

EDITOR, DEPARTING: SANDY RUSSELL RETIRES

By Wendy Leland

On 30 September, *Naval Aviation News* staff members, Naval Historical Center colleagues, friends and longtime associates bade farewell to beloved Editor Sandy Russell as she marked the end of a distinguished 30-year government career.

After working for a few years in Navy contracts, Sandy found her true calling when she reported to the *Naval Aviation News* office in August 1976. Then a newly minted Editorial Assistant, she could have never imagined how much of an impact she would have on the magazine itself, nor how many people she would touch, over the next 28 years.

As Sandy moved up the editorial “ranks” over the years—becoming Managing Editor in 1985 and Editor in 2002—she saw many Navy journalists and civilians come and go. For them, she was more than just a manager, she was a mentor. Associate Editor JO2 Dan Ball commented, “Sandy’s professional knowledge and love of editing really helped me learn about Naval Aviation and how to tell its story. She was always open to new ideas and changes for the better. Her thoughtfulness and generosity will be missed.” Assistant Editor JOSN Brandy Lewis added, “Sandy’s ability to edit and manage *NANews* is remarkable. She is one of the most proficient and organized women that I have ever had the pleasure to work with.”

Sandy said that during her career, she was fortunate to have great bosses who encouraged her professional growth. When she became a manager herself, she was dedicated to helping her staff grow both personally and professionally. Art Director Morgan Wilbur said, “Sandy’s style of leadership is reflective of the spirit of Naval Aviation. She encourages people to push their own capabilities and gives them the responsibility to make *NANews* a better magazine. Her words of encouragement will long be with me.”

During her tenure, *Naval Aviation News* evolved from a monthly, black-and-white magazine to a

bimonthly, color publication. And under her leadership the magazine and its individual staff members achieved significant Navy-level recognition. Editor in Chief Commander Jeremy Gillespie commented, “It has been a tremendous pleasure to work with Sandy and learn from her. During

almost three decades, more than any other individual, her professionalism and dedication have made *NANews* what it is today: the best magazine of its kind. Twenty-four CHINFO

Merit Awards for the magazine staff in the last decade and five First Place awards for the magazine in the last six years says a lot about what she’s achieved, but it doesn’t begin to describe what she’s truly meant to us here and to everyone across the globe who’s a part of, or a fan of, Naval Aviation. She’s off to a well-deserved retirement, but she’ll be sorely missed.”

Sandy retires with the distinction of being the longest serving *NANews* staff member.

“My years of government service have gone by incredibly fast, particularly while on the magazine staff,” she said. “It has

been a great job and, working closely with the Aviation History Office, more like a ‘family’ than a workplace.” The credit for building that sense of family belongs directly to Sandy. Her years of personal caring and dedication to the happiness and well-being of those around her have created a warm, friendly environment where camaraderie and good spirits are the rule. These effects extend beyond the physical walls of this office, for she has personally built and kept in touch with an extensive network of former editors, journalists and historians who remain a part of our extended family.

Although her name may no longer be on the masthead, Sandy’s spirit will continue to influence the magazine. The legacy of personal and professional caring and dedication that she has built over 28 years will continue to shape the future of *Naval Aviation News*.

