TNP



VOLUME 2021 ISSUE 2

2ND CHANCE TO SERVE

CTF SENTINEL

NEPLO VACCINE ROLLOUT



COVER RESERVE SAILOR OF THE YEAR NAVAL AIR STATION POINT MUGU, Calif. — The 2020 Navy Reserve Sailor of the Year (RSOY) was announced by Chief of Navy Reserve Vice Adm. John Mustin through a livestream broadcast of the ceremony event from the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C., May 7. Read about Naval Air Crewman (Mechanical) 1st Class Kody Sims on page 16. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Arthurgwain Marquez.

THIS PAGE SURGEMAIN SUPPORTS NAVY SHIPYARDS NORFOLK, Va. — Assigned to Shop 11 (Shipfitters) at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Hull Technician 3rd Class D'Andra Gomez tries her hand for the first time at vertical welding while her instructor, Hull Technician 1st Class Jean Luquis Merced watches. Both are among the hundreds of Reserve Sailors mobilized to support Navy shipyards during the COVID-19 pandemic. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Jeffrey J. Hanshaw.

TNR

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Chief of Navy Reserve
Commander, Navy Reserve Force

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Deputy Commander, Navy Reserve Force
Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command

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SUBMISSIONS: TNR is always looking for submissions that display the work Navy Reserve Sailors are doing around the force. To submit a photo or story, email us at **cnrfc_pao@navy.mil**. Instructions and submission criteria will be provided to help guide your entry.

ARCHIVE AND NEWS: Current and past issues of TNR are available at: **www.navyreserve.navy.mil**. Follow the Navy Reserve on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. Additional Navy Reserve news can be found on the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS) at: https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/CNRF.

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THE NAVY RESERVIST VOLUME 2021 | ISSUE 2

TNR tells the story of the U.S. Navy Reserve through articles, news and photos showcasing the contributions of Navy Reserve Sailors delivering real-world capabilities and expertise in support of the Navy mission. Find more news and information at www.navyreserve.navy.mil

FEATURES



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Unwavering attention to detail is a major reason why Chief Naval Aircrewman (Mechanical) Select Kody Sims was selected as the fiscal year 2020 Navy Reserve Sailor of the Year.



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His grandfather served as an enlisted Sailor in the Navy during World War II and his father was an Army sergeant during Vietnam. Lt. Cmdr. Brian Abbott felt inspired to join the Navy after a visit to his school library.



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Most disaster response missions supported by NEPLOs take place overseas, but the COVID-19 pandemic showcased this unique community's ability to help American citizens here at home.

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FROM THE TOP



WE ARE OPERATIONAL

While we never shut down, the opening of the country, specifically to travel, allows us to execute drill weekends and Annual Training — something that was challenging to do for nearly 18 months. If you haven't already, take the opportunity to re-establish in-person contact with your units and supported commands.

Your resiliency and flexibility throughout the pandemic kept us warfighting and mobilization ready. Your creative use of technology for virtual drilling, training and support to your gaining commands was extraordinary. And when the vaccines became available, you again showed leadership by being among the first to get the shots. For those that have not, I encourage you to get vaccinated to protect your family, shipmates and community.

Despite the unusual circumstances imposed by COVID-19, our Force has also been moving out on the actions outlined in the Navy Reserve Fighting Instructions with a sense of urgency. We are realigning billets and restructuring roles and responsibilities to eliminate redundancy and inefficiency. Some units may merge as early as fiscal year 2022 to enhance warfighting readiness. We are consolidating Navy Operational Support Centers to free up resources necessary to mobilize the entire 50,000 Selected Reserve Force in 30 days, leveraging what we call Distributed Activation at our regions, Reserve Centers and operational commands. And there are more changes coming that will make us a more warfighting-ready Force. Two in particular are featured in this edition of TNR: eNAVFIT [see page 7] and a new directive specifying that all Sailors' Fitness Reports and Evaluations will be signed by a Reporting Senior in their supported command rather than their training command [see page 4]. Please become familiar with both of these improvements in how we administer what is important to our Sailors and our service.

Our cover story on the 2020 Navy Reserve Sailor of the Year — Naval Aircrewman (Mechanical) 1st Class Kody Sims — is a story of exceptional leadership [see page 17]. Sims, who recently reported to Fleet Logistics Support Squadron Five Five (VR-55), was recognized for coordinating execution of four detachments in the Central, European and Indo-Pacific Command areas of responsibility — all while navigating COVD-19 restrictions. Further, his detailed planning and execution also led to 1,100 mishap-free flight hours. BZ, Shipmate.

Our other RSOY finalist — Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Ronnie Heen — from Force Headquarters Group, Commander, Marine Forces Reserve, was also a first responder to COVID-19. These Sailors distinguished themselves from thousands of others, who they represent, and who are also doing great work around the world. Thank you both for putting service before self in this unprecedented time.

Shipmates, we live in demanding, busy times, but it's important that you carve out time to rest, relax and recharge this summer. By the time you read this, most of us will be able to get together with family and friends we have not seen in months — a welcome respite after the forced separations necessary to keep us all safe. As you enjoy your time off, stay vigilant, plan ahead to avoid hazards and injury, exercise moderation, and keep an eye out for your shipmates who are away from their families this summer. Keep up the great work, Team, and I look forward to seeing you on the waterfront.

Now, let's get busy.

Vice Adm. John B. Mustin
Chief of Navy Reserve
Commander, Navy Reserve Force

FACTORY TO FLEET... FAST!

I am assigned as a supporting team member on two lines of effort of the Navy Reserve Fighting Instructions. If you have not already read through our action plan, I urge you to do so today. Our Fighting Instructions are a critical part of transforming our Navy Reserve to a "speed to need" force. During my engagements across the Department of Defense it is clear that each Reserve Component is pushing hard to reorganize from the Global War on Terror to the Strategic Competition. Our Navy Reserve has been aligning with the Fleet via some very high level engagement that I would like to lay out for your situational awareness:

Reserve Capability Review – an in-depth engagement with Fleet Commanders to look at current force lay down against Force Employment. These engagements lasted roughly six months and were laser-focused on "as-is" force structure.

Strategic Depth Assessment – our Commander's response to the Chief of Naval Operations on what the "to-be" of our Navy Reserve Force, based on the outcomes of the Reserve Capabilities Review.

Make no mistake, we have moved out with great intensity well before delivery of the Strategic Depth Assessment. You have seen this movement in terms of realignment of the evaluations and fitness reports from the TRUIC to the UMUIC starting in August 2022, the creation of Distributed Activation site billets, and the newly created Command Reserve Management Program, formerly the Operation Support Officer Program.

While these may not seem like changes that directly affect you immediately, believe me – they do! Over the past 20 years, in the post 9-11 GWOT, our Navy Reserve has brilliantly supported the operational aspects of our mission. The strategic reserve part of the Navy Reserve is now the imperative. Building capabilities in maritime operations, space, expeditionary repair, expeditionary basing, logistics, airlift and adversarial support, and certainly intelligence capacity and cyber.

Lastly, happy Fourth of July to our Nation! Our summer will be very busy with the global pandemic waning, vaccination rates rapidly increasing. It is important for every Sailor to make sure they get their leave plan communicated, double-check all career plans and goals, make sure the physical fitness and health is solid, and your family is in a good place. I thank you all for your contributions to our National Defense, your families for their support and being a part of our Navy family, and you're civilian employers for their contributions and support of our Reserve Force.



WHILE THESE MAY NOT SEEM LIKE CHANGES THAT DIRECTLY AFFECT YOU IMMEDIATELY, BELIEVE ME – THEY DO! OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS ... OUR NAVY RESERVE HAS BRILLIANTLY SUPPORTED THE OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF OUR MISSION.

Master Chief Petty Officer Chris Kotz
Navy Reserve Force Master Chief

BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

UNIT MOBILIZATION UIC

In this era of Strategic Competition, the Navy Reserve is serious about ensuring its Sailors are warfighting ready, which means that starting next year, all Cross-Assigned Out (CAO) Sailors' Fitness Reports (FITREPS) and Evaluations (EVALS) will be signed by a Reporting Senior (R/S) in their supported command (UMUIC), no longer their training command (TRUIC).

"I can't emphasize enough this is a major cultural shift for our Selected Reserve (SELRES) Sailors," said Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command, Rear Adm. John Schommer. "We need our Sailors to know and train to their assigned UMUIC billet, at their assigned command, so that they can perform their duties immediately upon activation. Training at your TRUIC and not at your UMUIC is no longer enough. Our Navy needs us to be ready for the high-end fight, which means all of our Sailors need to be trained in their mobilization billet, not just locally assigned Sailors."

The shift is aligns with the Navy Reserve Fighting Instructions (NRFI), released in late 2020, which reaffirms the Navy Reserve's strategic direction in alignment with the National Defense Strategy, while accounting for recent global events and Navy organizational changes to rapidly move the Reserve Force forward.

According to Schommer, the current Reporting Senior (RS) construct for some Navy Reserve Readiness units does not align with the NRFI in support of warfighting readiness, specifically for CAO Sailors whose FITREPs/EVALs are signed by their TRUIC instead of their UMUIC. The TRUIC is responsible for the CAO Sailor's monthly drill periods and maintains administrative and mobilization readiness (pay, readiness and travel support) such as a Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC) Operational Support Unit (OSU). The UMUIC, on the other hand, is a Readiness Unit assigned to an active Navy unit, such as a numbered Fleet Reserve unit.

"Members of my staff have submitted a change request to the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS) to update the RS FITREP/EVAL responsibility for CAO Sailors from their TRUIC to their UMUIC in the next Navy instruction update for performance evaluations," said Schommer. "Sailors should be performing their drills and Annual Training with their UMUIC, and if not already, will be evaluated as a result of that performance."

The new construct will go into effect no later than Aug. 1, 2022, but CAO Sailors will be able to start submitting their FITREP/EVALs with their UMUIC RS as early as Feb. 1, 2022.

According to Schommer, the RS shift from TRUIC to UMUIC "…will ultimately increase awareness and engagement for both the supported command and Sailor, while also increasing participation in support of warfighting readiness and mission requirements. We need Sailors to be trained in their billet so on day one of a crisis they are an effective member of the team."

Until the applicable instruction (BUPERSINST1610.10F, Navy Performance Evaluation System) is updated, the current RS construct for all Sailors still stands. Additionally, once the policy is in effect, NOSC Commanding Officers (CO) will have the option to write concurrent FITREPS/EVALS for Sailors who provide significant support to their command.

CNRFC expects the revised instruction later this year. CNRFC will ensure that the 14,000 CAO Sailors who currently obtain their FITREP/EVALs from their TRUIC switch to their UMUIC Aug. 1, 2022.

