

Hawaii Enlisted IT Shore-Duty Manning

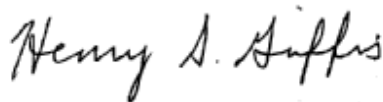
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CAB D0020432.A2/Final
May 2009



Approved for distribution:

May 2009

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry S. Griffis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H' and 'S'.

Henry S. Griffis, Director
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Executive summary

- A CNA team visited four sites in Hawaii over the 4-day period of March 30 to April 2, 2009
 - Heard directly from nearly 100 ITs (on sea duty and shore duty)
 - Of key interest was their perception of the manning situation
 - Comment-card feedback allowed some statistical analysis of results
 - Also provided an outbrief to CPF-N6 on April 3
- The discussion group participants were aware of the IT shore-duty manning shortage in Hawaii
- Their recommendations for closing the gap broke down along the lines of seniority
- Those who were more junior valued financial incentives
 - AIP, SRB/LSRB, COLA/BAH
- Those who were more senior viewed career considerations as more important
 - Follow-on assignments, sea/shore rotation, advancement prospects
- Most were not enthusiastic about hiring more civilians (or contractors) to help relieve the strain of the IT manning gap



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In support of the IT “Deep Dive” led by CNO-N12, a CNA team spent 4 days in Hawaii holding discussion groups with Navy Information Systems Technicians (ITs) on duty there. We had a total of 88 participants in 11 discussion groups over those 4 days. The groups included ITs serving on both shore duty and sea duty. Most of the participants were serving on shore duty. Comment cards were distributed to each discussion group, and we received a great deal of feedback. On the fifth day, an outbrief was provided to CPF-N6.

The participants were aware of the IT manning shortfall and spoke of how it had increased their workload. They added that the negative reputation of Hawaii shore duty had spread among their IT peers Navy-wide. Their recommendations for closing or mitigating the ashore IT manning gap in Hawaii tended to split along seniority lines. The more junior ITs were more interested in financial incentives, such as Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) or Selective Reenlistment Bonuses (SRBs). Those who were more senior were less concerned about financial incentives and more worried about such Navy career issues as follow-on assignments, sea/shore rotation policies, and advancement. They were asked about the hiring of federal civilians or contractors to help relieve the workload burden. Although they acknowledged that it could help alleviate some of the strain of the IT manning shortage, they were generally unenthusiastic, viewing it as a paper solution that would fall short in implementation. Nor were greater opportunities for geographic stability (i.e., consecutive sea/shore tours) in Hawaii a high priority for them.

We received some command-specific feedback on the two commands that are home to the largest cluster of ITs on duty in Hawaii—NCTAMS-Pac and NIOC-Hawaii.

Outline

Study background

- Discussion group visits
- Comment-card results
- Manning-gap analysis
- Conclusions/recommendations

We begin with a review of the background of the study.

Study background

- Study was triggered by the IT “Deep Dive” led by CNO-N12 in mid-2008
 - The Deep Dive is examining the full scope of issues that pertain to the IT rating
 - Of special concern is the IT ashore-manning shortfall in Hawaii
 - IT shore duty billets in Hawaii are currently filled to less than 75% of BA
 - The gap is worrisome because of the large concentration of shore duty IT billets in Hawaii
 - “Hawaii should be the Mecca for the IT rating, but it’s not”
- In late 2008, CNA was asked to lead discussion groups of ITs in Hawaii to ascertain the “ground truth”
 - Delays in scheduling pushed the timetable back to early 2009
 - A three-person team (two analysts from CNA and an officer from NNWC) visited 4 sites in Hawaii over 4 days in March/April



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The IT ashore-manning gap in Hawaii is one of a broad range of issues that are being considered by the IT Deep Dive that was initiated by CNO-N12 in mid-2008. At the end of 2008, IT shore duty billets in Hawaii were filled at less than 75 percent of billets authorized (BA), with some key activities manned in the 60- to 70-percent range. Hawaii is of special concern because of the concentration of IT shore duty billets there. A cluster of billets is located there because Hawaii is a Navy communications hub, due to its strategic location in the western Pacific Ocean. Commented one IT on shore duty in Hawaii, “Hawaii should be the Mecca for the IT rating, but it’s not.”

In support of the IT Deep Dive, CNO-N12 (RDML Cynthia Covell) asked CNA in fall 2008 to visit with ITs on duty in Hawaii to gain their perspective. The purpose of the visit would be to interview them about the manning gap and obtain their recommendations for closing or mitigating it. The interviews would take place in the context of discussion groups of ITs. Both shore duty and sea duty ITs in Hawaii would be interviewed to gain a fuller perspective. Initially, the visit was to occur before the close of the year. Scheduling issues postponed the trip to early 2009.

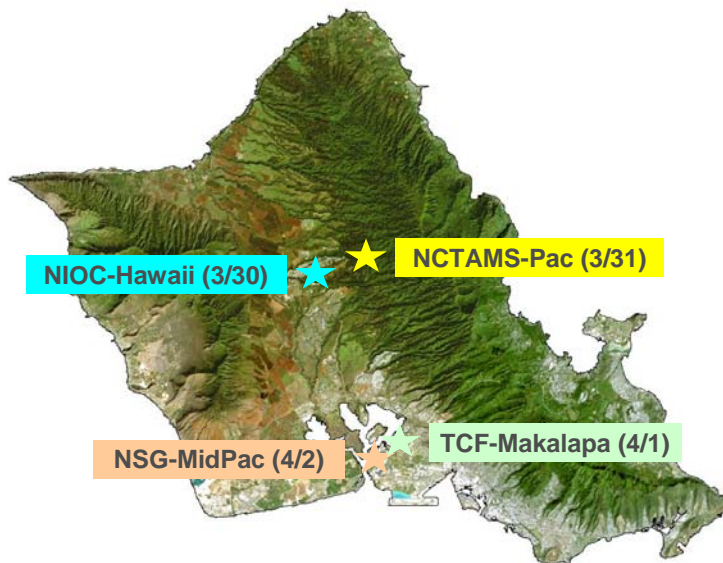
Once the schedule was finalized, a three-person team visited Hawaii over the week of March 30 to April 3, 2009. The team consisted of two analysts from CNA, Christopher Duquette and James Gasch, and an officer from Naval Network Warfare Command (NNWC), CDR Mark Oldfield. CDR Oldfield’s assistance was invaluable in gaining the full cooperation of the commands that were visited.

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Next, we present a description of the discussion groups and the feedback that we received from them.

Commands visited between March 30 and April 2



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Four commands were visited for discussion group purposes:

- *Monday, March 30:* Naval Information Operations Center, Hawaii (NIOC-Hawaii)
- *Tuesday, March 31:* Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station, Pacific (NCTAMS-Pac)
- *Wednesday, April 1:* Technical Control Facility, Makalapa (TCF-Makalapa)
- *Thursday, April 2:* Naval Surface Group, Middle Pacific (NSG-MidPac).

After the discussion groups at NIOC-Hawaii and NCTAMS-Pac, an outbrief was given to the command leadership: CAPT James Hagy at NIOC-Hawaii and CAPT Janet Stewart at NCTAMS-Pac. The outbriefs lasted roughly an hour each and went well. Both commanding officers appreciated the high level interest in improving their IT manning situation. Their only request was to be included on the distribution list for the final report to CNO-N12. No outbrief was requested by the leadership at TCF-Makalapa or NSG-MidPac.

