

## **FY 2012 GUNNERY SERGEANT SELECTION BOARD**

### **LETTERS:**

**1. How did you feel about personal letters or letters of recommendation that Marines forwarded to the board?**

**Answers from the board:** For the most part the board felt that letters added "little or no value to a Marine's record" and other board members thought that they were "mostly useless." However, some of the members felt, "if it was a letter explaining or clarifying the Marines record, MBS, or OMPF" then they were helpful and added value. They felt letters to the board should be, "a maximum of 1 page" and "Their record should speak for itself." A majority of the board members felt that, "we do not need a slew of updated documents such as Letters of Appreciation sent for them to go through, because they should have already updated there OMPF before the convening of the board." If a Marine submitted a rebuttal to a specific incident or adverse report, "he/she does not need to submit a letter to the board explaining the same thing that there rebuttal should have stated." Some said, "Letters outside of your chain and especially from individuals already retired were not necessary and did not hold that much weight."

**2. What type of letters/material was not significant enough to send to the board and how much was too much?**

**Answers from the board:** Most board members felt if an individual was going to send letters in, they did not like to receive more than a couple. For the most part, the only types of letters they felt worth receiving would have been, "letters of clarification explaining short and to the point anything that would not paint a clear picture for the board member." Letters that were not that significant and a waste of time were, "Letter's that state what is already in the OMPF.", and "Letters owning up to responsibility for adverse material, when the rebuttal to the fitness report can be used for that."

### **PHOTOGRAPHS:**

**3. What were you looking for in a promotion photograph and what was considered a questionable photo?**

**Answers from the board:** The overall consensus of the board members were having good personal appearance, being within Height and weight standards, fresh haircut, ribbons in the right

order, trousers not to short or too long, and making sure the date and verification of information is accurate and up to date. Some board members felt that, "A small percentage had questionable Ht/Wt/BF%", "Marines assigned to BCP at anytime throughout their career seem to get taller through the years" and "First impression is huge. If the photo was current and looked good at a glance, I moved on."

Some things that the board members mentioned as questionable items were, "sloppy photos with no attention to detail", "snug fitting uniforms" "ht/wt numbers that portrayed a Marines at his max wt", "Marine's looked heavier than what was portrayed in the photo", and "Poor in quality, a Marines' body fat percentage at its max, and questionable tattoos exceeding Marine regulation."

#### **4. How did you consider photographs not received?**

**Answers from the board:** The day the board convened, 1527 Marines failed to submit a photo or the photo in the record was out of date.

All board members said that Marines records were taking negatively if the Marine did not submit a photo or the photo was out of date they were automatically viewed as less competitive, lazy, and or hiding something. A board member expressed, "Photos not in the record send a strong message that the Marine does not care about promotion" and another said, "It definitely makes the Marines less qualified, even more so if there is a history of exceeding ht/wt standards."

One board member talked about the importance of the photo, "You actually can tell a lot about a Marine by the way they wear their uniform, standing at attention, and facial expression." Some board members view a Marine having no photo almost the same as recent adversity in grade such as "No photo equals no promotion in most cases".

#### **5. Did you submit any Discrepancy Notices (DN) for verification of Marines meeting/exceeding Height and Weight standards?**

**Answers from the board:** Board members can submit Discrepancy Notices (DN) to the board recorders requesting more information on a specific Marine and his record. If the Board recorder can't find the information that the board member is requesting then they will push the request to either the Promotions Branch and/or MMSB. During this board there were only two of the 21 board members that requested a (DN) pertaining to a Marines Height and weight.

**ADVERSITY:**

**6. If a Marine had an incident of Domestic Violence (DV) on record, was it recoverable and if so, what helped a Marine demonstrate recovery?**

**Answers from the board:** The view of the board members in the topic of Domestic Violence was more than unfavorable. Less than half the board members stated that it was recoverable and that also depended on the severity, time that had elapsed since incident, and what the individual Marine did to correct his/her deficiencies to get the correct help needed. On the other hand most board members stated that it was not recoverable and just a few quotes from some of the board members were, "DV was a show stopper", "DV for the most part was not recoverable regardless if the incident was recent or 5 years ago." More than a few board members stated that even if there had been a significant amount of time that had passed and the severity was not at its highest it was still hard to justify the adversity.

