

The Mustang Lariat

December 2025
Volume 02

Silver Eagle: CAPT Mark Nowalk

Senior Warrant Officer, Navy (SWON) CWO5 Sigfrido "CP" Cruzpena

Head OCM's Corner:

Happy Holidays!

I would like to begin by wishing each of you a joyful and restful holiday season. I hope you are taking time to recharge and spend meaningful moments with your family and friends.

Please join me in bidding farewell to CWO5 John Cowan as he retires after 33 years of faithful service. Over the past four years, he has served exceptionally as the CWO Officer Community Manager (OCM), launching several key initiatives—including a proposal of extending High Year Tenure (HYT) for warrant officers. His dedication and leadership have left a lasting impact on the LDO/CWO community, one that will be felt for years. CWO4 Tim Secord, recently selected for W5, will be assuming the role as CWO5 Cowan's replacement and is a welcome addition to the team.

Over the past seven months serving as your Head, Community Manager it has been an honor to engage with the Fleet and lead our team through recruiting season and ongoing community initiatives focused on the long-term sustainability and relevance of the LDO/CWO community in support of evolving Fleet requirements.

I want to thank our LDO/CWO community leaders for their continued engagement and candid dialogue. Through virtual engagements with senior leaders - CAPTs and W5s, we have identified key challenges and opportunities that will inform deliberate, long-term actions to strengthen each designator.

One major initiative underway is a comprehensive review of all 47 designators to ensure long-term health and viability. This effort aims to balance billet structure with Fleet requirements while remaining compliant with the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA, ensuring appropriate distribution of officers from ENS through CAPT and W2 through W5 in compliance with policy).

The FY-27 LDO/CWO promotion plan has been released. Promotion opportunities are forecasted to be higher than FY-26. The below is the SECNAVINST 1420.3 policy for opportunity rates:

CAPTs, promotion opportunity ranges from 40–60%, with flow points between 21–23 years.

CDRs, promotion opportunity ranges from 60–80%, with flow points between 15–17 years.

LCDRs, promotion opportunity ranges from 70–90%, with flow points between 9–11 years.

W4s and W5s, forecasted to be similar to FY-26. Flow points typically at 7 years for W4 and 12–13 years for W5.

The increase in flow points is a positive step, allowing officers more time to complete milestone tours before being eligible for promotion. We recognize that timing differs for every officer, especially at the O4/O5 and W4/W5 level.

Head OCM's Corner (Cont):

The FY-27 Career Pattern sheets will be released in the coming days and will be available on the LDO/CWO MyNavy HR webpage.

As we enter board season, I urge every potential board member to develop a thorough understanding of career progression and milestone tours specific to each designator. This understanding is essential to selecting officers who are both Best and Fully Qualified.

We have also finalized the accession plan for the LDO/CWO In-service Procurement Board, a critical step in shaping the future force and ensuring we attract the right across all designators.

Thank you for your continued service, professionalism, and dedication. Together, we will ensure that the LDO/CWO community remains a vital part of the Navy's officer corps. Enjoy the holidays, stay safe, and I look forward to our continued work together in the new year.

*Very Respectfully,
CAPT Kenny Allison*

CWO OCM Corner:

Happy Holidays! Wishing everyone a safe and wonderful season with family and friends.

As my remaining time here as the Chief Warrant Officer OCM comes to an end, I am reminded of all the amazing people we come into contact with each day. This is truly a special group of people, and I am privileged to sit here and address you.

We have accomplished so much in the past few years; it's hard to believe my four-year mark is coming up very soon. We dedicated our efforts to define what we do, why we do it, and how we do it. Please continue to support the OCM office in everything it does so that these efforts will continue. Moving forward, one of the biggest initiatives is a proposal to adjust the Title X article 1305 language to increase the statutory service time for W4s to 32 years and W5s to 35 years. We are seeking this change to fully utilize our senior leadership in those pay grades and to slow the loss of technical knowledge. This initiative is still in process and may take some time to be included in the NDAA, but we are anxiously awaiting its approval.

I will be turning over the reins to CWO5 (select) Tim Secord, who is coming to us from CNATTU Norfolk and has spent a vast majority of his time in the Hampton Roads area. He is a welcome addition to the OCM team and will do great things here. Please plan to attend one of this year's LDO/CWO Road show events to meet and greet with Tim.

As I leave this team, I'd like to request that we, as Mustangs all across the Fleet, increase our engagement and support the written instruction we have developed. In the past, we had grey areas to navigate; we now have very defined policies but have not wholly implemented them yet. We need your help to provide guidance at the deckplate level so that applicants know what is within and outside of parameters. Over the last few years, the OCM office has held the line extremely rigid, and at times, it seems as though we might be the only ones doing so. This area is where we need your focus.

Promotions and accessions should be very similar to last year; both of these events are normalizing at this time. The competitive category has been great for providing a long-term, manageable, and stable state of readiness. Our health is improving; it may take a little longer, but we are almost there. With continued improvements to manpower, we will be in a better position to ensure others will be ready for operational duty to relieve those transferring to shore duty.

In closing, it has been a privilege to be the OCM. As I move into the next phase of my life, I would like to tell you that it was an honor to serve alongside and with so many great AMERICANS, MUSTANGS, and UNITED STATES SAILORS. The memories will never disappear.

*Very Respectfully
CWO5 John Cowan*

Words from the Silver Eagle!

I am honored to be recognized as our community's Seventh Silver Eagle. I want to acknowledge CAPT Matt Arnold for his 38 years of dedicated service to our nation and our Limited Duty Officer (LDO) and Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) communities. It was a privilege to participate in his retirement ceremony.

