

CAREER NEWSFLASH

Third Anniversary Issue

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E7 BOARD ROLL-UP



This year's Gunnery Sergeant Selection Board was probably one of the toughest yet, amplifying the sentiment, 'Promotions are earned, not given.' As a result of debriefing this board, some interesting information has been obtained. This year there were 1,537 selections to GySgt with a breakdown as follows:

Above Zone: 472 selected out of 2,519 considered (AZ selection rate was 18.7%)

In Zone: 1,003 selected out of 2,046 considered (IZ selection rate was 49.0%)

Below Zone: 62 selected out of 1,853 considered (BZ selection rate was 3.3%)

One thing we must point out when analyzing these statistics is that the in zone selection rate is steadily dropping from 56.3% in 2002

to 49% this year. Along with this drop, we also saw a decrease in the above zone selection rate from 22.5% in 2002 to 18.7%. This above zone drop may be somewhat deceiving because although the percentages appear to fall, the total number of allocations taken by the above zone is rising. In 2002 the percentage of allocations taken by the above zone was 26.2%, in 2003 it was 27.9%, and in 2004 it was 30.7%. Marines in the above zone are doing a great job of increasing their competitiveness and, as a result, are taking more and more of the allocations every year.

The below zone Marines are also starting to make things happen. This year, we saw a 3% rise in the below zone selection rate, with 62 Marines being selected. This is a strong indicator that junior Marines are not

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COUNSELING TEAM

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Head, Career Counseling Unit
- **GySgt Lannon**
Career Counselor
- **GySgt Perkins**
Career Counselor
- **GySgt Payne**
Career Counselor
- **Sgt Vogel**
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HOW DID WE DO?			
RATES	FY04	CY03	CY02
PME Submission	92.5%	90.8%	85.9%
Photo Submission	97.3%	97.4%	94.9%
IZ Selection	49.0%	52.7%	56.3%
IZ Percentage of Allocations	65.3%	71.7%	73.3%
AZ Selection	18.7%	21.3%	22.5%
AZ Percentage of Allocations	30.0%	27.9%	26.2%

waived. There is an article in this newsletter to explain and clear up any misunderstanding of the message; please read it for amplification.

As a whole, the amount of missing fitness reports before the board is on the decline. The selection board noted they did not have a big problem in this area. This makes their job easier, but more importantly it shows that Marines are taking care of their records. However, 'Not-Observed' fitness reports continue to be a problem. As the time in grade continues to decrease, having many of these reports does not provide the briefer with much detailed information

standing idly by. This also reinforces the fact that Marines cannot just wait around for a promotion. Selection Board members have stated that superior performance helps a Marine stand out from the rest of the below zone. These Marines seem to excel in almost every aspect of their career. Assignments such as B-Billets and Special Duty Assignments also helped to cut those Marines away from the pack, as it allows them to demonstrate their ability to perform in an independent environment.

On the subject of PME during the post board counseling sessions, it became clear that Marines did not understand the intent or content of ALMAR 026/04. Many Marines were under the impression that the Selection Board did not even review the PME because it was

to present to the board. Some members stated, 'We don't like walking in the dark.' Understanding that not-observed reports are unavoidable, the board members need to see documentation of demonstrated performance. Steps should be taken to limit not-observed fitness reports.

At this time we would like to welcome aboard Gunnery Sergeant Kim A. Lannon to the counseling team. She joined us from CSSG-3 at MCB Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. Coming from the 0411 community, she brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience.

Semper Fidelis

***Enlisted Career Counselors,
HQMC***



PME POLICY WAIVER

ALMAR 026/96 announced that if Marines do not complete their minimum Professional Military Education (PME) requirements, they will not be selected for promotion. In May 2004, this policy was waived for the remaining FY04 SNCO selection boards with ALMAR 026/04. The waiver was written into the precept given to the FY04 Gunnery Sergeant Selection Board, and it will also carry over to the Staff Sergeant Selection Board. This was done to accommodate those stellar Sergeants and Staff Non-commissioned Officers who may not have had the time to complete their PME requirements, due to the high operational tempo that the Marine Corps has sustained.

One thing that must be remembered about PME is that it is not simply a book or a course to complete. PME truly serves as an indication of a Marine's drive and motivation. It takes a lot of time and commitment to pursue education and although this requirement

has been waived, PME is still viewed as a mark of competitiveness.

It is easy to identify within a Marine's record whether he or she has been deployed or has served only in garrison.

For those who have never deployed, not being able to find the time to complete the minimum requirements does not sit well with the board members. With the SNCO selection board competition being tough, it is imperative Marines do everything within their power to excel to a level higher than their peers. Remember, the Selection Boards select the 'Best and Fully Qualified.'

