

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF  
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CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL  
AND  
DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
(PERSONNEL, MANPOWER, & TRAINING)  
BEFORE THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL  
ON  
MERITOCRACY  
IN THE  
MILITARY SERVICES:  
ACCESSION, PROMOTION, AND COMMAND SELECTION  
SEPTEMBER 20, 2023**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, and distinguished Members of the Military Personnel Subcommittee, I appreciate and thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee to discuss meritocracy in the United States Navy. Our Navy must always build, maintain, train and equip a combat-credible, dominant Naval force to keep the sea lanes open and free, deter conflict, and when called upon, decisively win our Nation's wars. This requires our entire Navy to leverage the best of our Nation by investing in trained, resilient, and educated Sailors that are self-assessing, self-correcting, and always learning toward one goal – delivering warfighting advantage. The United States Navy remains one of the most meritocratic organizations in the world, thanks to the principles established by President Truman in Executive Order 9981. Our Navy is dedicated to selecting and advancing only the best and most fully qualified our Nation has to offer.

## **NAVY ACCESSION PROCESS**

Navy is committed to a process that attracts, recruits, develops, and retains individual Americans with the motivation required to be transformed into a member of a highly skilled, operational, and combat-ready warfighting team. Competition for talent has never been more complex; our target demographic of 18–24-year-olds have more options today than in previous years. As such, it is a strategic imperative for the Navy to remove barriers for entrance and service. Our accession pipeline rating determination process is merit based, specifically using the Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT), and associated individual ASVAB sub-tests used for rating assignment.

### **Enlisted Sailor Accessions**

All military applicants must take the ASVAB that is comprised of ten individual sub-tests. Four of those sub-tests (similar in nature to Scholastic Aptitude Test/American College Testing) are combined to form the AFQT which is used as a general assessment of qualification for military service. However, the AFQT does not form the basis by which the Navy assigns individuals to ratings. Ratings are assigned based on a data-informed combination of ASVAB sub-test results known as 'line scores.'

No recruit is accepted into the Navy that does not qualify for a rating based on the data informed combination of ASVAB line scores. For example, to qualify as a Cyber Warfare Technician, an ASVAB line score of at least 255 is required. As another example, Electronics Technicians must have an ASVAB line score of at least 222. CAT IV recruits (AFQT 10 through 30) are not eligible for line waivers. They must meet all necessary rating-specific line score requirements.

AFQT scores, expressed on a percentile scale, reflect an applicant's standing relative to the national population of men and women 18–23 years of age. The scores are grouped into five categories based on the percentile score ranges shown in the table below:

<b>AFQT Categories and Corresponding Percentile Score Ranges</b>	
<b>AFQT Category</b>	<b>Percentile Score Range</b>
I	93–99
II	65–92
IIIA	50–64
IIIB	31–49
IV	10–30
V	1–9

The data-informed combination of ASVAB line scores predict success through the training pipeline with a high degree of confidence. This confidence is further validated through a detailed review of actual performance compared to predicted performance over periods of time. Based on these reviews, line score requirements are frequently reviewed and adjusted to ensure the high rate of predicted success is maintained through the training pipeline.

This accession process is entirely based on the merit of the individual candidate.

### **Naval Officer Accessions**

Commissioned Officers are members of the Navy or Navy Reserve who have a degree from a four-year college or university as a minimum educational requirement and have gone through Officer Training. Applicants for Officer Candidate School, Naval Reserve Officer’s Training Corps, and the United States Naval Academy are evaluated under a grading rubric that yields high-scoring candidates with high potential to succeed as a Navy leader. Scoring categories include a motivational statement, grade point average, officer aptitude rating, educational background, past employment, physical stamina and agility, oral and written statements, interviews, letters of recommendation, and recruiter comments. This accession process is entirely based on merit of the individual candidate.

### **NAVY PROMOTION PROCESS**

Promotion in the United States Navy, whether officer or enlisted, is based on transparent processes known to those subject to evaluation. Promotion eligibility is based on time, and selection for promotion relies on the best and most fully qualified standard.

#### **Enlisted Promotion Process**

Enlisted promotion to E2 through E4 is based on time in service, applicable to all Sailors. Enlisted promotion to E5 through E6 is determined via the administration of a Navy-Wide Advancement Exam, the results of which feed into a Sailor Scoring Criteria. This approach considers the exam score, as well as performance mark average, service in paygrade, awards, education points, and pass not advance points (credit from previous exam cycles). Sailors selected for the next higher paygrade exceed the required Sailor Scoring Criteria for their rating. Enlisted promotion to E7 through E9 is determined by a board of Senior Enlisted and Officers

who are under oath. Selection for promotion is based on a best and most fully qualified standard, governed by precepts and convening orders. The best and most fully qualified standard is discussed in more detail in the Command Selection Process discussion below.

### **Officer Promotion Process**

Officer promotion to O2 and O3 occurs through the All Fully Qualified Promotion process in line with Title 10. Officer promotion to O4 and above, to include Flag Rank of O7 and O8 is determined by a board of senior officers who are under oath. Selection for promotion is based on a best and most fully qualified standard, governed by precepts and convening orders. The best and most fully qualified standard is discussed in more detail in the Command Selection Process discussion below.

The enlisted and officer promotion processes are entirely based on merit of the individual candidate.

### **COMMAND SELECTION PROCESS**

Our Navy employs a robust, data-driven process to select and assign personnel to command leadership positions. Through Administrative Selection Boards, the Navy considers eligible candidates through a careful and detailed review of their records by senior officers who are under oath during the process. Each record represents years of service by the individual candidate and only the written record is considered by the board. Command selection is based on a best and most fully qualified standard, governed by precepts and convening orders.

An Administrative Selection Board Precept governs the standard, promulgated by the Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel (DCNP). Fully Qualified means the candidate must be capable of performing the duties for which selected, and they must demonstrate the appropriate level of leadership, professional skills, integrity, management acumen, business practices, and resourcefulness in difficult and challenging assignments. Necessary professional attributes include adaptability, intelligent risk-taking, critical thinking, innovation, adherence to Navy and Department of Defense ethical standards, physical fitness, and loyalty to Navy core values. Among the fully qualified candidates, the board recommends the best qualified from the group. Proven and sustained superior performance in command and other leadership positions in difficult and challenging assignments is a definitive measure of fitness. Additionally, successful performance and leadership in combat conditions demonstrate exceptional advancement potential.

Command selection results are reviewed by the individual community lead Flag Officer, the Chief of Naval Personnel, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, and the Chief of Naval Operations.

At the Flag Officer level, all Navy assignments, including command, are determined through a rigorous process of record reviews and discussions with community lead Flag Officers,

stakeholders and Fleet Commanders prior to submission via the Chief of Naval Operations for approval by the Secretary of the Navy.

This command selection process is entirely based on merit of the individual candidate.

## **CONCLUSION**

Our Navy is a meritocratic institution that ensures our accessions, assignments, command selections, and promotions are based on established standards. The Navy has a deliberate process for recruitment, advancement, and selection for leadership positions which is constantly reviewed to ensure the finest Americans are available for service at all ranks and paygrades. I look forward to working with you as we continue shaping our Navy to meet future challenges. On behalf of the Sailors of the United States Navy, thank you for your unwavering support.