

Pfc. Graham J. Benson

## Ensign Ilic Commissioning Article

A Defense Information School instructor left the enlisted ranks and stepped into those of a commissioned officer in a ceremony held at the Defense Information School October 3. Ensign Dusan M. Ilic has spent more than 15 years in the U.S. Navy, the majority of those as a mass communicator.

A first generation American citizen of Serbian decent, Ilic completed his basic training at the Recruit Training Center Great Lakes in 1993.

Ilic's career accomplishments include deployments to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where he used his Serbian heritage to aid U.S. Army peacekeeping forces as a Serbo-Croatian linguist.

Ilic then went on recruiting duty in Indianapolis, where he excelled and became the Recruiter in Charge of Navy Recruiting Station, Piqua, Ohio. Ilic ended his recruiting duties as the 2001 Southwest Ohio Recruiter of the Year for the Navy Recruiting District Indianapolis.

From Indianapolis, Ilic reported to Fleet Combat Camera Atlantic in Norfolk, Va. During his tour with combat camera, Ilic spent 90 percent of his time deployed, including a combat deployment to Iraq in 2004. His exceptional performance during his time in Norfolk earned him the Fleet Combat Camera Atlantic's Sailor of the Year distinction.

In May of 2006 Ilic came to DINFOS as an instructor for the Video Production and Documentation course and the Combat Camera Leadership course. In September of 2006, while at DINFOS, Ilic was promoted to Chief Petty Officer.

Ilic said he first considered becoming an officer in 2004 but delayed his plans because he didn't feel his resume was ready for submission at that time. When he came to DINFOS in 2006, however, his department head reviewed his application and encouraged him to pursue commissioning.

He obtained his commission through the Navy's Limited Duty Officer Program, which offers enlisted sailors the opportunity to become officers based on their time in service.

Ilic was the first of three sailors chosen by a board that meets annually to choose three enlisted sailors from the mass communications field to be commissioned. It is a competitive selection and reflects greatly on the careers of those chosen.

Senior Chief Petty Officer Roberto Cerda, the senior enlisted advisor for Navy personnel at DINFOS, said he believes Ilic's commissioning is a great thing for him and the sailors who will work for him in the future.

"He's a calm, cool and collected individual who works very well with others," said Cerda. "He really is one of the best I've seen, and I would love any opportunity to work with him again."

Though Ilic is excited about his future opportunities as an officer, leaving the senior enlisted ranks, known as the Chief's mess to Navy personnel, was a hard decision for him.

"I'll miss everything about being a Chief. The Chief's mess is a community, almost a worldwide fraternity. You meet another Chief, doesn't matter where it is, and you have a connection. So I'm going to miss that a lot," said Ilic.

While the Navy lost a Chief Petty Officer in Ilic, his first action as an officer was replace that loss by reenlisting newly-promoted Chief Petty Officer Eric S. Powell, a Basic Mass Communications Specialist Course instructor at DINFOS.

Ilic has been Powell's mentor throughout their time together at DINFOS.

"I couldn't be happier for him," said Powell. "He's a great guy and will make a great officer. When I found out that he was going to be commissioned in early October I knew that it would be time for my reenlistment, so I asked him to do it."

From here Ilic will go to Limited Duty Officer class in Newport, R.I. After completion of LDO class, he will return to DINFOS as a student in the Public Affairs Officer Qualification Course.