
WAVES
Issue 2
HERE RESTS IN
HONORED GLORY
AN AMERICAN
SOLDIER

WAVES

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An honor guard sentinel from the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment walks the mat before the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery on Monday June 2, 2025. Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division leadership and Sailors took part at a wreath-laying ceremony at the tomb. The ceremony honors those who have served and sacrificed for their country, in a gesture of respect and gratitude. (U.S. Navy photo by Corum Byers)

Elissa Trueman Embraces 'Creative Tension' as Carderock CTO

By Alisha Tyer, NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

WEST BETHESDA, Md. – When Elissa Trueman became Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC), Carderock Division's Chief Technology Officer (CTO), she described the experience as "coming home."

Trueman, who previously served as the deputy and acting CTO for NSWC Headquarters, returned to Carderock with a broader perspective, an expanded network and enthusiasm for reconnecting with the community.

"I'm really just excited to be back," Trueman shared. "Especially after the role I just left, where I got to see Carderock from a different perspective."

Trueman's priorities include maintaining successful initiatives, such as the STEM and outreach programs, the Naval Innovation Science and Engineering and In-House Laboratory Independent Research portfolios led by Dr. Krista Lossing, and the management of Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADA) by Joe Teeter. She also aims to improve communication and unify the vision for Carderock's Technology Office.

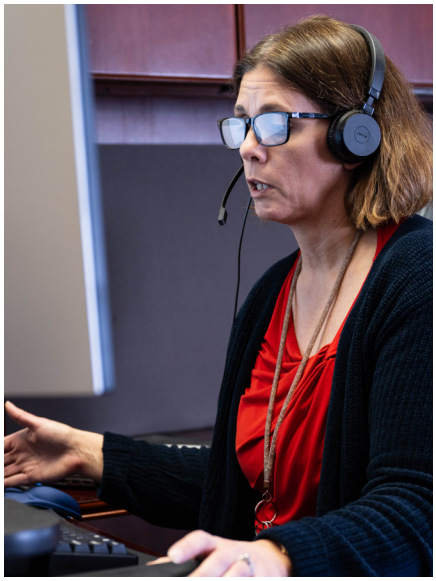
"I feel like folks don't always know what the CTO does," she said. "We need to work on how we're communicating internally to our workforce and externally to the outside world. We want to build out an architecture where we're communicating with one voice—telling our unique stories, but within a common architecture."

Trueman wants to ensure employees understand and access available resources.

"The CTO shop is here to be an enabler," she emphasized. "We have so many tools—grants, agreements, internal funding, and relationship-building activities. I'm not sure people know enough about these resources to access them, and that's something I'm working to change."

A key challenge for Trueman is balancing immediate priorities with long-term strategic thinking, a concept she calls "creative tension." The term, originally coined by Peter Senge at MIT, was introduced to her by Professor David Baker during a Big History course at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia.

"It's about thinking in multi-disciplinary ways to broaden your perspectives," Trueman explained. "There are these opposing forces—wanting to focus on the future while addressing pressing issues in the present. You have to recognize this tension, understand the risks and uncertainties it creates, and be thoughtful in how you address them."



Her approach involves setting goals across different timeframes. Short-term, she focuses on employee engagement, ensuring everyone understands the Technology Office's mission. Mid-term, she aims to support warfighter readiness, remaining adaptable to changes. Long-term, her focus will be on emerging technologies, workforce development, and facility management.

Trueman's leadership philosophy includes empowering her team to embrace their own ideas.

"They're rock stars, all of them," she said. "What I need them to do is have a vision for what they want to accomplish, break it down into actionable steps, and focus on outcomes and impact."

She encourages her team to consider the impact of their work on the organization and the warfighter.

"If we're not doing things that we can track outcomes and impacts, we're not doing the right things," she said.

Trueman also advises young professionals to stay curious and be mindful.

"Opportunities often present themselves quietly," she said. "If you're rushing through your day, you might miss them."

Trueman credited mentors like Jack Price, and Eric Satchel, for shaping her leadership.

"I don't feel pressure or stress. I actually love this job. It's thoughtful work, and I make time to think," she said.

Trueman plans to improve communication about the CTO office's role and resources, organize outreach events and promote strategic awareness.

CWMR Hosts Pi Day 2025

By NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Happy Pi Day! Carderock employees celebrate with a quick 3.14 minute break during their lunch to eat some pie in an event hosted by Carderock's Civilian Morale, Welfare and Recreation (CMWR) team on Friday, March 14 in West Bethesda, Md.

Puget Sound Detachment Gets Pi'd

Bangor detachment held their annual Pi Day on Thursday March 14, 2025, in Silverdale, Wa. During the event the detachment celebrated accomplishments of coworkers, length of service awards and welcoming some new staff. They also held a raffle to support their Rec Fund and Several Supervisors Volunteered to get pied for a good cause.

Those Pied were:

- Bangor Site Director, Aaron Stewart (Code 70122)
- Brian Haggerty (Code 711)
- Brett Weisgerber (Code 713)
- Kevin Runyan (Coce 7151)
- Steve Hubbs (Code 717)
- Russ Dukek (Code 73 Division Head)

A Curator's Legacy: Dana Wegner Honored for 50 Years of Federal Service

By Alisha Tyer, NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Capt. Christopher Matassa presents Dana Wegner, curator of ship models, with the Department of the Navy Civilian Service Achievement Medal as Dr. David Drazen looks on during Wegner's retirement ceremony at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, March 21, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by Lena Simmons)

BETHESDA, Md. – After dedicating half a century to his career, Dana Wegner, curator of ship models at Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC) Carderock Division, retired from federal service.

In recognition of his expansive knowledge of naval architecture and his contributions to preserving naval history, Wegner received the Department of the Navy (DoN) Civilian Service Achievement Medal during a ceremony held March 21, 2025, at the David Taylor Model Basin. The award highlighted his leadership in the safe recovery of 76 ship models that were on loan to the National Museum of the United States Navy, accomplished ahead of schedule despite staffing and travel restrictions.

Wegner, who has served as curator of models at Carderock since 1980, is the fifth curator in the program's history. His remarkable career is marked by numerous achievements, among them the DoN Distinguished Civilian Service Award and the division's Dr. Murray Strasberg Lifetime Achievement Award. As a subject matter expert in ship model construction, Wegner has also published extensively on naval history.

Surrounded by team members and colleagues, Wegner was presented the award by Carderock's Deputy Technical Director Dr. Dave Drazen, alongside Commanding Officer Capt. Christopher Matassa.

Wegner referred to the collection of over 3,500 ship models – which he managed for 44 years – as a national treasure. Carderock leadership agreed.

"You're really like a national treasure yourself," said Matassa in his opening remarks. He recalled first hearing of the demand for Wegner's expertise from former Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition James Geurts, long before taking command at Carderock.

"Your steady leadership was vital at turbulent and challenging times to ensure the protection and safeguarding of models, while empowering the curative models program to continue to perform in an outstanding manner," said Drazen, while presenting the medal and certificate. Matassa also presented Wegner with a Command coin, and his team members gave him a farewell card.

As the ceremony concluded, Wegner reflected on the moments that shaped his long career – including one vivid memory that has stayed with him for decades: the unmistakable smell of the tow tank.

"My wife used to say my clothes smelled like it," he recalled, laughing. "I'd say, it's okay, I like the tow tank!"

That fondness, Wegner said, extended far beyond the walls of the model shop or tow tank.

"I loved it here. You don't stay as long as I did if you don't like where you're working."

Throughout his 44 years as curator and more than 50 years in federal service, Wegner built more than a legacy. Through the Department of the Navy Ship Model Program, which preserves and shares scale models in museums and institutions nationwide, he helped safeguard naval history for generations to come. His impact, much like the ship models he championed, will stand the test of time.

New Female Restrooms, Showers, and Nursing Mothers Facility Now Open in Building 19 in WB

NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Carderock opened a newly renovated restroom and nursing room in Building 19 at West Bethesda. On March 26, Commanding Officer Capt. Chris Matassa, Code 60 Deputy Department Head Nancy Adler, and Code 102 Project Manner Anna Tran cut the ribbon to celebrate the opening of these modernized facilities, featuring a new female restroom, complete with multiple shower rooms, lockers and benches, as well as a private nursing room with refrigerated lockers.

The facilities team (Code 102) and Code 60 are working on finalizing the design of the remaining restrooms in Building 19.

“These types of projects significantly enhance the quality of life for employees at Carderock, providing modern facilities that support our employees,” Adler said.

This first project in Building 19 successfully transformed outdated facilities into a modern, functional space designed to meet the needs of the workforce, particularly female employees. The project involved the demolition of existing men’s and women’s restrooms that were small and outdated, two mini-storage rooms, and a janitorial space to complete the new female restroom.

In addition, a former storage room was renovated into the private nursing room, which is equipped with comfortable chairs, adjustable tables, a sink, privacy curtains, and a refrigerator, providing essential amenities for nursing mothers. Adjacent to this, another mini storage area was repurposed to house additional lockers, benches, and an 8-compartment locking breast milk refrigerator.

The Building 19 Restroom Renovation & Nursing Room project construction period was from August 2024 to February 2025, costing approximately $568,000. The key Carderock personnel involved included Suzanne Friedman (Tech Code 60 Facilities Lead), Anna Tran (Project Manager, C102 Engineer), Dave Heller (C102 Engineer) and Joel Dingman (C102 COR).

Carderock Math Contest: Cultivating the Next Generation of STEM Professionals Through a Love for Math

By Kristin Behrle, NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

CARDEROCK, Md. – More than 180 middle-school students put their math skills to the test at the 14th annual Carderock Math Contest (CMC) on Friday, April 4, 2025, at Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division in West Bethesda, Maryland.

The contest, which is part of Carderock's science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) outreach, drew bright young minds from local schools across Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. They faced a series of challenging MATHCOUNTS-style exams designed to evaluate their speed, critical thinking, and teamwork skills.

