



***THE
CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER
ASSIGNMENT GUIDE***



July 2010

Welcome!

Yet another Assignment Season is underway! For all you veterans of the process, welcome back. Also, we want to particularly congratulate all the prospective new appointees and welcome them to the Chief Warrant Officer ranks. In that the CWO assignment process is different from what most of us have experienced at the enlisted grades, we have created this guide to:

- demystify the process;
- pass along some of the rules of engagement we follow;
- provide information that will help everyone involved in the process manage expectations; and
- help prepare you with some assignment process survival tips.

While we have targeted the information in this guide at the incumbent CWOs and new appointees, we hope that all officers and supervisors will find it useful for their own use or in counseling others.

The CWO Assignment Team

The CWO Assignment Team within the Coast Guard Personnel Command, Officer Personnel Management Division (CGPC-opm), consists of:

- CDR Nathan Moore, Chief, Officer Assignments Branch (opm-2)
- CWO Jerry Fitchett (opm-2N), Assignment Officer for specialties:
 BOSN ELC ENG ISM MLES
 MSSD MSSE OSS
- CWO Steven Creech, (opm-2M), Assignment Officer for specialties:
 AVI BNDM F&S GENDU INF INV
 ISS MAT MED PERS WEPS

The Key Elements

The CWO assignment process is, to a large extent, no different from what you've experienced in the past in that the key elements remain the Shopping List and your e-Resume.

The Shopping List

The Shopping List of all the CWO positions open in the current Assignment Season is typically made available in August via Direct Access. As a starting point, the list includes all those positions where the incumbent will be tour-

complete the following summer together with positions filled by CWOs with approved separation requests. This keeps everyone informed of the positions we expect to be open.

In September, after commands have had a chance to review and validate the Shopping List in Direct Access, we will release the Shopping List via an ALCGOFF message. Changes to the Shopping List will also be communicated in subsequent ALCGOFF message updates and Assignment Season SITREPs. The greatest number of changes normally occurs after the results of the CWO to Lieutenant Selection Panel and the CWO Service Beyond 30 years Panel. Other changes will likely occur as officers re-evaluate their career and personal goals.

Shopping List updates give potential candidates a chance to consider new alternatives and frequently are issued simply to develop assignment contingency plans. Please keep in mind that it is inappropriate to subject the Assignment Officer (AO) or any incumbent in an advertised position to questions regarding why the position will be vacant or what is happening with the incumbent.

Use the Shopping List to develop or update your e-Resume. If you are tour complete or desire a transfer in the current Assignment Season, ensure your e-Resume is submitted in accordance with the timeline outlined in the Assignment Year (AY) Kick-off Message.

The e-Resume

The e-Resume is your primary, and in some cases may serve as the only needed, method of communicating with your AO. You should not consider submitting your e-Resume as an entering position to begin an extensive, iterative dialog. Providing the most complete and accurate information up front allows us to provide the best possible service. Updates along the way, based on Shopping List changes or other new information, are always welcome. The bottom line is that your e-Resume should accurately reflect your personal preferences.

e-Resume Craftsmanship

A well crafted e-Resume should allow flexibility and acknowledge an array of possible assignment outcomes. If you prefer an out-of-specialty assignment, tell us, but also consider telling us what your specialty preferences are in the event an out-of-specialty assignment isn't possible. A very narrow e-Resume (*i.e.*, just one position listed) makes our work almost as easy as a blank e-Resume as we presume you'll be equally thrilled with any assignment after the few preferences listed. A broad e-Resume (*i.e.*, 10-15 diverse positions identified) tells us your preferences and addresses alternatives that you would like the Service to consider you for given your specialty background and/or experience. Keep in mind that CWOs who have completed two consecutive

tours in a highly desired geographic area should expect reassignment to another area. This will give other officers an opportunity to serve in those areas too.

e-Resume Due Date

Your e-Resume is due by **01 October**. That's when we begin a broad assessment of program and unit needs across paygrades, evaluate tradeoffs, and take a vertical look at workforce issues before moving forward in our horizontal (by paygrade) Assignment Panels and decisions. We try to be as responsive as possible in adjusting to changes as they occur throughout this dynamic process. Delayed submission of an e-Resume will reduce your assignment options. You should notify your AO immediately via email of any changes to your e-Resume after the 01 October submission deadline.

