The Navy’s Use of Special and Incentive Pays: Sailing Away From Jointness

Drew A. Bennett, Colonel, USMC

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Sponsoring Professor
Dr. Inderjit Singh

Advisor
Col Dave Peeler

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**Abstract**

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Abstract

This paper contends that the military pay system needs a complete review and examines the use of Special and Incentive (S&I) pays by one service as a case study. It examines the background necessary to evaluate this issue, the essentials of sea pay, submarine pay, and responsibility pay, and the concept of “jointness.” Arguing that these pays work against the concept of jointness and the military ethic, this paper makes several recommendations. It is time for a commission to conduct a complete review of the military compensation system. Services should attempt to limit the use of these types of pay in order to reinforce the military ethic and concept of jointness. Finally, if operational requirements prevent such changes, the Navy’s use of S&I pays should be adjusted to a more equitable system and the S&I pays of the other Services should be adjusted to a common standard.
Biographical Data

Col Drew A. Bennett, USMC
bennettd@ndu.edu
(703) 619-9272

Education
BA Tulane University               1977  History
MS Golden Gate University             1984  Human Relations
PhD Texas A&M University               1991  Adult and Extension Ed
Amphibious Warfare School               1983 (correspondence course)
US Army Infantry Officer Advanced Course        1984
USMC Command and Staff College        1992
USMC School of Advanced Warfighting          1993
US Armed Forces Staff College              1993
US Air Force War College                 1993  (Seminar Program)

Military Assignments
77-80 Platoon Commander/Company Commander 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines
80-84 Aerial Observer                  Marine Observation Squadron One
84-88 Marine Officer Instructor NROTC, Texas A&M University
88-91 Company Commander/Operations Officer 1st Battalion, 7th Marines
93-95 Amphib Ops Off/Crisis Action Team XO Combined Forces Command, Korea
95-96 Writer/Project Officer Commandant's Staff Group, HQMC
96-97 Congressional Fellow Office of the Speaker of the House
97-98 Operations Officer               7th Marine Regiment
98-00 Battalion Commander                 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines

Publications: (in addition to numerous book reviews)
"Will the Next War Be Like the Last One," Marine Corps Gazette, Mar 92.
"Exercising the Operational Art in Steel Knight VII," Proceedings, Jul 98.
“Green Fields Beyond," Military Review, Jan-Feb 00.
“Wild and Crazy or Bold and Daring,” Marine Corps Gazette, Sep 00.
“Gapped Billets Exist, Deal With It,” Proceedings, Nov 00.
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The Navy’s Use of Special and Incentive Pays: Sailing Away From Jointness

“Troops should not be encouraged to foster a spirit of jealousy and unjust detraction towards other arms of the service, where all are mutually dependent and mutually interested, with function differing in character but not in importance.”

Lieutenant General J.E.B. Stuart

1. Introduction

A patchwork of programs -- the military compensation system is a result of our history, the unique relationship between our society and the military, and fluid economic pressures. Making that complicated system support current military requirements in today’s environment is a difficult task. An effective military pay system must periodically account for shifts in the political, military, economic, and demographic environment. Yet, despite major changes as a result of increasing jointness, the end of the Cold War, the military draw down, and a threefold increase in the number of operational deployments, the military compensation system has remained stagnant for the last three decades. This issue takes on strategic relevance as the Armed Forces attempt to take advantage of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) and “transform” in order to meet the challenges of the new millennium.

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2The word “joint” is defined in the military as a term that “connotes activities, operations, organizations, etc., in which elements of two or more Military Departments participate.” U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms. Joint Pub 1-02 (10 June 1998), 236.
This paper contends that the military pay system is in need of a complete review and examines the use of Special and Incentive (S&I) pays by one service as a case study to highlight this need. “[Military] service in both peace and war requires a complex and durable set of interlocking loyalties. It is crucially important that the compensation system support, and not undermine, that fabric.”¹⁴ One area where the military compensation system undermines this fabric is the use of S&I pay by the Navy. While all services have anomalies, inequities, and inconsistencies in their use of the pay system, this paper will examine the Navy’s use of sea pay, submarine pay, and responsibility pay to illustrate this issue. These pays provide rewards that have unintended and negative consequences that work against the concept of jointness, emphasizing the need for a total reform of the current pay system.

2. Uniqueness of the Military Profession and Culture

One cannot understand the military compensation system without understanding the unique aspects that separate the military from civilian organizations. “A civilian works for General Motors; but a career soldier is in the Army.”⁵ The purpose of the military is to provide for the security of the nation and to support and advance its national policies. To accomplish this purpose, the military must be prepared for the possibility of armed combat. It is this possibility that is the most distinguishing characteristic of the military. In his classical work on this subject, The Soldier and the State, Samuel Huntington addresses this concept. Huntington states, “The direction, operation, and control of a human organization whose primary function is the application of violence is

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the peculiar skill of the [military] officer.” While the nation has always sought to provide compensation for members of the Armed Forces, money alone will not provide the motivation necessary for military service. Again, Huntington bases his concept of military professionalism on the premise that the primary motivation for the military officer is not economic reward.7

