



COMFRC bids FRCSE team farewell



Rear Adm. Paul Sohl, commander, Fleet Readiness Centers, left, speaks with four Fleet Readiness Center Southeast artisans, from left to right, Michael Mayer, Mike Worthington, Paul Taylor and Derrick Kennedy about the future workload of the Navy's trainer aircraft during his visit to the military depot April 28. (U.S. Navy Photo/Released)

Jacksonville, Fla. – Rear Adm. Paul Sohl, commander, Fleet Readiness Centers (COMFRC), returned to the familiar confines of Fleet Readiness Center Southeast (FRCSE) April 27-29 as part of a farewell tour of sorts before his tenure ends in June.

Many to whom he spoke were old friends. Sohl served as executive officer of FRCSE at Naval Air Station Jacksonville from 2007-09, and commanding officer from 2009-11. After his command tour, he went on to command the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, California before taking the helm of Fleet Readiness Centers.

Sohl made stops at FRCSE Detachment Jacksonville, FRCSE Detachment Mayport and Cecil Commerce Center during the week, briefing the workforce on challenges that lie ahead and thanked them for the daily work they perform to keep the military's aircraft flying.

"You all are so important to the Navy because you get planes back to the fleet," Sohl told a crowd of workers outside the Jacksonville facility's F/A-18 line. "You are performing what I



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believe to be miracles in maintenance and repair. I just wanted to say thank you from the bottom of my heart.

"I always said the best ideas come from within 50 feet of where the work is being done."

During his visit, Sohl handed out a trio of Meritorious Civilian Service Medals to recognize Lucas Downard and Gail Eyler at Cecil Commerce Center and Rex Ledford at Mayport. All three were honored for providing critical first aid to save the lives of coworkers.

The admiral also recognized the contributions of his active-duty Sailors and presented several of them with command coins for volunteerism within their divisions and in the local community.

"I came to visit FRCSE to see what you are doing and to reemphasize how very important your mission is in supporting the fleet," Sohl told FRCSE Detachment Jacksonville Sailors. "Your jobs are crucial to the P-8 Poseidon platform. We need your skill sets to help continue deploying our assets worldwide and keep our missions growing. Thanks for what you do each and every day. You really are making a difference within the FRCSE Enterprise and to our fleet."

In Jacksonville, Sohl visited with employees at the FRCSE F/A-18 and P-3 lines, manufacturing division and Crinkley Engine Facility April 28. The next day, he stopped by to take part in the retirement ceremony of Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic (AW) Morgan Lemos, who specifically requested his presence because of the impact Sohl made upon him as a young petty officer.

However, perhaps Sohl's major legacy will be his innovations in integrating FRCSE's civilian and military workforce. That legacy lives on with operations like the FRCSE hydraulics shop, where Sailors and civilians work alongside each other.

"I'm especially happy to see our civilian artisans working side-by-side with our junior Sailors teaching them what they know," Sohl said. "Many of our civilians are retiring and it's crucial that their knowledge is passed on."

During his tenure as commanding officer of FRCSE, Sohl oversaw the beginning of maintenance work on F/A-18 Super Hornets, and also saw the last S-3B Viking leave the facility. Tremendous strides were made in production, capability, employee safety and environmental stewardship.

The Waterloo, Iowa native was a natural fit as both commanding officer of FRCSE, as well as COMFRC. Sohl earned his bachelor's degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1985, followed by a Master of Science in Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering from Stanford University. He deployed as part of Operation Desert Shield and Operation Enduring Freedom, tallying over 3,200 flight



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hours in 30 different aircraft.

In August, Sohl will take over for Rear Adm. Jeffrey Penfield as Commander, Operational Test and Evaluation Force in Norfolk, Virginia. Though Sohl made it clear he will always maintain a fondness for his current role.

“They’re going to be dragging me out of here with scratch marks on my desk,” he said.

Sohl will be succeeded as COMFRC by Capt. Michael Zarkowski, who is currently serving as COMFRC vice commander.



Rear Adm. Paul Sohl, commander, Fleet Readiness Centers, talks with Aviation Structural Mechanic 3rd Class Armando Vivaldo as he visits with Sailors at the Fleet Readiness Center Southeast Hydraulics Shop April 28. (U.S. Navy Photo/Released)



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Rear Adm. Paul Sohl, commander, Fleet Readiness Centers (COMFRC), center with microphone, speaks with employees on the Fleet Readiness Center Southeast (FRCSE) P-3 line April 28. Along with Sohl, is P-3 Product Officer Adam Schantz, far left, and FRCSE Commanding Officer Capt. Charles Stuart. Sohl took questions from the men and women in attendance about the future of P-3 maintenance and repair, as well the state of Fleet Readiness Centers. Sohl will move on from his post as COMFRC in June. (U.S. Navy Photo/Released)



Rear Adm. Paul Sohl, commander, Fleet Readiness Centers, left, and Fleet Readiness Center Southeast (FRCSE) Components Integrated Product Team Lead Tim Postemski discuss the F/A-18 left outer wing panel forward spar and missile rib replacement process at the FRCSE F/A-18 Wing Shop April 28. (U.S. Navy Photo/Released)



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Jason Bell, a Fleet Readiness Center Southeast electronics engineer working at Cecil Commerce Center, right, discusses the proposed F-35 LMSTAR to electronic Consolidated Automated Support System Offload program that will provide F-35 I level repair capability for the Navy and Marines ashore and afloat with Rear Adm. Paul Sohl, commander, Fleet Readiness Centers, April 28. (U.S. Navy Photo/Released)



From left, Aviation Machinist's Mate (AD) 2nd Class (AW) Jacob Freeman, AD2(AW) Sarah Werner and Aviation Machinist's Mate Airman Devon Henson work on a cold section module for the SH-60 engine as Rear Adm. Paul Sohl, commander, Fleet Readiness Centers, thanks the Sailors for their dedication to the fleet April 27. Sohl visited the command to commend the Sailors for their hard work and bid them farewell as he plans to transfer in June. (U.S. Navy Photo/Released)