

# Naval Construction Battalion Center

Gulfport, Mississippi  
32nd Change of Command



*and*  
Retirement Ceremony of  
Captain Jeff Powell

July 28, 2023

## **Change of Command Tradition**

The ceremonies, customs, and traditions of our modern Navy predate the Christian era and draw their origin from ancient customs and laws of the sea. They began in historic times by seafaring men and gradually merged into the British Naval Regulations around the time of the American Revolution.

The change of command you witness today is not prescribed specifically by U.S. Navy regulations, but rather is an honored product of the rich heritage of naval traditions. Nowhere else does the instantaneous transfer of complete authority and responsibility from one individual to another exist. It is a custom wholly naval, without an equivalent counterpart in the U.S. Army or Air Force. Custom has established that this ceremony be formal and impressive - designated to strengthen the respect for authority that is vital to any military operation. Parading all hands at quarters and the public reading of official orders stems from the days when the movement of mail and personnel was a very slow process. This procedure was designed to ensure only duly authorized officers held command and that all aboard were aware of its authenticity.

The heart of the ceremony is the formal reading of the official orders by both the relieving officer and the officer to be relieved. Command passes upon utterance by the relieving officer, "I relieve you, sir or ma'am!" The officer being relieved responds "I stand relieved!" This simple procedure is duplicated hundreds of times daily throughout the navies of the world as each watch officer passes responsibility to his relief in the conduct of each ship's routine.

The strength and supremacy of today's Navy stem in large measure from the observance of customs and traditions, each founded on need and contributing its share to stability, combat effectiveness, and smooth transition of authority. This simple ceremony, passing authority and responsibility to yet another fine officer, reflects the dedication of free men and women serving their nation proudly.

# **Change of Command**

**Musical Selections**  
*Navy Band Southeast*

**Arrival of Official Party\***

**Parade of Colors\***

**National Anthem\***  
*Navy Band Southeast*

**Invocation**  
*Lieutenant Monya Stubbs*

**Welcome and Introduction of Presiding Officer**  
*Captain Jeff Powell*

**Remarks**  
*Captain Ian Johnson*  
*Commander, Navy Region Southeast*

**Presentation of Award\***

**Remarks**  
*Captain Jeff Powell*

**Reading of Orders**

**Remarks**  
*Captain Ana Franco*

**Departure and Transition to Retirement Ceremony\***  
\*Guests please stand.

# Prior Commanding Officers

## Naval Construction Battalion Center Gulfport

**Captain C. S. Daily**  
April 1952 - December 1954

**Captain E. S. Bathke**  
December 1954 - June 1958

**Captain A. S. C. Wadsworth**  
June 1958 - June 1960

**Captain H. C. Rowe**  
June 1960 - June 1962

**Commander W. S. Valentine**  
June 1962 - June 1964

**Commander N. L. Martinson**  
June 1964 - October 1966

**Captain R. C. Ingram**  
October 1966 - December 1968

**Captain J. M. Hill Jr.**  
December 1968 - July 1971

**Captain W. M. Zobel**  
July 1971 - July 1973

**Captain W. W. DeGroot III**  
July 1973 - May 1976

**Captain J. T. Taylor**  
May 1976 - June 1978

**Captain R. J. McHugh**  
June 1978 - September 1980

**Captain R. P. Phenix**  
September 1980 - June 1982

**Captain A. M. Steadle Jr.**  
June 1982 - September 1984

**Captain C. M. Maskell**  
September 1984 - October 1986

**Captain Q. E. D. Lewis**  
October 1986 - September 1988

**Captain H. H. Lewis Jr.**  
September 1988 - June 1990

**Captain W. O. Hilderbrand**  
June 1990 - August 1992

**Captain J. A. Lehman**  
August 1992 - December 1994

**Captain F. P. DiGeorge III**  
December 1994 - October 1997

**Captain L. V. Marchette**  
October 1997 - March 2000

**Captain B. R. Kelm**  
March 2000 - June 2003

**Captain W. C. McKerall**  
June 2003 - June 2005

**Captain G. E. Eichert**  
June 2005 - May 2006

**Captain H. V. Dobson**  
May 2006 - July 2008

**Captain E. W. Brown**  
July 2008 - September 2010

**Captain L. V. Cariello**  
September 2010 - July 2011

**Captain F. F. Burgess III**  
July 2011 - June 2013

**Captain P. J. Odenthal**  
June 2013 - July 2015

**Captain C. M. Hansen**  
July 2015 - July 2017

**Captain W. L. Whitmire**  
July 2017 - August 2020

**Captain J. S. Powell**  
August 2020 - July 2023

## A Short History of NCBC Gulfport

NCBC Gulfport was established in 1942 as Advance Base Depot (ABD) Gulfport. The location was ideal as a shipping and construction battalion station, as the semi-tropical climate allowed year-round shipping and was similar to much of the Mediterranean and Pacific theaters where the Seabees were expected to deploy, fight, and work.

