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## A Profile of Navy Family Configurations

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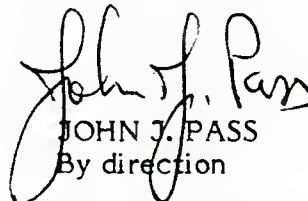
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From: Commanding Officer, Navy Personnel Research and Development Center

Subj: **A PROFILE OF NAVY FAMILY CONFIGURATIONS**

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1. This demographic analysis of Navy families was conducted under work unit number R1770-MP003, on behalf of the Navy Family Support Program (NMPC-66) to provide an accurate update on family patterns among Navy members. Timely information of this kind is essential for planning and providing responsive support services for Navy families.
2. Appreciation is extended to NMPC-16 for their assistance in generating the random sample of social security numbers of Navy members and to NMPC-312 for providing the relevant microfiche records.

  
JOHN J. PASS  
By direction

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**A Profile of Navy Family Configurations**

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## SUMMARY

### Problem

In order to improve existing services or implement new programs intended to support and enrich the lives of Navy families, timely accurate information about the composition and structure of those families is needed. This information is not presently available through computerized personnel or dependency records.

### Objective

A 1980 demographic profile study of Navy families was replicated to determine changes in family patterns occurring in the past 6 years, and to provide reliable information about Navy families for policy and planning purposes.

### Method

A 1 percent sample of Navy members was drawn based on random selection of social security numbers from all active duty Navy personnel. The 5,385 randomly generated social security numbers were linked to microfiche records of emergency data forms from personnel files. Pertinent information for sample members was extracted from the most recent emergency data forms on file and coded for computer analysis. Information obtained included marital status, unit, rank, sex of the member, the number and age of members' dependent children; whether such children were living in the member's household or with another custodian, whether or not the member was previously married, and dual-career status. Representativeness of the resulting sample was confirmed by comparison with official Navy statistics on two known dimensions. Figures in this report can be assumed to vary as much as 1 to 2 percent from the true Navy personnel situation.

### Conclusions

Consistent with general population trends in the U.S., the percentage of members who are unmarried has increased, as has the number of women in the Navy, the number of dual-career couples, and the number of Navy women married to civilian husbands. Overall, fewer married members are having children than in 1980. The largest subgroup, however, continues to be the member with a civilian wife.

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## INTRODUCTION

Six years ago, a study was undertaken to provide an accurate description of U.S. Navy families (Orthner & Nelson, 1980) confirmed that the social and demographic trends reflected in the changing family patterns throughout society are also found in today's Navy population. Although these findings were hardly a surprise, the report was valuable because it provided the reliable data required for implementing support services tailored to the changing characteristics of the Navy families.

Navy concern with family matters has grown with an accumulation of evidence supporting the interconnectedness of family, work, and Navy life. The impact of family well-being on retention and performance has been documented in a number of reports (Farkas & Durning, 1982; Hunter, 1977; Orthner, 1980; Orthner & Brown, 1978; Szoc, 1982) and requires no further elaboration here. This relationship between family matters and Navy goals has implications for planning and policy decisions. Family status data must be periodically updated, however, and made available to decision-makers in order to contribute to effective planning. The intent of this demographic study, then, is identical to that of the 1980 effort: to describe the composition of Navy families and to assess changes in living and family patterns within the Navy community. Of particular interest is information regarding the size of subpopulations that may require additional or specialized support services, such as dual-career couples, single parents, cross-cultural couples, and the like.

## METHOD

To take advantage of the availability of baseline data, the decision was made to replicate the Orthner and Nelson (1980) demographic profile analysis. With this approach, demographic trends can be revealed that will aid in the projection of future requirements.

Emergency data forms stored in central personnel files continue to represent the only known source of detailed information about the composition of Navy households. Completion of the emergency data form is required of all Navy personnel at the time of transfer from one assignment to another, or when family composition changes (i.e., a marriage, birth, divorce, etc.). At the present time, the unique information to be gained from this data source is not computerized. Although other personnel records are available in computerized forms that include the number and category of dependents recorded for each member, they do not indicate whether a dependent presently resides in the same household with the Navy member.

