

Aviation Nuclear Officer



2018 Newsletter

**Aviation Officer
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COMMANDER, NAVAL AIR FORCE, PACIFIC

Our nuclear powered aircraft carriers (CVN) and embarked air wings (CVW) are modern engineering marvels that embody the military might of our great nation and remain the centerpiece of our Navy's global engagement strategy. When combined with highly trained Sailors from ship's company, the air wing, and the entire strike group, these marvels provide our Commander in Chief and combatant commanders with adaptable, agile and powerful options that rapidly respond to any crisis. The test of time continues to demonstrate that the Carrier Strike Group with its nuclear powered aircraft carrier and embarked air wing are the premier striking and deterrent platforms for the United States.

In today's uncertain and dynamic environment, the Navy needs strong and innovative leaders to keep the CVN force trained and ready to protect the high seas and project power ashore. To assist with educating those leaders, the 2018-2019 Aviation Nuclear Officer (AVN) Newsletter is a great resource for those already established in the AVN pipeline as well as for those who are interested in the countless opportunities this career track provides. Thanks to the BUPERS for providing updates on the nuke pipeline training track, bonus structures and general career advice.

The AVN career path is a challenging but incredibly rewarding experience that guarantees major command at sea and the opportunity to command one of our nation's most strategic and powerful assets. A carrier Commanding Officer (CO) is directly responsible for the safe, effective operation of a 98,000 ton vessel and has a direct, positive impact on the lives and careers of thousands of Sailors, chief petty officers, officers, and their families. There is no other adventure like it in the world!

This is a great time to be in carrier aviation with Naval Aviation entering into a period of both revolutionary and evolutionary changes in capabilities. The Ford Class CVN has a new propulsion plant and a redesigned ship layout that improves combat capability, sortie generation rate and provides for years of capability growth. The air wing of the future also continues to evolve and improve. The integrated capabilities of the F-35C, E-2D, F/A-18E/F, EA-18G, MH-60R, MH-60S and future unmanned MQ-25 make our Navy more capable, more lethal and more relevant well into the future. The incorporation of these systems into the fleet makes this a fascinating period for the Navy and specifically, the AVN community.

The Navy Nuclear Propulsion Program provides leaders with the opportunity to continue making a difference in Naval Aviation while simultaneously experiencing the challenge and rewards of Command-at-Sea. For those of you already established in the AVN community, stay credible, be humble and keep leading from the front. To any officers who are interested in the aviation nuclear pipeline, use this newsletter to answer any initial questions you and your spouse might have. Then feel free to call my POC, Captain Walt "Sarge" Slaughter (CNAP N-7), or track down any Big XO or CVN CO (or their spouses) to get their valuable and insightful perspectives.

We Fly, We Fight, We Lead ... We Win!

D. H. MILLER III
Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy





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Front cover: A Sailor assigned to the aircraft carrier USS *Gerald R. Ford's* (CVN 78) air department prepares to direct aircraft during flight operations on the ship's flight deck. *Ford* is underway conducting test and evaluation operations. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cat Campbell.

Back cover: The aircraft carrier USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68) steams in the Pacific Ocean during an air power demonstration. The *Nimitz* Carrier Strike Group is on a regularly scheduled deployment to the Western Pacific. The U.S. Navy has patrolled the Indo-Asia-Pacific region routinely for more than 70 years promoting peace and security. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jacob M. Milham.



Program Manager Update

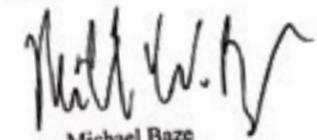
Greetings from Millington! Welcome to the 2018 edition of the Aviation Nuclear Officer Newsletter. We believe you'll find this year's edition packed with valuable information whether you are an established member of the AV(N) team, just starting nuclear propulsion training, or simply considering the benefits of being selected for the AV(N) community. We hope you'll find it useful when making career, personal, and financial decisions, but don't hesitate to contact us for one-on-one advice.

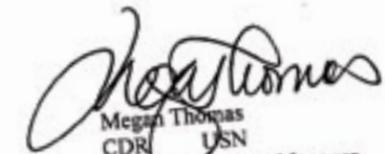
Your AV(N) career management team consists of: CAPT Michael "Mouse" Baze, Division Director for Aviation Officer Distribution (PERS-43); CDR Megan Thomas, SWO(N) Program Manager (PERS-424/4 1 N); CDR Jeffrey "Googar" Farmer, the Aviation Commander Detailer (PERS-431); LCDR Rob "Woody" Woodards, Aircraft Carrier Placement (PERS-433G); LCDR John Actkinson, Surface Nuclear Officer Community Manager (PERS-42DI) and your first point of contact for many new AV(N) officers.

The centerpiece of our Navy remains our nuclear powered aircraft carriers, their air wings, and those who command and man them. The rigor of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program and its selection and training processes are recognized worldwide and continue to ensure the U.S. Navy maintains the world's best nuclear operators. This, in turn, enables our carriers and air wings to move freely around the globe, wherever and whenever needed.

The Commanding Officer of a CVN has broad influence, not only over world events, but also over their officers and crew. This newsletter is also intended to provide information to help AV(N)s mentor the top-notch SWO(N)s working for them.

We look forward to working with you in the year ahead as you continue to lead the charge in the fleet. We encourage you to pass this newsletter around your Ready Rooms and to contact potential aviation nuclear officers in their squadron XO and CO tours. Call or e-mail us with any questions; we are here to serve you. Sail and Fly Safe!


Michael Baze
CAPT USN
Aviation Officer Distribution


Megan Thomas
CDR USN
SWO(N) Program Manager





Congratulations to the following AV(N) officers who were selected to the next rank or career milestone and to our newly screened AV(N)s!

FY 17 VICE ADMIRAL
VADM John D. Alexander

FY 17 REAR ADMIRAL (UPPER HALF)
RADM Bruce H. Lindsey
RADM Dee L. Mewbourne

FY 17 REAR ADMIRAL (LOWER HALF)
RDML Stephen T. Koehler
RDML John F. Meier
RDML Michael A. Wettlaufer
RDML Karl O. Thomas

FY 18 VICE ADMIRAL
VADM Bruce H. Lindsey
VADM DeWolfe H. Miller

FY 18 REAR ADMIRAL (LOWER HALF)
RDML Timothy C. Kuehhas
RDML Andrew J. Loiselle
RDML John C. Ring

FY 16 CAPTAIN
CAPT Amy N. Bauernschmidt
CAPT David G. Duff
CAPT Brent C. Gaut
CAPT Paul J. Lanzilotta
CAPT Philip S. Miller
CAPT Craig C. Sicola

FY 17 CAPTAIN
CAPT Daryle D. Cardone
CAPT Colin P. Day
CAPT Christopher F. Hill
CAPT David-Tavis M. Pollard
CAPT Brian T. Schrum

FY18 CAPTAIN
CAPT (SEL) Robert T. Bibeau
CAPT (SEL) Jonathan J. Bradford
CAPT Richard G. Burgess
CAPT (SEL) Douglas Graber
CAPT (SEL) John W. Kurtz
CAPT (SEL) Peter J. Riebe
CAPT (SEL) Michael D. Snowden
CAPT (SEL) Matthew C. Thomas
CAPT (SEL) Joseph P. Thompson
CAPT (SEL) Timothy L. Waits

FY 17 SEQ COMMAND AT SEA – CVN
CAPT Putnam H. Browne
CAPT Kevin P. Lenox
CAPT Douglas C. Verissimo

FY 18 SEQ COMMAND AT SEA – CVN
CAPT Sean R. Bailey
CAPT Nicholas J. Dienna
CAPT Kyle P. Higgins
CAPT Glenn R. Jamison
CAPT Carlos A. Sardiello

FY 19 SEQ COMMAND AT SEA – CVN
CAPT Max Clark
CAPT John J. Cummings
CAPT Patrick J. Hannifin
CAPT Matthew C. Paradise
CAPT Randall W. Peck

FY 17 MAJOR SEA CMD – AV(N) SELECTION
CAPT Christopher F. Hill
CAPT David-Tavis M. Pollard
CAPT Brian T. Schrum
CAPT (SEL) Peter J. Riebe
CAPT (SEL) Michael D. Snowden
CAPT (SEL) Joseph P. Thompson III

FY 18 MAJOR SEA CMD – AV(N) SELECTION
CAPT (SEL) Jonathan J. Bradford
CAPT Richard G. Burgess
CAPT (SEL) Douglas Graber
CAPT (SEL) Matthew C. Thomas
CAPT (SEL) Timothy L. Waits
CDR Paul D. Will

FY 19 MAJOR SEA CMD – AV(N) SELECTION
CDR Dale M. Gregory
CDR Daniel J. Keeler
CDR Douglas M. Langenberg
CDR Michael D. Nordeen
CDR Daniel R. Prochazka
CDR David W. Skarosi
CDR Matthew T. Ventimiglia



The Nuclear Power Pipeline: Fact or Fiction

Captain J.J. “Yank” Cummings
PCO USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN 78)

The nuclear power pipeline offers senior naval aviators the most challenging and rewarding career path the Navy has to offer: aircraft carrier command. There is no other position in the Navy that gives a commanding officer the ability to positively influence literally thousands of officers, Chiefs, and Sailors.

Rumors about nuclear power start the instant a young junior officer sets foot on an aircraft carrier and while some of these rumors are based in fact, many are not. This article provides a different perspective and classifies as FACT or FICTION many of the comments heard in ready rooms through the years about the nuclear power pipeline.

1. “I don’t think I will be able to make it through the entire pipeline.” FICTION

- If selected, you will make it through and the return on your investment of time and effort is three of the most rewarding tours of your career. Yes, it will be hard and you will need to be dedicated, but you’ll get all the support you need and at the end of it you’ll be making a tremendous difference in the fleet.
- AVNs are academically successful at NPS because of the rigorous screening process that places quality officers in NPS classroom and the efforts put forth by the staff. Historically, those who did not finish NPS did so because of non-academic related reasons.

