

The Leadership News

A quarterly newsletter on leadership and diversity in the Coast Guard

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Questions and Answers About the New Professional Military Education for Enlisted Members

by FTCM Tim Cary, Coast Guard Headquarters (G-WTL)

Q: What exactly is the new Enlisted Professional Military Education?

Professional Military Education (PME) is professional development, knowledge and tools for enlisted members to develop into high performers. This education is separate from a member's particular specialty or expertise, e.g., electrician, mechanic, etc.

The PME has three parts:

- Performance requirements (sign-off sheets)
- An end-of-course test
- A study guide that will prepare members for the performance requirements and end-of-course test as well as the service wide exam

PME topics include leadership, management, administration, Coast Guard history, enlisted heritage, organizational structure and management, personal development, training, education, wellness, etc.

PME will be part of the advancement process for enlisted members. The PME performance requirements will replace the old military requirements (MRN). The PME study guide will replace the three now-defunct MRN courses (for pet-

ty officers, senior petty officers and chief petty officers).

Q: How was the PME created?

Work force studies performed during the last 10 years, such as the Nonrate Work Force Structure Study, the Chief Petty Officer Needs Assessment, the Petty Officer Development Initiative and the Senior Enlisted Needs Assessment, are largely the basis for the new PME.

Q: What happened to the old MRN courses?

The old MRN courses (for petty officers, senior petty officers and chief petty officers) were not kept up to date. The MRN qualifications were also limited in their ability to meet all the training and educational needs of Coast Guard personnel throughout their career.

Q: How will the PME affect me?

The PME will have performance requirements to be performed by members and witnessed by supervisors in order to be qualified for advancement. Also, there will be three PME end-of-course tests developed at separate pay grade levels that members will need to pass in order to take the service wide exam. Both

the performance requirements and the tests will ensure that only those ready for advancement will take the service wide exam. This is similar to the rating courses and old MRN.

Q: How will the PME work?

The study guide will be available in three formats (paper-based, CD-ROM, and Web-based). The Web and CD-ROM versions will have interactive lessons separated by pay grade levels. These lessons will prepare members for either a performance to be witnessed by their supervisor or for the end-of-course test or service wide exam. While not interactive, the paper-based version will contain all necessary information and aids for the same purposes (performance and studying).

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Q: When will I see this new En-listed PME?

Currently, course writers are working with contractors to develop the course. As it is being developed, portions of the course will go through a quality assurance scrub with subject matter experts, rating force master chiefs, command master chiefs and selected field personnel. Feedback from this process will ensure the new course will be accurate and complete. We hope to have the new course ready for final clearance and approval at the end of May. We believe complete approval of the new course will occur in June or July 2003.

Q: So when will it go into effect?

Perhaps late summer 2003 is my best guess for full distribution.

Q: How will the PME be distributed?

After final approval, we will send out an ALCOAST message giving the link to the Web version of the study guide, and we will publish the new performance requirements. The Coast Guard Institute will print the paper-based versions of the course and create copies of the CD-ROM version. All units will receive copies of the CD-ROM version. It will take the Institute approximately 60 days to have everything ready for shipping after final approval.

Q: What makes the PME better than the old system?

First, it is comprehensive and based on work force studies and input from all the rating review processes. This makes for a more prepared and better trained service member for Coast Guard mission performance. Second, it gives members a one-source document for qualification and studying for both the PME end-of-course test and the service wide exam. The current system gives members a list of dozens of hard-to-find references for study. Third, updates and changes will be more timely and accurate. ❖

**The First One ... the Only One ... the Senior One ... the Female One
The Challenge of Being a Woman in the Coast Guard**

by Lt. Lynda Hester, Coast Guard Headquarters (G-WTL)

Early in my Coast Guard career (1981) as in the careers of many women in the Coast Guard, I often heard I was “the first one,” “the only one,” “the senior one,” or “the female one” at my units. Even now, after women have been on active duty for nearly 30 years, many of us are still hearing these phrases. I had hoped one day I would be referred to as “the professional one,” “the competent one,” “the achiever,” or “the outstanding performer.” When others looked at me, I hoped they wouldn’t see my gender; rather, I had

hoped they would see the human being with basic personal and professional needs (e.g., money to support my family, desire to be accepted for my contribution to the Coast Guard and the desire to make an impact during my career). I hoped that when I was recognized for my contributions to the Coast Guard, it wouldn’t be as “an outstanding *female* role model” or “the senior *female* at this command.” These, unfortunately, were actual statements in award citations. In all cases, the command was not even aware that these phrases unnecessarily

ingly singled me out as a woman. I hope these commands have been enlightened by the information that I, “the female one,” passed on to them and that they no longer use such phrases in evaluation reports, award recommendations, etc.

