

## ***Service, Professionalism & Talent***

# **USNPAA 2022 Awards Honorees**

By CAPT Jim Noone, USN (Ret.)

Though U.S. Navy Public Affairs Association (USNPAA) has postponed our 2022 reunion, the Association is already making plans for award presentations originally slated for the April 1 reunion banquet in Arlington.

"These awards are an important part of our Association's activities and well-deserved by the recipients," said RDML Tom Jurkowsky, USN (Ret.), USNPAA president. "They've been presented since our organization was formed in 1994. We need to present them regularly, not just at our reunion dinners."

## **USNPAA 2022 Awards**

### ***USNPAA Annual Award***

#### ***for Exemplary Service***

**Mass Communication Specialist First Class  
(SW/EXW) Kelsey Hockenberger**

∞

### ***Captain Thomas Coldwell Award***

#### ***for Significant Achievement***

**Captain Kevin Wensing, USN (Ret.)**

∞

### ***USNPAA Distinguished Service Award***

**Navy Marine Corps Relief Society**

# USNPAA Annual Award for Exemplary Service

*Recognizing exemplary service by an active duty enlisted member.*

*Selected by the Chief of Information*

## 2022 USNPAA Exemplary Service Award

**MC1 (SW/EXW) Kelsey Hockenberger**



U.S. Navy illustration by MC1 (SW/EXW) Kelsey J. Hockenberger created for Women's History Month 2020. Ctrl/Click image to view full design.

Petty Officer Hockenberger is currently attending the Military Visual Journalism Program at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University.

As 2020 Junior Mass Communication Specialist of the Navy and 2020 Commander, Submarine Squadron 15 Junior Sailor of the Year, Petty Officer Hockenberger's outstanding drive and unmatched performance were key to this selection according to RDML Charlie Brown.

Beginning with her Navy enlistment in January 2016 the Hudson, Wisconsin native has blazed a trail of achievement.

Here are a few highlights:

- Defense Information School honor graduate and recipient of Mass Communication Specialist First Class Bobby McRill Excellence Award.
- Independent MC in support of Operation Inherent Resolve aboard USS Princeton (CG 59) from March to Dec. 2017. (Navy Public Affairs Support Element (NPASE) West)
- RIMPAC Exercise 2018 deployed aboard the Royal Australian Navy HMAS Adelaide (L01), representing the U.S. Navy public affairs. (NPASE West)
- Covered all expeditionary public affairs for Commander, Task Force 75, and its subordinate commands from Sept. 2018 to April 2019, including humanitarian recovery efforts for Typhoon Mangkhut and Super Typhoon Yutu. (NPASE West)
- Deputy Public Affairs Officer for Commander, Submarine Squadron 15 in Santa Rita, Guam where she was named the 2020 Junior Sailor of the Year and 2019 Russell Egnor Navy Strategic Communicator of the Year.
- Military decorations include: four Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medals, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Good Conduct Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, two Sea Service Deployment Ribbons, an Overseas Service Ribbon, and the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal.



"Petty Officer Hockenberger is just an amazing Sailor," shares CHINFO Senior Enlisted Advisor MCCM (AW/SW/EXW) Michael Lewis. "She's been extremely successful at sea and ashore. The sky is the absolute limit for this communication professional."

"Once she graduates from Syracuse this summer, she's heading to the USS Boxer (LHD 4) where there's no doubt in my mind, she'll do the things she needs to do to become a Chief petty officer," he continues.

"Frankly, I'd I had my way; I'd welcome her into the Mess tomorrow. She's that good."

## The Total Package

Today's Navy Mass Communication Specialists inherited duties once performed by enlisted Journalists, Photographer's Mates, Lithographers, and Illustrator-Draftsmen, along with the diverse variety of specialized Navy enlisted codes (NECs) within those ratings. Since then, the enlisted pros of the Navy public affairs community have mastered their craft and harnessed technology to excel at telling today's Navy story.

Petty Officer Hockenberger's work exemplifies that excellence and leadership. From her [Silent Service video tribute to Submarine Squadron 15](#), specially designed [USS Asheville \(SSN 758\) 29<sup>th</sup> Birthday illustration](#), underway action shots and fun portraits, this USNPAA Exemplary Service Award recipient provides an incredible snapshot of today's Navy Mass Communication Specialist.



CHINFO's Master Chief Michael Lewis presents then-MC2 (SW/EXW) Hockenberger with 2020 Junior Mass Communication Specialist of the Year Award.



