

Enlisted Career Newsflash

Quarterly Newsletter of the Enlisted Career Counseling & Evaluation Unit (MMSB-50) / HQMC

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 03 – 4TH QUARTER FY11 – OCTOBER 2011 (release)



Enlisted Career Counselors Editorial

This third issue of the Enlisted Career Newsflash arrives with big changes having occurred in the Enlisted Career Counseling & Evaluation unit. We have effectively completed our transition from different branches of Manpower Management, from the Enlisted Assignments branch (MMEA) to the Support branch (MMSB). With this transition, our section, as well as the Officer's counseling section, has merged into one main counseling section designated as MMSB-50. Both sections will continue to operate with the same missions as before, but now with combined forces of an overall counseling section within Headquarters Marine Corps. This move is critical in attempting to streamline our ability to work with the Support Branch, as well as other HQMC sections, to better support Marines throughout the Corps. Our new location is on the 3rd deck of the MMSB building, building 2008, on MCB Quantico, Virginia.

In the last issue of the Enlisted Career Newsflash (3rd Quarter FY11), we focused on laying the foundation for a successful career, provided statistical information on the recently adjourned FY11 GySgt selection board & preparing for retirement. In this issue we will discuss important decision factors concerning

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MMSB-50

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“The (Performance Evaluation System) PES highlights past performance; counseling shapes future performance”
PES Manual - MCO P1610.7F
(w/Ch 2)

Career Counselors Editorial

From the office of the Enlisted Career Counseling & Evaluation unit
(Continued from the previous page)



the 1stSgt/MSgt career path, statistical information pertaining to the recently adjourned FY11 SSgt selection board and the recently released new service limits for Sergeants.

Promotions within the Marine Corps are continuing to be very competitive, with most getting more competitive by the year. Every day adjustments are being made, throughout our government and Corps, which affect each and every one of us. Sergeants that thought that they would be good to serve until thirteen years of service are now realizing that the situation has changed which has forced many to re- think their future Marine Corps career options and possibly even civilian career options earlier than originally expected. With many Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) having fewer allocations and the zones becoming tighter, it has really started to make Marines think about their approach to their career. It is important to realize that there are sections of Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) that continue their mission of helping Marines succeed throughout their career. Marines need to

take advantage of these opportunities, if for nothing else; to get a second set of eyes to review their records and help them set themselves up for future success. At the end of the day, it is the individual Marines' responsibility to take charge of their own career and seek out the information that is available and in most cases, needed.

In closing, we continue to seek feedback from Marines on what they think about the Enlisted Career Newsflash, as well as any ideas for future topics of discussion. Has it been beneficial to you personally? Or, how did you come to find the newsletter? We will continue to strive to improve our ability to reach more Marines with this newsletter, but it has been a slow start in trying to get enough feedback to make adjustments for our target audience. This newsletter is for ALL Marines of the past, present and future; regardless of them being Enlisted or Officers in charge of enlisted Marines, who this newsletter is intended. We thank you all for your continued hard work and efforts in continuing to pass this information throughout the different levels of your Chains of Command.



Semper Fidelis
Enlisted Career Counselors, HQMC

Selection board precepts:

Marines should always ensure that they know the process in which they are selected for promotion to the next higher grade. Every board is given a precept (guidance) from the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) prior to the board convening. This document is posted to the Promotion branches website at the adjournment (conclusion) of every SNCO selection board, on the specific page of the rank boarded. It is highly recommended that Marines visit the Promotion branches website to view what the Commandants specific guidance is. A brief example of what is discussed is below:

Recruiting and Drill Instructor duty: "Particular effort must be applied to interpreting the markings of fitness reports before, during, and after assignment to recruiting or drill instructor duty. Because of the standards applied during these assignments, marks may be lower than marks reflected by an equal level of performance in other duty assignments".

Leaders at all levels should ensure that they are spun up on the guidance provided the members of the board.

