Wounded Warrior Addresses Navy Ball

MC1 Lewis Hunsaker

NPS and the Naval Support Activity Monterey kicked off the Navy’s 240th U.S. Navy Birthday Ball in the Barbara McNitt Ballroom, Oct. 17. NPS student Army Maj. Dennis “DJ” Skelton, dubbed the “Most Wounded Commander in U.S. Military History,” was this year’s guest speaker.

“I have had many highs and lows in my career, but I would have never guessed that I would stand before you at this prestigious event. The honor is truly mine,” said Skelton. “When I was asked to speak at this event, I thought a lot about the theme ‘Ready Then, Ready Now, Ready Always.’”

Skelton was severely wounded in November 2004 while leading a rifle platoon in close combat in Fallujah, Iraq. Since his recovery, he has dedicated himself to advancing the causes of wounded veterans. He is the author of the “Our Hero Handbook,” a comprehensive guide to assisting wounded service members and their families.

“I have had a couple bad days. I forgot to duck once, but the military has been incredible.” — U.S. Army Maj. Dennis “DJ” Skelton

“We have come a long ways. I was very proud to witness that our military has figured it out … We weren’t ready at a time that we needed to be, but we did what we needed to do to acquire the resources, to write the policies, and to give the military commands the resources they needed to take care of our wounded warriors,” said Skelton.

But for Skelton, taking care of wounded warriors was not enough. He advocates for full inclusion of wounded service members wherever appropriate and despite the severity of his injuries maintains a positive outlook regarding his storied military career.

“I have had a couple of bad days. I forgot to duck once, but the military has been incredible,” said Skelton.

In 1972, then Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt authorized recognition of Oct. 13 as the Navy’s birthday. Since then, each CNO has encouraged a Navy-wide celebration of the occasion to enhance a greater appreciation of our Navy heritage, and to provide a positive influence toward pride and professionalism in the naval service.
Student Report Shares Insights Into the Integration of Women on Navy Submarines

By Kenneth A. Stewart

Lt. Cmdr. Krysten Ellis, a 2015 NPS graduate, fulfilled a lifelong dream when she was part of the first cohort of female submariners to graduate from the Submarine Officer Basic Course in November of 2011.

“My dad was a career submariner. I grew up around boats my whole life, they were my jungle gym and I wrote papers in high school about why women should serve on them. It was a childhood dream of mine, and it seems to have just happened magically,” said Ellis.

Ellis and 23 of her fellow female graduates were assigned to serve aboard ballistic and guided ballistic missile submarines. While at NPS, Ellis and fellow submariner Lt. Garold Munson chose to chronicle the experiences of these Sailors in a professional report for their NPS Master of Business Administration degrees titled, “Gender Integration on U.S. Navy Submarines: Views of the First Wave.”

“We wrote the thesis because we wanted for there to be somewhere that the submarine force could go to hear the actual experiences [of female submariners] without a filter. I wanted our leaders to be able to understand that integration was not that big of a deal,” explained Ellis.

“The major goals of this study were two-fold … to create a rich data set capturing the lived experiences of the first group of female submariners for follow-on studies, and to provide an analysis of the data that will address the main research questions,” she continued.

Ellis and Munson’s report is an ethnography, drawing upon the “lived experiences” of the women that agreed to participate in it. They interviewed 25 female submariners for their thesis, 16 of which were from the initial group of 24 female officers to serve aboard a submarine. Their comments offered keen insights into the experiences of the integration and its supporting and hindering factors. Throughout the interview process, several themes emerged … Female submariners often spoke of the difficulties associated with their initial integration, the command climate aboard the submarines they served on, and a common desire to be treated as equals.

Lt. Matthew Smith served with four of the initial 24 female officers. He too recognized the initial difficulty that submariners experienced as they adjusted to serving with female officers.

“Typically, whenever a new officer comes on board, there is some trepidation as we wait to see how they will integrate with the group. With the women who came on board, we probably stepped a little softer. It probably took a little longer for people to relax and be themselves in front of the female officers,” said Smith.

But despite the initial adjustment period, Smith feels that a lot of the concern about women aboard submarines was “much ado about nothing.”

“Having women neither added nor detracted to the boat … I didn’t find that their gender made much of a difference,” said Smith.

Another prominent theme throughout Ellis and Munson’s report was the desire for equal treatment by the new submariners. Several of the women who participated in the study noted a disconnect between the stated goal of equality, and the side effects of simply being the first females on board, and the notoriety that came with it.

