

Surface Warfare

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DIGITAL FEATURE



MARCELLUS

U.S. NAVY

RC to Sea

Enlisted Reservists Take
Sea Duty Tours, Gain Experience
and Readiness

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THERE'S A HUGE OPPORTUNITY RIGHT NOW FOR NAVY RESERVE SAILORS TO GET SEA DUTY EXPERIENCE.

— Adm. Ted LeClair

The Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (SURFPAC), is looking for selected reserve Sailors who'd like to put some adventure in their lives by spending a year or two filling active-duty billets in the surface fleet.

"There's a huge opportunity right now for Navy reserve Sailors to get sea duty experience," said Rear Adm. Ted LeClair, a Navy reservist and SURFPAC's deputy commander. "This fiscal year, we've had over 100 reserve Sailors in shipboard active-duty billets. In October, 2024, there are going to be even more opportunities."

LeClair said it wasn't long ago that reserve Sailors had little opportunity to go to sea. He often got questions about it as a senior officer when visiting reserve units.

"I had to tell them if they wanted to go on a ship, then find a recruiter and join the active Navy," he said. "I'm happy to say that's no longer the case—it's a great way to supercharge your reserve career—and help fleet readiness, too."

SURFPAC expects to send roughly 120 selected reservists to fill active-duty billets in the coming year. Over 60 have already committed to taking orders, and 20 of those are Sailors asking to stay an additional year, said Lt. Cmdr. William Sprouse, SURFPAC's Deputy Reserve Programs Director (RPD).

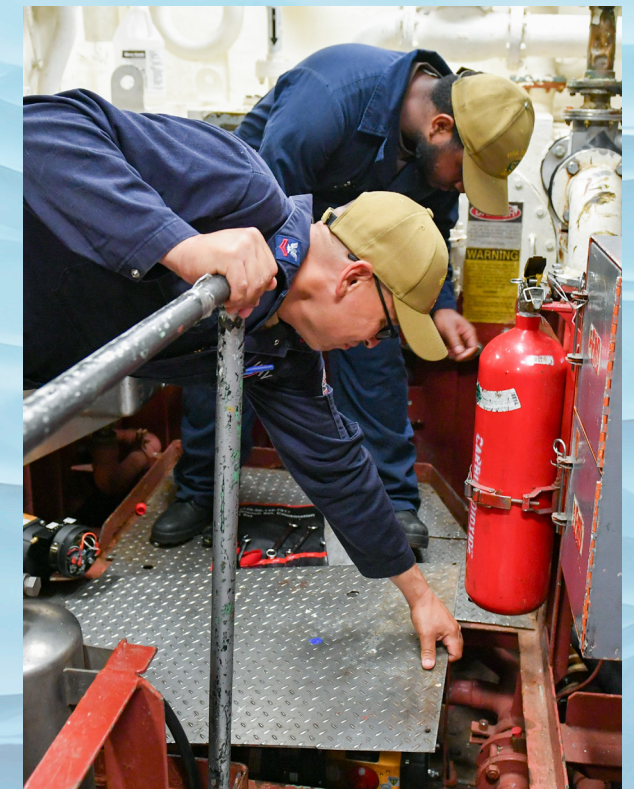
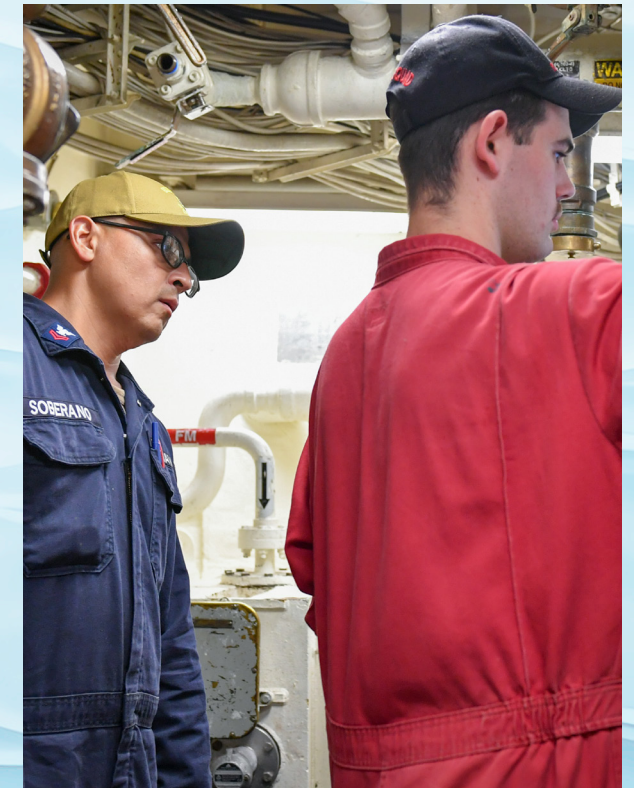
"It's called RC2SEA, because we're putting reservists on surface ships that can use their skills," Sprouse said. "The preference is to put them on deploying and forward-deployed ships."

