



An employer of choice, Navy stands alongside Google, AT&T

PRESS RELEASE

From Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

WASHINGTON — Navy is the first in the Department of Defense and the second government agency in 19 years to earn recognition as Workforce Management Magazine's Optimas Award winner in "General Excellence."

The award recognizes achievement in at least six of nine areas including competitive advantage, financial impact, global outlook, innovation, managing change, partnership, ethical practice, service and vision. Navy joins past winners such as Google, Intel, Hewlett Packard and AT&T as employers who are leaders in developing management initiatives that directly affect business results.

"Earning the award is truly a tremendous achievement," said Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson, the chief of naval personnel. "However, it isn't the recognition that is most important — it is the opportunities and benefits these programs offer our Sailors in areas that are important to their personal and professional success."

In announcing the 2009 Optimas Awards, the editors of Workforce Management Magazine highlighted Navy's Assignment Incentive Pay Program (AIP), an online assignment process through which Sailors are encouraged to volunteer for hard-to-fill assignments by leveraging a more direct role in their career path management through an incentive pay bidding system.

Editors also praised Navy's

See EMPLOYER, A15

NAS Oceana wins regional 2009 Installation Excellence Award

BY KELLEY STIRLING

Naval Air Station Oceana Public Affairs

Commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic awarded Naval Air Station Oceana the 2009 Installation Excellence Award, making NAS Oceana the Mid-Atlantic region's nominee for the Commander, Naval Installation Command's Installation Award.

"We are very proud to be the Mid-Atlantic region's nominee for the CNIC Installation Excellence Award," said NAS Oceana Commanding Officer Capt. Mark Rich. "I believe it validates the tremendous efforts that the Sailors and Marines here at Oceana put in every single day."

All the installations in the Mid-Atlantic Region submitted three-page summaries describing what that base has done in the last year in several categories, such as business process improvement, quality of life, community relations and environmental stewardship.

Some highlights from Oceana's submission include the completion of the Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) at Dam Neck An-

nex, which also led to the 2009 Presidential Award for Leadership in Federal Energy Management. Phase II of that contract was awarded this year and is expected to save almost \$5 million in energy each year in energy consumption at Oceana.

"With these energy savings measures in place, Oceana will be using less than 50 percent of the energy that we used in 2003," said Andrew Porter, Oceana deputy public works officer at the recent groundbreaking ceremony of the ESPC Phase II.

Besides environmental stewardship, Oceana public works teamed up with bachelor housing to find ways to improve the Bachelor Enlisted Quarters (BEQ) on both Oceana and Dam Neck Annex. Three extremely deteriorated BEQ buildings were demolished with more than 500 pieces of furniture either re-distributed to other installations or donated to local families in need through the Veteran's Administration.

Recreation and fitness were a repeat throughout the Oceana summary, with Morale, Welfare and

Recreation programs for Oceana and Dam Neck Annex providing a vast array of facilities, services and activities used by more than 1.2 million patrons this year. These programs are not limited only to the traditional fitness and recreation facilities, but also encompass riding stables, a skeet range, an RV Park and beach cottages.

The winner of the CNIC Installation Excellence Award will be nominated for the Commander's in Chief Annual Award for Installation Excellence which recognizes that "excellent installations enable better mission performance and enhance the quality of life for military men and women and their families," according to a news release announcing last year's winner.

"The Naval Air Station Oceana team has set the standard for overall excellence in the region over the past year. I am proud to nominate them for the Installation Excellence Award and I am very confident that they will compete well in the Commander Navy Installations Command-wide competition," said Rear Adm. Mark S. Boensel, Commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic.



Photo by MC2 Miguel Angel Contreras

USS Enterprise (CVN 65) service members decorate a Christmas tree with paper angels aboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower

USS Enterprise Angel Tree program gives gifts of joy

BY MC3 (SW) TRACEY WHITLEY

USS Enterprise (CVN 65)

NEWPORT NEWS — USS Enterprise (CVN 65) Religious Ministries Department (RMD) has launched the Angel Tree program, designed to privately provide financially stressed junior Sailors with gifts for their children during the holiday season.

"It's a great way to discreetly help out a shipmate in need," said Religious Programs Specialist 2nd Class Hayk Alciyan. "There's nothing that feels better around the holidays than helping others."

Participants fill out a paper angel with information about their child, like their age and a few gift suggestions. All participants' names are kept private by RMD.

The paper angels will be placed on a Christmas tree in the ship's library. Those who wish to donate will take an angel from the tree and deliver

See ANGEL TREE, A15

Bataan Amphibious Ready Group to return home



Photo by MC2 Julio Rivera

NORFOLK — Nearly 3,200 Sailors and Marines from the Bataan Amphibious Ready Group (ARG)/22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) will return from a regularly-scheduled seven-month deployment to the Navy's 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operation in support of maritime security operations (MSO), and Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) Tuesday, Dec 8.

See BATAAN, A10

Commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command visits 5th Fleet Sailors

BY MC2 NATHAN SCHAEFFER

U.S. Fleet Forces Command

MANAMA, Bahrain — The commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command took time from his tour of the U.S. 5th Fleet Area of Operations on Nov. 25 to meet with Sailors in Bahrain.

Individual Augmentees (IA) assigned to support the Navy's efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan were a specific group Adm. J.C. Harvey Jr. sought to hear from and to address their concerns.

"It was time for me now to put my eyes on the target out here and be sure I understand exactly what we are asking our Sailors to do," stated Harvey. "It's important for me to see how they are doing it, and what else we can do to improve their training and conditions."

Earlier in the day, Harvey visited the Al Basrah Oil Terminal, where he met with Sailors assigned with the primary responsibility of security and protection of the terminal. The Khawr Al Amaya and Al Basrah terminals are significant sources of revenue for the Iraqi people, and their operation contributes to the reconstruction of the Iraqi economy. Coalition maritime vessels have been providing security for the oil terminals since they were secured by coalition forces in March 2003 during the early stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Iraqi naval and security forces have been integrated into maritime security operations inside their territorial waters with coalition maritime forces and alongside U.S. naval security personnel on the



Photo by MC2 Nathan Schaeffer

Adm. J.C. Harvey Jr., commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, tours the Department of Defense Dependent School in Bahrain. Harvey is visiting the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility during the Thanksgiving Day holiday season to meet with senior military leaders and thank Sailors for their service.

oil terminals themselves.

"I was extraordinarily impressed by what I saw out there, to include the teamwork of not just the U.S. Navy, but also the Royal Navy, U.S. Coast Guard and Iraqi Marines. It is a very uplifting sight to see. My morale was raised spectacularly by going out there and seeing our Sailors at work on such an important job."



Photo by Lt. Matt Allen

Adm. J.C. Harvey Jr., left, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, and Chief Master-at-Arms James Curby, assigned to Maritime Expeditionary Security Detachment 823, discuss platform operations aboard the Al Basra Oil Terminal. The security detachment protects the terminal and trains the Iraqi marines stationed there. Harvey is making his first visit with deployed Sailors in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility since taking command last July.

Harvey wished Sailors around the region a safe and happy holiday season and thanked them for their significant contributions in helping to bring stability and prosperity to the region by supporting maritime security operations. During his visit, he emphasized the critical role being played by Individual Augmentees in the Central Command Area of Operations.

"The success of our IA members in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait in a multitude of assignments that were never envisioned just two or three years ago fills me with extraordinary pride. Not

only that, it builds pride and is the foundation for the success that we are achieving in so many of these efforts all across this region."

During the visit, Harvey also toured the Department of Defense Bahrain School, which at the start of the school year saw the return of military dependents to the hallways for the first time in more than four years.

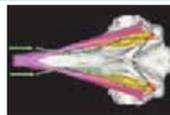
Harvey began a tour of the Naval Forces Central Command Area of Operations Nov. 23 to meet with Sailors during the Thanksgiving Day holiday season.

INSIDE:

NEW WHALE DISCOVERY

A7

Rocket science leads to new whale discovery
Discovering how sounds associated with Navy sonar might affect the hearing of a marine mammals.



FRONT & CENTER

B8

Bataan celebrating Thanksgiving
Bataan service members celebrate Thanksgiving on their way home from a seven-month deployment.



OFF DUTY

C1

'Tis the season
Celebrate the festive holiday season in Hampton Roads with tons of events across the seven cities.





Official U.S. Navy Photograph

Pearl Harbor Attack, December 7, 1941 — USS Arizona (BB-39) sunk and burning furiously, that horrific Sunday. Her forward magazines had exploded when she was hit by a Japanese bomb. At left, men on the stern of USS Tennessee (BB-43) are spraying fire hoses on the water to force burning oil away from their ship.

Annual Pearl Harbor survivor's remembrance ceremony to be held at Joint Expeditionary Base

PRESS RELEASE

JEB Little Creek-Fort Story
Public Affairs Office

VIRGINIA BEACH — “A date that will live in infamy” was coined by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt following the harsh attack on the U.S. Navy Base Pearl Harbor in 1941 by the Japanese Navy. Members of the local Tidewater Chapter 2, Pearl Harbor Survivors Association live with that mantra every day and continue to promote “never forget Pearl Harbor” as they speak to local groups and school kids throughout the area.

The Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story will honor the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in that attack by hosting the Annual Pearl Harbor Survivors Remembrance Ceremony on December 7. This marks the 68th anniversary of the 1941 attack where more than 3,600 service men were wounded or lost their lives. This single attack propelled the United States into World War II.

The service at the Joint Expeditionary Base will begin promptly at

12:55 p.m., reflecting the exact time of day of the Japanese attack in 1941. It will be held at the Pearl Harbor Monument located on Nider Blvd. across from the Personnel Support Detachment on base. Active duty members from each military service and members of the Tidewater Association will be in attendance.

“We, in military uniform, live our history and heritage each day and the legacy left to us by those Pearl Harbor veterans who sacrificed their lives to protect our freedoms must not be lost in the annals of history,” stated Captain Bill Crow, Commander, JEB Little Creek-Fort Story. “We must continue to remember and educate our youth that freedom is not free. The harsh reminder of that is the attack on our country on September 11, 2001. We can not let our guard down.”

Guest speakers for the service will be Rear Adm. Wayne E. Justice, Commander, Coast Guard Fifth District and Fireman Apprentice Jordan Sanderson, a recent graduate of Coast Guard basic training. In addition, local dignitaries and

senior officers from several area military installations will be on hand to commemorate the sacrifices and contributions made by the Pearl Harbor veterans.

“I encourage and personally invite all the military personnel in Hampton Roads, retirees and family members to join us in honoring these true American heroes,” said Crow. “Please share this time with us and also take time to shake the hand of a Pearl Harbor survivor while you still have this opportunity. I guarantee you that it will be a moment you will never forget!”

The Pearl Harbor memorial was built and dedicated in 1990 by the PHSA Tidewater Chapter 2. An expansion to the monument was completed in 2001 which includes 184 names of known local survivors of the attack. In addition to the granite marker, the association has also planted trees around the memorial with each tree dedicated to a member of the Chapter who has passed away. There are 28 survivors remaining associated with the local PHSA.

THE FLAGSHIP'S LEEWARD SHOUT

What was your reason for enlisting in the Navy?



“The reason I joined the military is to make a difference. The guys who went before me did their time and now it's time for us to do ours.”

CS1
Demetrius Fitts
USS Metzger



“I joined the Navy because I wanted to follow family tradition and serve my country.”

OS1
David Hemlock
ACU Gravelly



“The reason that I joined the Navy was to provide freedom to all of my friends and family and everyone else in the United States.”

DC2
Michael Vaughn
TPU Norfolk



“At a young age I knew I wasn't disciplined enough for college, so I decided to join the military and do college later.”

SH1
Cory Wallace
CSS Learning Site



“I joined the military to better myself as a person.”

MASN
Dexter Howard
Sewell's Point Police Precinct



“I joined the Navy to set a good example for my brother.”

SC3
Rachel Lee
PCD Norfolk

Photos by SA Brian Auker

Commander Navy Region
Mid-Atlantic is:
Rear Adm. Mark S. Boensel

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Wasp volunteers give Jamaican school a fresh coat of paint

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
MC1 AMIE GONZALES

USS Wasp (LHD 1)/DESRON 40
Public Affairs

OCHO RIOS, Jamaica — Sailors and Marines from Task Group 40.7 traveled to Parry Town Basic School in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, to help paint classrooms, Nov. 20.

Task Group 40.7 sent numerous personnel and supplies to the island nation Nov. 19 – 20 as the USS Wasp (LHD 1) steamed just off the coast in support of Southern Partnership Station-Amphib 2009 (SPS).

“I think it is awesome, it is going to be a tremendous help, and we have wanted to paint the inside of our classrooms for a long time now,” said Parry Town Basic School Principal Claudette Forsythe. “It will do so much for the children because they learn better in a clean environment. It is really very awesome and we appreciate it a whole lot.”

The 33 volunteers used paint and supplies provided by the U.S. Embassy in Jamaica. With help from some of the children who attend

the school, they were able to paint 12 of the classrooms, which hold grades one through six for local children.

For Aviation Support Equipment Technician 1st Class Petagaye Blair, a native of Manchester, Jamaica, it was a chance to come home and give back to her country. When talking with the children Blair passed along words of encouragement and stressed the importance of staying in school and striving to do your best.

“Words can’t explain it,” said Blair, who had not been back to Jamaica in two years. “To come back and give something back, it means a lot and even though I’m not seeing my family, I’m able to help out somebody else, because we are just one big family. I love it.”

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Jason Service, a native of St. Catherine, Jamaica, said showing pride in the Jamaican culture was a driving force in his desire to “give back.”

“There’s nothing better than being able to come back to your country and do something posi-

tive,” said Service, who has been away from Jamaica for six years. “It’s not just coming to visit, but coming to give something back, even if it’s in small ways ... to further show [pride in] where we come from. That’s the biggest thing.”

When the children of Parry Town Basic School return to class, they will come back to clean and freshly painted rooms of yellow and blue, and the knowledge that the U.S. Navy cared enough to do this just for them.

“It’s great. It is giving back,” said Forsythe. “I think that is really awesome that they have decided to come and help. It’s not their part of the country but that doesn’t matter – it’s Jamaica.”

Wasp is currently deployed on SPS-Amphib 2009 with Destroyer Squadron 40 and embarked Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force. SPS is part of the Partnership of the Americas Maritime Strategy that focuses on building interoperability and cooperation in the region to meet common challenges.



Aviation Support Technician 1st Class Petagaye Blair, a native of Manchester Jamaica, paints the inside of a classroom at Perry Town Basic School in Ocho Rios during a USS Wasp (LHD 1) community relations project.



Electronics Technician 2nd Class Geoffrey Donnelly shares his lunch with a local Jamaican boy at the Perry Town Basic School, where volunteers from USS Wasp (LHD 1) painted classrooms as part of a community relations project in Ocho Rios, Jamaica.



Ship's Serviceman 2nd Class Natasha Feliciano paints the door to one of the classrooms at Perry Town Basic School in Ocho Rios, Jamaica during a USS Wasp (LHD 1) community relations project.

Local service times

LDS PROGRAMS

JEB Little Creek Chapel Worship Schedule:
Noon — Sun. Worship (Chapel Annex Classroom 4)
8 p.m. — Wed. Bible Study
(Chapel Annex Classroom 4)

NAVAL STATION NORFOLK

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Our Lady of Victory Chapel

Mass Schedule:

5 p.m. — Sat.

(fulfills Sunday obligation)

10 a.m. — Sun.

11:45 a.m. — Mon.- Fri.

(except holidays)

Confessions:

4:15 p.m. Sat.

PROTESTANT

David Adams Memorial

Chapel Worship Services:

10:30 a.m. — Sun.

Worship

Wednesday Services:

8:30 - 10:15 a.m. — Bible

Study Noon "Lunch

with the Lord"

**For more information call
Naval Station Norfolk Chapel 444-7361**

JEWISH PROGRAMS

Commodore Uraih P. Levy Chapel: Jewish services are at Norfolk chapel in Building C7 on the Second Floor every Friday at 7:30 p.m. Building C7 is located at 1630 Morris St. on Naval Base Norfolk. For more information call 444-7361 or 7363.

MUSLIM PROGRAMS

Masjid al Da'wah

2nd Floor (Bldg. C-7): Muslim services are at Norfolk chapel every Friday at 1:30 p.m.

JEB LITTLE CREEK CHAPEL

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Mass Schedule:

5 p.m. — Sat.

(fulfills Sunday obligation)

9 a.m. & 12:15 p.m. — Sun.

11:30 a.m. — Tues. - Fri.

(except holidays)

Confessions:

3:30 - 4:30 p.m. — Sat.

PROTESTANT

9 a.m. — Sun. School

(4 years-Adult)

10:30 a.m. — Sun.

Divine Worship,

Children's Church

(Ages 4-10)

PWOC: Bible Study at the Chapel Annex Every Wed.

Fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Bible Study: 10 a.m. - noon

PWOC: Evening Bible Study Every Mon.: 7 p.m.

Latter Day Saints

11:30 a.m. — Sun.

Coffeehouse

6 p.m. — Sun.