The day offered more than just problem-solving. Students participated in individual and team written exams, heard from two-time USA Memory Champion Ron White as a guest speaker, toured Carderock's cutting-edge labs and facilities, and witnessed a live, bracket-style "Countdown Round" competition featuring the day's top scorers.

"We're ecstatic to have so many bright young minds who are all here excited about math," said Capt. Chris Matassa, Carderock's commanding officer, in his opening remarks. "Carderock is a place where science, mathematics, and engineering come to life, and you'll be able to see some of that today. There are people of various disciplines and backgrounds that work here with us, and we all join forces to solve real-world problems and develop new ideas, all in support of our Navy."

What sets the Carderock Math Contest apart is its focus on connecting abstract equations to tangible real-world applications. By engaging with Carderock's STEM professionals and touring their workspaces, students gain valuable insight into how math fuels innovation.

Partnering with other participants, students work together to solve stimulating math equations in hopes of taking home the team award at the Carderock Math Contest (CMC) held annually at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division in West Bethesda, Md. In its 14th year, the CMC welcomed 187 students from 27 local middle schools on Friday April 4, 2025, to compete in timed individual and group exams and a "Countdown Round" featuring the event's highest achievers. Between solving rigorous math equations, students toured special labs and facilities as well as learned valuable memory skills from guest speaker and two-time USA Memory Champion (2009 and 2010), Ron White. (U.S. Navy photo by Lena Simmons)

During afternoon tours, the students explored Carderock's world-class facilities to include the Additive Manufacturing Research Lab, the Non-Destructive Evaluation Lab, the Magnetics Lab, the Fire Safety Lab, and the Subsonic Wind Tunnel. These small group interactions provided a unique opportunity for the students to ask questions and engage with subject matter experts in their fields.

"It's an honor supporting the Carderock STEM program, I love seeing kids grow in their math skills," said CMC committee member Andy Loh, a customer advocate at Carderock.

The contest's success relies heavily on the dedication of employee volunteers who are passionate about inspiring the next generation. The event serves to spark students' interest in various science and engineering fields, highlighting potential STEM career paths crucial for maritime innovation for the Navy and the revitalization of American shipbuilding.

"It's one of the most enjoyable things I do all year," said Dr. Nicholas Jones, a materials engineer in Carderock's Physical Metallurgy and Fire Branch and a CMC planning committee member. "The planning committee is really fun, but still efficient. The visiting students are amazing and bring youthful energy and excitement to our base. We get volunteers from all aspects of the base: technical, financial, administrative, facilities, and the front office. It's not every day that you get to casually talk with the Captain and the Chief Technology Officer."

The day reached its climax with the top 16 students from the morning's individual competition squaring off in a fast-paced, bracket-style countdown round. Capt. Matassa and Carderock's Chief of Staff Stephanie Feulner took turns reading the questions, building anticipation in the room.

"This is one of my favorite events of the year," Feulner told the students before reading the countdown questions.

In a thrilling display of mathematical prowess, the countdown narrowed the field to the top three competitors. Ultimately, Alice Wang from Longfellow Middle School in Falls Church, Virginia, emerged as the first-place winner.

Elissa Trueman, Carderock's Chief Technology Officer, attended the contest for the first time this year and was impressed by the students' enthusiasm. "I think these kids are amazing, and they're going to do amazing things," Trueman said.

She underscored the vital role of STEM events like this in nurturing future talent. "The reason this is so important for Carderock, and our mission, is because getting students interested in all the science that goes into building Navy ships, in middle school, is essential to building our future workforce, and building kids who actually want to come and do great things for our Navy and our country."

CMWR Deadlift Competition

By NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division hosted a Deadlift Competition on April 10, 2025, in West Bethesda, Md. Colleagues and family members supported the participants as they attempted to conquer personal records, leading to total of 15,668 lbs. lifted across all attempts. (U.S. Navy photo by Corum Byers)

Seahawks Visit Bayview

By NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Members from the Seattle Seahawks team visited Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division's Acoustic Research Detachment in Bayview, Idaho, on April 11, 2025, to say "thanks" for all they do.

The event, which was part of a military appreciation tour that included Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane, Washington, was a huge morale booster to the ARD employees, according to site director Seth Lambrecht.

Seahawks Safety Jerrick Reed II, Seahawks Dancers Geena and Lillian, and the Seahawks mascot Blitz, met employees, signed autographs, took photos and toured some of the facilities at ARD, even taking a look inside Large-Scale Vehicle 2, Cutthroat, as well as a ride on Lake Pend Oreille.

"Most people in our area of Idaho are Seahawks fans, just by proximity," Lambrecht said. "This was perfect timing with all that is going on."

Take a Child to Work Day

By NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Carderock hosted 332 young faces in celebration of Take a Child to Work Day on Thursday, April 24th, 2025 at the Raye Montague Center for Maritime Technology in West Bethesda, Md.

Take a Child to Work Day is a national holiday that encourages parents to bring their children to work to explore a workplace and meet the professionals that make up the workforce. This year's Take a Child to Work Day Celebration at Carderock celebrated the national theme "For a New Generation"!

The celebration at West Bethesda included guided and open house tours of West Bethesda facilities, observance of morning colors, the chance to engage with local firefighters and their equipment and much more.

196 Carderock employees brought a child to work with them making this event our largest in numbers to date!

Command Awards

By NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, recognized employees for their outstanding contributions to the workforce in 2024 during a Command Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, in West Bethesda, Md.

This year's event honored 44 Command Award winners, eight Carderock awardees from the annual Warfare Centers Awards, and one Navy Civilian Service Meritorious Award.

"It's truly a privilege to be here and to have all of you join us today as we celebrate the outstanding contributions of our dedicated workforce – the individuals who consistently go above and beyond for our command, the Warfare Centers, and the United States Navy," said Carderock's Commanding Officer Capt. Chris Matassa, who joined acting Technical Director Dr. Paul Shang and Carderock's Department heads on stage to present the awards.

Command Awards, presented by each department, recognized awardees for their expertise in critical areas such as signatures, platform integrity, naval architecture and engineering, finance, contracts, and operations. The awards given to Carderock's technical and administrative experts reflected significant contributions to world-class shipbuilding, acquisition reform, cost-effective solutions, and dedication to mission accomplishment in support of the warfighter and the Fleet.

"These individuals we recognize today embody an unwavering commitment to Carderock's mission," Capt. Matassa said. "One of the most important things we can do as leaders, is to recognize individuals who are going above and beyond. And I'm deeply grateful for the service of these awardees."

In addition to Carderock's Command Award winners and the Warfare Centers Award winners, Joseph Walther was presented with a Department of the Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award. This award is the third-highest honor a civilian service member can receive from the Department of the Navy, representing exceptional service and achievements that contribute to the mission of the armed forces.

"As an engineer in the Survivability and Weapons Effects division, Joe Walther has led several major efforts focused on bringing advanced warfare capabilities to our warfighters," stated Landon Transeau, emcee for the ceremony, and human resources specialist in the Labor and Employee Relation Branch.

"He has executed multiple novel test programs in an extremely short time to prove efficacy of innovative technology. This technology has played an outsized role in changing warfighting planning for future naval engagements," continued Transeau.

To conclude the ceremony, Dr. Shang remarked, "Each and every one of you embodies the expertise that defines Carderock as the Navy's leading authority in maritime engineering and naval ships. We are immensely proud to count you among our workforce".

Carderock, the Navy's innovation and ship design powerhouse, headquartered in West Bethesda, Maryland, is a world-class research and development facility specializing in critical ship design components. Carderock uses state-of-the-art facilities, like the David Taylor Model Basin, to create small-scale models and evaluate next-generation surface ships and underwater vessels, ensuring they are future-proof, agile, and equipped to dominate the maritime environment. Carderock's focus areas include Platform Integrity, Signatures, and Naval Architecture and Engineering. With teams and facilities across the country, from Florida to Alaska and Idaho to Washington, Carderock is "Where the Fleet Begins," building the future of the Navy.

The following recipients were recognized for Carderock's 2024 annual Command Awards and Warfare Center Awards:

Carderock's Command Awards

Command Leadership Department
High Performance Team – 00Q Team: Anna Rucker, Katherine Citro, Julia Medina
Leadership Award – Paul A. Lara
Customer Service – Samuel P. Tofani

Comptroller Department
Employee of the Year– Kristina L. Ross
Customer Service Award– Sandley Jean-Louis
Outstanding Team Award– Employee Services Division: Kristy Ross, Bianca Teel, David Callis, Kennard Dixon, Theresa Kiefer, Denise Lyles Leonard, Veronica Denise McClure, Lyniqua (Nikki) O'Bryan, Brittany Payne, Hernan Truque Hurtado, Brittany Estell, Kenny Pleasants, Jessica Volley, Eveling Woodbridge

Contracting and Acquisition Department
Acquisition Professional of the Year- James M. McGarvey
Rising Star Award- Nicholas Andrew Holdren
Outstanding Leadership Award- Michael E. Rossik
Outstanding Team Award- Government Purchase Card Management Team: Kimberly Barker, Mackenzie Miller, and Anna Henson

Corporate Operations Department
Leadership Award- Katherine Helen Conklin
Unsung Hero Award- Andrew Trongone Alderfer
Customer Service Award- Jesse D. Totten
Rising Star Award- Devante Jarod Harden
Honorary Team Award- High Performance Computer Cluster (HPC) Lease Award Team: Michael Dempsey, Suave Darden, Patricia McCarthy

