

# **NAVY** Future of the Fleet **RECRUITER**

## **CNRC Introduces Junior Officer Diversity Outreach Program**

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## **Recruiting Headquarters Receives COVID Vaccine**

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## **Plank, Row Become Newest Changes to PRT**

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# From the Admiral

Rear Admiral Dennis Velez  
Commander, Navy Recruiting Command



Recruiting Nation,

It has been quite a year already. Thank you for all that you do every day to ensure we are able to make mission. That said, I want to start by encouraging you to get vaccinated. While some of you may think you don't need it, it is a sure way to minimize the transmission path for the virus and keep your families and shipmates safe. For me, it has given me a sense of safety as I have traveled and visited with many of you throughout these last few months, and that is so valuable to me. In January, I was fortunate enough to beat the winter weather and participate in the NRS Yakima station opening. It was a great event and I know the community of Yakima is happy to have Navy back. In February and March I was able to visit with more than 200 recruiters in the DC, Philadelphia, Empire State, Portland, and San Antonio AORs. Nothing is better than seeing you all in action and continuing to thrive in these challenging times. I cannot wait to see more of you in the next few months.

There are a few reoccurring concerns I am hearing on these visits, and I want to assure you that we hear you, and we are working hard for you.

We are currently testing how having an iPad can help our recruiters in the field. So far we have received positive feedback on this, especially amongst our talent scouts. We have some work to do here, but we are working hard to come up with the right solution for MRI issues.

We know that getting into high schools has still been a challenge. We are working with our marketing and advertising department to get Sailors virtually involved in the classroom by creating videos that can be used by teachers to discuss different topics our community is expert in.

Also, in view of the legalization of marijuana in many states, we have modified our drug screening policies to ensure we don't lose Future Sailors in this environment. I hope to have some guidance on this soon.

On another note, I know many of you saw what happened at the Capitol in January and what continues to happen in pockets of our country and throughout social media. Extremism is dangerous and goes against our core values, good order and discipline. Please remember that you wear and/or represent the cloth of our nation and how you conduct yourself privately and publicly matters.

As always, I appreciate your efforts toward mission, while also remaining healthy and safe. I know you are giving your full effort, and as always, I am humbled by all you do.

Thank you!

Rear Adm. Dennis Velez

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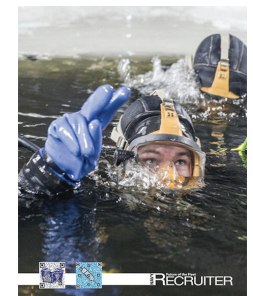
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#### FRONT COVER:

Deck-plate and leadership Sailor's hands at Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, encircle the command crest to reflect diversity as a strength throughout all Navy recruiting. (Photo illustration by Kim Hyback and Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Elijah Newton)



#### BACK COVER:

LITTLE FALLS, Minn. - (Feb. 21, 2021) Navy Diver 3rd Class Amyn Maloney, assigned to Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 2, signals to a dive team member on the frozen lake top during an ice diving drill at Camp Ripley in Little Falls, Minn. (Photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Jeff Atherton)

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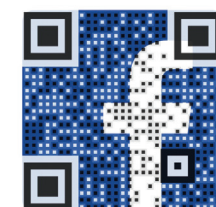
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Navy Recruiter encourages the submission of "Letters to the Editor" and articles expressing the opinion of individuals in the Navy recruiting community. All submissions must be signed. Send submissions to: [elijah.g.leinaar@navy.mil](mailto:elijah.g.leinaar@navy.mil)



# CNRC Promotes New Chief Petty Officers During Pandemic

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Elijah Newton, Navy Recruiting Command  
Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Preston Jarrett, Navy Recruiting Command

▼ Chief Machinist's Mate Jilmar Pena renders a salute as he passes through side boys during a chief petty officer pinning ceremony at Commander, Navy Recruiting Command.

MILLINGTON, Tenn. – In the midst of COVID-19 precautions, five Sailors from Commander, Navy Recruiting Command (CNRC) joined the ranks of the chief's mess during a chief petty officer pinning ceremony in front of CNRC headquarters, Jan. 29.

During the past nine weeks of chief initiation, chiefs at CNRC came together to make sure that new chiefs were able to get effective training while also following the COVID-19 precautions. This year's chief training was jointly ran by chiefs from

Naval Support Activity Mid-South, which is comprised of six different commands and more than 400 chief petty officers.

"There's definitely a sense of pride and accomplishment in making chief," said Chief Carlo Flaccavento, E-talent division leading chief petty officer at CNRC. "I'm grateful to all the people that have gotten me to where I'm at because I didn't get me here on my own."

After first class petty officers learn that they have been selected for promotion to

chief petty officer, they immediately go into intensive training to learn leadership lessons and adjust their mindset to be able to fulfill the new paygrade and responsibilities that come with it. This process is called "chief season," and the lessons, heritage and traditions learned date back to the establishment of the chief petty officer on April 1, 1893.

"As a first class, I would think how I can get the job done and how good a job I will do," said Chief Petty Officer Jilmar Pena. "Now I think outward. By getting this done, how will it impact my Sailors, the command . . . so on and so forth."

The new chiefs also learn they are not alone through this process. It's all about teamwork and helping out the Sailors around them.

"The greatest thing I believe I've learned throughout this process is that it's okay to ask for help when you need it," said Chief Petty Officer Marlin Wren, the leading chief petty officer of Information Assurance department. "You'll be welcomed with open arms when you need help"

COVID-19 presented this chief season with unique challenges, forcing the chiefs mess to get creative with the way they train their new chiefs. They weren't allowed to be in groups larger than ten or close proximity during face-to-face interaction. Face masks were always required as well as strict following of CDC guidelines to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus.

"With the limitations of in-person interaction, we had to find meaningful alternatives to ensure that we are still providing good training that they need," said Senior Chief Petty Officer Sheryl Gutierrez, CNRC chief season leader for Naval Support Activity Mid-South.

Though the chief lessons span 128 years of history and experience, there was nothing antiquated about the fiscal year 2021 chief season, according to Chief Mass Communication Specialist Elijah G. Leinaar, chief season Heritage and Public Affairs committees leader.

"We issued the chief selectees iPads and equipment to be able to complete their training any time, location or COVID risk mitigation. Being able to hold training virtually with the largest chief's mess in the world was a technical challenge we were able to overcome," said Leinaar. "I'm proud I was able to be a part of this year's season because it reflects how the U.S. Navy is

the most technically advanced naval force in the world and chiefs are able to find working solutions despite any challenges COVID presented."

Even with the trials presented by COVID-19 restrictions, the new chiefs still feel like they got the best training available.

"They had many hurdles, if not more, to face than we did to get us the proper training to become chiefs," said Flaccavento. "I think they did a fantastic job training us with what they had."

Although the chiefs were limited to what they could do for training, they were able to find some unexpected benefits to virtual training. Through video conferences they were able to connect with each other no matter how far apart they were. They were still able to stay engaged and share experiences together.



▲ Top - Chief Machinist's Mate Jilmar Pena gets pinned by family members during a chief pinning ceremony at Commander, Navy Recruiting Command.

▲ Above - Navy Recruiting Command's Command Master Chief Ricardo Moreyra (left) and Commander, Navy Recruiting Command Rear Adm. Dennis Velez (right) congratulate Chief Information Systems Technician Marlin Wren during a chief pinning ceremony at Commander, Navy Recruiting Command.





# North Carolina Enlists Newest Sailors Virtually

Story and photo illustration by Gregory White, Navy Recruiting Command

RALEIGH, NC - On Wednesday, February 3rd Rear Admiral Murray "Joey" Tynch, Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific (COMLOG WESTPAC) Commander Task Force 73 (CTF 73) enlisted nine North Carolina residents into the United States Navy Delayed Entry Program (DEP). Chief Cryptologic Technician-Maintenance Richard Brown, a native of White Plains, NY, hosted the virtual enlistment and served as master of ceremonies.

"Honestly, it's the first time I've been a part of something like that so I think it's great because even as a chief in the Navy I've only had a handful of meetings with an admiral," said Brown.

"And to have such a casual sleeves-up sit down with him, and for him to be there for these future Sailors, is just incredible."