APRA HARBOR, Guam (Oct. 24, 2020) Homecoming transit of Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Topeka (SSN 754). Navy photo by MC1 Kelsey Hockenberger.



The illustration left was specially designed by Petty Officer Hockenberger to commemorate the USS Asheville's (SSN 758) 29<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**ROCK OUT** with Submarine Squadron 15 in *Silent Service*, a U.S. Navy video by MC1 (SW/EXW) Kelsey J. Hockenberger. Ctrl/Click image to play. (*Sightings* print readers, see: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/757928/we-silent-service>)



Right, Petty Officer Hockenberger finds a unique portrait location. Below, she poignantly captures sun and sail as USS Ohio (SSGN 726) transits Apra Harbor, Guam in 2021.





# USNPAA Distinguished Service Award

In the 2020 calendar year, the NMCRS provided some \$24 million to 28,000 clients for financial assistance and education, including:

- \$12.5M - Basic living expenses (food, lodging, utilities, household)
- \$5.8M - Transportation (car repairs/payment/insurance/rentals)
- \$2.9M - Family emergency, funeral, medical/dental
- \$1.0M - Transportation due to family member illness
- \$1.7M - Other (education, pay/entitlement shortfalls)



*Awarded to an organization or non-USNPAA member for work that has benefitted mankind or contributed to those in need.*

## Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society

This year's Distinguished Service Award recognizes the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS). Started in 1904, the mission of NMCRS is to help members of the Navy and Marine Corps and their families who are in need. NMCRS is a worldwide organization with 217 locations. It has a staff of some 150 and approximately 3,200 volunteers.



The Society also played a key role in helping Sailors who were members of the USS Bonhomme Richard crew. The ship suffered a catastrophic fire in 2020 and most of the Sailors lost all their personal possessions and uniforms.

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society president/chief executive officer is LTG Jack W. Klimp, USMC (Ret.). The executive vice president/chief operating officer is RDML Dawn Cutler, USN (Ret.), former CHINFO.

The award will be presented to NMCRS later this year.

NMCRS Executive VP/CEO & former CHINFO Dawn Cutler, RDML, USN (Ret.), right.

NRMC meets the needs of our Navy-Marine Corps team in photos above and left. NMCRS Photos.



## Captain Thomas Coldwell Award for Significant Achievement

*The Coldwell Award goes to a USNPAA member for significant achievement after Navy service.*

The 2022 Thomas Coldwell Award recipient is *CAPT Kevin Wensing, USN (Ret.)*. Kevin retired in 2006 and went to work at the USO, supporting U.S. troops and their families. He later helped actor Gary Sinise launch his foundation.

CAPT Wensing is currently involved in numerous volunteer activities, including:



*CAPT Kevin Wensing, USN (Ret.)*

- Member of the Speakers Committee at the National Press Club; particularly, he arranges for the service secretaries, military leaders, and Veterans Administration officials to speak at the Press Club.
- Helps organize the Washington, DC, Memorial Day Parade and the New York City Veterans Day Parade.
- Serves on the Board of Directors of the USS Constitution Museum in Boston.
- Very active in the U.S. Tennis Association; helps organize the annual LT Joe Hunt Military Appreciation Day during the U.S. Open tennis championships.
- Has served as chair of FCA Americas, a branch of FCA, Finland's largest international charity that works in Africa and Asia in inter-faith dialogue and peacemaking.

USNPAA plans to present the award at a luncheon at the Army/Navy Country Club later this spring.

*In addition, USNPAA has contributed to CHINFO's Norma B. Connelly Navy Public Affairs Service Award by funding the plaque. The award goes to an outstanding member of the Navy public affairs community.*

*This year the award will be presented posthumously to CDR Mary Jane Osmena Perry, who passed away last year. She was the spouse of PAO CAPT Ryan Perry.*



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## From the Bridge...

Dear USNPAA Members:

By now, you should have received word that our April 2022 Reunion has been cancelled. Like you, I will certainly miss seeing so many old friends and colleagues. Re-connecting reinforces what makes our community the special one that it is. The bonds we create are unlike those in any other Navy community, and our reunions remind us how meaningful it is to represent our Navy in this way. We are a unique team.

Meanwhile, Rear Adm. Brown and his team are pursuing plans for CHINFO's worldwide training symposium in Norfolk at the end of March. *This will be the first all-community gathering since 2015!* USNPAA is pleased to sponsor a reception for attendees on the first evening of the symposium.

