

2019 Naval Officer Board Question Bank



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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Officer Candidate Board Questions - to judge aptitude	2
OOD, TAO, BWC Board questions - to judge tactical proficiency and judgement	5
Department Head and Command Screening Board Questions - to judge leadership	10
Officer Board Scenario Questions	12
Would you like to Help?	19

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Introduction

Any interview or officer board is intended to accomplish two objectives. Make sure the candidate is a good fit for the Navy and also make sure the Navy is a good fit for the candidate. As such the interviewers OWE IT to the candidate and the Navy to ask high quality and challenging questions. It is my desire that these pages of questions are used to better judge candidates aptitude, character, judgement and leadership and bring our Navy to a higher level.

If you would like to be part of this team and contribute to this project contact me at john@dodreads.com.

Officer Candidate Board Questions - to judge aptitude

The intent of the officer candidate board is to gauge aptitude for future leadership. Does the individual possess the baseline knowledge which can be built upon, and developed into a military Officer. This can be judged by observing the candidates appearance, confidence, attitude, knowledge and speaking ability.

Question	What are your reading?
Intent	This is my first and favorite question for all boards and tells me more about the individual than any other question. Additionally I frequently learn about new books and resources that can aid in my own personal and professional development.
Question	How did you get interested in Military Service?
Intent	Was is a shiny brochure, Top Gun, or family that got you interested. Was this a long term interest? Or an interest that grew this week?
Question	Tell me about your last job? Boss? Or Instructor?
Intent	How the candidate relates to his last job, command or boss will probably be very similar to how he relates to his next job. Negativity breeds negativity; positivity breeds positivity.
Question	Why do you want to get off the CMC track and get on the CO track?

	Or Why Do you want to be an Officer?
Intent	Any enlisted individual wanting to selected for commissioning is currently on track to become a CMC. Why do they want to get off that track and onto the "CO Track"? Why is "operational" leadership at an officer level more important to you than "Tactical" leadership at an enlisted level?

Question	What does your selected career path look like?
Intent	If they want to be an officer they better know exactly what their career path looks like. They should have read everything they can online about their chosen career path.

Question	If I asked you to do something that you disagree with how would you respond?
Intent	What is your moral compass like? How do you respond to a tricky situation where you need to disagree with your boss? How do you balance respect with truth?

Question	Describe your leadership style now, and how do you think that will change as an officer?
Intent	Is the candidate self aware that they will change? Do they understand the difference between tactical and operational leadership?

Question	Tell me about a failure
Intent	Is the candidate self aware to discuss a failure, and what they learned from it? The bigger the failure the more confident they are and the more they learned from it.

Question	Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?
Intent	Take any question and ask Why until the point of failure. This will show how the candidate responds to failure and confusion in the "high stress" context of a board. You will also be able to see how quickly the candidate recovers and moves on.

Additional Questions

- Why are you a good fit to be a Naval Officer?
- What unique experiences can you bring to the table to support the Navy?
- How do you feel about people working for you that know more than you do?
- Tell me about a time where you quit?
- Have you ever been on a team where people did not pull their own weight? How did you handle this?
- What is the most important thing you learned in school?
- What is the least important thing you learned in school?

OOD, TAO, BWC Board questions - to judge tactical proficiency and judgement

Intent of the board: provide me an understanding how how well I trust the oncoming OOD, TAO, BWC, and how much latitude to give him/her. To have a discussion on my expectations and for the individual to understand that they are holding a position of trust.

No instruction shall take the place of sound judgement.

Question	What are my wakeup criteria? Ok, One of those criteria were meet. Give me a wakeup call.
Intent	1) To have a discussion about wake up call expectations 2) Convey you can always call call me day or night 3) Convey that we are on the same team, Neither of us want an incident on watch. Leverage my expertise before you get in a sticky situation.

