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## Transition Assistance Program and the Enlisted Retention Board Released Sailor

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Transition Assistance Program and the Enlisted Retention Board Released Sailor

A Research Study

Presented to the Graduate Faculty

of the Department of STEM Education and Professional Studies

at Old Dominion University

In Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Master of Science

in Occupational and Technical Studies Degree

By

Danielle A Hughes

August 2012

SIGNATURE PAGE

This project was prepared by Danielle A. Hughes under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in SEPS 636, Problems in Occupational and Technical Education. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science in Occupational and Technical Studies degree.

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John M. Ritz  
Graduate Program Director

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Date

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Times have changed in the United States Navy. The personnel increases in response to the global war on terror have left it with a surplus of personnel now that the overseas requirements are decreasing. Recent efforts to reduce the personnel surplus have resulted in different force shaping strategies promulgated by the Department of Defense in response to budget cuts. One of the programs created to address the reduction in force is the Navy Enlisted Retention Board (ERB) Program (Commander of Naval Operations, 2011). As a result of the ERB Program many active duty members will be forced to leave active service involuntarily and with less warning time than normal. To address the unique needs of these Sailors the Transition Assistance (TA) Program, which has been addressing the needs of prospective veterans since 1982, has tailored its program to address the problems associated with the suddenness of their release from active duty (Bureau of Naval Personnel, 2011).

The Department of Defense and the Department of Veteran's Affairs recognize that the Sailors released as a result of the ERB Program deserve effective preparation programs for their transition to the civilian world and employment outside of active duty service. The Transition Assistance Program specifically targets preparation for employment after separation from active service. The program addresses education programs (both academic and vocational), job finding skills and preparation, benefits counseling, and has partnerships with employers particularly interested in the skill sets of Veterans. Does the tailored program work? Where does it fall short (if at all)? This study attempts to answer these questions.

## Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine the effect of the Transition Assistance Program on the success of Navy enlisted veterans who were separated from the Navy due to the Enlisted Retention Board Program and who were not eligible for retirement benefits or pay.

## Research Questions

The main goal of this research was to determine if the Transition Assistance Program successfully prepares Navy veterans released from active service due to the Enlisted Retention Board program in the areas of education, employment, and compensation. To make this determination the following research questions were developed:

RQ<sub>1</sub>: Did the veterans successfully complete a training program or college degree program in preparation for employment after separation?

RQ<sub>2</sub>: Did the veterans obtain employment within six months of separation from the Navy?

RQ<sub>3</sub>: Did the members obtain income with benefits that were 75% or more of their compensation while on active duty?

RQ<sub>4</sub>: Was the Transition Assistance Program successful in preparing veterans for separation in the areas of education, employment, and financial success?

## Background and Significance

The Transition Assistance Program has been a benefit provided to the active duty members of the military since 1982. It is a five day workshop that informs prospective veterans about educational opportunities, helps them with job searches, pairs them with



military friendly employers, and provides counseling on benefits for veterans. Originally, it was created for members contemplating voluntary separation and was recommended for those who were 18-24 months away from their expected separation date (Bureau of Naval Personnel, 2011).

The Transition Assistance Program has been very successful in helping veterans get jobs earlier than those who did not participate in the program (Perron, 2008). Most military veterans who have taken advantage of the program have found it to be very valuable in the areas of information and preparation for leaving active service. While historically it has a proven record of value, it is not clear how well it serves those who face separation due to the Enlisted Retention Board Program. The unique problem for those who separate as a result of the Enlisted Retention Board process is that they are not volunteers and, consequently, are not prepared to begin the active duty separation process. Also, this new group of veterans has about nine months to prepare for separation with little or no warning before being notified. The Transition Assistance Program has special program meetings, particularly tailored to meet the unique needs of this new group of unprepared prospective veterans.

A comprehensive plan to assist the prospective veterans consists of the well-established elements of the Transition Assistance Program along with strategies that assist them with overcoming the challenges that the lack of time and preparation may create. For example, a veteran who has not had a chance to start post-secondary education can be counseled on the Post-9-11 GI bill which pays living expenses while a veteran attends college after separation. The participant can be assisted with enrollment in the program, finding a suitable educational institution, and even obtaining part-time

employment. The overall goal of the Transition Assistance Program is to provide Veterans with a smooth and successful transition to civilian life. Does it achieve this for the suddenly separated veteran who does not have the benefit of time in preparing for the transition? This study will examine how well the program is working for those presented with unexpected and sudden separation as a result of the Enlisted Retention Board Program. It is vital that the special needs of this unique group of sailors are addressed. Members enter active service and willingly make great sacrifices for their country. The promise of appreciation and preparation in return for faithful service is presented to sailors from the time they are recruits. This promise must not be broken. Active service must continue to be rewarded. Veterans must be given opportunities to succeed. The revised Transition Assistance Program attempts to secure these opportunities for those released from active duty suddenly, after honorable service. These veterans, like others, have sacrificed in service to their country. The Transition Assistance Program intends to salute them for their valuable service by providing them with the same benefits it provides to those traditionally separated from active service with much more time to prepare.