**For more information call JEB
Little Creek Chapel 462-7427**

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Are you a junkie for the latest news?

BY LT. CMDR. CLINT PICKETT CHC

Director, CREDO NE

Are you a news junkie? Do you have a compulsion to check out the newest, late-breaking news? I have to admit that I tend to take a glance at some of the various news sites on the Internet a couple of times a day. But I am not a junkie, though, just aware of current events. I read an interesting article once (I wish I could remember the source!) about the pitfalls of being caught up in what we often find in daily news sources, such as television or newspapers.

Bad news is a good thing in the news business, because bad news gets people's attention. The article used the war in Iraq as an example. For the longest time, whenever a soldier was killed or wounded, we heard about it. Now, any death we suffer over there is a tragic thing. But what doesn't get reported with bold headlines is anything that happened to go right on any particular day. We don't often find news stories about power being restored, or

hospitals being repaired, or pipelines constructed, or teachers being hired.

A hundred good things might occur, touching thousands of lives, and we seldom hear about them. And what happens to last week's headline? Who remembers, or who can follow up? Focusing exclusively on the stream of individual daily events can cause us to lose sight of the big picture. The author of the article suggested forgetting about daily news altogether, and getting our information from periodicals or books. Sources such as these give us a bigger perspective of what is going on in our world, and where we might be heading.

I think that perspective can be very helpful in our personal lives, as well. How often do we tend to focus on a single event that might happen in our day, usually a negative event? Maybe it could be a hurtful remark by a significant other or a friend. We can let that single "headline event" overshadow all the little good things that might have happened on that same day. The sun setting in splendor over the bay,

a phone call from a good friend you haven't heard from in a while, a word of praise and thanks from our boss.

And, instead of getting lost in the "headlines" of each day, we can look at the big picture of what is going on in our lives. Looking back over the past few months or years can help us get a better picture of where our lives are going. I know that I can see how God is working in my life if I take a bigger perspective, instead of getting lost in the flow of individual days.

If we are working towards a goal, taking the longer view can help as well. We can see an overall progress and not be discouraged over the occasional set back on any particular day. One of my favorite Bible verses is from Jeremiah, "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." (NRSV Jer. 29:11) God always sees the big picture. Living in faith and trust in his guidance, God will set us free from the occasional daily setback, to give us a future with hope, indeed!

Italian Armed Forces Day, Naval Air Station Sigonella



Photo by MC2 Jason T. Poplin

U.S. Navy Chaplain Cmdr. Alfonso Concha offers communion to Sailors of Naval Air Station Sigonella and members of the church of Parrocchia S. Antonio during a Roman Catholic service to celebrate Italian Armed Forces Day and the anniversary of the end of World War I. The celebration, which includes a procession through the town of Motta Sant'Anastasia with members of the Italian Military and Police forces, veterans associations and town council members, is an annual event to honor fallen service members and commemorates the signing of the armistice between Italy and Austria.

General Petraeus with Nimitz on Thanksgiving

BY MC3 J.D. LEVITE
USS Nimitz Public Affairs

USS NIMITZ, Gulf of Oman — The commander of U.S. Central Command celebrated the Thanksgiving holiday at sea with the crew of the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68).

Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, the four-star general responsible for U.S. operations in 20 countries from Egypt, to Central Asia and the entire Middle East, joined the crew at the mid-point of her 8-month Western Pacific deployment operating in direct support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan.

"It's a unique American holiday," Petraeus said. "And to spend it on a unique piece of American turf — a ship that no other country can match — really makes it an enjoyable and memorable experience."

Minutes after arrival, Petraeus worked his way down ladder wells and through passageways to conduct re-enlistments and present awards to Nimitz Sailors in the ship's fo'c's'le.

Petraeus also had the opportunity to see flight operations from the aviators' perspective when he stepped into an F/A-18F Super Hornet from the "Black Aces" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 41 with Capt. Scott Conn, deputy commander of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 11.

"It really was awesome to experience a bit of that today, to have that Top Gun moment," said Petraeus. "To being shot off the deck and make a pretty quick landing and see again the extraordinary work that you do."

Petraeus took a helo over to visit Sailors aboard the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Sampson (DDG 102). Returning to Nimitz, Petraeus carved a turkey for Nimitz crew members for a memorable Thanksgiving dinner.

In addition to 1,000 pounds of traditional Thanksgiving turkeys, Nimitz' food service team served up 600 pounds of ham, 15 roasted pigs, roast-steamship rounds of beef, broiled lobster, and 150 one

gallon cans of cranberry sauce.

"We brought the turkeys on board prior to leaving San Diego," said Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Kristopher Freyberg. "We wanted to make sure that was the first thing we had since we knew we would be planning for the holidays. We loaded the entire pig on outside of Hawaii, and aside from that, we've been taking it on during replenishment-at-sea little by little."

The day ended with an all hand's call, where Petraeus addressed the entire crew, wanting the Sailors deployed out here to know just how valuable they are.

"Each and every person that wears our country's uniform is indeed, in a sense, 'An Army of One,' or a Sailor of one," said Petraeus. "Each of us has enormous intrinsic worth and can be the most important person in the life of a fellow Sailor or others with whom we work."

Petraeus expressed thanks and gratitude for the job Nimitz Sailors are doing in support of U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan.

"I'm so thankful to be out here with more than 4,000 great Americans who are engaged in important missions and working together to accomplish them," said Petraeus. "There's no greater source of energy than the 4,000 plus members of the crew and air wing that are on one of these great ships."

CVW-11 provides 30 percent of the close air support to coalition forces on the ground in Afghanistan. Since Nimitz arrived in 5th Fleet area of operations, Sept. 18, more than 1,450 sorties have been flown in support of OEF.

Nimitz CSG, commanded by Rear Adm. John W. Miller, is comprised of USS Nimitz, embarked Carrier Air Wing 11, embarked Destroyer Squadron 23, and the Ticonderoga-class cruiser USS Chosin. Ships assigned to DESRON 23 include the destroyers USS Pinckney, USS Sampson and the frigate USS Rentz.

Squadrons from CVW 11 include the "Black Aces" of Strike



Photo by MC3 Matthew Patton

Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), serves Thanksgiving dinner to Sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68). Nimitz and embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 11 are currently deployed to the Central Command area of responsibility conducting operations to reassure regional partners of the United States' commitment to security, stability and global prosperity.



Photo by MC3 Eduardo Zaragoza

Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander, U.S. Central Command, pins warfare specialty devices on the uniforms of Sailors during a ceremony in the fo'c's'le aboard the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) on Thanksgiving day. Nimitz and embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 11 are currently deployed to the Central Command area of responsibility.

Fighter Squadron 41, the "Tophatters" of VFA 14, the "Warhawks" of VFA 97, the "Sidewinders" of VFA 86, the "Indians" of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron 6, the "Black Ravens" of Electronic Attack Squadron 135, the "Providers" of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 30 and the

"Wallbangers" of Carrier Airborne Command and Control Squadron 117.

Helicopter detachments include the "Easy Riders" of Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron Light 37, the "Battle Cats" of HSL 43, the "Wolfpack" of HSL 45, the "Scorpions" of HSL 49 and the

"Wildcards" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 23. Also accompanying the Nimitz CSG are Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 11 and the USNS Bridge (T-AOE 10).

For more news from USS Nimitz (CVN 68), visit www.navy.mil/local/cvn68/.

Navy Recruiters of the Year announced for 2009

BY MC3 JARED M. HILL

Navy Personnel Command
Public Affairs

MILLINGTON, Tenn. — The commander of Navy Recruiting Command announced the Recruiters of the Year for Fiscal Year 2009 in an E-mail to recruiting leadership, Nov. 19.

Rear Adm. Craig Faller, NRC's commander, informed the regional commanders that the selection process for the recruiters of the year was very competitive.

"I extend my heartiest congratulations to all winners and region nominees," wrote Faller. "The board had to make some very tough decisions; each of you should be extremely proud of the significant contributions you have made in support of Navy Recruiting Command."

The 2009 Recruiters of the Year are:

Enlisted Recruiter of the Year - Active

Personnel Specialist 2nd Class (SW) Tyrone Davis - Navy Recruiting District Nashville

Enlisted Recruiter of the Year - Reserve

Logistics Specialist 1st Class Eva Marte - NRD Richmond

Officer Recruiter of the Year - Active

Lt. Derrick Mitchell - NRD Raleigh

Officer Recruiter of the Year - Reserve

Lt. Todd C. Winn - NRD New Orleans

Medical Programs Recruiter of the Year

Lt. Julie Schmidt - NRD New York

Nuclear Propulsion Officer Candidate Recruiter of the Year

Senior Chief Information Systems Technician (SW/AW) Tyrone D. Scafe - NRD Seattle

Nuclear Field Coordinator of the Year

Machinist's Mate 1st Class (SW/AW) Brian Moore - NRD Nashville

Recruiter in Charge of the Year



Photo by MC3 Michael Russell

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Rick D. West speaks with Cyberspace recruiters about bringing qualified people into the Navy during a visit to Navy Recruiting Command.

Gas Turbine System Technician (Mechanical) 2nd Class (SW) Rudy Lopez - NRD Los Angeles

Classifier of the Year

Personnel Specialist 1st Class (SW) Estela J. Makahi - NRD San Francisco

Zone Supervisor of the Year

Chief Navy Counselor (AW/SW/NAC) Jessie L. Jones - NRD Atlanta

Diversity Officer Recruiter of the Year

Lt. Anthony Cosby - NRD San Antonio

Diversity Enlisted Recruiter of the Year

Gas Turbine System Technician (Electrical) 1st Class (SW) Jose Angelo B. David - NRD Los Angeles

NSW/NSO Recruiter of the Year

Steelworker 2nd Class (SCW) Sanjay Prakash - NRD Seattle

NSW/NSO/AIRR Coordinator of the Year

Chief Quartermaster (SW/

SWCC/PJ) Erik P. Kraft - NRD San Francisco

LEADS Production Team Supervisor of the Year

Chief Operations Specialist (SW/AW) Darrell E. Lafrenz - NRD Portland

Support Person of the Year

Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Claudia J. Duncan - NRD Denver

The 15 recruiters of the year will be honored during a week-long program in Washington Jan. 11-15, 2010.

NRC consists of a command headquarters, two Navy Recruiting regions and 26 Navy Recruiting Districts which serve hundreds of recruiting stations across the country.

NRC's mission is to recruit the best men and women for America's Navy to accomplish today's missions and meet tomorrow's challenges.

For more news from Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, visit www.navy.mil/local/cnrc/.



Photo by MC3 Michael Russell

Navy Recruiting Command's 2008 Recruiters of the Year were treated to a tour of Capitol Hill. Navy Recruiting Command hosts the Recruiter of the Year awards program annually in Washington. The program includes meetings with senior Navy leadership, various dignitaries and visits to national historical sites.

Rocket science leads to new whale discovery

PRESS RELEASE

From Office of Naval Research Corporate Strategic Communications

ARLINGTON, Va. — Rocket science is opening new doors to understanding how sounds associated with Navy sonar might affect the hearing of a marine mammal – or if they hear it at all.

The same type of large industrial sized X-ray scanners that NASA uses to detect flaws in the space shuttle’s behemoth solid fuel rockets is now allowing scientists to peek inside the giant head of a whale. The scans are providing detailed three-dimensional replicas of a whale’s hearing anatomy using a breakthrough method developed by Dr. Ted Cranford, a marine biologist sponsored by the Office of Naval Research (ONR) and the Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Readiness Division (N45).

Using a simulated model of a male beaked whale’s head, Cranford’s team at San Diego State University and the University of California at San Diego (UCSD) has unveiled data that suggests mid-frequency active sonar sounds are largely filtered, or “muffled,” before reaching the animal’s ears. The findings also suggest that higher frequencies used by whales to hunt prey are heard at amplified levels without any dampening.

“Even though these findings are promising, our next step is to reproduce the study with a similar species for which hearing tests are available, such as the bottlenose dolphin. If we obtain like results, it will help to validate this new discovery,” said Cranford.

The innovative approach integrates advanced computing, outsized X-ray CT scanners, and modern computational methods (developed by Dr. Petr Krysl at UCSD) to generate the reproductions in minute detail. The simulation, also referred to as a “finite element model” or FEM, accurately describes the interactions of sound with the whale’s hearing anatomy. In addition, it forecasts and analyzes incoming sound received at the ear and provides a description of how different characteristics combine to create movement throughout the ear.

“The simulation technology is powerful because it provides a means to look at a broad range of species, from whales to fish, for which we may not otherwise be able to study hearing,” according to

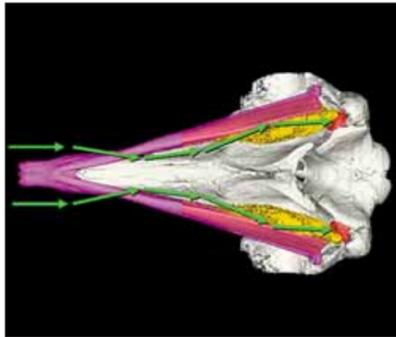


Photo Illustration courtesy of Dr. Ted Cranford

This simulated bottom view of the head of Cuvier’s Beaked Whale is pointing to generalized pathways or “rivers” of sound passing in front, underneath the jaws (magenta), through the fat body (yellow), and to the ears (red). The simulated model, developed by Dr. Ted Cranford’s team at San Diego State University and the University of California at San Diego, suggests that mid-frequency active sonar sounds are largely filtered before reaching the animal’s ears.

ONR program manager, Dr. Michael Weise. “Virtual experiments can also provide potential for evaluating and directing mitigation efforts.”

In October, Cranford earned top honors for a presentation entitled, “Knocking on The Inner Ear in Cuvier’s Beaked Whale” at the 18th Biennial Biology of Marine Mammals Conference in Quebec, Canada. The development is gaining widespread attention throughout the scientific community as a credible and highly useful tool.

In 2009, ONR and N45 contributed \$20 million for research on marine mammals and the effects of underwater sound. ONR provides the science and technology necessary to maintain the Navy and Marine Corps’ technological advantage. Through its affiliates, ONR is a leader in science and technology with engagement in 50 states, 70 countries, 1,035 institutions of higher learning, and 914 industry partners.

ONR employs approximately 1,400 people, comprised of uniformed, civilian and contract personnel. N45 works with the fleets, systems commands, and government regulatory agencies to develop effective environmental policy and ensure Sailors and Marines can train and operate in compliance with environmental laws.

For more news from Office of Naval Research, visit www.navy.mil/local/onr/.



Right: Construction Mechanic 3rd Class Paul Case, native of Battle Creek, Mich., assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74, Electrical Shop, checks the oil level of a 60 kilowatt generator after changing the oil and filter. One responsibility of the electrical shop is maintenance and repair of eight generators on Camp Natasha at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan.

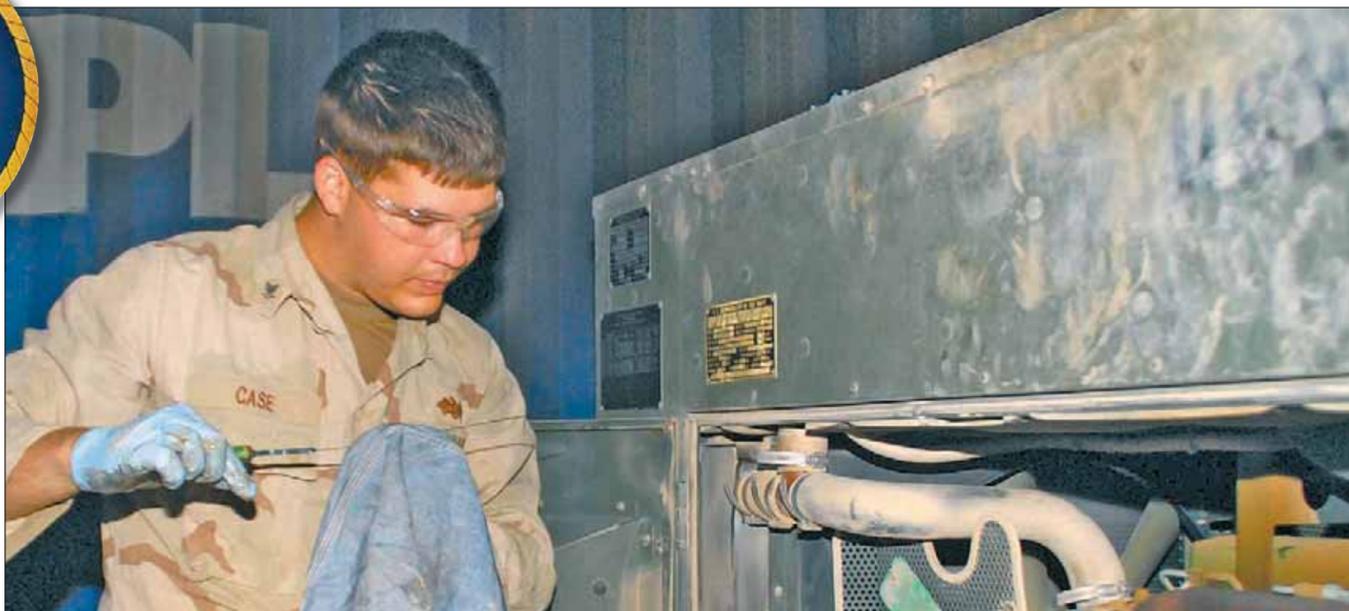


Photo by MC1 Ryan G. Wilber



Left: Steelworker Constructionman Tanner Casto, native of Litchfield, Ariz., assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74, Steel Shop, fabricates a triceps pull-down bar for the Camp Natasha gym utilizing arc welding. One of the responsibilities of the Steel Shop is metal fabrication and repair.

