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The Royal Australian Navy
Officer Retention Survey

The effects of Career Stage and Location
on Serving Officer Attitudes

Part 11

A proposed four stage career model

by

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ABSTRACT

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A tentative, four-stage officer career model was devised based on the above interval. Retention Survey and other data were reworked to test the reality of the model.

It was concluded that this model more accurately reflects officer attitudes and behaviour than does the Jans three-stage concept.



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Introduction

Jans (1985*) linked attitudinal and other changes to particular stages in a service officer's career. He labelled these stages Early career (1 to 13 years) Middle career (14 to 19 years) and Late career (20+ years).

In a recent Research Note the present writer reported the results of an attempt to reproduce Jans' findings using responses from a sample of about 1400 serving, male RAN officers (Salas, 1989). These failed to support Jans' findings except in the instance of job related factors. Observations made on the Retention Survey data suggested that the 1 to 13, 14 to 19 and 20+ years intervals, more or less arbitrarily chosen by Jans, might not have allowed the most accurate representation of the full spectrum of officer attitudes. Sequences other than those postulated by Jans are not necessarily excluded in the analysis of career stages.

Aim

1. To devise a provisional four-stage career model based on empirical evidence.
2. To anchor the provisional four-stage career model as far as possible to actual officer attitudes and behaviour.

Part 1

Introduction

This Part traces the origin and development of the proposed four-stage officer career model. It commences with an extract from a previous Research Note (see Table 1 below) regarding the results of an interim analysis of Retention Survey data made prior to the closure of the Survey proper (Salas, 1987).

* see Technical Note 2.

In Table 1 below the risk factor (col 4) was determined by the frequency of those who scored 1 or 2 on the following Retention survey questionnaire item.

"At present how actively are you considering resignation?"

Very Actively 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not at all

Table 1

Length of Service (Yrs)	f high risk	Borne	% high risk	
8	11	89	12	
9	9	82	11	
10	12	93	13	12%
11	5	47	11	(8 to 12 yrs)
12	5	40	13	
13	4	52	8	
14	2	52	4	7%
15	5	65	8	(13 to 15 yrs)
16	7	60	12	
17	10	54	19	
18	18	62	29	26%
19	18	65	28	(16 to 20 yrs)
20	26	67	39	

(from Salas, 1987)

Comment

A clear drop in high resignation risk is apparent in Table 1 for the years of service 13, 14 and 15.

These results were confirmed at the completion of the Survey; as revealed in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Resignation risk by length of service

Frequencies and percentages of those "very actively" considering resignation (from the Officer Retention Survey).

Length of Service (yrs)	Borne	Frequency high risk	% (6 or 7 scores)
1	7	0	0
2	16	1	6
3	23	4	17
4	34	4	12
5	56	4	7
6	51	7	14
7	64	3	5
8	80	10	13
9	74	7	10
10	89	11	13
11	41	4	10
12	36	5	14
13	49	3	6
14	50	3	6
15	63	5	8
16	53	7	13
17	50	9	18
18	58	17	29
19	62	18	29
20+	356	106	30
Totals	1302	228	17.5%

The comparatively low resignation pondering over years 13, 14 and 15 in the Table 1 data appears to be confirmed by that in the Table 2 above. No other such clear cut sequences are apparent.

Conclusions

If the years of service 13 to 15 are recognized as a possibly unique career stage in its own right, characterized by a comparatively low level of active resignation thinking, it might provide the basis for a reconceptualization of officer career stages using this datum as a benchmark.

This results in the following tentative four-stage career model.

Career Stage	Intervals
Early	1 to 12 years
Early Middle	13 to 15 years
Late Middle	16 to 19 years
Late	20+ years

Results

In the Tables below the Retention Survey data from Table 2 above are reduced as follows:

Table 3

Very Actively Considering Resignation

Career Stage	Years	n	f	%
Early	1 - 12	571	60	10.5
Early Middle	13 - 15	162	11	6.79
Late Middle	16 - 19	223	51	22.85
Late	20+	356	106	29.77

Table 4 below shows the Retention Survey data in Table 3 reduced to the three-stage career model favoured by Jans (1985).

Table 4

Very Actively Considering Resignation

Career Stage	Years	n	f	%
Early	1-13	620	63	10.16
Middle	14-19	336	59	17.5
Late	20+	356	106	29.77

Comparison of Tables 3 and 4 above shows that, the (above) career stage intervals used by Jans tend to obscure the 13 to 15 year phenomenon. This circumstance energised the further exploration of the reality of the four-stage model.

Resignation Behaviour

The results in the Tables above are based on non-behavioural data ("resignation pondering"). Tables 5 and 6 below show statistics for actual resigning RAN officers, grouped according to the proposed four-stage career convention.

Table 5

1988 Resigning Cohort* (n = 193)

Career Stage	Years	n	%
Early	1-12	63	32.6
Early Middle	13-15	7	3.6
Late Middle	16-19	6	3.1
Late	20+	116	60.1
Missing		1	
Total		193	

* Data from Officer Resignation Questionnaires issued by the Director of Naval Officer Posting.

