

A SURVEY OF FACTORS RELATING TO SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE
OF RECRUIT COMPANY COMMANDER DUTY

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SUMMARY

A. PROBLEM

The present project was undertaken to determine the feasibility of developing selection standards for recruit company commander duty.

B. PROCEDURE

A survey form was developed to investigate various aspects of recruit company commander duty, to reveal characteristics which might differentiate effective from ineffective company commanders, and to suggest criteria of satisfactory performance as a recruit company commander. The form was administered to 287 recruit company commanders at the U. S. Naval Training Center, San Diego on 26 March 1957.

C. RESULTS

1. The respondents suggested a number of personality traits which recruit company commanders considered to be important for effective company commander performance. They also stressed the need for physical fitness requirements. Their comments suggested that a small but significant number of ineffective company commanders were present at the training center. Therefore improved selection techniques and devices would be desirable.

2. The respondents suggested that the present evaluation system is not valid. They suggested that a system free from favoritism and bias be developed that would evaluate the company commander in terms of his own, rather than his company's performance. They felt that the evaluators should have closer contact with the men they evaluate. The personal aims reported by the company commanders were more in line with the aims of recruit training than with factors measured by the present evaluation system.

3. The major complaint of the company commander is that he has little authority or backing from his battalion commander, especially in matters of discipline enforcement. The company commander's wife generally likes or accepts his duty, although she often dislikes the long hours. The present rotation system is endorsed, and the men seem to like company commander duty per se.

D. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of responses to the questionnaire it appears feasible to develop selection techniques for screening out irresponsible, physically unfit, emotionally unstable, and unmotivated candidates for recruit company commander duty. However, before the validation of any new selection techniques and devices can be undertaken, research aimed at the development of suitable recruit company commander evaluation techniques must be carried out. In addition, the responses to the questionnaire suggest that it might be possible to improve company commander performance through certain administrative changes.

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A SURVEY OF FACTORS RELATING TO SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE
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A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The survey described in this report was initiated in response to a request from the Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Training Center (NTC), San Diego to the Chief of Naval Personnel, (see Appendix A), the text of which stated:

"1. Approximately 2,100 chief and first class petty officers in the three Recruit Training Commands are utilized in the training program that effects each year a transition of 140,000 individuals from civilian life to Navy life.

"2. It is believed that at least eight per cent of these petty officers are unfit for duty as recruit company commanders. If this is true then this eight per cent compounds to a considerable number of naval personnel who have possibly been subjected to maltreatment or at best, poor naval indoctrination.

"3. Some of the factors that appear to make a particular petty officer unfit for duty are family problems, lack of patience in dealing with young men, inability to cope with a large group of young men as individuals, severe and exacting personality traits, and age and length of time in the naval service. There are undoubtedly many others.

"4. Because the battalion commanders are relatively inexperienced and because of the rapid turnover in these junior officer billets adequate supervision for some of these marginal company commanders is not available at times. In view of the above it is requested that a study be made to determine the feasibility of developing an instrument to be used in assisting in the selection of recruit company commanders."

The study was initiated to determine the feasibility of developing such an instrument. This report covers the first step which involved a survey of acting or former recruit company commanders to obtain three sorts of information. The first was insights into personality or other characteristics important in company commander duty. The second was an indication of the utility of the present evaluation system to serve as a criterion for testing the effectiveness of any instrument that might be devised. The third involved the obtaining of information regarding problems that company commanders have that might affect their efficiency as recruit company commanders. This last type of information was obtained since preliminary discussions at the

Recruit Training Command suggested that certain administrative changes might be instituted that would improve company commander efficiency as much as, or possibly more than could be expected from improved selection devices.

B. PROCEDURES

In order to better understand the nature of company commander duty and problems associated with it, a series of interviews were held with officers and groups of company commanders at the Naval Training Center, San Diego. As a result of these interviews it was decided to prepare a survey form in order to obtain information necessary to the further conduct of this project from acting or former company commanders¹ themselves.

Such a survey form was prepared covering such topics as characteristics of good and poor company commanders, present methods of evaluating company commanders, problems associated with company commander duty and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the company commander. This form was reviewed by officers at the Recruit Training Command. It was pre-tested on a group of company commanders, followed by a critique. On the basis of information obtained the form was revised for final administration. The survey sheet is presented in Appendix B.

The recruit company commander survey sheet was group administered on 26 March 1957, to 287 recruit company commanders at the Recruit Training Command, San Diego, who had "pushed" at least one company. All 287 men were tested in groups of 90 to 100 in consecutive sessions during the same morning so that there was practically no opportunity for them to discuss the form among themselves before filling it out. No time limit was set for completion of the survey sheet. All forms were completed anonymously and returned in sealed envelopes at the end of the session.

The survey forms were content analyzed to determine types of answers or comments made to each of the questions. Comments made by 5 per cent or more of the sample are presented in the tables in the report. In some instances, where the comments in the response categories are less than 5 per cent but are felt to

¹Chief and first class petty officers assigned to the Recruit Training Command rotate between company commander and other duties. All individuals surveyed were either acting as company commanders or had been and were in another rotational assignment. All the respondents will be referred to as recruit company commanders.

be particularly critical or informative, these are included as well. Their comments will be discussed in detail under Results.

C. RESULTS

The responses to most of the questions are not completely independent--that is, in some instances a particular company commander's comments may be included in more than one response category. Where this is not the case, the number of responses are shown as totalling 100 per cent. The recorded percentages may total to slightly more or slightly less than 100 per cent due to accumulated rounding errors.

It should be indicated that the use of open-ended questions tends to underestimate the frequency of response that would be obtained if the questions were presented in "Yes-No" form. Thus, in certain instances, comments made by relatively small percentages of the respondents in the present form might well be endorsed by the majority of the company commanders if put in "Yes-No" form. This is particularly true in the present survey where independence of response was obtained by careful scheduling, and by assuring privacy of response during the actual administration of the survey.

