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Have you completed your JPME? Do you know what these letters mean? Do you know why it's important to your career?

Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) is a collection of joint learning objectives (JLO) that comprise the educational requirement for an officer to earn a Joint Specialty Officer (JSO) designation. JPME is usually divided into two phases. JPME Phase I consists of JLOs included in intermediate and senior level service college curricula. It emphasizes the fundamentals needed for a sound basis in joint operations and is taught from the Component's perspective. JPME Phase II consists of JLOs contained in the intermediate and senior level courses offered by the Joint Forces Staff College. Phase II emphasizes joint perspectives, focusing on planning, operations, and procedures. Officers who attend the National War College or the Industrial College of the Armed Forces receive complete JPME credit. In addition, an officer must complete a joint tour to be eligible for designation as a JSO.

Why JPME? Twenty years ago, assignment to joint staffs was not considered to be career enhancing. Services assigned officers who were passed over or on their twilight tours to joint billets. There were obvious inefficiencies and problems, prompting Congress to address Pentagon reform.

The Goldwater-Nichols act of 1986 made significant changes to the Department of Defense. It removed the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) from the chain of command of operational forces, revised Joint Staff duties, and established a JSO designation. As an incentive to attract officers to joint duty assignments, it stated "officers who are serving in, or have served in, joint duty assignments are expected as a group to be promoted at a rate not less than that for all

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officers of the service in the same grade and competitive category," and "officers may not be selected for promotion to brigadier general or rear admiral (lower half) unless they have served in a joint duty assignment."

Goldwater-Nichols created and mandated JPME for active component (AC) officers. Additional legislation has expanded JPME. Title 10 USC, Chapter 38, Section 666 directed a parallel program for reserve component (RC) officers. DoD INST 1215.20 implements this program. The FY2002 Defense Authorization Act authorized funding for an Advanced JPME (AJPME) course.

CAPT Tim Moon, one of the first RC officers to complete AJPME, offers the following:

As a professional in the Navy, it is important to study, to improve our skills, to expand our knowledge, and to advance the profession while preparing ourselves for current and future assignments. Engaging in JPME will provide the education and the tools to make us relevant and advance the profession.

There are a number of JPME Phase I accredited institutions. Because the program is joint, by definition officers can go to any of the armed services for their education.

The Naval War College (NWC) in Newport, RI, offers a Master of Arts in National Security Studies and Strategic Studies to students who complete the ten-month resident course or the Fleet Seminars. The correspondence course program has been phased out and is replaced by Web-based training. The two-week reserve seminars offered annually provide a sample of the information contained in the more rigorous courses, but do not by themselves grant JPME credit. See COMNAVRESFORCOM 051359Z AUG 05 to register for these two-week courses. For more information on NWC distance learning, or to enroll in the Web-based course, see <<http://cde.nwc.navy.mil/>>.

Other options for RC officers include the Army War College in Carlisle, PA, <<http://carlisle-www.army.mil/>>, which offers a 24-month distance learning program with two summer sessions. Additionally, the Air War College <<http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/awc/>> is a popular option because it offers the

shortest non-resident seminar to complete JPME phase I – a mere 11 months.

CAPT Stu Hinrichs, who led the reserve contingent that supported the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) in Southwest Asia during Operation Iraqi Freedom, states:

We are without question shaping an Operational Level of Warfare Community in our Navy. Within the RC, the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC), Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC), and Joint Task Force (JTF) units will heavily invest in the courses that already exist and those that develop. We must grow a generation of Operational Warfare Warriors who understand Joint Planning and Execution System (JOPES), Course of Action (COA) Development, time-phased force and deployment data (TPFDDs), and are well versed in Joint and Combined processes. Further, they must develop the personal relationships with other service/nation counterparts to foster the synergy needed when it must be done for real.

Lastly, NAVADMIN 093/05 fundamentally changes Navy Reserve officer career paths and planning:

Joint professional military education phase one is now a requirement for unrestricted line officers screening to unrestricted line commander command (active duty and reserve commands) beginning with screening groups receiving their first look during the fiscal year 2009 command selection board (held February through December 2008). Selected reserve command billets, including those competed for via the APPLY process, are under review to determine which billets will be subject to this requirement.

Don't neglect this important element of career development. Those who do may find themselves limited in career opportunities as we progress further to a joint warfighting force.

See <<http://www.navy-reserve.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=2268>> for a more complete discussion of professional military education (PME) opportunities.