In order to function, the Armed Forces require large numbers of young able-bodied personnel operating under strict discipline.8 To accomplish this control the military operates under its own justice system, uses a pyramidal hierarchy with rigid controls, and follows rules and regulations that, in addition to governing conduct, determine how long members can stay. In business, negotiation resolves disputes over promotion, pay, or working conditions through collective bargaining whereas the law prohibits the military from conducting such actions.9 Military service members cannot unionize or quit until the end of their service obligation, which the United States involuntarily extends in times of conflict. Not only does the military place controls preventing members from leaving; the Armed Services also place controls preventing members under certain circumstances from remaining on active duty. Members must prove worthy of promotion or they will reach service limits established for each rank. At service limits military personnel must leave in a policy commonly known as “up or out.” Even the 9.2 % of the military service personnel who serve long enough to become

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7Ibid., 15.
8The military annually recruits almost 200,000 men and women for active duty.
eligible to retire must leave long before the maximum retirement age in the business world.\textsuperscript{10}

A closed hierarchy, the military only promotes from within its ranks. Failure to recruit enough untrained entry-level personnel or retain the optimum number of trained career personnel adversely affects the Services’ future ability to provide personnel at middle and top levels of the hierarchy. Because the military hierarchy is a pyramid requiring a young work force, turnover is extremely high. National security needs that are largely independent of national economic and employment cycles determine the size of the military. The military does not generate capital or lay off workers based on quarterly financial predictions, as its purpose is readiness, not profit.\textsuperscript{11}

3. **History of United States Military Compensation**

Partly because of the uniqueness of the military profession discussed above, military compensation has been a controversial subject since the American Revolution when General George Washington argued with the Continental Congress over pay for American troops. With the exception of the period from 1870 to 1922 when officers received a salary, the military compensation system has been composed of pay plus allowances.\textsuperscript{12} Designed as a system to support a small, cadre-type force made up of relatively unskilled, single men, it offered free food, uniforms, and accommodations to

\begin{footnotesize}\textsuperscript{10}This number reflects the year group who entered in 1980 and remained on active duty for 20 years until the year 2000. Retirement eligibility rates are different between officers and enlisted. For this period, the rate was 19\% for officers and 7.9\% for enlisted. The ratio of officers to enlisted was about 1:7.25 for this period. Note that while military service members are first eligible to retire after 20 years some members remain on active duty until 30 years of service. Source is DOD.

\textsuperscript{11}Malone and Penner, 40.

\textsuperscript{12}U.S. Department of Defense, *Military Compensation Background Papers*, Fifth Edition (September 1996), 26.\end{footnotesize}
augment low pay. Commissaries and exchanges were necessary because of the isolation of military installations.¹³

Like the United States and its military, the military compensation system has evolved over the last two centuries undergoing major changes. This evolution, however, has not always been steady and smooth. Over the years the military has experienced complete reversals of some policies and radical changes in rates of pay. An example of a reversal is the concept of paying service personnel additional money for going to sea. In contrast to our current system which rewards sea duty under certain criteria, for 75 years beginning in 1835 a naval officer who was not at sea was paid up to 15% less than an army officer. The rationale for this policy was that when not at sea a naval officer was “considered to be performing less than full fledged duty and thus was entitled to only part of the regular pay of his grade.”¹⁴ While the general trend has been to increase pay along with inflation, military pay has often stagnated for long periods requiring sharp subsequent increases from time to time. In 1917, Congress authorized a 100% increase in the pay of privates in order to provide them the minimum standard of living at that time.¹⁵ Additionally, rates of pay have not always gone up. During the depression in the 1930’s, President Franklin Roosevelt acted to reduce federal spending by ordering a 15% cut in military pay.¹⁶

Society’s beliefs concerning the military’s size and quality significantly influence the military pay system. During times of compulsory service, monetary incentives to join

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or stay on active duty were less necessary. In 1947, after the United States began to demobilize from World War II and its record number of military personnel, the Congress established the Hook Commission to study pay and allowances.\textsuperscript{17} Based on its recommendations, Congress passed the Career Compensation Act of 1949. This act was the first major change to the military pay system in 40 years. Providing for an 18.8% raise to bring military pay in line with industrial wages, this act also tied pay to rank and length of service, and utilized special remuneration, incentive pay, and reenlistment bonuses.\textsuperscript{18} During the Cold War, the concepts of citizen soldier and demobilization after major conflicts were not feasible as the United States maintained a large standing military for a prolonged period. Another societal change occurred when the United States ended the draft in 1973 as it pulled out of Vietnam. In the early 1980’s, Congress passed two pay raises, totaling a 25% increase, in order to recruit and retain the number of quality personnel necessary for the all-volunteer force.\textsuperscript{19}

4. The Current Military Compensation System

Today’s military compensation system of pay and allowances has had the same basic structure since World War II. This system has not dramatically changed since 1973 with the end of the draft and the subsequent pay raises necessary to maintain an all-volunteer force.\textsuperscript{20} By comparison, the volunteer forces of Australia, Canada, and the

\textsuperscript{17}Over 16,353,500 Americans served in the military during World War II. This number was almost twice as many as any other time in our history, with the next highest period being the Vietnam War when 8,752,000 Americans served.


