

JUNIOR OFFICER SYMPOSIUM

San Diego, CA | December 7-8 2016

Symposium Background

Participants from every Submarine Homeport and major Fleet concentration area to provide a representative sample of the Force.

Criteria for JO attendance: volunteer, talented (handpicked), committed to improving Submarine Force, no requirement to be committed to Department Head (diverse opinions desired)

Senior Mentors/Facilitators: Naval Reactors, Submarine Force Atlantic and Pacific, PERS42, N133, SUBSCOL

Concept and resource support for Symposium approved and provided by Submarine Force Leadership

Significant JO-led discussion and development prior to JO Symposium via online collaboration

Purpose

Bring Junior Officers (JO) from sea and shore assignments together with access to key Submarine Force leadership to discuss JO Survey results with the goal of actionable Force wide improvement.

Long-term vision is to establish a Junior Officer Council that can facilitate high-velocity learning and provide direct feedback to leadership to support rapid and sustained improvement.

Empower the Junior Officer Council to take results of the JO Symposium to the Force to facilitate dissemination of results and solicit further ideas and suggestions for improvement.

NOT intended to be a complaint session, a vacation, a one time, discrete event or an event that does not improve the Force.

Format of Symposium

Focus on specific Lines of Effort identified via JO Survey

Limited time requires focused vs general discussion

Goal is to develop actionable ideas, briefs, and messages to facilitate dissemination to the Force

Small Group, Group Peer Review, Senior Mentor/Facilitator Feedback Review sessions

“Ask Me Anything” sessions (working lunch and specific periods) with JOs and Senior Mentors/Facilitators

Non-attributional, Tang Format, Civilian Attire

Lines of Effort

Detailing Process

Prototype and PCU Assignments

Recognition for Top Performers

Leadership and Mentoring

Work-Life Balance

JO Survey: The Detailing Process

“Screw any kind of detailer guarantee. Half of my wardroom didn't trust the detailers.”

“There is too large of a schism between those JOs that get a "good deal" on shore duty and those who get a NTSD. Specifically, keep your word that those who go to a PCU will get a follow-on shore assignment despite the boat's schedule. “

“The Navy does not seem to value me and doesn't seem to need me to stay in.”

“It is unfathomable to me that there is no process in place to require so much as a waiver to extend a junior Officer over 5 and a half years as a division officer”

“Despite how hard I have worked and recognized as JOOY for my command, I was still red detailed for shore duty.”

“I considered a shore tour, but there were no jobs available that would help me in a future career. I was also reluctant to move my family without knowing I was going somewhere I wanted”

“I was told by my detailer that the community would rather you get out [than] let you lat-transfer and that the community had to "play hard-ball.”

JO Detailing Process the Basics

Sea Duty Detailer assigns ~350 Junior Officers per year to 91 crews. These assignments are based on JO desires AND wardroom manning (minimum manning is 9 JOs/sub) AND pipeline performance (balance talent across Force)

Co-Location of military to military spouses is a priority and policy. Navy to Navy is easiest. Other services more difficult due to geographic limitations. Exceptional Family Member (EFM), Non-military spouse career and education, family needs, etc are all considered and balanced across ALL JO desires and needs of Navy. Priorities often conflict. Without the current assignment process, imbalances would occur such as submarines being significantly over or under manned and large variations in wardroom ability. Risk to wartime mission and long term health of force.

Shore Duty Detailer assigns ~275 Junior Officers per year (550+ total shore duty billets) to myriad of unique shore duties. Same rules and constraints apply above. Largest block of assignments are: 80 NROTC Instructors, 60 NPTU Shift Engineer, 20 MTS conversion assignments, 20 PCU Split Tours, 20 Non-Traditional Shore Duty (DESRONS, PHIPRONS, etc), 20 USNA, 20 SUBSCOL, 20 TTFs, 20 TYCOMs, 20 SUBGRUs, 20 NPS, etc. Typical shore slate size is 70 assignments (10 NROTC, 7 NPTU, 4 MTS conversion, etc) with 60+ JOs participating.

Submarine Force accesses for JO Sea Duty Billets (and DH Billets). More shore billets at every career milestone than available personnel. Commitment to DH (COPAY) is a priority for Force.

