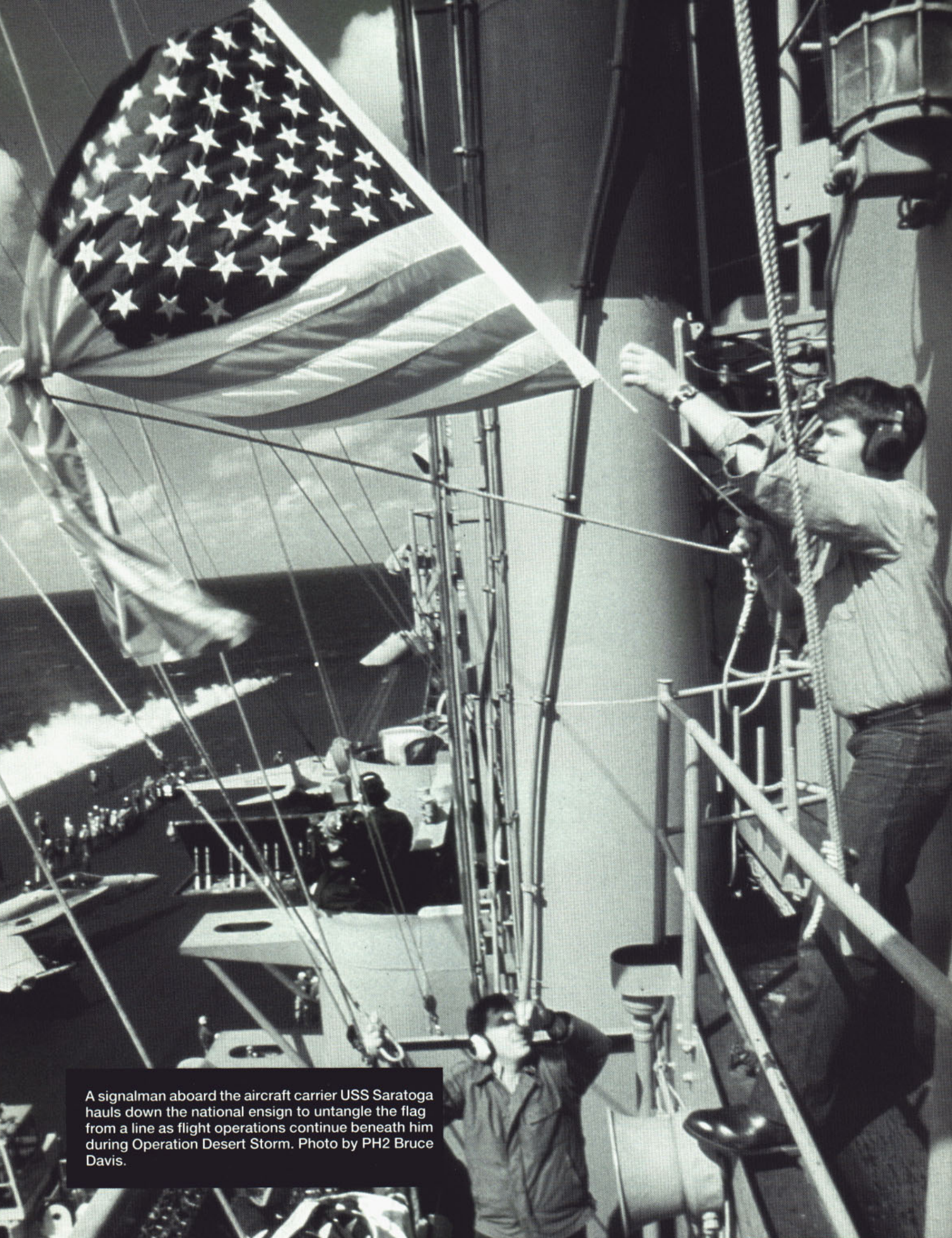
ALL HANDS

JANUARY 1992

Year of the rescue



A signalman aboard the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga hauls down the national ensign to untangle the flag from a line as flight operations continue beneath him during Operation Desert Storm. Photo by PH2 Bruce Davis.

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ALL HANDS

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Photo by PH1(AW) Joseph Dorey

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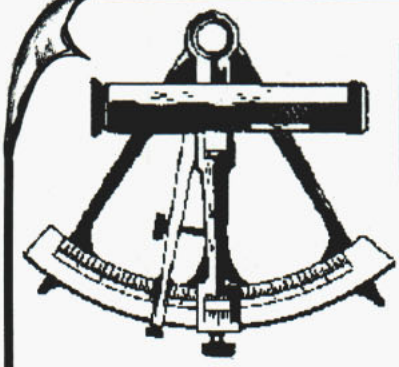
Front Cover: 1991 — Year of the rescue. The Navy was active in six major humanitarian rescue missions during 1991 in far-flung places across the globe, aiding victims of man-made as well as natural disasters. Top left: Mt. Pinatubo's volcanic eruption wreaked havoc in the Philippines, thrusting the Navy into action during Operation *Fiery Vigil* (U.S. Navy photo). Top right: Navy ships and Marine Corps aircraft evacuated civilians from war-torn Somalia during Operation *Eastern Exit* (Photo by LT K.F. Flynn). Bottom: Operation *Provide Comfort* brought much-needed food and medical supplies to Kurds fleeing Iraqi forces (Photo by JOC Marjie J. Shaw). See story Page 35.

Back Cover: The cargo ship *Green Wave*, loaded down with 450 containers holding a fleet hospital, sits at the pier near the town of Evenes, Norway. Photo by PH1(AW) Joseph Dorey. See story Page 24.



From the charthouse

BuPers requests MCPON nominations

Since September 1988, the Navy's most senior enlisted position — Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) — has been held by Master Chief Avionics Technician (AW) Duane R. Bushey, who is slated to retire from active duty later this year.

The Chief of Naval Personnel is requesting nominations of master chief petty officers from the fleet who strongly desire to serve in this position and are considered by their commanding officer to meet the prerequisites.

Nominations must reach the Chief of Naval Personnel by Feb. 15, 1992. Selection will be based upon preliminary screening by the Senior/Master Chief Petty Officer Selection Board and final screening by a special selection board.

The new MCPON will report to Washington, D.C. to relieve Bushey on Aug. 28, 1992.

Institute holds essay contest

To promote research and writing on the topic of leadership, the U.S. Naval Institute and the Vincent Astor Foundation are sponsoring their 18th annual leadership essay contest for junior officers and officer trainees of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. Entries must be postmarked by Feb. 15, 1992, and cannot exceed 4,000 words.

The first prize winner receives $1,500, a Naval Institute gold medal and life membership in the Institute. The first honorable mention winner receives $1,000 and a silver medal.

The Institute will also award two second honorable mentions $500 and bronze medals.

For a list of contest rules, write the U.S. Naval Institute Membership Department, 118 Maryland Ave., Annapolis, Md. 21402-5035, or call (800) 233-USNI.

Association offers education loans

Scholarship loan applications for the 1992-93 school year are now available through The Retired Officers Association.

No-interest loans are awarded for up to five years of undergraduate study to unmarried students under the age of 24, who are dependent children of active, reserve and retired service personnel, or their widow(er)s.

Applications must be requested by March 15, 1992, and returned with a postmark on or before April 1, 1992. For an application or information, write to TROA Scholarship Administrator, 201 N. Washington St., Alexandria, Va. 22314-2529.

Getting out? Think again!

It's time to decide whether or not to stay in the Navy. If your choice is to get out, coming back may not be possible.

Down-sizing of the armed forces has put some difficult decisions upon policy makers who shape the size and composition of our Navy. These decisions are being made with a careful eye toward protecting the careers of sailors who choose to remain on active duty.

One way to reduce the size of the Navy is to not replace all the sailors who choose to separate from active service. Cuts need to be made across all paygrades if the Navy is to remain a balanced force with opportunities for advancement.

The bottom line is: once you make the decision to get out, you must be prepared to live with that decision. No matter how much you contributed to the Navy while on active duty, there simply may not be a spot to put you in without hurting the sailor who remained on active duty.

National Defense eligibility expanded

By executive order, President George Bush authorized the National Defense Service Medal for all members of the National Guard and reserves who were part of the Selected Reserve in good standing during the period Aug. 2, 1990, to an end date yet to be determined.

This includes selected reservists not called to active duty, but who continued to train to be ready for possible mobilization in support of Operation *Desert Shield/Storm*.

As before, those members of the Individual Ready Reserve and retired reservists who were called to active duty are eligible.

CHAMPUS changes cost-share

The amount active-duty families pay for in patient care in civilian hospitals increased Oct. 1, 1991. The new amount is $8.95 daily vice $8.55.

This means that an active-duty family member who is admitted to a civilian hospital under CHAMPUS will pay the rate of $8.95 times the number of days spent in the hospital, or a flat fee of $25, whichever is greater.

This rate does not apply to any other category of CHAMPUS-eligible patients. Their inpatient care will, in most cases, be cost-shared under CHAMPUS' diagnosis-related group payment system.

Memorial plans commemoration

A series of events are planned during 1992 commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. In the coming weeks, Jan C. Scruggs, president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF), will announce plans for the 10th Anniversary Commemoration.

The historic 10th Anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial will provide a unique opportunity for remembrance and reflection. It will honor the nation's progress in healing and celebrate the role the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has played during its 10 years on the Mall in the nation's capital.

For more information on specific events, call (202) 393-0090.

Blood donations halted for Gulf vets

Blood donations from *Desert Shield/Storm* veterans are temporarily halted due to a rare parasite transmitted by sand fleas in the Gulf.

To date, only 22 service members out of a half-million, have been found to have the parasite known as Leishmania.

This organism usually causes an easily treated skin disease. Doctors at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research have identified the infection — via a bone marrow culture — in seven patients who have no skin lesions. The patients were found to have mild illnesses, some with fever and diarrhea.

Although doctors believe the number of cases is small, they want to ensure that all cases are quickly detected and treated.

The illness is not fatal and does not progress to more serious illnesses. Skin lesions, high fever and diarrhea are the only known difficulties.

The infection is treatable and symptoms are not expected to recur, nor are these forms of the parasite contagious in person-to-person contact.

It is recommended that individuals who traveled to the Gulf region since August 1990 temporarily refrain from donating blood. This delay will allow researchers time to determine the level of additional infections among the exposed population, and to develop a screening test for infection. □

New CNP takes personnel helm

ADM Mike Boorda recently turned over leadership of the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BuPers) to VADM Ronald J. Zlatoper following Senate confirmation of both nominees.

Boorda relieved ADM Jonathan T. Howe as Commander in Chief of both U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Allied Forces, Southern Europe.

Taking the BuPers helm after serving as Commander Carrier Group 7 during Operation *Desert Storm*, Zlatoper said BuPers will keep emphasizing personnel policies and programs that promote stability, equal opportunity and a good quality of life for Navy people; personalized services from BuPers and manpower reductions without voluntary separations of sailors. □

U.S. Navy photo

Mail Buoy

Unknown ship

In regards to an article that I read in October 1991 issue of *All Hands* magazine, I found a mistake that disturbed all the sailors aboard my ship as well as myself. In the article titled "Fiery Vigil," you mistakenly called our ship USS *Ingraham* (FFG 61). My ship is USS *McClusky* (FFG 41).

During our participation in Operation *Fiery Vigil*, *McClusky* took aboard 375 evacuees, 15 dogs, two cats and a bird. If you have ever been on an FFG, you know that it is cramped enough with an Air Det. embarked, which brought the total of men aboard, prior to pick up, to around 235. Everyone put forth a tremendous effort to make all the victims of Mount Pinatubo's rage feel at home. All of the crew gave up their racks so many of the women and children could get sleep for the first time in days.

We also gave up little things that meant a lot to the evacuees, such as extra sea bags, which made it easier for some of the people to keep their things all together and extra blankets that we had purchased in other ports.

Well, every time our ship's name appears in a military magazine, it is either misspelled (which had been done numerous times) or mistaken for some other ship. All of us aboard feel like we are lost at sea on the "unknown ship." Maybe everyone here should get an American Express card. Maybe then people will recognize us. We might be a "small boy," but when it comes right down to it, we are "Mighty Mac," leaders of the Pac.

ET3 Enrico Fambry
USS *McClusky* (FFG 41)

Mistaken identity

As a member of HC 2 (Helicopter Combat Support Squadron 2) Det. 2, the "world famous Desert Ducks," I would like to correct a minor discrepancy in your September '91 issue. On the inside back cover, your fine magazine shows a picture of a SH-3 "G" mighty *Sea King* (A/C 746 "Wild Duck") hoisting to the deck of the USS *Niagara* (AFS 3). The caption states that the aircraft was a SH-3 "H" and not the venerable "G" with the powerhouse of powerhouses (not), the T-58 "Dash 8" engines.

Being the only helicopter combat support detachment permanently based in this tropical and exotic paradise known as the Persian Gulf, and posting record numbers in hours flown as well as pax, mail and cargo moved during Operation *Desert Storm*, I would just like to make it known that the helo pictured is indeed a "Golf" and is a fine old workhorse for the "world famous Desert Ducks."

A concerned Duck
HC-2 Det 2

Reunions

• **Iwo Jima Survivors Association** — February 21-23, Wichita Falls, Texas. Contact Iwo Jima Survivors Association of Texas, P.O. Box 1657, Bowie, Texas 76230.

• **USS Noa (DD 841)** — March 27-28, Sanford, Fla. Contact USS *Noa* Reunion Committee, 129 Willow Lane, Lake Helen, Fla. 32744; (904) 228-3366.

• **USS Purdy (DD 734)** — April 2-5, Norfolk. Contact Larry Eckard, P.O. Box 5145, Hickory, N.C. 28603; (704) 256-6274.

• **USS Smith (DD 367)** — April 9-11, Tyler, Texas. Contact Harold Angel, Route 4, Box 126, Winnsboro, Texas 75494; (214) 629-3549.

• **VF(N) 52** — April 21-23, Pensacola, Fla. Contact Douglas T. Horst, 2612 Salina Way, Kissimmee, Fla. 34758; (407) 846-4388.

• **USS LST 2** — April 23-25, Easley, S.C. Contact Edford Turner, 320 Mossie Smith Road, Easley, S.C. 29642; (803) 859-1258.

• **USS James O'Hara (APA 90)** — April 24-26, Fort Myers, Fla. Contact Jerry Schuetz, 15160 N. Pebble Lane, Fort Myers, Fla. 33912-2335; (813) 482-1049.

• **USS Tarawa (CV/CVS/CVA 40), air groups and Marines** — April 30-May 3, Norfolk. Contact Larry Eckard, P.O. Box 5145, Hickory, N.C. 28603; (704) 256-6274.

• **USS Lloyd Thomas (DD 764)** — April 1992, Virginia Beach, Va. Contact Robert J. Scherrer, 4812 Admiration Drive, Virginia Beach, Va. 23464; (804) 467-6270.

• **Mobile Riverine Task Force 117, USS Benewah (APB 35), USS Calleton (APB 36), USS Mercer (APB 39) and USS Nueces (APB 40)** — April 1992, Hickory, N.C. Contact Larry Eckard, P.O. Box 5145, Hickory, N.C. 28603; (704) 256-6274.

• **USS Little (DD 803)** — May 1-3, Catalina Island, Calif. Contact Frank Whall, 50 Maple St., Norfolk, Va. 02056.

• **50th Anniversary of the Battle of Coral Sea** — May 1-9, Australia. Contact Leanne Jones, 222 Kearney St., San Francisco, Calif. 94108-4510; toll free (800) 234-2394.

• **NMCB 128 (Vietnam Era)** — May 5, Gulfport, Miss. Contact Mack Hood, P.O. Box 784, Long Beach, Miss. 39560; (601) 863-7941.

• **USS Chicago (CA 29/136 and CG 11)** — May 12-17, San Antonio, Texas. Contact M.E. Kramer, 41 Homestead Drive, Youngstown, Ohio 44512

• **USS Jenkins (DD/DDE 447)** — May 13-16, Wauwatosa, Wis. Contact Ralph J. Kuhnke, W149 N8378, Norman Drive, Menomonee Falls, Wis. 53051; (414) 251-5609.

• **PBM Mariner and P5M Marlin** — May 13-17, Virginia Beach, Va. Contact Dr. Harold W. Stetson, 222 N. Chancellor St., Newtown, Pa. 18940-2206; (215) 968-3103.

• **Carrier Air Group 11 (World War II)** — May 13-17, Virginia Beach, Va. Contact Rod Ham, 361 Chickasaw Road, Virginia Beach, Va. 23462; (804) 499-2630.

• **VP/VPB 204 (World War II)** — May 13-17, Virginia Beach, Va. Contact George W. Thaler, 310 S. Main St., Chippewa Falls, Wis. 54729; (715) 723-2822.

• **USS Providence (CL 82)** — May 14-16, Covington, Ky. Contact Ray E. Lape Jr., 1717 Monticello Drive, Fort Wright, Ky. 41011; (606) 341-6114.

• **USS Cogswell (DD 651)** — May 14-16, Fall River, Mass. Contact R.A. White, 56 Park Ave., No. 3, Winthrop, Mass. 02152; (617) 539-0408.

• **USS Kearsarge (CV/CVA/CVS 33)** — May 14-16, Mobile, Ala. Contact Kenneth S. McDaniel, 301 East Drive, Oak Ridge, Tenn. 37830; (615) 482-4302.

• **Vietnam Veterans** — May 15-17, Frankfort, Ky. Contact L.Z. Bluegrass Inc., P.O. Box 4884, Louisville, Ky. 40204.

• **USS Raleigh (CL 7)** — May 18-21, Reno, Nev. Contact Glenn Nichols, 126 6th, Unit 134, Langley, Wash. 98260; (206) 321-5398.

Transition to quality

Chiefs take charge, and the squadron takes off

Story and photos by JO1 Steve Orr

"We're not the best squadron in the Navy, but we're working on it."

These words echo through the passageways, work spaces and hangar bay of Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron (Light) 32 (HSL 32), based at Naval Air Station Norfolk. It reflects an attitude which has been the HSL 32 "Invaders" driving philosophy for more than a year.