Career Decisions – 1stSgt / MSgt route

Early planning to enhance future competitiveness



This article is a snapshot of an article that will be put on the Enlisted Career Counselor website in the near future:

This article is intended to focus on the 1stSgt/MSgt career path that GySgt's seek throughout their time in-grade. This article is intended to discuss future decisions concerning this critical venture in a Marines career towards 1stSgt or MSgt, with the focus of making the decision early on in a Marines career. It is imperative to understand that all Marine GySgt's that meet the promotion zone Junior Date of Rank (JDOR) are screened for 1stSgt, but only those Marines that select (F) on their last fitness report prior to the convening date of the board will be considered on that specific board. We will discuss various topics that need to be considered in preparation for this critical decision such as: reasons for selecting (F) or (M), key factors to setup your career path for that route, the dual eligible quandary, as well as switching from (F) to (M) and vice versa.

There are numerous reasons why Marines want to go the 1stSgt route. With pursuing this route being the most complex and puzzling to a vast majority of Marines, we will focus on the 1stSgt route more than MSgt. When a Marine is putting (F) on their fitness reports, or is considering doing so, the first question that tends to get asked is, why? That is a good question that deserves to be asked and usually has many answers, depending on who is answering. A good majority of Marines that select the 1stSgt route want to be a 1stSgt for various personal and professional reasons that generally vary. Most of those Marines have made it a goal and want to follow through and accomplish that goal. Another group of Marines go the 1stSgt route for a slight different reason. These Marines typically are looking for something different and may not be fully content in their PMOS. If they really want to be a 1stSgt or not is irrelevant, but regardless they put (F) and hope for the best either way. The last group is those that know they won't be looked at for MSgt for 4-5 years (on average); they want to be selected for E8 so they tend to take the path of least resistance which will hopefully get them selected sooner than later. These Marines tend to be the ones that don't necessarily want to be a 1stSgt, but the need to be promoted overrides the want/need to stay in their PMOS. During recent SNCO selection boards, Marines have been eligible for the 1stSgt Promotion zone typically after 3 years in grade as a GySgt, so this thought process does make sense, but there are things to consider, in advance, of making this very important decision. Ensure the decision is made for the right reason!

Every Intended Military Occupational Specialty (IMOS) is more or less competitive every year. The Career Counselors maintain the selection rate percentage statistics for every IMOS at the adjournment of every board. These statistics tell us exactly how competitive that IMOS was with the numbers of Marines in zones and the total number of allocations. This also gives us a selection rate percentage to give Marines an idea of what percentage of a chance that he/she had to get one of the few allocations available. The 1stSgt route (8999) has consistently been the most competitive IMOS for past years E8/E9 boards. Regardless of the 1stSgt/MSgt route that one may take, performance tends to trump most other aspects of the Marines individual record, as performance typically carries over 80% of the weight of a Marines entire record. For example, a Marine GySgt 0369 could have a Bronze Star with a V, a Black belt 1st degree MCMAP qualification and have gone above and beyond in all training and education and still be passed over for MSgt (or not selected to 1stSgt – as a free look) due to having low performance in that PMOS (basically performing below the Marines' peers). Performance inside and outside of the PMOS also goes to show a willingness and ability to perform outside of a Marines comfort zone, making that Marine more well rounded as a Marine in general. Some Marines in certain PMOS's are not afforded the opportunity to get outside of the PMOS, due to the PMOS being a critical MOS (so the community cannot afford to let Marines leave at the time). Comments on Section I & K (from the Reporting Senior and Reviewing **(Cont...)**

Career Decisions – 1stSgt / MSgt route

Early planning to enhance future competitiveness
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Officer) of the fitness report are always big ticket items since this is information coming from the “horse’s mouth” on exactly how you performed throughout the reporting period and how the RO breaks you out in comparison with your peers that he/she has reviewed. Comments that truly speak to the performance reflected throughout the reporting period, without inflation and fluff, or space filler type comments, make a board members job of placing a Marine above their peers a little easier. For example, if a Marine is filling a Company GySgt billet and is in charge of say 300 Marines, having that reflected is a tangible comment that the board member prepping your record can copy and paste directly into your brief. Annotating how many Marines a Martial Arts Instructor (MAI) has instructed throughout the reporting period is another example of tangible type comments. When a Marine has tangible bullets with statistical data notated in their billet accomplishments; having them reiterated in the Section I comments can effectively enhance the board members ability to give the MRO the best chance of a complete and accurate brief.

