

# SALUTE



PSNS & IMF

## ON THE MOVE

Ex-Norfolk's sail  
heading home  
to its namesake

• PAGES 6-7



Team PSNS & IMF,

I'd like to take this time to extend my thanks for the expert support from many of you during two very significant shipyard operational events recently, which include the NAVSEA 08 Management Audit and the congressionally mandated Black Start Exercise.

Both evolutions tested the shipyard's operational capabilities, the strength of our communications, and our professional reflections to accept lessons learned and succeed as a team.

These recent evolutions demonstrated the strength, dedication, and professionalism of this entire team, and you should take pride in the areas where we clearly excelled. Your focus, discipline, and adaptability were evident throughout, and they reflect the high standards we strive to uphold.

At the same time, the audit and exercise highlighted specific areas where we can improve, refine our processes, and elevate our overall performance. I encourage us to see these as opportunities for growth and steppingstones that will make us stronger, more capable, and better prepared to meet the challenges ahead. I have full confidence in this team's ability to learn, adjust, and continue to perform at the highest level.

Success doesn't happen overnight. It requires hard work, persistence, grit and a willingness to work cohesively and collaboratively, not just within but across our codes and organizations. It demands unity of effort.

Let me take a minute to emphasize another important milestone and success story for the shipyard. Recently the Office of Personnel Management approved our request for a Professional Engineer Special Salary Rate for the Seattle-Everett-Tacoma, and this will in fact be such a huge influence on the future of Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility. The new SSR, which began last pay period, is based solely on data trends and market conditions, not individual performance ratings or attendance records. It will allow the command to offer more competitive salaries, attract top talent and retain our essential engineering employees. That's a game changer for our ability to maintain a competitive professional engineering work force. It's also critical to our ability to return combat-ready ships to the fleet and support the Navy's readiness and deterrence mission worldwide.

While the new SSR is tailored toward specific positions where the Shipyard was able to document and demonstrate recruitment and retention challenges, it does not mean that other roles within the command are less important. To be clear, we value every member of the PSNS & IMF team equally. This decision was based on a multi-year, data-driven analysis that focused on significant recruitment and retention challenges, as well as intense local market competition, unique to the Puget Sound region.

I can't emphasize this enough, the new rates are not a reflection of how the command values the importance of your work. The work you do here is vital to the nation and the Navy, and you are all an essential and valued part of our team.

A Ready Team Defines Us. Quality Drives Us. Mission Unites Us.

  
Captain JD Crinklaw  
Commander, PSNS & IMF

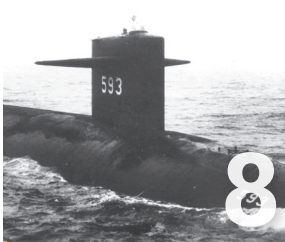
In this issue:



PSNS & IMF attorney honored for her dedication



Apprentice instructors teach critical thinking skills



In remembrance: USS Thresher (SSN 593)

On the cover:

Alexander Hackett, rigger, Code 740, Riggers, hooks rigging gear to the sail of Ex-Norfolk before it's lifted onto a flatbed truck, Feb. 24. The sail and fairwater planes are being shipped to Norfolk, Virginia for public display.

(U.S. Navy photo by Wendy Hallmark)



ABOVE: Capt. JD Crinklaw, commander, PSNS & IMF, presents Wendy Kelly, counsel, Code 107, Office of Counsel, with the Meritorious Civilian Service Award, March 30, during a ceremony in the Horseshoe Conference Room. (U.S. Navy photo by Scott Hansen)

Meritorious Civilian Service Award

Code 107 attorney recognized for her 'steadfast leadership'

PSNS & IMF Public Affairs

Wendy Kelly, counsel, Code 107, Office of Counsel, was recognized by command leadership at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility, March 30, for her "steadfast leadership and exceptional legal advice" during her many years of service.

Capt. JD Crinklaw, commander, PSNS & IMF, presented Kelly with the Navy's Meritorious Civilian Service Award during a ceremony in the Horseshoe Conference in Building 850. The MCSA is the Navy's third highest civilian honor.