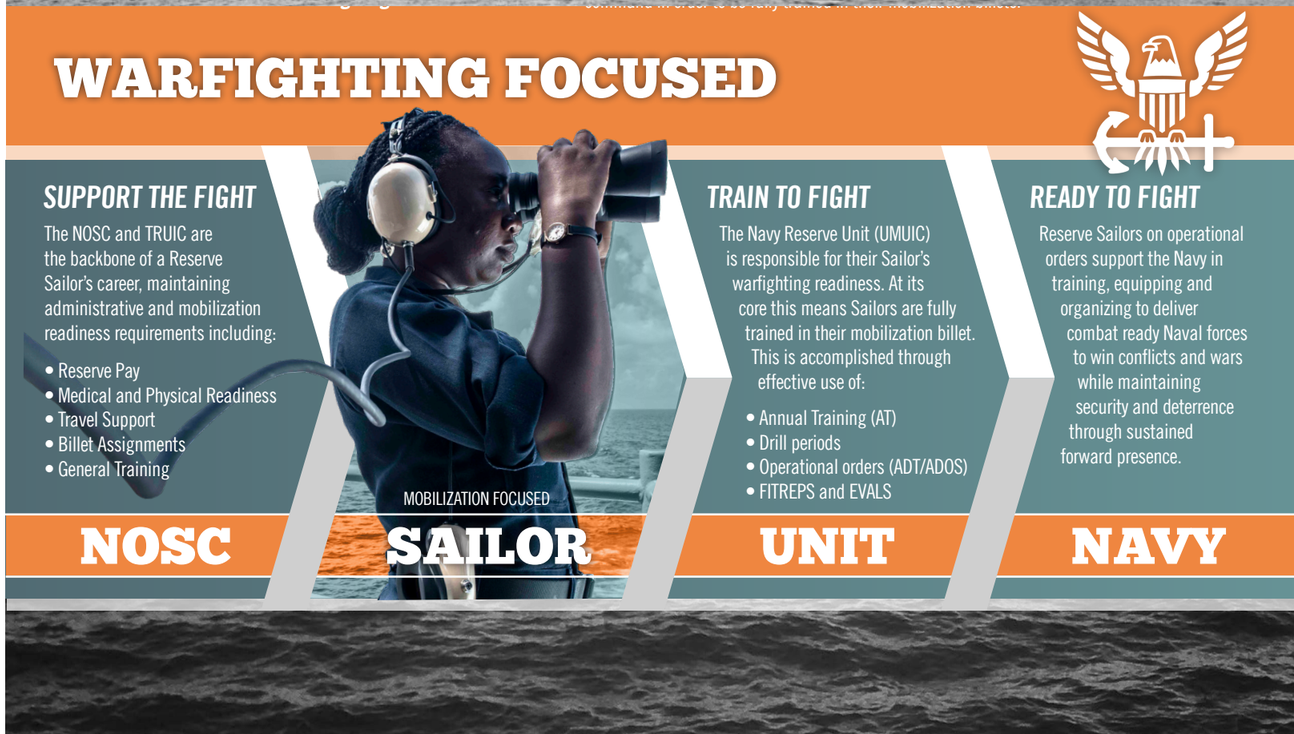
"I strongly encourage our UMUIC triads to begin planning for this major change and prepare to assume FITREP/EVAL responsibilities next year," said Schommer. "I also encourage CAO Sailors affected by this change to begin planning their Reserve participation for next year so that they can best support their active command and increase the likelihood of a strong FITREP or EVAL."

To better understand Cross-Assignments with a TRUIC and UMUIC, SELRES Sailors are encouraged to review the latest edition of the TNR Almanac at https://navyreserve.navy.mil/Resources/TNR-Almanac/

"OUR NAVY NEEDS US TO BE READY FOR THE HIGH-END FIGHT, WHICH MEANS OUR SAILORS NEED TO BE READY TO PERFORM THEIR DUTIES, IN THEIR MOBILIZATION BILLET, IMMEDIATELY UPON ACTIVATION."

-REAR ADM. JOHN SCHOMMER

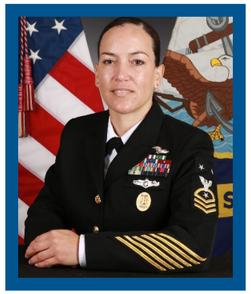




AROUND THE FORCE

A SNAPSHOT OF NEWS AND EVENTS FROM THE NAVY RESERVE FORCE DELIVERING STRATEGIC DEPTH AND OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY AROUND THE WORLD. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE STORIES AND MORE, VISIT WWW.NAVYRESERVE.NAVY.MIL.

CNRFC COMMAND MASTER CHIEF SELECTED



Congratulaions to Command Master Chief Nicole C. Rios! "Rios will be joining our team at a critical point in our Reserve Force's transformation," said Rear Adm. John Schommer, Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command. "As we move our force away from the War on Terrorism to one that delivers combat readiness in today's Strategic Competition, we will need strong leaders like her to help us execute our mission, ensure the success of the Navy Reserve Fighting Instructions, and take care of our Sailors."

Rios is estimated to arrive at CNRFC on Oct. 30.







NOSCS REDESIGNED AND REALIGNED

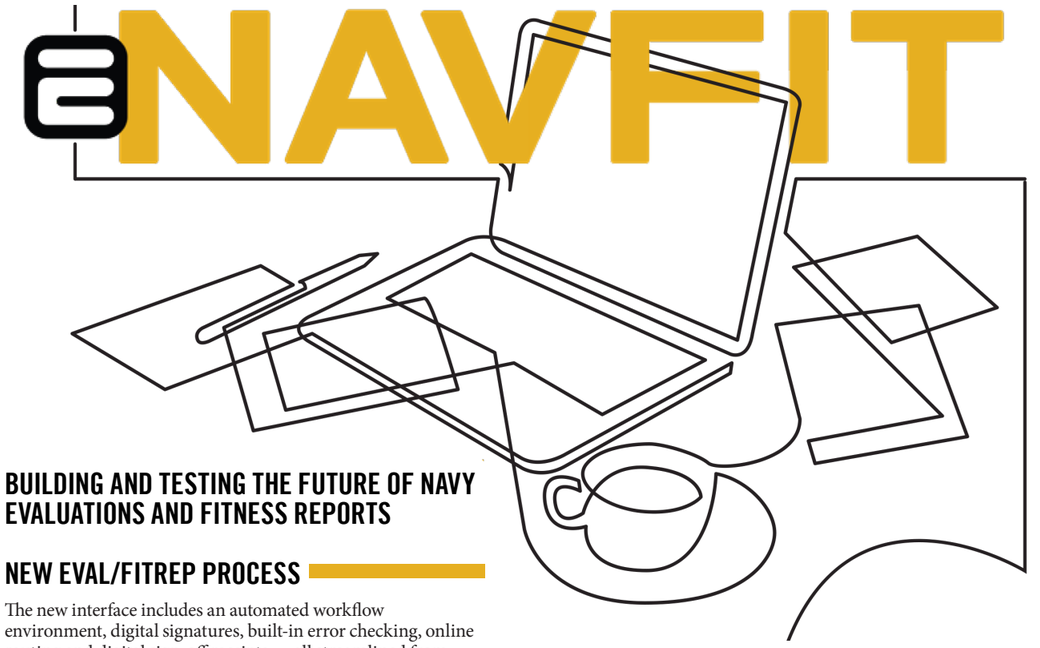
NOSC Lemoore officially opened its new state-of-the-art facility. The new building covers more than 20,000 sq. feet, can fully support the 11 units it currently serves and operates with a staff of up to 13 full-time support Sailors. Beyond the medical and administrative services offered by the NOSC, the new building also provides several classrooms — including fully functioning distanced learning computer labs.

NOSC Milwaukee held a disestablishment ceremony April 18. The disestablishments and consolidations align with the Navy Reserve's Fighting Instructions; most importantly the rebalancing of Full Time Support billets and supporting the Distributed Mobilization (DM) process. Essentially, disestablishing the NOSCs will improve the operational efficiency of the Navy Reserve by reducing administrative redundancies and operating and maintenance costs.

EXERCISE GLOBAL MEDIC

Exercise Global Medic provides robust opportunities for military medical personnel to improve their proficiencies in realistic training environments, while combining forces with sister service branches and international military participants. The exercise provides an opportunity to test, evaluate, and ultimately validate military medical personnel in an austere environment. This is a vital requirement that is particularly important as Soldiers and Sailors are returning to the field after months of scheduled training activities postponed or limited by the global pandemic.

eNAVFIT



BUILDING AND TESTING THE FUTURE OF NAVY EVALUATIONS AND FITNESS REPORTS

NEW EVAL/FITREP PROCESS

The new interface includes an automated workflow environment, digital signatures, built-in error checking, online routing and digital sign-off receipts — all streamlined from creation to service record submission.

ONLINE SUBMISSION

eNavFit gives local administrators the ability to create, edit, delete, route and validate performance appraisals, as well as allows reporting seniors to group and process summary group reports before pushing through on a web-based system or saving to a controlled medium.

Both offline and online capabilities will allow local administrators to create, edit, delete, route, and validate performance appraisals, as well as allow reporting seniors to group and process summary group reports.

PILOT PHASE

Several Navy Reserve commands and units have been chosen to test the eNavFit program's evaluation and fitness report cycle across several pay grades beginning this summer. Navy Personnel Command will gather feedback for a Fleet-wide rollout by December 2021.

After completion of the pilot program, NPC will gather feedback and adjust the system as necessary for a fleet-wide user experience testing, with the active component Navy and subsequent rollout.

NROWS UPDATE

The process for Navy Reserve Sailors to create, modify or cancel orders through the Navy Reserve Order Writing System (NROWS) system has been simplified in the latest application software update.

NROWS is the Navy Reserve's official orders management center for Annual Training (AT), Active Duty for Training (ADT) and Individual Duty Training Travel (IDTT) orders.

NROWS "Build 43.1" went live April 13, introducing a new program accessibility option. By selecting the "Mobile Optimized" button at the bottom of the NROWS login screen, users are presented a single-page navigation of the entire orders writing system.

The update is available through computer workstations and on Apple mobile devices through the Ready-2-Serve (R2S) application, and offers the ability to complete the orders writing process in as little as five minutes.

According to Cmdr. Colin Kennedy, director for Force Travel, Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command (CNRFC), the update marks the culmination of a three-year effort to bring the "look and feel" of NROWS into the modern era of web and mobile applications.

"This is more than a quick fix," Kennedy said. "We've been using NROWS for nearly 20 years now and have implemented dozens of updates — but a modernized system is something my team has been looking forward to for a long time. Through the new 'mobile optimized' system we've planned out how the orders process will look and feel in the future — this update is a proof of concept and a taste of what's to come."

The future for NROWS lies in the 2022 transition to the Navy Pay and Personnel system (NP2), a transition Kennedy said will be based on the format presented in the latest update.

"We have about a year until NP2 starts to replace NROWS," he said. "We didn't want to wait until then to roll out what we feel is a significant improvement to the user experience. Reserve Sailors with any experience in NROWS will definitely appreciate the change."



RESERVE SAILORS ARE VALUABLE PART OF RECRUITING COMMAND

BY REAR ADM. ROBERT NOWAKOWSKI, DEPUTY COMMANDER
NAVY RECRUITING COMMAND

The increased demand for paralegal support needed to execute recruiting mission requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic made leveraging the strategic depth and operational capabilities of the Navy Reserve the number one priority for Navy Recruiting Command's Staff Judge Advocate office (SJA).

"As soon as the demand signal for Reserve support was triggered, our team quickly engaged with the Deputy Judge Advocate General for Reserve Affairs and Operations team and, within weeks, received the necessary support from these elite Reserve Sailors," said Rear Adm. Robert Nowakowski, Deputy Commander, Navy Recruiting Command (CNRC).

Legalman 1st Class Adam Schultz, CNRC SJA lead chief petty officer, worked upfront with the Reserve Affairs and Operations team to pioneer and seamlessly integrate Reserve Sailors, and support them throughout the duration of their orders.

"I was nervous when I first heard we would be getting remote Reserve support from Arkansas, Texas, Washington and California," said Schultz. "Primarily because telework was a new concept for me, especially remote telework, and at the time I had neither led, nor managed, anyone in that type of environment."

Schultz' nerves were quickly calmed as CNRC was able to leverage Navy and Marine Corps Internet assets to easily deliver and grant access to required file systems.

