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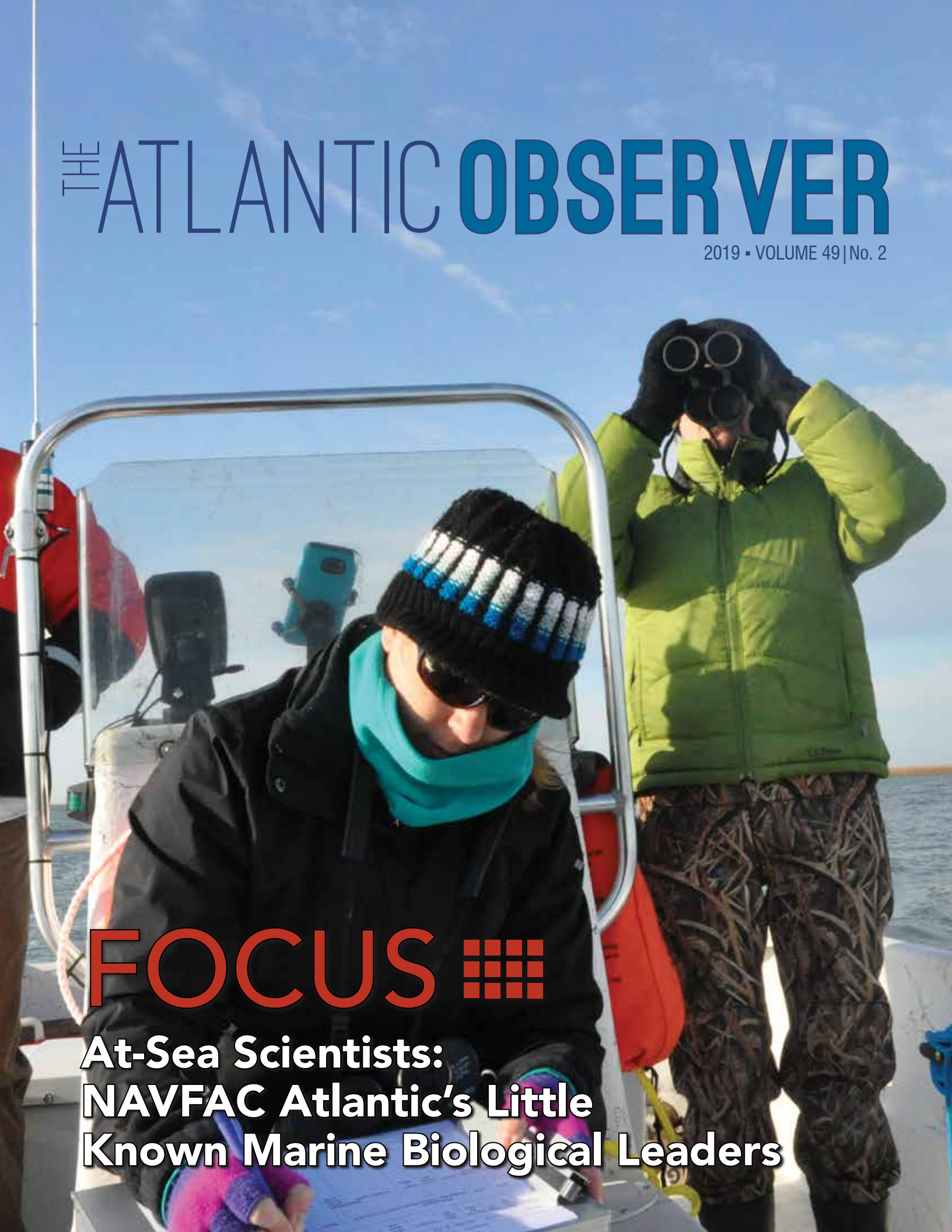

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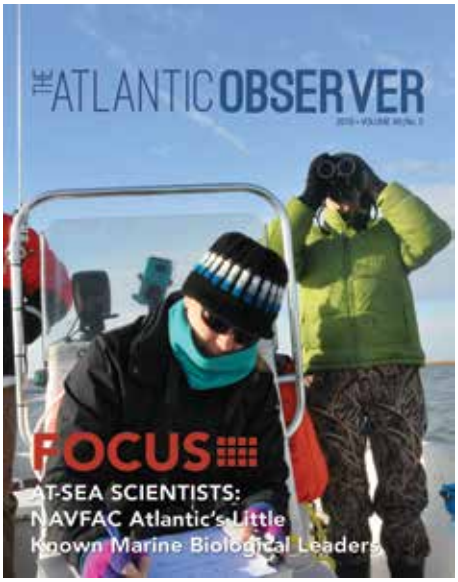

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Danielle Jones a marine biologist with the NAVFAC Atlantic Marine Resources section (EV53) collects observational data during a harbor seal haul-out count with partners from The Nature Conservancy.

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ABOUT THE ATLANTIC OBSERVER

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For more information or other comments, e-mail navfaclant_pao@navy.mil

COMMANDER'S INSIGHT

We are almost halfway through FY19 and as always there is no shortage of amazing accomplishments to recognize! Reflective of an incredible amount of hard work over the last year, this issue celebrates just some of the great work the LANT team does every day! I am consistently amazed at the exceptional work each of you does every day and I'd like to share with you why that work is so important.

As a Systems Command (SYSCOM), NAVFAC supports the Navy and Marine Corps in significant ways. We, along with NAVSUP, NAVSEA, NAVAIR, and SPAWAR, are part of the team responsible for the full life-cycle of systems and infrastructure (supply chain, ships, aircraft, weapons, communications, and shore facilities) that enable pilots, ship drivers, and Marines to, quite literally, take-off, get underway, and take the fight to our adversaries. But the support we provide can feel very disconnected from the "Forged by the Sea" commercials we see on TV...and this can be especially true here at LANT, where, while we have a nice commute, lots of parking, and beautiful grounds, there are no ships, no runways, no aircraft, and no training ranges, to bring home the value and impact of the work you do.

But make no mistake - your work is imperative to ensuring our Nation remains relevant in the current global environment of great power competition. You may have heard me talk about "Supported Commanders" – when we use this phrase, we are referring to the major operational units of the military and their need for our efforts in order to be successful – those piers, runways, and training buildings…the planning, development, design, construction, and then maintenance of every piece of infrastructure on every Navy and Marine Corps base worldwide.

Every aspect of our business is essential to enable us to support the warfighters – from validating BFRs to developing a 1391, from awarding major construction contracts to modifying BOS contracts, from in-house design to full project management, from preventative maintenance to work orders, from NEPA permitting to munitions cleanup and mammal tagging, from budget management to accepting funding documents, from LER to hiring – every single job here at LANT has a direct mission impact.

In an effort to better illustrate this, the Atlantic Observer will transition from a printed quarterly publication to a digital monthly newsletter with a printed annual version that will serve as a reflective Command summary. My intent is that this format will enable timely recognition of all the great work you do here at LANT as well as tie your work to its physical application out in the field. It will keep you apprised of our accomplishments, training opportunities, and of course REC-ing Crew events.

Lastly, I want to share the importance of the newest versions of our governing guidance: the 2019 CONOPS and NAVFAC Strategic Design 2.0. These two documents work together to describe the scope and organization of NAVFAC, our fundamental operating philosophy, and the areas in which we are focusing our efforts to improve. I ask that you read Chapters 1 and 3 of the CONOPS to better understand the range of what NAVFAC does and for whom. I ask that you also review the Strategic Design 2.0, paying special attention to the Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles, and the initiatives that specifically affect your area of expertise. I encourage you to discuss these ideas with your colleagues and supervisors – ongoing dialogue will deepen our understanding and strengthen our team!

My sincere thanks for your daily service – it is my pleasure to serve with you!