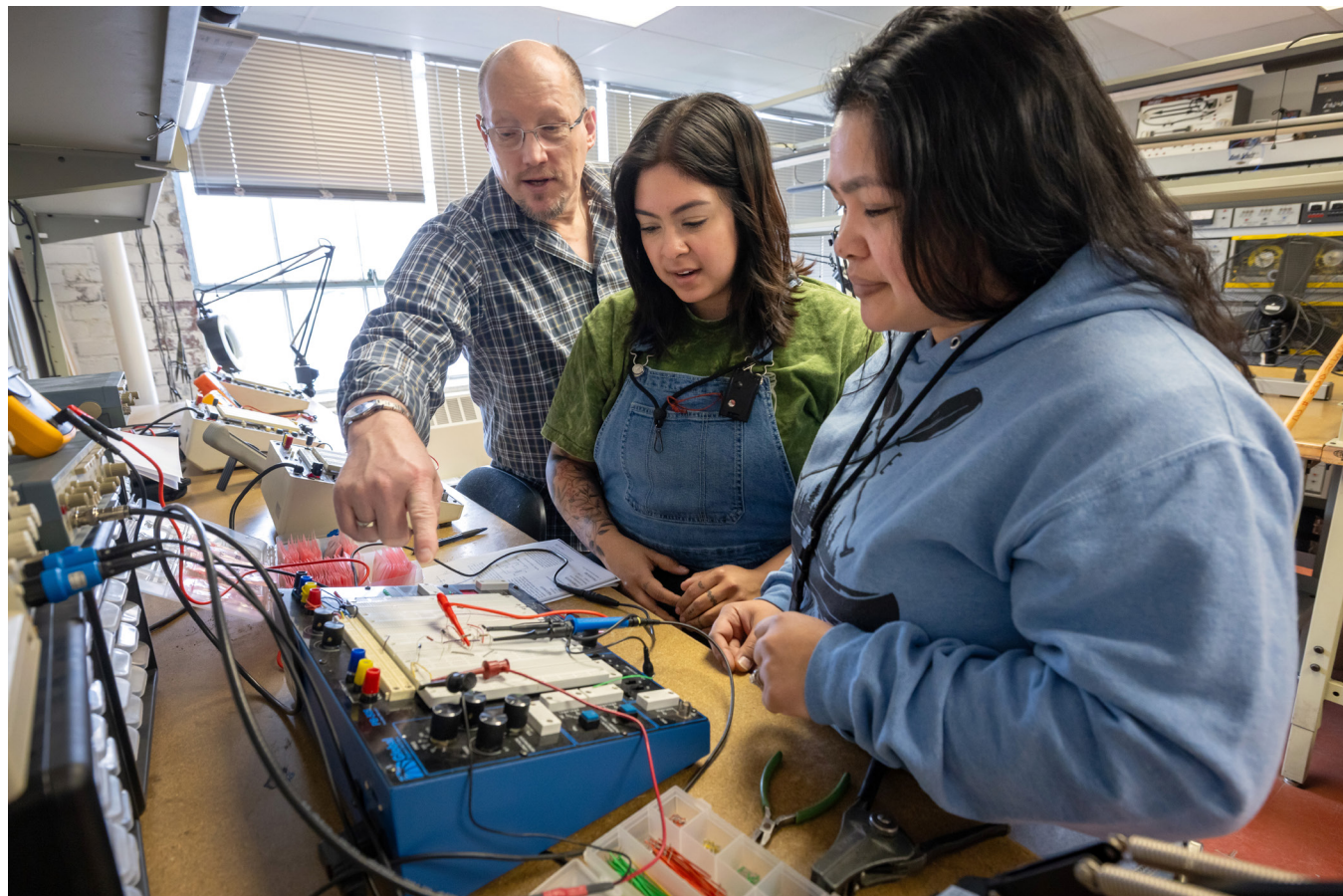
Master of ceremonies Lisa Foster, Code 107, Office of Counsel, said Kelly was instrumental "in guiding the shipyard through three of its most significant and complex challenges: a high-profile workplace conduct investigation, the global

COVID-19 pandemic, and the dynamic implementation of new administration policies."

