HEADQUARTERS, NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. — The 18th annual NAVAIR Commander’s Awards, held here March 14, celebrated teams that helped further the command’s strategic priorities: increasing readiness and speed of capability to the fleet.

“The depth and breadth of what is represented in this room is eye-watering,” NAVAIR Commander Vice Adm. Paul Grosklags told a room full in Patuxent River and via video teleconference to all NAVAIR sites nationwide. “This isn’t about NAVAIR and succeeding at something NAVAIR wants to get done; it’s about making sure we’re getting products out to our Sailors and Marines.”

Grosklags referenced the three lines of effort in the 2018 National Defense Strategy, which he believes NAVAIR employees are already working to accomplish, as demonstrated through the award winners:

1. Rebuilding military readiness as we build a more lethal joint force
2. Strengthening alliances as we attract new partners
3. Reforming business practices for greater performance and affordability
“The teams represented here today are applying creativity, innovation and critical thinking to streamline business processes. You’ve demonstrated a relentless sense of urgency and focus on warfighter outcomes,” he said.

Deputy Commander Garry Newton echoed the admiral's emphasis on teamwork.

“When you look at the different people and the different teams, you’ve got folks that have been around for a long time — years — and you’ve got folks who’ve been here one, two, three years, all working on the team together, so I think that the team sport and the team approach to producing results was pretty evident in the teams that we recognized today,” he said.

The ceremony also included special recognition of Ruth Perry, who is retiring after coordinating the NAVAIR Commander’s Awards and all other honorary awards for seven years.

The winners are, by category:

**Business Innovation**

- **First Place: AIR-1.7 Acquisition Management System (AMS) Team, led by Thomas Spidel, Patuxent River:** This team reduced duplicative data entry workload up to 30 percent and standardized data elements across multiple tools. The command now has enterprise-wide tools that provide real-time single source acquisition and financial analytics, create an audit trail for contract deliverables, and link financial management to contract execution. These expanded capabilities save the command millions in sustainment and labor costs. The team also delivered micro services development architecture for the rapid creation and implementation of future digital capabilities for the user community, providing nine micro services two weeks ahead of schedule and at 28 percent below cost. AIR-1.7’s enhancements to AMS continue to reduce manual administrative workload and facilitate the command's strategy for an integrated digital business environment.

- **Second Place: PMA-261 3-D Data Exchange Digital Transformation Team, led by Howard Owens, Patuxent River:** This team developed a system that reduced significantly the amount of time and resources required to create/verify/validate technical data, resulting in an estimated cost savings of $4.6 million annually.

- **Honorable Mention: Cost Adjustment and Visibility Tracking System (CAVTSWeb) Design, Development and Implementation Team, led by Kenneth Wells, Patuxent River**

- **Honorable Mention: PMA-299 Cost and Contracts Collaboration Team, led by James Haynes, Patuxent River**
Improving Fleet Readiness

- **First Place**: PMA-202 and PMA-273 T-45 Return to Flight Team, led by Scott Adley, Cmdr. Kevin McGee, Shane Morast and Cmdr. Jeffrey Repass, Patuxent River: Through multiple lines of effort, this team improved the overall material condition of the T-45 fleet; introduced modifications to aviation life support systems, emergency backup systems and aircraft systems; and produced sufficient aircraft data to guide analytical efforts to address naval aviation's top safety priority. With a focus on meeting operational readiness, the team worked diligently to re-initiate pilot production after an operational pause attributed to physiological events.
- **Second Place**: Fleet Readiness Center Southeast (FRCSE) Joint Logistics Teams (JLT), led by Cmdr. Daniel Bessman and Ilene Schiffer, Jacksonville, Florida: The JLT broke boundaries and barriers to increase production in major areas of FRCSE. The teams include personnel from Production Support Logistics, Industrial Production Support and the Defense Logistics Agency. By implementing JLTs across the aircraft and component production lines, FRCSE provided a significant near-term improvement of increased depot maintenance production by 42 percent across four integrated product teams. Strategically, the JLTs improved bill of material accuracy, established new procedures to improve pre-expended part bins, identified alternative sources for outside vendors, and created innovative ways to expedite local manufacturing by increasing parts production and putting stock on the shelf.
- **Honorable Mention**: Naval Air Technical Data and Engineering Service Center (NATEC) Hornet and Growler Airframes Team, led by Burdell Hillquist, North Island, California
- **Honorable Mention**: PMA-275 Power and Propulsion Integrated Product Team, led by Lt. Col. Dale Short and William Winters, Patuxent River
- **Honorable Mention**: AIR-6.8.2.2 Advanced Analytics and Innovation Branch, led by James Stratakes, Patuxent River