The questions in the survey sheet were arranged in an order which minimizes stereotyped answers or response sets. However, in the present section they are discussed in logical groupings according to content. Thus, the sections below do not parallel the arrangement of the questions in the survey sheet.

The first section describes the sample of company commanders surveyed. The second describes personal characteristics of good and poor company commanders. The third section discusses the evaluation of company commander performance. The fourth section discusses some additional factors related to effective company commander performance.

1. Description of the Sample

The first four questions in the survey sheet provide information about the makeup of the sample. Table 1 shows that almost three-fourths of the company commanders are chief petty officers. The remainder are first class petty officers. The ratings in the sample are probably representative of ratings of company commanders, but are not representative of Navy ratings in general. As Table 1 indicates almost all of the ratings used as company commanders fall into the Deck, Ordnance, and Engineering and Hull groups. This is due to the unavailability of specialized shore billets for certain ratings.

TABLE 1

Composition of the Sample: Rates and Ratings

	Number	Per Cent
Rates:		
Chief	206	72
First Class	71	25
No answer	10	3
<hr/>		
Total	287	100
<hr/>		
Ratings:		
BM (Boatswain's Mates)	58	20
QM (Quartermasters)	38	13
MM (Machinist's Mates)	37	13
GM (Gunner's Mates)	35	12
BT (Boilermen)	29	10
EN (Enginemen)	21	7
CS (Commissarymen)	15	5
TM (Torpedoman's Mates)	13	5
RD (Redarmen)	11	4
SM (Signalmen)	6	2
ME (Metalsmiths)	5	2
Other ratings	9	3
No answer	10	3
<hr/>		
Total	287	100
<hr/>		

Ninety-five per cent of the company commanders are married, and 86 per cent of those who are married have children. The number of children range from none to five, with a median of two.

The respondents vary in the amount of time they have spent in the Navy, ranging from six years to over 22 years. The mean number of years in the Navy is about 15 with a standard deviation of 3.6 years.

The median amount of time spent at the training center by the group is 22 months, with a range of from 8 months to 54 months. The distribution was found to be multi-modal with modal frequencies of company commanders at 12, 22, and 34 months.

Information as to the number of companies pushed by the respondents is provided in Table 2. Eighty-five per cent have

TABLE 2

Number of Companies Pushed To Date by Company Commanders
Now Pushing and Not Pushing Companies

Number of Companies Pushed	Number now* Pushing Companies	Number not Pushing Companies	Total Number	Total Per Cent (N=287)
One	35	9	44	15
Two	36	152	188	66
Three	10	30	40	14
Four	2	5	7	2
Five	0	3	3	1
Six	1	1	2	1
Seven	1	1	2	1
Eight	0	1	1	0
Total	85	202	287	100

*Number of companies pushed does not include present company.

pushed two or more companies. The mean number of companies pushed was 2.2 with a standard deviation of .94. The actual amount of experience in pushing companies is somewhat understated, since company commanders pushing companies at the time of the survey do not have their current company included in Table 2.

In general the sample may be considered to be highly representative of company commanders at the Naval Training Center, San Diego.

2. Personal Characteristics of Good and Poor Company Commanders

The primary goal of the present project was the development of selection standards for company commander duty. Thus, it was important to obtain insights as to what traits or personal

characteristics especially qualify or disqualify an individual for this duty. It was believed that a good source of information would be the company commander himself. The company commander, during his tour at the training center, becomes well acquainted with a number of his fellow company commanders, especially those in his own battalion. Thus, he should be in a good position to discern outstanding characteristics or personal failings in these individuals as related to performance of their duty.

In the present survey two different types of questions were used. The first asked the respondent to specify characteristics related to successful or unsuccessful performance as a company commander. The second asked him to actually describe the best company commander he had ever known and the least effective company commander that he had ever known. In this way, both abstract qualities and actual characteristics of both good and poor company commanders were ascertained. It was necessary to determine what qualities are important for company commander effectiveness before selection instruments or procedures could be devised. Information on leadership effectiveness which would be applicable in this case was available from other studies. However, the above questions were asked to find out which traits were considered by the company commanders themselves to be closely related to their jobs. The answers did not reveal any new or unsuspected traits, but they did indicate that the company commanders are concerned with characteristics which are generally regarded as important for effective leadership.

As it turned out, the characteristics mentioned most frequently in describing actual company commanders were also listed frequently as being general characteristics of good company commanders. For this reason, characteristics obtained in both types of questions will be discussed together.

a. Characteristics of good company commanders. The characteristics in the following list are the ones which were mentioned most frequently in describing good company commanders:

- 1) Conscientious
- 2) Understanding of recruit problems
- 3) Able to enforce discipline
- 4) Good appearance
- 5) Patient
- 6) Good leader
- 7) Enjoys working with recruits
- 8) Proper in speech
- 9) Honest
- 10) Identifies with the Navy.

Tables 3 and 4 present the frequency with which these characteristics were listed and additional characteristics.

TABLE 3

Responses to:
 "Think of the best recruit company commander you have known. Describe him. What things did he do, what was there about him, that made him an outstanding company commander?"

Response Category	Number	Per Cent (N=287)
Conscientious, hard working, spent extra time with company	74	26
Gained recruit's confidence, helpful, understanding of recruit's problems	66	23
Firm in enforcing discipline	65	23
Neat, good military appearance	64	22
Patient, calm, good natured	48	17
Good leader, able to handle men	40	14
Liked to work with recruits, interested in company commander duty	33	12
Gave orders clearly, able to express self, not profane	18	6
Honest, sincere	18	6
Inculcated pride in the Navy	18	6
Encouraged men to be self-sufficient	17	6
Risked using illegal means to enforce discipline	14	5
Don't know any, all doing best we can	31	11

TABLE 4

Responses to:
 "In general, what characteristics make
 a top-notch company commander?"