Question	You are standing watch as BWC during RIMPAC 2018 in building 139. You receive a call from a frantic Canadian diver from a CTU not assigned to us who reports "hey mate, one of your helicopters is operating in the wrong location and just abuuut hit my diver". You look out the window and can visually tell that the helicopter is operating in the proper location. How do you respond?
Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quickly acknowledge something is wrong and immediate action is required.• Recognize that it does not matter who is wrong (helo or divers) but that the BWC needs to take decisive action.• If you hesitate they the helo may come back and hit the diver on its next track.• FIRST: Take that decisive action.• SECOND: Notify me.

Question	You are standing the midwatch as BWC on watch onboard the USS MT WHITNEY. At 0400 the XO walks in while doing his rounds. He quickly looks over your plan and says "wow, that does not seem very safe, I
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	<p>really would not do that if I were you", he shakes his head and walks out.</p> <p>How do you respond?</p>
Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quickly acknowledge something is wrong ● Acknowledge the XO is not in your chain of command; yet his/her opinion as a senior naval officer counts. ● Quickly be willing to pause operations ● Quickly be willing to wake us up

Question	<p>It is 2200 and you are BWC during BALTOPS. Over the last three days one of your French ships that you have TACON over has been complaining in their LOGREQ about being low on wine and cheese. The ship CO gives you a ring and reports that he has just worked a deal with his French logistics ship to have a Belgian helicopter conduct a VERTREP to deliver the wine and cheese. The helo will also drop off some parts and conduct a pax transfer. Weather is picking up, but within limits. This VERTREP will not take the French ship of station and is scheduled for 0530 the next morning.</p> <p>You review the CCIR's and note that there is no mention of UNREPS in CO's wakeup criteria.</p>
Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize that although TACON does not include logistic responsibilities, and this is not a CCIR, this is a big deal. ● Apply the "swiss cheese" model. Foreign helicopter, rushed planning, night time, bad weather, VERTREP on a ship that does not practice VERTREPS, and all for some "nonessential" wine and cheese ● Forsee My response if I learned about this at 0600 the next morning. ● Gather additional information on what is going on and give us a ring.

Question	<p>Slow motion train wreck with a false sense of urgency:</p> <p>It is the end of a 4 week RIMPAC exercise and everyone has worked hard and is ready to get home. The final ENDEX requirement is mine recovery. It is Sunday afternoon after the end of exercise party and the dive team had just been recalled to conduct an ordnance recovery in 180 feet of water after the MK-7 sea lions team refused to dive</p>
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due to an increase in shipping and fishing traffic in that area. It is getting dark, and the weather is kicking up a bit, but still within limits. Furthermore the dive team's chief left a day before the exercise ended back to VA Beach as his wife was having a baby, and the team is led by a new ensign. The LPO is a confident 2/c EOD diver and reported to you that he's done this job thousands of times and that the team is good to go.

You take a quick look at the risk matrix and see that the dive team is not violating any one item on the matrix. You talk to your EOD rep and there is nothing in any instruction that prevents you from this mine recovery. You call to the EOD unit CDO to verify and the YN2 answers. He reviews the instructions and affirms that you are not in violation of any diving instruction. You can not get ahold of anyone.

This job needs to be completed tonight as the mines are scheduled for repainting and refurb on monday. Removing the mines is the last item on SMWDC and ADMIRAL Wade's requirement for ENDEX.

<<If the candidate still wants to continue with the mission>>

In addition the chamber team has already started packing up but they report that *in an emergency* they can have it ready in about 60 minutes.

<<If the candidate still wants to continue with the mission>>

(one engine OOC on the two engine boat, flat tire on emergency truck, RADAR on RHIB not working, lightning 6 miles away (limit is 5 miles) low cylinder pressure on gas tanks, debris on bottom, dive sup prone to seasickness, no radio but working cell phones, pier gate locked but they could "cut it in an emergency", ect...)

