



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

SEP 10 2025

From: Secretary of the Navy  
To: FY-27 Active-Duty and Reserve Navy Flag Officer Promotion Selection Boards  
Subj: FY-27 ACTIVE-DUTY AND RESERVE NAVY FLAG OFFICER PROMOTION  
SELECTION BOARD PRECEPT  
Ref: (a) DoD Instruction 1320.14 of 16 December 2020  
(b) SECNAVINST 1420.3  
(c) 10 U.S.C.  
Encl: (1) FY-27 Active-Duty and Reserve Navy Flag Officer Promotion Selection Board  
Guidance

1. Function and Membership

a. The function of promotion selection boards is to consider officers for promotion to the grade indicated in each board's convening order. Promotion selection boards shall consider carefully, without prejudice or partiality, the record of every eligible officer. The records and names of all eligible officers, determined as of the dates the boards convene, will be furnished to the boards.

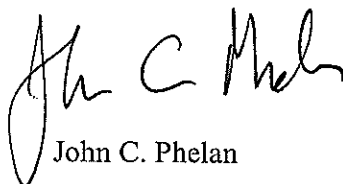
b. I will personally appoint the members of promotion selection boards. During the board process, the officers assigned as board members work directly for me, under oath. Board members are entrusted with selecting the future leadership of the Navy. The performance of these duties will have a greater effect on the future of the Navy than any other duty they perform. During the board process, all other duties of an assigned member are secondary to the board process, and the utmost care will be given to ensure the process is not compromised or rushed to accommodate outside concerns. Each record reviewed represents years of service by the individual officer. It is absolutely essential that our evaluation select the very best while also affording each eligible officer fair and equitable consideration.

2. Promotion selection boards shall proceed in accordance with the convening order, any guidance contained in this letter, and the FY27 Active-Duty and Reserve Navy Flag Officer Promotion Selection Board Guidance, enclosure (1).

3. Unless expressly authorized or required by the President, Secretary of Defense, or me, no member of the board, recorder, assistant recorder, or administrative support personnel may disclose the proceedings, deliberations, or recommendations of the promotion selection boards. All board members and administrative support personnel must comply fully with these requirements, and I expect each board president to emphasize the need for strict confidentiality. In accordance with the exceptions granted by the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to the Department of Defense policy in reference (a), the Chief of Naval Personnel, in exceptional cases, may provide the recommendations of a flag officer promotion selection board to those personnel within the Navy coordinating the fill of key and critical flag officer vacancies, prior to public announcement.

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SELECTION BOARD PRECEPT

4. In order to continually improve the selection board process, each board president will report out to me and the Chief of Naval Operations via written feedback immediately after the board. The board president should indicate whether all written guidance to the board (for example, the precept and convening order) was sufficiently direct, clear, and concise to assist board members in performing their duties. The report should also assess board support and the administration of the board. Further, an office call and debrief regarding the board process should be offered to both of us. The Chief of Naval Operations and I will typically choose to accept the office call based on the written feedback.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John C. Phelan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

John C. Phelan

**FY-27 ACTIVE-DUTY AND RESERVE NAVY  
FLAG OFFICER  
PROMOTION SELECTION BOARD GUIDANCE**

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### GENERAL GUIDANCE

1. **Duties of the Board President.** The president of the board is appointed by me and shall perform prescribed administrative duties. The board president has no authority to constrain the board from recommending for promotion those fully qualified officers whom the majority finds best qualified to meet the needs of the Navy.

2. **Board Proceedings.** The following directions apply to all board proceedings:

a. Each of you (president, members, recorder, assistant recorders, and administrative support personnel) is responsible for maintaining the integrity and independence of this promotion selection board, and for fostering the careful consideration, without prejudice or partiality, of all eligible officers. Reference (a) provides specific rules governing the conduct of officer promotion selection boards and the actions of promotion selection board personnel.

b. You must pay particularly close attention to the rules governing communications with and among other board members, the information authorized to be provided to you, and the procedures you should follow if you believe that the integrity of this promotion selection board has been improperly affected.

c. You may not receive, initiate, or participate in communications or discussions involving information that reference (a) precludes from consideration by a promotion selection board. You are to base your recommendations on the material in each officer's military record, any information I have provided to the board in accordance with reference (a), and any information about his or her own record communicated to you by individual eligible officers in accordance with regulations I have issued.

