NAVY RECRUITER

Future of the Fleet

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April - June 2020
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From the Admiral

Rear Admiral Dennis Velez
Commander, Navy Recruiting Command

Recruiting Nation!

I've had the great honor of assuming command, albeit in one of the most unique change of command ceremonies I've ever been a part of. While I have not had the ability to meet many of you due to circumstances beyond our control, I am so very impressed by your continued professionalism and drive! I am honored to guide this command into the future.

Although we are experiencing many challenges during this time, the Transformation efforts Navy Recruiting started two years ago, which enhanced our way of doing business organizationally and technologically, have kept the majority of our force well equipped and trained to recruit virtually. We are accelerating that process, with the intent to have the nation transformed by the end of 2020. We are pulling the best of the best together to form training teams to not only get your transition started, but to follow up with your team later down the road to make sure things are running the way they should be.

Yes, it's a change – but the work is not changing. The dedication, effort and focus we expect from you is the same. The mission and goals are the same. I need everyone on board as we accelerate this Transformation and restructure into a better, more prepared, and more technically advanced organization. If you haven't already, start learning the process now. We need everyone to embrace the way forward.

The end state for the CNO's Warfighters is a "world-class naval force through recruitment, education, training, and retention of talented American men and women…" We are essential to this mission. And while performing that mission, we must achieve a Culture of Excellence across our Navy. Adopting this culture champions excellence across the Navy and allows us to maximize our collective potential. I need each of you to do the best you can do, and be the best you while you do it.

Take care of each other and continue to lead by example.

Rear Adm. Dennis Velez

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Navy Recruiting Command reaches the American public with its message virtually during the coronavirus pandemic. (Photo illustration by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Zachary S. Eshleman)

BACK COVER:
ATLANTIC OCEAN (Aug. 2, 2017) The aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) (Ike) transits the Atlantic Ocean. Ike is underway during the maintenance phase of the Optimized Fleet Response Plan (OFRP). (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Cole Keller)

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NRC Holds Change of Command

Story by Jordan Smith, Navy Recruiting Command

▲ Rear Admiral Dennis Velez relieves Rear Admiral Brendan McLane as Commander, Navy Recruiting Command during a change of command ceremony at Navy Recruiting Command Headquarters, April 3, 2020. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Zachary S. Eshleman)

MILLINGTON, Tenn. — Commander, Navy Recruiting Command Rear Adm. Brendan McLane was relieved by Rear Adm. Dennis Velez in a change of command ceremony held at Navy Recruiting Command headquarters in Millington April 3.

McLane will now take over as Commander Carrier Strike Group 10 embarked aboard the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, (CVN-69).

Vice Admiral John Nowell, Chief of Naval Personnel, attended the event through video teleconferencing and shared positive comments for Navy Recruiting Command (NRC).

"Admiral McLane has just done a superb job in an ever-increasing demand for talent," said Nowell. "No matter the recruiting mission that was given to him and our superb team in the Recruiting Nation, he and the entire NRC team have knocked it out of the park."

During his tour at NRC, McLane helmed a team of 6,955 officers, Sailors, civilians and contractors across the Nation and around the world. Under McLane's leadership, Navy Recruiting Command recruited more than 77,000 of America's best and brightest men and women into the active and reserve enlisted ranks, and commissioned more than 8,000 officers into the U.S. Navy.

"As I relinquish command of NRC, I know I leave the entire Navy Recruiting Team in very capable hands," said McLane. "Rear Admiral Velez is one of the Navy's best, with the right background and skill to lead NRC on its continued path of excellence in support of America's Navy."

Velez's most recent shore assignment prior to reporting to NRC was as senior military assistant to the 76th Secretary of the Navy.

Velez received a Bachelor of Science in aerospace engineering from the United States Naval Academy. He also earned a Master of Science in information technology management. Additionally, he is the recipient of the Navy League of the United States 2016 John Paul Jones Award for Inspirational Leadership.

In his closing remarks of the ceremony, Velez talked about the men and women of NRC.

"I'm in awe of the work they do day in, day out, and how well they represent the Navy to our Nation and our communities. Their reputation is certainly well earned," said Velez. "I look forward to serving with every one of you. I look forward to working hard and supporting you. I'm very humbled and honored to be here."

◀ Capt. Mark Hendricks gives the invocation during a change of command ceremony at Navy Recruiting Command Headquarters, April 3, 2020. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Zachary S. Eshleman)

◀ Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the change of command was live-streamed, and Chief of Naval Personnel, Vice Adm. John Nowell, was the guest speaker via a video teleconference. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Zachary S. Eshleman)

▼ Rear Admiral Dennis Velez relieves Rear Admiral Brendan McLane as Commander, Navy Recruiting Command during a change of command ceremony at Navy Recruiting Command Headquarters, April 3, 2020. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Zachary S. Eshleman)

Navy Recruiter Produces Face Shields To Fight Against the Coronavirus

Story and photos by Burrell Parmer, Navy Recruiting District San Antonio

▲ Aviation Maintenance Administrationman 2nd Class Elias Grey demonstrates one of the final products of his 3-D printing efforts.

MIDLAND, Texas – (March 29, 2020) During the coronavirus pandemic which is affecting many across the country, one Sailor with Navy Recruiting District (NRD) San Antonio is doing his part to stop the spread.

Aviation Maintenance Administrationman 2nd Class Elias Grey, of Bonners Ferry, Idaho, a recruiter assigned to Navy Recruiting Station Midland, during his off-duty time is producing 3D-printed face shields for civilian medical personnel.

According to Grey, who is performing his recruiting duties virtually from his home, the shields are predominately for use by hospitals.

"Right now, I am producing shields for three local hospitals to include Medical Center Hospital, Odessa Regional Medical Center, and Midland Memorial Hospital," said Grey. "I am projecting before April 14, that I'll be printing 100 face shields per day due to the influx of donations to purchase additional 3D printers and plastic to print with."

Grey, whose last duty was with Helicopter Strike Maritime Squadron (HSM) 51 located in Atsugi, Japan, Va., has been assisted by his wife, Mariah, who helps him clean and assemble the face shields.

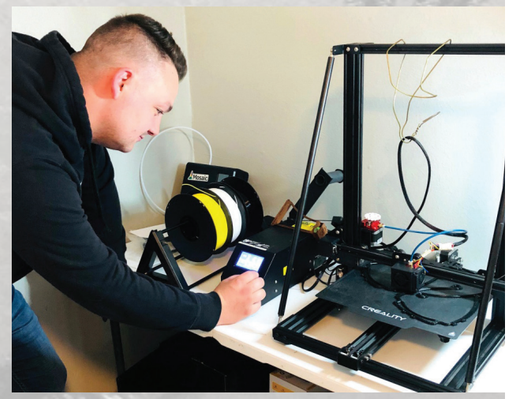
According to Grey, he has been a 3D printer enthusiast for the past two years.

"I love technology and the concept of printing a 3D object out of thin air," said Grey. "As a Christian, I believe in serving others and setting the best example."

Grey, who is part of the Facebook 3D-Printing community, collaborated with others on how they could help provide supplies as hospitals began to have shortages of personal protective equipment.

Once the need is no longer needed, Grey will donate the 3D printers and materials procured through donations to local high schools and colleges in the Midland/Odessa area.

NRD San Antonio's area of responsibility includes more than 34 Navy Recruiting Stations and Navy Officer Recruiting Stations spread throughout 144,000 square miles of Central and South Texas territory.



▶ Aviation Maintenance Administrationman 2nd Class Elias Grey, of Bonners Ferry, Idaho, a recruiter assigned to Navy Recruiting Station Midland, works on the apparatus he uses to produce 3D-printed face shields for civilian medical personnel.

NUPOC Entrant Carries on Family's Leadership Legacy

Story by Petty Officer 1st Class Benjamin Dobbs, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Pittsburgh

PITTSBURGH, Pa.— Cole Kubiak, a 19-year old sophomore attending Texas Tech University and majoring in mechanical engineering, joined the Navy through the Nuclear Propulsion Officer Candidate (NUPOC) program. NUPOC provides college students with advanced training opportunities for them to one day become Navy nuclear officers.

"Both of my parents were in the Military at one point," Kubiak said. "My dad is out now and my mom is still in. It's always been in my mind that it's an option I can go with."

