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# NEWS RELEASE

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*ETCS (SWAW/EXW) Kirk Hurst, left, is presented a traditional shadow box by Chief Alonzo Perez during Hurst's official retirement ceremony at the Captain's Club June 8. Hurst retired with 22 years of dedicated service. (Photo by Fifi Kieschnick, NAS Kingsville Public Affairs).*

## **Ceremony closes out 22-year career for NAS Kingsville Senior Chief**

*By Jon Gagné, NAS Kingsville Public Affairs*

Senior Chief Electronics Technician Kirk D. Hurst, a native of Port Isabel, Texas, closed out his 22-year active duty career June 8 with an official retirement ceremony at the NAS Kingsville Captain's club. More than 100 friends, family and shipmates turned out to help send Hurst and his family ashore as they embark on a new and challenging career in the civilian sector.

Retired NAS Kingsville Command Master Chief Charlie Ratliff served as guest speaker for the ceremony.



“As his former boss, I can tell you that Senior Chief Kirk Hurst will find challenging employment in the civilian sector and he will succeed,” Ratliff said. “I can say that because I’ve seen his competition. You don’t just be advanced to Chief Petty Officer simply by taking a written test like other E-7’s in other branches of the military. The Navy looks for the Sailor who has taken the tough assignments – like service at sea – and excelled in them. They look for the Sailor who has demonstrated sustained, superior performance in challenging leadership positions. They look for people like Senior

Chief Kirk Hurst.”

Ratliff added that only the most qualified and tested Sailors are chosen for advancement into the Chief Petty Officer Community.

“Only 10 percent of eligible enlisted Sailors are selected for Chief Petty Officer, and only 5 percent make Senior Chief during their career,” Ratliff stated. “So, you see, Senior Chief Hurst has accomplished what few Sailors have during his career. And after working with him, I can tell you that no matter what he chooses to do in his civilian career he will succeed.”



Hurst enlisted in the Navy in 1989, and after completing Electronics Technician ‘A’ School in Orlando, Fla., and UHF Technician ‘C’ School in San Diego, he reported to USS Walter S. Diehl (TAO 193), forward-deployed to Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines. Aboard Diehl, he served as a UHF communications system technician and underway replenishment team leader, and completed a deployment to the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Desert Storm.

During his career Hurst would serve on four Navy ships and complete two deployments to the Persian Gulf, three deployments to the Western Pacific, and participate in three Mine Counter Measures (MCM) crew swaps. He also completed an assignment with the Expeditionary Combat readiness Center, and an eight month deployment to Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa, where he served as Electronic Materials Officer and Tactical Communications Division leading chief in support of Operation of Enduring Freedom.

Hurst was also fortunate to spend 16 years in South Texas, bouncing from four ships homeported at Naval Station Ingleside, to NAS Kingsville, NAS Corpus Christi and back to NAS Kingsville for his final tour of duty.

During his final remarks during the ceremony, Hurst praised those who pushed him in the right direction to succeed.



“I am a very lucky and blessed man to be [standing here today],” he said. I am a firm believer that as long as humans remain imperfect life has never been – and never will be fair.

“I believe that all suffer hardships and disadvantages,” Hurst added, “but we all have God-given gifts and we are born with a distinct desire to succeed. It is through hard work, personal responsibility and that you do with the gifts you are given that makes the difference. I was lucky enough to have some exceptional people in my life, and this day, for me, is all about them.”

Hurst became emotional when he spoke about his family – from his grandparents to his wife Kathy and sons Kirk and Trevor. “I cannot thank you enough for your support,” he said as he pushed back tears.

When it came time for Hurst to address the Sailors he has led for the past three years at Ground Electronics, Hurst praised them for being professional, loyal and dedicated.

“Some of the finest technicians in the Navy walk through the doors of Bldg. 4973 every day before, during and after the planes are flying. Thank you for your work ethic and remember: teamwork, teamwork, teamwork. Keep your standards high, and always remember rule number one: you’re not underway or sucking sand, so you have nothing to complain about.

“You have it good right now,” Hurst added. “It has been an honor and a pleasure to have served with all of you. I thank the Navy for the great people that I have met during my career, the lessons I have learned, and the opportunity and experiences I have gained.”

NAS Kingsville Executive Officer Cmdr. Scott Wilmot presented Hurst with a Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medal (Gold Star in lieu of third award) for his performance as Leading Chief of the Ground Electronics Division over the past three years. Wilmot also presented a letter of proclamation from Texas Governor Rick Perry declaring Hurst an honorary admiral in the Texas Navy.



Kathy Hurst, Kirk’s wife of 19 years, was designated as an official “Yellow Rose of Texas,” and sons Kirk and Trevor received letters of appreciation for their support of the father’s career from NAS Kingsville Commanding Officer Capt. Mark McLaughlin.

Senior Chief William Tirado read the CXPO Retirement Creed and presented Hurst a traditional retirement shadow box on behalf of the NAS Kingsville Chief Petty Officers Association, while Senior Chief Brian Carr served as master of

ceremonies; Chief Lorenzo Perez presented “The Watch.”

Sideboys included Senior Chief Rudy Oliva, Chief Dale Wagner, Chief Johnny Tienda, Chief Eric Smith, Chief Curtis Malone and Chief Stan Pendergrass. Chief Ronnie Murchison served as the bell ringer and Petty Officer 2nd Class Lauren Hosey served as the Honor Boatswain. Eddie Earwood, NAS Kingsville BASH manager, offered the invocation and benediction.



