# Anchoring Effect: The Power of "Suggestion" on Military Evaluations

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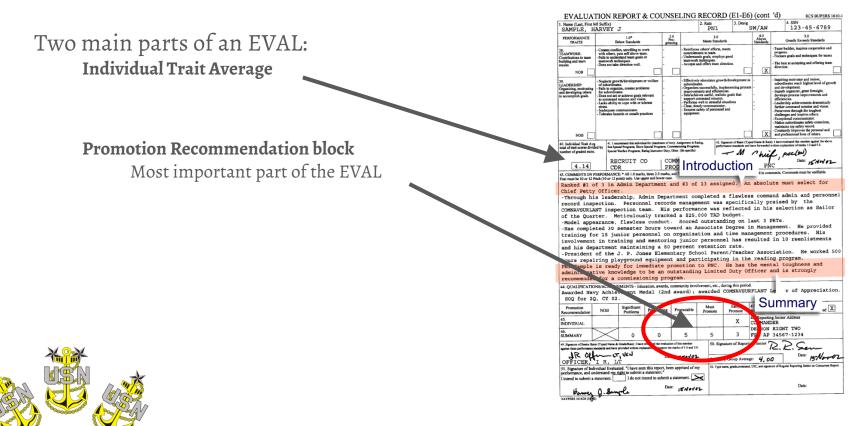


## Military Evaluation System



Evaluations (EVALs) are provided to the service member on an annual basis EVALs serve the following purposes:

Official documentation of the member's job performance over the course of his/her career Primary factor in determining promotion in front of a Promotions Board





# Military Evaluation Rankings



Member's Promotion Recommendation is determined by being ranked against his/her peers.

Member is ranked based on recommendations by the following three **decision making bodies**:

Chiefs mess
Department Heads
Executive Officer

Chiefs mess ranks members 1st
Department Heads rank members 2nd
Executive Officer ranks members last
Final ranking determines the members'
Promotion Recommendation category

Chief Rankings				
Name	Rank			
Sally	2			
Joe	3			
Bob	5			
Zeke	4			
David	6			
Rose	1			
Howard	7			





## **Anchoring Effect**



After the chiefs have completed their ranking of members, this list is turned over to the Department Heads who conduct their own internal ranking. Anchoring Effect has a powerful influence on the Department Head decision making process.

For example:

Chief Rankings			Department Head Rankings	
Name	Rank		Name	Rank
Sally	2		Sally	2
Joe	3		Joe	3
Bob	5	<b>—</b>	Bob	4
Zeke	4		Zeke	5
David	6		David	6
Rose	1		Rose	1
Howard	7		Howard	7



....very minimal changes from one list to the other....



# **Anchoring Effect Mitigation**



- Department Heads should start their ranking from scratch just like the chief's do.
- Doing so will allow for a less-biased approach to deciding how to rank each individual member.
- Executive Officer is in the position to adjudicate major discrepancies between chief and department head rankings.
- Biggest effects will be seen in the mid-ranked personnel, given that the top-ranked and bottom-ranked positions are always a topic of vehement opinion.