Kubiak, who graduated from Kellam High School in Virginia Beach, Va., took the oath from Lubbock, Texas, during a virtual ceremony witnessed by his mother, Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Pittsburgh Command Master Chief Mistie Marcucci.

"There were so many emotions going on,"Marcucci said. "I was excited for him. More than anything, I was just so proud that he would take on the family tradition of serving this country, because everyone in my family from my great-grandfather down have all served. My father was Air Force and my brother went Army, but everybody else was Navy."

Kubiak had worked a part-time job, logging more than 20 hours a week in addition to taking 16 to 18 credit hours a semester. With the NUPOC program he will now have more time to focus on his academics, while still being financially stable.

NUPOC offers students scholarship money to pay for a degree, while providing a regular monthly income when they are still in school. Students can pursue their education with no service obligations to the Navy until they graduate.

"I've been having my school paid for by the Hazzlewood Act that my dad passed down to me and that wouldn't have paid for my entire college career," Kubiak said. "Once I found out about this NUPOC program that I qualified for I went ahead and started going through that process."

While there were no hugs and handshakesto follow the virtual ceremony, Kubiak was grateful for his family being present with him remotely online during this moment.

"It was amazing to be able to say the oath," said Kubiak." "It definitely was a good gift to have it happen right before Mother's day. It lined up pretty well. She's definitely been a big part of helping me through growing up and helping to direct me in the right ways. She definitely guided me in the right places a lot. I'm glad she was there to help me with that."

▲ Cole Kubiak, a sophomore attending Texas Tech University poses with his mother, Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Pittsburgh Command Master Chief Mistie Marcucci, following a swearing in ceremony at the Pittsburgh Military Entrance Processing Station. (Courtesy photo)

Recruiting and the New Normal

Story by Chief Petty Officer Kathleen Gorby, Navy Recruiting Command

Protecting our people has remained a DoD Priority from the start. We must take those prudent measures to limit the coronavirus' spread, while also ensuring our people are trained and ready to defend the nation. Chief Brandon Keesee conducts a Delayed Entry Program (DEP) meeting with Yuba City Future Sailors from home on April 8. (Courtesy photo)

Between social distancing, virtual recruiting and home schooling, in order to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, nothing about the past few months has been normal. So Senior Chief Petty Officer Tori Novo, from Navy Recruiting District (NRD) Miami, has had to redefine the term.

Novo is NRD Miami's command trainer, responsible for the training program, personnel qualification standards (PQS) program and maintaining an inspection ready command. She is also a wife and a mother of 3 sons ranging from toddler to elementary age.

"It's all about scheduling and creating a routine," said Novo. "With so many things going on in one household, it's easy to lose track of what needs done, who needs to do it and what's coming next."

NRD Miami transitioned to virtual prospecting in Mid-March to aid in social distancing. Many businesses along with schools and daycare have also had to shut down due to the pandemic.

"My husband and I are both working from home," said Novo. "He is a manager and, like me, is on a lot of conference calls throughout the day. It's tough when we have calls at the same time, and there is no one to watch our little one."

To create a sense of normalcy for her youngest, Novo purchased some of his favorite daycare toys to help create a more normal play day for him.

The hardest part of all of this is keeping the toddler entertained," said Novo. "When he starts to lose interest in his toys, he starts wandering the house. We have a pool in the back so keeping track of him feels like a full-time job."

Novo's two oldest sons have really pitched in to help the family. They are taking turns entertaining their youngest brother when their parents are working.

"We have been making this work as we go," said Novo. "The first week of school was rough because we didn't have written schedules. But we were able to learn from that week and now I make up schedules for everyone. This keeps us on task and on target."

Even with the family's full schedules, Novo created time around work and school for her and her children.

"The mornings are my time with the kids," said Novo. "We have a routine from 8-10 a.m. where I get them ready for school, cook them breakfast and I'm there for them if they need me. It's really nice not having to drive anywhere, it gives me more time with them"

Novo's work schedule has her at the computer from as early as 9 a.m. to as late as 6 p.m. She has been able to transition most aspects of her job to the virtual world.

"I'm still holding PQS boards and command wide trainings via Zoom," said Novo. "We have been able to keep everything on schedule excluding division in the spotlight (DITS) inspections. I'm finding my biggest challenge are maintaining connectivity to the Virtual Private Network and training 200+ recruiters to our new system."

Learning, growing and adapting have been Novo's mantra since her transition from the office to working from home.

"I have done a lot of adjusting lately," said Novo. "Without my assistant Petty Officer 1st class Allen, this job would be 10 times harder. I am so thankful to have her to lean on."

Despite all of the challenges social distancing can bring, Novo is confident in her command and their resilience.

"NRD Miami Sailors are committed to our mission of bringing the best and brightest into the Navy," said Novo. "I'm confident that each and every one of us is doing our part to make the most of the current situation."

Eye on the Field

SAN FRANCISCO, California (May 20, 2020) Navy Counselor 1st Class Alicia Rollins re-enlists while social distancing on the quarterdeck of NTAG Golden Gate on May 20. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Meranda Keller)

SAN FRANCISCO, California (June 12, 2020) Leading Petty Officer (LPO) training conducted via FaceTime on June 11. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Meranda Keller)

Eye on the Fleet

BREMERTON, Washington (April 29, 2020) Lt. Aaron Chambers, Navy Medical Service Corps officer and podiatrist assigned to Naval Medicine Readiness and Training Command Bremerton, mans the command's drive through screening process in helping to stop the spread of the coroanvirus. (Photo by Douglas H Stutz, NMRTC Bremerton public affairs officer).

HOUSTON, Texas (May 6, 2020) The U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, fly over Houston, Texas, May 6, 2020. The flyover was part of America Strong; a collaborative salute from the Navy and Air Force to recognize healthcare workers, first responders, military, and other essential personnel while standing in solidarity with all Americans during the coronavirus pandemic. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Cody Hendrix)

Service As A Mother, A Daughter, And Both

Story and photo by Gregory White, Navy Recruiting Command

Sisters Michelle Williams and Samantha Lee pose with their mother Lynnette Smith. (Photo sourced from Samantha Lee).

RALEIGH, North Carolina – (May 7, 2020) Having a mother in the military isn't always easy on a daughter. There are a lot of missed moments and missed opportunities during crucial periods in life. Being a mother in the military is just as hard. Chief Navy Counselor Samantha Lee is about to know both.

Lee's mother, Lynette Smith is a retired Air Force senior master sergeant who served for 23 years. While Lee didn't go into the Air Force, and instead chose to join the Navy, she still credits her mother for the inspiration. Now, Lee's daughter Amiyah is a member of the Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps and she intends to follow her mother's footsteps. She will enlist in the U.S. Navy following high school graduation.

"Amiyah's Marine instructor tries to convince her otherwise, but her Navy instructor outranks him and helps keep her on track," said Lee, smiling.

Lee is grateful that she could be as much of an inspiration to her daughter as her mom was for her.

"For many years my mother was a single mom raising us up in a military environment," said Lee. "Seeing her be there for my sister and me, and still be that stellar mom, very much involved in our lives while serving her country as a rock star in the Air Force, was very inspiring to me. Watching her succeed so well and still be a mom really made me respect her and look up to her. Honestly, I didn't see that outside of my home, as far as my friends parents go. I was really fortunate."

Lee is not the only of Smith's daughters to follow in her mom's footsteps and join the military. While Lee joined the Navy, her sister, Michelle Williams, joined the Army. Although neither chose the Air Force, they grew up knowing the value of service to their country.

"My Navy recruiter really identified with me and just made me realize that the Navy was the way for me," said Lee. "I used to think I was going to go Air Force and follow exactly in my mom's footsteps but this has worked out very well for me."

Smith is happy knowing her career and her sacrifice are serving as a guide path for her daughters, and her daughter's daughter.

"It makes me proud," said Smith. "It makes me feel like I did something positive for my daughter to inspire her and give her something she could carry with her through her life. I'm very proud of my daughters, and I'm so happy that Sammy (Lee} was able to become a DLCPO (Division Leading Chief Petty Officer). She's in the job that she is supposed to be in because she cares about people, and she's always talking about the positive impact she has been able to make and will continue to make as she lives out her dream."

Smith said both of her daughters are extremely successful and driven women, and she is honored to be the inspiration for the next generation of women in the military.

