

social sounds. The proposed research would be conducted in Hawaiian waters between Maui and Lanai and off the northwest coast of Hawaii between Kona and Hawi from January 1, 1999 through May 15, 2004.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of this application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: December 14, 1998.

**Ann D. Terbush,**

*Chief, Permits and Documentation Division,  
Office of Protected Resources, National  
Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-33729 Filed 12-18-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Patent and Trademark Office

#### Electronic Application for Patent Examiners—Job Application Rating System (JARS)

**ACTION:** Proposed collection; comment request

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce (DoC), as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on the continuing information collection, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

**DATES:** Written comments must be submitted on or before February 19, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 5327, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information should be directed to the attention of

Vivian Clark at P.O. Box 171, Washington, DC, 20231, by telephone at (703) 305-8227, or by facsimile transmission to (703) 305-9864.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### I. Abstract

The Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) is developing an electronic Job Application Rating System (JARS) to assist in the hiring of 550 new patent examiners in FY 1999.

The PTO has received hiring assistance from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) through the use of their electronic application system called MARS. The PTO has found that the services provided by MARS do not meet current hiring needs.

In the current employment environment, Information Technology professionals and Engineering graduates are in great demand. The PTO is in direct competition with private industry for the same caliber of candidates with the requisite knowledge and skills to perform patent examination work. Consequently, it is imperative that every available technology be employed if the PTO is to remain competitive, meet the hiring goal, and fulfill the agency's congressional commitment to reduce the pendency rate for the examination of patent applications. The information supplied to the PTO by an applicant seeking a Patent Examiner position with the PTO will assist the Human Resources Specialists and hiring managers in determining whether an applicant possesses the basic qualification requirements for the Patent Examiner position. In addition, the electronic transmission of this information will expedite the hiring process by eliminating the time used in the mail distribution process.

JARS will provide the PTO a more user friendly online employment application process for applicants and will enable the PTO to process hiring actions in a more efficient and timely manner. The online application will provide an electronic real time candidate inventory that will allow the PTO to review applications from potential applicants almost instantaneously. Given the immediate hiring need of the Patent Examining Corps, time consumed in the mail distribution system or paper review of applications delays the decision making

process by several weeks. The implementation of the JARS system will result in increased speed and accuracy in the employment process. It will also streamline labor and reduce costs.

The use of the JARS online application fully meets the intent of 5 U.S.C. 2301, which requires adequate public notice to assure open competition by guaranteeing that necessary employment information will be accessible and available to the public on inquiry.

Since the JARS online application will be used as an alternative form of employment application, the collection and use of the information requires OMB approval as outlined in section 5.1 of the Delegated Examining Operations Handbook. The Handbook provides guidance to agencies under a delegated examining authority by OPM, under the provisions of Title 5, U.S. Code, Chapter 11, Section 1104.

##### II. Method of Collection

The application information is collected electronically from the applicant. Applicants may contact the PTO Web site on the Internet where they will find the application form. They can fill the form out while connected to the web site. For those applicants who do not have access to a personal computer, applications are available in the Personnel Office at the PTO or the applicant can go to the local library to complete an application.

##### III. Data

*OMB Number:* 0651-XXXX.

*Type of Review:* New information collection.

*Affected Public:* Individuals or households, businesses or other for-profit, not-for-profit institutions, farms, state, local or tribal governments, and the Federal Government.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 3,700 respondents per year.

*Estimated Time Per Response:* It is estimated that it will take from 20 minutes to one hour to complete the application, depending on the situation. On average, the time to complete the online application is estimated to be 30 minutes.

*Estimated Total Annual Respondent Burden Hours:* 1,850 hours per year.

*Estimated Total Annual Respondent Cost Burden:* \$323,750 per year.