Following the 4 days of discussion groups, a somewhat fuller debrief was provided to CAPT Judie Heineman with U.S. Pacific Fleet (ComPacFlt) N6 on the morning of Friday, April 3. CAPT Heineman had been very helpful in coordinating the schedule of discussion groups with the Hawaii-area commands. Present also for this debrief was ITCS Allen Grove from CPF-N6, who had provided a great deal of assistance with coordinating the participation and facilities for the April 1 and 2 discussion groups.

Command discussion group participation

| | Turnout | Paygrade breakout |
|--------------------|---------|----------------------|
| NIOC-Hawaii (3/30) | 25 | E1-E5: 13 |
| | | E6-E9: 12 |
| NCTAMS-Pac (3/31) | 29 | E1-E9: 9 |
| | | E1-E5: 14 |
| | | E6-E9: 6 |
| TCF-Makalapa (4/1) | 14 | E1-E4: 2 |
| | | E5-E6: 5 |
| | | E7-E9: 7 |
| NSG-MidPac (4/2) | 20 | E1-E4: 5 |
| | | E5-E6: 11 |
| | | E7-E9: 4 |
| Totals | 88 | 11 discussion groups |



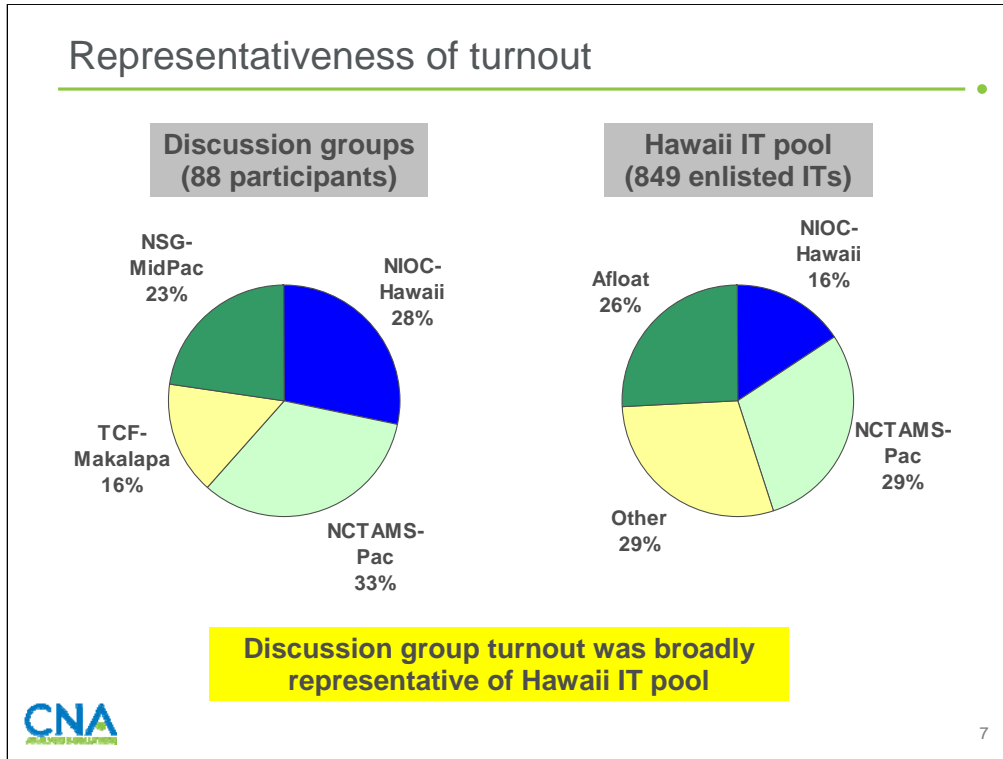
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In all, 11 discussion groups were held at the 4 sites between March 30 and April 2. A total of 88 ITs participated. Three discussion groups were held at each site, with one exception: two were held on March 30 at NIOC-Hawaii.

The command with the most ITs was also the command with the greatest participation: NCTAMS-Pac. It had 29 participants in three discussion groups on March 31. Next was NIOC-Hawaii, with 25 participants, followed by NSG-MidPac with 20 and TCF-Makalapa with 14.

The discussion groups were split by paygrade band when possible. Every discussion group but one was broken out into some subset of the nine enlisted paygrades, E1 through E9. The one that was not split was the first discussion group at NCTAMS-Pac on March 31. When there were three discussion groups at a command, the breakout was E1–E4, E5–E6, and E7–E9. Commands with two discussion groups were broken out by E1–E5 and E6–E9. The first discussion group at NCTAMS-Pac was a late addition to the day’s schedule, which is why the command’s other two groups were E1–E5 and E6–E9. While segregating the junior and senior paygrades is preferred (to ensure that the discussion group participants feel free to contribute without facing supervisor/subordinate issues), it isn’t always possible.

Representativeness of turnout



The 88 discussion group participants were drawn from the larger pool of 849 ITs on duty in Hawaii. (That larger pool consists of 629 on shore duty and 220 on sea duty, as of December 2008.) A comparison of the two shows that the discussion group turnout was broadly representative of the Hawaii IT pool.

NCTAMS-Pac accounted for the largest share of the discussion group participants: 33 percent. Its share the Hawaii IT pool was 29 percent.

The rest of the discussion group turnout was split between NIOCHawaii with 28 percent, NSG-MidPac with 23 percent, and TCF-Makalapa with 16 percent. That compares with the rest of the IT pool breakout of 26 percent for Afloat, 16 percent for NIOCHawaii, and 29 percent for Other. (The Afloat category for the Hawaii IT pool includes the surface ships in NSG-MidPac as well as the other sea duty units, such as the VP squadrons. The Other category consists of TCF-Makalapa and a number of smaller commands with IT numbers in the single-digits or low double-digits.)

How the discussion groups were conducted

- Each discussion group was organized along the same lines:
 - Segregated by paygrade bands
 - Optimal size of 8-12 participants
 - Duration of ~90 minutes each
 - Run by a moderator and at least one observer
 - Emphasis on confidentiality of feedback
 - Focus on Hawaii’s IT ashore-manning gap and how it might be closed or mitigated
 - Some command-specific feedback
 - Distribution of comment cards afterward



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All 11 of the IT discussion groups that were held at the 4 sites followed the same basic model. That model has been developed and fine-tuned over the last 10 years at CNA.

A key feature of the model is to ensure that the discussion group participants are grouped by seniority. Those who are less senior can be inhibited from speaking freely by the presence of those who are more senior. The reverse can hold as well, with the presence of those who are less senior inhibiting those who are more senior. In this case, there were no officers; everyone who participated was enlisted. The breakouts were either E1–E5/E6–E9 or E1–E4/E5–E6/E7–E9.

The optimal size of each discussion group was 8 to 12 participants. Groups larger than that tend to result in a couple of participants dominating the discussion. Groups smaller than that may not have a “critical mass” of participants that is needed to stimulate a lively, productive discussion.

The focus of the discussions was the IT ashore-manning gap in Hawaii. Participants were asked about the manning gap—how it affected them, why it might exist—and to brainstorm ideas for how it might be closed or mitigated. A fair amount of command-specific feedback was received regarding the two commands (NCTAMS-Pac and NIOC-Hawaii) that account for the bulk of the manning gap. That feedback was noted, but with the caveat that the intent of the study wasn’t to put any one command on report. All feedback was kept strictly confidential. Comment cards were distributed to all participants afterward.

