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### **Optimizing Navy Recruitment: Lessons from Navy Talent Acquisition Groups**

December 2024

**LT Ronzanae B. Belton, USN**

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**Department of Defense Management**

**Naval Postgraduate School**

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Prepared for the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA 93943.

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## ABSTRACT

The Navy has faced significant recruitment challenges resulting in not meeting fiscal year 2022 and fiscal year 2023 goals. This capstone seeks to optimize Navy recruitment practices by analyzing the successes and shortcomings of Navy Talent Acquisition Groups (NTAGs) through investigating the factors enabling successful recruitment and the impacts of leadership and training on recruitment outcomes. From comprehensive interviews with NTAG leadership, recruiters, and Navy Recruiting Command's Chief of Staff, this research revealed that Admiral Waters' battle stations initiative effectively eliminated a backlog of 7,000 medical waivers, significantly improving the efficiency of candidate qualification and contributing to the Navy's fiscal year 2024 recruiting success. However, this project also identified key inefficiencies, including the administrative burden caused by Salesforce, irrelevant monthly training, and outdated eligibility standards. This capstone recommends upgrading the Navy's version of Salesforce, revising outdated eligibility standards, and tailoring training to station-specific needs. Future research could explore the long-term effects of these reforms by evaluating the health and performance of the force over time.



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>CAPSTONE OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>NRC STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>NTAG COMMAND STRUCTURE .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>NORU .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>DEP.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>MEPS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.	CO/XO/CR Interviews.....	9
2.	Recruiter Interviews .....	16
<b>B.</b>	<b>COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LEADERSHIP VS. RECRUITER INTERVIEWS.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>INTERVIEW WITH NAVY RECRUITING COMMAND’S CHIEF OF STAFF.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>25</b>
	<b>APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>CO/XO/CR QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>RECRUITER QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>29</b>
	<b>APPENDIX B. EMAIL INVITATION TO NTAGS .....</b>	<b>31</b>
	<b>LIST OF REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>33</b>



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## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Map of NTAGs. Source: Navy Recruiting Command (n.d.b) .....	8
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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASVAB	Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery
C2	Command & Control
CO	Commanding Officer
CR	Chief Recruiter
DEP	Delayed Entry Program
DPR	Daily Production Review
EPO	Enlisted Programs Officer
FY	Fiscal Year
GED	General Educational Development
MEPS	Military Entrance Processing Station
MHS	Military Health System
MS	Microsoft
NORS	Navy Officer Recruiting Stations
NORU	Navy Recruiting Orientation Unit
NRC	Navy Recruiting Command
NTAG	Navy Talent Acquisition Group
OJT	On-the-Job
OPO	Officer Program Officer
RinC	Recruiter in Charge
RLMM	Recruiting Leadership and Management Manual
ROC	Recruiting Operations Center
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
SWO	Surface Warfare Officer
USNI	United States Naval Institute
UX	User Experience
XO	Executive Officer



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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Navy has received significant negative media coverage regarding insufficient manning. As of March 2024, the Navy faced a shortage of 22,000 active-duty junior Sailors, resulting in unevenly distributed work-life balance across units. This imbalance left 40% of E-6 and below Sailors experiencing severe or extreme stress (Mongilio, 2024a). As proven in the recent Navy's Health of Force Survey, operating with fewer personnel makes already challenging Navy missions even more stressful and difficult to accomplish. Low work-life satisfaction coupled with stress statistically lead to high attrition, which is costly and inefficient (G, 2023).

On August 29, 2024, the United States Naval Institute released an article titled, "Navy Set to Meet Active-Duty Recruiting Goals After Missing Two Straight Years" (Mongilio, 2024b). This article briefly mentions the struggles Navy recruitment has had in the past couple years to meet goals and that it was a surprising victory to have prematurely released, before the end of the fiscal year, predictions of meeting recruitment goals. This goal was met despite the prediction that the Navy would miss the target by almost 7000 (Mongilio, 2024a). Navy Recruiting Command's (NRC) recruitment efforts deserve further investigation to pinpoint what changed in just five months to explain how they were able to meet goal and whether it is possible to sustain these efforts.

In that same article, Mongilio credits the actions and efforts of Admiral Waters, who took command of NRC in April, and within about three months, the Navy was averaging 4000 contracts monthly, with 36,776 active-duty contracts and another 30,314 sent to bootcamp (Mongilio, 2024b). Admiral Waters' dedication to improving the three-year stint NRC was facing has made lasting impacts on not only the recruiting community itself but also on the overall welfare of the naval force. Specifically, he filled recruiter billets, improved the medical waiver process, lowered the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) score requirements, implemented a future sailor preparatory course, and changed policies regarding eligibility such as raising the maximum age to 42 and eliminating the requirement for a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) (Mongilio, 2024b). From the perspective of Admiral Waters, these



improvements will provide more opportunities for ambitious and motivated Americans while also improving the functions of NRC, and thereby enhancing the Navy's capabilities.

This capstone builds upon Jacob Black's 2023 thesis titled "Recruiting Crisis: Analysis of Navy Recruiting Deficiencies in 2022 and Beyond," in which he explains NRC's organizational transformations, the current structure and breakdown of the Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG), recruitment challenges, and finally the factors that have hurt recruiting. He found that "manpower deficiencies, advertising shortcomings, the job market, recruiting transformation, high school access, the political environment, and low propensity to serve are all contributors to recruiting struggles" (Black, 2023, p.3). This capstone builds on his report by investigating the experiences and testimonies of NTAG Commanding Officers (COs), Executive Officers (XOs), Chief Recruiters (CRs), and recruiters, to see if there are clear patterns of policies or practices that help or hinder navy recruitment.

## **A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

I answer the following questions in my capstone project:

1. What factors contribute to whether an NTAG meets their recruiting goals?
2. How does training and leadership from NTAGs affect recruiting?

## **B. METHODOLOGY**

To effectively address the research questions, I conducted interviews with NTAG COs, XOs, CRs, and recruiters to gain insight into how these issues affect those directly involved in the recruitment process. Lastly, I interviewed the Navy Recruiting Command's Chief of Staff to further my knowledge of Battle Stations and gain the perspective of someone working from NRC headquarters. I held separate interviews and report the findings anonymously to encourage open, honest feedback from participants.

During my interviews with the recruiting triad, the NTAG CO, XO, and CR, I heavily focused on Navy-wide policies. Given the recruiting triad's proximity to decision-making positions, I wanted their perspectives on which policies support or hinder recruitment. I also asked about successful practices at their commands to see if their





insights aligned with those of actual recruiters. This approach allowed me to assess whether the leadership and recruiters were aligned in thought regarding effective and ineffective recruitment practices. Next, I asked the triad about the level of autonomy in their roles and their collaboration with other COs, XOs, and CRs to identify whether community-wide interaction promotes recruitment success. Lastly, I inquired about the training and resources provided by NTAG headquarters to individual recruiting stations to understand if greater support could positively impact recruitment.