Increasing Speed Capabilities to the Fleet

- **First Place**: Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division/Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division Counter Unmanned Air System (C-UAS) Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) Team, led by David Drys, Patuxent River: In December 2016, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy Research, Development & Acquisition identified AIRWorks as the lead project office to rapidly select, obtain, field and initially sustain a C-UAS to protect assets vital to national security. In less than a year, Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division and Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division personnel fielded this critical capability at two national sites within tremendous time
constraints and at an affordable cost of less than $15 million, meeting the urgent warfighter need.

- **Second Place**: **Special Operations Forces Tactical Communications Team, led by Arthur Coon, St. Inigoes, Maryland**: The AN/PRC-161 provides near-term, emerging communication technologies to greatly enhance the digitally aided close air support (DACAS) capabilities for military operations. In less than 24 months, the team — with assistance from the Joint Staff — developed and operationally tested this handheld form factor Link-16 DACAS system. This system is a game changer for the Special Operations Forces community, reducing the kill chain timeline by an average of 94 percent and significantly mitigating the risk of fratricide through digital situational awareness, providing a common operational picture between air and ground forces. The AN/PRC-161 gives forward-deployed warfighters something they haven’t had in the past: a rugged, compact and lightweight tactical data link capability for integrating ground forces with tactical air support.

- **Honorable Mention**: **PMA-242 Airborne Rockets Team, led by Lt. Cmdr. Daniel Ropp, Richard Chambers and John Hepp, Patuxent River**
- **Honorable Mention**: **“BATWING” ALQ-99 Tactical Jamming System (TJS) Team, led by Ronald Ferguson, Patuxent River**
- **Honorable Mention**: **PMA-263 Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Services Integrated Product Team, led by Douglas Thorp Jr. and Gregory Linsky, Patuxent River**

**Technical Innovation**

- **First Place**: **Multilayered Obstructed Brokered (MOB) Hub Team, led by Nathan Kielman, China Lake, California**: The team successfully developed the MOB Hub, which was designed to interface mobile computing devices with existing embedded systems on NAVAIR platforms. The MOB Hub has been evaluated across a portfolio of platforms to enable wireless or wired communication between mobile devices and embedded systems with potential application in the areas of mission planning, digital junction mapping and mitigation of parts obsolescence.

- **Second Place**: **Team MAGNETO, led by Nicholas Sofocleous, Patuxent River**: Team MAGNETO's achievement is the demonstrated feasibility of incorporating active damping technology into an SH-60B landing gear to mitigate landing-induced shock loading, testing the modified gear, and achieving reductions in dynamic loads. This type of retrofit had not been done for military aircraft before. This innovative approach's value is in its potential to make landings smoother for fleet pilots and to reduce aircraft operations and sustainment costs, thus improving fleet readiness.

