

The Bowline

Newsletter of The Tenacious Tidewater Chapter
National Naval Officers Association



2012 scholarship recipients (l to r): Blair E. Cutting, Twymun K. Safford, Alston T. Cobb, Derrian W. Flemings, Jourdan K. Simpson, Keaun Q. Barrett, and Cameron K. Bell. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Lacordrick Wilson.

NNOA Awards Scholarships to Hampton Roads Students

By Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Karen Blankenship
Navy Public Affairs Support Element-East

NORFOLK (NNS) -- The National Naval Officers Association (NNOA) Tidewater Chapter awarded \$25,500 in scholarships to seven graduating high school students in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia, May 5.

The NNOA also awarded scholarships to four students who plan to pursue undergraduate degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

Three students received the Vice Admiral Gravely Scholarship, named after the first black naval officer to rise to the rank of vice admiral.

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Chapter Goals

Training and Education – To provide relevant, realistic, continuous training and information to enhance members' opportunities for success.

Membership – To aggressively recruit eligible individuals and organizations to actively contribute their skills and efforts towards achieving NNOA's mission.

Partnership - To establish community partnerships and maintain strong civic and military alliances to accomplish the mission and vision of the organization.

Public Relations – To actively highlight the accomplishments and benefits of the organization by effectively utilizing military and local communication channels.

Message from the President

Greetings Hampton Roads,

As we enter into Fall, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for a great summer at Harbor Park. As you know, our annual Harbor Park fundraiser is the sole source for funding the Vice Admiral Samuel Gravelly Scholarships. Thanks to the dedicated support of the Harbor Park team, we are on track to have another successful scholarship banquet in 2013.



In the year ahead, we will continue to expand partnering opportunities with diversity leaders, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) organizations and local societies with common interests. Exposing young students to STEM opportunities in the military and civil service is our top priority. Last year, we received over 60 applications for four scholarships from highly qualified candidates. As we solidify partnerships with DoD agencies, our goal for 2013 is the increase the number of STEM scholarships offered to local students desiring to pursue careers in the Sea Services.

In addition to the monthly Professional Military Education meetings held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, the Tidewater Chapter provides year-round deckplate mentoring, recruiting, and professional development and represents the military's "face of diversity" to local schools and universities. There are several mentoring and volunteer opportunities available each month. I challenge each of you commit at least one day each month toward making NNOA and ultimately our Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard better.

Finally, on behalf of Tidewater Chapter, I want to commend the outgoing members of the executive board for their dedicated service and extend a warm welcome to new members of the executive team. The year ahead is promising and filled with opportunities to enhance diversity in the Sea Services.

Terrel Fisher
CDR, SC, USN

Navy Promotes First African-American Female Three-Star Officer

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Phil Beaufort, U.S. Fleet Forces Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. (NNS) -- Vice Adm. Michelle Janine Howard has been a trail-blazer throughout her entire career. She was the first African-American woman to command a U.S. Navy warship, the first female graduate of the Naval Academy to achieve the rank of rear admiral, and the first African-American woman to command an Expeditionary Strike Group at sea.

Howard reached another milestone Aug. 24, when she became the first African-American woman promoted to three-star rank in the U.S. Armed Forces with the assumption of her new job as deputy commander, U.S. Fleet Forces headquartered here.

With a career highlighted by firsts, the path to Howard's current assignment as a Navy vice admiral initially began with an obstacle. It is an obstacle that taught her to embrace change, find strength in the challenges she faced, and to not be afraid to lean on others.

Howard said her Navy career began as a chance encounter while watching television. It was a documentary about one of the military service academies that opened Howard's eyes to a possible future career as an officer in the military. But as Howard learned, not all opportunities were available to women at that time.

The 12-year-old Howard went to her older brother to get his opinion on her becoming an officer. He informed her that U.S. military academies were not open to women. Undeterred, she spoke to her mother who told her that if she really wanted to join the military as an officer, she would have to wait until she was old enough.

Hopefully by that time, society would change, and if it does; then she should go after it. And go for it Howard did.

Four years after that discussion, the federal law concerning the acceptance of women into the nation's service academies changed. At 17, Howard applied and was accepted into the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.