Amiyah is also extremely proud of her mother. During a recent visit to Amiyah's school, Lee conducted an inspection for her NJROTC unit.

"Everyone loved her," said Amiyah. "I'm proud of my mother. I'm joining the United States Navy because my mother raised me right."

Samantha Lee is a career recruiter for Navy Recruiting District Raleigh, North Carolina. She has 21 years in and hopes to exceed her mother in years and paygrade.

"It's all just family competition", said Lee. "You should see how my sister and I bash each other over the Army/Navy game!"

As an Air Force veteran, that's one family argument Smith is happy to sit out of.

Navy Chief Samantha Lee poses with her daughter, Amiyah (left). Chief Lee conducted an inspection for the NJROTC unit at her daughter's High School in December 2019.

U.S. Navy Reserve

Reserve Force Master Chief Hosts Virtual Q&A With Sea Cadets

Story by Petty Officer 2nd Class Craig Rodarte

U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps Able Soto lines the walkway with other cadets to welcome guests to a memorial service honoring former Navy SEALs who have died in the past year. (Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Abe McNatt)

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Reserve Force Master Chief Chris Kotz and a panel of Reservists joined more than 40 members of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps (USNSCC) on a virtual call to field questions about careers in the Navy and Navy Reserve, June 5.

The virtual environment allowed the panel and cadets a chance to invest personal one-on-one time despite the restrictions of face-to-face interactions and travel.

"Opportunities to engage with active-duty personnel and Reservists is one of the best things that the program offers," said USNSCC Chief Jens Sorensen, a high school senior from Aberdeen, New Jersey who has been a part of the Sea Cadet program for five years. "It allows cadets to meet the people involved, and I think it's valuable to see the humans behind the titles and institutions, as well as collect new information."

The Reservist panel, including Kotz and five Reserve 2nd Class Petty Officers, led the call with short back stories of their naval career and shared their experiences in the Navy Reserve with the sea cadets.

"Cadet units routinely drill at many locations in the interior of our nation, where the Navy has Navy Operational Support Centers in areas where the Navy does not have a sea base," said Kotz. "Our Navy Reserve activities host the local unit, and this exposes the young cadets to Sailors, providing a basis for role modeling and mentorship. The training in Naval Science and Seamanship serve as an excellent foundation for a career in the Navy and, hopefully, the Navy Reserve."

Some cadets are closer to high school graduation and making career decisions, and the virtual call helped define their career path.

"I have been accepted into the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and am due to report on July 10th," said USNSCC Chief Patience Simes, a high school senior from Knoxville, Tennessee who has been a Sea Cadet for six years. "I feel more focused on the paths that I can take upon graduating."

Kotz, who has a vested interest in the program from years of active participation, expressed that the skills cadets learn are applicable with or without continuing in to a military education.

"The Sea Cadet Corps instills our youth with the principles of citizenship and democracy, while teaching strong moral character, teamwork and leadership," said Kotz. "These skills will help them thrive not only in military service, but throughout life."

USNSCC is a national youth leadership development organization that promotes interest and skill in naval disciplines while instilling strong moral character and life skills through leadership and technical programs modeled after the Navy's professional development system.

For more information about the Navy Reserve, visit https://www.facebook.com/U.S.NavyReserve/

For more information about the USNSCC, visit https://www.seacadets.org

Twins Looking Forward to Being U.S. Sailors

Story by Burrell Parmer, Navy Recruiting Command San Antonio

Twin brothers Reynaldo (left) and Santos Vasquez, of San Antonio, are making final preparations to attend recruit training and become Sailors in America's Navy. (Photo by Burrell Parmer, Navy Recruiting District San Antonio Public Affairs).

SAN ANTONIO – (May 19, 2020) Twin brothers Reynaldo and Santos Vasquez, of San Antonio, are making final preparations to attend recruit training and become Sailors in America's Navy.

According to Reynaldo, he joined the Navy to change his life.

"I felt like it was time to start a new chapter," said Reynaldo, who graduated from John Jay High School along with his brother in 2012. "The time is right."

Santos says that he and his brother have been contemplating joining the military since high school, and college at Northwest Vista Community College.

"I want to see the world and be a productive citizen," said Santos. "Additionally, I want to be able to use the Navy's Tuition Assistance Program to pay for my bachelor's degree."

For the past few years, the brothers have been working at fast food restaurants and supporting their church.

"Working in a fast food restaurant is not the career that my brother and I envisioned," said Santos. "It's not very fulfilling as many may think, especially making minimum wage."

According to the brothers, they are looking forward to spending some time apart and explore what the Navy and the world has to offer.

Reynaldo will serve in America's Navy as a hospital corpsman and will receive advanced training in special warfare, search and rescue or serve as a corpsman in the Fleet Marine Force.

After recruit training, Santos will receive training in the Navy's Submarine Electronics/Computer Field and serve aboard nuclear-powered submarines.

"We currently have a brother serving in the Army, but serving in the Navy will be much cooler," said Santos. "Plus, it continues a family tradition; our grandfather and two uncles served in the Navy."

Both brothers were recruited by Electrician's Mate 2nd Class Jasmine Harris assigned to Navy Recruiting Station Ingram.

Navy Recruiting Command Recruits Veteran Sailors

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cody Anderson, Navy Recruiting Command

MILLINGTON, Tenn. (NNS) – As the coronavirus pandemic continues to affect the world, the Navy is offering opportunities for prior Sailors to serve again. To support U.S. national security during the coronavirus pandemic, Commander, Navy Recruiting Command (CNRC) developed strategies and solutions to continue its essential mission of building the Navy the Nation needs. One solution is allowing eligible Sailors (officers and enlisted) to transition to the reserves or re-join the Navy if they have separated or retired.

With the release of NAVADMIN 89/20, the Navy made changes to allow recently separated personnel to come back to active duty. Although the Navy recruits veterans and retirees regularly, CNRC is actively bringing in a greater number of qualified and recently separated personnel. This change allows prior Sailors to restart their careers, earn benefits and provide for themselves and their families, which in turn helps the Navy fill critical billets in an uncertain time - some of those billets being medical officers in response to the coronavirus.

"Officer veterans that have been out of uniform for less than 24 months can come back in if approved by the officer community manager shop through a fast track process," said Cmdr. Heather Kirk, the Director of the Medical Programs division at CNRC. "For Doctors and Nurses, we are working with BUMED (Bureau of Medicine and Surgery) to get credentialing and board recommendations for these veterans in a shorter period of time."

With the fast-track process in place, a medical officer that does not require credentialing can be integrated back into the Navy in as little as six weeks. Those officers that require credentialing may take up to four months to rejoin, said Kirk.

In response to NAVADMIN 89/20, CNRC released OPNOTE 94 (and subsequently, OPNOTE 94 Change 1), which outlines the actions recruiters should take when receiving inquiries about possible re-affiliation with the Navy in response to the coronavirus pandemic. OPNOTE 94 also outlines the details and requirements distinguishing which service members will be eligible for re-entry into active duty.

CNRC is also actively recruiting civilians and all military service veterans for affiliation into the Navy Reserve, while overcoming the unique challenges of reaching the Sailors who are transitioning out of the Navy.

"Since Navy Personnel Command went to Health Protection Condition Charlie, the Career Transition Office (CTO) has moved to a telework status. When you combine this with ships restricting visitors to preserve the health of their crews, contacting Sailors has become difficult," said Cmdr. Del Gray, Director of Prior Service Accessions at CNRC. ". This complicates the process of contacting Sailors because now the prior service recruiters cannot go aboard those commands to assist CTO with helping Sailors explore all their options, including the Navy Reserves, when seeking to transition out of active duty."

Although the process has become more difficult, it hasn't stopped prior service recruiters from getting the job done. All Navy recruiters are available via phone, social media, messaging platforms and video chat. This includes the Navy esports team, Goats & Glory, which is actively engaging with potential recruits through live-streaming events from their telework locations.

Navy veterans can find out if they are eligible to rejoin the Navy by calling My Navy Career Center (MNCC) at 1-833-330-6622, or by contacting their local recruiting office and speaking with an active duty recruiter. Veterans can also call 1-800-USA-NAVY to be connected with a navy recruiter.

