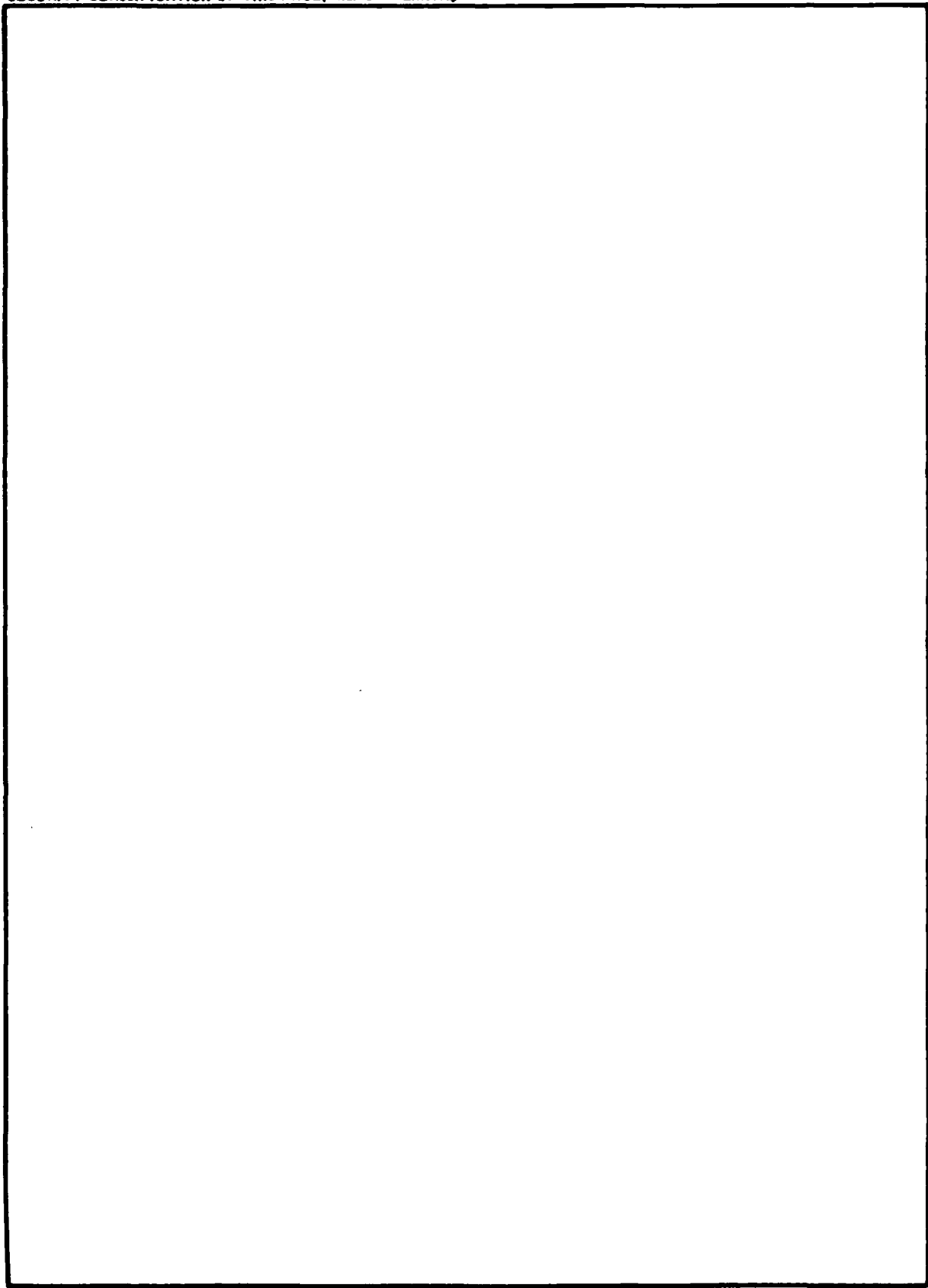


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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
	AD A116230	
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) The Marine Corps Professional Military Education Selection System		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Student Essay
		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s) R.G. Leidich		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS US Army War College Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Same		12. REPORT DATE 16 April 1982
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 27
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) Unclassified
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) The essay describes the Marine Corps method of selecting officers to attend Professional Military Education courses of instruction prior to 1977. It then researches the new selection technique that developed into a "system" and describes the reasons for change and gives the details of the revised system. ↑		