\textsuperscript{20}Asch and Warner, 1 and 17.
United Kingdom have all converted to a salary-based system of compensation within the last thirty years. The United States military compensation system consists of three elements. First, Regular Military Compensation (RMC) includes basic pay, tied to rank and length of service; basic allowance for housing (BAH), which is non-taxable; and basic allowance for subsistence (BAS), the term used for the value of meals provided, also non-taxable. All service personnel receive RMC. Second, Special and Incentive Pays (S&I) are intended to compensate service personnel for hazardous duties or encourage personnel to join the military, reenlist, or serve in certain career fields. Each military Service manages its S&I pay based on its needs and consistent with established law and Department of Defense (DOD) guidelines. There are roughly 60 different S&I pays. Benefits make up the third category and include health services, leave, exchanges and commissaries, and the retirement plan. There are currently three different military retirement plans in effect. The year an individual enters the service determines which military retirement plan is applicable. Each plan is a percentage of basic pay dependent on the number of years served with the minimum set at 40% after 20 years and the maximum set at 75% after 30 years. All military personnel who retire incur an obligation and are subject to recall to active duty if necessary.

This paper examines the use of certain S&I pays in some detail because of the importance of this element of the military compensation system in the Navy and their relationship to the overall problems in the military pay system. In some cases the use of

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23 The number of S&I pays depends on how they are counted. As an example, some would count Career Sea Pay and Career Sea Pay Premium as two different pays, others as one S&I pay category.
S&I pay attempts to compensate highly trained and specialized personnel who are in great demand in the civilian labor market. Such personnel include pilots, doctors, and nuclear power officers. As an example, nuclear qualified officers are eligible for a Nuclear Officer Accession Bonus of $12,000. Additionally, as long as they remain qualified, these officers can receive Nuclear Officer Continuation Pay of $19,000 a year for every year after their obligated service or a Nuclear Career Annual Incentive Bonus of $12,500 a year for every year after their obligated service.24 Another use of S&I pay is to compensate personnel for duties that incur added hazards. Such duties include parachute duty, demolition duty, and flight deck duty. Often referred to as “hazardous duty pay,” the S&I pay for these types of duty usually amounts to $150 a month. As an example, a sailor who works on the flight deck in an authorized billet and conducts at least four days of flight operations in a month receives $150 per month in Flight Deck Duty Pay.25 Given the complexity of the criteria covered by the numerous S&I pays, combined with the fact that the different Services manage them separately, it is not surprising that inequities occur within the compensation system.

5. Economics of the Military Pay System

The goal of today’s military compensation system is to recruit, retain, and motivate enough qualified military personnel necessary to maintain a large, all-volunteer, highly technical, and joint military force at a reasonable cost during peace or conflict.26

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Economic studies generally concentrate on maximizing efforts to recruit and retain individual service personnel in relation to national employment and compensation rates. Such studies rarely examine the quality, morale, or professionalism of the overall Armed Forces. Because of the historical evolution of the military pay system, the structure of the military as an organization, and the uniqueness of the military’s role in society, it is extremely difficult to reduce the military compensation system into a simple labor market problem. First, as discussed in the previous section, there are numerous constraints on the highly regulated military labor market and wages alone do not bring demand and supply into equilibrium. Second, one cannot quantify elements of quality, morale and professionalism. Despite this, numerous economic models and theories have attempted to explain and optimize the military compensation system.

“Think tanks” dominate the economic literature on the military compensation system. Two of the more noteworthy of these organizations are the Brookings Institution and RAND, both of which conduct defense policy studies. In the mid 1970’s and early 1980’s, Martin Binkin, of the Brookings Institution, examined the military pay system and recommended transitioning to a salary system and paying personnel according to their contribution as opposed to their rank. More recently, in the 1990’s Beth Asch, of RAND, conducted several studies of the military compensation system including a review of the contributions and implications of economic literature on the subject.

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27 Asch and Warner, iii and 115.
29 Beth J. Asch, *Designing Military Pay* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1993); Beth J. Asch and James R. Hosek, *Military Compensation* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1999); and Asch and Warner.
Much of Asch’s work focused on the “pay gap” between military and civilian workers and the military retirement system.

Economic options for maintaining a military generally rely on varying either the size of the budget or the size of the force. One can vary compensation in order to buy the number of personnel needed, that is budget is flexible and the force is fixed, or by varying unit or Service size in order to reach an affordable level, that is budget is fixed and the force is flexible. Techniques for varying compensation include targeted or across-the-board adjustments in RMC, changing S&I pays and bonuses, and changing benefits. Techniques for varying the force include changing strength levels; quality standards for enlistment, promotion, and retention; and requiring compulsory service. These variations in budget or the force attempt to counterbalance outside economic pressures related to inflation, unemployment, and changing levels of national economic prosperity.

