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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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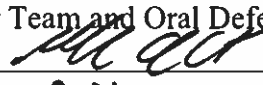
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Executive Summary

Title: Leaders Not Managers: The Navy's Imperative Need to Emphasize Junior and Intermediate Officer Professional Military Education

Author: Lieutenant Commander Joshua R. Johnson, United States Navy

Thesis: The ideal concept of Navy Professional Military Education needs to focus on developing educated, moral, and ethical naval leaders with the ability to thrive in a multi-domain operational maritime environment, lead fleet combat forces, and hold an unparalleled understanding of the conduct of war. A renewed focus on Navy Professional Military Education would cultivate a cadre of professional warfighters and competent leaders with a mutual understanding of what it means to be an experienced Armed Forces Officer.

Discussion: The Navy has routinely disregarded the importance of the professional military education of its officer corps. By establishing a career-long Navy Professional Military Education (NPME) continuum, which provides practical and necessary cross-designator PME without hampering the career progression of the officer corps. It would provide Naval officers with the appropriate and rigorous naval warfare and leadership education to lead in future multi-domain warfare environments. The findings indicate an institutional disregard and neglect toward a career-long NPME system that starts at the beginning of an officer's career and continues throughout their career. Today's junior officers are not provided with the time or proper emphasis regarding NPME, resulting in a lack of a moral and ethical decision matrix when they take command-level leadership positions. The data provided in this paper offers likely solutions to the problem by 1) integrating NPME in an officer's basic designator training; 2) developing an O3 cross-designator education program, much like the Marine Corps Expeditionary Warfare School; 3) expanding the College of Naval Command and Staff's (CNCS) capability to support an increased throughput of O4s, O4 selects, and those in zone for the associated calendar/fiscal year Navy O4 Selection Boards; and 4) introducing CNO Career (O3) and Intermediate (O4) level education boards to advance needed talent management and promote the selection of top performers for in-resident NPME. These results build on existing evidence and data supporting the argument the Navy's needed advancements to NPME.

Conclusion: A transition towards a career-long Navy PME continuum that continually builds on naval officers' professional and ethical development would cultivate a cadre of officers who can dynamically shift between requirements rather than adhering to stringent priority matrices. After embracing a fleet-wide culture change, the Navy would find itself leading highly educated and cohesive teams striving towards success rather than managing working groups and moving callously from task to task.

DISCLAIMER

THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT.

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Preface

The basis for this research originally stemmed from my persistent passion for leading Sailors and Information Warfare teams. Throughout my 21 years in the Navy as an enlisted Intelligence Specialist, Intelligence Limited Duty Officer, and now a Restricted Line Intelligence Officer, I have unfortunately witnessed the gradual decline in leadership ability throughout the Fleet. When I arrived at US Marine Corps University for Command and Staff College, I was unsure of the topic of discussion concerning my thesis project. Once we had been in class for several weeks, I realized every naval officer should attend resident PME, and led to my decision to explore how to improve Navy Professional Military Education (NPME) for the officer corps. My community would have preferred I write on a topic regarding Information Warfare, but I believe the Information Warfare community has been negatively affected by this lack of leadership training. I decided to explore the importance of NPME in an officer's career, factors that may be causing this decline in leadership ability, the implications of the decline, and provide recommendations to elevate the officer corps' leadership abilities. I will not be discussing Joint Professional Military Education; rather, I want to focus on the need for an improved NPME and Junior Officer Leadership education.

I would like to thank my thesis advisor Dr. Douglas Streusand of Command and Staff College at the United States Marine Corps University. My whole mentor team always allowed this paper to be my own work but provided honest and constructive rudder corrections whenever they thought I was heading off course.

I would also like to acknowledge Colonel Thomas Gordon, USMC, Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, as the second reader of this thesis. I am gratefully indebted to him for his incredibly valuable mentorship and guidance on this thesis

project. Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge and thank Mr. Russ Evans, CDR(ret), USN, Academics Officer at the Marine Corps University, for his insurmountable breath of support, knowledge, and experience gained by his years of naval service. Additionally, a special thank you to my Intel Detailer Commander Chris Dumas for providing me the opportunity to attend the Marine Corps Command and Staff College. I have received the professional military education that I have been seeking for the entirety of my commissioned career and believe all naval officers should have the same opportunity.

Finally, I must express my very profound gratitude to my wife and children for providing me with unwavering support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of service, study, and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them. Thank you. *“Sursum Ab Ordine”*

INTRODUCTION

“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.”

– William Arthur Ward

The Navy has consistently adapted to current and evolving technology and operational challenges. The technical training for the fleet is unparalleled. However, all of this has been done at a cost: the delegitimization and neglect of Navy Professional Military Education (NPME) for junior officers (JO). The Navy’s ability to effectively carry out its mission is jeopardized if substantial steps are not taken to improve the assessment of officers’ competence, strengthen morale, promote organizational capacity development, and introduce progressive alternatives.¹ A renewed focus on NPME would cultivate a cadre of professional warfighters and competent leaders with a shared understanding of the profession of arms.

A career-long Professional Military Education (PME) continuum, which starts at the beginning of an officer’s professional occupation, would provide Naval officers with the appropriate and rigorous naval warfare and leadership education. The FY22 Active-Duty Line Community Brief does not mention PME or the need to include the in an officer’s career for it.² These schools and colleges include: Air Force Squadron Officer School (SOS), Army Captain’s Career Course (CCC), or Marine Corps Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS), and the in-service command and staff colleges. Ideally, PME should start with an officer’s commissioning and focuses on developing educated, moral, and ethical naval leaders with the ability to thrive in a multi-domain operational environment, lead fleet combat forces, and understand the conduct of war.

