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Spring Graduation at NPS and the ARP Impact - Acquisition Research Program (archived)

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Spring Graduation at NPS and the ARP Impact

Get to know the latest cohort of graduating students and the research ARP supported

Michelle V Johnson
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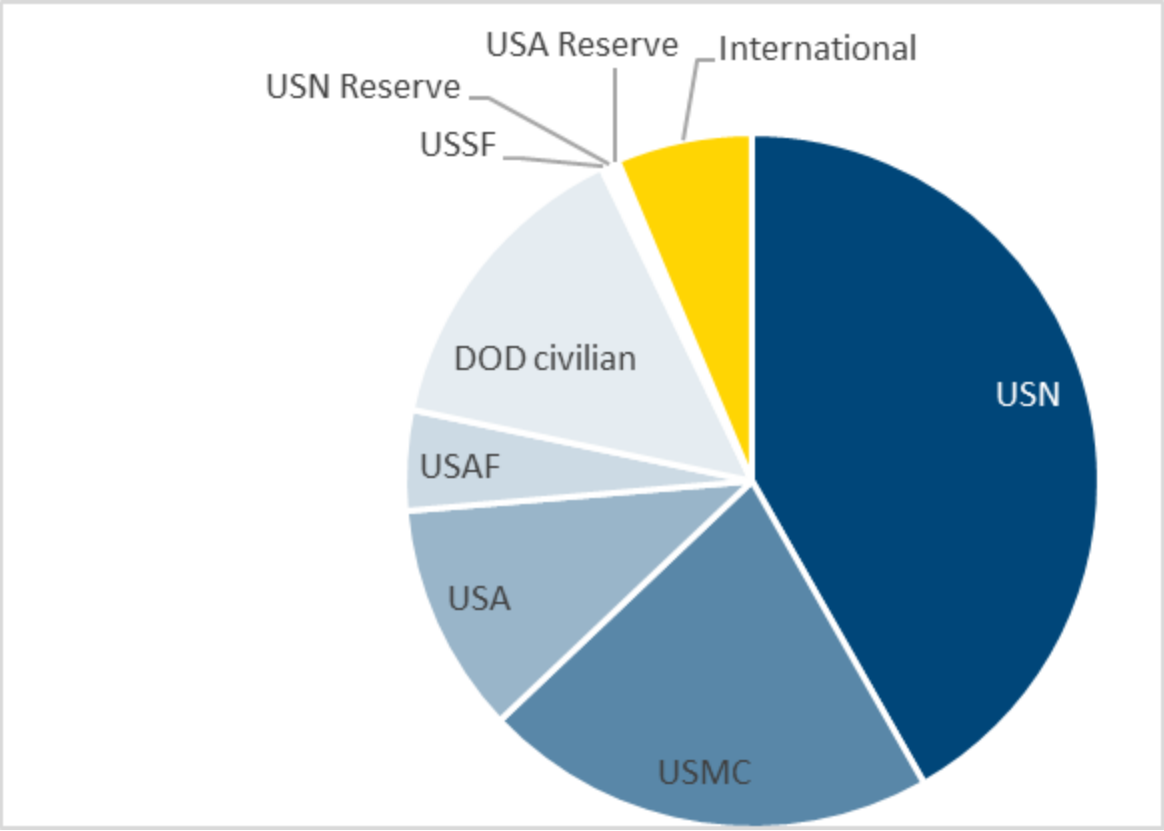
About the Spring 2021 Cohort of NPS Graduates

A total of 364 U.S. and international military officers and DOD civilians completed their studies at Naval Postgraduate School this June.



The Spring Quarter class graduates included:

- 152 from U.S. Navy
- 77 from U.S. Marine Corps
- 39 from U.S. Army
- 17 from U.S. Air Force
- 53 from DOD civilian
- 1 from U.S. Space Force
- 1 from U.S. Navy Reservist
- 1 from U.S. Army Reservist
- 23 international graduates representing 15 countries

Commencement speaker

On June 18 NPS welcomed to campus **VADM Jeff Hughes**, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Warfighting Development, as the commencement speaker for the first graduation offering in-person attendance since COVID-19 precautions went into effect last year.

Hughes spoke about today's rapidly changing character of war, and the critical role NPS and its graduates play in the cognitive era. He also spoke about the kind of leaders needed, people "of competence and character, who think freely and leverage the diverse thinking from their teams. We strengthen our position by continued investment in our Naval education enterprise."

