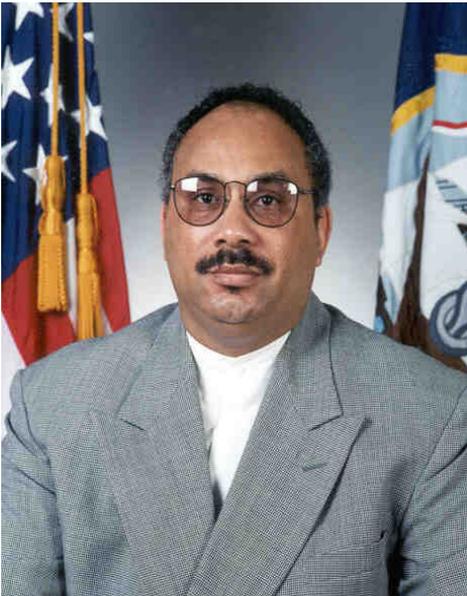


EEO SPOTLIGHT



Commander Navy Region Southeast
www.hrojax.navy.mil/eo.html

Vernon Watson named CNRSE Deputy Equal Employment Opportunity Officer



Vernon Watson
Deputy Equal Employment Opportunity Officer
Commander Navy Region Southeast

Vernon Watson has been assigned as the Deputy EEO Officer to replace Junarion Hubbard who accepted an overseas appointment in Japan. Vernon brings more than 30 years of experience to this position.

Vernon Watson began his Equal Opportunity career while serving on active duty in the U.S. Navy. He earned a 9505 Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) designation as Race Relations Education Specialist after attending the Defense Race Relations Institute (DRRI) in 1974 and a 9515 NEC designation as a Human Resources Management Specialist (HRMS) after completing HRMS Training.

In 1975, his NEC designation title changed to Equal Opportunity Program Specialist after DoD renamed DRRI as the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI). After active duty, Vernon served the Chief of the Military Equal

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Opportunity Branch for the Air Force Reserves at Eglin Air Force Base from 1978 to 1993. Concurrently, he started his civilian career in 1978 as EEO Counselor for Naval Air Rework Facility (now known as Fleet Readiness Center Southeast). He has served in many positions since: 1979-80, EEO Officer for Escambia County, Florida; 1980-81 EEO Investigator for Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; 1981-82 EEO Specialist for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; 1982-85 Deputy EEO Officer for Naval Air Station Whiting Field; 1985-89 Deputy EEO Officer for Naval Comptroller's Activity; 1989 - 2007 EEO Manager for Human Resources Office Pensacola, and in March 2007 was assigned as the EEO Manager of CNRSE West Operations.

Vernon is also a certified Navy mediator. He holds an undergraduate and a graduate degree in Business Management from Troy State University.

Deputy's Corner

By Vernon Watson, DEEO

Due to the implementation of the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) and the pay for performance system, it is anticipated that the number of Equal Pay Act (EPA) claims may potentially be on the rise. It is important that managers and employees understand the different legal bases and remedies arising out of equal pay claims.

The EPA was signed into law on 10 June 1963, by President John F. Kennedy. The EPA was passed as an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to prohibit discrimination in the payment of wages by employers on the bases of sex.

In defining and strengthening the EPA, court decisions have determined that work must be "substantially equal" but not "identical" to fall under the protection of the EPA.

To make a claim under the EPA, an employee must show (1) different wages are paid to employees of the opposite sex; (2) the employees perform substantially equal work on jobs requiring equal skill, effort and responsibility; and (3) the jobs are performed under similar working conditions. Under the EPA, liability is established by meeting the above criteria, regardless of the intention of the employer. There are four affirmative defenses to the EPA for unequal pay for equal work when wages are set by an established

seniority system, a merit system, a system that measures wages by quantity or quality of work production or any other factor other than sex.

Unlike a Title VII claim, a complainant alleging a violation under EPA is not required to pursue an administrative complaint of discrimination through the traditional EEO process. A complainant may file a civil action in a U.S. district court within two years of the alleged violation or within three years if the violation is willful.

While Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the EPA both prohibit wage discrimination based on gender, Title VII goes beyond ensuring equal pay to barring discrimination in every aspect of employment (i.e., disciplinary actions, promotion, hiring, termination, etc.) based on race, color, sex, religion and national origin. A violation of the EPA is also a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. A complainant may pursue a claim under Title VII and EPA simultaneously. In EPA claims, a complainant may recover up to double damages.

Women have made tremendous progress in the workforce since the enactment of the EPA, but after over four decades, the salaries of women and men have not reached parity. Ongoing efforts are underway to close this gap; however to date, the goal of the EPA has not been realized.

