



## NPS Space Systems Grad Carlos Del Toro sworn in as 78th Secretary of the Navy

*By Matthew Schehl*

Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) alumnus Carlos Del Toro was sworn in as the nation's 78th Secretary of the Navy, August 9. Del Toro served 26 years in uniform followed by 17 years as CEO and President of a private sector firm.

A 1989 graduate of NPS' Space Systems Engineering master's degree program, Del Toro brings a keen understanding of the value of advanced education, applied research, and technological leadership as the United States and the world grapple with the challenges presented by peer adversaries. In addition to his graduate degree from NPS, Del Toro also holds master's degrees in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College and legislative affairs from George Washington University.

"As a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, the Naval Postgraduate School, and the Naval War College, I understand the importance of, and I have benefited from, professional military education," he told the Senate Armed Forces Committee during his confirmation hearing, July 13. "PME is a necessary investment by the Department of the Navy to improve readiness across the force. PME reforms should concentrate on creating a relevant and challenging learning environment for officers and enlisted Sailors and Marines that is responsive to emerging threats.

"PME is a necessary investment by the Department of the Navy that improves readiness across the force by developing critical and creative thinkers," Del Toro said recently. "Any PME reforms should concentrate on fostering a realistic and challenging learning environment, operating within a continuum through the progression of ranks for both officers and enlisted Sailors and Marines, ultimately preparing them for emerging threats."

*“As our nation shifts from a land-based strategy over the past 20 years fighting the wars in the Middle East to a more dominant maritime strategy in the Pacific, particularly in our efforts to deter China, I do believe that our Navy and Marine Corps team will need additional resources to be able to fully field the combat effectiveness we will need as a nation.”*

*-78th Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro*

NPS President retired Vice Adm. Ann E. Rondeau offered congratulations to Del Toro on behalf of the NPS community, adding that she is eager to show Del Toro how far NPS has come since his time here as a student and the exciting future ahead as the institution sets out on a transformation vector to maximize its impact for and in support of the Naval services.

To read the full story, please visit our [website](#).

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
UPDATE  
NPS

- p2 NPS Develops Custom Curriculum for Navy's Cyber Warfare Engineer
- p3 NPS Hosts 70th Annual Ordnance and Ballistics Working Group
- p4 Aviation Community Graduates Set to Take Command
- p6 NPS' NSA Dept. Program Officer Retires After 28 Years of Service

National Suicide  
Prevention  
Awareness Month

September 2021

# NPS Develops Custom Curriculum for Navy's Cyber Warfare Engineer

By MC2 Lenny Weston

The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) has launched an all-new, customized track within the existing Electronic Systems Engineering curriculum in response to an ever-changing and increasing need within cyberspace and the Navy's growing Cyber Warfare Engineer (CWE) community.

The new curriculum was developed by NPS Center for Cyber Warfare Director and Permanent Military Professor U.S. Navy Cmdr. Chad Bollmann, with the advice of the CWE community and subject matter experts from across the NPS campus. With plans to roll out in fiscal year 2022, the program will focus on cyberwarfare with the intent to educate the CWE community while providing the Navy and DOD with new opportunities to educate the future force in the vast field of cyber.

"The main purpose for creating this track is to provide a highly-technical education in the area of cyber warfare and cyber operations for those naval officers who have the mathematical and technical backgrounds to study a rigorous engineering curriculum that specializes in the area of cyber warfare," said NPS Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Chair Douglas Fouts.

"By creating this new program, we were able to provide a sampling of all the best programs and specialization areas that support cyber warfare," added Bollmann. "Cyber itself is hard and frankly ill-defined a lot of times, because there are so many different disciplines that are required for effective cyber warfare."

The track will consist of three core areas (reverse engineering, networks, and mobile wireless systems) along with 13 specialization fields allowing students to develop expertise within a specific contributing discipline within cyber.

"The uniqueness has to do with the rigorous computer science, electrical engineering and mathematics foundation, along with the ability to choose from one of many contributing cyber disciplines to build out their knowledge in the best way that supports a student's desires and the community's needs," noted Bollmann. "Essentially, NPS is going to be the primary source of CWE graduate education."

Bollmann is quick to emphasize that NPS is one of a few universities, if not the only one, that could successfully develop a custom, high-quality program within the field of cyber with so many options for specialization.

"There is no other university with this breadth of subject matter excellence in cyber," said Bollmann. "Partially, it is because we are unique in terms of mission, but also because of several other specialized, unique programs at the university."