Awareness of the Hawaii IT ashore-manning gap

- Most discussion group participants were aware of the manning shortage
 - All of the more senior ITs were aware and said that the word is out among ITs serving elsewhere as well
 - That awareness may aggravate the situation by discouraging ITs on duty elsewhere from wanting to serve in Hawaii
- Impact on those serving in Hawaii
 - Increased the intensity of their workload
 - Led to pressure from detailers to extend or commit to a second tour (re-tour) on shore duty in Hawaii
 - They were concerned that doing so would be the “kiss of death” in terms of advancement
 - One participant said that Hawaii IT shore duty is like “The Hotel California”: “You can check out, but you can never leave”



Nearly all of the discussion group participants were aware of the issue of unfilled IT shore duty billets in Hawaii. It was news to only a few of them. All of the more senior ITs were aware of the situation. They added that the negative reputation of Hawaii shore duty has spread among ITs on duty elsewhere. They recognized that Hawaii’s negative reputation for IT shore duty, in turn, is aggravating the situation by discouraging ITs on duty elsewhere from wanting to serve there. Hawaii IT shore duty billets are significantly undermanned, which makes Hawaii IT shore duty unattractive, thereby discouraging ITs from being willing to serve there and worsening the undermanning. They agreed that the cycle needs to be broken somehow.

When asked about its impact on them personally, the discussion group participants spoke of two effects: First, the shortfall is intensifying their workload. Unfilled IT billets at a command mean that the occupants of other IT billets at the same command must work harder to take up the slack. Second, the shortfall is leading to intense pressure from detailers on ITs who are already on shore duty in Hawaii to either extend their tours or commit to a second tour (re-tour). The ITs worried that such extended tours or re-tours while on shore duty would damage their chances for advancement. They understand that the path to advancement in the Navy is to either go to sea or gain a broad range of experience from having had a variety of different duty-station assignments. An extended stay at one shore duty location is the “kiss of death” professionally, they worried.

Discussion group findings (junior)

- Feedback broke down largely along lines of seniority
- For the more junior ITs (E1 through E5)
 - It was mostly about the money
 - They were concerned about the high cost of living in Hawaii
- Their top recommendations for closing the shore-manning gap were as follows:
 - 1) Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP)
 - Would be available to all ITs who accept a shore duty assignment in Hawaii
 - 2) Location/Selective Reenlistment Bonus (LSRB/SRB)
 - Less attractive because it is only available upon reenlistment
 - 3) Other Hawaii duty pay incentives (Cost-of-Living Adjustment/Basic Allowance for Housing (COLA/BAH))
 - Set by Department of Defense (DoD) vice Navy
 - BAH not available to those who live on base



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Discussion group feedback tracked largely along the lines of seniority. For the more junior ITs (paygrades E1–E5), it was mostly about the money. Their top priorities were a liberalization of certain financial incentives: AIP, LSRB/SRB, or COLA/BAH. (However, authorization for LSRB was eliminated in FY05 because AIP was seen as filling that need.)

AIP for IT shore duty in Hawaii was their #1 preference. It topped the list because they believed that, if AIP were implemented, every IT agreeing to shore duty in Hawaii would be eligible to receive it as a condition of serving there. Past CNA research¹ has shown that AIP is a cost-effective option for closing enlisted manning shortfalls in certain overseas locations in Europe and Japan. A recent CNA study², though, found that AIP was less effective where it had been instituted for the IT rating. It has been speculated that AIP's lack of success in addressing IT manning shortfalls is caused by some combination of (a) the chronic under-manning of IT shore billets worldwide and (b) the shift-duty nature of the work.

LSRB/SRB was their #2 preference. Many were concerned that the SRB had been cut to zero for the IT rating (along with other ratings) in FY09. They understood that the cut was mainly due to the slowing economy, but that understanding provided little consolation. Reenlistment incentives ranked behind AIP with them because only those who reenlist may receive them. Liberalized COLA/BAH for Hawaii duty was third on their list of incentives. It was behind AIP and LSRB/SRB because those who live on base don't receive BAH and the COLA and BAH for Navy IT shore duty in Hawaii are set by DoD rather than the Navy.

¹ P. Golfin et al., *Evaluation of the Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) System*, CNA Annotated Briefing D0010240.A2, June 2004.

² P. Golfin et al., *Assignment Incentive Pay Revisited: Manning and Continuation Effects*, CNA Research Memorandum D0020390.A1, April 2009.

Discussion group findings (senior)

- For the more senior ITs (E6 through E9)
 - Financial considerations were less important (though not unimportant)
 - Career considerations were more important
- Their priorities for closing the shore-manning gap were:
 - 1) Follow-on tours
 - a) A guaranteed follow-on tour in a location of their choice
 - b) Relaxation of the “two-ocean” restriction as it applies to moves from Hawaii
 - 2) Sea/shore rotation: Reclassification of shore duty in Hawaii as Type III (OUTUS) duty for the IT rating
 - 3) Advancement: Special consideration of the arduous nature of this shore duty by CPO selection boards



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The more senior participants (paygrades E6–E9) tended to care more about Navy career considerations. Financial considerations were less important, albeit not unimportant.

Topping the list of priorities was follow-on tours. Past CNA research² has found that the choice of duty-station location is a key factor in Sailors’ reenlistment decisions. ITs prefer to have their choice of a guaranteed follow-on tour after shore duty in Hawaii. If that proves untenable from a detailing standpoint, they want a relaxation of the so-called two-ocean rule governing the shipment of their household goods from Hawaii. Because of how the Navy costs its moves, the two-ocean rule, in effect, prevents those on shore duty in Hawaii from taking a follow-on tour in Japan or Europe. The rule was very unpopular with the discussion group participants. Many desired follow-on tours in Japan (either for financial reasons or because they had Japanese spouses) yet had been told that it was too expensive because their goods would have to be shipped back to the U.S. mainland before being shipped to Japan. It made no sense to them.

Their #2 preference was a reclassification of IT shore duty in Hawaii as Type III (OUTUS) duty for sea/shore rotation purposes. Some were aware that such a policy is already in place for the Cryptologic Technician (CT) rating. However, such a reclassification would be problematic if applied to all IT shore billets in Hawaii because there would no longer remain any shore-duty IT billets to support back-to-back tours.

Third on their list of preferences was special consideration of IT shore duty in Hawaii by the Chief Petty Officer (CPO) selection boards. They proposed that the arduous nature of this duty be explicitly set forth in the selection board precepts to ensure that IT shore-duty in Hawaii would receive the same consideration as sea duty.

² A. Kraus and D. Lien, *The Navy Survey on Reenlistment and Quality of Service*, CNA Research Memorandum D0008416.A2, August 2003.

Hiring of civilians or contractors (CivSub)

- They acknowledged that it could help alleviate some of the strain of the IT manning shortage
- They were generally unenthusiastic about it
 - They felt that ITs are more versatile than civilians, whose duties tend to be precisely stipulated
 - They worried that any civilian/contractor billets wouldn't be fully funded, exacerbating the situation
 - Even if the billets were fully funded, they worried about lengthy delays before anyone was hired
 - An unintended consequence was encouraging ITs to leave active duty for the higher paying civilian jobs
 - Viewed CivSub as largely a paper solution



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Many of the participants acknowledged that they were working closely with civilians and contractors at their commands and that their duties didn't require a Navy IT. Still, there was resistance to hiring more civilians or contractors to alleviate the strain of the IT manning shortfall. They said that it's a paper solution.

They maintained that civilians or contractors can't be hired to replace ITs on a one-for-one basis because their jobs are tightly defined whereas ITs can provide greater coverage across a range of jobs as the need arises. Thus, it would take more than one civilian or contractor to replace each IT. They also worried that the civilian/contractor billets that were created wouldn't be fully funded, leaving them and their commands no better off. Even if the billets were fully funded, they believed that the best case scenario would be that it would still be some time before the Navy's HR bureaucracy would be able to hire anyone. During that time, which could be as long as a year, the command would suffer a gap in manning.

