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- Yoga: Ancient Practice Helps Today's Patients: [\[LINK\]](#)
- The Keep What You Earned poster contest: [\[LINK\]](#)

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1.) 5 things to know about the Meritorious Advancement Program/ 18 JUNE 15 [LINK](#)

As part of the Navy's on-going talent management initiatives and to empower the command triad to advance their top performing Sailors, the Command Advancement Program (CAP) is being changed in name and scope to the expanded Meritorious Advancement Program (MAP) as announced in NAVADMIN 141/15.

Here are 5 things to know about MAP:

1. At the foundation of this change is the idea that no one knows their Sailors better than our commanding officers (CO), CMCs and the chief's mess. MAP gives them the tool to recognize their best Sailors, advancing them when they are ready for the next level of responsibility.
2. MAP provides COs flexibility and allows commands to petition for additional meritorious advancements or surrender those not needed for a given period.
3. Further expansion of MAP for next year, including the number of quotas, shore duty command eligibility and number of "MAP seasons," is under review by Chief of Naval Personnel (CNP) and Fleet leadership. Additional guidance will be published early in fiscal year 2016 outlining future changes.
4. This fiscal year MAP Open Season runs from July 1 through Aug. 31 and the redistribution season runs from Sept. 1 through 30.
5. Commanders continue to have the authority to set MAP performance standards and select their best Sailors for advancement.

For complete information on MAP see NAVADMIN 141/15 at www.npc.navy.mil.

2.) SECNAV Orders Review Of Fitness, Advancement/ 12 JUNE 15

NAVY TIMES, Mark D. Faram

A month after Navy Secretary Ray Mabus announced far-reaching personnel policy moves in a speech at the Naval Academy, he released an ALNAV to the Navy and Marine Corps that adds new details and deadlines.

Officials say the purpose of his ALNAV message, published Friday, is to "codify" many of the new initiatives announced in the Annapolis speech and set formal goals and timelines for much of what he announced.

"We are moving forward with multiple initiatives that will impact every sailor and Marine," Mabus said in the ALNAV 050/15 message. "Some will be implemented immediately, others in the coming months and years."

Some goals - and how the service will deliver on them - remain murky, such as Mabus' call to make women a quarter of the Navy and Marine Corps, a landmark change that will require more recruiting and much better retention. Personnel officials say he's not backing down, and details on this initiative are expected to be revealed in an upcoming message.

General Military Training

Both the Navy and Marine Corps are responsible for blocks of mandatory training each year. Sailors have both Navy and DoD-mandated training topics that must be addressed periodically. But Mabus sees these

requirements as a distraction to commanders. In the past two years, the number of big Navy-mandated topics has dropped.

"The elementary, repetitious and time-consuming tasks of General Military Training just don't achieve that end and eat into COs' ability to spend more of their precious time training to fight and win," he said May 13.

"Therefore, I am ending GMT as we know it. Beginning June 1st, we will stop all Department of the Navy-directed GMT on Navy Knowledge Online."

Officials say the deadline set by Mabus was met, at least for Navy-mandated GMT. Now COs can decide what training to mandate, based on the command's training needs. They can also decide whether training is done online or in a classroom.

"Effective immediately, the Services [i.e., commanders] will be responsible for Department of the Navy directed annual training on Navy Knowledge Online and MarineNet," the message states. "We will also begin working with the Secretary of Defense to modify DoD-required training so that Commanders can conduct training as they see the need, giving them more choice in how training is delivered, and what type of training is delivered." Personnel officials say those discussions could result in new ways to deliver the training, such as interactive games.

Fitness

Mabus has ordered a comprehensive review of the Navy and Marine Corps' fitness programs.

Mabus' speech called the Navy's physical fitness test "a high-stakes, bi-annual crucible that often results in sailors resorting to drastic, unhealthy measures" to ensure they pass.

And the fitness assessments, both the test and the body composition, "often inaccurately assess one aspect of overall fitness," he said. "We will instead focus on evaluating health, not shape."

Fitness requirements should "properly measure the conditioning required to complete the specific mission," according to the ALNAV. "They will integrate spot checks between test cycles and [ensure] there are programs in place to recognize individuals for superior physical achievement, including documented performance on fitness reports and evals."

The Navy is planning to try new methods of assessing body composition and will look into a ribbon or medal to recognize superior fitness, something service officials have long fought.

By the end of 2015, Mabus wants new programs in place that "promote a year-round culture of health and fitness."

The message gives the Navy and Marine Corps 60 days to have their plans on Mabus' desk.

Navy personnel officials say their proposal is nearly done and could be delivered to the secretary ahead of schedule.