A lot of Marines have misconceptions on whether switching from 1stSgt to MSgt, or vice versa, is a good or bad thing. It is typically viewed as a negative act. It is known that showing consistency is the best course of action, to show the board members that you are consistent and that you are pursuing the route that you truly want to go. Showing consistency would be ideal, but not always the best option to continue with if the individual Marine’s circumstances have changed. There are several case by case scenarios that must be looked at to ensure that Marines know the impact of each. The best understood scenario is the Marine that continues with the decision originally made for 1stSgt or MSgt, and no change is made throughout all GySgt fitness reports. The second scenario is, the GySgt that has been putting MSgt (M) on all fitness reports and then makes the decision to switch to the 1stSgt (F) route, for whatever reason. The third

scenario is Marines that have been putting 1stSgt (F) and then want to switch to MSgt (M), staying in his/her PMOS. Lastly is the “Switch ball hitter”. Meaning that every time that the wind changes, so does their decision and route. Or, said another way, if things don’t necessarily go their way they switch to the other direction. This last decision tends to show board members that the Marine doesn’t know what they want and that their priorities may not be the needs of the Marine Corps, but mainly their individual needs, which could adversely affect the outcome of the possible selection. The overall effect of each of these decisions is based off of how 21 different board members, from year to year, perceive each record, again, on a case by case basis.

Before getting into the specifics of each of these decisions, it is important to know what the Dual Eligible Quandary is, and what its implications are. The easiest way to describe the Dual Eligible Quandary is that a Marine continues to put all of their eggs in one basket for 1stSgt; neglecting the PMOS skill sets for MSgt being reflected on the in-grade fitness reports. A lot of Marines talk to their reporting officials and ask them to not mention their MOS technical skills in the Section I & K comments, but want the focus to be on the administrative facets only, in thinking that this will set them apart for 1stSgt. This is probably one of the worst things that a Marine, and his/her leadership, could do to try to help their competitive chances for future selection to E8. The implications of this are that the Marines record may not be competitive enough for 1stSgt, so he/she doesn’t get selected for that route. The Marine has been neglecting his/her PMOS skills and now is not competitive enough to get selected in the PMOS, so now they don’t get selected either way. Now the Marine has put himself/herself into a situation where they may have to **(Cont...)**

Career Decisions – 1stSgt / MSgt route

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retire (if they stay around that long) as a GySgt, when they could have planned their career in advance to have helped alleviate the problem in the first place, by being well rounded for the primary path of MSgt or the 1stSgt route. This is the worst case scenario, but also what tends to happen is the Marine really wants to be selected to 1stSgt, but doesn't get it. The Marine then gets selected to MSgt and is sometimes not happy with the selection. The bottom line is that a selection is a selection and every Marine should be striving to enhance their proficiency within their PMOS regardless. Especially since this is the field that they have been school trained in, in the first place.

Now looking at each of these scenarios, just discussed, and breaking each one down further will help Marines see the possible impact of each decision. As mentioned above, staying consistent by continually keeping (F) or (M) on fitness reports would be the ideal situation. However, things do change and reasons for the original decision may not necessarily be relevant now, so it may not be feasible to continue with the Marines initial decision. The second scenario was the Marine going the MSgt route and then decides to switch to 1stSgt. Breaking this decision down even further shows a few concerns that one must consider. First is that the Marine needs to make sure that this is the decision that they really want to make. If a Marine has a competitive enough record, they could be selected for 1stSgt