Of special concern to the ITs was the disincentive effect from the higher civilian pay that would be offered for their jobs doing the same work at the same command. The high cost of living in Hawaii holds for everyone: those on active duty and their civilian counterparts. Any civilian jobs that were created would have to pay well to attract civilians who possess the necessary qualifications and were willing to move to Hawaii. (The ITs commented that few native Hawaiians possess the necessary IT-related skill sets.) The higher civilian pay would have the unintended consequence of encouraging ITs to leave the Navy for those civilian jobs, making it a zero-sum exercise from a personnel standpoint—and more expensive to boot.

Geographic stability

- Geo-stability was not a high priority for either the junior or the senior ITs
 - The junior ITs didn't want to be tied down in Hawaii early in their careers
 - The senior ITs didn't want to stay for multiple tours due to concerns about the quality of public schools
 - They also voiced concerns about the very high cost of home ownership in Hawaii
- Nor was moving the Hawaii facilities to CONUS viewed as a workable alternative
 - Geography: Hawaii is a communications hub, and remote support on the scale required isn't feasible
 - Signal strength/propagation: Moving from Hawaii to CONUS would cause a break in connectivity



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For both the junior and the senior ITs who participated in the discussion groups, geographic stability (or geo-stability) was not high on their list of priorities. More closely aligning the number of sea duty and shore duty billets to provide expanded opportunities for ITs to remain in Hawaii for multiple tours was not a key consideration for them.

Those who were more junior didn't value Hawaii geo-stability because they didn't want to be tied down at any one location early in their careers. They wanted to travel—to see the world. Those who were more senior were willing to take a shore-duty assignment in Hawaii at NCTAMS-Pac or NIOC-Hawaii (the two commands with the largest IT contingents) because they understood the importance of those commands' missions. However, they were reluctant to commit to remaining in Hawaii because of the worry about the high cost of home ownership and the low quality of the state's public schools for their school-age children. (The state's largest newspaper, the *Honolulu Advertiser*, had reported the week before [on March 26, 2009] that Honolulu is the nation's priciest major metropolitan area for previously owned single-family housing.)

Moving the facilities lock, stock, and barrel from Hawaii to a CONUS location wasn't a solution, they maintained. They nixed the idea because the geography of the Pacific region dictates that Hawaii is a communications hub, which means that Navy ITs need to be there. Also, moving the facilities to CONUS would cause gaps in connectivity due to signal strength/propagation. Security considerations militated against exploring this any further in an unclassified forum.

Other suggestions that were received

- Create a special Hawaii 3/3 rotation for ITs
 - Allow ITs assigned to afloat units to have a shortened sea tour of 36 months provided they incur OBLISERV to complete a 36 month shore tour in Hawaii
 - An IT would have to request this option not later than 2 years into his or her sea tour to allow adjustment of the PRD to generate a timely replacement requisition
- Elevate priority for filling IT shore duty billets in Hawaii
 - Assign CNO-Priority III status to those billets
 - Ensure that they are manned to BA vice NMP “fair share”
- Eligibility for Overseas Tour Eligibility Incentive Program (OTEIP)
 - Hawaii would have to be considered an overseas tour for purposes of eligibility
- Guaranteed C-School (and an NEC) en route to shore duty in Hawaii
 - The challenge would be to ensure that the NEC would be one that would be employed while on IT shore duty in Hawaii
- Classification of IT shore duty in Hawaii as Type V (Neutral) for sea/shore purposes (if it can't be classified as Type III [OUTUS])
 - Wouldn't be counted as sea duty or shore duty; the sea/shore clock would simply stop ticking
 - However, Type V duty was eliminated as a category about ten years ago
- Eligibility for cyber-warfare pin while on shore duty
 - Only came up in a couple of discussion groups



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While pay issues were key for the more junior participants, and career incentives were most important for the more senior participants, those weren't their only priorities. Other suggestions were received, including creating a special 3/3 rotation for Hawaii-based ITs, raising the priority for filling IT shore billets in Hawaii, adding Hawaii to the list of duty stations that qualify for the Overseas Tour Eligibility Incentive Program (OTEIP), guaranteeing C-School for ITs as they are en route to shore duty in Hawaii, reclassifying IT shore duty in Hawaii as Type V (Neutral) duty if it's not possible to reclassify it as Type III (OUTUS) duty, and permitting ITs on shore duty to earn an enlisted cyber-warfare pin.

The 3/3 rotation for Hawaii ITs would shorten the sea tour to 3 years in return for committing to a follow-on shore tour of 3 years. The sea-shore rotation for those who weren't willing to commit to a follow-on shore tour would be unaffected.

The priority for filling IT shore billets in Hawaii could be elevated in either of two ways: Hawaii IT shore-duty billets could be assigned CNO-Priority III status for detailing purposes, or Hawaii-based units could be manned to BA (billets authorized) instead of their NMP (Navy Manning Plan) “fair share.” The downside of both is that manning is a zero-sum exercise: a higher priority for IT shore duty billets in Hawaii means that IT billets elsewhere would have to have their priority downgraded.

Another incentive that was mentioned was the inclusion of Hawaii on the list of duty stations that rate OTEIP. Those who are eligible for OTEIP receive either additional leave or a free commercial flight home—an attractive prospect for Hawaii-based ITs who might otherwise not be able to afford to visit their families.

Command-specific feedback

- Had to tread carefully with this feedback
 - Emphasized that the study’s intent wasn’t to put any commands “on report”
 - Couldn’t disregard this feedback altogether, though, because two commands account for the bulk of IT billets in Hawaii
- NCTAMS-Pac
 - The watchbill was very unpopular: “It’s shore duty, but it’s not shore duty”
 - Some voiced dissatisfaction with the lack of certain base services, such as an onsite galley or a base MWR program
 - The base’s isolated location with infrequent bus/shuttle service was a drawback for the more junior ITs without cars
- NIOC-Hawaii
 - Due to the command’s mission, a TS/SCI clearance is required of all
 - Those whose clearances weren’t in order upon reporting aboard had to wait—sometimes for months—in an “Aloha center”
 - The command could benefit from swapping lessons-learned with other Navy commands that have similar security-clearance requirements




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Most of the command-specific feedback we received concerned two commands, NCTAMS-Pac and NIOC-Hawaii, which also account for the bulk of the ITs on shore duty in Hawaii. As of December 2008, they together accounted for 375 of the 622 shore duty ITs in Hawaii, or 60 percent. Many participants in the discussion groups viewed IT shore duty in Hawaii as synonymous with one command or the other. We emphasized that it was not the intent of the study to put any single command “on report.” Yet, because those two commands figured so prominently, the feedback that was related to them couldn’t be dismissed entirely.

Start with the larger of the two commands: NCTAMS-Pac. There, the watch rotation was very unpopular. Those on the watch rotation work an 8-day cycle with four 12-hour shifts, split between day and night shifts. Including turnover, the shifts often last longer than 12 hours. Additional time is set aside for training. Many complained that the watch rotation was not what they had expected of shore duty. The frequent switching from day to night and back left some feeling drained. There were also complaints about the lack of a galley and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs on base and the infrequent bus service.

At NIOC-Hawaii, the main issue was the pace of processing clearances for those reporting aboard. The command’s mission requires a Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI) clearance for everyone. If clearances aren’t ready when personnel report aboard, they must wait in limbo in an “Aloha center” until their SSBI (investigation) has finished and been adjudicated. According to LCDR David Durazzo, the command’s N6, the best case for those whose SSBI hasn’t been initiated before reporting aboard is an 8-month wait.

