

# Developing an Expeditionary Warfare Officer Career Path

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Rodney". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

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## Executive summary

The Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) manages the Navy's diverse expeditionary capabilities and combat support elements. NECC leadership has been concerned that officers are not developing enough expertise in expeditionary warfare and has looked for ways to develop the necessary leadership and proficiency. CNA undertook a quick-look analysis on how to best manage expeditionary warfare officer careers. United States Fleet Forces Command (USFF) requested that CNA provide a more in-depth analysis, focused on developing a suitable career path and using additional qualification designators (AQDs) to manage expeditionary warfare officers within their own communities.

The underlying premise of the study is that some expeditionary warfare assignments require prior experience. This study quantifies the extent of such positions and examines the practicalities of developing this expertise.

## Billet structure

To understand how to manage officers within NECC, we first need to understand the billet structure. There are numerous different commands within NECC, and a large portion of their officer corps resides in the Reserve Component. We limit our analysis by excluding those expeditionary warfare officers who are already managed within their own communities and have established methods for developing experience. This leaves Riverine, Maritime Expeditionary Security Force (MESF), Maritime Civil Affairs Group (MCAG), Expeditionary Training Command (ETC), Expeditionary Combat Readiness Command (ECRC), and NECC Headquarters (NECC HQ). Our analysis focuses on the active-duty Unrestricted Line (URL) officers in these commands. We further focus on Surface Warfare Officers (SWOs)

because they make up the majority of the junior billets, though we also include general URL billets (1000 and 1050 billets).

Limiting our analysis to these groups leaves 201 officer billets, out of an initial total of 2,442. Discussions with subject matter experts (SMEs) in the NECC commands of interest indicated that experience was required in 33 billets in MESF, Riverine, and NECC HQ at the lieutenant commander (O4) level and above.

## Fungibility of experience

One question that naturally arises is whether all of the junior NECC billets provide the necessary experience to fulfill all of the more senior experience requirements. This is really a question of fungibility of experience across NECC commands. For example, does a junior MCAG billet provide the experience for a senior MESF tour that requires prior expeditionary warfare experience? Our discussions with SMEs indicated that some professional military education (PME) or professional qualification standards (PQS) would have to be developed to ensure that experience was fungible across commands.

## Career paths

Using the information on the billet base and the experience requirements, we develop potential career path options that will allow SWOs to have multiple tours at NECC while remaining viable in their community. The issue of viability arises because of the Surface Warfare Enterprise (SWE) business rule that officers cannot have more than one of their first four sea tours outside of mainstream afloat billets. We work around this by creating career paths that include NECC sea tours during time typically used for shore duty. The new career path options could have impacts in officer career development since they limit shore opportunities for graduate education; they could also affect retention given the extended periods at sea. If expeditionary warfare officers were allowed an exemption to this business rule, similar to SWO Nukes, these potential consequences would be avoided.

Using a simple continuation model with the career path options, we calculate that the billet base will provide enough experienced officers to meet the requirements laid out. Selection rates for experienced officers will be low enough to give the Navy choices when selecting officers for the experience billets, and they will also provide options for officers to decide whether to continue in expeditionary warfare or revert to mainstream surface warfare activities. Though we assume fungibility of experience in our model, removing this assumption still provides feasible selection rates.

## Supporting roles

In addition to SWOs, there are opportunities for other URL communities to provide support to NECC, mainly through the general URL billets. Of the 76 billets that can be filled by any URL officer and do not require prior expeditionary warfare experience, several are filled by non-SWO URL officers, mainly aviators.

We also looked at the role of the Reserves in developing expeditionary warfare proficiency. Of our commands of interest, MESF and MCAG have large reserve elements, made up of both Selected Reserve (SELRES) and Full-Time Support (FTS) billets. It appears that deploying reserve units gain similar experience to active-duty forces, which means that reservists could potentially fill active billets requiring prior experience, thus expanding the pool of eligible officers for the Navy to select from. It has not been determined whether reservists will be eligible to earn the expeditionary warfare AQD but if the experience is truly comparable, it is a possibility.

Finally, we considered the usefulness of Specialty Career Paths (SCPs) in managing expeditionary warfare officers. SCPs focus on officers who are no longer on the command track. The intent of our analysis, however, was to ensure that expeditionary warfare officers remain viable for promotion and command, so SCPs are not a good fit.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The results of this analysis were briefed to USFF in March. USFF approved the recommendations of creating an expeditionary warfare

career path integrated into the traditional SWO career path and tracking officers with AQDs.

Though the implementation process has started, our analysis relied on some assumptions that should be considered carefully. Our assumption of fungibility was not binding in terms of making experience requirements feasible, but we recommend that NECC both determine its PME/PQS requirements for ensuring fungibility and consider requiring PME for obtaining the AQD.

There is the potential that expeditionary warfare officers may continue and/or promote at lower rates than typical SWOs given the extended sea duty and missed opportunities for graduate education and joint experience. The SWE should consider exempting expeditionary warfare officers from their business rule that limits time out of mainstream afloat billets; another suggestion would be including expeditionary warfare specialties in promotion precepts.

Finally, we recommend that NECC work to stabilize its billet structure. This will help the SWE understand the expeditionary warfare career path and evaluate specific expeditionary warfare billets.

# Introduction

## Issues and Tasking

The Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) was established in January 2006 to centrally manage the Navy's diverse expeditionary capabilities and combat support elements. NECC's mission is to "organize, man, train, equip and maintain Navy expeditionary forces to meet the maritime security operations and joint contingency operations requirements" [1].

In mid-2008, CNA undertook a quick-look analysis on how to manage expeditionary warfare officer careers. Based on the findings of that study, United States Fleet Forces (USFF) requested that CNA provide a more in-depth analysis of expeditionary warfare officer management. To do this, we analyze the billet structure of NECC and determine if a career path can be created that will allow for the development of the necessary experience. Following the results of the quick-look analysis, we focus on managing officers using an Additional Qualification Designator (AQD). We also look at the role of Reserves in meeting experience requirements, and the role of Specialty Career Paths (SCPs) in managing officer careers.

## Background

NECC leadership has been concerned that the Navy is not developing the appropriate amount of expertise in expeditionary warfare, and has looked for other options to develop the necessary leadership and proficiency. Expeditionary warfare covers a wide range of capabilities all focused on forward-deployed operations and interaction with host nations. NECC commands provide very different services, from Maritime Expeditionary Security forces, which provide surveillance and protection on the waterways, to Maritime Civil Affairs, which interact with host nation governments and civilians to lessen the impact of

military operations. Managing such a diverse force within a single command has created challenges, and NECC has looked for ways to manage the officer corps and build experience in expeditionary operations.

In [2], NECC provided an assessment on the creation of an Expeditionary Warfare Officer Community in order to provide the necessary experience and leadership within the expeditionary combat environment. The brief notes that the status quo did not maximize readiness or provide the leadership for the force.

In [3], RDML Barnett, then-Deputy Commander of NECC, aimed to “develop courses of action to ensure the professional development and progressive proficiency of expeditionary officers.” Reference [3] notes that NECC missions require progressive experience in expeditionary skills that cannot be attained while assigned in other career paths. The briefing focuses on the development of leadership within the URL roles, specifically related to the development of Surface Warfare Officers (SWOs) as expeditionary warfare officers. SWOs are only filling single expeditionary tours, never returning for another tour to utilize any expeditionary experience. The briefing notes that SWOs have performed well in current NECC missions, including Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), but predicts that future missions may uncover the lack of progressive development, experienced planning, and execution.