Next, during my interviews with recruiters, I focused primarily on the techniques and practices they used to get a better understanding of the recruitment process. I welcomed criticism of current practices or policies to address any weak points within the organization. The goal was to identify common recruitment approaches and effective methods used, to establish best practices and list inefficient tactics to avoid wasting time and resources. I also wanted to gauge their sense of autonomy in making decisions within recruiting to see if they felt like it was possible to make impactful changes or suggestions to improve recruitment. Additionally, I asked whether they felt adequately supported by headquarters through training and resources. To conclude, I asked each recruiter what changes they would implement if they were in command, hoping this would reveal valuable ideas for improvement.

Finally, I conducted an interview with the Navy Recruiting Chief of Staff, a captain in the U.S. Navy, who worked closely with Admiral Waters during his initiation of Battle Stations to streamline the Navy recruitment process and meet goal Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. The purpose of this interview was to deepen my understanding of Admiral Waters' actions, his methods, motivations, and outcomes. By evaluating his efforts, I aimed to gain insights into strategies that could enhance Navy recruiting. This assessment could guide the development of similar initiatives across the Navy, applying lessons from the Battle Stations program to improve processes in other areas as needed.

## **C. FINDINGS**

The interview process with the recruiting triad and recruiters corroborated the United States Naval Institute (USNI) source, revealing that Admiral Waters' use of battle



stations to clear medical waivers has proven to be the most valuable improvement in qualifying candidates more quickly for service. Additionally, practices like “Knowing Your Number,” or consistent follow-up with recruiters have proven to be successful. Next, the version of Salesforce used by the Navy was identified as an additional, unnecessary hindrance to the administrative burden demanded of recruiters for each candidate kit. In addressing leadership involvement and training, the recruiting triad mentioned their priority in visiting different stations throughout the month and showing their buy-in, which positively impacts Sailors. Next regarding training effectiveness, recruiters said that “headquarters monthly training” frequently lacked relevance to the needs of the stations and therefore took the back burner among their long list of responsibilities. However, they did mention helpful resources provided by headquarters, such as RinC/Recruiter University, which they felt adequately prepared Sailors for future on-the-job (OJT) provided at individual stations.

The interview with the Navy Recruiting Chief of Staff revealed that Battle Stations were indeed instrumental in meeting FY2024 recruiting goals. The Battle Stations initiative was created after the Fleet’s Crisis Action Teams, to tackle a backlog of 7000 candidate medical cases that had stalled the recruitment process. In April 2024, NRC set up Battle Stations by converting conference rooms into specialized workspaces equipped with necessary resources, enabling staff to focus solely on reducing the backlog. The initial success led to another successful session in May, which completely cleared the backlog.

#### **D. CAPSTONE OVERVIEW**

The rest of the capstone is organized in the following: Chapter II focuses on the relevant background information surrounding the research question and the current structure of NRC along with roles and responsibilities of each position within the command. It also mentions other necessary contextual information on navy recruitment to better support and close information gaps with interview findings. Chapter III summarizes the interview methodology, and the interview findings. Lastly, Chapter IV concludes with recommendations.



## **II. NRC STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION**

This chapter covers the structure and composition of NRC, as well as information on relevant sub-commands.

NRC is headquartered in Millington, Tennessee and led by a Rear Admiral, who oversees 2 regions comprised of 26 NTAGs with about 850 recruiting stations, a reserve command, Navy Recruiting Orientation Unit (NORU) schoolhouse, and the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) (NRC, n.d.c). As noted on their website, it is made up of over 6,000 active, reserve, civilian, and contract employees who aim to equip naval forces with high quality recruits for the 89 Navy ratings, with a focus on specialized roles like Seals or nuclear power. Knowing the organizational structure and roles and responsibilities associated with each position is key to understanding the recruitment process.

In order to accurately report the current structure of a NTAG, I reached out to a senior professional in the recruiting field, a commander in the U.S. Navy. In an email correspondence on October 17, 2024, they responded, “CNRC has a document called the Recruiting Leadership and Management Manual (RLMM) which used to have an opening chapter dedicated to NTAG Command and Control (C2) and roles/responsibilities. The latest version of the RLMM pulled out that section, and it’s being made into a separate instruction.” Therefore, my latest and current knowledge of NTAGs is limited to personal, professional correspondence via email and captured in the following sections.

### **A. NTAG COMMAND STRUCTURE**

The Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) serves as one of 26 regional command headquarters responsible for officer and enlisted recruiting (NRC, n.d.c). According to a Commander in the USN, each NTAG (represented in Figure 1) covers a specific area and hosts multiple Navy Recruiting Districts, typically numbering between six and ten per NTAG, dependent on the geographical size of NTAG (email correspondence, October 17, 2024). Within these districts, there are further subdivisions called Navy Recruiting Stations (NRSs), staffed with personnel focused on enlisted outreach and recruitment efforts. The NTAG structure, similar to other Navy commands,



includes department heads with clearly defined areas of responsibility to ensure smooth and effective operation.

The same USN Commander stated the leadership team, often called the “Quad Squad,” includes the CO, XO, Command Master Chief (CMC), and CR (email correspondence, October 17, 2024). Furthermore, the CO and XO are generally selected from Unrestricted Line Officers, such as Surface Warfare Officers (SWOs) or aviators, but still may have a Restricted Line Officer fill that billet, while the CMC is typically an experienced Chief with familiarity in recruiting. In addition, the CR, a senior specialist in recruiting, plays a pivotal advisory role, given that COs and XOs often lack prior recruiting experience. Next, NTAG department heads manage specific recruiting aspects: the Enlisted Programs Officer (EPO) and Officer Programs Officer (OPO) handle enlisted and officer recruitment, respectively, with support from Assistant Chief Recruiters. Other roles include the Admin Officer, Supply Officer, and Command Trainer, who leads NTAG training and ensures that all personnel receive adequate preparation. Each NRS is managed by a Recruiter in Charge (RinC), a qualified recruiter responsible for overseeing other recruiters and managing daily operations. Officer recruiting typically operates out of a Navy Officer Recruiting Station (NORS) near major college campuses and involves a mix of officers and senior enlisted personnel.

## **B. NORU**

The Navy Recruiting Orientation Unit (NORU) was established in 1978 in Orlando, Florida, and in June 1990 it changed location to Naval Station Pensacola, Florida. The mission of NORU is, “to provide technical and professional development training for recruiters to inform, attract, influence, and hire the highest quality candidates from America’s diverse talent pool, and to conduct periodic inspections and assessments to ensure compliance with applicable instructions” (NRC, n.d.a). NORU serves as the primary schoolhouse for enlisted and officer personnel who are assigned to recruiting duty and they place a lot of their success on the works and efforts of the hand-picked CRF instructors. Mentioned in paragraph two, they specialize in “professional sales, prospecting techniques, marketing, applicant processing, recruiting terminology, leadership, ethical behavior, and



activity analysis” (NRC, n.d.a., para.2). Lastly, NORU emphasizes focusing on the needs of prospects, open and honest communication, and overall ensuring the prospect understands the process and commitment they are potentially making.