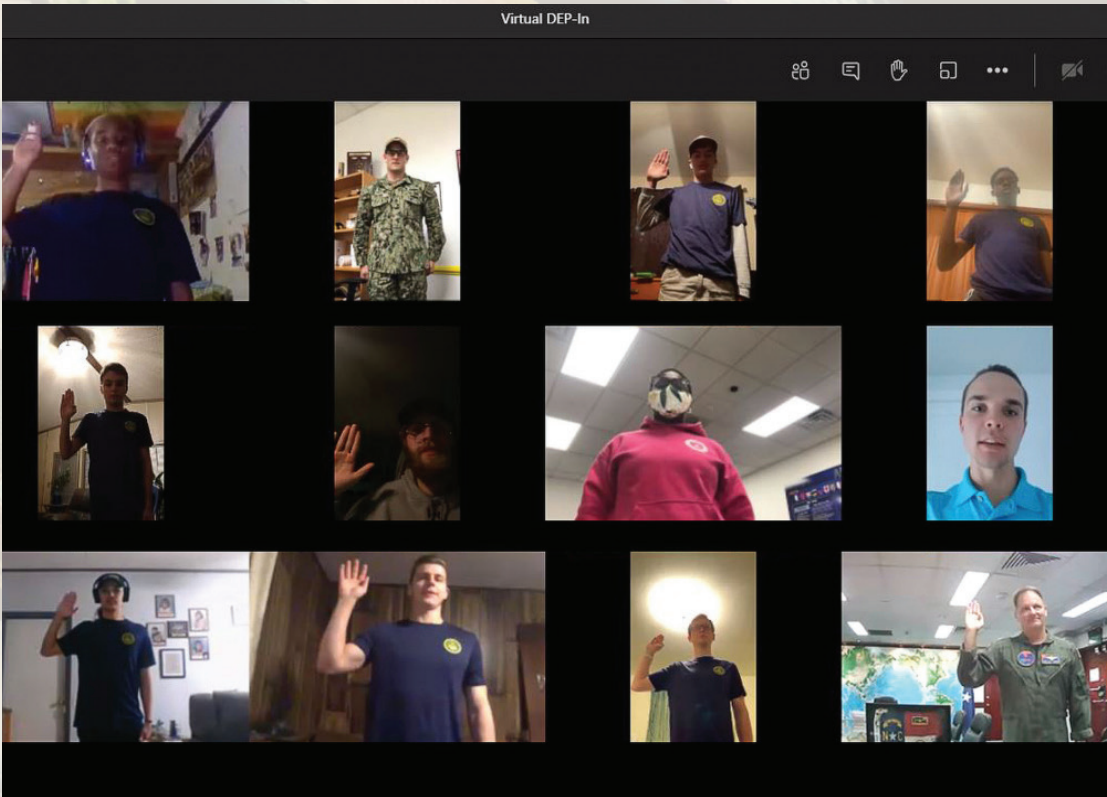
Upon entering the Teams meeting, Rear Adm. Tynch wasted no time getting to know the young men and women he was preparing to enlist. Being that he is a North Carolina native himself, it was just as big of a deal for him as it was for the future Sailors in attendance.

He made it known that he grew up fishing and surfing in the "great north state" and that he attended college at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He spoke at length about his love for his home state and his love for the US Navy. Then, after leading those future Sailors in attendance through the Oath of Enlistment, Rear Adm. Tynch gave them a few words of encouragement.

"As the newest members of the Department of Defense, you are about to swear an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States," said Tynch, and reminded them that they must embody the values and ideals of the nation they are about to serve.

He also reminded them that at times that their journey will be tough but when it is to just hold on. He emphasized the importance of taking those hard days just a few minutes at a time.

"Five more minutes," said Tynch. "Then after that, just another five more. I want you to promise me you'll do that."



That's how you're going to make it through the tough times."

It was the practical advice of an experienced Navy admiral with a career stretching more than 30 years. It was the advice of a man openly remembering where he came from and what he went through to get to where he is now.

"And I want you all to keep in contact with your families and your friends," Tynch continued.

It was the advice, and an experience, to which North Carolina's newest future Sailors responded with positive vigor.

"Meeting an admiral made me go 'Wow!'," said Lance Schave, a Cameron, North Carolina resident and participant in the virtual enlistment. "Doing the Oath of Enlistment was nice too. It felt nice doing it."

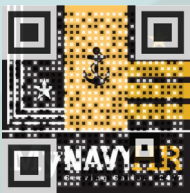
According to Brown, experiences like this can really motivate a future Sailor.

"For some of these guys meeting an admiral like that might be all the motivation they need to say, 'Wait, he joined out of Raleigh. I'm joining out of Raleigh. He flew helicopters and has served for 33 years. I want to be like that guy. I want to be an admiral in the United States Navy'," said Brown.

The virtual enlistment concluded with RDML Tynch opening the floor for a question and answer session before bidding all in attendance his best wishes. 🇺🇸

# Plank, Row Become Newest Changes to PRT

Story and photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Tyler Priestley, Navy Recruiting Command



Information Systems Technician 1st Class Caleb Womack performs a plank in preparation of the upcoming Physical Readiness Test

"The transition to the plank is a wise move on the Navy's part," said Chief Cryptological Technician (Interpretive) Justin West, Navy Recruiting Command's Command Fitness Leader. "It is a better gauge of an individual's core strength than the curl-up is, and there is less chance of sustaining injury or strain on the lower back than with the curl-ups."

An example of the plank scoring goes as follows: Sailors age 17-19 must reach a minimum time of one minute 30 seconds in order to pass. The required time to achieve maximum points is three minutes 40 seconds.

From there, the time needed is decreased by five seconds as you go up each age bracket. The plank

MILLINGTON, Tenn. – The Navy is replacing the "curl-up" portion of its Physical Readiness Test (PRT) with the "plank," as well as adjusting the physical health assessment (PHA) requirements. The changes improve requirements while taking into consideration current pandemic challenges.

A plank is a core strength exercise that looks much like a push-up in the raised position with the person using their feet and arms to support their weight while holding their core body straight. The main difference is using a person's forearms rather than the palms of their hands while keeping perfectly still.

COVID-19 has brought many changes to the Navy, with one of them being the cancellation of multiple PHAs. In 2021, there will be one PHA instead of the usual two. This PRT will introduce the plank and will also introduce a rowing machine as an alternative cardio option.

The Navy chose to do only one cycle of the PHA to aid in mitigating the spread of the coronavirus and allow more time for the COVID-19 vaccine to be widely distributed throughout the fleet. The PHA cycle will go from July 1 to Dec. 31, 2021.

For this cycle, Sailors will not receive a "fail" for the PRT if they do not meet minimum requirements for the plank as long as they pass the push-ups and cardio portions.

As of now, this exception is only for the upcoming 2021 cycle.

scoring is gender-neutral just as the curl-up portion was.

"I've seen the PHA and PRT changes come and go the last seven years, and I think planks make the most sense of any of the improvements," said Information Specialist Technician 1st Class Caleb Womack. "I like running the cardio portion, but can see where rowing is a lot easier on your knees. It's a better option for many people."

With rowing being introduced as an alternative cardio option, Sailors must row a set distance of 2,000 meters. Score is based on how long it takes a Sailor to reach the 2,000-meter mark. Unlike the plank, the scores for the row are affected by gender and altitude.

At an altitude of less than 5,000 feet, a male age 17-19 must reach 2,000 meters by seven minutes for maximum score, and nine minutes 20 seconds would net them a probationary score. A female of the same age and altitude would be eight minutes and 10 minutes 30 seconds for the same respective scores. Sailors above 5,000 feet are allotted slightly more time.

"I think it will be well received," said West. "Planks are a fairly standard exercise for core workouts, and the rowing machine is a popular cardio workout for a lot of Sailors. More so, in my opinion, than the recently removed elliptical." 🇺🇸



# Recruiting Headquarters Receives COVID Vaccine

Story and photos by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cody Anderson, Navy Recruiting Command

MILLINGTON, Tenn. — As the Navy continues its phased distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) personnel are volunteering to be some of the first to receive the vaccine in the recruiting field. Since Jan. 4, more than 30 people assigned to NRC headquarters have received their first round of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Navy is first offering the vaccine to essential healthcare workers, providers, emergency services and public safety personnel. The next phase includes mission-critical personnel by the command, followed by service members who are preparing to deploy within the next three months. After these personnel receive their vaccines, less critical service members and their beneficiaries will be able to volunteer to receive the vaccine. The Department of Defense (DoD) does not currently require service members to receive the vaccine; however, many Sailors have volunteered in

an effort to reduce the spread of the virus.

Command Master Chief Daniel Tschida, the COVID deputy at CNRC, who has been in charge of coordinating volunteers to receive their vaccine said service members have stepped up to receive the vaccine for a multitude of reasons.

“For the majority, it really stems from wanting to be part of society again and helping to prevent others from getting sick. It’s just them doing their part to help recover from this pandemic,” said Tschida. “Others have more personal reasons. Some members have family and children who would be greatly affected by being infected with COVID. Some have children with underlying health conditions while others live with their 75-year-old-plus parents; if they were to get it they might struggle to survive.”

Capt. Steven Milinkovich, NRC’s chief of staff, is aware of skepticism regarding the vaccine, though he views it as a simple cost-benefit analysis.

“We read about the side effects of actually getting the virus, and we also read the side effects of taking the vaccine,” said Milinkovich. “The side effects of getting the virus are generally and widely reported as being worse and more frequent than the side effects of getting the vaccine.”

Milinkovich said he believes that being infected with COVID-19 is not a matter of if, but when. His thought process is not without precedence. As of Jan. 27, more than 25 million Americans have already been diagnosed with COVID-19. Of those infected, more than 425,000 people have died from the disease. Instances are on the rise with the US reporting its greatest number of single day cases on Jan. 8, with more than 300,000 new cases.

Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, who received his first round of the COVID-19 vaccine, stresses the importance of his fellow service members stepping up and volunteering to receive the vaccine when it is available.

“Getting the vaccine is a safe, selfless act that helps protect not only ourselves but our

an individual. However, the products are not interchangeable, meaning you must receive both rounds from the same manufacturer to gain immunity.

The vaccines have received Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in order to more quickly resolve the current public health crisis. An EUA is authorized by the government during public health crises when there is sufficient evidence to believe that a product is safe and is likely to treat or prevent disease. This EUA was only authorized after the FDA rigorously tested the vaccines for safety and efficacy during each vaccine’s respective trials. The DoD is confident that the work done by the FDA ensures the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines.

