

TAKING THE NEXT STEP



MAY 2005

AMERICAN

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. MILITARY



SEABEES

Building Democracy in IRAQ



22 Building Democracy in Iraq

Navy Seabees are working directly with coalition forces to help establish a democracy in Iraq. They provide not only force protection and construction support, but also provide the Iraqi people the knowledge to fend for themselves.

Photo by PH3 Todd Frantom

[On the Front Cover]

BUCN Josh Dibendenetto stands a protective watch as a local Iraqi ICAP student peers cautiously at a Navy Seabee building his new school. Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7 are working in partnership with residents of a small bedouin village on the outskirts of Najaf, Iraq, to build the school and improve the village water, electricity and sanitation facilities.

Photo by PH3 Todd Frantom

[Next Month]

All Hands heads to the Norfolk waterfront to check out the Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center, and to visit with the "Yellow Shirts." aboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71).

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14 The Fisher House

After losing his leg in Iraq, Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Joseph "Doc" Worley, who had treated many Marines in combat, went from being a "doc" to be constantly treated by them. It's a harsh reality for him that requires some adjustment. And with the help of Fisher House, that adjustment has already begun.

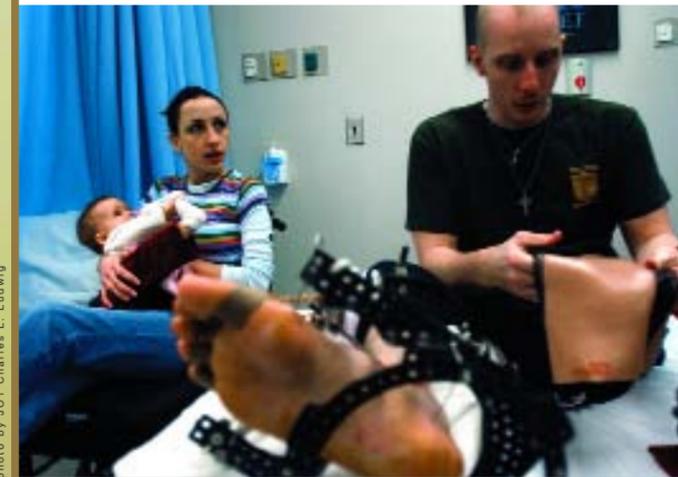


photo by JO1 Charles L. Ludwig

32 Live from...

To celebrate their 80th anniversary, the Navy Band put together a show they have never taken on tour before. For the first time, on their Southeastern U.S. tour, the concert band was joined by the Navy Sea Chanters chorus and a 1960s rock act, the Cruisers.



photo by JO1 Charles L. Ludwig





On a lonely strip of road outside a small bedouin village on the outskirts of Najaf, Iraq, small children cheer a passing convoy in hopes of receiving gifts from the Americans. The parents of these children are villagers who work alongside Navy Seabees to improve the overall quality of life in this desolate part of the country. Together they are building a school and improving the village's water, electricity, sanitation and other facilities.

Photo by PH3 Todd Frantom

Speaking with Sailors

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
MCPON (SS/AW) Terry D. Scott

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to fulfill what I consider to be one of the most significant responsibilities I have to Sailors as the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy – testifying on their behalf to the United States Congress. This year's testimony was before the House Appropriations Committee (HAC), Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans' Affairs.

The HAC has jurisdiction over discretionary spending, which is approximately one-third of the federal budget. It consists of thousands of programs controlled through annual appropriations acts.

Highlighting accomplishments such as the successful and continuing operations in the global war on terrorism as well as the outstanding efforts in humanitarian missions and tsunami relief, the statement to the subcommittee concentrated on the areas of improvement in housing for families and single Sailors, professional military education and providing support to family members stationed around the globe.

Providing for our families means funding our family support resources; Morale, Welfare and Recreation activities; medical care; commissaries and exchanges; and housing. To me, the latter is especially important.

The resources for adequate and comfortable living conditions ashore are the foundation of the support for Sailors and their families. I have spoken to thousands of Sailors during the past year and have concluded that while the quality of life they enjoy is important, the quality of their work life and the work they do is just as crucial in electing whether to depart the Navy after their first term or to devote a career to the service of our country.

With the demands we have accepted as our duties

in the global war on terrorism, we must pay particular attention to these factors if we hope to retain the best quality Sailors.

