

April 2009

# ALL HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY



## Arming the Weapon





#### [On the Front Cover]

These combat support Sailors represent just a few of rates found in Naval Special Warfare. These Sailors are called upon to use their knowledge in ways not usually found in the fleet. Being part of NSW allows them to gain experience unique to the special warfare community.

Photo by MCC(SW) Jeremy L. Wood

#### [Next Month]

*All Hands* takes a look at how Electronic Attack Squadron 132, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash., is preparing to receive the new EA-18G *Growlers* in August 2009.

## [Departments]

Around the Fleet — 6

This Just In — 32

Something to Think About — 36

Focus on Service — 38

History — 40

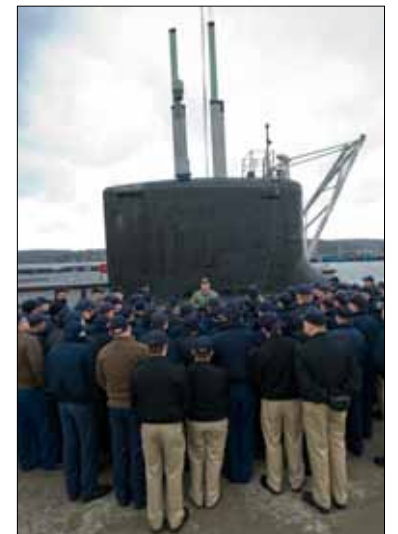
[Number 1105]

# ALL HANDS

# April

## 12 Living on *Virginia*

During the past year, USS *Virginia* (SSN 774) has been at sea more than 50 percent of the year. The *Virginia*-class, an upgrade from the *Los Angeles* class submarine, enhances the Navy's ability to execute the maritime strategy with technology, and the nimbleness to operate in shallow water. The dedication of the crew has been recognized twice with both the Battle Efficiency "E" and Navigation "N" by Submarine Squadron 4.



## 18 Preserving Florida's Greatest Treasures

Northeastern Florida is the third-largest naval region in the United States (trailing only Norfolk and San Diego). Sailors lucky enough to be stationed here often decide to stick around and retire to this military-friendly area, which is also home to some of the nation's most beautiful beaches, abundant wildlife and outdoor recreational opportunities.



## 24 Special Warfare Support: Arming the Weapon

If SEALs are the spearhead of naval special warfare, support personnel are the backbone. A SEAL can receive the best combat training in the world, but without critical support elements such as logistics, intelligence, communications and weapon systems, his mission is not nearly as effective.

Photo by MC2(AW) R. Jason Brunson







**BM3 Avonta U. Danzie (left) and SR Tanner B. Springer** crew a rigid hull inflatable boat while performing preventive maintenance on USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72).

Photo by MCSA Robert A. Robbins



# Speaking with Sailors

Force Master Chief Jeffrey Garrison Commander Submarine Forces Atlantic

**T**he Navy core values of honor, courage and commitment are familiar to every Sailor who wears the uniform. But how do we use these values on a daily basis? What do they mean to you?

The Navy Ethos is a tangible expression of these core values and was created using the comments of thousands of active and Reserve Sailors and Navy civilians. The idea is that, regardless of experience, background or culture, the principles laid out in the Ethos are valued by everyone and support the Navy core values in the activities we do each day.

I am proud to say that I see daily examples, from the deck plate on up, of Sailors living by the principles of the Navy ethos.

“A diverse and agile force exemplifying the highest standards of service to our nation.”

In the submarine force, even the most junior Sailor receives advanced training on nuclear propulsion and is held to a high standard of excellence. But submarines are only one part of the nation’s sea power; we are all “ready guardians of peace, victorious in war.” Maintaining high standards in training ensures that we carry those standards through to our missions.

Since each individual brings value to our Navy, an atmosphere of mutual respect and teamwork flourishes. This ultimately means success for not only the submarine force, but every community within the Navy.

It is in this atmosphere of mutual respect and teamwork that we can find everyday examples of the Navy Ethos at work around the fleet.

Each Sailor brings unique life experience and culture into their part of the Navy team. The character and strength that each person gains from their experiences significantly contribute to the

team dynamic that ensure success for our Navy.

People are the most vital elements of a successful Navy. As Sailors, your families, your friends, and your shipmates are the life blood of our Navy. Our Ethos belongs to you.


“Integrity is the foundation of our conduct.” As we grow and develop our future Navy leaders, we will continue to stress the need for the moral courage and honesty so vital to our day-to-day operations.

And you agree. The results of a Navywide survey of more than 7,000 participants show that Sailors consider integrity, respect and discipline the standards that distinguish military members and set the high bar for their performance.

When I am on the waterfront, I see submariners studying, training, standing watch, and ensuring that the submarine force is ready to perform any mission at any moment. Though every task is not glamorous, it is this discipline and preparedness that gets us through the challenges we face.

Living our lives through the tenets of the Navy Ethos is how we apply the Navy core values of honor, courage and commitment.

Our Navy Ethos is what we want to have on our minds every day when we go to work. The way we work together and treat each other determines how successful we are within our community and as a Navy as a whole.

We have a dynamic and ever-changing Navy, and as we power ahead into the future at flank speed, we must remember those values we share and what makes us United States Navy Sailors. 



U.S. Navy photo

## All Hands

Number 1105 • April 2009  
www.navy.mil

Secretary of the Navy  
**The Honorable Donald C. Winter**

Chief of Naval Operations  
**Adm. Gary Roughead**

Chief of Information  
**Rear Adm. Frank Thorp IV**

Director  
Defense Media Activity-Anacostia  
**Capt. David E. Werner**

Chief of Production  
**Richard D. Welsh**

Chief of Publishing  
**Lt. Cmdr. Leslie Hull-Ryde**

Assistant Chief of Publishing  
**Lt. Ligia I. Cohen**

### EDITORIAL

Editor  
**Marie G. Johnston**

Assistant Editor/LCPO  
**MCC(AW/SW) Ernest W. Frazier**

Photo Editor  
**MC1(AW) R. Jason Brunson**

Editorial Staff  
**MC2(SW) Elizabeth Vlahos**  
**MC2(SW) William Blake**  
**MC2(AW) Jonathan W. Hutto Sr.**  
**MC2(SW/AW) Jhi Scott**  
**MCSN Richard Two Bulls**

### LAYOUT & WEB DESIGN

Slice  
Design + Project Management  
**Richard Rabil, Julie Dorman,**  
**Diana Flores, Tory Hobson**

Printing  
**Universal Printing Company**  
GPO Printing Specialist  
**Robert Coates**

All Hands (USPS 372-970; ISSN 0002-5577) Number 1105 is published monthly by the Defense Media Activity - Anacostia, Production Department, 2713 Mitscher Rd. S.W., Anacostia Annex, D.C. 20373-5819. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. **Subscriptions:** For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 or call 202/512-1800. Subscription prices \$45 (domestic)/\$54 (foreign); \$7.50 (single copy domestic)/\$9 (single copy foreign). **Postmaster:** Send address changes to All Hands, Defense Media Activity - Anacostia Production Department, 2713 Mitscher Rd., S.W., Anacostia Annex, D.C. 20373-5819. **Editorial Offices:** Send submissions and correspondence to Defense Media Activity - Anacostia Production Department, ATTN: Editor, 2713 Mitscher Rd., S.W., Anacostia Annex, D.C. 20373-5819. Tel: DSN 288-4171 or 202/433-4171 Fax: DSN 288-4747 or 202/433-4747 E-Mail: allhandsmagazine@navy.mil Message: NAVMEDIACEN WASHINGTON DC //32// **Authorization:** The Secretary of the Navy has determined this publication is necessary in the transaction of business required by law of the Department of the Navy. Funds for printing this publication have been approved by the Navy Publications and Printing Committee.



# Handle with Care.

April is Child Abuse Prevention month. For more information visit [www.defenselink.mil/fapmip](http://www.defenselink.mil/fapmip)



## MCPON Confirms Performance as Key to Staying

The Master Chief Petty Officer on the Navy (MCPON) recently visited Navy Personnel Command where he spoke with one of the largest chief petty officer communities in the Navy about senior enlisted continuation boards.

“The response I’ve been receiving has been pretty positive. [I know] we’re going to have a few who don’t like this idea [but] that’s OK,” said MCPON(SS/SW) Rick West. “I think the senior enlisted continuation board is a very important process for us. It gives us a quality check at the senior enlisted levels.”

According to NAVADMIN 030/09, performance-based, senior enlisted continuation boards call for an annual performance-driven review of chiefs, senior chiefs and master chiefs with more than 20 years of service and three years time in grade. Members not selected for continuation after the performance-based review will transfer to the Fleet Reserve or retire.

“I think this is absolutely awesome, and I wish we would have implemented this 10 years ago. Some of our senior Sailors have quit. They have lost the energy and drive, and we need to keep our Navy strong,” said Command Master Chief (SW/AW) Billy Hill, assigned to NPC as CMC detailee.

“Our Navy is vacancy driven, and if there is a hard-charging first class out there ready to step up, we need to give them the opportunity. We cannot promote them if we have senior enlisted people standing in the way,” added Hill.

“I feel senior enlisted continuation boards are



Photo by M/C Jennifer A. Villalobos

▲ **Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Rick D. West speaks with the Senior Enlisted Academy (SEA) class 143 at Naval Station Newport.** The SEA focus is to strengthen the senior enlisted commitment to professional excellence and mission accomplishment through education.

necessary. They will help overall progression and allow for better promotion and advancement opportunity,” said Personnel Specialist 1st Class (AW) Millie Woodward, assigned to NPC.

Woodward, who was a recent NPC Sailor of the Quarter, currently has 13 years of active-duty service and is in a rating that has seen many of its billets civilianized. “Even when I do make chief, without these boards and Sailors retiring, there is little hope for much upward mobility,” she added.

To date, NPC’s active-duty continuation board coordinator has received more than 70 calls from the fleet seeking more details on the two most common subjects - criteria and eligibility. Those topics have been prominent in discussions among chiefs in general, too.

“There has been a lot of talk about it since the message came

out, and for some people there is a lot of uncertainty. The feedback I’ve heard is that Sailors who may be facing these boards would like a little more information about the criteria,” said Master Chief Information Systems Technician (SW/AW) Jerita Kearnes, senior enlisted advisor for NPC’s enlisted distribution branch.

Kearnes, who is scheduled to retire after 30 years of service, is exempt from the board.

While the NAVADMIN does not specify what constitutes performance, the senior enlisted continuation board precept will outline that information.

Officer continuation board precepts instruct board members to consider performance as well as adverse information. Candidates need proven and sustained performance with favorable consideration given to those who displayed superior performance while serving an

individual augmentee or in GWOT Support Assignments, and those with relevant education and professional development.

According to the message, Naval Education and Training Professional Development and Technology Center, Pensacola, Fla., recently released a list of continuation board candidates to commands and servicing personnel support detachments.

Each candidate is responsible for ensuring their record is correct and up-to-date with their latest evaluations, awards and other appropriate information.

Candidates may communicate with the continuation board by submitting a board package. Selection board packages provide candidates the opportunity to submit any missing documents from the sections of their records that are viewed by the continuation boards. Packages must be post marked no later than

Aug. 17, 2009. Further guidance on submitting a board package can be found in the NAVADMIN.

Candidates may confirm receipt of board packages by contacting the NPC customer service center at 1-866-U-ASK-NPC (1-866-827-5672). ☞

*Story by MCC(SW) Maria Yager, Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.*

## Navy Mandates Electronic Service Record Accounts Fleetwide

The Chief of Navy Personnel recently released NAVADMIN 043/09 announcing the requirement for all active-duty and Reserve personnel to establish and maintain a self-service electronic service record (ESR) account.

“Having a self-service account is necessary for updating emergency contact information. Self-service accounts contain other important features, such as enabling Sailors to directly submit PCS (permanent change of station) travel claims upon PCS transfer; update race, ethnicity and religion information; and view all other ESR service record information,” said Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson, chief of naval personnel.

The requirement date for Sailors serving at sea and without connectivity to establish an ESR is 60 days upon return to homeport.

The Navy first implemented ESRs in 2006. The ESR provides individual Sailors, personnel support activity detachments (PSD), personnel offices holding service records, Navy operational support centers and customer commands of PSDs

with secure worldwide Internet, access to personnel, training and awards data.

The ESR replaces the paper service record as the single field level data entry point for service record maintenance. Commands are required to use all available ESR functionality.

Self-service accounts can be created at <https://nsips.nmci.navy.mil> or on the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS) ESR server on board ship.

Commanding officers, executive officers and command master chiefs can obtain command-level view only access within their UIC(s) by completing the NSIPS/ESR system authorization request and contacting their local NSIPS area manager.

All commands responsible for service record entries are required to initiate updates in NSIPS ESR, but official military personnel file requirements remain unchanged.

