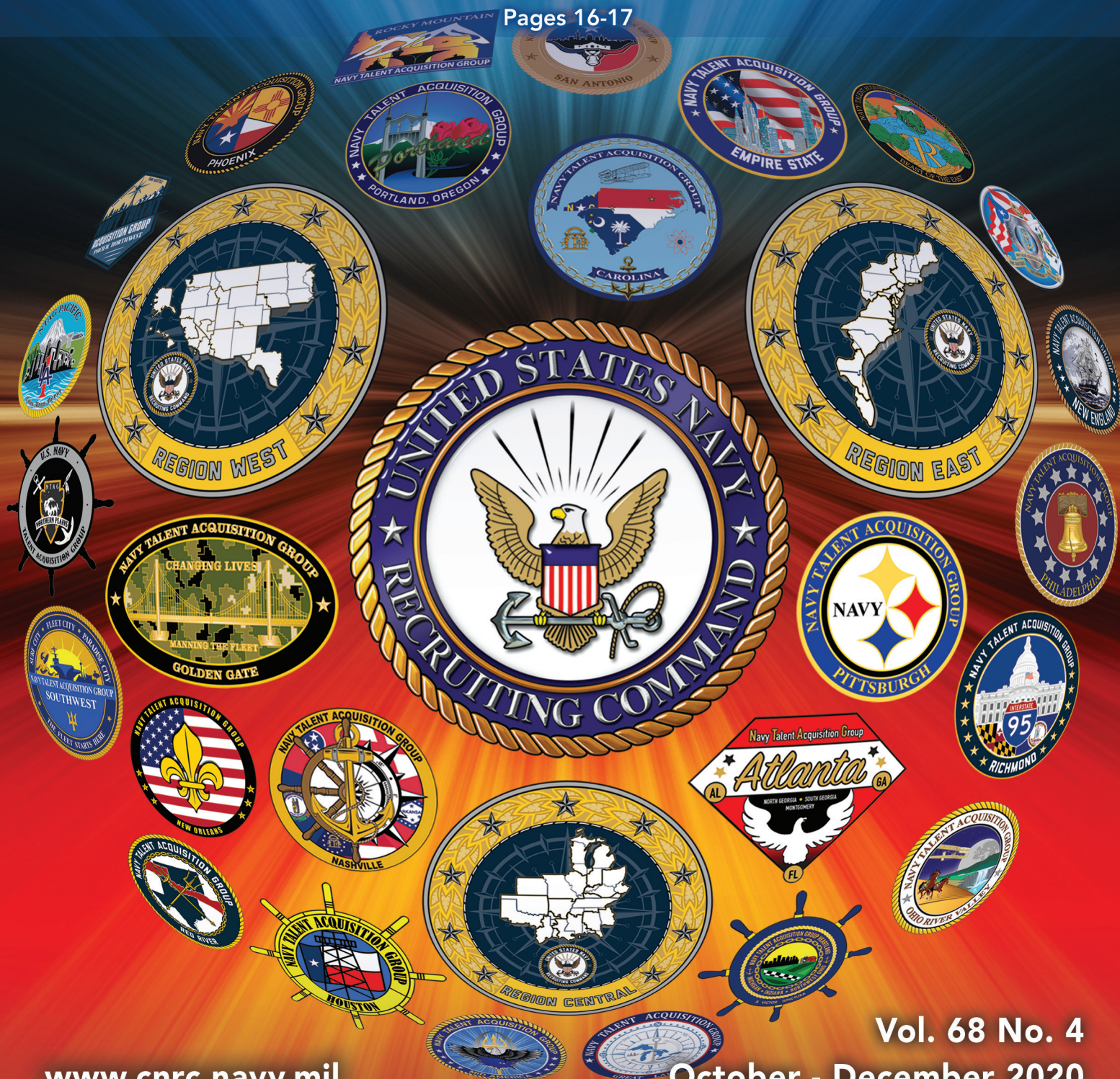


Transformation: Mission Complete

Pages 16-17



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Vol. 68 No. 4
October - December 2020

From the Admiral

Rear Admiral Dennis Velez
Commander, Navy Recruiting Command



Recruiting Nation!

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a safe and healthy holiday season.

One year ago, none of us could have predicted where we would be as a recruiting force today, or that a global pandemic would dramatically shape our business practices and interactions with prospects and future Sailors, not to mention our entire way of life. I am so proud of each and every one of you for your agility and positivity in the face of such unparalleled challenges in 2020.

You continue to exceed my expectations. Through virtual prospecting, video meetings, social media engagement, and other innovations, you each raised the bar and made our recruiting force stronger! Thanks to your hard work, we completed our recruiting transformation and now have transformed all 26 NRDs to NTAGs...an unprecedented undertaking for our enterprise!

As we look forward to the year ahead, I'm depending on each of you to ensure that the changes we've implemented through transformation are permanent. Now more than ever I am asking you to dig deep as we acclimate to a "new normal". I do not anticipate a major shift back to the way we were doing things, so please stay on course and maintain the creative and inventive spirit that has made us so successful in the face of this pandemic.

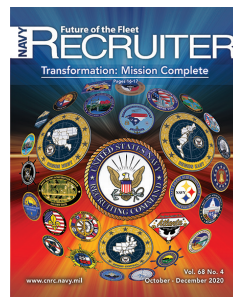
I hope that in the not-too-distant future I will be able to get out there and thank each and every one of you for the work you do day in and day out. Until then, I'm looking for your inputs, good ideas, and best practices that will enable us to make mission in FY21. Your chain of command is listening and we all need your good ideas. Please reach out. I want our organization to excel and we can only do with your input and support. Thank you for everything you do.

May 2021 be our best year yet!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis Velez", with a long, sweeping underline.

Rear Adm. Dennis Velez

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FRONT COVER:

With the establishment of three regions and 26 Navy Recruiting Districts transformed into 26 Navy Talent Acquisition Groups, Navy Recruiting Command has successfully completed this very important mission (Photo illustration by Kim Hyback)



BACK COVER:

MEMPHIS, TN (January 4, 2021) – Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Deputy Commander, Navy Recruiting Command Region East, Captain Karen Jane Muntean, a coronavirus vaccination. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Elijah Newton)

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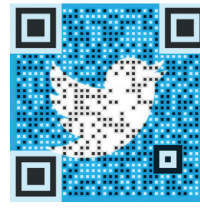
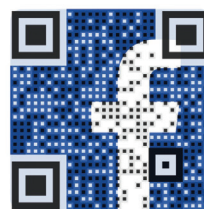
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Navy Recruiter encourages the submission of "Letters to the Editor" and articles expressing the opinion of individuals in the Navy recruiting community. All submissions must be signed. Send submissions to: elijah.g.leinaar@navy.mil



Navy Recruiting Completes Transformation Ahead Of Schedule

Story by Creative Writer Jordan Smith, Navy Recruiting Command Public Affairs

MILLINGTON, Tenn. — In December, Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) concluded the transformation of Navy Recruiting Districts (NRDs) into Navy Talent Acquisition Groups (NTAGs). What began in 2017 as a multi-year project — with an anticipated completion in 2023 — is now complete, making Navy's recruiting enterprise more agile and enhancing the way recruiters do business today.

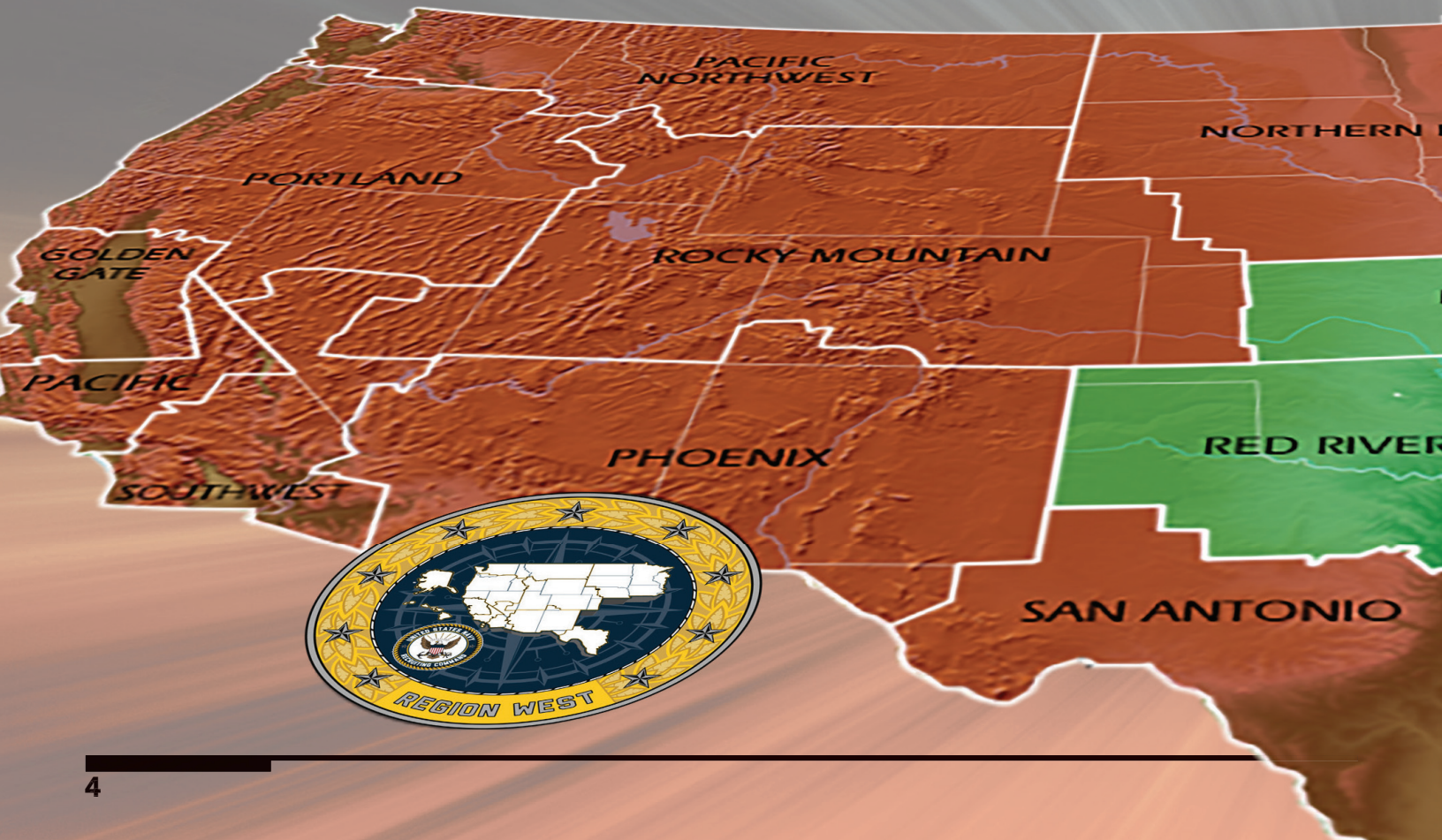
"I'm very proud of our recruiting team, how everyone came together under the unprecedented circumstances of 2020, to drive our transformation to the finish line," said Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, commander, NRC. "After seeing the success of our transformed NTAGs—particularly the success of our e-talent teams—I could see that our districts were capable of transforming on an accelerated timeline.

