

CHAPTER III

IN PURSUIT OF A CAREER AS AN LDO, CWO OR WO1

301. IDENTIFYING AND COUNSELING POTENTIAL CANDIDATES

Selection into LDO/CWO/WO1 community has been and will continue to be extremely competitive. There are several factors that are considered for selection.

The LDO/CWO/WO1 community is looking for talented personnel that have garnered the experience in a variety of challenging assignments with increasing responsibility and leadership opportunities. Budding applicants should compare their record to the community approved designator discrete requirements they are applying for and seek guidance from an LDO/CWO mentor for assistance in the application process.

Strong applicants are expected to be technically, operationally and administratively proven while demonstrating **Sustained Superior Performance** (i.e. Consistent Hard/Soft evaluation breakouts; above RSCA etc.) in increased levels of technical management within their rating specialty.

Interested personnel should prepare early in their career to ensure that they will be competitive for selection when eligible to apply. Many successful candidates begin as early as PO3. Most have a combination of tough jobs, exceptional performance, outside education and correspondence courses that are well-documented in their enlisted evaluations and service record.

Since LDOs/CWOs/Cyber WO1s are commissioned directly from the enlisted ranks, division officers and other officers in the chain of command should be alert to recognize, counsel and encourage their outstanding enlisted personnel who possess the potential to excel as "Mustangs".

Increased technical knowledge acquired by on-the-job and specialized training through schools and correspondence courses should be sought by all potential candidates. Many candidates apply repeatedly; unless they demonstrate continued growth in experience, technical expertise and training, they will not be competitive for selection.

Quotas for individual designators vary from year to year depending on changes in authorized billets, retirements and other manning considerations. Therefore, a decision to apply (or not) should not be based on previous year's quotas. Each year, the Navy selects approximately 500 new LDOs and warrant officers. Many successful LDOs and CWO/WO1s applied several times before being selected. Selection opportunity increases

significantly with additional experience and knowledge.

302. GETTING STARTED

Applicant information contained in this chapter is also available and kept updated on the MyNavyHR website, at:

<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Management/Community-Management/Officer/Active-OCM/LDO-CWO/Applicant-Information/>

THE DEADLINE FOR APPLYING IS 1 OCTOBER

First, read [OPNAVINST 1420.1 \(series\)](#). Review it carefully before starting your application, making note of those specific sections applicable to you as an individual candidate.

- Changes (if any) will be announced via a NAVADMIN message typically released in May/June of the year the application is due.

- Check your service record for completeness. Look for missing/misfiled evaluations, qualifications, awards, etc. Make corrections as soon as possible.

- PO1s who wish to apply for LDO must have taken the CPO exam in January of the year the application is due to BUPERS and be selection board eligible. The current year exam "profile sheet" must accompany the application as an enclosure.

- Eligibility is computed for the first day of the fiscal year that the board is for. Your package for the board is due exactly one year prior to the eligibility date. Example: if you are applying for the FY-24 Board, your application is due 1 October 2022 and your eligibility is computed as of 1 October 2023.

- All inquiries concerning the application, including verification of its receipt, should be directed to the My Navy Career Center (MNCC), DSN 882-MNCC (6622) or commercial 901-874-6622; email: askmncc@navy.mil

303. SELECTING AN OFFICER DESIGNATOR

LDO, CWO and WO1 designators are similar to enlisted ratings. They describe the officer's technical specialty and will usually be directly related to the applicants former enlisted rating.

Applicants for the LDO, CWO and WO1 programs should normally request consideration only in the category of their normal path of advancement.

Although candidates may apply for any category for which they are qualified, even stronger competition will be encountered when applying outside the normal path of advancement. Ask yourself how competitive is your record when compared with an individual in a rating that is in the normal path. For example, how would a typical BM do when competing with an ET for an electronics quota? Bottom line: Apply for only the designator(s) for which you are well-qualified, and then take the time to ensure that your record, evaluations and application fully supports that request. When in doubt, review the discrete requirements to help determine your eligibility, and seek and ask advice from mentors.

- Eligible candidates requesting consideration for **both** LDO and CWO may apply for only one designator under each program.

- Nuclear trained enlisted personnel may apply only for nuclear power designators.