NSIPS ESR is the data entry point for ESR maintenance. Sailors are responsible for the accuracy of their ESR and must contact the servicing personnel office if any information is incorrect.

For more information read NAVADMIN 043/09. ☞

*Story courtesy of Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.*

## Limited Paper-based Test Afloat Available

Paper-based Excelsior College and ACT exams may now be administered afloat on ships designated as Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education (DANTES) testing sites under new policy guidelines announced

## Naval Undersea Warfare Center Scientist Wins ONR Award



**Dr. Gerard Exley**, head of the Undersea Warfare Electromagnetic Systems Department at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Division, Newport, R.I., was recently named the recipient of the 2008 Office of Naval Research (ONR) Dr. Arthur E. Bisson Prize for Naval Technology Achievement.

“The Bisson Prize is presented to an individual to recognize notable successes in technology achievement, based on a significant direct transitional impact from science and technology to naval operations,” said Capt. Michael Byman, commander, NUWC Division Newport.

“Throughout his 26-year career with NUWC Division Newport, Dr. Exley has been recognized as a sound leader and outstanding technical professional in his field,” said Byman.

“It’s quite an honor to be associated with someone as accomplished and revered as Dr. Bisson,” said Exley. “I was very honored and surprised by the announcement.”

Exley has also served as the Naval Sea Systems Command’s (NAVSEA) Technical Warrant Holder for Submarine Communications - Unique Systems and Nodes for On-Board systems for the past four years. As a technical authority, NAVSEA is accountable for the technical engineering elements of ship maintenance, modernization, construction, design and safety.

“Dr. Exley has further solidified his status as the Navy’s leading expert in submarine communications and modernization,” said Byman.

Exley has been the driving force behind the modernization of submarine communications providing connectivity for e-mail, Web browsing, tactical operations and other essential battle force communications.

“We have the best submarine communications team in the world doing the work necessary to keep submarine communications responsive to a wide variety of challenges,” said Exley. “This honor truly reflects a tremendous team effort in this field of engineering.”

*Story courtesy of Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport, R.I.*

in NAVADMIN 029/09.

“This is good for the Navy because it allows Sailors to maintain their educational progress while they serve afloat,” said Ann Hunter, the Navy’s voluntary education service chief. “The Excelsior College and ACT exams are accepted by many academic institutions,

and includes 53 exams testing the arts, sciences, business, education and nursing areas.”

In March 2008, DANTES suspended paper-based testing for college-level examination programs across the Navy due to a loss of control of paper-based exams aboard several Navy ships. DANTES testing facilities



# Around the Fleet

**AW1 Patrick Frizzelle, assigned to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (HS) 5, communicates with pilots aboard an HH-60H Sea Hawk helicopter as USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) departs Naval Station Norfolk.**

Photo by MC2 Kenneth R. Hendrix



Photo by MC3 Matthew Bookwalter

▲ **Lt. Joseph Nencka, the dental officer aboard USS Nashville (LPD 13), reviews dental X-rays while examining a patient while deployed for Africa Partnership Station 2009.**

▼ **SN Christopher Smith, from Washington, D.C., assigned to Beachmaster Unit 1, Det. Western Pacific, directs Landing Craft Air Cushion 63, assigned to Assault Craft Unit 5, as it transports Marines and equipment ashore for Cobra Gold 2009, in Sattahip Thailand. Cobra Gold is an annual Kingdom of Thailand and United States co-sponsored military exercise designed to train U.S. and partner Asian-Pacific forces.**



Photo by MC2 Gabriel S. Weber

▼ **HM3 Class Ricardo Perez, assigned to USS Boxer (LHD 4), says goodbye to his son before boarding the ship to leave San Diego. Boxer departed for a scheduled western Pacific deployment to provide global maritime security.**



Photo by MC2 Jon Rasmussen

*Continued from page 8*

resumed the administration of paper-based exams on shore installations only in May 2008.

Ships with full-time education service officers may request authority to stand up a DANTES testing site. Requests to stand up a DANTES testing site will be forwarded to OPNAV N15 via the immediate superior in charge. If the ship's request is approved, OPNAV N15 will review and submit a complete nomination package to DANTES.

DANTES-sponsored tests are controlled items and require secure storage and handling. Commanding officers are responsible for the management and oversight of the DANTES-sponsored testing programs aboard their ships and should refer to the NAVADMIN for security guidance.

For more information on DANTES testing and Navy College visit [www.navycollege.navy.mil](http://www.navycollege.navy.mil).

To review NAVADMIN 029/09, visit [www.npc.navy.mil](http://www.npc.navy.mil).

**Story by Lt.j.g. Richlyn Neal, Chief of Naval Personnel, Washington, D.C.**

## NPC Adds Force Stabilization Page to Web site

Navy Personnel Command (NPC) added a force stabilization fact sheet to its Web site to provide the fleet more information about how new personnel policies may affect them.

Those interested can review it at force stabilizations measures visit [www.npc.navy.mil](http://www.npc.navy.mil).

"If deckplate Sailors are out there working hard every day, that is what they need to focus on. Continue to work hard and perform at the highest level. Get

your qualifications done and move forward, and you know what? You're going to be okay," said Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) (SS/SW) Rick West during a recent visit with force stabilization policy makers at NPC.

The Web page, which had nearly 5,000 page views in the first two days, was added to the NPC Web site to provide references, answer frequently asked questions, and offer a fact sheet and links to more information to guide Sailors.

"We had a lot of questions from Sailors about continuation boards, zone B PTS (perform to serve), and SRBs (selective re-enlistment bonus)," said Command Master Chief (AW/SW) Kenny Ellenburg, a briefer for NPC's Career Management Symposium team which visits commands throughout the fleet providing information on the latest Navy personnel policies.

Ellenburg and his team spoke to Japan-based Sailors at Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Naval Air Facility Misawa, Fleet Activities Okinawa and Naval Air Facility Atsugi soon after several force stabilization Navy messages were released.

"A lot of chiefs wanted to know what the senior enlisted continuation boards would be looking at," said Ellenburg. More details are on the way and will be added to the force stabilization Web site as they become available as Navy officials finalize details before the September board.

"Similar to an advancement board, continuation board panel members will review both the candidate's official record and submitted materials. As in advancements, the single most important factor influencing selection for continuation is sustained

*Continued on page 11*

To be considered for the "Around the Fleet" section, forward your **high resolution (5" x 7" at 300 dpi) images** with full credit and cutline information, including **full name, rank and duty station** to: [navyvisualnews@navy.mil](mailto:navyvisualnews@navy.mil)

Directions on how to properly submit photos can be found at [www.navy.mil/photo\\_submit.html](http://www.navy.mil/photo_submit.html)

Mail your submissions to:  
Navy Visual News Service  
1200 Navy Pentagon, Rm. 4B514  
Washington, D.C. 20350-1200

Click on the **Navy's** home page, [www.navy.mil](http://www.navy.mil), for fresh images of your shipmates in action.



# Around the Fleet

▼ Sailors participate in a Damage Control Olympics event aboard USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) in the Persian Gulf. The timed event, called “Find Your Missing Shipmate,” sent fire teams and stretcher bearers into *Iwo Jima*’s dark and smoky upper vehicle storage where Sailors had to locate and rescue an “injured” shipmate.

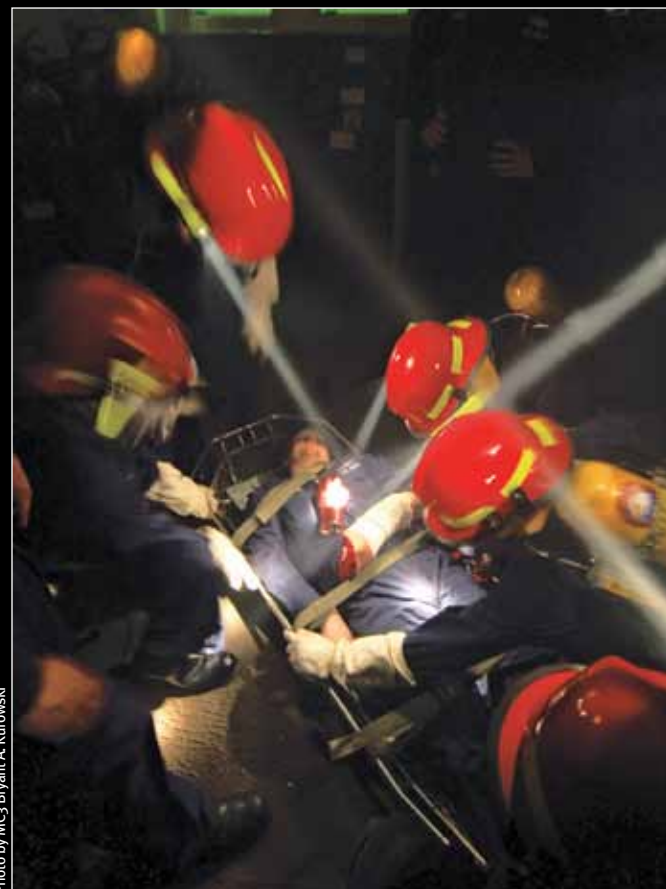


Photo by MC3 Bryant A. Kurowski



Photo by EO3 Danielle T. Fisher



Photo by MC3 Walter M. Wayman

▲ SN Sean Flaherty, from Philadelphia, stands aft port lookout watch aboard USS *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) as USS *Kidd* (DDG 100) (front) and USS *Preble* (DDG 88) steam ahead of USS *Antietam* (CG 54) during a scheduled deployment to the western Pacific Ocean.

◀ Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 5, Port Hueneme, Calif., practice various rope rescue techniques during a training evolution held by the 31st Seabee Readiness Group. NMCB 5 is currently preparing for their upcoming deployment to the Central Command area of responsibility.

► YN2 Akaiya Miller, from Claxton, Ga., plays basketball with Japanese children from the Omura Kodomo Children’s Home at a pool party during a community relations project. Volunteers from Fleet Activities Sasebo, Japan, hosted 45 children at the base for a picnic and games at the base swimming pool.



Photo by MC2 Joshua J. Wahl

*Continued from page 9*

superior performance of duty,” said Cmdr. Stuart Satterwhite assigned to Navy Personnel Command’s policy division.

Satterwhite is helping to draft the senior enlisted continuation board precept which will be reviewed by senior leaders before approval.

“A board precept is currently being drafted and will be vetted through those who normally provide input to board precepts, including MCPON. Details of the precept cannot be released, however, once the precept is complete, general information will be forthcoming,” said Satterwhite.

For further updates on force stabilizations measures visit [www.npc.navy.mil](http://www.npc.navy.mil). **SE**

**Story by MCC (SW) Maria Yager, Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.**

## Joint Service Exceptional Family Member Forum Provides Assistance

The Joint Services Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Committee of Hampton Roads recently held its 12th annual Joint Services Exceptional Family Member Forum and Resource Expo in Newport News, Va.

The goal of the expo was to bring together families, EFMP coordinators, medical staff personnel, and professionals working in the field of special needs to provide service members and their families information, resources and assistance.

“I think the EFMP is phenomenal,” said Fort Monroe Garrison Commander Army Col. Anthony D. Reyes. “Service members need to know that they have that kind of resource available to them. Because of that

program, many of our service members are able to focus on their day-to-day jobs, and take comfort in knowing that their exceptional family members will be taken care of.”

The forum’s keynote speaker was Karen Gaffney of the Karen Gaffney Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to championing the journey to full inclusion in families, schools, communities and the workplace for people with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities. Additionally, several workshops were held to cover more specific issues such as autism, estate planning and canine companions.

“The types of workshops that we put on are really to encourage parents to build strong relationships and a bond with their children,” said Eva Granville, EFMP coordinator, Fort Monroe, Va. “They should also build a bond with the caregivers and teachers, as well as the medical professionals. The parents are their child’s best advocate; they know what is best for their child.”

Service members with exceptional family members are encouraged to contact the Fleet and Family Support Center at their installation to learn more about the EFMP and enrollment procedures. **SE**

**Story by MC3 Coleman Thompson, Navy Public Affairs Support Element-East.**



# Living on *Virginia*

Story and photos by MC2(AW) Jonathan W. Hutto Sr.

A day after supervising the loading of eight war shot torpedoes for an underway training cycle, Machinist's Mate 1st Class (SS) Steven Hurt walked the narrow passages of USS *Virginia* (SSN 774). As he conducted his daily duties, he took a moment to reflect on the path that brought him to become the Sailor of the year aboard the very same submarine he helped build and test as a civilian.



Sailors aboard USS *Virginia* (SSN 774) bring necessary supplies aboard for a six-week underway. With the exception of the captain and executive officer, everyone in the command helps bring supplies aboard.



# First in Her Class

USS *Virginia* was the first of her namesake class to be launched on Aug 16, 2003. She is homeported in Groton, Conn.