d. In your deliberations, you may discuss your own personal knowledge and evaluation of the professional qualifications of eligible officers to the extent that such matters are not precluded by law, reference (a), or Service regulations from consideration by a promotion selection board or inclusion in an officer's military personnel record. You may not discuss or disclose the opinion of any person not a member of the board concerning an officer being considered unless that opinion is contained in material provided to the board in accordance with reference (a).

e. To ensure each record is voted independently, without consideration of the score that another record received, the board president and voting members are prohibited from using writing utensils in the tank.

f. When discussing your own personal knowledge concerning the professional qualifications of eligible officers, the board is reminded that, if such personal remarks could be considered adverse, the member cannot discuss that personal knowledge or evaluation unless such matters are contained in the officer's official record or other material placed before the board in compliance with the law and Service regulation. In addition, should an officer's record

reveal the removal of a fitness report, the member may not discuss any personal knowledge regarding the circumstance that resulted in the removal of the report, nor should any member conjecture or draw any inference as to the underlying circumstances involved.

g. I am the only person who may appear in person to address you on other than administrative matters. All communications with this board, other than those that are clearly administrative, must be in writing, given to each of you, and made part of the board's record. I have designated in writing those persons authorized to provide routine administrative information to you.

h. To ensure impartiality, you may not visit or communicate with detailers, placement officers, community managers, or any candidate immediately prior to or during the promotion selection board. As a general rule, communications of any kind or method with outside parties (i.e., persons other than board members, recorder, assistant recorders, board sponsors, and administrative support personnel) before, during, or after the board relating in any way to the selection board or its proceedings, discussions, deliberations, or recommendations are prohibited. Questions concerning the propriety of any communications prior to the board should be addressed to the board sponsors. The proceedings, discussions, deliberations, or recommendations of the promotion selection board shall not be disclosed, nor shall any written or documentary record of such proceedings, discussions, deliberations, or recommendations be used for any purpose, unless expressly authorized or required by the President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, me, or as outlined in paragraphs 2j and 2k below.

i. To ensure the integrity of the board process, it is imperative that you advise the board sponsors of any former or ongoing relationship with any eligible officer that may affect the perceived integrity of the board. Such relationships include, but are not limited to, spousal, immediate relative by blood, marriage, adoption, or blended family up to the fourth degree of kinship (e.g., first cousin), fiancé(e), significant other or other intimate partner, ex-family member, business relationship, or an accuser/accused in legal proceedings. A business relationship may include ongoing landlord-tenant, shared lease, roommate, or other relationships based on housing expenses. If you have any doubts or reservations, err on the side of disclosing the relationship. This is a continuing obligation throughout the board proceedings. If necessary, take such action as will protect the integrity of the board process as outlined in paragraph 2k below.

j. Before the report of the promotion selection board is signed by each board member, recorder, and assistant recorder, the recommendations and proceedings may be disclosed only to members of the board, recorders, assistant recorders, and those administrative support personnel I have designated in writing. After you sign the board report and the public release has been made, only the recommendations of the board may be disclosed. Procedures and processes of the board may be discussed only in general terms. The disclosure of recommendations and proceedings of the board are governed by references (a) and (b), and reference (c), §§ 613a, 616(f), 618, 14104, 14108, 14110, and 14112. The proceedings of the board may not be disclosed to any person not a board member, recorder, or assistant recorder, except to request relief from board duties in accordance with the law and reference (a).

k. If at any time you believe that you cannot in good conscience perform your duties as a member of the board without prejudice or partiality, you have a duty to request relief by me from this duty. I will honor any such request. If you believe that the integrity of the board's proceedings has been affected by improper influence of military or civilian authority, misconduct by the board president or a member, or any other reason, you have a duty to request from me or the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness relief from your obligation not to disclose board proceedings and, upon receiving it, to report the basis for your belief.

3. **Organizational Leadership**. The Navy needs innovative and bold leaders to lead, think creatively, challenge assumptions, and take well-calculated risks that maximize effectiveness. You should give careful attention to selecting officers who possess these valuable attributes and have demonstrated the potential to lead large organizations in a complex world. The Navy's ability to meet this leadership challenge depends, in part, on having leaders for, and from, our Navy who reflect our very best, including performance, professional experience, education, and the spectrum of professional communities.