"Her dedication, unwavering counsel, and strategic guidance were pivotal in helping the shipyard navigate through these challenges and meet its important mission. Her distinguished performance at PSNS & IMF and tireless devotion to duty reflected great credit upon herself and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service," Foster said.

Representatives from the Naval Sea Systems Command Office of Counsel were also on hand via Teams to recognize Kelly's dedication and years of service.

Kelly, who is retiring after 33 years of federal service, was also awarded a PSNS & IMF retirement certificate.



**ABOVE:** Patrick McIlhagga, trade instructor, Shop 51, Electricians, works with Tarah-Mei Blas, right, and Allyson Velez, both marine electrician apprentices, Shop 51, Electricians, April 2, during class at PSNS & IMF. (U.S. Navy photos by Wendy Hallmark)

By Ben Hutto  
PSNS & IMF Public Affairs

Since 1901, when the Shipyard Labor Board selected six men to train under skilled craftsmen, the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility's Apprenticeship Program has been a proving ground for some of the shipyard's most skilled employees.

Students in the four-year program attend classes during working hours, in 27 different trades. Each session contains four academic weeks, with the remaining weeks dedicated to on-the-job learning. Since 1950, the shipyard has partnered with Olympic College for customized, accredited coursework.

The student/workers arrive at 7:20 a.m., Mondays through Fridays, to learn the intricacies of their chosen professions. Upon graduation from the program they earn an Associate in Technical Arts degree and a Journey Worker Certification from the Department of Labor, and the Department of the Navy.

It's a program that requires dedication, hard work and



**ABOVE:** Chris Moss, trade theory instructor, Code 740, Lifting and Handling, works with apprentice students, Kevin Cockerill and Michael Guerra, rigger apprentices, April 2, during class at PSNS & IMF.

many hours of study. Ensuring the success of these students requires equally dedicated instructors.

Patrick McIlhagga, a marine electronics instructor in Shop 5, Electricians, has taught at the trades school for 15 years.

See **'INSTRUCTORS'** on page 10



**APPRENTICE PROGRAM:**  
Chris Moss, trade theory instructor, Code 740, Lifting and Handling, observes students Willam Davis and Michael Guerra, rigger apprentices, Shop 740, Lifting and Handling, April 2, as they use a classroom rigging mock up at PSNS & IMF.

(U.S. Navy photo by Wendy Hallmark)

# LESSONS LEARNED

Command apprentice instructors take pride in teaching their students both trade and critical thinking skills

# AROUND THE YARD

EX-NORFOLK'S SAIL AND FAIRWATER PLANES ARE HEADING HOME TO ITS NAMESAKE CITY, NORFOLK, VIRGINIA. • (U.S. Navy photos by Wendy Hallmark)



**ABOVE:** A team of Code 740, Riggers, carefully lifts the sail of Ex-Norfolk onto a flatbed trailer, Feb. 24. The former Los Angeles-class attack submarine's sail and fairwater planes are being transported to the submarine's namesake city, Norfolk, Virginia, where they will be put on public display.

**AT RIGHT:** Ex-Norfolk's sail departs PSNS & IMF before beginning its long journey to Norfolk, Virginia. Ex-Norfolk was commissioned May 21, 1983, and decommissioned Dec. 9, 2014.



**ABOVE:** Alexander Hackett, right, and Ethaniel Hiller, both riggers, Code 740, Riggers, work together to hook up rigging gear in preparation for Ex-Norfolk's sail to be lifted onto a flatbed trailer, Feb. 24.



**AT LEFT:** The former Los Angeles-class attack submarine's fairwater planes are lifted onto a separate flatbed trailer, Feb. 24, in preparation for shipping to Norfolk, Virginia, where they will be put on public display alongside the former Navy submarine's sail.