#### Limitations

There were a few significant limitations to this study. Most are related to location. First, the veterans being studied have attended the Transition Assistance Program located at Norfolk Naval Base in Norfolk, VA. This will limit the number of participants and geographical location of those from whom the information will be gathered and the number of veterans studied. It is estimated that of the 60,000 sailors to be separated under the Enlisted Retention Board program, about 1000 will come from

installations in Virginia. The Norfolk Naval Base Transition Assistance program expects to serve at least one-fifth of these sailors. The study will be further limited to only those active duty service members who were notified of their separation in September 2011. The reason for this is that most will leave active service in the spring of 2012, allowing post separation information to be gathered in time for submission of the research report. Immediacy of information gathering is important to ensure that the veterans are still able to be contacted for information gathering. The average Transition Assistance Program class convening consists of about 25 students. For purposes of this study, twenty randomly chosen individuals will be studied which should allow for an adequate cross section of the average class size.

#### Assumptions

The following assumptions were pertinent to this study:

1. The Department of Defense and the Department of Veteran's Affairs are interested in the successful transition of all veterans.
2. The Transition Assistance Program is generally an effective tool in preparing veterans for transition from active service to civilian life.
3. The Transition Assistance Program participants believe that the program is an essential tool in preparing for their successful transitions to civilian employment.
4. The Transition Assistance Program has been tailored to address the needs of prospective veterans who will be separating from military service sooner than normal and not voluntarily.

## Procedures

The Transition Assistance Program employs counselors who must follow-up on veteran participants up to one year after separation. The information gathered by those counselors included the information needed to address the research questions. One must go to the Transition Assistance Office to have access to the information; the data could be examined with permission from the center's director. All data that could be accessed were confidential when recorded for general information and it was unclassified. It was from this database that most of the research was obtained. The data collected were confined to information on employment and education of individuals five to seven months after release from active service, where the separation was mandated by the Enlisted Retention Board Program (Bureau of Naval Personnel, 2011). The data were then analyzed according the research questions being addressed.

## Definition of Terms

The following terms and their meanings were defined specific to this study:

Active Duty: Currently enlisted in or commissioned by a branch of the United States armed forces.

Enlisted Retention Board: A personnel revision tool used by the Navy to eliminate enlisted members in specialties that are over-manned while retaining those needed to support the Navy's current or projected global mission (Commander of Naval Operations, 2011).

Transition Assistance Program: A five day program administered by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veteran's Affairs to prepare

prospective veterans for transition from active duty service (Bureau of Naval Personnel, (2011).

Veteran: Formerly enlisted in or commissioned by a branch of the United States armed forces.

### Summary

In Chapter I of this study, the problem was presented which involves the level of success of the Naval Transition Assistance Program in addressing the unique needs of the prospective veterans scheduled for release from active service as a result of the Enlisted Retention Program. The discussion addressed the questions to be answered through the research, some of the history of how the problem came to be, the geographical factors that reduce the number of participants studied, a few of the baseline beliefs that are particular to the study, a brief overview of the methods used to investigate the problem, and definitions of terms that may confuse some readers who are not familiar with common terms used in the Navy.

In Chapter II, the Review of Literature will explore information regarding the Transition Assistance Program, how it benefits its participants, and how it has been tailored to assist prospective veterans who leave active service as a result of the Enlisted Retention Board Program. Chapter III describes the research methods used for purposes of this study, the description of program participants, the procedures employed for evidence gathering, and an analysis of the data gathered.

Chapter IV discusses the findings that are a result of the research. This focuses on data pertinent to the research questions. Chapter V summarizes the findings, answers the

research problem, and makes conclusions based on the research. Finally, recommendations for the application or uses for the findings are discussed.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review systematically addresses the pertinent points presented in the research questions. It is intended to present the supporting information that provides the context in which the research variables were identified and define the viewpoint of the presentation of the research. The first factor that is examined is education in the Navy as described by DODINST 1322.25, the Voluntary Education Handbook which discusses the many education assistance programs offered by the Department of Defense to active duty members and veterans. The next factor examined is preparation for post-military employment using the information provided in the Guide to Veteran Employment which outlines the employment assistance programs available to veterans. The third factor discussed is calculation of military pay and benefits and how it translates to compensation in civilian employment as described in the Navy Pay and Benefits Guide. The last factor discussed is the Transition Assistance Program for active duty members preparing for separation from active service as described in the Navy Transition Assistance Handbook. This publication takes prospective veterans through the steps of transition from active duty service to the civilian world in the areas of benefits, education, and employment. These four publications provide the framework for the study as it relates to service members released from active duty as a result of the Enlisted Retention Board Program. It is also important to note that most of the literature has been revised recently to address the newly presented challenges of shorter notice for the prospective veterans released under the force shaping program.

