



LCDR Phan Phan, USNR
National VP for Junior Officers

Success through Diversity: The Sailor, Unit, and Naval Reserve All Win!

By LCDR Alejandro J. Garcia, USNR

Over the past several months, I've had the pleasure and encouragement from communicating with many fellow JO's out there in the fleet. Some of you have exchanged e-mail messages with me on your questions and concerns. Some of you have shared with me in person your ideas, thoughts, and observations about our Navy and Naval Reserve. Some of you have even gone the extra mile and have sent me contributing articles to be published in our column. Last month's was by LT Charlene Inouye; and this month's is an article by LCDR Alejandro J. Garcia, Commanding Officer of NR COMDESRON Six DET Bravo, which, by the way, very much resonates in line with my experience and belief. I do appreciate all of our contacts and input; keep them coming; and keep our forum alive, robust, and relevant. I look forward to hearing more from you.

After assuming command last October, I learned that many of my unit's Sailors had significant tenure within my command. Indeed, many personnel assignments dated back

between four and twelve years!

I mentored my Sailors to take stock in their careers with a view toward change – change away from the comfort zone they were in. Although I felt one particular Sailor was somewhat skeptical of my advice, I received his unit transfer request not long after briefings on career management. That Sailor transferred from my unit in February of this year; and, in March, he was assigned as the XO of his new unit! How's that for a good career move? If that Sailor had remained in my unit, such a promotion in duties would not have been likely as my unit has two excellent and senior CPOs.

This immediacy of the result will of course not be the case for all, but it does provide a powerful example that career diversity does work. The active component has detailers to help manage their careers, as does the Naval Reserve. The difference is that all active duty detailers are at BUPERS whereas each Sailor in the Naval Reserve is his/her own detailer. As a general rule, I recommend that no Sailor stay in one billet more than (2) two years within the same unit and that no Sailor remain in the same unit for more than (4) four years.

As unit CO, you hold the power to effect billet changes within your command and

considerable influence in encouraging diversity in unit assignments.

For some Sailors, a transfer out of their "comfort zone" may be an uneasy proposition. Not to worry, we can help our Sailors in this endeavor. Example: In my case, I spoke with the Senior Enlisted Advisor and explained my unit's situation. He offered to help in reassigning my people to other NRC units. In case I needed more options outside the NRC, I also spoke with Command Master Chief, at our last CO's conference in Orlando, for support. She, too, was onboard to help. My advice, mentor your Sailors and leverage resources available to you – a winning strategy!

These internal billet moves and unit transfers will come at the cost of losing good Sailors proficient in your command's assignments, but we owe it to our Sailors and wardrooms to mentor and advance their professional development and peer competitiveness.

These new assignments will keep your Sailors learning and competitive. Unit transfers will ensure that junior personnel have room to move up within your command's organization, and the overall impact of those benefits will keep the Naval Reserve diverse and ready for new challenges. In summary, the Sailor, unit, and Naval Reserve all win! 🏆

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Unfortunately, not a month goes by without the Association being informed of the passing of several members. Although addressing the loss of a loved one is not an easy or light subject, the Association has prepared itself to assist surviving family members. We are proud of the assistance we provide. In such difficult times, the last thing a family member needs is confusing or conflicting information about benefits or entitlements.