Operational demands of the global war on terrorism have hindered some Sailors from using their accrued leave, causing some to lose leave because of policy and statutory limitations on the amount of leave service members may carry over from the previous year. Those who do not have the opportunity to use leave due to operational commitments should have the ability to sell back more than the current limit of 60 days over a career.

Advanced education will emphasize the development of a technical or analytical knowledge base, critical thinking skills, an innovative mindset and competencies to lead the Navy in the future. These education opportunities will include certificates, degree programs, and courses and seminars tailored to meet the professional requirements of all Sailors. We are transforming the way our Navy develops and equips our men and women. As our Navy becomes even more technologically advanced, our workforce is going to need critical thinkers and agile learners.

In addition, we are focusing efforts on caring for the families of our deployed Sailors. Navy OneSource seeks to expand its service to at least 15 percent of the force through an aggressive campaign to market the services it offers. There is a value for our Sailors and their families in a one-stop shop to request information on military life, deployments, separations, reunion adjustments, parenting challenges, relocation, emotional well-being, legal issues and parenting and child care, and a variety of personal financial issues such as home buying and consumer information.

Even as our mission continues to find us fighting the global war on terrorism, our Navy can be proud of the job we have done in the past year. The images and stories of the hopeful Iraqi people as they participated in their country's first free election, the first tentative steps toward freedom for that nation, are a reward for the sacrifices our service members have made in this effort.

A copy of my full testimony is available at the following web address: <http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/mcpon/mcponpg.html> ■

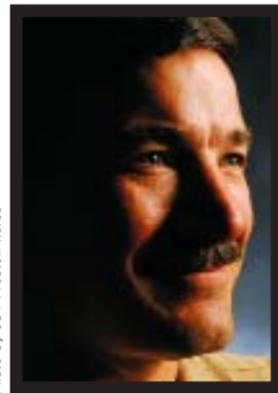


Photo by JO1 Preston Keres

Speaking with Sailors is a monthly column initiated by the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy as a way of reaching out to the men and women of the fleet, whether they are stationed just down the road or halfway around the world.

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For more information about smoking, smoking-related health problems, and how you can quit smoking visit

www.lungusa.org or www.cancer.org



Navy Releases Updated Selective Reenlistment Bonus Award Levels

The Navy released the latest Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) award levels, effective Feb. 1 for eligible Sailors reenlisting in Zones A, B or C, in a naval message.

This message updates the SRB multiples the Navy released in November in NAVADMIN 260/04.

"The SRB program is another example of our Human Capital Strategy's aim to ensure we have the right Sailors with the right skills in the right jobs, and this program helps us achieve that goal," said VADM Gerry Hoewing, Chief of Naval Personnel.

"It is a flexible incentive for the Navy to encourage retention in ratings where skilled Sailors are needed and in turn provides those Sailors with greater financial compensation," said Hoewing.

The multiples for 33 ratings in both Zone A and B increased over the previously published levels. Sailors in Zone A have less than six years of service, while Sailors in Zone B have between six and 10 years of service.

In Zone C, Sailors who have been in the Navy between 10 and 14 years, there were 37 ratings that showed an increase in award levels.

Several ratings now have an SRB in certain zones where previously none existed: Quartermasters, Zones A, B, C; Cryptologic Technician (Technical), Zones B and C.

Aviation Boatswain's Mate

(Fuel), Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling), Engineman, Damage Controlman and Hull Technician now have SRBs in Zone A, as well.

"The Navy will continue to closely monitor retention among our critical skill sets, and we will issue another SRB message as fleet requirements dictate," said RADM Jerry Talbot, director of Military Personnel Plans and Policy Division in Washington.

Sailors whose SRB levels decreased have a 30-day grace period to reenlist at the higher rate. Compared to the November message, there were 13 ratings in Zone A that decreased, 15 ratings in Zone B and three in Zone C that also decreased. The decreases went into effect March 3.

For more information, contact your command career counselor or view the NAVADMIN online at www.npc.navy.mil/ReferenceLibrary/Messages/NAVADMINS/MessageDetails/o2o_05.htm.

Story by LT Kyle Raines, who is assigned to the public affairs office, Chief of Naval Personnel.



Photo by PHAN PAUL H. LAVEITY JR.

HT3 Ryan Rousseau, brazes a plug assembled for a salt water flushing system in the pipe shop aboard USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76).

