

SPAWAR Project Lead Receives Joy Bright Hancock Leadership Award

By SPAWAR Public Affairs

SPAWAR service member Lt. Sarah Rice received the Joy Bright Hancock Leadership Award from the Sea Service Leadership Association and the Military Officers Association of America.

The award was presented to Rice at the Joint Women's Leadership Symposium luncheon March 15 at the Sheraton Hotel and Marina in San Diego.

"I am deeply honored and would like to thank SPAWAR and the entire Navy engineering duty officer (EDO) community for all the opportunities they have given me. Without those opportunities I would not be receiving this award," said Rice. "They've allowed me to find and pursue some of my passions. The gateway toward success is finding a place where you fit in, that is also supportive of what you would like to do."

Rice, a Navy EDO and former surface warfare officer, is assigned to SSC Pacific where where she is the project lead for the Cryogenic Exploration of Radio Frequency (CERF) project.

The CERF project is using sub zero temperatures to make cryogenically cooled, low-noise amplifiers and tunable filters to enhance radio performance and signal reception. "Lt. Rice just returned from the first installation of CERF capabilities aboard USS Cape St. George (CG 71) where she was able to work directly with Sailors and document the operational parameters of these newly designed technologies," said Anna Leese de Escobar, principal investigator for the CERF project. "This is just another example of the close working relationship SPAWAR maintains with the fleet and the added benefits of having fleet officers like Lt. Rice working alongside civilian engineers at SSC Pacific."

"Information is a main battery for the Navy. The CERF project is one of many SPAWAR research and development efforts helping to ensure the fleet's ability to seize and control the information domain 'high ground' whenever, wherever and however required for decisive competitive advantage across the full range of Navy missions," said Capt. Joe Beel, commanding officer of SSC Pacific. "SPAWAR plays a leading role in the Navy's ability to maintain a robust set of information capabilities that result in information dominance — the ability to collect, process and disseminate an uninterrupted flow of information while exploiting or denying an adversary's ability to do the same."

Rice also serves as a member of the Retention Pillar Team of the EDO community Diversity Working Group (DWG) which is responsible for identifying issues and implementing solutions to encourage female junior EDOs to stay in the Navy.

"Navywide, women make up 14 percent of Sailors. In the EDO community, it's about seven percent, so we're few and far between," said Rice. "I think it's a fantastic way to connect EDOs who have things in common that may not otherwise interact on a regular basis, and to give and receive mentoring advice."

Along with her fellow DWG members, Rice co-founded the Network of EDO Women and is actively involved in conferences on both the East and West Coasts.

"We hope to inspire other diversity groups to get together as we have done. I think that one of the first steps to embracing a culture of diversity is to acknowledge our differences, so that they can be appreciated and used to the best advantage," said Rice.

In addition, Rice currently serves as SSC Pacific's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) representative. Through the coordination of training on sexual assault awareness for victim advocates, command leadership, general military and all incoming Sailors, Rice has turned the SAPR into a successful, active and robust program. Her involvement continues through her support of the Navy Region Southwest Victims Advocate Watchbill, remaining on call around-the-clock to respond to victims calling in to the response line.

Rice has also volunteered more than 60 hours of her own time in support of the SSC Pacific's Technical Outreach Program, targeting middle-school women, to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

"I've been raised with the idea that service to others is important. I've also learned that it's sometimes difficult for people to take a first step to ask for help, guidance or even just companionship," said Rice.

Rice's extensive community involvement also includes holding a position as Marketing Chair of Women-in-Defense San Diego Chapter, volunteering at Habitat for Humanity's Women Build event and serving as a mentor for a "Girls on the Run" 5 kilometer race.

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