### **C. DEP**

Delayed Entry Program (DEP) is an opportunity for those who are interested in joining the military but are too young, i.e., in most cases rising high school seniors, or those who do not qualify via certain standards (physical or education), to experience and learn more about the branch of service of their choosing (Veteran.com, 2021). Additionally, they noted on their site that each branch also permits different opportunities for their recruits in DEP to participate actively in the military mission, and that could even include recruiting other people interested in service. For the Navy candidates in DEP, they are “considered Navy Future Sailors from the time they contract until they report to their first permanent duty” (Veteran.com, 2021). The Navy values “leaders at all levels” and especially values the commitment and experience of their recruits in DEP. In hopes of preparing future Sailors for success, Navy START guides recruits with basic tips for bootcamp, chain of command knowledge, and other useful military expectations (Veteran.com, 2021).

### **D. MEPS**

Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) is where recruits report to and officially become “applicants,” take the ASVAB testing, medical examination, and background screening (Military.com, 2017). Additionally, noted on their site, MEPS staff test candidates’ “urine for drugs, sugar and protein levels, and pregnancy, while their blood is tested for HIV.” Furthermore, candidates “go through vision and hearing tests, height and weight measurements, blood pressure and pulse checks, and an orthopedic and neurological exam to check their basic physical agility” (Military.com, 2017). The purpose of MEPS is to determine if the candidate is eligible for duty. Therefore, another essential part of MEPS is the one-on-one medical examination in which the candidate and doctor do a more thorough examination and discuss the candidate’s complete medical history. This is the stage where if discrepancies are found, a medical waiver may be permitted to qualify the candidate for service.



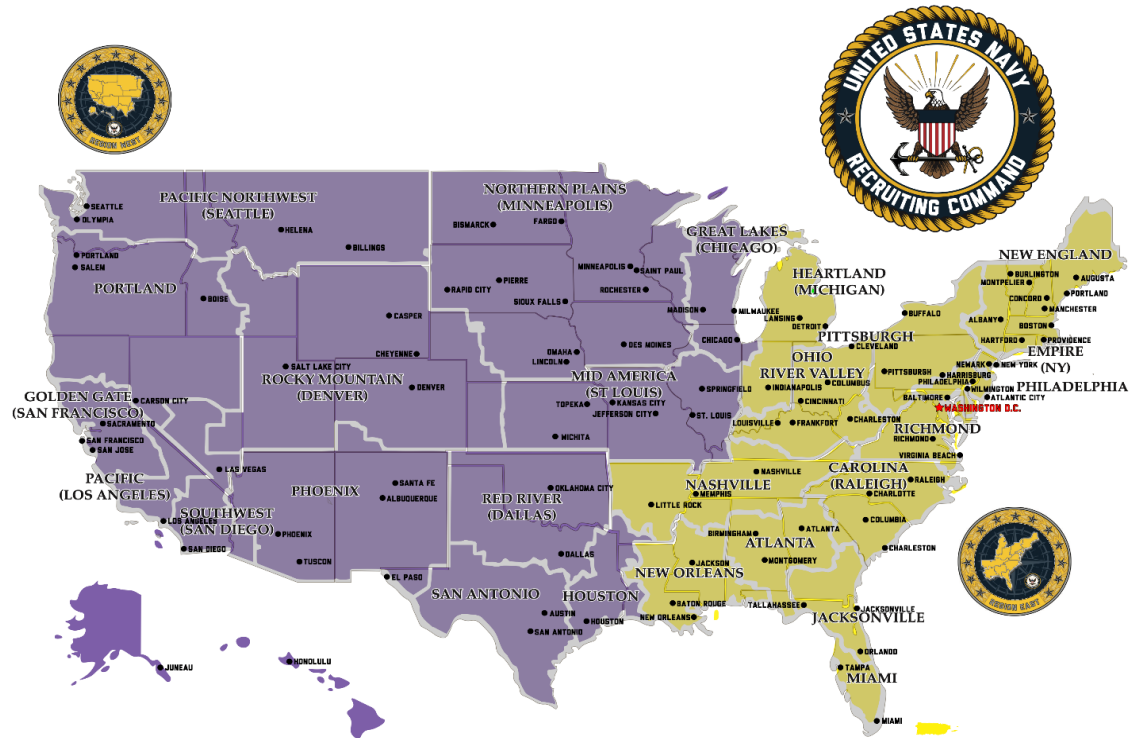


Figure 1. Map of NTAGs. Source: Navy Recruiting Command (n.d.b)

### **III. METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS**

#### **A. METHODOLOGY**

For the interviews, I reached out to all 26 NTAGs (and 11 responded) via email. This involved me sending an email, primarily to the CR and the XO or CO, requesting their participation in my capstone project. I included a brief statement explaining what I was looking into and how their contribution would help support my project. I then provided windows of availability with dates and times for them to sign up for an interview. Once we scheduled the interview I would send a Microsoft (MS) Teams Meeting Invite, in which I included the interview questions we would be discussing. All interviews, with the exception of four phone interviews, were automatically recorded and transcribed for accurate use in the project write up. All interviews were about 30 minutes to an hour and a half long, and they varied from having 3–4 people per interview to just me and one other respondent. To get in contact with recruiters, I requested that CRs or XOs put me in contact with some of their most experienced/active recruiters and from there, the recruiter and I coordinated interviews. I spoke with 10 different recruiters, all of whom are currently on recruiting duty. The recruiter interviews also varied in attendance, some were executed as focus groups with 3–4 recruiters, while others were one on one interviews. Two of the five recruiter interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams, while the others were over phone to permit travel. My thought process behind separate triad and recruiter interviews was to gain the most honest feedback to my questions without fear of reprimand. To maintain the integrity of those interviews and phone calls, no NTAGs or recruiters will be mentioned by name.

##### **1. CO/XO/CR Interviews**

For the first two questions, I examined Navy-wide policies that have impacted recruitment efforts, both positively and negatively. While the responses varied, several key policies stood out. Many COs and CRs mentioned the “Every Sailor is a Recruiter,” which encourages Sailors across the fleet to support recruitment by referring potential candidates they know and sharing personal experiences in a natural way. Many NTAGs found this





approach beneficial because it fostered engagement across ships and squadrons, leading to more informed conversations about Navy careers. However, they also noted that in areas with a high concentration of military personnel, this policy has had a negative impact. One respondent said, “It’s funny because a lot of the Sailors that were getting credit for writing contracts and getting flocks (navy award given for writing contracts), most of them were previous recruiters. So they just went to the fleet and then they still knew people, so they were still able to recruit.” Thus, since non-recruiters are targeting the same pool of candidates as recruiters, this policy reduces the number of potential recruits NTAGs can bring in, ultimately affecting their ability to meet recruitment goals. Additionally, the shift from monthly to annual recruitment goals significantly reduced pressure on recruiters, enabling more consistent efforts throughout the year—a practice embraced by many NTAGs. Annual goals also allowed stations to better anticipate and prepare for seasonal fluctuations in recruitment (especially during budget constraints between October and December, which limited their ability to conduct advertising and travel for recruitment events), helping them stay on track and avoid falling behind.