## Voluntary Education Programs

Education has been one of the major goals of those considering enlistment in the United States Military. For those separated under the ERB program, education could be the deciding factor of success after active duty service. The Department of the Defense uses its exceptional Voluntary Education Program to attract new young recruits who may not have other options for paying college tuition. Once enlisted in the Navy, new sailors are frequently encouraged to work toward a college degree. There are several programs within the Navy that are tailored for the unique challenges that face enlisted sailors who are interested in higher education in preparation for civilian employment after active service. Four of those programs that are particularly material to the study are the Tuition Assistance Program, the Voluntary Education Programs on military installations, education partnerships between the educational institutions and the U. S. Navy, and the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) (Stanley, 2011).

The tuition assistance program provides up to \$4500.00 per fiscal year to members embarking on a college degree. It is available to members who are in good disciplinary standing, have completed all required job-related qualifications, and are within fitness standards according guidelines for Navy fitness. It is estimated that 22% of female and 6% of male active duty enlisted sailors take advantage of this program (Buddin & Kapur, 2005). The advantage of using this tuition payment program over others (like the post 9-11 G.I. Bill) is that it is available for education up to one associate's or bachelor's degree and allows the member to achieve a degree without using the G. I. Bill, which can be transferred to the spouse or children of the Sailor. Using the Tuition Assistance Program while on active duty instead of the G. I. bill also saves the



prospective member money. The benefits of using the Post 9-11 G. I. Bill are much greater for a veteran than one on active duty (Stanley, 2011).

The Voluntary Education on Military Installations initiative allows and encourages institutions of higher learning to set up classrooms and offices on military installations allowing active duty members easier access to education. Students can conduct education business at their location (which can sometimes be remote) and attend classes in places where those services might not otherwise be available (i.e., in other countries, onboard deployed naval vessels).

Education partnerships between the Navy and various institutions of higher learning provide many benefits to the active duty student. There are agreements that allow for college credit for military experience, easy access to education partners, and easy transition of education careers in cases where members may change location. Another benefit concerns compensation. In most cases military members are allowed in-state status for tuition rate purposes at partnered institutions no matter what their state of citizenship may be (Stanley, 2011).

The Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) is charged with the responsibility of executing the practical application of non-traditional education in the active duty military. A few of its notable responsibilities is maintaining a registry of all partnership institutions and translation of non-traditional experiences of active duty members to recommend college credit value for the partnered institutions. The activity also negotiates the support services from partnered institutions like compensation access and consideration of sudden duty assignment changes (Stanley, 2011).

There are several entities charged with different responsibilities when it comes to educational opportunities for the active duty sailor. However, it is recognized that all of these education programs are aimed at preparing prospective veterans for employment after separation. The question is, “Do these education programs translate to gainful employment after active duty?”

### Guide to Veteran Employment

There is an initiative underway to secure employment for veterans who are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan to an American economy where jobs are at a premium (Vogel, 2012). Along with those war veterans there are general active duty members who will be entering the civilian job market while unemployment in the civilian sector is at a relatively high rate. There are programs put in place to assist prospective veterans in their quest for employment that is adequate in the areas of compensation and benefits. The recently revised Guide to Military Employment outlines veteran employment programs and strategies that attempt to give veterans assistance in finding employment. The guide provides guidance on all stages of obtaining employment. Some things addressed are preliminary preparation, the application process, and the process of obtaining employment (Military Advantage, 2010). First the researcher analyzed some of the preparation tools.

The preliminary process guidance includes career field research procedures, professional development, and resume preparation. Next, active preparation is discussed with an overview of job fairs, job searching tips, networking, application processes, and interview tips. Preparation during the final year of active service is emphasized. In later additions, the process recommended to mitigate difficulties created by a shorter

preparation period is addressed. Some of the recommended tactics include maintaining an active networking web of prospective employment opportunities, staying informed of occupational trends, and continuous education that addresses the occupation trends. There is little time for preparation. The process takes this into consideration. Addressing the unique time constraints is one of the ways the Transition Assistance Program attempts to overcome the time barrier.

