NAVY RECRUITER magazine

Supporting Navy Recruiters

March-April 2012
Volume Sixty Number Two

2011 Recruiters of the Year

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On the back cover:
The 2011 Recruiters of the Year and their guests received the red carpet treatment during ROY Week in Washington, D.C. Besides an awards ceremony, receptions, luncheons and office calls with the Navy's top brass, they toured many of the historic sites in our nation's capital. (Photos by MC1(AW) Christopher D. Blachly and MC2(SW) Dennis Irwin, NRC Creative Div.)

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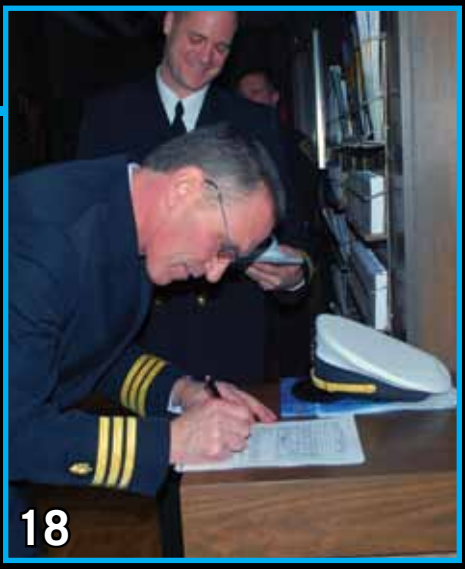
On the front cover:
One of the many places the 2011 ROY visited during ROY Week in Washington, D.C., was the Lincoln Memorial. Pausing on the steps are PS1(SW/AW) Terry Mullen, left front; LS1(EXW) Christopher Cataldo; LT Renato DePaolis; LTJG Adrian Harvill; CS1(SW/AW) Samuel Tran, left middle; AWO1(NAC/AW) Joshua Hammonds; LTJG Stephen Graff; ABF2(AW/SW) Carl Tramel; EM1 (SW/AW) John Geiger; NCC(SW) Julio Menendez, left back; EODC(ESC/PJ) Shawn Forbes; ADC(AW/NAC) Dennis DeJong; CWO3 Frank Dark; NC1 Brandon Whobrey; and MMC(SS) Ferlin Espinal. (Photo by MC1(AW) Christopher Blachly, NRC Creative Div.)



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From the Admiral

Rear Admiral Earl L. Gay
Commander, Navy Recruiting Command

Shipmates:

I am honored to salute our top Recruiters of the Year who visited Washington, D.C., in January. Ardella and I were extremely humbled and honored to be part of such a tremendous celebration.

I want to thank all of our families, friends, and Navy partners for their enthusiastic support and dedication to our recruiters during ROY Week and throughout the year as they help us find the best and brightest to join America's Navy – A Global Force for Good.

(Photo by MC1(AW) Christopher Blachly, NRC Creative Div.)

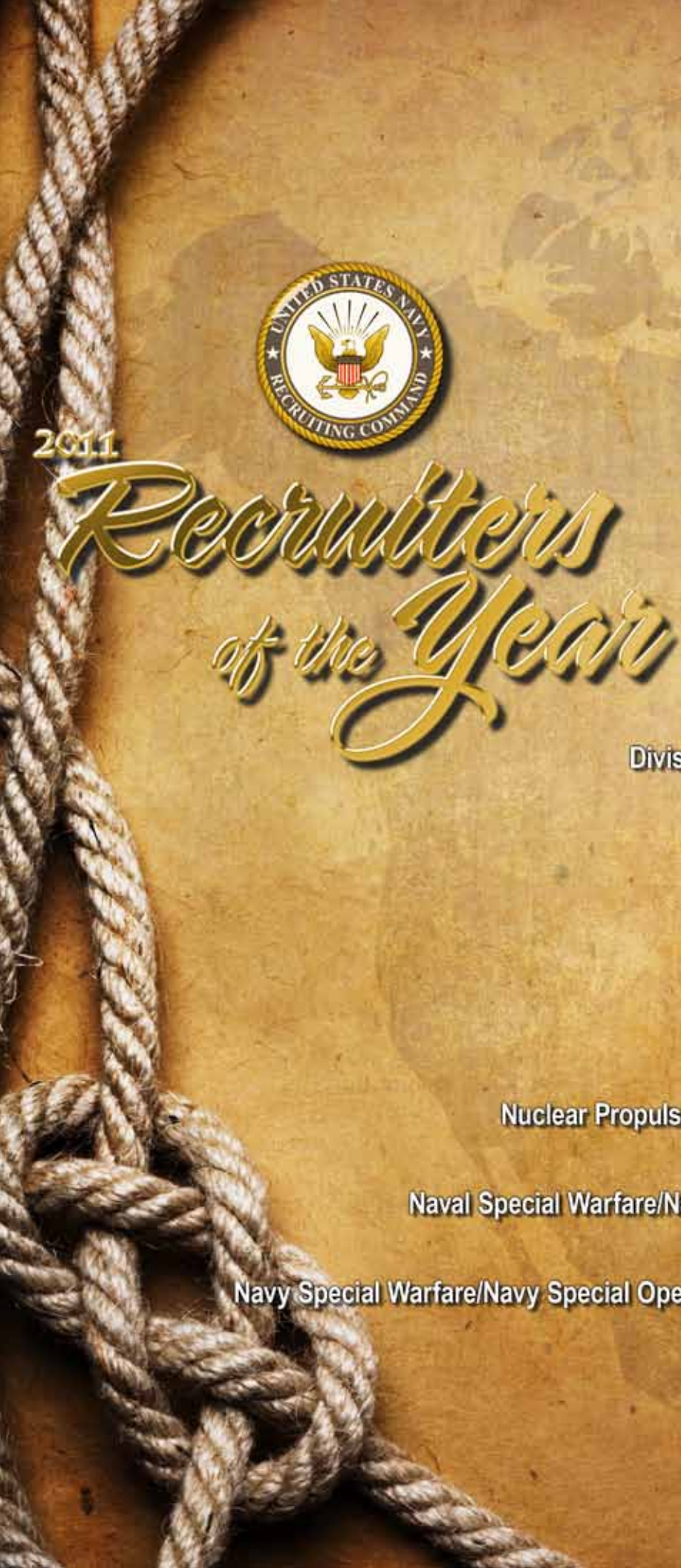
Our top recruiters exemplify the highest qualities that make our challenging job worthwhile. Each recruiter has a success story to tell, and many are highlighted throughout the pages of this magazine.

During ROY Week, our Recruiters of the Year met with the Secretary of the Navy, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Chief of Naval Personnel, Chief of Navy Reserve, and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy.

These were all proud moments in the lives of not only these outstanding recruiters and support personnel but their families as well.

We all know recruiting the right Sailor for the right job is not easy, but our recruiting professionals never cease to inspire me with their ability to get the job done and meet the mission. They are highly deserving of this recognition.

ONE TEAM, ONE FIGHT!



2011 Recruiters of the Year

Enlisted Recruiter of the Year - Active
MM1(SS) Ferlin Espinal

Enlisted Recruiter of the Year - Reserve
NC1 Brandon Whobrey

Officer Recruiter of the Year - Active
LTJG Adrian Harvill

Officer Recruiter of the Year - Reserve
LTJG Stephen Graff

Nuclear Field Coordinator of the Year
EM1(SW/AW) John Geiger

Station Leading Petty Officer of the Year
CS1(SW/AW) Samuel Tran

Classifier of the Year
PS1(SW/AW) Terry Mullen

Division Leading Chief Petty Officer of the Year
NCC(SW) Julio Menendez

Diversity Enlisted Recruiter of the Year
ABF1(AW/SW) Carl Tramel

Diversity Officer Recruiter of the Year
CWO3 Frank Dark

Medical Officer Recruiter of the Year
LT Renato DePaolis

Nuclear Propulsion Officer Candidate Recruiter of the Year
ADC(AW/NAC) Dennis DeJong

Naval Special Warfare/Naval Special Operator Recruiter of the Year
AWO1(NAC/AW) Joshua Hammonds

Navy Special Warfare/Navy Special Operations/Air Rescue Coordinator of the Year
EODC(ESW/PJ) Shawn Forbes

Support Person of the Year
LS1(EXW) Christopher Cataldo

Gold "R"
Navy Recruiting District Denver

Enlisted Recruiter of the Year - Active

MM1(SS) Ferlin Espinal

of Navy Recruiting District Los Angeles

Hometown: Long Island, N.Y.

How long have you been in recruiting? One year, three months.

Previous commands and job titles: USS *Key West* (SSN 722) fireman/tech; USS *Buffalo* (SSN 715) work center supervisor (WCS); Pearl Harbor H&C Squad Leader, USS *Columbus* (SSN 762) First Lieutenant LPO.

How do feel about being chosen for this honor? It has been an honor to be recognized as recruiter of the nation. It proves that hard work and perseverance pays off. Throughout the year I have been able to bring the best and brightest into the Navy. I am very proud of each of my future Sailors.

What advice would you give to others in your position? To be a successful recruiter you must avoid getting complacent and never let your guard down. Be proactive, stay ahead of the game, and always be ready for the next task.

Your future goals? I hope to make chief, as well as complete my master's degree in global leadership.

How has the Navy changed your life? The Navy has allowed me the opportunity to see firsthand what determination and perseverance can lead to. I feel that the Navy has instilled the values and beliefs that have built my foundation and inspired me to become the Sailor I am today.

Hobbies and interests: Spending time with my family, sports car drag racing, and traveling.

Enlisted Recruiter of the Year - Reserve

NC1 Brandon Whobrey

of Navy Recruiting District Michigan

Hometown: Elberfeld, Ind.

How long have you been in recruiting? Two years.