In response to the first question, all NTAGs noted improvements from Admiral Waters’ reform of the waiver process. Specifically, the reform addressed a backlog of 8,000 pending medical waivers, which had been a significant roadblock in the system. One respondent said, “Admiral cleared the backlog through convening week-long “battle stations” events (bringing together medical professionals and recruiting leadership in Millington to rapidly review and rule on outstanding waiver requests), changing N33[CNRC header quarters office] leadership, and approving a list of several hundred common medical conditions for automatic waivers.” By allocating resources to resolve the delay, the recruitment process became quicker and more efficient in the view of respondents. Several NTAGs highlighted key changes, such as auto-qualification for common medical conditions, relaxed tattoo restrictions, and reduced educational requirements (i.e., allowing applicants without a GED or high school diploma to qualify with a passing ASVAB score), which helped get recruitment efforts back on track. However, some triad members raised concerns about the long-term effects of these lowered





educational standards, particularly for specialized roles like nuclear power. Admiral Waters' relaxation of marijuana use policies in states where it is legal also played an important role in helping candidates join, provided they tested negative by the time they completed boot camp. While many NTAG triad members understood the rationale behind the Navy's zero-tolerance drug policy, they emphasized the need to revisit current policies, especially regarding marijuana, in order to maintain and sustain a force. Finally, they mentioned financial incentives, such as shipping bonuses for recruits who entered before certain deadlines, were effective in boosting recruitment.

In response to the second question that asked for examples of specific Navy wide policies that had a negative impact on recruiting, several NTAGs mentioned Military Health System (MHS) Genesis thoroughness as a key obstacle and outdated personnel eligibility standards. MEPS adapted MHS Genesis in 2022, an unsuccessful recruitment year, and many leaders blamed the adoption of MHS Genesis at MEPS for hindering recruitment (Loewenson & Ziezulewicz, 2023). MHS Genesis is the fairly new, electronic system that tracks applicants' complete medical history, and when discrepancies are found or if a candidate is no longer physically fit, a medical waiver may be granted on case-by-case basis. The delay in processing medical waivers caused significant delays in processing candidates for service, which sometimes resulted in potential recruits losing interest and choosing other career paths. One respondent explained, "There's a lot of medical issues presented (from the MHS Genesis deep dive) and it's over to the Navy once MEPS identifies those issues, whether or not we want to process them. Then what happens is, that applicant gets put in a hold status and their medical waiver goes to CNRC N33, which is their medical wing, to adjudicate their waiver." This process can become extremely lengthy and time consuming, which overall contributes to the challenge of recruiting candidates. While Admiral Water's has aimed to alleviate a lot of that delay in processing, there are still many inefficiencies within MHS Genesis that have hindered the recruitment process. Next, one respondent noted that the overly stringent background check policies that requires recruiters to investigate incidents from decades ago, even when the courts no longer retained records of such incidents, is unreasonable and way beyond the necessary statute of limitations. In the words of a CO, "I recently submitted one [proposal] to



introduce a “statute of limitations” for misconduct waivers. Current language in the Recruiting Manual requires recruiters to report any arrest or citation regardless of timeframe, and I have found that around half the waivers that cross my desk are for incidents that happened over five years in the past, leading me to propose changing policy to only look back five (or seven) years.”

Another unnecessary and outdated policy that was highlighted was the requirement for both parents’ signatures for recruits under the age of 18, even in cases where one parent was deceased (providing a death record was necessary). They also pointed to outdated drug policies and standards, where waivers are attainable, therefore reassessing the standard would be a more permanent solution. One XO credited Admiral Waters for the policy change that allowed for marijuana waivers and even permitted retesting to occur after 6 months versus complete disqualification as before. They said, “Admiral Waters came in and took a look at certain states where marijuana is legal and thought it would only be common sense to give those kids a chance versus complete disqualification. And so that kind of opened up the doors and aperture a little bit for us [in a region where marijuana is legal and they struggled before policy change].”

The next set of questions addressed the effectiveness of recruitment practices within the command, examining both successful strategies and areas that may need improvement. On the positive side, many commands found that re-engaging with high schools (since the COVID-19 pandemic restricted access), especially by targeting rising seniors (referred to as “11S kids”), was crucial for building a future pipeline of recruits. When recruiters build a strong, trusting reputation and rapport with students and high schools, future interactions and requests become smoother and more effective. NTAGs also focused on specific outreach efforts to clubs like Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs and athletic teams, which helped attract candidates for specialized fields like nuclear engineering and special warfare. Others highlighted that the return to the legacy recruitment model, with clear leadership structures and accountability, along with moving away from monthly recruitment goals, allowed for more consistent outreach without the pressure of quotas. Consistent prospecting and a focus on improving processes, rather than chasing immediate results, led to steady improvements in recruitment numbers for many



commands. Lastly, some leaders stressed the importance of high-volume prospecting and tracking recruiter interactions through a “Know Your Number” approach, which helped boost efficiency. The “Know Your Number” approach is essentially knowing how many interactions it takes to get one contract written. The theory is, once a recruiter knows how many interactions it takes to get one contract, they can adjust their workload and schedule, accordingly, increasing productivity. This is not a one size fits all solution, so understanding personal traits and abilities is crucial to success with this approach.

In response to the fourth question, senior leaders identified several ineffective practices within their recruitment processes. While these issues were not specific to individual commands, they reflected broader challenges in recruitment. One common concern was the inefficiency of daily production reviews (DPRs) by the Recruiting Operations Center (ROC), which were viewed as unproductive and created a “policing” environment that distracted the command from their primary duties. Another challenge mentioned was the cumbersome process of building recruitment kits [what is this], where scanning documents individually into Salesforce, an online platform that aids companies in connecting with more customers, slowed down operations and increased the administrative burden on recruiters tremendously. Additionally, the recruitment style taught at the NORU, the schoolhouse that trains recruiters before reporting to the NTAG, was criticized for being too scripted and awkward, leading to lower success rates if used. The responses to this question were limited and somewhat vague, likely because no leader would willingly stand by as their command faces challenges, nor admit such shortcomings in an interview. However, the shared concerns among leaders provide valuable insight into practical inefficiencies that may be helpful to NRC.

Following that, I looked into the level of authority the individual holds, exploring whether their current rank allows them to make impactful decisions to boost recruitment. Most recruiting triads expressed confidence in their ability to implement changes that improved recruitment, particularly when their leadership teams were aligned. Many CRs noted that having support from their “top 3 of 5” referring to the NTAG CO, XO, CMC, is critical to the success of their efforts and initiatives. However, some leaders voiced frustrations about specific limitations due to the level of authority for approval for many



archaic standards that require waivers. For example, an NTAG CO's inability to make waiver decisions for something like a tattoo, age, or conduct was seen as an avoidable hindrance that slowed down the recruitment process. Frustration arose because they do not have the same level of approval that their counterparts have in seagoing billets, where O-6, captains, are making decisions about retention and so on. Additionally, while some leaders felt they had sufficient authority within their billets and rank, several others pointed out that they do not have the autonomy to effectively and creatively run their commands. For instance, it was mentioned that due to NRC being under heavy scrutiny, NTAG CO's do not have the authority to offer small privileges like days off for Sailors, special uniform days, or even at one point working hours.

