

OPTEMPO and Retention: Okinawa, Hawaii, and Twentynine Palms

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Photo credit line: Marines with 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward) take the first steps of their deployment by boarding chartered buses at the French Creek Reception Center aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 15. Members of 2nd MLG (FWD) will embark on a year-long deployment to Afghanistan's Helmand province in support of International Security Assistance Force operations. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Justin J. Shemanski)

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OPTEMPO and Retention: Okinawa, Hawaii, and Twentynine Palms

Neil Carey and Gary Lee
with Diana Lien, Robert Shuford, Cathy Hiatt, and
Theresa Kimble

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CNA began examining the relationship between operational tempo (OPTEMPO) and retention in FY03, based on the Commandant's concerns that high wartime OPTEMPO might negatively affect Marines and their families—reducing their retention and the Corps' ability to sustain itself. This iteration of the Marine Corps OPTEMPO and Retention study continues this work (see [1 through 6]). The project sponsor is the Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs (DC, M&RA).

The current weak economy, coupled with endstrength growth and record monetary incentives, has led to all-time high retention levels at present. Among first-term Marines, the percentage saying they are likely to reenlist is at the highest level in 3 years (29 percent likely to reenlist in FY09, 37 percent in FY10, and 38 percent in FY11) [7]. A small number of Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs), however, still have difficulty maintaining sufficient numbers, and, if the economy improves, the reenlistment picture could worsen. This study identifies problems that, if unaddressed, might affect future retention. This work combines data analysis with information gathered through structured discussions with Marines and their families in Okinawa, Hawaii, and Twentynine Palms.

Outline

- Recent retention patterns by deployment status
 - Trends in deployment of First-Term Alignment Plan (FTAP) Marines
 - Reenlistment rates for FTAP Marines with recent Afghanistan or Iraq experience
 - FY10 FTAP reenlistment rate by number of deployments to Iraq and/or Afghanistan and dependent status
 - Share of FTAP Marines who have never deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq
 - FTAP reenlistment rate by days deployed
 - Continuation rates of non-retirement-eligible officers and retirement-eligible officers
- Purposes of the structured interviews in Okinawa, Hawaii, Twentynine Palms
- Okinawa
 - Who did we talk to and what did we hear from Okinawa-based Marines and spouses?
- Hawaii
 - Who did we talk to and what did we hear from Hawaii-based Marines?
- Twentynine Palms
 - Who did we talk to and what did we hear from Twentynine Palms-based Marines?
- What did we hear that was common across all three sites?
- Possible policy implications
- Appendix: Methodology and additional findings
- References

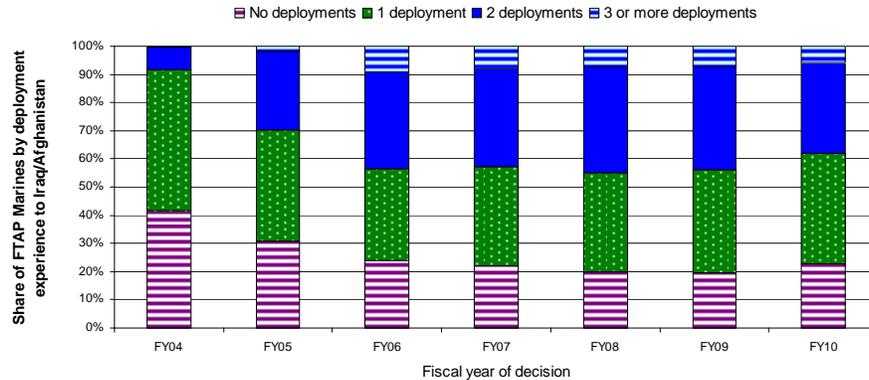


This annotated briefing reports our findings based on recent data on the relationship between deployments and retention, and on structured interviews at three sites: Okinawa, Hawaii, and Twentynine Palms, CA.

In this briefing, we first present the most recent (end of FY10) statistics on how often Marines have been deploying, who has been deploying, and Marines' subsequent reenlistment decisions. Next, we discuss the purposes of our structured interviews in Okinawa, Hawaii, and Twentynine Palms and describe how many Marines we interviewed. Then, we summarize what we heard that was unique at each site and what was common at all three sites. Finally, we discuss possible policy implications of our findings.

This briefing includes an appendix that contains details on the methodology we used and provides further details about our results.

Trends in deployment of FTAP Marines



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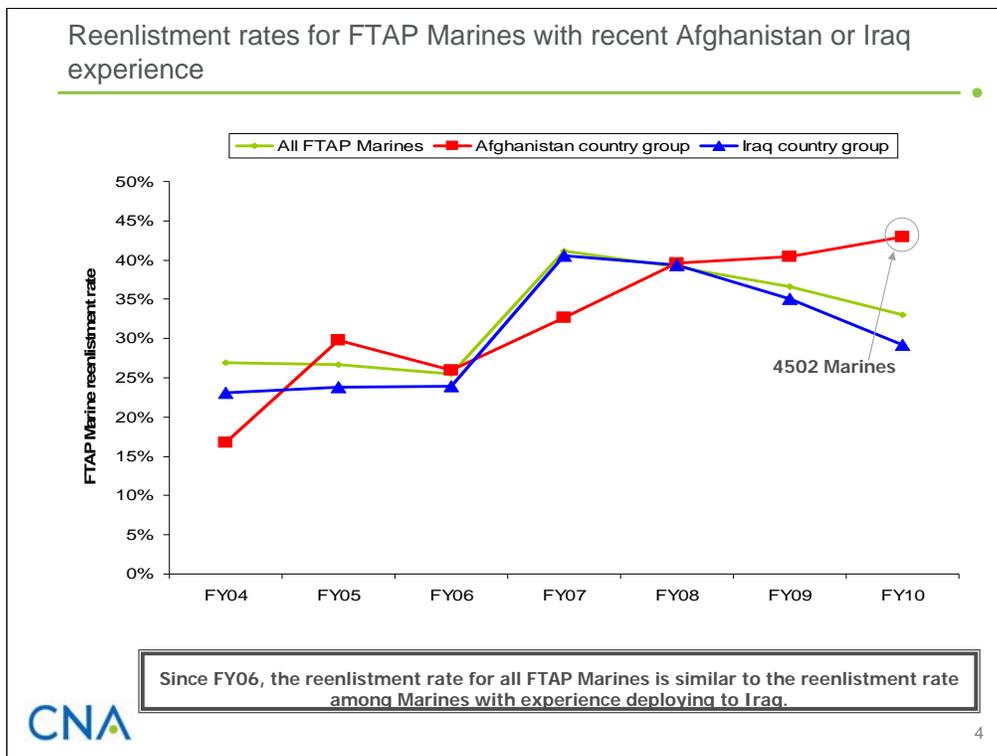
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Our presentation of deployment trends focuses on recommended and eligible First-Term Alignment Plan (FTAP) Marines (i.e., Marines making their first decision whether to reenlist) because they have been found to be most affected by increases in the number and length of deployments. FTAP Marines have the highest frequency of deployments, and the FTAP reenlistment point is the main selection point to determine who becomes a careerist. We have been tracking trends in deployment experience since FY04. This figure shows by fiscal year—at the FTAP reenlistment point—the share of Marines who have never deployed, deployed once, deployed twice, or deployed three or more times to the Iraq and/or Afghanistan country groups.¹

The Commandant of the Marines Corps’ FY07 ALMAR 002/07, “Every Marine Into the Fight,” was issued to address the discrepancy of some Marines having no Iraq and/or Afghanistan deployment experience and others having high levels of OPTEMPO. This figure shows that the percentage of FTAP Marines with no deployment experience decreased in the years immediately following the ALMAR.

However, the FY10 numbers show that, *for the first time since FY04, there was a year-to-year decrease in the percentage of FTAP Marines who have deployed.* In FY09, 3,840 FTAP Marines (19.4 percent) had never deployed; in FY10, the number had increased to 5,094 (22.9 percent). This might be the combined effect of 202K growth and the end of major combat operations in Iraq. In our focus groups (reported on later in this annotated briefing), we asked FTAP and other Marines how lack of opportunity to deploy might affect their morale and reenlistment decisions.

¹ This methodology is explained in more detail in the appendix.



Another issue that we have been tracking is whether deployments to Afghanistan will have a more negative effect on reenlistments than deployments to Iraq have had.

This graph shows the reenlistment rates of FTAP Marines who deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan in the last few years, and all FTAP Marines.² We see no consistent difference between Marines whose most recent deployment was to Iraq or Afghanistan and all FTAP Marines. However, the trend is that Marines deploying to the Afghanistan country group have higher reenlistment rates than do those who deployed to the Iraq country group.

Recent statistics from FY09 and FY10 show that the FTAP Marines with the highest reenlistment rates had deployed to Afghanistan, and those with the lowest FTAP reenlistment rates had deployed to Iraq. In FY10, 43 percent of FTAP Marines with an Afghanistan deployment reenlisted, versus 33 percent for all FTAP Marines, and 29 percent for FTAP Marines whose most recent deployment had been to Iraq.

These findings indicate that Afghanistan deployments are not having a negative affect on reenlistment decisions. If anything, Afghanistan deployments appear to have a positive effect. This is based on a fairly large number of FY10 FTAP Marines having served in Afghanistan—more than 4,500.

In our focus groups (reported on later in this annotated briefing), we asked FTAP Marines to compare the likely effect on their reenlistment decisions of Afghanistan deployments vice Iraq deployments.

²We put Marines in both groups if their records indicated that they had deployed to both Afghanistan and Iraq in the last 4 years.

