

## **Professional Fleet Aviator (PFA) Pilot Program**

Recognizing the desire of fleet aviators for greater flexibility in their careers, the Professional Fleet Aviator (PFA) pilot program was developed to provide an alternative career path that allows officers to continue flying throughout their career without adhering to the traditional milestone tours and sea/shore rotations outlined in the Naval Aviation career continuum. The PFA program addresses critical officer (O4) manning shortages within operational sea-going commands, while enabling aviators to maintain currency and proficiency in their assigned Type/Model/Series (T/M/S) aircraft. This fact sheet provides detailed information on the PFA program, including application process, eligibility requirements, rotations and initial contract lengths, program exit criteria, and frequently asked questions.

### **Application Process & Timeline**

The application process for the PFA program mirrors that of the Professional Flight Instructor (PFI) program. Key dates include:

- **NAVADMIN Release:** Application messages will be released via NAVADMIN, concurrent with the PFI board notification, typically in March / early April each year.
- **Application Deadline:** May 31st (same as PFI).
- **Board Convening:** The selection board convenes in June.
- **Results Release:** Results are released no later than one week following board completion.
- **Acceptance Deadline:** Selected members have 7 days from notification to accept the position.
- **Detailing:** Upon acceptance, members will be detailed to their first PFA tour.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible for the PFA program, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Projected Rotation Date (PRD) within the calendar year outlined in the PFA NAVADMIN message.
- NET completion of their first shore tour.
- No later than completion of their Department Head (DH) tour.
- O4 Select status to be detailed.

## Sea/Shore Rotation & Contract Length

- **Initial Commitment:** The initial contract length for the PFA program is 6 years, consisting of two 36-month tours.
- **Tour Length:** Tours are stabilized at a fixed length of 36 months each (Sea & Shore).
- **Tour Sequencing:** Officers entering the program from a shore duty assignment will be assigned to sea duty for their first PFA tour. Conversely, officers entering the program from sea duty (Training Officer, Department Head, or 2nd Sea tour) will be assigned to shore duty for their first PFA tour then a follow-on sea tour.
- **Sea Duty Assignments:** Sea tours are primarily within operational squadrons or airwings. Quotas are community-driven, based on existing officer (O4) billet gaps.
- **Shore Duty Assignments:** Shore tours will be within community-based production Unit Identification Codes (UICs) in Duty Involving Flight Operations (DIFOPS) coded billets. Examples include Fleet Replacement Squadrons (FRS), Wing Staff, Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center (NAWDC), and VX/HX test squadrons.

## Program Exit Criteria

Participants will exit the PFA program under the following circumstances:

- Selection and acceptance of Department Head (DH) milestone.
- Resignation or retirement from the Navy following initial 6-year obligation.
- Acceptance of promotion to O5.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- **Assignment Stability:** PFA officers will remain with their assigned squadron or airwing for the duration of their 36-month sea tour.
- **Promotion to O5:** Screening for O5 requires officers to decline the promotion to remain in the PFA program. Acceptance of the promotion will result in reassignment by their respective O5 detailer.
- **Concurrent Applications:** Officers can apply for both PFI and PFA in the same year, but eligibility requirements differ. Applicants must prioritize their preferred program on their applications.
- **Permanent Change of Station (PCS):** PCS requests are permitted for PFA assignments. Detailing to a new location is contingent upon the existence of a suitable, valid billet that aligns with the officer's PRD and community needs.
- **Post-Initial Commitment:** After the initial 6-year commitment, officers may elect to serve additional 36-month tours.

- **Dual Military Colocation:** Selection into the PFA program does not negate COLO eligibility, however selectees must be able to adhere to the defined sea/shore rotation.
- **Bonus Eligibility:** Members selected into the PFA program prior to or in lieu of Department Head are not eligible to receive the Aviation Department Head Retention Bonus (ADHRB). Selectees will be eligible to receive milestone flight pay for the entirety of their initial 6-year commitment, and any additional 36-month tours post initial commitment. Members who are selected into the program post DH will continue to receive milestone flight pay, along with any ADHRB anniversary payments until contract expiration.

#### **Additional Information**

- For further details about the PFA program, including specific application procedures and community-specific requirements, prospective applicants should refer to the most recent NAVADMIN message and/or consult with their detailer.