

# T N R



## **ALWAYS READY**

Reserve Sailors attack the COVID-19 pandemic from the front lines of the Navy relief efforts.

**THE NIGHT SHIFT**

**SAILOR OF THE YEAR**

**SURGEMAIN**

**CYBER REINFORCEMENTS**



**COVER FRONT LINES** NEW YORK — Cmdr. Cecilia Mendoza, a medical surgical nurse with Expeditionary Medical Facility, Camp Pendleton Detachment F, poses for a photo outside of Bellevue Hospital while on deployment to U.S. Northern Command with the Navy Medical Support Team in New York. A family nurse practitioner with the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department in her civilian capacity, Mendoza is one of thousands of Navy Reserve members who volunteered to support the Navy COVID-19 relief efforts. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Omar Rubi.

**THIS PAGE HEROES WORK HERE** NEW YORK — The Empire State Building is lit up to display blue and gold to thank U.S. Navy medical providers supporting New York City hospitals during the COVID-19 response, April 27, 2020. Around the globe, Reserve members have answered the call to provide critical support to pandemic response efforts. Read some of these individual stories beginning on page 6. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Brendan Fitzgerald.

# TNR

## LEADERSHIP

Vice Adm. Luke M. McCollum  
Chief of Navy Reserve  
Commander, Navy Reserve Force

Rear Adm. John Schommer  
Deputy Commander, Navy Reserve Force  
Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command

Rear Adm. Scott D. Jones  
Commander, Naval Air Force Reserve  
Deputy Commander, Naval Air Forces

Rear Adm. Gene F. Price  
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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](mailto:cnrfc_pao@navy.mil). Instructions and submission criteria will be provided to help guide your entry.

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## THE NAVY RESERVIST VOLUME 2020 | 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.

## FEATURES



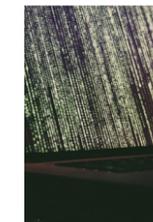
### 12 THE NIGHT SHIFT

"I have been to Afghanistan as an advisor to the Afghan police and army hospitals and have seen terrible injuries in both U.S. and Afghan service members. This was magnitudes worse."



### 16 RESERVE SAILOR OF THE YEAR

Across computer screens and smart phones, the 2019 Reserve Sailor of the Year was announced — an award presentation experience unlike any previous RSOY ceremony.



### 22 NAVY CYBER REINFORCEMENTS

"More than ever, we as a Navy need to leverage our Reservists' skill sets to defend against advanced adversary cyber, cryptologic and electronic warfare capabilities."



### 24 SURGEMAIN

Nearly 25% of the shipyard production workforce has been affected by CDC stay at home requirements — incurring delays that could slow the return of ships to the fleet. To help clear the backlog, SurgeMain Sailors are stepping up to keep production on schedule.

## DEPARTMENTS

- 2 FROM THE TOP
- 4 BLUF: NAVY RESERVE POLICY BOARD / GOOD YEAR
- 6 AROUND THE FORCE: RESERVISTS ANSWER THE CALL
- 32 RESERVE HISTORY: GUARDIANS OF THE PAST

# FROM THE TOP



## RESERVE RESILIENCY

It has been over six months now since COVID-19 emerged and subsequently became a global pandemic. The crisis hit the United States particularly hard, sending most of the country into quarantine starting in March, and deaths in the country exceeded 100,000 by late May. Our ready Reserve force, a key contributor to the military's response, quickly mobilized to help fight the invisible enemy, and ease the burden on the civilian healthcare system. At the height of the emergency more than 1,600 members were on active duty orders. I cannot thank every one of them enough for selflessly leaving their families and going into harm's way to care for citizens in cities often far from home.

In fact, every single one of you should be proud of your response to the pandemic whether you mobilized or not. As the pandemic impacted every facet of American life over the last several months, you responded with resiliency and reliability — from maintaining readiness and training remotely, to teleworking and attending virtual drill weekends — often while diligently caring for family at home. You demonstrated selfless leadership by also checking on your shipmates at a time that we needed each other the most. I commend all of you for your steadfastness, but there was never any doubt you were ready for the challenge.

COVID-19 also presented an opportunity to implement the Distributed Mobilization (DM) concept nearly nine months earlier than planned. We established DM in order to create greater throughput and limit the number of stops between your home and place of duty. With DM, your Navy Operational Support Centers performed most of the activation process and, in this case virtually, sent you directly to your duty station demonstrating greater speed and agility. The lessons learned from putting DM in action will pay huge dividends for the future.

As the public and private sector slowly emerged from quarantine, Naval Sea Systems Command identified a critical backlog of unfinished work at the shipyards. The Reserve Surge Maintenance (SurgeMain) community is distinctively qualified to fill such a role, and nearly 1,600 members are beginning to mobilize to meet this warfighting gap. The article in this issue on SurgeMain shows why this is such an important skillset our Reserve team brings to the fight. Thank you SurgeMain!

In another sign of our new normal, the 2019 Reserve Sailor of the Year (RSOY) was announced through a livestream broadcast event. Naval Aircrewman (Mechanical) 1st Class Amanda Alcantar, assigned to Fleet Logistics Support Squadron Five Eight (VR-58), Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida, was selected from five outstanding finalists as the 2019 top Reserve force enlisted Sailor. The margin between the finalists was very thin. Every Sailor who makes it to the RSOY selection is already a winner. Their achievements are a mosaic of their employers, families, careers and sacrifice. They exemplify the best of our Navy Reserve's strategic depth. Congratulations to all!

Next month I will turn over leadership of the Navy Reserve. The last four years have been the highlight of my Navy career. Without question, getting out and meeting so many of you made my role as Chief of Navy Reserve so rewarding and enjoyable. Your eye watering accomplishments and dedication will be the guideposts that I will remember. It has been a complete honor to serve with all of you. I thank you and your families for your dedicated service to our Nation and wish you well in the future!



*Luke M. McCollum*

Vice Adm. Luke M. McCollum  
Chief of Navy Reserve

NAVY PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 1ST CLASS SHANNON D. BARNWELL



## EXEMPLIFYING THE ART OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Our Navy Reserve is such an unbelievable force for good. The mobilizations in support of the COVID-19 response for our Navy medical forces and Surge Maintenance (SurgeMain) units have put on display the need and power of having such tremendous talent in the strategic Reserve. We often use the mantras Strategic by Design and Operational by Necessity as calling cards for our Reserve force. These mantras provide a quick picture of how we get to the action in both a contingency and from day to day. Our Reserve force provides a tremendous level of operational support, but as a strategic force — we deliver!

This August will mark the end of Vice Adm. Luke McCollum's time as Chief of Navy Reserve. He and I have traveled the globe together to meet with you as you serve our nation. I want you to know that I have the utmost respect and admiration for our commander. From the moment I met him, he has displayed such dedication for seeing the Navy and Navy Reserve through the eyes of a second class petty officer. Nearly every initiative and strategic focus has been about making the force better for Sailors who are subject to process and policy. We have had numerous conversations about what it takes to make a process better, or more importantly, how to ensure the voices in the ranks are heard. There are many achievements CNR should celebrate as he looks back on his tenure, but here are some initiatives he has championed for our Sailors that I am most notably proud.

**Navy Reserve E-Lodging (NREL)** — This application was born from an idea generated from the deckplate during CNR's first year in office. He has harnessed over 1,000 ideas from the ranks and brought them back to the Pentagon for the staff to categorize and attack. This particular idea caught his eye because — as he would say — "This makes life easier for our newest Sailors." NREL brought transparency and efficiency to drill weekend lodging procedures that was at the time a very confusing process.

**Inactive Duty for Training (IDT-R) Pilot** — Through the help of the National Navy Reserve Policy Board, CNR set to examine and break down the policy for reimbursing specific high-demand, low-density skills for travel reimbursement to drill. Other Reserve component services were

utilizing this component of the Joint Travel Regulations and CNR wanted to as well. The pilot program was rolled out in 2019 for E-6 and below in critical roles to harness the utilization data. I am very proud to say CNR wanted this change in policy to specifically benefit our enlisted force to ensure our Sailors have access to what they need to serve with their units and increase warfighting readiness.

**The Idea Portal** — I would call this idea the crown jewel of CNR's efforts. During our Ready to Win (R2W) action plan campaign, CNR wanted to ensure that innovation from the ranks had a more natural way to be seen by the Reserve forces staff to support a process improvement system. The Idea Portal was born to allow Sailors of all ranks to submit their ideas and provide their shipmates with a way to review them, make comments, and even rank them to help establish urgency and priority.

These three milestones during our commander's tenure may seem trivial to the layperson. To us, as a Reserve force, they are groundbreaking and speak volumes about the leader who has been at the helm of our Navy Reserve. The idea of servant leadership is a philosophy or set of principles for some and for others it is a way of life. It has been a tremendous privilege for me to serve side-by-side a leader who embodies servant leadership. McCollum continually looked at our service through the eyes of our second class petty officers with one of his most familiar turns of phrase, "If you get it right for the second class, you get it right for the Navy!"

Fair Winds and Following Seas, Vice Adm. Luke McCollum.



*Chris Kotz*

Master Chief Petty Officer Chris Kotz  
Navy Reserve Force Master Chief

NAVY PHOTO BY CHIEF BOATSWAIN'S MATE NELSON DOROMAL

# BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

## LETHALITY THROUGH CHANGE: BE A NAVY RESERVE CHANGE LEADER

Policies ought to be shaped so that the Reserve force can be maximally lethal when called to duty. When policies are enacted with an effective understanding of the day-to-day life of a Reserve Sailor, the Reserve force can be positioned to make a huge impact.

Acting as a conduit for systemic issues from the perspective of drilling Navy Reserve Sailors, the Navy Reserve Policy Board (NRPB), convened by Commander Navy Reserve Forces Command (CNRFC), reviews all issue submissions; and, if selected for a policy change recommendation, forwards them to CNRFC for final review and deposition. Policy change recommendations which require Secretary of the Navy approval or legislative changes are forwarded to the National Navy Reserve Policy Board (NNRPB) who advise the Secretary of the Navy and the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower & Reserve Affairs on policy matters.

