FRCSW
ALMANAC
Volume 7 - Issue 5

FRCSW Change of Command

Capt. Pfannenstein at the Helm

Skipper's Corner:

Generating Readiness is What We Do

Capt. Timothy Pfannenstein

I want to share with you a vision of who I believe we are as an organization and how together we can adapt to an uncertain future.

Who we are is defined by our mission, which is, has been, and always will be to Generate Readiness for the Fleet. Our name says it all… Fleet ***Readiness*** Center Southwest. Readiness is what we do!

FRCSW does this by supporting the warfighter and delivering critical readiness enabling products for aircraft, engines and components. We do this no matter when or where we are called upon.

We fulfill this mission in a way that makes us good stewards to the taxpayers and to our environment. We invest in our future, value Employee/Sailor development; acknowledge the contributions of our best and brightest and are proactive with regards to improving our facilities and increasing our technology efforts. All of this allows FRCSW to remain viable to the nation.

In order to continue being effective we must enable execution through communication, linkages and connections between FRCSW, those we support and those who support us.

FRCSW is committed to excellence. In execution of our mission we cannot, and will not, stray from our obligations to our customers, the work force or the taxpayer.

FRCSW personnel deliver to promise, are compliant with maintenance, safety, financial and environmental policy, and measure ourselves in order to improve. We weed out inefficiency and strive to do things better. Not just when we want to, but every day, even when it is hard. We are committed to one another as a teammate, not a competitor; we respect each other, and as such, support employee growth, employee skill development, diversity and inclusion. We acknowledge that every sailor and civilian, regardless of rank, time in service or time aboard, has something of value to offer.

In order to achieve everything we do all members of our team must embody two simple core constructs; organizational competence and employee confidence!

The first; **organizational competence**, means having the knowledge that no matter what the challenge, our work force is fully enabled and can respond to any constraint that could impact our ability to meet the mission. We gain this competence through trained people, ready facilities and equipment, able skill sets and a results oriented focus.

Second to our core is **employee confidence**, which enables us to ensure that our fundamental ways of doing business are appropriate and sound. We recognize that Hail Mary Passes and Diving Catches feel good in the short term, but should only be used to answer a Red-Stripe or immediate crisis and they are not the way to successfully sustain and consistently meet the mission.

Finally, success can only be achieved when we can count on each other every time that we are called upon. We must recognize that it is an honor to work at FRCSW and that our warfighters, and our nation, rely on our talents and need us to give our absolute best every single day on every single task.

In summary, here at FRCSW we generate Readiness; for the Nation, for the Fleet, for our Organization and for our work force. Generating Readiness is what we do and I am excited to be your partner as we successfully achieve this mission.

Timothy H. Pfannenstein

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Commanding Officer

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FRCSW Mission, Vision & Values

Mission

Deliver responsive maintenance, repair and overhaul products and services in support of Naval Aviation and National Defense objectives.

Vision

Be the provider of choice for aviation maintenance, committed to customers, partners, workforce and community.

Values

Honor, Courage, Commitment.

FRCSW ALMANAC

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America's Navy – A Global Force for Good

FRCSW ALMANAC

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Fleet Readiness Center Southwest Commanding Officer Capt. Timothy Pfannenstein addresses the audience during the FRCSW Change of Command ceremony aboard the USS Midway Museum on August 8, 2014.
Photo by Mike Furlano

An MH-60S *Seahawk* multi-purpose helicopter is taxied to Building 306 for induction to the Planned Maintenance Interval program at FRCSW.
Photo by Jim Markle

Pfannenstein Assumes Command of FRCSW

Capt. Timothy Pfannenstein arrives for the FRCSW Change of Command ceremony aboard the USS Midway Museum, August 8. *Photo by Jim Markle*

Capt. Timothy Pfannenstein relieved Capt. Donald B. Simmons, III as commanding officer Fleet Readiness Center Southwest (FRCSW) on Friday, August 8, during a change of command aboard the USS Midway Museum. Pfannenstein previously served as the command's executive officer.

Following the arrival of the official party and national anthem, Capt. Simmons opened the ceremony with welcoming remarks and introduced the guest speaker, Rear Adm. Paul Sohl, commander, Fleet Readiness Centers.

