

Navy Installations Command Recognizes Top Sailor

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By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Belanger, Navy Installations Command Public Affairs

Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) announced the CNIC 2015 Sailor of the Year (SOY) during a ceremony held at CNIC headquarters at the historic Washington Navy Yard, Jan. 21.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (FMF) Mark Francesco from Atlantic City, New Jersey, was selected from among 70 installation SOYs to earn the prestigious award.

Francesco, the nominee assigned to Navy Region Europe, Africa, Southwest Asia, was among three finalists who went before the SOY board conducted by a panel of senior enlisted leaders. Each Sailor's service record was scrutinized carefully, evaluating the Sailor on educational accomplishments, physical fitness standards, academic test scores and participation in civic and community activities. The other two candidates who competed for the award were Naval Aircrewman 1st Class (AW/SW) Jesse Peterson from Ridgecrest, California, serving at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington, and Master-at-Arms 1st Class (SW/AW) Guadalupe Gonzales-Quintana from Los Angeles, serving at Fleet Activities Okinawa, Japan.

"They are all extremely honorable," said Vice Admiral Dixon R. Smith, Commander, Navy Installations Command. "None of them attributed their success to themselves, but they attributed their success to their shipmates and those they are charged to lead. They all noted that they found one of the keys to success was 'leadership by example,' and it's obvious in them day-in and day-out."

Force Master Chief for CNIC, Andrew Thompson, added, "I can tell you that the competition was really tough. They were all that good and deserving of the opportunity, but they all really do have the ability and opportunity every day to take charge of each Sailor, and there is no greater recognition than that. That in itself is what it is all about."

Francesco has served in the Navy for more than 12 years. He began his career in Recruit Training, Great Lakes. Attending hospital corpsman "A" school, he graduated top of his class, which earned him immediate advancement to petty officer 3rd class. His following assignments have taken him all over the world, serving in California, Japan, Afghanistan and Djibouti, where he's currently stationed.

"To know that I had the opportunity to help people, to lead them, to save lives and surely make a difference getting people home safe and healthy, that's all the reward that I ever needed," said Francesco. "The gratification that, as a leader, I had an impact on their life moving forward. To me, that's what it's all about, that's what being a first class is about, it's what Sailor of the Year is all about and that's



WASHINGTON -- Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Mark Francesco, from Atlantic City, N.J. receives a trophy from Vice Adm. Dixon Smith, commander of Navy Installations Command (CNIC) for his selection as 2015 CNIC Sailor of the Year. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Belanger/Released)

quite an experience."

Francesco's personal awards include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (4 awards), Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, and numerous unit and campaign awards.

Francesco will now compete for the Navy Shore Activities SOY competition next month where he'll compete against 30 other shore activity Sailor nominees.