



The Mustang Lariat

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Volume 02

Silver Eagle: CAPT John Popham

Senior Warrant Officer, Navy (SWON) CW05 Brian Baker

Head OCM's Corner:

Greetings from Millington! CAPT Pat Sutton here, your LDO/CWO OCM. I am proud and humbled by the opportunity to serve as your OCM in these challenging and rewarding times. We are all thankful for CAPT Dave Dwyer's leadership and innovation during his tour as our OCM. CAPT Dwyer, CW05 Hector Sandoval, LCDR Bryan Gill and Mr. Parker Dinwiddie made significant progress in shepherding 51 LDO/CWO designators. Their team initiated multiple improvements to the LDO/CWO accession process, increased our community's role in supporting the warfare enterprises, and we are a stronger Navy for their efforts.

A quick introduction: I grew up as a Surface Electronics Technician, commissioned as a 6180 (Surface Electronics) LDO, and truly have the good fortune to have been surrounded by outstanding people the whole way. No stories of stepping in for an underperforming boss, singlehandedly saving the day, etc. What I have been is an integral part of a long line of great teams. I had the great fortune to serve as LDO/CWO detailer, CVN CSMO/CSO, XO ashore, CDR CMD ashore, and Major CMD ashore.

Our LDO/CWO Community is in great shape, and we remain healthy across most of our designators - our overall manning is 3443 LDOs at 99% manned and 2027 CWOs at 94% manned – our accession opportunities and billet authorization remain, and are projected to be in a steady state. Promotion opportunity in the major enterprises is trending positively, while the smaller communities are challenged by limited numbers of billets as always.

In-Service Procurement Board process: *You and I own this. From our Silver Eagle, CAPT John Popham, to our newly appointed WO-1, it is as imperative as ever that we all PARTICIPATE in the process. It starts with those closest to the deckplate today in identifying and engaging our reliefs. Let's don't wait on the reverse mentoring process. Be mindful that we are taking the best and brightest from our enlisted ranks, and let's give the process the respect it deserves. CAPT Nichol Schine and her San Diego Mustang Association team come to mind when we think of how a vibrant and meaningful recruiting campaign is undertaken. We all have hard jobs doing critical work for our Navy. Almost nobody enjoys the thought of leaving the ship late, driving through a tunnel or eighteen lanes of traffic, to attend a roundup and mentoring event. Why do I bring this up? Please, read on.*

Head OCM's Corner Cont:

While accession quotas remain similar from year to year, we have seen two years of significant decline in our applicant numbers, decreasing 400+ last year, to another 400+ this year from last. I believe there are various reasons for, and possible outcomes related to our current applicant numbers. What may some of the reasons be for lower applicant numbers? Overall recruiting and retention goals Navy-wide are down. A more rigorous appraisal process initiated this year. Recent opportunity for senior enlisted personnel to advance to position. COVID fatigue. Whatever the reasons, a large decrease in applicants, coupled with steady state opportunity for selection, impacts our quality cut. In the smallest designators, the demand signal for billets is greater than the applicant pool, creating a possibility for no quality cut.

We counter those low applicant numbers by actively identifying our reliefs at the deckplate. Rather than approach this concept in the abstract, mentor one relief in a meaningful, measurable way that will inspire that Sailor to follow our path.

Our role as LDO/CWOs: *Couple things up front. Beyond the textbook definitions of technical managers and technical experts, the work we do as LDOs and CWOs overlaps. There is little divergence in most of our work until our officers get to control grade billets. There are certainly some specific exceptions in some small designators that are specifically CWO only, or LDO only. There is absolutely a difference in the level of experience of new accession LDOs as compared to new accession CWOs by definition.*

The LDO/CWO program affords an opportunity for the warfare enterprises to leverage the knowledge level and experience of top-performing Sailors to do critical officer work in support of our Navy team. Those top-performing Sailors are afforded an opportunity to select into these critical roles at different points across the continuum of a career. The various inputs into that LDO/CWO career continuum dovetail with the lifespan of a ship, squadron, or any mission set for that matter, so that the Navy is best supported to fight and win.