Extensions

If you are requesting an extension, you **MUST** have a command endorsement on your e-resume. CWOs requesting an extension will compete with other CWOs requesting that particular position. CWOs requesting a second extension should expect reassignment, unless service need supports a second extension. CWOs requesting extensions who have 28 years of service will normally not be approved. Requests will be considered and based on service need.

Early Rotations

All requests for an early rotation **MUST** have a command endorsement. The purpose of a command endorsement is not to give an opinion of the suitability for the requested position(s), but rather to address the effect an early departure would have on continuity or the overall skill/experience level of a unit or staff. Conditional positive endorsements (*e.g.*, "I support early rotation for position X, but not for position Y") are not appropriate. Command approval of an early rotation does not guarantee reassignment.

On occasion, early rotations may be required when a specific specialty or service need cannot be adequately satisfied using officers that are tour complete. An early rotation request while serving in a command position will normally be denied.

Special Need Program

Many CWOs have "special needs." In this context, however, a Special Need is a specific term used to define any medical physical, psychological, mental, or educational disability involving a dependant. All active duty members who have family members with professionally diagnosed Special Needs are **required** to enroll their family members in this program. This ensures early identification of families with Special Needs and serves to minimize family stress and undue hardships as well as costly, disruptive off season reassignments. Enrollment in the program will create a special flag in Direct Access that is visible to the Assignment Officers. It only tells us that you have

a Special Need but does not divulge any details. When we see that indicator, we work closely with the Work-life staff in the local area to ensure potential assignment outcomes are compatible with your Special Need. Please don't wait to introduce this consideration until after you've received orders. This makes it more difficult to accommodate your needs. Reach out to your local Work-life staff to assist with creation of your e-resume.

Being enrolled in Special Needs does not give anyone the advantage for any particular assignment. Having access to a specific health care professional is not required if the medical care can be met elsewhere.

Familiarize yourself with Work-life policies. We find many CWOs who should be enrolled in the program, but are not. The reason given most often is they don't want to bother the Coast Guard, or they don't want special treatment. Whatever the medical condition or other situation, the Work-life staff can confirm your needs can or can not be met at your proposed assignment area. It may not be somewhere you believe you should be, and you may not be able to stay in an area just because you like the doctor you have now, but we strive to locate an assignment area where the Special Need can be met.

Overseas Duty

If you are requesting an overseas assignment review Article 4.H.2 of CG Personnel Manual. Additionally, the following statement must be entered into the comment section of your e-resume:

"My family (if applicable) and I meet the criteria for overseas assignment as outlined in Article 4.H. of the Personnel manual, COMDTINST M1000.6. My spouse (if applicable) and I have reviewed the Command Checklist for Overseas Screening, the Financial Assessment Checklist and the Dependent Overseas Screening shown in Article 4.H of the Personnel Manual.

Other Concerns

Aside from Exceptional Family Members, among the more prevalent concerns many of us have relate to children in school, caring for aging parents, a challenging housing market and spouse employment issues. We are sympathetic to those concerns, but you need to know that these issues are often so common they become the norm, not exceptions. However, it is not possible to accommodate everyone's desires.

Collocation

The collocation policy supports married active duty members desire to assigned to the same geographic whenever possible. However, couples should realize that the Service might not be able to co-locate them throughout their careers depending on Service needs and professional development. In cases where tour lengths are not aligned, Assignment Officers may adjust the tour

length of one member to allow for both to transfer during the same Assignment Season.

Both married members desiring collocation with their spouse should tailor comments in their e-Resumes accordingly. We recommend that couples work together on their e-Resumes and give the Assignment Officers reasonable geographic and position options. Further information on this policy can be found in the CG Personnel Manual, Article 4.A.8.

The Assignment Process

Armed with your well crafted e-Resumes, we begin to process all the information we need to develop assignment recommendations.

Performance Basis

Officer assignments are primarily performance based decisions. The best way to compete favorably for desired assignments is to demonstrate a pattern of sustained, high level performance regardless of job assignment history.

New Appointee Lists

The cut and predictor for the annual Promotion Year's eligibility list for appointment to CWO specialties is established by opm-2. The cut is based on known retirements, separations, vacant positions, new positions, and position deletions that will occur during the upcoming AY. The predictor is established by using a formula of historical attrition that takes in account expected retirements and billet grade changes that we not yet approved.