Master Chief Aircraft Maintenanceman (AW) Edward Kiger, HSL 32's command master chief, sweeps a hand over a stack of documents outlining squadron goals and accomplishments of the past year. Flight hours are at an all-time high. Advancement and retention are up. The helo squadron has enjoyed one of its safest years on record. "We've come a long way in the space of a couple of years," Kiger said proudly. "I think a major factor in our success is the increased leadership role of HSL 32's chief petty officers' mess."

HSL 32 is home to the SH-2F *Sea Sprite* helicopter, which provides anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and anti-ship surveillance and targeting support for smaller combatant ships. The aircraft is also used for search and rescue (SAR) operations.

Kiger admits the squadron was having more than its share of problems as far back as mid-1989. Although the Invaders had just begun to pull out of a deep slump, "in February 1990 they flunked a corrosion control inspection," he recalled. "It was pretty bad. Flunking the corrosion control inspection basically says your squadron is at the bottom of the barrel. The command was in the pits."

On top of the unsuccessful inspection, the squadron also dealt with an accident and several foreign object damaged (FOD) engines. Part of their problem, thinks HSL 32's Maintenance Control Chief, Senior Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic (AW) John Blizzard, was a lack of consistency in the squadron leadership.

"When I first checked on board, there was no continuity at all, either in the chiefs' mess or in the rest of the squadron. There was someone different in charge of maintenance control almost every day. The officers would do all the planning but were never around because of their other commitments and requirements. It was chaos. No one knew who was running things. It was cutthroat, no squadron unity at all."

It was time for changes, remembered CDR Joseph Belinski, HSL 32's commanding officer.

"After the accident, we started to break things down, looking at what we needed our goals to be," he said. To achieve those goals, three areas of concern were identified: mission readiness, safety and personnel welfare and retention.

"There was a big turnover in the chiefs' mess and in the first class petty officer community about that time," said Chief Aviation Anti-Submarine Warfare Technician (AW) Thomas Nelson, leading chief of HSL 32's "A" Detachment. "The new chiefs came into the command concerned with turning the squadron around."

"The biggest thing was just getting everybody together and using the ideas, making them all work but still holding the reins with a firm

An SH-2F *Sea Sprite* from HSL 32 practices hot air refueling with USS *Wainwright* (CG 28).

hand," Blizzard said. "The chiefs had to form one solid group, with no person stronger than another."

The chief petty officers of HSL 32 went to work, concentrating on the goals agreed upon by the squadron officers and chiefs. "It became a working chiefs' mess, the way a mess was designed, the way it should be," Blizzard recalled. "Everyone knew the squadron goals. It was now a matter of achieving them."

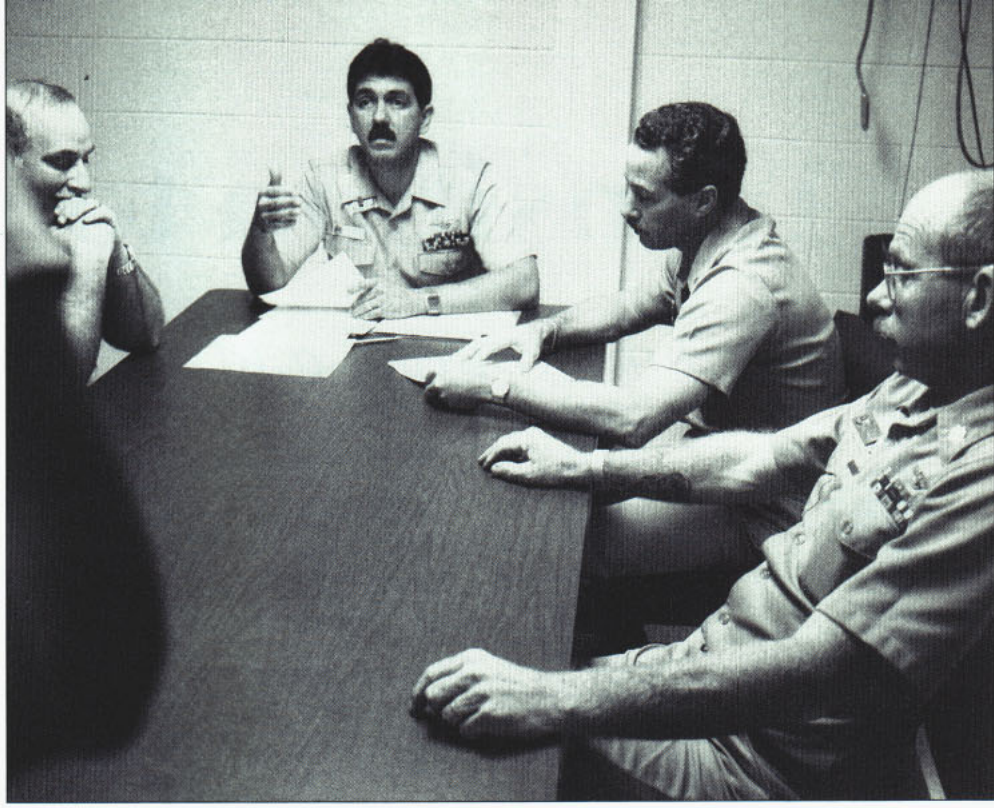
Led by the chiefs' mess, the squadron placed a renewed emphasis on training. "We've put together an aggressive training program," Belinski said.

Newly reporting personnel are assigned to Detachment Zulu, a work center devoted to training. Many are slotted for schools, especially non-designated strikers. Thanks to the educational services office, most immediately begin working on advancement requirements.

"As soon as they check in, I give them the courses they need to complete for advancement," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Aircraft Handling) 1st Class Sanjuan Badillo, the squadron's educational services assistant. "In the work center, their supervisors stay on top of things, asking the airmen how they're doing, how far along they are."

"Too often in the Navy a new guy will check into a command and it's sink or swim," said LCDR Louis Ludlum, squadron maintenance officer. "HSL 32 has invested a lot of time sending people to school, even if it hurt our manning levels. In the long run, though, we've gotten better quality work out of our people."

The training program encompasses all levels in the squadron, from pilot qualifications for the officers to plane captain qualification for junior personnel. First class petty officers are put on the night shift to give them the responsibility and experience of running HSL 32's 10 detachments. The chiefs' mess also manages the squadron's professional development board.



Above: HSL 32's disciplinary review board investigates the facts surrounding a case before it reaches the commanding officer. Right: AA Alton Franco works on the tail rotor of one of HSL 32's 10 aircraft.

As a result of these combined efforts, the squadron has enjoyed remarkable results in recent exam cycles. In the past two cycles alone, 207 of 208 personnel passed the advancement exam, and 59 were advanced. "We can't really do much better than that," Belinski said.

Safety and personnel welfare concerns were approached with the same enthusiasm as training. "Once everyone is trained and ready to do the mission," Belinski emphasized, "the next thing is to keep them in good health and give them a safe working environment."

This is accomplished through extensive planning sessions. "On Monday mornings, the maintenance chief gets together with all the other chief petty officers and shop supervisors," explained Kiger. "They go over everything that has to be done during the week — scheduled

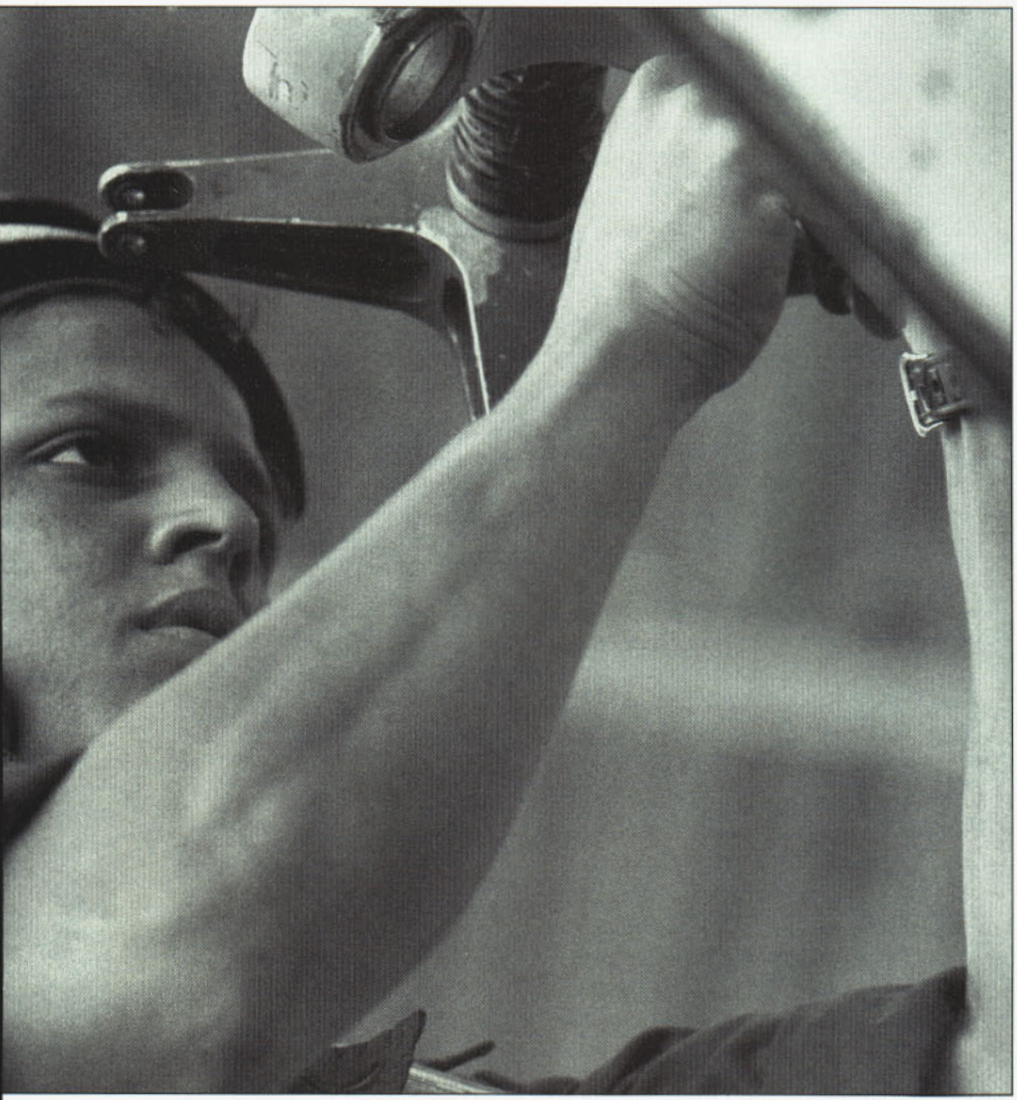
inspections, flying missions and static displays. They plan out everything. Ninety-nine percent of the time when something comes up, it's already handled. It cuts down on the problems when things get hectic."

Teamwork plays a key role in HSL 32's safety program. Every morning squadron personnel — from the commanding officer to the most junior airman — gather on the flight line for the FOD walk-down. In addition to keeping the flight line free of debris, the all-hands walk-down fosters a sense of togetherness, according to Kiger.

"In leadership, everything hinges on two things — teamwork and involvement," said Kiger. "The buzzwords may change, but the Navy's been preaching those principles for a long time."

One way HSL 32 has nurtured the feeling of teamwork and involvement in its personnel is through an increase in personal recognition. Again, it is a concept that involves all levels of the squadron.

"We've taken a hard look at what our people are accomplishing," Kiger stresses. "Using evaluations, we make sure the chiefs and first class petty officers are getting credit for their management roles. If they're reaching out and grabbing that ball, they're getting credit for it.



"The recognition of outstanding achievement is a priority for the Invaders," he continued. "We're constantly improving our Bravo Zulu program. Anyone can put anyone else up for anything from an 'Atta-boy' to a Navy Achievement Medal. Our sailor-of-the quarter program is outstanding.

"We hold monthly chiefs' meetings and ask ourselves, 'Who's been busting their butt this month?'" Kiger said. "We'll identify one or two of our people and invite them into the chiefs' mess so the maintenance chief and I can personally thank them for what they've done for the command. We just want to tell them, 'Thanks a lot. We appreciate what you're doing.'

"To tell you the truth, I think that means more to some of our sailors than getting a letter of appreciation at quarters, because we're the ones driving them and we've taken the time to thank them."

"Recognition has played a large role in enabling the squadron to accomplish its goals," Nelson said. "The important thing is that the recognition is timely and appropriate, and that ties into communication."

Communication has aided the leadership of HSL 32 to establish strong bonds with its personnel. A good example is the frequent predeployment briefs offered by the squadron to those preparing to depart on a cruise. Spouses and significant others are encouraged to attend with their sailors. Information about financial aid, counseling and other services are presented by family service center staff and members of the squadron.

The Invaders' efforts to lend a helping hand isn't lost on its personnel. When he encountered difficulties during his transfer to the Norfolk area, Aviation Electrician's Mate 2nd Class Michael Dea said the squadron went the extra mile.

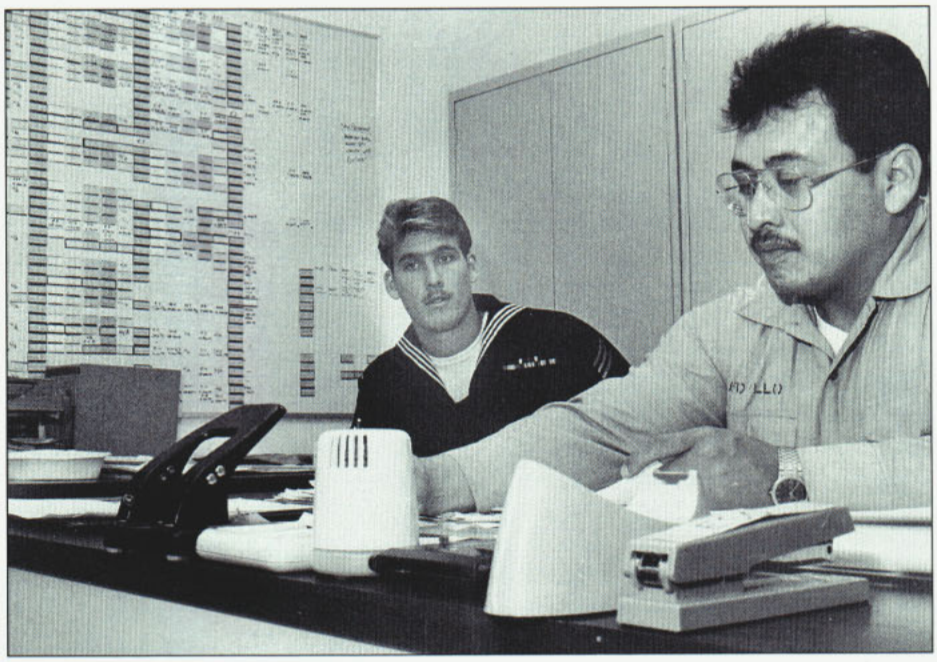
"They bent over backwards to help me out," he said. "I was trying to settle in with a sick child, and the command helped ease me through and got me into housing quickly. I've been in squadrons and at other commands that were so mission-oriented they didn't care if someone had personal problems that could affect job performance. This squadron makes you feel like somebody — like part of a family — and it's the first command I've been in where I could see how high the morale really is."

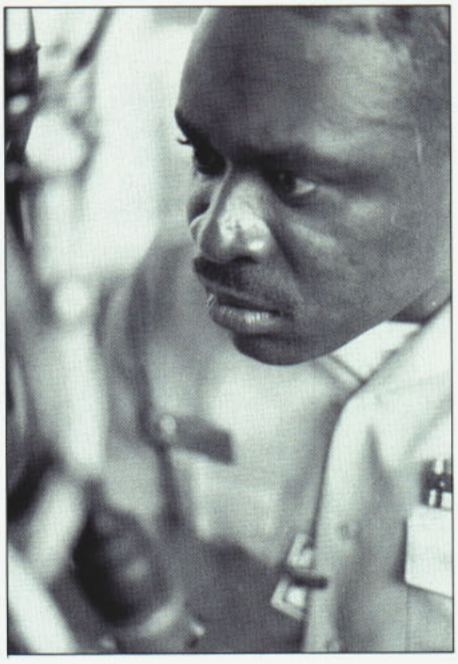
"As a new chief reporting from a training command," Nelson said, "I was behind the power curve when I first checked on board. I had a lot of growing to do. The chiefs' mess, I think, functioned exactly as it was supposed to. The more experienced chiefs took me under their wing until I got my feet on the ground and my nose pointed in the right direction. They gave me a combination of technical help, good advice and good examples to follow."

When a sailor is happy with the working environment, it usually reflects in the decision to continue a naval career. "This is a squared-away command, from the people to the work place," said Chief Navy Counselor (SW) Michael Watterson, HSL 32's command career counselor. "The numbers for retention come after the people are satisfied. The support from the top is the best I've ever seen."

As a result, HSL 32 boasted an increase in retention. First-term retention was up 12 percent, second-term was up 13 percent and career retention was up 35 percent. "We've surpassed the Navy goals for retention and it's getting better," Watterson said.

"One thing that has really helped meet our goals," Kiger said, "is that CDR Belinski, our CO, and the Executive Officer CDR Frank Verhofstadt, let the chiefs take the reins, as long as they do the job. The CO also won't hesitate to jerk them up short if they're screwing around. That's an important point."





Above: ABH1 Sanjuan Badillo, educational services assistant, discusses advancement with ADAN Tim Jewell. Right: AMHC(AW/SW) Sylvester Freeman inspects work on a helo part.

So far it's working. The Naval Air Atlantic Performance Assessment Team recently cited HSL 32 as the "most-improved" squadron in Naval Air Forces Atlantic. In 1991, the Invaders flew more hours than ever before, more than 7,000. People are being trained and advanced. The work is being accomplished safely and the trend is continuing.

The training and teamwork are paying off time and again for the Invaders of HSL 32. Deployed detachments from the squadron were involved in recent at-sea rescues. One *Seasprite* crew, embarked aboard the cruiser USS *Yorktown* (CG 48), plucked a Navyman from the Mediterranean Sea after the crash of an E-2C *Hawkeye* surveillance aircraft. Another helo crew, operating with the frigate USS *Pharris* (FF 1094), identified a sailboat in distress off the coast of North Carolina and hovered nearby until the boat's crew could be rescued.