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- Study background
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Now we move on to a discussion of the results from the comment cards that were distributed at the conclusion of each discussion group.

Sample comment card

| CNA IT Discussion Group Comment Card <i>(Please do not provide any personal identifiers such as your name or SSN)</i> | Sample Card |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Please provide your enlisted paygrade: (Circle one) E1 E2 E3 E4 E5 E6 E7 E8 E9 | |
| 2. Please indicate your current job title: _____ | |
| 3. Does your current job have to be performed by a Navy IT, or could be done by a civilian? Are civilians at your activity already doing similar work? What would be the ideal arrangement? _____ | |
| 4. Could the billet you occupy be moved to CONUS, or does the mission require that it be located in Hawaii? (Circle one) CONUS HI Why? (UNCLAS) _____ | |
| 5. Why do you think the Navy has faced a special challenge in filling shore-duty IT billets in Hawaii? What would you recommend the Navy do about it? _____ | |
| 6. Would you consider Hawaii as a location for sea/shore geographic stability involving multiple tours? (Circle one) Y N Briefly explain why. | |



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At the close of each discussion group, comment cards were distributed to allow the participants an opportunity to provide additional feedback. A blank comment card is displayed above. As each discussion group got under way, the respondents were assured that their feedback would remain anonymous. Those assurances were repeated as the comment cards were distributed.

The cards had six questions. The first two questions asked for demographic information: enlisted paygrade and current job title. The next two questions were about the nature of one's job: whether it had to be performed by a Navy IT (as opposed to a federal civilian or a contractor) and whether the job had to be performed on site in Hawaii (as opposed to potentially being moved to CONUS).

Question 5 was more open-ended and asked why the Navy had faced special challenges in filling IT shore duty billets located in Hawaii. To follow up, it also asked what the Navy might do differently to fill those billets.

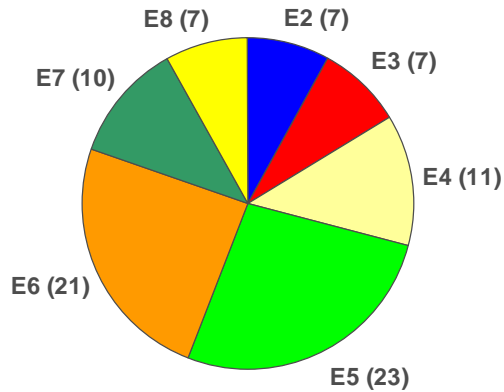
Geo-stability was the focus of question 6. It asked whether respondents would consider geo-stability, or multiple tours, in Hawaii.

The discussion group participants were also encouraged to provide additional feedback by writing on the reverse of each card. Most chose to do so.

An analysis of the results from questions 1 through 6 follows. After that, we present a selection of excerpts from the reverse-side comments.

Comment card distribution, by paygrade

86 completed comment cards



18

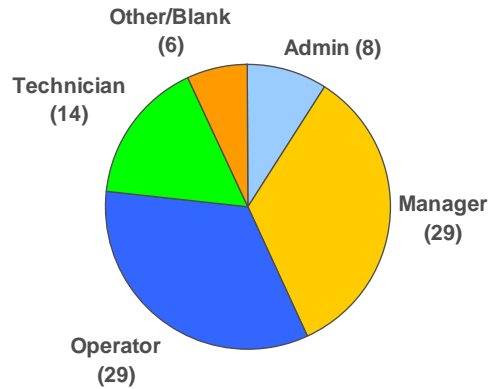
All but 2 of the 88 IT discussion group participants returned completed comment cards.

We begin with the by-paygrade breakout. Paygrade was the first of the two demographic questions. The 86 completed comment cards were distributed across 7 enlisted paygrades: E2 through E8. Just over half, 44, came from ITs with either the E5 or E6 paygrades. The breakout was E2 with 7, E3 with 7, E4 with 11, E5 with 23, E6 with 21, E7 with 10, and E8 with 7.

It wasn't too surprising that there weren't any E1 comment cards: most of those with the E1 paygrade, the most junior of the enlisted paygrades, are still in school for training before reporting to their first duty station. Nor was it a surprise that there wasn't anyone with the E9 paygrade. That paygrade, the most senior enlisted paygrade, is also the smallest. It accounts for only 1 percent of the Navy's enlisted population.

Current-job-title distribution

86 completed comment-cards

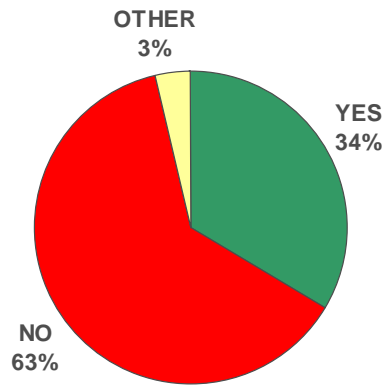


19

The second demographic question was current job title. Many different job titles were provided. For reporting purposes, they were grouped into five broad categories: Administration, Manager, Operator, Technician, and Other/Blank. Manager included Leading Chief Petty Officer (LCPO), Leading Petty Officer (LPO), as well as anything else that indicated supervisory responsibilities. In some cases, it was a judgment call as to whether a respondent was a manager. The other categories tended to be more straightforward.

The two most common job title categories were Manager and Operator. Both were named by 29 respondents. Together, they accounted for just over two-thirds of the total of 86 completed comment cards. Next was Technician with 15, followed by Administration with 8, and Other/Blank with 6.

Q3: Does your job have to be performed by an IT, or could it be done by a civilian?



Caveat: Some of the “No” responses said they would prefer a Navy IT



20

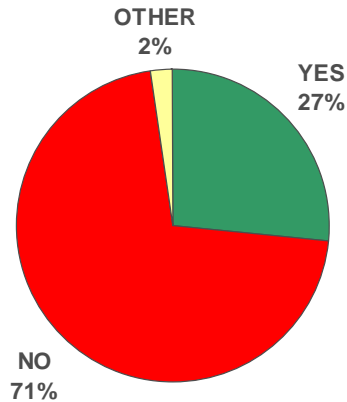
Question 3 consisted of three parts. It asked, “Does your current job have to be performed by a Navy IT, or could it be done by a civilian? Are civilians at your activity already performing similar work? What would be the ideal arrangement?”

Many respondents provided only one written answer—usually an answer to the first part. That didn’t pose a problem, though, because the first part was the key. The other two parts were corollaries. They were there so that respondents could amplify on what they had provided in response to part one.

By a margin of roughly 2:1, the respondents indicated that their jobs didn’t have to be performed by Navy ITs. There were 29 who replied in the affirmative that their jobs had to be performed by Navy ITs, versus 54 who replied in the negative that they didn’t. Another three didn’t indicate a response either way.

A caveat, though, is that some of those who replied in the negative, saying that their jobs didn’t have to be performed by ITs, nonetheless indicated a preference for ITs. The 63 percent of respondents who said that their jobs might be performed by someone else (such as a federal civilian or a contractor) didn’t all state a preference for giving their jobs to someone else. Those who stated a preference but not a requirement for an IT repeated some of the concerns about hiring federal civilians and contractors that had been given during the group discussion. Some stated that it’s important for the Navy to maintain a significant IT presence in Hawaii.

Q4: Could your billet be moved to CONUS?