In 1978, Howard entered the Naval Academy as a freshman. She was in only the third class to accept women. At that time women made up only five percent of the Navy. With more than 200 years of naval history and traditions, there was some resistance to change.

With a self-deprecating laugh Howard said that the Academy wasn't easy. In retrospect, she's realized that expecting a smooth sail wouldn't have been very realistic.

"When you look at where society was at the time, this was before there was even a woman on the Supreme Court, before Sally Ride was an astronaut, and it was also only five or six years after we became an all volunteer force in the military, so our society was still going through a lot of changes."

She says the one person who was incredibly helpful in putting her experiences in context was Wesley Brown. Brown was the first black Naval Academy graduate, Class of 1949. They met when Howard was a lieutenant commander.

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NORFOLK (Aug. 24, 2012) Vice Adm. Michelle Janine Howard, center, has her shoulder boards replaced by her husband, Wayne Cowles and her sister, Lisa Teitleman, during a promotion ceremony at Naval Support Activity Hampton Roads. Howard is the first African-American woman to receive a third star in flag rank. She assumes the duties as deputy commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command and commander of Task Force 20. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Rafael Martie/Released)



NEW ORLEANS (July 26, 2012) Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Jonathan Greenert meets with members of the National Naval Officers Association (NNOA) before delivering his remarks as the guest speaker at a luncheon hosted by the NNOA. During Greenert's keynote remarks he emphasized the importance of diversity reflected in the fleet and attributed it as one of the Navy's greatest strengths. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Peter D. Lawlor/Released)

Tidewater NNOA Racks Up National Awards

By Tidewater NNOA Public Affairs

The Tidewater Chapter of the National Naval Officers Association (NNOA) received several distinguished chapter and individual awards at the 2012 national conference. The 40th NNOA Professional Development and Training Conference was held July 24 in New Orleans, La.

Tidewater NNOA garnered three chapter awards including Outstanding Large Chapter (1st Place), Outstanding Chapter Newsletter (1st Place) and Established Growth- Large Chapter (2nd Place).

Eight Tidewater NNOA members received Distinguished Service Awards:

Cdr. Terrel Fisher
 Cdr. Thurraya S. Kent
 LtCol. (Ret) James Washington
 Lt. Cdr. Michelle Joachim
 Lt. Cdr. Keith Dobbins
 Lt. Cdr. Terri Gabriel
 Maj. Lawrence Arnold
 Lt. Julius Fears.

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"Tonight is about education and, throughout my life, I've always passionately believed education is the cornerstone to success," said keynote speaker Vice Adm. Carol M. Pottenger, deputy chief of staff for Capability Development NATO Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation.

The NNOA, which began in 1970, awarded its first Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) scholarship in 1980. Eventually, the scholarships were named in honor of Vice Adm. Samuel L. Gravely, Jr., and were also awarded to students outside of Navy ROTC. This year, the first STEM scholarships were awarded thanks to a grant by the Office of Naval Research.

"I hope everyone of you decides to put on the uniform," said Pottenger. "But, no matter where you study, what you study, and no matter how you decide to use this education, you will be serving your country."

The theme for this year's banquet was a quote from Nelson Mandela in which he said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."



Twymun K. Safford, recipient of a \$10,000 STEM scholarship speaks with guest speaker Vice Adm. Carol M. Pottenger at the Tidewater NNOA scholarship banquet. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Lacordrick Wilson.

Pottenger reiterated that sentiment by telling the scholarship recipients, "We expect you to give back."

"It's a real prestigious honor," said Twymun K. Safford, recipient of the \$10,000 STEM scholarship. "It's like I'm finally being rewarded for all the hard work I've done and it allows me continue on to the next level."

Safford, a student at Denbigh High School, plans to attend Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and major in aerospace engineering.

Alston T. Cobb, a student at Western Branch High School, received a \$5,000 STEM Scholarship. Blair E. Cutting, a student at First Colonial High School, and Derrian W. Flemings, a student at Bethel High School, both received \$2,500 STEM Scholarships.

