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**THESIS**

**ISSUES SURROUNDING THE DEPLOYABILITY OF SINGLE  
AND DUAL-SERVICE PARENTS IN THE NAVY**

by

Valerie LaJetta Reynolds

June 1991

Thesis Advisor:  
Co-Advisor:

Alice M. Crawford  
Mark J. Eitelberg

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ISSUES SURROUNDING THE DEPLOYABILITY  
OF SINGLE AND DUAL-SERVICE PARENTS  
IN THE NAVY

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT

from the

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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis investigates some of the issues associated with single and dual-service parents in the Navy and the ability of the Navy to manage these individuals. Information from two surveys of active-duty Navy personnel, statistics from the Defense Manpower Data Center, and data from the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-13W) were obtained to meet the objectives of the thesis. This research determined that single and dual-service parents account for a relatively small proportion (8 percent) of the Navy's total force. The problems associated with these individuals appear minor and manageable. In addition, their productivity level is generally no different from that of other service members. The Navy has a policy governing the dependent care responsibilities of single and dual-service parents that proved to be effective during the Persian Gulf War. However, a slight modification of the policy may be required to ensure continuous readiness.



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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. PROBLEM

The average military person in today's All-Volunteer Force is more likely than in previous years to be married and have children. The percentage of married military personnel rose from about 40 percent in 1970 to 60 percent in 1990, and the average number of dependents per member increased from one to almost two [Ref. 1]. Military analysts believe that these factors could have important implications for the performance of military personnel, especially those who are deployed. This transformation has caused the military to deal with a whole new set of responsibilities concerning deployment.

Many times during Operation Desert Shield/Storm, there were accounts in the news media of military personnel who were forced to leave their young children behind as they departed for war. The American people responded, expressing concern about the welfare of these children and asking what the Department of Defense (DoD) would do to care for them [Ref. 2].

The DoD policy states that military members, including single and dual-service parents, must be available to deploy on very short notice. "Dual-service parents" are married

couples with children in which both the husband and wife are in the military, either in the same service or in different ones. Single parents are unmarried individuals with custody of at least one minor child. The Persian Gulf War revealed that there were some problems with the deployment of single and dual-service parents. For example, a Navy female reserve member moved to Maine from Santa Ana, California. Subsequently, she was identified for recall to the Naval Hospital, Camp Pendleton. She has two small children (ages 2 and 4) and was in the process of a divorce. Her mother was not able to care for her two children. The Navy modified her orders from Naval Hospital, Camp Pendleton to the Branch Medical Clinic in Brunswick, Maine [Ref. 3]. The situation in the Persian Gulf has thus served to bring attention to this issue.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

Single parents make up four percent of the Navy's active duty force, and dual-service couples account for another four percent [Ref. 4]. If the military is compelled to exempt them from deployment to areas of imminent danger, readiness will be reduced, recruiting and training costs will increase, and a loss of valuable experience will result [Ref. 2]. The primary objective of this thesis is to determine the impact that single and dual-service parents have on the Navy,

and the ability of the Navy to manage them. Secondary objectives include:

- Determine whether single and dual-service parents are complying with the Navy's policy so that they are available to deploy on short notice; and, if not, whether the policy should be modified.
- Determine whether single and dual-service parents are more or less productive than other service members.
- Determine whether single parents are abusing the hardship/discharge system as a way out of the military.

#### **C. AREA OF RESEARCH**

This thesis addresses military and family issues with respect to the deployment of single and dual-service parents. In addition, this thesis looks at how the current deployment policy affects these individuals. For a very long time, military regulations have stated that dual-service and single parents must designate someone in advance to take care of their dependents in case of deployment. During peacetime, this regulation was never fully enforced by the military [Ref. 5]. One can assume that this was the reason for dependent care problems with respect to single and dual-service parents during the Persian Gulf War.

#### **D. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

Historical events, deployment policies for DoD and the Navy, and recent societal changes identify issues involving both the military and military families, and they are used to

create a foundation for the thesis research. These issues address the need for examination of the Navy's current deployment policy.

In addition, empirical data gathered from the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-13W) and the Defense Manpower Data Center, Monterey are used to evaluate the impact that single and dual-service parents have on the Navy. The empirical data from OP-13W include the 1990 Navy-Wide Survey that was given to a sample of single parents and dual-service couples in the Navy concerning dependent care and other issues that affect deployment. This survey is used to assess various issues addressed throughout the thesis.

Current statistics on single parents in the Navy may overestimate their true number. The Navy does not maintain a separate data base on these individuals. Single parents are determined through financial records. Consequently, individuals who are divorced, but are paying child support, are classified as "single parents"; and they may not actually have custody of their children [Ref. 6]. The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-16) is currently developing a more accurate system for identifying single parents that will facilitate future research in this area.

## **E. ORGANIZATION**

Chapter II gives a historical view of events and policies that are relevant to the current military family structure.

Chapter III reviews recent studies conducted in this area. Chapter IV presents the methodology and approach that is used in order to meet the research objectives. Chapter V presents the results and discussion derived from the data presented in Chapter IV. Chapter VI examines policy alternatives and offers several recommendations.

## II. BACKGROUND

Prior to the Vietnam War, the military was primarily composed of single, young men without any family responsibilities [Ref.1]. By 1969, the percentage of married, Navy enlisted men had risen to 40 percent [Ref. 7: p.6]. With the start of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) in 1973, the military family structure began to change. The conventional family pattern of a military member with a civilian wife became somewhat less prevalent than it had been. There was also a commensurate increase in dual-service couples, single parents, and marriages between female Navy members and civilian husbands [Ref. 8: p.11].

