

July 2009

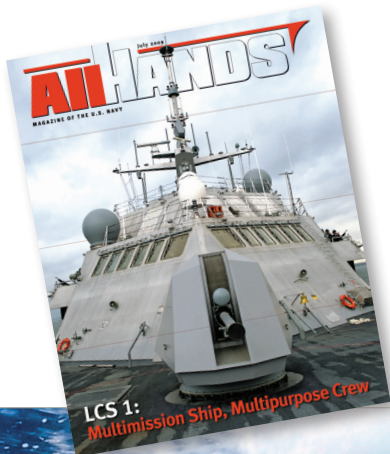
ALL HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY



LCS 1:

Multimission Ship, Multipurpose Crew



[On the Front Cover]

USS Freedom (LCS 1), the first of a new class of littoral combat ships, can operate in shallow coastal water with a crew of 40 Sailors.

Photo by MC2(AW/SW) Jhi L. Scott

[Next Month]

All Hands takes you behind the scenes of Navy Criminal Investigative Service. We will also include a special issue on the Navy's global presence.

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JULY



20 Multimission Ship, Multipurpose Crew

USS *Freedom*, a littoral combat ship (LCS), is the lead ship in the Navy's newest class of ships. LCS is a fast, maneuverable and networked surface modular warship primarily designed to complement the Navy's larger multimission surface combatants in select warfare mission areas such as combating threats in littoral areas to include submarines, mines and fast-attack craft.

Photo by MCz(AW) Jhi L. Scott



26 Changing the Way Sailors Perform UNREPs

While the importance of underway replenishments for the fleet has not changed, the way Sailors train and mitigate the risks of the evolution has evolved significantly. Tucked away within the confines of Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Norfolk, is a school that teaches boatswain's mates the proper, and most importantly, (as it is stressed from day one and throughout the course) the safe way to conduct an underway replenishment.

Photo by MCz(AW) Jhi L. Scott



Sailors aboard USS *Forrest Sherman* (DDG 98) haul down the Ensign during evening colors while at anchor off the coast of southern Florida. *Forrest Sherman* participated in Fleet Week Port Everglades and is currently conducting operations in preparation for an upcoming deployment.

Photo by Ensign Adam R. Cole





Speaking with Sailors

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy MCPON (SS/SW) Rick D. West

This year I was given the opportunity to testify before a congressional subcommittee on quality of life (QOL) for our Sailors and their families. The questions and testimony range from housing and child care to medical facilities and beyond.



Photo by MC1 Jennifer A. Villalovos

Although only a few hours in length, the time spent with members of Congress is important to the future of our QOL programs and the well-being of our Sailors and families. The enlisted leaders of our sister services and I were given time at the beginning and the end to tell the committee what our priorities and concerns are today and in the future.

One of the items brought up by all the enlisted leaders is stress within each of our forces. In our case, stress on the Sailor and his or her family. As we continue to take on the missions of the Navy, and in particular individual augmentees, one of the concerns we need to address is stress and stress control.

We've seen several recent cases of personnel coming forward and seeking assistance for stress-related injuries. This is where you come in as shipmates. If you notice that a shipmate is exhibiting some of these symptoms: a drastic change in eating or sleeping habits; alcohol abuse; moodiness or poor judgment; then I need you to engage with the Sailor to ensure he or she is properly cared for. It can be as simple as talking to them as a shipmate or suggesting a private meeting with a leader within their chain of command.

Never be afraid to recommend to a fellow Sailor that the best course of action may be seeking Navy-provided, professional assistance.

Recently, I was visiting the fleet when I ran across a group of Sailors. As I normally do, I engaged the Sailors and asked how they were, what commands they were from, their hometowns, etc. At one point I asked a young Sailor why he ended up on limited duty and was being assigned to the transient personnel unit. He immediately hung his head and told me he was diagnosed with stress-related symptoms.

Now here comes the MCPON advice. If you're feeling that pressure build, there is nothing wrong with seeking help. What you need to know is that it's OK to have a bad day or feel pressured. It happens to all of us, me included. What we all have to do is find the appropriate avenue upon which to move forward for a better tomorrow. You owe it to yourself and your family. I, for example, use exercise. This often puts things back in perspective for me and gives me the motivation to seek a better tomorrow.

Visiting a counselor at one of our health clinics or a chaplain are excellent options, too. I know what many of you are thinking as you read that. Well, let me tell you that going to a professional for help is not a sign of weakness. In fact, I can't even describe the level of respect I have for anyone who recognizes the need to do that and acts on it.

Stress affects everything, shipmates. It impacts your physical health, your relationships with your family and your performance on the job. There isn't anything I can say or do that will eliminate all of your stress. The Navy's Operational Stress Control (OSC) program has training available to assist you in recognizing signs and symptoms of stress-related injuries as well as resources to help you find out ways to decrease your stress levels at home and at work. Visit their Web site to learn more at www.nko.navy.mil/portal/operationalstresscontrol/operationalstresscontrol.

We need you. We need every Sailor in our Navy because our nation depends on us. I'm relying on you to take care of yourselves every way possible. Start with reducing the amount of stress in your lives. **✉**

ALL HANDS

Number 1108 • July 2009
www.navy.mil

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All Hands (USPS 372-970; ISSN 0002-5577) Number 1108 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: allhandsmag@dma.mil Message: NAVMEDIAEN 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.



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Any Day in the Navy

Photo submissions are due by July 17, 2009.

Around the Fleet

CNO Focused on Right Programs, Policies to Support Sailors

The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Gary Roughead recently spoke about the Navy of today and of the future as a panelist on the Sea Services Chiefs' Panel at the Navy League's 2009 Sea-Air-Space Exposition (SAS Expo) during a seminar entitled "Seapower and America's Security."

Roughead joined panel members, Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James T. Conway; Commandant of the Coast Guard, Adm. Thad Allen; and Acting Deputy Maritime Administrator, Mr. James Caponiti for the event.

The SAS Expo is the largest maritime exposition in the world and provides the Navy and other services an opportunity to interact and meet with national and international industry providers working with the latest in sea power technology. This year's theme, "National Security, Maritime Superiority and Global

Presence," complements the cooperative maritime strategy and advances public understanding of the critical importance of sea power for America's security and prosperity.

During the discussion, CNO emphasized how busy the Navy has been during the last year.

"The Navy is being used aggressively, and the Navy is being used very hard. In addition to the traditional deployments and formations that we have operating around the world, we have 14,000 Sailors on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan," Roughead said.

"We see increasing demands for things such as ballistic missile defense, intelligence surveillance reconnaissance, proactive humanitarian assistance, maritime security and the most newsworthy event in recent times, the counterpiracy operations that several nations are involved in off the coast of Somalia."

CNO also spoke about the completion of the FY10 budget, the upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review, shipbuilding programs and how everything in the Navy comes back to its people.

"I think it's always important to recognize, to realize and to go out periodically into the fleet and determine what it is that we're really all about up here [in Washington, D.C.]. And that is being able to provide the right things, the right programs and the right policies so that our great Sailors can go do the terrific work that they're doing," Roughead said. **SS**

*Story by MCz(SW) Rebekah Blowers,
Office of the Chief of Naval
Operations, Washington, D.C.*

Poll Shows Most Sailors Able to Navigate Through Strained Economy

Navy Personnel Command recently released the results of the 2009 Navy Financial Health Quick Poll, which shows more Sailors than not are safely riding out the nation's current economic environment.

"The chief of naval operations directed the 2009 Financial Health Quick Poll to reassess financial stresses as a result of the recent economic downturn," said Kathy Wells, policy manager for the Navy's Personal Financial Management (PFM) program.

"The poll was a follow-up to the May 2008 Financial Health Quick Poll. The main areas of focus were financial condition, residence and PCS [permanent change of station] moves, both Navywide and by Navy region."

According to the poll, more than 85 percent of officers and 60 percent of enlisted Sailors continue to describe their financial condition as "very comfortable" or "able to make ends meet." About one-third of enlisted Sailors indicate they "occasionally have some difficulty;" about 9 percent are "keeping their heads above water;" and 1 percent are "in over their heads."

Help is available for Sailors feeling financial strain.

The Navy's PFM program provides classes, education and assistance through the Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSCs) on sound financial management including classes about the wise use of credit and home-buying strategies.

FFSCs offer a new course entitled Million Dollar Sailor, a personal, wealth-building program for Sailors and their families.

▼ Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Gary Roughead attends the Navy League Sea Air Space Expo 2009 at the Gaylord National Resort, National Harbor, Md.



Photo by MCz, Tiffini M. Jones

Designed as a two-day training course, Million Dollar Sailor assists Sailors and their families to navigate successfully through the transitions of Navy life and the financial challenges that accompany them.

Although the poll shows Sailors are weathering the current economic storm, it also indicates that Sailors are not unaffected.

Of the participants, 63 percent of enlisted Sailors reported that they are contributing less to a savings account to pay for necessities, compared to 59 percent of enlisted in May 2008.

Fifty-three percent of enlisted Sailors are saving less to make credit card payments, compared to 48 percent of enlisted in May 2008.

Financial health is important in the Navy because poor finances can impact readiness. Poor financial management is the leading cause of Navy security clearance denials and revocations.

Sailors should notify their chain of command if they are suffering from financial stress. Leaders say supervisors should ensure individuals receive financial counseling and follow up with the counselors' recommendations. **SS**

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

Navy Works Through High Retention, Low Attrition

The chief of naval personnel (CNP) recently talked with Sailors and civilians at the Navy's personnel and manning headquarters to discuss the future of the force and the hold on permanent change of station (PCS) moves throughout the summer.

"We started this fiscal year with an end strength of about

332,230 active-duty Sailors. We sit today at about 332,280 active-duty Sailors. We have stopped reducing the size of the force, and we are stabilizing in response to a strain placed on watchstanders in the fleet and the individual augmentee demand," said Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson, CNP, during his visit to Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

The Navy has been reducing the size of the force for several years at a rate of approximately 10,000 Sailors annually, but according to Ferguson the time has come to level off.

"The cumulative effect of the (manpower) reductions [during] the last six to eight years and the increased individual augmentee demand demonstrated that if we hadn't pulled out of the force reduction glide slope, you would be experiencing more significant impacts than you are now," said Ferguson referring to the Navy's \$350 million budget shortfall, that has in part affected PCS transfers through the end of the fiscal year.