"It was as if they were working right beside me," said Schultz. "Their knowledge levels, enthusiasm and hunger for more was a breath of fresh air during the peak of a very challenging time. Their impact was truly immeasurable as it allowed me to dedicate time to the development of junior Sailors while still closing out a large volume of cases."

Thousands of hours of support were provided by four enlisted Reserve Sailors since June 2020: Legalman first class petty officers Gabriela Guerrero, Kenneth Connor, Christina Oliver, and Chief Petty Officer Shakira Fisher.

"The type of support we've received is the best and most productive I have seen in my career," said Lt. Cmdr. Greg Young, NRC SJA. "It takes careful coordination, but we're consistently seeing Reservists start supporting remotely and, within a week or two, they become fully integrated members of the legs team, managing their own projects and portfolios of work. Without exaggerating, I'm not sure we could have gotten everything done without them."

It was also a great opportunity for the Sailors, providing them with meaningful work in a rewarding environment.

"I instantly felt like a part of the family," said Fisher. "The level of knowledge, drive, and most importantly the respect the staff had was unlike anywhere I've ever been. I was included in every aspect of the office daily assignments and never felt left out. I would tell anyone make sure you put CNRC on the list of commands you assist. A great opportunity."

Connor and Guerrero felt the same way. They expressed that working with the CNRC legal team was a great experience, and provided some of the most rewarding, real time, fast-paced, adrenaline filled work they've ever done for the Navy.

Reserve Sailor support to CNRC SJA will continue on for the foreseeable future as reservists fill needed gaps. In March 2021, Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Benson executed long-term orders to be the interim Staff Judge Advocate as Young and his family transition to civilian life, and the command awaits his permanent replacement later this year.

"Taking orders to support the active duty component has been the most rewarding aspect of being a Selected Reserve member," said Benson. "I know how valuable it can be to provide continuity and balance during gapped billets, or when workload exceeds available manning."

Benson has also been able to reconnect with active duty teammates and provide legal support to leaders across the enterprise, something he said led to his desire to take the oath of office many years ago.

"Being a part of Navy Recruiting — a mission so integral and vital to our branch services' health and success — is an absolute honor," said Benson. "I'm extremely proud to be able to step in when needed, and I'm grateful to remain a part of the Navy JAG community as a member of the Reserve."

Rear Adm. Les E. Reardanz, Deputy Judge Advocate General for Reserve Affairs & Operations Deputy Commander, Naval Legal Service Command, said the Navy Reserve Law Program is designed to provide a ready and trained force of dual professionals both in the law and at arms to maintain strategic depth for the Navy and the warfighter.

"Wonderful opportunities like those from CNRC provide our Reserve law program professionals the chance to develop our strategic depth and train to the skills we need to mobilize in support of great power competition, while also providing real world support to the CNRC team," said Reardanz. "It is truly a win-win situation for us all and the Navy team as a whole."

SURGEMAIN SAILORS COVER COVID GAP

BY NAVAL SEA SYSTEMS COMMAND OFFICE OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION AND SUPERVISOR OF SHIPBUILDING NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

One year ago, the Navy activated Navy Reserve Surge Maintenance (SurgeMain) Sailors to help reduce COVID-19 impacts in four shipyards across the United States. Of the 1,300 Reserve Sailors activated, 850 have demobilized since April with the remainder heading home in the next couple months.

SurgeMain Sailors provided the shipyards with additional capacity to conduct ship maintenance and modernization, reduce the backlog of work, and supported critical maintenance availabilities to deliver ships back to the fleet during the pandemic. In addition to their direct work on availabilities, SurgeMain Sailors also provided valuable technical support, using skills from their civilian experience to perform critical machinery maintenance, return needed equipment to service and fill key supervisory roles within the shipyard.

The Navy activated SurgeMain in July 2020 to mitigate the impacts associated with 25 percent of the naval shipyards' production workforce, considered at high risk for severe complication from the COVID-19 virus, being on weather and safety leave at the outset of pandemic. As a result, the four shipyards lost approximately 100,000 workdays across four naval shipyards; Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (PNSY) in Kittery, Maine; Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) in Portsmouth, Virginia; Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility (PSNS & IMF) in Bremerton, Washington; and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility (PHNSY & IMF) in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

The four public shipyards implemented a number of aggressive health and safety measures to nearly eliminate the spread of COVID-19 in the shipyard environment, which enabled the full return of the production workforce, bringing productivity back to pre-pandemic levels and reducing the need for urgent support. As the SurgeMain team reached mission accomplishment the intent was to evaluate the need and release Sailors back to their families and civilian employers as soon as possible. In the early part of 2021 it was determined that PSNS & IMF and PHNSY & IMF had met this objective while NNSY and PNSY still required a lower level of support; ultimately affording the opportunity to demobilize 850 Sailors early.

Approximately 450 Sailors remain activated and will return home starting in July of this year.

"The Navy activated SurgeMain during a critical time of need. These Sailors rose to the challenge to help the shipyards deliver combat-ready ships back to the Fleet," said Commander, Naval Sea Systems Command Vice Adm. Bill Galinis "Now that our shipyard production workforce has almost entirely returned and we're just about at pre-pandemic levels, the Navy is making the prudent decision to demobilize SurgeMain, allowing Sailors to return home to their families following a job well done."

Established in 2005, SurgeMain has 2,200 enlisted Reserve Sailors and 240 Reserve officers across 75 units and was created to augment the Navy's organic civilian shipyard workforce in times of need. SurgeMain Sailors have technical and trade backgrounds that allow them to have an immediate impact at the shipyards.

"This mobilization was the largest Reserve deployment in NAVSEA history and demonstrated SurgeMain's ability to rapidly deploy in a crisis and provide immediate support," said NAVSEA's Director of Military and Reserve Programs Capt. Rich Sussman. "This deployment strengthened the relationship between the four shipyards and SurgeMain, assisted in driving ship maintenance, and developed critical skills which will benefit both organizations during standard Sailor annual training and for the next time urgent maintenance needs arise to include battle damage repair programs currently being developed."

SurgeMain Sailors will return to their assigned Navy Operational Support Centers (NOSCs) to finish their administrative demobilization requirements. The Navy Reserve uses the new Distributed Mobilization process which uses NOSCs to mobilize and demobilize a large of number of Reservists quickly to meet operational requirements more effectively. The entire process normally takes one to two months in order to ensure all administrative requirements are met and Reserve Sailors receive all their entitled benefits.

"Since its inception in 1915, the Navy Reserve has responded in every global conflict, including the fight against COVID-19," said Vice Adm. John Mustin, Chief of Navy Reserve and Commander, Navy Reserve Force. "SurgeMain Sailors are an example of what the Navy Reserve can do for our Navy in a timely and expeditious manner. I'm extremely proud of them for their great work."





HSM-60 JAGUARS SAVE TWO LIVES IN FOUR DAYS

BY COMMANDER, NAVAL AIR FORCE RESERVE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

As many Navy missions have a degree of inherent danger so Navy first responders and medical personnel are trained to quickly provide life-saving medical assistance to Navy and Marine Corps personnel in case of an emergency. Earlier this year, four Sailors assigned to the "Jaguars" of Helicopter Maritime Strike (HSM) Squadron 60 recently used those skills to jump into action to provide life-saving aid to two civilians while off duty — just four days apart.

HSM-60's Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Aaron Pruneda, who had recently moved to Jacksonville, Florida in preparation to check in to the squadron, ran to the aid of a gunshot victim, April 15 after being woken up by gunfire while asleep in his apartment.

Senior Chief Culinary Specialist Denis Camarillo, assigned to Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command, was on his way to work when he crossed paths with Pruneda, who was a civilian EMT (emergency medical technician) prior to beginning his Full Time Support career with the Navy Reserve.

Here is their story:

Pruneda: I woke up at the sound of the first shot, and I quickly realized what I was hearing wasn't fireworks. I heard someone scream right afterward, and I began running around my apartment to look out the windows and try and see what was happening. Out of my bedroom window I saw someone standing over a person lying on the ground, and I just ran out there in my t-shirt, shorts and socks hoping I would be able to help. I saw the teen boy lying face down on the ground, and there was a lot of blood. I asked if anyone had something I could use to stop the bleeding.

Camarillo: I was on my way to work when the person driving in front of me stopped her car and got out. I got out as well to find out what was going on. Right as I realized it was a person on the ground, I saw Pruneda, who I didn't know was a corpsman at the time, running past me yelling 'I'm a medic! I'm a medic — I can help!' When he started asking if anyone had anything to stop the bleeding I ran to get the trauma kit out of my truck.

Pruneda: We were able to use Senior Chief Camarillo's trauma kit to do our best to stop the bleeding. We kept him calm and awake.

For the entire story, visit the Navy Reserve website: https://go.usa.gov/x6Gub

RESERVE UNIT SUPPORTS NCIS

BY LT. CMDR DEREK JENNINGS
NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE

When Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) and Department of Defense (DoD) Force Protection Detachment (FPD) Bogota, Colombia requested mission essential support for a complex project requiring a Reserve Sailor with Spanish speaking ability, Lt. Roberto Lopez, assigned to Reserve NCIS Unit 1274, answered the call.

During his assignment in Colombia, the Tampa, Florida native facilitated training, coordinated collaboration meetings with host nation military and civilian officials, and performed threat assessment consulting and inter-agency work with the FPD at Bogotá U.S. Embassy.

Sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the FPD program was established after the results USS Cole Commission Report, which identified an immediate need for permanent DoD counterintelligence support to in-transit forces overseas. The FPD's primary mission is to detect and warn of threats to DoD personnel (military, civilian and dependents) and resources in-transit at overseas locations.

According to his leadership, Lopez's language skills and operational experience added immediate value to the FPD/NCIS partnership, meeting a steadily increasing demand signal for Reserve support.

"This has been another great opportunity to leverage our Sailors' language skills and familiarity with the region and culture as a force multiplier for both the NCIS Southeast Field Office and the DoD," said Cmdr. Michael Schaeber, NCIS 1274 commanding officer. "We want to see more of this, and we're working with our sister units and the NCIS Office of Military Support to make this kind of support the norm under a new, Reserve Intelligence Employment Plan (RIEP)."

The initial Reserve requirement specified experience providing intelligence support and region-specific expertise for both the Colombian and the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) area of responsibility (AOR). This included familiarity with counter-terrorism, counter-drug and paramilitary operation mission sets. Lopez fit the bill on all counts.

"I recently completed a mission to Honduras," said Lopez. "I'd never been to Colombia, but I'm familiar with the problems in the SOUTHCOM AOR."

For the entire story, visit the Navy Reserve website: https://go.usa.gov/x6Guj





RESERVE SAILORS LEAD PHOENIX EXPRESS 2021

BY LT. MATHUEL BROWNE

Navy Reservists were at the helm of U.S. Africa Command sponsored exercise Phoenix Express 2021 that took place in Tunisia and throughout the Mediterranean Sea May 17-28. The multinational maritime exercise brings together North African, European and U.S. maritime forces with the goal of enhancing cooperation and expertise related to maritime security in the Mediterranean Sea.

Sailors from Commander Naval Forces Europe/Commander Naval Forces Africa/Commander Sixth Fleet Maritime Partnership Program (Det 205), based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, were tasked with organizing the exercise in support of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, who led execution of the event objectives.

"Our support of Phoenix Express is all about building partnerships and cooperation," said Capt. Harry Knight, exercise director, detachment 205 commanding officer. "One of the great strengths of our U.S. Navy is our allies and partners, and this exercise strengthens those relationships."