In his opening statement Rear Adm. Sohl summarized the Midway's 47-years of naval service, and noted the ship's significance to the change of command ceremony:

"Scores of Sailors served on her prior to decommissioning in 1992. Today we stand in gratitude of their collective service. Among those Midway Sailors was Chief Warrant Officer 4 Donald B. Simmons, Jr., the Skipper's dad, and Capt. Craig Owen, the incoming FRCSW executive officer," he said.

Afterward, Sohl reviewed Simmons' tenure at FRCSW.

"A little more than a year ago, Capt. Simmons assumed command of this organization. Through sequestration and budget battles and government shutdowns, Don and the command team have been keeping the ship steady and delivering outstanding service to our customers – the fleet warfighter. Don's `take care of business' attitude and stellar leadership ability made him stand out."

Sohl turned his focus to the current demands placed upon the FRCs and the importance of ensuring the readiness of the Fleet.

"Wednesday night, the chair of the Joint Chiefs met with the president. Thursday night, the president announced targeted airstrikes were required in Iraq. This morning at 3:45 our time, less than seven hours ago, who responded to that call? USS *George Herbert Walker Bush* (CVN 77) and her airwing dropped laser guided bombs in Iraq against terrorists associated with the Islamic state. That is what the president needs. That is what we deliver," he said.

Sohl addressed incoming-FRCSW Commanding Officer Capt. Pfannenstein's 36-years of naval aviation experience, saying that "there is little in naval aviation maintenance he hasn't seen or done."

Rear Adm. Paul Sohl, Commander, Fleet Readiness Centers (COMFRC), right, presents Capt. Donald B. Simmons, III with the Legion of Merit award.
Photo by Jim Markle

FRCSW Change of Command

Guest speaker, Rear Adm. Paul Sohl, COMFRC, delivers his opening remarks at the FRCSW Change of Command. *Photo by Jim Markle*

FRCSW Change of Command Video
http://youtu.be/VXTaveLa1Tk

Next, he presented Simmons with the Legion of Merit Award for his role as FRCSW commanding officer from April 2013 to August 2014.

Referencing the command's spirit of innovation in his farewell remarks, Simmons said:

"Over the last 95 years FRCSW has been the leader in aviation maintenance; whether it was pioneering the use of a civilian workforce, or utilizing watchmaker benches to streamline engine repair, FRCSW has always been at the forefront of naval aviation."

"Today, we continue to be innovation leaders," he said. "We are establishing new capabilities not seen before: Our additive manufacturing division is paving the way of the future by printing tools and parts for aircraft. The environmental team has achieved huge reductions in steam, water, and compressed air usage through its use of innovative techniques."

Simmons said that he focused on cost scheduling and production quality during his tenure, and attributed the success of those efforts to the command workforce.

"It was the men and women of FRCSW who made extraordinary things happen," he said.

Plans to meet Fiscal Year 2014 goals are online, he said, with delivery estimates of more than 40 F/A-18 *Hornets*; 20 E-2/C-2s; six AV-8B *Harriers*; 10 H-53s; 21 H-1 *Hueys*; and over 50 H-60 *Seahawks*.

After the reading of orders, Rear Adm. Sohl officiated the transfer of authority.

Following the exchange of salutes, Capt. Pfannenstein spoke of the command's mission. Generating readiness, he said, was essential to supporting the Fleet and its warfighters.

"We do this supporting of the warfighter by delivering critical readiness enabling products for aircraft, engines and components. We do this no matter when or where we are called upon by our customers and clients," he said.

Pfannenstein also stressed the importance of placing value on the workforce and the significance of process execution in FRCSW meeting its mission.

"When execution is effectively enabled, it allows us to improve our products and our product reliability. This makes us viable and relevant to our customers now, and in the future," he noted.

Also participating in the change of command ceremony were the FRCSW color guard, the Navy Region Southwest Band, and Lt. David Carlson, a Navy chaplain, who gave the invocation and benediction.

Simmons' next assignment will be with Commander, Naval Air Forces.

Meet the Executive Officer

Captain Craig Owen

Capt. Craig Owen grew up in Jamesport, Missouri and graduated from Tri-County High School in 1981. He enlisted in the Navy in December 1981 and upon completion of boot camp, reported to Aviation Structural Mechanic School in Memphis, Tennessee.

Capt. Owen was promoted to Chief Petty Officer in 1991 after only nine years of enlisted service and held the rank of Chief Petty Officer for two years. As part of the Limited Duty Officer Program, Capt. Owen was commissioned in 1993 and completed initial officer training at Schools Command in Pensacola, Florida.

