



CAREER SPEAK is a six-part series being published throughout 2008 in *The Reservist* in support of a broader Reserve Junior Officer (RJO) Career Management Program initiative. The series discusses successful career strategies and important how-to's in managing your Reserve career. Enlisted members are also encouraged to read this series to gain insight, especially if considering the Selected Reserve Direct Commission program in the future. CAREER SPEAK Part 4, published here, focuses on how two of our distinguished Reserve admirals evaluate many of the most important characteristics that will help guide each Coast Guard RJO to a successful and rewarding career.

Part 4: Reserve Admirals Outline Keys to Successful Reserve Junior Officers' (RJO) Career

By LT Sandor Schump
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Author's Perspective as an RJO

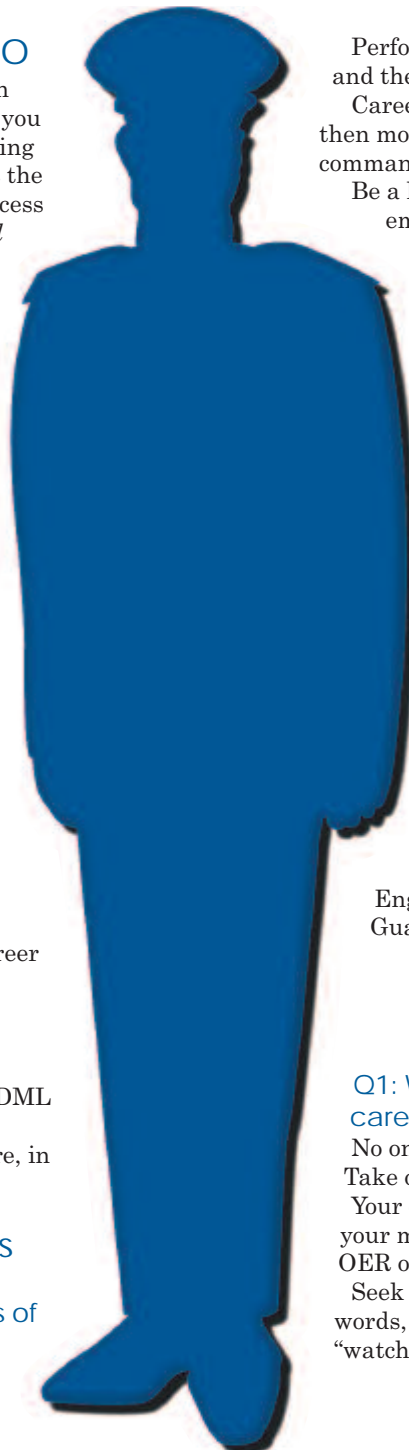
In order to be a successful junior officer in the Coast Guard Reserve, from the moment you put on the rank of ensign, you should be taking charge of your career by first learning about the Officer Evaluation System process. This process is detailed in Chapter 10 of the *Coast Guard Personnel Manual*. In addition, you must become very aware of the Reserve Officer Promotion Board process, which is described in detail in Chapter 14.A.3 of the same document. These two resources have proven to be invaluable since I became a Reserve Program Administrator (RPA), and as a result, I have learned the intricacies of Reserve officer management. By applying time and effort in researching these manuals, I have become much more knowledgeable. I am proud to serve as a junior RPA in the Reserve officer corps.

Please remember that proactive career communications to the promotion board are highly recommended for each Reserve junior officer prior to coming before IDPL promotion boards. Please contact CGPC-rpm-1 for detailed guidance and templates to assist you in preparing for your promotion boards. Chapter 5.A.4.E of the *Personnel Manual* describes the comments that can and cannot be used in the letter. Remember no one cares more about your career than you!

In CAREER SPEAK, Part 1, by CAPT Michael Price of CGPC-rpm, he states that Reserve officers must "take control of their career." Both RDML Michael Seward and RDML Steven Day offer their keys to success to a productive Reserve junior officer career. Here, in Q&A format, are those keys to success.

RDML Seward's Comments

Q1: What are the most important items of Reserve career management?



Performance on the job: What you do, how well you do it, and the impact it has on the Coast Guard.

Career Diversity: Make a difference where you are at now, then move on and embrace new challenges in a new command in a different mission set.

Be a lifelong learner: The culture, climate and mission emphasis is constantly changing within and outside the Coast Guard. Be change-centric and "know your stuff."

Q2: What are the keys to success for a Reserve junior officer?

