A man in a flight suit and sunglasses is shown from the chest up, holding a microphone to his mouth with his left hand and a control lever with his right hand. The background is a clear blue sky. The man's flight suit has the number '50' visible on the chest.

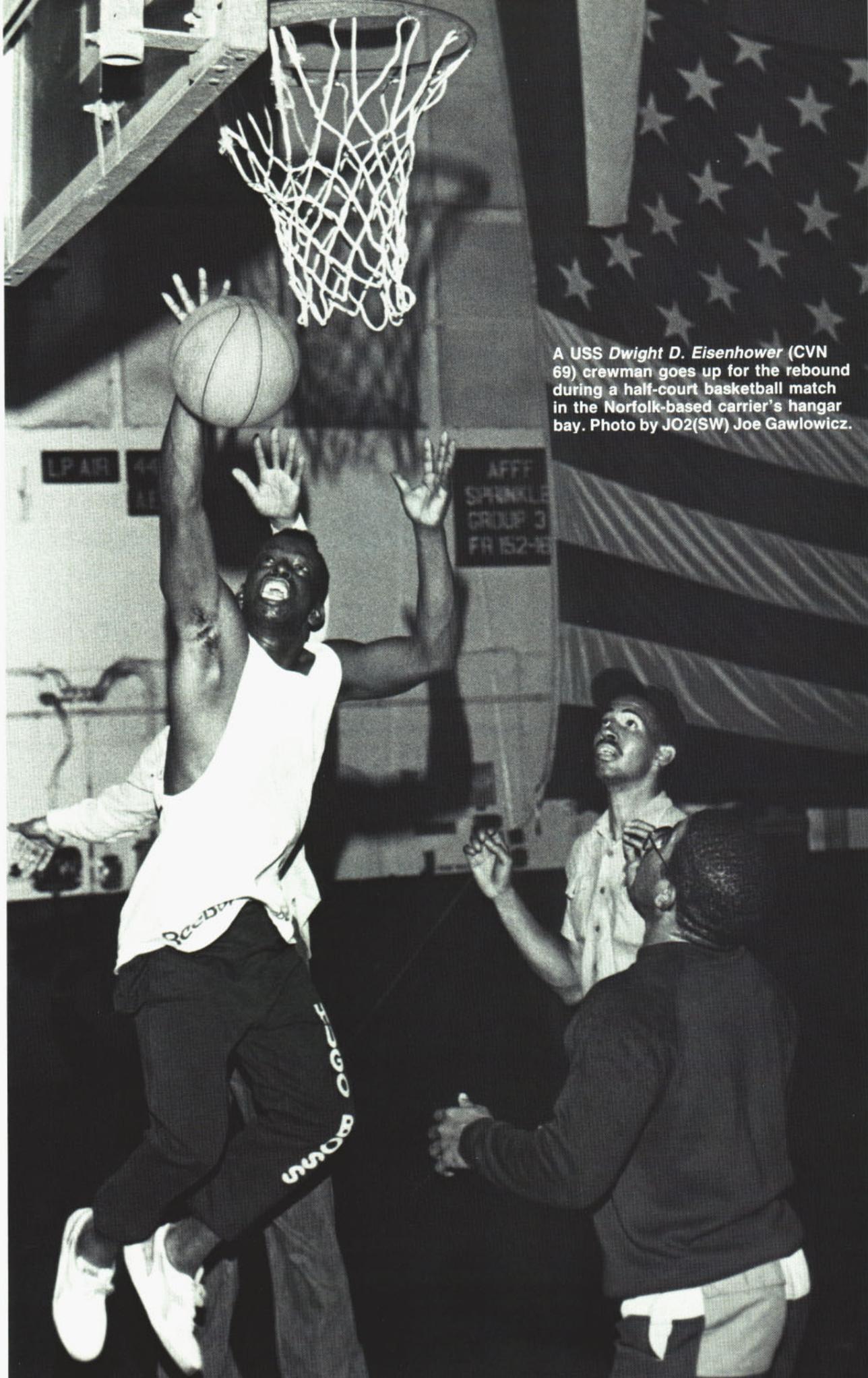
ALL HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY

OCTOBER 1989

LSOs

Bringing
them home



A USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) crewman goes up for the rebound during a half-court basketball match in the Norfolk-based carrier's hangar bay. Photo by JO2(SW) Joe Gawlowicz.

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ALL HANDS

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Photo by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen

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Front cover: LT Ron Broadway, a landing signal officer with Training Squadron 22 on board USS *Lexington* (AVT 16), is ready to press the "pickle switch" button to light the wave-off lights, signalling a foul deck. His handset allows him to communicate with the pilot. See story, Page 10. Photo by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen.

Back cover: Scenes from aircraft carrier life include catapult team members, plane captains, firefighters, pilots and, of course, ships and planes. See story, Page 19. Photos by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen and VA 176.

News You Can Use

Personnel issues

Decommissioning crews get follow-on help

Sailors who are stationed on ships scheduled for decommissioning will receive additional assistance with their follow-on orders from Naval Military Personnel Command detailers.

The scheduled decommissioning of 16 ships during the past two years prompted NMPC to develop a new way to detail entire crews at the same time. When the entire crew needs orders, detailers from NMPC hold a special conference with the ship's commanding officer, executive officer, command career counselor and the sailors themselves. The conference is usually held in Washington, D.C., for East Coast sailors, and a West Coast site is determined as needed.

Sailors can negotiate orders in person or via an open phone line operating on the ship during the conference.

All hands should update their duty preference sheets before the conference to let detailers know exactly where they want to be stationed next. This helps detailers trying to match a sailor's first choice with available billets and the needs of the Navy. □

Detailers extend working hours

Sailors in the Far East will be able to reach their detailers in Washington, D.C., during Western Pacific morning hours. Every second and fourth Wednesday of the month, detailers in all Naval Military Personnel Command officer and enlisted shops will extend their hours until 11 p.m. (Eastern Daylight Time), which is 10 a.m. in the Philippines.

This will give WestPac sailors a chance to discuss their orders during morning hours rather than having to call in the middle of the night. If enough sailors take advantage of the extended hours, it will become permanent. □

PCS assistance

AFHA has relocation packets

The Armed Forces Hostess Association offers assistance to any uniformed service member or authorized civil service employee relocating anywhere in the world. Upon request, volunteers put together a packet on the transferee's new duty station from AFHA's extensive files of unclassified information.

To obtain an information packet, write to Armed Forces Hostess Association, The Pentagon, Room 1-A-736, Washington, D.C. 20310-3133, or call commercial (202) 697-3108/6857 or Autovon 227-6857 weekdays between 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

Include in the request your name, rank, branch of service, address, phone number, new assignment (APO or FPO, if possible), departure date and family data (children's ages, pets, any special needs). □

AIDS resource materials available

A direct source of free government approved HIV and AIDS educational brochures, posters, point-of-purchase displays and more, is available to the public through the National AIDS Information Clearinghouse. The clearinghouse is a service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control, and is the only centralized source for in-depth information about available AIDS services and resources. Selected materials

Deep Freeze volunteers sought

The Public Affairs Office at the Naval Support Force, Antarctica, is seeking journalists (E-4 through E-6), for temporary additional duty with the annual deployment of *Operation Deep Freeze* at McMurdo Station. Deployment is from October through February. McMurdo also needs an interior communications electrician with the Navy Enlisted Classification Code 4747, and a photographer's mate with the 8148 NEC. For more information on *Operation Deep Freeze* call ENS D. Shook or JO1 Dan Simon at Autovon 360-5712 or commercial (805) 982-3292. □

from the clearinghouse are available in Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese and Braille. Orders for bulk quantities of publications can be placed through a toll-free number, 1-800-458-5231.

To speak with a bilingual reference specialist, call the clearinghouse at (301) 762-5111, weekdays between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. (Eastern Time). Requests for information can also be made by writing NAIC, Box 6003, Rockville, Md. 20850.

The clearinghouse also presents exhibits at conferences and conventions. □

Special assignments

Family medical needs met

Special assignment consideration is available for sailors who have severely handicapped family members requiring specialized and extensive medical or educational assistance. An exceptional family member (EFM) is someone who has an impairment or long-term serious medical condition which requires medical specialists, frequent hospitalization, intensive nursing care, special pharmacy or laboratory support, or health services available only at a limited number of naval medical treatment facilities.

Sponsors with severely handicapped family members may be considered for long-term assignments or series of assignments in selected locations where needed educational and medical services are available. An EFM program office has been set up to assist officer and enlisted detailers who work with the Navy member to develop a career path which permits assignments in selective locations. For more information see NavOp 072/89 or contact the EFM program manager at Autovon 223-3308/9/10 or commercial (202) 693-3308/9/10. □

University offers security course

The National Defense University is offering a senior level National Security Management correspondence course for qualified active and reserve officers, as well as selected civilians from the private sector, including foreign nationals. The course covers many of the same topics as the National War College and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, with emphasis on the formulation of defense and foreign policy.

Course options include a program of individual study designed to be completed in 16 months (or 21 months overseas), and seminar programs of one or two years duration for Washington, D.C., area participants. Reserve officers can earn 120 retirement points for individual study, or 150 points for seminar participation. Students may transfer from one mode of instruction to another upon request. However, participation in seminars is strongly encouraged.

For more information, write to the National Defense University, Attn: NDU-IH-OS, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C. 20319-6000; or call commercial (202) 475-1850, Autovon 335-1850. □

All Hands interview

CNO

Navy's top admiral addresses issues, says today's sailors are doing a "superb job."

All Hands recently interviewed ADM Carlisle A.H. Trost, the Chief of Naval Operations. The CNO discussed a wide range of topics relating to the U.S. Navy today and the fleet of the future — subjects important to sailors everywhere.

All Hands: President Bush has said the Cold War is over. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has said he no longer considers the Soviet Union his enemy. Do *glasnost* and *perestroika*, along with more open governments in eastern bloc nations mean that the threat to world peace is less than it was ten years ago? As a maritime nation, have our commitments lessened?

Trost: Let me begin by noting that the threat to world peace in the near term probably *has* lessened from what we saw just a few years ago. But

there's still a lot of unpredictability about what will really happen in the Soviet Union. I think it's prudent to recall also that both the President and ADM Crowe [Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff] have noted that we have to watch and see what the Soviet Union does because our military requirements in support of our national security are driven by a potential threat and a requirement to be able to respond to crisis situations around the world that do not necessarily involve the Soviet Union.

People say, "Are we not now facing a lesser threat? Should we not now be able to reduce forces?" The answer to that is "probably not just yet." We still see a very substantial capability in the armed forces of the Soviet Union. The stated intent of Soviet leadership can change overnight. The Soviet Union is taking steps to reduce

its tank and manpower strength in Eastern Europe, as it stated it would. However, they still maintain a very substantial capability; they still maintain the capability to very rapidly reinforce their forces in Eastern Europe, or to introduce forces on call as compared to our own ability to reinforce our allies in Europe. So we still have to say there is a very considerable potential threat.

Now let's set the Soviet Union aside for a minute and say, yes, if there were no threats from the Soviet Union, that would impact our force structure. But our force structure is also driven by the need to maintain forward deployed forces in peacetime in order to be able to control or reduce the likelihood of peacetime crisis situations around the world. Those are situations that would impact adversely on our economic or



Photo by JOL Lee Bosco

political interests or those of our friends and allies. Our force structure development is really rather complex and depends on a number of different factors.

The Persian Gulf is a prime example of the need to have forces that are flexible, that are mobile, that can sustain a presence for extended periods of time and be free of dependence on land bases and political access.

All Hands: You've said that anti-submarine warfare is your number one war-fighting priority. Does that mean, in a budget crunch, you would prefer to follow through with the *Seawolf* SSN rather than build more *Nimitz*-class CVNs to bring carrier groups up to 15? How committed are you to 29 DDG 51s?

Trost: We don't really have the luxury of the "either/or," but ASW is our

primary emphasis. ASW competence depends on the total effects of submarines such as the new *Seawolf*, and our surface and air platforms, as well as on a number of other sensor systems that would be used when cueing these particular systems. So the ASW requirement itself involves a rather complex combination of balanced capabilities. The Navy overall requires a balance. Thus, I can't say that I would favor one or another type of force in a given situation, because if you weaken one area, that becomes the critical area, because an enemy would take advantage of that weakness.

I support the DDG 51 program. It's critical to our long-term capability in ASW, anti-air warfare and air warfare. It is an extremely survivable platform, which we expect to remain in service many years.

All Hands: How might your answers to questions about CVNs be affected by the coming reductions in aircraft procurement and consequent elimination of a 14th carrier air wing?

Trost: We need the aircraft carrier platforms and it takes a long time to get them. They also serve a long time — up to 45 years. It takes a lot less lead time to buy aircraft. In addition, it is important to know that even though we have had to "stand down" the 14th active tactical air wing, we still have the 13 tactical air wings along with the two reserve tactical air wings. Together, they give us the aircraft we need.

All Hands: How safe is the Navy? Some critics have raised questions about safety in the fleet following recent losses of life aboard *White Plains* (AFS 4), *America* (CV 66) and especially *Iowa* (BB 61). What do three separate major accidents in less than one month mean? Some have even called for decommissioning of the four battleships. Are these ships, which were built in the '40s and '50s, suitable platforms for the '90s?

Trost: First of all, I would say the Navy is quite safe, as a result of our continuous emphasis on proper training and on safety as a paramount requirement of operations in peacetime. The three accidents you referred to were indeed tragic, but totally unconnected — three different types of accidents. We are investigating the causes in each case to determine lessons learned and to make sure we do whatever we can to preclude such accidents. The fact remains that life in the military can be dangerous. We often operate in a hazardous environment. There is nothing, for example, more hazardous than life aboard a carrier deck at night. And it would be especially so

if people were not fully and properly trained. So we put a great emphasis on training and procedural adherence in order to enhance safety. After the *Iowa* incident, people said, "My goodness, we should just decommission all these battleships." But I've reminded several people publicly that that's the equivalent of saying that when [USS] *Samuel B. Roberts* [FFG 58] hit the mine in the Persian Gulf, we should have decommissioned all frigates, or when [USS] *Stark* [FFG 31] was hit by two missiles, we should have decommissioned all frigates, or when we have a submarine accident, we should stop using submarines. In my view, it's not a valid argument. The *Iowa* accident has been used as an argument in favor of getting rid of battleships, usually by the people who were not in favor of recommissioning those battleships in the beginning. It has nothing to do with the long-term viability or utility of those recommissioned battleships. It's important to remember that when those battleships were recommissioned, we very carefully worked over all of their existing systems, upgraded communications, sensors and weapons capabilities to permit them to serve in a modern environment.

Again, I remind people that a battleship serving, for example, in the North Arabian Sea during the Persian Gulf crisis, was able to sail up the Strait of Hormuz despite the threat of the *Silkworm* cruise missiles because it is tough and is virtually unsinkable. We forget that those ships were designed to go in harm's way against other ships with 18-inch guns firing one-ton armor-piercing projectiles. A cruise missile with a 2,000-pound warhead is not likely to do other than superficial damage to a battleship.

All Hands: The Navy has benefited in the recent past from "lessons learned." For instance, the *Stark* incident taught us lessons that enabled a



Photo by JO1 Lee Bosco

courageous crew to save *Roberts*. Are there any lessons learned that are emerging from recent incidents?

Trost: I can't comment on these three [incidents aboard *White Plains*, *America* and *Iowa*] since the investigative reports aren't completed yet, but we'll have a very careful look at whether or not they were due to procedural errors, material failures, damage control training or whether equipment is adequate. But we've found over the years that lessons learned tend sometimes to have to be relearned. We therefore have put a lot of emphasis on cataloging in the computer data base lessons learned for ready recall. That's for use not only in training courses, but for periodic review by people who, for example, go on to more responsible positions — to make sure that they are aware of what's happened in the past, and what they might expect in the future.

All Hands: Espionage incidents (at least those that have been discovered to date) continue to be small in number, but irritatingly persistent.

Have recent steps — such as reducing the number of Navy people with high security clearances — worked? What else has been done or needs to be done?

Trost: We've taken quite a few steps. Reduction in security clearances is one. By reducing the number of people who are designated as having a need to know regarding sensitive or highly classified information, we reduce the base from which potential espionage cases could develop.

We've also taken a lot of procedural steps to better safeguard and control access to classified information. I think those steps are working.

What troubles me most is that we have no way of absolutely guaranteeing that we will discover people who are driven by greed, or motivations that have nothing to do with the type of individual who fits the standard pattern of one we might suspect of espionage. And I'm not sure that in a free society we're ever going to totally protect ourselves from that type of person.

What we have to do is ensure that each of us is well aware of the characteristics of those individuals most prone to engage in espionage. On a day-to-day basis, we carefully adhere to very well established guidelines for the control of access to classified information and for the protection of that information. On each occasion, when we come across such an incident, we properly investigate and prosecute fully those who engage in espionage and this is a deterrent against those who might say, "Well, that's not a bad way to pick up a few bucks, I think I'll try it and it will be easy." It won't be!

All Hands: Do you think *Operation Ill Wind* has put an end to Pentagon procurement problems? How much of an impact have these scandals had on our ability to efficiently fund our top priorities?

Trost: It has clearly caused us some problems, in that it has been perceived to be a much greater problem than it actually is. If one looks at the numbers of people involved, one quickly determines that very few of those people were in fact government employees and none of them, to date, were people in uniform. That latter fact makes me feel quite good. It's also important to note that *Ill Wind* is an investigation that grew out of an internal Navy investigation. It resulted in the further involvement of the FBI and the subsequent indictment of a lot of people who were guilty of defrauding the government.

I think it's important for us to recognize the need to work very quickly, and actively follow through on any such cases. *Ill Wind* in itself focused on some aspects of Navy procurement, but won't solve all defense procurement ills or government procurement ills. I'm struck by the fact that what I read just about the frauds taking place at HUD [Housing and Urban Development] makes the fraud in *Ill*

Wind pale by comparison. And I'm quite sure those investigations will continue.

The problems coming from all this might be the hampering of our procurement process. Members of Congress and others in government may put even greater constraints on those with responsibility for government procurement — so much so, that they can't carry out their jobs. The answer isn't more regulation. The answer is adherence to hopefully simplified rules and regulations that government can practice.

All Hands: Do you see any possibility that budget constraints might cause you to modify OpTempo, the six-month deployment limit?

Trost: We're going to hold to OpTempo and PersTempo guidelines as the best possible way to keep from putting the burden of reduced forces on the backs of our people. I think it's essential that we adhere to those guidelines. I also think it's appropriate to note that the Secretary of Defense, after his direction to reduce further some of our surface combatant force levels and some of our P-3 force levels in this most recent budget action, also stated his commitment to help sustain the Navy's goals for OpTempo and PersTempo. That said, we'll find ourselves meeting continuing demands on the Navy with somewhat fewer forces than we had hoped to have, but considerably larger numbers of ships than we had just a decade ago.

All Hands: A recent book about women in the military — Brian Mitchell's *Weak Link* — claims that women are a "bad buy" for the U.S. armed forces and that the Joint Chiefs actually prefer men over women for military service, but are reluctant to say so publicly. Can you comment on these allegations and offer us your perspective about Navy women and

what you see as their future afloat?

Trost: I don't concur with the comments made by that author. I found it interesting that he can state the views of the JCS without having ever spoken to any one of them, either collectively or individually. He certainly never contacted me and he misstates my views *totally*.

I think the Navy position on the role of women in the service is rather clear and it's been frequently restated. We find that women serve a very important role in the Navy. They are doing their jobs well. We need them. We rely on them. We are looking at ways to enhance their roles, rather than for ways to get rid of them. I think the very fact that we have a structure in place that assures that the role of women is kept at the fore of the thought process of Navy leadership is important.

The fact that we have a mechanism to ensure equal opportunity across the board in the Navy — not just for women, but for everyone in the Navy — I think is significant. All of it, contradicts the statements made by the author.

All Hands: What's the Navy doing to limit attrition, particularly first-term attrition?