His tours encompass cruises in the Pacific Ocean and Mediterranean Sea onboard USS *John F. Kennedy* (CVN 67), USS *George Washington* (CVN 73), USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70), the USS *Midway* (CV 41) and the USS *Ranger* (CV 61) as well as a work-up cruise with the USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65).

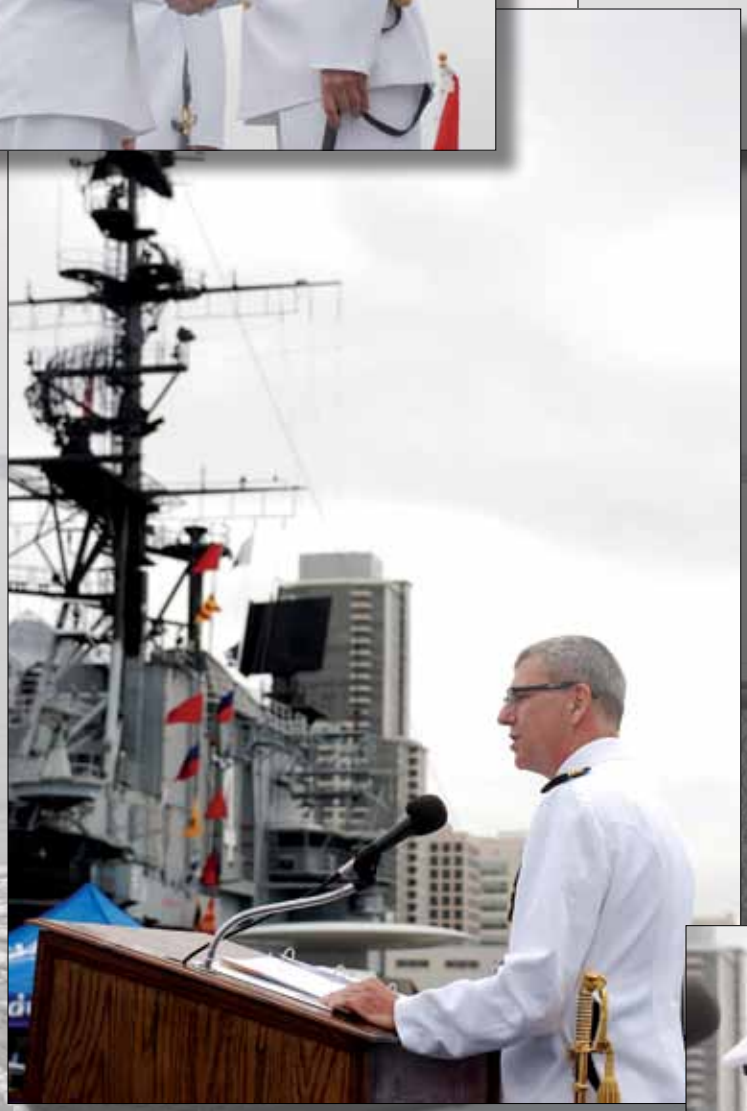
Capt. Owen served with multiple squadrons, to include Helicopter Combat Support Squadron One (HC-1), Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Fourteen (HS-14), Attack Squadron One Four Five (VA-145), Electronic Attack Squadrons One Two Nine (VAQ-129), One Three Nine (VAQ-139), One Four One (VAQ-141) and Strike Fighter Squadron One Three One (VFA-131), gaining experience in several Type/Model/Series aircraft platforms, including SH-3 *Sea King*, A-6 *Intruder*, EA-6B *Prowler* and F/A-18 *Hornet* aircraft. His shore duty assignments include Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Detachments in Rota, Spain and Norfolk, Va., Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic (FRCMA), Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV), Commander, Fleet Readiness Centers (COMFRC) and Fleet Readiness Center Southwest (FRCSW).

Capt. Owen received his undergraduate degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University with a major in Professional Aeronautics in 1999, and transitioned to the Aerospace Engineering Maintenance Duty Officer, 1520 Designator, in 2000. Capt. Owen earned dual Master's degrees in Aviation Aerospace Safety Systems and Aviation Aerospace Management, graduating from Embry-Riddle in 2005 with honors.