NPS core technical strengths in programs like electrical and computer engineering, computer science, mathematics, and information science provide the foundation, Bollmann said. In addition, NPS' ability to perform applied, classified research and teach courses at both classified and unclassified levels is significant in evolving strong programs in cyber operations, software forensics, electronic warfare, and space systems. Finally, NPS is widely recognized across the Navy and DOD for its flagship programs in operations research and electronic



*The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) is launching a new track within the existing Electronic Systems Engineering curriculum in response to the ever-changing and increasing need within cyberspace and the growing Cyber Warfare Engineer (CWE) community.*

warfare, and has been designated by the National Security Agency as a Center of Cyber Academic Excellence in Defense, Operations and Research for several years.

Put it all together, Bollmann says, and "the bottom line is that there is no other place that is strong across the board like this."

The new track was developed with the aid of CWE students who are currently enrolled in NPS' Cyber Systems and Operations program. This opportunity and experience from the students provide NPS and Bollmann the assurance that the track aligns with the exact needs and wants of the CWE community.

"The biggest aspect of being in the trial is providing feedback to help fine-tune the options," said NPS student U.S. Navy Lt. Luke Baden. "For example, highlighting difficult areas that perhaps we need more focus on, like vulnerability research for example, or ensuring the course progression for a track makes sense based on our expected background on arrival."

With the program receiving a provisional approval, Bollmann said, the CWE community is requesting two student billets at the master's level each year and a separate billet for a Ph.D. every year alternating between electrical and computer engineering, and computer science.

"Our community is going through a lot of growth and expansion at present," noted Baden. "I think the curriculum here is going to help continue to professionalize our community as our mission set and footprint within the Navy expands."

With the constantly evolving threat of cyber warfare ever looming, NPS, the Navy, and DOD must search for new ways to traverse this changing battleground.

"To be successful at cyber warfare, one must be able to defend against both old and new cyber threats, and also able to take advantage of both old and new cyber vulnerabilities of our adversaries," noted Fouts. "Cyber Warfare is going to play a huge part in any future conflict, and in fact, it has already played a huge part in recent conflicts. Therefore, if the Navy expects to win battles in the future, it needs to be able to win in cyberspace, as well as on the sea, under the sea, and in the air."

# NPS Hosts 70th Annual Ordnance and Ballistics Working Group

By MC2 James Norket

The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), in partnership with the National Armaments Consortium (NAC), hosted the 70th annual Ordnance and Ballistics Technology Working Group, Aug. 3-5, combining top academic, industry and government leaders in a classified setting to discuss the latest innovations in explosives, warheads, and terminal ballistics.

The working group serves as a unique role for partners to discuss research and ideas at the classified level and is limited only to military and personnel from the Department of Defense and related agencies. The workshop consisted of seven different sessions on topics ranging from shaped charges to armor to additive manufacturing of warheads.

“It’s really the only classified meeting where people in a relatively small field of ordnance, explosives, ballistics, and terminal effects can get together and share their research,” said James Miller, the Chair of the Working Group. “The fact that you can share classified details about test data with each other makes it really unique. Not only can we have the meetings and presentations, but the time we have together is invaluable.”

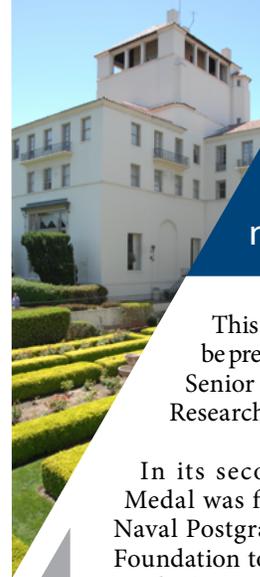
Department of Physics Chair Dr. Joe Hooper, the NPS coordinator for the conference, believes it is a crucial piece in the advancement of ordnance and ballistics.

“A lot of the information in this field isn’t neatly summarized in a textbook or existing literature,” he said. “Much of it is more like tribal knowledge, and gets passed down and shared in meetings like this. Being able to do this in a fully classified setting at NPS is particularly beneficial.”

Although the event accomplishes multiple objectives, Miller stated the main goal was to make sure everyone was on the same page and working together.

“The primary goal is to highlight the research that’s going on across all the services,” said Miller. “Unless you have a meeting like this, I don’t really know what everyone else is working on, so having a chance to see their results, their analysis, their testing, it helps everybody get better and further the research. Because in the end, we’re trying to develop weapons and get them to our war fighters as soon as possible.”

The event was cancelled last year due to COVID-19, but Hooper and Miller both agreed that this year made up for last, saying they had a record-number of participants and considered the event to be a “major success.”



