

RC WO Promotion Board Process (2 Sep 2004)

I have received several emails calling me out on my offer to explain the RC CW3 / CW4 Promotion Board and the RC CW5 Promotion Board process. He is my best attempt to explain. I would like to thank MAJ Richard Dederer of HRC St. Louis for reviewing my comments and providing his own. I have included them in this email. First I'll explain the rules of each board then observations I had on each board. The observations I have are my personal ones and don't reflect those of any other board member or that of HRC St Louis. It should be said that the people in St. Louis who manage the board process, those who maintain your records, and those who maintain your OERs do a Herculean and mostly thankless job. For us on the board they always had the right answer.

The first thing of note was that the board was completely electronic - no paper. All your records and photos were electronic and the voting was electronic. Our board consisted of seven officers, One BG, Two Colonels, 4 CW5's. There were two RA officers and 5 USAR officers. Board make-ups are IAW AR 135-155. The DA Secretariat follows applicable laws and AR 135-155 very strictly and very literally. They work in a zero defect environment when it comes to the promotion process. It is required by the Army G1, the Secretary of the Army and the President of the United States. They, as well as you, should accept no less.

The rules.

The CW3 and 4 boards utilized the 'Fully qualified to meet the needs of the Army' method. Here are the Procedures described in the instructions to the Board:

Phase I (Initial Relative Standing List of officers):

- (1) The board will consider and evaluate the entire record of each officer under the consideration in and above the promotion zone. Each board member will also identify any officer in and above the promotion zone whose manner of performance or conduct potentially merits recommendation to show cause for retention in an active status.
- (2) The board will then merge scores to produce a single relative standing list of all officers in and above the promotion zone.
- (3) The board may only recommend those officers you consider to be 'fully qualified' for promotion. To this end, you should satisfy yourselves that the individual is qualified professionally and morally, has demonstrated integrity, is physically fit, is capable of performing the duties expected of an officer with his or her qualifications in the next higher grade, and is educationally qualified. (You CANNOT be promoted if you are NOT EDUCATIONALLY QUALIFIED ' This is a big key to your future!!)
- (4) At the completion of this phase, the board will set aside for further review the records of officers whose conduct or manner of performance merit recommendation to show cause for retention in an active status. These are typically those officers that have an anomaly in their record i.e. GOMAR, Referred OER's, pattern of substandard performance.
- (5) If the board receives additional information concerning an officer under consideration, which may be considered by the board under the provisions of this MOI, it will revoke the officer's file, and if necessary, it may adjust the final relative standing list and the selection list.

(6) At the conclusion of the deliberative process described above, the board will conduct a formal vote to ensure that no officer is recommended as fully qualified for promotion unless he or she receives the recommendation of a majority of the members of the board. Each member of the board has an equal vote in this process. The board's collective judgment is the final determination of an officer's qualification to meet the Army's needs.

What that equates to, is this: On the CW3 and CW4 board we voted the records as fully qualified or not fully qualified. Fully qualified received a score of two and not fully qualified received a score of one. When the seven votes were tallied if an officer received a score of 11 or greater they were recommended for promotion, less than 11 they were not recommended. An example of this might be - if four officers voted 2, or yes (total of 8 points) and three officers voted 1 or no (total of 3 points) it would be a grand total of 11 points (Simple Majority rules). Here is the other point to remember. Not all officers eligible for consideration were considered. The only officers considered were those whose MOS' that had vacancies in the next grade. In this case no aviation MOS' nor several other MOS' were considered.

The CW5 board utilized the 'Best Qualified' method. Here are the Procedures described in the instructions to the Board:

Procedures. Board members will use the following general procedures in evaluation records of officers under consideration:

Phase I (Initial Relative standing list of 'Best Qualified' officers)

(1) The board will consider and evaluate the entire record of each officer under consideration in and above the promotion zone. Each board member will award a numerical score to assess each officer's promotion potential and will also identify any officer in and above the promotion zone whose manner of performance or conduct potentially merits recommendation to show cause for retention in an active status.

(2) The board will then merge the scores to produce a single relative standing list of all officers in and above the promotion zone.