Below: Builder's 2nd Class Craig Kleffel and Duncan Keller, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 3 brace support columns with 2-by-4s while working on the Hamramba Primary School in Moroni on the East African island nation of Comoros. NMCB 3 is deployed to Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa from their homeport in Port Hueneme, Calif. and are working on the school in cooperation with the government of Comoros.



Photo by MC1 Jonathan Kulp

Photo by MC1 Ryan G. Wilber

7th Fleet hits social media milestones

PRESS RELEASE

U.S. 7th Fleet Public Affairs

YOKOSUKA, Japan — When Maudy Ramadhani clicked the “Become a Fan” icon on the 7th Fleet’s page on Nov. 22, the Facebook user from Indonesia became the 5,000th person to actively follow the 7th Fleet on the world’s largest social networking site, and further demonstrated the power of social media to connect.

More than 65 percent of 7th Fleet’s fans on Facebook are international, with India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, and Singapore accounting for the top ten, according to data provided by the site. Of those users, 54 percent are age 24 and under.

“One of the fleet’s persistent priorities is to build partnerships, and that requires us to promote transparency and foster goodwill,” said Vice Adm. John Bird, 7th Fleet commander.

“Social media has dramatically increased our ability to engage with people and tell them not only that we are here, but also to show them why we are here, and how our presence promotes regional stability, enables prosperity and fosters cooperative security.”

USS George Washington (CVN-73), 7th Fleet’s only forward deployed aircraft carrier, also experienced rapid success with the launch of its Facebook page. It accumulated over 1,300 fans as of Nov. 22, just tens days after launching its group on the site.

The milestones are further progress in a series of initiatives in 7th Fleet to

embrace social media as a central element of public communication.

Rear Adm. Richard Landolt, 7th Fleet’s Amphibious Force commander, actively used both Facebook and Twitter to inform the public about U.S. Navy humanitarian assistance operations in Indonesia in the weeks following a devastating 7.6-magnitude earthquake that struck near Padang, Sept. 30.

“Amazing response by Sailors and Marine volunteers who came ashore to help,” he wrote, Oct. 9. “The Indonesians thanked them all! Sama-Sama (you’re welcome).”

Landolt’s once-to twice-daily “tweets” helped not only inform the public at large, but also helped to rapidly disseminate practical information in real time

to local residents, government officials, and non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives, many who spoke only

limited English.

“I tried to use Twitter as a way to try to talk to somebody, say in the fifth grade,” said Landolt. “As I learned something that I thought was useful, I would [send a ‘tweet’] out and post it; a factoid on what we were doing or what kind of capacity a CH-53 helicopter has, for instance.”

The Navy’s humanitarian and civic action mission Pacific Partnership 2009 also made social media a key component of its communications efforts during the mission earlier this year. In addition to a Facebook page, PP09 launched a blog to capture a variety of personal perspectives on the mission from Navy, U.S. government, NGO and

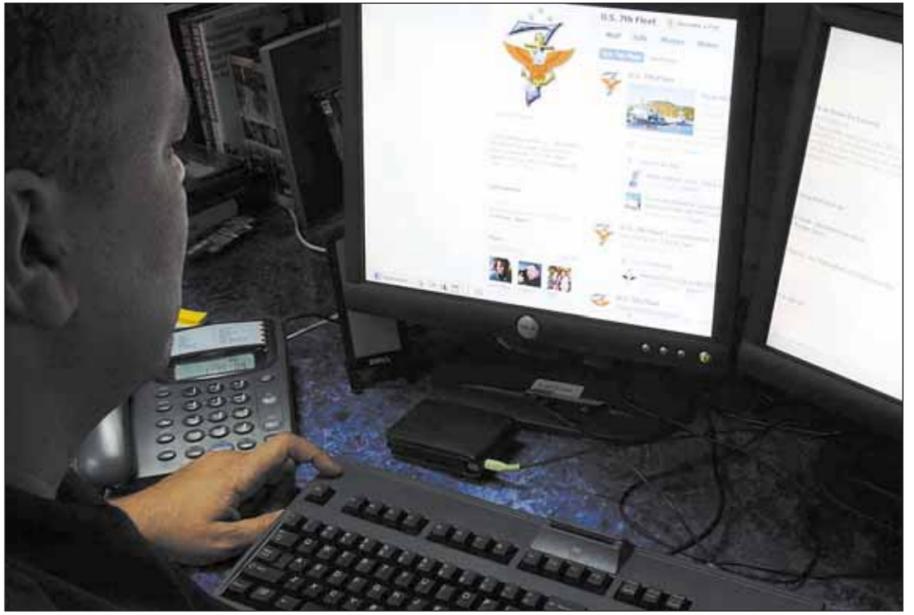


Photo by MC2 Gregory Mitchell

Chief Mass Communication Specialist Palmer Pinckney makes updates to the official U.S. 7th Fleet Facebook social media site. U.S. 7th Fleet began using social media in the Spring of 2009 to promote interaction with the people who have an interest in the U.S. Navy.

partner nation participants.

“This has been a very personal experience,” State Dept. Liaison Officer Tom Weinz wrote on the blog in July during a mission to Samoa. “Our band has played for kids with special needs and marched with the police band in the streets of Apia... It makes Samoans, Americans and our several partner nation participants a little wiser, a little more understanding and even more appreciative of random acts of kindness and love.”

For more information about the U.S. 7th Fleet, and for links to its social media pages including Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, MySpace and YouTube, visit www.c7f.navy.mil.

BATAAN: Bataan Amphibious Ready Group to return home

Continued from page A1

Commanded by Capt. Paul McElro, the Bataan ARG is comprised of the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), the amphibious transport dock ship USS Ponce (LPD 15), the amphibious dock landing ship USS Fort McHenry (LSD 43), Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 2, Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 22 Detachment 4, Fleet Surgical Team (FST) 6, Tactical Air Control Squadron (TACRON) 21 Detachment 1, and detachments from Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 2, ACU4 and Beachmaster Unit (BMU) 2.

homeported at Naval Station Norfolk, and Fort McHenry is from Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek.

During the deployment, ships from the Bataan ARG engaged in seven theater security cooperation engagements and exercises, including Bright Star 2009, Fifth Fleet's largest multinational exercise. The Bataan ARG/22nd MEU was the first ARG/MEU to deploy with the MV-22B Osprey. The Ospreys, which were based on the Bataan, are a versatile, medium-lift aircraft that can fly and hover like a helicopter, or tilt its wing-mounted propellers forward to fly like an airplane.

Bataan and Ponce are



Photo by MC2 (SW) Kory Kepner

(Front) Seaman Cody Freerksen, Seaman Riley Tanner and Boatswains Mate Seaman Dustin Hoskins heave around on a line while connecting the king post wire rope link to the pelican hook during a replenishment at sea. USS Ponce is currently on a regularly scheduled deployment to the 5th and 6th fleet areas of operation.



Photo by MCSA Erin Boyce

An AV-8B Harrier from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 263 (reinforced), embarked aboard the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), executes a vertical landing on the flight deck during routine flight operations.



Photo by MC2 Kelvin Edwards

Col. Gareth Brandl, commanding officer of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), addresses Sailors and Marines aboard the multipurpose amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) during the Marine Corps' 234th birthday ceremony on the ship's flight deck.



Photo by MC3 (SW/AW) Kleynia R. McKnight

Capt. Sam Howard, commanding officer of the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), takes Vice Adm. Mel Williams Jr., commander, U.S. Second Fleet, and staff on a tour of Bataan's flight deck Nov. 10.



Photo by MCSA Erin Boyce

The Navy's newest chiefs sing "Anchors Aweigh" during their pinning ceremony held on the flight deck of the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5). Thirteen Sailors were promoted to the rank of chief petty officer aboard Bataan.

Wasp Marines kick start busy day with soccer match

BY MC3 DAVID SMART
USS Wasp (LHD 1)
Public Affairs

GOOOOAAAAL!!!!

OCHO RIOS, Jamaica — Security Cooperation Marine Air Ground Task Force (SCMAGTF) Marines embarked on the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) played a friendly game of soccer with the Jamaican radio station, Irie FM, Nov. 19, helping to foster a burgeoning relationship with the country.

Earlier in the day, Wasp sailors and marines delivered more than 40 pallets of hygiene, medical and medicinal supplies, as well as school supplies and teddy bears through several Project Handclasp and Hugs Across America events while in Jamaica.

Wasp sailors and marines also participated in various community relations events, and military-to-military

training aimed at strengthening partnerships and improving regional security during the ship's two-day stay anchored off the coast of the island.

The Marines were originally scheduled to play a soccer match with the Jamaican Defense force but was cancelled due to a scheduling conflict. A local radio station, Irie FM, volunteered to play the Wasp Marines.

"The U.S. Embassy gave us a call and asked if we would play," said Nicholas Evans, sports reporter and producer for

Irie FM. "We gladly ac-

cepted." The first half of the game was close for both sides and by the beginning of halftime Irie FM was up 1-0.

"It was tough," said Cpl. Alan Brandli, embarked SCMAGTF member. "They had a lot of talent and you could tell that they've been playing to-

gether for awhile." Not only were the Marines and Irie FM getting into the game, the crowd of more than 100 spectators enjoyed the match as well.

"It was a great experience," said 2nd Lt. Matthew Porter, SCMAGTF communications officer. "The size and atmosphere of the crowd ...

there was a lot of good-natured ribbing."

Irie FM ended up on top with a 3-0 victory, but the Marines didn't give the Jamaicans the win easily.

"It certainly wasn't a blowout," said Porter. "I think if we had cleats it would've been better, but we did great for never playing together. I think the Jamaicans were pretty surprised."

No matter the score, it was clear the Marines enjoyed the game and were more than ready to play again.

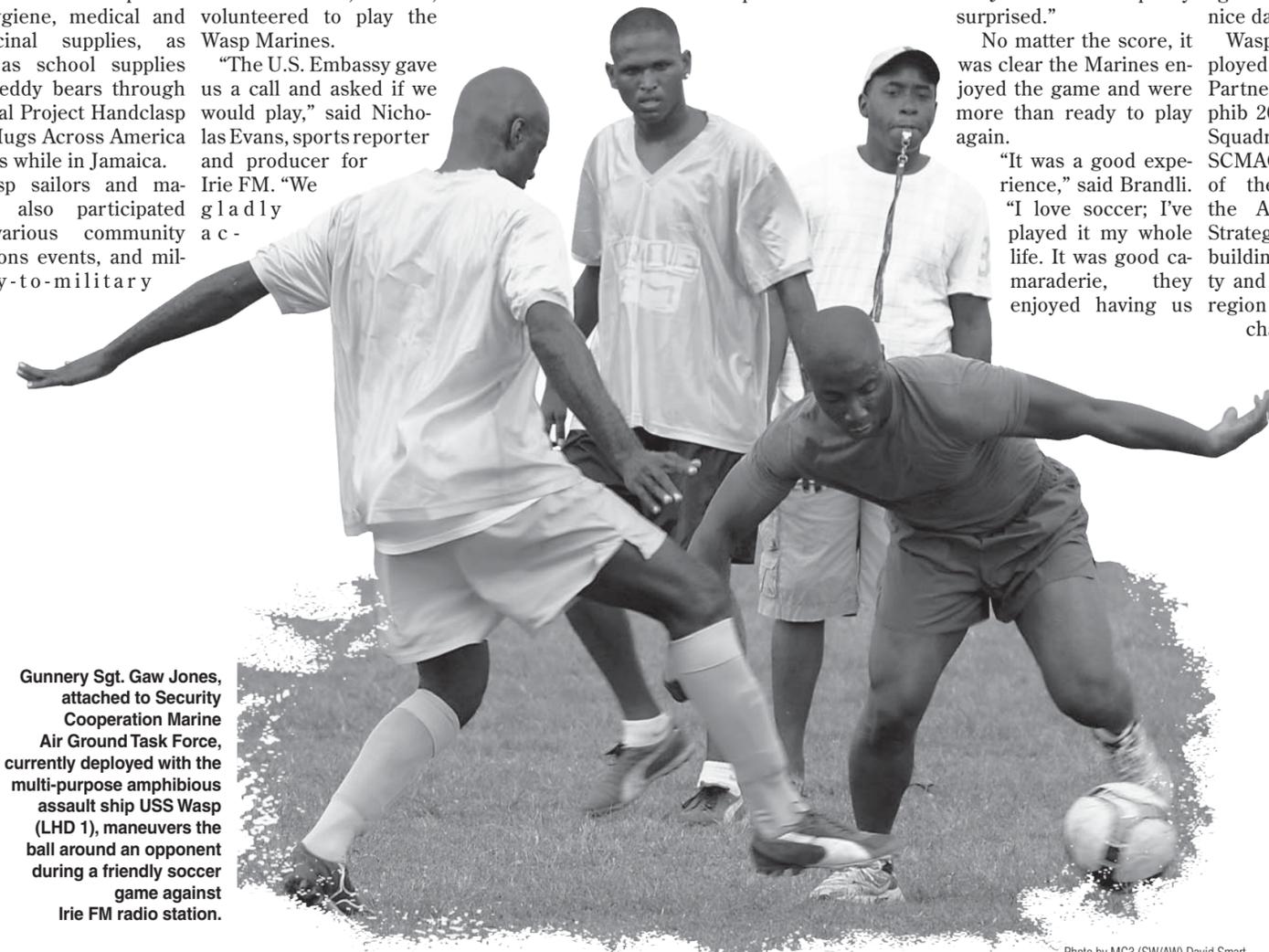
"It was a good experience," said Brandli. "I love soccer; I've played it my whole life. It was good camaraderie, they enjoyed having us

out there and we enjoyed being there."

The Jamaicans also had a fun time interacting with the Marines

"We really enjoyed it; pure fun" said Evans. "It's good having you guys here and you could see the guys were really having fun. We would definitely play you guys again. Thank you for the nice day."

Wasp is currently deployed on Southern Partnership Station-Amphib 2009 with Destroyer Squadron 40 and embarked SCMAGTF. SPS is part of the Partnership of the Americas Maritime Strategy that focuses on building interoperability and cooperation in the region to meet common challenges.



Gunnery Sgt. Gaw Jones, attached to Security Cooperation Marine Air Ground Task Force, currently deployed with the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1), maneuvers the ball around an opponent during a friendly soccer game against Irie FM radio station.

Photo by MC3 (SW/AW) David Smart

Navy Chaplain Corps continues 234 years of service

BY MC1 AMIE GONZALES
USS Wasp Public Affairs

CARIBBEAN SEA — The U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps celebrated 234 years of continuous service in providing ministry, guidance, counsel and care to the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Merchant Marines, Nov. 28.

The Chaplain Corps has been responsive to the diverse ministerial needs of the sea services and their family members. Their mission is to provide religious ministry and support, facilitate for all religious beliefs, care for all Sailors, Marines and their family and friends, and advise commanders to ensure the free exercise of religion.

"In war and in peace, they support the free exercise of religion for those who serve our country, facilitating the religious practices of all," said Chief of Navy Personnel, Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson. "Navy chaplains advise commanders on moral, ethical, and spiritual matters and extend spiritual guidance and pastoral



Ship's Chaplain Lt. Stephen Warne sumo wrestles with Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Austen Gant during a steel beach picnic aboard the amphibious dock landing ship USS Fort McHenry (LSD 43), Sept. 19.

Photo by MC2 Kristopher Wilson

care whenever and wherever needed. Chaplains and religious program specialists contribute daily to the readiness and resilience of our profile."

The Continental Navy was approved by the United States Congress, Oct. 13, 1775; on Nov. 28, of that same year they adopted Navy regulations that

reflected those of the Royal Navy. Although it does not specifically mention chaplains in the Navy, the second article of these regulations requires divine services be performed onboard and a sermon preached on Sundays; this

would require an ordained clergyman and the need for Navy chaplains.

"I think the Chaplain Corps is important in the military setting because warriors understand the sacrifices, the difficulties of combat, of being away from

family and loved ones and from home. War isn't an easy decision that nations make and the men and women that fight it, I don't think it's an easy thing for them to do," said Cmdr. Dean Hoelz, USS Wasp's (LHD 1) Command chaplain.

"As a Christian chaplain I think people need to hear words of comfort, hope, forgiveness and even outside the Christian [faith], chaplains from other faiths are going to speak about hope, comfort, aid and support in those times that are very difficult," Hoelz said. "Even if you're not fighting someone, just being away from home is hard."