- Builder:** General Dynamics Electric Boat Division and Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding - Newport News
- Commissioned:** Oct. 23, 2004
- Propulsion:** One nuclear reactor, one shaft
- Length:** 377 feet (114.8 meters)
- Beam:** 34 feet (10.4 meters)
- Displacement:** Approximately 7,800 tons (7,925 metric tons) submerged
- Speed:** 25+ knots (28+ miles per hour, 46.3+ kph)
- Crew:** 134: 14 Officers; 120 Enlisted
- Armament:** *Tomahawk* missiles, 12 VLS tubes, MK-48 ADCAP torpedoes, four torpedo tubes
- Ships:**  
USS *Texas* (SSN 775), Groton, Conn.  
USS *Hawaii* (SSN 776), Groton, Conn.  
USS *North Carolina* (SSN 777), Groton, Conn.  
USS *New Hampshire* (SSN 778), Groton, Conn.  
*New Mexico* (SSN 779), Christened Dec. 13, 2008  
*Missouri* (SSN 780), Keel Laid Sept. 27 2008  
*California* (SSN 781), Construction began January 2006  
*Mississippi* (SSN 782), Construction began December 2006  
*Minnesota* (SSN 783), Construction began February 2008  
*North Dakota* (SSN 784), – Ship named July 15, 2008  
*John Warner* (SSN 785), Ship named Jan. 8, 2009

Six years ago, Hurt worked as a test service engineer for the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics. He was part of the team that tested all the systems of the future USS *Virginia* before commissioning, and he worked in the space that now houses *Virginia*’s torpedoes.

A husband and father, Hurt had previously served 10 years active duty as a submariner and then became a civilian in the Navy Reserve while he completed his second bachelor’s degree. Despite what many would consider a comfortable life, Hurt felt he was missing something vital.

“I missed the camaraderie and friendship of the guys I worked with for years,” said Hurt. “I liked my job at Electric Boat, but it did not give me the same feeling of being on a submarine. Being a submariner is a way of life, and you must be immersed in it. You can’t do it part time.”

Hurt first discussed with his wife the possibility of going back on active duty. With his wife’s blessing, he began a conversation with *Virginia*’s command leadership to seek a potential assignment. His brother-in-law, MMC(SS) Christopher Frank, and MMCS(SS) Kenneth Caswell, a mentor from his prior active service, were instrumental in navigating the command leadership to support his coming back to active duty aboard *Virginia*.

Once Hurt secured the endorsement of the command, he then talked with a detailer to assure his assignment aboard *Virginia* pending completion of the reentry process for prior active service members.

Hurt serves as the leading petty officer for the weapons department, encompassing all the weapons launching systems. He is currently engaged in preparing his team for the Operational Reactor Safeguard Examination (ORSE) and the Tactical Readiness Evaluation (TRE) during their upcoming six-week underway. The ORSE and TRE evaluations will assess the submarine’s reactor along with its capacity to combat casualties and fight the ship.

“The ORSE and TRE evaluations are the big prize fights for the engineering and weapons departments,” said Hurt. “During the examination, we’ll be able to simulate weapons ensuring our capacity to fight the ship.”

Damage control is an essential aspect of life for a submariner. With roughly 130 total personnel on board, everyone is a fireman with the responsibility to combat casualties.

“As submariners, this is our home, and we’re going to protect it from fire and flooding,” said Hurt. “Damage control encompasses the entire submarine.”

During the past year, *Virginia* has been out to sea for more than 50 percent of the year. The dedication of the crew has been recognized twice with both the

Battle Efficiency and Navigation “N” by Submarine Squadron 4.

“Being awarded the Battle E is a great honor for us,” said Cmdr. Jim Waters, *Virginia*’s commanding officer. “Our focus was putting *Virginia* through the necessary trials and testing to really prove to the country the Navy got its money’s worth for this submarine.”

The *Virginia*-class enhances the Navy’s ability to execute the maritime strategy with technological enhancements, and the ability to operate in shallow water. The mission areas of the *Virginia*-class submarine include: anti-submarine warfare; anti-surface strike warfare; special operations; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; irregular warfare; strike group support and mine warfare.

“The *Virginia*-class submarine can go anywhere in the world, in both deep and shallow water, with the ability to project power ashore with *Tomahawk* cruise missiles from unexpected places,” said Waters. “The *Virginia* class is the most advanced and stealthiest in our arsenal.”

Unlike older classes of submarines, the *Virginia*-class submarine can operate in less than 200 feet of water, enhancing forward presence and the Navy’s capacity to protect its surface ships.

“The future of submarine warfare will take place in shallow water,” said MMCM(SS) Todd Schultz, *Virginia*’s command master chief. “Our enhanced capacity ensures we can protect our surface ships when they are engaged in evolutions such as humanitarian assistance. We are [at] the pointed edge of the sword.”

- ◀ **MM1(SS) Steven Hurt explains his job** as the leading petty officer of the weapons department. Hurt worked as a civilian with Electric Boat Company to build USS *Virginia*. Hurt was recently selected Sailor of the Year for the second year in a row.
- ▶ **USS *Virginia* (SSN 774) has one of the** most advanced torpedo delivery systems in the fleet. In addition to torpedoes, *Virginia* is armed with *Tomahawk* cruise missiles and has been designed to host the Advanced SEAL Delivery System (ASDS) and dry-deck shelter to support various missions.



Commanding Officer Cmdr. Jim Waters addresses the entire crew of USS *Virginia* (SSN 774) before getting underway. *Virginia* was awarded the Battle E designation from Squadron 4 and was the first of her class to shoot *Tomahawk* cruise missiles. The ship also received the Battle “N” for superior excellence in navigation.



Photo by MCC James Plinsky



Along with deterrence, humanitarian assistance, power projection and forward presence *Virginia* supports the maritime strategy aspects of maritime security and sea control.

“We contributed to maritime security through our support to counter illicit trafficking operations in the U.S. Southern Command area of focus,” said Schultz. “We maintain sea control by being able to track, range and

[sight] multiple targets at one time. The forward presence comes from our littoral operations and being able to launch Mark 48 torpedoes and *Tomahawks* from a stealth position.”

And Hurt plays an important role in ensuring that, when tasked, that mission will be executed successfully. In his shop, this means constantly training his team simulating strikes using the Tomahawk Missile System (VLS).

“The sonar technicians, fire controlmen and cooks all engage their jobs everyday. When we engage our jobs, bad guys get hurt,” said Hurt.

## Technological Revolution

Executive Officer Lt. Cmdr. West Brigham, who has served on the last three classes of submarines during his 13-year career, has witnessed *Virginia*’s enhancements firsthand.

“My first submarine was USS *Hawkbill* (SSN 666), commissioned in 1971, which was the latest and greatest of ‘60s technology,” said Brigham. “My next submarine was a *Los Angeles*-class, which was a quantum leap in terms of sonar upgrades. *Virginia*-class [submarines] are a greater leap from *Los Angeles*-class, giving us the ability to obtain the entire picture before us by simply looking from left to right.”

The executive officer is able to see the total picture because of the more than 50 touch screens located throughout the submarine. These touch screens integrate sonar, radar and fire control giving the officer of the deck, and those with a need to know, instant knowledge on where the submarine is located and what’s out there – a clear upgrade from plotting navigation by hand. *Virginia* was the first sub to shift from paper to electronic navigation. Instead of approving paper charts, the commanding officer currently approves navigation charts on his laptop.

“The most significant enhancement for us was the progression from conventional to electronic navigation,” said Navigation Officer, Lt. Gregory Koepp.

Waters has also witnessed the improvements of a *Virginia*-class sub as he also served on *Los Angeles*- and *Sturgeon*-class submarines.

“Both the *Trident* and 688-class submarines are capable and still meet the necessary mission,” said Waters. “However, the *Virginia* class is an incredible leap forward. This is the *Starship Enterprise*!”

The *Virginia*-class is also an enhancement in the field of photonics. Sailors in past classes of submarines used a long tube in the control room with mirrors to assess the terrain beyond

the submarine. Today, that information is gathered with high resolution cameras.

“At periscope depth our enhanced photonics give us the ability, day and night, to go anywhere and see everything within our reach,” said Waters.

Sonar Technician 3rd Class (SS) Jerry D. Mathurin uses the enhanced technology to ensure there are no potential objects or threats in the water.

“My job is to search the area for potential collision threats such as oil tankers,” said Mathurin. “We track potential threats by taking soundings in the water, convert it to digital and view it on a touch screen. On screen, we’re able to listen and look through everything in the water to ensure the ship will not be restricted.”

Completing the mission aboard a submarine is an all-hands evolution. Unlike larger commands where rank determines responsibility, tasks such as bringing food on board the submarine for an underway becomes everyone’s responsibility.

“We don’t have the luxury of always delegating tasks based on rank,” said Ensign Brian Higgins, *Virginia*’s supply officer. “Often times it can be a daily occurrence witnessing chiefs help junior Sailors load boxes aboard the submarine.”

## Their Brother’s Keeper

Due to the small number of the crew, tighter relationships and bonds are forged regardless of rank and time in service.

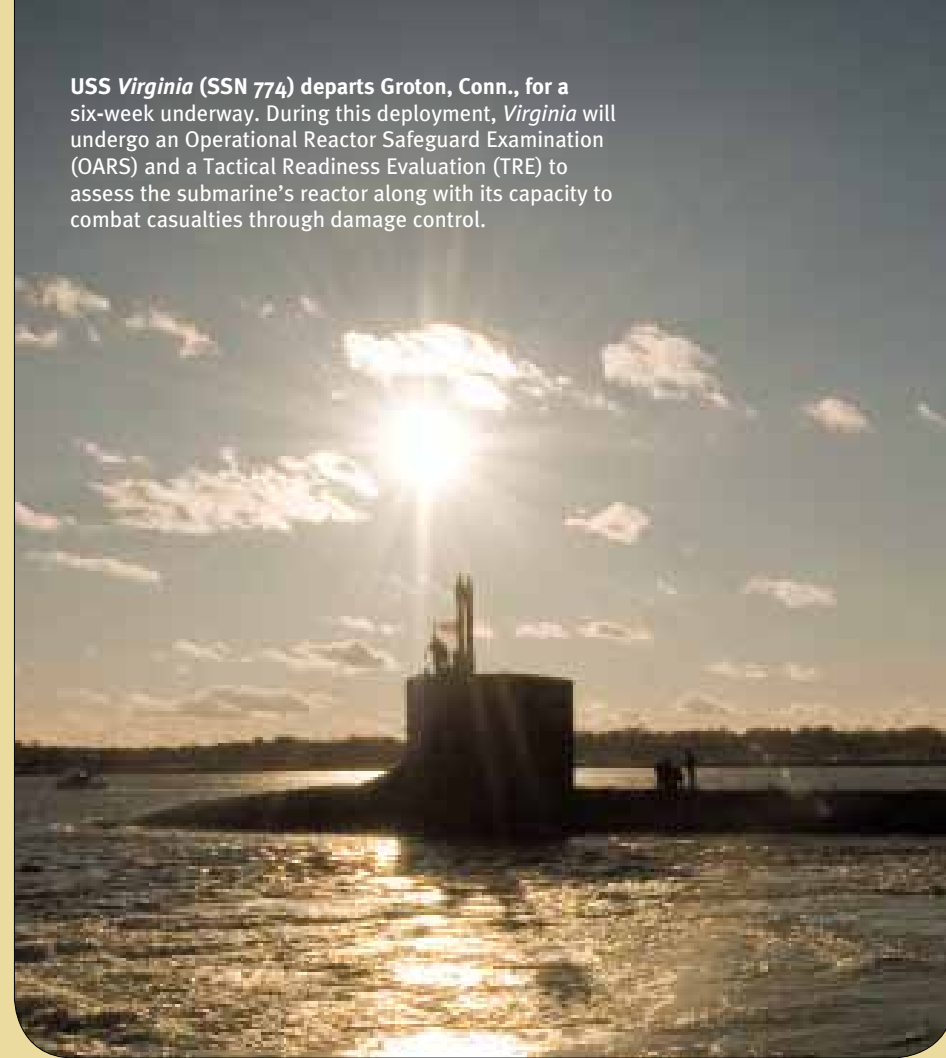
“It is much more like a family serving on a submarine,” said Waters. “I know every crew member’s name, their job and can probably tell you what they like to do in their off time.”

Hurt believes coming from small towns helps his Sailors build the long-lasting relationships that are essential to mission accomplishment.

“The average age of a crew member is 20 years old,” said Hurt. “Although these guys are young, they apply themselves very quickly to become a self-sustained unit.

They first come to the command with their heads like sponges. Watching them grow and

**USS *Virginia* (SSN 774) departs Groton, Conn., for a six-week underway. During this deployment, *Virginia* will undergo an Operational Reactor Safeguard Examination (OARS) and a Tactical Readiness Evaluation (TRE) to assess the submarine’s reactor along with its capacity to combat casualties through damage control.**



▲ ***Virginia*’s Submarine Escape Immersion** Equipment is designed to facilitate safe escapes from as deep as 600 feet.