The United States military remains globally competitive in large part, Hughes said, because of "the strength of our intellectual capital and creativity. Our potential adversaries will never be as effective," he argued, because they can't replicate this kind of mission command "in their education, learning, and training approaches, despite their best efforts to do so."

This kind of intellectual strength must be closely tied to technological capabilities: "Whomever successfully develops and fields proven operating concepts that capitalize on emerging, disruptive technologies will stand a higher probability of success within the competition continuum, and certainly in conflict."

The Acquisition Research Program (ARP) helps NPS students develop the critical thinking and creative problem-solving abilities Hughes emphasized. Students who complete a thesis with ARP receive guidance on topic selection, the research and writing process, and the importance of delivering a final product with operational relevance. As detailed below, many of them won awards for their research, and all of them produced well-reasoned, timely research reports inspired by current challenges facing the Department of the Navy and the Department of Defense.

ARP-supported student research

A total of 16 students, in 8 teams, graduated this June with support from ARP. Of these students, 9 came from the U.S. Navy, and 7 were DOD civilians who completed their degrees via distance learning programs.

Spring Quarter 2021 Award Winners

Select ARP-supported students were recognized by Naval Postgraduate School or Military Services with the following awards:

- **LCDR Luis Escobar, USN** – Outstanding Thesis
- **LCDR Anthony Meyer (USN)** – Conrad Scholar Award for Distinguished Academic Achievement in Financial Management
- **LCDR Brad Sturgis, USN** – Outstanding Thesis
- **LCDR Austin Gage, USN**
    - Outstanding Thesis
    - Graduated With Distinction (top 10%)
    - Rear Admiral Donald R. Eaton Logistics Award for Outstanding Achievement
    - Commander Philip A. Murphy-Sweet Memorial Award for Excellence in Acquisition

Research from the June Graduates

Get to know the research produced by this quarter's graduates. Note that each link takes to you to an entry in ARP's Defense Acquisition Innovation Repository (DAIR) for the particular thesis. Several entries include the thesis report as well as additional materials, such as a summary poster and a short video created by the students. (Note that two of this quarter's eight theses are still in processing and will be posted to DAIR when complete.)

Applying Commercial Procedures and Technology to the United States Navy's Material Inventory Validity

- **Author**: LCDR Jan-Paul Amposta, USN
- **Degree earned**: Master of Business Administration, Acquisition & Contract Management
- **Thesis Advisors**: Dr. Geraldo Ferrer, Professor, and Dr. Simona L. Tick, Lecturer

Abstract: In light of the Department of the Navy's increasingly dynamic operating environment, it does not have sufficient record keeping, processes, or controls in place for the management of physical assets, and this has a negative impact on our readiness in multiple theaters. There are many logistics organizations that excel at warehousing, managing a supply chain, and transportation, and the Navy can learn from these organizations' processes and culture in order to improve their audit readiness. This study analyzes high-profile logistics organizations to identify the processes and technological

tools that enable real-time audit such as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), and it includes a Cost-Benefit Analysis to determine which technological tools are feasible for acquisition.

DoD 4th Estate: Improvements and Efficiencies for the Services

- **Authors**: Damon L. McCoy, Leanne S. Holmes (Defense Contract Management Agency), and John S. Carhart (Naval Surface Warfare Center, Port Hueneme)
- **Degrees earned**: Master of Science in Contract Management
- **Thesis Advisors**: Dr. Robert F. Mortlock, Professor, and Dr. Keith F. Snider, Dean/Professor