Response Category	Number	Per Cent (N=287)
Good military appearance, neat, clean	101	35
Wants to teach recruits, enjoys company commander duty	90	31
Hard worker, energetic, puts in extra time and effort	69	24
Good leadership qualities, able to handle men	60	21
Patient, friendly, good disposition	58	19
Understands recruit problems, helpful	51	18
Able to enforce discipline, strict, firm	50	17
Devoted to duty, pride in the Navy	39	14
Sincere, truthful, honest	28	10
Able to give commands, good voice	26	9
Dignified and self-assured	17	6
Physically qualified, good health	17	6
Impartial, plays no favorites	17	6
Moderate or high intelligence (GCT)	16	6
Sober, little or no drinking	15	5
Good sailor, good record in the Navy	15	5

b. Characteristics of ineffective company commanders. In many instances the characteristics ascribed to poor company commanders are antithetical to those mentioned as characterizing the best company commander. The following characteristics were mentioned most frequently in describing ineffective company commanders:

- 1) Lack of interest
- 2) Poor appearance
- 3) Lack of responsibility
- 4) Heavy drinker
- 5) Dishonest
- 6) Abusive in speech
- 7) Poor attitude toward Navy

Frequencies and additional characteristics are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

TABLE 5

Responses to:

"Think of the least effective company commander you have known. Describe him. What things did he do, what was there about him that made him a poor company commander."

Response Category	Number	Per Cent (N=287)
Didn't care for job, 20-year attitude, no interest in company	65	22
Little time or effort with company, recruits left on their own	61	21
Sloppy, dirty, bad appearance	59	21
Intoxicated, drank to excess	57	20
Cheated, relied on personal contacts	43	15
Shouted at men, abusive, profane	30	10
Made detrimental remarks about Navy system or superiors, a chronic griper	27	9
Didn't know how to enforce discipline	22	8
Poorly indoctrinated, didn't know job	20	7
Drove recruits, mistreated them, did not consider them as human beings	16	6
Don't know any	22	8

TABLE 6

Responses to:
 "What characteristics would make a man a poor
 prospect for company commander duty?"

Response Category	Number	Per Cent (N=287)
Insufficient interest in company commander duty, just a job to him, does not want to be a company commander	80	28
Temperamentally unsuited, not patient, bad temper, emotionally unstable	74	26
Sloppy, dirty, poor military bearing	69	24
Heavy drinker	64	22
Lazy, puts in little effort or time	39	14
Dishonest, a cheater, plays favorites	37	13
Bad leader or instructor, incompetent, inexperienced at handling men	35	12
Resorts to shouting or profanity, unable to give orders calmly	19	7
Poor home life	17	6
Poor attitude towards Navy	16	6
Poor physical condition	15	5
Bad background in previous duty	14	5

Since each of the respondents to the survey had a limited circle of acquaintances from whom to select "the least effective company commander you have known" it cannot be assumed that all respondents were describing a single or even a very few disinterested, slovenly, abusive, alcoholic or dishonest company commanders. What the exact percentage may be cannot be determined. However, from the frequency and variety of unfavorable descriptions given of actual rather than hypothetical individuals, it can be concluded that there are at least a small but significant number of undesirables serving as company commanders at the Recruit Training Command.

Men described as "alopy" or "cheaters," are probably not the best persons to indoctrinate recruits; men described as "intoxicated" or "abusive" are poor examples in light of the moral qualities the Navy hopes to inculcate in the young recruits. Thus, it is essential that men who possess these unfavorable characteristics be eliminated from the recruit training command if the Navy wishes to avoid the serious risks their presence as company commanders involves.

c. Physical fitness requirements. Since the need for special physical fitness requirements was repeatedly voiced in preliminary discussions with company commanders, even though they did not indicate it on their preliminary survey sheet, in describing good or poor company commanders, this matter was explored by a separate question. In response to the question, "Do you feel that there should be special physical fitness requirements for selection to company commander duty?" Fifty-nine per cent answered "yes," and 41 per cent answered "no." A major objection raised in discussing this question was that under the present system physically unqualified men were assigned to "soft" jobs. Thus, the chief who has kept himself physically fit is presented with long hours and arduous duty, while his soft, unfit counterpart puts in a shorter and more leisurely day.

Physical fitness requirements are described largely in terms of sound feet, legs and back. Adequate stamina is also implied, since it is indicated that the recruit company commander should be able to do everything his men do. Response categories and frequencies for these and other comments will be found in Table 7.

TABLE 7

Responses to:
 "Do you feel that there should be special physical fitness requirements for selection to company commander duty?
 Yes ___ No ___ If yes, discuss."

Response Category	Number	Per Cent* (N=169)
If not fit, send back to fleet, object to men being disqualified for physical reasons and sitting around	45	27
A recruit company commander should be able to do everything his men do	19	11
Sound feet, legs, back, required	18	11
Considerable marching and walking required	18	11
Should be emotionally or mentally fit	18	11
Should have good military bearing and appearance	17	10
A restatement of the necessity of physical exam requirements	33	20

*Fifty-nine per cent (169) responded "yes" to the question.

3. Evaluation of Company Commander Performance

For the purposes of the present project it is necessary to have reliable and meaningful criteria against which to validate measures of personal traits judged to be important in selection. A first, economical step towards this goal would involve a determination of the utility of the present evaluation system for this purpose.

It was discovered in preliminary discussions with company commanders that the present evaluation system might be far from acceptable for criterion use. Thus, several questions were

introduced in the present survey form to obtain information regarding the present system and also regarding factors that might be incorporated into a research criterion if such development were deemed necessary.

A question was aimed at determining whether the company commander understands the present system of evaluation. It was felt important to determine his understanding of the system in order to gauge the validity of his criticisms of it. This was followed by a question regarding weaknesses in the present system.

The company commander was next asked how he personally felt company commanders should be evaluated, and what sorts of things should be considered in judging a company commander. This question was complementary to that asking about weaknesses in the present system and, in effect, sought positive suggestions regarding company commander evaluation.