Though we are disappointed we will miss out on honoring this year's award recipients at our reunion banquet, they will be personally recognized at a time convenient for each individual recipient. If you haven't yet, please get to know our *USNPAA Annual Award for Exemplary Service*, *Captain Thomas Coldwell Award for Significant Achievement*, and *Captain Thomas Coldwell Award for Significant Achievement* recipients in the preceding pages of *Sightings*.



RDML Tom Jurkowsky

One of the other things I will miss is simply observing the reunion's overall coordinator—Sheila Graham. The skills she learned as a PAO—planning for the 'what if,' anticipating issues and planning for contingencies, and detail, detail, detail—have obviously made her the extraordinary event planner she is. Her article on the following pages details the reunion timeline and board's decision process in more detail. We hope to return to an in-person reunion in 2023 or 2024 and will hold a virtual membership meeting in 2022.

In other exciting news, the board of directors has approved pursuing an effort that will allow us to better partner with the current Navy PA team. Since its 1994 founding, USNPAA's mission has included "supporting and promoting the professional growth, education, and development of individuals engaged in all aspects of U.S. Navy public affairs." Currently, Association member panels are exploring specific needs, policy guidelines and funding recommendations for a new USNPAA Professional Development Assistance Program (PDAP) concept. Full program launch will require ratification by Association membership. Learn more about this new initiative on page 15.

To help jump start the PDAP effort, the Association received an anonymous \$5000.00 donation. The donor made the gift in the hope other members will follow suit as



USNPAA pursues supporting the Navy public affairs community in a more meaningful and substantive way. I am personally very grateful for this very generous, thoughtful, and supportive gift.

As many of you know by now, CAPT Ryan Perry has been selected as the new CHINFO. He will relieve RDML Charlie Brown. Congratulations to CAPT Perry. We look forward to working with CAPT Perry; he and his team will continue to have our fullest support. Congratulations also to Charlie Brown, of course, for the superb job he has done over the last three years. Those of us who have sat in Charlie's seat know the demands of being the Chief of Information, and I can attest to what Charlie has accomplished during his tenure. Charlie has been an extraordinary leader of the community. It's hard to believe his three-year tour is coming to a close.

I would also like to inform you that the board approved my successor as president of the Association—Rear Adm. Dawn Cutler. Dawn will assume her role in October 2022. Dawn is currently the Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society.

As always, stay tuned for *USNPAA Happy Hour* sessions with speakers we had invited to present at the reunion and other notable public affairs community, Navy and press professionals. USNPAA members will receive their invitations and virtual meeting sign-in instructions via email.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Sightings*. Please remember that we are always looking for your story ideas, and photos. New contributors welcome!

Tom Jurkowsky

President

### U.S. Navy Public Affairs Association (USNPAA)

was established in 1994 to:

Foster and enhance cordial relations and mutual understanding among former and current active duty personnel and civilian employees of the U.S. Navy who were, or are, engaged in performing public affairs functions.

Support and promote the professional growth, education, and development of individuals engaged in all aspects of U.S. Navy public affairs.

Stimulate and promote a broad acquaintance and a spirit of fellowship among members and others interested in an effective U.S. Navy public affairs program.

Our name changed to *U.S. Navy Public Affairs Association* in 2013 to better focus on all three areas of purpose, and to send a strong *signal of inclusiveness to all Navy public affairs communities: active, reserve, retired, civilian, officer and enlisted.*

**JOIN US:** *If you are, or ever have served in Navy Public Affairs, become a member for free at [www.usnpaa.org/membership.html](http://www.usnpaa.org/membership.html) to receive access to USNPAA events and community.*

**The U. S. Navy Public Affairs Association is a**  
501(c)(19) nonprofit Veterans organization headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia.



# 2022 USNPAA Reunion Cancelled –

## To Be Rescheduled

By CAPT Sheila Graham, USN (Ret.)



CAPT Sheila Graham  
Reunion Coordinator

On 17 December 2021, Tom Jurkowsky notified our members by email that the USNPAA board of directors made the difficult decision to postpone the April 2022 reunion scheduled for 1-2 April in Arlington, Virginia. In addition to the financial risk we faced if we continued with the reunion, the

health and safety of our members was of paramount importance.

The rise of the omicron variant and prevalence of the delta strain was causing uncertainty, particularly when it came to travel. This was confirmed when our board members contacted our members to ask if they planned to attend the reunion. Many of our members said they were hesitant to commit and may only do so at the last-minute. That made reunion planning very difficult.