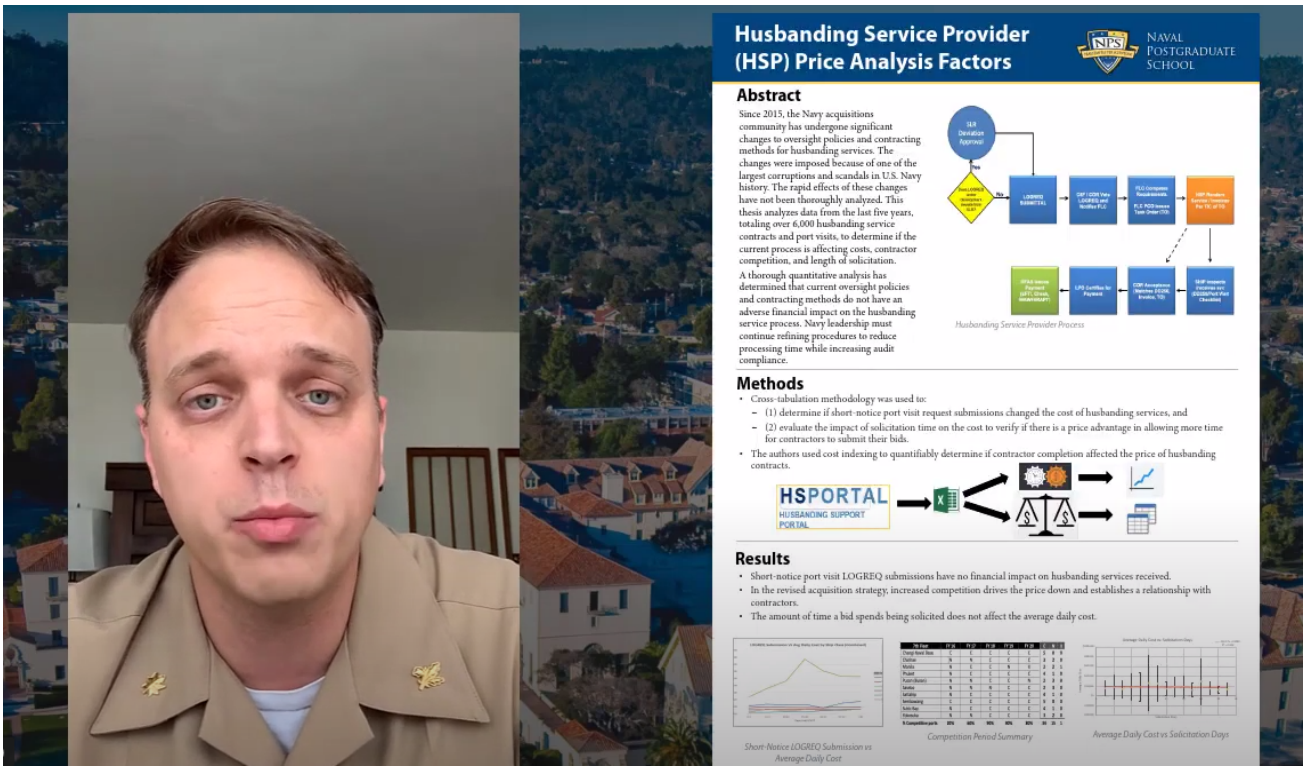
Abstract: This paper recommends how Defense Agencies and Field Activities (DAFA) should consolidate efforts and reconfigure itself to better align its own missions with those of its customers and save the DOD money to spend on other projects. The DOD should also look to cut the DAFA budgets from a bottom-up approach and not a percentage slice across the top of all agencies. DAFA could implement eight measures to improve efficiencies, with or without budget cuts. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have also caused exploration of how the federal government must rethink the work environment. The data shows that the DOD could reduce its physical footprint by moving toward needs-based congregation, personnel, and facility sharing.

Husbanding Service Provider (HSP) Price Analysis Factors

- **Authors**: LCDR Austin W. Gage, LCDR Luis C. Escobar, and LCDR Bradford R. Sturgis Jr., USN
- **Degrees earned**: Master of Business Administration, Supply Chain Management (Gage and Sturgis), and Master of Business Administration, Financial Management (Escobar)
- **Thesis Advisors**: Dr. Geraldo Ferrer, Professor, and Dr. Robert F. Mortlock, Professor

Abstract: Since 2015, the Navy acquisitions community has undergone significant changes to oversight policies and contracting methods for husbanding services. The changes were imposed because of one of the largest corruptions and scandals in U.S. Navy history. The rapid effects of these changes have not been thoroughly analyzed. In this thesis, there is data from the last five years totaling over 6,000 husbanding service contracts and port visits. They were analyzed to determine if the current process is having an adverse financial impact, including the financial impact of short-notice port visits, contractor competition, and the length of solicitation. A cross-tabulation methodology was used to determine if short-notice port visits request submissions have a financial impact on the cost of husbanding services. Cross-tabulation was also used to determine if the length of solicitation time makes a difference in the daily average cost. The authors used cost indexing to quantifiably determine if contractor competition affected the price of husbanding contracts. After a thorough quantitative analysis, the authors have determined that the current oversight

policies and contracting methods do not have an adverse financial impact on the husbanding service process. Navy leadership must continue refining procedures to reduce processing time while increasing audit compliance.



