

FY20 IW O5/O6 IWC, Command and Milestone Board Observations

TALENT within & across IW is **STRONG**. Margins for selection were small and narrow; records are increasingly well constructed and thus competitive.

ENDURING FEATURES

••• This board is about IW community MSN and LDRSHP. FITRs in aggregate should document and illuminate personal professional IMPACTS to the IWC, the Navy, and achievement of IW war fighting and readiness outcomes. Clear and consistent message in the Officer's record is the easiest way to determine "fully" and "best" qualified.

••• We must consider Great Power Competition, not only "the last war." Our board actions should reflect member appreciation of records that "ride to the sound of the FUTURE guns." Rebalance to force development, force generation, and force employment around major combat operations in the maritime should be communicated clearly to ALL IW wardrooms.

••• Sustained superior performance in all assignments **CORE** to the communities, to include (though not exclusive to) milestone jobs, is **KEY** to selection. SSP IS:

- Consistent evaluations **ABOVE** RSCA.
- Hard AND soft breakouts - soft breakouts against all designators is important throughout your record, especially in 1-of-1 situations or very small IW summary groups. It adds context to the level of performance. This is especially true in O-4/O-5 milestone assignments when competing against other (non-IW) designators (e.g., CSG, Fleet staffs).
- Trending right in the FITRs (P, MP, to EP) over time and breaking above the RSCA and group cumulative average. Trait averages below Reporting Senior's Cumulative Average (RSCA) should be easy to understand (i.e. reason called out in FITR by Reporting Senior, be a first newly reported FITR, a "Selected" report, etc...). Otherwise, member should consider a Letter to the Board to explain performance that is strong (above RSCA) from the start of an assignment resonates, especially in a tough operational or Major Staff tour.

••• Career diversity that provided broad exposure to multiple key disciplines is key factor to the Officer's ability to serve in a variety of positions; geographic diversity helps also.

••• Major staff tours/experience is a good thing (OPNAV staff, Joint Staff, OSD, IFOR, 4-star Fleet staffs (USFF/CPF)).

••• Reporting Seniors ought guard RSCA, and use it judiciously. If the RSCA is too high, then you cannot highlight a particularly stellar Officer. Protect your ability to "raise your voice."

••• Common and consistent recommendations for the next career milestone and COMMAND in Block 40 and 41. Reporting Seniors should be judicious in their recommendations; COMMAND

should not be the default. Flag Officers and Current CO's recommendations are highly valued when screening for command. Inconsistencies in recommendations leave the board to guess.

••• Flag recommendations from a Flag officer. Any other mention of Flag is wasted space and does not carry weight.

••• ABSENCE of above is ambiguous; Ambiguity is an undesirable targeting solution. CDE here is non-selection.

GENERAL

••• Documented LDRSHP experience, influence, scope of responsibility & outcomes is an important factor [people, resources, missions, functions].

••• Documented community “we value” in the FITR [ACQN, Space, Certs, Joint] as documented in the Convening Order. Previous years’ convening orders are great guides.

••• To be CONSIDERED for command, your CMD QUAL board must be COMPLETED and command recommendation ENDORSED by the iBoss. Recommend completion before wearing O-5 and greater than 60 days prior to board convening to ensure the Command Qualification reflects in your record.

••• FITRs need to contain clear language from Commanding Officers:

- Clear, common language should be used to ensure understanding and to highlight the importance of the job, performance, etc.
- Reporting Seniors need to be clear in their opening and closing comments. If a member is being marked below the RSCA due to policy (selects, etc.) or to set RSCA, this need to be specifically stated. The board should not be left to interpret on their own
- Changes to promotion recommendation should be clearly stated. This can be due to promotion to the next rank or declining performance; make this clear to the board.
- Maintaining Average with Officers in Selected status is clearly Commander’s business, but consideration should be given and appropriate explanation made in BLK 41 to ensure future board members understand how these officers are progressing at a pivotal time in their career.

••• Officers must own their record. Officer Record maintenance remains extremely important in order to provide board members with the most accurate picture possible. It is incumbent upon the Officer to ensure the accuracy and completeness of their record. An official photo in current grade is required. He/she should fully review their record and previous Convening Orders before going before the board (and when they submit their FITR); Commanding Officers and Mentors should be active in guiding careers.