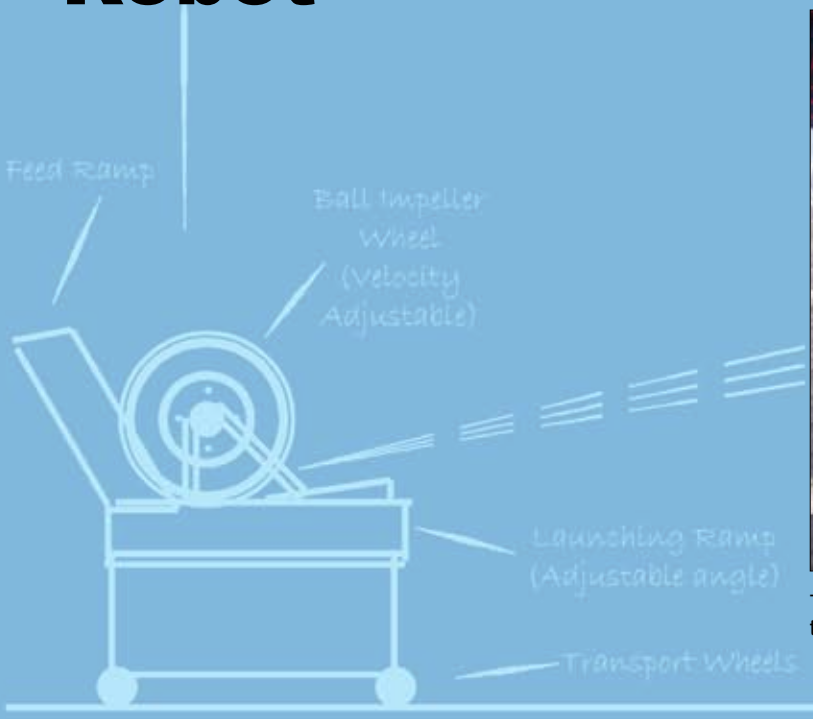
Capt. Owen's personal awards and decorations include four Meritorious Service Medals, eight Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, six Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals and numerous unit awards. He is Acquisition Professional Certified and has received numerous Defense Acquisition University certifications to include Production Quality and Manufacturing Level III, Logistics Level III, Program Management Level III and Systems Planning Research Development and Engineering Level II.

FRCSW Change of Command Photos

Photos by Mike Furlano and Jim Markle



NAVAIR Engineer Helps Students Design Specialized Robot



The Mira Mesa High School Robotics Club's prototype robot created to assist Little League baseball coach Steve Wampler.

Courtesy Photo

A Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) materials engineer is lending his expertise to help a group of high school students make fielding and batting practice a bit easier for a Little League baseball coach afflicted with cerebral palsy.

Justin Massey, who is assigned to the Fleet Readiness Center Southwest (FRCSW) materials engineering division, has spent the past two years working with eight students from the Mira Mesa High School Robotics Club to design a robot that will assist coach Steve Wampler in pre-game warm ups with his Little League players.

"The robot is placed at home plate and it shoots ground and fly balls; allowing the coach to shoot practice balls to the infielders and outfielders," Massey said.

"It has two modes: One is manual so if you're in a wheelchair you can manually control it, or it can go to auto-feed and will automatically send a ball to third base, then to the shortstop, second base, first base; then to left field, and center and right field."

"Steve Wampler wanted this product for his son's Little League team so he could be active instead of just sitting on the side lines watching. He is good friends with the high school's engineering teacher and robotics club sponsor (Eric Fischer) and that's how they got the idea," Massey explained.

In the past, the Mira Mesa Robotics Club was a regular participant in the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) robotics program and annual competition.

But the club's members changed their goals last year when they were given the choice between creating a robot for competition, or one that could be used for an altruistic purpose.

