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1) Navy Overhauls Spot Promotions / Rules expand eligibility, set command advancement window / 8 SEP 14

By Mark Faram, Navy Times

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More eligible: Sailors with early promote evaluations are eligible up to a year early, making the CAP cycle the same as the semi-annual petty officer testing cycles. Advancement window: Commands must spot promote sailors between July 1 and Sept. 30, before personnel officials set quotas for test-takers.

The changes will give your commanding officer more say in who makes rate and will align the CAP advancements with the process by which most sailors advance.

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That's due to big changes coming to the command advancement program, the authority that allows skippers to spot advance sailors to E-4, E-5 and E-6, Navy Times has learned.

Those changes, set to take effect Oct. 1, include:

More eligible. Sailors with early promote evaluations are eligible up to a year early, making the CAP cycle the same as the semi-annual petty officer testing cycles.

Advancement window. Commands must spot promote sailors between July 1 and Sept. 30, before personnel officials set quotas for test-takers.

The changes will give your commanding officer more say in who makes rate and will align the CAP advancements with the process by which most sailors advance.

"We want COs to be able to make the call and use CAP to advance their best people," Vice Adm. Bill Moran, the chief of naval personnel, said Sept. 4. "Allowing COs the same EP waiver authority to reward hot-running sailors with that early promote themselves, better aligns CAP with our overall advancement system and puts more power in the hands of the command triads."

As the Navy assesses the program long-term, other changes may be in the offing. These include extending CAP to shore duty beyond recruiting commands and spot-promoting to chief.

Moran has decided not to boost the number of CAP quotas, as many go unfilled, but said he is open to increases later.

His nearer goal: to change fleet culture. CAP has mixed reviews in the fleet, with many griping that rather than rewarding top performers, skippers pick those who get the most face time or who are near their high-year tenure cap.

Moran Says That Must Change.

"What we're also emphasizing under this CAP program is that we hope you would CAP your best performing sailors," he said in a July interview with Navy Times. "In the past, you could argue CAP was only used for sailors who couldn't pass the test."

Moran's changes have reportedly saved the CAP program, and officials hope the changes will be another incentive – like the sea pay hike – to persuade sailors to stay in and return to sea duty.

New Rules

The new CAP rules will restrict when COs can advance their people, allowing personnel officials to better manage overall advancement quotas. Starting Oct. 1, CO's will only be allowed to CAP sailors during the three-month window.

“We want to have the clearest picture so we can build the quotas for the September and March advancement cycles and continue to stabilize the workforce,” Moran said in the Sept. 4 interview.

Some COs feel the restrictions aren’t necessary, but officials say it’s what most commanders are doing anyway. “Our 2012 study indicated that 86 percent of CAPs are concentrated immediately after the release of advancement exam results, with the majority during the summer months,” Capt. Karan Schriver, who heads enlisted plans and policy on Moran’s staff, said in June.

As part of the management moves, the Navy will move the CAP program, starting in fiscal year 2015, from a calendar year schedule to one aligned with the fiscal year.

The 2014 calendar-year program will be cut short by three months, and all remaining 2014 quotas will go away Oct. 1.

Under the current rules, COs must advance CAP sailors by Sept. 30 and report it to Navy Personnel Command by Oct. 15.

Quotas Outlook

Eligibility is expanding under the new rules, but not the pool of quotas. Officials say they want to see more used, and are weighing a boost to the numbers in coming years.

CAP quotas are based on the size of the command. So under the existing rules, a command with 100 or fewer authorized enlisted billets can CAP two sailors: one to E-5 and one to E-6.

Commands with more than 100, but fewer than 1,000, billets, like a cruiser, get two E-5 quotas and one for E-6. Those between 1,000 and 2,000 get four E-5s and two E-6s.

And commands like aircraft carriers, with upward of 2,000 billets, can spot-advance six E-5s and two E-6s. While there are no quotas to spot promote to E-4, commands can take unused E-5 or E-6 billets and instead advance someone to E-4, but they’re still limited to the total number of quotas.

