



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
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OPNAVINST 1534.1E
N42
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OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1534.1E

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: STRATEGIC SEALIFT OFFICER PROGRAM

Ref: (a) 46 U.S.C §51101, §51301, §51501, §51701
(b) NSTC M-1533.2B
(c) BUPERSINST 1001.39F

Encl: (1) Strategic Sealift Officer Program Participation

1. Purpose

a. To issue policy and assign responsibilities for the organization, administration, and training of commissioned officers in the Strategic Sealift Officer Program (SSOP).

b. This revision removes the Maritime Administration (MARAD) from the responsibilities paragraph and updates the SSOP requirements as an enclosure. This instruction is a complete revision and should be reviewed in its entirety.

2. Cancellation. OPNAVINST 1534.ID.

3. Scope and Applicability. This instruction applies to all strategic sealift officers (SSO).

4. Background. The U.S. Merchant Marine is an essential component of national defense and provides the primary sealift capability necessary to meet national defense requirements. Experience gained during previous conflicts has emphasized the importance of Navy coordination with all segments of the maritime industry. In order to facilitate these integrated operations, the Department of the Navy established, in support of reference (a), the Merchant Marine Reserve U.S. Naval Reserve Program. This program is now called the SSOP. The SSOP supports national defense sealift requirements and capabilities. The SSOP provides the opportunity for Navy officers to obtain a valid U.S. merchant mariner's license and subject matter expertise in sealift, maritime operations, and logistics necessary to fulfill many of the Navy's combat support missions. Enclosure (1) provides policy on eligibility, participation, designation, and warfare qualification.

5. Responsibilities

a. Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Fleet Readiness and Logistics (CNO N4)

- (1) Serve as SSOP sponsor.
- (2) Establish a 1665 (special duty officer – SSO, Navy Reserve) designated active duty recall billet as primary action officer.
- (3) Provide policy and planning direction.
- (4) Validate SSO billet requirements.
- (5) Support personnel and logistic requirements.
- (6) Coordinate with Commander, Military Sealift Command (COMSC); Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command (COMNAVRESFORCOM); and Commander, Navy Personnel Command on policy for SSO retention.
- (7) Coordinate with COMNAVRESFORCOM to establish the Strategic Sealift Readiness Group (SSRG) training plan.

b. COMSC

- (1) Serve as flag sponsor for the SSOP.
- (2) Establish a 1665 designated active duty recall billet as primary action officer.
- (3) Serve as the supported command for the SSRG.
- (4) Establish strategic sealift units to support SSRG program compliance.
- (5) Assist CNO N4, COMNAVRESFORCOM, and other commands, as appropriate, in support of the management and administration of the SSOP.
- (6) Provide annual guidance to COMNAVRESFORCOM on which sealift commands require SSO support.
- (7) Issue SSO policy and directives on the management of billets, promotion rates, accession plans, and qualifications for promotion and retention.
- (8) Establish technical training requirements for the strategic sealift units, in coordination with CNO N4.

(9) Establish the SSRG training plan in coordination with CNO N4, COMNAVRESFORCOM, and MARAD.

(10) Adjudicate eligibility waivers.

(11) Establish and maintain an SSO executive steering committee.

(12) Coordinate with COMNAVRESFORCOM to identify SSRG members to fill mobilization requirements.

c. Navy Education Training Command's Naval Service Training Command (NSTC)

(1) Maintain a department of naval science at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) and at each approved State maritime academy.

(2) Administer and align the Strategic Sealift Midshipman Program (SSMP) with the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps program.

(3) Process applications and appointments for the SSMP and maintain administrative control of all midshipmen.

(4) Process commission applications for all graduating strategic sealift midshipmen and assist with obtaining secret clearances.

(5) Coordinate with Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel Training and Education (CNO N1) and CNO N4 to ensure that the Navy Reserve accession plan adequately resources the appropriate number of accessions from the USMMA and the approved State maritime academies participating in the SSMP.

(6) Provide midshipman disenrollment reports to MARAD.

(7) Provide CNO N4, COMSC, and COMNAVRESFORCOM with an annual summary that provides:

(a) number of graduates with United States Coast Guard (USCG) merchant mariner credential (deck or engine);

(b) number of midshipmen in pipeline by class year, and broken down by intended USCG merchant mariner credential with mate or engineer officer endorsement;

(c) number of students at each school, including how many are in a merchant mariner credential track, not in training to join the SSOP;

(d) recruiting and mentoring efforts, and number of days and other data on each strategic sealift commissioned officer's interaction with midshipmen and prospective strategic sealift midshipmen; and

(e) suggestions for training improvement.