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. 🇺🇸

▼ Force Master Chief Chris Detje, Navy Personnel Command, receives the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine from Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Brian Alsobrook.



▼ Yeoman 1st Class Chad Grant from Navy Personnel Command Grant receives the COVID-19 vaccine from Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Brian Alsobrook.

▼ Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Brian Alsobrook fills a syringe with the COVID-19 vaccine.



families, our communities and our nation,” said Velez. “This is a simple way to put this behind us and stay healthy so we can continue our critical mission of manning the fleet.”

There are currently two vaccines circulating throughout the United States. Both were developed with the support of Operation Warp Speed, a multibillion-dollar program that was greenlit by the U.S. government to accelerate the creation and production of the COVID-19 vaccine. Through this program, Pfizer and Moderna developed two separate vaccines which both require two doses of the product, given in an interval of 21 or 28 days, respectively, to provide full immunity for



# Pittsburgh Native's Career Takes Flight

Story and photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Benjamin Dobbs,  
Navy Talent Acquisition Group Pittsburgh

▲ Spenser Neel takes the Oath of Enlistment into the U.S. Navy at the Jefferson Memorial Cemetery, Funeral Home and Crematory.

PITTSBURGH – A man dressed in a black suit and tie sits at a table reviewing documents inside an office space at a funeral home. His eyes attentively scan the pages in front of him while he holds an ink pen in his hand. After careful review, he prepares to sign papers that will change his life, and the lives of his loved ones, forever.

Spenser Neel, a Pittsburgh native and 2009 graduate of Thomas Jefferson High School, waits inside the Jefferson Memorial Cemetery and Funeral Home, which was founded by his great grandfather Harry C. Neel in 1929. The business was passed down to his grandfather, John D. Neel, and is currently ran by his father, also Harry C. Neel, who is President and CEO. The cemetery and funeral home is owned and operated as a fourth-generation family enterprise and is one of the largest, privately owned cemeteries in the United States.

Photos of Neel's great-grandfather, grandfather and dad are on prominent display in the entrance of the building, but it isn't long after entering the establishment one might realize that their family is bound by much more than the daily business conducted at this location.

Framed photos and paintings from the World War II era and aviation history photos line the hallways and staircases. All of them reveal a more detailed, and perhaps unexpected insight into the history of the Neel family.

Neel's grandfather, John Neel, joined the Army Air Corps in 1944 and was a World War II B-25 pilot who earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions. Neel flew 52 combat missions and bombed a railroad bridge at Maribor, Yugoslavia, on April 12, 1945, during a mission in which one B-25 was destroyed and 17 were damaged. The Distinguished Flying Cross was established by Congress in 1926 and is awarded to those serving in the Armed Forces who distinguish themselves for heroism or outstanding achievement while participating in aerial combat.

John Neel was honored with a painting of himself depicting

his heroic deeds during World War II on the walls of the family business. It was in front of this image more than 75 years after his last flight that his son Harry Neel, who joined the Navy in 1972 and spent six years as a naval aviator, would administer the oath for his grandson Spenser's swearing in ceremony.

"Today was significant for a couple of reasons," said Neel. "I lost my grandfather close to 10 years ago. Despite knowing he couldn't hear any of that, it had a lot of meaning, and I know that if he were here today he'd be proud that I'm following in his footsteps, and my Dad's footsteps."

In addition to his grandfather, both of Neel's parents, Harry and Marianne Neel have their civilian pilot's licenses.

Neel contemplated his career options after he graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics and eventually decided to join the Navy. He called his father one day to inform him he wanted to join the Navy.

"It is certainly rewarding to have my son going to the United States Navy and most specifically into naval aviation," said Neel. "It was a proud day for me without question. If I could do it all over again I would, but I can't, so we pass the baton to the next generation. I'll be very proud to see Spenser go through OCS (Officer Candidate School), get commissioned and go through flight school to get his wings."

The generations of the Neel family are connected through making the commitment to serve. That commitment is continuing into the future with the latest oath taken.

"This is a career that is going to ask more from me than anything I've ever experienced in my life, and I can't be more excited," said Neel. "I want to do what my dad and grandpa did, and I think I'll be good at it. I want to do something that would make my family proud, my wife proud if I were to ever have kids, would make them proud. I want to do something bigger than myself and I couldn't think of a better thing to do than go fly for the Navy." 🇺🇸

# NTAG Ohio River Valley Pins Newest Chiefs After Socially Distanced CPO Season

Story and photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Brian Dietrick,  
Navy Talent Acquisition Group Ohio River Valley

COLUMBUS, Ohio – After a much different initiation season than in years past, Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Ohio River Valley welcomed the newest chiefs to the mess in two virtual socially-distanced ceremonies in Ohio and Kentucky.

During the past nine weeks, 10 of NTAG Ohio River Valley's best and brightest recruiters transitioned from first class petty officer to earning the privilege to be referred to as "chief." It was a very different training environment than in years past as the sessions were done in a virtual setting.

"We completed the training virtually from three different locations," said Chief Navy Counselor Greg Perpignan, chief season co-leader. "Even though we had challenges to overcome because of COVID-19, we made it happen and it still held the high standards of training they would get in a normal year."

The Sailors who were pinned to chief during the ceremony were: Chief Aviation Ordnanceman Joshua Collins, Chief Navy Counselor Ronald Cooper, Chief Navy Counselor Alec Granderson, Chief Information System Technician Tatiana Green, Chief Navy Counselor Christopher Harkins, Chief Navy Counselor Trisha Hoskins, Chief Navy Counselor Benjamin James, Chief Machinist's Mate (Nuclear) Christopher Lang, Chief Navy Counselor Trevor Rawdon and Chief Gunner's Mate Harvey Sleesman.

After first class petty officers learn that they have been selected for promotion to chief petty officer, they immediately go into intensive training to learn leadership lessons and adjust their mindset to be able to fulfill the new paygrade and responsibilities that come with it. This process is called chief season, and the lessons, heritage and traditions learned date back to the establishment of the chief on April 1, 1893.

"There is a huge sense of pride

and accomplishment in being selected for chief," said Chief Navy Counselor Trisha Hoskins. "I'm very grateful to my friends, family and shipmates that have gotten me to where I am because I surely didn't do it on my own."

COVID-19 presented this chief season with unique obstacles, forcing the chiefs mess to get creative with the way they train their new chiefs. They weren't allowed to be in groups larger than 10 or in close proximity during face-to-face interactions. Face masks were always required as well as strict following of CDC guidelines to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus.

Even with the trials presented by COVID-19 restrictions, the new chiefs agree that they got the best training available.

"I'm proud to have been a part of this season because it shows that the Navy and the chiefs mess can adapt and overcome," said Chief Navy Counselor Dion Hewell, Chief season co-leader. "We, as chiefs, can figure it out and make it happen, regardless of what is in our way." 🇺🇸

▼ From left to right; Machinist's Mate (Nuclear) Christopher Lang, Chief Information System Technician Tatiana Green, Chief Navy Counselor Trevor Rawdon and Chief Navy Counselor Benjamin James pose for a group photo during a virtual socially-distanced Chief Petty Officer pinning ceremony in Ohio and Kentucky.







# U.S. NAVY RESERVE

## Reserve Sailors Are Valuable Part Of Recruiting Command

Story and photos by Admiral Robert Nowakowski,  
Deputy Commander, Navy Recruiting Command



▲ Petty Officer 1st Class Adam Schulze as acting Lead chief petty officer for Commander Navy Recruiting Command Staff Judge Advocate. (Photo by Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Preston Jarrett)

MILLINGTON, Tenn. – Since early March 2020, the entire planet has diligently and creatively collaborated to adapt and overcome the COVID-19 pandemic – a historic health crisis of the greatest magnitude, the likes of which have not been seen in more than 100 years. Global cooperation on many levels has altered the ways people communicate, plan and lead on a daily basis.

That collaboration has been felt locally at

the Staff Judge Advocate office (SJA), at Navy Recruiting Command.

Due to the rising demand for paralegal support needed in order to execute Recruiting Nation mission requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic, it became priority one to leverage the strategic depth and operational capabilities of the Navy Reserves. The seamless integration and cooperation between Active and Reserve Sailors has been incredibly successful.

“The mission of the Navy Reserve is to provide strategic depth and deliver operational capabilities to the Navy and Marine Corps team and Joint forces, in times of peace or war,” said Rear Adm. Robert Nowakowski, Deputy Commander, Navy Recruiting Command (CNRC). “As soon as the demand signal for reserve support was triggered, our team quickly engaged with the Deputy JAG for Reserve Affairs & Operations Team and, within weeks, received the necessary support from these elite Reserve Sailors.”

PO1 Adam Schultz, acting lead chief petty officer for CNRC SJA, was the catalyst for working upfront with the Reserve Affairs & Operations team to pioneer and seamlessly integrate the Reserve Sailors as well as sustain and support them throughout the duration of their orders.

“I was nervous when I first heard we would be getting remote Reserve support from Arkansas, Texas, Washington, and California,” said Schultz. “Primarily because telework was a new concept for me, especially remote telework, and at the time I had neither led, nor managed, anyone in that type of environment. Through CNRC’s ability to have Navy/Marine Corps Internet assets delivered to them, along with granting access to our file system, it was as

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

Thousands of hours of support were provided by four enlisted Reserve Sailors starting in June 2020: PO1 Gabriela Guerrero, PO1 Kenneth L. Connor II, CPO Shakira R. Fisher and PO1 Christina D. Oliver. Each provided superb support.