Other miscellaneous guidance in the literature includes veteran preferences in federal employment, procedures for obtaining employment through government partnerships with private employers who have pledged to employ military veterans, and special resources for military veterans looking for employment in specific geographical locations (Military Advantage, 2011). Do these programs adequately address the unique needs of those separated from active duty due to the ERB program? Another consideration that prospective veterans must take into consideration when transitioning to civilian employment is determining what compensation they need to facilitate an acceptable transition. To do this, prospective veterans must first analyze what their current compensation translates to in civilian employment and benefit programs. This is not as straight forward a process as one may assume. The Navy Pay and Benefit Guide can help in this endeavor.

#### Navy Pay and Benefit Guide

Pay and compensation is important to the new veteran. When the affected members are notified of the mandate of separation set forth by the ERB program, a new concern presents itself. How will the members provide for themselves and their families? The Navy had previously been viewed as a secure employment option. Members entered

into mortgage contracts, obtained car loans, started families, and incurred other financial obligations. Essentials such as medical care and retirement programs were secure with active military service. Those who face mandatory release from active service with less than 15 years in the Navy will leave with few benefits and no pay. When looking for a new source of compensation it must be understood what financial obligations one has and what one's true compensation is and must be to maintain a personally acceptable standard of living or prepare for another one.

The process for calculating how military compensation translates to the civilian sector is not as easy as it may seem. It is not just a matter of one's enlisted pay rate. Active duty military members enjoy a comprehensive benefits program that includes medical, dental, and prescription coverage as well as a lucrative retirement program and investment opportunities. In addition, military members are entitled to allowances for things like clothing and family separation, taxation benefits, and a myriad of free services and discounts. Quantifying this into consolidated figures that translate to comparable compensation from civilian employment can be difficult but must be done when planning for separation from active service. The Navy Pay and Benefits Guide released by the Navy Personnel Command helps members with this daunting task (Bureau of Naval Personnel, 2010). It takes every relevant variable involved in military pay and compensation and translates it to its civilian compensation equivalent. Originally it was intended to be a recruitment and retention tool but was revised in July of 2010 to include a new use, a preparation and translation tool.

## Navy Transition Assistance Program

The Navy Transition Assistance Handbook is the guide used by the Transition Assistance Program in guiding prospective veterans through the transition process (active duty to veteran). It encompasses discussion and guidance on the programs previously mentioned as well as other programs that may assist members in transitioning from active service. The Transition Assistance Program uses this guide as a classroom manual when administering the program to prospective veterans. It was revised in November 2011 to address the unique needs of prospective veterans scheduled for release from active duty as a result of the ERB program (Bureau of Naval Personnel, 2011).

Originally, as reflected in the manual, this program was used dually as a preparation tool and as a retention tool. Since retention is not an option for some veterans and their expectation and preparation time may have been cut short, the program was revised to allow for the presentation of a more targeted approach to transition preparation for those that need it. In fact there is an entire addendum dedicated to the ERB released sailor and there are special training sessions where the entire program specifically focuses on the special needs of the ERB released sailor. Some items of note are partnerships with Navy friendly employers like Northrop Grumman and General Dynamics who recruit employees right from the class. There are also application and resume submission sessions. Employment counselors are assigned to individuals who may be unable to execute a comprehensive job search due to duty limitations. There are even face to face interview sessions in the Transition Assistance Program facility. They facilitate sessions on site or connect remotely assigned individuals to interviewers through electronic/web based technology. It is estimated that on average, veterans who

used the transition assistance program obtained jobs three to six weeks earlier than those who did not with better compensation packages (quantified to +4%) over a one year period (Perron, 2008). Of particular interest to the study are the outlined provisions specifically targeting the prospective veteran with little time to prepare for separation from active service.

### Summary

Proper preparation is important both for ERB separated veterans and the Navy. Ensuring that military members are well prepared for the civilian workforce through education and assistance is a fulfillment of a promise from the Navy to its voluntary members. The well prepared veteran becomes a positive ambassador of the Navy. The successful Navy veteran is living proof that active service is a rewarding sacrifice and that the United States Navy takes care of those who take the oath of service. There is significant guidance on obtaining employment and education for veterans. The Transition Assistance Program has a history of facilitating the transition of Navy veterans from active service to the civilian sector. The tenets of education, employment, and compensation have historically been addressed by the Transition Assistance Program for the traditional separating member who has 24 months before separation; it has now been tailored to adequately serve the needs of those veterans with just nine months of lead time before separation. Is the program revision adequate? Does the Transition Assistance Program prepare Navy enlisted veterans separated from the Navy due to the Enlisted Retention Board Program for success outside of active service in the areas of education, employment, and compensation? The next chapter discusses the methods used in