Following Captain Arnold is a significant responsibility. He played a vital role in collaborating with our LDO/CWO Community Manager (OCM) team and the Board of Directors (BOD) to strengthen our community across all Competitive Categories (CC) and designators. Serving on the BOD with him for the past two years, I witnessed his dedication and energy in maintaining our community's relevance and value to Navy leadership

As we conclude the FY-27 LDO/CWO In-Service Procurement Board (ISPB) applicant season, I recommend taking some time to reflect on what worked well and what did not. It is essential to collaborate and communicate with senior leadership in your CC, so that we can discuss these points at our annual LDO/CWO BOD meeting. Make sure to attend detailer visits or meet with the OCM Teams when they are in your area; network across CC designators, ask questions and provide feedback. Please conduct thorough research and ensure your feedback is value added and most of all actionable. While we desire more billets across our enterprise, we must remember that this may require the communities we support to give up some of their own. Our OCM team values open communication and aims for continuous improvement.

As we transition into board season, ensure your record is accurate and clearly understood by someone outside your designators. Review your official record, submit necessary corrections, and verify they're made. If needed, submit a letter to the board before the cut-off date. Assess your commitment to accepting the next promotion and communicate with your detailers about future assignments. If you can't relocate and do not wish to be selected, submit a "DO NOT PICK ME LETTER" before the correspondence cut-off date. Don't let your actions impact others who are willing to move. Promotion often requires relocation due to limited senior billets.

Since taking over from Matt, I have received several questions about how I became the Silver Eagle. I was not prepared for these inquiries because I didn't do anything particularly extraordinary. I simply focused on working to the best of my abilities. Although I wasn't perfect all the time and faced my share of failures, what mattered most was how I responded to those setbacks and what I learned from those experiences, supported by the guidance of excellent mentors. I consistently put forth my best effort and was fortunate enough to be selected during the statutory promotion boards, including one selection during an "Above the Zone" look. Therefore, if you find yourself not selected during an "In the Zone" look, keep doing your best; with perseverance, you may achieve similar results.

The key point is that we will all eventually retire and pass our senior leadership responsibilities to those we lead, with the hope that we have adequately prepared them to excel. This has been our tradition since I joined the Navy, as far back as I can remember. My goal as your Silver Eagle is to "do no harm" while providing valuable recommendations to our OCM.

I look forward to collaborating with our OCM and the CC Leadership throughout my tenure. Most importantly, I am excited to meet with our Limited Duty Officers (LDOs) and Chief Warrant Officers (CWOs) during my visits to your regions. Keep pushing forward, upholding the highest standards in all aspects of your daily routines, and, above all, continue to grow and develop your technical and leadership skills.

*Very Respectfully,
CAPT Mark Nowalk*

Words from the SWON!

Fellow Mustangs, as I prepare to turn over with CWO5 James Dertilis, I want to take a moment to reflect and thank each of you for the unwavering support you've shown throughout my tenure as the 11th Senior Warrant Officer of the Navy. Serving in this role has been the greatest honor of my career, and every edition of the Lariat has allowed me to share my views on what makes our community truly exceptional.

I still believe that the "secret sauce" of our success has always been our GAS factor. Our ability to not host "gravy train riders" in our stables ensures our ability to provide the best and most powerful leaders the Navy has to offer. We master our craft, stay technically sharp, and lead with authenticity. This is what sets us apart from the rest and ensures the Navy can always count on us to deliver.

We must continue to capitalize on our mentorship program. Whether interviewing candidates or developing reliefs, we owe them honest feedback and steady guidance. Additionally, we must put as much emphasis on developing our reliefs, ensuring they are ready for any challenge ahead. Our Navy depends on our talent and cannot afford to lose the corporate knowledge that defines our community. It is on all of us to help keep that GAS tank full and retain our best

Continuous learning is another cornerstone of our profession. Whether it's staying ahead of technological advances, sharpening leadership skills, or pursuing formal education, we must remain lifelong learners. Knowledge has true value when applied, shared, and used to strengthen the team. The day we stop learning is the day we stop being effective.

Change will always be part of our profession, policies shift, missions evolve, and priorities adjust. As Mustangs, it is our duty to continue to embrace change, adapt quickly, and lead from the front. However, with adaptability comes the responsibility to hold fast to our standards. We must continue to reject the normalization of deviance from taking root. As such, we must continue to remind ourselves that regulations, discipline, and good order are not optional. These are the bedrocks of trust and mission success. Our Sailors look to us for clear, honest leadership, and we must never let them down.

To those recently selected for promotion, congratulations! Your selection is proof that sustained superior performance across challenging assignments remains the key to advancement. Own your records, document your achievements, and continue pushing yourselves and your Sailors forward.

To our future candidates, I encourage you to keep sharpening your skills, broadening your experiences, and expanding your resumes as you prepare to join the most impressive team the Navy has ever formed. The LDO and CWO community provides unmatched technical expertise, seasoned leadership, and the unique ability to translate deckplate experience into strategic action. This call demands the very best from each of us, and I have no doubt you are up to the challenge.

Before closing, I want to extend a special thank you to CWO5 John (GOB) Cowan for his spectacular work as our CWO Community Manager and for the mentorship he continues to provide across the ranks. His dedication, steady leadership, and genuine care for our Mustangs have made a lasting impact. Simply put, our community is stronger because of him.

*As I pass the torch to CWO5 Dertilis, I leave you with this charge: **Master your craft, mentor without pause, and keep the GAS factor alive!** You are the Navy's technical experts, problem solvers, and leaders of character. Wear your collar devices with pride, lead with conviction, and never forget that the trust placed in you must be earned every single day. The future of our Navy depends on it.*

*Very Respectfully,
CWO5 Sigfrido (CP) Cruzpena*

61XX/71XX Note:

Forging the Future of the Surface Mustang: A Message from CAPT Keith Foster, Senior Surface LDO/CWO:

Greetings Surface Warriors! For those whom I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting, I am CAPT Keith Foster, the senior Surface Mustang Captain. I am a career engineer currently serving as the Director of Officer Engineering Training at Surface Warfare Schools Command (SWSC) in Newport, Rhode Island. It is both an honor and a blessing to serve in this role, and I am genuinely excited for what the future holds for our Surface LDO/CWO community. The momentum we are building—across readiness, training, opportunities, and leadership—is significant, and it is a privilege to help shepherd this community into its next chapter.