By 13 December, we had received only 29 registrations for the reunion. That included 27 people for the Friday dinner, 23 for the Saturday meeting/lunch, and 21 for the Saturday evening reception. In comparison, for the 2019 reunion we had 103 people at the Friday dinner, 78 at the Saturday meeting/lunch and 80 for the Saturday night reception.

*"Sheila thinks of every possible detail and ensures hotel and banquet staff follow through. Watching her negotiate with both hotel and banquet managers to ensure we receive the best possible prices is a lesson in diplomacy. What are the best and most cost-effective options for our banquet reception? How about the menu items? What kind of entrée could be offered at the best price? Do any of our attendees have food allergies? Any vegetarians? What menu options are available for them? (Then she ensures banquet staff know where these guests are going to be seated.) How many bus trips do we need to get attendees from the hotel to the banquet? ... These are just a few of the questions that Sheila concerns herself with. There are myriad other details that she covers without anyone realizing.*

*The take-away from watching her work is that Sheila always has the attendee —our members— in mind. We receive the best quality and at the lowest price possible thanks to Sheila Graham.*

*Sheila, you have earned our eternal appreciation and gratitude for your work on behalf of everyone in the Association."*

**Tom Jurkowsky, USNPAA President**

While statistics from past reunions show that our group tends to register closer to the reunion, we faced a significant financial risk due to cancellation penalties in our hotel contract. The hotel agreed that we could cancel the reunion without penalty if we cancelled before December 31, 2021. If we cancelled after that date, we would incur penalties as high as \$25,000, depending on how close we were to April 1. The board decided this financial risk was not in the best interest of USNPAA.

*Refunds (including uncashed checks) were mailed in January to people who had already sent in their registration form and payment. If you registered and haven't received a refund, contact our Treasurer, Brian Gray, at [graybrian@aol.com](mailto:graybrian@aol.com).*

Awards we planned to present at the April 2022 reunion will be still presented, but at various times and locations. Awards Coordinator, Jim Noone, is making those arrangements.

On a more positive note, the board of directors agreed that we will hold a virtual full-membership business meeting in 2022. We look forward to providing details about an Association program –now in development– that focuses on new ways of supporting CHINFO and the Navy public affairs community.

We hope to have an in-person reunion in 2023 or 2024. The location has not yet been selected.

For those who live in the Washington, DC area, a luncheon meeting will be held this spring, if conditions permit. *We encourage others who live in areas with a high concentration of USNPAA members to consider holding similar "mini-reunions" in their own communities.*

Our reunion planning committee and our board of directors are very disappointed that we will not see you in-person in April 2022. The members of our reunion planning committee – Betsy Bird, Chuck Connor, Sheila Graham, Brian Gray, Tom Jurkowsky, Jim Noone, and Dick Thompson – put considerable time and effort into planning the 2022 reunion. We all hope to dust off the plans in the future and bring USNPAA back together in-person again when the time is right.

**CHINFO LTs of the early 90s say:**

**Have a USNPAA Mini-Reunion!**



(l. to r.) CDR Ed Austin, CAPT Beci Brenton, CAPT Jacquie Yost, CDR Chris Dour, CDR Karen Jeffries, LCDR Tina Tallman, CAPT Anthony "Coop" Cooper & CAPT Tom Van Leunen – all USN (Ret.)

# Five Questions for Ned Lundquist



## 1. How did you happen to become a 1650?

My father was a Navy PIO (public information officer) during World War II, as were many of his professional colleagues. I went to Marquette University on an NROTC scholarship and received my degree in journalism with the idea of eventually becoming a PAO myself. After two sea tours, and while I was assigned to recruiting duty in Boston, I applied for redesignation. I felt I was a strong candidate with my degree, the CHINFO Merit Award I received for my cruise book, and the successful marketing campaigns I accomplished in recruiting. However, it took me three boards to get selected. That's because, I was told later, the SWO community couldn't afford lateral transfers from my year group, which was abnormally small because of the Vietnam War drawdown.

## 2. What would you say is your most formative assignment?

*My goals in the Navy were to get positions of increasing responsibility; to continue my education; and see the world. Every time I achieved one of those goals, I set the bar higher. I've learned from every assignment.*

In fact, I would often learn that what I previously thought I knew was not necessarily the way things really are. You can never stop learning. My first two ships as a line officer were truly formative. My first sea tour was aboard an ocean-going tug, going to some amazing places in the Pacific. I wanted to be a big fish in a small pond, and see the world, and I did just that. When we decommissioned USS Tawakoni (ATF 114) and transferred her to the Republic of China Navy in 1978 (when she was 34 years old), I was an ensign and the junior XO afloat in the Navy.