Table 6

Retention Survey Sample
Validation sub-sample, 1987
(Officers who subsequently resigned)#
(n = 148)

Career Stage	Years	n	%
Early	1-12	46	32
Early Middle	13-15	7	5
Late Middle	16-19	22	15
Late	20+	73	48
Total		145	

The lowered resignation rates over the 13 to 15 year point in the two tables above are clear enough. This tends to confirm the decreased resignation pondering over these years reported by serving officers in the Retention Survey (see Tables 1 to 3) and supports the reality of these years as possibly constituting a unique career interval*.

numbers of these would also have featured in the 1988 ORQ resigning cohort
* see Table A, p25

Officer Attitudes

Further confirmation of the 13 to 15 year effect was sought amongst attitudinal data from the Officer Retention Survey according to the following conjecture.

If serving officer resignation pondering was found to be diminished in the career years 13 to 15 and if actual resignation rates were also found to be diminished in the career years 13 to 15 it could be assumed that mean career motivation should be comparatively high during those years and mean resignation propensity correspondingly lower when compared to other career stages. Data in Table 7 below provide an answer.

Table 7
Mean Career Motivation and Resignation Propensity*
Scale scores across the proposed four stage officer
career model as applied to data from the
Naval Officer Retention Survey

No	Career Stages (years)	Label	Career		Resignation	
			Motivation#		Propensity	
			X	SD	X	SD
1	1-12	Early	14.9	4.3	25.7	8.3
2	13-15	Early Middle	13.9	3.8	24.9	7.8
3	16-19	Late Middle	15.6	4.5	27.7	7.7
4	20+	Late	17.7	5.3	27.4	8.7

* Career motivation is the propensity to continue serving. Resignation propensity is the opposite (Salas 1988a,b,1989)

CM Scale scores are negatively keyed. Lower CMS scores = higher career motivation.

Comment

A dip in the mean CMS scores (= higher career motivation) and a lowered resignation propensity is evident in the Early Middle career stage in Table 7. This supports the above conjecture especially as the differences in mean CMS scores between all successive career stages are all highly significant statistically. For resignation propensity, only the mean RP score difference between adjacent successive career stages 2 and 3 in Table 7 are statistically significant ($p = .005$). These results support the validity of splitting Jans original Middle career stage into the two proposed sub-stages.

Final conclusions

The results in Tables 1 to 7 above tend to support the reality of the 13 to 15 year interval as constituting a career stage characterized by lowered resignation pondering, lowered resignation attitudes and lowered actual resignation rates.

This conclusion provides reasonably firm support for the proposed four-stage career model at the possible expense, it seems, of the earlier three-stage conceptualization.

Part 11

Introduction

This Part presents the results of an analysis of the comparison of mean scores on constructs and on individual questionnaire items made by RAN officers in all four stages of the model proposed in Part 1. Data were drawn from the 1987 Retention Survey.

Aim

To demonstrate that the proposed career stages have both statistical and empirical meaning.

Method

Mean scores were compared for successive career stages i.e. 1-12 years with 13 to 15 years, 13 to 15 years with 16 to 19 years and 16 to 19 years with 20+ years. t values and their probabilities of chance occurrence are supplied in the tables. To minimize Type 1 errors a probability level of 0.005 was set as an upper limit.

Procedure

Mean scores on the scales listed below were calculated and compared across successive career stages. The results are tabled.

The scales are described briefly in Annex A. Those asterisked were generated during the course of an attempted replication (Salas, 1989) of some results originally reported by Jans (1985). Individual Retention Survey questionnaire items are also treated as above. They are listed in the Tables following the scale data.

Scale	Acronym
Satisfaction with Navy life	SQ
Commitment to Navy	CS
*Career Motivation	CMS
*Family Factor	FF
*Job Satisfaction	JOBSAT
*Remuneration	RS
K. Scale (Affective Commitment)	KS
*Service Effectiveness	SE

Stages	n
Early Career	571
Early Middle Career	162
Late Middle Career	223
Late Career	356

Table 8

Results

t values and probability levels for mean scale score and mean item score differences between officers in successive career stages.

Scales	1		2		3	
	Early (1-12 yrs)		Early Mid		Late Mid	
	vs Early Mid (13-15 yrs)		vs Late Mid (16-19 yrs)		vs Late (20+ yrs)	
	t	p	t	p	t	p
Family Factor (FF)	-7.16	.000				
Resignation Prop (RP)			-3.54	.000		
Career Motiv. (CM)#	2.89	.004	-4.00	.000	-5.06	.000
Navy Commitment (CS)					-3.15	.002
Satisfaction with Navy (SQ)					-2.96	.003
Items						
Pension*	-4.99	.000				
Pension uncertainty*	-5.91	.001				
Higher civilian income*	3.59	.000				
Frustration with DOD	-3.56	.002				
Promotion unlikely*	-3.14	.002				
Try civ. life*			-3.42	.000	-3.44	.001
Freq. of job inquiries					-3.83	.000
Expect. met					-3.48	.000
Resignation thinking			-5.3	.000	-7.9	.000

higher CMS score = lower career motivation

* as a resignation influence

Comment

Table 8

Column 1

Early Career

Early Career vs Early Middle Career

(1-12 years) (13-15 years)

The polarity of the t values shows that pension matters as resignation influences received significantly greater endorsement from those officers serving in Early Middle career (13 to 15 years of service) than from those in Early career (1 -12 years). This result is consistent with the arguments put forward previously by Jans (1988) in support of the onset of the golden handcuffs effect at the 12 or 13 year point (see Technical Note 3).