(3) The board may only recommend those officers you first consider to be 'fully qualified' for promotion. To this end, you should satisfy yourselves that the individual is qualified professionally and morally, has demonstrated integrity, is physically fit, and is capable of performing the duties expected of an officer with his or her qualification in the next higher grade, and is educationally qualified.

(4) At the completion of this phase, the board will set aside for further review the records of warrant officers whose conduct or manner of performance merit recommendation to show cause for retention in an active status.

What this equates to, is this: On the W5 board we voted the records using an electronic score card where the scores range from 1 to 6 and each level can get a + or -. Once the voting was complete the staff created an order of merit list, using the scoring described above. A cut line or best qualified line was determined based on the select objective set by HQDA. Which is to say if three slots are vacant three are selected. This is done for each MOS.

Here are some personal observations. I couldn't believe how complex the issues covered on the promotion board were. The mixing of Title X, IRR, and all the other types of USAR Warrant Officers that there are. Some of our soldiers are very astute and concerned about their promotion potential and it shows in the Board Consideration File. These officers had a photo, current OER's and commendatory data (awards etc) and education. I'm sad to say some of our officers did not even provide basic information like a current photo (not even an outdated photo). Some information was very curious, like on OER's - the three OERs prior to the current OER have an officer at 245 lbs and 70 inches tall. (Pretty much over weight by any standard) The current OER however (officer knows it's a Promotion Board OER) has the officer at 215 lbs and 73 inches?? It sends a conflicting message. A similar phenomenon is the Up and Out Height and Weight statements. That is to say that some evaluations list a soldier as 10 pounds heavier but now he/she is an inch or two taller. The board members are smart and astute, they see these things. Other strange things were Senior Raters who gave an officer an ACOM rating but, don't select the left most blocks (Outstanding Performance, Must Promote) or (Best Qualified) on the back of the OER. Board Members are judicious enough to assign a shared responsibility for the administrative data on the OER between the chain of command and the officer. This is to say that when the rated officer signs the OER and there are glaring discrepancies it can provide an indication of a soldier's credibility.

I realize that some officers had no idea that they were being considered for promotion. Like the officers in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), some of these officers I believe thought they had departed and left the Army behind. And, that they didn't know or care if the Army selected them for promotion because they didn't think they'd be coming back into the Army. The DA Secretariat now has the ability to reach out and touch those officers via an AKO email. In addition, soldiers are now able to view their EXACT board consideration file on line before, during and after the board convenes and recesses.

I think some officers used a strategy that their weight might be an issue to the board, so they didn't send in a photo. But, this was defeated when you read the OERs.

Again, these are personal observations.

The things I saw that made an officer successful on this board were:

Current photo

Good and current OER's. Not all ACOMs but good solid performing officers (Looking for the heart beat in a chain of OER's : i.e.: CM, CM, ACOM, CM, ACOM, etc)

Height and Weight within standard

Physically Fit

Educationally qualified (civilian and military)

History of Performance (IDT, TPU, AT's, etc) Remember - Past Performance is the indicator of promotion potential.

For future boards I'd advise:

Get a photo in the year you go below the zone, another in the zone, and if needed every year above the zone

Take control of your OER ' Don't accept Senior Rater comments like CW3 Smith - good Joe, hair short, boot black. Promote now. Help your senior rater, intermediate rater and rater. We may not be blocking W1's and W2's but, that just makes the write-ups that much more important. And, each OER now takes on more weight ' you must execute to standard on each. RATERS: Be honest, tell the board in simple language ' Does the rated officer deserve to be promoted! - Help the board do their jobs by putting effort into the evaluation ' your soldiers deserve your candor and your leadership.

Don't get over weight, and if you do don't play with your height and weight numbers on the front of the OER. If you have a medical reason for the added weight - have it explained.

It was my honor to be a member of this board, any observations I made or omissions I made are purely my own.

Hope this helps.

v/r
Chris Dodd
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(Note: On July 12, 2006 the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower & Reserve Affairs) approved a policy change to create separate competitive categories of AGR and NON-AGR for all USAR warrant officers that are considered by mandatory promotion selection boards, effective Calendar Year 2007.)

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