Previous commands and job titles: NAS Patuxent River (CMAA), gate sentry/patrolman; Naval Security Forces, Crane, Ind.

How do feel about being chosen for this honor? I am so thrilled to represent NRD Michigan. This is truly surreal and a very humbling experience that is not an individual accomplishment. I have to thank God for such a wonderful blessing. I could not have been this successful without all the help I had from my fellow shipmates and recruiters.

What advice would you give to others in your position? Working together as a team is just as important in recruiting as it is anywhere else in the fleet. To perform at optimum levels in this field, one needs to exhibit high levels of efficiency and effectiveness, which are derived mostly from proper planning and organizing. I think if you are team player and can complement that with determination and good organizational skills you can be successful in recruiting.

Your future goals? Complete my LCPO qualifications, obtaining a degree in applied management and to continue to strive for excellence in recruiting. I would like to earn a PhD in business administration.

How has the Navy changed your life? Joining the Navy has been the most impactful and life-changing decision I have ever made. I attended the University of Southern Indiana and earned my undergraduate degree. I wanted to be a recruiter from the day I joined the Navy, so this was a great door that opened for me. The Navy has presented me with a plethora of opportunities to learn many valuable skill sets that can be utilized not only throughout my Navy career, but also in everyday life and the private sector.

Hobbies and interests: I enjoy volleyball and softball, traveling, watching movies, and singing.

Officer Recruiter of the Year - Active

LTJG Adrian Harvill

of Navy Recruiting District New England

Hometown: Columbia, S.C.

How long have you been in recruiting? Two years.

Previous commands and job titles: NAS Oceana, air traffic control PALS; TACRON 21, tactical watch supervisor; FACSFAC VACAPES, facility watch sup., training chief; USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71), carrier air traffic control watch officer.

How do feel about being chosen for this honor? I am very appreciative for being chosen. I owe it to the support of my chain of command for giving me the room to grow and succeed and also to my junior Sailors for supporting me. A leader's success is always a direct reflection of his or her Sailors' performance and this is an example of that.

What advice would you give to others in your position? This job is demanding and you have to stay organized to be successful and use the experience of the CRF community. This job can be successful if you practice good leadership and management techniques. I help Sailors succeed and recruiting gives me an opportunity to do that in the officer community as well. Complete your degree while you have the opportunity... I am four classes shy of my master's degree and I didn't have a bachelor's degree when I checked aboard NRD New England.

Your future goals? Continue to grow as a father and husband above all. Complete my master's degree and HR certification, then transfer to the USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) in Norfolk, Va., in November 2012.

How has the Navy changed your life? I joined the Navy to serve my country. The Navy has given me the opportunity to provide for my family and also excel personally and professionally.

Hobbies and interests: I have five children so that is pretty much my main hobby. Complete my master's degree and traveling – I just returned from Mexico with my wife. Many types of community service.

Officer Recruiter of the Year - Reserve

LTJG Stephen Graff

of Navy Recruiting District Chicago

Hometown: Bolingbrook, Ill.

How long have you been in recruiting? 7 1/2 years.

Previous commands and job titles: NOSC Chicago, human resources officer; NRD Chicago, recruiter-in-charge; NOSC Chicago, reserve law enforcement; Illinois Air National Guard, 183rd Fighter Wing, senior airman, security forces.

How do feel about being chosen for this honor? I feel honored and privileged to receive this accolade. I was surprised to know that I was selected out of the talented pool of recruiters going for the title. All recruiters deserve acknowledgement for their hard work and dedication to recruit for our Navy. I would like to thank my wife for her support and motivation to help me achieve mission, then thank my command for being a strong advocate for me to achieve this award.

What advice would you give to others in your position? Recruiting is a team sport and requires all hands on deck. Without the entire command supporting you, there is no way of achieving mission. I truly believe that hard work, dedication, perseverance, and keeping the pace is what makes an excellent recruiter. Sustained superior performance is what our Navy leadership phrases in our culture is very true in recruiting. Recruiting it is not a sprint to the finish, it is a marathon. Everything counts in this business, by paying attention to every detail, working well with your team, and leading your applicant into the Navy will lead to success.

Your future goals? I would like to become a Navy human resources, full-time support officer.

How has the Navy changed your life? The Navy has supported my family, education, and career goals. I wouldn't be here in this position if it weren't for this great organization. I truly believe in the product and I hope that I will be able to continue enjoying the privileges the Navy offers.

Hobbies and interests: My hobbies and interests include spending time with my family, running, scuba diving, kayaking, hiking, fishing, and visiting historical sites.

Nuclear Field Coordinator of the Year

EM1(SW/AW) John Geiger

of Navy Recruiting District Portland

Hometown: Vancouver, Wash.

How long have you been in recruiting? Three years.

Previous commands and job titles: USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70), RCOH LPO, primary electrical WCS.

How do feel about being chosen for this honor? I am extremely honored to have been selected for this award for the second year. The command and I have continued to push forward in our drive to achieve all mission objectives for the nuclear field (NF) while maintaining an administrative program as error-free as possible. I am pleased to be able to represent NRD Portland again.

What advice would you give to others in your position? NF mission is just as much about recruiting high-quality individuals as it is about maintaining the attention to detail and procedural compliance that are hallmarks in the nuclear Navy. If you treat this job with the same respect and devotion as you do when in the fleet, you will be successful.

Your future goals? I will be transferring to the USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68) in the near future and am looking forward to continuing my training and qualifications in rate, with an eye on being advanced to chief petty officer. In addition, I will be finishing my degree in nuclear engineering and obtaining all certifications applicable to my chosen profession.

How has the Navy changed your life? Prior to joining the Navy, I was a college dropout and had no chance of being able to continue my education. I was working a general labor job with no chance of a career. The Navy has given me the training, skills, and opportunities to advance myself in a way that I would have never had without it.

Hobbies and interests: Spending time with my wife and children, fiction writing, and game testing and development.

Station Leading Petty Officer of the Year

CS1(SW/AW) Samuel Tran

of Navy Recruiting District San Francisco

Hometown: San Francisco, Calif.

How long have you been in recruiting? Four years.

Previous commands and job titles: USS *Elliot* (DD 967), repair parts petty officer; Carrier Strike Group 7, WCS.

How do you feel about being chosen for this honor? I feel great for being chosen for this honor. I was amazed to hear that I won this award and thankful to my team at NRS San Francisco, the chain of command, and my family who helped and supported me throughout my tour.

What advice would you give to others in your position? The key to my success as a LPO is interact with your recruiters; know their strengths and weaknesses. Properly train them and point them in the right directions based on their strengths. Lastly, help them work on their weaknesses. Keep in mind that your success is measured by your recruiters' success.

Your future goals? My goal at this moment is to advance to chief petty officer. Afterward, apply for an officer program and get my degree.

How has the Navy changed your life? The Navy has taught me to become a better person and has disciplined me well. It has taught me to always plan for the future and for my family. To never pace myself in the same place and always keep my mind going to put myself ahead of everyone and everything.

Hobbies and interests: Watching sports, surfing the net, and enjoying family time.

Classifier of the Year

PS1(SW/AW) Terry Mullen

of Navy Recruiting District Atlanta

Hometown:
New Orleans, La.
How long have you been in recruiting? Three years.
Previous commands and job titles: USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71), Pers LPO; PSD New Orleans, admin LPO and legal officer; VFA 131, personnel clerk; VFA 105 - personnel clerk; NATTC Pensacola, asst. command career counselor; PSD New Orleans, service record/customer service clerk.
How do feel about being chosen for this honor? I am humbled and truly blessed to have been chosen for this award.
What advice would you give to others in your position? Always put the future Sailor FIRST! They are the future of our great Navy.
Your future goals? My future goals are to become a chief petty officer while continuing to learn, train, lead and mentor our junior Sailors.
How has the Navy changed your life? The Navy has changed my life by giving me the opportunity to travel the world, receive great training and education, and to meet some of the most interesting and wonderful people I have ever met in my life.
Hobbies and interests: Reading, cooking, golfing, and spending quality time with family and friends.

Division LCPO of the Year

NCC(SW) Julio Menendez

of Navy Recruiting District Denver

Hometown:
Los Angeles, Calif.
How long have you been in recruiting? Eight years.
Previous commands and job titles: USS *Mount Vernon* (LSD 39); NRD Los Angeles; NRD San Francisco; NRD Denver.
How do feel about being chosen for this honor?
I am very humbled and honored to have been chosen for this prestigious honor. First and foremost I would like to dedicate this honor to my son, Joshua. May he be with God resting in heaven and I thank my wife for her support. I would be disregardful if I did not thank the people of Division 4, the great leadership at NRD Denver, and finally the "Roundtable," the best DLCPOs in the nation, who got me here. Thank you.
What advice would you give to others in your position? Have a vision, mission, and set a brand within your divisions which is in line with your expectations and what the team believes in. Believe in your people and foster innovation and trust in your chain of command. Train your people and allow them to make decisions. Stick together when times get hard and push forward and never give up. Listen to your people and always care of them and their families. Most importantly, be genuine and sincere towards your Sailors and they will execute the mission for the team and have fun at the same time.
Your future goals? To be a chief recruiter. I'd like to finish my PhD in business administration/organizational leadership and serve as the National Chief Recruiter.
How has the Navy changed your life? I participated in the NJROTC program in my high school which set the foundation for my Navy career. I was the first to join the military in my family and it allowed me to set the right example for my family, resulting in my sister joining the Navy. The Navy made me a better man, husband, and father. It allowed me to provide a better life for my wife and my beautiful son who I miss dearly. The Navy has afforded me the opportunity to accomplish educational goals and set a positive example. The Navy has given me a greater appreciation for this country and the freedom we have.
Hobbies and interests: Fishing, time with family, sports, and giving back to the community. My interests include industrial and organizational psychology, organizational leadership, and team dynamics.