Nearly three-quarters said their billets needed to stay in Hawaii



21

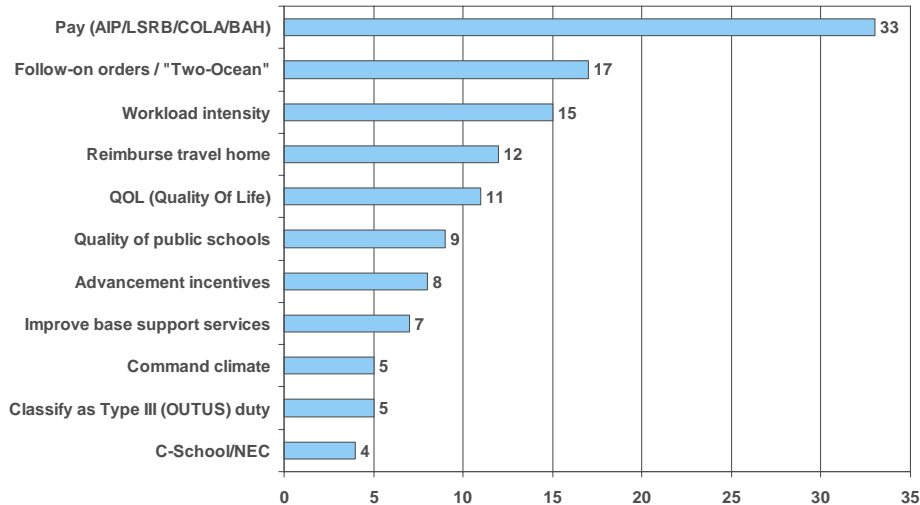
Question 4 read, “Could the billet you occupy be moved to CONUS, or does the mission require that it be located in Hawaii? Why?”

By a nearly 3:1 margin, respondents indicated that their billets could not be moved from Hawaii to the U.S. mainland. Negative replies to the question outnumbered affirmative ones by 61 to 23. There were also two blanks.

Those who gave an explanation as to why their billets could not be relocated to CONUS mentioned the same two issues that were raised in the group discussions: (1) Hawaii as a communications hub and (2) the risk of connectivity gaps. A few noted that they couldn’t provide any further details because of mission sensitivity.

The just over one-quarter who thought that their billets could be moved offered that their duties could be performed remotely, via the Internet and other means of communication.

Q5: Priorities for closing IT manning gap



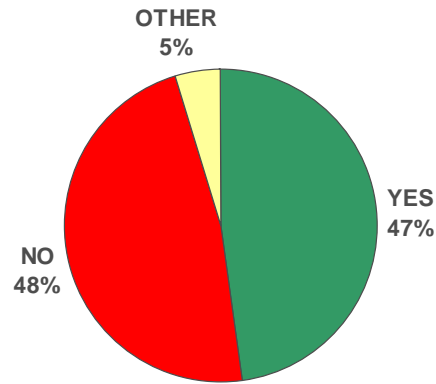
22

Question 5 was more open-ended. It read, “Why do you think the Navy has faced a special challenge in filling shore-duty IT billets in Hawaii? What would you recommend the Navy do about it?”

The open-ended nature of the question led to many different concerns and suggestions. Where possible, they were grouped into such categories as pay, follow-on assignments, and advancement. Some respondents mentioned a complaint but didn’t offer a suggestion for doing anything about it. A number of respondents took the opportunity to comment about more than one issue, which resulted in the number of comments exceeding the number of comment cards that were distributed (86).

Atop the list of priorities for closing the IT manning gap was the respondents’ pay. Pay issues of some sort or another—base pay, AIP, COLA, BAH, or L/SRB—were noted by 33 respondents. Complaints about the high cost of living in Hawaii that didn’t specifically mention pay were also included in this category. Second on the list was follow-on tours: either a guaranteed follow-on tour or a relaxation of the “two-ocean” restriction on the shipping of household goods. It was noted by 17 respondents. Next was relief from the intensity of their workload, which was noted by 15 respondents. Other issues that were mentioned by at least 10 respondents were the expense of making trips home from Hawaii and Quality of Life. Between 5 and 10 respondents mentioned the quality of Hawaii’s public schools, advancement incentives, base support services, command-climate, or reclassifying IT shore duty in Hawaii as Type III (OUTUS) duty.

Q6: Would you consider Hawaii for geo-stability?



Willingness to remain in Hawaii was split nearly evenly



23

Question 6 asked, “Would you consider Hawaii as a location for sea/shore geographic stability involving multiple tours?”

Respondents were split in their willingness to consider geographic stability (geo-stability). The split was right down the middle. Of the 86 responses, there were 41 who responded in the affirmative, 41 who responded in the negative, and 4 who didn’t indicate one way or another. (For display purposes, the percentages came out slightly different—47% yes versus 48% no—because of rounding.)

It almost seems incongruous: Half of those who indicated a preference one way or the other were willing to consider geo-stability, yet the group discussions said that geo-stability wasn’t a priority. The two findings can be reconciled. The key is in the intensity of the preferences. Question 6 asked about willingness to consider geo-stability; it didn’t ask how willing. When the discussion groups were led in ranking their preferences, geo-stability wasn’t near the top of their lists. Neither the more junior groups nor the more senior groups ranked geo-stability in the upper tier of their preferences. Their replies to question 6 show that there were those who were willing to consider it, and those who weren’t. For those who weren’t willing to consider it, it was a non-issue. For those who were, it was one of a number of factors (financial incentives, career considerations, quality of life, etc.) that they were willing to consider. It wasn’t their top priority.

Selected comment card feedback


- “ITs in Hawaii have only two options: stay in Hawaii or go to California/Seattle area.” [E8]
- “Watch rotations – similar to sea-duty. No time for family and schooling.” [E7]
- “Incentive money most of all.” [E4]
- “Most shore IT jobs are being contracted out. I am getting out to do the same job making more money and with more stability.” [E5]
- “Poor opportunities for buying a home and very poor schools.” [E8]
- “The work can be done and is by civilians. But to most of us it is demoralizing because they’re getting paid a lot more for what we do.” [E5]
- “[More civilians] would be a great help to our watch rotation.” [E5]
- “The concept of shore-duty in Hawaii for ITs is attractive, but the realization is not always that way. Too often, an advertised billet becomes something else, souring the experience.” [E8]
- “Costs too much for families to live and buy a house here.” [E5]
- “NCTAMS-Pac image is the #1 reason the Navy has trouble filling shore billets in Hawaii.” [E7]
- “Area is too small to stay multiple tours. After three years, sights and actions become old.” [E6]



24

A selection of the comment card feedback is provided. Nearly all of the 86 comment cards that were completed provided some reverse-side feedback. That feedback covered the same broad range of issues that had been dealt with in the discussion groups: pay, follow-on tours, advancement, workload, quality of life, and so on. It tended to break down along lines of seniority—as was the case with what was said in the discussion groups—with the more junior respondents focusing on pay and those who were more senior emphasizing career considerations.

Outline

- Study background
- Discussion group visits
- Comment-card results
-  **Manning-gap analysis**
- Conclusions/recommendations

A brief statistical analysis of the IT ashore-manning gap in Hawaii follows.