One big take away was that "sustained solid, if not superior, performance documented in the record (multiple high RVs, high RO assessments (Christmas tree), and exemplary commentary from RSs and ROs in Sections I and K of fitness reports" is what the Marine would need to have a chance at overcoming the adversity.

**7. If a Marine had a DUI/DWI on record (or in-grade), was it recoverable and if so, what helped a Marine demonstrate recovery?**

**Answers from the board:** Across the board, members stated that even if they really didn't think it should be recoverable it was. Allot of things dictated the ability to overcome the past DUI/DWI. The biggest factor was the time that had elapsed, "Recent (less than 5 years) DUI/DWI in grade was not recoverable", and "recoverable only if it occurred more than 5 yrs ago and the Marine had an exceptional package to include above average fitness reports."

The overall view was that having an impeccable record prior to and after as well as 5+ years have passed and the incident was not in grade would greatly increase the Marines chance of overcoming adversity.

**8. For Marines who were previously assigned to weight control/BCP, was it recoverable and if so, what helped a Marine demonstrate recovery?**

**Answers from the board:** Some of the board members felt it was not recoverable if the BCP assignment was in grade. For the most part though, board members said it was recoverable as long as time has elapsed to show that the Marine can stay in standards and it was a onetime deal. Multiple assignment were not looked at favorably, "history of multiple BCP assignments and ht/wt failures in grade severely affected SNM's recoverability of the adversity."

There is no specific amount of time that would need to elapse for the individual to be considered in the clear of the BCP assignment, it all boils down to what has the individual Marine done since the assignment to stay within standards. Some board members felt 36 months was significant and others felt around 5 years was enough time right along with any other kind of adversity. If an individual Marine is close or has been assigned before it would behoove them to have the highest PFT/CFT as possible to show good physical fitness.

**9. For Marines who previously failed a PFT(s), what helped demonstrate recovery?**

**Answers from the board:** Less than a handful of board members felt that if the failure was in grade then it was not recoverable. For the most part, board members felt if it was a onetime incident, or anomaly and since then the Marine has had nothing but high PFT/CFT's then it did not affect them as much as it would if they had a history of failures "If the Marine demonstrated a consistent 1<sup>st</sup> class PFT prior and after failing a PFT, then it was an isolated incident, but a history of being a PFT failure was not recoverable." Another thing that would help the Marine overcome a past PFT/CFT Failure was consecutive high 1<sup>st</sup> Class PFT/CFT's since the incident "Continued PFT performance", "Time + Sustained 1<sup>st</sup> Class PFT/CFT scores."

**10. How did you view records with date gaps? Did you experience a lot of Marines with this issue?**

**Answers from the board:** Date gaps did not seem to be a huge issue on this selection board; however some board members did have to deal with date gap issues. Date gaps that were no more than 2 months did not seem to have to big effect on the individual Marine. On the other side of the coin, some board members felt that "Date gaps more than 30 days were questionable."

In any instance a date gap is not a good thing and in someone's eyes can be looked at negatively. Date gaps also shown that the Marine did not periodically review his record or

care to get the issue fixed before the board convened. If a Marine has a date gap and knows it, then he needs to submit a letter to explain the reason and what he is doing to fix the problem.

#### **REPORTING OFFICIALS:**

#### **11..How much weight did you place on the Billet Description/Billet Accomplishments in Sections B & C of the fitness report?**

**Answers from the board:** More than half of the board members stated that sections B & C held little to no weight at all when assessing the Marines record. Some of the members said they used it as a reference, "Sections B & C seem to serve more to clarify billets and the requirements of the job/MOS." The board members that did review the accomplishments felt, "At the rank of SSgt, there should be no empty space in that area."

The "bloom where you were planted" concept was mentioned numerous times throughout the members responses. Marines need to have significant accomplishments and try to exceed all expectations no matter what job they are doing or where they have been placed.

#### **12. How much weight did you place on the Relative Values (RV) and RAW Scores in assessing overall competitiveness?**

**Answer:** Board members seemed to place a lot of weight on the Relative Values (RV). Most members stated that they used it for an initial assessment of the Marines overall performance and that more weight was placed on in grade RV than the grade before. The biggest responses were that RS's and RO's need to start matching their word picture to where they are placing Marines in their individual profiles as expressed, "Their word picture at times does not reflect how they rate", "Marine's whose RS had no profile, or small profile, or happen to be a non Marine then their reports were questionable."