gathering the information needed to answer these questions and describes the data gathered to address important factors presented in the research questions.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the effectiveness of the Transition Assistance Program in the support of prospective veterans, unexpectedly notified of their immediate release from active service as a result of selection of the Enlisted Retention Board program. In particular, three areas were examined. First, the success of the Transition Assistance Program in helping prospective veterans to acquire education sufficient enough for them to find employment after separation was examined. The second variable examined was the success of the Transition Assistance Program in helping prospective veterans find employment that commenced within six months after official separation. The third area examined is the success of the Transition Assistance Program in preparing the unique set of prospective veterans in the area of benefits of employment. All three of these examined items combined helped the researcher determine if the Transition Assistance Program in Norfolk, Virginia, was successful in preparing veterans for success in the areas of education, employment, and financial success. There were several important things taken into consideration in determining the methods and procedures used in the research. The research population, the instrument used in data collection, the data collected, and the analysis of the data were all chosen to affect an organized method of answering the research questions.

#### Population

The population of this study was comprised of 25 participants, all attending a special convening of the Transition Assistance Program for members preparing for separation under the Enlisted Retention Board Program. All of the participants are



expected to separate from active service on or before July 1, 2012. The members were notified of their mandatory release from active service in September 2011. In the class under study there were 20 men and five women ranging in age from 24 to 38. The participants served an average of 4.5 years in active service. Most have some college experience; all have high-school diplomas, and two have college degrees. The class selected is expected to be a typical cross section of prospective veterans, separated from active service as the result of selection by the Enlisted Retention Board process.

### Instrument Design

The instrument of this study is a questionnaire (Transition Assistance Participant Status Questionnaire) that program participants are required to complete during their Transition Assistance Program class convening and six weeks after their actual separation date as part of the processing procedure and after separation. Among other things the students are asked for data that is pertinent to the research questions. The response rate for participants is high because the questionnaire is required to be completed for participants to complete several important processing evolutions.

### Methods of Data Collection

The data collected from the questionnaire were stored in a database called the Transition Assistance Program Data Collection Database. Using the query function of this vast database, the researcher provided some variables and limitations that effected the generation of a table that displayed the information requested under the limitations provided. The following data were submitted, with applicable parameters, to the data base:

1. Limitation/Restrictions:

- a. Class number: 101104z, 101105
- b. Class convening: Special (Denotes the ERB Specific Class)
- c. Status Date: Nov. 1, 2011, August 15, 2012

## 2. Data Retrieval

- a. Education
- b. Income (level)
- c. Compensation

After the information was processed the researcher was given two reports in table form. The first was a table showing all the pertinent facts as of November 2011 (education, military income, and military compensation) of each member of the ERB class. The second table shows all the pertinent information six weeks after separation for the same group. The two tables were compared by the researcher to decipher the difference in the data for the selected participants.

### Statistical Analysis

The data from the Transition Assistance Program Data Collection Database were grouped according to the factors discussed in the research questions: education, income, and compensation. The education data were organized according to a point system as follows: HS Diploma = 12, Some College = 13, Associates Degree = 14, Bachelor's Degree = 16, Master's Degree (and above) = 18. The income portion was displayed in annual pay rounded to the nearest thousand dollars. The compensation portion awarded points for different benefits which include medical benefits, retirement/401k benefits, and annual vacation time (projected). The data collected were then compared in two ways. The first was internal; data from the group in the November snap shot were compared to

the data for the same subjects in the July snap shot. The second is the documented success of the Transition Assistance Program in preparing prospective veterans for success after separation. These two comparisons gave the researcher the information needed to determine if the Transition Assistance Program was working for the prospective veterans under study.

### Summary

Chapter III begins with a discussion on the population under study. Although the Transition Assistance program is for all prospective veterans, the special convening class chosen allows the researcher to focus on prospective veterans who separate from active service as a result of the Enlisted Retention Board Program. Next, the instrument used to gather data was one already in use by the Transition Assistance Program. It allows for maximum participation of the participants and requires response to questions that satisfy the requirements of the research study. The data collection section discusses how the data were pulled from the data base maintained by the Transition Assistance Program. Finally, the methods employed by the researcher in the statistical analysis section shows how the data were used to address the research questions. In the next chapter a description of the data and how they relate to the research questions is discussed.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the Transition Assistance Participant Status Questionnaire given to USN sailors who attend the Transition Assistance Workshop in anticipation of separation from active duty as a result of the Enlistment Retention Board Program. The data that revealed the results of the questionnaires were retrieved from the Transition Assistance Program Data Collection Database by a counselor from the Transition Assistance Program Office. The data were retrieved to determine if the Transition Assistance Program successfully prepares Navy veterans released from active service due to the Enlisted Retention Board program in the areas of education, employment, pay, and compensation.