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE(When Data Entered)



SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE(When Data Entered)

US ARMY WAR COLLEGE
INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH BASED ESSAY

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THE MARINE CORPS PROFESSIONAL MILITARY
EDUCATION SELECTION SYSTEM

BY

R.G. LEIDICH

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GLOSSARY

Academic Year (AY). The school year in which the student actually matriculates. Usually expressed as AY YY/YY. For example, the student who begins school in calendar year 1981 and graduates in calendar year 1982 would be shown as AY 81/82.

Career Schooling. Training and education conducted for officers beyond entry and basic level schooling. Includes PME, MOS skill progression training, Special Education Program (SEP), Advanced Degree Program (ADP), Funded Law Education Program (LAW) (ELP(L)) and College Degree Program (CDP).

MOS Skill Progression Training. Training and education to advance skills in specific occupational specialities. Typical courses are normally intended for officers in the grade of captain and include Infantry Officers Advanced, Field Artillery Officers Advanced, and Armor Officers Advanced.

Precept. A formal document which prescribes the manner in which a Board of officers is to perform. Precepts are typically utilized to instruct promotion and other selection boards on the criteria for selection and any special guidance such as adherence to equal opportunity regulations.

Professional Military Education (PME). Education provided to unrestricted Marine officers at the Top, Intermediate, and Career levels.

Slates. A document published three times each year by Headquarters, Marine Corps which projects future assignments for officers in the grades of captain through colonel. Separate slates are published for each grade (colonels through captains) in March, July, and November. The slates predict moves during the forthcoming 9 months beginning with the month the slate is published.

Unrestricted Officer. A male Marine officer in the grade of second lieutenant through general who may be assigned any duty for which he is qualified (as opposed to a restricted officer (all warrant officers and some second lieutenants through lieutenant colonels) who, by nature of their commissioning source and/or Military Occupational speciality (MOS) may serve only in billets corresponding to their primary MOS).

INTRODUCTION

In 1977 the Marine Corps decided to change the manner in which students were chosen to attend Professional Military Education (PME) courses of instruction. The selection technique utilized prior to 1977 was a selection "method." Beginning in 1977, the selection technique became a selection "system."¹

The purpose of this article is to describe the previous selection method, the reasons why the method was changed, the revised system (utilized in 1977 and 1978), the growing pains experienced within the Marine Corps as a result of the change to the revised system and finally, how the present system operates.

PME is conducted at three levels - Career, Intermediate, and Top - for officers in the grades of captain, major, and lieutenant colonel/colonel, respectively.

BODY

The Previous Selection Method

In order to understand and appreciate the reasons for the present PME selection system, it is essential to understand the previous PME selection method and the forces which caused the Marine Corps to change to the revised system.

Previous (Pre - 1977) PME Selection Method.²

Top Level School (TLS). Students chosen for TLS prior to AY 78/79 were selected by a formally precepted board. To be eligible an officer had to have at least two years in grade as a lieutenant colonel upon matriculation but not be so senior that, as a colonel, he/she would be in the primary zone for selection to brigadier general while in school. The other eligibility criteria were that an officer could not be in a failed of selection to colonel status and the officer had to be available for transfer during the following academic year.