REAR ADM. DARIUS BANAJI
COMMANDER, NAVFAC ATLANTIC

FOCUS

At-Sea Scientists: NAVFAC Atlantic's Little Known Marine Biological Leaders

EV53 Marine Resources Division

Naval Facilities Engineering Command is known for planning, building, and maintaining sustainable facilities, delivering environmental, utilities and other base services, and acquiring and managing expeditionary combat force systems and equipment. However, another service we provide to the Navy and Marine Corps is our technical expertise on at-sea environmental compliance and marine species monitoring.

Gwen Lockhart a natural resource specialist with the NAVFAC Atlantic, Marine Resources section (EV53), and project partners from NUWC and Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries take biological samples from a harbor seal. Seals are held for 20 min to affix a satellite tag and then released. NMFS Scientific Research Permit Number 17670

> "The Navy employs over 200 marine biologists and environmental planners to ensure that it is in compliance with applicable environmental laws, and to conduct research to better assess and mitigate the Navy's potential impact on marine resources."

If you didn't know that the Navy employed marine biologists, you would not be alone. The Navy employs over 200 marine biologists and environmental planners to ensure compliance with applicable environmental laws, and to conduct research to better assess and mitigate the Navy's potential impact on marine resources. NAVFAC Atlantic was one of the very first commands to employ dedicated marine biologists. In the late 1990s and early 2000s the need to advance a new environmental compliance strategy was precipitated by the shift from shore based live-fire training at the former Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Area in Vieques, Puerto Rico to the offshore environment of the eastern seaboard. Additionally, a marine mammal-stranding event in the Bahamas, the first of its kind where sonar was shown to be a contributing cause, resulted in the need for additional environmental analysis.

In December 2000, the undersecretary of the Navy issued the "At-Sea Policy," that directed Fleet and Systems Command commanders to develop a pro-

grammatic approach to environmental compliance for all ranges and Operating Areas (OPAREAs). By early 2004 several important steps had been taken to meet this goal, including the development of U.S. Navy Marine Resource Assessments. Several Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance documents for important Atlantic Fleet offshore range complexes and OPAREAs were either completed or well underway, and a clear way ahead had been developed for bringing the rest of the at-sea training and testing activities into compliance with certain environmental laws. A marine resources center of excellence was established here at NAVFAC Atlantic known as the Marine Resources Support Group (MRSG).

NAVFAC Atlantic is the only FAC/FEC with a dedicated Marine Resources section (EV53) under the Environmental Conservation Division, with ten full-time professional marine biologists. They are collectively diverse and specialized in their particular areas of expertise, ranging from marine habitats, geographic information systems, and marine acoustics, to a more specific focus on particular groups of species such as marine mammals, fish, and sea turtles.

The primary driver for having a dedicated marine resources section is Navy at-sea environmental compliance, which centers on a few key U.S. environmental laws. The National Environmental Policy Act, ESA, Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA), and National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA) require federal agencies to analyze their impacts to marine resources and, if necessary, obtain environmental permits or authorizations through coordination and consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFF) is responsible for applying for and holding the necessary permits and authorizations, but NAVFAC Atlantic is the main service provider conducting and managing the necessary analyses and documentation.

The NAVFAC Atlantic Marine Resources section (EV53) from left to right are Jaime Gormley, Gwen Lockhary, Brittany Bartlett, Danielle Jones, Carter Watterson, Cara Hotchkin, Scott Chappell, Jackie Bort Thorton, Joel Bell, Deanna Rees.

On the East Coast, the primary at-sea compliance document that covers all training and testing in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico is the Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing (AFTT) Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS). Now in its third phase, the AFTT EIS/OEIS analyzes impacts from Navy training and testing activities on socioeconomic and environmental resources, with marine resources being a major component. The marine biologists in EV53 play an important role in this process by conducting environmental analyses, preparing consultation documents and permit applications, and managing and reviewing contractor products to meet the regulatory requirements of the MMPA, ESA, MSFCAMA and NMSA. Without the permits and authorizations associated with these regulatory consultations, Atlantic Fleet readiness throughout the Northwest Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico would be at risk.

One major project that is required as a result of our MMPA and ESA compliance is the Lookout Effectiveness Study. A key mitigation measure for reducing potential impacts to marine mammals and sea turtles during Navy training and testing, such as sonar or the use of explosives, is to post lookouts on the bridge wings of ships during these exercises. NMFS has asked the Navy to conduct a study to determine the effectiveness of these lookouts at spotting protected marine species. NAVFAC Atlantic biologists with training and experience in marine species observing embark aboard naval vessels and conduct surveys during training and testing exercises, while also recording sightings made by Sailors during the same survey period. The two sets of data are then analyzed to assess lookout effectiveness.

NAVFAC Atlantic manages several in-house projects that are helping to inform the Navy about protected species that overlap with naval ranges and OPAREAS, and what potential impacts naval activities may have on these species. This information will be used to improve upon Navy mitigation measures. For example, over the last two years, NAVFAC Atlantic has led the seal tagging and tracking in Southeast Virginia project. Seals, protected under the MMPA, were thought to be infrequent visitors to Virginia. Recent studies, including one conducted by NAVFAC Atlantic EV53 to count seals at their known local haul-out (or resting) sites, have shown that harbor seals occur more regularly than previously thought between fall and spring. The tagging project uses satellite-linked tracking to collect data on individual's movement and habitat use patterns in the lower Chesapeake Bay

A harbor seal is seen here affixed with a satellite tag. Tags are attached using epoxy and fall off when the seals molt their winter coats. NMFS Scientific Research Permit Number 17670

Carter Watterson a senior marine resources specialist with the NAVFAC Atlantic surgically implants an acoustic tag into a sturgeon. The tag transmits data to an array of receivers set up throughout the Chesapeake Bay. NMFS Scientific Research Permit Permit No. 19642

and coastal waters of Virginia that are also heavily used by the Navy. NAVFAC Atlantic biologists and their project partners were able to deploy satellite tags on seven harbor seals in the 2017 to 2018 field season, in addition to taking biological samples for genetic and other analyses. The data from these tags are already informing the Navy on how seals are moving throughout the area, how long they are here, and when they migrate towards New England for the warmer months. The biological samples are helpful to projects being conducted by scientific partners, and could inform biologists on the health of the seals in the area.

Another example of an in-house project that is informing the Navy on the impact of anthropogenic sound on marine life, and specifically fish, is the underwater acoustic camera surveillance of pile driving associated with Navy proposed actions in the Mid-Atlantic region. Understanding the effects of construction activities that the Navy sometimes uses is difficult for a few reasons. Containing fish in a pen so they can be observed creates unnatural behaviors in the fish, but observing them in their natural environment is often impossible due to water clarity and other factors. NAVFAC Atlantic uses an Adaptive Resolution Imaging System; which is a highly specialized camera that utilizes high frequency sonar to film fish during pile driving activities in order to assess any behavioral changes due to construction noise.

These are just small sampling of projects that directly involve the Marine Resources Section; EV53 is also responsible for managing the entire Marine Species Monitoring Program in the Atlantic on behalf of USFF. This program directly funds approximately $3.5 million worth of marine species research and monitoring every year and works with academic and research institutions including Duke University, Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center, Cascadia Research Collective, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, and Scripps Institute of Oceanography. For information visit http://www.navymarinespeciesmonitoring.us, the Navy's Marine Species Monitoring Program; which includes project information, profiles, news updates, and blog posts.

STEWARDS OF THE SEA

You can tell the U.S. Navy's environmental stewardship story.

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> Marine mammal research and monitoring
> How the Navy manages shipboard waste
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NAVFAC Atlantic Working Group Innovates and Transforms the Funds Workflow Process

NAVFAC Atlantic Public Affairs

In a brief ceremony held Aug. 29, Rear Adm. Darius Banaji celebrated the work of a group of Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic employees responsible for implementing the Funds Workflow Process - a revolutionary change to the way that General Funds are accepted for work performed across NAVFAC. This small subset of team leaders and key participants were responsible for delivering the new standardized processes in June of 2018, but this effort would not have been possible without the support of the dozens of employees who were part of the larger working group across the enterprise. As a result of this innovation, NAVFAC can now centrally track funding, improving audibility and timeliness of funds acceptance.