The Navy has pursued multiple courses of action towards improving the fleet. Technical training, advancing the procurement of advanced technologies, and fleet composition are at the center of the current solution. Current fleet improvement plans lack anything regarding improving the wellbeing and professional education of its officers. The recent shift to heavily focus on great-power competition and a new fleet modernization program plan provides a great opportunity to promote a fleet culture change regarding the validity and importance of PME in an officer's career. Cultivating Navy officers using a consistent fleet-wide NPME program would produce a cross-designator education program focused on understanding and operating seamlessly within naval doctrine and foster a corps of professional leaders for the fleet. The global conflicts of today and tomorrow cannot be fought with technology and technical expertise alone. *The Education for Seapower 2020 Final Report* (E4S) concluded, "to protect naval superiority in an age of great-power competition and technological change, the Navy must enhance and increase their educational efforts."³ The Navy desperately needs to develop professional leaders who have the knowledge and understanding to properly lead naval warfare teams in this new highly dynamic and multidimensional operating environment.⁴

The Navy must evolve to overcome growing global challenges. Navy officers must be effective leaders with strategic vision as well as fundamental expertise. Emphasizing management skills alone has been unsuccessful and created a fleet of personnel with low morale and officers with a lack of proper leadership education. Future fleet combat operations are not going to be successful if officers are not able to, or given the authority to, lead warfare teams in dynamic and arduous situations. Officers must be able to think independently to produce and execute the best possible kinetic or non-kinetic action or counteraction. The move to managerial control has likely contributed to the Navy's marginalization of JOs and an increase in micro-

management by routinely pushing authority to make even basic decisions up to the highest levels of command. Improved NPME has been extensively discussed over the last three decades, but this discussion has not led to change. The *E4S Final Report*, NAVADMIN 137/20⁵, and Publication of BUPERSINST 1610.10E (EVALMAN) Change One⁶ collectively state that the fleet must recognize the need for NPME and include it in an officer's career and fitness reports (FITREP). Unfortunately, the FY22 Active-Duty Line Community Brief indicates no significant move away from the status quo.⁷

The Navy can reinvent NPME by providing the necessary institutional and professional education without hampering the career progression of the officer corps? Education must start in an officer's basic designator training and introduce Navy-wide curriculum with a community-specific doctrine to establish the foundation of their moral and ethical leadership abilities. The Navy can encourage mid-career training by developing an O3-specific cross-designator Naval Warfare School (much like the Marine Corps EWS) and increase the proportion of officers who attend the College of Naval Command and Staff (CNCS). NPME completion must become a key factor in the promotion of officers. The renovation of NPME must start with the inclusion of a Navy-wide leadership and maritime warfare component in an officer's basic designator training. This is an exceedingly difficult problem to solve. Repairing the fleet wide cultural attitude and developing an institutionally accepted and supported NPME continuum is a complex problem with multiple factors at play. The transformation of the Navy's view of the value of NPME is the topic of another paper. It is beyond the scope of this study to address them all with the scrutiny this subject deserves. These factors include needed staffing increases for CNCS, cost/budget analysis to develop and integrate NPME into an officer's career roadmap, and

recommendations for education board creation and promote a culture change to refocus and emphasis the value of NPME.

The first section of this thesis provides a background on the Navy's view of NMPE and the current NMPE structure and practices. It explains how the inadequacies of current PME have harmed the performance of Navy officers, especially in the joint community. This section also addresses the negative affect the lack of a career-long NPME curriculum has had on the performance of Navy officers in the joint environment. Section two compares the current service PME continuums and requirements revealing the disparity between the Navy and the other services. Section three focuses on the impacts of a lack of early-career moral and ethical leadership education on officers. It also discusses the current mentality on the meaning of leadership and the institutional misuse of the word when describing management practices. The fourth section recommends solutions to the Navy's NPME problems. This paper will outline the need for a mandated NPME continuum with rigorous curriculum covering leadership development, operational art, theories of warfare, and naval warfare; in order to create an officer corps capable of meeting tomorrow's challenges.⁸

The US Navy has put the fleet's technological advancement before the professional development of its enlisted and officers. It is the only service without established educational milestones that are highly coveted for promotion.⁹ This weakness threatens the Navy's ability to perform its mission. The Navy must develop its human capital through NPME to function in the complex and unpredictable multi-domain environment of the future.¹⁰ Career-long PME would stimulate and reinforce the analytical skills necessary for naval officers to exercise sound military judgment in modern maritime and joint operations.¹¹

Successful organizations require ethical and dynamic leaders and allocate considerable resources and time to building leaders at every level.¹² The Navy lacks any effective approach to leadership development and provides inadequate resources for it. The current leadership principle “Ship, Shipmate, Self,” has become unethical. As a result, today’s Navy has acute deficiency in the ethical leadership, strategy, and operational art. It needs a career-long naval warfare-focused NPME continuum with NPME requirements for promotion.¹³ The curriculum should include moral and ethical leadership development, operational art, theories of war, and most importantly an emphasis on naval warfare theory and practices. The renewed focus on professional military development would cultivate a community of professional warfighters and competent leaders with a shared understanding of the profession of arms.¹⁴ Prerequisite PME is the first step in resolving and addressing rising concerns in the fleet, such as commanding officers relieved of command for a loss of confidence, elevated Navy suicide rates, sexual harassment, and substance and alcohol abuse, to name a few.¹⁵ Naval leadership needs to stop pointing the finger down the chain of command and take responsibility for the issues plaguing the fleet.

