

Sea Power 21 Series: Part VII

Sea Warrior

Maximizing Human Capital

By Vice Admiral Alfred G. Harms Jr., Vice Admiral Gerald L. Hoewing,
and Vice Admiral John B. Totushek, U.S. Navy

The foundation of “Sea Power 21” is our people. Navy men and women—here, returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom—will be asked to deliver unprecedented offensive power, defensive assurance, and operational independence to joint force commanders with a level of responsiveness never before achieved. It is imperative they be prepared—either on station or poised to surge—to immediately employ combat capability. Sea Warrior is how we are going to build the sailor to run the Navy our nation demands.



U.S. NAVY (MICHAEL DAMRON)

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Naval Institute published Admiral Vern Clark's "Sea Power 21" in the October 2002 Proceedings, followed by coverage of Sea Shield, Sea Strike, Sea Basing, ForceNet, and Global Concept of Operations in November and December 2002 and January, February, and April 2003, respectively.*

The Navy's human resource system produces trained sailors to man the fleet. "Sea Power 21" demands much more. Our striking groups deployed over the past two years have been increasingly better manned as a result of a host of personnel and manpower initiatives, but we still have much to do if we are to optimize our Navy's personnel readiness. We must find a way to get each individual—consistently, systematically, and comprehensively—into the job of maximum potential.

Shaped by the conscription demands of World War II, then the Cold War, and then more than a decade of draw down, our processes and systems understandably were not designed with the individual at the center. So it should not surprise us, in today's all-volunteer environment, that we see some misalignments and inefficiencies. Neither should it surprise us that transformation is within our grasp.

This is the goal of Sea Warrior: to integrate the Navy's manpower, personnel, and training organizations—active and reserve—into a single, efficient, information-rich human resource management system. Its focus is on growing individuals from the moment they walk into a recruiting office through their assignments as master chiefs or flag officers, using a career continuum of training and education that gives them the tools they need to operate in an increasingly demanding and dynamic environment. Through Sea Warrior, we will identify sailors' precise capabilities and match them to well-articulated job requirements that far exceed the simplistic criteria used today. In addition, we will implement different types of incentives and flexible rotation dates and move the Navy toward a job-based compensation system.

From an acquisition perspective, this means designing our platforms and systems with warfighter performance as a key parameter. For commands, it means a market-based, near-real-time process that responds rapidly and efficiently to the manpower, personnel, and training demands of an expeditionary service.

The result is not simply trained sailors to the fleet, but a quantum leap in fleet effectiveness through efficient development and assignment of optimally trained, motivated manpower.

Not Just Change at the Margins

The functions of manpower, personnel, and training have grown in stovepipes, each with its own set of business processes. An individual moves from one organizational process to another, to another, subject to all the discontinuities and inefficiencies associated with imperfect handoffs. But if the systems are built around comprehensive knowledge of each individual and the tasks required to accomplish the mission, these stovepipes can be integrated and handoffs between functions can be made seamlessly over a career. Creating a single business process for the range of human resource management activities is the means by which the Navy is achieving the objectives of Sea Warrior.

At the heart of this approach is "sailor advocacy," a fundamental change in the assignment process that puts the detailer to work for our sailors and gives sailors a stronger voice in and greater control over their career decisions. Working closely with the command retention team, the detailer develops a comprehensive picture of each sailor's preferences and capabilities. The command retention team, in turn, working closely with the detailer, helps each sailor develop a realistic, career-enhancing set of expectations.

To be an effective advocate, the detailer must have access to specific information about the sailor to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, and personal concerns or issues. He needs more than just a performance evaluation. This additional information comes from the sailor's unit, the people in that command who have watched that sailor perform, who have developed relationships with him, who understand what motivates him. This knowledge also must be readily available to that sailor's mentors, his career counselor, and his leaders. In addition, Sea Warrior brings the gaining commands into the assignment process. With this perspective, the system is more apt to create the best match of that sailor to a job.