Based on the aforementioned work, United States Fleet Forces (USFF) requested that CNA do a quick look into how to manage expeditionary warfare officer careers [4]. The analysis focused on answering three main questions:

1. Is expeditionary warfare a “pickup” game, or does it require extensive career development?
2. Is there a common thread to all expeditionary warfare assignments that enables the development of an expeditionary warfare community?
3. What is the best method for developing expeditionary warfare careers (assuming the Navy needs them)?

The analysis, including conversations with subject matter experts (SMEs), found that expeditionary warfare does require officers to build expertise during their careers. The authors found that there are differences between expeditionary warfare assignments, and these inhibit the creation of an expeditionary warfare designator. There are some skills and assignments, however, that appear to be more fungible, such as Riverine and MESF. Lastly, the authors found that creating an Additional Qualification Designator (AQD) to manage expeditionary warfare officers within existing Unrestricted Line (URL) communities was likely the best option.

The analysis concluded with recommendations for further study, including quantifying the supply and demand for expeditionary warfare officers and developing detailed expeditionary warfare career development plans.

Based on the findings from this quick-look study, USFF asked CNA to provide a more in-depth analysis of expeditionary warfare officer management. The decision was made to utilize AQDs to manage expeditionary warfare officers, leaving them in their original communities. Tracking expeditionary warfare officers by an AQD does not solve the problem of officers not returning for follow-on tours in NECC. Our analysis focuses on the development of a career path that will allow for re-tours in expeditionary warfare and the buildup of expeditionary expertise.

## Approach

We examine the NECC billet base to determine which officers and commands would be included in the new AQD subcommunity. We held discussions with subject matter experts (SMEs) from NECC to help interpret the billet base and to identify billets that require prior experience.

We develop potential career path options that include multiple NECC tours but still fit within typical officer career paths. Using the career paths we develop, we create a simple continuation model to determine if the experience requirements are feasible.

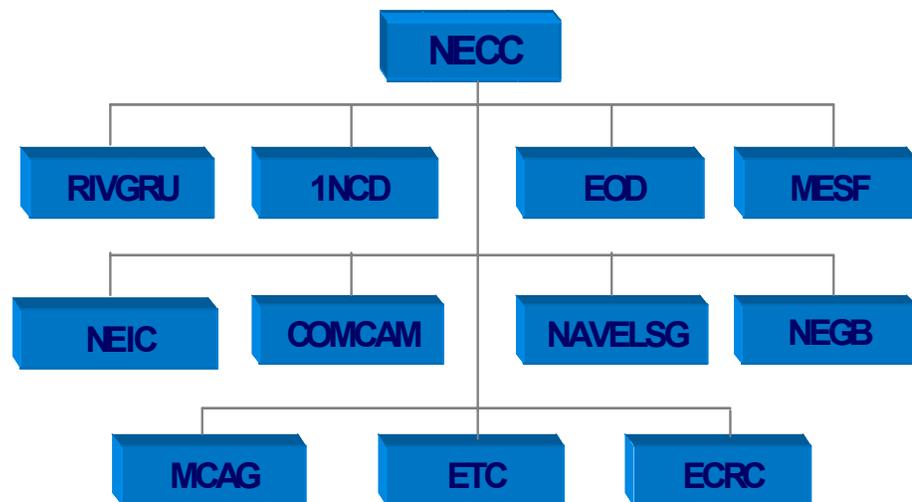
In addition, we look at the role of specialty career paths and the Reserves.

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## NECC billet structure

To understand how to manage officer careers in expeditionary warfare, it is important to understand the officer billets within NECC. The billet structure will help determine whether the experience requirements and career path are feasible. As mentioned, NECC brings together a variety of disparate commands. Figure 1 shows the NECC commands as of March 2009.

Figure 1. NECC Commands



## NECC Commands

The NECC Fact Sheet [1] provides the following description of these command activities:

- **Riverine** (RIVGRU) establishes and maintains control of rivers and waterways for military and civil purposes, denies their use to hostile forces, and destroys waterborne hostile forces as necessary.

- **Maritime Expeditionary Security Forces (MESF)** supply highly trained, scalable, and sustainable security teams capable of defending mission critical assets in the near-coast environment.
- **Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)** conducts counter-IED operations, renders safe explosive hazards, and disarms underwater explosives, such as mines.
- The **First Naval Construction Division (1NCD)** provides a wide range of construction in support of operating forces, including roads, bridges, bunkers, airfields, and logistics bases. Seabees support disaster recovery operations and perform civil action projects to improve relationships with other nations.
- The **Maritime Civil Affairs Group (MCAG)** is an enabling force working directly with the civil authorities and civilian populations within a Combatant Commander's maritime area of operations to lessen the impact of military operations imposed during peacetime, contingency operations, and periods of declared war.
- The **Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Group (NAVELSG)** delivers worldwide expeditionary logistics to conduct port and air-cargo-handling missions, customs inspections, contingency contracting capabilities, fuel distribution, freight terminal and warehouse operations, postal services, and ordnance reporting and handling.
- The **Naval Expeditionary Guard Battalion (NEGB)** consists of 600 guards who have administrative oversight for the guard battalion at Guantanamo Bay. The Guard Battalion is fully educated in procedures training, cultural training, legal training, self-defense training, first aid training, non-lethal weapons training, and weapons training and qualification for external security.
- **Expeditionary Training Command (ETC)** supports Combatant Commanders' Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) efforts by delivering timely, focused, and customizable training to designated host nations. ETC draws training expertise from across the NECC force and DoD to assist in training delivery.

- **Naval Expeditionary Intelligence Command (NEIC)** delivers flexible, capable, and ready maritime expeditionary intelligence forces that respond rapidly to evolving irregular warfare area intelligence requirements.
- **Expeditionary Combat Readiness Command (ECRC)** coordinates and oversees all administrative processing, equipping, training, deployment, and redeployment of Sailors assigned as Individual Augmentees (IAs), In-Lieu of forces, and to Provisional Units committed to Joint and Maritime Operations.
- **Combat Camera (COMCAM)** generates video and still documentation of combat operations, contingencies, exercises, and Navy events of historical significance.

## NECC officer billet base

NECC N12 provided billet snapshots for all officers in the NECC domain, as of October 2008. Of the 2,442 officer billets, 1,175 are in the Active Component and 1,267 are in the Reserve Component.

We break down the NECC officer billets by command, component, designator, and grade. Table 1 shows that some commands fall primarily in the Reserves, such as NAVELSG, while others, such as Riverine and NEGB, have no reserve billets.

The purpose of the AQD career path is to manage officers in order to develop expertise and leadership among the officer corps. We will focus on active-duty officers and discuss the role of reserve officers (both Selected Reserve and Full-Time Support (FTS) officers) in a later section.

In establishing a billet base for the AQD to manage expeditionary warfare officer careers, we first excluded those officers who are already managed within their own communities and have established methods for developing experience. The Naval Construction Force and Explosives Ordnance Disposal officers that fall under NECC are primarily made up of officers from distinct communities (CEC and EOD, respectively) and can be managed within those communities. Similarly, NAVELSG is primarily Supply Corps, NEIC is primarily Intel

officers, and Combat Camera is primarily made up of Limited Duty Officers (LDOs). NEGB will no longer operate as of 1 October 2009, so we exclude these officers from consideration as well. The exclusion of the above commands leaves Riverine, MESF, MCAG, ETC, ECRC, and NECC HQ. The remainder of the analysis focuses on these commands.