Before the first Seabees arrived, the ABD hosted an armed guard school and a cooks and bakers school. The Seabees arrived in force in October of 1942 and established housing in temporary structures much like the ones they would later inhabit on deployment. After a period of training, the Seabees shipped out to pave the road across the Pacific, and the Depot became a training center for various technical ratings.

After the war, the ABD was converted to storing stockpiles of certain national resources of particular interest to the Navy, especially copper, bauxite ore, and certain textile fibers. The ABD function dramatically dropped the station population, from a wartime high of about 25,000 to a 1950s low of a few dozen.

In the mid-1950s, the Seabees returned and the Depot was renamed the Naval Construction Battalion Center. During the Cold War, especially the Vietnam War, the Navy Seabees provided construction and engineering services to U.S. allies.

The Gulfport community has also benefitted from the presence of highly skilled, highly trained Seabees; several Little League fields, parks, scout camps, and other public facilities were built with Seabee help. Throughout their tenure at Gulfport, the Seabees have found themselves responding to local hurricane disasters, most notably Hurricanes Camille and Katrina.

The installation is thriving today and remains a vital part of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.





## **Captain Ian Johnson** **Commander** **Navy Region Southeast**

Captain Ian Johnson is a native of Wakefield, Rhode Island. He graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1994 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautical Engineering, and entered the submarine training pipeline, completing nuclear power training in Orlando, Florida, and Ballston Spa, New York.

In 1996, he reported to USS Parche (SSN 683) in Bangor, Washington, where he served as electrical officer, main propulsion assistant and damage control assistant. There he completed three special ocean engineering missions, and earned three Battle “E” awards, two Meritorious Unit Commendations, and the Presidential Unit Citation. After completing the Submarine Officer Advanced Course in Groton, Connecticut, he reported to USS Maine (SSBN 741) in Kings Bay, Georgia, where he completed five strategic deterrent patrols as the ship’s navigator from 2001 to 2004.

His next sea tour was the executive officer aboard USS Memphis (SSN 691) in Groton, Connecticut from 2006 to 2008, and then as commanding officer of USS Connecticut (SSN 22) in Bremerton, Washington, from 2011 to 2014.

Johnson’s shore assignments include Strategic Systems Programs; Office of the Secretary of Defense; deputy commodore of Submarine Squadron 7 in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; Submarine Force Atlantic Shipyard representative at Electric Boat Shipyard Groton, Connecticut; commanding officer of Naval Station Newport; chief of staff of Navy Region Northwest; and executive assistant to Commander, Navy Installations Command.

In May 2023, Johnson reported as Commander, Navy Region Southeast.

Johnson holds a Master of Science degree in Engineering Management from Catholic University of America. He completed his phase II of Joint Professional Military Education at the Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia in 2010.

He has been awarded the Legion of Merit Medals, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medals, Navy Commendation Medals, Joint Service Achievement Medal and Navy Achievement Medals.



## **Captain Jeff Powell** **Commanding Officer** **NCBC Gulfport**

Captain Jeff Powell is a native of St. Louis and Kansas City, MO. He graduated from Clemson University in 1996 with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering and a minor in mathematics, and was commissioned through Officer Candidate School. He earned a Master of Science degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Stanford University in 2005.

His expeditionary assignments include Engineering Officer and Detail OIC for Navy Cargo Handling Battalion ONE in Williamsburg, VA; Department Head, Company Commander, and Detail OIC for Naval Mobile Construction Battalion THREE in Port Hueneme, CA, deploying to Rota, Spain and Sasebo, Japan; OIC for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division at FOB Loyalty in Baghdad, Iraq; Executive Officer of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion ONE THIRTY-THREE, with deployments to Okinawa, Japan and Kandahar, Afghanistan; and Future Operations Officer of FIRST Naval Construction Division in Little Creek, VA. Captain Powell commanded Naval Mobile Construction Battalion ONE THIRTY-THREE from 2013-2015 and completed a deployment headquartered in Rota, Spain with the battalion dispersed among 20 different countries.

His shore assignments include Construction Manager at Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown, VA; Flag Aide to the Commander of Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific in Pearl Harbor, HI; Public Works Officer at Marine Corps Air Station, Beaufort, SC; Assistant Regional Engineer for Navy Region Mid-Atlantic in Norfolk, VA; Shore Readiness Section Head on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations, Assessment Division (OPNAV N81); Director of the Pacific Programs Office (formerly Joint Guam Program Office) on the staff of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Energy, Installations, and Environment); and Executive Officer of Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest and Deputy Regional Engineer of Navy Region Southwest.