The other factor contributing to the hold on PCS moves was a change in the accounting system that requires the Navy to fund PCS orders when they are written versus when the orders are executed. This paired with record retention and fewer separations from attrition has slowed the number of Sailors leaving active duty and has required the Navy to divert money for payroll instead of previously budgeted programs.

"Attrition is significantly down. So those individuals who may have terminated their service early are choosing to stay," said Ferguson. "We have a rare opportunity now, with great morale, great compensation and stabilized end strength, to shape the Navy of the future and retain the best Sailors with the right skills.

In the past months, the

Sailor Named Military Citizen of the Year

Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate Equipment (SW/AW) Patrick Bourgeois was recently named the 2008 Military Citizen of the Year during a luncheon at Naval Air Station (NAS) Meridian, Miss.

The award, presented annually by the Meridian Area Navy League, salutes the military member who has dedicated their time to volunteerism in the community.

"Through community service, we at NAS Meridian have forged a partnership with the community," Bourgeois said. "I am grateful for this award, but it would not be possible without the Sailors from Naval Technical Training Center, the Marines and the personnel from NAS Meridian who all volunteer their time in the community."

Bourgeois added that he would like to dedicate the award to his fellow service members.

"In the spirit of volunteerism, I dedicate this award to all the members of the armed forces, men and women, who are protecting us today," said Bourgeois who serves as liaison between NAS Meridian and the United Blood Services. He is a board member for the Lauderdale County Habitat for Humanity, Navy Ball Committee treasurer and the NAS Meridian Area 5 Special Olympic representative.

During 2008, Bourgeois spent most of his volunteer time at the American Red Cross Key Chapter Veteran's Center and Habitat for Humanity, as well as at the Wesley House Community Center and Silver Leaf Manor, Meridian, Miss.

Story and photo by Penny Randall, Naval Air Station Meridian, Miss.



Navy has introduced several performance-based measures designed to help stabilize the force. Measures include controlling short-term extensions, time-in-grade waivers, senior enlisted continuation boards and Perform to Serve expansion.

"You are worth every penny and every benefit you have earned through your service. What we ask in return is a commitment to the organization – performance. I think it is a pretty fair trade," said Ferguson. **SS**

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

Flight Deck Cleaning "Zamboni" Gives Aircraft Carriers a Cleaner Wake

The Navy's newest flight deck cleaning technology, the Mobile Cleaning Reclaim and Recovery System (MCRRS), is powerful and environmentally safe.

The MCRRS vehicle uses hydrocyclone technology; which does not require soap; uses only pressurized water; and reclaims and recycles the spent cleaning water. Everything from oil, fuel and loose bolts on deck can be

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Around the Fleet



A special warfare combatant-craft crewman (SWCC) assigned to Special Boat Team 20 navigates a rigid-hull inflatable boat while SEALs from a West Coast-based SEAL team board a yacht for a scene in the upcoming Bandito Brothers production titled "I Am That Man" due in theaters in 2010. SWCC operate and maintain the Navy's inventory of state-of-the-art high-speed boats in support of special operations missions worldwide.

Photo by MCC Kathryn Whittenberger

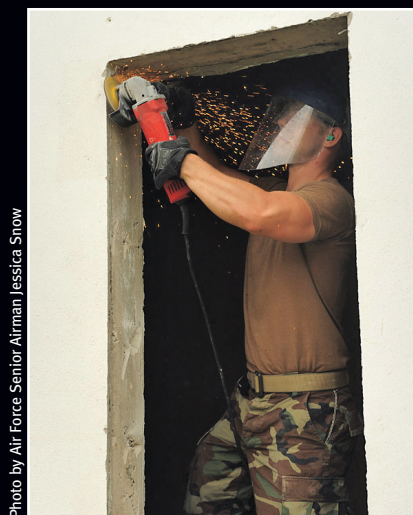


Photo by Air Force Senior Airman Jessica Snow

▲ **SW2 Charles Smith**, assigned to Construction Maintenance Unit 202 embarked aboard *USNS Comfort* (T-AH 20), prepares a window for replacement at a mental health facility during a *Continuing Promise* 2009 community service project. *Continuing Promise* is a humanitarian and civic assistance mission to seven countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.



Photo by MC3 Daniel Viraumontes

SN Joseph Bean mans a sound-powered telephone aboard *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) during a crash and salvage drill to simulate an emergency helicopter landing and crash on the flight deck.



▲ An Italian Marine participates in a cargo container inspection exercise in Souda Bay, Greece, during exercise *Phoenix Express* 2009. The exercise is part of the overall combatant commander theater security cooperation strategy to enhance regional stability through increased interoperability among regional allies from the United States, Africa and Europe.

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vacuumed into the MCRRS. Oil and other hazardous materials are separated into waste concentrates so they can be properly disposed of, while the water can be recycled for cleaning. The MCRRS can be used while underway and in port.

"The Office of Naval Research (ONR) funded MCRRS as a Small Business Innovative Research initiative," said Steve McElvany, ONR's program manager overseeing its development. "The system was designed specifically to address the need for a flight deck cleaning vehicle that is also environmentally safe."

Testing of MCRRS aboard the USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) and USS *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6) began this year and has delivered impressive results.

"The equipment is sort of like a 'flight deck Zamboni' used for a hockey rink – you drive it around, it makes a little bit of noise, and you see a clean smooth line after you're done," said Tracy Harasti, an environmental protection specialist from the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock, Md.

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 3rd Class Ryan Dodge, who tested the MCRRS aboard *Bonhomme Richard* in San Diego, noted a number of the benefits from this ONR-funded technology.

"It uses higher water pressure than compared to the old scrubber we used to use, which gives it a deeper cleaning," he said. "This is better for us ... helps us maintain the flight deck better and makes it look nicer, too."

Debris, fuel, oil and hydraulic fluids are hazards to personnel and aircraft and must be continually removed from a flight deck. The manual process, known as a "scrub-ex," is time-consuming and uses saltwater and special detergents that can corrode metal.

The MCRRS improves safety of flight for personnel by removing debris that can damage a jet engine or cause harm to personnel. "It really does steam-clean the flight deck," added Dodge. ■

Story by Dave Nystrom, Office of Naval Research, Arlington, Va.

New Apprenticeship Trade Program Launched for Security Specialists

The United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP) released a new apprenticeship trade program for security specialists serving on active duty in the U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Corps and Navy.

The Center for Security Forces worked closely with both the USMAP and Department of Labor (DoL) for two years to develop a program to encourage professional and technical growth of personnel. Personnel completing the apprenticeship program will be awarded a "Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship" by DoL.

"Earning this nationally recognized certification requires individuals to perform duties and gain experience they may not otherwise have taken on," said Cmdr. William Hommerbocker, director of master-at-arms career development at the Center for Security Forces.

"This new trade recognizes the unique technical expertise gained through military training in the areas of law enforcement, security and antiterrorism."

The program does not require off-duty hours, and USMAP may award up to one-half of the required on-the-job training hours for applicable military experience. Individuals may

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Around the Fleet

▼ **Search and rescue (SAR) swimmers pull a pick-up truck during a SAR competition at Naval Air Station North Island, Coronado, Calif.** The competition is held annually and unites SAR swimmers from around the globe to participate in the physically demanding race that tests strength and endurance.



Photo by MC3 Damien Horvath

▼ **GM2 Thomas Frederick, a member of the visit, board, search and seizure team aboard USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62), secures a perimeter during a Malabar 2009 training exercise with the Indian Navy replenishment tanker INS Jyoti (A 58).** *Malabar* is a trilateral exercise between the United States, India and Japan involving air, surface and sub-surface warfare.



Photo by MC2 Matthew R. White

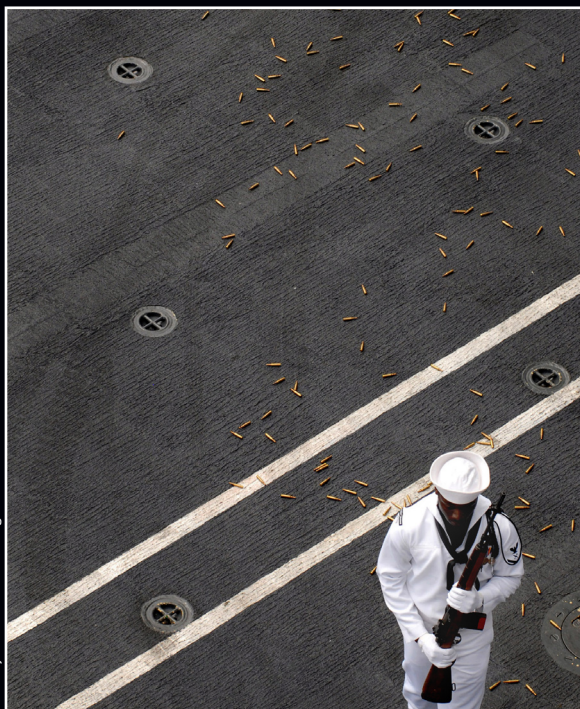
Naval Surface Forces Force Master Chief Eric Page tests a motorcycle simulator at the 3D Marine Aircraft Wing. Page investigated the new motorcycle simulator program, while looking at options to enhance the Navy's safety programs.



Photo by MC2 Elena Velazquez



▲ **GSM3 Brian Caver, from San Diego, inspects a gas turbine engine exhaust pipe inside the uptake room aboard USS Lassen (DDG 82).** *Lassen* is currently undergoing a scheduled dry dock ship's restricted availability.



▲ **A member of the rifle detail leaves the area after a burial at sea ceremony aboard USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) on a routine deployment to the Western Pacific.** Twenty-three service members and their spouses were laid to rest during the ceremony.

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also receive credit for previous apprenticeships.

For more information on available apprenticeships, visit <https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil/usmapss/static/wps/1037N.jsp>. ❧

Story by Darryl Orrell, Center for Security Forces, Norfolk.

Chief of Naval Personnel Addresses Sailors' Concerns in Bahrain

The chief of naval personnel (CNP) recently visited Sailors in Bahrain to discuss current Navy personnel issues and thanked them for their service.

CNP Vice Adm. Mark E. Ferguson held an all hands call at Naval Support Activity Bahrain and visited Sailors deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet Area of Operations aboard USS *Milius* (DDG 69), USS *Gladiator* (MCM 11) and USS *New Orleans* (LPD 18).

"There is no substitute for going forward and seeing the great work that Sailors are doing and hearing their concerns," said Ferguson. "Then I can take their concerns back to Washington, D.C., when we address the problems of Sailors and their families."

