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NAVAIR names 2017 Sailor of the Year

Petty Officer 1st Class Michael A. Giraud, NAVAIR's 2017 Sailor of the Year, accepts congratulations from Ronnie Burdett following the award ceremony. (U.S. Navy photo)

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. — Petty Officer 1st Class Michael A. Giraud with the Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 31 (VX-31) was named 2017 NAVAIR Sailor of the Year at a ceremony here Jan. 25.

In his endorsement, Capt. Thomas M. Santomauro said he could not imagine a more deserving individual. Among the instances of exceptional performance described in Giraud's nomination was the management of 12 sailors through more than 650 hours of search and rescue and training operations that included Giraud himself personally saving the lives of two civilians.

"[Giraud] is an outstanding leader who meets every challenge head on," Santomauro wrote. "[Giraud] genuinely cares for his soldiers ... His superb leadership, sustained superior performance and exemplary work ethic have earned him the respect of his professional and personal associates."

A native of Redwood City, California, Giraud graduated from Calmont High School in 2002 and enlisted in the Navy the next year. He attended Aviation Machinist Mate School and Rescue Swimmer School out of Pensacola, Florida, where he became a search and
rescue naval aircrewman and advanced to petty officer third class.

Giraud assumed his current duties in March, 2015 as SAR division lead petty officer at VX-31 in China Lake, California, where he also served as a helicopter inland rescue aircrewman (HIRA), HIRA crew chief, Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures Standardization (NATOPS) evaluator, operations LPO, assistant drug and alcohol program advisor and full speed ahead facilitator.

During the 2017 Sailor of the Year ceremony, Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags, NAVAIR commander, offered remarks praising the leadership and integrity of Giraud and the award’s other finalists.

“Apply critical thinking to every mission; question the process,” Grosklags said. "Listen and learn from others. And demonstrate the desire to be accountable for the success of your command, mission and shipmates.

“Thank you for what you’ve done so far for our Navy, and I look forward to watching what I know you’re going to do for our Navy and the nation."

As winner of the 2017 NAVAIR Sailor of the Year, Giraud will go on to represent NAVAIR in the 2017 Navy Shore Sailor of the Year Competition.

Other Finalists

Among the other finalists for this award were Petty Officer 1st Class Edward Carrera, NATOPS program manager with NAVAIR, and Petty Officer 1st Class Kenneth R. Roper, a maintenance department leading petty officer with Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Two Zero (VX-20). Carrera and Roper each received a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal in recognition of their accomplishments.
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Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags, NAVAIR commander, (left) stands next to Petty Officer 1st Class Michael A. Giraud, (right) NAVAIR’s 2017 Sailor of the Year. (U.S. Navy photo)