Platform Integrity Department
Mentoring Award- Amanda K. Blumenthal
Technical Excellence Award- Randall J. Goodnight
Emerging Scientist/Engineer- Jason Patrick Kelly
Knowledge Management- Jonathan G. Kruft
Commitment to Service- Marianne B. Moag-Philie
Innovation Award- Keith W. Brennan
Outstanding Achievement Team Award- AM Moonshot Team: Matthew Sinfield, Jennifer Gaies, Richard Gins, Nathan Korinchak, Evan Handler, Susan Hovanec, Patrick Korzeniowski, Erica Scates, Maximilian Kinsey, Matthew Dantin, Matthew McMahon, Allison Nienaber, Jeremy Salmon, Dale Simpson, Timothy Lewis, Nathan Leong, Hosein Nasrin, Sebastian Patterson, Thomas Rogers, Gabriela Wolford, Randall Goodnight, Jacob Mason, Timothy McGee, Zachary Voelkel

Signatures Department
Senior Technical Employee of the Year- John P. Wagner
Program Manager of the Year- Jenna Kathleen Gietl
Technician of the Year- Timothy M. Herzfeld
Business/Administrative Support Employee of the Year- Alanna Jill Ray
Fleet Support Employee of the Year- Kevin J. McMahon
Innovation & Emerging Technology Award- POREOSS Team: Julie Bothell, Eric Enloe, Brandon Good, Ben Jeffers, Jon Michael, Pat Mulliken, Josh Park, John Proto, Chris Rhinehart, Bret Snodderly, Hazen White
Team Technical Excellence Award- ONR FNC Acoustic Trial Team: James Alfano, Emily Assaley, Shenika Bailey, Amelia Baldo, Jacob Barnett, Morgan Bayer, Bryan Bennett, Matt Betts, Kevin Biegel, Max Borchardt, Thomas Bowling, Kyle Brokaw, Jeremy Brooks, Kyle Bugeja, Cooper Clark, Deandre Corbe, Tom Corona, John Correll, Liz Cosharek,Thomas Costner, Kevin Davis, Karen Deering, Kathleen Desmond, Roberta Dillenburg, Theresa Dukek, Mike Elsbree, Erasto Fernandez, Brandon Fleet, Miguel Forero, Jon Forest, Davis Foster, Christ Galasso, Jenna Gietl, Bridget Hartil, Doug Hedrick, Steve Jackson, Jim King, Robert Kollars, Jordan Kollars, Kevin Koppenhaver, Josh Ladrillono, Trevor Lauer, Pat Madden, Kevin Mallory, Clare Mangus, Jason Martin, Christion Maurno, Matthew Medzegian, Scott Oney, Chris Pust, Mark Rajan, Robert Reed, Mike Ribich, Todd Rittershausen, Greg Roberts, Lillimar, Ruhlmann, Kevin Runyan, Josh Smith, Jason Smoker, Jim Sracic, Jerry Stevenson, Aaron Stewart, Chrystal Stroud, Ian Stuek, Eric Taam, Sumner Thomas, Michael Tindal, Nomer Tuazon, Robert Vanover, Jason Vest, John Wagner, Tom Wallace, Britney Wang, John Ware, Kellan Warren, Shane Watson, Brett Weisgerber, Matt Willey, Ted Worden, Dave Young, Chris Young

Naval Architecture and Engineering Department
Supervisor – Jeffrey W. Wolfe
Emerging Scientist/Engineer- Justin Michael Harler
Naval Research- Dr. Shawn Aram
Technical Excellence/Project Lead- Dr. Jared T. Soltis
Mentorship- Dr. Minyee Jiang
Innovation- Christopher J. Chesnakas
Make-It-Work- Jacob Alan Upton Wilson
Fleet Support- AASB Team: Laura Cornish, Steven Czarny, Daniel Demko, Nathaniel Wilhelm, Christopher Hamilton, Matthew Meyers, Randy Arends, David West, Lawrence Wilson, Dorothy Bell, Lori Fanney, Gary Jernigan, Brian Mishoe, Ryan Moberly
Customer Service- Gregg Murach
Testing Excellence- Ian Kevin Bahr
Outstanding Accomplishment- ASRV Team: Jeff Green, Matthew Madalis, Jovan Brown, Joe Buto, and Wayne Weers
Knowledge Management- Brian T. Avadikian
Collaboration- Amber C. Buzzard
Direct NAVSEA Support- Chandler Alan Seibert

Warfare Center Awards
John C. Mickey Collaboration- CRDR Fleet Products Team: David Askin, Matthew Betts, Henry Elder, Dr. Brian Glover, Brian Mackey, Frederick Merkel, Dr. Megan Schaal, Edward Taylor
John C. Mickey Collaboration- Panama City Wrap Test Team: Julie Bothell, Benjamin Jeffers, Matthew Mills, Patrick Mulliken, Hazen White
Innovation Award- CRDR Ice Exercise 2022 and 2024

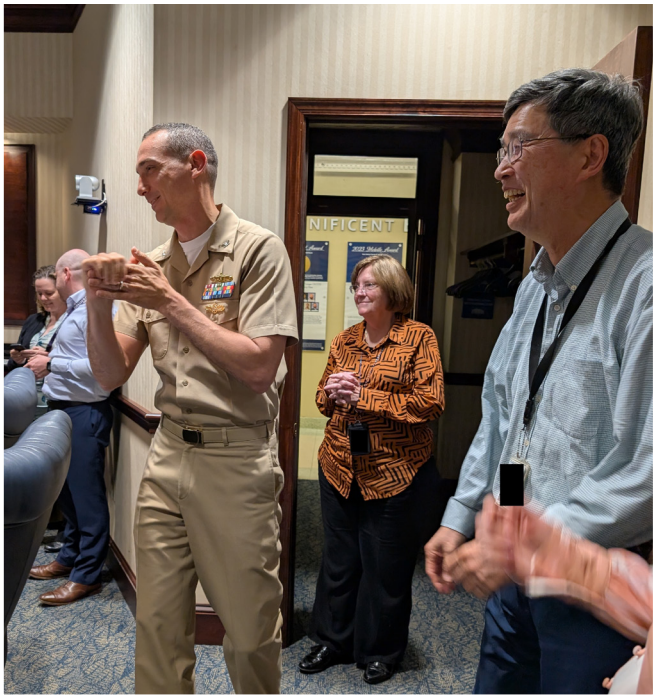
Acoustics Team: Rodney Grogan, Emmerson Jueco, Jason Martin, Matthew Medzegian, Eric Spiegel, James Sracic, Robert Vanover
Technical Support Services Award- Christopher Dibiasio
Warfighting Readiness Award- Guam Magnetic Silencing Facility Team: Nana Asare, Michael Barbe, Scott Chan, David El-Taher, Ibraam Fahmy, Michael Felder, Michael Jacobsen, Daniel Lenko, Troy Mapa, Christopher Marou, Edward Morai, Hermanzo Moreno, Ashton Mullen, Jonathan Reynon, Daniel Stouffer, Kazman Toran, Andy Wen, Kodjovi Wome
Warfighting Readiness Award- John Phillips
Warfighting Readiness Award- Carderock Members of Keyport's Submarine Force Wargaming and Experimentation Center Team: David Amavisca, Zachary Basanese, David Bishop, James Kirk, Richard Loeffler, Kimberly Marquette, Melisa Pham
Warfighting Readiness Award- Dr. Paul Lara

Other Awards
Navy Civilian Service Meritorious Award - Joseph Walther

CO and TD's Birthday

By NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Members of the command gathered at the Command Briefing Room, April 30, 2025 to wish a happy birthday to Capt. Chris Matassa, Carderock's CO and Dr. Paul Shang, the acting TD. Capt Matassa's birthday is April 30 and Dr. Shang's is May 1. Having a Commanding Officer/Technical Director pair with birthdays one after the other is a Carderock first!



French Delegation Visit

NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

The French Navy Fleet Support Services Central Directorate, led by Vice Adm. Guillaume de Garidel-Thoron, visited Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division, the Navy's innovation and ship design powerhouse, on April 30, 2025. The visit included a command brief with Commanding Officer Capt. Chris Matassa, and a tour with Carderock's Deputy Technical Director, Dave Drazen, of several of Carderock's cutting-edge research facilities that test and develop new naval technology.

Carderock Partners with George Mason University for Second Year of Senior Design Project Oversight

By Brittny Odoms, NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Beginning in 2024, Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, partnered with George Mason University (GMU) to provide technical oversight for senior design projects its Mechanical Engineering students. On May 9, 2025, Carderock hosted two student-led teams from GMU for a visit to present their final projects.

The collaboration began through Maureen Foley, a materials engineer, in Code 617 at Carderock. Foley was introduced to the chair of GMU's mechanical engineering department, through the American Society of Naval Engineers, where they discussed ways to better leverage the existing educational partnership agreement between Carderock and GMU.

"The partnership began as a way to make students aware of the Navy as someone they can work for," Foley said.

Carderock engineers were crucial in guiding the teams on various project aspects and providing access to technical labs. This allowed students to take back ideas for their respective projects. Students also had the opportunity to visit the base to test fabrication for part of their projects, helping them better understand what they needed to be successful.

"Last year's project was very successful," said Foley. "We are rolling out the technology to the intermediate level facilities at all homeports and we have a patent application in process."

Foley visited GMU's campus in March to check on the status of this year's projects before their presentations. GMU students praised Carderock engineers for their support and guidance.

"The staff have been very helpful in providing suggestions in how to approach certain problems and have been open to letting us know about potential future job opportunities," said Quentin Crocker, a GMU senior and Naval Research Enterprise Internship (NREIP) intern.

One team built an environmental chamber for mechanical testing, and the other was tasked with fabricating composite panels for ready service lockers. These panels needed to be malleable enough to bend 45 degrees on all four corners and edges.

In addition to Crocker, who is an NREIP intern, two other students are currently interning through the STEM Student Employee Program (SSEP) at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington D.C. and another student has already obtained a full-time position at Norfolk Naval Shipyard upon graduation.

Quarterly Command All Hands

NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Carderock hosted its first Quarterly Command All Hands of the year in West Bethesda at the Montague Center Auditorium on May 14, 2025.