2. “I will get to fly more during a CAG or Wing Commander tour.” FACT

- CAGs and Commodores do a significant amount of tactical flying during their 30-month tours but there are also some heavy lifting non-flying tours generally before and most definitely after these tours are complete. CAGs/Commodores who continue to serve after these tours

traditionally end up wearing loops on major staffs or at the Pentagon.

- However, as an AVN you will have the opportunity to regain currency and fly regularly during your 30-month CVN CO tour, launching off and recovering on the ship that you command.



3. “The nuclear pipeline will be detrimental to my family because I will never see them.” FICTION

- The time commitment for the three tours is very similar to the time spent on tours that non-AVNs complete at the Pentagon, as CAGs, or on a major TYCOM staff. There is potentially some significant down time before and after the Deep Draft (DD) tour. Due to DD CO or CVN CO change of command/slate timing, some AVNs have had between three and 15 months of stash time at various commands (TYCOM or OPNAV).
- For the first year of nuclear power training at NPS and Prototype, AVNs are home every night. Additionally, families will not have to PCS until all the CVN PXO training events have been completed, thus keeping the family in the Charleston, S.C., area for two straight years.
- AVNs complete three ship’s company tours (CVN XO, Deep Draft CO, CVN CO) but, depending on the ship’s OFRP schedules, the majority of this time is not spent underway. Ship sustainment windows and maintenance

periods provide plenty of opportunities to be home at night. In fact, during a six to 12 month deep draft maintenance availability, the ship CO and XO will be home every evening, allowing maximum participation in family, school and social events.

- Geobatching can be a reality of military life for any Navy family - Aviation, Surface or Submarine. Some AVNs have opted to geobach through Nuke Power School (NPS) and Prototype given the mature age of their children who are approaching or in high school. This is a personal choice that can place additional stress on the family, or it can lead to increased family closeness if all family members understand and recognize the sacrifice they are making as a family for a cause bigger than themselves. It really depends on the family. Naval aviation families who have been through multiple deployments can grow even stronger throughout this training track and follow on tours.
- The strict design of the nuke track makes it extremely predictable so upon selection, AVNs will have a clear understanding of their orders timing and location for eight years. Other career paths cannot match that that level of predictability.

4. “The nuke pipeline is long.” FACT

- Initial nuclear training is designed to train CVN XOs to provide forceful backup for the CO and Reactor Officer. The XO and DD CO tours are designed to prepare AVNs for the CO’s chair on a carrier. This preparation takes time but every hour a nuke spends preparing for these tours is worth every second as XO, DD CO and CVN CO.
- The total time to complete the career path through CVN CO Tour is generally eight to ten years. For context, please refer to RDML Koehler’s article on the specifics but this is the executive summary of the track:

Nuke Power School	Six months
Prototype	Four months
CVN underway training	Approximately one month
Naval Reactors Course	Three months
Pre CVN XO training track - SWOS, NLEC, other training	Approximately two months
CVN XO tour	24 months
Pre Deep Draft (DD) CO training track - SWOS, Major Command Course - Legal School, other training	Approximately three months
Pre CVN CO training track - Naval Reactors PCO Course (five weeks) - SWOS, NLEC - FRS CAT V - JMTC, NSLS, UWDC (if required)	Approximately four months
CVN CO tour	30 months

- In between each of the events during initial nuclear power training there is some down time which can vary between one to two months. There is also TAD stash time post CVN XO and DD CO that can be as short as three months or as long as 15 months.

5. “Nuke Power School is hard.” FACT

- “Hard” does not mean “unmanageable.”
- Do not let the academics of NPS or Prototype be the reason you decide to opt out of the AVN program. The Navy selects AVNs based on the strength of their academic records and their performance in command. AVNs will succeed at NPS and be successful as CVN COs.
- AVNs take 25 tests while at NPS, but they receive 100% support from EVERY instructor in the building. AVNs can personally select their own instructors and get as much one-on-one instruction/tutoring as desired. The NPS Staff members are there to make sure their students fully grasp all of the concepts and are prepared for the exams.
- Prototype is much different than NPS where AVNs put theory to practice in an operating nuclear plant. A majority of the training is hands-on which provides them the opportunity to lead from the front as a watch officer and interact with enlisted students. With years of flying aircraft and filling leadership roles in squadrons, this is where AVNs shine.

6. “The nuke bonus is inflexible and limits your options.” FICTION

- The \$30,000 a year nuke bonus can be contracted for the minimum of three years and a maximum of seven years. Several Continuation Bonus (COBO) contracts can be signed for various lengths just as long as the last contract does not go beyond the 30th year of commissioned service (YCS).

- Many AVNs sign a five to six year contract that times out after their DD tour to wait for sequential command at sea screen results, then sign a three to four year contract to get to 30 YCS as their CO tour concludes.
- AVNs do not have to sign multi-year nuclear bonus contracts. After promoting to O-6 and having 26 years of commissioned service, they are eligible to receive the \$22,000 a year Annual Incentive Pay (AIP) that incurs NO commitment. This is yearly pay

- that is basically “flight pay” for nukes. Unlike a COBO contract AIP is not paid up front, it is paid on October first of each year.
- Newly selected AVNs also receive a \$15,000 “signing bonus” when they agree to pursue this career path and receive an additional \$2,000 upon completion of prototype.
- The SWO(N) Community Manager works closely with the AVNs to answer any questions and maximize bonus opportunities.

7. “I heard that not everyone screens for CVN CO command.” FACT (but barely)

- Over the last five years the screen rate was 92% for those aviators who were eligible for CVN command.
- BUPERS’ goal is to get every AVN at least two competitive looks for carrier command and two looks for flag promotion. Recent increases in LPD deep draft availability will contribute to this goal.
- AVN orders and career timing are closely monitored by CNAF N00, CNAL N00, and BUPERS during monthly phone calls.

8. “I heard that in a few years, there will be too many AVNs and many will not screen.” FICTION

- With USS *John F. Kennedy* (CVN 79) and USS *Enterprise* (CVN 80) coming to the fleet, CVN CO screening opportunities are increasing.
- For the foreseeable future, the number of available AVNs compared with the forecast number of CVN CO slots ensures command opportunities will remain high.

9. “The nuclear pipeline is 10 years straight of sea time.” FICTION.

- See above.

10. “I do not have a technical degree and I heard that it will really suck for me because Nuke Power School sucks.” FICTION

- Same can be said of many post-O5 command and post major command jobs in D.C.

- If AVNs work hard and listen to their instructors, NPS is manageable even for officers with non-technical degrees.
- AVNs also bring Naval Aviation Spirit to the Nuke Power School classrooms, showing a generation of Sub and SWO nukes what Naval Aviation leadership is about. AVNs absolutely make Nuke Power School less painful for the junior officers.
- At NPS you will be home every night with your family and have some of the sharpest junior officer instructors in the Navy standing by to personally instruct you in any topic you desire. The Charleston, Mount Pleasant, and Daniel Island are great areas to live.



11. “AVNs become SWOs. I don’t want to be a SWO.” FICTION

- AVNs are not SWOs. They are nuclear-trained aviators who have been selected for their demonstrated leadership potential and been given the greatest privilege our country can offer: command of a nuclear powered warship. AVNs inject an added culture of excellence and enthusiasm for naval service into the Surface Fleet. The Nuke experience broadens their horizon and introduces AVNs to communities and areas of the Navy never encountered as an air wing aviator. Nuclear trained aviators are extremely well rounded.
- Exposure to the SWO and SWO(N) communities also expands their leadership experience and provides a unique opportunity for professional growth. Contrary to popular ready room public opinion, there is much to learn

- from the way these communities do business.
- AVNs bring many positive attributes to the SWO and SWO(N) community, and the positive influence a DD CO has on the wardroom will change the lives of many SWO junior officers. Leading a wardroom of recently commissioned ensigns and brand new lieutenant junior grades is just as rewarding as leading a ready room full of lieutenants. In some ways, it is even better.

12. “The SWOs make sure the Deep Draft COs get all of the shipyard time.” FICTION

- While ship maintenance is an unavoidable reality of this pipeline, the stacking of the ship maintenance deck to ensure aviators soak up maintenance availabilities does not happen.
- CNAF, CNAL and BUPERS routinely monitor the slate and scheduled ship availabilities to ensure there is balance between underway and shipyard time between each of the AVNS tours.

13. “The CVN tours are challenging.” FACT

- The CVN tours are extremely rewarding, because with great responsibility comes an even bigger challenge.

- There is no job in the Navy that has this much influence, impact and interaction with Sailors, Chiefs and officers.
- AVNs have the opportunity to positively impact Sailors during three distinct sea tours as CVN XO, DD CO and CVN CO. There is no post O-5 command tour that even comes close to the scope and amount of influence these jobs have.

14. “But if I go nuke I will be eligible for Admiral later than my peers.” FACT

- Focusing on the impact this career path has on flag promotion timeline is time not well spent. The AVN community desires officers who want to lead from the front as they take a nuclear powered warship over the horizon to do our nation’s bidding, not officers who sweat flag promotion eligibility.
- AVNs are eligible for flag one to two years later than non-uke major commanders, but any AVN will tell you that the delay was absolutely worth it.
- Selection rate of AVN officers for promotion to Rear Admiral is the highest percentage across all designators.



Basics of Aviation Nuclear Program Selection



Annual Screening Board

Officers are selected annually for Major Command at Sea (Nuclear Power Pipeline) during the Aviation Major Command Screening Board (AMCSB) held in October. This board also reviews the records of serving/served Deep Draft CO nuclear-trained aviators for selection as CVN COs. In order to be eligible for selection to the nuclear power pipeline, officers must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Served or serving as an Operational Squadron CO with an observed FITREP in command
- Not yet selected for promotion to O-6 (to ensure the officer is junior enough to enable completion of the entire nuclear pipeline through CVN CO)
- Completed, at a minimum, a department head and/or Executive Officer/Commanding Officer tour (XO/CO) in a Carrier Air Wing Commander (CVW) squadron. CVW squadron is defined as HS, HSC, HSL, HSM, VAQ, VAW, VF, VFA, VS and VRC commands whose immediate superior-in-charge (ISIC) was a Carrier Air Wing Commander.
- Meet minimum academic criteria required by Naval Reactors:
 - One year of college calculus (minimum grade: C)
 - One year of college calculus-based physics (minimum grade: C)
- Aviation Major Command Screen Board “Pick Me” letters. While these are not required, we certainly welcome and encourage any interested officer to submit a “Pick Me” letter for consideration to the AVN program. A “Pick Me” letter will not guarantee your selection, but it does show dedication and determination that is required to be a successful AVN candidate. If interested in submitting a letter to the board, please contact your detailer; they will assist you.