304. LISTING OF CURRENT AVAILABLE LDO/CWO/WO1 DESIGNATORS

SURFACE

<u>ENLISTED RATING</u>	<u>LDO DESIGNATOR</u>	<u>CWO DESIGNATOR</u>
BM/QM	DECK (611X)	BOATSWAIN (711X)
OS/STG/QM/CTT	OPERATIONS (612X)	OPERATIONS TECHNICIAN (712X)
EN/MM/GS/EM/HT/DC/MR (See Note 1)	ENGINEERING/REPAIR (613X)	ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN (713X)
SO WITH NEC O26A (5326) OR O23A (5323) (See Note 2)	N/A	SPECIAL WARFARE TECHNICIAN (715X)
SB WITH NEC O52A (5352)	N/A	SPECIAL WARFARE COMBATANT-CRAFT CREWMAN (717X)
STG/STS/FC/FCA/FT/ET/ETV/ CTT/GM/IC/MN/MT/TM	ELECTRONICS (618X)	ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN (718X)

NUCLEAR POWER/SUBMARINE

<u>ENLISTED RATING</u>	<u>LDO DESIGNATOR</u>	<u>CWO DESIGNATOR</u>
ANY RATING QUALIFIED IN NUCLEAR POWER	NUCLEAR POWER (620X)	N/A
ND WITH NEC MMDV (5341) OR M1DV (5342)	N/A	DIVING OFFICER (720X)
EN/MM/GS/EM/HT/DC/ MR (See Note 1)	ENGINEERING/REPAIR (623X)	N/A
FC/GM/MN/FT/STS/MT/TM (See Note 1)	ORDNANCE (626X)	ORDNANCE TECHNICIAN (726X)
IC/STG/STS/FC/FT/ET/ETV/CTT (See Note 1)	ELECTRONICS (628X)	N/A
STG/STS/AWO/AWR WITH NEC 708B (0416), V44B (0417), T42A (0501), 712B (0507), 715B (0551) OR V59B (0553) (See Note 1)	N/A	ACOUSTIC TECHNICIAN (728X)
ITS (See Note 3)	COMMUNICATIONS (6290)	N/A

AVIATION

<u>ENLISTED RATING</u>	<u>LDO DESIGNATOR</u>	<u>CWO DESIGNATOR</u>
ABE/ABF/ABH	AVIATION DECK (631X)	AVIATION BOATSWAIN (731X)
AWR/AWO/AWV/AWF/AWS CTI/CTR/CTT (MUST POSSESS NEC C06A OR C06B)	N/A	AVIATION OPERATIONS TECHNICIAN (732X)
AD/AME/AM/PR/AS/AZ/AF/ AV/AT/AE/AWF/AWV	AVIATION MAINTENANCE (633X)	AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN (733X)
AO	AVIATION ORDNANCE (636X)	AVIATION ORDNANCE TECHNICIAN (736X)
AC	AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL (639X)	N/A

AIR VEHICLE PILOT

<u>OCS PROGRAM</u>	<u>LDO DESIGNATOR</u>	<u>WO1 DESIGNATOR</u>
Open to all personnel (See Note 4)	N/A	AIR VEHICLE PILOT (737X)

GENERAL LINE

<u>ENLISTED RATING</u>	<u>LDO DESIGNATOR</u>	<u>CWO DESIGNATOR</u>
YN/PS/NC/LN/RP	ADMINISTRATION (641X)	ADMINISTRATION TECHNICIAN (741X)
MU (See Note 5)	BANDMASTER (643X)	N/A
EOD MUST POSSESS NEC M03A (5335), OR M04A (5337)	EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL (648X)	N/A

MA	SECURITY (649X)	SECURITY TECHNICIAN (749X)
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STAFF

<u>ENLISTED RATING</u>	<u>LDO DESIGNATOR</u>	<u>CWO DESIGNATOR</u>
CS/RS/LS (See Note 3)	SUPPLY (651X)	N/A
CS	N/A	FOOD SERVICE TECHNICIAN (752X)
BU/CE/CM/UT/EA/EO/SW/CU	CIVIL ENGINEER CORPS (CEC) (653X)	N/A

INFORMATION WARFARE

<u>ENLISTED RATING</u>	<u>LDO DESIGNATOR</u>	<u>CWO/WO1 DESIGNATOR</u>
AG	N/A	OCEANOGRAPHY (780X)
CTT/CTR/CTI/CTM	N/A	CRYPTOLOGIC WARFARE (781X)
IT/ET/CWT	N/A	INFORMATION SYSTEMS TECHNICIAN (782X)
IS WITH NEC K10A (3910), K13A (3913), K23A (3923) OR K24A (3924) (See Note 2)	N/A	INTELLIGENCE TECHNICIAN (783X)
CWT MUST POSSESS NEC H13A (9308), H14A (9326), H15A (9327) OR H16A (9328)	N/A	CYBER (784X) (WO1 ACCESSIONS Only)

Notes:

1 - Open to Submarine, Surface and Expeditionary ratings with maintenance or repair backgrounds.