▼ Engineman 1st Class Chad Small, assigned to Navy Recruiting Command's cyberspace department, chats online with a potential Future Sailor at the Navy.com "Navy Chat" page. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Preston Jarrett)

NRC Holds FY2020 Commanders Conference

Story by Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Preston Jar-

MILLINGTON, Tenn. (June 15, 2020) - The 2020 Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) Commander's Conference was held virtually June 2-4 via conferencing software in order to uphold social distancing and CDC safety guidance during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

The conference, usually held bi-annually in Millington, Tennessee, is an event attended by recruiting leadership where Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, Rear Adm. Dennis Velez provides guidance and receives feedback on the general status of Navy recruiting.

This particular conference is both the first to be led by Velez and the first to be held virtually. Velez's Executive Assistant, Lt. Cmdr. Shaina Hogan, identified that the Commander's Conference would have to be virtual, and after initiating Microsoft (MS) Teams for small group meetings she directed a phased-approach to using MS Teams with more and larger groups.

"After we successfully held the 30-person NRC Department Head meeting on Teams, the Admiral decided we would maximize usage of the software for all meetings during this max telework environment due to the coronavirus," said Hogan. "Once the groundwork was set, Lt. Cmdr. Jessica Cline and Mr. John Griffiths (both assigned to Commander's Action Group at NRC) devoted over 150 hours op-testing MS Teams with the 26 Navy Recruiting Districts and Navy Talent Acquisition Groups, and both regional and headquarters staff. Ultimately, we had over 200 people participate in the virtual Commander's Conference."

Hogan said that the two-way discussion held during the conference was invaluable, "Our number one job at NRC is to support the recruiters, so we discussed in depth how we will maximize FIT while making FY20 mission, the acceleration and changes of transformation, increased transparency within the organization, and the challenges the NRDs/NTAGs are experiencing and how we can help them. We also saved $150,000 due to the conference being held virtually vice in-person."

Though much was accomplished, the virtual method did have some drawbacks.

"Unfortunately, we did lose out on the face-to-face networking and collaboration that comes with an in-person Commander's Conference, and we were unable to have the breakout sessions this time," said Hogan. "We intend on having at least one Commander's Conference in-person annually as a way ahead."

Navy Recruiting Command's goal is to attract the highest quality candidates to assure the ongoing success of America's Navy and provide the Navy the Nation needs.

MILLINGTON, Tenn. Lieutenant Rob Slye reviews available jobs in the Personalized Recruiting for Immediate and Delayed Enlistment (PRIDE) office. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cody Anderson)

NRC Transformation To Virtual Prospecting

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Zachary S. Eshleman, Navy Recruiting Command

MILLINGTON, Tenn. (NNS) - The U.S. Navy is hiring. Despite all the safety precautions Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) has made during the coronavirus pandemic that message hasn't changed. What has changed is the way in which the message has been getting to the qualified people across the world.

Like many organizations across the nation, the shutdowns and required changes in behavior during the pandemic have had major effects on day to day operations.

"March was probably the peak month for shock value — no one wanted to go outside, no one wanted to do anything," said Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, Commander, Navy Recruiting Command,.

However, in order to continue the essential business of manning the fleet, Velez said he empowered his recruiters to rely on the tools and resources at their disposal.

"Recruiters right now have pretty much everything they need on a laptop," said Velez. "So, when they do need to meet with potential Sailors, they can take biometrics and get signatures all right on the spot — with no need to meet in the building. The entire process can pretty much be done anywhere."

The Navy has been moving their recruiting efforts, including marketing and advertising, into the digital realm for years now. This effort is in addition to recruiting command's effort to transform Navy Recruiting Districts (NRDs) into Navy Talent Acquisition Groups (NTAGs). This new method has been taking the place of the classic one-to-one, recruiter-to-applicant, recruiting method, and the plan is to have all NRDs transformed by the end of 2020.

In an NTAG, the duties that would typically be handled by a single recruiter are divided into three disciplines, and recruiters are assigned one main discipline based on their individual skill set. This created Sailors who are dedicated to sales and sourcing, assessing, or onboarding, instead of one person doing all of that for each applicant.

The advantage this created for NTAGs during the pandemic is that Sailors who were already dedicated to sales and sourcing have had the chance to hone their abilities to make contact with applicants over social media and other digital methods. Whereas, in the NRDs where older methods still prevail, recruiters are often overtasked, with their time being divided between sourcing, assessing, and onboarding, while also continuing to mentor contracted Sailors until they ship to boot camp.

"The NTAG model, in my opinion, has been key to preparing my team for virtual prospecting," said Cmdr. Mary Decker, Commanding Officer of NTAG Houston. "Just a year or so ago, many of my recruiters were inclined to believe virtual prospecting couldn't work. That we had to have that in-person interaction . . . The pandemic forced what was already in progress, and the results prove that virtual prospecting is a success."

Decker embraced virtual prospecting as the way of the future. She doesn't believe recruiting, at least in her command, will ever fully return to the way it was before the pandemic.

"To me to go backward is to fail," said Decker. "We have a new and proven method of recruiting that we as leaders need to acknowledge and continue to develop. It's the way of the future."

Even in certain NRDs that haven't shifted to the NTAG recruiting model yet, they have created dedicated social media outreach positions to broaden their footprint. One recruiter, who has been doing this for years, is Logistics Specialist 1st Class Derrick Elefante.

"Over the years, I've found that recruiting online is just an extension of recruiting in real life," said Elefante. "It won't ever replace being face-to-face with someone, but it can definitely extend our reach."

For Elefante, the pandemic didn't change very much for his recruiting numbers because he and his E-talent division had already embraced, and began perfecting, digital recruiting long before the pandemic began.

Many districts have similar E-talent divisions where the recruiters' entire job is to create online content and interact with potential applicants through social media. If someone is interested, they direct applicants to their local recruiters to continue the process.

"In my district, our E-talent numbers did not fluctuate at all; they did not rise or go down," Elefante said. "We average 20 to 25 contracts per month, and in April we had 23 contracts and 22 contracts in May."

For Sailors just now trying their hand at recruiting via social media, Elefante had some advice.

"To be successful at recruiting virtually, you need to understand the structure is still the same as recruiting face to face. There are still the four stages of sales, and they need to address those stages to increase their engagement."

Just like Elefante, many recruiters had taken it upon themselves to penetrate the virtual space long before it became a necessity. Recruiting for the Navy had been challenging before the pandemic because of the booming economy and cuts in traditional marketing and advertising. This forced the necessity for innovation on the ground level recruiters before, and in this regard, the pandemic is just another hurdle.

"Recruiters understand how critical it is for us to get new Sailors and recruits into the Navy," said Velez. "Because, at the end of the day, we have 90 plus ships at sea today — over one-third of our force is underway doing the nation's business, and if we fail at doing our part, a Sailor is going to stay at sea longer because we can't get the right Sailors through the schoolhouse to relieve them."

People looking to speak to a recruiter remotely can do so by going to www.navy.com and clicking "apply now," or by calling 1-800-872-6289.

Navy Recruiting Station Asheboro hosted its first "virtual DEP meeting" with Future Sailors in the Delayed Entry Program (DEP). Fifteen people were present on the virtual meeting. The recruiters, Machinist Mate (Nuclear) 1st Class Lawrence Gillet, Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Brian Austin and Engineman 2nd Class Darrell Chavis, began the meeting by leading their recruits through reciting the Sailors Creed. (Photo by Gregory White)

Nashville Navy Family Enlists Fourth Son Into Service

Story by Petty Officer 2nd Class Leslie Koxvold, Navy Recruiting Command

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (NNS) - Many service members regard their co-workers as an extension of their blood family. However, for Jake McKinney, a future Sailor out of Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Nashville, some of his future brothers in arms are his actual brothers.

Jake McKinney expects to ship to Navy Recruit Training Command in June with a contract to become an aviation electronics technician (AV). For Jake McKinney, the U.S. Navy is very much a family tradition. Not only does he have three older brothers who are currently enlisted, his father, Lee McKinney, is a retired master chief master-at-arms.

"I've always wanted to go into the military, ever since I was a little kid," said Jake McKinney. "My dad would always come home, and I loved to see the camos he was in, and I loved to see my brothers come home in their blues. It made me feel like that was where I wanted to be."

