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## Legion of Merit Headlines Winter Awards Ceremony

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## Legion of Merit Headlines Winter Awards Ceremony

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Article By: *Barbara Honegger*

Friday, March 20, 2009

The festive spirit of St. Patrick's Day filled King Hall as the Naval Postgraduate School recognized more than two dozen students and five faculty members for outstanding achievements at the Winter Quarter 2009 Awards Ceremony, Mar. 17. Graduate School of Business and Public Policy Military Associate Dean Capt. Theresa Rea officiated the event, which highlights exceptional accomplishments in academics, instruction, research and community service.

Kicking off the ceremony with a bang was the presentation of the Legion of Merit to Col. Alejandro S. Hernandez for his "exceptionally meritorious" service as Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Operational and Information Sciences, as a military faculty member, as Director of Wargaming and as Senior Army Representative. The citation from the President, signed by Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead, honors Hernandez for his outstanding mentoring and superb leadership in "flawlessly managing 160 military and civilian faculty including 600 students." It lauds him as an exemplary researcher who established and developed a partnership with the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization that "has had a profound effect on our current operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan" and notes that his "exceptional ability to clearly and comprehensively present complex theories and algorithms within relevant military tactical and operational contexts has set the standard for all faculty at the Naval Postgraduate School."



The second highlight of the afternoon was the Richard W. Hamming Award for Interdisciplinary Achievement, presented by NPS Foundation Executive Director retired Rear Adm. Merrill Ruck to two faculty members, Associate Professor of Public Administration and Management and Principal Investigator for the university's Acquisition Research Program Keith F. Snider; and Senior Lecturer and Director of the Acquisition Research Program retired Rear Adm. James B. Greene.

"It's a tremendous honor to receive the Hamming Award, which is very prestigious here on campus," said Snider. "It reflects very well on our [acquisition] research program to have it associated with someone of the caliber and reputation of Professor Hamming whose name is so well known in scientific circles." Greene, an NPS alumnus (Electrical Engineering and Business Administration, 1973), was unable to attend as he was in Washington, D.C., meeting with program sponsors.

Receiving the prestigious Monterey Council Navy League Award for Highest Academic Achievement by a student in the Winter 2009 graduating class was National Security Affairs-Western Hemisphere student Lt. Alisha E. Hamilton, for her research and master's thesis on "Defending the Amazon: Conservation, Development and Security in Brazil." While at NPS, Hamilton also earned her Joint Professional Military Education (Phase I) certification with highest distinction through the Naval War College, Monterey.

"I'm absolutely floored and completely flattered that the Navy League chose me to receive this honor," Hamilton said after having her photo taken with the League's local chapter president and NPS Special Collections Manager John Sanders. "They do so much to involve the community at NPS, and everywhere. I'm really honored.

"Being able to be at the Naval Postgraduate School is absolutely priceless," Hamilton stressed. "Even more than the superb education are the interactions with the officers from all the services and our international partners, and the relationships that you'll maintain for a lifetime." After graduating Mar. 27, Hamilton will report as Flag Aide to Rear Adm. David Thomas, Jr., Commander,

Joint Task Force-Guantanamo Bay.

Accepting the Association of the United States Army General Joseph W. Stillwell Chapter Award for Outstanding Army Student on behalf of her husband Army Capt. Colin Tansey, who left NPS a week previous for operational duty, was his wife Leoann. "Colin worked really hard, and I'm really proud and excited to be able to receive this for him today," she said. "As a civilian, it was great to get to see all the services together in uniform. I can't wait to tell him about it."

Also garnering special recognition as a faculty member was Marine Corps Lt. Col. Sergio Posadas, who received the Admiral Wayne E. Meyer Award for Teaching Excellence in Systems Engineering (Distance Learning).

**In addition to the above, the following Winter 2009 graduating class students also received special recognition:**

Louis D. Liskin Award for Excellence in Regional Security Studies: Air Force Maj. Ryan C. Hall

Outstanding United States Air Force Graduate Award, Department of National Security Affairs: Air Force Capt. Christopher R. Mullins

Hans Jones Award for Excellence in Thesis Research in Special Operations and Irregular Warfare or in Security, Stabilization, Transition and Reconstruction: Air Force Capt. Steven C. Taylor

Naval Postgraduate School Outstanding Academic Achievement Award for Department of Defense Student; and Air Force Association Award for Outstanding U.S. Air Force Student: Air Force Capt. Casey Hayden

Naval Postgraduate School Outstanding Academic Achievement Award for International Students: Hellenic Navy Lt. Dimitrios Alevras

Naval Postgraduate School Superior Service Award: Air Force Maj. Rob W. Chambers

Marine Corps Association Superior Service Award for Outstanding U.S. Marine Student; and Space Naval Warfare Systems Command Award in Electronic Systems Engineering: Marine Corps Capt Jameson B. McGee

Surface Navy Association Award for Excellence in Surface Warfare Research: Lt. Stephen Valerio and Lt. Eric Boernke

Military Operations Research Society Stephen A. Tisdale Graduate Research Award: Lt. Stephen Valerio

Chief of Naval Operations Award for Excellence in Operations Research: Lt. David T. Clark

Rear Admiral Grace Murray Hopper Computer Science Award: Lt. Paul Francis Farrell, Jr.

Rear Admiral Grace Murray Hopper Information Technology Management Award: Hellenic Navy Lt. Cmdr. Ioannis Tzanos



Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association Award: Mr. Steven Mico Benveniste, Department of Defense Civilian, Edwards Air Force Base

Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport Award for Excellence in Undersea Warfare Technology: Lt. David C. Zinkhon

Chief of Naval Operations Undersea Warfare Award: Lt. Christopher S. Bernotavicius

American Society of Naval Engineers Award for Excellence in Naval Engineering: Lt. Kiah Rahming

Graduate School of Business and Public Policy Faculty Outstanding International Student Award: Turkish Air Force 1st Lt. Fatih Sahin

**Receiving Awards but Unable to Attend Due to Operational Responsibilities:**

Lieutenant Commander David L. Williams Outstanding Professor Award: Dr. Nadav Morag, Center for Homeland Defense Security

Curtis H. "Butch" Straub Achievement Award: Deputy Chief Phillip L. Sanchez, Santa Monica Police Department, Santa Monica, Ca.

Zimbaro Award for Graduates of Master of Arts in National Security Studies (Homeland Defense and Security) Department of National Security Affairs: Mr. Robert Miranda, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Rear Admiral Thomas R. McClellan Award for Academic Excellence in the Graduate School of Business and Public Policy: Cmdr. John Chewning

Admiral Wayne E. Meyer Award for Outstanding Student in Systems Engineering (Distance Learning): Mr. Robert Earl Howard

Chief of Naval Personnel Award for Excellence in Manpower Systems Analysis: Lt. Scott Woosley

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