(8) Enter all strategic sealift midshipmen into the officer program management information system.

(9) Notify CNO N4, COMSC, and COMNAVRESFORCOM when a change in staff occurs that may affect the administration and leadership of the SSMP.

(10) Notify CNO N4, COMSC, and COMNAVRESFORCOM when there is a revision to reference (b) that may affect the administration of the SSMP, allowing for appropriate time to submit recommendations.

(11) Execute guidance from CNO N4 that outlines SSMP requirements.

d. COMNAVRESFORCOM

(1) Serve as SSOP manager.

(2) Establish 1665 designated active duty recall billets as action officers.

(3) Serve as the single point of contact for SSOs in the SSRG.

(4) Establish SSRG training plan in coordination with CNO N4 and COMSC.

(5) Establish SSRG officer training requirements to meet the objectives of the SSOP.

(6) Monitor program training requirements for the processing of active duty for training (ADT) applications, uniform allowance claims, ADT waivers, and inactive duty for training orders.

(7) Assign members of the SSRG to meet special requirements.

(8) Monitor the performance of program members and report those officers who are no longer eligible for, or in compliance with, Navy Personnel Command, Reserve Officer Status (PERS-911) and MARAD.

(9) Ensure good order and discipline of all officers in the SSOP. Offenses will be addressed pursuant to the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

(10) Assist Commander, Navy Recruiting Command (COMNAVCRUITCOM) and Bureau of Naval Personnel Reserve, Community Manager (BUPERS-318) with meeting Selected Reserve (SELRES) placement requirements outlined in the officer accession plan for each fiscal year, to include endorsing all SSOs requesting SELRES affiliation.

(11) Serve as security manager for the SSRG as required.

(12) Maintain service and medical records for SSRG officers.

(13) Coordinate with COMSC to identify SSRG members that will fill mobilization requirements.

e. COMNAVCRUITCOM

(1) Screen and process direct commission applications for appointment to the SSOP.

(2) Process all SSO accession requests for affiliation into the SELRES, based on recruiting goals and coordination with COMNAVRESFORCOM.

(3) Ensure all direct commission or SELRES applicants meet the maritime requirements per enclosure (1).

(4) Verify all accessions into the SSOP, or SSO accessions into the SELRES, are approved by COMNAVRESFORCOM.

f. Navy Personnel Command

(1) Staff the departments of naval science at USMMA and approved State maritime academies with Active Component and Reserve Component members.

(2) Separate or take administrative action against strategic sealift midshipmen who fail to fulfill the requirements outlined in reference (a).

(3) Select those graduates of USMMA and approved State maritime academies who desire to exercise the active duty option.

(4) Monitor SSOs for Reserve status, designator changes, and attrition under current laws and directives.

(5) Separate or take other action against, per reference (a), any SSO who fails to meet the participation requirements outlined in enclosures (1) pursuant to the recommendation of COMNAVRESFORCOM and approval by CNO N4.

(6) Assign additional qualification designators (AQD) and Navy officer billet classification codes to SSOs as endorsed by COMNAVRESFORCOM based on credential level, qualification, or experience, per reference (c).

g. Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

(1) Review physical examinations conducted by Department of Defense (DoD) Medical Examination Review Board for program applicants who do not meet the physical standards for appointment and provide waiver recommendations for entry into the SSOP.

(2) Review commission physical examinations for all SSMP and report on the physical qualifications or waiver recommendations for commission, per surface unrestricted line officer requirements.

6. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, must be managed per Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Manual 5210.1 of January 2012.

7. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, Strategic Mobility and Combat Logistics Division (OPNAV N42) will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of its issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, DoD, SECNAV, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 5 years, unless revised or cancelled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 5-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the need for cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1 of May 2016.

8. Forms. NAVPERS 1200/2 Navy Reserve Qualification Questionnaire is available for download from Naval Forms OnLine at <https://navalforms.documentservices.dla.mil/web/public/home> and from the Navy Personnel Command Forms Reference Library at <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/reference/forms/NAVPERS/Pages/default.aspx>.



