



## @USNPEOPLE WEEKLY WIRE

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- Revamping the uniform board to speed uniform changes.
- Unclogging over-manned ratings and spreading opportunities.

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## 1) CNP's big changes: Higher sea pay, stable advancements and a streamlined uniform board / 24 FEB 14 [\[LINK\]](#)

By Mark D. Faram and Sam Fellman, Navy Times

Vice Adm. Bill Moran is a man on a mission. The chief of naval personnel wants to pay fleet sailors better. He wants to add the latest flame-resistant coveralls to your sea bag. He wants to improve the advancement system and give more sailors a chance to make rate. He wants to design more comfortable blue cammies.

He even wants to blow up the uniform board.

Moran, a career P-3 Orion pilot, has been jetting around to fleet areas to hear your complaints since he took over seven months ago. He's grappling with a fleet still uneasy from the enlisted retention boards and thousands of gapped jobs, and one that's eyeing expanding opportunities on the outside as the economy improves. His buzzwords are "stability" and "trust."

In his first wide ranging sit-down with Navy Times, Moran explained his vision for personnel programs, including big changes such as:

- Hiking career sea pay levels for the first time in 13 years.
- Revamping the uniform board to speed uniform changes.
- Unclogging overmanned ratings and spreading opportunities.

"The trust level really comes from whether we are transparent, or we are open and honest with sailors in communicating our issues, our challenges and anything we are doing that may affect their lives," Moran said in the Feb. 18 interview, during which he addressed his goals for uniforms, advancement, pay and more.

Sea Pay Boost

Fleet sailors are about to get more money in their wallets.

Officials hope to lure more sailors back to sea by boosting sea pay – the first such raise since 2001. In the interview, Moran made clear that he thinks it's about time the payout went up, and he revealed new details about the proposal.

"We value sea duty," he said. "The fact that we have not adjusted that pay in 12 years, it is hard to argue that you value sea duty when you are not even keeping up with the rate of inflation."

The goal, Moran said, is to catch sea pay up with inflation. He's proposed that change; it'll be up to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus to make the final call.

"Our recommendation is that we bring the value back up to inflation over that time period, which is 25 percent or so," Moran said. "And that is across the board, officer and enlisted."

That rate – a touch below the 32 percent inflation rise over that period, according to the Consumer Price Index – would be a substantial bump. Right now, sea pay can vary from \$50 for a seaman to \$700 for a warrant officer.

A petty officer third class with one year of sea duty, for instance, now gets \$80 a month. The hike would make that \$100, a pay boost of \$240 for a sailor who spends the whole year on sea duty.

Similarly, a first class with three years at sea will now get \$350 a month, up from \$280. That's \$840 more a year.

It is also possible the inflation rise will be applied to the \$100 sea pay premium that kicks in for those who've been in sea duty billets for more than 36 months.

Mabus will set the final rate and determine when any changes would take effect.

Officials are also laying the groundwork for an even bigger special pay hike in coming years, with the belief that those who sail on long deployments should be paid for doing so.

High deployment allowance pay would kick in after a sailor hits 190 days on deployment; after that point, the sailor would receive up to \$1,000 a month extra. This pay was passed by Congress but then suspended in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Top Navy officials believe it's time that it be reinstated.

"I do support it," Moran said, noting that the new deployment plan, known as the optimized fleet response plan, makes eight-month cruises the standard. "Our deployments inside O-FRP are in the eight month range as opposed to the more traditional six months. And if we go longer than that, I would tell you those are arduous tours for sailors to be at sea that long. And we ought to pay them for it."

In order for sailors to get paid, the suspension must be lifted and Mabus must set the monthly payout amount.

Moran said the pay levels are still being figured out.

"It is up to the secretary, where he is comfortable, and I am pretty sure it will not be a thousand a month, but it will be at the lower end of that spectrum," Moran said.

#### Advancement Chances

When it comes to advancements, the future is bright.

The advancement percentages are likely to remain elevated for the next few cycles, Moran said. The fall cycle's overall chance to advance slipped to 27.71 percent – but was still much higher than the 2011 fall cycle.

"On the last advancement cycle, in September, when the results were released, we were able to tell sailors that we were advancing above historical norms," he said. "So for the March exam cycle that is coming up, we expect to see similar advancement rates ... that we saw in September."