### A. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE POLICY

In the early stages of the AVF, the Department of Defense (DoD) was not certain that the supply of male volunteers would continue to meet the services' requirements. The AVF was a new venture, and many uncertainties remained. In 1972, the Secretary of Defense set up a Central All-Volunteer Task Force to evaluate various options for maintaining personnel strength. The task force was ordered to study the use of military women and to prepare contingency plans for increasing the number of women to offset manpower shortages anticipated

upon termination of the draft. The study evaluated the desirability, feasibility, and propriety of repealing the regulations pertaining to the involuntary separation of women for parenthood [Ref. 3]. As a result, DoD amended its policy, and provision was made for exceptions to separations on a case-by-case basis [Ref. 9].

The family policy arena became the site of some of the most emotional policy battles of the seventies. For a long time, DoD rested on the assumption that a woman's natural responsibilities as a wife or mother were inherently incompatible with her military duties. The policy of involuntary separation for pregnancy or parenthood was based in law and Executive Order [Ref. 10]. Finally, in August 1975, DoD abandoned the policy that forced women to leave the military if they became pregnant, had a child, adopted or otherwise obtained custody of a minor child [Ref. 9].

In contrast to the old policy, the current policy is that all personnel may have children, but they must remain unencumbered and be able to respond to any contingency when called upon to do so. Therefore, permanent or prolonged deferment from reassignment cannot be considered. However, there may be times when members, due to circumstances beyond their control, cannot acquire adequate care for their children. In these cases, the member may request a voluntary

discharge for reasons of dependency, or the Service may process the member on an involuntary basis.

#### **B. NAVY POLICY**

The Navy requires its members to carry their load, each taking his or her turn of assignment including duty in imminent danger/hostile fire areas. Members are required to make necessary dependent care arrangements in the event that they are forced to leave their family behind. This policy applies equally to military couples and single member parents. The purpose of this policy is to ensure combat readiness of the forces [Ref. 11].

Every military member of the Navy has freely made a pledge to carry out assigned duties whenever and wherever needed. This commitment makes the military unique and is a basic tenet of an effective, voluntary fighting force. Military duty requires members to be assignable to worldwide locations. When they are unable or unwilling to keep this commitment, they may request separation from the Navy.

The Navy is sensitive to the needs of all military families, including the special needs of single parents and military couples. When members, due to circumstances beyond their control, cannot provide adequate dependent child care, the procedure in the Navy is as follows:

- First, emergency or ordinary leave is used as a means of easing the hardship and/or resolving the problem. If the



nature of the situation is such that the problem cannot be resolved in a short period of time, reassignment or the deferment of assignment, of a temporary nature, is considered.

- For instances which are temporary in nature, permissive humanitarian reassignment/deferment policies which are considered on individual merit, taking into account the human factors involved, the skills and length of service of the applicant, and the manning priorities and requirements. These temporary assignments are normally approved when it is clearly in the best interest of the Navy.
- If the situation fails to be resolved or evolves into a longer term problem, the member is considered for hardship discharge [Ref. 11].

### C. SINGLE AND DUAL-SERVICE PARENTS

Single parents in the military are a relatively new phenomenon. There are 25,909 single parents in the Navy [Ref. 12]. Of this number, 19,649 are men and 6,260 are women [Ref. 12]. Twenty years ago, there were no female single parents in the Navy. Women who acquired parental status (either through pregnancy or marriage) were separated from the Navy. Male single parents were almost unheard of. It was rare for a father to retain custody of his children when parents divorced [Ref. 9]. A very small portion of single parents enlist in the Navy. The Navy requires that single applicants relinquish custody of their children before being allowed to enlist [Ref. 13].

A small but growing proportion of military families are dual-service parents. Of the Navy's total active-duty force,

less than four percent are dual-service parents [Ref. 4]. There is some concern about the deployability of dual-service parents because they, like single parents, do not have a civilian spouse to assume parental responsibilities. This is probably the most significant problem among dual-service and single parents.

In April 1982, the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-01) and the Commander, Naval Military Personnel Command (CNMPC) established a committee to review policies relating to single parents, military couples, and pregnant members [Ref. 14]. The primary goal of this committee was to establish policies that were sensitive to the concerns of the individual, provide the tools by which members could accomplish personal career planning, and still be responsive to the needs of the Navy. This committee surveyed 5,000 Navy units worldwide. Of this number, only 120 units cited any problems. Only 64 of the 120 units had single parents. Based upon this, the committee found that the Navy's problem with these members was small. The committee recommended that the Navy continue with its current assignment policy, facilitate child-care opportunities at problem locations, and avoid assigning single parents to locations likely to create severe problems [Ref. 14].

Two years later, the Navy promulgated an instruction that described the policy on dependent care responsibilities in relation to the accomplishment of a member's military

duties [Ref. 15]. This was the Navy's first instruction on dependent care responsibilities. In addition, it outlined procedures for counseling single parents and military couples with dependents on dependent care responsibility. All single and dual-service parents in the Navy are required to complete a Dependent Care Certificate, which is attached to the instruction, each time they are assigned to a new duty station. The purpose of this form is to ensure the availability of all personnel in short-notice situations.