“Sustained Reserve support has been critical to the mission accomplishment of the Navy Recruiting Command Staff Judge Advocate’s office over the past year,” said Lt. Cmdr. Greg Young, Navy Recruiting Command Staff Judge Advocate. “And the type of support we’ve received is the best and most productive I have seen in my career. It takes careful coordination, but we’re consistently seeing Reservists start supporting remotely and, within a week or two, they become fully integrated members of the legs team, managing their own projects and portfolios of work. Without exaggerating, I’m not sure we could have gotten everything done without them.” Serving as a Legalman has afforded Fisher many opportunities to serve at a broad array of military commands. She said CNRC was by far one of the best commands she has worked for as a Reserve Sailor.

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

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

And the Reserve Sailor support to Recruiting Nation continues. In March 2021, Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Benson executed long-term orders to be the interim Staff Judge Advocate as Young and his family transition to civilian life, and the command awaits his permanent replacement later in the Summer 2021.

“Taking orders to support the active duty component has been the most rewarding aspect of being a Selected Reserve member,” said Benson. “Having served as the Staff Judge Advocate for Naval Special Warfare Center and Naval Special Warfare Command for the last two summers, respectively, I know how valuable it can be to provide continuity and balance during gapped billets, or when



workload exceeds available manning. The opportunity to assist Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, this year has been just as, if not more, rewarding than each of my past experiences. Reconnecting with my active duty teammates and providing legal support to leaders across the enterprise is why I took the oath of office to serve many years ago, and being a part of Navy Recruiting – a mission so integral and vital to our branch services’ health and success – is an absolute honor. I’m extremely proud to be able to step in when needed, and I’m grateful to remain a part of the Navy JAG community as a member of the Reserves.”

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

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

▲ Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Benson as the interim Staff Judge Advocate. (Courtesy photo)



# NRC Celebrates the Opening of NRS Yakima

Story and photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cody Anderson, Navy Recruiting Command



▲ Commander, Navy Recruiting Command Rear Adm. Dennis Velez (right) and Mayor of Yakima, Patricia Byers, perform the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the grand opening of Naval Recruiting Station Yakima.

YAKIMA, Wash. – Navy Talent Acquisition Group Pacific Northwest (NTAG PACNORWEST) held a grand opening ceremony for their newest location, Navy Recruiting Station (NRS) Yakima, Jan. 26. Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, and National Chief Recruiter, Master Chief Navy Counselor Heather Charara, alongside the mayor of Yakima, Patricia Byers, marked the facility opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The event marked the first opening of an NRS in the city of Yakima in more than six years.

Cmdr. Dan Washington, commander of NTAG PACNORWEST, says he believes the opening of NRS Yakima will have a positive impact on the community.

"It's great to be out here, re-establishing a presence where we can create some really awesome opportunities for the youth of

this community," said Washington. "There's going to be a lot of opportunities and a lot of people getting started on some really exciting careers just by walking through the doors here. I couldn't be any more proud of the NTAG Pacific Northwest Team."

The opening of NRS Yakima is already having a positive impact on some Future Sailors who are now able to attend their Delayed Entry Program (DEP) meetings closer to home. Before the opening of NRS Yakima, some prospective Sailors would have to travel upwards to 3 hours for their meetings. Now their travel time has been cut down to minutes rather than hours.

"It means a lot, not only for me, but for other Future Sailors," said Gorge Englishdoty, a future Sailor in DEP. "It's so much more convenient for all of us. I think it's great seeing Yakima and the Kittitas county area show more support for the services."

# Eye on the Field



▲ SEATTLE, – (Mar. 19, 2021) Cmdr. John Hiltz, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Pacific Northwest's (NTAG PACNORWEST) Commanding Officer, gives a speech during a change of command ceremony held at the Museum of Flight. NTAG PACNORWEST oversees Navy recruiting efforts in the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana and Washington and manages 43 recruiting stations in the region. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cody Anderson)

▲ JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND AFB, Tex. – (Feb. 1, 2021) Chief Quartermaster Harry Warner, of Alvin, Texas, an enlisted classifier/shipping clerk assigned to Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) San Antonio, receives the initial dose of the COVID-19 vaccine from Air Force 1st Lt. Sarah Caouette, a registered nurse, assigned to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit at Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center. (Photo by Burrell Parmer, NTAG San Antonio Public Affairs)



# Eye on the Fleet



▲ EL CENTRO, Calif. – (Feb. 26, 2021) Lt. Katlin Foster, events coordinator of the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron of the Blue Angels, conducts ground support operations during the Blue Angels winter training flight demonstrations at Naval Air Facility El Centro. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Drew Verbis)

▲ MOMBASA, Kenya – (Feb. 09, 2021) Dr. Monica Juma, Cabinet Secretary and Minister of Defence to Kenya, walks through the side boys of the Expeditionary Sea Base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Eric Coffey)





# CNRC Introduces Junior Officer Diversity Outreach Program

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Zachary Eshleman, Navy Recruiting Command

▲ Members of Navy Recruiting Command's Diversity and Outreach department and participants in the Junior Officer Diversity Outreach (JODO) program speak to students at Hambrick Middle School. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Zachary Eshleman)

▼ Members of Navy Recruiting Command's diversity team and participants of the Junior Officer Diversity Outreach program visit Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Elijah Newton)

HOUSTON – In February 2021, Navy Recruiting Command's (NRC) outreach and diversity team traveled from their headquarters in Millington, Tennessee to Houston as part of Navy Promotional Days (NPD) and the first iteration of their new Junior Officer Diversity Outreach (JODO) program.

The JODO program brings successful naval officers, from diverse backgrounds and cultures, out of the fleet for a short time and places them face to face with students and community leaders around the country in an effort to show what it possible to achieve through Naval service.

"I can go in with my own personal experience and tell my story about how I became a naval officer," said Lt. Cmdr. Isaiah Stokes, a JODO participant. "The goal is just to inform, and hopefully through

informing students about the Navy as a career we can cultivate a military that is more reflective of the United States."

Even with a power outage at Glenda Dawson High School, the team continued their mission, and gave presentations in the light of the student's cell phones. This event, coupled with several other school visits, let them reach out to youth directly without the immediate goal of recruitment.

Although the JODO program is an NRC initiative, its goal is more centered around outreach then meeting recruiting goals, and redefining the way minority communities view the possibility of high-level military service is a primary piece of that goal.

"There are people in the Navy that are successful and pretty high-ranking and they are from diverse cultures and backgrounds, and a lot of times you don't necessarily

see that," said Lt. Cmdr. Ron McNeal, another JODO participant. "You feel more comfortable when you see someone that looks like you in those high-ranking positions . . . something you can aspire to be as well."

Other events included a trip to Texas A&M to meet with the one of the country's largest Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) units and take a tour around the facilities. The day prior to that they took a trip to Prairie View A&M where they met some students and spoke to Frank Jackson, a retired navy captain and former mayor of Prairie View. He had also attended Prairie view in the NROTC Unit and commissioned in the Navy in 1973.

“There are people in the Navy that are successful and pretty high-ranking . . .”

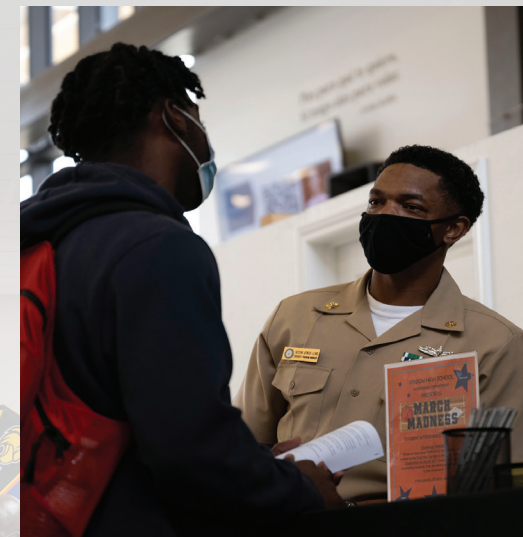
He spoke with the JODO team of the history of Prairie View A&M, which is a historically black university that was built on land that used to be a slave plantation, and the difficulty of the task the recruiting team is taking on. He had led the NROTC unit toward the end of his time in the Navy, and discussed the unique challenges involved in bringing in minority officer candidates, and they strategized possible ways forward.

"This has been a great opportunity," said Stokes, "it's personally and professionally enhancing, and it's a way for me to use my story to motivate students to achieve, approach their lives different and say 'hey, I don't have to be a statistic and I don't have to be limited by what I see in my community . . . I can go and do something better with my life.'"

Along with many other engagements, completed both safely in person or virtually, they also sat down with several people unaffiliated with the Navy to get a fresh take on what they may think about Navy service.

"Growing up, the military was always seen as like the last resort," said Vondrick Christmas, an entrepreneur and social media influencer. "It was like punishment for not making it to college, but me getting more information that I have now, I would have done both (college and military)."

All in all, the team was positively received by the students and communities all around this part of Texas. The first three participants in the JODO program were happy with trip, and Lt. Kenny Rice said that if it could have helped a single person see a possibility they didn't know existed, it was worth it for him.