Effect of deployment to Afghanistan vs. Iraq country groups (FTAP Marines)

| Variable | Mean | Coefficient | Derivative | Variable | Mean | Coefficient | Derivative |
|----------------------------------|--------|----------------------|------------|---|--------|---------------------|------------|
| Male | 0.934 | 0 (-.01) | 0 | Male | 0.934 | -.223** (-3.72) | -0.045 |
| Black | 0.074 | 0.915** (16.6) | 0.194 | Black | 0.074 | .952** (27.32) | 0.203 |
| Hispanic | 0.138 | 0.161** (3.7) | 0.032 | Hispanic | 0.138 | 0.168** (3.86) | 0.033 |
| Number of dependents | 0.66 | 0.245** (9.96) | 0.049 | Number of dependent | 0.66 | 0.261** (10.58) | 0.053 |
| Married | 0.484 | .546** (12.34) | 0.109 | Married | 0.484 | .537** (12.12) | 0.108 |
| SRB level | 1.105 | 0.254** (24.52) | 0.051 | SRB level | 1.105 | .246** (23.91) | 0.05 |
| E3 | 0.141 | -0.892 (-16.98) | -0.158 | E3 | 0.141 | -.917** (-17.46) | -0.162 |
| E5 and up | 0.184 | -.07 (-1.79) | N.S. | E5 and up | 0.184 | -.092* (-2.25) | -0.019 |
| Deployment to Iraq Country Group | 0.696 | -0.574** (-17.61) | -0.117 | Deployment to Afghanistan Country Group | 0.202 | .624** (17.1) | 0.129 |
| Constant | | -1.05 (-16.47) | (N.A.) | Constant | | -1.367 (-21.69) | (N.A.) |
| Average reenlistment rate | 33% | | | Average reenlistment | 33% | | |
| Chi-Square | 2,590 | | | Chi-Square | 2,570 | | |
| Observations | 22,191 | | | Observations | 22,191 | | |
| R squared | 0.092 | | | R squared | 0.091 | | |



* means p < .05; ** means p < .01, two-tailed

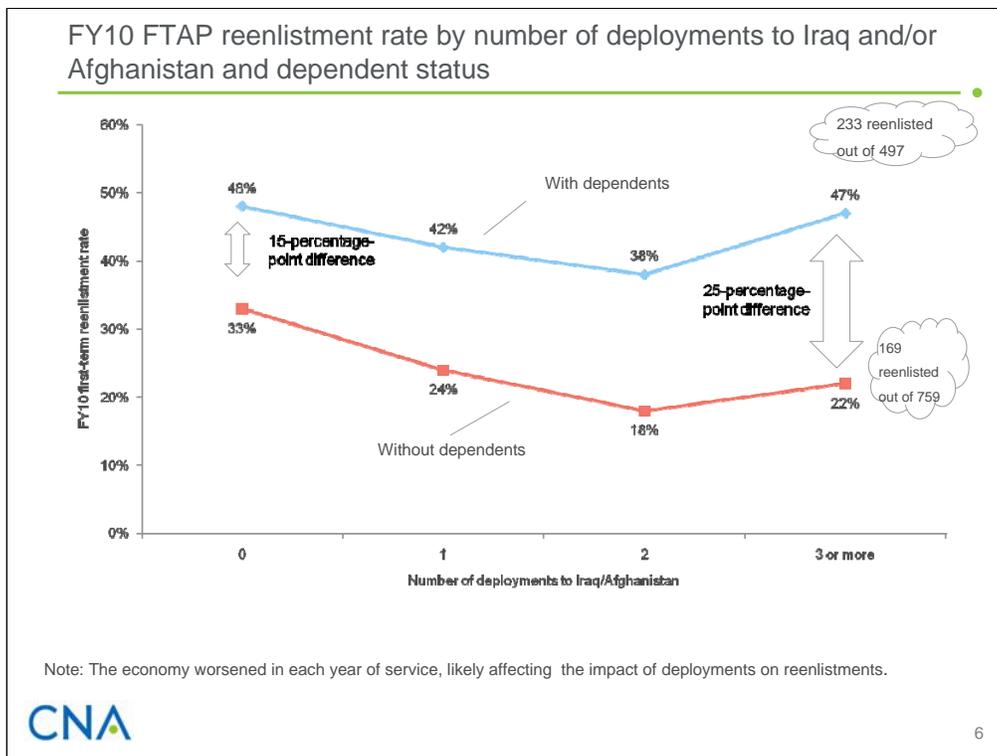
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On the preceding slide, we showed that FTAP Marines who had deployed to the Afghanistan country group reenlisted at a higher rate than those who had deployed to the Iraq country group in FY10. We wanted to investigate why this was the case: Was it the result of the different deployments, or were FTAP Marines who deployed to Afghanistan different from those who deployed to Iraq? To answer this question, we performed logit analyses controlling for other factors known to affect reenlistments (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, whether the Marine had dependents, SRB level, and the Marine’s rank) plus whether deployed to the Iraq or Afghanistan country group.

The results for the first model specification (on the left side) demonstrate that one or more deployments to the Iraq country group had a large negative effect (a 12-percent decrease) on reenlistments even when controlling for these other factors. The second model specification (on the right side) indicates that a deployment to the Afghanistan country group had a substantial positive effect on reenlistments, when controlling for other factors, and is associated with a 13-percent increase in reenlistments.³

Taken together, these two logit findings indicate that deployments to the Afghanistan country group have a positive effect on reenlistments. They also confirm what we heard in discussion groups—that Marines want to deploy to Afghanistan, not to Iraq.

³Other factors in the logit model were as expected: Black, Hispanic, and married Marines and Marines with dependents all reenlist at higher rates than average. We also expected the findings that having promoted to E5 and above, and having an SRB, were associated with higher reenlistment rates. In contrast, Marines who are single and who have only promoted to E3 are less likely to reenlist.



We now turn to the issue of differences in FTAP reenlistment by dependent status. This figure shows FY10 FTAP reenlistment rates by dependent status and number of deployments to the Iraq/Afghanistan country groups in the past 4 years.

First, Marines without dependents are less likely to reenlist than Marines with dependents. In FY10, the overall FTAP reenlistment rate for Marines without deployments to Iraq and/or Afghanistan and without dependents was 33 percent, compared with 48 percent for FTAP Marines with dependents.

Second, we find that FTAP Marines without dependents are more negatively affected by multiple deployments. In the case of FTAP Marines with three deployments, those with dependents are almost as likely to reenlist as are those with no deployments (47 percent versus 48 percent). But FTAP Marines without dependents who serve three deployments are much less likely to reenlist than are those with no deployments (22 percent versus 33 percent).

These are not new findings: they show that Marines without dependents are (i) more likely to leave the Marine Corps than those with dependents, and (ii) more negatively affected by deployments. We have seen this pattern in previous years as well.

Furthermore, FTAP Marines without dependents are more likely to deploy (in FY10, 75.1 percent of FTAP Marines with dependents deployed one or more times to Iraq/Afghanistan versus 79.0 percent of those without dependents). Lastly, we caution the reader from drawing the conclusion that three or more deployments results in higher reenlistments than two deployments. The economy worsened during this time period (FY08 through FY10), so the apparent positive effect of a third deployment is likely the result of changes in the economy.

Effect of days deployed for FTAP Marines with and without dependents

| Marines with dependents | | | | Marines without dependents | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|---------------------|------------|----------------------------|--------|---------------------|------------|
| Variable | Mean | Coefficient | Derivative | Variable | Mean | Coefficient | Derivative |
| Male | 0.913 | 0.416** (5.21) | 0.08 | Male | 0.956 | -.401** (11.63) | -0.067 |
| Black | 0.078 | .803** (10.32) | 0.172 | Black | 0.069 | .962** (11.63) | 0.172 |
| Hispanic | 0.157 | .097 (1.69) | N.S. | Hispanic | 0.120 | .185** (2.56) | 0.029 |
| Number of dependents | 1.32 | .209** (7.91) | 0.044 | Number of dependents | 0 | N.A. N.A. | N.A. |
| SRB level | 1.108 | .256** (16.8) | 0.053 | SRB level | 1.101 | .259** (16.8) | 0.043 |
| E3 | 0.131 | -.864 (-12.27) | -171 | E3 | 0.152 | -.758** (-8.92) | -0.104 |
| E5 and up | 0.182 | .041 (.73) | N.S. | E5 and up | 0.186 | -.157* (-2.43) | -0.023 |
| Deployed day (*100 days) | 2.97 | -.281** (-14.28) | -0.058 | Deployed day (*100 days) | 0.202 | -.374** (-16.76) | -0.062 |
| No deployments | 0.093 | -.436** (-5.28) | -0.088 | No deployments | 0.059 | -.483** (-4.72) | -0.068 |
| Constant | | -.651** (-7.5) | N.A. | Constant | | -.227* (-2.05) | N.A. |
| Average reenlistment rate | 0.423 | | | Average reenlistment rate | 0.237 | | |
| Chi-Square | 1,698 | | | Chi-Square | 1,557 | | |
| Observations | 11,065 | | | Observations | 11,126 | | |
| Pseudo r-squared | 0.113 | | | Pseudo r-squared | 0.128 | | |

* means p < .05; ** means p < .01, two-tailed

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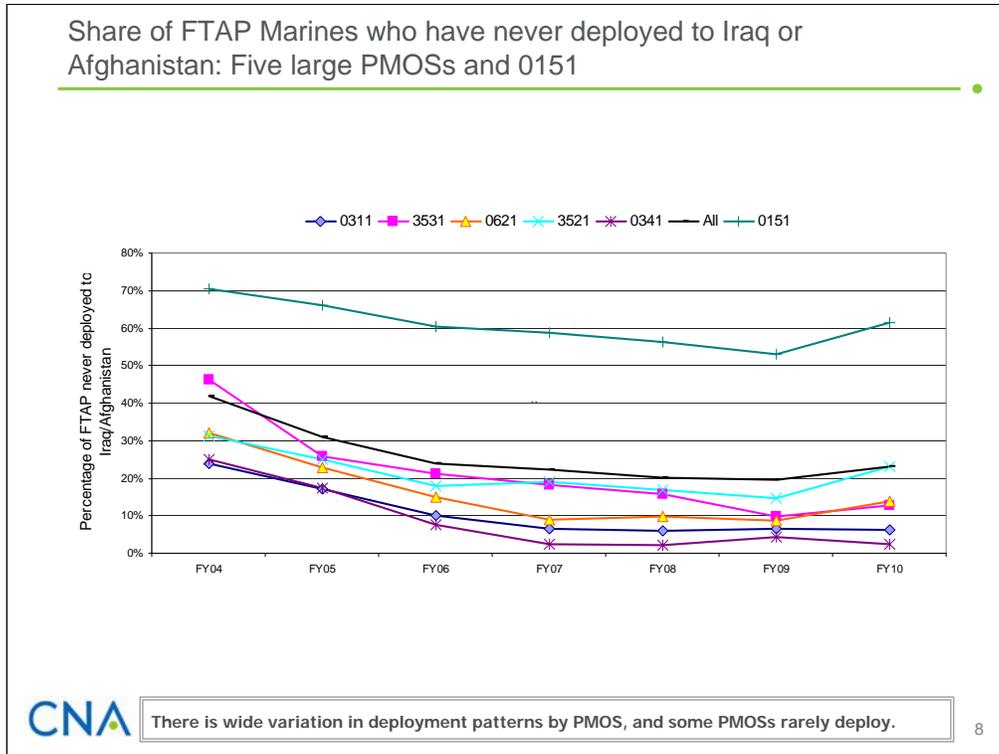
On slide 6, we showed that, as the number of Iraq/Afghanistan deployments increased, the reenlistment rate of FTAP Marines with dependents did not appear to be as negatively affected as that of FTAP Marines without dependents. We wanted to know what else might be different for Marines with and without dependents—and how it might affect sensitivity to days deployed.

To answer this question, we performed logit analyses controlling for other factors known to affect reenlistments (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) level, rank, whether the Marine had no deployed days) plus the number of days deployed (in 100s). The number of deployed days in this slide shows a broader category of days deployed, including days deployed in support of operations, exercises, unit training, home station training, and mission support temporary duty (TDY).

The left side shows the results for Marines who have dependents. For these Marines, men are 8 percent more likely to reenlist than women. The addition of each additional dependent makes the Marine about 4 percent more likely to reenlist, and each SRB level adds about 5 percent to the reenlistment likelihood. And every 100 days of deployment in the first term decrease reenlistment probability by about 5.8 percent.