"We're proud of what we've accomplished," said Belinski. "I think it shows in how everyone works together. A year ago, the attitude just wasn't there. Now, everyone is hard-charging — and that's what counts." □

Orr is assigned to NIRA Det. 4, Norfolk.

Brazen courage

Ike *aviators bring home a bird without a beak*

Story by JO1 Lee Bosco

The art of landing an F-14 on the deck of an aircraft carrier is doubly deceiving. Done correctly, landing any aircraft on the deck of a ship at sea is a combination of supreme high-tech instrumentation, hours of training and brazen human courage.

But sometimes a subtle, calculable kind of good fortune also occurs when everything just seems to break the right way during an incident — when training and ability come together in a blinding flash and life moves in slow motion. And, in some extraordinary cases, it helps produce an event that makes witnesses stand back, shake their heads and mutter, "How the hell did he do that?"

LCDR Joe "Reb" Edwards knows that slow-motion moment. The Fighter Squadron 142 pilot had just launched from USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) Nov. 13 and was cruising along in his F-14, 27,000 feet above the Persian Gulf, when the aircraft was suddenly struck by what seemed to be a foreign object. The windscreen of his aircraft was smashed, and the canopy glass above his head was gone. He knew whatever had struck the aircraft had also caused him serious injury — his right eye was blinded, and he suffered a broken right collarbone — as shards of glass slammed into his cockpit. He instantly lost all communications capability and couldn't see or tell if his back-seat Radar Intercept Officer (RIO) LCDR Scott "Grundy" Grundmeier had been seriously injured.

"I knew we hit something, and it had to come from the aircraft," said Edwards. "My most serious concerns were the condition of my RIO Grundy, and the fact that my canopy had imploded and I had no idea why."

Edwards didn't have time to worry about what caused the damage. His first concern was keeping his jet in the air. "Because of the loss of pressurization, once I got the aircraft

LCDR "Reb" Edwards and LCDR "Grundy" Grundmeier's F-14 *Tomcat* following the hair-raising recovery.

U.S. Navy photo

Crewmen stare in disbelief at the "wounded bird's" shattered canopy.

stabilized, I had to get to a lower altitude and slower speed," he said.

Unbeknownst to the pilot, the radar dome encased in the aircraft's nose had separated from the fuselage and hit the wind screen. The sudden impact caused the canopy to implode, showering him with glass. "My next decision was where to put the plane down. Bahrain, my divert field, was 125 miles away. I didn't know how seriously injured I was or how long I could maintain flight," Edwards said.

"The ship was nearby, and I still didn't know the condition of Grundy. I knew medical attention would be waiting aboard, and it was a situation where minutes could make a big difference. So, I decided to try to bring it home to the ship."

Edwards, flying with one good eye and a broken collarbone, still couldn't communicate with his RIO as he sighted the ship. "I made a couple of low-level passes above the ship to let them know I needed immediate priority," he said. "Just then, Grundy popped up behind me and hand-signaled to me that the ship was getting ready for us to try to land. You don't know how relieved I was to see that he wasn't really hurt and that he had comms [communication] with the ship. I hadn't been able to see him because he was crouched down to avoid wind blast and to talk to the ship."

The knowledge that his RIO was O.K. relieved some of Edwards' anxiety, allowing him to concentrate on his approach. He made a smooth trap and caught the "three wire," still unaware of the extent of the damage.

Amid the cheers of shipmates and the bustle of medical personnel, Edwards got his first look at the wreck he brought safely home. "I was wide-eyed and wondering what people were looking at; then I saw that the entire nose was missing," he said. "It was then that I realized the great job that the guys on the ship did. The landing safety officers were great — true professionals."

The flight deck crew and his RIO also received praise for their parts in the drama. "From the moment I saw Grundy back there I knew things were getting better. Then, when I looked down and saw them clearing the flight deck and turning into the wind, it made me feel pretty good about coming back to the ship."

Following the successful landing, Commander Carrier Airwing 7 CAPT Jim Sherlock, heaped praise on the officers and crew of *Ike*, but reserved his highest accolades for Edwards and Grundmeier.

"The aviators on this ship, to a man, cannot believe that LCDR Edwards landed that airplane," Sherlock said in an interview with the *Virginia Pilot*. "The RIO did an absolutely super job. They both are heroes. It is the most extraordinary flying feat I've seen in peace or war in my lifetime."

Edwards also marveled at the durability of the aircraft. "There aren't many airplanes that can take that kind of abuse and still remain airborne. We were very fortunate that the airplane stayed flyable."

Edwards said he was thankful for the confidence the chain of command had in him. "They could have taken one look at the condition of the aircraft and said, 'No, it's too risky. Bingo him to Bahrain,' but they didn't. They let me take a shot at landing on the ship. I appreciate their confidence in me, Grundy and the team on deck."

Confidence and luck — a potent combination. The radar dome *could* have separated on take-off, which would have made control of the plane much more difficult. The airplane *could* have been 200 miles from the ship when the accident happened. The flying debris *could* have smashed into one of the tail fins and caused the aircraft to spiral out of control — instead it bounced over the rear of the airplane. As in many outstanding achievements, luck played an important role in Edwards' unbelievable feat.

Bringing the wounded bird home was a cumulative effort. Brave men in the air and on deck used knowledge, expertise and instinct to add a unique chapter to the annals of naval aviation. Ask them about it and they'll talk about superb equipment, strict adherence to emergency procedures and hard work.

Then they might even admit to being more than a little lucky.

Bosco is a photojournalist for All Hands.

Welcome aboard!

Welcome center aims to be a "one-stop" shop

Story and photos by JO1 Steve Orr

One fact of Navy life is moving. New duty stations are exciting but bring with them concerns that require immediate attention — not the least of which is housing. Frequently, government quarters aren't readily available, forcing sailors to live on the economy. Yet finding affordable housing in the civilian community can be a time-consuming and frustrating endeavor.

In early 1990, CAPT William Mitchum, then commanding officer of Public Works Center (PWC) Norfolk, recognized this problem and challenged PWC Housing to "draw up plans for the ultimate housing referral operation." According to Larry Pledger, director of the personnel support division of PWC Family Housing, "The idea was to create more of an all-around welcome center, rather than the normal housing referral-type of operation you usually see."

All aspects of the proposed pilot operation, from funding and manning to location and types of services offered, were scrutinized by planners. The city of Norfolk lent its support and expertise for the project that would benefit the area's large military community. The proposed center would be open to active-duty and retired military personnel and DoD employees and their families.

The Norfolk Navy Welcome Center offers military personnel, DoD employees and their families help in finding housing when they transfer to the Hampton Roads area.

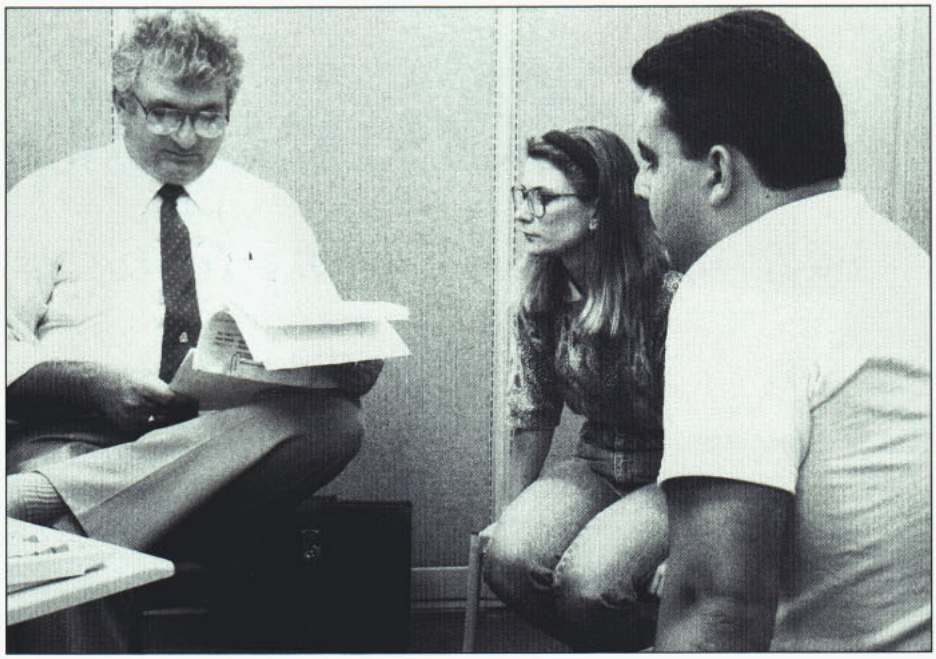
Months of planning and building culminated in the early 1991 opening of the Norfolk Navy Welcome Center. Located in the JANAF (Joint Army-Navy-Air Force) shopping center, the welcome center is comfortably and conveniently nestled among familiar department stores and boutiques; across the street is a major shopping mall.

"Because 75 to 90 percent of our business deals directly with housing referral, [JANAF] was considered a central location for [all] the services," Pledger explained. "This way, we are closer to the houses and apartments we list."

The beautifully decorated welcome center has many assets, such as a spacious lounge and a supervised playroom for children. Friendly counselors assist service members by first placing them on government housing waiting lists.

From there, the customer can request a listing of houses and apartments available for sale or rent anywhere in the Hampton Roads area. These listings are customized to fit the individual's desires or needs. Parameters such as location, number of bedrooms and bathrooms required, pet agreements and desired price range are fed into a computer terminal.

"We access a data base of more than 7,000 rental and 500 sale listings, and that base is growing every day," said Dawne Brooks, a housing



Right: Counselor Gene Suggs reviews forms for military housing customers. Below: To help locate a satisfactory apartment for a military customer, counselor Rudy Francisco enters parameters such as number of bedrooms and bathrooms desired, location and price range.

administration specialist. "This data base is shared by the housing offices of other area commands through a computer network based at the welcome center.

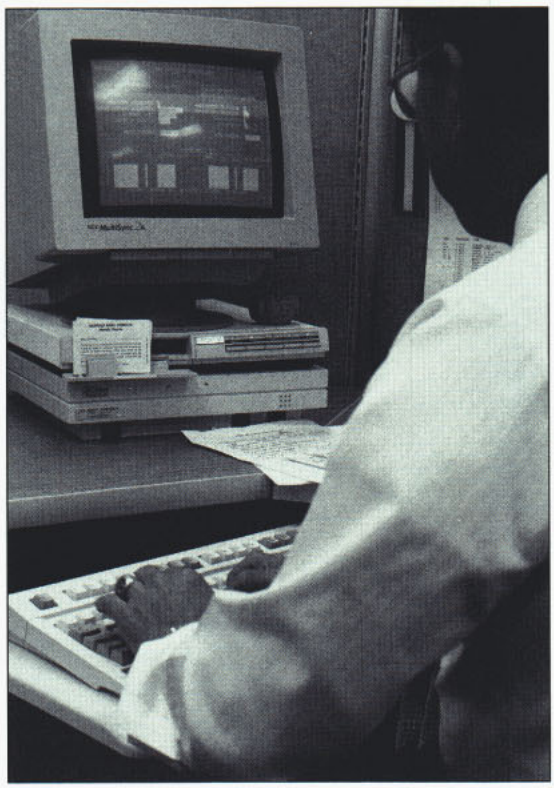
"Area realtors can call in their listings to add to our base," Pledger said. "If we are out in the city, we'll even jot down phone numbers and addresses of houses that have signs in the front yard and try to get those listings added."

The listings, while constantly growing, are also constantly changing. Welcome center personnel may add or delete 50 to 100 listings a day. "If someone comes in one day and doesn't see something they like, that doesn't mean we won't have something for them the next day," Pledger said. " We encourage people to come back or call often. We will even fax the listings to them."

Armed with their customized printout of listings, customers can choose to call the phone numbers for the houses and apartments on their list using a bank of phones at the center provided for that purpose. Others prefer to go look at the listed properties. Maps and directions are also provided by the welcome center.

Customers can also have any questions about the area answered by a Norfolk city representative working full time at the welcome center. "Most of the questions I'm asked concern things like car registration, inspections and city decals," said Joreen Baxter. "I also answer questions about schools, taxes — whatever anyone needs, I can get the information. I can also register customers to vote."

Other services offered by Pledger and his staff include lease review, mediation in landlord/tenant issues and command briefings. "We even have someone who can travel overseas to give briefings to ships that expect to homeport in the Hampton Roads area.



Although the welcome center has been in operation several months, Pledger is quick to emphasize the list of services will continue to grow.

"Sometimes we get a customer who has no transportation, so we provide a showing service," Pledger stated. "We pick up the customer, bring them to the center to get the listings and take them out to actually see the properties. Our hope is to expand this service to all our customers in the future."

An expanded showing service is only one of many improvements welcome center personnel are anticipating. Other additions include a touch-screen computer system to help customers find where they are on housing lists, where to go for different services and hours of operation for exchanges and other facilities. Another service will allow a customer telephone access to check their position on the housing lists.

As expansion continues, Pledger and his staff keep their eyes on the future. "We haven't stopped growing by any means," he said. "We will continue to look at what we're doing to fine-tune the operation so that our customers truly find the center to be a one-stop shop." □

Orr is assigned to NIRA Det. 4, Norfolk.

Fair winds

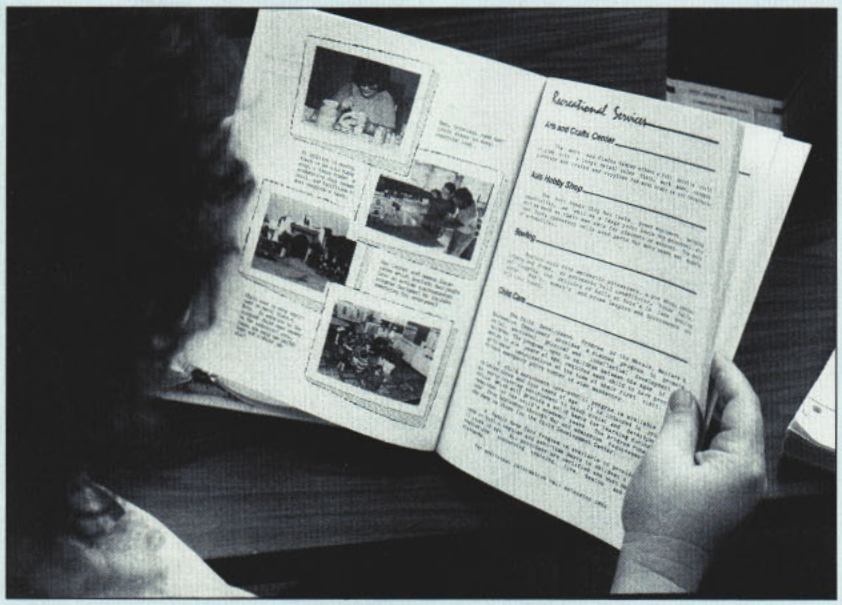
Departure center smooths the move for sailors

Story and photo by JO1 Steve Orr

A few months after the celebrated ribbon cutting at the Norfolk Navy Welcome Center, another service center aimed at PCSing personnel opened its doors for business less than a half-mile away. Although it hasn't enjoyed the fanfare associated with its more well-known cousin, the Housing Departure Assistance Center (HDAC) has provided several hundred military customers the information needed to make smoother transitions to new duty stations. The center is also overseen by Norfolk's Public Works Center.

"It's a free service," said Tony La Via, the office manager of HDAC. "Any military member or civilian Department of Defense employee assigned to a Navy or Marine Corps command, or their spouse, can use the center."

First-time customers are asked to complete an assessment questionnaire to determine their needs. Information such as number of family members, anticipated duty station and areas of interest are entered into a computer bank. At that point, the customer can either meet with a departure counselor or use the automated self-help computer program to find information about where they are going. The counselors and computers provide extensive information on 24 Navy-designated primary duty sites in the United States and overseas, and limited government housing information and phone numbers for more than 100 secondary sites.



Norfolk's Housing Departure Assistance Center provides Navy families with information on schools, housing and other areas of concern for 24 major Navy bases around the world, easing the transition of PCS moves.

The menu-driven, self-help program can help the military member or spouse retrieve information about the primary sites' availability of government housing, the civilian housing market, variable or overseas housing allowance rates, base services and community information. Hard copies of the computer information are kept in binders if the self-help modules are in use. Most of the information is updated on a quarterly basis. Additionally, there are videotaped programs, literature, large wing files and newspapers available to help the customer gather information.

The departure center also provides workshops to customers on home-buying and home-selling to help prepare for dealings with real estate agents.

The departure assistance service, funded through Naval Facilities Engineering Command (Nav FacEngCom) in Washington, D.C., will be carefully looked at in the coming year. "This is a new program," said Ann Snider, NavFacEngCom family housing management specialist. "We'll review it in a year and see where we will take it from there."

While HDAC is not intended to replace the Navy's sponsor program, La Via is convinced it can better prepare transferring personnel for their new commands. "The customer can get a feel of what it would be like to live on the economy of a new duty station," he explained. "The person is already armed with essential information before they start their transfer." □

Orr is assigned to NIRA Det. 4, Norfolk.

A detailed future

Getting orders takes some flexibility

Story and photos by PH1(AW) Joseph Dorey

The voice on the phone is concerned, but firm. It is friendly, but hurried. "What's your social?" the voice inquires. "Let's see what we've got." It is the voice of destiny for many sailors and their families worldwide. For the next three or four years, where those families live and what job those sailors do often depends on what happens during the next few minutes.

The voice comes back on the line listing what is available. "What do you want to do?" The future is now.

The "voice" belongs to a detailer. Every day hundreds of enlisted personnel go through this process to get orders. It all seems simple enough, but there is much more to it.

On the third deck of the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BuPers) in Washington, D.C., there are 250 detailers tasked with writing 130,000 permanent change of station (PCS) orders for enlisted sailors each year. Yet most sailors don't know where detailers get these orders from and who decides what billets need to be filled. That responsibility lies with the four manning control authorities (MCAs), the first step in the detailing process.