Originally, plans were in place to lead the exercise in 2020. Then the pandemic hit, putting everything on hold. A year later, the event was given the green light and DET 205 fulfilled its role directing more than 1,000 participants and 11 partner nations in Tunis and Bizerte, Tunisia, as well as in the Mediterranean Sea.

Lt. Cmdr. Evan Werner, one of this year's organizers and the detachment's operations officer, made sure all of the exercise participant travel arrangements were in place and each person was ready to support.

"My role was to integrate our unit into Phoenix Express's operational planning and make sure that our personnel were prepared to participate and mentor exercise participants," said Werner. "Upon arriving in Tunisia, I transitioned to running and organizing the visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) training in Bizerte for our African Partner Nation participants and the U.S. Coast Guard Trainers. At the conclusion of the VBSS training in Bizerte, I arrived in Tunis to assist the exercise's control group where I was involved in sending out daily scenarios to underway maritime interdiction teams that drove VBSS training at sea."

Phoenix Express focuses specifically on maritime security operations to counter illegal activities in the Mediterranean such as human trafficking, smuggling, and illicit, unreported and unregulated fishing. During the exercise, a combined maritime operations center was stood up in an expeditionary location where watch teams conducted communication drills and practiced regional information sharing. This operations center directed the exercise's multinational surface action group and aircraft in ship boardings, airborne maritime patrol operations, and search and rescue drills.

The diverse set of skills and experiences of the detachment Reserve Sailors, like those of Lt. Jeremy Mock, proved to be essential in the effective execution of the exercise tasks. Mock, a supply corps officer and the unit's on-ground logistics planner for the exercise, was able to leverage his knowledge as a civilian business owner to support the exercise.

"This year, it was my responsibility to coordinate with U.S. 6th Fleet, AFRICOM, and all of the partners on the requirements here," said Mock. "This included finding out what ships are arriving, how much fuel they will need, and what they'll need when they come into port. We are also required to manage the berthing for the participants. There were barriers to understanding the language and culture, but we were able to work through them for a successful exercise."

Information Technology Specialist 1st Class Brian Stephan's prior exercise experience allowed him to hit the ground running while setting up the necessary IT communication support.

"I have done another Phoenix Express in Morocco in 2019 and the Obangame Exercise in Nigeria a few years back," said Stephan, Reserve detachment's lead petty officer for operations. "During the exercise, it was my role to setup the communications and SharePoint for the operations center. Our team was pretty much in charge of all communications and internet access during the event."

Phoenix Express provides an opportunity to work side-by-side to better synchronize and rehearse for potential real-world scenarios, as well as create an environment where the U.S. and participants learn from each other.

"I think Phoenix Express is more than the learning and educational piece of it," said Mock. "I think it helps us better understand each other's cultures and how we all work before we are in a real-world situation."

The exercise is one of three regional maritime exercises executed by U.S. Naval Forces Africa's Navy Reserve Maritime Partnership Program detachments. These exercises are part of a comprehensive strategy to provide African forces and international partners collaborative opportunities to improve regional maritime safety and security. They also demonstrate the valuable contribution the Navy Reserve provides within an operational environment.

The U.S. Navy has remained operational throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Reserve team supported the safety of each participant by following all COVID-19 safety precautions and regulations during the event.

U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners in order to advance U.S. national interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.

PROFILES IN PROFESSIONALISM



"I'd like to be able to bring more diversity into the Navy, and I think I'm able to do that just by being myself."

ENSIGN MARCIA VILLAVICENCIO

Marcia Villavicencio was in eighth grade when her cross country coach volunteered her to run a half-marathon without telling her the distance. She completed the race with steady determination, eventually finishing in second place.

Today, Ens. Villavicencio is still moving forward, setting and achieving goals with a tenacious spirit that has propelled her on a journey from E-1 to O-1, and from fitness fanatic to small business owner.

"I want to help open some doors for young Latina and gay women out there that might be thinking 'I could never get to that point,'" said Villavicencio. "I'd like to be able to bring more diversity into the Navy, and I think I'm able to do that just by being myself."

As Villavicencio achieved each new career and life goal, she faced the pressures of increased responsibility—something she credits her wife with helping her manage.

"She tells me 'you got commissioned, you have a role and a responsibility and this is who you are,'" recalled Villavicencio. "She gives me that strength. Whenever I have a setback, she tells me 'It's okay, you can whine about it for a day, but tomorrow is a new day.'"

She says the integration of her family life with her Navy career has provided stability, something that wasn't always an option for military members in the LGBT community.

"It's such a huge privilege to be able to bring my wife to events with me and just be like 'this is my wife,' and everyone is cool with it," she said. "I can't imagine having a wife and having a life that you have to keep separate from the Navy."

Villavicencio hopes to continue to move forward by encouraging others through action and authenticity. "The more you're out there, the more you're yourself, the better it is," she said. "I've gotten lots of messages from several women who've told me 'you're such an inspiration, I can see that you did it, so I know I can do it, too.'"

According to Villavicencio, it all boils down to one simple truth; "It's awesome to be able to be accepted for who you are."

"It turned into this streak. First seven days in a row, then ten days ... so here we are, over three hundred sixty-five days later."



CHIEF PERSONNEL SPECIALIST EDDIE BOEVE

On June 11, 2020, Chief Personnel Specialist Eddie Boeve decided to run the Navy physical readiness test on his own, simply to assess his fitness level.

The next day, Boeve ran the PRT again. He hasn't missed a day since. And he's still going strong.

"I started with the intention of just doing it a few times a week — maybe three times a week at least," said Boeve. "It turned into this streak. First seven days in a row, then ten days in a row, and I didn't want to let up... so here we are, over three hundred sixty-five days later."

Boeve, the N112 leading chief petty officer at Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command, said his re-focused fitness mindset was shaped, in part, by reading books and listening to podcasts by former Navy SEALs, most notably retired U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Jocko Willink and retired Chief Special Warfare Operator David Goggins.

"Goggins always talks about doing something that sucks every day," said Boeve. " I like playing basketball or flag football, but running the Navy PRT is not something fun for me."

Boeve said he chose the PRT because it offered him a sense of immediate professional feedback.

"I thought, 'hey, this is the Navy standard, so if I need to do something everyday it might as well be something the Navy requires from me,'" he said. "I may as well work toward that standard every day and use it to measure where I'm at physically."

While Boeve was never out of standards, the married father of two said the challenges of balancing a job, family and relocation were all factors contributing to the dulling of a once-sharpened sense of physical discipline.

"I'd transferred from Tennessee to Virginia, took 30 days of leave and then started focusing on learning a brand new job and all of that was kind of stressful," said Boeve. "I just stopped eating right and lost the fitness focus I had before."

Boeve said the difference between his current streak and previous bursts of fitness motivation boiled down to wanting to cultivate an overall lifestyle of wellness instead of just reaching for specific performance numbers.

"I really needed to make some changes," said Boeve. "Not just for a single season or a single goal — I need to do something for the rest of my life."

Boeve said on day one, he initially started out with one goal in mind.

"My only goal was just to do it," he said. "The action of doing the push-ups, the sit-ups — now the planks — and the run, really was the only objective."

As a single day turned into 365 consecutive days, Boeve said the true benefits have revealed themselves in a gradual, yet profound way.

"I've lost about thirty pounds and I'm back in the uniforms I got pinned in," said Boeve."So that accomplishment alone feels really, really good."

Boeve had advice for anyone hesitant to take the first step toward a better fitness future.

"Don't think about instant results," said Boeve. "At first, it's not about hitting some target number, it's about making a commitment to getting out there and just doing it. The rest of that stuff will take care of itself."

PROFILES BY CHIEF MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST SCOTT WICHMANN



LIEUTENANT COMMANDER
NATHAN GREBB

The duties of a naval officer can involve managing Sailors, ships, aircraft and weapons systems at any given time or all at once. The specialized training officers receive as military leaders requires discipline, toughness and resilience.

These are the qualities Lt. Cmdr. Nathan Grebb routinely relies on in his civilian career as both a mixed martial arts fighter and trainer. Grebb credits both his military training as a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) and his time in the fleet for laying the keel that serves as the foundation of his martial arts career.

"The Sailor's Creed talks about a 'fighting spirit,'" said Grebb. "I believe that 'spirit' refers to the underlying willingness to take risk and make sacrifices for what you believe in. The 'fight' can come in many different forms. Our Sailors at the tip of the spear exemplify that fighting spirit every day."

His passion for martial arts opened the door to his Navy journey. While competing as a teenager, he found himself at an event where the USNA karate team was also competing. After seeing them in action, he was inspired to pursue a career in the Navy.

"It takes a tremendous amount of discipline to train successfully," said Grebb. "The sport will teach you something about yourself."

While at the academy, Grebb served as the karate team captain for two years. He continued to train in different disciplines while on active duty before transitioning to the Navy Reserve. Along the way, he's fought as a professional mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter and now co-owns two martial arts and fitness facilities where he teaches Brazilian jiu jitsu, boxing, kickboxing, MMA and fitness classes.

Grebb has also shared his skills while teaching Sailors during self-defense and combat tactics classes, as well as members of the Army, Secret Service and various law enforcement agencies.

Most notably, Grebb and his training partners recently served on the coaching staff of the USNA Brazilian jiu jitsu team, bringing his Navy martial arts journey full circle.

"My approach to MMA, both as a former fighter and now as a coach, is very clear." He said. "We want to win, and do so as efficiently and safely as possible."

Grebb identified parallel goals between the Navy Reserve and the in-the-ring objectives of his civilian career, placing an emphasis on focus, determination and elimination of all distractions in the pursuit of mission accomplishment.

"The CNR said in his recent fighting instruction, 'We are focused unambiguously on warfighting readiness. It is my number one and only priority... period,'" Grebb recited, verbatim. "That is our job, and why the Navy Reserve exists. All else is secondary."

Grebb drills at Navy Operational Support Center Baltimore and credits his flexible drill schedule for allowing him to stay local, grow his business and pursue his lifelong dream of teaching martial arts.

"The knowledge and discipline I've gained as a martial arts expert has helped shape my commitment," he said. "It's an unwavering honor to serve as an officer in the Navy Reserve."

"I believe that 'spirit' refers to the underlying willingness to take risk and make sacrifices for what you believe in."

PROFILE AND PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 1ST CLASS DAVID COLEMAN

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER
LENAYA ROTKLEIN

After a heartbreaking second-place finish in a high profile international fitness competition in Miami last year, Lt. Cmdr. Lenaya Rotklein decided to go back to the drawing board, identify weaknesses and sharpen her focus in pursuit of victory. Five months later, Rotklein stood in the champions circle and walked away with the top spot in her fitness category.

"I really feel that sometimes the toughest losses in life are the biggest motivation for you to get back up and push forward," said Rotklein. "This competition was a culmination of years of training, sculpting and jumping hurdles."

Inspired to military service by her father who served in the Israeli Defense Force, Rotklein graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and spent nine years as an active duty Navy public affairs officer before transferring to the Navy Reserve. She currently lives in Naples, Italy with her husband, an active duty surface warfare officer, and their two daughters.

Fitness has always been a part of Rotklein's life, but she was only introduced to bodybuilding in 2018 after working with Darwin Dezemo, a fitness trainer at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado in San Diego, California. Dezemo changed her outlook on fitness and gave her the confidence to go further.

"He didn't push me into bodybuilding, but he taught me the importance of weightlifting to increase lean body mass, which contributes positively to your daily life and longevity," said Rotklein. "After working with Darwin, I felt an internal calling to compete."