Title of form	Form Nos.	Estimated time for response	Estimated annual burden hours	Estimated annual response
Electronic Employment Application .....	New Form ##### .....	30 minutes	1,850	3,700

Title of form	Form Nos.	Estimated time for re-sponse	Estimated annual bur-den hours	Estimated annual re-sponse
Totals .....	.....	.....	1,850	3,700

**Note:** The burden hours estimated above are based on the average time (30 minutes) that the PTO expects it will take to complete the online application. Depending on the situation, it could take as little as 20 minutes or as much as one hour to complete the online application. The burden hours for this information collection could range from 1,233 to 3,700 burden hours.

#### IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: December 15, 1998.

**Linda Engelmeier,**

*Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer.*

[FR Doc. 98-33698 Filed 12-18-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-16-P

#### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

##### Office of the Secretary

##### Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

**ACTION:** Notice.

The Department of Defense has submitted to OMB for clearance, the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35). A notice of proposal for collection of information was published on July 22, 1998 (Volume 63, Number

140, page 39273-39274). Subsequently, the Department of Defense, with concurrence of OMB, withdrew the proposal from review due to extensive revision to AF Form 56.

**Title, Associated Form, and OMB Number:** Application for Training Leading to a Commission in the United States Air Force; AF Form 56; OMB Number 0701-0001.

**Type of Request:** Reinstatement.

**Number of Respondents:** 2,900.

**Responses per Respondent:** 1.

**Annual Responses:** 2,900.

**Average Burden per Response:** 20 minutes.

**Annual Burden Hours:** 967.

**Needs and Uses:** The information collection requirement is necessary for providing information to determine if applicant meets qualifications established for training leading to a commission. Air Force selection boards use the information to determine suitability for officer training. Information contained on AF Form 56 supports the Air Force as it applies to officer training (procurement) programs for civilian and military applicants. It is imperative that only persons fully qualified for receipt of Air Force commissions are selected for the training leading to commissioning. Data supports the Air Force in verifying the eligibility of applicants and in the selection of those best qualified for dedication of funding and training resources. Eligibility requirements are outlined in Air Force Instruction 36-2013, "Officer Training School (OTS) and Airman Commissioning Programs." **Affected Public:** Individuals or households.

**Frequency:** On occasion.

**Respondent's Obligation:** Required to obtain or retain benefits.

**OMB Desk Officer:** Mr. Edward C. Springer.

Written comments and recommendations on the proposed information collection should be sent to Mr. Springer at the Office of Management and Budget, Desk Officer for DoD, Room 10236, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503.

**DOD Clearance Officer:** Mr. Robert Cushing.

Written requests for copies of the information collection proposal should

be sent to Mr. Cushing, WHS/DIOR, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302.

Dated: December 14, 1998.

**Patricia L. Toppings,**

*Alternate OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense.*

[FR Doc. 98-33640 Filed 12-18-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 5000-04-M

#### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

##### Office of the Secretary

##### Defense Intelligence Agency, Science and Technology Advisory Board Closed Panel Meeting

**AGENCY:** Department of Defense, Defense Intelligence Agency.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to the provisions of Subsection (d) of Section 10 of Public Law 92-463, as amended by Section 5 of Public Law 94-409, notice is hereby given that a closed meeting of the DIA Science and Technology Advisory Board has been scheduled as follows:

**DATES:** 13 January 1999 (900 am to 1600 pm).

**ADDRESSES:** The Defense Intelligence Agency, 200 MacDill Blvd, Washington, DC 20340-5100.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Maj Donald R. Culp, Jr., USAF, Executive Secretary, DIA Science and Technology Advisory Board, Washington, D.C. 20340-1328 (202) 231-4930.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The entire meeting is devoted to the discussion of classified information as defined in Section 552b(c)(1), Title 5 of the U.S. Code, and therefore will be closed to the public. The Board will receive briefings on and discuss several current critical intelligence issues and advise the Director, DIA, on related scientific and technical matters.

Dated: December 14, 1998.

**Patricia L. Toppings,**

*Alternate OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense.*

[FR Doc. 98-33641 Filed 12-18-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 5000-04-M