"In my 31 years in the Navy and all of my NAVFAC tours, I've never seen something so transformational done so quickly that affects all 71 of our naval bases and worldwide FECs," said Banaji.

The ceremony was the culmination of a nearly yearlong journey that began at a summit meet-

> "In my 31 years in the Navy and all of my NAVFAC tours, I've never seen something so transformational done so quickly that affects all 71 of our naval bases and worldwide FECs"

Rear Adm. Darius Banaji recognizes the group of NAVFAC Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic employees responsible for implementing the revolutionary change to the way that General Funds are accepted for work performed across the Naval Facilities Engineering Command enterprise.

ing in early FY18 where personnel from across the NAVFAC financial management, acquisition, and business line Program Analyst communities came together to discuss the challenges associated with the funds acceptance process. They analyzed the high error rate and long acceptance time for funding documents processed by NAVFAC and identified several major causes. A lack of training and inconsistent training initially seemed to be the culprit. Upon further analysis, however, the most significant issue was that each field office - a total of 71 worldwide - had a different process for accepting documents and nearly all steps of the process were conducted via email communication.

The summit determined that a standardized workflow process and a centralized work management system to support it was needed. NAVFAC Headquarters directed NAVFAC Atlantic to develop a plan to make that concept a reality and so the General Funds Workflow (FWF) Working Group, led by Capt. Pete Maculan, NAVFAC Atlantic Operations, was formed. Their goal: to improve both the quality and timeliness of NAVFAC General Fund funding document acceptance practices and thereby increase efficiency of product and service delivery. By standardizing the processes and tools, standardized training would become possible, and enterprise-wide expertise could be developed.

The working group divided into six principle teams: Process and Roles, Policy, Information Technology Application, Communications, Metrics, and Training. Each group drew on a wide range of professional expertise integral to NAVFAC, ensuring that all business lines, support lines, functional areas, and Echelon levels of the enterprise were represented.

Charting the Course – Process and Roles

This team isolated key information on how the existing funds workflow processes could be simplified and automated. This included clearly defining process steps and who within the organization is responsible for each step, and identifying the requirements for proper acceptance of funding documents.

Aligning the Process – Policy

With the consensus of the greater Working Group, this team drafted the enterprise policy and video message that introduced and will ensure the longevity of the process. Then-NAVFAC Chief of Engineers, Rear Adm. Bret Muilenberg signed the policy memorandum and delivered a video message to the workforce, emphasizing the importance of this change. They also created a Business Management System procedure to codify the process

Creating the Tools – Information Technology System

This team, comprised of employees from the Command Information Office and Business Enterprises, studied the existing processes and asked, “how do I support and drive the standardization of the process with a common tool?” The solution is a new ieFACMAN application known as eTracker. They created a centralized location for funding documents to be stored and progressed, an automated standard Funds Request Form, and automated email communications that enabled unprecedented transparency and accountability of funding documents throughout the acceptance process. The viability of the system was confirmed through aggressive Beta testing at Echelon II, Echelon III, and select Echelon IV NAVFAC commands

Spreading the Word – Communications

The success of the proposed changes to the FWF process hinged on many elements, but perhaps none as important as the willingness of the NAVFAC work force to embrace the changes…and behavioral change is never easy for large organizations. This team developed tools to explain the changes to FWF to both em-

ployees and external stakeholders. They created users' quick reference pamphlets, Fact Sheets, and informational briefings, as well as template All-Hands emails, digital signage, and a webpage.

Measuring Impact – Metrics

To validate that the standardized process and the tools created to support it were functional and effective during both the implementation phase and the long-term, metrics had to be identified and developed. This team narrowed down the many possible measurements to a key few – error rate, throughput cycle time, and total throughput by step – then developed automated reports for those metrics to support leaders at every level in understanding their teams' performance.

Educate for Success – Training

The sixth team had the monumental task of ensuring that the NAVFAC workforce was trained to start operating the new process through eTracker. They developed a phased approach and built and implemented a curriculum for everyone involved in each part of the FWF process. Formal training was conducted on an enterprise-wide level from March through June, covering general financial knowledge, the FWF process, and eTracker operation.

On May 31, 2018, the 71 different practices used across NAVFAC were discontinued and replaced the next morning by the new General Funds Work Flow process and the use of eTracker. In preparation of the implementation, a Subject Matter Expert (SME) was identified for each FM Center and FEC, and was charged with ensuring smooth transition to the new system as well as being the single point of contact for each major office both during implementation and over the long term. During the August ceremony, Rear Adm. Banaji applauded the group for overcoming what he saw as the largest potential roadblock to the successful introduction of innovative programs. "We had yet to experience…the roll-out of a process where communication of expectations and training are in place before the process has been started," said Banaji. "(Our working group) got that training in place."

The Group's final efforts were fruitful - over 800 Funds Requests were input in the first week, 4,600 in the first month and by the end of the fiscal year, over 26,000 were in the system. Between IOC in June and FOC in December, the SMEs worked with the Working Group to identify and make significant changes to eTracker to improve its utility for users across the enterprise.

There are over 52,000 Funds Requests in eTracker today. FWF and eTracker have been enormously successful – every major aspect of the Working Group's goal has been accomplished. Movement of documents has become transparent and trackable, a standardized and basic level of financial knowledge has been defined and circulated, and a standardized process with clearly identified roles and responsibilities has been implemented.

There is still work to be done. Now that NAVFAC has transparency and established baseline metrics, the organization can move toward reducing cycle time by 50 percent, a goal of the FY18 Strategic Design. Improved financial expertise at all levels of NAVFAC and reduction of errors and rework time is still needed but can be achieved using the framework that the Working Group established.

The Working Group's charter concluded in December 2018. With the disbanding of the Group, FWF/eTracker sustainment and management transitioned to NAVFAC Headquarters FM. As NAVFAC moves through additional changes to its financial systems and funding sources over the next several fiscal years, FWF and eTracker will continue to be used to maintain auditability of accepted funding.

NAVFAC Atlantic's Vieques Restoration Teams Sweeps Environmental Awards

NAVFAC Atlantic Public Affairs

The Vieques Environmental Restoration Team of Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Atlantic completed a clean sweep of Department of Defense environmental awards for 2018. The team received environmental restoration, individual and team awards from the secretary of defense, the secretary of the navy and the chief of naval operations for their management of cleanup operations at the former Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Area in Vieques, Puerto Rico. This marked the second time the team has achieved this triple recognition in the past two years.

"These awards celebrate the remarkable commitment of an outstanding group of professionals devoted to protecting human health and the environment while advancing the military mission," said Rear Adm. Darius Banaji, Commander, NAVFAC Atlantic in recognition of the team's efforts and accomplishments. "Their skillful use of innovative technologies, meticulous dedication to safe operations, and keen understanding of the needs of multiple stakeholders in the Vieques community have produced results that are unparalleled in the Department of Defense."

From the mid-1940s until 2003, the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Area served as the Navy's premier training range, ensuring combat readiness of US Atlantic Fleet Forces and for North Atlantic Treaty Organization operations. Over those decades, more than 300,000 munitions were fired during military training operations. In 2005, 23,000 acres of land in the range and 12,000 acres of surrounding waters were placed on the National Priorities List.

Responsibility for executing this complex cleanup fell to NAVFAC Atlantic's Vieques Environmental Restoration Team. Removing, neutralizing or destroying unexploded ordnance and environmental contaminants left after many years of use was only part of their challenge. The former range is home to abundant ecologically and culturally-sensitive resources, each with their own special considerations. An equally complex challenge was addressing the often-disparate objectives of numerous stakeholders, such as including multiple regulatory agencies, local community, and various advocacy groups interested in the past and future use of the site.

Subsurface soil sampling beneath a removed munitions item. An advanced geophysical classification (AGC) technology, Time-domain Electromagnetic Multi-sensor Towed Array Detection System, allows users to rapidly identify sampling locations, expedite the remedial investigation, and lower costs. Accumulated savings from this novel use of AGC are estimated to be $100,000.