Such economic options, however, do not explain the Marine Corps’ recruitment and retention successes compared to the other Services. In relation to the other Services, the Marine Corps is the smallest and has the highest planned turnover. Additionally, because of its lean structure, during the 1990’s, the Marine Corps experienced the lowest percentage of decrease in total end strength.\(^{30}\) These factors forced the Marine Corps to meet relatively high recruitment and retention numbers compared to the other Services. From 1991 to 2000, recruiting goals generally fluctuated for the Army, decreased for the Navy, and remained constant for the Air Force and the Marine Corps. Despite the

disadvantages of less economies of scale and relatively high recruiting goals, during this period the Marine Corps was the only Service to consistently meet its recruitment and retention goals, while competing in the same booming economic climate as the other Services. See Figures 1 and 2. This is significant when considering that the Marine Corps competes for personnel to operate in the same environments as the other Services, i.e. land, sea, and air. Additionally, compared to the Army and the Navy, the Marine Corps was able to recruit a higher percentage of personnel who are high school graduates. Even more significant is that during this period the Marine Corps accomplished its goal with the smallest percentage of the DOD budget used for enlistment bonuses. From 1991 to 2000, the amount of money spent on bonuses remained stable for the Marine Corps, but increased dramatically for all the other Services. See Figure 3 and Table 1. While many other factors are involved, given its relative size and the number of new personnel it requires each year, in the last ten years the Marine Corps recruited more and generally higher quality people for significantly less money.31 See Figure 4, and Table 2.

More pay is not always the answer to recruiting and retention problems as illustrated by the Marine Corps experience. Carl von Clausewitz, one of the most profound military theorists who ever lived, writes about the “human factor” in an attempt to describe the intangible dimension of the military and clearly illustrates this point.32 Variables such as leadership, morale, esprit de corps, tradition, patriotism, danger, courage, fear, and sacrifice are perplexing to measure and impossible to isolate and

31 Other recruiting factors include the standards used to set goals, number of recruiters, budget for advertising and operating expense, attrition rates, educational benefits, and cost of units like the Navy Blue Angles or Air Force Thunderbird demonstration squadrons.

quantify. Such values “can only be perceived by the inner eye, which differs in each person, and is often different in the same person at different times.”33  More importantly, isolated studies that focus on one Service or military specialty do not fully support the intent of the overall joint military doctrine mandated by law in order to increase interoperability and cooperation within the military. When dealing with military issues “more than any other subject we must begin by looking at the nature of the whole; for here more than elsewhere the part and the whole must always be thought of together.”34 Therefore, the value of using economics as a tool to assist the military compensation system accomplish its goals is significantly enhanced when that tool is used in relation to basic principles and within a joint context.

6. Principles of Military Compensation

In 1965, Congress passed legislation that required the President to conduct quadrennial reviews of the principles and concepts of the military compensation system. However, the Department of Defense has never established a standard compensation policy or set of principles. A set of governing principles would provide the foundation to explain the overall compensation system and facilitate changes, adjustments, and reforms.35

There have now been eight Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC) reports. Building on the previous reports, the 8th QRMC developed seven principles stating that a military compensation system must be (1) effective throughout

33Ibid., 137.
34Ibid., 75.
the spectrum of military operations, (2) equitable, (3) financially responsible, (4) flexible, (5) encourage retention, (6) dependable, and (7) understandable. Numerous QRMC reports recommend sets of principles. Unfortunately, DOD generally ignores these recommendations.

Instead of establishing and updating a general theory and foundation for the military compensation system, the QRMC recommends specific changes. However, “no single sub-element of the military compensation system should be studied, evaluated, or modified without putting it in the context of the entire system.” Specific changes recommended by the QRMC have not been part of an updated, comprehensive approach and the result is a military compensation system that is a holdover from the Cold War era. A more logical approach would be to start with the National Military Strategy, determine what capabilities are needed to execute that strategy, develop the force structure to provide those capabilities, and then, using principles like those recommended by the QRMC, establish a compensation system to support that force structure.

7. Career Sea Pay

As stated earlier, an examination of the S&I pays used by the Navy provide an important illustration for what is wrong with the military compensation as a whole. The history and background discussed above provide a starting point for examining the Navy’s use of certain S&I pays beginning with career sea pay. Often referred to by the shorter term -- sea pay, the rationale for this pay is to provide compensation for the extra

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37Association of the United States Army, A Bill of Rights for Those Who Serve, pamphlet prepared in the late 1970’s, ii-iii.
hazard and hardship involved in sea duty and to encourage sailors to reenlist. Proponents claim sea pay is necessary to compensate sailors for low pay and duty that separates them from their families. Presidential Executive Order and DOD regulation establish the conditions of entitlement for this pay. While sea pay is available to all Services, the Navy and Coast Guard monopolize this pay because to qualify for career sea pay one must become “vested” in the system by assignment to a sea duty billet. Enlisted personnel must be at least an E-4 and officers must serve in a sea duty billet for three years. Career sea pay increases for every year of sea duty and ranges from $50 to $520 a month. An additional “premium” of $100 a month goes to E-5’s and above who serve for more than three consecutive years of sea duty up to a maximum of five. There is no maximum year limit for officers. About one third of Navy personnel serve in billets that qualify for sea pay.