Hoelz added that in addition to being available to the crew, they also serve as a sounding board to commanding officers giving insight on ethics and morals of a situation. They also extend their services to family members.

"If we are in home port we do pre-marriage counseling for couples and baptisms on board. The [Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation] chaplains stay busy doing retreats for married couples, couples about to get married, personal growth retreats for men and women, wounded warrior retreats and for spouses of military families," said Hoelz. "So that's how we are tied into the families, not just the service member."

The Chaplain Corps has grown over the years, there are a lot of places that chaplains go now that they didn't in the past. "There are more billets now with the Marines, Coast Guard and Merchant Marines. You find chaplains pretty much anywhere around the globe," said Hoelz.



Photo by MC1 Joseph Seavey

Command Chaplain, Cmdr. John Shimotsu assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6), paints the trimming on a window during a community relations project at a school in Manatuto, East Timor in support of Marine Exercise (MAREX) 2009.



Photo by MC1 Corey Lewis

Lt. Cmdr. Laura Bender, command chaplain aboard the amphibious transport dock USS New York (LPD 21), delivers the first religious ceremony in the chapel, Aug. 23.

Seabee first Sailor to earn martial arts title

PRESS RELEASE

From Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 Public Affairs

GULFPORT, Miss. — Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 celebrated the achievements of one Seabee after his success in the Marine Corp Martial Arts Program (MCMAP).

Builder 3rd Class (SCWS) Ryan Sparks graduated from Martial Arts Center for Excellence this fall with the title of Martial Arts Instructor Trainer (MAIT) Black Belt First Degree Red Tab. He is the first and only Seabee to accomplish this feat.

Sparks began the first level of MCMAP in March, to earn the Tan belt under the close supervision of Marine Maj. Justin Ansel, Military Advisor, 22nd Naval Construction Regiment.

Ansel approached Sparks about becoming a MCMAP instructor due to his natural talent and interest in martial arts. He first had to complete the Grey belt course in Gulfport, Miss under the instruction of two martial arts instructor trainers (MAIT). In May, Sparks started the Martial Arts Instructor Program (MAI) that required him to run the Marine Corps' First Class Personal Fitness Test.

The following three weeks of training under Staff Sgt. William Callen and Sgt. Oneil Cambell helped him become a certified



Photo by MCC Ryan Delcore

Builder 3rd Class Ryan Sparks, left, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 133, allows Utilitiesman 3rd Class Jonathan Cox to demonstrate the proper technique for applying a choke during martial arts training at Naval Construction Battalion Center Gulfport. Sparks is the first Seabee to attain the Martial Arts Instructor Trainer (MAIT) Black Belt First Degree Red Tab from the Marine Corps Martial Arts Center of Excellence in Quantico, Va.

Green belt instructor after his skills were evaluated.

The class started with 22 students and the remaining 11 who graduated consisted of six Seabees and five Marines. Sparks was recommended to attend the Martial Arts Center of Excellence (MACE) after he completed the Green belt instructor course. After two months of instructing the

Tan belt course alongside Major Ansel, Sparks was offered the chance to attend MACE in Quantico, Va. which would be a first for the Seabees.

He arrived at MACE for training on August 7. Before the course even started, he was required to score at least 225 out of 300 on a Marine Corp Fitness Test, run an obstacle course in full gear three

times in under 30 minutes and complete a level two swim qualification. He faced many physical and mental challenges over the next seven weeks while training on weapons combat and night operations. He also learned several fighting techniques and their origins. Sparks' class also got the privilege to attend day camps with well-known Jujitsu instruc-

tor Lloyd Irwin and Shandoshi instructor Jack Hoban.

At the conclusion of this grueling seven week course he was required to complete the same strenuous physical test that was required before the course began, but instead of three times around the obstacle course in under 30 minutes while wearing full gear, they made it five times around in under 30 minutes.

At the graduation, four awards were presented to those who stood out through the training. Sparks was recognized with the Dunham-Weatherbee Award which is given to the student who displays the most courage and will power during the course. The Dunham-Weatherbee Award consists of a Raider Knife from the Marine Corps Raiders and a certificate.

Sparks is one of only 17 to receive this prestigious award. He was also given a copy of "Valor of Honor," a book dedicated to Cpls. Dunham and Weatherbee. The award was presented to Sparks by Lt. Col. Joseph Shusko USMC MCMAP director. Sparks has plans set to start MCMAP on NCBC Gulfport, Miss. for any interested Seabee or military personnel.

For more news from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133, visit www.navy.mil/local/nmcb133/.

Leadership Core Continuum begins fleet-wide roll-out

PRESS RELEASE

From Center for Personal and Professional Development (CPPD) Public Affairs

VIRGINIA BEACH — The Center for Personal and Professional Development (CPPD) is rolling out Modules one and two of the Leadership Core Continuum (LCC) this month.

LCC training is designed to meet the continuing process of training and developing enlisted leaders in pay grades E4 through E6.

"CPPD is working diligently on the next stage in enlisted leader development for the Fleet," said LCC Project Manager Senior Chief Petty Officer Samantha Blackwell.

"In 2006 CPPD replaced the Petty Officer Indoctrination with Petty Officer Selectee Leadership Course (POSLC), for newly selected E-4s," Blackwell said. "And in September 2008, Petty Officer First Class Selectee Leadership Course (PO1SLC) was launched to provide "just-in-time" leadership training for the Navy's newest first class petty officers. CPPD also rolled out the Petty Officer Second Class Leadership Course (PO2SLC)

curriculum in March 2009 for newly selected second class petty officers."

All three of these courses were implemented as command-delivered leadership training for leaders in pay grades E-4 through E-6, and are designed for delivery upon selection to respective pay grades.

"LCC is the foundational link in the Navy's enlisted leadership continuum and is designed to enhance the leadership training our junior enlisted Sailors receive between promotion cycles," said CPPD's Director of Training, Cmdr. George Michaels. "LCC is a fleet-relevant, Sailor-centered set of development tools to assist in understanding leadership topics established in Navy Leadership Competency Model, and provides a path for enlisted Sailors to receive continuous leadership training and development."

"The core competencies of LCC include accomplishing missions, leading change, working with people and resource stewardship; all of which are essential in the process of engaging our Sailors and capitalizing on previous lessons learned



U.S. Navy photo

Eight Sailors in pay grades E-6 and E-7 from the Hampton Roads naval community participated in subject matter expert working groups for Leadership Core Continuum development.

through command-delivered courses," said Michaels. "Furthermore, LCC content is reality based, taught in an operational environment, and appropriate to its target audiences."

In July 2009, CPPD hosted a subject matter expert working group with representatives from across the

Hampton Roads area. Eight Sailors in pay grades E-6 and E-7 from the Hampton Roads naval community participated in subject matter expert working groups for LCC development.

During the working group, members developed real-life scenarios, which are fundamental components of

LCC. The working group members also assisted with prioritizing competencies and other items needed to construct appropriate training for leaders in pay grades E4 through E6.

In November 2009, the LCC pilot was conducted at NAS Oceana. Sailors from various commands on board the base attended the one-day event to review and provide critical feedback for CPPD. The pilot participants provided valuable information and served as the final evaluators prior to the releasing this material to the Fleet.

In its final delivery, LCC will consist of six modules

with a phased roll-out plan. Sailors should expect availability of modules one and two this December. Modules three and four will roll out in early spring 2010, and the final two modules (five and six) are scheduled for release in the summer of 2010. The combination of these six modules, and the various petty officer selectee command-delivered training courses, will provide all E4 through E6 Sailors with knowledge and tools needed to sustain and continually improve upon their leadership skills.

For more information about LCC, visit www.nko.navy.mil

Going the extra mile to welcome new Sailors

BY MC1 (AW)
LATUNYA HOWARD

Navy Personnel Command
Public Affairs

MILLINGTON, Tenn.

— Command indoctrination is a military tradition but it's also a readiness program designed to give Sailors a good foundation when joining a new command.

“Effective command sponsorship and indoctrination programs represent the difference between good commands and great commands,” said Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON), (SS/SW) Rick West. “The return on your up-front investment will pay huge dividends to your command for years to come. It is imperative that all commands provide the best possible support for newly arriving shipmates and their

families.”

OPNAVINST 1740.3C identifies sponsorship and indoctrination as the best aids for a smooth transition into a new working and living environment for Sailors and their families. It should also minimize the anxiety associated with permanent change of station moves, according to the instruction.

The Command Indoctrination Program provides a detailed orientation to the new command; its structure, mission, history and specific expectations of the service member.

Navy Personnel Command (NPC) conducts a five-day indoctrination class monthly for new arrivals. Sailors and civilians reporting on board receive a wealth of information about

their new command. On the last day, the class tours Memphis.

“This was the first painless and informative indoctrination I've had the pleasure of going through,” said Chief Aviation Electronics Technician (AW/SW) Jason Farrington. “Usually a new command hands out a brochure of places to go, things to see in your new town but NPC took us there.”

“The best indoc in my 17 years of service,” said Chief Legalman (SW/SCW/AW) Anthony Carrier. “It was very informative and the tour helps in learning the city.”

The Navy revised the command sponsorship and indoctrination program last year. Command master chiefs are responsible for the program and must



Photo by MC3 Patrick Grieco

Machinist Mate 3rd Class Stephanie Checa, left, and Machinist Mate 1st Class Robert Walton, help Machinist Mate 3rd Class Leslie Grant into her firefighting gear during the damage control portion of the shipboard indoctrination course aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75). The course familiarizes newly arrived Truman Sailors on basic shipboard qualifications, command structure and orientation.

ensure that Sailors receive Navy pride and professionalism training within 30 days of arrival.

“We must make every effort to prepare our Sailors for success from day one,”

said West. “Being brilliant on the basics creates a solid foundation upon which every successful career is launched. Manning the fleet with ready Sailors, supporting their ability to serve

from beginning to end, that is what it's about.”

For more information on command sponsorship and indoctrination read OPNAVINST 1740.3C or visit www.npc.navy.mil.

Family Care Plan revisions include deployment deferment option

BY MCC (SW) MARIA YAGER
Navy Personnel Command
Public Affairs

MILLINGTON — Navy officials announced revisions to its Family Care Plan policy Nov. 23 which includes a new deployment deferment option for eligible Sailors.

“Under the new policy, Sailors who are required to complete a family care plan and may be deployed to an area authorized imminent danger pay are allowed to request a deferment of deployment due to unforeseen circumstances,” said Kathy Wells, Navy Family Care Plan policy coordinator.

The change is a result of guidance from the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, section 586, Family Care Plans and Deferment of Deployment of Single Parent or Dual Military Couples with Minor Dependents.

“Service members on active-duty make requests for deferment to

their commanding officer. Commanding officers can grant deferments for up to four months,” said Wells.

According to Wells, the NDAA provides broad guidance and does not specifically define unforeseen circumstances.

“It is going to be up to the commanding officer,” said Wells.

More information can be found in the Family Care Plan instruction, OPNAVINST 1740.4D.

The updated policy also incorporates Navy Guidelines Concerning Pregnancy and Parenthood which allows a female Sailor a 12-month deferment from travel away from the home station after childbirth.

A Family Care Plan is a group of documents, including a Family Care Plan certificate NAVPERS 1740/6, which identifies and outlines who will provide care for a Sailor’s minor children in the event the Sailor is de-

ployed.

“Ensuring proper care for a Sailor’s minor children or adult family member/dependents reduces stress on the Sailor and strengthens a deployable asset for the command,” said Wells.

Formal documentation of a Family Care Plan is required under any of the following conditions:

- A Sailor with primary or shared physical custody of a minor child or children who is not married to the other natural or adoptive parent of the minor child or children.

- Both members of a married dual-military couple where one or both have primary or shared physical custody of a minor child or children.

- Sailors who are legally responsible for an adult family member who is incapable of providing for themselves in the absence of the Sailor.

ANGEL TREE: Program helps provide junior Sailors with gifts for their children

Continued from page A1

their gifts to RMD by Dec. 10.

“The program is targeted more towards our E-3 and below Sailors, since they have the lowest income. They will be given the first priority, but the program is open to anyone in need,” said Alciyan.

The program is open to

shipyard personnel and other civilian contractors as well.

“With being in the shipyards for so long and Big E Sailors working side-by-side with Northrop Grumman employees to get back out to sea, sometimes we have to remember that we’re all just one big family,” said Lt. Cmdr. Alan Wilmont, an

Enterprise chaplain. “This program is a great way to lend a helping hand to those in the Big E family that are less fortunate, and while epitomizing the Christmas spirit at the same time.”

EMPLOYER: Navy stands alongside Google, AT&T as employer of choice

Continued from page A1

efforts to recruit and develop a skilled and diverse workforce noting “[Navy’s] portfolio of workforce initiatives showed the range of its efforts to attract, train and retain a skilled, diverse workforce of 300,000 that increasingly encompasses women and minorities.”

To be considered for the award, Navy submitted descriptions of AIP and seven other programs:

- Crisis Action Organization (CAO) informs personnel readiness by assisting commands in effectively accounting for Navy personnel and their families following catastrophic events such as severe hurricanes, tornadoes or wildfires using a Web-based system, Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System. CAO also provides a venue to address post-incident needs to assist families during their period of re-stabilization.

- Global War on Terror Support Assignment Process Initiative allows Sailors to plan and volunteer for combat-zone assignments, improving morale and assignment predictability;

- Center for Language, Regional Expertise and Culture Program prepares Sailors for mission success overseas by strengthening communication and cultural awareness;

- Credentialing Opportunities Online, (COOL) allows Sailors in each of Navy’s 64 enlisted career fields to receive independent occupational certification for skills learned in the military;

- Advancement Exam Development Conference Initiative enables subject-matter experts from the fleet to convene and author annual advancement examinations, allowing 85 of 100 full-time exam writers to be released for high-priority assignments and saving \$7 million per year;

- Navy College Program Distance Learning Partnership partners with 32 institutions, offering 240 on-line degree programs to Sailors, with no out-of-pocket expense;

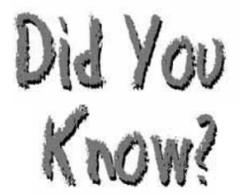
- Task Force Life Work aims to improve life work integration across Navy’s Total Force through innovative life work programs and policies.

In evaluating candidates for the Optimas Awards, Workforce Magazine editors considered information from published reports, conferences, interviews with leadership and program managers and demonstrated performance.

“For nearly two decades, Workforce Management has been honoring organizations with exceptional workforce initiatives that clearly show

a measurable, bottom-line success in response to the organization’s business needs, issues or challenges,” said John Hollon, a Workforce Management Magazine editor. “The 2009 winners uphold this standard yet again.”

For more news from the Chief of Naval Personnel, visit www.navy.mil/local/cnp.



Remembering Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society in your will (or living trust) is one of the easiest and best ways to ensure that the Society’s crucial work will continue for generations to come?

Including the Society as a beneficiary of your will can be as simple as adding an amendment (or codicil) to your existing document. NMCRS can provide sample bequest wording and a codicil form. Please contact the Society for further information! Let them know how they can be of assistance.

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FRONT & CENTER

SECTION B

FLAGSHIPNEWS.COM

December 3, 2009

Determined crew returns USS Kearsarge to sea

BY SN INDRA BOSKO

PORTSMOUTH — The amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) left Norfolk Naval Shipyard on schedule Nov. 16 to perform a series of sea trials despite a threat of delay by a recent Nor'easter storm that flooded parts of the Hampton Roads area.

Thanks to the drive and determination of Kearsarge Sailors, the ship maintained its readiness through the storm and sailed out of the shipyards without a hitch.

"The Sailors of USS Kearsarge know what it means to be the best, and they persevered through the rough weather and long hours to make sure this great ship returned to service for the Fleet on time," said Commanding Officer, Capt. Walter Towns. "It was a successful and demanding period in the yards, but the ship and the crew are better for it. The shipyard employees did a great job in partnering with our Sailors to get us back to sea, and now the rest is up to us."

Kearsarge entered NNSY in January for a Dry-Dock Planned Maintenance Availability (DPMA) for the first time since its commissioning 16 years ago. The \$43 million maintenance period included a new fuel/oil compensation system, a new turbine, refurbishment of the flight deck and ship's laundry facilities, repainting of the hull, a new GIG-E computer system and an upgrade to a SPN-35 radar system. The upgrades and maintenance affected every



Photo courtesy Norfolk Naval Shipyard Public Affairs Office

The amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) departs Norfolk Naval Shipyard Nov. 16. Kearsarge completed an 11-month Dry-Docked Planned Maintenance Availability and returned to her homeport at Naval Station Norfolk.

department and every Sailor and Towns commended the crew for their flexibility and willingness to work long hours under tough conditions.

"Congratulations to each and every one of you," Towns said as he addressed the crew once the ship was underway for the sea trials. "It was a total team effort and

we have a lot to be proud of as the first ship in a long time to enter and leave the ship-

See KEARSARGE, B15



Photo by MCSA James M. Smevog

Senior Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic (AW) Virgil J. Esteves coaches a Sailor on finances Nov. 12.