#### General Data and Information

The data revealed in the research findings were collected from the questionnaires administered to 25 anonymous respondents who were separating from active duty naval service as a result of the Enlisted Retention Board Program. The questionnaire was completed by 100% of the class.

The populations of questionnaire respondents were enlisted sailors between the ranks of E-1 and E-5 who were separated from active duty as a result of the Enlisted Retention Board Program. The first group of data was the results of a questionnaire given in November 2011. All of the attendees of the class completed the questionnaire. The second group of data was the results of the same respondents filling out the same questionnaire in July of 2012. The group attended a special convening of the Transition Assistance Program, specifically tailored to meet the needs of the unique group of

prospective veterans. Most respondents were given only nine months notice of their separation and were allowed to attend one specially designed convening of TAP class.

The data discussed in the following section includes the education, employment, pay, and compensation figures for the attendees of the ERB specific Transition Assistance class given in November 2011. The data were collected from questionnaires completed by the attendees of the class in November 2011 (before the class) and July 2012 (after separation). The discussion is a compilation of the data.

#### Education Data

Education was presented according to education years. Twelve years indicated a high school education. Thirteen years indicated high school + some college. Fourteen years indicated an associate's degree or technical certification. Sixteen years indicated a bachelor's degree. Eighteen years indicated a graduate degree. In November 2011, the average number of years of education for ERB released Sailors was 13 years (some college). In July 2012, the average years of education for ERB released veterans was 14 years (associate's degree or certification). See Table 4.1.

#### Pay and Employment Data

Pay was revealed by annual salary in \$1000.00 increments; employment was indicated with a yes or no (yes indicating employment). The reported figures from the respondents were rounded to the nearest thousand dollars and recorded without the last three digits (i.e., 28,423.00 = 28). In November 2011 the average pay for the ERB released Sailors was \$31,000.00 in Navy pay with 100% being employed by the Navy. In July 2012, the average pay for ERB released veterans was \$38,000.00 with 100% being employed. See Tables 4-2 and 4-3.

Table 4.1

*Education Data Comparison (Class # 101104z Sailors)*

Respondent	November, 2011	July, 2012	Respondent	November, 2011	July, 2012
1	12	13	14	13	13
2	13	14	15	12	13
3	14	14	16	14	14
4	14	14	17	13	14
5	16	16	18	13	13
6	12	13	19	13	14
7	13	13	20	14	14
8	14	14	21	13	14
9	12	13	22	13	16
10	13	13	23	13	13
11	13	13	24	14	14
12	13	14	25	13	14
13	13	13			

Education in years: 12 = High School Diploma; 13 = Some College; 14 = Associates Degree or Certification; 16 = Bachelor's Degree; 18 = Graduate's Degree

Table 4.2

*Pay Data Comparison (Class # 101104z Sailors)*

Respondent	Pay November, 2011	Pay July, 2012	Respondent	Pay November, 2011	Pay July, 2012
1	30	31	14	30	67
2	29	32	15	30	37
3	29	32	16	29	32
4	31	32	17	30	30
5	35	34	18	32	57
6	36	34	19	31	60
7	29	30	20	32	33
8	28	29	21	30	55
9	31	30	22	29	38
10	32	29	23	30	35
11	33	30	24	32	45
12	29	32	25	30	38
13	29	55			

Pay is annotated in \$1000 Increments (i.e. 23=\$23,000.00)

Table 4.3

*Employment Data Comparison (Class # 101104z Sailors)*

Respondent	Employed July 2012?	Respondent	Employed July 2012?
1	Yes	14	Yes
2	Yes	15	Yes
3	Yes	16	Yes
4	Yes	17	Yes
5	Yes	18	Yes
6	Yes	19	Yes
7	Yes	20	Yes
8	Yes	21	Yes
9	Yes	22	Yes
10	Yes	23	Yes
11	Yes	24	Yes
12	Yes	25	Yes
13	Yes		

Compensation Data

Compensation was revealed on a 5-point scale. A full 5-points indicated full benefits (retirement plan, medical, annual leave, dental, and education). Any point value lower than five-points indicated less than full benefits. The researcher was not given information indicating what the specific benefits were. In November 2011 the average compensation indication for the ERB released Sailors was 5-points (full military benefits). In July 2012 the average compensation indication for ERB released veterans was 3-points. See Table 4-4.

