

Great Lakes Bulletin

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SERVING "THE QUARTERDECK OF THE NAVY" FOR 104 YEARS

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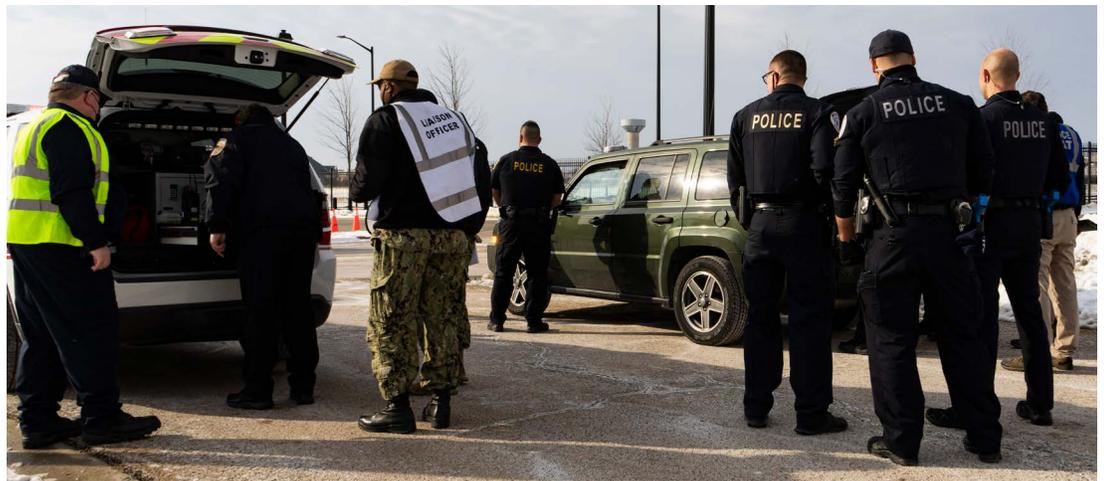
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Naval Station Great Lakes Participates in Citadel Shield-Solid Curtain 2022

Story from MC2 Brigitte Johnston, Naval Station Great Lakes Public Affairs



Navy installations across the country are participating in an annual two-week force protection exercise, Jan. 31- Feb. 12.

Exercise Citadel Shield-Solid Curtain 2022 is conducted by Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command and Commander, Navy Installations Command on all Navy installations in the continental U.S., including Naval Station Great Lakes.

On Feb. 1, the NSGL installation training team, led by Installation Training Officer Terry Lanners, conducted an active shooter drill that evaluated information dissemination, individual response plans, security force response, and the ability to coordinate with local emergency responders and the community. A simulated active shooter took place at the USS Midway Drill Hall at Recruit Training Command in a graduation day scenario. Naval Security Forces and Great Lakes Police responded to multiple simulated threats in the Visitor's Reception Center and adjacent parking garage. Great Lakes Fire & Emergency Services additionally simulated triaging victims.

"Practicing our responses to these scenarios is crucial to supporting our mission, said Capt. Jason J. Williamson, NSGL's commanding officer. "Our drill went smoothly both on scene with our security forces and in the Emergency Operations Center with the incident management team. We really strive to be prepared for these scenarios and we exhibited that."

The local community was informed prior to the exercise, warning of traffic, sirens, and other possible minor disturbances that could affect the area. The use of outdoor warning sirens is used in lockdown procedures to inform the base to lock down or shelter in place. Part of the simulation included practicing lockdown procedures.

"You never want to just jump into something without fully understanding the situation," said Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Brandon McPhan, the drill's Emergency Operations Center Liaison. "Without proper training you will not know what to do." In addition to Great Lakes resources, outside law enforcement agencies included 1



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Gurnee, Wauconda, Lake Forest, and Buffalo Grove Police Departments and the Naval Criminal Investigation Service. Lanners states that incorporating help from federal and local partners makes this exercise complex and realistic.