Carderock Commanding Officer, Capt. Christopher Matassa, and Acting Technical Director, Dr. Paul Shang, went over some of their priorities and recognized employees who have achieved 25 years or more in length of service.

Topics discussed during the all hands included recent event and technical highlights around the command, the impact of the DRP to Carderock, upcoming CMWR events, a sit-down with Carderock's CTO, Dr. Elissa Trueman, and Code 104's Devante Harden, as well as facilities project updates.

Dr. Shang also provided additional technical highlights and a video of GARC testing. The All Hands event concluded with an open floor to anyone with questions for the CO or TD.

AUKUS Visit

NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Dr. Paul Lara and other subject matter experts from the Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division lead a tour of the facility in West Bethesda, MD, May 20, 2025, for 9 visitors supporting the AUKUS partnership.

This trilateral security partnership between Australia, the UK, and the US, is driving increased collaboration in naval technology and submarine development, making visits like this crucial for fostering shared understanding and advancing cooperative research.

Stephanie Ferrone, from the AUKUS Integration and Acquisition (I&A) Office, coordinated the visit, which focused on submarine support lifecycle and enterprise, signature management, and hydrodynamics. The group received a command brief and toured facilities including the Model Shop, Tow Basin, Magnetics Laboratory, Deep Submergence Pressure Tank, Explosive Test Pond, and Anechoic Flow Facility. (U.S. Navy photos by Jonathan Thompson)

Memorial Day Wreath Laying

NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, marked this solemn day with a wreath-laying ceremony led by our Sailors in uniform in West Bethesda, Md.

In his remarks, Carderock's commanding officer, Capt. Christopher Matassa, pointed to our history:

"Within two months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the model towing schedule had been converted over to two full shifts at the David Taylor Model Basin and a full shift at the older basin at the Washington Navy Yard...

The projects undertaken here - from torpedoes to landing craft - directly supported the war effort and the brave individuals who operated them, some of whom paid the highest price...

...as we reflect on the sacrifices made, we are reminded of the profound responsibility we have to equip our Sailors and Marines with the best possible technology and support."

This place, Carderock, stands as a testament to those who came before us and the solemn responsibility, we bear to those who serve today.

Let us carry their memory in our hearts and observe this Memorial Day with gratitude and deep respect for the lives given to keep us free.

BU1 Justin Gilliland (Left) and HM2 Manolito Diaz (Right) carrying wreath for Carderock's Memorial Day ceremony in West Bethesda, MD, on Thursday, May 22nd, 2025. This ceremony was conducted to honor and remember those who have served and made the ultimate sacrifice for our Freedom. (U.S. Navy Photo by Travis Troller)

Carderock Commanding Officer Cpt. Christopher Matassa (Left) and Carderock Technical Director Dr. Paul Shang (Right) hang a wreath during Carderock's Memorial Day ceremony in West Bethesda, MD, on Thursday, May 22nd, 2025. This ceremony was conducted to honor and remember those who have served and made the ultimate sacrifice for our Freedom. (U.S. Navy Photo by Travis Troller)

Sailors posing for group photo with Carderock Commanding Officer Cpt. Christopher Matassa (Far Left) and Carderock Executive Officer Gerald J. Lettich (Far Right) after Memorial Day wreath laying ceremony in West Bethesda, MD, on Thursday, May 22nd, 2025. This ceremony was conducted to honor and remember those who have served and made the ultimate sacrifice for our Freedom. (U.S. Navy Photo by Travis Troller)

Carderock Commanding Officer Cpt. Christopher Matassa addressing sailors during Carderock Memorial Day ceremony in West Bethesda, MD, on Thursday, May 22nd, 2025. Here he shared words of encouragement, personal stories, and gratitude for the amazing work being done on base. This ceremony was conducted to honor and remember those who have served and made the ultimate sacrifice for our Freedom. (U.S. Navy Photo by Travis Troller)

Navy Divers Clear the Way for International Submarine Races at Carderock

By Alisha Tyer, NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

BETHESDA, Md. – Before the 18th International Submarine Races (ISR18) can make waves at the Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division, someone has to clear the way. That job fell to six military divers from the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Keyport Division Dive Locker. Over three days from May 27–31, 2025, the team was submerged in the near 3,000-foot David Taylor Model Basin, hand-removing an estimated 10 tons of corroded steel and sediment to ensure safe conditions for the biennial competition.

The divers were able to volunteer their efforts due to a well-timed opportunity. While preparing for a separate one-atmosphere suit-testing mission on the East Coast, they were contacted through existing connections with Carderock and offered to assist with the basin cleanup during their visit.

It was a mission they did not hesitate to take on.

Although the still water and visibility were better than most conditions the team typically faces, the operation came with a unique set of challenges that required on-the-spot problem-solving.

“We’re used to diving in the middle of the night in cold, choppy water that you can’t see in,” said Chief Navy Diver (NDC) Jacob Eastland, the team’s lead diver. “So, this was great for us because we were diving in well-lit, still water. The more difficult thing was trying to figure out how we were going to accomplish something close to perfect in just three days.”

The team adapted quickly, using dustpans, surface-supplied air, and creative problem-solving to clear debris from the basin’s bottom and under its beaches. Working 12-hour days over the course of three days, they used plastic carts tied to the basin’s moving carriage and relied on crane support to extract bins weighing thousands of pounds each.

For the divers, the value of the mission went beyond cleanup. Keyport’s working capital funding model gives the team unique flexibility to take on high-impact assignments like this, which are critical not only to operations but also to junior diver development. With only 12 personnel at the locker, every job offers exposure to real-world logistics, rapid planning, and collaboration across commands.

“We give our young guys the leash to go run these operations; plan the job, solve problems in real time, and get the experience that sets them up for a better, more rewarding career,” Eastland said.

One of eight bins of corroded steel cleared from the test basin floor at the David Taylor Model Basin at West Bethesda, Md from May 27 to May 31, 2025. Six divers from the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Keyport Division Dive Locker hand-removed 10-tons of corroded steel from the test basin floor in preparation for the 18th International Submarine Races, hosted by Carderock. (U.S. Navy photo courtesy of NUWC Keyport Dive Locker).

Among the team were four junior divers: Navy Diver 1st Class Jason Marshall, Navy Diver 2nd Class Giovanni Alawdi, Navy Diver 3rd Class Kaiden Smith, and Navy Diver 3rd Class Giovanni Casteneda, each of whom brought strong work ethic, adaptability, and an eagerness to learn. Supporting their growth were more experienced teammates, including Navy Diver 1st Class Benjamin Eisenbarth and Eastland, who both helped guide the team through on-the-fly planning, rotating dive schedules, and equipment improvisation.

“These guys are all very young,” Eastland said. “One of them had only been out of dive school for four months. For another, this was his first command ever. Watching them step up and stay motivated through 12-hour days in the water was impressive.”

The team faced less-than-ideal conditions: hauling debris, navigating underwater with limited visibility, and maintaining focus over long hours on the bottom. But for these junior divers, it was more than just another task. It was a chance to prove themselves, sharpen their skills, and build confidence under real-world pressure.

“They could have complained or dragged their feet,” he added. “But every day they showed up smiling, making jokes to keep each other focused, and pushing each other in a healthy, competitive way.”

The mission highlights the importance of cross-community collaboration within the Navy. While Carderock provides a testing ground for research, development and engineering, its success often relies on support from operational units like Keyport's dive team. These partnerships ensure that facilities are maintained and mission-ready, and that lessons learned can flow mutually from the lab to the fleet and back again. "It's a two-way street," said Kevin Meier, Carderock's dive officer. "We rely on each other to get the job done."

None of it would have been possible without the support of Carderock's Facilities Engineering and Operations team. Moises Cruz and Chase Allison arrived before the divers each day and stayed late into the evening, operating cranes and vacuums, and making sure gear was where it needed to be, often before it was requested. "Anything we needed, they were already on it," Eastland said. "They made it possible."

Without the divers, Carderock would have faced serious delays or less safe options, for removing debris before ISR competitors arrived. For many students diving during ISR, it may be their first time underwater since certification.

"It's one thing for trained divers to work in this kind of environment," Meier said. "But for a student diver, it can be dangerous if the basin isn't cleared properly."

He further explained that corroded steel, loose sediment, and clouded water from disturbed debris all pose real risks – especially for student divers who may be new to underwater navigation or limited visibility. Ensuring a clean, level testing space was not just about aesthetics – it was essential to protecting competitors and equipment and preserving the integrity of ISR operations.

The cleanup effort not only cleared the basin floor for ISR 18, but also demonstrated the power of collaboration across the Navy, bringing together operational expertise and engineering support to ensure a safe, functional space for testing, learning, and innovation.

Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Keyport Division's Dive team poses for a photo with Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division's (NSWCCD) Commanding Officer at the David Taylor Model Basin at West Bethesda, Md. From May 27 to May 31, 2025, the six divers hand-removed 10-tons of corroded steel from the test basin floor in preparation for the 18th International Submarine Races, hosted by Carderock.

Pictured: ND3 Kaiden Smith, ND1 Jason Marshall, ND2 Giovanni Alawdi, NDC Jacob Eastland, ND1 Benjamin Eisenbarth, ND3 Giovanni Castenada, and Capt. Christopher Matassa, Commanding Officer, Carderock. (U.S. Navy photo courtesy of NUWC Keyport Dive Locker).

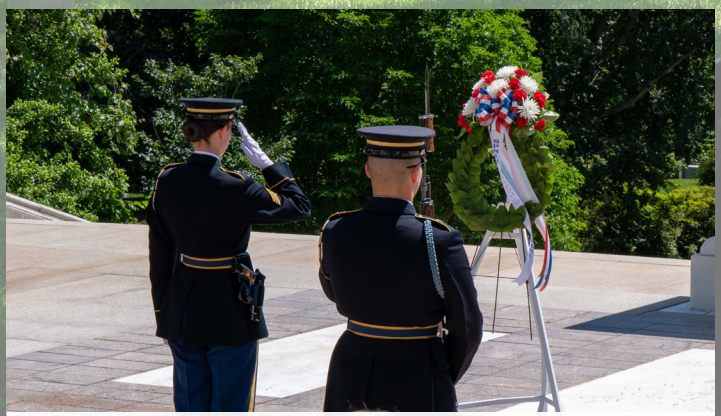
NSWC Carderock Leadership Participates in Wreath-laying Ceremony

NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division leadership and Sailors took part in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery on Monday June 2, 2025.