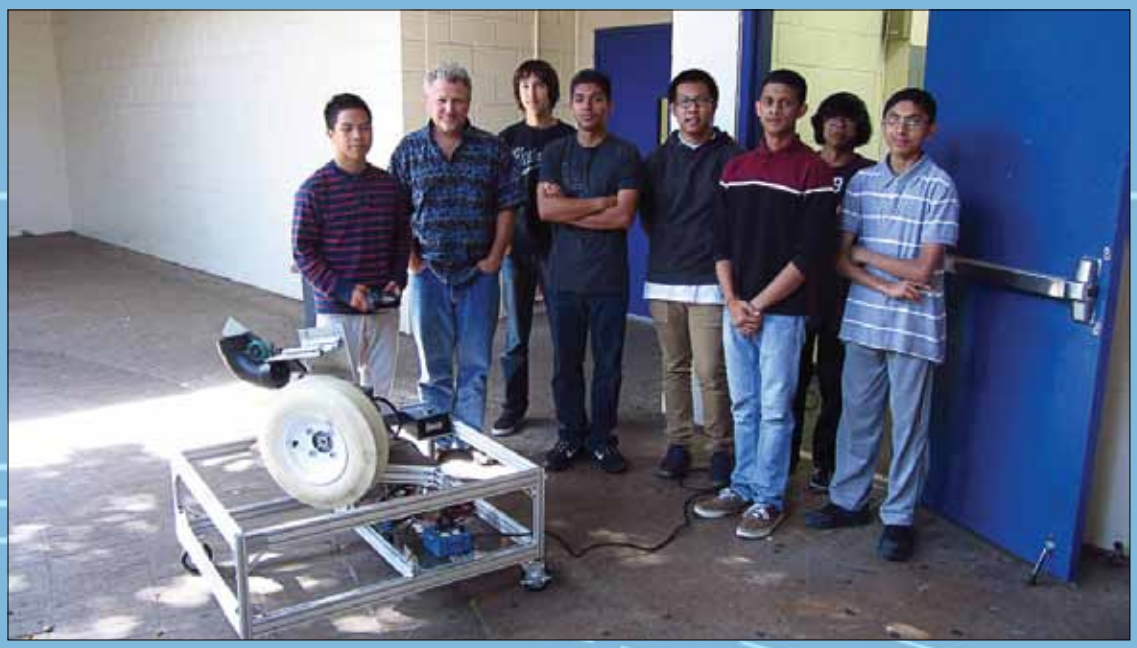
Using computer-aided design (CAD) software, the students set out to design the robot. Massey, who serves as the club's mentor, offered advice to correct potential design flaws or flaws affecting the manufacturing of the robot.

"For the ball feeder, for example, two or three of them would come up with a design, and then we'd narrow it down to what was the best design or use multiple designs to form one," Massey said. "I always told them to keep it simple because if they over designed, it would take too long to manufacture."

"There's been a lot of prototyping and design since it all started. Last year we came up with the basic design. Since all of the kids were doing this after school, for the most part, and once the second half of the year came around, the progress slowed down because most of the kids were looking to go to college, so we've had more involvement from younger students," Massey said.

The robot is made of aluminum, steel and PVC. Its pitching wheel is made of rubber over a steel rim, and the final version will be made of the same materials, Massey said.

"One of the most intricate mechanical designs is the rotation of the pitching wheel," he said. "There's a car window motor that has intricate bearings and collars, so it only turns on one pivot point. That was the most difficult aspect of making the robot. It (pitching wheel) uses roller



Teacher Eric Fischer, second from left, is joined by members of the Mira Mesa High School Robotics Club. The club designed and assembled a prototype robot, foreground, used in Little League pre-game warm-ups. *Courtesy Photo*

bearings, and a carbon fiber plate holds it all together."

The electrical needs to power the robot also presented a challenge. Though the unit may be plugged into a typical 110 volt outlet, it uses 90 volts and DC current instead of AC current. Consequently, to avoid damage, the robot's motors and switches require converters.

Massey noted that some of the parts for the prototype robot were taken from scrap materials because of their availability, and to avoid the inordinate amount of time required through the school's purchase order process.

"Some of the electronic components were taken from previous competition robots," he said. "The main things we bought were the (pitching) wheel, the motor, and the hand-held controller which came to about $200 altogether. The total cost to build the robot was about $600."

Though the designing and electronics of the robot's components were a significant issue to resolve, Massey said that the actual machining of the unit was the most difficult.

"The biggest hurdle that every high school faces with their robotics program is someone doing the machine work for them. Last year we were able to get some work done here through donated hours of FRCSW engineers who had machinist backgrounds," he said.

This year, Naval Sea Systems Command ship mechanic/machinist, Ryan Blouin, a personal friend of Massey's, offered his help.

Some the robot's more intricate components were made at the Kearny High School machine shop through computer numerical control (CNC) tooling.

Massey said that the 3-foot-6-inch by 2-foot-6-inch robot weighs approximately 35 pounds, and took almost 10 months to build.