Intermediate Level School (ILS). Students chosen for ILS prior to AY 76/77 were selected by their monitors based upon their availability for transfer during the AY in which they were to matriculate. Officers in the grades of major and lieutenant colonel were chosen for ILS. Generally, the monitors considered their entire unrestricted populations so long as the officer was not in a failed of selection to lieutenant colonel status, was considered competitive for promotion to the next

grade, had, upon matriculation, at least two years in grade as a major but not more than 19 years commissioned service, if a lieutenant colonel, and, if a major, would not be in the zone for selection to lieutenant colonel while in school. The monitor's school selections were formalized by approval of the then-annual officer slates. Student selection by the monitors served to spread out the base of formal school trained officers and served to keep more competitive officers in the Fleet Marine Force (FMF). AY 76/77 students were chosen by an informal board of Officer Assignment Branch Officers utilizing essentially the same selection criteria as that previously employed by the monitors. AY 77/78 students were chosen by a formally precepted board of Officer Assignment Branch Officers but the selection criteria remained essentially unchanged.

Career Level School (CLS). The CLS selection process prior to 1977 was a virtual mirror image of that utilized for ILS except that the grade upon matriculation ranged from the most junior captain through majors with no more than two years in grade, the officer could not be in a failed of selection to major status, and could not be in the zone for selection to major while in school.

The Forces Which Caused The Change

Three conditions occurred almost simultaneously which caused the Marine Corps to re-examine the manner in which officers were selected for PME:

Excellence in Education Committee (EEC).³ In its report, dated 5 June 1975, evaluating the Senior Service Colleges*, the EEC required the

* In Marine Corps terminology, the Senior Service Colleges are called Top Level Schools.

military services to select officers for TLS based on a system which provided for a "time window" during which an officer, once selected, would be assigned to school in accordance with his/her next logical tour completion date. The EEC also required the services to refine their selection procedures to take advantage of the strong points of the other services' selection procedures. Analysis of the Marine Corps selection procedures disclosed that, although the quality of the Marine TLS student was considered to be exceptionally high, the career point at which Marine students matriculated was significantly later than that of the other services. This late matriculation resulted in the Marine Corps receiving fewer average years active service from its TLS graduates than the other services. Similarly, in its report dated 1 December 1976 on the Intermediate Level Staff Colleges, the EEC concluded that, with some allowance for special conditions, it was not cost effective for other than junior majors to attend ILS.

Department of the Navy Inquiry.⁴ Coincident with the EEC studies, on 15 September 1976, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (M&RA) questioned the Marine Corps concerning the promotion rate of lieutenant colonels who attend Marine Corps Command and Staff College, the propriety of conducting an informal board composed of members of the Personnel Management Division to select officers for Marine Corps Command and Staff College, and the policy of not considering officers for Marine Corps Command and Staff College who are in the primary zone for selection to lieutenant colonel.

Equitability.⁵ In addition to the questions being raised by the EEC and the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (M&RA) regarding PME selection methods, internal feedback within the Marine Corps indicated that,

largely because of the increased time on station constraints facing the Marine Corps,* an inequitable situation would develop if an officer was only considered for PME selection when available for transfer.

* In late 1975 and early 1976, the Department of Defense issued a series of memorandums, later to be known as the Brehm memorandum, which were designed to reduce PCS movement expenses. The Brehm memorandum established three years as the minimum tour and established the "homebasing" concept for those assigned to dependents restricted tours. The effect of the Brehm memorandum was to increase the time most Marines would remain in the same geographical location.

The Revised Selection System

Because of the questions/criticisms raised by both the Excellence in Education Committee and the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (M&RA) and because of selection inequities caused by increased time on station constraints, the Marine Corps decided, in 1977, to revise the manner in which students were chosen to attend PME.

The features of the revised PME selection system were as follows:

All Levels (TLS, ILS, and CLS).⁶

- o Time on station (availability) was not a selection consideration.
- o Officers selected for school attended as soon as available.
- o Assignment to school took precedence over all other assignments.
- o Requests for deferment were not normally approved.
- o Primary selectees, not able to attend school the year selected, because of availability constraints or other reasons, were moved to a deferred list and replaced by the number one alternate in their category.*

* Officers competing for TLS were categorized as ground, aviation,

aviation ground, or supply/data systems/Judge Advocate while those competing for ILS or CLS were categorized as ground, aviation, or aviation ground.

