

Captain Kai O. Torkelson, USN

Shipyard Commander,
Norfolk Naval Shipyard
Portsmouth, Virginia

Captain Torkelson is a native of Mount Crawford, Virginia. A third generation naval officer, he was commissioned from the Virginia Military Institute Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps in 1991 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. He holds a Master of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from Virginia Tech and two Master of Science degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in both Naval Construction and Engineering and Ocean Systems Management.

Torkelson served for 12 years in operational, training and engineering billets as a submarine nuclear trained officer. He served as the Chemistry Radiological Assistant (CRA), Damage Control Assistant (DCA) and Quality Assurance Officer (QAO) aboard USS Olympia (SSN 717), then as Assistant Professor of Naval Science at Virginia Tech from 1996-1998, and as the Engineer Officer aboard USS Alabama (SSBN 731) (Blue), responsible for the ship's nuclear reactor and engineering plant operation. During this period, he also completed the requirements for submarine command.

In 2002, he laterally transferred to the Engineering Duty Officer (EDO) Community where he has filled maintenance, staff engineering, technical, war zone, and program management positions. His project leadership assignments include Assistant Project Superintendent and Deputy Project Superintendent at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, on USS Jefferson City (SSN 759) Depot Modernization Period (DMP), USS Helena (SSN 725) Docking Selected Restricted Availability (DSRA), and USS Seawolf (SSN 21) and USS Connecticut (SSN 22) projects. Then at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, he served as Deputy Project Superintendent for the USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) Planned Incremental Availability (PIA), and as the Submarine Repair Officer for Sub Squadrons Six and Eight.

Torkelson was among the first five EDO volunteers for assignment to Operation Iraqi Freedom, as the J7 Requirements Officer for Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq. He traveled throughout 14 of the 18 provinces in Iraq, rebuilding the country's military bases with its military and Ministry of Defense, joint services and coalition military personnel.

At headquarters, he has served as the Carrier/Submarine/Ship Fleet Readiness Requirements Officer in the Chief of Naval Operations Staff Logistics Division (OPNAV N43) and at Naval Sea Systems Command as Assistant Deputy/Commander Maintenance, Modernization, Environment and Safety (NAVSEA 04R).

As a shipyard department head at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Torkelson served as Code 300 Operations Officer, Code 900 Production Resources Officer, and as Code 1200 Business and Strategic Planning Officer.

He was selected as the 108th Commander, Norfolk Naval Shipyard, and assumed command June 29, 2018.

Torkelson's personal awards include the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service, Navy Commendation and Navy Achievement Medals.