Even with a similar choice in careers, each of the McKinney brothers has taken a different path in their fields. Alan Shira, Jake's eldest brother, chose the nuclear field and currently holds the rank of chief petty officer as a machinist's mate.

"Well, both my dad and my step dad were in the Navy," said Alan Shira, "so growing up I was certainly inspired."

The oldest brother's inspiration to join the Navy pushed him into the Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). His participation in NROTC introduced his younger brothers, Aaron Dose, a Navy Reserve intelligence specialist third class, and Jake to also participate in the program.

Though he shared this experience with Aaron and Alan, Jake felt he was more like his other brother Justin Shira who is now an aviation warfare systems operator second class.

"Justin is the brother I was always closest to," said Jake. "We always like messing with things together, and exploring mechanics and seeing how stuff works."

"The kid can build anything; you can give him a bail of wire and bubble gum and he will build you a radio," said Lee about Justin, "He tinkers; he is always making stuff. Jake's like that."

Even with all four brothers joining the Navy, Lee doesn't believe he was the leading inspiration for their choice.

"I think Aaron joined for the college opportunities," Lee said. "Alan and Aaron were always really book smart. They would always ask me about the places I've been," Lee continued, "It became kind of a joke, when we would watch a movie they knew, I'd say 'Yeah, I've been there.' It wasn't anything I talked about 24/7 though."

"That was just what dad did for work," said Jake about his perception of his father's career. However, he always knew he would join the Navy. He explained how he has always been interested in airplanes since he was a child playing with model airplanes. He had a dream early on to become a Navy pilot, however, issues with depth perception shifted that dream to a more mechanical role, and his inspiration came from his family.

Along with their shared interest in careers, Jake, his brothers and his father all bonded over cars. It is these memories which Jake feels shaped him into the mechanic-minded individual he is today.

Jake said, "Growing up my dad used to work on race cars, and he would take me out to races and stuff and show me stuff on the cars. That really affected me and showed me that me and my dad had so much in common. That was the thing me, my dad and my brothers all focused on together."

Lee also laughs at the similarities between him and his son. He thinks a Navy career is most suited for Jake and his need for discipline. He thought the same about himself when he was his youngest son's age.

"If it wasn't for the Navy I would have probably been in jail, probably arrested for racing," Lee said.

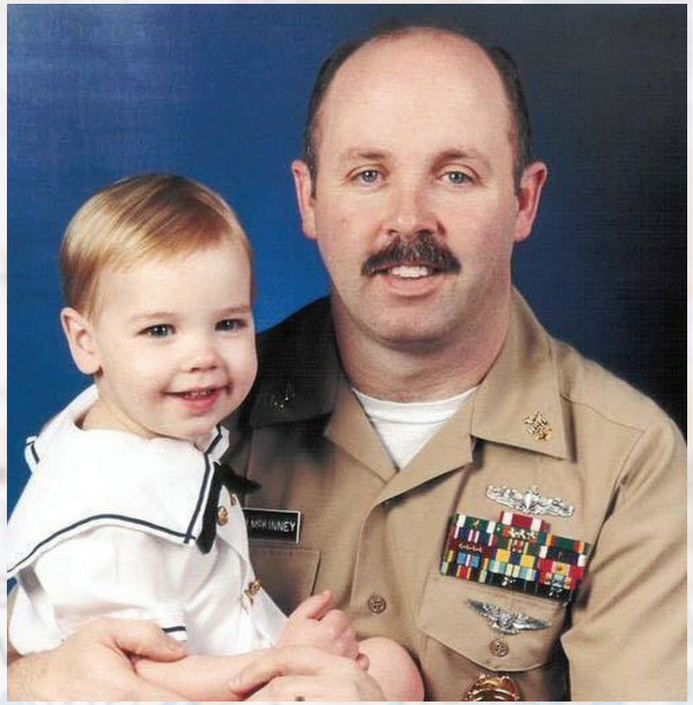
Even with a deep-rooted family history in the branch, and Jake's experience in ROTC, he still fears he will have to face major challenges, and he is worried he isn't fully prepared with his knowledge of ranks and Navy tradition.

"My biggest challenge is to stay focused on what I really want," said Jake, "I know the school is going to be hard on me, but I know if I stay focused, I can get what I really want and get the job done and have a good future in the Navy."

Though there are likely many challenges ahead for Jake and his brothers, his father can't help but feel a sense of Navy pride.

"I think the full story is about them and I am super proud of them," said the retired master chief. That feeling which is also shared by the younger McKinney, "My dad is my inspiration and I just want to make him proud."

Future Sailor Jake McKinney poses for a photo in front of his house. (U.S. Navy photo)



A childhood photo of future Sailor Jake McKinney and his father, retired Master Chief Master-at-Arms Lee McKinney.

CNRC Welcomes RDML Dennis Vélez

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cody Anderson, Navy Recruiting Command

Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, Rear Adm. Dennis Velez addresses the class of 2020 in a video from his office in Navy Recruiting Command headquarters. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Zachary S. Eshleman)

MILLINGTON, Tenn. – Taking charge of a Navy command is always a huge undertaking for a commanding officer, and with the constraints and the safety concerns of the current world pandemic, the job isn't any easier.

Add to the challenge, 6,000 personnel with the essential responsibility of recruiting the Navy the nation needs. Personnel spread all over the country making up Command Headquarters, two Recruiting Regions, 15 Recruiting Districts and 11 Talent Acquisition Groups serving approximately 1,450 recruiting stations worldwide. This enormous undertaking is what Rear Adm. Dennis Vélez, faced when he took the position as Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, April 3.

Vélez is CNRC's first Latino commanding officer. He came from the humble city of Adjuntas, Puerto Rico. With a population of less than 20,000, its citizens are spread throughout the mountainside, waterfalls and small tourist business in the area. His dreams spanned much further than the township could take him, and today he's a newly promoted Admiral with a huge task - to find the sea warriors who will serve in the world's greatest Navy.

"I am extremely honored to lead Navy recruiting," said Vélez. "I know these are unprecedented times for our country and for the Navy, but we have full confidence in our great recruiting force. When we bring all the energy and talent of the Navy Recruiting Command and its partners to the different situations that we have to face, we can face any challenge. I am looking forward to this new stage."

As the world continues to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, organizations are being forced to adapt to a new way of operating. Online ordering is on the rise, many restaurants have become carry out only and Navy Recruiting Command prospecting has converted to 100% virtual prospecting for future Sailors to join the Navy the nation needs.

"It is important for everybody to understand, we are still working to get future Sailors into the Navy," said Vélez. "Our Sailors are no longer able to go to schools to malls to colleges to look for future Sailors. We are now 100% online, we're making phone calls, and doing all digital marketing."

However, it is his belief that recruiting efforts can provide a sense of stability for those who may have a negative outlook for their future.

"In difficult times, the country has looked to the military for a way forward," said Vélez. "As the new Commander of Navy Recruiting Command, I would like students in their final year of high school, especially those who are anxious about the future, to understand that the United States Navy can offer them a pathway to follow. Now more than ever, a Navy enlistment is one of the best investments a new graduate can make. "

Vélez can say those words in earnest. Joining the Navy was a monumental time for him and something that has brought him full-circle in many ways. With the opening of new stations, Navy recruiting has significantly grown in Puerto Rico. Vélez said he is proud to be a part of something that has greatly benefited his life, and it is an honor to return that opportunity to all future Sailors worldwide.

A Quiet Hero

Story by Bruce Howard, Navy Recruiting Command New York

NEW YORK - Chief Gas Turbine Mechanic Delando Beckford is the soft-spoken Navy Chief leading the Sailors of the Navy recruiting station in Hempstead, New York. A native of Jamaica, he moved to Brooklyn six days before his 16th birthday and was enrolled in the New York City Fire Department High School for Fire and Life Safety, a school dedicated to the training of future firefighters and emergency medical technicians. Following graduation in 2009 he attended college for one year before deciding that he was done with school for the time being.

"My buddy was joining the Navy, so I went with him to the recruiting office in Crown Heights, Brooklyn," Beckford said with a laugh. "I got a lot of information on the benefits from the recruiter. As we were going home, he actually called up his aunt who had been in the Navy because it sounded too good to be true, and she said all the same things the recruiter had. That really helped me decide to join."

Beckford had also wanted to become a mechanic like other members of his family, so he joined the Navy as a Gas Turbine Mechanic in January 2010.