The creation of the AVF and the increased role of women in the military have transformed the conventional military family from that of a military husband, civilian wife, and children. The new family structure resulted in an increase in single parents, dual-service couples, and marriages between female military members and civilian husbands. This chapter presented a brief historical view of military policies supportive of the changes made in the military family structure. The next chapter reviews recent studies conducted in this area.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### A. THE FAMILY VERSUS THE MILITARY

Child care is perhaps the most important family issue ever to demand the attention of employers, who, throughout history, have rarely become involved in domestic matters [Ref. 16: p. 10]. Traditionally, most employers have taken an adversarial role in family matters. One of the major concerns of employers has been the ability of employees to reconcile their occupational and family responsibilities [Ref. 17: p. 95]. Given unique personal and professional requirements, this conflict may be even more pronounced in the military. Although it is economically and logistically easier to deal only with single military members, the reality is that the vast majority of people are bound to develop personal relationships and acquire dependents. Thus, the family institution has become inextricably entwined with military manpower issues [Ref. 16: p.11].

At the same time, both the military and the family have been characterized as "greedy" institutions, making great demands of individuals in terms of commitment, loyalty, time, and energy [Ref. 18]. In the past, the family was expected to adapt to the demands of the military institution

and support the service member in meeting military obligations. However, important changes in societal trends in general, and in military family patterns in particular, are making this adaptability problematic. Because of these trends--which include changes in women's roles in society, as well as increases in the number of married military personnel, single parents, and dual-service couples--military family demands are growing, thus increasing the potential conflict between the military and the family [Ref. 16: p.13].

## **B. LIFESTYLE CHARACTERISTICS**

The military makes various demands on service members to accomplish its mission. While some demands vary in frequency and intensity among and within the services, over the course of a military career a family can expect to experience many demands. Military families reflect many characteristics which set them apart from society. Characteristics of the military lifestyle include risk of injury or death, geographic mobility, periodic separation, and residence in a foreign country [Ref. 18].

### **1. Risk of Injury or Death**

The risk that military personnel will be wounded or killed in the course of their duties is an obvious aspect of the institution's demands. The legitimacy for the institution to place its members at such physical risk is the greatest demand of all. While this risk is greatest in wartime,

peacetime military training maneuvers entail some risk of injury, and military personnel can be sent at any moment to areas of armed conflict.

The Navy Safety Center maintains statistics that are classified as "operational" or "non-operational" on the number of Navy deaths. "Operational" means job-related accidents and "non-operational" means everything else that is not considered as job-related. In fiscal 1990, the Navy Safety Center reported 48 deaths due to operational causes and 204 deaths that occurred in a non-operational environment [Ref. 19]. These 252 accidental deaths account for just 0.04 percent of naval personnel serving on active duty during the year.

## 2. Geographic Mobility

Approximately one-third of any particular military base changes its personnel every year [Ref. 20: p. 6]. Hunter and Sheldon [Ref. 20] cite mixed reports on the advantages and disadvantages of mobility for military families. The positive aspects include the following: family members may gain valuable cultural experiences in conjunction with educational knowledge; the family may become more unified; and the service member may advance more rapidly in his or her career. On the negative side, the dependents (children and adolescents) may not be able to adapt quickly to a strange, new environment. At the

same time, limited educational services, limited community resources, fewer occupational opportunities for the spouse, separation of the family during transfers, limited monetary funds during the moving process, frequent moving of household items, and adjusting to a new social/cultural environment make life difficult for the mobile military family.

### **3. Periodic Separations**

A major aspect of the Navy family is a lifestyle punctuated by separations [Ref. 17: p.113]. Military demands often necessitate that service members be away from their families. During peacetime, periodic separations include military schooling or training, sea duty, and unaccompanied tours. The length of these separations generally varies from a few days to a year. Wartime separations can be much longer as well as indefinite [Ref. 18: p.19].

Some effects of separations on families vary depending on the type of separation. Separations always require adjustment by service members and their dependents. During peacetime separations, the most common problems experienced are loneliness, physical illness, and problems with minor children. Wartime separations carry special problems and sources of stress. Concern for the service member's safety can be paramount [Ref. 18: p.20].

Separations also have potentially beneficial effects. They allow for individual growth and for development of

marital relationships. Some relationships benefit from a period of less intense interaction. Separations cause families to appreciate each other more. However, the difficulties of separations usually outweigh the benefits [Ref. 18: p.21].

#### **4. Residence in Foreign Countries**

Periodic foreign assignments bring to the military family both benefits and hardships. Because of the role of the United States in the balance of world power, even in peacetime, a substantial portion of American military personnel are stationed overseas. All of the advantages and disadvantages mentioned under "Geographic Mobility" are experienced in an extreme form. The initial reaction is often one of culture shock. Behavioral norms differ on matters both serious and mundane, and language barriers can lead to feelings of isolation and, sometimes, fear [Ref. 18: p. 21].

In addition, economic problems are prevalent when the foreign currency exchange rate is unfavorable to the U.S. dollar and spouses experience difficulty obtaining employment. Families who are not command-sponsored--that is, those who accompanied the service member on a set of "unaccompanied orders"--must live on the economy, and tend to be isolated from formal and informal military institutional support [Ref. 18: p.22]. These families must live outside of the military installation because they are ineligible for military housing.



This may create a financial hardship and the military is not obligated to provide any type of assistance.

### **C. MEMBERS AND LIKELIHOOD OF INVOLVEMENT**

In the past, conflict between military requirements and family needs was avoided when the family adapted to the military's demands. The military family structure today is not the same as it was 20 years ago. The increase in married personnel, active duty women, and single and dual-service parents are the most notable changes. However, the family members of military personnel are much more independent and demanding than in the past. In turn, this means a heightened potential for conflict between the military and the family [Ref. 18: p. 24].

