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Ike Sailors Rewarded for Their Beneficial Suggestion

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NEWPORT NEWS, Va. (NNS) -- Almost a year ago, 10 USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (Ike) (CVN 69) Sailors from Combat Systems Department received a check for \$5,000 for a beneficial suggestion. June 16, those Sailors received another \$5,000 check to split among them.

The Sailors received these awards for overhauling the ship's AM-3729/SR amplifiers, LS-474/U speakers, Type G telephones, AN/BQH bathythermographs and electrical workbenches aboard Eisenhower, rather than sending them to contractors for overhaul or purchasing new equipment.

The first time around, the \$5,000 check was awarded by command authority. Then the beneficial suggestion award recommendation was routed up through Commander, Naval Sea Systems Command, where it was determined the Sailors would receive an additional \$5,000 reward.

"Not only was it a cost savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars, but it also allowed us to control the flow of work, and let us do the installation in a timely and logical manner as opposed to trying to fit it into someone else's plan of attack," said Cmdr. Rick Strickland, Eisenhower's combat systems officer.

The project involved stripping, sandblasting, powder coating, reassembling and testing all the equipment prior to reinstallation.

"I'm really proud of us for getting to this point," said Electronics Technician 2nd Class (SW) Ann Ferguson of combat systems department. "What makes it even better is that other carriers are going to come in after us and duplicate our work, so the precedent we set is going to live on well after Ike goes back to sea."

The Department of the Military Cash Award Program (MILCAP) is designed to recognize employees or groups of employees for ideas that benefit the Navy or Marine Corps through cost avoidance or cost savings. Any employee or private citizen is eligible to submit a suggestion. An item submitted for review outlines a plan to correct a specific problem, improve upon the quality, or create a new approach or method. This suggestion identifies a problem and recommends a solution.

Combat systems' suggestion to overhaul their own equipment did receive a cash reward, but it was their overall Navy pride and confidence in their own abilities that was the big winner.

"We have changed the way the Navy does business with the shipyard forever," said Ferguson. "Future Sailors will have the opportunity to do a job that used to be done at the depot level. If the type commander decides to do this on every ship in overhaul, it will save the Navy millions in the end. (Cmdr.) Strickland believed enough in us to give us the support we needed, and in turn, he received a product that will give the Navy at least another 20 years of good service."

MILCAP isn't just about money to these Sailors. They know that what they did will continue to move the Navy forward and get Eisenhower back to sea that much sooner.

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