

Headed to Honolulu

Jan. 3, 2018

Hayley Betker will serve on the bridge of the NOAA ship Hi'ialakai



Spartan Engineer Hayley Betker ('14) is headed to a Hawaiian adventure - spending her next few years serving on the bridge of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Ship Hi'ialakai.

The Hi'ialakai is a NOAA dive platform, stationed in Honolulu.

"We are one of 16 ships in the NOAA fleet. Our mission is oceanographic research including coral reef ecosystem mapping, coral reef health and fish stock studies, and maritime heritage surveys," she said. "One of our ship's specialty missions is observing the Monk Seal population on the northern islands of Hawaii. We'll spend 160-180 days a year at sea, depending on the projects."

Betker recently graduated from basic officer training at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

"Prior to getting assigned to the Hi'ialakai, 16 shipmates and I went through a blended OCS/BOTC military training program along side 80 USCG candidates in New London, Connecticut, for 19 weeks. With the completion of the training, I am now qualified to drive 100-ton ships and certified in Advanced Fire Fighting, CPR/AED/First Aid, Seas Survival, and Fast Rescue Boat."

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Published on College of Engineering, Michigan State University (<https://www.egr.msu.edu>)



Betker graduated from MSU in December 2014 with a bachelor's degree in environmental engineering. Her adviser was Susan Masten, professor of civil and environmental engineering.

"After graduating from MSU, I worked at Ford Motor Company as an applications engineer for two years. I realized that I didn't enjoy just doing one environmental job; I wanted to do all of them -- from hands on work, to leading, designing, and managing. I heard about NOAA from a friend and it had everything I wanted, including the adventure."

Betker's career goal is to be stationed on a research ship as she works through the ranks until she can command her own ship in about 15 years.

"In between the sea tours, I hope to get into the NOAA Office of Response and Restoration Department, where I will be able to use my engineering degree to help mitigate and respond to natural and man made disasters in the environment," she added.



She is a 2010 graduate of Petoskey High School.

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