#### **1. Active Duty Women**

Military women are less likely than their male counterparts to be married or have children. In March 1990, only 39 percent of all active-duty Navy women were married; and, almost 60 percent of these married women had no children. Of the 61 percent of single, active-duty Navy women, 89 percent were childless. In contrast, while 52 percent of all active-duty Navy men were married, approximately 32 percent of these married men had no children [Ref. 16: p.13].

#### **2. Dual-Service Couples**

More women in the military generally means more dual-service couples. As of February 1991, the number of dual

military members in the Navy was 22,958 (11,479 couples) [Ref. 12].

Dual-service couples are often seen as a problem for personnel management because these couples desire "joint domicile," which requires the military to coordinate the assignments of two people. There is also concern about the deployability of couples with children because they do not have a civilian spouse to assume parental responsibilities [Ref. 18: p.27].

However, with respect to assignment of couples, these families may not have much conflict with the military. Although collocated assignments may sometimes be difficult to arrange, it is generally easier to place a military couple in a single area than to coordinate a military assignment to accommodate a civilian spouse's employment [Ref. 16: p.13].

### **3. Single Parents**

As of February 1991, there were 25,909 active-duty Navy single parents. Of this number, 18,410 were enlisted men [Ref. 12]. The family demands are typically greater for single parents because there is no other parent or partner to share in child care responsibilities. Conflict between military obligations and family demands can therefore occur for these parents [Ref. 18: p.29].

#### **4. An Increasing and Relatively High Proportion of Married Military Personnel**

In fiscal 1974, approximately 52 percent of all enlisted personnel were married. Over the next six years, the figure dropped to 47 percent. Manpower analysts attribute this decline to a general erosion of military compensation and benefits in the 1970s. The decade of the eighties witnessed a series of military pay raises, a general restoration of economic benefits, and increased interest in the well-being of the military family. By fiscal 1989, the proportion of married enlisted personnel had risen to 53 percent--including 53 percent of those in the Army, 47 percent in the Navy, 44 percent in the Marine Corps, and 64 percent in the Air Force [Ref. 21].

Marriage rates in the officer corps are typically higher than those in the enlisted force. As of fiscal 1989, almost 72 percent of all active-duty officers were married, with the following proportions by service: Army, 72 percent; Navy, 67 percent; Marine Corps, 71 percent, and Air Force, 75 percent [Ref. 21].

Comparisons of marriage rates in the military with those in the civilian sector are somewhat problematic because of differences between the military's enlisted force and officer corps. In addition, the age distribution of military personnel is quite dissimilar from that of the general population, and marriage rates tend to vary by age.

Nevertheless, in 1989, census figures showed that about 58 percent of all persons between the ages of 18 and 44 in the general population were married. Though the proportion of married personnel in the enlisted force appears lower than the civilian rate, further comparison by age, labor sector, income, education, and gender (the enlisted force is 89 percent male) would probably show that people in the military (enlistees as well as officers) are generally "more Married" than their civilian counterparts.

The military, by its nature, produces some degree of inconvenience for service members and their families. Furthermore, requirements for maintaining a certain level of readiness will continue to require occasional separations of the military family. However, the more military policy makers take family needs into account, the less the conflict will be between the family and the military. The next chapter presents the results of data analyzed to determine the impact that single and dual-service parents have on the Navy.

#### IV. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

There are a variety of assertions about single and dual-service parents, their impact on the Navy, and the ability of the Navy to manage them. Military analysts believe that these individuals have a significant impact on the readiness level of Naval forces. Many Navy personnel managers disagree. They see the readiness problems associated with single and dual-service parents as relatively minor [Ref 14].

However, the unprecedented deployment of single parents and married couples with children to the Persian Gulf confronted the military with problems that it had never faced before. The news media played up the issue of "military moms" torn away from their dependent children and Gulf War "orphans" abandoned by their soldier-parents. The American public reacted with concern about minor children being separated from their parents. In addition, there were complaints from military personnel who felt pangs of guilt and worry about leaving their children behind in the care of friends or relatives.

These concerns and complaints caused Congress to consider several bills with respect to single and dual-service parents. One bill brought before Congress proposed the exemption of single parents and one member of a dual-service couple from serving in the Persian Gulf. By a 54-38 vote, the Senate

rejected this proposal [Ref. 22]. Congress felt that it would be unwise to exempt individuals from combat who were already serving in the Persian Gulf. It was also said that a policy of excluding single parents or a dual-military member from serving in the War would be paramount to treating these people as second-class citizens, which would benefit neither the individual nor the Navy [Ref. 11]. However, Congress agreed that the current deployment policy needs to be updated and uniformly applied across all of the services.

Another bill rejected by Congress was for the exemption of service by women with infants younger than 6 months. However, Pentagon officials are currently considering a similar policy for active duty and reserve single and dual-service parents with children under 6 months old [Ref. 22]. For active duty members, all female and male single parents with custody of an infant child would be exempt from either temporary or permanent reassignment on an unaccompanied tour until the child is 6 months old. Second, for dual-service couples who adopt a child of any age, one member of that relationship would be allowed to remain at the current duty station to care for the child for at least 6 months. Last, reserve female and male single parents with custody of an infant would be exempt from mobilization for other than active duty for training. If this policy is approved, it would apply in both peacetime and war.

