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Change of Command | August 4, 2020





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CAPTAIN'S CORNER

By retired Capt. Todd Abrahamson

Over the last three years, I have really enjoyed using this Captain's Corner as a means to get essential news out, and I hope that information has been of help to you. However, rather than impressing upon you the importance of personal responsibility, physical distancing or staying in the know right now, I want to take this opportunity in my last column to say *grazie mille* to each and every one of you for your support. I am grateful to have served alongside the outstanding personnel assigned to NSA Naples and its tenant commands, and to have built and grown positive relationships with the Sailors, civilians and Italians here. Leading NSA Naples, living in Italy and getting to experience *la bella vita* has truly been one of the highlights of my career and an amazing experience for my family. I am glad to have been here.

Now, I would like to hand over this column – as well as the other responsibilities and privileges that come with my position – to Capt. James Stewart, commanding officer of NSA Naples. I am confident in the continual success of this base under his leadership. Please show him the same extraordinary support you have given me during my tenure. With that, *arrivederci* Team Naples and *benvenuto* Capt. Stewart.



By Capt. James Stewart, commanding officer of NSA Naples

I would like to start my first message in the Captain's Corner by thanking the NSA Naples community for such a warm welcome. My family and I are thrilled to be in Naples, and we appreciate how you have already made us feel at home. During my turnover with Capt. Abrahamson, I have really enjoyed seeing all the departments,

tenant commands, official organizations and private clubs at work. It is very clear NSA Naples is populated by a lot of truly incredible people. I am honored to assume command of a base with such a dedicated and vibrant community.

Capt. Abrahamson was tremendously dedicated to prioritizing the needs of our service members, civilian and Italian employees, and families, and I am committed to continuing this pursuit. Each and every one of you – whether you are serving at NSA Naples, 6th Fleet, Region, or any of our other departments and tenant commands – play an active role in the advancement of our naval operations in the Naples area and in the region as a whole. Our daily efforts here, with the support of our families, make accomplishing that mission possible. So, it is my intention to ensure your personal success, as well.

Lastly and most importantly, I encourage you to have fun. Our jobs and many aspects of our service may be challenging, but with that comes reward. This can mean embracing the mission with an enthusiastic attitude, taking advantage of traveling around Italy and Europe, or enjoying the great facilities and events available through NSA Naples. For my family and me, we are particularly excited to learn about the history and experience the culture of our host city. No matter how you do it though, I urge you to enjoy your time here.

I hope to meet many of you soon, and I look forward to working with you all over the next few years! ☀



NSA NAPLES HOLDS CHANGE OF COMMAND

By Naval Support Activity Naples Public Affairs

NAPLES, Italy – Naval Support Activity (NSA) Naples held a change of command ceremony in the hangar onboard Capodichino, Aug. 4.

Capt. Todd “Jack” Abrahamson was relieved by Capt. James “J-Stew” Stewart as commanding officer of NSA Naples.

Guest speaker Rear Adm. Scott Gray, commander, Navy Region Europe, Africa, Central, praised the achievements of NSA Naples and its personnel under Abrahamson’s leadership.

“Despite the challenges presented by the complexity of this base, Jack Abrahamson has done great things for Team Naples during his time here,” said Gray. “From community engagement, to supporting tenant commands and visiting units, to morale and the health and well-being of our force, Naval Support Activity Naples, under Jack Abrahamson’s leadership, has continually and consistently answered our nation’s call with dedication, a sense of urgency and a positive can-do attitude.”

During his speech, Abrahamson thanked and credited the personnel onboard NSA Naples with his success during his three years onboard.

“We are fortunate that we get to live in Italy, a host nation of our partners and allies. This incredible team, made up of Italians, civilians and our U.S. Navy personnel, is

exceptionally unique. It has been a true joy to lead and work alongside each and every one of you, and we could not have accomplished anything without the teamwork we enjoy onboard this installation.”