2 - Applicants must place the Core Competency Area (CCA) title behind the 715X SEAL and 783X Intelligence Technician designators on the application (i.e., 715X SEAL CORE or SDV; 783X OPINTEL, HUMINT, or GEO). Applicants holding qualifying NECs in more than one field may request a secondary CCA.

3 - Off-ramp designators. Applicants for LDO off-ramp designators must comprehend designator specific off-ramp requirements and procedures as defined in NAVADMIN 128/19 (629X) or NAVADMIN 014/18 (651X).

4 - Air Vehicle Pilot is an OCS accession program. Refer to Program Authorization 106A for eligibility criteria and NAVADMIN 315/20 and NAVADMIN 141/21 for additional information.

5 - No path into 643X designator under the reserve LDO program.

305. THE APPLICATION

Read [OPNAVINST 1420.1 \(series\)](#) and the current FY board [NAVADMIN](#). Go over them carefully during your application process, making note of sections applicable to you as an individual candidate. These are your source documents for submitting an application, only language or policy promulgated by a more current NAVADMIN message for the current application cycle will override what is written in this directive. The application is your resume to the board demonstrating your potential for selection as a Naval Officer. Think of your application as one of many for the same great job -- you have to beat out the competition. You won't get extra points for thickness. Do not include information that is in your service record unless required by [OPNAVINST 1420.1 \(series\)](#) or current FY board [NAVADMIN](#).

- Be sure the application is complete, in the proper format, and that spelling and grammar are correct.

- Any additional comments that you believe are important to your application should be 100 words or less and only address any anomalies in your record.

- There are no "required" or "right" correspondence courses. A good blend of technical/non-technical courses will help, especially if done over a number of years and not just since you decided to apply. Consider taking enlisted rating courses of the other source ratings that are also in the normal path of advancement for the designator for which you are applying.

- Candidates may submit evaluations, awards, and all other routine addendums after submission of the application until 15 December of the year

in which the board is scheduled to convene.

- Seek guidance from your command program coordinator. Your coordinator represents the commanding officer and is your first point of contact with any questions you might have. Do not go outside the lifelines of your command without speaking with your coordinator first.

- In addition to your program coordinator, seek out a Mustang mentor who you can consult with. An LDO or CWO in your desired designator can assist and ensure your application is ready for submission. Listen to what they say -- they've been there.

- Applications from all qualified applicants shall be forwarded to CHNAVPERs (Pers-803) unless the person is specifically not recommended by their commanding officer.

- Commands shall provide applicants with a copy of their entire completed application to include all enclosures after submission.

306. THE INTERVIEW BOARD

The interview board helps the CO evaluate the candidate's potential as a career officer. The CO's endorsement should be consistent with the board's comments or an explanation should be provided. [OPNAVINST 1420.1 \(series\)](#) and the Board [NAVADMIN](#) are very specific in addressing the board's purpose and composition.

The Command LDO/CWO Coordinator should assist in identifying Interview Board members. Candidates should not "shop" for favorable interviews.

Interviewers need to ensure they mark and annotate the "**POTENTIAL**" block on the interview form. **That section applies to LDO/CWO candidates and must be completed.**

It is encouraged that the board members provide applicants with verbal feedback at the conclusion of the interview then provide the completed interview form to command coordinators for routing with the completed application.

307. COMMANDING OFFICER'S ENDORSEMENT

The CO's endorsement is critical. It must be specific as to why an applicant is better than his/her competition -- hard to do if not true. Weak praise may hurt the candidate. If the CO does not recommend a candidate for commissioning, the application should not be forwarded by the command.

- An applicant must be recommended by the CO to be eligible for consideration. If the applicant is applying for two designators, the CO's endorsement must address qualifications for both as outlined in the respective discrete requirements for those designators.

- If the candidate *is* not professionally competitive, he/she should be advised on ways to improve.

- The CO's endorsement **must include the following statement:** "Applicant meets all requirements outlined in [OPNAVINST 1420.1 \(series\)](#), [NAVADMIN XXX/XX](#), meets the physical fitness standards of OPNAVINST 6110.1 (series), and is worldwide assignable."