After first serving on USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60) from 2011 to 2016, he reported to USS John McCain (DDG 56) in the summer of 2016.

Once there, he became not only his division's leading petty officer, but also the ship's quality assurance officer. In summer of 2017, he departed on the ship for a regularly scheduled deployment. Beckford was assigned as an engineer of the watch in the number one machinery room on the watchbill as well as being assigned to the crucial sea and anchor detail. It was the sea and anchor detail watch that he was preparing to man when he woke up a little after 0500 on August 21, 2017.

Climbing out of his rack, he started his morning routine when he heard an announcement saying "Loss of steering." Alerted, but not yet alarmed, he hurried to finish getting ready.

"I knew I was going to be needed," said Beckford. "Then I heard and felt something hit us in what felt like the back, so I grabbed my coveralls, threw them on, hit the lights in the berthing and was yelling, 'Get up! Get up! Get up!'"

As he was heading to the central control station to assist the engineering department, he saw Sailors stumbling out of berthings whose hatches were nearby.

"Some were covered in fuel, some didn't have clothes on, everyone was just wet, so I grabbed one of my guys and took them out to the flight deck, and that's when I saw the huge hole in the back end of the ship," said Beckford. "I brought him back and I gave him to another Sailor to get him to medical, then I went back to damage control central to manage the damage."

Beckford said his concern or panic did not set in immediately; instead, his training took over.

"We had done damage control training the day before, and at first you're so much into the situation that your body takes over, it's muscle memory," said Beckford. "You're not thinking; you're just going through the motions."

After they got reports of someone trapped in berthing three, Beckford and another Sailor went down to the compartment, but the hatch was stuck shut. They quickly went to the second access hatch and together, the two first classes entered the chaotic scene and found a Sailor trapped in his rack.

"I was lifting up the rack to try and create space," said Beckford. "The racks were smashed together, almost welded from the pressure and looked like sardines in a can."

Together they started working to free the Sailor despite the rising water, floating fuel, and razor-sharp sheet metal.

"We realized we needed the pneumatic cutters, which we call the Jaws of Life," said Beckford, "from up above, we heard the executive officer yell down 'what do you need?' so we said, 'the jaws of life!' And he ran himself to get them for us. We finally freed him and thought we were done."

"I have an accent, so everyone knows my voice." Beckford continued. "We were saying we were done. Then we heard a voice in the bottom rack 'Yo Beck! Come here man! Don't leave me, don't leave me!' So, we started working to get him out of there too."

With a second Sailor trapped they restarted the rescue efforts, and in the heat of the moment, even other injuries took a backseat to the rescue attempts.

"I was lifting the racks up to create space, and one of the other damage controlmen asked if I needed help," Beckford explained. "I told him to grab higher up and help me lift and when he did his arm touched the top and he got shocked from a wire. But he didn't care, we weren't going to leave anyone down there."

His initial rescue team eventually got a hand from other members of the crew.

"We were lifting and then Lt. [Aaron] Van Driessche showed up and helped us pry up the racks," said Beckford. "Our main propulsion assistant [Chief Warrant Officer Michael Calhoun] who was this short, strong guy eventually got down there, and he was able to kick out the emergency escape at the foot of the rack so that the Sailor could escape."

After checking to make sure they had saved everyone in the compartment, they left to continue damage control efforts elsewhere, including setting up emergency pumps and staging the ship's small flight deck to transfer injured Sailors for emergency treatment to amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) which was nearby.

The next morning, Beckford found out he had not completed the rescue attempt without injury. His feet and legs were covered with chemical burns caused by the fuel he waded through during the rescue. Those burns rendered him almost unable to walk from the pain, requiring him to be transferred to America for treatment. Eventually, he was able to make a full recovery.

After this ship tour, Beckford transferred to recruiting duty at Navy Recruiting District (NRD) New York, where he was selected for advancement to chief petty officer. Despite the infamy of the collision and his heroic actions, very few at his new command knew about it. "I had no idea," said one recruiter. "He's very nice and always willing to help, just like any other chief, but that was all I knew about him."

It was because of this silence on the situation that so many of the command were left silenced and amazed when he was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal at an all hands call in October 2019. The Navy and Marine Corps Medal, established in 1942 by Congress, is the highest non-combat award in the United States Navy, and it's only awarded to those who performed an act of lifesaving while risking their own life to do it. Beckford received the award along with the other six Sailors and officers who performed the rescue. Additionally, 43 other crew members were awarded Navy and Marine Corps Commendation or Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals for their actions following the collision.

When asked about how the collision affected him, he gave a soft smile and said, "That was one of the worst days of my Navy career, but it's one of the moments I look back on because to see how well the crew came together when disaster struck . . . that was a moment you're like, 'man, training does work.'"

Chief Gas Turbine Mechanic Delando Beckford is the soft-spoken Navy Chief leading the Sailors of the Navy recruiting station in Hempstead, New York. (Photo by Bruce Howard, Navy Recruiting Command)

Navy Recruiting Region East holds Change of Command Ceremony

Story by Seaman Apprentice Elijah Newton, Navy Recruiting Command

Rear Admiral Dennis Velez salutes the new commander of Navy Recruiting Command Region East, Captain Katrina Hill. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Austin J. Breum)

MILLINGTON, Tenn. — Capt. Katrina Hill relieved Capt. James D. Bahr as commodore, Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) Region East, during a change of command ceremony held at NRC headquarters, May 8.

During his tour at NRC, Bahr led over 3,500 personnel dispersed across the eastern half of the United States and Europe. Under his leadership, NRC Region East successfully recruited and assessed over 27,000 Sailors, and he guided the transformation of four legacy Navy recruiting Districts into Navy Talent Acquisition Groups.

"This is a tough business; you recognize that," said Bahr as he addressed Hill. "I want you to know that you have a fantastic team here in Region East, and they're ready to get the job done for you.

Hill's most recent assignment prior to reporting to NRC was to the Office of Legislative Affairs as a liaison to the House of Representatives.

Hill received a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy. She also earned a Master of Business Administration from Pennsylvania State University in 2006, and she attended Harvard's Kennedy School of Government as a national security fellow.

In her closing remarks, Hill talked about how excited she was to join the NRC staff.

"You all started stories for Sailors, and those will go on long after all of us are gone," said Hill. "I am incredibly happy to be here and proud to be here and be part of this team."

Navy Recruiting Command consists of a command headquarters, two Navy Recruiting Regions, 14 Navy Recruiting Districts and 12 Navy Talent Acquisition Groups that serve more than 815 recruiting stations across the world. Their combined goal is to attract the highest quality candidates to assure the ongoing success of America's Navy.

Navy Recruiting Station Opens in Salina, Welcomes First Local Future Sailor

Future Sailor Logan Hasselman dons a Navy ball cap at Navy Recruiting Station Salina, KS. Hasselman is the first local Future Sailor to join the U.S. Navy out of the newly opened station, which first opened its doors on May 1, 2020. (Photo by Senior Chief Navy Counselor James Rayburn)

Story by Petty Officer 1st Class Chris Williamson, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Mid America

SALINA, Kan. – Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Mid America recently opened a Navy Recruiting Station (NRS) in Salina, Kansas, May 1, 2020. The new station, located in the town's Central Mall, will serve as a core resource for recruiting future Sailors into the Navy.

NRS Salina is the 30th brick-and-mortar station to join the NTAG Mid America family and is led by Machinery Repairman 1st Class Justin Bacon.

Bacon, born and raised in McPherson, Kansas, decided to do recruiting duty back in his home state because he wanted to use his Fleet experiences and leadership to lead Sailors and pique people's interest in the Navy.

"I'm very excited to be here," said Bacon. "I have a very good outlook on my career, so I think I'm a prime candidate to shed some light on the Navy."

Despite being in the middle of the Midwest, Bacon feels that NRS Salina, its surrounding area and community are valuable assets to the Navy's recruiting mission.

"The Navy definitely needs to be in Salina so we can keep people informed," said Bacon. "There's a lot of talent here and it's a great market to tap into. Salina definitely has the kind of motivated and hard-working people the Navy needs."

Despite having just opened their doors, NRS Salina already has the aforementioned type of people interested in being part of the world's most powerful Navy.