"Steve has a powered wheelchair, so the thought was the robot would be on a trailer that he could pull with the wheelchair. It can be plugged in with the typical outlet, and we also can make it battery powered but that's not too practical because a car battery would be used and they're quite heavy. Most Little League fields have power outlets, anyway," he said.

The Mira Mesa High School students presented their robot at the College Career and Technical Education (CCTE) Showcase in late May at Liberty Station. The fully completed robot shot whiffle balls into a display at the event.

The CCTE is a branch of the San Diego Unified School District that challenges students to succeed by applying academics to technical and occupational knowledge.

"Next year the kids might try to manufacture a robot designed to assist quadriplegic people. Quadriplegics use pneumatics for everything, so it's all air driven, and we'd need to figure out how to adapt from an all switched to an air driven system," Massey said.

"I went to Mira Mesa High School and want to give back," Massey said. "The kids always ask me questions about the engineering fields, and what type to enter and what schools are best to attend for the field." △

SUPPORT EQUIPMENT REWORK SHOP PUTS A POLISH ON SHIPBOARD TOOLS

AS3 Michael Derosiers installs a new starter on a tractor from the amphibious assault ship USS *Boxer* (LHD 4) at the FRCSW Support Equipment (SE) Rework shop in Building 801. The SE shop supports the refurbishment of shipboard equipment belonging to aircraft carriers and amphibious force ships in San Diego. *Photo by Jim Markle*

Shipboard aviation equipment, like tractors and tow bars, can take a beating from the elements and daily use at sea.

Like the Sailors who use them, this equipment needs rejuvenation upon returning to port. Aboard Fleet Readiness Center Southwest (FRCSW), the Support Equipment (SE) Rework shop in Buildings 801 and 789 serve as the refurbishment hub for these tools.

For almost 30 years, the SE shop and its staff of Sailors and contractor personnel have handled the technical training, tools, and parts that enable Sailors to prepare equipment for its next deployment.

The shop's civilian contractors are technical experts who assist Sailors in SE repair and maintenance. The contractors also troubleshoot and maintain the shop's tools and machinery.

SE Rework Supervisor ASCS Chester Nicolas said the SE work centers are funded by Commander, Naval Air Forces, which also funds the costs of contractors and parts for support equipment.

"The ships bring in their support equipment and gear that needs refurbished and supply their own manpower to do the work. Those people are usually aviation support equipment, ordnance, or machinist mates. We also have three offices available for their use while they overhaul their equipment here," said AS2 Maurice Williams.

"We have five contractors under Dynacorp who help me facilitate the building and provide guidance to the Sailors. Most of them have been here for about 20 years, so they are very knowledgeable," Nicolas said.

"This building could be looked upon as a schoolhouse: We teach our young Sailors the right way to do things."

"There are times when we contact the `C' school here, so when they hold their classes, they can tour our facilities to see what the actual performance of the job is. In the schoolhouse you may have a tractor, for example, all built up and the Sailors are taught how to troubleshoot; but here they can get the hands-on experience," Nicolas said.

The Building 801 facility contains eight work bays, a full-service welding shop, overhead cranes and a tool room to handle scheduled maintenance to major equipment refurbishment. The staff is not authorized to rebuild major components like engine and transmissions.

Building 789 serves as the rework shop's corrosion and paint branch, where steam cleaning, blasting, sanding, painting and powder coating are performed.

Williams said the rework shop's primary customers include the aircraft carriers ported at Naval Air Station North Island and amphibious force (Gator) ships ported at Naval Base San Diego.

"Gator class ships normally bring in about 600-700 pieces of support equipment, and it's almost double that for the aircraft carriers. Small gators send over about 25 personnel, and the carriers send about 55-60 personnel to work on their support equipment. This saves the Navy a tremendous amount of money vice having depot level guys work on the support equipment," Nicolas said. △

Aboard USS Vandegrift:

FRCSW Artisans Repair H-60, Watch Navy Stop Drug Smugglers

The repaired H-60 *Seahawk* helicopter aboard the USS *Vandegrift* (FFG 48) that suffered tail strut damage and damage to its skins, formers and some stringers. *Courtesy photo*

Planner and estimator Andrew Crump, left, and sheet metal mechanic Harris Pham stand in front of an H-60 Seahawk helicopter aboard the USS *Vandegrift* (FFG 48). *Courtesy photo*

A mission to repair an H-60 *Seahawk* helicopter turned into a rare opportunity for two Fleet Readiness Center Southwest (FRCSW) artisans to experience the Navy's drug interdiction efforts in Central America aboard the guided-missile frigate USS *Vandegrift* (FFG 48).