Photo by MCC James Pinsky

▲ ***Virginia*’s advanced infra-red function** on the photonics gather information about the terrain with high-resolution cameras.



**Sailors aboard USS *Virginia* (SSN 774)** stand by to cast off lines from the pier. A tug is stationed alongside to assist when *Virginia* moves away from the pier.

develop is one of the greatest joys of my life.”

Yeoman 3rd Class Nathan Parrus is one of those “small-town” Sailors from Fort Smith, Ark.

“Fort Smith was sort of sluggish, and I was looking for opportunity when I joined the Navy,” said Parrus. “Although it can be rocky when you first come in, you end up building relationships with folks from all walks of life.”

Mathurin, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., is an advocate of everyone being their brother’s keeper. Submariners do not receive regular mail and e-mail while deployed

“There’s not a lot of space to work around on a submarine,” said Mathurin. “We don’t interact much with the outside world during operations, so all we have is each other. It’s a must for all of us to get along. Our motto is ‘I watch your back, and you watch mine.’”

Brigham believes the smaller crew and tighter bonds yield more effectiveness

toward maintaining morale and good order and discipline.

“The professionalism and pride on board is stellar,” said Brigham.

For Waters, the most meaningful aspect of his job is the day-to-day interactions with the crew and witnessing their joy when they accomplish a huge undertaking.

“Watching the crew come together, do a job and do it well is incredibly satisfying,” said Waters. “The look on those Sailors’ faces when they accomplish an incredibly hard task always motivates me during the most challenging periods.”

Hurt is living the time of his life aboard USS *Virginia*.

“The most rewarding job you can have is being a submariner,” said Hurt. “We’re a rare breed. There are more millionaires in the world than us, so that makes us elite.”

***Hutto is assigned to Defense Media Activity-Anacostia, Washington, D.C.***



The beautiful beaches of North Florida are among the region's greatest natural treasures.

# Preserving

## Florida's Greatest Treasures

Story and photos by MC2(SW/AW) Jason McCammack

**T**he sun-drenched state of Florida is one of America's greatest natural treasures. Tourists flock to our southeastern-most state for its perfect mix of warm weather and unmatched beauty.

Northeastern Florida is the third-largest naval region in the United States (trailing only Norfolk and San Diego). The harbor, at nearby Naval Station (NAVSTA) Mayport, can provide a home for more than 30 ships. Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville

is located just outside the city's business district, and employs more than 23,000 civilian and active-duty personnel. Sailors lucky enough to be stationed here often decide to stick around and retire in this military-friendly area, which is also home to some of the nation's most beautiful beaches, abundant wildlife and outdoor recreational opportunities.





NAVSTA Mayport Wildlife Officer Arthur Burt walks the crossovers that were built to protect the dunes from heavy traffic.

## The wildlife of Mayport

NAVSTA Mayport is home to some of Florida’s most pristine white-sand beaches. Each year, endangered sea turtles return to these beaches to nest, and the men and women of NAVSTA Mayport are their earnest guardians.

“Naval Station Mayport has at least 10 threatened or endangered species on base, 20 percent of the base is protected wetlands ... and we have sea turtle nesting areas along 1.2 miles of beach,” said Arthur Burt, NAVSTA Mayport wildlife officer.

“We have to find every sea turtle nest site that’s on the station. We put screening all the way around each nest site, and we also put some mesh material on the top to keep predators out. We normally have a 100 percent hatch rate that makes it to the ocean from our sea turtle nest sites – with the exception being last year because Hurricane

Fay took five of our 11 sites at the naval station,” Burt said.

Support for the turtles goes all the way to the top of the base’s chain-of-command.

“The commanding officer of Naval Station Mayport and his wife Debbie are two of our state-certified volunteers,” said Burt.

Educating the base population about sea

turtles is a top priority. The turtles use light clues to find their way to nesting sites and, later, back to the ocean. Artificial lights can disorient the turtles and lead them in the wrong direction. Base residents are encouraged to close all house curtains that face toward the beach after sunset, and the base Navy Lodge and bachelor housing does the same.



U.S. Navy photo

► NAVSTA Mayport wildlife officer, Arthur Burt, directs his team as they attempt to save a beached manatee.

“Our game warden created a successful volunteer program for sea turtle protection so that on-base residents and tenants can learn about the threatened loggerhead turtles, which have experienced large increases in nesting and hatching rates during the last several years,” said Cheryl Mitchell, NAVSTA Mayport’s environmental director.

Maintaining the base’s beaches is another top priority for Mayport’s Environment Office staff. The team works with volunteers from housing, tenant commands and nongovernmental organizations to conduct shoreline cleanups. They also built six dune crosswalks to protect the areas from being trampled by beachgoers.

“We broadened our research into alternative funding programs, like the Agricultural Outlease program, to obtain funding for projects like the dune crosswalks that were completed last year,” said Mitchell. “This included the educational signs that will be posted on those walks this year. Mayport is fortunate to have so many natural areas – more than half the installation’s acreage is wetlands, river shoreline and beach front.”

“Our residents, Sailors and civilians work hard to protect and enhance these areas; and in an era of shrinking budgets, we all have become a lot more creative in how we implement our natural resources stewardship program,” Mitchell added.

The base is also populated by gopher turtles and river otters. But it is two more fearsome creatures that capture most of the base personnel’s attention.

Visitors to NAVSTA Mayport’s Lake Wonderwood often come to look for the two alligators who make their home there, and many long-time legends surround the “possible” existence of a Florida panther.

Many at Mayport believe the “Big Cat’s” presence is nothing but myth. According to Burt, the panther is very real and has been prowling the base grounds, going largely unnoticed, for years.

“He works the berm area,” Burt said. “He’s been there for more than two years. We’re putting up some signage about the panther because he’s beginning to cross the highway into a park which is city property.”

Mayport is also home to some very large birds.

“We have osprey nesting sites,” said Burt. “We put up some poles for the osprey to take over in the wetlands, and they have [begun using them]. We have an eagle’s nest site, which is active each year between November and January.”

“NAVSTA Mayport has performed in a true ‘team effort’ in executing our stewardship program. The evidence of our success is seen every day in the natural beauty of our installation,” said the proud wildlife officer,



NAS Jacksonville recycling drop-offs are used by thousands of base residents.

who has worked at NAVSTA Mayport in various roles since 1958.

“It’s my baby,” he added.

## Jacksonville: Action on every front

NAS Jacksonville features a basewide recycling program that is a prime example of the regional commitment to safeguarding Florida’s natural wonders.

NAS Jacksonville began their recycling program in 1989 and 20 years later the program continues to expand and flourish.

“We normally receive recyclables from our main base command, tenant commands and everybody who lives in base housing,” said Storekeeper 1st Class Victor DeLeon, NAS Jacksonville recycling leading petty officer. “After they’re received, we process them and separate plastics, paper products, metals and glass. Next, we compact and bale

◀ Sailors from NAS Jacksonville’s recycling center shovel cardboard into a mechanical compactor. In 2007, the center recycled more than 10,000 tons of material.







Sailors from Naval Station Mayport's spill response team set up a barrier during a spill response drill.

the products. Then we load up a big truck, and when it's full, it's delivered to a civilian contractor and we receive funds for the amount of product we provide."

According to Capt. Jack Scorby, NAS Jacksonville's commanding officer, "In fiscal year 2007 we recycled more than 10,000 tons of material, which includes glass, metal, paper, cardboard and plastic. That also saved us more than \$250,000 in disposal costs alone. But the real reason we recycle is because it's the right thing to do for the environment."

Because they have so much to protect, the Jacksonville community and its citizens expect the Navy to take a leadership role in environmental efforts according to Scorby.

"[Environmental stewardship] is very important to the Jacksonville community and it's also part of the maritime strategy. It's very much a priority for the warfighters here at NAS Jacksonville. We're definitely committed to the environment. The city knows it, and we're on a variety of their boards to ensure that we're following proper procedures at all times."

Another important piece of the installation's environmental program is

disaster response. Frequent drills maintain the team's skills.

"We had a mass casualty drill yesterday, and part of that drill involved a simulated spill of a fuel tank," said Scorby. "We had our first-responders, and they were able to work on what they would do in the event that something like this did happen. It's about getting out there quickly, and putting up barriers to prevent leakage to the river or any area where it could seep into the ground. One of the first calls we make for any kind of emergency is to the [NAS Jacksonville] Environmental Department. They'll get teams out instantly to make sure we're taking care of the environment."

NAS Jacksonville also looks after the environment by ensuring strict guidelines are followed on hazardous material (HAZMAT) distribution and disposal. The Hazardous Material Center on base is the one-stop source for all HAZMAT needs for every command located on the base and is the disposal center for empty HAZMAT containers.

"We have about 600 HAZMAT line items," said Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class Randy Wade, NAS Jacksonville HAZMAT

Center leading petty officer. "We make sure that the commands on base get the right HAZMAT – the stuff they are authorized to use – and we make sure that each item stays within regulations."

Correctly managing HAZMAT is also a priority for each of the commands that call NAS Jacksonville home.

"We have to ensure that our personnel know how to store each of these HAZMAT products safely," said AD1 Rick Poland, Helicopter Squadron Light (HSL) HAZMAT coordinator. "We also ensure that each product is returned to our secure HAZMAT facilities and that we dispose of it properly. The first priority is the safety of our Sailors and the environment is a close second. If we train our people how to [properly] handle, return and dispose [of HAZMAT], the environment falls right in place."

NAS Jacksonville sits alongside the beautiful St. John's River and one of the top priorities for the base environmental office is protecting the river from fuel spillage and eliminating the very small amount of untreated wastewater that goes into the St. John's.

"The design is to go to zero discharge of untreated wastewater [into the St. John's River]. We want to reuse [the wastewater] for irrigation of our golf courses and ball fields," said Chief Boatswain Mate (SW) Darrell Washington, NAS Jacksonville spill response officer.

The team at the NAS Jacksonville Boathouse is constantly drilling to minimize any damage from fuel spills into the St. John's.

"Our job is to respond to any spill and assist the environmental office in any way possible," Washington said.

Sailors assigned to the boathouse come from a number of different ratings, but the expectation is that each individual Sailor will have a comprehensive knowledge of spill-response techniques. There are five enginemen, four boatswain's mates and two electricians, but by the end of their six-week personal qualifications training, each Sailor is equipped to do each job at the boathouse.

"Boatswain's mates are required to learn the engineman's job – to work on engines and electrical stuff," said Washington. "Electricians are required to know how to do an engine-man's job. It's all cross-training here, and it's very important to the way we do business. No

matter what your rating, when you come to the spill-response team you've got to be on top of your game."

Washington said the dedication of his team is the reason the spill response team at NAS Jacksonville is so good.

"For a small crew, I am unbelievably fortunate to have the team I have. It's a superb group. Whatever I ask of them, they go out and get it done. It's a dream job for a chief when you have the quality of Sailors that we have here. Day-in and day-out, nine or 10 hours a day, these guys are just the best."

In both Jacksonville and Mayport, protecting the region's greatest natural resources comes naturally to the men and women lucky enough to be stationed in North Florida.

"It's very important that we have a strong environmental program," said Scorby. "It's good for the Navy, it's good for the community and it's just the right thing to do. I'm committed to ensuring that we remain good stewards within the Jacksonville community and having a strong environmental program is key to that success." ■

*McCammack is a photojournalist formerly assigned to Defense Media Activity-Anacostia, Washington, D.C.*




▲ At NAS Jacksonville's HAZMAT center the team properly disposes of HAZMAT containers. Strict guidelines are followed to ensure the safety of Sailors and the environment.



NAS Jacksonville Sailors contain a simulated HAZMAT spill. Continuous drills ensure that Sailors are at the top of their game when it's time to respond to a real spill.





Story by MC2(SW) Elizabeth Vlahos,  
photos by MC1(AW) R. Jason Brunson

It's easy to think about a Sea, Air, Land (SEAL) combatant whenever you hear the words "special warfare." These seasoned, fearless warriors are trained to slip under the radar into a specific locale to destroy the enemy and get out. SEALs are the maritime strategy at its most basic and primal level.

# Special Warfare Support: Arming the Weapon

GM1(SW) Travis Haislip demonstrates  
how to reassemble an MK-48 machine  
gun at the Logistic Support Unit 1 armory.



The truth about Naval Special Warfare (NSW) personnel, however, may surprise many – One of the elements most critical to the success of NSW does not wear the trident rightly associated with the SEALs.

Look at it this way: Try throwing a spearhead by itself. It probably won't do much. Next, provide means of propulsion and guidance, and then throw it. Now, you'll inflict some damage ... with range.

If SEALs are the spearhead of naval special warfare, support personnel are the backbone.

A SEAL can receive the best combat training in the world, but without critical support elements such as logistics, intelligence, communications and weapon systems, his mission is not nearly as effective.

