Rating changes may strengthen Navy careers

By MC3 Andrea Perez,
Navy Personnel Command Public Affairs

MILLINGTON, Tenn. – Rating conversion allows career-minded Sailors in overmanned ratings to stay Navy and helps shape the force to meet future manning requirements, officials said April 16.

"If a Sailor is in a rating where promotion is stifled at the present time, converting to a different rating can open up significant advancement opportunities," said Master Chief Navy Counselor David Duncan, enlisted community manager, Bureau of Naval Personnel and rating conversion veteran. Duncan first enlisted as a radioman before converting to his current rate.

Today, Sailors can apply for rating conversion during their Perform to Serve (PTS) negotiation window. When Sailors with less than 14 years of service are within 12 months of their end of active obligated service (as extended) date, they must compete for a PTS quota to continue their career.

The Fleet Rating Identification Engine-PTS (FR-PTS) provides Sailors with billet availability information in their current rating and other ratings one might qualify for, based on their year group (YG) and Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery score.

According to Duncan, when an individual enters the Navy, they may not be assigned the rating they initially wanted and conversion gives them an opportunity to try something different. It also gives Sailors the chance to discover new skill sets and talents.

One Sailor shared his rating conversion experience.

"I put in a package to convert to Cryptologic Technician Technical (CTT), Cryptologic Technician Collection and Cryptologic Technician Networks, and I was accepted for CTT," said Aviation Support Equipment Technician (AS) 1st Class Odel Schroeder. "I think converting is going to benefit me because in the CT (Cryptologic Technician) rating I have a better chance of getting promoted and after the Navy I can get a higher paying job than if I get out as an AS."

Official Navy file photo

To date, thousands of Sailors have converted to different ratings, allowing the Navy to keep Sailors who are committed to a career in the Navy.

"For the past few months, I've felt like I needed to do something different and I'm looking forward to learning my new rate," said Schroeder. "I don't know anything about it, so I'm trying to go TAD (temporary assigned duty), that way I'll have an idea of what to expect before I actually go to school."

Sailors considering conversion can ask their career counselor to review the YG manning for the rating which they would like to convert to.

"They have to do their homework. Understanding what your year group manning is in your current rating and knowing what the year group manning is for the rating that you're looking to convert into is a good start," said Duncan. "You really have to look and if there's something that leaves you scratching your head, talk with your career counselor."

Per MILPERSMAN 1440-010, requests for conversion to ratings that are properly manned, will only be considered on a case-by-case basis and requests for conversion to overmanned ratings will not be considered.

On PTS applications where "willing to convert" is selected, a member will be considered for in-rate reenlistment prior to being reviewed for conversion. On applications where "conversion only" is selected, the member will be reviewed only for conversion.

A Sailor's command career counselor can assist them in understanding the benefits of reviewing their YG information and provide Sailors with guidance throughout the FR-PTS process.

"Many years back, we didn't always see a conversion as a positive thing," said Duncan. "Now days we have got to look at conversion and know that it's the way things have to be for us to stay up to speed and keep the same good people in uniform."

For more information, visit the conversion Web Page on the Navy Personnel Command website, www.npc.navy.mil/CAREER/CAREERCOUNSELING/Pages/Conversions.aspx.

Sexual assault: Hurts one, affects all

From Naval Surface Warfare Center Panama City

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), and, according to Chief of Naval Information Rear Adm. Denny Moynihan, Navy leaders are committed to using SAAM as a jumping off point for a campaign to ensure every Sailor and Navy civilian fully understands the depth of the problem, that deckplate leaders must lead from the front in preventing this crime, and that all of us take ownership of the issue.

Sexual assault is corrosive to our readiness and to our combat ability. Sexual assault is detrimental to the morale of our Sailors.

"Prevention is everyone's duty, and that we simply will not tolerate the victimization of our shipmates," said Moynihan. "To alert you to the scale of the problem, statistics indicate sexual assaults occur in our Navy an average of three times a day. This is simply unacceptable. Sexual assault is a crime that is detrimental to readiness, retention and morale."

There were a total of 611 restricted and unrestricted reports of sexual assaults in fiscal year 2010 (FY10).