## CAMPUS news & notes

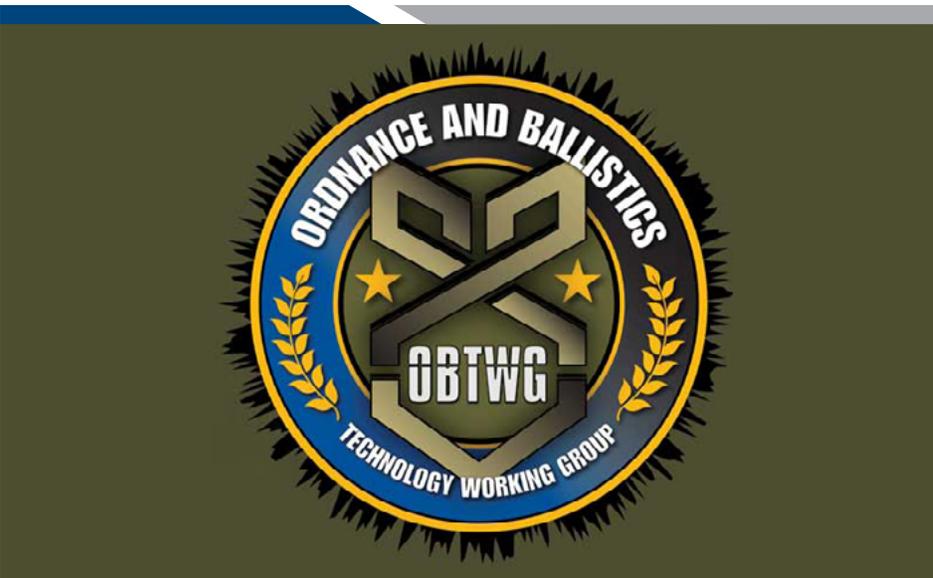
This year’s Mills Medal will be presented to Jeff Appleget, Senior Lecturer, Operations Research Department.

In its second year, the Mills Medal was founded through the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) Foundation to recognize research, analysis, or service conducted under the auspices of the Naval Research Program (NRP) that had a meritorious or conspicuous impact to a Headquarters or Fleet organization. Nominations are solicited from Fleet Topic Sponsors of past NRP Research projects.

Dr. Appleget’s adroit application of wargaming to inform force development decisions in support of the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab has no peer. His students’ willingness to immerse themselves in the most demanding future operating environment challenges is a function of his charisma, technical/tactical acumen, and positive leadership.

The powerful work done by Dr. Appleget in support of USMC force design efforts has greatly aided in generating the synergy and momentum necessary to catapult the Corps towards success in the first battle of the next war.

Further, the Naval Enterprise has a greater understanding of the Future Operating Environment has been significantly enhanced by the perspectives, insights, and thoughtful hard work of the Dr. Appleget and his team of post-graduate candidates.



Send your campus news and notes to [update@nps.edu](mailto:update@nps.edu).

# NPS Aviation Community Graduates Set to Take Command

By MC2 Lenny Weston

A trio of Naval Aviators attending Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) may be starting a trend – heading to command a squadron upon their graduation. All aviation community students attending NPS come to campus to research key operational problems, and to find innovative solutions to those problems, all while earning a master’s degree in the process. However, not all of them will put their new education and skills to use at the command level right away.

U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdrs. Michael “Jeeves” Hooten, Philip “Lurch” Pretzinger and Austin “Truffles” Ordway will be doing just that as they are set to become Executive Officers (XO) of Naval Aviation Squadrons after their respective graduations.

While the NPS campus in Monterey, Calif. has a long history with Naval aviation, where it graduated 5,000 aviation cadets during World War II, these days the Navy sends some of its aviators to Monterey not for flight training, but to become innovative thought leaders, critical thinkers and decision-makers ready to lead in Great Power Competition and in an ever-increasing cognitive age.

In developing these leaders, NPS immerses these officers into the school’s cutting-edge curricula to conduct applied research that addresses specific warfighting needs. For Hooten, Pretzinger and Ordway, each one is studying a specific operational need and taking away a transformational experience furthering their readiness to lead in an operational command.

According to U.S. Navy Capt. Edward “Tick” McCabe, NPS’ Air Warfare Chair, Naval Aviation is looking for key abilities in prospective squadron commanders.

“Leaders are expected to bring to the table the ability to think critically and solve problems, and in some cases, technological challenges ... and organizational change challenges,” said McCabe. “At NPS, our graduates leave here with the technical and intellectual edge that will help their commands to deter and prevail in the all-domain battlespace. For these three officers, who were fortunate enough to refine those skills at NPS, they are not just prepared to succeed, but to excel.”

Like most NPS students, they were able to focus their problem-solving research on operational challenges they were familiar with from their time in the Fleet. With the help of NPS’ expert faculty, there is potential for their findings to benefit the fleet, and in some cases, their solutions to see fleet-wide adoption.