The measures taken by the team have produced exceptional results in several areas. One of the most potentially dangerous challenges facing the team is the removal of thousands of submunitions in one of the most areas of the former range. Hidden by vegetation, the team developed an innovative method for removing these items. The team also worked with partners to redefine site boundaries to segregate areas of the range that were highly impacted from relatively unimpacted areas, accelerating by more than a decade return of nearly 5,000 acres to beneficial reuse.

Dangers were also addressed in the waters surrounding Vieques, where several World War II-era rockets posed a threat to 20 miles of beaches frequented by commercial and recreational users. Removal of these weapons will accelerate beneficial reuse of beaches and their near-shore waters by more than a decade. Cutting-edge technology to measure trace levels of contaminants from leaking underwater munitions was put into use, helping to demonstrate that some of the underwater munitions posed no significant concern in the marine environment.

Diver measuring the movement and burial of a munitions surrogate. Throughout 2016 and 2017, staff studied the movement and burial of 61 munitions surrogates just offshore of Vieques beaches. The Vieques team is working with the DoD Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program to assist in their efforts to develop a predictive model that will support underwater munitions cleanup efforts across DoD.

An important aspect of the work carried out by the team was focused on building understanding and support for the cleanup process among the residents of the island. The Navy led stakeholder site visits, supported a munitions safety event for local school children, and sponsored a tour and briefing of the Vieques cleanup for the secretary of the Interior.

These multifaceted programs drew that attention and accolades of the highest levels of the Department of Defense.

In her letter notifying the Vieques team of their award, Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Ellen Ward praised the impact of their work in promoting the environment and well-being of the residents of and visitors to Vieques.

“By removing submunitions from a former bombing range, conducting a wide area assessment of underwater munitions, and removing unexploded World War II-era rockets offshore from a small island adjacent to a public beach, the Vieques Environmental Restoration Team improved environmental performance and protected human health,” said Ward.

In presenting the Vieques team with the 2017 Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Award for Environmental Restoration during a video teleconference on June 13, 2018, Vice Adm. Dixon Smith, deputy chief of naval operations, fleet readiness and logistics saluted the team for environmental leadership and dedication.

“The Navy should follow the lead of this year’s winners to mitigate negative environmental impacts that could hinder our abilities to operate, avoiding complacency as we remain forward-thinking in our practices,” said Smith during his remarks. “The work done by these individuals and teams positively impacts our mission readiness, enabling the warfighter as we maintain an informed, innovative, and lethal fleet.”


BANAJI
U.S. NAVY
NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND
ATLANTIC

NAVFAC Atlantic 2019 Engineer of the Year

NAVFAC Atlantic Public Affairs

Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Atlantic named Eric Heinbach, P.E. its top engineer Oct. 10 for efforts supporting the command's worldwide mission.

NAVFAC Atlantic Commander, Rear Adm. Darius Banaji, announced Heinbach as the 2019 NAVFAC Atlantic Engineer of the Year, calling him a catalyst within NAVFAC Atlantic's Facilities Management Sustainment Product Line.

"Eric is a driving force for change in our Facilities Management and Sustainment Product Line," said Banaji. "He has made significant process improvements to our preventative maintenance and service call programs and how our in-house shops forces function at the local Public Works Departments. These changes have had a profound impact for the hundreds of tenants at every one of our 71 Navy bases."

Banaji also thanked Heinbach's spouse Krisan for her support.

"His successes are her successes," declared Banaji. "We expect a great deal more from our Naval engineers than a traditional engineering firm and Naval service is a team sport; Eric could not do what our Navy and Nation expects without her and his family's support."

This selection places Heinbach in the running for consideration at NAVFAC Headquarters' nominee for the Federal Engineer of the Year Award, placing him in competition against, in Banaji's words, "the best of the best." Sponsored by the Professional Engineers in Government, this honor is awarded to an engineer of a federal agency that employs at least 50 engineers worldwide.

Heinbach is a proven leader in the critical field of Facilities Engineering Management and a driving force within the NAVFAC Facilities Management & Sustainment Product Line. He's made significant impact across the preventive maintenance, service calls, and in-house projects programs.

His influence is far-reaching on a global scale, as Heinbach leads international teams in identifying, analyzing, and implementing mobile technology advancements for efficient delivery of workload for military customers. He designed and communicated standardized methodology and tools to capture integrated priority workload, assisting Public Works Departments in communicating priorities to their installation commanding officers and ensuring alignment with the CNO's Targeted Investment.

Heinbach standardized rate structure and elements throughout the Maintenance and Repair commodity, which enabled increased transparency to supported commanders and enhanced analytic decision making in the Working Capital Fund Facilities Management and Sustainment Product Line.

"Eric consistently integrates his experience from working in the field and his working knowledge of Public Works Departments (PWDs) with his engineering and business education to provide high quality solutions that have been leveraged across the entire NAVFAC enterprise," said Don Alkire, Heinbach's supervisor. "He combined his business acumen and facilities engineering principles to lead initiatives that supported complex resourcing discussions for PWDs in support of Navy installations throughout the world."

In addition to his work for NAVFAC Atlantic, Heinbach has been certified as an Energy Manager by the Association of Energy Engineers and is a member of the Defense Acquisition Corps. He also served as a committee chairman, committee member and Cubmaster in the Boy Scouts of America, mentoring two Packs of Scouts between the ages of 5 and 11 while organizing adult volunteers supporting 60 boys.

In reflecting on the award, Heinbach drew a parallel between the NAVFAC journey which led him to this recognition to that of another journey described by one of his favorite authors, J.R.R. Tolkien in "The Fellowship of the Ring."

"It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door," quoted Heinbach. "You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to."

NAVFAC Atlantic Honors Top Employees

NAVFAC Atlantic Public Affairs

Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Atlantic honored two of its outstanding employees April 11, 2018 for efforts supporting the command's mission.

For their achievements and contributions to NAVFAC Atlantic during 2017, NAVFAC Atlantic Commander, Rear Adm. Darius Banaji, named as Employee of the Year and Diane LeCroy, Supervisor of the Year.

Brandy Tallaksen, NAVFAC Atlantic Employee of the Year is a Realty Specialist and Contracting Officer who enabled NAVFAC Atlantic to deliver vital real estate services to supported commanders around the globe. In 2017, she managed 12 leases valued at $4.7M for U.S. Marine Corps, Navy Exchange Command and Naval Surface Warfare Center across the United States. Tallaksen spearheaded a complex market survey in San Francisco and Portland, Oregon to enable the U.S. Pacific Fleet and Naval Sea Systems Command Regional Maintenance Centers to house hundreds of Sailors if upcoming ship repair contracts were awarded in locations away from the ship's homeport. Her impact was felt outside of the United States, as Tallaksen was instrumental in the disposal of Navy land in Argentina, Newfoundland to the Government of Canada.

"To me, what sets Brandy apart is her initiative and follow-through," said Steven White, Real Estate Product Line Leader for NAVFAC Atlantic and Tallaksen's supervisor. "She looks for meaningful ways to contribute to the organization and then works to see her efforts through to positive results."

Tallaksen's accomplishments during the past year have extended beyond her normal job assignments, however. She demonstrated a willingness to stretch the limits of her professional experience by volunteering her personal strength in data analytics and developed more useful metrics that were adopted for use by the NAVFAC Operations Assessment Board to measure execution performance of the entire Real Estate product line. The impact has been profound, as NAVFAC is now better able to identify and address potential execution shortfalls before customers were adversely impacted.

Always self-challenging, Tallaksen also undertook a temporary assignment that propelled her outside

Brandy Tallaksen, NAVFAC Atlantic Employee of the Year

her career field when she volunteered to support a stressed field office by serving as the Norfolk Naval Shipyard Facilities Management Division Supervisor. She led a team of fifteen facility planners and management specialists to focus on the Conditions Based Maintenance Program and Infrastructure Condition Assessment Plans while also making process improvements for implementing government credit card purchases.