There was no better time than this year to wrap up our transformation, and I'm pleased to see our team's progress so far."

When the coronavirus pandemic struck earlier this year, NRC quickly adjusted to the new recruiting environment. Recruiters had already been shifting to a more streamlined way of doing business, but the process needed to be accelerated. After witnessing how well the transformed NTAGs were doing with their new organizational structure, upgraded technologies and utilization of e-talent teams during the initial months of the pandemic Velez, directed Navy's recruiting enterprise to accelerate the transition for the remaining districts by the end of 2020.

"Transformation has given NRC the flexibility to operate in any environment, whereas the legacy model wasn't as flexible as far as personnel manning and resources," said Cmdr. Sean Foster, commanding officer for NTAG Miami, which completed its transformation in October as part of the accelerated timeline.

Under the NTAG structure,



Navy recruiting has modernized and is more equipped to recruit in any environment.

"This transformation ensures Navy recruiting is more aligned with modern corporate America, and how they are doing things," said Senior Chief Mass Communication Specialist Sara Drake, director of Personnel Operations for NTAG Miami. "This new structure was needed to keep up with the times. Our Future Sailors and applicants are different now, and recruiting needed to adapt to that."

In addition to making Navy recruiting current with the times, transformation has changed how everyone works together.

"Everyone's dependent on each other under the NTAG structure," said Foster. "That creates a more cohesive and more unified command. It creates much more camaraderie and a better place to work in the long run where everyone feels like they're part of something bigger than themselves and working toward a very rewarding mission."

Despite a more flexible and adaptable recruiting force, the change has also resulted in more individual successes. While the old structure had one recruiter responsible for an applicant from beginning to end, the new structure places the right people in the right place to optimize success by playing their strengths.

"Operations Specialist 1st Class Vanessa Alvarado is a great example of a recruiter that was moved to assessing and turned into a superstar," said Cmdr. Lauren Majchrzak, commanding officer for NTAG Nashville, which transformed in October 2019. "She was the


CNRC National Assessor of the Year FY-19 and was advanced to First Class through the Meritorious Advancement Program (MAP)."

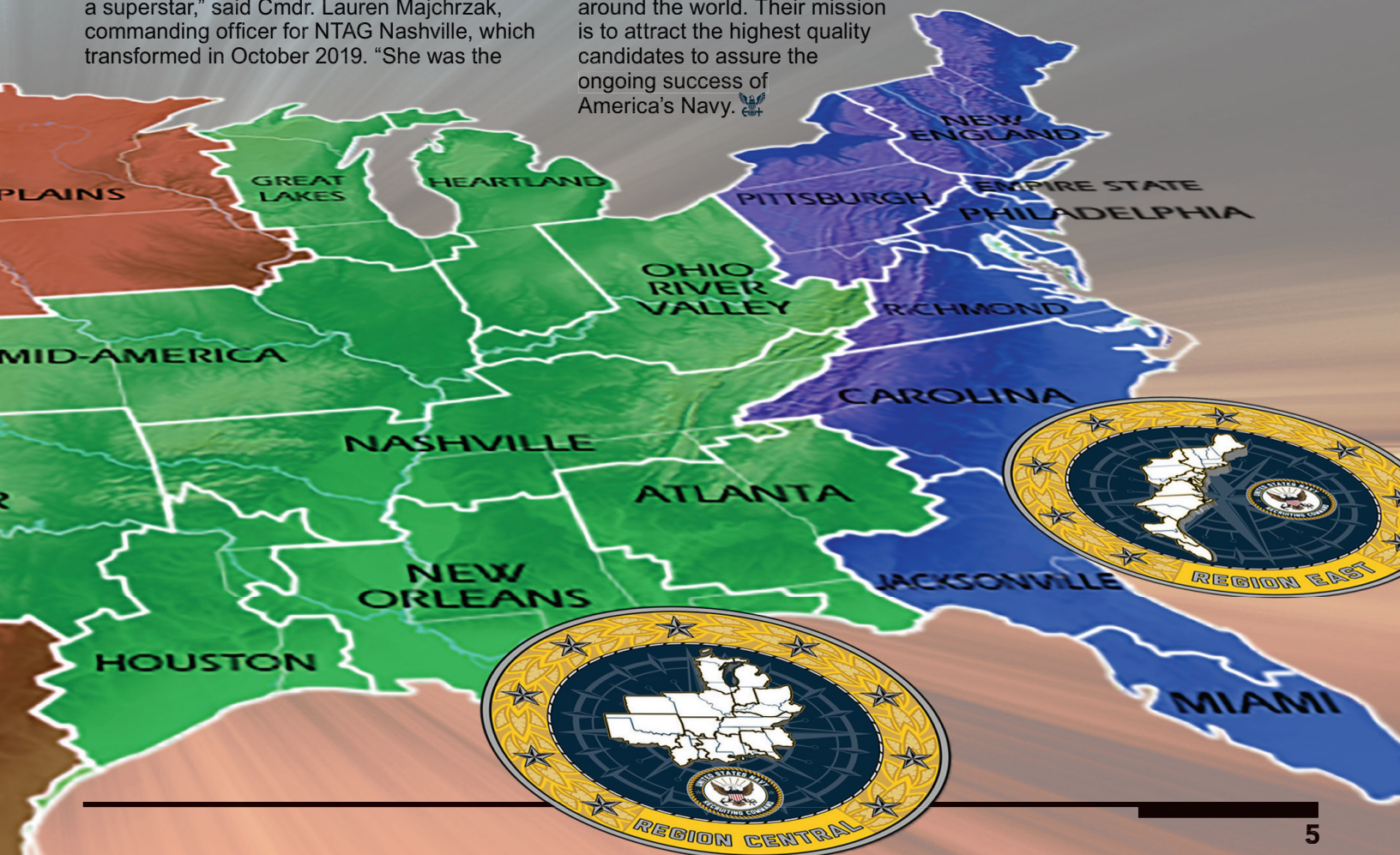
By focusing on one discipline, recruiters have the opportunity to master their domain, resulting in a more successful tour.

"We moved Chief Navy Counselor Shacara Washington to be the Discipline Director of Assessing," said Majchrzak. "She is doing awesome! She breaks down each applicant issue at MEPS (Military Entrance Processing Station) throughout the month at our production meeting, and has been a driving factor in our success. NTAG Nashville usually has 3-4 assessors convert at over 90% each month."

Despite the positive effects transformation has had, change of any kind is almost always greeted with some degree of friction, but a person's mindset can make all the difference.

"Transformation is what you make of it," said Drake. "We have a lot of entities, including myself, that have been doing this job for a long time, and to be honest with you, when I first heard about this, I was in the camp of 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it.' But once I embraced it and really understood it, I saw that it was actually working. I think the biggest thing is that we just need to be reminded to embrace change."

Navy Recruiting Command consists of a command headquarters, three Navy Recruiting Regions, 26 NTAGs and 64 Talent Acquisition Onboarding Centers (TAOCs) that serve more than 1,000 recruiting stations around the world. Their mission is to attract the highest quality candidates to assure the ongoing success of America's Navy. 



NTAG Southwest Establishment Ceremony Ends 2020, NRD San Diego



▲ Left to right, Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Southwest Command Master Chief CMDCM Michael Noullet, NTAG Southwest Executive Officer Cmdr. David Yoon, NTAG Southwest Commanding Officer Cmdr. Jason Eckhardt, and NTAG Southwest Chief Recruiter NCCM Jayson Whalen, participate in a cake-cutting ceremony during the official command transformation from Navy Recruiting District San Diego to a Navy Talent Acquisition Group.

Story and photo by Todd Hack, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Southwest Public Affairs

SAN DIEGO (Dec. 4, 2020) (NNS) – Change is the only constant in the universe. When COVID-19 began sweeping across the United States in March, change became the new normal as most people and businesses went into quarantine mode. This drastic change affected everyone's lives, especially those with jobs that seemed to require face-to-face interactions, such as recruiting or the Navy.

Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) took the opportunity to make its own changes, and the transition from Navy Recruiting Districts (NRD) to Navy Talent Acquisition Groups (NTAG) became more urgent.

NRC's urgency led to the organization being on a single operating model by the end of 2020 – far ahead of the original schedule of 2023. NRD San Diego's scheduled transition to NTAG Southwest was launched into warp-speed, and the command was up to the challenge.

The transition became official during a socially-distanced and virtual ceremony Dec. 4 at Naval Base Point Loma, Harbor Drive Annex.

"This time last year, if you would have told me we were transforming, I would have thought you were crazy, but we did it," said NTAG Southwest Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Jason Eckhardt.

Eckhardt credits the command's hard work and dedication to making the quick transformation possible.

"As command leadership has been hitting the field, we've been asking what's working and what's not working and making adjustments in the process to make it better," said Eckhardt.

The transition was part of a recruiting-wide strategy to change how the recruiting mission is approached and accomplished, said NTAG Southwest Chief Recruiter Master Chief Navy Counselor (Recruiter) Jayson Whalen.

As the cake was cut and the speeches ended, NTAG Southwest was already up and running because of the work done on the transition before the ceremony.

"It was a smoother transition than I thought it was going

to be," said Eckhardt. "I know the people back in Millington were impressed with how well we were doing. Production has not tailed off, and that's a testament to everyone's dedication to the mission."

Starting Oct. 1, the recruiting command began operating under the NTAG model in preparation for the upcoming transition.

According to Whalen, the purpose of the transformation is to allow recruiters to operate more efficiently and effectively.

"This started as a way for Navy Recruiting Command to ultimately figure out how to operate within the financial and manpower restraints put on us," said Whalen. "The need to transform was driven by innovation and focused on how we operate as an enterprise."

Transformation is not only modernizing Navy Recruiting's technologies and platforms but is maximizing the unique talents of each Recruiter by matching them with the recruiting pillar (sales and sourcing, assessing, onboarding or e-talent) that best suits their talents.