- o The names of officers on the alternate list were prioritized by category, as determined by the selection board.
- o An alternate, designated to become a primary, was also moved to the deferred list if unavailable to attend school.
- o Alternates, not assigned as a primary or not deferred, were reconsidered for selection the following year provided their Promotion Year Group (PYG) remained eligible.
- o Deferred officers' records were reviewed by the subsequent year's selection board and, provided there was no qualitative change to their records, were revalidated and designated as primaries.

ILS Unique.⁷

- o During the two year transition period from 1977 to 1979, two separately precepted ILS Selection Boards convened each year. One board, hereinafter described as the "junior board," selected students from the five most junior lieutenant colonel promotion year groups. The second board, hereinafter described as the "senior board," selected students from immediately above the junior board zone up to, but not including, those officers projected to be in the brigadier general selection zone while in school, less those lieutenant colonels who were in a failed of selection to colonel status.

- o After the two year transition period was completed (commencing with those officers selected for TLS during AY 80/81) only officers in the four most junior lieutenant colonel promotion year groups were to be considered for TLS.
- o The following schools are considered to be Top Level PME Schools: Naval War College, National War College, Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Army War College, Air War College, Inter-American Defense College, NATO Defense College, Australian Joint Services Staff College, Foreign Service Institute, Royal College of Defence Studies, and Norwegian National Defence College.

ILS and CIS Unique.⁸

- o The Judge Advocate Officer Advanced Course (JAOAC), an MOS skill progression course, is considered either a Career or Intermediate Level PME School equivalent dependent upon the grade of the officer (captain or major) upon matriculation.
- o A portion of the annual quota to the JAOAC was set aside, on a noncompetitive selection basis, to be utilized by MOS 4402 officers whose delayed entry into the judge advocate field dictated they attend JAOAC in order to gain professional parity with their contemporaries. The quota size was determined by mutual agreement between the Occupational Field (OF) Sponsor (HQMC Code JA) and the Officer Assignment Branch (HQMC Code MMOA).

- o An officer may attend the College Degree Program (CDP) and another career school while in the same grade. Except for post baccalaureate education, which must proceed CDP, order of attendance (CDP or another career school first) shall not be a factor. An officer may be assigned from CDP to another career school, or vice versa (except for post baccalaureate education), with or without an intervening tour.
- o Participation in the Advanced Degree Program (ADP), the Special Education Program (SEP), the Excess Leave Program (LAW) (ELP(L)), and the Funded Law Education Program (FLEP) is considered to be the equivalent of either CLS or ILS dependent upon grade at matriculation.
- o Officers who attend PME are eligible to attend another career school (ADP, SEP, ELP(L), or FLEP) while in the same grade once they have completed at least one intervening tour.
- o Officers selected for more than one type of career schooling before attending either can chose which school they desire to attend.
- o Officers selected for more than one type of career schooling before attending either are administratively deleted from the selection list(s) of the career school(s) they opt not to attend.

ILS Unique.⁹

- o During the two year transition period, majors in the five most junior promotion year groups were considered for selection to ILS.

- o Subsequent to the two year transition period, majors in the four most junior promotion year groups were considered for selection to ILS.
- o Lieutenant colonels do not normally attend ILS.
- o Officers do not attend school with more than 17 years commissioned service.
- o The following schools are considered to be Intermediate Level PME Schools: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Armed Forces Staff College, Command and Staff Naval War College, Army Command and General Staff College, Air Command and Staff College, Canadian Forces Command and Staff College, Spanish War College, and German General Staff Course.

CLS Unique.¹⁰

- o Captains in the four most junior PYG's were considered for selection to CLS.
- o Majors do not normally attend CLS.
- o Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School is considered to be the only Career Level PME School available to Marine officers.
- o The Advanced Communications Officer Course plus the following U.S. Army MOS skill progression courses are considered to be the equivalent of Career Level PME School for selection and attendance: Armor Officer Advanced, Engineer Officer Advanced, Field Artillery Officer Advanced, Infantry Officer Advanced, Military Police Officer Advanced, Signal Officer Advanced, and

Transportation Officer Advanced.