Towards the end of the survey form, the company commander was asked, "What do you, personally, aim at in pushing a company? What sorts of objectives do you try to achieve?" This question attempted to obtain a statement of personal objectives of the individual company commander divorced, as far as possible, from a stereotyped reproduction of official pronouncements.

a. Knowledge of evaluation system. While the question, "What system is at present being used to evaluate company commanders?" was interpreted in several ways, almost all respondents described relevant aspects of the present evaluation system. Response categories with percent of respondents in each are presented in Table 8.

It is of interest to note that 11 per cent of these experienced company commanders indicated that they did not know what the present system is. Furthermore, 8 per cent of the group chose to criticize rather than describe the present system by stating that evaluation was in terms of personal biases of the evaluator.

b. Weakness in the present evaluation system. When asked "Would you say there are any weaknesses in the way company commanders are being evaluated?" 61 per cent of the respondents answered "yes," 5 per cent answered "no" and 34 per cent answered "don't know." Those answering "yes" were asked to describe these weaknesses.

TABLE 8

Responses to:
 "What system is at present being used to
 evaluate company commanders?"

Response Category	Frequency	Per Cent (N=287)
On his company's marks, recruit performance, company standing, flags	114	40
By the battalion commander	93	33
In terms of personal biases of the evaluator	23	8
On his attitudes, military bearing and personal qualities	21	7
On the performance evaluation sheet, 4.0 system	18	6
By the battalion and regimental commanders	17	6
By the Training Evaluation Department	15	5
Don't know	31	11

Present techniques of evaluation were rather seriously criticized and, as may be seen in Table 9, there was considerable agreement in these criticisms.

Twenty-seven per cent of the respondents indicated that battalion commanders were not in a position to validly evaluate the company commander. This was ascribed to the battalion commanders' having insufficient contact with all company commanders under them, and in some instances, lacking familiarity with recruit training. Twenty per cent specified that the present system of evaluation was unfair.

TABLE 9

Responses to:
 "Would you say there are any weaknesses in the way
 company commanders are being evaluated? If Yes,
 what sorts of things do you have in mind?"

Item Mentioned	Fre- quency	Per Cent of Respond- ents Answering "Yes" (N = 176)
Officers are not qualified to evaluate. Don't have enough information or contact with company commanders	48	27
Grades are unfair. Personal preferences and subjective biases operate	36	20
The company commander should be evaluated on his own performance, rather than on his company's performance	30	17
Evaluation of the company commander is dependent upon initial caliber of recruits assigned to him	25	14
Training Evaluation Department does not give an accurate picture of the company commander	13	7

Instances were reported where favoritism was exerted by teams doing the evaluating. Members of these teams were occasionally in the position of evaluating company commanders who would be evaluating them in the future. Thus, "evaluation" in these instances became a matter of "I'll scratch your back and you scratch mine."

Seventeen per cent of the respondents specified that the company commander should be evaluated on his own behavior

rather than on his company's performance, since the quality of men from company to company often varied considerably. In some instances this inequity resulted in the company commander's encouraging the recruit to cheat on objective examinations to enable the company to make a good showing.

c. Recommended factors in evaluation. In describing factors on which company commanders should be evaluated, it was repeatedly pointed out that the evaluation should be of the company commander himself, and not of the company. As may be noted in Table 10, the three most frequently mentioned characteristics on which evaluation should be based were the company commander's appearance, his attitude, and the conscientiousness with which he did his job.

TABLE 10

Responses to:
 "How do you, personally, feel company commanders should be evaluated? What sorts of things should be considered in judging a company commander?"

Response Category	Number	Per Cent (N=287)
His appearance	74	26
His attitude	48	17
His performance, effort, work, time spent with company	47	16
Company performance, marks; present system as is, or with minor changes	46	16
His ability to handle men; leadership	41	14
The type of sailors he turns out	38	13
The discipline of recruits, especially when he isn't there	27	9
His own merits rather than on his company's marks	25	9
By qualified officers who observe the company and company commander	18	6
The cleanliness and appearance of recruits	13	5

The respective percentages for these characteristics were 26, 17 and 16. Only 16 per cent of the respondents indicated that evaluation should be made on factors that are presently used.

There are two reasons why the majority of the company commanders objected to the present system. The first of these is that differences in caliber among companies exist which render evaluation of the company commanders by company performance unfair. The second is the feeling on the part of the company commanders that while they had the responsibility for disciplining their recruits, their authority to do so was most limited. The last point will be discussed later.

d. Aims of the company commander. The most frequently stated aim of the company commanders (44 per cent) was to help effect the transition of the recruits from civilians to sailors. (See Table 11.)

Thirty-five per cent specified the teaching of cleanliness and neatness, 27 per cent the teaching of discipline and respect, and 22 per cent the teaching of self-reliance. The inculcation of moral qualities such as honesty, truthfulness and industriousness was specified by 21 per cent of the group. It is of interest to note that only 10 per cent specified good marks or getting a top company rating as personal aims. In fact, 5 per cent explicitly stated that their goal did not involve these objectives.

4. Factors Affecting Company Commander Performance

a. Attitudes towards recruit company commander duty. The attitude that an individual has towards a new duty cannot help but influence his performance in that duty. Preliminary discussions indicated that the general opinion in the fleet was that company commander duty was undesirable and that its only merit was that of a shore billet. Thus, the question was asked, "Before assignment to NTC, did you consider pushing companies to be good duty?"

TABLE 11

Responses to:
 "What do you, personally, aim at in pushing a company?
 What sorts of objectives do you try to achieve?"

Response Category	Number	Per Cent (N=287)
To make good sailors; prepare them for shipboard life; turn civilians into sailors	125	44
To teach cleanliness, neatness	101	35
To teach discipline, respect, obedience	77	27
To teach self-reliance; enable men to take care of themselves	62	22
To instill moral qualities such as honesty, truthfulness, industriousness	60	21
To turn out sailors who will like the Navy and have pride in it	41	14
To turn out a sailor that one would be proud to have in his division	33	12
To teach teamwork	29	10
To aim for good marks; get top company	28	10
To pass on naval knowledge; details of Navy life	19	7
To push average company; to get through; to disregard marks in pushing	14	5

As may be seen in Table 12, 27 per cent of the group considered the duty to be desirable, 33 per cent considered it to be somewhat undesirable, but only 8 per cent considered it to be very undesirable. Thus, it cannot be said that the attitude of the prospective company commander is unfavorable prior to his reporting to the Training Center.