After a few enlightening conversations with co-workers, I realized that maybe being “the first one,” “the only one” and “the female one” was an *opportunity* and a *challenge!* I decided to look positively at the situation. Maybe in some way I could contribute to changing the

way people view those of us of the “female gender” (I hate that term). Maybe through education, information and letting people know me for who I am, I could prevent other women from going through the same experiences.

Obviously, when I look in the mirror each morning, I realize I don’t look like the majority of people in the Coast Guard (i.e., men). I look and sound different, and I am built differently. The reasons I

came into the Coast Guard, however, are the same: I want to serve my country, need money to support my family, have career goals, identify with the missions of

the Coast Guard, want to make a significant contribution, and would like to be recognized for my contributions and receive equal pay. We are all here to do a job, and that’s the bottom line.

I now realize that the Coast Guard has changed significantly since I came in *way back in 1981*. Many of the challenges I faced (discrimination, sexual harassment, etc.) are not as prevalent today, but I would be remiss if I said they don’t still exist. These challenges certainly still exist for women coming into the Coast Guard and for those of us who remain. Today,

however, we have more information and education on handling these situations, and most people are being held accountable for actions that conflict with the Commandant’s policies.

Mentoring and Diversity

We hear a lot about mentoring and diversity today, but all of us may not know what these terms mean. Everyone needs mentoring; it’s a great way to help others (by showing

them the way, giving them your insight, listening to them, influencing them, etc.). It’s about sharing your power and influence (professional and person-

al) with others to help them succeed. Mentoring is not just about helping people who look like you, but it’s about helping another person, another Coastie, to be successful.

I know I add differences to the work force, like everyone else in the Coast Guard. When we talk about differences, we are also talking about diversity. Most people think diversity only relates to race, gender, age and other physical attributes. These, however, are just the visible signs of diversity. Diversity also relates to education, commissioning source, experience, marital status and the other quali-

ties each of us bring to the workplace. Managing these differences is key. Managing diversity requires us to recognize and appreciate the value of the individual and to support their well-being and success. It is a way of thinking, seeing and behaving. It celebrates individual differences as a source of organizational strength instead of seeing differences as weaknesses. I want to be valued for my contributions and for the differences I bring to the workplace, not singled out for them.

I hope the impact women have made in the Coast Guard will change us from being referred to as “the first one,” “the only one,” or “the female one” to “the professional one,” “the competent one,” “the outstanding performer,” or “just another great Coastie.” Hopefully, in some way, all of us, women and men, are contributing to this change. Together as Team Coast Guard, we need to ensure all members of the team are treated with the respect and the professionalism that goes along with our core values of honor, respect and devotion to duty. As people, we are not so very different – it’s that we sometimes treat each other differently. Today, my hope is to see everyone treating each other as professionals dedicated to getting the job done and trying to make a difference! ✦

This article was originally written by Senior Chief Petty Officer Lynda Hester in 1996. Since that time, she rose to the rank of lieutenant and will retire in May 2003.

“Today, my hope is to see everyone treating each other as professionals dedicated to getting the job done and trying to make a difference!”

Diversity Staff Increases, Expands Role

by Lt. j.g. Libby Rasmussen and CWO Michael Maher, Coast Guard Headquarters (G-WTL)

In an effort to increase responsiveness to current diversity challenges within the Coast Guard, the diversity management division at Coast Guard Headquarters has added five new members to its staff. The diversity team had been operating with three full-time policy advisors, and now, four assistants and a program coordinator have joined the team. The new positions will allow the staff to interact more with other Coast Guard entities, such as the Coast Guard Recruiting Command, Coast Guard Academy, Leadership Development Center, rating program managers, gold badge network, etc.

In addition, members in the field will have a greater opportunity for direct contact when looking for advice or help with issues pertaining to ethnic and gender policy in the workplace. The diversity staff will continue to work on a wide variety of policy issues, clarifications, changes and complaints, along with other duties.

The diversity staff is:

Gender Policy

Gender Policy Advisor: Cmdr. Catherine Haines
(CHaines@comdt.uscg.mil)

Assistant Gender Policy Advisor: Lt. j.g. Libby Rasmussen
(LRasmussen@comdt.uscg.mil)

Enlisted Gender Policy Advisor: YNCS Ann DeCoursey
(ADecoursey@comdt.uscg.mil)

Ethnic Policy

Ethnic Policy Advisor: Cmdr. Sharon Donald-Baynes
(SDonald-Baynes@comdt.uscg.mil)

Assistant Ethnic Policy Advisor: CWO Michael Maher
(MMaher@comdt.uscg.mil)

Enlisted Ethnic Policy Advisor: SK1 Isabel Paez
(IPaez@comdt.uscg.mil)

