

Meridian earns Community Service Awards

By Penny Randall
Staff Writer

Each year the Navy recognizes outstanding community service projects in three divisions: Sea, Shore and Overseas Commands.

Awards are presented in five flagship categories: Personal Excellence Partnership; Health, Safety and Fitness; Campaign Drug Free; Project Good Neighbor; and Environmental Stewardship.

Navy Region Southeast recently announced the winners from the regional competition for the 2009-2010 program year, and Naval Air Station Meridian has proven once again that it is dedicated to community service.

Competing in the Shore Category (200-499 members), NAS Meridian earned first place honors in three flagships including Health, Safety and Fitness; Environmental Stewardship; and Project Good Neighbor.

Contributions in the Health, Safety and Fitness came through NAS Meridian's participation in Area 5 Special Olympics fall games, Northeast Lauderdale High School NJROTC drill team events, Pearl High School Annual NJROTC Regional Competition, Susan G. Komen Rally for the Cure Golf Tourna-

ment and Kemper High School Family Fitness Day. A total of 137 volunteers gave 796 hours of their time to assist with these activities.

For the Environmental Stewardship Flagship category, NAS Meridian worked with agencies such as Adopt-A-Highway and Keep America Beautiful. Volunteers also contributed 328 hours assisting with clean-up efforts at the historic Magnolia Cemetery and 10th Avenue Cemetery sites.

NAS Meridian beat out the Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit at NAS Jacksonville to place first in the Project Good Neighbor Flagship. NAS Meridian provided community service to the following agencies: Habitat for Humanity, Angel Food Ministries, LOVE's Kitchen, Wesley House Community Center, Silverleaf Manor and the United Blood Service. From July 2009 to June 2010, 30 volunteers provided 113 man-hours to the agencies.

The command earned second place honors in the Personal Excellence Partnership Flagship. NAS Meridian volunteers worked with 17 area schools in addition to churches and civic organizations to earn this recognition.

Commander, Navy Region Southeast

Rear Adm. Tim G. Alexander, congratulated his winning commands in a message. It read: "Bravo Zulu to the winners and honorable mentions. My sincerest personal thanks to all commands and individuals who selflessly volunteered their time to improve the quality of life in their local community and for participation in this year's completion. Over 385,000 hours of volunteer service were contributed by commands in the Southeast Region. You are an inspiration to us all."

The packages from the following Navy Region Southeast commands will be forward to Commander, Navy Installation Command (CNIC) for Navy wide competition in the Special Recognition Award categories including the USS Bainbridge Award for Overall Excellence in Community Service: NAS Meridian; NAS Jacksonville; NSB Kings Bay; Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit, Keesler Air Force Base; Trident Training Facility, NSB Kings Bay; Naval Aviation Schools Command, NAS Pensacola; FBM Operations Test Support Unit Two, Cape Canaveral; and USS Maryland, NSB Kings Bay.

Naval Technical Training Center Meridian earned the USS Bainbridge Award in 2009.