For more information on EPA, contact your local EEO office or visit www.eeoc.gov.

Navy's Equal Opportunity

By Master Chief Dominick Haen, EO Officer

The Navy is committed to fair and equitable treatment of all hands, by all hands, at all times.

Equal Opportunity (EO) is a fundamental element of the Navy's core values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment. The Navy Regulations regarding Equal Opportunity (Article 1164), reads "Equal Opportunity shall be afforded to all on the basis of individual efforts, performance, conduct, diligence, potential, capabilities and talents without discrimination of race, creed, color, gender, or national origin. Naval personnel shall demonstrate a strong commitment to stand on these principles and carry them out."

EO enables Sailors to honor and support Navy core values, accept responsibility for their actions, and to expect others to do the same. EO keeps the mission of the Navy first and allows all to be proud to be in the service of our country.

EO empowers Sailors to respond appropriately, even when faced with increasingly difficult choices. EO promotes and develops unit cohesion and partnerships up, down, and across organizational lines in order to meet the challenges of today and the future. EO recognizes the whole Sailor and the responsibility that the chain of command has to care for them. EO is the foundation of **Diversity**.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

By Genida Searles

Hispanic Heritage Month is 15 September 2007 to 15 October 2007. The theme this year is “Hispanic Americans: Making a Positive Impact on American Society.” There are many sub-groups that make up the Hispanic/Latino ethnic and cultural group. They are Puerto Rican, Dominican, Mexican, Cuban, and Central and South American. Though they share a common bond in their language, each group has its own history in the immigration story of America.

The focus of this article is on the Hispanic Employment Initiative. On 18 September 1997, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a memorandum to Heads of Executive Departments and Independent Agencies that raised concerns about Hispanic under-representation in the Federal workforce. In this memorandum, OPM proposed a Nine-Point Plan to improve the representation of Hispanics in the Federal workforce. The Nine-Point Plan encourages Federal agencies to:

1. Support and implement the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans;
2. Provide employment information to students, faculty, and the Hispanic Community;
3. Use the President Management Intern (PMI) Program for recruiting, converting, and advancing Hispanic college graduates;
4. Participate in the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) National Internship Program;
5. Use the flexibilities of the Student Educational Employment Program to bring Hispanic students into agency’s shortage category occupations, as well as other occupations;
6. Develop mentoring programs to motivate young people to pursue higher education and Federal careers;
7. Promote participation of Hispanic employees in career development programs;
8. Assess agency needs for full-time, part-time,

or collateral Hispanic Employment Program (HEP) Managers and ensure that HEP Managers are integral members of the agency’s management team; and

9. Incorporate these activities into agency’s Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) accomplishment report to OPM.

In accordance with Executive Order 13171, OPM asked Federal agencies to provide effective human capital practices related to the Hispanic Employment Nine-Point Plan. In December 2006, OPM issued its Sixth Annual Report to the President on Hispanic Employment in the Federal Government. The report indicated that although the permanent Federal workforce declined from 1,692,905 as of 30 June 2005 to 1,682,108 as of 30 June 2006, the number of Hispanics increased from 125,638 to 126,909. This is a change from 7.4% to 7.5%. The increase was seen in the largest Federal agencies: Homeland Security, Social Security Administration, Department of Treasury, Department of Justice, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The Department of Navy is still behind in their efforts to increase Hispanics in the workforce.

What can we do? We can offer specialized recruitment programs. We can offer job listings in Spanish. And, we can partner with national or local groups. In OPM’s report to the President, they said that “Successful Hispanic Recruitment depends, in large part, on the agency’s articulating a commitment to diversity and communicating that commitment to the Hispanic community, among others.” If agencies don’t come up with creative ways to lure more Hispanics into Civil Service, the private industry will continue to be the employer of choice.

Use of Official time in the EEO Complaint Process

By Yvonne Burleson, EEO Specialist

A complainant is allowed time to meet with the EEO counselor and other EEO officials, as well as time with their representative to prepare and present an EEO complaint. This time spent on the complaint is called official time.

If the complainant is an employee of the agency and designates another employee of the agency as a representative, both the complainant and the representative are allowed a reasonable amount of official time. Official time is scheduled during the complainant's normal duty hours to the extent practicable. However, there is no obligation to change work schedules, incur overtime wages, or pay travel expenses to facilitate the choice of a specific representative or to allow the complainant and the representative to confer.

The agency is not required to grant official time to Department of the Navy (DoN) employees to prepare or present complaints against other Federal agencies. Official time also is not allowed for DoN employees who represent non-Federal employees.

