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Naval Acquisition Development Program graduates building solid foundation for NAVAIR careers



The new graduates of the Naval Acquisition Development Program (from the left): Wilberto Flores, Peter Telford, Russell Lall, Jeffrey Ho, Stephanie Souders (NADP functional manager, Naval Air Systems Command Logistics and Industrial Operations), Jeffrey Harmon, Roy Harris (director, Aviation Readiness and Resource Analysis Department, Naval Air Systems Command), Justin Zarzaca and Sara Gravatt. (U.S. Navy photo)

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. -- After taking the helm of the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) this past October, Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags set forth two strategic priorities: to increase readiness of aircraft currently in the fleet and to improve affordability and speed in delivering new capabilities to the fleet.

People are the key enabler to accomplishing these imperatives in Grosklags' plan, and the Naval Acquisition Development Program (NADP) is one of the ways NAVAIR is growing its future workforce and leaders.

"The NADP program is designed to provide employees with systematic development, career-broadening assignments and rapid advancement," said Stephanie Souders, NADP functional manager, NAVAIR Logistics and Industrial Operations (AIR 6.0C). "These individuals are our future leaders, so us vesting time and instilling knowledge is key to a successful career for them."

Seven members from AIR 6.0 are the most recent graduates of the program and AIR 6.0

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celebrated with a ceremony Mar. 17 in Building 446 here. The new graduates are Wilberto Flores, logistics management specialist (AIR 6.8.3), Total Asset Visibility Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP); Sara Gravatt, supportability test and evaluation monitor for the Persistent Maritime Unmanned Aircraft Systems Program Office (PMA-262 Triton); Jeffrey K. Harmon Sr., DECKPLATE Technical Directives Team Lead (AIR 6.8.5.2.2); Jeffrey Ho, sustainment analyst, International Directorate, Joint Strike Fighter; Russell Lall, computer engineer, NAVAIR Fleet Systems Array (AIR 6.8.4); Peter Telford, DECKPLATE Integrated Product Team (IPT) lead (AIR 6.8.4) Resource Allocation Management Program (RAMP); and Justin Zarzaca, operations research analyst, 4.0M.4.3 Model Development and Data Management branch.

During the ceremony, Roy Harris, director, Aviation Readiness and Resource Analysis Department (AIR 6.8), who emceed, called upon each graduate to share three things they had learned as NADP participants. All stressed the importance of teamwork and of asking questions. They also were grateful for the opportunity to work with people of all levels of experience and rank.

"The NADP was well worth the experience," Gravatt said. "I was granted many fortunate opportunities to build a solid foundation for my career at NAVAIR, including training, hands-on experiences and meeting highly intelligent coworkers. The NADP allows for endless possibilities, and I would highly encourage everyone to use this as their time to take advantage of all aspects while in the program."

"My three years in the NADP have been fulfilling both professionally and personally," Ho said. "It has allowed me to expand my knowledge in various fields while building friendships along the way. I was able to experience the professionalism, hard work and commitment that embodies NAVAIR and those traits will always stay with me."

Zarzaca echoed Gravatt's and Ho's praise for the program and NAVAIR personnel adding that the rotational aspect of the program was essential to his professional development.

"Being able to experience such a wide range of activities within one organization really helped me to understand how the whole enterprise works together," he explained. "Being able to involve myself with such a diverse set of activities really helped me mold myself into a better employee. I really wanted to be a part of the NADP program because I have multiple family members who serve in the military. I grew up with such a respect for the military that I wanted to do my part to help in any way that I could."

Telford agreed that NADP rotations provided an invaluable opportunity.

"The NADP program helped align my knowledge and skill sets to a position within NAVAIR where both will benefit," said Telford, who chose the entry level program instead of the associate level because of the rotational opportunities. "The program provided flexibility to

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move within the organization and get a feel for different areas which ultimately led to my final 'resting place' within 6.8 DECKPLATE IPT."

Lall and Harmon completed the NADP program at the associate level. Lall spoke to the diversity of the program and the importance of tours set up for the NADP participants to places such as the Pentagon and the Manned Flight Simulator.

"The NADP employees are so diversified that you are always surrounded by intelligent people who are always sharing their experiences and that makes the program so interesting," Lall said. "I also enjoyed meeting people through the different tours the program offered which helped broaden my knowledge of NAVAIR and its operations."

"Working with a very knowledgeable group of former Navy personnel had a great and positive impact on my daily work," he continued. "They were always there to mentor me and to provide a great depth of knowledge from their past experience. It helped me understand my daily tasks more since they made me feel like I was actually at a squadron or I-Level or depot level. These experienced personnel brought to me what I couldn't experience by just being in an office."

Currently, the NADP has 70 participants at Patuxent River and 135 nationally.

The NADP program provides professional development, coaching and mentorship to promote the growth of entry-level professionals in finance, contracting, logistics, science and engineering. Mid-career professionals can participate in the program as an associate. For more information about the NADP program, contact Stephanie Souders at 301-757-8416 or visit the [NADP website](http://www.secnav.navy.mil/rda/workforce/Pages/NADP.aspx) at <http://www.secnav.navy.mil/rda/workforce/Pages/NADP.aspx>.

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During the Naval Acquisition Development Program (NADP) ceremony, Roy Harris (standing, right), director, Aviation Readiness and Resource Analysis Department (AIR 6.8), asked the graduates to draw a piece of paper from a bowl. The papers had the number one, two or three on them. Harris then challenged each to list one, two or three things he/she learned while in the program. Sara Gravatt (second from left) takes her turn to choose a piece of paper. Incredulously, all of the grads choose the paper with the number three on it. Also pictured (from the left): Justin Zarzaca, Sara Gravatt, Russell Lall, Jeffrey Harmon, Peter Telford and Wilberto Flores.