TABLE 12

Responses to:
 "Before assignment to NTC did you consider
 pushing companies to be good duty?"

Response Category	Number	Per Cent (N=287)
Very desirable	16	6
Desirable	59	21
Somewhat undesirable	95	33
Very undesirable	22	8
Hadn't thought about it	95	33
Total	287	100

Table 13 reflects the recruit company commander's present attitude towards pushing companies. Thirty-four per cent indicated that they enjoyed it very much, while only 16 per cent specified that they did not enjoy it at all. The same trend is reflected in Table 14 which asked the company commander how many companies he would like to push in a 3 year tour of duty. The modal number, three companies, was specified by 40 per cent. Sixty-six per cent indicated that they would like to push 3 or more companies. This information is particularly significant when compared with the information in Table 2 which shows that only 19 per cent of the present group have pushed 3 or more companies. Thus, it must be considered that for the population under investigation, company commander duty is relatively popular.

TABLE 13

Responses to:
"Do you enjoy pushing companies?"

Response Category	Number	Per Cent (N=287)
Very much	97	34
Somewhat	143	50
Not at all	47	16
Total	287	100

TABLE 14

Responses to:
"If you had your choice, how many companies would
you like to push in a three year tour of duty?"

Number of Companies Specified	Number	Per Cent (N=287)
0	23	8
1	1	0
2	71	25
3	113	39
4	17	6
5	10	3
6	27	9
7	0	0
8	2	1
9	3	1
10	10	3
No answer	10	3
Total	287	100

A reflection of the attitude of the company commander towards his duty may be obtained by asking him to compare it with other duties with which he is familiar. To this end, the company commander was asked whether his present job was more difficult or easier than other jobs that he had held, and in what respects. Fifty per cent of the respondents specified that recruit company commander duty was harder than other duty they had held. Twelve per cent specified that it was easier. The remainder of the group took a position somewhere in between. Factors which make the company commander job harder or easier are listed in Table 15. "Long hours" is by far the most frequently mentioned reason why company commander duty is harder, being indicated by 24 per cent of the group.

TABLE 15

Responses to:
 "Is the job of recruit company commander harder or easier in other respects than the other jobs you have had in the Navy? What are some of the things which make the job hard or easy?"

Response Category	Number	Per Cent (N=287)
Takes a lot of time; long hours	69	24
Provides more job satisfaction	40	14
Marching, physical demands	35	12
Difficult to enforce discipline without endangering one's rate; court martial	30	11
It is a complex, demanding job; requires one to be alert at all times	27	9
Requires more responsibility, patience, etc., than other jobs	25	5
Poor quality of some recruits	18	6
Too much interference or pressure from above	16	6
Gets easier after learning routine	14	5

The physical demands of the job were considered to make it harder by 12 per cent, while administrative problems in enforcing discipline was mentioned by 11 per cent. On the other hand, 14 per cent of the group felt that the job was easier in that it provided greater job satisfaction to the company commander than did their previous assignments.

b. Problems associated with company commander duty. In earlier discussions with company commanders the following problems were mentioned as being prevalent:

(a) Recruit company commanders had serious difficulties in enforcing discipline. (b) The present rotational system (area, company, area, etc.) was undesirable. (c) The company commanders' wives had a highly negative attitude towards this duty. (d) Relationships between battalion commanders and company commanders were less than optimal. (e) The evaluation system lacked validity.² (f) Physical requirements were needed for company commanders.

These had been mentioned by the company commanders themselves as possible problems. It was desired to question the company commanders in the survey regarding them to determine how widespread they might be. A general question was introduced at the beginning of the questionnaire asking what difficulties the company commander has had in pushing companies. In this way an indication of the frequency with which the problems would be mentioned spontaneously was obtained. In addition, scattered throughout the remainder of the questionnaire were specific questions referring to discipline, the rotation system, wives' attitudes, and relationships with the battalion commanders.

Two consecutive questions were asked of the company commanders regarding problems they had pushing companies. The first asked about their main problem; the second asked about other problems. However, many company commanders chose to write continuously from the first to the second questions. Thus, the data from the two questions were analyzed together. Table 16 lists the problems mentioned by the company commanders with percent of mention.

It is striking to note that 42 per cent of the company commanders specified a lack of authority to enforce discipline or no backing in its enforcement. Twenty-seven per cent complained about relationships with battalion commanders or staff personnel. Twenty-six per cent specified over-long hours or

²The last two problems were discussed previously and will not be covered here.

TABLE 16

Responses to:
 "What, would you say, is the main problem you have had in pushing companies? What other difficulties, if any, have you had in pushing companies?"

Response Category	Number	Per Cent (N=287)
No authority to enforce discipline, must baby recruits, no backing in discipline	119	42
Interference from above, no cooperation from officers, Training Evaluation Department, or staff personnel	77	27
Too little spare time, must spend own time with company, schedules too tight	75	26
Unfair evaluation practices, favoritism in inspections, cheating in tests, have to cheat to get by	38	13
Unnecessary classes, inspections, appointments interfere with training	33	12
Misfits or low caliber men, difficult to get rid of misfits, get "drops" from other companies	29	10
Too much paper work	28	10
Difficult to motivate men under present marking system, competition is between company commanders rather than companies	24	8
Difficulty in getting started with first company	15	5
Not enough time for forming company	13	5

too little spare time, while 13 per cent spontaneously criticized evaluation practices. Among other problems mentioned were interference with training schedule (12 per cent), presence of misfits (10 per cent) and too much paper work (10 per cent).

