FY-19-2 Test Pilot School Selection Board Lessons Learned
July 2018
UNCLASSIFIED

Purpose

• Provide feedback to the NAE from the 25 July 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 1500.62C
  - CO endorsement required; must state whether candidate will be available for training timeline to support class dates
    - Not available = Not reviewed
  - 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: 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
19-2 Applicant Summary

• 48 Total
  – 37 Pilot
    ➢ VFA: 10
    ➢ HSC: 3
    ➢ HSC with MQ-8: 1
    ➢ HSM: 7
    ➢ VP/VQ(P): 5
    ➢ VAW/VRC: 8
    ➢ VAQ: 2
    ➢ HM: 1
  – 11 NFO
    ➢ VFA: 3
    ➢ VAW: 3
    ➢ VAQ: 4
    ➢ VP: 1
19-2 Requirements

• 17 TPS quotas/16 selected
  – 8 pilot quotas, 9 pilots selected
    ➢ VFA – 3 quotas/4 selects (1 select from VFA NFO)
    ➢ VP – 1 quota/2 selects (1 select from VQ(P))
    ➢ VQ(P) – 1 quota/0 selects
    ➢ HSM – 1 quota/2 selects (1 select from MQ-8)
    ➢ HSC – 1 quota/1 select
    ➢ MQ-8 – 1 quota/0 selects
  – 9 NFO quotas, 7 NFOs selected
    ➢ VAQ – 3 quotas/3 selects
    ➢ VFA – 4 quotas/2 selects (1 quota transferred to VFA pilot, 1 quota unfilled)
    ➢ VAW – 1 quota/1 select
    ➢ VP – 1 quota/1 select

• Selections included 1 quota for USAFTPS and 1 quota for ETPS
Select Summary (% of category)

- 16 of 48 selects (33%)
  - 9 of 37 Pilots (24%)
    - 4 of 10 VFA (40%)
    - 2 of 5 VP/VQ(P) (40%)
    - 1 of 3 HSC (33%)
    - 0 of 1 HSC with MQ-8 (0%)
    - 2 of 7 HSM (29%)
    - 0 of 2 VAQ (0%)
    - 0 of 8 VAW/VRC (0%)
    - 0 of 1 HM (0%)
  - 7 of 11 NFOs (64%)
    - 2 of 3 VFA (67%)
    - 1 of 3 VAW (33%)
    - 3 of 4 VAQ (75%)
    - 1 of 1 VP (100%)
# Selects vs. Non-selects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>TPS Selects</th>
<th>TPS Non-Selects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total eligible: 48</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JO Sea EP* (pilot): 30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JO Sea MP* (pilot): 7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JO Sea EP* (NFO): 8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JO Sea MP* (NFO): 3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat Applicants 29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM degree: 46</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-STEM degree: 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT: 47</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCDR: 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEDO**: 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payback &gt; 24 mos: 46</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payback &lt; 24 mos: 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Defined as ‘highwater’ competitive FITREP of any length
** Includes AEDO selects
Takeaways
Applicant Quality

• Performance: 79% of applicants had a first tour EP

• Academics: Strong applicant base to select from; 96% STEM

• FY-19-2 had 26% fewer applicants than FY19-1
  – VP and HSC pilots were the largest decliners

• Limited quantity of F/A-18F WSO applicants (3) relative to quotas (4)

• Repeat applicants
  – 60% of applicants
  – 75% of selects
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
    ➢ No MH-53 Pilot opportunity on this board
    ➢ No E-2/C-2 Pilot opportunity on this board
    ➢ No EA-18G Pilot opportunity on this board
    ➢ High demand for WSO experience; higher opportunity than number of NFO applicants
TPS Overview

• Opportunities for TPS graduates:
  – Developmental test and evaluation of leading-edge capabilities, including: JSF, Next-Gen Jammer, P-8A Increment 3, CMV-22, next-gen strike weapons, networked/integrated warfighting capabilities, and unmanned systems (MQ-8, MQ-4C, and MQ-25)
  – Significant impact on the future capability of their fleet communities
  – Astronaut candidacy – TPS is the only path for aviation!

• 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
  – Excellent grades in STEM degrees
  – NFOs are in particularly high demand for a variety of systems-based programs
    ➢ This will not change. NFOs are highly encouraged to apply!

• Opportunity varies for each board - if interested, APPLY! Don’t let perceived requirements be a deterrent.

Community endorsement / encouragement of the TPS path is vital to the success of developmental test programs / future capability
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)
• TPS recommendations in Blocks 40 and 41 are noticed and briefed
• Make the FITREP easy to read for the briefer!
Letters to the Board

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

- Recommend CO endorsement states whether officer will receive an EP FITREP prior to departure for TPS training track if not yet achieved
  - If FITREP will be at Change of Command and include date

- LTBs can be effective if explaining FITREP timing or screen group changes

- 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
  - Screening is based on FITREP performance, not LTBs

- Consider LTB to explain ranking of unranked EP
Applications

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

- If timing is less than 24 months for follow-on test tour, 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.
• **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)”
    ➢ My Record” and “ODC, OSR, PSR, ESR”

  – Ensure there is are no FITREP gaps and no missing qualifications or awards

  – Make sure AQDs are documents in OSR