### Where do the Navy Reserve Policy Boards get ideas for change and how do the boards decide what to change?

The ideas come from you. The Navy Reserve Policy Board actively solicits recommendations year-round, and Sailors may submit recommendations online by clicking “Workplace” and “NRPB” on the Navy Reserve Homeport or by visiting the Innovation Portal at [www.R2W.navy.mil](http://www.R2W.navy.mil). Many factors are considered during deliberations, but the boards always ask the same questions:

- What is the benefit of a suggested change to the Navy Reserve?
- Is the change good for the Navy as a whole?
- How does this balance the personal benefits to members of the Reserve against the costs and value to the Navy?
- Is the change consistent with Navy total force policies?

### How does the change contribute to lethality, force readiness and support to the Fleet?

Ultimately, deliberations are guided by considering how a suggested change will affect the everyday Sailor and overall mission readiness.



### What if the recommended change is bigger than the Navy?

The board receives many great ideas that are beneficial for the force and beneficial for Sailors, but sometimes the governing policies or regulations that need to be adjusted to implement the recommended changes are outside the scope of control of the Navy Reserve or even the Navy. When this happens, the NNRPB forwards recommendations to the Reserve Forces Policy Board (RFPB). Comprised of members from the seven Reserve components and professional and business civilian leaders from industry and academia, the RFPB advises the Secretary of Defense on strategies, policies and practices designed to improve and enhance the capabilities, efficiency and effectiveness of the Reserve component. By law, the RFPB is a federal advisory committee within the Office of the Secretary of Defense whose activities are published at <https://rfpb.defense.gov/>.

### What are some recent policy board victories?

While the NRPB cannot anticipate any final decisions by higher policy boards, or the leaders whom they advise, there are several examples of successful policy changes initiated by Reserve Sailor recommendations. For example, a large number of Reserve Sailors reported going unreimbursed for travel to and from their drill sites. The NNRPB, forwarded a recommendation to Navy Secretariat requesting that the Navy Reserve align current policy with that of the other services to offer up to a \$500 per month travel reimbursement. As a result, for fiscal year 2020 the Chief of Navy Reserve implemented a pilot program called Inactive Duty Training Reimbursable (IDT-R), providing drill travel reimbursement eligibility for more than 3,000 Sailors with critical skills who are both locally assigned to their command and reside more than 150 miles from their drill site.

In another example, the NRPB recently received a suggestion that an increased understanding of the competencies that exist in the Reserve force would enable improved support to the active component and result in better utilization, morale and retention of Reserve component Sailors. The board agreed and forwarded a recommendation to research options to broadcast capability and utilization opportunities for Reserve units through various career progression courses. This recommendation resulted in a pending revision to the Reserve 101 online course and greater interaction with fleet operational support officers and their active staffs in order to better promote Reserve component capabilities.

ARMY PHOTO BY LEROY COUNCIL



### Who can become an NRPB/NNRPB board member?

Each Spring an ALNAVRESFOR message is released soliciting nominations for membership on both the NRPB and NNRPB. Nominations are open to Full Time Support and Selected Reserve nominees in the grades of E-7 to E-9, Chief Warrant Officer and O-3 to O-6 to fill board member vacancies for a 3-year commitment. See ALNAVRESFOR 016/20 for additional details and to apply for board membership.

## UNDERSTANDING A RESERVE GOOD YEAR

Generally, a Reservist is eligible for Non-Regular Retirement once they have 20 Qualifying Years of service. Also known as a Good Year, a member accrues a Qualifying Year after they have earned a minimum of 50 retirement points in their own Anniversary Year. This is the Sailor’s individual Reserve year, which typically begins on the anniversary of their first day in the Reserve or date commissioned and ends the day prior to the anniversary. This date can change throughout a career depending on breaks in service or other factors. Knowing your Anniversary Year can help you maximize your future retirement value. The 50 retirement points (or more) accrued over each year are from two sources:

- You receive one point for each drill period performed (e.g., Inactive Duty for Training (IDT)); one point for each day of active service (e.g., Annual Training (AT), mobilization); and one for each day of funeral honors. You may also earn points from approved correspondence courses.
- For each year you are affiliated with the Navy Reserve you will automatically receive 15 points for Reserve service — or as pro-rated for partial years.

The annual maximum number of total points is equal to the number of days in the anniversary year (365 or 366), while the maximum number of Inactive Points is capped at 130.

It is possible to earn a Good Year while simultaneously having unsatisfactory participation. In other words, the Sailor may have over 50 retirement points in an Anniversary Year, qualifying the member for

a Good Year, but have unsatisfactory participation from not completing an AT (and not having an approved AT waiver), or having more than nine unexcused drill period absences. Unsatisfactory participation does not cancel out a Good Year, but could lead to an early separation from the Navy Reserve.

As your years of service close out along the path toward retirement, you should be keeping an eye on your point record. Your annual record of accrued Retirement Points, also known as your Unofficial Statement of Service, is available to you with a CAC login to the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS) via Employee Self-Service in the Retirements and Separations module. This is the source platform for what you may know as the Annual Statement of Service History (ASOSH), found on BUPERS Online (BOL). If you do not have a CAC, you may request a copy by contacting the My Navy Career Center (MNCC).

Here are a few terms you will need to be familiar with as you decipher your point record:

**Total Years of Qualifying Service (TYQS)** - Number of years completed with the minimum number of points to qualify as a satisfactory year toward retirement.

**Pay Entry Base Date (PEBD)** - Date that denotes how much of your service is creditable towards longevity for pay purposes. It can be found in field four of your last active duty Leave and Earnings Statement (LES).

**Length of Service (LOS)** - Total number of years, months and days a member has been under contract. LOS is used to calculate PEBD and is also the measure of when a Reserve Component Sailor reaches High Year Tenure (HYT).

**Years of Commissioned Service** - Total number of years an officer has been commissioned, which is subject to Statutory Limits.

Take time to assess your goals and ensure your career path is taking you where you hope to be when you reach retirement eligibility and beyond. Strategically plan your time in regard to active and inactive points, anniversary and fiscal years.

If you anticipate reaching HYT (Enlisted) or Statutory Limits (Officer) at 20 years of service, you should be especially mindful of your Qualifying Years compared to Years of Service. You should start talking with your career counselor now about the best time to submit your retirement request.

Frequent review of your Statement of Service is critical. A discrepancy in your point record can be a meaningful difference in Qualifying Years and/or the dollar value of your future retirement. The earlier discrepancies can be identified and corrected, the better. Looking ahead, some discrepancies can still be corrected while in the Gray Area, but this can be problematic for members who are no longer focused on drilling, have competing priorities in their daily retired life, and no longer have CAC-enabled access to systems like NSIPS and BOL or support from a NOSC or Program Office to readily verify that the point record updates were made. Get your corrections taken care of now.

While still a member of the Reserve Component, you can take your supporting documentation to your NOSC or Program Office for assistance in correcting any discrepancies. If unable to correct an issue, contact the My Navy Career Center to create a service request in order to begin the discrepancy resolution process. Again, you will need to be able to provide supporting documentation to MNCC.

MNCC can be reached by phone at 1-833-330-MNCC or by email at [askmncc@navy.mil](mailto:askmncc@navy.mil).

NAVY PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 1ST CLASS KEVIN O'BRIEN

# AROUND THE FORCE

A SNAPSHOT OF NEWS AND EVENTS FROM THE NAVY RESERVE FORCE DELIVERING STRATEGIC DEPTH AND OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY AROUND THE WORLD.



## VIRTUAL DRILLING

Navy Operational Support Centers and Reserve units across the country have had to rethink how to accomplish monthly drill requirements under new quarantine norms during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Reserve Force leadership has given us maximum flexibility in continuing to meet readiness requirements through virtual methods,” said Capt. Dale Maxey, commander of Reserve Component Command Southeast. “While this is forcing everyone to rethink old delivery methods, it is an exciting opportunity to continue to support drill weekends via digital delivery.”

All regular drill weekends, many annual training opportunities and other Reserve training events have been postponed in order to comply with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance to maintain social distancing. Yet, Maxey stressed that NOSCs have not shut down.

“Even with social distancing and telework, all NOSC functions are available to support our Sailors,” said Maxey. “We want to ensure that no one has to wait until the summer to get their mobilization readiness needs addressed.”

Many NOSCs and units implemented virtual drill weekends through video, text and email platforms. A goal of the efforts, according to NOSC Pensacola Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Mario Melendez, was to mimic as much as possible the standardized face-to-face drill format.

“We prepared for this initiative by contacting units early on to identify their desire to stay on task with the scheduled drill weekend and opt in to the



## BY THE STARS

PACIFIC OCEAN — Ens. Aldon Pagio, a Navy Reserve Strategic Sealift Officer serving as 3rd Mate aboard the Military Sealift Command fleet tug USNS SIOUX (T-ATF 171), fixes the vessel’s position through sextant observations of the moon, planets and stars. Ens. Pagio is a licensed civilian mariner who was activated for COVID-19 response to ensure Military Sealift Command can continue to provide seamless mission support to fleet operations worldwide. NAVY PHOTO BY ENS. CHRISTIAN MORRIS



## FLYING BOOTS

GREAT LAKES, Illinois — Recruit Training Command (RTC) turned to Commander, Naval Air Force Reserve (CNAFR) to help move the fleet’s newest Sailors from Great Lakes to their follow-on assignments.

With CNAFRs unique ability to effortlessly pivot aircraft and crew to meet evolving, high-priority tasking, Reserve Fleet Logistics Support Squadrons (VR) were able to provide daily support to RTC at the request of Navy Air Logistics Office.

This mission-essential transport of personnel ensured the Navy was able to maintain the current accession pipeline for new Sailors throughout the Fleet.

In the absence of viable commercial air options, CNAFR’s fleet of C-40s supported the transportation of RTC graduates to their respective assignments. Reserve VR squadrons have supported a weekly transport of nearly 500 graduates from RTC along with more than 38,000 pounds of cargo to locations across the country.