During his discussions with Sailors, Ferguson addressed the Navy's recent decision to hold some permanent change of station (PCS) moves, the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the return of family members to Bahrain, force stabilization, selective reenlistment bonuses, individual augmentee deployments and the new Navy working uniform.

"It's a great time to be in the Navy," said Ferguson. "We're seeing record retention levels, we're seeing reduced attrition, and the performance of our Sailors around the globe is truly extraordinary. It is a great time

to serve with the benefits that we offer in terms of education, pay, health care and the introduction of the Post-9/11 GI Bill."

Ferguson assured Sailors that they will be able to conduct a PCS move to their next duty station if they have orders in hand. He also said the Navy should soon have a more definitive answer regarding PCS moves for the rest of the fiscal year.

"Those who could potentially be affected in July, August and September, we'll work on a case-by-case basis and try and protect those who have operational assignments, career milestone billets and follow-on education to get them orders," said Ferguson. "I can assure Sailors that leadership, from the secretary of the Navy to the chief of naval operations on down, are working to identify sources of funding for this year."

Ferguson also lauded the introduction of the Post-9/11 GI Bill and stressed its flexibility, which allows Sailors to transfer their entitlement to their spouse or children.

"Congress and the administration have been extremely supportive of our service members and their families," he said. "The Post-9/11 GI Bill is a tremendous benefit that entitles Sailors or their [family members] to post-secondary school tuition, basic allowance for housing and a stipend for books and fees, upon completion of service requirements." ❧

Story by MC2 Nathan Schaeffer, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/5th Fleet, Manama, Bahrain.


USS *Kauffman* (FFG 59) sails in formation with the Brazilian frigate BNS *Constituição* (F 42) and the Chilean frigate CF *Almirante Blanco Encalada* (FF 15) *UNITAS Gold*.



UNITAS GOLD

50 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP

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



Navy Counselor 1st Class Paul D. Soto – named for the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto, leader of the first European expedition into the modern day United States – grew up in a bicultural home where both Spanish and English were spoken daily. Born in New York City, he spent his middle school years in Puerto Rico, his father’s birthplace, becoming fluent in Spanish. The diversity of Soto’s background prepared him to serve as an ambassador for the United States Navy aboard the Chilean ship *Blanco Encalada* (FF 15), one of more than 30 ships participating in the 50th iteration of *UNITAS Gold* in Mayport, Fla.

“My personal and professional background prepared me for this role,” said Soto. “I truly believe the U.S. Navy is the most diverse in the world with backgrounds ranging from every culture.”

Soto embarked on the *Blanco* for the operational phase of *UNITAS*. During this time, Soto lived the life of a Chilean sailor participating in shipboard drills, building

friendships and helping to keep the mess decks clean.

“It’s been a while since I’ve cleaned the mess decks,” said Soto. “On *Blanco*, they believe it’s an honor to serve one another. My Puerto Rican background helped me connect to their culture, which is similar due to the Spanish influence. I’m able to communicate in meaningful ways due to the culture and being a

blue shirt. Our conversations are based on us all being sailors and sharing one ocean. We enjoy the same things such as visiting other countries, enjoying other cultures and traditions including similar sports such as baseball. In the end its one ocean and one fight.”

UNITAS, which means “unity” in Latin, was initiated in August 1960 with ships from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela and the United States. Fifty years later, the exercise has grown to include more than 30 ships, two submarines and 50 aircraft along with more than 7,000 sailors and marines, and included first-time participants, Canada and Mexico, to become the longest running, multinational exercise in the world.

“We have a close relationship with the U.S. Navy, in both distance and support,” said Canadian Navy Lt. Karen O’Connell a force tactical action officer. “We’ve done combined training to combat drug trafficking. This

operation gives us a better understanding of what assets the participating countries can provide and how they operate.”

Mexico, sent two ships and 45 marines, with the goal to gain new knowledge toward implementing long-range strategic planning for their military.

“We hope to take back knowledge on the process of organizing a staff and doing some planning to counter threats such as narco-trafficking and criminal activity,” said Cmdr. Jose Barrabas of the Mexican General staff. “We desire to learn and observe how other country’s staffs plan and find a standardized way of planning and executing [multimission] operations together.”

During the recent two-week exercise, the U.S. Navy, along with 11 partner nations, rendezvoused in Mayport, Fla., to train together in a realistic scenario-driven environment featuring live-fire exercises, undersea warfare, shipboard operations, maritime interdiction

operations (MIO), air defense and surface warfare, amphibious operations, electronic warfare and special warfare.

“Through the years, *UNITAS* has evolved to fit the landscape, needs and mutual naval and maritime interests of the Americas and Caribbean,” said Rear Adm. Joseph D. Kernan, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command (NAVSO) and U.S. 4th Fleet. “As we move forward together, I am confident that future opportunities to work with our partners will not only strengthen our ability to operate together and provide for our nation’s security, but will also build personal and professional respect and friendships.”

Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 40, headed by Commodore Capt. Rodelio Laco, is the command element for 4th Fleet charged with executing the *UNITAS* evolution.

“Today’s exercise focuses on interoperability and cooperation between the United States and its partner nations,” said Laco. “The challenges

▼ **A U.S. Navy landing signal officer with Beachmaster Unit 2 directs two 87-foot landing craft, air cushioned from Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 4 to their landing zones to unload soldiers and marines from Canada, Chile, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay onto a Florida beach during an amphibious training exercise.**



Photo by Coast Guard Petty Officer Seth Johnson



▲ Canadian soldiers set a perimeter position after disembarking a U.S. Navy landing craft during a simulated amphibious landing demonstration in Mayport, Fla., during *UNITAS Gold*.

we all face are common. This exercise helps us work together as a group toward identifying and minimizing threats. One way we work together is with the U.S. Coast Guard learning various boarding techniques.”

During the in-port phase of the exercise, the Coast Guard conducted three days of multinational training on visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) techniques with teams from Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Chile, Canada and the United States. The first day consisted of classroom instruction. The second day of training involved Sailors engaging in defensive tactics and handcuffing. On the final day, each country’s VBSS team participated in a mock maritime interdiction operational (MIO) exercise.

“We travel all over the world training with our partner nations, sharing information and creating international bonds,” said Lt.j.g. Cliff Harrison of the Coast Guard. “Whenever we bring these nations together to shake hands, make friends and work together, we’re moving toward a unified front.”

Gunner’s Mate 1st Class Geoffrey Collier of the U.S. Coast Guard help lead the mock boarding on the last day which consisted of each VBSS team attempting to find an unaccounted person on the vessel.

“Normal procedure when boarding a vessel consists of the security team taking a muster of the crew and conducting an inspection of all persons aboard,” said Collier. “The protocol varies due to each country capabilities [and] in accordance with their laws. We’re here to share common practices across the board.”

First Corporal Roberto Sanchez is a weapons engineer and member of the MIO team from Chile. Their MIO operation, depending on the mission, consists of securing the bridge while the team initiates a search of the vessel.

“If we find something of illicit nature, we would notify our commanding officer, and he would make procedural calls accordingly,” said Sanchez. “We only board compliant ships. We have another specialty team to search and board non-compliant ships.”

Ensign Roger Eyrolles, electronic maintenance officer aboard USS *Oakhill* (LSD 5), led the U.S. VBSS team during the mock MIO boarding.

“This training was a good opportunity for all the nations to observe and learn from each other,” said Eyrolles.

The U.S. VBSS teams are taught and trained to search and board compliant and non-compliant ships. The skills they learn include hand-to-hand maneuvers, discharging a weapon and the ability to up the level of aggression during a boarding if needed.

“Due to our present environment, we’re always looking for the next move, like a chess game, so we know what’s coming before they can throw it upon us,” said Eyrolles.

Once aboard a ship, the U.S. team will immediately conduct a “blow through” taking control of the pilot house and engine spaces. The next phase involves sweeps throughout the ship with team members searching for stowaways, castaways, illegal weapons, contraband, drugs and human smuggling.



A Mexican boarding team member fast ropes to the deck of the German navy vessel *Frankfurt* as part of a mock boarding and inspection during *UNITAS Gold*.

Photo by Coast Guard Petty Officer Seth Johnson

“Every pound of drugs we find is one less drop in the bucket to fund Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups hoping to do us harm,” said Eyrolles. “That’s one less drop in their bucket to bring the fight to us. Through VBSS we’re bringing the fight to them.”

During planning meetings, every aspect of the *UNITAS* operations was discussed and agreed upon. All the participating nations were informed about measures to mitigate the environmental impact from the use of sonar during the exercise.

“Throughout the planning process for *UNITAS* we ensured safety and adherence to all environmental standards especially marine mammal mitigation procedures were discussed among the partner nations,” said Laco. “All guidance was translated in English, Spanish and Portuguese to ensure everyone was up to speed.”

“We hope to take back knowledge on how the U.S is working to protect the environment,” said Barrabas.

On April 23, the multinational fleet got underway to begin the at-sea phase of the exercise, which included a robust schedule of back-to-back evolutions from flight quarters to underway replenishment and small boat operations. With 10 to 15 events on each participant’s daily schedule, all departments on every ship had a role to play.

UNITAS is traditionally held in waters off the coast of South America, but the United States offered to host the 50th iteration of the exercise.

“We asked to host one combined exercise as an opportunity to share resources we have in a maritime training environment,” said Laco. “This is an opportunity for us to share our resources in a composite

unit training exercise (COMPTUEX) type environment.”

One of those resources the U.S. Navy shared was USS *Mesa Verde* (LPD 19), that served as headquarters for DESRON 40 and the *UNITAS* evolution.

“My team aboard *Mesa Verde* is a true total force staff comprised of DESRON 40, U.S. Navy Reservists from across the country along with 79 multinational representatives from our partner nations,” said Laco.

Lt. j.g. Juan Saltos, an aviator from Ecuador, served as an air defense commander (ADC) viewing air operations during the evolution. Saltos was one of four Ecuadorian officers embarked aboard *Mesa Verde*.

“We have similar threats in our region such as piracy, people trafficking and narcotics,” said Saltos. “Our country can gain from the more experienced navies working with our partner nations during this exercise.”

One of the highlights of the at-sea events was the sinking exercise (SINKEX) of the former ex-USS *Connelly* (DD 975). The assault began when a Colombian AS-555 *Fennec* helicopter from ARC *Almirante Padilla* (FL 51) aimed its crew-served machine guns at her empty hull and opened fire. Following close behind was a Mexican B0-105 *Bolkow* helicopter from the frigate ARM *Mina* (F 214) carrying 2.75” high-explosive rockets.