NOTE: Contact your detailer to discuss your academic eligibility. Officers can (and have) gone back to school to take required classes in order to meet academic eligibility requirements.

Depending on career timing, officers may have more than one opportunity for selection.



Interview at Naval Reactors

Once selected by the Aviation Major Command Selection Board, you will travel to Washington, D.C. for an interview at Naval Reactors (NR). This is usually a two-day process. At NR, you will interview with a few senior members of the staff and conclude your visit with an interview with Admiral Caldwell, the Director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program. You will also be scheduled for a call with one of the nuclear-trained flag aviators stationed in the Pentagon or Crystal City. This provides you an opportunity to ask questions of someone who has made it through the program. LCDR John Actkinson, the SWO(N) Community Manager, will coordinate the interviews. Any further questions can be directed to john.actkinson@navy.mil.



AV(N) Career Planning

Officers selected for Major Command at Sea (Nuclear Power Pipeline) and approved by the Director, Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, will complete nuclear power training, be assigned as CVN Executive Officer and serve as Commanding Officer of a Major Command (Deep Draft) ship. They will ultimately form the pool from which CVN Commanding Officers will be selected. The CVN XO tour is managed to ensure a three-month separation between CO/XO turnovers while also ensuring a CVN XO gets to Deep Draft command PCO pipeline on schedule.

We are always available to discuss career planning and selection/screening board preparations with you. In trying to balance your personal desires and your professional needs, we have developed the following nominal timeline to assist you in career planning.

CVN PXO Nuclear Training Pipeline

- Six months Nuclear Power School: Charleston, S.C.
- Six months Nuclear Prototype: Ballston Spa, N.Y. (TDY) or Charleston, S.C. (PCS)

- One month CVN underway
- Six months CVN familiarization: NR PCO course (Washington, D.C.), SWOS PCO (Newport, R.I.), JMTC

CVN PCO Nuclear Training Pipeline

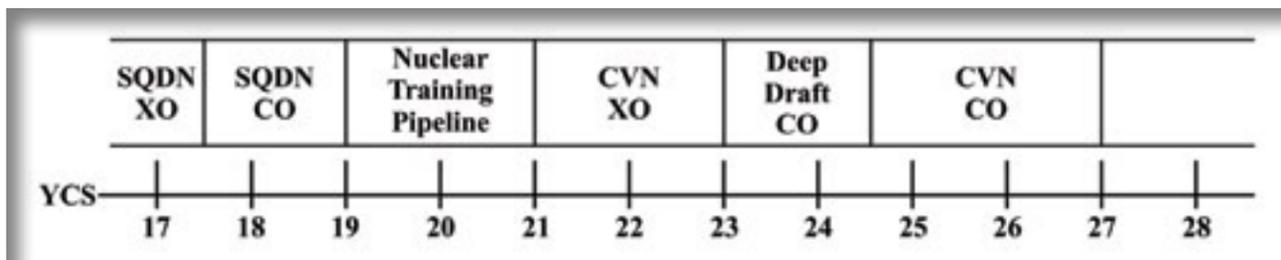
- Five-week NR PCO Refresher

Nominal Tour Lengths

- CVN XO - 24 months (may be shortened by Navy Personnel Command but cannot be less than 18 months)
- Deep Draft CO - 18 months (may vary as determined by Navy Personnel Command)
- CVN CO - 30 months (may vary between 24-48 months as determined by Navy Personnel Command)

Relief Policy Guidance

- The relief between CO/XO and CO/RO of every CVN must each be separated by at least three months.
- CO and RO turnover periods are required to be at least thirty (30) days long.



Nuclear Officer Bonus and Incentive Pay Program



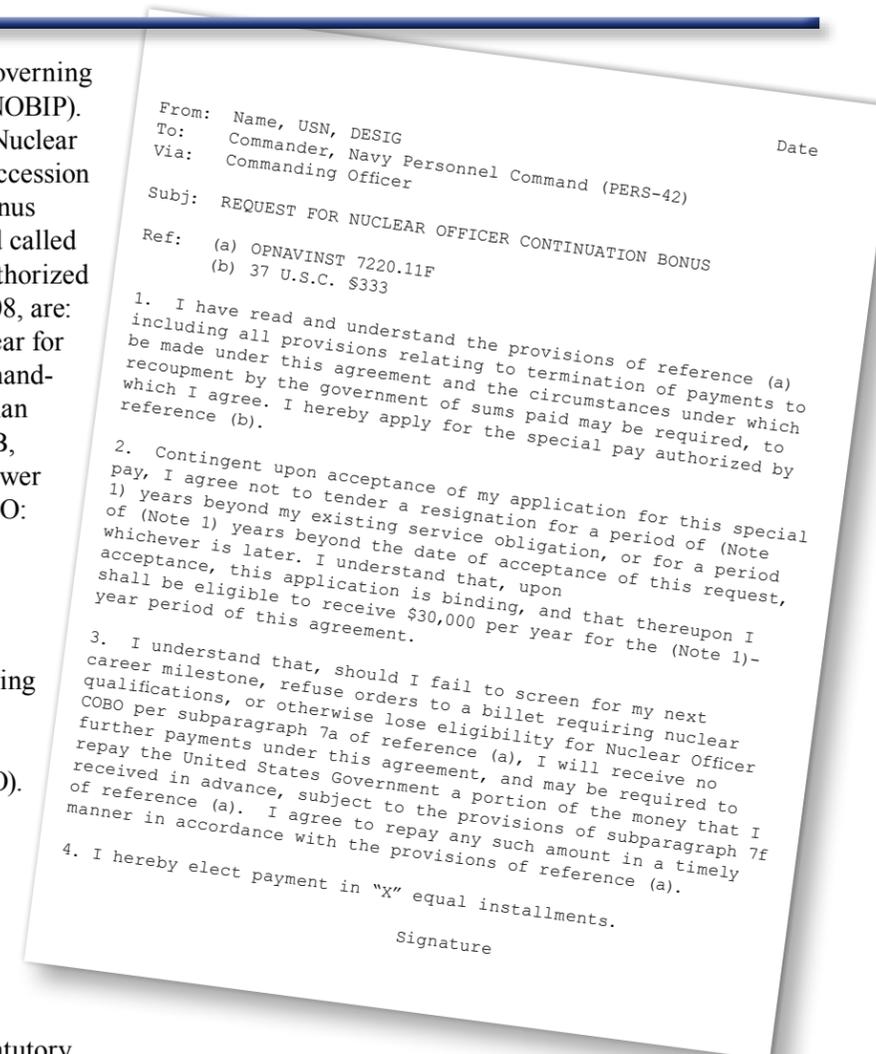
OPNAVINST 7220.11F is the current instruction governing Nuclear Officer Bonus and Incentive Pay Program (NOBIP). Special pays under the NOBIP umbrella include the Nuclear Officer Accession Bonus (NOAB), Nuclear Career Accession Bonus (NCAB), multi-year contract Continuation Bonus (COBO), or annual installments for services rendered called the Annual Incentive Pay (AIP). The current rates authorized by the Secretary of the Navy, effective 1 October 2008, are: \$30,000 per year for COBO contracts, \$12,500 per year for standard AIP, \$22,000 per year AIP for Major Command-serving/served officers and O-6 officers with more than 26 years of commissioned service, \$15,000 for NOAB, and \$2,000 for NCAB. The following paragraphs answer frequently asked questions concerning AIP and COBO:

Types of NOBIP

New accessions into the program receive a \$17,000 Nuclear Accession Bonus. \$15,000 is paid upon acceptance into the program (NOAB) and the remaining \$2,000 is paid on completion of prototype (NCAB). After graduation from prototype, you are eligible to apply for Nuclear Officer Continuation Bonus (COBO). You can sign a three, four, five, six, or seven-year contract (the term cannot extend past the thirtieth year of commissioned service) and will receive payments in equal annual installments. Qualified nuclear trained officers not under a COBO contract will receive the Nuclear Career Annual Incentive Pay (AIP) until retirement or promotion to flag rank. Officers promoted to flag rank, or those that reach statutory retirement, are eligible for a pro-rated share of AIP from 1 October (or the end of previous COBO contract) until the date of their promotion or retirement.

Negotiating Contracts for COBO

Each individual must carefully consider the appropriate length and timing of a COBO contract. A different combination of contracts will be required to maximize your bonus pay depending on when you enter the program. Some officers are eligible to execute a five-year contract upon graduation from prototype and an additional three-year contract prior to reaching the 27th anniversary of commissioning. Other officers may have to use a different combination. If COBO rates are changed while an officer is on a current COBO contract, they will be able to renegotiate a new contract for the higher rate. No contract may extend beyond 30 years of commissioned service. Please feel free to contact us if you have concerns or questions prior to signing your first/next COBO contract.



Payments for NOBIP

Defense Joint Military Pay System (DJMS) will automatically deposit COBO and AIP payments into the same account as the officer's regular pay. If you decide to put a percentage of your COBO into the Thrift Savings Plan (see page 15), remember it is considered a special pay and not a bonus pay!

NOBIP Points of Contact

If you have any additional questions or pay problems regarding NOBIP, please contact LCDR John Actkinson at john.actkinson@navy.mil, or you can mail it to Bureau of Naval Personnel (PERS-42D1), 5720 Integrity Drive, Millington, TN 38055-4210.