Hawaii ashore IT manning, by paygrade, 12/08

Source: Enlisted Master File

| | Billets Authorized | Inventory | Shortfall | INV/BA ratio |
|--------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| E1-E3 | 45 | 119 | (74) | 2.64 |
| E4 | 193 | 86 | 107 | 0.45 |
| E5 | 298 | 153 | 145 | 0.51 |
| E6 | 217 | 147 | 70 | 0.68 |
| E7 | 97 | 95 | 2 | 0.98 |
| E8 | 31 | 18 | 13 | 0.58 |
| E9 | 10 | 11 | (1) | 1.10 |
| Totals | 891 | 629 | 262 | 0.71 |

Overmanning in E1-E3 paygrades is offset by undermanning in rest



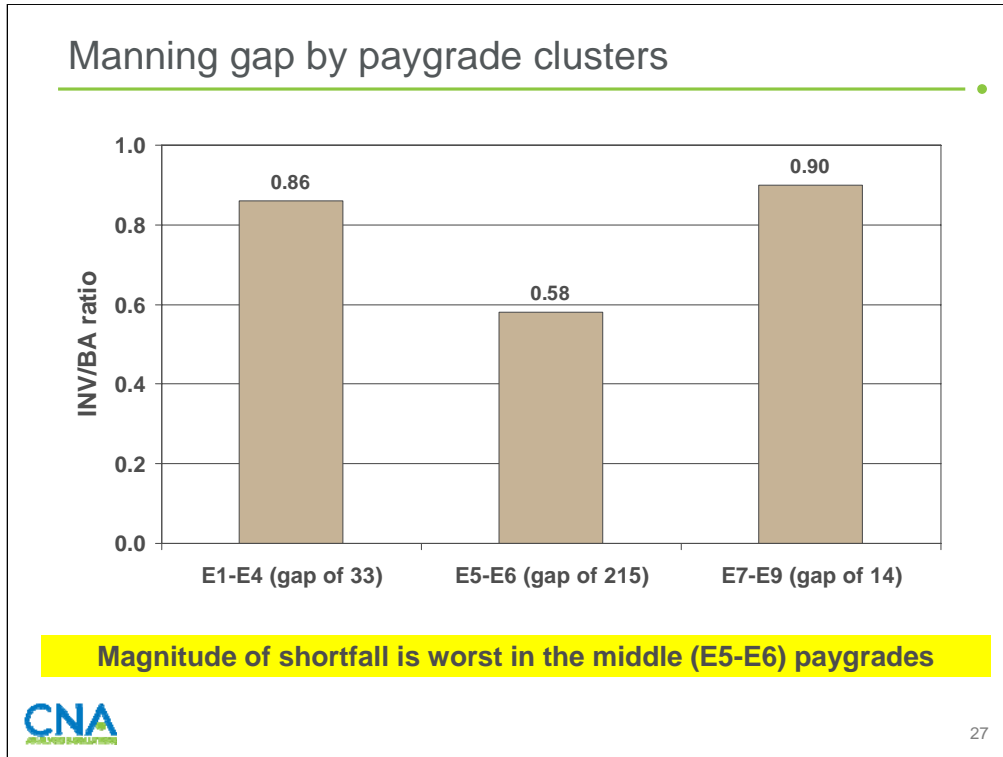
26

As noted earlier, the discussion groups' recommendations for closing the IT ashore-manning gap in Hawaii broke out largely along lines of seniority. Those who were more junior emphasized financial incentives, and those who were more senior highlighted career considerations. Consequently, it becomes important to determine whether the gap is more acute at the junior or senior paygrades. The Navy can then adopt policies that are targeted for where the need is greatest.

For the three most junior enlisted paygrades, E1 through E3, there was no manning gap. In fact, there was a surplus: inventory (actual manning) exceeded billets authorized (BA) by 74. That surplus was more than offset by a manning deficit in the E4–E8 paygrades. The deficit for those five paygrades was 337. Nearly all of that gap lay in the E4–E6 paygrades: the deficit for the E7–E8 paygrades was only 15. There was a surplus of 1 for the most senior paygrade, E9.

Another metric for assessing the shortfall is the ratio of inventory (INV) to BA. Relative to BA, the gap is most severe in the E4 and E5 paygrades. For the E4 paygrade, the INV/BA ratio was 0.45; for the E5 paygrade, it was 0.51. Just under half of the Hawaii-based IT billets in those two paygrades were filled. The shortfall in the E4 paygrade, though, was largely offset by the overage—a ratio of 2.64—in the E1–E3 paygrades.

On balance, then, the IT manning gap appears to be most serious in the E5 and E6 paygrades. The 215-IT shortfall in those two paygrades represented more than 80 percent of the aggregate shortfall of 262. The E4 manning shortfall isn't as serious because it can be mitigated by the overage in E1–E3 manning.



The IT ashore-manning gap in Hawaii can also be examined by paygrade cluster. The paygrade clusters were E1–E4, E5–E6, and E7–E9. Those were the same three clusters that were followed in assembling the discussion groups at two of the four commands that were visited: TCF-Makalapa and NSG-MidPac. (NIOC-Hawaii and NCTAMS-Pac, the other two commands, tried but were not able to accommodate that paygrade breakout for their discussion groups.)

The breakout by paygrade cluster reinforces how the IT manning deficit is most severe at the E5–E6 paygrades. For those two paygrades, the ratio of inventory (actual manning) to BA (billets authorized) was 0.58. They were manned to just over half of their authorization. Their aggregate manning gap was 215 ITs. By comparison, the E1–E4 and E7–E9 paygrades were much more fully manned. The INV/BA ratio for the E1–E4 paygrades was 0.86; for the E7–E9 paygrades, it was 0.90. Their IT manning gaps were 33 and 14, respectively.

The E5–E6 paygrade cluster had the largest fraction of unfilled billets and accounted for just over 80 percent of the unfilled IT shore duty billets in Hawaii. Those paygrades—the LPO and work center supervisors—will be key. They are going to have to be the focus of attention if the Navy is going to close the IT ashore-manning gap. Because those paygrades straddle the line between junior and senior, closing the gap in those paygrades will most likely require a blended set of policies. That policy blend would feature certain incentives geared toward those more junior (e.g., AIP) and others aimed at those more senior (e.g., follow-on tours).

Outline

- Study background
- Discussion group visits
- Comment-card results
- Manning-gap analysis
- **Conclusions/recommendations**

We close with some conclusions and recommendations for the Navy leadership to consider.

Conclusions/recommendations

- The IT ashore-manning gap in Hawaii is of real concern to ITs
 - The gap boosts the workload of those who are there, making duty there less desirable, which discourages other ITs from wanting to serve there
 - This perverse cycle needs to be broken somehow
- Their recommendations for closing the gap broke down along the lines of seniority
- Those who were more junior valued financial incentives the most highly
 - AIP, SRB/LSRB, COLA/BAH
- Career considerations were more important to those who were more senior
 - Follow-on assignments, sea/shore rotation, advancement prospects
- They felt that civilians could perform some of their work, but they were unenthusiastic about hiring more of them
 - They were skeptical that the hiring could be implemented effectively
- Nor did the participants regard it as feasible for their billets to be moved back to the U.S. mainland



29

The word is out among Navy ITs that shore duty in Hawaii is not paradise; it carries a significant downside in terms of the number of gapped billets at key commands. Those unfilled billets cause a more intense workload for those who are on duty there, which makes duty there less desirable and discourages others from wanting to volunteer for duty there. A perverse cycle has been created. This cycle needs to be broken somehow.

Four days of holding discussion groups with ITs on duty in Hawaii (shore duty and sea duty) in March/April 2009 produced a menu of options for Navy policy-makers to consider. Their recommendations tended to follow seniority lines. Those who were more junior emphasized pay issues. Their priorities were AIP eligibility for IT shore duty in Hawaii (#1) and SRB/LSRB and COLA/BAH (#2). Those who were more senior (and had presumably decided to “stay Navy”) cited career issues as priorities: choice of follow-on assignment after duty in Hawaii (#1), reclassifying IT shore duty in Hawaii as OUTUS duty for sea/shore rotation purposes (#2), and special consideration of the arduous nature of Hawaii shore duty by IT advancement boards (#3).