This ceremony acts as a commemoration for those who have served and sacrificed for their country, symbolizing respect, gratitude, honor and victory.

Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division Sailors salute at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier after the wreath-laying ceremony on Monday June 2, 2025, at Arlington National Cemetery. Pictured, from left: Executive Officer Cmdr. Gerald Lettich, Senior Chief Logistics Specialist Henry Oseiakoto and Chief Yeoman Delcon Ferguson. Cmdr. Christopher Jackson is at back right. (U.S. Navy photo by Corum Byers)



The honor guard sentinel relief commander and detail salute at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery on Monday June 2, 2025. Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division leadership and Sailors took part at a wreath-laying ceremony at the tomb. The ceremony honors those who have served and sacrificed for their country, in a gesture of respect and gratitude. (U.S. Navy photo by Corum Byers)

Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division Commanding Officer, Capt. Christopher Matassa (Right), and Business Director James (Todd) Cheek (Center) place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Monday June 2, 2025, at Arlington National Cemetery. Carderock, the Navy's innovation and ship design powerhouse, is a world-class research and development facility specializing in critical ship design components. (U.S. Navy photo by Corum Byers)

An honor guard sentinel from the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment walks the mat before the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery on Monday June 2, 2025. Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division leadership and Sailors took part at a wreath-laying ceremony at the tomb. The ceremony honors those who have served and sacrificed for their country, in a gesture of respect and gratitude. (U.S. Navy photo by Corum Byers)

Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division leadership and Sailors gather for a group photo in the Memorial Amphitheater before arriving at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery on Monday, June 2, 2025. Pictured, from left: Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Ayomide Oguntuase, Lt. Cmdr. Marshell McCrosky, Cmdr. Christopher Jackson, Executive Officer Cmdr. Gerald Lettich, Commanding Officer Capt. Christopher Matassa, Chief of Staff Stephanie Feulner, Deputy Technical Director Dr. David Drazen, Chief Engineer Dr. Paul Lara, Chief Yeoman Delcon Ferguson, Senior Chief Logistics Specialist Henry Oseiakoto, Master-at-Arms 1st Class Montril Rabion. (U.S. Navy photo by Corum Byers)

Ice Cream Social

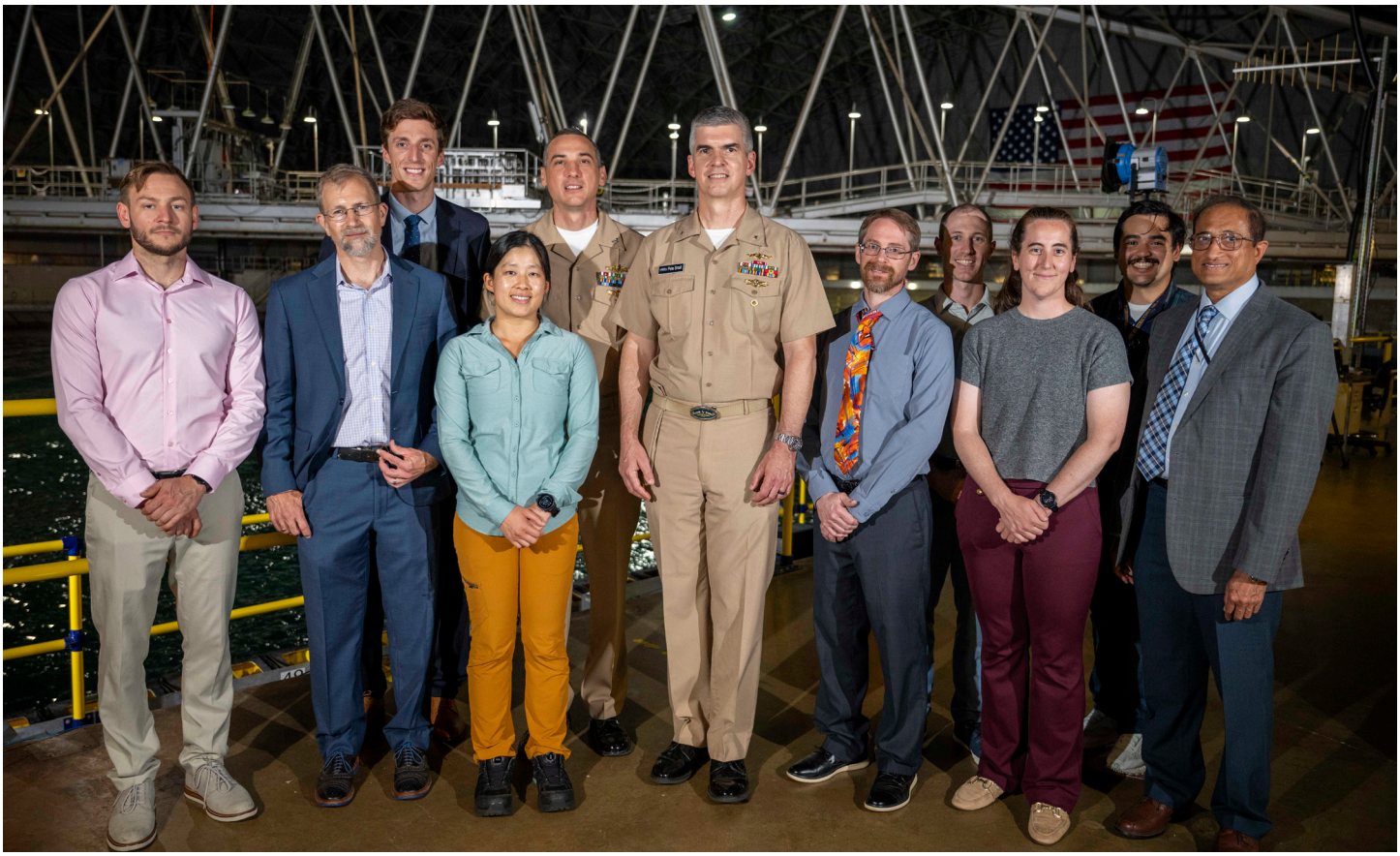
NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division's CMWR hosts an ice cream social for the workforce at the Raye Montague Center for Maritime Technology in West Bethesda, Md., on June 5, 2025. The event featured yard games and music for all to enjoy.

Rear Adm. Small Visits Carderock for Test Demonstration

NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Rear Adm. Peter Small, commander, Naval Surface and Undersea Warfare Centers, and Capt. Chris Matassa, commanding officer, Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division, greeted the naval architects and engineers who design DDG(X), the U.S. Navy's next guided-missile destroyer, during a seakeeping and secondary loads model test on June 17, 2025, at Caderock's Maneuvering and Seakeeping Basin in West Bethesda, Md. From left to right: Christopher Rupp, Adrian Mackenna, Colton Clark, Samantha Lee, Matassa, Small, Bradley Campbell, Matthew Poloniak, Kariann Vander Pol, Issac Di Napoli, Rasik Patel. (U.S. Navy photo by Devin Pisner)



From Whiteboard to Water: Oregon State Team Castorea Makes a Splash at ISR18

By Brittny Odoms, NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

What began as a submarine sketch on a whiteboard in 2022 became a reality for Oregon State University's human-powered submarine team, Team Castorea, in their inaugural run at the 18th International Submarine Races (ISR 18) in West Bethesda, Maryland.

The club was founded in 2022 by Liam Vincent, a mechanical engineering student and long-time participant in the Kids Into Discovering Science (KIDS) team. KIDS is a Maryland-based nonprofit that introduces K-12 students to hands-on STEM and engineering principles through submarine design. Drawing from his background, Vincent pitched the club idea during his freshman year at OSU, took initiative on the logistical and administrative work, and laid the groundwork for what would become a two-year student-led design-build project.

"He was fully willing to take on the brunt of what it takes to start a club," April Martus, an OSU engineering student and member of Team Castorea, said. "He has done a lot to get the club off its feet."

The team faced classic early-phase challenges: no budget, funding, sponsors or organizational base. With no prior base to build from, the team began to recruit members and eventually secured funding, becoming recognized as an official OSU club. They spent 10 months in research and development, using ISR design guides to prototype and manufacture their submarine during fall 2024.

Despite limited in-water testing—only about 12 feet of propulsion achieved in a controlled pool environment—and finalizing logistics just weeks before the event, the team arrived at ISR 18 with a working system.

Their goal was simple: complete one race and cross the finish line.

On Day 1 of ISR 18, they did just that, with April Martus piloting their sub across the finish line in its very first race.

"It was really special," Martus said. "We knew it wasn't usual for teams to finish on their first try on the first day."

Most of the founding members will graduate this year or next, but their legacy has established a foundation for growth for future OSU sub teams to follow. Team Castorea has proven what's possible with dedication, teamwork, and a clear vision.

Racing with Purpose: From STEM to Service with Virginia Tech at ISR18

By Alisha Tyer, NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Divers and team members from Virginia Tech make in-water adjustments to their submarine, Exlienni, during a race cycle at the 18th International Submarine Races (ISR 18), hosted at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, from June 23-27, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by Kristin Behrle)

BETHESDA, Md. – Three Virginia Tech students are transforming hands-on experience into long-term opportunities through their participation in the 2025 International Submarine Races (ISR18). Hosted by Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, the ISR serves as a unique naval engineering competition that develops critical domestic scientific engineering talent.