Staying afloat during the holidays through financial management

BY MCSA JAMES M. SMEVOG

USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) Public Affairs

NEWPORT NEWS — The holidays can be a difficult time to save money. Fortunately, the Navy offers some advice to help educate Sailors on spending efficiently.

Senior Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic (AW) Virgil J. Esteves, leading chief petty officer for the Transportation Division aboard USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77), is one of the Command Financial Specialists (CFS) who helps Sailors create budgets to better manage their money.

A budget allows a Sailor to see where his money is going and how much is left over each month by subtracting monthly expenses from the Sailor's paycheck.

"It's like a map or plan for you to get there. If you know how much you are spending on food, on gas, insurance, you know how much you will have in the end for savings, and if you don't have it, you know where you can cut down on other stuff that you are just wasting," Esteves said.

"Only buy what you can afford," he added.

Esteves explained that after his budget opened his eyes, he saw how much money he was spending on gas. Now, even though he is a senior chief petty officer, he takes the bus to and from work because it is free.

"I can relax on my way to work and on my way back home, and save a tremendous amount of money on gas and wear-and-tear on my car," he said.

Budgeting can also help Sailors save on holiday spending at the same time, by shopping early or out of season, and by handcrafting gifts. Esteves said to look for sales throughout the year and start shopping early. As the holidays get close,

See FINANCE, B15

CNSL helps Sailors stay connected to home

BY MC1 JULIE MATYASCIK

CNSL Public Affairs

One of the difficulties with Navy life is spending time away from families, but thanks to video teleconferencing (VTC) technology, Sailors aboard surface ships attached to Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic (CNSL), were able to communicate with their loved ones face-to-face during this holiday season.

Over the past two weeks, CNSL assisted in connecting more than 50 families with their Sailors deployed on amphibious assault ships, USS Wasp (LHD 1) and USS Bataan (LHD 5), allowing them to talk in real time using live video and audio.

Waiting patiently to see her husband of 12 years, Kim Legg's eyes welled up with tears as she anticipated seeing Lt. j.g. James Legg, the auxiliary officer on board Bataan, for the first time since May. Sitting quietly next to her are her three sons, ages 6, 9, and 12.

"This is the first time we have used the VTC," she said. "I am very anxious to see him and so are our boys. I didn't tell them

about this visit until we were walking into the building."

Inside the conference room they huddled together in front of the video camera, waiting anxiously for their Sailor to come in.

"They were so excited to find out they are going to see their daddy," she said. "It is a big treat for them."

When their father sat down in front of the camera, the boys jumped out of their seats, yelling "hello" excitedly.

Legg asked his sons if they were behaving for Mommy.

"Yes," they said in unison.

He praised them on their good report cards and told them he couldn't wait to get home and see them.

"I am doing well and I miss you all very much," he said.

Newlywed Abby Haas was grateful to have the allotted 15 minutes of private VTC time with her husband, Fire Controlman 1st Class Jeff Haas, also on board Bataan.

"It is great to see him," she said. "I cried. I haven't seen him since July."

"We have been married for

See CONNECTED, B15



Photo by MC1 Julie R. Matyascik

Fire Controlman 2nd Class Jeff Haas speaks to his wife through video teleconferencing (VTC) technology during family holiday VTCs at Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic aboard Naval Support Activity, Norfolk, Va., Nov. 24. Haas, attached to USS Bataan (LHD 5), is deployed in the Atlantic Ocean and will be returning home in December.

Rear Adm. English visits newly formed unit

BY MC2 MADDELLIN ANGEBRAND

Navy Operational Support Center Norfolk Public Affairs

NORFOLK — Rear Adm. Raymond English, director of Joint Reserve Forces, awarded plank owner certificates to 16 enlisted Sailors and 2 officers during a visit to a newly formed unit, known as Navy Reserve Defense Logistics Agency Distribution Operations Team (NR DLA DOT) Norfolk, Nov. 21-22.

English, who is in charge of more than 700 joint Reservists in the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), welcomed the Sailors and spoke to them about NR DLA DOT's mission and what to expect while assigned to the new unit.

"We send DLA reservists to Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan, said English. "For example, the Depot Program sent reservists into Iraq to teach Iraqis how to run a distribution depot. Teaching the Iraqis



Photo by MC2 Maddelin Angebrand

Rear Adm. Raymond English, director of Joint Reserve Forces Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), speaks to Sailors of the Navy Reserve Defense Logistics Agency Distribution Operations Team (NR DLA DOT) during a visit to the Defense Distribution Center Norfolk, Nov. 21.

See RESERVES, B15

SPOUSE SPEAK!

Celebrate the holidays well despite any sacrifices

BY MICHELLE GALVEZ
Journalist/2009 Heroes at Home
Military Spouse of the Year

I've run out of creative Turkey leftover ideas, tried to avoid the commercialism of Black Friday (besides it's not on a payday, who can afford it?) and dragged Christmas decorations out of the garage – so it's officially the holidays! Despite Target's best efforts to get me in the holiday spirit while buying school supplies, I like to save the holidays to savor at least until after the Thanksgiving roasting pan has been washed and wedged back into the cupboard.

Santa's given us a special gift this year and that's the presence of my husband. Since family togetherness is synonymous with holidays for most American families, including my in-laws, those not in the military marvel at our ability to cope with our alternate universe. In fact, Blue Star Families' (BSF) military lifestyle survey's most significant finding was: "The general public does not truly understand or appreciate the sacrifices made by service members and their families."

My husband has missed so many birthdays, anniversaries and minor holidays that I've lost count; but the three Christmases definitely stick out in memory. During a recent 23-month tour to Mississippi, my hubby spent two consecutive six-month deployments in Iraq, and they were both of the October to April variety. I'm used to playing single parent in the name of duty, but it's tough to be mom, dad and Santa's helper two years in a row.

I speak only for myself, but I'm acutely aware of the sacrifice quantified in the BSF survey when I'm staying up into the wee hours swearing at the "easy to assemble!" directions of a pile of gifts all by myself. Ditto for trying to Christmas shop for the kids at a crowded Wal-Mart with the kids in tow because my partner/built-in babysitter is thousands of miles away, and had we moved in a week ago and didn't know anyone to watch the children yet. Independent handy woman that I am, I draw the line at negotiating the pitch of my roof with a ladder and an armful of Christmas lights.

Looking back now, those two Christmas seasons were extreme opposites. The second was vastly more festive because I'd learned some valuable lessons the hard way. Solo Christmas number one occurred shortly after moving and church and community connections had yet to be made. I didn't want to be alone, so I decided to drive 18 hours with three children on a marathon visit to see friends, relatives, godparents and sightseeing points of interest. Since we were going out of town, I reasoned there was no point in getting a tree or decorating, so our Christmas ended up exhausting and not very sparkly. The following year we stayed home and invited folks to come to us and went all out with the décor. I may have overcompensated slightly with the baking, wrapping, parties and glitz galore, and probably could have done without the intricate and gigantic gingerbread house.

Whatever your style – over-the-top or low-key – there are a few ways to make

the holiday shine without so much stress. Deployment cycles being what they are, many military families often face the holidays without their service member by their side. We also spend holidays stationed far from family and sometimes even familiar signs of the season. So I asked a few military friends of mine to share their holiday anecdotes and words of wisdom.

Set realistic expectations: If you've found yourself alone for the holidays thanks to deployment or PCS orders, have an open mind about what this year's celebration will look like.

"We were newly married and stationed in Hawaii," recalled Rebecca, an Army spouse from Tennessee. "Since we had our usual Christmas expectations in mind, it was the strangest Christmas for us – wearing shorts and flip flops and paying over \$100 for a really horrible, dried out imported tree. We were far away from family, but we made the most of it."

Make the best of it: Military families are a resilient lot and can overcome a lot of challenges becoming even stronger than before. My mom used to say it all builds character. Any situation is what we make of it, so why not make the most of it? When we lived on a cul-de-sac in California, most of us couldn't be with family over the holidays, so we adopted each other. Two of our neighbors were from Sweden and we ended up with a cultural Christmas exchange when the Swedish kids learned to sing American classics like "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and all the neighborhood children gave us a traditional Swedish Lucia performance.

Lisa, a retired Marine's spouse from Mississippi, had a similar experience in South America.

"Christmas overseas was different because it was summer in Peru and my husband and son were in the pool that day," she said. "We enjoyed sharing our traditions with our Peruvian friends. One year we invited them over for an American Christmas and another year we went to all their parties and celebrated their way, going to mid-

night mass, opening presents and staying up all night on Christmas Eve."

Be a kid again: The holidays can be overwhelmingly stressful, but try to make some time to stop and smell the pine trees. It doesn't have to be expensive to take in the wonder and magic of the season like a child again. Take a ride through the neighborhoods, on the boardwalk or through the Botanical Garden while listening to carols and sipping hot chocolate. Or rent some skates and take a few turns at the ice skating rink.

"Stationed in England, we got to enjoy all kinds of lighthearted fun for Christmas," explained Sue, a retired Air Force wife who lived off base and was immersed in local culture. "Everything was fun and very different from what our holiday entailed. I remember sitting around the table after a Christmas dinner of roast goose, popping Christmas crackers, telling each other's fortunes and wearing funny paper crowns."

Maintain traditions: Psychologists and experts generally agree on the value and importance of helping military children and families maintain their routines during times of stress and sacrifice. Even if I started out sad and lonely on the inside and just went through the motions of making merry at Christmas for the kids, keeping up with our traditions made us all feel a little better.

"I have rituals and I stick with them whether my husband is home or not," said Heather, a Navy spouse from Louisiana. "On Christmas Eve we open all family presents, make reindeer food, decorate cookies for Santa, read The (Cajun) Night Before Christmas and put the kids to bed."

Stay on budget: Even with that extra money that pads the paycheck during a deployment, es-

pecially one to a tax-free combat zone, try not to conquer the blues with retail therapy or help Santa to be extra generous in an attempt to distract the kids from their parent's absence. I tried it. It didn't work.

There's also the temptation to buy today and pay tomorrow. As instantly gratifying as that may be, it usually leads to worry and strain over finances taking away from the happiness of the season.

"When we were a younger military couple, it was so tempting to go get a credit card and buy Christmas," remembered Kellie, a Navy spouse from Oklahoma. "But the best gift is not the one that costs a lot of money, and we don't want to put ourselves in debt to give presents. We put a little away several months ahead of the holidays, have our kids make meaningful gifts for relatives, and we frame their artwork as presents."

The experts at Military OneSource recommend that military families set a budget and stick to it. Include meals, gifts and entertainment and think about how much you can spend before you go shopping or before you decide how many people to invite for a holiday meal. Save your money and use it to get a head start on planning for the following year rather than having a stack of holiday bills in 2010.

Have an attitude of gratitude: Sure, you could make a list of all the ways this holiday could be better. There might not be much you can do to have your family under one roof, but don't be a scrooge. Why not write down all your blessings instead, even small and insignificant ones. They add up and end up making things look a whole lot brighter. Or try putting things in perspective and help bring some cheer to someone lonelier or more downtrodden. Ideas abound. Why not visit a nursing home, adopt a family, buy presents for an angel tree, or volunteer at a homeless shelter?

I hope your holidays are sparkly and special no matter how far from home you and your loved ones are this year.

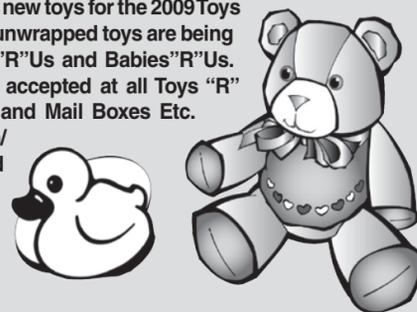
Michelle Galvez is a Navy spouse and lives in Virginia Beach with her husband and three children. Michelle is also an ombudsman and the 2009 Heroes at Home Military Spouse of the Year.



TIP
of the week

Toys For Tots Toy collection
Deadline: Ends Dec. 6

The nine-week campaign to collect new toys for the 2009 Toys for Tots season will end Dec. 6. New, unwrapped toys are being collected at locations such as Toys"R"Us and Babies"R"Us. Monetary donations are also being accepted at all Toys "R" Us, Babies "R" Us, The UPS Store and Mail Boxes Etc. locations and online at Toysrus.com/ ToysForTots through Dec. 24. To find toy drop-off locations in your area or to make a monetary donation online, visit www.toysfortots.org.



SPOUSE SPEAK!

My unexpected life as a military spouse

BY CASEY SPURR

Director of Programs for Blue Star Families

When I was teaching middle school, I had a sign taped above the exit to my classroom displaying one of my favorite quotes: "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined." -Henry David Thoreau. I thought it served as an inspiration to my students, but the truth is I am not exactly living the life I imagined when I was their age.

As a teenager, I swore I'd never marry a man in the military. I grew up in a Navy town, so I got a good glimpse of what life was like for military families and just knew in my infinite adolescent wisdom that such a life was not for me. Military families moved too frequently, and I watched my friends' fathers deploy what seemed to be far too often. I can remember feeling each time my best friend's father came home from a deployment like he was a stranger to me all over again. The truth was I almost felt bad for military families and couldn't imagine ever choosing that life for myself. I unquestionably respected their sacrifices - I have always held service members, veterans, and their families in the highest regard. But I didn't want to join them, thank you very much.

It came as a bit of a surprise then when karma kicked me in the behind, and I fell in love with a Navy man. Life always seems to happen that way, doesn't it? By that time I had graduated from college and many of my friends had joined the military themselves or had married into it. I'd had the good fortune of knowing many magnificent individuals in the military along the way, but until I met my husband the thought of being a military spouse was still something I couldn't foresee myself becoming.

Suddenly, a life I'd never imagined was staring me in the face, and I had a choice between walking away from what could be the love of my life or opening myself up to a lifestyle I hadn't exactly set out to lead. During the initial months after I met him I had to do

a lot of soul searching, but the only decision that made sense became clear fairly quickly. I realized that the life I had imagined may be easier, but that easier certainly didn't mean better. Broadening my horizons and making a few sacrifices might do me some good.

Seven years later, I know how blessed I am to have made that decision and have my life turn out so much differently than I had planned. Sure, we've had our ups and downs as a military family. What military family hasn't? But for every challenge there has been something just as significant to let us know how wonderful our life really is.

Though I never thought I would say so, one of the things I am most thankful for is the time we spend apart. While there is more of that time than either of us would like, it strengthens our marriage in such an unexpected way. It affords us an opportunity that many people never have in their marriage - the opportunity to miss one another. I never enjoy being separated from my husband, but it makes me appreciate him that much more when he's home. We value each and every day we are together as a family, and I feel like that brings a dimension to our lives that I might otherwise take for granted. I'm very grateful for that.

I think our time apart has also forced me to become much more independent. I like to think I've always had a fairly good head on my shoulders, but being a military spouse has given me a chance to learn how to rely upon myself. Running a household by yourself for months at a time and caring for a child alone really makes you mature in a way you didn't realize you needed.

I have also been privileged to make some of the most amazing, lifelong friends through

the military. There is nothing like finding out someone you have just met is a military spouse to create an instant connection, and the ability to simply pick up where you left off with an old friend you haven't seen in years is remarkable. I have built friendships with everyone from spouses just beginning their marriages at the same time I was, all the way to wives of commanding officers who have embraced me as if they've known me for years. These men and women inspire me daily with their strength, poise, and ability to remain optimistic in the face of challenges that so many others may find unimaginable.

Being part of a military family has given me so many unique experiences, as well. I have traveled to corners of America and the globe that I am certain I never would have seen had it not been for the Navy taking my husband there. What excites me even more are the places I know we have yet to see.

And anyone who has ever participated in one knows there's no better place than a military ball or squadron party to find a group of people who know how to have a good time. Some of my best memories are of occasions like those spent with my husband and our friends taking a well-de-

been proud to be an American and considered myself patriotic, but my love for our nation runs deeper for me now than at any time in my life. Today, I am more aware of the sacrifices made by service members and those continuing to do so each day to give me everything that is quintessentially American. Just the sound of our national anthem or even hearing someone express gratitude for our men and women in uniform elicits an emotion in me that is often hard to contain.

So while the life I once imagined - a family home where we would raise our children from infancy to adulthood, nightly dinners around the family table, holiday traditions never missed - may have escaped me, I know I am better because of it. Life as a military spouse has enriched my life in more ways than I ever thought possible. These relationships and experiences that have created such an immeasurably meaningful life for me have helped shape the person I have become, and I wouldn't change that for anything. This unexpected life I am leading is a tremendous blessing.

Casey Spurr is a Navy spouse and lives in Virginia Beach with her husband and two-year-old son. She is also the Director of Programs for Blue Star Families. To find out more about Blue Star Families or to become a member, please visit www.bluestarfam.org.

"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined."

— Henry David Thoreau

served opportunity to unwind.

