



**CAPTAIN MICHELLE J. HOWARD
UNITED STATES NAVY**

Captain Michelle Howard graduated from Gateway High School in Aurora, Colorado in 1978. She graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1982 with a Bachelors of Science, and from the Army's Command and General Staff College in June 1998, with a Masters in Military Arts and Sciences.

Her initial shipboard assignments include USS HUNLEY (AS 31) and USS LEXINGTON (AVT 16). While serving onboard the LEXINGTON, she received the Secretary of the Navy/Navy League Captain WINIFRED COLLINS award in May 1987. This award is given to one woman officer a year for outstanding leadership.

From 1987 to 1990, she was as an instructor and later course coordinator at the STEAM Engineering Officer of the Watch (EOOW) course in Coronado, California. Captain Howard was a Distinguished Graduate from Department Head School in September 1990.

She reported to USS MOUNT HOOD (AE 29) as Chief Engineer in 1990 and deployed to the Persian Gulf for Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. She assumed duties as First Lieutenant onboard the USS FLINT (AE 32) in July 1992.

In December 1993, she rotated to the Bureau of Personnel, as the Navy's liaison to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Military Services. Captain Howard was also the action officer for the assignment of women in the Navy policy.

In January 1996, she became the Executive Officer of USS TORTUGA (LSD 46). She was the first woman in the Navy to be assigned duties as XO of a combatant. During her tour, the ship deployed to the Adriatic Sea in support of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, a peacekeeping effort in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. Sixty days after returning from the Mediterranean deployment, TORTUGA departed on a West African Training Cruise, where the ship's Sailors, with embarked Marines and US Coast Guard detachment, operated with the naval services of seven African nations.

When she assumed command of USS RUSHMORE (LSD 47) on 12 March 1999, Captain Howard became the first African American woman to command a ship in the US Navy. RUSHMORE is the Navy's only Amphibious "Smart Ship". The "Smart Ship" concept integrates and evaluates commercial off the shelf technologies for future fleet application. In December 1999, RUSHMORE became the first Smart Ship to complete a six-month deployment.

In November 2000, she was assigned to J-3, Global Operations, Readiness on the Joint Staff in the Pentagon. She later served as the Executive Assistant to the Joint Staff Director of Operations from February 2003 to February 2004.

Captain Howard served as Commander, Amphibious Squadron SEVEN from May 2004 to September 2005. Deploying with Expeditionary Strike Group Five, the Group's operations included Tsunami Relief support in Indonesia.

Captain Howard currently is assigned as Deputy Director N3 on the OPNAV Staff.