<<keep going until the candidate stops the dive>>

Intent

- Recognize the false sense of urgency.
- Recognize that no instruction supersedes good judgment.
- Have a "Swiss Cheese" Discussion
- Hold the team at the pier until you get further guidance.
- In 2013 a similar incident cost two divers at Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit their lives; James E. Reyher said Ryan Harris.

Question	MNSN Smith, your primary communications operator, shows up dead sick and totally non functional to his 0100 watch. It is a slow night and MNC Jones can very easily cover MN1's position. What do you do?
Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As A BWC I have Empowered you to make good, common sense decisions without always checking with us. This is a position of trust. • Acknowledge that I signed the watch bill and that is should not be changed without my approval. • Balance those two opposing ideas and make the correct decision

Question	What risk are you willing to accept on your behalf, and what must you push up?
Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I want you to Accept risk that will stay at DIV31 level; push up risk that will go outside our lifelines. • (This will be different for each Command / Commander. However it is good to have this discussion with your JO's on what risk they should accept at their level.)

Question	How do you balance passing up too much information with too little information?
Intent	This is a good discussion to have between the commander and the watch stander. You can go wrong operating at both extremes of the spectrum. How do you want your watchstander to balance these two extremes.

Additional Questions	<p>Doctrine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be familiar with all the different types of command relationships (OPCON, TACON, Supporting...) • Be familiar with joint planning and the military decision making process • Understand joint level doctrine; focus on JP 1-2, 3-0, 3-15, 3.15.1, and 5.0 • Understand navy doctrine; focus on NWPs and NTPPs that are relevant to EOD • Understand Strategy; be able to discuss our National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, National Military
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Strategy, CNO Guidance, NECC Total Force Vision and NECC Strategic Vision for the 21st Century.

Operations:

- Know the difference between TYCOMS/SYSCOMS/OPCONS and what they do.
- Be familiar with the requirements (ATFP/Country Clearance/Theater clearance and APAS requests) for entering foreign countries.

Personnel:

- Understand the Officer and enlisted promotion process
- Understand the Officer administrative board process
- Be able to discuss NJP and article 15. Discuss the full range of administrative actions and punishment options
- Discuss how you would conduct a CACO call
- Discuss how and why we would conduct an investigation
- Enlisted Records

Security:

- Requirements to get access (or to pull someone's access) to Classified material
- How to mail secret material
- How to travel with secret material
- How to travel with weapons
- Level ONE, TWO, THREE restricted areas (OPNAV 5530.14)
- Authorizations to release Unclass / Classified material
- Disclosure vs. release
- ACGU, FVEY countries

Department Head and Command Screening Board Questions - to judge leadership

The intent of this board is to gauge trust. Can the Navy trust you to full a capstone position, take responsibility for our nations finest, sail over the horizon, and properly represent the United States of America?

Question	What are your reading?
Intent	This is my first and favorite question for all boards and tells me more about the individual than any other question. Additionally I frequently learn about new books and resources that can help me out.
Question	Who is your mentor?
Intent	No one gets to this point alone. A high quality team surrounding your will be the first one to point out a chink in your armor or a dull sword BEFORE it rises to the level of your boss or Navy Times. As Iron sharpens Iron, so one man sharpens another - Proverbs 27:17
Question	How should you Disagree with Me?
Intent	1) Support in public 2) Express disagreement in private (<u>YOU OWE IT TO YOUR BOSS</u> to express your disagreement even when you don't want to) 3) If he changes great. If not you have two options: refer back to rule #1 or resign.
Question	What is your Command Philosophy? And what were your formative events with lead you to develop that philosophy?
Intent	What are your governing priorities that will guide you in command? A great article to assist is My Philosophy on a Commander's Philosophy .
Question	How do you balance right vs right decisions? Such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present Benefits vs. Future Benefits: How do you balance sacrificing present benefits for the hope of future rewards?