“Personally, *UNITAS* is a great learning opportunity for me and my crew, something I’ve wanted to do for a long time,” said Commanding Officer Efren Gomez Luis, on the bridge of ARM *Oaxaca* (PO 161) while watching the horizon with large binoculars.

An English speaking voice comes through the radio –

Photo by MCz(SW/AW) Jhi L. Scott



◀ **Sailors from the Peruvian ship *BAP Palacios* (FM 56) board the German ship FGS *Sachsen* (F 219) during a visit, board, search and seizure drill. The sailors moved from room to room looking for hostages as well as the “terrorist” who captured the ship.**

Photo by MCz(SW/AW) Jhi L. Scott



◀ **A Peruvian visit, board, search and seizure team member discusses tactics with a U.S. Navy SEAL prior to participating in a boarding drill aboard the German ship FGS *Sachsen* (F 219) during *UNITAS Gold*.**

▼ **A Mexican B0-105 *Bolkow* helicopter fires two rockets at the ex-USS *Connolly* (DD 979) during *UNITAS Gold*.**

Photo by Coast Guard Petty Officer Seth Johnson



someone from USS *Donald Cook* (DDG 75). They relay course information and *Oaxaca*'s radioman, a young officer fresh from Mexico's naval academy, replies in English. *Oaxaca*'s finished its practice firing and reset course to a position with the other ships. In front of *Oaxaca*, four ships form an orderly line, and behind, five more, all sailing in formation for *UNITAS Gold*.

In all, a multinational force of 15 ships and 12 aircraft unloaded more than 450 rounds of ammunition, one *Maverick*, three *Harpoon* and two *Sea Sparrow* missiles, two 2.75" high explosive rockets and four MK-83 during the six-hour SINKEX.



Photo by MCz(AW) Jonathan W. Hutto Sr.

Another unique training opportunity was provided by the German Navy Combat Support Ship *Frankfurt Am Main* (A 1412). As the primary replenishment asset during the replenishment at sea (RAS) exercise, German supported RAS drills conducted by ARM *Mina* and multipurpose ship ARM *Oaxaca*, USS *Mesa Verde* and USS *Donald Cook* (DDG 75).

◀ **Chilean Navy Cmdr. Enrique Marin**, a 26-year Navy veteran, serves as the commanding officer of CF *Blanco Encalada* (FF 15). The frigate was the sole representative of the Chilean Navy within *UNITAS Gold* and hosted partner nation representatives from the United States, Germany and Argentina.

UNITAS Gold Fleet

Included 30 ships, two subs, 50 aircraft, 650 Marines and 6,500 Sailors. Participants came from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Germany, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

Multi-mission training included undersea warfare, shipboard operations, maritime interdiction operations, air defense and surface warfare, amphibious operations, electronic warfare and special warfare.

United States

USS *Nassau* (LHA 4)
 USS *Doyle* (FFG 39)
 USS *Kauffman* (FFG 59)
 USS *Donald Cook* (DDG 75)
 USCGC *Thetis* (WMEC 910)
 USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75)
 USS *San Jacinto* (CG 56)
 USS *Hue City* (CG 66)
 USS *Carney* ((DDG 64)
 USS *McFaul* (DDG 74)
 USS *Oscar Austin* (DDG 79)
 USS *Winston S. Churchill* (DDG 81)
 USS *Forrest Sherman* (DDG 98)
 USS *John L. Hall* (FFG 32)
 USS *Mesa Verde* (LPD 19)
 USS *Ashland* (LSD 48)
 USNS *Laramie* (T-AO 203)

Brazil

BNS *Independencia* (F 44)
 BNS *Tikuna* (S 34)

Canada

HMCS *Athabaskan* (DDG 282)
 HMCS *Montreal* (FFH 336)
 HMCS *Corner Brook* (SSK 878)
 HMCS *Preserver* (AOR 510)

Chile

CF *Blanco Encalada* (FF 15)

Colombia

ARC *Almirante Padilla* (FL 51)
 ARC *Cartagena De Indias* (BL 161)

Germany

FGS *Sachsen* (F 219)
 FGS *Lubeck* (F 214)
Franfurt Am Main (A 1412)

Mexico

ARM *Mina* (F 214)
 ARM *Oaxaca* (PO 161)

Peru

BAP *Palacios* (FM 56)

Amphibious forces had their time for action during an amphibious assault demonstration in which multinational forces arrived in four landing craft, air cushioned (LCAC) amphibious hovercrafts to set up security perimeters for additional troops and vehicles to come ashore.

“We have been training at Camp Blanding to learn how to get down from helos, combat shooting and urban combat with all different nations,” said 1st Technician Julio Rodriguez, a Peruvian Marine. “It is good training because everybody learns from everybody from Latin America, South America and the United States.”

Capt. Flavio Jaimes, advisor for the Colombian navy, is optimistic about the various strategies, tactics and techniques he can bring to his Navy from this exercise.

“We hope to learn how multinational forces and staffs can work together in a friendly environment with maximum efficiency to resolve myriad problems and manage the variables that are present in complex operations such as *UNITAS*,” said Jaimes. “I believe this exercise increases the mutual confidence to counteract new threats every country has, such as drugs, weapons, human trafficking as well as any possibility to prevent terrorist actions.”

Soto is also grateful and appreciative for his *UNITAS* experience.

“Overall, I am elated to have been afforded the opportunity to be here with a great crew,” said Soto. “They all accepted me with open arms. Being out to sea is the lifestyle we know how to do best. Any day in the Navy we’re able to accomplish the mission is a great day.”

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



Photo by MC2(SW/AM) Jhi L. Scott



▲ **Waldemar Castillo** gathers empty 76mm bullets after the Colombian ship *ARC Almirante Padilla* (FL 51) participated in a live fire exercise during *UNITAS Gold*.

◀ **NC1 (SW) Paul D. Soto**, from *USS Doyle* (FFG 39), helps make bread aboard *CF Blanco Encalada* (FF 15). Soto served as an ambassador for the U.S. Navy aboard the Chilean ship.

Photo by MC2(AW) Jonathan W. Hutto Sr.

Multimission Ship

Story by MC2(AW) Jonathan Hutto Sr., photos by MC2 (SW/AW) Jhi Scott

As USS *Freedom* (LCS 1) prepares for a five-day underway, even seasoned Sailors may experience culture shock as they approach the ship. Once over the brow, they will immediately see chief petty officers and a lieutenant commander handling mooring lines during sea and anchor detail – an unusual sight for most enlisted Sailors. But, this is not your traditional Navy vessel.

**USS FREEDOM
(LCS 1)
FAST FOCUSED**

Multipurpose Crew

Freedom, a littoral combat ship (LCS), is the lead ship in the Navy's newest class of ships. LCS is a fast, maneuverable and networked surface modular warship primarily designed to complement the Navy's larger multimission surface combatants in select warfare mission areas such as combating threats in littoral areas to include submarines, mines and fast-attack craft.





▲ FC1(SW/AW) Clifford Smith performs another one of his duties as he checks the 60mm guns on the weather decks prior to assuming his watch in the mission control center (MCC).

▲ The Senior Sailor of the Year aboard *Freedom*, Smith, stands watch in the MCC as the defensive systems operator in charge of all radar and weapon systems. *Freedom* has the ability to combat anti-submarine warfare, surface warfare and mine warfare.

"*Freedom* is not an evolutionary but revolutionary step in the next generation of warships," said Commanding Officer (Gold Crew) Cmdr. Michael P. Doran. "Forty percent of the ship is open and available to complete whatever mission is available at the moment. We simply need the mission package, not an entire new ship."

A cornerstone of *Freedom's* versatility is its manning. Two rotating crews, with 40 Sailors each, extend the ship's operational availability, on-station time and help mitigate unplanned losses. Beyond that, *Freedom* employs a relatively new, creative and highly interactive concept that produces Sailors with multiple skill sets- the Train-to-Qualify (T2Q) Sailor.

The T2Q pipeline starts at the LCS Academy in San Diego. The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) Academy was designed to be a centralized training source for Sailors. The purpose of T2Q and the LCS Academy is to create Sailors with the ability to function at multiple levels throughout the command.

"The LCS Academy allows us to get people qualified for different shipboard operations all in one shot," said Command Master Chief (CMC) Anthony Decker. "We don't have the luxury of doing under-instruction watches for new Sailors. When a Sailor reports to this platform, they must be ready to go."

"*Freedom* is not an evolutionary but revolutionary step in the next generation of warships."

The best way to operate the LCS platform is by training and ensuring every Sailor is equally qualified in a wide range of jobs including maintenance, operational skills, leadership, search and rescue, small arms, security tactics, force protection, firefighting and damage control.

"Everyone on board should be a part of every evolution including those involving aircraft," said Fire Controlman 1st Class (SW) Clifford Smith. "All of us are qualified to work on the flight deck as well."

Information Technician 1st Class (SW) Zachary Lee Weichert is a recent arrival to *Freedom*. After completing the LCS Academy, he attended an additional eight weeks of advanced training. The training gave him the practice and knowledge to be a lookout, identify classes of ships, use small arms and oleoresin capsicum pepper spray.

"I'm still in shock after being here a month," said Weichert.

Weichert completed his deck watch qualifications upon arrival through the T2Q program.

"As an [information systems technician] on a [destroyer], I did not have much experience with deck watches," said Weichert. "On this ship, all of us stand deck watches, including the engineers."



▲ Smith prepares the messenger line for line handling prior to getting underway aboard *Freedom*.

Weichert is currently perfecting his use of the hand-held radio, a visible feature on the uniform of a LCS Sailor.

“Through the T2Q program, I can receive training from anyone at anytime,” said Weichert. “On a legacy ship, radios were for those within high levels of the command. Here, everyone has a radio due to our need to be in constant communication with each other. I’m currently learning to use the radio and diversify my portfolio. If we all learn more, it helps everybody.”

The example of the LCS Sailor starts at the top with Decker. He enlisted in the Navy 26 years ago as a boiler technician. Today, he is the junior officer of the deck (JOOD) helping to navigate *Freedom*.

“Excuse me sir,” said Decker. “We’re on a course of 180 at six knots. I have a radar contact up on starboard beam at 4,500 yards.”