Every job our new accession officers fill is critical to the success of their respective commands. The jobs only get tougher from that point. As LDOs/CWOs, we do not own any billets. We serve at the leisure of the unrestricted line communities. That means as naval officers we have to walk on board and deliver on day one. Achieving a commission as a LDO/CWO does not give us relevancy. Performance gives us relevancy. Treating everyone with respect gives us relevancy. Our value to the Navy team keeps us in a position to fill the great jobs we have, and when we as a community are hitting on all cylinders, nobody can do it better.

Competitive Categories (CC): *SECNAVINST 1400.1D refers. This term refers to the group each of us belongs to with respect to promotion planning and execution, as well as career development. Those categories were revised for LDO/CWO promotion boards in FY21, hence the term Revised Competitive Categories, or RCC. The reason for RCC was to strike a balance among the warfare enterprises so each gets as similar a promotion opportunity as possible, resulting in each enterprise getting the senior billets filled that they are paying for. This initiative was a resounding success as reflected in parity of our promotion numbers among the competitive categories. Today, we have only the need to refer to this term as "competitive categories".*

Head OCM's Corner Cont:

Board of Directors: *The LDO/CWO BOD is comprised of our flag sponsor, RADM Peter Garvin, your OCM team, and the senior O-6 and CWO-5 in each competitive category (Aviation, Gen Line/Staff, IWC, Sub/Nuc, and Surface). Each competitive category has their own BOD. For example, the Surface BOD is made up of leaders in each designator that make up the Surface CC. Our community as a whole is comprised of 51 designators, and currently we accept accessions in 40 designators as many are sun-downed. Those are big numbers. I belabor this explanation for our Ensigns and W-2s out there, because our community needs junior Mustang involvement. The fact is, our LDO/CWOs closest to the deckplate have an opportunity to do some reverse mentoring that could result in improvements for others in your designator, CC, or the community as a whole. For those who have the bandwidth, I ask that you seek out the senior officers in your designator to develop those relationships. It's about business. I can assure that your senior leaders are interested in what you have to say, and would benefit from your constructive participation. It's all about steering the course of our community as best we can to best serve the Navy team.*

LDO/CWO Academy: *What a great and absolutely necessary course for our new accession officers to learn, prepare, and commune before they set out on their first officer tour! One of our OCM duties is to brief and have a discussion with each Mustang U graduating class. It is always an invigorating and confidence-inspiring experience. It's so invigorating that words cannot adequately describe it. I highly encourage any CAPTs and W-5s who haven't had the opportunity to sponsor a class, to overcome any obstacle and attend. You will not be disappointed.*

We are in the planning phase of a full OCM Road Show schedule for CY23, and requesting command sponsorship. If your command can host, please contact our office to coordinate. Thanks for all you do for our Navy and sail safe!

Very Respectfully,

CAPT Pat Sutton



CAPT Sutton delivering the Roadshow Brief at Naval Station Norfolk.

CWO OCM Corner:

Greeting from Millington. Hope this newsletter reaches everyone doing great and preparing for an amazing holiday season. Millington is much cooler and wetter than my past few holiday seasons, but the changing of the leaves has truly been wonderful to witness this year.

Assuming the role as the CWO OCM has been not only a fantastic and exciting experience but also a very educational opportunity in my career. Learning every single day what it takes to keep the community healthy and growing as needed to meet the operational commitment of our URL communities is the highlight of my days. I am certainly learning what drinking from the fire hose truly means!