### Sampling

A 1 percent sample of the active duty Navy population was drawn by random selection of social security numbers from the most recent computerized data base listing all Navy members and maintained by NMPC-16. These randomly-generated social security numbers were then matched to personnel files from which emergency data forms were extracted. Pertinent information from these microfiche records was reduced to numeric code and a data tape prepared. A second match (by social security number) with the current enlisted and officer master data tapes was carried out to add supplemental variables. This procedure also made it possible to verify the accuracy of information found in both sources.

The result was a sample of 5,385 Navy members for whom the following information was compiled:

Member: sex, age, race, pay grade, identification and development status of the unit to which assigned, marital status, whether or not the member was previously married

Spouse: age, dependent status, U.S. citizen status, if marriage took place in the U.S.

Other Family Members: age, relationship to member, dependent status, if physical custody resides with a custodian other than the member.

### Defining Classification Categories

All Navy members included in the sample were first categorized as belonging to one of the following subpopulations: single members, single members with children, married members with no children in the household, or married members with children in the household. Each of these groups are discussed in the following sections of the report, with some categories also broken down further into subgroups. To aid in the interpretation of results, decision rules for assigning members to marital status categories are presented. For purposes of this discussion, it may be helpful to refer to the emergency data form reproduced in Figure 1.

A member was categorized as married if he or she listed the name of a spouse in response to item 5. This criterion applied regardless of what address might be listed for the spouse, as it was not possible to determine from these records whether an indicated separation might be temporary or long term, whether it might be only geographical or a dissolution in every sense other than legal. If no spouse name was given, the Navy member was considered to be single.

Information about dependent children was taken from items 13 through 32 (and continuation sheet if necessary) of the emergency data form. Included in this section were the name, age, dependent status and relationship of dependents (other than spouse) of this sample of Navy members. Also included was information about the custodian of minor children, if that custodian is someone other than the member. Using this information, it was possible to determine if a child was in the physical custody of someone other than the Navy member during the specific time period represented by these data.

It was thus possible to identify two subgroups of single personnel with dependent children. The first, and larger of the two, has been labeled "singles with children" and includes all those who are not presently married, but claim minor children as dependents. The designation of "single parents" is reserved for unmarried personnel who list minor children as dependents, and do not specify a custodian of the child or children. That is, since no other custodian is named, it can reasonably be assumed that they also have physical custody.

The frequency of dual-career marriages was determined by looking at the dependency status of the spouse when one is listed. Members who were married but did not claim his or her spouse as a dependent on the emergency data form were classified as dual-career. A "primary dependents code" variable from the master tapes also provided a designation for dual-career individuals, which was used as a check for reliability of the emergency data.

NO USE UN

P602R

NO USE UN

DEPENDENCY APPLICATION/RECORD OF EMERGENCY DATA

USE THIS FORM TO REPORT GAIN OR LOSS OF DEPENDENTS

1 UNIT CODE	2 SHIP OR STATION	3 INITIAL	4 CHANGE
5 NAME OF SPOUSE		14 DATE OF BIRTH OF SPOUSE	15 RELATIONSHIP
8 PLACE OF MARRIAGE (CITY & STATE OR COUNTRY)		9 DATE MARRIED	10 CITIZENSHIP OF SPOUSE
11 ADDRESS OF SPOUSE		12 DEP	BYAA
13 NAME OF CHILD OR DEPENDENT		14 DATE OF BIRTH	15 RELATIONSHIP
16 ADDRESS (INCLUDE NAME OF CUSTODIAN IF OTHER THAN CLAIMANT)		17 DEP	BYAA
18 NAME OF CHILD OR DEPENDENT		19 DATE OF BIRTH	20 RELATIONSHIP
21 ADDRESS (INCLUDE NAME OF CUSTODIAN IF OTHER THAN CLAIMANT)		22 DEP	BYAA
23 NAME OF CHILD OR DEPENDENT		24 DATE OF BIRTH	25 RELATIONSHIP
26 ADDRESS (INCLUDE NAME OF CUSTODIAN IF OTHER THAN CLAIMANT)		27 DEP	BYAA
28 NAME OF CHILD OR DEPENDENT		29 DATE OF BIRTH	30 RELATIONSHIP
31 ADDRESS (INCLUDE NAME OF CUSTODIAN IF OTHER THAN CLAIMANT)		32 DEP	BYAA
33 NAME OF FATHER		34 DEP	BYAA
34 ADDRESS OF FATHER (SEE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING BLOCK 35)		35 DEP	BYAA
36 NAME OF MOTHER		37 DEP	BYAA
37 ADDRESS OF MOTHER (SEE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING BLOCK 38)		38 DEP	BYAA
39 WERE YOU PREVIOUSLY MARRIED? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	40 PRIOR MARRIAGE DISSOLVED BY: DEATH <input type="checkbox"/> ANNULMENT <input type="checkbox"/> DIVORCE <input type="checkbox"/>	41 DATE	42 PLACE (CITY & STATE OR COUNTRY)
43 WAS SPOUSE PREVIOUSLY MARRIED? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	44 PRIOR MARRIAGE DISSOLVED BY: DEATH <input type="checkbox"/> ANNULMENT <input type="checkbox"/> DIVORCE <input type="checkbox"/>	45 DATE	46 PLACE (CITY & STATE OR COUNTRY)