Table 1. Officer billets by NECC command (October 2008)

Command	Number of officer billets		
	Total	Active	Reserve
NECC Headquarters	117	100	17
Riverine	73	73	0
Naval Construction Force	832	391	441
Explosive Ordnance Disposal	363	308	55
Maritime Expeditionary Security Force	561	167	394
Navy Expeditionary Intelligence Command	24	20	4
Combat Camera	6	3	3
Navy Expeditionary Logistics Support Group	303	12	291
Navy Expeditionary Guard Battalion <sup>a</sup>	20	20	0
Maritime Civil Affairs Group	111	56	55
Expeditionary Training Command	8	3	5
Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center	24	22	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,442</b>	<b>1,175</b>	<b>1,267</b>

a. As of 1 October 2009, the Navy Expeditionary Guard Battalion will no longer operate.

## NECC URL billets by designator and grade

Because NECC concerns have centered on the need to build leadership and proficiency in the URL officer corps [2, 3], we further narrow our focus to the URL billets. This limits our billet base to 232 active-duty officer billets. The URL billets within NECC are predominantly composed of SWO (1110 designator) and general URL billets (1000 and 1050 designators). Looking at the billets by designator and grade, we see that the junior billet base is almost exclusively SWO (see table 2). Therefore, to effectively grow expertise in expeditionary warfare, our analysis will have to focus primarily on SWO careers. We also include the generalist URL billets since they can possibly provide

some opportunities for building experience and, as we will see in the next section, include billets that require prior expeditionary warfare experience.

Table 2. NECC URL billets by designator and grade

Billet designator	CAPT O6	CDR O5	LCDR O4	LT O3	LTJG O2	Total
General URL - 1000	1	3	20	4		28
General URL (warfare qualified) - 1050	4	9	29	19		61
Surface Warfare - 1110	2	14	26	52	18	112
Special Operations - 1140 <sup>a</sup>	4	5	8	10		27
General Aviation - 1300			2			2
Naval Flight Officers - 1320			2			2
Total	11	31	87	85	18	232

a. The Special Operations billets do not include those in the Explosive Ordnance Disposal command in NECC.

### Billet base for 1000, 1050, and 1110 billets

Focusing on 1000, 1050, and 1110 billets leaves 201 active-duty officer billets that we propose should be the billet base for the expeditionary warfare AQD. Figure 2 displays the billet structure. A limited number of billets are available for junior officers to get expeditionary warfare experience and “grow” to fill the billets requiring experience later in their careers. The Surface Nuke subcommunity provides a good comparison. It is managed by AQD within the SWO community and has a much larger junior billet base. Appendix A provides more detail on the billet structure of Surface Nuke officers.

We next need to understand which billets require an officer to have had a prior tour in expeditionary warfare. Based on these requirements and the billet base, we can then determine the feasibility of these requirements. By feasibility we mean that the junior billet base allows a sufficient number of officers to develop the required experience to fill the more senior experience tours later in their career.

Figure 2. AQD billet base including 1000, 1050, and 1110 billets

### Total Billets

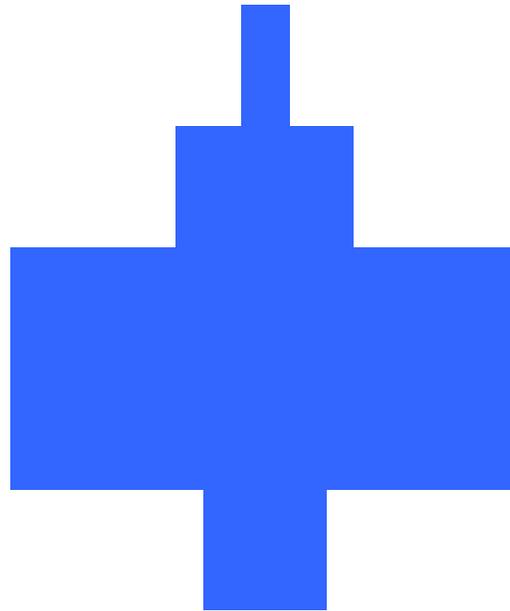
**O-6 = 7**

**O-5 = 26**

**O-4 = 75**

**O-3 = 75**

**O-2 = 18**



### Experience requirements

The underlying premise of this report is the necessity for NECC officers to build experience in expeditionary warfare as their careers progress. The requirement for experience is not simply based on rank. We asked subject matter experts which assignments required prior expeditionary warfare experience. In an attempt to make our analysis replicable and robust, we asked for specific positions, billet titles, or other general rules that could be established for understanding the experience requirement.

SMEs from MESF, Riverine, MCAG, and ECRC all discussed experience requirements. MCAG and ECRC SMEs both stated that none of their positions *required* prior expeditionary warfare experience. The SMEs for MESF and Riverine did, however, provide several billets that require an officer to have had prior tours within the expeditionary warfare domain. They noted that commanding officers of their squadrons would benefit from prior experience, as would senior

operations and planning officers. The executive officer billets within MESF also require prior experience. In addition, the overall force commanders and chief staff officer positions require prior experience. NECC leadership added the NECC headquarters Chief of Staff billet as one that requires prior experience. In sum, there are 33 active-duty SWO and 1000/1050 billets requiring prior expeditionary warfare experience (see table 3).

In addition to the billets listed in table 3, the Riverine and MESF SMEs suggested that experience would be desirable in the Staff Ops & Plans billets at the lieutenant level. There were many discussions about where experience was required and where it would be desirable. In the end, the ability of the billet base to provide experienced officers will likely determine the extent to which certain billets get filled with experienced expeditionary warfare officers.

Table 3. Billets requiring prior expeditionary warfare experience

Billet title	Grade	Number of billets	Designator
<b>NECC</b>			
Chief of Staff	CAPT	1	1050
<b>RIVGRU</b>			
Commander, Operating Forces Command	CAPT	1	1050
Chief Staff Officer	CDR	1	1050
CO Afloat	CDR	2	1110
Staff Ops & Plans Officer	LCDR	4	1110
<b>MESF</b>			
Commander, Operating Forces Command	CAPT (MESG)	2	1110
	CDR (MSRON)	5	
CO Afloat	CDR	1	1110
XO Afloat	LCDR	6	1050 (4), 1110 (2)
Staff Ops & Plans Officer	CDR	2	1110
	LCDR	8	1050 (6), 1110 (2)

Figure 3 shows these experience requirements overlaid on the billet base we described in the previous section. The SMEs we spoke to

noted that there were no billets that required more than one prior tour of experience.

