



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.S. Navy to Sponsor 2017-2018 Conrad Spirit of Innovation Challenge

The U.S. Navy is pleased to announce it will once again serve as a lead sponsor for the 2017-2018 Conrad Spirit of Innovation Challenge (Conrad Challenge) – an annual, multiphase, entrepreneurial student competition for high school students from around the world. The Navy began its sponsorship of the Conrad Challenge in 2016, and during the 2017 final round this past April, created and presented the inaugural Gemini Award, which is given to the team that best demonstrates Navy characteristics of teamwork, innovation, and hard work.

The 2017-2018 Conrad Challenge, which is conducted primarily online, kicked off mid-September encouraging teams to register and begin their investor pitch submissions highlighting their product of service created to solve a real-world challenge in one of the following four categories: Aerospace and Aviation, Cyber Technology and Security, Energy and Environment, and Health and Nutrition. Navy officers and specialists will serve as judges and subject matter experts for all three rounds of the 2017-2018 competition: Round 1: Initial Entry (Investor Pitch), Round 2: Semi-Finals (Business Plan), and Round 3: Innovation Summit Finals (Pitch Presentations). For more information on the competition guidelines, visit conradchallenge.org.

"The Navy and the Conrad Foundation both share a deep commitment to STEM-related career fields," says Captain David W. Bouve, National Director of Marketing and Advertising for the Navy Recruiting Command. "The Navy's sponsorship of the Conrad Challenge provides the opportunity for a diverse group of Navy experts to share their experiences and perspectives with the competitors."

The Conrad Challenge was founded by Nancy Conrad in honor of her late husband, Charles "Pete" Conrad Jr., a U.S. Navy officer and aviator. He was selected as an astronaut in the second round of pilots chosen to join NASA and became the third man to walk on the moon during the 1969 Apollo 12 mission. He set an eight-day space endurance record on the Gemini 5 mission, and commanded the Gemini 11 mission. Captain Conrad logged more than 6,500 hours flying time and 1,179 hours of spaceflight. In 1978, he was awarded the Congressional Space Medal of Honor.

"The U.S. Navy holds a special place in my heart and we are thrilled to continue our relationship this year. This partnership provides invaluable resources to our students," said Nancy Conrad, Founder and Chairman of the Conrad Challenge. "The entire Navy team is hands-on throughout the competition. The knowledge and expertise they share with our global community of students is priceless and we cannot thank them enough."

The Conrad Challenge will hold the final round of the competition during its three-day Innovation Summit on April 26-28, 2018 at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex in Florida. During Summit, student teams will present their innovative, commercially viable products to a live panel of judges. The students have done everything from developing nutrition products for use in space to lightweight, flame-resistant gear worn by firefighters, to a water filtration system now deployed in nine counties and many more highly innovative products.

For more information about America's Navy, please visit www.navy.com, www.facebook.com/usnavy, or www.twitter.com/usnavy. For more information about Conrad Challenge, please visit www.conradchallenge.org.