The term "reasonable" is defined as whatever is appropriate, under the particular circumstances of the complaint, in order to allow a complete presentation of the relevant information associated with the complaint and to respond to agency requests for information. Thus "reasonable", with respect to preparation time (as opposed to time actually spent in meetings and hearings), is generally defined in terms of hours, not in terms of days, weeks, or months. The complainant and the agency should arrive at a mutual understanding as to the amount of official time to be used prior to the complainant or representative using such time. Time is scheduled by the complainant with his or her immediate supervisor.

If you have questions on the use of official time, please call your EEO Program Manager or Louise Webb at Commercial 904-542-2407 or DSN 942-2407 to obtain the name and telephone number of your EEO Program Manager.

Succession Planning

By Yvette C. Harris

PMF Program Analyst on rotation at OPM from CNRSE

Succession planning is the ability to recognize today what tomorrow's workforce should resemble. It should be regarded as a critical component needed in all agencies due to the projected number of Federal employees eligible for retirement within the next five years. Most Federal agencies are already starting to feel the effects of the exodus of the "Baby Boom" generation in their attempt to retain their most experienced portion of the workforce. In addition to this phenomenon, the reality of competition within the labor market that will attract younger employees will make it difficult for agencies to maintain continuity and adequately replace the loss of experience.

Strong succession planning will enable agencies to internally develop promising talent into tomorrow's leaders. This will ensure that agencies retain stability while sustaining business continuity. We are currently witnessing the impact of an emerging new breed of succession management systems and human capital enrichment programs. Contemporary systems no longer think just about the replacement of talent, but also focus on development. These new approaches take a more systemic approach toward an organization's human capital.

Best practice succession systems are also effective at spotting gaps in talent and identifying positions that are critical to the overall success of the organization. Succession planning does the job of monitoring the succession process, enabling the company to ensure that the right people are moving into the right jobs at the right time and that gaps are being spotted early on to insure the organization receives an adequate return on investment. Managers should be aware of the cross-generational demographics and dynamics of their organizations when assigning teams, workgroups or special projects to maximize on contributions from its entire workforce.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

By: Yvonne Burleson

Congress designated each October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This effort is to educate the American public about issues related to disability and employment actually began in 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.” In 1962, the word “physically” was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to “National Disability Employment Awareness Month.”

Civilian Hiring and Recruitment Tool (CHART) résumé training was provided to Veterans Administration Vocational Rehabilitation (VA VocRehab) clients 3 May 2007. The training will be given again on 16 October 2007. As CHART résumés

are received, qualification determinations are made and the résumés are submitted to supervisors where current vacancies exist.

Ms. Tamira Bradshaw, Supervisory VA VocRehab Counselor, briefed the Fleet Readiness Center Southeast Area Command Management Board on 19 September 2007 regarding the services of the Jacksonville Area Vocational Rehabilitation Office. Her presentation, entitled “Department of Veterans Affairs Hiring and Helping Disabled Veterans”, educated the Board members regarding services and assistance available which enable veterans with service-connected disabilities to become employable and to obtain and maintain suitable employment.

The EEO Office is arranging for a similar presentation to be presented at other commands at Naval Air Station, Jacksonville and Naval Station, Mayport.

Your Pay is in the Pool

By Kenneth Richmond

One of the key elements of the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) is the pay pool process. At the end of each rating cycle, employee performance will be evaluated to determine the level of compensation and pay an employee will receive, based on how well the employee has accomplished his or her individual objectives. This is where the pay pool process comes into play. The pay pool process is a vital part of the NSPS system in that it justifies the amount of payouts a pay pool can award an employee.

For the NSPS pay pool process to be successful and beneficial to both employees and managers, communication is critical. Supervisors must be proactive in providing constructive feedback to their employees while ensuring they understand how the pay pool process works. Likewise, the employees need to have a clear understanding of what their role and responsibilities are in helping their supervisors make fair and accurate judgments about their performance. Bottom line: ongoing communication about performance and results between supervisor and employee will enhance common trust and teamwork throughout the organization.

Another essential component of NSPS is the pay pool. It is a group of managers and supervisors who work in an organization and are tasked with ensuring that the fairness, integrity and distribution of payouts are awarded to deserving employees based on their level of contributions to the organization. Although pay pools vary in size, depending on the organization, employee performance is still the overall determining factor in salary increases, awards and bonuses.

The driving force behind the distribution of compensation and pay increases is the pay pool panel. This is a group of managers/supervisors that meet to review employee evaluations and ensure the same standards for evaluating performance are applied and that performance payouts are consistent with employee ratings. Each pay pool has a designated pay pool manager who is responsible for managing the pay pool. The pay pool manager’s role is to ensure that pay pool procedures are adhered to in accordance with NSPS guidelines and policies.