The MCAs are responsible for filling the Navy's enlisted billets. They are Commanders in Chief, Atlantic and Pacific Fleet; Chief of Naval Personnel and Commander, Naval Reserve Forces. The MCAs determine the quantity and priority of all enlisted billets. They decide the number of personnel in each rating, paygrade and Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) required to man their ships, squadrons and shore activities. This is compiled at the Enlisted Personnel Management Center (EPMAC) in New Orleans, where it is broken down by rating and paygrade. Then it is sent to the detailers in the form of a requisition, or "req," listing commands with billets opening in the next nine months.

EPMAC updates the requisition every two weeks, usually the first and third Monday of each month. With this institutional information in place, the person-to-person process of detailing can begin.

Detailers can only assign sailors to billets listed on the requisition. Writing orders can become challenging as detailers try to balance the needs of the Navy with the desires of individual sailors. As Senior Chief Electrician's Mate (SW) Paul A. Johnson Jr., an EM detailer explained, "What we do is two-fold. First, we're the advocate for the sailor. Our No. 1 priority here is to try to see if we can get the sailor what he or she wants. Second, we have to be concerned with filling the fleet's priorities, making sure the fleet is manned."

According to Johnson, it gets tricky sometimes when there is a top-priority billet and no one available. He must fill those billets quickly but, "We try not to force somebody into a billet that they don't want. It makes our job a lot harder."

Most detailers average 30 to 50 phone calls a day. This explains why sailors frequently have trouble getting through. Some calls take only a few minutes, while others can take up to a half-hour, depending on how much time a detailer has to spend counseling an individual.

"If a person goes to his career counselor and finds out his options, it helps us immensely," Johnson said. "The member has an idea of what is available and what we can do for him.

"It's a lot harder when you get somebody on the phone who says they're coming up for orders and we ask them what they want, but they have absolutely no idea. So then we have to go into their options, and it takes time. Other people who've talked with their career counselor are held off. It backlogs things."

Sitting down with a career counselor and having a basic understanding of the Enlisted Transfer Manual is helpful to the sailor because he or she can see the rules in black and white. "And basically that's what we're working out of, the transfer manual," Johnson said.

Even though detailers are busy, they try not to hurry people who call. "We give them all the time they need and try to answer their questions," said Chief Hospital Corpsman (AC) Melissa M. Collins. She is one of 11 detailers who service the Navy's largest rating — more than 28,000 HMs.

CEC Carlos Figueroa, a Seabee detailer, listens to a request for orders.

"The only thing is, we just can't take many calls. You can only work one call at a time," she said. "But we spend as much time on the phone to meet that individual's needs. We just don't cut them off because we don't have enough time to talk to them."

Talking on the phone is only part of the job. Writing orders makes up about 40 percent of a detailer's workload. The rest of their time is spent working on the mountain of paperwork that goes with detailing. They are responsible for sending message traffic and answering numerous personnel action requests (1306/7s) — requesting everything from "C" school to spouse co-location. They do most of their own typing, so it doesn't take long for them to become "administrative warfare" qualified. As one detailer put it, "If this had been a civilian job, I would have quit a long time ago."

"For about the first four months I was here, I was kicking myself for taking this job. I was just completely overwhelmed," said Master Chief Boatswain's Mate J. Joe LaCaze, a SEAL detailer. "There are so many different things you have to know about."

"I thought it was going to be something where I could sit back and pick out billets and write orders. Basically, that was it. But there's a whole lot more entailed," added Johnson.

The glamor of the job seems to be a misconception shared by many sailors in the fleet. There is a preconceived mental picture of BuPers — of the luxurious conditions in which detailers work. Because of the seniority of most detailers and the prestige sometimes associated with BuPers, detailers "must be" accorded such amenities as private offices, secretaries and lounge chairs. But they aren't. In fact, they seem cramped in their small cubicles. If you listen closely, you can hear the conversations of three or four detailers drifting over the partitions. Visitors are usually amazed at the tight working spaces.

"Everybody [who visits] says, 'I was expecting you to have a real nice desk and a window.' But they see what kind of office space we work in, and they're pretty surprised," said LaCaze. "The first time I came here, I was very surprised that it was more like [being] a telephone operator."

Another delusion sailors often have about detailers is that they are not being entirely straight with them on the phone.

"I think they feel that in some way we're not telling them everything available on the requisition, that we're still trying to hold some billets back and not giving them the whole story," said Johnson.

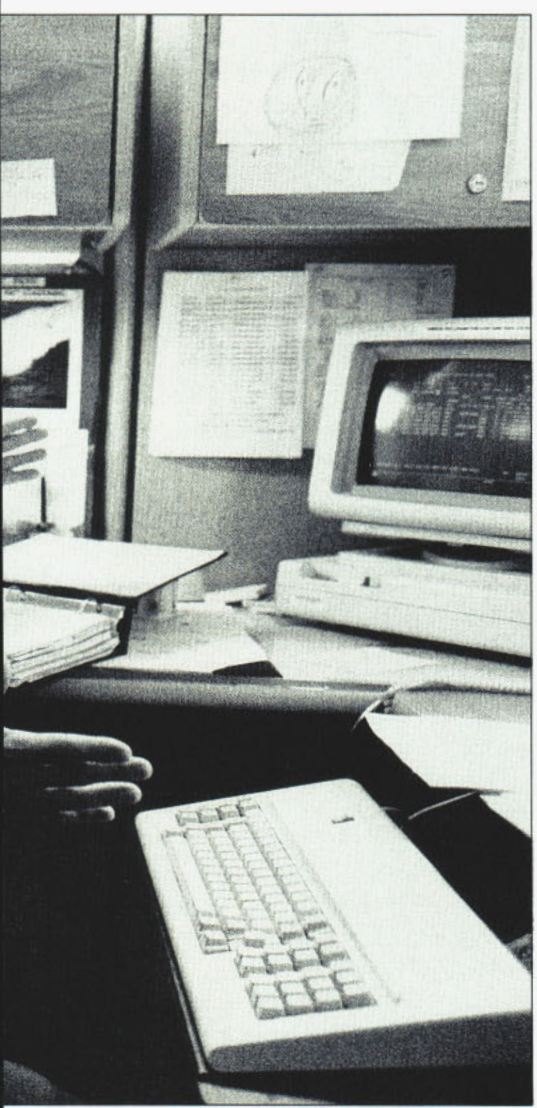
Communication with the detailer will debunk this myth.

There are two ways to meet the face behind the voice and see what the detailer actually has on the requisition — pay a visit to BuPers (not an easy task when stationed halfway around the world) or take advantage of the many field trips detailers make throughout the year.

Master Chief Constructionman John H. Lewis, the senior Seabee detailer, would like to see more sailors visit his office. "We invite anybody to come up here if they

want to see how it works, to look at our requisitions or whatever. If there's any doubt in their mind that we're not telling them the whole truth, they can come at anytime. My requisition book is right there in front of me, and I'll gladly pull it out and show them exactly what's available," he said.

"It's nice to see [sailors] face-to-face. We can briefly run them through the computer and show them what the detailer has to work with," said Senior Chief Machinist's Mate (SS) Timothy W. Jacobs, a submarine MM detailer. "If you're coming up for orders and you visit D.C., we'll punch in the 'req.' If the job is available, and you're qualified, you can have it. I have even let five sailors write their own orders, which they got a kick out of."



Submarine machinist's mate (Aux) detailer MMCM(SS) John S. Taylor (right) shows MMCS(SS) Bobby Davis the list of available billets on his BuPers computer.

Will coming to Washington give an extra advantage to sailors up for orders?

"As far as better service here — no. You do not get any better service," Jacobs said. "We're going to make the same offers to you over the phone as we do here in person, but sometimes it's easier to show a sailor what you've got [on a requisition]."

There is no room for favoritism either. "I don't save jobs for certain people," Jacobs said. "Basically, it's first come, first served. If you call me, and there's a billet available that you want, you've got it."

And since "seeing is believing," detailer trips are invaluable. Several times a year a small group of detailers representing all the ratings will travel to various duty stations worldwide. It does not matter if a particular rating's detailer is not there. The ones that are have full access to the requisitions of the ratings they represent. Meeting with them can be an eye-opening experience for some doubtful sailors.

"It's amazing when you go out on a detailer trip," Johnson said. "You may have talked to guys on the phone, but when you sit down person-to-person with them and open up the req right in front of them, they look at you and say, 'Wow, you're not lying.' Their mouths open and a light goes on that says 'Yeah, this detailer's not giving me a line.'"

Since some ratings are small, they are combined under one detailer. Chief Machinery Repairman (SW) James A. Stead details five ratings: patternmakers, molders, opticalmen, instrumentmen and MRs. Because these ratings work closely together, any one representative can effectively detail the others.

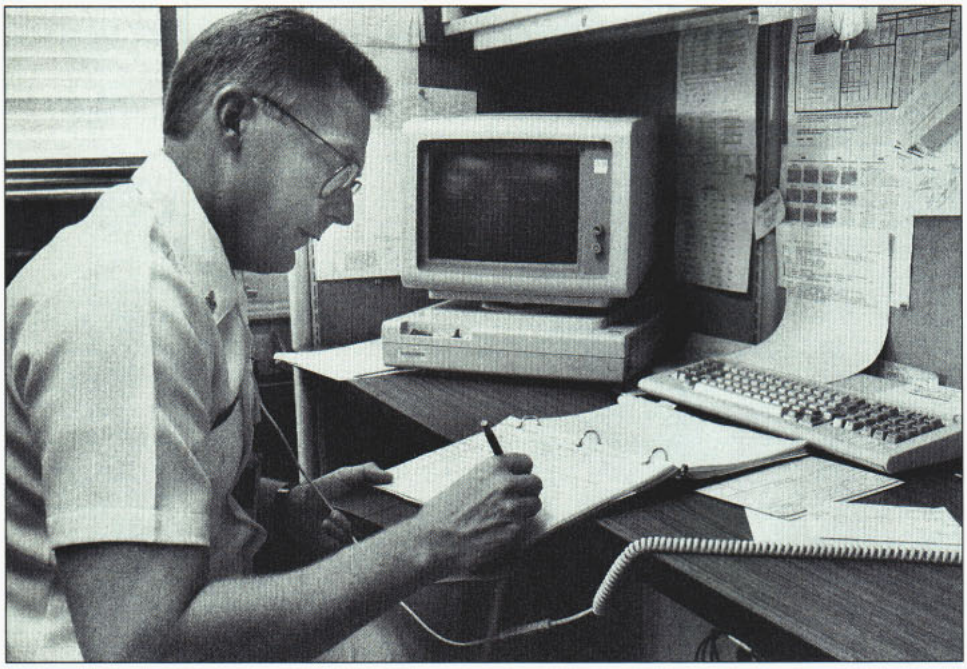
"I've never felt out of touch at all [with the other ratings]," Stead said. "I've been on five tenders and had a tour at a SIMA [Shore Intermediate Maintenace Activity], so I've worked with many IMs and OMs, patternmakers and molders. The career paths are basically the same. I detail them all the same — with all the priorities and guidance from the transfer manual."

While working with such small ratings, it is not unusual for the detailer to know many of the people they detail. The SEAL community is a good example.

"Other than the new guys fresh out of training, I know most of the people in the community," LaCaze said. "And most of the people that I know, I know by first name. It probably makes it more difficult. It's real hard to tell them 'no' sometimes, but I have to."

Although about 90 percent of sailors up for orders call their detailer, some never call. Each detailer has a list of "rollers," people who are due to transfer but haven't called to negotiate orders. Every month the list is updated, and anyone within four months of his or her projected rotation date (PRD) will be sent orders for transfer. The detailers can wait no longer because orders need time to go through the system. This is when enlisted duty preferences (NAVPERS 1306/63) or "dream sheets" are mostly used. Since the individual has not contacted the detailer, detailers will use these forms to see if the individual's desires can be met. Other sailors will call repeatedly with each new requisition cycle — from nine months before their PRD to four months — without being satisfied.

"We'll let them go down to about four months and then we'll say, you



EMCS(SW) Paul Johnson Jr. updates his electrician's mate requisition. Opposite page: These engineman detailers are among 250 detailers working on the third deck at BuPers.

need to make a decision now. If you can't make a decision, we'll have to make a decision for you. A lot of times an individual just refuses to make a decision for whatever reason, and we have to send them a set of orders," said Lewis. "From nine months to four months is a lot of time."

The term "penciled in" has been used around the fleet to mean that your orders are waiting to be cut, but are not yet official. According to Lewis, you can consider it done. "To us, when we say penciled in after the person has acknowledged [a billet] they want, they're just like orders. If I pencil you in for a set of orders, you're going to get those orders."

Writing orders also means paying for the transfer. Detailers are responsible for allocating the money for PCS moves and for any training received en route to the new duty station. They must figure the costs for transportation of family members and household goods, being careful not to exceed their limits. Detailers keep a voucher, like a checking account, that must be balanced at all times.

"When people call up and they want to go overseas, one thing we look at is our budget," Stead said. "Do we have the money to move people? Do we still have enough money to complete the training the sailor needs to have? We've got to use the money we get wisely."

Even though orders are carefully reviewed by detailers and their rating assignment officers, occasionally a problem can occur.

In situations where a service member feels there has been a mistake made in his or her transfer, a sailor has the option of asking for a flag review of the orders as outlined in the Enlisted Transfer Manual. However, this is not done simply because an individual is unhappy with the orders. A flag review can only be requested by a commanding officer when all avenues of appeal through BuPers have been exhausted, and only if the CO believes that BuPers has not been apprised of all pertinent facts of the case. Usually this includes factors such as a sailor not being qualified, a family medical problem or some other fact that was not made known to the detailer or had transpired after the orders were written.

CAPT Thomas W. Tilt, director of BuPers' enlisted assignment division, said they don't get many flag reviews because most people understand the system and communicate with their detailers, realizing that the detailers are there to help them. And many recognize the delicate balance between the needs of the Navy and the desires of each sailor.

"We try very hard to give an individual what he or she wants. But that has got to be consistent with what the Navy needs. That's why we're all here — to do the Navy's job," Tilt said.

The best time to call the detailer is every other Monday when new requisitions come out. But it's especially difficult when calling from overseas. Sailors are encouraged to use Autovon phone lines or even call collect. Detailers realize the difficulty of trying to call from overseas because of the time difference and the likelihood of getting cut off. Detailers suggest that sailors specify that they are calling from overseas so that their call can be given priority.

There is also night detailing every second and fourth Wednesday of the month, where many detailers are available until 10 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. This is a good time to call because the majority of the phone traffic from the continental United States slows down. It is also more convenient for sailors in Pacific area time zones.

An electronic bulletin board system has recently been installed at BuPers to allow sailors to communicate with detailers through computers. The idea is to leave a message for the detailer that either they or an administrative assistant can answer, usually within 24 hours.

The system, called BuPers Access, will free up phone lines and provide information on billets opening, detailer visits, advancement and selection board results, school programs and PCS housing.

"Every branch now has a BuPers Access terminal," Tilt said. "If you have a modem, a telephone and a computer, you can call in and leave a message or you can get information.

You don't have to talk directly to the detailer."

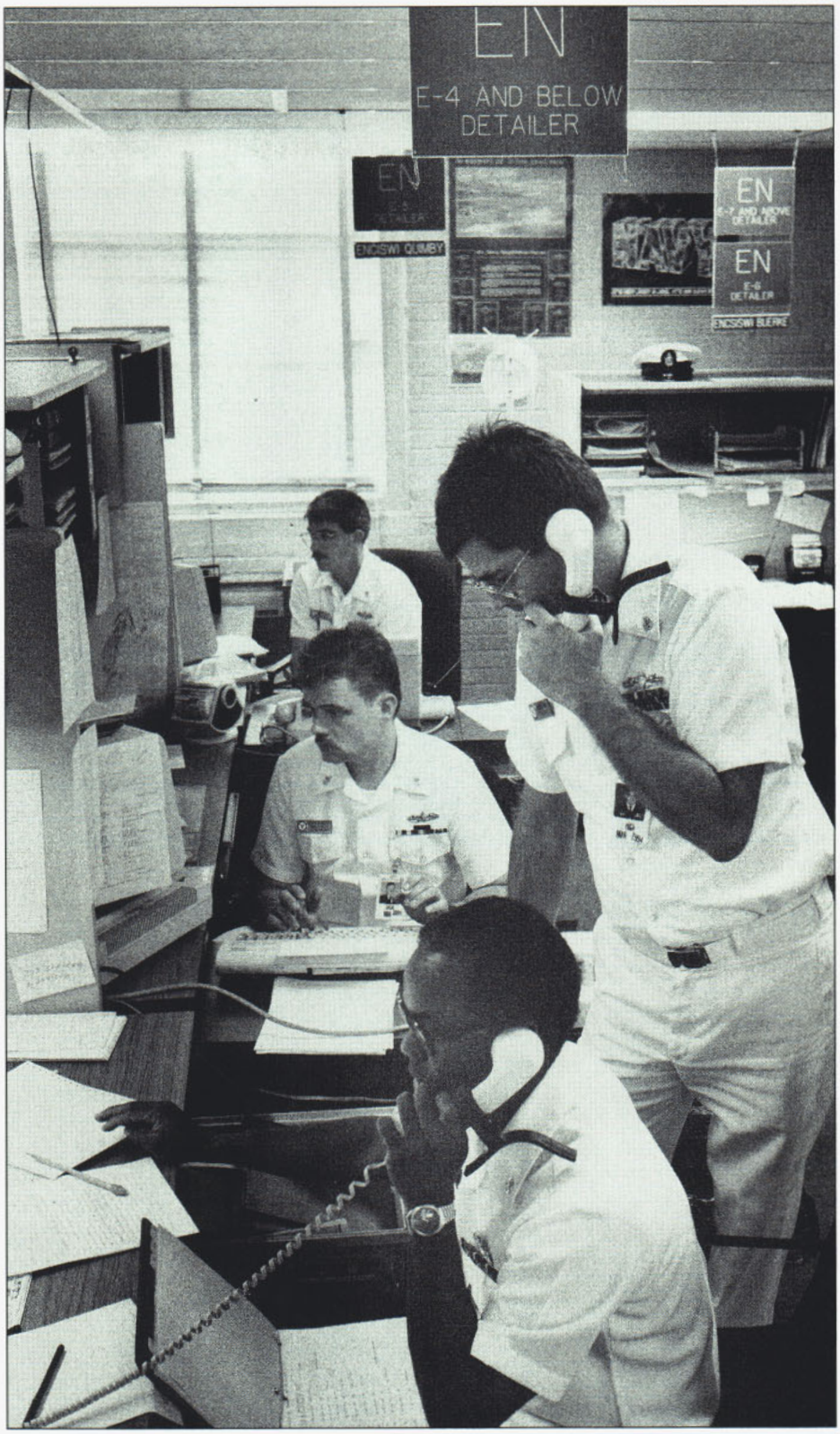
Although detailing can be a frustrating and demanding job, there are some rewards that detailers learn to cherish, if only for a few minutes.