**MIDDLE LEFT:** Drew Dickey, rigger, Code 740, Riggers, inserts wedges for Ex-Norfolk's sail to rest on as it's lowered onto a flatbed trailer at PSNS & IMF, Feb. 24. The sail and fairwater planes are being shipped to Norfolk, Virginia.

## USS Thresher (SSN 593)

**April 10, 1963:** The nuclear-powered attack submarine breaks up off the coast of New England, killing all 129 on board

Naval History and Heritage Command

**U**SS Thresher (SSN 593), the quietest and fastest nuclear-powered attack submarine of its era, broke up 220 miles off the coast of New England, April 10, 1963, while conducting deep-submergence testing. In all, 129 crew members and civilian technicians were lost at sea.

USS Thresher was first laid down, May 28, 1958, at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, New Hampshire. Thresher was launched, July 9, 1960, and subsequently commissioned, Aug. 3, 1961, under the command of Cmdr. Dean W. Axene, ship's captain.

Following sea trials, the nuclear attack submarine took part in Nuclear Submarine Exercise 3-61, September 18-24, 1961, off the coast of New England.

Two years later, Thresher put to sea, April 10, 1963, along with USS Skylark (ASR 20), to conduct deep-diving exercises. In addition to its 16 officers and 96 enlisted Sailors, the submarine carried 17 civilian technicians.

Shortly after reaching its assigned test depth, Thresher communicated with Skylark, via underwater telephone, that the nuclear-powered submarine was experiencing difficulties. Sailors aboard Skylark later reported hearing a noise, "like air rushing into an air tank" — then, silence.

After efforts to reestablish contact with Thresher failed, a Navy search group was formed in attempt to locate the ill-fated submarine.

Rescue ship USS Recovery (ASR 43) eventually recovered debris, including gloves and bits of internal insulation. Underwater

photographs later confirmed that the submarine had indeed broken up, taking all aboard to their deaths. Thresher was officially declared lost, April 10, 1963.



**ABOVE:** The nuclear-powered attack submarine USS Thresher (SSN 593) is pictured at sea, July 24, 1961, while conducting routine operations. (U.S. Navy photo)

### THE AFTERMATH

In June, 1963, in the aftermath of the USS Thresher tragedy — amidst multiple Naval accident investigations, design reviews and congressional hearings — the U.S. Navy's SUBSAFE Program was born.

The SUBSAFE Program is designed to provide the maximum reasonable assurance of watertight integrity and recovery capability for U.S. nuclear-powered submarines. A culture of safety is central program — and to the entire Navy submarine community.

The SUBSAFE Program clearly defines non-negotiable requirements, requires annual training of all submarine personnel and ensures compliance with reviews, including audits and independent oversight. The annual training requirement includes a review of past failures — including the loss of USS Thresher.

Since its inception 62 years ago, the U.S. Navy's SUBSAFE Program — an enduring part of USS Thresher's legacy — has made a significant contribution to the fleet, to the Navy and the nation.



**ABOVE:** Divers from Code 760, Dive Locker, assist Tucker Foster, a Ridgetop Middle School 8th grade student, as he tests the dive helmet intercom system March 31, during Career Day at Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton. (U.S. Navy photo by Jeb Fach)

## Students get first look at potential shipyard careers

By Ben Hutto  
PSNS & IMF Public Affairs

**A**pproximately 120 8th graders from Ridgetop Middle School attended Career Day at the Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton Fitness Center, March 31. The event was designed to showcase potential jobs at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility, as well as Naval Base Kitsap.

Curious students were given the opportunity to visit a variety of booths to see how robotics, virtual reality, and technology are now used in trades. Representatives from the PSNS & IMF STEM program, the shipyard Dive Locker, Code 200, Engineering and Planning; Code 700, Lifting and Handling; Shop 11/17, Shipfitters, Forge, Sheetmetal; and Shop 71, Painters, Shop 51, Electricians, were on hand to share information about the jobs they do. They also demonstrated some of the equipment they use on a daily basis.

