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As mentioned in last month's issue, this article will cover the second half of the APPLY board process, slating. I've collected the following notes & observations from serving as an assistant recorder on the O-5 Line Panel. There were many other panels (O-4/O-6 Line, Medical, Chaplain, Medical, Intel, METOC, etc.) with their own particulars, but the general slating process remained the same.

After the first week or so of records review, briefing, and voting on confidence factors of thousands of records, the APPLY board spent the second week assigning officers to billets according to their "dream sheets," competitive ranking, technical qualifications, supported command's requirements, and others. On the O-5 panel, there were roughly 580 billets to be slated from a pool of about 2,000 applicants. A very conscientious effort was maintained by the board to deliberate this as a slating process and not a detailing process. During this second half, what the board saw included: (a) applicant's remarks, billets history, and dream sheet from the APPLY Web site; (b) education; (c) last four reserve NOBCs; (d) AQDs; (e) any résumé submitted; (f) level of security clearance; and last, but not least, (g) confidence factor from the first week.

1. If one notices any degree or NOBC missing from one's OSR, be sure to mention them in the remarks section as well as sending in any documentation of proof. Any information entered in the remarks/comments section should be of short, concise, and relevant bullets. If your current billet is going away, with tenure remaining, due to ZBR draw down or whatever reason, so articulate. However, the textbox only allow for so many characters, use the limited real estate wisely. Don't waste valuable

Lessons Learned from APPLY 06 – Part 2

"advertising" space with wordy narrative. Imagine your attention span while traveling at 65 MPH on the freeway, trying to catch a billboard.

2. If applying for a billet within a program requiring a résumé, such as Programs 18 (SPACE & NETWAR) or 38 (ONR), do submit a thoughtfully crafted résumé. Relevant civilian experience counts! Otherwise, an applicant will be skipped over swiftly. Can one imagine responding to a job advertisement in a local newspaper, a hiring company Web site, or even through personal connection without submitting a résumé? Unthinkable in the civilian world, but there were a few instances here.

3. Look at the requirements of the billets for which one might want to apply two-to-three years down the road and do some advanced planning for NOBC and security clearance (especially at TS or SCI level) and work on them. These usually take time and persistent effort to accomplish and maintain, but will most probably make a difference between a pay billet and VTU. Consider them as long-term personal investment.

4. Be sure to register with the APPLY Web site every year, even if one might not be applying for a billet. Update or validate one's PRD and billets history. It's much easier to maintain your profile incrementally. It could be a bit more difficult trying to search through stacks of old admin documents, or to remember from missing paperwork after several years.

5. The O-5 panel consisted of four RDMLs and about 23 senior O-5/O-6s. Every vote counted, and counted equally. Competition was extremely keen. The board made an exhaustive effort to fill all billets but, in the end, there were still about a dozen or so O-5 billets left on the

table due to lack of qualified candidates (hard-coded designator/NOBC, security clearance, technical qualifications, low confidence factor, etc.).

6. As part of the process dynamics, there were also O-5 billets that became available in the last moment to be filled but, of course, had never been advertised by APPLY. These were vacated, during the board process, by CAPT(S) applicants; or by CDRs who got selected for command billets with tenure still remaining in current non-command billets. Lesson learned: carefully weigh your desire to engage & willingness to travel (within 100 miles, at the very least), and to accept billets not on your dream sheet. One could never know, that local billet right across the drill hall might open up after all the dust has settled.

For JOs, even though not being required to go through APPLY for a pay billet, it's very important to avoid homesteading; i.e., staying in the same unit doing the same job for five-to-six years without moving up in leadership responsibility. If you've been moving up from Dept. Head, to XO, and then perhaps to CO in the same unit, that's great. But if you've evidently "maxed out," and an appropriate opportunity presents itself with another unit, or even a different designator, for which you can qualify, seriously consider it. For non-command jobs, the billeting process for JOs can be accomplished via your local NRA's Manpower. Your CO/XO, recruiters, and officer community leaders are also good sources of information and guidance. Certainly, register with APPLY every year and review the billets database to see what kinds of CO jobs are available out there. It is also worthwhile to look at some senior billets, just to get some ideas to prepare yourself a little bit further down the road. The need of the Navy is ever changing, keep your eyes open and your ears close to the ground. Think ahead; plan ahead. ↴