Logan Hasselman, a 19-year-old from Abilene, Kansas, was the first local Future Sailor to walk through NRS Salina's doors.

"I initially went online to navy.com to learn more about the Navy," said Hasselman. "A recruiter contacted me shortly after I submitted my information and directed me to the closest station which happened to be down the road."

Hasselman's interest in the Navy purely came from a desire to be the best person he can be.

"I want to better myself," said Hasselman. "I think among all the military branches, the Navy has the most opportunities for me to do that."

On May 20, Hasselman swore-in to the Navy at the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) in Kansas City, Missouri. While at MEPS, he chose his rate as a Machinist's Mate Submarines. The job came with a 5-year commitment and a $12,000 enlistment bonus.

"I picked my rate because I've always been around machinery," said Hasselman. "Ever since I was a kid, I've been working with my dad who is a vehicle mechanic. So, it seemed like a good fit for me."

As for why he'd like to serve aboard submarines as a mechanic, his answer was simple.

"Submarines just seem really cool."

Although Bacon, who is Hasselman's recruiter, hasn't served aboard any submarines, he's positive the young man will succeed in the Navy.

"Knowing that I'm guiding someone in the right direction has such a positive impact on me and my Future Sailors," said Bacon. "My time in the Navy has been very rewarding, and I hope it's just as rewarding for Future Sailor Hasselman."

Hasselman is due to ship out to the Navy's only boot camp, Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Illinois, June 29.

The U.S. Navy has been recruiting amid the coronavirus pandemic, by practicing virtual recruiting, enacting strict screening processes, physical distancing and utilizing protective gear to the fullest extent possible.

NTAG Mid America, part of Navy Recruiting Command (NRC), recruits the next generation of Navy Sailors throughout areas encompassing Missouri, Kansas, central and southern Illinois, and a portion of Kentucky.

E-Talent Team Proves Great Success for Navy Recruiting

Story by Jordan Smith, Navy Recruiting Command

Interior Communications Electrician 2nd Class Brandy Clevenger is highlighted in this week's "Recruiter Spotlight." (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cody Anderson)

MILLINGTON, Tenn. (NNS) – Navy recruiters have a tough job. Historically they have been pulled in a many different directions trying to scout out talent, assess interest and eligibility of applicants and then onboard those who meet all of the qualifications. With leads coming in from all directions, it can be hard to engage those leads effectively. That's where the E-Talent Team comes in.

E-Talent Teams are taking over for what were Leads Production Teams under the old model. These teams existed in each Navy Recruiting District (NRD), and provided administrative support pursuing the leads generated through marketing and advertising. However, this still proved to be daunting for the districts. Now, focused E-Talent Teams in each district thoroughly develop these leads, enabling recruiters to do what they do best: find qualified people in local high schools, colleges, and the civilian sector to join the Navy.

One of E-Talent Team's main functions has shifted the role from administrative support to production, so now all of the marketing and advertising leads that come from national or local efforts go to the E-Talent Teams instead of going to the field recruiters to call or engage. This shift alleviates the burden put on field recruiters, but it also serves another purpose.

"There are a lot of areas that aren't covered directly by a local recruiter out in the field," said Petty Officer 1st Class Aaron Wollitz, E-Talent leading petty officer for NTAG Ohio River Valley. "They wanted to have the ability to reach the people who are in those areas without having someone physically in that area."

An E-Talent team resides in each NRD/NTAG and ranges from four to eight recruiting personnel. Each E-Talent scout will work those leads by calling and communicating via different platforms (e.g. texting, emailing, social media) to engage prospects or applicants. E-Talent scouts will blueprint applicants to determine their interest in the Navy, their eligibility, and a social media lead, and each E-Talent scout will be responsible for creating a social media platform to communicate with their target audiences in each of their areas of responsibility (AORs). This involves consistent posting and boosting of Navy content to create awareness. Not only do they engage the leads that they receive, but they are also responsible for increasing the number of local leads that are being generated across the Navy recruiting enterprise.

The implementation of the E-Talent Team has been wildly successful and has helped recruiters significantly, but all of this success wasn't achieved without its challenges.

"One of the challenges definitely was the tracking of all of the leads as they came in and trying to get full dispositions on them

Fire Controlman 1st Class Dwayne Clement is a cyber recruiter working at Navy Recruiting Command. His job involves answering questions on the Navy.com chat system and guiding potential future Sailors through the process of joining the Navy. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Zachary S. Eshleman)

ultimately get them ready to meet the recruiter face-to-face. By the time they do a face-to-face interaction with a recruiter, they've already expressed interest in joining the Navy and have been properly vetted as a potential future Sailor. Then the recruiter can work with that applicant to start the process for enlistment.

"The good thing about having an E-Talent Division is that it allows us to have singular focus on all of the leads that are generated either nationally or locally," said Wollitz. "Now that we have a dedicated team of people who are working on nothing but leads, the ratios and contribution to goal and everything have skyrocketed."

Another duty of the E-Talent Teams is to increase social media presence at the local level. Each individual NRD/NTAG will have and feed all of that information back up the chain of command for tracking purposes," said Wollitz. "There wasn't anything specifically in place, so I kind of created my own way of doing it. At this point now, we have 100% tracking on every person that comes into our system."

Petty Officer 1st Class Paul Burke, E-Talent leading petty officer of NTAG Nashville, believes their success comes down to one thing.

"It comes down to delivering the highest quality experience that you can," said Burke. "This is an experience. Talking to people in the Navy is an experience. We own this disposition. If we focus on that disposition being as high quality as it possibly can be, the numbers will play out for themselves. This isn't archery; this is horseshoes."

Big Bonuses of Joining the Navy

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Austin Breum, Navy Recruiting Command

MILLINGTON, Tenn. (NNS) – With the current spike in unemployment and the uncertainty of what post-pandemic employment and the economy will look like, many are searching for stable and viable career paths.

For many people on the fence about joining the Navy, now may be the time to truly consider making the decision to serve. Benefits include 100% medical and dental coverage, housing and food assistance, and can also help pay for college education or college debt. In some instances, for selected career paths you may be eligible for enlistment bonuses up to $38,000.

There are currently over a dozen rates (jobs) that are offering bonuses from $10,000-$38,000. Some bonuses are also given based on education level or iphysical fitness ability.

The Navy is offering many benefits to new recruits and is seeking highly qualified individuals to serve in the Navy. Some of these high value rates are Hospital Corpsman, Navy Diver, Information Systems Technician, and Nuclear and Special Warfare Operators.

"The Navy has been a great experience for me and I love what I do," said Heather Charara, National Chief Recruiter, Navy Recruiting Command. "It's a wonderful feeling knowing that I can be a part of someone else's journey and help them start their career in the Navy."

Alongside the specific rating bonuses being offered, there are also bonuses that are applicable to all rates. These are based on your education level starting at a $3,000 bonus for being a high school graduate and up to a $7,000 bonus for having 96 or more semester hours of college credit.

"We are looking for highly motivated individuals who are going to be in for the long haul. Not only do we need them now, but we need them 10, 15, 20 years from now," said Charara. "I am very proud to be a part of the Navy and to be able to look back and see how far I've come in such a short amount of time. I hope to inspire a new generation and help bring more people into this amazing career opportunity."

Additionally, if college debt has already been accrued the Navy can help pay back loans up to $65,000. This bonus can be applied to Stafford, Perkins, PLUS, and other Title 4 loans college students may have received. These bonuses are awarded to individuals who enlist to become an Air Rescue Swimmer, Cryptologic Technician, Missile Technician, Nuclear and Special Warfare Operator, and select other rates.

"This is a great opportunity for many people to explore a career path they may have never even thought of," said Justin Noble, National Chief Recruiter Executive Assistant. "It's a great feeling knowing that no matter how the economy may look, I will continue to be getting a paycheck and I have job security in the Navy."

In addition to the educational bonuses, the Navy also offers physical fitness bonuses. All Active Component recruits, regardless of rate, who pass their week one Physical Fitness Assessment at Recruit Training Command (RTC) with a score of satisfactory-medium or better, will be awarded a $2,000 bonus. Additionally, all Active Component recruits who complete the Warrior Challenge Program and graduate from RTC are eligible for a $2,000 bonus.

"The Navy has many great incentives for motivated, physically fit, and highly educated individuals," said Noble. "We hope to attract many young and powerful recruits to fill our shoes as we look forward to the future of the world's greatest Navy."