Abrahamson assumed command of NSA Naples in August 2017 and led the NSA Naples Operations department’s support of 3,258 air terminal flight evolutions involving the movement of 4.9 million pounds of cargo and the transit of 34,550 passengers and multiple distinguished visitors. Additionally, he led his Public Works department in significant risk to mission reductions on the operational base platform, including the execution of significant fire protection distribution repairs, a base wide fire alarm reporting system, multiple roof replacements, and repairs to air terminal and administration facilities. He drove significant improvements in energy resiliency, winning the Secretary of the Navy Gold Energy Award each year and the Regional Building Energy Manager of the Year award.

Abrahamson also demonstrated success when the NSA Naples Security department received an “outstanding” score of 96% during the 2019 Final Evaluation Problem (FEP) inspection, the highest score ever received within the entire Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) enterprise, and when the installation Emergency Operations Center received a FEP readiness score of 94.7%, the third-highest score within the

CNIC enterprise. He also led the charge to ensure the resumption of in port, pier-side helicopter flight deck operations onboard USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) after more than a decade without this capability, and developed a Joint Base Defense Plan with the Italian Air Force for the first time in the installation's history.

"Providing support to NATO, 6th Fleet, afloat units in the Mediterranean, our 55 tenant commands and over 10,000 personnel is no easy feat," said Abrahamson. "It requires a lot of coordination, flexibility, patience and respect. Fortunately, the team here at NSA Naples is a cohesive unit of professionals dedicated to naval service. I couldn't be more proud."

Abrahamson previously served as a Blue Angel and flew the right wing position (#2) during the 2002 and 2003 show seasons. He also commanded Fleet Area Control Surveillance Facility from May 2010 to July 2012, served as the air officer aboard USS Nimitz (CVN 68) in 2012, and served as the executive assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs at the Pentagon from December 2014 to January 2017. Abrahamson has accumulated more than 3,600 flight hours and over 500 carrier arrested landings.

Abrahamson is a native of Santa Monica, California, and was commissioned in 1992 through Navy ROTC after receiving a degree in political science from UCLA. He was designated as a naval aviator in 1995.

Abrahamson now retires and moves to Washington, D.C., with his wife, Christine, and son, Luke.

Stewart, the new commanding officer, arrived in Naples after serving as the force inspector general for Commander, Naval Special Warfare, and previously serving as the commanding officer of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 15 and the deputy force readiness officer for Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. Stewart is a native of Suquamish, Washington, and was commissioned in 1997 through the Navy ROTC program after graduating from Seattle University with a degree in nursing. He was designated as a staff nurse. In 2000, Stewart re-designated to naval aviation and earned his wings as a naval aviator in August 2001.

"I am extremely humbled and honored to lead such an outstanding team on this incredible installation," said Stewart. "I am excited to see what we can accomplish moving forward." ✱



Capt. Todd A. Abrahamson, the departing commanding officer of U.S. Naval Support Activity (NSA) Naples, Italy, speaks during a change of command ceremony in the hangar onboard NSA Naples, Aug. 4, 2020. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Donovan K. Patubo)



Captain James Stewart

Commanding Officer of NSA Naples



Capt. Jim “J-Stew” Stewart is a native of Suquamish, Washington. He was commissioned through the NROTC program following his graduation from Seattle University in 1997 with a Bachelor of Science in nursing. Upon graduation, he was assigned to Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, California, as a staff nurse. In 2000, Capt. Stewart re-designated to naval aviation and earned his wings as a naval aviator in August 2001.