▲ Members of Navy Recruiting Command's Diversity and Outreach Department and participants of the Junior Officer Diversity Outreach program visit Sam Houston Park, home of the Houston Heritage Society, as part of their mission to increase diversity among the Navy's officer ranks. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Elijah Newton)



▲ Participants in Navy Recruiting Command's Junior Officer Diversity Outreach program speak with the "It's All About You" youth organization to share the possibilities of naval service. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Zachary Eshleman)

▼ Members of Navy Recruiting Command's Diversity and Outreach department and participants in the Junior Officer Diversity Outreach (JODO) program speak to students at Hambrick Middle School about the scholarship opportunities available in the Navy. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Zachary Eshleman)







# From Boot Camp to Best Friends: Two Sailors Navigate the High- speed World of Navy Recruiting

Story and photos by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Joshua Keim,  
Navy Talent Acquisition Group Houston

HOUSTON – Cheers of excitement filled the vibe inside the gymnasium as the roar from hundreds of Navy recruits, gripped by one final bout of competition before graduation, reverberated in anticipation. It was the final leg of the relay race at the Captain's Cup competition after seven long weeks at Recruit Training Command when Edward "Tyrone" Lee was set to clench the baton and head for the finish line. Cameron Johnson, an opponent from a competing division resting from his own leg of the relay, observed from nearby as the fate of the race was in Lee's final sprint. Unbeknown to Johnson or the crowd, Lee was a three-time All-American, two-time NCAA conference champion track star who scoffed at the thought of losing a race, and that wasn't about to change. Lee snatched the baton, burst forward and, within a few short seconds, the crowd erupted in astonishment.

"When it was his turn, he literally had the entire Captain's Cup at a standstill in awe," Johnson recalled, his tone discreetly divulging continued admiration. "I was amazed at how fast this dude was. I mean, he completely destroyed everybody."

After the race, Johnson approached his turbo-charged competitor and asked, "Who are you? Why are you so fast?"

Johnson and Lee didn't know it yet, but they were about to embark upon an enduring friendship and a different type of race altogether.

Today, more than a decade later, Johnson and Lee are two ascending stars whose potential is limited only by the height of their ambitions. Brothers by any sense of the word, they share much in common. Both have two daughters born two

years apart; they were stationed together on Naval Base San Diego after "A" school; both are currently serving at Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Houston as Navy recruiters; they were both meritoriously promoted to first class petty officer in September 2019; and both were selected last year for rating conversions to Navy counselor as full-time recruiters. More meaningful than any of that, they both have Texas and Navy pride in their veins and a yearning to help change and improve people's lives.

"Success fuels me, sure, but seeing the impact I'm able to have at just my old high school, for example, with kids whose parents I went to school with makes all the hard work worth it," said Lee. "We really have three options down here – sports, oil and gas, or illegal stuff. So, I can go back to these kids as someone who looks like them with all the same tattoos and stuff, and they see me enjoying what I do, hear about my experiences, and it just sort of clicks for them," he added.

Lee joined the Navy when he was 28 years old after graduating from Sam Houston State University with a bachelor's degree and after a successful stint in the oil and gas industry. Displeased with his perception of the workplace politics he encountered in the industry, Lee was compelled to find a profession with greater job security to offer his family, more stability, and a better quality of life. Meanwhile, Johnson's call to service was even more personal – a desperate plea for a better life for him and his family – and is still the driving factor behind his motivation to succeed in the Navy.

"I didn't care what job I had," Johnson remembered. "Whatever position I was going to be put in, I was going to make the most of it because I needed to provide for my family. I needed the medical coverage because my wife has a serious medical condition, and I needed financial stability. I grew up struggling, not knowing where we were going to go, what we were going to eat. I was young, but I said I'd never live that life. But other than that, I'm successful because I'm driven to genuinely change and give someone the opportunity for a better life. There's no greater feeling than knowing where [these recruits] come from and where they're headed after they join. I come from a struggling family, so when I see someone else struggling and have the opportunity to help lift them up, I couldn't ask for a better opportunity."

Johnson and Lee agree that full-time recruiting for the Navy, while rewarding, can also be challenging and, at times, relentless.

"Recruiting is nonstop," Lee said with a pitch of imminent anxiety. "Hitting goal every month is the hardest part, and every month there's another goal. It's not a nine-to-five job, but these kids are worth it."

The most challenging aspect of recruiting is denying entry to candidates who, based on various adverse circumstances, do not meet the basic eligibility requirements but would otherwise substantially benefit from service, said Johnson.

"Closing the door on that individual and not giving them an opportunity to do better is the hardest thing to do."

Despite how Johnson and Lee arrived, they both have found their niche as Navy recruiters, and they are always competing in the way older and younger brothers do. When Johnson was selected as NTAG Houston's Sailor of the Quarter in 2020, Lee was selected the following quarter. Watching each other succeed further encourages their competitive spirits.

"He's like 10 years older than me," Johnson said about Lee,

"but he has a very young soul. We both had two little girls, and my oldest has the same birthday as him. Our wives are best friends, and we've just been following in each other's footsteps. He taught me a lot about how to raise girls, and he's just someone I look up to. He never makes an excuse for anything. Whatever he has to do, he does it. He does it above what is expected. I think that's why he's been so successful."

Lee said it's Johnson's relatability and gregarious personality that help him thrive in recruiting.

"He has the same outgoing personality, like, really outgoing," said Lee. "He can talk and hit it off with anybody."

When asked who the better recruiter is, Lee exclaimed, "Oh, definitely me! I tell him that even though we got [meritoriously promoted] at the same time, I was only here for a year, and he had already been here for almost two. So, I technically did it faster."

But when Johnson was asked the same question, his answer was strikingly indistinguishable.

"Oh, definitely me!" Johnson replied with a playful chuckle.

"By a long shot! He has a lot more firepower in his future in the Navy than what I have because he was personally groomed. He was definitely set up for success by all means. I had to completely make it known. If he wants to take that and say he's a better recruiter, okay. But come on, we all know how that goes."

The next move on both of their agendas is the straightest line to chief petty officer.

"My goal is to run my own division, get my Division Leading Chief Petty Officer qualification, and put myself in line to make chief," said Johnson.

"I'll be eligible for the chief exam next year," Lee said. "My plan is to make chief at my next tour in San Antonio. I want to retire in the Navy now, so my plan is to make the highest pay grade. Not only that, but I want to be in the highest position that I can – chief recruiter at a regional or

national level. Ultimately, out of life, I just want to be healthy, raise my kids, and see my grandkids grow up. I plan to start my own something before I retire. I train high school and college athletes now, so I'll do something fitness related – probably start my own gym or something."

On the other hand, Johnson launched his own YouTube channel called "The Oreo Family," which he hopes to grow into a family business.

"It's a channel for me and my family, and we do funny pranks and share our experiences, good times, birthday events, and stuff like that. It's like our own personal reality TV show. The opportunity you have with a YouTube platform is phenomenal and can lead to an insane amount of generational wealth. We have 95 subscribers right now, but we're just going to keep growing the channel and hopefully make something big from it."

Over the last 10 years, Johnson and Lee have found continual success in the Navy. Best friends, shipmates, competitors, and brothers: Today, they find themselves in a virtual tie as they race toward the finish line. 🏆



Opposite top: Navy Counselor 1st Classes Edward "Tyrone" Lee (middle-left) and Cameron Johnson (middle-right) and their families walk off the track together after Johnson and Lee went head-to-head in a 100-meter sprint at one of their daughters' elementary school track in Houston, Texas.

Above: Navy Counselor 1st Classes Edward "Tyrone" Lee (left) and Cameron Johnson burst off the starting line for a 100-meter sprint at one of their daughters' elementary school track in Houston, Texas.





# NTAG Philadelphia Holds Change of Command Ceremony

Story and photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Diana Quinlan, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Philadelphia

▲ From left to right, Lt. Michael Sparrow, Navy chaplain, Cmdr. Todd Winn, prospective commanding officer, Cmdr. Kemi Elebute, commanding officer of Navy Talent Acquisition Group Philadelphia, and Chief Yeoman George Whittaker salute during the national anthem as part of a change-of-command ceremony.

▶ Cmdr. Kemi Elebute, from Hyattsville, Maryland, salutes sideboys as he arrives for a change-of-command ceremony.

PHILADELPHIA – Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Philadelphia held a virtual change-of-command ceremony at the command’s headquarters located at Naval Support Activity Philadelphia, Jan. 5.

During the ceremony, Cmdr. Todd Winn relieved Cmdr. Kemi Elebute, who had served as NTAG Philadelphia’s executive officer since December 2017 and commanding officer since May 2019.

Unlike traditional change-of-command ceremonies held with all hands present, NTAG Philadelphia recruiters and Navy Recruiting Command leaders attended the ceremony virtually, following the COVID-19 regulations and subscribing to a teleworking directive preventative measures, including social distancing and travel restrictions.

Capt. Katrina Hill, commodore of Navy Recruiting Region East, presided over the virtual ceremony.

Elebute thanked his Sailors and encouraged the team to continue to strive for excellence as the new commanding officer takes charge.



“I remain honored and humbled to be standing here today as your commanding officer, I couldn’t have asked for a better team,” said Elebute. “My tour here has been the highlight of my naval career. You are an exceptional group of professionals who continue to exceed expectations despite the challenges of recruiting with limited resources, recruiting in a COVID-19 environment, or just recruiting in the Philly AOR. So team, continue to impress with your ability to overcome challenges, help each other and work as a team towards command objectives. And as I turn over command to Cmdr. Todd Winn, I have no doubt you will continue to impress and do your part to man the fleet!”