In the meantime, Mabus wants the services to adjust fitness center hours to improve access, especially for those who get to work early or stay late.

He also wants the Navy and Marine Corps to revamp their chow halls to "provide more healthy eating options at sea and shore facilities."

In the speech, he said the dietary effort will start in fiscal 2016, with one sea-based and one shore dining facility experimenting with more healthy food. This effort will be discussed in future messages, sources said.

More Child Care

Child care for active-duty women and families is one of the foremost retention concerns that Navy officials say they hear.

"We've already established 24/7 child care development centers in three fleet concentration areas," Mabus said in his speech.

While it's not feasible to do that for every center, officials say, the service would like to gradually expand in that direction. Starting Oct. 1, all of the services' child care facilities will be open four more hours each day, two hours earlier and two hours later.

The services must provide more flexibility for sailors and Marines with newborn children, according to the ALNAV. In his speech, Mabus announced the service is proposing legislation to double paid maternity leave from 6 to 12 weeks. In addition, service officials plan to change policy to "better support paternity and adoption leave," though the ALNAV doesn't state how this will happen.

In addition, Mabus wrote, a new DoD policy will allow the services to ensure more dual military couples are co-located. Officials say they are working out the details.

Spot Advancement

On July 1, the Command Advancement Program will become the Meritorious Advancement Program, officials tell Navy Times, and the first spot advancement "season" will begin. Skippers of sea duty commands can spot advance their best sailors to E-4, E-5 and E-6 in the three-month window that ends Sept. 30. .

An even bigger change is in the works.

By October, the Navy will have a plan in place to expand the number of spot advancement quotas to 5 percent of the total operational force, including those on shore duty.

"Marine Corps will continue to maximize its use of Meritorious Promotion Boards," Mabus wrote. Sources tell Navy Times, the Corps' already meritoriously promotes to nearly the 5 percent figure.

To maximize advancements by fleet and Corps leaders, Mabus is directing each of the services to recycle unused quotas, so that slots unused by one command can be used by another command in the same season.

"Each of the services will have the ability to redistribute quotas as required to ensure that no quota goes unfilled," Mabus wrote. "This change will potentially result in a commanding officer's ability to return unused meritorious promotion quotas or petition for more."

Officer personnel changes

Changes To Officer Personnel Management Will Start Soon With The Establishment Of An Office of Talent Optimization at the Naval Academy by September.

This office will align military needs with "current and future educational and labor market conditions." Though based at Annapolis, this effort to revamp an officer's initial assignments could eventually reach beyond the banks of the Severn River.

Eventually, this could also "inform the assignment process for sailors and Marines entering the service from other commissioning sources."

Mabus also wants to ditch the long-standing policies of year-groups and other hard and fast milestones that have made the officer corps a rigid, "up or out" system.

Mabus also wants to ditch the long-standing practice of tying promotion opportunities to year-groups, as well as required milestones, that have made the officer corps a rigid "up or out" community.

"We will work to find places to more closely align promotion timing to performance, experience and achievement of community career milestones."

Instead of a rigid set of the mandatory career milestones that exist today in all officer communities, what Mabus wants is a way to take into account the "total officer" when looking at promotions.

"We will identify opportunities to consider factors such as unique career experiences and niche talents, to ensure best and fully qualified officers are promoted with consideration for current abilities and talents, rather than placement in a particular promotion zone," according to the message.

New Opportunities

Mabus wants a modern Navy featuring the best available technology in sea, subsea and air platforms, and a personnel system to match, one that provides more career flexibility.

This is seen as a key factor in future retention - especially for women - something the service must have to compete with private sector companies that can often pay more and that already provide more flexible career choices.

To do this, he wants to offer more sabbaticals and a robust internship program that will allow officers to mingle with corporate counterparts to learn and bring back best practices back.

"Our structured career paths often cause us to lose high quality people who find greater flexibility and options to succeed outside of naval service," Mabus wrote. "We have made a concentrated effort to expand career flexibility in several different areas."

Mabus would like to see more sailors take advantage of the Career Intermission Program, which allows them to take up to three years off.

"My intention is to expand this program ten-fold, growing the number from 40 to 400, after we receive congressional approval," he said.

Another enticement is expanding graduate school opportunities for officers.

"By October 1, we are sending two additional top-performing officers to graduate education at leading universities, with plans to expand to 30 additional officers per year beginning in the Fall of 2016," Mabus said in the message.

Diversity Goals

Mabus said in his speech that he wants a more diverse force and, specifically, he wants to increase the numbers of women.