The Navy does not stipulate knowledge requirements at each career level or mandate participation in NPME as an institutional expectation for O4s. The Navy treats PME as a distraction from officers’ time at sea and milestones. Navy community leaders must recognize that NPME is just as important as operational experience. At the O3 level the Navy must move beyond the designator specific PME/training hybrid (e.g., Surface Warfare Officer Department Head School and Naval Aviator Weapons Tactics school) and bring all designators together to learn how the Navy fights as a united service, much like the Marines do with EWS. The Navy sees NPME as a “nice to have” for JOs, and only if it fits within their career path, rather than

making it an institutional expectation. Any considerable time away from the waterfront for NPME is detrimental to an officer's career progressions if it is not managed and timed appropriately.

During the Cold War, the Navy abandoned the Second World War's joint operations and thought processes. Instead, it promoted a greater focus on tactical expertise, causing the naval officer to fall behind the other services' operational knowledge and experience.¹⁶ Analysis shows a drastic disparity in the percentage of Naval flag officers who have completed more than the minimum PME requirements compared to the sister services.¹⁷ The gap in the PME requirements for naval officers is obvious when operating on joint staff and planning cells across the military. The lack of experience in the joint planning process limits the ability of Navy officers to contribute to joint staffs and thus the integration of naval forces in joint plan effectiveness and success.¹⁸ The independent nature of naval operations has enabled a mentality of autonomy from the other services. According to Rear Admiral Jacob L. Shuford, USN:

If the Navy is to function smoothly in joint operational planning and contribute effectively to the execution of joint and combined campaigns, it must develop flag officers who are strategically minded, capable of critical thinking, and highly skilled in naval and—of paramount importance—joint and coalition warfare. Navy leaders must be able to envision, articulate, and integrate the capabilities of the maritime component in the planning and execution of joint, inter-agency, and multinational efforts.¹⁹

Furthermore, the lack of emphasis on the professional leadership development perpetuates the ongoing issues with micromanagement practices by senior and flag officers. Today's young officers need improved PME to overcome these weaknesses.

A New NPME continuum's objectives must focus on the individual officer's betterment as a professional Armed Forces Officer and a moral and ethical leader. Without better commanders, the Navy will not be able to make use of its superb technology. During a video conference conversation with CDR Russell Evans, USN(Ret), Academics Officer at Marine

Corps University, asserts, “Navy officers must understand the technical advances to maintain the fleet and understand the operational or strategic level of to employ it; ultimately, it is not one or the other, but a balance of both.”²⁰ If PME objectives changed, the Navy would find itself in a better position to produce highly educated and cohesive teams striving towards unified success. NPME should develop naval officers educated and skilled in the employment of multi-domain combat forces and the conduct of war, cultivating a corps of officers with the knowledge and critical thinking skills needed to function in a progressively more demanding operational environment.²¹ CDR Evans also asserted, “The Navy will argue stating it already does [PME]. However, the Navy is incapable of agreeing on a set schedules for PME courses starting at Newport; has no formal board to select the students; will take O3s not yet selected for O4; has a low promotion rate of the Navy officers selected as faculty; and the JOs that are sent to PME courses are not considered to be the front runners of the Navy.”²² Since fleet requirements continually change, this provides the Navy the leeway to maintain ambiguity in the definition of a fully qualified professional naval officer.²³ The institutional change needs to start by aligning naval officer PME obligations with sister service board requirements. Establishing PME requirement criteria for promoting O4s through flag officers would make expectations clear. This change would not only challenge service traditions but also transfer resources from systems development to human development.

The Navy’s current officer training pipeline emphasizes management and technical expertise over leadership skills. The late Senator John S. McCain’s (R-AZ) asked the 2011 Tailhook Convention and nailed the issue on the head: “Have we allowed ourselves to be knocked off-course to the point that we strive now to produce the ‘ideal manager’ rather than the next generation of true leaders?”²⁴

Terms and Definitions. Many of the key terms in this paper have multiple definitions. It is crucial to define these terms to ensure clarity and understanding throughout this paper. PME in this context is strictly defined as “the education that provides individuals with the skills, knowledge, and understanding that enable them to make sound decisions in progressively more demanding command and staff positions within the national security environment.”²⁵ The most common sources of PME are in-resident, distant learning, and hybrid classes. Leadership is a focus of the paper and is defined as, “a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal.”²⁶ General Lejeune stated that leadership is “the sum of those qualities of intellect, human understanding and moral character that enable a person to inspire and to control a group of people successfully.”²⁷ Given the dynamic and complex security environment in the future, Navy leaders must be able to thrive in conditions of uncertainty. The Profession of Arms is built on leaders who build trust and confidence up and down the chain of command and with the American people they serve. The degree of trust and confidence reflects the leader’s competence and character.²⁸ A leader accepts responsibility both for faithful execution of the office, to include a life of continuous study and application, and for the maintenance of an exemplary personal life.²⁹

PME is defined as career training designed to provide or enhance the recipient force’s leadership and capabilities to conduct military planning, programming, management, budgeting, and force development to the appropriate level of sophistication.³⁰ Continuum is a critical part of this paper and is a continuous sequence in which adjacent elements are not noticeably different from each other.³¹ Within the continuous sequence, each element builds on the knowledge acquired in the previous element of education. Management is characterized as a

process of planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, and controlling resources such as people, material, time, and money to accomplish the organization's mission.³²

Improving NPME will not be easy. It requires a cultural transformation to refocus the fleet and Navy leadership on the importance of PME. Culture change is a term used in public policy that emphasizes the influence of cultural capital on individual and community behavior.³³ It places stress on the social and cultural capital determinants of decision making and the way these interact with other factors like the availability of information or the financial incentives facing individuals to drive behavior.