Incentive Pay Strategy



Continuation Bonus

In order to maximize your financial benefit, it is important to plan your Nuclear Officer Continuation Pay (COBO) strategy early and carefully. To be eligible for COBO, AV(N)s must have successfully completed prototype. Officers within one year of completing an existing COBO contract may apply for a new COBO contract to begin at the end of their current. However, OPNAVINST 7220.11F includes a "Rate-Change Clause" which allows a COBO contract to be renegotiated in the event of a rate change. Currently, a COBO agreement may not extend beyond the end of the thirtieth year of commissioned service (YCS). Because of this, AV(N)s must be especially vigilant in planning the timing and sequence of COBO contracts. Based on career timing, the best answer may be two shorter contracts vice one longer one. Please call/e-mail the SWO(N) Community Manager prior to signing any COBO contract so that we can quickly provide an independent second check of your contract timing and help ensure that you maximize your financial incentives.



While the bonus rate has periodically changed, the rate change (and associated renegotiation opportunity) is not guaranteed to occur at a specific periodicity. The best course of action is to plan agreements based upon a payment scheme that will maximize COBO under the current plan, and then make further adjustments later, if (or when) the rate changes again. Any renegotiation should occur after carefully considering the long-term implications of the shift in timing, as discussed above.

Transition from COBO to AIP

The difference in payment schedule between COBO and AIP should be kept in mind when an officer approaches the end of a COBO contract and plans to shift to AIP. COBO is paid in advance; AIP is paid at the end of the fiscal year for service already completed. This difference can create a gap of up to 23.9 months between bonus pay installments during the automatic transition from COBO to AIP, depending on

your specific COBO anniversary. Assuming that an officer is Major Command (Deep Draft) served or serving at the time of transition, the total difference in annual nuclear compensation will be small (\$30K versus \$22K), but the difference in payment timing can be an unexpected, but totally predictable, surprise!

As an example, an officer on a four-year contract that started 1 October 2009 would be obligated until 30 September 2013, but would receive the last COBO payment on 1 October 2012. If they decided to transition to AIP, their first AIP payment would be paid on 30 September 2014.

Further AIP installments would be made on 30 September of subsequent fiscal years until retirement or promotion to flag rank. You must be in the Navy on 30 September to receive AIP. Only those that reach statutory retirement are authorized a partial payment if they retire before 30 September.

Aviation Career Continuation Pay (ACCP) Update

The O-5 Aviation Command Retention Bonus (ACRB) is back! Eligibility begins upon assumption of initial O-5 command and ends at outgoing Change of Command from that tour. ACRB should not interfere with NOBIP eligibility in any way. For ACRB program details, please visit <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/officer/Detailing/aviation/OCM/Pages/ACIP.aspx>.

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)



TSP is a retirement savings and investment plan that offers the same type of savings and tax benefits as many 401(k) plans. It is a defined contribution plan. The retirement income that you receive from your TSP account will depend on how much you have contributed to your account during your working years and the earnings on those contributions.

Contribution Rules

There is no maximum percentage of base pay that may be contributed, only a maximum dollar cap. Base pay contributions are deducted monthly. Additional funds cannot

be contributed by sending a check to the TSP. Once pay has been received, you cannot contribute any of it to the TSP. However, you may contribute 100% of Special/Incentive Pays and Bonuses up to the yearly maximum tax deferred cap of \$18,500 for 2018. You must already be contributing from basic pay in order to contribute from a bonus.

More Information

The TSP website: www.tsp.gov.

Type Of Pay	TSP Category
Continuation Bonus (COBO)	Special Pay
Annual Incentive Pay (AIP)	Bonus Pay
Nuclear Career Accession Bonus (NCAB)	Bonus Pay
Career Sea Pay	Special Pay
Aviation Career Incentive Pay	Incentive Pay
Surface Warfare Officer Department Head Retention Bonus (SWO DHRB)	Special Pay
Surface Warfare Critical LCDR retention Bonus (SWO LRB)	Special Pay



One Aviator's Perspective on the AV(N) Pipeline...



Congratulations on being selected for the nuclear power program. If you are like we were, you have lots of questions and uncertainties about the program. This letter is intended to address both. If this doesn't answer them all or you just want to talk to someone that is going through it right now call down to the Power School PXO office at Charleston (843) 574-8116. Believe us, any AV(N) Commander who answers would really like to take a study break and talk to someone in the Fleet! Additionally, most of the recent graduates can be found at the common e-mail address: xo@cvnXX.navy.mil. Yes, XX is where the hull number goes.

still very hard, but the instructors are definitely on your side. The Nuclear Power community is a very interesting culture, and we've found much to admire in how they do business.

Interviews

The Surface Nuclear Program Manager (who has always been very helpful to us) will give you all the physical details on the Naval Reactors interviews. The interviewers are not hostile, but will try to gain insight into how you think, your integrity, your ability to handle difficult choices, your technical background, etc. Don't study how to derive $E=mc^2$.

Just think in advance about your overall command philosophy and how you approach safety and quality, etc. If you were like we were, you have a few courses in college that might not have gone so well. The interviewers will have your transcripts, and will ask about those, so it might be worth the time to think about answers to those. Other typical questions might be:

"What is the toughest problem you've ever had?"
"What is the most difficult thing you've ever done?" (Try to do better than, "Landing

on a ship at night.")

"Why do you want to get into this program?"

"Why do you think you can handle this program?"

If you made it through command, and are the least bit introspective, you'll do just fine. Be yourself.

As you progress through the program, you will find that the fundamental tenets of the nuclear power program are:

- Integrity – first on the list for a reason
- Level of knowledge
- Formality in communications, something we aviators are not used to

- Informed procedural compliance
 - A questioning attitude
- Keep these things in the back of your mind in your interview, but I wouldn't spout them.

Once accepted by Naval Reactors, you will get an accession bonus (\$15,000), and will be slated immediately to a CVN. A common thread throughout the training is that all the instructors (officers and enlisted) want "the Commanders" to pass. Getting you through is a priority... as long as you're working hard. The carrier you are slated to should mail you a nametag/ballcap. If not, call them, it will help your morale tremendously.

Preparation for Charleston

There are those who will tell you to not study--just go play golf. We recommend a little of both if you have the time. The Schaum's Outline series that Nuclear Power School recommends (and can send to you) are pretty good, but we found them a bit daunting. In the end, we really only looked at math and scraped the rust off the brain. It kind of got the brain engaged again. Like all the courses, the math course moves really fast, so it will bypass what you pre-studied very quickly anyway. Look at trigonometry, imaginary numbers, integrals, and differential equations if you can. A little basic circuits in EE and some basic thermodynamics wouldn't hurt, especially if you were like us and had very little of that over the past twenty years or so. The purpose isn't to get super smart before you get there - it's more to brush out a few cobwebs. Studying a little before we went was at least a big confidence builder for us as we reentered the academic environment. Two points: first, get in touch with Nuclear Power School - they will help you with any study recommendations. And second, don't overdo it. It is also important to show up well-rested and ready to go.

Calculators. When you get there, Nuclear Power School will provide a list of recommended calculators, abundant and

cheap at the exchange/NEX-minimart. If you have one that converts rectangular coordinates to polar coordinates easily, you are set.

Nuclear Power School

As you know, you are going to have to resign yourself to a busy seven months (including pre-school) in Charleston. The course is very well laid out, and you will be impressed as you move along with how well everything is synchronized. It is extremely interesting material - it is only the hard work required to master it, and the anxiety over tests that makes it daunting and tedious. Most agree that the pace of the material is worse than the difficulty, although there is plenty of difficulty.

Preschool is three weeks, and consists of physics, thermodynamics, and math. It is a freebie, and almost



First, let us assure you that if you apply yourself, you will get through the program. Your record was screened by nuclear trained officers before the selection board picked you, so you have what it takes. By no means were we the smartest guys in the program, far from it, but with the help of the smart JOs in your class and the instructors we made it and so will you.

Let us also tell you that you will hear varying opinions on how friendly the program is towards aviators. You have been specifically selected and the program knows it. They want to see you succeed and will do just about anything to help make sure you do. Which is not to sugar coat it - the program is

mirrors the first three weeks of the real thing. You will be in class with Surface Warfare qualified Lieutenant (junior grade) officers that have completed a 21-month division officer tour on a conventional ship. You don't have to take notes (PXOs are given the instructor notes--a great deal!). Use this time to build a routine. As in regular school, you will be learning three subjects at a time.

You will have a free week after pre-school. The good news is that you will be allowed to study the Reactor Plant Systems (RPS) notes (which the junior officers don't get until they start). RPS is a one-week course that is sheer memorization of drawings and facts. We took a break for a couple of days



and then worked hard at the end of the week to get ahead. Taking a little time is good because when it starts - it really starts. The junior officers will underestimate how exacting Nuclear Power School is about grading this first test taken at the end of the first week--a wake up call for them (by design), but you will do fine, and get off to a good grade point average start. It is a one hour test and the time goes really fast.

The subjects in Charleston include the aforementioned RPS, math, physics, thermodynamics, electrical engineering, radiological fundamentals, chemistry, materials, reactor dynamics, core construction, and aspects of reactor plant operations. All of these courses will be used throughout each phase of your training. The junior officers continue to study a large portion of these courses after they get to the Fleet. We found ourselves using a lot of the knowledge we learned continuously through the pipeline and our instructors

work with you anytime. They are motivated to get their students through.

- Some instructors are direct input Ensigns, straight out of college, who will leave the Navy when their tour is over. As such, their military bearing is not always the greatest - you'll get over it.
- Bring your lunch every day - you will have your own office with reefer and coffee mess (you supply the pot). You actually get treated like a Commander (only the CO of the school was senior to us). You actually have a reserved parking spot!
- Bring mechanical pencils, a ruler, erasers, a confidential stamp, and lots of paper for homework problems. We used three-ring binders to keep notes and homework in. We used 3x5 cards extensively to study from - mostly formulas and lists - you will memorize a lot of lists. We

had huge stacks at the end.

• One big key to success is being organized. It's half the battle. For example, we would keep summary sheets of all the relevant formulas in a particular subject for study before a test (and the comprehensive exam).