- o A portion of the annual quota to the Military Police Officer Advanced and Post Graduate Intelligence Courses is set aside for restricted officer utilization, on a noncompetitive selection basis. The restricted officer quota size will be determined by liaison between the respective HQMC Occupational Field Sponsor and the Officer Assignment Branch.
- o A portion of the annual quota to the Post Graduate Intelligence Course (PGIC) was set aside, on a noncompetitive selection basis, to be utilized either to gain professional parity with their contemporaries for MOS 0202 officers whose entry into the intelligence field occurred as the result of a lateral move subsequent to initial qualification in another MOS or for those MOS 0202 officers who required the PGIC education in order to qualify for a specific billet upon graduation.

The revised PME selection system required a separate, formally precepted selection board be convened for each level of PME and that officers be considered for their respective level of school regardless of their availability for transfer. The revised system, which was precepted to select only the highest quality officer for assignment to school, served to narrow the base of formal school trained officers.

Growing Pains Resulting From the Change

A considerable amount of controversy surrounded the revised PME selection system subsequent to its announcement in July 1977. The initial objection to the revised system centered around the abruptness by which it was adopted and announced and the diminished selection opportunity experienced by senior captains, senior majors, and senior lieutenant colonels as their status changed from being prime candidates, by reason of their relative seniority, for PME selection to candidates with little or no probability for selection at their present grade. Although some criticism was anticipated prior to announcement of the revised system, and accommodated to by a subsequent change, neither the depth nor intensity of the criticism was anticipated.¹¹

The revised selection procedure was precepted to identify and select those officers who had most demonstrated outstanding potential for future service whose records indicated they would be utilized in positions of increased responsibility. The revised selection procedure also established precise eligibility zones, based on promotion year groups, so that every officer knew whether or not he/she had been considered. In essence the Marine Corps transitioned from a "method" of selecting officers for PME to a "system". The system was precise in that an officer was either considered or not depending upon seniority. Moreover, not only the officer, but also his/her peers, subordinates, and superiors knew the officer was in the zone for consideration. Consequently there was now no way to rationalize nonselection, because of nonavailability, as had existed under the previous method. Because the PME precepts required selection of the best officers, these boards became de facto preselection boards for the next grade. That is not to

say that promotion preselection was their intended purpose but, because the boards were looking at entire promotion year groups while these groups were still relatively junior in their respective grades, and were selecting a significantly smaller percentage for PME than that which a promotion board would select for promotion, as a by-product, the PME boards provided an indication of an officer's competitiveness relative to his peers. An officer selected for PME as a primary, deferree, or alternate could feel reasonably comfortable that he/she would be selected for the next grade provided his/her performance level remained constant. Nonselection for PME per se did not indicate an officer was not competitive for selection to the next grade but it did indicate, statistically, that his/her chances were reduced and this factor served to make him/her uneasy.¹²

After the board results for TLS, ILS, and CLS were published during the summer of 1977 a second chorus of concern began to be heard. Unlike the initial criticism voiced upon announcement of the revised selection system, this concern was more fundamental and dealt with what should be the Marine Corps' educational philosophy and what effect would selection/nonselection have on the individual officer's career. Other criticisms surfaced at this time also but were principally isolated within the lieutenant colonel community. The criticisms expressed by the lieutenant colonels were how the Marine Corps could justify selecting a major, who was a lieutenant colonel selectee, for TLS when that officer had yet to compete as a lieutenant colonel for billets, responsibilities, and fitness reports. Another concern expressed by the lieutenant colonels was that once they had passed through the four most junior promotion year groups they would no longer be considered for TLS.¹³

From the educational philosophy standpoint what was being heard was the debate over whether the Marine Corps should train only the best officers, as the precepts for the PME selection boards dictated, or should that prerogative be reserved for TLS only, as before, and train promotable/competitive officers at the career and intermediate levels.

Based on feedback from the faculties at Marine Corps Command and Staff College, the Amphibious Warfare School, and the Advanced Communications Officer's Course, there was no question that the quality of the student selected by the revised system was appreciably higher than in the past.

