



DESERT BUZZ NEWS



Commodore's Corner



Men, Women, Families, and Friends of 30NCR,

Happy Halloween! By the time you read this, we will have been away from home for nearly three months now, and we are already looking forward to our “Over-The-Hump” celebration here on 14 November. The “Leaders of the Pac” are truly making a difference here in Afghanistan. My leadership at United States Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) has repeatedly told me what I already knew - that there was absolutely no slippage of engineering momentum experienced during and after the whirlwind turnover from 25NCR to 30NCR. That is a result of thorough preparations, diligent attention to detail, and just a lot of hard work from everyone in the Command. I am truly blessed to be surrounded by such a talented and motivated team of professionals!

I want to recognize in my article this time our recently selected Sailors of the Quarter. Congratulations to YN1 Tanya Tedeschi and EA2 Erick Gilbert for being singled out from amongst a large cast of front-running Seabees at 30NCR. Both of these superstars are members of our Reserve Component (RC), as are about one-third of our deployed unit here in Kandahar. YN1 and EA2 are

classic examples of why I said we really hit the jackpot with the caliber and initiative of the RC Seabees we brought down range with us!

Since my last article, we have welcomed our new Medical Officer, Doc Schelzig, to the team, and celebrated the pinning of our newest 30NCR Chief, RPC Alan Grow. Additionally, we have welcomed the Main Body from NMCB-22, an RC NMCB out of Fort Worth, Texas that has really hit the ground running with some impressive construction in support of the Combat Aviation Brigade. NMCB-74, our Seabee brothers and sisters from Gulfport, continues to excel in support of the Marines at multiple locations as well. Last but certainly not least, we received the great news that our very own CSO, CDR LaTanya Simms, has been selected to become the new CO of NMCB FOUR next summer - recognition that is very well deserved!

For all the folks back home, please stay tuned to the Ombudsman Newsletters and emails for information concerning the Port Hueneme “Over-The-Hump” celebration. Details of that are still being worked as I write this short note. Also, thanks so much for all the cards, letters, emails, and care packages that you are sending. As I said last month, nothing makes a Seabee’s day more than getting a package from home! Until next time, take care and God Bless.

- CAPT Kelly Schmader

Words From The CSO



30NCR Families and Friends,

Hello once again! It seems like I was just writing for last month’s newsletter, now LT Eric Vega, our Admin Officer / PAO, is beating us up for input again. Where did the month go? Happy Columbus Day and Halloween! Please take necessary precautions when taking the little ones out trick or treating to ensure everyone has a good time and comes home safely to survey their bounty.

Since we’ve last chatted, 30NCR participated in a couple of September 11th remembrance ceremonies alongside the 143d Expeditionary Sustainment Command; NMCB-22 and the 588th Explosive Hazard Team (that will synchronize route clearance initiatives) joined Task Force Forager; Commodore Schmader re-enlisted SW1 David Banaszak, our Safety Chief, in front of an A-10 Warthog which was pretty cool; six of our folks ran in the Army 10-miler here on Kandahar Airfield (KAF); we’ve received a ton of care packages (that’s no exaggeration); Ens. Kyle Lenahan ran the Marine Corps marathon at Camp Leatherneck; and we paused to celebrate the Navy’s 234th

birthday on October 13th. The event was short, yet powerful and was attended by many of our shipmates from U.S. Forces – Afghanistan (South), NMCB-22, NMCB-74 and other commands assigned to KAF. The Logistics Department even got us delicious birthday cake... lots of it!

Even with the cake and care packages loaded with goodies, as a command we’ve lost 385 pounds which equates to 2.7% less body mass. If we didn’t make time for PT, we would be in trouble. So far, Senior Chief Frank Palmer is our “Biggest Loser,” having lost 12% of his initial weight.

It’s starting to get colder, especially in the mornings, so we’re breaking out our cold weather gear. The weather guessers say it doesn’t get terribly cold here, but for a south Florida native like myself, anything below 55 degrees is quite uncomfortable. As suspected, the pace has remained steady, if not increased since last month. Overall, everyone is doing very well though. We humbly thank you for your positive thoughts, prayers, and words of encouragement. Until next time, be well!

