

World Class People Doing World Class Work

WELCOME TO THE spring 2014 issue of *Currents*. As the new deputy director of OPNAV N45, I am excited to have the opportunity Rear Admiral Slates offered me to use this space to communicate with you my initial thoughts about the Navy’s environmental and energy programs.

I arrived in this position in December of 2013 with 23 years of environmental experience in the public and private sector. As the newest member of the Navy’s environmental and energy leadership, I’d like to share with you some of the important programs and processes we are advancing.

Readers of this column know that the Navy sponsors mature and effective environmental programs that support the Fleets’ operational training and testing needs afloat and ashore while protecting the environment. We also sponsor operational and shore energy initiatives to enhance Navy capabilities while increasing energy security and reducing cost.

Environmental planning and permitting for our at-sea training and testing remains a top priority. We have to do this right—it’s about saving lives by training our Sailors and testing the equipment we give them, protecting marine resources, and retaining our training and testing capabilities for the future. We’ve had good success with our deliberate, phased permitting approach to ensure continuity in our

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ability to train and test at sea. I also like how our adaptive management process provides flexibility and transparency in compliance, as well as opportunity to work with regulatory partners to improve practices. Going forward, we have additional work to do with the regulatory community to streamline the permitting process by leveraging our comprehensive studies and analyses, track record and lessons learned.

I may be the new guy on the block in the energy arena, but anyone who is familiar with history knows that access to energy has been critical to our mission over the past two and a half centuries. At N45 we invest in operational energy research, development, testing and evaluation that enhance capability and reduce cost. Saving energy saves money, and for the operators can mean several extra days of steaming

before refueling, or several more planes that can join the fight instead of serving as tankers, or more energy available for onboard systems. So we listen to the Fleet operators for demand signals, and also bring to their attention promising maritime and aviation technologies. We work to integrate our research investments with future full-scale production plans. As with any high tech company in the private sector, it is difficult to predict which technologies will take off. The stakes are high and the resources are limited. So we do what the best firms do—keep the customer (the Fleet) in mind.



I have always viewed this office, and the professionals with whom N45 interacts at the Pentagon and across the Navy, as world class people doing world class work. That was my impression before coming here, and now I actually know that’s the case. We’re working on high-stakes, high-visibility issues that are of keen interest to regulators, the public, Congress, the Fleets, systems commands, Secretariat, and others. When we “get it right,” the result is that we are able to fulfil our national security obligation today and strengthen the Navy of tomorrow, while being good stewards of our environment.

Both in my previous Navy job and earlier in my career, I was aware of *Currents*. I have always been impressed with the look of the publication and the technical rigor of the articles, but I wasn’t aware of its circulation to such an influential audience. I think the magazine punches way above its weight class in terms of effectively covering the Navy’s energy and environmental issues—but again I’m finding that to be the norm for many initiatives handled by this office. It is both an honor and a privilege to be a part of the magazine and N45, and to have the opportunity to share my thoughts with you in my new role. 📍

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