• Do as many homework problems as you can in every subject. Unless you're a rocket scientist from way back, you won't be able to complete all the homework. However, since PXOs get the homework key, make sure you at least look at all the problems so that you

don't get a "curve ball" on any exams. You'll be expected to do a lot of studying outside of class. Even though you'll hear a number of hours bantered about, just so long as you're doing well, they won't bug you.

- Find a routine. Some people went home at about 1630 for a run and dinner, then came back and studied from 1900-2100 or later. What worked for us was to run at lunch and clear the brain for the afternoon of class, then study through to about 1900 or so then be done for the day. Fridays we were ready for Happy Hour. On heavy weekends, we studied the whole weekend with Saturday and Sunday night off. On light weekends, we would

study Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon, with 1200-1200 Saturday-Sunday off.

- Our hard sayings log/fun things to do book should be around someplace. You will definitely want to keep your sense of humor up. We really like reading the old stuff written by current Flag Officers and Carrier COs as well as adding our own. Keep it up!
- One of us brought our family and one was a geobachelor, and each person has their own situation. There are pros and cons to both that are too long to list here. We strongly urge talking to those who have done each path and make your decision from there. Obviously, both ways work.
- There is no gouge. Don't even try.
- You will have around 24 tests. They average one per week, but there are some "trifectas" where they are bunched. Most are two hours, but some of the finals are three hours. Successive tests in a subject include about one-quarter devoted to review from past tests. They want you to know everything. The comprehensive exam is four hours at the end.
- The key to doing well during these tests is time management and not getting intimidated by the questions. Never leave a question blank, ever. The gods of partial credit will be on your side - remember, your instructors want you to pass, but will not give anything away - you have to give them the opportunity to help you. Some of the tests are butt kickers for time. Work fast, try to check your work if you can.
- You will wear uniform of the day once a week, usually on Fridays, and khakis the rest of the time. Leather flight jackets are permitted (it gets cold inside the building sometimes).
- Your grades are watched closely down there - you will get tired of it, but there's nothing you can do. All the instructors know right away how the PXOs did on

the exam. Your study time is monitored as part of the building access swipe card system.

Your instructors try to lay a sound engineering foundation at Nuclear Power School. Afterwards they don't want to spend time on you in class - they just put a book in front of your face and tell you to learn it. The system works very well - it gives you great confidence in your ability to analyze any situation from a technical standpoint. Very important to the program - operators in stressful situations can make decisions based on sound understanding when they are over the horizon from the experts.

Charleston can be quite the emotional roller coaster, but we can assure you that you can make it through this place (if we did, you can). It's just a bit painful for a few months. It is one of those experiences that teaches you that you are capable



continued to build on and test the fundamentals. We were still using information learned in Power School nearly a year later towards the end of training at Naval Reactors in D.C. It's important that you learn this material and don't "flush" it after the test. The material never goes away (except for the math). All of the material may seem intimidating, but you'll do fine.

A few notes:

- If you have a problem in a subject, Nuclear Power School will go one on one with you to get you through as long as you show you are working. All the instructors will

of a lot more than you ever thought. Having other aviators around makes all the difference in the world. Another key to success - do it their way. It's the old "wrestling with a pig" argument. Moreover, they've been doing it for years, and they really know how to train nuclear officers. You may not agree with the methodology but you can't change it so don't waste your time and energy trying.

Power School is a program you can get through - it just takes a lot of hard work - something you're already used to at this point. If you don't understand something, get help from the instructor immediately. If you wait even a day, there will be so much additional material, you'll be way behind. Make

sure you get an instructor to come and visit before each test to throw additional problems at you (run time for the whole group of commanders). You'll be surprised how much it helps (note: these will not be gouge sessions).

Prototype

Prototype is a bit different. Much more hands-on and the kind of "touchy-feely" that you're used to. You'll need a couple of sets of the new Navy Working Uniform. Do yourself a favor and if you don't already own some, get them ahead of time and avoid the "order by mail" routine. The commanders will be on shift work, right alongside the JO's and Sailors. The exams seem a bit easier than power school, but much longer. Since you're all "white board kings," the final oral board should go well.

hurdles are a four-hour "midterm" exam, a final watch board (casualties), an eight-hour final, and a final oral board. NR reps are at the final watch board and oral boards, which are big deals. You are on rotating shift work once you go "in-hull," which is painful, but you get more time off than you had at Nuclear Power School. The academics are there, but are much less stressful. The key is "staying ahead of the curve" - they track your PQS progress (since they have those bar code readers), and expect you to be at certain point total every day. Very self-paced. Prototype can be frustrating, but it's good to finally get your hands on one of these things and run it. You'll do much better than the Ensigns at watch standing, for obvious reasons.

When you are finished, you can start collecting your Nuclear Officer Incentive Pay (NOIP), as well as getting the rest (\$2,000) of your accession bonus. Take a look at the bonus wording before you sign on the dotted line. Each person may need to sign up for a different number of years in order to maximize bucks. For the old guys, take the longest you can. For the not so old guys, two different contracts will give you more years of big bucks. Don't expect prototype to know what is best for you, call the Surface Nuclear Community Manager and get individualized advice.

While we're talking about bonuses, you will also be happy to know that you may be eligible to draw \$10,000 per year in

Aviation Career Continuation Pay (ACCP) at the same time you are drawing NOIP. Make sure you talk to the NPC POCs about bonuses because you need to sign aviation and nuclear bonus contracts in the right sequence and the rules have recently changed for ACCP.

CVN

You will next spend about a month on a CVN. Here, you will read the reactor plant manuals, crawl all over the plant, watch drills, get lectures, and basically hang around getting smart on the carrier plant. It is a tremendous relief to be done with prototype and power school, and good to be around

aviators again and back underway. We found this to be the best part of the training. Make the most of this time that you can. The CVN ride is critical to the last part of your training, at Naval Reactors (NR). Get the learning objectives from the XO and answer them before you get to NR. That will make NR less onerous. Dedicate most of your time in the plant and ask questions which will allow you to see how your Nuclear Power School and Prototype training, with its emphasis on submarines, applies to the CVN plant. The more time you spend in the plant, the easier it will be to visualize systems at NR. Especially, look at systems and memorize the system drawings you will be expected to know at the Naval Reactors PCO course in D.C. The Reactor Training Assistant (RTA) will have a recommended study schedule, a Basic Quals (BNEQ) handbook, and subject matter experts to support you. You will rapidly grasp the CVN plant because of the similarities between all Navy plants and your now solid understanding. The CVN plant is huge and much cleaner and newer than the plant at Prototype. Wandering around and comparing and contrasting the plant with a submarine is almost fun!

Naval Reactors

Finally, you'll go to NR for the three-month PCO course. You are mixed with submarine PCOs and CVN PROs. Challenging, but you are treated like a trusted agent. You progress through a series of courses (fluid systems on your plant, electrical systems, thermodynamics, reactor theory, materials, reactor safety, chemistry and radcon). Sound familiar? It is interesting to see the guys who actually designed these things. You have a bunch of tests again, and two oral boards. There is also the eight-hour written final. The academics are not as stressful as Charleston, but there is some pucker factor. The final is long and covers everything you've learned so far, but is a real confidence builder. Establish a solid base during your 30-day CVN ride and you'll have no problem.

Then you're done! You will find the program to be frustrating, a test of your stamina, very interesting, and very rewarding. As "Jaws" Winnefeld said, "It will change your

life." Finally, please remember that the nuclear-trained aviator community is very closely knit. They all know what we've been through, and you're about to go through. You will hear this from everyone, but if you ever need any help, or a morale check, or some reassurance that you will make it through, call someone!

General Notes on the AV(N) Pipeline

Pay: If you elect to go to Charleston for Nuclear Power School and New York for prototype, you will receive per diem throughout the pipeline, which is a great deal. However, due to the TDY nature, pay can be an issue at times. CVN Placement and the nuclear training staffs are there each step of the way to handle any problems.

Medical: Due to the demanding schedule and the short time at each training command, handling medical issues



You begin with five weeks of "ground school" studying systems (like ARPO in Power school), Radiological Controls, and Chemistry. Then you split off from the junior officers and jump right on the boat. In Charleston (which is a great city), you will be qualifying as Engineering Officer of the Watch (EOOW) on an old submarine. There is a huge PQS book you get signatures in (they use a wand system with bar codes to verify signatures). The signatures can be systems knowledge (signed off by Petty Officers after you demonstrate your knowledge to them - it feels funny, but it works) or actual watchstanding. You will stand every watch on the boat, and will stand about five to seven EOOW watches. The big

takes more forethought and coordination than you're probably used to. Additionally, if you bring your family with you, ensure they are properly enrolled in TRICARE at each stop. It may be easier to disenroll/enroll at each command. Regardless, make sure you talk to a TRICARE expert before you start the pipeline.

The biggest thing to remember is that it's a tough program, but guys a lot dumber than you have made it through! Always keep your sense of humor, no matter how hard it may seem!

Good luck and all the best,
From all the AV(N)s that have gone before you

Words of Wisdom from AV(N)s Around the Fleet



“I never seriously considered the nuke program AV(N) up until the time the detailers encouraged me to submit a “pick me” letter toward the end of my CO tour. I figured that with my college grades I would never be an eligible candidate. Turns out I was correct. I didn’t have the grades to be accepted initially. I took that as a challenge and went back to school to improve my grades. So post-command I found myself back in school for the next two semesters taking night classes after work. I submitted better grades to replace the grades that were sub-par, and on the next AMCSB I was selected. And then, things got hard. I’ll be honest, it wasn’t

MAKE it.

So why should you accept this challenge when you can make an easier choice? Well, if you are willing to work hard, are committed to applying yourself 100% everyday and want to be challenged to think and learn beyond anything you’ve probably ever done before - this is a program for you. The highlight is the opportunity to lead sailors for the rest of your career on our nation’s capital ships. You will learn to analyze problems in a different way. You will work with some of the intellectually brightest officers and enlisted sailors our nation can produce. You will be proud of yourself, our Navy and our country for the incredible feat of engineering and war fighting capability that you will be leading. As my wife told me, “If you are going to stay in the Navy, go big or get out.” I made my choice.