Frequent requests to fill NROTC assignments and other higher demand assignments must be balanced with other assignments. Processes in place that balance current retention and higher demand assignments. Top performers (top half NNPTC/NPTU) required for NPTU assignments.

Guarantees (Homeport, DH (Eng, Nav, Weps)) offered as incentive to volunteer for certain assignments (NPTU, PCU, NTSD). Pick off slate for follow-on shore duty, and 1 year sabbatical added incentives.

Historically: 95% of JOs received preferred assignments. Less than 5% sent to assignment they have not requested ("red detail"). Last two slates had ZERO "red details" and 100% of JOs receiving a preferred assignment.

Proposed Actions: Detailing Process

All detailing guarantees provided in writing signed by PERS42

Realignment and process changes at PERS42:

- Division of Detailer Responsibilities between NPTU/PCU and other JO shore assignments
- More interaction between detailers and constituents as career progresses
- Direct feedback and interaction at all levels of PERS42 encouraged

Education of Force on detailing process and priorities

- Improve transparency (via JO Symposium and Fleet engagement)
- Desire to retain all committed Submarine Officers
- Insight into decision making process with respect to detailing

Personal Email from the Detailer to the SVM with reason for assignment

“Red” details will be notified by the CO with follow-on contact by PERS-42

Upon completion of PNEO relative technical performance information available to SVM upon request

Detailing correspondence and assignment History available upon request

Video of detailer area briefs posted on PERS-42 website

Expand discussion of Lateral Transfer process and results during detailing visits and accession source briefs

Ask Anything Feed Back: Detailing

Why can't I know my technical score (final technical number)?

Everyone who completes PNEO examination is fully qualified. Detailers can give indication of whether you are likely to be assigned as Engineer however assignment as Engineer, Weapons Officer, or Navigation has ZERO bearing on whether you are screened for XO. Promotion boards do NOT have access to technical performance. At sea performance regardless of assignment (Eng, Nav, Weps) is what is evaluated.

Why is everyone detailed the same? Why doesn't my performance matter?

Performance does matter. The Submarine Force wants to retain top talent but also has assignments such as NNPTC/NPTUs that require top performers. Additionally, talent must be equally balanced across wardrooms. Without processes in place imbalances would occur that jeopardizes long term health of force. However, these processes can be improved (guarantees, pay, etc).

Why is there is no history of conversations or interactions I have with the detailer?

Detailers keep records of all emails, phone conversations, and assignments that are passed down from Detailer to Detailer. That does not mean everything is recorded precisely. It is recommended that every phone conversation be followed up with an email to avoid any misinterpretations. Guarantees will be provided in writing.

Why can't I lateral transfer?

Anyone who is in the approved year group or senior (completed MSR) and not under a COPAY (or other obligation such as graduate education payback) and within 1 year of PRD at time of request (requirement to find relief) meets the criteria to be released by the submarine community for lateral transfer. Gaining community still needs to accept applicant. There are limitations to number of lateral transfers per year group to ensure sufficient number of Department Heads but these are generally not reached. Although not all candidates that meet the basic criteria will be released for lateral transfer consideration, each applicant is, at minimum, given a call from their detailer discussing their application and status of release from the submarine community.

Ask Anything Feed Back: Detailing

Why isn't detailing a talent race, where the best JO gets the best job and worst JO gets the worst job?

There are no "worst" jobs. There are jobs that individual JOs may desire more than another but no job is "better" than another. The most important thing is to perform well in whatever job you are assigned. The reason why JOs cannot always get the assignment they desire is because the Submarine Force balances talent throughout all assignments. Additionally, some commands like NPTU and NNPTC require certain technical aptitude for assignment.

Why is preferential detailing limited to the JOOY?

There is a limit to the ability to give everyone there number one preference. Allowing this to occur would lead to force imbalance with respect to numbers of personnel and the talent of personnel. It is also exceptionally difficult to rank talent among various wardrooms let alone with a single wardroom of very talented officers.

JO Survey: NPTU and PCU Assignments

“Offer many things without a contract requirement.”

“Guaranteed education opportunities at grad schools, not just a sabbatical year or online schooling.”

“As a split tour division officer on a PCU, I believe that the detailing process does not protect us. I spent 39 months on my first boat and received 18 month orders to a PCU with no complaint. I have now been extended 3 times to make the tour a total of 29 months. There is no assurance that I will not be extended past that.”