or they could be lessening their chances for selection in their PMOS if they don't get selected to 1stSgt, which we discussed above in the dual eligible quandary. Typically a lower percentage of Marines end up getting selected for 1stSgt going this route, due to the fact that they have been able to establish a degree of being the "duty expert" in their PMOS and now are behind the power curve of continually setting their record up for success for the 1stSgt route. Another area to focus on is if the decision is for the right reason, or if the Marine is getting pressure to go that route due to someone else thinking that the Marine would be better suited for it. If your IMOS is now closed out or the allocations dropped dramatically, jumping ship may not be the best decision, depending on the timing of the decision. The third decision is to switch from 1stSgt to MSgt. If a Marine has been consistently going 1stSgt and then decides to pursue the MSgt route, this is really a no brainer. Every Marine was school trained in their PMOS, which is also the MOS that they continue to steer towards in going to towards the E8 pay grade. If a Marine was putting (F) consistently on all fitness reports and then decides to put the focus back on their original MOS for

MSgt, this can only be a good thing. Quite a few Marines would disagree, but once put into perspective it would be better understood. Depending on the reason that the Marine put (F) to begin with, now the situation or mindset has changed. Every Marine pursuing the 1stSgt route should continue to set themselves up for success as both a MSgt and 1stSgt, which so many Marines tend to neglect. For those that have been continuing to be proactive in both routes, the switch would not be a bad one. Those Marines that have been putting all of their eggs in one basket are Marines that would not necessarily benefit from this decision. Lastly is the "Switch Ball Hitter". Consistency in whichever path taken is the key. A board members job of selecting the best and fully qualified for each allocation is a daunting task. If a Marine is indecisive and cannot decide which path that he/she wants to take, it really is not looked at as favorable.

Questions concerning this topic are ones that our section gets frequently. Continually auditing ones record and ensuring that the Marines career is as well rounded as possible is ideal. Active leadership and initiative on the Marines part can help alleviate this decision having a negative impact on the Marines' career.



Semper Fidelis
GySgt Robert Bell, Career Counselor

SSgt selection board rollup

Results from the FY11 SSgt selection board

Tensions have eased, or in some cases tightened, with the recent adjournment (release) of the FY11 SSgt selection board. This board convened on 19 July and adjourned on 23 September 2011. This year's board had 598 fewer allocations than the last FY10 board, as well as 1,589 fewer Marines considered. The In zone selection rate dropped slightly this year: from 64.6% last year (FY10) to 63.8% (FY11). Understanding that the allocations are based off of putting Marines in the Promotion zone for the first time, this is understandable.

The PME completion rate continues to rise, yearly, which is a definite positive trend. In FY07 the rate was 87.7%, which has risen every year, culminating at 95.5% this year (FY11). There tends to still be Marines with misconceptions and misunderstandings of PME requirements, by grade. Marines are encouraged to seek out the information provided in the Marine Corps' Professional Military Education (PME) order (MCO 1553.4B) and the Marine Corps' Promotion Manual (vol 2) (Enlisted Promotions) (MCO P1400.32D w/ch1). If Marines still have questions, please feel free to contact us for clarification or to dispel any rumors circulating.

The photo submission rate rose this year, from 87.7% last year (FY10) to 90.0% this year (FY11). This percentage has fluctuated in the last recent years: from 89.0% (FY07) which dropped in FY08 to 88.0%. It rose again in FY09 to

88.7% but dropped back in FY10 to 87.7%. This rise to the 90 percentile is a promising figure; however, Marines need to understand that the requirement to take a digital photograph is spelled out in the 60 day MARADMIN. Senior enlisted leadership need to continue to be proactive in ensuring that individual Marines understand the importance of squared away promotion photographs and its individual representation, or lack thereof, to the board members.

Our FY11 SSgt selection board debrief with the board members went well. One of the main topics of discussion was training and education. MCMAP belts were an area of concern. The board members talked about Marines that have Tan belts being looked at like "failing a PFT making them not as competitive". On the topic of education, the resident SNCO Academy Sergeant's course was very important. Having completed any advanced MOS schools was also important as it obviously gives a Marine more MOS proficiency and credibility.