Under the NTAG umbrella, recruiters are assigned to offices within a Talent Acquisition Onboarding Center (TAOC). Recruiting assignments fall into three types within each TAOC; talent scouts, assessors and on-boarders. Under the NTAG model, the NRD will be restructured and be broken down into three different Talent Acquisition and Onboarding Centers (TAOC) – Fleet City, Surf City and Paradise City.

"TAOCs are like subordinate commands for the NTAG," said Whalen. "Typically, TAOCs are located in a highly concentrated, high propensity military markets, but our TAOCs will be operated virtually while collocated with the NTAG."

TAOC Fleet City includes San Diego County, part of Riverside County and Yuma, Arizona. TAOC Surf City include Orange County, Riverside County and San Bernardino County. TAOC Paradise City encompasses southern Nevada, including the Las Vegas metro area. 🇺🇸



Navy Recruiting District Raleigh Rebrands to Navy Talent Acquisition Group Carolina

Story and photo by Gregory White, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Carolina Public Affairs



◀ Cmdr. Mark Smith, commanding officer of Navy Talent Acquisition Group Carolina (formerly NRD Raleigh), Command Master Chief Kenneth Nixon, Navy Counselor Master Chief Petty Officer Gerald Allchin, chief recruiter, and Cmdr. John Horne, executive officer, prepare to cut a cake during a ceremony celebrating the transformation of NRD Raleigh to Navy Talent Acquisition Group Carolina October 1.

RALEIGH - Navy Recruiting District Raleigh rebranded to Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Carolina during an unofficial renaming ceremony Oct. 1, in Raleigh.

Master Chief Navy Counselor Gerald Allchin, the chief recruiter at NTAG Carolina, said that the transition was part of a recruiting-wide strategy to change the way the recruiting mission is approached and accomplished.

"Under the NTAG umbrella, recruiters are assigned to offices within a talent acquisition and onboarding center (TAOC)," said Allchin. "Recruiting assignments fall into three types within each TAOC. They are talent scouts, assessors, and onboarders."

Allchin went on to explain the roles and responsibilities of each position.

"Recruiters are no longer expected to do everything from prospecting to onboarding," said Allchin. "This new way allows us to utilize and rely on each individual's strengths. Talent scouts are on the beat networking with community influencers and centers of interest. They'll be

talking to new people and introducing people to the Navy. Our assessors will take prospects from the scouts and complete all the paper work and processing. Onboarders ensure Future Sailors stay fit, trained and ready to ship."

The goal is to adjust the culture, processes and organization structure in order to successfully recruit in future market conditions that in the past would have been extremely challenging, according to NTAG Command Master Chief Kenneth Nixon.

"Our vision to accomplish the mission will be people first," said Nixon. "My strong belief is that we will embrace the challenges head on, looking at the future of recruiting and doing what it takes to be even more successful."

The ceremony was hosted by Cmdr. Mark Smith, the commanding officer for NTAG Carolina.

"Today is a new ship for us, NTAG Carolina, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Carolina," said Smith. "We are no longer, after today, NRD Raleigh."

NRD San Antonio Decommissioned, NTAG San Antonio Established



Story and photo by Burrell Parmer, Navy Talent Acquisition Group San Antonio Public Affairs

▶ Cmdr. Nicholas Gamiz (left), of Albuquerque, N.M., commanding officer of Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) San Antonio, and Executive Officer Cmdr. Michael Files, of Austin, Texas, cut the ceremonial ribbon which decommissioned Navy Recruiting District (NRD) San Antonio and established NTAG San Antonio at NTAG headquarters.



JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO, FORT SAM HOUSTON – (Oct. 1, 2020) District (Navy Recruiting District) San Antonio was decommissioned and re-established as Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) San Antonio during a ribbon-cutting ceremony held at NTAG headquarters.

Under the new structure, NTAG San Antonio will possess two Talent Acquisition Onboarding Centers (TAOC): TAOC Alamo City based in San Antonio and TAOC Capital City based in Austin.

"Over the last few years, Navy Recruiting Command has been transforming its NRDs into NTAGs," said Senior Chief Navy Counselor Jesse Eldridge, NRD San Antonio's transformation chief petty officer. "Traditionally, recruiters were responsible for seeking applicants through various prospecting methods, collecting all necessary application forms, and mentoring them through the Navy's

Delayed Entry Program (DEP) until their departure for Recruit Training Command. With the new NTAG model, recruiters will be assigned one particular segment. One of the reasons behind transformation was to create better quality of life for those assigned to recruiting duty."

NRD San Antonio was established in January 1972 with Cmdr. H.J. Steffes as commanding officer. Cmdr. Nicholas Gamiz will serve as the NRD's final commander and NTAG San Antonio's first commanding officer.

"This is the best command in all Navy Recruiting," said Gamiz, of Albuquerque, New Mexico. "The Sailors, civilians, and contractors make this command successful. And we will be even more successful under the NTAG model."

NTAG San Antonio's area of responsibility will include more than 30 Navy Recruiting Stations and Navy Officer Recruiting Stations spread throughout 144,000 square miles of Central and South Texas territory. 🇺🇸

NTAG Northern Plains Conducts Small Change-of-Command

Story and photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Christopher Lindahl, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Northern Plains Public Affairs

FORT SNELLING, Minn. – In a setting demanding less ceremonial presence than normal due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Northern Plains conducted a routine change-of-command in a small ceremony outside of Historic Fort Snelling.

Cmdr. James Duvall, a native of Twentynine Palms, California, relieved Cmdr. James Darkenwald, a local native of Elk River, in the small, routinely scheduled ceremony.

In a traditional change-of-command ceremony, guests can usually expect to see a ceremonial band, sideboys, leadership from the next echelon, an exceptionally large ceremonial flag, boatswain's pipes and guest speakers. Due to COVID-19 and the Navy's safety protocols to prevent possible exposure, this change of command was limited to very few spectators to keep the gathering to less than 10 people and was preceded by a verbal turnover with Commander, Navy Recruiting Region West, Capt. Anthony Bayungan.

Darkenwald, a University of Minnesota graduate, will be leaving his home state to return to the Navy fleet with his family in Yokosuka, Japan.

"Far from any ocean or sea, it has been a rare opportunity and a great honor to serve the Navy in my home state of Minnesota," Darkenwald said. "I've been fortunate to spend time with my extended family and parents while continuing the adventure I embarked upon more than 20 years ago. I will miss my crew, and all we have accomplished, immensely -- but my family and I look forward to the next adventure in continuing our service."

Duvall assumed command following his tour as the executive officer of NTAG Northern Plains and looks forward to the new challenge.

"There will definitely be new challenges for me as commanding officer," Duvall said. "These are challenging times, but Cmdr. Darkenwald and I have been working with this team and preparing for the year ahead, and I am confident that we have all the right pieces in place to ensure mission success."

Due to COVID-19 safety precautions, the Navy's modified their recruiting strategy to respond in the most socially appropriate and safe manner possible, including a shift earlier this year to 100% virtual prospecting, and now more of a hybrid of virtual and in-person prospecting while maintaining distance with proper personal protective equipment.

Prospecting is the act of identifying potential future Sailors who may have an interest in serving. In the past, prospecting was mostly done via high school visits and college/career fairs. Now, the recruiters are moving almost exclusively into the realm of social media and word-of-mouth referrals to find new applicants.

"It has been an interesting tour so far, that is for sure,"



▲ Cmdr. James Darkenwald salutes Cmdr. James Duvall as he turns over command of Navy Talent Acquisition Group Northern Plains during the change of command ceremony.

Duvall said. "But we have had our recruiters able to remote work ever since the command transitioned to the new NTAG recruiting model. I know the changes already implemented helped immensely with our ability to shift to working remotely in a greater capacity, offering our recruiters more agile and tailorable solutions to accomplishing the mission."

Duvall was a Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) Midshipman at the University of Southern California before he received his commission as a surface warfare officer in 2002.

Duvall's sea duty assignments include duty in amphibious ships and aircraft carriers in the Pacific Fleet. During these tours, he deployed to the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aqaba, Western Pacific, and Indian Ocean areas of operation.

Prior to assuming the position of executive officer at Navy Talent Acquisition Group Northern Plains, he most recently completed his assignment as executive officer aboard the littoral combat ship USS Freedom (LCS 1).



Navy Recruiting District Raleigh Holds Change-of-Command

Story and photo by Gregory White, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Carolina Public Affairs



▲ Cmdr. Mark Smith salutes Capt. Katrina Hill, commodore of Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) Region East, as he assumes duties and responsibilities as the commanding officer of Navy Recruiting District (NRD) Raleigh. Smith relieved Cmdr. Andrew McGinly of that position during a Change of Command ceremony at Navy Operational Support Center Raleigh on August 21.

RALEIGH – Cmdr. Mark Smith relieved Cmdr. Andrew McGinly as commanding officer, Navy Recruiting District (NRD) Raleigh, during a change-of-command ceremony held at Navy Operational Support Center Raleigh, August 21.

Capt. Katrina Hill, commodore, Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) Region East, attended the ceremony as presiding officer and guest speaker. She praised McGinly's leadership and the district's exceptional performance in view of a few attendees and the many more watching the ceremony via livestream.

"Under Skipper McGinly's leadership, you've led Region East in total accessions contributing 15 percent of our total enlisted production," said Hill. "Your 66 Nuke attainments and 56 Naval Special Warfare attainments also were number one in the region."

Hill went on to state that NRD Raleigh topped the region in NAT (New Accession Training) attainments and wrote more prior service contracts than anyone else, with exception of fleet concentration areas.

"Along the way, you won a retention

excellence award, posted a SWARM, advanced 32 Sailors, converted five CRFs (career recruiting force), all while weathering a hurricane and a pandemic," said Hill. "In short, you've made excellence a habit. It's one I expect you to continue under new leadership."

McGinly shared some departing words with the district.

"To the sailors of NRD Raleigh, soon to be NTAG Carolina, you are one of the main reasons that I'm up here," said McGinly. "In my three years as your XO (executive officer) and CO (commanding officer), I put exactly zero people into the Navy. All of you did the heavy lifting in a very high-stress environment. While all the rest of the world had to take a knee because of COVID, we were told we were mission-essential and, COVID or not, we needed to get things done. All of you responded incredibly well and made the magic happen. I'm incredibly proud of your efforts and accomplishments, and I'm incredibly proud to have been your CO."

Smith, who had served under McGinly as his executive officer, further emphasized the sentiments of both McGinly and Hill upon assuming command.

"What a strange time we are living in," said Smith. "But I cannot imagine a better command or a more professional group of people to carry out our mission. I want you all to stand by. Changes are coming, and they're coming fast. We have to be ready for it. I am not going to stand up here and make some profound promises about how we are going to be bigger, better, faster, and stronger than the other guys. You already know how to do that, and you're doing it well. I've seen your potential, and I know what you're capable of, so just keep going."

