

Navy to reduce recruiting goals

By Dave Moniz
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — The Navy will lower its recruiting goal this year by about 1,000 because — to its pleasant surprise — it is keeping more sailors in uniform than it previously anticipated, Navy Secretary Richard Danzig said Thursday.

Danzig said that starting this year, the service has been placing more emphasis on convincing sailors to stay to reduce pressure on recruiters. Anticipating that it can continue to improve its retention rates in the future, the Navy is planning to reduce its recruiting targets additionally by several thousand a year, Danzig said.

The Navy's original recruiting target for this fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30, was 56,600. Navy spokesman Cmdr. Brian Cullin said the Navy will end up retaining about 2,000 more sailors than it had expected. Even so, Cullin added, the Navy is still not meeting its long-term goals for keeping people.

The Navy, which has 370,000 sailors, plans to officially announce its new recruitment goals today. At a Pentagon luncheon with a group of reporters, Danzig said the new emphasis on retention is not

without some risk. It is based on the idea that the Navy can retain higher numbers of sailors in the future, something all the services are finding difficult in an economy with such low civilian unemployment.

"The return on investment is richer if you retain more people," Danzig said.

The secretary said he developed the idea after discussions with recruiting commanders. The service has thousands of people charged with recruiting new sailors and spends \$70 million a year in advertising, but it devotes only a handful of personnel and no promotional dollars to keeping them in the service, Danzig said.



Danzig: Emphasis on retention.

To focus on keeping more sailors, the Navy is establishing a special "Retention Center." The Navy will also make retaining sailors an important criterion for commanders.

"We have 5,000 recruiters, but how much are we spending to advertise to families in the Navy to stay?" Danzig asked.

All four services — the Navy, Army, Air Force and Marines — say they expect to make their year-end recruiting goals, the first time that has happened in three years. However, every branch is engaged in a difficult struggle to keep talented workers.

This USA Today article, dated August 25, 2000, makes no mention of the 1999 memo sent by Navy HQ to all commands, about the "go easy on miscreants" policy which enabled the improved retention of sailors -- thus reducing recruiting goals.