



US Navy Civil Engineer Corps Collegiate Corner



October 2023

CEC Selectees,

As we move through October, we hope all is going well with your coursework and preparation for OCS. For those who have exams, projects, presentations, etc., we wish you the best as you power through these challenges. For those attending OCS in the coming weeks/months, we encourage you stay engaged with your recruiters and fellow collegiates. Doing so will help you succeed in Rhode Island and beyond. For all, we encourage you to continue to represent the Navy and CEC well in your communities.

As you prepare for OCS, please remember to go above and beyond with your physical fitness goals and to follow the exercise techniques/forms outlined in the Navy PRT Guide. Technique is **heavily** enforced at OCS. Also, be careful of any info on OCS provided by non-Navy sources.

As always, the CEC Accessions Team is here to support you with any questions or comments you may have along the way. Feel free to reach out!

- CEC Accessions Team

LEADERSHIP TOPIC Mission Command

In order to achieve our nation’s strategic goals, our military leaders at every level, including newly-commissioned officers, practice mission command. Future officers can benefit greatly from learning about this concept early and revisiting it often.

What is mission command?

Mission command is a system in which leaders develop expectations for their subordinates based on centralized intent and higher-level goals, then trust subordinates to control all execution (means, methods, adjustments, and time-critical decisions) with full autonomy. In other words, centralized goals identify the force’s “why,” tasks identify the “who, what, when, and where,” and decentralized execution allows subordinates to independently navigate the “how” and “what if.”

Why is it important?

Mission command cultivates an innovative force that can quickly and independently find the best ways to meet any centralized objectives. It does this in two steps. First, it acknowledges that each leader’s operating environment is uniquely complex, constantly evolving, and only best understood by the leader most exposed to it. Second, it encourages those leaders to take initiative by independently planning, deciding, and adjusting course based on their uniquely fluid context – all while remaining focused on the centralized intent and desired end-state established by superior leaders. Through this blend of autonomy and results-based expectations, a force can relentlessly progress towards its objectives with uninterrupted tempo and real-time adaptations – even when leaders and subordinates don’t have the luxury of regular communication.



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How does it work?

According to joint U.S. military doctrine, effective mission command has three minimum prerequisites: Understanding, Intent, and Trust.

Before crafting any intent or missions, all leaders must first **understand** the environment in which they operate and confirm that their subordinates also understand the operating environment. All service members must also routinely test their understanding and adjust it as needed.

Commanders must then provide their **intent** to subordinates and verify their subordinates' receipt and understanding. **Commander's Intent** is crucial to any force's mission accomplishment. It is a commander's **succinct, simple, yet detailed** way to provide the "why" that will inspire future missions/tasks. Below is Naval Construction Group ONE's commander's intent. NCG-1 is responsible for three battalions of Seabees that routinely deploy to the Pacific theater.

"Organize, Man, Train, Equip, Deploy and Sustain Pacific Fleet Naval Construction Forces in order to provide task-tailored, adaptable, and combat effective engineer forces ready to support Combatant and/or Component Commanders across the full spectrum of military operations."

From this intent, NCG-1's personnel can independently generate and execute any missions and tasks daily without needing to consult their commander. The intent provides expectations, and subordinates have the freedom to find and exploit any opportunities to meet those expectations.

Superiors and subordinates at all levels must also have **mutual trust**. Trust is earned by both parties, and once established, it provides a foundation from which mission command can flourish.

How is mission command relevant to me?

Leaders at all levels use mission command. When a subordinate leader receives its mission, they begin devising their plan of execution, which may include tasking for their own subordinates. To accompany the new tasking, these leaders provide their intent and expectations. As the tasking cascades down, missions become more specific, but their impacts are still crucial to meeting commanders' intent and the desired end-state. The following logistics proverb embodies this:

"For want of a nail, the (horse)shoe was lost. For want of a shoe, the horse was lost. For want of a horse, the rider was lost. For want of a rider, the battle was lost. For want of a battle, the kingdom was lost. And all for the want of a horseshoe's nail"

Newly-commissioned junior officers are expected to **understand** their operating environment, their commander's **intent**, the **purpose** of each task they receive, and the desired **end-state** they must achieve. They must understand their unit's **capabilities** and **limitations** in every possible context, and must **plan** their mission accordingly. They must also be ready to **adjust** their plan based on any changing conditions. This was true for junior officers responsible for horses' readiness in past wars, and it still applies to those responsible for the Navy's shore infrastructure today.



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Additional resources on mission command:

The Joint Chiefs of Staff initial philosophy on mission command:

<https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/missioncommandwhitepaper2012.pdf>

Additional commentary and updates from the Joint Chiefs of Staff on mission command:

https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/fp/missioncommand_fp_2nd_ed.pdf?ver=2020-01-13-083451-207

Criticism on mission command – and why a newer alternative (flexive command) may be more effective:

https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-86/jfq-86_94-100_Hill-Niemi.pdf

Naval Construction Group ONE (NCG-1) homepage:

<https://www.necc.usff.navy.mil/Organization/Operational-Forces/SEABEES/NCG-1/Commanders-Intent/>

Career Focus Retirement and Long-Term Financial Planning

Past Collegiate Corners have highlighted the importance of financial literacy for yourself and your subordinates. This month, we will continue this tradition and briefly discuss how to serve our future selves by using Navy-provided tools aimed towards long-term financial stability.

