



Meet a NUWC veteran: Liz Tretton

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NewPortal

Name: Liz Tretton

NUWC job title: Ohio-class non-propulsion electronics system ship systems manual coordinator

Department/code: Undersea Warfare Combat Systems Department, Ohio-class Configuration Management/Integrated Logistics Support, Code 2522



Liz Tretton (left photo) graduated basic training as a fireman in January 2015. Tretton (center photo, left) tends buoys on the 26-foot Aids to Navigation boat in Point Judith Pond, Narragansett, Rhode Island, in February 2015. Tretton (right photo), an Ohio-class non-propulsion electronics system ship systems manual coordinator in the Undersea Warfare Combat Systems Department, Code 25, joined NUWC Division Newport in 2019. (Photos courtesy Liz Tretton)

Date hired: October 2019

Hometown: Venice, Florida

Education: Bachelor's degree in homeland security and emergency management from Ashford University in California in 2018

Branch of military: U.S. Coast Guard

Total years of service: December 2014 to July 2019, 4½ years

Rank: Petty officer third class (E-4)

Unit and location: U.S. Coast Guard Sector Long Island Sound, New Haven, Connecticut

Role in the unit: Operations specialist

Medals or citations: National Defense Service Medal, Coast Guard Basic Training Honor Graduate Ribbon, and Coast Guard Special Operations Service Ribbon

What made me decide to serve my country: As a child and throughout my teenage years, I frequently played in fast pitch softball tournaments at a sports complex in Clearwater, Florida that was located near a U.S. Coast Guard Air Station. I became interested in the Coast Guard and its missions around that time, but it wasn't until college that I decided to enlist. One of my main goals was to help people while staying near the water as this is where I grew up and felt happy and comfortable. The Coast Guard allowed me to fulfill both needs, so it felt like a perfect fit.

Greatest achievement during my service: Learning how to be an effective member of a Command Center. My role as a communications watch stander was both challenging and rewarding. During the summer, we would receive multiple distress calls over Channel 16 simultaneously, and it was our job to work together as a team to provide the best response possible. This included alerting the general boating public that there were mariners in distress, keeping in communication with the distressed vessel and responding Coast Guard assets, and relaying all pertinent information up the chain of command. Coast Guard Sector Long Island Sound covers a large area that includes all of coastal Connecticut, Long Island Sound, and the north and south shore of Long Island. Consequently, the tempo stayed relatively high during the summer months. Search and rescue is only one of the duties of a Coast Guard Command Center, so there was constant activity and endless learning experiences.

Most impactful moment during my service: My first duty station out of boot camp was on the Aids to Navigation Team in Bristol, Rhode Island. Coming from Florida, I was excited to get to work experience during multiple seasons. I flew into Boston in January 2015, after winter storm Juno had just hit, and I was a little shocked to see 8-foot piles of snow on the tarmac. As I recall, almost all of our navigational aids were either submerged due to ice buildup, off station, or completely gone. Not only did our unit fix the navigational aids that winter, but I also believe that our officer in charge played a key role in getting the Coast Guard's buoy utility stern loading (BUSL) boat's ice breaking parameters changed. Originally, the 49-foot BUSL had a 6 inches ice breaking capability, but after proving itself by assisting in keeping the shipping channels in Narragansett Bay clear, the boat's capability was expanded. Our unit worked exceptionally hard to get every aid back in working order and received the Coast Guard Special Operations Ribbon for 96 hours of icebreaking efforts.

How my military service affected my life: It has positively affected my life in many different ways, such as allowing me to obtain my bachelor's degree in homeland security and emergency management, providing me with a lot of different and useful skills. My military service has also opened many doors even after I finished enlistment.

Advice I'd give to anyone considering joining the military or government service: Do it! Find a branch with missions that interest you and go for it.

If I could travel anywhere in the world, it would be: Italy

If I could eat dinner with somebody famous - dead or alive - it would be: American aviator Amelia Earhart

The restaurant I would go to: Giacomo's in Boston's North End

Favorite leisure time activity: We are a young family, with a 2-year-old boy and 4-month-old girl, so there isn't much leisure time, but I would say spending time with my family at the beach or on the water is my favorite thing to do!

I think the world's greatest invention is: Flight

My favorite motto or saying: "Where there's a will, there's a way." — Proverb

What I like best about working at NUWC: I like that I'm able to support our military as a civilian and that there is always something to learn. Our mission at NUWC is pretty incredible, and though I don't always feel like I'm making a difference in my logistics role, I know that we all play a part in keeping the fleet strong and safe.