

22 Jul 2022

From: PERS-432G (VFA JO Detailer)

To: Fleet VFA Junior Officers

Subj: First Shore Tour Slating Process

## 1) Introduction.

- a) Congratulations on the near completion of your Fleet JO tour! I am the VFA JO Detailer and look forward to working with you as you make the transition to your first shore tour. As your Detailer, I am your advocate for future orders.
- b) I encourage you to seek out senior aircrew within your air wing to gain perspective on the different options available for your shore tour if you have not done so already. There are likely alumni from SFTI, TPS, FRS, VX, and VT backgrounds among CO/XOs, Department Heads, and Training Officers within your air wing. Their vast breadth of experience can provide an excellent background to help aide you in determining your desires for your first shore tour.

## 2) The Slate Process.

- a) Three times a year (December, April and August), first tour JOs are “slated” based on Planned Rotation Date (PRD). Table 1 outlines when PRD groups are slated. When practical, TPS and SFTI selections are determined prior to the slate. During the slate, the VFA Detailers and VFA Placement Officers review eligible Junior Officers and available billet listings and subsequently generate order assignments based upon billet availability, aircrew qualifications, aircrew preferences, FITREP rankings, and needs of the Navy.

PRD GROUP	TPS CLASS	SFTI CLASS	SLATE
APR-JUL	JUL	MAY	DEC
AUG-NOV	JAN	SEP	APR
DEC-MAR	JAN / JUL *	JAN	AUG

**Table 1 – Slate Timing**

\*For FITREP purposes, pilots on the August slate should prioritize the July TPS class of the following year because of a 12-week flight training work-up that begins in October prior to the January class convening. Because WSOs don’t have a lengthy pre-class work-up requirement, they can begin TPS in a TAD status for a couple weeks, if required, in order to stay eligible for a January periodic FITREP.

- b) Your input to the slating process begins with this memo. If you are receiving this memo, you should be five to eight months out from your PRD (**your PRD should generally fall between December 2022 and March 2022**). Your Commanding Officer will have the most up to date information, so please confirm your expected transfer date with your CO/XO before moving forward and I can adjust your PRD as necessary. Because the slate conducted referencing PRD, it is important to establish a firm date at the outset of the slating process.
- c) The key factors affecting shore duty are billet availability, individual preference, and FITREP.
- (1) Availability. The number of billets per command will not be disclosed prior to the slate.
  - (2) Preference. It is very important to submit a full, ranked preference list to your Detailer. Be sure to include LSO and FAC(A) qualifications expected prior to your PRD as well as any amplifying personal information (e.g. family issues, EFM, military co-location) that the Detailer should be aware of during the slating process. I am your advocate, and the more information you can provide will help to gain the orders you want. **The Excel spreadsheet that accompanies this memo provides the format required for submitting your request.**
  - (3) FITREP. Once the slate group is complete, members are ranked based on their high water FITREP. CO recommendations, submitted preferences, and aircrew qualifications (i.e. FAC(A) or LSO) will also impact the ranking and order writing process.
- d) Orders notification. Once approved here at Naval Personnel Command (NPC), your Skipper will receive notification of the slate results.
- e) The goal is to have your slate finalized prior to the end of **August**.

### 3) Shore tour opportunities.

- a) Naval Aviation prioritizes “production billets” for first shore tours, defined as any flying job that contributes to the support and staffing of the VFA community. Table 2 lists generic production commands (\* = pilot only). **Production jobs available for your slate are on the drop down menu on the Excel spreadsheet that accompanies this memo.**

NAWDC	VT Pensacola (VT-86)	VFC-12*
VFA-122	VT Kingsville	VFC-13*
VFA-106	VT Meridian	VFC-111*
SFTI	VX-9	VFA-125 (F-35C)*
TPS	VX-9 DET Edwards (F-35C)*	
<b>Table 2 – Generic Production Commands</b>		

- b) Individual commands for Test Pilot School (TPS) and TOPGUN graduates (SFTI) are not listed in Table 2 since there is a separate application and slating process for these billets.

i) SFTI selections:

- (1) The slate will occur once the SFTI selection process concludes.
- (2) With your current command's agreement, JOs are allowed to apply for SFTI selection any time **before or after** they are slated, so long as the results of the **next** SFTI selection are released prior to execution of **ANY** form of funding from their pending orders (PCS, HHG move, advance DLA, etc).
- (3) SFTI application deadlines and the results of the selections are dynamic. If a JO plans to apply to SFTI after being slated, they must **contact their detailer immediately** to ensure his current set of orders facilitate delaying their rotation until the results of the SFTI selection are complete.
- (4) **\*The exception to this rule remains those slated to F-35C squadrons. If you slate to an F-35C squadron, you cannot apply post-slate to SFTI. This is done in order to meet all F-35C quotas and ensure no class seats are gapped.**

ii) TPS selections:

- (1) **Submitting an application package to TPS will have no impact on where you are slated.**
  - (2) With your current command's agreement, JOs can apply to TPS any time **before or after** the slate.
  - (3) Unlike SFTI, there is no line of accounting/PCS caveat with multiple TPS applications. However, if a JO plans to apply to TPS after being slated, they must **contact their detailer immediately** to help coordinate detaching dates if/when feasible.
- c) Periodically, non-production billets become available. These include, but are not limited to, the Pilot Exchange Program (PEP), ROTC Instructor billets, Naval Recruiting, base staffs, ONI/SPEAR, OPNAV, OLA and the Naval Safety Center.
- (1) PEP. This includes billets flying Hornets in Australia, Canada and Switzerland. An exchange tour flying Rhinos in Australia is available for WSOs only. PEP tours, even if located in a foreign country or in a deployable unit, are not considered sea duty. Following a PEP tour, you will be up for a second sea tour. Certain PEP tours will be preceded by time at the Defense Language Institute to learn the native language.
  - (2) Other non-production jobs. Availability varies on each slate and is dependent on filling the production requirements. Non-production billets include staff positions within Naval Recruiting, base/wing/flag staffs, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), the Naval Safety Center, Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA) and OPNAV

billets in Washington D.C. These positions can open up locations not normally available in the VFA community.

#### 4) Individual's Career.

- a) Prior to submitting your preferences for the slate, it is important to consider the career implications of each option.
  - (1) FRS/TRACOM. Instructor duty is favored within our community. Additionally, both the FRS and TRACOM offer the chance to compete with a large summary group, providing the opportunity for excellent FITREP breakouts. FRS and TRACOM billets are both competitive for future career milestones. FRS billets, however, enable aircrew to maintain FA-18/F-35 currency, which makes that officer more competitive for CVW staff and Super JO follow on tour options. FRS billets also tend to be more competitive on selection boards.
  - (2) PEP/Adversary. These options offer tremendous flying opportunities and unique locations and experiences **when available**. However, during a PEP tour you will likely be the only U.S. Naval Officer attached to the command, which translates into a non-competitive (1 of 1 EP) FITREP for three years. This can have adverse long-term career implications when you are competing against your peers in future selection boards. The adversary squadrons vary in the size of their ready rooms, which can help mitigate this issue. VFC-12 typically has only one or two active duty lieutenants and therefore tends to have the same career impact as a PEP tour. VFC-13 and VFC-111 usually have eight to twelve active duty lieutenants, affording you the opportunity to break out in a larger summary group as well as the opportunity to fly a different T/M/S in a new location.
  - (3) NAWDC/VX. Both of these options offer tactical and challenging flying opportunities with large summary groups and the opportunity for competitive FITREPs. These billets also enable aircrew to maintain FA-18 currency, which could make that officer more competitive for flying second sea tours. NAWDC billets also offer a unique opportunity to fly the F-16.
  - (4) SFTI/TPS. Both have excellent flying and education opportunities as well as large summary groups. There is a separate application process which is delineated in the application message. The selection process determines which command you will go to. Application deadlines are released via Navy Message. Please start a dialogue early with your front office, your training officer and myself if you have questions.
    - (a) The SFTI course is a 13-week graduate level tactics syllabus at the United States Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN) located in Fallon, NV. Upon graduation, instructor duty occurs at TOPGUN (NAWDC N7), STRIKE (NAWDC N5), SFWSPAC, SFWSLANT, VX-9, or an FRS. Completing SFTI shore duty results in a 24-month Training Officer tour in the fleet. Additionally, there is a two year added commitment upon conclusion of your shore tour to ensure fulfillment of the training officer obligation. Talk to your training officer and CO/XO about options and timing. There are three TOPGUN classes each

fiscal year: September, January, and May.

- (b) TPS begins with a one-year course of study at the Navy, Air Force, or an overseas Test Pilot School. After TPS, aircrew will execute a 24-36 month tour at VX-23 or VX-31. Pilots selected for TPS expect to be sent on a 12-week flight training workup prior to the TPS class convening date. Check your timing with the Detailer prior to filling out an application. Table 1 depicts TPS class based on PRD group.

- 5) I hope that this has answered some questions and provided baseline guidance for your follow-on tour preferences. Please call or email me with any questions or concerns; I am more than happy to discuss your options. Fly safe and enjoy the rest of your first fleet tour!

Very Respectfully,

LCDR Adam “Roloff” Jackson  
PERS-432G // VFA JO Detailer