- **Honorable Mention**: **Liquid-Fuel Fire Alternative for Fast Cookoff Munitions Testing**
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Team, led by Dr. Ephraim Washburn, China Lake, and Dr. David Hubble, Dahlgren, Virginia

- Honorable Mention: INfusion of CARbon Nano Tubes in Additive Manufacturing Technologies in Operations of the Navy (INCANTATION), led by Dr. Ronald Poveda, Lakehurst, New Jersey
- Honorable Mention: Small Tactical UAS Test Team, led by Capt. Stephen Egerdahl and William McCartney, St. Inigoes

Small Business Advocacy Awards

- Team Category: Engineering Support Services (ESS) Acquisition Team, led by Deborah Linck, China Lake: This team provides concurrent engineering and subject matter expertise that offers the government an infrastructure that fosters a unified collaborative approach for integrated engineering and management specialists across traditionally segregated phases of the acquisition life cycle. The ESS Acquisition Team reached out to Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division’s Office of Small Business Programs for market research training during the last full and open competition, which resulted in an industry day. Seven service disabled veteran-owned small businesses participated in the event. After the solicitation was released, three more proposals were received than the previous full and open competitions. The resulting $87.2 million contract was awarded to a service disabled veteran-owned small business.

- Individual Category: Kim Matsunaga, NAWCWD Contracts Branch Head, China Lake: Under Matsunaga’s leadership, NAWCWD’s Test & Evaluation and Logistics, Fleet Readiness Center Southwest and NATEC requirements were responsible for approximately 40 percent of NAWCWD’s small business obligations in 2017. Her branch obligated 85.7 percent ($30.9 million) to service disabled veteran-owned small businesses, 50.8 percent ($15.6 million) to woman-owned small businesses and 71 percent ($52.2 million) to small disadvantaged businesses. In addition, Matsunaga requires all new personnel to take the Small Business Overview, Market Research and Small Business Coordination Record training from NAWCWD's Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP). She also encourages her personnel to engage OSBP early in the acquisition process to ensure small businesses have the maximum practicable participation.

Edward H. Heinemann Award for Outstanding Achievement
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- This award recognizes an individual or group within NAVAIR who achieved, or helped achieve, significant improvement in the design or modification of an aircraft or an aircraft system. Sponsored by the Association of Naval Aviation, this award honors the legendary Douglas Aircraft Company chief engineer/designer of several naval aircraft.
- **Winner: T-45 Flight Test Team, led by Lt. Jonathan Larsen and Mary Picard, Patuxent River:** The team overcame technical and schedule challenges while conducting both ground and flight test activities to support the ongoing NAE physiological episode investigation. The team conducted more than 75 hours of flight test during 70 sorties and more than 30 individual ground test events to provide critical information to senior Navy executive leadership. Numerous modifications to aircrew flight equipment and aircraft onboard oxygen generating systems were tested to find a solution to prevent future physiological episodes. This testing and the subsequent modifications directly supported the return-to-flight of the T-45 training aircraft — 100 days after the grounding — and prevented a critical pilot shortage in operational combat units.
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Commander’s Awards and all other honorary awards for seven years. (U.S. Navy photo)

First place winners of the NAVAIR Commander's Award in the category of business innovation: AIR-1.7 Acquisition Management System (AMS) Team, led by Thomas Spidel, Patuxent River, Md.

First place winners of the NAVAIR Commander's Award in the category of increasing speed capabilities to the fleet: Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division/Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division Counter Unmanned Air System (C-UAS) Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) Team, led by David Drys, Patuxent River, Md.

First place winners of the NAVAIR Commander's Award in the category of technical innovation: Multilayered Obstructed Brokered (MOB) Hub Team, led by Nathan Kielman, China Lake, Calif.
Winners of the Small Business Advocacy Award in the team category: Engineering Support Services (ESS) Acquisition Team, led by Deborah Linck, China Lake, Calif.

Winner of the Small Business Advocacy Award in the individual category: Kim Matsunaga, NAWCWD Contracts Branch Head, China Lake, Calif.
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Winners of the Edward H. Heinemann Award for Outstanding Achievement: T-45 Flight Test Team, led by Lt. Jonathan Larsen and Mary Picard, Patuxent River, Md.