Among FTAP Marines without dependents (right side), men are less likely to reenlist than women (a difference of about 6.7 percent). Each SRB level adds about 4 percent to the reenlistment likelihood. And every 100 days of deployment decrease reenlistment probability by about 6.2 percent—similar to the effect for Marines with dependents.

In conclusion, there is only a small difference in effects of deployed days on Marines with and without dependents. The reenlistments of both groups are negatively affected.



Next, we examine which primary military occupational specialties (PMOSs) are not getting a chance to deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan.

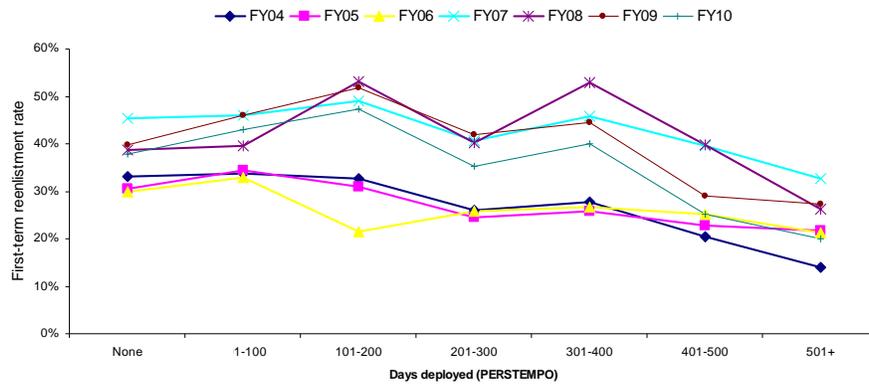
This slide shows, by PMOS, the share of FTAP Marines who have never deployed (for several large PMOSs). As we would expect, some PMOSs, such as the 0151s (Administrative Clerks), are more likely to have not deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan in the past 4 years. The share of 0151s who have not deployed has increased from FY09 to FY10, from 53 percent to 61.5 percent. Many of the PMOSs with a low deployment percentage are termed “reachback PMOSs.”

However, almost all Marines in infantry PMOSs deploy—for example, the 0341s (Mortarmen) and 0311s (Riflemen). This slide shows a slightly increasing percentage of FTAP Marines who have never deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan for the entire FTAP cohort (“All”) and for four of the six PMOSs shown between FY09 and FY10. The two exceptions were PMOS 0341, which decreased from 4.3 to 2.4 percent between FY09 and FY10, and PMOS 0311, which was essentially unchanged from FY09 to FY10.

Other large PMOSs had an increased percentage of Marines who had never deployed, including PMOS 3521s (Automotive Maintenance Technicians), PMOS 0621s (Field Radio Operators), and PMOS 3531s (Motor Vehicle Operators).

Overall, the percentage of FTAP Marines who have never deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan increased from 19.4 percent to 23.0 percent between FY09 and FY10. The appendix lists the 10 most deployed PMOSs and the 10 least deployed PMOSs for FY10.

FTAP reenlistment rate by days deployed

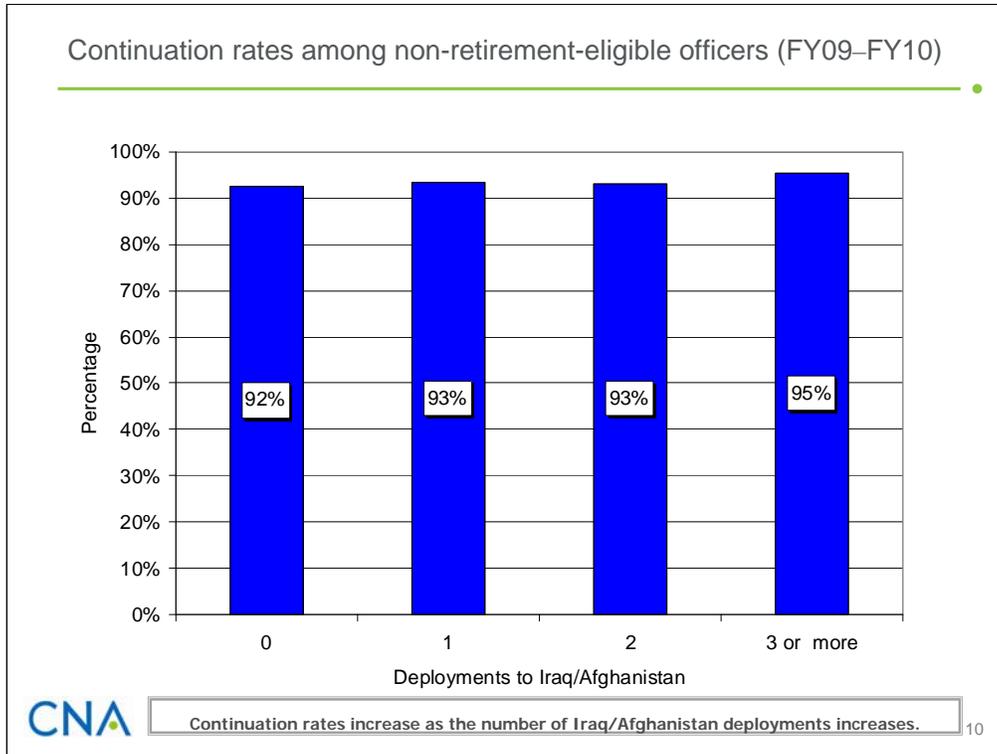


In each year, Marines with no deployed days had slightly lower reenlistment rates than those with 1 to 100 days of deployment experience.

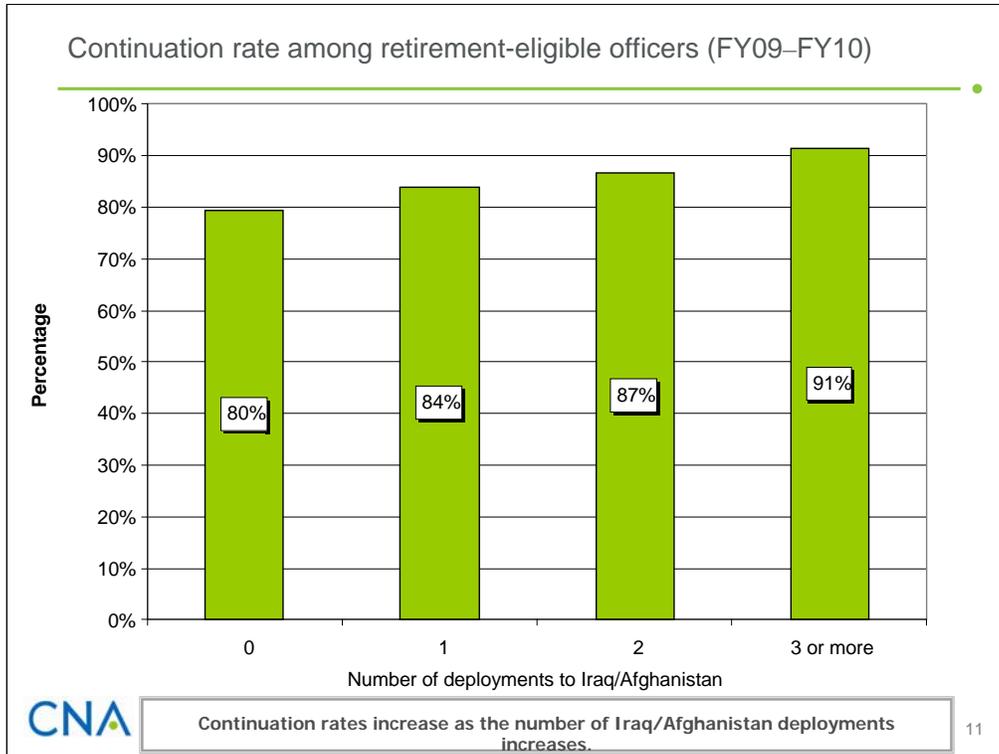
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This figure shows FTAP reenlistment rates by year of reenlistment decision and days spent away from home (PERSTEMPO). While some of our earlier figures showed deployments to the Iraq/Afghanistan country groups, this figure shows a *broader* category of days deployed, including days deployed in support of operations, exercises, unit training, home station training, and mission support TDY.

The figure shows that, in FY10, as in other years, *moderate PERSTEMPO* (1 to 100 days in the last 4 years) was associated with *increased* reenlistments, but very heavy PERSTEMPO (in FY10, over 400 days in the last 4 years) appeared to negatively affect reenlistments.



So far, we have shown reenlistment rates for FTAP *enlisted* Marines. This slide shows the continuation rate of non-retirement-eligible *officers* from September 2009 to September 2010 by number of deployments to the Iraq and/or Afghanistan country groups. We look at deployments 48 months before separation; if the officer did not separate, we look at deployments in the 48 months preceding September 2010. The positive pattern (between number of deployments and continuation rates) is consistent for officers across year-of-service groups. This pattern is consistent with what we have seen in earlier statistical analyses of officer continuation. However, we note again that Marine officers with a third deployment were more likely making continuation decisions during a time when the economy was weak, so the apparent positive effect of a third deployment could reflect economic conditions.



This slide shows the continuation rates of retirement-eligible officers. Even among this group, officers with more Iraq/Afghanistan deployments stay at a higher rate. This finding, as well, is consistent with our earlier results. Note, as mentioned earlier, that the worsening economy affects continuation rates for officers.

Purposes of the structured interviews in Okinawa, Hawaii, and Twentynine Palms

- To gain insights into potential future retention issues for Okinawa-, Hawaii-, and Twentynine Palms-based Marines
- To focus on OPTEMPO, but also listen to anything Marines had to tell us



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Although the OPTEMPO and retention study has continued since late 2003, we hadn't previously gone to WESTPAC. This time, we and the sponsor wanted to see if there were concerns on the part of III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Marines (i.e., Okinawa and Hawaii Marines) that Marine Corps leadership should know about. We also visited Twentynine Palms; we hoped that, by doing so, we could speak with more Marines who had recently returned from Afghanistan.

In our structured interviews, we focused on OPTEMPO and how it affects retention. Nevertheless, we gave all Marines the opportunity to bring up issues that they thought should be brought to the attention of Marine Corps leadership.

Structured interview questions: What did we ask?

- What is OPTEMPO like in your unit? How does OPTEMPO influence your thinking about reenlisting/continuing to serve?
- What is it like to serve at this base? How does location influence your reenlistment/continuation intentions?
- New Post-9/11 GI Bill
 - Will it change your retention/continuation behavior? Will it change others' behaviors?
- Afghanistan (have you been, want to go back?)
 - Will it change your reenlistment/continuation behavior?
- What do you think about the probability of promotion?
 - How does promotion influence your thinking about reenlisting/continuing?
- What are your observations about the Marine Corps?
 - Quality of Marines?
 - Availability of equipment?
 - Opportunities to train?
 - Ways to improve the Marine Corps?



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We asked all the structured interview groups several main questions, although we left time for members to bring up other issues related to OPTEMPO and retention.