So what are you going to do?”

-P-CVN Executive Officer

-P-CVN Executive Officer



“The NR PCO course is just over three months long. You’ll attend the course with submarine PCOs and CVN PROs, and

occasionally you’ll also overlap with CVN PCOs who are coming through for a refresher on their way to command. Although the material isn’t conceptually challenging, the sheer volume of information you’ll need to assimilate makes the course the ultimate crucible for the AVN pipeline. This is where all your prior training as an aviator, at Nuke School, Prototype and the CVN ride will all converge, and where you’ll relearn fluid and electrical systems, nuclear theory, reactor design, chemistry and radiological controls, material science, and many other topics... all as they directly apply to the actual ship you’ll be reporting to. You will be taught by the absolute best that Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program

has to offer - in many cases, the actual senior engineers who were directly involved in the design and maintenance of your platform. Sea-returnee junior officers will be readily available to help you learn, but ultimately (like every other stop in the pipeline), it’s on you to put in the effort and long hours. You’ll also be exposed to the “bigger picture” of how NR expects you to lead your crew and manage your reactor plant; topics like public affairs interaction and political considerations are heavily emphasized towards the conclusion of the course.

As with Nuke School, you will be challenged each week with either a quiz or a test (mostly closed book, taken on your own time). In addition to an extensive written final exam, you will undergo a very comprehensive Technical Oral Board (one versus Many, facing off against those same engineers), as well as a Final Oral Board (two or three versus Many, facing off against senior leadership at NR); both boards were easily the most challenging academic evaluations of the entire pipeline. Although the course is tremendously challenging, the keys to success are dedicated effort in the schools leading up to NR and making the most of your 30-day CVN ride. When you walk away from NR, you’ll be walking away with a heightened sense of confidence.

In addition to completing the nuclear-specific portions of the AVN pipeline, you will also be required to complete several other stops along the way. You’ll go through the CVN PXO curriculum at SWOS, where you’ll be reintroduced to Rules of the Road, to general ship handling principles (the simulators are actually pretty good and can be configured for virtually any port you could drive a CVN in and out of) and get a broad overview of programs you’ll be heavily responsible for - like 3M, Zone Inspection Program, Damage Control and other Training, ATFP and Supply programs. You won’t leave Newport as a SME in anything but the course will give you newfound appreciation of how deep the water is as a newly-reporting XO (and touch upon all the things you probably avoided in your former life as a CVW aviator). In addition to SWOS, you’ll also visit

the TYCOM and PERS, in order to get a better picture of the upcoming challenges the ship you’re reporting to will be facing. Again, these give you broadbrush perspective – it’ll be up to you to focus your effort once you get there.”

-CVN Executive Officer



“Don’t be intimidated by what you don’t know about the pipeline. Nuke School is challenging, but you will get through it and enjoy the rewards on the other side. I brought my family with me to Charleston and we had a great time. I managed to get away for several weekends backpacking and exploring the area with the family and even had a couple



easy. There were some bleak, challenging times getting through the challenges of a graduate-level engineering course of study in 18 months. I worked harder to graduate from this program over the last year and a half than for anything else I have ever done in my career. Looking back I’d say its like SERE school. Glad I went, but I wouldn’t ever do that again. But I DID make it.

I am not the poster child for natural academic prowess that will get you through a course of study of this academic rigor. I worked hard and got lots of tutelage when I needed it. Nobody is going to give you anything in this program, but if you work hard you will get what you need and you WILL

weeks off for the holidays and between I-stops. You’ll of course complain along the way (we all do) but we all have buddies that have harder staff jobs at the Pentagon. The XO job has also proven to be both challenging and rewarding. You’ll learn more about a CVN than you ever thought possible, and you’ll be impressed with the talent the Bureau sends you to help run it. If you enjoy Naval Aviation and want to continue to be part of it’s leadership in the future then you should definitely consider the AVN track.”

-CVN Executive Officer



"I started out not wanting the nuclear pipeline, but in hindsight I wouldn't have traded it for any other path. At the time, my decision to go down the "nuke" path came down to enjoying Squadron command, wanting to command again and not willing to make a career decision on anecdotal information and hearsay. While I certainly would not want to repeat the training pipeline, I would not let the threat of academics force a decision. You will get through it... a rock like me did... and I continue to be amazed at how it all works. I truly believe you have to understand it to make the right decisions and have any credibility with the Sailors in Reactor Department.

I know the company that I keep in this program, and realize that the competition for a CVN is fierce, but regardless of my selection to command a CVN, I would have done the same thing for the opportunities that the XO and Deep Draft CO gave me, they are awesome jobs. Similarly, when you compare the different tracks to command, you won't find a more operational one than the Nuclear Power program. For me with the exception of nuke school, I have been in the operational forces for 11 straight years starting with Squadron XO, and I have not spent any time languishing on a staff awaiting the next job and it has been awesome. Whether it is a Deep Draft or a Carrier, it is an awesome feeling to take a ship underway and sail the sea. Combine that with the flying I am now able to do and the number of Sailors I am fortunate to lead every day, and I have the best job in the Navy."

- CVN Commanding Officer



"I'll never forget the phone call to notify me that I had been selected for the Aviation Nuclear Power pipeline... my knees literally started to shake. I was apprehensive about the school, but it didn't take long to realize how hard the program would work to make me be successful. It was far from easy, yet it didn't break my work-life balance or keep me from seeing my family. The pipeline prepares you extremely well on all aspects of nuclear power and when I arrived for my XO tour, I quickly realized that I had a lot to learn about the other departments as well. Within two weeks of reporting as XO, the CO went on leave. I was the acting CO in the shipyard, trying to get my arms around the scope of my new job. I'm still amazed at the level of trust and confidence that the CO placed in me. I was empowered to "run the ship." That aspect combined with an extremely talented group of HODs made my XO tour one of the best in my career.

Deep draft command was fantastic and opened my eyes to the AMPHIB mission. I found this to be much more challenging than my XO tour or even my O-5 Command

tour, as the wardroom and the CPO Mess were much smaller and significantly less experienced than the CVN equivalent. While challenging, it was also incredibly rewarding running the ship and training the junior officers. I wasn't overly confident in my ship handling skills when I arrived, and I quickly realized that I was much better prepared than I thought. I was fortunate to have plenty of at-sea time and with AMPHIBs, much of that was in shallow water close to shore.

As a CVN CO, I fully understand the rigor of the AVN pipeline. I feel extremely well prepared, technically, organizationally, operationally and as a leader. At this stage "I've seen some things," so I don't get surprised too often, I rely on my XO and I work to stay focused on the strategic vision for the ship and crew. I have absolutely no regrets about being an AVN. The opportunity to effect change and to make a difference in the lives of our Sailors and for the nation as a CVN Commanding Officer is unrivalled. This will be a tough act to follow in or out of uniform."

- CVN Commanding Officer



"The AVN pipeline provides the broadest training and most comprehensive leadership opportunities in the Navy, bar none. Throughout the journey from "ground school" in Charleston to running 20 departments as a CVN XO to commanding a ship at sea and managing a major maintenance availability, the flight discipline ingrained from early squadron days combined with the critical self-assessment that underpins Navy Nuclear Power allow you to make a positive impact our Sailors and our Navy. I cannot imagine a more rewarding career path."

- CVN Commanding Officer



"The Aviation Nuclear Power pipeline is arguably the most challenging program we have in the aviation community. After having spent an entire career flying naval aircraft, the shift in platform and mindset is monumental. But the discipline and drive one develops over a flying career prepares you well for the challenge. Though some candidates may doubt their academic qualification, the Bureau folks do a very good scrub of officer records and rest assured, if they tell you you're qualified, you are (I'm certainly a living example of that concept).

Nuke power is school is tough. With exception of a handful of CVN PXO's that have gone through the program, most can

expect to put in time after class to become comfortable with the material. None of the course work is particularly difficult, but the volume of information you're responsible for is huge. In power school math, for example, you start with middle-school algebra and in 10 days you're into fourth semester college differential equations. This is the typical pace in power school and through most of your training. But it can be done.

Prototype takes on a more operational focus, the phase wherein you actually work in a live plant. You're assigned to shift work and you're responsible for completing PQS. Again, it's not rocket science, but most of us work at an aggressive pace to get through quickly and get to the next phase, 30-days underway on a CVN under the tutelage of the Big XO. Ready to "get back to the fleet," the potential PXO pitfall is viewing this as an opportunity to get reacquainted with the smell of JP-5 burning and the sound of freedom rather than its true purpose - learning your way around the A4W propulsion plant. The 30-day underway is the lead-in for the final phase of your nuclear journey, 13 weeks attending the Naval Reactors (NR or NAVSEA 08) PCO course. Although you're a PXO, you're in the PCO course because you're being trained to take command of an aircraft carrier. If you're fortunate enough to actually be selected for sequential command at sea of a CVN you'll go through the five-week PCO refresher course. Of course interspersed through this lengthy process are various other courses of instruction; legal, SWOS, command leadership, etc.

Finally the day arrives, your training is complete and you report as "Big XO." Although the price of admission has been high you're now ready to reap the rewards - you're now in charge of one of our nation's capital ships. You're not in command, but make no mistake; you are "in charge!" Compare yourself to a City Manager, the CO being the Mayor, or CEO of a large company, the CO the CEO, and you are the one making this complex organization move forward and run smoothly. You orchestrate the operations of an airport, utilities department (power, water, and sewage), fire department, police department, aircraft repair facility, telecommunications, a hospital (complete with dentistry), longshoremen (okay, a bit of a stretch), logistics and retail infrastructure, and of course a Starbucks! It's all here and you alone can muster all 3,000 people running this with one announcement on the 1MC. Sign up now! The price of admission is worth it!

