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Sidewinder® with C4® LED was specially designed for the military with 20 lights in one - Red, White, Blue and Infrared LEDs, each with 4 intensity levels and a strobe. 2AA alkaline batteries are included. The Sidewinder Compact™ has all the same great features in a compact size that weighs less than 2 ½ ounces and comes with one CR123A lithium battery.

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Streamlight tactical lights are advanced illumination tools; they provide a clear advantage in areas of poor light or limited visibility.

YourCorps

Staff NCOs to serve as foreign experts

By Gina Cavallaro
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The Corps is looking for a select group of enlisted Marines to volunteer for a pilot program that will land them in the Corps' elite pool of foreign area experts.

The Marines who are chosen — 10 active duty and five Reserve staff noncommissioned officers — will become the first enlisted members of a current force of 295 foreign area experts, a field traditionally open only to officers.

The Marines will be trained for up to a year, depending on their level of experience, language and education, and then will spend one year in an assignment.

Unlike foreign area officers, known as FAOs, who are trained in an intensive three-year program to operate at the strategic level, the enlisted Marines will be known as foreign area staff NCOs, or FASs. They will receive part of the same training as FAOs, and be assigned to operational units at the tactical level.

It's a hot new initiative for a few qualified Marines and part of Commandant Gen. Jim Amos' aggressive plan to build a deeper bench of foreign and regional area experts.

The plan to train enlisted Marines is partly a matter of practicality, said Lt. Gen. Richard Mills, deputy commandant for combat integration and development and himself a FAO.

"It's a numbers game to a certain extent, and I think it's not just officer country," he said. "It's an area where we can take our talented people, regardless of rank, and apply it."

Plus, it's important to educate some enlisted Marines beyond the typical language and culture training everyone receives before deployment, Mills said.

"In places like Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan, we kind of went in blind ... we learned on the fly," he said. "Now you'll have people available to you — regional experts who can advise you on what you need to know, before you go in."

What the Marines will be responsible for and where they will work will take shape during the pilot. Planners envision a FAS working in the intelligence, operations or future operations plans shops, but commanders may decide that they would be best employed in some other area of the unit.

The possibility exists that a commander may employ his FAS as an interpreter or part of his civil affairs team, but that is not the intent, Mills said.

"We have a tendency to ride our good horses as far as they'll go," he said. "Like any high-demand, low-density expert, you're going to have to manage his working hours very carefully."

Marines selected for the program will

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

The pilot program is open to:

- Male and female enlisted Marines in the ranks of staff sergeant to master or first sergeant.
- All military occupational specialties.

A Marine must:

- Meet minimum time on station requirements.
- Be eligible for permanent change-of-station orders by December.
- Have a minimum of an associate degree or equivalent.

For more information

- Visit www.marines.mil/unit/hqmc/planspolicies/pl/plu/. Applications will be due Oct. 15.

Source: Marine Corps

attend college- and graduate-level courses at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., spend three months in a foreign country for immersive language training, then travel in that foreign region for another three months. Those with a higher level of the skills and education will receive less training at home and abroad and be assigned more quickly to the participating units.

Those units are: the 15th, 24th and 31st Marine expeditionary units; the Marine Corps Training and Advisory Group; the commandant's Red Team at I Marine Expeditionary Force; Marine Expeditionary Brigade red teams; and Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command.

There will be three study tracks for the pilot. The baseline is the longest and will be for Marines who come in with the least education, language and experience. Marines who qualify for the partial study track will spend less time studying and training; Marines selected for the experienced-track level will go straight to their assigned unit.

The test program will be announced in a forthcoming Marine administrative message. Once the pilot is over and the program is in full swing, Marines who are selected for the job will be trained for up to a year and then spend a year filling a billet on a Marine air-ground task force commander's staff before returning to the operational force in their primary MOSs.

The 15 Marines in the pilot will be considered as having been on special duty assignment when they go before a promotion board.

Whether Marines in those future billets will get the same consideration is still being mulled by Sgt. Maj. Mike Barrett, the Corps's top enlisted Marine.

"Marines who serve in this arena may never find the opportunity to get to a traditional SDA tour," Barrett said. "I think we would need to look at considering the [FAS] or including this successful duty as a precept like SDA on future promotion boards." □