Keaun Q. Barrett, a student at Churchland High School, received a \$2,500 Vice Admiral Gravely Scholarship. Cameron K. Bell, a student at Woodside High School, and Jourdan K. Simpson, a student at Lakeland High School, both received \$1,500 Vice Admiral Gravely Scholarships.

Pottenger issued a challenge to the recipients by saying, "If you're not being challenged by the course your life is taking you, then change that course. You must give it your all."

Gravely, who passed away in 2004, said, "Success in life is the result of several factors. My formula is simply education plus motivation plus perseverance. Education is paramount. Motivation: one must decide what he wants to do in life, how best to get there and to proceed relentlessly towards that goal. Perseverance: the ability to steadfastly proceed to your goal. It is the ability to overcome."

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"He talked about how great this country is and how much it has changed; that as the country changed, people changed. And even though he was the only African-American to attend Annapolis in the 1940s, when he attended reunions he was a member of that class," said Howard. "What I really learned from him was that he was a man who could forgive and go on with his life. There is a lot of strength in that."

Change is inevitable, and Howard rode a wave of it as she moved through her career.

"In the 1980s when the Navy opened the logistics ships to women, that was huge, because it allowed a lot of opportunities for women to serve at sea. Then it was just a few years later that we were engaged in Operation Desert Storm. So even though women weren't serving on warships, women were still serving in a combat arena, and that started a national conversation.

"What is a woman's role in the military?" So coming out of that time frame, the combat exclusion law was repealed and that meant that women were going to serve on combat ships and fly combat aircraft," said Howard.

After serving sea tours aboard several ships, Howard fulfilled her dream in 1999 of commanding a Navy warship at sea. She took command of the amphibious dock landing ship USS Rushmore (LSD 47), becoming the first African-American woman in such a role.

"The crew was wonderful. To this day that's what I think about. When you are going into command you think it's going to be challenging, you believe it's going to be fun, and it definitely was fun, but there are always challenges you don't expect. At the same time you go in with the expectation that Sailors can do anything, and that was the ship that proved it. We are so lucky that we have the people who not only have the talent, but who care and want to get it right."

Howard was selected for the rank of rear admiral lower half in 2006, making her the first admiral selected from the United States Naval Academy class of 1982 and the first woman graduate of the United States Naval Academy selected for flag rank.

In 2009, Howard put on her second star and assumed command of Expeditionary Strike Group 2 and deployed in the Gulf of Aden to conduct anti-piracy operations. Within one week of checking aboard her flag ship, amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4), she was immersed in the rescue of Capt. Richard Phillips, commanding officer of the MV Maersk Alabama.

"That's an eye-opening way to start a new job. Very quickly we had several ships, special forces, aircraft and it seemed like everyone in the world was focused on one American and trying to make sure he didn't end up on shore in Somalia. Synchronizing that kind of might and capability was pretty amazing."

Not including the 3,000 Sailors and Marines in her task force, Howard said they also had support from reconnaissance aircraft out of Djibouti, intelligence support from the United States, and she was in constant communication with the staff at U.S. 5th Fleet in Bahrain.

"When you think about it that's a lot of people, and I'm going to say that's the right call. The Department of Defense is there to protect America's interest, America's property and America's citizens. And in the end there is a deterrence factor. You want the average pirate to look at an American ship and say, 'we'll just let that one go by.'"

For the women who are following in her footsteps, Howard has this advice.

"You have to keep your sense of humor. You have to develop stamina and you need to be adaptable. Finally, you need to stay connected to women. It's important to be able to share experiences and to be able to tap into those shared experiences."

During her career, Howard has seen dramatic changes in the Navy and the nation, but there is one more change she'd like to witness.

"I would like to see our nation appreciate the importance of the Navy. We are blessed to live in a time where the average citizen really appreciates their Sailors; when we walk anywhere in a uniform we get thanked. If I could change anything I'd like to have Americans understand who they are thanking and why. How do you convince a nation this big that they are a maritime nation? Our founding fathers got it; they understood the importance of international commerce and that is why they said maintain a Navy in the Constitution. And ironically enough, we are even more dependent on maintaining safe water ways now than they were then."