His first operational tour was flying H-46Ds with HC-11 based in San Diego, California, where he deployed aboard USS Tarawa (LHA 1) supporting Operations Southern Watch and Iraqi Freedom. He also earned his Fleet Officer of the Deck (OOD) Underway qualification. He then reported in 2005 to HSC-2 in Norfolk, Virginia, as an MH-60S instructor pilot to establish the East Coast MH-60S Fleet Replacement Squadron and serve as the assistant operations officer and maintenance officer. During his shore tour at HSC-2, Capt. Stewart deployed to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In 2009, Capt. Stewart retrained to the SH-60F/HH-60H and reported to the Dusty Dogs of HS-7 for his department head tour serving as the administration, safety, training, operations and maintenance officer. He deployed in May 2010 with USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Immediately following the deployment, he led the squadron's homeport change from Jacksonville, Florida, to Norfolk, Virginia, and the transition to the MH-60S as the Norfolk officer in charge.

Capt. Stewart reported to the world-famous Red Lions of HSC-15 in March 2014 as the executive officer. He assumed command of the Red Lions in June 2015 during the squadron's fly-off from its 10-month deployment with USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. He remained with the Red Lions until their deactivation in March 2017. Following command, Capt. Stewart has served as the deputy force readiness officer for Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, and as the force inspector general for Commander, Naval Special Warfare.

He is a graduate of the Naval War College and holds a master's degree in national security and strategic studies. His decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (2), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (2), Navy Achievement Medal (3), and various unit and service awards.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE NEW COMMANDING OFFICER

By Capt. James Stewart, commanding officer of NSA Naples

What message would you like to share with the personnel and/or families here at NSA Naples?

Jen and I are excited to join the Naples family. We have wanted to do an overseas tour from early on, but the timing never lined up during my career. We are very fortunate for this opportunity to be part of such a close community here in the greater Naples area. I will strive every day to positively impact our NSA Naples team and work to ensure the success of all the military, civilian, and host nation members and their families assigned here in Naples.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?

The best advice I have ever received is “that there is no such thing as good news or bad news. It’s just the news.” Without the label of “good” or “bad,” an emotional response is prevented. By treating it as just news, the team can easily move past reporting and on to solving the problem.

Of what accomplishment are you most proud?

Personally, I would have to say that my family and my children are the thing I am most proud of. I am continually impressed with their strength, resilience, character and compassion. It is important to focus on your family, and I think through our years of service we have kept that promise to ourselves.

Professionally, I am most proud of how we deactivated my squadron. With painstaking detail, we ensured that each and every Sailor was hand-detailed to a new command that would benefit them either personally and professionally. This job is all about the men and women that serve our country and their families that sacrifice alongside. It was my opportunity to make sure that I took care of all of them.

What are you most looking forward to about daily life in Naples?

I cannot wait to experience the culture of Naples. For the past six months, we have been reading and studying about the colorful and diverse culture of this wonderful city and are looking forward to getting outside the gate and taking advantage of the time we have been given here. From the museums, art and history to the street markets and restaurants, we are excited to get out and explore our new home.

What Italian food or meal are you excited to try?

The first thing Skipper Abrahamson and his wife, Chris, brought us in ROM was true Neapolitan pizza. It was incredible, and we now see why everyone claims that pizza from Naples is the best. That was quickly followed by amazing produce and buffalo mozzarella, also amazing. I realize this is only the tip of the iceberg, and we look forward to finding our favorite restaurants and markets in town.

Where are you most looking forward to visiting in Italy?

Our first goal is to explore this fantastic city. There is so much to see in our own backyard. We want to explore Pompeii, Mount Vesuvius and the Amalfi coast. From there, our list of places to visit is long. I think we will be challenged to see it all in the next three years. ☀



Retired Capt. Todd A. Abrahamson, former commanding officer of U.S. Naval Support Activity (NSA) Naples, and his family pose for a photo after a change of command ceremony in the hangar onboard NSA Naples, Aug. 4, 2020. During the ceremony, Abrahamson retired after 28 years of faithful service. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Donovan K. Patubo)



Naval Support Activity (NSA) Naples Commanding Officer Capt. James W. Stewart and his family pose for a photo after a change of command ceremony in the hangar onboard NSA Naples, Aug. 4, 2020. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Donovan K. Patubo)

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