In the end, Ellis and Munson’s report noted that command climate and leadership, particularly the tone set by senior leaders, was a critical factor for success.

“It is readily apparent from the experiences of the participants how important good command climate was to the success of the integration process, and, at the same time, how destructive poor leadership could be,” said Ellis. “Some people deal with change very well, others do not.”

Ellis, as both a documenter of the women’s experiences as well as a participant in the process, has come to believe that integration will require more than welcoming crews, responsive commanders and equal treatment. She notes that if women are to serve as career line officers within the submarine fleet, that serious changes will have to be made to accommodate female submariner career paths.

“You will not really be able to integrate unless you have thought out six or seven years of someone’s career. Out of the [24] women in the first group, only two are going to go back to a boat. It is not necessarily due to bad experiences or because of the command climate, it’s because the career paths that work for a man do not necessarily work for a woman,” explained Ellis.

“Update NPS” is a monthly publication for students, faculty and staff of the Naval Postgraduate School produced by the Public Affairs Office. For additional copies, comments, or to suggest story ideas, contact the editorial staff at pao@nps.edu.
NPS Student Develops Fuel Saving Measures

By Kenneth A. Stewart

NPS student Lt. Cmdr. Korban Blackburn is developing an optimization tool dubbed the Optimized Transit Tool Easy Reference (OTTER), which has the potential to save the Navy millions in fuel costs.

“If I can stay on station for an extra week without fueling, I have optimized my operational capabilities. That’s the goal,” said Blackburn.

OTTER is used to determine the most fuel efficient speeds at which to travel between two given points and helps mission planners to take into account the affects of various speed combinations while incorporating the impact of group transits, and other variables, when conducting mission planning.

“Every ship has a fuel burn-rate curve, which shows how much fuel you burn for a given speed,” explained Blackburn. “Think of gears in your car. Would you rather go 50 miles per-hour down the freeway in first gear or fifth gear? There is one gear that is the most efficient for a given speed, OTTER helps us to determine which gear that is.”

What OTTER demonstrates is seemingly counterintuitive. On a Littoral Combat Ship, for example, if the ship’s destination required steaming 17 knots for 24 hours, the average person in open water would likely set the ship’s speed at 17 knots and keep it there until it reached the destination. But OTTER reveals that by steaming forward at 15 knots-per-hour for 90 percent of the time, and then 25 knots for ten percent of the time, the ship would still travel at an average rate of 17 knots over a 24-hour period, but would save over 400 gallons of fuel per hour.

Blackburn’s planner builds upon work done by NPS Professor of Practice and retired Navy Capt. Jeffrey Kline, Distinguished OR Professor Gerald Brown, Distinguished OR Professor Alan Washburn, and the late Distinguished OR Professor Richard Rosenthal. The team received a 2007 patent for its Transit Fuel Planner.

“The Transit Fuel Planner advises a specific ship, based on its own fuel consumption curves, what is the most fuel efficient engineering plant configuration and combinations of speeds to transit a certain distance in a certain time,” said Kline.

Kline got the initial idea for the Transit Fuel Planner when he took command of the USS Aquila (PHM-4) after graduating from NPS. Even in its rudimentary state, Kline was able to realize significant fuel savings by utilizing it. He eventually returned to NPS and collaborated with members of the OR department under an Office of Naval Research (ONR) program before securing the Transit Fuel Planner patent.

Blackburn’s OTTER program simplifies the Fuel Transit Planner, and makes it more user friendly by graphing the results of various algorithms and reproducing them in a simple, easy-to-follow chart.

“I wanted to make the [Transit Fuel Planner] easy to use. I developed an excel spreadsheet that can be given to someone aboard a destroyer, cruiser or any fuel-burning Navy ship. Sailors won’t need a laptop or anything. It’s literally just a piece of paper,” said Blackburn.

Blackburn also worked closely with former NPS intern Brandon Naylor while developing OTTER. Naylor is the developer behind the the Fuel Usage Study Extended Demonstration (FUSED), which tests variant combinations of shipboard efficiencies. His work solved many of the underlying equations that make OTTER work.

Similar developments and collaboration between researchers at NPS and ONR have made programs like OTTER succesful in in the past. Blackburn hopes that OTTER will contribute to efforts in the areas of conservation, operational research and efficiency.

NPS Professor of Physics Gamani Karunasiri was recently named an American Physical Society (APS) fellow. Karunasiri is well known for his work developing quantum detectors and micro-sensors.