Summary

Chapter IV contains a summary of the data retrieved from the Transition Assistance Program Data Collection Database at the Norfolk Naval Base Transition Assistance Program Office in Norfolk, VA. The data were limited to the one class of Transition Assistance Program Participants only. Data regarding pay, compensation, and

Table 4.4

*Compensation Data Comparison (Class # 101104z, Sailors)*

Respondent	Comp. November, 2011	Comp. July, 2012	Respondent	Comp. November, 2011	Comp. July, 2012
1	5	3	14	5	3
2	5	2	15	5	3
3	5	4	16	5	3
4	5	4	17	5	3
5	5	3	18	5	3
6	5	3	19	5	3
7	5	2	20	5	4
8	5	1	21	5	3
9	5	3	22	5	4
10	5	4	23	5	3
11	5	3	24	5	3
12	5	4	25	5	2
13	5	3			

Compensation on a scale of 1-5 (1=minimum benefits; 5=maximum benefits)

education were the only data obtained regarding the participants. See tables 4-5 and 4-6.

The data were used to determine if the Transition Assistance Program specifically targeted the unique needs of veterans released from active duty as a result of the Enlisted Retention Board Program in the areas of pay, compensation, and education. The next chapter determines the meaning of the gathered data and deciphers their relationship to the research questions.



Table 4.5

*Retrieved Data November 2011 (Class # 101104z Sailors)*

Resp.	Employed?	Pay	Comp.	Edu.	Resp.	Employed?	Pay	Comp.	Edu.
1	Yes	30	5	12	14	Yes	30	5	13
2	Yes	29	5	13	15	Yes	30	5	12
3	Yes	29	5	14	16	Yes	29	5	14
4	Yes	31	5	14	17	Yes	30	5	13
5	Yes	35	5	16	18	Yes	32	5	13
6	Yes	36	5	12	19	Yes	31	5	13
7	Yes	29	5	13	20	Yes	32	5	14
8	Yes	28	5	14	21	Yes	30	5	13
9	Yes	31	5	12	22	Yes	29	5	13
10	Yes	32	5	13	23	Yes	30	5	13
11	Yes	33	5	13	24	Yes	32	5	14
12	Yes	29	5	13	25	Yes	30	5	13
13	Yes	29	5	13					

Pay is annotated in \$1000 Increments (i.e. 23=\$23,000.00). Compensation on a scale of 1-5 (1=minimum benefits; 5=maximum benefits). Education in years: 12 = High School Diploma; 13 = Some College; 14 = Associates Degree or Certification; 16 = Bachelor's Degree; 18 = Graduate's Degree

Table 4.6

*Retrieved Data July 2012 (Class # 101104z Sailors)*

Resp.	Employed?	Pay	Comp.	Edu.	Resp.	Employed?	Pay	Comp.	Edu.
1	Yes	31	3	13	14	Yes	67	3	13
2	Yes	32	2	14	15	Yes	37	3	13
3	Yes	32	4	14	16	Yes	32	3	14
4	Yes	32	4	14	17	Yes	30	3	14
5	Yes	34	3	16	18	Yes	57	3	13
6	Yes	34	3	13	19	Yes	60	3	14
7	Yes	30	2	13	20	Yes	33	4	14
8	Yes	29	1	14	21	Yes	55	3	14
9	Yes	30	3	13	22	Yes	38	4	16
10	Yes	29	4	13	23	Yes	35	3	13
11	Yes	30	3	13	24	Yes	45	3	14
12	Yes	32	4	14	25	Yes	38	2	14
13	Yes	55	3	13					

Pay is annotated in \$1000 Increments (i.e. 23=\$23,000.00). Compensation on a scale of 1-5 (1=minimum benefits; 5=maximum benefits). Education in years: 12 = High School Diploma; 13 = Some College; 14 = Associates Degree or Certification; 16 = Bachelor's Degree; 18 = Graduate's Degree

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter summarizes the findings of the research, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations based on those findings. The main goal of the research was to determine if the Transition Assistance Program successfully prepared Navy veterans released from active service due to the Enlisted Retention Board program in the areas of education, employment, pay, and compensation.

#### Summary

The problem of this study was to determine the effect of the Transition Assistance Program on the success of Navy enlisted veterans who were separated from the Navy due to the Enlisted Retention Board Program and who were not eligible for retirement benefits or pay. To make this determination four research questions were developed.

They research questions were:

RQ<sub>1</sub>: Did the veterans successfully complete a training program or college degree program in preparation for employment after separation?

RQ<sub>2</sub>: Did the veterans obtain employment within six months of separation from the Navy?