- CDR Simms

Command Master Chief's Corner



Regimental Family and Friends,

We are all making great progress in regards to not just the mission put before us here, but the calendar as well. As you can see by another newsletter, time is moving forward. All the seasonal fall changes you are experiencing at home, we are going through them as well. The temperature has taken a significant turn downward which; at the moment, is a welcome change for us all. The rain is not far behind, similar to the southern California area, we'll all be complaining about a few weeks in.

The staff continues to work hard keeping a steady progressive pace forward, with a workflow that does not seem to have an end in sight, at least in this stage of the effort. The impact of the engineering effort across the country is invaluable. And you all should be very proud to be part of it. Please continue your support, thoughts and prayers for all our units under the 30NCR umbrella; Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74, NMCB-22, Army 19th Engineer Battalion and last but definitely not the least the Army 4th Engineer Battalion.

We have had two reenlistments recently, Petty Officer First Class David Banaszak and Petty Officer Second Class Derrick Maldonado. It is always inspiring and motivating to bear witness to the rededication ceremony of a reenlistment, no matter how many times you see it. And we have a couple more on the horizon but we won't mention their names until they sign the dotted line!!!

Thank you all for what you continue to sacrifice and for the endless support you give our team. Although it may seem thankless at times, know that what we all do is for a greater good, a cause that not everyone gets or understands, but most will undoubtedly be thankful for.

Stay strong and loyal, "CONSTRUIMUS BATUIMUS"

-- CMDCM Tom Cyr

Chaplain's Chat



As I write this, we are two months into our deployment. The newness of our surroundings has worn off, the work routines have set in, and so have our feelings of homesickness. As military members, we are torn between our sense of duty to country and love for family. I think I speak for all the Regiment's people in saying to our families, "I don't like to leave you. I hate being without you, but my duty demands the sacrifice."

First of all, our duty is noble and righteous. Not only is it selfless to endure danger and hardship to help an oppressed people gain the freedom and security we all enjoy, but a free and stable Afghanistan will make the world a safer place for all of us; especially our children. If generations to come are to enjoy peace and safety, the war against terrorism must be waged and won now. Our duty is not just to country but primarily to the people we love the most; to you and our children.

Secondly, and this is sometimes especially hard for spouses, our sense of duty in great part defines us. Without a strong sense of duty, life has no purpose. Without a noble and righteous cause to champion, strength of character and commitment cannot be formed or grow to full maturity in us.

As much as we may be tempted to believe our spouse's sense of duty comes before the love he or she has for us, please consider this; if your mate would shrink back from arduous duty to country and career, what makes you think they wouldn't do the same through difficult times in your relationship?

It is this demonstration of strength of character and commitment to country and career that contributes to your confidence and assurance that your loved one has the character to remain committed to you. To stand between your loved one's sense of duty is to undermine the very thing that defines him or her as a person worth having and loving. Admittedly, we military members, and the commands who own us, all need to do a better job of balancing our commitments to duty and family, but the two can never be separated. Neither can be forsaken without also forsaking the other!

So family members at home, I applaud you for understanding and making this sacrifice with your deployed loved one. You are our essential partners in fulfilling the mission we've been given to perform. You "keep the home fires burning" while we are away. You are the one that motivates us to succeed. You are the warriors that most uphold us to God in prayer. You are the love that is most on our minds and, in the case of our spouse for those of us who are married, you are the "better half" of us we most long to return to when our job is done. You are the reason we risk our lives to make the world a better place.

As much as you need our strength, we need yours. Help your loved one stay focused on the mission by being understanding and patient during this time of separation. Tell him or her how proud you are of what they are doing and that you love them all the more for being a person of such character and commitment. And above all else, may we all look to God with an unshakable faith worthy of the One who fulfilled the ultimate duty for each of us on the Cross.