Questions included:

- What is the OPTEMPO in your unit? Is it about right, too fast, or too slow? How does OPTEMPO and the chance to deploy influence your thoughts about continuing to serve?
- What is it like to serve at this base? Does your current location influence your thinking about staying in the Marine Corps?
- Have you heard of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill? What do you think about it? Will it influence your willingness to stay in the Marine Corps?
- Have you been to Afghanistan? If so, what was it like? Does that experience influence your thoughts about remaining in the Marine Corps? How does Afghanistan compare to Iraq?
- What do you think about your chances of getting promoted? What are other Marines saying about their chances of being promoted?
- What are your observations about the Marine Corps today? Are there issues that the Marine Corps leadership should know about? Are there recommendations that would improve the Marine Corps?

We asked commanders and senior enlisted to answer from their own perspectives, and also from the perspectives of their junior Marines.

Whom did we interview in Okinawa/Hawaii/Twenty-nine Palms?

- 47 groups totaling 712 Marines:
 - 421 enlisted Marines (PFC – SgtMaj)
 - 291 officers (O1 – O6, WO1 – CW05)
 - All 5 MAGTF elements and all occupational fields were represented
- One group of 16 spouses (wives)
- Five general officers
 - LtGen Stalder, LtGen Robling, MajGen Laster, MajGen Fox, BGen Clardy
- Force Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEA), MEF SEA, all MSC SEAs, and the base and stations' SEAs

We spoke only with Marines that the Marine Corps wants to keep.



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We asked to speak only with high-quality Marines who had at least 24 months of service—the kind of Marines that the Corps would like to keep. Our observations in the structured interview groups confirmed that we were talking with motivated, competent Marines.

Across the 3 sites, we conducted structured interviews with 47 groups composed of 712 Marines (421 enlisted and 291 officers). These groups of Marines included all 5 Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) elements and all occupational fields. In Okinawa, we spoke with Marines who were stationed at a number of different bases, including Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma, Camp Kinser, Camp Foster, and Camp Hansen. In addition, we interviewed a group of 16 spouses in Okinawa.

We spoke with five general officers on these visits, including then-LtGen Stalder, LtGen Robling, MajGen Laster, MajGen Fox, and BGen Clardy. We also had discussions with the Force Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEA), MEF SEA, all Major Subordinate Command (MSC) SEAs, and the base and station SEAs.

These interviews gave us a chance to hear the concerns of Marines, their leadership, and their families from many different perspectives.

Okinawa structured interviews



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We conducted the first set of structured interviews in Okinawa. These interviews provided us with the perspective of Marines who were serving in a foreign country, far from the continental United States (CONUS), and in a unique area of the world. The next few slides summarize our interviewees and what we heard from them.

Whom did we interview in Okinawa?

- 23 groups totaling 326 Marines:
 - 186 enlisted Marines (PFC – SgtMaj)
 - 140 officers (O1-O6, WO1 – CWO5)
 - All 5 MAGTF elements and all occupational fields were represented
- Included multiple sites
 - Camp Kinser, MCAS Futenma, Camp Foster, Camp Hansen, Camp Schwab

We spoke only with Marines that the Marine Corps wants to keep.



16

In Okinawa, we spoke with 23 groups—a total of 326 Marines. We spoke with 186 enlisted Marines and 140 officers. We asked to speak only with “good” Marines, the kind of Marines that the Corps would like to keep. Our observations in the structured interview groups confirmed that we were talking with motivated, competent Marines. We spoke with groups at five different locations in Okinawa. This gave us an understanding of how Marines at different bases viewed OPTEMPO and reenlistment issues.

These interviews gave us a chance to better understand the concerns of Marines stationed in Okinawa and their leadership.

What did we hear from Okinawa-based Marines?

- Perception that HQMC/CONUS leadership does not appreciate Okinawa service
 - Very high OPTEMPO due to exercises and training-related travel
 - Believe that OIF/OEF service is critical for promotion
 - Difficulty to deploy **except as IA**
- Okinawa service limits first-term Marines' ability to "get into the fight"
- WESTPAC units are undermanned, especially in terms of experienced NCOs and company-grade officers
 - "Once we get junior Marines trained, they leave us" (officer and enlisted)
 - Junior personnel fill large number of enlisted and officer leadership billets



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In almost all of our structured interviews in Okinawa, we heard that Marines felt that the Corps does not understand or appreciate the difficulties of serving in III MEF. The exercise and training schedule includes iterations in Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, and back to the West Coast, totaling over 70 obligations per year. (Slide 20 provides a partial list of III MEF exercises.) The distances and time zone changes required mean that many Marines are traveling, and units back in Okinawa or Hawaii are serving without their full contingents (because Marines are being pulled to go to exercises in other countries). The Marines feel that the Marine Corps leadership does not appreciate these sacrifices and that OEF service is critical for promotion. They believe that their promotion chances and career opportunities are negatively affected if they do not “get into the fight.”

Marines in III MEF see that the only way they can deploy to OEF is as Individual Augmentees (IAs). Many feel that they have to argue for their chance to deploy as IAs, but they also see the downside—that deploying as IAs can negatively affect their MOS development.

We heard from both officers and enlisted Marines that III MEF units are undermanned, especially at the senior NCO and company-grade officer levels. For instance, the practice of assigning Marines to III MEF straight out of MOS school led to a shortage of Marines at the ranks of corporal and sergeant and at first lieutenant and captain. Once their 24 months were completed, they returned to CONUS to be replaced by new Marines just out of school. As a result, many leaders referred to III MEF as “the training MEF” and said that Marines leave III MEF as soon as they are trained enough to be useful. They thought that the new policy of allowing some Marines to leave after 18 months (vice 24 months) made the problem even worse. We also heard that junior personnel had to fill leadership billets because of this undermanning.

What did we hear from Okinawa-based Marines? (cont.)

- Single Marines frustrated with service restrictions
 - Liberty restrictions (Marines believe they are more likely to get NJPs)
 - Lack of ability to drive a car (*dependents* can drive, why can't I, a Marine?)
 - Reluctant to take part in sponsored singles activities
 - Lack of training opportunities without leaving the island
- Difficulty getting tour conversions from unaccompanied to accompanied
- Pressure for career planners' roles to expand to areas once reserved for unit administrators (NCOs/SNCOs/officers)



18

In addition, many single Marines are very frustrated by the service restrictions in Okinawa. They think that the tighter liberty restrictions make them more likely to get Non-Judicial Punishments (NJPs) for behaviors that would be overlooked in CONUS (such as staying out too late). Commanders acknowledged that they felt pressure to hold their Marines accountable for actions that would not rate the same level of discipline in CONUS. Particular complaints for single Marines in Okinawa are that they cannot drive a car (but dependents can) and that they lack training opportunities on the island. For example, on Okinawa, Marines cannot drive a truck in wet weather because of safety concerns. Despite service restrictions, Marines are reluctant to take part in sponsored singles activities in Okinawa. Marines cannot take weapons in their cars where civilians can see them, and it is difficult to get enough time for all Marines to renew their rifle qualifications.

Some of the married Marines in Okinawa reported having difficulty getting tour conversions (from unaccompanied to accompanied) so that their spouses could join them in III MEF.

Lastly, we heard that career planners are being asked to expand their personnel administrative services because of the lack of administrative Marines in their units. For example, they often are asked to help young Marines with administrative issues, such as getting web orders and extensions.

What did Okinawa-based spouses tell us?

- Onbase housing management is number one irritant
 - Air Force controls
 - Marine families feel they are not given housing of same quality
 - Long commutes
 - Maintenance problems slow to be fixed (e.g., mold)
 - Some would like to live off base but can't
- Okinawa's OPTEMPO much higher than expected
 - Volunteered for Okinawa as a break from repeated OIF/OEF tours
 - Pace of exercises, training is worse than in CONUS
 - Unit manpower shortages keep Marines working long hours
- Spouse employment is difficult
- Complimented FRO program
 - But felt that there were not enough FROs and communications structure
- Difficult to get medical care for family members
 - Not enough specialists in Okinawa
 - Only one family member was funded to accompany minor to Tripler Army Hospital



Nevertheless, none of the spouses we spoke to would counsel Marines on their initial contracts NOT to pursue a Marine Corps career.

19

We spoke with a group of Marine spouses in Okinawa. This group was particularly concerned about housing issues. They believed that Air Force families get better housing than Marine Corps families because the Air Force controls onbase housing in Okinawa. They mentioned difficulty getting repairs done to their houses in a timely manner, and cited long commuting distances from Kadena to some Marine Corps bases. Some spouses said that they would like to live off base, but can't get permission to do so.

Spouses also were vocal about how hard Marines work in Okinawa. The spouses expected the Okinawa tour to allow more family time; instead, they found that Marines were working longer hours than when they were in CONUS. They blamed this on a lack of experienced personnel and the fact that exercises were held in other countries.

A few spouses said that they would like to work outside the home in Okinawa, but that it was very difficult to find employment. They liked the Family Readiness Officers (FROs) but wished that there were more of them, and that communications were better. They mentioned that some FROs were better than others at keeping spouses informed.

The spouses with children complained that it was difficult to get specialty appointments in Okinawa, particularly if a child needed surgery that required him or her to be treated at Tripler Medical Center in Hawaii. They said that it was policy for the military to pay for only one parent (not both) to accompany the child to Hawaii for surgery, and they wanted the policy changed so that both parents could do so.

Partial list of III MEF exercises

- Artillery relocation exercise
- Forest Light
- Korean Incremental Training Program (KITP)
- Balikatan
- Blue Flag
- Bright Star
- Cobra Gold
- Cope Thunder
- Cope Tiger
- Crocodile
- Eager Mace
- Ellipse Charlie
- Ellipse Foxtrot
- Emerald Express
- Foal Eagle
- Freedom Banner
- Golden Spear
- Indigo Desert
- Infinite Moon
- Internal Lock
- Keen Edge/Sword
- Kernel Blitz
- Khaan Quest
- Native Fury
- Natural Fire
- Positive Force
- RimPac
- RSOI
- Southern Frontier
- Tandem Thrust
- Tempest Express
- Tempo Bravo
- UFL
- Ultimate Resolve

Spouses told us that personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO) was very high in Okinawa because of the number of exercises in which III MEF participates. The list above, from an unclassified source [8], shows that III MEF does, indeed, participate in a large number of exercises. Since III MEF includes forces based in both Okinawa and Hawaii, we wanted to find out if Hawaii-based Marines also thought that the number of exercises was high.

Hawaii structured interviews



21

We conducted the second set of structured interviews in Hawaii. Although these Marines are serving in the United States, they are still far from CONUS. We were told that serving in Hawaii has its own unique characteristics and issues. The next few slides summarize our interviewees and what we heard there.

Whom did we interview in Hawaii?

- 15 groups totaling 200 Marines:
 - 116 enlisted Marines (PFC – SgtMaj)
 - 84 officers (O1 – O6, WO1 – CWO5)
 - All 5 MAGTF elements and all occupational fields were represented

We spoke only with Marines that the Marine Corps wants to keep.