Twenty-four months later your CVN XO tour is over and you're off to command of your own ship; your "deep draft" command. You're tired, but you've been supported by 18 department heads in milestone tours and who've, for the most part, been selected for this tour by their communities. So they've helped you get through the challenges. You surely are tired; but nothing that a few days of sleeping in won't fix.

You've commanded a squadron, so you know executive

leadership and the virtues of command. You just completed a CVN XO tour, so you know how to run a ship. In your deep draft tour you put it all together. For the first time, you're in command of a ship underway and all eyes are on you. With exception of a few of our deep draft ships, you're senior by about eight years to the next senior officer, your SWO XO. You're expected to be the best ship handler and interestingly enough, you probably are. You mastered the three dimensional world of your previous command tour. In the two dimensional world which you now command in, you quickly "get it." "It" is the concept of commanding a ship at sea. In fact, you had when you arrived. Up to this point this is the best tour of your Navy career... that is, up to the point you get the phone call from the first flag officer in your chain of command to congratulate you on selection for CVN command. It's a bit early in my CVN command tour to say with absolute certainty, but from where I sit, I can't think of a better crowning achievement to a naval aviation career!"

- CVN Commanding Officer



CVN Shipyard Availability Schedule



The current CVN overhaul schedule is provided below for planning purposes. Dates are subject to change.

CVN 68 USS <i>Nimitz</i>	DPIA	March 2018 - May 2019
CVN 69 USS <i>Dwight D. Eisenhower</i>	PIA	September 2020 - March 2021
CVN 70 USS <i>Carl Vinson</i>	DPIA	March 2019 - July 2020
CVN 71 USS <i>Theodore Roosevelt</i>	PIA	July 2018 - January 2019
CVN 72 USS <i>Abraham Lincoln</i>	PIA	May 2020 - November 2020
CVN 73 USS <i>George Washington</i>	RCOH	Present - August 2021
CVN 74 USS <i>John C. Stennis</i>	RCOH	September 2020 - January 2025
CVN 75 USS <i>Harry S. Truman</i>	PIA	March 2020 - September 2020
CVN 76 USS <i>Ronald Reagan</i>	SRA	Yearly January - May
CVN 77 USS <i>George H.W. Bush</i>	DPIA	November 2018 - March 2020
CVN 78 USS <i>Gerald R. Ford</i>	PSA/SRA	March 2018 - January 2019

PIA – Planned Incremental Availability
 DPIA – Docking Planned Incremental Availability
 SRA – Selected Restricted Availability
 RCOH – Refueling Complex Overhaul
 PSA – Post Shakedown Availability

Joint Professional Military Education



We fight as a Joint Force, and pursuing Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) is an important part of every officer's professional development. Officers should strive to achieve Level III Joint Qualified Officer (JQO) status by completing JPME Phases I and II, as well as a tour in a JCS-approved Joint Duty Assignment. **Early completion of joint requirements opens up later career opportunities and will likely be a discriminator when selecting officers for the AV(N) program and sequential CVN command at the Aviation Major Command Screening Board.** The governing documents for Joint Qualifications are DoDI 1300.19 and CJCSI 1330.05.

SWO(N) MENTORING NOTE: Although JPME Phase I is only required of officers before they take Commander Command, it is still a discriminator at selection boards and officers should strive for early completion to increase their competitiveness.

In-Residence JPME Phase I

U.S. War Colleges and select foreign war colleges award completion of JPME Phase I. Some programs also offer accredited Master's Degrees. The PERS-440 website provides a wealth of detailed information on Service College,

Foreign Service College, and Fellowship opportunities. <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/officer/Detailing/jointofficer/Pages/default.aspx>.

Naval Command and Staff Newport, R.I.
 August (10 mos)
 October (12 mos)
 January (12 mos)
<http://www.usnwc.edu/academics/colleges/cde/overview.aspx>

USMC Command and Staff Quantico, Va.
 August (10 mos)
<http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/>

Army Command and Staff Fort Leavenworth, Ks.
 January (12 mos)
 July (12 mos)
www.cgsc.edu

Air Command and Staff Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 July (12 mos)
<http://acsc.maxwell.af.mil/>

Naval Postgraduate School offers four courses comprising a joint education curriculum leading to JPME Phase I certification.

Non-Residence JPME Phase I

Naval War College

Three non-residence opportunities to complete JPME Phase I are available through the Naval War College. The structure of each program consists of three courses: Strategy and Policy, National Security and Decision Making, and Joint Military Operations. More information is available at <http://www.usnwc.edu/Students/College-of-Distance-Education.aspx>.

- Fleet Seminar** (classroom seminars at designated remote sites). Coursework is completed through weekly three-hour sessions from August to May. Open to O-3s and senior. Training locations include 20 Fleet-concentration areas and officers can transfer between sites during or between courses.
- Web-enabled correspondence** (online group seminars). Designed to be completed in 12-18 months, and closely aligned with the Naval Command and Staff College in-residence and Fleet Seminar curriculums for O-4s and O-3s. In order to attend graduation in June, students must complete all course requirements by 30 April.
- CD-ROM Based Correspondence** (O-3 and senior). Designed to be completed in less than 12 months. Enrollment constitutes a commitment to a minimum of two study periods of three or more hours each week. Online applications should be filled out at least six months prior to course start date.

Air Force Command and Staff College

Offers a CD-ROM and internet-based JPME Phase I correspondence course which can be completed in 6-18 months. The college will send books, a CD-ROM, and instructions for accessing lectures via the school's web site. Applicants must be O-4 select or above to be eligible. The College is very supportive of Navy students but does have a quota limit. Be careful to not confuse this course with a similar Air War College course, which does not offer JPME Phase I credit.
<http://acsc.maxwell.af.mil/distance-learning.asp>
 Phone: (334) 953-7901 DSN: 493-7901 or Toll Free: (800) 316-7042.

JPME Phase II

National War College (NWC), Washington, D.C.
Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF), Washington, D.C.

NWC conducts a senior-level course of study in national security strategy and national security policy process. ICAF conducts an executive-level course dealing with the resource component of national power, with special emphasis on material acquisition and joint logistics, and their integration into national security strategy for peace and war. Both schools grant a Master's Degree and convene in August. <http://www.ndu.edu/colleges.cfm>

Joint Forces Staff College / Joint Advanced Warfighting School (JAWS), Norfolk, Va.

JAWS educates selected O-4s and O-5s in the art and



science of joint, interagency and multinational planning and warfighting at the strategic-operational level of war as directed by the CJCS Officer Professional Military Education Policy. JAWS awards Service Intermediate or Senior Level College credit, and JPME Phase I & II credit. JAWS is undergoing accreditation to award a Master of Science degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy.

Two JAWS seminars are organized with twelve students in each seminar. Each seminar consists of four Army students, four Air force students, three Navy students and a Marine student. Students are assigned to seminars with intent to provide an optimum mix of Service, grade, experience, specialty and expected follow-on assignment potential.

Each seminar is conducted in collaborative learning and collaborative information environment with current information technology tools available at student desktops in the classrooms. http://www.jfsc.ndu.edu/schools_programs/jaws/default.asp

Joint Forces Staff College / Joint and Combined Warfighting School (JFSC/JCWS), Norfolk, Va.

JCWS-I is a 10-week school for selected O-4s and above who have completed JPME Phase I. CJCSI 1800.01C, Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP), furnishes the basis for JCWS. <http://www.jfsc.ndu.edu/>

Service War Colleges

Officers attending the senior course at any of the four service colleges will receive Phase II credit. Phase I completion is a pre-requisite for attending the senior course, although there is a waiver process for a small number of officers. Officers must be O-5(Sel) or senior.

Naval War College August (10 mos)
Newport, R.I. November (12 mos)
www.usnwc.edu February (12 mos)

Marine Corps War College August (10 mos)
Quantico, Va.
<http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/mcwar/>

Army War College July (12 mos)
Carlisle, Penn.
<http://carlisle-www.army.mil/>

Air War College July (12 mos)
Maxwell AFB, Ala.
<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/curriculum.htm>

Joint Duty Assignments

Joint duty assignments are those billets listed on the Joint Duty Assignment List (JDAL). JDAL billets are designated for LCDR and senior; however, LTs serving in a LCDR JDAL billet for the prescribed tour length will receive joint duty credit. While a full tour is three years, tour lengths may be shortened for officers designated as having a Critical Operational Specialty (COS) after 22-months (day-for-day) service in a joint billet.

The new Joint Qualification System provides an alternate path to joint duty completion through a points system, with points awarded for joint duty in billets not on the JDAL. Officers that serve in a non-JDAL billet accrue joint duty credit by self-nominating their service for Experience-Based Joint Duty Assignment (E-JDA) points. One point is awarded for each month of service, and 36 points are needed for full joint duty credit.

Joint Qualified Officer

Level III JQO designation is required before a Captain can be promoted to Rear Admiral (Lower Half). Level III Joint Qualified Officer status is approved by the Joint Staff for officers that have completed JPME Phase I, JPME Phase II, and a joint duty assignment. This process happens automatically for qualified officers. See <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/officer/Detailing/jointofficer/Pages/default.aspx> for more information.



Mentoring Your SWO(N)s



As XO and COs of CVNs, you will lead a wardroom containing many nuclear-trained Surface Warfare Officers - SWO(N)s. In the same way that you are aviators who have a nuclear subspecialty, these SWO(N)s are Surface Warfare Officers with a nuclear subspecialty. They are SWOs - first and foremost. They train to become successful ship COs and also gain the technical experience needed to be a successful CVN Reactor Officer. Like their conventional counterparts, they screen and promote in the Navy based upon their readiness to serve and demonstrated performance in afloat jobs.

You will play an integral part in their career development. They will serve as your Reactor Department Division Officers, Principal Assistants (a second-tour Department Head position), and Reactor Officer (a post-commander command billet). Only the most successful commander command-served SWO(N)s will become ROs.