Trost: We've taken a number of steps. I was particularly concerned when I learned that our first-term attrition hadn't gone down despite the fact that we've been recruiting higher quality people into the service in this decade. We've taken a look at our practices in recruit training and in our "A" schools and in other training pipelines to ensure that our attitude is one of being success-oriented, rather than taking the easy way out when someone fails to fully measure up the first time. We've also put an emphasis on leadership responsibilities, both in ensuring better leadership training for our senior enlisted personnel, and our officers, as they go

on to positions of higher responsibility. We also emphasize to the entire chain of command the fact that it is leadership which makes someone perform responsibly in a new organization where he may or may not feel very comfortable and familiar.

All Hands: Is that why the Navy is eliminating LMET, Leadership and Management Education and Training, and going to the new Career Leader Development Program?

Trost: The basic philosophy of leadership training in LMET was still very valid. What we need to do is ensure that we have a continuum of training which focuses on individual requirements throughout an individual's career. We want to ensure that, as each new level of responsibility is attained, whether it's advancement within the enlisted ranks or assignment of officers to executive officer and command positions, that the individual has a refresher course in leadership training that will be most effective in carrying out those responsibilities. It's really an emphasis on better organization and focus, without changing the basic philosophy behind LMET.

All Hands: Last year, budget constraints forced some difficult personnel actions: promotion delays, early outs, etc. The situation has improved this year. What does the future hold?

Trost: We feel quite good right now. We were able in FY89 to avoid any of the adverse actions that we had to take because of budget constraints in FY88. This success was based on a number of factors. We had, first and foremost, the very strong support of the SecNav in approving a reprogramming request that we successfully pursued, which gave us full funding of our military personnel account. In addition, there has been very active management of that account by

VADM Boorda [Chief of Naval Personnel] and his subordinates to ensure that we managed properly and didn't have to delay promotions, force early outs, or take any of the other actions which we really found untenable last year.

For the FY90 budget, we've again ensured that we transferred funds from procurement accounts into the military personnel accounts so that those accounts would remain fully funded. We have pursued our goals with members of Congress and their staffs to ensure that they understood the importance of that funding and to date we have been successful in maintaining that account fully funded. I'm optimistic that for 1990, we again will be able to properly manage our account without harming our people in any way.

I am concerned, however, about compensation, which we do not control directly. We have watched as our people were brought back up to relative parity with their civilian counterparts at the beginning of the 80s and now once again face a gap in compensation parity, which is almost the equivalent of what we saw in the late '70s.

We demand a lot of our people. We take a lot of steps to ensure that they achieve the satisfaction to match the challenges they face in the Navy and that the individuals and their families are properly cared for. The one gap that is most obvious in my view is the compensation gap. I think it's something we're going to have to convince Congress to close up, perhaps in several steps, over the next few years.

All Hands: In recent years, the Navy has held its own in recruiting, but just barely. The Army has fallen below its quota and that's a bad omen for all the services. What is the Navy doing to improve recruiting, not just



Photo by JOI Lee Bosco

in terms of the numbers and quality of recruits, but in terms of making life better for recruiters? How will the new Accession and Retention Branch with its emphasis on marketing and advertising help?

Trost: We have been successful in meeting our goals in recruiting — our quality goals as well as our numerical goals — for quite a long time. It's taken a lot of work and recruiting's increasingly difficult — we recognize that fact. And we recognize that we haven't had recruiting advertising dollars in the amounts necessary to ensure proper awareness, among our nation's youth, of what the Navy can offer.

We've taken a number of steps — first of all to provide for greater flexibility in our recruiting process, by shifting more recruiting assets to areas where there are more potential recruits available. We have also worked hard to improve the hours, workload and the overall amount of support for our recruiters.

We have established the Accession and Retention Branch to focus across the board on recruiting, attrition and

retention, since all three are so closely tied together. We hope to ensure that a single organization will have responsibility for oversight of the whole program that impacts the total number of people we have available to do the job. I do think that this effort will help in focusing attention on the organization, and I am also hopeful that the organization will be able to come up with ideas that help us make people more aware of what the Navy offers and therefore ease the burden on the recruiter.

All Hands: The medical community has been working hard to improve both its image and its ability to provide services. Many of the recommendations of last year's Blue Ribbon Panel are being put in place. Are Navy men and women and their families receiving the best possible medical care? Will that care level decline, improve or stay the same?

Trost: When you say "best possible medical care," I say "yes" in terms of *quality* of care available to our Navy families. However, we do not yet have adequate resources to provide all the *quantity* of care we would like.

Our goal is to provide adequate care across the board for active duty personnel, dependents and retirees. We know also that we can provide that care in in-house service facilities at less cost than it can be provided for under CHAMPUS. So, our goal is to enhance our in-house capability. We're making positive steps in that direction. But we're not home free yet, because it takes a lot more resources than we currently have available to close the gap.

What I foresee is an improvement in the quantity of care without sacrificing the quality of care available, but with a continuing dependency on outside care through CHAMPUS.

All Hands: With everything the

Navy is doing on its shrinking budget, how does drug interdiction fit in?

Trost: Drug interdiction is part of our effort to help tackle what's really a national problem. We have devoted a number of ship steaming days and many hours of aircraft flight time to the drug surveillance and interdiction program. That effort will continue.

With a reduction of surface combatants available to carry out that job, as well as to meet our forward deployed commitment responsibilities, it puts a greater burden on our operational commanders to meet those commitments. However, we have no option but to carry out this mission.

All Hands: When base-closing legislation was proposed a couple of years ago, it sounded rather sweeping, with significant impact on several large Navy facilities. Now that the rubber is starting to meet the road, it seems that there will be little real impact on Navy facilities or people. Is that true, or is it just the calm before the storm? How do you see base closings affecting the Navy in the next five to 10 years, both in terms of the people that are served by those bases and the people who work on them?

Trost: We need to think back to where we were in the 1970s. People have forgotten that in the early- to mid-seventies, we reduced our base structure by almost half as we were cutting down on total force structure subsequent to the Vietnam War. That fact became obvious to the Base Closure and Re-alignment Commission, I think, which noted that the Navy, rather than having surplus bases, was in fact seeking more bases under the strategic homeporting program in order to properly support the growing, modernized fleet. That resulted in a relatively small impact by that base closure commission on

Navy bases, and I think that is properly so.

I foresee that continuing for the future, because we don't have a surplus of bases. We have far fewer today than we had just 20 years ago, and we've been very careful to articulate and properly support our requirements for the bases that we already have.

All Hands: What, in general, is the state of the Navy?

Trost: The state of the Navy is quite high. Readiness is good across the board. Supportability, sustainability, dedication, professionalism, personnel readiness are characteristics of a truly ready force. We have been able to meet every commitment laid upon us. We had a challenge by Libyan fighter jets — and a challenge in the Persian Gulf. We have clearly made strong contributions to the nation's effort to deter crisis situations. We have been a major instrument in successful foreign policy in areas such as the Persian Gulf.

All Hands: If you could spend sixty seconds talking directly to every sailor, what would you say?

Trost: I'd tell them that they are part of an organization that they all should be proud to serve in. They all clearly are, or we wouldn't enjoy the high retention we do today. Our Navy has done a superb job in meeting its nationally tasked commitments. We do so in such a way that we get the admiration of everyone who comes out to take a look at our ships, squadrons and support activities. They can't help but note the quality and dedication of our people.

Our people are doing a superb job. They're proving that the emphasis and high priority we put on our personnel *does* pay off.

And so I say to all our people, "Stay on course." □

'Somebody down there likes me'

A student's best friend: the LSO

Story by JOC Robin Barnette
Photos by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen

Carrier pilots may get the glory, but they don't land the Navy's powerful jets on aircraft carrier decks by themselves. From a small platform near the stern of every aircraft carrier, landing signal officers wield the power to OK pilots to land, or "wave them off," sending them around for another try at the deck.

In fact, the LSOs are officially charged, in the LSO naval aviation training and operations procedures standardization manual, with the "safe and expeditious recovery of aircraft" aboard carriers. From their vantage point at the edge of the flight deck, LSOs guide pilots in, then evaluate and grade each landing.

The relationship between the pilot and the LSO is important, one of the most vital in all of naval aviation, and

the relationship between them is first established in flight training.

A student jet pilot works with an LSO for the first time 12 to 14 months into flight training. "The students first officially work with the LSOs in this carrier qualification phase," said LT Charlie Gay, Training Air Wing 3 LSO and flight instructor at Naval Air Station Chase Field, Beeville, Texas. "It may be the first time they work with LSOs, but it won't be the last."

The heart of the carrier qualification stage of training is the FCLP, the field carrier landing practice. During this two-week preparation for their first carrier landing, each student gets 10 opportunities — called "bounce periods" — to practice carrier landings on land. Most of the FCLPs for Gay's students — and other Beeville

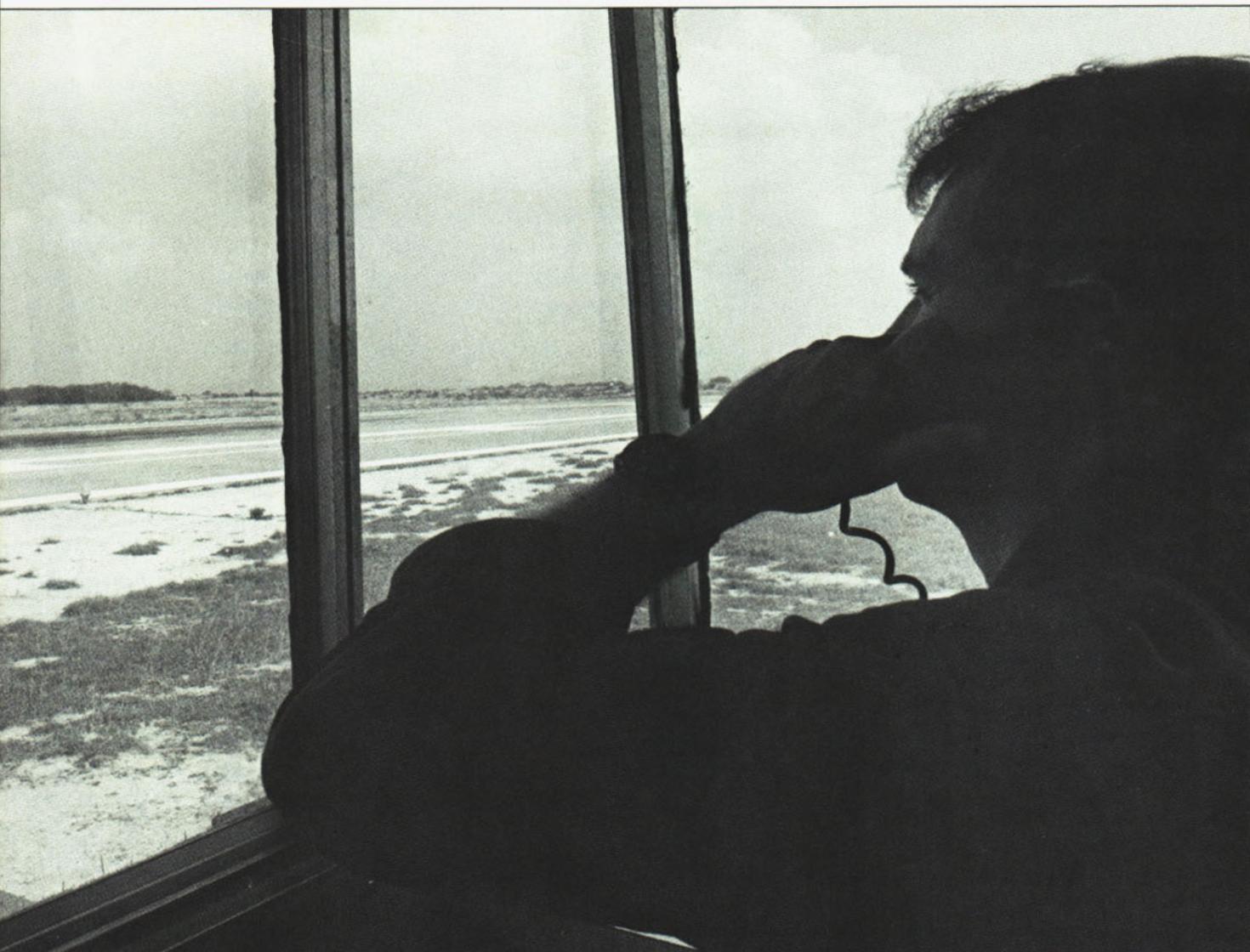


trainees — are held at Naval Auxiliary Landing Field Goliad, 35 miles from NAS Chase Field.

* * *

Before heading out for the day's FCLP, Gay briefs his six students to prepare them for their ninth bounce period. "Fly the ball," he says. "Don't let it get away from you." The "ball" or "meatball" is a bar of yellow light in the Fresnel lens, which looks like a ball from the pilot's perspective. The special lens concentrates light into a narrow beam. The pilot keeps this light centered between a row of green lights on either side to make his landing. "Keep the ball in the middle," Gay urges his students. "Don't settle for a little low or a little high." He wants them to strive for the perfect landing every time.

At the airfield, Gay and his stu-



dents have to wait for their 30-minute "window" to complete today's FCLPs; other students — some in T2-C *Buckeyes*, others in the more advanced trainers, the A4-J *Skyhawk* — are also doing FCLPs.

When the time comes, Gay and another LSO hop in a van and drive out to the edge of the runway. Goliad has the luxury of a small shack for LSOs to work in, glassed in on all sides. The shack is air-conditioned, which makes it preferable to standing in the glaring heat of the south Texas sun, which is what they have to do if the FCLPs are done at Chase Field.

A third man joins Gay and the second LSO. He is today's "writer" for the FCLP — responsible for recording in LSO shorthand Gay's ongoing evaluation of the students' landings.

As each student comes in on a pass,

he calls in his approach, identifying himself, his plane and "calling the ball," announcing that he has the yellow bar in sight. With only about 30 seconds between one pilot's touch down and the next, Gay keeps up a constant patter of commentary to the writer, who records it all on a small card. "Low in the middle . . . high in close . . . too much power. . . ."

The T-2s touch the runway about 100 feet away from the shack. Communicating requires constant shouting — everyone wears hearing protection because the glass does little to dampen the noisy roar of the jets.

As needed, Gay also talks on the radio to each student — giving the previous student a few seconds of feedback on his pass, giving the next student input on his approach — and manages somehow to listen to the

LSO talks to a student pilot during carrier landing practice.

suggestions and comments of the second LSO who is helping keep track of the students.

"Jackson was high and fast out of the turn," Gay says to the writer. But even as Gay evaluates Jackson, his eyes are already on the next jet coming in. "Round four," announces the writer, indicating that all the students have completed three passes. He continues to scribble furiously. The radio crackles with static as the next student calls the ball. "Roger, ball," Gay says into the radio. To the writer he says, "What does this guy need?" "A wave-off," the writer responds.

Gay holds in his hand the "pickle," the control that triggers the red



“wave off” lights, signaling pilots to add full power and not to land. He pushes the button and the lights flash red; the jet roars away from the runway without touching down. On a carrier deck, the wave-off lights are used to signal pilots that it’s unsafe to land, either because of an unsafe approach, or because of an unsafe condition on deck.

The bounce period is over when each student has made six passes. Gay heads back to Goliad Field’s lone building — a combination fire house, crash house, office building, lounge, briefing room and medical department — to debrief his students.

The session is informal, but businesslike. The students sit in a semi-circle at small desks with Gay seated

in front of them. Gay refers to the evaluation cards filled out by the writer as he discusses the passes of each student. A student’s entire history in the carrier qualification phase is on the card, so Gay can easily talk about the previous eight bounce periods in addition to today’s. He reconstructs each pass from the notes and clearly recalls what happened. Gay’s goal is plainly not to simply evaluate the student’s flying, but to teach him how to think for himself and make needed corrections to maintain a satisfactory approach.

“You need to figure out in your own mind why you’re coming in low,” he says to one student, “and what you need to do to correct it.”

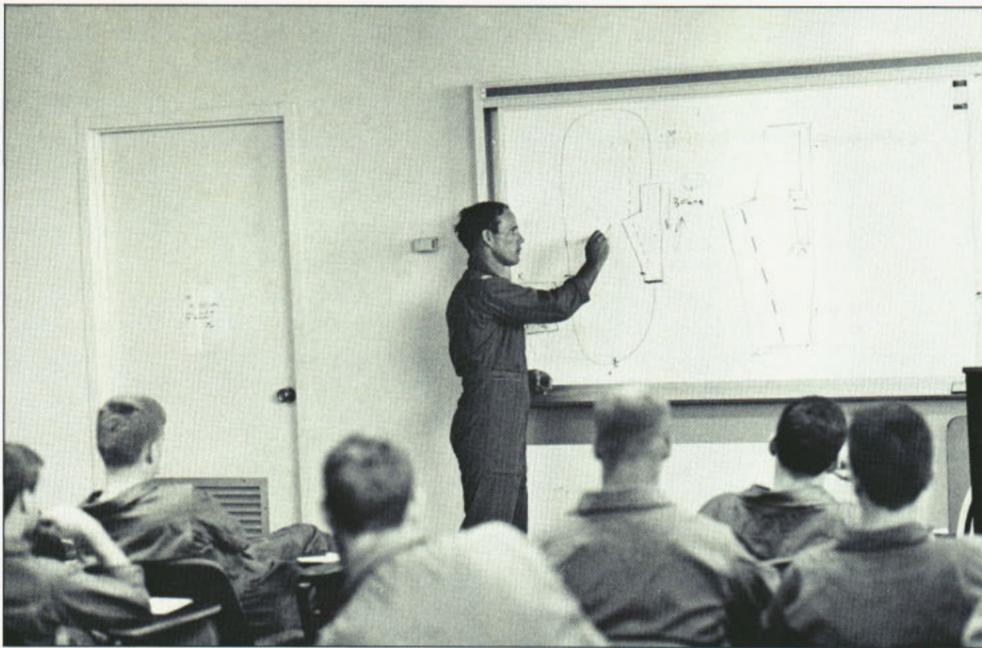
The students are impressed by the

LSO’s ability to remember in detail what they did on each pass.

“We’ll come in here for a debrief and there’s been six of us flying six passes — that’s 36 passes,” said one student, Marine 1st Lieutenant Mark Brewster. “And the LSO will come in here and remember that single pass — and when you think back, you say, ‘Yeah, that’s what I did.’”

“I went out and sat with the LSOs for a couple of bounce periods,” said another student, Marine 1st Lt. Peter Harmon. “You think there’s no way they can tell whether you’re going fast or slow, high or low. But then I realized they can see *everything*.”

During their first two FCLPs, the students have an instructor riding in the back seat in addition to the LSO



Opposite page: A student pilot's view of the landing strip. Left: Students get a detailed briefing before flying to a carrier for the first time. Below left: Learning to "fly the ball" using the Fresnel lens is part science, part art.



on the ground. This helps the students gain confidence in the LSO's abilities.

"It's amazing," said Brewster, "that when you're with an experienced pilot [in the back seat] he'll tell you things you're doing wrong coming down the groove — and when you get your card afterward, it's almost verbatim what that LSO has written. That really shows us the expertise of the LSO."

"We hadn't worked with an LSO at all [until this phase of the training]," said student pilot Naval Cadet James Jackson. "We were wondering what kind of attitude they were going to have in this whole evolution. What surprised me was that they were real calm."

"We make the same mistakes on each pass — and we *know* we're doing it and trying to correct for it," Jackson continued. "But they see it every time, and we're wondering why they're not screaming, blowing the radio out. They're real patient."

Gay's students gain a lot of confidence during their week and a half of training and anticipate their carrier quals aboard USS *Lexington* (AVT 16), only a few days away.

"Everything went pretty good today," said student pilot ENS Robby Chason, "and coming in from the flight I was thinking, 'If I do this just like I did today, I can make it!' But then I'll go home and start thinking about it and the doubt will start creeping in."