-LCDR Slater



30NCR Participates in 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony



Chief Religious Program Alan Grow of Bogalusa La., delivers a message to servicemembers during a 9/11 Memorial Ceremony.

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The 30th Naval Construction Regiment (30NCR), alongside the 143d Expeditionary Sustainment Command (143d ESC), commemorated the eighth anniversary of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 during a brief ceremony at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.

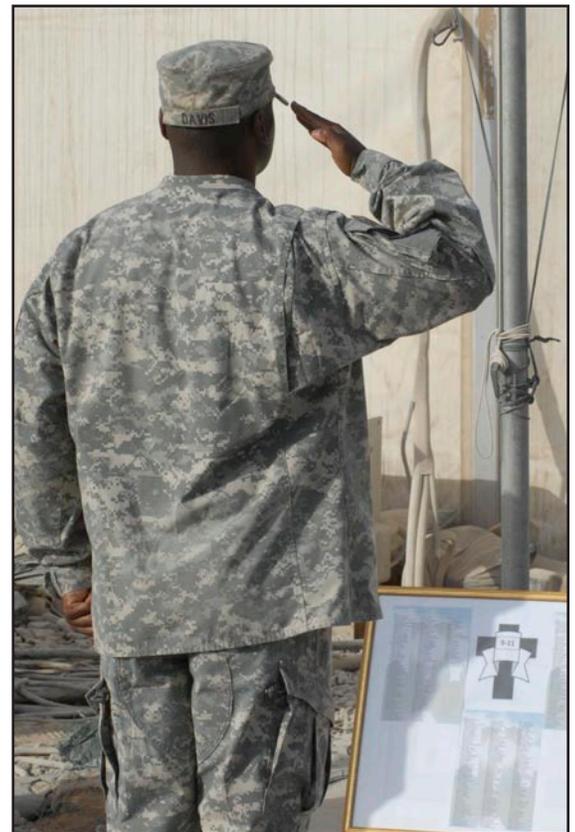
In remembrance of what has been described to be one of the darkest days in American history, only comparable to the attack on Pearl Harbor, Sailors and Soldiers from both units paid respect and

salute to those lost on 9/11.

“I was pretty nervous and shaking a little during the ceremony,” said Yeoman Seaman Apprentice Cosme Hernandez who was a rifle man in the multi-service color guard. “I was 11 years old and in the 6th grade during 9/11, my class saw the planes on live news crash into the World Trade Center and Pentagon, that’s what I remembered during the ceremony. It was an honor to participate in the remembrance.”

30NCR and 143d ESC gathered in formation and conducted several military honors including a rendition of taps and a color guard detail made up of Sailors and Soldiers. One of the key speakers for the ceremony was Chief Religious Program Alan Grow.

“Whether a Sailor, Marine, Soldier or Airman deployed or a family member at home, no one understands better than we do the high cost of freedom,” said Grow. “We will be questioned, criticized and ridiculed no matter what



Staff Sgt. John Davis of Smithfield, N.C., assigned to the 143d Expeditionary Sustainment Command renders honors as a member of the multi service Color Guard during the memorial ceremony.



Above: Members assigned to 30NCR and the 143d ESC, stand together during a memorial ceremony held to honor those who lost their lives on Sept 11, 2001 and to pay tribute to the service men and women that have paid the ultimate sacrifice in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

we do. But it is better to suffer for doing what is right, than for doing nothing about what is wrong.”

In what was the most somber part of the ceremony, the multi-service color guard placed a list containing the names of the nearly 3,000 9/11 victims in front of the U.S. flag as every Sailor and Soldier present saluted.

“As we remember the 2,993 people killed on September 11, 2001, we pause to remember the 5,130 brave men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice to fight the War on Terror to ensure the United States is not attacked again,” said Grow. “We will not forget!”

(More photos on the next page.)

Below: Members of the multi-service Color Guard prepare to present plaques with the names of citizens that perished on Sept 11, 2001.