Important career advice for your SWO(N)s is provided below:

- Every SWO(N) is required to complete one nuclear shore tour prior to commander command. We recommend that an officer complete this requirement early (post-DIVO) in their career because it allows for greater career path flexibility later. In addition, some post-DIVO nuclear shore billets offer lucrative incentives (see below).
- SWO(N)s are eligible for both SWO and nuclear incentive pays – amounting to more than \$1 million in bonus money alone over a 30 year career. Contact us for the most current information regarding incentive pay.

Division Officers

- Next career milestone is “Department Head Afloat” and should be in every fitness report and in both block 40 (recommendation) and block 41 (comments). Other useful block 40 recommendations are: “Early Command” or “CVN PA”.
- In most cases, your DIVO’s minimum service requirement (MSR) expires at the end of their CVN DIVO tour (approximately five and a half YCS). He

(or she) is eligible for a wide variety of shore duty opportunities! After four or more years of sea duty and one year of nuclear power training, we highly recommend that officers take advantage of a shore opportunity (regardless of whether or not they intend to stay on active duty)! The vast majority (>90%) of shore billets do not require an agreement to serve as Department Head.

- Career advantages and incentives for completing the nuclear shore duty requirement as a junior officer (post-DIVO):



- Orders to NPS/NPTU come with a “silver bullet” for ship type or homeport of choice for the first DH tour.
- Post-PA nuclear shore tours are more challenging and time-consuming; they generally do not afford time to concurrently complete a Master’s degree program.
- Greater flexibility in accommodating personal preferences post-DIVO (due to the limited number of billets post-PA).
- NPTU Shift Engineer billet provides up to 12 months of dedicated (i.e. no other duties) time to pursue a Master’s degree and JPME Phase I following completion of 18 months serving as a NPTU Shift Engineer. An officer must commit to serve as a Department Head in order to take advantage of the dedicated graduate education time option.
- Officers interested in “Early Command” (i.e. PC or



Career Planning For Your SWO(N)s

MCM CO) should seek nuclear shore post-DIVO. This will create the flexibility in the career path later to accommodate the Early Command tour.

- A SWO(N) may apply to lateral transfer to EDO(N) as early as completion of their PNEO exam (but no later than six and a half YCS). The EDO(N) career path was designed to produce ROs who serve in RCOH (refueling) or NEWCON CVNs. EDO(N)s maintain their nuclear AQDs and eligibility for nuclear bonuses; they serve as CVN PAs and ROs accruing the technical knowledge and leadership skill required for service as commanding officer of a nuclear-capable shipyard.
- Shore tour slating to a conventional SWO billet is in large part influenced by the relationship between the officer's individual trait average and the CO's RSCA (not Summary Group average) on the most recent FITREP. The actual amount over (or under) RSCA is used to mathematically generate a performance ranking of all the officers competing on a particular slate.

Principal Assistants

- Next career milestone is "CO Afloat" and should be in every fitness report and in both block 40 (recommendation) and block 41 (comments). Other positive block 40 recommendations are: "Flag EA" or "Fellow Programs".
- In order to be eligible for consideration for commander command, your PAs must complete all command at sea requirements in accordance with CNSP/CNSL INST 1412.2B, Requirements for Command of Surface Ships (DTD 12 March 2013). In most cases, CVN PAs arrive with most requirements complete – needing only the individual Command Qualification (oral) Board in order to complete the qualification.
- Careful consideration should be given to the billet a SWO(N) takes following their PA tour. Nuclear shore

tours and SWO Community billets are often viewed favorably at the CDR Command Board. Conversely, a joint tour immediately following PA is not recommended due to the "joint lock" and often do not provide an opportunity for a competitive FITREP. SWO(N)s are highly encouraged to discuss shore slating options with the SWO(N) Community Management Team prior to submitting preferences.

Assistant Reactor Officer

- Next career milestone varies based upon career timing but could range from "CO Afloat" to "Major Command."
- In some cases, a SWO(N) ARO may still have a third and final look for Commander Command, if they have executed an ARO tour as their XO Special Mission tour. On the opposite end of the spectrum, it's also possible that an ARO is a CO Special Mission-served officer who is eligible for promotion to CAPT and screening for Major Command. Due to the vast possibilities that exist, it's important to understand the specific circumstances of your ARO so that you can mentor and provide recommendations on their FITREPs accordingly.

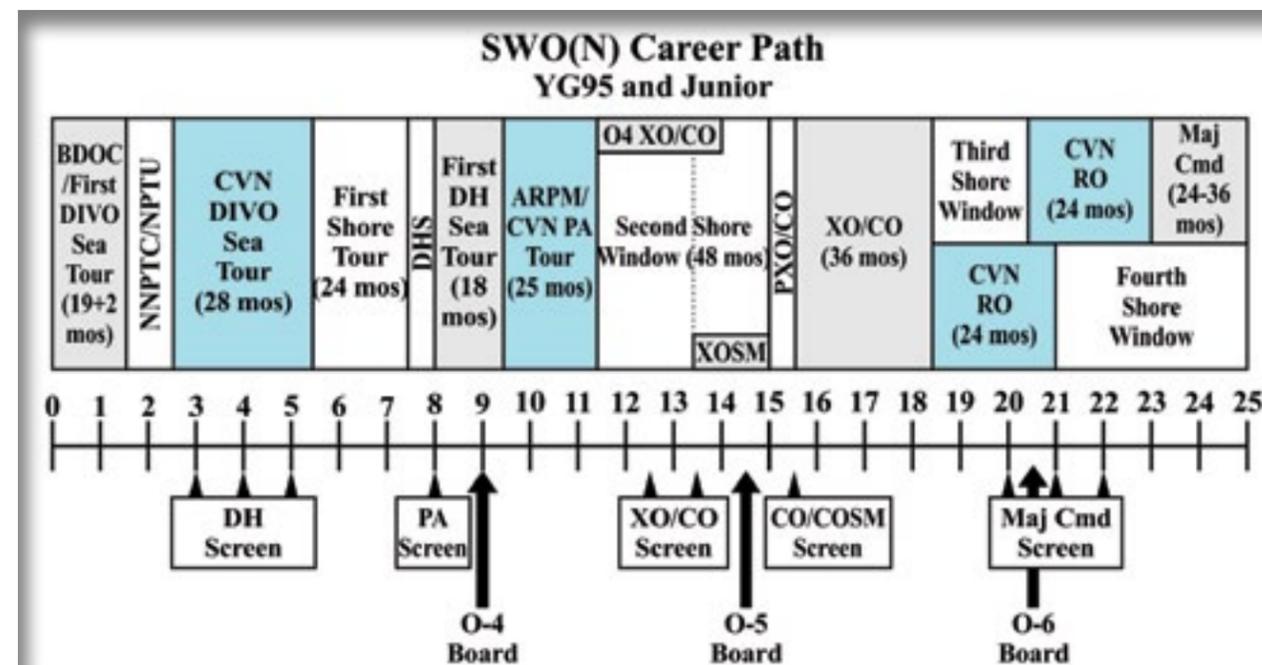
Reactor Officers

- Next career milestone is "Major Command Afloat" and should be in every fitness report and in both block 40 (recommendation) and block 41 (comments). Another strong block 40 recommendation is: "Four Star EA."
- The strike and power projection capabilities of our nuclear powered aircraft carriers would not exist were it not for the relationship forged between AV(N)s and SWO(N)s over the past five decades. Help your SWO(N)s succeed - they will help you succeed.

The planning of an officer's career, professional development, and preparation of their service record for Administrative Screening and Selection Boards is an important job for each SWO(N) and the SWO(N) detailer and program manager. The Bureau often only hears from officers when it is time to talk about the next tour, whereas the timing to the next Screening or Selection board is also important to discuss. We very much want to discuss career planning and selection/screening board preparations with you, your RO, and your junior SWO(N)s.

In trying to balance personal desires and professional needs, we have developed this chart to assist in career planning. The following timeline applies to PYG 05 and junior, all serving SWO(N) PAs and Division Officers. It is important to keep in mind that SWO(N)s are given the optimal number, type, and mix of tours to enhance opportunities for various qualifications and maximize exposure to and performance in surface tours, while maintaining and utilizing an officer's nuclear propulsion subspecialty.

The chart also shows the important career "gates" that SWO(N)s must consider in order to ensure that they have the necessary at-sea fitness reports before going up for the next promotion or selection board. These "gates" are rigid and are used as planning points to ensure an officer starts the next training pipeline at the proper point. If you are unsure of an officer's eligibility for the next board, contact us early to find out if one of your officers is in zone. More importantly, understand the impact of current and future tours on their next selection and/or screening gate. Frequently you will get asked questions by your SWO(N)s about shore duty. SWO(N)s can expect to serve in at least one nuclear tour ashore. Completion of a Masters Degree, JPME, and a career broadening assignment (joint, OPNAV, etc) are vital to remaining competitive for future boards. Most importantly, the most critical factor in screening and promotion boards remains sustained superior performance at sea.



The SWO(N) Grams sent periodically via e-mail from PERS-424 provide additional information to mentor your SWO(N)s.

Don't hesitate to contact us for help!

Resources and References



View the latest selection board information. Find instructions. Answer your personnel questions.
<http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/Pages/default.aspx>

One stop shop for instructions, NAVADMINs, and up-to-date source documents.
<http://www.public.navy.mil/BUPERS-NPC/REFERENCE/Pages/default.aspx>

Includes electronic copies of Link and All Hands, great publications for your wardroom.
<http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/reference/publications/Pages/default.aspx>

No matter what your long-term goals are, this site provides invaluable information and tools to help you make informed career and retention decisions.
<http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/career/PayAndBenefits/Pages/default2.aspx>

My Navy Portal is a source for Navy information and can be customized to your specifications.
<http://my.navy.mil/>

SECNAVINST 1421.3K – Temporary (Spot) Promotion of Officers

OPNAVINST 1520.23B – Graduate Education

OPNAVINST 7220.11F – Nuclear Officer Bonus and Incentive Pay Program

BUPERSINST 1150.1C – Policies and Administrative Procedures for OHARP

BUPERSINST 1540.41E – Qualification and Assignment of Personnel in the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program

MILPERSMAN 1520-050 – Nuclear Propulsion Training (Surface and Submarine)