The students all look forward — nervously — to that first carrier landing, and appreciate the fact that the LSO instructor who will be waving them aboard when they get there will be the same one they've been working with all week.

"That's a nice thing, when you think about it," said Harmon. "You've built up a real relationship with that particular LSO down there on that deck. It's not a ship's LSO who is just a voice to us, with no name or face."

The LSOs also feel a relationship with their students and are motivated by a desire to be on that carrier deck for them — to teach them and help them become qualified carrier pilots.

"When I was a student, my LSO seemed to be the kind of guy who would be there 'on a dark and stormy night,'" said LT Bob Julius, an LSO instructor with Training Squadron 26. "He was the kind of person you could count on in trouble. Just the way he said 'roger, ball' had a calming influence on me. I want to fill that role for others."

"All the LSOs I knew were always looked up to in the squadron and the air wing," said another LSO instructor, LT Mike Petersen, of VT 24. "The LSOs didn't always have the highest grades, but the ones I'd known always knew what they were talking about. They helped me improve my flying."

An LSO is a carrier pilot who waves — controls landings — for other pilots in addition to his own flying duties. It means putting in a lot of extra hours, and to some extent cuts down on the LSO's flight hours. It's usually voluntary on the part of the LSO, and flight time is something pilots usually don't want to give up. So why do some volunteer? The answer is both

professional and political.

"Number one, it improves your skills," Gay said, "because you're dealing with landing so much, you're harder on yourself — you're just thinking about it more often.

"Number two, you get to interface a lot more with the rest of the air wing on the ship," he continued. "Because you're an LSO, you have to go around and debrief all the pilots after they land. So you're meeting a lot of people. That just helps you out in the long run. It's a good career move. It opens other doors."

The instructor LSOs at the jet training squadrons in Beeville and Kingsville, Texas, Meridian, Miss., and Pensacola, Fla., bring new strike carrier pilots into the Navy community — and also lay the foundation for a relationship that the pilots will have with LSOs throughout their careers.

"The relationship is very important," said Petersen. "The LSO is tasked with getting the squadron pilots ready to go out to the ship. And he trains the naval flight officers for the two-seat planes — we do training in night landings and bad weather — it takes up a lot of time."

The training includes evaluating every carrier landing pilots make.

"Every single carrier landing that's made is graded by the LSO who's waving that pass," Gay said. "Not only is it graded and recorded, the actual scores are posted in every ready room for the entire squadron to see. That's an indication of the importance placed on landings."

The key phrase is "importance placed on *landings*," not the importance of grades.

"Grading is really secondary to the LSO," explained LT Julius. "We're not grading for competition, but to make the flying better. Sometimes the relationship between LSOs and the other pilots becomes adversarial,



and that's bad. Grading encourages the pilots to do their best — because they're competitive — but the pilots can also take it too seriously and get nit-picky."

Julius stressed the importance of an LSO carefully evaluating both the student pilots he's training now and the more experienced fleet pilots: anyone can develop bad habits.

"We look for trends," he said. "We can't ever take a pilot for granted — we have to take landings seriously every time."

Because the LSO is responsible for evaluating other pilots, he has to keep his own piloting skills up to par.

"Here in the training squadrons, we have the benefit of higher rank over the students," Julius said. "But even so, our credibility is important because the students can recognize if you're trying to snow them. In the fleet, our credibility is even more important, because we're dealing with peers or even seniors."

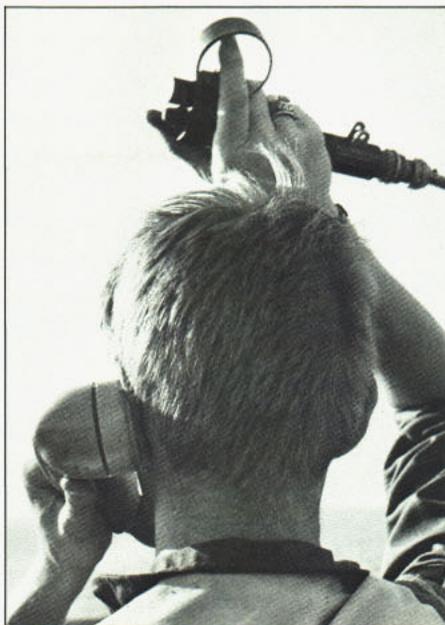
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Gay's students join other students from the training squadron for one of the final briefs in the last days before flying out to *Lexington* for the carrier qual. The brief goes into every detail, from the moment the students climb into the cockpits of their T-2s at Chase Field to their return to the "beach" when it's all over.

"Do what that LSO tells you out at the boat," says the XO of VT 26 in introductory remarks. "The only way you'll be sent home is if you don't respond." It happens — a student can manage to mess up so badly he's sent "home" to his squadron from the ship. That possibility is on the mind of every nervous student.

A couple of days later, the LSOs are on board *Lexington*, off the southern coast of Texas in the Gulf of Mexico, waiting for their students to fly out from Beeville.

LT Gay is on the LSO platform, located at the edge of the flight deck,



Far left: A small crowd on the LSO platform greets a student pilot's approach to USS Lexington. Left: By holding the "pickle" — the control for the wave-off lights — in the air over his head the LSO signals that the deck isn't cleared for a landing. Below: A student pilot attempts his first "trap" on a carrier.

A critique of the second jet's approach by the LSO covers his position abeam the ship, then his turn and his approach. The student pilot calls the ball and the LSO answers, "Roger, ball." The green shirt is screaming, "Foul deck!" The jet fuel is thick in the air; everyone's eyes are aching, straining, watering with a mix of jet fuel fumes and sweat in the Gulf's hot sun.

It seems chaotic, but it's controlled chaos. They all know exactly what they're doing — except for the student pilot who is entering this environment for the first time. And even when the pilot is a veteran of many carrier landings, there are too many variables, too much potential for disaster on the flight deck for the pilot to land without guidance.

That's why the LSO/pilot relationship is so important.

* * *

Several days later, back at Chase Field, the students are exhilarated over their experience — they all "qual'ed" — and have nothing but praise for their LSOs.

"I don't think words can describe the experience," said Harmon. "It was like nothing I ever imagined — it was so much fun, I couldn't even see straight!"

"The LSOs were really good," he continued. "Some of my passes weren't real pretty, but the LSOs were there, they knew I was learning and just said to me, 'Take it easy.'"

Another student, Jackson, said simply, "It was a big relief to hear the voice of someone you knew." □

Barnette is assistant editor of All Hands. Allen is a photojournalist with All Hands.

on the ship's port side, near the stern. Another LSO, LT Dave Dallas, is with him, because two of Dallas' students are flying in the same group with Gay's students. LT Julius is there, too, serving as backup and another pilot will be the writer.

Two enlisted "Lex" crew members are also on hand — a "green shirt" announces whether the deck is foul or clear; a "blue shirt" keeps an eagle eye on whether the pilot has lowered landing gear and hook as the jet approaches the ship.

Even though the small platform is already crowded, a couple of extra LSOs come and go, lending a hand as needed. They're welcome, because the ship's air boss and his second in command — the mini-boss — each have phone lines to the LSO platform and call frequently to talk to the LSOs about the students making their passes, conditions on the deck, etc.

A jet in the pattern comes around and "settles into the groove," the ap-

proach to the deck. The green shirt is shouting, "Foul deck! Foul deck!" Gay and Dallas hold the "pickles" in the air, a signal to everyone that they're heeding the foul deck call and are ready to wave off the pilot. Gay talks into the radio to the student, giving pointers on how to correct for a good landing. The plane comes in rapidly — at what seems the last second, the green shirt yells, "Clear deck!" The LSOs drop the pickles to their sides. All eyes are fixed on the jet — the aircraft dips slightly from side to side, constantly correcting — closer, closer — the T-2 roars past — every head turns — it's a trap!

The LSO is already shouting into the writer's ear, giving his critique and turning around to get the second jet in sight. The air boss' phone buzzes, barely discernible over the noisy deck operations; one of the "extra" LSOs handles the call. The blue shirt has binoculars trained on a third jet in line: "All down at the 180!"



Just like home

Isolation brings Goliad crew together.

Story by JOC Robin Barnette, photos by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen

"I was on a tender in Charleston, S.C., and the detailer asked, 'Where do you want to go?'" said Electronics Technician 1st Class William Cassel. "I said, 'anywhere in Texas,' and got orders here, to NALF Goliad.

"My first question was, 'What's an NALF?'" continued the black-shoe sailor, "and my second question was, 'Where is it?'"

But Cassel, the Goliad crew's leading petty officer, doesn't regret his assignment. "The people out here are great to work with — everybody helps everybody."

Naval Auxiliary Landing Field Goliad is located 28 miles from the town of Beeville, Texas, and 35 miles from Naval Air Station Chase Field. Nobody denies it's in the middle of nowhere. But what it lacks in convenience, it more than makes up for in

teamwork and family spirit.

During a five-day period in May, there were 5,000 aircraft operations at Goliad; the busiest day saw 1,223 operations. And two days were extended to include night operations. All the work was handled by the Goliad crew — about 30 people in all.

It isn't that busy every week, but there's never a shortage of work at NALF Goliad.

"Our yearly ops average about 56,000," said the officer in charge, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Mike Greiner. "The sailors also maintain 800 acres of pasture — mowing around the taxiways and the lights — and they provide their own security, do their own housekeeping. I like their attitude — nothing's too hard. They're always one or two steps ahead, wanting to please.

"They're a very close-knit group," he continued. "They fight and fend for themselves. They thrive on their own esprit de corps."

That esprit de corps includes both the sailors and civilians at Goliad, and is extended to the many pilots and student pilots who come to Goliad for air operations.

"At larger fields the fire crew doesn't get any contact with the pilots," said Lanny Holland, the civilian crash captain. "It's different here — we get to know the pilots. It's the personal touch — the close working conditions. If there's a problem with an aircraft, the crash crew knows that pilot — they've eaten dinner together."

Goliad doesn't rate a messing facility — and there's no restaurant (or anything else) close by, where people

can get food — so the crew at the NALF provides chow in addition to more typical airfield services. They're famous for their Mexican dinners — beef enchiladas covered in sauce, or pinto beans with corn bread, both liberally laced with jalepeño peppers.

"The cooking was a tradition started long before I got here," said Senior Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate Daniel Fernandez, the leading chief. "The pilots come out for most of the day, so for a small fee to cover our expenses, we cook. We've built up a reputation as a good place to eat."

The esprit de corps at Goliad extends into the community. At the field's 20th anniversary celebration last spring, the NALF signed a mutual aid agreement with the surrounding county. In case of fire, for example, Goliad and the county can team up to fight it.

"Since we signed the agreement," crash captain Holland said, "a lot of local landowners are stopping by to say hello, have a cup of coffee with us. They're bringing their kids to watch the air ops."

The community outreach doesn't stop there, however — Goliad holds a food drive every Thanksgiving and a toy and clothing drive every Christmas for the needy in the closest town, Berclair, population 70. Many of those are migrant farm workers; 90 percent live below the poverty level and 60 percent are single-parent families.

"When we started, they were suspicious and surprised," said Holland, "but we *do* care. We have all lived in that situation, or know those who have." Holland has worked at Goliad for 17 years and grew up in the local area.

Goliad Field is also known for its recreational opportunities. For hunters, there are deer, wild hogs, dove and quail.

"We follow the state regulations on



fishing and hunting," said LPO Cassel. "We've caught record-size fish from the lake." Langley Lake is about a quarter of a mile from the building, fed by run-off. "We caught a bass that was 29 and a half inches," he said.

For those not into hunting and fishing, Goliad boasts a small recreation "center." Hooper Hall, named for a Goliad sailor killed years ago in a traffic accident, is open when flight operations are over and has a pool table and a ping-pong table. Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Electrical) 1st Class Jerry Witzke is working on an extension to the center, plans to screen in the patio and wants to put up a fence around the area for visiting families and children.

"When we get a chance, we try to have family days out here," Witzke said. "We do a lot of barbecuing. I'm planning on a new barbecue pit and I want to make some more tables."

If Goliad is starting to sound like a vacation spot, remember the 5,000 air ops in that five days in May. The rush of work is determined by the schedule of classes at Chase Field training squadrons — so Goliad sailors and civilians have to be flexible.

"This is the best duty station I've ever been at," said Air Traffic Controller 1st Class Darrell Jones. Previously stationed aboard USS *Coral Sea* (CV 43), Jones has an appreciation for the generally less stressful life at Goliad. "However, during the field carrier landing practices, the tempo

For the NALF Goliad "family," life revolves around the kitchen.

picks up quite a bit around here."

Another sailor agrees about the tempo of operations. "We'll start at 8:00 in the morning, with no break till maybe 1 p.m. Sometimes we're not even *that* lucky," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Fuels) 3rd Class Jimmy Antoine.

Antoine and the civilian fueler he works with strive to give the best possible service to the pilots. "We fuel them fast and come in [to the lounge] and say, 'Sir, your plane is fueled and ready whenever you want to go.' I think they appreciate the service." The mutual respect that is shared among the sailors, officers and civilians enables them to work together comfortably in Goliad's tight quarters. There's no room for segregation of officers from enlisted — there's one head, one lounge.

"When everybody's together here, it's not like 'you're senior, I'm junior,'" said Antoine, trying to explain the relationship between pilots and support personnel. "We rent movies and all sit together to watch."

And everybody rubs elbows in the kitchen, dishing up plates of Mexican pinto beans and corn bread with hot peppers.

Concluded Antoine, "It feels like home." □

Barnette is assistant editor of All Hands. Allen is a photojournalist with All Hands.

USS *Lexington*

Carrier's dual missions essential to Navy, public.

Story by JOC Dave Marr

The U.S. Navy's newest carrier rapidly steamed to the Pacific theater in 1943 to join the fight against Tojo's Japan.

Also in 1943, Tokyo Rose declared her sunk.

In 1944 she sustained a torpedo hit and a kamikaze strike that nearly wiped out the signal bridge and killed 47 men. However, USS *Lexington* (CV 16) rebounded to sink more than one million tons of Japanese shipping and destroy 1,000 enemy aircraft in 21 months of combat.

Today's *Lexington* has a dual mission: get new Navy pilots carrier qualified and show the public what naval aviation is all about.

Since 1962, USS *Lexington* (AVT 16) — AVT for auxiliary aircraft landing ship — has served as the platform for carrier qualifying student naval aviators and requalifying fleet and reserve squadron pilots. Accomplishing the mission means lots of underway time — nearly 100 days a year — operating off the coasts of Pensacola, Corpus Christi, and Key West, Fla.

"A big misconception about USS *Lexington*," said CAPT C. Flack Logan, the ship's commanding officer, "is that we don't do much of anything except steam around in our own private 'pond.' Actually, we accumulate about 15,000 carrier arrested landings a year. A 'big deck' carrier may average between 10,000 and 12,000 in the same amount of time.

"Sure it's 46 years old, but *Lexington* is the Navy's no-frills alternative for training pilots. It's cost effective, and very well maintained," he added.

In addition, the public turns out for tours in droves, especially since *Lexington's* move from Naval Air Station Pensacola to the downtown Port of Pensacola last spring. In 1989, "Lady Lex" is expected to attract 70,000 people — a statistic essentially unheard of among active aircraft carriers.

"People don't realize that we *do* get underway for our 10 to 14-day carrier qualification periods," pointed out LT Roberta McCorkle, the carrier's

public affairs officer who is responsible for coordinating the bustling tours program. "So when the pier is vacant, they're amazed and confused at the same time. Their museum vanished!"

Those fortunate enough to catch the ship in port get a tour through the hangar bay and flight deck by crew members. Everybody aboard is expected to give a tour at a moment's notice — no questions asked.

"I get a kick out of showing people the ship, because they're overwhelmed with the things we can do," said Airman Stephen Williams, who works in V-2 Division's administration office but serves as a tour guide every duty day as needed.

Bank presidents, educators and other influential members of communities nationwide also tour the ship through the Civilian Orientation Cruise program. Groups are flown to the ship when under way to observe flight operations and tour the ship.

"After we show them what *Lexington* and naval aviation has to offer," said CAPT Logan, "they become supportive of the Navy and of people who wish to become a part of the Navy."

Lexington changes home ports in 1991, when she will move to the new Naval Station Ingleside, Texas. From there, the "Lex" will continue her dual mission of training the next generation of carrier pilots well into the next century, and spreading the good word about naval aviation — past, present and future — to thousands.

Not bad for a ship declared sunk by Tokyo Rose in 1943. □

Marr is assigned to PAO, USS *Lexington*.

USS *Lexington* (AVT 16) in 1963.



'Thunderbolts'

It takes all kinds, on the deck and in the air, to keep VA 176 flying.

Story by W.W. Reid, photos by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen

"509, three-quarters of a mile. Call the ball."

"509, *Intruder* ball. Four-point four."

"Roger, ball. Twenty-two knots."

In that ten-second, three-way conversation, a great deal of information has been passed: the identity and range of the approaching aircraft, the weight of the fuel the aircraft still has on board, and the speed of the wind over the deck of USS *Forrestal* (CV 59).

Now it's all between the pilot and the landing signal officer.

Carefully balanced between left and right, too low and too high, too much power and not enough power, the pilot follows the ball in a meticulous descent, flying straight into the deck at 130 knots.

Immediately upon impact, the pilot slams the throttle full forward in a desperate effort to get airborne again. Engines thundering, *Intruder* 509 leaps forward. But the A-6E is racing down the flight deck with the second arresting gear wire cleanly snagged in its tailhook. The cable shrieks out after the jet, dragging it to a halt. Only after the aircraft stops, does the pilot pull back on the throttle. Tailhook up, cable retracted, 509 taxis clear of the landing area. The pilot guides his attack bomber into its allotted space, secures the jet engines and pops the canopy.

Just another "day in the office" for CDR Rocco Montesano, Commanding Officer of Attack Squadron 176, the "Thunderbolts."

"No doubt about it — this is the greatest job in the world," said Montesano, back in his squadron's briefing room, Ready-Five.

"But it's not just the flying," Montesano said. "In the beginning, that's the main draw — it makes all the difference. But ultimately, the real plus is working with these terrific people. Just to see all these guys at work, to see their high pride — from the

youngest kids to the most senior people — it just gives me a real great feeling."

When Montesano refers to "all these terrific people," he's not just talking about aviators. There are 274 people in VA 176, and every one of them contributes, every day, to the success of the Thunderbolts.

* * *

LT Denny Franklin is the VA 176 maintenance material control officer. "I make sure we handle all the 'up-gripes,'" he said, referring to minor mechanical problems that don't ground aircraft, "because 'up-gripes' that don't get handled right can turn into 'down-gripes' in a hurry."

The *Intruder*, first introduced into the fleet in the 1960s, requires plenty of maintenance and that maintenance is done by the book in VA 176.

OpNavInst 4790 is the "bible" that Franklin and his maintenance people live by. "The instruction contains all the maintenance info, all the references and procedures we need to do our job right," he said. "And we follow it to the letter."

The instruction calls for "special inspections" on a periodic basis or under certain circumstances. "We like to think we do our 'specials' a little deeper," said Franklin, "and, as far



Photo by W. W. Reid

Another "day in the office." VA 176 CO prepares for takeoff.

Squadrons fly on paper work, and YNC Coleman, Thunderbolts' admin chief, works with YNSN Brian Benson to keep 'em flying.

as I'm concerned, that's what helps put us at the top of the A-6 community."

Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic Arthur Clements knows what it takes to succeed as a Thunderbolt; he's in his third tour with VA 176. "I first served with the Thunderbolts from '75 to '78, then from '81 to '84, then I came back in 1987," he said. "I want to be where the action is, and that's up on the flight deck."

Clements is the line supervisor. "We prepare the aircraft for flight," he said. "We break down the pad-eye chains, greet and seat the pilot and B/N [bombardier/navigator] and assist them in getting comfortable in the aircraft. Then we start 'em up and send them off to launch. When they trap and get back, we shut 'em down and fuel and service, as necessary."