“You want to train as much as possible,” said Chief Master-at-Arms Zachary Plumb, NSGL’s security department training officer. “When you work with a small unit, they become cohesive. Here, we need to bring all of those units together to execute those mass casualty events. This gives us the opportunity to do that, refine that, and work out any kinks in the communication and response systems. We can figure out best practices together and change what needs to be changed and move forward in the direction we need.”

“Naval Station Great Lakes would like to thank all of our partners, both federal and local, who participated,” said Lanners. “Without your assistance, cooperation and dedication this exercise would not have been as successful as it was.”

Exercise Citadel Shield-Solid Curtain 2021 is a regularly scheduled exercise that reinforces the need for everyone to maintain a force protection mindset and a readiness to respond to threats. We encourage personnel to remain aware of their surroundings throughout the exercise and to not assume that any suspicious activity is part of the exercise. Community members are asked to report any suspicious activity to Great Lakes Police at (847) 688-5555 for non-emergencies and to call 911 for emergencies.

Clock is Ticking

Feb. 17 Application Deadline for the Annual Scholarships for Military Children Program

Story by Mike Perron, Defense Commissary Agency Public Affairs

The Feb. 17 deadline to apply to the Scholarships for Military Children program, administered by the nonprofit Fisher House Foundation, is quickly approaching. A total of 500 scholarship grants, each for \$2,000, will be awarded for the 2022-23 school year with at least one recipient selected at every commissary location where qualified applications are received. Additional recipients will be selected based on a prorated basis, so more applicants will be selected from those commissaries with larger numbers of applicants.

“As of Jan. 28, there had been just over 1,200 completed applications submitted, but from experience, we anticipate somewhere near 5,000 by the deadline,” said Marshall Banks, Fisher House Foundation’s Director of Community Relations.

Now in its 22nd year, the Scholarships for Military Children Program, through the generosity of DeCA business partners and others, has allowed more than 12,300 students, selected from a pool of nearly 109,000 applicants, to share over \$21 million in scholarship grants.

The program was created in 2001 to recognize the contributions of military families to the readiness of the fighting force, and to celebrate the role of the commissary in the military family community. It is open to sons and daughters of active duty, reserve/guard, or retired military commissary customers.

“Over the years Fisher House has become a beacon of hope for military families, often during the most challenging moments those families will ever face. Our commissaries are incredibly honored to remain participants in a program that has provided the children of military service members with this financial boost to their higher education goals for 22 years now,” said Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Michael R. Saucedo, senior enlisted advisor to DeCA’s director.

Eligibility for the program is determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) database. Applicants should ensure that they, as well as their sponsor, are enrolled in the DEERS database and have a current military dependent ID card. The applicant must also be planning to attend or already be attending an accredited college or university full time, or be enrolled in a program

of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-year program. Applicants who are awarded a full scholarship to attend a college or university or receive an appointment to one of the service academies or affiliated preparatory schools are not eligible to receive funds from this program. A full scholarship is usually defined as one that provides for payment of tuition, books, lab fees and other expenses.

All rules and requirements for the program, as well as links to frequently asked questions and the application itself, are available at Fisher House's Scholarships for Military Children web page.

Fisher House also hosts a custom scholarship search engine on its website, tailored to military families, called "Scholarships for Service." It's free, easy to use, and formatted for both mobile devices and computers at MilitaryScholar.org.

Students enter brief background information and educational goals and the search tool will identify military-affiliated scholarships they may be eligible for based on their input. Once the search is complete, students receive a list of scholarships with a summary of eligibility requirements, points of contact and links to the scholarship provider's website.

"Fisher House Foundation and DeCA have had a long-standing partnership on our scholarship program," said Fisher House Chairman and CEO Kenneth Fisher. "This program is an extension of how we support and show gratitude to our nation's

military families. Just saying thank you is not enough."

The Scholarships for Military Children program is managed by Scholarship Managers, a national, nonprofit organization. If students have questions about the scholarship program application, they should call Scholarship Managers at 856-616-9311 or email them at militaryscholar@scholarshipmanagers.com.