Although Moran was considering an increase in CAP quotas,, he backed off the idea. As it stands, roughly one in three quotas go unused every year.

“We have had years when we haven’t used the full authority of CAP,” he said. “And to me, that’s a good sign that COs are taking their responsibility seriously.”

For now, officials want to see how the program works with more eligible sailors and a new management system. If all goes well, an increase in quotas could come in future fiscal years.

CAP, Moran stressed, isn’t for so called poor test-takers or those nearing their high-year tenure. It’s intended to reward the best sailors.

Moran says he is encouraging skippers to “CAP sailors who they think should move on because they’ve demonstrated their ability, and not to wait on the exam.”

What he wants is a new dynamic in using CAP. If COs and CMCs believe they have a sailor who is a “shoe-in” to make it on the next exam, then why wait, he said.

“Why not make a call on your best and guarantee that sailor’s going to advance?” he said. “It’s going to open up quotas for those behind them, but you’re ensuring your best and brightest advance.”

Far-Reaching Possibilities

For now, the only way to get an automatic advancement to chief is through the Sailor of the Year selection process, in which four E-6s are spot-promoted.

Schraver told Navy Times in June that leadership currently feels the board process is still the best way to advance sailors to chief petty officer.

But some would like to see a limited ability for the fleet to be able to choose their best via spot advancements. “It’s something that could be considered in the future but officially isn’t on the table at the moment,” said one senior official who asked to be anonymous because he wasn’t free to discuss the issue publicly. “The board system is tried and true and what we feel is the best way to pick our new chiefs, but then again, COs and command triads know their people best, so it’s an idea that at least deserves to [be] looked into and debated.” Another possibility: expanding CAP to shore duty. As designed in 1978, CAP originally targeted sea duty commands.

A few special shore duty commands have earned the right to use CAP, including Navy Recruiting Command, the Recruit Training Command, the Ceremonial Guard and the USS Constitution. Many sailors would like to see that list expanded.

Officials don’t see that changing while the fleet still has thousands of unfilled billets.

“It’s something that has been discussed, because it’s something we’re hearing from sailors a lot,” the senior official said. “It’s something we’re interested in investigating, but we need to reserve this now, at least in the short-term, to sea duty and special shore commands.”

2) DDG And Hornet Squadron COs Win Top Leadership Award / 9 SEP 14

The skippers of a destroyer and a fighter squadron are this year’s recipients of the Navy’s top leadership prize. Cmdr. Gavin Duff, former commanding officer of Strike Fighter Squadron 14 and Cmdr. Thomas J. Dickinson, former CO of the destroyer Barry, have been named winners of the prestigious Vice Adm. James Stockdale Award.

Duff and Dickinson were selected from a pool of eight finalists.

Duff, an academy grad, was commissioned in 1995 and has served with fighter squadrons in Virginia Beach, Virginia, Japan and Lemoore, California. He has also done a tour as a test pilot at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, and a stint at Navy Personnel Command in Millington, Tennessee.

Dickinson, a surface warfare officer and fellow academy grad, has done tours on the cruiser Chancellorsville, the minesweeper Champion and the destroyer The Sullivans. He has also done shore tours at Millington, the late Joint Forces Staff College and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

These COs were nominated by fellow COs, O-5 and below from unrestricted line commands. Nominees are screened by how well they embody the leadership ethos of the late-Vice Adm. James Stockdale, a Vietnam POW who earned a Medal of Honor for leading a resistance campaign against his North Vietnamese captors.