NAVY PHOTO BY CMDR. JASON WALBORN



## OVERSEAS

YOKOSUKA, Japan — Information Systems Technician 1st Class Manny Bueno and Operations Specialist Senior Chief Jason Kiritschenko stand watch in the Regional Operations Center of Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka. Bueno and Kiritschenko are part of the Navy Reserve, Navy Region Japan (CNRJ) battle watch team and spent their Annual Training in Japan providing daily reports to commander of U.S. Naval Forces Japan and CNRJ on COVID-19 risk factors to Japan naval base services.

NAVY PHOTOS BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 2ND CLASS ZHIWEI TAN



virtual teleworking option,” said Melendez. “From there we provided guidance on teleworking, scheduled time for mustering and tasks, communicated expectations and mediums for touchpoints to pass the status of task completion, and collected requests for required assistance of our Full-Time Support staff.”

Capt. Mike Dean, commanding officer of the Reserve Chief of Information Headquarters unit, said there are limits to what can be accomplished remotely, but stressed the need to maintain his unit’s cohesion.

“The goal of a drill weekend is to provide training to our Sailors,” said Dean. “Video will never take the place of in-person interaction, but under these challenging circumstances, we were able to use video teleconferencing to have face-to-face conversations to build camaraderie and hold each other accountable.”

Senior Chief Mass Communication Specialist Meagan Klein (pictured left) assisted in developing the CHINFO unit’s program and coordinated logistics to ensure a seamless experience.

“This pandemic is obviously a tragedy,” said Klein. “But many of the resulting pain points of social distancing and limited travel are forcing us to innovate, and we will ultimately come through this a stronger and more resilient force.”

While virtual drills are a new and sometimes challenging frontier in accomplishing unit training requirements, the COVID-19 protection measures are important to maintain a ready Reserve force according to Deputy Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Rear Adm. John Schommer. “Our priorities are the protection of our Reservists, our civilians, and our families, and maintaining our ability to support the Navy and Joint Forces,” he said.

The protection measures are an encouraging part of the ongoing virtual drill weekend format according to Operations Specialist 1st Class Daniel Ortiz, assigned to NOSC Orlando.

“It puts my health and safety first during this pandemic and I am appreciative,” said Ortiz. “I value being healthy so that I can serve my country and take care of my family.”

NAVY PHOTO BY SENIOR CHIEF MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST MEAGAN KLEIN



## SUITING UP

GUAM — Lt. Julian Hernandez, from NOSC Rock Island, Illinois, is fitted for personal protective equipment while deployed to Expeditionary Medical Facility Camp Pendleton in support of the Navy’s COVID-19 relief efforts. “This mobilization is surprising in the fact that nothing has been written in stone,” said Hernandez. “I like a routine and knowing what exactly it is that I am doing and why. However, in order to accomplish the mission, we need to step up and be willing to accept new challenges.”

NAVY PHOTO BY CAPT. TOBIAS PAIVA



## COMFORT AND MERCY

More than 200 hundred Reserve Sailors reported to Military Sealift Command hospital ships USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) and Comfort (T-AH 20) in March to support COVID-19 medical relief missions in Los Angeles and New York City.

The volunteers were selected from a group of Navy Reserve medical professionals and other ratings for the short-fused request for support. “The Navy Reserve prides itself on being a ready, agile force that provides responsive, vital support to the Navy and the Nation,” said Rear Adm. John Schommer, deputy commander of Commander, Navy Reserve Force. “When we were asked to help find medical professionals to help support this mission, we received hundreds of volunteer requests from our Reserve medical community in less than 24 hours. That’s extremely humbling.”

The ability to rapidly provide support to missions like the Comfort’s is a key purpose of the continual training and mobilization readiness efforts of the Navy Reserve, but the motivated responses from the volunteer Sailors was remarkable. For example, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Candace Johnson, assigned to NOSC Chattanooga, Tennessee, reenlisted for an additional two years in order to take on orders to provide support in New York aboard Comfort (pictured above right with her NOSC Commanding Officer, Lt. Cmdr. Peter Remillard).

“Right now, medical centers are doing everything they can to help their communities,” said Lt. Derek Hinkley, selected from NOSC White River Junction, Vermont, to support the response effort. “I see this mission as an opportunity to do what we can to help, in whatever way we can.”

“The sheer strength of what the ship can do, from all the CT scans, to full operating rooms and how fast it can be there to support different areas is awesome,” said Yeoman 1st Class Chad Williams, who traveled from NOSC Washington D.C. “This mission is important because it shows that we are not only doing humanitarian missions outside of the U.S., but that we support missions inside the country as well.”

FROM TOP, NAVY PHOTOS BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 2ND CLASS ERWIN JACOB MICIANO, MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 2ND CLASS CRAIG RODARTE AND PERSONNEL SPECIALIST 1ST CLASS ERIC PETDAN

## STAYING ON SCHEDULE

NORFOLK, VA. — Sailors from over 50 Navy Reserve units located across the country answered a call to keep the Norfolk Navy-operated Air Mobility Command Air Terminal on schedule during the COVID-19 pandemic. The terminal’s Reserve unit, NR NAVAIRTERM NORVA 207, sent out a call for support to Reserve Sailors of any rate or rank.

Lt. Cmdr. Chen Chang, Commanding Officer of the unit, knew the Reserve force could help, but was still humbled by the number of Sailors who volunteered to support. “As the only Reserve unit assigned to the terminal, we knew about the growing demand on the AMC staff and stepped up to the plate when called by Cmdr. Dietrich, officer in charge of the terminal,” said Chang. “We needed to help keep them on schedule — everything from loading cargo, driving forklifts, handling luggage, transporting household goods, to processing paperwork. But to get so much help from the Reserve Force outside our unit was incredible. We have had 83 Reserve Sailors and 16 Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One (NCHB-1) Sailors help the terminal so far.”

One of the Sailors responding to the call, Lt. Brianna McLeod, assigned to the Reserve maintenance team of Commander, Naval Force Atlantic (CNSL), says it was exciting to be a part of the Navy’s COVID-19 pandemic response efforts. “During this chaotic and uncertain time, the men and women here, especially our Reserve Sailors, have stepped up and answered the call to continue the mission,” she said.

Boatswains Mate 2nd Class Karthiga Jordan, assigned to Carrier Strike Group Four (CSG 4), had her first experience as a cargo handler during the orders. “I’ve been fortunate enough to work on my qualifications in preparation to obtain a civilian position as an aircraft freight loader once my orders have ended,” she said. “Best of all, I’ve had the opportunity to meet some wonderful people who’ve made my time here rewarding and fulfilling. I’m truly grateful to have had this experience.”

During a normal month, the Norfolk terminal handles an average of 330 aircraft, 8,000 passengers, 2.6 million pounds of cargo and 450 trucks. The Reserve surge of support allowed critical supply chains depended on by forward deployed commands to remain constant during a significant reduction of the civilian workforce.



## RESERVE INTERNATIONAL

GAETA, Italy — Rear Adm. Michael T. Curran, currently serving as Fleet Supply, Logistics and Ordnance, N4, U.S. Naval Forces Europe/Africa/U.S. Sixth Fleet, spoke at an event announcing the first of three donations of medical equipment and supplies to local Italian communities, June 17.

Appearing before Italian dignitaries and media, Curran, a Reservist attached to Navy Operational Support Center Richmond, Va., announced the Navy’s inaugural donation of a new ultrasound machine designed to assist pandemic recovery efforts.

“Italian hospitals regularly treat U.S. service members and their families,” said Curran. “It is only natural that we look for opportunities like this to support our local communities and show our appreciation for our strong and enduring relationship.”

The three donations, scheduled in coordination with the Defense Security Cooperation Agency’s Humanitarian Assistance Program and the U.S. Mission to Italy, are valued at approximately \$1.6 million. They serve to replenish expended medical equipment and supplies, and assist in preparation for any possible second wave events.

STORY AND PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 1ST CLASS SCOTT WICHMANN



## SIBLING SUPPORT

NEW YORK — Navy Reserve Cmdr. Cecilia Mendoza, a surgical nurse deployed from Expeditionary Medical Facility, Camp Pendleton, California, and her brother, Navy Logistics Specialist 1st Class Ernesto Mendoza, assigned to the hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19), both deployed to New York at the same time in support of COVID-19 medical relief efforts.

“I love and adore my sister. She is one of my biggest heroes — if not my biggest hero,” said Ernesto Mendoza. “She enlisted 20 years ago this month in April and I’m really proud of her and all of her hard work.”

Cecilia Mendoza, joined the Reserve medical field on the recommendation of her brother. “I got recruited by my brother to join the military,” she said. “He said that the Navy will give me the greatest opportunity to advance in my career.”

The Mendoza family came to the country from El Salvador to find a better future, it just so happened they both found that future in the Navy. “We came here because we were fleeing our country,” said Ernesto Mendoza. “My mother wanted to try and provide a better future for both me and my sister.”

“It’s an honor to be here. It’s an honor to wear our uniform,” said Cecilia Mendoza. It’s not easy for my mom to see both of her kids being deployed but we are very close family and our love keeps us together in whatever part of the world we go to.”

NAVY PHOTOS BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 3RD CLASS BRENDAN FITZGERALD



GUAM — The site of an Expeditionary Medical Facility (EMF) being built at Naval Base Guam is graded to ensure a level foundation. The EMF will provide expanded medical capabilities in support of DoD’s COVID-19 response efforts.

NAVY PHOTO BY CHIEF MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST MATTHEW R. WHITE

## RESOURCING THE FIGHT

During a crisis, Navy Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers (NEPLO) assist in providing Navy resources where they are needed most. The NEPLO program consists of 138 Navy Reserve personnel trained in Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA). In less than two weeks after the President’s Executive Order declaring a national emergency, March 13, an initial contingency of 32 of these specially-trained Navy Reservists rapidly deployed nationwide to support civil authorities in the COVID-19 pandemic response efforts.

NEPLOs embed in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) at FEMA central and regional headquarters and State Emergency Operations Centers ensuring effective communications between civil and military counterparts. NEPLOs are also assigned to Department of Defense command and control nodes including U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), Navy and Army component commands and Commander, Navy Installations Command.