Next, I explored the extent of collaboration with other NTAG COs or CRs, investigating the frequency and nature of their interactions, as well as opportunities to improve these discussions. The responses indicated that while some collaboration occurred, it was not always as frequent or effective as it could be. Several commands reported regular and helpful interactions with other command leaders through weekly or biweekly calls and group chats, where recruitment strategies and region-specific challenges were discussed. However, some leaders observed that interactions were primarily limited to mandated calls, and when they did reach out, it was typically to trusted peers rather than engaging with the wider recruitment community. Recruitment's highly competitive nature was seen as both a positive and a negative. On the positive side, the healthy competition between commands helped drive performance and foster creativity. However, the downside was that this competitive atmosphere also led to increased pressure and tension within commands. One CR added, "If I were to call a command and say hey, this is working for me. You should do this. They'll take that as an insult." Knowing that NTAGs are constantly compared and measured against each other is key to understanding why they are defensive and apprehensive to advice. Furthermore, comparing NTAGs directly was viewed as counterproductive, given the significant differences between them. They suggested that fostering greater collaboration between similar commands could facilitate the sharing of best practices and ultimately enhance recruitment success.



I then shifted focus to the support and resources shared by the command, including how often leadership engages with recruiters and what resources and training are provided. In response to the seventh question regarding the resources provided to recruiters, many commands reported offering substantial support in both technology and human resources. DPRs conducted through platforms like MS Teams helped leadership monitor recruiter activity and provide timely guidance. Some commands emphasized the role of the education specialists, who acted as liaisons with local schools, facilitating access to administrators and educators. Leadership support was also highlighted, with regular visits to recruiters in the field to offer assistance and direction. Additionally, some NTAGs mentioned that standardized letters were provided to help recruiters gain access to schools, with leadership stepping in for direct outreach when needed. The responses to this question captured the spirit of “one team, one fight!” COs and CRs noted that taking the time to personally visit different stations, often referred to as “windshield time,” was essential for making a positive impact. These visits not only demonstrated leadership presence but also reinforced the message that recruitment is a collective effort, with buy-in and support at all levels of command.

Lastly, I asked about recruiter training, specifically whether it was formal or informal and/or mandatory, to understand the level of training invested in recruiters at commands. In response, all commands emphasized a strong focus on both formal and informal training. Formal training like Recruiter University was offered to both new and experienced recruiters as a refresher course for those who may have had some extended leave time before reporting to recruitment duty. Furthermore, some commands held biweekly training sessions and used development boards to track recruiter progress. Due to the station’s operations being primarily run by the RinC, some commands emphasized their reliance and success with RinC trainings. For example, one CO explained, “So we’re taking some either perspective RinCs and or some that are struggling and we bring them up to headquarters and basically do a two-day kind of mini recruiter university and we really emphasize certain areas like analytics in Salesforce. So they can see where they should be focusing their efforts on.” These trainings, according to respondents, have been extremely instrumental to overall mission success. Additionally, respondents mentioned



weekly training sessions hosted by national teams (Admiral Waters has initiated national training teams to spread awareness and connection amongst the recruitment community) were helpful. Lastly, senior leaders emphasized that personal development skills are important for recruiters to excel in their roles, which is why station leadership is far more aware of training priorities than headquarters.

The interviews with the NTAG recruiting triads highlighted three major findings regarding Navy recruitment. First, Admiral Water's policy changes with medical waivers and relaxed standards on tattoos and marijuana use, have significantly improved recruitment by speeding up processing times and expanding the pool of eligible candidates. Second, some of the most effective recruitment strategies include: strategically manning stations with recruiters of the same local demographics, engaging with high school programs like STEM, and constant, consistent effort which has been made more possible with the shift to annual goals. One XO mentioned how with annual goals, "there's really no reason to sandbag as we call it, or push somebody off to the right unnecessarily," to make goals for that month. Third and finally, there are still many inefficiencies that persist beyond Admiral Water's improvements, such as the troublesome MHS Genesis system, overly strict background checks, and archaic standards that contribute to delays with the waiver process, which has proven to be a hindrance in recruitment.

## **2. Recruiter Interviews**

In the next set of interviews, I spoke with recruiters about how they've adapted to recruitment challenges. The purpose of these interviews is to accurately capture the sentiments and experiences of the Sailors who are directly involved in recruiting, the recruiter themselves. In answering the first question regarding effective practices they've used or experienced, the recruiters offered many answers. Unanimously, they mentioned that classroom presentations in schools, especially when delivered with humor and relatability, have been their most successful approach. Another common theme was the value of teamwork—one recruiter said, "I really don't think recruiting is meant to be done alone, and it's a lot harder that way." Recruiters found that visiting high schools or attending events as a group created a stronger presence, making the Navy more



approachable and less intimidating for potential recruits. Presenting as a unit also enhanced their image, especially when compared to one-on-one efforts, which were seen as less effective due to the hesitance of students to engage with a single recruiter. A respondent said, “High schools are our primary market, and so it can be intimidating for a 17, 18-year-old to just come up to a single military individual and just kick off a conversation. So going out in groups is key.” Furthermore, it was mentioned that due to the limited availability of classroom time, recruiters have had to make lunchtime interactions and efforts extremely meaningful. One recruiter mentioned a very creative and effective practice they’ve used -- this included the recruiter building relationships with recreational team coaches and connecting with them to set up meets and introductions during practices. They mentioned, “once the coach believes your supporting the same good, positive things that they also want for their players, the opportunity was secured.” This connection opened the pool of candidates to other high school students or maybe even other athletes who did not get a chance to interact before. Additionally, building relationships with key influencers, such as counselors and teachers, also proved invaluable, as they often referred candidates directly and were more willing to support recruitment efforts. Next, despite the constant demand of online presence, social media, particularly Instagram, was another strategy that produced results. One recruiter said, “Incorporating humor and real-life interactions, drive the algorithm. Unique, original video clips grab their (potential recruits) attention and allow offline contact that results in leads. I’ve had 5 (contracts) this year.” Finally, a key tip mentioned was consistent follow-up with recruits and ensuring they understood the next steps in the process to help keep engagement high and reduce drop-off or disinterest.