Past winners include Adm. Cecil Haney, the Pacific Fleet commander; Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jon Greenert; and retired Adm. Mike Mullen, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The other finalists selected for “inspirational leadership,” according to the release, are:

Cmdr. Martin Muckian, commanding officer, attack submarine Greeneville

Cmdr. David Ray, former CO, amphibious transport dock New Orleans

Cmdr. Andrew Thomson, CO, destroyer John Paul Jones

Cmdr. Brian Weiss, former CO, Patrol Squadron 9

Cmdr. Greg Zettler, CO, attack submarine Norfolk

Cmdr. Daryle Cardone, former CO, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 121

3) What CFLs Want –Their nine proposals to toughen Navy fitness tests / 8 SEP 14

By Meghann Myers, Navy Times

Rumor has it that some big changes are coming to the Navy’s physical fitness assessment, but top officials say they’re just that – rumors.

The scuttlebutt that hard-core changes were coming to the PFA has spread through the command fitness leader community since they were first posted on the online forum Reddit on Aug. 28.

The post listed nine updates to the Navy’s physical readiness program, from ending “bad day” retests to instituting random body composition tests, where a sailor could be roped and choked at random with their urinalysis tests. Others would mandate command physical training or automatically dock a sailor after even one PFA failure.

There was even a suggestion that those who ace their physical readiness test would be allowed to wear a special PT shirt.

Those changes are not “soon to be released” as new rules, as the anonymous Reddit post claimed, but neither are they groundless. The proposals were ginned up by command fitness leaders who were asked for ways to improve the PFA, Navy Times has confirmed.

The leaked proposals are a veritable wish list of what CFLs really want. But they have not been approved and are unlikely to be, said the chief of naval personnel’s senior enlisted adviser.

“If you were king for the day, what would you do? And someone says, ‘Oh, that’s a good idea,’ and they float it, and the next thing you hear, it’s ‘CNP said.’ And that’s not what happened,” said Fleet Master Chief (SW/AW) April Beldo.

None of the proposals have been approved, and some aren’t even feasible, she said.

“Some of the stuff, we’re never, ever going to be able to do based on the number of sailors that we have to test twice a year,” Beldo said in a Sept. 4 phone interview. “I appreciate the feedback, but we know what we can do and can’t do based on the mission of the Navy and our responsibilities on a day-to-day basis.”

The Reddit user said the proposals were discussed at a CFL seminar at Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, Illinois; officials couldn’t confirm where it came from.

Here are the nine radical ways that CFLs want to remake the PFA:

1. Goodbye, ‘Bad Days’

Sailors who fail their PRT are allowed to request a “bad day” retest, with approval from their CO, to be taken within seven days of the failure and within the same PFA cycle, under existing rules.

If the Navy did away with PRT retests, as the CFLs proposed, then anyone who failed the sit-ups, push-ups or 1.5-mile run would automatically be enrolled in the Fitness Enhancement Program, which assigns extra work-outs and guidance to get sailors up to snuff for their next PFA.

Some CFLs, like Air Traffic Controller 2nd Class (AW) Mike McCastle, a command fitness leader at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington, think “bad day” retests send the wrong message and should be scrapped.

“I don’t think it’s fair to people who do prepare for the PRT, people who do put in the time. Because a bad day retest is essentially saying it’s OK to fail ... I think people are losing the accountability,” said McCastle, who was not at the seminar where the proposals were discussed.

2. Tape Tests For All

Among the most controversial is the CFLs’ proposal to radically expand the body composition assessment.

No more height and weight measurements determining who gets taped. Under the proposal, everyone will get taped regardless of whether they are within height and weight standards.

Even more onerous: Men with waists over 40 inches and women with waists over 36 inches would be automatically enrolled in FEP.

Body composition is calculated by subtracting the neck measurement from the waist measurement – or waist and hip, for women – then comparing that number to a body fat percentage chart. For example, a man with a 32-inch waist and 15-inch neck would fall well below the 22 percent max body fat percentage.

Under existing rules, it would take a really big neck to balance out a 40-inch waist, 19.5 inches to be exact, and even then you would have to be over 40 years old. With the suggested standard, CFLs wouldn’t have to bother with a calculation, because 40 inches would fail automatically.