Before diving into the nuts and bolts of this issue's message, I want to begin with something far more important: celebrating our people. The Mustang community stands tall not just because of what we do, but because of who we are—and that begins with honoring those who have paved the way through decades of dedicated service.

Honoring Our Retirees: Over Three Decades of Service

It is my distinct pleasure to recognize the retirement of several exceptional leaders, Mustangs whose impact will be felt for decades to come. These officers served with distinction across the Fleet, led Sailors in demanding environments, and upheld the highest traditions of our community. Their service was not theirs alone; their families sacrificed alongside them, supporting each milestone and deployment with unwavering strength. Please join me in congratulating the following retirees:

- CAPT Zeverick Butts, 6110, CAPT Shaun Fischer, 6180, and CAPT Rod Little, 6110
- CDR Will Dougher, 6110, CDR Warren Freeman, 6130, CDR Stephen Hartley, 6130, and CDR Brian Mutsch, 6120
- LCDR Michael Azuela, 6120, LCDR David Cox, 6110, LCDR Jeffrey Clayton, 6180, LCDR Russell Dickert, 6180, LCDR Stephen Eckstein, 6180, LCDR Nikko Edwards, 6180, LCDR Jonathan England, 6180, LCDR Aaron Gordon, 6130, LCDR Marcus Hayes, 6120, LCDR Israel Isip, 6130, LCDR Steven Manning, 6120, LCDR Jorge Martinez, 6120, LCDR Andrew Miles, 6130, LCDR Jared Pahl, 6180, LCDR Thomas Samella, 6180, LCDR Daren Sanford, 6180, LCDR Jeffery Simmons, 6180, LCDR Adriane Whitehead, 6110, and LCDR Corey Wright, 6120
- LT Barry Adams Jr., 6180, LT Manuel Agah, 6120, LT Patrick Baker, 6180, LT Craig Borden, 6110, LT Reynald Catillo, 6130, LT Beth Denys, 6180, LT Matthew Korte, 6130, LT Robert Prine, 6180, LT Paolo Saldua, 6130, LT Jamerion Shorter, 6180, LT Billy Spikes Jr., 6110, LT Jennifer Sullivan, 6180, LT Andrew Westcott, 6180, and LT Gregory Williams, 6110
- CWO5 Mark Bradford, 7111, CWO5 Al Lucario, 7111, CWO5 Mike McCullars, 7121, CWO5 John Penick, 7181, and CWO5 Troy Wilson, 7153
- CWO4 Jovie Cabasug, 7121, CWO4 Timothy Camacho, 7181, CWO4 Wilbert Dispolo, 7131, CWO4 Lawrence Fraley, 7131, CWO4 Tremayne Frederick, 7131, CWO4 Jamen Gensure, 7121, CWO4 Jason Goins, 7181, CWO4 Michael Jensen, 7171, CWO4 Denerio Kennedy, 7181, CWO4 Walter Lasbury III, 7183, CWO4 Ferdinand Marzan, 7131, CWO4 Joseph McQuiggan, 7181, CWO4 Lee Mears, 7131, CWO4 Joshua Patat, 7181, CWO4 Melvin Ruffin III, 7127, CWO4 Matthew Shanks, CWO4 Jabari Turner, 7111, CWO4 Andrew Warren, 7181, and CWO4 Donovan Williams, 7131
- CWO3 Joseph Aldana, 7171, CWO3 Ariel Ancheta, 7131, CWO3 Alirio Arguetapinto, 7131, CWO3 Daniel Bergen, 7181, CWO3 Demetrius Carnell, 7131, CWO3 Andrew Charman, 7151, CWO3 Daniel Fiack, 7151, CWO3 Keith Harder, 7131, CWO3 Joshua Keown, 7131, CWO3 Benjamin Lebron, 7121, CWO3 Christopher Leugers, 7131, CWO3 Darrion Maxie, 7181, CWO3 Joseph Pate, 7181, CWO3 Denise Paul, 7181, CWO3 Courtney Pugmire, 7151, CWO3 Devon Seitz, 7111, CWO3 Adam Tolar, 7181, CWO3 Jeremy Whitehead, 7171, and CWO3 Steven Williamson, 7181
- CWO2 Amagouno Minta, 7131

61XX/71XX Note (cont):

To each of you, thank you. Thank you for your leadership, your mentorship, your technical and tactical contributions, and your steadfast commitment to the Mustang ethos. Your example strengthened our community, and your influence will echo far into the future.

Sea Duty and Operational Tours: Our Core Identity

Sea duty remains our #1 priority. It is what we do. It is who we are. The Navy is a seagoing service, and our Mustang identity is anchored in the crucible of operational experience. Every time you coach or mentor a junior Sailor or aspiring Mustang, emphasize this truth: credibility is earned at sea.

Operational tours shape your judgment. They build resilience, sharpen your leadership, and deepen your tactical understanding in ways no shore billet can match. As detailing and Fleet requirements continue to adjust to global demands, our community must hold the line: the hardest billets must be filled by our strongest leaders.

Milestone Tours: The Gateways to Increased Responsibility

Milestone tours—whether as Principal Assistants or Department Heads afloat—are critical leadership billets that prepare our officers for greater authority. These billets are not designated by detailers. They are established by each designator's Board of Directors (BoD).

Designator Updates: Your Community at a Glance

Below is a snapshot of the latest developments across all Surface LDO/CWO designators—opportunities you should be aware of and ready to pursue.

DECK (6110/7111)

Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV) Opportunities

USV units in San Diego are now online and open to CWOs as Ship's Bos'n. This is an extraordinary opportunity to be at the forefront of unmanned maritime operations—developing expertise that will define future generations of surface warfare.

New O5 Leadership Opportunity Ashore

The Port Operations billet at Naval Base San Diego has transitioned to the LDO community. This high-visibility O5 Department Head Ashore position offers broad leadership exposure in one of the Navy's busiest fleet concentration areas.