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PART I

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Figure 1. Form used to record emergency data.

In all tables to follow, subgroups are reported as a percentage of total Navy members rather than as a percentage of a marital status category.

Population Estimates

Descriptive statistics for the sample were computed, and percentages were then projected to the current Navy population. With a completely random sample of this size, based on a comprehensive sampling frame that provides an equal opportunity for any individual to be selected, sampling error will be no greater than plus or minus 2 percent.

To provide an additional check on its representativeness, the sample was compared to population estimates generated for the third quarter of FY86 by the Naval Military Personnel Command. Table 1 indicates the correspondence between this sample and the total population in distribution by gender and officer/enlisted percentages.

**Table 1**  
Sample and Population Distributions by  
Gender and Officer/Enlisted

	Population			Sample		
	Male	Female		Male	Female	
Officer	11.5% (67,105)	1.2% (7,312)	12.7%	11.5% (504)	1.5% (64)	12.9%
Enlisted	79.3% (463,820)	8.0% (46,757)	87.3%	78.7% (3,459)	8.4% (367)	87.1%
	<u>90.8%</u>	<u>9.2%</u>		<u>90.2%</u>	<u>9.8%</u>	

Note. Population totals do not include officer candidates.

The close fit between the sample and population distributions suggests that sample percentages can be applied to the total Navy population to determine, with considerable accuracy, the size of various subpopulations within the Navy at this time. The total force projections shown in the tables that follow are based on a total Navy population of 590,000.

**SAMPLE DESCRIPTION**

At the time data were compiled for this report (third quarter, FY86), approximately 91 percent of the total force were male and 51 percent were married. In the sample drawn from this population, 69 percent of the officers were married compared to 48 percent of enlisted personnel. The distribution of married and single personnel broken down by gender and officer/enlisted is displayed in Table 2, along with projections for the total force.

**Table 2**

Distribution of Officer and Enlisted Personnel by  
Marital Status and Gender

	Sample Distribution				Total Force Projection			
	Officer		Enlisted		Officer		Enlisted	
	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M	F	M	F
Single	3.0	0.9	40.0	5.0	17,700	5,310	236,000	29,501
Married	8.0	0.5	39.0	3.0	47,234	2,952	230,264	17,712

### CONFIGURATIONS OF NAVY FAMILIES

In the following sections, additional details about each of the family status groups are provided. These groups are identified as independent singles, singles with children, married members without children, married members with children.

#### Single Members

Overall trends in the United States indicate that an increasing number of men and women are remaining single or choosing to delay marriage. A substantial proportion of Navy singles were previously married and, as reported by Orthner and Nelson in 1980, 20 percent of those who divorce do not remarry.

Overall, slightly more than 48 percent of the sample was single. A demographic summary for single Navy members is provided in Table 3, along with projections for the total force. As one would expect, the substantial majority of single members are among enlisted personnel at entry ranks and have not been married.

#### Single with Children

Information about the percentage of the sample who are both unmarried and have children is presented in Table 4, along with projected total force estimates for that group.