The objectives of this thesis were explained in Chapter I. These objectives will be achieved by examining data obtained from the sources mentioned below.

#### A. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The statistics used in this thesis were taken from four primary sources: (1) The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-13W); (2) Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), Monterey; (3) *1990 Update on Progress of Women in the Navy*; and (4) *1990 Navy-Wide Survey of Pregnancy and Parenthood*.

The information obtained from OP-13W included several recent reports on single parents and dual-service couples being deployed to the Persian Gulf War. In addition, copies of speeches prepared for Congressional hearings were included. This information incorporated current statistics on single parents and dual-service couples, and a summary of the bills before Congress to exempt these individuals from deployment.

Data obtained from DMDC included statistics on military families of all branches of the services from 1972 to present, including persons assigned to Operation Desert Storm/Shield. In addition, statistics were also obtained on persons who were discharged from the military for reasons of hardship or dependency.

The *1990 Update on Progress of Women in the Navy* was conducted by the Navy Women's Study Group. This group was tasked by the Secretary of the Navy in November 1990 to

provide an update on the progress of Navy women. The study group acquired its information from surveys, interviews, briefings, and reports from a variety of sources. Information was provided from fleet, field, and headquarters activities, from leadership and support personnel, and from individual service members, ranging from recruit to flag officer. The following is a breakdown of the study group's data sources, as noted in its report [Ref. 6]:

#### Surveys

- 1990 Study Group Survey (4,073 Respondents)
- 1990 Navy Personnel Survey (11,884 Respondents)
- 1990 Navy EO Climate Survey (5,558 Respondents)
- 1990 Study Group Legal Survey (82 Commands)

#### Interviews

- 1,300 Women, Randomly Selected
- 1,400 Men, Randomly Selected

#### Briefings

- Detailed briefings on policy and progress associated with female/male work relationships within the Navy.

#### Reports

- Black Women in the Navy Study Group Report
- Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) Executive Committee 1990 European Trip Report
- Women Midshipmen Study Group Report (July 1990)
- 1990 Study Group Telephone Hotline



The 1990 Navy-Wide Survey of Pregnancy and Parenthood was administered by mail to a selected group of personnel from the January 1990 file of all active duty personnel. The following shows the number of surveys mailed and returned [Ref. 5]:

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>
Surveys Mailed	2,783	3,820
Nondeliverable	217	365
Actual Returns	1,656	2,095
Response Rate	65 percent	59 percent

The purpose of this survey was to determine whether or not the pregnancy and parenthood rates were changing from what was reported in the 1988 survey, and to verify information concerning the characteristics of enlisted personnel who comprised these two groups. In addition, data regarding dependent children, outcomes of pregnancy, and knowledge of pregnancy policies were gathered. Two versions of the survey were designed, one for women and one for men. The items were the same for three sections of the survey: (1) descriptive information about the respondents and their Navy jobs; (2) parenthood data (e.g., number and ages of children living in household, child care, single parent status); and (3) knowledge of, and experiences with, Navy policies regarding pregnant women and single parents. The women's version of the survey also included questions about outcomes of pregnancies in the Navy [Ref. 5].

The issues of concern in this thesis, for both single and dual-service parents, are: (1) productivity on the job; (2) compliance of policies for ensuring deployment; (3) deployment problems associated with Persian Gulf; and (4) abuse of the hardship/dependency discharge system.

## **B. APPROACH**

Issues concerning the deployability of single and dual-service parents are examined and discussed on a management level, not on an individual level. That is, the focus is on this group of people and any problems that the group, as a whole, may experience in comparison with other service members. Personal problems and perceptions of individuals in the group are not addressed here. The population itself is first studied to place the issue in perspective.

Research then looks at the productivity level of single and dual-service parents in the Navy. It is important to know whether these individuals are more or less productive than other service members. If they are less productive, then the Navy may be faced with readiness problems, or these individuals may have an adverse effect on national security. It is anticipated that no major differences will be found in the levels of productivity exhibited by these parents and other service members.

Another area of interest concerns the number and proportion of single and dual-service parents who are

complying with the Navy's deployment policy and are thus available to deploy on short notice. The Navy has a well-established policy in place to ensure the availability of single and dual-service parents. Non-compliance of this policy may result in a significant number of single and dual-service parents not able to deploy, which will also result in reduced readiness. In fact, it is likely that a substantial number of single and dual-service parents do not have current dependent care arrangements in accordance with the Navy's deployment policy.

A related question is: Did single and dual-service parents pose any special problem to personnel managers during the Persian Gulf War? When Desert Shield started, there were a number of personnel problems associated with the deployment. For example, it was said that the deployment was hampered to some extent by service members who had not made the necessary long-term arrangements for care of their children.

A final issue examined here is whether or not single parents are abusing the hardship/dependency discharge system as a way out of the military. Single parents in a deployable status are normally viewed as unable to handle both a military career and their family. This situation, it follows, may eventually compel them to relinquish their military career. To what extent, if at all, is this true?

Each of the above issues is discussed in the next chapter.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. POPULATION DEFINITION

The All-Volunteer Force (AVF) is comprised of four primary elements: (1) Army, (2) Navy, (3) Marine Corps, and (4) Air Force. The literature review shows that the AVF has become increasingly more family-oriented. Military policy makers have responded over the years with actions and specific regulations to ensure the well-being of military dependents. Table I shows the number of active-duty military personnel within each of the marital/dependent categories. Table II shows the percentage distribution of these people by service. "Dependents" in this table do not include spouses. Children, dependent elderly persons, or disabled dependent adult children are considered as dependents. For the Navy, people classified as "Divorced without Dependents" are included in the "Single without Dependents" category and those classified as "Divorced with Dependents" are assigned to the "Single with Dependents" category.