In response to the second question, recruiters said that over the past year, several unsuccessful recruitment practices have emerged. Recruiters expressed frustration with micromanagement from senior leadership, whose distance from fieldwork has led to ineffective strategies being imposed, particularly outdated methods that don’t fit local market needs. A respondent said, “even when I first came in recruiting and which was only in 2019, recruiting now is night and day different. So we have a bunch of people that say hey, this used to work for me some 10–15 years ago, and the stuff I used to do a few years ago doesn’t even work.” The job is constantly changing, and the recruiters stressed the





importance of adapting. Additionally, excessive administrative tasks, especially for non-recruiting rated personnel, have overwhelmed recruiters, detracting from their core focus. Next, participants highlighted that rushing candidates through the process to meet quotas has actually resulted in higher attrition rates, as recruits often felt pressured and uncertain. The practice of relying on “phone power,” where recruiters manually call parents or candidates from outdated lists, has also proven ineffective due to low response rates, highlighting the need to focus on new prospects rather than salvaging disengaged recruits. Multiple recruiters said that meaningful advice in recruiting typically comes from those “actively working” with candidates. However, process improvements from leadership can be valuable, particularly when they reduce administrative burdens and address inefficiencies with tools like Salesforce.

The third question addressed the resources shared with recruiters from their commands. Recruiters highlighted a mix of training resources and on-the-job learning in their experiences. Some appreciated resources like Recruiter University, which offers hands-on training to accelerate the learning curve for new recruiters, and the forthcoming Salesforce playbook, which was expected to enhance system usage. However, many noted that formal training was minimal, with programs like “RinC training” being helpful but limited. Much of the necessary knowledge and skills were acquired through trial and error, as recruits fresh from orientation were not fully prepared for recruiting duty. Multiple RinCs said, “We are the resource. We are expected to get them through. Taking a brand-new person and making them into a salesman, plus maintaining all Navy standards, and we have to do that ourselves.” This sentiment further supports the claims that recruiting is an art and a science, and resources can be helpful, but the most impactful and useful changes come from fixing things that come up on the job.

The next question focuses on the training provided by commands and more specifically whether it was helpful and mandatory. Respondents mentioned that commands offer mandatory recruitment training, including monthly divisional sessions and resources like Recruiter University (mentioned above) which are particularly useful for new recruiters. However, many recruiters felt that the ongoing training, often delivered through repetitive PowerPoint-based sessions, was ineffective and seen as more of a check in the





box. Despite the existence of indoctrination and Personnel qualification Standard (PQS) processes, much of the practical knowledge is gained through on-the-job learning, therefore command training isn't necessarily always relevant. There is a shared belief that current training programs lack relevance to the real-world challenges recruiters face and do not adequately adapt to the evolving nature of recruitment. Additionally, training often takes a backseat when processing a single candidate in Salesforce can take over two hours, or when other priorities that contribute to gaining a recruit overshadow command training sessions.

Following that, I inquired about the recruiters' individual belief in their ability and authority to increase recruitment at their command. Recruiters had mixed responses. Some felt they had the freedom to speak up and suggest improvements, benefiting from supportive relationships with their chain of command. However, others expressed frustration over limited power to implement changes, as suggestions or alternative methods were often met with resistance or even reprimands for not adhering to strict procedures. This created a Catch-22, where following the rules might hinder recruitment success, but deviating could result in disciplinary action. One recruiter alluded, "If you're not following the rules or doing all the admin, but you're making goal and putting people in the Navy, they're still going to be mad at you. Don't get me wrong. But it's not that big of a deal compared to NOT making goal, but hey, all my admin and stuff is good, and I'm following everything you tell me." So regularly, the recruiters are struggling to do everything by the books when the requested privileges are small asks, like wearing a polo instead of a uniform, to present less intimidating and more approachable to ease the process of recruiting qualified candidates in today's environment.

The sixth question asked about recruiters' interactions with other recruiters and what platforms they've used to communicate. Recruiters responded that they regularly interact with one another to discuss recruitment issues, primarily through phone calls, group texts, WhatsApp, and other messaging tools. These interactions occur daily, sometimes hourly, especially within their divisions, and serve as a pathway to share knowledge and strategies in real-time. However, much of this communication is informal, with conversations often focused on venting frustrations rather than structured problem-solving. Some recruiters expressed a desire for more formal and organized collaboration,



suggesting that more frequent team-building exercises and structured discussions could help address shared challenges more effectively. While no specific improvements to the current communication methods were offered, the value of collaboration and shared expertise was emphasized.

The last question was on the more creative and ambitious side of the house, asking recruiters what they would do as the CO for a day to improve recruitment efforts. Recruiters suggested several changes to improve recruitment practices and morale which in turn, improves outcomes. They advocated for reinstating the Liberty Program to reward high-performing recruiters with extra time off and reducing micromanagement to give top recruiters more autonomy. Recognizing the unique challenges of smaller stations and adjusting incentives accordingly was also highlighted and mentioned to level the playing field for national NTAG recognition. Additionally, they proposed relaxing the uniform policy for recruiters in high schools, allowing them to wear command polos instead of formal uniforms to appear more approachable. To boost morale, suggestions included offering small rewards like relaxed grooming standards or casual dress days. Streamlining administrative processes, particularly reducing the redundancy of documenting interactions in multiple systems, was seen as critical to freeing up time for actual recruitment work. Recruiters emphasized the need for better screening before assigning sailors to recruiting duty, ensuring that only those truly suited for the role are selected. Many noted that sailors nearing the end of their Navy careers were often placed in recruiting positions, which frequently made them less motivated and created additional challenges for station RinCs to manage, ultimately hindering the recruitment process. Next, they recommended changing the policy preventing individuals with three dependents from joining the Navy because dependents do not directly relate to his or her potential contribution to the Navy. Lastly, there was a heavy emphasis on improving the MEPS process and increasing pay and accountability for MEPS staff to retain talent and reduce administrative delays in high-volume areas. It's believed that if MEPS staff are compensated fairly, then they may be more incentivized to do their job and work with Navy personnel more efficiently to get potential recruits qualified quicker.



Two final insights gained from the interviews with the recruiters was that Salesforce is a major hindrance to the recruitment process and the stress and workload of recruitment duty should not go unnoticed. Recruiters frequently highlighted Salesforce as a significant administrative burden, noting that the time spent inputting data and completing forms detracted from their core recruiting duties. Many felt that the system was inefficient and not well-suited to their needs. They mentioned inefficiencies surrounding the hours spent backlogging their activities, which takes away from making meaningful progress in actual recruitment efforts. For instance, one recruiter said, “they want us to track every single move that we make, they want us to go into Salesforce and update our planner to account for our time.” This was referencing simple things like conversing with recruits or making calls and any other activity not previously captured on the planner; all time and activity must be accounted for via Salesforce, or it’s perceived that the recruiter is not optimizing his or her time. The recruiters also added that the version of Salesforce currently employed by the Navy does not have the necessary upgrades and privileges that permit efficient tracking. Next, recruiter fatigue and mental health concerns were recurring themes brought up, particularly for Sailors already dealing with personal challenges when they arrive to duty. A RinC emphasized, “The last thing that they (someone already struggling with mental health) need is the stress of recruiting. Because as a RinC, you’re torn between like, hey, I need my station to be successful, but I have this recruiter who has so much family issues and needs time to tend to them.” The personal dilemma experienced by RinCs is on brand and common for those in leadership positions, but with that being said, it is something that can be prevented on the manning side. This is not to say that a recruiter must be perfect or problem-free, but the point made was that recruiting is a stressful and demanding job; therefore, Sailors with previous or existing mental health issues or concerns should not be assigned recruiting duty and there needs to be improvements to the screening process for selecting Sailors for recruiting duty.