“Guaranteed follow-on orders would be helpful. Having the opportunity to do a follow-on "cool job" (e.g. OLA, UUV driver, etc.) if you signed up for one of the "non-traditional" jobs would be helpful as well.”

“Shift work is inherently unpleasant compared to a 9-5 office job that is almost every other shore duty. Shore duty is supposed to be the time to recharge.”

NPTU and PCU Assignments the Basics

60 NPTU Shift Engineer Assignments (25/yr or 7/slate) – assignments are 24 months with 1 year sabbatical for those continuing to DH. 20 MTS Conversion (NPTU equivalent assignments) (10/yr or 3/slate).

NPTU and MTS assignments guaranteed follow-on homeport or DH assignment. One year sabbatical only authorized for those committing to DH.

NPTU assignments generally require top performers top half/top half pipeline performers.

20 PCU Split Tour assignments (10/yr or 5/every other slate) – assignments planned for 18 months.

PCU allowed follow-on shore tour (pick off slate).

NPTU/PCU only source of “red details” on JO shore duty slate (2-3/slate max).

THERE HAVE BEEN NO red details on last 2 slates.

Proposed Actions: NPTU and PCU Assignments

Modify career track to enable follow-on shore tour regardless of commitment to DH. Referred to as “Split Tour” or 2-2-2 (24 month sea tour, 24 month NPTU (or 18 month PCU), 24 month shore tour).

Split tour personnel volunteer for NPTU/PCU follow-on assignment at NPTU after 50% exam. Authorized for JOs at sea.

PCU manning changes (DELAWARE and later) have split tour JOs arrive 6 months later than previous allowing 18 month PCU assignments.

Split tour and PCU/NPTU guarantees are provided in writing, signed by PERS-42.

Shift Engineer Pay (\$500/month). Receive Shift Engineer Pay even when on sabbatical.

Ask Anything: NPTU and PCU Assignments

Why do NPTU assignments require shift work?

NPTU assignments require shift work due to having operational nuclear propulsion plants and to meet fleet manning requirements. In the future there may be a shift to simulators enabling a standard Monday through Friday training schedule. This shift is decades away.

Why not a different shift work schedule (12hr shifts for 4 days followed by 4 days off, etc)

Different shift schedules have been studied. Nuclear regulatory requirements limit the length of shifts precluding some options like 12 hour shifts. New York NPTUs are experimenting with different shift rotations on an exploratory basis. Shift changes to better align with circadian rhythm are also being considered.

Is the Sabbatical really guaranteed?

Yes, guaranteed in writing (for future details). Ask Shift Engineers who are taking it.

Why do we need to have JOs as Shift Engineers?

Naval Reactors is hiring 70 civilian Direct Input Officers (DIOs) to supplement the Officer Training requirements. This may reduce the number of Junior Officers who serve at NPTU. Sea-returnee Junior Officers are valued as mentors to the officer students and they provide unique at-sea experience and insight into leading watchteams.

Why do we waste talent at NPTU? Everyone gets out.

Just the opposite. We send our best to NPTU and they stay in the Navy at a higher rate than any other shore duty assignment. Non volunteers retain at a 48% (vs 36% for the Force) and at 67% for volunteers. Additionally, personnel who serve as Shift Engineers have a significantly higher selection rate to XO and CO than their peers. On average the selection rate is 10% higher to XO and no XO who has served at NPTU has not selected for CO.

JO Survey: Recognition for Top Performers

“There is no incentive to do well. The most competent individuals are paid the same as the window lickers. Those who are capable are tasked the most.”

“Hook-ups for [screw]-ups”

“Myself and a lot of my friends in the submarine force are getting out of the Navy and attending world class universities ranked in the top ten. Many of them would have stayed in the Navy had they been allowed to do this during shore duty.

“It's near impossible to get a good degree with the geographic constraints and time limits we have on shore duty. Harvard, Wharton, and other top grad schools recognize our value, why does the Navy sell us short?”

“In fact, the incentive is to perform poorly because the underperforming officers get less tasking and then receive comparable FITREPs since the chain of command is afraid to write negative comments in a FITREP.”

