



October 11, 2012

Dunbrack closes Reserve duty period at NAWCWD



Rear Adm. Paul Sohl, left, Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division commander, and Capt. Harry Dunbrack, NAWCWD vice commander, make the name change on the F-4 positioned at the front gate of Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake before Dunbrack ended his Reserve duty and returned to his civilian job in Texas. Dunbrack stepped up and served as NAWCWD commander for three months before Sohl reported for duty. (U.S. Navy photo)

After 15 months of active duty recall, Capt. Harry Dunbrack left the position of Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWCWD) vice commander and returned to his civilian job in Dallas, Texas.

"I feel blessed to have had this assignment to NAWCWD," Dunbrack said. "This was a unique opportunity to serve in an active duty role at a level in the organization where I could hopefully make a difference. Without question, the best thing about this tour was meeting the people at NAWCWD. The excitement and attitudes of such an outstanding group of dedicated professionals is amazing. Also, the one-of-a-kind laboratories, facilities and land and sea ranges at China Lake, Point Mugu and San Nicolas Island are truly a national treasure. These assets, combined with the intellectual capital and corporate knowledge of the people, make this the ideal place to support our warfighters with weapon system integration and development of warfighting effects. It all comes together at NAWCWD."



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Dunbrack didn't plan to leave the Navy after 15 years of active duty service, but he did just that in 2001 for family reasons. Thanks to the Navy Reserve, that wasn't the end of his Navy career. Dunbrack found a way to stay connected through the NAVAIR Reserve Program (NRP) which allowed him to maintain his two highest priorities – remaining close to his only daughter and continuing to serve his country.

Right after he got out of the Navy, Dunbrack began working as a commercial pilot for American Airlines, and later took a job with Wyle Laboratories where he worked in program management and business development.

"At that time, I didn't know much about the Navy Reserve," he said. "I visited the unit in Fort Worth, liked what I saw, decided to join, and it turned out to be one of my best decisions."

Dunbrack said he was grateful for the chance to give back to the Navy that provided him with a quality education as well as invaluable program management and leadership experience.

"The Navy deserved something for what it invested in me," he said. "The NAVAIR Reserve Program was a great way for me to return the favor while at the same time contributing to the naval aviation mission."

Dunbrack was recalled to active duty to China Lake, Calif. in July 2011 to serve as the vice commander. During his tour, he also stepped up and took on the role of NAWCWD commander for three months to fill a gap between admirals.

A goal of Dunbrack's is to increase awareness within NAVAIR's active duty community about the NRP.

"A lot of folks on active duty don't know they can call on reservists," he said. "Instead of having to hire someone, NRP can provide surge support with experienced subject matter experts, sometimes for no additional cost."

The NAVAIR Reserve Program has nearly 250 officer and enlisted members supporting the command, its associated warfare centers and program executive offices. NRP members regularly deploy forward with operational units, providing more than 12,000 man-days of support each year.

"Our reservists want to get involved, do meaningful work and really make a difference," Dunbrack said. "It is a win-win opportunity. It provides a pool of educated and qualified talent from which NAVAIR can draw to accomplish its mission. And, it gives a lot of great folks a way to continue contributing to the defense of our country after their active duty service is over."

Benefits of working with the reservists, said Dunbrack, are their previous military connections combined with the



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experience they bring from their civilian work. Dunbrack honed his skills at writing and negotiating contracts in the commercial world and shared what he learned with the NAWCWD workforce.

“A lot of people, especially in the government, don’t like negotiating,” he said. “It’s not black magic; you just need to do your homework and be prepared.”

Dunbrack said that no matter who he’s working for, he’s still the same person who graduated from the Naval Academy, flew P-3s in Operation Desert Storm, was selected as the 1994 Test Pilot of the Year, and who served aboard USS Carl Vinson in the Persian Gulf. He still wants to contribute to the Navy’s mission and make a difference to the country.

“My shirt might have changed, but my morals, ethics and goals haven’t,” said Dunbrack. “Things haven’t always gone according to my plan, but I’ve remained open-minded and made the most out of every opportunity I’ve been given. That is how you turn a challenge into a success.”