

CAREER NEWSFLASH



MMEA-64

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CY03 SSGT BOARD ROLL-UP



The Staff Sergeant Selection Board adjourned on 16 September, thus ending the calendar year board rotations; next year the boards will be held on a fiscal year schedule, beginning with the E9/E8 Board convening this October 2003. Overall we are seeing the competition improve every year.

When compared to the CY02 SSGT Selection Board, the In Zone (Promotion Zone) selection rate has decreased from 73.1% to 68.5%, showing that not only are Marines in the In Zone becoming more competitive, but Marines in the Above Zone are as well. The Above Zone saw a 29.2% selection rate among those considered this year. The breakdown is as follows:

- ▶ **Above Zone** 430 selected out of 1471 considered (AZ Selection Rate was 29.2%)
- ▶ **In Zone** 2583 selected out of 3768 considered (IZ Selection Rate was 68.5%)
- ▶ **Below Zone** 47 selected out of 3011 considered (BZ selection Rate was .0156%)

Marines should note they are not only competing with those in the In Zone, but also with those in the Above Zone. The total selection rate when combined is 57.51%. The Selection Board considers both

zones with equal emphasis. This illustrates the importance of ensuring Marine's records are complete and accurate. Several articles from back issues of the Career Newsflash may be referenced in order to help Marines in this area.

This year we saw an improvement in photo submission over previous years. Marines who are returning from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom appear to be proactive about preparing for upcoming boards, including getting photos taken and submitted. The photo submission rate was 87.1%. There was nearly a 2% increase, but there is much more room for improvement. MCBul 1430 states Marines are required to submit a photo. We are improving, but our senior leadership should get more involved in this process.

Unlike photo submissions, we saw a decrease in PME completion rates. This year there was over 2% less Marines who were PME complete. When the Board has the responsibility to select the 'Best and Fully Qualified', those without the minimum required PME fall short of 'Fully Qualified'. This is not a new concept—ALMAR 026/96 was released in 1996. Marines must complete their PME or they will not be selected and ultimately will be

asked to separate from the Marine Corps at service limits, which are outlined in the Enlisted Career Force Controls (ECFC) program.

The SSgt Selection Board requested we address the issue of complete Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF). There were several incomplete records where the only viewable items were fitness reports and perhaps a high school diploma. Marines should take the time to ensure their records are complete—their OMPF serves as their resume, representing them within the boardroom. There is an article on page 4 illustrating the Marine’s responsibility in the



CY03 SSgt Selection Board

- ▶ *IZ Selection Rate: 68.5%*
- ▶ *Photo Submission: 87.2%*
- ▶ *PME Completion: 92.3%*

promotion process. This cannot be stressed enough. Although MCBul 1430 states the Commander shall ensure the Marine’s record is complete and accurate, the Marine should take full responsibility— this says a lot about those who take the time to make sure their records are complete.

SNCO promotions are competitive and Marines should take every opportunity to ensure they are prepared. When the message is released, the Below Zone data informs those eligible Marines within the below zone to prepare for consideration on the next year’s board. However, zones do shift and some Marines end up in zone (Promotion Zone) at the last minute. Our message to all Marines is ‘Be Ready’. Although Marines are doing much better than in previous years, there is still some work to do.



By GySgt Payne
Enlisted Career Counselor, HQMC

‘NEW’ CAREER BRIEF 301

When Marines talk to their monitors about assignments, they are often unsure about what assignment would be best for them when looking at the context of what is best for promotion. This is a hard question to answer because promotions are very competitive. The peer competition for each MOS is different every year.

To help Marines make career decisions, the Career Brief 301 was developed as part of the ‘Train the Trainer’ package, which is part of the five career progressive briefs that are available from the Career Counselors. The target audience for the 301 Brief is the E9/E8 population, because enlisted Marines normally go to them for advice. The main focus of Career Brief 301 is career progression, as well as considerations that affect SNCO careers.

There are no clear-cut answers as to what works best, but through years of counseling, Career Counselors have seen the records of very successful Marines and studied them for common factors. We review the records of all Marines selected from the below zone to try and

understand what made them so competitive over others with more observed time. We also review the records of Marines who were passed over several times before being selected, to understand the process of recovery.