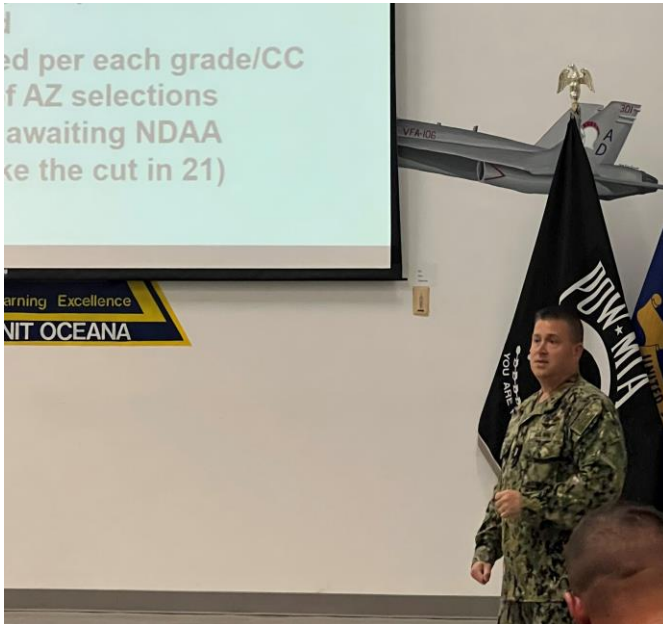
We have several small CWO communities, and as with anything that has small numbers, any deficit within that group equals pain. Distributable inventory is low, and that means some are going to be gapped a CWO and possibly a URL/RL will have to be identified to fill that role. That is not always the preferred option for both the CWO communities and the commands in general. We as a group need to focus our efforts on recruiting. We need to be “THAT” role model inspiring others to want to follow. We need to be actively seeking our reliefs. It’s not just a slogan from yester years; it’s reality. I would truly like all of you to take the time to start mentoring and developing our Sailors for these future career goals. We had a much smaller overall number of applicants this year, and when that occurs, it affects the overall number of applicants we can commission. Please do your part, start actively recruiting in your daily routine, and build our communities to sustain the mission in the future.

I would like to take a few minutes to discuss participation in the road shows that come to your areas. The OCM shop hit a few major areas this past summer, and honestly the attendance at some of the locations was extremely low for our Mustangs. We had good-sized groups for the applicants, but the numbers from within our communities was a little lackluster in a few places. These are the venues where applicants can start to find mentors, gate keepers, and up and comers to help shape them into the future Mustangs that the Navy will need as we are all quickly marching towards retirement. When you see that flyer or announcement that there will be a brief in your area, please make plans to attend; it does matter and it does have an effect on your applicants.

How did the recruiting and applicant season go in your area? What adjustments can we make to improve the process? We would enjoy hearing from you as we can’t make changes to a process without constructive feedback. So if you want to make suggestions and recommendations on how to make things better, we truly want to hear from you. One thing I’d like to mention is the make-up of the appraisal board. We as a community are looking for the “gate keepers,” the more senior members of the communities to play a pivotal role in appraisals. That is why the O5 and W5 are being asked to chair the boards. We intend for this to be the standard going forward, and we want to encourage the use of technology to make that happen. We understand that O5 and W5s aren’t everywhere, but with COVID we have advanced the application of technology and use TEAMS (or other means) to do appraisal boards as if they were in person. We believe with a little effort just about every appraisal can have a “gate keeper” be the first line of defense prior to the In-Service Procurement Board (ISPB). If you have suggestions, please use our functional mailbox to provide your inputs. LDOCWOOCM.fct@navy.mil.

Very respectfully,

CWO5 John Cowan



CWO5 Cowan delivering the Roadshow brief at Oceana.

Zone and Continuation NAVADMINs

NAVADMIN 270/22, FY-24 Promotion Zones, and NAVADMIN 272/22, Continuation Policy, have been released. Ensure you make yourself familiar with these messages and how they apply to you.

This is also a good time of year to request your updated snapshot. Keep in mind on your snapshot, the low, mid, and high zone blocks are based off your flowpoint from when you were commissioned. When you actually go into zone will be based on vacancies and determined from year to year and announced in the zone message.

To request your snapshot, please send an email to the OCM functional email: ldocwoocm.fct@navy.mil.