Diversity Enlisted Recruiter of the Year

ABF1(AW/SW) Carl Tramel

of Navy Recruiting District Michigan

Hometown: Detroit, Mich.

How long have you been in recruiting? Two years.

Previous commands and job titles: USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65), flight deck supervisor, ACU4; USS *George Washington* (CVN 73) flight deck/below deck operator.

How do feel about being chosen for this honor? I'm honored and humbled for being selected for this prestigious award. I'm truly blessed to have a great chain of command, NRD Michigan, and division (D-5) backing me and inspiring me to excel. They allowed me to flourish in my environment and have fun in the process. It all wouldn't be possible if not for the direct support of my LPO and shipmates at NRS Detroit.

What advice would you give to others in your position? Just to listen to your chain of command, LPOs, LCPOs and fellow recruiters for guidance. Be proactive and remain positive. It's very important to know your product, market and the needs of each and every potential applicant you come in contact with. Lastly, have fun recruiting and enjoy every moment as you experience the highs and lows of the game.

Your future goals? My long-term goals are making master chief and obtaining my bachelor's in science as I continue to enlist the most qualified men and women into the Navy.

How has the Navy changed your life? The Navy has had a profound impact on my life and my family's life. It has given me the opportunity to explore other countries and cultures and given me the tools to be a positive role model in my community of Detroit.

Hobbies and interests: Playing basketball, helping coach football at the greatest high school in Detroit "Dendy" and talking with youth in my community and, finally, spending time with my family.

Diversity Officer Recruiter of the Year

CWO3 Frank Dark

of Navy Recruiting District Atlanta

Hometown: Chattanooga, Tenn.

How long have you been in recruiting? 3 1/2 years.

Previous commands and job titles: NRD Atlanta, general officer recruiter; USS *Emory S. Land* (AS 39), ship's bosn; Naval Ordnance Test Unit, Cape Canaveral Fla.; Port Ops Departmental LCPO; USS *Bunker Hill* (CG 52), Operations Departmental LCPO; Afloat Training Group San Diego, surface deck instructor/evaluator.

How do you feel about being chosen for this honor? After being able to overcome difficult challenges and adversities such as being diagnosed and treated for cancer throughout this past year, being selected for this award is truly a blessing and an honor.

What advice would you give to others in your position? Remember to give it your very best effort and the rest will take care of itself. I was fortunate to receive such an award for doing what I absolutely love and believe in: My desire to assist others in their hopes of joining the Navy through officer programs or enlisted programs.

Your future goals? To continue assisting and empowering others to reach their goals and aspirations, as well as spending more quality time with family and friends. My greatest desire is make a positive difference in those whom I have the opportunity to interact with.

How has the Navy changed your life? I always knew I was going to join the Navy, especially after seeing the commercials on television (It's not just an job, it's an adventure). This is all I ever wanted to do – be a part of something big and I am a member of the world's greatest Navy. I honestly and truly believe that helps make my current job of recruiting that much easier. The Navy has helped me gain maturity and responsibility through a vast amount of experience and sacrifice, it has taught me the true meaning of "Honor, Courage, and Commitment."

Hobbies and interests: Spending time with my family, various sports, camping (ATVs and fishing), and modifying the appearance and performance of cars.

Medical Officer Recruiter of the Year

LT Renato DePaolis

of Navy Recruiting District New England

Hometown: North Attleboro, Mass.

How long have you been in recruiting? One year.

Previous commands and job titles: VT-21 NAS Kingsville, student pilot, strike pipeline; VT-9 NAS Meridian, student pilot, strike pipeline; VT-27 NAS Corpus Christi, student pilot, primary; NAS Pensacola, Naval Aviation Schools Command, student.

How do feel about being chosen for this honor? Honored and humbled. This award recognizes the exceptional efforts and ability of military members and civilians working together to attract the best physicians and medical professionals in the country to care for our Navy combat team.

What advice would you give to others in your position? Be open minded to learning about subjects and jobs that are outside of your comfort zone. A lack of experience in a particular subject area or job field will not preclude success. Instead, the combination of a can-do attitude and a willingness to learn will be a recipe for success in recruiting or any station in life.

Your future goals? Continue serving the Navy combat team on active duty in any capacity that will best utilize my skills and abilities.

How has the Navy changed your life? The Navy provided me an opportunity to fulfill my dream of serving our country and becoming a member of the greatest team in the world.

Hobbies and interests: Flying, skiing, hiking, and law school.

NUPOC Recruiter of the Year

ADC(AW/NAC) Dennis DeJong

of Navy Recruiting District Denver

Hometown: Springfield, S.D.

How long have you been in recruiting? Three years.

Previous commands and job titles: Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, air operations CPO; VRC-30, C-12 instructor; HM-15, aircrew/110 shop supervisor.

How do feel about being chosen for this honor? It is an incredible honor to be chosen from such a talented collection of national recruiters. I am blessed to work with an extremely exceptional team at NRD Denver. The Officer Production Team is truly the driving force behind this prestigious award. However, the support of my loving wife and family is the true backbone of why I am here today.

What advice would you give to others in your position? As a recruiter, it is your honesty, fairness, and integrity that will be tested. It is imperative to keep our honor, courage and commitment as our core values and to treat other as you would want to be treated and always tell the truth. Our prospects respect us and gain your trust if you are open and honest. We are not selling used cars or behave as quick salesman. We are professionals that promote Navy core values to future Sailors and their future way of life. Honesty is the key in sales and I believe that there are 10 positives for every one negative in our selected career fields.

Your future goals? I truly enjoy assisting people in achieving their future goals and leading teams to their targeted agenda. I think it would be exciting to start a new company and build a team to succeed and grow into something extraordinary.

How has the Navy changed your life? Joining the Navy and traveling the world is the second best decision I have ever made. It has helped shape and mold my life and gave me the opportunity to make the best decision of my life: asking my soul mate to marry me. Throughout my Navy career, I have been given the opportunity to work with many wonderful people and experience the camaraderie and diversity I would not have received anywhere else. I am proud to be a Sailor and proud to serve my country.

Hobbies and interests: Family skiing, boating, hunting, and vacation trips, to name just a few.

NSW/NSO Recruiter of the Year

AWO1(NAC/AW) Joshua Hammonds

of Navy Recruiting District Atlanta

Hometown: Atlanta, Ga.

How long have you been in recruiting? Two years.

Previous commands and job titles: VP-4, naval air crewman operator.

How do you feel about being chosen for this honor? I am so honored to have been selected. Recruiting is extremely difficult and challenging and even more so when recruiting to find men and women to fill the Navy's Warrior Challenge Programs. I set a personal goal of being the national NSW/NSO ROY and it shows that with hard work, dedication, and tremendous support, you can achieve great and amazing things. This award and recognition could not have been possible without the love and support from my beautiful wife and daughter, mother, and the continuous support from the best shipmates and fellow recruiters in NRD Atlanta.

What advice would you give to others in your position? Don't lose sight of Navy Core Values. Recruiters are the first thing people see when deciding on joining the world's finest Navy. Take care of your future Sailors and shipmates and set the tone for your future Sailor's career. Recruiting is what you make of it.

Your future goals? To continually grow as a Sailor, mentor, and a leader in today's Navy. My goal is to become a chief petty officer and beyond. I am working toward my bachelor's degree.

How has the Navy changed your life? Soon after the 9/11 attacks occurred, I knew that I wanted to serve my country in a time it needed me the most. Joining the Navy was one of the proudest days in my life, and I get to relive that moment in each and every future Sailor that I send to the fleet. The Navy has given me countless opportunities and challenges to become successful. The training that I have received will carry me through life. One of my prior commanding officers said, "The Navy takes good young men and makes them great Sailors!" God willing, at the end of my career, I can be a true testament of that very statement.

Hobbies and interests: I enjoy biking, swimming, and photography and spending time with my beautiful wife and daughter.

NSW/NSO/AIRR Coordinator of the Year

EODC(ESW/PJ) Shawn Forbes

of Navy Recruiting District Denver

Hometown: Seattle, Wash.

How long have you been in recruiting? Two years.

Previous commands and job titles: EODMU8, EODMU5.

How do feel about being chosen for this honor? I am humbly honored and it is a direct reflection on NRD Denver as a whole.

What advice would you give to others in your position? Be proactive and attack each day like you're in the crisis mode.

Your future goals? A naval commission.

How has the Navy changed your life? It has given me the opportunity to defend my country and provide for my family.

Hobbies and interests: Anything and everything with the family, skiing, and biking.

Support Person of the Year

LS1(EXW) Christopher Cataldo

of Navy Recruiting District New England

Hometown: Albany, N.Y.

How long have you been in recruiting? Three years.

Previous commands and job titles: NCWRON 21, supply leading petty officer; NCB ROMEO, Customs and Border Clearance Agent; NAS Keflavic, commercial inspection team supervisor; IBU 22, patrol boat engineer/supply leading petty officer.

How do feel about being chosen for this honor? Excited and appreciative. The caliber of people throughout NRC makes excelling a challenge. I am privileged to work with some of the most professional Sailors the Navy has in its ranks at a command that does everything possible to support its members. My success is a reflection of the work ethic and selfless dedication to mission accomplishment.

What advice would you give to others in your position? Don't compromise your integrity to be popular. Make your junior Sailors and their careers a priority as they will be your replacement someday. Take advantage of being home each night with your family, there is nothing in your career as important as they are. Take the collateral duties no one else wants and leave them in better shape than you found them. Learn from the civilians in your office – the knowledge they possess can save you time and effort trying to reinvent the wheel. Finish what you start and provide a product higher quality than expected.

