Name: LT Tatana Olson

Job Title/Company: Strategic Analyst and Special Projects, Chief of Naval Personnel, U.S. Navy

Job responsibilities:
- Develop and maintain the Navy’s human capital strategy
- Conduct assessments of the strategic environment to identify social, economic, political, and technological factors that may influence Navy manpower, personnel, training, and education programs and policies
- Speechwriter for the Chief of Naval Personnel (CNP)
- Prepare CNP’s congressional testimony
- Shape strategic messages and provide executive communications support to senior leadership
- Survey design and development
- Personnel policy development and evaluation

My specific I-O interests: Personnel assessment and selection, personality, survey design and analysis

A typical day at my job includes: There is no typical day! Working for a three-star admiral in the U.S. Navy, my days are pretty fast-paced. In a single day, I could be working on congressional testimony, developing a strategy for social media, and developing an official response to a question from the Secretary of Defense.

What I like best about my job: Being an I-O psychologist in uniform. The Navy is an organization of more than 500,000 sailors and civilians. It is incredible to work with people from such diverse backgrounds and experiences all united by a strong ethos and desire to serve. I love being able to use my background and experience to implement solutions that will help a sailor in the fleet or improve the efficiency of the Navy as a whole.

Some of the challenges of my job: With multiple projects going on at once, all with a tight timeline, it can get a little crazy. Sometime, I feel like I’m running around with my hair on fire! Because I deal with issues that cross functional lines, I also have to be aware of everything that is going on in the organization.

My career path/job history: During graduate school, I was an intelligence officer in the Navy Reserve. I joined the active duty side of the Navy right after I received my PhD and have been in about 6 and a half years.

My advice to future I-O psychologists: Bloom where you’re planted. I strongly believe that I-O psychology has applications in multiple domains and contexts. Don’t restrict yourself to a typical or traditional career path – broaden your horizons. The knowledge and skills an I-O psychologist brings to any organization, adds value. Look for areas when you can make meaningful contributions. Once people see what you bring to the table, there will always be a place set for you.

Why I-O psychology matters: Work is a critical part of people’s lives and often their identity. The science of I-O psychology provides the means to better understand work, workers, the workplace, and the relationship among all three, enabling us to make significant contributions to both the individual and the organization.

Read the entire series at www.siop.org/psychatwork.aspx!