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Releasability and distribution:

This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via Department of the Navy Issuances Web site, <http://doni.documentservices.dla.mil>

STRATEGIC SEALIFT OFFICER PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

1. Organization. The SSOP is composed of three categories as per subparagraphs 1a through 1c.

a. SELRES. SSOs who drill for pay, per reference (c).

b. Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). IRR SSOs are assigned to the SSRG or to a voluntary training unit (VTU). The SSRG is comprised of naval officers licensed as U.S. Merchant Mariners who are qualified to operate merchant ships as naval auxiliaries and provide officer crewing for ships in MARAD's Ready Reserve Force and COMSC's Surge Sealift Fleet. SSRG's primary responsibility will be COMSC tasking. SSRG SSOs can be mobilized to the Ready Reserve Force ships, per the 23 January 2003 memorandum of agreement between Department of the Navy and MARAD.

c. SSMP. The SSMP is an education and training program conducted by the departments of naval science at the USMMA and approved State maritime academies. These programs are designed to qualify participants for commissioned service. Program administration, eligibility, participation requirements, and training are directed by NSTC, per reference (b).

2. Eligibility

a. Merchant Mariner Credential Requirements for all SSOs. Both SELRES and IRR SSOs will maintain an active unlimited tonnage upon oceans and unlimited horsepower, deck, or engineering USCG merchant mariner credential. In addition, SSRG officers must maintain a standards of training, certification, and watchkeeping (STCW) endorsement. Merchant mariner credentials within the 1-year grace period for renewal or those that are renewed as "certificate of continuity" are not considered valid or active for the SSOP. Officers with credentials that have expired or have renewed for "certificate of continuity" must have an approved waiver by COMSC for a period not greater than 1 year from the expiration of the USCG merchant mariner credential, or for a period as determined necessary by COMNAVRESFORCOM to renew the USCG merchant mariner credential. This waiver may be granted only once in an officer's career.

b. SSRG. SSRG SSOs must meet one of the requirements listed in subparagraphs 2b(1) through 2b(5).

(1) Be serving under the terms of the initial Military Service obligation per OPNAVINST 1000.26B or other Navy obligations per reference (a).

(2) Hold an unlimited tonnage second mate or unlimited horsepower second assistant engineer merchant mariner credential, or higher.

(3) Be employed as an instructor at a State maritime academy, or in a USCG approved school of navigation or marine engineering.

(4) Be employed with a U.S. Government agency concerned with civilian or military shipping.

(5) Be actively employed in a maritime-related occupation (e.g., terminal manager, vessel manager, petroleum surveyor, ship repair supervisor).

c. Compliance. Failure to maintain eligibility requirements may result in administrative action.

3. Eligibility Waivers. Waivers will be submitted by the individual to COMNAVRESFORCOM for adjudication. COMNAVRESFORCOM will then submit the recommendation to COMSC for final disposition. Appeals of waiver determinations will be adjudicated by CNO N4 upon submission of a written request submitted via COMSC and COMNAVRESFORCOM.

4. Participation. Minimum participation requirements for retention in the SSOP are based on the status of the officer.

a. SELRES and VTU. SSOs in the SELRES and VTU must maintain participation requirements per reference (c).

b. SSRG

(1) Required

(a) Complete 2 weeks of ADT each fiscal year unless waived by COMNAVRESFORCOM.

(b) Submit a complete NAVPERS 1200/2 Navy Reserve Qualification Questionnaire each fiscal year to COMNAVRESFORCOM.

(c) Complete one muster coordinated through a regional strategic sealift each fiscal year unless waived by COMNAVRESFORCOM.

(d) Verify civilian employment information, contact information, and dependency data annually in Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS) and within 180 days of any active duty period.

(e) Complete a periodic health assessment annually per RESPERS M-1001.5, section 1534-010 (NOTAL).

(f) Complete a physical fitness assessment annually.

(g) Answer all official Navy correspondence and keep the Navy informed of all address and contact changes.

(h) Notify COMNAVRESFORCOM whenever there is a change in physical condition that may interfere with performance of Reserve obligations.

(2) Options for Voluntary Participation

(a) Complete approved correspondence courses.

(b) Drill voluntarily with a Navy Reserve unit under non-pay inactive duty for training orders issued by COMNAVRESFORCOM. Assignment will be made with concurrence of the Navy operational support center and the Reserve unit commanding officer.

(c) Perform professional training as authorized by COMNAVRESFORCOM per reference (c).

(d) Perform pay and non-pay ADT under orders issued by COMNAVRESFORCOM. Assignment will be made with the concurrence of the Navy activity.

(e) Funeral honors drill.