The bottom line is, when the RV does not match the word picture it can sometimes have negative effects on how that Marine gets briefed.

#### **13. How important to you was where the Marine was marked on the Reviewing Officer's Comparative Assessment, 'Christmas Tree', and how much weight did this have?**

**Answers from the board:** All the board members felt that the RO's assessment held a lot of weight and that the RO markings

and comments solidified what the RS was stating. A few quotes from the board members that will paint a good picture of their overall views were, "If a Marine was consistently marked in the 6 or 7 blocks by several different senior RO's it became obvious that he/she was a performer", "Being marked high or low on the Christmas Tree says quite a bit about the Marine both positive and negative and being marked in the same block as the majority of Marine's reviewed says that you are average."

There are a lot of Marines that receive fitness reports from RO's that have little to no profile and this next quote I felt was very true in the aspect of the RO assessment and is the main reason why all Enlisted Advisors to RS's and RO's should make sure that a Marine's report is written in accordance with the Performance and Evaluation Manual MCO P1610.7F w/change 2, "Having an RO with no to very little profile or having a Navy Officer or GS that has no clue about being a Marine, write your report can damage a Marines opportunity to be promoted/completive."

**14. How much weight did you place on the comments from the Reviewing Officer/Reporting Senior and what were you looking for in these comments?**

**Answers from the board:** The section I&K comments were weighed on heavily by almost all of the board members. Some said that, "Comments usually tell how they really feel about a Marine." The board members wanted to see good solid promotion recommendations along with breakout comments. A very good quote that kind of shows the difference between good promotion recommendations and average recommendations is, "Comments were only important if the comments matched the markings. Comments like **promote ahead of peers** and **promote now** proved more worthy unlike the comments of **promote with peers**."

It seems a lot of times Marines are in the above average category of the profiles, but when it comes to their comments they will have a promotion recommendation that states, "Promote with Peers." Promote with peers is nothing but an average comment meaning that the Marine should get promoted at the same time any other average marine of his/her grade in their specific MOS gets promoted.

**15. Are there any important issues (positive or negative) that you feel needs to be passed to RS's and RO's (throughout the Marine Corps) to ensure that they are complying with the Performance Evaluation System (PES) and to help make a Board Members job easier in their evaluation of a Marines record?**

**Answers from the board:** Board members said that the RS's and RO's need to be making sure that the comments match the attributes. More than half of the board members stated that, "often the marks and the comments did not match the word pictures." Board members also mentioned that Reporting Officials need to be annotating in their comments the reasons why Marines have not been able to qualify on the ranges as well as if they have been trying to get to a Special Duty Assignment but have not been afforded the opportunity to do so, due to Operation Tempo and such. The final big issue was making sure that if a Marine rates an adverse report then he or she is receiving one such as Marines that were ever on BCP, "too many times Marines were on BCP but were not given an adverse fitrep." Reporting Officials also need to understand that just because a Marine is not formally assigned to BCP, but is still out of Ht/WT standards they still rate an adverse report. The bottom line was stated very clear by one board member in stating, "Know your profile and don't make efforts to game the system."

RS and RO's need to ensure that all levels of leadership are complying with MCO P1610.7F W/ change 2.

**16. How important was a promotion recommendation from the Reporting Senior and Reviewing Officer and how was this viewed?**

**Answers from the board:** The entire board stated that the RS/RO promotion recommendation was, "Very important." Some stated the recommendation carried allot of weight because it impacts how that specific board member will brief and vote.

The different recommendations that are being put on reports are viewed in different ways and the compiled views are listed as, "Promote with Peers, says average", "Promote ahead of Peers, says above average", "Has my highest recommendation for promotion and retention is above average", and the single word promote, says nothing at all."

**17. How was one or two line comments from the Reporting Senior/Reviewing Officer viewed?**

**Answers from the board:** For the most part they were viewed as, "laziness on the part of the RS/RO and the the RS/RO was not good at writing." They also felt that, "If the RS/RO didn't have much to say then they either didn't care whether or not the Marine got promoted or just did not have anything good to say."

On the other hand, some felt that if the Marine was a "Water Walker" and the comments were well written then they were fine. A few felt that, "One or two line comments are fine if they are water walker type comments and they match their markings."

Sometimes, one or two line comments will paint enough of a picture about a Marine's performance.