Using Naval Sea Systems Command STEM initiatives as a springboard, these students have each found ways to contribute, grow, and prepare for civilian careers supporting Carderock, NAVSEA, the Navy and the broader technical community within America's Maritime Industrial Base.

Charlie Giglio, Maggie Campbell, and Bryan Tomer have taken on various roles—pilot, diver, engineer, and event coordinator—across multiple ISR events. Their journeys have been shaped by programs like the Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship-for-Service, Science and Engineering Apprenticeship Program (SEAP), the Naval Research Enterprise Internship Program (NREIP), and Carderock's student trainee hiring pipeline.

Their experiences underscore the Navy's continued investment in cultivating technical talent and building clear pathways into the defense workforce well before graduation. Together, they reflect how early engagement through internships and scholarships help shape the Navy's next generation of technical leaders.

Building submersibles and a career through ISR

For rising senior and support diver Charlie Giglio, the ISR journey began in high school, long before his first day as a college student or intern at Carderock. He first attended ISR15 in 2019, competing with a team affiliated with his local career and technical education program.

"I was racing with a high school team, and we had a mentor from Carderock who helped us and encouraged us to participate in ISR," Giglio said. "To be working with an engineer of that caliber as a student was incredible."

That early exposure to hands-on submarine design and Carderock mentorship sparked his interest in naval research.

Through SEAP and NREIP, Giglio took on increasingly technical roles, including a COVID-era remote research project on non-nuclear sub design and later in-person work in Carderock's Acoustics and Anechoic Laboratory. Now, entering his final year at Virginia Tech, he is spending his second summer as a student trainee in the Signatures Department.

"The Navy has so much to offer," he said. "I was blown away by the scale and scope of the facilities, especially at Carderock. Once I got involved, I didn't want to leave."

Having participated in three ISR events, Giglio served as lead structures engineer for the Virginia Tech human-powered submarine team. He also supported race operations as a support diver, balancing technical oversight with in-water duties, including trim and ballast adjustments throughout the competition.

With extra divers and equipment on hand, Giglio and other Virginia Tech teammates stepped in to assist Javelin 2, the only independent family team competing at ISR18. He helped with diving support, gear setup and submarine stabilization during their runs.

"We showed up ready to race and to help," he said. "There's a real spirit of collaboration here, and it was cool to get hands-on with another team's design."

After six years of Navy STEM involvement, Giglio says the experience has solidified his interest in acoustics research and future service at Carderock.

"I've learned how to build, how to lead, and how to adapt under pressure," he said. "That's what I want in a career, and I've found that here."

From pilot to SMART scholar

Another rising senior, Maggie Campbell, serves as the team's hydrodynamics lead, support diver, and primary pilot. She's also a recipient of the Department of Defense (DoD) SMART Scholarship, which provides full academic funding in exchange for a civilian service commitment. Her placement is at Carderock's Combatant Craft Division (CCD) in Little Creek, where she plans to work as a naval architect specializing in small-craft—an interest shaped by her love of boats and early exposure to life on the water.

"I've always known I wanted to be a naval architect, and the SMART scholarship gives me the opportunity to start that career," Campbell said.

She joined the Virginia Tech team as a freshman and piloted her first ISR race that summer. Campbell described the ISR17 race as a rebuilding year, with students still recovering from COVID-related knowledge gaps. The team arrived late, spent the week troubleshooting, and completed only a limited number of runs.

"We weren't as prepared as we would have liked to have been," she said. "As a team, we recognized that. One of our main goals this year was to show up to the races prepared."

Determined to improve, the team overhauled their process starting construction earlier, conducting more rigorous testing, and expanding membership. The new hull was completed by early in winter 2023, allowing for spring pool trials ahead of the 2025 race.

"It was exhausting, but it paid off," Campbell said. "We came in with a plan, and we were ready."

Virginia Tech's 2025 vessel, Exlienni, takes its name from the phrase "Exit light, enter night" – a nod to the Metallica anthem that rallies Hokie athletes. This year, the team arrived with a fully operational vessel and cleared divers, enabling them to begin racing on day one.

Despite their preparation, they encountered challenges midweek after modifying the hull to use a more powerful propeller. The added power caused the vessel to roll early in each run, noticeably impacting the steering and speed.

Campbell led the team's response, rebalancing the sub, adjusting ballast to pre-load the opposite angle, and reducing the effects of torque as the pilot accelerated.

"We couldn't have known this would happen. We can't replicate this issue in our pool tests at home," she said. "It's the kind of thing you only learn by coming to a place like Carderock and racing. The model basin is the only place to do that."

Campbell plans to continue at Virginia Tech through a 4+1 master's program before transitioning to full-time civilian service at Little Creek.

Virginia Tech pilot and hydrodynamics lead Maggie Campbell waves to spectators at the David Taylor Model Basin during the 18th International Submarine Races (ISR18), hosted at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division from June 23-27. Campbell is a SMART scholar slated to join Carderock's Combatant Craft Division after graduation. (U.S. Navy photo by Alisha Tyer)

"This scholarship has allowed me to fully commit and focus, not just on school but on doing the work I love," she said. "And I'm excited to work on platforms with rapid, cradle-to-grave lifecycles. That's what drew me to combatant craft."

She credits ISR with accelerating her growth.

"The fact that we get to race here in the David Taylor Model Basin is such an incredible opportunity," Campbell said. "The race teaches us so much about what we're capable of. Through this sub team, we're able to see incredible facilities like this and think, 'Hey, I could work at someplace like this.'"

Building on legacy and looking ahead

Bryan Tomer, a rising junior in aerospace engineering and 2025 SMART scholar, was introduced to ISR long before college. His father, Bryan Tomer Sr., a current Carderock employee, competed in the original version of the races when they were held in the Atlantic Ocean. Years later, Tomer Jr. attended ISR as a high school student—an experience that he says sparked his interest in the program and Navy STEM opportunities.

That same summer, he joined the Virginia Tech team and later contributed to ISR17 as a member of the hydrodynamics subgroup.

While not competing at ISR18, Tomer returned in a supporting role—helping with event coordination and outreach. His behind-the-scenes work helped highlight the team's efforts and expand awareness of the program.

"A big part of the coordination job is spreading knowledge about what STEM is to students in the surrounding areas," he said. "We go to high schools and show incoming college students how ISR gives them an opportunity to actually build a submarine and compete in it. It's a great way to start building a professional network and see the Carderock facilities they might one day work at."

Beyond ISR, Tomer has built experience across the Navy STEM enterprise. He began at Carderock as a SEAP intern in the Naval Architecture and Engineering Department.

"My time at Carderock is what really set me off on my journey of civil service," he said.

He went on to complete additional internships through NREIP at NSWC Dahlgren, and the U.S. Naval Observatory. He is currently serving as a SMART scholar with the Missile Defense Agency.

His diverse experiences – including ISR- have helped him clarify his long-term goal: to become a program officer. Though he is not actively racing alongside the team, Tomer credits early internships and the ISR experience with giving him a lasting sense of direction.

For Giglio, Campbell, and Tomer, ISR is more than a competition. It's a chance to practice what they've learned, contribute to a team, and take the next step toward careers in naval engineering. Whether piloting, diving, designing, or supporting from the sidelines, each reflects what Carderock's STEM programs and events are designed to do: engage students early, provide mentorship, and show them what's possible.

They've each taken different routes through SMART, SEAP, and NREIP. But the outcome is the same: a stronger sense of direction, real-world experience, and a deeper connection to the Navy mission.

Bryan Tomer, a SMART scholar and aerospace engineering student at Virginia Tech, returned to the 18th International Submarine Races (ISR18) in a support role to assist with event coordination and STEM outreach. ISR18 was hosted at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, from June 23-27, 2025. (U.S. Navy screen capture by Kristin Behrle)

Charlie Giglio, a rising senior and student trainee at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, poses by his submarine, Exilenni, during the 18th International Submarine Races (ISR 18), hosted at Carderock from June 23-27, 2025. He served as both a support diver and the lead structures engineer for the Virginia Tech human-powered submarine team at ISR18. (U.S. Navy photo by Travis Troller)

Virginia Tech team members Charlie Giglio and Maggie Campbell prepare their human-powered submarine, Exlienni, during a dive cycle at the 18th International Submarine Races (ISR 18), hosted at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division from June 23-27, 2025. Both students served as support divers in addition to their engineering roles. (U.S. Navy photo by Corum Byers)

Cultivating Tomorrow's Leaders: Inside Carderock's LEAD Program

By Brittny Odoms, NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Jason P. Kelly

Timothy Langaster

Henry Mordica

Dr. Michelle Otero

Tristan Wright

The Leadership, Education and Development (LEAD) Program offers highly skilled engineers, scientists, technicians, business and financial professionals a chance to develop the strategies and tools needed to lead Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division. To be eligible, applicants must meet specific experience requirements (at least an ND-4/NT-4 level) and have worked at Carderock for at least one year.

The program was developed by Carderock's former Executive Director, Dr. Tim Arcano, in 2014 as Carderock's version of the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) Journey-Level Leadership (JLL) program founded by NAVSEA Executive Director William Deligne. It's a long-term organizational strategy to enrich the workforce, share knowledge, and invest in Carderock's future. The program gives future leaders the skills and strategies to lead across Carderock, helping them developing their talent, learn from Navy leadership, and contribute to long-term success.

"I am very excited to be part of the FY25 LEAD Cohort and to collaborate with highly intelligent and driven team members," said Henry Mordica, Facilities Acquisition Service Contract Lead (Code 1022) and FY 2025 LEAD Cohort chair.

Applicants attend an informational meeting, submit their application and resume, and then go through an interview process. Typically, five to six individuals are chosen for the program.