Frustrations with the Department of Defence organization and the perceived unlikelihood of promotion in Early Middle career were also reported more frequently as likely resignation influences by those in Early Middle career.

Members of the 13 to 15 year group report the Family Factor (spouses' attitude, marital harmony, childrens' education) as likely to be a more potent resignation influence than do those in Early career. This is possibly because of the higher frequency of those without wives and/or families in the Early career stage (1 to 12 years). On the other hand those in Early career appear to regard the higher income available in civilian life as a more likely resignation influence for them. Finally, the polarity of the t score indicates that the mean career motivation scale score (CMS) for the Early Mid career stage is less than that for the preceding, Early, career stage. Since CMS scale scores are reversed, this result indicates that career motivation in Early Mid career is actually higher than it is in Early career. This datum represents a reversal of Jans' (1985) finding in which he reported higher career motivation scale scores in Early career than in middle career and was concerned with the drop off of career motivation after the 12 year point. The present results would have been obscured if the Jans three stage career model had been used.

As will be seen later on below in Part 111 of the present Note, those officers in their Early career stage also appear to be less generally

vulnerable to the "Canberra-effect" than are those at other stages of their Naval careers, including those in Early Middle career.

Table 8

Column 2	Middle Career
	Early Middle Career vs Late Middle Career
	(13 - 15 years) (16 - 19 years)

The Late Middle stage results see a clear cut upsurge of resignation pondering and activity over those of the Early Middle stage, including a corresponding loss of career motivation and a growing attraction for civilian life.

These results suggest that it would not be advisable to treat these two sub-groups as one combined "Middle" career group, as does Jans, especially as there is supporting evidence which suggests that interest in pension benefits shows a dramatic rise after the fifteenth year of service (see Annex B).

In spite of the greater generalized propensity to separate shown by Late Middle stage officers compared with the 13 to 15 year stage, they appear, as a group, to be remarkably uninfluenced by the Canberra effect except for their job attitudes (see Part 3 below).

Table 8

Column 3	Late Career
	Late Middle career vs Late career
	(16-19 years) (20+ years)

Although career motivation (CMS) is much lower in Late career than in the previous stage, mean resignation propensity (RP) scores are not significantly different and there is a significant upsurge in commitment to the Navy and also of general satisfaction with Naval life (SQ) at this juncture. More Late career officers than Late Middle officers report that their expectations of Naval life have been met.

Despite significantly invariant RP scores between these two career groups there is much more active resignation thinking and resignation behaviour (job inquiries made) to be found amongst Late career officers. These officers are also significantly more keen to try their talents in civilian life than are officers in the 16 to 19 year bracket.

The resignation rate of those in their Late career stage is the highest for any career stage (60%).

Conclusions

The results in Table 8 above suggest that officers in each career stage produced response patterns which were statistically distinct from those in career stages immediately adjacent to it. In particular, the splitting of Jans' Middle career stage, which embraced years 14 to 19, into two sub-stages, Early Middle and Late Middle, embracing years 13 to 15 and years 16 to 19 respectively appears to have been justified i.e. The Late Middle career group appear, from the Table 8 data, to be distinctly more resignation prone than those in Early Middle career. In addition the onset of the golden handcuffs effect, repeatedly referred to by Jans (see Technical Note 3), appears to be reflected in the pension concerns of the 13 to 15 year group who additionally reported higher career motivation than did the 1-12 year, Early, career group.

Jans alludes to fundamental differences between the Early/Early Middle and Late Middle/Late career stages in that the former is more highly focussed in terms of personal goals and career development in comparison with the latter, (1988, p.146,) and later "three elements of a mans self-image are particularly pertinent in Late Middle career" (ibid p.160) ".. especially at the critical phase of Late Middle career stage" (ibid p 173).

From these extracts it appears that Jans recognized the existence of significant differences of various sorts between those serving in the early and late sub-stages of his Middle career stage. To this extent the present four-stage model would seem to be reasonably well supported by previous observation and argument as well as by actual officer behaviour as discussed

in Part 1 of the present Note. Further evidence as to the likely uniqueness of each of the four career stages is put forward below in Part 3 of the present study.

Part 3

Interaction Effects

Introduction

Jans (1985) found that officers of all three services serving in the Middle stages of their careers were inclined to report lower career motivation and commitment to their service when compared with officers serving in their Early career stage. Those in Middle career seemed to be generally disenchanted with their career and work situations and to be undergoing a crisis of sorts.

The effect was found to be exacerbated if the officer was serving in Defence Central, Russell Offices, Canberra at the time of the survey. Jans referred to this phenomenon as "The Russell Bogey". The present writer, using the three stage career model devised by Jans (Early, Middle and Late career), attempted to reproduce the latter's findings using the responses of about 1400 serving male Royal Australian Navy officers from the Retention Survey (Salas 1989).

