

## DEMOBILIZATION

When Japan officially surrendered on September 2, 1945, the demand for rapid demobilization from soldiers, their families, and Congress became unstoppable and all previous plans became moot. Conscription was reduced to 50,000 men per month, less than the military's requirements for replacements. Soldiers, sailors, and marines in the Pacific became eligible for demobilization.

At the end of World War II, the United States Navy implemented a point system known as the "Navy Point System" or the "Advanced Base Personnel Score" (ABPS). The purpose of this system was to determine the eligibility of Navy personnel for demobilization and their priority for discharge from service.

The Navy Point System assigned points to individuals based on various criteria such as length of service, combat duty, and other factors. The points were calculated based on the following elements:

1. Length of service: Each month of active duty counted as one point. For example, if a sailor had served for 36 months, they would receive 36 points for this category.
2. Combat duty: Points were awarded for participation in combat operations. The initial combat operation earned one point, and each subsequent combat operation earned an additional point. The exact criteria for what constituted a combat operation were defined by the Navy.
3. Awards and decorations: Points were given for specific medals, ribbons, or commendations received. The exact point values varied depending on the type and significance of the award.
4. Time overseas: Additional points were awarded for time spent overseas. The specific point values for different durations of overseas service were determined by the Navy.
5. Dependents: Points were awarded for each dependent, such as a spouse or child. The exact point values for dependents varied depending on the number and relationship of dependents.

1 October 1945.

CERTIFICATE OF DEMOBILIZATION FACTORS - ALNAV 295-45

1	DONOHUE, John Thomas	814 33 30	E.M.2c(T)(SS), V6 USNR.				
2	U. S. S. TENCH (SS417), Care of Fleet Post Office, New York, New York.						
3			A	B	C	D	E
4	Date of birth	4-15-20		25	$\frac{1}{2}$		12 $\frac{1}{2}$
5	Months active duty Navy	8-20-43		25	$\frac{1}{2}$		12 $\frac{1}{2}$
6	Dates of active duty in any of United Nations						
7	Active duty outside continental U.S.	10-6-44 to 4-12-45		11	$\frac{1}{4}$		2 3/4
8	Dependency status exist- as of 8-15-45	Married.		Yes	10		10
9	Total Points						37 3/4
10	Eligible for immediate release	No					
11	No. days of leave since 9-1-39 - officers only						
12	City and state to which transportation entitled	New York, New York.					

Certified to be correct to the best of my knowledge and in accordance with the information available this date.

*John Thomas Donohue EM2c*  
John Thomas DONOHUE, E.M.2c(T)(SS).

*A. Turner*  
A. TURNER,  
Lieutenant, U.S. Navy,  
Executive Officer, USS TENCH.

The Navy Point System was designed to prioritize the discharge of personnel who had served for a longer duration, had seen combat, and had accrued higher points. Those with higher points would be released from service earlier than those with lower points.

The system helped the Navy manage the demobilization process efficiently and fairly by determining the order of discharge based on service and combat-related factors. It allowed for a systematic and organized approach to the post-war downsizing of the Navy's personnel.

### **The Promise**

The War Department promised that all servicemen eligible for demobilization from Europe would be in the US by February 1946 and from the Pacific by June 1946. One million men were discharged from the military in December 1945 alone. Every congressman was “under constant and terrific pressure from servicemen and their families” to discharge soldiers more rapidly.

**Soldiers demand faster demobilization:** The rapid demobilization of American servicemen threatened to create a shortage of manpower for the responsibilities of occupying Germany, Austria, and Japan. On January 4, 1946, the War Department backtracked on its previous promises of early demobilization and announced that 1.55 million eligible servicemen would be demobilized and discharged over a six-month period rather than in three months as previously announced. This announcement generated immediate protests from soldiers around the world.

In Washington, Army Chief of Staff General Eisenhower ordered an investigation of the protests and concluded that the main cause was “acute homesickness” and recommended that “no mass disciplinary action be taken” against the demonstrators. The military sped up demobilization by liberalizing the point system once again to further speed up demobilization, although Eisenhower banned any further demonstrations and threatened court-martials for participants.

The number of personnel in the US military between mid-1945 and mid-1947 was reduced almost 90 percent, from more than 12 million to about 1.5 million.

### **SEPARATION AND DISCHARGE**

At separation centers like Lido Beach, military personnel were processed through a series of administrative and medical screenings to ensure that they met the criteria for discharge.

The steps and procedures that were typically involved in the separation process:

- **Administrative processing:** Upon arrival at the separation center, soldiers would typically undergo administrative processing, which involved verifying their service record and other important information. This might include checking for any outstanding pay, benefits, or awards that the soldier was entitled to.
- **Medical screening:** Soldiers were also typically screened for any medical conditions that might impact their ability to be discharged. This might involve a physical exam, as well as tests for hearing, vision, and other medical issues.