(1) **Discipline.** In answer to the question as to whether the company commanders had any problems enforcing discipline, 37 per cent marked "yes," 59 per cent marked "no," and 4 per cent did not answer. This 37 per cent agrees with the 42 per cent of Table 16 because of the broader nature of the question in Table 16. As may be noted in Table 17, foremost among the problems cited by the 107 company commanders who answered, "yes," was that of insufficient authority (22 per cent).

TABLE 17

Responses to:
 "As a recruit company commander did you have any problems in enforcing or administering discipline?
 Yes _____ No _____ If yes, discuss."

Response Category	Number	Per Cent of those answering "yes" (N = 107)
Company commander restricted in authority to administer discipline	24	22
No backing; battalion commanders do not enforce discipline, are ineffectual	20	19
No way of punishing minor infractions; demerit system does not work	18	17
Recruits run to parents, chaplains	12	11
There are a few problem cases in every company	9	8
Too much red tape in getting infractions punished	6	6

Nineteen per cent complained about lack of backing by the battalion commanders, while 17 per cent specified that there was no way of punishing minor infractions. The recruits' complaining to parents or chaplains was mentioned by 11 per cent.

(2) Rotation system. In answer to the question "Do you like the present system of alternating area duty and company commander duty?" 82 per cent checked "yes," 13 per cent checked "no," and 5 per cent gave no opinion. In answer to the question, "Could you suggest any changes in this system which might make recruit training more effective or make the job easier?" only 49 per cent had something to say. However, these remarks were largely irrelevant or in support of the present rotational system. For this reason, results are not presented in tabular form. The only relevant remarks made by more than 5 per cent of the group were that pushing companies should be entirely voluntary (8 per cent) and that company commanders should push companies before having area duty (7 per cent). The results of this survey indicated that the rotational system is not a source of problems, contrary to the original hypothesis.

(3) Wives' attitudes. Two hundred sixty-two of the company commanders indicated that they were married and that their wives were living with them. This group was very fluent in expressing what they felt to be their wives' attitudes towards their present duty assignment.

As shown in Table 18, 27 per cent indicated that their wives passively accept any duty that they might be given. In many of these instances, it was simply specified "she is a good Navy wife." However, 18 per cent of the recruit company commanders indicated that their wives disliked or hated their duty. In a very large proportion of these instances, violent emotional reactions were reported with separations or near divorces mentioned in 11 instances. On the other hand, 15 per cent of the company commanders indicated that their wives enjoyed their present assignment, and were proud that their husband was a recruit company commander. Six per cent simply stated that their wives liked it because it was shore duty.

There were a number of categories of complaints centered about the hours that the company commander must put in under the present system. In all, 32 per cent of the company commanders reported that their wives complained about these hours, particularly in their first few weeks of pushing a new company. The hours not only kept the company commander from his family, but left him strained, tired and irritable. This did not make for the best family relationship. Specifically, 17 per cent of the company commanders' wives indicated the recruit company commander

TABLE 18

Responses to:
 "...describe your wife's attitude toward your assignment
 as a recruit company commander."

Response Category	Number	Per Cent of those living with Wives (N = 262)*
Good Navy wife, accepts any job re- cruit company commander has, recruit company commander doesn't bring problems home. (No stated attitude on part of wife.)	71	27
Dislikes or hates duty, tremendous strain on her and family, re- cruit company commander extremely tired or irritable when home.	47	18
No complaints other than too little time at home, doesn't get to see children, neglect of social or domestic responsibilities.	44	17
Enjoys it, proud of duty, inter- ested in recruits problems, thinks it's good duty.	38	15
No complaints other than the long hours during the first few weeks.	28	10
Likes it, because it is shore duty.	16	6
Complains about the long hours and physical and mental strain on the recruit company commander.	13	5
Miscellaneous	5	2
Total	262	100

*Twenty-five are unmarried or are married and not living
with their wives.

spent too little time at home, rarely got to see their children, and were forced to neglect social and domestic responsibilities. Ten per cent indicated that the only complaint their wife had was that the long hours they had to put in were unreasonable, particularly during the first few weeks with a company. An additional 5 per cent complained about the long hours together with the physical and mental strains resulting.

Combining the 32 per cent of the complaints associated with the company commander hours and the 18 per cent of other more severe complaints, it may be seen that 50 per cent of the company commanders' wives are reported to be dissatisfied with some aspect of this duty. Twenty-seven per cent are indifferent toward it and 21 per cent are favorable to the duty with no complaints.

(4) Relationship with battalion commander. In order to elicit discussion of the battalion commander's role without necessarily encouraging criticism of it, the question, "In what ways does the battalion commander influence a recruit company commander's effectiveness?" was asked. It was placed at the end of the survey sheet so as not to influence responses to earlier questions.

This question was interpreted in two different ways by the respondents. One group discussed what the battalion commander could do, the second group discussed what the battalion commander actually does. The responses to this question were analyzed so as to distinguish between these two interpretations, and are given in Table 19.

Thirty-five per cent of the respondents made comments as to what the battalion commander could do. Thirteen per cent of these described how he could help, 5 per cent described how he could hinder, and 17 per cent indicated that he was in a position to help or hinder. In all these instances, the battalion commander's backing or failing to back the company commander was the critical issue. This backing was apparently most crucial in the matter of discipline. Cooperation or lack of it was also repeatedly mentioned, suggesting the importance of a close harmonious working relationship between the officer and his men.

In describing what the battalion commander does do, 33 per cent of the respondents stated that he presently exerts a negative influence or no influence on the company commander's effectiveness. In this group, 11 per cent indicated that the battalion commander actually hindered or interfered with their performance. An additional 12 per cent specified a desire not to be supervised by the battalion commander, while 10 per cent indicated that the battalion commander had no influence on the

TABLE 19

Responses to:
 "In what ways does the battalion commander influence
 a recruit company commander's effectiveness?"