22

In Hawaii, we spoke with 15 groups—a total of 200 Marines. We spoke with about 120 enlisted Marines and 80 officers. As with all of our groups, we asked to speak only with “good” Marines, the kind of Marines that the Corps would like to keep. Our observations in the structured interview groups confirmed that we were talking with motivated, competent Marines.

These interviews gave us a chance to better understand the concerns of Marines stationed in Hawaii and their leadership.

What did we hear from Hawaii-based Marines?

- 3rd Marine Division has very high OPTEMPO—at any time, there are 2 battalions deployed
 - Difficulty getting backfills when Marines go on exercises
- Must go to Big Island or Twentynine Palms for certain infantry training
- Headquarters commands are difficult billets for first-term Marines—top-heavy structure prevents development and taking initiative
- Difficult to get back to states to take PME courses (Sgt, SSgt, GySgt)
- Some data communications Marines (0651) said they intend to leave the Marine Corps



23

We heard that the 3rd Marine Division stationed in Hawaii has one of the highest OPTEMPOs of any unit in the Marine Corps. It usually has two battalions deployed at any time. They also mentioned that, when not on Mideast deployments, they spend a lot of time away from home going to training or exercises. These Marines enjoy the high OPTEMPO for the most part, but mentioned that it is often difficult to get a backfill when the unit goes on a training exercise.

The infantry units we spoke with also talked about the lack of infantry training grounds in Hawaii. As a result, they need to go to the big island, or Twentynine Palms, for some of their training.

We heard different perspectives from different types of units stationed in Hawaii. First-term Marines stationed *at headquarters* said that they feel underutilized because they are the most junior Marines in their units. First-term Marines mentioned that they would like to take the corporals' course to advance their careers, but they have difficulty getting permission to do so. We heard from communications Marines that they do not like lateral moves into their MOS, or policies that encourage such moves. Also, several data communications Marines (0651s) told us that they are planning on leaving the Marine Corps to seek higher pay in the private sector.

What did we hear from Hawaii-based Marines? (cont.)

- Concern over quality of Hawaii schools (cutbacks to 3.5 days/week, furlough days)
- Perception that WESTPAC-based Marines were not as competitive for promotion—should ensure that MARFORPAC has board members on SNCO/officer selection and slating boards
- Some great Marines wait too long to reenlist, and find that the boatspaces for their MOSs have been filled
- Pilots lose MOS proficiency and credibility while working in Individual Augmentee/Training Team (IA/TT) assignments—also, almost all squadron billets have too many collateral duties
- Desire to move off base among single enlisted Marines
 - “Contract marriages” to get out of poorly maintained, crowded barracks
 - Not enough billeting, base housing—especially at Kaneohe Bay
- Drugs are an issue in Hawaii—not always processing out fast enough
 - “Spice” and cocaine
- Too much unnecessary training



24

Several Marines told us that it is difficult to raise school-age children in Hawaii because of the large budget cuts that schools have suffered. These have resulted in furlough days.

Marines said they believe that Marines in Hawaii and Okinawa are not as competitive for promotion because they serve in the Pacific (both officers and enlisted). The Marines want to ensure that a MARFORPAC representative sits on SNCO/officer selection and slating boards.

We were told that several excellent Marines waited too long to reenlist and missed their chances because of boatspace caps. A common theme was that the Corps was not always retaining the best. Some thought there should always be promotion boards for E4s/E5s to make sure that only the best Marines are promoted.⁴ They said that, in some cases, a company commander will not recommend a Marine for reenlistment, but the battalion commander recommends the Marine anyway.

Marines in aviation squadrons told us that MOS credibility was a problem with pilots assigned to IA/TT assignments because they fall behind their peers when serving out of their MOS. They said that young pilots serving in squadrons also were given a large number of collateral duties, which detract from learning their PMOS.

Marines told us that they wanted to move off base and were frustrated that the way occupancy is calculated makes it unlikely. One reason Marines get married (so-called contract marriages) is to have an opportunity to live off base. Marines based in Kaneohe Bay told us that the barracks are overcrowded, and both married and single Marines complained of a lack of adequate housing.

Several groups told us that there was a drug problem in Hawaii, particularly with “spice,” which was legal for civilians. Lastly, Marines told us that many of their training requirements seemed unnecessary. They cited annual Basic Skills training (not needed for infantry Marines) and Information Assurance training.

⁴As of 11 May 2011, the Marine Corps has expanded submission timeframes for reenlistment packages to 90 days, and changed to a tiered evaluation system.

Were some Marines allowed to reenlist who would not have been allowed in ordinary circumstances?

Count of recommended and eligible by FY

| Decision FY | Zone | | | | | |
|-------------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| | All | A | B | C | D | E |
| 2000 | 28,542 | 18,998 | 4,038 | 2,423 | 2,442 | 641 |
| 2001 | 28,797 | 20,423 | 3,746 | 1,788 | 2,236 | 604 |
| 2002 | 30,134 | 20,529 | 4,853 | 2,301 | 1,855 | 596 |
| 2003 | 29,905 | 20,841 | 4,542 | 2,291 | 1,582 | 649 |
| 2004 | 30,803 | 20,884 | 4,989 | 2,542 | 1,735 | 653 |
| 2005 | 29,360 | 20,099 | 5,135 | 2,222 | 1,418 | 486 |
| 2006 | 30,980 | 20,953 | 5,350 | 2,650 | 1,556 | 471 |
| 2007 | 38,758 | 25,811 | 6,363 | 3,567 | 2,379 | 638 |
| 2008 | 30,849 | 20,136 | 5,402 | 3,132 | 1,749 | 430 |
| 2009 | 29,971 | 20,526 | 5,314 | 2,719 | 1,099 | 313 |
| 2010 | 31,093 | 22,657 | 4,255 | 2,034 | 1,656 | 491 |

Zone A, or FTAP, applies to active-component Marines with 17 months to 6 years of active Marine Corps service and at least 17 months of continuous service other than for training. Zone B refers to Marines with 6 to 10 years of active Marine Corps service. Zone C refers to Marines who have between 10 and 14 years of service. Zone D and Zone E are the most senior Marines.



We heard from Marine leaders in Okinawa and Hawaii (and later in Twentynine Palms) that some Marines were allowed to reenlist who (in their opinion) would have been separated in previous years. This slide shows that in FY07, the first year of the build to 202K, there was a 25-percent increase in the number of Marines recommended and eligible to reenlist—an increase from an average of about 31,000 per year to close to 39,000. This 1-year increase might account for some of this perception.

Twentynine Palms structured interviews



26

We conducted the third set of structured interviews at Twentynine Palms. These Marines were serving in CONUS in a location where there is more space for Combined and Integrated Arms training. We also hoped to speak with more Marines with Afghanistan deployment experience. The next few slides summarize our interviewees and what they told us.

Whom did we interview in Twentynine Palms?

- 9 groups totaling 186 Marines:
 - 119 enlisted Marines (PFC – SgtMaj)
 - 62 officers (O1 – O6) and 5 Warrant Officers (WOs) (total of 67)
 - All occupational fields were represented

We spoke only with Marines that the Corps wants to keep.



27

During our visit to Twentynine Palms, we spoke with 186 Marines in 9 groups. In all, we spoke with 119 enlisted Marines, 62 officers, and 5 Warrant Officers (WOs). The Marines we spoke with represented all occupational fields in the Marine Corps.

What did we hear from Twentynine Palms-based Marines?

- Personnel cap imposed on units deploying to Afghanistan results in negative discipline and morale issues
 - Especially true for fully deployable Marines who have never been to a combat zone
- Current process limits commanders' abilities to involuntarily separate Marines



28

Marines in Twentynine Palms told us that units scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan, by policy, had to reduce their numbers to accommodate MARCENT personnel caps. This cap frustrated many Marines in the unit, especially those who were fully deployable and had never been to a combat zone. Although some Marines in the Remain Behind Element/Unit were nondeployables who had medical, disciplinary, or other issues, many were fully deployable Marines. The personnel cap caused morale and discipline issues for the Commander/staff responsible for them while the parent unit was deployed. We recommend that HQMC stress that deploying commanders provide equal opportunity for Marines who have never deployed (even in units with personnel caps).

Marines also told us that current administrative discharge processes limit commanders' abilities to separate Marines involuntarily. We heard how difficult it is to assemble the documentation that the Major Subordinate Commands (discharge authorities, MSCs) require to involuntarily separate Marines deserving of such action. The frustration was that intermediate commanders and their staffs required different documentation for each case, even identical ones. Another concern was the ability to expeditiously separate medically nondeployable Marines. These Marines, who also were frustrated by the process, often became disciplinary problems for commanders. In addition, every Marine being involuntarily separated, regardless of reason and deployment history, must receive a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) screen, and there is limited medical capability for doing this. Commanders and their subordinate leaders expressed a need for a less complicated, more timely process.

We recommend that the CMC direct the MC Judge Advocate Division to convene a working group of appropriate subject matter experts (SMEs) to develop templates that would require all discharge authorities to expect the same documentation from commanders initiating discharge requests. These templates would be the baseline documents for separating Marines before End of Active Service (EAS).

What did we hear from Twentynine Palms-based Marines? (cont.)

- Units TEEP'd and trained to deploy to Afghanistan were rerouted to support the 31st MEU or were relegated to CONUS support role
 - Marines in these units were disappointed
- Rules of engagement in Afghanistan too strict
 - 1st Division Marines feel they cannot protect themselves
 - Couldn't shoot at vehicles moving parallel to convoys
 - Saw IED being placed, but couldn't shoot
- Marines returning from B-billets need refresher courses before returning to OPFOR units



29

Although the CMC's "Every Marine Into the Fight" initiative has been successful, we heard that, very recently, fewer first-tour Marines and officers are getting the opportunity to deploy. Our data analysis, shown earlier, confirms that more Marines have not been deployed. Marines at Twentynine Palms told us that certain units that had been planned (Training, Exercise and Evaluation Plan (TEEP'd)) and trained to deploy in Afghanistan were redirected to support the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) or play a CONUS support role. Marines in these units were bitterly disappointed at missing their chance to deploy to Afghanistan. For those whose reenlistment decisions coincided with this news, some chose to separate. Commanders and their SEAs said it was a challenge to convince those Marines to continue in service. As fewer units deploy to Afghanistan and dwell increases, this could lower retention.

As the Corps transitions from its wartime OPTEMPO, we recommend that it ensure that commanders and retention personnel are attuned to all possible negative retention effects.

Another issue was the rules of engagement in Afghanistan. Those who had actually experienced the Afghan fight felt that they often were unable to take the Direct Action they needed to protect themselves and their Marines. For example, one Marine said that he was not allowed to open fire on trucks that drove parallel to his convoy. Another Marine said he was not allowed to shoot, even when he saw someone placing an Improvised Explosive Device (IED).

Lastly, Marines at Twentynine Palms told us that Marines returning from B-billets need to attend career progression school or some sort of refresher training before returning to Operating Force (OPFOR) units.