"The satisfaction you get varies from phone call to phone call," Johnson said. "You can get off the phone with one sailor and feel great because you helped out. You get off the phone two minutes later with another sailor you couldn't help. You just didn't have what they wanted, but you know you've done your best."

"The best feeling in the world is when you make somebody happy and they start yelling and jumping up and down; you can hear them on the other end of the phone. They got what they wanted," said Collins. "And you get just as upset when you have to say 'no' to a sailor. That's the hardest thing, telling people 'no.'"

Jacobs also enjoys the gratification that comes with helping out shipmates. "I think the most satisfying thing is to get a call from a junior E-4 saying, 'Chief, I know I probably can't get this, but this is what I want,' and you're able to say, 'Buddy, I'll tell you what, I can do that for you.' It just makes your day when you can give him something he thinks is impossible. Because whenever he picks up that phone, that is the most important call he has made all day long. That may be the most important call in his whole life," Jacobs said.

Being flexible when looking for orders is essential. As seniority increases, availability of billets decreases. If location is most important, then flexibility is needed in the type of commands requested by sailors. The detailers are there to help individuals; however, they cannot create billets. Calling nine months before your PRD and continuing to call at each new requisition cycle provides the best opportunity for finding a suitable billet. Lewis also advises that sailors be aware of what is happening in their rating and stay in contact with their career counselor.



"A lot of people listen to hearsay without really finding out the truth of things," Lewis said. "They should find out what the facts are. They need to take responsibility for themselves and their careers." The future is now. □

Dorey is a photojournalist for All Hands.

Unity on the seas

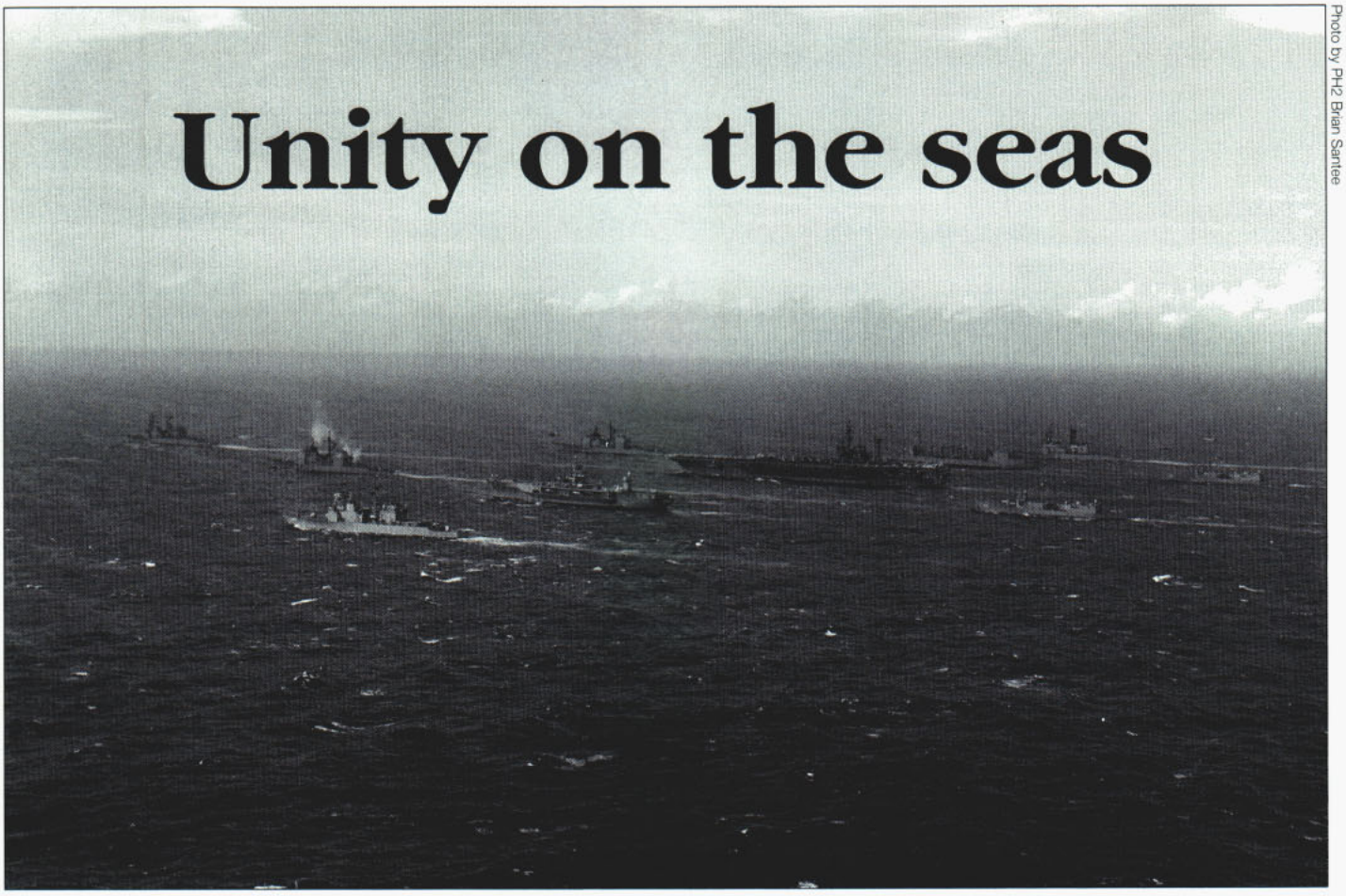


Photo by PH2 Brian Santee

In the frigid North Atlantic, NATO still sails

Story and photos by PH1(AW) Joseph Dorey

As the ship moved quietly past the darkening shadows of the steep cliffs above, the crew moved confidently, not knowing that their daily routine was about to be rudely interrupted.

They were now entering the "Fjord Zone," a place where electronic surveillance equipment cannot always be counted on for protection, and where surface vessels and submarines can easily hide.

"Inbound surface contact fast approaching!" comes the call across the bridge. But it is too late. The ship and crew have been destroyed — this time.

Welcome to *North Star* '91, a NATO exercise held Sept. 10-19 in the North Atlantic, the Norwegian Sea and the fjords along Norway's coastline, where scenes like this are acted out in preparation for the defense of NATO's northern flank.

The players included more than 17,000 allied personnel, some watchful neighborhood "bears," a windchill factor of 20 degrees and several "blue noses."

Sailors from eight countries, embarked in 55 ships, tested NATO's ability to respond to multiple threats in a harsh environment. The players also tested their interoperability while providing a strong show of force to any potential aggressor. As was demonstrated in Operation *Desert Storm*, a multinational coalition can be a very potent force.

"If you looked at the recent Gulf War, we had Third World countries using first-world weapons," said VADM Michael P. Kalleres, commander of 2nd Fleet, Striking Fleet Atlantic and *North Star* '91. "And not every one of those countries is our buddy."

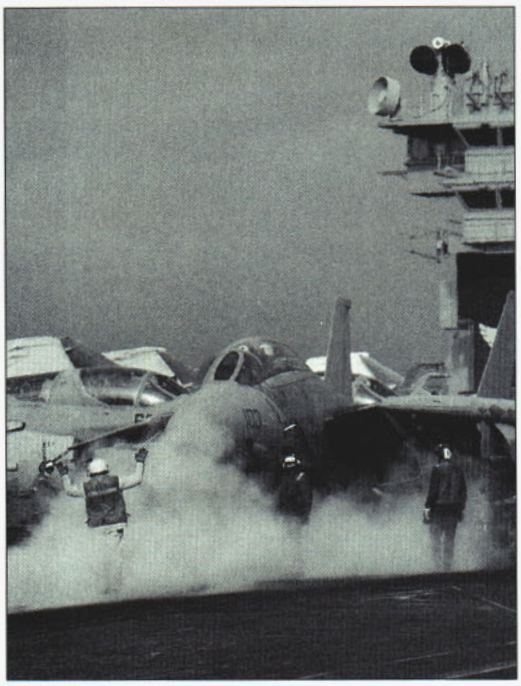
The exercise gave NATO participants the chance to practice combat strategies against aircraft and weapon systems similar to the ones available to most Third World countries. Familiarization with an opponent's weapons can be critical.

"It does no good to train against only five enemies if the minimum you're ever going to see is 25. It does no good to train against a ballistic weapon if what you're going to see is a precision munition that's either radar-controlled or homing. So it takes practice against multiple threats. An FPB [fast patrol boat] with a well-placed torpedo is just as dangerous as a *Tomahawk*," Kalleres said.

Left: HMS *Invincible*'s flight deck during flight operations. Opposite page: NATO ships sail through the choppy North Atlantic as *North Star* '91 gets underway.

Before the exercise, each of the participating nations — Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal and the United States — determined whether their forces needed more practice in anti-submarine warfare, surface warfare or air warfare. Each force then concentrated on strengthening that particular area during the exercise, playing roles of the "good guy" and the enemy.

The scenario for *North Star* '91 changed daily, so attention to detail was extremely important, especially for pilots of the more than 200 aircraft involved.



An F-14 *Tomcat* prepares to launch from USS *America*'s flight deck for a mission with NATO allies.

"That's one of the tough things to keep up with," said LTJG Matthew B. Aljanich, an F-14 pilot with Fighter Squadron 33 aboard USS *America* (CV 66). "One day the German ship over here is your friend and the *Tornado*s are good guys, and the next day they're bad. So you've got to really listen to what's going on, because it changes quickly."

But with both the British and the Germans flying *Tornado*s it can get more confusing, according to Aljanich. "Because you've got to go out and say, 'Oh yeah, I've got *Tornado*s. Well are they German or are they British?' Some days the British are the friends and the Germans aren't."

Coordinating communication between such a vast group can sometimes be difficult. According to Kalleres, the participants arrived for the exercise with all systems working and ready to go, including the communication systems. All they needed was practice.

"The first day was tough. There was a lot of 'say again, overs' and 'jeez, I can't reach this guy on this frequency or this guy on that.' The amazing part was that by the second day, everyone had snapped in. When I was up here 10 years ago, that took almost a week."

Aljanich agreed that good communication just takes some coordination. "Say our AWACS [Airborne Warning and Control System] bird is out there and it's about to hand off [control] to one of the other NATO planes. It takes a little bit of effort to make sure everybody knows what's going on. But I think it works out pretty well. It's just a change of voice — a different accent out there," Aljanich said.

Although *North Star* '91 was held at the end of summer, the weather was often unfriendly. A prevailing north wind swept through the fleet bringing a mixture of rain, clouds and occasional sunshine. The unique mixture of varying ocean currents, with both hot and cold pools, the location of the continental shelf and very deep water, all combined to make operating difficult, especially for anti-submarine warfare. That is also one of the reasons the exercise was held off the coast of Norway. It provides a realistic training environment and is no place for fair weather sailors.

"It's rough and it's tough, and you have to have a deep-ocean capability to handle [the North Atlantic]," said VADM Nicholas Hill-Norton, U.K. Royal Navy, NATO Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Striking Force.

"So it presents a considerable challenge to us, which is why we like to come and do our training here. If you can crack it in the North Atlantic, you can probably crack it anywhere," Hill-Norton said.

Since the exercise area encompassed water north of the Arctic Circle, the uninitiated had the

Right: OS1(SW) John Snyder (left) monitors anti-submarine warfare operations with British sailors aboard HMS *Invincible*. Below: An A-6E *Intruder* traps aboard USS *America*.

chance to become "blue noses." For sailors aboard USS *Mount Whitney* (LCC 20), that meant lining up on the flight deck in T-shirts and shorts while getting doused with a fire hose, a procedure that ensured more than just noses turned blue.

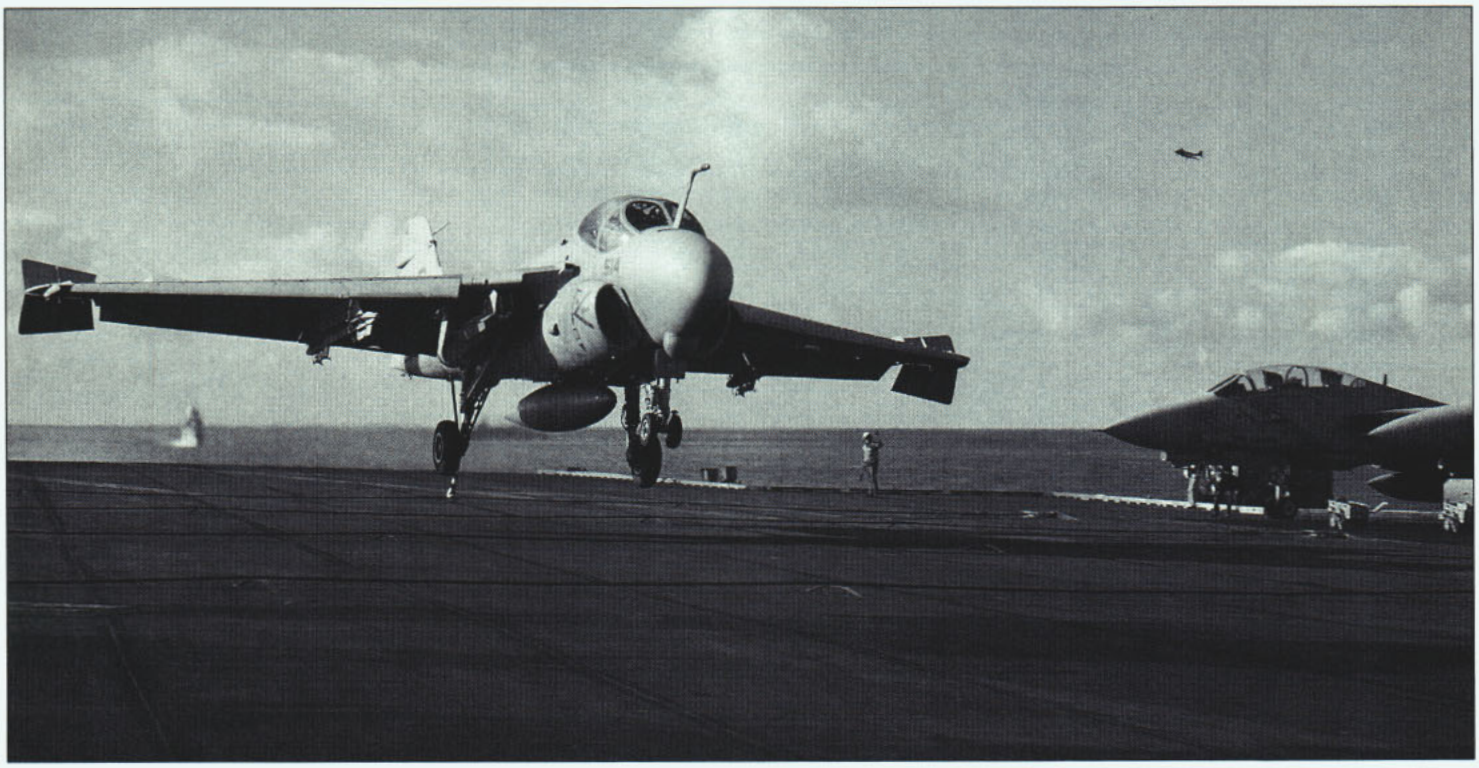
Because of the exercise's proximity to the Soviet Union, some Soviet reconnaissance "Bear" aircraft showed interest in the proceedings. Almost daily, U.S. fighter aircraft from *America* would intercept a Soviet scouting party about 200 miles from the battle group and escort it in. There was no provocation on either side as the F-14s would position themselves between the Soviets and the carrier while the "Bears" flew by, took some pictures and went on their way. All of this is standard procedure, except that now, because of easing tension with the Soviet Union, these encounters have changed.

According to LTJG Jerry H. Leaky, an F-14 pilot with Fighter Squadron 33, these meetings have taken on a more friendly atmosphere. In the past, it was not uncommon for U.S. and Soviet crewmen to exchange less than friendly gestures. But this time, "We pulled up next to [the Soviets] and their guys were waving at us. I think you can tell they're really excited about their freedom and the things that are going on over there," he said.

Operating in the North Atlantic may have more significance as world events dictate change. "I don't think we get enough opportunity to practice in this region. You think about the North Sea and the Baltic states, for instance, and the turmoil that's going on inside the Soviet Union. The necessity to operate in this region might be greater than it has been in the past," said *America*'s Commanding Officer CAPT Kent W. Ewing.

While operating in the area is somewhat unfamiliar for many U.S. sailors, the European members of NATO feel quite at home here, having practiced throughout the area for years. The many fjords along the Norwegian coast are of particular strategic interest.

The fjords are carved between steep mountains and often contain very deep water. These havens offer protection from threatening seas and enemy forces and are large enough to harbor a battle group.



Left: NATO ships and helicopters performed a vital role in anti-submarine warfare operations during *North Star*.

"There are considerable advantages to the fjords in times of defense against missile firings," Hill-Norton said. "It's difficult to fire missiles with a lot of granite in the background. It's also tricky because people can hide in fjords and they're difficult to find, particularly submarines and fast patrol boats. An offensive advantage is that you can seal off a fjord. You can get rid of whatever enemy was in there and operate reasonably safely inside."

Sharing knowledge of the area is just one of many keys to NATO's success. Learning about each other's methods is also a key. During *North Star* '91, several sailors were able to "cross deck" to other ships in order to work face-to-face with their NATO partners.

LT Robert P. Wilson, U.K. Royal Navy, is part of the Personnel Exchange Program with the U.S. Navy. He is a flight officer with Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 120 (VAW 120) out of Oceana, Va., but was assigned to VAW 123 for *North Star* '91. "One of the reasons I'm here is because I've done this exercise seven times during the years," he said.