“I’d like to see the taping standards get a little bit more strict,” McCastle said. “I think there’s a great margin of error with the way we currently measure body fat percentage for both men and women. Sometimes it can be a little unfair.”

3. Military Bearing Scores

One suggestion would be a big blemish on a sailor’s chances for promotion. As it stands, Beldo said, a skipper decides whether to lower a sailor’s military bearing score on an evaluation after their first or second PFA failure.

The proposal calls for mandating that everyone who has a first or second PFA failure gets a 2.0 military bearing score – a tough move that would harm many sailors’ shots at advancing.

The Navy’s rules are tough as is. It takes only three PFA failures in four years, under existing rules, to get administratively kicked out of the Navy.

Beldo said the mandatory scores were unlikely to make any headway.

“The COs make that decision right now on the first and second PFA, as they should,” Beldo said. “We would be taking the authority away from the CO, and there’s no appetite for that.”

4. Random BCAs

Sure, eliminating “bad days” and tape-testing everyone may be tough. But those were not even the most draconian suggestions.

Imagine coming to work after a week-long vacation of hanging out with friends and eating, only to be randomly chosen for a body composition assessment. If you don’t meet the height and weight standards, you could immediately be put on FEP, otherwise known as the “forced exercise program” – or worse.

The proposal would make BCAs random, much like “whiz quiz” tests. But officials say it is not “under review,” as the Reddit post claimed, and is highly unlikely to ever be approved.

“One of CNP’s main focuses in the last year has been to empower the triad to reduce the administrative burden,” Beldo said. “If you read these things, it’s causing more work for our sailors and for our leadership out in the fleet, so definitely, it’s not something that we would even entertain.”

Further, Beldo said, whoever suggested it might be someone who’s never had a problem acing the PFA.

“It could have been a sailor that has 17 percent body fat,” she said. ““OK, I can do a BCA any time you ask me, I’ll do it with my urinalysis.’ OK, well for that person, who’s only 17 percent body fat – he might have thought it was a good idea, because he knows he’s never going to have an issue with that.”

5. No Break Between PFAs

Commands are required to conduct two PFAs each year, though they decide individually on which days to hold them. The current rules permit PFAs any time; many commands schedule them in spring and fall to avoid extreme weather.

The only caveat: There must be a four-month break between tests.

The CFL suggestion is to do away with the four-month break. That might mean a command could hold a PFA in May and another in July, because technically they’re two different cycles. That proposal could make it easier to schedule PFAs and for test-takers in good shape to pass them.

On the flip side, sailors in poor shape could fail two tests within weeks of each other and be only one failure away from getting booted.

6. Alternative Cardio

The CFLs proposed making the bicycle PRT test harder, and adopting gender-neutral standards.

If running isn't your thing, under the current rules, your CO can give you permission to take the cardio portion of the PRT with 12 minutes on an elliptical or stationary bike. A sailor rides as hard as possible for 12 minutes, and the CFL uses the number of calories they burn to come up with a score.

Currently, the Navy uses a conversion calculator on the bike or elliptical score to get the "run time." The run standards are different for men and women.

The proposal would make the bike and elliptical tests "harder" – it did not specify how – and would have bike-specific PRT scores instead of being converted into a run time. These new bike-specific scores would apply equally to men and women.

7. Mandatory Command PT

The Navy has long recommended that COs organize command PT for their sailors, or at least allow a few hours in every workweek for them to do it on their own. It's never been a requirement, but some would like it to be.

The Reddit message says that the new instruction will remove the option and declare that "commands shall integrate PT into the workweek and during working hours," with no exceptions for mission or schedule, as there are now.

This would eliminate some excuses commands give about mandatory PT, e.g., "We have way too many things going on, we have too many flights or we have lots of maintenance to do," the Reddit post said.