He'd like to see women comprise a quarter of the Navy, and of every fleet, by 2025. In addition, he says he wants every operational billet to be open to women as well - giving them an equal footing in the service as men. But the message doesn't detail how the service will achieve these goals, which would require a sea change in female recruiting and retention. Details on this initiative are likely in later messages, officials say.

3.) Retirement Pay: The DoD Plan/ 22 JUN 15

NAVY TIMES, Andrew Tilghman

After months of silence, the Defense Department has sent Congress its formal recommendation for transforming military retirement benefits, a move that likely will clear the way for major changes to become law.

Defense officials are backing a "blended" system that would shrink the size of the current defined pension by about 20 percent, while bolstering that benefit through government contributions to individual retirement investment accounts.

The proposal would provide, for the first time, a modest benefit for the roughly 83 percent who leave service short of 20 years and qualify for no retirement benefits. The recommendations track legislation gaining steam on Capitol Hill as lawmakers hammer out their annual defense policy bill.

"We believe very strongly in this and I hope that this does become law," Laura Junor, principal deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, told Military Times in a June 10 interview. DoD has sent top lawmakers a six-page "white paper" outlining in detail the official military position on retirement reform. Top defense officials began meeting with lawmakers on Capitol Hill June 11 to talk over details and specific legislative proposals, Junor said.

The plan tracks with the general thrust of what has already been taking shape in Congress, based on a vision of a future military retirement involving individual investment accounts for all troops and providing government contributions to those accounts as part of a Thrift Savings Plan. Money put in a TSP is not available without tax penalties before age 59 and a half.

In effect, the new system would significantly reduce the monthly payments to so-called working-age retirees, but would restore that money - and potentially more - after they reach age 60 and can tap their TSP money without penalty.

Important Changes Sought

But DoD is seeking some key changes to Capitol Hill's military retirement reform bills. Officials would like to eliminate a feature backed by the Senate that would give troops retiring after 20 years the option to give up traditional monthly retirement checks and instead take a lump-sum payment as soon as they leave service.

That option was criticized as a bad deal for troops, with some noting that the concept resembles the payday lending business that charges exorbitant interest rates.

Defense officials share that view, noting in their memo to Congress that such a lump-sum payment is a smart financial decision only "in very limited circumstances."

They also ran some models and found that the concept resulted "in relatively small lump sums," while the value of the forfeited annuities were "significant."

Another change suggested by the Pentagon: a substantial adjustment to the lump-sum "continuation pay" bonus that is part of the current congressional proposals. Specifically, the pending bills would give lump-sum cash payments at the 12th year of service if a member agrees to stay in uniform for four more years. The cash payment would total at least 2.5 times monthly basic pay, and the services would be able to go even higher for troops in certain career fields.

The Pentagon's proposal would eliminate that guaranteed minimum payment for troops and seeks more flexibility for the services to determine when and how much continuation pay to offer individual troops. The Pentagon vision would resemble the current system of retention bonuses. But the continuation pay would result in more and higher cash payments going to midcareer troops, said Anthony Kurta, deputy assistant secretary of defense for military personnel policy.

"This is the cost of doing business under a blended retirement system," Kurta said in an interview. "As soon as you reduce [the fixed benefit] particularly in those middle years, the eight to 16 years, you are going to lose retention because the pull to 20 [years] ... is less." This is how the entire system works, Kurta went on. "We have taken some future compensation and we've moved it into current compensation - the current compensation is that continuation pay. Without that, and without talking about that, the new system doesn't work," he said.

Playing Catch-Up

The push to reform military retirement got a boost in January after the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission completed a two-year study and sent a slate of detailed recommendations to Congress.

For months, the Pentagon avoided taking a position on the proposals and allowed lawmakers to begin crafting legislation. Both the House and the Senate included many elements of the commission's recommendations in their current bills.

Now the Defense Department's recommendations, approved by the top officers from each service, are coming into play in the later innings, but still are likely to influence Congress as it works toward a final, single compromise version to send to President Obama for his signature as part of the 2016 defense policy bill.

"The plan we came up with, it has to preserve a nearly equivalent lifetime benefit," Junor said.

The value of the new government benefit, however, will depend heavily on the level to which troops contribute their own out-of-pocket cash.

"If you completely opt out and never get anything more than 1 percent, obviously you will be worse off than the current plan," Junor said.

"If you hold tight at 3 percent, you will be about the same [as the current system] over your lifetime," she said.

"For those who are financially savvy and contribute 5 percent, they will do a lot better than the current system." Defense officials initially are betting that troops will contribute an average of about 4 percent of their basic pay.