Results generally failed to support those of Jans so far as the effects of any Mid-career crisis went but evidence for the existence of the Russell Bogey (herein known as the Canberra Effect) was recognized. However, in the Retention data the focus of the latter appeared to find expression more in Late career rather than in Middle career as claimed by Jans (ibid).

Aim

To test for the existence of interactive career stage and location effects on officers' attitudes using the present tentative, four stage career model and to discuss the results

Method

The male RAN officer sample from the Retention Survey were divided into four career stage groups as follows:

Stage	Interval
Early career	1-12 years
Early Middle career	13-15 years
Late Middle career	16-19 years
Late career	20+

Each group was sub-divided by location into Canberra and non-Canberra and mean scale and item scores were compared between these sub-groups using t as a test of statistical significance of the mean differences found.

Procedure

The results are tabled and discussed for each career stage group in turn

Results.

Table 9
Mean scale and item scores by
location and career stage

	Early career stage (1 to 12 years of service)		t	significance
	Canberra Mean Score* n	non-Canberra Mean Score* n		
Scales				
Family Factor (FF)	9.8 105	8.2 394	2.76	.006
Items				
Age	31.2	28.3	1.03	.000
Rank	2.3	1.9	3.89	.000
Own home	1.5	1.7	-2.81	.006
Financial loss	1.9	1.6	2.84	.005
No further contrib	2.9	2.6	2.7	.008
Trained for pres job	2.9	3.3	-4.07	.000

* only significant mean score differences are reported.

Comment

Lack of training for their present jobs is reported significantly more frequently by Canberra-based officers in Table 9 above. This has been thought by Jans (1985), to be one of the factors mitigating against the achievement of high job satisfaction amongst Canberra-based officers. However, neither mean job satisfaction scores nor other job related indices show any significant mean differences between Canberra and non-Canberra based officers in the above Table 9. This general phenomenon was discussed earlier in Salas, (1989). On the evidence above it can be concluded that the Canberra effect is minimal upon officers serving in their Early Career stage.

Neither career motivation, commitment to the Navy, resignation propensity nor service effectiveness measures registered the influence of any Canberra effect amongst officers serving in this career stage.

Table 10

Mean scale and item scores by location and career stage

Early Middle Career
(13 to 15 years of service)

	Canberra	n	non-Canberra	n	t	significance
Scales	Mean score	40	Mean score	97		
Navy Satis. (SQ)	41.5		45.1		-1.92	.05
Job Satis. (JOBSAT)	21.7		24.1		-2.09	.04
Items						
Length of service	14.2		13.9		2.20	.03
Rank	2.9		2.7		2.06	.04
Trained for present job	2.8		3.1		-1.73	.05
Sat. with Navy job	4.2		5.1		-2.66	.01

Comment

Officers serving in Canberra tended to report to a significant extent:

- a. a lower level of general satisfaction with Navy life (SQ).
Because of the structure of the SQ this can be interpreted as a lower level of morale
- b. a lower level of overall job satisfaction (JOBSAT).
- c. a lower level of satisfaction with their specific Navy job
- d. that they are not as well trained for their present job*

These results can be interpreted as providing evidence of lowered morale (SQ) amongst Canberra located officers in this particular career stage (13 to 15 years) probably centering on their jobs and job related variables.

This supports results which Jans (1985) reported for his larger 14 to 19 year (Middle) career stage. However, the concomitant slump in scores amongst Canberra based officers on such variables as career motivation, Navy commitment ("career involvement") and service effectiveness reported by Jans did not appear in the present analysis

* a, b and c are highly intercorrelated. See Technical Note 1

Table 11

Mean scale and item scores by location and career stage

Late Middle Career

(16 to 19 years of service)

	Canberra	n	non-Canberra	n	t	significance
	Mean score	156	Mean score	194		
Items						
Rank	3.3		3.0		3.44	.001
Live in one loc.*	2.9		3.2		-1.90	.05
Poor RAN housing*	2.1		2.5		-2.08	.03

* As resignation influences

Comment

This stage appears to represent the most homogeneous of all four career groupings. There appears to be virtually no Canberra effect (or "Russell Bogey"). Evidence for any location-induced career crisis is non-existent in the above table. In addition it has been demonstrated elsewhere (Salas 1989a) that this career group has one of the lowest resignation rates of all four stages.

On the above evidence one is hard put to discern reasons for describing this career stage as does Jans, (1988, p.173) as "the critical phase of late Middle career stage...." (my italics RGS). Other grounds for this description may exist.

As will be suggested below, there are more attitudinal and behavioural reasons for describing Late career (20+ years) as a "critical phase" for those serving in Canberra than there would be for their brethren serving alongside them in their Middle career stage.