A point to stress is this PME waiver is only temporary. ALMAR 026/04 states, 'those Marines who are selected without the minimum requirements will be expected to complete the required PME for both their previous grade and select



Marines from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, load an Air Force C-130 cargo plane

NOTE

*ALMAR 156/96—If a Marine has successfully graduated from Recruiter, Drill Instructor, or MSG School **and** has completed the Non-resident PME requirements for promotion to the next grade may use the appropriate equivalency code as a substitute for the Resident Course. The use of these codes are at the Commanding Officer's discretion.*

grade prior to coming in zone for the next selection board.' This means, for example, those Gunnery Sergeant selects who did not complete the Career Non-Resident Course (7100) must complete it *and* the Advanced Distance Education Course (8200) prior to coming in zone for Master Sergeant. Unless this requirement is met, those Marines could sustain some negative effects.

Every effort should be made to improve a Marine's warfighting ethos. However, because of operating tempos, a Marine who is not able to complete the minimum required PME is strongly encouraged to submit a letter to the board. The letter should highlight the increased operational commitments and explain to the board why it has slowed his or her progress towards completing the required PME. There are many deserving Marines who have not been able to complete their PME. The purpose

of these waivers is to allow the Marine Corps to accomplish its' mission and ensure Marines stay qualified for promotion.

** At the time of print, ALMAR 035/04 was released announcing the waiver of PME requirements for the FY05 SNCO Selection Boards. This ALMAR is in concert with ALMAR 026/04, asserting that Marines who are selected without the minimum requirements will be expected to complete the missing PME. The only exception to this is in the case of Gunnery Sergeants selected to First Sergeant. Those Marines will not be required to attend the advance course if they have not already done so.*



By GySgt Payne

**Enlisted Career Counselor,
HQMC**

THE VALUE OF MENTORSHIP

Customs and traditions are among the many things which set the Marine Corps apart from other military services. Ours is a rich history that dates back many years - 228 to be exact - and has impacted generations of Marines. One medium of passing on our traditions and customs that has proven to be quite effective (outside of the scores of books and PME) is mentorship. Mentorship fosters professional and personal development, which encourages

Mentoring is another form of leadership, it should occur at every step in a Marine's career

individual and collective success. It is another form of leadership, and the goal of mentoring is to develop tomorrow's leaders.

Aside from educating and empowering Marines, the Career Counselors have many opportunities to mentor Marines. On several occasions and in various settings, we discover that the first time many Marines receive a candid assessment of where

they stand in terms of their competitiveness to that of their peers,

and particularly in the area of performance, is when they speak with us. For most, this is usually an enlightening experience which serves as a catalyst for improvement, thus helping to aid their success. Though we consider the opportunity to mentor Marines a crucial responsibility, it is something that leadership at every level needs to foster.

Given the fact that mentoring is another form of leadership, it should occur at every step in a Marine's career. For the mentorship process to be successful, the mentor needs to create an environment that allows for open communication. In describing the relationship between the mentor and the mentored, General John A. Lejeune said that the relationship should be as a father to son, senior to junior, teacher to scholar. There are a number of things that will affect Marines over the course of an enlistment and/or career, regardless of the duration, and as leaders, we want to do everything in our ability to encourage and facilitate their success. For example, one of the first things we want to do for our newly promoted Marines is inform them of the expectations and increased responsibilities associated with their promotion. In the case of our NCOs, they need to understand why it is necessary to have some degree of segregation from former peers—their obligation as role models, and the necessity for them to be an example for others to follow. We should also assist them by developing a means for assessing their progress both professionally and personally. As leaders, we should help shape the whole Marine, by assisting them in establishing family goals, financial goals, and off-

duty education goals.

Once a Marine reaches the ranks of



It never hurts to be pointed in the right direction from time to time.

Staff Sergeant and Gunnery Sergeant, which is considered to be mid-level leadership, it is important that they be provided greater insight into career progression and life's challenges and their relationship to professional and personal development. Things such as attending MOS schools, nonresident and resident Professional Military Education (PME), financial planning, family readiness, and community involvement are areas that should be addressed. For our Master Sergeants and Master Gunnery Sergeants, areas such as off-duty education, battle studies, staff rides, and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) seminars should be encouraged. Finally, we have First Sergeants and Sergeants Major. Being that 1stSgts are assuming a new MOS,

and both First Sergeants and Sergeants Major are assuming positions of greater leadership across the spectrum of MOSs and ranks, it is strongly recommended that they seek out senior Marines as well as subject matter and duty experts for guidance and insight. Additionally, they should continue to hone their oral and written skills.