No government funds are used to support the Scholarships for Military Children Program. Commissary vendors, manufacturers, brokers, suppliers and the general public donate money to fund the program.

"One hundred percent of the donations given to the Scholarships for Military Children program go toward the award recipients' education. This means that a \$10,000 donation, for example, fully sponsors five scholarships of \$2,000 each," explained Banks. "Fisher House Foundation covers all administration costs and the cost of the scholarship management contract."

Saucedo also praised the program's many donors for their continued efforts to keep it alive and relevant for 22 years and counting. "We at the Defense Commissary Agency extend our thanks to Fisher House Foundation as well as the generous industry partner donors and others that make these scholarships possible for so many deserving families each year."

Navy Recruiter Continues Successful Career in Great Lakes

Story by Navy Recruiting Command Public Affairs



From a young age, Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class Gary Coit knew he wanted to do something different. While he was growing up he said he was more motivated than other kids his age to do something better and see what life had to offer. Little did he

know that someday he would travel the world.

During his years in high school while playing for the football team, he was injured and came to the realization that sports wasn't his only option to enjoy the things life has to offer. At the age of 20, he joined the United States Navy to go on journeys he would never have imagined.

"I have a lot of experiences, some good, some bad," Coit said. "But those experiences are what shape us and make us who we are."

After Coit joined the Navy, his life changed and he said he had earned things he never had before; stability, increased drive in work ethic and the opportunity to be a part of

something bigger than himself. The experiences he has had in the Navy is something he wants to share with others.

"I love seeing different people from different walks of life have different outlooks on different situations," Coit said. "I also love all the travel opportunities the Navy has given me. I've been to 32 different countries and I wouldn't trade any of my experiences for the world."

Upon his time of entering the Navy, he was given the opportunity to be on a NATO deployment and travel to 18 countries around the world. He was able to see different faces, experience different cultures, taste different foods and experience a whole new life. While on that deployment, he had the opportunity to serve more than just his country. As he traveled from country to country, he volunteered for extraordinary projects such as helping to build a church in Madagascar. Coit would go on to travel to Cape Town, Africa and volunteer there to help build a school for the local community.

"I love to see the change in the future Sailors and the ability to change peoples' lives," Coit said. "We don't just recruit, we help change lives on a daily basis. Whatever situation they were in or how they grow up can all be changed with our help."

Coit became no stranger to traveling since more opportunities allowed him to help others around the world. During his time traveling, he found himself in the United Arab Emirates. He was playing with a local basketball team in Fujairah while working fundraisers for the local youth and mission trips. Coit was having fun playing basketball with those around him and helping change their lives. Coit hopes that many never forgot the smile, passion and positive outlook he left behind.

Coit had accomplished so much but his drive and work ethic didn't stop. In 2011, he volunteered to become a recruiter in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He knew how to reach out to those in the local and surrounding communities and give them a chance at Navy life. There have been many times where he has seen future Sailors in challenging situations transition to a much better one thanks to the benefits the Navy offers. Coit expressed that recruiters have more influential power than they think, as he has seen the faces of many Sailors and parents who were grateful.

Coit has been a recruiter at NTAG Great Lakes for 7 years and he never stopped reaching new heights. As a talent scout, he recruited 39 high quality candidates into the Navy, which led him to receive many awards such including a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, several

Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, Junior Sailor of the Quarter, Junior Sailor of the Year, Talent Scout of the Month and the Quarter multiple times throughout Fiscal Year 21 and much more.

From the very beginning Coit always had it in mind to do more throughout his Navy career. Even outside of the Navy he is still helping out as he continues coaching basketball in his community. He has also coached at local colleges, YMCA's, and The Boys and Girls Club. Coit continues to show everyone the opportunities the Navy can bring and how the Navy can help with education benefits, steady pay and the training and qualifications he's received.

"I am enrolled in a dual program for my Bachelors in Criminal Justice and Masters in Psychology," Coit said. "My program has been shut down multiple times due to COVID, so I am hoping to complete it sooner than later. Long term, I am hoping to become a chief and eventually retire."