During the ceremony, Elebute, whose following tour will be at Program Executive

Officer Unmanned and Small Combatants, Washington DC, received the Meritorious Service Medal for his performance as commanding officer and was presented with a traditional parting gift and symbol of NTAG Philadelphia - a liberty bell.

Winn officially assumed the title of commanding officer after orders were read and salutes rendered. In his speech, Winn shared his command philosophy and views on the future of the command and its Sailors.

“Normally, new commanding officers are afforded a “shakedown” period to get to know their command and its personnel, but COVID-19 adds additional challenges to make this happen, and our ceremony attests to that,” said Winn, addressing all hands on screen. “But as I learn more about you, my team, I wish to share something about me.



◀ Cmdr. Todd Winn, from Denver, the newly appointed commanding officer of Navy Talent Acquisition Group Philadelphia, salutes Cmdr. Kemi Elebute, from Hyattsville, Maryland, offgoing commanding officer, during a change-of-command ceremony.

I embrace teamwork, a strong sense of command pride, individual purpose within the command and mission completion, as

“ I embrace teamwork, a strong sense of command pride, individual purpose within the command and mission completion ”

to our communities, to our future Sailors, we are the window into the Navy. I am a member of NTAG Philadelphia first, and all other demographics second, and I promise to give you my very best as your commanding officer as I ask the same from each of you in return. We are one team, and your efforts are critical to our success.”

NTAG Philadelphia encompasses regions of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and West Virginia, providing recruiting services from more than 30 talent acquisition sites.

◀ Cmdr. Todd Winn, from Denver, the newly appointed commanding officer of Navy Talent Acquisition Group Philadelphia, salutes sideboys as he departs from a change-of-command ceremony.





Sonar Technician (Surface) 2nd Class Matt Perry poses for a photo with HSM-40 executive officer (left) Cmdr. Thaddeus Rusinek, Command Master Chief Joshua Davis, and commanding officer (right), Capt. Ross Drenning (Photo courtesy of Sonar Technician [Surface] 2nd Class Matt Perry)

# Sailor Uses Passion For Racing to Showcase Navy Opportunities

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cody Anderson, Navy Recruiting Command

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. – While some Sailors may dream about starting new careers after leaving the Navy, Sonar Technician (Surface) 2nd Class Matt Perry is not content to wait, living life at a faster pace than most. Instead of switching gears after his enlistment, he already had an established career of what many rookie race car drivers aspire to be: a NASCAR driver.

Perry began racing in 2010, four years before he would eventually join the Navy. He started with drifting cars and has since taken every opportunity to get behind the wheel and compete. This openness to trying different kinds of racing has resulted in a plethora of unique experiences that have shaped his driving style.

“I’ve pretty much raced in everything, and when I say everything, I literally mean everything,” said Perry. “Autocross, drag racing, road course, drifting, dirt tracks and NASCAR. I’ve raced everything from local short tracks to now getting ready to race national-level events. I’ve even been invited to race in the Chili Bowl nationals, which is the Super Bowl for Dirt Midget Racing. We’re

practicing in 2021 to take on the challenge in 2022.”

Perry says racing across different tracks, engines, and body styles has given him a unique set of skills that allow him to adapt to a multitude of situations. This is just one of the factors that ultimately sets him apart from his peers. He is also the only current active-duty Sailor who is racing in NASCAR.

However, traveling down two different paths simultaneously can be a daunting task. Perry has had to manage the duties of being a full-time Sailor while fulfilling his passion for racing during his off-duty hours. This has led to many late nights, long weekends and plenty of sacrifice.

Perry is now working to intersect his two careers. He believes his unique position as the only active duty service member who races in NASCAR allows him the opportunity to share his story with potential future applicants. Perry says he wants to be an example of what is possible for active-duty service members.

“A common misconception that people have when they join the military is that it’s their life 24/7,” said Perry. “But

the reality [for many] is that you work eight hours a day and then you go home. There are 16 more hours in a day to do whatever you want.”

Perry went on to say that rather than using off-duty hours to play video games, look at his phone or watch T.V., he makes every effort to pursue his passion. He believes he can inspire others to do the same, and that is what led him to enter the recruiting enterprise. His ultimate goal is to use his role as a recruiter to be an official representative of the Navy in the world of racing.

However, both his careers and his life came to a literal screeching halt after suffering a near-fatal car accident near his home in San Diego. Due to the severity of the accident, Perry had to fight not only for the opportunity of racing again but the possibility to walk again.

“I reached down to grab a water bottle, and the car in front of me shifted lanes at the last second because there was a bus that had stopped in the left lane,” said Perry. “I ended up running right underneath it and was presumed dead on scene.”

During the accident, Perry crumpled his car beneath the bus, totaling it into a mangled pile of steel, glass and plastic debris. As the resulting crash was so severe, onlookers assumed there wasn’t a possibility of his survival. However, Perry was alive and was actually the first one to call 911. And being the conscientious Sailor that he is, he then called his work to let them know he wouldn’t be coming in the next day, all while sitting in the aftermath of the accident. Using what remaining strength he had, Perry then pushed on his dashboard to unpin himself from the vehicle and escape the wreckage. Although he was alive, he was not without injury.

“I fully tore the PCL (posterior cruciate ligament) in my left knee and crushed much of the soft tissue in my left leg. I had to relearn how to walk twice. Of course there was knee surgery and well over 100 physical therapy appointments,” said Perry. “I was doing physical therapy three or four times a week for well over a year.”

This car wreck had a tremendous impact on both of his careers. As far as the Navy went, Perry was transferred from sea duty to a shore command and was put on Limited Duty (LIMDU) status, missing his second deployment. During his LIMDU status, Perry was unable to race. However, as soon as he was deemed fit enough, he jumped at the first opportunity to get behind the wheel.

After nearly two years, and with the support of a dedicated team and their sponsors, Perry was racing again, this time in a SPEARS Tour Modified. The SPEARS Manufacturing Modified Series is currently the highest level for modified racing on the West Coast. His first time ever racing in that vehicle class, in his first race back behind the wheel after more than two years of inactivity, Perry was able to start in third place and finish to claim eighth place, raising the eyebrows of many who have raced in the series before.

His goal is to race full-time in the national levels of NASCAR, fully sponsored by the Navy.

Racing, however, is not a cheap sport. Not only do the drivers and their teams have to provide for themselves and their families, but they also have to have high-tech, top-of-the-line vehicles and the personnel to maintain them. Perry’s goal is to one day mix his passions and be a full-time NASCAR driver, sponsored by the Navy.

His lofty goal is not without precedence. Previously, the Navy sponsored Dale Earnhardt Jr’s number 88 car with Hendrick Motorsports in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, ending the sponsorship at the end of the 2008 season.

Perry is working hard to bring the Navy back into the world of racing. He believes the talented engineers and dedicated race fans that exist within the world of motorsports can provide a great pool of possible applicants and offer them long-term career potential. Perry believes his story is a great example that shows it is possible to pursue what you are most passionate about while also being a full-time active duty service member.

Perry is currently recruiting out of Naval Recruiting Station, Winston-Salem in North Carolina. 🇺🇸



Sonar Technician (Surface) 2nd Class Matt Perry gets strapped into the ARCE Racing SPEARS Modified vehicle before qualifying at Irwindale Speedway to set his starting position for the SPEARS Modified Series K&N Filters 60 presented by Traffic Management Inc. (Photo courtesy of Sonar Technician [Surface] 2nd Class Matt Perry)





# NTAG Mid America Holds Virtual Change of Command

Story and photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Chris Williamson, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Mid America

▲ Cmdr. Benjamin Fischer, left, oncoming commanding officer of Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Mid America, relieves Cmdr. Bradley Whittington during a virtual change of command ceremony at NTAG Mid America headquarters in St. Louis,

▶ Cmdr. Bradley Whittington, outgoing commanding officer of Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Mid America, receives a custom Major League Baseball St. Louis Cardinals jersey during a virtual change of command ceremony.

ST. LOUIS – Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Mid America held a virtual change of command ceremony at its headquarters in St. Louis.

During the ceremony, Cmdr. Benjamin Fischer relieved Cmdr. Bradley Whittington as NTAG Mid America's commanding officer.

Capt. Robert "Butch" Smith, commodore of Navy Recruiting Region Central, served as the presiding officer and gave words of thanks to the outgoing commanding officer and his command.

"Whittington has shown outstanding leadership, hard work and dedication to the recruiting mission," said Smith. "While under Whittington's vision and leadership, NTAG Mid America has become one of the best NTAGs in the nation."

Smith also spoke highly of the oncoming commanding officer as well.

"I want to welcome Fischer to the chase," said Smith. "I'm glad he is on my team and I can't wait to see what he does by building off what Whittington has already accomplished."

During Whittington's tenure at NTAG Mid America, the command successfully contracted 2,102 active-duty and reserve personnel, of which 182 were in the nuclear

field, 131 were warrior challenge candidates and 139 were reserve officers. While under Whittington's leadership, NTAG Mid America achieved a Navy Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) goal of 125% and awarded 11 immediate selection NROTC scholarships to some of the brightest men



and women in the country.