LCDR Austin Gage shares his team's research on Husbanding Service Providers

Acquisitions Above the Stratus: Procuring Consumption-Based Solutions for a Modern DoD

- **Authors**: Katherine D. Bukowski and William S. Parkin (Air Education and Training Command)
- **Degrees earned**: Master of Science in Contract Management
- **Thesis Advisors**: Dr. Robert F. Mortlock, Professor, and Raymond D. Jones, Professor of the Practice

Abstract: When procuring information technology requirements for systems such as cloud-based services, acquisition professionals often choose from outdated and misaligned categories of supplies or services established by Department of Defense (DOD) Acquisition regulations. Current contract structures constrain scalability, and it is imperative that the DOD revise its contract types to permit new solutions that enable commercial goods to be procured on a consumption basis. This Capstone Applied Project evaluates the impact of procuring modern DoD capabilities as consumption-based solutions by applying relevant policy analysis, cost effectiveness analysis, and case study analysis. The findings indicate that a consumption-based approach to acquiring cloud-based solutions is the most

beneficial method for obtaining fair and reasonable prices while minimizing costs associated with contract administration. The authors recommend that cloud computing be placed into a new category within the DOD Taxonomy for the Acquisition of Services and Supplies & Equipment to enable greater flexibility in implementing a newly proposed contract type, consumption-based variable pricing, which must be supported by the revision of language contained in FITARA and 31 U.S.C. §1341 and an extension of FAR Clause 52.241-8.

Comparison of Naval Acquisition Processes between the United States and Taiwan

- **Authors**: LCDR Chih-chieh Liu (Republic of China Navy)
- **Degree earned**: Master of Business Administration, Financial Management
- **Thesis Advisors**: Dr. Robert F. Mortlock, Professor, and Dr. Charles K. Pickar, Senior Lecturer

Abstract: This research uses a case study approach to analyze the respective naval acquisition processes of the United States and Taiwan. The methodology enables a comparison of the acquisition systems used by the U.S. Navy (USN) and Republic of China Navy (ROCN) related to specific naval acquisition programs. The researcher identifies that both countries have established similar structures in their respective acquisition systems; however, the U.S. acquisition system is overall more comprehensive and systematic than Taiwan's system. As for the implementation of the respective systems, the U.S. Navy made several mistakes caused by adopting an experimental acquisition strategy in the process of its Littoral Combat Ship program. By contrast, Taiwan adopted a more conventional approach for the Tuo Chiang-class corvette program, hence mitigating risk. Recommendations for the United States include to conduct sufficient analysis before taking experimental approaches and to value the importance of requirement identification, and test and evaluation. In contrast, Taiwan needs to complete its acquisition regulations to cover the process of a program's full life cycle and organize these steps in a systematic manner. Moreover, the test and evaluation processes should not be ignored to expedite the progress of a program. Finally, Taiwan also needs to develop strategic guidance that directs requirements identification beyond the next decade.

Optimizing the Navy Supply Corps 810 Program: Analysis and Recommendations

- **Authors**: LCDR Aaron K. Smith, LCDR Shawn M. Grogan, and LCDR Aaron J. Harpel, USN
- **Degrees earned**: Master of Business Administration, Acquisition & Contract Management
- **Thesis Advisors**: Dr. Paul Lester, Associate Professor, and E. Cory Yoder, Senior Lecturer

Abstract: The Naval Supply Systems Command 810 program provides an opportunity for approximately eight Navy Supply Corps officers to attend a top-30 U.S. business school every year. Upon graduation, these officers obtain a 1301 subspecialty code and are expected to serve in leadership assignments where their educational experience is needed to influence strategy, innovation, and significant Department of Defense business decisions. Our research has identified a twofold problem facing what is considered the most expensive educational program within the Navy Civilian Institutions Office's portfolio costing nearly $100,000 per student per year. Firstly, between 2003–2019, only 5% of NAVSUP 810 graduates were billeted to a 1301-coded position within the first two assignments following completion of their degree. Secondly, the current set of 1301-coded billets for NAVSUP 810 graduates does not provide the best return on investment to the Navy. Data shows that the current inventory of 1301-coded assignments should be increased to meet the demand of graduating officers. Likewise, these positions must be located at prominent commands that provide the officer with the opportunity to impact strategy, innovation, and policy-making. Our team has provided several recommendations to improve billet optimization for this highly selective population of Navy Supply Corps officers.