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SWOS Names Instructors and Sailors of the Year

NEWPORT, R.I. – The commanding officer, Surface Warfare Officers School (SWOS) recognized the Newport-based SWOS Sailors of the Year (SOY) and Instructors of the Year (IOY) at a ceremony Dec. 4.

Operations Specialist 1st Class Thomas Milligan and Fire Controlman 1st Class Christopher Wallachy were selected as SWOS Newport Junior Sailor of the Year (JSOY) and Sailor of the Year (SOY), respectively.

"These Sailors are the best of the best," said Capt. David Welch, SWOS commanding officer. "They impact and influence every Surface Warfare Officer heading to Department Head and Commanding Officer assignments at sea. The surface community entrusts only its finest enlisted Sailors with these roles, and Petty Officers Milligan and Wallachy are shining examples of experienced Fleet Sailors whose expertise and professionalism add greatly to the learning experience."

Milligan, recently frocked to 1st Class Petty Officer, serves as an instructor in the Trainers and Simulators (N71) Directorate. He specializes as a Multi-Mission Tactical Trainer and Full Mission Bridge subject matter expert, personally impacting fleet readiness by training junior and senior officers in tactics and shiphandling.

"I'm honored. This is my first time winning anything at this level," said Milligan in regards to his selection. "This command has really given me an opportunity to shine; I took it and it's made me a better Sailor."

Wallachy is also assigned to the N71 Directorate as an instructor. According to his award package, he was responsible for providing 9,052 hours of outstanding training to 891 students, ranging from ensign to captain, on topics including anti-terrorism and firearms handling to critical Fleet tactical scenarios.

"To me this is a testament to the hard work and accomplishments of the people that work for and with me over the past year," said Wallachy.

"Nothing that I have done this year or during my entire time here at SWOS would have been accomplished without their support."

The SWOS overall command Sailor and Instructor of the Year competition includes the Newport headquarters as well as the nine SWOS learning sites dispersed around the globe. Recognized for outstanding contributions to the SWOS mission were: Engineman 1st Class Hyung Choe (SOY); Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Brian Sosa (junior enlisted IOY); Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Electrical) 1st Class Hao Vuong (mid-grade enlisted IOY); Chief Hull Maintenance Technician Benjamin Bates (senior enlisted IOY); and Lt. Patrick Hynes (officer IOY).

Petty Officers Choe, Sosa, and Vuong and Chief Bates serve as instructors at SWOS Command Unit, Great Lakes III. Lt. Hynes serves as an instructor at SWOS Learning Site, San Diego.

"SWOS is a huge command with hundreds of enlisted and officer staff members spread around the globe." said Welch. "I make my way around

each of the SWOS learning sites, but it's a challenge to develop personal relationships with Sailors you only meet a few times. The remarkable accomplishments of these Sailors, however, raised their profiles throughout the year. Each of these fleet-experienced individuals is an absolute technical expert, a role-model leader, and a dynamic instructor. I'm proud that they wear SWOS ball caps!"

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

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