A major fault of sea pay is it discriminates against embarked troops from other Services who, despite serving on ships for extended periods, are not “assigned.” Generally, these troops “embark” for periods of training and deployments that involve operations at sea, usually for periods no longer than six months. Unlike the ship’s crew, embarked troops do not serve on a ship when home ported or when it undergoes time-consuming repairs in dry dock. A sailor could be assigned to a ship and qualify for career sea pay even though during that period the ship spends less than six months at sea. In

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this situation, the sailor may spend the majority of the time living off the ship. At the 
same time, on another ship, embarked troops will not receive extra pay even though they 
actually experience hazard, separation, and because of the significantly smaller living 
spaces of embarked troops, even more hardship.

Additionally, sea pay fails to recognize personnel in other Services who work 
under hazardous and arduous conditions or who work away from their families. By way 
of comparison, Canadian Armed Forces service members receive almost twice as much 
“environmental allowance” for field duty as they do for sea duty. 42 During 
unaccompanied tours an airman loading ordnance on a flight line in Saudi Arabia, a 
soldier patrolling in South Korea, or a Marine conducting live fire training on Okinawa 
experiences the same, if not more, hazard and separation, than a sailor on sea duty. 
Despite this fact, there is no comparable “field duty” pay under the United States military 
compensation system. Sea pay is even more divisive when the sailors drawing this pay 
are in administrative billets aboard a ship or when the sailors drawing this pay join their 
families because the assigned ship is in homeport. 43 Sea duty in an “afloat billet” does 
not necessarily mean duty at sea, hazardous duty, or family separation. Even when an 
“afloat” billet does involve duty at sea, under hazardous conditions, and while separated 
from families, it is not more arduous than the duties personnel from other Services 
perform without equivalent compensation.

42 U.S. Department of Defense, “Foreign Military Compensation System Review,” Global Subject 
8. Submarine Pay

Rationale for submarine pay is similar to that for sea pay. The purpose of submarine pay is to “attract and retain volunteers for submarine duty, and to compensate them for the more than normally dangerous character of such duty.”\textsuperscript{44} Pursuant to Presidential Executive Order, the Secretary of the Navy regulates this pay.\textsuperscript{45} Submarine pay is in addition to sea pay, implying that it is more difficult to attract volunteers for submarine duty and that submarine duty is more hazardous. Classified as incentive pay, submarine pay falls into two categories, operational and continuous. Operational submarine pay goes to personnel not receiving continuous submarine pay, as long as they serve on a submarine, regardless of duties. Continuous submarine pay goes to personnel who hold or are in training for a submarine duty designator and remain in the submarine service on a career basis. Such personnel must meet certain “gates” to verify they are working in the submarine force and serve at least 6 of their first 12 years and 10 of their first 18 years to remain eligible. If one fails to meet a gate, submarine continuous pay stops, but the individual does not repay the amount previously accumulated. Personnel receive continuous submarine pay up until the 26th year of service, regardless of whether or not they serve on a submarine. The amount of pay varies with rank and years of service and ranges from $75 to $595 a month.\textsuperscript{46} Of note, all United States submarines are nuclear powered and their qualified officers, as previously mentioned, receive a significant amount of money in the form of nuclear accession bonuses, continuation pay, and U.S. Department of Defense, \textit{Military Compensation Background Papers}, Fifth Edition (September 1996), 305.
\textsuperscript{45}Ibid, 318.
and annual incentive bonuses to retain them on active duty. These pays are separate from submarine pay.

One of the problems with submarine pay concerns the concept of pay for hazardous duty. While the early history of submarine duty was extremely dangerous, it has been relatively safe for the last three decades. Without demeaning the courage of the sailors who defend our country while diving beneath the seas in submarines, they are no braver than many other servicemen and women who risk their lives in peacetime military training without additional compensation. As far as risk is concerned, personnel on submarines incur less risk than many other occupational specialties according to fatality statistics. During the period examined by this paper, 1991-2000, submarine personnel had zero operational fatalities while ground, air, and surface personnel of all Services had numerous operational fatalities every year.47 See Figure 5.

Another problem area concerns the concept of hardship. While submarine duty unquestionably involves hardship due to separation, as well as living and working conditions, it does not necessarily involve more hardship than many personnel experience in other Services. How does one compare conditions aboard a modern submarine with conditions in a desert environment in the summer, a mountain environment in the winter, or a jungle environment during the monsoon season? What provides more hardship, sailors living and working on a climate controlled submarine or troops from other Services living in the field or in substandard conditions while performing physically demanding and dangerous tasks? In addition, the argument of compensation for hazard

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and hardship fails because, like sea pay, crewmembers receive operational submarine pay when the boat is in homeport or dry dock and not subject to danger or separation. Unlike sea pay, personnel keep on receiving continuous submarine pay regardless of assignment and exposure to hazard and hardship.

As discussed in the earlier section, there are many factors influencing recruitment and retention. It is difficult to imagine that the Navy would not be able to find crews for submarines without submarine pay. With regard to nuclear submarine officers, while there are some shortages at certain bottleneck points in an officer’s career, generally, the shortages experienced are similar to those of other line officers in the Navy. Many of these shortages are the result of retaining more mid-level officers as opposed to accessing more entry-level officers during the draw-down in the early 1990’s.  