**WOUNDED WARRIORS / MEDICAL ISSUES:**

**18. Were there any issues concerning Wounded Warriors' records that may have made assessing their records and recommending them for promotion difficult, such as lack of observation time (as a Patient) and lack of important details concerning their situation?**

**Answers from the board:** The biggest issues seen across the board in this aspect was the lack of information. A lot of the board members wanted to know what the Marine was there for and what happened. However, the problem with wanting all of this detailed information is medical information will never be provided to the board. The only way that any medical information such as who, what, when, where, how long, and current status will ever make it into the board room would be from the specific Marine submitting that information himself. Most board members want to know if, "The injuries were combat related or not" and if, "Didn't seem like a fair assessment could be made due to lack of information." Most all felt, "The board had little knowledge of the situation unless it was captured in a fitness report."

**19. In relation to ANY Marine with medical issues, was there any lack of information provided in the records or by the Marine which left gaps of uncertainty for a proper recommendation?**

**Answers from the board:** Just about all of the board members stated that their response remained the same from question 18, dealing with information or lack of information to sometimes make a fair assessment.

**TRAINING & EDUCATION:**

**20. How much weight did you attach to Non-Resident PME that was above minimum requirements?**

**Answers from the board:** Every board member stated, "That it held some if not a lot of weight." Marine's going above and beyond to do PME that is not necessarily required for them to be eligible for promotion "shows initiative, desire, hunger, and separates otherwise equal records." One board member stated, "It showed that the Marine went above the minimum standard."

This question is great, because it reinforces the reason we, the Enlisted Career Counselors, are always telling Marines to go above and beyond to complete courses that are not specifically required for them to be promoted.

**21. How much weight did you give to Marines who completed off duty education, such as college and trade schools**

**Answer from the board:** Credit was added to individuals that had completed off duty education however, there was a big emphasis put towards whether or not the Marine had completed their required PME. Most board members stated, "If you spent more time securing a Civilian education than your Military PME/experience, then they did not give you much credit," and "If the Marine has not put any effort into Military Education Advancement, they did not weigh his/her civilian education too heavily." Some board members also felt, "that it made the Marine more competitive in his/her MOS if there off duty civilian education pertained to their specific MOS."

**22. How much weight did you give to having completed the SNCO Academy Resident Career Course?**

**Answer:** Across the board it was said, "To hold Much Weight." Just about every board member mentioned, "That resident PME was a major plus and in some circumstances was used as a Tie-Breaker." They did take into account specific MOS's that Marines may not have been afforded the opportunity to attend there resident course as stated in this quote, "A lot unless you were in a micro MOS where you absolutely couldn't go. I compared all to their peers, if the majority of the Marines in an MOS went and they didn't, it didn't go well for them." The bottom line is to get as much PME as achievable to make yourself as competitive as possible against your peers.

**23. How much weight did you place on all other advanced MOS schools in the Marines PMOS?**

**Answer:** A lot of board members stated, "That it was sometimes difficult to tell which courses where the Advanced Course for the specific MOS unless they were familiar with that MOS and that they still held a lot of weight." Most felt, "that there needs to be more information in directed comments so that it is easily identifiable that there Advanced MOS Course/Courses are complete." A lot of the board members felt that, "It indicated that the Marine wanted to embrace greater responsibility." Some Marines in this situation may want to

submit a letter to the board to clarify that all advanced MOS schools are complete.

**24. How did you view Marines who had not been to the rifle and pistol ranges for a number of years?**

**Answers from the board:** Most board members stated that they viewed and extremely out of date range qualification's as "Negatively". The biggest take away from this question is that if you do not have a current range score for whatever reason your RS needs to make directed comments in section I on the situation surrounding the out of date Qualification, such as "Quota control", and , "if the range was available or not." For the most part, "If justified, it did not matter" and "Without an explanation it seemed, "that the Marine didn't care". Marines need to try to qualify annual if it is required for their specific rank. It is great that we try to take care of our junior Marines and give them all the quotas; however that does not excuse the fact that Sgt's and SSgt's are required to qualify annually.

**25. How much weight did you place on PFT/CFT scores when assessing overall competitiveness?**

**Answer from the board:** PFT/CFT was viewed with much weight in the eyes of the board members. Most just stated "the higher the better and that it spoke volumes to whether the Marine wanted to do their best or just meet minimum standards." It also "became obvious over time that these two areas of training are linked directly to performance in that the higher the PFT/CFT score the higher the performance in the RS/RO values." There is a lot of Marines that always want to know what they can do to be more competitive for promotion and have an overall better record and the PFT/CFT is one of those things that a Marine has control over. The score of their PFT/CFT reflects how much effort they put into enhancing their overall record. One board member summed it up by saying, "that you should not be second class in anything."