ADMIN TOOL BOX

Enlisted to officer conversions for active duty LDOs and CWOs are processed by TSC Great Lakes. Great Lakes begins working with the prospective officer's CPPA four to six weeks prior to the commissioning date. The Great Lakes team will provide guidance, process the DD-214, open an officer pay record, start initial officer pay and entitlements, and electronically forward the signed Oath to PERS-8 to be included in the OMPF. TSC Great Lakes encourages prospective officers to sign and provide all commissioning documentation prior to the actual commissioning date to ensure officer pay is received at the end of the first pay period following commissioning (the Oath of Office should be signed using the actual commissioning date).

TSC Great Lakes now will forward Oaths for future LDOs/CWOs onboard carriers and certain SPECWAR units, but these units process their own commissionings.

*All prospective LDOs/CWOs (including those on carriers and SPECWAR units) MUST contact TSC Great Lakes 60 days prior to the commissioning date at: M-GRLK-TSCEOPP@navy.mil. Provide your name, your commissioning date, the name of your command, your contact information, the name of your CPPA, and your CPPA's contact information.

Words from the Silver Eagle

It was a great honor to assume duties as the community's fifteenth Silver Eagle during Captain Heather Walton's retirement ceremony in Gulfport, Mississippi in September. What a remarkable retirement ceremony: The large Naval Construction Battalion Center auditorium was packed with officers, enlisted, and civilians assembled to show their appreciation and admiration for Captain Walton. A model LDO and example for us all, she fulfilled her many roles brilliantly, leading from the front at every level of the Seabee world, officer and enlisted. She also set a high bar as the Silver Eagle, positively impacting our community through engagement, messaging, and personal example. She was the first female officer to hold the position.

I look forward to carrying on the efforts that Captain Walton and her predecessors did so much to advance. Among the most important of those was the continuing and never-ending effort to increase cohesion across designators and the competitive categories (CCs). We are a large and varied group, LDOs and CWOs, totaling more than 5,000 officers. We occupy dozens of designators, each of which demands a vast breadth of experience and expertise in a range of complex work. The number of officers in each designator varies widely, from many hundred in some to several dozen in others. Just the same, the ties that bind us together are stronger than the differences that set us apart. From application seasons, through promotion selection boards, to retirement planning, the more effectively we collaborate across designators and RCCs, the stronger the community will be. While the OCMs take point and provide guidance on these matters, they rely on every one of us to play our part and to grow in community knowledge as we get more senior.

I am confident that the goal of every Silver Eagle—from Captain Walton back to Captains Merrill Albury and “OW” Wright—has been to strengthen the community and preserve it both as a source of tested leaders for the Navy and as the ultimate career opportunity for the best of the enlisted ranks. All of us, from the freshest Ensigns and WO1/CWO2s on up, share responsibility for the long-term health of the community. We must all “protect the brand” by living up to and exceeding the high expectations that those before us established through their service and sacrifice. How we individually perform and conduct ourselves will establish and reinforce in the eyes of others a perception of the community. Let's ensure perception is a positive one. I will share a pet peeve of mine: Statements such as “I did it the hard way...I earned it.” Such sayings are insulting to other officer communities and do not reflect well on us.

Here's another way to phrase it, “I took the long way around to a commission.” It's a fact that we are older than most of our URL and RL/Staff counterparts. We typically ran hot throughout our enlisted careers, chasing the hardest jobs and pouring our all into each one of them. Sacrificing for the goal: Commissioning. Often, that pattern continues into our officer careers as we pursue promotion ultimately to O6 or CWO5. The cause and effect are obvious: take the tough job, do it very well, and promotion typically follows. What can be less obvious are the mental and physical effects that often accumulate along the way. The effects can build up imperceptibly, over the course of many years, and we learn to live with them until one day we can't. Poor sleep is a common issue, from my experience, and poor sleep negatively impacts every other aspect of your health. If you sense you are not on the right track you might need to make some changes in your life. Talk to your family, your chain of command, your primary care manager. Talk to a mental health professional if you are so inclined – there is no shame in doing so. It's the smart move.