Recognition for Top Performers the Basics

Detailers track at sea performance on objective performance metrics, referred to as “BUPERS Number”. This number is used in ranking Junior Officers for shore assignments and also to balance talent with follow-on at-sea assignments.

Top performers are recognized with: Shift Engineer billets, PCU assignments, Fleet Scholar Program, SecNav Tours with Industry, Graduate Education Vouchers, NPS opportunity, and new “split tour” option.

Submarine Force has greatest number of graduate programs to officer ratio of any community. 80 NROTC, 40 NPS, 10 FSEP, 4 MIT/Woods Hole, 10 GET/Lead, 24 GEV, 10 MIT Seminar (via DC shore duty), 20 NWC. Nearly 40% residence opportunity.

Positions such as NROTC, USNA, Flag Aide, Presidential Staff assignment, etc require formal interviews and review of performance.

Performance (FITREPs) is used for all administrative (DH, XO, CO) and statutory (LCDR, CDR, and CAPT) selection boards.

Proposed Actions: Recognition for Top Performers

BUPERS Number process posted on PERS 42 website

- Junior Officer Council endorsed formula – based on Reporting Senior Cumulative Average (RSCA), hard and soft breakouts, DH recommendation, PFA, etc.

- Fleet training on BUPERS Number & usage

- BUPERS Number context explained and data available upon request

Formal Quarterly Talent Management Boards at PERS42 to formally weight performance for various programs (ex: Graduate Education Voucher, Fleet Scholar, etc) every JO Shore Slate.

Preferential detailing for JOOYs.

- SQD JOOY choice of any assignment

- Submarine JOOY no “red” detail

Split tour (2-2-2) option to enable those top performers to obtain graduate degree in residence vs sabbatical. Recognizes top performers with expanded opportunity.

COs consider JO/Wardroom input into JOOY selection

Ability to take PNEO examination earlier (18-20 months) waivable to 16 months (split options tour 14 months)

Peer-to-Peer Review feedback semi-annually, to be debriefed by CO – (Pending Action)

Ask Anything: Recognition for Top Performers

Why is the #1 JO ranking only awarded to those JOs who are staying in the Navy regardless of performance?

FITREP rankings are indications to selection boards for promotion potential. Those JOs who are leaving the Navy generally are no longer competitive for promotion. However, until a resignation or retirement is formally submitted it is strongly recommended that Command Teams continue to rank Officers based on performance until an officer submits a request to resign/retire.

Why is JOOY awarded only to JOs who are on the ship at the end of year rather than the JO who performed the best throughout the year?

There is no requirement to select a JO based on still being on the ship. However, the selection package and potential for interviews by Squadron can result in a bias towards selecting those officers who are on board in the late fall when annual inputs are due.

Why aren't JOOYs peer selected like the Stockdale Award?

Based on JO Council recommendations this is recommended for Command Teams to consider when making their selection.

Why are Immediate Graduate Education Program (IGEP) personnel not allowed to take a full shore duty?

The Split Tour (2-2-2) program is designed to address this. It is recommended these personnel take this option to “catch” up to their Year Group (YG). In this case they may only be offered a sabbatical vs the full 2 year shore tour. Submarine Officers can be shifted YGs for administrative boards if they are behind career milestones but they cannot be shifted YGs for statutory (promotion to LCDR, CDR, etc) boards due to Federal law. This can result in officers who are significantly behind their YGs failing to promote and being forced out of the Navy.

JO Survey: Leadership and Mentoring

"Help foster the "personal" professional development of junior officers."

"I think more information needs to be put out about the benefits of...(literally everything)"

"Nearly zero career mentorship"

"The submarine culture and environment lacks in proactive positive leadership and instead supports leaders who are reactive, emotional, motivated by power and positional benefits, and lacks leadership with patience, wisdom, empathy, and other qualities required to develop future submariners and officers."

"JOs are often reprimanded/scolded in humiliating ways in front of large groups with little to no praise or support"

"My impression is, despite being well ranked by two CO's on my sea tour, I am no different than any other LT."

"The real talent and leadership is leaving the Navy."

Leadership and Mentoring the Basics

SOBC, SOAC, XO, CO, and CDRE training pipelines provide a continuum of leadership training.

Command Climate survey is required with 90 days on assuming command and yearly thereafter. This is tracked by ISIC and TYCOM. ISIC is required to review and endorse command climate survey.