## An Assignment like No Other

Roughly 60 percent of NSW personnel take on combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) roles. In a typical deployed NSW squadron of roughly 300 personnel, of

which 40 percent are operators, many of the combat support Sailors are assigned from logistics support units, support activities or group staff. They can vary from gunner's mates and master-at-arms, to hospital corpsmen, intelligence specialists, information systems technicians and operation specialists.

Capt. Thomas L. Brown II, commodore, Naval Special Warfare Group 1, disagrees with the terms "tech" and "enabler" when describing support staff.

"I think it does a disservice to their contributions," said Brown. "The use of the words 'tech' and 'enabler' clouded our ability to plan the numbers of [certain] specialties we needed to be functional on the battlefield."

Brown explained that SEALs focus on maintaining their highly specialized combatant skills, the expertise of the combat support and combat services Sailors is essential to the warfighters' tool kit.

"If you start looking at all the tasks we load on a SEAL – weapons, diving, parachuting, language, regional expertise – we can't also train him to run a network system, fix guns, order spare parts or repair motors [as efficiently]," Brown explained.

◀ **CM2(SCW) Juan Dobles (left)** and other Navy Seabees from Logistics Support Unit 1, inspect the undercarriage of new Humvee, prior to issuing it to the motor pool.

▼ **CM2(SCW) David Privett** takes a break from working on a new Humvee.



## A Responsibility of the Utmost Importance

The absence of a SEAL trident on the support personnel in no way detracts from the importance of their roles. Since the SEALs are immersed in keeping their highly specialized training up-to-date, it's up to the support staff to make sure the Humvees are running, the weapons are in good working order and ready to put rounds down range, the lines of communication are open, and the intelligence is updated and relevant.

Construction Mechanic 2nd Class (EXW) Joey Johnson, from Logistics Support Unit (LOGSU) 1's Combat Service Support Detachment (CSSD), maintains the Humvees for the SEALs in support of their training missions. The magnitude of this responsibility remains at the front of his mind constantly.

"If those trucks aren't running, those boys aren't going out," said Johnson. "If that truck breaks, it's my fault and they want to know why. You are held accountable – they don't play around."

Seabees are also responsible for the establishment of camps and command posts, while on deployment.

"We support the SEAL teams in logistics – embarkation, expeditionary camp set-ups," said Construction Electrician 1st Class (EXW/SCW) Chance Agnew, leading petty officer for LOGSU-1 CSSD. "When a SEAL team gets ready to deploy, we actually go [on temporarily assigned duty] three months prior to the unit deploying. Once we get into theater, we break it up and put Seabees into every location the squadron is going to be maintaining."

Some Sailors have found working for NSW to be different but rewarding.

"It's a whole different perspective. For me,



the personal growth being a member of NSW ... you can't beat that. It's a lifetime experience that you'll remember," said Storekeeper 2nd Class (SW/AW) Gener Paraon, assigned to LOGSU-1's supply department.

For Chief Gunner's Mate (EXW/SW) Nick Peters, getting the right weapon to the right person at the right time is of the utmost importance.

"We support their training in the logistics sense," said Peters, the leading chief petty officer for the LOGSU-1 armory.

Along with the routine ammunition issuances and weapons inventories, Peters emphasized the need for agility and proficiency, due to the high tempo of SEAL training.

"If a weapon goes down during a block of training, the SEAL operator, who is tactically proficient, is probably not going to be capable of performing [nor will have the time to complete] the technical repairs. They can't just stop the clock and secure from training; [a weapons technician] needs to be on site to provide immediate technical support [to] either get the weapon back on line or get a replacement."

▲ **CM2(SCW) David Privett (left)**, tightens a suspension mount on a new Humvee, prior to issuing it to the motor pool. The Seabees work in concert with government contractors at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, Calif., allowing them to learn skills not normally available in the fleet.

## Ramping Up to Ship Out

The typical deployment schedule for NSW support staff consists of six months, with the following 10 to 12 months back ashore. But, this can vary from Sailor to Sailor.

"When we get back, we have 10 months at home," Agnew explained. "But, some guys like to turn around and do [a] back-to-back deployment right away."

The time between deployments provides no leisure period – NSW personnel are sent to different schools to hone their existing skills and to acquire new skills vital to the mission.

"There's a saying within the teams that amateurs do it until they get it right, [but] professionals do it until they never get it wrong," said Peters. "That's one of the mottos they live by, [to] train so they can execute [their mission] perfectly."





▲ **GM1(SW) Travis Haislip** begins to disassemble an MK-48 machine gun for maintenance at the Logistic Support Unit 1 armory.

► **GMC(EXW/SW) Nicholas Peters** holds a modified Remington 870 breacher shotgun in the Logistic Support Unit 1 armory. This weapon is used to blow hinges off locked doors.

A Sailor in a combat service support role almost has to have a “MacGyver” complex, being able to make a piece of equipment work with little-to-nothing on hand while thinking on one’s feet.

“[The operators can] show you how to make a Humvee run on nothing,” said Johnson. “How to battle start it, how to start it using just plain wires. It’s training you will never get to see in a battalion or anywhere in the [Naval Construction Force].”

The greatest level of autonomy afforded to Sailors, in Agnew’s eyes, is one of the biggest challenges of working for NSW.

“You’re held responsible at a higher level, and it gives you a challenge of, ‘I got to get this done, I got to get this done!’” Agnew explained. “[You have to] know your resources. [Leadership is] not going to set you up for failure, but they will give you a lot of responsibility. Having a challenge is job satisfaction. I’m not just sitting around wasting time.”



According to Johnson, another on-the-job test is often being the only mechanic, or subject matter expert, on site.

“That’s why they require all these schools, so you’re ready for deployment,” said Johnson.

Seabees assigned to NSW have to be especially versatile in their field, not just their given rating.

“They see [that you’re a] Seabee and they expect you to build, run wiring, weld, plumbing ... you name it,” Johnson continued. “In a battalion, when we deploy, you deploy with 700 people; so you have a large group of mechanics. Going by myself as the single mechanic for the site, I was like, ‘What do I do?’ I had to set up a whole shop, [and] I had to get everything ready for the next guy who was going to relieve me.”

## Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunities

The increased responsibilities of the assignments at NSW coexist with a number of opportunities that are hard to find anywhere else. Working for NSW can give a Sailor a crash course in ratings other than his or her own, or a firsthand look at how his or her work directly impacts the SEALs’ mission.

“My previous experience in the fleet was just a bunch of number-crunching, coming in everyday for a 12-hour watch,” said Chief Intelligence Specialist John Collins, from Naval Special Warfare Support Activity 1.

“You [didn’t] really see the effects of the analysis you’re doing. You don’t get the instantaneous gratification from your work, but what you’re doing [at NSW], you get the gratification of guys going out, finishing a target or doing a tribal engagement. It’s based off a lot of stuff that you’ve done analytically.”

In an environment where self-reliance and initiative are fostered, Sailors are offered and encouraged to attend schools and master their craft to the umpteenth degree.

“Being with NSW, I’ve actually been able to attend two years of Arabic language studies, through both military

and privately taught courses,” he said. “That’s benefited me a great deal – I’m proficient in reading and writing, semi-proficient in speaking and understanding Arabic, which I used on my last deployment to Kuwait.”

The opportunity to earn the coveted Enlisted Expeditionary Warfare Specialist (EXW) has become another incentive for hard-charging Sailors at NSW. Like any other pin, much on-the-job training is involved.

“It’s not too different from other warfare qualifications in that the bulk of the work lies primarily within completing the prerequisite material,” said Peters. “Once all that’s completed, [completion of] the Expeditionary Warfare book entails a lot of the items you would find in the Seabee handbooks.

The EXW pin is mandatory for all active-duty, enlisted, support personnel, ranks E-5 and above, who meet eligibility requirements and work in a command that allows the pin. E-4 and below and enlisted selected Reservists can qualify for the pin, but reservists must be assigned to an NSW Reserve unit for a minimum of a year prior to final qualification. SEALs and SWCC are allowed to pursue the pin.

“To me, it was a lot more enjoyable than previous warfare qualifications, because it was a lot more fun to learn how to set up a [field shelter system] or field-strip an M-16, because it’s something that’s practical to us.

Besides becoming a career-enhancing tool, the EXW qualification demonstrates a Sailor is a true expeditionary asset, a skilled warfighter that can be trusted even in the most extreme situations. This trust is essential to the relationship between SEALs and support staff.

“You’re part of a team,” said Master Chief



▲ **ET1(SW) Daniel Haley** demonstrates how one of Mobile Communication Team 1’s satellite arrays unfold.

◀ **ET1(SW) Dan Haley** demonstrates how to assemble wiring for a medium satellite deployable node during a Mobile Communication Team 1 equipment familiarization.

▼ **ET2 John Bartlet (right) and other members of Mobile Communication Team 1**, assemble a medium satellite deployable node. The newly-formed command deploys ETs, ITs and other Sailors with the West Coast SEAL teams to provide an integrated battle space communications package.







▲ **GM2(SW) Michael McCrackin** inspects an M-4 Assault Rifle in Logistic Support Unit 1's armory, Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, Calif. The armory accommodates more than 25 specialized weapons for the special operations community.

gunner's mates to make sure they have the weapons, the ammo, and the equipment they need to get the job done. I wouldn't say it's a laid-back mentality, [but] more of a team atmosphere."

A key plus to being at NSW is that those who do well are almost never left unrecognized.

"They take care of their people here," said Johnson. "They give credit where credit is due. If you do a good job, you're going to be recognized. They'll pull you in front of the group [and] give you the recognition you deserve."

Foley senses the same feeling of reward among those battle-tested in the NSW environment.

"I interview all of our people when they come in and when they leave," he said, "and I have never had an outbound [person] transfer from the command tell me that he did not like being here. That's the kind of people I want."

Utilitiesman (SCW) Paul Foley, "but when it comes down to it, these guys are the best at what they do. They expect you to be on point.

"We all know each other, and we rely on the guys we deploy with, and these guys rely on their storekeepers [and] their

## Wanted: A Few Good Men (And Women)

"We seek the best people out there for the mission at hand," said Foley. "That requires individuals who are independent thinkers. They are often out there on their own doing what we expect them to do. The only time we really hear from them is when the job's done."

Lt. David Huber, a supply officer within NSW, had nothing but praise for the Seabees with whom he worked.

"You might have two or three Seabees at a location out in the middle of the desert," said

Huber. "[They] need to be able to leverage support from other units on site, and they did a fantastic job. NSW wouldn't have been able to function as a squadron without quality Seabee support."

Sailors wishing to throw their cover in the ring with NSW have to know their ratings well. Sailors interested in an NSW billet should possess a valid security clearance, have no non-judicial punishment or courts-martial on their record, and be able to qualify as a second class swimmer.

"Some people come there thinking it's going to be a cakewalk, and they don't do so [well]," said Agnew. "For people who try – it's

rewarding. You get a lot out of it. The people here will definitely reward you for what you do."

The message is clear – NSW duty can be very rewarding personally and professionally, but it's up to the Sailor to invest the great deal of effort required to succeed in such a challenging and demanding community.

Johnson's words leave little else to be said.