Wilson has been working with Americans on anti-submarine warfare in E-2C *Hawkeye* aircraft for the past two years. He had always been interested in how other nations' command decision-making processes worked, and is now getting a good insight on how the two navies compare.

"The Royal Navy's aim, for somebody in my field, has been to try to get as much integration as possible and to try to get the Americans to learn what we can do," said Wilson. "Everybody's got limitations. But if you understand what the limitations are of the other units, then you can at least deploy them in the right way so that their limitations aren't going to be a major drawback."

Aboard the British carrier HMS *Invincible* (R 05), Ocean Systems Technician (Analyst) 1st Class (SW) John W. Snyder agrees that working hand-in-hand with NATO allies is extremely rewarding. Snyder is attached to Commander Ocean Systems Atlantic, Norfolk, but got the opportunity to spend a month aboard *Invincible* for a series of exercises, including *North Star* '91.

"I've benefited from learning about the Royal Navy and the way they operate," Snyder said. "And in turn they have benefited from some of my ASW experience."

Snyder said the crew on *Invincible* was not only eager to share information about their jobs and equipment, but also about their culture as well. "It's been a really close relationship with the British sailors, on a very personal level. I've seen a different side. I'm in their neighborhood, so to speak. I'm the one with the funny accent."

As for the future of NATO and exercises like *North Star* '91, many agree that international cooperation is as important now as it has ever been. With declining military budgets around the world, no one can afford to stand isolated. The demise of communism in Europe and success of the international coalition in the Persian Gulf can be attributed in part to the strength of NATO.

When talking about the unification of Germany, Major Hartmut Buchholz, Federal Republic of Germany Air Force, said, "A lot of that was NATO. If the western countries hadn't been that strong in military power and in economy of course, things wouldn't have changed. We lost part of our enemy, but that's what we are here for." Buchholz was embarked aboard *America* for the exercise as part of Commander Carrier Group 4 staff.

For *America*'s commanding officer, *North Star* '91 makes a lot of sense. Ewing said unity will be at a premium in future conflicts everywhere, "with the friendly nations of the world against the enemies of the world, just like we had with Saddam Hussein. That came off very, very well and we were ready to do that because of exercises like this." □

Dorey is a photojournalist for All Hands.

Cold storage

Story and photos by JO1 Lee Bosco

Christmas Eve 1990. Above the Arctic Circle in Norway. Men and machines move through the blizzard that has enveloped the northern town of Evenes. Only the most dire emergency could bring these men from their homes on this holy night. But the American president has drawn a "line in the sand" 4,000 miles away, and the equipment stowed in the caves here will be needed if blood is let in the desert. Truck after truck loaded with snow-covered containers pulls up to the pier, while oversized forklifts struggle through the tempest to maneuver the seemingly never-ending stockpile of U.S. Navy materials. Street lights cut through the curtain of snow and provide sparse illumination as cargo handlers use cranes to load the large box-like objects onto the cargo ship Fleming Sif. *And as the winter storm dies, the ship, laden with lifesaving equipment, sails off to wai. . . .*

Previous page: Cargo handlers begin the exhausting task of unloading the fleet hospital. Left: *Green Wave* traverses the fjords that lead to Evenes. Below: SK1 Jeffrey Stewart awaits transportation back to the Norwegian Army Base following a 12-hour shift on the pier.

January 1991. Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia. Navy cargo handlers, home-based in Gulfport, Miss., are accustomed to the heat. Sweat runs into their leather gloves as they work to free the load from Fleming Sif. *They realize the importance of their task as Navy attack aircraft fly overhead, Bagdhad bound. The containers hold all the equipment needed to build and operate a 500-bed hospital in the barren environment of Saudi Arabia.*

Lives will depend on the equipment that arrived from Norway on the cargo ship. With grim-faced determination the Navy cargo handlers drive the trucks through the dunes to the hospital site. Having completed the bizarre journey from caves above the Arctic Circle to the sands of the Middle East, Fleet Hospital 15 is being delivered. Within a week the hospital will be set up, staffed and ready for casualties. And as Desert Storm *clouds break on the horizon, the cargo handlers make their last delivery and the hospital staff hunkers down to wait. . . .*

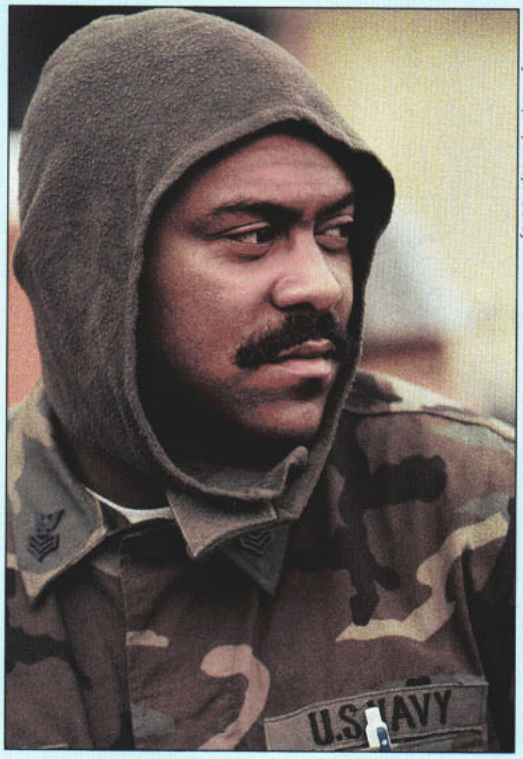


Photo by PH1(AW) Joseph Dorey

In the history books of the future, the Gulf War, known as Operation *Desert Storm*, will stand out as a model of innovation. Historians will be able to point to "smart" weapons, satellite communications and space-age intelligence capability as new tools unavailable to the military during previous clashes in Vietnam and Korea.

The American public, gathered in front of television sets during the buildup to war, learned of new destructive weapons — *Tomahawk, Stealth* bomber, *SLAM* — and of one lifesaving development — Fleet Hospitals.

Until the Gulf War, most Americans' perceptions of battlefield emergency medicine came from the popular television show "M*A*S*H." Set during the Korean War, the TV series depicted the Spartan conditions at a mobile hospital. A decade ago Navy planners decided this system needed to be modernized. Their feeling was that if servicemen and women were going to face high-tech weaponry in battle, we needed to employ advanced technology to care for the injured. Thus, the Fleet Hospital Program was born.

It has been little more than 10 years since the idea was first considered, and today equipment for 17 fully-functional fleet hospitals is stored in strategic areas around the globe. In addition to Norway; Okinawa, Guam, Japan and Diego Garcia all house fleet hospitals.

At these sites, stored in 450 international standardization organization (ISO) containers, is all the gear needed to save the lives of battle-injured servicemen and women. The value of the program was proven during *Desert Storm* when, on short notice, three fleet hospitals were brought thousands of miles, from diverse points on earth, to the Middle East. Upon arrival each was constructed, staffed and prepared for battle casualties.

Now, six months after the war, the hospital that came out of the Norwegian caves is being replaced. On the pier near the town of Evenes, overseeing the offload from the cargo ship *Green Wave* is CDR Richard Wieczorek, executive officer of the Fleet Hospital Support Office, in Alameda, Calif. "These hospitals were central to the United States' medical efforts during the war," he said.

"We couldn't be happier with the performance of the program," Wieczorek said. "Deploying three hospitals along with two hospital ships sent an unmistakable message to Saddam Hussein and to the rest of the world. We were saying, 'Yes, we are expecting casualties, and

Left: Cargo handlers atop fleet hospital containers watch as a crane swings into action. Below: The spacious caverns of the secret storage site will soon be chock-full of the containers and vehicles that make up a fleet hospital.

we are very capable of providing them with first-rate medical attention. We are very *serious* about liberating Kuwait and are ready to pay the price.' It had to make the Iraqis think.

"Secondly, the war was the perfect real-life test for the program. In training, we've set up and operated a fleet hospital, but never under war-time conditions. We had a good feeling the hospitals would work, but you're never absolutely sure. The Middle East is a severe environment, but the program proved itself over and over again under tough conditions. No other country on earth has a system as extensive as ours. Nobody else could have done it," he continued.

LCDR Tom Lippert is the program's logistics officer; he makes it possible for things to get from here to there and back again. His three years with fleet hospitals have been a series of daunting challenges, both in war and in peace. The logistics of finding storage space, moving the equipment, ensuring accessibility and keeping track of 17 fleet hospitals in eight countries is a complex undertaking.

"This move back to the caves has gone very smoothly because the cargo handling battalion has experience in moving a fleet hospital, and the weather has been very mild. But the load-out last Christmas was an accomplishment. The Norweigians and a small complement of

Photo by PH1(AW) Joseph Dorey

Navy cargo handlers fought a blizzard and still got the hospital out of here very quickly."

Naval Reserve Cargo Handling Battalion 13 (RCHB 13) was deployed to the war for six months. In that time they unloaded military hardware from a long procession of Military Sealift Command ships that poured into Al Jubayl. One of the tasks they completed, swiftly and professionally, was the offload of Fleet Hospital 15.

"During the build up to the war we knew that each ship we worked carried vital equipment," said CDR Al Murray, commanding officer of the battalion. "Tanks,

trucks, ammo and guns are easily recognizable as important gear, but these containers are just as valuable. Our experience moving a fleet hospital in Japan prior to the war has taught us how to download this gear quickly, as well as just what is in those containers."

Some would say shipmates' lives were in those containers as Fleet Hospital 15 treated nearly half of all combat casualties in the Gulf War. "Oh, the cargo handlers felt the urgency when delivering Fleet Hospital 15," said Murray. "The other two hospitals had already been set up, but the projections of the possible wounded in battle were high. We knew that there was a definite need to get '15' off the cargo ship as quickly as possible. All 151 members of the battalion worked extra hours so that would happen."

Following the successful mission in the desert, the cargo handling battalion has come to Norway to unload the boxes and vehicles so the hospital can be packed away in its hiding place again. The fleet hospital presence in Norway includes two classified cave sites — one in the south and this one north of the Arctic Circle. Each contains an entire hospital. At the northern site the 450 containers and 78 vehicles that make up a hospital will be stored in specially designed man-made caves. The cave complex is shared with the Norwegian army.

With 43-foot ceilings and five 300-yard long corridors, the tunnels are designed to house the fleet hospital in the event of war in Europe.

If the need arises, the plan calls for all Norwegian gear stored in the caves to be rolled out and put into action. Then the hospital containers would be distributed throughout the cave tunnels. The entire hospital would be set up and function inside the cave.

"These caves are ingenious," Lippert said. "First they had to be dug out, and then, because of moisture, canvas walls were stretched from ceiling to floor and across the top of each tunnel. Lights and electrical outlets were installed. If people were ever going to actually set up the hospital in here they would also need plumbing, so an entire sewage system was designed into the facility.

"Nearly 1,000 doctors, nurses and support personnel along with 500 patients could exist in here indefinitely, as long as food and medical supplies could be replen-

ished," Lippert said. "Not all of the storage sites have that feature."

Working inside the cave directing Norwegian forklift operators while consulting a detailed floor plan, Ed Dofflemyer is eager to talk about the "hospital city in a box." He's been Director of Resources for the Fleet Hospital Program for eight years, and has been directly involved in bringing a good idea to life. Now, he's inspecting content lists on the containers already arranged in the tunnel. "This project takes a lot of planning. These containers can't be stacked randomly," he points to the rows of containers stacked three high reaching 25 feet in the air.

"The bottom row is the only easily accessible row," Dofflemyer says. "Many of the boxes include perishable items that have to be inspected or replaced frequently. Once this tunnel is full we can't be moving the containers around, so getting in and out of them is a big

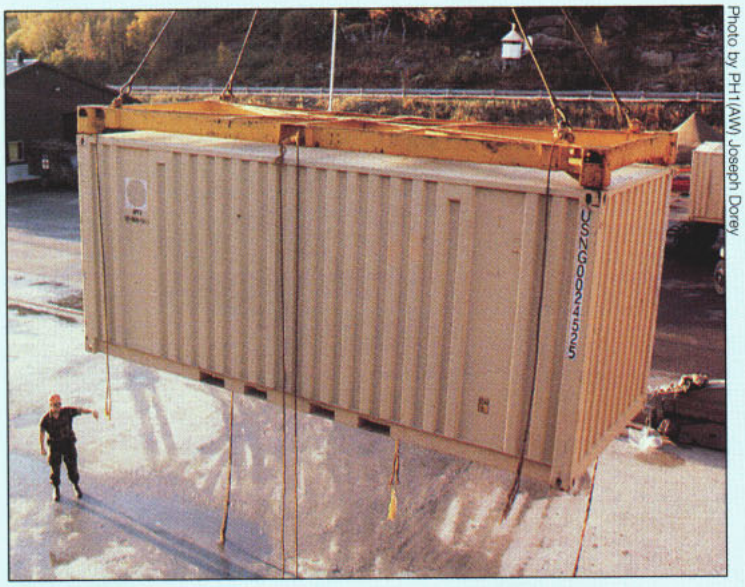
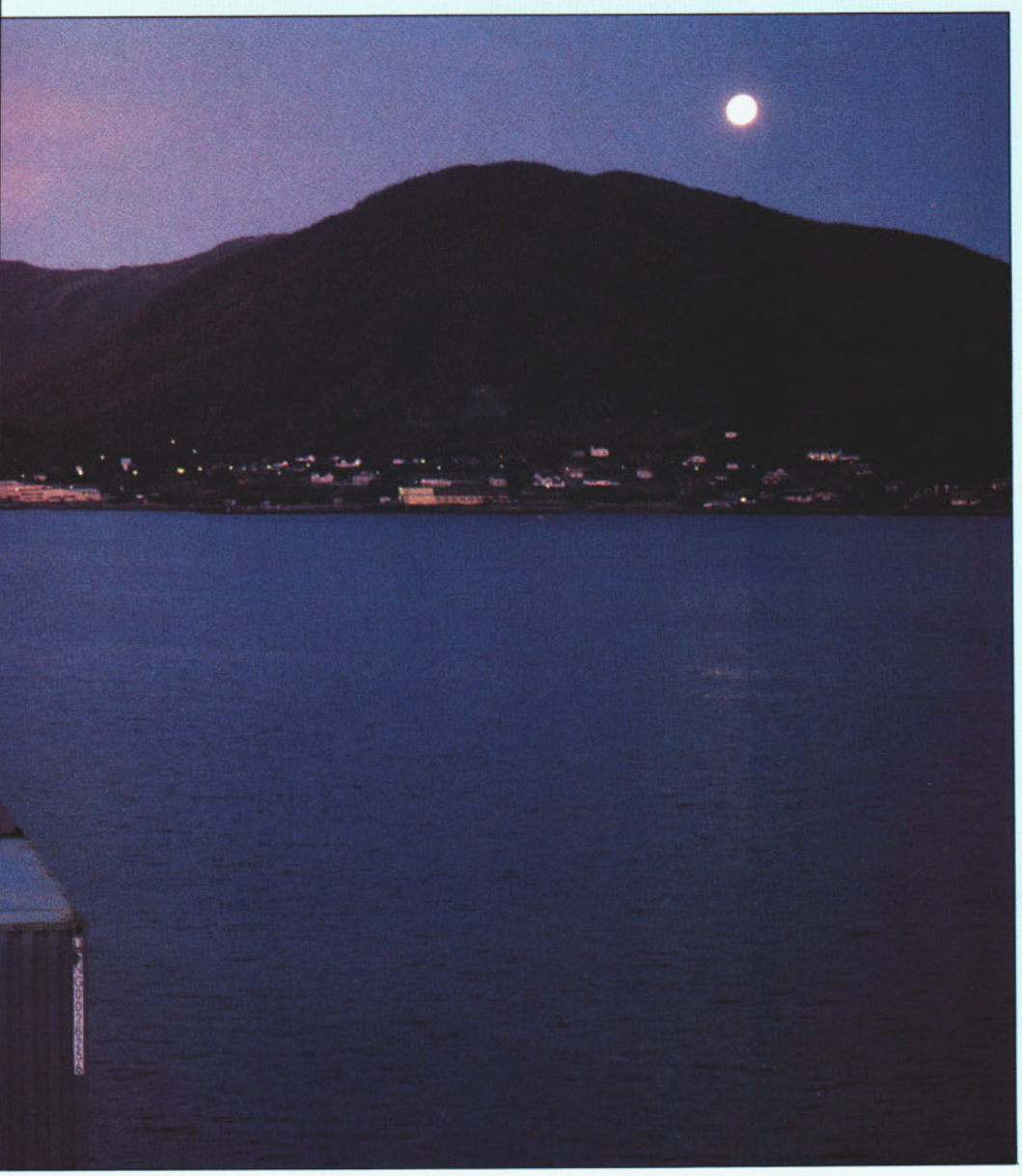


Photo by PH1(AW) Joseph Dorey



Opposite page: Freeing the containers is a slow and painstaking job for the cargo handlers. Left: Working 12-hour shifts under street lights and moonlight meant that the ship could be unloaded in a record 60 hours. Top: Just 450 containers hold all the equipment needed for a fleet hospital. Above: Weather plays a big role in the amount of time it takes the cargo handlers to download the hospital.

Photo by PH1(AW) Joseph Dorey

consideration in the floor plan. We've set it up so that the hospital can be broken out quickly."

He finds what he's looking for on the second tier of containers. "See there? That container needs to be on the deck. It holds medical equipment that needs to be inspected on a yearly basis. The whole success of this program comes from the words 'fully functional.' How is that equipment going to be fully functional if all the rubber gaskets are cracked? That's what we replace on some of the equipment during the yearly inspection."