9. Responsibility Pay

Rationale for responsibility pay, often called command pay, is to compensate officers in billets that carry significantly increased responsibility. Congress authorized this pay despite requests from the Department of Defense in 1963 to discontinue it. Responsibility pay is a permissive measure and the Navy and Coast Guard are the only Services that currently use it. Since 1980, the Navy has provided responsibility pay to officers who command a ship or aircraft squadron at sea. Depending on the rank of the officer, the amount of command pay ranges from $50 to $150 per month. Some Naval

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48Discussions between the author and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and the Nuclear Propulsion Programs Office, Officer Plans and Policy, Department of the Navy.  
officers defend this pay as an allowance for out-of-pocket costs involved in visiting foreign ports and hosting dignitaries.\(^{51}\)

Providing responsibility pay to commanders of ships or squadrons deployed at sea degrades the promotion system because responsibility should be a function of rank. A competitive process selects ship and squadron commanders, like the commanders of units in other Services. Selection for command is a reward in and of itself as it increases the chances for future promotion. Additionally, responsibility pay for the commander of a ship or squadron at sea gives the appearance of rewarding the care of equipment over personnel, since other commanders go without such reward even though they are responsible for units with larger numbers of personnel.

Any argument that the intent of command pay is to compensate the ship’s captain or squadron commander for out-of-pocket expenses incurred when hosting dignitaries is not valid. There is no requirement to spend the money on hosting expenses and the commander receives the money even when a ship or submarine is in dry dock and does not incur hosting expenses. Additionally, commanders in other Services who may entertain do not receive such pay. This pay is obviously unfair when considering that on board an aircraft carrier a Navy F-18 squadron commander receives command pay, while on the same ship, at the same time, with the exact same responsibilities, a Marine F-18 squadron commander of the same rank does not.

10. **Jointness**

Jointness, in theory and practice, is critical to understanding the problem of inequities in the military compensation system. Jointness is the concept of coordinating the military aspects of the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force so the Services work in

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\(^{51}\)Discussions with post ship commanders and the author.
harmony and not against each other. “Over time, the American experience in war increasingly demanded joint action.”52 Today’s technology combined with the geography of the United States demands the U.S. military maintain the capabilities to operate in a coordinated manner across the spectrum of conflict and provide protection from threats that may come by air, land, and sea.

Established in 1903, the Joint Board of the Army and Navy was one of the first attempts to use a formal structure to oversee coordination between the military departments. After World War II, the National Security Act of 1947 unified the military departments, which now included the Air Force, under the National Military Establishment, later renamed the Department of Defense.53 This legislation established Unified and Specified Combatant Commands. Problems with interoperability and coordination experienced by the military services in 1980 during the failed Iranian hostage rescue mission and in 1983 during operation Urgent Fury in Grenada provided the catalyst for further restructuring. As a result, the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act became law in 1986. In addition to designating the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the senior military advisor to the President, and strengthening the role of the Commander in Chief (CINC) of the Combatant Commands, the Congress intended to “create a joint, unified military fighting force, unhindered by Service rivalry and self-interests.”54 At this point, joint operations and joint planning became the law.

Since 1986, the military has made significant progress toward becoming more joint. In the last 20 years the Joint Staff wrote an entire joint doctrine, Service schools incorporated joint professional military education into their curriculum, personnel policies established a joint officer specialty and took steps to promote those serving in joint assignments, and subsequent Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) issued joint visions for the future. More than any other time in the history of the United States Armed Forces, training, exercises, and operations have a joint focus. In some cases, personnel administration is coordinated. As an example, the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act standardizes officer promotions within each Service. Yet, despite numerous changes in the military because of the joint emphasis, there has not been a corresponding joint impact on the military compensation system. In fact, with regard to S&I pay, the Services still have the discretion in many cases to set the rate of pay as well as determine eligibility requirements independent of, and sometimes in competition with, one another.

In the 1995 edition of Joint Pub 1, Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States, the cornerstone of joint doctrine, a chapter is devoted to values in joint warfare. This chapter concludes by stating, “unit cohesion is a most important cause of excellence in combat” and emphasizing that joint values are “inherent in building joint cohesion from individual Service elements and produces a shared loyalty among the members of a joint team.” Additionally, in Joint Vision 2020 it states, “The Nation

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will continue to depend on talented individuals of outstanding character, committed to an ethic of selfless service.”

Inequities in the military compensation system stand to increase Service rivalries, lessen the military professional ethic, and diminish the effectiveness of joint staffs and joint operations.

11. Conclusions

While arguments can be made to pay more to highly trained and specialized personnel who are in demand by the civilian market, to recruit and retain personnel, and to personnel whose duties incur significant hazard; sea pay, submarine pay, and responsibility pay do not meet these criteria. Unlike the labor markets for doctors, aviators, and nuclear power personnel, there is no highly specialized civilian market that is creating a disproportionate demand for seagoing personnel or commanding officers over that of other military specialties. Additionally, while the Navy needs sailors to fill seagoing billets, all Services require personnel. This is why each Service, including the Navy, uses the S&I group of recruiting and re-enlistment bonuses. As this paper has shown, more money in the form of sea pay, submarine pay, and command pay, is not the answer to recruiting and retention problems. Furthermore, while sea duty is certainly not risk free, it is not significantly more hazardous than many other military occupational specialties that do not receive additionally compensation. For this reason, sea duty is not in the “hazardous duty pay” category.