A variation of the foregoing comment was expressed by naval aviators who had served in Forward Air Controller/Joint Terminal Attack Controller (FAC/JTAC) tours. They felt that, if assigned to these billets a second time, they needed to attend only a refresher course since the training program is long and expensive. They recommended that FAC/JTACs who were returning for a second or third tour attend refresher training similar to the training they would receive when returning to the cockpit.

What did we hear from Twentynine Palms-based Marines? (cont.)

- Lack of mentorship for company-grade officers and young career-oriented NCOs/SNCOs
 - Young officers confused about career designation
 - Variety of reasons, including IA/TT-related requirements
- Company-grade officers, NCOs, and SNCOs are working in their MOSs for the first time in their short careers
 - Feel unprepared for new responsibilities
 - Feel new NCOs not as capable in leadership skills
 - Corporals' course mentioned multiple times
- Concerned that careers depend on having combat zone fitness report
 - Worst in Okinawa, but in Hawaii and Twentynine Palms several units have been taken out of deployment rotation
 - We heard this everywhere we went in the past 2 years



30

Some things that the Twentynine Palms Marines said were similar to what we heard elsewhere. In this slide, we list issues that seemed more salient at Twentynine Palms than at other bases we visited. However, these concerns also were expressed at other bases.

Initial-tour company-grade officers and young career-oriented NCOs and SNCOs said that they lacked mentorship for a variety of reasons, including their immediate superiors' absences due to IA/TT requirements and gaps in staffing. Field-grade officers, commanders, and their SEAs verified this. Some specific examples follow:

(1) Company-grade officers were confused about the career designation process and felt unable to obtain adequate advice on that process and their decision to accept or decline the offer.

(2) Many company-grade officers, NCOs, and younger SNCOs were working in their MOSs for the first time in their short careers. They are now in charge of units and equipment/financial accounts without having benefited from “growing up” in these jobs. They felt unprepared for their particular responsibilities and unable to get proper advice from their immediate superiors.

(3) Many new corporals lack leadership skills, either because they have been promoted too fast or because they have not attended the corporals' course.

(4) Despite increases in the percentage of Marines who had deployed through FY09, Marines are very concerned that their careers depend, more than anything, on having a combat zone fitness report.

What did we hear that was common across all three sites?

- Strong desire to deploy to OEF
 - Belief that they must have combat fitness report to compete for promotion and have a career
- Poor economy is increasing intent/propensity to continue in Corps
 - The economy was a major reason for joining and/or staying in
- Marines choosing lateral-move fields based on SRBs
- Resentment that lateral moves negatively affect junior enlisted Marines in technical MOSs
 - “I have to train sergeant or corporal and he takes my promotion space”
- Duty-station option a potential approach to compensate for reduced SRBs
 - Especially for FTAP and 2nd tour Marines
- Perception that high-quality Marines wait to reenlist while lower quality Marines reenlist ASAP (opinions of commanders and senior enlisted)
- Lack of military discipline among recent recruits
 - Leaders feel lack of support for any disciplinary measures
 - Small unit leaders have no recourse other than counseling entries (6105 statements)
 - Small unit leaders forced to refer charges on junior Marines rather than correct them



31

The Marines in Okinawa, Hawaii, and Twentynine Palms expressed many common concerns that seem to be Corps-wide perceptions. These Marines have a strong desire to deploy to OEF and believe that a combat fitness report is needed to be competitive for promotion and career progression.

Marines at all three sites are concerned about the poor economy and, as a result, want to stay in the Marine Corps. Many Marines and officers admitted that the economy was a major reason that they joined in the first place.

Marines at all three sites said that some Marines choose to laterally move solely on the basis of which MOSs awarded the largest SRBs. They said these lateral movers might leave the Marine Corps once SRBs decrease. We also heard that Marines resent those who laterally moved above them, especially in technical occupations. We heard comments about having to train NCOs who had laterally moved because the lateral movers were not as technically proficient as those who had started in the MOS. For MOSs with decreasing SRBs, we heard that having a duty station option would be a big reenlistment incentive.

Some of the Marine commanders, occupational field managers, and SEAs said that the best quality Marines were waiting to make reenlistment decisions until it was too late. (As of 11 May 2011, the Marine Corps has expanded submission timeframes to 90 days and changed to a tiered evaluation system.)

Lastly, Marines at all sites we visited expressed the opinion that the newest Marines (in the last few years) do not have the same military discipline as those before them. Marines said that NCOs fear being charged with hazing and, as a result, do not feel empowered to correct Marines without doing extensive paperwork and/or referring a charge sheet.

Possible policy implications

- HQMC leadership needs to reemphasize “bloom where planted,” but OEF equal opportunity also needs to be addressed
 - Too many Marines feel that their careers will be hurt if they do not go to OEF
 - WESTPAC’s importance needs to be stressed
- Revisit Okinawa tour lengths and types
 - 1-year tours for experienced Marines in addition to 2-year tours for inexperienced Marines
- Consider holding some reenlistments for later in the year (to avoid losing quality Marines who wait)
- Engage with senior AF leadership about Marines living on base in Okinawa



32

We raise several possible policy implications of our findings.

First, we think that Marine Corps leaders need to reemphasize the philosophy that Marines should “bloom where planted,” but many Marines feel they are planted in billets where they can’t bloom and have little opportunity to get to the fight. Many III MEF Marines felt that they were not competitive for promotion for the sole reason that they had not been to OIF or OEF. We think that Marine leadership needs to reemphasize the importance of doing well at one’s current job and the importance of III MEF.

Second, we believe that the Marine Corps might need to rethink tour lengths. Current policy assigns Marines to Okinawa for 2 years unaccompanied. We spoke with commanders in Okinawa who said that they would be willing to reconsider a split of 12-month and 24-month tours if they were assured of getting Marines who were already trained. We also asked COs about the new policy of letting selected Marines leave Okinawa after 18 months if they could be assigned to a deployable unit. The COs thought that this 18-month tour policy made things even more difficult for units in Okinawa because it shortened the tours of Marines who had spent much of their tours getting trained.

Third, based on CO suggestions, we think that consideration should be given to holding back a percentage of boatspaces in each MOS for quality Marines who decide to reenlist late in the fiscal year.⁵ (High-demand/low-density and chronically short PMOSs, however, should be filled as soon as possible.)

Fourth, Marine Corps leadership needs to engage with the Air Force concerning living conditions at Kadena. There is a strong perception that Marine Corps families are not getting their fair share of quality housing and that too many maintenance problems are allowed to persist.

⁵Since we first made this recommendation, the Marine Corps has expanded submission timeframes for reenlistment and has instituted a tiered evaluation system.

Possible policy implications (cont.)

- Engage with leadership about perception that NCOs cannot discipline their Marines
- Consider making corporals' course more easily available to Marines in WESTPAC and Hawaii
- Improve the process of separating problem Marines



33

We think it is important to address the problem of NCOs and SNCOs being afraid or not allowed to correct their Marines short of a formal counseling document or the referral of a charge sheet. This is a problem that was mentioned repeatedly and seems to hurt the morale of the Marine Corps' enlisted leadership.

We heard in multiple sites that Marines need to take the corporals' course. The corporals' course is local command-sponsored training, so we think the importance of the course should be reemphasized with commanders.

Finally, we think that the Corps needs to address the systematic delays in separating problem Marines. A process that takes too long can affect the entire Marine Corps unit. We recommend that CMC direct the MC Judge Advocate division to convene a working group of appropriate SMEs to develop templates that would require all discharge authorities to expect the same documentation from commanders initiating requests for discharges. These templates would be the baseline document for separating Marines before EAS.

Appendix:
Methodology and additional findings

CNA

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The following slides provide additional information on OPTEMPO and retention, using the most recent (FY10) data.

Data used for the update

- CNA enlisted reenlistment decision dataset
 - Linked FY06 to FY10 decisions and Marine's PERSTEMPO and DEPTempo information for past 4 years
 - Used PERSTEMPO and Contingency Tracking System (CTS) data back to FY01
 - Days deployed (PERSTEMPO) in support of operations, exercises, unit training, home station training, and mission support TDY
 - Number of deployments (DEPTempo) to Iraq and Afghanistan country groups
- CNA officer continuation dataset
 - For FY10 update, used September 2009 to September 2010 continuation
 - Linked continuation data with PERSTEMPO and CTS data



35

The data we used are a combination of administrative personnel and deployment data. For enlisted Marines, we took CNA's enlisted Marine Corps database and looked at reenlistment decisions from FY06 to FY10. We included only Marines who were recommended and eligible for reenlistment. We linked the decision files with deployment data from FY03 to FY10. Our two data sources on deployments are the Defense Manpower Data Center's PERSTEMPO and Contingency Tracking File databases. The PERSTEMPO file goes back only to 2001. For each Marine making a reenlistment decision, we look at deployments over the previous 1,461-day window, or approximately 4 years. For example, for FTAP Marines, we are roughly looking at deployments since they entered the Marine Corps.

We also matched the PERSTEMPO and CTS data to officer personnel files to track officer retention between September 2009 and September 2010.

We cleaned the PERSTEMPO and CTS data by:

- Dropping all deployments if the begin date was after the end date
- Closing all 1-day gaps between deployments.

In the CTS data, we closed all gaps for deployments to crisis areas that were less than 30 days if the result was a deployment that was not more than a year in length. Apparently, as units changed from one command to another, sometimes one crisis deployment record was ended and another crisis deployment record was begun.

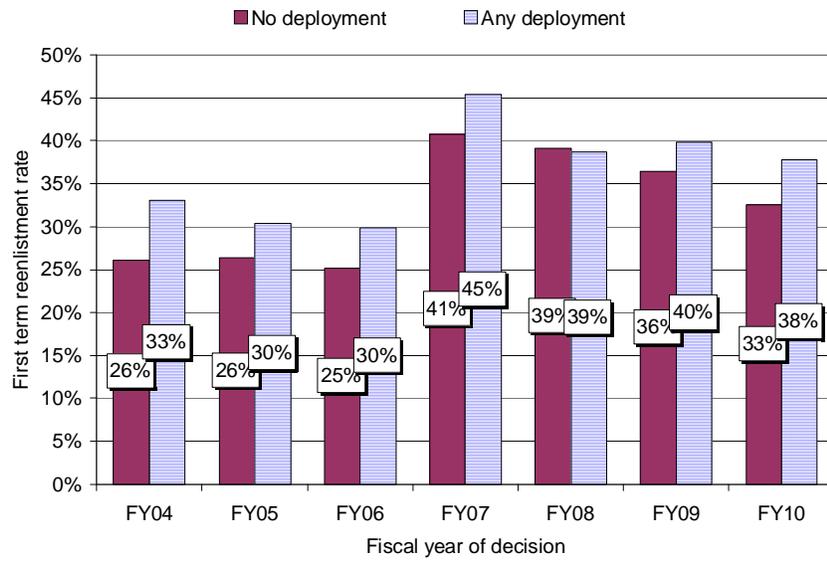
Definitions

- Days deployed (PERSTEMPO) in support of operations, exercises, unit training, home station training, and mission support TDY
- Number of deployments (DEPTEMPO) to Iraq and Afghanistan country groups

From the PERSTEMPO file, we calculate days deployed, which includes five categories of days: operations, exercises, unit training, home station training, and mission support temporary duty (TDY).