BACKGROUND

Over the last three decades, there has been a sweeping shift in PME across all branches of the military in accordance with both congressional mandates and current requirements. The Navy lags the other services, service- and rank-specific PME obligations for JOs and rejects any time away from the waterfront to focus on PME. The Navy's capability to successfully carry out its mission is at risk if it does not take significant measures to determine its officers' competence, improve leadership, encourage organizational skills growth, and implement developmental alternatives.³⁴ In recent years, defense and naval officials consistently called for a renewed focus on advanced military education as a base for national security. The 2018 National Defense Strategy stated that the American warfighter's ingenuity and talent is our greatest lasting power and alluded that the NPME system had deteriorated. The following year, the groundbreaking E4S Final Report determined that to preserve naval superiority in an age of great-power competition and technological change, the Navy needs to improve and expand their educational efforts."³⁵ As an example, the Marine Corps offers the EWS for O3 and Marine Corps University (MCU) Command and Staff College (CSC) to O4 grade officers with three different

course competition options. An equivalent O4 core curriculum exists at CNCS. However, the O3 officers that attend CNCS are at a disadvantage because of a lack of operational experience needed to contribute to the discussions and get as much as they could from the education experience. Because of the lack of respect for PME, many officers either cannot or will not attend resident courses, fearing it would damage their careers.³⁶ Designator quotas are set by the detailers. The detailing shop for each designator meets with NWC and Naval Postgraduate School and guarantees to provide a set number of students for each year. The service schools would get more students to attend if the detailing shops were provided designated time in an officer's career roadmap and direction to commit to them.³⁷

Today, the bulk of NPME is taught through Navy e-Learning on the My Navy Portal website or distance-learning programs at the Naval War College (NWC). The Navy states that these programs meet basic requirements. However, the quality of the courses does not compare to the quality of education received in residence, and ultimately should not be considered problematic. The actual curriculum, however, meets JPME minimum requirements but does not provide higher education in leadership and naval warfare.³⁸ The Online PME Fact Sheet states that “[t]hey are designed to provide the fleet with a PME experience at milestones in their careers...these courses increase professional knowledge, develop an understanding of naval science and joint operations, and enable service members to fully engage in the joint military environment.”³⁹ Official Navy policy dictates that officers ought to receive a graduate degree, which is maintained in promotion and selection board convening orders.⁴⁰ The E4S study states, “[i]n recent decades, advice and mentorship provided to both junior and senior officers was that the path to promotion valued ‘time in the cockpit’ or ‘time at sea,’ etc., and as a result a set of orders spent in graduate school or in a program of higher learning would be seen as a black mark

on an officer's record.”⁴¹ The online PME approach portrays a false level of concern about the necessity of PME by delivering access and “are designed to provide learners with a 24/7 worldwide PME experience,” without interfering with operational requirements.⁴² The Navy's approach to distance education in PME reveals that fleet time matters more than formal education.

The Navy is not preparing officers to be department heads, mentors, holistic thinkers, and leaders due to the lack of an opportunity to lead at lower levels of command like the Army and Marine Corps.⁴³ Seldom community managers encourage spending a year away from the fleet to study. Officers try to complete their education requirements with distant learning courses to fulfill JPME requirements without affecting their career paths. They thus rarely have time to appreciate what they are studying, because they must focus on their primary responsibilities of leading Sailors.⁴⁴ Navy education pipelines generally do not include leadership and ethics, unlike the absorbent amount of time invested in technical experience and management skills. Navy commissioning sources attempt to educate midshipmen on some of these basic professional and leadership skills, but so do Army, Air Force, and Marine commissioning programs, all in the middle of a host of other academic standards.

COMPARATIVE SERVICE PME

Unlike the other services, the current NPME does not stipulate knowledge requirements at each pay grade or demand participation. The other services begin their PME continuum at the grade of O3 with Air Force SOS, Army CCC, or Marine Corps EWS. These programs bring all service communities and warfighting functions together, encouraging integration. The Navy's lack of a similar program reduces its operational efficiency, as well as the ability of Navy officers to contribute to joint planning. The disparity in NPME requirements for naval officers is

obvious when operating on joint staff and planning cells across the military.⁴⁵ The lack of experience in joint planning puts naval officers behind the power curve when serving on a joint staff, reducing their ability to contribute to effective planning and hindering the inclusion of Navy capabilities in the plans.

Sister Services PME. In the joint operational environment, it is crucial that service branch officers are trained in the Profession of Arms, making the entire DoD officer corps indistinguishable in matters of leadership ability and ethical concepts. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 1800.01F, Officer Professional Military Education Policy states, “The PME system is a progressive educational continuum guiding an officer’s individual development over time. The continuum structures the development of Service and Joint officers by organizing PME into educational levels and linking those levels so that each build on the experience, self-development, and learning mastered previously.”⁴⁶ The instruction specifically calls out “in Service PME” in addition to JPME in the effort to develop well rounded commissioned officers and leaders. Within the continuum outline, it states that Primary PME is the entry-level education obtained at the grade of O1 through O3 and shall focus on specialized skills and tactical knowledge of in Service-specific concepts with an introduction to Joint subject matters.

The three resident O3 PME Service schools have remarkably similar mission statements: to provide O3s with the education and training to prepare them mentally, morally, tactically, and technically for billets of increased leadership responsibility and prepare them to overcome tomorrow’s challenges.⁴⁷ This wording demonstrates that the services must provide an educational foundation for their officers before they enter the JPME system. The programs contain Service PME subjects, branch-specific warfighting capabilities instruction, and non-branch specific staff officer training.⁴⁸ Leadership is a cornerstone of all three schools, the Air

Force SOS says it best, “Students will engage in classroom and hands-on application events to know themselves to lead themselves, know their team to lead their team, foster a strategic and creative mindset, resolve conflict effectively, collaboratively solve problems.”⁴⁹ Completion of these programs weighs heavily on their service records and promotion board selection. SOS lasts four weeks, CCC six months, and EWS ten months.