Navy Recruiting Command consists of a command headquarters, three Navy Recruiting Regions, and 26 Navy Talent Acquisition Groups that serve more than 1,000 recruiting stations across the world. Their combined goal is to attract the highest quality candidates to assure the ongoing success of America's Navy.

Seabee Battalions Sponsor Recruits in Boot Camp

Story by Susan Martin, U.S. Navy Recruit Training Command Public Affairs

For the first time at Recruit Training Command (RTC), home to the Navy's only boot camp, construction battalions sponsored 12 divisions, nearly the entire training group, which graduated Jan. 28.

Construction battalions, better known as "Seabees" which participated in the sponsorship program included: Naval Construction Group 1; 22nd Naval Construction Regiment; Amphibious Construction Battalion 2; Naval Construction Training Center Gulfport; Naval Special Warfare Group ONE – LOGSU; Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133; Naval Support Facility Thurmont; Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 303; Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 11; Naval Support Unit-Department of State; Underwater Construction Team 2; and Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Pacific.

Recruit division sponsorship develops a special bond between recruit divisions and military or civilian

organizations. Mentorship and direct contact from these entities enhance basic training and provide a unique learning experience for recruits and sponsoring groups. The relationships built with sponsoring groups increase outside support for RTC's mission and enhance Navy awareness in the civilian community.

"I had many conversations with the governing command and they decided that it would be a cool idea to sponsor a few divisions," said Senior Chief Damage Controlman Andrae Sutherland, RTC's recruit sponsorship coordinator. "The recruit division projections are not perfectly accurate based on receiving numbers, so they decided to sponsor nearly all the divisions in the training group."

Throughout the recruits' eight weeks of training, the Seabees were able to visit various areas of boot camp training evolutions that included division commissioning, physical fitness assessment (PFA), pizza night on the eve of

graduation, and Battle Stations-21.

Battle Stations is the culminating event of recruit training and tests recruits' knowledge and ability to apply what they learned throughout basic training. It is a vital component in the transformation from civilian to Sailor. Recruits use problem-solving skills and teamwork training to accomplished fleet-oriented tasks.

"I have been incredibly ecstatic about this visit. I've been a Recruit Division Commander (RDC) for two and half years and in my time here I have not seen any Seabee command sponsor any divisions," said Builder First Class Richard Liles, RDC. "To be a part of the first sponsor since I've been here, and nearly the entire training group, is a huge honor itself being as a Seabee myself."

For Seaman Thomas Pekofske, 21, of Oswego, Illinois, having NCTC sponsor his division was an interesting experience as his rate is construction mechanic.

"This has been my first introduction in the community of the SeaBees, and it's been wonderful," said Pekofske, who leads his division as the recruit chief petty officer. "It's definitely changed my image of what I thought the military was about, specifically within the Seabees. I was able to speak with several chief Seabees one-on-one who all gave good advice."

Sutherland said the recruits get a better understanding on what to expect at their follow-on commands, especially the Seabee commands.

"The recruits are used to seeing their RDCs at least 12-14 hours daily for 60-plus days and for sponsors from outside RTC to take interest and come spend some time with them, it gives them a more sense of purpose and belonging to the United States Navy," said Sutherland. Many of the sponsor staff have not been at RTC since the 12-year modernization of the entire command that began in 1995. Returning to RTC and seeing the vast improvements at RTC was gratifying for them.

"Most importantly, being able to see the process, and the new additions to our training curriculum is important because they can understand the recruits much better who are coming to their commands in their fleet," said Sutherland.

Command Master Chief Raquel Jeffers, NCTC, explained how beneficial their sponsorship was to their staff as well as the recruits. Since their staff is an integral part of the accessions pipeline, she stated it's extremely important to fully comprehend the experience today's recruits go through prior to their arrival at builder and steelwork "A" School.