From the CTS, we calculate number of deployments to the Iraq and Afghanistan country groups. We use the Iraq/Afghanistan country groups because the majority of Marines who deploy to any country in this group typically also serve in Iraq or Afghanistan during that deployment spell.

FTAP reenlistment rate by whether deployed



CNA

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This slide shows that, among FTAP Marines, those with one or more deployments are more likely to reenlist than those who have never deployed. The only exception was in FY08, when the percentages were equal (39 percent).

Effect of deployments and occupational field on zone A promotions

| Predicting Promotion to E5 in Zone A | | | |
|--|--------|---------------------|------------|
| Variable | Mean | Coefficient | Derivative |
| Number of deployments to Iraq/Afghanistan country groups | 1.01 | 0.0175 (1.26) | N.S. |
| Male | 0.929 | -.021 (-.45) | N.S. |
| Black | 0.19 | -.058** (-4.98) | -0.025 |
| Hispanic | 0.175 | .036 (1.25) | N.S. |
| Months in service | 45.66 | .135** (74.08) | 0.022 |
| Number of dependents | 0.872 | -.025* (-2.25) | -0.004 |
| Occ field 01XX (Admin) | 0.071 | -1.180** (-2.35) | -0.184 |
| Occ field 31XX (Dist mgt) | 0.005 | -1.098* (-2.07) | -0.174 |
| Occ field 34XX (Financial mgt) | 0.01 | -1.124* (-2.18) | -0.177 |
| Occ field 44XX (Legal services) | 0.186 | -1.767** (-3.19) | -0.245 |
| Occ field 55XX (Music) | 0.673 | 1.550* (3.04) | .310 |
| Constant | | -6.37** (-12.49) | N.A. |
| Chi-Square | 12,663 | | |
| Observations | 54,236 | | |
| Pseudo R-squared | 0.191 | | |

* means p < .05; ** means p < .01, two-tailed

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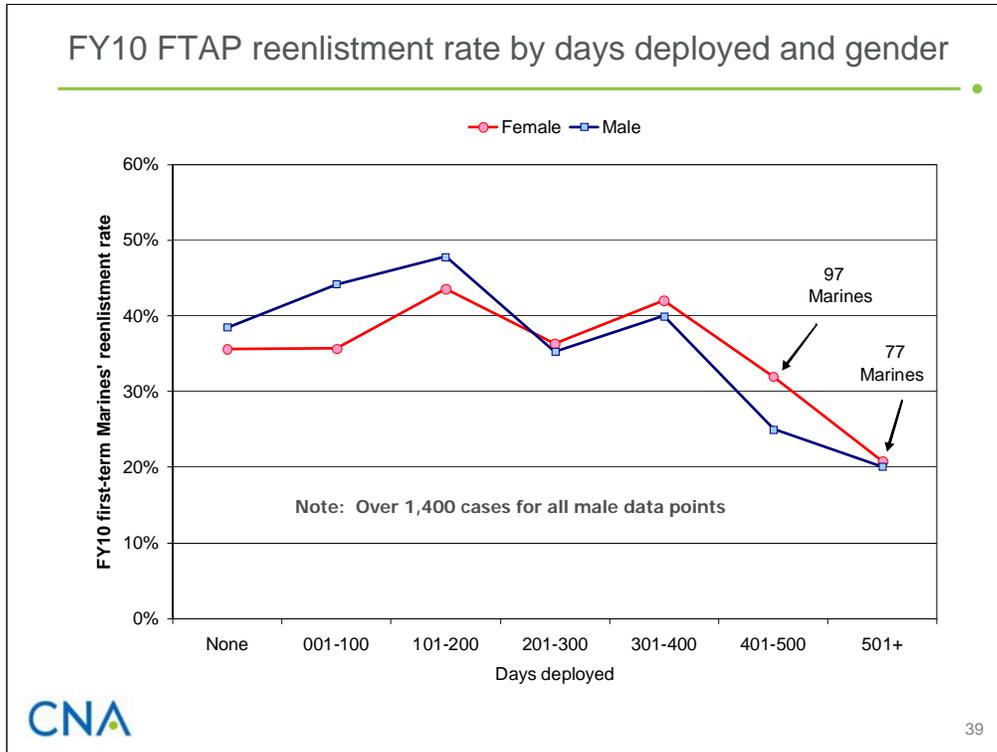
Many Marines felt that they had to have a combat deployment to get promoted. We examined promotion data to determine whether this widely held belief was true.

Our findings, shown above, demonstrate that between FY04 and FY10, having multiple deployments to Afghanistan or Iraq was not a statistically significant predictor of promotion to E5 while in zone A.

The largest influence on whether a Marine promoted was the number of months of service; the second largest predictor was the year that the Marine was considered for promotion. Race/ethnicity and the number of dependents also predicted promotion probability.

Lastly, the occupational field predicted promotion to E5. Those in 01XX (Administration), 31XX (Distribution Management), 34XX (Distribution Management), and 44XX (Legal Services) were less likely to be promoted than were Marines in other occupational fields. Marines in Music (occupation field 55) were more likely to promote to E5.

In summary, Marines' promotions are less affected by whether they deployed to the Iraq/Afghanistan country groups than they believe they are.



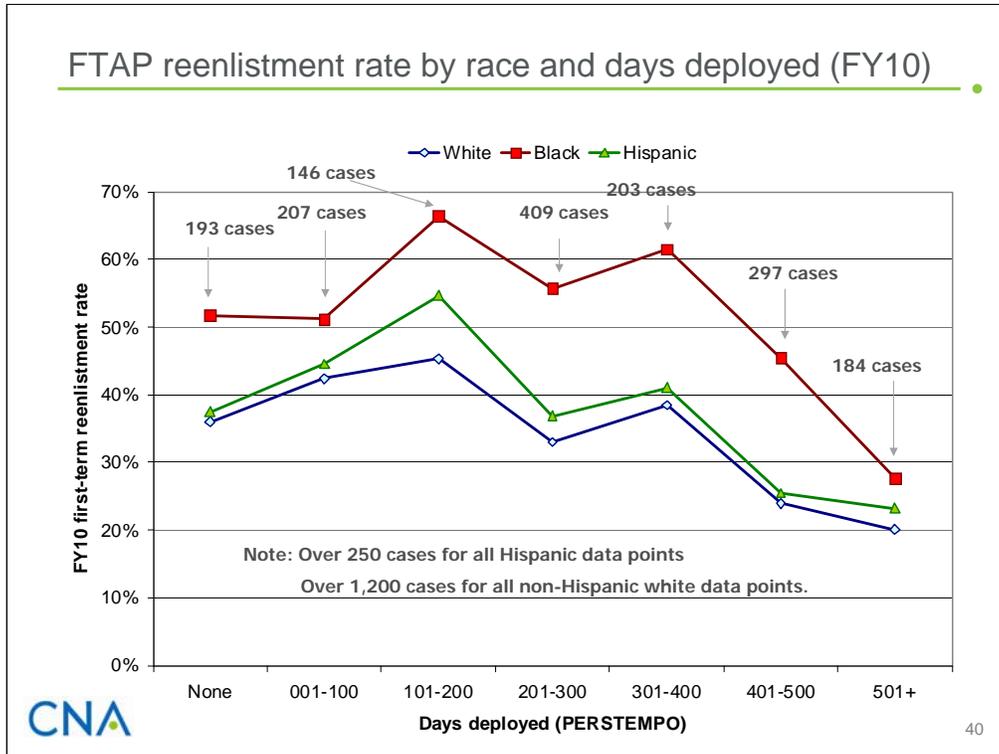
There has been interest in comparing the reenlistment rates of men and women by days deployed.

This slide shows the FTAP reenlistment rates of Marines, by the number of days deployed (PERSTEMPO). In the FY10 data, men with no deployments have a slightly higher reenlistment rate than women with no deployments (38.5 percent for men and 35.6 percent for women). Men also have a slightly higher reenlistment rate with PERSTEMPO of 1 to 100 days (44.2 percent vs. 35.7 percent).

However, at higher levels of PERSTEMPO (over 200 days in the last 4 years), the female reenlistment rate is the same as or higher than the male rate. At 201 to 300 days deployed within the last 4 years, female reenlistment rates slightly exceed male rates (36.3 percent vs. 35.3 percent), as they do at 301 to 400 days deployed (42.0 percent vs. 40.0 percent) and 401 to 500 days (32.0 percent vs. 25.0 percent). Female and male reenlistment rates are essentially the same at over 500 days (20.8 percent vs. 20.1 percent).

These results should be interpreted with caution because two of the data points for women are based on a limited number of cases (less than 100). Each data point for men is based on 1,400 or more Marines.

FTAP reenlistment rate by race and days deployed (FY10)



This slide shows the most recent findings on the relationship between FTAP reenlistment rates and days deployed by race/ethnicity. It shows that blacks have higher FTAP reenlistment rates than whites, even when controlling for days deployed. Whites have the lowest reenlistment rates at all PERSTEMPO levels. However, the slide also shows that blacks, whites, and Hispanics show roughly the same pattern of reenlistment as days deployed increase.

PMOSs with highest average FY10 PERSTEMPO and DEPTEMPO

| PMOS with over 50 Marines and highest averages | | | | | |
|---|------|-------|--|------|------|
| Average days deployed (PERSTEMPO) by PMOS | | | Average number of deployments to Iraq/Afghanistan (DEPTEMPO) by PMOS | | |
| 1 | 0331 | 446.3 | 1 | 0231 | 1.91 |
| 2 | 0231 | 444.6 | 2 | 6154 | 1.84 |
| 3 | 0341 | 443.2 | 3 | 6113 | 1.83 |
| 4 | 0351 | 441.8 | 4 | 6153 | 1.80 |
| 5 | 6154 | 436.2 | 5 | 6114 | 1.77 |
| 6 | 6112 | 435.1 | 6 | 0352 | 1.74 |
| 7 | 0352 | 430.8 | 7 | 2671 | 1.72 |
| 8 | 0811 | 430.5 | 8 | 0351 | 1.71 |
| 9 | 6217 | 429.7 | 9 | 0331 | 1.70 |
| 10 | 0311 | 423.9 | 10 | 0341 | 1.68 |

In FY10, across all PMOSs, the average days deployed was 316.1 and the average number of deployments to Iraq/Afghanistan was 1.2.



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For the most recent fiscal year available (FY10), the PMOSs with the highest PERSTEMPO were:

- 0331 (Machine Gunner)
- 0231 (Intelligence Specialist)
- 0341 (Mortarman)
- 0351 (Infantry Assaultman)
- 6154 (Huey/Cobra Airframe Mechanic)
- 6112 (Helicopter Mechanic, CH-46)
- 0352 (Anti-Tank Missileman)
- 0811 (Field Artillery Cannoneer)
- 6217 (Fixed Wing Aircraft Mechanic, F/A-18)
- 0311 (Rifleman).