One of the most important jobs NEPLOs have taken on during the pandemic is coordinating the use of Navy medical assets to help save lives. NEPLOs supported the arrival of hospital ships USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) in Los Angeles and USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) in New York City by working alongside city governments. The Reserve team also helped arrange transportation of Emergency Medical Facilities to locations across the country and overseas.

“Our team has a unique set of skills not replicated by the active duty Navy. We possess the know-how to get Navy resources and capabilities into the fight,” said Capt. Steven Stacy, NEPLO deputy commander, who added that being part of the COVID-19 relief efforts to help fellow Americans has been one of the most rewarding experiences of his career.



**CAPT. LISA GITTLEMAN**

Navy Medical Support Team

Over her nearly 25 years in the Navy, U.S. Navy Reserve Nurse Corps Capt. Lisa Gittleman had seen the highs and lows. But when she was recalled along with hundreds of other Nurse Corps Reservists to support New York City's COVID-19 response efforts, none of her past assignments were quite like the one she would experience in the days ahead.

**I think every single one of us felt that it was a very hard mission**

"I think every single one of us felt that it was a very hard mission," Gittleman said.

Upon her arrival, she said it was surreal with the quiet parks and changing stoplights met by silence on city streets normally filled with bustling traffic. For the city's seven public hospitals most affected by the COVID-19 crisis, the situation was dire and far from silent.

The city had quickly become the epicenter of the virus outbreak and was admitting patients at a rate much higher than they had ever seen — and the death toll continued to climb.

As the assistant officer in charge of her team, Gittleman met nightly with providers and nursing team leads for each of the hospitals.

Two days passed, then two weeks, and suddenly two months. Despite the sadness and stress, she said she also witnessed commitment, innovation, compassion and the amazing humanity of each young officer during the health crisis.

"All I can say is that I am humbled by the next generation of Navy Nurses and I am so proud of them," she said. "I can't wait to see what they will do with the Nurse Corps. It will be in good hands."

PROFILE BY LT. J.G. JENNIFER BOWMAN  
PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 3RD CLASS OMAR RUBI

**LT. J.G. GENIENNE MCGRATH**

Expeditionary Medical Facility Jacksonville

Less than 48 hours after receiving the call to mobilize, Lt. j.g. Genienne McGrath was plucked from her hometown on the outskirts of Des Moines, Iowa, and thrust into a frontline battling to save patients during the coronavirus pandemic.

McGrath, assigned to Expeditionary Medical Facility (EMF) Jacksonville, provided direct patient care at NYC Health + Hospitals/ North Central Bronx hospital April 7 through June 11 as part of Navy Medicine Support Team's Operation Gotham 2020.

"There were so many patients, not enough staff to get to them, and not enough equipment," said McGrath. "It was like a war zone."

As a critical care nurse in her civilian life, McGrath was accustomed to administering life sustaining treatments. However, she wasn't used to dealing with a virus like COVID-19.

"Everything that we were doing, going in there and treating them, and the sheer quantity of numbers, was completely different and unprecedented," said McGrath. "This is a virus that is much more virulent than other things I've ever dealt with before."

Dealing with life and death situations can be stressful for even the most experienced nurses. McGrath said she made it a priority to stay personally healthy so she could continue to care for patients and carry out the mission.

After bonding with others care workers and experiencing such a supportive environment, McGrath said she realizes how important it is to have a good support system in place at home and to continue to foster relationships while mobilized.

"That's something we are taught and we talk about while we're getting ready to demobilize — that the people at home may not understand what you experienced so you may need to reach out to other people that do," said McGrath. "It was difficult, but that's what we signed up to do as health care workers and as Sailors. I'm very proud to have been a part of that. I feel 100% like it was completely worth it."

PROFILE BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 1ST CLASS CHARLES PANTER



**It was difficult but that's what we signed up to do**



**HOSPITAL CORPSMAN 1ST CLASS De'MARIO JORDAN**

Expeditionary Medical Facility Bethesda

Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class De'Mario Jordan deployed with Expeditionary Medical Facility Bethesda and had a big job in support of the Department of Defense COVID-19 response efforts. As the leading petty officer of processing payments, demobilizations and fixing administrative discrepancies, his efforts were vital to getting Sailors home, as well as ensuring they were administratively ready for further missions and support.

"Every day that I get to assist somebody is a good day for me," said Jordan. "I don't want to come to work and ever feel like I didn't do enough and that I wasn't able to help as many of my fellow sailors as possible."

**Every day that I get to assist somebody is a good day**

Jordan said what he remembers most about being at the Javits Center is the facility itself being able to adapt and become a makeshift hospital treating patients, and being able to be a part of a joint task force to combat COVID-19.

"It's an experience that I find most useful to exemplify what it is to be an American in the military," he said. "Because we

are able to work cohesively despite the branch of service, I think that we bring the biggest benefit with all of the diversity that we have to offer."

Jordan says he is proud of the work he does because it is something service members depend on and it helps their families as well. He also encourages family and friends to continue to reach out to check in on each other, and to their service members.

"Just remember that we're here for a reason — and until we have accomplished that, we need your support," he said.

INTERVIEW AND VIDEO SCREENSHOT FROM ARMY SGT. DEONTE ROWELL

**CMDR. MALINDA KENDRICK**

Operational Hospital Support Unit Camp Lejeune

Cmdr. Malinda Kendrick of Springfield, Missouri deployed to Woodhull Hospital in Brooklyn, New York to work in support of the Department of Defense COVID-19 response efforts. She is a Family Nurse Practitioner currently working in the Intensive Care Unit providing support and needed relief to New York health care workers.

Kendrick said she was heartbroken and saddened while watching the news of the crisis COVID-19 was creating, and was ready to answer the call to support and render care.

By the time she arrived, the hospital staff had already been working nonstop for weeks. Her team quickly jumped into a schedule of 12-hour shifts, three days on and three days off.

"A physician told us that in the last six weeks he had one day off," she said. "Because our team was there, he was able to take two days off."

Her group of approximately 300 service members divided out amongst the 11 hospitals in New York City with the primary goal to "save as many lives as we can," she said.

Even as she herself provided support through the pandemic, she thanked the community and local restaurants for providing free meals. And she thanked her family and friends who reached out to her through social media and sent cards and packages.

"It's such a blessing to not have to worry about when you are going to eat again and just to see the support from the community," she said.

INTERVIEW AND PHOTO BY ARMY SPC. NATHAN HAMMACK



**A physician told us that in the last six weeks he had one day off**

# THE NIGHT SHIFT

## MY FIRST 12 HOURS SUPPORTING COVID-19 RELIEF EFFORTS IN NEW YORK



BY CAPT. JOSEPH KOCHAN  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OPERATIONAL HEALTH  
SUPPORT UNIT PORTSMOUTH, VA.

**A**s my group of 15 physicians and nurses began a half mile walk from our hotel to the Javits Center in the early evening of April 10 to catch a bus to Elmhurst Hospital, we discussed how empty New York

City was. No people. No traffic. Just empty streets. My team had not only volunteered to be a part of the New York City coronavirus response, we had also raised our hands to go to Elmhurst, the epicenter of the disease. Once on the bus, we began the seven mile trip to the hospital where we would report for our first shift in the various New York hospital intensive care units. During the ride I reflected on the events of the previous five days.

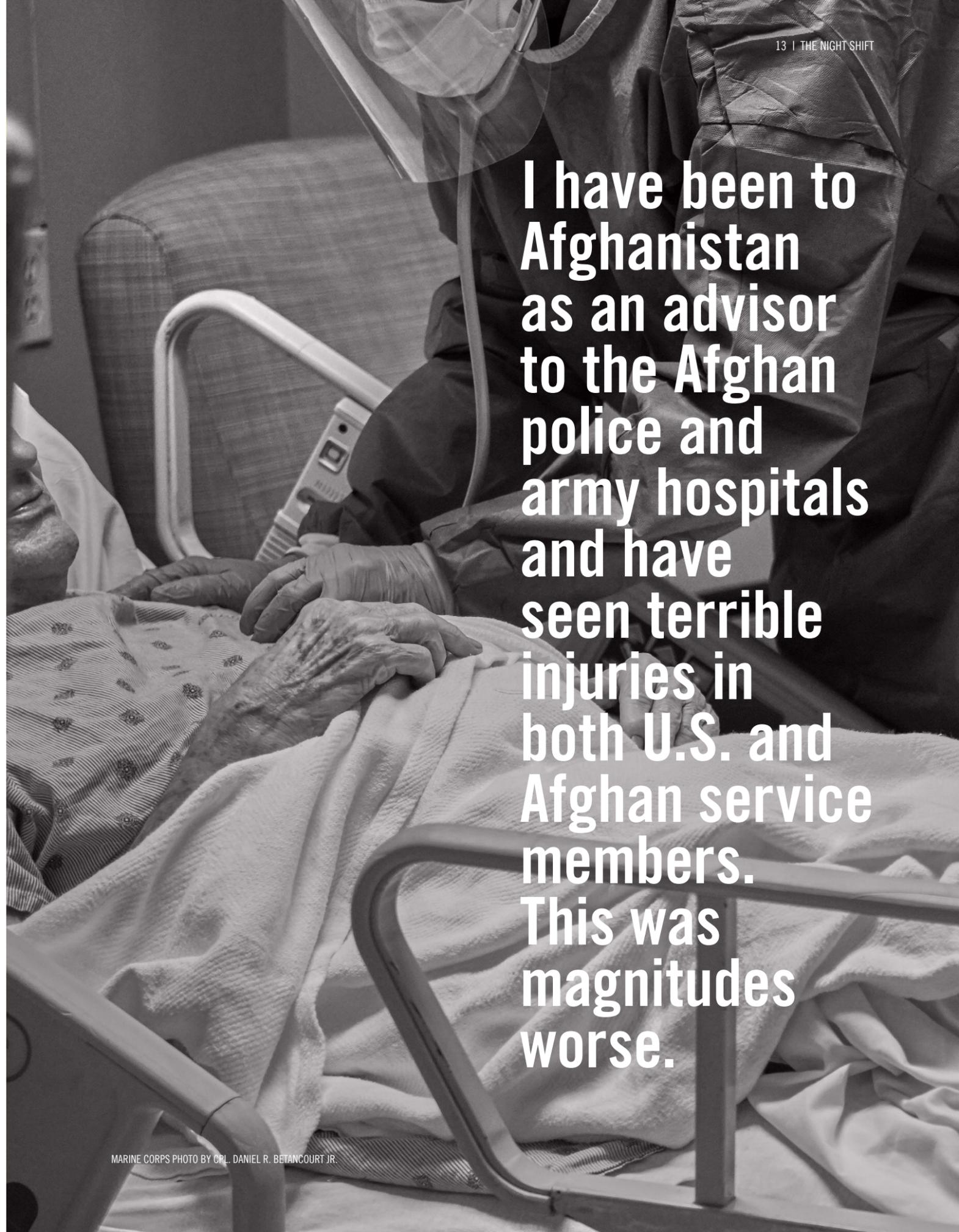
It was late on April 2, when the deputy chief of staff, Naval Medical Forces Atlantic contacted Navy Reserve Operational Health Support Unit Portsmouth with a request for nurses and doctors willing to support the COVID-19 response efforts in New York City — and he needed the list of volunteers by the next morning.

