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Contact: Lt. Cmdr. Kate Meadows

850.452.5845  
(DSN) 922.4858  
(FAX) 850.452.4900

## **DEPARTMENT HEAD GRADUATES BOUND FOR THE FLEET**

NEWPORT, R.I. – Surface Warfare Officers School (SWOS) announced the graduation of Department Head Class 228 on Sept. 18 in the Admiral Michael G. Mullen Auditorium.

Sixty-three Surface Warfare Officers completed the 27-week course designed to prepare officers for duty as chief engineers, combat systems and weapons officers, operations officers on all classes of ships, and as First Lieutenants on amphibious ships.

The course is divided into two major sections – Tactical Action Officer (TAO), which focuses on undersea warfare, air defense, surface warfare, and expeditionary warfare and Operations, Readiness, Training, and Engineering (ORTE), which explores the specifics of each student's prospective assignments.

"Surface ship department heads have a challenging task – they are at the heart of long range planning as well as day to day execution of missions, functions and tasks aboard each of their ships," said Capt. David A. Welch, SWOS commanding officer. "SWOS strives to expand their level of knowledge, and hone key facets of our vocation as they prepare for a key career assignment. I think it's important to pause and acknowledge their completion of this rigorous, six month course."

Rear Admiral Pete Fanta, Director, Surface Warfare (N96), was the guest speaker for the ceremony. "The nature of the threat has changed, nations are building navies to contest our ability to control the sea," said Fanta. "The truth of the matter is we cannot project power unless we own the water column and the air above where we wish to operate. That's our job, and it is something we are going to seriously focus on, probably for the rest of your careers." He added, "the best ships are the ships where the Department Heads work together, every step of the way and always remain dedicated to the Navy's core values of honor, courage and commitment."

Lt. Morgan Dietzel, prospective operations officer for USS BAINBRIDGE (DDG 96), received the Arleigh Burke Award for the graduate recognized by classmates as the individual possessing the strongest leadership, industry and perseverance; best exemplifying the fighting spirit of Admiral Burke's famous squadron, the 'Little Beavers' – Destroyer Squadron 23. She was also named "Top Gunner" for her outstanding performance on the tactical portion of the course.

"It's really an incredible honor to be selected by your peers for an award like this," said Dietzel. "It gives me a lot of confidence as I go out to the fleet to lead my department as well as be a leader for my peers in the wardroom."

Lt. Adam Van Horn, Lt. Thomas Brewer and Lt. Brian Newcomb were also recognized during the ceremony. Van Horn, prospective weapons officer on USS HALSEY (DDG 97) was the recipient of the City of Newport Award for demonstrating the highest qualities of professionalism and leadership, as reflected by his overall contributions to class 228. Brewer received the Newport Navy League award for academic excellence as the top graduate for

department head class 228, and will serve as Chief Engineer on USS MCCAMPBELL (DDG 85). Newcomb, prospective chief engineer in LCS Crew 101, earned the "Top Snipe" award for having the highest overall grade point average for the engineering portion of the course.

After more than 50 years, the Department Head Course remains the flagship course at SWOS. Approximately 275 students attend the course each year.

SWOS is headquartered in Newport, R.I. and oversees nine learning sites, which provide more than 1,000 courses a year to more than 67,000 Sailors.

SWOS uses a mix of blended-learning techniques comprised of instructor-led classes, hands-on labs, high fidelity, physics based simulation and computer-based training. Courses include specialized training supporting all enlisted engineering ratings, and Surface Warfare Officers at every level. Building maritime partnerships, the command also provides training to international students.

For more information about Surface Warfare Officers School, visit <https://www.netc.navy.mil/centers/swos/>.

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

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Story by Lt. Jason Bilbro, Surface Warfare Officers School Command