Howard may get her wish. As the newest vice admiral in the Navy and deputy commander of U.S. Fleet Forces she will have the opportunity to reach a much larger audience than ever before.

As she has proven time and again, there is a first for everything.

**Thank You
to our
2011-2012
Tidewater
Chapter
Officers**

President

Vice President

Treasurer

Secretary

Membership Director

Assist. Membership Director

Harbor Park Coordinator

Retired Representative

Public Affairs Officer

Chaplain

Community Outreach Coordinator

CDR Terrel Fisher, USN

LCDR Terri Gabriel, USN

LCDR Michelle Joachim, USN

LT Julius Fears, USN

LCDR Absolon S. Kent, USN (ret)

LTJG Trudy Shelton-Harris, USN

LCDR Michelle Joachim, USN

CAPT Sandy Pollard, USN (ret)

CDR Thurraya S. Kent, USN

LtCol J.W. Washington, USMC (ret)

LCDR Keith Dobbins, USN



Tidewater NNOA President Cdr. Terrel Fisher talks with a young student about educational and career opportunities during the 7th annual joint cookout. The annual event is attended by members and guests of The Rocks, Inc., NNOA, and the Tuskegee Airmen—three military service and mentoring organizations with similar objectives. Photo by T.S. Kent.

2012 Joint Cookout

The 7th annual membership appreciation joint cookout was held on Aug. 18 at Langley Air Force Base. Sponsored by local chapters of The Rocks, Inc., NNOA, and the Tuskegee Airmen, the event was a great opportunity for fellowship, mentorship and collaboration. Tidewater NNOA thanks Lt. JT Fears for representing the chapter on this year's planning committee.

Local Tuskegee Airmen President Lt. Col. Terence Spann, USAF, ret., discusses Tuskegee Airmen scholarship opportunities with guests at the 7th annual joint picnic. The 2013 Tuskegee Airmen scholarship applications are available now online at www.tai-tidewaterchapter.com. Applicants must be students of accredited high schools who have graduated or will graduate during the 2012-2013 school year. Photo by T.S. Kent.



HELP WANTED

NNOA Tidewater will host 25 students from **The Urban Youth Racing School (UYRS) located in Philadelphia, PA** for aviation, submarine and surface ship tours. This school is sponsored by NAVSEA and they were recently featured in a press conference held by VADM McCoy, CO NAVSEA as a signature diversity STEM program. The Urban Youth Racing School is a 22 week program where students learn about fuel injection, combustion analysis, maintenance, shock testing, alternative fuel, gas turbine, diesel and steam engines and the **October 6** visit will be ideal in providing the students a first-hand perspective how the Navy uses technology as part of their development program. Please contact CDR Fisher at terrel.fisher@act.nato.int if you are interested in volunteering for this event.

Bravo Zulu...

- BZ to Lt. Cdr. Michelle Joachim who was highlighted in the national magazine of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. for her military service.

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Next Meeting...

Join us Tuesday, Oct. 16 at NATO HQ SACT for our next Professional Military Education meeting. The meeting will begin at 11:30 a.m. in the Ottawa Conference Room. Capt. Michael Malone, USN will be the presenter.

Congratulations to the 2012-2013 Tidewater Chapter Officers

Cdr. Terrel Fisher – President
 Lt. Cdr. Keith Dobbins – Vice President
 Lt. Cdr. Angela Cox – Treasurer
 Lt. Julius Fears – Secretary
 Lt. LaTanya Rose – Membership Director
 Lt. Sharon Wheaton – Chaplain
 LtCol James Washington – Master at Arms
 Lt. Angela Cox – Harbor Park Coordinator
 Lt. Cdr. Keith Dobbins – Community Outreach
 Capt. Sandy Pollard – Ret Mbr Rep

If you are interested as serving as the chapter PAO, contact Cdr. Fisher.

National Naval Officers Association (NNOA) actively supports the Sea Services in the recruitment, retention and career development of its members and the enhancement of diversity in the officer corps. We provide professional development, mentoring and support cultural diversity. We establish and maintain a positive image of the Sea Services in communities and educational institutions.