Table 12

Mean scale and item scores by location and career stage

Group 4 Late Career Stage
(20+ years of service)

	Canberra	n	non-Canberra	n	t	significance
Scales	Mean score	155	Mean score	193		
Navy Sat. (SQ)	43.8		46.5		-2.77	.006
Job Sat. (JOBSAT)	23.5		25.1		-2.85	.005
K Scale (Emot Comm)	19.8		20.8		-1.98	.05
Items						
Rank	3.8		3.2		5.95	.000
Decision partic.*	2.6		2.4		2.50	.01
Trained for present job	2.9		3.2		-3.32	.001
General satisfaction with Navy life	4.5		4.8		-2.21	.02
Sat. with Navy job	4.8		5.6		-4.45	.001
Personal sign. of Navy	5.0		5.4		-2.86	.02
Marital harmony*	3.1		3.4		-2.17	.03
Childrens' education*	3.3		3.7		-2.50	.007
Frustration with N.org*	3.4		3.0		2.69	.007

* as resignation influences

Comment

Compared with their counterparts serving elsewhere Late career stage Naval officers serving in Canberra tend to exhibit the following characteristics.

- a less general satisfaction with Naval life (SQ)* This can be interpreted as lower morale
- b less general job satisfaction (JOBSAT)*
- c less emotional commitment to the Navy (KS)
- d less satisfaction with their specific Navy job*
- e more frustration working within the DOD organization
- f less personally identified with the Navy
- g they are less trained for their present jobs
- h they are more frustrated at the lack of decision participation.

Compared with their Canberra-located counterparts, officers serving elsewhere report greater family disruption due to posting turbulence. This centres mainly on general marital harmony and the effect of postings upon childrens' education.

Summary - Part 3

Comparing the results of the previous four tables, it could be concluded that in Canberra, if any officer career stage were to exhibit signs and symptoms of a crisis of some sort the Late stage presents as best qualified of all. Additionally, Late career exhibits the highest resignation rate of any of the four career stages. Table 13 below shows a summarized version of the foregoing tabular data.

* a, b and d are highly correlated. See Technical Note 1.

Table 13

Career Stage and Location

Negative "Canberra-effect" reported in(X)

Career Stage

Scale	Early	Early Mid	Late Mid	Late
Sat. with N. life (SQ)		X		X
Job satisfaction (JOBSAT)		X		X
Emot commitment (KS)				X
Family Factor (FF)	X			
Items				
Trained for job	X	X		X
Sat. with N. job		X		X
Decision participation				X
Personal sign.of Navy				X
Frustration with DOD				X
Marital harmony				positive
Childrens' education				positive
Comment				

Of the 14 negative location effects reported across the full career spectrum twelve are job related. Eight appear in Late career. The absence of a location effect with such key variables as career motivation, Navy commitment, service effectiveness and resignation propensity for any stage is noteworthy.

Statistical and other Validation

The results in Table 13 above suggest that each career stage produced response patterns which were statistically distinct from those career stages which were immediately adjacent to it. Signs of a lower general satisfaction with Navy life (morale) are evident amongst Canberra located officers serving in Early Middle career and in Late career.

The behavioural significance of these results is not easy to determine. The Early Mid career stage tends to have the lowest resignation rate of all stages and Late career officers had the highest resignation rate of all (Salas 1989a). Late Middle career, a period alluded to by Jans as "the critical phase of late middle career" (1988, p.173) appears completely free of location effects.

Conclusions

Any career crisis would appear to be confined to Early Middle career, a very short stage but more substantially, to the Late career stage.

Final Conclusions

The results provided and discussed above suggest that there are no disadvantages to the use of the present, tentative, four-interval model to conceptualize male, Naval officer career stages. Some advantages to its use follow.

a. This model is empirically based being primarily keyed to the attitudes and thinking of serving officers and to their actual behaviour in the resignation area.

b. On the other hand the structure of the previous three stage model (Jans, 1988) was based on a mixture of logic and intuition and its use, in the present setting at least, has been shown to result in the obfuscation of phenomena of potential importance. Not only is the future use of the four-stage model supported by the statistical analysis, further substance is added by the thoughts of Jans regarding Early Middle and Late Middle career

stages as being likely to constitute distinct entities (ibid, p.146, also see page 13 above). It can be finally concluded that the proposed four-stage career model, in more accurately reflecting actual thinking and behaviour than the three-stage model might be the preferred choice for future use in analyses of Naval officer populations.

Overview and Evaluation

The splitting of the 14 to 19 years of service (Jans' Middle career stage) into Early middle (13 to 15 years) and Late Middle (16 to 19 years) sub-stages may present as a footling exercise, especially in view of the brevity of the proposed Early Middle stage and the numerically few officers involved (150+). However, the present results, supported by Jans' thinking, suggest that there seems no alternative but to accept the provisional reality of these two substages of "Middle career".

The present writer toyed with amalgamating Early career (1 to 12 years) and the maverick Early Middle career (13 to 15 years) into one "Early career" stage stretching from 0 to 15 years. The subsequent analysis appeared to hold up but again at the expense of obscuring the seemingly unique 13 to 15 year period and at the same time straining opinion, logic and fact by distorting the equally unique characteristics of the Early (0 to 12 years) career stage.*

Jans' study, "Careers in Conflict" (1985) is an academic treatise the results of which are declaredly devoid of much practical guidance to management (1988, p.6, final para) e.g. in a later article (1987) that writer reports some very modest validities for two of his scales in predicting Navy officer resignation. (0.25, n = 35) a result with quite limited utility.