Tallaksen has embraced her role as the spouse of an active duty Army officer with zeal comparable to that devoted to her career. She is an active member of the local Army Family Readiness Group where she helps soldiers and their families cope with the challenges of military life.

Diane LeCroy, NAVFAC Atlantic Supervisor of the Year

Diane LeCroy, NAVFAC Atlantic Supervisor of the Year is the Director of the NAVFAC Atlantic Business Processes Division, exercising oversight of acquisitions made by six component commands within NAVFAC Atlantic's area of responsibility. She has been singled out as a true team builder whose work has forged common solutions to significant acquisition issues across the entire NAVFAC enterprise.

"Diane's knowledge, experience, and commitment are instrumental to the success and support of NAVFAC Atlantic and the entire NAVFAC organization," said Patty Kellihan, Acquisition Business Line Leader for NAVFAC Atlantic. "She continues to demonstrate outstanding leadership, teamwork and service to meet our mission requirements."

As the program manager for all acquisition business processes, invoicing and acquisition responsibilities, LeCroy is a recognized expert whose knowledge and insight is consistently sought by both subordinate and senior commands. LeCroy leads NAVFAC Atlantic in performing strategic community management for staffing, budgeting, workforce shaping, recruitment and selection.

In addition to her normal duties, LeCroy has been an important member of the Funds Workflow Process Team, lending her expertise in acquisition electronic systems, obligation authority processing and facilities information systems to help develop processes to streamline the funds acceptance process in the NAVFAC Atlantic Financial Management Support line.

She is recognized as a team builder working not only with the NAVFAC Atlantic area or responsibility, but also with NAVFAC Pacific and NAVFAC Engineering and Expeditionary Warfare Center (EXWC) to solve significant acquisition issues. She plays a pivotal role in the shaping of the workforce in her field as the Acquisitions Support Line Intern Coordinator for NAVFAC Atlantic.

NAVAFAC ATLANTIC CLASS OF 2018 GRADUATES

Annually, we like to take a moment to recognize the accomplishments of our staff and those of their family members. Due to the hiatus in production of the Atlantic Observer the command is late in recognizing the graduates of 2018. We would like to say to you all now, congratulations and good luck with all of your future endeavors.






CLASS OF 2018

Robert (Bobby) W. Majure, son of Karen Lassiter and David Majure, graduated from Virginia Tech in May 2018 with a degree in Computer Modeling and Data Analytics. Bobby also received minors in Mathematics and Statistics. Bobby was a 2012 graduate of Western Branch High School in Chesapeake. Bobby continues to live in Blacksburg where he enjoys hiking and attending VA Tech sporting events. He is employed by Soft Solutions in Roanoke, VA.

Robert (Bobby) W. Majure

Kelsey Sumner

Kelsey Sumner, daughter of Stephanie McManus, graduated from Virginia Tech in May 2018 with honors. She majored in industrial engineering, obtained process improvement certifications, and interned at both NAVFAC MIDLANT and Disney. After she graduated, she toured Italy and then returned to start her career. She is currently employed as a management engineer for Duke University hospital. Kelsey plans to pursue a Master's degree at Duke University. As a former junior Olympic volleyball player, she also is playing volleyball through a Duke University program.

Will Phelps, son of Dave Phelps and Suzanne graduated from Florida International University with a PhD in Experimental Nuclear Physics and is continuing postdoctoral research at Jefferson Laboratory in Newport News, Virginia. Will's area of research has been in the Antibaryon Photoproduction using CLAS in Experimental Hall B.

Will Phelps

Reilly Schindler

Reilly Schindler, daughter of Ron and Theresa Schindler, graduated with Honors from Bishop Sullivan Catholic High School in Virginia Beach. She was a member of the National Honor Society, National History Honor Society, and the National Art Honor Society. Reilly was a four-year member of her high school swim team and swim team captain her senior year. She was also on her high school crew team where she rowed varsity for three years and earned MVP honors two of the three years. Reilly is also an accomplished triathlete competing in several triathlons since she was 14 years old. Reilly was recruited by St. Mary's College of California on an athletic and merit scholarship where she will be on the women's rowing team. She will be studying Health Science in college and plans to pursue a career in Physical Therapy or Sports Medicine.

GRADUATES

Janet "Nicole" Hoffmann, daughter of Ted Hoffmann graduated from First Colonial High School with a 4.4 GPA. Nicole was a member of the National Honor Society and was captain of the First Colonial Girl's Tennis Team. Nicole will be attending Furman University in Greenville, SC in the fall.

Janet "Nicole" Hoffmann

Joseph Deneke

Joseph Deneke, son of Bernie and Heather Deneke, graduated from First Colonial High School in Virginia Beach. Joseph was the First Colonial Marching Band Drum Major his senior year and was selected 21st chair in snare drums making the all-state band. He is a member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Mathematics Honor Society, Rho Kappa Social Studies Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society. He will attend George Mason University studying Mechanical Engineering.

Elena Cofer, daughter of Elise and Richard Cofer, graduated from Princess Anne High School in June 2018 with honors. Elena also completed the International Baccalaureate program and will be graduating in December 2018. She has enjoyed several extra-curricular activities including Girl Scouts (12 years), National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society and Swim Team. Elena was accepted into the Honors College at James Madison University and will be attending this fall with plans to pursue a degree in Nursing and a minor in Spanish.

Elena Cofer

LaDariah Boone

LaDariah Boone, daughter of La Donna and Daryl Boone, an International Baccalaureate student, graduated with Honors as Salutatorian from King's Fork High School with a GPA of 4.5; A four-year member the National Honor Society, National Society of High School Scholars, and the Virginian Pilot Scholastic Achievement Team; A volunteer for Children's Hospital of the Kings Daughter's Youth Volunteer Program, Southeastern Food Bank, and Relay for Life; Received the Princeton Book Award and the International Pilot Salute to Youth award; A 2017 Disney Dreamer's Academy Graduate; Accepted to and received Merit Scholarships from a wide number of Universities including her dream school, Johns Hopkins University; Ultimately accepted the College of William and Mary's designation as a William and Mary Scholar with a Full Academic Scholarship; Received the William and Mary Scholars Undergraduate Research Experience award and accepted membership in the James Monroe Scholar Program, awarded to only ten% of undergraduates; Received a substantial Research Stipend to be used prior to her Senior year; Plans to attend Johns Hopkins Medical school in 2022.

NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Announces its Military, Civilian Engineers of the Year for 2019

NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Public Affairs

Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Mid-Atlantic announced its selections for the 2019 military and civilian engineers of the year awards, Oct. 12.

Lt. Genevieve Flatgard, Civil Engineer Corps (CEC), assistant public works officer for Public Works Department, Naval Support Activity, Hampton Roads, was selected as the NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Military Engineer of the Year, and Julie Heup, P.E., anti-terrorism force protection program manager in the Capital Improvements Business Line Core, was selected as the NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Civilian Engineer of the Year.

"Congratulations to these two outstanding engineers who were selected as our military and civilian engineers of the year for 2019," said NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Commanding Officer Capt. Rich Hayes. "Our nominees were evaluated in the areas of engineering achievements, civic and humanitarian activities, professional registration, continuing education, and professional and technical society involvement. These awards recognize the exceptional talent and achievements of both of these engineers."

As an Assistant Public Works Officer (APWO) assigned to NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic, Flatgard responded to changing mission needs at Norfolk Naval Shipyard to solve design problems for future Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command facility needs. She prioritized more than $23 million worth of projects for fiscal year (FY) 2017 and 2018

NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Military Engineer of the Year

project execution plans to meet fleet readiness requirements.

After transferring to Naval Support Activity Hampton Roads, Flatgard again serving as an APWO, was assigned to coordinate all facility engineer support to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. In this role, she led continuous improvements of project planning, programing, and coordination between the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, the installation and NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic. She also drove customer prioritization of more than $100 million in future projects.

"It is an honor to be named the NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Military Engineer of the Year," Flatgard said. "I am proud to represent the team of outstanding engineers who give their best supporting the Navy and Marine Corps mission each and every day."