Today's opportunities are healthier for one reason: fewer overmanned ratings. The Navy advances to vacancies in the fleet, so it is obvious that an overstocked rating will have fewer openings. Still, Moran said the key is stabilizing the swings between cycles and making sure that sailors in every rating have a chance to advance.

"We have got to stabilize this process," Moran said.

"And we do not have these wild swings in advancement rates from one cycle to the next where you have zero one cycle and you have got, you know, 80 percent a year later," Moran said. "That makes sailors wonder if we know what we are doing up here, and I do not blame them – they ought to have some reasonable understanding of what their likelihood is to advance."

Moran said he is focusing on the undermanned and overmanned rates – ones that advance all eligible sailors or none of them.

“I do not like that picture. I think we ought to have something that gives every rate an opportunity to advance,” he said. “We should not be auto-advancing people based on vacancies all the time.

“And I see that probably sticking around for a few more cycles and then hopefully, stabilizing at a new norm that is still very healthy. If we all agree historical is healthy, then I think we will stay a very healthy Navy in terms of advancement rates.”

As the service tries to hold its end strength, Moran predicts that he’ll be able to reduce the number of over and undermanned ratings. But the service isn’t there yet, he warned.

“We are still doing some work to understand what a healthy Navy ought to be.”

Better ‘Blueberries’

Your “blueberries” aren’t going anywhere.

It’s no longer an underway uniform, but the blue-and-gray Type I Navy working uniform will remain part of your sea bag and can be worn ashore or pier side, Moran said.

“NWU is here to stay,” Moran said when asked whether the Navy would continue to issue it in the wake of the fleet commanders’ October decision to bar it from underway wear, except for special occasions, because of its lack of flame resistance.

And he added that officials are working on a lightweight version of NWUs for sailors in warmer climates, a more breathable version similar to the woodland cammies, or NWU Type IIIs.

“I think it will be much more in line with what you see in the Type III in terms of comfort and weight, and people generally who wear the Type III like the overall feel of that uniform,” Moran said.

Officials have said that they hope to run a wear test of the light weight NWUs in 2014 once the design is approved. The new ones could use lighter weight fabric or could skip the curing finish that maintains the uniform’s permanent press. Officials say it will be hard, if not impossible, to tell the two apart.

Moran said officials are assessing whether to eventually add the new flame resistant coveralls to the sea bag, replacing the utility coveralls that are also now barred underway. The first step is to make sure that every fleet sailor has three pairs, Moran said.

“Once that is done, we are looking at the cost and the ability to produce enough of the coveralls to issue them as part of the sea bag,” Moran said. “Of course, that makes sense.”

Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, Ill., will continue to issue utility coveralls until that decision is made – likely closer to the end of the year, Moran said.

Moran will also be overseeing a closely watched wear test. Female sailors will don “Dixie Cups” and service dress blues, and female officers and chiefs will try on newly designed covers that resemble the round ones worn by their male counterparts.

‘We Are Going To Change It’

He's also taking aim at the uniform process itself.

Case in point: the parka. For sailors in cold climates, the pea coat isn't cutting it. After hearing that message loud and clear in late 2012, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jon Greenert directed uniform officials to find and field a heavier parka for sailors to wear with service and dress uniforms, and decided to start with parka worn by other services to speed up the process.

Still, after a chilly winter whose snowstorms have clobbered bases from Kittery, Maine, to Groton, Conn., to Norfolk, Va., there's no sign of the parkas. It remains unclear whether these will be approved and issued to sailors before next winter.

Another example: the long awaited update to white crackerjacks. The Navy Uniform Board unveiled these in 2007 – and still no one's wearing them. Officials hope to begin issuing them to recruits in 2015.

It is for reasons like these that Moran is determined to overhaul the uniform board process. He, CNO and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (AW/NAC) Mike Stevens want to radically change it. Moran said they get more than enough fleet input and want to speed up the development, decision making and fielding so sailor feedback can go from concept to prototype to the uniforms faster.

"And what we want is good input, good ideas, and to be able to attack those ideas in a responsive way that some sailors understand that we are not ignoring them," Moran said. "Which they could view in this board process as just taking too damn long."

Moran thinks it's unnecessary to have a large uniform board that meets regularly to share fleet feedback, which he says is easy to get via surveys and emails.

"We are going to change it," Moran said. "And we are going to let people that are on the board get back to doing what we really need them to do and let us worry about the uniform piece by getting direct feedback from sailors."