Essentially, we are all students in our Corps' and life's classrooms. In order for our Corps to continue to be the 'force in readiness' that it has been, we need



to capitalize on, and pass on the knowledge, wisdom, and experience of those leaders with whom we serve and whom we have served through mentorship. Our future success depends on it, and we owe it to our Marines at every level and rank.

By GySgt Perkins
Enlisted Career Counselor,
HQMC


DUTY OUTSIDE THE PMOS

There are billets outside of Marines' Primary Military Occupational Specialty (PMOS) within the Marine Corps which have to be filled because they are vital to the performance of the Marine Corps' mission. Some Marines may consider these billets to be less than desirable or the commands where they are located to be outside the mainstream of the Marine Corps. With that perception in mind, we have to ask the question, 'How does serving in one of these billets affect a career?'

There are no hard and fast rules to answer this question, but a large part of it comes down to demonstrated performance and an overall good balance. As with any duty station or billet, just being there does

not get the job done. There are many Marines fighting to become the Weapons Platoon Sergeant or the Company Gunnery Sergeant, yet once in the billet, nothing happens or little gets accomplished. Then there are those who become the Barracks NCO, Substance Abuse Counseling Officer, or maybe the Training NCO, and are putting forth the maximum effort to make a difference. Why should these Marines be penalized because of a perception?

The Selection Board knows these jobs have to be done and their guidance is, 'Just don't stay there too long.' For example, if a Marine has been serving as the Barracks NCO for the last three years, the board may consider this to be suspect because normally this is a short-term billet. That is not to say that being the Barracks NCO is a bad thing - not at all - but staying there for an extended period of time does not add anything



Marines should always be asking themselves, 'What can I do next,' and looking for new challenges that will add to the diversity of their record

new to a Marine's record. There are many good Marines in these billets, taking charge and making life better for their units. After about a year, the Marine should be looking to get back to their MOS and let someone else take the helm for a while.

Instructor duty could be construed as being in the same category. Some believe, 'Those who can't do, teach'. There is a vital need within the Marine Corps for capable instructors. This type of duty offers a Marine the chance to enhance communication skills and make a significant impact within their respective community. However, spending more than one tour as an instructor may not be wise - a good balance between FMF and Non-FMF billets is needed.

The board members know there are



Sergeant Bryan Wallgren teaches Marines how to disable booby traps and avoid land mines.

billets and duty stations believed to be career killers. However, they are guided by precepts that state, 'Marines serving in billets outside their primary MOS are to be considered qualified for promotion

based upon their performance in their assigned duties.' Promotion is based on the competitiveness of the Marine's demonstrated performance and potential, balanced against sound choices. Staying in one place or one billet for too long may not present the best image.

Marines should always be asking themselves, 'What can I do next,' and looking for new challenges that will add to the diversity of their record.



By GySgt Payne
Enlisted Career Counselor,
HQMC

ACCELERATED PROMOTIONS

There have been several questions from Marines regarding accelerated promotions. According to the Promotion Manual (MCO P1400.32C), it is a form of meritorious promotion where Marines are promoted ahead of their peers. These stellar Marines are considered 'race horses' - they give all they have

day in and day out and are never satisfied with the status quo. These Marines demonstrate exceptional, noteworthy, and commendatory performance over a sustained period. Their performance must be to a degree that clearly merits promotion over other qualified, more senior Marines being considered by the board.



MMEA-64

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We have not decided all the topics for the next newsletter and would like to hear from you regarding what you want to know more about. Please send us your suggestions by email.

The accelerated promotion program is in place to allow selection opportunity for those Sergeants and Staff Sergeants who do not meet the Date of Rank (DOR) or Armed Forces Active Duty Base Date (AFADBD) for the Below Zone. Only those

Marines with a DOR that does not make them eligible for consideration by the selection board in their MOS or OccFld are eligible for this program. This means Marines who would not

normally be considered by a regularly scheduled selection board will be placed in the below zone. In order for a Marine to be considered for accelerated promotion, the proper documentation must be submitted by the reporting officials. For those who are either in the below zone, promotion zone, or above zone, this rule does not apply.

The selection board will consider Marines who are recommended for accelerated promotion by their Reporting Senior through the use of the Performance Evaluation System. The fitness report recommending accelerated

promotion must have an ending date that ends any time between the last annual selection board and the current selection board's convening date. Marines who are considered and not selected under this program

will not be presented to a subsequent selection board for accelerated promotion unless they are recommended again during the next year. If for some reason this is done incorrectly, the Marine does not rate a remedial consideration.

The recommendation will be strictly reserved for the Marine who is 'the one above' – the Marine who is eminently capable of immediately assuming the responsibilities of the next senior grade. For this reason, an addendum page will be attached to the fitness report providing sound justification for the recommendation. The accelerated promotion program is another tool used to recognize truly exceptional Marines.

**By GySgt Payne
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