* a "pure" career stage, supposedly devoid of pension influences - see Jans, 1988, p.139.

His work presents mainly as a plea for a fair go for ADF officers and it should not be seen as being explicitly concerned with practical outcomes such as officer retention, separation or resignation rates.

To this extent Jans' three-stage career stage model was probably never meant to be incontrovertible. The chosen career intervals comfortably matched his anecdotal, interview and other evidence and these supported and were supported by, the results of the statistical analyses.

The fact that his results were not closely replicated (Salas 1989 and in the present study) is perhaps not at all that momentous since the present, practically oriented, researches have now provided fresh insights into the possible use of organizational (service) career stages as an explanatory tool in establishing member attitude differentials and possibly behaviour.

By linking this model with observed resignation behaviour and with the reported attitudes of serving officers, career stages have become transformed from near abstractions into concepts of possible practical utility.

For example, even though the "anomalous" 13 to 15 year service time bracket is small and includes only a relative handful of Navy officers (150+) it might be of interest for management to appreciate that despite the seemingly low morale of these officers they appear less likely to resign.

It is in just this manner that the proposed fine-tuning of the officer Resignation Propensity scale devised by the present writer can be accomplished. (Salas 1988,b).

Final Statement

Before concluding, it should be pointed out, that the reality of the 13 to 15 year phenomenon upon which is based the presently proposed four-stage model has yet to be decisively established. This can be accomplished by re-analysing existing data and/or providing for the appropriate sorting of projected statistical data or of those in the course of being gathered.

The following data obtained from the Australian Army Officer Resignation survey across the period 1986 to 1988* tends to support the general position taken in this paper.

Table A

Career Stage	years	n	%
Early	1 - 12	99	34
Early Middle	13 - 15	15	5
Late Middle	16 - 19	6	2
Late	20+	<u>170</u>	59
Total		290	

* Hodge, B.J. Officer Resignation Survey. The First Year. Research Note 4/88 1 Psych Research Unit, Canberra, ACT. (Data reworked courtesy of the Commanding Officer, 1 Psych Research Unit)

Technical Note 1

Two of the four JOBSAT items come from the SQ which is represented by items 1 to 10 in Section 4 of the Naval Officer Retention Survey questionnaire. These are "What sort of a chance does the Navy give you to show what you can do?" and "How do you feel about your current Navy job?" (see scale descriptions in this Note). Thus SQ, JOBSAT and the "Navy job" item share considerable variance (e.g. SQ vs JOBSAT $r = 0.88$, $n = 1326$). However by testing for mean scale score differences and also for mean item score difference, when the scales are constructed by selections from these items, provides a chance to assess where the main variance from the scale is concentrated for any particular analytic situation.

e.g. The JOBSAT scale failed to register any location effect but one of its constituent items ("satisfaction with Navy job") was sensitive to the location of respondents. In testing for other effects, the same "Navy job" item could well not register at all and the JOBSAT scale could.

Technical Note 2

The first edition of N.A. Jans' "Careers in Conflict" appeared in 1985 in the form of a Defence Fellowship Report. It had a circulation limited mainly to Department of Defence libraries on the basis of one copy to each. This made availability correspondingly limited. No publishing details are to be found in this edition.

In 1988 "Careers in Conflict" was reprinted without textual alteration and issued by the Canberra College of Advanced Education under the sub-script of "Canberra Services in Administrative Studies No 10". This reprint features a cover design by Carl Ruediger. It has 403 pages not including Annexes. The National Library of Australia card number and ISBN is 0.85889-337.

A condensed version of the study entitled "Main findings of the Services Officers' Career Study" appeared in the Australian Defence Force Journal, 65, July/August 1987.

Technical Note 3

1. "...it is popularly believed that the Serviceman wears the golden handcuffs after 13 years of service" (1988, p.122).
2. "...the pension scheme appears to be an inducement for an officer to serve on after reaching 12 to 14 years service" (ibid, p107).
3. "...the financial inducements of the pension scheme - the "golden handcuffs" - do begin to operate at around the 12 to 14 years of service" (ibid, p93), and finally,
4. The "golden handcuffs effect" is popularly believed to come into play at around the point of 13 years of service" (ibid, p12).

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SCALES

CAREER MOTIVATION

As noted above, the Career Motivation Scale (CMS) measures the extent of the desire to continue serving.

The scale is comprised of the following items from the Retention Survey Questionnaire. The Section and item numbers follow in parentheses.

1. At present how actively are you considering resignation? (S3Q2)
2. Please give an estimated time-frame in which your contemplated resignation is most likely to be implemented. (S3Q3)
3. At present, how certain do you feel that you could get satisfactory employment in civilian life without much trouble? (S3Q8)
4. Have you actively initiated enquiries about one or more employment prospects outside the Service over the past 2 years? (S3Q9)
5. How many of these enquiries were related to your Navy employment? (S3Q10)

N.B. For this scale, the items were keyed so that a high score indicated a low level of motivation to continue serving and vice-versa. This should be remembered when interpreting Tabled data.