"Collectively, NCTC was a part of the commissioning, swim qualifications, PFA, Battle Stations, and graduation. Battle Stations and graduation were most meaningful, as we got to see the full range of emotions; fear, excitement, and pride in themselves and their shipmates," said Jeffers.

"For the students, they got to see senior leaders outside of RTC engaged in their training, and they had the opportunity to ask us questions about life in the fleet. Overall, it was an absolutely fantastic



Gym 2A - The Loft

Mon - Fri: 5 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Gym 440 - The Fieldhouse

Mon - Fri: 6 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Gym 4 - Courts Plus

Mon - Fri: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Sat & Sun: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Check out the latest events and activities from our MWR at

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www.navylifegl.com

For tickets and travel, call 847-688-5417



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experience that I'd like to be a part of again."

At the graduation ceremony, Rear Admiral Maria "Lore" Aguayo, commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command, Atlantic, served as the reviewing officer. As she addressed the graduating Sailors, she offered them insight as they embarked on their naval careers.

"Your adventure will present you with opportunities on many levels. On a personal level, you have the opportunity to live the old Navy slogan and see the world. You will make lifelong friends, develop incredible skills and explore the depths of your courage," said Aguayo, "On a broader level ... you will have the opportunity to change the world. Your adventure has only begun. And I firmly believe your futures are bright, full of promise and hope. I shall be greatly

honored if we have the opportunity to serve together in the future."

For the recruits, the Seabees offered a glimpse into the camaraderie in store for them in the fleet as they watched the Seabees interact with RTC staff with whom they had previously served.

"I can't emphasize enough how much they all really seemed like they are comfortable and happy with each other because they know the person to their right is going to work just as hard as they are," said Pekofske. "One of them was in at the same time as my RDCs and seeing them interact and the friendship they have is definitely something to look forward to as I go to sea."

NEX Photographer Wade Downey Retires After 39 Years

Story by Susan Martin, U.S. Navy Recruit Training Command Public Affairs

After 39 years of photographing recruits at Recruit Training Command, Navy Exchange (NEX) photographer Wade Downey not only received accolades at a retirement ceremony, he was also honored in a most distinguished manner: he was named an honorary recruit division commander (RDC) at the Navy's only boot camp.

On Dec. 27, 2021, Downey was honored at a retirement ceremony for the following:

"In recognition of your 39 years of faithful service to the mission at Recruit Training Command Great Lakes. You demonstrated peer leadership, recruit mentorship, and teamwork of the highest caliber. Your efforts have been recognized far and wide and make you a perfect candidate for this first-ever designation as an Honorary Recruit Division Commander. You have been an important member of the team and we consider you part of our Navy family. On behalf of Recruit Training Command Great Lakes we say, 'Thank You and a job well done!'"

Downey, who began his photography career at the NEX photo lab June 29, 1982, as a cruise book (yearbook) layout clerk, was soon promoted to cruise book photographer in 1983.

His primary duties included taking photos in the recruit barracks, makeup pictures and division photos, and military ball pictures. When he wasn't taking photos he helped with mailing, transferring schedules onto dry erase boards, checking in cruise books at the photo lab, and anything else

he felt with which he could help.

While he is prominently present to all of the recruits and RDCs, what makes his presence and communication even more unique is he's deaf.

"He has his own unique way of communicating with the recruits, military and civilian staff as well as graduation guests by being very animated and acting out what is saying," said Diana Williamson, NEX photographer supervisor who worked with Downey for 23 years. "He is great at reading lips; the last year and a half has been extra tough for him with everyone wearing masks."

Downey graduated in 1981 from the Illinois School for the Deaf in Jacksonville, Illinois and returned to Waukegan, Illinois, to begin electrician school, something he found dissatisfying. Being that Waukegan is in close proximity to Naval Station Great Lakes, his mother suggested he pursue a civilian position on base.

After he began photo processing for the recruit yearbooks, NEX staff began seeking his assistance in taking photos.

When recruits were present for their division photos, Downey noticed situations where some recruits needed guidance and decided to help intervene.