Submarine Force has added Executive Coaching with both CO and XO training pipelines.

Force wide career management training via Officer “Pathway to Success”, community status briefs, and briefings at key milestones (PNEO, etc).

Leadership training regarding FITREP writing, promotion, and career opportunity.

Talent (measured by both technical and at-sea performance) of YG retained to DH is above average. This is measurement of entire YG and not necessarily every individual.

Proposed Actions: Leadership and Mentoring

Feedback to leadership on JO Survey results.

Expansion of community briefings with focus on real world operations (CTF69, CSG7, SSBN operations, etc). Done on monthly rotational basis via VTC at SECRET-NOFORN (potential for TS) level.

Inclusion of Executive Coaching Staff in JO Symposium to further understand JO desires regarding positive leaders.

Planned increase of bonus (\$5000/yr) to match inflation (not raised since 2008) and increase selectivity to Department Head.

Discussion with leadership to expand active mentorship to ISIC and as applicable Group Staff.

JOC fully endorses focus on High-end Warfighting fine tuning of FRTP.

Recommend CDREs consider integrating 360 Feedback in CO FITREPs / Mid-term Counseling with CO using anonymous feedback from DH, CPO, and JO from ship (top three, bottom three items at CMD)

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What goes on behind the scenes with the Command Climate Survey?

ISICs, GP(if applicable), and TYCOM closely review the results and discuss with the Commanding Officer. In some cases immediate actions are required with additional follow-up. For Culture Surveys the ISIC is immediately alerted to a significant issue but otherwise the results are kept within the command.

Why aren't there more Greybeards; around more often?

Greybeards are senior government civilians and are expensive. Additionally, there are a limited number of personnel who have the experience and skill sets to serve as greybeards.

Why isn't there an award to recognize leadership talent among JOs?

JOOY was specifically designed to recognize talent.

JO Survey: Work-Life Balance

“Excessive working hours when in port.”

“There are unnecessarily long hours because of completely unnecessary requirements.”

“Made to believe that quals are only worth supporting when a body is needed to fill a role.”

“Result of the long hours (typically excess of 11 hours/day) and the empathetically draining nature of submarine work. This fatigue resulted in carryover of stress and discontent to my life at home which was unfair to my wife and children.”

“If it was only long hours in port or only underways with short days in port, we would be satisfied. However, Working 70-100 hours in port combined with underways puts too much of a burden on us.”

“My CO/XO, “reasonable” in-port hours (3 section w/ 8-10 hr days otherwise) to 12-14 hour days in port.”

“The command refusing to qualify additional JOs until all 3 senior of us were about to leave.”

Work-life Balance Basics (focus on in-port)

Aggregate underway time has remained stable or decreased as a Force. Does not imply that individual units will not experience high OPTEMPO. In general, relatively few comments in survey on time spent underway other than spending away from family.

Majority of frustration from inport work hours. Survey was not specific with respect to SSN vs SSBN inport work hours.

SSBNs spend 60% of time u/w. 40% of time inport (20%/crew). 73 days of refit per crew/year. SSBN refit results in 3(4) section manning. Total duty days in a year 24 (18) days (effective duty rotation is 15 (20)) section.

Officer Manning Model (SSN)(SSBN and SSGN not a duty issue in port)(this is nominal):

SSN JO manning is 11 JOs per submarine (billeted for 9 JOs increased to 11 JOs to meet DH requirements – this increase in JO manning is not based on actual increases in workload). Actual JO manning is 11.7/submarine. On average JO arrives to submarine every 4 months.

Maximum time for EOOW(EDO) qualification is 6 months (12 months SDO). 11.7 JOs – 2 JOs (assume both arrive same time and take full time to qualify) = 9.7 JOs qualified EDO/EOOW or 7.7 JOs SDO/EDO.

3 Department Heads/submarine. Maximum time for EOOW(EDO) qualification is 6 months. Assume 1 DH not qualified. Results in 2 DHs qualified SDO/EDO.

Total number of watch standers fully qualified 9.7 with 11.7 qualified EDO. Watch rotation should be ~6 section without singling or ~10 section with singling of duty. Assuming leave, 5 or 9 section duty (duty = onboard overnight).

