FY-19-1 Test Pilot School
Selection Board
Lessons Learned

February 2018
Purpose

• Provide feedback to the NAE from the 14-15 February 2018 TPS Selection Board

• Provide Aviation Leadership with information to assist efforts to ensure that high quality candidates apply for TPS
Eligibility

• Application based
  - Application requirements IAW BUPERSINST 1500.62B
  - CO endorsement required; must state whether candidate will be available for training timeline to support class dates
  - Academic transcripts required; TPS Chief Academic Instructor provides assessment that is non-binding for the board
  - Bachelor of Science degree in engineering, physical science, or math ‘required’:
    - Can be waived by the board “…if requirements dictate and applicant has completed college-level calculus and physics”
    - Board uses TPS academic assessment to assist with any uncertainty regarding academic credentials
  - Wing/CAG endorsement is common but not a requirement
Convening Order

- NAVAIR Assistant Commander for Test and Evaluation (AIR 5.0) provides requirements letter based on test squadron demand signal that forms basis of Convening Order (TMS/designator specific)

- Guidance to board
  - Post-TPS test payback availability: “should ensure” 24-36 months
  - URL: O-2/3 candidates “preferred”; O-4 may be selected if insufficient quantities of well-qualified O-2/3 provided they can still meet applicable career milestones
  - Strong operational background
  - Superior overall performance
  - Able to meet rigorous academic background requirements
19-1 Applicant Summary

• 65 Total
  – 53 Pilot
    ➢ VFA: 13
    ➢ HSC: 9
    ➢ HSM: 9
    ➢ VP/VQ(P): 10
    ➢ VAW/VRC: 7
    ➢ VAQ: 4
    ➢ HM: 1
  – 12 NFO
    ➢ VFA: 4
    ➢ VAW: 5
    ➢ VAQ: 2
    ➢ VQ(P): 1
19-1 Requirements

• 19 TPS quotas (All USNTPS)
  – 11 pilot quotas, 14 pilots selected
    ➢ 5 VFA
    ➢ 1 VQ(P)
    ➢ 1 VAW (1 select from VAQ NFO waterfall)
    ➢ 1 VP
    ➢ 3 VAQ (2 selects from VAQ NFO waterfall)
    ➢ 1 HSM
    ➢ 2 HSC
  – 8 NFO quotas, 5 NFOs selected
    ➢ 2 VFA
    ➢ 2 VAW (1 select from VP NFO waterfall)
    ➢ 1 VQ(P) (1 select from VAQ NFO waterfall)
Select Summary (% of category)

- 19 of 65 selects (29%)
  - 14 of 53 Pilots (26%)
    - 5 of 13 VFA (38%)
    - 2 of 10 VP/VQ(P) (20%)
    - 2 of 9 HS/HSC (22%)
    - 1 of 9 HSL/HSM (11%)
    - 3 of 4 VAQ (75%)
    - 1 of 7 VAW/VRC (14%)
    - 0 of 1 HM (0%)
  - 5 of 12 NFOs (42%)
    - 2 of 4 VFA (50%)
    - 2 of 5 VAW (40%)
    - 0 of 2 VAQ (0%)
    - 1 of 1 VQ(P) (100%)
# Selects vs. Non-selects (by billet)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TPS Selects</th>
<th>TPS Non-Selects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total eligible: 65</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>JO Sea EP* (pilot): 37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>JO Sea MP* (pilot): 16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>JO Sea EP* (NFO): 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>JO Sea MP* (NFO): 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEM degree: 52</td>
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<td>36</td>
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<td>69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-STEM degree: 13</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>LT: 63</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<td></td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>LCDR: 2</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>AEDO**: 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Payback ≥ 24 mos: 57</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Payback &lt; 24 mos: 8</td>
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* Defined as ‘highwater’ competitive FITREP of any length  
** Includes AEDO selects
Takeaways
TPS Overview

• Opportunities for TPS graduates:
  – Test and evaluation of leading-edge capabilities, including work related to: JSF, Next-Gen Jammer, P-8A Increment 3, MQ-4C, MQ-8C, CMV-22, next-gen strike weapons, and networked/integrated warfighting capabilities.
  – Significant impact on the future capability of their fleet communities