DOD Approves Retention Initiatives for Special Operations Forces

DOD recently approved a new retention incentive package for Special Operations Forces (SOF) aimed at maintaining combat readiness and keeping experienced operators in uniform.

The initiative uses existing DOD incentive programs, including Special Duty Assignment Pay, Critical Skills Retention Bonus and Assignment Incentive Pay to retain individuals who have years of experience, especially as they become retirement eligible and are at the peak of their value to the armed services.

The following retention incentives were approved for U.S. Army Special Forces, Navy SEALs

(Sea, Air, Land) and Special Warfare Combatant Craft Crewmen, Air Force Combat Controllers and Pararescuemen:

- The ranks of E-4 to E-9 in identified USSOCOM (U.S. Special Operations Command) billets will receive Special Duty Assignment Pay in the amount of \$375 per month.

- A Critical Skills Retention Bonus will be available to senior enlisted service members (pay grades E-6 to E-9) and warrant officers. Contract amounts are as follows: \$150,000 for six years, \$75,000 for five years, \$50,000 for four years, \$30,000 for three years, \$18,000 for two years and \$8,000 for one year.

- Enlisted members and warrant officers who have more than 25 years of service will receive Assignment Incentive Pay in the amount of \$750 per month, provided the member signs an

agreement to stay on active duty for at least an additional 12 months.

In addition to the new incentives, the military services will continue to offer SOF service members Selective Reenlistment Bonuses as needed.

"Our investment in these professionals is great, and the experience gained through years of service makes them invaluable assets to our nation's defense," said Army Lt.Col. Alex Findlay, USSOCOM personnel directorate. "Younger replacements can be trained, but experience is irreplaceable in the current worldwide war on terrorism."

"This retention incentive package is the result of widespread quality-of-life studies, interviews, and town hall meetings with our SOF operators and their families," said U.S. Special Operations Command senior enlisted service advisor, Command Chief MSgt. Bob Martens. "Our goal was to better understand what is most important to our people and their families in order to determine what we can do to make us the employer of choice for the long term."

Eligible service members can contact their unit personnel cen-

ters for more details on the SOF retention incentive package.

Story courtesy of the public affairs office, U.S. Special Operations Command.

Free Advancement Tips, Advice Available Online

Active-duty and Reserve Sailors can obtain answers to advancement questions by going online to a variety of Navy-sponsored Web sites.

Professional military knowledge and rating specific references and bibliographies for advancement (BIBs), along with other information to help Sailors climb the ladder to success, are just a simple click away.

"Virtually everything you have to buy from the commercial sites is available for free from the Navy," said ETC Shane Drinkwater, Electronics Technician (Submarines) examination writer, Naval Education and Training Professional Development and Technology Center (NETPDTC), Pensacola, Fla. "There are a lot of



Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Bartholomew Rodriguez and Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Monique Rodriguez, a married couple stationed in Jacksonville, Fla., were recently honored as their commands' Sailors of the Year. Bartholomew was named Senior Sailor of the Year for Naval Ophthalmic Support and Training Activity (NOSTRA), where he serves as director of NOSTRA's Optical Detachment Services. Monique was selected as Naval Hospital Jacksonville's Junior Sailor of the Year for 2004.

tools out there to help you get advanced, but the best tool we generate is the Advancement Exam Strategy Guide, which can be accessed at <https://www.advancement.cnet.navy.mil>.

According to Drinkwater, the Navy Web site has a specific "how to take an advancement test" section, as well as information on exam strategies and examination development. To help Sailors

understand what skills and knowledge exam developers are assessing, specific rating information is broken down by rank into topic and subject areas.

"A Sailor can go to the exam section, look up their specialty, and we give them what references we use for exam questions," said Drinkwater. "We give them practice exam questions that they can try and tell them if they are correct

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Ricky's Tour

By J01 Mike Jones

www.rickystour.com



Around the Fleet



▲ A crew chief assigned to the Blue Angels signals to start the engines of an F/A-18A Hornet for a daily preventative maintenance check during annual winter training aboard Naval Air Facility El Centro, Calif.

Photo by PH2 Johansen Laurel



◀ HMC Santy Shirley leads crew members in Tae Bo exercises aboard the hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19).

Photo by PH2 Timothy Smith



► Crash and salvage team members simulate rescuing AW3 David Ruiz from an SH-60 Seahawk helicopter assigned to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (HS) 7, during General Quarters drills on the flight deck of USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75).