And finally, being part of a military family has given me a love for my country like never before. I have always

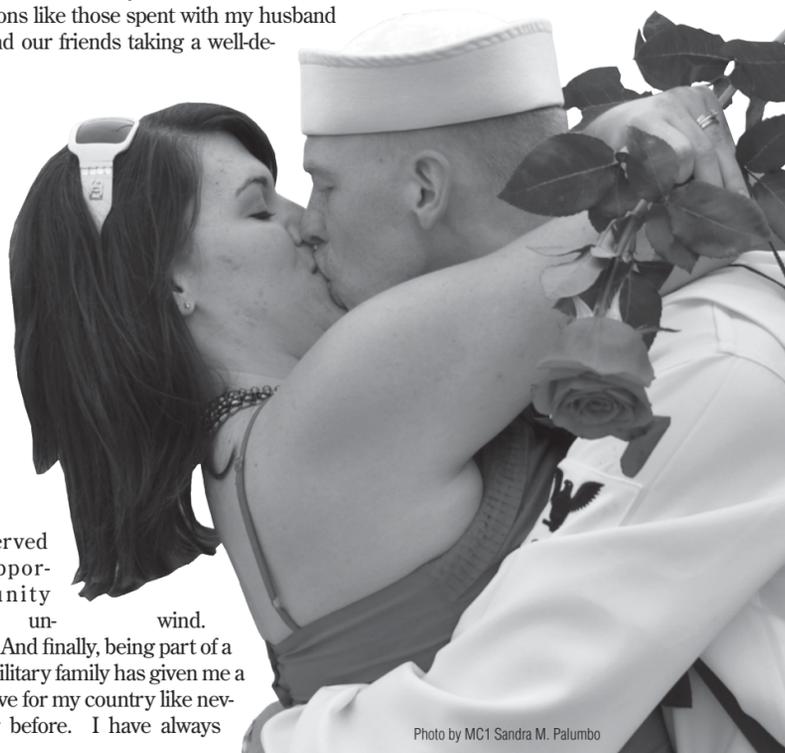
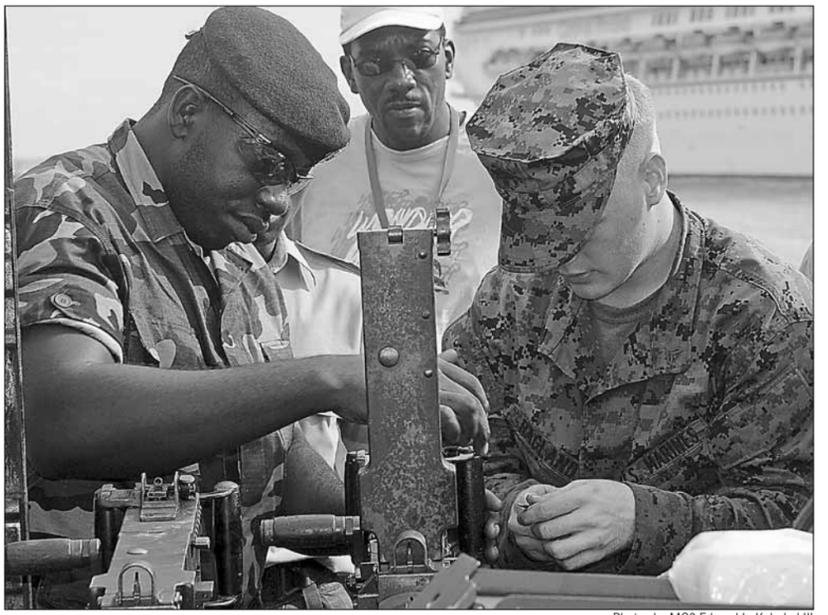


Photo by MC1 Sandra M. Palumbo



Photos by MC3 Edward L. Kobobel III

At right, United States Marine Corporal Bowen Ragland attached to Security Cooperation Marine Air Ground Task Force (SCMAGTF) and Jamaican Defense Forces Coast Guard Ordinary Seaman Andre Grant perform maintenance on a .50 cal. machine gun on the bed of a truck at Reynolds Pier in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, November 19, to improve regional security through military to military training.

Wasp conducts information exchange with Jamaican Defense Forces Coast Guard

BY MC3 CLASS EDWARD L. KOBABEL III,
USS Wasp (LHD 1) Public Affairs

OCHO RIOS, Jamaica — Sailors and Marines from Task Group 40.7 embarked onboard the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) and members of the Jamaican Defense Forces Coast Guard (JDFCG) participated in an Anti-Terrorism Force Protection (ATFP) exercise to exchange information between U.S. and Jamaican militaries Nov. 19, in an effort to improve regional security through military-to-military cooperation.

Both militaries provided guidance to each other on proper steps to take in a vehicle search, personnel search and control, and how to maintain an entry control point (ECP).

“We shared a lot of information with them,” said Master-at-Arms 1st Class (SW/AW) Reginald Allen. “We touched on ATFP subjects they knew and some they didn’t know. They asked a lot of questions, and were very receptive to the information. If I had the chance, I would love to go back and work with the Jamaicans again.”

The Sailors learned a great deal about how the Jamaicans perform security pro-

cedures and were very impressed by their overall knowledge.

“We discovered they were trained very well,” said Master-at-Arms 2nd Class (SW) Joe Gutierrez. “We would create a scenario for them and they would be able to tell us step by step what they would need to do. They were very knowledgeable and the exchange of information went well.”

The training was conducted at Reynolds Pier where U.S. Marines and Sailors were unloading pallets of supplies which were donated to Jamaican medical and educational organizations.

Other members of Task Group 40.7 assisted the JDFCG by performing maintenance on .50-caliber machine guns that belonged to the JDFCG personnel manning the pier. The JDFCG was then able to conduct a gunnery exercise from their boats with the overhauled guns.

Wasp is currently deployed on Southern Partnership Station-Amphib 2009 with Destroyer Squadron 40 and embarked Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force. SPS is part of the Partnership of the Americas Maritime Strategy that focuses on building interoperability and cooperation in the region to meet common challenges.



Master-at-Arms 3rd Class Jacob Shaw, assigned to USS Wasp (LHD 1), demonstrates how to properly search a vehicle with a mirror and flashlight to members of the Jamaican Defense Forces Coast Guard at Reynolds Pier in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, November 19.

Knowledge helps Sailors stay safe during winter season

BY MCSA J.
SCOTT ST. CLAIR
*USS George H.W.
Bush Public Affairs*

NEWPORT NEWS — As USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) enters the winter season in the Northrop Grumman Newport News Shipyard, its Sailors will face more dangers than many realize. The Bush's Safety Department wants to ensure that its Sailors are aware of and prepared for these hazards.

According to Cmdr. Robert Standley, command safety officer, the winter season poses a variety of new challenges.

"The biggest single threat is our Sailors' involvement in accidents and injuries. The risk for both is increased during the winter due to two factors: the weather and the holiday activities Sailors participate in," he said.

Standley said that the most obvious winter threat is the increased hazards on the roadways.

"Winters in this region are non-standard. The weather is sporadic and many of the crew members have never experienced snow and ice. The best way for Sailors to avoid the possibility of being involved in an accident is to use operational risk management and watch the weather forecast. That may let them know they need to allow for extra time during the commute," he said.

Not only do Sailors have to be prepared for adverse driving conditions during

their commute, they must also be ready for worst-case scenarios, Standley said.

"This area experiences bay-related snowfall and the peninsula is hit even harder than the main land. The area is not ready for a cold snap. Sailors should treat the weather similar to a hurricane," he said.

Everyone should have a family plan in case they are stuck on board the ship due to inclement weather, ensuring that their family has plenty of supplies and utilities in the event that there are power outages, he said.

"Apart from the winter weather, the main cause for accidents and injuries are the potentially risky off-duty activities that Sailors participate in," Standley said.

Winter sports such as skiing and ice skating are not activities that most people participate in on a regular basis, and inexperience poses the threat of injury and possible death, said Standley. The winter also sees an increase use of fire, from lighting candles to fireplaces, and the possibility of a house fire is greatly increased. If a crew member is injured, not only are they hurting themselves, while they recover their shipmates have to work extra to pick up that slack, he said.

The winter holidays also add potentially dangerous activities: holiday parties and increased road travel.

"With holiday parties there is almost always alcohol and intoxication



U.S. Navy photo

The most obvious winter threats are the increased hazards on the roadways, being prepared for a worst case scenario may be the best way to keep out of an accident.

involved. Someone who rarely drinks may be more dangerous than a frequent drinker because they may not realize to what extent the alcohol is impairing them," Standley said.

For this reason, Sailors need to be extra careful on the roads. They not only have to worry about themselves, it could be the other drivers on the road that are impaired, he said.

Sailors sometimes travel great distances in an effort to be with friends and family for the holidays. Besides the winter road conditions and increased intoxication, the biggest danger is fatigue.

"Sailors try to make long trips in single drives in an attempt to conserve their leave time. It's often in the final stretch of the trip that drivers fall asleep at the wheel and get into potentially fatal accidents," Standley said.

Sailors should make frequent stops, not make long drives alone, and avoid driving at night to mitigate the risk of driving while fatigued, Standley said.

In order to increase awareness and minimize the number of winter accidents this year the ship's Safety Department is implementing many strategies that target the unique winter hazards. Risk management will be stressed through safety notes in the Plan of the Day and through various training exercises. While the command is committed to ensuring its Sailors are prepared for the winter ahead, Standley acknowledges that the responsibility ultimately falls on the individual.

"Whether it's the commute or recreation, be conscience of all the dangers and use risk management," he said.



U.S. Navy photo

Even simple chores take on extra hazards when wet or cold.



U.S. Navy photo

Winter sports can cause injuries through the fact that people may not participate in them on a regular basis.

SCMAGTF Marines share expertise with Dominicans

BY ENSIGN JASON S. FISCHER

USS Wasp (LHD 1)/DESRON 40
Public Affairs

SAN ISIDRO AIRBASE, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC — Members of the Dominican Air Force anti-narcotics unit Defend Protect and Serve (DEPROSER) and Marines and Sailors from Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force (SCMAGTF) recently got a chance to hone their interoperability skills while training on the island nation.

The units took two days to exchange best practices, preparing themselves for future operations and challenges.

Training evolutions included a known distance weapons range with the M16A1 rifle, night vision goggle familiarization, patrolling, military operations in urban terrain (MOUT), combat lifesaver techniques, Marine Corps Martial Arts Program and a culminating event – a heliborne airfield assault.

According to Marine Capt. Nelson Candelario, officer-in-charge for these training evolutions, the benefits of joint exchanges like this are tangible and apparent to both the Americans and Dominicans.

“The Dominicans have an opportunity to learn and employ Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP), which help them conduct efficient and effective military and law enforcement operations. It was obvious the Dominicans greatly enjoyed the training and saw the immediate benefits of incorporating these TTPs into their operations,” he said. “Events like this demonstrate to our Marines the extent and level of training they actually receive. Oftentimes Marines fail to realize just how well trained they really are, or the disparity in training among different nations. These types of events give them some perspective. It also affords them an opportunity to take on a unique mentor role.”

Parachutist Major Eddy Reyes



Photos by MC3 David Smart

Sgt. Daniel Newman, assigned to a Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force (SCMAGTF) currently deployed with the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) coaches a member of the Dominican Republic military during a gun shoot, as part of a Theater Security Cooperation event at San Isidro Air Base. Wasp is currently deployed on Southern Partnership Station-Amphib with Destroyer Squadron 40 and embarked SCMAGTF.

Concepcion, DEPROSER commanding officer, said the joint training will enhance the new unit's ability to fight the war on drugs.

“This training benefits us in that we learn new techniques for combating drugs. This knowledge will be put into practice when we are conducting operations,” he said. “Now we will have better results in the fight against drug trafficking and the emerging threats that we are facing everyday.”

The Marines are in the region as part of Southern Partnership Station-Amphib, which is a mission that nurtures interoperability with U.S. partner nations (PN) in the Caribbean and Central America.

Candelario said effective relationship-building and military-to-military training necessitates healthy, productive interaction between the Marines and their

counterparts from other countries.

“These types of events allow us that personal interaction with PN nationals while simultaneously improving PN military personnel's skill set,” he said. “It also opens the door for future similar events incorporating multiple PNs aimed at improving our partnerships.”

Sgt. Brandon Price, SCMAGTF Marine Corps Martial Arts Program instructor, said it was an honor to learn about different cultures by working with the Dominicans, and that he was impressed with their willingness to learn new things.

“They were receptive and eager to learn. They're like sponges, pay attention and are totally focused,” he said. “They might not be able to understand the language (English) very well, but through this, we can still build ca-

maraderie.”

Candelario agreed, adding the Dominicans also seemed to enjoy the exchange.

“Their reactions to the instructors, their willingness to participate, and their desire to learn was evident throughout the entire evolution. Their great enthusiasm for all of the training events made it quite clear that they thoroughly enjoyed the training.”

The Dominicans aren't the only ones who learned something new. Candelario said learning how other nations conduct certain types of training allows the Marines to evaluate and sharpen their own techniques.

“These events allow Marines to see the different ways that other nations approach tactical situations. This allows our Marines to view operational situations from a standpoint that they may not have

prior to participating in this type event,” he said. “Gaining different perspectives better the individual Marine's ability to overcome obstacles they encounter during the course of operations.”

Concepcion said training with the U.S. military gives the Dominican airmen an opportunity to make sure their training is not only adequate, but also current and timely.

“These events are an excellent way for us to gain valuable training because it allows us to determine what we need to change or improve because it is outdated and no longer effective. It helps us figure out what is current and relevant in today's operational environment,” he said. “Oftentimes we are using techniques the U.S. forces no longer use because they have developed more effective techniques. Events like this allow us to learn and also benefit from those more effective techniques.”

Cabo Parachutist Yeury's Gonzales Matos agreed, adding he also made new friends during the exchange.

“They taught us skills that we have not yet employed [on the battlefield],” he said. “We are good buddies, and we are grateful for the training, capabilities, and knowledge we have acquired.”

Concepcion said joint training opportunities help guarantee his airmen are ready to respond at a moment's notice.

“My men are committed to their mission 24/7 and they get the best results. They are willing to engage in operations regardless of time or place; they are always ready.”

But to LCpl. Corey Armstrong, who coached M16 range, the event was deeper than just the tangible act of training together – he said he wanted to make an impact on the Dominicans.

“When we leave, I hope we leave them with the impression Marines are very professional and well-trained – we want it to mean something to them.”

Air Traffic Controller achieves personal goal, career milestone as limited duty officer



Photo by MCSN Kristan Robertson

Air Traffic Controller 1st Class (AC1) Brock Blair (left), AC1 Keith Wilson (second from left) and AC1 Jack Coleman (right) are just some of the peers that AC1 Petunia Orr (second from right) accredit for helping her along her career, working in the air traffic control environment.

BY MC2 KRISTAN ROBERTSON
NAS Oceana Public Affairs

Air Traffic Controller (AC) 1st Class (AW/SW) Petunia Orr from NAS Oceana Air Operations Flight Planning division, has achieved a long-time goal and pivotal point in her naval career by being selected for the limited duty officer (LDO) program.

In 1997 in her hometown of Kankakee, Ill., Orr accepted a challenge from her sister when she was dared to enter the military. That dare led to an enlistment oath two days later and a 12-year career thus far as an air traffic controller. Even in the beginning, Orr explained to her recruiter her desire to be an officer and was told that she should enlist first to get the experience.

She arrived at boot camp Oct. 1, just four days prior to her 20th birthday and took a head-on approach from there, serving on USS Kearsarge (LHD 3), then with TACRON-21, doing one deployment with USS Wasp (LHD 1), then went to USS George Washington (CVN 73) and did two deployments. After that, Orr reported to NAS Oceana and has been here for the past five years.

"With the AC rate, it is a very fast moving environment," said Orr. "It keeps you constantly thinking and provides a lot of room to gain knowledge which, in turn, builds confidence."

She displayed this and set herself up for success during these assignments.

"I had a trend of being a sustained superior performer, having all sea duty assignments first, taking on the hard jobs, getting fully qualified on all platforms and acquiring collateral duties," Orr said.

She explained it was easier in the beginning before having two children and getting married, but with a supportive husband, she has continued to strive to be a well-rounded Sailor and perform her job.

"I can honestly say that I never really had any discouragement about being in the Navy except when I was taken out of my element and put into administration," she said, "because I enjoy my work, but knowing that I will be an officer, I feel fortunate to have the experience to help me with my knowledge of all aspects of the job."

Orr put in her package in October 2008 and found out this past February that she was selected. She is to be commissioned Jan. 29 this coming year and will report to Rota, Spain for three years. She has her plan lined up already for what she wants to achieve.

Currently, Orr does not have a college degree and has ambitions of getting that on her list of accomplishments. Being selected for LDO involved being looked at who is the best qualified as a subject matter expert to be put in the position of an officer, she explained.

"There are changes happening right now in our rate and I want to be involved and to be a leader for those changes based on what I know," she said. "I want my Sailors to be taken care of."

Her peers are what she attributes her success to and she explained that a leader, always having their Sailors on board with them, is what makes a good team.

"Oceana is challenging, there's a lot to know and you have to be flexible to be a team and with that, you will see rewards," Orr said. "I wouldn't be where I am without my team."