The NWC’s equivalent curriculum is available only online and consists of only 4.5 semester hours. The Navy Online Professional Military Education (OPME) ignores leadership development. There is a single curriculum for both senior enlisted (E7-E9) and officers (CWO2 to O4) and is “designed to provide a common educational experience that addresses fleet and Joint education requirements.”⁵⁰ Senior enlisted personnel and junior officers have vastly different education needs. The generalized approach to PME cannot provide sufficient professional development and leadership education for either group.

The Navy needs to provide a sequence of programs for JOs, at the O1, O2-O3, and O4 levels as the foundation of career-long PME. The current OPME curriculum is voluntary for officers and consists of approximately 70 contact hours of online instruction, to satisfy the Navy’s basic PME requirement for O1 through O4. The other services foundational education and training programs go beyond technical competence and mandate professional self-study. When looking into the other DoD Services’ PME, O1, O2, and CWO2s are expected to focus on developing into competent experts within their professional fields and professional self-study, through the professional reading programs.⁵¹

To be considered PME complete for O4 in the Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps, officers must complete either a resident, or command and staff college program. These Command and Staff Colleges are ten-months long and cover both Service and JPME Phase 1

education requirements. Again, completion weighs heavily on their service records and promotion board. The Naval College of Command and Staff meets the same JPME and civilian accreditation standards as the other service, but the Navy does not treat it with the same respect. The other services make PME completion a promotion criterion.⁵² For example, MARADMIN 351/20, Convening of the FY22 U.S. Marine Corps Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, Major, And Captain Promotion Selection Boards, emphasizes the necessity of PME. Selection guidance for many of the Marine Corps selection boards includes a notice of the significance of PME.⁵³ It advises officers to ensure course completion is noted on their Master Brief Sheet (MBS), PME completion certificates are included in their Official Military Personnel File (OMPF).⁵⁴ However, the only reference to PME in Navy convening orders states, “[t]he boards shall give favorable consideration to those officers with relevant graduate education, experience in specialized areas, and NPME and JPME.”⁵⁵

The difference in the Navy’s mindset regarding officer NPME in comparison to the other services is discouraging and shows a lack of importance toward the professional and leadership education of its officer corps.

An Emphasis on NPME? In recent years, the Navy has taken a new look at the education of Sailors and officers. The Department of the Navy (DoN) E4S Final Report, released in December of 2018 calls for “a ‘clean sheet’ review of all aspects of naval education and carefully reviewed and assessed the entire naval educational enterprise.”⁵⁶ The report identifies the need for better NPME and identifies that other Services constantly outperform Navy students.⁵⁷ A Joint Staff J7 analysis concluded that in AY16-AY-18, significantly fewer navy officers attending sister service resident schools, resulting in a significant deviations from

policy and law.¹ The report repeatedly states the need for PME reform in the Navy and selection board should favor officers who attend resident PME and graduate in the upper third.⁵⁸ The report points out the Naval Leadership and Ethics Center has programs only for senior officers, O5 and O6.⁵⁹ The report detailed the need for ethical leadership training for department heads, executive officers, and commanding officers, while denouncing any leadership training for JOs. By the time an officer has reached O5, the personal moral and ethical code of conduct has been established over 15 or more years of service. Providing no leadership education until an officer is closer to retirement than initial commissioning is a stunning disregard for any professional education of Navy JOs.

DEVELOPING TRENDS

The Navy requires officers with the ability to lead teams in challenging and dynamic operational environments but, unlike contemporary corporations, does not devote resources to development them.⁶⁰ The dedication of these organizations to optimizing the leader's contribution and cultivating personnel with the capacity to dynamically prioritize criteria in the best interests of the collective and the individual is an integral characteristic of these organizations.⁶¹ The Navy as a collective asserts that "everything begins and ends with leadership;" but it assumes that leadership "just happens as a normal byproduct of operational assignments. A modern methodology for Naval Officers' development needs to include career-long naval warfare-focused NPME, rigid by-grade leadership education, and completion as a prerequisite for promotion.⁶² Without such a program, the Navy remains unable to balance professional education, technical training, and an officer's occupational experience.⁶³

¹ During the period of AY16-AY18, 22 of 72 Student Seminars at the Army's Command and General Staff College had no Sea Service officers, and 9 of 40 Student Seminars at Air Force Command and Staff College had no Sea Service officers. The Marine Corps Command and Staff College reported 7 out of 16 class seminars had no Navy officer participation, resulting in major deviations from policy and law.

Management not Leadership. The management mentality that the military has enthusiastically adapted from the corporate world is characterized by its determination that everyone delivers goods to the “consumer,” which is accomplished by targeting an optimal combination of mathematical formulas, metrics of success, and increased production.⁶⁴ Adam Wolfe explains, “[a]bove all, it is the managerialist’s idolization of technology that leads them to view human beings in a progressively more mechanical, deterministic way.”⁶⁵ The managerial mindset has caused a spread of military ineptitude, “directly, by forcing their members to act in a fashion that is not always conducive to military success, and indirectly, by attracting, selecting and promoting a minority of people with particular defects of intellect and personality.”⁶⁶ Military incompetence is typically a failure in leadership. Officers are put in situations and leadership positions when they are inept or incapable of performing the required level of dynamic problem solving needed to accomplish the objective.⁶⁷ This encompasses both the daily routine engagements with Sailors and life-or-death situations in combat or at sea. The system not the officers are at fault for not provided proper upbringing and institutional education on leadership.