Top photo: Ned Lundquist on the deck of USS Zumwalt (DDG-1000) at Newport Rhode Island. Right, ENS Lundquist as OOD aboard USS Tawakoni (ATF 114) circa 1978.



My second sea tour was aboard USS Cochrane (DDG 21), a great ship with great skippers, superb wardroom, terrific chiefs and the reputation as the best ship in Pearl Harbor. I learned a lot, but also contributed to that reputation.

Aboard RCS Ta-Han 40 years later (photo right): The U.S. transferred Tawakoni to the Republic of China (Taiwan) in 1978. In 2018, while writing about the National Chung Shan Institute of Science and Technology, the RCN brought Ta-Han from Kaohsiung to Keelung to bring me aboard as their special guest. The ship is still active in Taiwan's navy.



**All my PAO tours were “formative.”** But my first, at Commander Submarine Group Two/COMSUBASE in New London was my first exposure to the community. Unlike most new PAOs, I didn’t go to DINFOS, and I didn’t work as a protégé to a senior PAO. On top of all that, I was double-hatted as base PAO. There was a lot going on at Groton. We had Sub School; there were 29 SSNs homeported there along with 16 SSBN off-crews and all the PRECOM crews; a tender; two drydocks; and an ASR and the deep-diving nuclear powered NR-1. In my 18 months on the job, I participated in 17 launchings and commissionings of Trident SSBNs and Los Angeles class SSNs built at Electric Boat.

**My PAO trial-by-fire occurred my first day on the job,** which happened to be the “Proud-to-be-an-American” Open House. Protesters managed to come aboard the base and entered the Fleet Ballistic Missile Training Facility, taking out baby bottles filled with what they said was their own blood and then pouring it on the firing control panels as families and Cub Scouts looked on. The protesters had their own PAO working the phones, and we had instant media attention. Not having an instruction manual from DINFOS, I called the CNO duty captain, who patched me through to the CHINFO duty officer, CDR Mark Neuhart, who I knew from his time at NAVINFO Boston. He walked me through the steps, and we managed the media onslaught.

One of the best lessons I learned at CSG2/SUBASE NLON how to make the most of *the unique contributions and the value of support from Reserve PAOs*. I didn’t figure this out right away, but by the end of my tour I had about 18 1655s and enlisted communication professionals working for me. *They contributed greatly, and every one of them taught me something different from their civilian professions.* I still keep in touch with many of them to this day. It was most gratifying when reservists volunteered to come work with me when in my subsequent tours. One of them, JO2 Rich Gorham, did his first two-week reserve training with me, and many years later, when he was a JOCS and I was an O6, he planned his last AT with me.

### 3. Who were your mentors and what did you learn from them?



"I'm proud of the "U.S. Navy Express" train I created for NEXCOM. The goal was to create a holiday gift which said "Navy" that you couldn't get at Walmart or Target. (Photo by CAPT Gordy Peterson)

At New London, I was fortunate to have a great mentor at COMSUBLANT, LCDR Dave Thomas. He remained a great resource for me after we both left the Submarine Force, and we ended up working together at OASD(PA) later on. Dave went on to command the Navy Internal Relations Activity before it became the Naval Media Center, and he was always a source of great advice when I commanded NMC.

Another mentor was then-CDR Gordy Peterson. He was at CINCUSNAVEUR when I was at NAS Sigonella, and was not only a font of wisdom, but a great listener when that's all I really needed.

### 4. What was your toughest challenge as a PAO? Your most satisfying assignment or project?

Every PAO will have their crisis moments. As I said, I had my first crisis on my first day in Groton. In 1985, at Sigonella, we had the terrorists who had hijacked the Achille Lauro cruise ship and killed an American. They were "diverted" to our base courtesy of U.S. Navy F14 intercept, sparking an international incident and media frenzy.

During my assignment to Fleet Home Town News Center, I was in the fortunate position to be proactive in a job where we could measure our success one good news story at a time. We went from 750,000 releases per year to 1.3 million! At the Navy Exchange Service Command, I learned a lot about business and retail operations. We had some award-winning marketing campaigns, and I was encouraged to be very proactive. I even created the "U.S. Navy Express" train set.