"This trip is about exposing our students to opportunities

post-secondary education," said Kelly Scheese, Naval Base Kitsap school liaison. "As they prepare to enter high school, this is one of the ways to help give them early exposure to what the shipyard offers as employment."

As Kitsap county's largest employer, events like Career Day help give students a clearer picture of what is available at PSNS & IMF. That knowledge can help them and their counselors tailor their high school classes to align with careers they may be interested in after they graduate.

"I think its really fun," said 8th grader Gabby LaBostrie. "My dad works at the shipyard, and it was cool to see some of the things he does."

Steve Lee, counselor, Ridgetop Middle, explained the group that visited NBK to explore potential careers had shown interest prior to the visit through a program at Ridgetop Middle that uses assessments to help pair students with

See **'CAREER DAY'** on page 10

**'INSTRUCTORS'** from page 4

"It's a job I enjoy," he said. "Watching people advance in their careers has been one of the most rewarding things in my career. Teaching students is something I truly enjoy."

Chris Moss, a rigging trade theory instructor in Code 740, Lifting and Handling, has been an instructor for 11 years and echoed McIlhagga's sentiment.

"I really like to see the growth in my students," he said. "There is a moment where a shift happens. People who were finding things difficult become comfortable. The questions they ask become more focused. To see a student become self-motivated and confident is the goal."

Both men discuss their students and careers with pride. They both helped develop the curriculum they teach.

"There isn't another job in the shipyard like it," Moss said. "To do this, you have to thrive in a self-driven environment, but it can be rewarding."

The reward in seeing former students achieve personal and professional goals is something both men value. They both acknowledge they could potentially make more money in other positions within the shipyard. However, for them, being an instructor is more than a paycheck.

"Apprentices are the future of the shipyard," McIlhagga said. "I have been willing to take less money to get more job satisfaction. I don't just deal with electricity. This position deals with more than that. I'm whatever my students need me to be that day. My whole job is to help get them across the finish line."

Moss said he teaches students to solve problems, not just check boxes.

"I tell my students that they will be paid for their judgment," he said. "I don't just teach skills. I teach them how to figure out the best way to solve problems. Critical thinking is seeing beyond one problem and seeing how it applies to the bigger picture."

The leadership of Code 900 are happy to have instructors as dedicated as McIlhagga and Moss.

"Our trade theory instructors represent the very best of the shipyard," said Luke Williams, production department student programs director, Code 900T.4, Production Training Department. "They are highly skilled professionals who show up every day not just to teach, but to pass on the knowledge, standards, and pride that define their trades. I am incredibly proud of the way they invest in our apprentices; shaping the next generation of journeymen with both technical excellence and a deep commitment to their craft."

**'CAREER DAY'** from page 9

clusters of jobs they are both interested in, and that fit their skillsets.

"This is great," Lee said. "After this visit, our students will be matched with high school guidance counselors after spring break so they can begin getting registered for classes that fit with their interests, to plot their course forward."

Students like Gabe Briardy were happy to get out of the classroom and get his hands on the equipment featured at the displays. As he tried on a dive helmet, had his hand outlined on a computer screen with virtual reality capture devices, and then used a VR headset to traverse a virtual ship. He was all smiles.

"This is a lot of fun," he said. "I really liked the virtual reality and the divers. This (event) is not what I thought it was going to be. It is something I'm definitely interested in going into after high school. I'm glad we came here."

Words like that are music to the ears of Nick Grim, alternate IT coordinator and communications representative, Code 1100, Executive Department. Grim was one of the organizers of the event.

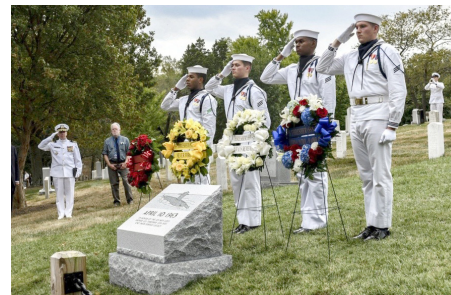
"Events like are the future of our workforce," said Grim. "It was good to see so many students interacting and having a good time."