“I’m an experimentalist working primarily on sensors in three different areas, one of which is THz imaging [similar to the scanners used by airports],” said Karunasiri.

Karunasiri was made a fellow after his first nomination to the APS. Only .5 percent of APS members are named fellows.

L. Warren Rogers, an electrical engineer with the NPS Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering was recently awarded a patent for his approach to converting alternating current (AC) power into direct current (DC) power for a variable speed DC motor.

Have a story to share? Public Affairs is constantly seeking interesting news and stories for Update NPS. Send your tips to pao@nps.edu.
NPS Says Farewell to Historian, Union Leader

By Kenneth A. Stewart

NPS said farewell to Special Collections Manager and unofficial NPS Historian John Sanders at a retirement ceremony held in his honor on the Quarterdeck of Herrmann Hall, Oct. 30.

“There are a lot of things I am going to miss about NPS. There’s the camaraderie and this remarkable historic property that we have. But I think at the very top, I will miss seeing the people who work so diligently at shaping the future with such an amazing level of commitment. I will miss being a part of that purpose and motivation,” said Sanders.

In addition to his work at both the NPS Public Affairs Office and the Dudley Knox Library, Sanders was a long-time member of the National Federation of Federal Employees’ Local 1690 and served as its vice president for nine years.

“John Sanders stands as the most eloquent and polished union official I have worked with. You couldn’t help but respect him in his tireless zeal to represent the people at NPS and the [Naval Support Activity Monterey],” said Local 1690 President Pete Randazzo.

Prior to the commencement of Sanders’ retirement ceremony, he insisted that attendees “roast and toast” him in a celebration of not only his career, but of all the people that contribute to the university. He was adamant that there be “more roasts than toasts.” His son Aaron Sanders was the first to comply.

“If you have been here for a while, you remember that there used to be a pool. My brother and I looked forward to going to it every single summer. That was our oasis. Our father was like a celebrity. When he walked out in his bathing suit, cameras would flash and security guards would try to keep kids from falling into the pool as the paparazzi fought to get a shot of the sasquatch!” Aaron Sanders quipped.

Others were quick to note Sanders’ penchant for being long-winded, and his dry sense of humor. Still, despite some funny anecdotes and light-hearted banter, the vast majority of people who spoke at the ceremony did so with admiration.

Sanders came to NPS as a writer/editor with the Public Affairs Office in 1984. He served in various public affairs capacities over a 24-year period appearing on CNN and occasionally hosting the local “Your Town” television program. Throughout Sanders’ long career, he has done everything from helping an iconic cartoonist launch his career to impersonating Bob Hope.

But Sanders also faced challenges while serving at NPS. Professionally, he watched as administrators, professors, students and colleagues came and went. Personally, he fought a long battle with cancer, and won. Through it all, Sanders has kept a tremendously positive attitude and an endearing sense of humor. He attributes much of that to the good times he shared at NPS.

“As much as anything, it’s the laughter in this place [that makes it special]. If you let yourself feel it, NPS resounds with the laughter of so many people, like Bob Hope, who came here to entertain troops after WWII. These buildings echo with the joy of those times,” said Sanders.

Local WWII Vet Shares His Navy Story

By MC2 Michael Ehrlich

Retired Sonarman 1st Class Noel Van Bibber emotionally recalled his war-time service aboard the USS Chincoteague (AVP 24) during a visit with NPS Sailors at the Carmel Hills Care Center, Nov. 6. During its World War II service, the Chincoteague received six battle stars, the purple heart, the combat action ribbon and many more medals and awards.

“They thought they had us. We were out of power, filling with water, full of bullet holes, and the ship was tipped about 30 degrees,” described Van Bibber.

The Chincoteague had suffered a direct hit, a bomb had dropped down the smoke stack, through the mess hall and exploded in the engine room killing 13 Sailors. Van Bibber described how this event did not break the spirit of the crew.

“That night, we were dead in the water, but we sat there on the deck with a guitar and sang songs until midnight … one group sang songs while the other group was bailing water, then they switched. They were good times,” said Van Bibber. “In my four and a half years in the Navy, the only time I really cried was that night.”

“The average man that fought for the U.S. Navy was without a doubt the bravest person I ever knew,” added Van Bibber. “They stepped into the line of fire, and did everything they needed to do to fight for their country.”
NPS Welcomes New Deputy Dean of Students

By MC2 Shawn J. Stewart

NPS recently welcomed newly-appointed Deputy Dean of Students Cmdr. Paul Rasmussen. Rasmussen replaced Deputy Dean of Students Cmdr. Alex Mabini. He comes to NPS from the U.S. Naval War College where he served as a military professor in the National Security Affairs Department.

