
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News Release #130-14

December 17, 2014

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Naval Air Technical Training Center Recognizes top Sailors and Instructors for 2014

PENSACOLA, Fla. – Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC) recognized its 2014 top instructors and Sailors from its schools during a ceremony onboard Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola Dec.12.

Selected as Junior and Senior Sailor of the Year (SOY) were Naval Aircrewman (Tactical Helicopter) 2nd Class Michael Whitlock II and Air-Traffic Controller 1st Class Kelly Nelson. The Junior Instructor of the Year (IOY) was Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Aircraft Handling) 2nd Class Alec Weeks, the Mid-Grade IOY was Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Angel Rodriguez-Martinez and the Senior IOY was Chief Air-Traffic Controller Marcanthony Gutierrez.

Capt. Alan Dean, NATTC commanding officer, congratulated the awardees and noted that the competition for SOY and IOYs was keen.

"There are so many quality Sailors at this command that it is very, very tough to choose the winners," said Dean. "You should be proud of your selection. Congratulations and well done."

He also took a moment to speak to the family and friends of the selectees who were present at the ceremony.

“Thank you for your support. This is not an easy job and your backing is so important to enable them to accomplish what they have,” added Dean. “The encouragement and dedication you provide translates into improved performance while at work.”

Gutierrez, who worked as the Aviation electronics Technician I-Strand leading chief petty officer, echoed Dean’s remarks.

“I wouldn’t be here if not for the senior instructors who mentored me and took me under their wing,” said Gutierrez. “The best part is that now I get to show the junior personnel that earning an award like this is achievable if they are willing to work hard.”

Petty Officer Weeks described how it felt and exactly what kind of effort it took to be selected as IOY.

“It feels amazing to be recognized today,” he said. “It took a lot of hard work, study, focusing on skills and teaching all day every day. It’s been an honor to lead the future of the Navy in the right direction and to pass on knowledge to future troops that they will use every day.”

Dean noted that the other Sailors’ achievements were equally remarkable, and all certainly deserved the recognition. With nearly 500 active duty staff members at NATTC, these Sailors represent the top one percent of a highly professional and knowledgeable group of Sailors.

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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