



## NAVAIR names 2016 Sailor of the Year

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Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Launching and Recovery Equipment) First Class (ABE1) Ronell Day reacts after learning he won NAVAIR's 2016 Sailor of the Year. Nominees from left Yeoman First Class (YN1) Nicholas Zirpoli, Aviation Maintenance Administrationman First Class (AZ1) Lashannda Lowe and Naval Aircrewmembers (Mechanical) First Class (AWF1) Jeremy Roberts congratulate the winner. (U.S. Navy photo)

**NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md.** — Petty Officer First Class Ronell Day of the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) won the 2016 NAVAIR Sailor of the Year at a ceremony here Jan. 12 for his leadership, integrity and accomplishments.

"He demonstrates the professional attributes of a model Sailor," wrote Rear Adm. Shane Gahagan, NAWCAD commander and NAVAIR assistant commander for research and engineering. "His dedication to the United States Navy and fellow Sailors has set him at a level far above his peers, and he is held in high esteem by his subordinates and seniors alike."

A native of Destrehan, Louisiana, Day began his career in 2009 after attending basic training in Great Lakes, Illinois. He served as TC-7 assistant leading petty officer, as well as the quality assurance assistant leading petty officer for Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 23 here, where he led 30 sailors in the Catapult/Arresting Gear Department to support the critical developmental testing of multiple airframes.



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He has accumulated more than 7,000 launch and recoveries of fixed wing naval aircraft with zero mishaps. Day was hand-selected to a Chief of Naval Operations priority billet as a recruit division commander and is currently a student at the Recruit Training Center in Great Lakes.

In his spare time, Day volunteers at a local high school and with several community programs, including Special Olympics and Christmas in April.

"His inspirational leadership serves as a shining example to his peers and exemplifies the qualities that this award was created to recognize," wrote Cmdr. J.K. Carver, VX-23 commanding officer. "He demonstrates a professional character that inspires subordinates and supervisors alike and has fostered high morale and team spirit throughout my entire command."

Day said he was humbled and blessed to win this award. "It's important to look out for and to take care of junior Sailors, but I have learned much from them, too; my Sailors helped me to be better," he said.

Other finalists for this award included Naval Aircrewman (Mechanical) First Class (AWF1) Jeremy Roberts from Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division; Yeoman First Class (YN1) Nicholas Zirpoli from Commander Fleet Readiness Centers and Aviation Maintenance Administrationman First Class (AZ1) Lashannda Lowe from NAVAIR headquarters. Roberts, Zirpoli and Lowe received the Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal in recognition of their accomplishments.

"These first class petty officers demand excellence and accuracy from themselves and those they lead," said Command Master Chief Shaun Brahmsteadt, the event's master of ceremonies. "They set and maintain the highest of standards and execute the right things at the right time for the right reasons."

Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags, NAVAIR commander, recognized the Sailors for giving back, mentoring and displaying the highest standards of integrity and personal behavior.

"These four petty officers are smart, talented and have a deep understanding about what is important to our Navy," Grosklags said. "They have embarked on great career paths, and I look forward to seeing continued success from each of them."

Grosklags gave the nominees three things to consider as they progress in their careers:

- Critical thinking
- Listening and learning
- Cultivating a desire to be accountable

"Critical thinking should become part of your approach to every activity. Continue giving us



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your ideas. Listen to those who think differently than you. Have a true desire to want to be accountable for success for whatever it is you are working on," Grosklags said.

Brahmsteadt closed the ceremony with a final thought: "We know you will continue to serve the Navy and our country with the ideals of our Navy core values – honor, courage and commitment – well into the future."

Day will compete at the next level for Vice Chief of Naval Operation Shore Sailor of the Year next month.



Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags, NAVAIR commander (left), congratulates the 2016 NAVAIR Sailor of the Year ABE1 Ronell Day. (U.S. Navy photo)



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NAWCAD and VX-23 leaders show their support for ABE1 Ronell Day (center), NAVAIR's 2016 Sailor of the Year. From left are Cmdr. Johannes Jolly, VX-23 chief test pilot; VX-23 Commanding Officer Cmdr. James Carver; Rear Adm. Shane Gahagan, NAWCAD commander and NAVAIR assistant commander for research and engineering; VX-23 Command Senior Chief CMDCS Keith Griffin; and VX-23 Executive Officer Cmdr. James Tomaszewski. (U.S. Navy photo)



NAVAIR's 2016 Sailor of the Year winner Aviation Boatswain's Mate, Launching and Recovery Equipment First Class (ABE1) Ronell Day (left) and nominees after a ceremony here on Jan 12. From left, Naval Aircrewmen Mechanical First Class (AWF1) Jeremy Roberts, Aviation Maintenance Administrationman First Class (AZ1) Lashannda Lowe, and Yeoman First Class (YN1) Nicholas Zirpoli. (U.S. Navy photo)



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NAVAIR's 2016 Sailor of the Year Aviation Boatswain's Mate, Launching and Recovery Equipment First Class Ronell Day (left) pictured with Aviation Boatswain's Mate, Launching and Recovery Equipment Chief Courtney Boesch. (U.S. Navy photo)