Rotklein said her competitive fitness preparation process includes meticulous planning and detailed workout schedules — mapped out months in advance — requiring organizational skills developed in the Navy.

"Motivation can only get you so far," said Rotklein. "What the Navy has taught me is that you need to have discipline, especially during a global health pandemic. Working long hours, counting your calories and macronutrients and consistently working out while also making time for family and professional development takes a lot of discipline."

Discipline and meticulous planning aren't enough though, she also credits flexibility and problem-solving when well-laid out plans suddenly change due to unforeseen factors.

"You have to think creatively," said Rotklein. "Sometimes you need to wake up at 3:45 a.m. to get your workout in because of the next day's workload … It's a constant grind and results don't appear overnight."

Rotklein often maps out the progression of each day in great detail, factoring in sleep, hydration, workouts and nutrition — all while putting in long duty days as part of the high-tempo public affairs staff at U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet — a vital information hub and key strategic communication component. She credits her role models for providing not only the physical strength, but the strength of will to reach her endeavors.

"Strong women have empowered and motivated me to set an example for my daughters and all of the other strong women serving in the U.S. military," said Rotklein. "I sincerely hope that my story can inspire others to achieve their goals. Anything is possible with discipline and a strong mindset."



"Sometimes you need to wake up at 3:45 a.m. to get your workout in because of the next day's workload. It's a constant grind and results don't appear overnight."

PROFILE BY CHIEF MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST SCOTT WICHMANN

RESERVE SAILOR OF THE YEAR



PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 1ST CLASS ARTHURGWAIN MARQUEZ

BY CHIEF MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST SCOTT WICHMANN

Chief Naval Aircrewman (Mechanical) Select Kody Sims is a stickler for details. He has to be. In Sims' world, it's the little details that often mean the difference between success and failure — terms which, in the aviation community, can equate to life and death.

That unwavering attention to detail is a major reason why Sims, a C-130 flight engineer assigned to Fleet Logistics Support Squadron Five Five (VR-55), Naval Air Station Point Mugu, California, was selected as the fiscal year 2020's top Reserve enlisted Sailor.

"If I'm not detail-oriented, I put the rest of the crew — and the aircraft — at risk," said Sims.

Operated by a crew of five — two officers and three enlisted aircrew personnel consisting of a pilot, copilot, radio operator-loadmaster, flight engineer, and flight attendant — the C-130 aircraft is used to provide rapid logistics support to operating forces. It can be configured to provide transportation of personnel or cargo by parachute, low level fly-by ground extraction, or landing, making it a key asset in the current era of strategic competition.

Serving as leading petty officer for both VR-55's quality assurance and maintenance departments, Sims' primary focus is to ensure preflight, organizational, preventive and corrective maintenance is completed to ensure the aircraft is safe, reliable and mission ready around-the-clock.

"My main job is to ensure that maintenance is being conducted safely and by the book," said Sims. "It's a huge responsibility."

Getting qualified as a flight engineer is a lengthy process. Once a command recommendation has been submitted on a Sailor's behalf, the member goes to flight engineer initial training, beginning a qualification process that can take years to complete.

Naval Aircrewman (Mechanical) First Class Colton Buchanan, now a C-130 loadmaster with Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 54 (VR-54), was a second class petty officer when he met Sims and the two formed an immediate and lasting bond. Buchanan credits Sims with pushing him to achieve his loadmaster certification, leading to a significant leadership role promotion.

"He's one of my mentors and someone who has helped me out my entire career," said Buchanan. "I recently took over as the LPO here, and he was one of the first people who called me."

Buchanan said he models his current leadership role on the template Sims left behind.

"Some of the most important advice he has given me is just to trust your people," said Buchanan. "Be able to lean on them to be able to help you with any deficiency that you might have. Take care of them and always take care of them on the back end."

A native of Marianna, Fla., Sims's family







moved around a lot when he was young. He loves Florida Gators football, farm life, and the outdoors. As a teenager, he considered a career in agriculture or possibly even aeronautical engineering.

"One day I heard the words 'flight engineer,' and I knew that's what I wanted to do," said Sims, who joined the Navy Reserve in 2011.

For Sims, there's no daylight between his civilian and Reserve occupations. On the civilian side, he is a C-130 flight engineer with Air test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 30 at the Naval Air Warfare Center, working less than four minutes away from the locker where he hangs his VR-55 Navy Reserve flight suit. In his civilian role, he trains Sailors to qualify as C-130 flight engineers.

"Basically, I do the same thing in my civilian job and my Reserve job," said Sims. "They go hand-in-hand and I definitely stay proficient and very current with what I do as a flight engineer. It makes things a lot easier and makes life pretty nice."

Submitted by his unit leadership as a Reserve Sailor of the Year (RSOY) candidate, Sims said the selection process could be summed up best by the rising degree of difficulty demonstrated by the questions posed to him at the various selection boards -- Commander, Fleet Logistics Support Wing (CFLSW), Commander, Naval Air Force Reserve (CNAFR), and Chief of Navy Reserve (CNR).

"At the CFLSW level, they'd just ask point-blank: 'What's your opinion on this policy?'" said Sims. "At the CNAFR level, they'd say 'This is the policy. How do you, as a leader, plan to implement this policy?' and finally, at the CNR level, they said 'Here's a scenario — you know the policy already — how do you plan to use this as a leader?'"

"THIS AWARD IS NOT FOR ME. THE RSOY IS FOR THE SAILORS THAT HAVE BEEN AROUND ME THROUGHOUT MY CAREER, BECAUSE THEY ARE THE REASON I'M IN THIS POSITION."

Habitually attuned to improving processes, procedures and workflow, Sims said he used the RSOY board questions as a personal diagnostic to assess and evaluate his own leadership growth.

"The CNR-level questions were very thought-provoking," said Sims. "They made me dig down deep and look at myself as a leader and evaluate how I look at things. It really made me think — even after the fact — 'am I doing it the right way? Is there anything that I can improve on?' And it ultimately made me better in the long run."

A team of senior enlisted leaders led by Reserve Force Master Chief Chris Kotz convened to hold the virtual RSOY board and ultimately made a recommendation to CNR Vice Adm. John Mustin, for the RSOY finalist.

Sims was joined by Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Ronnie Heen, assigned to Force Headquarters Group, Marine Forces Reserve, during the 2020 RSOY week held virtually from May 3 to May 7, culminating in the winner's selection during a virtual ceremony. According to Kotz, the selection was no easy task.

"I cannot stress to you the difficulty it is to measure the absolute excellence of these two Sailors," Kotz said as part of his remarks during the virtual ceremony. "I'm so proud of the professionalism, the tenacity, the dedication that our two boards put together to render the final recommendation."

The ceremony streamed live from the Navy Museum at the Washington, D.C. Navy Yard, where Mustin and Kotz were joined by the master of ceremonies, 2019 RSOY Chief Naval Aircrewman (Mechanical) Amanda Rodgers. The nominees and their families joined virtually from their homes to limit travel and crowds during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following his remarks, Kotz introduced Mustin, who reemphasized the excellence of the two finalists, particularly compared to a pool of excellent and dedicated candidates.

"What I want everyone to understand is that we have 12,000 first class petty officers in the Navy Reserve, and we're selecting one," Mustin said, minutes before announcing the winner. "We've already narrowed it down from a little over a dozen to two. And I can assure you that both of these Sailors have distinguished themselves from thousands of others who are also doing great work around the world, in every theater of the globe, in every moment in time."

Finally, Mustin announced Sims as the winner. Sims was stunned.

"I did not expect to hear my name called," he said. "It was a surreal experience."

After a virtual award presentation, Sims had the opportunity to present his own remarks.

"Every Sailor that I have had an interaction with throughout my career, I've been able to pull a positive or constructive piece of insight from, which has ultimately helped me improve," said Sims. "I feel that is what makes us great as a Navy, the diversity of our people … a diversity that introduces you to new and different ideas that can only guide you to improvement."

Sims said the meticulous habits he's cultivated over the course of his 10-year dual civilian-military aviation career naturally translates to Sailorization, mentorship, and staying on top of both short and long-term individual, team and mission objectives. For him, it all comes back to doing the little things correctly.

"If I'm not detail oriented, I put my career at risk, and I put my Sailors at risk," he said. "So I think it's very important to pay attention to those details, be able to account for those details and know how to deal with those details, no matter what situation you're in."

Sims, who will be promoted to the rank of chief petty officer during the Chief of Naval Operations Sailor of the Year ceremony at a later date, said it's not just his award.

"This award is not for me. The RSOY is for the Sailors that have been around me throughout my career, because they are the reason I'm in this position. It's their doing," said Sims, who closed his remarks with advice for the next RSOY candidates. "Trust your instincts. Trust your gut. Your command has chosen you to represent them for a reason. Represent why you're there by showing who you are."

CNR

Questions from the Fleet

Chief of Navy Reserve and Commander, Navy Reserve Force, Vice Adm. John B. Mustin, was a guest speaker at the Navy Reserve Central Command/5th Fleet (NAVCENT/C5F) Leadership Symposium in April. Below are some of the question answered by Mustin during the virtual event, reflecting what is on the minds of our Sailors in this important area of operations.

Q: The Navy Reserve Fighting Instructions call for reducing Individual Augmentee (IA) sourcing. As a partial counter, IA assignments have provided critical opportunities for Reserve members to gain deployed operational experience, particularly in the joint environment. What is the plan to ensure that personnel are afforded sufficient operational training and experience that these IA assignments have provided in the past?

A: First, it is important to understand we are not getting rid of all IAs, but rather the involuntary, land-based counter-insurgency mobilizations that have characterized the last two decades. There will continue to be mobilization and joint opportunities for those who desire them. Second, any future conflict will likely be fought in a joint environment, which is why we need our Reserve Sailors focused on their maritime supported commands. C5F alone has International Maritime Exercise (IMX), the second largest joint and combined exercise in the world, and the coalition Operation Sentinel making up the International Maritime Security Construct. Those and other valuable opportunities provide relevant, required support to our great Navy and will continue to provide operational experience.

Q: Continuing on the "IA to Zero" track, in the future Sailors will mobilize to their supported command. Does this mean we should expect unit mobilizations to become common in the future?

A: We certainly would like to move in the direction of unit vs. individual mobilizations to support validated deployment requirements. In fact, that assumption is built into the design and strategic depth of the reserve component (RC). It does not mean, however, that individuals will no longer be mobilized in response to a crisis or to deliver specific skills, as we did with nearly 3,000 COVID-19 activations in 2020 and 2021.

Q: In the event of a unit mobilization, would cross-assigned Sailors mobilize with their TRUIC or their UMUIC?

A: UMUIC. Training units are important for centralizing individual training, and tracking mobilization requirements for our Sailors; but the mobilization unit, or UMUIC, is the supported command. When I talk about "Mob-to-Billet," I am talking about a Sailors' warfighting ready UMUIC billet. The TRUIC can generate Mob readiness, but for our Sailors to be ready to fight and win on day one, they have to train to their UMUIC billet requirements.

Q: Are any changes being considered that would impact cross-assigned Sailors, for example, increasing IDTT (Inactive Duty Training Travel) funding for travel?

A: As a Selected Reserve (SELRES) member myself for many years, I understand the value that IDTT provides, and the opportunity it offers our Sailors to travel to their supported command rather than their Reserve Center. While funding for IDTT is subject to our overall budget, we make every effort to adequately fund IDTT, and frankly we haven't used it completely in at least the last 12 years so there's already IDTT out there for you.