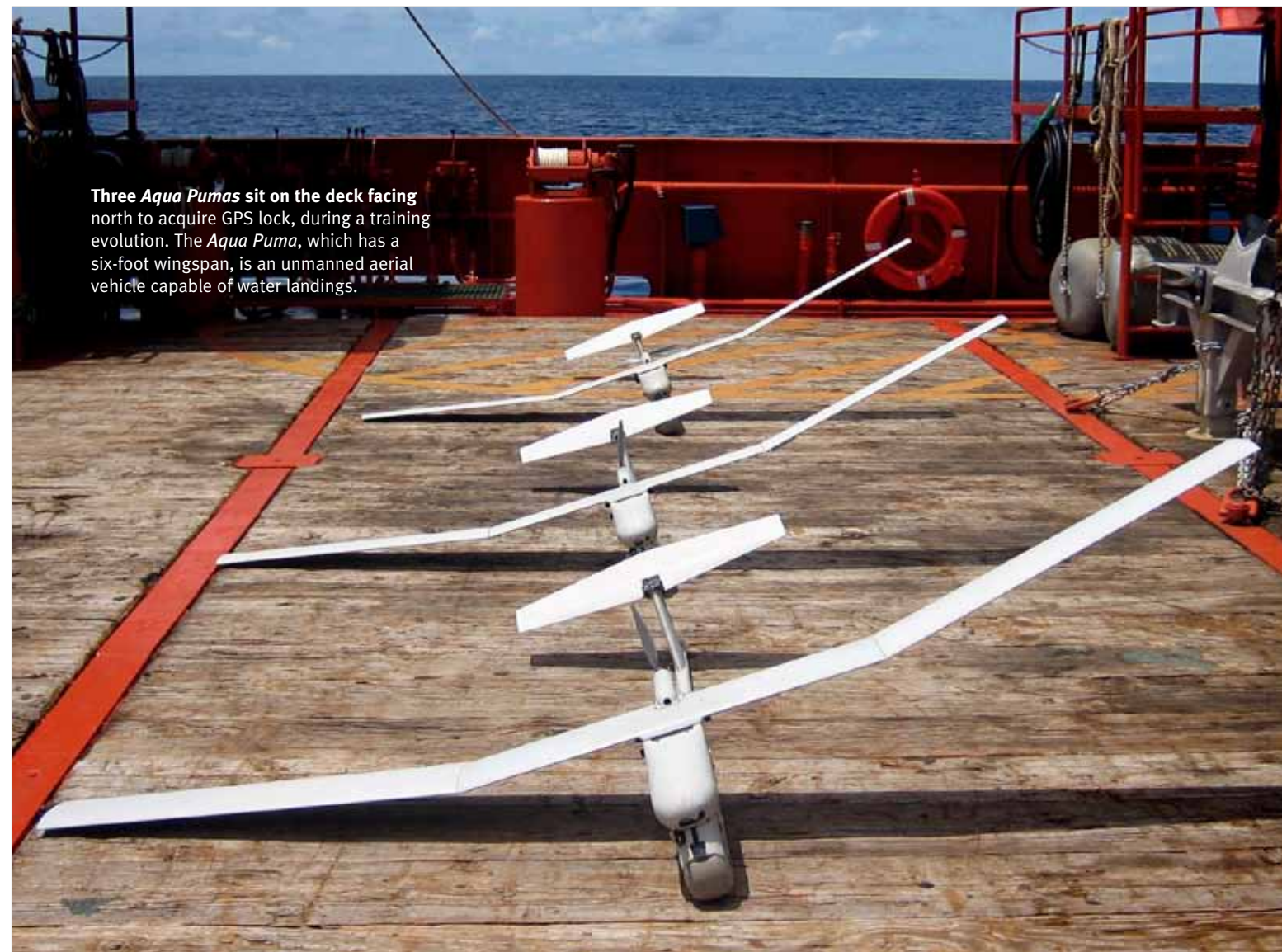
"If you come here, be prepared for the challenge. This isn't an easy command. You gotta be ready." ■

**Vlahos and Brunson are assigned to Defense Media Activity – Anacostia, Washington, D.C.**

**Editor's Note: For more information about Special Warfare Support assignments contact your command career counselor.**



▲ **A turret gunner** launches a Swift Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) from the top of a Humvee with a specially-designed slingshot. SEAL Teams use UAVs to help scout out rugged terrain and urban areas in real-time.



**Three Aqua Pumas** sit on the deck facing north to acquire GPS lock, during a training evolution. The *Aqua Puma*, which has a six-foot wingspan, is an unmanned aerial vehicle capable of water landings.



## NMCB 7 Redeploys to, Focuses on Afghanistan Operations

**S**eabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7 recently redeployed from Iraq to Afghanistan.

The move repositioned the battalion to build bases for additional U.S. forces already flowing into southern Afghanistan to reinforce the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

“Our engineering services are needed here in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, to construct a number of new forward-operating bases (FOB) in support of the much publicized 20,000-plus troop surge into southern Afghanistan,” said Lt. Cmdr. James Brown, NMCB 7’s operations officer.

“We had a very important mission in Iraq supporting the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, but there was a larger demand here in Afghanistan. Our capabilities, to not only build, but to build in hostile areas, and defend ourselves and the new areas we create, made Seabees the logical and necessary choice.”

The movement included the embarkation of troops and equipment necessary to ensure mission success.

“The effort needed to airlift an entire Seabee Battalion’s armored construction equipment in less than 40 days would be a tremendous accomplishment for any unit,” said Brown.

“Recognizing the extreme importance of the mission and aggressive surge timeline, NMCB 7 successfully rose to an even higher challenge. For the first 30 days we were simultaneously embarking ourselves out of Iraq and into Afghanistan, constructing a new 430-acre FOB, and providing security for five miles of site perimeter.

While deployed to Afghanistan, NMCB 7 will be part of ISAF, working with other U.S. Armed Forces and NATO allies, including British, Danish and Dutch forces.

“The first real evidence of the U.S. surge into southern Afghanistan became apparent when the Seabees arrived,” said British Royal



Photo by MC2 Michael B. Lavender

▲ **Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7 depart an Air Force C-17 aircraft following its arrival at a forward-operating base in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. NMCB 7 is deployed to Afghanistan to provide contingency construction support to Alliance forces supporting NATO International Security Assistance Forces.**

Navy Lt. Cmdr. John Bawer, deputy chief of staff, Bastion for Supply, Logistics and Real Life Support.

“The U.S. Marines arrived first, but the Seabees are who really captured our attention. We describe them as the ‘enablers to the enablers.’ In the [United Kingdom], we have nothing like them. The Seabees are a self-contained unit who not just arrived, but asked not ‘what the base could do for us’ but rather ‘what can we do for you?’ Their efforts greatly impressed us as they were eager to help with an amazing attitude to back it.”

While NMCB 7’s main effort focused on quickly building the necessary force protection emplacements for the FOB, the battalion will occupy, some Seabees focused on providing service to the U.K.-run base and other deployed units.

“The battalion of Seabees assisted with cooking meals and with dental work as well as some construction work,” said Bawer. “They came in with great numbers, yet the impact to our base was minimal as they were so eager to help. We’re very big about the Seabees, as they are personnel who can take charge of a project and ensure it is completed. The British can learn a lot from

this cooperative effort and we have so far. It’s been a great experience thus far. We in the [United Kingdom] like to align with U.S. forces when we go forward in countries and the Seabees of NMCB 7 are a great example of why we do.”

Some of the projects being undertaken by NMCB 7 include perimeter berm construction, conducting security, construction of perimeter security towers, grading the entire site, building nearly 10 miles of interior roads, constructing fuel storage areas, constructing helicopter landing zones and other infrastructure for various coalition forces.

Additionally, NMCB 7 accepted the challenge and surpassed the expectations not posed to many Seabee battalions.

“Our most recent redeployment evolution proved that our deployment success was not just luck or chance,” said Brown. “In fact, it showed us that we were well-prepared by the 20th Seabee Readiness Group embark staff. NMCBs, by doctrine, can deploy an air detachment of 89 personnel within 48 hours of notification. When the battalion deploys an air detachment...the entire battalion contributes to the effort. In this case, we

had less than a full battalion, worked in a semi-austere contingency environment, and moved a great deal more equipment. We also had to compete for air lift with other services that were also in the process of redeployment. We trained very hard in embarkation last homeport and it was a magnificent success!”

*Story and photo by MC2 Michael B. Lavendar, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 7.*

### CTF-56 Serves Multiple Roles in 5th Fleet

In the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility, the men and women of Commander Task Force (CTF) 56 play a vital role in the region by providing operational oversight for all naval expeditionary combat forces.

CTF-56 supports nine different task groups including expeditionary combat, logistical support and combat service support forces.

“The mission of CTF-56 is to properly assign and manage Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) forces in theater,” said Capt. Michael Jordan, commander, CTF-56.

CTF-56 has several different task groups that fall under their command. These task groups include: Naval construction force, Navy explosive ordnance disposal, mobile diving and salvage, maritime expeditionary security forces, Navy expeditionary logistics support forces, combat camera, riverine

▼ **Personnel assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 1, Company 3, zero in on their M-4 rifles on the range at Contingency Operating Base Speicher.**



Photo by MC2 Joan E. Kretschmer

squadrons, expeditionary intelligence units, maritime civil affairs teams and expeditionary training teams.

“We are unique from other task forces in 5th Fleet because we have such a wide range of capabilities,” said Lt. Cmdr. Eric Bray, CTF-56 operations officer. “Our task groups cover multiple roles throughout the U.S. 5th Fleet; from security, construction to ordnance disposal.”

CTF-56 task groups deploy throughout the U.S. 5th Fleet Area of Operations to support various commands.

“Our task forces are deployed to seven countries throughout the region,” said Bray. “Our task groups are serving in Operations *Iraqi Freedom* and *Enduring Freedom* as well as conducting maritime security operations.”

Members of the EOD task group regularly deploy to front line commands.

“We get called to clear IEDs a lot in Iraq,” said Explosive Ordnance Disposal 1st Class (EWS) Phillip Morrison, who deployed there in 2006 and 2007. “If EOD wasn’t there to remove IEDs, they might still be there killing or wounding our Soldiers.”

EOD Sailors also help gather information on the IEDs being used in Iraq, which enable investigators to hunt the terror cells that plant them.

CTF-56 also provides intelligence information that helps NAVCENT operate effectively.

“Being part of CTF-56 has given me a bigger view of how and why we operate the way we do,” said Intelligence Specialist 1st Class Douglas Kelley Jr. “Doing this job allows those in command to make informed decisions on how to best use our troops and resources.”

“I’m glad to be supporting the troops on the front lines,” said Morrison. “I always want to be as involved as possible in supporting the troops who are in harm’s way. That’s the greatest honor that a Sailor can have.”

*Story by MC2 Matt Snodgrass, Commander Task Force 56.*



▲ **Lt. j.g. Kristina Rohlin, from Russell, Pa., assigned to Destroyer Squadron 15 aboard USS *Lassen* (DDG 82), checks the size of a shirt before giving it to a girl at the Missionary Dominican Sisters of the Rosary orphanage in Dili, Timor-Leste.**

### Lassen Completes Successful Dili Visit

USS *Lassen* (DDG 82) conducted community relation (COMREL) projects in Dili, Timor-Leste during a recent port visit.

The crew of *Lassen* hit the ground running with a COMREL within hours of dropping anchor off the coast of the island country. The first COMREL was at the Missionary Dominican Sisters of the Rosary orphanage, where Sailors delivered toys and sweets to the children.

“Everybody was running around and having a good time,” said Storekeeper 2nd Class (SW) Nakeia Golden, from Savannah, Ga. “Being out there having fun and supporting [the citizens] made it a great experience.” “The interactions also helped overcome the language barrier,” she added.

The crew of *Lassen* was also invited to celebrate Australia Day, the Australian equivalent to American Independence Day. The highlight was a tug-of-war competition among members and contractors of the Australian Army, *Lassen* Sailors and members of various regional forces of the International Stabilization Force and United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste. American service members interacted with their counterparts from the defense forces of both Australia and Timor-Leste throughout the port visit, conducting training on damage control and visit, board, search and seizure techniques.

“It was an honor to be invited to attend Australia Day,” said Aviation Warfare Systems Operator 2nd Class (NAC) Hadley



Dykes, from Denver. “It was a great opportunity to meet and greet some of the people from the other services and countries we work with.”

The major outreach event was at the Comoro Intermediate School, where *Lassen* Sailors spent three days repairing equipment and beautifying classrooms. The Sailors painted the interior and exterior of the classroom buildings and cleaned windows, desks, and other areas of the school grounds.

Damage Controlman Fireman Gabriel Alcaine, from San Jose, Calif., made a particularly lasting impact on the school, fixing a water pump that had been broken for more than a year, providing running water to the students. Alcaine was originally born and raised in El Salvador and said he understands what it’s like to live in poor conditions.

“I know what it’s like to grow up in the conditions that these kids have to live with every day,” said Alcaine. “So, if providing running water to the school will bring even a little bit of happiness, then that makes me feel like I’m making a difference.”

The crew also distributed Project Handclasp pallets of medical supplies, infant care supplies, and sports equipment to a local charity. The supplies will be used to help the citizens of Dili.

During the last evening, *Lassen* hosted José Manuel Ramos-Horta, the president of Timor-Leste, for a reception on board.

“I feel proud that *Lassen* is representing the United States to the people of Timor-Leste,” said Lt. j.g. Thomas Brewer, of Aiken, S.C. “It’s not every day that you host a head of state aboard a U.S. warship. I was honored.”

“The crew has left a huge and lasting footprint, accomplishing great feats throughout the city, and I take pride in being able to say that. They worked hard to make the city a better place for the citizens of Timor-Leste,” said Cmdr. Anthony Simmons, commanding officer of *Lassen*.

“In America, we know that a good education is critical to realizing your dreams. Success starts at the schoolhouse door, so we feel that we’ve directly contributed to a prosperous future for the kids in Timor-Leste,” he said. 🇺🇸

*Story and photo by MCSN Charles Oki, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan.*

# RIVGRU 1 Increases Command, Control with New RCB Boat

Riverine Group 1 is testing its first Riverine Command Boat, which gives Riverine squadrons the ability to travel not only in rivers, but also out to bays and coastal regions, expanding the capabilities of command and control and the Riverine squadrons’ maritime security reach.

RCB-1, which the command received in October, has a primary mission of improving maritime security. With its versatility, the boat offers the ability for use as a primary boat in combat missions, patrolling missions, as a combat information center and can even be configured as an ambulance boat. It is designed to land on a variety of shorelines, including solid rock, to drop off and extract personnel from any area.