The FY11 SSgt compiled debrief is being worked on at this time. It will take some time to be able to complete this document and once completed will be publicly released.



Semper Fidelis
GySgt Robert Bell, Career Counselor



SSgt board statistics:

There were 2,741 selections to Staff Sergeant, broken down as follows:

Above zone: 599 selected out of 2,317 eligible (AZ selection rate of: **25.9%**).

In zone: 2,077 selected out of 3,253 eligible (IZ selection rate of: **63.8%**).

Below zone: 65 selected out of 67 briefed (BZ selection rate of: **97.0%**).

The percentage rates of highly qualified Marines within SDA's (DI, Recruiter, MSG, MCSF, SOI & Critical Skills (CS) or MARSOC operators) to include Transition Teams (TT) and Joint IA (JIA) billets are also kept by the Promotions branch. A listing of each selection rate is below:

DI:	80.5%
Recruiter:	71.9%
MSG:	77.9%
MCSF:	56.5%
SOI:	79.7%
Critical Skills:	60.0%
TT:	78.8%
JIA:	82.4%

NOTE: The selection rate shows the % of Marines selected with that skill in their record.

We are your supporting arm!!

Utilizing the Enlisted Career Counseling & Evaluation unit



Our section has a wide range of responsibilities at HQMC. Our main focus is the counseling of individual Marines either by phone or in person, but that is just one facet. Prior to that individual counseling session ever being conducted, multiple things happen to be able to efficiently provide the information passed.

Our primary means of collecting information for Marines is the active duty SNCO selection board debriefs. These are conducted just before the release of every SNCO selection board. This gives us the most updated and relevant information required. We also conduct performance assessments at the HQMC level for the Enlisted Retention section for all Marines submitting for reenlistment, extension, lat moves, SDA requests, MOS reclassifications and separation requests. This gives us the best assessment when it comes to Marines with adversity and how it affects them in regards to promotion.

We are also here for senior enlisted advisors and reporting officials. It is highly recommended that senior leaders utilize our section when issues arise with their Marines. If you are not 100% sure how a certain situation would impact the future career of a Marine, let us know. If we don't have the answer needed, we can always point you in the right direction with the Marine or civilian Marine that does. If you have never utilized our section we challenge you to find out what we are about. It could help set your Marines up for success.



Semper Fidelis
Enlisted Career Counselors, HQMC

Accelerated Fitness Reports – (debunked)

This question was asked to be added by a Marine reader and should help answer questions Marines have concerning this topic. It is a widely asked question that needs to be discussed.

This section is referenced from the PES Manual (MCO P1610.7F w/Ch2) Chapter 4, section 4003, paragraph d:

“Reporting Seniors should reserve an accelerated promotion recommendation strictly for the Marine who is ‘the one above’ and who is eminently capable of immediately assuming the responsibilities of the next higher grade. NOTE: Per the provisions of reference (n) (MCO 6100.13), regarding enlisted promotions, the accelerated promotion program is designed to provide selection opportunity to Sgts and SSgts who do not meet the DOR or AFADBD... cutoff required for below zone consideration”.

What does this mean to the Marine?:

An accelerated promotion automatically puts the Marine into the below zone on the next convening SSgt or GySgt selection board, if, the Marine has not yet reached the below zone and has not yet been considered for promotion to the next higher grade.

Reporting Senior's must “attach a separate addendum page to the fitness report per paragraph 4015. Provide supporting rationale for the recommendation. This is a separate and distinct procedure from the narratives that report performance in sections C and I and any justifications for sections D – H”.

Sergeant Service Limits – New recent changes

Dispelling misconceptions for Marines across the Fleet

MARADMIN 433/11 contains the FY11 Enlisted Career Force Controls (ECFC) program guidelines. The end state of the ECFC program is, “to balance the inventory of Marines by grade and MOS to meet career force requirements. Continued implementation of these force management strategies will help ensure that commanders are provided the right Marines by grade and MOS”.