OPERATIONS (6120/7121)

JICO Readiness: Change Is Coming – And It's Good!

Operational excellence is reflected in our at-sea milestones, whether serving as CSG JICO or LHD AOPS. Success in these roles is driven by preparation, technical expertise, and tactical proficiency. For the JICO skillset, the stakes are higher than ever, as PERS-41 is increasing the rigor by implementing a Talent Management Board (TMB) process starting in FY26.

61XX/71XX Note (cont):

What does this mean? The way we train, qualify, and detail JICOs is going to change. Those who want to earn the JICO AQD will need to apply, screen, and be selected through an interview process.

There's a lot of goodness in what's forthcoming. Why? The LT2/JICO skill set is perishable if you're not up to speed on all things interoperability (afloat and ashore), and this process will allow those in the pipeline to gain and sustain proficiency. The revised approach is relevant, will make us all better, and will be career-enhancing for those filling these critical billets.

The TMB Announcement Message is out: GENADMIN R 251538Z NOV 25 COMNAVSURFOR SAN DIEGO CA, FY26 SURFACE OPERATIONS TALENT MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES. This message contains detailed guidance on the application process and discrete requirements for selection. The first TMB to be held 19-23 January 2026.

All eligible Mustangs are strongly encouraged to apply as it only strengthens our community and allows us to achieve high levels of performance and excellence as we deploy forward to potential contentious environments.

ENGINEERING (6130/7131)

O5 Spot Promotion Opportunities

DDG-1000 Class Chief Engineer (CHENG) billets now offer O5 spot promote potential. To qualify, candidates must:

- *Have at least two years in grade*
- *Have one year remaining in the qualifying billet*
- *Not have a most-recent failure of selection*

Spot promotion remains one of the most powerful incentives for taking on the Fleet's toughest billets.

LCS CHENG Opportunities Expanded

LCS CHENG billets are now open to CWO4s, providing a clear and competitive DH Afloat path for engineers. Prior successful LCS MPA service is required.

CNSGs Growing Rapidly

Commander, Naval Surface Groups are expanding and provide excellent engineering leadership roles ashore. CNSGs are pivotal to preparing ships for the basic phase and improving waterfront readiness across the Fleet.

Return of SIMA

Ship's Intermediate Maintenance Activity (SIMA) capabilities are returning—revitalizing technical proficiency and offering LDOs and CWOs shore opportunities to strengthen maintenance planning, repair execution, and fleet support.

Advance Engineering Instructor (AEI) Pipeline

The AEI program is accelerating. Both LDO and CWO Engineers should anticipate completing the AEI qualification pipeline enroute to production tours, with a goal of 100% qualification.

61XX/71XX Note (cont):

ELECTRONICS (6180/7181)

Two new senior Warrant Officer billets stand out:

- *INSURV – an exceptional opportunity to apply technical expertise while touring Fleet units worldwide*
- *Director of Surface Ordnance, NAVSUP NALC – a keystone billet for shaping ammunition logistics and warfighting readiness*

Forging Ahead: Our Charge to Lead

The Surface Mustang community is evolving—growing more capable, more diverse in talent, and more integrated into the broader warfighting enterprise. With these opportunities, however, comes responsibility. We must:

- *Stay ready*
- *Lead with integrity*
- *Mentor the next generation*
- *Uphold the standards of worldwide assignability*
- *Prioritize sea duty*
- *Honor the legacy of those who came before us*

Above all, we must continue to exemplify the qualities that define us: resilience, technical mastery, humility, operational excellence, and a commitment to our shipmates and our Navy.

The future of the Surface LDO/CWO community is bright. Together—through readiness, leadership, and unwavering dedication—we will continue to make the Fleet stronger and the mission possible.

Continue to lead boldly. Stay the course. And remember: we are Mustangs—Forged at Sea.

*Very Respectfully,
CAPT Keith Foster*

62XX/72XX Note:

Submarine and Nuclear Power Competitive Category Lead: CAPT Mark Nowalk

It has been an honor to serve as your Competitive Category (CC) Lead for over a year now. This is something I never dreamed of when I was coming up the ranks, just as each of you is doing today. I am fully committed to this role, working closely with each of the CC Designator senior leaders as your direct point of contact to the OCM shop.

Retention of our control-grade officers is becoming a key focus area, particularly among our detailers. With support from COMSUBFOR, we conducted the inaugural TYCOM-sponsored 62XX/72XX retention survey. While each CC designator has conducted similar surveys in the past, this enterprise-wide survey proved pivotal, providing direct input and a broader base of responses to secure buy-in from our resource sponsors for necessary actions. The Qualtrics platform recorded 675 responses, yielding invaluable data to inform improvements within our community.

We are currently evaluating and analyzing the feedback received on actionable items within our existing policy parameters. I look forward to updates on the survey results and discussions about initiatives during the upcoming FY26 Detailer Roadshows. However, please note that pre-decisional items will not be addressed during these discussions. I plan to attend some of these roadshows to support our CC. Thank you for your continued support of our community.

If you have concerns about your designator-specific initiatives or ideas on how we can better support you, please share them with your CC leadership. Please feel free to communicate directly with me as well; I welcome your input. I pledge to review everything you send, but I will consider it for action only after it has been discussed with your CC leadership and our 62XX Board of Directors, and then it will be submitted to the OCM. Please keep striving to make a difference in your wardrooms, our community, and the Navy.

6200: Nuclear Power (Inputs from PERS 422, CAPT Homer Hensy and the Nuclear Power OCM, CDR Michael Kenndey)

Please join us in extending our sincere gratitude to LCDR Karl Martin and family for their dedicated service as PERS-422B. We wish him and his family all the best as he embarks on his tour as the Ship's Maintenance Manager onboard USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71). We also extend a warm welcome to LT Ryan Kuhn and family as the incoming PERS-422B.