$2,400 in command pay. Superscript 59 See Table 3. It is impossible to justify to Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps officers who have endured as much, and in some cases more, hazard, hardship, and command responsibilities, why they are worth as much as $143,340 less than their Navy counterparts. Superscript 60 While the numbers are different, and command pay is not an issue, the same argument is valid for enlisted personnel. Such policies do not enhance the concept of jointness. As this case study has shown, extra pay to sailors based on assignment to ships or submarines, or in command of ships or submarines is unfair.

Career sea pay, submarine pay, and responsibility pay discriminate against members of other Services who do not receive compensation for hazards, hardships, separations, and/or command responsibilities, equal or greater than those of Naval personnel.

12. Recommendations

First, it is time for a commission to conduct a complete review of the military compensation system, similar to what the Hook commission did in 1947. Stagnant for almost 30 years, the military compensation system has not changed significantly since the military transitioned to the all-volunteer force in 1973. During this period, not only has the environment changed, but the use of S&I pays have increased independent of an overall compensation policy. Today’s military pay system should support, not hamper, the military profession and culture of service to country, the compensation principle of equity, and the National Military Strategy concept of jointness. In order to have the authority and capability to implement change, the executive branch should establish this


Superscript 60 These numbers are calculated using the current rates of pay and do not consider the investment value of compounded interest over a 20-year period nor projected increases in pay due to inflation.
commission and fill it with personnel from both the executive and legislative branches of government. This review should follow the logical process previously discussed and be based on the National Military Strategy and its resulting capabilities, force structure, and guiding principles. An advantage of a comprehensive review and complete restructuring of the military pay system is that it makes change easier than individually stopping incentive pays, many of which have long established histories. Such a review would have strategic implications as it designs a military pay system that not only supports the current military structure, but also supports the “transformation” of the military and is capable of expanding to meet dramatic mobilization if necessary in the future.

Second, the examination of the Navy’s use of the S&I pays suggests that all Services should attempt to limit the use of these types of pay in order to reinforce the military ethic and concept of jointness. This action could take place immediately, without waiting for the results of the commission discussed above. While all Services currently place a high value on leadership, and no one works without compensation, a shift in emphasis is necessary. In order to recruit, retain, and reward personnel, the Services must place greater emphasis on cultivating and developing professionalism and leadership than reliance on using additional economic incentives. In relation to the specific case study presented, by quickly phasing out and discontinuing the practice of sea pay, submarine pay, and command pay, the Navy would move its compensation policies more in line with the rest of the Services.

Finally, if the Navy cannot meet today’s operational requirements its use of S&I pays should be adjusted to a more equitable system and the S&I pays of the other Services should be adjusted to a common standard. In this case, one would rate sea pay
or submarine pay on a daily basis and only when at sea. Based on the case study, the Navy should pay submarine pay instead of, and not in addition to, sea pay. Additionally, both of these pays should be paid to everyone aboard Navy ships and submarines regardless of their status as embarked, temporary, or permanently assigned and regardless of Service. Furthermore, in the event the Navy continues to use sea pay and submarine pay, ”Field Pay” should be established and paid to service members for every 24-hour day they spend in training or operations in the field. Instead of command pay, DOD could establish an entertainment expense account for all field grade commands, regardless of Service, and provide regulations for the use of such accounts. In this way DOD would reimburse commanders up to an established amount for actual expenses incurred similar to the manner used to reimburse military members for authorized travel expenses. If command pay must continue, DOD should provide this pay to every field grade commanding officer regardless of Service.

13. Summary

While the Navy currently dominates the special pay category, which varies significantly among the Services, there are numerous examples of other military pay issues that involve the other Services. Differences in how the Services pay flight pay/bonuses, educational benefits, incentives for Judge Advocate General officers, and enlistment and retention bonuses are just a few examples. When evaluated from a Department of Defense perspective such discrepancies and inequities are potentially divisive and detract from the military culture of service and professionalism. Eliminating
inequities in the compensation system will not be easy as the recipients quickly see incentives as entitlements. Nevertheless, if we are going to transform the military in order to meet the challenges of the future it becomes strategically important to transform the military pay system as well.