Know your job, take care of your shipmates, and embrace our core values both on and off watch. It's not just about you. Seek out leadership activities and remember: Leadership is a verb. You can't make it happen on one weekend a month and two weeks a year. Real time engagement is a must.

Q3: What are the key things Reserve junior officers should know and focus on in their first 10 years of service?

Qualify in a mobilization billet and earn an insignia such as Boat Forces, Marine Safety, Port Security Badge, etc.

Expect a mobilization; No notice call-up. Have an individual mobilization plan that includes family and civilian employment issues.

Engage your family and civilian employer in your Coast Guard career, early and consistently.

RDML Day's Comments:

Q1: What are the most important items of Reserve career management?

No one is more concerned about your career than you. Take ownership!

Your command should not have to chase you down to keep your metrics in the "green" and to get you to submit your OER on or before the due date.

Seek "leadership and learning opportunities." In other words, be the person who "makes things happen," not "watch things happen," or worse, being the person who

says, “what the heck happened?” That idea is a quote from VADM Johnson, USCG(Ret.) to the Executive Leadership Class 15-19 OCT 07.

Your command is responsible, through the Reserve Policy Statement, but you as well as all Selected Reservists, as RDML Seward states, “Are a national asset ready to answer the call in 24 hours or less.”

Q2: What are the keys to success for a Reserve junior officer?

Lay out five-year plan segments over a 20-year period. Know and plan for in advance when the promotion opportunities will arrive. Within each of those five-year segments, plan a period of being in the “Blue Suit,” “Purple Suit,” “SRO,” and “Senior Reserve Assignment.”

Continue to apply for boards and service schools. Investigate opportunities to serve not only “purple” DOG or DOD, but also DHS or interagency. Take on those “project officer” jobs that represent excellent training tools/opportunities for planning and leading.

Focus on your mobilization requirements, ensure your metrics are always “green” and challenge your shipmates to be the same. If you have attained and are able to maintain your mobilization requirement with extra time to spare, then advise your command of your availability to assist where you will add value.

Q3: What are the key things Reserve junior officers should know and focus in on their first 10 years of service?

You can’t “lead if you don’t read.” Take a look at the

Commandant’s Reading List. Continual learning means not just the first 10 years, but forever.

No one should have to tell you to do things you were taught in boot camp, ROCI, OCS, or the Academy.

No one should have to tell you to get your metrics “green.”

Have your personal effects in order, including family, and employer. The possibility exists over a 20-year period that you could expect to be recalled at least three or more times based on the Global War on Terrorism within the three functions listed in the Reserve Policy Statement.

In Summary

To summarize, know and utilize your available administration resources. In particular, CGPC-rpm-1 has a full-time staff that is ready, willing, and able to assist you through the promotion board process. The CGPC-rpm Web site is <http://www.uscg.mil/RPM/rpm1/>. Remember, as RDML Seward states, “You are a national asset ready to answer the call in 24 hours or less.”

Semper Paratus!

About the Author: *LT Sandor Schump is the Board Coordinator for the Reserve Personnel Management Division within the Coast Guard Personnel Command (CGPC-rpm). As Board Coordinator, he establishes all IDPL boards and panels selecting the future of the 1300 Reserve officers. He enlisted in the active duty Coast Guard in 1998, was selected for the Selected Reserve Direct Commission program and attended ROCI in 2003, and subsequently selected as an RPA in 2006.*

Using terms Reserve, reserve, and reservist

By CAPT Roger Pike, USCGR(Ret.),
reprinted from November 1994 RESERVIST

The use of the terms “reserve” and “reservist” seem to cause considerable confusion. “Reserve” (note upper case) refers to one of the seven Reserve components — Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Guard, and Air Guard. A “reservist” (note lower case) is a person who is a member of one of those components.

If you say, “Three reservists are drilling this weekend,” you should expect to see three people show up. But, if you say, “Three Reserves are drilling this weekend,” then you should anticipate hosting a rather large crowd, possibly numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

If you use the term “the Coast Guard Reserve” or, simply, “the Reserve,” the word is being

used as the name of an organization and should be capitalized as a proper noun. On the other hand, in uses such as “both active duty and reserve personnel were present,” the word is a common noun and need not be capitalized. With rare exception, “reservist” is almost always a common noun and would not be capitalized. The most common exception is when the term is used as a title, as in, “she is a Coast Guard Reservist.”



Ed’s note: *CAPT Pike served as a Reserve Program Administrator before his retirement in January 1991. He “wordsmithed” many congressional budget statements/hearings while working in the Office of Readiness & Reserve at Headquarters. At last check, he was enjoying retired life in Sequim, Wash.*