## **B. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LEADERSHIP VS. RECRUITER INTERVIEWS**

In comparing the two sets of interviews, there are multiple areas where they were aligned and other areas where they differed in perspective and opinion. For example, with



the first question, observing what Navy wide policies have helped with recruitment, both the recruiting triad and recruiters mentioned how Admiral Water's has opened many doors in the recruiting world by improving the medical onboarding processes and changing eligibility policies, which reduced processing time and increased the opportunity for potential recruits to serve by modifying archaic requirements. Also, in describing effective recruitment practices used at their commands, both groups brought up the activity and efforts in high schools along with RinC focused training offered to close the gap between NORU training and the field. Stations are primarily run by the RinC, so ensuring that the RinC is equipped with the knowledge and skills to do the job is key.

When I asked the recruiting triad about the effectiveness of training provided and whether it was mandatory, they were very confident in answering that training is constantly provided and mandatory for recruiters. However, when I asked the recruiters about the effectiveness and formality of command training, they offered different answers. Mainly they stressed that training was not a high priority, especially when the training topics are preplanned and irrelevant to the current, pressing issues at the stations. Furthermore, when the station is behind on so many other administrative tasks, priority will be processing paperwork and giving training on that versus whatever is on the training calendar.

Another significant discrepancy noted by recruiters was the efficiency and usability of Salesforce. Recruiters noted that Salesforce was an obstacle and hindrance to effective and efficient recruiting due to the high administrative burden placed on recruiters with the version of Salesforce that the Navy has purchased. COs or CRs praised Salesforce for its transparency and ability to fully capture and account for every second of a recruiter's day. However, the time it takes for a recruiter to track and input all their actions in Salesforce is too high for the amount paperwork that is demanded for each candidate's "kit." While the system itself is not all bad, there are upgrades and improvements that could be made to improve user efficiency and serve as a helpful tool for commands and recruiters.

Overall, the analysis gained from comparing the two interview sets highlighted some important areas of attention for navy recruitment. First, the deficiency in the effectiveness and usability of training provided by commands exposes an area for improvement. It is inefficient and unnecessary for command's training departments to push



out mandatory, monthly training plans that should be executed by stations, when the training is not relevant or useful. During their interviews, CRs and COs shared they able to use Salesforce to examine their recruiters' activity, evaluating whether they are effectively time managing and contributing to mission success. However, recruiters highlighted that Salesforce is a burdensome and admin-intensive system that takes more time to track their actions than it is helpful.

On the positive side, there were numerous areas throughout the interview process in which the recruiting triad and recruiters were on the same page. For instance, they both agreed that showing a presence in high schools and in classrooms has been effective in recruitment. Furthermore, senior leaders and recruiters both voiced frustration with current policy restricting their ability to wear command polos or civilian equivalent appropriate clothing when visiting high schools and this has been seen as a hindrance because high school students typically view a uniform to be intimidating. Conclusively, the differences and similarities between the interviews highlighted that gaps of information exist between headquarters and stations, but also valuable similarities exist that can help policymakers make thoughtful decisions. Therefore, more focus groups or avenues for recruiters and senior leaders to provide feedback may help mirror the policy improvement to the issue at hand.

### **C. INTERVIEW WITH NAVY RECRUITING COMMAND'S CHIEF OF STAFF**

After interviewing NTAG triads and various recruiters and receiving a wealth of responses crediting Admiral Waters' Battle Stations initiative for recruitment success, I felt compelled to delve deeper into his process. I wanted to understand the full scope of the "how," the "why," and exactly "what" actions Admiral Waters took and will continue to take to ensure NRC meet its goals. This led me to interview the NRC Chief of Staff, where I gained valuable insights into the origins and objectives of Battle Stations.

NRC's Chief of Staff mentioned that battle stations, designed after the fleet's crisis action team concept, targeted a backlog of candidate packages where the medical status was undecided and stashed away, and eventually forgotten, thus stalling the recruitment



process. Once leaders at NRC realized that this backlog of undecided packages existed and was preventing people from joining the Navy, they acted quickly. NRC hired additional medical professionals and other motivated military and civilian personnel to investigate, and through thorough data analysis, the team identified 7,000 stalled cases in need of review. This realization initiated the setup of Battle Stations, where conference rooms were converted into “watch station” areas, that included computers and other essential resources, allowing personnel to focus exclusively on reducing the backlog. The first Battle Stations were set up in April of 2024 and these efforts were successful, leading to a follow-on session in May.

In efforts to sustain the progress and growth made, NRC has continued some practices from lessons learned through Battle Stations to ensure that they do not ever get thousands of records behind again. One example highlighted was communication between NRC and the Navy Recruiting Training Command (NRTC), which oversees training at boot camp. NRC leaders asked, “What impacts have they seen from our battle stations, and we continue these conversations [on constructive feedback] because we want to make sure that we are able to continue to keep this barrier from growing again and then also do no harm to the fleet [by allowing unqualified candidates to join the Navy].” While it is important to have a steady influx of candidates for naval service at the ready, it is also just as important to ensure that those candidates meet the standards and quality expected of a Sailor. In closing, the NRC’s Chief of Staff interview revealed that the process can be just as important as the result, which is why constant and consistent internal checks are important for Navy recruitment.



## IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a conclusion to my research and recommendations to enhance Navy recruitment based on the insights gained from interviews with NTAG leadership and recruiters. The recommendations attempt to address the challenges at multiple levels, from operational inefficiencies and policy obstacles to improving recruiter morale and autonomy to sustain NRC's efforts.

This capstone sought to answer two main research questions: what factors influence NTAGs' success in meeting recruitment goals, and how does NTAG training and leadership affect recruitment outcomes? From the interviews, respondents noted several negative factors impeding recruitment to include: inefficient Salesforce usability, lack of autonomy in executing duties, and outdated eligibility standards that narrow the gate of qualified candidates. In addressing the second question regarding whether NTAG training and involvement affects recruitment success, respondents noted that NTAG leadership involvement is essential to mission success and increases morale. On the other hand, recruiters also mentioned that monthly training topics often times lacked relevance to the pressing needs of the station, thus training has become an additional administrative burden, not a resource. In efforts to address some of the concerns and inefficiencies exposed during the interview process, below are my recommendations.