Planner and estimator Andrew Crump and sheet metal mechanic Harris Pham left FRCSW in June to repair the Seahawk assigned to Vandegrift.

The two were scheduled for a layover on June 4 in San Salvador, El Salvador. But those plans abruptly changed due to violence attributed to the international gang Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13.

"To get to San Salvador, you had to drive an hour and a half. A week prior, the MS-13 gang was looking for an individual on a bus and ended up murdering everybody who was on the bus while looking for that one guy. So the security commander said we couldn't drive there now, so we stayed at the Quality Hotel in Comlapa," Crump said.

Comlapa, El Savador, is home to one of four counterdrug Forward Operating Locations, or airfields, owned by their host nations and used in conjunction with the U.S. military to disrupt the flow of drugs to the USA.

"Though El Savador is a very dangerous place, the hotel is very nice; and basically it's like a compound in the jungle," Crump said.

"Six armed guards constantly patrolled around the hotel to keep it safe for the staff and residents," Pham noted.

The following morning, June 5, Crump and Pham were met at the Comlapa airfield by one of Vandegrift's Seahawks and taken to the ship to assess and repair its other H-60 helicopter.

"The H-60 had a hole in it. The tail shock strut blew up and the Schrader valve from the shock strut blew out the transition section, damaging the skins and the formers and some stringers. I don't exactly know how it happened, but one possibility is when the aircraft is over pressurized, over serviced," Crump said.

Crump said that the H-60 was placed in the ship's hangar bay, and that he and Pham worked inside of the aircraft under extreme temperatures.

"It was very hot on the ship and inside of the aircraft where we were working, in the transition section," he said. "It was hard to get in there. And the tail landing gear strut was de-serviced so there was a small access door to enter, and the helicopter was so close to the ground; plus it was on a jack which is in the way."

"To keep cool, we used a vacuum cleaner hose hooked up to the ship's vent inside of the hangar so it would blow out air. We tied a garbage bag around the vent and poked a hole in the bag, and taped the vacuum cleaner hose to it and ran the hose to the transition section of the helicopter."

Crump and Pham completed repairs to the H-60 in five days, but because the Vandegrift had prior scheduled assignments, the two FRCSW artisans remained onboard for six more days.

With its second Seahawk ready to go, the ship ramped up its efforts to locate and stop vessels transporting drugs.

The Seahawks are equipped with forward looking infrared (FLIR) cameras that are used to identify heat sources emanating from engines or human body heat.

"They were capturing cocaine, but who knows what else they find trying to be smuggled on those boats, Crump said. "They got an estimated $34 million worth of cocaine, or about two tons between the two boats they detained while we were there."

One of the vessels, a 40-foot fishing boat, was sunk by the Vandegrift, Pham noted.

According to a Vandegrift June 25 press release, the vessel was destroyed because it was unseaworthy. The other was released to the coast guard of its host country – Costa Rica.

The Vandegrift also held detainees for processing who were turned over from another ship of the battle group.

"Bear in mind that just because the drug traffickers are the bad guys, it doesn't necessarily mean the guys in the boats are bad guys, too," Crump said. "A lot of times they are told `Hey, you take these drugs or we'll kill your family.'"

Prior to this mission, Crump and Pham had completed numerous assignments overseas and in Hawaii.

"I didn't realize they (Vandergrift) were going to commandeer us for so long. I don't have a family, but I have three dogs and a cat, so it got sticky as to how they were getting along. But of course, if I need to go I will go, and make whatever arrangements I need to make that happen," Crump said.

FRCSW Wins NAVAIR Energy Award

Former FRCSW Commanding Officer Capt. Don Simmons (left), and Commander, Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR), Vice Adm. David Dunaway (right) stand with FRCSW Energy and Water Conservation Program Manager Matt Schreck, recipient for the 2013 NAVAIR Commanders National Award for Energy. *Courtesy photo*

FRCSW Pilot is "Hero of the Game"

FRCSW F/A-18 Military Program Manager Cmdr. Kerry Smith (right) is honored as the LA Kings "Hero of the Game" June 7 at the Los Angeles Staple Center during Game 2 of the NHL Stanley Cup Final while recording artist Pia Toscano sings the National Anthem. The Kings won the game in overtime against the New York Rangers 5-4, and ultimately captured the 2014 Stanley Cup championship. *Courtesy photo*