And while you did not ask about locally assigned Sailors, we've also instituted a program called IDT-R, Inactive Duty Training – Reimbursement. This program improves warfighting readiness and encourages Reserve Sailors with critical skills to accept local assignments by reimbursing travel expenses of up to $500 per month for those who live more than 150 miles from their drill site. Operational unit leadership billets are also eligible for this benefit. I'd like to expand the program further in coming years, but the decision will be based on Force-wide usage. The list of eligible units, rates and Navy Enlisted Classifications (NECs) is available on the Navy Reserve Homeport.

But the short answer is that we will prioritize funding of any type to enable warfighting readiness.

Q: How do you see the shift toward strategic competition and the contested Pacific environments affecting force allocations (and budget decisions given likely tightening defense spending) affecting C5F and Seventh Fleet (C7F)?

A: That's a very broad question, with a long, complicated answer. Let me answer with a focus on the Reserve Force. As part of our "Design the Force" Line of Effort in the Navy Reserve Fighting Instructions, I directed each of our Reserve Flag Officers to conduct an in-depth analysis of every billet in their command, and their community, to determine its contribution to warfighting. This comprehensive, force-wide scrutiny of billets and units will likely impact the Reserve Force billet allocations in the near- to mid-term. Some units and billets may be shifted to other units in the community, or even other designators. I also foresee some unit consolidation within and across communities. Subsequent budget decisions will reflect the absolute, critical need to emphasize funding for units, billets and capabilities that are most effective in meeting Navy requirements to compete and win in conflict.

Q: What options exist to retain female members who want to start a family? Some separate from Reserve service due to the complexities associated with having a family. Active Duty has had success with essentially a career intermission program.

A: Great question! I'm really happy the Mothers of Military Service (MOMS) Leave Act was included as part of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act. The specifics of the Act, as it relates to the Reserve Force, provide compensation and retirement points to RC members who are authorized to miss drills while on maternity leave. The legislation authorizes pay for up to 12 pay periods (equal to six drill days/three months of drill weekends) while a Sailor is on maternity leave. The Office of the Secretary of Defense is developing the policy to implement the law since it is applicable to all services, not only the Navy. Once approved, it will be retroactive to Jan. 1, 2021, and we will let our Force know the details immediately.

As far as a Reserve career intermission policy, we have the Navy National Reserve Policy Board investigating options, but to date we haven't formalized anything beyond existing volutary training units (VTU) and Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) options.

Q: Are there any initiatives underway that consider greater access to and from commercially available medical/dental services for reservists? This could also be extended to General Military Training (GMT) and other training many of us already receive in our civilian careers.

A: Yes, the RC is looking to expand the use of the already existing civilian contracted Reserve Readiness Health Program (RHRP). The Navy RC administers medical readiness through the use of Organic/Internal SELRES Medical Forces, MTFs and Navy Health Clinics, and through RHRP. RHRP provides more flexibility to administer medical readiness services, especially in remote locations. The Navy already obtained approval from the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) to only require a DoD provider to conduct a dental exam once every four years instead of three years in calendar year 2021. A civilian provider can conduct the exam in the off years.

The idea of giving our Sailors RC credit for GMT and other training received in their civilian careers is intriguing. Clearly, any GMT and other training conducted in conjunction with a member's DoD civilian or government contractor career can absolutely transfer into a Sailor's RC training record by ensuring the certificate or 3500 is entered into their record. More interesting is giving RC credit for any like training a member receives in a private sector position. I'm going to follow up with my staff on this.

Q: How do you think the world is shaping up with respect to strategic competition, and what do you see as the future for the Navy Reserve?

A: I'd like to focus on the second part of the question first, which will lead to answering the first part. The Navy Reserve is an insurance policy for our nation. We provide the strategic depth the Navy, Marine Corps, and joint forces depend on to fight and win on day one, should our nation and our allies require it. It is the reason we exist…period…and the reason we are quickly transforming from the counter-insurgency, land-based IA-focused Force of the last two decades to one that is warfighting ready for a maritime, peer conflict. As you know, warfighting readiness is my #1 and only priority, and we need to make some changes to be relevant in a strategic competition environment. We are well into executing three Lines of Effort in the Navy Reserve Fighting Instructions to execute the transformation to policy, force structure, training and mobilization processes with urgency. You see supporting evidence of the vital role our military leaders expect from on our force in strategic documents such as the National Defense Strategy, the Tri-Service Maritime Strategy: Advantage at Sea, and the Chief of Naval Operations' Navigation Plan 2021. If you haven't already, you should become familiar with each of those documents. ⚓





SECOND CHANCE TO SERVE



BY ENSIGN GULIANNA DUNN, NAVY PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPPORT ELEMENT (NPASE) EAST

When it comes to choosing a military career, a call to serve drives many people to join. Others choose it as part of their family's legacy and heritage. For one Sailor, the choice was made early on, but the decision to stay Navy seemed unattainable — until he was given a second chance.

Navy Reserve officer Lt. Cmdr. Brian "Band Camp" Abbott was born and raised in Fabius, New York. "It's a tiny little farm town with more cows than people," Abbott laughed. "There is probably a six to one ratio of cows to people, and it is nowhere near anything having to do with the Navy whatsoever."

While his grandfather served as an enlisted Sailor in the Navy during World War II and his father was an Army sergeant during Vietnam, Abbott first felt inspired to join the Navy after a visit to his school library.

"There was a book at my high school library about all of the Navy ships and planes that really fascinated me," he said. "My first real exposure to the Navy was when they would send some of their smaller warships through the Saint Lawrence Seaway into the Great Lakes every summer, and I got to go onboard an Oliver Hazard Perry class frigate. Eventually, I decided I wanted to join the Navy and found myself at Fort Schuyler for Recruit Officer Training Corps. In retrospect, it was the best thing that ever happened to me."

After spending four years at the State University of New York Maritime College, where he learned about merchant marine ship handling and navigation, Abbott elected to go into naval aviation and commissioned as an active duty officer in May 2003.

"When I started out, I was all set to go super hornets. I wanted to go fast and blow stuff up," Abbott said. "After spending time in flight school, I started to learn more about naval aviation, different aircraft and the fleet. As a naval flight officer, I wanted to be in a community where I felt I could truly impact the mission. I had a chance to tour one of the Hawkeyes from a visiting squadron, and I fell in love with that aircraft on day one."

Like many junior officers, Abbott was overwhelmed and excited about all of the opportunities afforded to him as a Sailor. "I was controlling a simulated air strike out in Fallon, Nevada, one time as part of a strike fighter advanced readiness program," he said. "When the strike lead thanked me for doing a great job and helping them all through the event — as a junior Hawkeye guy, that was a huge thing because I was earning the respect of the guys for the event I was controlling."

Abbott spent time at a variety of squadrons, ships and commands throughout his active duty career. However, in 2014, his career hit a road block when he was passed over for promotion to lieutenant commander.

"Those were some tough years for aviation officer promotions, and I was essentially handed a pink slip and told to prepare myself for separation from active duty," Abbott explained. "I thought that was game over, and it was the end of my time in the Navy."

After separating from active duty, Abbott remembers thinking it was "game over," and that his time in the Navy was done. But he was presented with a second chance to serve through a transition into the Navy Reserve.

"When you roll into the Reserve, you essentially get a fresh start," he said. "I thought I would have to wait a year before getting another look for promotion, but I was selected for lieutenant commander in July 2015."

Even though Abbott has only been in the Reserve for five years, he already has many memorable experiences including providing support as a subject matter expert for the MQ-25A Stingray aerial refueling drone program.

"It was my first real experience in the Reserve and I was able to work closely with the engineers in the Stingray program office," he said. "Being able to share my experience and advice on how to integrate this aircraft into the carrier flight environment and see how this all came together operationally was a very rewarding experience."

As a member of the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) Reserve program for most of 2021, Abbott has supported the development of a public-facing website for the command.

"We finally went live with our website," Abbott explained. "We've never had that before. A place to advertise our command, talk about our mission and provide information for other aviators looking to transition to the Reserve."

Abbott says his experience in the Navy Reserves has been absolutely incredible and attributes much of his success to the support at his civilian job. "The leadership and my co-workers have been extremely supportive of my Reserve career," Abbott said. "I thought the Reserve was going to be a miserable experience and that I would have to just ride out my time until I could retire but I could not have been more wrong."

Given his second chance, Abbott has continued working and promoting his love of naval aviation. He was selected for commander in June 2020 and is slated to promote this summer. He currently serves as the NAVAIR Reserve program deputy chief of staff for operations and works as the civilian aviation safety officer at Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Two Zero (VX-20), both located at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland.

PHOTOS COURTESY ENSIGN GULIANNA DUNN

PHOTOS COURTESY ENSIGN GULIANNA DUNN

RESERVE SENTINELS SUPPORT GLOBAL ECONOMIC STABILITY

BY COALITION TASK FORCE SENTILNEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Confidence in a rules-based international system is essential to the stability of the global economy. Without it, commerce could not flow as freely as necessary to keep up with the world's demand. For this reason, eight partner nations work together within the International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC) to cultivate that confidence in the Middle East region. Partner nations include Albania, Bahrain, Estonia, Lithuania, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and the United States.

Serving as the operational arm of IMSC is Coalition Task Force (CTF) Sentinel, a group of 85 staff members created to deter state-sponsored malign activity throughout the Middle East region's international waters. Over half of the CTF Sentinel staff are from the United States, and 55 of those are mobilized Selected Reserve (SELRES) Sailors, providing operational support in keeping sea lines of communication open for business.

A primary component of CTF Sentinel's collaboration is key leader engagements, or KLEs. Responsibility for planning, coordinating and executing the frequent KLEs falls to Navy Reserve Lt. Cmdr. Kate Gardener.

Gardener performs her KLE role in addition to serving as the command's protocol officer and planner of multiple major command evolutions; however, she says her KLE responsibilities are the highlight of her assignment.

"Interacting with foreign navies and being in the room during many of these high-level talks is simply inspiring," she said.

Transitioning to the Navy Reserve after more than

"The value of the knowledge gained here is hard to imagine. Considering the qualifications, training, certifications and experience in working with coalition nations afforded to us on this assignment — it is mind blowing."



eight years on active duty, Lt. Cmdr. Morgan Hill, CTF Sentinel's future operations lead, has seen her command's international presence through her recent travels to Souda Bay, Crete, Djibouti and Mozambique.

"The Navy has been a part of my life, my identity and soul since I left for college at the U.S. Naval Academy over 10 years ago," she said. "Sentinel's mission is unlike any I've ever been a part of — in that we are directly affecting global commerce by providing reassurance to the merchant community in strategic chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz. Some days I have to take a pause to realize how cool my job is and how unique of a position I'm in. Who else can say that they sit in meetings with people from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates on a weekly basis?"

CTF Sentinel's joint force efforts to monitor and provide support to merchant shipping is integral to the mission and is the primary task of Quartermaster 3rd Class Alesha Greene as a CTF Sentinel Maritime Trade Officer (MTO).

"After working here for six months, I can see how much we are needed," Greene said. "It feels good to be part of something purposeful and that causes tangible change in the world."

As a Reserve Sailor, Greene says the experiences she's had overseas with CTF Sentinel have been eye opening.

"What a learning experience this assignment has been," Greene said, "I can see how we all play a part in the big picture of how merchant shipping affects the world."

Lt. Cmdr. Danielle Centeno provides leadership to the CTF Sentinel's MTOs and serves as a vital connection between the task force and the maritime shipping industry as the MTO lead. She is also one of the few CTF Sentinel officers who commissioned through the Navy Reserve's Strategic Sealift Officer program, bringing essential experience with the maritime industry to the team.