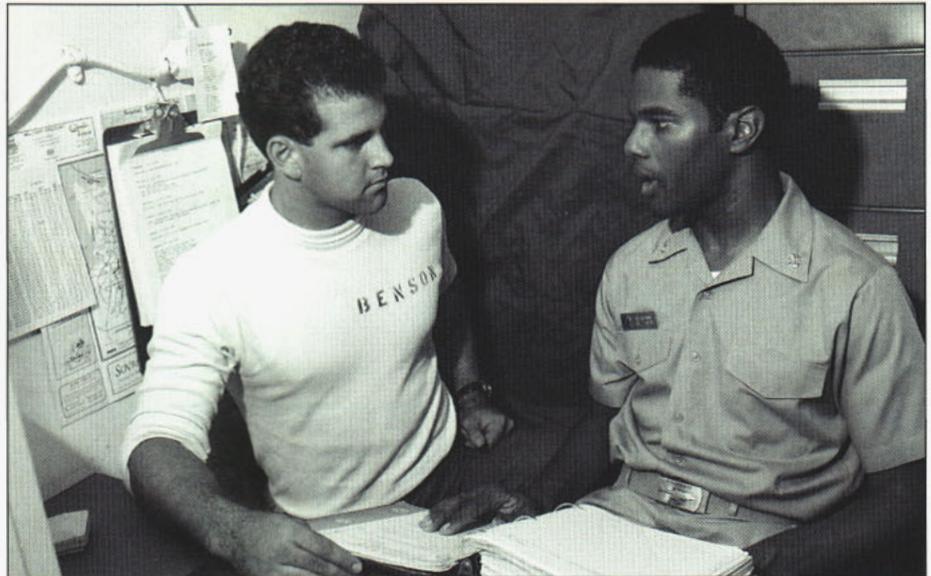
But Clements doesn't just work with aircraft, he is a people specialist as well.

"Many of the guys who work for me up on the flight deck are new to the Navy — maybe just out of recruit training or 'A' school," he said, "so it's a big responsibility — and a *major* challenge."

Clements, the VA 176 Sailor of the Year for 1988, has learned how to get things done under the pressure of carrier flight deck ops. "When it gets hot, there's no time for debate," he said. "I know — and I want everybody on the team to know — that *teamwork* is the only way to succeed up there."

Life on the flight deck can be intimidating, and Clements often has to deal with fear — his troops' . . . and his own.

"No question — it can get hairy up there! But you can't be afraid — this is real life," he said, "and you have to



deal with it. At the same time, you can't get cocky, because that will lead to carelessness, and it will get you killed."

Clements hopes his lessons rub off. "I'd like to think the kids on this line will go on, take a position of responsibility on some other flight line," he said. "And someday they'll get in a situation and say, 'Yeah, Clements told me about that.' And then they'll know that what I told them was true. *That's my reward.*"

Art Clements, in his third tour as a "Thunderbolt," knows what he's doing, and likes what he's doing.

"I've got a wonderful job," he said. "I love it — I don't care *how* hot the action gets!"

A lot of what makes a squadron



work well doesn't happen on the flight deck — it happens in the squadron's office spaces. The Thunderbolt admin supervisor, Chief Yeoman Everett Coleman, knows that accurate paper work can be as important as proper flight ops procedures.

"If we don't keep good track of the squadron's flight records, health records, qualifications and all the rest — then these people don't fly," he said, "because, as important as performance is, proper *documentation* of that performance is just as important." Coleman's admin staff consists of a YN1, a YN2, a YNSN and two operational yeomen, for logging traps and other flight quals and for manning the phones and providing other admin support during ops.

"People don't always see what we do," said Coleman, "but we're here and what we do is important. If we didn't do our job, the other people wouldn't be able to 'do planes.'"

"It takes a lot of paper work to keep a squadron in the air."

The Thunderbolts aren't the only squadron serving aboard *Forrestal*.

"There are nine squadrons altogether," said LCDR Jack Godlewski, "and the job of sorting out the schedules for flight ops, landing quals

LT Franklin (right) works closely with his maintenance crew to keep "up-gripes" from becoming "down-gripes."

and all the rest, falls to the Air Group operations officer and each of the squadron operations officers." Godlewski is the VA 176 operations officer.

"The ops officers for the squadrons have to work closely with the ops officer for the Commander of the Air Group — squad ops to squad ops doesn't happen," Godlewski said. "Our assistant ops officer, LCDR Mike Hecker, is a key player. He and the 176 schedules officer, LT Chris Flood, actually write the schedule — I review it and the CO approves it. Then it goes, with all the other squad ops 'skeds,' to the CAG ops, where everything gets sorted out."

This "sorting out" takes a few trips up to the air operations status board. "Up at air ops, our sked gets written out on the status board in blue," said Godlewski. "I go up and review it, and, if I see something that I think won't work, I mark it in red. That lets CAG ops know we've got a problem with the schedule of operations and have identified areas that have to be worked out."

Godlewski's other responsibilities include supervising Hecker, Flood, weapons officer LT Ted Braun and tactics officer LT Rob Rabuse in the training, supply, qualifications and overall operations of the squadron, on a day-to-day basis.

"We have a multitude of training, supply, qualification and other operations responsibilities," Godlewski said. "But the bottom line — and the only reason ops exists — is to be sure that these guys are ready for combat. When they go over the beach for real, all their training had better be behind them."

* * *

Everyone who flies with the Thunderbolts has to pass through the parachute loft. There, they are inevitably greeted by Aircrew Survival Equipmentman 2nd Class (AW) "Steve" Lowe, the 'chute loft supervisor.



Ops officer LCDR Godlewski passes the word on flight schedules.

"We take care of that air crew — all their flight gear — make sure everything fits, everything works, everything's ready," said Lowe. "We inspect all the gear that's been packed ashore, or, if we have to, pack it ourselves — including parachutes."

Lowe's expertise isn't limited to inspecting flight gear. "We provide instruction in how to properly use land and sea survival gear," he said. "We even invent a few things."

Lowe's shop manufactures tool pouches that allow maintenance workers, on a particular job, to carry only the tools they need for that job and not lug the entire tool chest up to the flight deck.

"We also fabricate intake and exhaust covers for the aircraft," Lowe said. "We know how to make this big sewing machine perform. We can work with imitation leather or canvas — we personalize 'em — they're all in black, with the big thunderbolt. They're nice, and help promote squadron spirit — but they're also important because they help prevent FOD." Foreign object damage is a constant concern of all squadron personnel.

Besides maintaining the inspection program for all the survival gear — battery checks in the strobe, corrosion in the fittings, sanitizing the face

masks, sharpening the survival knives, and so on — Lowe heads up a group of PRs who are the "squadron seamstresses."

"We'll sew on crow's, mend uniforms, sew on patches and devices — anything that will make the squadron look good."

* * *

With all the technical aviation expertise necessary to keep VA 176 flying, Master Chief Yeoman (SS) Dave Farrugia might feel out of place, but he doesn't. "I'm a 'people' guy," he said, "and when people are no longer necessary, they won't need me anymore."

But people *are* necessary, and that's why Farrugia is part of the Navy's Command Master Chief program.

"I have a separate detailer and work directly for the CO," he said. "Wherever the CMCs serve — whether it's with submarines or bombers or frigates — we watch out for Navy people."

"Whenever someone gets in trouble — bounces a check, DWI, whatever — the command master chief makes it his business to help," Farrugia said. "The command legal officer *may* be there, but the CMC had better *always* be there."

* * *

Meanwhile, back on the flight deck, Aviation Fire Control Technician 2nd Class Royal P. Taylor III is checking for TFOA.

"'Things falling off aircraft' is no joke," Taylor said. "AirLant keeps a record of TFOA — the number of incidents would surprise you. Once people have been in this job for a while, they understand what can happen and how 'small problems' can cost people their lives."

As the aircraft moves into launch position, Taylor and his crew swarm carefully over it, performing dozens

of last-minute checks to be sure the A-6E is truly airworthy. "One of the key checks is to try and push the flaps back in," Taylor said. "If hydraulic pressure is good, the flaps will resist. Once, we found a flap that 'gave' when we pushed it. If that aircraft had launched, it wouldn't have flown."

That kind of responsibility can be oppressive — in the beginning. "Yeah, it weighed on me a bit, at first," said Taylor. "Now I love it. It's one of the most important jobs in the Navy and I thrive on it — I do it well, and so does everyone else on our team."

Taylor supervises 11 other squadron members, and also helps out the plane captain as he checks planes ready for launch.

"I work hard to communicate the need for everyone on the team to take the responsibility for their job," Taylor said. "And they do — people grow up real fast on the flight deck."

Taylor knows that an important part of his job is "riding herd" on others. "In this job, people gain a lot of experience, fast. Everyone quickly learns how important this job is. Once they get some experience, they see what sorts of things can happen, so they understand." He smiled. "If



YNCM (SS) Farrugia is the VA 176 CMC — he can talk to the CO anytime.

they don't, I remind them."

Taylor acknowledged his reputation as one who doesn't compromise on the flight deck. "Sometimes they say my initials stand for 'royal pain,' but it doesn't bother me. If that's what it takes for VA 176 to be the best, then that's OK with me."

* * *

Intruder aircraft are subject to many dangerous forces and threats: high-G turns and dives, the almost-instant starts and stops of catapult launches and arrested landings, bumps and scrapes during microscopically close maneuvering on the flight deck. But one of the most serious threats to these carrier-based aircraft comes from nothing more dramatic than simply sitting around in a marine environment: corrosion.

The foot-soldiers leading the never ending war against corrosion are the aviation structural mechanics in the squadron phase maintenance shop. When an aircraft comes into the shop for scheduled maintenance, the aviation metalsmiths go into battle.

"Everybody hits that bird when it comes in," said AMSAN David Wood. "We tear the aircraft down, then split up into teams to attack the particular areas we're responsible for. My job is to grease certain sections of the plane," he said. "A bird that's not greased right won't fly right."

AMSAN Darrell Root works in corrosion control and has to use different techniques to properly protect different metals. "We have to strip and treat the metal — magnesium doesn't take too much work, but the steel sure does," he said. "Mostly, we work with aluminum, though. It doesn't rust, of course, but it does have its own corrosion problems."

"A stitch in time" means PR2 Lowe keeps the Thunderbolts looking sharp.



Before those problems can be solved, the paints and other protective coverings have to be removed. "We grind the paint away with wire brushes and sanders," said AMSAN Curtis Davis, who works with Root in corrosion control. "Sometimes though, we have to use chemicals, especially organic paint strippers. They work, but you have to be careful with them."

After the paint is removed, the bare metal receives special treatment. "We use alodine on the metal after it's stripped," Davis said. "It forms a coating on the metal, so that it won't corrode under the paint."

Some parts of the aircraft are more vulnerable to corrosion than others. "The landing gear is the worst," said Davis. "It really takes a beating, so we have to work the hardest on that since it's so important to the aircraft's performance."

The maintenance shop doesn't work exclusively with metals, as Davis pointed out. "Fiberglass work is important too," he said. "That's the best way to fix the little dings and bent wingtips that the planes sometimes pick up on the flight deck."

Structural integrity of the aircraft is the shop workers' major concern, but not their only concern.

"We like to make 'em look good, as well as work good," said Davis. "We think we look the best because we are the best."

* * *

"The best?" Rocco Montesano asked himself, pondering the idea.

VA 176 *did* win the 1988 Battle E for all East Coast A-6 squadrons, but

that's not Montesano's main concern. When he talks about his job as the Thunderbolts' CO, he speaks of people more than airplanes.

"My main object in this job is to let these highly professional people do their jobs," he said. "I only provide the basic focus — I let them develop the actual plans and carry them out. I sort out conflicting priorities, if necessary."

Montesano has *his* priorities straight. In an atypical career move, he came *back* into the Navy after getting out for two years.

"I was a pilot for Continental Airlines," he recalled. "The money was good, and the more stable lifestyle was nice — no deployments. But flying for the Navy was much more fun."

But "fun" wasn't the deciding factor for Montesano. "I soon realized that what I could do with the Navy was just more *important*. The good you can contribute to the nation and society is greatest in the Navy," he said. "Everyone I talk with agrees: we definitely need a Navy. But when I ask them, 'Who's gonna do that job that we all agree needs to be done?' they hesitate."

But Montesano doesn't hesitate.



"They don't say, 'launch' until I say they say, 'launch.'" AQ2 Taylor makes a last-minute check.

"This is where it's at — this is the best job anyone could have," he said. "Sometimes it amazes me that they actually pay me to do this."

Does that mean that there are no drawbacks to squadron life? "There *are* drawbacks," he said. "The biggest one is the work schedule — 12 hours on and 12 hours off is rough. The A-6 is an older aircraft, so we have a lot of maintenance, plus a lot of paper work. We *like* to work hard — that's how we got our Battle E — but we need some breaks, too.

"It can also be hard on the families," Montesano said. "When we're deployed, that's one thing. But it's hard to make them understand when we're back home, but *still* have to work all weekend."

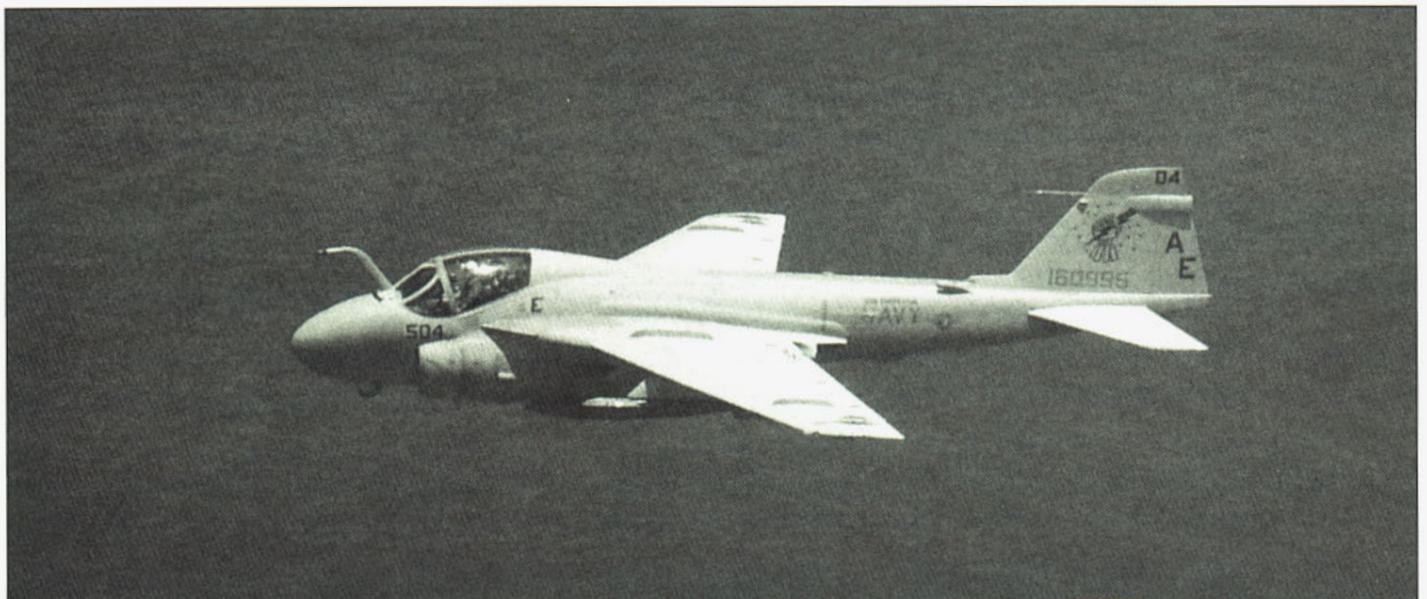
Still, all things considered, squad-

ron life is the best, according to Montesano. "This is a great squadron. We like each other — we do a lot together," he said. "It's one of the tightest squadrons I've ever been associated with. The people are all great — the chiefs are the finest I've seen in the Navy. In fact," he said, "the excellence of those chiefs, more than any other single factor, is what has made the Thunderbolts as great as they are."

Montesano paused, apparently concerned that his unrelenting praise of his squadron seemed immodest.

"Look, I can say, 'We're the greatest,' but you'd expect any CO to say that. But when *they* say it — those guys down in the pits, the guys doing all the hard work — when they sincerely feel that we're the greatest, then," he said with a confident smile, "you know it's true." □

Reid is editor of All Hands. Allen is a photojournalist with All Hands.



On the flight deck

*Where the action is
“in the danger zone!”*

Story by W. W. Reid, photos by PH1(AC) Scott Allen

An F-14A *Tomcat* comes screaming in at 130 mph, 20 feet above the flight deck. At the same instant, an A-7E *Corsair* pilot, his aircraft locked into the starboard catapult, rams his throttle to the maximum setting: full military power.

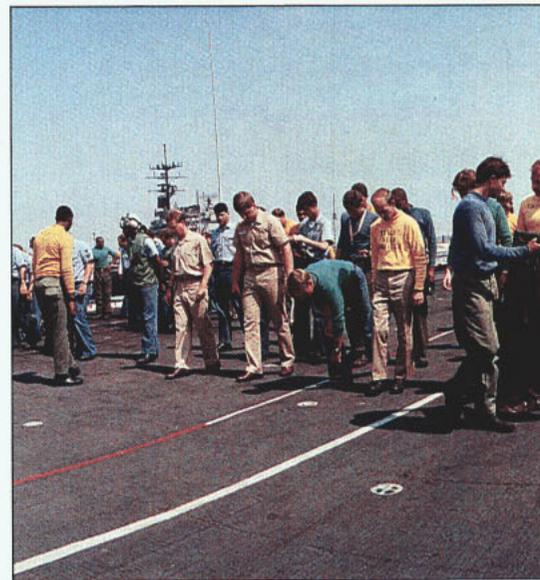
As the F-14 slams into the deck, its massive tailhook gouging the non-skid and snagging the three-wire, the A-7 pilot is crushed deep into his seat by the catapult stroke that snatches him and his 35,000-pound aircraft from standing still to airborne — from 0 to 135 mph — in about three terrifying heartbeats.

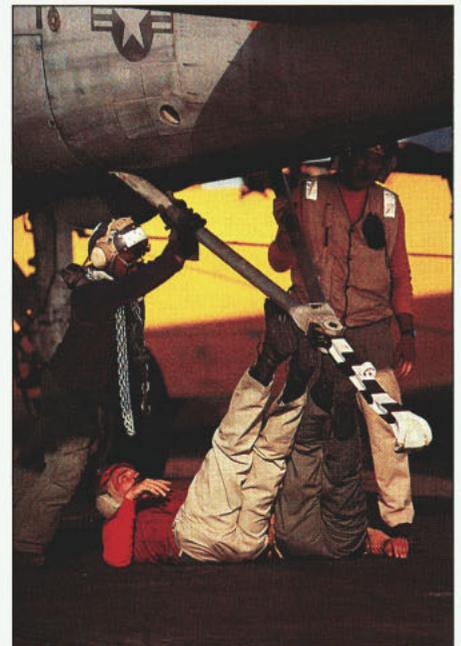
And as the *Corsair* thunders into the air, the *Tomcat* roars down the

flight deck, 200 feet of arresting cable screaming along behind, drawing the aircraft to a lurching halt less than 30 feet from the edge of the aircraft carrier.

But the *Tomcat* and the *Corsair* are only two aircraft out of a dozen or more that are constantly maneuvering, always just entering or just leaving the “danger zone” that envelops life on the flight deck of a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier.

“There is nothing more hazardous than life on a carrier deck,” said the Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Carlisle A. H. Trost, during a recent interview. “So we put a great emphasis on training and adherence to





Once the aircraft come off the elevators, once the FOD walkdown is complete, once the tailhooks are in place, then the fun *really* starts.

