

May 15, 2014

## FORMULA WON: Air Combat Electronics Program Office sails off with military honors

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Sponsored by the Baltimore Federal Executive Board and given out May 2, John "Jeff" Cooke won the 2014 Rookie Employee of the Year Technical Scientific and Program Support Award in the bronze category. The award recognizes exceptional and meritorious performance. (U.S. Navy photo)

**NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md.** — At last count, the [Air Combat Electronics Program Office \(PMA-209\)](#) had earned five nods in the past six months, becoming the darling of DOD red carpet awards for its stellar performance in categories ranging from communications and networking to navigation and sensors.

So, what's the secret to beating the competition? An award-winning cast of talented professionals has pushed PMA-209 to the gold level every time, said [Keith Sanders](#), who leads the Program Management (AIR 1.0) organization that oversees PMA-209.

"Those of us at Patuxent River have known for years how talented and accomplished the people working PMA-209's many initiatives truly are," Sanders said. "Now, their reputation is spreading and their work is being appreciated across DOD and throughout the defense community."

As she gets ready to pass the torch of leadership to her Deputy Candy Chesser in June, PMA-209 [Program Manager Capt. Tracy Barkhimer](#) reflected on her office's achievements and why it's important to recognize outstanding performance.

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“I’m extremely proud to lead a team of professionals who perform at such a level of excellence that they are being recognized by industry experts,” said Barkhimer, who has led the organization for the past three years. “PMA-209 develops, integrates and delivers avionics solutions that meet customer requirements, enable interoperability and maximize affordability. These awards are proof that my team is going above and beyond the mission; proof that PMA-209 is more relevant to our customers and the [Naval Aviation Enterprise](#) today than ever.”

Here’s a glance at PMA-209’s recent wins:

**COPERNICUS AWARD:** As the integrated product team lead for the [Military Flight Operations Quality Assurance \(MFOQA\)](#) system — a software application that provides analysis and visualization of flight data — [Susan Whitley](#) is responsible for the overall design, development and execution of the program designed to identify potential human error and other factors before they lead to aircraft mishaps. Whitley will be honored by the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association and the [U.S. Naval Institute](#) with a Copernicus Award for her leadership on the MFOQA program at a ceremony June 4 in Baltimore. The Copernicus Award honors individual contributions to naval warfare in the disciplines of command, control, communications, computers and intelligence (C4I), information systems and information warfare.

**Diminishing Manufacturing Sources and Material Shortages (DMSMS) Program Achievement Award:** A sustainability analysis engineer assigned to PMA-209, Rex Coombs was honored with a Diminishing Manufacturing Sources and Material Shortages (DMSMS) Program Achievement Award in December. The award recognizes obsolescence management — in other words, the process by which a piece of equipment becomes no longer useful or a form and function is no longer currently available for production or repair. As the service life of a product extends beyond the technology life cycle incorporated in the design, problems with obsolescence and DMSMS arise. Coombs was lauded for developing and implementing a highly successful hardware reuse program for several avionics systems, including the AYK-14 Standard Airborne Computer used aboard Navy fleet aircraft, such as the [F/A-18 Hornet](#), [EA-6B Prowler](#) and [SH-60B Seahawk](#) helicopter. “This will allow us to continue flying the system for the next 10 to 15 years and not impact fleet mission,” Coombs said.

**NUCLEAR COMMAND, CONTROL AND COMMUNICATIONS (NC2) AWARD (TEAM CATEGORY):** A joint effort by the National Security Agency (NSA) and the DOD, the Cryptographic Modernization Program is focused on replacing outdated equipment, educating customers and promoting new encryption technologies. Led by Tom Waters, the Air Combat Electronics Program Office’s (PMA-209) [Tactical Communications/ARC-210 Tactical Secure Voice Crypto Modernization team](#) has supported the DOD program,

May 15, 2014

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modernizing and upgrading secure voice and data transfer via systems, such as radios used in naval aviation. The PMA-209 team achieved NSA certification five months ahead of schedule, earning the 2013 Nuclear Command, Control and Communications (NC2) Award, which was presented March 31 at a PMA-209 all-hands awards ceremony. The team, which includes experts from [Naval Air Systems Command](#), Raytheon, SAIC, NSA, L-3 Communications, MITRE and Rockwell Collins, provided a crypto modernization solution that satisfies tactical and strategic platform mission requirements.

**SENIOR SAILOR OF THE QUARTER:** Petty Officer 1st Class (AW) John Stewart earned Naval Air Systems Command's (NAVAIR) Senior Sailor of the Quarter honors for fourth fiscal quarter 2013. The aviation electronics technician is responsible for the tracking and management of 792 naval technical manuals and 220 joint service publications. Stewart revised 13 maintenance manuals, thereby increasing the capabilities of 10 mission-critical avionics systems 15 percent. In addition, he monitored more than 130 technical publication deficiency reports in support of 241 avionics systems and 32 platforms, and performed research that identified defective components installed in the AN/APN194 Radar Altimeter system resulting in a 50 percent increase in weapon replacement assembly availability. Stewart's efforts saved the Navy \$450,000 in depot-level repairs, Navy officials said.

**ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARD:** John "Jeff" Cooke, the deputy assistant program manager for Logistics for PMA-209's Fleet Support Team (FST), may have won a recent Rookie of the Year award, but he's no amateur. Though he has only worked for the federal government for about a year, Cooke has considerable expertise in avionics support and military logistics network — experience earned over a 24-year career while on active duty with the Navy. On May 2, Cooke won the 2014 Rookie Employee of the Year Technical Scientific and Program Support Award in the bronze category. Sponsored by the Baltimore Federal Executive Board, the award recognizes exceptional and meritorious performance. Cooke earned kudos for guiding FST through logistics obstacles by applying proven supply management techniques, such as product warehousing, re-use, leveraging, system and part research, system or piece-part redesign and replacement and resourcefully managing the FST's broad product base with limited manpower and funding.

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Led by Tom Waters, far left, the Air Combat Electronics Program Office's (PMA-209) Tactical Communications/ARC-210 Tactical Secure Voice Crypto Modernization team has supported the National Security Agency's and DOD's Cryptographic Modernization Program, which focuses on replacing outdated equipment, educating customers and promoting new encryption technologies. The PMA-209 team achieved NSA certification five months ahead of schedule, earning the 2013 Nuclear Command, Control and Communications (NC2) Award, presented March 31 at a PMA-209 all-hands awards ceremony. (U.S. Navy photo)



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