"My biggest contribution has been raising the shipping industry's awareness of IMSC's mission," she said.

Knowing where merchant vessels are, where they are going, and when they will arrive is central to the MTO team's success. For U.S. flagged merchant vessels, one important source of information is through U.S. Naval Forces Central Command's (NAVCENT) Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS).

Now on his sixth assignment in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, Navy Reserve Chief Operations Specialist Timoteo Gonzales initially worked at NCAGS as a maritime domain awareness analyst and senior enlisted leader. He now serves as the leading chief petty officer for CTF Sentinel's operations department.

"This is a very necessary mission," said Gonzales. "It's in the international community's interest to ensure that this mission of partnership is pursued."

Alongside Gonzales, Intelligence Specialist 1st Class Peter Jackson also works closely with the NAVCENT team to analyze the information space to effectively support decision makers with timely and relevant input.

"The value of the knowledge gained here is hard to imagine," Jackson said. "Considering the qualifications, training, certifications and experience in working with coalition nations afforded to us on this assignment — it is mind blowing."

One of the most active parts of developing CTF Sentinel partnership capabilities has been through Sentinel Shield naval exercises. The exercises are designed to allow coalition partner navies to train together with realistic scenarios simulating state-sponsored behavior that threatens freedom of navigation and how they would respond with direction from headquarters

Lt. Cmdr. Martin Schricker serves as the command's exercise planner and accounts for all of the details from the creation of the exercise concept of operations to the post-exercise wrap ups.

Schricker said his experience as an exercise planner shaped his understanding of the importance of having freedom of navigation in critical areas.

"Our global economy depends on that," Schricker said. "That's why these exercises are so important. We must be ready to work together at a moment's notice."

In addition to the regular exercises, Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Corey, CTF Sentinel's training department head, coordinates frequent and rigorous training evolutions.

"Forming watch team cohesion in this multi-national, multi-organizational, and multi-industrial environment, considering the military and the merchant industries, requires robust training with buy-in from every watch stander," said Corey. "Through our frequently held integrated training scenarios, we have to align cultures, mindsets and approaches to standing watch across our distinct partner nation perspectives to ensure we are all trained, drilled and ready."

Before taking the reins of the training program, Corey qualified as one of the CTF Sentinel's group watch officers, who provide oversight on the watch floor to enforce the commander's intent and inform the commander's decision-making.

"It has been challenging and rewarding as we all work to appreciate cross-cultural dynamics inherent to this watch floor, being sure to not only respect differences in perspective, but leverage them," said Corey.

All of the training and coordination that CTF Sentinel's Reserve team provides, supports the command's overwatch of approximately 200 merchant vessel transits a month through the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait — translating to more than 18,000,000 tons of merchant shipping combined carrying capacity traveling within the region monthly.

In March, 2021, before transferring command of CTF Sentinel to Royal Navy Commodore Adrian Fryer, Royal Navy Commodore Craig Wood explained that with support from the Navy Reserve team, Sentinels will continue to safeguard freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce in the Middle East region.

"The quality of the U.S. contribution to CTF Sentinel's mission cannot be overstated. This is truly a special group of professionals and it has been a high honor to be a part of their synergistic momentum as our coalition makes a major contribution to the sustainment of the global economy." said Wood. "When it comes to employing Reserve forces, this is what 'good' looks like."







SAILORS HONOR USS OKLAHOMA VETERAN LAID TO REST 79 YEARS LATER



BY CMDR. KRIS HOPPER, REGION SOUTHEAST, RESERVE COMPONENT COMMAND-FORT WORTH

Navy Mess Attendant 3rd Class Isaac Parker was stationed aboard USS Oklahoma (BB-37), a Nevada class battleship, during the surprise attacks officially beginning the United States' involvement in World War II. Like so many of his shipmates, Parker paid the full measure of devotion to his country.

Unfortunately for his family, Parker's body never returned for a proper burial, leaving the last page of his journey yet to be written. That changed on his 97th birthday, June 8, 2021, when Parker was rendered full military honors by Navy Reserve Sailors at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, bringing closure to a story almost 100 years in the making.

Parker's story began in a small town, growing up as the second oldest of six children. He didn't want to be a farmer like his father, but he did want to serve and set a good example for his three brothers and two sisters.

After graduating high school at 17, Parker knew he wanted to join the Navy. To do so underage meant he had to convince his father, Holsey Curle, a WWI Army veteran, to give permission. His father agreed and on July 31, 1941, his second oldest son joined the Navy.

"Our family has a proud history of military service." Parker's niece Angela Curtis said, "We were told Isaac was intelligent and wanted more opportunities than a small town could offer. He wanted to see the world and someday go to college."

Parker's first assignment, only five months into his enlistment, was aboard Oklahoma. The ship was moored outboard at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, when attacked by Japanese aircraft. The USS Oklahoma sustained up to eight torpedo hits in rapid succession and capsized in less than 12 minutes, trapping hundreds below deck.

Many of her crew escaped and some were even able to remain in the fight, climbing aboard USS Maryland (BB-46), a Colorado class Battleship moored inboard, to help serve her anti-aircraft batteries. In the end, 429 officers and enlisted sailors were killed or missing from the Oklahoma.

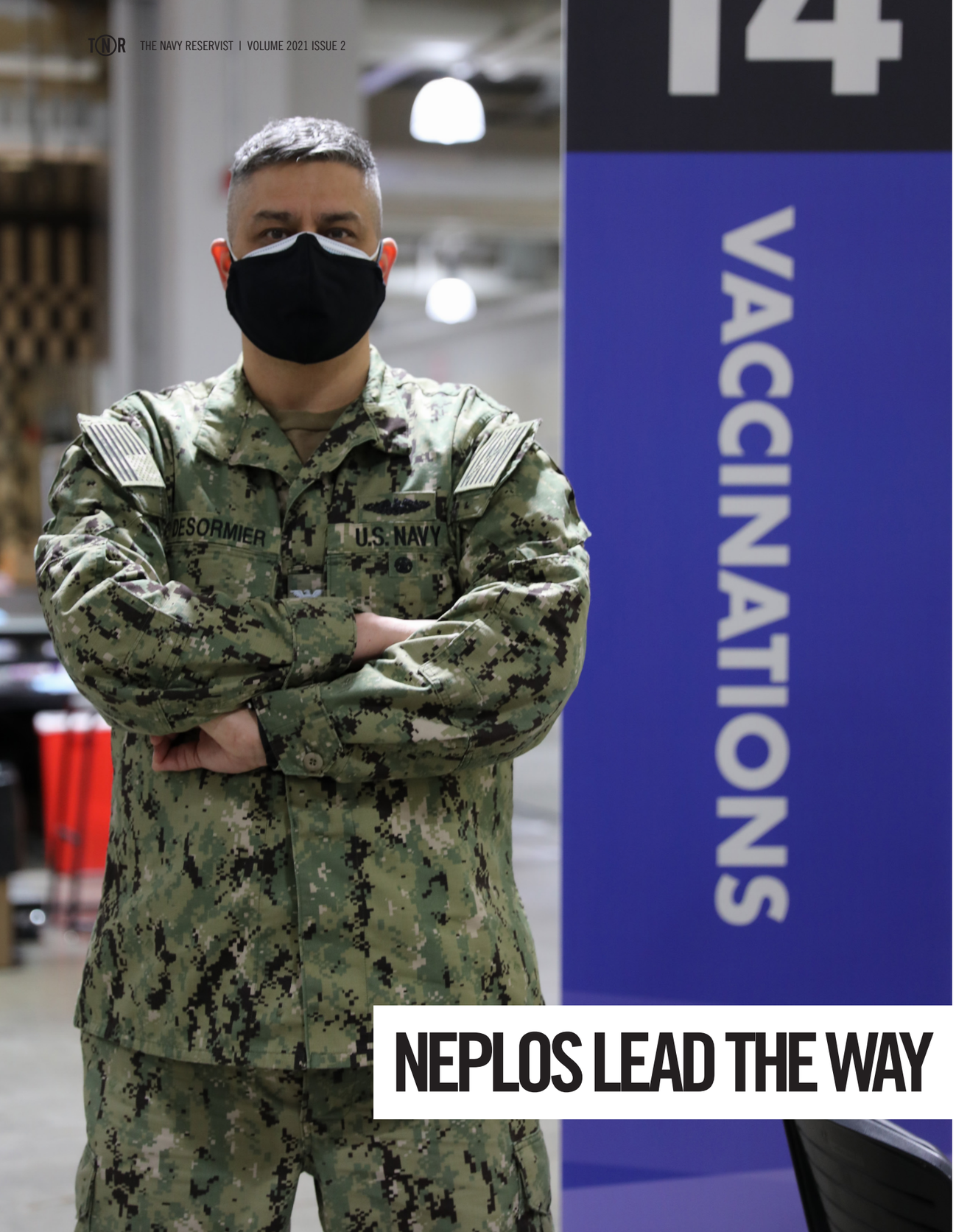
Parker's unidentified remains were buried in the 1940s as an unknown at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, known as the Punchbowl in Honolulu. His mother, Pearlie Mae Parker, kept a picture in her house of Isaac and stories were passed down from generation to generation of his bravery. Their pride in his service never waned, but they never thought he would return.

A grateful nation never gave up trying to identify Isaac's remains even though decades had passed. Through modern technologies only recently available to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency's USS Oklahoma Project, fragments of Isaac's body were positively identified on Sept. 8, 2020 by dental, anthropological and mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis using samples from relatives.

The news of Isaac's positive identification and pending return was shocking. The family started making arrangements for the burial ceremony to take place on his birthday.

"This was something Isaac's mother always prayed for, that her child would be sent back home," said Curtis.

For the entire story, visit the Navy Reserve website: https://go.usa.gov/x6Gwp.



NEPLOS LEAD THE WAY

BY CHEIF MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST SCOTT WICHMANN

When it comes to responding to emergencies, the Navy has one community focused on providing support to civil authorities: Navy Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers, also known as NEPLOs.

Most disaster response missions supported by NEPLOs take place overseas, but the COVID-19 pandemic showcased this unique community's ability to help American citizens here at home.

"When a community is in a state of emergency and the Navy is called upon to help, it is a NEPLO that the Navy sends forward," said Navy Reserve Capt. John Saccomando, NEPLO program commanding officer. "Our NEPLOs are trained to go into emergency scenarios and help the civil authorities appropriately leverage the military resources available to them."

The NEPLO program has around 130 officers trained in defense support of civil authorities. There is no active-duty equivalent, and NEPLOs only exist in the Navy Reserve.

The drumbeat for NEPLOs has always differed from that of traditional Reservists. NEPLOs don't plan their drills or annual training like most of the Navy Reserve. Instead, they are on standby — waiting for an emergency before surging forward to meet it head-on.

NEPLOs Answer the Call

When the global COVID-19 pandemic struck, most Sailors found their Navy Reserve battle rhythm disrupted. By contrast, NEPLOs found their skill sets in high demand.

During the early phases of the 2020 COVID-19 shutdown, more than 80 NEPLOs went on orders to support everything from Federal Emergency Management Agency regional headquarters to working with emergency officials at the state level. NEPLOs also served as the major Department of Defense command and control nodes at Northern Command, Army North Command, Navy North Command and the Navy Installations Command.

Key to the NEPLO mission is timely response during an emergency, so members are often assigned to the nearest FEMA region in the continental United States. This proximity to home allows NEPLOs to respond quickly and serve the same communities in which they live and work.