The really tough challenges were the rare times when my command had to deal with tragedy, such as the death of a newborn baby belonging to one of my staff members at DoD High School News Service, or a New Year's Eve car accident involving one of our Navy Broadcasting Sailors at Guantanamo. There were infrequent mast cases and courts-martials that consumed a lot of time but were absolutely necessary. In one case, I was working to have someone severely punished for his offenses; in



With Bob Young, the civilian deputy at Naval Media Center upon receiving my Humanitarian Service Medal. I owe so much to Bob Young. He was a great leader, manager, broadcast technician and human being.

another case I was fighting to exonerate our Sailors who were charged with serious offenses they were not responsible for—and these were happening at the same time on different sides of the globe. Overall, the 450 men and women of the Naval Media Center were superb professionals, and my job was to give them the tools, resources and direction they needed to do their jobs, and then to cheer wildly when they succeeded brilliantly. I derived great satisfaction walking around building 168 and finding out about the great things they were doing.



**Digital Imagery:** A brand new thing. Watching one of my Naval Media Center Sailors work with this cutting edge tool.

Perhaps the greatest single accomplishment for our team was creation of Direct-to Sailor television providing live satellite TV to ships, a cause championed by RADM Kendell Pease and AFRTS Director Mel Russell.

## 5. Where are you today & what's next?

I joined the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) and became president of two chapters, a member of the International Executive Board and chair of the International Accreditation Council. I was named an IABC Fellow in 2016. After retiring in 2000, I had a couple of corporate VP jobs, and worked for a defense contractor. I currently have my own company, Echo Bridge LLC, supporting U.S. and international clients, and do a lot of freelance writing. One of my current projects is writing about NATO's effort to establish a standard for communication professionals. I present at and chair a number of naval and maritime security conferences around the world. As the communications director for the Surface Navy Association, I still get to visit Navy leadership and commands all around the world and write about the great accomplishments of our Navy men and women.



Surface Navy Association Communications Director Ned Lundquist at SNA Awards luncheon aboard Battleship IOWA in Los Angeles, October 2021.



In addition to fostering mutual understanding & promoting a spirit of fellowship, USNPAA's founding mission includes this key purpose:

*To support and promote the professional growth, education, and development of individuals engaged in all aspects of U.S. Navy public affairs.*

## USNPAA to Support

# Professional Development for Navy Communicators

By LCDR Brian Gray, USN (Ret.)

*"Over the years, USNPAA has explored ways to better achieve that mission. We have had some success, probably more on the social side with reunions and working with CHINFO to support awards to those in the community. However, I think we can be more additive with some vibrant and substantive professional initiatives. For example:*

- *Funding training opportunities that CHINFO's budget may not otherwise support.*
- *Providing scholarship support to members of the community who are pursuing an after-hour education program.*
- *Supporting the costs involved in professional accreditation (PRSA/IABC) for our members who are working in the public affairs community."*

*USNPAA President Tom Jurkowsky*

Progress has been underway since USNPAA's board approved the concept of a Professional Development Assistance Program (PDAP) in December 2021. Since January, two USNPAA member working groups have convened to start exploring concepts and possibilities for PDAP. These panels will "look at some possible opportunities we may want to consider supporting CHINFO and the community," said Jurkowsky.

The member panels created by RDML Jurkowsky include a Policy Development group and a Navy Team group. Members of the Policy Development group comprise a broad spectrum of post-Navy communications experience, while the Navy Team group includes currently-serving Navy communicators and represents the officers, enlisted and civilians working in Navy public affairs today.

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*"This effort will elevate USNPAA and change the face of our organization. It will also require a lot of work and transform us from being perceived as a social organization to one that has a more professional focus."*

*Tom Jurkowsky*

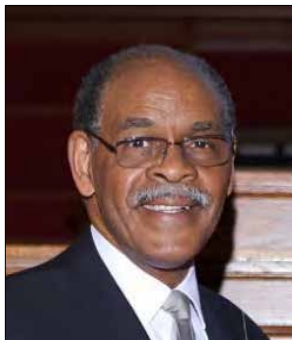


Brian Gray

USNPAA Treasurer

The PDAP Navy team panel was recruited by CAPT J.D. Dorsey who currently serves as the SECNAV PAO and is a member of the Association. His panel will come up with the list of ways USNPAA could lend support (scholarships, training, professional memberships, etc.), as well as potential opportunities to enhance USNPAA – Navy public affairs community collaboration and engagement going forward. This group of current Navy public affairs team members includes Susan Henson, Jeff A. Davis, CAPT Anthony Cooper (Ret), CDR Beth Teach, and LCDR Desiree Frame.