## **2) CNP Talks Fitness, PCS Moves and More/ 28 FEB 14**

The chief of personnel's duties go beyond bonus rates and uniform matters – his office touches nearly every aspect of Navy life.

And while Vice Adm. Bill Moran's main priorities have involved filling the fleet's manning needs and providing a stable advancement system for sailors, he addressed many other issues – from permanent change of station moves to women in SEAL teams – in a recent sit down with Navy Times reporters and editors.

Some of his answers, edited for brevity and clarity:

Q. Last fall, your folks said the funding shortfall was going to affect about 17,000 sailors [making permanent change of station moves]. As we are moving into PCS season, what does it look like for this year for sailors?

A. Now that we have a budget, we are OK. We have the money to do the PCS moves we need to do in '14. It did affect sailors at the beginning of '14 in that we were slower and took longer before we could commit PCS funds to sailors and so they were getting their orders later – much closer to their actual rotation date, which is not what we want.

And the reason for that is the comptrollers of the world, when you are under [a continuing resolution], will only issue smaller pieces of blocks of funds for purposes of PCS as we get closer to the end of the quarter, so they can balance their books. So when you are doing that, the folks down at [Navy Personnel Command] cannot cut orders six months ahead of time. They have got to wait until a month, two, three months, which is frustrating to sailors and families.

We are past that now. We are back into normal business process for PCS through '14, and it looks like '15 is going to be fine, too.

Q. Are you looking at upping sea and/or short tour lengths so you do not have as many PCS moves?

A. In some rates, we have made some adjustments already. But that was really targeted toward [the Optimized Fleet Response Plan]. So OFRP becomes the driver for policies related to PCS and to sea/shore rotation. And we are starting to see the effect of that now as we look toward the Truman strike group in 2015 and out.

All of this is trying to get out in front of these problems well ahead of time.

Q. Aside from changing physical standards, what are some of the issues involved with putting women in SEAL units?

A. I am going to wait for the [type commander] to come to me and say, "Here is what we think we need to do with standards, how it affects recruiting, and then where we take it to the next level." There is so much here I would love to talk to you about that is in a classified realm I cannot talk about that is really positive when it comes to women in special forces.

Q. How many women would you have in each submarine?

A. I do not know the answer to that. We are [in], as you know, the early stages – not so early stages, frankly, anymore – with women in submarines. But the same issues come up: How many women do you assign to a submarine so that you assure that the women that do show up... have enough of a cadre of folks that they are successful. And so the challenge we have now is how do we pull in senior enlisted in submarines so that we can start recruiting women to become submariners. ... We are at the very early stages of a similar kind of discussion with the SEALs.

Q. You changed some of the body composition assessment rules recently, to allow more time between the weigh-in and the physical readiness test.

A. We found too many people going right up to the end and then starving themselves to try to meet it. So we try to make it healthier approach to this. Frankly, that was in the works before I got here, and we are taking a comprehensive look, as we always do, at the whole PRT program and make sure it still makes sense.

Q. What fitness issues are you looking at?

A. Everything. I am looking at the way the Marines do it, the Air Force does it, the Army does it. And this has been going on since John Paul Jones probably, comparing each service to each other and seeing who has got it right.

I do not know what the right answer is, but I think enough people are frustrated by the program that it is worth considering whether we do have the standards right. ... It's the weigh-in piece that has gotten most people frustrated.

Q. We've heard from people who can pass the PRT but they say their body type is different, they are a heavier-bodied person, but whatever the Navy can ask them to do, they can do it. Are you looking at keeping some of those sailors?

A. Organizationally, no, we are not moving in that direction. Personally, yes. My head is there because I have lived it for 32 years, and I find aspects of it frustrating. ... But it is not a priority that I am going to stop all engines and try to figure out.

Do I look like a guy who is out of standards? But I will tell you, every weigh-in, I am down to the ounce, just because of the way I am built. So I have not a personal interest in adjusting it for me, but if I am struggling every year, every weigh-in, then I can imagine how many other sailors are also struggling. And we just have to get it right.

### **3) MCPON Testifies before Congress on Quality of Life / 27 FEB 14 [\[LINK\]](#)**

By Chief Mass Communication Specialist Jackey Smith, Office of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON)(AW/NAC) Michael Stevens testified before Congress Feb. 26.

MCPON appeared before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies.