In comparison to other Navy vessels, Doran believes *Freedom* is not different in terms of responsibility, accountability and authority. The difference comes in the daily operations. Doran views Decker as an example of that difference.

“Right now, Master Chief Decker is navigating the ship using electronic navigation, radar and communication,” said Doran. “The JOOD watch is just as vital as the officer of the deck. This was a guy lighting fires to boilers doing all the steam engine stuff. Now he is on an LCS navigating the fastest [surface combatant] in the Navy.”

Decker’s primary job is as CMC, but along with being the JOOD underway, he also serves as the command career counselor; material/maintenance/management (3M) liaison; and fantail supervisor for the sea and anchor detail.

“The LCS concept has forced all of us to expand what we see as our job,” said Doran. “We are no longer in our narrow stove-pipe union mentality. These Sailors are not just in their individual jobs; they are LCS Sailors. People see themselves as a part of a larger crew rather than part of a department or division.”

Smith is a prime example of the LCS concept. *Freedom*’s Sailor of the Year, Smith is primarily involved with the weapon and radar systems. Nevertheless, Smith engages in many jobs on an average day using knowledge from other rates throughout the Navy.

“This morning I stood watch on the bridge and upon completion disarmed the watch

team. That would be the job of a duty gunner’s mate,” said Smith. “I then engaged the sea and anchor detail with the knowledge of a boatswain’s mate. Afterwards we had chow, and all of us are mess deck master-at-arms because no one cleans your dish after a meal. After chow, I proceeded to mission control serving as the defensive systems operator in charge of all radar and weapon systems.”

Camaraderie and accountability are essential to mission accomplishment aboard *Freedom*.

“We’re a special group of people. Most of us have been together for the last three years,” said Smith. “No one here lets the load slack. Everyone carries his or her own weight, from the commanding officer on down.”

Of the 40 Sailors aboard *Freedom*, 23 are E-7 and above. The ship is comprised of eight officers, 15 chief petty officers, 15 first class petty officers and two second class petty officers.

“Aboard an LCS, there are far less people so everyone has to pitch in,” said Doran. “We are less able to delegate to others. We can’t expect the second classes to clean the ship and take out all the trash; we simply can’t do it. Everyone must carry his or her own weight here. We’re more like a Marine company;

▼ As an unusually small crew, Sailors attached to USS *Freedom* (LCS 1) perform a multitude of jobs on board. Here, lines are handled by one second class, four first classes and a chief to get the ship underway.





▲ **BMC(SW) Francisco Valdovinos teaches EN2(SW) Janis Francis how to tie a square knot on the flight deck of USS *Freedom* (LCS 1).**

of the crew including immunizations and health status would fall under me,” said Dennis. “Everyone is a qualified stretcher bearer and [knows] advanced first aid.”

There is a contrast between Dennis’ role as an IDC and a medical department on a larger vessel.

“The major difference between myself and a medical department on a ship is the capacity I have,” said Dennis. “On an aircraft carrier for example, if a Sailor’s appendix becomes infected, they roll [the Sailor] to medical and take it out. On this platform, we don’t have that type of capability, so I would do everything to stabilize the Sailor before we medevac the patient off the ship for surgery.”

Nevertheless, Dennis finds himself involved in most evolutions throughout the ship.

“I’ve been trained in many different aspects of the ship,” said Dennis.

everyone is carrying their own pack. No-one cleans my cabin for me.”

Decker believes the lack of luxury on the ship helps build unit cohesion and morale.

“Morale is enhanced by everyone working side-by-side with the ship leadership,” said Decker. “We demonstrate daily we can get down and dirty with the rest of them. I handle mooring lines along with having a sponge, broom and swab in my hands daily.”

As the sole independent duty corpsman (IDC) aboard *Freedom*, Chief Hospital Corpsman Joseph Dennis’ job is ensuring the health and welfare of everyone.

“As the only medical person I really can’t be strapped to another role on the ship,” said Dennis. “If I were in another role and a medical emergency takes place, I would have to respond to it.”

Dennis’ job consists of maintaining medical supplies, safety, checking the potable water system, sanitation and the ship’s habitability along with managing sick call.

“Everything related to the maintenance

▼ **The littoral combat ship USS *Freedom* (LCS 1) pulls into port at Alexandria, Va. *Freedom* brings new capabilities to the fleet, including the ability to travel closer to shore than a conventional ship, thus providing a considerable advantage in the littoral operations.**



Photo by MC1 Brien Alho



▲ CMC(SW/AW) Anthony Decker supervises his Sailors during sea and anchor evolutions as USS *Freedom* (LCS 1) gets underway from Norfolk.

"This morning, for sea and anchor, I was up in the forecastle and down in the windlass supervising the evolution on the safety aspect."

Freedom is helping to train Sailors for future LCS ships. The Navy is slated to build a total of 55 littoral combat ships. USS *Independence* (LCS 2), based in Mobile, Ala., will be commissioned before long. Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW) Nicholas Young, attached to *Independence*, is aboard *Freedom* to receive preliminary training during this underway. Young is helping ensure meals are prepared on time while *Freedom* culinary specialists are engaged in mandatory evolutions.

"I'm here to obtain an idea of the watches and scenarios affecting the ship's ability to have a meal," said Young.


A Sailor for almost 10 years, Young is preparing to take on new responsibilities aboard *Independence* to include using crew-served weapons, mounting a .50 caliber gun, being a barber and helping connect his ship for vertical replenishment (VERTREP) at sea.

"Based on what I've learned, I'll be extra careful during VERTREP," said Young.

Doran is honored to command the Navy's first littoral combat ship.

"This is an opportunity you get once in a career," said Doran. "I'm very fortunate to have been chosen to do this. I can't believe my good fortune to have this crew [and] commanding the most capable ship in the fleet."

Decker believes this current duty does not compare to any other command he's been lead during his entire career.

"This is the hardest I've worked, but [it's] the most rewarding time [since I was] an E-3 and E-4," Decker added. 

Hutto and Scott are assigned to Defense Media Activity-Anacostia, Washington, D.C.



▲ Decker stands the JOOD watch. He also serves as the command career counselor; material/maintenance/management liaison; and fantail supervisor for the sea and anchor detail.



▲ QMC(SW) Stephanie Kotatis stands the Junior Officer of the Deck watch on the bridge of USS *Freedom*. Having only 40 Sailors (eight officers, 15 chief petty officers, 15 first class petty officers and two second classes) each person has to pull his or her own weight.



FROM THEN TO

CHANGING THE WAY SAILORS PERFORM UNREPS



Story and photos by
MC2(AW/SW) Jhi L. Scott

Today, an underway replenishment is known throughout the Navy as possibly the second most dangerous evolution – the first being flight operations aboard a ship. During an UNREP, two ships travel at the speed of 12 to 18 knots alongside one another with a distance of approximately 150 to 180 feet between them. Often, an UNREP can be done for two ships simultaneously by positioning a receiving vessel on either side of the supply vessel.

NOW



▲ As the last pallet is loaded and prepared to be sent to the other side, the Sailors from USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68) perform safety checks to ensure all cargo is safe and secure before sending.

◀ Sailors secure cable to the receiving end of underway replenishment equipment during the standard tension alongside method course.



The safety of each individual Sailor relies on the person to his or her right and left as well as the rig captain (responsible for overall safety), bridge team (who keep the ships at a safe operating distance) and engineering watchstanders (who ensure the ships are able to maintain speed).

While the importance of UNREPs for the fleet has not changed since World War II, the way Sailors train and mitigate the risks of the evolution has evolved significantly.

Tucked away within the confines of Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Norfolk, is a school that teaches

boatswain's mates the proper, and most importantly – as it is stressed from day one and throughout the course – the safe way to conduct an underway replenishment. The Standard Tensioned Replenishment Alongside Method (STREAM) course is designed to enhance and improve team efficiency and the deficiencies of a ship's rig team.

"There are two different STREAM courses taught here," said Boatswain's Mate 1st Class (SW/AW) Danielle Vandorst, an instructor for the STREAM course. "The STREAM team trainer is used when a ship brings their qualified rig team through, and they are using the equipment. We are only there as safety observers."

While participating in the STREAM course, Sailors from USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68) practice line handling during a pallet transfer.



The STREAM specialist course is a three-week course that incorporates classroom portions with lab time.

“Teaching each individual part, what every part does and why it’s important will help not only the Sailors when they perform their next UNREP, but it will also give them the tools to train their other Sailors,” added Vandorst.

Teaching the basics of an UNREP is not always an easy task to accomplish. Sailors from carriers do things differently than Sailors from destroyers, so the instructors for the STREAM course have to reteach the Sailors, one person at a time.

“Every ship does an UNREP a little different, and every chain of command has a different way that they want to see things done. That is one of the biggest problems that we run into,” said BMC(SW) Adam Cayer, a STREAM instructor. “We teach one way – by the book. The most important thing is that everyone should be doing things the same way, the safe way and the ‘by-the-book way.’”

One recurring subject throughout the course is also a major factor in the fleet –

safety. Teaching Sailors how to look out for one another as well as be proficient in their jobs is another aspect of the instruction.

“During the classroom portion, everything about an UNREP is taught, but safety is the biggest portion, and it runs throughout the whole course,” said Vandorst. “An UNREP is loud and dangerous; the other ship is right there, and you can’t stop anything to ask questions or say, ‘training timeout.’”

“The advantage to our environment is with the people who would normally be too scared to ask a question or just wouldn’t ask questions about certain things. Those people feel comfortable asking them here. Plus, when we are outside, the ships aren’t moving, and we can stop everything and answer questions about everything. I think they absorb more and are more comfortable asking questions here.”

► **BM2 (SW/AW) Melinda Erickson (rig captain)** receives cargo from the sending side during a simulated underway replenishment.

The instructors also stress that Sailors avoid complacency. Because UNREPs can last for several hours, the rig captain must make sure all members of the rig team keep his or her head on a swivel and stay fresh throughout the evolution.

“There are going to be down times during these evolutions where there isn’t anything going on. That’s the time when you have to concentrate the hardest because that’s when bad things happen. Bad things never happen when people are paying attention,” said Cayer.

“People turning their backs to the rig is an example of losing focus, and that can’t happen while you’re out there. During those times, the Sailors need to think ‘this is really important,’ and we need them to focus on what we are doing. We try to teach them that every person is important no matter your rank or position during the UNREP.”

