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The inner workings of the Apply Board are often a subject of much speculation, rumor, and exaggeration. To set the record straight, here is how the Apply Board really works. Apply Board members perform three basic tasks: review records, brief and vote records, and slate billets.

Record Review

All pages of a member's service record (stored electronically in EMPRES) are available to the reviewer. Records are assigned randomly to board members, usually of the same designator. The reviewer opens a record, reads any letter to the board, the OSR/PSR, FITREP's (with particular emphasis on recent IDT reports), award citations, and possibly NRQQ's, transcripts, and other pages. The reviewer "marks up" the OSR/PSR records using an electronic text tool similar to PowerPoint. These notes contain a narrative of the officer's career based on details gleaned from the record review and are written in the remarks section on the first OSR page. Reviewers often add comments to individual lines of the OSR/PSR, capturing quotes from FITREP's. Additionally, reviewers can add clip art icons as appropriate. Once the record is fully annotated, the reviewer assigns a letter grade, ranging from "A+" to "F", saves the record, and opens the next one to begin this process again. Each record takes an average of 20-plus minutes to review. Within a few hours, a sufficient number of records have been graded (usually 50 or 60) for voting. At this point, reviewers head down the passageway into the "tank."

The Tank

The tank contains ready-room chairs arranged classroom style in front of five large projection computer screens. Each chair has a laser pointer and a voting box. Tank sessions usually last one hour. Each

How the Apply Board REALLY Works

voting box contains six buttons: 100, 75, 50, 25, 0, and reset. These are the only permissible ways to vote a record. Boxes are designed so that others cannot see a person's vote. Reviewers now become briefers and take turns presenting records to their fellow board members. The lights dim and the briefings begin. An officer's OSR and PSR appear across the screens. No other pages from a record are displayed. The briefer begins speaking; and voting members follow along, observe the grade assigned, and eventually make their decisions by pressing a button. When the last vote is entered, the brief is over, even if the briefer is still speaking. Most records take no more than 45 seconds to brief. A computer monitor shows votes cast. When all votes are in, the overall grade, called "confidence factor," is displayed. This is the mathematical average of all votes, ranging from 100 to 0. When all records for that tank have been briefed and voted, members return to the reviewing room and begin the process of record review again. Large Apply panels necessitate 20 or more roundtrips between the record review room and the tank, each iteration taking two-to-three hours. The record review phase of the board concludes when the last record is briefed.

Slating

Slating relies heavily on specialized software that displays Apply records submitted by applicants via the Web. During this phase, officers are assigned billets. The first screen shows officers ranked sequentially by confidence factor, starting with 100. A name is selected, and that officer's Apply record displays on a second screen. That officer's first choice billet is displayed on a third screen and deliberations begin.

If the officer is fully qualified, and no other officer with a similar confidence factor requested the billet, that officer is slated into the billet. If another officer with a similar confidence factor requested the same billet, that Apply record is displayed on a fourth screen; and the board debates who is best qualified. The board considers designator, NOBC, job experience, travel distance, and other factors in the Apply

record. Note that letters to the board are not visible at this time. In some cases, an officer with a slightly lower confidence factor may be a better fit than an officer with a higher confidence factor. A motion is made and seconded to slate an officer into a billet. All vote; and, if it carries, that officer has a new job.

This process continues, counting down in confidence factor. At some point, a record arises where all valid choices have already been assigned. If the officer indicates willingness to accept other billets, that record remains available for slating. If the officer indicated "no" to other billets, the officer either returns to any remaining billet tenure or receives orders to the VTU. The board does its best to give all officers their highest choices, consistent with confidence factors and qualifications.

Eventually, the board either runs out of pay billets or well-qualified records. Some billets remain unfilled if there are no qualified candidates or no one requested them. These billets are assigned later. When slating is complete, the work of the board is done. Officers who did not receive a billet are placed on an alternate candidate list. As cancellations and changes occur, these officers can be slated into billets that open up.

Board members may not discuss the results of the board until after they are published and may NEVER discuss with anyone the deliberations of the board.

That is how the Apply Board really works.



**Leadership
Tip of the Month**

1. Lieutenant Fitness Reports due
31 October 2003.
2. O-7 Staff Board convenes
28 October 2003.
3. O-7 Line Board convenes
4 November 2003.

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