Response Category	Number	Per Cent (N=287)
Can help or hinder, depends on amount of backing he gives recruit company commander, amount of assistance in discipline cases, cooperation with recruit company commander, can either make or break a company	48	17
Can help recruit company commander by backing him, offering assistance when needed, by cooperating with the recruit company commander, by enforcing discipline	38	13
Should leave recruit company commander alone, not bother him, serves little or no useful purpose	34	12
Hinders the recruit company commander, interferes with him, plays favorites, the battalion commander isn't needed	32	11
None, no influence	29	10
Can hinder the recruit company commander by not cooperating, by exerting constant threats, by not backing him up	13	5
By setting example, gives men idea of officers, commanding officers, chain of command, helps the recruit company commander in dealing with problem recruits, discipline cases	12	4
No answer	29	10
Miscellaneous	52	18
Total	287	100

company commander's effectiveness. In contrast, only 4 per cent of the respondents stated that the battalion commander actually helps the company commander in dealing with problem cases or discipline.

In general, the company commander feels that some battalion commanders are not sufficiently experienced to perform their job adequately, or that they do not have sufficient knowledge of the Navy or of company commander duty to do so.

c. Changes in recruit training recommended by the company commanders. Company commanders are in an excellent position to make recommendations regarding changes which might help them do a better job. It was believed that administrative changes might improve company commander effectiveness as much as improved selection devices would. Thus, a question asking for such recommendations was included in the survey form. Responses to this question are presented in Table 20.

It may be seen that the changes recommended are aimed at remedying problems mentioned repeatedly throughout the survey form. For example, 40 per cent of the group recommended greater authority to enforce discipline; 14 per cent recommended the elimination of the competitive marking system. A listing of recommendations made by 2 per cent or more of the company commanders is presented in Table 20 for informational purposes.

TABLE 20

Responses to:
 "What changes, if any, in recruit training would help the
 company commander do a better job?"

Response Category	Number	Per Cent (N=287)
More authority over recruits more freedom to enforce discipline; more backing	113	40
Eliminate competitive marking system, Training Evaluation Department: make marking system objective; eliminate competition on composite exam	39	14
More company commander periods, review time, particularly in early phases of training	35	12
Confine recruits during training; no visitors; more control over liberty	25	9
More help; two company commanders, assistants, especially in beginning	18	6
Classification, testing, dental work, clothes issue etc. before company is formed; more time for forming	18	6
Less interference from above (officers, chaplains, Training Evaluation Department)	17	6
Lay stress on useful subjects; less emphasis on competitive marks	12	4
Better planning of recruit schedules; more time; longer period of training	11	4
Better indoctrination of battalion commanders; have them observe companies in training	9	3
Less interference from parents, public, etc.	9	3
More careful screening of recruits; don't place low quality men in company	8	3
Eliminate or cut down paperwork	6	2

D. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

A survey form was administered to 287 experienced recruit company commanders at the Naval Training Center, San Diego on 26 March 1957 to identify factors related to successful company commander performance. Responses to the survey are summarized below.

1. Characteristics of Effective and Ineffective Recruit Company Commanders

No unusual or unsuspected traits were found to be important for recruit company commander effectiveness. The characteristics mentioned were ones which often appear in leadership studies. The best company commanders were described as being conscientious, understanding of recruit problems, able to enforce discipline, of good appearance, patient, good leaders, enjoying working with recruits, proper in speech, honest, and as identifying with the Navy. The least effective company commanders were described as lacking interest in their companies, poor in appearance, lacking responsibility, heavy drinkers, dishonest, abusive in speech, and as having a poor attitude toward the Navy.

2. The Feasibility of Development of Selection Procedures

It would be feasible to develop improved selection instruments and procedures only if the input of petty officers to the Recruit Training Command includes a significant proportion of individuals who will perform unsuccessfully as company commanders. It may be concluded from comments made in describing actual company commanders that there are at least a small but significant number serving in this duty who possess some of the traits characterizing ineffective company commanders. This evidence suggests that the development of improved selection instruments or procedures would be both feasible and valuable.

3. Physical Fitness Requirements

The majority of the respondents pointed out the importance of physical fitness requirements for company commander duty, since the company commander must literally keep pace with his men.

4. The Present Evaluation System

The present evaluation system was subjected to serious criticisms by a large proportion of the company commanders. Officers were reported as having insufficient contact with company commanders to make valid evaluations. Favoritism and bias

entered into inspections. The caliber of men varied too greatly among companies to permit the evaluation of the company commander on the basis of his company's performance.

5. Attitudes Towards Recruit Company Commander Duty

Recruit company commander duty is considered to be desirable duty, per se, by the large majority of respondents. However, certain modifiable aspects of the duty detract both from its desirability and the company commander's effectiveness.

6. Problems in Enforcing Discipline

The recruit company commander feels he has little authority to enforce discipline, or is not backed up in disciplinary matters by the battalion commander. He also feels that effective means of punishing minor infractions are needed.

7. The Present Alternating System

The present system of alternating area and company commander duty is strongly endorsed.

8. Recruit Company Commanders' Wives' Attitudes

Most Navy wives accept or like their husbands' duty. However, many bitterly complain about strain on family life occasioned by overly long hours.

9. Attitudes Toward the Battalion Commander

According to a large number of respondents, relationships between the battalion commander and his company commanders are less than optimal. Some company commanders indicate that they are not backed in disciplinary matters, and that battalion commanders are not sufficiently acquainted with company commander duty to be as helpful as they might.

E. CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the present findings it appears feasible to develop an instrument that will help in the selection of recruit company commanders. The repeated mention of personality factors would suggest the value of trying out a personality test as a predictor. A supplementary biographical information blank would also be worth investigating. An investigation of physical disabilities disqualifying for company commander duty should also be undertaken. However, the validation of any selection instruments or standards should not be undertaken without concurrent development of realistic criteria.

F. OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Some of the recommendations made by the company commanders or arising from a consideration of problems mentioned, should, at this time, be considered as tentative pending further investigation. However, certain others of these recommendations are in such good accord with both past experience and common sense that their adoption should be given serious consideration. The recommendations listed below are some which are reasonable enough to be considered seriously in formulating operational procedures.

