



# Bataan Counselors

*Are Critical Links for Sailors Making Their Dreams Reachable Goals*

Story by MC3 Christopher Jones

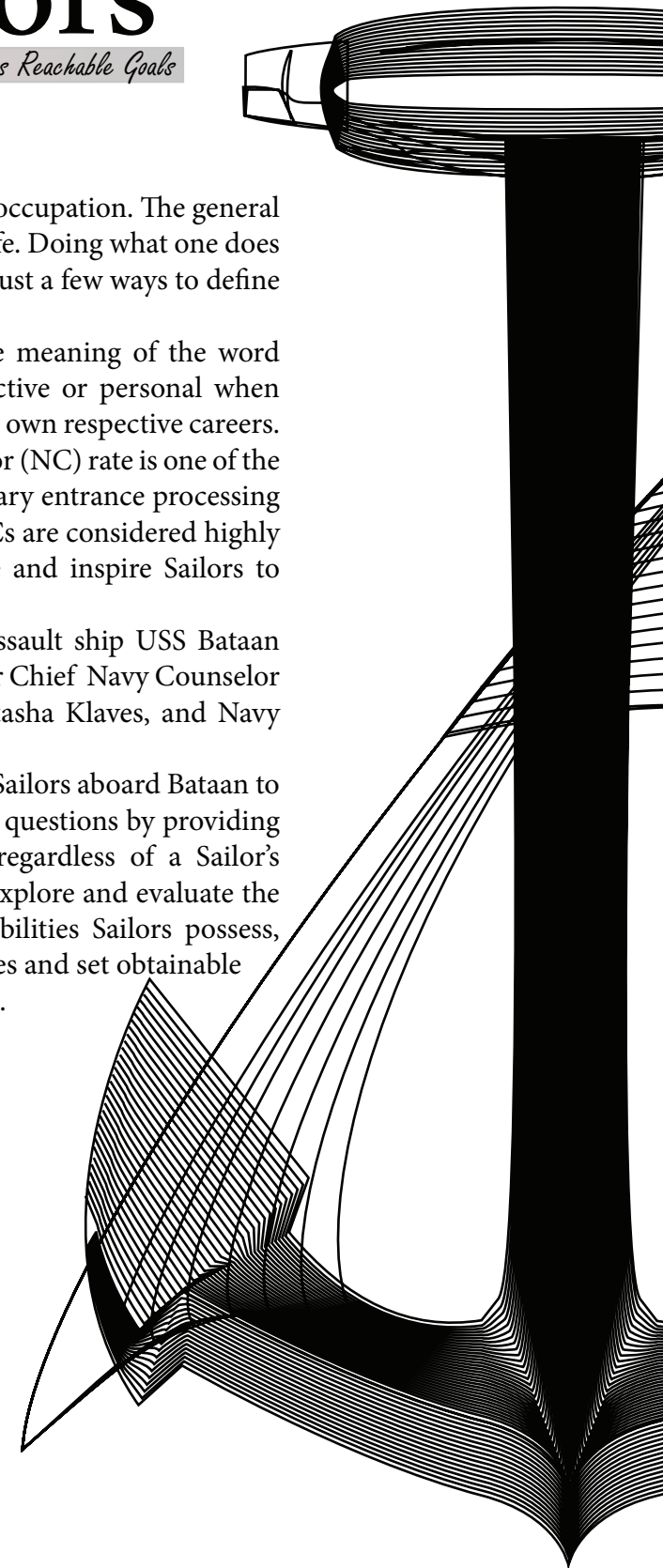
A chosen pursuit; a profession or occupation. The general course or progression of one's working life. Doing what one does as a permanent occupation. These are a just a few ways to define the term career.

Expressed as a noun or adjective, the meaning of the word career in its objectivity, becomes subjective or personal when one begins to navigate the terrain of their own respective careers.

Established in 1972, the Navy Counselor (NC) rate is one of the few that is not on the list of jobs at military entrance processing stations. Placed in a unique position, NCs are considered highly qualified personnel who offer guidance and inspire Sailors to make informed career decisions.

Aboard the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) there are three such NCs. Senior Chief Navy Counselor Wesley Fox, Chief Navy Counselor Natasha Klaves, and Navy Counselor 1st Class Paloma Bazile.

All three act as a primary resource for Sailors aboard Bataan to utilize when they seek answers to career questions by providing information, guidance and assistance regardless of a Sailor's rank or rate. Bataan NCs continuously explore and evaluate the education, training, interests, and capabilities Sailors possess, in order to help them make sound choices and set obtainable goals based on identifiable opportunities.





Subsequently, they oversee the careers of more than 1,000 Sailors and due to the sheer volume of Sailors in comparison to the amount of NCs, Bataan Sailors communicating with the career counselors in a timely manner proves to be vital.

Some of the issues Sailors may encounter while working on developing their careers are prioritizing time to focus on career plans, proper planning for career development, while including the deployment schedule and making final career decisions while under high emotional stress,” said Klaves. “NCs can provide assistance for almost every career inquiry and there are many Navy administrative processes that NCs are privy to. However, because there are more than 1,000 Sailors onboard the USS Bataan and only three NCs, it is safe for Sailors to visit the Command Career Counseling office at least 60 days in advance to ensure proper and timely submission of request.”

By not interacting with or having the proper time to coordinate with NCs, Sailors can potentially miss deadlines for package submissions, potential orders, bonuses and perspective on the benefits the Navy offers.

To help curb some of these issues, the NCs on board are starting a program entitled ‘PACT Social,’ aimed at PACT and undesignated Sailors who are attempting to strike a rate of their liking. PACT Social occurs every third Monday of the month, consisting of guest speakers willing to talk about the details of their jobs, and former PACT and undesignated Sailors who have shared experiences.

Leadership and chains of command are encouraged to attend, in an effort to bring in more involvement in the success of their Sailor’s career and the continuing dissemination of important information.

“There are many missed opportunities, because of a lack of knowing how to take advantage of them,” said Bazile. “Sailors need answers to questions about personal and professional development opportunities and identify them to develop their careers to the fullest potential.”

Sailors like Personnel Specialist 3rd Class Dazzah Moore, who was formerly undesignated and Boatswain’s Mate 2nd Class Angelica Gutierrez, who spent seven months temporarily assigned to the NC work center understands this in an intimate way.

They really help you take charge of your career,” said Moore. “They provided resources for the ASVAB retest, commissioning packages, as well as kept me posted on when my window for striking was coming up. They helped connect me with those who had a similar process.”

After ten years of being in the Navy, the NCs have definitely enlightened me with very important information that I didn’t know,” said Gutierrez. “Like having an understanding that there is so many options for one’s career and you do not have to follow the basic ladder to go places.”

Ultimately, the Bataan NCs have confidence that the success of Sailors and their careers is their main objective and with lots of communication, it is more than feasible.

“Being a NC is my passion; it doesn’t feel like work,” Klaves said. “I have always wanted to help people and mostly let them know they aren’t alone and you’ve got this.”

For this reason and many more, NCs have the capacity to not only be one of the more influential ratings on the ship, but a critical link between Sailors making their dreams reachable goals.

NC  
*Navy Counselor*