**ABOVE:** Kenneth Cook, metrologist, Shop 11, Metrology, demonstrates 3-D laser scanning for Ridgetop Middle School students Eli Sturgeon and Tucker Foster, March 31, during Career Day at Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton. (U.S. Navy photo by Jeb Fach)

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**April 10**



- **USS Thresher:** USS Thresher (SSN 593) was lost at sea April 10, 1963.

**April 11**

- **Submarine Day:** National Submarine Day is April 11.

**April 15**

- **Tax Day:** Employee tax returns are due April 15.

**April 22**

- **Earth Day:** The annual Earth Day celebration is April 22.

**April 22**



- **Employees of the Year:** The annual PSNS & IMF Employee of the Year ceremony is April 22.

**May 16**

- **Armed Forces Day:** The annual Armed Forces Day celebration is May 16.

**Corrective Actions**

During the month of **March 2026**, the command had **63 actions**. The following are examples and associated behaviors.

**8 SUSPENSIONS**  
(Non-supervisors) for failure to follow verbal instructions, inappropriate conduct, inattention to duty, loss of govt/others property, other, unacceptable conduct, unauthorized absence.

**20 REPRIMANDS**  
(Non-supervisors) for careless workmanship, disgraceful conduct, disrespectful conduct, failure to follow instruction, inappropriate conduct, inattention to duty, LEA.

**3 REMOVALS**  
(Non-supervisors) for conduct toward others, failure to follow instruction, unauthorized absence.

The remaining **32 ACTIONS** consisted of:

Abeysance of Contract/Decision (3); Demotion (1); Letters of Caution (8); Medical Certification Letters (16); Proposed Indefinite Suspension (1); Return to Work Letter (1); Termination (2).

**ASBP**  
Armed Services Blood Program



**GIVE A GIFT OF LIFE —  
DONATE BLOOD**

**1st WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH**  
May 6, 2026

**9AM - 3PM, BLDG. 850A, RM 160**

For full details, visit News You Can Use on the PSNS & IMF SharePoint home page.

**VOLUNTARY  
Leave Transfer  
PROGRAM**



**Code 105.3**

Tara Wilson

**Code 109**

Shawn Fellows

Mikayla Taxacher

**Code 244.1**

Shawna Pappas

Paul Rohrer

**Code 246.1**

Michael Larsen

**Code 246.2**

Christian Carlson

**Code 270.1**

Jason Rogers

**Code 1102**

Robyn Rogers

**Code 1166**

Carie Hagins

**Code 2305.24**

Jennifer Garrett

**Shop 06**

Shawn Duffy

Douglas Willis

**Shop 11**

Lee Warren

**Shop 26**

Thomas Finn

**Shop 38**

Wilbur Hinman

Hannah McGraw

MaryJane Gordon

**Shop 51**

Catherine Derry

Robert Wallace

**Shop 56**

Alexander Glaser

**Shop 57**

Aunoa Iokia

**Shop 64**

Jesse Peirce

This program authorizes federal employees to donate annual leave to other civilian federal employees. If you wish to donate annual leave or have any questions, please contact the Human Resources Office at 360-476-8289/7015, or visit Building 435, 3rd floor, Room 338, or fax your donation form to 360-476-8723.



**REMINDER:**

Use of the camera feature on your personal cell phone in any capacity, including QR Code scanning, FaceTime, Google Chat or any video conferencing apps, is strictly prohibited in any PSNS & IMF space. See 'News You Can Use' for more information.

**SALUTE**

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Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility



*Join us as we honor our nominees for 2025 at the Admiral Theatre:*

**12:30 – 3 p.m., Wednesday, April 22**

There will be a **live streaming** event for those who wish to support our nominees and watch the ceremony online. Details will be posted on our official Facebook page, [facebook.com/PSNSandIMFontheWaterfront](https://facebook.com/PSNSandIMFontheWaterfront).

**See 'News You Can Use' for more information.**