

Blue Angels Announce 2016 Team Members

PENSACOLA, FL - The U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, announced the officers selected for the 2016 team.

The squadron selected two F/A-18 demonstration pilots, one C-130 demonstration pilot, a maintenance officer and a public affairs officer to join a pre-selected commanding officer on the 2016 team.

Many highly qualified Navy and Marine Corps officers submit applications to join the Blue Angels each year.

“Selecting team members is always a difficult process, but once again I am confident we have picked the best, most qualified individuals for our team,” said Capt. Tom Frosch, the current Flight Leader and commanding officer for the 2015 team. “The 2016 team members were chosen from an exceptionally competitive talent pool, and we are excited to have them join our team.”

The Blue Angels select finalists to interview at the Blue Angels’ home base at Pensacola Naval Air Station during the week of the Pensacola Beach Air Show. The team makes selections at the conclusion of the interview week.

“All of our extremely qualified applicants went through a rigorous screening and interview process,” said Lt. Ryan Chamberlain, Opposing Solo pilot and the applications officer for the 2016 team selection. “The individuals selected are some of the finest Navy and Marine Corps officers in the fleet today, and we look forward to serving with them.”

The newly-selected 2016 team members include:

F/A-18 Demonstration Pilots

Navy LT Lance Benson, 32, of McPherson, Kan, is an F/A-18 Super Hornet pilot currently assigned to “The Eagles” of Training Squadron Seven (VT-7). He is a 2006 graduate of Kansas State University, Salina, Kan.



LT Tyler Davies



LT Lance Benson

Navy Lt. Tyler Davies, 33, of Kennesaw, Ga., is an F/A-18 pilot currently assigned to the “Gladiators” of Strike Fighter Squadron 106 (VFA-106). He is a 2007 graduate of the University of La Verne, La

C-130 Demonstration Pilot

Marine Maj. Mark Montgomery, 36, of Cartersville, Ga., is a KC-130 Aircraft Commander currently assigned to USMC Manpower Management/Officer Assignments. He is a 2001 graduate of the University of Georgia, Athens, Ga.



Maj. Mark Montgomery



LT Samuel Rose

Maintenance Officer

Navy Lt. Samuel Rose, 35, of Whitehouse, Texas, is a Maintenance Officer currently assigned to the Fleet Readiness Center, Detachment Jacksonville. He was commissioned through the Limited Duty Officer Program in 2011.

Public Affairs Officer

Navy Lt. Joe Hontz, 37, of Longmont, Colo., is a Public Affairs Officer currently assigned to U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Bahrain. He is a 2006 graduate of the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Colo.



LT Joe Hontz

Pre-selected to join the 2016 team was:

Commanding Officer, Flight Leader

Navy Cmdr. Ryan Bernacchi, 42, of Mountain View, Calif.

Expected to return for the 2016 season are:

F/A-18 Demonstration Pilots

Navy Lt. Matt Suyderhoud, 32, of Honolulu.

Navy Lt. Andrew Talbott, 32, of Sedan, Kan.

Navy Lt. Ryan Chamberlain, 30, of Bloomington, Ill.

Marine Capt. Jeff Kuss, 31, of Durango, Colo.

Events Coordination Officer

Marine Capt. Corrie Mays, 35, of Marstons Mills, Mass.

Executive Officer

Navy Cmdr. Bob Flynn, 46, of Moorestown, N.J.

C-130 Demonstration Pilots

Marine Maj. Mark Hamilton, 37, of Becker, Minn.

Marine Capt. Katie Higgins, 28, of Annapolis, Md.

Supply Officer

Navy Lt. Gregory Bollinger, Jr., 32, of Carbondale, Ill.

The mission of the Blue Angels is to showcase the pride and professionalism of the United States Navy and Marine Corps by inspiring a culture of excellence and service to country through flight demonstrations and community outreach.

In 2016, the Blue Angels will celebrate their 70th anniversary. Since 1946, the Blue Angels have performed for more than 484 million fans.