

## VFA POST-DH DETAILING

The purpose of this document is to provide information on the current VFA post-department head detailing process and provide background on the current manning landscape and shortfalls across the VFA community, which is the main factor driving post-DH billet options. While it is always a good idea to discuss career options with a mentor, their past experiences may not retain the same level of applicability based on the current VFA manning outlook. If you have any questions, the detailer is here to help guide you and, more importantly, is your advocate at PERS-43.

### Background:

The fleet is currently experiencing a VFA 1310 shortage due to a number of factors to include production shortfalls impacting junior officer pilot billets in addition to consecutive years of low department head retention. These issues combine to create gaps across production billets that are now available to be filled with post-DH pilots. The good news is that if you desire to stay in the cockpit, you can. How will this affect your career? If you have specific questions, please discuss with your detailer. Production tours are VALUED by the VFA community and will be briefed accordingly on upcoming boards.

1. Please read the following guidance to help understand post-DH detailing and how to prepare for the Aviation Commander Command Screen Board (ACSB).
2. Orders negotiation should begin via phone or email about 12 months from projected rotation date (PRD). Confirm a “roll window” with your front office so all potential billets can be considered and keep your detailer informed on any changes. A last minute (i.e., inside 12 months) notification of new PRD may reduce available options.
3. Follow-on options depend on your DH FITREP and competitiveness for command – overall your entire record is what matters most when reaching Command and Major Command milestones. You and your detailer will review your record to determine which jobs interest you based upon desired career progression. Keep in mind that no job will **guarantee** selection for command. Your next job will only strengthen an already established performance trend.
  - Options include Community billets, War College (to include sister services and international), joint duty assignments\*, NSW\*, GSA\*, as well as general flying and non-flying billets\*. (\*) *Options are limited for 1310s when detailing to non-flying billets.* You are encouraged to discuss options with your detailer, CO/XO, peers, and mentors to make an educated decision.
4. Community Jobs. VFA Community jobs include Navy Personnel Command, FRS training officer, NAWDC Air Wing training officer, and AIRLANT/AIRPAC key billets. Only those with a competitive record will be considered for filling a community billet. The detailer will inform you if you are being considered for a VFA community billet.
5. Education. War College is a great choice for someone with a desire to complete in-residence JMPE and a Master’s Degree program. A joint duty assignment could also be a possibility after War College if the timing allows. Programs at the Naval Postgraduate School may be an option but are limited. If you desire an in-residence education at a civilian university, DHs may be eligible for the

fleet scholar education program (FSEP). There are numerous distance learning options for JPME and Master Degree programs. Popular options are provided via NWC or USAF Air Command and Staff College. ***Friendly reminder: JPME1 must be complete prior to assuming command at sea.***

6. Joint duty assignments are typically only available for those “on-track” for Command. When listing preferences to the detailer, attempt to narrow down the location and/or command of interest. A joint command will use you as they see fit. You may be filling the typical TACAIR billet, but if they need a Coffee Mess Officer, you are going to be running the Coffee Mess. Do as much research as you can, concentrating on location and command. **Do not make a decision on a joint job based on whether the incumbent screened or did not screen for command.** Sustained superior performance over an entire career makes a CO, not the joint job title.

a. JCS carries some extra weight on the ACSB. The reason is twofold. First of all, JCS carries significant responsibility. Second, JCS billets are nominative and only selects competitive nominees.

b. The remainder of joint billets can be grouped together. Although some may provide a Major Staff (if it is commanded by a 3 star) and/or an overseas stamp, they are all basically the same. Find a good location, check in, and expect to be assigned a job based on the command’s needs.

c. Although some joint billets will offer a competitive break out, they are neither predictable nor required. A non-competitive (1 of 1) Joint Fitrep will **NOT** have a negative effect at the ACSB. If lucky enough to be ranked among a competitive group, ensure progression towards an EP.

d. It is important to be flexible with job location, as many opportunities to fill joint billets will be based solely on timing and availability.

7. If you are an OP-T DH currently serving at a shore command (VTs/FRS), you should expect sea duty orders for your next assignment. One of the most efficient ways to satisfy this sea duty requirement is via a GSA. If filling a GSA, expect to receive full sea duty credit for doing a year or less boots on ground. If a GSA is not agreed upon, you can expect a more traditional sea duty like 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet, 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet, CSG or ESG staff.

8. If you are an OP-T DH currently serving on sea duty (TACRON), you should expect shore duty orders. Possibility of flying orders at places like the NAWDC, VXs, DCMA, base or Type Wing staffs. Numerous non-flying opportunities exist at a wide variety of shore commands and locations. Work with the detailer to get an idea of the possibilities that fit your roll timing.

9. Aviation Commander Command Screen Board (ACSB). At some point following your DH tour (or in some cases, nearing the completion of your DH tour), you will be eligible for the ACSB. PERS-43 staff members will perform a courtesy scrub of your record, however they may not be familiar with specifics such as type and number of personal awards (NAM and above), qualifications, or any special circumstances you experienced in your career. FITREPs (gaps or missing), qualifications, and awards are the most common discrepancies we find when reviewing records. Remember you OWN your record!

**The 2D1 “command qualified” AQD is required to be eligible for command.** Additionally, ensure the detailer has your contact information just in case they find something missing prior to the ACSB. Please note, correspondence sent to the ACSB **WILL NOT** be added to permanent records, except for official Navy photos\*. ***\*Photos are currently not being used in boards, but officers are still required to have an up-to-date photo on file.***

10. Professional flight instructor (PFI). The PFI program was introduced to support instructor manning requirements in CNATRA commands. If selected for the program, you will be considered

“off-track” and no longer eligible for command. You will however be eligible to fly in CNATRA commands until retirement, voluntary removal, or a non-recommendation to continue as a PFI. 12 months from your PRD, you may be eligible to apply. While the majority of PFI’s are 1310s, there are a very limited number of 1320 PFIs. PFI messages will be released via NAVADMIN with specific eligibility requirements for each board.

The key to a successful detail is communicating early with your detailer and ensuring you understand all the options available to you based on your specific timing. We are here to help support your career desires while meeting needs of the Navy. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask!

Very respectfully,  
PERS-432F  
VFA O-4 Assignments