Your future goals? Pursue a degree in emergency management to work in disaster recovery when I leave the Navy. Possibly apply for the LDO Program next year after reaching my next duty station and being selected for chief petty officer.

How has the Navy changed your life? The Navy has changed my life in many ways. I have visited places in the world that I couldn't find on a map. I experienced foreign cultures, made life-lasting memories, and met friends that have become closer than some families. Most of all, it's how I met my wife. I was returning home from a deployment to Iraq in 2007 – she was a flight attendant on the charter.

Hobbies and interests: Spending time with family and friends, exercising, and taking my dog for long runs through the woods.

Gold "R" Navy Recruiting District Denver

Navy Recruiting District Denver's territory covers 325,000 square miles and encompasses the entire states of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and portions of three other states to include southern Idaho, western Nebraska, and western Kansas. NRD Denver is not only a production powerhouse, but an NRD dedicated to producing the highest quality Sailors, recruits, and officers for the United States Navy.

Team Denver set out on a dedicated mission in FY11 to increase both quality and quantity by recruiting only the "best and the brightest" future Sailors and officers. In a year that was preceded by unprecedented and exceptional national performances in both enlisted and officer programs recruiting, NRD Denver's teamwork approach permeated in every recruiter, processor, civilian, contractor, and headquarters personnel. NRD Denver's enlisted and officer processes were proven as the model for Navy Recruiting Command during their near flawless August 2011 Command Inspection. Team Denver was able to attain herculean production achievements in FY11 while overcoming the challenges of the fit-not-fill recruiting environment, the NRC district realignment order, and unprecedented budget constraints while operating in one of NRC's largest and most geographically-challenging markets.

To amplify the significance of their production achievements, NRD Denver's Enlisted Programs team assessed or affiliated 1,064 future Sailors while maintaining a low in-month loss rate of 2.2% – the lowest in NRD Denver history. They finished with 93.5% on the NSW/NSO stacking report above the 92.3% national average. Their accomplishments in NROTC recruiting earned them a ranking of second in NRC. The Officer Programs team led the region in overall production for 11 months during FY11, finishing the year ranked first of 13. They exceeded goal in 11 of 17 mission areas and closed the overall Big Four, attaining 115% Reserve Medical, 105% Reserve General Officer, 107% Active General Officer, and 133% Active Medical.

NRD Denver led Region West and the rest of the NRDs in the nation in almost every measurable category, and ultimately produced the NRC national award winners for Division Leading Chief Petty Officer, NSW/NSO/AIRR Coordinator, Nuclear Propulsion Officer Recruiter, NRC Sailor of the Year, and the runner-up winner for Officer Recruiter and Medical Officer Recruiter of the Year. FY11 was a phenomenal year of success across all mission areas for every department for NRD Denver including their support departments. As a result, NRD Denver was awarded the Officer "O," Enlisted "E," NSW/NSO/AIRR "W," NROTC "C," Admin "A," LSO "S," Quality "Q," and Bronze "R," and Navy Recruiting Region West Silver "R," all of which led to their ultimate selection as Navy Recruiting Command Golden "R" National District of the Year award.

2011 Recruiters of the Year Tour Nation's Capital

Story by MC2(SCW) Michael B. Lavender, NRC Public Affairs
Photos by MC1(AW) Christopher D. Blachly, NRC Creative Division

MILLINGTON, Tenn. – NRC's 2011 Recruiters of the Year (ROY) were honored with a trip to Washington, D.C., Jan. 23–27 for an awards ceremony and festivities.

The 2011 ROY visited the Washington Monument during ROY Week: PS1(SW/AW) Terry Mullen, left front; LS1(EXW) Christopher Cataldo; LT Renato DePaolis; LTJG Adrian Harvill; CS1(SW/AW) Samuel Tran, left middle; AWO1(NAC/AW) Joshua Hammonds; LTJG Stephen Graff; ABF2(AW/SW) Carl Tramel; EM1 (SW/AW) John Geiger; NCC(SW) Julio Menendez, left back; EODC(ESC/PJ) Shawn Forbes; ADC(AW/NAC) Dennis DeJong; CWO3 Frank Dark; NC1 Brandon Whobrey; and MMC(SS) Ferlin Espinal.

"I've been to Washington, D.C., before but I've never been inside the White House or Pentagon," said NC1 Brandon Whobrey, Enlisted ROY– Reserve. "It was pretty neat to go there, especially since we're in the military. Our group got personal tours from personnel from the Navy Ceremonial Guard at the Pentagon and also got to meet a plethora of high-ranking military personnel including the Secretary of the Navy, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy and Chief of Navy Personnel."

The ROYs visited multiple historic landmarks including Capitol Hill, the Library of Congress and the Iwo Jima Memorial.

"It was a fantastic experience," said Whobrey. "We were definitely busy while we were there, but we got to do a lot of neat things. The magnitude of the award didn't hit home until we got out there, with people showing us their depth of appreciation for our work last year and all we accomplished. It was also a great experience meeting the other ROY winners. We bonded and got along very well despite never having met [before]. Our NRC staff was just all around fantastic and on point with the coordination of events. For me, the most memorable part of the entire week was the wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I found out just minutes before the ceremony that I was actually going to help place the wreath on the tomb. It was a very prestigious honor that not many people get to do in their lifetime."

A highlight of the week was the awards ceremony at the Navy Memorial where Chief of Naval Personnel, VADM Scott R. Van Buskirk, commended the ROY on a job well done.

"You are the best of the Navy's nearly 4,300 recruiters worldwide," said Van Buskirk. "The Navy has charged you with an incredible task – to keep our ships and submarines sailing, our aircraft flying, our expeditionary forces ready, our hospitals staffed – bringing in the right people, with the right skills, to meet our unrelenting global mission 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

Describing a recent graduation he witnessed at Recruit Training Command, Van Buskirk said, "It's clear that we're bringing the best and the brightest into our Navy – but that doesn't happen by accident. These Sailors, the Navy, starts with you. Recruiting is challenging work. Nationwide, the pool of applicants continues to shrink. Nearly two-thirds of the Navy's target market is ineligible for Navy service due to medical conditions, inability to meet academic standards, or legal and conduct issues.

"Right now, we're experiencing historically high retention as more and more talented Sailors want to stay Navy," explained Van Buskirk. "We're facing challenges in managing a force for the future, but now more than ever, it's critical to make sure the Sailors and officers that succeed us are highly qualified, technically proficient and physically fit. Your presence at our recruiting stations, at our nation's high schools, and at conferences and events sends this message: 'We are America's Navy – A Global Force for Good and we're still hiring!'

"This year, our total force mission is more than 45,000. This mission starts with you. Never doubt the work that you do, day in and day out. You have a direct impact on our Navy's readiness as a global force for good, and I am incredibly proud of all the work you have accomplished. Congratulations to each and every one of you!"

Top: MMC(SS) Ferlin Espinal, left, the 2011 Enlisted Recruiter of the Year-Active, and NC1 Brandon Whobrey, Enlisted Recruiter of the Year-Reserve, assist a member of the Honor Guard place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery at Arlington, Va., during ROY Week. Espinal is with NRD Los Angeles and Whobrey is with NRD Michigan.

Middle: MMC(SS) Ferlin Espinal, right, was appointed to chief in a ceremony conducted by ADM Mark Ferguson, Vice Chief of Naval Operations. On hand to congratulate her husband was August Espinal. He qualified for the promotion after obtaining Enlisted Recruiter of the Year-Active. A native of Long Island, N.Y., Espinal has been in recruiting for less than two years.

Bottom: The 2011 ROY and their guests made office calls with the Navy's top officials including the Chief of Navy Reserve, VADM Dirk J. Debbink, right, while on a tour of the Pentagon where they also enjoyed lunch. NRC's Force Master Chief Earl S. Gray, Jr., and Commander, NRC, RADM Earl L. Gay, fourth and fifth from right respectively, were also on hand.

NOFFS Kicked Off at NRD Miami

Story and photo by MCC(SW/AW) Gabe Puello, NRD Miami Public Affairs

MIAMI – RADM Earl L. Gray, commander, NRC, selected NRD Miami to kick off the Navy's fitness and nutrition program which delivers revolutionary change and fitness support for recruiters nationwide.

Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling System (NOFFS) deploys a new performance-based methodology to keep Sailors ashore and afloat in peak physical condition while reducing the risk of sports injuries which have plagued Sailors in the past and addresses the importance of proper nutrition.

NOFFS is based on world-class sports science training philosophy developed by Athletes Performance Institute that has worked extremely close with Naval Special Warfare Operators, U.S. Army Special Forces and professional athletes.

NRC partnered with Commander Navy Installations Command (CNIC) and MWR to bring the NOFFS "train the trainer" course to 19 of 26 NRDs that are not geographically located near MWR facilities where NOFFS is routinely taught by fitness professionals. The remaining five NRDs will receive their training at MWR locations near them.

Recruiter MM2 Jeffrey Collado, left, receives instruction from Brian Hannah, Navy MWR fitness specialist at NAS Pensacola, on how to properly perform the squat with mini-band that assists proper squat alignment, as described in series guides of the NOFFS. NOFFS deploys a highly researched, performance-based methodology to keep Sailors ashore and afloat in peak physical condition while reducing the risk of sports injuries which have plagued Sailors in the past. NOFFS also addresses the importance of proper nutrition.

"NOFFS is designed to improve operational performance, decrease the incidence and severity of musculoskeletal injuries while providing foundational nutritional guidance for Sailors. Resiliency, durability and increased readiness for Navy Recruiting personnel are the primary goals of implementing and training recruiters on the NOFFS," said retired SOCM(SEAL) Victor LiCause, NRC Physical Fitness Program manager .

To emphasize the important of NOFFS to NRC, Gay, NRC Force Master Chief Earl S. Gray, Jr., and the NRC National Chief Recruiter Jimmie Holt were present to communicate their guidance, intent and approval of the NOFFS training and NRC's ongoing partnership with CNIC and MWR.