The recurring questions, though, were can the Marine Corps afford to have so many top quality officers out of circulation at one time and what are the consequences of training only the very best to assume greater responsibilities in the future? The pragmatic answer to the first question: "Can the Marine Corps afford to have so many top quality officers out of circulation at one time" was "yes" because after the "price" had been paid the first year, the same number of high quality officers going to training would be returning therefrom. The answer to the second question: "What are the consequences of training only the very best to assume greater responsibilities in the future" was much more complex and therefore more difficult to answer. A very prevalent line of argument heard was that the top quality officer will take the initiative to educate him/herself and that, although top quality officers should be sent to PME, to deny resident education to the bulk of the officer corps, the steady "average", promotable officer, is to invite disaster in time of crisis when an immediate need exists for as many trained officers as possible. Furthermore, a variation of this theme argues that an officer, not selected for PME, creates within

him/herself an image of less than a high achiever and, as a result of that mental set, suffers a performance reduction, either consciously or subconsciously.¹⁴

As could be expected, the reaction by individual officers to their nonselection was swifter and louder than the debate over educational philosophy. The nonselectees were quick to perceive their competitive position and voiced strong opposition to being identified as a "have-not" in the "have/have-not" equation. Many officers felt the Marine Corps was approaching, or had arrived at, the "ticket punching" syndrome found in some of the other services while other officers took the PME selection board results as a message to look for employment elsewhere, either immediately through resignation or through retirement at an earlier than previously planned point in their careers. Although not quantifiable, a strong argument can be made that the revised PME selection system was at least a contributing factor to the larger than normal number of resignations received from captains and junior majors and the earlier than expected retirement of some lieutenant colonels.¹⁵

Subsequent to announcement of the revised selection system in July 1977 a conscientious effort was made to educate Marine officers as to why the revised PME selection system was adopted and how it operated. Information concerning the PME selection system was published via HOTLINE, the Navy Times, the "Dear . . ." letters sent out by the field grade monitors to their population prior to each slate year, and by a personal letter from the DC/S for Manpower to all captains. Further, every monitor trip provided a comprehensive explanation of the revised PME selection process.¹⁶ Despite, or perhaps because of, these extensive educational efforts, the criticism concerning the PME selection

system persisted. In an effort to gauge the nature of the criticism from another perspective, during April 1978, the DC/S for Manpower tasked an Ad Hoc Committee to review the PME selection process to determine its effectiveness compared to the previous selection method, and to recommend appropriate changes, if required. The Ad Hoc Committee reported:¹⁷

- o An overall lack of specific knowledge concerning PME existed among the officer corps,
- o That a large undecided group of officers existed who had not made their minds up concerning the relative merits of the revised system, and
- o That knowledge of the system was a function of experience.

The committee further reported that:

- o General satisfaction existed within the officer corps concerning the revised PME selection system,
- o The PME selection process was perceived to be fair and equitable,
- o A stream of cautious optimism existed concerning the merits of the PME selection system,
- o PME attendance is highly valued and selection equates with a fast track,
- o PME selection equates with preselection for promotion and influences assignments,
- o The officer corps appears to accept the reality of the PME selection system and its effects,
- o The PME selection system splits the officer corps into "haves" and "have-nots",
- o The transition to the revised system was not fair to all

promotion year groups, and

- o Lieutenant colonels felt more strongly than the other grades concerning the revised system,

The Ad Hoc Committee Recommended:

- o To maintain the present PME selection process, with minor changes,
- o To increase the officer corps' level of knowledge concerning the PME selection system,
- o To precept PME selection boards to select for school but waive attendance for those few highly qualified officers who had already gained equivalent experience,
- o To select PME students proportionally by occupational field, and
- o To reconsider the advantages of a pooling system and its flexibility.