Heup developed a creative acquisition strategy, a regional force protection template, and a facility checklist for security improvements at 62 off-installation sites in the Hampton Roads area to bring them into compliance with anti-terrorism force protection (ATFP) requirements and to protect Navy personnel working off base. These efforts enabled obligation of more than $5 million of FY17 funding. The strategy and template were developed as a prototype that could be used throughout the U.S. at approximately 600 locations.

As the command's ATFP subject matter expert, Heup provides consultation, training, design, and review services, including code and criteria interpretation, analysis and design for blast construction, and progressive collapse prevention analysis and design throughout NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic, which is responsible for more than $1.2 billion in design annually.

"I am honored to be selected as the NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Civilian Engineer of the Year," Heup said. "It is incredibly humbling to receive individual recognition for ATFP program successes over the past year that are a result of the collaborative efforts of a diverse Navy team of design engineers and operations, security, and support personnel."

NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Civilian Engineer of the Year

Flatgard and Heup will now go on to compete for the NAVFAC Engineer of the Year awards and potentially for higher honors in the National Society of Professional Engineer's Federal Engineer of the Year award program.

NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Fire Protection Engineer is Chicago FEB's Employee of the Year

NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Public Affairs

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Mid-Atlantic employee Sheldon Rucinski, P.E., was named "Citizens Services Employee of the Year" for 2018 by the Chicago Federal Executive Board (FEB), during their 61st annual awards presentation in Chicago, May 10.

The Chicago FEB annual awards program is open to more than 170 federal offices and agencies and their 40,000 federal employees. The FEB awards represent the broad spectrum of roles and highlight the diversity of public service in their region.

"This is a great honor," said Rucinski, a nine-year NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic employee, currently working in Capital Improvements onboard Naval Station Great Lakes. "I hope it motivates others to give a little of their time."

The Citizens Services Employee award category recognizes significant contributions in activities related to public and community service to include areas such as economic development, education, health care, housing, labor, and transportation.

"Sheldon Rucinski shows humility and a commitment to service every day through volunteer work in his community. Sheldon volunteers every week with the Holy Family Soup Kitchen, serving food to more than 200 people weekly. He also volunteers with the Naval Station Great Lake's USO where he serves food to upwards of 300 Sailors and even de-

NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Fire Protection Engineer Sheldon Rucinski receives the 2018 Chicago Federal Executive Board (FEB) "Citizens Services Employee of the Year" award from Jeannette Tamayo, director of Economic Development Administration, Department of Commerce, and former chairperson of FEB, during an awards ceremony, May 10. Rucinski is part of the Capital Improvements Core onboard Naval Station Great Lakes. The Chicago FEB annual awards program is open to more than 170 federal offices and agencies and their 40,000 federal employees. The FEB awards represent the broad spectrum of roles and highlight the diversity of public service in their region. Photo courtesy of Chicago FEB

lays his own holiday dinners to volunteer when the USO is short staffed," read the Chicago FEB press release announcing the 2018 award winners.

Rucinski, who had been previously selected as the NAVFAC Midwest 2013 Civilian Engineer of the Year, holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Architectural Engineering and Building Construction and a Minor in Business Management from the Milwaukee School of Engineering, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

As a fire protection engineer (FPE), Rucinski provides design and engineering services for the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps to include design, consultation, site assessments, testing, RFP (request for proposal) development, and contract execution.

"I'd known of Sheldon's reputation as a fire protection engineer long before becoming his supervisor in late 2015," said Douglas Stultz, P.E., NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Fire Protection Engineering Department acting branch head and Technical Discipline coordinator. "Sheldon has long been recognized for his excellence within the NAVFAC community of FPE."

"Sheldon has never mentioned his volunteering at the soup kitchen or his sacrificing time with his family to help those less fortunate. When Blayne Kirsch, Sheldon's previous supervisor, contacted me in January regarding his potential to be selected for the award and why; I was impressed with Sheldon's volunteerism, I was however, not surprised he was selected,"said Douglas.

The Federal Executive Boards, established by Presidential Directive in 1961, are a forum for communication and collaboration among federal agencies outside of Washington, DC. The need for effective coordination among the field activities of federal departments and agencies was then, and is still, very clear. Approximately 85 percent of all federal employees work outside the national capital region. The national network of 28 FEBs, located in areas of significant federal populations, serves as the cornerstone for strategic partnering in government.

NAVFAC Southeast CERT Deploys to Assess Damage Caused by Hurricane Michael

NAVFAC Southeast Public Affairs

Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Southeast dispatched one military member and 11 civilian personnel to Naval Support Activity Panama City, Florida, from Naval Air Station Jacksonville Oct. 11, as part of a Contingency Engineering Response Team (CERT) after Hurricane Michael made landfall there.

NAVFAC Southeast Commanding Officer Capt. Mike Monreal spoke with the team before they left for Panama City today and thanked them as they left their families to help others.

"Take your time, be safe. Don't take any unnecessary risks," said Monreal. "Know that the things you are doing are very important for our mission and for our military family in Panama City. Thank you for volunteering to do this and know that you have my full support."

CERT members will work directly with the staff on the ground at the installation to perform assessments to help get the base back to normal operations as soon as possible.

"This is the first deployment of the 2018 hurricane season for the team," said NAVFAC Southeast Production Officer and Disaster Preparedness Officer Lt. Cmdr. Ryan Thrun. "The team is experienced in responding to storms. They require little preparation time as they are ready to go at a moments notice. Our continuous planning for contingencies like this makes deployment of the CERT after disasters very smooth."

In conjunction with the installation Public Works Department staff, the team will prioritize the review of each facility/infrastructure on the base. To accomplish this, the team will also deploy Disaster Assessment Teams (DATs) to identify and quantify damage caused by the storm. They will then record the damage to a sufficient degree to develop cost estimates for repairs.

The CERT has DATs which consist of structural, electrical, and mechanical engineers, architects, roofing specialists, community planners, environmental specialists and construction contract specialists that deploy to begin Rapid Damage Assessments.

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southeast's Contingency Engineering Response Team (CERT) members load supplies and equipment prior to departing from Naval Air Station Jacksonville October 11. The CERT will conduct damage assessments of base facilities and infrastructures onboard Naval Support Activity Panama City to quickly return the installation to full operational status after Hurricane Michael made landfall near the base.

Contingency Engineering Response Team (CERT) members assess building on Naval Support Activity Panama City (NSA PC) after Hurricane Michael brought heavy rain, damaging winds, and coastal surge to the Panama City area on Oct. 10th. Personnel at NSA PC are assessing the damage and working with Navy Region Southeast and Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Southeast to begin the work of restoring the base to full mission capability.

It is during this phase that debris is removed and basic functions are restored such as opening roadways, sanitation, water, electricity and communications.

"This will be the third CERT I have been on," said CERT Team Lead Lt. j.g. Derek Schmitz. "Being a part of a CERT is an exciting experience as it is fast-paced and demands long hours. Being able to coordinate a group of people with various engineering disciplines to safely assess damages of every structure on a base after a devastating event is challenging and rewarding."

The entire team is comprised of volunteers. Every year before the hurricane season begins, a request goes out asking for volunteers so that teams are ready and established in advance of an event.

When a disaster occurs, a multi-disciplinary team is brought together and is placed on stand-by. The CERT is ready to deploy as soon as it is safe to travel. Typically within 24 hours of the storm making landfall.

"It is important to make sure the teams get what they need to accomplish the mission," said Schmitz. "Our goal is to get there and get working as soon as possible so that we can provide the base a record of each building and structure with details of the damages, percentages lost and the urgency of certain repairs."

Sending engineers around the world is not new to NAVFAC.

"We train for circumstances just like this. Our team is always ready to go," said Thrun.