"NOFFS is going to help recruiters make better choices in how we exercise and eat, which will lead to improved health, well-being and mission readiness. It is designed for Sailors to help us in our day-to-day tasks at home and in the fleet. That's going to help us and the Navy in the long run," said Gay.

When asked if NRC has any immediate plans to introduce NOFFS as the physical training platform for future Sailors, Gay said, "NOFFS is designed for us as [NRC] Sailors. Once it's rolled out to our entire recruiter force

and we are comfortable with the system, we will consider whether it's an appropriate means of exercise for future Sailors in our pipeline," said Gay.

A team of Navy fitness specialists consisting of LiCause, Nicole Gilchrest and Brian Hannah, MWR, NAS Pensacola, travelled to NRD Miami and trained 22 personnel including the command fitness leader and assistant command fitness leaders. Training consisted of two days of classroom and practical exercises, techniques and procedures that will standardize their Navy physical training and optimize operational performance command-wide. Additionally the NOFFS fueling guide was introduced and students learned more about eating for fuel, not about dieting and calorie restriction.

"The fuel that is introduced to the body really does make a difference in physical and mental performance. This is really a complete departure from the days of doing a little stretch followed by sit-ups and push-ups and then heading out for a mile-and-a half run. This system directly relates to what we actually do as Sailors in our jobs," said FCC Kurt Morgan, command fitness leader, NRD Miami.

The work Sailors perform, their actions and movements on ships, submarines and installations guided the direction and development of NOFFS. Input from hundreds of Sailors as to their real-world job requirements – in the daily grind of lifting, pushing, pulling and carrying or in their office environment in static positions – went into NOFFS development.

"Extensive groundwork centered on focus groups and the feedback of 750 Sailors resulted in a physical training system that eliminates the guesswork while providing a progressive and safe fitness and nutrition program. The result is a total body, conditioning and fueling system highly relevant to Sailors in any environment," said LiCause. "Sailors now have everything they will need at their fingertips to gain and sustain a high level of physical performance at home or at sea."

NOFFS card sets come in four series: Submarine, surface ship, large deck and group training. Designed specifically for real-world space and equipment limitations, these four categories provide Sailors three different levels of exercises that are based on current fitness and capability. The four series of workout routines include more than 90 exercises that directly translate into operational performance benefits for Sailors including "Pillar Preparation" and "Movement Preparation" (dynamic warm-ups), multi-directional movement training, muscular strength/endurance training, cardio-respiratory training, recovery training and nutritional fueling strategies.

NOFFS was further refined and developed through close relationships and involvement from key Navy organizations including Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, Naval Supply Systems Command, Naval Safety Center and OPNAV 135 Physical Readiness Division.

Specific NOFFS information can be accessed at http://www.navyfitness.org/fitness/noffs/. All workout series cards and video demonstrations for all 90 exercises and nutrition guide can be pulled from this resource. iPod and iPad users can also download the NOFFS "app" from this resource.

NRD Philadelphia

100 Centurion Award

CDR Thomas Gelker, left, NRD Philadelphia commanding officer, presents MM1 Jaewlaye Sherman with the Centurion Award. This award is given to recruiters who achieve 100 net new contracts during their current recruiting tour, covering three or less consecutive years of recruiting. (Photo by MC2 Randall Damm, NRD Philadelphia Public Affairs)

New Navy Psychiatrist Readies for Fifth Deployment

Story and photo by Gary Kunich, Milwaukee VA Medical Center Public Affairs

MILWAUKEE – Dr. Mike McBride went from a successful practice helping children and teens with psychiatric issues to running mental health triage for plane loads of injured soldiers from Iraq – many with missing limbs and traumatic wounds that ran deeper than flesh. And in the process, already in his late 40s, he found a passion and calling he never knew was possible.

McBride, a Milwaukee Veterans Affairs (VA) psychiatrist, spent eight years in the Army and four deployments helping soldiers with the mental wounds of war. It was tough work. He thought he had enough. Then he had second thoughts.

So on Dec. 30 he signed up to do it again – this time as a Navy officer. His commissioning ceremony at the Milwaukee VA also came with a promotion to commander.

Now he hopes he'll soon get his fifth crack at another deployment, this time working with Marines in Afghanistan. In the meantime, he'll continue doing his job at the Milwaukee VA, a position he's held since 2007.

Dr. Michael McBride, a psychiatrist at the Milwaukee VA since 2007, makes his Navy commission official by signing the paperwork. McBride previously served in the Army Reserves for eight years and chalked up four deployments, two of them to Iraq. Now he's looking forward to another. The NRD Chicago Officer Recruiter LTJG Chad Sobotka observes the process.

His work in and for the military is something he never thought about having. A case of mumps, a year before the vaccine, left him hearing-impaired.

His father was drafted and served as a Navy doctor during the Vietnam War but, "I never thought the military would take me at all," McBride said. "It wasn't until 9/11 that I thought about it and one of my partners (in my medical practice) told me it was a different world, things had changed and the Army wanted doctors."

McBride was 40-years-old and part of a mental health practice at Aurora when he joined the Army Reserves as a captain in 2003.

"I thought they'd use me for backfill while the active-duty doctors went overseas. But Iraq started saber-rattling in March 2003, the war started in April, and by summer I was at Landstuhl [Medical Center] in Germany."

By the time Iraq fell in the fall of 2003 and roadside bombs became prevalent, scores of wounded were evacuated every day to Germany.

"My commander wanted me to see every blast-injured soldier who came through," he said. "It was like a scene from 'MASH.' We were getting 30 to 60 new wounded each day. I was working my shift, talking to soldiers who were dealing with amputations they had just that day."

McBride was soon back home and resumed his practice but the four-month tour left an indelible mark. "There was a certain amount of readjustment," he said, "and you come home thinking about the people still serving over there."

In 2005, he knew it was only a matter of time before he'd be deployed back to Germany for another four months. "My partners did a good job managing the work and my families I had been treating the first time, but it was more difficult the second time around, and I knew I was doing a disservice to those families if I was going to be gone for a long period."

Just as his number was about to come up for a third deployment in 2007, he got a call from Dr. Rich Gibson at the Milwaukee VA. Gibson knew about McBride's deployments and wanted to hear his ideas about treating young veterans who were starting to come to the VA in droves. By the end of the meeting, Gibson offered him a job.

"It just made a lot of sense," McBride said. "They knew I was in the reserves, they knew I could deploy and that was just part of it. We have people who work here every day who deploy and then come back. It's part of our mission." McBride next did a deployment to Camp Liberty in Iraq beginning in December 2007. "I never thought this would happen when I joined," he said. "Even in a camp, it was dangerous. Doctors were dying from mortar attacks. The rockets come in whether you're in a convoy or in a camp. There's really no break from that."

With no replacement in site, he spent nine months in country as the officer in charge of the 785th Combat Stress Support.

He found himself not only helping soldiers with battle wounds, but others dealing with divorce and other stresses of long-term deployments. As he walked into the chow hall one day and saw the diversity of soldiers, all from different backgrounds, it was a bit of an epiphany. "This was America," he said.

The thought makes McBride stop and start to choke up. "You're going to make me emotional," he said while his voice cracked. "This is what it meant to be an American. To go overseas and give up all your comforts, yet everybody is working together for a greater purpose. I never understood that before the military."

McBride said he started to see more and more of the side effects of the prolonged war when he went back to Iraq in January 2010.

"That was the hardest [deployment]," he said. "The soldiers were worn out from fighting two wars. Medical support was reduced, but we still had the same number of combat troops to treat but we were understaffed. Rockets could come in at anytime, anywhere. Nobody felt safe."

Finally, it felt like enough. Soon after returning home, the Army asked if he wanted to sign on for a few more years. He said, "No, thanks."

But those years spent treating the battle-wounded and weary helped make him just as successful back at the VA where he interacts daily with hundreds of military troops who fought the same war.

Many of them posted on Facebook after his Navy ceremony and said he has made a difference. "Great man and healer," one person wrote. "The only psychiatrist I know who has been over there and gets it. Thanks for giving back to your fellow warriors and continuing to serve. I salute you, Doc." McBride modestly waves off the compliments.

"I think it helps that I was over there, but I'm not the best psychiatrist here. My experience compliments our team, but our entire mental health team is a strong group of dedicated, devoted and very professional people who truly do care."

McBride's office is decorated with the souvenirs of war – photos from past deployments and mementos of his time in Iraq and Germany. For many who come to him for healing, it provides an opening and lets them know he understands. He said it's those he treats who convinced him there was still work to do. "Many of these people would do anything to continue serving, to go back over there, but they can't because of their injuries. It's the whole idea of sacrifice. And I thought this is my shame. I'm sitting here. I can go back over and they can't."

McBride made his latest commissioning ceremony a family and military affair. He took the oath while his father held one side of an American flag, and his father-in-law, Carl John, also a military veteran, held the other side. The flag was a gift to McBride from his battle buddies in Iraq. And lest anyone think he wanted the ceremony to be all about him, McBride took a detour from his planned remarks and made a point to individually recognize everyone in the room, by name, who served in the military, and asked them to say when they served.

"I had a whole other speech prepared, but when we talk about the war and the sacrifices people make, it is the veterans who truly understand that, and that's the point I wanted to make."

He doesn't know when he'll pack his bags and go again, but he already told the brass he is ready and willing to go. And so he'll do what he's done before, just in another uniform. After all, there's more work to be done.