MCPON, along with the enlisted leaders from the Marine Corps, Army, and Air Force, discussed the current status of their respective military branches, focusing specifically on quality-of-life programs and initiatives.

Stevens discussed the Navy's current operational tempo and told the subcommittee that approximately 50 percent of the Navy's ships are underway or deployed globally on any given day.

"The caliber of Sailors that join the fleet today are educated, perceptive, and eager to embrace the challenges that lie ahead, said Stevens." Today's Sailor, overall, has a high quality of life; however, our Sailors also carry a burden of uncertainty when it comes to potential pay and compensation changes, family program services, and predictability with respect to deployment lengths."

Stevens acknowledged that Sailors are working to prepare for future economic and fiscal challenges. He assured that they will rise to meet the challenges and noted that their mental and physical welfare should not become a casualty of budgetary uncertainty.

"It is critical in today's fiscal environment, that we protect programs and services which promote a thriving and healthy family unit."

Representatives asked about programs and initiatives which promote family unity and strong bonds.

"Family readiness is an extremely important part of mission readiness," said Stevens. He explained the resources available from Fleet and Family Support programs and also talked about the Ombudsman program. "We have extended resources to our Navy families, providing Sailors with the reassurance that their families are being supported."

Recruiting, retention, commissaries, family and single Sailor housing, and programs related to family unity were among the topics addressed at the hearing. Stevens responded to several questions from representatives about budget cuts.

"Sailors understand that a budgetary reformation is fast-approaching, and we are working hard to implement policies that will meet end strength controls and planned budget execution," said Stevens. "I believe it's vital that the Navy is provided with adequate force capacity to support mission demands and ensure reasonable deployment lengths are sustainable."

Other topics of discussion included initiatives and programs for spouse employment, transition programs, and mental or physical identifiers regarding suicides. Stevens highlighted the importance of predictability with regard to deployments.

"Our Sailors and their families understand that deployments are a part of Navy life; however, it is imperative that we never underestimate their sacrifices."

Stevens noted some of the main factors in determining how long many Sailors will serve.

"Our Sailors and families stay in the Navy because they believe and trust that you and I have their best interest at heart." said Stevens. "This trust is fundamentally parallel with our core values of honor, courage, and commitment. This trust is priceless. This trust puts in place the greatest weapon's system we can provide our Sailors and that weapon's system is called "unit morale."

MCPON reaffirmed the Navy's commitment to family and mission readiness.

"Both CNO and I understand that nothing comes second to combat readiness and we are committed to preserving our people and our fleet programs to the fullest extent possible," said Stevens.

"In over 30 years of service, I have watched these amazing men and women serve and ensure the freedom and security of our nation," said Stevens. "As I navigate through the various commands and units of our force, I am always inspired by their overwhelming work ethic and dedication and I am honored to serve with and represent these amazing men and women - your Sailors."

The Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy periodically testifies before Congress along with the senior enlisted leaders of the other services. This was his first appearance before the congressional committee.

#### **4) College Accreditation Type may Affect Sailors' Wallets / 24 FEB 14 [LINK](#)**

By Susan D. Henson, Center for Personal and Professional Development Public Affairs

Sailors working on completing a degree should ensure their school has the appropriate type of accreditation or it could cost them money later, said Center for Personal and Professional Development education professionals Feb. 24.

"Most students know the school they attend should have some sort of accreditation as a way of ensuring the quality of their education, but they don't understand how important the type of accreditation is in their school selection," said Ernest D'Antonio, director of Navy Voluntary Education at the Center for Personal and Professional Development. "I've seen way too many examples of service members using their tuition assistance

or G.I. Bill education benefits to earn a degree at a school whose credits aren't transferrable to or recognized by other schools. And when a Sailor's benefit is spent, it's spent."

According to Raymond Sayre, director of the Navy College Office in San Diego, there are three kinds of accreditation. One is regional, which is granted by an accrediting organization in one of six regions in the United States. "Regional accrediting organizations review educational institutions as a whole," he said. "Schools with regionally accredited programs focus on academic theory for a full range of degrees from accounting to zoology at all educational levels."

National accreditation is another type. Sayre said nationally accredited institutions fill a different educational need than those with regional accreditation. "The real difference is that national accrediting bodies focus on operational/technical skills. These accreditors tend to focus on a particular discipline such as business or technical skills, or distance learning," he said.