TABLE I. NUMBER OF ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY PERSONNEL BY MARITAL/DEPENDENT STATUS AND SERVICE, APRIL 1991

MARITAL/ DEPENDENT STATUS	ARMY	NAVY	MARINE CORPS	AIR FORCE	ALL SERVICES
Married Without Dependents	129,275	101,807	33,880	123,322	388,284
Married With Dependents	289,275	191,162	58,467	233,082	771,986
Single Without Dependents	265,264	254,902	93,532	140,191	753,889
Single With Dependents	14,630	25,596	4,322	4,828	49,376
Divorced Without Dependents	8,898	(a)	2,071	11,645	22,614
Divorced With Dependents	19,192	(b)	3,914	17,634	40,740
Unknown	1,324	0	0	117	1,441
TOTAL	727,858	573,467	196,186	530,819	2,028,330

(a) Included with "Single Without Dependents".

(b) Included with "Single With Dependents".

Source: Defense Manpower Data Center.

**TABLE II. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY PERSONNEL BY MARITAL/DEPENDENT STATUS AND SERVICE, APRIL 1991**

MARITAL/ DEPENDENT STATUS	ARMY	NAVY	MARINE CORPS	AIR FORCE	ALL SERVICES
Married Without Dependents	17.8	17.8	17.3	23.2	19.1
Married With Dependents	39.8	33.3	29.8	43.9	38.1
Single Without Dependents	36.4	44.4	47.7	26.4	37.2
Single With Dependents	2.0	4.5	2.2	0.9	2.4
Divorced Without Dependents	1.2	(a)	1.1	2.2	1.1
Divorced With Dependents	2.6	(b)	2.0	3.3	2.0
Unknown	0.2	0	0	(c)	0.1
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Included with "Single Without Dependents".

(b) Included with "Single With Dependents"

(c) Less than 0.05 percent.

Source: Defense Manpower Data Center.

Table II shows that over 57 percent of the total force is married (as of April 1991). Approximately 38 percent of all military personnel (almost 772,00 people) are married with some type of dependent (spouses not included). On the other hand, single and divorced members with dependents are a small proportion (about 4 percent) of the AVF.

Of 90,116 single and divorced members in the AVF with some type of dependents (children, dependent elderly persons, and disabled dependent children, etc.), approximately 66,000, according to the Department of Defense, are single parents. In addition, dual-service couples account for about 160,000 service members. Single and dual-service parents make up 11 percent of the total force [Ref. 23]. With respect to the Navy, there are 25,596 single members with dependents (as shown in Table I). In addition, there are 22,958 dual-service couples in the Navy [Ref. 12]. Of this number, 46.1 percent of the women and 3.3 percent of the men are married to another military member [Ref. 6].

Tables III and IV show that men in the Navy are more likely to be married than women. However, as seen in Table III, the proportion of women who are single parents (4.6 percent) is more than double that of their male counterparts (1.9 percent).

TABLE III. NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF NAVY OFFICERS BY GENDER AND MARITAL/DEPENDENT STATUS, 1989

Marital/Dependent Status	<u>Women</u>		<u>Men</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Married without children	2,422	28.3	13,864	20.5
Married with children	1,509	17.6	34,483	50.9
Single	4,247	49.5	18,090	26.7
Single Parents	394	4.6	1,267	1.9
TOTAL	8,572	100	67,704	100

Source: Department of Defense, Population Representation in the Military Services, Fiscal 1989 (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense [Force Management and Personnel], July 1990).



**TABLE IV. NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF NAVY ENLISTED PERSONNEL BY GENDER AND MARITAL/DEPENDENT STATUS, 1989**

Marital/Dependent Status	<u>Women</u>		<u>Men</u>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Married without children	13,428	25.4	74,748	15.7
Married with children	7,994	15.1	169,261	35.7
Single	25,597	48.3	212,097	44.7
Single Parents	5,901	11.2	18,438	3.9
TOTAL	52,920	100	474,544	100

Source: Department of Defense, Population Representation in the Military Services, Fiscal 1989 (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense [Force Management and Personnel], July 1990).

Basically, a small number of people (48,554 or 8 percent) of the Navy's active-duty force are single members with dependents and dual-service couples. Nevertheless, 48,554 service members is a significant number when considering exemptions from deployment.

#### **B. PRODUCTIVITY**

When single parents and both members of a dual-service couple with children deploy, they are obviously concerned about their children. They wonder whether or not the children are coping well with the separation and, to some extent, the care that the children are receiving. Because of these

worries, single and dual-service parents have been stereotyped by some as not being able to perform their duties as well as other service members.

In the 1990 Update on Progress of Women in the Navy, commanding officers and command master chiefs were interviewed concerning the productivity of single parents. They reported that supervisory personnel continue to attempt to balance meeting the special needs of single parents with providing fair and equitable assignments for other service members. This challenge is clearly heightened in overseas, remote, and high-cost CONUS areas. However, the Study Group survey results indicate that, of the 4,073 respondents with an opinion, 70 percent of those at paygrades E-6 and below and 60 percent of chief petty officers and officers believe single parents do not have a negative effect on mission accomplishment. In addition, approximately 80 percent of all respondents stated that single parents perform their job as well as any other service member [Ref. 6].