30NCR Seabees also participated in a ceremony later that day, where they raised the ensign for the Navy and Coast Guard.



Above: Logistics Specialist 1st Class Mark Co (left) and Utilitiesman 2nd Class Heranio Wagayen raise the Navy Ensign during a remembrance ceremony Sept. 11, 2009.

Right: Construction Mechanic 1st Class Clarence Boulais (left) and Engineering Aide Constructionman Wesley Hetrick raise the Coast Guard Ensign during a remembrance ceremony Sept. 11, 2009.





30NCR Seabees play football on the MWR field. The regiment plays sports almost every Sunday morning.

The Making of a Chief

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Chief Religious Program Specialist (RPC) Alan Grow is humble, mild mannered, soft-spoken and a newly frocked Chief Petty Officer (CPO) in the United States Navy.

Grow, 27, a native of Bogalusa, La., quickly rose through the ranks to become the youngest of only 40 RPCs in the Navy.

“I have been blessed to have worked with some great Sailors. Some are already Chiefs and some are still climbing the ranks,” said Grow. “I had superiors, CPOs and peers that took care of me and set me up for success. Now as the Chief, it is my job to set them up for success so they can achieve their goals.”

Grow’s pinning ceremony took place on Sept. 16, 2009 at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. Marching in solo to the ceremony, Grow led the 30NCR Chiefs in a rendition of “Anchors Aweigh” followed by the “Song of the Seabees” before being welcomed into the Chief’s Mess.

The Chief’s pinning ceremony dates back to April 1, 1898 and is among one of the most admired and unique Navy rights of passage. Each September 16th, Chiefs from all over the Navy gather to welcome newly frocked members of the Mess.

“Being the only CPO Selectee within the command,” said Grow, “I was given a lot



Newly frocked Chief Religious Program Specialist Alan Grow marches into his pinning ceremony singing “Anchors Aweigh.”



Newly frocked Chief Religious Program Specialist Alan Grow is welcomed into the “Chief’s Mess” by his fellow Chiefs. Grow, who has served in the Navy for nine years, is one of only 40 RPCs in the United States Navy.



Newly frocked Chief Religious Program Specialist Alan Grow (center) stands with his sponsors Chief Steelworker Michael Bonifer (left) and Chief Hospital Corpsman Michael Broomfield.

of mentoring and training from the Chief’s Mess. Most CPO Selects do not get as much one on one time with the CPOs that I was given.”

Grow joins the unique and elite position of being one of only two RPCs assigned to the Naval Construction Force or Seabees.

“There is only one RPC billet with the Seabees, and that is the 1st Naval Construction Division RP,” said Grow. “The NCRs have RP1 billets and the Naval Mobile Construction Battalions have RP2 and below billets. I am the first and only permanently assigned RPC

with any of the seven NCRs.”

Grow began his Navy career by completing Boot Camp at Great Lakes, Ill. before reporting to his first command, the USS Belleau Wood (LHA-3). He then traveled to Religious Program Specialist “A” school in Meridian, Miss., where he graduated with honors.

Upon completion of Chaplains and Religious Program Specialist Expeditionary Skills Training (CREST), he was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 11th Marines, stationed at Camp Pendleton, Calif. During his tours of duty, Grow has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as well as Operation Enduring Freedom.

Grow’s duty within the regiment is to coordinate and facilitate religious programs, coordinate religious ministry training for Chaplains and RPs and is the United Through Reading program manager.

“As an RPC, we are usually over a much larger area. RPCs not only take care of the command they are assigned to, but also take care of all the commands in their AOR [area of responsibility],” said Grow. “For instance, a RPC would be the senior RP for a whole Carrier Battle Group.”

Achieving the rank Chief symbolizes one’s deckplate leadership, institutional and technical expertise, professionalism, character, loyalty, active communication and sense of heritage. Congratulations Chief Grow.

Newly frocked Chief Religious Program Specialist Alan Grow is congratulated by Cmdr. La Tanya Simms, 30NCR Chief Staff Officer.