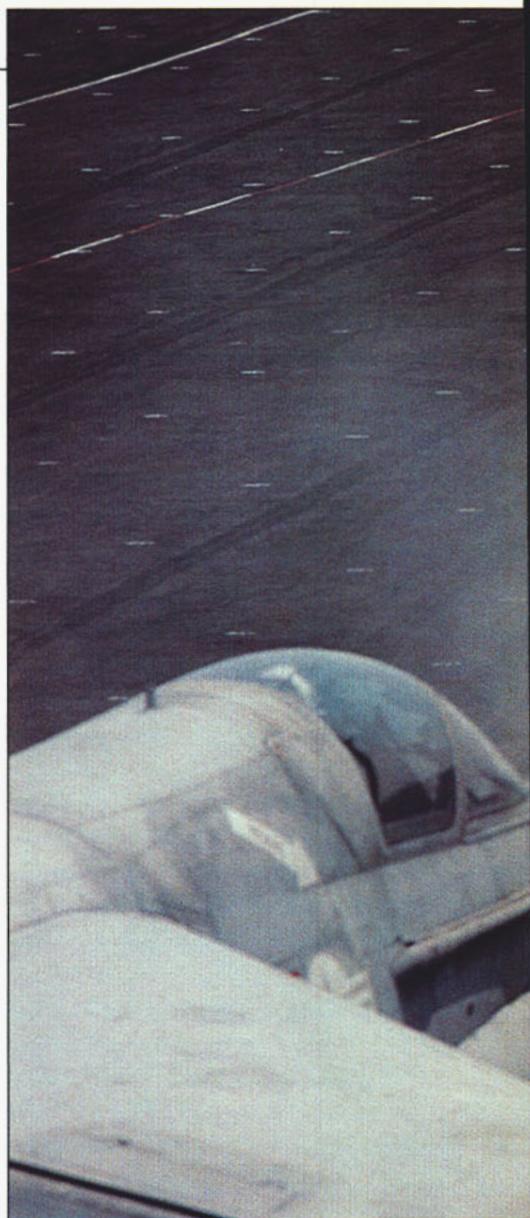
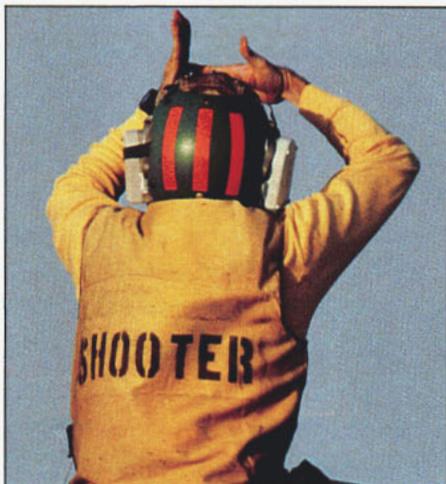


Flight deck

Flight deck communications can be done by hand signals, by hand-held signs or by screaming.

Right: A shooter calls the shots. Below: A catapult crew member shows an aircraft's weight (so the force of the catapult stroke can be calculated).

Bottom: Over aircraft noise, Aqs pass the word as best they can.



proper procedures in order to ensure safe operations."

Aircrew Survival Equipmentman 1st Class Mark Sileikis agrees. "We have to work day and night on safety on the flight deck."

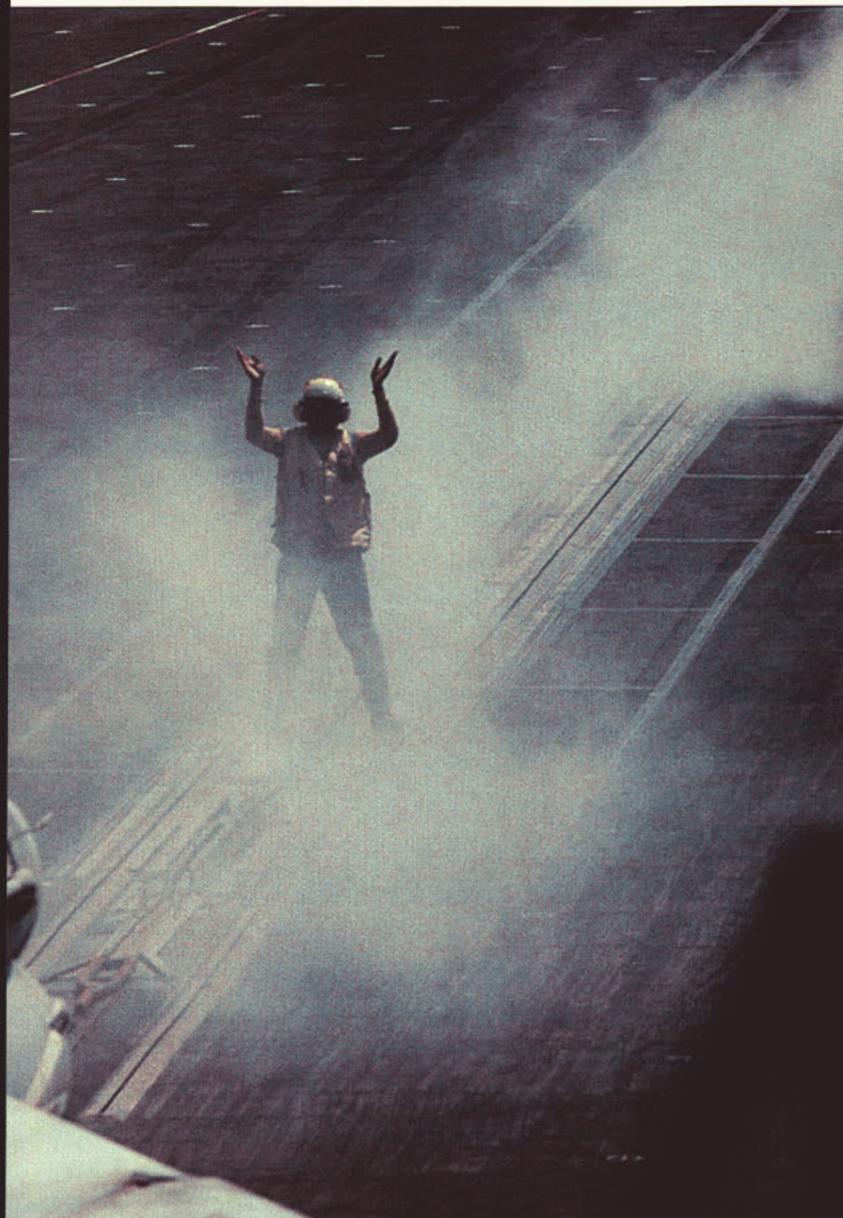
Sileikis is the Ground Safety Officer for Attack Squadron 176 aboard USS *Forrestal* (CV 59). "Every squadron has a GSO. And it's not just a collateral duty, it's a full-time job."

Sileikis carries the nickname "Silky" as an alternative to his hard-to-spell last name, not because he's smooth as silk. "Sometimes you have to be a bit abrasive," he admitted. "A few people don't get the

message right off that safety is the key to successful operations," he said. "The younger guys haven't always learned it right, and a few of the older guys may have forgotten. Sometimes you have to insist." But when Silky insists on safety, he's not acting on his own.

"I have the full backing of the squadron CO," Sileikis said. "I have direct access to him in all matters concerning safety, because of his total commitment to safe operations."

Silky gets ample opportunity to practice the safety lessons he preaches. "One of my most important jobs as GSO is up on the flight



Waiting for the next shoot. Left: Shooter guides an A-7 into the "cat." Below: Catapult final checker waits for his next "customer." Bottom: Once everything is ready, flight deck personnel go over the side to wait along the port catwalk.



Flight deck

Signals are the key to final preparations for the launch. Below: Catapult crew member signals the shooter that his *Prowler* is locked into the cat. Right: From the end of the catapult, a "thumbs-up." Bottom: An aviator's view as an *Intruder* taxis into final launch position.

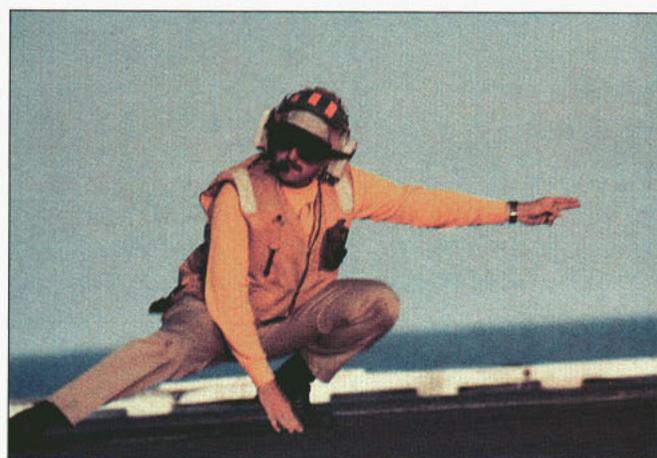


deck, acting as a roving safety observer during operations," he said. "Everyone on deck is very safety conscious, but they can also get engrossed in operations — they don't always have the luxury of looking around, watching for any hazards that might pop up. The GSO is the only guy who has nothing else to do but look for trouble," he added. "We're often referred to as 'steel beach lifeguards.'"

"I've pulled guys away from propellers and jet intakes," Silky said, "not because those guys were careless, but because something out of the ordinary happened on the flight deck and they were too busy

doing their job to notice the change."

Sileikis recalled an incident during *Forrestal's* last deployment that shows how important it can be to have a dedicated GSO working on the flight deck but functioning independently of flight deck operations. "During our last cruise, from the Indian Ocean to the Norwegian Sea, we had a lot of steaming, everyone was working hard all the time — we also had some turnover," he said, "and that can be dangerous, too. One day, during cyclic ops, a fuel cap came off the centerline tank of an A-6. Since the tank was under pressure, the fuel sprayed all over



First comes the "all clear" from the catapult final checker (top), then the classic "launch" signal from the shooter (above), and finally . . .

the deck. A couple of A-7s had engines turning and if they sucked fuel into their engines, they could explode. A couple of us grabbed a fire hose and washed the fuel away from the A-7s and over the side," he recalled. "We were able to spot it first, because we didn't have ops responsibilities."

Later, up on the flight deck, Silky was back at it — tapping people on the shoulder to remind them of safety procedures — pointing to an air-

craft about to swing around. "Watching out for things that the other guys couldn't see unless they had eyes in the backs of their heads — that's what GSOs do."

He shouted, in order to be heard above the roar of EA-6B *Prowler* inching into launch position: "It can be a very rewarding job!" □

Reid is editor of All Hands. Allen is a photojournalist for All Hands.







Photo by PH1/JC1 Scott M. Allen

Color-coded sailors

On the flight deck, your shirt says it all.

Story by JO3 Thomas Walsh

It's 2300. The flight deck is alive with activity.

Engines thundering, an A-6 *Intruder* crawls across the ink-black surface, slowly moving toward catapult number one. Its wings whine as they unfold. The pilot stares intently at a yellow-shirted petty officer with a plastic light, who is motioning the pilot forward. Moments before, the pilot's seat was occupied by a brown-shirted airman making sure the jet was ready to fly. There are green jerseys out in the darkness too, getting ready to hook the jet to the "cat."

Back aft, red-shirted ordnancemen load up another *Intruder* as purple shirts drag hoses to refuel, preparing it for flight.

Only flight deck workers wear jerseys, long-sleeve cotton shirts to protect from the heat and the cold. The colors are vital, identifying the job of the wearer:

YELLOW: The main handlers and

directors of movement on the flight deck. Nothing moves without being told to do so by a yellow-shirt. The aircraft handling officer and catapult officers, as well as the air boss and mini-boss, are all yellow shirts.

BLUE: Working mainly with yellow shirts, they operate different yellow gear, such as tractors and forklifts. They "chock and chain" aircraft to the flight deck or hangar deck, as well as operate aircraft elevators.

GREEN: Mainly the catapult and arresting crews. Photographer's mates and postal clerks also sport green jerseys when working on the flight deck.

BROWN: Brown shirts are the plane captains, or "brakers" of the aircraft. They sit in the cockpit while it is being moved, braking as needed. They are in charge of making sure that all maintenance is performed prior to launch.

PURPLE: "Grapes," as they are af-

fectionately referred to, or "fuelies." They refuel all aircraft and monitor all fuel supplies. There are purple shirts working seven decks below the hangar bay, on the hangar deck itself, and the flight deck.

RED: Red shirts signify ordnancemen. They load aircraft with all ordnance, missiles, mines and ammunition. They also make up the crash and salvage teams. This includes manning the flight deck fire trucks.

WHITE: It would be fair to label white shirts as "miscellaneous." They consist of safety and medical personnel, catapult final checkers and catapult and arresting gear quality assurance inspectors. Anyone who does not normally work on the flight deck wears a white shirt on deck during flight operations. □

Walsh is assigned to PAO, USS Forrester (CV 59).

The billion-dollar chess game

On a carrier flight deck, every move requires brilliant strategy.

Story by JO3 Thomas Walsh, photos by PH3 Clay Farrington

LCDR Anthony McFarlane sits high in a brown leather chair, answering phones on his left and right. He replaces the phones and studies a three-foot plexiglass flight deck in front of him. The pieces on the board represent aircraft parked right outside his watertight door, and they are moved about with all the thoughtfulness and intensity of chess kings, queens, knights and pawns.

His opponents outnumber him significantly — players with green, blue, yellow or brown shirts, are constantly being substituted. Radios squawk as McFarlane bears down on a blue-shirted airman with a sound-powered phone, demanding to know the status of the aft aircraft elevator. He gives the airman a 15 second deadline.

Pressure. Constant pressure.

But McFarlane juggles the phones and clipboards and pencils and, above all, he stays cool.

"Look at them," he says, nodding toward the planes outside. "Those are multi-million dollar aircraft, but we deal with them as nuts and bolts on the board here."

Small, flat, wooden aircraft models slide around the plexiglass as their flight priorities indicate. The pieces have nuts to the front or the back of them, according to their primary or



secondary flight status. The color codes of the nuts and bolts and the pieces themselves are all memorized, of course. There isn't much time for questions during flight ops.

LCDR McFarlane is the Aircraft Handling Officer aboard USS *Forrestal* (CV 59). He is speaking from one of the nerve centers of any carrier, flight deck control. Everything on the flight deck is moved from here, the heart of the ship's "island" structure. From flight deck control, the most expensive and dangerous game of chess

LCDR McFarlane, *Forrestal* aircraft handler, contemplates his next move on the carrier's "chess board" deck.

imaginable is played out every day. And every night, for that matter.

The flight deck of an aircraft carrier at sea has been called "the most dangerous place on earth." Intense, harnessed power from steam catapults blasts the jets into the air. Cables as thick as mooring lines catch the same jets as they perform the controlled crashes they refer to as

"landings." These indescribably powerful war machines are moved steadily into their desired positions by helmeted men with different colored jerseys. Then they are moved again, and again. It is a billion-dollar chess game. And the players' average age is 19.

From flight deck control, the movement of every aircraft is monitored on the plexiglass, commonly referred to as "the Ouija Board." McFarlane cannot see the actual flight deck, for this would be distracting. During *Forrestal's* work-up phases in preparation for deployment, aircraft are usually launched in cycles. These cycles involve up to 20 aircraft airborne at one time. Normally, there are three or four cycles during one period of flight ops, creating a stressful situation in flight deck control, to say the least. However, during a full-scale strike, there could be 50 or more jets in the air at one time. And when they have completed their mission, they're all coming back at once.

"I'd say the normal situation up

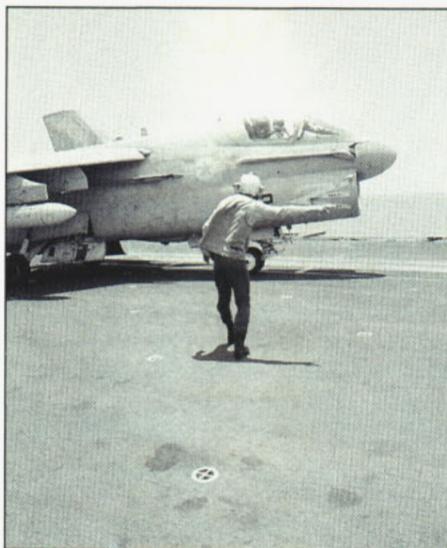


Photo by PH1(A/C) Scott M. Allen

"Yellow shirts" on the flight deck get the word from the handler via their headsets, then direct the pilots where to go.

here is that of a madhouse," said McFarlane, who answered questions about his job during the rare moments when he was not giving or receiving information. "We work up to 20 hours a day up here, and that pretty much forces you to acquire some patience."

LCDR McFarlane, who rose from a blue shirt airman recruit tractor driver to the man accountable for all aircraft positioning, said the most hectic situation for him is when a jet such as an F-14A *Tomcat* cannot fold its wings back. Folding wings is the only thing that enables a carrier to

hold over 50 aircraft on deck at a time. Even helicopters streamline themselves by folding their rotary wings when taking their place in a standby position.

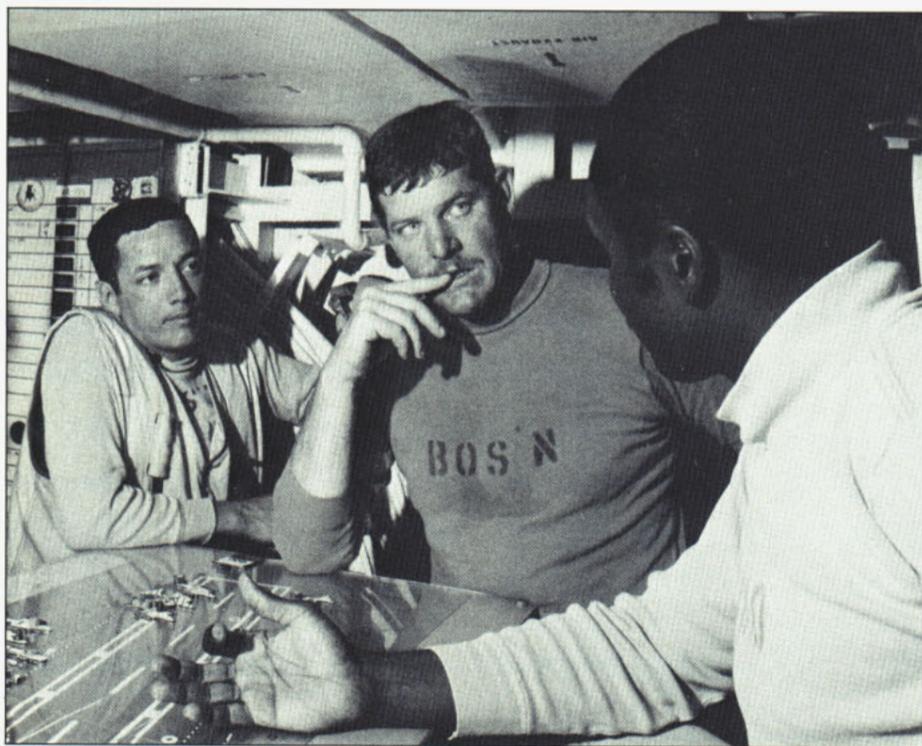
"The *Tomcats* are so large that when the wings aren't folded, it'll take up about twice as much space," he said.

During one afternoon, McFarlane and his fellow yellow shirts found that there were more F-14s in the air and on the flight deck than normal. This was a problem, because *Forrestal* was built in the mid-1950s, long before the large *Tomcat* came into service. There were other launches to keep in mind, so one F-14 was moved to an undesired but necessary position. The unusual parking spot of the *Tomcat* created some confusion and concern among the players involved. Over one of the many loudspeakers in flight deck control, the Air Boatswain, CWO2 Don Johnson, lightened the mood.

"Everything up here belonging to Tom Cruise does not look good," he blurted out, alluding to the *Tomcat* made famous by the movie "Top Gun."

Obviously every aircraft has a different size and weight, and it is up to the aircraft handler to figure the total aircraft density and deck multiple. This involves knowing the number and type of aircraft on the flight and hangar decks at all times. Aircraft density is figured prior to flight operations and maintained throughout.