Hill shared departing sentiments.

"As I head home today, I am going to leave Raleigh just as I found it – in the hands of an experienced and capable leader," said Hill. "I charge you to keep charging. Keep up the habits of excellence you practice so well. Keep taking care of each other, and keep bringing our Navy the very best war fighters the Carolinas have to offer." 🇺🇸

Navy Talent Acquisition Group Ohio River Valley Changes Command



Story and photo by Chief Petty Officer Brian Dietrick,
Navy Talent Acquisition Group Ohio River Valley Public Affairs



◀ Cmdr. Warren Overton (left), incoming commanding officer, NTAG Ohio River Valley, renders a salute to Capt. Robert Smith, commodore, Navy Recruiting Command Region Central (center), as he relieves Cmdr. Robert Moran of command during a change of command ceremony.

COLUMBUS, Ohio (Nov. 19, 2020) – Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Ohio River Valley held a change of command ceremony where Cmdr. Robert Moran was relieved by Cmdr. Warren Overton.

Capt. Robert Smith, commodore, Navy Recruiting Command Region Central, served as presiding officer for the ceremony and congratulated both officers for a job well done during their time at the command.

Moran reported to the command, previously known as Navy Recruiting District Ohio, in October 2017 as the executive officer. In March 2019, he fleeted up to become the commanding officer and said it was one of the most rewarding tours of his naval career.

During his time in command, Moran established Team Ohio River Valley as leaders in the recruiting enterprise. They met or exceeded all officer and enlisted attainments including the very challenging

nuclear, special operations and prior service programs. His team's efforts resulted in one national award winner, 10 national award finalists, a sweep in regional station awards, the Bronze "R" and for the first time in the command's storied history, the Gold "R", recognizing the gold standard in recruiting.

Moran will transfer to Naples, Italy and Overton is excited to start his tenure as commanding officer for the nation's premier recruiting team.

Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, NTAG Ohio River Valley's mission is to man the Navy fleet with the highest quality Sailors and maintain the Navy's unchallenged worldwide maritime superiority and ability to win wars, deter aggression and maintain freedom of the seas. NTAG Ohio River Valley operates 56 Talent Acquisition Stations and four Navy Officer Recruiting stations throughout Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky and West Virginia. 🦅



U.S. NAVY RESERVE

NAVSUP WSS Employee - Citizen Sailor, Selected as Junior Officer of the Year

Story by Kelly Luster, NAVSUP Weapon Systems Support



▲ Lt. Curt Bender, Navy Cargo Handling Battalion Ten, Operations Officer, is congratulated with a commander's coin from Capt. Trent Kalp, Commanding Officer, FLC Pearl Harbor, after the successful completion of the Pacific Pathways 20-1 Operation in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Jan. 2020. (Courtesy photo)

MECHANICSBURG, Penn. – Curt Bender, Logistics Management Specialist at Naval Supply Systems Command Weapon Systems Support, Doctrine and Policy Directorate, is a man of diverse experience who wears many hats. One of those hats, that of Navy Lieutenant Curt Bender, garnered him top honors as the 2019 Reserve Officers Association Junior Officer of the Year.

According to the ROA, each year's winners are selected from among reserve officers who exemplify the best and brightest serving in the United States Navy Reserve.


The commander of Navy Cargo Handling Battalion Ten, Cmdr. Michael Griffith said, "No

other officer has contributed more to their unit's operational readiness, training, safety, and force than Lt. Bender. His personal dedication and devotion to duty are above and beyond his peers and well above expectations."

Among the accomplishments that earned Bender this honor was his successful tour at NCHB Ten where he concurrently served as the battalion Operations Officer, battalion Safety Officer and Surface Cargo Company Commander. He was responsible for the operational support of 349 enlisted and 24 officers across 11 cargo handling companies. Additionally, he led a team of 11 safety company petty officers across 21 high risk training evolutions resulting in zero accidents or injuries.

Bender now dons his Navy uniform for duty as the Assistant Readiness Officer at Navy Reserve U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Logistics Support Unit. He is responsible for the readiness of 33 Sailors who provide mission capable personnel to support exercises, contingency operations and Maritime Operations Center Logistics Readiness Center surges.

In his civilian career, Bender supports the development and implementation of policy related to surface and sealift transportation. Prior to his tenure with NAVSUP WSS, Bender had an extensive career in the commercial maritime industry primarily in ship management, marine terminal operations and intermodal logistics.

"NAVSUP WSS is the End-to-End supply chain integrator for the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, joint and allied partners—a mission that is vital to readiness and lethality," said Rear Adm. Doug Noble, commander, NAVSUP WSS. "That is why we continue to attract and retain the most talented people like Lt. Bender. His dedication both as a Sailor and civilian shipmate, exemplifies our Navy." 

Navy Recruiters Perform Life-Saving Skills on Shooting Victim

Story by Burrell Parmer, Navy Talent Acquisition Group San Antonio Public Affairs



JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON – (Nov. 6, 2020) When aboard ship or ashore, Sailors are expected to be able to react to any situation, ranging from enemy engagement to applying medical care to an injured shipmate.

For two Sailors assigned to Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) San Antonio, their Naval training kicked in the afternoon of Nov. 5, after a shooting near a local high school.

Navy recruiters Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Brandon Rodriguez, of San Antonio, and Information Systems Technician (Submarine) 2nd Class Robert Davis, of San Antonio, had concluded a school visit to Highlands High School. Upon driving away from the school, they witnessed a shooting of a man outside his residence.

After hearing the gun shots, the recruiters cautiously approached the residence and saw the victim laying in the driveway after which they instructed the neighbors to call 911.


The recruiters began to apply pressure

to the wound and treat the victim for shock until emergency medical services arrived five minutes later.

"We happen to be in the right place at the right time," said Davis, who has been recruiting for 18 months. "The basic life-saving skills we attained in the Navy definitely prepared us for the moment."

"I knew we could do something," said Rodriguez, who received basic medical training while aboard the nuclear aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77). "Our initial thoughts were on the whereabouts of the shooter, but we knew we had to act fast."

After EMS arrived, the Sailors reported the observations of the incident the San Antonio Police.

NTAG San Antonio's area of responsibility includes more than 30 Navy Recruiting Stations and Navy Officer Recruiting Stations spread throughout 144,000 square miles of Central and South Texas territory. 

◀ Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Brandon Rodriguez, of San Antonio, assigned to Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) San Antonio. (Courtesy of NTAG San Antonio Public Affairs)



◀ Information Systems Technician (Submarine) 2nd Class Robert Davis, of San Antonio, assigned to Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) San Antonio. (Courtesy of NTAG San Antonio Public Affairs/Released)

Time for a New Team

Story and photo by Daniel Rachal, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Portland Public Affairs



Stephen Marcille took the opening kickoff of the 2015 football season for Beaverton High School at the 10 yard line. A three year starter, Marcille was hoping to showcase his talents further, after garnering interest from Washington State University during a camp the previous summer. The Cougars head coach at the time, Mike Leach, talked to his parents about the impressive week Marcille had at the camp. Future NFL prospects were there, along with the skinny 5-11 receiver from Beaverton, Oregon.

Marcille remembers the play, the one that would change the trajectory of his life after high school, vividly.

"Caught the kick return," he said. "I ran right through the hole, the guy grabbed ahold of my leg and he spun me but I reversed field. As soon as he spun me, I felt a pop in my knee. I reversed field and I was running, but by the opposite 30 I could feel my knee was tightening and I couldn't run anymore. I hit the ground and that was that."

He ran for 37 yards after the knee popped, but the torn meniscus he suffered kept him sidelined for five more games. After a successful return against archrival Southridge High School, in which he scored a touchdown and the team rallied for a victory, Marcille broke his leg in the very next game and his senior season was over. The interest, and potential college scholarship, that teams like Eastern Washington, Oregon and Portland State had shown was gone.

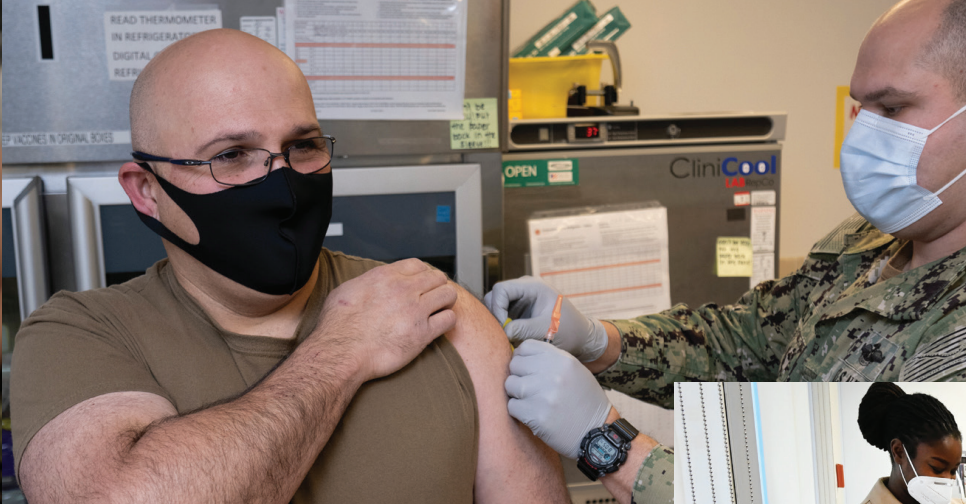
"I had thought about going into the Navy right after high school," he said. "I stayed here, put the Navy card back down, train, go to school and find a school that best suited me."

Marcille persevered, went through rehab after two surgeries and that next year walked-on at Portland State University. He knew he could still play, and after sitting behind other players, thought he could earn a wide receiver spot on the offense. All that mattered to him was that he was playing again and his dream of playing college football had come true.

After two seasons, though, Marcille was burned out. He knew it was time to hang up his jersey and figure out what was next in life. A Navy recruiting pamphlet sat on his desk for years and Marcille, from time to time, would open it up and take a look.

That's when he walked into a Navy recruiting station. For the second time in his life, Marcille thought that he was going to have to convince a team to give him a chance. This time around, it was the complete opposite.