The first choice is to take Sailors in sea-going ratings; however, all junior Sailors are welcome to apply, he said. For those E-5 and above, the priority is to find those with some sea duty under their belts, but others will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Orders longer than 181 days are permanent change of station (PCS) orders, allowing Sailors to bring their families to the ship's homeport while they serve. Orders under 181 days are not PCS, so they don't come with a funded move. All overseas tours are unaccompanied orders.

Two reserve Sailors already serving aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Preble (DDG 88) are Electrician's Mate 2nd Class Luis Soberano, from Chicago, Illinois, and Machinist's Mate Fireman Djanya Marcellus, from Elmont, New York.

Both Preble Sailors arrived on the ship in January 2024. Soberano recently requested to stay until February 2025, and Marcellus has asked to remain until at least September 2025. Both Sailors said they have found their active mobilizations rewarding and helpful in gaining hands-on experience.



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For Soberano, it has been more about gaining on-the-job experience as an electrician. When not on active orders, he works in facilities maintenance for a large development corporation, involving him in anything from structural to electrical work. However, neither that job nor his time as a reservist has provided the same specialized, hands-on electrician experience as his time on active orders.

"I felt like I needed the experience," Soberano said about his desire to stay active. "I've always been a reservist, and I'm an E-5 coming in here and honestly, I feel like I'm an E-3."

Soberano welcomes the opportunity to gain experience and learn in a shipboard environment, including spending time out at sea.

Marcellus came aboard with a slightly different thought process. While on active orders since the beginning of the year, she is working on continuing her education in her spare time.

"I want to become a lawyer," said Marcellus. "I'm mostly a computer person. I like office jobs, so I wanted to try something new before fully committing to becoming a lawyer."

"Machinist's mate is completely different from what I thought I wanted, so I decided, 'Why not?' It's a new experience, and I'm learning something."

Part of the draw of reserve service has always been flexibility. Reserve Sailors can volunteer for activation based on their own schedule and availability. Marcellus and Soberano both spoke of this freedom they enjoy in having that choice and the ease with which they were selected for orders they desired.

SURFPAC's RPD staff is ready to field questions on finding and applying for advertised active sea-going jobs and can be reached at cnsp_rpd_distro@us.navy.mil.

These and many other activation opportunities can

also be searched in the Navy Reserve's ZipServe. This online application allows reservists to apply for all reserve order opportunities ranging from two-week annual training opportunities to multi-year activations. ZipServe can be found on the Navy Reserve Homeport Portal at <https://locker.private.navyreserve.navy.mil/>.

Soberano said he had applied for a job advertised in the reserve system, and when it was already filled, Sprouse called him directly to offer him the Preble opportunity.

Marcellus asked for jobs on the West Coast and was immediately offered the job on Preble. She advised anyone considering the Navy first to join the reserves and then choose active-duty orders because it provides flexibility to select the job you think will be the best fit and the opportunity to extend or leave at the end of the active orders if it's not.

She also said the benefits and community cannot be matched.

Marcellus explained that while her experience has affirmed that she would still like to become a lawyer, her time as a machinist's mate has given her an appreciation for the hands-on work involved. She said she enjoys the learning process, no matter the equipment it applies to. Most of all, though, she has stayed aboard Preble for the people.

"I enjoy the people, and they make it worthwhile," said Marcellus. "I actually have people I could call family on this ship that I've known since A school. It just feels like home."

Soberano advises anyone considering Navy service to seriously think about what would be suitable for them, "either reserve or active. Active offers more, but as a reservist, I am very happy with everything I've done, and I'm very happy with everything the Navy has done for me." ⚓



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