For instance, Hooten’s research focused on comparing operational costs to combat readiness requirements for F-18 Super Hornet Squadrons through an operational cycle. By comparing operational costs or what a squadron is supposed to produce, he found there is a significant difference in the outcome.

“My research looked at fiscal constraints and how it affects combat readiness,” said Hooten. “I was able to identify certain types of Super Hornet squadrons who may not have been getting a commensurate



Three Naval Aviators completing their graduate degrees at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) – Lt. Cmdrs. Michael “Jeeves” Hooten, Philip “Lurch” Pretzinger and Austin “Truffles” Ordway – are slated for future command and to become Executive Officers (XO) of Naval Aviation Squadrons after their respective NPS graduations. (Courtesy Photos)

return on investment in terms money spent on combat readiness. I also looked at finding economical options for the Strike Fighter community to achieve their combat readiness requirements, identifying options where funds may be available to redistribute to other requirements within the Naval Aviation Enterprise.

Hooten noted, “My research is designed to get people talking. If the Navy were to choose to follow what my thesis recommends, it would be a monumental shift in naval aviation.”

Reflecting on his combined operational and NPS experiences, Hooten believes he has a new perspective and many objective tools he hopes to take to his future unit and command.

“In some of the most demanding situations, I found myself readily able to reflect on my past experiences and apply many of the concepts and frameworks we are taught here [at NPS],” said Hooten. “Particularly, our studies on leading for organizational effectiveness, strategic leadership, ethical leadership, and consensus-building, helped to better equip me to objectively evaluate past operational experiences, both successes and failures, and I am now able to more effectively apply the lessons learned from them.”

While Hooten studied fighter jets, Pretzinger, a helicopter pilot, started his research with a question about helicopters that had puzzled him his whole career. In exploring the development of carrier aviation, he will be writing his thesis on, “Why are helicopters secondary to jets in the Navy’s TacAir community?”

“My whole career, I’ve tried to figure out why we’re kind of in a secondary role and there’s never been a good explanation,” said Pretzinger. “I’m kind of using this opportunity to look at it academically. Which I then will learn something academically to take back to the Fleet and try to apply these things as an XO to help the aviation community.”

[Story continued on next page]

“NPS drives critical thinking,” Pretzinger continued. “It’s searching for and trying to understand other perspectives, including our military branches, the DoD, our allies, our partners, our adversaries. With that broader perspective, it’ll help me as I go to squadron command and maybe further.”

As for Ordway, he is still in the early stages of his NPS curriculum but has high hopes of integrating his financial management classes into a thesis project helping the Chief of Naval Air Training on a new aviation training program.

“The significance of coming [to NPS] is the focus on the leadership, higher-level thinking and the strategic thinking classes that we take, which are significant for later on in the career,” added Ordway. “In addition, being here teaches you how you can teach other people in the future.”

As pilots progress through their career on the path to serving as squadron commanders, getting out of the cockpit for higher education is imperative to develop their ability to identify, explore and solve complex warfighting challenges. As McCabe noted, this education from NPS will serve as a building block for their upcoming command tours.

“The reasons are simple, but extremely significant for Naval Aviation,” said McCabe. “Education is important for our future, but the rigorous and extremely competitive requirements for command limit those educational opportunities. Officers who have already established their potential for command and have clearly demonstrated sustained superior performance are therefore able to take advantage of this opportunity.”

“There is only one window available for an aviator to come to NPS and still make command,” continued McCabe. “This window is immediately after a successful department head tour. Officers who are NPS graduates are highly educated, capable officers who are now starting to be in high demand.”

Every student at NPS produces a thesis or capstone project, and that process enables students to find solutions. As graduates returning to the fleet, however, they are now equipped to be critical thinkers and solution leaders.

“Ideally, the skills they gained at NPS will enhance their already strong resumes and help facilitate a successful command tour,”

said NPS’ National Security Affairs Program Officer U.S. Navy Cmdr. Paul Rasmussen. “A successful command tour will lead to increased responsibility and likely promotion to Captain for the three officers where they will lead large organizations at not only the operational but strategic level. At these levels of command, above-average levels of critical thinking and decision making are vital as we execute current strategy.”

As Hooten notes, while he is ready to influence the next generation, he hopes more officers like him will gain from the operational and educational path he has traveled.

“It’s really exciting to have that opportunity to shape and mold the next generation of aviators coming in,” said Hooten. “I hope that by having more and more graduates from NPS selected for command, for it sends a signal to the rest of aviation and the rest of the Navy. We should be sending our top performers and our top critical thinkers from the aviation community to NPS because they can take those critical thinking skills and all the tools and the perspectives that NPS offers back to the Fleet.”