RQ<sub>3</sub>: Did the members obtain income with benefits that were 75% or more of their compensation while on active duty?

RQ<sub>4</sub>: Was the Transition Assistance Program successful in preparing veterans for separation in the areas of education, employment, and financial success?

The research limitations of this study were identified as the number of research subjects, geographical location, and the required active duty release notification date of

the participants. All research subjects attended the TAP class in Norfolk, VA. The number of research subjects was limited to 25 subjects. The notification date of the release from active duty for the subjects was limited to September 15, 2011.

A questionnaire was administered to the attendees of a TAP class convening specifically tailored to ERB Sailors. The questionnaire addressed information pertinent to the research questions, employment, pay, education, and compensation, before separation and six weeks or more after separation. All data were put into a database maintained by the Transition Assistance Program offices in Norfolk, VA. An internally generated report was retrieved from the locally held database (the Transition Assistance Program Data Collection Database) containing the pertinent information regarding the research population. The research population was 25 Sailors released from active duty as a result of the ERB program attending a special convening of TAP class (TAP class Number 101104z) that was specifically tailored to their unique needs.

The data retrieved from the Transition Assistance Program Data Collection Database and the information revealed in the Review of Literature were the primary sources of the research information. They were the basis for the conclusions and recommendations of the research.

### Conclusions

The following research questions were addressed in an effort to accomplish the main goal of the research which was to determine the effectiveness of the TAP program in serving ERB Sailors:

RQ<sub>1</sub>: Did the veterans successfully complete a training program or college degree program in preparation for employment after separation?

The training level of attendees went from 13 years (average) in November, 2011, which indicated a high school education with some college to 14 years (average) in July 2012. This indicated an Associate's Degree or vocational certification. This rise in education level by 7.7% indicated that the veterans successfully completed a training program or college degree program in preparation for employment after separation.

RQ<sub>2</sub>: Did the veterans obtain employment within six months of separation from the Navy?

Based on the data retrieved, all attendees of the class indicated that they were employed in July. A 100% employment rate within six months of separation clearly indicated a positive answer to RQ<sub>2</sub>.

RQ<sub>3</sub>: Did the members obtain income with benefits that were 75% or more of their compensation while on active duty?

The data from the report indicated that the average income of the class went up by 22.6% (from \$32,000.00 – \$38,000.00 annually), while the compensation indicator went down by 40 % (from 5 – 3). This indicated that average pay and compensation for the 25 respondents was within the 75% or more threshold set by RQ<sub>3</sub>.

RQ<sub>4</sub>: Was the Transition Assistance Program successful in preparing veterans for separation in the areas of education, employment, and financial success?

Taking all the facts regarding education, employment, pay, and compensation into consideration, the researcher concluded that the Transition Assistance Program was successful in preparing veterans for separation in the areas of education, employment, and financial success. This indicated a positive answer to RQ<sub>4</sub>. See Table 5-1.

Table 5-1

*Change in Pay, Compensation and Education; Nov 2011-Jul 2012 (Class # 101104z Sailors)*

Variable	Average Nov 2011	Average Jul 2012	% Change
Pay	31	38	+ 22.6
Compensation	5	3	- 40.0
Education	13	14	+ 7.7

Pay is annotated in \$1000 Increments (i.e. 23=\$23,000.00). Compensation on a scale of 1-5 (1=minimum benefits; 5=maximum benefits). Education in years: 12 = High School Diploma; 13 = Some College; 14 = Associates Degree or Certification; 16 = Bachelor's Degree; 18 = Graduate's Degree

Therefore, the researcher concluded that the answer to the research problem was:

Yes. The Transition Assistance Program successfully prepared Navy veterans released from active service due to the Enlisted Retention Board program in the areas of education, employment, and compensation. While it was recognized that the will of each individual was important to his/her success, it cannot be discounted that a 100% employment rate was remarkable and the program's efforts to help prospective veterans secure employment directly after separation must be part of that. The education benefits afforded through naval service had a direct impact on pay and compensation. It was encouraging to see that these Sailors were not released and forgotten. Several programs had been created to help them successfully transition to civilian life. The Transition Assistance Program was a successful one.

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research and the literature review, the following recommendations have been developed:

1. Continue to monitor the TAP participants each year for three years to determine consistency of results/progress.
2. Conduct similar research that focuses on an overseas program office to determine the effects of remotely located programs (specifically in the area of job placement assistance) on attendee success.
3. Conduct a Navy wide study for a more complete understanding of the TAP program's impact on ERB Sailors overall.
4. Conduct a study comparing the impact of the TAP program on ERB and Non-ERB Separated Sailors to identify any disparity.

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