

High Year Tenure: Navy has enjoyed tremendous recruiting success, historic retention rates, and some of the lowest attrition seen in recent memory. That is all a direct result of your superb effort in recognizing manpower is the key to everything we do as a fighting force. All that good news comes at a price: because we are limited by law to how many Sailors we can have on active duty (End Strength), we must continually adjust the personnel mixture via a variety of Force Shaping programs. Using mandatory High Year Tenure (HYT) gates is one method of adjusting the throttle. HYT precludes stagnation within the paygrades, ensures each of our Sailors has upward mobility for advancement, and provides for "Force freshening". NAVADMINS in 2002 and 2003 set the HYT limits for PO1's at 20 years active military service and for PO3's at 8 years active Naval service. Individual who would have been immediately impacted by the new, lower HYT were provided a transition period of at least 14 months.

For PO1's, the transition period ends this Sept 30th. Those with 20 years or greater service must transfer to the Fleet Reserve NLT 30 Sep 2003, unless they have an approved HYT waiver on file. The Enlisted Community Managers have reported a spike of urgent HYT waiver requests from PO1's within the past 2 weeks. Almost without exception, it is from Petty Officers (or their Chains of Command) who must retire by 30 Sep. The request is typically for an additional 3-4 months and the reason stated is that the Sailor has done no preparations for retirement or they did not understand the impact of HYT. This shocks me and it should alarm you! These Sailors must retire in about a month, and are unprepared. Regretably, because of the by-law requirement to meet End Strength on 30 Sep, we must disapprove the majority of those HYT waiver requests. Only those who are filling priority operational billets or have an urgent humanitarian need are being permitted to stay beyond 20 years. HYT waiver requests of a routine nature or simply for personal convenience cannot be supported.

We as leaders and managers must keep faith with our Sailors by ensuring we identify and counsel personnel approaching an HYT gate. I ask you to communicate with your Chiefs' Messes. The Personnel Officers, LCPO's and CCC's should be reviewing the Active Duty Service Date for each member in the command. Each Sailor (whether MCPO or SR) has an HYT gate. Maximum years of service are listed in OPNAVINST 1160.5C (Reenlistment Quality Control Program), NAVADMIN 160/03, and NAVADMIN 208/02. As part of your Professional Military Training sessions and Professional Development Boards, I urge you to include an explanation of what HYT is, how it impacts each individual, and what must be done as a Sailor approaches that date.

Perform To Serve: Perform to Serve (PTS) is now in it's fifth month of operation. As of 08 Aug, we've received nearly 14,000 applications. Of those, almost 9,800 Sailors (70% of all applicants) have been offered reenlistment in rate. An additional 1,600 (11.5% of applicants) have been offered reenlistment via conversion. That conversion figure is really the good-news portion of this story. That's 1,600 Sailors being moved from over-crowded ratings where they may stagnate and are under-utilized, to other skill fields where we need a boost in manning. BZ to all Command Retention Teams out in the Fleet making this program operate to specs.

What we don't want to lose sight on is the other 2,600 Sailors (18.5%) in the stack. They have been offered neither reenlistment in rating nor by conversion. It is critical we counsel those Sailors individually now - they must be given advanced notice of what the future may hold. If they are only applying for reenlistment in rating, explain to them the opportunities that await in other skill fields. To stay Navy, they must be willing to transfer to skills where we have room for them. And for those willing to convert, but still not receiving approval (due to where they break out in the stack in comparison with their peers), we must prepare them for the likelihood of being notified to separate at EAOS. The first of those message to commands will appear in the traffic next month. The messages may shock some Chains Of Command - but they are a necessary part of our Force Shaping strategy. We simply cannot afford to retain personnel in overpopulated skill fields. Please socialize this with your CPO Messes.

Finally, one item I am personally concerned with is overall program compliance. Although we've received approximately 14,000 applications, we have calculated we should be seeing 17,500 of them. That's in the neighborhood of only an 80% application rate. Where are the other 3,500 Sailors? PTS is relatively new and some confusion still exists. I have a staff of PTS experts waiting to assist you at the Center for Career Development in Millington and OPNAV N-132 in DC. PTS is a necessary program. PTS is a mandatory program. If there is any confusion on this, I ask your Command Retention Teams review applicable PTS NAVADMINS and then give our Program Coordinators a call. Having ALL first-term, CREO Group 3 Sailors apply will ensure a level playing field, complete fairness in the process and provide us the best chance of putting the right Sailor, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time.