Each of the pillars of the maritime strategy – forward presence, deterrence,





▲ **Sailors from USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68) transition from the fuels rig to the cargo rig during training for a simulated underway replenishment.**

sea control, power projection, maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster response – depends on the fleet’s ability to remain on station for extended periods of time in locations around the world where port calls are sometimes unavailable. Boatswain’s mates take pride in knowing that without them, it would be difficult for a ship to get its food, fuel and other necessities to remain underway and carry out the ship’s mission.

“[Boatswain’s mates] support the maritime strategy in every aspect of our jobs,” said Cayer. “Whatever mission is being accomplished out at sea or in the fleet is brought to you by your local boatswain’s mate and his local supply ship.

“Without fuel, you’re not on station; without jet fuel, you can’t fly the aircraft; without ammo, you can’t shoot anything; and without food from the UNREPs, none of the work gets done by the Sailors. We put the fleet in the position to stay on station. The UNREP is mandatory, and I think all boatswain’s mates should go through this course,” added Cayer.

The Sailors going through this course get a chance to slow things down and take the time they need to fully understand the complete evolution of an UNREP. Learning all you can while going through training is invaluable to junior Sailors who haven’t been through or seen an actual, full-scale UNREP.

“A lot of things take place while you’re on an UNREP,” said Seaman Nyevel Vazquez, a Sailor attached to the deck department aboard USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68). “Everything is moving so fast, and here it is broken down so you can actually grasp everything that is going on, whether it’s the rig captain, line handling or a signalman.



"I never knew how dangerous it was, but I'm going to start paying more attention to detail," said Vazquez. "It has also helped me with my signaling, which I didn't know a lot about before coming to this class."

Students are not the only ones having to go through the course. The instructors take the course prior to teaching.

"You have to go through everything that every student goes through," said Cayer. "Then you have to teach every topic at least once. One thing you have to do

that they are doing a good job, and you would be surprised how that motivates them."

Having the tools needed to succeed will make the Sailor and his or her command look good.

"We find out that this school absolutely teaches the students what they need to learn to succeed in today's Navy," said Cayer. "This is a very dangerous job, and all the schooling that each Sailor can get will help them. There is so much to learn and so much to get out of this class."

"Underway replenishment was the U.S. Navy's secret weapon of World War II."

— Fleet Admiral Chester A. Nimitz

is personalize the curriculum to fit your teaching style. Then you get evaluated on your teaching topics by the other instructors, and if you pass, then you start teaching."

The instructors are Sailors who have fleet experience and care about making everyone performing this operation better than when they arrived at the school.

"Our goal is to try to make these Sailors better and make these teams better at what they do. We also try to motivate them while teaching," said Cayer. "If they are doing something wrong, we step in and correct them and let them know what they did wrong. When they do something right, we definitely tell them

"If you're going to be in deck department, you have to be able to rely on the person who's standing right next to you," said BM3(SW) Alberto Rosario Jr., another Sailor assigned to Nimitz's deck department. "They don't necessarily do your job, but they can do it if something was to happen. They would know what to do. I really wanted to be here to learn everything I could, and I recommend this to all boatswain's mates in the Navy."✉

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

THE SMELL OF SALT WATER

fills the air, and Sailors line the decks of two ships. It's 2 a.m. when an ammunition ship pulls alongside USS Yorktown (CV 5). A shot from an M-14 rifle echoes through the night's darkness to signal the Sailors that the evolution has begun.

The ammunition ship begins a transfer of supplies to Yorktown so she can continue with her mission. During World War II, the underway replenishment, or UNREP, was a secret. The United States did not want to run the risk of other countries knowing how we kept our ships out to sea for so long.

UNREP is the transfer of fuel, munitions, supplies and personnel from one vessel to another while ships are underway. This process allows entire fleets to be resupplied, rearmed and refueled in a matter of hours while continuing on their mission.

According to Jack Green, a consultant to the Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C., "In the Pacific, service squadrons (SERVRONS) were formed of oilers, ammunition ships and provision ships to follow the aircraft carrier task forces during their attacks on Japanese bases. On a regular basis, the carrier task groups and the SERVONS would meet up and UNREP by each individual type of ship. This allowed the carriers to stay at sea for a far greater period of time before having to return to an advance base. This is the reason Admiral [Chester] Nimitz believed that UNREPs were so vital to the Navy's success in the Pacific during World War II."

◀ **After the weeklong STREAM course,** Sailors fill out an end-of-course critique which will give the students a chance to express how they thought the class was and how it would benefit them in the future.



This Just In

Joint Exercise Northern Edge Ensures Maritime Security

Photo by MC3 Kenneth Abbate



▲ **ABHAN Kelsey Gifford** communicates with hangar deck control during the transfer of an F/A-18C *Hornet* from Marine Strike Fighter Squadron 323 to the flight deck of USS *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) in the Gulf of Alaska. The carrier and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 9 are participating in *Northern Edge* 2009, a joint exercise which focuses on detecting and tracking units at sea, in the air and on land.

The USS *John C. Stennis* Carrier Strike Group assets consisting of USS *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74), Carrier Air Wing 9 and USS *Antietam* (CG 54) recently arrived in the Gulf of Alaska for Exercise *Northern Edge* 2009.

The exercise provided real-world proficiency in detection and tracking of units at sea, in the air and on land and responses to multiple crises. Joint service participation used U.S. maritime and air forces, while focusing on common threats to ensure maritime security.

Approximately 9,000 U.S. active-duty and Reserve component Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, and more than 200 aircraft took part in *Northern Edge* June 15 to 26.

"*Northern Edge* is one of the biggest joint exercises that we do in this country, and it's a great opportunity for *John C. Stennis* to go up there and participate," said *Stennis*' Commanding Officer Capt. Joseph Kuzmick. "There's a lot of room and lots of places to fly that make this a very robust exercise. It's exciting for me to take this team up there and see how we do."

According to Kuzmick, *Northern Edge* is an Air Force-run exercise, but the workload is split evenly between Air Force and Navy assets.

"[We played] the chief asset of the naval component commander," said Kuzmick. "[We operated] as an aircraft carrier in the exercise scenario, and [we applied] our air power to the problem."

Northern Edge is designed to be an air-centric exercise to train units in joint air operations tactics and command and control in a cost-effective and low-risk environment.

"It's incredibly important, that if we are going to fight together, that we train together," said Kuzmick. "We need to learn each other's languages, each other's tactics, techniques and procedures so that we can operate relatively seamlessly as a very effective tool."

Northern Edge operations were conducted within the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex, which includes more than 60,000 square miles of air space and the Gulf of Alaska, encompassing 50,000 square miles of air space. ■

Story by MC1 Steve Owsley,
USS *John C. Stennis* CVN 74

Special Duty Assignment Pay Revised

NAVADMIN 156/09, announced revisions in Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP) that will take effect July 26.

The revisions adjust SDAP levels for active and Reserve component full-time support (FTS) Sailors, but the majority of SDAP pay remains unchanged from 2008.

"We typically release a new SDAP plan once per year," said Jeri Busch, the head of the military pay and compensation policy branch for the chief of naval personnel. "Out of 166 line items, we reduced 36 single-level and 21 multilevel, with seven going to zero and 102 remaining unchanged," said Busch.

Approximately 26,500 Sailors receive SDAP each month, and of these, 6,300 are affected by this message. Adjusted pay rates will be reflected in the August pay cycle, said Busch.

Sailors whose SDAP will be eliminated will receive half of their previous SDAP entitlement for 12 months, or until the Sailor completes the tour, whichever comes first.

The SDAP program is an incentive for Sailors to serve in designated billets that are considered extremely difficult or entail arduous duty. For example, basic underwater construction divers, helicopter rescue swimmers (AW), P-3 flight engineers and acoustic intelligence specialists are just four of the billets that are affected. Program levels change to reflect the current environment associated with each billet.

Commands holding SDAP billets are required to complete an annual recertification by Aug. 31, 2009. Guidance for this process can be found in NAVADMIN 168/09. ■

Story by MC1(AW) LaTunya Howard, Navy
Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

Iraq Assumes Control of Oil Terminal from Coalition Forces

The Iraqi navy recently assumed control of the Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminal (KAAOT) during a ceremony aboard the terminal in the North Arabian Gulf.

This turnover is the first step of a multi step naval transition plan that will eventually transfer security responsibilities to the Iraqi navy.

"The Iraqi navy is ready and capable of assuming security responsibility for KAAOT," said Rear Adm. T.C. Cropper, commander, Task Force Iraqi Maritime (CTF-IM).

"This milestone represents another indication of increasing Iraqi operational independence. It's very important to the way ahead and the future of Iraq."

U.S. and coalition forces have maintained a presence on KAAOT since April 2004, assisting the Iraqi Navy by helping provide security to their oil platforms, which account for approximately 70 to 85 percent of Iraq's gross domestic product.

Coalition forces have operated jointly with Iraqi navy sailors and marines,

training them in point-defense force protection and visit, board, search and seizure operations.

"Our Sailors have labored diligently to make this day possible, working by, with and through the Iraqi navy in a very close partnership," said Capt. Karl Van Deusen, commander, Combined Task Force (CTF) 55, which is responsible for providing security to the oil platforms. "They have brought great credit upon our Navy and our nation."

U.S. and United Kingdom forces will continue to operate jointly with the Iraqi navy to provide training and assistance in support of future security transfers in accordance with a security agreement, to include Iraq's other key oil platform, the Al Basrah Oil Platform.

"It's my duty to defend the oil terminal," said an Iraqi marine aboard KAAOT. "It belongs to my country. It belongs to my people. Our economy is based on it. I take pride in doing so." **S**

Story by MC2(AW) D. Keith Simmons, aboard Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminal, Iraq.



Photo by MCSA Rachel N. Clayton

▲ Sailors from the reactor department reenlist in the forecandle aboard USS George Washington (CVN 73). Fifteen Sailors reenlisted with a combined selective reenlistment bonus of more than \$1.3 million.

Reenlistment Ceremony Nets \$1.36 Million for GW Reactor Sailors

Fifteen Sailors from Reactor Department aboard USS *George Washington* (CVN 73) recently reenlisted, receiving a combined selective reenlistment bonus (SRB) totaling \$1,356,288.63.

Commander, *George Washington* Carrier Strike Group Rear Adm. Kevin M. Donegan presided over the mass reenlistment ceremony along with three other GW officers.