Major features of the Pentagon plan:

- . Shrink the size of the current defined monthly pension by 20 percent.
- . Automatically create TSP accounts for all troops and begin government contributions equal to 1 percent of a member's basic pay.
- . Automatically set troops' voluntary personal contributions to the TSP at 3 percent of their basic pay.
- . Allow troops to opt out of that 3 percent voluntary contribution of basic pay only after completing financial literacy training at their first duty station.

- . Allow the TSP account to "vest" and legally transfer to individual service members' control after two years of service.
- . Begin government dollar-for-dollar match of individual troops' out-of-pocket TSP contributions, up to 5 percent of basic pay, after they complete four years of service.
- . Allow the military services to offer "continuation pay" to boost retention in specific career fields for troops with eight to 16 years of service.
- . Allow government contributions to TSP accounts to continue for the duration of a member's service. (Initial proposals called for stopping such payments at 20 years of service.)

The bottom line is that the government would kick in 6 percent of basic pay for a service member who agreed to contribute 5 percent of his or her own pay.

Option To Grandfathering

A grandfather clause will give current service members a choice.

The Pentagon would like a new retirement system to launch in January 2018, which would give current troops plenty of time to decide whether to opt into the new system and begin accruing money in a TSP account or exercise their grandfather rights and remain under the traditional retirement system. In weighing those choices, defense officials want troops to know that the proposed plan does not amount to an overall reduction in the benefit.

"One of the Joint Chiefs' requirements was that whatever blended basic pay, but that ultimately will depend on real-world decisions made by millions of service members.

The likelihood is that it will save us money, but we can't really forecast with great accuracy how much because of the labor market variable, because of the opt-in rates in the short run," Junor said.

However, she said officials are "reasonably sure" that the Defense Department's overall retirement bill would not rise.

Adopting a new system probably will save taxpayers some money, but how much remains unclear. The initial projection is that the Pentagon plan would save less than \$1 billion a year initially and about \$1.2 billion a year in the long run.

4.) Military: More Women Needed In Uniform/ 13 JUNE 15 [\[LINK\]](#)

UTSANDIEGO.COM, Gretel C. Kovach

Brass at Joint Women's Leadership Symposium talk recruiting, retention

Vice Adm. William Moran felt intimidated when he stepped in front of a large crowd of military women.

"I really am uncomfortable," the Navy chief of personnel said, speaking to nearly 800 female service members in San Diego last week for the 28th annual Joint Women's Leadership Symposium.

As one in a handful of men present, the three-star admiral was vastly outnumbered.

"This is what women feel like when they walk into most of our ships," Moran said. "Diversity – whether it's gender, whether it's race, whether it's background or experience – is so fundamental to our ability to be successful.

“We can’t solve our challenges, we can’t look to the future, without your input.”

The military needs more women, Moran and a host of military and defense leaders said at the two-day event that ended Friday.

Recruiting and retaining a greater concentration of female troops will help the armed forces combat sexual assault, integrate combat units, diversify thinking, and create a more professional work environment attractive to the millennial generation, according to speakers at the symposium hosted by the Sea Service Leadership Association.

It included female troops from all five service branches and the National Guard in what is billed as the largest gathering of military women worldwide.

“Women sometimes in their units feel very isolated. Part of the purpose of this leadership symposium is bringing women together so they can have a network,” said Rear Adm. Cari Thomas, incoming assistant commandant of the Coast Guard for human resources.

In her career, Thomas was always the only woman stationed on ship.

Moran went 27 years in the Navy before the P3 pilot encountered his first female boss. Today about 18 percent of the Navy is female, slightly higher than the average across the services of about 15 percent.

To normalize workplace relations, move beyond tokenism and overcome stereotypes, the Navy needs a “critical mass” of at least 25 percent women, including the same proportion aboard each ship and squadron, Adm. Michelle Howard, the Navy’s No. 2 officer, has said.

The Navy is hitting that target now with new recruits, 25 percent of whom are female. At the Naval Academy, 22 percent of midshipmen are women.

The numbers fall off steeply in the higher ranks because women leave the services at more than twice the rate of men, Moran said. For instance, 9.13 percent of Navy flag officers are female, or 20 out of 219 admirals. The highest enlisted rank, master chief petty officer, is 6.51 percent female.

To prime the pump on the recruiting side, the Pentagon is rolling out a new ad campaign focusing on young women who desire to take pride in their work. “You have a calling. We have an answer,” the narrator says, as a girl on a stand-up paddle board plunges into the ocean and sees her doppelgänger as a Navy diver.

“It’s critical as you all move forward in your careers that we find that next generation to backfill you, that next generation of women leaders,” said Stephanie Miller, the Defense Department’s Director of Military Accession Policy.

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