- Excellence vs. Compliance: Do you prefer rule based compliance or more flexible, but less organized.
- Strive to Win vs Do not Loose: Playing to win holds much more risk; is that risk you are willing to accept for your self and your crew?
- High Risk vs. low risk: Do you like to play high risk games with hail-mary passes, or keep it safe with base hits?
- Benefit the unit vs benefit the individual: Where do you fall out on Ship/Shipmate/self?
- Black and white thinking vs shades of grey: Is there always one right answer for most problems? or is your most likely answer "it depends" Are you willing to operate in the grey, or does every problem need a book answer before you find it acceptable?
- Strong vs. Smart: Do you prefer being around smart workers or hard workers?
- Standard SOP vs Diverse SOP: How much latitude do you want to give your people when executing your instructions
- Operational Focus vs. Administrative focus: Is it more important to have admin or operations at 100%. Is your hazardous safety program run so tightly that all work is stopped? or is it so loose that the crew is in danger?
- Good vs. fast vs. cheap: all three have upsides and downsides
- Minority vs. Majority: Similar to ship/shipmate/self. Will you benefit the majority even at the cost of the minority?
- Generalist vs specialist: Do you want a shallow bench of specialists or deep bench of generalists
- New vs old: Do you tend to believe new is better, or do you like to stick with the old and proven?
- Do right vs do no wrong: Is avoiding error better than achieving success?
- Wide Focus vs. Narrow Focus: Do you want to give a little energy to a lot of things, or lots of energy to a small number of things?
- Quality or Quantity: Is more better or is better better?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision making with 60% of the available information vs. Decision making with 95% of the available information: How much information do you need before making a decision and how does that affect the pace of operations?
Intent	Right vs. Wrong decisions are easy. Right vs. Right decisions are some of the hardest decisions you will ever make.

Question	What decisions and information do you keep at your level and what do you push up to your Boss? What if it is not on his CCIR (Commander's Critical Information Requirements)
Intent	Do you use good judgement in pushing up the right amount of information?

Additional Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would you change about your last command? How would others describe you? How do you balance life and work? Do you consider yourself successful? Ethical decision (right vs right) How do you Balance "Needs of the Navy vs. Needs of the individual" How do you ballance long term good of your command vs short term good of your command. What is the most useful criticism you have ever received? What specific strengths did you bring to the table? Of all the work (personal / professional) you have done, where have you been the most successful? How have previous jobs prepared you for greater responsibility?
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Officer Board Scenario Questions

All of these questions are designed to help you think through the right vs. right situations that commanding officers and OICs deal with on a daily basis.

A good framework for answering these are:

- 1) Do nothing, gather my thoughts, take a breath, gather facts, initiate an investigation or PI.
- 2) Reflect on my command priorities, ship/shipmate/self, and the short vs. long term effects of my decision.
- 3) Reach out to a mentor
- 4) Decide
- 5) Reevaluate my decision (and if need be return to step 1)

Question

MU-13 was tasked to source a 12 month IA to Iceland, and you have two possible options. EOD2 Single just returned from a 10 month deployment last month and EOD2 Married just returned from an 6 month deployment last month. EOD2 Married has 4 kids under 5 years old and is struggling keeping his family together, EOD2 Single is your carefree single guy. Neither want to take the IA. What are your decision factors?

Intent

- Think through the dilemma of fair vs. right.
- How does this decision affect the unit and individual?
- Should and how should family matters be taken into consideration?
- Is there a [3rd alternative](#)?

Question

You are the OPSO of MU-13 and out of the blue you get a phone call from EOD1 Jones's wife who tells you that he's been stealing dive knives, sunglasses and backpacks from MU-13. She reports that he has two dive knives, three sets of sunglasses and four backpacks in his garage along with other assorted EOD gear. She wants him to be kicked out of EOD for stealing equipment.

What do you do?

How does the scenario change if she reports that he has been driving drunk after work and smoking weed on the weekends?

What if you went over to his house to investigate, found that he had done nothing wrong, EXCEPT he had taken a roll of riggers tape and box of AA batteries from the command.