Furthermore, we commend all commands for their diligent efforts in executing the FY27 LDO/CWO Application Season. We successfully navigated the challenges presented by the government furlough and ensured accountability for all submitted application packages. We kindly request your continued patience as we process these applications. Please monitor BOL feedback for any discrepancies requiring resolution. As a reminder, addendums, endorsed by the Commanding Officer, are due no later than 15 December 2025 and must be submitted to NPC in accordance with NAVADMIN 113/25. Please refrain from utilizing the "Letter to the Board" process on BOL.

The draft FY26 Road Show schedule has been disseminated to our senior LDOs and CWOs. While travel is projected to commence in March, we are soliciting fleet input at your earliest convenience to help finalize our travel arrangements. Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment.

6230: Submarine Engineering (Input from Designator Leader, CAPT Kurtis Krug)

We saw a marked increase in applicants for our designator this year. This is what we need to strive for every year. That being said, I challenge each one of you to mentor one or more candidates to be your

62XX/72XX Note (cont):

future relief. If a candidate is not suited to our designator, find them a mentor in the designator they align with. Advocate for the broader LDO/CWO program, then provide these candidates with a path to be successful, but make them do the work to demonstrate they are ready to meet the challenges of serving as an officer in our ranks.

When should you review your record? The answer is continually after something changes in your career...FITREP, award, AQD, or a change of station. If you don't see the changes reflected promptly, act; don't wait for a board to try and correct issues. The bottom line is your record needs to be current, and it is ultimately your responsibility to own your official record on file at Millington.

The traditional path to becoming a Commander and Captain five years ago is not the same today. Our designator is constantly evolving to suit the needs of the Navy. Stay informed about our career pattern sheet as new opportunities and billets are added to support new programs and fill existing gaps. Lastly, utilize the detailer and our senior 6230s, as they are a wealth of knowledge to help your transition, whether to your next tour, promotion, or eventual retirement.

6260: Submarine Ordnance (Inputs from CAPT Gregory Price, CAPT Bryan Kupyar, and CAPT Jeriahmi Tinsley)

Emerging Opportunities – Columbia-Class SSBN and Perth, AUS

The Columbia-class SSBN represents one of the most significant milestones in undersea warfare in decades. With first-in-class construction well underway, the demand for experienced LDOs and CWOs with expertise in ordnance, nuclear power, and weapons handling will grow. Our officers will play critical roles in establishing training pipelines, integrating advanced systems, and leading crews through the transition to this strategic deterrent platform.

Opportunities are also expanding overseas with the stand-up of CSS-3 operations in Perth, Australia. This provides a unique chance to serve forward while strengthening AUKUS partnerships and supporting SSN deployments in the Indo-Pacific. LDOs and CWOs filling these billets will set the tone for how the Navy integrates with host-nation infrastructure and operates in a new strategic hub. Both the Columbia and CSS-3 Perth assignments reflect the growing trust placed in our community to lead in high-visibility, high-impact missions.

In closing, thank you for your sustained leadership and daily mentorship across the fleet. Continue to recruit aggressively, review your records thoroughly, submit LTBs on time, uphold Navy standards, and share these resources widely. Together, we will sustain a strong bench of LDOs and CWOs ready to lead the next generation of undersea warriors.

6280: Submarine Electronics (Input from Designator Leader, CAPT Kirby Hallas)

Shipmates, the 6280 community continues to deliver excellence across the undersea force. From tenders and submarines to program offices and shore commands, our Limited Duty Officers remain at the forefront of technical leadership and warfighting readiness. The past year has presented challenges across modernization, workforce, and maintenance; yet our team has consistently demonstrated that adaptability and professionalism define who we are.

As I transition CC leadership soon, we are fortunate to have CAPT (SEL) Mike Fasano taking the helm for the 6280s. CAPT Fasano is now back in CONUS after years of forward-deployed service. He brings his wealth of operational experiences with a focused vision for sustaining our 6280 LDO legacy within the submarine force and the billets we support. His priorities will center on mentorship, deliberate professional development, and ensuring that our voice remains strong within the broader LDO/CWO enterprise.

62XX/72XX Note (cont):

Our continued success depends on your active engagement in recruiting the next generation. We must identify, mentor, and advocate for the best Sailors, those who demonstrate technical mastery, leadership potential, and an enduring commitment to the mission. Whether serving aboard a submarine, tender, or in a shore billet, each of us has a responsibility to develop our reliefs and ensure the continuity of technical expertise that keeps our boats operational and our crew safe.

In closing, every 6280 who has led from the deck plates, trained the next watch stander, or solved the impossible casualty, thank you. Your dedication sustains our community's reputation for quiet.

6290: Submarine Communications (Designator Leader, CDR Ray Cureton)

The 6290 community remains a driving force for war-fighting excellence, both afloat and ashore. Our Limited Duty Officers maintain their position at the forefront of technical leadership and warfighting readiness. This year, there is additional focus on C5I Readiness and Cyber Security Inspections (CSI).

Applicant Pool & Mentorship:

- *We experienced a notable increase in applicants for the 6290 designation this year. I appreciate your dedication to mentorship, which contributed to the successful completion of many boards early in the application season, a significant improvement over previous years.*
- *As we progress through the board process, continued mentorship remains critical for each applicant, including pre-board record reviews. All applicants will be assigned a mentor if one is not already established.*

Professional Development & Community Transition:

- **1820 SV3 IP Officer Transition:** *A comprehensive understanding of the off-ramp to the 1820 SV3 IP Officer community is essential for all applicants.*
- **Education & Certifications:** *We must emphasize the importance of pursuing higher education and relevant IT certifications. This will enhance applicants' competitiveness and address existing gaps in communications and information systems expertise, crucial for success within the 1820 community and for future promotion opportunities.*
- **Best of Fully qualified IP O4/LCDRs will have:**
 - 1) *Completed the IP Basic Qualification*
 - 2) *Completed or be in a deployable C4 or Cyber assignments*
 - 3) *Demonstrated superior performance in O-3 operational or cyber assignments. 1820 Community defines superior performance as Individual Trait Average above RSCA.*
 - 4) *Superior performance as an instructor of IP/IW curricula, including WTI*
 - 5) *Progressed towards a technical post-graduate master's degree or in-residence education*