Key parts of the 18-month LEAD Program are leadership training, mentorship, development planning, networking and observing how the organization works. All activities are led by the LEAD cohort members themselves. These activities include discussions with Senior Executive Service (SES) members during brown bag lunches, briefings, leadership book discussions, classroom leadership training, a six-week paid rotational assignment and a team capstone project focused on current leadership challenges at the command. Members finish the yearlong program with an improved awareness of their personal strengths, management abilities and leadership skills. They also gain a broader view of the challenges faced by Carderock, NAVSEA and the Department of the Navy.

"What I look forward to most is the opportunity to complete a rotation outside of Carderock," Mordica said. "This experience offers a unique chance not only to enhance my leadership skills through hands-on shadowing but also to gain insight into the successes and challenges faced by another DoD site."

The program's goal is for participants to better understand their leadership strengths, improve their management skills and get a wider perspective of NAVSEA and Carderock.

Sailor Frocked to PO2

By NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Carderock Commanding Officer Capt. Chris Matassa frocks Yeoman Third Class Alcel Venasquez to the rank of petty officer second class during a ceremony on March 21, 2025, at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division in West Bethesda, MD. A frocking ceremony provides early recognition for Sailors who have been selected to advance to the next rank. (U.S. Navy phot by Lena Simmons)

CO Recognizes GARC Team

Commanding Officer Capt. Chris Matassa presented command coins to members of the combined Combatant Craft Division team who participated in a demonstration of the capabilities of the current GARC (Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Craft) USV in March. The development efforts and the demonstration itself showcased the Warfare Centers ability to work across the NR&DE and Industry to rapidly meet a Fleet need. Three Combatant Craft Division Branches teamed up to make the testing and demonstration a success. The combined team, led by Patrick Murphy, worked around the clock to accelerate this capability (ahead of schedule) to deliver a full autonomous capability for the GARC platform ahead of a Joint Exercise in the summer. (U.S. Navy photo)

Jeffrey Klimczak Receives NAVSEA Award: Building Pathways for Growth at Carderock University

By Alisha Tyer, NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division's Commanding Officer, Capt. Chris Matassa presents Jeffrey Klimczak, a human resources specialist at Carderock, the Naval Sea Systems Command Human Resources (HR) Award for Collaboration at an HR All Hands in West Bethesda, Md. on April 29, 2025.

BETHESDA, Md. – Jeffrey Klimczak, a human resources specialist at Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division, received the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) Human Resources Award for Collaboration on April 29.

Capt. Christopher Matassa, Carderock's commanding officer, presented the award in recognition of Klimczak's leadership in developing and launching Carderock University—a centralized platform for professional development. Klimczak successfully brought together contributors from across the organization to align resources and create a unified approach to workforce growth.

The NAVSEA HR Collaboration award recognizes individuals or teams for significant contributions to their organizations through effective teamwork and partnership. The award specifically highlights efforts that result in increased trust, cooperation, and respect from stakeholders while fostering productive relationships within and across organizations.

Klimczak was surprised to learn that he had received the prestigious award. "I was in shock and extremely humbled. I didn't even know I was submitted for this award," Klimczak admitted. He described the recognition as both personally motivating and a professional validation of the work his team's work.

The aim of Carderock University is to bring together a variety of resources for training and career development in one easily navigable location. The platform consolidates resources such as career guides, training roadmaps, and educational opportunities, making them accessible to employees at all levels. Klimczak explained that the biggest challenge in developing Carderock University was transitioning the concept into a fully functional platform without an established outline or parameters.

"The biggest challenge we faced with Carderock University was taking a concept that had been in the works for over a year and creating the actual product without an outline or set of parameters," he said. "We developed and then changed our entire layout numerous times as we added content to make the different pages easier to navigate. There is still a constant flow of content being added weekly, which means that we are constantly reorganizing and/or creating new pages."

A key element of Klimczak's efforts was fostering partnerships with universities and leveraging internal training academies within the organization. These collaborations allowed him to integrate resources such as the Defense Technical Information Center Portal, Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport's Corporate Research and Information Center's Research Commons, and connections with professional organizations.

Internally, Klimczak and his team worked to establish internal training academies, such as the School of Naval Architecture and Engineering and the School of Strategy and Leadership, to centralize specific career development opportunities. By coordinating across departments and external institutions, Klimczak ensured that employees have access to a comprehensive suite of training, mentoring, and leadership resources.

According to Jorge Galindo, head of the Workforce Development Branch, and the manager that nominated Klimczak, his ability to coordinate input and manage content development was key to ensuring the platform would meet the employees' needs. "His ability to bring together diverse stakeholders and create a really comprehensive knowledge base has positioned Carderock University as a premier destination for employee growth," he wrote.

Klimczak emphasized communication, multitasking, decision-making, adaptability, and creativity as critical skills for this initiative. "In my career, I have always found inspiration in seeing those around me grow professionally," Klimczak said. He credits his success to his team's support and leadership for allowing him the freedom to innovate. Klimczak views Carderock University as a guidepost for the workforce – a resource that provides direction and clarity in navigating career development. For him, every addition to the platform represents a step forward in building an organization where employees feel empowered to grow. "The long-term impact we would like to see is for a new employee to check onboard and be provided with not only a career path… but also the resources and mentoring to complete each step on their way," Klimczack said.

Although Carderock University is still in its early stages, Klimczak said the team is exploring ways to measure its success and define its impact. In the future, he hopes Carderock University will provide employees with comprehensive career paths, mentorship opportunities, and the resources necessary to achieve their career goals.

Looking ahead, Klimczak hopes to replicate this model with additional departments across the division. "I would like to work with the different departments to start our own in-house training programs and tie them into Carderock University," he said. Plans include developing Carderock University's career development section, integrating new in-house training programs, and continuing to expand the platform's content.

Carderock University continues to grow alongside the workforce it supports, continually opening doors to new opportunities for professional development. The NAVSEA Human Resources Award for Collaboration recognizes Klimczak's leadership and ability to unite contributors across the organization in support of workforce development innovation.

"The long-term impact we would like to see is for a new employee to check onboard and be provided with not only a career path… but also the resources and mentoring to complete each step on their way

John Phillips Receives 2024 Warfare Center Award for Warfighting Readiness

By Alisha Tyer, NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

BETHESDA, Md. – John T. Phillips, director of fleet engagement in the Technology & Innovation Office (Code 00T) at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, received the 2024 Warfighting Readiness Award in recognition of his efforts in uniting the fleet, application, and technical communities to advance the Navy's capabilities.

The award was presented on April 29, 2025 during the Command Award and Warfare Center Award Ceremony, where Capt. Christopher Matassa, Dr. Michael Shang, and department heads honored the 2024 Command Award recipients and Carderock's Warfare Center awardees. Phillips was unable to attend the ceremony, and the award was accepted on his behalf.

Bridging the gap between cutting-edge technology, systems engineering, and real-world fleet operations is no small feat, but Phillips made it his mission. As a key player in aligning the Navy's technological advancements with operational needs, he has been instrumental in driving experimentation, demonstrations, and disruptive capabilities, particularly by leveraging the increasingly important capability of unmanned surface vehicles (USVs).

Phillips was an inaugural member of the Department of the Navy's Unmanned Task Force to establish a Disruptive Capabilities Office, ensuring NAVSEA's Warfare Centers deliver solutions with immediate fleet impact. He credits his time as an Office of Naval Research Global Science Advisor to Marine Corps Forces Command from 2018 to 2021 as pivotal, recognizing then the potential of USVs in fleet innovation.

"I learned a lot about warfighting needs and how the fleet works across the Navy and Marine Corps," Phillips said. "The more I learned, the more I wanted to try to address those needs. I was able to take a lot of those lessons from the fleet and apply them to the work being done by the Navy Unmanned Task Force."

He explained that USVs offer incredible potential to safely and efficiently meet fleet requirements, especially in high-endurance missions or situations where sailors might face unnecessary risks. Returning to Carderock, Phillips identified connections between specific programs, capabilities, and expertise that could better support fleet needs.

"We focused on a three-pronged approach," he said. "First, engaging with the fleet commands to support their events through experiments and demonstrations. Second, connecting with Echelon I commands, which oversee many of the programs, to establish a valuable link between fleet needs and the programs designed to meet them. Finally, and most importantly to Carderock, bringing all that knowledge back to the Warfare Centers to align our efforts with fleet priorities and future program requirements."

Phillips' innovative approach, recognizing the overlooked connections between the fleet, application and technical communities, earned his selection for the award. For him, the recognition reinforces the tangible impact of his efforts to support the Navy in protecting the nation.

"I'm thrilled to receive this award," he said. "It's a good litmus test that the work I'm doing is well received. I never served in uniform, but the call to serve is strong. My family has a legacy of Navy civilian service—my dad, my uncle, my aunt—so that sense of duty and making a difference for the Navy was instilled in me early on."

Phillips said he never imagined his love for problem-solving and repairing cars with his father would evolve into a career at Carderock. Today, he hopes his work helps leave the world a better place for his four-year-old daughter. He credits his strong support system, including Carderock's Deputy Technical Director Dr. Dave Drazen, with enabling him to innovate and champion initiatives leading to his recognition.

"Dr. Drazen provided me with the autonomy to do good things for the Navy," Phillips said. "I've always been thankful for his support and trust. And my wife—she has always been there for me. Many of the exercises and demonstrations we organized meant I was away from home a lot. I couldn't have done any of this without someone holding things together when I wasn't there."

Looking ahead, Phillips remains committed to supporting the warfighter in any way he can.

"I don't know exactly what I'll take on next," he said. "But my goal is always to add value to whatever organization I'm supporting—ultimately to bring capabilities to the Navy and Marine Corps that make them a more effective fighting force."

His recognition with the 2024 Warfighting Readiness Award highlights the importance of visionary leadership in driving the Navy's operational edge.

CIO, Mike Kirby, Recognized with Department of the Navy Civilian Service Commendation Medal

Chief Information Officer (CIO), Mike Kirby (Code 104), was awarded the Department of the Navy (DoN) Civilian Service Commendation Medalfor his significant contributions as CIO and a senior civilian, as well as his outstanding leadership.

