

CHIEF SELECTION BOARD

Are You Up For Chief?

It's not just about what you do; it's about what's on paper

By: MC3 Jules Stobaugh, Defense Media Activity

When asking what qualities you look for in a chief, responses are usually quite standard: dedication, perseverance, determination, loyalty, dependability, and sustained superior performance. Rarely do you hear people say, a complete and up to date Official Military Personnel File (OMPF). But chances are, even if your dedication, perseverance, determination, loyalty, dependability, and sustained superior performance are praised by everyone around you, if your record is a hodgepodge of missing information and evaluation gaps, it will be set aside, along with your hopes of advancement.

Taking the test for chief and making board gets your foot in the door, but from that point on the only voice you have is in the form of your OMPF; and you don't want it saying the wrong thing to the board.

Board members will begin looking at an eligible candidate's OMPF, Performance Summary Record (PSR) and any letters to the board (LTB) to determine who will be selected to become the Navy's newest chief petty officers, using the convening orders and precepts set forth by the Chief of Naval Personnel (CNP) as a guide.

"CNP signs out annually a precept that covers all the enlisted advancement selection boards for that year, and it talks about best and fully qualified, as does the convening order," said May. "So if an eligible record exceeds the fully qualified threshold and is high up on the best-qualified threshold, then that is a sterling record."

The important thing to remember in regards to your record is that board members are looking for sustained superior performance, up to date awards, qualifications and accomplishments, and no evaluation gaps, said May.

"If the OMPF and the PSR are 100 percent accurate, and if any gaps in evals are explained through a letter to the board, that is exemplary," said May. "The board members appreciate it because it shows, 'hey, this Sailor is squared away and professional enough to keep their record up.'"

LTBs can assist the board with your record if something is missing or needs to be clarified; but be careful not to

add anything unnecessary, as they receive more than a million pieces of paper a year.

"Letters to the board are a tool to communicate from the eligible to the board," said May. "But if your OMPF and your PSR are accurate and up to date, there's no gaps in evals, there's no issues, then don't submit a letter to the board. It's not beneficial."

An eligible will still be considered for selection despite an inaccurate or incomplete record because the board for chief is based on eligibility, not applications. So if a Sailor in the fleet is considered eligible for this board, he or she will be presented to the board as such.

However, May still warns about the dangers of an incomplete record.

"If their record is not up to date and accurate, they're not getting the best consideration possible for advancement."

The boards take place at Navy Personnel Command in Millington, Tenn., and are comprised of 21 officers and 138 enlisted Sailors for active duty and nine officers and 56 enlisted for reserve. The board members are chosen from across all rates and are from all over the fleet. The officers selected are O-5's and O-6's and the enlisted are mostly master chiefs with a small percentage of senior chiefs.

Sailors interested in becoming a board member submit an application, and need to meet several requirements.

"The applicant cannot be within 12 months of retirement, (and) they have to have passed their last PFA," said Capt. Donald May, director for Officer and Enlisted Career Progression Division (Pers-80). "They also can't have a relative who is eligible for that board and they cannot serve the same board two consecutive times."

After these standards are met, the applicants are then chosen based upon quota requirements per rate and geographic region for proper representation among the fleet, said May.

Once they are selected they are sworn to secrecy and are only allowed to inform their superiors of their selection.

When the members finally convene, the magic happens.

Just remember, behind every good trick there is usually a logical reveal; and that logic starts with your record.