For more information regarding how you can join the Navy and all applicable bonuses, visit https://www.navy.com/bonus.

Goats & Glory Esports Team Update

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Austin Breum, Navy Recruiting Command

MILLINGTON,Tenn. (NNS) - As the coronavirus pandemic continues to affect the country, and leaders are figuring out the best ways to reopen safely and get things back up and running, it is more important than ever for the Navy to find new ways to connect with potential Sailors.

The pandemic forced a fast shift from face-to-face interactions, to mostly virtual prospecting. Thankfully, the Navy's esports team, Goats & Glory, has given recruiters access to new recruits, while still maintaining safety measures during the pandemic.

"It's not a lot different than it was before the pandemic," said Lt. Robert Dyer. "The esports efforts were already mostly digital, so I think if anything, it has driven more traffic to us while everybody is stuck at home."

With many different venues postponing or canceling events and sports leagues pushing back their schedules, there has been a lot of attention shifted to online entertainment. Competitive gaming has been one of the least affected sports leagues.

"Especially with traditional sports like basketball and baseball not on TV, what else do people have to watch? So they consume more digital media," said Dyer. "We accelerated the launch of our Twitch channel a little earlier than we liked. We were hoping to hold off until we had our facility in Memphis ready to go, but we're very happy we got out ahead."

In the last eight weeks, the Goats & Glory Twitch channel has gained over 1,200 followers and more than 760,000 visitors with 90 percent of the visitors having not previously engaged with navy.com. Additionally, more than 70 people have clicked online to request to chat with a recruiter for more information about the Navy.

"People are definitely out there watching, engaging and interacting with our Sailors on the team," said Dyer. "First and foremost, we're just out there engaging on a near daily basis with the community. We've reached out doing several squad streams and trying to fit into the community just trying to get exposure in those authentic ways."

The Goats & Glory team currently streams on the America's Navy Twitch channel Monday through Saturday with a rotation of different games and players. You can follow the Goats & Glory team and watch their streams at https://www.twitch.tv/americasnavy.

UPDATE

Recruiter Spotlight

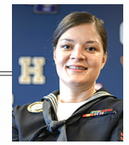
Every week, a selected Navy Talent Acquisition Group or Navy Recruiting District chooses one Sailor with a special story to tell. We are highlighting them here so people across the country can see who our recruiters truely are. To learn more about these extraordinary Sailors, visit our website at www.cnrc.navy.mil.

January

Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class John Arendt

Interior Communications Electrician 2nd Class Brandy Clevenger

Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Tameka Butcher

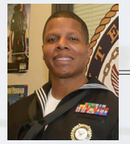


Navy Counselor 2nd Class Nicole White

Chief Navy Counselor Tony Murphy

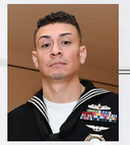
February

Avaiation Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Emerie Joy Toylo



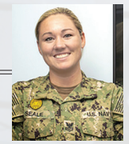
Navy Counselor 1st Class Christopher Fuller

Aviation Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Brian Glass

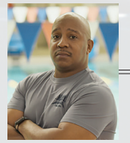


Retail Services Specialist 2nd Class Orlando Sanabria

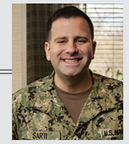
March



Master-at-Arms 1st Class Briana Seale



Naval Aircrewman (Tactical Helicopter) 1st Class Brennen Blackwell



Navy Psychiatric Nurse Lieutenant Thomas Sarti

Bravo Zulu

As part of a new initiative, Rear Admiral Dennis Velez would like to offer a Bravo Zulu to the following individuals for performing exceptionally during a unique time in Navy Recruiting.

Lt. Cmdr. Jessica Cline

Navy Recruiting Command Headquarters

Aviation Electrician's Mate 1st Class Joseph Luna

Navy Recruiting District New York

Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Cyriacus Owaraji

Navy Talent Acquisition Group Golden Gate

Fire Control Technician 2nd Class Cody Leaver

Navy Talent Acquisition Group Nashville

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 3rd Class Brandon Morales

Navy Talent Acquisition Group Philadelphia

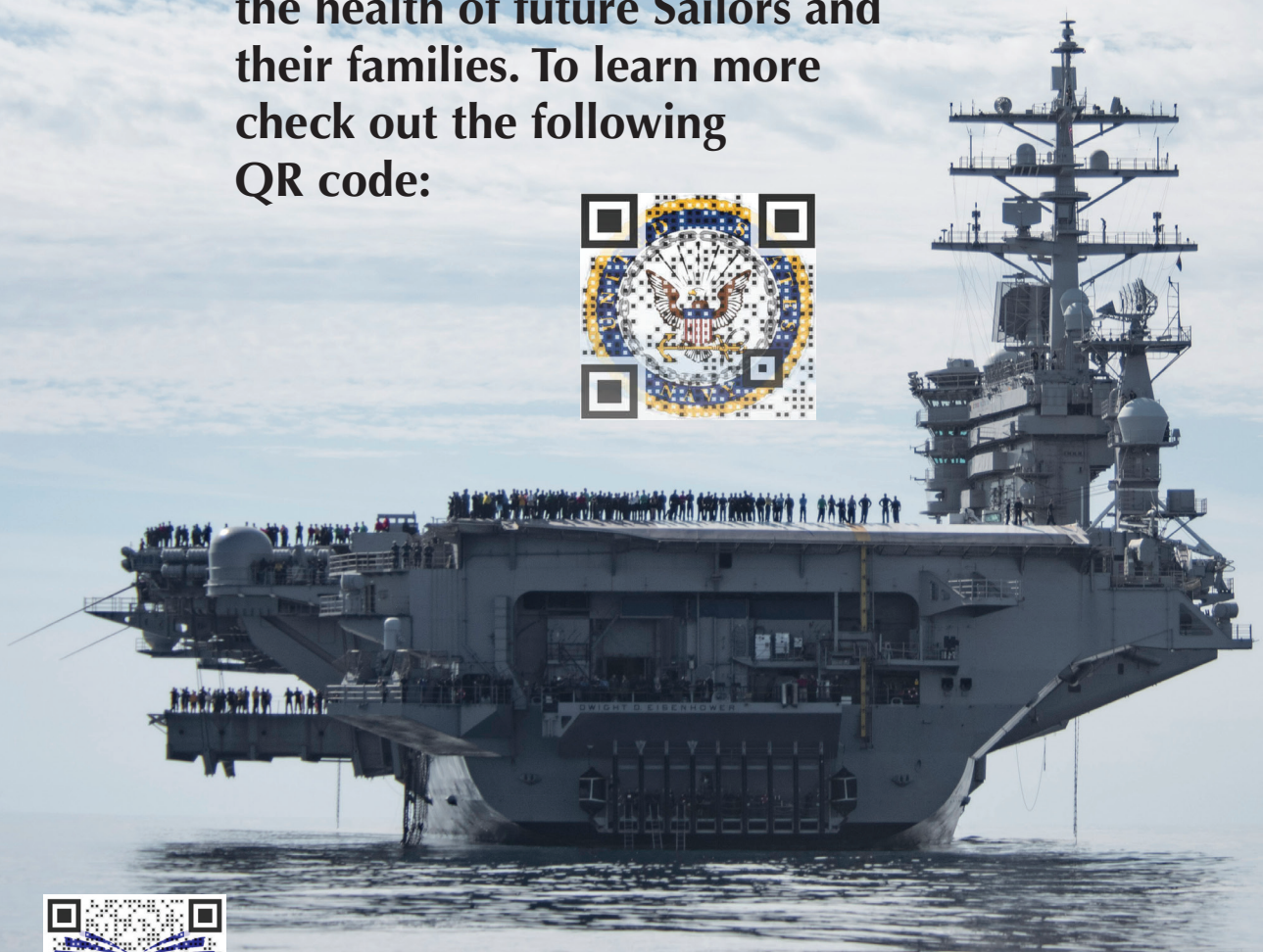
E-7 and above

Civilian

E-6 and below

THE MISSION CONTINUES

Our recruiters have shifted to 100% virtual recruiting to protect the health of future Sailors and their families. To learn more check out the following QR code:



NAVY Future of the Fleet RECRUITER

Atlantic Ocean - USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69)