

2008 SWE Emerging Leader Award

Lt. Cmdr. Camille Flaherty

United States Navy

Lieutenant Commander Camille Flaherty is the United States Navy's first female nuclear surface warfare officer to be selected for command of a warship. She has distinguished herself in the extremely competitive community of Naval nuclear engineers through her leadership, technical acumen, and mentorship.

Flaherty graduated from the United States Naval Academy with a bachelor's degree in oceanography, reporting to the USS Vella Gulf (CG 72) as an electrical officer. After only eight months, she was promoted to auxiliaries officer — a position normally held by a division officer with at least three years of experience.

Following this initial tour and deployment to the Arabian Gulf, Flaherty transferred to Naval Nuclear Power School where she completed an advanced course in nuclear power and a course in nuclear propulsion plant operation.

Flaherty next reported to Navy Recruiting Headquarters where she was responsible for processing and selecting 1,600 naval officers per year. While fulfilling this full-time job, she also attended the University of Memphis full time and earned her master's degree in mechanical engineering.

After returning to sea duty on the nuclear aircraft carrier, USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), Flaherty qualified as a propulsion plant watch officer, leading a 25-person watch team to maintain safe reactor plant operations. She also served as a reactor controls and mechanical division officer. Adding to her credentials, Flaherty received certification as a nuclear engineer and was ranked second out of 47 lieutenants.

As combat systems officer for USS Carr (FFG 52), Flaherty led a department of four divisions

**CITATION:**

For demonstrated leadership in systems engineering.

and was in charge of the anti-terrorism and force protection for the ship.

Following this tour, Flaherty was selected as the first female reactor electrical assistant in the Navy. Ranked first of 41 lieutenant commanders, she was responsible for the maintenance and operation of both nuclear reactors and the electrical distribution system for the 5,000-person command.

Currently, Flaherty is a program manager for the Navy Nuclear Surface Community. She is the diversity lead for the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program.

A dedicated mentor and role model for women, Flaherty is the most senior female surface nuclear warfare officer [SWO(N)] in the Navy. She provides career guidance and established a support network

for this 235-member cohort. The network provides information, contacts, and solutions to problems encountered by this group of working women trying to achieve work/life balance.

Flaherty has become an effective advocate for SWE. She obtained funding and organized a trip for 13 SWO(N) women to attend WE07 in Nashville, Tenn. She also represented the Navy on a panel that discussed nontraditional careers for women engineers during the conference.

In addition, she organized trips for 14 SWO(N) women to attend women leadership symposiums in Washington, D.C. Her efforts have increased female retention in the SWO(N) community by 27 percent in the last year, and are helping to shape the future of the Navy's Nuclear Propulsion Program.

Flaherty has also been an organizer, participant, and keynote speaker in Women's History Month celebrations.

She is married to Lt. Scott D. Flaherty.