



Lessons Learned from Training Center Yorktown's Chief Warrant Officer Pre-Board



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Training Center Yorktown (TCY) typically has 50 enlisted members request to compete for Chief Warrant Officer commissions annually. These candidates come from various divisions and branches, posing the potential for numerous chains of command to request “highest recommendation” for any given warrant officer specialty from the commanding officer. To provide an objective, thorough, and meaningful evaluation of each candidate, TCY employs a local pre-board. Board membership is comprised of senior personnel, including an O-5 president, a CWO-to-Lieutenant, sitting CWOs, and a Master Chief active in the Chiefs’ Mess, and evaluates candidates by reviewing their PDRs and interviewing them. The board’s product to the command is a rank order of the candidates per specialty, including recommendations for block 10 of the OER (highest recommendation, highly recommended, recommended, or not recommended) should a candidate make the primary or alternate candidate list.

This year, TCY’s pre-board met December 2012 and interviewed 46 of the 53 candidates who initially requested consideration to compete. The board identified common best practices from those candidates who earned the board’s top recommendations. While this list is not complete, it may be of use as a primer for those who interview with their commands when pursuing Chief Warrant Officer Commissions. The board found that top candidates:

1. Understood the general responsibilities of Chief Warrant Officers. They characterized Chief Warrant Officer leadership and management roles, accurately summarizing the Coast Guard’s definition of the Chief Warrant Officer. They accurately explained how Chief Warrant Officers “fit” into the Coast Guard workforce.
2. Understood the specialty for which they were competing. They demonstrated how their career to date had prepared them for the jobs and skill sets typical of their specialty. Further, they identified specialty-specific competencies they would need to strengthen if commissioned.
3. Had already held leadership positions where they were responsible for people and mission accomplishment, using specific examples from their own experiences to demonstrate solidly developing leadership and management skills. They could readily explain their positive impacts on major projects, evolutions/events, or other people, as lead, team member, or coach.
4. Put effort into their collateral duties.
5. Were active outside their everyday jobs. They helped others through community service and Coast Guard-related organizations like the Chiefs’ Mess or the Coast Guard Enlisted Association.
6. Had records of solid performance and updated PDRs, including updated creditable sea time and a continuous and up-to-date record of evaluations.
7. Had career tracks that naturally developed the skills sets needed for their prospective specialty (see #2 above). Being out-of-rate too long hurts; candidates currently serving in back-to-back training tours were less competitive than their peers who had recently been in jobs directly conducting the missions of their rate.

8. Had strong records of continuing education.

9. Demonstrated professionalism and attention to detail by arriving at the interview in a sharp uniform with awards and service stripes displayed matching their service record.

The board was impressed with the leadership capabilities, management skills, and dedication to Coast Guard core values demonstrated by this year's candidates. We wish them well and look forward to seeing them excel whatever advancement path they choose.

Leadership competencies addressed: Human Resources Management, Taking Care of People, and Mentoring