In the Career Brief 301, we discuss nine career templates or paths that help to maximize potential and time. To fit the brief into a two-hour class, we have narrowed down the design patterns, eliminated the MOS factor, and reduced the scope to those seeking 1st Sgt or MSgt. Within these designs or templates, we take into consideration those who have completed a Special Duty Assignment and those who have not. Before we go any further, it is important to note that these templates are no substitute for performance; a design itself is not competitive. A good design matched with strong performance is what makes the difference.

In recent years the time in grade for each rank has been reduced—Marines are coming into zone faster. Therefore, it is important that Marines make sound decisions that affect their

career path. In years past it was possible to serve at a few duty stations, go out on a Special Duty Assignment, and then return to the MOS — all while serving within the same grade. Now Marines must start thinking about career choices or preferences earlier (e.g. desire to be a First Sergeant or Master Sergeant), and make sound choices to support those decisions.

An example could be a Marine seeking Master Sergeant in a non-feeder MOS—the career should be broken up to allow for diversity, while timing the billets to serve during the grade when the billet would allow for maximum impact. The Marine should complete a Special Duty Assignment (SDA) tour early, to allow for MOS progression later in the career. Upon completion of the SDA, independent duty would be a benefit, offering more demanding billets with additional duties. Afterwards, returning to the Primary MOS (PMOS) with seniority can set the Marine up for more senior leadership billets, something that may not have been possible earlier in the career. This would then allow for a B-Billet such as a staff assignment, which can round out a strong career.

Another example could be a Marine seeking the rank of First Sergeant—credible MOS time early on as a Sergeant allows the Marine to leave the operational forces for instructor duty within the PMOS before picking up Staff Sergeant. As an instructor, the Marine will be able to showcase both MOS skills and leadership abilities with the students. Provided both the MOS and instructor duties are strong, a Marine is then able to seek an SDA. This paves the way for more senior billets, strengthening the position for First Sergeant and not closing the door on Master Sergeant.

There are many variables that affect careers. The helpful information contained in Career Brief 301 is not found in any order, nor is it taught by anyone else. We believe this will be our flagship brief, shedding light on what is normally considered an obscure area. This brief is available to the E8/E9 population for the E8 Seminar, First Sergeant's course, MMEA Command Visits and separate counselor visits, upon request. To request a brief during the upcoming MMEA Command Visits, see your



Marines should think about their goals early and have a good road map or design to accomplish it

Career Retention Specialist to schedule a time. Contact MSgt Coon, Head MMEA-64 at DSN 278-9241, for details and coordination regarding all requests.

The following are the five current Career Briefs available upon request:

- ▶ **CAREER BRIEF 101** (E5 - E6) - Introduction to all aspects of career management, the SNCO Selection Board Process and the responsibility of the individual Marine
- ▶ **CAREER BRIEF 201** (E7) - Preparing Marines for selection boards and the audit of official records
- ▶ **CAREER BRIEF 301** (E8 - E9) - Career Progression and guiding SNCO Careers
- ▶ **CAREER BRIEF 401** (E8 - E9) - Remedial Promotions, PERB, BCNR Action and waivers
- ▶ **CAREER BRIEF 501** (E8, E9, RS, RO) - Impact of the Performance Evaluation System on Retention, Assignments and Promotion



By GySgt Payne
Enlisted Career Counselor, HQMC

MARINE'S ROLE IN THE PROMOTION PROCESS

The individual Marine's role in the promotion process carries far more impact than most Marines realize, and is an area often referred to in different Marine Corps Orders and documents. During an average week counseling Marines, the Career Counselors encounter far too many instances where Marines fail to place themselves in a position to enhance their opportunity for selection to the next grade by ensuring their record is accurate. Having heard the sentiments from various selection boards, the importance of Marines maintaining complete and accurate records cannot be overemphasized.

The primary order highlighting the importance of a Marine's role in the promotion process as it relates to the accuracy of their record is MCO P1610.7E, the Performance Evaluation System (PES). The Fitness Report Audit Program, chapter 9 of the PES, offers Marines the ability to request and audit their performance records. Making a record available to a Marine is one of the functions of the Manpower Management Support Branch (MMSB). MMSB will mail all Marines a copy of their Master Brief Sheets (MBS) upon request. When requesting your MBS by mail, ensure that you include your rank, full name, SSN, complete mailing address, and phone number. Mail your completed request to Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, (MMSB-12) 2008 Elliot Road, Quantico, VA, 22134-5030.

