Veterans Day 2012

“How did your military service prepare you to work at HII?”

HII Corporate Communications
“Serving six years onboard a U.S. Navy submarine always reminds me of how important our job is here, and how many lives depend on us to do our job right.”

-- George Morris III, Newport News Shipbuilding
“The biggest contribution toward my industrial career was to experience and later appreciate the perfect model for any organizations structure. Disciplined, black and white, without question of who reports to who and what exactly is expected at each level within the organizational structure (chain of command). Building ships is near identical to the military’s organizational structure and needs to be in order that we are all communicating in the proper direction be it up, down or peer to peer – horizontal and vertical integration is paramount in our success.”

-- Bruce Knowles, Ingalls Shipbuilding
“I was a submariner during that period when two American submarines were lost: USS *Thresher* (SSN 593) and USS *Scorpion* (SSN 589). The *Thresher* loss resulted in requiring submarines to go to test depth to spot any issues for correction. When the *Scorpion* was lost, I had to go out on another boat as part of the search effort.

“What I got out of those times was the fact that sometimes we tend to look at the ships we build as just ‘products.’ They are more than products; they are life-support systems, and real people with families, friends just like we have, depend upon what we do here for their very existence. They have to go into harm’s way every single time they put a foot on these products. ... You could almost paraphrase Mr. Petters in that we have to do the ‘right things done hard.’ In other words, we need to go hard at everything we do on these ships. Missions and lives depend on it.”

-- **Charles B. Harvilicz**, Newport News Shipbuilding
“The time I spent in the U.S. Navy was invaluable. ... The military taught me basic electrical and electronic theory among many other classes and also helped me get a security clearance. My military experience helped me get a job at Newport News Shipbuilding as a nuclear electrician on second shift.

“I am a plankowner for the USS Harry S. Truman and came to the ship when it was in the shipyard. My tour was from September 1997 to October 2001 on the USS Harry S. Truman, so I got to see the shipyard from Navy side and now from shipyard side.

“The years of living on a aircraft carrier, the many Naval training classes I attended, and hours and hours working on electrical/electronic equipment in the U.S. Navy were invaluable and still help me at Newport News Shipbuilding in building great ships.”

-- Heath Ambrose, Newport News Shipbuilding
“As a junior officer in the Navy, I was taught to take care of my shipmates -- both those under me and my peers. As a young division officer, it was my job to ensure the folks that worked for me had every opportunity to succeed. I learned how powerful a positive atmosphere can be -- an atmosphere where people feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves and their contribution definitely matters. Shipbuilding is very similar: It’s a people business, and our shipbuilders like to work in a positive atmosphere where their hard work and dedication is recognized ... and sometimes a simple handshake or pat on the back is all it takes. They want the same opportunity to succeed and flourish, and to be recognized ... just like my junior sailors did.”

-- Derek Murphy, Ingalls Shipbuilding
“As a Navy veteran with over 30 years of combined experience in ship repair, construction and life-cycle maintenance, I am truly thankful for the opportunity to fill positions that have fully exploited my skills and abilities in the art of ship operations, construction and repair. ... All of my Navy experience has been instrumental in preparing me for the many challenges of shipbuilding and repair here at NNS.”

-- Gary B. Piccoli, Newport News Shipbuilding
“My service as a Marine infantry officer was one of the two most formative experiences of my life. Being at the ‘pointy end of the stick’ imbued me with passion for designing the most signature-effective ships as I have seen first-hand the benefits of well-engineered equipment and the drawbacks of poorly designed gear to the warfighter. Our sea services demand the best we can give them, and I am extremely proud of working with colleagues that try to do that.”

-- Thomas Rychlik, Newport News Shipbuilding
“My military service not only taught me NDT [non-destructive testing], but it also taught me how to lead, how to work under pressure and, most importantly, how to be a team player.”

-- Robert R. Bell, Ingalls Shipbuilding
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“It prepared me to deal with the chain of command like it was in the Navy. Also how to work with so many different people. In the Navy, you work as one team, just as we do here in the shipyard, either working on aircraft carriers or submarines.”

-- K.S. Staskywicz, Newport News Shipbuilding
“From day one arriving at boot camp ... I learned the full meaning of personal responsibility. Personal responsibility means that you strive to do the right thing at all times, and when mistakes are made, you first look at yourself to understand what you should have done. I believe my naval nuclear power training fits right in with the job I have now as an engineer in the Nuclear Propulsion-Construction Process Engineering Department working in the reactor plant mechanical section on the *Gerald R. Ford CVN 78*.”

-- Jim Zalonis, Newport News Shipbuilding
“We are a small office of on-site representatives, working in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. We are all retired Navy chief petty officers or better. While on active duty in the submarine force, we learned the value of integrity, maintaining a questioning attitude, and doing the right thing since our lives depended on each other. Here with HII the same is true since the lives of our sailors depend on how we do our jobs.”

Newport News Shipbuilding

Joseph Aquino  Tony Becker  Perry Kemplin  Karl Sakai  Alan Spangenberg
“I held many positions and titles while serving in the U.S. Army – all of which carried various levels of responsibility, both for government equipment and human life, and helped to mold the person that I am. I learned how to follow, lead, instruct and motivate others. I learned that keen attention to detail can save lives, and heavy is the collar that wears the chevrons. I learned that you can delegate a task but not responsibility. My AIT instructors taught me how to troubleshoot a radar system down to a burnt jumper pin. That’s the reason I got hired on as an electronics technician. I then went to school on the weekends taking classes in non-destructive test inspection, and that’s what I do now. I utilize all of the Army values to better myself and the people surrounding me.”