The third kind is accreditation for specialized programs and single-purpose organizations. A specialized accreditation is typically granted for a particular section or discipline within a regionally accredited educational institution, such as for a school's law, medical or engineering program.

It's confusing because it's complicated, according to D'Antonio. "The key for Sailors is to understand how accreditation directly relates to their educational goals," he said. "This is part of why Navy College Program education professionals exist - to help Sailors make the best choice for them."

Sayre pointed out that one type of accreditation isn't necessarily better than the others; it is simply contingent on the student's objectives. "It depends on what professional path Sailors are choosing," he said. "If they want a hands-on career in the vocational or technical world such as auto repair, electronics, nuclear technician, etc., they may benefit by choosing a school with national accreditation. If their choice is the academic world - teacher, law, business or doctor, for example - they ought to choose regional accreditation. Many nationally accredited schools offer advanced vocational or technical education and training programs that are excellent and meet the needs for which they were designed."

A handful of schools have both regional and national accreditation, but Sayre said it isn't common.

Gary Henwood, an educational services specialist at Navy College Office (NCO) Whidbey Island, Wash., said it's important for Sailors to view their school choice in the broader spectrum of their current - and future - educational goals. "When Sailors apply for commissioning programs such as Medical Enlisted Commissioning Program or Seaman-to-Admiral 21, the participating universities and colleges are regionally accredited and may not accept credits from nationally accredited schools."

For this reason, Henwood advises Sailors specifically trying for a commission to ensure they attend an accredited school whose credits are transferrable to other programs since it's up to each school what transfer credits it will accept.

Sailors not applying for a commissioning program should still carefully consider how they're using the Tuition Assistance program to complete classes toward their degree, or it could result in bad news. Henwood gave an example of a Sailor he worked with last year who completed a Bachelor of Science in Business from a nationally accredited school, which he used Navy Tuition Assistance to complete. He then applied to a regionally accredited school's MBA program, but that school didn't honor his bachelor's degree. "Because the Navy only pays for one bachelor's degree, he will have to go back and pay out-of-pocket for a regionally accredited degree program or return to the original school for its MBA, which limits his choices."

While this is one example, there is no steadfast rule. Sayre pointed out that some regionally accredited schools do accept credits earned from a nationally accredited school. "A degree from many nationally accredited schools can make you eligible for a commissioning program, depending on which school you earned your degree from," Sayre said. "Also, a high-tech degree from a nationally accredited school may make you more competitive for employment after completion of military obligation."

The U.S. Department of Education has a College Navigator (<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>) on its website to assist students in evaluating schools in areas such as costs, financial aid access and graduation rates. Navy students have an additional resource - education professionals at Navy College Offices and the Virtual Education Center.

"Degree types are an individual choice," Sayre said. "Our job as counselors is to provide information - without opinion - that enables the individual to make educated choices."

Sayre said Sailors should thoroughly research schools and ask the right questions. "Any school an individual is going to invest in should be 'checked out' to ensure the institution is able to meet the needs and long-term goals of the individual. Impartial, professional counseling and advisement is critical," he said.

According to D'Antonio, Voluntary Education and Navy College Program professionals are committed to helping Sailors reach their educational and credentialing goals. "We provide the necessary academic programs that meet the needs of an educated force and provide the needed academic advice and counseling that guides our Sailors toward their life-long learning goals," he said. "When we are successful in this mission, we have served the Navy and the Sailor."

## **5) Navy Officials Tell Sailors to Verify PRIMS Data / 26 FEB 14 [LINK]**

With the semiannual Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA) upcoming, Navy Physical Readiness Program officials remind Sailors to verify their results in the Physical Readiness Information Management System (PRIMS).

"After each PFA, Sailors need to log into PRIMS and ensure their data is entered and accurate," said Bill Moore, director, Navy Physical Readiness Program.

All commands are required to report their PFA data via PRIMS no later than 30 days after conducting the PFA in accordance with guidelines established in the Navy's Physical Readiness Program instruction, OPNAVINST 6110.1J. Each Sailor must have a record for both PFA cycles in the year, even if the record reflects non-participation status due to deployment, individual augmentee, medical waiver, etc.

Sailors need to verify their data within 60 days so that any corrections can be made by the Command Fitness Leader at the command level. After six months of PFA completion, record changes can only be made by PRIMS administrators at Navy Personnel Command, which requires a Letter of Correction from the individual's commanding officer, on letter head, that grants authorization to make the change.