The Policy Development panel is headed by Association treasurer Brian Gray. This group is responsible for establishing policy, structure, and a funding mechanism for the program. Once PDAP launches, the group will also be responsible for program administration—including review of items on CHINFO's "wish list" and considering assistance requests as they are received. Gray and team members—Rod Hill, Karen Jeffries, Duke Smith, Joe Quimby and Tim Beecher—already have given thought to the rough outline of what might be possible with a USNPAA-supported professional development program for officers, enlisted and civilians in the community. Current thinking is that USNPAA would support requests for training courses, seminar registrations, accreditation fees and similar activities. Additional recommendations from CAPT Dorsey's team will be included for consideration. The Association will not consider funding anything that is properly the responsibility of the Navy itself.



Duke Smith



Karen Jeffries



Joe Quimby



Tim Beecher



Rod Hill

Where the money will come from has yet to be determined. USNPAA has received an anonymous \$5000 donation to kick-start a fund for this new program. A development campaign will proceed once PDAP structure and program needs have been better established.

(USNPAA does not currently have the financial depth to fund an extensive program. Our endowment created mostly by plank owners for the long-term survival of the Association is in interest-bearing certificates of deposit, with modest returns of about \$1,000 annually.)

Any USNPAA member who wants to offer ideas about professional development or how we can generate the funds to support the new program can contact [Brian Gray](mailto:graybrian@aol.com) (graybrian@aol.com) or any member of the Policy Development panel.

# The Fredericksburg Incident

LCDR George C. Gillet, Jr, USN (Ret.)

As a lieutenant and second in command at the Navy Office of Information, Dallas, in the late 1970's I had an enjoyable assignment. All the officers and one chief were assigned to coverage states in the region. As number two, I also backed up the others if they had more on their plates than they could handle. Therein arose a problem.

I was happy with Arkansas and Louisiana. JOC Troy Snead was responsible for the sprawling area of Texas and New Mexico. He was also our supply officer, and always up to his ears in something somewhere or other.

About this time word filtered down that the Japanese government was donating a Japanese Tea House to the Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg, Texas (later to become the National Museum of the Pacific War.)

As luck would have it, Chief Snead was otherwise occupied with projects in New Mexico, so the tea house became my baby.

For me, logistics was a breeze. I was quickly given to understand that the event of formal presentation was a PA community responsibility. I filled the need for official Navy representation and that was it. Oh yes, one assignment sort of slipped in unofficially. The guest list included Admiral Arleigh Burke and Admiral Thomas Moorer, both retired Chiefs of Naval Operations. They were already in town.

The official Japanese party was flying to the LBJ Ranch air strip. A prominent community leader was going to take the admirals to meet the plane. Would I like to go? Certainly, -- how could I not?

The community leader picked me up at the museum with our passengers already aboard. Our vehicle was an experienced Ford Country Squire, one with side-facing rear seats. The old vehicle had obviously been around the block several times. I was assigned the rear seats, which did not bother me. I had ridden many miles in the back seat of a school bus and knew what to expect.



My family after an awards ceremony at the Pentagon. This photo was taken in the mid-70s — not long before I was transferred to Navy Office of Information Dallas. (From left) Kathy, Wanda, Terri, Gary, and LT Gillett (Photo by PH1 Dave Wilson)

All started well. We arrived at the airstrip in good order and everyone piled out to stretch our legs and be ready to greet the visitors.

The plane came into view, landed and taxied to us. The group of visitors deplaned and after much handshaking and bowing moved toward their vehicle. Their spokesman talked briefly with our driver, who seemed to disagree but finally shrugged, obviously not pleased.

"They say that since they were allowed to land here and LBJ's gravesite is close, they must go by the grave to pay proper respects. Never mind it is a mile in the wrong direction!"



Still grumbling, the driver led us to the grave and we all got out. Except for me.