The request started a cascade of events that landed 154 Navy Reserve medical and nurse corps officers in the heart of New York City on April 5 — 48 hours after the initial call and within 24 hours of receiving orders. Four days later we

had all been in-processed into U.S. Northern Command’s joint reception, staging, onward movement and integration at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. We received orientation with Joint Task Force COVID-19 Pandemic, New York City; obtained training and emergency privileging with New York Health and Hospitals; and received Intensive Care Unit introductory orientation.

My day job is as an anesthesiologist at a Level I trauma center in Lansing, Michigan and coverage at a community hospital in Owosso, Michigan. Although, I had critical care training in residency and helped care for patients in the community hospital intensive care unit, nothing could have prepared me for what I was about to encounter. I have been to Afghanistan as an advisor to the Afghan police and army hospitals and have seen terrible injuries in both U.S. and Afghan service members. COVID-19 was magnitudes worse.

We were now at the tip of the spear fighting COVID-19. Many in our group designated the hospital as the “Hot Zone.” Arriving at Elmhurst, we were greeted by multiple New York City emergency response vehicles — sirens and horns blaring — with almost every person on the way in thanking us for coming to help. As we moved into the lobby, we were greeted by hospital administrators passing out dinner and bottled water to every employee including us. We moved to our locker room and put on our “battle-rattle” which included scrubs, an N-95 mask, a surgical mask over the N-95, two head covers, a clear face shield, surgical boot covers and a surgical gown. At this point, the team scattered across four different intensive care units.



I have been to Afghanistan as an advisor to the Afghan police and army hospitals and have seen terrible injuries in both U.S. and Afghan service members. This was magnitudes worse.

## I had 11 more hours to go in this first shift and it had already been an emotional roller coaster.



NAVY PHOTO BY CHIEF MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST BOBBY NORTHAGLE

My small team was assigned to A-4, which had been a regular ward until just about two weeks prior. I put on a second cover gown and medical gloves to enter through a newly constructed door with a sign posted, reading in all caps, “You are entering a Level 3 zone, must wear prescribed personal protective equipment and continuous hand washing after touching all doors and equipment.”

This was no ordinary intensive care unit with individual rooms, where inside the room was considered contaminated and the hallway was clean. The entire floor was considered contaminated. Walking through the door all one could hear were alarms from ventilators, IV pumps and cardiac monitors. I joined the intensive care team of two attending physicians, two resident physicians and two physician assistants providing care to 40 unstable, intubated and ventilated patients.

This was nothing like I imagined; the reality was it was much, much worse. Much worse than what I had even seen on the news or read about online. This was just one of many wards in Elmhurst where 180 patients were exactly the same; suffering from an overwhelming illness that first attacked lungs, then caused kidney failure, strokes, blood clots and death. And to further stress the health system there were at least 400 patients in the hospital diagnosed with serious COVID-19 infections. The hospital was full of COVID-19 patients.

Not even in this newly constructed ICU for 20 minutes, the overhead speaker blared “Code Blue A-4, Code Blue A-4.” One of our patient’s heart had just stopped. Our team entered the room along with a respiratory therapist, a laboratory technician and multiple nurses. We began advanced cardiac life support protocols to try to revive our patient. We performed CPR, gave multiple medications and gave multiple electrical shocks trying to restart the heart. What seemed like five minutes actually had been over 30 minutes with the patient never regaining a heartbeat — my first casualty of COVID-19.

Then it hit me. There were no family members who had seen our patient since being admitted two weeks prior. No one to hold their hand. No one to say I love you. No one to give them a hug. No one! This was due to the strict no visitor policy to try to stop the spread of the disease. But in the process, we had dehumanized care. A ray of humanity returned when the lead resident asked if we would all take a moment of silence for the patient. I teared up immediately as this simple gesture touched my heart.

I looked around and it was only 8 p.m., I had 11 more hours to go in this first shift and it had already been an emotional roller coaster. I looked at the team and you could see in their eyes that this was just as hard on them as me. I stood in the center of a 20-room, 40-patient ward manned by 20 nurses. Our gowned and masked team were caring for patients in a dire situation, fighting a virus that was so new that treatments were being developed as the disease progressed. We were not winning this war.

No time lapsed and a second Code Blue was called. For this patient, we were able to restart the heart after it had stopped three times. But it stopped for a fourth time and we were not able to restart it. A moment of silence to mourn the

deceased patient, then on to care for our next patient. Out of a line of 40 patients we had actually only seen about five, and two hours had passed.

Two more Code Blues occurred as the night progressed and both patients died followed by two more moments of silence. I also witnessed as the resident doctors would go back to our workroom and call each deceased patient’s family. Many times they would speak fluent Spanish to the family explaining every aspect of care during the final minutes of their life. The resident would never rush the conversation and was always compassionate even though the conversation was often repeated from family to family.

The staff was incredibly respectful preparing the bodies of the deceased patients for the morgue. They quietly removed all IVs, breathing tubes, bladder catheters and other equipment. Then they thoroughly bathed the patient and placed them in a body bag. Another team would appear and transport the patient to the morgue.

Once the room was cleaned the next critically ill, intubated and ventilated patient was admitted. There were now over 20 patients in the emergency room needing ICU beds. It was after midnight when we finally completed evaluating each of the 40 patients. Now the work began to adjust medications, place special central access IV lines, hemodialysis catheters, adjust breathing tube placements and other tasks. This took all of our efforts for the remainder of the night.

As the clock reached 7 a.m. the next morning and my first 12-hour shift ended, I walked out of the same “Level 3” labeled door after doffing my outer layer of personal protective equipment. During the night I had changed gloves, sanitized my hands dozens of times, and changed my outer gown in between treating each patient.

It was time to go home, exhausted both mentally and physically. I met up with the Navy team in the locker room as they returned from their own ICU assignments. Every one of them had a similar experience that night and it was a quiet ride home to our hotel.

As I left Elmhurst that morning after my first night, I met Anthony. He was an administrator and our team’s supply chain manager. That morning he was handing out breakfast. He and I would meet almost every night and every morning in the lobby food line. He became my sanity check at the beginning and end of each shift for the next two month.

As a Navy team we were adopted into the Elmhurst healthcare team family from day one. We worked side-by-side with Elmhurst staff and contract nurses for 60 days straight. Our bonds of friendship and companionship ran deep with the staff and at the end they didn’t want us to leave. As we reached the 30-day mark, we started to see a definite decrease in the number of cases being admitted to the ICUs. We had started to see some patients improve enough to be removed from ventilators, have breathing tubes removed, and then “graduate” to normal hospital wards. The tides of the war were changing.

In 20 years of training and practice, this has been one of the toughest assignments of my career. But even in the darkest days, as a doctor and as a Navy Reserve Sailor, being part of a team dedicated to caring for others and serving our nation makes it all worth while. ✨

# 2019 NAVY RESERVE SAILOR OF THE YEAR



BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 2ND CLASS NANCY diBENEDETTO

Through computer screens and smart phones, the Navy Reserve community recently watched a short 30 minute award presentation for the 2019 Navy Reserve Sailor of the Year (RSOY) — an experience unlike any previous RSOY ceremony.

Originally designed as a way to honor the finalists for their hard work and achievement, the five RSOY finalists and their families should have traveled to Washington for a week of selection board interviews, tours and senior leadership mentorship opportunities. But with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Reserve leadership had to adjust course to select the top Reserve Sailor. In the end, Naval Aircrewman (Mechanical) 1st Class Amanda Alcantar, assigned to Fleet Logistics Support Squadron Five Eight (VR-58), proudly received the Sailor of the Year selection.

“Given the constraints and the emerging technology that has been provided to us by DoD, I am satisfied that we did the best that we could given the limiting factors of the environment,” said Reserve Force Master Chief Chris Kotz.

As the ceremony streamed live across Navy Reserve social media platforms, Chief of Navy Reserve Vice Adm. Luke McCollum and Kotz joined the finalists virtually to thank each of them for their outstanding efforts on behalf of the Reserve force and assure them that every Sailor who makes it to this level is already a winner.

Shown on the multi-paneled video teleconference feed were the finalists, each in service dress blue uniform and joined by family members:

Alcantar; Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Bradley A. Corr II, assigned to Surgical Company Bravo; Naval Aircrewman (Tactical Helicopter) 1st Class Calder L. Epes, assigned to Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 41 (HSM 41); Culinary Specialist 1st Class Mark A. Gular, assigned to Coastal Riverine Squadron One (CRS 1); Electrician’s Mate 1st Class Christian Martinez, assigned to Assault Craft Unit 1 (ACU 1).

The central part of the RSOY program remained in place — a selection board of master chiefs, chaired by Kotz, who interviewed each of the five candidates to determine the top Sailor. Prior to the livestream, each of the finalists met virtually with the board to be tested and graded on their Navy and general military knowledge and

responses to questions on leadership, character and military bearing.