The Navy has the institutions to provide the essential and highly needed leadership education to the fleet. Nevertheless, the Navy does not see this as an essential requirement until the officer is a Senior Officer or Flag Officer. As mentioned above, the Navy teaches leadership only to senior officers, at the NWC College of Leadership and Ethics. The website advertises a curriculum intended to create “leaders who build trust and confidence up and down the chain of command and with the American people they serve. The degree of trust and confidence that exists is based on the combination of the leader’s competence and character.”⁶⁸ Resident programs at the NWC include leadership education, but too few officers attending. However, the

requirements and emphasis put on these issues for JOs is remarkably lacking due to the cultural mindset of “officers are meant to be at sea.”⁶⁹ Providing institutional leadership training to officers of all pay grades would build a community of officers with a consistent education across all designators rather than leaving it up to on-the-job training, often by officers who themselves lack leadership education. The current system may result in the Navy’s inability to effectively perform its mission in the near future, unless major strides toward improving the evaluation of officer performance, JO leadership education, and encourage the development of interpersonal skills.⁷⁰

The US Navy’s integrity problem affects officers at all pay grades. However, the individuals that get the most attention are commanding officers (CO). Headlines describing the personal misconduct of these senior officers – such as cruelty, solicitation, sexual harassment, drunkenness, and fraternization – reveals a dangerous trend.⁷¹ In 2010, the Naval Inspector General (NAVIG) organized a team to conduct an in-depth examination of the circumstances behind COs being detached for cause (DFC) over a six-year period to determine if there were any fundamental or cultural reasons for the increase of these cases and what further actions need to be taken to prevent such misconduct.⁷² Personal misconduct, including adultery, inappropriate relationship, harassment, and sexual assault accounted for most of the DFCs. The study goes on to reveal that adultery, inappropriate relationship, harassment, and sexual assault accounted for nine of the ten cases (90%), with alcohol abuse being the reason for the remaining ten percent.⁷³ Furthermore, a secondary factor of sexual harassment was identified in alcohol-related relief cases. Lastly, eight out of the nine DFCs due to adultery, inappropriate relationships, harassment, and sexual assault; COs were also relieved for inappropriate relationships.⁷⁴ While more than 97% of the Navy’s commanding officers perform honorably.

The Navy's leadership did not believe that the NAVIG's report indicated a systemic problem.⁷⁵

The percentage of morally compromised officers, however small, indicates otherwise. The Navy is failing to maintain the ethical standards that American society now demands.⁷⁶

Only career-long education in ethical leadership and moral decision making, can curb the growing trends of personal misconduct by Navy officers. Naval command involves distinctive moral and ethical demands. Integrity is a byproduct of an officer's moral and ethical code. Everyone is raised with distinctive morals and ethics based on their cultural upbringing and belief systems. However, this does not mean these individuals have the proper moral and ethical foundations required for naval service. Career-long leadership development will equip officers to meet them, as the 2010 NAVIG study states: "[s]everal people who have done work in this field conclude that this type of failure can be mitigated through opportunities for self-awareness and related ethics training throughout a career."⁷⁷ However, what the fleet receives is a rudimentary attempt at mandating ethics training by developing a Navy eLearning course that is nothing more than a check in the block for a command's Fleet Training Management Planning System (FLTMPS) requirements.² The Navy did not even make the rudimentary eLearning course mandatory until after the 2006-2013 Fat Leonard Scandal went public, putting the Navy's cultural ineptitude regarding ethical conduct on full display.⁷⁸

Navy officers embrace the Navy's core values of "Honor, Courage, and Commitment," but without adequate training on how to apply. Systematic leadership education must fill this gap. Officers need to be educated in what it means to be a US Naval Officer, how to build sound ethical foundations, and the importance of moral thought processes and decision-making skills. Ethical leadership is defined as, "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers

² I went through my personal Navy eLearning and identified when the Navy made Ethics training mandatory.

through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making.”⁷⁹ Leaders set the ethical climate for an organization by enacting practices, policies, and procedures which facilitate the demonstration of ethical behavior and decrease the probability of misconduct.⁸⁰ A code of ethics is not a silver bullet or a quick fix by itself. Alone a code is just a collection of words with no power or influence.⁸¹ A code, set of principles, or standards are an essential step, but hardly sufficient to secure the ethical character of the Navy as an institution.⁸² Not only should expectations be set high, but there needs to be a curriculum that actively educates and teaches naval professionals during their careers.⁸³ The code should serve to “reinforce and unify professional thinking,” as well as represent to the nation and the world “what the naval profession stands for and by what standards it accepts judgment.”⁸⁴

The lack of any substantial ethical and moral leadership education and thus of a clear understanding of the moral obligations of naval command puts the Navy’s institutional identity into question. The Marine Corps identity is at the heart of what it means to be a Marine. Marine Corps core values are centered on a bedrock of character, guiding their actions and bolstering resolve, and supporting their common moral cause.⁸⁵ The use of key mottos like “Once a Marine Always a Marine,” *Semper Fidelis* (always faithful), and *Ductus Exemplo* (lead by example) exemplify the meaning of being a Marine creating an organization under one moral and ethical code.⁸⁶ Career-long leadership training is particularly important to the Marine Corps, and developed two official publications centered on career-long leadership development. Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 6-10: Leading Marines describes the leadership philosophy that distinguishes the US Marine Corps.⁸⁷ General Carl Epting Mundy Jr., 30th Commandant of the Marine Corps, stated in the foreword of the original publication in 1995, “leading Marines is the most important responsibility in our Corps, and thus we must educate the

heart and mind to prevail on the battlefield and in the barracks, in war and in peace.”⁸⁸ Marine Corps Tactical Publication (MCTP) 6-10B: Marine Corps Values: A User’s Guide for Discussion Leaders demonstrates the USMC’s intent for Marines to employ ethical principles throughout their careers.⁸⁹ Both publications reinforce a Marine’s moral and ethical commitment to the core values and to the Corps. NPME must create a similar ethos, a true Navy identity that transcends individual differences and unifies the fleet’s moral identity.

