

Navy Celebrates 237th Birthday at DINFOS By Navy Seaman Nicolas N. Lopez

The United States Navy's 237th birthday was observed in a ceremony in the Hall of Heroes at Defense Information School at Fort Meade on Friday.

Among those attending were more than 100 DINFOS students and staff, such as Navy Seaman Apprentice Matthew Wright, a student at DINFOS.

During the ceremony they had the youngest sailor, Seaman Recruit Ryan A. Harper, a DINFOS student, and the oldest sailor, retired Master Chief Jimmie L. Bell, the Director of Staff at DINFOS, cut the cake with a cutlass, or a slightly curved sword. Wright said cutting the cake in this manner symbolized the past and the future of the Navy.

"It was really an honor," said Bell, who seemed proud and genuinely surprised to have been given this honor. "You won't ever see a retiree be asked to participate in a ceremony. It's not that they don't care about retirees, it's always the youngest sailor in active duty and the oldest sailor that's on active duty. There's no protocol that says it has to be that way but that's normally the way it is."

In addition to the cake cutting ceremony, there were multiple speakers, such as Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Jason Thompson, a broadcasting instructor at DINFOS and the master of ceremonies for the event.

"The speaker was our favorite speaker, MC1 Thompson, because he usually gives a lot of really good GMT's [General Military Training] on navy history," said Navy Seaman Christopher Liaghat, a student at DINFOS who attended the ceremony. "We were all really excited to see what he had planned for the Navy birthday... Once he finally started, he had a really moving speech about a table that had been prepared off to the right, it was for all of our shipmates that couldn't be there because they were either missing or lost their lives."