The CMS proved to be unifactorial with a reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.71. This is a satisfactory result and one which could probably be improved upon. All items were generated by the present writer.

NAVY COMMITMENT SCALE

The following six items were included in the Retention Survey Questionnaire with the aim of measuring officer commitment to a Naval career.

Commitment Scale items - Retention Survey (Section 4)

	Item
At present, how committed do you feel to the idea of a Navy career?	(11)
How satisfied are you with your Navy career to date?	(12)
How satisfied are you that you chose to join the Navy over the other careers available?	(13)
I find that my values and Navy values are very similar	(14)
Navy membership has a great deal of personal meaning for me	(15)
How strong is your sense of obligation to the Navy?	(16)
This scale is unifactorial with a reliability coefficient (alpha) of .84	

The above instrument was constructed to test the role of organizational commitment amongst RAN officers. A description of the construct is covered in Mowday et al (1982). Broadly speaking, it describes the proclivity possessed by a member of an organization by which he identifies with it to the extent that he views the goals and aims of the organization as HIS goals and aims, its values as HIS values and, figuratively speaking, its existence as HIS existence. Associated with these feelings are a desire to continue to maintain contact with the organization and to repudiate membership of other organizations.

The first three items were generated by the present writer. The "careers available" item was designed to substantiate the choice for a Navy career over alternatives. The "career to date" item establishes a direct link between the satisfaction and the commitment constructs.

The "values" item is modified from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCL; Mowday et al, 1982). The "personal meaning" item was designed to allow for the expression of broader emotional feelings, (affective commitment) whilst the "obligation" item gives expression to the feeling that one "ought" to remain serving as a duty, out of allegiance or loyalty.

The Affective Commitment (K) Scale comprises the following items from the Retention Questionnaire.

Section & item

1. How do you feel about making the Navy your career? (S4Q4)
2. I find that my values and Navy values are very similar. (S4Q14)
3. Navy membership has a great deal of personal meaning for me. (S4Q15)
4. How strong is your sense of obligation to the Navy? (S4Q16)

The K. Scale which purports to isolate the emotional component of commitment is unifactorial and has a reliability coefficient (alpha) of .81.

COMMITMENT - IDENTIFICATION - SATISFACTION

Organizational commitment is a construct which seems co-dimensional with another, older one, that of identification with the organization. In fact, in Mowday et al. (ibid.) the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably.

In a Defence Force with its characteristic all-embracing responsibility for most significant aspects of a member's life and welfare the concept of individual commitment (or identification) seems especially pertinent when evaluating retention/turnover/attrition and attempts at predicting these. This supposition appears strengthened by contemplating, for one, the longer training and more intense indoctrination period characteristic of military employment conditions compared with those conditions of employment in most civilian organizations.

Identification (commitment) has been shown to be associated with assimilation to the Army (Salas, 1967a) and assimilation status has in turn been significantly linked to retention over a three-year term.*

In the model used in the study, (ibid) the thesis that a certain prior level of satisfaction with other-rank Army life was a prerequisite of attaining a measure of identification (commitment) with the organization was supported.

In the present study of Navy officer retention, both the satisfaction and commitment (identification) constructs were found to be very highly significantly correlated from a moderate to high degree.

Three SQ items are found in the 9 item Resignation Propensity (RP) scale. The RP Scale, the conceptual reverse of the Career Motivation scale, has been found to be a valid predictor of RAN male, officer resignation activity. (Salas, 1988b).

THE SATISFACTION SCALE QUESTIONNAIRE (SQ)

A ten-item adaptation of a 14 item scale of satisfaction with Army life (Salas, 1967b) was included in the Retention survey.

* unpublished follow-up study of results in Salas (1967a).

The SQ is a well documented scale, the results of which have been shown to be implicated in the separation and the re-engagement decisions of other - rank personnel. (Salas, 1984).

The SQ items used in the Retention Study are listed below:

1. How well do you think the Navy is run?
Very well 7 6 5 4 3 3 2 1 Very badly
2. What sort of chance does the Navy give you to show what you can do?
A very good chance 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 A very poor chance
3. In general, how do you feel about life in the Navy?
Very satisfied 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Very dissatisfied
4. How do you feel about making the Navy your career?
Very keen to 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Don't want to
5. How do you feel about your chances of promotion in the Navy?
Satisfied 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Dissatisfied
6. Do you feel in general that you are doing better in the Navy than you could in civilian life?
Very much better 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Very much worse
7. Do you think you have improved and bettered yourself by being in the Navy?
Very much so 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all
8. How satisfied are you with your Navy pay?
Very satisfied 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Very dissatisfied
9. How do you feel with your current Navy job?
Very satisfied 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Very dissatisfied

10. Men and women coming into the Navy expect things from their future Navy life. How well would you say that your expectations have been met?

Much better than expected 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Much worse than expected

The present version of the SQ does not cover the possible universe of content. Satisfaction with supervision is one important omission. Intention to re-engage, a potent item in reflecting general satisfaction in the other-rank version of the SQ, was excluded as being inappropriate in the officer setting.