**26. Did the RS explanation have any weight when a Marine had "NMED PFT/CFT" reports?**

**Answer from the board:** More than 90% of the board members stated that it helps a lot in painting the picture. They also commented that sometimes the explanations were a little weak in getting the point across. If a Marine is having the NMED code ran for a PFT/CFT they need to make sure that there RS is

elaborating on the specific circumstance surround the reasons in section I comments on the fitness report.

**27. How much weight did you place on the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) and how was an instructor qualification viewed? What seemed to be the Average MCMAP belt for the SSgt's reviewed on this board?**

**Answer from the board:** It was pretty much looked at negatively if you were below Green belt. "TAN belt was seen as unsatisfactory and deducted points". With the Marine Corps getting extremely more competitive we recommend that Marines try to do everything that they can to excel and exceed all average standards to become extremely competitive against their peers. It seemed that the average belt across the board was Green and anything above that was going a little above and beyond, which received more points in evaluating.

**DUTY ASSIGNMENTS:**

**28. What did you define as MOS credibility and how was MOS credibility viewed in terms of competitiveness?**

**Answers from the board:** The "Bloom Where You Are Planted" concept came into play more so than not. The main area being graded is performance, and if you have good performance no matter what you are doing, than you will be setting yourself up for success. However, Marines must be able to show that they can perform in there MOS, because that is what the Marine is being promoted to perform in. A few quotes from board members are, "MOS credibility was very important! You have to perform in your MOS regardless of how many SDA's you have" and "Bloom where planted! I viewed each assignment as an opportunity to shine".

Even though a lot of board members felt that performing no matter what billet you are filling is important, it is also important to stay current on MOS specific PME and Advanced schools. These too will help an individual in the aspect of MOS credibility.

**29. How did you view combat experience (fitness reports) in terms of competitiveness?**

**Answers from the board:** Most board members commented that, "It depended on the MOS. Some MOS's have limited opportunity" and "Communities vary, as long as the Marine did not avoid combat service". Just about all the board members stated in one way or another that combat time and the performance during the combat time held a lot of weight in being more competitive. A

board member stated, "I compared them to their peer group, if the majority had combat tours and they didn't, it didn't bode favorable for them".

Marines just need to ensure that they are not avoiding combat deployments as their record will reflect.

**30. How much weight did you attach to 'Operational or Deployed' time, in regards to Marine Expeditionary Unit's (MEU's), etc.?**

**Answers from the board:** Most board members felt that they both held the same weight. They understand that not all Marines will get the opportunity to deploy due to certain billets and the needs of the Marine Corps. Marines need to ensure that they are not hiding from deployment's either. There is a few ways that Marines can do this and the easiest way is having there Reporting Senior comment on the fact that the Marine has tried diligently to get on a combat deployment but due to operational tempo and unit placement has not been afforded the opportunity to do so.

Some felt that, "It had solid value, and was very important especially if the Marine didn't have any actual combat time" and "The Marine Corps uses Marines in many different areas according to the needs of the organization. Unquestionably, combat is far more difficult than a MEU deployment. Not all Marines will have the opportunity to deploy to a combat zone, however all operational deployments involve Marines spending time away from their families, being outside their comfort zone and far removed from their normal duties."

**31. What weight did you attach to currently being on or successfully completing a Special Duty Assignment (SDA), since it was a precept on the board?**

**Answers from the board:** All board members felt that the SDA held, "Much Weight". Considering the fact that SDA's are a precept and that, "Any Marine that is currently on or has successfully completed an SDA is considered highly qualified". Some board members felt that it held a bit more weight if the individual had already completed the SDA vice still being on it, "Having a B-Billet successfully completed was held slightly above those that were out serving on B-Billet currently because they have not completed a SUCCESSFUL tour just yet". This next quote supports the reason we always tell Marines to make sure that they have good solid performance in there MOS before heading out on the SDA, "It bode very favorable; however they must have shown performance in their primary MOS as well".