- Counseling and guidance: Many soldiers were also offered counseling and guidance services during the separation process. This might include information on educational and job training opportunities, as well as advice on managing the transition back to civilian life.
- Discharge paperwork: Once all of the administrative and medical screenings were complete, soldiers would receive their discharge paperwork, which formally ended their military service. This paperwork would include information on their rank, service record, and any benefits or entitlements they were due.

Overall, the separation process was designed to ensure that soldiers were discharged in a timely and orderly fashion, with appropriate attention paid to their administrative, medical, and personal needs. However, the separation of millions of service men and women in such a short period of time was an daunting task. Knowing they were on their way home, for the men and women being discharged it was another painfully slow, hurry up and wait, process. By the beginning of 1946, on average, the process lasted ten days.

**This was the tunnel:**

Entering demobilization when they reported at the Arrival Station, officially known as Incoming Records Section of the Enlisted Men’s Record Branch, the process began. The Arrival Stations operated on a 24-hour basis throughout the entire period, employing hundreds of civilians and enlisted men and women under the supervision of five officers. Among its other facilities the Arrival Station had a snack bar where men got coffee, milk, doughnuts, and sandwiches before they assembled to be briefed on the separation procedure. At this assembly the soldiers completed the first in a series of WD (Discharge) forms and then proceeded to the Initial Clothing Shakedown Section at which place they were relieved of all unauthorized government clothing and equipment. The Clothing Shakedown Section, like the Arrival Station, operated on a 3-shift basis, facilitating the rapid processing of the discharge-es. This is where the men were separated from whatever “War Trophies” they might have brought with them.





**War Trophies** – *The problem of war trophies gave the separation center personnel cause for much extra work. Certain items were authorized to be kept by discharge-es, provided they had the items certificated by their commanding officers before leaving their units. It was discovered, however, that many troops kept unauthorized articles – and even had no certificates for those which could have been authorized. Various reasons were offered by the soldiers for this situation. Some of them claimed that they had known nothing about the arrangement to have trophies checked; others complained that officers were either too busy or not available to do the job. Whatever the reasons, the result was that unauthorized items showed up everywhere, and it was discovered that soldiers were throwing these trophies out the train windows as they approached camp, hoping to pick them up later without censure. Roadbeds had to be searched daily in order to pick up these discarded articles. Those who legally retained weapons were warned to register them with local police after discharge.*

From the Clothing Shakedown Section, separatees were transported to their assigned processing company. Separation Companies, usually divided into five units that were in charge of all casual personnel processing for discharge – Orderly Room, Billeting, Supply, Mess, and Operations Sections. Separatees were fed, billeted, issued passes and furloughs, and kept informed by the company. Roster leaders from Operations Section, trained in separation procedure, conducted each group to formations, the first of which was an orientation lecture giving the details about separations, information regarding the facilities of the camp, and for those returning in early 1945 after the German surrender, a pep-talk about re-enlisting!



The fourth step in the separation process was the final physical examination. Separation Centers devoted multiple barracks-size buildings to this purpose – most for actual examinations and some in which to keep records.



While in the Medical Processing Branch, men were not only examined thoroughly but their complete medical history was made a matter of record. Should a man require further examination, he was sent to a Veteran's Administration hospital.

The last step in the medical examination was a final check at which time a board of four medical officers, one of whom was a psychiatrist, made the decision as to whether or not a man was fit for discharge. At this point men filed their disability claims.

Having passed their physical examination, a soldier was ready to go through the fifth stage of the separation – counseling. The Army had instituted counseling to assist the soldier in making a smooth transition to civilian life, to make known to him his rights and benefits as a veteran, and to offer vocational and educational guidance.

At most separation centers, the counseling system was divided into enlisted men's and officers' sections with each section housed in buildings consisting of a general orientation room, an individual booth

capacity of fifty, a library, a civilian agency office, and an administrative office. The original group counselors for enlisted men rose into the hundreds (plus officer counselors) at the height of separation activity. Counselors at first were graduates of The Adjutant General's Counseling School and had had experience in the work at other separation centers. When the demand for additional counselors became great, schools and on-the-job training courses were established and men with high AGCT scores, personnel experience, and college educations were enrolled.

Although formal counseling was the fifth step in being discharged, counseling of sorts had been going on all the time. Men had already been apprised of the benefits they could expect under the GI Bill of Rights, the actions discharge-es must go through in civilian life, and what to do about their National Service Life Insurance. With this information in mind, the soldier could approach his counselor with intelligent questions and could assimilate the new facts he learned.

When the soldiers were brought to the Counseling Branch, they were first given a quick summary of what they could expect there and were impressed with the importance of cooperating as much as possible – for their own good. After the brief orientation, soldiers passed to the counseling booths for individual attention. There particular emphasis was placed on filling out the Separation Qualification Record, with an account of all military and civilian education, training, and experience; and the rest of the interview dealt with awards, various GI rights, and job opportunities for returning veterans.