“The draft and basic hull construction allows the craft to operate effectively in environments from open seas to shallow river waters,” said Chief Engineman (SW) Michael Flanagan RCB engineer, “That means we are capable of being launched from shore or a ship and operating in almost any environment that our area commander requires. Versatility is the key word.”

The normal crew for the RCB is three to five personnel, and the crew compartment holds up to 15.

While this is the first of six RCBs, mission requirements will determine how many RCBs each squadron will have.

“The RCB will be used for command and control of Riverine forces in the river deltas and bays where brown water interfaces with

blue water operations,” said Cmdr. Raul Gandara, chief staff officer for RIVGRU 1.

The RCB is equipped with a remote operated small arms mount (ROSAM) on which a variety of machine guns can be mounted. The ROSAM allows for a safer mission by keeping Sailors inside the boat while operating the weapon. It also has an automatic target locking capability, which allows easier and more accurate operation during high seas and high speed operations. Several universal mounts topside also allow Riverine squadrons to mount any of type of manned machine gun or grenade launcher needed for the mission.

“The Navy saw other countries use their version of the RCB, and saw that the boat can do anything you need; it can be refueled at sea, giving it the capability for use on long-range missions,” said Engineman 1st Class (EXW/SW) Christian Jimenez, RCB coxswain.

The cockpit is constructed with armor plating around the boat, protecting the crew members and engine compartment during passage through harsh areas. The armor protects against small arms fire and fragments from nearby explosions.

The boat also protects against nuclear, chemical and biological agents because the cabin and cockpit can be pressurized when entering a contaminated area. There is a facility inside the compartment in case of decontamination being needed.

“On a general scale coming straight from the manufacturer,” said Jimenez, “we can make this boat into anything we want, which is another great thing about the RCB.” 🇺🇸

*Story by MCz(SW) Michael R. Hinchcliffe, is assigned to Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, Norfolk.*



The new Riverine Command Boat allows Riverine squadrons access to bays and coastal areas, which expands their command and control capabilities.

U.S. Navy photo

# Navy ITs Adapt to a Changing World, Support Maritime Strategy

When the Navy shot down a non-functioning satellite last year, an information systems technician (IT) didn’t “push the button,” but an IT did provide the critical data and the managed communications links required to execute the mission.

Each day throughout the fleet commanding officers and other naval leaders make important decisions that affect not only the lives and welfare of Sailors in their command, but the lives and welfare of many Americans. ITs ensure the critical data and timely communications key decision-makers rely on remain secure and open.

IT training typically begins shortly after a Sailor completes boot camp. They report to Pensacola for 11 weeks of intensive “A” school training at the Center for Information Dominance (CID), Corry Station where they learn numerous technical skills.

The new ITs learn about designing, installing, operating and maintaining state-of-the-art information systems including local and wide-area networks, mainframe, mini and microcomputer systems and associated peripheral devices; writing programs to handle the collection, manipulation and distribution of data for a wide variety of applications and requirements; performing the functions of a computer system analyst; operating and coordinating telecommunications systems including automated networks and the full spectrum of data links and circuits; transmitting, receiving, operating, monitoring, controlling and processing all forms of telecommunications through various transmission media including global networks.

“CID is exceptionally proud of helping Sailors execute the maritime strategy,” said CID Corry Station Training Directorate Head Chuck Sauter. “CID prepares our Sailors to help achieve the imperatives of the maritime strategy. Our focus is building the future force and developing training paths for an IT’s career.”

The IT skills are in high demand, but ITs must be prepared keep pace with a rapid technology turnover.

“Peacetime IT skills may include assisting emerging partner nations with advanced technology applications; wartime IT skills

# APS Running Mates Program Nurtures Long-term Relationships

West African trainees and U.S. Sailors participating in Africa Partnership Station (APS) Nashville are building partnerships on both professional and personal levels with APS’s running mates program aboard USS *Nashville* (LPD 13).

The running mates program, one of APS Nashville’s main components, provides opportunities for building and strengthening relationships between navies at an interpersonal level. This goal is achieved by teaming pairs of West African and *Nashville* Sailors together for three weeks at a time. During this period, *Nashville* Sailors familiarize their African counterparts with the U.S. Navy’s leadership philosophy and programs for training, maintenance, logistics and operations at sea.

“I think it’s a really good way to build relationships at the [deckplate] level,” said Lt. Will Phillips, assistant embarked trainee coordinator. “Normally, we see high-ranking officials or defense attachés building relationships at the strategic or operational level. Now you see one-on-one interaction between junior officers and enlisted as well.”

Togoese Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Mouzou Banadjuba agreed that the interaction has benefited him.

“My [running mate] explains what he is doing and that helps me to understand all the personal qualifications on the ship,” said Banadjuba. “I think this is a good program. When I follow him, we work together and it helps answer any questions I may have.”

APS works cooperatively with U.S. and multinational partners to enhance maritime safety and security for the continent of Africa. The running mates program builds upon that idea from the deckplate level allowing the relationships built to act as the catalyst for a safer maritime environment.

*Story and photo by MC2 David Holmes, USS Nashville (LPD 13).*



▲ Africa Partnership Station (APS) embarked trainees practice manning a fire hose aboard USS *Nashville* (LPD 13) during damage control training.

are integrated to the success of putting weapons on a target,” said Capt. Connie Frizzell, commanding officer, CID Corry Station. “Job diversity for this rating is as diverse as the spectrum of operations.”

“ITs are working side-by-side with Marine, Air Force and Army personnel to provide specialized communications and network expertise,” Sauter said. “Although the systems used for kinetic ground operations are somewhat different from the ones that are used on board ships, the principles we teach in our classrooms apply to both shipboard and ground-based systems. This allows our ITs to report to their units and immediately contribute to the team anywhere in the world.”

Information Systems Technician 1st Class (SW) Dave Doughty, a CID Corry Station IT instructor who spent a year with the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa headquartered in Djibouti as an electronic key management system manager explained that his role there was primarily to help keep track

of and maintain \$400 million of digital and communications equipment for more than 2,000 joint and coalition forces station in nine countries throughout the Horn of Africa.

“While I was in Africa I supported the Air Force, Army and Marines in addition to German and French coalition forces with equipment, key materiel and COMSEC (classified security equipment and materiel) policy,” Doughty said. “It was a big operation and my team was constantly providing oversight, accountability and training to our designated local element managers, the people who were our authorized customers.”

The speed, flexibility, agility and scalability of maritime forces provide joint or combined force commanders a range of options for responding to crises, and it’s the Information Systems Technicians of the U.S. Navy that help keep those critical data and communications lines open. 🇺🇸

*Story by Gary Nichols, Center for Information Dominance Corry Station, Pensacola, Fla.*





# Avoid Excess Costs When Shipping Household Goods

Story by Nannette Davis, graphic by MC2(SW) William Blake

**T**he process to close out a permanent change of station (PCS) household goods (HHG) move can be longer than expected and often Sailors are at risk of receiving a bill many months after the actual move.

There are several aspects of PCS moves that all Navy personnel need to be aware of to help themselves and to help the Navy. Rear Adm.

Andy Brown, commander, Fleet and Industrial Supply Centers (COMFISCS), is making PCS move support a top command priority.

"Too many Sailors are getting billed for exceeding authorized weight allowances or making bad decisions; this hurts our Sailors and costs the Navy more to move them," said Brown.

On average, the Navy processes 178,000 PCS orders a year at a total cost of approximately \$800 million. Of this, almost \$500 million is spent moving household goods,

including privately owned vehicles (POVs).

"Every pound we move costs the Navy and adds to the potential for Sailors to pay excess weight charges," said Brown. "And, it could take up to two years from the date of your last move for the bill to reach you."

Navy members can perform different types of HHG shipments under most PCS orders such as personally procured "do-it-yourself" moves and government-arranged household goods, unaccompanied baggage and non-temporary (long-term) storage shipments.

For each type, the weight is counted against the maximum weight allowance. Weight allowances are based on a member's rank and number of family members.

"You will pay excess costs if the combined weight of all shipments made under a specific PCS order exceeds the

maximum entitlement for your rank and dependent status," said Brown.

"Many factors can contribute to excess costs, such as attempted pickup or delivery charges, exceeding maximum weight allowances or storage periods, shipping excess distances or unauthorized items, or even accessorial services such as packing and crating," said Brown.

"Always consult your local personal property office [PPO] before arranging any type of government-funded household goods move."

When planning your move, it is important to avoid or minimize excess costs wherever possible.

"Consider donating or discarding unneeded HHG items such as appliances, furniture, housewares, collectibles and building or remodeling supplies. It helps you and it helps the Navy," Brown said.

Brown also recommends discussing storage requirements with a personal property counselor before the move.

"A Navy family might not own a home at the new duty station or have a rental property picked out, so they may need to move into a temporary residence," Brown said. "If all of their household goods can't fit into the temporary residence, the government is not obligated to pay for temporary storage in transit (SIT) beyond 90 days."

To avoid incurring debts for government-directed moves, here are some tips on staying within your authorized weight allowance.

- Dispose of unwanted articles. Shipping unneeded articles is needlessly expensive; shipping costs vary based on destination, region or country.

- Claim professional books, papers and equipment (PBP&E), also referred to

as pro gear. Declare all PBP&E weight, even if your estimate is within your weight allowance. Check to ensure the weight is reflected on your DD Form 1299 prior to pickup. Separate the PBP&E before the transportation service provider (carrier) arrives, as they must mark and weigh the pro gear. Check your inventory form periodically to ensure the carrier annotates PBP&E accurately.

- Request a reweigh if your pre-move survey estimate is more than your maximum allowance. If your shipment is picked up and exceeds your weight allowance, ask the destination PPO to reweigh the shipment. Reweighing the shipment will not cause any increase in excess cost to you.

- Avoid shipping excess unaccompanied baggage (UB): Because UB shipments usually travel by air, they tend to be very costly and may result in higher excess costs per pound. Avoid shipping unnecessary items in your UB.

- Minimize temporary storage in transit (SIT). SIT raises the overall cost of personal property shipments and may increase the total excess cost. If your shipment is overweight, have it delivered within the authorized time frame, generally within 90 days of arrival at destination.

- Overseas weight restricted areas: If you are moving to, from or between an administratively weight restricted area, ensure any additional weight allowances are approved before shipping. Contact your local PPO for more information.

- Excessive packing: If you feel the carrier used excessive packing material for your move, notify the destination PPO prior to delivery. They can instruct the carrier to completely unpack the shipment and verify the weight of the packing materials.

- Pay attention to weight estimates Remember, weight estimates made by carriers or personal property counselors are not binding; they are for planning purposes only. Excess costs are based on the actual weight of unpacked and uncrated household goods, and cannot be accurately determined until the shipment is packed, picked up and weighed at a certified scale.

