NAVSEA/NOSSA Team Wins 2012 SECNAV Safety Excellence Award

By Jamal Wilson
Naval Ordnance Safety and Security Activity

The safe execution of the mission is, and always has been, paramount in American military and civilian operations, whether it’s here at home or at forward-deployed locations throughout the world.

Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), Naval Ordnance Safety and Security Activity (NOSSA) and U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) have been working collaboratively to ensure this safety for America’s warfighters, supporting the Global War on Terror in Afghanistan. This joint effort was recognized in a ceremony held July 11 as these organizations with simultaneous exemplary safety performance.” From its advent in 2002, the award has become the Navy's premier venue to recognize commands, teams and programs that promote the safety of Sailors, Marines and civilians, and protect aircraft, ships and facilities from mishap.

The award’s objectives are to promote excellence in mission readiness by mishap and hazard reduction through the implementation of effective safety programs, to fully integrate operational risk management principles throughout the Navy and Marine Corps, and to establish a sound safety culture.

Migration in the military is the way we do business. The event, which will stay at the UMW Dahlgren Campus as part of an agreement with the Dahlgren Heritage Board, is the first official exhibit of the Dahlgren Heritage Museum. Themathrm is to celebrate the story of Dahlgren. The exhibit, which will stay at the UMW Dahlgren Campus as part of an agreement with the Dahlgren Heritage Board, is the first official exhibit of the Dahlgren Heritage Museum. "We’re very proud of it,” said Mark Safferstone, executive director of the UMW Dahlgren Campus. “We think that it really demonstrates the university’s engagement and commitment to this region and it also provides the museum with a venue for permanent displays.”

Dahlgren women honored with inaugural museum exhibit

By Andrew Revelos
Staff Writer

The inaugural exhibit of the Dahlgren Heritage Museum was unveiled to a large crowd at a July 25 ceremony and panel discussion at the University of Mary Washington’s (UMW) Dahlgren Campus. The exhibit, “Women in Science and Technology at Dahlgren,” and panel discussion featured informational photo displays and original Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) uniform from the World War II era.

The panel discussion featured four professional women who have left their mark on Dahlgren, three of whom remain actively employed on the installation.

Ed Jones, president of the Dahlgren Heritage Board, kicked off the ceremony by describing his connection with the base. “Like many of you, I have personal connections to Dahlgren,” he said. “My father, Arthur Jones, worked in Dahlgren for 30 years, from 1942 to 1972. My father worked with people like Charles Cohen, William Kemper, David Brown, Ralph Niemann, Russell Lyddane, Bernard Smith, Jim Colvard; these are iconic names from Dahlgren history.”

The crowd buzzed with recognition and at least one of those big names, Jim Colvard, a former technical director of the Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division (NSW- CDD) who serves on the Dahlgren Heritage Board, was in attendance. The ceremony served as Dahlgren reunion of sorts — many of the current and former Dahlgren employees who attended found themselves not only depicted in the exhibit, but among old friends and former co-workers.

Pat Smith worked in Dahlgren from 1956-1993 and attended the exhibit opening. She recognized her old boss in a 1950s photo depicting him with the Naval Ordnance Relay Calculator (NORC), one of the world’s first supercomputers. As a retired woman professional, Smith certainly

Dahlgren Heritage Museum posts first exhibit

The Dahlgren Heritage Museum ceremony at University of Mary Washington (UMW) Dahlgren Campus marked a milestone in the two-year collaboration between the Dahlgren Heritage Board, UMW, the Navy and local leaders and museum supporters to celebrate the story of Dahlgren. The exhibit, which will stay at the UMW Dahlgren Campus as part of an agreement with the Dahlgren Heritage Board, is the first official exhibit of the Dahlgren Heritage Museum. "We’re very proud of it,” said Mark Safferstone, executive director of the UMW Dahlgren Campus. “We think that it really demonstrates the university’s engagement and commitment to this region and it also provides the museum with a venue for permanent displays.”

The panelists at the Dahlgren Heritage Museum exhibit opening at the UMW Dahlgren Campus on July 25, from left to right, Dawn Murphy, program manager at NSWCDD, Cynthia Holland, lead instrumentation engineer for the Naval Electromagnetic Railgun, Glaides West, a retired Dahlgren employee who worked in satellite data analysis, and Ann Swope, chief of staff for NSWCDD.
Raymond Hughey, a retired mathematician and satellite data analyst who worked in Dahlgren, was and one of four speakers at the ceremony’s panel discussion, said the exhibit made her feel famous. “It’s fantastic, magnificent and well-done,” she said. “It’s an honor that makes you feel like you’re somebody special.”

Of course, West is someone special. “The majority of my work was done analyzing satellite data, which in turn is used in the Global Positioning System (GPS),” she said. She laughs when she considers how far that technology has come. “We have a GPS in the car.”

Do West’s grandchildren have any idea that their grandma helped develop the GPS in the car? West grinned. “I don’t think they really have the whole ‘picture’ yet.”

For West, an employee’s skills always mattered more than anything else in Dahlgren. “The advisors encouraged me to go into a government job brought her to Dahlgren. A government job brought her to Dahlgren. "The advisors encouraged me to go into environmental issues. Motherhood, however, is a factor inseparable from the female sex, though the panelists found themselves in a similar situation when she worked onboard ships that often did not have female restrooms. Therefore, you sort of went along with the flow and kept it pretty safe and sound.”

West added that such challenges did not discourage her from continuing her work and said she noticed improvements in race and gender relations by the time she retired.

For Swope, who began her career in the 1980s, working in facilities that were not designed to accommodate women presented some unique challenges. Her first assignment took her to a building with one bathroom and a sign on the door was flipped to designate the gender of the occupant. “It only took one trip to realize this is a men’s restroom,” she said, which roused a laugh from the audience. “So from then on I just had to cross the street to (another building) that had women’s restrooms.”

As late as the year 2000, Murphy found herself in a similar situation when she worked onboard ships that often did not have female quarters. Murphy did manage to find accommodations in the absent admiral’s quarters. “I had my own head, my own room and it was a great week.”

All of the women agreed that professional skills matter more in Dahlgren than gender. Motherhood, however, is a factor inseparable from the female sex, though the panelists found themselves in a similar situation when they were still on duty. The advisors encouraged them to go into environmental issues. Motherhood, however, is a factor inseparable from the female sex, though the panelists found themselves in a similar situation when they were still on duty.

For Swope, who has had three children while in the military, said, “I do think that’s true and it was true during that period also. You have to stand and be part of the workforce.”

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