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NATTC CPO 365 Sailors immerse themselves in Naval History

GULF SHORES, Ala. – As part of the local Chief Petty Officer 365 (CPO 365) professional development program for senior petty officers seeking promotion to chief, 38 1st class petty officers and six chief petty officers from Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC) traveled to Fort Morgan in Gulf Shores, Ala. July 10.

At Fort Morgan, the group explored the historic battlefield and discussed the naval history of the Battle of Mobile Bay.

The battle took place on the morning of Aug. 5, 1864, as Adm. David Farragut's force of 18 warships steamed into Mobile Bay fighting their way past the Confederate defense of Fort Morgan. During the approach, Farragut commanded his fleet to ignore defenses in the harbor, famously proclaiming "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!"

Command CPO 365 coordinator for NATTC Senior Chief Aviation Support Equipmentman Luis Fontanez said the visit to Fort Morgan dovetailed perfectly with the history and heritage aspect of the program.

"The event gave the group a hands-on opportunity to show how our strength is linked to our past, with an emphasis on history, heritage and naval

traditions," said Fontanez. "Each participant provided a heritage lesson, presenting their research findings on each ship that participated in the naval battle. The shared training event concluded with the story of Adm. Farragut and the Order of Battle for Mobile Bay."

After the group completed their self-guided tour, they explored the museum, viewing artifacts and reading stories dating back more than 180 years.

The final event of the day was a guided tour provided by the park staff, dressed in Civil War period attire, including a demonstration of loading and firing a black-powder musket.

"Our Sailors learned a variety of lessons in naval warfighting strategy, effective use of technology, and history which allowed them to take a look back in time, a perfect illustration of how they are continuing a legacy of excellence," added Fontanez.

One of the tour group participants, Chief Naval Aircrewman (Operator) Mike Anderson, said that for aspiring chiefs, the tour helped put into perspective how far the Navy has come.

"This visit drove home where the Navy has been and illustrates how we continue to build upon the foundation from those who have gone before us," said Anderson. "Sailors stationed in Pensacola are in a location rich in naval history; those participating in CPO 365 are committed to passing on the stories of the past and helping us build a stronger Navy today."

For Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Jeremy Russell, Fort Morgan was a worthwhile learning experience.

"You can vividly imagine the scenes that played-out while standing at the west battery location overlooking the inlet to Mobile Bay," said Russell. "The

fort played a crucial role in how naval and overall military strategy was developed for that area, especially prior to the Battle of Mobile Bay."

CPO 365, a year-long development and training process for 1st class petty officers, was introduced in 2010. It includes two phases, the first begins annually in September and focuses on teamwork and leadership.

Phase two of training begins with the announcement of CPO selectees, and focuses on preparing selectees to enter the chief's mess. Phase II concludes with the anchor-pinning ceremony making the selectees full-fledged Navy chiefs. Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Michael Stevens revised the program for 2014-15, amending course curriculum and reinforcing a year-round training schedule for all 1st class petty officers.

For more than 70 years, NATTC has been providing training and increasing readiness within the Naval Aviation Enterprise. NATTC graduates approximately 15,000 Navy, Marine and international students annually. The majority of the student body is comprised of enlisted personnel attending "A" schools, where they gain the knowledge and skills required to perform in the fleet as technicians at the apprentice level.

Advanced schools provide higher-level technical knowledge for senior petty officers, and specialty schools offer specific skills not particular to any one rating, such as airman apprentice training, maintenance, personal financial management and shipboard aircraft firefighting. NATTC also conducts technical training for officers in aviation fuels, carrier air traffic control center operations, aircraft launch and recovery equipment, shipboard aircraft fire fighting and amphibious air traffic control center operations.

For more information about Naval Air Technical Training Center, visit their web site at <https://www.netc.navy.mil/centers/cnatt/nattc/Default.aspx>

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Story by Master Chief Avionics Technician Patrick Hosterman, Naval Air
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