FRCSW Security Specialist Receives Certification

FRCSW security specialist Chris Clavier (right) receives a certification in physical security June 6 from Mr. Jeffrey Bearor, Senior Director for Security, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy for Plans, Policy, Oversight, and Integration. The Security Professional Educational Development Certification Program is a DOD initiative intended to ensure there is a common set of competencies among security practitioners that promotes interoperability, facilitates professional development and training, and develops a workforce of certified security professionals. Clavier is one of only three security specialists within Navy Region Southwest to be awarded this certification. *Courtesy photo*

FRCSW Engineer Inspires Students at Science, Engineering Festival

FRCSW engineer David Price uses a Romer Arm Laser Scanner to make a 3-D image of a student's hand at the 2014 USA Science and Engineering Festival held April 26-27 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. Price was one of seven engineers from NAVAIR sites who volunteered during the event to help inspire students to explore careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. *Photo by Kristin O'Malley*

FRCSW Renovates Media Blast Bays

Fleet Readiness Center Southwest's (FRCSW) paint, strip and preservation department is responding to an increasing workload by revamping its three particle media blast (PMB) bays in Building 468.

PMB is a procedure used to remove paint and other protective coatings from aircraft and their components.

Of the three bays, Bay11 may accommodate full-sized aircraft; Bay 12, which is currently a walk-in PMB booth, will be reconverted to also handle full-sized aircraft; and Bay 13 will exclusively be used to blast individual components.

Ten media blasters are assigned to the three bays.

Aircraft blasted in Bays 11 and 12 last year included 12 H-53 Super Stallion helicopters; 27 H-60 Seahawks; seven E-2C Hawkeyes and seven C-2 Greyhounds; and 29 F/A-18 Hornet fighters.

Further, more than 1,200 components including nine rotodomes and 10 E-2C/C-2 wings underwent PMB last year.

"The bays are relatively all the same size. A significant change is the exhaust systems which will use about 50 percent less energy because they have fewer motors, more efficient ducting systems, and variable frequency drives (VFD)," said project manager Daniel Cunniff.

Cunniff said that the advantage of VFDs is that they are computer controlled so the operator can adjust the speed of the exhaust system motors as needed. VFDs do not need to "hard start," or use a sudden burst of electricity to turn on. Instead, the motors slowly ramp up and down.

The exhaust systems on Bays 11 and 12 currently operate four motors each — two 50 horsepower motors to exhaust air and two 30 horsepower motors to induct.

Stacks on Bay 11 and 12 exhaust out to the atmosphere by 50 hp motors. And then you have 30 hp motors sucking the air back in. So you have two 50 hp and two 30 hp motors working at the same time.

"With the new concept, there are two motors for the whole bay. We eliminate four motors and install two in-line on the roof with all of the air recirculating and filtered using HEPA filters; so the atmosphere in the bay is cleaner as well," Cunniff said.

In addition to cleaner air, the $5.4 million project also upgrades existing fire protection devices by installing smoke detectors in the duct work. The bay floors will be treated to reduce the possibility of slippage, and an improved carbon monoxide notification system will be installed to monitor respirator lines.

"A major improvement is the ability to blast more effectively," Cunniff said. "The media can be controlled better and should reduce blasting time by about 30 to 40 percent."

"Right now, after a while, the blast media tubes get clogged because they can't be regulated properly. But the new system separates it out, and is controlled by VFDs with a state-of-the-art vacuum system."

"Our capacity to do work is much greater. Now, we'll have two booths to blast aircraft and one to blast components. So that will help us get everything through faster and increase our turn-around time to the customer," said aircraft paint supervisor Anthony McClure.

Renovations to Bay 13 were completed in early June, and Bay 12 should be completed by the end of this year. Bay 11 renovations are slated to start in January 2015 and should be complete sometime next summer.

Fair Winds and Following Seas, Captain Simmons!

Captain Don B. Simmons, III, left, former Commanding Officer of Fleet Readiness Center Southwest (FRCSW), accepts a commemorative plaque in the shape of a paddle from CMDCM (AW/SW) Pablo Cintron on behalf of the FRCSW Chiefs Mess during the Change of Command ceremony aboard the USS Midway Museum on August 8, 2014. *(Story on page 4.)*

Photo by Jim Markle