Among the Sailors who mobilized in 2020 was Navy Reserve Capt. Michael Flatley, a NEPLO since 2017. Flatley, a resident of East Hampton, Connecticut, supported civil authorities across five FEMA regions while interfacing daily with the Vermont Emergency Management Services just 10 days after the presidential declaration of a state of emergency.

"Like everybody there, I was trying to better understand what the threat was, how to mitigate it and how to get on top of the national security risk we were facing," said Flatley.

While Flatley coordinated FEMA support, many NEPLOs served aboard the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) in New York City, providing support to local authorities during COVID-19.

"They left their families during this uncertain time in our nation's history knowing that they can make a difference," said Navy Reserve Vice Adm. John Mustin, Chief of Navy Reserve / Commander, Navy Reserve Forces, during a speech addressing the Comfort crew. "That is what the US Navy does, and this is an example of Americans helping their fellow men."

Over a third of NEPLO COVID response missions in 2020 supported communities and commands in Navy Region Mid-Atlantic. NEPLOs averaged about a month on orders in the Mid-Atlantic and about 40 days in Navy Region Southeast.

In the spring of 2020, with New England and the New York tri-state area the hardest hit with COVID-19, Flatley's mobilization lasted for about 90 days, a three-month mission says he couldn't accomplish alone.

"Two things a Navy reservist needs to be successful on a mobilization are a supportive employer and a supportive family," said Flatley. "Thankfully, I'm fortunate enough to have been blessed with both."

Going on the Offensive

On December 14, 2020, Sandra Lindsay, a New York City critical care nurse at Long Island Jewish Medical Center, became the first person in the United States to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. It was a small but resoundingly significant first salvo in the battle to bring the pandemic under control. Suddenly, the tide began to turn, and the NEPLOs provided reinforcements.

Comments from Mustin's 2020 pierside press conference seemed to telegraph the enormous vaccination support effort NEPLOs would provide in the early months of 2021, specifically to one of the most iconic — and populous — cities in America.

Giving a message for all New Yorkers, Mustin said, "Now your Navy has returned and we are with you, committed in this fight. Every Sailor, every Marine and every civilian on this mission stands proudly. Stands ready to serve the people of New York City. We have not yet begun to fight, and we will not yet give up this ship."

When the COVID-19 winter mission began, 42 NEPLOs logged more than a month on orders, many this time finding themselves working at federal vaccination sites under the U.S. Northern Command through U.S. Army North. NEPLOs had indeed begun to fight, and the results would be stark and significant.

Flatley, a New York native, returned for another mobilization in February 2021, this time to support the federally-run Community Vaccination Center Site at York College in Queens, New York, through May.

"My second mobilization was more like going on the offensive against the enemy," said Flatley. "It was wonderful to be able to do something proactive instead of reactive — namely, taking the fight to the enemy in the form of the vaccine."

Flatley said being in such familiar surroundings was both a comforting and slightly funny feeling.

"I actually grew up on Long Island, near the vaccination site, about 5 miles away," said Flatley. "I never thought one day I'd be deploying to Jamaica, Queens. Honestly, it feels very gratifying. We had about 3,000 opportunities a day to make a good impression about the military to the people in this community."

'A Family Affair'

During his second tour at York Site CVC, Flatley received some help from a familiar face wearing a familiar nametape: Intelligence Specialist 3rd Class Sean Flatley, who enlisted in the Navy Reserve just last year.

"My son used his drill weekend to come down here and support the mission," said Flatley, with pride. "His unit had been drilling remotely via CVR Teams, and he just wanted to come down and get some real-world experience and help out where he could ..."

However, the support of the Flatley family to the NEPLO mission didn't end there. Flatley's daughter, a nursing student at Sacred Heart, travelled to Queens with a friend two separate times and volunteered to assist ...

For the entire story, visit the Navy Reserve website, https://go.usa.gov/x6Gw



★★ A 39 YEAR PERSPECTIVE:

Navy Reserve Air Boss Reflects on the Past and Future of the Navy

BY REAR ADM. SCOTT D. JONES
COMMANDER, NAVAL AIR FORCE RESERVE

Often, I will hear someone harken to times past when the Navy was so much better than it is today. It is my opinion that this look into our past is viewed primarily through the lens of nostalgia without a clear-eyed remembrance of the full story about who we were only four decades ago. When I enlisted in the Navy as a seaman recruit in June of 1982, the nation's wounds from the Vietnam War were still fresh. The Navy I knew then as an organization was almost unrecognizable in comparison to the professional institution that we know the Navy to be today.

Hazing and drug use were rampant and an accepted part of our organizational culture. There was no mechanism to ensure Sailors treated each other with dignity and respect. There was not yet a Command Equal Opportunity (CMEO) program, or a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program, the urinalysis program was present but not yet enforceable, and the list goes on. Needless to say, we had a lot of growing up to do as an organization.

Over the past 39 years, I have seen our Navy evolve into the highly capable and lethal force that is today's standard. With each passing year, leaders have taken deliberate steps to align the efforts of our naval forces in pursuit of our nation's strategic goals, and Sailors have risen to the challenge every time.

Looking at the landscape of today's Navy, it is evident that we are once again faced with an opportunity for growth in our professionalism and strength as an organization.

With a rise in extremism and division in our country, along with the current global landscape, it is more important than ever that we continue to focus on cohesion and look for ways to strengthen our Navy as a team.

Last year, the Chief of Naval Operations encouraged us to have more open and honest conversations between shipmates with diverse backgrounds to help us better understand the unique challenges we each have faced throughout our careers.

For many of us, these conversations have been an eye opening first step into rarely traveled territory that helps us better relate to, and care for our fellow Sailors. For others, it was an opportunity to be heard by their shipmates and explain the many burdens they've endured throughout their lives.

This internal work is critical to the future success of our Navy. We are a volunteer service that represents a diverse nation. Without the diverse, brave few who answer our nation's call, we would have no Navy. All Sailors are equally valuable members of our team — period.

We must also recognize that differing perspectives bring unique insight to innovate and problem solve in a complex and rapidly-changing world. With the strategic competition looming, we will need to put these problem-solving strengths to work with a powerful, intelligent and cohesive force as we move forward. Mentorship and coaching down and in, as well as leading up, need to once again become the norm and not the exception.

This focus is not unique to our active duty counterparts. The Navy Reserve is designed to mirror and supplement the capabilities and core competencies of the Navy. In the context of cohesion, this is an opportunity for Reserve and active leaders to work together as we face these new challenges at home and around the globe.

To this end, I cannot overstate my faith and trust in the strength and resilience of our Navy team and Sailors' ability to grow and adapt to keep our institution at the forefront as a professional fighting force. I have witnessed firsthand the amazing things we are capable of. Looking back on how far we have come as an organization, it is exciting to imagine how much we can achieve in the next 39 years. ⚓

SIGNATURE BEHAVIORS

OF THE 21ST CENTURY SAILOR

1 Treat every person with respect
2 Take responsibility for my actions
3 Hold others accountable for their actions
4 Intervene when necessary
5 Be a leader and encourage leadership in others
6 Grow personally and professionally every day
7 Embrace the diversity of ideas, experiences and backgrounds of individuals
8 Uphold the highest degree of integrity in professional life
9 Exercise discipline in conduct and performance
10 Contribute to team success through actions and attitudes

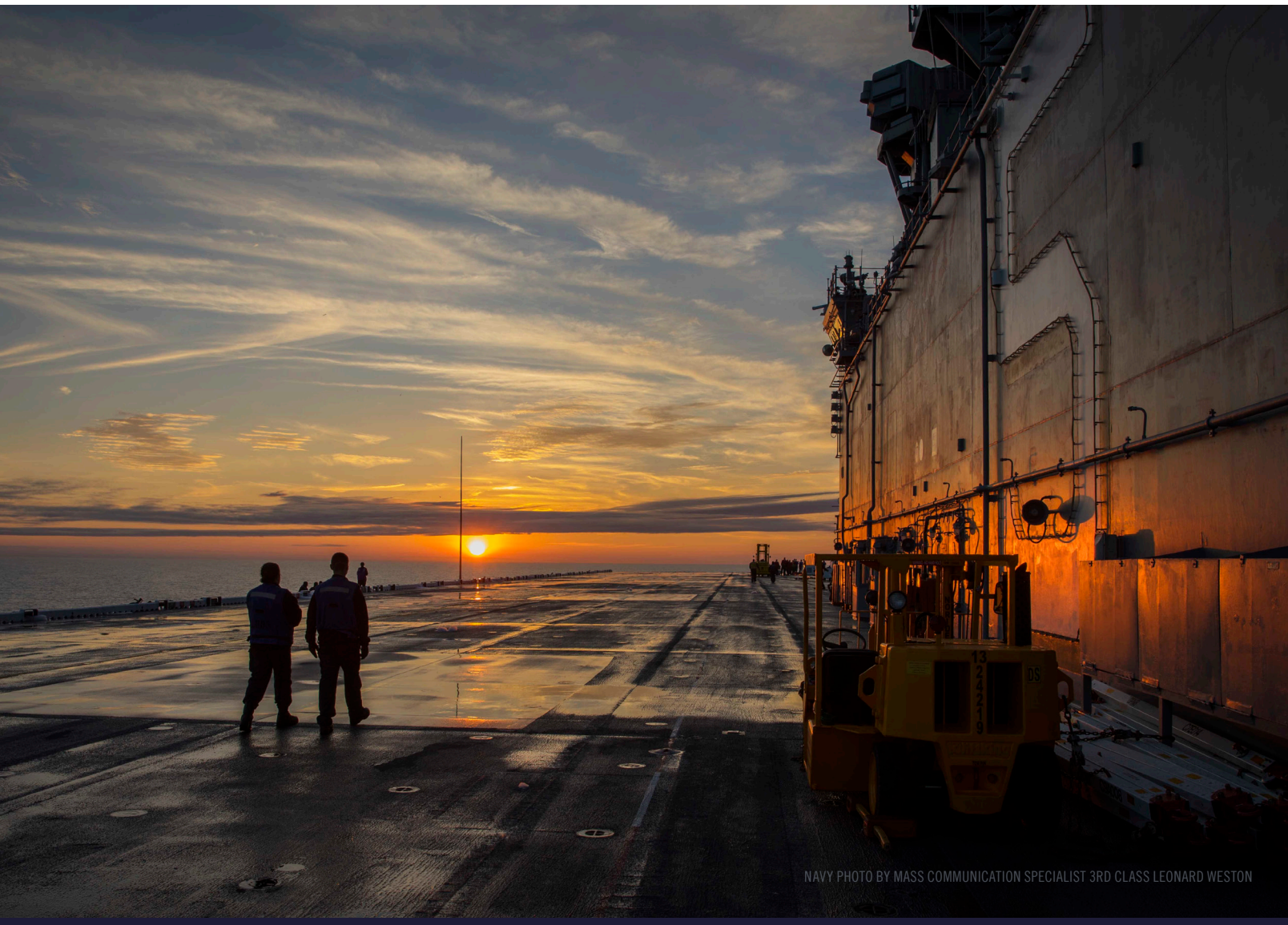
"As we focus on the future, we will value and celebrate our heritage. Our Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment and our attributes of Integrity, Accountability, Initiative, and Toughness will always guide us. They underpin who we are as members of the profession of arms: united by our common oath, dedicated to our special standards of ethics and character, and constantly honing our unique expertise in the art and science of naval warfare."

Adm. Mike Gilday
Chief of Naval Operations



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