Subsequent to announcement of the "fine tuning" changes to the PME selection system a third wave of concern began to crest. This concern was related to the relatively large number of officers who had been deferred the previous year who were now effectively insured of PME attendance. Deferees became a liability in that they reduced the selection probability of the remaining officers in the zone. Another concern, which affected TLS eligibility only, was that only the four most junior lieutenant colonel promotion year groups would be eligible for TLS selection after the two year transition period had passed.¹⁸

How The Present System Operates

Analysis of the Ad Hoc Committee's report and PME selection system criticism, as well as analysis of the entire Marine Corps career school

selection philosophy resulted in some modifications to the PME selection process. The resulting changes involved the relationship and PME equivalency of SEP, ADP, FLEP, ELP(L), CDP, and MOS skill progression courses; the relationship of restricted officers to career schooling; and the noncompetitive selection of certain officers to MOS skill progression courses who receive lateral MOS moves as captains and above. Resolution of these issues resulted in modifications to the PME selection system but retained the previously approved fundamental philosophy.¹⁹

The present PME selection system was approved during the summer of 1979. During that summer, officers were selected to attend school during AY 80/81. During Summer 1980 officers were selected to attend PME during AY 81/82 (officers presently in school) and this past summer students were chosen to attend school during AY 82/83. The selection process/criteria is as follows:²⁰

Top Level School (TLS)

The Selection Board will be formally precepted.

Eligibility criteria:

All lieutenant colonels less those:

In the most junior promotion year group

who have requested retirement

who have requested not to be considered

who have failed selection to colonel

who are limited duty officers

who have previously attended TLS

Colonels in the most junior FYG less those:

who have requested retirement

who have requested not to be considered

who have previously attended TLS

Officers will be considered regardless of their availability for transfer (selectees not available for transfer will be notified by letter and an appropriate entry will be made in their case file. These officers may compete again for selection if they remain eligible).

Officers will be selected regardless of category, i.e., ground, aviation, and aviation-ground officers will compete in one category.

There will be no deferees.

Selection criteria: Officers who have demonstrated outstanding potential for future service in the Marine Corps and whose records indicate that they would most benefit from TLS attendance to prepare them for assignments of increased responsibility should be selected.²¹

Intermediate Level School (TLS)

Students will be selected by an informal board of officers.

Competitiveness, promotability, and availability for transfer are the key factors for selection.

Selections will be made by category (ground, aviation, and aviation ground).

There will be no deferees.

All majors available for transfer will be considered less those:

Projected to be in the next promotion zone to lieutenant colonel.

Selected by the most recent major's promotion board.

Who commenced Test Pilot School (TPS), Special Education Program (SEP), Advanced Degree Program (ADP), Funded Law Education Program (FLEP), and the Excess Leave Program (LAW) (ELP(L)) as insignia majors.

Who are LDO's.

Who have requested to retire, resign, or not to be considered.

Who have previously attended ILS.

Career Level School (CIS)

Students will be assigned by their monitors subject to the approval of the Director, Personnel Management Division (a major general's billet).

Competitiveness, promotability and availability for transfer are the key factors for selection.

Selections will be made by category (ground, aviation, and aviation ground).

There will be no deferees.

All captains available for transfer will be considered less those:

Projected to be in the next promotion zone to major.

Who commenced TPS, SEP, ADP, FLEP, and ELP(L) as insignia captains.

Who are LDO's.

Who have requested to retire, resign, or not to be considered.

Who have previously attended CLS.

For All Schools

Assignment to school will take precedence over all other assignments.

Requests for deferral will not be approved.

Officers selected for ILS or CLS and SEP, ADP, FLEP, or ELP(L) before attending either may choose the school they desire to attend.

School Quotas

The number of students who attend school, and the schools they attend, varies each year. This variance is relatively minor. The figures presented below are for AY 82/83 and are representative of the numbers chosen and the schools available during the past five years:

Top Level School²²

<u>School</u>	<u>Quota</u>
Naval War College	26
National War College	10
Industrial College of the Armed Forces	10
Army War College	8
Air War College	5
Inter American Defense College	1
NATO Defense College	2
Executive Seminar in International Affairs	1
Australian Joint Services Staff College	1
Norwegian National Defense College	1
Total	<u>65</u>

	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>
Number of officers considered	1077	1101	903	953	977
Number of primaries selected	61	63	65	65	65
Number of alternates selected	72	63	65	65	65