With such impressive numbers in mind, Whittington said it wasn't because of him. It was because of his team.

"NTAG Mid America is full of true leaders who are dedicated to being a team," said Whittington. "Getting to lead this team has been fulfilling in ways I could never imagine."

Immediately following the ceremony, Whittington retired after 20 years of naval service, and he thanked the command for all their hard work and support during his final tour of duty.

"This has been the absolute pinnacle of my Navy career," said Whittington. "I have seen this command soar in the time I have been here, and I know it's because they have been the team they all wanted to be. Through some of the most challenging of circumstances, they were the ones who went and did the impossible. I want to thank them for letting me be part of that team. I will forever be in their debt and they will forever be in my heart."

Toward the end of his remarks, Whittington said that the command was in

great hands moving forward with Fischer.

"I know this team will continue to excel," said Whittington. "That's because I know Fischer will take great care of this team. I know he'll lead well."

Fischer, who served as the executive officer of NTAG Mid America, said the command will continue to build on the strong sense of teamwork and leadership instilled under the guidance of Whittington, and that he will continue to put the best and brightest people into the world's most powerful Navy.

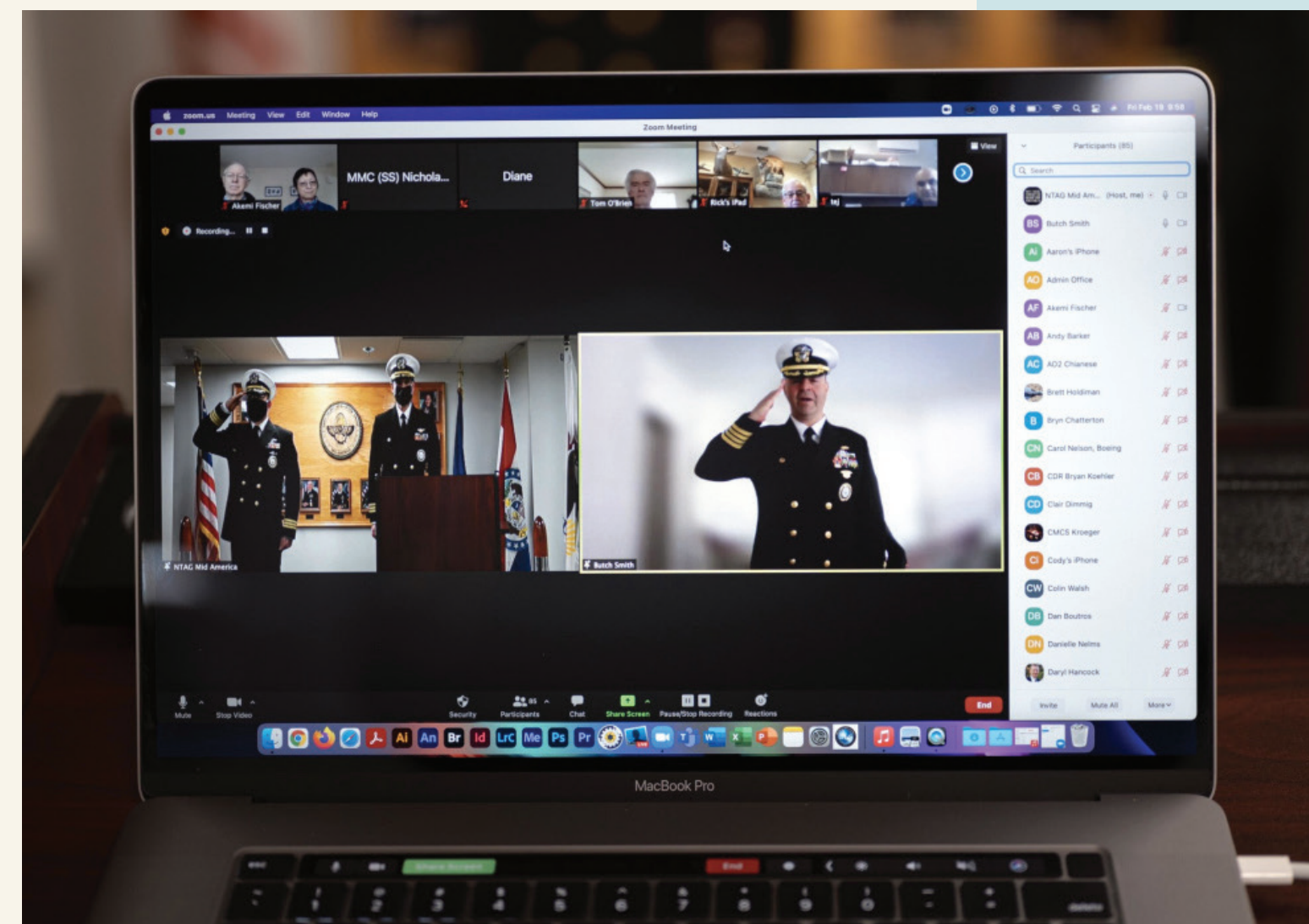
Succinctly, Fischer said: "We are going to change many lives."

Fischer also said he is beyond ready to lead the command into the future.

"I am ready to lead such an amazing team of dedicated Sailors," said Fischer. "Being NTAG Mid America's commanding officer is easily the single greatest professional honor of my career."

NTAG Mid America, part of Navy Recruiting Command, recruits the next generation of Navy Sailors throughout areas encompassing Missouri, Kansas, central and southern Illinois, and a portion of Kentucky. 🇺🇸

▼ Cmdr. Benjamin Fischer, far left, oncoming commanding officer of Navy Talent Acquisition Group Mid America, reports to Capt. Robert "Butch" Smith, far right, commodore of Navy Recruiting Region Central, that he has relieved Cmdr. Bradley Whittington.





# USS St. Louis Scholarship Fund Provides Grants to Support Crew and Family Members

**Story by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Chris Williamson,  
Navy Talent Acquisition Group Mid America**

ST. LOUIS – In an effort to support the crew and family members of USS St. Louis (LCS 19), the USS St. Louis Commissioning Committee established a \$500,000 scholarship fund that awards annual grants to qualifying members who are pursuing undergraduate degrees or advanced technical training. The scholarship fund, one of the largest of its kind to be presented to the crew of a ship by representatives of the sponsoring city, will support Sailors and their families throughout the life of the ship.

“It is a great honor to have this beautiful ship named for our hometown, and to establish a lasting bond with the inspiring men and women who are stationed aboard it,” said Barbara Broadhurst Taylor, the ship’s sponsor. “We’ve embraced the crew as honorary St. Louisans and

have committed to making a meaningful investment in their futures. This legacy scholarship fund is our way of showing how much we value them.”

One important distinction of the scholarship fund is that it is available to not only members of the crew, but to their college-age children and spouses.

“Family members sail in spirit with their loved ones on every mission, and their patriotism and sacrifice match the commitment of the enlisted crew,” she said. “We celebrate and honor them as equal partners in service to our country.”

In fact, Barbara Taylor has first-hand understanding of the vital role family

members play in military service. Her father, Edwin B. Broadhurst, and her father-in-law, Jack Taylor, were decorated pilots in World War II. She and her daughters, Patty Taylor and Chrissy Broughton, who serve as the St. Louis’s maid and matron of honor, will continue to support the ship throughout its life.

The scholarship fund will be administered by The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis, a nonprofit organization that helps students at all stages of the college experience by awarding interest-free loans and scholarship grants, advising them to make informed financial decisions about postsecondary goals and options, and advocating for policies that improve college accessibility and affordability for students with significant financial need.

A grant of \$5,000 will be awarded each year to one recipient based on an evaluation of academic performance, career potential, character and financial need. The grants are renewable for up to 10 semesters and can be applied toward study for a first undergraduate degree or certificate from an accredited, nonprofit, postsecondary institution. Plankowners of the St. Louis and their dependents are eligible to apply for as long as the fund exists. Subsequent crew members and their dependents are eligible to apply for a period extending up to five years after departing the ship.

Application forms are available starting Jan. 1, 2021, through The Scholarship Foundation at [sfstl.org](http://sfstl.org), Scholarship Central at [myscholarshipcentral.org](http://myscholarshipcentral.org), and The Navy League of the United States - St. Louis Council at [navyleague-st.louis.org](http://navyleague-st.louis.org). The application window closes on April 15 and the first award will be announced this summer before the start of the Fall 2021 semester.

“Continuous learning is a way of life for all of us in the Navy, and higher education and advanced training provide the strategic edge we need to stay innovative and competitive and to grow rewarding careers,” said Cmdr. Eric Turner, the ship’s executive officer. “We are thrilled by the size and scope of this extraordinary gift, and deeply grateful to the Taylor family and the people of St. Louis who continue to support us and our families with their encouragement, friendship and generosity.”

The scholarship fund is arguably the most substantial and enduring gift given to the ship in honor of its commissioning last summer. Taylor and fundraising chair Don Ross, former president and vice chairman of Enterprise Rent-A-Car, led the efforts of an 11-member commissioning committee to solicit donations that support the scholarship fund, morale-boosting activities and commissioning events. The committee is a nonprofit arm of the St. Louis Council of The Navy League.

The public may contribute to the scholarship fund by sending checks made payable to The Scholarship Foundation, 6825 Clayton Ave., Suite 100, St. Louis, MO 63139, including a designation for the USS St. Louis Scholarship Fund.