Aside from requesting your MBS by mail, you can order your MBS by e-mailing or faxing a request to MMSB. When requesting your MBS by e-mail the address is: MMSBOMPF@manpower.usmc.mil. By fax: DSN 278-5792, Commercial (703) 784-5792. If you

are requesting your MBS be mailed to an address other than your unit or home mailing address shown in MCTFS, your signature is required. Additionally, if you are in the Quantico area, you may get copies in person by visiting the Customer Service Window on the 3rd deck of Building 2008.

There are two areas on the MBS: the Header Data extracted from MCTFS/3270, and the Fitness Reports Listing. Marines should verify that any and all Fitness Reports are contained in the record via the Fitness Report listing. If something is missing, the earlier it is identified

the better, as it may take time to make corrections.

The next document emphasizing the importance of accurate and complete records (which again is the individual Marine's responsibility) is the Marine Corps Promotion Manual, Volume 2, Enlisted Promotions. It states that the Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) is the primary record used by the selection board for a comparative view of all

Marines competing to the next higher grade in a particular MOS or occupational field. Marines must actively pursue and bring to the attention of their command any discrepancies noted for corrective action prior to the convene date of a selection board in which they are eligible for selection.

As with the MBS, OMPFs may be ordered by e-mailing, writing or faxing a request to MMSB. Marines should order their OMPF at least once every 2 years to review them for accuracy. Marines should audit their OMPF at least 12 months prior to a board convene date. The



Colonel Kenneth J. Glueck, Jr. promotes Sgt. Gary Bass, from the 26th MEU to his current rank.

Career Counseling quarterly newsletter holds a wealth of information, varying in topics, which can assist Marines in their individual responsibility to manage their records and careers. Marines may access the Career Newsflash by going to the counseling website www.usmc.mil, then selecting the following links: Career-Marines-Career Counseling-Enlisted Counseling-Home Page-Internal Links-News Letter.

Always remember that the responsibility for the completeness of a Marine's record falls solely on the individual Marine's shoulders. It is imperative that Marines remain steadfast and informed regarding this responsibility, and educate others to do the same.



By GySgt Perkins
Enlisted Career Counselor, HQMC

A VIEW ON COUNSELING

In the past, the career counselors have published several articles associated with techniques of counseling. In this article we will discuss the importance, timing and benefits of performance counseling. The Performance counseling order (MCO 1610.12) has been under revision for quite some time. This order is still in effect until the revised edition or replacement references are published.

Having counseled thousands of Marines on their careers, it is evident that most Reporting Seniors and Reviewing Officers are referring to the MRO worksheet as a rough draft for the "Section A," and the only counseling that seems to take place is at the end of the reporting period when the Reporting Senior (RS) sits down with the Marine Reported On (MRO) and provides a copy of the fitness report. Marines need to know where they stand, to what level they are expected to perform or achieve, and be given the opportunity to improve. Performance counseling programs are needed in order to enhance performance, mentor subordinates and increase potential. Marines should take the initiative to seek performance counseling if the desire for self-improvement is sincere. As leaders, we should make the time to assist subordinates and provide guidance to improve performance.

The Marine Corps changes, and will continue to change in the future. The one thing that

remains constant is the fact that Marines continue to be evaluated on their performance and their future value to the Marine Corps. Performance evaluations along with individual records are used to determine who is best suited for promotions, key assignments and even retention.

We will look at the relationship between counseling, performance and promotions. In pursuit of the best-suited and most qualified Marines within a PMOS for promotion, promotion boards are guided by precepts. These precepts are used to find Marines within an MOS that meet the qualifications and have demonstrated or are capable of demonstrating the skills of the next higher grade.

Marines considered for assignments to key or highly visible billets will undergo either an informal or formal review. The individual records will be screened to find the Marine that is best suited amongst those considered for the assignment in question.