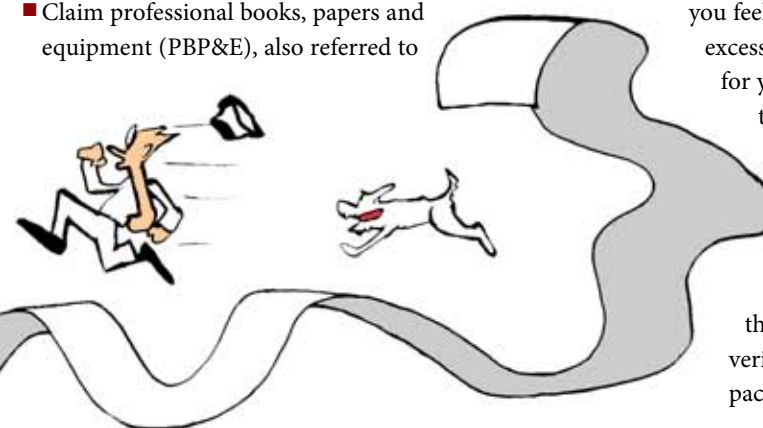
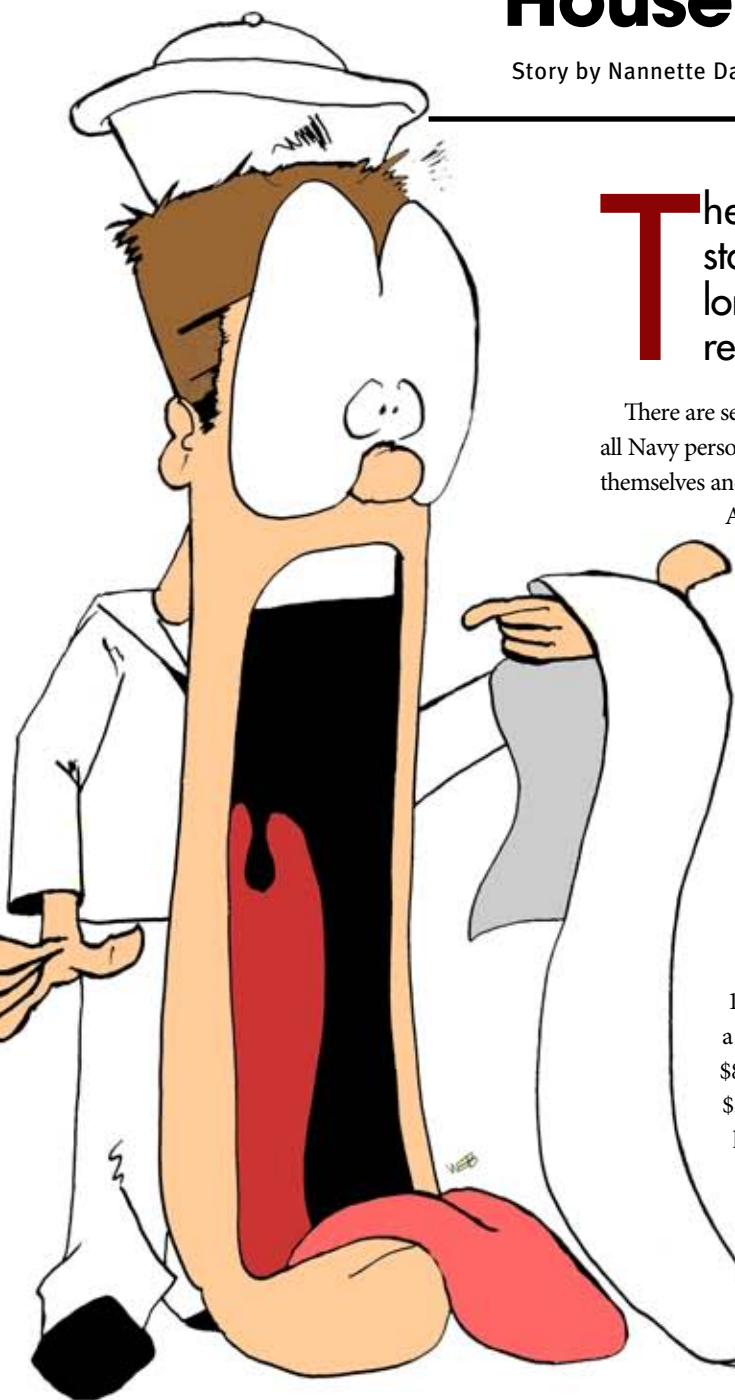
So, what should you do if you receive a notification of indebtedness for a household goods shipment?

Brown, who has paid excess costs himself, is on a mission to advise Sailors.

"Review your shipping documents for each move and pay special attention to the household goods inventory sheets," advises Brown. "Carefully check your DD Form 1299 [Application for Shipment and/or Storage of Personal Property] to ensure PBP&E or pro gear was annotated. Submit all supporting documentation to the household goods audit team (HHG-AT) within 30 days of the indebtedness notification."

If you no longer have copies of your shipping documents, contact your local PPO or the HHG-AT toll-free at 1-888-742-4467, or via e-mail to [pptas.fiscn@navy.mil](mailto:pptas.fiscn@navy.mil). Overseas callers may call DSN 312-646-5412 or commercial (757) 443-5412. You can also log on to their Web site at <https://pptas.ahf.nmci.navy.mil/pptcs/>.

*Davis is assigned to Commander, Fleet & Industrial Supply Centers, San Diego; Blake is assigned to Defense Media Activity-Anacostia, Washington, D.C.*





# LIFE SAVER in Combat

Story by MC2 Robyn Gerstenslager, photo by MCC(SW/AW) Katt Whittenberger

**S**pecial Warfare Boat Operator 2nd Class John Cowgar of Naval Special Warfare Group (NSWG) 4 competed against more than 100 other SEAL and special warfare combatant-craft crewmen (SWCC) combat medics within Naval Special Warfare Command to be selected as the Naval Special Warfare Special Operations Combat Medic (SOCM) of the year by the Special Operations Medical Association

“He’s an excellent example of a SOCM in Naval Special Warfare,” said Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Rickie Fry, NSWG 4’s medical department leading chief petty officer. “He has excellent medical and leadership skills that he has proven in combat.”

The most challenging step to becoming a SOCM is six months of intensive training at the Joint Special Operations Medical Training Center, Fort Bragg, N.C.

The training taught him to perform a variety of life-saving skills in an austere environment with a focus on trauma skills. A SOCM may be called upon to administer advanced cardiac life support, intubation, chest tube thoracostomy or venous cut downs.

He put those skills to the test in 2006 while deployed to Iraq with a Riverine Troop (RT) from Special Boat Team 22; during a mission the RT was ambushed by an improvised explosive device (IED) and small arms fire.

Cowgar was injured during the attack, but aggressively engaged the enemy until the troop was out of the contact area. He ignored his own injuries and tended to a teammate with severe shrapnel wounds.

His selfless efforts earned him the Bronze Star with a V for Valor, March 10, 2008.

“My training has benefitted me every day,” said Cowgar. “Since becoming a SOCM, I have been given the chance to help others on a regular basis.”

Since reporting to the NSWG 4’s medical department in April 2008 Cowgar has taken the SOCM program within the special boat team community under his wing. He created a tracking program to stay current on the number of SOCMs at each team and at the schoolhouse.

After a SWCC receives his SOCM certification, Cowgar ensures that each one maintains his credentials by tracking individual re-certification dates. Cowgar also developed a sustainment program for all SWCC medics.

“I created the sustainment program to further enhance and sharpen the skills of a SOCM, enabling them to better treat their teammates,” said Cowgar. “So far it’s working very well. It has provided an avenue for learning which has increased our medical readiness across the board.”

Already Cowgar’s efforts have led to an increase in SWCC SOCM manpower. Since the implementation of his sustainment program SOCM numbers within the special boat team community have increased. **SS**

*Gerstenslager and Whittenberger are assigned to Naval Special Warfare Group 4, Virginia Beach, Va.*

“I created the sustainment program to further enhance and sharpen the skills of a SOCM, enabling them to better treat their teammates.”

Focus on  
**Service**



## USS Nautilus: Under Ice on Nuclear Power

Story by MC2Ron Kuzlik

**U**SS *Nautilus* (SSN 571) commanding officer Cmdr. Eugene P. Wilkinson sent the message “Underway on Nuclear Power,” to the submarine force commander, as the world’s first nuclear-powered submarine cast off her lines and departed the pier at Groton, Conn., on the morning of Jan. 17, 1955.

She was the fourth ship to bear the name *Nautilus*.

This *Nautilus* was made possible only after scientists and engineers at the Naval Reactors Branch of the Atomic Energy Commission developed a pressurized water reactor nuclear propulsion plant. The design and construction of *Nautilus* was overseen by none other than then-Capt. Hyman G. Rickover, the “Father of the Nuclear Navy.”

Her keel was laid by the 33rd President of the United States Harry S Truman, June 14, 1952, and launched Jan. 21, 1954, as First Lady Mamie Eisenhower broke the traditional bottle of champagne across her bow as *Nautilus* slid down the ways into the Thames River in Groton.

By Feb. 4, 1957, *Nautilus* logged 60,000 nautical miles, matching the endurance record of the fictionalized submarine *Nautilus*, from Jules Verne’s 1870 novel *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea*.

Under the command of Cmdr. William R. Anderson, *Nautilus* and her 116-man crew departed Pearl Harbor, July 23, 1958, under top secret orders, Operation *Sunshine*. Then, on Aug. 3, he announced to his crew, “For the world, Our Country and the Navy – the North Pole.”

*Nautilus* had accomplished what was previously considered impossible – they had reached the North Pole, 90-degrees North.

After 96 hours submerged and 1,590 miles under the ice, *Nautilus* surfaced in the Greenland Sea, completing the first submerged voyage under the North Pole.

*Nautilus* then proceeded to Portland, England, where she was presented the Presidential Unit Citation, the first time the “PUC” was ever awarded in peacetime.

The submarine left England for New York City, sailing more than 3,100 miles submerged in six days, 11 hours, and 55 minutes. Upon her arrival, the crew was greeted with a hero’s welcome, followed by a traditional New York-style ticker-tape parade.

During the next three decades, *Nautilus* continued to perform her mission with pride and distinction, passing many milestones and many firsts. *Nautilus* and her crews earned a variety of awards and commendations for their gallant service.

In the spring of 1979, *Nautilus* sailed from Groton, Conn., on her final voyage.

Following a career that spanned nearly a quarter century of service – after 2,507 dives and more than 513,550 miles steamed – she was decommissioned March 3, 1980, at Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo, Calif.

◀ The watch crew in the control room of USS *Nautilus* (SSN 571) maintained exact course and depth as the sub passed under the polar ice cap.



▶ The crew of USS *Nautilus* (SSN 571) stands quarters for entering the port of New York. *Nautilus* arrived after making a trans-polar voyage under the Arctic ice cap.



first Model-T Ford being used as a taxi in a big city for 25 years.

“My tour on *Nautilus* really made me appreciate the genius of Admiral Rickover and his team in building a propulsion plant that could run hard for 25 years.”

*Nautilus* was later designated a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior on May 20, 1982, and was later towed back home to Groton.

On April 11, 1986, the eighty-sixth anniversary of the birth of the submarine force, the Historic Ship *Nautilus* and Submarine Force Museum opened its doors to the public.

“I really loved that old ship,” Riddell recalled. “Having command of USS *Nautilus* was the best assignment I had in the U.S. Navy!”

**Kuzlik is assigned to Defense Media Activity – Anacostia, Washington, D.C.**

Years later, *Nautilus’* commanding officer at the time of her decommissioning, retired Rear Adm. (then-Cmdr.) Richard A. Riddell commented on *Nautilus’* durability and reliability.

“I find it astounding that this submarine, with its first-of-a-kind propulsion plant, could operate so well for almost 25 years. This is like the Wright Brothers aircraft being used for passenger service for 25 years, or the



## A World of Possibilities

### IA Officer Awarded Bronze Star, Shares Experiences

#### Individual Augmentee

Story by MCC Dean Lohmeyer

**T**he executive officer of Naval Submarine Support Center, Norfolk, recently received the Bronze Star Medal for nearly a year of service as an individual augmentee (IA) at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Shield, Sadr City, Baghdad, Iraq.

Hoch, a 44-year-old native of Lebanon, Pa., served with the Iraqi Ministry of Interior Transition Team for Logistics. His duties included outfitting the Iraqi Police, the Border Patrol, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), with weapons, ammunition, body armor, uniforms, and additional equipment.

Hoch, who has completed 10 patrols on four different ballistic missile submarines, found service in Iraq as a submariner to be an eye-opener.

A former senior chief missile technician, Hoch believes his experience on the whole was positive.

It was definitely a learning experience serving with a Danish general, a British general, U.S. State Department personnel and U.S. contractors, said Hoch.

He was a mentor for three Iraqi generals within Iraq’s Ministry of Interior. These experiences gave him a whole new outlook on what it would be like to work in a multinational, joint-service environment.

Hoch’s biggest challenge during his IA tour was developing accountability for the supplies he and his crew handled on a daily basis.

“Helping the ministry build a system of accountability was the biggest accomplishment we were able to help them complete,” said Hoch. “Part of building that system of accountability was moving to a computerized tracking system. Before, these items were tracked on paper. This wasn’t simply an issue with the Iraqi Army or Iraqi Police.”

Hoch’s unit was tasked not only with developing a system to track future deliveries of weapons, ammunition, uniforms and more, but also with trying to track down what had already been distributed.

Hoch said they did their best to assure those who had been armed that they wouldn’t have to give up their weapons, because in a country such as Iraq, bearing arms is not only a right but a part of their culture.

As he learned more about the culture, he was intrigued how work was built around friendships.

“You could go into a meeting with an Iraqi, and you’re going to spend 15 minutes talking about family, what you did yesterday, what you’re doing tomorrow, and whatever it may be, and then you’ll talk 10 minutes about the business that brought you there in the first place.”

During his service, Hoch experienced several brief attacks while he served at FOB Shield.

“The insurgents targeted the prison while I was there because they were planning a raid to get their people out,” said Hoch.



“The prison took a couple hits, we took one in our motor pool, the Baghdad police college took a couple, and the helo pad took a couple hits, but even though we were in what most people think of as the bad part of town, it was quiet.”

Hoch’s advice to Sailors who are thinking about volunteering for an IA, or who are concerned about their chances of being sent on an IA, is to be proactive in the decision.

“I tell everyone that if you’re planning on staying in the Navy for the next 10 years, you’re going to do an IA,” he said. “It would be better for you to choose where you’re going rather than to be sent on an IA without any input on the decision.”

**Story by MCC Dean Lohmeyer, Commander Submarine Force, Norfolk.**



# EARTH DAY

MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.  
HELP ~~Y~~OUR PLANET.



APRIL 22, 2009