"It was a lot more personal," he said. "Petty Officer Buck made my life easier and was honest with me. Football recruiting, you can just tell it's a business, you're trying to sell yourself to these coaches. I didn't have to sell myself to the Navy." 🦅



Eye on the Field

▲ **MILLINGTON, TN (January 4, 2021)** -- Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Skyler Holt gives Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, Rear Admiral Dennis Velez a coronavirus vaccination. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Elijah Newton)

▶ **SUNRISE, FL. (Dec. 18, 2020)** Aviation Boatswains Mate, Equipment 2nd Class Shakera Alexander holds a collection bag as Construction Electrician 2nd Class Roxanne Brown puts in toys donated to the Toys for Tots toy drive at Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Miami's. (Photo by: Chief Mass Communications Specialist Kathleen Gorbey)



Eye on the Fleet

▶ **PHILIPPINE SEA (Dec. 10, 2020)** Naval Air Crewman (Helicopter) 1st Class Jonathan Kangas, from Newberry, Mich., assigned to the "Island Knights" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 25, lowers a hoist during training with French Loire-class tender, and support vessel FS Seine (A 604) to ensure both nations maintain proficiency in personnel recovery while out at sea. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Cole C. Pielop)



◀ **Ensign Joseph Durigan, far left, from Longwood, Fla., Sonar Technician (Surface) 2nd Class Joshua Farr, center, from Woodbridge, Va., and Operations Specialist 2nd Class Joshua Hansen, from Kissimmee, Fla. monitor a computer-aided dead-reckoning tracer (CADRT) in the combat information center aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS John S. McCain (DDG 56) during an anti-submarine warfare training evolution. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Markus Castaneda)**



62nd Annual Recruit Cardinal Division Begins Navy Journey

**Courtesy Story From Navy Talent Acquisition Group Mid-America.
Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Spencer Fling, Navy
Talent Acquisition Group Mid-America.**

ST. LOUIS – Recruits at Recruit Training Command (RTC) began their Navy journey as the 62nd Annual Recruit Cardinal Division, Sept. 16, 2020.

As the Navy's longest-running special recruit division, the Cardinal Division this year is distinctively different compared to its previous 61 iterations, marking several firsts along the way.

In the past, Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Mid America was charged with recruiting approximately 80 Future Sailors from their area that would ship to RTC together as a division. The day they were set to arrive at RTC, the Future Sailors

would recite the oath of enlistment in front of St. Louis City Hall, have a picnic with their friends and family at a nearby park, and then proceed to march through the streets of St. Louis to Busch Stadium. Once there, the recruits would swear-in again in front of a crowd of thousands during a St. Louis Cardinals home game, donned in red Cardinal Division t-shirts and Navy recruit ball caps. After the oath, the Future Sailors would watch most of the baseball game, say their goodbyes, and board the buses that would take them to Navy boot camp in Great Lakes, Illinois.

Regrettably, all of the aforementioned

▲ A recruit marches in formation carrying the St. Louis Cardinals flag at Recruit Training Command.

events for this year's Cardinal Division did not take place due to constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. With large social gatherings being limited to a handful of people, and the general public not being allowed inside Busch Stadium, it appeared that the Cardinal Division would not happen. At least not in the traditional sense.

So in an effort to keep the Cardinal Division alive, instead of forming a division the typical way, NTAG Mid America decided 2020 would be the first year they and the St. Louis Cardinals would sponsor a division already at RTC.

Under normal circumstances, there are always several recruits from the greater St. Louis area in the Cardinal Division. However,

hometowns is a once in a lifetime opportunity. A little bummed COVID-19 kept us from being able to pick up the division in St. Louis, but still super proud to fly that Cardinal Division flag."

Aside from how the division was formed and the RDCs leading them, the next first is undoubtedly the most notable. Historically, Cardinal Divisions have been all-male. Now, for the first time in 62 years, the division is comprised entirely of women.

"An all-female Cardinal Division is absolutely incredible," said Fennewald. "I made it a point to relay this fact that they are trailblazers for future divisions to bear the name of the Cardinals. I feel that we have an incredible group of women in this division and I wouldn't trade them for any other division."



◀ Recruits shine boots and study their recruit training guides inside the USS Arizona recruit barracks at Recruit Training Command.

since standard recruit divisions are formed from Future Sailors around the nation, there was no guarantee that the division would have local recruits. And unfortunately, that was the case. Yet in a fortunate turn of events, and for the first time, the two recruit division commanders charged with leading the Cardinal Division happen to be from St. Louis.

Chief Aviation Electrician's Mate Matthew Fennewald and Engineman 1st Class Rachel Eads, who enlisted out of the St. Louis metropolitan area and who are die-hard Cardinals fans, are more than excited to lead this year's Cardinal Division.

In fact, Fennewald said he had to do a double take when he initially read the email stating he would be in charge of the division.

"It was pretty hard to contain my excitement," said Fennewald. "I immediately let [Eads] know since she is from the St. Louis area as well."

Eads recalled her excitement too after Fennewald texted her in all capital letters about the news.

"I was super excited just to get a sponsor division," said Eads. "But to find out that it was being sponsored from both our



▼ Seaman Recruit Lashanda Gill poses with her design of the division flag of recruit division 418 inside the USS Arizona recruit barracks at Recruit Training Command.

▶ A recruit chief petty officer commands her division to pickup their food trays following chow inside the USS Arizona recruit barracks at Recruit Training Command.

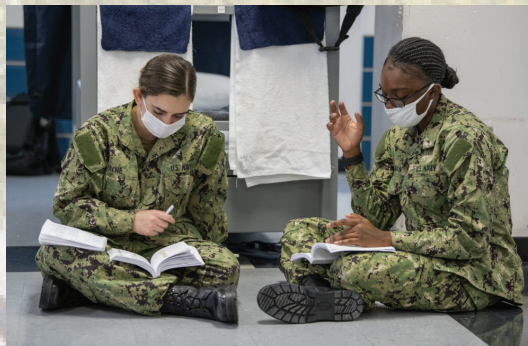


▶ Recruits study their recruit training guide inside the USS Arizona recruit barracks at Recruit Training Command.

Eads also stated that she's proud that so many women are being acknowledged by the St. Louis Cardinals as the first female Cardinal Division.

"As a female, I absolutely love this," said Eads. "I am sure that these ladies are going to love being recognized as the first female division sponsored by the Cardinals."

▼ Chief Aviation Electrician's Mate Matthew Fennewald and Engineman 1st Class Rachel Eads, recruit division commanders, review division paperwork with a recruit yeoman before leaving their compartment inside the USS Arizona recruit barracks at Recruit Training Command. More than 40,000 recruits train annually at the Navy's only boot camp.



Although the division officially started their Navy in-processing at RTC on Sept. 16, most of the recruits were at Fort McCoy for two weeks beforehand. Due to COVID-19 precautions, all recruits are placed in a 14-day restriction of movement (ROM) status before being transported to RTC to begin training. The ROM ensures the long-term safety and security of recruits, while continuing to execute the essential task of training the Navy's newest Sailors during the pandemic.

Fennewald noted that although it's frustrating not being able to train the division right away, the safety and well-being of the recruits is what's most important.

Now that the first week of processing is over, the Cardinal Division has entered into the militarization phase. During this phase, the recruits are introduced to military bearing, drill, and inspections. They will also take basic classes related to getting ready for operating out in the fleet.

The next phase in their boot camp journey is Sailorization, where they will learn the bread and butter skills necessary for that of an enlisted Sailor. These include skills such as firefighting, line handling and weapons familiarity.

Finally, the last week of boot camp will include their final evaluation phase, official physical fitness assessment, final inspections preparing for review and graduation, and the final crucible event – Battlestations, where they will hopefully earn the right to be called U.S. Navy Sailors.

If they're able to pass Battlestations as a team and a cohesive unit, Eads wants the 62nd Annual Cardinal Division to know this: "It would be an honor to work with them out in the fleet."

The Cardinal Division is set to graduate on Oct. 29, 2020. 🦅





Twin Brothers Strengthen Bond by Joining America's Navy

Story and photo by Burrell Parmer, Navy Recruiting District San Antonio Public Affairs

SAN ANTONIO – (Sept. 25, 2020) Two Highlands High School seniors have made the decision to join the world's most powerful naval force, America's Navy.

Twin brothers Calvin and Kelvin Rodriguez Rivera, of San Antonio, entered the Navy's Delayed Entry Program and are making preparations to attend recruit training to become naval aircrewmen.

"I am joining the Navy for the numerous opportunities it provides," said Calvin, who is interested in applying for a Navy Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) Scholarship. "Initially, I thought about joining the Air Force, but after speaking with my Navy recruiter, the Navy seemed a better fit for me."

Kalvin said that he is looking forward to traveling and meeting new people.

His brother shares the same reasons for joining and also is looking forward to traveling.

"I've always wanted to travel around the world," said Kelvin. "I started at a young age and wish to continue."

As an aircrewman, Kelvin will get

to work with those who he wishes to become, a naval aviator.


Both brothers have always thought about joining the military.

"I am happy to join the Navy with my brother," said Calvin. "We are looking forward to joking with fellow Sailors about who is which."

The twins' father, Rudy Rodriguez, said it was a dream come true that his sons have achieved something that he had always wanted to accomplish.

"I've have always told to them to be better than me in life," said Rodriguez, of Miami. "Joining the military is a high honor. They are going to go far in the Navy and achieve their goals."

Both brothers were recruited by Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Brandon Rodriguez assigned to Navy Recruiting Station (NRS) Southeast San Antonio.

Navy Recruiting District (NRD) San Antonio's area of responsibility includes more than 34 Navy Recruiting Stations and Navy Officer Recruiting Stations. 

▲ Rudy Rodriguez (center) stands proudly with his twin sons Calvin (left) and Kelvin Rodriguez Rivera after the two brothers entered the Navy's Delayed Entry Program to become naval aircrewmen.

Baltimore Fleet Week Commemorates Patriot Day With Oath of Enlistment Aboard USS Constellation



Courtesy Story Navy Talent Acquisition Group Philadelphia

▲ Cmdr. Kemi Elebute, center right, commanding officer of Navy Talent Acquisition Group Philadelphia, Chief Recruiter Master Chief Navy Counselor Stephen Callaghan, center left, future Sailors and local recruiters pose for a group photo in front of the museum ship USS Constellation. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Diana Quinlan)

BALTIMORE – A harbor breeze bolstered the national ensign, flying half-mast on the ship's fantail, as young men and women saluted the colors from the brow in a traditional Navy manner Sept. 11, 2020.

These men and women arrived onboard the sloop-of-war USS Constellation, a museum ship in the Baltimore Inner Harbor, to swear the Oath of Enlistment on the last day of the Maryland Fleet Week and Airshow Baltimore and the 19th anniversary of September 11, 2001.

Aboard the ship, local recruiters, assigned to Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Philadelphia, took the opportunity to educate the future Sailors about the history

and shipboard traditions of the U.S. Navy before guiding them into formation for the enlistment ceremonies, where the enlisting officer, Rear Adm. Carl Lahti, commandant, Naval District Washington, addressed the group, imparting knowledge and advice.