Figure 3. Experience requirements in NECC officer billet structure

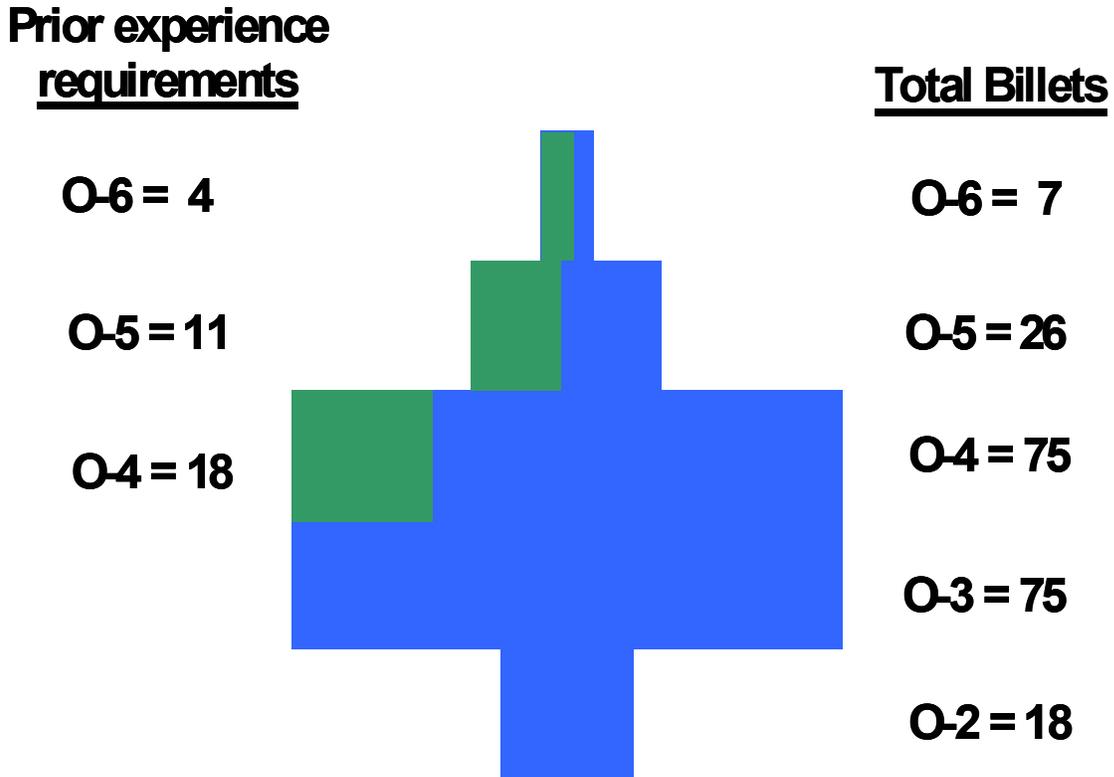


Figure 3 implicitly assumes that all of the junior billets provide the appropriate experience for follow-on tours. This is a rather strong assumption, since most of the experience requirements are in Riverine and MESF, but the billet base includes officers from ECRC, MCAG, and others. This implies, for example, that junior experience as a Civil Affairs Team Leader in MCAG provides the necessary experience to fill an XO Afloat billet in MESF. While the rest of the analysis continues with this assumption that all of the experience is fungible, the SMEs we spoke with stressed the importance of developing robust Primary Military Education (PME) or Professional Qualification Standards (PQS) to provide a base set of skills and improve the fungibility

of experience across commands. Without some base of knowledge from PME, the SMEs do not feel that all junior tours will provide the requisite experience for the more senior billets.

In the next section, we talk about possible career paths that would enable officers to re-tour and fill the experience-requiring billets, and we will determine whether this billet base can fulfill these experience requirements.

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## Expeditionary warfare career path

The issue of building up experience within the expeditionary warfare domain arose because officers, specifically SWOs, were not getting a chance to re-tour within NECC. A main reason for this is that the Surface Warfare Enterprise (SWE) business rules do not allow an officer to spend more than one of their first four sea tours (two Division Officer (Divo), two Department Head (DH) tours) out of mainstream afloat billets, and NECC billets are not considered mainstream [5]. Therefore, to re-tour within NECC, officers would be hurting their chances for promotion and would no longer be viable as SWOs. While the Surface Nuke subcommunity is exempt from this business rule, we proceed with our analysis assuming that expeditionary warfare officers cannot violate this rule without impacting their career progression.

The desired career path for the expeditionary warfare officer would have to involve a way for officers to fit in two expeditionary tours while remaining viable as SWOs and due course for promotion. This includes following the business rule mentioned above. Figure 4 displays our notion of integrating expeditionary warfare tours into the traditional SWO career path.

As you can see from figure 4, there are four possible tours (indicated by yellow stars) in which an officer can gain expeditionary warfare experience before the Executive Officer (XO) tour. Given the experience requirements laid out in table 3, we can see that there are a few options for providing experienced expeditionary warfare officers to fill the LCDR billets that require prior experience.

The option for officers to have both their second Divo and second DH tours at NECC is not feasible because it violates the SWE business rule. Therefore, to fill lieutenant commander (LCDR) experience tours, expeditionary warfare officers would have to take an additional sea tour during time that is traditionally used for a shore tour in the

typical SWO career path. This means that officers could come to NECC as lieutenants junior grade (LTJGs) during their second Divo tours and return after their second DH tours, during a traditional shore tour, or they could come in as LTs after their second Divo tours, during a traditional shore tour, and return for their second DH tours. A final option would be to have expeditionary warfare officers fill both their Post-Divo shore tours and their Post-DH shore tours with at-sea NECC billets. We do not believe this is feasible, however, given the prolonged sea duty that this would entail.

Figure 4. NECC integration into SWO career path

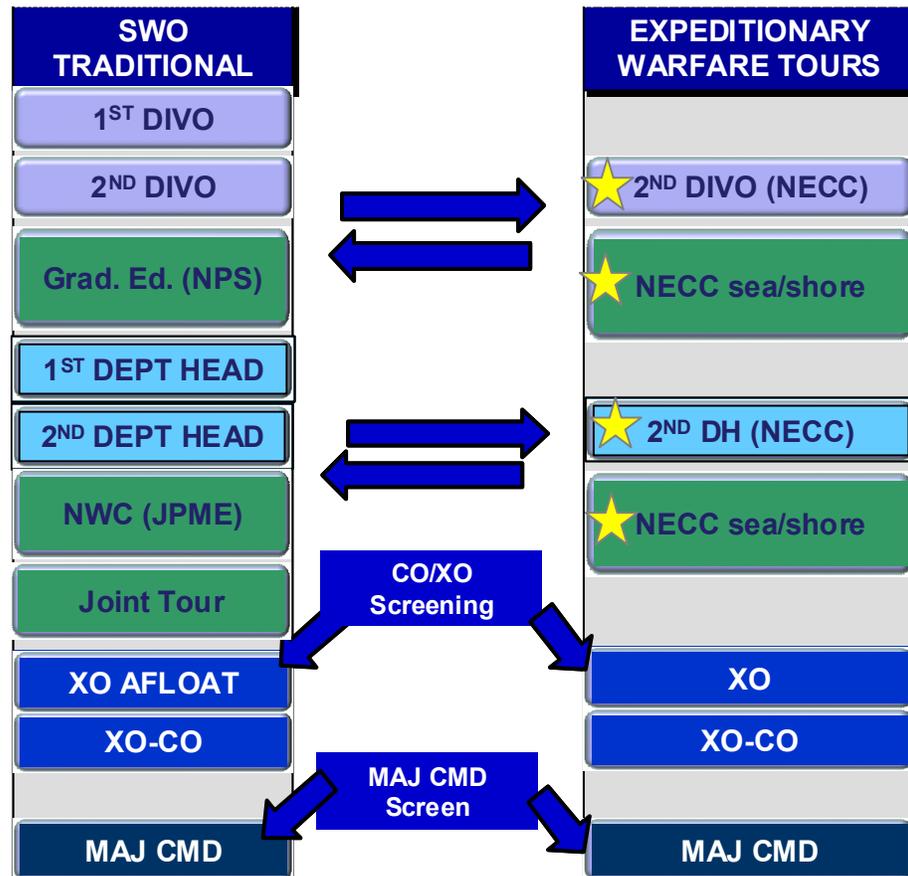


Figure 4 also shows how this career path structure would limit an expeditionary warfare officer's ability to attend in-resident graduate

education, either at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) or the Naval War College (NWC). This limitation could affect the desirability of the expeditionary warfare career path because graduate education is seen as both an incentive for the individual officer and a positive factor in promotion boards. The tradeoff between a shore tour and a second NECC tour could also affect an officer's ability to fulfill the joint requirements—another factor in career development and promotion.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, replacing a shore tour with an at-sea NECC billet increases the amount of time at sea and therefore increases an officer's time away from home and family. It may be necessary to incentivize this career path to counteract the increase in time at sea.

