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Local Reservist to Command U.S. Base in Africa

Submitted by Robin Bertelsen



Captain Kevin Bertelsen Photo provided

A Navy Reservist from Orinda will soon take command of the United States' only military base in Africa. Captain Kevin Bertelsen, will take command of the Navy Expeditionary Base Camp Lemonnier in the small East African country of Djibouti in mid-May.

Camp Lemonnier is the only U.S. military base located in Africa supporting operations geared toward building security, sovereignty, and stability in the region. It supports various counterterrorism and regional capacity building activities. The base gained notoriety recently when it was at the center of the commando raid on January 25 by a Navy Seal team to free an American and a Danish aid worker taken hostage by Somali pirates.

Captain Bertelsen is a Naval Aviator, commissioned in 1987, flying the P-3 Orion Submarine Hunter while on active duty. He has previously commanded two Navy Reserve units, at Naval Station Newport, R.I., and at Naval Air Station, Whidbey Island, Wash. He recently returned in September 2011 from a two-year recall to active duty with the US Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, serving in both Djibouti and Kenya. This recall to active duty came as a surprise: No Navy reservist has ever been selected to command an active U.S. Navy base. Captain Bertelsen will serve as the Base commander until May 2013.

Captain Bertelsen has lived in Orinda since 2003. He has two sons. His oldest, Spencer, is a junior at Southern Oregon University, and his youngest, Carter, is a junior at Miramonte, where he plays varsity lacrosse. Captain Bertelsen's wife, Robin, is a social media marketing consultant as well as an active member of the EFO Board.

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