Bold New Technologies

Behind the process improvements fostered by Sea Warrior is advanced technology. Taking advantage of off-the-shelf, corporate-tested products such as Knowledge Management programs, PeopleSoft, and SkillsNet, as well as such newly developed tools as advanced auction engines, the Navy is constructing a human resource system that is world-leading. The Sea Warrior information technology (IT) strategy is moving aggressively to eliminate the dozens of legacy client server systems and stove-piped databases. Key ForceNet elements such as the Navy-Marine Corps Intranet, IT 21, and Task Force Web will provide the IT framework

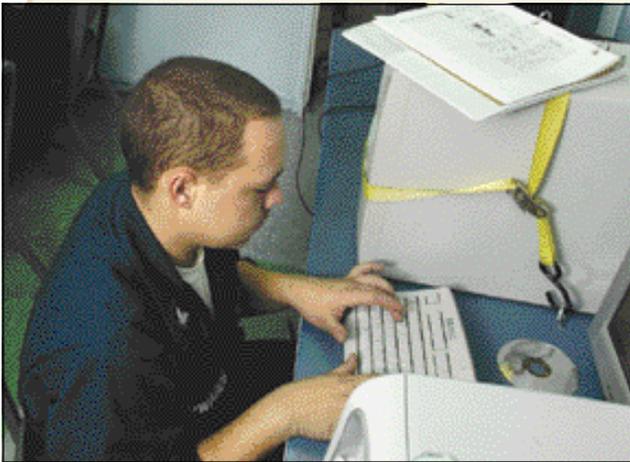
“Sea Warrior will serve as the foundation of warfighting effectiveness by ensuring the right skills are in the right place at the right time. It will develop naval professionals who are highly skilled, powerfully motivated, and optimally employed for mission success.”

— Admiral Vern Clark

How e-Resumes and Intelligent Agents Work for the Sailor

Intelligent software agents are powerful: they do the heavy lifting to get information. It is a way for sailors to express their preferences and their personal and family needs. It is a way to package sailors' resumes.

I think of the resume just as they do in the commercial world. "Here is the job I want; here is where I would like it to be; here is what I want out of a career; and here is my experience, my training, my ed-



U.S. NAVY (BOB HOULIHAN)

ucation, my certification—the things that qualify me for what I want." Then I let that agent go out and represent me. It searches for and screens jobs and tells me how well they match my preferences. How well do I match the requirements of the job? How likely is it the Navy would put me in that job? It helps me understand whether a job is a good fit and in effect counsels me on whether I am competitive. It also tells me what I need to do to become more competitive.

While all this is going on, agents on the command side help the command look at sailors and screen them against the jobs they have opening. Is this a good match for us? Is this a sailor we want to go after? You now involve the gaining command in a very profound way: You say, "We already hold you accountable for your personnel readiness; now you have a way to play directly in the assignment."

And throughout this whole thing, you have the pros in Millington focused on you and your career, working with the pros in your command who know you best, working as a team, on your behalf. Pretty exciting.

Master Chief Bob Cote, U.S. Navy

for every facet of Sea Warrior. They are the information superhighways that bring sailors and commands together.

Sea Warrior focuses on increased options and information for career managers, commands, and sailors, providing a one-stop information source through a single, web-enabled portal. Professional development, training and education, and continuous performance feedback are available and visible to every stakeholder on a sailor's career management team. Whether active duty or reserve, each sailor's personal and professional information—assignment preferences, family requirements, training information, and performance data—is contained in an electronic document for use by career managers and associated technologies that synchronize and couple this information to job advertisements, command requirements, and training opportunities.

Personnel distribution relies on each command's leadership and mentoring processes, in partnership with detailers, to shape expectations and guide sailors to the next logical assignments for faster career progression and greater performance. But what is the right job and how do we match the talents of each sailor with the requirements of the job? Allied with the personnel and training elements of Sea Warrior is Improving Navy's Workforce, a job content definition initiative that uses Department of Labor competency descriptors developed by SkillsNet. The SkillsNet methodology defines job requirements in terms of knowledge, skills, abilities, and tasks, as opposed to our current approach of relying on the rating badge and a naval enlisted code only loosely associated with the billet.