All appointments to CWO are made to fill vacancies, and are made when the assignment action can best be accomplished in the normal personnel assignment process. Appointees whose names appear at or above the cutoff who have not been appointed by the time the current list expires on 31 May will be carried over to the top of the new eligibility list ahead of the new candidates.

As new information is received which creates additional vacancies, such as results from selection boards, retirement requests, new positions, etc., or members elect to remove their name from the appointment list, opm-2 will revise the cutoff. This will normally be done during the months of August, December, and April.

After the slate for incumbent Warrants is complete, new CWO appointees are notified of available assignment opportunities. This is normally done between January thru March to allow inclusion of those positions previously slated to be filled by incumbent CWOs who have elected to retire in lieu of orders and account for any late season voluntary retirements or position creations. This ensures maximum competition for desired positions by CWO appointees.

Retired Recall to Active Duty

Every year, Chief Warrant Officers ask about “contracts.” More accurately they are called “Retired Recall to Active Duty Agreements.” Policies can be found in the CG Personnel Manual, Article 1.A.10.

The only way to return to active duty after retiring is by requesting retired recall. The member actually retires from the Service and if the recall is approved, returns to work at the same rank. In order for a retired recall request to be approved, the following conditions must be met:

- the CG needs your skill set and experience;
- there exists a vacant position at the unit you desire; and
- your past performance warrants you coming back to the CG.

If you are successful in your bid for retired recall, you will be paid just the same as the day you left the Service. Impacts on your retirement benefits when you return to retired status depend on the length of time you serve in the retired recall capacity.

Officers facing mandatory retirement can pursue continuation past 30 years of service, if offered that year, or pursue retired recall. However, the number of retired recall contracts approved has significantly declined in recent years.

**RILO
(Retirement In Lieu of Orders)**

It is important to understand who is eligible to RILO and under what conditions.

- If you have 20 years of service, have no obligated service, and you prefer to retire instead of accepting orders, your request will normally be granted.
- If you are selected to the next rank, eligible to retire, and request to retire in lieu of orders, you must also ask to voluntarily have your name removed from the list of CWO selectees.
- If you are a newly promoted CWO, by policy, you are required you to serve in grade for two years prior to retiring. If your two years of obligated service isn't up by 01 August, or if you have other obligated service (advanced education pay-back, OCONUS transfer, etc.), you are not eligible to RILO.

Please also note that all RILOs must take place by 01 August, but you can ask to retire earlier. If you prefer a later retirement date (perhaps to be eligible for a longevity pay raise or to better meet your personal needs), then you need to submit your voluntary retirement request in time for us to act on it prior to the end of the assignment season.

Orders From November through March, orders are transmitted via Direct Access to the respective Servicing Personnel Office, starting with OCONUS transfers and other officers known to have early reporting dates. Usually, all CWO orders are out by the beginning of March. While Direct Access requires an estimated report date in order to cut orders (typically 01July200X is entered as a default), commands are authorized to arrange exact dates among themselves.

Off-Season Although the vast majority of CWO assignments are handled by the processes described above, each year circumstances arise which require off-season transfer decisions not previously contemplated.

When we become aware of an upcoming off-season vacancy, we advertise the position in an ALCGOFF message, along with any other positions that stand a good chance of opening as part of a chain reaction (unless advertised extensively during the regular assignment season).

Off-Season Retirements Under CG Personnel Manual policy, eligible officers may submit a request for retirement a minimum of six months and no more than twelve months in advance of the desired separation date. We can normally approve a request made within those parameters, but in some cases Service need or circumstances at a unit do not permit approval of the requested date. One important consideration is our ability to backfill the retiring officer's position. There are usually no easy backfill options when a vacancy occurs outside the annual assignment process. For that reason, command endorsements on retirement requests must address backfill requirements. Retirement requests which would cause a vacancy off-season may face disapproval if an acceptable backfill arrangement cannot be found and the command is not willing to absorb a gap.

Special Note: As a reminder, Chief Warrant Officers are expected to attend the Chief Warrant Officer Professional Development School within 12 months of commissioning. In some cases, this may impact an assignment outcome, especially in consideration of highly desired positions, including Commanding Officer or other high profile assignments.

GOOD LUCK! We hope you find this information useful in understanding the assignment process and that it helps reduce the associated anxiety. We recognize how important the outcome of assignment decisions is to each individual and to the Service. We look forward to serving you and hope that our messages, website, and personal contact will keep you well informed.