"Normally, Sailors working in reactor departments receive an average SRB of about \$62,000 when reenlisting," said Reactor Department Officer Capt. William Silkman. "But through efforts to improve manning and retention, we were given a one-time window of 90 days to increase the amount to an average of \$90,000."

Reenlistment in the Navy is a major career decision that every Sailor has to face during his or her career and a significant milestone for those who choose to "Stay Navy." Silkman saw these increased bonuses as rewards for serving in demanding billets at sea.

"These Sailors work hard. They come in earlier than the rest of the ship, and they stay later to shut down the plants when we pull back into port," he continued. "It means a lot to them to know that from the very highest levels of the program, including Adm. [Kirkland H.] Donald [Director, Naval Nuclear Propulsion], that they care about



Photo by MC2 Nathan Schaeffer

▲ Sailors walk along Iraq's Khawr Al Amaya Oil Platform (KAAOT). The Iraqi navy recently assumed control of KAAOT as part of a multistep transition plan to transfer oil platform security to the Iraqi navy.



USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) is underway from Naval Station Norfolk conducting acceptance trials and the Board of Inspections and Survey to test the ship's material conditions and readiness.

that, and they're doing something to make sure we retain quality folks in the naval nuclear propulsion program."

Master Chief Machinist's Mate (nuclear) (SW/AW) Peter White, leading chief petty officer of GW's Reactor Department, echoed Silkman's sentiments.

"We want to make the statement that the nuclear-qualified Sailors work very hard at the job they do, and we want to retain the very best and brightest in our field," said White.

"I've been in the Navy for seven years now, and I never knew if I wanted to stay in the Navy," said MM1(SW) Brandon Naddell. "But, seeing my shipmates here reenlisting with me, and knowing that the other Sailors we serve with appreciate the hard work that we do, makes me feel better about continuing my service to my country."

In addition to the SRBs, 12 of the 15 reenlistees were advanced in rate under the Selective Training and Reenlistment (STAR) program. **SS**

**Story by MCSN William P. Gatlin,
USS George Washington (CVN 73).**

USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) Joins the Fleet

The Navy recently took delivery of USS *George H.W. Bush* (CVN 77), the 10th and final *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier.

"*George H.W. Bush* has been eight years in the making, with her keel laid in 2003, followed by christening in 2006 and today's delivery," said Capt. Frank Simei, Navy program manager for in-service aircraft carriers. "It's a testament to the dedication and professionalism of both the Navy and our industry partners."

George H.W. Bush is the most advanced ship of its class. Relative to the last aircraft carrier, USS *Ronald Reagan* substantial design features were modified and new technologies inserted. Examples include a new vacuum marine sanitation system, a new jet fuel distribution system and numerous other new control systems and piping materials. These new features will reduce the lifecycle cost of the carrier.

"*George H.W. Bush*'s delivery completes the construction of *Nimitz*-class aircraft carriers, but their legacy will continue" said Simei. "This ship will be an important part of our maritime forces for the next 50 years." **SS**

**Story courtesy of Naval Sea Systems
Command, Washington, D.C.**

Maritime Partnership with Korea Strengthened

U.S. Pacific Fleet recently hosted officers and senior enlisted personnel from the Republic of Korea Navy to explore mutual ordnance logistics support between the two navies.

As part of the maritime partnership event, Korean personnel traveled to San Diego to interact with their counterparts at U.S. 3rd Fleet, U.S. Naval Surface Forces and aboard USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) and USS *Howard* (DDG 83).

"This exchange benefits both navies because it enhances our readiness," said Cmdr. Sang-hak Park, chief, missile and ammunition branch manager, Republic of Korea Navy headquarters. "If there is a logistical problem while on patrol, the concept, if approved, allows a U.S. Navy ship to pull in to our ports, and we can provide the support needed."

The visit featured several activities including a roundtable discussion and a number of tours. Korean personnel visited a missile magazine and the installation's Standard Missile Intermediate-Level Maintenance Facility. They observed wharf-



▲ An ordnance worker with Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach, Calif., goes over loading procedures with two senior enlisted sailors from the Republic of Korea Navy. The Korean sailors are touring U.S. Navy facilities while fostering cooperation between the two nations and support of maritime partnership.

side ordnance operations involving USS *Princeton* (CG 59). They also observed civilian ordnance workers and U.S. Navy Sailors loading several vertical-launch missile canisters onto the ship.

The visit served as both a professional exchange focused on continued maritime partnership opportunities and as a valuable opportunity to strengthen the relationships that are fundamental to the partnership between the two navies.

"This event was a great success and afforded the U.S. Navy officers, enlisted and civilians the opportunity to engage with our Korean Navy counterparts and discuss ordnance logistics and demonstrate our capabilities" said Capt. Drew Morgart, director of logistics current operations, at U.S. Pacific Fleet.

This visit follows a similar exchange hosted by the Republic of Korea Navy in June 2008, in Chinhae, Republic of Korea. Personnel from U.S. Naval Forces Korea, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Navy Munitions Command, East Asia Division, Detachment Guam, met with their Korean counterparts in an earlier stage of the maritime partnership program. ☞

Story courtesy of U.S. Pacific Fleet, Seal Beach, Calif.

Eisenhower Makes Historic Port Visit to Bahrain

USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) recently became the first aircraft carrier to pull in pierside in Bahrain in more than 60 years, as part of the ongoing effort to strengthen relationships, increase interoperability and address maritime strategies.

The last carrier to moor pierside during a liberty call to Bahrain was the 11,373-ton *Commencement Bay*-class escort aircraft carrier USS *Rendova* (CVE 114) in 1948.

"The U.S. Navy shares a very special relationship with Bahrain, and for that we are extremely grateful," said Rear Adm. Kurt Tidd, commander, *Eisenhower* Carrier Strike Group.

"This visit is the first time in [more than] 60 years an American aircraft carrier has moored in Bahrain, and the first time ever a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier has pulled in pierside Bahrain, as a result of the careful and detailed hard work of the people of Bahrain. The Sailors aboard *Eisenhower* are excited to be part of this historical visit."

During her stay in Bahrain, *Eisenhower* hosted Sheikh Salman bin Hamad al-Khalifa, Emir of Bahrain.

Vice Adm. Bill Gortney, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, said he is very pleased *Eisenhower* was able to pull into the newly-constructed Mina Khalifa pier facility in Hidd.

"This is an important day for both the United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain," said Gortney. "*Eisenhower's* pierside visit is a tangible reminder of our commitment to Bahrain and highlights the special relationship that our two nations share."

During the port visit crew *Eisenhower's* crew members took part in various community relations projects, sporting events and many other Morale, Welfare and Recreation-sponsored events.

Visits by U.S. Navy ships symbolize the continued friendship and partnership between countries and military services – increasing cooperative engagement and exemplifying commitment to building trust and confidence among friends worldwide. ☞

Story by MC2(SW) Kenneth R. Hendrix, USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69).

▼ An F/A-18F *Super Hornet* from Fighter Attack Squadron (VFA) 106 makes an arrested landing or "trap" aboard USS *George H.W. Bush* (CVN 77). The aircraft carrier was underway off the coast of Virginia.



Something to Think About

"Summertime, and the livin' is easy ..."

Nothing says summertime like packing your bags, stocking up on the sunblock, filling up the cooler, putting the kids in the back seat (if you have a family), and taking off for familiar haunts or parts unknown.

If you plan on going on vacation, whether by air or by car, read this primer so your "Fantastic Voyage" remains just that – fantastic.



Fantastic Voyage: Summer Travel Safety

Story by MC2(SW) Elizabeth Vlahos, graphic by MC2(SW) William Blake



Get Your Kicks on Route 66

Ah, road trips. Very few things are as exhilarating as throwing a suitcase into the trunk and taking off on a cross-country drive with the windows open or the top down and the wind blowing through your hair. Road trips are the stuff of Americana, from classic literature to the tales that spring from your friends' travels, and of course who can forget Simon and Garfunkel singing about going to look for America?

Here's how to prevent such tales of the road from becoming real-life horror stories, because those are no fun to retell.

- Know and stay within the current speed limit. Speed kills.
- Buckle up, and ensure every passenger is properly restrained. It is your best defense against the 57 varieties of drivers that stalk the highways.
- Give yourself enough time to reach your destination. If you're running behind schedule, call ahead and let someone know; don't compensate by adding 40 pounds to the foot on the gas pedal.
- The following bears repetition every year since too many people think they can get away with it: DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE! DON'T LET ANYONE ELSE DRINK AND DRIVE! Too many people are seriously injured or killed every year because someone didn't hand over the keys after even the first beer.
- Keep a cool head on the road, and concentrate on driving safely. Don't drive if you're upset or angry. Entertain pleasant thoughts and listen to some music to create a comfortable driving atmosphere.
- Watch out for aggressive drivers. Give them space to maneuver out of your way, and whatever you do, do not respond to the one-fingered salute. If they refuse to let up on you, call 911.
- Keep your eyes on the road, your hands on the wheel, and your mind on the drive. If you absolutely have to use your cell phone, pull over to the side of the road first. Never take notes or look up a number while you're driving.

- Get plenty of rest before you hit the road. If you start to get tired, pull off the highway. It's better to crash at a hotel than into a guardrail. Avoid driving between 12 a.m. and 6 a.m.
- Make sure your car is in good working condition before you embark on your trip. At the bare minimum, have a spare tire, a first-aid kit, a flashlight, a cell phone and a charger in your car at all times.
- Don't drive too fast for conditions. If it's pouring outside, the posted speed limit is likely too fast.

Heaven can wait, so slow down. Being late for your own funeral is actually a good thing – the longer you delay it, the better. Concentrate on filling the time between with amusing stories and anecdotes from your travels instead.

Stay Off the Highway to Hell

This is where the Travel Risk Planning System (TRiPS) comes in. TRiPS is an online travel assessment tool designed to pinpoint the hazards you might face in your travels. Many commands require the use of TRiPS for Sailors who venture outside their command's travel limits.

TRiPS asks you about your route, what type of car you'll drive, how much sleep you'll get and whether or not you wear your seatbelt (if the answer is not "yes," slap yourself NOW), among other questions. Basically, it takes the information you put in and uses it to calculate a final risk assessment. It also gives you good driving tips based on the answers you put in.

Be realistic with your answers on TRiPS. Yes, it's tempting to sugar coat the truth and sweet-talk your supervisor before embarking on the long and winding road, but what a long, strange trip it will be if your vehicle unwittingly becomes the world's worst alarm clock. Also, if you get pulled over, the officers doing so probably won't be as cordial as Ponch and Jon.