Psychiatrist is Last Navy Reserve Officer Commissioned in 2011

Story and photo by Jim Lumsden, NRD Chicago Public Affairs

CHICAGO – Dr. Michael McBride of Milwaukee's Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center became the U.S. Navy Reserve's last newly-commissioned officer of 2011 as he took the oath of office from VADM Dirk Debbink, chief of Navy Reserve, in a brief ceremony on Dec. 30 at the medical center's Matousek Auditorium.

McBride, a doctor of psychiatric medicine, works with Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom veterans, as well as active-duty troops at the hospital.

A veteran of 2008 service in Iraq with the U.S. Army Reserve 785th Combat Stress Control Company, McBride was commissioned as a commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve Medical Corps.

Dr. Michael McBride, left, a psychiatrist at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center, addresses an audience of more than 100 people at his commissioning ceremony. He related some of his Army experiences and told why he wanted to join the Navy Reserve. VADM Dirk Debbink, chief of Navy Reserve, travelled to Milwaukee to give him the commissioning oath on Dec. 30.

It can take a long time to complete the process of commissioning a medical officer, but it also can be well worth the effort – for the Navy, for the new officer and for the recruiter.

"We began this process in May and it took until the end of the year to complete the process," said NRD Chicago Officer Recruiter LTJG Chad Sobotka, "but I'll be darned if I was to let this top-quality physician go to the Army Reserve."

A veteran of four U.S. Army deployments, including the tours in Iraq, McBride had approached both the Army Reserve and the Navy Reserve regarding re-enlistment. Sobotka's mission was to keep this extraordinary psychiatrist focused on the Navy as the best way to satisfy his personal and professional goals.

"I knew that he had a penchant for serving again, but in a way that would allow him to bring his finely-honed expertise in dealing with battlefield mental trauma directly to those who need it most. He dealt with both Army soldiers and also Marines in his earlier deployments so he knew that Navy medical could get him there every bit as well as Army. I needed to make sure he recognized how eager Navy was to have his expertise," Sobotka said.

What became even more important was the efficient processing of paperwork through all of the channels. Sobotka handled the routine elements as a matter of course, but as an advanced medical officer, McBride was eligible for a high-level rank, and that required approval of higher authority.

"I had done it before, so I knew what was required and the proper channels," Sobotka recalls. In this case, it required approval of the Secretary of the Navy's office. "We got that sign-off on Tuesday and held the commissioning ceremony on Friday," Sobotka added.

So what can a recruiter do to maintain interest during the waiting time? "I relied on similar experiences that we could share," Sobotka said. "In this case it was sharing our passion for military service and our sincere appreciation of our vets. The fact that we grew up in neighboring communities was another plus."

Los Angeles-based Recruiters Go Wireless

Story and photo by MCC(AW/SW) Anthony Briggs, Jr., NRD Los Angeles Public Affairs

LOS ANGELES – NRD Los Angeles completed the initial roll out of the Mobile Recruiting Initiative (MRI) for its stateside stations Dec. 19.

The MRI consists of a common access card (CAC)-enabled laptop with Wi-Fi, a portable scanner and a compact printer.

The new system replaces the NMCI-based laptops, which forced recruiters to link to the Internet and their email through NMCI-enabled lines, keeping them tethered to their desks for connectivity.

With more than 160 recruiters assigned, the district's System Administration (SYSAD) Department was very busy with the roll out and pleased with the results.

NRD Los Angeles' SYSAD Department Head Nicole Thompson, left, assists GM1(SW) Virginia Houseal in logging onto her laptop computer during the initial roll-out of NRC's MRI, a new system that allows recruiters to process applicant documents utilizing a Wi-Fi connection and secured cloud-based servers.

"The transition was smooth," said SYSAD Department Head Nicole Thompson. "We put the system through its paces, worked through any potential issues our recruiters may face and came up with solutions to those problems. The initial log-on process for each unit took about two hours, but after that initial log-on at the district they [the recruiters] can work anywhere."

Before MRI, recruiters would typically meet a prospective applicant to discuss Navy opportunities only to set up multiple appointments to gather and process the paperwork necessary to go to a Military Entrance Processing Station. Now, a recruiter can meet at an applicant's home to scan birth certificates and diplomas, and print the forms needed to join the Navy.

"The MRI process streamlines the entire recruiting process," said Foothill Division Leading Chief Petty Officer NCC Josh Tripp. "Recruiters have all the tools for processing right there, eliminating the need for multiple visits to the applicant's home or the recruiting station for processing. This is a time saver for our applicants. Now, the recruiters have more time to develop relationships and raise awareness in the areas they work in."

The new system utilizes cloud-based computing on secured servers, which eliminates personally-identifiable information being stored on the laptop. The CAC reader on the laptops, along with the industry-standard encryption protocols, allows the recruiters to work remotely, knowing their information is secure.

"The move to MRI-based processing constitutes a paradigm shift for Navy recruiting," said ET2 James Bame, SYSAD technician, "We've embraced the change and we're moving forward, smartly. When we say 'The Navy's Hiring' we really are – wherever, whenever."

NRD PHILADELPHIA VOLUNTEERS AT OPERATION GRATITUDE

SENDING CARE PACKAGES TO U.S. MILITARY

Story and photo by MC2 Randall Damm, NRD Philadelphia Public Affairs

PHILADELPHIA – NRD Philadelphia recently partnered with other organizations in support of Operation Gratitude by collecting items to send to deployed troops.

Operation Gratitude is a non-profit organization that seeks to lift troops' morale by sending care packages to individual military members serving overseas.

Since its inception in 2003, Operation Gratitude volunteers have shipped more than 750,000 packages to American military. Care packages contain food, toiletries, entertainment items, and personal letters of appreciation, all wrapped with good wishes of love and support.

"I enjoy giving back, and it was important to me to support Operation Gratitude Day. Participating in an event like this makes me proud to be a Sailor," said YN1 Loleta Bowden.

Eleven NRD Philadelphia military personnel volunteered for Operation Gratitude and staffed donation drop-off points throughout the city of Philadelphia.

Volunteers also collected and consolidated an estimated four large pallets of popular care package items, and shipped them to the Operation Gratitude headquarters in Encino, Calif., for distribution.

NRD Philadelphia's CS1 KerryAnn Dawkins, left, from NRS Germantown and ND1 Aaron Cominio, SPECWAR/SPECOPS coordinator, along with volunteers from Holy Family College staffed one of several donation drop-off points in the city of Philadelphia during Operation Gratitude Day. The non-profit Operation Gratitude organization sends thousands of care packages annually to deployed troops.

Navy Warrior Returns Home after IA in Kuwait

Story by MC1(SW/AW) Robert Keilman, NRD New Orleans Public Affairs
Photo by NCC Tony Botello

NEW ORLEANS – When civilians think of the Navy, they think of Sailors aboard warships on the sea, in submarines below the sea, or flying in aircraft above the sea, protecting the world's oceans and the United States' national security. However, for more than a decade, thousands of Sailors have also been serving on individual augmentee (IA) assignments on the ground, providing operational support in various locations around the world.

One of these Sailors is YNC Gregory Howell, NRD New Orleans chief administrator who recently returned from a nine-month IA deployment to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

"Going on an IA deployment is a good experience because you get to work and interact with other services," said Howell. "We were also able to make process improvements [with administrative functions] which really made a difference."

Howell was assigned as the leading chief petty officer at Naval Forces Central Command Headquarters, Forward Kuwait, located on Camp Arifjan. He was responsible for overseeing the administrative activities of 12 administrative controls (ADCONs), consisting of 400 Sailors, located at various units throughout Kuwait and Qatar. This included providing administrative support to Army and Air Force commanders who had questions about Navy personnel procedures, such as performance evaluations, and providing support to subordinate ADCONs located throughout the camp.

Howell was also involved in overseeing customer-service operations during the camp's Warrior Transition Program (WTP) that Sailors go through prior to a new duty assignment in Kuwait or when returning to the United States. Specifically, Howell oversaw the administrative functions of the WTP when Sailors were going home.

"We conducted weekly surveys and after-action reports on the Warrior Transition Program. There were anywhere from 80-200 people going through Warrior Transition every week. And according to the surveys and reports, we always maintained a standard and received frequent, positive comments about how impressed our service members were with the amount of our customer service they received and how it helped them make a smooth transition to the United States," said Howell.

YNC Gregory Howell sits in back of a Mine Resistant, Ambush Protected vehicle while on a nine-month IA deployment to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Howell is currently chief administrator at NRD New Orleans.

Additionally, Howell served as the education services officer (ESO) and coordinated the ordering and administration of Navy advancement exams.

"Our ADCON units had their own ESO, but some of them [had] never served in that position before so I gave them training on how to conduct the necessary administrative tasks prior to ordering promotion exams….. I also served as a proctor [of] the exams and taught all our ADCON units the procedures for the administration and proctoring of exams," explained Howell.

In his free time, Howell worked on his physical fitness. His immediate goal was to lose weight. "When I got to Kuwait my weight was 182 pounds and I needed to be at 165 pounds. After about 2 1/2 months, I weighed 165 pounds. After I left Kuwait, I weighed 152 pounds, and I [had] lost two inches off my waistline," said Howell.

He was able to accomplish this goal by adhering to a strict diet, eating lots of fresh fruit, and implementing a nightly workout routine, about 45 minutes of cardio and 30-45 minutes of free-weight training.

Howell and his fellow service members worked together to boost morale during their stay at Camp Arifjan. They managed the command's auxiliary resale outlet by selling command emblematics (t-shirts and coins) to raise money.

"The garden outside of our tent had a wood deck with some fake plants around it, along with a couple of tables, and wireless Internet hotspot – all from six months worth of t-shirt sales. It was something small but it improved morale because it took an effort on everybody's part to sell the t-shirts. We were also able to raise enough money to transfer funds over to our MWR for the purchasing of each staff member's Internet card, which was about $35 a month – something that you had to buy in order to have Internet in your tent," said Howell.