"I would tell them over and over again, 'Stop playing, stop talking, stop messing around and don't waste your time. You need to focus on yourself, please. When you're done with graduation, you gotta think about what you're going to do,'" said Downey.

Williamson frequently witnessed Downey help correct and train recruits as well.

“He has effectively shown many recruit chief petty officers to properly salute with their cutlass and when he sees a recruit doing something wrong he corrects them before they get in trouble,” she said.

In the years prior to smart phones, Downey would find his own way to communicate with recruits and personnel with some even knowing sign language themselves. Once he obtained his smart phone, communication became easier.

“When I bought a smart phone, I, and others, could use that for interpreting whereas before I just kind of dealt with it,” said Downey. “I’m not complaining, but you know, God bless they came up with smart phones!”

Downey says that he often meets RDCs who remember him from when they were in boot camp and has a good working relationship with them.

“Wade is most beneficial to the photo lab due his awesome public relations with the RDCs and the command,” said Williamson. “He gets along with everyone and everybody loves Wade.”

Now that he’s retired, Downey plans to head to Little Rock, Arkansas, to spend time with family. However, RTC and the recruits will always be on his mind.

“Maybe I could teach them! I’ve got the red rope now,” he said, indicating the rope Sailors wear to signify they are an RDC. “Now I can go teach the recruits how to handle the cutlass and all that. It’s perfect! If you decide you need me, call me back, I’ll teach them. I’ll come back!”

Boot camp training includes physical fitness, seamanship, firearms, firefighting and shipboard damage control along with lessons in Navy heritage and core values, teamwork and discipline. About 40,000 recruits graduate annually from RTC and begin their Navy careers.

NEXCOM Achieves Full Operational Capability of NGIS

Story by Kristine Sturkie, Navy Exchange Services Command Public Affairs

The Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) achieved ‘Full Operational Capability’ of Navy Gateway Inn & Suites (NGIS) on Jan. 30, 2022. With this milestone, NEXCOM attains complete operational control of NGIS and all administrative functions.

“Over the past year, NEXCOM; Commander, Navy Installations Command’s Fleet and Family Readiness; and NGIS teams have worked diligently to ensure a smooth transition, one that was seamless to our patrons,” said retired Rear Adm. Robert J. Bianchi, Chief Executive Officer of NEXCOM. “I appreciate all the support we received from Navy leadership as we successfully reached Full Operational Capability eight months earlier than directed. I look forward to supporting our NGIS team as they continue to provide quality lodging for TDY travelers.”

On Jan. 4, 2021, Gregory J. Slavonic, Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of the Navy, issued a memorandum that directed the consolidation of the Navy’s Permanent Change of Station lodging program, NEXCOM’s Navy Lodge Program and the Department of the Navy’s Temporary Duty Lodging program, NGIS, under NEXCOM with Initial Operational Capability by Oct. 1, 2021 and Full Operational Capability by Sept. 30, 2022.

A small ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Oct. 1, 2021, on Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Virginia, when Initial Operational Capability was achieved and NGIS operations transitioned to NEXCOM.

NGIS is a professionally managed, business-based DoD Lodging Program. NGIS contributes to mission readiness by offering quality lodging and services for a mobile military community, while keeping official travel costs to a minimum. With 16,000 rooms at 61 military installations worldwide, NGIS provides Priority-One lodging for the Official Temporary Duty (TDY) traveler. NGIS delivers comfortable and welcoming accommodations with cost-saving room rates for individual and group TDY travelers, permanent change of station (PCS) travelers, Department of Defense civilians and leisure travelers, retirees, reservists and sponsored guests. For more information or to make a NGIS reservation, visit <https://ngis.dodlodging.net/>.

NEXCOM oversees seven business lines that include Navy Exchange (NEX) stores, Navy Lodges, Navy Gateway Inns & Suites, Ships Store Program, Navy Clothing and Textile Research Facility, Uniform Program Management Office and Telecommunications Program Office.