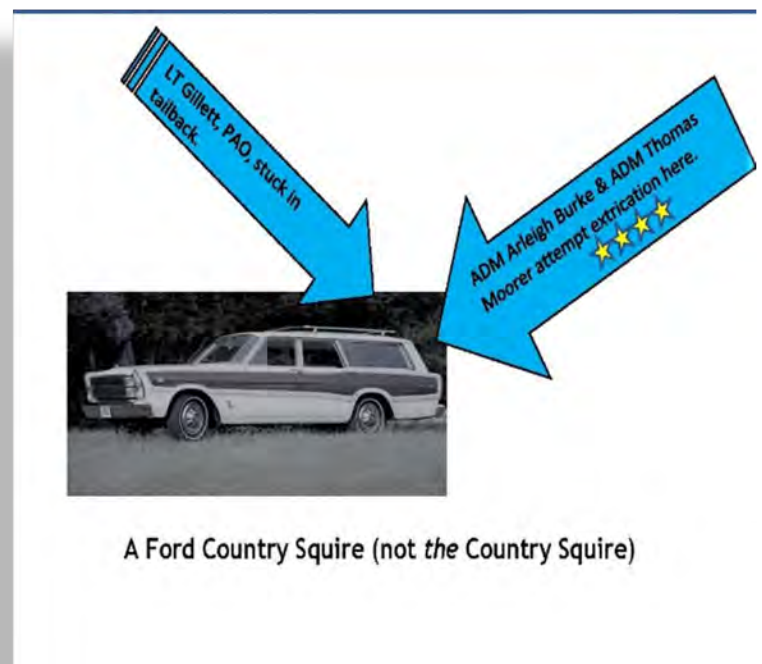
I could not get the tailgate to open. I was preparing for a graceless exit over the middle seat when both admirals appeared and began pounding, pulling, and thumping to no avail. No way would the tailgate open.

The driver showed up and did something to free the works up, the tailgate reluctantly swung open, and I was free. Mortified but free.

I believe to this day I hold the record of being the Navy's first and only lieutenant to require eight stars and a civilian to get him out of a pickle.

But I also learned that behind stars or community standing such folks are, down under, still human.

## INCIDENT DIAGRAM



The tea house remains a centerpiece at the *The Japanese Garden of Peace* at the National Museum of the Pacific War (previously the Nimitz Museum) in Fredericksburg, Texas. A gift from the people of Japan to the people of the United States the garden honors the friendship between Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz and Admiral Heihachiro Togo. It was first dedicated and opened to the public on May 8, 1976. (National Museum of the Pacific War Photo)

## GOOD MORNING, VIETNAM!

# Famous People and Me

By CAPT Gene Wentz, USN (Ret.)

*I am a pompous name dropper.*

If the person was reasonably well known, and if I shook his/her hand, was within spitting distance of them or rubbed elbows, I made sure all my relatives and friends were informed of the encounter - told with brazen embellishments.

Those celebrities included Harry Truman, George H.W. Bush, Kirk Douglas, Jayne Mansfield, Tippi Hedren, George Jessel, Jimmy Stewart, Hedda Hopper, Doris Day and Sophia Loren (twice).

But the show business hot-shot that I knew best, and had the longest association with, was just a lowly U.S. Army E-4 in Saigon in 1968-69.

He was Armed Forces Radio Disc Jockey Pat Sajak. Pat is now known to millions, and has earned millions, as the 40-year host of the highly rated television game show "Wheel of Fortune," with sidekick Vanna White.

I arrived in Saigon in July 1968 with orders as the Officer in Charge of Network Radio for the Armed Forces Vietnam Network (AFVN). There were 15 enlisted broadcast specialists in my division. Most were Army, with a few Air Force and one Marine and one Navy. Pat was the morning DJ, opening the day with "Good Morning, Vietnam" on a music/news/sports program titled "Dawn Busters." He was not a broadcast specialist, but



**Saigon, 1969 — Gene Wentz and Pat Sajak sit side by side in the back row of this AFN team photo. Gene is third from the left and Pat is fourth from the left.**

rather in Army finance. He had civilian experience in radio/TV and talked his way into a transfer to our station.

Military broadcasters in Vietnam during that time could be disciplinary problems. Many were drafted into the Army from good paying civilian jobs and resented the interruptions to their careers and the relative inconveniences of military customs and traditions.

During the nine months that I worked with Pat I never had a single problem with him. He was hard-working, respectful, polite, showed up on time, shined his shoes and got regular haircuts. He was well-liked by everyone in the station.

The last time we had contact was in 1980 when I was temporarily assigned to the Los Angeles area. One evening I tuned in to an area TV station for the local news. Who should show up on screen as the station's weatherman but Pat Sajak. I telephoned the station and we talked about our Saigon days and old colleagues. That was about one year before Pat won the audition to host "Wheel. "

His career has been nothing but success ever since. He progressed from E-4 pay of about \$214 a month to where Wikipedia estimates his worth today as \$70 million. For comparison, in 1969 as an O-4, I earned \$890 per month. My financial worth today is less than \$70 million

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