



July 12, 2016

FRCMA Sailor wins Athena DC 1.0



Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Pecota, Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic Detachment Patuxent River (FRCMA Pax) senior Innovation Think Tank member, center, displays the Admiral Sims Award for Intellectual Courage he received by winning Athena DC 1.0 during the recent Navy League Sea-Air-Space Exposition. Pecota pitched an innovative idea to a panel of judges that would help save the Navy time and money while increasing readiness of a MH-60R Seahawk sonar system transducer. Flanking Pecota are mentors Lt. Jason Shaw, FRC Pax assistant maintenance officer and Eric Kyle, Naval Air Systems Command engineer. (Courtesy photo)

NATIONAL HARBOR, Maryland – One Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic (FRCMA) Sailor has proven he has the ability to think outside the box when working to solve problems for his fellow Sailors and take home a top prize in the process.

Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Pecota, senior Innovation Think Tank member from FRCMA Detachment Patuxent River, was one of six Sailors who pitched innovative ideas in front of spectators and a panel of Naval leaders during the recent Navy League Sea-Air-Space Exposition as part of Athena DC 1.0. The pitches were done in a fashion similar to the TV show, “Shark Tank,” where entrepreneurs pitch ideas before a panel of potential investors.

Pecota’s idea is to use additive manufacturing, also known as 3-D printing, to design and produce a cover at the cost of about \$10 for the \$2 million MH-60R Seahawk sonar system's transducer to prevent scraping the foam inside of a shipping or transporting



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container. This problem has caused an average of two man-hours and cost of \$90 to repair each time this happens. This innovative idea stands to have a potential cost savings of more than \$76,000 and nearly 1,700 man-hours per year.

For presenting the top idea, Pecota received the Admiral Sims Award for Intellectual Courage and command backing for a small functional team to make their idea a reality by leveraging the Athena Network of scientists and engineers.

The Athena Project, an initiative focused on harnessing deckplate innovations to create a cadre of forward-thinking, creatively confident Sailors for the fleet of tomorrow, provides an open forum for Sailors to pitch innovative ideas to improve their command or the Navy. Contestants have five minutes to present their innovative ideas in a casual environment, followed by a five-minute question and answer session from the panel and audience. The contestants are judged in three categories based on idea quality, actionability and presentation.

More than 20 ideas were submitted from throughout the Navy with six being selected by the Athena National Council to compete at Athena DC 1.0.