Finally, every one of us can support the community by ensuring the In-Service Procurement Board has a surplus of highly qualified candidates in every designator. The FY24 board meets in January, hundreds of happy Sailors will get good news shortly after that, and then the FY25 application season will be upon us. Please do your part to make it a success by enthusiastically encouraging qualified Sailors to apply.

Very Respectfully,
CAPT John Popham



Nuclear OCM Corner

As we conclude our recruiting efforts for FY24's In-Service Procurement Board, I want to thank those of you who put forth the effort it took to match last year's application numbers. As opportunities for our Sailors evolve both in the Navy and in the civilian sector we must evolve how we sell ourselves to our future community members. Thanks to your efforts, it looks to be another good year with good selectivity for the board to choose our reliefs from. I'm looking forward to a great ISPB in February!

With all of that said, it is time to shift our focus to FY25's recruiting process. The first step in that is identifying any PO1 that needs to take the CPO exam early for LDO purposes and help them accomplish that next month. Further, we need each and every member of our community to find at least one person that we think has great potential to be part of our community and proactively and aggressively guide them through the process of applying for FY25. Every one of us knows at least one person eager to be an LDO, whether they know it or not, that we can assist in this process. Please make your goal over the next couple months to engage those personnel and get them started.

*LCDR Jerod Cole
Nuclear LDO and CWO Community Manager
jerod.cole@navy.mil*



Recently at the retirement of CAPT Nichols, there were more current or previous 6200 CAPTs in one room than probably ever before. This handsome group accounts for 251 years of service...and counting...to the Nuclear community. From left to right: CAPT Dwyer, CAPT Etheridge, CAPT Reid, CAPT Nichols, CAPT Lepine, CAPT Groom, CAPT Holland.

Words from the SWON

Fellow Mustangs,

Greetings from Naval Safety Command! I hope you all are doing well wherever you are in the world. I wanted to take this opportunity to update you all on trends coming out of new unannounced safety assessments. I also want to talk about a disturbing trend we have seen regarding Mustangs who are disengaged from their jobs, especially some on shore duty. And for our junior and mid-grade Mustangs, I'd like to pass on a little thanks for what you do and hopefully give you some inspiration to keep fighting the good fight.

Despite the CNO's Get Real, Get Better initiative, a lot of major and very costly mishaps to both readiness and budget have been happening. Simultaneously increased real threats like China and Russia growing enhanced naval warfare capability therefore demanding that we produce higher warfighting readiness. We are also still finding a lot of risks because leaders aren't leading and Sailors aren't following the basic practices of their trade/rates.

I challenge you all to read the new OPNAV Manual 5100.23H Change 2 to learn what it takes to support an effective Safety Management System that supports the CNO's Get Real, Get Better initiative and the role we play in accomplishing both to make our Navy better. The top themes we are finding across all enterprises down at the deckplate level are a lot of failure to follow established procedures and a lack of appropriate risk management due to the lack of correct oversight. There are also an abundance of fire safety issues, as well as numerous Safety and Occupational Health discrepancies, with ineffective fall protection being one of the most frequent. There are also a lot of third party support issues, which some of you may play a big role in that support. If you would like more detail for these, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or your warfare area representative here at Naval Safety Command.

The bottom line, as I stated in my last Lariat message, we MUST get better at inspiring our peers and Chiefs Mess to lead with high standards and be engaged. We MUST also inspire our Sailors to understand the full scope of what they contribute to our Navy and nation. We must ensure our Sailors and those we mentor understand the full reality of the consequences of their failure to take pride in their service and care to do their job to the best of their ability daily.

I will tell you that our upper echelon assessments have revealed major risks associated with changing deployment schedules somewhat due to fall out of sliding maintenance completion schedules. There has also been a significant trend for lack of sufficient resources such as healthy, knowledgeable, and experienced manpower, supply/material system shortfalls, and significant facilities issues. The new Echelon II and III level assessments have also identified safety assurance failures that play into an ineffective Navy Enterprise SMS. These are the type of issues that are getting briefed to SECNAV, CNO, and VCNO by my Admiral at a minimum twice a year. For those of us that are in assignments and areas where we can influence and improve, or rather eradicate or better mitigate, any of the above trending risks, that is what the Navy commissioned us to do.