Reflecting back on his experience, Howell explains that he is proud of his IA deployment and would do it again if called upon. "Going on an IA is an opportunity to make a change in whatever the situation is there. Instead of simply arriving and going with the flow of things, you have the opportunity to voice your input, improve productivity, and really make a difference," said Howell.

"We had so many diverse personnel, pretty much pulled from every command at every corner of the United States, and no matter who we were or where we were from we were able to come together and work as a team," said Howell. "Most people are only there on a six-month, nine-month, or 12-month assignment so there is a constant turnover of people. When I got there, 80 percent of the command had already transferred out, and when I left, there was no change in operation. It was amazing to see how much we could maintain our workflow, and at the same time keep our spirits high."

NRD San Francisco hosted an event at their headquarters in observance of American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month. The Smokey Bay Band drummed and sang as Anacita Hernandez from Native Boogie and Beats performed a Native American healing dance. (Photo by MC1 Grant Probst, NRD San Francisco Public Affairs)

NRD OHIO MASTER CHIEFS LEAD FROM THE FRONT

Story and photos by MC1(SW/AW) Keith Bryska, NRD Ohio Public Affairs

COLUMBUS, Ohio – A typical Navy command consists of one senior enlisted Sailor, normally a command master chief (CMC) guiding junior Sailors and acting as the liaison to the commanding officer. At NRD Ohio, that job is spearheaded by two master chiefs: CMDCM Aaron Shipley and Chief Recruiter (CR) NCCM Clemente James.

Both of them have always showed unity at NRD Ohio whether on the road talking to young Sailors and their families or during the quarterly road show to show thanks to their Sailors. It goes a long way to help keep a command's structure strong, and they both maintain an open-door policy for any Sailor to come in and talk to them.

"There is not a more important relationship than that of the two master chiefs. Be it a ship, squadron or NRD, if the two master chiefs do not get along, the mess is forced to chose sides which trickles down to divisions within the command. It is unacceptable and irresponsible leadership on both the CR and CMDCM if they do not get along and the command knows it," said Shipley. "In the end it is the CMDCM's issue if the relationship is adversely affecting the command but both should be mature enough to realize their relationship is not about them. It's about doing what's best for the entire command."

NRD Ohio CMC Aaron Shipley, left, talks to NC1 Brett Yahn during his check-out process.

NRD Ohio Chief Recruiter NCCM Clemente James, left, goes over recruiting procedures with ET1 Nathan Nalley during a site visit to Frankfort, Ky.

James also feels it is important to show junior Sailors about cooperation and leading from the front. "It is so important for the CR and CMC to have a great working relationship. Everything that goes on at the command no matter if its production related or Sailor related the CR and CMC know about. One should not know more than the other. This way the commanding officer has two sounding boards to turn to. Everything that happens no matter what, we come together and talk about it. Once we come up with a solution, we then go together as one voice and present it to the XO and Skipper. This is very important because if the CR and CMC are not on the same page it could ruin a command. If that happens then our Sailors suffer in the long run. It is our ultimate responsibility as master chiefs to take care of the Sailors and Skipper, bottom line."

"The fact of the matter is, for this command to be successful our command leadership team [CO, XO, CMC, and CR] must be effective. The ONLY way that can happen is if we're working together and mutually supportive of each other," said CDR Michael Hudson, NRD Ohio commanding officer. "As CO, I am very fortunate in that our two master chiefs clearly understand that and have taken their professional relationship to a significantly higher level than you'll find in most places elsewhere. "

Shipley believes strongly that the most important part of leadership is being able to listen to his

Sailors. "My number one leadership tool as a command master chief is listening. I can talk all I want but if I'm not doing more listening than talking I have no idea what to talk about. It is the wise leader who listens twice as much as they speak. Getting out and talking to Sailors and family members allow me to see and hear firsthand their concerns and then act accordingly. It also provides our Sailors with the knowledge that we do care about their issues and want to hear about them."

On his fourth CMDCM tour but serving at a recruiting command for the first time, Shipley has learned that there are more than just the immediate Sailors in his command, but the countless future Sailors and their families to help also. Shipley says having a senior recruiter that has dedicated so many years to helping recruiters and future Sailors out has been helpful to him.

James has always enjoyed being a recruiter and learned a long time ago about its importance. "I take being the chief recruiter seriously. I feel it is important to not only focus on production but to be focused on the overall well-being of each and every Sailor in the command."

James stresses the importance of the two being able to effectively communicate to assist Sailors.

"It is important to be able to get the information out to our Sailors in a timely and correct manner so that they will always know what's going on in the command," said James. "Communication is the key in any organization if you want your people to be happy and successful."

Hudson agrees. "Each of them knows that they have a unique role to play, based on their position and experience, and they are very good at what they do. However, they also truly believe that without a unified approach, not only will they lose the ability to capitalize on and leverage each other's strengths, but so will our Sailors. They 'get it' – and that makes life better for all of us!"

Phoenix Sailors Help Feed Hungry

Story and photo by MC1 Adrian Melendez, NRD Phoenix Public Affairs

PHOENIX – Sailors from NRD Phoenix Division 6 and Leads Department spent Dec. 15th giving back to their local community at the St. Mary's Food Bank.

The 25 volunteers spent the morning working alongside volunteers from other local organizations packing food into boxes for needy families around the Phoenix area.

"We've [Division 6] been really active in our community," said STG1 Chad Gepfrey, Division 6's community service organizer. "Not only do we volunteer here at St. Mary's Food Bank, but we've helped collect clothing to donate to St. Vincent de Paul and have also been part of Habitat for Humanity."

NCC Jerrime Gardner, Division 6 leading chief petty officer, echoed how important it is for everyone to give back to their community all year. "This is America's Navy and we are taking care of where we live. I'm a blessed person and it feels amazing to be able to give back to those in need."

After all their hard work was done, the Sailors had helped pack 661 boxes onto 14 pallets that would go out to feed 21,735.

"We gave back a little blood and sweat to the community today," said Gardner. "This is one thing we could do to help out our community."

Gardner also stressed how important it is for Sailors to get out into their local communities and be involved. "It's one of the most important things the Navy can do," he said. "It's not just about us being out to sea protecting the waterways, it's also about us being part of our community. This is one way for us to take ownership and show that we are part of the community."

Approximately 25 Sailors from NRD Phoenix Division 6 and Leads Department volunteered their time at St. Mary's Food Bank in Phoenix on Dec. 15. They worked alongside other local volunteers to pack 661 boxes with food, the equivalent of 21,735 meals, for local families in need.

Nothing Cold about FCPOA Volunteer Project in Freezer

Story and photo by MC1 Michael Tackitt, NRD Dallas Public Affairs

NC1 Dwain Peters and other members of NRD Dallas' FCPOA work with freshly packed boxes of frozen food during a community service project at the North Texas Food Bank.

DALLAS – For most people, the holidays bring thoughts of family gathered around a turkey with all the trimmings. For thousands of North Texans, the season fails to dull the sting of hunger that plagues them and their families all year long.

The NRD Dallas First Class Petty Officers Association (FCPOA) spent a dreary December morning in an even colder freezer, helping the North Texas Food Bank's (NTFB's) Dan Norton Campus sort out frozen meats and other food products for distribution to thousands of deserving families in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area.

About 20 volunteers from the FCPOA, as well as one NRD Dallas civilian support staff, spent four hours working in a large, walk-in freezer, approximately the size of a small warehouse. They moved nine pallets of more than 8,100 pounds of food, which was then loaded into 270 boxes. In total, the FCPOA sorted out enough frozen food to make 6,750 meals.

The project was the association's first community outreach undertaking since recently deciding to have one on a quarterly basis. However, the FCPOA may make this particular event a staple for them.

"I think it would be a good idea for the FCPOA to do this annually. I actually think it would be a good idea for the CPO mess and the FCPOA to do this as a joint effort as part of the CPO 365," said PS1 Erica M. Blackwell, president of the FCPOA. "Doing this kind of work puts life into perspective and it can also help the recruiters relate to the situations that their applicants or future Sailor are dealing with."

According to the NTFB, the rate of childhood hunger in Texas has increased more than two percent since last year's report, meaning 163,525 more kids are going without sufficient food.

These estimates are expected to rise over the coming years as the full impact of the economic downturn is taken into account. Hunger in North Texas is not only affecting young people. According to Feeding America's Hunger Study from last year, the number of NTFB's elderly clients has grown four percent since 2008 to 13 percent.

NTFB also states that a total of 40 percent of its clients have to choose between buying food and paying for medicine or medical care, a rate that is 10 percent higher than the national average.

NTFB also claims that the number of people its food pantries serve each month would fill Cowboys Stadium 2 1/2 times beyond its capacity.

While the first class petty officers only worked from 8:45 that morning until 12:30 p.m., they were pleased that they were able to help out so much in a short amount of time. They didn't even mind having to work almost four hours inside a giant-size freezer.

"Once we got over the initial shock of working in the freezer, it wasn't that bad," Blackwell said. "They provided us with parkas and gloves so that helped out as well."

NRS Lakewood Holds Grand Opening

Story and photo by MCC(SW/AW) Anthony Briggs, Jr., NRD Los Angeles Public Affairs

LAKEWOOD, Calif. – NRD Los Angeles (LA) celebrated the grand opening of its new Lakewood recruiting station with a ribbon cutting ceremony Nov. 18.

Recruiters, future Sailors and staff members were on hand as the new Lakewood Joint Military Recruiting Station officially opened for business.

This station houses Navy, Air Force, Army and Marine Corps recruiters in one central location, making it easier for perspective applicants to visit each service to learn about opportunities to serve in the military.

BM1(SW) Meafu Nuusila sings the national anthem as local officials watch during the NRS Lakewood grand opening ceremony. The station is one of four at the Lakewood Joint Military Recruiting Station, allowing perspective candidates one-stop access to each of the service branches.