In addition to the Army counselors, there were representatives on hand from civilian agencies, such as Red Cross, U. S. Employment Service, and the Veteran's Administration, to answer questions and give advice. At all times an effort was made to have current information so that it would be as useful as possible to the veteran.



The Awards and Decorations Section of the Counseling Branch issued Good Conduct Medals to qualified troops, gave detailed information regarding all medals, awards, and decorations, and prepared medals for presentation at the Departure Ceremony.

A clothing issue warehouse and tailor shop operated under the Post Quartermaster's supervision. The clothing issue warehouses were set up so that a soldier could enter at the side of the building; and then, proceeding down a guide rail, they collected the various items of clothing that were coming to him. A checker stood at the end of the line, making sure that the separatee had received the proper things. From this point the man continued to the near-by tailor shop for any necessary alterations, pressing, or sewing, which usually took no more than ten or fifteen minutes. Sometimes a soldier was of such extreme size that he could not be provided with proper clothing immediately, in which case it was forwarded to his home as soon as possible.



At the Initial Clothing Shakedown separatees were relieved of all unauthorized items, and this process was repeated at the Final Clothing Shakedown, with soldier's uniforms being checked for neatness and fit also. Should any alteration, pressing, or sewing be required, the separate-e received a priority slip entitling him



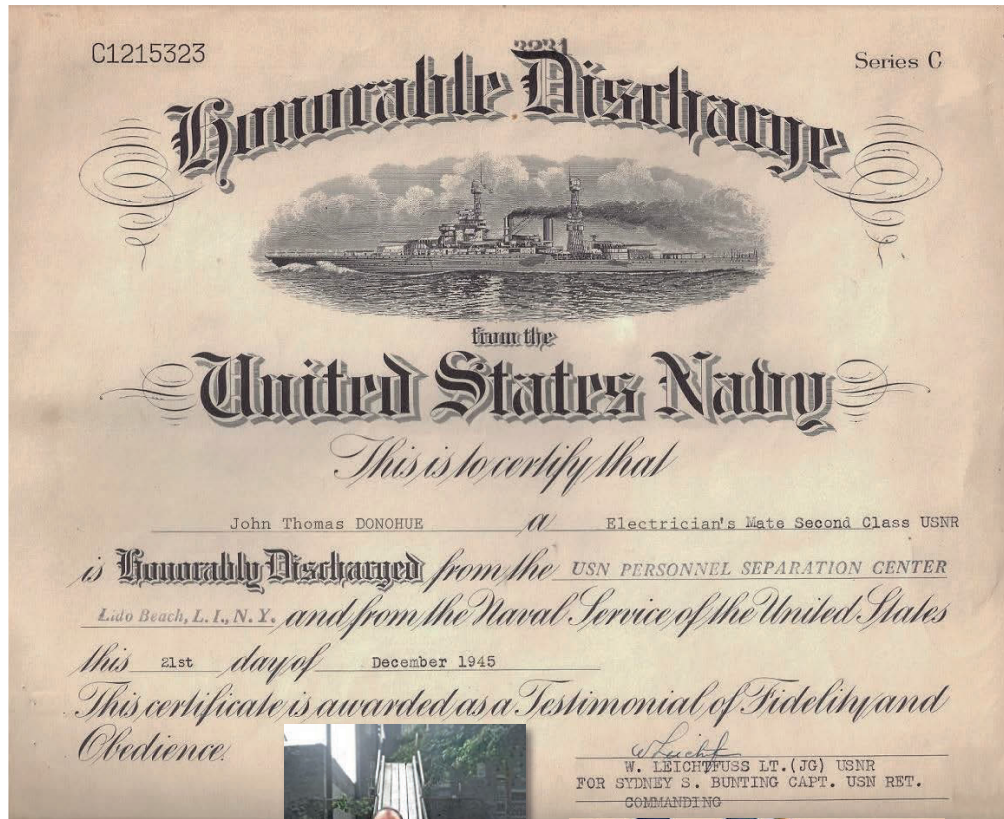
to these services as soon as his discharge was complete. Luggage was tagged for storage at this point until after the final ceremony.

The final step in the separation procedure was the departure ceremony. At this assembly the War Department had an opportunity to express in a dignified way its gratitude to the civilian soldiers for their service and to help them leave with a feeling of pride in themselves for doing a good job. Military and religious significance was given to the occasion by having both a field grade officer and a chaplain in charge.

Begun with an invocation by the chaplain, the ceremony continued with a talk by the officer, who gave the soldiers a few pointers about returning to civilian life. At the same time the discharge-es were praised for their loyal service in the Army and were given a pep talk on being good Americans when they became civilians again. When the speeches were concluded and decorations issued, the separatees filed past the officer in charge to receive their discharge certificates, the last step in the separation process.



Finally, the paper was in John's hands and he was on his way home to start the next chapter of his life.





EM2cl John Thomas Donohue – WWII Submariner