"It is a tremendous opportunity to be here, on this historic ship, USS Constellation, which served our Navy for 100 years. It is a legacy of service that we want to imbue in our future Sailors so it's very symbolic that we're able to do that aboard the Constellation - a ship that is available for people to see and to understand the impact that it has had, and that the Navy continues to have around the world," said Lahti. "Today

is the 19th anniversary of the September 11 attacks on the United States, and it is very significant that we have young people willing to put their lives on the line for the United States, raise their right hand, go forward and do that today! I'm very proud of them for making the decision to join the Navy, and proud of them for being here today, to have that symbolism of their willingness to stand up and fight, even in the face of potential future dangers in defense of our nation."

It was a proud day for the future Sailors as they were now part of history. Not many can claim accomplishing so much in one day: enlisted by a role model with a rich naval career on the decks of a national historic landmark that faithfully served this country's Navy; celebrated the final day of the fleet week, and commemorated the anniversary of September 11th.

"I was very excited to meet and speak to Rear Admiral Lahti who is also a submariner, and learn a bit about the job I will be doing in the Navy," said Laurel Orendorf, who is joining the Navy as a Machinist's Mate (Nuclear) serving on submarines. "And it makes it all the more special to enlist on September 11th, because I feel that all of us here were touched by the events on that day in some way, shape or form. I was only a year old at the time, but I was with my father, stationed overseas at the time, ready to come back to the U.S. I am proud to have my dad here with me, watching me enlist."

Like many other future Sailors, Orendorf



▲ Rear Adm. Carl Lahti, commandant, Naval District Washington, administers the Oath of Enlistment for Future Sailors aboard the museum ship USS Constellation, Historic Ships in Baltimore, during the virtual Maryland Fleet Week and Airshow Baltimore. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Diana Quinlan)

considered both college and other military branches, but in the end she chose the Navy, to follow in her father's footsteps, who proudly served for 20 years on submarines, retiring as a Machinist's Mate.

"I was over the moon when I found out she was going Nuke and on submarines," shared Ron Orendorf, Laurel's father.

"I hope she has a rewarding career and someday becomes an officer - a commander of a submarine!"

Supporting the day's young men and women and representing local recruiting efforts were Cmdr. Kemi Elebute, commanding officer of NTAG Philadelphia and Master Chief Navy Counselor Stephen Callaghan, chief recruiter.

"It's a great feeling to support our future Sailors and have them enlist on the 19th anniversary of 9/11," said Elebute. "There are some future Sailors here today who weren't even born that year, and may only know about the events of September 11th from the history books. Yet they stand here, on this day, volunteering because they want to join the Navy, to be part of this great institution, but also to mark this special day with their Oath of Enlistment. And as we bring these future Sailors to USS Constellation, and give them the opportunity to start their naval careers by getting sworn in today, it brings me great joy and makes it a great day all around."

At the conclusion of the event, those who had just taken their Oath of Enlistment helped lower the national ensign they saluted earlier in the day, and working as a team, folded the nearly 17-foot-long American flag in a triangle fold as a tribute to the nation's honored dead.

Biennial Maryland Fleet Week and Airshow Baltimore, held this year virtually September 8-11, is Baltimore's celebration of the sea services, and provides an opportunity for the local community and Maryland visitors to meet Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, as well as see firsthand the latest capabilities of today's maritime services. 🇺🇸



◀ Future Sailors help lower the national ensign aboard the museum ship USS Constellation. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Diana Quinlan)

Ohio Sailor Gives Mother the Gift of Life

Story by Chief Petty Officer Brian Dietrick, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Ohio River Valley



Cryptologic Technician (Collection) 1st Class Dustin Ueltschy (second from right), NTAG Ohio River Valley talent scout, poses for a group photo with his mother, Mary (left), and command leadership after being presented the CO's Warrior of the Month Award. (Photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Brian Dietrick)

SHAKER HEIGHTS, Ohio (Oct. 5, 2020) – When Cryptologic Technician (Collection) 1st Class Dustin Ueltschy found out that he could save his mother's life, he knew there was no other option other than to help.

Ueltschy, a talent scout for Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Ohio River Valley in Mentor, Ohio, donated one of his kidneys in a paired donation exchange program at the Cleveland Clinic. During the exchange, Ueltschy's kidney went to a patient that was a suitable match and his mother received a kidney that was a match for her.

"My mother asked if we knew anyone that would be willing to donate," said Ueltschy. "My wife and I discussed it and it there just was not an option to not go through with it and help. I knew if I was able to help, then I had to."

Ueltschy started the donor screening process in November 2019 at the Cleveland Clinic. It was determined that he was not a match for his mother, but he learned of the paired donor exchange program where he could still donate and she would still be able to receive one.

Upon successful completion of screening at the Cleveland Clinic, he then had to run his request through his local chain of command and then ultimately big Navy had to sign off on it after a screening at the hospital in Great Lakes.

He kept the screening from his mom at first because he was unsure if the Navy was going to let him participate. Once he was fully cleared by the Navy doctor in Great Lakes, he surprised his mom by showing her the approved

request revealing that he was allowed to help save her life.

"It was a very emotional moment for us once I showed my mom that letter," said Ueltschy. "She was so excited and it was like she had a new lease on life."

He was approved by the Navy to donate in March 2020, just as COVID-19 cases were ramping up in the U.S. After a few cancellations and minor setbacks due to the ongoing pandemic, Ueltschy and his mother had a successful surgery in late September. His mother received her new kidney first and the next day, Ueltschy donated his kidney.

Cmdr. Robert Moran, NTAG commanding officer, visited with Ueltschy and his mother and presented him the Warrior of the Month award for September 2020.

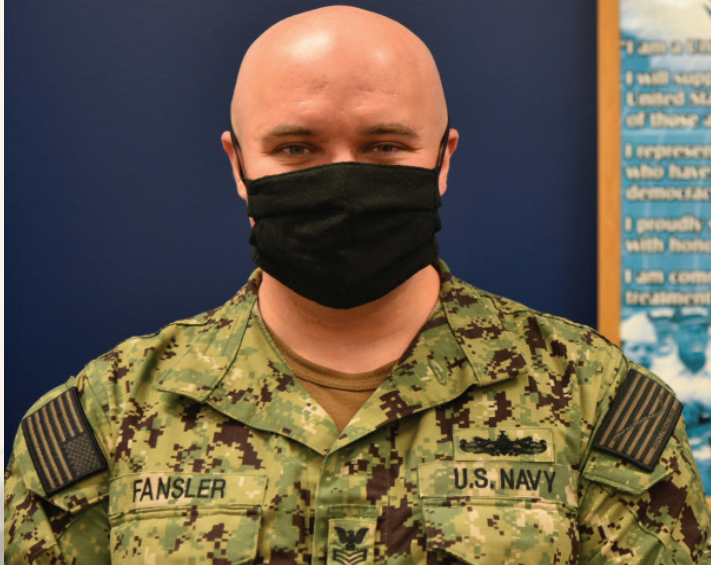
"It's important for me to recognize people like your son because his behavior is what we want to epitomize in the military and actions like that are contagious," said Moran. "I truly value when people do things that are above and beyond themselves and it's nice to see when they think of other people instead of themselves."

After 4 - 6 weeks of recovery time, Ueltschy will be back on the grind doing what he does best, finding the highest quality men and women to serve in the United States Navy.

"Knowing that I can relieve her of having to go through daily dialysis, which is really inhibiting on what she can do in life, is an amazing feeling," said Ueltschy. "Not only did I help my mother, but I was able to help someone else by giving them my kidney. It's really just a great feeling!" 🇺🇸

Navy Recruiter Reaches Out; Shines Light On Mental Health

Story and photo by Aren Everett,
Navy Talent Acquisition Group
Great Lakes Public Affairs



◀ Sonar Technician (Surface) 1st Class Kevon Fansler, assigned to Navy Recruiting Station (NRS) Janesville, helped an interested prospect find family and resources to assist in his struggles with mental health issues while using social media to reach potential applicants to the Navy.

JANESVILLE, Wisconsin (Dec. 9, 2020) - Navy Talent Acquisition Group Great Lakes Talent Scout Sonar Technician 1st Class Kevon Fansler walked into the Navy Recruiting Station (NRS) in Janesville, Wisconsin, one Saturday morning and sat down at his computer. Signing on to Facebook Messenger, he began social media prospecting. As the day wore on, one interested applicant caught his attention.

"He sounded positive, but then he sent me a peculiar message," said Fansler. "I didn't think anything of it at first because it wasn't worded in a way that seemed questionable."

Fansler let the remark slide and continued communication with the prospect, but a similar statement came up later in the conversation.

"He said he probably wasn't going to be around much longer anyway," said Fansler. "That really triggered and flagged something in my head. I decided I needed to probe and figure out what was going on with this young man."

As the conversation continued, Fansler became concerned that the young man was exhibiting signs of suicidal ideation because the young man confided that he felt isolated, he was living at home, he had no friends, and that he was feeling "really down."

"I continued to communicate with him as much as I could through Facebook Messenger and started searching online for some relatives I could contact," said Fansler. "I was trying to connect with him because I've been there."

"I sought mental health services twice in my military career. As a junior Sailor, I felt similarly isolated during my

first time stationed in Japan," said Fansler. "Then six years ago on recruiting duty, I lost my first-born daughter when she fell into my backyard pool."

"Knowing how it feels to lose a child, I didn't want his mother to lose hers," continued Fansler. "I don't think anybody should be a part of that group. It's a very exclusive group with a price of admission that is too high."

From his online search, Fansler was able to locate a cousin, who put him in touch with a brother, who then gave Fansler a phone number to contact the young man's mother.


"I'm sure she was confused and probably thought I was a spam caller," said Fansler, "but I kept calling because I knew I had to get him help immediately."

Fansler was able to contact the young man's mother, and after a few follow-up calls, learned the young man was able to receive the help he needed before any drastic measures were taken.

Fansler said it's important to be mindful of the threats to mental health and of ways to safeguard it.

"Recognize feelings of doubt, confusion, sadness, or loneliness and reach out," said Fansler. "Those feelings don't go away. They build and stack up on top of each other until you can't escape. It feels insurmountable."

Fansler encourages others to react when presented with similar circumstances.

"Don't be afraid to reach out if you see something like this happening, and don't think it's going to go away," said Fansler. "Simply ignoring it is not the answer." 

Mother Follows Son Enlisting In Navy

Story by David DeKunder, 502nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — (Oct. 5, 2020)

A mother of two from Kerrville, Texas is following her son into the Navy, fulfilling her longtime dream of serving in the military.

Seaman Apprentice Bobbi Saenz has been in the Navy for 8 months and is stationed at Naval Air Station North Island, near San Diego, California, where she is an aviation technician with the Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 35.