## Executability of the billet structure

Given the experience requirements, the billet base, and the possible career path options, we calculate whether this billet structure is executable. Figure 5 provides a timeline depiction of the career path options we discussed.

To determine the executability, we make certain assumptions about tour lengths and continuation. First, we assume that all tours will be 2 years. Second, we assume that expeditionary warfare officers will exhibit the same continuation behavior as typical SWOs, and we use 2007 SWO continuation rates in our analysis.

The experience requirement that comes earliest in the career is the LCDR Staff Ops & Plans billets. We discuss in some detail the calculation for determining whether the Navy will be able to meet these experience requirements given its junior billet base. Appendix B provides a more in-depth discussion of the calculations for this requirement, and includes the calculations for the more senior experience requirements.

To fill an LCDR billet with an experienced expeditionary warfare officer, that officer must fill either an LTJG or LT billet in NECC. We focus on the two most viable career path options: (1) first NECC tour

at second Divo and follow-on NECC tour Post-DH or (2) first NECC tour Post-Divo and follow-on NECC tour as second DH.

Figure 5. Career path options with two NECC tours

**Career Path 1**

ENS		LTJG		LT			LCDR					CDR				
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1st Divo		NECC 2nd Divo		Post-Divo shore			1st DH	2nd DH		NECC Post-DH shore					XO	

**Career Path 2**

ENS		LTJG		LT			LCDR					CDR				
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1st Divo		2nd Divo		NECC Post-Divo Shore			1st DH	NECC 2nd DH		Post-DH shore					XO	

**Career Path 3**

ENS		LTJG		LT			LCDR					CDR				
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1st Divo		2nd Divo		NECC Post-Divo shore			1st DH	2nd DH		NECC Post-DH shore					XO	

**Career Path 4**

ENS		LTJG		LT			LCDR					CDR				
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1st Divo		NECC 2nd Divo		Post-Divo shore			1st DH	NECC 2nd DH		Post-DH shore					XO	

In the first career path option, officers first come to NECC as LTJGs and would return as Post-DH LCDRs. There are 18 LTJG billets within NECC; using our assumption of 2-year tours, NECC must fill 9 of these each year. Thus, NECC will be creating 9 experienced officers yearly. Based on our 2007 SWO continuation rates, we would expect about 3 of these 9 officers to make it to the Post-DH LCDR tour.

In the second career path option, officers have their first NECC tours as LTs and return for their second DH tours as LCDRs. There are 75 LT billets, so NECC would fill 37.5 per year. Again, using typical SWO continuation rates, we would expect about 14 of these officers to reach their second DH tours.

In total, we expect approximately 17 officers each year to be eligible to fill the LCDR Staff Ops & Plans billets as experienced expeditionary warfare officers. There are a total of 12 of these billets, so NECC

would need to fill 6 per year. That would give NECC a selection rate of 35 percent.

In addition to the career path options we discuss, there are two alternative career paths for officers to reach LCDR with prior experience. These alternatives come at a cost, however. The first would have an officer replacing both the Post-Divo and Post-DH shore tours with NECC sea tours. This career path would have significantly more sea duty than the typical SWO path and thus would severely limit shore opportunities, such as graduate education and joint education. In addition, the increased time away from home and the arduousness of sea duty could have strong negative effects on continuation rates. The second alternative is the opposite: have both NECC tours as typical SWO afloat tours during the second Divo and the second DH tour. As mentioned, this would violate the SWE business rule and could affect promotion opportunities.

Following the same calculations for the LCDR XO billets, the CDR experience billets, and the captain (CAPT) experience billets, we get selection rates of 9, 18, and 10.5 percent, respectively. Table 4 provides a summary for each group of billets requiring prior experience.

Table 4. Selection rates for officers with prior experience

Rank	Number of experienced officers needed <sup>a</sup>	Number of officers reaching rank with experience <sup>a</sup>	Selection rate (percentage)
LCDR (non-XO)	6	17 <sup>b</sup>	35
LCDR (XO)	3	32 <sup>c</sup>	9
CDR	5.5	30	18
CAPT	2	19	10.5

a. The number of officers is shown on a “per year” basis, which assumes 2-year tours in all billets.

b. Includes only the two more viable career path options.

c. Four of these officers will have had two prior tours in NECC.

Selection rates less than 100 percent imply that the career path is possible, but it is not likely that the Navy wants to be in the position where they have to take every officer who fills an NECC billet and bring

them back for a second tour. This leaves no choice on either the Navy's side or the officer's side. While we do not have specific benchmarks to compare the selection rates, the selection rates for the experience requirements in NECC are never higher than 35 percent, meaning that there should be an ample pool of officers for the Navy to choose from to fill these billets. It also means that an individual officer who decides to take a junior NECC billet will not be forced to make expeditionary warfare their career.

We also note that the Navy can increase its pool of eligible officers by allowing for different career paths, though this increase would come at a cost. These costs include limiting shore opportunities, such as graduate and joint education; increasing sea duty, which could decrease continuation; and potentially decreasing the chances for promotion as a result of taking multiple tours outside the mainstream SWO afloat tours.

## Potential issues

We just showed that the billet structure should provide more than enough officers with experience to fill the more senior billets. However, this analysis relies on some assumptions, both implicit and explicit, that need to be understood to ensure that the experience requirement is met.

The main underlying assumption is that the billet structure we have described will be the billet structure used to grow the requisite experience in the future. NECC is still a relatively new organization, and its structure has continued to evolve over time. Stabilizing the billet base is important to understanding which billets officers can fill that will provide the necessary experience. A stable billet structure will also help the SWE identify where billets are comparable to typical SWO tours, and should aid in managing career paths.

Even if the billet structure is stable, we have still assumed that the experience requirements are correct. The experience requirements we discuss in this paper are not set in stone. The requirements came from multiple discussions with NECC SMEs, and there was not universal agreement on all points. In spite of all this, we think that the

requirements are a good starting point; even if they were to increase, the selection rates are such that the structure should still be workable.

One of the stronger assumptions, however, is that all of the junior billets provide the appropriate experience to fill the senior billets. We previously discussed the need for PME or PQS to ensure the fungibility of experience across commands. This is a crucial point in terms of the feasibility of the billet structure. If experience is not fungible across commands, some of the junior billets could not be used to build the necessary experience, and the overall billet base would shrink. In the most extreme case, an officer's first tour billet would only provide the necessary experience for a follow-on tour in the same command. In this case, instead of one large billet structure, there would be multiple smaller billet bases, and the pool of eligible officers to fill each experience billet would be significantly smaller.

We used the same methodology described above to calculate the selection rates for experience billets in MESF and Riverine assuming that experience was not fungible at all. Table 5 shows these results. Removing our assumption on fungibility increases selection rates, some to 50 percent. While the selection rates still indicate that the career paths are feasible, the choice for the Navy and for the officer would be more limited in this scenario.

Table 5. Selection rates for officers with prior experience

Command	Rank	Number of experienced officers needed <sup>a</sup>	Number of officers reaching rank with experience <sup>a</sup>	Selection rate (percentage)
MESF	LCDR (non-XO)	4	8	50
	LCDR (XO)	3	16	19
	CDR	15	4	27
	CAPT	1	7	14
Riverine	LCDR (non-XO)	2	4	50
	CDR	4	1.5	38
	CAPT	2	0.5	25

a. The number of officers is shown on a "per year" basis, which assumes 2-year tours in all billets.