Work Force Policy

Work Force Policy Advisor: David Benton
(DBenton@comdt.uscg.mil)

Compass Diversity Outreach

Program Coordinator: Lt. Necia Chambliss
(NChambliss@comdt.uscg.mil)

Role of the Advisors

The advisors work on diversity management, identifying and removing barriers to job satisfaction, so that all of Team Coast Guard will work in an environment where the differences and similarities of all personnel are recognized, understood and valued. The policy advisors have the following functions:

- Continually assess diversity issues in the Coast Guard
- Coordinate diversity awareness and diversity management modules for Coast Guard leadership development programs
- Advise and assist managers on work force diversity management and leadership practices
- Provide career guidance, counseling and intercession, if required, to military and civilian personnel on diversity-related issues
- Facilitate, advise and coordinate the Diversity Advisory Council
- Maintain liaison with recognized military and civilian organizations that are involved with work force diversity

Diversity Resources

A diversity information phone line and Web site provide an informational source for people with questions or concerns about work force diversity issues. The phone line is staffed weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Eastern time). Voicemail accepts messages when the line is busy or not attended. All calls are returned.

Calling the diversity information phone line does not constitute bypassing the chain of command.

However, all personnel are encouraged to seek answers or resolve issues through the chain of command before calling. Whenever possible, callers will be assisted in solving problems by working with and through their chain of command. Callers may remain anonymous but must provide a means of contact if they leave a message that requires a response.

The toll-free diversity information phone number is 1-800-242-9513 or 202-267-6942. The Web site is www.uscg.mil/diversity.htm. ☒

Leadership & Diversity

BEST PRACTICES

Sustaining Morale on Patrol: an Engineer's Perspective

by Lt. Matt Lake, CGC Northland

Coast Guard engineers aboard cutters experience unique challenges as a result of extended patrols away from home, demanding missions, aging platforms and long work hours. It is the responsibility of engineering petty officers, chiefs and officers aboard a cutter to motivate their people and sustain morale throughout a deployment. As much as we would like to believe, good morale is not directly proportional to the number of underway pizza parties and bingo nights; rather, it is a function of sound leadership at the command level. Morale occasionally drops at the end of a patrol due to anxiety related to being away from home, higher frequency of equipment failures and tiring of sharing the same space with the same people. Although it is not possible to change the length of a patrol or buy new ships just to sustain morale, it is possible for engineers to help their personnel recognize how their work supports Coast Guard missions. Equally important, engineering supervisors should ensure their staff has the tools necessary to succeed and the opportunity to do their jobs well.

One of the most difficult tasks of a senior engineer is to convince each member that their job is vital to

mission success. One way of accomplishing this task is to market the command mission and vision and then link the associated command strategies to individual jobs or tasks. Specifically, the command must effectively articulate the fact that mission success is directly related to successful support by junior and mid-grade members. For example, a boarding team or small boat crew gets publicly recognized for a drug seizure or search and rescue case. Animosity may occur if the people who worked hard to support the boarding team do not get the same public acknowledgement. It is the duty of the engineer, therefore, to ensure that his or her personnel know that by making the ship "answer all bells," the teams were able to accomplish their missions. As an engineering leader, it is important to remind the command to publicly praise the contributions that engineers make so that each engineer takes ownership for the operational success of the cutter. This also fosters a sense of teamwork across each technical specialty and department, allowing all crewmembers to have a better understanding of the team effort required to run a cutter. Another way to instill a greater sense of teamwork is to ensure that

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Article Submissions

We need your articles on leadership and diversity issues and best practices. Article length should be 400 words or fewer.

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engineers are engaged in all operational evolutions. For example, encouraging engineers to become qualified as boarding team members/officers improves their sense of ownership for accomplishing the mission, thus sustaining morale.

Another way to promote a healthy engineering climate is by having adequate tools (e.g., parts, technical documentation, etc.) and the necessary time to maintain the ship. The Coast Guard is fortunate to have some of the most capable technicians working on cutters. Nothing kills morale more quickly, however, than knowing how to fix a piece of equipment but not having the parts to do it. A major challenge (especially while operating outside the United States) is to obtain spare parts and services to make repairs. Maintaining an effective logistics network, understanding Coast Guard naval engi-

neering policy and sustaining a healthy relationship with those responsible for depot level repairs (Maintenance and Logistics Command and Engineering Logistics Center), enables an engineer to obtain required parts as quickly as possible.

Another important aspect of allowing engineers to do what they do best (i.e., fix ships) is to ensure that they have adequate time to effectively complete repairs. A classic engineering morale killer is to steam around with broken equipment without providing sufficient time to effectively make permanent repairs. The ability to keep equipment running is one of the best ways to instill pride in an engineer and sustain morale.