- The endorsement and evaluations must be consistent. An extremely strong endorsement with weak evaluations from the signer raises doubts in the reviewer's mind.

- The CO or drafter should read the interview sheets before writing the endorsement -- they should also be consistent or the board will get mixed signals.

- Whenever possible, the endorsement should be personally signed by the CO, not "Acting". "By direction" is not acceptable.

- The Commanding Officer's endorsement verifies the accuracy of the applicant's statements, as well as all enclosures.

308. PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

If there is one thing reporting seniors can do to recognize achievers, it's substantiation in performance evaluations. All too often the board must read "...one of the best..", "...head and shoulders performer", or "...cream of the crop", yet the person wasn't broken out at all in the evaluations.

- If the individual is truly a superstar, the evaluator 'should break the person out with statements such as "Top performer, ranked 2 of 21", or "My strongest petty officer, number 1 of 15 in the division".

- Bulletize and highlight achievements by boldface, underline or offset techniques. Don't bury credentials in a six-line paragraph and don't try to stretch three significant accomplishments into five bullets.

- Reference to qualifications for officer programs in several evaluations (not just the most recent) is very positive.

- Applicants must ensure copies of their most recent periodic evaluations are included in the application or provided via addendum for board review and continuity. First class petty officers must submit the 15 November evaluation via an addendum if it is not already reflected in their OMPF.

309. COMPETITIVE EDGE

Every year the Navy selects on average, 500 highly talented Sailors as future LDOs and CWOs. We are looking for the BEST AND FULLY QUALIFIED...SUSTAINED SUPERIOR PERFORMERS the fleet has to offer. While it is considered continuing your naval service, understand that when you apply to the LDO, CWO or WO1 program, you are applying for a brand new career. Those that are selected, are selected on their previously proven technical ability and the potential to perform as an officer.

There is no "trick" to getting selected. As mentioned earlier, the most important selection criterion has been and will continue to be sustained superior performance in your technical specialty over a variety of challenging assignments in line with the discrete requirements.

Over the years, many Sailors have asked for assistance in submitting their applications/packages. Getting an LDO or CWO to review your application will ensure your submission is in the proper format called out by the instructions and FY NAVADMIN. You must understand that it is **YOUR RECORD** that will ultimately provide you the best opportunity for selection.

As you progress through your career, engage with your LDO or CWO mentor(s), review your designators discrete requirements, compare them to your record and **MASTER YOUR CRAFT!** Continue to grow professionally and periodically monitor your progress by reviewing your entire record:

- Does your record (ESR, PSR, EVALS) reflect documented employment outlined in the discrete requirements?

- Have you earned designations/qualifications/NECs that are instrumental for selection by your community?

- Consistently above your reporting senior's RSCA?

- Regularly recommended for the LDO/CWO program in your evaluations?

Those who have applied before you met the above criteria and possibly more on their way to getting selected.

Work with your mentors and detailer to identify those assignments that will help you master your craft as you progress through your career. Attain those qualifications and leadership experience early to help you stand out as the best and fully qualified for LDO or CWO selection.

- **Education and Lifelong Learning:** Even though a college degree is not required for selection into the LDO/CWO/Cyber WO1 community, more and more applicants (your competition) have some post-high school education. Generally, off-duty education is a plus; however, it should not interfere with your job. Full-time schooling that detracts from performance will hurt, not help.

310. IN SERVICE PROCUREMENT BOARD

LDOs and CWOs are selected for appointment by In Service Procurement Boards (ISPB). A new board is convened each fiscal year, usually in January, for approximately three weeks. The results are normally released to the Fleet by NAVADMIN message in the February-March timeframe.

Selectees are commissioned monthly, beginning 1 October. Details are included in the message.

In addition to senior LDO and CWO community leaders, board membership includes officers of the line and various staff corps to allow the senior member of the board to establish internal panels with a good knowledge of the requirements of each occupational specialty. Each member of the board is sworn to select the best qualified candidates without prejudice or partiality.

ISPBs consider applicants for appointment in the designator(s) they have requested. If a candidate requests consideration in more than one designator (the maximum that can be requested is two), the board recommends the individual for appointment only in the designator for which he or she is considered best qualified.

The boards recommend candidates for appointment in numbers not to exceed the quotas furnished by the Chief of Naval Personnel N-13. However, the board is not obligated to select to the numbers provided, if in its opinion, sufficient numbers of applicants are not qualified for appointment in a particular designator.