Career Management & Record Maintenance:

- *Career management is an ongoing process. Regular record review is essential to ensure accuracy and completeness.*
- *Actively pursue and document relevant AQDs (Additional Qualification Designators) within both the 6290 and 1820 communities each year. This documentation is paramount in highlighting experience and can be a differentiating factor in promotion boards, particularly following the transition to the 1820 community.*

62XX/72XX Note (cont):

My sincere gratitude to all 6290s and 1820 SV3s for your daily contributions. Your hard work, dedication to Sailor development, and commitment to mission success are recognized and deeply appreciated. Contact CDR Belcher, CDR Cureton, or LCDR Gainey with any questions related to the 6290 designator.

7201: Diving Officer (Input from Competitive Category Lead CWO5 Dertilis and CWO5 Potts)

The Diving Officer community remains actively engaged and in high demand throughout the Fleet. We've seen a significant increase in funded billets, particularly within the Special Warfare and Expeditionary Combat enterprises, while simultaneously establishing new positions at Ship Repair Facility Yokosuka and the Diving Programs Office at Naval Sea Systems Command headquarters. Additionally, we now have a funded billet aligned with the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in support of aviation survival training diving programs. For a more detailed overview of our billet structure, please be sure to check out and share with our prospective applicants the latest community slating graphic.

Regarding applicants, let me just say thank you--thank you for your diligent efforts in identifying and preparing this year's 7201 candidates. The record number of applications submitted is a true testament to your hard work and dedication to bringing the best and brightest into our small, yet highly technical, designator. The future is bright for our community, as we are no doubt attracting the Navy's most talented and capable enlisted leaders.

To increase community wide engagement, we've initiated virtual open forums on a bimonthly basis. Through this line of effort, we've seen tremendous value in just getting together and chopping it up. There is always value added from discussing diving policy, bringing attention to and working through problems, and sensitizing everyone to initiatives aligned with the Diving Chief Warrant Officer and Senior Enlisted Advisory Teams as well as the Diving and Salvage Executive Steering Committees. Your engagement matters, and we look forward to seeing you at the next gathering!

7261: Submarine Ordnance Technician (Input from Competitive Category Lead CWO4 Steven Hurt)

The 7261 community continues to support the Undersea Domain in every aspect, and finding our relief is no different. We have supported 14 CWO boards and 24 LDO boards for the FY27 LDO/CWO application season. "Remember, when you make it to the top, turn and reach down for the person behind you."

Lastly, if you don't have a mentor, please reach out to someone. It is always good to seek information, guidance, or even just a compass recalibration. This designator is filled with exceptional individuals who possess a wealth of knowledge about what you're looking for.

7281: Acoustic Technician (Input from Competitive Category Lead CWO5 Kyle Graham)

Attention all LDOs and CWOs, the acoustic warrant community needs your help! A relatively new designator, we are primarily concentrated in three locations. We are seeking your assistance in promoting this program to ensure that the best and brightest understand the opportunities available to them in the 7281 community. If you lead STGs, STSs, or AWs who you think could impact the Officer ranks, do not hesitate to reach out to the community. With CWOs in Dam Neck, VA, Whidbey Island, WA, Japan (YOKO/OKI), and JBPHH, HI, there is no shortage of mentors for these prospective candidates!

62XX/72XX Note (cont):

Greetings SONAR Jockeys. It has been an interesting year, marked by dynamic changes within the Acoustic Technician Community, including new AQDs, billet growth, and changes in billet management. We have added two more W5 billets to our inventory and expect to see significant billet growth from 42 to 63 by June 2026. What does this mean for us? Similar to the above, it means that recruitment of the best and fully qualified Sailors is as paramount as ever. Everyone should continue to engage with the fleet and educate them about our program.

I'll close with a hardy congratulations to CWO4 Wieland, CWO3 Mike Beach, and CWO2s Maserang, Pena, and Richards on their promotions. This year's promotion board truly showed how competitive our CC is. It also reminded us that at some point someone will fail to advance. As you progress in your career always think about what your exit strategy is going to be. It is never too early to plan ahead.

*Very Respectfully,
CAPT Mark Nowalk*

63XX/73XX Note:

The CNATRA Advantage: A Career-Defining Tour for Aviation Maintenance Officers

There's a common misconception in Naval Aviation that a successful career follows a single, narrowly defined path. This rigid mindset suggests that only certain billets lead to promotion and command. However, the reality is far more nuanced. The community requires a diverse range of skills to maintain warfighter readiness, and the paths to leadership are as varied as the officers who walk them. The consistent thread among those who rise to the top is not the billet they hold, but the exceptional performance they deliver in every assignment.

Every billet in the Navy is funded for a reason, and each one is critical to the mission. Consider the assignments available within the Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA) command. These are not "easy" shore tours; they are demanding, complex, and vital for the future of Naval Aviation. A tour at CNATRA offers a unique opportunity to gain invaluable experience in force generation and high-level contract management—skills that are not only crucial for naval leadership but also highly sought after in the civilian sector.

Purpose: The Strategic Value of a CNATRA Billet

At its core, a CNATRA tour is about force generation. As an Aviation Maintenance Officer at a training squadron, you are directly responsible for ensuring the availability and safety of the aircraft that produce the next generation of Naval Aviators and Flight Officers. This is a no-fail mission that directly impacts the readiness of the entire fleet.

Furthermore, CNATRA billets provide unparalleled experience in contractor maintenance management. Officers oversee multi-million dollar contracts, manage a civilian workforce, and are responsible for ensuring that the contractor meets rigorous performance, safety, and quality standards. This is executive-level experience that is difficult to gain elsewhere. You will develop a deep understanding of budgeting, negotiation, and performance oversight—skills that are critical for future leadership roles and are increasingly important as the Navy continues to rely on contractor support.