For more information on the pay pool process, contact Julie Riley at 904-542-2140 or DSN 942-2140.

Let's Cooperate! The Importance of Cooperation during EEO Interviews

By Christine Freeze

"In a controversy, the instant we feel anger we have already ceased striving for the truth, and have begun striving for ourselves."

-Thomas Carlyle

We all know the feeling. It is hard to effectively communicate with someone when you are hurt, angry and breathing fire. Although it may be helpful to get those feelings off your chest, it may also hinder your counselor's ability to clearly understand the issues at hand when conducting an EEO interview.

Cooperation with the counselor during an EEO interview is crucial to ensuring that all concerns presented by the complainant are openly discussed and understood by all parties involved. The interviewee should have a clear, organized sense of his or her issues and concerns when meeting with a counselor to make certain that all matters are noted and fully explained.

When a complainant calmly cooperates, the counselor is able to clearly understand the issues. This full comprehension allows the counselor to more effectively discuss the complainant's concerns with management, often resulting in a better chance at a successful resolution.

The counselor's thorough knowledge of the issues may also aid the counselor in recommending possible resolution options that may not have been considered by the parties. Furthermore, a more detailed understanding of the complainant's concerns will reduce the need for frequent calls from the counselor to request further clarification on the issues presented.

Cooperation can also make certain that all of the complainant's issues and concerns are on the table and under discussion. If the complainant is difficult and refuses to communicate effectively with the counselor, a significant issue may not be successfully communicated or may be overlooked by the counselor.

Complainants should make sure that all problems are discussed with the counselor in order to paint a more complete picture of the issue. Make sure to give a comprehensive account of all events so that all parties involved have a clearer understanding and are better able to respond to the issues at hand.

Entering the EEO process is never an easy decision. Make sure you are getting the most out of your EEO experience by communicating effectively and by keeping your counselor well informed. The EEO counseling process revolves around you, so do your part to make it a success!

Commander Navy Region Southeast, Total Force Management welcomes two new EEO Specialists

Total Force Management is pleased to welcome two new Equal Employment Opportunity Specialists, Sidney Gainey and Jackson Blamo.

Sidney has worked for the Federal government for six years. He transferred from Naval District Washington in Washington, DC.

Jackson retired from the United States Navy where he served 21 years. For several years, he worked as the military EO Officer.

Employee Highlight



Laurent C. Heard
Equal Employment Specialist
CNRSE Pensacola Forward Deployed
Detachment

Laurent Heard is a native of Jacksonville, Florida who served five years in the United States Navy as an Illustrator-Draftsman. Laurent's first three years of active duty were onboard the USS Sacramento (AOE-1). He was then transferred to the Naval Education and Training Command Headquarters (formerly Chief of Naval Education and Training) in Pensacola, Florida under the command of the late Rear Admiral Ken Shugart.

Laurent began his civil service career in 1982 as an Illustrator for Naval Education and Training Professional Development and Technology Center (NETPDTC, formerly Naval Education and Training Program Management Support Activity) in Pensacola, Florida.

After spending 13 years as an Illustrator for NETPDTC, in 1995 Laurent applied for and accepted an EEO Assistant position at Human Resources Office (HRO) Pensacola. There he was assigned as an assistant to the Special Emphasis Program Manager until her retirement in 2002. Shortly after, Laurent was appointed the Special Emphasis Program Manager for HRO Pensacola, where he coordinated all special emphasis programs for the Pensacola Naval Complex (which included Saufley Field, Whiting Field and Corry Station). In 2004, the Special Emphasis Program was transferred to NETC Headquarters and Laurent was assigned to his current position as an EEO Counselor for Commander Navy Region Southeast (CNRSE) Pensacola Forward Deployed Detachment.

Of the many memorable moments in Laurent's life, two come to mind. In 1992, he traveled to Rome, Italy as a member of the St. Joseph Catholic Church Inspirational Choir and performed before Pope John Paul, II. The second memorable moment was in 2006, when Laurent preached his initial sermon at St. John Baptist Church, where he is now the Associate Minister.

In his spare time, Laurent enjoys mentoring, studying (as a seminary student) and graphic design. He is married to Carol, and the father of two sons, Joffrey and Laurent Jr. and two stepsons, Malerick and Corey.

UPCOMING FY 08 EEO TRAINING

Title: Diversity

Dates and times to be announced

For any questions, please contact Louise Webb by telephone at Commercial 904-542-2407 or DSN 942-2407 or by e-mail at louise.webb@navy.mil.

EEO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Hispanic Heritage Month	15 September-15 October 2007
Disability Employment Awareness Month	October 2007
Native American Heritage Month	November 2007