“It’s an honor to come to this respected institution,” said Rasmussen. “My goals are to keep focused on one of NPS’ core missions, which is educating officers and civilians in order to lead an innovative and effective joint force.”

Rasmussen is looking forward to picking up where Mabini left off - no easy task considering the bar that Mabini has set.

“I’ve been here for three days and I can already tell I’ve got some big shoes to fill.

“I look forward to continuing [Mabini’s] legacy by focusing on the students and producing highly-educated leaders,” said Rasmussen.

Mabini soon leaves NPS for Okinawa, Japan, where he will serve as a plans officer with Expeditionary Strike Group 7.

Outreach Efforts Pick Up STEAM at Colton Middle School

By Javier Chagoya

NPS National Reconnaissance Office Chair and former NASA astronaut, retired Capt. Dan Bursch, was greeted by an enthusiastic group of 7th and 8th grade students from Monterey’s Walter Colton Middle School, Oct. 15.

Bursch, along with three former NPS interns, Amara Borchers, Stephen Edgar, and Carson Vogt, traveled to the school as part of a community outreach effort that cultivates interest into the traditional STEM disciplines, as well as the arts, known as STEAM.

“Mathematics is the language of physics and allows you to solve problems. Knowing physics and how machines are designed empowered humans to get into space,” said Bursch.

He described different phases of the Space Shuttle launch sequence, Earth orbiting maneuvers, and even his own adventures into space, including his 2001-2002, six-and-a-half-month stay on the International Space Station. Bursch also talked to the class about two instances when things didn’t go quite as planned, and used the events as life lessons.

“On two separate shuttle launches, we had to abort take off at the very final seconds of the count down. That what means is that many of the rocket engine parts have to be refitted, and that takes up to six weeks, so you can imagine how that can be a bit unnerving,” Bursch explained. “But, you still have to gather yourself up, prepare for the next time and be ready to face the challenge.”

Bursch also brought his personal set of space working gloves and passed them around to the students, who marveled at the chance to slide their hands into them. Bursch and his colleagues hope they will inspire a student, or two, to reach for the stars.

“I really think that some of these kids have it in them to reach for the stars and make their dreams of doing great things come true one day,” said Caroline Wormley, a teacher at Colton Middle School.

NPS and Naval Support Activity Monterey leadership encouraged students, faculty and staff to spread the word about domestic violence prevention throughout the month of October.

“The military is taking an increasingly serious look at domestic violence,” said Fleet and Family Services Center Clinical Counselor and Case Manager Guy Sartee. “Dedicating a month toward awareness and prevention is very helpful … because no one is exempt throughout all the ranks.”

Associate Professor Timothy Chung and Lecturer Kristen Tsolis recently hosted the first meeting of NPS’ Robotics Club in the RoboDojo laboratory. The Robotics Club is looking to establish a community setting for students, faculty and staff to explore advancements in robotics and mechatronics.

NPS alumnus and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy International Programs (NIPO) Rear Adm. James Shannon addressed students, faculty and staff during a recent Secretary of the Navy Guest Lecture (SGL).

Shannon spoke about the value that NPS offers the Navy, referring to the institution as one of the Navy’s “three crown jewels” noting its place among the Naval Academy and the Naval War College.
NPS Doctoral Student’s Book Explores Drones, Law

By Kenneth A. Stewart

NPS doctoral student Donna A. Dulo is the lead author and editor of “Unmanned Aircraft in the National Airspace: Critical Issues, Technology and the Law,” published by the American Bar Association. The rapid advancement of unmanned aerial vehicles has led to wide gaps in existing law and policy, providing Dulo with just the motivation she needed to advance the conversation.

“I want this book to set the stage and create some legal frameworks … so that the industry can look at the book and follow it,” she said.

Dulo notes that despite the media hype, unmanned aircraft or “drones” have been in use for a very long time. In fact, unmanned aircraft have been around for longer than manned aircraft.

“With drones, size doesn’t matter. They can literally be as small as a fly, or as large as a [Boeing] 747-800. Anything that can fly remotely can be considered a drone,” she said, adding that nearly anything that can fly, can be modified to fly remotely.

When it comes to UAVs and the law, Dulo acknowledges that there is a lot of work that needs to be done. She likens current UAV law to the early tort law that developed around the railroad and manned aviation industries.