According to Kotz, the overarching goal of the process was to provide to McCollum a thorough briefing on all of the candidates with a focus on transparency. He said the board’s methodology and recommendations for the final selection is provided to give the Chief of Navy Reserve confidence that due diligence was completed in determining the final nomination.

During the live-stream event, before handing the presentation over to McCollum for his remarks, Kotz said the selection was no easy task. “The margin between these finalists was extremely thin,” he said.

“We didn’t have a final four this year in basketball, but we had a final five in the Navy Reserve,” McCollum said, also acknowledging the difficult task of selecting just one finalist. “You’re all winners today,” he said, adding that the finalists were a representation of the entire Navy Reserve team. “It’s a mosaic of your employers, of your neighbors, of your families, of your careers and of your sacrifice. And that’s what gives me significant excitement to know that the future of the Navy Reserve is in your hands and in what you represent.”

The culminating point of the ceremony in year’s past was when an envelope containing the name of the RSOY was handed to the admiral. With baited breath, an audience of board members, senior military leadership, distinguished visitors, family, friends and command representatives watched the emotionally constrained faces of each of the finalists sitting in a row before them. The five Sailors’ mixed feelings of anticipation, stress and excitement filled the auditorium.

This year, with only a camera in the room for an audience, McCollum delivered his line for effect. “May I have the envelope please?” he asked as Kotz handed him the RSOY nomination note.

With the finalists and

family members displayed in their own individual boxes on the stream, McCollum read the name.

Alcantar, from Salinas, California was officially announced as fiscal year 2019’s top Reserve enlisted Sailor.

After virtually accepting the award, Alcantar gave her remarks. “The competition on this board was incredible and I am truly humbled to have been selected as this year’s Navy Reserve Sailor of the Year,” she said. “Thank you to the Reserve Sailor of the Year team for making this board possible despite the effects of COVID-19. I hope I get the privilege to one day shake your hands in person. To my fellow candidates, it has been a true pleasure getting to know you. I wish there was a way to promote all five of us, because all of you are the epitome of a Navy chief and Navy leadership.”

McCollum closed with a challenge for each of the finalists to continue to excel in their own readiness as well as in supporting their own unit readiness. “You all have demonstrated your readiness through the tools the Navy has given you,” he said. “I would just ask that you continue to commit to that readiness challenge, so we can deliver to our nation

whenever and wherever our Navy asks our Navy Reserve fighting force warriors to go.”

Usually presented in person, but this year through the mail, each finalist will receive a Lone Sailor statue and other gifts in honor of their achievement. A Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal will also be formally presented to each finalist by their respective commands once they are able to return to their units. Alcantar also received a statue and medal, but was distinguished among her peers with another virtual ceremony — promotion to chief petty officer, May 20. 🇺🇸

HM1 BRADLEY CORR



AWF1 AMANDA ALCANTAR



AWF1C CALDER EPES



CS1 MARK GULAR



EM1 CHRISTIAN MARTINEZ



Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Elmo Zumwalt and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Jack Whittet initiated the Sailor of the Year program in 1972 to recognize outstanding Atlantic and Pacific Fleet Sailors. The program was later expanded to honor the top shore and Reserve force Sailors of the Year.

MARINE CORPS PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. BRIAN BUCKWALTER.



# WITH RSOY AWC AMANDA ALCANTAR

BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 2ND CLASS NANCY diBENEDETTO

**N**ow officially known as Chief Naval Aircrewman (Mechanical) Amanda Alcantar, the Salinas, California native is hitting the ground running as the newest Reserve Sailor of the Year. As a nurse in her civilian career the COVID-19 environment has kept her busy at home, but as the Navy requires, she supports VR-58's medium lift squadron mission, operating three C-40A aircraft, providing airlift logistics support to combatant commanders worldwide.

As a leading petty officer for 31 Sailors, Alcantar currently serves as a loadmaster instructor. Her "lead by example" approach to qualifications have not only made her a C-40A platform subject matter expert, but also a role model for others. As a Reservist balancing a civilian nursing and naval career, she found time to earn a master of science in nursing and a master of business administration joint degree from Jacksonville University.

The TNR staff talked with Alcantar about her selection as the FY19 RSOY, what it means to her, and her plans for the future. Here's what she had to say.

## How did you feel when your name was announced?

The feeling of having your name called to win such an incredible nomination is indescribable. The competition was unbelievable and to be honest, I didn't feel like I had a chance of winning going into this competition. For me, winning was more than just a promotion. I wanted to represent Commander Naval Air Force and my squadron, the Sunseekers of VR-58, to the best of my ability. The Sailors at my squadron deserve the recognition for their hard work and sacrifice, so this nomination is about them just as much as it is about me.

## How was the virtual experience of the ceremony?

I think there is a huge difference being in person instead of a virtual announcement. I was not able to be around the people who made all this possible and for me that hurt, and was the most difficult part.

## What do you think about your future in your new role as a Navy chief?

Being announced as the Navy Reserve Sailor of the Year has given me a platform that I hope to utilize to make a difference in the Navy Reserve. My goal is to inspire others to



Reserve Sailor of the Year Chief Naval Aircrewman (Mechanical) Amanda Alcantar in her last official photo as a first class petty officer; Alcantar in scrubs after her first tasking to a COVID-19 patient in her civilian career as a nurse; Alcantar at home during her chief pinning ceremony via a livestream event hosted on the Navy Reserve Facebook page. NAVY PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALCANTAR

become the best version of themselves and guide them into doing so. I plan to share my board process and experience with both the chief's and junior enlisted mess. I know that I still have so much to learn and I will forever remain humble throughout my naval career.

## How was the pinning ceremony and how did your family support you during this time?

My family is over the top excited and happy for me. They all know how much the Navy means to me and how much I give day in and day out for the Navy and those around me.

Unfortunately, I had to split up my pinning ceremony and cover ceremony. Only close friends and family were able to attend. I would have loved it if the Chiefs Mess of VR-58 were able to attend but they were only able to attend virtually. My family supported me since the very beginning. My mother and sister both live in Salinas and were able to watch virtually which was amazing. My cover ceremony is scheduled for late July in our hangar — which I am very excited for!

## As RSOY, how will your new role affect your leadership style?

I hope to continue making an impact for all the Sailors around me, those who have heard about me and those I've never meet. I'll tell you what, I am not a good public speaker nor am I good at interviews. Yet, the Navy was able to bring out my weaknesses and make me a better person. I hope to make an impact on Sailors who feel like they are not good at certain things or feel weak in certain areas. I've never been more of an advocate of the saying "get comfortable being uncomfortable."

Mentorship is vital to the Navy and the success of our Sailors. Mentorship has been an important part of my growth while in the Navy. I have been fortunate to work along side some great leaders who took the time to teach and guide me so that I may learn what processes and principles help me and my Sailors to reach the Navy's goals as well as

my own. Every day we are given an opportunity to mentor our Navy's future and we must maximize this opportunity and not take it for granted. In the future, I will continue to communicate with my Sailors and support their growth both in and out of the Navy by helping them establish and achieve realistic goals while providing positive and constructive feedback for their development.

## How has COVID-19 affected your civilian and Reserve careers?

As a nurse, we deal with COVID-19 in different aspects than most other hospitalizations. For example, in the hospital, COVID-19 patients are not able to have any visitors. This can be a lonely and depressing time for these people who are not able to see the ones they love in such a scary time of their life. For me, it's my job to be there for these patients during times like this to make them feel like they are not alone.

In the Navy, VR-58 and many of the other C-40 squadrons have recently been the workhorse of the Navy with regard to transportation. Right now, with the travel ban, military members are only able to travel by military air. We have supported the movement of medical personal as well as Sailors just graduating boot camp and needing to get to their next duty station. Prior to the ban of healthcare workers supporting Reserve units, I was actively involved in the scheduling of these missions.

## What does serving in the Navy mean to you?

Serving in the Navy has changed my life. To be honest, I don't know where I would be without the Navy. The Navy has taught me to be tough, to persevere and to become the best version of myself. There are endless opportunities in the Navy that you must not be afraid to take. Because of the Navy I have been able to achieve a higher education, travel the world, and build the greatest relationships. ✚

# NAVY CYBER REINFORCEMENTS

RESERVE CYBER TEAM DELIVERS EXPERTISE  
IN THE BATTLE FOR CYBER DOMINANCE



BY LT. ROBBY MOOK, U.S. TENTH FLEET RESERVE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

When Justin Eitel joined the Navy Reserve in 2015, he came with years of Navy experience as a contractor working on the Navy Marine Corps Intranet initiative. In his new role as a cryptologic technician, Eitel found a way to put his prior-skills in managing the implementation of hardware to work under a new perspective — as a warfighter.

“I wanted to do the ‘cyber effects’ stuff,” recalls Eitel, now a cryptologic technician 1st class. “That’s when I looked into Reserve opportunities and saw it could get me right back where I wanted to be.”

Since graduating from CT “A” school, Eitel has witnessed the information warfare community’s rapid growth as others like him have stepped up to meet an ever-increasing demand for Reserve capacity in cyberspace. “When I first enlisted there were about 200 CTNs (Sailors in the cryptologic technician networks rating) in the Reserve,” he said. “Now it’s doubled to more than 400.”

Eitel recently witnessed another important evolution in the Navy’s Reserve cyber community, when he and 50 of his shipmates became the inaugural members of the Navy’s first Reserve cyber defense unit. The Cyber Defense Activity 64 Detachment 1 (NR CDA-64 Det 1) was commissioned with orders to defend Navy networks and improve overall network security by implementing preventative measures, as well as to respond to suspected cyber incidents.

Information Warfare community leaders inaugurated the new unit during a ceremony at Navy Operational Support Center Baltimore in March. “More than ever, we as a Navy need to leverage our Reservists’ skill sets to defend against advanced adversary cyber, cryptologic and electronic warfare capabilities,” said Rear Adm. James Butler, Deputy Commander of U.S. Fleet Cyber Command, who presided over the inauguration ceremony. “As the first Reserve detachment for CDA-64, you are on the front lines of that mission.”