Intent	<p>Did you demonstrate the ability to properly deal with a situation that MAY goto NJP?</p> <p>Did you go high and right and assume the worst or take a deliberate approach?</p>
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Question	<p>You are MU-13 OPSO and been noticing your XO hanging around and chatting up the new cute YNSN. It's been going on for about a month, nothing overt, but it is raising eyebrows.</p> <p>How do you respond?</p>
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Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If you notice then EVERYONE in the command notices ● This could be the tip of the iceberg, or it could be nothing. ● How does this action affect good order and diciplin?
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Question	<p>One of your top EOD1's who was recommended for Chief just returned from a combat deployment 3 months ago. It was a rough deployment where he saw plenty of fighting and lost a buddy on his platoon 3 weeks prior to their RIP.</p> <p>While he seemed fine on deployment, the months after deployment have been bad. EOD1 has been late to QTRS 3 times, had 1 minor drinking incident in VA beach, and has the police called to his house last week for a domestic dispute.</p> <p>The OIC and CPO want squash his discipline issues by taking him to mast and kicking him off the platoon. You are the XO, What is the command's way forward?</p>
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Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discipline vs remediation ● Once an incident (DV/DUI/ECT) goes out of the "lifelines" your hands are tied ● Discuss the importance of catching PTSD behavior issues BEFORE it blows up into DV/DUI
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Question	<p>MU-13 has just finished a major investigation where an ENS accidentally uploaded an entire hard drive of Secret material to the UNCLASS portal. As a result you and your CSG platoon sat through hours upon hours of IA and security awareness training. The next day as you sit down at your NIPR computer you see an e-mail from your EOD3 addressed to you and your Chief.</p> <p>"</p> <p>Sir,</p>
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The float on the USS CARRIER has been good, we are scheduled to pull into to Bahrain on the 15th at 1200. I'll offload all our gear and meet you at the pier.

VR, EOD3

"

What do you do?

Intent

- Before going high and right, see if a violation actually occurred.
- If a violation occurred what steps do you take to mitigate the damage?
- How do you deal with EOD3? Punitive? Administrative? Training?

Question

You are the CO of MU-13. One of the platoon commanders had been complaining about some behavior issues from a EOD1 on his MCM platoon. The EOD1 has been showing up late, lost gear, wearing a crummy uniform and mouthing off to his CPO. The platoon commander wants him off the platoon.

What do you do?

---would your respond differently In this scenario?---

You are the CO of MU-13. One of the platoon commanders had been complaining about some competence issues from a EOD1 on his MCM platoon. The EOD1 has been doing poorly on drills, failed to earn his dive supervisor or DOS qualification, accidently carried his cell phone to the demo range and had a negligent discharge at the shooting range last week. The platoon commander wants him off the platoon.

What do you do?

Question

You are the XO of MU-13. The Retired EOD association (a-non military group) is having a EOD roundup at the VA beach KOA campground. They came to you and are requesting to borrow a bombsuit, GERV, Robot and RHIB for a static display.

How do you respond?

Would the answer change if it was the Hampton Roads Anti-War Gay and Lesbian association asking for the same assistance?

What if they both asked at the same time?

Question

You are MCM platoon Commander deployed to Bahrain. While on an Exercise in Saudi Arabia your parting gift are very nice dive watches