Intermediate Level School²³

<u>School</u>	<u>Quota</u>
Marine Corps Command and Staff College	112
Armed Forces Staff College I	18
Armed Forces Staff College II	18
Naval Command and Staff College	20
Army Command and General Staff College	10
Air Command and Staff College	7
Canadian Forces Staff College	1
Australian Command and Staff College	1
Norwegian Army Staff College	1
Spanish Naval Warfare College	1
Total	<u>189</u>

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>
Number of officers considered	608	917
Number of primaries selected	189	189
Number of alternates selected	97	53

Career Level School²⁴

<u>School</u>	<u>Quota</u>
Amphibious Warfare School	170
Advanced Communications Officers Course	40
Field Artillery Officer Advanced Course	26
Engineer Officer Advanced Course	14
Infantry Officer Advanced Course	12
Armor Officer Advanced Course	12
Military Police Officer Advanced Course	3
Transportation Officer Advanced Course	3
Signal Officer Advanced Course	1
Post Graduate Intelligence Officer Course	17
Total	<u>298</u>

As of 8 March 1982, there were 4,828 captains in the Marine Corps.

CONCLUSION

In 1977 the Marine Corps imposed a revised PME selection system upon itself. The revised system was partially in response to outside pressures and partly due to internally perceived inequities. The revised system encountered a hail of criticism. Most of the criticism centered around the legacy associated with carrying the previous years' deferees over to reduce the next year's vacancies and the notion, real or perceived, that selection for school was paramount to preselection to the next grade. Whether true or not, many Marine leaders associated the greater than expected number of resignations from captains and junior majors and the earlier than expected retirement of a greater than anticipated number of lieutenant colonels with the revised PME selection system. After two years of turbulence and various degrees of dissatisfaction with the revised system, the system was 'fine tuned' in such a manner as to retain its desirable and required characteristics while eliminating those features which were found to be difficult to manage and/or objectionable.

After three years of selection experience with the present system, feedback from various sources (General Officer's Symposium, individual officers, Manpower Conference, Career Planning Branch, Monitor's Visits)²⁵⁻²⁸ indicates that the present system, while not perfect, has received general acceptance and is no longer a source of irritation within the officer corps.

Endnotes

1. Professional Military Education; Proposed Modifications to Present Selection System (Headquarters Marine Corps), Route Sheet (5211), 15 June 1977, p. 5.

2. Ibid., p. 2.

3. Ibid., p. 3.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 4.

7. Ibid., p. 5.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., p. 6.

10. Ibid., p. 7.

11. Ibid., p. 8.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., p. 9.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., p. 10.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., p. 11.

18. Ibid., p. 13.

19. Professional Military Education; Proposed Modifications to Present Selection System (Headquarters Marine Corps), Route Sheet (5211), 27 February 1979, p. 12.

20. Academic Year 1981/82 Student Selection Method for

Professional Military Education Schools (Marine Corps Bulletin). 10 July 1980, p. 1.

21. Precept, Top Level School (TLS) Board, Academic Year (AY) 1982/83 (Commandant of the Marine Corps), letter MMOA3-HWB-jac over 1500/1, 1 July 1981, enclosure (1), p. 1.

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25. Statement by Colonel Ray Kotesky, Head, Career Planning Branch, Headquarters Marine Corps, in a personal interview, HQMC, Arlington, Virginia, 24 November 1981.

26. Statement by Colonel Jim McWilliams, Head, Officer Assignment Branch, Headquarters Marine Corps, in a personal interview, HQMC, Arlington, Virginia, 24 November 1981.

27. Statement by Lieutenant Colonel Bob Sullivan, Head, Special Program Section, Officer Assignment Branch, Headquarters Marine Corps, in a personal interview, HQMC, Arlington, Virginia, 24 November 1981.

28. Statement by Major Russell Appleton, Head, Ground Company Grade Officer's Assignment Unit, Officer Assignment Branch, Headquarters Marine Corps, in a personal interview, HQMC, Arlington, Virginia, 24 November 1981.

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