The SDA is going to make the Marine more competitive but you have to show solid performance in your MOS before the SDA. Remember that you are being promoted in your intended MOS

**32. How did you look at Marines who were "Relieved for Cause" (RFC) or "Relieved for Good of Service" (RFGOS) on an SDA throughout their career?**

**Answers from the board:** RFC's were mostly viewed as adverse or negative material. What the individual Marines performance looked like after the RFC was taken highly into account. RFGOS was usually viewed as, "never happening" or "was looked as neither good nor bad".

Some looked at RFGOS's in the way that, "they tried but just couldn't complete it" and "a good explanation as to why the RFGOS was taken into consideration. They may not have had the choice". Anytime a Marine finds them self in either of these situations, they should make sure that the information is noted in their fitness reports following the situation or in a letter of clarification to the president of the board.

**33. How did you consider Marines with less PMOS observed time, but currently on an SDA?**

**Answers from the board:** Once again this brings us back to the bloom were you are planted concept. Some board members just evaluated the performance on record regardless of it being PMOS or out of MOS. In regards to observed time, Marines want to insure they have some good solid observed reports on record before making that decision to go on an SDA or accept a billet outside their MOS.

If a Marine is having a hard time making the determination on whether it is a good time to go on an SDA or other billets outside their PMOS then they should contact the Enlisted Career Counselor section at Headquarters Marine Corps, Manpower Management Support Branch (MMSB-50).

**34. How was a Marines viewed with observed time in a billet such as the Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA), SACO, RBE SNCOIC or on the SNCO College Degree Completion Program? Was it possible to have too much time and if so, what did you consider too much?**

**Answers from the board:** Most did state that "Assignment to these billets (particularly prolonged or multiple) could detract from record and overall competitiveness" and "Understanding that these billets need to be filled and if comments from the RS or RO stated that this person was handpicked then it added value to

the record". Having an RS's comment on whether they were put there because, "They were the best and needed to fix the program or because they were no good at their previous billet could add or detract from a record."

In regards to extra billets of responsibility, it seemed that across the board they felt that around one year was about the max needed observed time.

Marines need to also make sure that if they are dual hating, meaning fulfilling their PMOS responsibilities as well as one of these extra billets, that there RS still structures there Section I comments to cover their performance, leadership, MOS credibility, impact on unit and mission, and then their success in whatever extra billet they may be filling, as well as not forgetting there promotion recommendation.

**35. How did you consider staff type billets, to include HQMC billets? Were they less competitive than being in operating units?**

**Answers from the board:** Generally, these billets were viewed the same as, "Operational billets." Board members know that many Marines across the Marine Corps fill the, "Needs of the Marine Corps" category. Most board members focused more on performance in the billet that they are currently assigned. A few quotes from the board members and their outlooks on this issue, "If those Marines are performing in those billets, they are just as competitive as a Marine in Combat", "Depends on what or who the RS/RO is and what was stated in the section I&K comments". "Blossom where planted", was felt from across the board.

This still brings us back to making sure that our RS's and RO's are commenting on us correctly and making sure they are hitting all the topics that should be covered such as performance, proficiency, leadership, MOS credibility, Etc.

**36. How was a Marine viewed who had served in, "Joint billets such as Joint IA billets, Transition Teams, etc.?"**

**Answers from the board:** Transition Team deployments are a Precept and were viewed as directed with the most weight being placed on the performance in the specific billet held. Being able to perform outside your comfort zone was the big take away. Just a few quotes from some of the board members were, "Not all assignments to JIA/TT are voluntary. Blossom where planted" and "Exceptionally qualified as long as there were no derogatory comments".

More than 75% of the board members viewed these reports in the, "Bloom where you are planted" philosophy.

### **AWARDS/RECOGNITION**

#### **37. How did you view awards?**

**Answers from the board:** Less than a quarter of the board members even commented on this question and the one's that did said that they were favorable. Personal awards confirmed a lot of above average performance. "Awards serve to enhance a Marine's overall record and usually confirm or deny superior performance"; "Awards showed above average performance and awards in grade showed recent above average performance". Most of the board members that did comment stated that if a Marine did not have awards they deducted points when grading that individual.

Board members know that an individual Marine cannot write his own awards, however superior performance could eventually bring personal awards.

##### **a. Impact and End of Tour?**

**Answer:** More than 70% of the board members felt that Impact awards held more weight than EOT awards, however any personal awards were viewed positively and earned the Marine more + points towards their overall evaluation. Most Marines these days have a personal award or two, and personal awards help set a Marine apart from their peers.