It is tough enough launching, recovering and maneuvering aircraft under perfect conditions, let alone



McFarlane discusses aircraft movements over the "Ouija Board."

when the weather turns sour. Anyone who thinks that aircraft carriers don't move has obviously never been aboard while under way in the North Atlantic.

"We were rolling around all over the place up there," said McFarlane, referring to *Forrestal's* part in last year's *Operation Ocean Safari*, which took them above the Arctic Circle. "The ship was listing a lot more than usual and the deck was very slick. Sometimes, if fuel was spilled, the deck was so slippery it made it impossible for the tractors to move the planes around. We had to use two tractors sometimes, or whatever it took."

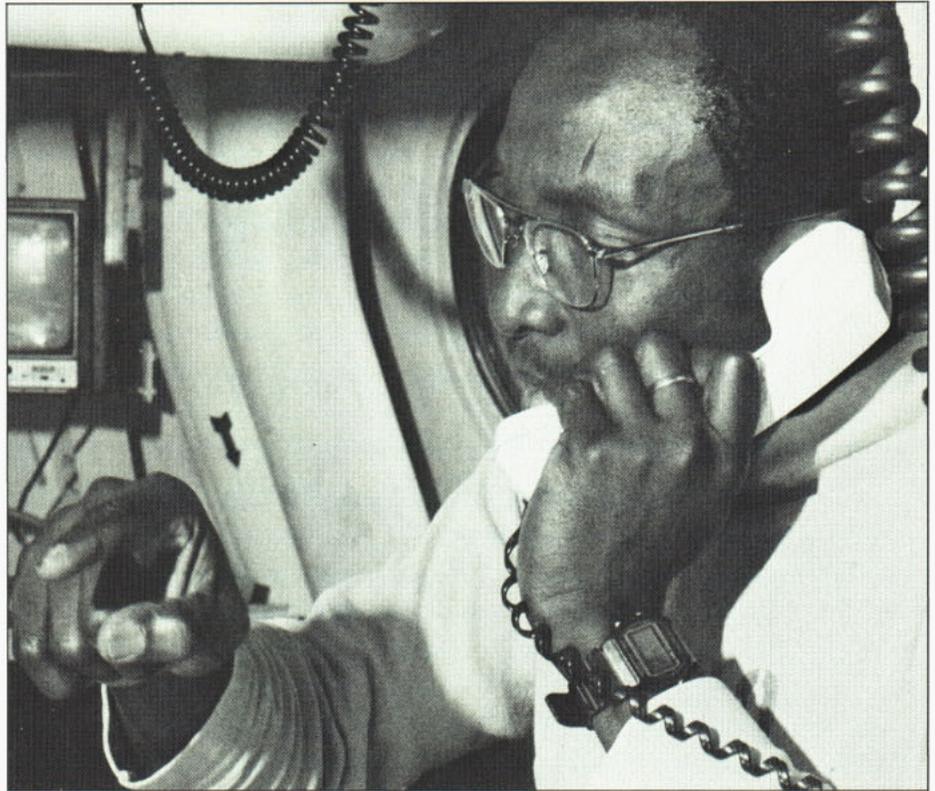
"Whatever it takes" is not an uncommon phrase when it comes to getting airplanes "off the pointy end." Successful launches and recoveries far outnumber the mistakes, but should something happen, *Forrestal* is prepared.

"If there's a fire, or if one is anticipated, we're gonna be there — that's what we do," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handler) Airman Richard Pike, a member of the flight deck crash and salvage team, a group of red shirts who spend their days "hoping nothing goes wrong."

There are two members of this team standing by in crash rescue suits at all times during flight operations, sometimes up to 72 hours straight. Pike was in one of those "hot suits" recently when an A-6 *Intruder* aircraft blew a tire on landing.

"When the tire blew, pieces 'FODed' the port engine and there was fire," said Pike. "It's difficult to move about on the flight deck when there are things moving all around you and you're concentrating on one thing. I noticed that the tilly [a crane used to move aircraft] was moving toward the A-6 even before the fire was out. I guess another recovery was coming in soon."

There's *always* another recovery



The aircraft handlers are "information central."

coming in, so ten minutes and thirty seconds after the A-6 blew its tire, there was a clear deck.

One of Pike's crash and salvage team members, ABH3 Robert Kretzchmar, can also vividly testify to the madness of flight deck traffic. Only quick reflexes saved his life one day last year when a taxiing S-3 *Viking* lost its brakes while being parked.

"I wasn't aware of what was going on until the last possible second," said Kretzchmar. "When I turned around, the plane was about two feet from my face. I dove out of the way. Something like that makes you a little more aware of your surroundings."



Photo by PH1(AJ) Scott M. Allen

Moving aircraft on a crowded flight deck can require more than the usual team effort.

Cool heads and communication put the method to the madness of the flight deck. Any weather condition, any mistake, oversight or wrongful anticipation all lead to an upset in the balance of life on the pitching, rolling stretch of non-skid. Awareness of where things are, where they have been and where they will be is essential. Are the weapons loaded? Is the aircraft fueled? Do we have a thumbs-up on the catapult gear? We're ready? Good. Shoot her.

On a modern day aircraft carrier, "the most dangerous place on earth" is the workplace of choice for the professionals who have mastered its complexities. Launch the aircraft. Recover them. Move them. Park them. Move them again. There's a strategy behind every move in this, the most expensive chess game of them all. □

Walsh and Farrington are attached to *USS Forrestal (CV 59)*.

Pollution solution

Navy attacks plastic waste problem.

Story by JOC Mike Ring

Fifty-thousand Northern Pacific fur seals die each year because they tangle themselves in plastic debris. Fifty of the world's 250 species of seabirds are known to eat floating plastic debris, mistaking it for plankton or fish eggs, which also float. Many birds, feeling full after eating this trash, die of starvation.

Killing marine animals and littering beaches worldwide, plastic waste also causes navigational problems. The plastic fishing nets that snare thousands of sea lions and seals also foul ships' propellers. And plastic sheets clog the sea-water intakes of ships.

For Navy ships, floating plastic debris presents a special problem: it compromises security. Plastic bags of trash thrown overboard form a trail that could betray a ship's location.

Also, floating trash easily can be picked out of the water and furnish information to a potential enemy.

Although the Navy contributes only 2.5 percent of the total marine plastic waste, it has acted swiftly to comply with a congressional deadline requiring a halt to all at-sea plastics disposal by Jan. 1, 1993.

Determined to serve as a model for the international maritime community, the Navy launched a four-pronged attack on plastic waste that includes education, operational changes, and supply and technology initiatives, according to Larry Koss, director of Shipboard and Aircraft

Systems, Environmental Protection, Safety and Occupational Branch, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C.

"We're pushing for long-term [plastics] recycling, which I believe is the beginning of a new ethic," Koss said.

Because a Navy ship is no different in design and operation from any other maritime ship, the challenge to comply with the no-discharge prohibitions can only be accomplished with an extremely well-coordinated, multi-disciplined program involving all hands.

In an educational videotape re-

corded last December, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Leon A. Edney, said, "Navy ships constitute a small but highly visible portion of the problem in the fight against ocean pollution. We must lead the world by example in eliminating the discharge of floating marine debris, particularly plastic and medical waste.

"Navy ships, as symbols of the U.S. commitment to protect the free world, must also demonstrate our commitment to protect the ocean environment against pollution and infectious disease," Edney said.

The Vice CNO called on all sailors to support the Navy's solid and plastic waste management program. "No program works without individual support, and we need your help. If each of you will simply separate your plastics and medical waste from other wastes and put the plastics in the appropriate waste receptacle, we can immediately reduce our overboard plastics disposal by 70 percent and eliminate medical waste disposal."

The effort by sailors to separate plastics from other solid wastes, called "source separation," had immediate results. "As of March 1, the Navy is basically 70 percent in compliance with the 1993 deadline," said Tom Scarano, program manager for shipboard environmental protection at the Naval Sea Systems Command. The 1987 Marine Plastic Pollution Research and Control Act established



Emory S. Land crew member takes a look at compacted garbage from a prototype compactor.

U.S. Navy photo

the Navy's compliance deadline.

Craig Alig, head of the Navy's David Taylor Research Center's environmental branch, said the importance of shipboard solid waste management was shown on the Navy's first demonstration ship, USS *Emory S. Land* (AS 39).

"*Land* crossed the Atlantic in 13 days, and crew members collected all of their plastic waste. During the first half of their trip, they experimented with various ways of doing it," he said. "Until they got the entire shipboard community separating their plastic waste, they had a great deal of difficulty." Initially taking 16 to 18 hours a day to handle solid waste, *Land's* crew cut that time in half once they began source separation, Alig said.

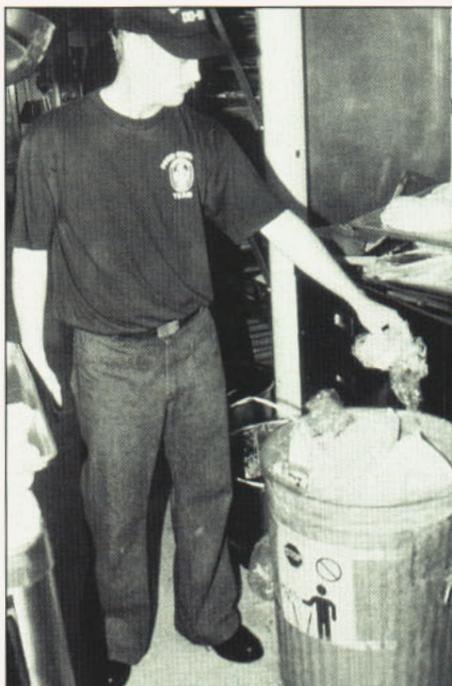
Source separation makes up the thrust of the "operational changes" part of the Navy's solid waste management program, said Koss, although there are constraints to operational changes. These are: manpower, space, quality of life and financial constraints.

No plans exist within the Navy to establish a new "environmentalist" rating specialty. Team effort at all levels of the chain of command is essential to the success of the Navy's program, said Koss.

"It's basically something that has to be institutionalized. You know, it can't be the responsibility of two or three people to carry out the ship's whole program because it's much bigger than that," he said.

To Alig, every shipboard sailor acts as an environmentalist. "Interestingly enough, we've discovered that while we don't have an environmentalist specialty on board the ship, we really have — for example, on a carrier — 6,000 environmentalists," he said.

"When these sailors pull into a pristine port and go down on the beach, they don't want to walk through their own trash," Alig said. "As a result, when we tell them what



A food service attendant aboard USS O'Bannon disposes of plastic in the "plastics only" receptacle.

U.S. Navy photo

they can do, how to do it, provide them with the equipment that makes their job easier, and show them a positive benefit, they're eager and enthusiastic to pitch in."

Like manpower resources, space is at a premium on board every naval ship. Little room exists for storage of plastic waste, or for the installation of new disposal or processing equipment.

Also, the need for each sailor to have a clean, healthy and safe environment further limits the Navy's ability to carry plastic waste for extended periods. This is particularly so since food-contaminated plastic makes up half of the Navy's plastic waste.

Yet, in light of these constraints, source separation costs are minimal, especially when compared to equipment installation costs. As an all-hands effort, source separation requires little extra manpower. Still, storage and quality of life concerns persist.

To lessen the effects of these last two concerns, the Navy established time limits during which food-contaminated and non food-contaminated plastic waste can remain on board ships. Food-contaminated plastic waste should be held on board only during the last three days a ship is at sea, so health and sanitation risks can be minimized. Non food-contaminated plastic waste should be kept on board a 20-day minimum — longer, if storage space permits — for disposal ashore.

While source separation gives the Navy a rapid start, supply and technology initiatives, along with ongoing education, ultimately will enable the Navy to stop at-sea plastic waste disposal entirely, according to Koss.

Last November, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Shipbuilding and Logistics tasked the Naval Supply Command and the Naval Sea Systems Command to prepare plans of action. NavSup must find ways to reduce the volume of plastic material on board ships. One method already begun reduces plastic waste by substituting non-plastic products for items such as plastic foam cups, plastic coffee stirrers and plastic trash can liners. NavSup also plans to find non-plastic packaging and wrapping materials, especially to eliminate food-contaminated plastic waste.

NavSea's plan covers the development and shipboard installation of solid waste management equipment.

Working with the research and development experts at the David Taylor Research Center, NavSea's shipboard environmental branch plans to install three types of solid waste disposal equipment on board Navy ships: the vertical trash compactor, the solid waste pulper and the plastic waste processor.

While source separation attained dramatic immediate reductions in plastic disposal, hardware technology to achieve a no-discharge capability

will not be available for fleet installation before the 1993 congressional deadline. However, in 1991 the Navy will report its progress to Congress, including hindrances to total elimination of at-sea plastic waste disposal. Scarano said the Navy will be able to eliminate plastic waste disposal completely only when its solid waste equipment is installed on each of its 500-plus ships.

"If we had all of the hardware available today in production units sitting on the dock all ready to go, it probably would take five to seven years to get that equipment installed, based on ship availability schedules," Scarano said. "Most of this equipment has to be installed during a ship availability; not necessarily in a shipyard, but at some industrial facility."

Although the hardware is not sitting on the dock, the David Taylor Research Center and NavSea began working on its development as part of the Navy's solid waste management program during the late 1970s, Scarano said.

"When we testified before Congress a couple of years ago," said Koss, "we made it very clear to them that our objective has always been to eliminate floating debris. We've been working toward that as an objective.

"And the reason we haven't been able to actually execute it is because we haven't had the technology until now," Koss continued. "However, we've had some real breakthroughs." One such breakthrough, he noted, was the vertical trash compactor, designed by David Taylor Research Center specifically to operate in a Navy shipboard environment.

The vertical trash compactor can process solid waste such as glass bottles, metal cans, paper products and other non-industrial, non-hazardous waste into 45-pound trash "slugs" that sink. This compactor currently is being evaluated on board USS *O'Bannon* (DD 987), said Scarano.

He added, "For ships that need

more capacity than that one unit can provide, we will install multiple units, say, for instance, on an aircraft carrier. In fact, it's really consistent with the fact that trash is generated throughout the ship," he said. "So you basically decentralize the ship's capability to deal with a problem that is generated on a ship in a decentral-

"The key to all of this is people . . . the ones who actually do the source separation."

ized way." The Navy intends to deliver the first of these units to the fleet within two years. The first pulpers may be delivered to the fleet within four years.

"The solid waste pulper resembles a food waste disposer, or food grinder, which people often have in their kitchen sinks," Scarano said. "More heavy duty than a food grinder, the solid waste pulper makes a wet pulp called 'slurry,' from such pulpable materials as paper, cardboard and food waste.

"There's a cutting mechanism — usually there's water inside this device, and it's maintained at a certain level. When you spin it you get a vortex. You throw in your food or your paper or your cardboard and you force the waste through certain size openings. You basically create oat meal. That's what it looks like," said Scarano.

Capable of processing 600 pounds of watered-down solid waste per hour, the pulper reduces the size of the solids, and forms slurry that can be pumped directly overboard in unrestricted waters. Pulped waste is more readily biodegradable than unpulped waste, tends to sink, and disperses

rapidly when discharged.

The Navy's third solid waste management device, the plastic waste processor, enters development in October, Scarano said. It is the one device designed specifically for plastic waste. "The plastic waste that is separated at the source will be processed through the plastic waste processor," he said. The compacted, sanitized block of plastic will be suitable for long-term shipboard storage, he said. It will also be recyclable. The Navy hopes to deliver the first plastics processors to the fleet within six years.

"The food waste goes through the food waste disposer, the pulpable waste goes through the solid waste pulper, the plastic waste goes through the plastics waste processor, the bottles and cans go through the compactor. And that's basically the concept of solid waste management on board Navy ships," Scarano said. "But you'll also notice that source separation, which is done manually, is a key element. Without that, nothing else works.

"In fact," he continued, "the key to all of this is the people — the ones who operate and maintain the equipment and actually do the source separation."

While plastic waste makes up only seven percent of the Navy's shipboard solid waste, a daily equivalent of two-tenths of a pound per person in the Navy, the Navy's proactive approach to waste management sets the example for all others who share its environmental and navigational concerns.

Each year, 100,000 marine mammals and one-million seabirds die, tangled in or ingesting plastic waste debris. Each day, U.S. Navy sailors work to end such debris. They separate their solid waste at the source. They set the example. □

Ring is a reservist assigned to NavInfo East 102, New York.

Keeping the oceans clean

Three ships, three systems, one goal

Story by JO2 Chris Price and
JO3 Kevin McWilliams

Personnel aboard USS *O'Bannon* (DD 987), homeported at Charleston, S.C., recently welcomed a new trash compactor into their spaces. At first they were overwhelmed by a structure that is six feet wide, two feet deep and six and a half feet high, but soon learned that this piece of equipment made their daily cleanup routine a whole lot easier.

The crewmen of *O'Bannon*, like others aboard U.S. Navy ships, are doing their part to clean up the ocean's environment by compacting their plastic waste and storing it aboard their ship until it can be safely and neatly disposed of. The compactor compresses both plastics and non-plastic materials. Since the machine is not equipped to separate the two, crews must separate the material themselves.

"Throughout the ship we have separate trash receptacles marked for plastics and non-plastics," said Chief Engineman Mark Myers, who supervises *O'Bannon's* trash compactor. "Once compressed, this trash weighs anywhere from 30 to 50 pounds, and **"Mr. Plastic" is one ship's imaginative approach to getting all crew members involved in plastic waste separation.**



PHOTO David Maclean

is approximately the size of a small trash can," he said.

Myers said that although there are no specific persons assigned to operate the compactor which runs seven hours a day, the machine is operated primarily by messcooks because they produce the most garbage from food products.

Whenever *O'Bannon* is at home in Charleston, the crew simply dumps the plastic waste in a nearby dumpster. When at sea, particularly for longer than 20 days, the ship's plastic stockpile can build up. Stringent guidelines are laid down for disposing of materials overboard in cases where build-up poses a serious problem aboard ship. Atlantic or Pacific fleet headquarters must be notified by message at the end of the underway period if policy compliance wasn't possible.

Food-contaminated plastics, such as plastic materials from the scullery, may be dumped after three days of accumulation without reporting, providing the ship is 50 miles from shore and the waste is rigged for sinking.

Myers feels that educating the crew on the hazards of dumping plastic into the sea has produced a successful program aboard *O'Bannon*.

"The process is relatively simple," he said, "and everybody on board is aware that they have to use different receptacles for plastics."

"Because of the state of the environment, it's up to the Navy to continue with this program and be the leader in the oceans' cleanup," Myers said.

One Mayport, Fla., based ship, USS *Doyle* (FFG 39), has a plastic waste disposal program which is totally different from *O'Bannon's*. Because *Doyle* doesn't own a trash compactor as yet, the plastics are stored in a designated compartment aboard ship.

"We dedicate a space for storing our plastics until we arrive at the next port," said LT Karl Sanders, Supply and Plastic Control Officer. "*Doyle*

collects at least 60 pounds of plastic waste a day. Owning a trash compactor would help to conserve space."

Sanders said that extended deployments tend to result in odors permeating from the storage compartment. But *Doyle's* crew keeps a light-hearted attitude about it, and even jokes about the ship being "tilted to one side" because of it.

"We have no problem getting a working party together to get rid of our plastic waste when we're in port," Sanders said. "Afterward, we scrub the spaces down and sanitize them." Still, Sanders feels that the plastics program is successful, regardless. He's received good ideas from the crew on how to separate the plastics from disposable trash, and has spearheaded an educational program about trash disposal. He puts information in the ship's plan of the day, and provides general military training and videotapes about plastics.

USS *Independence* (CV 62) has her own unique approach to the plastic

waste disposal problem, with the help of her safety department's own notorious "Mr. Plastic."

When "sweepers" is called away, the mild-mannered custodian of the sea ensures that plastic waste is maintained aboard ship while trash is being dumped over the side.

