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MEET ET3 HARRIS

Inventor, pilot, carpenter, Sailor

What do remodeling houses, building custom furniture, flying airplanes, inventing power tools, and eating a teaspoon of cinnamon in under a minute all have in common?

Electronics Technician 3rd Class Roy Harris is an expert at all of them.

Growing up in Mayport, NY, Harris developed unique hobbies early on. Since he was an only child, Harris learned that he had to make his own entertainment, which is how he got started reading textbooks and dictionaries.

“It’s sort of a hobby of mine to learn about different fields,” said Harris. “I used to read textbooks from classes I wasn’t enrolled in just to learn on my own.”

It wasn’t all about academics for Harris; he also spent a lot of his time helping his father work on re-facing kitchens and building furniture, a skill that he honed while working on nearly 400 kitchens in New York.

Harris’s father, an ex-Army electrician, eventually began teaching him about electronics, something that would begin to define his life. Once he mastered the basics, Harris started finding practical applications for his newfound skill.

“I started building little inventions to make our job easier,” said Harris. “I just kept it as a hobby and kept inventing things.”

As his interest in electricity grew, so did his interest in a diverse range of other hobbies—namely his dream to fly. While he was attending the Brookhaven Career Center School for electronics, he decided he would take flying lessons and attempt to earn his pilot’s license.

Harris said that on his first day of flight school the instructor told half of the class to stand up. That half of the class, the instructor told them, would probably fail. The half sitting down was also likely to fail. Harris did not fail. Instead he became one of four out of the original 25 students who ended up earning their license from the class.

“My first solo flight was hard to describe,” said Harris. “It was a really proud moment for me.”

When Harris decided to join the Navy, his love of electronics trumped his love of flying, and he became an electronics technician. Since joining the rate, Harris has kept his love of inventing alive. In his designated “lab” at home, he has invented everything from a belt that lights up when fastened, a thermos that cools itself, and a replica of the “proton pack” from the movie *Ghost Busters*.

He also invented a tool for testing the amplifiers and toners on Navy sound-powered phones, an invention he plans on submitting to the Military Cash Awards Program (MILCAP), an incentives program that awards inventors up to \$25,000 for ideas that will benefit the Navy.

“I like to try to make tools that are useful to people when I’m not just having fun,” Harris said of his inventions. “Right now I’m working on a way to keep camelbacks cool.”

Harris’s hobbies and skills have all come in handy since he joined the Navy. His skill for inventing tools is helpful for his job with USS Theodore Roosevelt’s (CVN 71) Combat Systems



Electronics Technician 3rd Class Roy Harris shows off his latest invention, a portable cooler designed to keep Camelbaks cold, in his work center onboard USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) Sept. 26.

department, since the ship’s current work environment is very industrial and requires a lot of maintenance and upkeep.

Another skill that Harris gets to use on a daily basis is his love for entertaining people. Since workdays are longer on the ship and the work is getting harder in his division, Harris says he always tries to keep up a good attitude and entertain those around him. Sometimes with jokes, other times with unusual skills, such as completing the “cinnamon challenge,” which consists of eating a teaspoon of cinnamon in under one minute.

“I’m kind of the ‘class clown’ for my division,” admitted Harris.

Harris said he has not yet decided whether he will make the Navy a career, but he is sure that no matter where he ends up he will never stop inventing things. He also plans someday to buy his own airplane for recreational use, as well as, upgrade his home laboratory to be able to handle more electricity.

MC2 Rooney is currently trying to find TR’s most interesting Sailor. If you know of a Sailor with unique hobbies or an interesting background (or if you think you are the most interesting person on the ship) please contact Rooney at rooney.austin@cvn71.navy.mil, or call the Media Department at 4-1406.