Typically, these teams are deployed to assess hurricane or other storm damage to military installations such as was the case last year with Hurricane Harvey at NAS Corpus Christi and then Hurricane Irma at NAS Key West, in October 2016 when teams deployed to the Bahamas and Cuba after Hurricane Maria went through the Caribbean, in April 2014 when teams deployed to NAS Pensacola after heavy storms rolled through the area and again in August 2012 when teams deployed to Gulfport, Miss. and New Orleans in response to Hurricane Isaac. They are also called upon to deploy for humanitarian efforts such as a tsunami or the earthquake in Haiti in 2010.

NCBC Gulfport Sailor Earns U.S. Navy Distinguished Pistol Shot at Shooting Competition

NAVFAC Southeast Public Affairs

One of Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport's own Public Works officers earned the title of U.S. Navy Distinguished Pistol Shot at the 57th Annual Atlantic Fleet and All Navy (East) Rifle and Pistol Championship held at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, May 6-16.

Lt. Cmdr. James Shambley, Facilities Engineering and Acquisition Division Director for Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southeast, Public Works Department Gulfport, earned a distinction that only 391 other Sailors in the entire Navy have obtained since 1925. Distinguished badges are the highest individual awards authorized by the U. S. Government for excellence in marksmanship competition.

"I felt very honored to join their ranks," said Shambley about becoming a U.S. Navy Distinguished Pistol Shot.

The championship competition consists of various matches that follow the Civilian Marksmanship Program for service rifle and pistol, said Shambley. He participated in this competition with the Navy twice before, once in 2008 and again in 2017. Shambley said that the combined points he scored from shooting over the last two years were used to

Lt. Cmdr. James Shambley, Facilities Engineering and Acquisition Division Director for Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southeast, Public Works Department Gulfport, fires his pistol during the 57th Annual Atlantic Fleet and All Navy (East) Rifle and Pistol Championship held at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, May 6-16, 2018. Shambley earned the title of U.S. Navy Distinguished Pistol Shot at the competition as well as several other high scores in various categories

Lt. Cmdr. James Shambley, Facilities Engineering and Acquisition Division Director for Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southeast, Public Works Department Gulfport, poses with his teammates from the All Navy Blue pistol team, which earned the highest scoring for All Navy team across the East and West coasts at the 57th Annual Atlantic Fleet and All Navy (East) Rifle and Pistol Championship held at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, May 6-16, 2018. From left to right are Shambley, Gunner's Mate Senior Chief Jason Stout, Lt. Cmdr. Richard Ray, and Lt. Jafar Ali.

determine his eligibility for becoming a U.S. Navy Distinguished Pistol Shot.

As if that distinction wasn't enough, Shambley was also the highest scoring Active or Reserve Navy pistol shooter in the All Navy President's 100 Pistol Match and the Long Range Pistol Match, and he was the highest scoring Active or Reserve Navy competitor for the All Navy Individual Pistol Aggregate. During the All Navy Pistol Championships, he was awarded a Gold Navy Pistol Excellence in Competition Badge for being the highest scoring Navy Non-Distinguished competitor in the All Navy Excellence in Competition Pistol Match. Earning this badge is what gave him enough points to qualify for the U.S. Navy Distinguished Pistol Shot. He also competed on the All Navy Blue pistol team, which earned the highest scoring for All Navy team across the East and West coasts.

"This is an incredible accomplishment and display of marksmanship by one of NCBC's own. Shambley did an excellent job representing NCBC Gulfport to the rest of team Navy," said Cmdr. Ron Jenkins, NCBC Gulfport executive officer.

Shambley said one of the main reasons he enjoys competitive marksmanship to begin with is that he's able to take what he learned over the years and teach it to other military personnel. When he was going through Expeditionary Combat Skills training at NCBC Gulfport back in 2008, Shambley was able to take some of his shooting knowledge and use that to help other Seabees and Sailors enhance their own marksmanship skills.

"That's one of the most gratifying things, to be able to come back to my parent command and have the opportunity to teach good fundamentals of marksmanship. To me that's really the big thing, especially as Seabees and being a part of an expeditionary force – you need to be able to use a weapon and employ it effectively. So it's very rewarding to be able to contribute in that way," said Shambley.

Opportunities in EURAFSWA Often Overlooked

NAVFAC EURAFSWA Public Affairs

Navy Region Europe Africa Southwest Asia (EURAFSWA) is a geographically wide region comprised of eight bases, in seven countries, on three continents. With half of those bases located in popular tourist destinations like Italy, Spain and Greece, garnering interest in joining the NAVFAC EURAFSWA team is usually not a difficult task. However, not all of the bases in EURAFSWA region receive the same level of interest. Bases in Poland, Bahrain and Djibouti usually are not high on the list of choice overseas assignments, but according to many of the employees that have worked there, they should be.

NAVFAC EURAFSWA's Public Works Departments (PWD) in Bahrain, Djibouti and Poland provide unique opportunities personally and professionally that you won't find in other locations.

The hub of US naval operations in the Middle East, Naval Support Activity (NSA) Bahrain has grown from a small Administrative Support Unit during the Gulf War, into a 62 acre facility that houses U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (CENTCOM) and the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet. The base has grown to match the increased mission in the CENTCOM area of responsibility. According to Jeremy Thompson,

Deputy Public Works Officer, being a part of this mission was a big draw.

"It's an exciting opportunity to work really integrated with the military and see how the fleet operates and how [the] overseas environment is different in the way that we're supporting the fleet," said Thompson. "It's a mission focus. We're here to support whatever the mission is – and that's very rewarding, knowing that I'm supporting that."

That mission focus creates an ever changing work environment that provides challenges and opportunity, something Patrick Smith, NSA Bahrain Installation Environmental Program Director, has found to be the professional highlight of his tour.

"The best thing about working here in Bahrain is the high tempo," said Smith. "Every day there's something new. I'm always learning."

It's not just the base that is growing in Bahrain. The island nation has been rapidly expanding for decades, attracting new residents from across the globe and creating, what Carmel Sanchez, a contract specialist with NAVFAC EURAFSWA, says is a diverse community and unique culture.

"There's Australians here, British, Indian, Bangladeshi, there's just a big huge diverse community [in Bahrain]," said Sanchez. "You get to kind of learn a lot of different cultures and meet a lot of different people from all over the world."

That growth has also led to a dramatic rise in the quality of living.