"I was looking for a way to get people's attention without having to beat them over the head," said CDR A.F. "Chip" Slater, or "Mr. Plastic," "*Indy's*" safety officer, who chose to pit the crew against an adversary. "It generates competition and provides a lighter approach to a serious issue, which I think makes people more receptive."

During the "Mr. Plastic challenge" sailors invite the plastic-clad hero to inspect their spaces. "If I find that they're complying with the plastic program, and they don't have any plastic mixed in with their non-plastics trash can, they win the challenge and receive an autographed poster — at the end of the night, I announce those who won, as well as those who lost, over the ship's public address system," said Slater.

"I think that the Mr. Plastic campaign is working amazingly well," Slater added. "The awareness is up and a lot of people are separating their trash even while we're in port. Almost every space now has a 'paper' can and a 'plastics' can, and people are becoming more enthused about the challenge."

Elimination of plastics from the world's oceans is a high-priority concern of Navy leadership, but it's the sailors in the fleet who make the program work. As *Doyle's* LT Sanders said, "When crews understand more about plastic waste disposal, they're more willing to work with it." □



U.S. Navy photo

"Plastics only" containers — the first step in waste control.

Price is a writer with All Hands. McWilliams is assigned to PAO, USS *Independence*.

Spotlight on Excellence

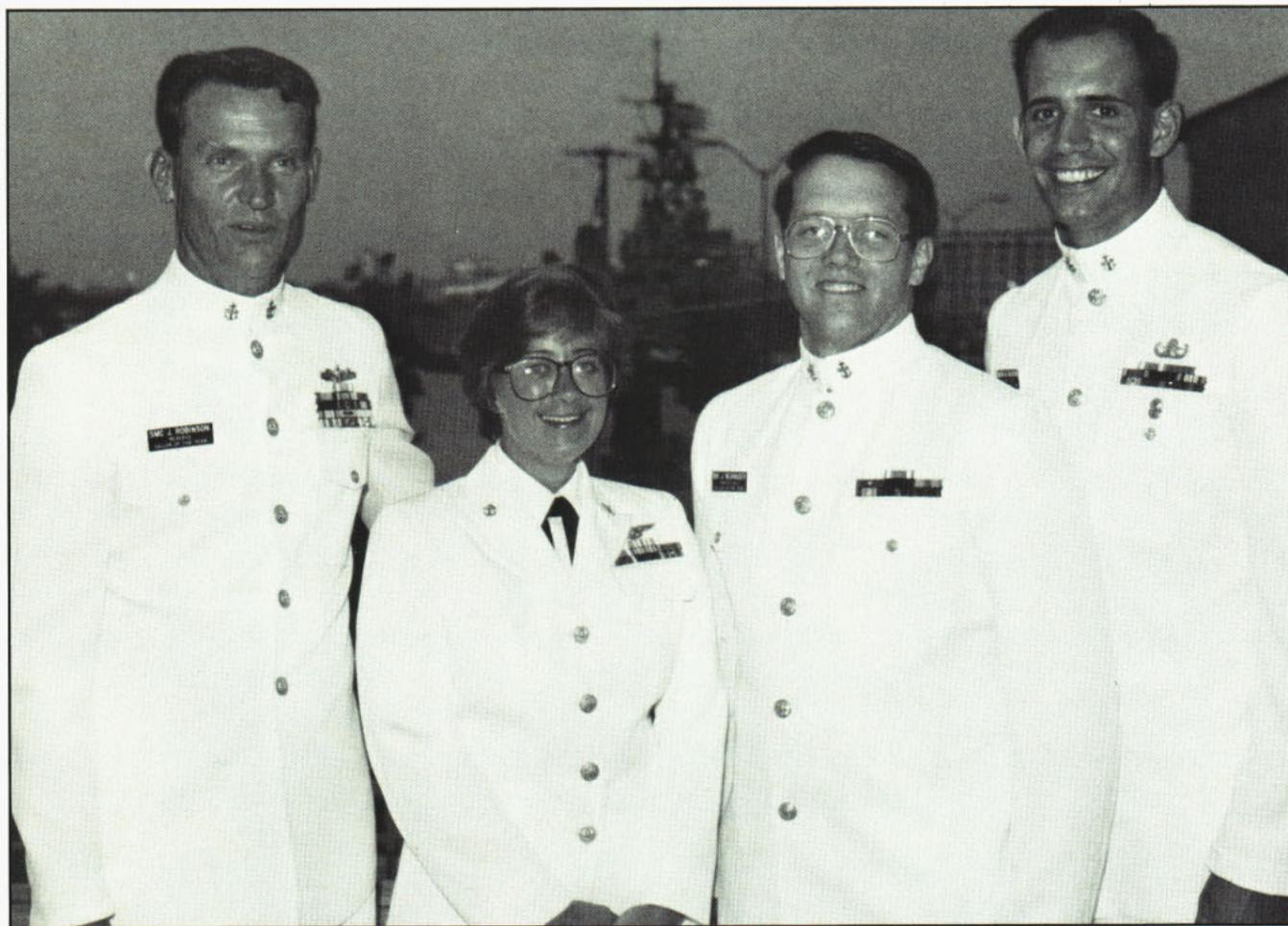


Photo by PH2 Mark Therien

Sailors of the Year

Story by JO2 Chris Price

The Navy's annual Sailors of the Year program honored the Atlantic, Pacific, Shore and Reserve sailors in July at ceremonies in Washington, D.C. The four were selected from a field of 365,000 worldwide.

The program, which was established by the Chief of Naval Operations in 1972, is designed to recognize and reward outstanding Navy men and women, and is open to all active duty personnel and inactive Naval reservists in paygrades E-4 through E-6. Those selected received a meritorious promotion to the next

higher paygrade and were each awarded a Navy Commendation Medal. The sailors also visited the White House and met with Vice President Dan Quayle.

The Sea Sailors of the Year may elect to serve a one year tour as special assistant to their Fleet Master Chief. The Shore Sailor of the Year may elect to serve a one year tour as special assistant to the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. The Reserve Sailor of the Year will sit as a member of the Naval Reserve Force Policy Board.

The Washington trip and five days rest and relaxation for the families of the active duty sailors was paid for by the Fleet Reserve Association. The Naval Enlisted Reserve Association provided funds for the reserve sailor's family. In addition, the associations hosted a luncheon with members of Congress for the SOYs and their families. The Naval Memorial Foundation presented each sailor with a replica of the "Lone Sailor."

Price is a writer assigned to All Hands.

1989 Pacific Fleet Sailor of the Year

"I've got to give a major amount of credit to my wife."

— BUC John W. Neuhauser

Chief Builder John W. Neuhauser was born in 1958 in Spokane, Wash.

He enlisted in the Navy's delayed entry program in December 1976, while a student at John R. Rogers High School in Spokane. Neuhauser reported for recruit training at San Diego in August 1977. Following recruit training he attended Builder "A" School at Port Hueneme, Calif., where he graduated first in his class.

Neuhauser was assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5 in Puerto Rico, where he was deployed to Diego Garcia; Yokosuka, Japan; and Sigonella, Sicily. In August 1982, he left active service and joined the Naval Reserve.

Returning to active duty in January 1986, Neuhauser was assigned to NMCB 4 at Port Hueneme, where he completed Builder C-1 Advanced School.

His battalion deployed to Sigonella, where he served as crew leader for the Fleet Mail Center Project. On his next deployment, Neuhauser served as Assistant Officer-in-Charge of a 32-man detail to Vieques Island, Puerto Rico.

At the time of his selection as Pacific Sailor of the Year, he was assigned as a platoon commander at NMCB 4's Charlie company at Port Hueneme.

Neuhauser is entitled to wear a Navy Achievement Medal (second award), Sea Service Deployment Ribbon (sixth award), Expert Rifleman Award and Pistol Marksman Award. He is married to the former Kimberly Anne Wright. The couple has three children.

Neuhauser is serving a one-year tour as Special Assistant to the Fleet Master Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet in Honolulu, Hawaii. □

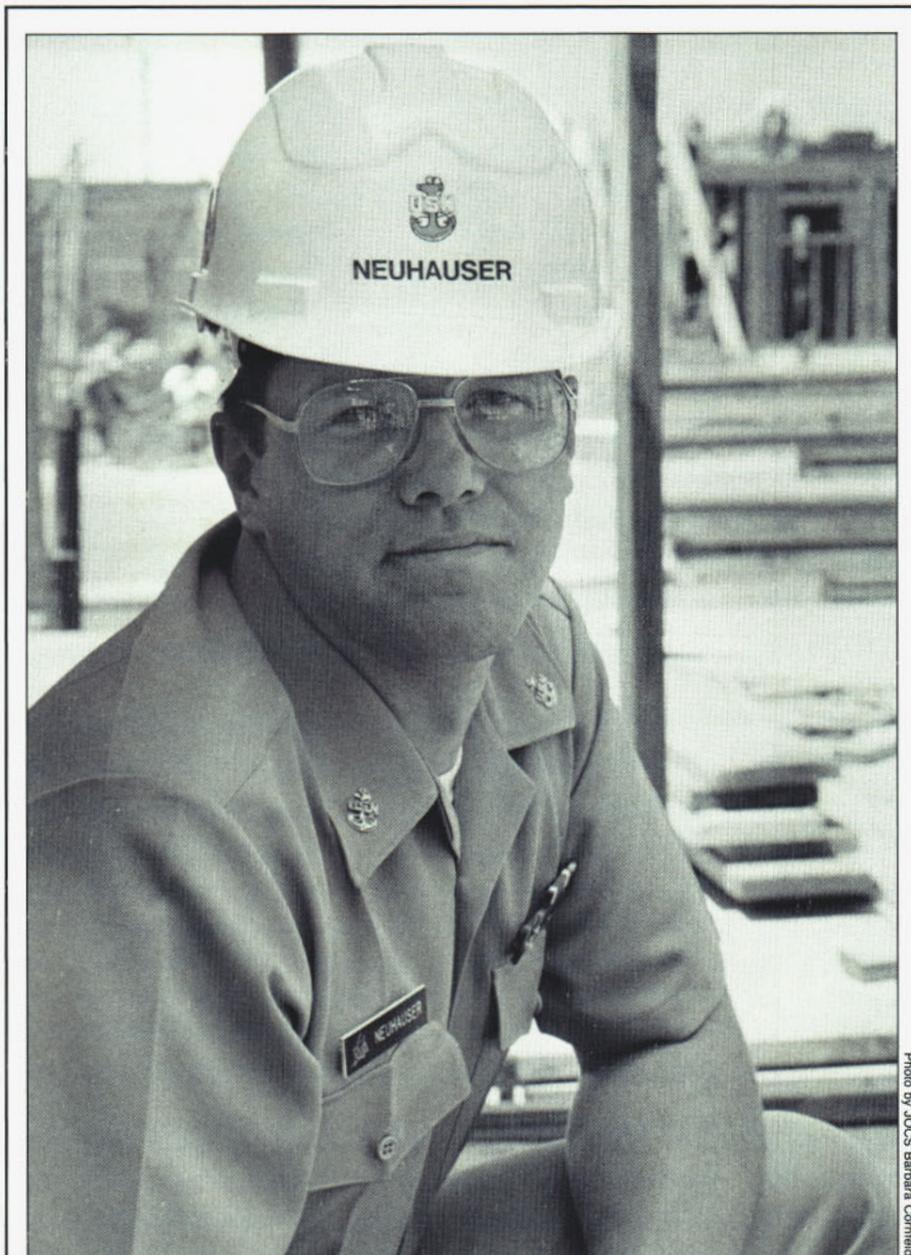


Photo by JCS Barbara Cornfield

What would you say to shipmates who feel that recognition of this kind is unattainable?

"Most commands have sailor recognition boards, but few sailors realize how far it can go and what it can lead to. I don't think that

any of us here today thought about being in this position. Still, I don't expect my people to achieve exactly what I've achieved. Everyone has their own built-in potential. All I ask out of anybody is that they do the best that they can."

1989 Shore Sailor of the Year

“Whenever I’m introduced as Sailor of the Year, eyes automatically go up and down examining my uniform.”

— ADC(AW) Jamie G. Murphy

Chief Aviation Machinist Mate (AW) Jamie G. Murphy was born in San Diego in 1959. She enlisted in the Navy’s Delayed Entry Program in 1977 after graduating from Greenville Senior High School in Greenville, Ohio, and attended basic training in Orlando, Fla.

Murphy completed all requirements for the lithographer rating, and reported to Unit News Department at the Pacific Stars and Stripes newspaper bureau in Tokyo, Japan, where she did newspaper paste-up and layout. On occasion, she held the position of production supervisor. Murphy also attended college while in Tokyo.

In March 1982 Murphy was honorably discharged but reenlisted in September 1982. She attended Aviation Machinist’s Mate “A” School at Memphis, Tenn., where she graduated in the top five percent of her class.

Subsequent tours include Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron 33 at Naval Air Station, Key West, Fla., (where she became a qualified diver in her off time), the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Division at Agana, Guam and the Dispatch Service of the Transportation Branch, Headquarters Allied Forces Southern Europe in Naples, Italy. Murphy is entitled to wear the Joint Services Commendation Medal, Joint Services Achievement Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (two awards), Navy Unit Commendation Medal (two awards), Battle “E,” Navy Good Conduct (two awards) and the Navy Overseas Ribbon (six awards). Murphy accepted a one-year tour at the office of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, Duane R. Bushey, in Washington, D.C. □

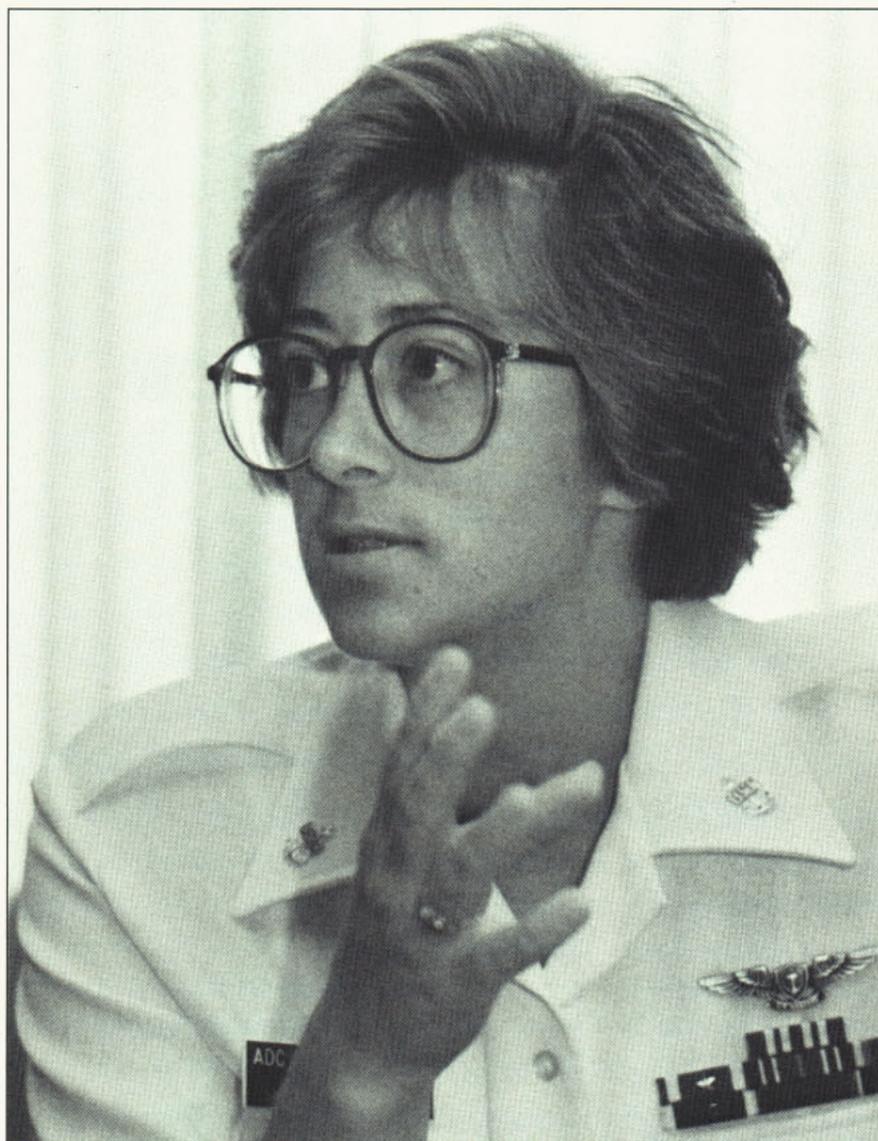


Photo by Vince Cuthrie

Is there anyone to whom you attribute your success as a petty officer and selection as an SOY?

“When I was a second class petty officer, another AD2 took me aside and told me that he didn’t think I was doing my best — that I was just bluffing my way through my job.

“I had just changed rating from lithographer to aviation, and what

he said was like a slap in the face, but I needed to hear it. I’d say the exact same thing to any sailor today. I was a rebellious person. But through Navy experience I’ve learned how to use that [rebellion] in a positive way. I’ve always been interested in policies and issues, and sailors being treated fairly and I believe this is what got me here today.”

1989 Atlantic Fleet Sailor of the Year

“This is pretty overwhelming.”

— AOC(DV) Martin A. Anderson Jr.

Chief Aviation Ordnanceman (Diver) Martin A. Anderson Jr. was born in 1964 in Chicago. He enlisted in the Navy's Delayed Entry Program in 1982 after graduating from Lyons Township High School in LaGrange, Ill.

Anderson completed basic training and airman apprenticeship training in Orlando, Fla. His tours include USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) aboard which he completed an around the world cruise and an extended deployment to the Western Pacific. He completed training at Second Class Dive School, Chemical and Biological Munitions training and Naval School Explosive Ordnance Disposal.

He was then assigned to Area Response Detachment EOD Mobile Unit 6 in Charleston, S.C. While stationed with Mobile Unit 6 he was called upon to assist in the disposal of a suspected bomb in the Mayor of Charleston's office.

His next assignment was with a mine countermeasure detachment, also with Mobile Unit 6. During a Persian Gulf deployment, Anderson personally disposed of a fully armed, free-floating contact mine in rough seas. He was assigned to Mobile Unit 6 when he was selected as the Atlantic Fleet Sailor of the Year.

Anderson is entitled to wear a Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon with Bronze Star, Expert Rifleman Medal and Expert Pistol Shot Medal, Navy Commendation Medal and Navy Achievement Medal.