The DoN Civilian Service Commendation Medal recognizes an individual whose performance or achievement within the Navy and Marine Corps goes above the degree of excellence.

Kirby served as the principal advisor on all matters related to information technology and digital transformation, directly impacting mission success and operational effectiveness.

As CIO, Kirby serves as the senior civilian responsible for cybersecurity, enterprise architecture, enterprise service delivery and digital transformation initiatives. He has developed and executed the Command's first-ever IT Digital Strategic Plan, laying a strong foundation for modern, resilient and mission-focused IT capabilities. He successfully stood up and chaired the Digital Optimization Governance Board, ensuring transparency, alignment and prioritization of enterprise-wide digital initiatives. His strategic oversight enabled the implementation of transformative technologies that enhanced data-driven decision-making and streamlined internal operations.

In addition to his strategic leadership, Kirby was responsible for overseeing day-to-day internal IT operations, effectively managing an $85 million operating budget. He led a comprehensive IT restructuring effort that improved organizational agility, clarified roles and responsibilities and aligned technical talent with mission-critical priorities. His negotiation of competitive and forward-leaning acquisition strategies ensured the command maximized value and return on investment, while remaining agile and adaptable in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

"You (Kirby) have been instrumental in serving as the Chief Information Officer, demonstrating exceptional leadership in guiding large-scale digital transformation initiatives and cutting-edge research and development operations," Carderock CO Capt. Christopher Matassa said. "Your ability to develop and implement comprehensive information technology strategies to strengthen cybersecurity, foster cross-functional collaboration, manage multimillion-dollar budgets and drive organizational growth reflects not only your deep technical expertise but also your visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to mission."

Kirby's leadership of a diverse, multi-disciplinary workforce ensured sustained excellence, accountability and professional growth across the organization. His visionary leadership, operational excellence and unwavering commitment to service are just some of the examples of his dedication to the workforce.

Strengthening Partnerships: Naval Engineering Education Consortium Symposium Showcases Research and Collaboration

By Alisha Tyer, NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

University of Michigan students retrieve "ice" from the university's tow tank after a day of testing on Feb. 2, 2023. From left to right: Logan Galindo, Victoria Arciniega, Adina Farca and Jackson Brown. The students researched ship designs for operation in icy conditions as part of a Naval Engineering Education Consortium grant from Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division. (Courtesy photo by Brenda Ahearn, University of Michigan)

BETHESDA, Md. – Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division hosted the 2025 Naval Engineering Education Consortium's (NEEC) symposium virtually on Feb. 26, bringing together academic researchers, university students, and Navy mentors to share innovative research and strengthen connections that advance naval science and engineering.

"The NEEC program is a win-win. It not only fuels academic innovation but also strengthens our technical workforce pipeline by introducing talented students to the Navy's mission," said Dr. John Barkyoumb, Carderock's NEEC manager. "Even in a challenging hiring environment, building these connections now is critical for the future."

Led by Barkyoumb, the virtual symposium highlighted the unique, symbiotic nature of the NEEC program. The program, which includes participation from 10 Warfare Centers across the Navy, fosters collaboration between academia and the Navy's science and engineering community. This symposium was exclusive to universities whose work aligns with Carderock's specific research and development efforts.

The event showcased projects from five academic institutions: the University of the District of Columbia, the University of South Carolina, the University of Michigan, Mississippi State University, and Boston University. Student teams shared research advancements in areas including machine learning, generative modeling, hydrodynamics, and lithium battery technology.

The symposium also served as a platform for students and faculty to connect with Carderock's STEM leadership and learn from each other's work. These connections are not just about research outcomes but also about building lasting relationships that can inspire new solutions to the Navy's toughest technical challenges.

Through NEEC, university students with aspirations in science and engineering gain hands-on research experience alongside faculty and Navy mentors, contributing to projects with real-world naval applications. In return, the Navy benefits from fresh perspectives, academic research outcomes and the potential to cultivate future civilian workforce talent.

Navy mentors, who are subject matter experts from NAVSEA's Warfare Centers, play an active role in the program by visiting university labs and classrooms, engaging professors in technical discussions and guiding students through internship and employment opportunities. Professors contribute by advancing research, maintaining communication with mentors and identifying strong candidates for internships and employment. Students benefit by gaining real-world experience, seeking internships and preparing for potential civilian roles with the Navy.

Proposals are solicited through a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) which outlines specific technical naval topics of interest, and projects are funded through a one-year grant, with options for second and third-year funding based on project success or programmatic needs. Many students then apply for acceptance into Carderock's STEM programs, such as the Naval Research Enterprise Intern Program or the SMART Scholar program, taking advantage of the relationships and interest established through NEEC.

As part of Carderock's broader STEM outreach efforts, NEEC plays a critical role in engaging graduate, post-graduate, and select undergraduate students, inspiring them to pursue advanced careers in naval engineering and research. By providing meaningful research opportunities and mentorship, the program contributes to a robust pipeline of talent prepared to support the Navy's long-term mission to protect America at sea, defend freedom, and ensure open and secure maritime trade. Developing a strong pipeline of technical talent is essential to maintaining a strategic advantage.

Carderock plays a key role in this effort by providing full-spectrum research and development, test and evaluation, and fleet support for naval platforms and systems. With expertise in naval architecture, marine engineering, and the integration of surface and undersea vehicles, Carderock advances the science and technology needed to strengthen fleet capabilities and support the maritime industry.

Since its inception, NEEC has played a quiet but pivotal role in introducing skilled professionals to the Navy's civilian workforce, underscoring the program's broader mission of preparing the next generation of naval engineers and scientists.

Arianna Kerkmaz and Patrick White, students at the University of Michigan, observe a model of a guided-missile destroyer in "ice" during testing on Dec. 12, 2023, in the university's tow tank. Kerkmaz is a Naval Engineering Education Consortium (NEEC) student and a former summer intern at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division. White, also a NEEC student and a SMART fellow, will work at Carderock after completing his master's degree. (Courtesy photo by Marcin Szczepanski, University of Michigan)

Dhiambi Otete, Apprentice Ship Design and Integration Engineer

By NSWC Carderock Division Public Affairs

BETHESDA, Md. – Dhiambi Otete, an apprentice ship design and integration engineer in Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division's Future Ship Concepts Branch (Code 824), became interested in supporting the Navy after having a conversation with her college faculty advisor.

"She told me about the wide range of opportunities here (at Carderock), for example being able to do work with structures or hydrodynamics or resistance," Otete said. "I was really impressed by the variety in comparison to other jobs. That is when it clicked for me and I started to take a deeper interest in fluid mechanics and electromechanical subjects."

Otete was born in Nairobi, Kenya, but moved to the United States with her family when she was three-years old. She was raised in Alexandria, Virginia, and attended George Mason University on a full-tuition academic scholarship. Not only is Otete book-smart, but she is also a gifted athlete. She was a college Division 1 track and field athlete and is currently in the top 10 all-time records list at George Mason for triple jump. She did all of this while carefully balancing her demanding workload.

As a child, Otete was a fierce competitor and competed in several of her elementary school's math challenges. In fact, she won her second-grade math contest and asked her teachers for more questions. After reaching seventh-grade math problems in the second grade, she eventually met her match.

"I have always had the luck and opportunity to have really good math teachers," Otete said. "I found out that I really enjoyed mechanical engineering in college because I had to think about objects in a 3D space. So that kind of opened my mind to how many different things mechanical engineering could evolve into and I ran with it."

After graduating college with her bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in May 2023, Otete accepted a job offer from Carderock and kick-started her federal career. Although she is still relatively new to the workforce, Otete wasted little time in becoming involved. She completed a team lead assignment for the Center for Innovation in Ship Design, guiding Naval Research Enterprise Internship Program Interns on a hydrodynamics and resistance project.

"It was a really unique experience being a team lead and I think what I learned the most is how much goes into project planning and data organization," Otete said. "I really enjoyed it because it was nice to see my team collaborate and grow as engineers from my perspective as a team lead, which you don't always see on the other side as an engineer on the project. I also really enjoyed the opportunity to go more in-depth with administrative tasks because it made me appreciate scheduling more."

Apart from leading students over the summer, Otete has also completed a ship-design project, which she oversaw from start-to-finish. She also rotated with the Survivability and Weapons Effects Branch (Code 665) and NAVSEA 05D1, where she was able to learn more about ship survivability and vulnerability reduction, collaborate, and sharpen her naval architecture skillset.

"So far, I've been really impressed with my rotations," Otete said. "The range

of different things I have been able to do at Carderock has made me really happy and I just never thought all these experiences would be possible and accessible."

One of the things she has most appreciated about Carderock is the team environment she and her coworkers have fostered over the past year.

"I think everyone is really passionate about what they do and I'm really lucky to be with coworkers that I enjoy hanging out with," Otete said. "You can have a simple conversation with your coworker and learn so much from them. All of the people I have met here have been so, so kind and so nice. I think that's what makes this place (Carderock) so special."

Reflecting on the advice she would give to new engineers entering the workforce, Otete urged new employees to never limit themselves.

"You can do so much great work here – you just have to be willing to ask," she said. "That is what happened to me and I have been enjoying my experience ever since. Don't be afraid to reach for new opportunities, even if they might seem scary."

Aside from her engineering responsibilities, Otete supports Naval Sea Systems Command at career fairs and similar events.

"I'm proud to attend career fairs and try to inspire young engineers to work for the Navy," she said. "I'm now the one advocating and expressing how great it is to work at our Division."

Away from the office, Otete spends her time hiking, cooking, running and attending farmers markets in the local area. She also volunteers as a coach for the Girls on the Run Program in Virginia, which blends physical activity with life-skill development, such as managing emotions, fostering friendships and expressing empathy. She said her goal is to empower young girls to achieve their dreams.

NAVSEA

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Carderock

Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division
9500 MacArthur Blvd.
West Bethesda, MD 20817-5700