U.S. Fleet Cyber Command/U.S. Tenth Fleet, the Navy component of U.S. Cyber Command, mans, trains and equips 40 cyber teams supporting the Cyber Mission Force, the action arm of USCYBERCOM. These teams defend against cyber attacks, conduct military cyber operations, defend the Department of Defense information networks, and provide analytic and planning support to combat missions.

The new Reserve unit supports the active duty CDA-64 command, which is one of six subordinate commands under Cryptologic Warfare Group SIX (CWG-6). Sailors in the Reserve unit like Eitel are assigned to specific teams, but are also trained to fill any active component manning gaps.

One of the first tasks given to Capt. Christopher Isakson, commanding officer of the Reserve CWG-6 unit, was to establish the manning levels of his workforce. Currently the staff includes three officers and 48 enlisted Sailors, but Isakson says there is more work to be done.

“We’re executing national leadership’s strategy by establishing the first Reserve unit dedicated to a truly unified information warfare mission for CTN, IT (Information Systems Technician, and IS (Intelligence Specialist) ratings,” he said. “We anticipate additional Reserve units will be created in the near future around the country.”

Two of the primary responsibilities of the unit is to assess the security of networks and recommend changes, and to investigate and assess breaches of security when they occur.

“We don’t fix or change anything about the network,” said Cryptologic Technician 1st Class Alicia Sutliff, one of the Reserve Sailors on Isakson’s team. “Our job is to write up packages of recommendations to protect the network. If an intrusion has already happened we investigate who, what, when, where and how to further protect from future occurrences.”

Sutliff, who brings seven years of active duty cyber experience to the team, describes her units work as “parachuting experts in.” She explains that the Reserve team is unique with its mixture of active duty, Reserve and civilian experience. “The knowledge you learn from one is directly applicable to the other,” she said. “Based on the Navy and private sector experience the Sailors in this unit have, we can take on a new set of challenges as they come in. Maybe the active duty will have something they’re not familiar with, we might have the skills to solve the problem. They don’t have to outsource the issue.”

However, Lt. Cmdr. Trulea Craig, officer in charge of the unit, says the dynamic nature of cyber threats means training is an ongoing requirement. “This warfare domain is rapidly evolving and isn’t constrained by the laws of physics,” said Craig. “It’s a challenge to operate in an enduring conflict that will never go away.”

Ensuring CWG-6 Reservists have the full range of skills to effectively collaborate with the active side takes an enormous amount of training. Members of the new unit are required to complete a rigorous curriculum before they are operational, including an eight week long intermediate cyber course. The amount of training required is a reason Reserve Sailors assigned to the unit are issued five year orders instead of the usual three.

To Sutliff, the ongoing training requirement is a good thing. “We’re putting sailors in a position where they’re learning new things,” she said. “Active duty is comfortable picking up one of our Reserve sailors because they know they can do the job.” Her advice to people thinking of joining? “Come willing to learn. There’s a lot of training, but once you get through that, the mission part is really fun.”

Sailors interested in learning more about joining the Reserve cyber warfare mission should contact Craig at [trulea.m.craig@navy.mil](mailto:trulea.m.craig@navy.mil). ✦

# SURGEMAIN

## RIGHT SKILLS RIGHT TIME RIGHT PLACE

BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 1ST CLASS JEFFREY HANSHAW,  
LT. NATHALIE BEHN AND LT. MATTHEW MONTGOMERY

**W**hen the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) crew asked for Reserve support during a Carrier Incremental Availability in November 2019, 26 Reserve Sailors in various engineering ratings and ranks from 18 different Reserve units across the nation answered the call, providing over 365 man-days of maintenance support.

“Mighty IKE” leadership later asked for additional support during an underway exercise in January 2020, and a four-man Reserve Sailor team formed and went underway with the ship’s crew within 72 hours.

In March, Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) authorized leave for shipyard personnel who fell under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) “high risk” category tied to the COVID-19 virus. With up to 25% of the production workforce unable to report to work, shipyards incurred a backlog that could result in delays in returning ships to the fleet. To help clear the backlog, the Navy is mobilizing nearly 1,600 Reservists to support aircraft carrier and submarine maintenance starting in July.

All of the Reservists mentioned above are part of the Navy’s Surge Maintenance, or SurgeMain, program. Established in 2005, SurgeMain has 2,440 Reserve Sailors across 75 units. Created to augment the Navy’s organic civilian shipyard workforce in times of need, these Sailors have technical and trade backgrounds that allow them to have an immediate impact.

In fiscal year 2019 alone, SurgeMain Sailors cumulatively devoted approximately 15,000 days of focused support to naval shipyards. These Sailors are ready to mobilize anywhere, at any time, to provide direct support to the fleet by supporting Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) mission priority: On-time delivery of ships and submarines.

“Our Sailors are electricians, pipe fitters, sheet metal workers, plumbers, hydraulic technicians, mechanics, machinists, carpenters, welders and more,” said Capt. Michael P. MacLellan, SurgeMain’s national director. “By far, SurgeMain is NAVSEA’s largest and most successful Reserve program and has gone from an unfunded pilot to one of the largest programs in the Navy Reserve.”

SurgeMain was the brainchild of retired Capt. Chuck Fidler, former NAVSEA Navy Reserve Engineering Duty program manager, and was originally created to help mitigate the decline of shipyard maintenance infrastructure.

“The objective of the program was to provide depot-level skilled workers during peak workload periods without impacting Naval Shipyard mission funding,” said Fidler. “Ultimately, the success of SurgeMain not only resulted in the Navy gaining a valuable and flexible ship maintenance capability, as reflected in our motto, ‘Right Skills, Right Time, Right Place,’ but also saved the officer and enlisted Reserve engineering communities from near extinction and instead enabled a solid career path for both.”

Rear Adm. Alma Grocki, SurgeMain’s first national director, former Director of Fleet Maintenance, U.S. Pacific Fleet and NAVSEA Deputy Chief of Staff for Reserve Affairs, had many legal and logistical hurdles during the program’s creation. One such hurdle involved the labor unions’ initial concerns.

“They wanted to know if Reservists would be taking their jobs and doing work they should be paid to do,” she said. “This was a very valid concern, so we had to structure the program so SurgeMain Sailors were only coming into shops that were maxed out in utilization of their own shop folks, maxed out in overtime, and couldn’t get the work done any other way.”

Initially, only journeyman-level Sailors were allowed into the shipyards, using skillsets learned in their civilian jobs.

“The program is now much more inclusive of different skill levels and skillsets than it was when we first started,” said Grocki.

This effort eventually evolved into post-apprentice opportunities and eventually, as the shipyard program managers realized how valuable these Sailors had become, evolved into today’s SurgeMain program, which includes the SurgeMain Training Candidate (STC) program.

SurgeMain candidates are Sailors within the engineering ratings who are allowed to work as apprentices within the shipyards, typically while on Annual Training (AT). This allows them to gain valuable in-rating experience and get qualifications signed off by program managers so they can eventually become journeymen.

“SurgeMain Sailors often bring new perspectives to problem solving as well as best practices from their civilian experience at a significant cost savings,” said Vice Adm. Robin Braun, former Chief of Navy Reserve, in a statement before the Senate Subcommittee on Defense in 2016. “The value SurgeMain Sailors add to the ability of Navy shipyards to improve fleet readiness has prompted (the) Navy to increase its investment to RC (Reserve Component) SurgeMain manpower.”



**By far, SurgeMain is NAVSEA’s largest and most successful Reserve program and has gone from an unfunded pilot to one of the largest programs in the Navy Reserve.**

The most recent mobilization to support Naval shipyards will be the first time SurgeMain has activated such a large cadre of personnel at one time — a testament to how far the program has come since 2005.

“We’re excited to mobilize and execute the mission for which we’ve been training,” said MacLellan. “This deployment presents a valuable opportunity for our Sailors to hone their skills, contribute to our national defense and allow us to gain valuable lessons you can only learn during mass mobilization.”

SurgeMain Reservists started arriving at their respective shipyards in phases in early July, with most of the Sailors scheduled to be on-site by early Fall. Sailors will be on one-year mobilization orders which may be extended or curtailed should circumstances change. The Reserve support will be provided to maintenance facilities across the country including Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine; Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, Virginia; Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility in Bremerton, Washington; and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

“We have been methodical in how we planned this mobilization,” said Vice Adm. Tom Moore, NAVSEA’s commander. “We did not mobilize anyone who already works in the ship maintenance or construction field, and we worked to place people into shipyards where they have previously drilled so there was a built-in comfort factor for both the Reservist and the shipyard personnel.”

Once at their designated shipyard, Sailors will abide by all COVID-19 specific policies. These include conducting a daily self-screening and undergoing a temperature check prior to accessing the shipyard, wearing all required personal protective equipment (PPE) and following the same social distancing measures as the rest of the shipyard workforce.

“We are laser-focused minimizing the spread while maximizing the mission,” said MacLellan. “This mobilization will strengthen the partnership between the shipyard workforce and Reserve community and help deliver combat-ready ships back to the fleet.”

## SPIKE

It can be a herculean task to maintain a ship as big as a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. Take the Nimitz-class as an example: with an overall length of 1,092 ft and a full-load displacement of over 100,000 tons, the Nimitz-class ships were the largest warships built until 2017, when the Ford-class entered the fleet. Many times, the task calls for more skilled hands than the ship has on board, which could mean a return from sea, an unplanned dock in port, and lost time protecting the world’s oceans. That’s when the Navy calls on a team of Sailors it has come to call on more and more ever since its inception 15 years ago, SurgeMain.

Case in point: The USS Eisenhower, nicknamed “Mighty Ike,” recently asked for additional support during an underway exercise in January 2020. A SurgeMain Production Team on Ike, called SPIKE, was expeditiously formed and four SurgeMain Sailors went underway with the ship’s crew within 72 hours. SPIKE is a pilot program implemented to test how fast SurgeMain can push orders for Reservists to support not only the Ike’s engineering team, but the strike group repairs as well.

“I am ecstatic that our SPIKE team was able to recently provide valuable support to the ship while underway,” said Capt. Michael Monaghan, Deputy National Director for the SurgeMain program.