Less popular with the ITs was the suggestion to hire civilians or contractors to help relieve the strain of the manning shortfall. Most acknowledged that their duties could be performed by civilians but were skeptical that the large-scale hiring of civilians to fill IT billets could be implemented effectively. Relocation of IT billets from Hawaii to the U.S. mainland was rejected by most as not feasible, due to the special status of Hawaii as a worldwide communications hub.

Conclusions/recommendations (cont.)

- Strategies for closing the IT ashore-manning gap in Hawaii
 - Navy data show that the IT gap is most severe at the E5-E6 paygrades
 - Those paygrades straddle the junior/senior divide
 - Closing the gap for those paygrades, which accounts for four-fifths of the overall gap, will likely require a junior/senior policy blend
- Many were mystified and frustrated by the “two-ocean” move regulation regarding the costing of the movement of their belongings
 - In effect, it prevents them from following a Hawaii tour with one in Japan (or another overseas destination)
 - It limits their options and serves to make duty in Hawaii less desirable
- Another potential solution is for the Navy to selectively reclassify some Hawaii-based IT shore duty billets as sea duty billets
 - IT sea duty billets worldwide in the E5-E6 paygrades are currently overmanned relative to BA, by 5% (for a total of 130 billets)
 - Reclassification would permit tapping that sea duty pool for purposes of filling those newly classified sea duty billets
 - It would reduce the number of shore-duty billets that remain to be filled



30

Because the IT ashore-manning gap in Hawaii is the most severe at the E5–E6 paygrades—straddling the junior/senior divide—closing it will likely require a blend of policies from the junior and senior groups’ recommendations. Those two paygrades account for four-fifths of the manning gap. The policy blend could include a mix of pay incentives and career incentives.

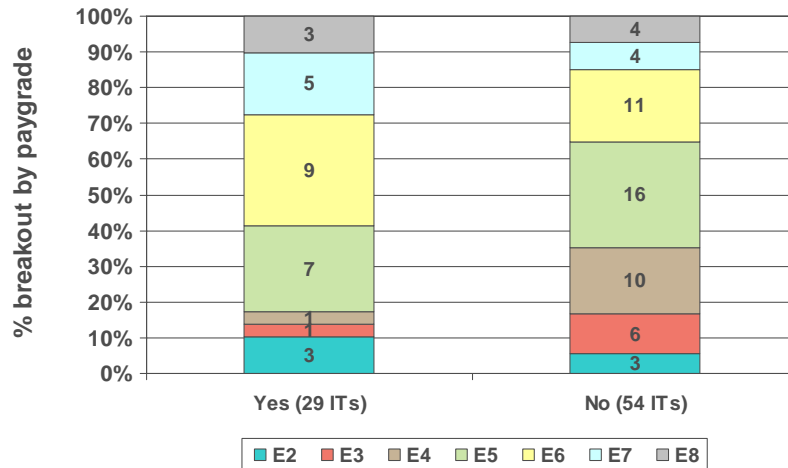
One recommendation that could be an easy fix for the Navy is to reform the two-ocean move regulation that acts to prevent a Hawaii tour from being followed by one in Japan. That regulation projects the cost of a Sailor’s move from Hawaii to Japan as though the Sailor’s household goods must first be shipped from Hawaii east to CONUS and then back west to Japan. Considering that Hawaii is halfway between the U.S. mainland and Japan, the back-and-forth shipment defies logic. The regulation limits the options for follow-on tours and serves as a disincentive to volunteer for shore duty in Hawaii. Because it represents a Navy policy, the Navy ought to be able to fix the regulation administratively.

One more option for the Navy to consider is the selective reclassification of some of the Hawaii-based IT shore duty billets as sea duty billets. As of March 2009, IT sea duty billets worldwide were overmanned (relative to BA) by 5 percent. That 5-percent overmanning represents a total of 130 billets. Reclassifying some of Hawaii’s IT shore duty billets as sea duty would permit the Navy to draw from a different pool in filling those billets, while reducing the number of shore duty billets that remain to be filled. This option is only suggested as a partial solution. Other solutions may still need to be adopted—perhaps from those listed here—to address the root causes of the negative perception of IT shore-duty in Hawaii.



Backup slides

Responses to Q3 (CivSub), by paygrade



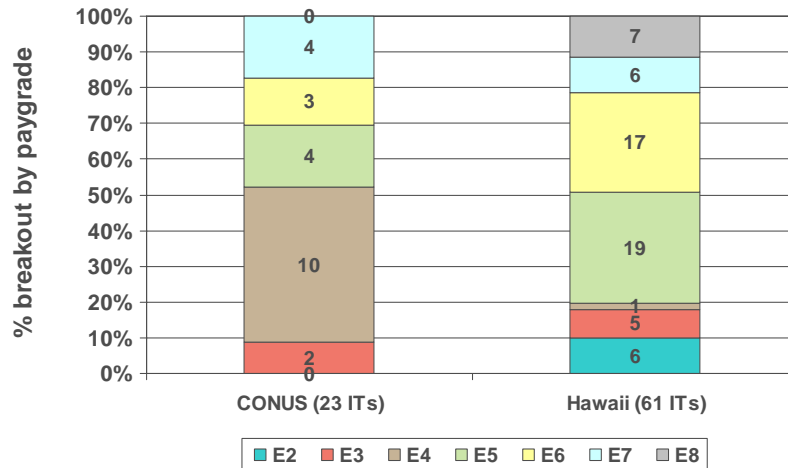
- By a nearly 2:1 margin, respondents believed that their jobs could be performed by civilians
- Those who maintained that their jobs required Navy ITs were somewhat more junior



32

We provide the by-paygrade breakdown for the responses to question 3, “Does your job have to be performed by an IT, or could it be done by a civilian?” There were 83 responses that could be categorized as either yes or no.

Responses to Q4 (CONUS/Hawaii), by paygrade



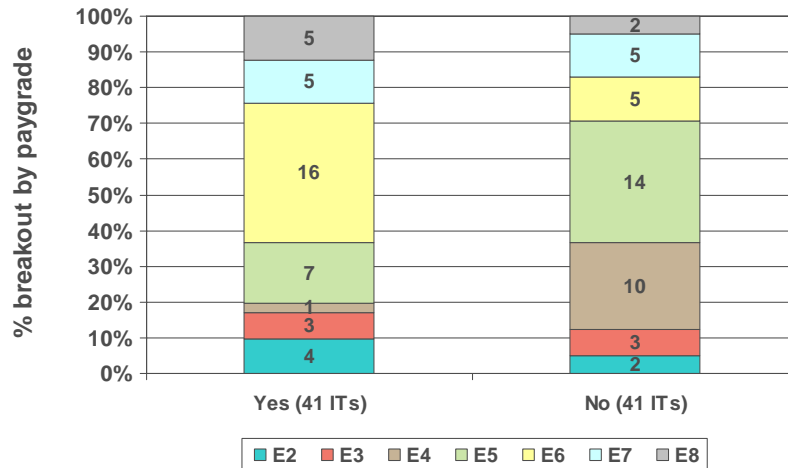
- Nearly three-fourths of respondents said that their jobs couldn't be moved from Hawaii to CONUS without compromising the mission
- Those who felt that their jobs could be moved were more junior



33

This slide provides the by-paygrade breakdown for the responses to question 4, “Could your billet be moved to CONUS?” There were 84 responses that could be categorized as either yes or no.

Responses to Q6 (geo-stability), by paygrade



- Willingness to consider geo-stability in Hawaii was evenly split
- Those willing to consider it tended to be more senior



34

Here we provide the by-paygrade breakdown for the responses to question 6, “Would you consider Hawaii for geo-stability?” There were 82 responses that could be categorized as either yes or no.

