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Kodiak-based Coast Guardsman to play chess for Navy at Inter-service Tournament

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Petty Officer 3rd Class Marvin Breis, of the Coast Guard Cutter Munro in Kodiak, Alaska, far left, stands with the other five members of the 2011 Navy Chess Team. U.S. Coast Guard photo.

KODIAK, Alaska – Petty Officer 3rd Class Marvin Breis placed 5th at the Navy Chess Qualifier at the Naval Air Station in Meridian, Miss., May 1 earning a spot on the Navy Chess Team that will go to the Inter-service Chess Tournament in California in June.

“It was a tough field this year,” said Jane Westbay, with Navy Fleet and Family Readiness who coordinates Navy Chess. “There were upsets and close games. Some real nail biters. Going into the final round, three players were guaranteed a spot on the 2011 Navy Chess Team and the other competitors were in a close race for the final three spots.”

Breis has secured one of those three spots. The 2011 Navy Chess Qualifier was a five round Swiss format tournament commencing on April 29 and ending May 1. There were 12 competitors, 11 Navy and one Coast Guard, playing for the six spots on the 2011 Navy Chess Team. These six servicemen will compete at the Inter-service Chess tournament from June 12 to 17, a seven round Swiss format tournament. The winner will go on to be part of the U.S.-led Team that will play at the NATO Chess Championship in Lithuania in August.

Breis has been in the Coast Guard for over five years and in Kodiak for about two and a half, serving as a machinery technician aboard the 378-foot Coast Guard Cutter Munro. He took up chess 15 years ago in Valdez and learned by watching other players.

“I play chess because I want to get better and I enjoy it because it presents a new challenge every time I play,” said Bries.

Bries won the 2010 King Crab Chess Tournament held in Kodiak. He also won the 2009 Rendezvous Chess Tournament in Anchorage and was the 2008 Alaska State Chess Champion. He tied for 1st place in the 2008 Labor Day Open also held in Anchorage.

Navy finished the inter-service tournament in third place last year, with just a couple of points keeping them out of first. The NATO Chess Tournament draws participants from 20 countries. The 2010 championship was the 21st to be held and was conducted in Køge, Denmark. Germany won with 21 points and the U.S. Team was 7th with 15 points.

Tags: [Coast Guard Cutter Munro](#) · [Navy Chess Team](#) · [Petty Officer 3rd Class Marvin Breis](#)

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Sasebo sailor headed to NATO Chess Championship

by
Matthew M. Burke
• • July 16, 2011



Petty Officer 1st Class Albertryan Hernandez, of the USS Denver, competes in the Interservice Chess Championship in June at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. Hernandez placed second at the tournament and will represent the U.S. Armed Forces in the NATO Chess Championship next month in Lithuania. (Photo courtesy of Ronna Anabel Hernandez)

SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan — Petty Officer 1st Class Albertryan Hernandez finished second in a military-wide chess tournament in June, earning a coveted seat on the six-person U.S. military team that will compete at a NATO tournament next month — quite an accomplishment considering he hadn't played seriously in 11 years.

Hernandez, who joined the Navy in 1999, said deployments and finding people to play against have hampered his ability to sharpen his chess skills throughout his career.

"I'm looking forward to [competing in the NATO Championship] but it hasn't really sunk in yet," he said this week aboard the USS Denver. "We're working seven days a week ... When I get the orders to go to Lithuania then it will."

The NATO Chess Championship takes place Aug. 8-12 in Kaunas, Lithuania, with teams from around the world competing. To get there, Hernandez said, the Navy paid his way to the Navy Chess Qualifier at Naval Air Station Meridian, Miss., in April and to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., last month for the Interservice Chess Championship, where he placed high enough at each to advance to the NATO tournament.

"It's a big deal to make the NATO team," Jane Westbay, spokeswoman for U.S. Navy Chess, said in an email to Stripes. "You've got to be playing some really good chess to make it, and everyone playing at Interservice wants to go."

It's an honor to get to travel to Europe and play against some of the best military chess players there are."

Hernandez — who grew up splitting time between New York and the Philippines — learned to play chess from his father, Abelino, in the Philippines when he was 17. His father, an accomplished player, taught his son the game, but not the strategy. The two would play three games a night. The father would "trounce" his son, thus motivating the high schooler to learn the game.

When he moved back to New York City in 1998, Hernandez spent his time at Washington Square Park, following in the footsteps of the legendary Bobby Fischer. He pored over books on chess and played the most talented players he could find, including two international masters. He beat one of them on his way to becoming rated as a U.S. Chess Federation Master.

"I spent a lot of time playing in Washington Square Park," Hernandez said. "I know a lot of people that [Bobby Fischer] played."

Then one night, Hernandez took two of three games from his father. They never played each other again. Abelino died in 2001.

He said his father would be proud of his most recent accomplishment.

"I'll be playing some of the best in the world," Hernandez was quoted in the Navy release as saying. "And regardless of the outcome, I'm just really happy to have this opportunity and represent my ship and the Navy as a whole."

burkem@pstripes.osd.mil

U.S. military team members for NATO tournament:

Petty Officer 3rd Class Mario Vinoya Jr., Naval Medical Center San Diego

Petty Officer 1st Class Albertryan Hernandez, USS Denver, Sasebo, Japan

Master Sgt. Robert Bucholz, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Master Sgt. Nate Ola, Buckley Air Force Base, Aurora, Colo.

Master Gunnery Sgt. James Adkins, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Staff Sgt. Daniel Fissel, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, N.C.

Migrated



Matthew M. Burke

Matthew M. Burke has been reporting from Okinawa for Stars and Stripes since 2014. The Massachusetts native and UMass Amherst alumnus previously covered Sasebo Naval Base and Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, for the newspaper. His work has also appeared in the Boston Globe, Cape Cod Times and other publications.