“The Wright brothers flew the Wright Flyer from Kitty Hawk in 1903, but we didn’t have laws governing the safety of manned flight until the 1950s,” said Dulo.

But the issue surrounding drones that has garnered the most media attention in recent years is privacy.

“Privacy is a huge issue. If the government is operating the drone than we may have Fourth Amendment issues, but if a private citizen is using a drone we go into the area of privacy torts,” said Dulo.

Past case law, particularly in the areas of privacy, dealt with constitutional protections against intrusion, even visual intrusions, upon dwellings in areas where residents had a reasonable expectation of privacy. Courts considered everything from the constitutionality of listening devices outside of phone booths, to the use of thermal optics outside homes. The advent of drones and micro-drones has once again pushed the boundaries on these issues.

“With drones, you can really get up close and remain on station with some very sensitive equipment, which may raise Fourth Amendment or privacy tort concerns,” Dulo explained.

Still, Dulo insists that legal inquiries should not be limited to the privacy concerns that seem to be dominating current discussions about drone usage in the media.

“There is so much more involved with drones than privacy, particularly in the areas of safety and security. That’s really what we are working on here at NPS,” she said.

Focus On … Athletic Excellence, Leadership
A Monthly Look at Names and Faces on Campus

NPS Graduate School of Business and Public Policy (GSBPP) Student U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Christine Taranto, in addition to her studies, finished 2nd overall among all women runners in the annual Marine Corps Marathon (MCM).

Taranto also placed 1st overall in the U.S. Armed Forces Marathon Championships, which was held in conjunction with the annual MCM in rural Arlington, Va., Oct. 25.

Taranto says that leadership and motivation are her driving force.

“I’m in a dual leadership role because people are motivated in different ways. It’s not the same formal leadership chain, but it allows Marines to be motivated in diverse way.

“At the end of the day, leadership and motivation isn’t about the Marine or the Sailor. It’s about how we engage the whole of the person,” said Taranto.
This month the President’s Student Council (PSC) is focusing its efforts on giving back to our Monterey Community.

In but one example of our efforts, the PSC and fellow NPS students, gathered to shovel and lay dirt in an effort to refurbish the horse stalls at the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal’s (SPCA) barn, Nov. 7.

The SPCA barn is home to horses, miniature ponies, ducks and roosters that have been surrendered by their owners. Several NPS students from both the Navy and the Marine Corps spent their morning helping the SPCA on this worthy endeavor.

Not many faculty, staff or students on campus know that one of the PSC’s regular duties is to sit on local honor boards. Though they can be painful and are not something we look forward to, we are grateful to the university for allowing the student body to be represented and for their willingness to let students be a part of the decision making process. The PSC has been receiving positive feedback about the posting of honor board results to the student muster page.

Reminder, PSC elections are coming up next month and we are looking for two hard-charging students to run for chair and vice-chair of the PSC. If you know of anyone that would like to have an active role in the school and student body, please direct them to our next meeting in the Dudley Knox Library’s room 263A, Dec. 2.

Have a story to share? Public Affairs is constantly seeking interesting news and stories for Update NPS. Send your tips to pao@nps.edu.
The mission of the Naval Postgraduate School is to provide relevant and unique advanced education and research programs to increase the combat effectiveness of commissioned officers of the Naval Service to enhance the security of the United States. In support of the foregoing, and to sustain academic excellence, foster and encourage a program of relevant and meritorious research which both supports the needs of Navy and Department of Defense while building the intellectual capital of Naval Postgraduate School faculty.

November 17
Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) General Military Training
3:00 p.m. in King Auditorium

November 24
Career/Retirement Counseling with MOAA
3:00 p.m. in King Auditorium

November 13
Defense Energy Seminar
1:00 p.m. in ME Lecture Hall

Historical Highlights
In 1963, Cmdr. Frances Biadasz became NPS’ only, and likely first, female instructor. Biadasz had a remarkable naval career filled with firsts. In 1958, she worked as Special Assistant to the Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Arleigh A. Burke. In 1961, she was transferred to Paris to work with NATO. Later in that same year, Biadasz received her PhD in International Relations from Georgetown University and earned Georgetown’s “Gold Key,” its highest academic honor.

Left, Biadasz presents Burke with her “Gold Key,” as a token of her appreciation for his “long and consistent support of graduate instruction for naval officers in the field of International Relations” and for his personal support of her career.

Read a full interview with Biadasz in “The Classmate” available in Calhoun, the NPS Archive at: https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/46832.

Historical Highlights are provided by the Dudley Knox Library.