... Letters to the Board that clarify are of value. Other LoRs less so. BY DESIGN, the record should stand on its own merit. The best letters address missing items (Command Qualification, FITREPs, Degrees, JPME completion). Letters that address specific FITR issues should include documentation from the Reporting Senior that signed that report. Letters that do not address one of these issues tend to distract from the record.

... An Officer that goes before the board and is not interested in a Milestone, Command, or IWC assignment (for the FY they are being considered) should submit a letter requesting to have their record removed from consideration (“Don’t Pick Me” letter). This is a clear message to the board that preserves opportunity for others who desire and can support these assignments. This counts as a year of non-selection which keeps an officer viable for future consideration if the member is eligible for additional screening “looks”. This is much appreciated by Community Leadership and is not looked upon negatively. It is the right thing to do if the Officer cannot answer the call to duty for the position they to be screened for. Commanding Officers, Detailers and Mentors should be active in these discussions.

... LTBs are due NLT 10 days prior to board convening; don’t bust the clock.

OTHER SPECIFIC

... IWC. FIERCE competition. Strongest emphasis was placed on success at sea even though this is a PMC-structured review. Best records demonstrated a broad scope of tangible cross-IW experience and impact. **ALL communities rowed hard; ALWAYS SSP.**

... 1800. Specific reference to sound METOC counsel should be included in FITREP language, so that the application of METOC knowledge is clearly understood.

... 1810. Discerning expert knowledge across CW portfolio from tactical EW thru National SIGINT to cyber security/cyber operations design/execution was a challenge AND increasingly the expectation of a well-prepared senior officer. Owning TACSIT could be reinforced. Post grad STEM and JNT is valued.

... 1820. Wide employment as global network and Fleet-wide leaders and IW drivers is reflected in the best records. Demonstrating expertise in multiple/all IW tenets is hard. Demonstrated success in leading IP core missions 24/7/365 mobile and non-mobile shows a powerful commitment to IW and Fleet success. Post grad STEM (related) valued.

... 1830. No one does OPINTEL like Navy; more IWs are learning and demonstrating this talent. This CORE talent should be reinforced (not exclusively) and exceptionalism driven home. Great at LDRSHIP functions and processes; must expand to demonstrate people and mission leadership.

OCEANO Observations

Talent level is high and competition in all categories remains fierce. General board guidelines apply. Board procedures and Convening Order Language continue to be consistent from year to year. The combination of SSP, leadership and sound METOC counsel continues to win the day.

CW Observations

- Superb talent from which to choose Officers for both milestone and command. Proven (rated) performance in leadership (CO, XO, OIC, DH) assignments, superior performance in at-sea and shore milestone assignments, geographic diversity, and diversity across core CW disciplines remain the foundation of selected individuals.

- Documenting progress towards Joint Qualification is necessary. Our current precept is written with JPME Phase I as a requirement for several boards, but JQO progress is emphasized and is a discriminator. Suggestion: JPME Phase I should be done NLT O-4.

- Career Diversity counts ((Cyber/SIGINT/EW), (Fleet/National/COCOM)). Understand the potential impact to your career if you select one track and stick with it.

IP Observations

- Advanced technical education that enhances IP skill sets is required. Grade-appropriate IP community qualifications expected. Progress toward/ completion of JMPE is highly desirable.

- Pursue breadth of experience. Maximize and document relevant IW experience. Multiple tours in same location without increase of responsibility, or at same command are not helpful.

- Space and Acquisition experience is beneficial, but not directly attributable to selection, as those officers also performed well in other traditional IP assignments.

- Traditional at-sea Milestones fared better than one-off, non at-sea Milestones.

Intelligence Observations

- Leading OPINTEL teams remains our core competency.

- The most competitive records documented substantiated/quantifiable leadership: Number of people led and (if applicable) size of budget managed. Both metrics help demonstrate the scope of responsibility.

- Records that showed impactful decision-making, in addition to leadership, were especially well regarded.