“This is truly a testament to the cooperation of our Sailors, their families, our NAVSEA Military Programs Office, Navy Operational Support Centers, and all others involved who made this evolution happen on short notice.”

Last November, Cmdr. Frank Gasperetti, Ike’s Chief Engineer (CHENG), requested SurgeMain Sailors come aboard while the ship went underway. This experiment was founded on the ability to surge Sailors through the Battle Force Individual Mobilization Augmentee program to other ships in order to knock down the Casualty Report (CASREP) repair items on other ships. Just as importantly, the team also transferred those skillsets to Ike’s organic crew.

“These four SurgeMain Sailors are not only supporting the heavy workloads in my divisions by helping with engineering trouble calls and supporting maintenance, but they also bring industrial standards to the deck plates and teach trade skills to my Sailors,” said Gasperetti. “These four SurgeMain Sailors provided 555 total man-hours of support, and 135 man-hours of on-the-job training and mentoring during their two weeks aboard.”

Lt. Nathalie Behn served as the SPIKE detachment officer in charge during the evolution, while Electrician’s Mate 1st Class Misael PerrezCarrion, from SurgeMain Puerto Rico supported the Ike’s electrical division.

PerrezCarrion enlisted in the active duty Navy in 2000 and transferred to the Navy Reserve in 2004. He was mobilized for one year with the Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Group in Kuwait and was a part of the Expeditionary Training Group unit for several years, transferring to the SurgeMain Puerto Rico unit in 2015.

## These four SurgeMain Sailors have provided 555 total man-hours of support, and 135 man-hours of on-the-job training and mentoring during their two weeks aboard.

He was also aboard Ike in November 2019 for three weeks, supporting the ship’s Carrier Incremental Availability and then again during its exercise in January 2020, where he worked on daily troubleshooting activities to support the heavy workload of the electrical division. His work at rewinding electrical motor coils of a ventilation motor for the pump room kept Ike from returning to port. This motor removes JP-5 and refrigerant fumes out of the compartment making it safe for personnel to enter, work and take readings in the space.

Chief Hull Technician Sean Moore, from SurgeMain Green Bay, assisted the repair division during the ship’s Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX), a rehearsal each Carrier Strike Group performs before departing for deployment. Moore joined the Navy in 1986 as a Hull Maintenance Technicians. During his 10 years on active duty, he served on Ike from 1990-1996 as a repair lead petty officer and locksmith.

After a 10-year break in service, Moore rejoined as a Reservist and member of SurgeMain Green Bay. He brings 30 years of welding and Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) experience to the table, filling a technical need that is currently not available on board. In his civilian life, he is a master welder and Level 2 NDT examiner.

“I wish I could go on deployment with them and get a chance to increase overall shop knowledge to handle any job at any time,” said Moore. “Training them as much as possible while answering the call for their daily mission requirements was a great reward and I’d do it again, anytime.”

Moore trained Sailors on metallurgy, aluminum and other welding techniques. He troubleshot and repaired multiple equipment issues, including a plasma cutter and a band saw, while also supervising the repair of ladders leading to the flight deck. All of this increased shop operations and helped maintain a safe work environment for Sailors. Moore is currently conducting daily weld training for junior Hull Technicians as well as cross-rating training for Machinery Repairmen within the repair division who wish to learn how to stick weld.

The fourth Reservist on-board, Engineman 1st Class Dayayne Schell, was assigned to Ike’s Auxiliary Division. Currently with SurgeMain Manchester, he joined the Navy Reserve in 2002 as an Aviation Support Mechanic before



ATLANTIC OCEAN — Electrician Mate 1st Class Misael PerrezCarrion conducts testing on electrical motor coils for a ventilation motor for pump room aboard the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), Jan. 25, 2020.

NAVY PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST SEAMAN BRENNEN EASTER



joining the SurgeMain community in 2010. He brings more than 20 years of industrial and heavy equipment experience and out of the box trouble shooting skills to the deck plates. In his civilian life, Schell works as a lead mechanic for crane maintenance at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

“I truly enjoy working with my shipmates in A-Division,” said Schell. “This is my first time underway on a naval ship since I joined the Navy and I truly appreciate this experience and would like to support A-Division during deployment.”

During his time aboard, he worked on various trouble calls replacing heaters, pressure valves on dishwashers in aft scullery, supported zone inspections, and mentored Sailors on identifying dry-well sockets, safety wire installations and operation on solenoid valves.

As of this writing, Behn is still in her Engineering Duty Qualification Program (EDQP) and on track to become a qualified EDO. Originally from Heidelberg,

Germany, she joined the NAVSEA SurgeMain Program in 2016 as a Direct Commission Officer, holding a master’s degree in mechanical engineering. She is part of one of the largest of the 77 SurgeMain units, SurgeMain Norfolk. There she serves as the Command Fitness Leader, Shipyard Project Officer, and the only qualified Shipyard Surface Ship Fire Safety Officer in the NAVSEA Reserve program. On drill weekends, she takes Sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS George H. W. Bush (CVN 77) during dry-docking periods for fire safety prevention inspections.

With her unique background, Behn brought a fresh look to Ike’s daily engineering department tasks. She performed daily walk-throughs in the engineering spaces — accompanying Gasperetti or the Engineering Division Master Chief to check Material Condition Zebra settings during General Quarters with the ship’s Fire Marshall. She also helped standardized Ike’s Repair Locker Zebra cards.

Behn was delighted to reunite with one of Ike’s crew,

Machinist Mate 1st Class Xavier Sanchez, formally a Reserve SurgeMain Norfolk Sailor. Behn personally managed his Reserve-to-active duty transfer package. “It was great seeing him again and watch him excel in the Navy,”

Overall, Ike benefited immensely from the SPIKE team’s contributions, which helped the aircraft carrier maintain its operational readiness. The ship is currently underway on deployment, and the efforts of the SPIKE team were truly a win for the “Mighty Ike.”

“As the SPIKE team officer-in-charge truly appreciated this opportunity to learn from some of the best Sailors in the fleet and bring the SurgeMain program to support their maintenance needs,” Behn said. “That was my second time underway with the Ike and knowing we were a part of a team whose mission it is to launch and recover airplanes at sea, is truly amazing to think about. I would deploy with them anytime!” ✂

## AT SEA WITH IKE

Left, SurgeMain Chief Hull Technician Sean Moore observes Hull Technician 3rd Class Emilia Flores as she grinds a piece of metal aboard the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69).

Above, members of the SurgeMain team pose on the Ike’s deck with Chief Engineer, Cmdr. Frank Gasperetti (center). From left to right: Chief Hull Technician Sean Moore, Lt. j.g. Nathalie Behn, Gasperetti, Engineman 1st Class Dawayne Schell, and Electrician’s Mate 1st Class Misael PerezCarrion.

NAVY PHOTOS BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST SEAMAN BRENNEN EASTER



# GUARDIANS OF THE PAST

BY CAPT. ERIC PIHL, NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND RESERVE



For the past 29 years, an elite group of Reserve Sailors attached to Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) have crisscrossed the globe to document and record fleet oral history for future generations.

Playing an integral part of our Navy by influencing its numerous traditions, missions and policies, the NHHC strengthens the Navy’s effectiveness by collecting, preserving, analyzing and interpreting the service’s hard-earned experiences. As the institutional memory of the Navy, NHHC has a small footprint of active duty enlisted and officers working alongside 30 Navy Reservists who serve as fleet historians.

Since 1991, these Reserve fleet historians have staffed the Navy Combat Documentation Unit (NCDU). The Reserve team — made up of civilian pilots, scientists, state federal employees, high school teachers, lab technicians and even a part-time stand-up comic — provides routine and mobilization support in documenting both combat and peacetime operations.

of significant events and operations that occur during a given year. The Reserve team ensures the activities of the commands will become a permanent detailed part of the Navy’s historical record.

“We make history relevant — understanding the past, informing the present, and guiding our decisions about the future,” said Capt. Bryon T. Smith, a former NCDU commanding officer.

Naval history is gathered and recorded, then filed at NHHC, and eventually housed in the National Archives. An abstract is written to facilitate pulling data in the future. The daunting, but thrilling goal is to gather first hand information that historians or leadership would want to know 20-30 years from now.

For example, fleet historians aboard the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN-75), focused on the ship’s recent Arctic operations; the first time in decades a U.S. carrier has gone above the Arctic Circle.

Having historians on scene is important because “each

**We make history relevant — understanding the past, informing the present, and guiding our decisions about the future.**

Because the mission is quite dynamic, unit members often travel to far off places such as Jordan, the Philippines, Sicily and Norway, sometimes on urgent assignments. For example, an away team recent flew to Oslo, Norway to catch USS Iwo Jima (LHD-7) to document preparations for operating in cold weather and large seas, after almost 20 years focusing on operations in the hot, flat seas of the Arabian Gulf.

“This is no ‘Sleepy Hollow’ assignment,” said Retired Rear Adm. Samuel J. Cox, who today serves as the NHHC director in a civilian role. “But, hey, riding around on strike groups is a lot more fun than sitting at a desk.”

These Reserve historians also facilitate the completion of the annual Command Operations Reports (CORs) assigned to their fleet or command, which include Fleet Forces, Submarine and Naval Surface Forces, several numbered fleets, Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, Naval Air Forces and SEAL Team 17. CORs provide a chronology

interviewee had a different take on the Arctic operations,” said Caitlin Nowak, NHHC’s Deputy Curator Branch Head. “Supply Officers delved into getting the right equipment, food and other supplies; the Commanding Officer spoke to the research performed and the numerous baseball bats purchased to break up potential ice build-up; and the commander of the air group got into how much the elements taxed the flight line crews.”

Sometimes it is hard to know exactly what information will be used in the future, while other nuggets like baseball bats to break ice is easy to flag as memorable. And being on the team also serves up unique memories for the members.

“This was my first time on a carrier and learning how to get around, reading the bull’s eyes, was critical,” Nowak said. “It took a bit to acclimate to the sounds of the jet blast deflectors and catapults, often running in the middle of the night, and to the lack of sunlight. Overall, it was a fantastic and memorable experience, one I’ll never forget.”



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