Bobbi enlisted in the Navy at the age of 39, after her eldest son, 21-year-old Seaman Diego Saenz, joined the Navy in November 2018.

The mother-and-son Sailors were both recruited by Navy Recruiting District San Antonio.

Bobbi shipped out to basic military training in February to Naval Station Great Lakes, Illinois, and turned 40 while in boot camp. She graduated basic military training in April and completed training school at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida in July.

Joining the military is something Bobbi said she had wanted to do for a long time but had put it off while raising her two

sons, Diego and Raul Vasquez, who is now 18. When her sons were grown, she decided it was the right time to enlist and pursue her dream of a military career.

The new Seaman said her family supported her decision to go into the military, especially Diego, who encouraged her to do so.

"My older son (Diego) was saying, 'You need to go after your dreams, you're still young enough to do all this. What are you going to lose if you do it,'" Bobbi said. "It was just something I felt it would be an honor to do."

Diego, stationed at Naval Station Everett in Washington state as an engineer on the USS Gridley (DDG-101), said his mother told him about her decision to join the Navy while visiting him in New York City, where he was on deployment last year.

"I was proud of her because she wanted to do something with her life, and she chose this route," he said. "I know you can do a lot going this route; you get more opportunity and you're serving your country."

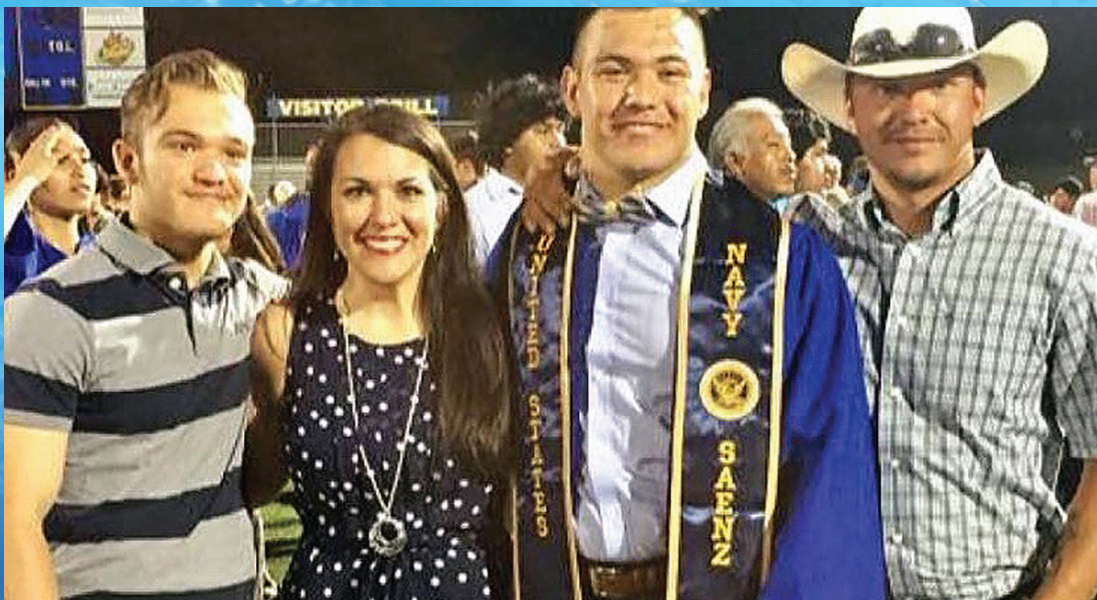
Following her son into military service,

▶ (Left) Fireman Diego Saenz from Kerrville, Texas is serving as an engineer aboard the USS Gridley (DDG-101), which is currently docked at Naval Station Everett, Washington state. He has been in the Navy since November 2018. (Courtesy photo)



▶ (Right) Airman Apprentice Bobbi Saenz from Kerrville, Texas enlisted in the Navy at the age of 39 and completed basic training in April. She is an aviation technician with the Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 35 at Naval Air Station North Island, near San Diego, California. (Courtesy photo)





◀ Bobbi Saenz (second from left) stands next to her son Diego Saenz (third from left) at his high school graduation in Kerrville, Texas in 2018. Family members joining them are Raul Vasquez (left) Bobbi Saenz's son, and Jay Vasquez (right). Both Bobbi and Diego are currently serving in the Navy. (Courtesy photo)

Bobbi was able to gain some insight from him on preparing for boot camp. Diego completed his boot camp training in January 2019.

Diego said he prepared his mother for what she would need to learn to get through boot camp, but the rest of the details he left out for her to find out on her own.

"I didn't want to make it too easy on my mother," Diego said. "I wanted her to experience it herself, but I hoped I gave her the fundamentals she needed to know. I said it's going to be eye-opening to see what's going to happen; sometimes it's going to feel weird. But I said I'm pretty sure you've been through worse situations than this, so it's not going to be hard for you."

Bobbi said she knew she would have to overcome a few challenges to make it through boot camp, such as being older than most of the trainees and adjusting to the way things are done in the military.

"You are set in your ways throughout life, as far as growing up, how you live, how you take care of a home," she said. "You have your routine down, and after 39 years, you have to switch the entire routine. Everything changes, it was like rewiring myself."

Serving in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the mother and son Sailors have experienced adversity.

First, Bobbi's boot camp graduation ceremony was canceled in April because of the pandemic. Her two sons and her parents had planned to attend the graduation.

At about the same time his mother completed boot camp, Diego tested

positive for COVID-19. He had to quarantine for almost a month, but he recovered and is doing well now.

Even though they are at different duty stations, hundreds of miles apart, the mother and son service members keep in touch with each other often, whether by texting or Face/Time.

"We talk quite a bit," Bobbi said. "We talk about what we are doing. During technical school, I asked him questions on things for getting qualifications - and just to catch up on each other."

"We text every day and check up on each other and make sure we are doing all right," Diego said.

Bobbi's having the chance to serve in the Navy fulfills one of her passions, helping people. Before joining the service, she worked two jobs in health care, as a pharmacy technician and part-time as a patient care technician.

"That's who I am," she said. "To me, I think my job is very important because I'm taking care of that person that is going to be flying that plane. It's my job to make sure those pieces of equipment are functioning properly so the pilots can do what they need to do."

Throughout his life, Diego's mother worked several jobs so he and his younger brother would have the necessities and she was always there for them. He said his mother also taught him some valuable lessons about life that he applies to his service in the Navy.

"She just always told us to never give up," Diego said. "She always told us, 'You are never going to get handed anything, you've got to work for it.' We had that hard work mentality, and it stuck with us." 🇺🇸

From the Basketball Courts to Boot Camp



▶ Turner Grimm is going from basketball to boot camp as he prepares to leave for Great Lakes, Illinois in January 2021. Grimm is joining the Navy out of Salem, Oregon under the PACSEA program.

Story and photo by Daniel Rachal, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Portland Public Affairs

SALEM, Oregon - One night while watching a movie on television, after seeing a military commercial on television, Turner Grimm's mother-in-law asked jokingly "why don't you join the military?" It was a joke, however he did not have a steady job at the time, was working for family mostly and he had never thought about enlisting in the military before.

"The rest of the hour, my mind was like 'I should see what it's about,'" he said. "My first thought was war or shooting guns at people."

Grimm stayed up all night. He logged onto the Navy website and began looking at career fields and exploring the options that the Navy offers. After staying up all night, in the morning he presented his wife with a detailed plan for joining the Navy and what it could mean for his family. She thought he was kidding.

"She laughed at first," Grimm said. "Oh you

want to go into the military. I started explaining all I found. I can jump the gun pretty quick when I get excited about something."

For 2 weeks straight, he bothered her about it. She wanted to know that he was serious and understood that joining the Navy was not a normal job. His excitement persisted and, like all good athletes do, he prepared himself well and answered all of her questions.

Grimm has been playing basketball since he was four-years-old. Toward the end of eighth grade, he realized that he had enough talent to potentially play after high school. He was the second freshman to play varsity basketball at McMinnville High School. Those around him preached practice, working hard and focusing on school as the pillars of being able to play basketball in college.

During his sophomore year, college

offers started coming in daily. At first, most correspondence was from smaller Division Two and Division One schools. By his senior season, he was on a good Amateur Athletic Union team that went to tournaments and he played against better-known players, the type scouts thought could play professionally. Eventually, larger schools contacted him, asking him to walk on or, like Oregon State University, potentially offering a scholarship.

He walked on at the University of Oregon, but only lasted one season. During his freshman year, he realized how much different college basketball was from high school. Gone were the days of handholding and being given numerous breaks to help you succeed academically. Now, he was expected to be in class, sit in the front row and make it known you are there as a student.

"It was kind of a wake up call," he said. "I didn't realize that it became more of a business than anything. It's not like high school. When you get to college they treat it more like a business."

Basketball always came easy to Grimm, but school was always a challenge. At the end of his freshman year in Eugene, Oregon he went back to McMinnville, Oregon to work for his father. He was depressed because he wasn't playing basketball and lacked direction. He tried community college in Vancouver, Washington for a semester but it did not work out.

"I was lost for a little bit," he said. "I had been playing sports my whole life. That was weird for me, just made me feel like I didn't want to do anything. I got stuck in that pattern of not doing anything."

At 20, Grimm met a girl, Lishawn. Eventually, they moved in together. He was still trying to find himself and figure out what his future was without basketball and college. It was his girlfriend who pushed him to get out of his funk.

"She had the only job and income," he said. "She was super nice,"

She convinced him to take a job at UPS, which led to working late nights loading packages into trailers at a warehouse. That is where Grimm started his personal comeback.

A little over a year later, he started hanging fiber optic wires while also welcoming his first child, daughter Camden, into the world. Grimm did not want to turn his current job into a career, so he sat down with his wife to figure out his next move.

"That's when we decided to go back to school," Grimm said. "It's a WE decision, like going to the Navy. It took both of us. I don't do anything without her giving me the go."

Shortly after, he enrolled at Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon. He was there to finish his degree, but the thought of playing basketball again was also at the

forefront of his thoughts. Before he could lace up his shoes and step onto a court, he had to qualify academically for the team.

David Abderhalden, the head coach at Chemeketa, wanted Grimm on the team but let him know that everything was contingent upon clearing up his grades.

"We had a real heart to heart regarding his past," Coach Abderhalden said. "It was a great dialogue because it was very honest from both sides of the table. We verbally committed to give it a go and I put together an academic plan for him which was going to take him a year."

For that year, Grimm redshirted and went to practice and participated in team activities but was not eligible to play, all while paying his own way. He ended up doing very well, passed his classes and regained eligibility. He looked forward to being back on a team, being named a captain, and playing at the collegiate level. But that season, being on the court wasn't the only reward he would get for his hard work and perseverance.

