

# SEABEE COURIER

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## NCBC NGIS receives prestigious Navy lodging award

By Ryan Labadens

NCBC Gulfport Public Affairs

The Navy Gateway Inns and Suites (NGIS) at Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport, Miss., received the 2019 Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt award for excellence in lodging management March 15, 2019.

This is the third time in a row that the NGIS facility here has received the Zumwalt award, which is the most prestigious award NGIS facilities can receive through the Navy Lodging Accreditation Program. The two previous times the lodging facilities here were reviewed and awarded was in 2015 and 2017.

Capt. William Whitmire, NCBC Gulfport commanding officer, praised the NGIS team on-board NCBC Gulfport for their stellar service that helped them to earn this award for yet a third time.

"Winning the Zumwalt award is a huge feather in the cap for the team over at NGIS. They have certainly earned it through their hard work and their personal commitment to providing outstanding customer service and an excellent lodging experience to the patrons. While I'm not surprised, I am extremely proud of them – again – for a job well done," said Whitmire.

The Zumwalt award was established in 1974 by the Secretary of the Navy to greatly improve customer service, operations, financial management, facilities and the lodging experience as a whole for NGIS guests. The goal of this program is to ensure that reliable and excellent management is provided by all Navy lodging fa-



**Katie Brockway, front desk supervisor for The Navy Gateway Inns and Suites (NGIS) at Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport, Miss., hands a new room key to a customer staying at the NGIS lodging facilities at the Seabee base Apr. 4, 2019. The Gulfport NGIS received the Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt award for excellence in lodging management for 2019, the most prestigious award NGIS facilities can receive for providing outstanding customer service. (U.S. Navy photo by Ryan Labadens/released)**

cilities around the world.

According to Peggy Morgan, NGIS house-keeping manager for NCBC Gulfport, lodging facilities are reviewed through unannounced inspections conducted by members of the accreditation committee for Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC). The inspectors visit different installations between January and June each year.

Once on base, the inspectors check in as regular guests and do not let the facility staff know who they are until the next morning. The results of the evaluations are given to the base's commanding officer once completed.

Gulfport's lodging facility is considered large since it has more than 200 rooms and serves more than 30,000 patrons per year, which is a high volume even for a large facility due to the heavy training mission present on the Sea-

bee base. Since the NGIS staff is currently only about 65- to 70-percent manned, this makes receiving the award an even more impressive achievement.

"We're all like one huge family in that if something needs to be done, we all pitch in to help out to get it accomplished," said Katie Brockway, NGIS front desk supervisor for NCBC Gulfport.

Simone Callaghan, NGIS general manager for NCBC Gulfport, mentioned how proud she was of the accomplishments and the service provided to patrons by her staff here at NCBC Gulfport.

"This award shows how we all work together as a team to help serve the customers and to take care of what needs to be done to make their stay the best that we can make it for them," said Callaghan.



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# Two NCBC security officers rack up prestige, accolades at FLETC

By Brian Lamar  
NCBC Public Affairs

Throughout the recent Federal Law Enforcement Training Center's Uniformed Police Training Program class UPTP-1904 in Glynco, Georgia, two Naval Construction Battalion Center's Security Department personnel attending the class, racked up nearly all of the class' awards.

Out of the more than 50 federal law enforcement officers with organizations like the United States Capitol Police and the Defense Logistics Agency, Maj. Jeff Graf and Patrolman Darren Lea scooped an arm load of awards, but a headful of valuable knowledge to bring back to use day-to-day on NCBC.

"I take all my training seriously. I train hard and learn what I can so I have the ability to equip my department with the best possible tactical advantages over any adversary," said Maj. Jeff Graf, one of two training officers with the Naval Construction Battalion Center's Security Department.

For 60 days, Graf and Lea were subjected to a battery of courses in advanced tactics, like responding to active shooter threats, advanced marksmanship training, counter-terrorism, aircraft counter-measures, WMD training, chemical warfare, advanced tactical driving and even academic courses like constitutional law.

"At first, I was not excited about the prospect of attending a mini boot camp with a lot of yelling. When I got there, I found that it was very professional and more of a gentleman's course that was intensely focused on equipping us with the most up-to-date tactical and professional law enforcement curriculum," said Lea. "Now I am very glad I went. I learned a lot and had a blast."

Not only was the curriculum more than expected, but the duo knew that their own motivation and attitude is what would carry them successfully through the course.

"I wasn't sure what to expect, but I went in with an open mind. I wanted to see if they could teach this old dog some new tricks," said Graf.

"Due to the professional instruction, I shot better there than I have in my entire life," Lea explained.

The curriculum at FLETC is varied and elaborate, which added to the realism of the training scenarios.

"Everything is done full speed. This is a state-of-the-art facility. The ranges were top notch. The school even has a mock airport, subway, bus and train stations that are so realistic, I thought they had actually taken us to an airport," said Graf.

Out of all the awards won throughout the course, the ones that Graf and Lea are most proud of were the ones that showed their tactical prowess that could someday save their own or their brother-in-blue's lives. Patrolman Lea received second place in overall academics, but also beat Graf by a fraction of a point in the Top Gun competition, which is designed to award the trainee who performed higher than all the other classmates. The pair



received expert as a team in firearm practical exercises.

Graf received a coin for overall best shooter and the coveted highest honor in the program, the Director's Leadership Award, which is a vote from all his peers in the course that he displayed the highest leadership attributes of the class. According to the award received, Graf displayed all the attributes that a law enforcement officer strives to be. The award citation states that he is a role model for other officers to follow due to his honor courage, commitment and loyalty. Graf is also proud of the driving expert award.

The classmates are now back at NCBC working in the Security Department with the latest and most advanced law enforcement tactics available.

"My goal is to bring back everything I learned and share the knowledge gained at the training center. My goal is to continue to train with my team in the hope that it makes that vital difference if it ever came to a situation where they would need it," said Graf.



An instructor, background, teaches two Park Service Rangers the finer points of arresting a combative subject at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. (Courtesy Photo)