FLEET WIDE CULTURE CHANGE

Effective leadership in the maritime operational environment requires a balanced education combined with professional and technical competence.⁹⁰ NPME should include that balance, teaching critical thinking, conflict resolution, ethics, and leadership, establishing a mindset of career-long learning. The Navy must take a comprehensive approach the rejuvenation of NPME, making it a scheduled assignment and a condition for, not a hindrance to, promotion.

Navy leadership should use Marine Corps PME as a model. The difference in PME mindset between the naval forces could not be more opposite. The Marine Corps uses the Basic School, which all officers attend to provide a moral, as well as professional, foundation for officer careers. Combining the two core concepts would ultimately strengthen the skills and competence of Navy officers to successfully perform in a highly dynamic and multidimensional operational environment and ultimately prosper in naval command.⁹¹ The Navy must integrate ethics education and professional education training. The initial education in NPME should be integrated into the officer’s basic officer course training, marginally extending the length of the school. The next level should be a CNO mandated O3 EWS equivalent education program that

brings all Navy officers together to learn how the Navy fights as a service and increase the value of O4 command staff college attendance for promotion.

Ensign to Lieutenant Junior Grade enhanced technical and tactical training: The primary warfare communities must expand their curricula to include both ethical decision-making and the overall patterns of naval operations as well as community specific tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP). These improvements will extend the time ensigns are in their basic training courses but will produce JOs with a broader and sounder understanding of the Navy and naval warfare. After graduation from the US Naval Academy (USNA), Officer Candidate School (OCS), or Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC), officers would transfer to their initial designator-specific courses of instruction. The NWC College of Leadership and Ethics (CLE) would develop and oversee the ethics curriculum.

After completion of basic community training, the officer will need to be assigned to a tactical operational level command – Sea Duty – Unit Identification Code (UIC) to continue their technical training, including initial tours at the squadron, ship, or team level. This would ensure the officers continue the crucial technical and tactical training while also allowing them to complete their basic designator-specific Personnel Qualification Standard (PQS) and Warfare Officer qualification or requalification by the time they are eligible for O3. In addition to refining the technical skills of these most JOs, these billets will also provide the opportunity to apply and build on the ethical and moral leadership education received during initial designator training, as well as learn from the extensive leadership experience of the Chief Petty Officers at the command.

Lieutenant PME – Naval Warfare School: As O3s, officers must be fully qualified, tactically sound technicians, and have division level leadership experience. At this point, the

Navy can shift focus and concentrate on a fleet standard resident NPME. Following the model of the Expeditionary Warfare School, a “Naval Warfare School,” would bring together all the navy’s communities and designators to study the integration of disparate capabilities in naval operations.⁹² Naval Warfare School should be a 28-week or more resident school that provides career-level, professional military education and training to O3s and selected O3 officers from other services and countries capable of demonstrating a dedication to the Navy’s Core Values in keeping with the highest degree of professionalism expected of all commissioned armed forces officers. First, Navy officers must display the ability of critical and creative thinking, ethical decision making, effective communication and a Composite Warfare mindset as leaders; second, officers must exhibit proficiency in their respective designators, and prepared for continued career progression, personal development, and professional education.⁹³ Curriculum development should be concentrated around six key concepts to provide a complete understanding of Naval Warfare in its entirety: Warfighting and Composite Warfare⁹⁴, Surface/Aviation/Subsurface/Information Warfare/Expeditionary Operations⁹⁵, Military Adaptation and Innovation⁹⁶, Wargaming⁹⁷, Occupational Field Expansion Course⁹⁸, and Leadership in the Profession of Arms.⁹⁹ Established as a component of the existing NWC College of Maritime Operational Warfare (CMOW), would prepare officers mentally, morally, and physically for higher responsibilities across the fleet and the Joint Force. Naval Doctrine Publication 1 (NDP-1): Naval Warfare, would form the basis of the curriculum and emphasis the concepts of naval warfighting capabilities within the Composite Warfare construct, Marine Air Ground Task Force operations, and Navy/Coast Guard police actions.¹⁰⁰ CMOW is already teaching these concepts to senior and flag officers, so the new Naval Warfare School would have

a vastly different program. Completion of an O3 NPME program should become a part of the O4 promotion guidelines.¹⁰¹

Lieutenant Commander PME – College of Naval Command & Staff participation.

Participation in intermediate-level NPME for all O4s will require fleet-wide changes within the Navy Personnel Command (NAVPERS) and the NWC. These changes will facilitate the needed improvements to career and talent management as well as promotion selection of officers of the highest quality. CNCS would first have to expand its capability to support an increased throughput of O4s, O4 selects, and those in zone for the associated calendar/fiscal year Navy O4 Selection Boards annually.¹⁰² NAVPERS will need to develop a Chief of Naval Operations Education Board construct to select and assign the officers for intermediate-level PME programs. In line with the above promotion statuses, officers with a permanent change of station (PCS) date from their current command of no later than 30 September will be screened on the associated fiscal year Professional Intermediate-Level Education Board.¹⁰³ Officers could satisfy the intermediate-level school requirement by attending resident CNCS, CNCS Distant Education, a sister service resident program, or a foreign command and staff program. The establishment of an education selection board to identify officers to participate in intermediate-level education and graduate programs would perpetuate a renewed emphasis on NPME. Program selection will depend on the overall quality of the officer's service record. It is symbolic of an officer's desire to seek professional development and may make the officer more competitive during selection to O5.¹⁰⁴ Requiring the attendance to CNCS or service equivalent O4-level NPME program will be futile unless the Navy revises the inimical attitude towards the professional education of junior and intermediate grade officers. The combination of relatively low program/school seat availability and the large number of eligible officers would make the Professional Intermediate-

Level Education Board process incredibly competitive,¹⁰⁵ resulting in added PME completion criteria to promotion selection board convening orders to assist in necessary and well overdue talent management and promotion of professional military officers.