-- Carlos Quintana, Ingalls Shipbuilding
“I enlisted in the U.S. Navy nuclear submarine program in the late ’60s and spent my enlisted career as a nuclear electrician. I had the pleasure of being on the commissioning crews of two 688-class subs for the building, launchings and test dives. I was very familiar with the nuclear test program. It was a natural transition for my naval nuclear training and experience to start working at Newport News Shipbuilding in the E84 Nuclear Test Dept. and to help bring the Radioactive Liquid Waste Disposal Plant on-line.

“When I reached the master chief (E9) level, I got a commission and went to the surface fleet as a nuclear repair officer and radiological controls officer. This career change allowed me to learn the skills of project management. Now I am working in the Washington Office, managing the supportability for the CVN 78’s newest technology.

“I started my career with the Navy and I will end it working with the Navy. It has been great, and I owe my career to the Navy.”

-- Timothy Kroha, Newport News Shipbuilding
“The U.S. Navy instilled these core values in my professional work life: Honor. Courage. Commitment. And I apply them to my work practices daily.”

-- Tom Jowers, Newport News Shipbuilding
“My time in the service prepared me for the leadership role that I now hold. It trained me on how to adapt to changes and to do what it takes to get the job done; that your people are the most important tool that you have. I’m proud to be able to build great ships for the ones that defend our way of life.”

-- Hubert “Tim” Andrews, Ingalls Shipbuilding
“I was in the 183rd Personnel Service Company in the Virginia Army National Guard as a personnel records specialist. My military occupational specialty (MOS) prepared me to work to a first-time quality standard. There could not be any mistakes on the individual soldier’s military personnel records jacket and corresponding documentation. When I was hired in to the shipyard as an office assistant, I reviewed the survey maps to make sure there were not mistakes on them before going to records retention. In my current position as a production planner scheduler, I take my time to enter information in a database so it is correct the first time. It may take a little longer to enter information, but that is OK because it will be done right the first time. The first-time quality standard teaches you that there is no shortcut worth taking to perform a task if it jeopardizes quality of work.”

-- Colette Quinn, Newport News Shipbuilding
“I served proudly in the United States Navy for more than 20 years onboard three aircraft carriers in the naval nuclear propulsion program. The numerous invaluable life experiences I gained while working and living onboard these ships and nuclear prototypes helped shaped my life and family into what they are today. I am very thankful for all these experiences and the technical aspects of my many jobs while serving in the Navy. All of these experiences helped prepare me with the capability of working in my current position in the E44 Automation Dept. as an expert in both automation and recoverability engineering design for the new CVN 78 class and future naval vessels.”

-- Steven M. Andrews, Newport News Shipbuilding
“I was working in this business before I went into the Navy in 1963. Did two tours of duty in Vietnam from 1965 and ’66. My plane was shot down on July 18, 1965. We made it back by bailing out over the Gulf of Tonkin. In 1968, I returned to this business and have been here in O44 [Career and Professional Development] since 1986.”

-- Stan Balson, Newport News Shipbuilding
“My military experience helped me understand the importance of providing quality products to our military. I view my job as an extension of a military career cut short by cancer. I serve as an administration generalist for the manufacturing division at NNS. I like challenges and accept adversity with faith and a smile. Every time someone says to me, ‘Thanks for your service,’ I always reply with: ‘Thank you for trusting my service.’”

-- Jose G. Perez-Machargo, Newport News Shipbuilding
“My 26 years in the United States Submarine Service prepared me for my work at Newport News Shipbuilding by equipping me with system knowledge in the submarines that we are now testing with the new construction *Virginia*-class submarines as well as the 688-class fleet support work.

“My military service was directly responsible for my ability to get my job in Test Engineering at Newport News Shipbuilding. Having the opportunity to work with the great shipbuilders who were responsible for building and overhauling the submarines I served on for so many years is a privilege and an honor. You are truly the world’s greatest shipbuilders! Thank you for all you do for our great nation!”

-- Marvin "Abby" Abercrombie, Newport News Shipbuilding
“I joined the Navy in 1973 as an equipment operator in the Navy Seabees. The Seabees are the Navy’s ‘construction battalions’ -- hence the name Seabees. As an equipment operator, I was trained to operate cranes, dozers, graders, scrapers and all the other equipment required to complete construction projects both over seas and state side.

“I retired from the Navy in 1994 as a senior chief or E-8. During the time I was in, I made 11 deployments while in four battalions. I was in Naval Mobile Construction Battalions 74, 62 and 133 twice. During this time, I gained a vast amount of experience which I bring to Ingalls Shipbuilding.”

-- William Ziegler, Ingalls Shipbuilding
“I served in the U.S. Navy for eight years and the U.S. Army National Guard for 23 years. In the Navy, I was an aviation anti-submarine operator (AW2) as an air crewman on S3A aircraft aboard the USS Ranger (CV 61) aircraft carrier. ... My proudest moment is when I got to take command of a Forward Supply Company supplying a Heavy Armor Brigade. ... I got to see history being made instead of just reading about it, and the hardest thing I ever had to do in the military was the day I had to hang up the uniform and retire.”

-- James Alexander, Continental Maritime San Diego (CMSD)
“I spent 13 months living and working on a Navy ship during combat operations in Vietnam. I was stationed on the USNS Corpus Christi Bay, a helicopter tender, in Vung Tau Harbor, as an aircraft armament repairman/door gunner on a UH-1D Huey. The ship was the USS Albemarle, a sea plane tender, in World War II and was re-commissioned and refitted from the Navy to the Army in 1961.

“I learned quite a lot about the daily operations, structure, maintenance, damage control and firefighting, life-saving, and day-to-day living conditions aboard a ship. Though she was a helicopter carrier, she still has a lot in common with what I do now.”

-- David N.T. Perry, Newport News Shipbuilding