Thus, there is no strong evidence to support the notion that single parents are less productive than other persons in the Navy. Although the survey did not ask commanding officers and command master chiefs to rate the performances of dual-service parents, one can assume that they would be evaluated at least as well. This is based on the understanding that dual-service parents can share parental responsibilities and

may experience generally less conflict between job and family than a single parent.

### C. COMPLIANCE OF POLICIES

Normal deployment during peacetime temporarily reassigns personnel from their home duty station for a specific period (average time is 6 months). These reassignments are scheduled in advance, thus allowing the individuals to ensure that all personal matters are settled, especially the extended care of their dependents.

However, in the case of combat, rapid deployment occurs. Rapid deployment in this sense means immediate reassignment of personnel for an indefinite period. In the case of dual-service and single parents, this does not allow much time to ensure extended care of dependents if someone is not designated in advance to take care of them. All single and dual-service parents are required to make family care plans in anticipation of deployment. All Navy single and dual-service parents are required to complete a Dependent Care Certificate each time they are assigned to a new duty station [Ref. 15].

In the 1988 and 1990 Navy Wide Surveys of Pregnancy and Parenthood estimated completion rates of the Dependent Care Certificates were determined. The results are shown in Table V.

TABLE V. NAVY DEPENDENT CARE  
 CERTIFICATE COMPLETION RATES, BY  
 GENDER, 1988 AND 1990

<u>PERCENTAGE</u>			
<u>GENDER</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>
WOMEN	48	60	12
MEN	29	44	15
TOTAL	77	104	27

Source: Navy Personnel Research  
 and Development Center Survey of  
 Pregnancy and Parenthood.

As seen in Table V, there was a moderate increase in the percentage of single parents and military-married-to-military parents who reported completing a Dependent Care Certificate in 1990 than in 1988. Nevertheless, approximately 40 percent of the women and more than half of the men sampled did not have a Dependent Care Certificate on file. It appears from this that Navy personnel managers have not been doing an effective job in counseling their people and ensuring that dependent care certificates are completed.

**D. DEPLOYMENT PROBLEMS WITH OPERATION DESERT SHIELD/STORM**

News media coverage of the Persian Gulf War led many people to believe that there was a large portion of single and dual-service parents unable to deploy, and that these people delayed the deployment of several ships and units. Table VI

gives a breakdown of Navy single parents and dual-service couples that were assigned to Operation Desert Shield/Storm.

TABLE VI. NUMBER OF NAVY SINGLE PARENTS AND DUAL-SERVICE COUPLES ASSIGNED TO OPERATION DESERT SHIELD/STORM, BY GENDER AND OFFICER/ENLISTED STATUS, FEBRUARY 1991

<u>SINGLE PARENTS</u>					
<u>Enlisted</u>			<u>Officers</u>		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2,501	139	2,640	109	20	129

DUAL-MILITARY COUPLES

One Member in Gulf 1,020	Both Members in Gulf 44 (22 couples)
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Source: The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations  
(OP-13WB)--12 February 1991

The data provided by the Department of Navy do not show how many dual-military couples are actually dual-service parents. However, one can assume that the number is somewhat lower than that of dual-service couples (as seen in Table VI), since all couples are not parents.

There were a very small number of single parents and dual-service couples in the Navy assigned to the War. The problems that were perceived by the American public do not represent a significant amount of people. There were not enough single

parents assigned to the War to prevent or delay any ship from being deployed.

Despite the various complaints and negative perceptions about the Navy's deployment policy, it apparently does work. The real proof of its effectiveness was in the very small number of members who could not deploy in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm. Out of over 178,000 Navy and Marine Corps personnel deployed to the Persian Gulf, as of February 19, 1991, there were only two cases of active-duty personnel who were unable to participate because of single-parent status. These cases occurred because the designated dependent care provider was unable to take responsibility for the children, as had been previously agreed. Of the 20,000-plus reservists recalled to active duty, only eight were discharged as of February 19, 1991 for child-care-related hardship [Ref. 4]. These numbers were obtained by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) from the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-13W) [Ref. 24].

In addition, in the case of the Naval reserve call-up, there were delayed reporting periods of 72 hours to 10 days and modified mobilization orders for over 150 recalled reservists to solve dependent care issues [Ref. 4]. No data were available for active-duty personnel on the modification of orders.

## **E. ABUSE OF HARDSHIP/DEPENDENCY DISCHARGES**

The Navy has a well-established and effective policy governing the dependent care responsibilities of service members. This policy has been developed and refined over years of deployments endured by Navy personnel and their families. It is both simple and enforceable. All single parents and married couples with children are required to formally document dependent care plans and update them regularly. Should a change in dependent status occur, or a newly assigned member not yet have a workable care plan, the local command may defer deployment in the short term.

Short-term problems can normally be resolved by granting emergency/ordinary leave or humanitarian reassignments. Humanitarian reassignment is a temporary reassignment for individuals who are unable to deploy due to extenuating circumstances.

However, for long-term problems, when the dependent care plan may become inexecutable, the member is considered for a hardship/dependency discharge. Table VII shows the number and percentage of hardship/dependency discharges given to military members in 1980 and 1990.