Items 1, 2 and 3 of the Resignation propensity Scale are from the SQ (promotion, doing better in Navy, Navy career). These all loaded on the "career" factor of the RP Scale (Salas, 1988).

SQ item 3 ("In general, how do you feel about life in the Service?"), has a history. This item first saw the light of day in Australia as part of the Satisfaction Scale Questionnaire (Salas, 1967a). It originally appeared in "The American Soldier" (Stauffer et al, 1949) as part of a Guttman scale of satisfaction with Army life.

The SQ has 2 factors with a reliability coefficient (alpha) of .82. With item 8 (pay) removed the SQ becomes unifactorial.

OTHER SCALES

The most important of these in the present context would be the Resignation Propensity (RP) Scale and the SQ, a measure of satisfaction with Navy life in the Retention Survey.

* Stouffer, S.A., Suchman, E.A., De Vinney, L.C., Star, S.A. and Williams, R.M. The American Soldier Voll Adjustment during Army Life: Princeton, N.J. Princeton Univer. Press, 1949.

The Resignation Propensity Scale (RP)

This is described at length in Salas (1988a, b). It is a nine item measure, scores on which provide an index of an officer's tendency towards voluntary separation from the Navy.

R P. Scale

Instruction: You are invited to answer some or all of the questions below, if you wish.

1. How do you feel about your chances of promotion in the Navy?
Satisfied 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Dissatisfied

2. Do you feel in general that you are doing better in the Navy than you could in civilian life?
Very much better 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Very much worse

3. How do you feel about making the Navy your career?
Very keen to 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Don't want to

4. At present, how committed do you feel to the idea of a Navy Career?
Very committed 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Not committed at all

5. How attractive does the idea of career employment in civilian life appear to you at present?
Very attractive 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Very unattractive

6. Have you had one or more job offers from organizations or individuals outside the Service over the past 2 years?
No.....1
Yes, one.....2
Yes, 2 or 3.....3
Yes, more than 3....4

8. Have you ever considered resigning?

Yes.....1

No.....2

9. If you answered Yes to the above item 8, please give an estimated time frame in which your contemplated resigning is most likely to be implemented.

0-2 mths.....1 3-6 mths.....2 7-12 mths.....3

13-18.....4 19-30mths.....5 30 + mths.....6

Not Applicable.....7

Three factors were identified in the RP Scale. It has a reliability coefficient alpha of .72.

The Job Satisfaction Scale (JOBSAT)

This measure comprised the following items, all from Section 4 of the Retention Survey Questionnaire.

What sort of chance does the Navy give you to show what you can do? (S4 item 2)

In general, how do you feel about life in the Navy? (S4 item 3; This item also appears in Jans' Career Motivation Scale).

How do you feel about your current Navy Job? (S4 item 9).

At present, how committed do you feel to the idea of a Navy career? (commitment Scale, CS) (S4, item 11)

How satisfied are you with your Navy career to date?

(Commitment Scale, CS) (S4, item 13)

The JOBSAT Scale is unifactorial with a reliability coefficient alpha of 0.79.

The Service Effectiveness (SE) Scale.

This measures attitudes towards the efficiency of the Navy as an employer. It includes opinions about career management,.

SE scale items are as follows: (The origin of each item is given in parentheses.)

How well do you think the Navy is run? (S4 item 1)

What sort of chance does the Navy give you to show what you can do? (S4 item 2)

In general, how satisfied do you feel with Navy life? (S4 item 3)

How satisfied are you with the current RAN Officer Personal Reporting System? (Section 2, item 8)

How satisfied are you with the quality of RAN Personnel management (including officer Career Planning)? (Section 2, item 9)

How effective do you think is the dream sheet system? (Section 2, item 10)

The SE Scale is unifactorial with a reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.79.

The Remuneration Scale (RS)

This instrument scales attitudes towards service and civilian pay and the financial costs of being a member of the Navy. The RS is made up of the following items. Origins of items are given in parentheses.

How satisfied are you with your Navy pay? (S4 item 8)

How does your Navy pay (+ allowances, benefits etc) compare with the money you think you could expect to receive in civilian life? (Section 3, item 15)

Financial costs of being in RAN (e.g. removals) - (as a resignation influence; Section 5, item 17)

The R. Scale is unifactorial and has a reliability coefficient alpha of 0.65.

Desire for DFRD Benefits as an influence on discharge

<u>Years served</u>	<u>No influence</u>		<u>Some influence</u>		
	f	%	f	%	
- 1	3	100	-	-	
1 - 5	24	96	1	4	
6 - 10	44	88	6	12	
11 - 15	19	86	3	14	
16 - 20	11	36	20	65	
21 - 25	10	22	36	78	
26 - 30	7	30	16	70	
31 - 35	1	13	7	88	(0000)

(from Salas, (1985,A-13.d))

There is a quantum jump in subscription to this variable as an influence upon discharge after 15 years of service.

Up to that point however, pension matters appear to exert very little effect upon resignation thinking.