

Subj: 2017 MILITARY VANGUARD AWARD NOMINATION IC0 AME1 (AW) BRETT A. BINGHAM, USN

c. Narrative:

- Aviation Structural Mechanic Safety Equipment First Class (AME1) Bingham distinguished himself through specific achievement while serving as Quality Assurance Representative at Electronic Attack Squadron One Three Two onboard Naval Air Station Whidbey Island Washington. On 16 December 2016, AME1 Bingham's actions likely saved the lives of two Naval Aviators and prevented injury to ground personnel and further damage to equipment's specific accomplishments include:

- On 16 December 2016 AME1 Bingham responded to a catastrophic mishap on aircraft 543 an EA-18G Growler. A sudden rapid over-pressurization of the cockpit during the launch evolution caused the canopy to explode, sending shards of glass and pieces of the canopy frame in all directions. The instantaneous de-pressurization of the cockpit caused significant injuries to both aircrew rendering them incapacitated with the engine throttle remaining at high power.

- While performing maintenance on another aircraft, AME1 witnessed several Sailors seeking the protection of the hangar bay. Without hesitation he instinctively ran toward the flight line, assessed the situation and began rendering assistance. Realizing both engines remained at 80 percent power, he selflessly instructed another Sailor to lift him onto the port wing of aircraft 543. He quickly advanced to the now exposed cockpit and reached through shattered glass and shards of metal to retard both throttles to OFF. AME1 Bingham's actions greatly reduced the chance of further damage to the aircraft, nearby equipment and injury Squadron ground personnel.

- As AME1 Bingham began to unstrap the aircrew from the ejection seats, he realized the seats had not yet been de-armed. He immediately alerted the ground crew of the situation and called for all safety pins to be passed to him. AME1 proceeded to secure both the forward and aft ejection seats as well as the Emergency Canopy Jettison handles, thereby keeping himself and others from inadvertently activating the jettison system and mitigating the potential for further damage. He then returned to the task of unstrapping the incapacitated aircrew. AME1 Bingham then aided emergency response personnel in the removal of both aircrew from the aircraft and onto stretchers.

2. Commanding Officer's comments: AME1 Bingham's quick, methodical, and calculated actions facilitated a coordinated response to a dire situation while his personal initiative ensured no further injury or damage occurred. His composed leadership and bravery under extreme

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stress likely saved the lives of two Naval Aviators, including myself. For his courageous actions, he is most deserving of the recognition afforded by awarding the 2017 Military Vanguard Award.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. F. Harris", with a stylized flourish at the end.

D. F. HARRIS

## Member Biography

Petty Officer Bingham was born in San Diego, California on 30 April 1980. He graduated from Santana High School in 1998. In March of 1999, shortly after graduating high school, he made the decision to join the Navy.

After completing Basic Training at Great Lakes, Illinois and AME "A" school at NAS Pensacola, Florida, he received orders to Virginia Beach, Virginia where he served with VF-213 for 5 years. During his tour with the Black Lions he deployed three times; once aboard the USS Carl Vinson, in support of response operations to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. Before transferring he completed two more deployments aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt.

In early 2004 Petty Officer Bingham received shore duty orders to VAQ-129 in Whidbey Island, WA, where he devoted his time to learning the EA-6B aircraft. While attached to the Vikings he completed 16 detachments in support of the training of Navy, Marine and Air Force aircrew.

Upon leaving the Vikings he received orders to VAQ-139 where, armed with his knowledge of the EA-6B, became the squadrons only Second Class Petty Officer to become a Full-Systems Quality Assurance Representative (QAR). While attached to the Cougars he made three deployments aboard the USS Ronald Reagan. In the winter of 2009 the Cougars meritoriously advanced Petty Officer Bingham to First Class.

In the winter of 2012 he received orders to Fleet Readiness Center North West (FRCNW). During his first year onboard he led 38 Sailors in five work centers as the 800 Division Production Control Leading Petty Officer. His last two years at FRCNW were spent in Quality Assurance as a Full-Systems QAR where he took on the full time job as the Naval Aviation Maintenance Discrepancy Reporting Program (NAMPDRP) manager.

After checking out of FRCNW he spent two months in Lemoore going through EA-18G career school. Upon completing his training he checked into VAQ-132, the "Scorpions," where he currently serves. During his current tour he has served as the Egress work center Leading Petty Officer and a Full-Systems QAR.

Petty Officer Bingham has received the following awards throughout his Naval career: Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal-1, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal-7, Good Conduct Medal-6, Letter of Commendation-6, VAQ-139 Junior Sailor of the year 2009.






**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**  
**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT**  
**THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAS AWARDED THE**  
**NAVY AND MARINE CORPS COMMENDATION MEDAL**

**TO**  
**AVIATION STRUCTURAL MECHANIC SAFETY EQUIPMENT FIRST CLASS (AVIATION WARFARE).**  
**BRETT A. BINGHAM**  
**UNITED STATES NAVY**  
**FOR**

**MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT AS QUALITY ASSURANCE REPRESENTATIVE AT ELECTRONIC ATTACK SQUADRON 132 ON 16 DECEMBER 2016. PETTY OFFICER BINGHAM SELFLESSLY PUT HIMSELF IN HARM'S WAY WHILE RESPONDING TO A CATASTROPHIC MISHAP ON AIRCRAFT 543. WITH BOTH ENGINES AT 80 PERCENT, PETTY OFFICER BINGHAM JUMPED ONTO THE AIRCRAFT, EXPOSING HIMSELF TO SHATTERED CANOPY GLASS, AIRCRAFT COMPOSITE, AND EXPLOSIVES. HE IMMEDIATELY REDUCED THE MISHAP AIRCRAFT'S THROTTLES TO IDLE, CONFIRMED BOTH EJECTION SEATS WERE SAPE, UNSTRAPPED THE AIRCREW FROM THEIR SEATS, AND AIDED FIRST RESPONDERS IN THE CRITICALLY INJURED AIRCREW'S EXPEDITIOUS REMOVAL FROM THE COCKPIT. HIS CALM DEMEANOR, STRADFAST RESPONSE, AND COURAGEOUS ACTIONS PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN SAVING THE LIVES OF TWO SQUADRONMATES. BY HIS UNSWERVING DETERMINATION, WISE JUDGMENT, AND COMPLETE DEDICATION TO DUTY, PETTY OFFICER BINGHAM REFLECTED CREDIT UPON HIMSELF AND UPHELD THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVAL SERVICE.**

**GIVEN THIS 11TH DAY OF JANUARY 2017**



  
FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
**S. T. FARR**  
**CAPTAIN, U.S. NAVY**  
**COMMANDER, ELECTRONIC ATTACK WING,**  
**U.S. PACIFIC FLEET**