Counseling may not have a big influence on retention as career Marines do not compete for boat-spaces. However, the Marine's individual record needs to reflect that the Marine is

within Marine Corps retention standards. A detailed review of the individual's record will be conducted on those Marines who had adverse material on their current contract. During this detailed review, an evaluation of the Marine's

Success is not guaranteed; a Marine is always competing for promotion with their peers. Being proactive in performance counseling will enable the Marine to excel.

performance before the incident, how the Marine took responsibility for his/her actions, and how the Marine is showing recovery from the incident through performance after the incident will be considered. Recommendations from the Commanding Officer, Reporting Seniors, Reviewing Officers and anyone else who has first hand knowledge of the situation will be reviewed. The purpose of this process is to determine the Marine's future value to the Marine Corps. Marines should seek counseling from their leaders to obtain guidance and look for opportunities for recovery.

Now let's discuss counseling and its relation to performance and evaluation. The Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) has directed the use of the MRO worksheet. It is an invaluable tool used for counseling, developing billet descriptions, and documenting the accomplishments during a reporting period.

The Career Counselors have come to the conclusion that the MRO worksheet is the link between counseling and evaluations. The Marine should make three copies of the MRO worksheet. Provide one copy to the Reporting Senior, and the second copy to the Reviewing Officer, along with the Marine's biography. This allows the RO to know who you are and what you are responsible for in the unit. The Marine should retain the last copy of the MRO worksheet and refer to it from time to time to ensure their focus remains on what is expected and on mission priorities.

Marines should seek counseling on their performance a minimum of every six months, or when deemed necessary. The question is: Who determines when a performance counseling is necessary? If the RS feels the Marine is not performing to the discussed expectations/standards, a

performance counseling will inform the Marine of their current status, as well as guidance for improvement. Every Marine should actively seek guidance to improve their level of performance and demonstrate the leadership principle of "Know yourself and seek self improvement." Marines need to be proactive in performance counseling. From the beginning to the end of a reporting period, counseling is continuous.

The fitness report is not a counseling tool, according to the PES. Counseling a Marine at the end of a reporting period is too late and does not give the Marine the opportunity to improve on any areas of performance before the evaluation is complete. Counseling then becomes reactive, as there is nothing that can be done about that evaluation. Under the direction of CMC, performance counseling should start within the first 15 days of a reporting period. During this initial counseling, both the RS and MRO are encouraged to discuss billet description, expectations, standards and any collateral duties assigned during the upcoming reporting period. The MRO will be responsible for demonstrating and accomplishing what was discussed. The RS is responsible for evaluating the Marine's performance. This evaluation should reflect the Marine's performance of assigned duties, responsibilities against an understood set of requirements, individual capacity, and professional character, based on Marine Corps Standards (MCO 1610.7E, CHAP 1, PAR, 1003). The billet accomplishments should reflect to what degree did the Marine accomplished the assigned duties during the reporting period, and what effects the Marine's accomplishments had on the unit's overall mission.

Success is not guaranteed; Marines are always competing for promotion

with their peers. Being proactive in performance counseling will allow Marines to know how they are performing, set objectives for improvement, and allow for a credible and accurate recording of the history of an individual's performance and achievements.



At the end of the initial counseling session the Marine should know what is expected during the reporting period, standards that need to be met, priorities and the main effort, how the Marine can expect to know how they are performing, and when the next counseling session will occur. Most Marines fail to be proactive in performance counseling after the initial counseling.

Career Counselors recommend that the next counseling session occur sixty days later, time permitting. In the second session, the focus should be ensuring the Marine is on track, verifying accomplishments, setting new goals for progression, and offering guidance for improvements. As units are obligated to operations, Marines may be assigned tasks that relate to upcoming operations. Once the operation is over, a Marine's involvement should be documented. The Marine should know how they did during the operation.

Ninety days into the reporting period calls for the third counseling session. By now, the RS and the MRO should have an established counseling routine, and should once again discuss accomplishments, progression, new duties/tasks, and guidance for improvements. At a minimum, Marines should be counseled every six months.

Counseling leads to mentoring Marines. Mentorship should be the responsibility of all leaders. Knowing the leadership traits, principles and objectives is not enough. The leadership characteristics need to be practiced. Remember to know your Marines and look out for their welfare. Sergeants and above are evaluated on leading, developing and ensuring the well being of subordinates.