TABLE VII. NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF HARDSHIP/DEPENDENCY DISCHARGE GRANTED TO OFFICERS AND ENLISTED PERSONNEL, BY SERVICE AND SINGLE/DEPENDENT STATUS, 1980 AND 1990

Service	1980			1990		
	Off	Enl	%	Off	Enl	%
<u>Army</u>						
Single Members	5	780	40	3	656	27
Members with Dependents	18	1,176	60	12	1,758	73
Total	23	1,956	100	15	2,414	100
<u>Navy</u>						
Single Members	*	155	36	1	264	31
Members with Dependents	*	280	64	1	581	69
Total	*	435	100	2	845	100
<u>Marine Corps</u>						
Single Members	*	131	59	0	181	40
Members with Dependents	*	91	41	1	268	60
Total	*	222	100	1	449	100
<u>Air Force</u>						
Single Members	8	518	27	0	192	22
Members with Dependents	16	1,421	73	9	664	78
Total	24	1,939	100	9	856	100
<u>All Services</u>						
Single Members	13	1,584	35	4	1,293	28
Members with Dependents	34	2,968	65	23	3,271	72
Total	47	4,552	100	27	4,564	100

\* Data Not Available

Source: Defense Manpower Data Center--April 1991



The hem item of interest here was the number of single parents receiving hardship/dependency discharges, but the data base did not provide the information necessary to identify single parents. There are, however, some interesting figures shown in Table VII.

For example, the data in Table VII reveal an increase in the percentages of hardship/dependency discharges given to service members with dependents over the past ten years. While the overall increase for the Navy appears small, the number actually doubled. In addition, the military as a whole grants a large number of hardship/dependency discharges to single members without dependents. In fiscal 1990, the Navy granted 31 percent of hardship/dependency discharges to single members without any type of dependents, compared with 40 percent in the Marine Corps, 27 percent in the Army, and 22 percent in the Air Force.

The hardship/dependency category includes two elements that are apparently not that well linked. This is apparent by the fact that so many people in this category do not have dependents--meaning that they must be "hardship" cases. Perhaps, with the growing population of single parents in the military, this category should be separated to more accurately reflect the cause of discharge.

## **F. SUMMARY**

The results of this thesis show that single and dual-service parents are a relatively small, but numerically significant, group of people. No evidence was found to support the belief that these individuals have an adverse effect on readiness. They apparently did not cause any unit or ship to delay deployment during Operation Desert Shield/Storm. The results do show that, from a management perspective, the problems related to single and dual-service parents are small and manageable. However, there are some special needs that have to be met to ensure continuous readiness. The next chapter will address policy alternatives that may assist in resolving some of the issues associated with single and dual-service parents.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. CONCLUSIONS

Current Navy assignment, transfer, and deployment policies state that single and dual-service parents should be treated like any other sailor. To do otherwise would be unfair to all involved. The underlying assumption is that no one group of sailors should systematically receive more "benefits" than another group--unless the group is of greater "value" to the Navy. In practice, some individuals do get assignments they want, while others do not. This is not necessarily a violation of the non-preferential policy. The assignment system does have some flexibility to accommodate the needs and preferences of individuals, but there are no guarantees [Ref. 14].

The Navy has a well-established and effective policy governing dependent care responsibilities of service members that has been developed and refined over years of deployments endured by Navy personnel and their families. Even though the policy has not been enforced Navy-wide, the Navy was very fortunate in not experiencing "non-availability" problems of single and dual-service parents during the Persian Gulf War, that in reality, could have occurred. There were no dependent-related problems during Operation Desert

Shield/Storm that caused a reduction in readiness or had a negative effect on National Security and mission accomplishment. The problems associated with single and dual-service parents were apparently small and manageable.

#### **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Given the concerns of the military, as well as those of single and dual-service parents, there appears to be several things that the Navy can do. The Navy can develop a single and dual-service parent data base that will allow the Navy to maintain an accurate account of these individuals. Second, it can enforce OPNAVINST 1740.4 Navy-wide to ensure that single and dual-service parents have a current Dependent Care Certificate on file that will assist in ensuring the availability of these individuals to deploy on short notice. Third, the Navy can maintain its current policy that includes the use of hardship/dependency discharges or humanitarian reassignments if an individual is unable to deploy for a child-care-related reason.

Single and dual-service parents are a growing population of the Navy and their service is clearly valuable. However, it is important that a data base be developed for the Navy to keep an accurate count on the number of single and dual-service parents. The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-16) is currently creating a single-parent data base that is expected to be completed in the near future [Ref. 6]. This

data base should allow the Navy to determine which members have actual custody of dependents. A data base for dual-service parents should also be created.

In addition to the development of a single and dual-service-parent data base, the Navy needs to enforce OPNAVINST 1740.4 uniformly. This instruction states that all members with dependents must have a current Dependent Care Certificate on file that states their dependent care arrangements in case of deployment. However, service members are not going to complete this certificate unless Navy managers and supervisors enforce the instruction.

The current policy appears to work reasonably well. It allows hardship/dependency discharges and humanitarian reassignments for individuals who are unable to deploy due to dependent care-related problems, whether they are long-term or short-term in nature. The Navy should maintain this policy.

A more thorough analysis of issues surrounding single and dual-service parents in the Navy is recommended. This analysis should include factors that are based on an individual level to determine the perceptions of problems from the perspective of single and dual-service parents.

Future studies should be conducted on the number of humanitarian reassignments that are given to military personnel and the reasons why.

Future studies should also be conducted on the number of hardship/dependency discharges that are given to military personnel and the reasons why.

This thesis is a step in investigating the impact that single and dual-service parents have on the Navy and on mission accomplishment. It appears that single and dual-service parents are not a burden, especially administratively, to the Navy. Hopefully, this thesis will aid Navy officials in making comprehensive decisions about the future care of single and dual-service parents.

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