NRS Downey's Leading Petty Officer (LPO), BM1 Meafu Nuusila, began the ceremony with an a capella rendition of the national anthem, followed by speeches from military and civilian dignitaries.

"The city of Lakewood was started by veterans returning from the war, and it's fitting that [we] celebrate this grand opening a week after Veterans Day," said Lakewood Vice Mayor Diane DuBois.

The Woodruff Avenue site was selected because of its central location which has helped increase walk-in traffic over the previous address.

"The difference has been night and day," said NC1 Jennifer Williams, NRS Lakewood's LPO. "This is a great location. Being here will make reaching out to the community much easier."

"This is a great day for the Navy and the city of Lakewood," said NRD LA's Commanding Officer, CDR Michelle D. Carter. "We're happy to be a part of this community, and we want everyone to know that we're open for business and the Navy is hiring."

Prior to the ribbon cutting, an oath of enlistment ceremony for the area's future service members was administered by Air Force Lt. Col. Angernette Coy-Coates, commander, 368th Recruiting Squadron, in Encino, Calif.

Closing out the day's festivities, a representative from each service participated in a cake-cutting ceremony, followed by tours of recruiting offices for future service members, their families and guests.

NRD Los Angeles Boosts Youth Robotics Teams

Story by MCC(AW/SW) Anthony Briggs, Jr., NRD Los Angeles Public Affairs
Photo by LCDR Anthony Q. Tran, NPC Diversity Directorate

LOS ANGELES – Sailors from NRD Los Angeles were recently on hand for the Los Angeles Regional Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) Invention Challenge.

The competition highlighted the area's best and brightest high school robotics teams.

Each year, NASA's JPL develops a unique challenge which allows students the opportunity to apply their math and science skills to meet the stated challenge. This year's competition focused on building a device that would kick a football over a two-meter barrier into a trash can five meters away. Each team was given one minute to kick three footballs. Teams were awarded points based on how close their attempt landed near the trash can, with the maximum points awarded for each ball that landed in the can.

SH2 Perry Valencia, left, and GM1 Virginia Houseal of NRD Los Angeles' Metro Division pose with students participating in the JPL Invention Challenge. The students produced a machine capable of kicking a football over a two-meter barrier into a trash can five meters away.

LCDR Anthony Q. Tran with Navy Personnel Command Diversity Directorate stated this is one of the many outreach opportunities to highlight the Navy's ongoing initiatives to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to inspire the next generation of leaders.

"The robotics program here at Manual Arts High has been a perennial top performer in the area," said Tran. "The kids here are applying the problem-solving skills they are learning in the classroom here as they look at their unit's performance and make adjustments to improve their project."

Manual Arts High is one of several schools and local organizations NRD Los Angeles has partnered with to promote STEM.

Tran said STEM awareness is a top priority of the Navy. "The Navy is a highly technical environment and we, as the rest of the country, will need tomorrow's leaders proficient in STEM-related fields. By highlighting STEM here and throughout the recruiting district, we believe we are helping to create a 'home-grown' talent pool to lead our country in the future."

John Santos, who leads the Manual Arts Imaging, Science and Technology Academy, believes the Navy's involvement is beneficial to his team.

"This is the seventh year that the Navy has participated in the JPL Invention Challenge at Manual Arts High School," said Santos. "This continued support provides the added synergies for young people in the inner-city schools to see what is possible if they excel in their STEM-related studies. For many students attending this event, it is the first time they will ever meet an engineer or see how and what engineers do. With the support of the Navy, students can see what careers await them if they continue their education."

NRD Miami Recruiters Mentor Girl Scouts

Story and photo by MCC Gabe Puello, NRD Miami Public Affairs

MIAMI – NRD Miami Sailors served as role models and mentors during the South Florida Girl Scouts two-day, overnight encampment at Camp Mahatchee.

EN1(SW/AW) Mariska Rey and HT2(SW/AW) Shanette Southerland answered questions from the Girl Scouts about careers for women in America's Navy as well as teaching military drill and uniform inspection procedures while helping them earn merit badges.

"Teaching the girls about what opportunities are out there for them in America's Navy was not something I expected to do at this Girl Scout encampment, but these were not ordinary girls. They were motivated, independent and already used to the outdoors, so they flooded me with questions about the fleet and life on board ships. It was a lot of fun telling them [that] girls actually load bombs onto airplane wings," said Rey.

NRD Miami Recruiters HT2(SW/AW) Shanette Southerland, left center, and EN1(SW/AW) Mariska Rey assisted South Florida Girls Scouts make holiday cards for military serving overseas during a two-day, overnight encampment at Camp Mahatchee.

The South Florida Girl Scouts of America invited female members of the military and the local high school Army Junior Recruit Officer Training Corps (AJROTC) members to assist them in the proper way to honor the U.S. flag, conduct a color guard, properly fold the flag, how to stand in formations and perform movement drills. Rey and Southerland oversaw the training of the AJROTC cadets and demonstrated how to perform a uniform inspection.

"The Girl Scouts ate it up. They had no idea behind the mechanics of a proper about face and had a lot of fun learning how to move a large group as one. This taught them about teamwork and learning to pay attention to detail, which is essential in any career they choose," said Southerland.

Southerland and Rey also participated in helping the Scouts make holiday cards for Soldiers and Sailors stationed overseas. The cards and flag etiquette satisfied the girl's Citizenship and Community Merit Badges. The field drilling helped them earn badges that require leadership, communication and teamwork.

"All positive endeavors which are part of everyday Navy life," said Southerland.

The District's Top Stations

December 2011

NRD Atlanta - NRS Macon
NRD Chicago - NRS Rockford
NRD Dallas - NRS Plano
NRD Denver - NRS St. George
NRD Houston - NRS Bearcreek
NRD Jacksonville - NRS East Orlando
NRD Los Angeles - NRS Santa Clarita
NRD Minneapolis - NRS Owatanna
NRD Nashville - NRS Southaven
NRD New England - NRS North Andover
NRD New Orleans - NRS North Baton Rouge
NRD New York - NRS Tribeca
NRD Ohio - NRS Toledo
NRD Philadelphia - NRS York
NRD Phoenix - NRS Desert Sky
NRD Portland - NRS Redding
NRD Raleigh - NRS Durham
NRD Richmond - NRS Charlottesville
NRD San Antonio - NRS Southeast
NRD San Diego - NRS San Diego
NRD San Francisco - NRS Modesto
NRD Seattle - NRS Marysville
NRD St. Louis - NRS Cape Girardeau

January 2012

NRD Atlanta - NRS Columbus
NRD Chicago - NRS Crystal Lake
NRD Dallas - NRS Cedar Hill
NRD Denver - NRS Montrose
NRD Houston - NRS Baytown
NRD Jacksonville - NRS Kissimmee
NRD Los Angeles - NRS Simi Valley
NRD Minneapolis - NRS Omaha
NRD Nashville - NRS Knoxville
NRD New England - NRS Springfield
NRD New Orleans - NRS Pensacola
NRD New York - NRS Newton
NRD Ohio - NRS Louisville
NRD Philadelphia - NRS Allentown
NRD Phoenix - NRS Santa Fe
NRD Portland - NRS Albany
NRD Raleigh - NRS Spartanburg
NRD San Antonio - NRS Mercado
NRD San Diego - NRS San Diego
NRD San Francisco - NRS North Highlands
NRD Seattle - NRS Puyallup
NRD St. Louis - NRS St. Joseph

Admiral's Five-Star Recruiters

December 2011

NRD Atlanta - STG2 Michael Fanning/GM2 Brad Mayer
NRD Chicago - EN2 William Park
NRD Dallas - AT2 Christopher Allen
NRD Denver - FC2 Chris Mayfield
NRD Houston - OS2 Alfred Johnson
NRD Jacksonville - AM1 Joshua Anderson
NRD Los Angeles - ET1 Mark Schilleman
NRD Minneapolis - AME2 Matthew Lee
NRD Nashville - NC1 Natalie Brown
NRD New England - QM2 Caleb Murray
NRD New Orleans - MA1 Christopher Williams
NRD New York - BM1 Yue Ming Li
NRD Ohio - ABF2 Travis Curd
NRD Philadelphia - FC1 Joseph Culotta
NRD Phoenix - AE2 Justin Davis
NRD Portland - GM1 Alfonso Vega
NRD Raleigh - AE2 Justin Hutson
NRD Richmond - FC2 Joshua Carlison
NRD San Antonio - FC2 Evan Lambert
NRD San Diego - GSM2 Duane Curato
NRD Seattle - EO2 Kenneth Hoffman

January 2012

NRD Atlanta - DC2 Keon Smith
NRD Chicago - MN1 Joyce Christensen
NRD Dallas - IC2 Richard Raymond
NRD Denver - DC2 Christopher Brennan
NRD Houston - BM2 Aaron Romo
NRD Jacksonville - STS1 Timothy Cunningham
NRD Los Angeles - BM2 Irma Farfanserrano
NRD Minneapolis - OSC Matthew Hayes
NRD Nashville - OS2 Matthew Tucker
NRD New England - EA2 Richard Lee
NRD New Orleans - PS1 Shelly Schwantz
NRD New York - AZ2 Kwane James
NRD Ohio - EN2 Chad Fisher
NRD Philadelphia - MM2 Anwar Barnes
NRD Phoenix - MR2 Waylon Lane
NRD Portland - GSE1 D. J. Crittenden
NRD Raleigh - BM2 Michael Simpson
NRD San Antonio - AT2 John Jensen
NRD San Diego - ABH2 Mark Poblete
NRD Seattle - NC1 Felicia Barr
NRD St. Louis - QM2 Jesus Montano

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