Another potential issue with the viability of the billet structure involves officer continuation behavior. In our analysis, we explicitly assume that officers in the expeditionary warfare track will behave the same as other SWOs in terms of their continuation. As we have discussed, however, the expeditionary warfare career path options involve additional sea time and the loss of certain shore opportunities, which could adversely affect both the officers' desire to continue in the Navy as well as career development and promotion opportunities. If expeditionary warfare officers have significantly lower continuation rates at any point in the career, the pool of officers eligible to fill more senior billets would diminish. However, it is also possible that continuation rates could be improved for NECC officers, as these officers would be self-selecting into a specialty of their choosing.

## Where do other URL communities fit in?

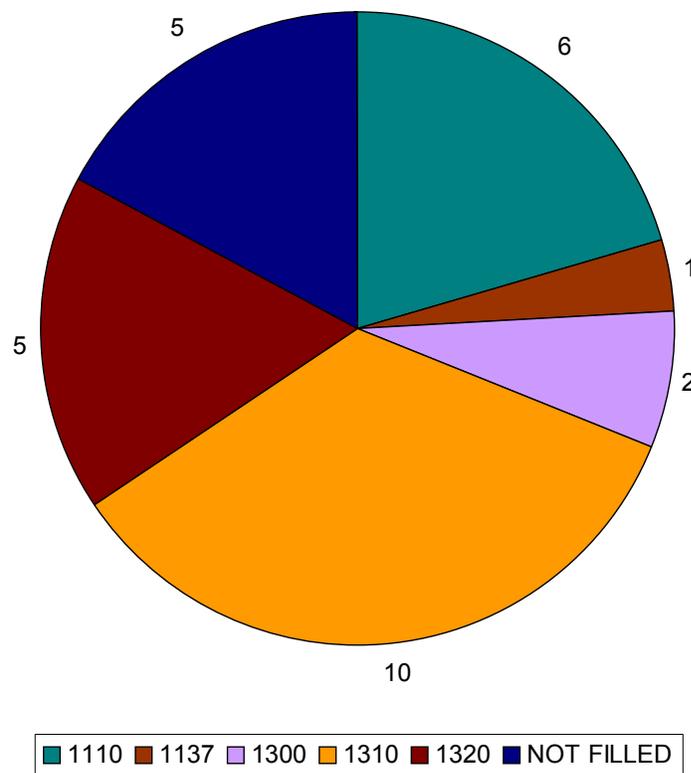
The majority of junior URL billets within NECC are SWOs, so we focused much of our attention on a career path that fit within the SWO guidelines. But it is important to understand how other URL communities support NECC and where they can be utilized within the expeditionary warfare domain. Table 2 showed the breakdown of URL billets by designator in the groups on which we focus. These included 27 EOD, 2 General Aviation, and 2 NFO billets, along with 89 nondiscrete URL billets (the 1000- and 1050-coded billets).

In addition to the NECC EOD division, there are a number of EOD billets in the Riverine force as well as some at NECC HQ. These make up the bulk of the non-SWO discrete URL billets. So, beyond the direct participation of the EOD community, how can the other URL communities contribute to the expeditionary warfare mission?

Focusing on the 1000 and 1050 billets, we see that a number of them require prior experience and thus will likely be filled with SWOs who were able to obtain that experience as junior officers. A total of 13 1050 billets require prior experience. As of March 2009, 8 of these were filled by SWOs, 1 by a Civil Engineering Corps officer, and 4 were unfilled. That leaves the number of 1000 billets and 1050 billets that can be filled by any URL officer at 28 and 48, respectively. Figures 6 and 7 show the distribution of officers filling these billets as of

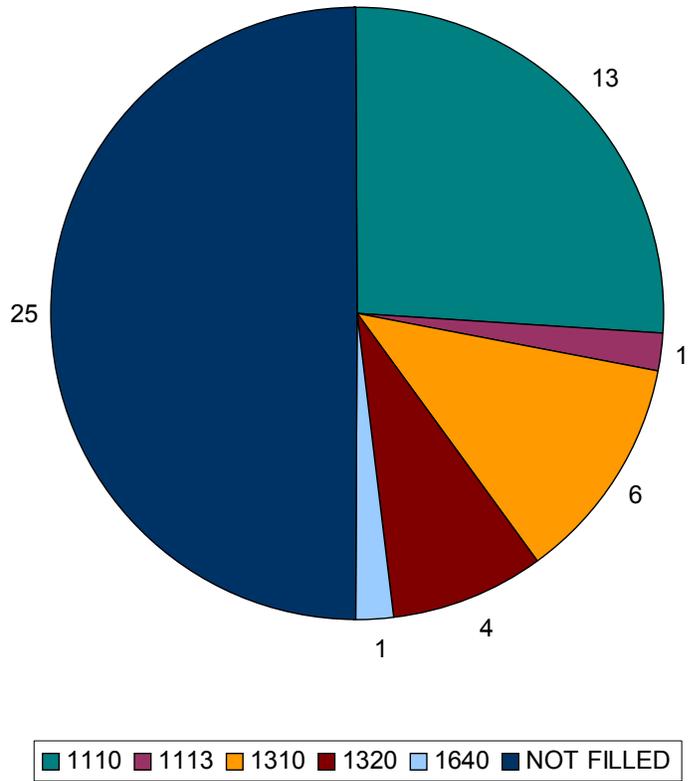
March 2009. As these figures show, a number of non-SWO URL officers are currently filling billets in NECC, especially for the 1000 billets. Seventeen of the 1000 billets are being filled by aviators, with only 6 being filled by SWOs. There are also 10 aviators filling 1050 billets, along with 1 Information Warfare officer. These generalist billets provide an excellent opportunity for other URL communities to contribute to the expeditionary warfare mission.

Figure 6. Officers filling NECC 1000 billets (as of March 2009)<sup>a</sup>



a. Total is larger than the number of billets due to double-filling in some billets

Figure 7. Officers filling NECC 1050 billets (as of March 2009)<sup>a,b</sup>



- a. Total is larger than the number of billets due to double-filling in some billets  
b. Excludes billets requiring prior expeditionary warfare experience

## Reserves

Thus far, we have focused on the Active Component officer billets, but NECC has a large Reserve Component force as well (see table 1). Of the commands we focus on in our analysis, MESF and MCAG both have large reserve elements. The NECC reserve force acts as an “operational reserve,” meaning the Reserve Component forces conduct missions similar to those of the Active Component and are not simply used as backfill for active units [6]. So how do the reserve forces fit into the discussion of an AQD career path within NECC?

The fact that the reserve forces are operational means that the expeditionary warfare skill set gained in reserve billets is likely similar to that gained through active-duty billets. This could allow for some reservists to fill active-duty experience billets, when needed. As the previous section detailed, there should be many more officers eligible to fill experience requirements than necessary, but having an additional pool of qualified officers from which to choose should only help to strengthen the expeditionary warfare proficiency within the active Navy.

Once the AQD subcommunity is well established, officers affiliating with the Reserve Component will take their AQD along with them, and it will be easier to identify qualified officers to fill these positions. One undecided question is whether reservists will be able to earn the expeditionary warfare AQD while in reserve billets. Again, given the similarities between reserve and active missions and deployments, this is a possibility. For example, if a reserve Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron (MSRON) deploys in the same manner as an active MSRON, performing the same missions, it seems reasonable that the reserve officers would be entitled to the same AQD as active-duty officers fulfilling the same mission. This would prove helpful in measuring the expeditionary warfare proficiency in the various units and help to identify eligible candidates for filling active-duty billets that require prior experience.