The Marine Corps spends a lot of time and money in an effort to prepare Marines for success on the battlefield. This is time and money well spent and it serves as a leader's first priority (mission accomplishment). There are three things that pertain to a Marine's career: promotions, assignments and retention. A question leaders should ask themselves is; "What am I doing that is preparing my Marines for success in their careers?" This is troop welfare, which should be the leader's second priority. A leader has the responsibility to take care of the Marine Corps, its Marines, their families and careers.



*By GySgt Cabral
Enlisted Career Counselor, HQMC*

SPECIAL DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

A successful Special Duty Assignment could be the best thing for a Marine's career. An article in the Career Newsflash Volume 2, Issue 1 discussed Special Duty Assignments (SDAs), their importance, and how to decide when is the best time to serve on a Special Duty Assignment. To restate, an SDA is a B-billet in one of the following areas: Recruiter (8411), Drill Instructor (8511), Marine Security Guard (8151), and Marine Security Forces (8152). There is a new addition to the SDAs—Marine Combat Instructor (8513). This billet was established as an SDA in October 2002 (see ALMAR 056/02). The Marine Combat Training Battalion (MCTB) billet is essential in teaching basic infantry skills to entry-level Marines. The standard tour of duty within this billet is 36 months, and Marines serve at MCTB East or West. Corporals through Gunnery Sergeants are

eligible, and the billet rates special duty pay. As with all of the SDAs, other factors are considered in determining eligibility.

Special Duty Assignments can be challenging and may serve as a tool for career enhancement upon successful completion. Each tour can be rewarding and is, as with every billet, entirely what the Marine makes of it. One key to succeeding and enjoying the time served in an SDA would be to closely examine the different SDA billets available, and determine which billet matches closest with a Marine's abilities. In addition, determining when to serve in an SDA billet will assist Marines in remaining proactive at managing their careers. Each assignment is available to any MOS. However, there are some MOS's which will not release a Marine for a Special Duty Assignment at the exact time they want to serve. The needs of the Marine Corps

may deem it necessary to keep a Marine within their primary MOS (PMOS). The Career Counselors recommend talking with the PMOS monitor to find out what billets are available and when. There are also situations where it would be wiser to remain in the PMOS to establish MOS credibility for a year or more before seeking an SDA due to competition for promotion. Marines should consider when they may be in-zone for selection to the next grade at the time they are considering an SDA. Again, remaining proactive with career decisions will allow Marines to best manage their career paths and ensure success.



SPECIAL DUTY ASSIGNMENTS CAN BE CHALLENGING AND MAY SERVE AS A TOOL FOR CAREER ENHANCEMENT

A common belief among Marines is that serving on a successful SDA tour is the best way to get a "quick fix" for below average performance or adverse material on their contract or military record. SDAs are not a quick fix, but they may enhance a Marine's overall record and assist in competition for promotion selection. As with any adverse material, Marines need to establish strong performance in their

past areas of weakness in order to show recovery from incidents (Career Newsflash Volume 2, Issue 1). A successful SDA tour may be a part of this, but is in no way the only requirement.

Deciding to take up the challenge of an SDA is a strong move towards building a Marine's career. SDA tours have been deemed "outside the comfort zone," and each duty offers its own mental and physical challenges. If a Marine is accepted for one of these billets, they can be sure the experience will be a demanding one. Marines can ensure they are ready for the challenge by contacting the Career Counselors to review their record, speaking with the command Career Retention Specialist/Career Planner about SDA assignments and eligibility, and call

the PMOS monitor to find out when it would be best to serve in an SDA.



By MSgt Coon
Head, Enlisted Career Counseling Unit

UPDATE ON PME

Professional Military Education (PME) affects Marines through promotion, education, and leadership development. The Marine Corps Institute (MCI) has been working with the EPME Staff at the Marine Corps University to revise the Staff Non-Commissioned Officer Advanced Distance Education Program (SNCOADEP), also known as the 7200 series. This new

development has resulted in the discontinuation of the 7200 program and the release of the improved SNCOADEP, or 8200 series.

If a student was enrolled in the 7200, they have until 22 June 2005 to complete the course. If they do not complete it by the date above, they will automatically be disenrolled according to MARADMIN 260/03. All GySgts who desire

promotion to MSgt or 1stSgt during the FY2004 Selection Board must complete either the 7400 or the 8200 series in order to satisfy distance education PME requirements according to the Promotions Branch. Look for this change to be incorporated as part of change 2 of the Promotion Manual. Students will have 5 years from the date of enrollment to complete the respective program. If a student decides to drop out of the 7200 or 7400 series and enroll in the 8200, they will not receive credit for the lessons already completed.