Captain Powell reported as the Commanding Officer of Naval Construction Battalion Center Gulfport in August 2020.

Captain Powell is a registered Professional Engineer, a Certified Energy Manager, a member of the Defense Acquisition Corps, and is Seabee Combat Warfare qualified. His personal decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (6 awards), Navy Commendation Medal (4 awards), Army Commendation Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, and Navy Achievement Medal (3 awards), and various unit and campaign awards.



## **Captain Ana Franco Prospective Commanding Officer NCBC Gulfport**

Captain Ana Franco is a native of San Juan, Puerto Rico. She is a 1997 graduate of the University of Miami (B.S. Electrical Engineering), and a 2008 graduate of the University of Florida (Master of Business Administration). She was commissioned an Ensign in November 1997 after completing Officer Candidate School in Pensacola, Florida.

Captain Franco was first assigned to Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, South Carolina as the Assistant Public Works Officer. In 2000, Captain Franco reported to U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion FORTY in Port Hueneme, California where she was assigned as the

Assistant Operations Officer, Material Liaison Officer, Air Detachment Officer in Charge and Deployment for Training Cobra Gold Officer in Charge during three deployments to Guam, Thailand and Spain. Her next assignment was in Norfolk, Virginia at Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic where she served as the East Coast Civil Engineer Corps Accessions Officer.

She became the Resident Officer in Charge of Construction at Caserma Ederle in Vicenza, Italy in 2003. Captain Franco then transferred in 2006 to the University of Florida where she received a Master of Business Administration degree with an emphasis in Finance and Real Estate. In 2008, she transferred to Naval Air Station Key West, Florida where she served as the Public Works Officer. She then reported to the Presidential Retreat, Camp David (Naval Support Facility Thurmont, Maryland) where she served as the Executive Officer from 2010 to 2012 under President Obama's first administration.

Captain Franco then completed a yearlong deployment during 2013 as an Individual Augmentee where she served as the Force Engineer and Future Engineer Operations Officer for Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa in Djibouti, Africa. She then served as the Chief Staff Officer for the SEVENTH Naval Construction Regiment in Gulfport, Mississippi from 2014 to 2016. Captain Franco assumed duty as the Commanding Officer of Naval Construction Training Center Gulfport in Mississippi from 2016 to 2018. Following command, she served for two years as the Operations Officer for Naval Facilities Engineering Command Washington at the Washington Navy Yard in the District of Columbia. She recently completed a one-year assignment in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Shore Readiness Division (OPNAV N46) where she served as the Strategic Laydown and Dispersal Branch Head.

Captain Franco currently serves in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Warfare Integration Division (OPNAV N9I) and serves as the Infrastructure and Facilities Program Manager in the Readiness Branch.

Captain Franco's decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (5 awards), Navy Commendation Medal (3 awards), the Navy Achievement Medal, the Presidential Service Badge and various service and unit awards. She is a qualified Seabee Combat Warfare Officer, a registered Professional Engineer in the state of North Carolina, a Level III DAWIA certified contracting officer and a member of the Defense Acquisition Corps.

She is married to Edwin Franco of Bogotá, Colombia. They have two children, Gabriel and David.



## **Michael Oestereicher** **U.S. Navy Captain (Ret.)** **Guest Speaker**

Captain (Ret.) Mike Oestereicher is a native of Westminster, Colo. He graduated from the University of Colorado in Boulder with a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering. He was commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps program in February of 1991.

Upon commissioning Oestereicher completed Navy Nuclear Power School in Florida, Navy Nuclear Prototype in Idaho, and Submarine Officer Basic School in Connecticut. His first duty assignment was onboard USS Casimir Pulaski (SSBN 633) serving as the Electrical and Interior Communications Officer.

In addition, he served as the Chemistry and Radiological Controls Assistant during nuclear de-fueling operations.

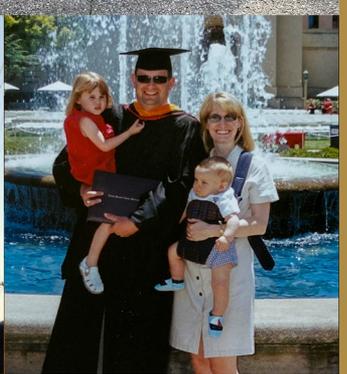
Captain Oestereicher was next assigned to the USS Hawksbill (SSN 666) where he served as the Sonar and Communications Division Officer. He accepted a lateral transfer into the Civil Engineer Corps while assigned to USSTRATCOM Special Activities Detachment, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii as the Strategic Command and Control Officer.