Captain Curtis Brown's career exemplifies the value of this experience. He served as a site Officer in Charge early in his career and now, as the CNATRA N4, he oversees all maintenance and contracts for the command. His success underscores the community's recognition of the importance of these billets.

Locations: Where You Can Serve

CNATRA's operations are geographically dispersed, offering a variety of locations for a shore tour. Billets for Aviation Maintenance Officers are primarily located at the CNATRA headquarters and the various Training Air Wings:

- *CNATRA Headquarters: Corpus Christi, Texas*
- *Training Air Wing ONE: Meridian, Mississippi*
- *Training Air Wing TWO: Kingsville, Texas*
- *Training Air Wing FOUR: Corpus Christi, Texas*
- *Training Air Wing FIVE: Pensacola, Florida*
- *Training Air Wing SIX: Pensacola, Florida*

A shore tour at one of these locations after a demanding sea tour not only provides geographic stability but also significantly enhances an officer's record with a unique and valuable skill set.

63XX/73XX Note (cont):

Broaden Your Horizons

When discussing your next assignment with your detailer, don't just think about the next step; think about the overall trajectory of your career. Prioritize personal and professional growth. Seek out opportunities that will broaden your experience and expose you to different facets of Naval Aviation. The skills and relationships you build at CNATRA will benefit you in subsequent sea tours and open doors to other opportunities.

Finally, as you build your resume, remember to consider the needs of your family. The challenges of a military career, with its frequent moves and deployments, are significant. Open and honest communication with your spouse and children is essential. Seek advice from your network of friends and mentors on how they navigated similar challenges. A successful career is one that is sustainable for the entire family.

*Very Respectfully,
CAPT Shawn Rumbley*

64XX/74XX Note:

GenLine Competitive Category Lead: CAPT Kenny Allison

I would like to first celebrate the retirement of several outstanding Mustang leaders whose impact within the community will be long lasting. These officers distinguished themselves across the Navy, guiding Sailors through demanding missions while leading from the front and setting the example for those to follow. Join me in giving thanks to the following leaders:

- *CAPT Brad Bauer, 6410*
- *CDR Rob Collett, 6490, CDR Brandon Dehaan, 6410, CDR Brian Finger, 6490, CDR Dianne Nichols, 6430, and CDR Allen Richmond, 6490*
- *LCDR Joel Borrelliboudreau, 6430, LCDR Marcus Browning, 6410, LCDR Jon Davis, 6410, LCDR Andrew Morris, 6413, LCDR Nathan Ouellette, 6490, LCDR Ryan Peter, 6410, LCDR Donal Reinhart Jr., 6490, and LCDR Benjamin Satrasook, 6410*
- *LT Jessica Bentley, 6490, LT Eric Hess, 6480, LT Mathias Jungers, 6480, LT Denton Kleiner, 6480, LT Calvin Lambrix, 6490, LT Mark Leet, 6410, LT Hershel Lemaster, 6410, LT Orie Maniece Jr., 6490, LT Christinemae Ocampo, 6410, LT Benjamin Simpson, 6480, and LT Alexander Vernon, 6410*
- *CWO5 Melanie Kinchen, 7413*
- *CWO4 Dewayne Belcher, 7491, CWO4 Maurice Evans, 7411, CWO4 Christina Haughton, 7413, CWO4 Keith Rainey, 7411, and CWO4 Xavier Ware, 7411*
- *CWO3 Raechel Pope, and CWO3 Kacee Sellers*

Leaders, thank you—for your leadership, mentorship, expertise, and unwavering dedication to the Navy and Wardroom. Your example has strengthened our community, and your impact will resonate for years to come.

I had the opportunity to attend the Norfolk SLAM, held 4-5 December. The SLAM was a strong reflection of what the Admin and LDO/CWO communities can accomplish when leaders come together with honesty, professionalism, and a shared sense of responsibility.

Special thanks go to CDR McDaniel, CWO5 Reid, CWO5 Roque, and CWO4 Thomas for organizing and executing an outstanding event.

Throughout the symposium, participants demonstrated exceptional engagement – asking meaningful questions, challenging assumptions, and openly discussing opportunities to strengthen the community.

The SLAM addressed several key topics, including billet distribution, board selection processes, declining milestone tours, the evolving LDO/CWO landscape, and the critical role Admin Officers play as the backbone of Navy personnel readiness.

What stood out most was the level of leadership present in the room. It was evident that attendees genuinely cared about their Sailors; their community and doing things the right way. The leaders who participated showed a clear commitment to accountability, developing talent, and understanding how their decisions influence careers, community health, and the future of the Navy.

Overall, the symposium reflected a community united in purpose and dedicated to raising standards across the Fleet. The investment of time, energy, and honest dialogue made the event highly impactful and set a positive path forward for continued collaboration and improvement.

64XX/74XX Note (cont):

New updates for the 6410/7411 community:

Updated the NOOCS manual, ensuring that officers in the 6410/7411 community receive Subspecialty Code 3130 – Manpower Systems Analysis. We will be working directly with the BSOs to ensure that the 3130 Subspecialty Code is assigned to manpower billets.

After thorough review of new accession requirements of LDO/CWO, there were 12 LDO aviation billets were redesignated as CWO positions to better align with established career progression. In addition, 10 Flag Secretary billets were adjusted upward or downward to ensure that each billet reflected the appropriate paygrade commensurate with its scope of responsibility. Attaché duty has also been turned over to the Intelligence Community. For officers currently sitting in these positions, you will be detailed into community jobs once minimum time on station has been met or at your PRD, whichever comes first.