CONCLUSION

A career-long NPME continuum would create a more professional, proficient, and ethical officer corps, prepared for a dynamic and providing leadership rather than management. The result would be a new class of naval professional who can dynamically shift between requirements rather than adhere to strict priority matrices. Embracing a fleet-wide culture change, the Navy would find itself leading highly educated and cohesive teams striving toward mission success rather than managing working groups shifting from task to task. The current lack of PME opportunities afforded to junior and intermediate Navy officers shows a glaring disparity between the Navy's view of PME and that of the other services. Improvements need to start at the beginning and continue throughout an officer's career. The extension of officer basic designator courses to include curriculum on community specific TTPs and foundational moral and ethical education would provide a more comprehensive entry-level training and better prepare them for their junior officer sea tours, where they could apply their classroom education to real world operations at the tactical level. Division officer level leadership responsibilities would allow an officer to develop their own personal leadership styles using the moral and ethical foundations laid at the schoolhouse. Great leaders are cultivated over a long period of time, applying positive and negative leadership and followership experiences to facilitate the natural growth of the individual officer.

Once the officers complete their initial sea duty assignments and fall within one of the O3 promotion statuses, they would be eligible to start their NPME. The creation of an O3 level

Naval Warfare School, which reaches across all communities and designators, would provide an initial education into naval strategy and philosophy. Having a career-level education program that immerses every naval officer into a common understanding and ability to apply naval warfare concepts, would bring a new level of tactical, operational, and strategic cooperation. Intermediate-level education attendance at the CNCS or service equivalent would build upon the lessons from Naval Warfare School and advance the officers education concerning naval and joint staff functions, planning, and joint wargaming. In the end, developing an intermediate-level corps of officers with homogenous knowledge and critical thinking skills to effectively analyze and execute sound decisions into the employment of multi-domain fleet combat forces and the conduct of war.

NPME must focus on developing educated, moral, and ethical naval leaders with the ability to function in a multi-domain operational maritime environment, lead fleet combat forces, and hold an unparalleled understanding of warfare theory and strategy. With a new understanding and approach to NPME, implementation of competitive higher education selection boards, and updates to officer selection board convening orders to instill the importance of NPME, the Navy will finally manifest a new era of professional naval officers fully prepared to lead the fleet into the conflicts of today and tomorrow.

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⁹⁵ US Marine Corps University, "Expeditionary Warfare School, Curriculum, MAGTF Operations Ashore.", US Department of the Navy, *Composite Warfare Doctrine*, NWP 3-56., US Department of the Navy, *Navy Planning*, NWP 5-01. Surface/Aviation/Subsurface/Information Warfare/Expeditionary Operations: While all five warfare areas are to be taught separately, however the elements of education and focus are relatively consistent. Educate officers on the operational elements of the specific warfare area through the lens of the Single Battle Concept and applying Naval Warfare philosophies. Officers will be able to integrate all warfighting functions and plan for the doctrinal employment of the full spectrum of naval capabilities in the execution of complex and distributed naval operations.

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⁹⁷ US Naval War College, "Wargaming," accessed on February 21, 2021, <https://usnwc.edu/Research-and-Wargaming/Wargaming>. Wargaming: Allows officers to gain practical experience and a better understanding of the dynamics of warfighting, but simulations are also designed to prepare military leaders for national disasters and humanitarian relief. These activities, designed both for students and external organizations, foster an understanding of decisions today's military leaders and civilian must make during maritime and joint warfare. Simulating these complex war scenarios builds analytical, decision-making, and risk assessment skills.

⁹⁸ US Marine Corps University, "Expeditionary Warfare School, Curriculum, Occupational Field Expansion Course.", US Department of the Navy. *Navy Officer Manpower and Personnel Classifications*. Millington, TN: Navy Personnel Command, October 2020. <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Portals/55/Reference/NOOCS/Vol1/Entire%20Manual%20I%2073.pdf?ver=rpCPz8Vt4b52x7ETTh2GP8A%3d%3d>. Occupational Field Expansion Course. Designed to sharpen the mission essential cognitive, and technical skills unique to each naval community. With the large number of naval officer designator codes, it would not be feasible to have designator specific OFEC in Naval Warfare School. Instead, OFEC would be broken down into rigorous community specific curriculum reinforcing how each community fights.

⁹⁹ US Marine Corps University, "Expeditionary Warfare School, Curriculum, Leadership in the Profession of Arms", US Naval War College, "Leadership in the Profession of Arms." Leadership in the Profession of Arms: CLE

would provide a developmental experience through self-learning that combines educational rigor and professional relevance. Affording the opportunity to focus on themselves as moral and ethical leaders, reflect on past performance, examine personal strengths and weaknesses, develop new competencies, and strengthen their personal character to enhance their ability to lead in a complex and dynamic environment. The expected outcome of is to enhance the officer's ability to self-assess, apply critical thinking, and the strength of character needed by leaders in the profession of arms.

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