The unintended consequences and long-term impact of failing to change the military compensation system could be extremely negative. While fairly compensating the men and women who admirably serve in all of the Armed Forces, the United States must also cultivate and maintain a professional military ethic, a high degree of cohesion, and a shared loyalty among the Services in order to conduct joint operations. Policies that place too much reliance on S&I pay incentives or produce a sense of relative deprivation undermine this effort. This does not mean that one size fits all, but it does mean that policies must not work against each other or that ethic. As Lieutenant General Stuart noted during the Civil War, we must not encourage jealousy and backbiting among personnel who perform functions that may differ in character but not importance. If this was relevant during the Civil War, it is even more relevant today. As the case study points out, service in the Navy, in and of itself, does not deserve more reward than active duty in the Army, Air Force, or Marine Corps. Otherwise, we sail away from a system of jointness and equity among the Services and towards one of elitism and competition.
# List of Special and Incentive Pays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Parachute Duty Pay</td>
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<td>Free Fall/High-Altitude Low Opening (HALO)</td>
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<td>Demolition Duty Pay</td>
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<td>Flight Deck Duty Pay (FDDP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experimental Stress Duty Pays: Pressure Chamber, Acceleration/Deceleration, and Thermal Stress</td>
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<td>Toxic Pesticides/Dangerous Organisms (Virus/Bacteria) Duty Pay</td>
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<td>Toxic Fuel/Propellants and Chemical Munitions Duty Pay</td>
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<td>Hostile Fire/Imminent Danger Pay</td>
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<td>Hardship Duty Pay (replaced Certain Places Pay 2/4/99)</td>
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<td>Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP) for Enlisted Members</td>
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<td>Officers Holding Positions of Unusual Responsibility</td>
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<td>Aviation Career Incentive Pay (ACIP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crew Member Flying Duty Pay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flight Pay (Air Weapons Directors)</td>
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<td>Career Enlisted Flyer Incentive Pay (CEFIP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Sea Pay</td>
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<td>Career Sea Pay Premium</td>
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<td>Pharmacy Officers Special Pay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterinarians Special Pay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enlistment Bonus</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Selected Reserves Non-Prior Service Enlistment Bonus</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Prior Service Enlistment Bonus</td>
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<tr>
<td>***Non-Prior Service Enlistment Bonus for IRR</td>
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<td>Critical Skills Retention Bonus</td>
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<td>*Affiliation Bonus for Service in the Selected Reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nuclear Officer Continuation Pay (COPAY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nuclear Officer Annual Incentive Bonus (AIB)</td>
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**APPENDIX A (continued)**

**List of Special and Incentive Pays**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Pay</th>
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<tr>
<td>Surface Warfare Officer Continuation Pay</td>
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<td>Medical Officers Incentive Special Pay (ISP)</td>
<td>Medical Officers Multi-year Retention Bonus (MSP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Officers Multi-year Retention Bonus</td>
<td>Dental Officers Additional Special Pay (ASP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Reserve Dental Officers (called to active duty) Special Pay</td>
<td>Optometrists Retention Special Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists Incentive Special Pay</td>
<td>*Critically Short Wartime Health Specialists in Selected Reserves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge Advocate Continuation Pay</td>
<td><strong>Engineering &amp; Scientific Career Continuation Pay</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acquisition Corps Continuation Bonus</strong></td>
<td>*IRR Enlistment, Reenlistment or Extension Bonus</td>
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<td>Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP)</td>
<td>Medical Officers Board Certification Pay (BCP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dental Officers BCP</td>
<td>Veterinarian BCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologists and Nonphysician Health Care Providers BCP</td>
<td>Enlisted Members Extending Duty at Designated Overseas Locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Special Assignment Pay for Enlisted Members in Selected Reserves</td>
<td><strong>Assigned to International Military Headquarters</strong></td>
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</table>

* Reserve Duty S&I Pays
** Not used

Source: Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OSD, P&R)
FIGURE 3
Enlistment Bonuses

Source: Table 1

FIGURE 4
Average Bonus Per Enlistee

Source: Table 2
Note: During this period there were zero submarine operational fatalities.
TABLE 1

Enlistment Data 1991-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>% HS Graduates</td>
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<td>58,208</td>
<td>63,073</td>
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<td>Actual Number</td>
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<td>63,073</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,192</td>
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*Current $ in millions
Source: OSD, P&R
### TABLE 1 (continued)

#### Enlistment Data 1991-2000

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TABLE 2

Enlistment Data Summary

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Navy</th>
<th>Marine Corps</th>
<th>Air Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991-2000</td>
<td>739,916</td>
<td>546,723</td>
<td>330,432</td>
<td>318,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number recruited</td>
<td>739,916</td>
<td>546,723</td>
<td>330,432</td>
<td>318,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total enlisted bonuses</td>
<td>405,280,000</td>
<td>226,390,000</td>
<td>30,765,000</td>
<td>115,810,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average bonus per enlistee</td>
<td>$ 547.74</td>
<td>$ 414.09</td>
<td>$ 93.11</td>
<td>$ 363.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Summary of Table 1.
# TABLE 3

Amount of Sea Pay, Submarine Pay, and Command Pay in a Typical Submarine Officer’s Career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sea Pay</th>
<th>Sub Pay</th>
<th>Command Pay</th>
<th>Yearly Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ens</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>* $175</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>175</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>4,680</td>
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<td>390</td>
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<td>4,680</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>7,140</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>595</td>
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<td>7,140</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>595</td>
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<td>215</td>
<td>595</td>
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<td>595</td>
<td>9,840</td>
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<td>595</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7,140</td>
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</tr>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>7,140</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>315</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12,120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 Year Career Total $143,340

*Blank cells indicate periods when an officer would generally not be eligible for those types of pay.

Bibliography


Krepinevich, Andrew F. “Cavalry to Computer.” *National Interest*, no. 37 (Fall 1994): 30-34.


U.S. Code Annotated, Title 36 and Title 37, Supplementary Pamphlet, 2000.