This brings me to my next topic, failure within our ranks. On every local area assessment we have been on, since starting these new assessments back in June 2022, we are finding LDOs and CWOs not doing their job and literally completely disengaged from their job they were assigned to fulfill. Unfortunately, some of these Mustangs superiors were letting them get away with not doing their job. What is even more concerning for me is these individuals were perfectly okay with it and it wasn't like they were within six months of retiring, nor had someone equivalent to fill the role. The things/areas these Mustangs were in charge of also tended to have very significant safety and readiness issues. On the flip side of the coin, I have also ran into a few fellow Mustangs who have had some real tragic life events happen to them and none of their fellow Mustangs within their community checked on them nor helped encourage them. We are better than this! We MUST support and hold each other accountable all at the same time.

The Mustang Lariat

Words from the SWON cont:

I know the disappointing things I have discussed above are not the majority of you reading this, but our community is failing in these instances. There are Mustangs within our ranks who know these people and we aren't talking with our peers and motivating them to care. Our Navy and our national security suffers when this happens. If this continues to grow, eventually the unrestricted line, that we support, will not see a need for us filling that role anymore and the billets will be taken over by them. These LDOs and CWOs not doing their jobs and not being engaged makes our entire Mustang community look bad and also can cause our senior unrestricted line leadership to question our utility to the Navy at our pay scale and level of responsibility. If you are reading this and you aren't putting your all into what we were commissioned to do, then you need to reexamine why you applied for your commission and get reengaged, or you need to separate and move out of the way for someone who will put forth the effort our Sailors, our Navy, and our nation need and deserve.

I don't want end on a negative note so I personally want to thank all of you who are putting forth your full effort every day for our Sailors, Navy and nation. As I tell the junior Sailors and Marines I talk with while out on safety assessments, you/we are less than one percent of our entire national peer group that provides the safety and security to our nation and the other 99 percent of American citizens. Yes, because of the things I talked about earlier in this message, the job is tough day after day, and it never seems to get easier, but our nation and the free world needs us to continue doing our jobs. You/we are the technical experts, bridging the gaps between the Os and Es, being that extra sounding board for your unit and our Navy's senior leadership. You/we are training the future senior leaders of our Navy and possibly nation, as well as setting the example for, leading, inspiring, and teaching our junior Sailors and future reliefs. As much as I get disappointed from what I witness while out assessments, I get reinvigorated and inspired by all of you LDOs and CWOs who do care, who are going the extra mile, who are ensuring you are getting out on the deckplates and seeing how we need to "get real" and ensuring we are "getting better". Yes, the civilian sector does look quite inviting these days, but I ask you to look at what you do that others aren't willing, or cannot do, for our country. You are needed by your Navy, leadership, peers, and subordinates for what you bring to the table so please, please, please keep up the good fight, stay engaged, make the Navy better before you leave, and ensure the Navy has a better relief for you before you decide to hang up your uniform. Thank each of you for what you do for our Navy and nation and I look forward to talking with you when I'm out on safety assessments or delivering safety risk management briefs in your area.

Bets regards,

CWO5 Brian Baker



Mustang Social with the Hampton Roads Mustangs

U.S.C. Title 10 Section 619:

From the promotion message, officers with an established separation date within 90 calendar days after the convening of their promotion board will not be considered for promotion. This will not apply to those who meet the requirements of the continuation policy.

Captain Pat Sutton
Head LDO and CWO Community Manager

CWO5 John Cowan
CWO Community Manager

LCDR Bryan Gill
Asst LDO and CWO Community Manager

Mr. Parker Dinwiddie
Asst LDO and CWO Community Manager

Our Group Email address: ldocwoocm.fct@navy.mil

Community News and Forums: Stay Connected!

MyNavy HR Website: <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Management/Community-Management/Officer/Active-OCM/LDO->



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/10150114349755436>

