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Coronado High School gets underwater with Sea Perch Program

SAN DIEGO — A group of 50 students from the Naval Science and Engineering Programs at Coronado High School in Coronado, Calif. demonstrated their ability to build and control underwater Remote Operated Vehicles (ROVs) Jan. 28.

The students are part of the Office of Naval Research's (ONR) Sea Perch program, building their ROVs from kits provided by grants from ONR and the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI).

According to ONR, Sea Perch is an innovative underwater robotics program that equips teachers and students with the resources they need to construct an underwater ROV in an in or out-of-school setting. Students build the ROV from a kit comprised of low-cost, easily accessible parts, following a curriculum that teaches basic engineering and science concepts with a marine engineering theme.

Coordinating the local Sea Perch program is retired Navy Capt. Kenneth Ireland, the senior naval science instructor for the Coronado High School Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) program. "It's all about getting these kids jazzed-up and excited about science and engineering," Ireland said. "I like to stress a well-rounded learning

experience by having each student participate in each aspect of building the ROV.”

Broken up into nine teams, students had the opportunity to learn about robotics, marine engineering principles, and oceanography while building their underwater ROVs. Assembly requirements included soldering parts together, building electrical motors, and ensuring the watertight integrity of the electronic components.

At the Coronado High School pool, the teams were challenged to operate the ROVs through timed maneuvering challenges including navigating through a series of underwater obstacles and moving hanging rings from one location to another.

William O'Brien, a Coronado High senior, said that working on the ROVs brought together a strong skill-set for his team. “Problem solving, teamwork, and the hands-on experience building these ROVs were all a part of the learning value from this project,” he said.

For more information about the Naval Science Program and NJROTC, visit <http://www.njrotc.navy.mil/index.asp>

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