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## **Submarine Learning Center announces 2015 Sailor of the Year**

By Submarine Learning Center Public Affairs

GROTON, Conn. – Sonar Technician 1st Class (SS) Zachary B. Nielsen was announced as the Submarine Learning Center (SLC) 2015 Sailor of the Year Nov. 12.

In announcing Nielsen's selection, SLC Commanding Officer Capt. David A. Roberts endorsed the praises of Captain Andrew C Jarrett, commanding officer, Naval Submarine School, who chose Nielsen as his Sailor of the Year and nominated him for consideration by the SLC.

"Petty Officer Nielsen's dedication, energy, enthusiasm and sustained superior performance are exactly what every command requires of a first class petty officer," said Roberts. "His attention to critical detail and his ability to foresee problems is unmatched. He provides energetic and intrusive deck-plate leadership and much needed mentorship to his junior Sailors. Petty Officer Nielsen welcomes the most challenging tasks and always produces the highest quality results."

Roberts also had words of praise for all who were considered.

"These outstanding Sailors are an extremely talented field of candidates who epitomize the honor, courage and commitment of our Sailors throughout the submarine learning domain."

Nielsen is the leading petty officer of the Sonar Technician Submarine "A" School at Naval Submarine School in Groton, Connecticut, and is responsible for the supervision and administration of one of the largest initial accession "A" schools in the Navy. His duties include supervising curriculum and administration for a division of 13 instructors and approximately 120 Sonar Technician Submarine (STS) students at any given time.

Nielsen sees his selection as recognition for a consistently high standard of performance excellence which he feels is the result of competitive camaraderie. "We have superlative Sailors throughout the Submarine Learning Center domain, so just being considered is an honor; being selected as the SLC representative is very humbling," Nielsen said.

"The SLC Sailor of the Year selection process for a domain spread across thirteen time zones with instructors teaching learners ranging from newly enlisted accessions through senior officers in submarine command courses reflects the challenges and rewards of Sailors assigned to instructor duty," said SLC Command Master Chief, Electronics Technician Master Chief (SS) Joseph Hundley.

Those considered, like Nielsen, were their respective training site's Sailors of the Year and include: Sonar Technician Surface 1st Class (SW/IUSS) Abigail Russell, Submarine Learning Facility, Norfolk, Virginia; Sonar Technician (SS/SW) 1st Class Andrew Whitson, Trident Training Facility, Kings Bay, Georgia; Electronics Technician 1st Class (SS) Jake Petty, Trident Training Facility, Bangor, Washington; Sonar Technician (SS) 1st Class Gabriel Brazell, SLC, Detachment San Diego, California, and Machinist's Mate (SS) 1st Class Jermaine Childs, Naval Submarine Training Center Pacific, Pearl Harbor.

Hundley noted the selection process was difficult because of the caliber of qualified candidates.

"As you can imagine, all of our Sailors had impeccable credentials, were superlative representatives of their schoolhouses, and each would be a great selection as our Sailor of the Year," Hundley said. "The decision, really, is choosing a 'Most Valuable Player' from what, in essence, is an All-Star team."

Nielsen conceded being selected changes you a little.

"When I prepare for duty, I look at myself a little extra in the mirror, because now I know there are others looking at me as well," Nielsen said. "You aren't just a top performer; you become the standard by which others judge themselves."

Nielsen moves to the next level of competition, representing the SLC for consideration as the Naval Education and Training Command 2015 Sailor of the Year.

For more information on the Naval Education and Training Command, visit the NETC website: <https://www.netc.navy.mil>.

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