In addition to the reserve units, NECC also has a number of Full-Time Support reservists. Within the commands and designators that we focused on, there are 21 FTS billets. One of the FTS billets at NECC HQ, the Assistant Chief of Staff, Training and Readiness (ACOS N7), was designated by NECC N1 as requiring prior experience. The other FTS billets could provide the necessary experience for that billet, as would active-duty expeditionary warfare experience and potentially, as discussed earlier, expeditionary warfare reserve billets.

One additional consideration is the division of NECC missions across the Active and Reserve components. NECC was recently moved from supplement funding to the base defense budget, moving it “towards permanency” [7]. Given the growth of NECC and the move to the base budget, it is possible that functions now in the Reserves might move into the Active component. While the alignment of missions across the components was outside the scope of this study, it is important to understand that any change in this alignment could change the experience requirements and impact the feasibility of meeting these requirements.

## Specialty career paths

The Specialty Career Path (SCP) was one option considered for the management of the expeditionary warfare community. The SCP is a relatively new Navy endeavor. SWOs are selected into specific career paths, which do not follow the typical command track, in order to maintain expertise in these areas. At present, these include Shore Installation Management (SIM), Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP), Missile Defense (MD), Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), Mine Warfare (MIW), and Strategic Sealift (SS). These officers serve in billets within their specific expertise, and they have improved chances at promotion compared with other non-due-course officers. The Navy is expanding these SCPs beyond just the surface community to the entire URL [8].

The SCP was not chosen as the means for managing the expeditionary warfare officers because it focuses on officers who are no longer on the command track. The intent of this analysis was to ensure that officers who serve in expeditionary warfare and build their proficiency in that domain remain viable for promotion and for command.

We looked at the usefulness of SCPs in managing other capabilities within NECC, but did not find any reasonable options. The SCPs that currently exist pool billets from a wide range of commands that perform similar functions and require a build-up of expertise over the career. We did not find any commands, or functions, within NECC that fit those criteria. However, we did investigate the AT/FP SCP, as NECC is the lead agent for those billets and some of them do fall under NECC.

AT/FP is currently a SWO SCP, and officers can be selected into that career path and build their expertise in that arena. Though a SWO SCP was created, most AT/FP assignments call for Limited Duty Officers (LDOs) and Warrant Officers (WOs). In [4], AT/FP assignments

are found to have limited commonality with expeditionary warfare assignments. The experience gained on an AT/FP tour is not fungible for filling expeditionary warfare experience billets. In addition, while en route training is required, no prior experience was said to be necessary for AT/FP billets.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The analysis in this paper was presented to ADM Greenert, Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, at the Fleet Readiness Enterprise Executive Committee (FRE EXCOM) meeting on March 10, 2009. The recommendations were to create an AQD to manage the expeditionary warfare community, assigning the AQD to officers already qualified and beginning assignment to officers as they complete their initial tours. Further, it was recommended that, coordinating with the SWE, expeditionary tours be integrated into the traditional SWO career path. ADM Greenert approved these recommendations and work began to institute them. While the AQD will help allow the tracking and assignment of experienced expeditionary warfare officers, it is the new career path options, with buy-in from SWO leadership, that will allow for multiple tours within the expeditionary warfare domain.

Though the process has been started, there are still some recommendations to ensuring that this endeavor is successful. One of the main concerns is the fungibility of experience across the various NECC commands that have SWO, 1000 and 1050 billets. The prior experience requirement is currently said to be met by filling any of these billets. However, SMEs noted that without a robust PME or PQS this might not be feasible. NECC needs to determine its PME requirements for making the experience fungible across commands, and should consider including PME as a requirement for obtaining the expeditionary warfare AQD.

An additional concern is that the officers who choose to follow the expeditionary warfare career path will be limited by the necessity to take an NECC sea tour during a traditional shore tour period. It will be necessary to watch these officers to ensure that missing a shore tour opportunity for graduate education or joint experience does not prevent promotion, and ensure that the additional sea time does not cause continuation to drop significantly. One possible solution to this

issue would be to allow expeditionary warfare officers the same exemption to the SWO business rule that Surface Nuke officers receive. This would allow NECC officers to have two expeditionary warfare sea tours and remain due-course as SWOs without removing shore opportunities. Another suggestion would be to include expeditionary warfare specialties in promotion precepts, to ensure that officers are not overlooked for missing shore opportunities given that they are obtaining important expeditionary warfare capabilities that the Navy now requires.

It was also not fully determined how AQDs would be handled for the Reserve component. We suggest allowing Reservists to earn the AQD, though NECC should develop appropriate requirements for obtaining it.

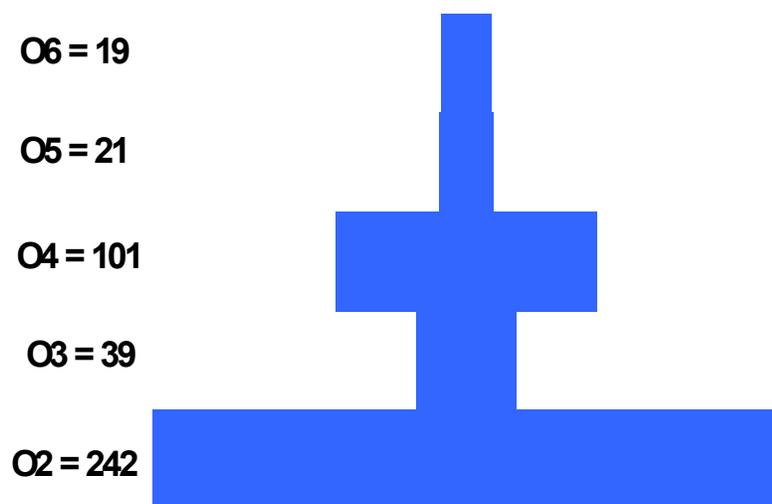
Lastly, we recommend that NECC work to stabilize its billet base and structure. NECC is still a relatively young command, and it has gone through several fluctuations in its structure. This dynamic structure has likely contributed to the manning issues, creating difficulty in understanding how comparable billets are to typical SWO billets and determining the appropriate billets for officers to fill. Stabilizing the billet base will help the SWE understand the expeditionary warfare career path, and should help garner buy-in from the surface warfare community.

## Appendix A: The SWO Nukes

The Surface Nuclear (SWO(N)) subcommunity provides a good comparison with the expeditionary warfare community because it is managed by AQDs and resides within the SWO community.

SWO(N) has been successful in growing an appropriate number of experienced officers to fill its senior billets, with this success likely based on a larger junior billet base as well as leadership support. Figure 8 shows the SWO(N) billet structure, consisting of 422 SWO billets. The large base of LTJG (O2) billets allows the SWO(N) community to build a large pool of experienced officers, creating a sizable group from which to select for senior billets. At the same time, the large pool provides the officers with options as well, since they are not tied to the SWO(N) path after completing an early tour. A snapshot of officers from November 2008 showed that 751 SWOs had a SWO(N) AQD.

Figure 8. SWO(N) billet structure—1110 billets



The SWO(N) subcommunity benefits from strong leadership support as well. One way this manifests itself is in its exception from the SWE business rule that we discussed earlier. SWO(N) officers are allowed, and expected, to have two afloat tours in nuclear billets, outside the typical mainstream SWO billets. This provides the opportunity to use the experience gained in junior billets, without sacrificing shore opportunities.

## Appendix B: Calculating the executability of the billet structure

This appendix provides further detail on how we calculated the expected number of officers who would be eligible to fill billets requiring prior experience. Throughout this analysis, we assume that all tours last 2 years. We also assume that officers filling these tours will exhibit continuation rates comparable to the typical SWO, and we use 2007 SWO continuation rates for all of our calculations.