SW1'S Reenlistment



Seabee Re-Enlists in Afghanistan

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan -- Steelworker 1st Class James Banaszak from Port Hueneme, Calif. re-enlisted for four more years during a brief ceremony Sept. 30, 2009 in Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.

Banaszak is the regiment's safety officer.

"My job is to ensure that 30NCR and all subordinate units have the necessary safety measures in place to perform jobs safely," said Banaszak.

Banaszak, who has served in the Navy for 16 years, re-enlisted on the flight line in front of an A-10 Thunderbolt II, more commonly known by the nickname Warthog.

After seeing the aircraft shoot its 30 MM cannon at night, Banaszak was impressed and decided to do some research on it.

"The Warthog is an impressive aircraft," said Banaszak. "A Warthog can take a lot of damage and still go home."

The same qualities, grit and determination that make this aircraft a success, are also reflected in Banaszak's Navy career.

Since he enlisted in the Navy, Banaszak has served in four Naval construction units and completed six deployments.

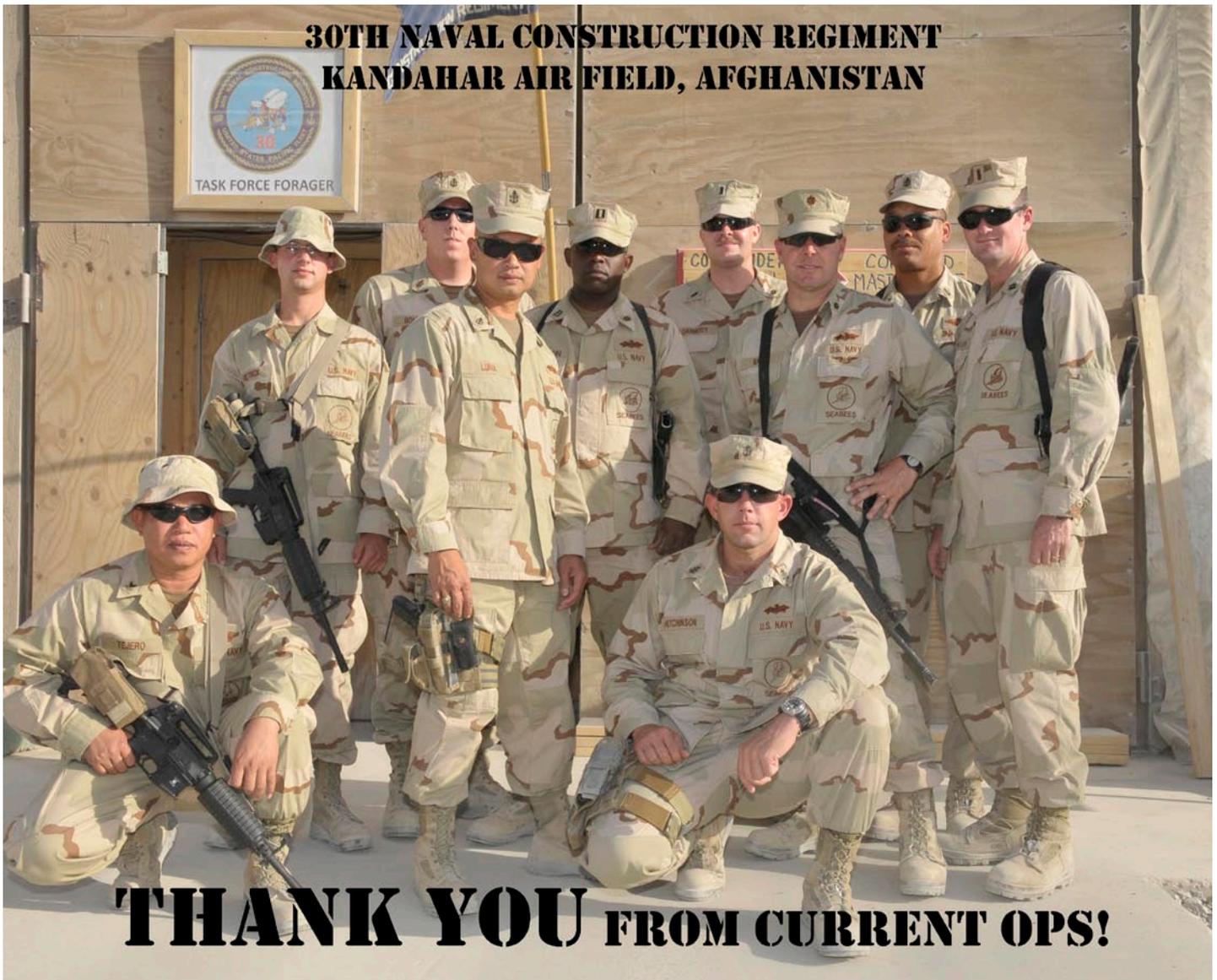


Above: Steelworker 1st Class James Banaszak poses for a photo in the cockpit of an A-10 Thunderbolt II.



Left: Steelworker 1st Class James Banaszak re-enlists after being discharged from the U.S. Navy.

**30TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT
KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, AFGHANISTAN**



Care Packages Make a Difference

Since arriving in August, the regiment has received an enormous amount of support in the form of care packages. These packages contain snacks, toiletry items, correspondence and sometimes even messages of encouragement. Your generosity is evident by the sheer volume of these gifts.

For many Seabees, care packages are a reminder of life at home and the family, friends and co-workers we miss. Thanks to all contributors who have made a difference.

A few quotes on care packages from our Seabees:

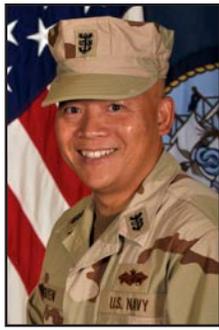
“I feel really thankful when I get one,” said Yeoman Seamen Apprentice Cosme Hernandez.

“They care about me,” said Chief Religious Program Specialist Alan Grow about getting a package from his mother and father. “They didn’t forget me.”