Anderson is serving a one-year tour as Special Assistant to the Fleet Master Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet in Norfolk. □

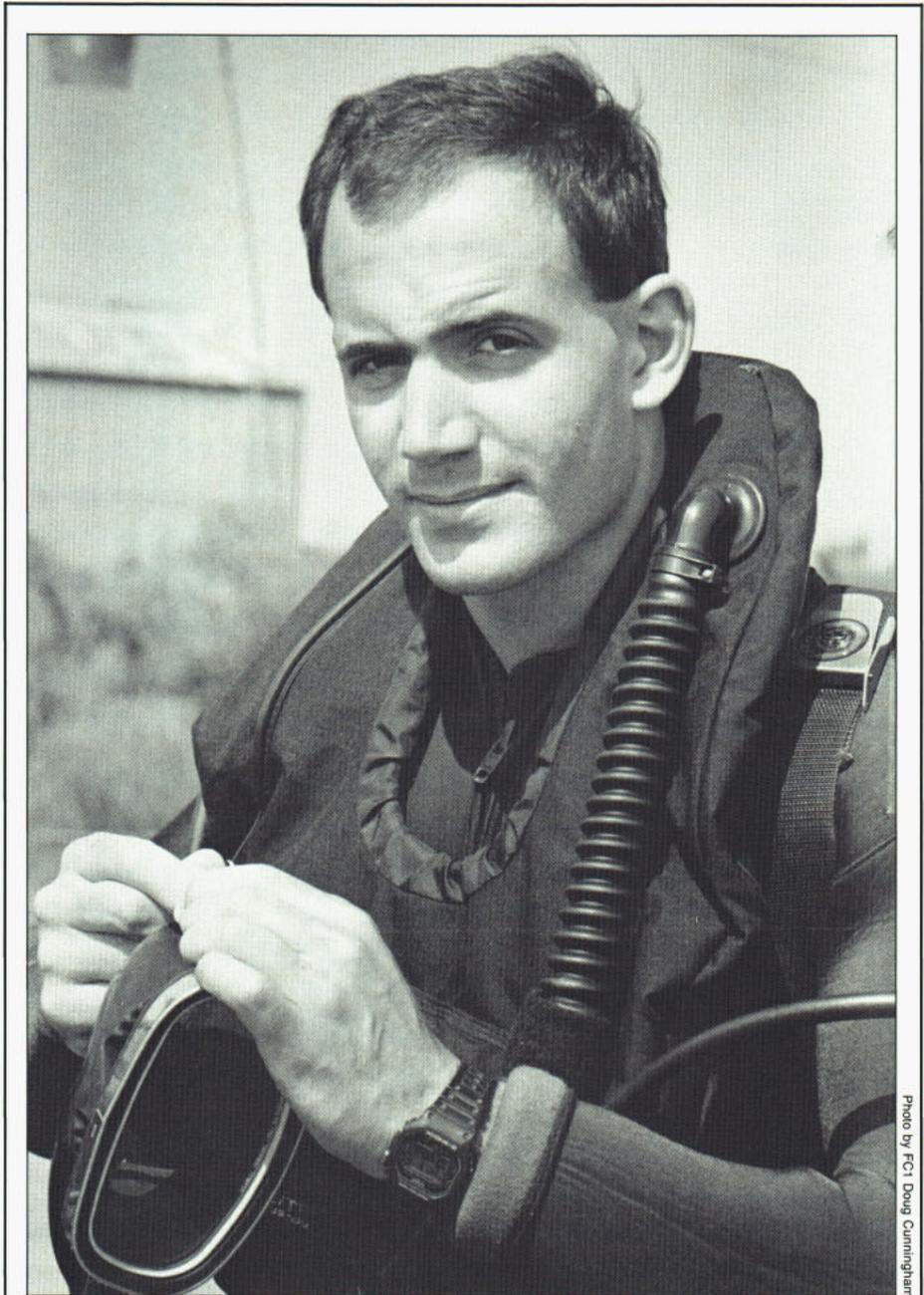


Photo by FC1 Doug Cunningham

As a result of your own success, will you expect more from other people?

“I don't expect the best from people who work with me — I demand it. I felt this way prior to

becoming Sailor of the Year, and it was expected of me also. Sailors I work with should strive to give their best — even if I'm not there supervising them. In my line of work I don't want anything but.”

1989 Naval Reserve Sailor of the Year

“There’s a fine line between Sailor of the Year — and getting your job done.”

— SMC(SW) Jerry L. Robinson

Chief Signalman Jerry L. Robinson was born in Chatsworth, Calif., in 1948. He enlisted in the regular Navy in 1968 and completed basic training and basic signalman school in San Diego.

His first tour of duty was aboard USS *George K. MacKenzie* (DD 836). He completed active duty service in January 1973 and affiliated with the Naval Reserve. Other duty assignments include: Naval Inshore Undersea Warfare Group 1 at the Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center in San Diego; Naval Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; Convoy Command in Long Beach, Calif.; and Fleet Training Group, Detachment 119, San Diego.

His shipboard tours include: USS *Southerland* (DD 743), USS *Constant* (MSO 427), USS *Mobile* (LKA 115), USS *Okinawa* (LPH 3) and USS *Lang* (FF 1060). Robinson is currently assigned to duty aboard USS *Racine* (LST 1191).

Robinson is entitled to wear a Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Unit Commendation, Battle Efficiency “E,” Navy Good Conduct Medal, Naval Reserve Meritorious Service Medal (two awards), National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, Vietnam Service Medal (three awards), Naval Reserve Sea Service Ribbon, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm Unit Citation and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Award.

Robinson is employed with Robinson Enterprises, a family-owned construction business in Chatsworth. He is an avid surfer and owns five boards.

Robinson is married to the former Eyde Erica Bass. □



Photo by Vince Cuthie

How are you dealing with the sudden attention you’re getting as an SOY?

“It’s fun to be recognized and we all appreciate it, but we’ll come back down to sea level soon, because in the next few days we’ll have to return to our jobs. As chief petty officers we have to live up to

certain expectations. It’ll be hard in some cases, maybe easy in others.

“I didn’t set my mind to become Sailor of the Year, and I don’t think that any of us did. What we all wanted was to do the best job that we could do. It didn’t matter who was standing over us and watching.”

Bearings

Navy recruiter rescues man trapped in overturned car

Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Jeffrey S. Robinson wasn't thinking about being a hero when he came to the aid of a couple whose car had collided with a van, but because of his actions, one man is alive today.

Robinson, a recruiter assigned to Navy Recruiting Station, Petersburg, Va., was driving back from a school visit along Interstate 95, when a tractor-trailer suddenly swerved in front of him. Just ahead he saw why the trailer swerved. In the right-hand lane, a car had flipped over and a van had its front end resting in a ditch.

Robinson, trained to handle disasters and recoveries with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 62, parked and ran over to the flipped car to try to rescue two trapped passengers.

With help from three other drivers, Robinson attempted to open the car

doors — they were jammed. Next he spotted a broken back window. He reached inside and worked with the door latch until it gave. Finally, the door was opened and Robinson climbed inside.

"I smelled gas and heard the fan motor, which was still on," said Robinson. "The first fear I had was that the car could catch fire. I managed to turn the engine off, while the truck driver aimed his fire extinguisher at the car."

The other three men cut the seat belt away from the driver, Lewis Skylar. Robinson instructed the men to carefully place Skylar in a better position to be checked for possible injuries.

"I checked for any bleeding before the ambulance arrived," Robinson said. "The man was in shock and

complained that his neck and back were hurting, so I cradled his neck until help came."

An emergency crew later arrived and took Skylar to a nearby hospital and later transferred him to a hospital in Washington, D.C., where he was treated for a broken hip, three broken ribs and neck and back injuries.

Skylar's wife, Edna, was pinned in the car and Robinson was unable to free her. She was declared dead on the accident scene.

Three occupants in the van were treated for minor injuries and later released from the hospital. Thanks to Robinson's quick thinking and Navy know how, one man is alive today. ■

—Story by JO1 Raul Beannes, Public Affairs Office, Navy Recruiting District, Richmond, Va.

NMCB 1 celebrates 40 years of service to Navy and neighbors

U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1, stationed at Gulfport, Miss., celebrated its 40th birthday in August. According to NMCB 1's commanding officer, that's 40 years of striving for professionalism.

"NMCB 1 has always been regarded Navywide as a close-knit group of professionals who will get the job done on time regardless of the circumstances," said CDR David Roach, NMCB 1's CO.

"I try to stress to the battalion's members that if they concentrate on being the best that they can be, do the best job that they are capable of, and work together as a team, success will surely follow," Roach continued. "If this battalion continues to gain Seabees like those who work for me now, we can all look forward to another highly productive 40 years!"

In past years, NMCB 1 has served in many locations in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, including Guam, Republic of the Philippines, Alaska, and Diego Garcia. The unit has also sent details to Camp David, Md.

The men of NMCB 1 not only provide construction support to Navy communities where they deploy, but also offer support to the local civilian community through civic projects and disaster relief assistance.

"Whether we're in Gulfport or Guam, we think of the local people as our friends and neighbors," said Roach. "Responding to them during a time of need is of the utmost importance to the men in my battalion."

What is today NMCB 1 was originally commissioned in 1942 as a Naval Construction Battalion and supported combat operations in the



Photo by PH2 Vic Thompson

Pacific. The first NCB began a tradition of accomplishment that has since become the Seabee motto "Can Do" by constructing an airstrip 6,000 feet long in dense jungle in 20 days.

The NCB was decommissioned in 1944, but reestablished on Aug. 8, 1949, as NMCB 1. ■

—Story by JO3 Michael D. Frate, assigned to NMCB 1.

'Mighty Mo' sailors help Cher turn back time

Occasionally the motion picture moguls of Hollywood, Calif., conceive ideas that require the help of the U.S. Navy. The movies "Top Gun" and "Star Trek IV" are examples. But a music video on a battleship?

Recently USS *Missouri* (BB 63) was asked to take part in a music video for a new song by Academy Award winning actress and singer, Cher.

The song entitled, "If I Could Turn Back Time" is the first song and video released off Cher's latest album, "Heart of Stone." The video has also

been shown on MTV and "Friday Night Video," a weekly late night program on NBC.

The production company, Cream Cheese Productions of Beverly Hills, had originally planned filming at another location, but according to Cher, using a 45-year-old battleship was perfect for a song that is about turning back time.

"We looked at pictures of other ships, but after seeing *Missouri*, everything just clicked," Cher said.

On Friday, June 30, the production

company came on board during the day to begin setting up the necessary lighting and stage for the video. In a matter of hours a stage had been erected in front of gun turret one.

On Friday night the crew of *Missouri* received its first glimpse of Cher as she arrived by limousine to begin rehearsal for the major scenes of the video that would take place the next night.

Saturday night proved to be the most exciting for the crew. After several shorter scenes were shot, including close-ups of Cher and a scene of the actress arriving at the ship in a speed boat, the climactic final scene was set up and a number of *Missouri* crew members took part.

This scene was set on the stage in front of *Missouri's* 16-inch guns and made to look like a concert scene — according to the director of the video, Marty Callner, the scene was "pure magic."

"On a scale of one to 10 I'd give that scene a 20," said Callner. "*Missouri* sailors were some of the finest people I've ever worked with."

Sunday brought a close to *Missouri's* excitement as the production crew came on board for a final time to break down the set and pack up equipment.

"Using the Navy as a background for this video was a tremendous idea and we are all extremely pleased with the result," said Callner. ■

—Story by JO2 Scott A. Thornbloom, Public Affairs Office, USS *Missouri* (BB 63).



Photo by PH1 Terry Casgrove

Cher greets sailors as she comes aboard ship USS *Missouri*.

Mail Buoy

Bugged over Wasp

I'm steamed! I just read the opening paragraph of your August *All Hands* article on USS *Wasp*. The first couple of sentences read, "Sailors who cringe at the thought of duty on a gator won't mind duty aboard USS *Wasp*. A gator she's not — if you think of an amphibious ship as a slow moving cargo vessel that dumps Marines and their vehicles in the mud."

What kind of nonsense is that and what kind of lead-in to an otherwise excellent article?

I'll have you know that 17 percent of the people in the Navy serve on amphibious ships and we are all proud of the job we do! Today's amphibious ships are extremely professional and combat ready ships that are an integral part of our forward offensive strategy just as are the carriers, cruisers/destroyers, minesweepers, supply ships and submarines. The duty is arduous and exciting and together with our Marine Corps partners we get the job done and done right.

The idea of making snide remarks about any part of the Navy is repugnant to me. Maybe your article writers don't know it, but this is one Navy and all parts are important for us to accomplish the Navy's mission.

— RADM Edward B. Baker Jr.
Commander, Amphibious Group 3
San Diego

I'm writing in reference to your August 1989 issue of *All Hands* and the article on the USS *Wasp* (LHD 1). I believe the opening and closing paragraphs of your article constituted an insult to the sailors and Marines who comprise the amphibious forces of the U.S. Navy.

To even imply that we would "cringe at the thought of duty on a gator" reflects a lack of knowledge and research on the part of JO2 Logan and a failure of editorial responsibility on your part.

Our amphibious ships are manned by proud, dedicated crews, many of whom actively seek duty in these ships which they consistently operate and maintain at the highest level of military readiness.

— CAPT R.J. Ianucci
Chief of Staff, Amphibious Group 3
San Diego

◆ *The only cringing going on lately has come from the editor cowering under a barrage of letters from angry 'gators!* — ed.

Switched ships

This is just a short note regarding your June 1989 magazine copy of *All Hands*.

On Page 28, in your story of USS *Franklin* (CV 13) it is noted that during her ordeal, USS *Hancock* (CV 14) was a thousand yards away.

This may have been brought to your attention by now, but *Hancock* was not CV 14 — USS *Ticonderoga* was. I was aboard *Ticonderoga*.

I just had to bring this to your attention. This was a very fine story on *Franklin*. Thank you for your time on this matter. It is a very fine magazine.

— Jack V. Coleman
Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

◆ *The fourth Ticonderoga (CV 19) was laid down on Feb. 1, 1943, at Newport News, Va., by the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company. The fourth Hancock (CV 14) was laid down on Jan. 26, 1943, by the Bethlehem Steel Company, Quincy, Mass. The ships were renamed and the hull numbers switched on May 1, 1943.* — ed.

Photo sensitive

While reading the latest edition of *All Hands* (July 1989), I noticed two errors. First, the caption of the inside cover photograph calls the gun a "seven-barrel Gatling gun." CIWS has only six barrels; the "seventh" barrel in the middle is a rod that the six barrels rotate around.

The second error involves the bottom picture on Page 33 in the NAPS article. Those attentive students in the classroom are not "NAPsters," but are members of the 1988 Naval Science Institute (NSI) class. NSI is a two-month program for enlisted service members who have been accepted in the Enlisted Commissioning Program and will attend college at one of the NROTC program colleges. Three individuals from that photograph on Page 33 are currently members of the NROTC Unit, University of New Mexico, here in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Keep up the great work — those of us who are landlocked like to keep abreast of happenings in the fleet, and *All Hands* helps.

— LT R. Allen Stubblefield
Instructor
University of New Mexico

Over a barrel

I enjoy your magazine, *All Hands*, very much and have had no reason to criticize it . . . until now. On the inside cover page of your July 1989 issue showing the Phalanx Close-In Weapons System, you have made a small, shall we say, "boo-boo."

Being an aviation ordnanceman, I have had many opportunities to work on the M61A1 Automatic Gun System and in the countless times I have taken them apart and put them back together, I have never found one with seven barrels. They only have six. What you have confused as a center barrel is actually part of the muzzle clamp assembly. My co-worker and I can see where this item could be mistaken for a seventh barrel, considering the shadows on the photograph, but it sure put a smile on our faces and brightened up our Monday morning.

Keep up the good work and thanks for the giggle.

— AO1 (AW) James L. Melton
Fleet Air Western Pacific

Lost in spill

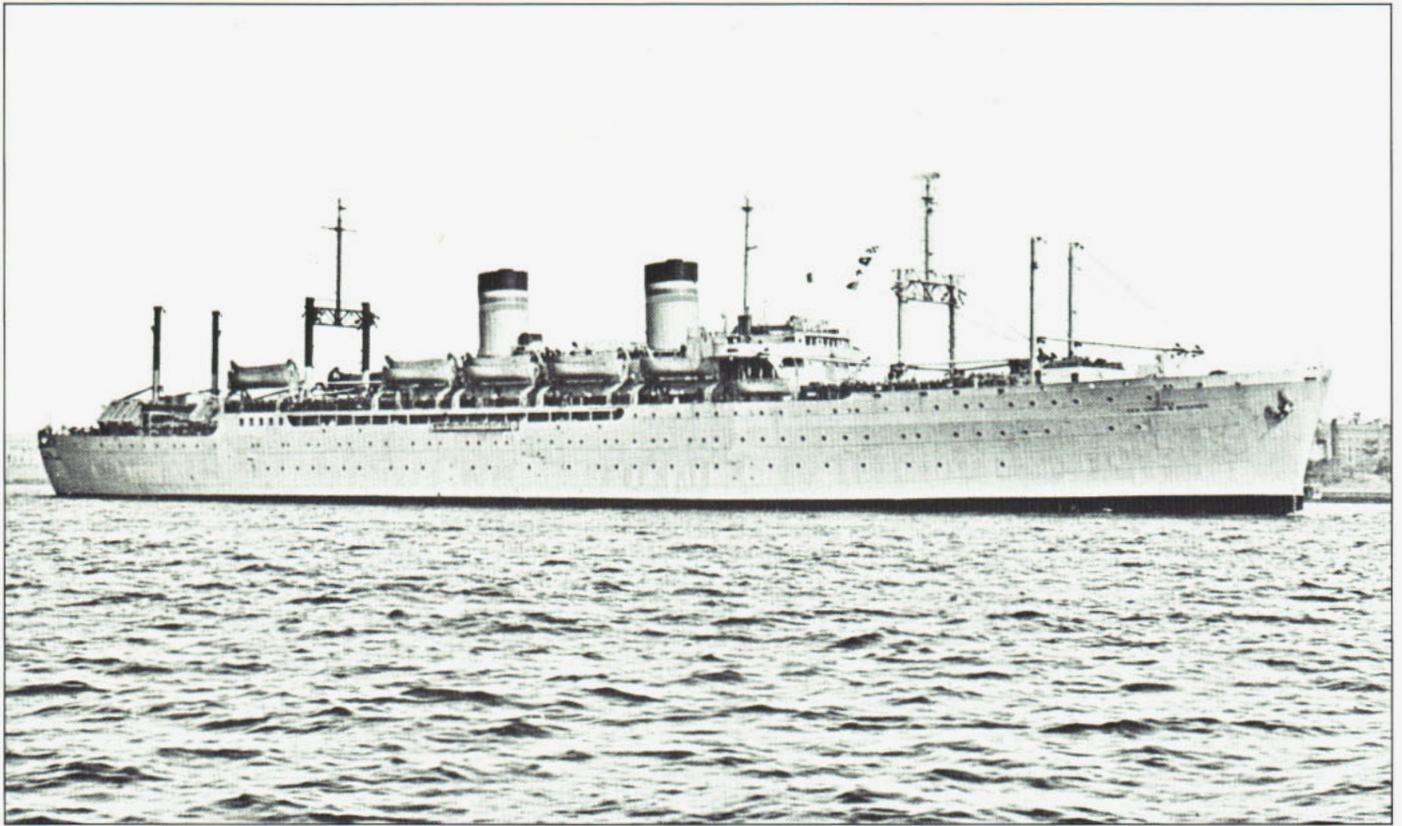
In your July 1989 issue of *All Hands* magazine, an article entitled, "USS *Juneau* adapts to new mission" outlined the U.S. Navy's effort in supporting the cleanup of the Exxon *Valdez* oil spill. Several commands were mentioned for their participation in the cleanup.

I would like to bring to your attention the efforts of the 52 men and four Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM) of Assault Craft Unit 1, NAB Coronado, Calif., who have been supporting the cleanup operations while embarked aboard the USS *Fort McHenry* and USS *Mount Vernon*. An additional detachment of 27 personnel arrived on-scene on July 15, 1989.

ACU 1 personnel have been involved with the actual hands-on portion of the effort, transporting and assisting civilian workers and equipment seven days a week since the operation began.

In the interest of crew morale and in appreciation of the outstanding first class performance of Assault Craft Unit 1, please include the aforementioned information in your next article on *Valdez* Alaska cleanup operations. Your consideration is appreciated.

— CDR J.M. Mackey Jr.
CO, Assault Craft Unit 1



The Military Sealift Command is celebrating its 40th birthday! Originally formed as the Military Sea Transportation Service on Oct. 1, 1949, what is now MSC came into existence when four military transportation organizations were combined under the new Department of Defense, following World War II. Its mission is to carry out all ocean transportation for DoD. With more than 9,000 personnel, including mariners, civilian administrators and shore-based workers, MSC works and sails all over the globe and shipped 10 million tons of dry cargo and more than 13 million tons of petroleum products in 1988. "In both peace and war, we move everything from beans to black oil to bullets," said VADM Paul D. Butcher, Commander Military Sealift Command. "Around the world, everyday, MSC employees and assigned military personnel work to support the national strategy of the United States. We're proud of our contribution to national defense and we accomplish our mission every day, all over the world." The Military Sealift Command plied the world's oceans in the '40s with such ships as USNS *Buckner* (T-AP 123), above, and sails into the '90s with state-of-the-art cargo vessels like USNS *Regulus* (TAKR 292). Happy birthday, MSC!