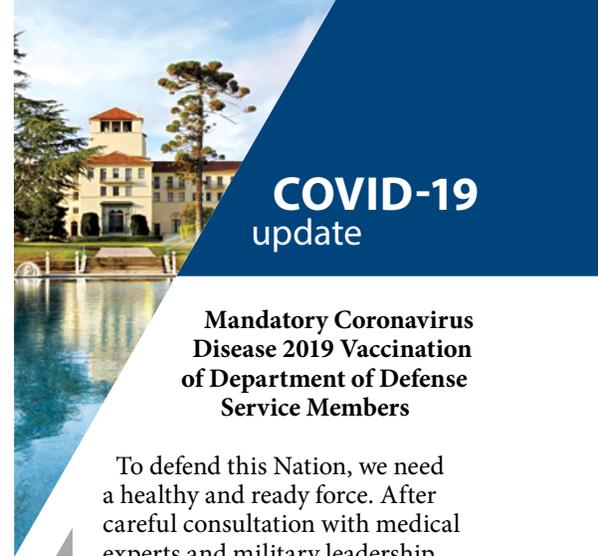
Both Pretzinger and Ordway are looking forward to leading in their next assignments.

“I am very excited to get back to the Fleet, focus on getting flying again, and supporting our missions,” said Pretzinger. “It’ll be nice to get out with junior sailors, junior officers and get everybody working towards the same goal.”

“It’s just exciting to know that if you take the job seriously and do it well, you can have a lasting positive impact on all the people that walk through that door,” said Ordway. “Having that influence as a commanding officer to make people excited about a career in the Navy is truly a gift.”

Hooten is slated to serve as the executive officer (XO) of the “Redhawks” of Training Squadron (VT) 21 in Kingsville, Texas. In San Diego, Pretzinger will be the XO of the “Blackjacks” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 21, and after his graduation in June 2022, Ordway will serve as the XO of the “Eagles” of Training Squadron (VT) 7 in Meridian, Miss.

“Our future continues to be in good hands with these officers,” said McCabe. “NPS has further prepared them to do exactly as the Air Boss directs. Fly, Fight, Lead and Win.”



## COVID-19 update

### Mandatory Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination of Department of Defense Service Members

To defend this Nation, we need a healthy and ready force. After careful consultation with medical experts and military leadership, and with the support of the President, I have determined that mandatory vaccination against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is necessary to protect the Force and defend the American people.

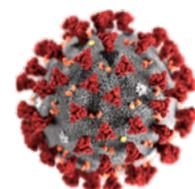
Mandatory vaccinations are familiar to all of our Service members, and mission-critical inoculation is a longstanding part of the U.S. military itself. Our administration of safe, effective COVID-19 vaccines has produced admirable results to date, and I know the Department of Defense will come together to finish the job, with urgency, professionalism, and compassion.

I therefore direct the Secretaries of the Military Departments to immediately begin full vaccination of all members of the Armed Forces under DoD authority on active duty or in the Ready Reserve, including the National Guard, who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Our vaccination of the Force will save lives. Thank you for your focus on this critical mission.

Secretary of Defense,  
Lloyd J. Austin III

To read the full memo, click [here](#).



Send your campus news and notes to [update@nps.edu](mailto:update@nps.edu).

# NPS' NSA Dept. Program Officer Retires After 28 Years of Service

By MC1 Nathan K. Serpico

The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) held a retirement ceremony for U.S. Navy Cmdr. Paul Rasmussen, Aug. 21, on the beautiful grounds just outside the historic Del Monte hotel to celebrate 28 years of Naval service. Over the last six years, Rasmussen has served in the role of Dean of Students, Deputy Dean of Students, and most recently the Program Officer for NPS' National Security Affairs (NSA) Department, allowing for his mentorship, knowledge, and experience to spread across campus and leave his mark on the institution.

As Program Officer for NPS' NSA Department, Rasmussen supervised more than 300 military students and coordinated periodic curriculum reviews to align the academic requirements with program sponsor guidance, ensuring NPS was completing its mission of educating future leaders and addressing DoD challenges.

“My time at [NPS] has been amazing,” stated Rasmussen. “This was one of the most fulfilling jobs I had in the Navy as I was able to utilize my nearly three decades of experience to mentor and guide hundreds of up-and-coming joint officers. I especially was proud of my support to students during the COVID pandemic when the uncertainty of the situation turned all our life's upside down. I doubled down on my support to students and facilitated the continued execution of the NPS Mission. In some respects, my time at NPS was a great way to give back to the Navy for all it gave me during my career.”