“I feel loved,” said Logistics Specialist 1st Class Leon Pizzaro after getting a package from family.

Around the Camp





CUCM

Robert Moons

UCCM

Minh Nguyen

EOCS

Frank Palmer

SWC

Mike Bonifer

ITC

Katrina Franklin

BUC

Derrin Austin

INTRODUCING THE CHIEFS

There are 20 chief petty officers deployed with 30th Naval Construction Regiment (30NCR). As senior non-commissioned officers, they serve as both technical experts and leaders in their fields with the collateral duty of training junior officers.

CUCM Robert Moons: I am the regimental operations chief and manage tasking performance and provide guidance to units assigned to 30NCR. I am also a sounding board for the Operations Department on issues that range from professional development to project reporting and execution methods.

UCCM Minh Nguyen: The Combat Operation Center (COC) is the regiment's hub that receives and disseminates timely tactical and operational information. As a COC watch officer, I ensure that command staff and relevant personnel are fully informed of the latest information needed to make decisions.

EOCS Frank Palmer: As the regiment's equipment officer, I have the distinct pleasure of working with two of the most dependable and knowledgeable Construction Mechanics in the Naval Construction Force, Construction Mechanic 1st Class Clarence Boulais and Construction Mechanic 2nd James Goode. Between these two stellar performers and Senior Chief Construction Mechanic Vern Forester, we manage the transportation and construction equipment programs; filling critical voids in resources, procuring parts on short notice throughout Afghanistan and supporting the war fighters with quality contingency construction. We support Forward Operating Base (FOB) construction, crane operations and water well drilling, and the performance of preventive maintenance and interim repairs on all equipment assets.

SWC Mike Bonifer: As the West Area Ops Chief, I manage the employment and tasking of all troop labor assigned to support the Marine Expeditionary Brigade. Projects range from providing camp support, construction of command and control facilities and building or expanding FOBs to support the war fighter.