This much more precise job definition, coupled with a parallel approach that describes the sailor in these same terms, enables optimal matches that improve job success and will increase operational readiness. Knowledge, skills, abilities, and tasks are translated into the training and education syllabus used to prepare sailors at each stage of their career development: apprentice, journeyman, master, and professional. Decomposing job content in such a fashion is key considering the Navy job portfolio of more than 400,000 positions covers the full range of competencies and that our schoolhouses must somehow account for and manage the production of those competencies.

With precise requirements developed for jobs, and each sailor's knowledge, skills, and abilities identified, intelligent software agents will work to expand assignment options, improve matches, and simplify the detailing process for sailors. These agents, working on line around the clock for both sailors and commands, create a virtual job market on the web. Sailors receive information about available jobs that fit their competencies, career demands, and goals; commands get information on the sailors available who meet their advertised requirements. In addition, the on-line marketplace uses real-time incentive packages to encourage sailors to take specific assignments. These incentives, applied in response to needs of commands and claimants, will drive the web-based marketplace into conformity with fleet priorities.

Commands also will be key sources of information for sailors and their families. Web sites viewable from the sailor's portal by family members provide information on schools, spouse employment opportunities, and community attractions, for example. Many of these sites are available today. The result is an informed system that gets the right sailor where he wants to go, and where the Navy needs him. And a sailor who reports on board satisfied with the career management process will be more motivated and productive.

The Power of Choice

Career management means a lot more than choosing the next assignment in a current rate. Sea Warrior also makes sailors aware of skill conversion opportunities, identifies new career paths and training opportunities, and introduces them to a much wider array of job possibilities. Using new personnel classification technology, Sea Warrior considers the sailor's aptitude and interests, as well as the Navy's needs, to produce a set of skills for which the sailor would be prequalified. Then, by comparing the sailor's experience and knowledge, skills, and abilities with the skill requirements of a new rating, Sea Warrior will help map the training that would be required to convert to the new rating. Sea Warrior provides every sailor the tools to achieve his personal goals and personnel managers a powerful tool to shape the Navy's force.

Career path development for enlisted sailors is well under way. It captures a sailor's progress along five vectors—professional development, personal development, professional military education and leadership, certificates and qualifications, and professional performance. The same intelligent agents that analyze a sailor's job preferences and skills and compare them to available jobs also will interrogate this career model and evaluate the sailor's progression along each vector and factor this information into assignment recommendations. This will help sailors and their supervisors to better understand individual growth and development and highlight strengths and skills to work on. Linked directly to the job requirements defined by SkillsNet, the five-vector model will help develop the right knowledge, skills, and abilities in our sailors and complete a critical personnel-training association.

In addition, Sea Warrior's rich language of sailor competencies makes possible profound improvements in human systems integration. System engineers can identify the exact capabilities of sailors in a particular job, take those capabilities to the lab, and design a system that "fits" the sailor. This integration of system and sailor enables a reduction of life cycle costs associated with the human element of systems.

Using the Market to Drive Top Talent to Top Jobs

Another key aspect of the marketplace concept employed in Sea Warrior is the introduction of dynamic incentives



Sea Warrior captures the early dramatic gains of Project SAIL, Task Force EXCEL, and the Navy's Workforce Initiatives. The emerging system creates a comprehensive approach to an individual's development on both a professional and personal level.

for specific assignments. There always will be jobs that because of their geographic locations or task descriptions will be hard to fill. The use of incentives, both monetary and nonmonetary, administered independently or in packages, is fundamental to eliminating involuntary assignments and getting qualified sailors to tough jobs.

Today's incentives are tied directly to reenlistments; tomorrow's will be tied to the job. Monetary incentives in the form of assignment incentive pay already are available in pilot form: Sailors compete for jobs through an on-line, sealed bid auction in which the lowest bid from a qualified sailor normally wins the assignment—not eBay, but close. Sailors know only what the maximum allowable bid is and what they themselves have bid. The bid becomes part of a weighted system that scores each candidate using preferences, skills, permanent-change-of-station costs, and other variables.