	<p>How do you respond while they are gifting them?</p> <p>How do you respond the next day?</p>
Intent	<p>How do you think through Ethical decisions?</p> <p>How will this decision affect your platoon when they need to make their own decisions?</p> <p>Three options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Keep them 2) Give them back 3) IS there a 3rd option? Maybe there is an ethical loophole for addressing incidents like this (there is, I dealt with it...)
Question	<p>You have a solid chief that just requested an early transfer from MU-13 to a different command. He feels like he's not being treated fairly at MU-13 and wants to go elsewhere. If he transferred his billet would be gapped for approx 6 months. How do you respond?</p>
Intent	<p>How do you think through good of the individual vs good of the Navy?</p> <p>Now think through short term/long term good of the individual vs short term/long term good of the individual.</p>
Question	<p>You are the platoon commander of 13-1-1 and about half way through your workup cycle. One of your EOD2 Senior Techs has been having minor behavior issues. He is always the last one to work, keeps his sideburns long, has a lax attitude and his equipment is in poor condition. It's not affected team continuity; however, it is starting to bother you.</p> <p>How do you respond?</p> <p>Replace the EOD2 with an EODC LCPO. How do you respond?</p>
Intent	<p>Can you properly go through the administrative steps to modify behavior?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Catch behavior issues before they blow up * Deal with it at the platoon level * Written counseling * Effect on other platoon members * Where is the chief in this situation?
Question	<p>You are the OPSO of MU-13, Friday afternoon you get an official notification that one of your Techs was WIA while conducting combat operations in Afghanistan. CO/CO/CMC are unavailable and MU-13's</p>

primary CACO is YNC Smith. GROUP has acknowledged the WIA and had directed you (MU-13) to make the first notification.

Do you have the resources to conduct a proper CACO call? [CNIC CACO](#), [BUPERS CACO](#)

Question

You are the XO of EODMU-13. Friday night you get a call from your OPSO that a brand new EOD3 who just reported to the command last month was on a US Secret Service Job in Washington DC and was found drunk taking a bath in the hotel fountain. Unfortunately, he was found by Anderson Cooper who immediately did a story on Navy EOD's Culture of Drunkenness and then proposed all Navy EOD missions be converted to the Seabees.

Monday morning you report to work and find that another EOD1 who was conducting training at Fallon NV that weekend was found drunk outside his hotel room. His Chief carried him to his room, put him to bed and the incident is over.

It is now 2 weeks later. Admiral Greenert, Admiral Tillotson and both Commodores have just completed their second trip to Capitol Hill to argue against merging Navy EOD with the SEABEES; additionally you have been fielding calls all day from the Admiral's staff asking when EOD3 is going to Courts Martial.

You completed XOI this afternoon on both sailors. What do you recommend to the CO as punishments?

---how would your thought process change in this scenario:

This weekend two sailors were arrested for a DUI. EOD3 blew a .31 and was arrested before he hurt anyone. EOD2 blew a .13 and was arrested after he crashed into a school bus.

Question

You are the CO of MU-13 and out of the blue you get a phone call from EOD1 Jones's wife who tells you that he's been stealing dive knives, sunglasses and backpacks from MU-13. She reports that he has two dive knives, three sets of sunglasses and three backpacks in his garage along with other assorted EOD gear. She wants him to be kicked out of EOD for stealing equipment.

What do you do?

How does the scenario change if she reports that he has been driving drunk after work and smoking weed on the weekends?

Question

You have 4 solid performing LT's going up for their XO board and it's fitrep time. You are allowed to give one P, two MPs and one EP.

1. LT #1 has been onboard 24 years and completed a deployment, he is an average EOD Officer and will be detaching after this FITREP
2. LT #2 has been onboard 14 months recently returned from a very difficult operational deployment where his PERSONAL performance was far superior to LT #1; however he will have another ranked FITREP prior to departing.
3. LT #3 has also been onboard 14 months and recently returned from a very difficult operational deployment where his PLATOONS performance was far superior to LT #1; however he will have another ranked FITREP prior to departing.
4. LT #4 just checked in 6 months ago but looks like he has far superior aptitude than LT 1,2, or 3.

How do you rank them?

Intent

What do you prioritize: Aptitude, unit performance, command performance or length of time at the command?

Question

This weekend one of the BM3s assigned to your command was arrested for a DUI out in town. Also in the car but not arrested was a LTJG and a BM1 (Non LPO). What do you do with the LTJG, BM3 and BM1? How would your answer change if the BM1 was the LPO?

Would you like to Help?



If you would like to contribute please
contact john@dodreads.com