This year’s MARADMIN contains some very important updates to the Sergeant Service limits, which Marines need to be aware of. It is always recommended that Marines utilize this yearly message to ensure that they are up to date on any and all updates to this program. There have been a lot of misconceptions and rumors circulating the Corps on misguided information, at all levels. The biggest misconception that the Enlisted Career Counselor’s have fielded has been whether or not Sergeants who are at or are nearing their 10 years Time in Service (TIS) (having already extended or reenlisted their contract prior to this MARADMIN’s release of 29 Aug 2011) will continue to be looked at on future SNCO selection boards, up until their existing EAS. As stated in the MARADMIN: “All existing service contracts for Sergeants will be honored regardless of TIS constraints”. Marines will; however, continue to get looked at on future SSgt selection boards as long as they have ample enough time on their current contract that is beyond the adjournment (release) of that upcoming SSgt selection board. For example, if a Marines new EAS is in August of 2014 and he/she has already been passed once for promotion with 9 years TIS, he/she will have the opportunity to be looked at on the next FY12 and FY13 SSgt selection boards, but not the FY14 since the EAS is during the time that the SSgt board will be in session.

This MARADMIN covers several different case by case scenarios which Marines need to ensure that they understand. Service limits for all other ranks have not been adjusted and remain the same. Leaders are encouraged to seek out those Marines who this new policy affects and ensure that they understand how this new policy affects them individually. If leaders still have questions or concerns and need clarification they are encouraged to contact MPP-20 at (703-784-9361) or our section at (703-784-9241 or 800-833-2320) for clarification.

Promotion Tempos:

Sgt:	4 years TIS	1stSgt/MSgt:	17 ½ years TIS
SSgt:	8 ½ years TIS	SgtMaj/MGySgt:	22 years TIS
GySgt:	13 years TIS		

These are the goals of the Marine Corps, for Marines to pick up each rank.

Why have not all MOS’s reached this goal? Because the Corps promotes to vacancy.



FITNESS REPORT and “I LOVE ME” binders:

Do you have a personal fitness report binder, with a hard copy of every fitness report received, and an “I love me” binder, with a hard copy of every certificate that you have received in your career?

Another question may be, do your Marines?

Both of these questions probably sound ridiculous to the majority of readers; however, one would be surprised to see how many Marines that we counsel that don’t. They have never heard of the need to therefore, they just don’t.

The next time that you get a face to face (knee cap to knee cap) meeting or formation with your Marines, pose the question. If the Marines are being truthfully honest, you may be surprised.

This is something that tends to be an un-spoken act that most Marines are doing, but the next time you get a chance, double check your Marines as it could help their career.



We are on the Web:

Our website, through the Manpower & Reserve Affairs (M&RA) portal, is literally a one-stop-shop for all matters pertaining to a Marines career.

Directions to the website:

Go to: USMC.MIL

Scroll to the bottom right and click on **Career/Manpower**, under Corps Highlights.

Click on **Enlisted Career Counselors**, under Top Requests

Career Counselors website updates:

- Marine Corps orders have been collected on the front page for easy access.

- More documents are being added to enhance the effectiveness of the site.

Enlisted Career Newsflash

Volume 01, Issue 03– 4th Qtr FY11

Upcoming Events – (For possible unit planning)

- * MMEA West coast road show 23 Oct – 4 Nov 2011
- * RS Portland (Command visit) 17-20 Nov 2011
- * MMEA East coast road show 4-15 Dec 2011

FY11 SNCO Academy visits - (Next upcoming classes)

Quantico, VA.	Counselors located on MCBQ
Camp Lejeune, NC.	7-8 Nov 2011
Camp Pendleton, CA.	6-8 Dec 2011
29 Palms, CA.	9 Dec 2011

NOTE: These upcoming events take place during the 1st quarter FY12. If you notice that we will be in your area and would like a Counselor to support your unit during that time, e-mail us using the e-mail address below and we will make the necessary arrangements to ensure that the visit will be at no cost or MINIMAL cost to your command.



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