• Ideal candidates:
  – Strong first sea tour EP performance with advanced fleet community quals
  – Career timing to support VX/HX tour and fleet community progression
  – Strong desire to solve technical challenges and directly impact the future warfighting capability of the U.S. Navy
  – Strong grades in STEM degrees
  – NFOs are in particularly high demand for a variety of systems-based programs

• Opportunity varies for each board - if interested, APPLY!*

  * Carefully consider the career impacts of potential selection if applicant will not have a highwater EP prior to departure from fleet squadron. Need relative to # of applicants in high-demand categories may result in ‘early’ selection - contact community Detailer for more information.

Community endorsement / encouragement of the TPS path is vital to the success of developmental test programs / future capability
Applicant Quality

• Performance:
  – By far the highest discriminator is Fleet performance with operation experience and advanced qualifications
  – CO Endorsement for JO Sea Tour must reflect projected ranking at next FITREP if last competitive FITREP is not in-hand – Board Members will not assume what the projection will be

• Academics: Strong applicant base to select from; 80% STEM

• Limited quantity of NFO applicants
  – Two EA-18G EWO applicants for four quotas
  – No P-8A/P-3C NFO applications for one quota
Selection Discriminators

- **Best and Fully Qualified Standard**
  - Record of sustained superior performance in operational environments
  - Warfighting ability and tactical excellence
  - Academic background

- **Opportunity**
  - Test squadron requirements for a specific board can have a major impact
    - Extremely high demand for AEA experience; both pilot and NFO
    - NFO requirements will continue to be in high demand
FITREP Guidelines

• Competitive # 1 EP FITREP is the best way for COs to reward performance
  - Always rank ALL officers with either a hard or soft breakout in the FITREP
    ➢ Lack of numbered breakout can be viewed as a negative signal
    ➢ Ranked “kiss” important
  - Management of Reporting Senior Average (RSA) is critical to send the correct message to the board

• Explain unusual circumstances in the FITREP
  - Perceived decliner due to promotion
  - Early roller for an aide billet, hard fill job, etc.
  - Annotate if ranked behind WTI(s) or Super JOs

• Document all qualifications (Use Block 29)
  – Advanced qualifications are a discriminator

• TPS recommendations in Blocks 40 and 41 are noticed and briefed
Letters to the Board

• A well written FITREP will preclude the need for a Letter to the Board (LTB)

• CO Endorsement
  – Include FITREP projections prior to detaching for TPS Training
    ➢ If FITREP will be at Change of Command, include date
    ➢ If unable to detach for training, TAD must be funded by losing command. If needed, this must be explicitly stated in Endorsement

• LTBs can be effective if explaining FITREP timing or screen group changes
  - Undocumented GSA/IA
  - Early pull for a flag aide, hard fill or transition

• LTBs can draw undue attention to a weakness
  - “Timing forced me to roll him two days before a COC”

• “Must Pick / Good Guy” LTBs are less effective
Applications

• Wing LSO Qual
  – MUST be qualified PRIOR to convening board
  – Include designation letter with application

• If timing for follow-on test tour is less than 24 months, state intentions in application (i.e. intend to apply for AEDO)

• Include CO office and cell phone numbers for notification if selected

• Applicants must have college level Calculus and Physics if they do not possess a STEM degree!
  – Transcripts are reviewed by the Chief Academic Instructor of USNTPS and graded to assist board members. A grade of “Not Recommended” is assigned if the candidate does not have Calculus and Physics. This is deemed Not Qualified by board members.
  – Some candidates take Calculus and Physics at local community colleges to correct this issue.
Records

- All officers must be proactive in keeping their records up-to-date
  - http://www.npc.navy.mil/Boards/ScreenBoards/Aviation
    - Click on “Printing OSR / PSR”
  - https://www.bol.navy.mil
    - Click on “Official Military Personnel File (OMPF)”
    - Click on “My Record” and “ODC, OSR, PSR, ESR”
  - Ensure there is are no FITREP gaps and no missing qualifications, awards, or transcripts