

## 2000 Military Exit Survey (MES)

\*\*The information provided represents all that is currently available from this survey. Due to the age of this survey, additional information may not be available.

### SURVEY OVERVIEW

In the Fall of 1999, Congress passed legislation requiring the Secretary of Defense to conduct a survey of every member separating from active duty about his/her reasons for leaving. This requirement for a one-time survey was included in the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000* (Public Law No. 106-65).

The legislation provided that, “The Secretary of Defense shall develop and implement, as part of outprocessing activities, a survey on attitudes toward military service to be completed by all members of the Armed Forces who...are voluntarily discharged or separated from the Armed Forces or transfer from a regular component to a reserve component... The survey shall, at a minimum, cover the following subjects:

1. Reasons for leaving military service.
2. Command climate.
3. Attitude toward leadership.
4. Attitude toward pay and benefits.
5. Job satisfaction during service as a member of the Armed Forces.
6. Plans for activities after separation (such as enrollment in school, use of Montgomery GI Bill benefits and work).
7. Affiliation with a reserve component, together with reasons for affiliating or not affiliating, as the case may be.
8. Such other matters as the Secretary determines appropriate to the survey concerning reasons why military personnel are leaving military service.”

Between 1 April and 30 September 2000,<sup>1</sup> the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) conducted the first Joint-Service exit survey. The 16-page questionnaire, *2000 Military Exit Survey (MES)* asked separating service members to identify their reasons for leaving, plans after

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<sup>1</sup> Although the legislation required that the survey be administered from 1 January through 30 June 2000, additional time was needed to develop and field a comprehensive survey. The Department of Defense (DoD) requested and received permission to conduct the survey from 1 April-30 September.

separation, and plans for affiliation with a Reserve component. The survey also elicited attitudes toward command climate, leadership, pay and benefits, and job satisfaction.

During this period, 113,403 questionnaires were sent to approximately 1,300 military separation points. Separation point personnel were required to administer the *MES* as part of outprocessing to all Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force members (including Reservists on full-time duty) who, with an Honorable discharge, were voluntarily separating or being discharged, retiring, or transferring from an active component to a Reserve component.

There were 16,033 DoD and Coast Guard respondents with voluntary and honorable separations. This number represents a 20% response rate for the six-month administration period. Typical surveys of military personnel achieve response rates between 40%-50%. Exit surveys, whether conducted with military or civilian personnel, historically have lower than desired response rates; a response rate of 20% is typical of what can be achieved for these surveys.

To minimize the potential for non-response bias, survey respondents are weighted to reflect the makeup of the population of members separating between 1 April and 30 September 2000. Despite the use of survey weighting techniques, there is still a potential for non-response bias with a 20% response rate. Therefore, results may not accurately reflect the entire population of separatees. Consequently, the survey results should be treated as one source of information in combination with other sources of information and expert opinion.

Figure 1 shows the tree of files on this CD-ROM. The remainder of this README documentation discusses which files are required to view the documentation and to access the dataset.

**Figure 1.**  
Tree Directory with File Size<sup>2</sup> (KB)

ROOTDIR		
	Readme.rtf	101KB
	Readme.pdf	18KB
+---	DATA_OS	
	mes00pub.DAT	41,893KB
+---	DATA_SAS	
	FORMATS.SAS7BCAT	221KB
	mes00pub.SAS7BDAT	83,217KB
	P_Contents.lst	5,863KB
+---	DATA_SPSS	
	mes00pub.SAV	35,380KB
\---	PDF	
	+---	ADMIN
		2000 MES Codebook Appendices A_J but not G.pdf
		2000 MES Codebook Appendix G.txt
		+---
		METHODS
		MESMethods041101revisions.pdf
		\---
		RESULTS
		2001-001_2000_MES__.pdf
		2001-003 MES 2000 Tabulations.pdf
		Congressional rpt Brief.pdf

## DOCUMENTATION

### *2000 MES Codebook Appendices*

Two files are required for the report prepared on survey administration and datasets for 2000 MES. One file contains the appendices that address issues in the analysis of the survey data. In a second file, Appendix G (the codebook portion of the report) provides frequency and percentage distributions for variables for both the basic survey dataset and the confidential dataset.

## RESULTS

### *2000 Military Exit Survey Tabulations (Report No. 2001-003)*

In this tabulation volume are an introduction to the survey, cross tabulations of the resulting data on a series of demographic variables of interest to the various policy offices within OUSD(P&R), and a copy of actual survey items. Results are tabulated by Service, paygrade,

<sup>2</sup> File sizes may differ depending upon disk operating system and formatting.

location, education level, race/ethnicity, family status, gender, officer/enlisted by gender, deployment status, and Service further broken out by paygrade.

## DATA FILES

This CD-ROM contains data from the *2000 Military Exit Survey*. Multiple-platform compatibility for the basic survey data file is achieved by providing the data in three files types: SAS<sup>®</sup>, DAT and SAV.

### SAS<sup>®</sup> System Files

The basic survey file contains a record for each person in the sample and all variables required for analysis—that is, all survey data, weights and selected administrative record variables thought to be reasonably required for analysis, that do not violate respondent confidentiality under the Privacy Act. The SAS<sup>®</sup> system files for the survey is:

mes00pub.SAS7BDAT	(basic survey file)
FORMATS.SAS7BCAT	(format catalog)

When analyzing the data in mes00pub, make sure the format catalog and the SAS<sup>®</sup> dataset (mes00pub) are in the drive and directories referenced in your SAS<sup>®</sup> program. For example, if the SAS<sup>®</sup> format catalog is in the root directory of your E:\ drive, your first two lines of SAS<sup>®</sup> code would be:

```
libname LibRef 'E:\';
libname library 'E:\';
```

The basic survey CD also contains a SAS<sup>®</sup> program providing examples that can be used to verify that the dataset has been properly imported.

### ASCII Files

An ASCII flat file was prepared from the SPSS<sup>®</sup> system file. The ASCII file is:

mes00pub.DAT	Basic survey file
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The file layout is contained in Appendix H.

**SPSS® Files**

SPSS® users can access the variable labels and value labels; however, all special missing values established for the 2000 Military Exit Survey SAS® data file will be converted to the SPSS® missing value.

mes00pub.SAV                      SPSS® system data file

**References**

Microsoft Windows XP [Computer software]. (2002). Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.

SAS® Institute Inc. (2006). SAS®/STAT User's Guide, Version 9.1.4. Cary, NC: Author.

SPSS® for Windows™ [computer software]. (2008). Version 16.0. Chicago, IL: SPSS, Inc.