5. Credit for Extended Sea Service. SSOs who maintain afloat engineering and ship handling experience on commercial ships provide critical skills for the SSOP, especially those with advanced level USCG unlimited tonnage and horsepower deck or engineering merchant mariner credentials. Since sailing SSOs have time and geographical constraints that may preclude them from performing options for voluntary participation, COMNAVRESFORCOM may credit compliant SSRG officers with 35 points for sea service provided that:

a. over 180 cumulative days at sea were obtained in the previous year;

b. days at sea were documented by USCG discharge papers or letter of sea service from COMSC (please note: time employed aboard Navy Ready Reserve Force ships, even in reduced operating status, count as sea days; credit for sea service does not waive SSOs from performing the required 2 weeks of ADT or other requirements, unless granted a written waiver by COMNAVRESFORCOM); and

c. awarding of points for extended sea time is not authorized unless the officer is in compliance with all other SSOP requirements (please note: the awarding of points for extended sea service commenced from 1 January 2006 and is not retroactive from this date).

6. Credit for Harbor Pilots. SSOs that are employed as harbor pilots obtain ship handling experience on commercial vessels provide the SSOP with officers possessing critical unlimited tonnage pilotage skills. Harbor pilots do not obtain discharges, but serve onboard ships during times of pilotage. COMNAVRESFORCOM may credit harbor pilots with up to 20 retirement points provided that:

- a. the harbor pilot is compliant with all other SSOP requirements;
- b. the officer is a current member of a recognized pilot organization and an active member of the SSRG;
- c. pilotage for any of the time is obtained onboard an unlimited tonnage vessel; and be determined by days on board or trips completed while piloting a vessel, as documented by the member and verified by COMNAVRESFORCOM;
- d. standby time will not count;
- e. 20 points per anniversary year may be issued for qualifying service of at least 100 days or 180 trips completed;
- f. each request for pilotage retirement points is accompanied by a letter from the pilot organization stating that the individual is a member in good standing and a copy of the State issued license or certification is provided, as applicable; and
- g. final determination as to the amount of time to be recognized per each request for pilotage will be made by COMNAVRESFORCOM.

7. Non-Participation

- a. SSOs participating under a Military Service obligation who are not a satisfactory participant, or whose merchant mariner credential has expired will be reported to MARAD and subject to administration action, per SECNAVINST 1920.6C.
- b. SSOs participating under voluntary service agreements who are not a satisfactory participant, or whose merchant mariner credential has expired, will be identified by the SSOP manager for administrative action, per SECNAVINST 1920.6C.

8. Designation and Warfare Insignia

- a. AQD Codes. SSOs will be commissioned with a special duty restricted line designator of 1665 SSO. AQD codes indicate warfare qualification and USCG merchant mariner credential officer endorsements within the SSO designator.

b. SSO Warfare Insignia and Qualification. The SSO warfare qualification recognizes the demonstrated professional expertise of a select group of personnel trained in strategic sealift operations. Only those officers who have completed the requirements outlined in subparagraph 8c will be eligible for designation as an SSO and wear the SSO warfare insignia. Qualification is mandatory for all 1665 officers. Eligibility to qualify is limited to commissioned officers in the special duty restricted line designator of 1665 SSO.

c. Qualification. To qualify for the SSO warfare insignia, candidates will meet the requirements in subparagraphs 8c(1) through 8c(3).

(1) Obtain a commission as an officer in the United States Navy through:

(a) graduation from the USMMA or one of the approved State maritime academies and successful completion of the department of naval science curriculum administered per reference (b);

(b) direct appointment of officers, under standards established by COMNAVCRUITCOM, who possess an active USCG unlimited officer credential at the minimum level of a second mate or second assistant engineer with current STCW endorsement, and are employed in a position deemed mission useful by COMNAVRESFORCOM; or

(c) change of designator by Navy Reserve officers originally commissioned through other programs, or inter-Service transfer of officers from other Reserve Components who possess an active USCG unlimited tonnage and horsepower officer credential with current STCW endorsement, and are employed in a position deemed mission useful by COMNAVRESFORCOM.

(2) Maintain an unlimited tonnage or horsepower USCG merchant mariner credential.

(3) Complete formal Navy training required by CNO N4 and COMSC via COMNAVRESFORCOM, per RESPERS M-1001.5, section 1534-010 (NOTAL).

d. Authorization to Wear the SSO Warfare Insignia

(1) COMNAVRESFORCOM will assign the appropriate AQD to those officers who meet qualification criteria per subparagraph 8c.

(2) The SSO warfare insignia will be worn per NAVPERS 15665.

(3) Personnel qualified to wear the SSO warfare insignia who change designators may continue to wear the insignia per NAVPERS 15665.