While this article has focused on engineers aboard ships, the principles of good leadership stated above can be applied almost anywhere to increase morale within the workplace. ❖

LEADERSHIP ESSAY

Risky Business

Defining Acceptable Risk Taking

by BMCS Dennis Endicott, Station Montauk, N.Y.

The commandant, Adm. Collins, recently gave a speech at the Coast Guard Academy, in which he stated that the Coast Guard “must be willing to embrace an acceptable degree of risk to accomplish great things, without unduly punishing those who are willing to take those risks.” He also said that “we must create an environment in which risk taking and innovation are not only valued but encouraged.” The implication, of course, is that the current work environment does not embrace or encourage risk taking and innovation. I completely agree.

Risk is defined in the dictionary as “the possibility of loss or injury” or “to expose to hazard or danger.” In the Coast Guard, we consider an action risky if the outcome is uncertain, and/or it contradicts established policy. The difficult task is in trying to define “acceptable risk.”

For example, a law enforcement detachment team leader decides to board a suspicious freighter in rough seas with a boarding team that is not large enough to safely contain the crew. He or she then succeeds in stopping a nuclear device from entering the United

States. The prudent observer would agree that this was an acceptable degree of risk given the end result. If the small boat had capsized in rough seas, however, or if a team member was injured or killed or nothing was found during the boarding, would that still have been considered an acceptable risk? I think not. The term “acceptable risk” has always been defined after-the-fact, and success in the endeavor has been the key to defining it in a positive way.

Defining “acceptable risk” is much like defining a “hero.” The

team leader described above would be considered a hero when the team found a nuclear device. In the second scenario in which the small boat capsized, however, he or she would be considered an irresponsible leader that placed his or her crew in jeopardy unnecessarily. In my opinion, the difference between being a hero or not, is success or failure.

If we truly want to embrace risk taking, we should evaluate the incident (regardless of success or failure) based on the chronological actions, not the result. Whenever a mishap occurs, we are required by policy to find the cause and recommend a means to avoid it in the future. Because of that requirement, we have come to believe that every mishap is avoidable. That is simply untrue. There are going to be times when the decision-making process was correct and the outcome was failure. A failed result does not always indicate a bad decision. And, conversely, success is not always the result of good decision-making. If the team leader in the example had no indication of suspicious activity and simply boarded the freighter because he or she was bored, his or her success in finding the nuclear device would have been pure happenstance. It would have been a bad decision leading to an exceptional outcome.

If we reward those who achieve positive results despite bad decision-making and punish those who fail, even when using sound decision-making, we will eventually destroy the ability to manage risk. Luck is not a skill that can be nurtured. We cannot foster it in others or rely on

it to minimize hazards. Only sound decision-making can do that. The lucky leader will eventually succumb to the odds. The thoughtful leader will consider the odds and then act. He or she will succeed more often than he or she will fail.

We have historically evaluated our leaders (our risk takers) on the success or failure of their actions. If we continue to do so, they will not base their decisions on the situation at hand, but rather on established (safe) policy. The team leader could have easily forgone the boarding because established policy dictated

maximum sea state and minimum team size. Instead, he or she evaluated the suspicious activity and the hazards and made a decision to violate policy for a greater good. That type of action needs to be supported, whether the outcome is positive or negative. We need to evaluate the decision-making process, instead of the results, when determining accountability for action. We need to accept that failure is sometimes inevitable and is, in fact, indicative of excellence. We must support and encourage those individuals that place themselves in a position where failure is a possibility. ✕

Commandant Publishes New Diversity Policy Statement

The commandant, Adm. Thomas Collins, has released the Coast Guard's new diversity policy statement. The statement reads:

Our people are the core of our capability and are the main focus of my attention. Our ability to attract, develop, retain and deploy a quality, diverse work force is the key to the Coast Guard's success – it must be a top priority for everyone. We must draw on the strength of our differences and similarities to:

Create a positive environment, through consistent leadership, where all members of the Coast Guard can achieve their potential and make their greatest contribution to accomplishing the mission.

Continuously strive for a work force that reflects America, and promote an environment that places high value on individual dignity, respect and professional growth.

Diversity in the work force contributes measurably to creative thinking and innovation so critical to excellence. Each of us must ensure that our actions conform to the spirit and intent of this policy, based on our core values of honor, respect and devotion to duty.

Visit the Leadership and Diversity Web site for:

- Leadership Training Courses
- Commandant's Reading List
- Innovative Leadership Initiatives
- Unit Leadership Program
- Diversity Training Modules
- Career Central
- Mentoring Information & Guidance
- Individual Development Plan

www.uscg.mil/leadership.htm

Honor



Respect



Devotion to Duty

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