USS St. Louis (LCS 19) is part of a well-connected family of littoral combat ships that maneuver primarily in shallow, coastal waters. Designed for speed and agility, the LCS network counters threats of coastal mines, terrorism and stealth submarines. The ship was commissioned in its homeport of Mayport, Florida, on Aug. 8, 2020, and has two crews – designated the blue and gold crews – both consisting of nine officers and 61 enlisted Sailors.

▼ Crew members assigned to the future Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS St. Louis (LCS 19) and Barbara Taylor, the ship’s sponsor, take a group photo during a special ceremony unveiling the ship’s crest at Soldiers Memorial Military Museum in downtown St. Louis, July 23, 2019. St. Louis is the seventh ship to bear the name of the city. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Chris Williamson)





# Navy Recruiting Presents Gold “R” Award Winners

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Tyler Priestley and photos by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Cody Anderson Navy Recruiting Command Public Affairs



Recruiting Region West Capt. Anthony Bayungan, accepting on behalf of NTAG San Antonio, were presented their awards at Commander, Navy Recruiting Command in a COVID-safe environment. The ceremony was live-streamed so the recruiting enterprise could watch it from home.

“I am very optimistic that we will make the Navy’s mission this year because of the Sailors we have out there in the field working hard every day,” said Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, commander, Navy Recruiting Command.

In order for a district to be eligible for the Gold “R” award, the Silver “R”

award must be achieved first. Commander, Navy Recruiting Region establishes a ranking system based off of policy and guidelines, and from this ranking system, one district in each region is awarded the Silver “R” award as well as being that region’s “district of the year.”

The National Awards Board reviews all Silver “R” award winners and submits a recommendation to Navy Recruiting Command for the Gold “R” award. Once the recommendation is approved, that district earns the Gold “R” award and “National Navy Recruiting District of the Year.”

In addition, all districts can earn a Bronze “R” award. In order to receive this award, a district must earn the following departmental awards: the Enlisted “E”, the Officer “O” and pass their National Inspection Team assessment. On top of the previous awards, a district must also earn four out of the six awards.



MILLINGTON, Tenn. – The annual Gold “R” award was created to recognize selected Navy Talent Acquisition Groups (NTAGs) for outstanding performance. Until 2019, only one NTAG received the award for any given year, but due to the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic presented, three winners were selected, differentiating the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic environments. NTAG Red River is the recipient for the pre-pandemic Gold “R” award, and NTAG San Antonio and Ohio River Valley are the post-pandemic Gold “R” award winners.

“I am very proud of what our team accomplished this past year,” said Cmdr. Dan Boutros, commanding officer of NTAG Red River. “At the beginning of the year, we set out with a clear goal of being national champions, and every Sailor and civilian took ownership of that goal. It was truly an all-hands effort that earned us the Gold ‘R.’”

Boutros attributed Red River’s success to their diligence and teamwork.

“NTAG Red River is successful because we kept our focus on people vice numbers,” said Boutros. “That enabled us to treat our applicants, Future Sailors, and officer candidates with respect and provide excellent customer service. We also prioritized our Sailors, their training, professional development, morale and welfare, knowing they are the ones who really get the mission done.”

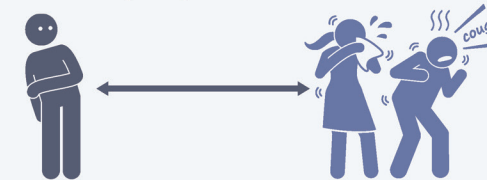
Commodore, Navy Recruiting Region Central Capt. Robert Smith, accepting on behalf of NTAGs Red River and Ohio River Valley, and Commodore, Navy

▲ Commander, Navy Recruiting Command Rear Adm. Dennis Velez presents the annual Gold “R” award to Commodore, Navy Recruiting Region Central Capt. Robert Smith, who is accepting the award on behalf of Navy Talent Acquisition Group Ohio River Valley.

▶ Commander, Navy Recruiting Command Rear Adm. Dennis Velez presents the annual Gold “R” award to Commodore, Navy Recruiting Region West Capt. Anthony Bayungan, who is accepting the award on behalf of Navy Talent Acquisition Group San Antonio.

## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Protect Yourself and Your Family

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick



- Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds with soap and water



- Ensure all immunizations are up to date, including your seasonal flu shot

- Stay home if you are sick and avoid close contact with Family members and pets

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth



Prevent COVID-19:  
**Take everyday actions to prevent the spread of germs**

- Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are unavailable

- Cover your cough/sneeze with a tissue, then throw it in the trash; cough/sneeze into your elbow if tissues are unavailable



- Create an emergency preparedness kit



For more COVID-19 information:

<https://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/discond/diseases/Pages/2019-nCoVChina.aspx>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Emergency Kit Checklist for Families:

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/checklists/kids-and-families.html>



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# 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](http://www.cnrc.navy.mil).

## December



Retail Service Specialist 2nd Class Tyler Grabow



Aviation Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Nevin Stevens



Electrician's Mate 1st Class Harley Broughton

## January



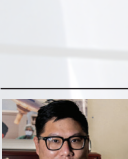
Naval Aircrewman (Helicopter) 1st Class Joshua Young



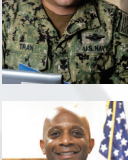
Retail Specialist 1st Class Tommie Davis



Electronics Technician (Navigation Submarines) 1st Class Tyler Boger



Navy Counselor 1st Class Paul Rydberg



Yeoman 1st Class Michael T. Fisher

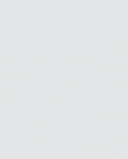
## February



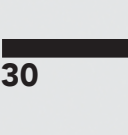
Navy Counselor 1st Class Quang Tran



Fire Controlman 1st Class Nicholas Hively



Master-at-Arms 1st Class Karl Harris



Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Cesargabriel Pagtakhan

## Navy Working Uniform Type III Fit Guide

**HEAD GEAR:**

- 8-Point cover is "Standard Head Gear." (ACE 8-Point 1 OCT 2019)
- Navy blue or coyote brown "Navy or Command" ball cap is optional.
- Worn squarely on head, parallel to the deck above the ears and eyes.

**T-SHIRT & UNDERGEAR:**

- Brown crewneck t-shirt. Collar should fit comfortably around neck.
- Thermal underwear authorized but must not be visible when wearing.

**RANK INSIGNIA:**

- Slip on embroidered (E-4 to O-10)
- Muted gold (O-1 & O-4)
- Silver (O-6)
- Black (all others)

**BLOUSE:**

- Blouse worn squarely on shoulders
- Length should fall between bottom of crotch and no further than the middle of the trouser cargo pocket flap

**TROUSERS:**

- Worn squarely on waist with 1 1/4" cotton or nylon belt or 1 3/4" rigger belt (E-1 to E-6 black belt) (E-7 to O-10 khaki/COY brown belt)

**TROUSER BLOUSING:**

- Blouse trousers using blousing straps. When bloused, blousing should cover top three rows of boot eyelets.

**NWU BOOTS:**

- Laces must be tied and tucked into boots.
- Boots should be fitted in, and worn with boot socks.

**Navy Working Uniform (NWU) Type III Quick Fit Guide**  
Revision Date: 1 July 19

**OPTIONAL PATCHES:**

- Reverse U.S. Flag (worn on right shoulder)
- Don't Tread on Me flag (worn on left shoulder)
- Command Patch (if not worn on the right breast pocket) can replace the DTOM
- Shoulder patches are laser cut or embroidered

**WARFARE INSIGNIA:**

- Primary warfare insignia sewn centered and flush atop top edge of the Service tape. Secondary insignia may be sewn centered and between primary insignia and Service tape or centered and below the Service tape at the top of the pocket flap. Fabric strip will extend a 1/4 inch on the left and right of the embroidery. (DOUBLE STACKING OPTIONAL)

**ROLLED SLEEVES:**

- 3" wide band covered by cuff with fabric side out.
- Falls approx. 2" above elbow.

**SLEEVE LENGTH:**

- Fully extended, cuffs fastened.
- Should cover wrist bone but not extend beyond first knuckle at base of thumb.

**TROUSER LENGTH:**

- When not bloused, trouser leg length shall not extend below bottom of boot heel.

**PARKA & FLEECE**

- To determine correct size, parka, fleece, and NWU blouse should be worn/fitted simultaneously.

**WASH/CARE OF THE UNIFORM**

- ALL BUTTONS/CLOSURES FASTENED AND SECURED
- WASH THE UNIFORM INSIDE OUT

## New Uniform/Uniform Component Mandatory Wear Dates

2020	2021	2021	2022
JAN	APR	SEP OCT	
<b>31 Jan 2020</b> Female E1-E6 Jumper SDB Female Officer/CPO SDW Choker	<b>30 Apr 2021</b> Black Cold Weather Parka	<b>30 Sep 2021</b> Navy Fitness Suit	<b>31 Oct 2021</b> E1-E6 SDW Jumper w/ Blue Piping

Navy Uniform Matters Office • 701 S. Courthouse Road • Arlington, VA 22204  
<https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/uniforms/Pages/default2.aspx>  
Questions? Contact us at [umo\\_cmc@navy.mil](mailto:umo_cmc@navy.mil) • Subscribe to the Newsgram and more at [usnpeople.fct@navy.mil](mailto:usnpeople.fct@navy.mil)

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NAVY **RECRUITER** Future of the Fleet