It is also important to note another change concerning PME that should be reiterated. In May 2001, MARADMIN 209/01 was released announcing the Amphibious Warfare School (AWS) Phase 1 8500 series would be replaced with the new 8510. Effective 1 June 2003, all students actively enrolled in the old 8500 AWS program were administratively disenrolled. If any of your Marines were among those disenrolled and still desire to complete the required PME program, the following options are available:

If the student has completed the 8501 course, send MCI a copy of the completion certificate with a cover letter, and credit will be given for course 8511 of the new AWS program. However, the student is still required to complete courses 8512 and 8513 in order to finish the new program.

If the student has completed the work for 8502 but it was not received at MCI before the cut-off date of 1 June 2003, send MCI the exam with a cover letter requesting credit for course 8512. If the student passes the exam, credit will be given for course 8512, and the student will still be required to complete courses 8511 and 8513 to complete the AWS program.

Although the AWSDEP is not required for SNCO promotions, it does add to the level of competitiveness for each Marine. However, to even be considered eligible for promotion the

m i n i m u m requirements must be met. GySgts looking to be promoted to MSgt must complete the SNCOADEP 7200 series and Warfighting Distance Education Program 7400, or the new 8200. In addition, those GySgts desiring promotion to 1stSgt must attend the SNCO Advanced Resident Course. SSgts looking to be promoted to GySgt must complete the

SNCO Distance Education Program 7100 series, and Sgts looking to be promoted to SSgt must complete the Sergeant Distance Education Program 8010 series or one of the equivalent courses. Because SNCO promotions are highly competitive, Marines should be encouraged to seek and complete additional PME. The minimum requirements are exactly that, THE MINIMUM!

All GySgts who desire promotion to MSgt or 1stSgt during the FY2004 Selection Board must complete either the 7400 or the 8200 series



By GySgt Fuller
Enlisted Career Counselor, HQMC

Note

MCBul 5314 has been posted as Maradmin 440/03 announcing the Enlisted Career Force Controls Program.

Enlisted Marines should familiarize themselves with this program as it plays a significant role in careers when seen in terms of Service Limits, Promotion Tempos and Promotion Opportunity.

This program provides balance to the inventory of Marines by controlling both retention and promotion.



MMEA-64

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ENLISTED CAREER

COUNSELING

We have not decided all the topics for the next newsletter and would like to hear from you regarding what you want to know more about. Please send us your suggestions by email.

MMEA ROADSHOW SCHEDULE

As fiscal year 2004 is fast approaching, so is the annual Enlisted Assignments Branch (MMEA) command visits. Starting in October, MMEA will be touring all major commands to provide manpower support. Marines will have the opportunity to speak to their Monitors on assignment issues, work with their Unit Career Retention Specialists (CRS) and the Retention Section (MMEA-6) towards retention requests, to include on-the-spot reenlistments for those who are eligible. Additionally, the Enlisted Career Counselors will provide individual career counseling and briefs to career Marines and senior leadership on career issues.

It is the responsibility of the individual Marine to order their Official Military Personnel File (now

on CD ROM) and Master Brief Sheet from MMSB. Since our travel season is rapidly approaching, do not procrastinate. Order your records now as it is easier than ever.

Refer to the current MMEA schedule below for information on when we will be arriving at your command. For a more detailed schedule, please see your Career Retention Specialist for the latest updates. The counselors will also provide individual career counseling following the scheduled briefs. Since career counseling is based on a review of the Marines official records, it is both necessary and imperative for any active duty career Marine in the rank of Sergeant and above seeking counseling to have a fresh copy of their official records with them when seeing a Counselor



MMEA TRIP SCHEDULE

MARFORLANT	15 – 16 October, 2003
II MEF/EAST COAST	26 October – 5 November, 2003
PENSACOLA	18 – 20 November, 2003
I MEF/WEST COAST	1 – 12 December, 2003
PAC/III MEF	6 – 21 January, 2004

Comments and suggestions regarding this newsletter to GySgt Payne at payneas@manpower.usmc.mil