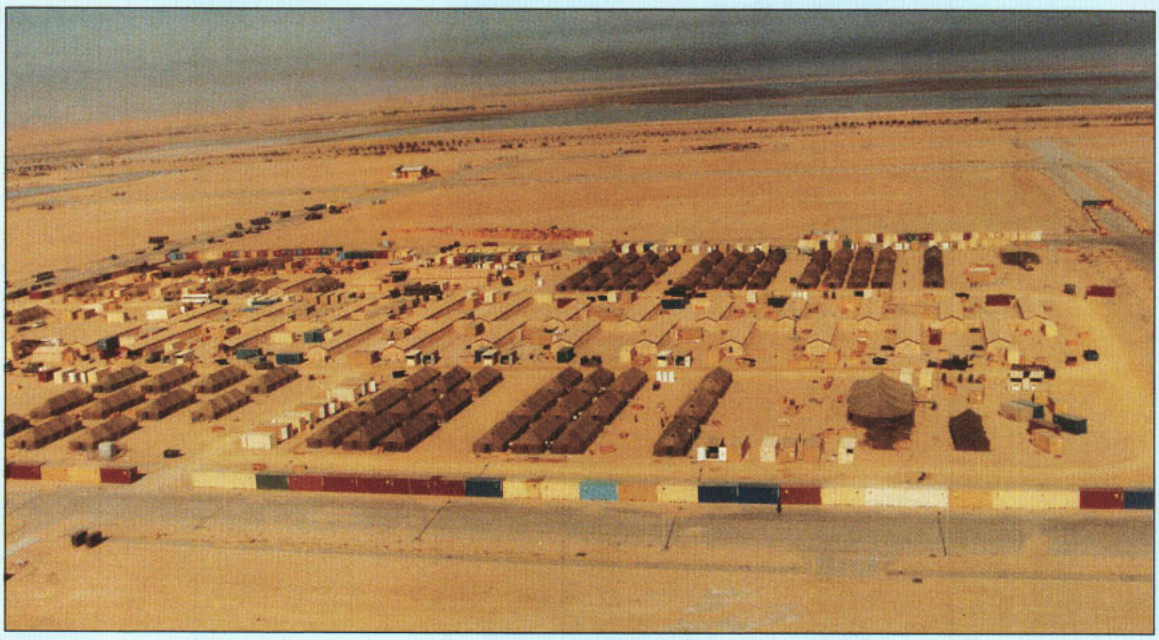
Dofflemyer calls over to a Norwegian forklift driver and explains the problem. Then he walks the length of the tunnel and talks to Storekeeper 3rd Class Mark Johnson, a member of RCHB 13 working in the caves. Dofflemyer tells the Navy man about repositioning the container.

Dofflemyer hurries off to check another section of the tunnel, and Johnson talks about the tunnel facility. "The first time you come in here it feels kind of weird. You're pretty deep into the mountain when you get to our storage area. It's impressive. Imagine the work it took to create this cave."

He's been with RCHB 13 for five years and is proud of the job his unit did during the war. "Lots of folks in the Navy don't know that there are two active-duty cargo handling battalions and 12 reserve battalions. People call us the Navy's stevedores," Johnson says with a grin. "We unloaded beaucoup gear in Saudi. With the ground war coming on, we kept up a real fast pace. This operation is more relaxed. Even though we will probably break our own record for downloading the hospital — we're shooting for the job to be complete in less than 72 hours — it still feels more relaxed."

As another truck pulls into the tunnel and Johnson

Above: BM3 Eric Sinks (left) and EM2 Jesse Escobedo catch a moments rest after a tough shift on the "crane gang." Right: Fleet Hospital 15 as it appeared when fully constructed and staffed in Saudi Arabia.



directs the off load, he sums up the feelings of some of his shipmates. "We unloaded Fleet Hospital 15 in the desert, and I'm glad that there weren't a large number of wounded in the war. It feels good to be putting the hospital away now. We did our job in the desert. The hospital did its job. Now it's time to pack it up. You know, I hope this thing stays in here forever without needing to be used. But, because of the Gulf War, I know that it's a good thing to have . . . just in case."

September 1991. Above the Arctic Circle in Norway. The days grow shorter by eight minutes each day now. Soon, a half hour of gray light will be the only sunlight in a 24-hour period. The cargo ship Green Wave *is freed from the lines that secured her to the pier. The Navy cargo handlers are finished with the ship. The hospital has been downloaded and stored away in 60 hours, and these weary men and women board the buses that take them to the barracks on the Norwegian Army Base. Among themselves they share a feeling of completeness. In the past nine months they've been involved in the deployment, and now the storage of those containers. They will soon fly back to the United States and back to their civilian jobs, where they will continue to drill and prepare, as they wait to be called on again. And in its secret cave in Norway, a U. S. Navy fleet hospital will also wait. . . .* □

Bosco is a photojournalist for All Hands.

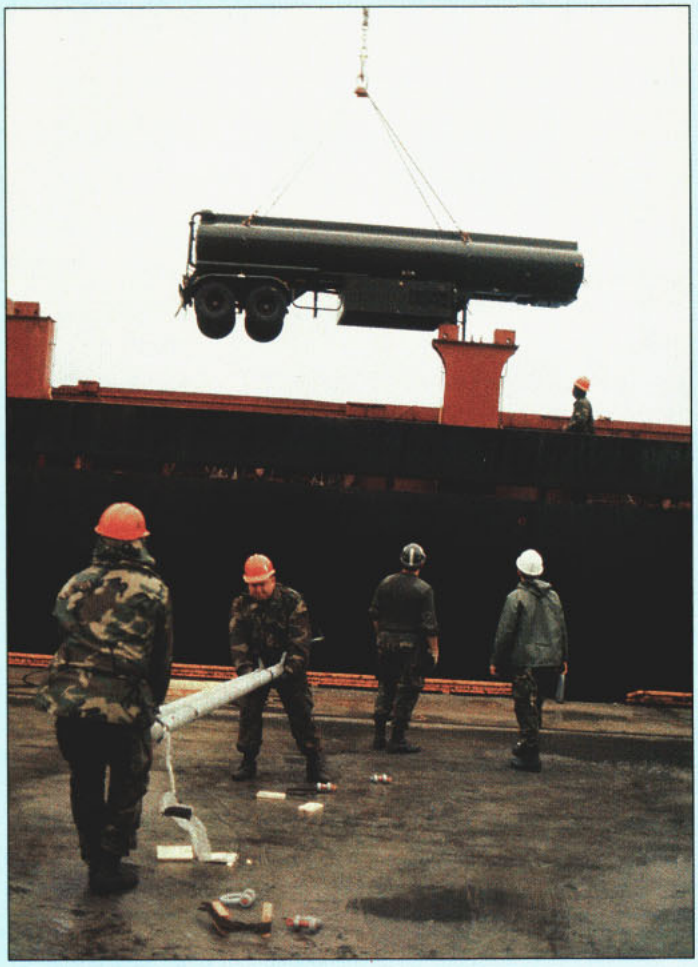


Photo by PH1 (AW) Joseph Dorey

Above: A water tank is lifted from the cargo hold of *Green Wave*. Left: Once the fleet hospital is secured in the cave it will wait until the next time it's needed.

"Remember the *Maine*"

A battleship's death sparks a rally to war

Story by JOC Thomas H. Berryman

The men of the battleship USS *Maine* (BB 2/C) felt the warm breeze on their faces, a big change from three months before when they had been in Hampton Roads, Va. They could see bright lights and hear the sounds from the nearby city of Havana, Cuba — a city none of them could visit. Tension was high. The watches were doubled with standing instruction to keep eyes on the water, particularly after the sun went down. About 9:40 p.m., Feb. 15, 1898, a huge explosion ruptured the forward part of the ship. Of the 350 American personnel on board *Maine*, 252 perished within a few hours. Eight others died during the next several days. A civilian steamer and a Spanish cruiser took on survivors.

The armored battleship was originally ordered to Havana to show the flag and protect the lives and property of American citizens. At the time, the Spaniards were fighting Cuban revolutionaries who wanted to overthrow the colonial power. *Maine* arrived Jan. 25, anchoring in the center of the harbor to reduce the risk of sabotage.

Initially, the outraged American public believed a Spanish mine planted under *Maine*'s hull caused the explosion, in spite of Spanish officials in Havana having shown every attention to the survivors of the disaster and great respect for those killed. A court of inquiry the following month couldn't determine the explosion's cause. It didn't make much difference as the sinking galvanized public opinion in the United States and the slogan, "Remember the *Maine*!" swept across the country. On April 21, the United States declared war on Spain.

With no cause for *Maine*'s sinking having been determined by the first board of inquiry, Congress authorized salvage of *Maine* Aug. 5, 1910. A second board of inquiry was appointed to inspect the wreck after she was raised. They reported that a small external explosion set off the forward magazine. But later, historians dismissed theories of a Spanish

Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy Historical Center

Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy Historical Center

Opposite page: View of the wrecked ship's stern, taken during salvage operations in August 1911. Above: View of the ship's wreckage in Havana harbor, Cuba, in 1898. Right: USS *Maine* memorial is located in Arlington, Va.

mine or a Cuban device, believing the disaster was an accident.

ADM Hyman G. Rickover, in a 1976 writing titled, "How the battleship *Maine* was destroyed," concluded the ship's explosion resulted from a spontaneous soft-coal fire in a bunker next to the powder magazine in her hull. A technical explanation by S. Hansen and Robert S. Price, included in the Rickover material, agreed the fire was most likely caused by heat from a fire in the coal bunker adjacent to the 6-inch reserve magazine. They also admit there is no way of proving that it was an internal explosion.

However, just 18 days prior to the explosion destroying *Maine*, Secretary of the Navy John D. Long was given a report on spontaneous coal fires. An investigative board stated that such fires aboard USS *New York* (ACR 2) and USS *Cincinnati* (C 7) could have been disasters for those crews had they not been discovered in time. Coal-fired ships underwent design changes to reduce temperatures in berthing areas and coal bunkers were separated from being adjacent to ammunition magazines.

In June 1911, water was pumped out of *Maine*'s wreckage in Havana harbor. The forward section was so damaged it was cut up for disposal. A bulkhead was built across the open end of the aft hull and *Maine* was again afloat Feb. 12, 1912. On March 16, 1912, a ceremony was held after the hulk was towed four miles from the harbor into the Florida straits where, with military honors, she was scuttled in 620 fathoms of water — an official end to a ship launched November 1889. □

Berryman is a reservist assigned to Office of Information Det. 916, Minneapolis.

Photo by PH1(AW) Joseph Dorey

Salt water and 45 stars

Story by JOC Thomas H. Berryman

A photo taken of the half-submerged USS *Maine* (BB 2/C) a day after the Feb. 15, 1898, explosion shows an American flag on the main mast. Almost a century later, the same flag has now been returned to the Navy.

According to the family history of Donald W. Nowviock of Savanna, Ill., a young Cuban rowed out to the ship Feb. 16, 1898, and brought the flag down. He delivered it to an American living on the island, Lucetta Flint James, a distant relative of Nowviock's. James heard the explosion and saw the flag waving in the harbor breeze. This reportedly bothered her as she thought of the sailors entombed below. Whether she asked someone to bring her the flag or someone knew how she felt, isn't recorded.

James put the flag away in her belongings, and nothing was heard of it until she died. The executrix of her estate, her cousin, Alida Flint Nowviock, was going through James' belongings and found the flag. She gave it to James' grandson and Donald's older brother, Thomas William "Billy" Nowviock.

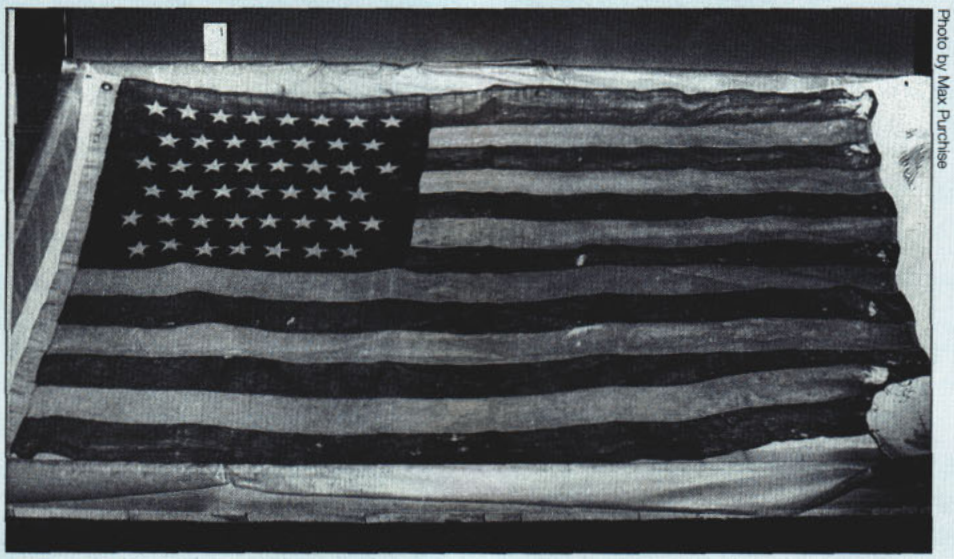


Photo by Max Purchise

Billy enlisted in the Navy right after graduating from high school in 1938. His assignment after boot camp at Great Lakes, Ill., was USS *Pickeral* (SS 177). He was stationed on the West Coast when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941.

Billy demonstrated substantial skill as an electrician and was offered promotion to chief electrician's mate. However, because he would have to transfer, he refused the position to stay with a crew he had grown to love.

In April 1943, *Pickeral* went to radio silence somewhere in the Central Pacific and was never heard from again. Historians believe she went down somewhere off the northern islands of Japan. The name of Electrician's Mate First Class Thomas William Nowviock is inscribed at the National Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii.

For [Donald] Nowviock, the flag, along with medals, photos and other items, were all part of his memories of Billy kept stored for nearly a half century.

Spring in the Midwest brings rain, which brought attention to the flag again. Nowviock and his wife Lorraine had stored some photos on the enclosed front porch of their home. "Early in April [1991]," Nowviock said, "we found that the rain had damaged a number of old photographs. The flag wasn't stored with the things that got wet, but was in a box in a drawer in a bedroom dresser. Nevertheless, we felt it had to be preserved."

The Nowviocks contacted LCDR Patrick Keller, Navy liaison at the U.S. Army Defense Ammunition Center and School (USADACS) nearby, who talked to officials at the Navy Museum in Washington, D.C.

On April 7, museum officials requested an opportunity to examine the flag along with other items. The flag, a commemorative plate showing pictures of *Maine* and other documentation, along with the sincere nature of the Nowviock family, warranted further investigation by the museum staff. On April 10, the flag and plate were carefully crated and shipped to the museum for verification. Museum officials determined the flag had indeed flown over the ship following the sinking.

The battered flag carries the ship's name on the white strip that attaches it to the halyard. Its 45 stars reflect the composition of the United States at that time.

"We had left the flag in the box," Nowviock said. "I remember Billy taking it to school in the 1930s, but nobody believed it was really from a battleship. My children had the same experience when they told their teachers about the flag. All I want now is for the flag to be put on display." Museum officials state it will become part of the Spanish-American War Exhibit. □

Berryman is a reservist assigned to Office of Information Det. 916, Minneapolis.

Year of the rescue

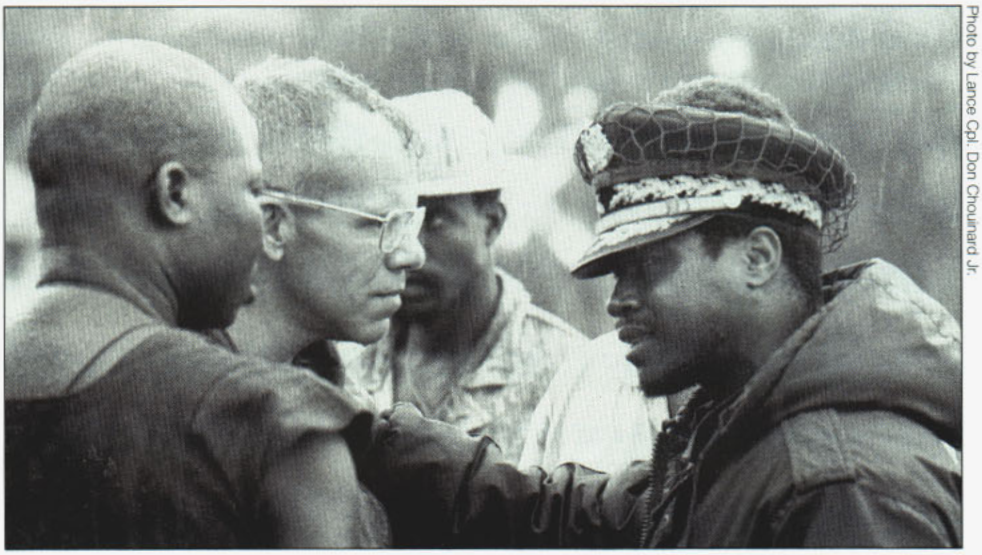


Photo by Lance Cpl. Don Chouinard Jr.

Photo by PHAA Michael Shull

Photo by Staff Sgt. John Lavallee

While attention was focused on the invasion of Kuwait, 1991 opened with sailors and Marines busy evacuating people from civil war-ravaged Liberia. Operation *Sharp Edge* began in August 1990 when Marines landed in Monrovia's American embassy compound to protect the embassy and evacuees. During the next five months, 2,690 American, Liberian, Italian, Canadian and French nationals were moved by helicopter aboard Navy ships prior to relocation to safe haven. When the evacuation was complete Jan. 9, 1991, sailors and Marines stayed to provide humanitarian assistance by airlifting food, water and medical supplies to the ravaged city — assistance that set the pace for 1991, the year of the rescue.

Top left: Marine Lt. Col. Thomas Parker (center) meets with a rebel officer at Port Buchanon, Liberia. Above: A child gulps milk aboard USS *Guam* (LPH 9). Left: Lance Cpl. Todd Strumke conceals himself near the American embassy.