Detailers have the final assignment decision to ensure quality accompanies the use of incentive resources. Decision support tools and advanced auction engine technology will provide the means to oversee this process to ensure accountability, enforce policy, and conduct real-time trend analysis.

The Way Ahead

As the human resource enabler, Sea Warrior is focused on getting optimally trained sailors to battle groups. This is being accomplished through a comprehensive manpower, personnel, and training integration effort targeted at producing a single integrated human resource system. The

The Future Is Sailor Driven

It is March 2005. The joint force combatant commander has directed the commander of the USS *Bataan* (LHD-5) Expeditionary Strike Group to disable an electronic grid in a city believed to be harboring international terrorists.

Information Technician First Class Jones, a leading petty officer in the *Bataan's* Combat Systems Department, has been asked to develop a concept of operations for the attack. Prior to reporting to the *Bataan*, he attended the Center for Information Technology in San Diego, where he received training from industry experts as well as sailors experienced in this warfare area from previous deployments.

Petty Officer Jones's arrival in the *Bataan* followed a successful sea tour in the USS *Bainbridge* (DDG-96). The *Bainbridge's* Career Development Board and Command Retention Team, in conjunction with his detailer and career managers from the Combat Systems Center of Excellence, encouraged him to return to sea duty to enhance his chances of being promoted to chief petty officer.

The decision to transfer to a Norfolk-based ship was a family decision. While at home, Petty Officer Jones used Sea Warrior to provide him with informed career choices. His electronic resume, continuously interrogated by software intelligent agents searching for jobs that meet his personal preferences, evaluated his progression along each vector in his specific five-vector career path, weighing the best use of his Navy

knowledge, skills, and abilities, and provided quality and measurable information to him for every available IT job. His family also enjoyed the command web sites that took them to the geographic area of a prospective next assignment and described available housing, schools, and opportunities for spouse employment.

Automatic alerts, preset by Petty Officer Jones in his e-resume, sent e-mails and called his cell phone

Petty Officer Jones has been asked to develop a concept of operations to disable an electronic grid in a city harboring international terrorists.

to inform him when jobs came up that met his prescribed requirements. He learned more about these jobs and applied for them on line, bidding for those with incentives in competition with other qualified sailors.

While Petty Officer Jones is preparing a concept of operations, Commander Smith, the *Bataan's* executive officer, calls up the Sea Warrior Career Management System from his stateroom. He enters the gaining command portal to review the status of open billets in his ship and updates these job advertisements using descriptions of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and tasks a sailor must have to be successful in the jobs, as well as other desirable qualities. He will evaluate information on sailors who have applied for jobs in the *Bataan*. Identified only by random

ID numbers, sailors' e-resumes and other professional information contained in Sea Warrior provide the executive officer with the information to rank these applicants in priority order as input to the detailer.

Two decks below, Master Chief Operations Specialist Williams, the command master chief, is on line in Sea Warrior's losing command portal. He is validating the list of *Bataan* sailors who are

within 13 months of transferring and using the same intelligent agent job and career information and recommendations provided to the sailors and associated e-resumes to prepare for upcoming career development boards. For those sailors thinking of leaving active service, the chief also has access to Reserve-specific information to steer those sailors toward continuing service in the Naval Reserve.

Several decks separate these Sea Warriors, but Navy leaders' commitment these sailors' personal and professional development have brought them to the tip of the spear honed and confident. As Petty Officer Jones reviews the upcoming mission, he knows he possesses the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities to deliver the explosive effects that will disable the terrorist camp.

Navy already is well downstream in the initiation phase of this major undertaking, and new initiatives designed to accelerate the integration process are drawing on experts in the field of rapid prototype development. Fleet sailors and commands are partners in the process, and focus groups on the waterfront root out the pros and cons of concepts to ensure the work remains grounded in the war fighter.

The Navy-Marine Corps team responded magnificently when called to Afghanistan and Iraq. As we constitute our forces for future challenges, there is no alternative to manning it with leaders possessing 21st-century skills.

Admiral Harms is Commander, Naval Education and Training Command; Admiral Hoewing is Chief of Naval Personnel; and Admiral Totushek is Commander, Naval Reserve Force.