##### **b. Combat awards (with Valor or not)?**

**Answers from the board:** Most said that, "Somewhat more weight was given to combat awards, and more for V", "Combat awards were given more weight only if they substantiated the Marine's overall record". Some board members felt that as long as the award was well written and indicated exactly what the Marine did to go above and beyond and did not just do his job, received more recognition.

#### **38. Graduating as Honor Graduate, Distinguished Graduate or Gung Ho from MOS schools or SNCO Academies get briefed or just the completion?**

**Answers from the board:** Across the board, members felt it was extremely helpful and, "Show's more were Marines performance is against peers." More than 85% of the board members stated

that it was all briefed to include any and all commendatory material received during the course. Some stated that "it was briefed and carried weight as above Average performance."

It is good for Marines to put out while attending the academies, in the long run it will show how they stack up against their peers, however to go along with that your overall record needs to match your performance while attending.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

#### **39. How did you view Marines with tattoos in terms of their overall competitiveness?**

**Answers from the board:** Tattoos were not a big issue as long as the Page 11's and proper documentation was present in member's record. Some board members stated, "They did not take Tattoos in to consideration at all and a few were indifferent, for the most part though if they were in regulations they were competitive."

Sleeve tattoos were viewed by most a bit differently. Just a few quotes from some of the board members were, "Sleeves (were looked at) in a negative way and took away from appearance if there was no paperwork in their record", "If the entire arm was covered then it was viewed negatively", and "I considered Marines with large tattoos to be less competitive".

Marines need to insure that if they have tattoos they are within regulation and properly documented.

#### **40. What were the heaviest weighted items/areas in a Marines record that you used when assessing tie breakers?**

**Answers from the board:** Very few board members stated that PFT/CFT was used heavily when assessing a tie breaker. For the most part the majority of the board members leaned toward the photo, personal appearance, SDA, PME, MCMAP, Impact Awards, RV/RO assessment, performance in combat, training score/currency, and 300 PFT/CFT.

Throughout the answers submitted by the board this is everything that the board members looked at to evaluate who would be the tie breaker. With a list that long, it goes back to have a good solid record and be very competitive.

#### **41. What seemed to make a Marine really stand out from their peers in your evaluation of their records?**

**Answers from the board:** The board members across the table had about the same general consensus. The big take away was the

RS/RV markings specifically in grade held a lot of weight. One board member pretty much summarized it the best as "High RV in grade, High RO marks in grade, stand-out comments in Section I and K, a current squared away photo, solid and up to date training stats, additional PME and/or other education, awards in grade, successful completion of (or current assignment to) an SDA, combat, MOS credibility, little to no, or distant adversity."

Another big take away was making sure you have good performance no matter where you were planted.

**42. What are your top recommendations for those Marines preparing themselves for a future GySgt selection board, whether or not they are coming into the below zone, in zone for the first time or have ever been passed over? (The big take a ways)**

**Answers from the board:** This section confirms allot of what the Enlisted Career Counselors keep telling Marines to be more competitive.

The biggest thing viewed on the promotion board is performance, "PERFORMANCE is critical, especially in today's shrinking Force".

Board members also stated "never be 2d class in anything", "Do your PME", and "Put all awards, certificates, civilian/military education, MCMAP training, etc. in your OMPF" (Comm/Derog Folder). Review records early enough to fix any discrepancies such as a date gap. Once again, "TAKE A PICTURE."

Make sure you are seeking counsel through your RS to insure that his/her expectations are being met throughout the reporting period and that your counseling sessions are being properly documented in your units training jacket the write way, individual Marines should see improvements in their performance

**43. What were some of the biggest issues (trends) that you noticed within the SSgt's records which showed a lack of knowledge or preparation on the individual's part, prior to the board convening?**

**Answers from the board:** One of the biggest noted issues this selection board from the majority of the board members was out of date or no photo on record, "TAKE CURRENT PHOTOS. You only get one chance to make a first impression." That comment is straight from one of the board members and is enough said.

A lot of the other issues were, "Not being PME complete, unexplained substantial date gaps, not going to rifle/ pistol range and not having an above average PFT/CFT score."

The Marine reviewing his own OMPF to make sure that he/she knows what is in there and if adverse material is pulled from the record, they need to ensure that all corresponding adverse material is also removed (i.e. an adverse FR is removed, but the PG11/6105 still resides in their record).