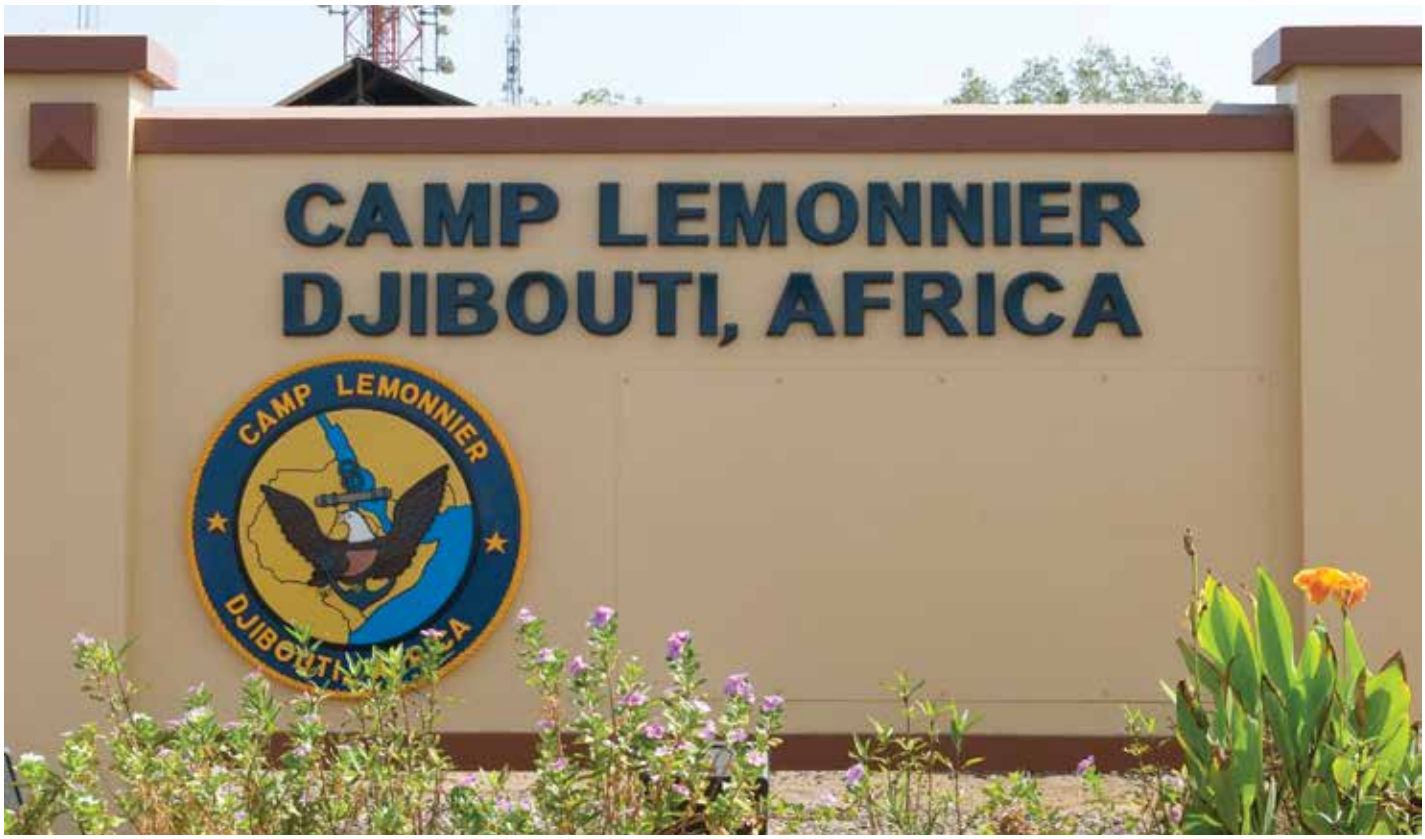
"It's really no different than in the States," said Smith. "The quality of the water is good, the food prices are normal, and they have malls just like at home."

Thompson adds that the housing arrangements in Bahrain will surprise people when they first get to Bahrain.

"There's a whole wide range of options from ultra-modern skyscrapers where you have amazing views, to villas where you've got your own little compound," said Thompson. "The ability to afford [that type of living arrangement] is one of the benefits of coming [to Bahrain] as the Navy pays for your housing while you're here."

Along with quality of living and professional satisfaction, a surprise at the ease of travel to surrounding countries was highlighted by all.

"Traveling from Bahrain was also one of the huge draws for me and my wife to come here," said Thompson. "It's pretty difficult from the U.S. to get



to Asian locations, but from Bahrain, India is very accessible, the other Middle Eastern countries, Dubai, and I have plans to travel throughout the Philippines, Malaysia, and just see some of the places that are really hard to access from the U.S."

South of Bahrain, but still in the EURAFSWA region, is another base growing from an expeditionary base into a more long term facility. Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti has expanded in size and infrastructure to support approximately 4,000 U.S. and allied forces and civilian personnel. The opportunity to be a part of that expansion and improvement of the base was a draw for Cmdr. Stephen Padhi, Public Works Officer for Camp Lemonnier.

"The work we do often has a direct, observable impact on the many supported warfighters and critical missions [at Camp Lemonnier]," said Padhi when asked about what drove him to apply to work in Djibouti.

Ernesto Espinosa, an engineering technician for Camp Lemonnier PWD, said he didn't know what to expect when he signed on to work at Camp Lemonnier, but has found the work very rewarding.

"The best thing about working at [Camp Lemonnier] is working directly with the military and seeing the impact our work has," said Espinosa. "I learned a lot about NAVFAC and the military and can say I learned more here in the last 2 years than I did back home in 8 years. I am looking forward to taking my experience and applying it to other areas in my career path."

Greg Neate took a position at Camp Lemonnier looking to enhance his career and create "upward mobility."

"If you want to better yourself it's a good place to be," said Neate. "My next position was due to my tour here."

While Bahrain has been steadily expanding for decades, the expansion at Camp Lemonnier has been recent and rapid. This has led to many misconceptions about the living and working environment on base.

"Many assume Djibouti's force protection and living conditions are more like that in Afghanistan or more remote locations," said Padhi. "CLDJ is no

longer expeditionary, and has constructed to permanent standards. There are amenities that really make life easier, such as free laundry service and a galley that rivals any other worldwide. Even the semi-permanent facilities (like CLUs) are of a high standard, in reality much better than they sound."

Timothy Nelson, Senior Performance Assessment Representative for Camp Lemonnier PWD, said he signed up to work in Djibouti to experience a "deployment assignment", but was pleasantly surprised with the living situation and the activities available.

"Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) does a great job providing activities," said Nelson. "I love going to the movies. They are free and you get free popcorn. I check out a lot of videos from the library and enjoy a lot of the sports activities, both as a participant and as a spectator."

Espinosa also noted the work of MWR, pointing to frequent opportunities to go snorkeling and diving in the reefs of the coast. He also added that working at Camp Lemonnier provided opportunity to travel to locals more difficult to access from the US.

"I used my leave to visit places in the world I have always wanted to see; South Africa, Egypt, Australia, Rome, and Tanzania," said Espinosa.

Moving north in the EURAFSWA region, Naval Support Facility Redzikowo, sits near the town of Slupsk in northern Poland. Not far from the Baltic Sea and the historic twin cities of Gdynia and Gdansk, Redzikowo was established in 2016 and is the newest base in the Navy.

Andrew Voshell, Contracting Officer Representative for the Poland BOS contract, was attracted by the newness of Redzikowo and the opportunity to help build something and to be a "plank owner." He said he was enjoyed "taking part in building a brand new base, [only] the second in over 30 years for the DOD."

"Establishing a base and a PWD is hard work," said Voshell, before noting how rewarding the work has been.

"It has been a huge honor and very rewarding having the opportunity to serve the warfighter and be a part of a mission that is bigger than you realize," said Voshell. "What we are doing out here to protect our country and allies is tremendous and the peace and security benefits will benefit generations to come."

Like the bases in Bahrain and Djibouti, Redzikowo provides a strong balance between work and quality of life. Voshell pointed to "having the opportunity to live out in town and interact with the local culture," as a highlight of his time in Poland.

"Off base housing has been great and Slupsk is a great little town to live in," said Voshell.

Voshell also noted the "good restaurants and entertainment" as well as "opportunities to travel all over Europe" as side benefits of living and working in Poland.

"Checked a lot off the bucket list [items] while being over here," said Voshell.

Whether it be Bahrain, Djibouti or Poland, everyone asked noted how happy they were with their decision to step outside of their comfort zone and take a position some may never consider.

"No one leaves here wishing they hadn't worked here," said Padhi. "Almost everyone leaves better off than they arrived [be it] financially, physically, professionally, etc."

"Most civilians end up extending because they enjoy the work and the feeling of satisfaction," said Nelson. "It is a good way to save money and get ahead, while feeling a great satisfaction from being involved in an important mission."

For those considering working at one of these locations, driven by the mission or the opportunities for personal and professional growth, those who are already working at these PWDs have a simple message.

"What I would say to people that are considering applying: Apply," said Smith. "It's been a great experience for me. I wouldn't trade this experience for anything."

Gunnery Sgt. Paul Worley releases "Purple Heart," a Kemp's ridley sea turtle, back into the Atlantic Ocean after being rehabilitated from a fishing hook. Worley, attached Command Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, is a Purple Heart recipient. "Purple Heart" is equipped with a U.S. Navy-funded satellite tag used to track the turtle's movements and the release was conducted as part of a Navy research project with the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center.

MARINE RESOURCES

WORD JUMBLE

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Assessments
Behavioral
Biologists
Compliance
Conservation
Endangered
Environmental
Expeditionary
Geographic
Fisheries
Habitats
Hydrophone
Marine
Mammals
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