4. **Area Tours**. If an officer's record contains multiple or consecutive tours in a particular geographic location, it should not be viewed negatively, provided the officer has progressed in billet complexity, professional development, and leadership responsibility.

5. **Indo-Pacific Area Expertise**. As indicated in the National Defense Strategy, China is leveraging military modernization and predatory economics to coerce neighboring countries to reorder the Indo-Pacific region to their advantage. As China continues to seek economic and military ascendance, it will continue to pursue a military modernization program that tries to displace the United States to achieve global preeminence in the future. Recognizing this challenge to U.S. national security interests, the Navy must grow an officer corps that includes strategists and leaders who excel in their knowledge of the political-military affairs and U.S. strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region.

6. **Adverse Information**

a. Just as you must consider positive performance, you must consider incidents of misconduct and substandard performance documented in an officer's official service record or adverse information otherwise furnished to the board by me when determining those officers who are best qualified for promotion. Adverse information may reflect negatively on an officer's suitability for promotion and future service in positions of greater responsibility and trust. Members must give careful consideration to each incident, and must be furnished the adverse information at each stage or phase of the board during which an officer with adverse information is considered. For those eligible officers who are recommended for promotion and who have received disciplinary action, or whose privileged information record (Electronic Military Personnel Records System Field Code 17) contains matters relating to conduct or performance of duty, every board member shall review the information contained therein personally prior to the final board decision.

b. While the Navy is, and will remain, a Service of the highest standards and strict accountability, we do not embrace blind adherence to a zero-defect mentality. All of us have made mistakes in the past; the test is of the character and resilience of the individual and his or her ability to learn and grow from that experience. In selecting the best and fully qualified officers to meet the future needs of our Navy, you should not automatically discount any officer who, except for a single incident, would otherwise be considered to be among the best qualified from those you consider fully qualified. Careful scrutiny of the adverse information at issue and the officer's overall record is necessary to ensure the board recommends the officers best and fully qualified for promotion, and who satisfy the exemplary conduct requirements of reference (c), §8167.

c. Promotion selection boards will not consider any adverse information related solely to COVID-19 vaccine refusal in cases in which an accommodation was requested. Additionally, you shall not consider any other adverse information related solely to COVID-19 vaccine refusal. If adverse information related solely to COVID-19 vaccine refusal is identified in an eligible officer's record, you will notify the board administrative support staff.

7. **Show Cause Determination.** In addition to determining which officers are best qualified for promotion, the board shall review each record carefully to determine whether the officer's performance is such that the individual is considered suitable for retention.

a. The board shall notify me of the name of each officer whose record, in the opinion of a majority of board members, indicates the officer should be required to show cause for retention due to:

(1) Substandard performance of duty;

(2) Moral or professional dereliction;

(3) Misconduct; or,

(4) Because the officer's retention is not clearly consistent with the interests of national security.

b. Negative reports shall state: "In the opinion of the majority of the members of the board, there were no officers recommended to show cause for their retention." Per SECNAVINST 1920.6D, the Chief of Naval Personnel (CHNAVPERS) has been designated as the show cause authority for the Navy. If the board recommends an officer be required to show cause, then the board shall provide, under separate cover signed by the president and the recorder, a supplemental memorandum to CHNAVPERS containing a brief explanation of the basis for the board's opinion that an officer should be required to show cause for retention.

c. CHNAVPERS retains the discretion to direct a more detailed inquiry into the matter.

## APPENDIX - B

### BOARD REPORTS

1. The record of the board's proceedings shall be compiled by the recorder, assistant recorders, and administrative support personnel and reviewed by the members. The written report of the board shall be signed by the board president, members, recorder, and assistant recorders. Applicable law and regulations require the members to make specified certifications in the board report. No person will sign the board report until he or she has reviewed its contents and is satisfied the certifications are met. The report shall contain the names of the officers recommended for promotion with appropriate selection statistics as required by reference (a), as well as the following items:

a. Convening notice required by reference (c), §§ 614 or 14105.

b. All instructions, information, and guidance that were provided to the board, under reference (c), §§ 615 or 14107 and reference (a), except information concerning particular officers, which must be retained and transferred to the CHNAVPERS.