Words from the Senior Bandmaster, CAPT Robert "Seph" Coats:

In FY2025 Navy Music took an active and pace-setting roll in the Navy's efforts to commemorate 250 years of service to the nation. As one of the few communities in the Navy with a specific mission focus dedicated to outreach and advancing strategic communications, the Navy's 11 world-wide bands executed 4900 events, building trust and relationships with a live audience of 11 million people and reaching an additional 214 million people via traditional and social media platforms. Led entirely by a 24-officer, all LDO wardroom, Navy music also supported ceremonies, recruiting and historic commemorations, and 15 exercises and deployments in the INDOPACOM, EUCOM, AFRICOM, SOUTHCOM, and NORTHCOM AORs, connecting the Navy with people in 36 countries and 38 states.

*Very Respectfully,
CAPT Kenny Allison*

6530 Note:

BLUF: Congratulations to our most recent LCDR selectees: LT Jon Dean, LT Brenton Heisserer, and LT Jeremy Harris! We look forward to your future success as you don the gold Oak Leaf!

The Civil Engineer Corps (CEC) LDOs are leading the way in numerous key leadership positions around the world. Among our ranks, we have three Commanding Officers, two Chief Staff Officers, and two Executive Officers. The CEC LDO community continues to offer excellent opportunities for leadership at the highest levels.

In recent months, the CEC LDOs have been diligently working to recruit top talent to “Build the Bench” for the future of our community. Currently, we have nearly sixty Sailors listed on our Prospect Tracker. As of this writing, we have conducted 23 Appraisal Boards for the FY27 ISPB; this is a significant increase over previous years. We are seeing an unprecedented interest in the program and opportunities for our Seabees to serve in higher levels of leadership.

In our recent community meetings, we had the opportunity to connect with several key leaders to discuss expectations, opportunities, and gain valuable insights. One of the notable speakers was now-retired Rear Admiral Dean VanderLey, who shared his reflections on his 34 years of service and emphasized his appreciation for our community. Additionally, we met with Force Master Chief Richard Straney from the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command and Force Master Chief Kevin Nolan from the Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command. Our discussions spanned various topics aimed at supporting all Sailors across the Navy Expeditionary Combat Force (NECF).

We are currently collaborating with CEC detailers due to multiple billet changes occurring across the Naval Construction Force (NCF). These changes will require adjustments within our community, significantly enhancing opportunities for CEC LDOs to support training through the establishment of the Seabee Training and Evaluation Unit (STEU), which is set to achieve Initial Operating Capability (IOC) in January 2026. LCDR Jake Hagan is leading the effort in Gulfport, while LCDR(s) Brenton Heisserer is in charge at Port Hueneme. Kudos to these outstanding LDOs!

Keep charging and always maintain an Unlimited mindset! #6530LDOs #BuiltDifferent

*With Much Respect and Gratitude,
CAPT Javi Lopez-Martinez*

Schoolhouse News!



Greetings from Newport, RI. I am CDR Jason Hinkley and took over as Director, LDO/CWO Academy in June. We've had a lot of turnover in the last few months. In August, LT Andrew Mixon transferred and CWO4 James Hansel reported aboard. In September, CWO4 Steven Hurt arrived. CWO4 Yusmani (Manny) Bitor became our newest member in October. In January we will pipe CWO5 Jody Olson ashore after 33 years of service. Jody has been an essential member at the academy for the last few years and what he's done here will not be easily duplicated. He'll be missed but we look forward to seeing Jody take on new and exciting adventures.

Thank you to our class sponsors and visitors!!

We truly appreciate the following class sponsors and drop-in visitors: CAPT Forrest "Tres" James, CAPT Dennis Richardson, CDR Bryce Klaput, CDR Lynn Wall, CDR Tony Barcellos, CWO5 Jared "Tux" Tuxill, CWO5 Sulton Hamzah, CWO5 Sigfrido "CP" CruzPeña, and CWO5 Radcliffe Samuels. The leadership insights shared by these officers left a profound and lasting impact on our newest officers.

Outstanding Mustang Students

Bravo Zulu to the following Mustangs that consistently set the example for their peers: ENS Justin Whitehead (25050), CWO2 Lori S. Morgan (25060), ENS Dominique Robinson (25070), CWO2 Jorge Esparza Jr (25080), ENS Wilgienson Auguste (25090), CWO2 Jace Prelip (25100), and CWO2 Christian Anderson (26010) on their selection as the Outstanding Mustang!

Did you know?

The First Limited Duty Officer Captain

In 1985, Congress authorized Limited Duty Officers to promote to Captain and the first was James John Kennedy (6330). Captain Kennedy enlisted in the Navy on 15 November 1951 as an Aviation Electrician's Mate. He was commissioned an LDO Ensign in December 1961 and served at NAS Pensacola, USS RALEIGH (LPD-1), Attack Squadron Seventy Six, NAS Oceana AIMD Det, Attack Squadron Seventy Five, Attack Squadron Forty Two, CAG Eight, Naval Safety Center, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing Twelve, NAVAIR HQ Director AIR-411. Captain Kennedy retired in February 1989 and his combination cover is on display in the Mustang Museum, here in Newport.

Welcome Back Supply Corps LDOs and Food Service Technician CWOs.

We look forward to the return of Supply Corps Limited Duty Officers and Food Service Warrant Officers at the LDO/CWO following their commissioning in FY-26 and beyond. For the last several years these officers would only attend the Navy Supply Corps School, Basic Qualification Course prior to heading to the fleet.



Future Students

The OTCN website is the definitive source for LDO/CWO Academy information:

<https://www.netc.navy.mil/Commands/Naval-Service-Training-Command/OTCN/LDO/>

Review all information, book lodging at the Navy Inn early, and bring all required uniforms. Feel free network with other selectees on the FY26 LDO/CWO Selectees Facebook Group and contact the academy staff via e-mail with any questions.

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U.S.C. Title 10 Section 623:

The Secretary concerned shall determine the number of officers in the promotion zone for officers serving in any grade and competitive category from among officers who are eligible for promotion in that grade and competitive category.

CAPT Kenny Allison
Head LDO and CWO Community Manager

CWO5 John Cowan
CWO Community Manager

LT Chuck Edwards
Asst LDO and CWO Community Manager

Mr. Hector Sandoval
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-CWO/>



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