Southern Command blue, green team leaders unite

BY MC1 (SW) HOLLY BOYNTON
Naval Forces Southern Command,
4th Fleet Public Affairs

MAYPORT, Fla. — Commander, Marine Forces Southern Command met with commander, Naval Forces Southern Command (NAVSO) and 4th Fleet (C4F), Nov. 24 during a visit to headquarters at Mayport, Fla.

Maj. Gen. Cornell Wilson, who also serves as the Marine Corps component commander for Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), met with Rear Adm. Vic Guillory to discuss Navy and Marine Corps engagements, tour the headquarters facility and meet with staff.

During the tour, Wilson spoke with NAVSO foreign liaison officers, naval representatives from Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru and members of the Inter American Telecommunications System.

"The Marine Corps is our number one joint partner," said Guillory. "We are looking at greater opportunities to work together in the future and with our partner navies and marines throughout the SOUTHCOM Area of Influ-

ence. This is an opportunity for us to advance the discussions."

Following his tour of NAVSO and C4F headquarters, Wilson visited the crew of the USS Klakring (FFG 42) and received a tour of the ship at Naval Station Mayport.

As the numbered fleet assigned to NAVSO, C4F exercises operational control of assigned forces and conducts a full spectrum of maritime security operations in support of U.S. objectives and security cooperation activities that promote coalition building and deter aggression.

As the Navy's component command of SOUTHCOM, NAVSO's mission is to direct U.S. Naval forces operating in the Caribbean, Central and South American regions and interact with partner nation navies within the maritime environment. Operations include counter-illicit trafficking, theater security cooperation, military-to-military interaction and bilateral and multinational training.

For more news from Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command, visit www.navy.mil/local/cusns/.

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Sailors aboard the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) and embarked Marines from the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit participate in a 5K "Turkey Trot" on the ship's flight deck Nov. 26. The Bataan Amphibious Ready Group is transiting the Atlantic on their way home from a seven-month deployment.

Photos by MCC Tony Sisti

Bataan celebrates Thanksgiving

BY MC3 RYAN STEINHOOR
USS Bataan Public Affairs

USS BATAAN — Nearly 2,500 Sailors aboard the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) and embarked Marines from the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit celebrated the Thanksgiving holiday Nov. 26 on their way home from a seven-month deployment.

Although Bataan Sailors are underway and not breaking bread with their families on this special day, reasons to be thankful are a virtual cornucopia.

"We've been given an opportunity today to give thanks for one another, and the people we've become," said Capt. Sam Howard, Bataan's commanding officer. "We can recognize that we are woven together and can enjoy the strength we have gained from one another ... Happy Thanksgiving, shipmates."

Crew members spent the holiday participating in a 5K "Turkey Trot" on the flight deck, enjoying a Native American heritage celebration on the mess decks and feasting on a traditional ham and turkey dinner, before relaxing with football and a day-long marathon of the pop-culture favorite "A Christmas Sto-

ry" played over the ship's closed-circuit television.

"The celebration Bataan put on was a great way to bring a little bit of home while we're underway," said Logistics Specialist Seaman Recruit Tyler Stringer. "I was amazing the way the supply department came out and got everything put together for the crew."



Preparations for the Thanksgiving meal began days before and continued through Thursday. All in all, Bataan's culinary specialists prepared more than 1,400 pounds of turkey, 450 pounds of ham, three whole pigs and more than 200 pies.

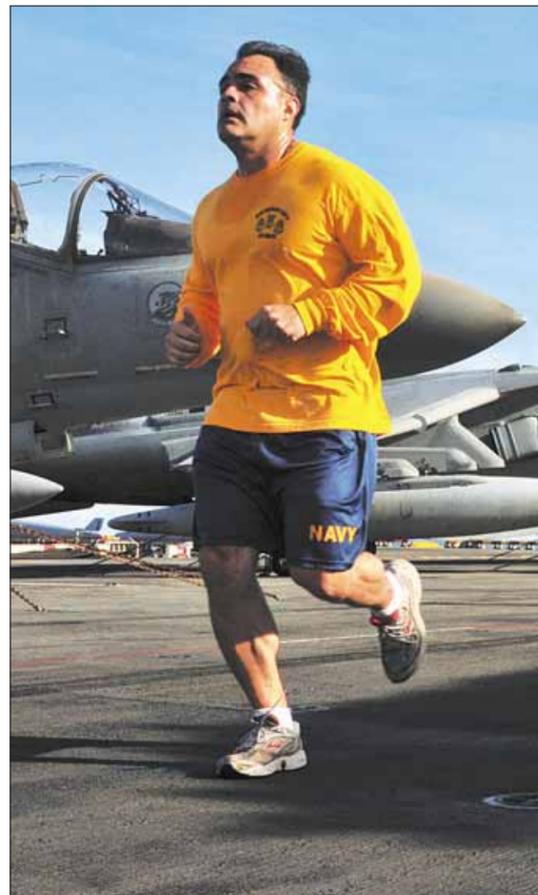
"When it comes to special meals like

Thanksgiving, we put a lot of thought into the process. We focus on what we're going to prepare for the crew and make sure we have enough portions," said Chief Culinary Specialist (SW) Karlene Henri. "The holiday time is when people start missing home, so we try to put out the best meal because we want it to feel a little more like home."

Bataan left her homeport of Norfolk, Va., May 13 to conduct Maritime Security Operations in the U.S. Fifth and Sixth Fleet areas of responsibility. She served as the flagship of the Bataan Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), which also includes the amphibious transport dock USS Ponce (LPD 15) and the amphibious dock landing ship USS Fort McHenry (LSD 43).

Bataan is the fifth ship of the Navy's Wasp-class ships. She was commissioned Sept. 20, 1997, and is the second U.S. Navy warship to bear the name. CVL-29 was an Independence-class light aircraft carrier that was commissioned in November 1943. After serving in both World War II and the Korean conflict, CVL-29 was decommissioned in 1954.

For more information about Bataan, visit the ship's Web site at www.bataan.navy.mil.



Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic Juan Rivas participates in a 5K "Turkey Trot" on the flight deck of the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) Nov. 26.

MCAST class completes course with field training exercise

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
MC3 CLASS LAUREN G. RANDALL
Navy Public Affairs Support Element, Norfolk

VIRGINIA BEACH — The Maritime Civil Affairs and Security Training (MCAST) command's newest members completed their two-week Civil Affairs Generalist Course (CAGC) at Naval Surface Warfare Center Dam Neck in Virginia Beach, Va., after one week of classroom and a week of field training exercise (FTX), on Nov. 20.

MCAST class CAGC1001 consisted of 18 students from a diverse group of ranks and rates from both the reserves and active duty components. Sailors came from all over; enlisted to officer and equipment operators to hospital corpsman and quartermasters. There were also a few Seabees who used their prior training and helped the class stand out.

"This class was by far the best we've seen come through here," said Dee Foster, the assistant FTX coordinator and an instructor for the course. "They latched onto the training, absorbed it, and then applied it very well to the field environment."

The FTX for this course is very involved and stands by the "train as if it's real" motto. There was a mock hurricane

that came through the city/state of 'Atlantica.' The teams had to locate and speak to local contacts for emergency services, food, shelter, medical needs and security forces. They also had to reach out to the local government and key people in the city and find supply and evacuation routes if necessary.

The 'townspeople' even had a mock riot to try and get into the strong hold storage facility guarded by students. It was a long week with most nights ending at 7 p.m., according to Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class (EXW) Gabriel Martinez, a Naval Reserve team member at Maritime Civil Affairs and Security (MCAS) in San Diego, Calif. The FTX concluded with a debriefing by Capt. Claudia Risner, the commanding officer of MCAST.

"I've heard this class was good and I wanted to see if you lived up to the hype," said Risner. "I have to admit this was the most thorough and thought-out briefing that I have seen."

The students graduated and were very grateful to go home, but they did enjoy the course and look forward to the new tasks set out for them.

"It's a whole different side of the Navy," said Martinez. "It's an interesting job and you're always in the know about world situations."



Maritime Civil Affairs and Security Training command's General Civil Affairs Course class 1001 try to keep a mock riot under control and keep the townspeople out of the storage facility in the city/state of 'Atlantica', Nov. 18 at Naval Surface Warfare Center Dam Neck in Virginia Beach.



Chief Petty Officer Matthew D. White, an equipment operator from Maritime Civil Affairs and Security (MCAS) team 206 from Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC) Dam Neck, and Lt. j.g. Jason Holbrook, team 206 MCAS, try to calm down and reason with a disgruntled citizen from the city/state of 'Atlantica' at the mock riot during the Field Training Exercise for MCAS Training command at NSWC Dam Neck.

Wasp celebrates Native American contributions, culture

BY MC1 (SW/AW)
ANDREW J. MCCORD
USS Wasp (LHD 1)
Public Affairs Office

CARIBBEAN SEA
– Sailors aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) assembled in the Hangar Bay Nov. 21 to help celebrate the Native American Heritage Month Observance.

Along with guest speakers and a discussion of contributions to the military by Native Americans, there was a ceremonial cake-cutting and an ice cream social to help celebrate a culture that's been on North America much longer than the United States of America has been a country.

Event Mistress of Ceremonies Aviation Support Equipment Technician Airman Tigar Lily O'Neil, who grew up on a reservation in Covelo, Calif., discussed her life experiences and noted the importance of celebrating the diverse cultures that make up the military, including that of Native Americans.

"The military has a lot of different cultures, and even though the smaller ones sometimes get overlooked; it's nice to get noticed," said O'Neil. "Being here makes me more proud of who I am, and it's important to recognize culture – where it came from, and to see where it came from before adapting to what it is now."

Wasp Commanding Officer Capt. Lowell D. Crow noted during his remarks that Native Americans have played a critical role in American history, particularly as important players in U.S. conflicts.

"Native Americans have served valiantly in our armed services," said Crow. They have fought from the American Revolution to combat missions

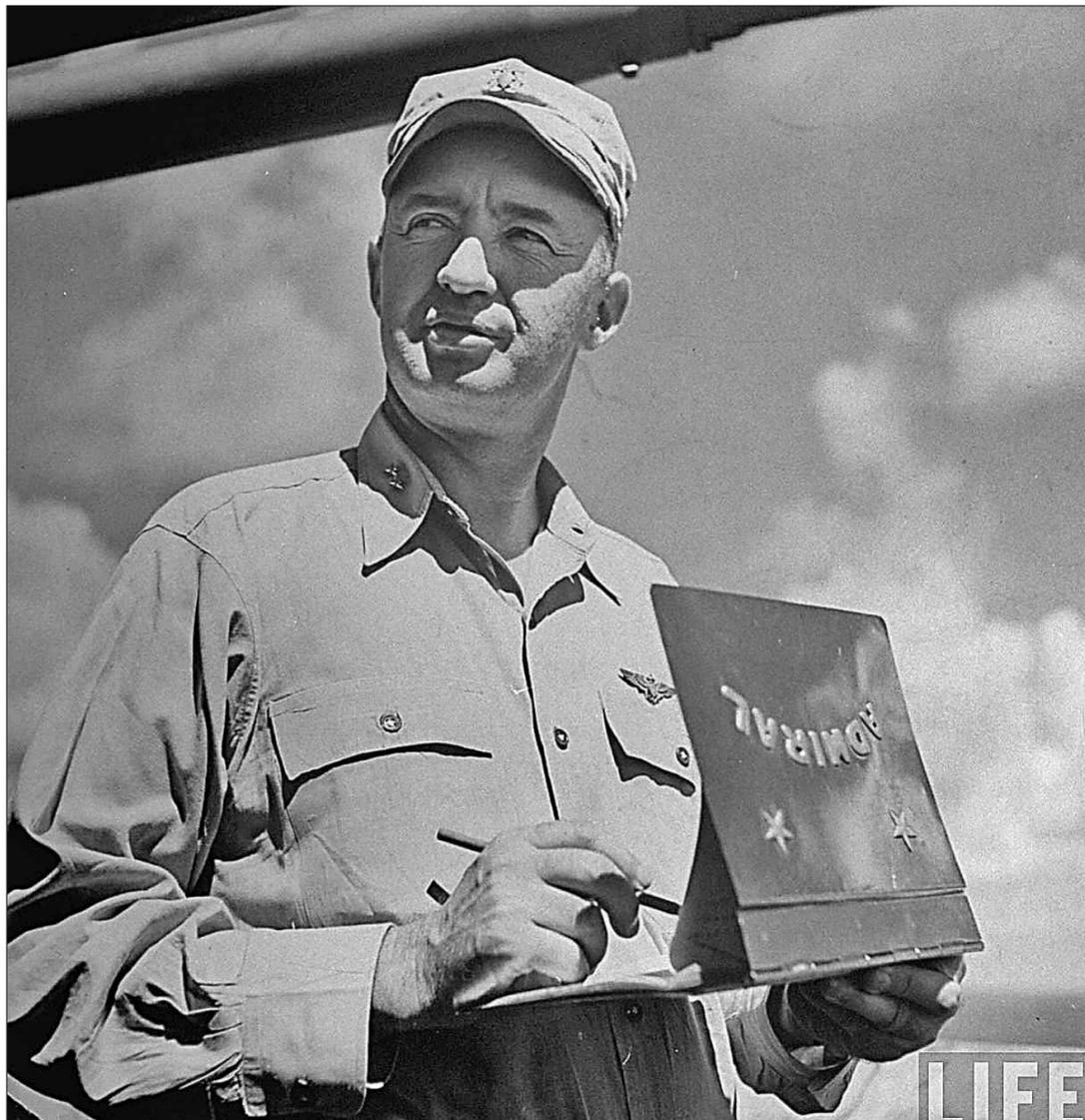
in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have fought valiantly in defense of our nation as dedicated service men and women."

Wasp Repair Division Officer Ens. Jodi Biermann, the keynote speaker for the event, pointed to the strength and resiliency inherent in Native American culture as key to the successes Native Americans have had in the military.

"The fighting spirit of the warrior is a rarity because of its universal presence in all Native American cultures," said Biermann. "The strong cultural values of this nation's indigenous people have boldly positioned them into the fighting core of today's military. Their willingness to engage the enemy in battle and fight for their tribe and homeland is a quality that has been unmistakably demonstrated by the courageous deeds performed by today's Native Americans in combat."

The first American Indian Day in a state was declared on the second Saturday in May 1916 by the governor of New York. Several other states followed suit that same year on the fourth Friday of September. It wasn't until 1990 that President George H.W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November as National American Indian Heritage Month, and similar proclamations under various names have been issued each year since 1994.

"The Native American warrior of today's military embodies and demonstrates unadulterated traits," said Biermann. "These traits – strength, honor, pride, devotion, and wisdom – not only make up the heart of an honorable culture, but come to embody the ethos of the ideal American war



The Wasp celebrated the contributions of Native Americans such as Vice Adm. Joseph J. "Jocko" Clark, a Cherokee descendant, who was the first Native American to graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy.

hero."

Wasp is currently deployed on Southern Partnership Station-Amphib 2009 with Destroyer Squadron 40 and embarked Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force. SPS is part of the Partnership of the Americas Maritime Strategy that focuses on building interoperability and cooperation in the region to meet common challenges.



Photo by MC3 David Smart

Crew members of the multipurpose amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) enjoy cake and ice cream on the Messdecks after attending Wasp's Native American Heritage observance in the ship's Hangar Bay, Nov. 21. Wasp is currently deployed on Southern Partnership Station-Amphib with Destroyer Squadron 40 and embarked SCMAAGTF.

Norfolk breaks ground on new fire station



Photo by SN Angela Chalbeck

Naval Station Norfolk broke ground Nov. 16 on a new \$6.4 million fire station. This facility, a congressional-add military construction (MILCON) project, will provide the fire department with a state-of-the-art, 5-truck bay, single story, fire station at the intersection of Admiral Taussig Blvd. and Virginia Ave. to better respond to station emergencies. Along with maximizing public safety response, this 20,000 square foot building will meet all environmental regulations and will be certified to at least LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver. LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system, providing third-party verification that a building was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance across all the metrics that matter most: energy savings, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts. Pictured: Frank Ferraro, Naval Station deputy public works officer; Chief Kenneth Snyder, district 3 fire chief; Jack Cox, facilities planner, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Mid-Atlantic; Chief Stephan Cox, regional fire chief; Capt. John Fristachi, regional program director for public safety; Capt. Kelly M. Johnson, commanding officer, Naval Station Norfolk; Chief George Ridgwell, asst. district 1 fire chief; Capt. David Boone, commanding officer, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Mid-Atlantic; Chief Royal Greer, district 1 fire chief; Kenneth P. Piche, vice president, Z Corp (contractor); Scott White, Z Corp; Eric Howard, project engineer, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Mid-Atlantic; Jason Ross, fire fighter.



U.S. Navy photo

Nassau

At right, French Air Force Gen. Stéphane Abrial, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), made a brief tour of USS Nassau (LHA 4) Nov. 19, escorted by the ship's Commanding Officer Capt. Ronald Reis. Reis gave the general a tour of the Well Deck, Hangar Bay and Flight Deck. Abrial said the ship's hull number had special meaning to him. "Big four is a great number for me. When I was an exchange cadet in the U.S. Air Force Academy back in 1974, I was in the Fighting 4th," said Abrial. He is the first European to be appointed permanently as head of a NATO strategic command.