The PMOSs with the highest DEPTEMPO were:

- 0231 (Intelligence Specialist)
- 6154 (Huey/Cobra Airframe Mechanic)
- 6113 (Helicopter Mechanic, CH-53)
- 6153 (CH-53 Airframe Mechanic)
- 6114 (Huey/Cobra Mechanic)
- 0352 (Anti-Tank Missileman)
- 2671 (Middle East Cryptologic Linguist)
- 0351 (Infantry Assaultman)
- 0331 (Machine Gunner)
- 0341 (Mortarman).

PMOSs with lowest average FY10 PERSTEMPO and DEPTTEMPO

| PMOS with over 50 Marines and lowest averages | | | | | |
|---|------|-------|---|------|------|
| Average days deployed (PERSTEMPO) by PMOS | | | Average number of deployments to Iraq/Afghanistan (DEPTTEMPO) by PMOS | | |
| 1 | 5831 | 29.9 | 1 | 5524 | 0.13 |
| 2 | 5524 | 51.0 | 2 | 5831 | 0.14 |
| 3 | 4421 | 63.7 | 3 | 4421 | 0.25 |
| 4 | 0121 | 73.5 | 4 | 0121 | 0.31 |
| 5 | 3112 | 106.5 | 5 | 6317 | 0.50 |
| 6 | 3432 | 123.8 | 6 | 0151 | 0.52 |
| 7 | 0151 | 125.7 | 7 | 3112 | 0.52 |
| 8 | 4341 | 133.3 | 8 | 3432 | 0.54 |
| 9 | 7257 | 155.0 | 9 | 4341 | 0.62 |
| 10 | 7051 | 159.0 | 10 | 7051 | 0.62 |

In FY10, across all PMOSs, the average days deployed was 316.1 and the average number of deployments to Iraq/Afghanistan was 1.2.



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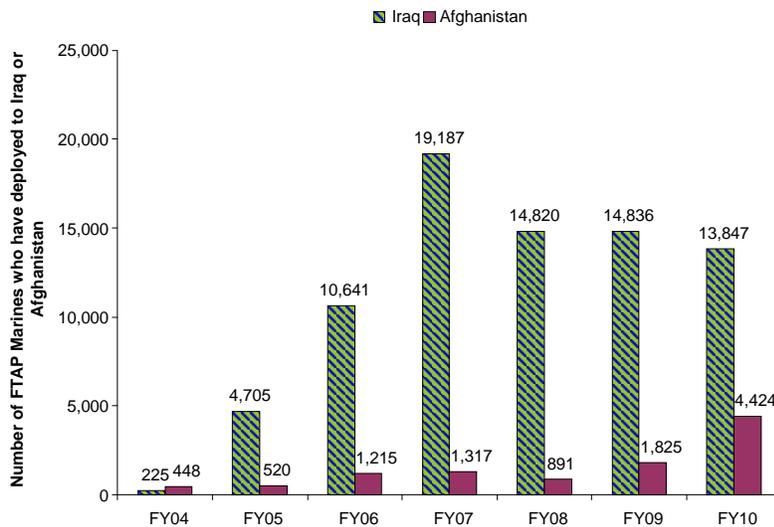
For the most recent fiscal year available (FY10), the PMOSs with the lowest PERSTEMPO were:

- 5831 (Correctional Specialist)
- 5524 (Musician)
- 4421 (Legal Services Specialist)
- 0121 (Personnel Clerk)
- 3112 (Distribution Management Specialist)
- 3432 (Finance Technician)
- 0151 (Administrative Clerk)
- 4341 (Combat Correspondent)
- 7257 (Air Traffic Controller)
- 7051 (Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Specialist).

The PMOSs with the lowest DEPTTEMPO were:

- 5524 (Musician)
- 5831 (Correctional Specialist)
- 4421 (Legal Services Specialist)
- 0121 (Personnel Clerk)
- 6317 (FA-18 Communication/Navigation/Radar Systems).
- 0151 (Administrative Clerk)
- 3112 (Distribution Management Specialist)
- 3432 (Finance Technician)
- 4341 (Combat Correspondent)
- 7051 (Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Specialist).

Trends in deployment experience of FTAP Marines



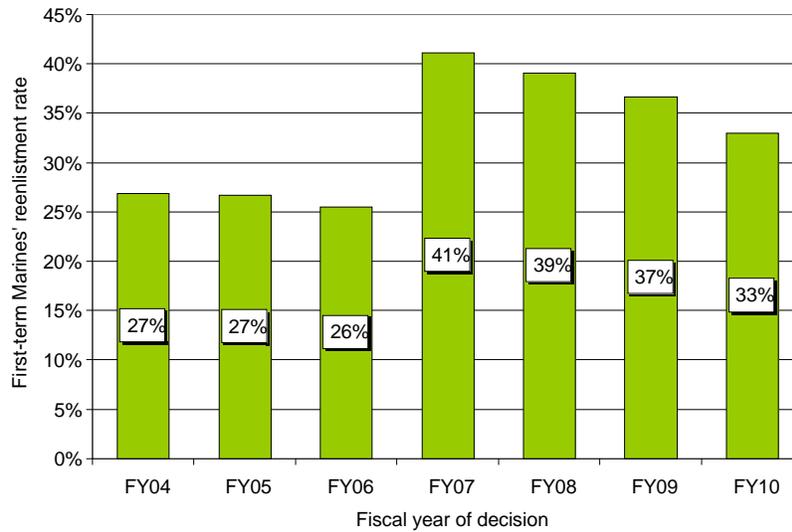
CNA

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This slide shows the numbers of FTAP Marines deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan in each of the past 7 years.

It shows that the number of Marines who have deployed to Afghanistan increased in FY10. In contrast, the number of Marines who have deployed to Iraq decreased.

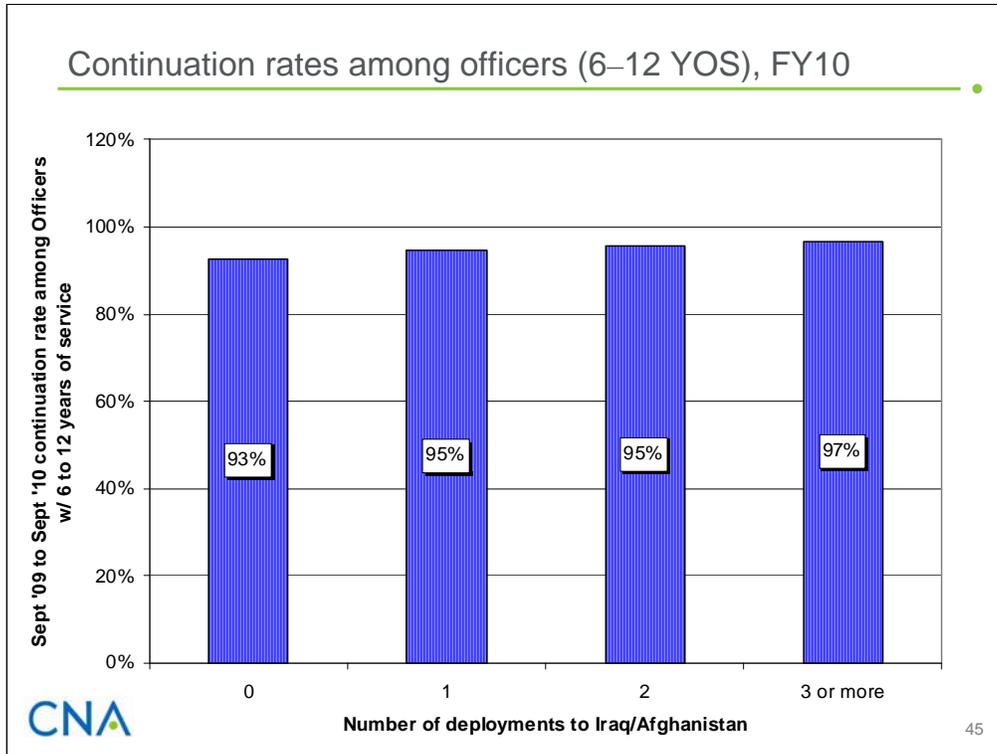
Overall FTAP reenlistment rate (FY04 – FY10)



CNA

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This slide shows that FTAP Marines, overall, reenlisted at a lower rate in FY10 than in any of the previous years since FY07. A number of factors might account for the lower reenlistment rate, including the end of 202K growth, stricter adherence to boatspace caps, and lower SRBs than in the previous fiscal year.



In the main part of this annotated briefing, we showed that, overall, having more deployments does not negatively affect officer continuation rates.

This slide breaks out the officer data for those with 6 to 12 YOS because there has been concern that they might leave the Corps if they are deployed too often. This slide shows that this is not the case. In fact, officers with one or two deployments to Iraq/Afghanistan have higher continuation rates than do those with no deployments. And the continuation rate for officers with the most deployments (three or more) is the highest of all.

The finding shown here is consistent with our earlier work on the effect of deployments on officer continuation rates.

Drawing conclusions from structured interview responses

- Purpose of structured interviews different from statistical analysis
 - Uncover viewpoints/opinions about emerging issues
 - Pay attention to how people use words to describe thoughts/opinions
 - Invite differing opinions
- We drew conclusions about direction of opinion after “triangulation”
 - Asked for reasons for an opinion, how strongly believed
 - Asked whether groups agreed or disagreed with a person
 - Asked later groups whether they agreed with what earlier groups said
- We concluded that an opinion was widely held when:
 - Expressed in three or more groups
 - Reasons were given for an opinion
- Other methods, such as surveys, are better for estimating percentage of population with particular opinions
- Structured interview groups are better for survey design and identification of future issues



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Our structured interviews and our statistical analyses have different purposes. Structured interviews are designed to uncover viewpoints and opinions about emerging issues. We paid particular attention to how respondents phrased their opinions because these might be the basis of future survey questions.

Structured interviews also allow us to tailor our questions to particular groups, rather than asking general questions of everybody. For example, we could ask FTAP Marines about their own thinking about reenlistment, and we could ask sergeants what FTAP Marines were telling their NCOs about reenlistment decisions. When we met with groups of pilots, we could ask questions specific to the pilot community. In structured interviews, we have more opportunity to discover if there is a misunderstanding of a particular policy because the Marines in the groups explain things in their own words. In this way, structured interviews offer the opportunity to gather more detail than a survey usually allows.

The conclusions that we drew from these structured interviews are what we heard most often after “triangulation.” If a participant expressed an opinion, we asked how strongly he or she believed it and asked the group whether others agreed or disagreed. We then would ask later groups whether they also agreed or could validate what we had heard. We concluded that an opinion was widely held if we heard it expressed in three or more groups, if the opinion was held emphatically, or if the respondents had reasons for their opinions and few (or no) counterarguments were given.

The point of structured interviews is not to estimate the percentage of Marines with particular opinions. Surveys are a better method for doing that. However, structured interviews are useful for getting information that could be used to design survey questions or to identify or anticipate issues that would not reveal themselves in surveys.

References



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