Command PT is not going to become mandatory anytime soon, personnel officials say, but high-ranking leaders encourage COs to work it into the schedule.

"I would say that providing sailors with an opportunity to be physically ready is something that commands have to do," Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (AW/NAC) Mike Stevens told Navy Times earlier this year. "But I wouldn't want to dictate how every command does that."

Stevens said that when he served as command master chief of Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 14, an MH-53 Sea Dragon squadron, senior leadership required division officers and chiefs to build in an hour and a half of PT up to four times a week during working hours.

"But because you work three different shifts, with all the watchstanders, it was really not realistic to think you were going to get everybody together to do this group PT, out-on-the-field kind of thing," he said.

Because of operational requirements and watch responsibilities, the sailors rotated their workouts, doing PT on different days and at different times, so that enough personnel were on hand to keep flight schedules and maintenance flowing.

"I believe what they'll find when they do that – productivity and wellness will get better," Stevens said of instituting more fitness time. "We witnessed firsthand the morale of the squadron increased, physical readiness became better and wellness became better."

8. Making Better CFLs

Among the proposals was a suggestion that has long been popular with fitness gurus: giving command fitness leaders a Navy enlisted classification. McCastle, the NAS Whidbey Island CFL, said this would motivate fitness leaders to take more pride in their jobs.

“I think with that, people would stop seeing it as just another collateral,” he said. “I think every CFL has a passion for it. It’s one of the few collateral duties that you can’t just pick up – you have to meet a minimum standard.”

Beldo said it’s possible the idea for a CFL NEC came from a Navy fitness expert, but it isn’t being considered by her office.

McCastle believes this step would standardize CFL training and make it more popular.

“By making it an NEC, I think you’re going to start getting a lot more people who are passionate about fitness but don’t want to just pick up another collateral. It holds a lot more weight,” McCastle said.

9. Special PT Shirts

Again and again, sailors have complained the Navy doesn’t do anything to reward PT studs. Acing the PFA doesn’t give you a leg up on advancement, or give you the chance to skip the next PRT, as some have suggested.

The CFLs have come up with another way to distinguish the fittest sailors: a chance to escape the gold Navy PT shirt.

Under the proposal, those who score well “will be allowed to wear an alternative PT shirt,” the Reddit post stated. It wasn’t clear what this shirt would look like or whether it would have a similar design to the gold shirt. But it would certainly create a distinction between PT aces and everyone else.

The Reddit post said this idea was “under review,” but officials warned sailors not to hold their breath for new T’s.

4) 3 Things to Know about the RAND Military Workplace Study / 11 SEP 14 [\[LINK\]](#)

From Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

On behalf of the Department of Defense (DOD), the RAND Corporation is conducting a Military Workplace Study that includes a survey of Sailors that is projected to conclude Sept. 24.

The Military Workplace Study is critical to helping DOD better understand workplace conditions and act to ensure a safe and professional work environment. This is a chance for Sailors to be heard by senior leaders.

Here are three things you need to know about the RAND Military Workplace Study:

1. Invitations to take a survey in support of this study were sent to 100% of female active duty Sailors, E-1 to O-6 (with more than 6 months of service), and a quarter of randomly selected active duty males. If invited, Sailors are encouraged to participate in the survey. Sailors who have not received an invitation, but think they should, may contact the RAND Corporation by calling the survey help desk at 1-855-365-5914 (OCONUS call collect 240-453-2620). Once your identity is verified, you will be emailed the survey information and passcode. You can also email the help desk at support@randmilitarystudy.org, stating you have not received the survey, including your telephone number and the best time to call you. The help desk will call to verify your information and make the

necessary arrangements for your participation in the survey.

2. Results from this study will help senior leadership evaluate current military workplace relations, professionalism and personal safety to determine future policies, programs and training.

3. The survey is voluntary and confidential. No one in DOD will see any individual Sailor responses.

The survey opened on Aug. 14 and is projected to close Sept. 24.

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