From earning his commission in June of 1993 through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps at the University of California, San Diego, earning a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering to his time as a Naval Aviator and through his time at NPS, Rasmussen would do it all again in a heartbeat.

“From day one I could not believe that I was being paid to do this job,” recalled Rasmussen. “The values of the Navy were in line with the values my parents imparted in me. As such, I loved what I did each and every day and it never seemed like a job.”



U.S. Navy Cmdr. Paul Rasmussen walks through side boys after his retirement ceremony, Aug. 21. Rasmussen served in the Navy for 28 years, and for the last six, he has served as the Dean of Students, Deputy Dean of Students, and the Program Officer for NPS; National Security Affairs Department. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Nathan K. Serpico)

Now that he has pulled back on the throttle, Rasmussen said the first things he will do after retirement is take a deep breath, walk his dogs, and reflect a little on his Naval career. Now that the constant relocating that is a part of the military lifestyle is not a necessity, Rasmussen plans to lay roots in the Monterey Peninsula area that he and his family have come to love.

“I have had a successful career, but I would not have had this career without the support of thousands of shipmates and colleagues over the years who taught me, supported me, and teamed up with me to execute various missions,” Rasmussen noted.

## NPS Community Honors Longtime DKL Staff Member Sam Hornbeck

By Javier Chagoya

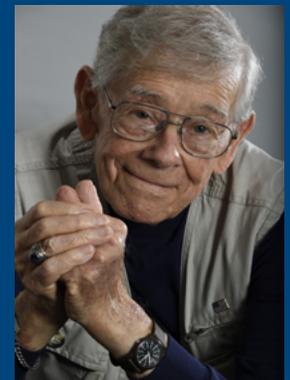
NPS Dudley Knox Library (DKL) staff member Sam Hornbeck passed away peacefully, July 18, 2021, at age 90. A memorial exhibit honoring Hornbeck's contributions to the school's library is now on display next to the Pearl Harbor and Battle of Midway piece to which he contributed the artwork.

Following a 26-year career in the United States Army, retiring as a Sergeant Major in 1975, Hornbeck soon found his next career at the university's Dudley Knox Library, joining the staff in 1976. Over the following 34 years, the library would become one of his greatest passions and joys. He considered DKL his home and the people he worked with his family.

His co-workers recalled the many conversations and quips he would come up with, then imparting those adages as “Sam-isms.” Sam had

a knack for making friends with everyone, and keeping a bowl filled with every kind of chocolate made his office a natural stop over.

Sam was an avid photographer and an aviation enthusiast. He left to the library his collection of aviation history posters and World War II aircraft models he assembled as one of his hobbies. Other hobbies included trout fishing, cartoon drawing, oil painting and being an expert prankster. He also had a great delivery when telling jokes, both “dad” and “non-dad” jokes.



Read Sam's full obituary [here](#).

# Any Day at NPS

## STUDENT voice



NPS Dean of Students Capt. Brandon Bryan, left, recites the Oath of Office during a mass promotion ceremony, Sep. 1. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Nathan K. Serpico)



NPS President retired Vice Adm. Ann E. Rondeau, right, awards Cmdr. Paul Rasmussen with a Meritorious Service Medal during his retirement ceremony, Aug. 21. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Nathan K. Serpico)



A group of NPS students recite the Oath of Office after being promoted to Lt. Cmdr. during a mass promotion ceremony, Sep. 1. (U.S. Navy photo by Javier Chagoya)



Lt. Cmdr. Richard Farias, left, receives a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal from NPS Chief of Staff Capt. Phillip Old during an awards ceremony, August 27. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Tom Tonthat)



Lt. Kenneth Pittner enjoys the moment as he receives a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal from NPS Chief of Staff Capt. Phillip Old during an awards ceremony, Aug. 27. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Tom Tonthat)



JIFX 21-4 participant Stuart Dana of SpyDar Sensors Inc. holds one of six motors used in their electric ducted fan propelled unmanned aerial vehicles. The Vertical Take-Off and Landing prototype and its larger cousin were demonstrated at the quarterly field experiment site, Aug. 24. (U.S. Navy photo by Javier Chagoya)



Maj. Domonique Hittner, U.S. Army

Hello new and current students,

As Summer Quarter is winding down, we hope you have begun to find a routine that fits your needs. The President's Board for Student Affairs (PBSA) is the communication bridge between the staff and students at the Naval Postgraduate School. As we prepare for the Fall quarter, we will be sharing current and responsive updates to our progress to support your needs. Thank you for sharing your feedback with us and please continue to keep us informed of any changes or challenges that you may be experiencing. Also, if you have any recommendations, concerns, or see anything that needs improvement that you would like brought up to the Staff, please email me directly at [domonique.hittner@nps.edu](mailto:domonique.hittner@nps.edu) or use our Student Recommendations Link.