Oestereicher's first tour in the Civil Engineer Corps was as Assistant Resident Officer in Charge of Construction at Port Hueneme, Calif. Following this tour, he was assigned to Naval Base Ventura County as the Assistant Public Works Officer. He then reported to Naval Air Station Brunswick, Maine where he served as Resident Officer in Charge of Construction (ROICC). Following this tour, Captain Oestereicher served as a Joint Engineer Staff Officer for the Logistics Directorate of United States Forces Japan, negotiating real estate transactions between the Government of Japan and U.S. Following this tour he reported to Naval Base Point Loma as the Public Works Officer and then served as the Assistant Regional Engineer for Navy Region Southwest. After that he served as Public Works Officer at Naval Support Activity Diego Garcia. He served as the Executive Officer and then Commanding Officer of NAVFAC Europe, Africa, Southwest Asia and Regional Engineer of Navy Region Europe, Africa, Southwest Asia. His most recent tour was as the Chief of Staff for NAVFAC Headquarters.

Oestereicher retired as the Commanding Officer of Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest and the Regional Engineer for Navy Region Southwest from 2019 to 2022.

Captain (ret.) Oestereicher is a Submarine Combat Warfare Officer, qualified Navy Nuclear Engineer, and a licensed professional engineer in the State of Colorado. He successfully completed the Keenan-Flagler School of Business Advanced Management Program, Wharton Advanced Management Program, and has attained a Master of Science Degree in Construction Management and Engineering from the University of Colorado. His awards include the Legion of Merit (two awards), Meritorious Service Medal (five awards), Joint Service Commendation, Navy Commendation Medal (second award), Navy Achievement Medal (third award), and various unit and campaign awards.

He is currently the Assistant Vice President of Facility Services at the University of Houston.







# **Retirement Ceremony**

## **Welcome and Introduction of Guest Speaker**

*Commander Bryan Beyer*

## **Remarks**

*Captain (Ret.) Mike Oestereich*

## **Presentation of Certificates and Letters**

## **Passing of Flag and Parade of Ranks**

*Commander (Ret.) Mike Brady*

## **Remarks**

*Captain Jeff Powell*

## **Benediction**

*Senior Chief Utilities Technician (Ret.) Robert Smith*

## **Piping Ashore\***

## **Departure of Official Party\***

\*Guests please stand.

## Captain Powell's Career Assignments

- 1996** Officer Candidate School, Naval Air Station Pensacola, FL
- 1996** Civil Engineer Corps Officer School, Port Hueneme, CA
- 1997 - 1999** Construction Manager, Public Works Department, Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, VA
- 1999 - 2001** Engineering Officer and Detail Officer-in-Charge, Navy Cargo Handling Battalion ONE, Williamsburg, VA
- 2001 - 2003** Company Commander, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion THREE, Port Hueneme, CA
- 2003 - 2004** Flag Aide, NAVFAC Pacific, Pearl Harbor, HI
- 2004 - 2005** Graduate Student, Stanford University, CA
- 2005 - 2008** Public Works Officer, Marine Corps Air Station, Beaufort, SC
- 2008 - 2010** Executive Officer, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133, NCBC Gulfport, MS
- 2010 - 2012** Future Operations Officer, FIRST Naval Construction Division, Little Creek, VA
- 2012 - 2013** Assistant Regional Engineer, NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic, Norfolk, VA
- 2013 - 2015** Commanding Officer, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133, NCBC Gulfport, MS
- 2015 - 2017** Shore Readiness Section Head, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, DC
- 2017 - 2018** Director, Pacific Programs Office, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Energy, Installations, and Environment), Washington, DC
- 2018 - 2020** Executive Officer, NAVFAC Southwest, San Diego, CA
- 2020 - 2023** Commanding Officer, NCBC Gulfport, MS

## **Acknowledgements**

### **Master of Ceremonies**

*Commander Bryan Beyer*

### **Coordinator**

*Lieutenant Junior Grade Annalie Nagel*

### **Ushers**

*Lieutenant Wilesie Wint*

*Lieutenant Junior Grade Annalie Nagel*

*Ensign Jason Manalo*

### **Sideboys**

*Lieutenant Commander Majellen Changcoco*

*Lieutenant Mark Schlom*

*Lieutenant Alexandra Smith*

*Lieutenant Junior Grade Alyson Wade*

*Chief Equipment Operator Tylor Blasko*

*Chief Master-at-Arms Leonid Aguilar*

### **Boatswain's Mate**

*Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Caleb Jarvis*

### **Time Orderly**

*Master-at-Arms Seaman Tierra Harris*



*Lord, stand beside the men who build  
And give them courage, strength, and skill.  
O grant them peace of heart and mind,  
And comfort loved ones left behind.  
Lord, hear our prayer for all Seabees,  
Where'er they be on land or sea.*

*From Eternal Father, Strong to Save  
(The Navy Hymn)  
Written by R.J. Dietrich (1960)*