With unmarried parents representing more than 3 percent of the total Navy personnel, a question frequently asked concerns the number of single-parent households (i.e., how many single members are the heads of households that include minor children). For many members, deployment demands mean that they must make alternative arrangements for the custody of children for much of the time. However, it should be remembered that these data represent a single time segment, and that the member may shortly resume custody to become a single parent. In Table 5, such individuals are included in the "without physical custody" category regardless of their legal custody status.

**Table 3**  
Profile of Unmarried Navy Personnel

	Percentage of Total Sample	Total Force Estimates
<u>Rank</u>		
Officer	3.9	23,010
Enlisted	44.1	265,500
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Never married	44.0	259,879
Divorced	3.6	20,972
Other	0.1	567
<u>Gender</u>		
Male, never married	39.2	231,255
Male, previously married	2.7	16,154
Female, never married	5.4	31,740
Female, previously married	.7	4,251
<u>Total Unmarried Population</u>		288,510

**Table 4**  
Family Profiles for Unmarried Navy Personnel

	Percent of Total Sample	Total Force Estimates
Singles without dependent children	45.7	269,630
Singles with dependent children	3.2	18,880
1 child	2.1%	12,390
2 children	0.9%	5,355
3 children	0.1%	850
4 or more	<sup>a</sup>	284
Total unmarried population		288,510

<sup>a</sup>Less than 0.1 percent.

**Table 5**

**Physical Custody of Dependent Children of  
Single Navy Parents**

	Percentage of Total Sample	Total Force Estimates
Single parents without physical custody	2.6	15,340
Single parents with physical custody	.6	3,540
Total percentage of Navy personnel, unmarried with dependent children	3.2	18,800

Although their numbers are relatively small, single parents with physical custody of minor children are of particular concern because they have special needs for support services. Table 6 provides a more detailed profile of the single parents who had physical custody at the time of completing their most current emergency data form. As the table indicates, there are more male single parents than female single parents because a much larger percentage of Navy members are male.

**Table 6**

**Unmarried Navy Personnel with Physical  
Custody of Minor Children**

	Percent of Total Sample	Total Force Estimates
Single parents with physical custody	0.6	3,540
Officer	a	--
Enlisted	0.55%	3,250
Male	0.5%	2,927
Female	0.1%	613
Projected number of children in physical custody of unmarried Navy personnel		4,718

<sup>a</sup>Less than 0.1 percent.

## Married Members

Based on this representative sample, approximately 51 percent of the Navy population are married. Three marriage patterns are represented in this population: members with civilian wives, members with civilian husbands, and dual-career couples. As shown in Table 7, the latter two groups are much smaller than the number of married men with civilian wives.

**Table 7**  
Marriage Patterns of Navy Personnel

	Percent of Total Sample	Total Force Estimates
Total married population	51	301,014
Married members with civilian wife	46%	271,493
Married members with civilian husband	2%	11,808
Dual-career couples	3%	17,713

### Married Members with Civilian Wife

Unchanged from 1980, the largest group of married Navy members fits the conventional pattern of military husband with a civilian wife. Overall, 16 percent of this subpopulation have been married previously. Approximately 9 percent of the civilian wives are 21 years of age or younger.

The number of childless marriages among these members has also changed little since 1980, dropping one percentage point to an overall 29 percent. Slightly more than 6 percent of these families have four or more children in the household. Table 8 is included to show the family size distributions.

### Married Members with Civilian Husband

Approximately 2 percent of the sample were Navy women married to civilian husbands (see Table 9). When projected to the total Navy, the population of this subgroup is slightly less than 12,000. As the family size distributions indicate, about three-fourths of these marriages are childless.

### Dual-Career Marriages

Based on this sample, approximately 3 percent of Navy members are married to military spouses, generally to other Navy members. Dual-career couples are somewhat more likely to have children than are Navy members with civilian husbands, but somewhat less likely to have children than are couples in which the husband is the Navy member with a civilian wife (see Table 10).