We are hosting an End of Summer BBQ Event on Sept. 23. This is to welcome new students and farewell our graduates but is open to students and faculty. The event-specifics will follow as soon as the details are finalized. Additionally, we will be featuring a student/faculty corner in our newsletters. This will feature first-hand tips from current/graduating students as well as faculty research topics, so please watch for it and email us if you are interested in participating. We will post other upcoming events, support resources, and more volunteer opportunities to our website, the muster page, and the library. Join us in getting involved on campus to help break up the time between studying. It is a great way to connect with other students and learn more about our local community.

Here to serve,

**Domonique Hittner, Chair, PBSA**

<https://nps.edu/group/pbsa>

# Coping with Afghanistan

By the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs

Veterans from all eras are reacting to the events in Afghanistan, such as the U.S withdrawal and the takeover by the Taliban.

In reaction to current events in Afghanistan, Veterans may:

- Feel frustrated, sad, helpless, grief or distressed
- Feel angry or betrayed
- Experience an increase in mental health symptoms like symptoms of PTSD or depression
- Sleep poorly, drink more or use more drugs
- Try to avoid all reminders or media or shy away from social situations
- Have more military and homecoming memories
- Veterans may question the meaning of their service or whether it was worth the sacrifices they made. They may feel more moral distress about experiences they had during their service.

Feeling distress is a normal reaction to negative events, especially ones that feel personal. It can be helpful to let yourself feel those feelings rather than try to avoid them. Often, these feelings will naturally run their course. If they continue without easing up or if you feel overwhelmed by them, the suggestions below can be helpful.

## You are not alone.

Veterans may question the meaning of their service or whether it was worth the sacrifices they made. They may feel more moral distress about experiences they had during their service. It's normal to feel this way. Talk with your friends and families, reach out to battle buddies, connect with a peer-to-peer network, or sign up for mental health services. Scroll down for a list common reactions and coping advice.

Consider more general coping strategies that you may want to try including:

- **Engage in Positive Activities.** Try to engage in positive, healthy, or meaningful activities, even if they are small, simple actions. Doing things that are rewarding, meaningful, or enjoyable, even if you don't feel like it, can make you feel better.
- **Stay Connected.** Spend time with people who give you a sense of security, calm, or happiness, or those who best understand what you are going through.
- **Practice Good Self Care.** Look for positive coping strategies that help you manage your emotions. Listening to music, exercising, practicing breathing routines, spending time in nature or with animals, journaling, or reading inspirational text are some simple ways to help manage overwhelming or distressing emotions.
- **Stick to Your Routines.** It can be helpful to stick to a schedule for when you sleep, eat, work, and do other day-to-day activities.
- **Limit Media Exposure.** Limit how much news you take in if media coverage is increasing your distress.
- **Use a mobile app.** Consider one of VA's self-help apps (see <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/>) such as PTSD Coach which has tools that can help you deal with common reactions like, stress, sadness, and anxiety. You can also track your symptoms over time.
- **PTSD Coach Online.** A series of online video coaches will guide you through 17 tools to help you manage stress.

## Resources available right now

- **Veterans Crisis Line** - If you are having thoughts of suicide, call 1-800-273-8255, then PRESS 1 or visit <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/> For emergency mental health care, you can also go directly to [your local VA medical center](#) 24/7 regardless of your discharge status or enrollment in other VA health care.
- **Vet Centers** - Discuss how you feel with other Veterans in these community-based counseling centers. **70% of Vet Center staff are Veterans.** Call 1-877-927-8387 or find one [near you](#).
- **VA Mental Health Services Guide** - This guide will help you sign up and access mental health services.
- **MakeTheConnection.net** - information, resources, and Veteran to Veteran videos for challenging life events and experiences with mental health issues.
- **RallyPoint** - Talk to other Veterans online. Discuss: [What are your feelings as the Taliban reclaim Afghanistan after 20 years of US involvement?](#)
- **Download VA's self-help apps** - Tools to help deal with common reactions like, stress, sadness, and anxiety. You can also track your symptoms over time.
- **Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)** - [Request a Peer Mentor](#)
- **VA Women Veterans Call Center** - Call or text 1-855-829-6636 (M-F 8AM - 10PM & SAT 8AM - 6:30PM ET)
- **VA Caregiver Support Line** - Call 1-855-260-3274 (M-F 8AM - 10PM & SAT 8AM - 5PM ET)
- **Together We Served** - [Find your battle buddies](#) through unit pages
- **George W. Bush Institute** - Need help or want to talk? [Check In](#) or call: 630-522-4904 or email: [checkin@veteranwellnessalliance.org](mailto:checkin@veteranwellnessalliance.org)
- **Elizabeth Dole Foundation Hidden Heroes** - [Join the Community](#)
- **American Red Cross Military Veteran Caregiver Network** - [Peer Support and Mentoring](#)
- **Team Red, White & Blue** - Hundreds of events weekly. [Find a chapter](#) in your area.
- **Student Veterans of America** - [Find a campus chapter](#) to connect with.
- **Team Rubicon** - [Find a local support](#) squad.



