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Groton learning center announces 2012 Instructors of the Year

GROTON, Conn. – The Submarine Learning Center (SLC) in Groton, Conn. announced its 2012 Instructors of the Year Feb. 6.

Capt. Emil Casciano, SLC's commanding officer congratulated the selectees for their professional diligence and dedication that ensures fleet readiness and mission accomplishment by providing the right Sailor with the right knowledge, skills and abilities at the right point in their career.

"These individuals were selected from an extremely talented field of candidates who consistently exhibited superb instructional technique and leadership skills," he said. "They serve as role models for their students and are critical to the training process and to fleet readiness."

Navy Diver 2nd Class Jason Fenn, assigned to Naval Submarine School's Submarine Escape Trainer, is the Junior Enlisted Instructor of the Year. A Master Training Specialist (MTS) rated instructor, he successfully graduated 800 initial accession and fleet level students, as well as qualifying five other MTS instructors and two high risk instructors while establishing a system to train instructors to obtain their MTS qualification.

Fenn also qualified more quickly than anyone who has gone before him in all submarine escape qualifications and qualified as an inside tender, a high level specialty that allows him to give medical attention to patients in need inside the facility's hyperbaric oxygen chamber.

"As instructors, we are the 'experts' for every Sailor in every class," he said. "We have to demonstrate through everything we say and everything we do our belief in the proficiency and effectiveness of whatever course and subject we are teaching. I may teach submarine escape, but I also instill confidence."

"Petty Officer Fenn's ability as an instructor and exceptional leadership combined with his thorough knowledge of the mechanics of submarine escape and physiology of diving make possible the highest quality of instruction at the Naval Submarine School," said his leading chief petty officer, Senior Chief Navy Diver Robert Evans.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Christopher Johnson, also assigned to the Submarine Escape Trainer is the Mid-Grade Enlisted Instructor of the Year.

Johnson performed medical screenings for more than 2,400 initial accession and fleet level students and was also a classroom instructor for 250 students. As a Medical Department Leading Petty Officer he took an active role helping streamline the way medical screenings are conducted and also oversaw the acquisition of more than \$15,000 worth of new pulmonary function testing equipment for the trainer.

"I have one opportunity to show Sailors' a skill we hope they'll never need to use, but if they do, I train them to save their life," said Johnson. "The

techniques of pressurized escape may be unique to the submarine force, but the ability to remain calm and collected under emotional and physical stress is a life-skill that a Sailor will use in some form every day and each of my student's counts on me to help them learn it."

Chief Sonar Technician William McDade, Leading Chief Petty Officer of the Modernization Training Team at Naval Submarine Training Center Pacific (NSTCP) in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii is the Senior Enlisted Instructor of the Year.

"Leading a team of five instructors in the execution of more than 800 hours of schoolhouse, shipboard and at-sea modernization training for five submarine crews, Chief McDade was a critical asset training the crews of three forward deployed submarines home ported in Guam and providing more than 250 hours of crew instruction in sonar employment and tactics," said Capt. Howard Goldman, NSTCP's commanding officer. "He is recognized as NSTCP's Subject Master Expert (SME) for training the command's sonar instructors, as well as students enrolled in the Submarine Command Course (SCC) and he is the command's new senior tactical advisor."

Honored by his selection, McDade says he has found his calling.

"Being an instructor is something that's become a part of who I am, not just what I do," he said. "I have the responsibility to train and teach Sailors of various ranks and skill levels, to elevate their overall expertise and professionalism in the most demanding tasks in the submarine force. They become the standard by which all other submarine Sailors measure themselves"

Lt. Jeremiah Johnson the pre-deployment training Officer at the Submarine Learning Facility (SLF) in Norfolk, Va. is the Officer Instructor of the Year.

“Lt. Johnson is very deserving of this recognition, his dedication to fleet training was consistently demonstrated during the development, management and execution of 17 pre-deployment training events for five Norfolk based submarines that resulted in five successful deployments,” said Cmdr. Albert Onley, SLF Norfolk’s commanding officer. “His commitment to classroom instruction and team training complemented by his subject matter expertise helps keep him in high demand with submarine crews looking for the latest in technique and theory on a broad range of training topics requiring demonstrated mastery.”

Johnson says he recognizes the importance of being an instructor and is aware of his role shaping the next generation of undersea warriors.

“We instructors have a unique opportunity to leave our fingerprints on our submarine force. As subject matter experts we are often the agents of change in showing and sharing new procedures, equipment or approaches to maintaining undersea supremacy and mission readiness,” he said. “Every successful deployment is comprised of hundreds of different elements and situations, not the least of which is the ability and success of classroom and trainer encounters to develop and maintain critical skills and vital abilities. That is what I, as an instructor, bring to the fleet--new knowledge and approaches to help us remain the best-trained and most able submarine force in the world.”

Fenn, McDade and both Johnson's will now go on to compete, in their respective categories, for Naval Education and Training Command's Instructor of the Year.

For information on the Submarine Learning Center, visit
<http://www.netc.navy.mil/centers/slc/>

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Story by Submarine Learning Center Public Affairs