The USS Enterprise (CVN 65) treated its Sailors on duty and their family members to Thanksgiving dinner.

'Big E' serves up Thanksgiving feast

BY MC3 MICHAEL CROFT
USS Enterprise Public Affairs

NORFOLK — While many Sailors in the Hampton Roads area braved the holiday traffic for a taste of a home-cooked Thanksgiving meal, some stayed on board ships — whether it was because they had to stand duty, couldn't afford a plane ticket, or were merely saving their leave for Christmas.

Thanks to the culinary services aboard USS Enterprise (CVN 65) Sailors who stayed behind were treated to a Thanksgiving dinner. Sailors were also given the option of inviting their family aboard for the holiday feast.

"I was a little upset when I found out I had duty on Thanksgiving," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 3rd Class Laurence F. Johnson. "But it turned out to be a great duty day because I got to bring [my wife] aboard for dinner. She really liked it."

Inviting family members to the ship turned out to be a better experience than what some of them expected. "I hear all the time about what the ship is like from my husband but I have never been here so I couldn't picture what everything was like," said Christina Johnson. "I'm so

glad I came, I really had a good time."

According to Chief Culinary Specialist (SW) Michael Sims cooking a meal as big as a Thanksgiving meal is not any different than any other meal prepared for the Enterprise crew.

"Our goal is to always try to have the best food available for everyone on board," said Sims. "Enterprise is one big family and all of us in the galley take pride in serving our family members and providing the best food we can."

Family members also competed in a pumpkin pie eating contest and watched "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving."

"This was my first time spending a holiday on the ship," said Ship Serviceman Seaman Jeffrey Campbell. "I had a great dinner and an excellent time. I look forward to the next holiday aboard Enterprise."

Enterprise is currently undergoing a maintenance period in the Northrop Grumman Newport News Shipyard and training to maintain proficiency in preparation to return to the fleet.

For more news from USS Enterprise (CVN 65), visit www.navy.mil/local/cvn65/.

SEALs offer aquatics enhancement program for fleet Sailors

BY MC3 JOSEPH M. CLARK

Naval Special Warfare Group 2
Public Affairs.

VIRGINIA BEACH — Members of the East Coast Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Motivating Team are establishing an Aquatics Outreach Program this December as part of the Sea Air Land (SEAL) and Special Warfare Combatant Craft Crewman (SWCC) fleet transition Program for candidates pursuing careers in military Special Operations.

The NSW aquatics program is open to fleet sailors who aspire to become SEAL or SWCC operators, with the intent on preparing candidates for the intense water skills and rigorous demands required for Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training (BUD/S) and Basic Crewman Training (BCT).

“Swimming and aquatics-based evolutions have been the Achilles heel for most candidates who recede from BUD/S,” said retired SEAL Capt. Dave Morrison, an aquatics instructor and SEAL motivator based out of Joint Expeditionary Base, Little Creek, Va. “Our program was designed to address this challenge by providing the candidates with a familiarity and level of comfort in the water, as well as instruction on technique and physical conditioning that was not available to these Sailors before we started this program.”

Morrison, who completed a tour as a BUD/S instructor as an active duty SEAL, said the aquatics program will open doors for candidates who are otherwise qualified for careers as SEALs and SWCCs.

“The system is tried and true,” said Morrison. “The goal has never been to lower the standards for candidates at BUD/S and BCT, but rather to increase the candidate’s proficiency and to prepare them mentally and physically for the challenges of this very difficult training.”

The aquatics program aims extend beyond preparation for the initial entry level SEAL/SWCC training, coordinators said.



Photo by MC2 Joseph M. Clark

Engineman 2nd Class Wilmot Lloyd trains for an upcoming physical screening test as part of the Naval Special Warfare Aquatics Outreach Program at Joint Expeditionary Base, Little Creek. The program is designed to prepare potential SEAL and Special warfare combatant-craft crewmen candidates for the rigorous swimming requirements presented at Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training and Basic Crewman Training.

These skill sets are essential for proficiency in the operational environment that SEAL and SWCC personnel work in.

“NSW constantly keeps one foot in the water,” Morrison said. “These operations are what define our community, and the rigors of BUD/S and BCT are a reflection of this concentration. This is also why many shy away from the community or are unable to make it through the training.”

Although the NSW community will continue to maintain its demanding environment, more candidates may find that they are up to the challenge as a result of the Aquatics Outreach Program, according to Morrison.

“We take candidates from ground zero and prepare them for the challenges,” Morrison said. “This program introduces a valuable skill set to those who are uncomfortable or who have low proficiency in the water. We are able, as a community, to incorpo-

rate candidates from a multitude of backgrounds, even if they have limited initial exposure to the water-based skills that they will need to succeed.”

Engineman 2nd Class Wilmot Lloyd, who has been participating in the program for four months, said that this program is the preparation that he needs to accomplish his goal of becoming a Navy SEAL.

“I wanted to be a SEAL since boot camp, but I never attempted BUD/S because I knew there was a lot of concentration on swimming and operating in the water,” Lloyd said.

Lloyd, who was born in Liberia and is now a U.S. citizen, has demonstrated proficiency in all of the physical skills required to enter BUD/S, with the exception of swimming. He attributed his limited ability in the water to a lack of exposure to swimming during his youth.

“Willy is an ideal candidate for

this program,” Morrison said, speaking about Lloyd. “Before he joined the program, he basically had no exposure to the water. The first time he I watched him swim, he literally sank to the bottom. He is now completing the entire swim portion and his times are improving each week.”

According to Morrison, Lloyd’s strongest asset is his strident dedication to his goal in the face of adversity.

“Willy has gone above and beyond in his commitment,” said Morrison. “He is usually here early each morning to get more time in the water, and again in the afternoon for the regular session we hold.”

Each candidate must demonstrate a high level of dedication in order to succeed within the program and ultimately make it through BUD/S and BCT, according to Morrison. “This program is not easy. It is designed to test the candidates both physically and

mentally,”

Morrison said. “It is a huge commitment and each candidate has to be up to it in order to succeed.”

The goal, Morrison said, is to utilize programs like aquatics enhancement to provide opportunities in Naval Special Warfare for a diverse cross section of Navy personnel.

“We are not looking for one type of individual to serve in Naval Special Warfare,” Morrison said. “Our operations are worldwide, and our success depends on having a diverse community. This program serves as a force multiplier in that respect.”

Sailors interested in Naval Special Warfare programs are urged to contact their command career counselors. Additional information about the Aquatics Outreach Programs as well as contact information for the coordinators may be found at www.seal.navy.mil or www.swcc.navy.mil.

Ike Sailors donate more than \$150K to charity

BY MC3 SEAN BURGESS

USS Dwight D. Eisenhower
Public Affairs

USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER — Sailors aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) (Ike) surpassed their goal to raise money for the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) and set a new record for their ship as they contributed charitable donations.

Ike's goal was to raise at least \$145,000. As of Nov. 22, Sailors have already donated more than \$150,000 and they are still sending contributions to the campaign.

Ike's Commanding Officer, Capt. Dee L. Mewbourne, said he was very proud of the Sailors aboard Ike in attaining and exceeding their goal. "It's a testament to this crew, because they believe in helping others, as shown by their giving to community relations (COMREL) projects and when visitors come to the ship. Ike has a very giving, caring crew that wants to make a difference wherever they go. This time, it's by contributing to the CFC."



Established in 1961, CFC is the largest workplace charity campaign in the country and the only campaign authorized to solicit and collect contributions from federal employees in the workplace. Donations collected by the CFC are used to support foun-

dations that feed the homeless, research advancements in medical technology and organizations that improve underprivileged communities.

"It's a pretty broad spectrum of charities Sailors can donate to, and just about any charity

you can think of is available," explained Lt. Scott M. Ryan, one of Ike's two CFC command coordinators. "I was absolutely blown away that we raised that much."

According to the Department of Defense (DoD) the CFC cam-

paign has out-pledged its previous year's goal for five straight years. The DoD's 2009 campaign goal is to raise \$14.1 million. Last year's campaign exceeded its goal by raising more than \$16 million in donations.

"Back in 2000, CFC contributions (by all federal employees) totaled upwards of \$230 million," said Chief Electronics Technician David Barber, the other IKE CFC coordinator. "Two years ago, it was \$260 to \$270 million. It grows every year as it gains momentum throughout the federal work force."

Originally, Ike's CFC coordinators imagined Ike's goal of \$145,000 to be daunting, considering the economic crisis people are experiencing. However, the ship's crew came through and showed what kind of giving people they are.

Last year Ike set their goal at \$112,000 and raised a total of \$139,289. In 2006, IKE Sailors donated \$146,392, previously the most ever contributed to CFC by the crew.

For more news from USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), visit www.navy.mil/local/cvn69/.

Employment assistance available to Veterans, families

BY BRUCE MOODY

Fleet and Family Support
Program, Commander,
Navy Installations Command
Public Affairs

WASHINGTON — The Navy provides no-cost consultations from employment specialists to provide individual counseling, workshops and seminars which provide and their families though the Family Employment Readiness Program (FERP).

The Fleet and Family Support Program, which manages FERP, is observing Warrior Care Month.

"We have employment experts around the fleet who are motivated in as-

sisting all veterans and their families as they transition from military to civilian life," said Panshella Cole, FERP manager.

Although FERP is not a job placement service, its employment specialists provide individual counseling, workshops and seminars which provide current strategies on job searches, interview techniques, dressing for success and resume writing to prepare people for the challenges and opportunities of today's changing job market.

"Oftentimes, when veterans transfer from the military to the civilian sec-

tor, it is difficult to put that military experience into civilian terms," Cole said. "Our goal is to assist these veterans in creating a resume that is civilian friendly."

For veterans and families whose transition involves moving to a new location, they are encouraged to contact the Fleet and Family Support Center in that area. The employment specialists there can discuss the job environment and opportunities and can assist with fine tuning resumes and applying for jobs before arriving.

FERP partners with the Department of Defense,

the Department of Labor, Military Spouse Corporate Career Network, Navy League, Avue Central and the Department of the Navy's employment Web site, www.donhr.navy.mil. These organizations allow visitors to post their resumes and search for job openings on their Web sites. Cole said the Department of Homeland Security has recently stepped up their drive to hire more veterans.

Federal agencies will soon have the option of hiring certain military spouses without having them compete for federal jobs, under guidelines recently issued by the Obama administration.

The rules apply to the spouses of military service members relocating for a new assignment, some physically disabled spouses, and those whose husband or wife was killed in the line of duty. Under

the guidelines issued by the Office of Personnel Management, eligible spouses will be able to apply for a federal job and ask that recruiters allow them to bypass the traditional hiring process.

"It's a family-friendly policy," Cole said. "It provides employment opportunities for individuals and a measure of economic stability to military families who must deal with a multitude of issues arising from one spouse serving their country."

Employment specialists at each Fleet and Family Support Center also reach out into their local communities and build partnerships which can benefit the wounded, ill and injured veterans as well as their family.

"We are constantly adding employers to our growing list of partners who are excited about hir-

ing our military families," Cole said. "These employers are generally familiar with the transition that military families face as well as the employment gaps, and they are able to overlook this. There are many organizations in communities that want to support veterans and their families, and these organizations have pledged their support in assisting these veterans in making this transition as well as hiring veterans who are wounded, ill and injured."

Once a veteran or family member is ready to begin their job search, Cole said the global network of FERP employment specialists, "will do whatever it takes to assist with that effort to gain employment."

The Family Employment Readiness Program is one of several provided by the Fleet and Family Support Program, which enhances Sailor readiness and family preparedness, thereby contributing to mission readiness. The program is committed to promoting self-reliance and resilience, not dependency, and empowers Navy families to meet the unique challenges of the military lifestyle.

For more information about FERP, visit <http://bit.ly/7C3fjh>.

For more news from Commander, Navy Installations Command, visit www.navy.mil/local/cni/.

KEARSARGE: Schedule demands Sailors gain experience fast

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yards on schedule. We had a lot of challenges and we met them all head-on.”

One of the greatest challenges faced was the transfer of 400 crew members during the yard period that resulted in a loss of invaluable experience. Making the situation even more challenging was the fact that many new reports had never been out to sea before in their careers. It was a true testament to the leadership at all levels that the ship got underway successfully and safely.

“The biggest thing for the new people is situational awareness because once we get underway they’re going to be dealing with less sleep and longer working hours,” said Chief Boatswain’s Mate Jason Knapp, who spent the last few days before the underway running Kearsarge’s Deck Department Sailors through a chain of checklists that included installing an adequate number of life rafts, conducting anchor tests, updating manuals and participating in daily emergency drills.

A great deal was asked of all

hands and it was a challenge Knapp feels his new Sailors answered like seasoned veterans. He also felt the steep learning curve exposed them to different facets of the job and taught them lessons in overcoming diversity that will pay dividends throughout their careers.

“The new Sailors are going to learn a lot in a short period of time because our schedule demands we get them up to speed now,” Knapp said. “They may never be challenged to do so much in so little time again and that can only make them better Sailors,

no matter how long they stay in the Navy. I’m proud of the way they stepped up and listened to instruction and understood how serious every step of getting underway is to safely returning the ship to Norfolk. I have no doubt the sea trials will be a success.”

Even with a successful return to the Fleet, Towns reminded his Sailors that there is still a great deal to accomplish in preparation for next year’s deployment and there can be no let-up or resting on laurels.

“We still have a lot to do with testing and certification and we

need to make sure we do it safely,” Towns said. “Getting out of the shipyards was our first step to bringing Kearsarge back into fighting form, and as long as we remember the basic things that make this ship and her crew the best in the Atlantic Fleet I have no doubt we can accomplish that goal.”

After USS Kearsarge completed the sea-trials, she returned to her home port of Naval Station Norfolk.

For more news from USS Kearsarge, visit www.navy.mil/local/lhd3.

FINANCE: Sailors do not have to spend the holidays spending money

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the merchants take advantage of that.

“You can be creative and have a good gift at the same. They know it came from your heart,” Esteves said.

Aviation Machinist’s Mate 1st (AW/SW) Erwin D. Bansil, IM2 400 Division leading petty officer and a CFS aboard Bush, said to start saving at least a year prior to the holidays.

Bansil explained the Holiday Assistance Program (HAP), which is a command-wide program available to Sailors who may need help getting a meal

for Thanksgiving, Christmas or a similar holiday.

There are several programs provided by the Fleet and Family Support Center to help Sailors save money during the holidays. These strategies include small, no-interest loans, car-buying strategies, and professional budgeting and money management.

CFSs encourage Sailors to seek guidance from them and to take advantage of the benefits available. For more information contact your departmental CFS, or the Fleet and Family Support Center at (757) 688-6289.



Photo by MC1 Julie R. Matyasick

Lt.j.g. James Legg speaks to his wife and three sons through video teleconferencing technology

CONNECTED: VTC increases morale

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only seven months and I was nervous and excited to see her,” said FC1 Haas. “I’m looking forward to getting back, relaxing and getting to know her better.”

Information Technician 2nd Class Juanita Beal, with CNSL’s communications center, says the program is a collaborative effort between the ship, Naval Surface Force Atlantic, and Naval Computer Telecommunications Area Master Station Detachment (NCTAMS) Hampton Roads.

“We (CNSL) put out a message to surface ships to see who would like to do a family day

VTC for the upcoming holidays,” she said. “The ships contact us letting us know they are interested. The ships then set up time slots, contact the families and get back to us with that information. The families go to CNSL for the VTC, and NCTAMS connects them to their loved ones on the ship.”

Beal, who assists in facilitating the VTC and welcoming the families to CNSL, thinks it is a good morale booster for the Sailors and their families.

“I like to see the families come in. They are always happy when they leave. My husband will be deploying soon and I hope they will do something like this. I will definitely come.”

The Chosin ones



Photo by MC1 Brandon Raile

Members of the visit, board, search and seizure team of the guided-missile cruiser USS Chosin (CG 65) practice boarding techniques from one the ship’s rigid hull inflatable boats. Chosin is the flagship for Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) 151, a multinational task force established to conduct counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia.

RESERVES: Reserve logistics helps Navy become more of a total force

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how to run a supply system is helpful with the Iraqis becoming a fighting force; it’s all about supply support and having a distribution system. So, they are in need of establishing that system, and we have Reservists doing that—teaching them how to do it.”

Formerly, 45 billets made up the Fleet and Industrial Supply Center Norfolk Detachment Ocean Terminal Center (FISC-N DET OTC). Now, 18 of those billets formed NR DLA DOT Norfolk.

“Functionally the mission of the unit has not changed, it’s still what is

called container freight station, which means we receive and sometimes repack cargo for shipment,” said Lt.Cmdr. Royce Yung, executive officer NR DLA DOT. “So, our mission is the same, but the organization of who we report to is different.”

NR DLA DOT Norfolk’s

mission is to provide a full range of distribution services and information to enable a seamless, tailored, worldwide DOD network that delivers effective, efficient and innovative support to combatant commands, military services and other customers during war and peace.