JO Symposium Feedback: Duty rotation varies significantly from P/S to 8 Section.

Proposed Actions: Work-Life Balance

Open forum via JO Symposium to provide recommendations to improve. Recommendations shared with waterfront leadership via area briefs, PCO training, etc. Maintain JO Council (JO Symposium members) to serve as conduit to address issues.

The JOs fully embrace the long and arduous working hours associated with submarining. However, they are concerned with a zero defect, single decision maker (CO) culture that creates a lack of empowerment and puts actual warfighting at risk. This culture is inconsistent with the force vision at the highest levels of leadership for competency in “mission command” in which our Navy especially submarine crews will operate forward with little to no guidance and be expected to win on day zero. Accepting some minor defects/mistakes today while developing the warfighting leaders of tomorrow is likely a higher return on investment and is consistent with the traditional fundamentals and hall marks of submarining (i.e. doing more with less, all-teeth warfighters, WWII in the Pacific).

Feedback to leadership from JO Council for consideration (focus on efficiency and empower leadership at lowest levels):

- Remove barriers to PNEO qualifications (allow as soon as possible 18-20 months)

 - 16 months with NR approval – TYCOM permission to exceed 20 months – NR notification if >24 months

- Maximize use of standardized tagouts

- Use of Authorizing Officer for tagouts during maintenance periods

- Remove (or reduce) nightly 2000 call in-port (focus on developing leaders vice enabling personnel to default to CO in all cases)

- Ensure Duty Officers have radios for immediate contact with Duty Sections

- Standardized reference list maintained and provided by TYCOM, GP, or ISIC via CD

- Ensure all laptops functional (enough laptops for every JO to have one if they all work – 800 new laptops in repair system)

- Create additional LAN drops (existing IT procedures to add SIPR LAN drops in staterooms)

- Recognize that nearly everything is done on computer (limited tech manuals, CTQS, Qualification Cards, leave papers, etc)

 - Develop alternative IT work areas (CONEX box, use classrooms off the ship so WR and CM can be used for IT)

- If CO/XO leads every assessment/critique can stifle/choke work processing and also limit professional development of DH/JOs

 - Threshold for assessments/critiques varies significantly and does not seem to directly correlate with overall performance

- Have JOs act as DH in port and u/w - “next man-up” concept that professional sports teams have and what military organizations

 - must have to succeed (Platoon leader losses in Vietnam, OOD on bridge during WWII sub warfare)

- Singling of duty not just on weekends but at night during week (SSN issue)

- Ensure DHs stand duty inport (not necessarily equal rotation but some duty)(DHs pass experience and JOs learn)

- Turn over duty singled (off going or oncoming does daily routine samples)(SSN issue)(big quality of life issue)

- Consider day after duty for Duty Officers (especially during SSBN refits, etc)

- Ensure Squadron assist visits are not another inspection with associated administrative reporting requirements

- Remove instructions/checklists that duplicate or echo higher level guidance – use of single source document

- CTQS viewed by JOs as administratively burdensome while nuclear training and qualifications simpler and more efficient

 - (two separate training programs viewed as in-efficient)

- Concern by several JOs that the OSO program was an administrative program vice a safety improvement (no alternative offered)

Ask Anything: Work-Life Balance

How does shipyard JO manning vary compared to other submarines?

14 vs 11. In addition enlisted augment. This is to enable personnel to ride other units for qualification while maintaining 4 section duty rotation.

Can we have CONEX Boxes on the pier with LAN drops and laptops?

Viewed primarily as SSN issue. SSBNs and SSGNs authorized additional LAN drops. Sufficient laptops for every JO to have laptop if all working. 800 replacement laptops in supply system.

Can we have dual crew SSNs?

SSNs were not designed to be at sea like SSBNs and SSGNs. The maintenance schedules preclude SSNs maintaining the same operating tempo of the TRIDENT Class. Even if you could operate them more the lifetime due to EFPH issues would be reached prematurely.

Why isn't everything wireless?

Security. SIPR will eventually be wireless in engine rooms but there is no plan on record currently to provide wireless SIPR in the forward compartment of submarines.

Why is PDTP 0700-1900?

It doesn't need to be. Some ships have success executing 0800-1200. It is not about quantity it is about quality of work. Efficiency requires complete support from all levels of a command.