"I was excited that I could still have an opportunity to play even though it was only one year," he said. "As the season started going on, I got more excited that I was going to actually be able to graduate."


Future Sailor Turner Grimm, at 24-years-old and the second-oldest player on the Chemeketa basketball team, was going to graduate college. His family literally filled the stands at the ceremony, as his foster parents, mother and father, step dad and step mom, mother and father-in-law, his wife and three children were all in attendance for what he called a very emotional event.

"My dad, it was the first time I've seen him cry in my entire life," he said.

Future Sailor Turner Grimm will graduate boot camp early next year and it is uncertain if he will be able to have fans in the stand for this ceremony. He isn't too concerned with that, at the moment though.

"As many people would come if they could. I've got a good support system around me, so I know everybody would be trying to get in there."

It is a support system, like a good team, who challenged him, helped him get out of a funk and gave him a sense of purpose to succeed. Now he wants the chance to be the leader of those who supported him most as he begins his journey as a Sailor. He hopes that by the end of his first 4 years of Naval service, he will have built the foundation that all great teams are built upon.

"Hopefully by that time I will have a rate in the Navy that I am turning into a career path," Grimm said. "We will be financially better off and in a better place for my family. It's all about trying to make sure my kids have what they need. Then take it another sixteen years." 

USAID Hosts Commander, Navy Recruiting Command

Story by Creative Writer Jordan Smith, Navy Recruiting Command Public Affairs Office

MILLINGTON, Tennessee — In honor of National Veterans and Military Families Month, Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, Commander for Navy Recruiting Command, spoke about his military service during a virtual event hosted by the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Hispanic Employee Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies (HECFAA) in collaboration with the Association of Naval Services Officers (ANSO) on November 19.

USAID is a foreign assistance organization that provides socioeconomic development assistance and civilian foreign aid. HECFAA and ANSO are non-profit organizations that work to promote recruitment, retention and career advancement of Hispanic and Latino Americans. They also promote a foreign affairs workforce that reflects the diversity of the United States, a goal that Velez shares for the Navy.

"Our Navy works really hard to ensure that everybody is advanced for what they do and what they bring to the table, not for what they look like," said Velez. "Our numbers in the enlisted ranks represent the country very well. The percentages of African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, Pacific Islanders and Native Americans are pretty representative of what the country looks like. Our Navy's honor, courage, commitment mantra really drives the data and having the courage and the commitment to do the right thing and really work hard to ensure that always includes us having a diverse organization."

Velez attends or speaks at many virtual engagements and conferences with the goal of increasing diversity in the Navy. He was the keynote speaker at an affinity conference called the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers in October. Other programs that the Navy participates in include the Society of Women Engineers and the National Society of Black Engineers. The Navy also has promotional days, which involves Sailors speaking to faculty and students of high schools, colleges and universities about opportunities in the Navy, especially in minority and underrepresented communities. Velez is also one of the line-of-effort leads for Task Force One Navy, which was established earlier this year to combat racism, sexism and harmful biases with the Navy's ranks.

During the diversity-focused USAID webinar, Velez discussed his experiences as a young Puerto Rican joining the Navy, the important skills he has learned from his nearly 28 years in the Navy, and how this has shaped his leadership philosophy.

"I started this journey in 1987 as an 18-year-old young man down in Puerto Rico," said Velez. "Never really thought I would make the Navy a career, but a friend of mine, who was a year ahead of me in high school, went to the Naval Academy, so I thought I'd give it a try."

Growing up watching "Star Trek" made Velez want to see new places, and he knew the Navy could make

that happen. When he attended the Naval Academy, he wanted to fly jets.

"I wanted to be a pilot and one day work for NASA," said Velez. "It all turned out a bit different, but it turned out in the right way."

The Navy took Velez to every continent and more than 60 countries where he met all types of different people. Those interactions gave Velez an expansive view of the world and that helped mold him into the leader he is today.

"The Navy has been a great equalizer because it allowed me to really see different perspectives," said Velez. "It taught me how to work, interact and lead different kinds of folks from all walks of life."

Many of the books about great leaders that Velez has read also contributed to his leadership philosophy, especially those portions that resonated with him like Adm. Burke's definition of leadership.

"Leadership is understanding people and involving them to help you do a job," quoted Velez. "And that really speaks to me because at the end of the day if you don't know your folks, you can never lead them, and that's probably the one critical piece about being a good leader - you need to know you: you need to know your people. You need to understand why they are who they are, what they do and why they do it, and how they got to where they are. That's the first step into becoming a leader for them."

Another source of inspiration for Velez was Field Marshal Montgomery's take on leadership.


"Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose and the character which inspires confidence," said Velez, quoting Montgomery.

Velez went on to explain what those words meant to him as a leader.

"You have to be a cheerleader," he said. "There are many amazing officers and leaders of industry that are good managers. They know their jobs and know how to get the mission accomplished, but they can't get people to rally around them to get the job done. It just makes everything much harder."

Velez said he believes leaders are not born, but rather they are forged. Trials, tribulations and experience are usually what transform people into great leaders.

Navy Recruiting Command consists of a command headquarters, three Navy Recruiting Regions, 26 NTAGs and 64 Talent Acquisition Onboarding Centers that serve more than 1,000 recruiting stations around the world. Their mission is to attract the highest quality candidates to assure the ongoing success of America's Navy.

For more news from Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, go to <http://www.cnrc.navy.mil>. Follow Navy Recruiting on Facebook (www.facebook.com/NavyRecruiting), Twitter (@USNRecruiter) and Instagram (@USNRecruiter). 

COMNAVCRUITCOM FY20 National Award Winners

The Navy's Career Recruiting Force (CRF) makes up about 20 percent of Navy recruiting, yet are the cornerstone of the most highly motivated and best trained personnel of any command. CRF members possess a thorough knowledge of recruiting techniques and administration as well as leadership and management skills. This team of exceptional talent acquisition leaders was established to provide consistency and leadership in the recruiting effort. To honor and reward the best and brightest of these leaders the Recruiter of the Year awards was established. We are proud to present the National Award Winners for the year 2020.



Platinum Winner

NTAG Ohio River Valley

Bronze Winners

NTAG Red River

NTAG Nashville

NTAG Pittsburgh

NTAG Portland

NTAG Rocky Mountain

NTAG Houston

NTAG Phoenix

Active Enlisted Recruiter of the Year

NC1 Paul Rydberg (NTAG Houston)

Reserve Enlisted Recruiter of the Year

HM2 Jennifer Deaton (NTAG Ohio River Valley)

Active Officer Recruiter of the Year

Lt. Cmdr. Lennox Smith (NTAG Philadelphia)

Reserve Officer Recruiter of the Year

Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Meehan (N3R-Millington)

Chaplain Program Recruiter of the Year

Lt. Cmdr. Dayton Nelson (NTAG Northern Plains)

Medical Officer Recruiter of the Year

NC1(IW) Ryan Evans (NTAG San Antonio)

Officer Nuclear Recruiter of the Year

NC1(SW) Christopher Thomas (NTAG San Antonio)

Enlisted Nuclear Field Recruiter of the Year

OS1(SW) Gabriel King (NTAG Richmond)

Active Enlisted Recruiter of the Year

NC1 Paul Rydberg (NTAG Houston)

NSW and NSO Recruiter of the Year

EOC(Sel)(SCW) William Walker (NTAG Southwest)

LPO of the Year

NC1(SW/AW) Samuel Mehok (NTAG Carolina)

Discipline Director of the Year

NC1(SW) Nicholas Juliano (NTAG Rocky Mountain)

DLCPO of the Year

NCC(SS) Ray Roberts (NTAG Rocky Mountain)

NTAG Sourcer of the Year

ITS2(SS) Marlin Flanders (NTAG Ohio River Valley)

NTAG Assessor of the Year

CTI1(IW/SW) Jacob Smith (NTAG Pittsburgh)

NTAG Onboarder of the Year

LS1(AW/SW) Joseph Rivera (NTAG Nashville)

Classifier of the Year

STS1(SS) John Caronquintal (NTAG Phoenix)

Support Person of the Year

LS1(SW/AW) Teresa Leon (NTAG Miami)

Recruiter Spotlight

Every week, a selected Navy Talent Acquisition Group chooses one Sailor with a special story to tell. We are highlighting them here so people across the country can see who our recruiters truly are. To learn more about these extraordinary Sailors, visit our website at www.cnrc.navy.mil.

August

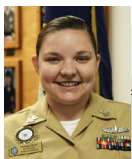


Navy Counselor 1st Class Natalie Brown

Operations Specialist 2nd Class Giavanna D. Walker



September



Fire Controlman 1st Class Mercedes Lair

Navy Counselor 1st Class Patricia Merryman



Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handler) 2nd Class Raymond Henson

Chief Master-at-Arms Michael Barron



October



Navy Counselor 1st Class Edson Felismino

Air Traffic Controller 1st Class Jaime Britt



Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Brittany Wenzel

Machinery Repairman 1st Class Fue Lor



Operations Specialist 1st Class Jamison Tutt

November



Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class Lester Hamilton

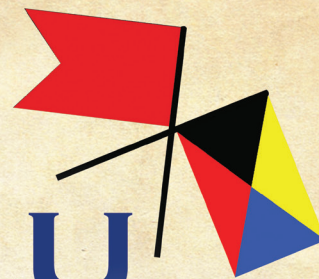
Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Americo Rosario



Operations Specialist 2nd Class John Murray

Engineman 1st Class Eden Avelino





BRAVO ZULU

As part of a new initiative, Rear Adm. Dennis Velez would like to offer a Bravo Zulu to the following individuals for performing exceptionally during a unique time in Navy Recruiting.

Belt Buckles:

9-Oct	MM2 Gamarra	NTAG Red River
14-Oct	HM1 Rydberg	NTAG Houston
16-Oct	MA2 Clayton	NTAG Southwest
22-Oct	NC1 Cabrera	NTAG Miami
	RS2 Brooks	NTAG Miami
23-Oct	OS2 Darden	NTAG Atlanta
30-Oct	OS2 Ganzel	NTAG New England
6-Nov	AD1 Puerta	NTAG Pacific
13-Nov	AD1 Turner	NTAG New Orleans
27-Nov	AT1 Lattier	NTAG Golden Gate
30-Nov	BM2 Rodriguez	NTAG San Antonio
	ITS2 Davis	NTAG San Antonio

Lapel Pins:

1-Oct	Mrs. Aimes-Tillman, N9	NRC HQ
	Mrs. Webb, N9	NRC HQ
	Mrs. Carter, N9	NRC HQ





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