## ESO Corner

The U.S. Naval Community College (USNCC) successfully completed its first Pilot program in June 2021 and will begin open enrollment for Pilot II this Fall, starting in October 2021.

The USNCC was established by the Department of the Navy (DON) to provide enlisted Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen access to professional certificates and naval-relevant associate degrees, that will enhance operational readiness, improve maritime warfighting capabilities, and begin these service members on a path of lifelong learning.

There are several distinguishing characteristics and benefits a USNCC student can expect:

- Naval-centered education - Naval Studies Certificate built into each degree plan
- Stackable certificates en route to earned associate degree
- Online/flexible course schedule and delivery options (asynchronous/competency based)
- Fully funded - The USNCC covers tuition, mandatory fees, and course materials (books).
- Course offerings do NOT deduct from TA/VOLED benefits; service members can retain their TA/VOLED benefits for their bachelor's and/or master's

Interested service members can complete the "prospective student interest form" available on ([www.usncc.edu](http://www.usncc.edu)) so that they may begin to receive USNCC communications, Pilot II updates, and open enrollment information.

If you have any questions, please contact the USNCC Enrollment Team at [info@usncc.usmcu.edu](mailto:info@usncc.usmcu.edu).

Get started today to advance your career!

- **Navy College Program**  
<https://www.navycollege.navy.mil>



- **USMAP: Make OJT work for you!**  
<https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil/usmapss/static/index.htm>
- **Navy Cool program:** Did you know there is a Navy Cool App? Have questions? Email them to [Navycool@navy.mil](mailto:Navycool@navy.mil)  
<https://www.cool.navy.mil/usn>

Commissioning Programs:

- **Officer Candidate Schools (OCS)**  
<https://www.navyocs.com/officer/>
- **Seaman to Admiral-21 Program (STA-21)**  
<https://www.netc.navy.mil/Commands/Naval-Service-Training-Command/STA-21/>
- **Naval Academy**  
<https://www.usna.edu/homepage.php>
- **MECP/MSC/IPP**  
<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmpdc/Pages/index.aspx>
- **LDO/CWO**  
<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Management/Boards/Administrative/LDO-CWO/>

## Navy Physical Readiness Assessment Information

PFA season is here!

BCAs will take place 27 Sept-01 Oct.

The PRT will be held 4-7 Oct

To ensure safety, reservations are required for conducting the BCA and PRT, and both will be available through <https://nrsw92.as.me/nsamontereypfa>.

Instructional videos for the new forearm planks core exercise and rowing cardio exercise are available online:

[Forearm Plank Instructional](#)

[Rowing Machine Instructional](#)

Review the PRT standards for your age group [here](#).



# On campus this month

## September 6

Labor Day



## September 14-16

Center for Executive Education SPEAR Workshop  
*Online*



## September 24

Summer Quarter Graduation Ceremony  
*Live in King Auditorium and Online*



## EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

AS OF 30 SEP 2021, LEAVE IN EXCESS OF 60 DAYS (UP TO 120 DAYS) IS PROTECTED UNDER SPECIAL LEAVE ACCRUAL. SEE NAVADMIN 159/21 FOR MORE DETAILS.

**-YOUR SLA LEAVE BALANCE MAY BE RETAINED UNTIL 30 SEP 2024.**

**-SAILORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR TRACKING AND MANAGING THEIR OWN LEAVE, WHICH CAN BE FOUND ON THEIR LEAVE AND EARNINGS STATEMENT (LES).**

**-PLEASE CHECK THE DFAS WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SLA.**



## Missing the camaraderie and conversation of the Trident Room?

We can help. We believe the Trident Room is an integral and well-known contributor to our NPS academic experience. Student-produced, this podcast is your new destination for illuminating, unfiltered conversation between student hosts and compelling guests.



## TRIDENT ROOM PODCAST SERIES

Brewer of stout conversation. Unfiltered and on tap.

Join us online at [nps.edu/tridentroompodcast](https://nps.edu/tridentroompodcast) or look for us on Apple Podcasts and Spotify starting July 29, 2020.