First in addressing inefficient Salesforce usability, it is necessary to mention that Salesforce is a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that aims to make connecting with customers more efficient, allowing users to find more prospects and close more deals. Additionally, Salesforce compiles all data gathered on a customer to be easily viewed and accessible by all members within an organization (Salesforce, n.d.). Recruiters revealed that Salesforce itself was not the problem, the issue is rooted in the inefficiencies of usability with the version or package of Salesforce the Navy purchased. Recruiters expressed frustration with how inefficient and time consuming it is to enter candidate information and scan documents into Salesforce. Whether it's the inherent functions of Salesforce or access to working with computers or scanners, the implementation of Salesforce is not as user friendly and helpful as originally intended. Therefore, my





recommendation would include upgrading the Navy's Salesforce package to one that ensures administrative ease and processing efficiency so that non-administrative rated recruiters can complete candidate information kits efficiently and accurately. I recommend that any upgrades include a User Experience (UX) design, particularly before launching across Navy recruiting. Additionally, revamping recruiting stations with the necessary office equipment like properly functioning computers, phones, and scanners, would promote efficient processing and eliminate avoidable delays within the recruitment process.

NTAG recruiting triads and recruiters alike mentioned their lack of autonomy when executing their various duties to fulfill the mission. Specifically worth mentioning is the lack of autonomy they had over minuscule tasks like wearing a polo instead of a formal uniform for school visits, CO permitting days off as an incentive for highly performing recruiters, or even detracting from the selling techniques taught at NORU. My recommendation to improve this flaw in the process, is to permit recruiting station's leadership autonomy over recruiting techniques and to wear Navy polos when visiting high schools, to ensure that they are maximizing their efforts and time, presenting as approachable as possible to ensure that they are not missing out on any Future Sailors due to awkwardness or intimidation. Additionally, I recommend permitting NTAG CO's the authority to control their command's working hours and allow them to incentivize days off for high performers. These small changes will not only empower recruiters and COs to execute their duties, but these improvements will encourage unique initiatives and inspire NRC to diligently work to man the force.

Another area of improvement for NRC are the outdated eligibility standards and requirements used to qualify a recruit for naval service. During the interview process, COs, XO's, and CRs were the respondents who primarily griped about the outdated eligibility standards and their role in hindering recruitment. For example, many respondents observed that some medical disqualifications assessed by MEPS lag behind advancements in modern medicine, thus a glaring area of improvement potentially for increasing the pool of eligible candidates, which was stated as a researched challenge to Navy recruitment. Additionally, assessing the Navy's Zero Tolerance policy, is something that many respondents expect to





change if or when marijuana, specifically, becomes federally legal. My recommendation to addressing the outdated eligibility standards is, if the standard must remain as is, and if waivers are already permissible for exceptions to that standard, allow the approval authority for certain conduct charges or tattoos to be held at the NTAG CO approval level. In many cases, NTAG COs have already experienced making decisions about Sailor retention from their time in the Fleet, plus they will have the support of their “Quad Squad” to make decisions about qualifying Future Sailors, so confidence is high in their ability to perform.

My last recommendation addresses training improvements that can aid in successful recruitment and serve as a resource for recruiters. The interview process revealed that monthly training pushed down from NTAG Training Departments was irrelevant and insufficient in meeting the needs of the stations. Furthermore, RinCs highlighted their “all-in-one” role at the station, such as conducting school visits, addressing personnel concerns with their recruiters, or handling administrative tasks. This multifaceted role significantly impacts their work-life balance and increases stress levels. To address these challenges, I recommend more collaborative meetings between the training departments and RinCs to ensure that training efforts effectively target the station’s specific concerns. With focused training and better-skilled recruiters, the mission success rate is likely to improve, reducing the heavy workload on RinCs. This approach can help prevent burnout and support their continued service as CRF Sailors, contributing to the effective manning of the Fleet.

In concluding this project, I am tremendously appreciative of the support, transparency, and expertise I encountered through the interview process. This experience has been invaluable, not only in addressing my research questions but also in deepening my understanding of the Navy recruitment process. From senior leaders to junior enlisted field recruiters, each person I spoke with offered a wealth of knowledge and willingness to provide insights on their roles and the recruiting challenges they navigate daily. Their readiness to support this project, connect me with additional resources, and offer honest perspectives were instrumental in contributing to the quality and depth of my findings. I am sincerely grateful for the opportunity to engage with members of NRC and the time and effort they spent towards helping me complete my research.



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## APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### A. CO/XO/CR QUESTIONS

1. What Navy-wide policies have helped you with recruitment in the past year?
2. What Navy-wide policies have negatively affected you with recruitment in the past year?
3. In the past year, can you please describe 3 effective recruitment practices at your command?
4. Can you please describe any ineffective practices at your command?
5. Do you have enough authority within your current rank to increase recruitment at your command?
6. Do you interact with other NTAGs COs to discuss current recruitment issues?
  - (a) If so, how often?
  - (b) How are the talks conducted (zoom, telecon, MS Teams, Cell)?
  - (c) Do you have any suggestions to making the calls more effective?
7. What resources does your command share with recruiters?
8. How often does your command's leadership meet with your recruiters?
9. Does your command train your recruiters? (formal/informal)

### B. RECRUITER QUESTIONS

1. In the past year, can you please share any successful recruitment practices you've used?
2. In the past year, can you please share any unsuccessful recruitment practices you've used or witnessed?
3. What resources does your command share with you to enable effective recruiting?
4. Does your command offer recruitment training? Is it mandatory? Is it helpful?



5. Do you have enough authority within your current rank to increase recruitment at your command?
6. Do you interact at all with other recruiters to discuss current recruitment issues?
  - (a) If so, how often?
  - (b) How are talks conducted (zoom, telecon, MS Teams, Cell)?
  - (c) Do you have any suggestions to making the calls more effective?
7. If you were the CO of your command for one day, please share 3 changes that you would implement to increase recruitment.



## APPENDIX B. EMAIL INVITATION TO NTAGS

SUBJ: Invitation to Participate in NTAG Interview for Navy Recruitment Project

Good Morning NTAG “blank” Leaders,

BLUF: NPS student seeking two interviews for Navy Recruiting project: one with NTAG CO & or XO(including CR or ACR) and one with NTAG recruiters.

My name is LT Ronzanae Belton, a Financial Management student at the Naval Postgraduate School, working on my capstone project titled “Optimizing Navy Recruitment: Lessons from Navy Talent Acquisition Groups.” This project will analyze NTAG successes and challenges to develop best practices for improving recruiting.

Your participation will help me better understand how your command has adapted to recruiting challenges. The more participants we have, the more accurate and comprehensive our understanding of the diverse NTAGs will be.

If you are available and willing, please reply to me (LT Belton) with your availability for any one-hour slot in the following windows below and if any of the times below do not work, please respond with another time slot.

Monday, August 5th, 0800–1200 PST

Tuesday, August 6th, 1000–1500 PST

Wednesday, August 7th, 0800–1200 PST

Monday, August 12th, 0800–1200 PST

Tuesday, August 13th, 1000–1500 PST

Wednesday, August 14th, 0800–1200 PST

Monday, August 19th, 0800–1200 PST

Tuesday, August 20th, 1000–1500 PST

Wednesday, August 21st, 0800–1200 PST

Monday, August 26th, 0800–1200 PST



Tuesday, August 27th, 1000–1500 PST

Wednesday, August 28th, 0800–1200 PST

I appreciate your time and input. Please note that no names or NTAGs will be mentioned specifically in the report.

Thank you for considering this opportunity!



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