

Bachelor housing manager earns Navy Award

Navy Seaman Apprentice Vivian Blakely

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AWARDS

NAVAL AIR FACILITY ATSUGI, Japan – Behind a large desk scattered with a considerable amount of paperwork sits Rhoneil Rocha, Navy Gateway Inn and Suites and Bachelor Housing director based at Naval Air Facility (NAF) Atsugi.

To anyone else, the paperwork alone would seem intimidating, let alone the position itself. But Rocha, 43, from San Diego, CA, seems to be handling it extremely well. So well in fact he was awarded the All-Navy Manager of the Year Award.

“It’s well deserved,” said Robert Simonton, maintenance manager for bachelor housing. “He’s a hard worker. He’s here all day. He works overtime when the job needs to be done. He supports his employees and gives them the freedom to do their jobs.”

Rocha spent 23 years active in the Navy before retiring as a

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Culinary Specialist Chief two years prior. All 25 years were spent doing the same position that he currently holds now. And the last five years, three active military and 2 retired, were spent at NAF Atsugi.

The award came as a complete surprise to the San Diego native. Having to compete with other managers in the Navy, he didn't think he was going to win the award, he said.

He was unable to attend the ceremony, however, due to the earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

The 43-year-old was too busy doing his job.

"I've been housing everybody that comes on base," Rocha said. "I've been doing emergency berthing for the Marines and the Navy. Wherever there's a space, we put them there."

It's not just him, said Rocha. Without his staff and their support, he'd be unable to do what is required of him.

"Without my staff, from the front desk to the maintenance to the military to my supervisor and housekeeping, I can't accomplish my job. I have a good staff, they really do the work. I just guide them."

However the job gets done, it's been done to a standard that was recognized Navy wide.

"I've been doing this for a long time," said Rocha. "The Navy's been good to me. I did this in the Navy for 23 years. Hopefully I get to do it until I retire. I love taking care of Sailors."