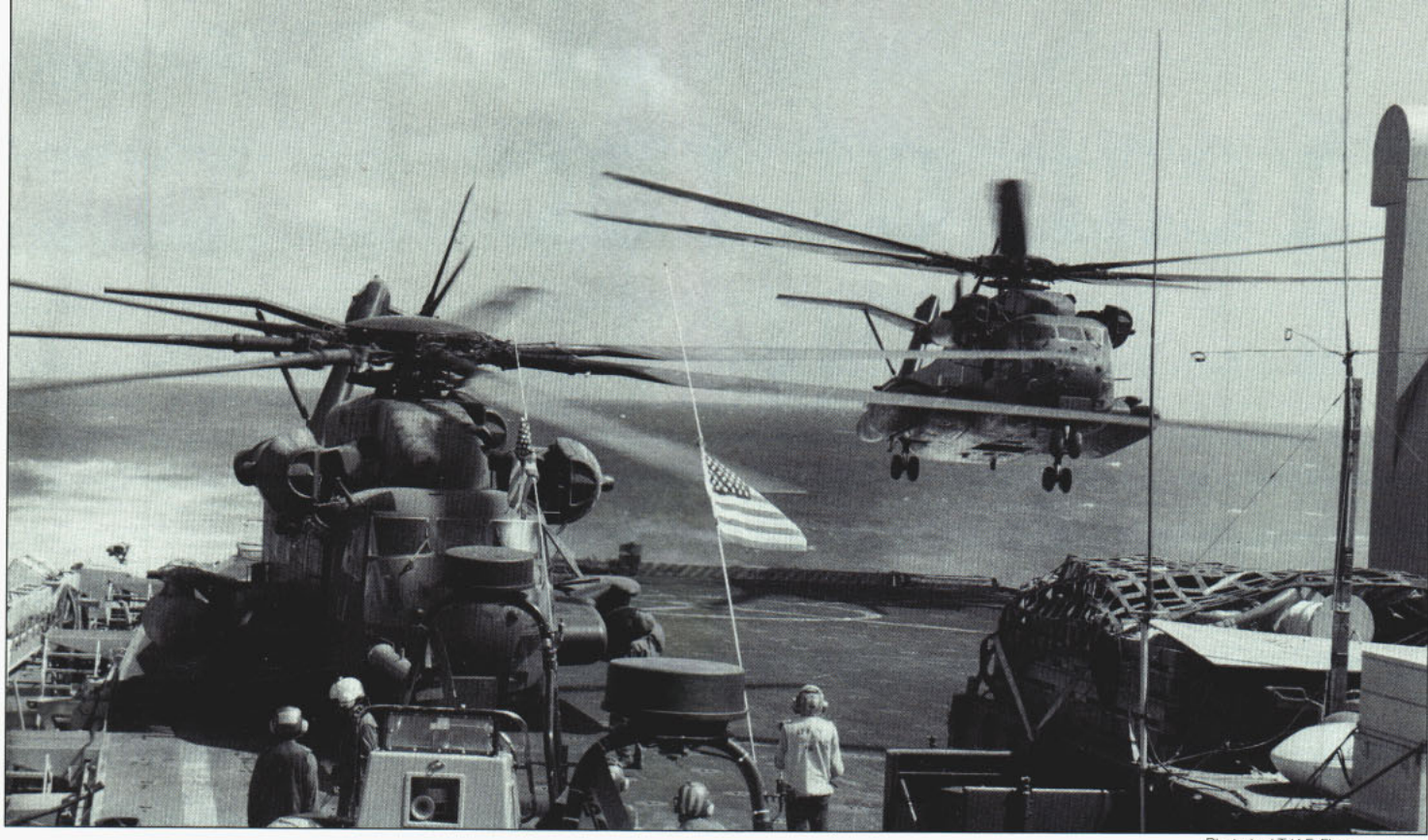


Photo by LT K.F. Flynn

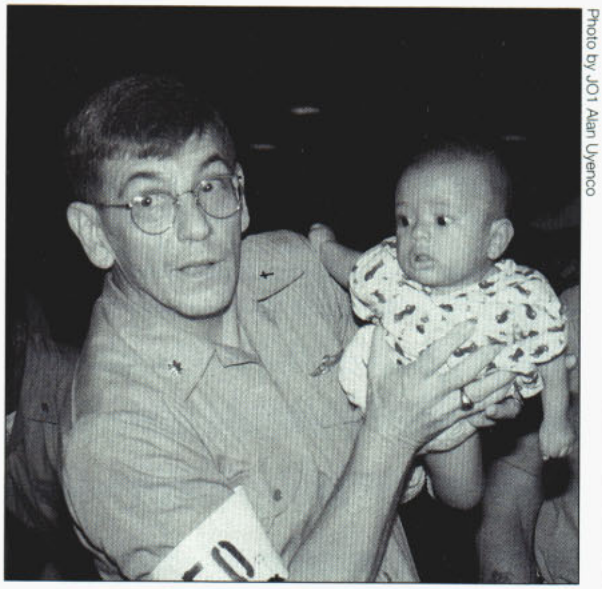


Photo by JO1 Alan Uyenco

Top left: Marine Corps helicopters return to USS *Trenton* (LPD 14) following their grueling flight to Mogadishu, Somalia, during Operation *Eastern Exit*. Above: Chaplain (LCDR) Norm Holcomb comforts an *Eastern Exit* evacuee aboard USS *Saipan* (LHA 2). Top right: *Provide Comfort*'s biggest customer — a Kurdish child in Northern Iraq. Right: Soon after the Marines' historic first landing in Northern Iraq, they met with two Iraqi generals who hadn't gotten the word to pull back from Kurdish refugee camps near Zakho. After a brief discussion, the Iraqi response was, "We don't want any trouble with Marines."

Photo by JOC Marjie J. Shaw

Photo by Staff Sgt. Lee J. Tibbetts

Just a few days before *Sharp Edge* ended, and a continent away, another civil war threatened American lives. Marine Corps helicopters lifted off the decks of USS *Guam* (LPH 9) and USS *Trenton* (LPD 14) during the early hours of Jan. 4. Fleet Marines set up defensive positions around the American embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia, and escorted 260 citizens from 30 nations through fierce firefights between rival factions. Upon completion, *Guam* and *Trenton* returned to the North Arabian Sea in time to support Operation *Desert Storm*.

After *Desert Storm*'s guns fell silent, the Navy-Marine Corps team mobilized for a mission of mercy in Northern Iraq and Turkey. As part of a joint task force to aid Kurdish refugees fleeing Saddam Hussein's army, Navy factions from USS *Theodore Roosevelt*'s battle group and Commander 6th Fleet provided humanitarian assistance to hundreds of thousands who took refuge in the frigid mountain region.

Marine aviators flew hundreds of sorties to move more than 12,000 tons of supplies while Marine and Navy ordnance disposal teams worked to rid the area of arms caches and mines. Navy corpsmen tended the sick and dying while Seabees and Army engineers constructed camps to house the refugees. Nearly a year after the Gulf War cease-fire, more than 1,000 U.S. personnel continue to *Provide Comfort*.

As *Desert Storm* ships headed home, a cyclone and subsequent battering by torrential rains left hungry and disease-stricken Bangladeshis with little hope for survival. Nearly 140,000 people perished in the storm and its aftermath.

More than 7,000 sailors and Marines of Amphibious Group 3 and the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade diverted from their return home from *Desert Storm* to make up the sea-based arm of Joint Task Force *Sea Angel*. During the next two weeks, joint task force personnel had moved more than 4,500 tons of relief supplies by helicopter and various landing craft that were key to the survival of the millions of displaced Bangladeshis.

Photo by JO3 J. Vincent Dickens

U.S. Navy photo

Left: Sailors and Marines helped Subic Naval Base, Clark Air Base and neighboring villages rise up from Mt. Pinatubo's (center) ashes. Bottom: USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) crewmen issue relief supplies to evacuees prior to transit from Subic Bay.

Photo by PHAN Dan Huge

Mother Nature's fury rocked the Philippines in June as Mt. Pinatubo awoke from a 600-year sleep to throw millions of tons of ash into the air and send thousands fleeing.

Seventeen 7th Fleet ships moved service members, families and civilians to nearby islands for air evacuation. Navy, Air Force and Marine bases in Guam, Hawaii and the West Coast mobilized to offer support.

During Operation *Fiery Vigil*, more than 18,000 people left Luzon for the United States. As evacuees departed, sailors and Marines helped Clark Air Base, Subic Naval Base and local villages rise up from the ashes.

As this issue goes to press, the Navy-Marine Corps team is once again on-station in the Caribbean, providing rescue support and shelter for Haitian nationals stranded at sea in Operation *Safe Harbor* — just another day during the year of the rescue. □

Salvaging the wreckage

Beaufort *aids the Air Force with downed plane*

Story and photos by JOC Vince Vidal

The salvage and rescue ship USS *Beaufort* (ATS 2) had only been back in her home port of Sasebo, Japan, for a month following her return from Operation *Desert Storm* when the call came to assist an Air Force mishap investigation board in retrieving parts from a downed F-16 *Fighting Falcon* off the southwest coast of South Korea.

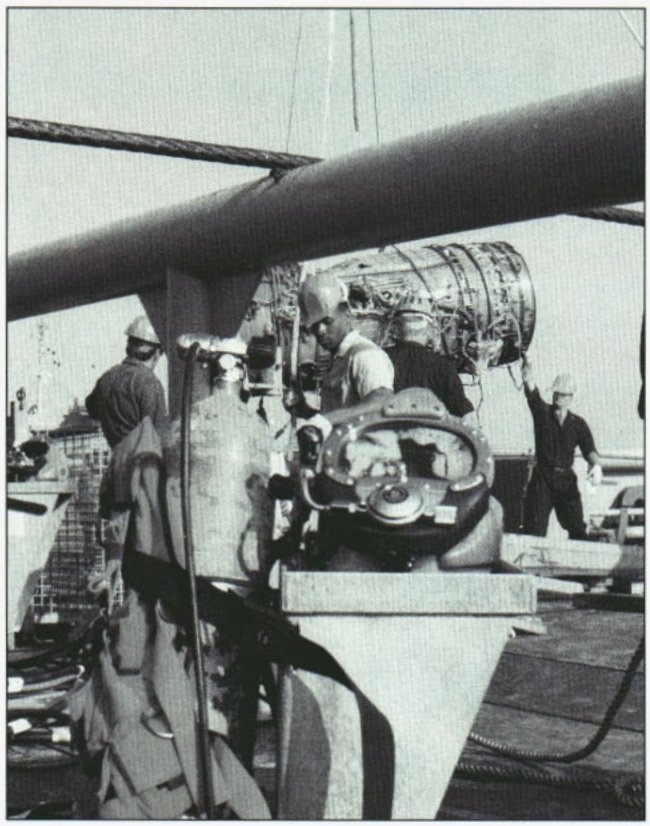
Two Air Force airmen from Kunsan Air Base, Korea, ejected safely from their F-16 July 17. Kim Hahn Ho, a fisherman from Sin Myung Ri, Korea, pulled the men from the water. Now came the important work of finding what caused the mishap.

Beaufort was on scene Aug. 2. "It's just another job for the world's greatest salvagers," said LT Chris Christoffersen, *Beaufort*'s lst division officer.

Six months prior these salvagers were zigzagging through mine fields in the Persian Gulf, towing Navy ships ravaged by Iraq's silent shipkilling warriors. Now, they were above pieces of an Air Force fighter resting on the muddy bottom of the Korean Strait under 90-feet of water half a world away.

Salvage work is not an easy task under the best of conditions. Finding the fragmented jet would be like looking for a specific desk in the Pentagon, with only a serial number engraved in a drawer for positive identification.

The search quickly became a combined effort of the Navy, Air Force and Republic of Korea's navy (ROKN). People stationed in Korea, Japan, and Hawaii arrived on-scene, and *Beaufort* was the central point for salvage operations. ROKN minesweepers *Ok Chun*, *Gang Gyung* and salvage ship *Gumi* were also in action.



Beaufort Commanding Officer LCDR Kemp L. Skudin wanted to begin the effort by talking with Kim, the fisherman who rescued the airmen. In Seoul, Korea, the Commander U.S. Naval Forces Korea's staff located ROKN LT Shin Moo Young, who would act as translator. Kim's eyewitness account would help pinpoint the crash site. He had to adjust painstakingly to finding his reference point (his house), from the lofty height of *Beaufort*'s bridge as compared to his small fishing boat.

"A fisherman will look at his house, or he'll use a different landmark to remember where he laid his nets. Then he'll say to himself, 'There's my house, and there's the grocery store, so therefore my net goes here.' He can leave it there a couple of days and come right back to it," said *Beaufort* Master Diver, Master Chief Machinist's Mate (SW/DV) Charles R. Fulkerson. "If he [Kim] said he saw that jet go in the water at this point or that area, it's probably right there."

And Kim was certain he knew exactly where to look for the submerged crash site as he departed *Beaufort*.

This search began in an area several miles long and wide. Eight-foot visibility ended when anything touched the bottom, resulting in an instant cloud of mud.

The ROKN minesweepers searched grids and U.S. sailors plowed through two- to three-foot swells using *Beaufort*'s side-scan sonar aboard her 35-foot work boat to study printouts of seabed contacts.

***Beaufort* crane crews lift the sunken F-16 engine aboard. Divers worked in a cloud of mud to rig lift lines prior to salvaging the wreckage.**

Above: RM2(DV) Eric Dewitt passes pieces of F-16 wreckage he found during his dive. Top right: ROKN LT Shin Moo Young (center), QM2 Daniel W. Dowell and local fisherman Kim Hahn Ho use a chart to locate the crash site. Right: HT2(DV) Johnnie Sapp stands ready to assist fellow diver BMCS(DV) Michael Kracht aboard *Beaufort*.

Scuba divers were whisked by *Zodiac* boat to several areas where suspected contacts were detected. Unfortunately, the initial contacts were cement blocks and fishing traps, so the search continued.

After a couple days of searching based on Kim's information, side-scan sonar and scuba divers eliminating bottom contacts, and the minesweepers pinpointing more bottom contacts, divers were eventually sent to retrieve what turned out to be wreckage of the aircraft everyone was looking for.

Recovering a piece at a time had some humorous moments, according to Navy diver LT Steve Reimers.

"I literally stumbled over the engine," Reimers said. "I was walking on some debris and stumbled. I put my hand out to brace my fall, and in front of me was what I could swear felt like an engine." It was.

Seven days after the salvage operation began, the team had recovered enough wreckage to complete the investigation.

"Recovery of an aircraft from the seabed is a complex undertaking, but one that is critical to our board, which may positively improve future operational safety and mission capability," said Col. Richard May, the mishap investigation board president. "I'd ask for this team again in a heartbeat." According to Skudin, it took "100 sailors" (his crew) to get the job done, and they all contributed. *Beaufort* sailors offloaded the jet parts they recovered in Pusan, Korea, Aug. 9, and quickly headed to their home port for some family time. □

Vidal is assigned to U.S. Naval Forces, Korea.

All Hands 1991 Index

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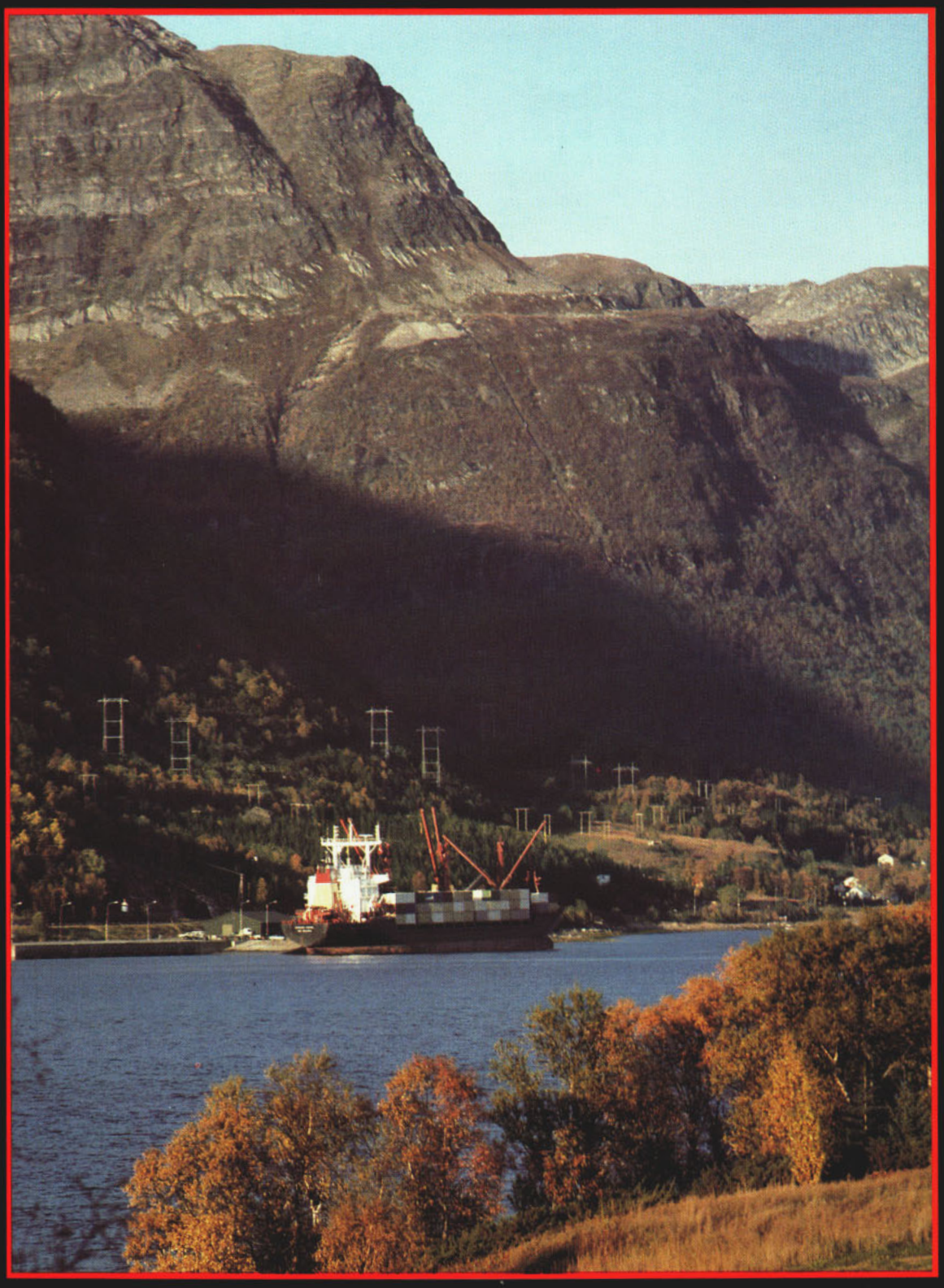

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