Officers have two options to complete their initial NECC tours in order to fill an experience billet at the LCDR level—the second Divo tour and the Post-Divo shore tour. In the typical SWO career path, officers come to their second Divo tour with 2.5 years of service (YOS) and reach their Post-Divo shore tour at the 4-year point. The opportunities for using the experience gained in these tours will be at the second DH tour and the Post-DH shore tour. Officers will reach the second DH tour at 9 YOS and the Post-DH tour at 10.5 YOS.

We follow two potential career paths to determine the number of officers who will reach the LCDR tour with experience. The first path has officers filling an NECC tour during their second Divo and then returning for the Post-DH experience tour; the second has officers coming to NECC during the Post-Divo shore tour and returning to fill an experience billet for the second DH tour.

Beginning with the first potential career path, officers begin in NECC as LTJGs at the second Divo tour. There are 18 LTJG billets within NECC. If we assume 2-year tours, it means that 9 billets will be filled each year and, therefore, 9 officers will be gaining the necessary experience each year. Further assuming that expeditionary warfare officers will have similar continuation rates as all SWOs, we can use past continuation behavior to determine how many of these 9 officers will remain in the Navy as SWOs at the 10th year of service. We use 2007 SWO continuation rates and calculate that 31.8 percent of SWOs with

2 years of service will remain in the Navy, and as SWOs, at their 10th year of service. Thus, of the 9 officers each year who begin second Divo tours at NECC, about 3 will be available to fill the LCDR billets that require prior experience 8 years later.

We follow the same assumptions and logic for the LT billets. There are 75 LT billets that can be filled at the Post-Divo shore tour, or 37.5 per year. Using 2007 continuation rates, we see that 37.5 percent of SWOs in the Navy at 4 years of service will remain in the Navy as SWOs to their 9th year of service. Therefore, there will be approximately 14 officers each year who reach the second DH tour point with expeditionary warfare experience.

Combining the above two paths for gaining experience, the Navy can expect to have about 17 officers with the necessary experience to fill the NECC experience billets at the LCDR level. As table 4 in the main body of the report shows, there are a total of 12 LCDR billets that require prior expeditionary warfare experience (not counting the XO billets). Again assuming 2-year tours, the Navy would need to fill only 6 of these each year. So, there will be 17 experienced officers to fill 6 billets, a selection rate of about 35 percent.

Table 6 summarizes these calculations and also shows the potential gains from the other two career path options (numbered 3 and 4). In career path 3, the first tour in NECC replaces the Post-Divo shore tour and the second tour replaces the Post-DH shore tour. Career path option 4 is characterized by first tour as second Divo and return for second DH. We have already discussed the problems with these two career paths. Career path 3 requires too much sea duty and significantly limits shore opportunities, such as resident graduate education, and career path 4 violates the SWE business rule and would affect promotion opportunities. Note, however, that providing these additional options effectively doubles the amount of officers with the necessary experience to fill the requirements at the LCDR level.

We perform the same calculations for filling the more senior experience billets, including the LCDR XO billets in MESF. The SMEs noted that the more senior billets still require only one prior tour in NECC and that presumably this experience could be obtained at any level. However, there is likely value in having the prior tour more recently in the career, rather than as an LTJG. Table 6 summarizes the

options for gaining the necessary experience for the MESF XO billets. We include the prior-experience LCDR billets because we assume that having two prior tours would be a benefit and would still allow officers to remain viable for promotion if their XO tours were in NECC.

Table 6. Calculating the experience provided by the NECC billet base

Career path	Number (and type) of billets	Per-year fill (assuming 2-year tours)	Continuation rate	Number of officers with necessary experience
<b>Most viable career path options</b>				
1: First tour - 2nd Divo (LTJG) Second tour - Post-DH (LCDR)	18 (LTJG)	9	31.8% (from 2 YOS to 10 as SWO)	3 reaching Post-DH each year
2: First tour - Post-Divo (LT) Second tour - 2nd DH (LCDR)	75 (LT)	37.5	37.5% (from 4 YOS to 9 as SWO)	14 reaching 2nd DH each year
<b>Less viable career path options</b>				
3: First tour - Post-Divo (LT) Second tour - Post-DH (LCDR)	75 (LT)	37.5	35.7% (from 4 YOS to 10 as SWO)	13 reaching Post-DH each year
4: First tour - 2nd Divo (LTJG) Second tour - 2nd DH (LCDR)	18 (LTJG)	9	33.4% (from 2 YOS to 9 as SWO)	3 reaching 2nd DH each year

As table 7 shows, there are several ways for an officer to get expeditionary warfare experience before coming to an XO billet. Not all of these are additive, however. The two possible tours for filling the non-experience LCDR billets, 2nd DH and Post-DH, will fill a total of 28.5 billets a year, not 28.5 each.

Also, the LCDR billets that require prior experience have already been counted because they come from the same pool of LTJG and LT billets that we follow through to the XO tour. We show them separately to indicate the number of officers that can be expected to reach the XO tour with more than one prior tour.

Table 7. Calculating experience for LCDR XO billets

Career path	Number (and type) of billets	Per-year fill (assuming 2-year tours)	Continuation rate	Number of officers with necessary experience
First tour - 2nd Divo (LTJG) Second tour - XO	18 (LTJG)	9	23.1% (from 2 YOS to 15 as SWO)	2.1 reaching XO tour each year
First tour - Post-Divo (LT) Second Tour - XO	75 (LT)	37.5	25.9% (from 4 YOS to 15 as SWO)	9.7 reaching XO tour each year
First tour - 2nd DH / Post-DH (LCDR) - non-experience billets Second Tour - XO	57 (LCDR, not requiring prior experience)	28.5	69.2% (2nd DH, from 9 YOS to 15 as SWO)	19.7 reaching XO tour each year
			72.6% (Post-DH, from 10 YOS to 15 as SWO)	20.7 reaching XO tour each year
First tour - 2nd DH / Post-DH (LCDR) - experience billets Second Tour - XO	12 (LCDR, requiring prior experience, non-XO)	6	69.2% (2nd DH, from 9 YOS to 15 as SWO)	4.2 reaching XO tour with 2 tours of prior experience
			72.6% (Post-DH, from 10 YOS to 15 as SWO)	4.4 reaching XO tour with 2 tours of prior experience

Overall, we expect about 12 of the officers who filled junior billets (2 from LTJG billets and 10 from LT billets) to make it to the XO tour with prior experience. Four of these officers will have had two prior NECC tours. The non-experience LCDR billets provide roughly 20 officers with experience to fill the XO billets. In total, there would be about 32 experienced officers each year to fill the XO billets. There are 6 XO billets requiring prior experience, of which the Navy would be filling 3 each year. This gives us a selection rate of about 9 percent (3 out of 32).

Following the same logic for CDR billets, we have 32 officers reaching the XO point with prior experience each year. Typical SWO continuation from 15 years of service to 18 is 93.3 percent, meaning we expect almost 30 of these officers to be eligible to fill a CDR experience tour, of which there are 11 total (5.5 per year). This equates to about an 18-percent selection rate.

These 30 officers reaching the CDR tour with prior experience continue on to fill CAPT billets. Typical SWO continuation is about 49 percent from 18 to 23 years of service. This results in nearly 15 of these officers reaching the CAPT tour with experience. In addition, there are 15 CDR tours that do not require any prior experience. Filling 7.5 of these each year, with typical continuation, would increase the pool of eligible experienced officers by about 4 at the CAPT level. There are only 4 billets at the CAPT level requiring prior experience. Filling 2 of these each year would allow for a selection rate of 10.5 percent (2 out of 19).

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