1. Physical requirements should be established for assignment of men to the Recruit Training Command for company commander duty.
2. Men found to be physically unfit should not be given the more desirable rotational assignments at the Recruit Training Command.
3. Intemperate or excessive use of alcohol should disqualify a man from consideration for recruit company commander duty.
4. Company commanders should be evaluated on their own performance rather than on their company's performance. Factors such as appearance, military bearing, and time and effort spent with company should be considered.
5. Duty hours should be reduced to that of other instructors at Recruit Training Command. This may be done by providing two company commanders for each company.
6. The present system of alternating area and company commander duty should be retained.
7. Steps should be taken to improve relationships between battalion commanders and their company commanders.

G. RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Selection techniques for screening out irresponsible, physically unfit, emotionally unstable, or unmotivated candidates for recruit company commander duty should be developed.
2. Research aimed at the development of reliable recruit company commander evaluation techniques for validation of selection devices should be performed.

APPENDIX A

Copy of Letter from Commanding Officer, Recruit Training Command,
U. S. Naval Training Center, San Diego 33, California

20.1:RHL:jt
pl6-3/MM
Ser:
21 Jun 1956

From: Commanding Officer, Recruit Training Command, U. S. Naval
Training Center, San Diego 33, California
To: Chief of Naval Personnel
Via: (1) Commander, U. S. Naval Training Center, San Diego 33,
California
(2) Officer in Charge, Naval Personnel Research Field
Activity, San Diego 52, California
Subj: Means of determining ability of petty officers to serve
as company commanders

1. Approximately 2,100 chief and first class petty officers in the three Recruit Training Commands are utilized in the training program that effects each year a transition of 140,000 individuals from civilian life to Navy life.
2. It is believed that at least eight percent of these petty officers are unfit for duty as recruit company commanders. If this is true then this eight percent compounds to a considerable number of naval personnel who have possibly been subjected to maltreatment or at best, poor naval indoctrination.
3. Some of the factors that appear to make a particular petty officer unfit for duty are family problems, lack of patience in dealing with young men, inability to cope with a large group of young men as individuals, severe and exacting personality traits, and age and length of time in the naval service. There are undoubtedly many others.
4. Because the battalion commanders are relatively inexperienced and because of the rapid turnover in these junior officer billets adequate supervision for some of these marginal company

(Appendix continued on next page)

APPENDIX A (continued)

commanders is not available at times. In view of the above it is requested that a study be made to determine the feasibility of developing an instrument to be used in assisting in the selection of recruit company commanders.

H. J. CAMPBELL

Copy to
CO RTC GLAKES
CO RTC BAIN

APPENDIX B

Copy of Recruit Company Commander Survey Sheet

DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME OR ANY OTHER IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ON THIS FORM.

RECRUIT COMPANY COMMANDER SURVEY SHEET

The U.S. Naval Personnel Research Field Activity is making a study of recruit company commanders. We believe that your experience as a company commander makes you especially well qualified to describe this duty.

This survey is being performed for research purposes only. Replies are to be anonymous. You are not to sign your name to this survey sheet. Completed forms will not be seen by members of the recruit training command. It is important that you express yourself freely, so that we can obtain an accurate picture of the job of recruit company commander.

When you have answered the questions, seal your form in the accompanying envelope and put it in the box provided, where a representative of the U.S. Naval Personnel Research Field Activity will pick it up.

During the period of this survey, please do not talk over the questions with other recruit company commanders. We want to get each individual's personal ideas.

If the space following each question is not large enough, you may use the back of the page.

How long have you been in the Navy? (in years) _____

What is your present rate (and rating)? _____

When did you begin your present tour of duty at NTC?
Month _____ Year _____

How many companies have you pushed? ____ Are you now pushing a
company? _____

Did you request assignment to NTC? Yes ____ No ____

Did you request duty as a company commander? Yes ____ No ____

When you first learned of your assignment to NTC, did you expect
to be a company commander?

Before assignment to NTC did you consider pushing companies to
be good duty? (check one)

_____ very desirable

_____ desirable

_____ somewhat undesirable

_____ very undesirable

_____ hadn't thought about it

What, would you say, is the main problem you have had in pushing
companies? (Please discuss)

What other difficulties, if any, have you had in pushing companies?

What changes, if any, in recruit training would help the company commander do a better job?

Do you feel that there should be special physical fitness requirements for selection to company commander duty? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, discuss.

Is the job of recruit company commander harder or easier in other respects than the other jobs you have had in the Navy? What are some of the things which make the job hard or easy?

Have you had any area duty? Yes _____ No _____

Do you like the present system of alternating area duty and recruit company commander duty? Yes _____ No _____

Could you suggest any changes in this system which might make recruit training more effective, or make the job easier?

Do you enjoy pushing companies? Very much _____ Somewhat _____ Not at all _____

If you had your choice, how many companies would you like to push in a three year tour of duty? (circle one number) 0 1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8 9 10

Are you married? Yes _____ No _____
If so, how many children do you have? _____

If you are married, is your wife here with you? Yes _____ No _____
If so, describe your wife's attitude toward your assignment as a recruit company commander.

What system is at present being used to evaluate company commanders? (Please describe)

Would you say there are any weaknesses in the way company commanders are being evaluated? Yes _____ No _____ Don't know _____
If Yes, what sorts of things do you have in mind?

How do you, personally, feel company commanders should be evaluated? What sorts of things should be considered in judging a company commander?

Think of the best recruit company commander you have known.
Describe him. What things did he do, what was there about him,
that made him an outstanding company commander? (Do not mention
his name.)

Think of the least effective company commander you have known. Describe him. What things did he do, what was there about him that made him a poor company commander. (Do not mention his name.)

In general, what characteristics make a top-notch company commander?

What characteristics would make a man a poor prospect for company commander duty?

What do you, personally, aim at in pushing a company? What sorts of objectives do you try to achieve?

As a recruit company commander did you have any problems in enforcing or administering discipline? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, discuss.

In what ways does the battalion commander influence a recruit company commander's effectiveness?