

TWENTY YEARS OF SUPSHIP QUALITY ASSURANCE WORKSHOPS

The NAVSEA/SUPSHIP Quality Assurance Officers/Directors Conference has a long and prestigious history of being a dynamic group comprised of forward-thinking leaders promoting communication and process improvement in the shipbuilding/repair community. Over the past twenty years, the conference has successfully transitioned from single quality focus to an all encompassing business and process improvement visionary group. Our membership has changed through the years from consisting mainly of SUPSHIP and Contractor QA Directors to include all stakeholders, customers, and suppliers. We may be the oldest existing working group in SUPSHIP. Over the next twenty years we will continue to refocus our efforts to the ever-changing environment. Currently, the group is expanding to enlist the participation and expertise of the Naval Shipyard community. The following is brief look at our past twenty-year history. It does not do justice to the individuals who help create such a successful working group, as they are too numerous to mention. In the late 1970's, we were called the NAVSEA/SUPSHIP QA Directors Conference. Our purpose was to address specific issues concerning SUPSHIP oversight and discuss how we were doing business as a community with our SUPSHIP counterparts. Contractors were also invited, but were limited to a separate meeting addressing only contractor issues. The main contractor representation was from the Shipbuilders Council of America. Some major accomplishments from these early meetings included the rewrite of SACAM and SRCM to NAVMATINST 4355.69A and the issuance of the NAVSEA Repair Forum Questions and Answers commonly known as the "Blue Book". NAVMATINST 4355.69A guidelines brought us in-line with DCAS oversight policies and the "Blue Book" clarified many government/contractor QA policies for repair.

As the years progressed, the conference format changed to more of a workshop environment. Specific issues were brought to the meeting and distributed to smaller workshop groups to brainstorm and present recommendations to the overall workshop. These workshops were geared toward internal SUPSHIP issues which led to having government only meetings. The workshops were instrumental in bringing SUPSHIP QA issues to NAVSEA attention such as identifying BOC standardization concerns.

In the late 1980's, we returned to inviting the contractors to the workshop. As the shipbuilding community faced reduced contracts, downsizing issues, realignments, and the cultural changes needed to implement Total Quality Leadership, the need for total community involvement was realized. Various customers and stakeholders were needed if we were to move forward in this changing environment. This led to many of our workshops being dedicated to cultural change, i.e., develop trust, reduce adversarial relationships, increase teamwork, and focus on customer satisfaction.

Our first charter was developed at SUPSHIP JAX around 1993. This charter provided linkage to the SUPSHIP Board of Directors identified our expanding membership, our vision, purpose, focus areas, and coordination issues. Through our charter, we have become a model for other public and private sector working groups to improve communication, interaction, and focus on resolving hard issues through teamwork. God Bless America!