ITC Katrina Franklin: I am Task Force Forager's Communication Chief in charge of providing tactical and strategic communication support and guidance to multi-service units; two Naval Mobile Construction Battalions, two Army Engineer Battalions and an Airforce RED HORSE Squadron. I lead a team of five talented communications technicians whose diverse background is key to the success of the command's ability to provide mission critical command and control.

BUC Derrin Austin: As the Kandahar Airfield (KAF) Ops Chief, representing Task Force Forager. My mission is to employ troop labor to build facilities, infrastructure support for forces here in KAF.





Sailors Celebrate Navy Birthday In Afghanistan

KANDAHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan-- Sailors deployed to southern Afghanistan celebrated the Navy's 234th birthday at a ceremony at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan Oct. 13, 2009.

Sailors from the 30th Naval Construction Regiment (30NCR), Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 22, U.S. Forces Afghanistan (South) and several other commands participated in the ceremony.

"The Navy has both a tradition and a future, and we look with pride and confidence in both directions," said Adm. George Anderson, former Chief of Naval Operations. Anderson's words, spoken Aug. 1, 1961, rang true throughout the birthday celebration. It provided Sailors

Right: Lt. j.g. Monica Rojas (left) and Ens. Michael Andrews sing the Star Spangled Banner.



Above: Yeoman Seaman Apprentice Cosme Hernandez (left), Senior Chief Builder Jon Koenig (middle), assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 22, and Ens. Kyle Lenahan sing "Anchors Aweigh."

an opportunity to share their pride and confidence in the Navy's past and future.

"Sea power protects the American way of life," said Cmdr. La Tanya Simms, 30NCR Chief Staff Officer and guest speaker for the ceremony. "We have been dubbed a global force for good, executing the nation's Maritime Strategy through forward presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection, maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster response."

Though today's Navy has changed from that which was founded Oct. 13, 1775,



Above: Steelworker 1st Class Charles Nelson (left), Construction Electrician 1st Class Diano Raigumal (middle) and Construction Mechanic 1st Class Clarence Boulais prepare for the Navy Birthday.

many aspects have remained the same. Today's Navy continues to build upon the legacy of service and tradition of being a force for good founded 234 years ago.

"We're in every corner of the globe wearing, among other uniforms, NWUs, ACUs, DUUs and CUUs," said Simms. "We are men, we are women, we are multi-ethnic [and] multi-cultural. An assortment of threads woven together from the fabric of our great nation; we are a brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers. We are family called to serve at a time of conflict and do so without hesitation or mental reservation."

The ceremony included a live performance of the "Star Spangled Banner" by Ens. Michael Andrews and Lt. j.g. Monica Rojas both assigned to 30NCR.

"I've sung the national anthem in front of stadiums so I wasn't nervous," said Andrews. "Seeing the look on the faces of the Seabees and IA Sailors put the meaning of the national anthem in a much more meaningful context."

After the Secretary of the Navy's birthday message was read, the ceremony concluded with the youngest and oldest Sailor present

cutting the Navy birthday cake and every Sailor in the room singing the song of the Navy, "Anchors Aweigh." Happy Birthday Shipmates!



Left: Yeoman Seaman Apprentice Cosme Hernandez (left) and Senior Chief Builder Jon Koenig, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 22, cut a cake during a Navy birthday celebration. Following tradition, the honor of cutting the cake went to the youngest and oldest Sailors present.

Holiday Mail Deadlines

With the holiday season arriving, please be mindful of the dates below to ensure that your packages arrive by Dec. 25.

First Class Mail Letters/Card: 04 DEC 09

Priority Mail: 04 DEC 09

Parcel Airlift: 01 DEC 09

Space Available Mail: 20 NOV 09

Parcel Post: 13 NOV 09

Address:

MEMBER'S NAME
30NCR (USN, SEABEES)
APO AE 09355



30th Naval Construction Regiment
Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan
September 30, 2009