Navy retirement tools

The two most common Navy-provided tools that can help service members pursue long-term financial stability are the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and the military pension.

TSP – Basic info

- The TSP is the U.S. government’s version of a 401k plan. Like a 401k plan, you can contribute a percentage of your **base pay** towards a tax-advantaged retirement account.
- You cannot draw funds from this account without a heavy tax penalty until you have reached a pre-determined retirement age.
- The TSP offers “traditional” and “Roth” methods of contribution
 - o In a traditional method, you don’t pay taxes on the base pay you contribute until you can begin drawing funds from your account. When you begin drawing funds, you pay taxes at a rate based on your income at that time.
 - o In the Roth method, you pay taxes on the base pay you contribute each year. Tax rates are based on your annual income for that specific year. In exchange, you will not pay taxes for these contributions when you draw funds from your account later.
- Under the Blended Retirement System (the default retirement system for service members), The U.S. government will automatically send 1% of your base pay to a TSP plan of your choice. If you independently contribute beyond 1% of your base pay to the TSP, the government will match up to 5% of your base pay.



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TSP – Basic info (cont.)

- When you return to civilian life, you can transfer your TSP savings to a qualifying 401k plan. If you transition to a federal civilian job, you will simply retain your holdings in the TSP, as the TSP is available to federal government civilian workers as well.
- As of 2023, you can contribute up to \$22,500 into your TSP each year
- The TSP offers a variety of funds to send your contributions to. These funds are similar to those offered in 401k plans, and each has its own advantages and risks.

Military pension

Service members who serve for 20 years can retire and receive a military pension. This pension sends a monthly payment with a value determined by the number of years in service

For collegiates: Your 20-year “clock” began when you started your collegiate enlistment.

Individual Retirement Account/Arrangement (IRA)

An IRA is a tax-advantaged account similar to a 401k. This is not Navy-sponsored, but rather controlled individually. As of 2023, the annual contribution limit is \$6,500. There is no matching in an IRA, but many IRAs offer a wide variety of destinations to send contributions to.

When should I start planning for retirement and long-term financial stability?

It’s important to develop good financial literacy prior to making major financial decisions that could affect your future. However, the sooner you develop that literacy and begin making decisions, the better. This is because many long-term financial moves involve compounding interest, which can result in exponential growth of funds and account balances. Therefore, starting as soon as possible is the surest way that you can maximize your use of exponential growth.

Help your future self out and develop your financial literacy now!

Links to resources for long-term financial planning:

TSP homepage:

<https://www.tsp.gov/>

TSP expanded information:

<https://www.tsp.gov/tsp-basics/>

Blended Retirement System Details:

<https://militarypay.defense.gov/blendedretirement/>

Internal Revenue Service information on IRAs

<https://www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/individual-retirement-arrangements-iras>

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission Compound Interest Calculator:

<https://www.investor.gov/financial-tools-calculators/calculators/compound-interest-calculator>

MyPay:

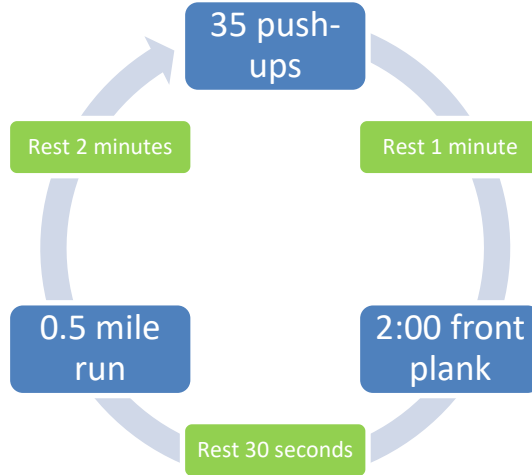
<https://mypay.dfas.mil/#/>



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FITNESS CHALLENGE: OCTOBER

3 days per week, complete the following circuit three times:



Navy Physical Readiness Program Guides:

<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/Culture-Resilience/Physical-Readiness/Guides/>

Navy PRT Guide, which has instructions on the correct form for push-ups and planks. Instructors at OCS heavily enforce proper form during all exercises:

https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Portals/55/Support/Culture%20Resilience/Physical/Guide_5-Physical_Readiness_Test_PRT_JAN_2023.pdf?ver=OlmOLoZTfCA641JUkAnIaw%3d%3d

Did you know you could increase your collegiate pay?

- If you refer a candidate for a Navy collegiate officer program, and that candidate gets selected, you could increase your pay by one grade (maximum of E-5 pay)
- One great way to do this is to facilitate CEC outreach on your campus. Contact your Accessions Officer if you'd like to set up an outreach event to introduce your peers, student organizations, or faculty to the CEC

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