Bottom line: Use TRiPS and stay off the Road to Nowhere.

Leavin' On a Jet Plane

Many of us like to travel *par avion*, whether it's across the continent or to another country, but when it comes to air travel, the plane's operation is really out of our control. We, however, are not. Here are a few tips to bear in mind for a smooth flight.

- Arrive at the airport early. For CONUS flights, arrive at least one hour before scheduled boarding time; allow two hours for international flights.
- DO NOT place your luggage in the custody of anyone you do not know, and do not leave it unattended.
- If you see an unattended package or anything else that looks out of place, report it immediately.
- DO NOT pick a fight with the security personnel. They have enough to worry about as far as the safety of everyone at the airport. If you have concerns, address them in a calm and professional manner. Otherwise, you may find yourself in the security office getting chewed out by the FAA while your plane takes off without you.
- Once you've boarded the plane, look for the emergency exit closest to your seat. Look over the emergency information before the plane starts taxiing the runway.
- Follow the flight attendants' instructions. This isn't just a matter of courtesy, it's also a safety and security issue. Straighten up and fly right!

Are we there yet?

You're almost there, don't worry. No matter what mode of transportation you take for the summer, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Bring enough cash for the essentials (food, gas) and incidentals.
- Carry your health insurance cards, medications and emergency phone numbers.
- Familiarize yourself with your maps, and listen to weather and traffic conditions.
- Notify your relatives and trusted friends about your itinerary.

That's it for this travel primer. Hit the road, Jack! 🍷

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

Camp Stone Gets First "Navy" First Sergeant

While deployed to Afghanistan, Senior Chief Aviation Warfare Specialist (NAC/AW) Ernest C. Edwards of Belle Glade, Fla., became the first Navy first sergeant at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Camp Stone, Herat, Afghanistan, a position normally filled by U.S. Army senior enlisted personnel.

"The first sergeant is a unique position that requires certain qualities, organizational skills and proper leadership ability," said U.S. Army Command Sergeant Major Mark Howe from Salem, Ill. "Those are the two biggest qualifications to be a first sergeant. You are the company commander's senior enlisted advisor in all matters pertaining to the enlisted service members of that unit. The position is a key element in the company structure."

Edwards was chosen by Howe and Col. John Bessler, commander of Afghanistan Regional Security Integration Command West, after he completed two and a half months as the non-commissioned officer in charge of the Regional Police Advisory Command.

"In this job I hear a lot of E-7s saying, 'that's tough; that's tough,'" said Edwards, "but in the past seven days while I've been exploring the sections that I'm in charge of I've

found some changes I think would benefit us. We've implemented those, and they are already improving our day-to-day operations."

As first sergeant, Edwards was in charge of all the operations at Camp Stone, from security forces, billeting, standing the watch, and the Morale, Welfare and Recreation department.

"I'm implementing changes to our force protection, to ensure our junior Soldiers, Sailors and Airman can execute procedures without hesitation," said Edwards. "It all falls under the first sergeant. If the Navy had a first sergeant, it'd be the command master chief."

The leadership skills of the Sailor did not go unnoticed in the Army-led unit.

"Senior Chief Edwards fits the mold of a first sergeant because he has the leadership to inspire, to encourage and to get people to perform," said Howe. "He also has the work ethic and the organizational skills to perform the

many different parts of the job. As a first sergeant, you are a leader; you are a teacher; you are a problem solver you are a counselor – all rolled into one person. I can tell Senior Chief Edwards [does] all those things to the best of his ability. Another key element in choosing a first sergeant is finding someone who has the desire to do it. If you thrust the position on someone, they may fail."

As an individual augmentee, Edwards brings his Navy skills and experience to play in the joint environment.

"Some people say, 'Wow, a Navy first sergeant,'" said Edwards, "but to me, I'm just doing my job. This is where they need me, and this is what I do. I don't see anything special. I just wake up every day and do the same thing I did yesterday. I just do my job."

Story courtesy of International Security Assistance Force – Afghanistan.

Focus on Service



Task Force 1 – The Nuclear Propulsion Great White Fleet

Story by MC2(SW) Elizabeth Vlahos

July 31, 1964, roughly 55 years after the Navy's Great White Fleet sailed around the world, Operation *Sea Orbit*, also known as *Task Force 1* – an all-nuclear-propulsion task force consisting of *USS Enterprise* (CVN 65), *USS Long Beach* (CGN 9) and *USS Bainbridge* (DLGN 256) – set sail from Gibraltar to sail around the world without refueling. The voyage, the first time since the Great White Fleet that the Navy scheduled such a display of their ships to circumnavigate the globe, marked a new chapter in the evolution of the fleet.

Operation *Sea Orbit* was a demonstration of the special global mobility and the self-sufficiency of nuclear-powered surface ships. It was a display of the new design of American sea power that was revolutionary at the time, serving as an unimpeachable example of the United States' enormous power for peace.

"We will test the ability of these new ships around the world," said Rear Adm. B.M. Strean, commander, *Task Force 1*, of the ambitious operation. "This cruise will be of tremendous importance to the Navy."

Task Force 1 rose to Strean's challenge and passed the test with flying colors. The Great White Fleet sailed 46,000 miles in 14 months; Operation *Sea Orbit* steamed 31,000 miles in 65 days.

Much like its predecessor, Operation *Sea Orbit* also proved to be a great diplomatic gesture, for the task force operated as a roving ambassador whose actions and abilities spoke for all Americans, extending a welcoming hand to the world.

The ships traveled a course peppered with port calls and visits with dignitaries in Morocco, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Ivory Coast and Kenya in Africa; West Pakistan in Asia; Australia and New Zealand; Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil in South America; and Puerto Rico, just off the coast of the continental United States. The task force was not all work and no play; the Sailors enjoyed port visits in Karachi, Pakistan; Freemantle, Melbourne and Sydney, Australia; Wellington, New Zealand; and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



▲ Nuclear-powered warships *Enterprise*, *Long Beach* and *Bainbridge* steam in formation, 1964.

Task Force 1 treated its guests to a variety of demonstrations, to include fire power and missile demonstrations; atomic fuel safety (to wit, a sensitive Geiger-counter probe measured more radiation from the guests' wristwatches than from the immediate area around the reactors); and air demonstrations, ranging from strafing runs to breaking the sound barrier.

On Aug. 25, 1964, *Task Force 1* engaged in a rendezvous with the British Royal Navy carrier HMS *Victorious* (R 38). After the flag officers from both countries visited each other's vessels, the British Royal Navy was treated to a short air demonstration. One of the British officers, upon seeing the air show, remarked to his American counterparts, "Thank God, you're on our side!"


The task force received nothing but high praise for the collective efforts of all the Sailors aboard the three ships.

"Your memorable visit, though brief, has given us great pleasure. All units of the Pakistan Navy wish the officers and men of your command God speed as they sail the oceans in pursuit of universal peace," said Rear Adm. Abal R. Khan, commander in chief of the Pakistan navy, said upon the U.S. Navy's departure from Karachi.

Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Right Honorable Keith J. Holyoake, said, "Of all the countries of the world, the

United States is the greatest lover of peace and hater of war. Your visit proved that the American people not only have the capacity to throw a protective screen around themselves but, also have the capacity to do it for their friends."

Vice Adm. W.E. Gentner Jr., commander, 6th Fleet, had this to say about *Task Force 1*: "All hands in the Sixth Fleet are particularly proud to have the nuclear-powered, multi-ship task force of *Enterprise*, *Long Beach* and *Bainbridge* as part of the fleet."

After a final stop and air demonstration in San Juan, Puerto Rico, *Bainbridge* departed for her homeport in Charleston, S.C., while *Enterprise* and *Long Beach* were homeward bound for Norfolk. By Oct. 3, 1964, all the Sailors were home, and their ships were still in combat-ready condition, with enough supplies to see them through another circumnavigation. 

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



A World of Opportunities

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class
Ixchel Mattes

Individual Augmentee

Story by MC2(SCW) Brian Coverley

Nestled between the misty and damp inlets of Washington State, and a short ferry ride from Seattle, Naval Hospital Bremerton offers modern medicine to the military community. For Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Ixchel Mattes, the sterile, modern facilities and the electronically-run appointment routine are a sharp contrast to her individual augmentee (IA) assignment in Afghanistan.

The soft-spoken corpsman was assigned to Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Kunar from March to November 2008, where she provided essential assistance to the team's mission.

"I was a battle aid station corpsman and mission-support corpsman for PRT Kunar," Mattes said. "I provided sick-call support to the forward-operating base of approximately 300 people – active duty and civilian – and provided medical support while on ground assault convoy missions throughout Kunar Province.

"It is a NATO-backed international security assistance force which is comprised of different countries. PRTs work with the provincial leaders of Afghanistan (tribal elders, district and provincial governors, etc.) on what infrastructure is needed – bridges, roads, schools, clinics, wells and the like. It's more a humanitarian-oriented IA than a combat-focused IA," Mattes said. "We do go out on ground-assault missions where we may be attacked, but we do not go out to engage the enemy," she added.

When asked how she was selected and whether she felt at ease, Mattes said she had originally been designated as an alternate. While she was on leave, she received a call that she had become a primary choice.

"I'm a surgical/ophthalmic tech and haven't done general duty corpsman duties possibly my entire time in, so it was definitely a learning experience," she noted.

According to Mattes, preparations were made prior to her being attached to the Army- and Navy-run outfit that was up on the eastern frontier near the Pakistan border. She also attained various higher levels of training while in country.


"I'm a certified 8404 corpsman which was required for this IA, but I have never been assigned to the Marines," she added. "Medically and militarily, I learned a lot from the Army. That was interesting in itself. It was a great adventure, just being in a dual-service venture," Mattes said.

Mattes wasn't only supporting our shipmates and soldier brethren. She also aided the overwhelmed and struggling Afghan people the Taliban left behind.

"I was also attached [as medical support] to some NATO-backed journalists as our unit would attempt aid missions to the children. There's a great strength of spirit in these people. You can see they are scarred, but you can also see they really want to rebuild. You just wanted them to succeed so much," Mattes said.



She explained that the overall experience offers ample reward to any Sailor willing to take on IA duty.

"Most [Sailors] think they should go to earn the extra money," said Mattes. "But there are a lot of people in Afghanistan who do want us there. Once a Sailor goes, they can see that." 

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

BEAT

THE