c. Certification that:

(1) To the best of your knowledge, the board complied with reference (a), all instructions contained in the convening order and precept and as appropriate, other letters of guidance or instruction provided by me;

(2) You were not subject to or aware of any censure, reprimand, or admonishment about the recommendations of the board or the exercise of any lawful function within the authorized discretion of the board;

(3) You were not subject to or aware of any attempt to coerce or influence improperly any action in the formulation of the board's recommendations;

(4) You were not party to or aware of any attempt at unauthorized communications;

(5) To the best of your knowledge, the board carefully considered the records of each officer whose name was furnished to the board;

(6) The officers recommended for promotion are, in the opinion of the majority of the members of the board, fully qualified and best qualified to meet the needs of the Navy among those officers whose names were provided to the board;

(7) The officers recommended for promotion, including those who had adverse information provided to the board, are, in the opinion of the majority of the members of the board, fully qualified and among the best qualified to meet the needs of the Navy among those officers whose names were provided to the board, consistent with the exemplary conduct requirements of reference (c), §8167 which states:

“All commanding officers and others in authority in the naval service are required to show in themselves a good example of virtue, honor, patriotism, and subordination; to be vigilant in inspecting the conduct of all persons who are placed under their command; to guard against and suppress all dissolute and immoral practices, and to correct, according to the laws and regulations of the Navy, all persons who are guilty of them; and to take all necessary and proper measures, under the laws, regulations, and customs of the naval service, to promote and safeguard the morale, the physical well-being, and the general welfare of the officers and enlisted persons under their command or charge;”

(8) You are aware that the names of the selectees will be released to the public after the board report is approved, and you know that you may not disclose the recommended selectees until the names are released to the public; and

(9) You understand that, except as authorized by references (a) and (b), and reference (c), §§ 613a, 616(f), 618, 14104, 14108, 14110, and 14112, you may never disclose the proceedings, discussions, deliberations, or recommendations of the board to any person who is not a board member, recorder, or assistant recorder.

- d. A list of all officers eligible for consideration.
- e. A sampling of records prepared by the board president under procedures prescribed by the CHNAVPERS/Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Personnel, Manpower, and Training) for use in convening special selection boards and special selection review boards.
- f. This precept.
- g. Convening Order.
- h. Non-select list.
- i. If applicable, the show-cause list shall contain the names of those officers whose records, in the opinion of a majority of the members of the board, indicate the officer should be required to show cause for his or her retention. It shall also contain a brief explanation of the basis for the board’s opinion. Negative reports shall state: “In the opinion of a majority of the members of the board, there were no officers recommended to show cause for their retention.”
- j. A list of the names of all officers considered by the board who submitted letters for board consideration requesting that they not be selected for promotion or who have otherwise directly caused their non-selection through written communication to the board. Negative reports shall state: “No officers requested that they not be selected by the board or otherwise caused their non-selection through written communication to the board.”

2. Reports for active-duty and reserve boards shall be forwarded for approval to the Secretary of Defense via, first, the CHNAVPERS; second, the Judge Advocate General of the Navy for legal review; third, the Chief of Naval Operations; and fourth, me. In addition, all active-duty and reserve boards will be forwarded to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for review.

## APPENDIX - C

### OATHS

1. The president of the board shall administer the following oath or affirmation to the recorder and assistant recorders:

“Do you, and each of you, solemnly swear (or affirm) that you will keep a true record of the proceedings of this board, and you will not divulge the proceedings of this board except as authorized or required by the Secretary of the Navy or higher authority, so help you God?”

2. The recorder or an assistant recorder shall then administer the following oath or affirmation to the members of the board:

“Do you, and each of you, solemnly swear (or affirm) that you will perform your duties as a member of this board without prejudice or partiality, having in view both the special fitness of officers and the efficiency of the naval service, and you will not divulge the proceedings of this board except as authorized or required by the Secretary of the Navy or higher authority, so help you God?”

3. The recorder or an assistant recorder shall then administer the following oath or affirmation to the administrative support personnel:

“Do you, and each of you, solemnly swear (or affirm) that you will not divulge the proceedings of this board except as authorized or required by the Secretary of the Navy or higher authority, so help you God?”