Of 441 unrestricted reports 49 percent (214) were aggravated sexual assault; 65 percent (285) were service member on service member.

Typically, there are 2-3 sexual assault operation reports every day. The weapon of choice, in most cases, is alcohol.

Of the 325 sexual assault investigations initiated and completed in FY10, one percent of suspects were females, 94 percent of suspects were male (remaining five percent of suspects were reported unknown).

The largest rank for suspects in investigations is E1-E4 at 35 percent, followed by E5-E9 at 21 percent.

The potential impact on victims includes withdrawal, depression, anxiety, silence and PTSD.

Sexual assault hurts Navy's readiness and combat effectiveness.

Of the 325 sexual assault investigations initiated and completed in FY10, 76 percent (267) of suspected offenders were Sailors.

Sixty-five percent (285/441) of FY10 reported sexual assaults are service member on service member.

We need to look at our culture and eliminate those behaviors that are incompatible with a safe, sexual assault-free environment.

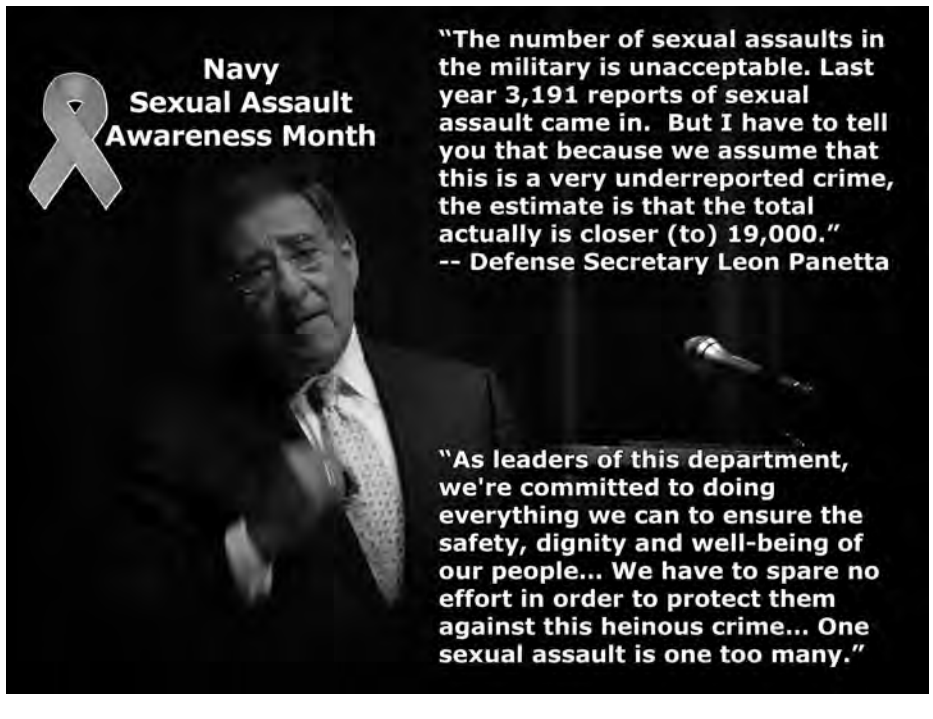
We have a moral duty to keep Sailors and their families safe from those who would attack their dignity and their honor.

Sexual assault prevention is everyone's duty. As shipmates, we must look out for each other and prevent harm before it occurs.

Bystander Intervention (BI) training teaches Sailors to recognize inappropriate, coercive and harassing behaviors and when to intervene, before a behavior moves closer toward sexual violence; tangible intervention behavior strategies.

Based on a recent survey of 687 Sailors who participated in a BI pilot program training in Spring 2011, 31 Sailors reported that they successfully intervened in situations that may have led to sexual assault.

As of March 25, 9,752 Sailors have participated in Bystander Invention training while at "A-School."

The Navy is working to implement BI training on a Fleet-wide level, in addition to other sexual assault training programs, later this year.

In a military force, where the promise to help each other in battle and to leave nobody behind is a sacred promise, we must honor the dignity of every Sailor in all arenas.