**Table 8**

## Family Size Profiles for Married Members with Civilian Wives

Number of Dependent Children	Enlisted		Officer	
	Percentage of Total Sample	Total Force Estimates	Percentage of Total Sample	Total Force Estimates
None	9.7	57,271	1.7	10,037
One	9.0	53,138	1.4	8,266
Two	8.7	51,367	2.0	11,809
Three	3.7	21,846	1.1	6,495
Four or more	1.7	10,087	0.4	2,362

Note. Because of missing data, percentages above do not total 46 percent.

**Table 9**

## Family Size Profiles for Married Members with Civilian Husbands

Number of Dependent Children	Enlisted		Officer	
	Percentage of Total Sample	Total Force Estimates	Percentage of Total Sample	Total Force Estimates
None	0.90	5,385	0.10	590
One	0.20	1,180	0.04	236
Two	0.10	590	0.02	118
Three	0.02	118	0.02	118
Four or more	0	0	0	118

Note. Because of missing data, percentages above do not total 2 percent.

**Table 10**

Family Size Profiles for Married Members with Dual-Career Marriages

Number of Dependent Children	Enlisted		Officer	
	Percentage of Total Sample	Total Force Estimates	Percentage of Total Sample	Total Force Estimates
None	1.00	5,900	0.20	1,180
One	0.40	2,361	0.10	590
Two	0.20	1,180	0.04	236
Three	0.10	590	0	0
Four or more	0	0	0.02	118

Note. Because of missing data, percentages above do not total 3 percent.

Previously Married Navy Members

The incidence of divorce among Navy personnel is currently 11.8 percent. These data cannot be interpreted as the rate at which divorce occurs because it was not possible to determine the number of members who have been divorced more than once. Therefore, the 11.8 percent represents the proportion of the total Navy population that has been divorced rather than the number of marriages that ended in divorce. In Table 11, the current marital status of members who have been divorced is shown, together with a breakdown by gender and officer/enlisted.

**Table 11**

Previously Married Navy Personnel by Current Marital Status, Gender, and Officer/Enlisted

	Percent of Total Sample	Total Force Estimates
Presently married	8.2	48,415
Female	0.8	4,723
Male	7.4	43,691
Enlisted	6.8	40,149
Officer	1.4	8,266
Presently unmarried	3.6	21,255
Female	0.8	4,723
Male	2.8	16,532
Enlisted	3.2	18,894
Officer	0.4	2,362

## Cross-Cultural Marriages

It is generally recognized that cross-cultural couples are likely to experience some unique problems, and foreign born spouses may require additional support services while they become integrated into the U.S. culture. The emergency data forms utilized in the present study did not include information about race or ethnicity for spouses. These forms did, however, provide information about the citizenship of the spouse, indicating that 5.9 percent of Navy personnel are married to individuals who are not U.S. citizens. Slightly less than three-fourths of the Navy marriages involving non-citizen spouses took place outside the U.S. Members selected because they met both criteria totaled 3.9 percent of the sample, or approximately 23,000 when projected to the total population. While this figure should not be considered as an accurate enumeration of cross-cultural marriages, it is possibly the best available at this time.

## **POPULATION CHANGES 1980-1986**

The present data were compared with similar data obtained in 1980 (Orthner & Nelson, 1980). Several trends were confirmed: The number of women in the Navy has grown from 7 percent to 9.3 percent. There are more single Navy members, proportionally, than in 1980--49 percent compared to 46 percent. The conventional family pattern of military member with civilian wife is at this time somewhat less prevalent, with a commensurate increase in dual-career couples, single parents, and marriages between female Navy members and civilian husbands. A smaller percent of officers were married in 1986 compared to 1980 (73% versus 69%).

The number of single parents in the Navy had been expected to increase sharply between 1980 and 1986. However, that expectation was not supported by these data, which show a decrease from 0.9 percent to 0.6 percent. A reasonable explanation lies in the fact that being a single parent is most often a temporary status. In any given period, some single parents will marry or remarry, while other personnel will become single parents through divorce, separation, or pregnancy. Still other members will resume physical custody of their children, which was disrupted due to transfers and deployments. Furthermore, the emergency data forms in members' personnel files are frequently as much as 2 years out of date. The timeliness of these data is therefore less than optimal, suggesting that there may be a considerable lag before changes in family patterns are reflected by the forms.

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