68th Annual Tailhook Symposium Concludes

Rear Adm. Doug Verissimo, commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic, speaks during the 2024 Tailhook Symposium in Reno, Nevada. The symposium brought together Navy and Marine Corps aviators and industry partners to discuss significant issues impacting the Naval Aviation Enterprise. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ryan J. Batchelder)
By Petty Officer 1st Class Aron Montan, Commander, Naval Air Forces

RENO, Nev. – U.S. Navy and Marine Corps aviators, veterans, industry partners and supporters attended the 2024 Tailhook Association symposium, Aug. 22-24, at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, Nevada. The symposium consisted of various speaking panels, junior officer engagements, an awards luncheon, winging ceremony and a banquet.

Guest speakers included Adm. Sam Paparo, commander U.S. Indo-Pacific Command; Adm. Daryl Caudle, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command; Vice Adm. Dan Cheever, commander Naval Air Forces; Rear Adm. Michael Donnelly, director, Air Warfare Division; Rear Adm. Daniel P. Martin, commander, Naval Safety Command; and Rear Adm. Marc Miguez, commander, Carrier Strike Group Two.

The 68th Tailhook Symposium focused on today's warfighters and topics relevant to the modern landscape of the Naval Aviation Enterprise (NAE). This year's theme of "Be Ready" emphasized the importance of alignment and teamwork between warfighters and industry partners to ensure mission readiness.

"Naval aviation is essential to our maritime nation," said Cheever. "Sea control requires air superiority, and air

superiority is what naval aviation provides. The U.S. Navy's indispensable aircraft carriers, carrier air wings and the Tailhookers who operate on them are key to our ability to win."

The three-day event kicked off with an integrated air dominance panel and NAE update to industry partners, emphasizing their contributions to naval aviation. On the second day of the event, Cheever moderated a flag officer panel facilitated discussion between flag officers and Navy and Marine Corps attendees.

"The Navy, enabled by naval aviation, provides credible capability for deterrence, sea control, preservation of peace, response in crisis and power projection to win decisively in combat," said Cheever. "When coupled with our expeditionary forces, USMC, joint forces, allies and partners and industry partners, we are a formidable and key part of distributed maritime operations."

Additionally, a panel of junior officers from Carrier Air Wing Three, embarked on the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), shared their experiences of operating in a combat zone, emphasizing the intense coordination required during missions and the personal growth they gained facing unprecedented challenges. They highlighted the camaraderie among the crew and the critical role their training played in ensuring successful operations under high-pressure conditions.

Tailhook 2024 concluded with a winging ceremony where student naval aviators received their "Wings of Gold," marking their transition to fully qualified naval aviators.

The Tailhook Association is an independent, nonprofit organization supporting aircraft carrier and other sea-based aviation.

The NAE benefits national security by improving the operational readiness of Naval Aviation. The NAE provides a collaborative forum for leaders to deliberate and resolve interdependent issues affecting multiple stakeholders across the whole of naval aviation.

As the type commander for naval aviation, Commander, Naval Air Forces' mission is to "man, train and equip deployable, combat-ready Naval Aviation forces that win in combat."