Photo by PH3 Craig R. Splering



▲ ENS Stephen Andros, dive officer aboard USS Grapple (ARS 53), has his suit checked prior to a dive. Andros is a member of the salvage and rescue ship tasked with recovering an MH-53E Sea Dragon helicopter from the ocean floor near the coast of Virginia.

Photo by SN Davis Anderson

To be considered for the "Around the Fleet" section, forward your **high resolution (5" x 7" at 300 dpi) images** with full credit and outline information, including **full name, rank and duty station** to:

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or not. And if they're wrong, we tell them where they need to look to find that answer."

JOCS Tom Updike, Journalist examination writer at NETPDTC, explained that there are many other Navy-sponsored Web sites Sailors can visit to help with their advancement needs.

"Since just about everything has gone electronic, any OPNAV, SECNAV or DOD instruction is available through the Web," said Updike. "These people on the other side of the fence that run advancement information sites not sponsored by the Navy just aren't in the know like the exam writers. Why pay for that outdated information when we give Sailors an updated list of reference material used to develop the very exam they are about to take—for free?"

Drinkwater and Updike both agree that the advancement exam strategy guides available on NETPDTC's Web site are a great study tool for Sailors. This professionally developed online advancement guide gives detailed information on exam preparation, how to take an exam, background on the Navy enlisted advancement system, professional military knowledge and rating-specific master reference lists, as well as sample and practice exams for each pay grade.

"Sailors can also use our site to access profile sheets, exam statistics by rating, non-resident training courses, final multiple computations charts, and many other helpful tools to better prepare for upcoming exams," said Updike.

Sailors seeking additional advancement and career information can visit Navy Knowledge Online at <https://www.nko.navy.mil>. This site allows Sailors to work with their respective 5 Vector Models (5VM).

The 5VM breaks down into five categories the skills and knowledge that Sailors need to

be successful: professional development, personal development, military education and leadership, certifications and qualifications, and performance. More sites available for information include: Navy Electronic Directive System at <http://neds.daps.dla.mil>, Defense Technology Information Center at <http://www.dtic.mil> and NETPDTC's <https://www.advancement.cnet.navy.mil/>.

Sailors without access to a computer may see their Education Services Officer or Command Career Counselor for ordering instructions or information they will need for their next advancement exam.

Story by Dean Persons, who is assigned to the public affairs office, Naval Education and Training Command.

Keystone Course Forms Joint Warfighting Foundation for Command Senior Enlisted Leaders

U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) and National Defense University (NDU) continue to take strides toward their goal of creating a larger Keystone program for command senior enlisted leaders (CSEL) with their Keystone CSEL Joint Operations Module (JOM), at USJFCOM's Joint Warfighting Center (JWFC) in Suffolk, Va.

The four-day course provides Army command sergeants major, Marine Corps sergeants major, Navy and Coast Guard command master chiefs and Air Force command chief master sergeants with tools they need to work in the joint environment.

"If we are to achieve the

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Around the Fleet

▼ A young Indonesian girl in respiratory distress and her father arrive aboard hospital ship USNS *Mercy* (T-AH 19) for treatment by Navy medical personnel and volunteers from "Project HOPE."

Photo by PH3 Rebecca J. Moat



◀ Sailors assigned to the air department aboard USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) use push bars to guide the arresting wire back into position after recovering an F/A-18C *Hornet*.

Photo by PHAN Phillip V. Morrill

▶ MM1 Jonah Brixey loads an M-16 clip in anticipation of an upcoming live-fire training exercise aboard the submarine tender USS *Emory S. Land* (AS 39). Brixey is a member of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 8, Det. 20, stationed at Sigonella, Sicily.

Photo by PH2 Jonathan Kulp



▲ BU2 Richard Flaws salvages tile from a schoolhouse in Koggala, Sri Lanka, that was destroyed by the tsunami that hit the region, Dec. 26, 2004.

Photo by JO5N S.C. Irwin



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Department of Defense's top priorities, then we must also transform how we train, educate and employ our CSELS," said Army Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Ripka, USJFCOM command sergeant major. "Strengthening combined and joint warfighting capabilities will require us to bring jointness down to the lowest appropriate level. Transforming the joint force requires creating a military culture that rewards innovation and risk-taking."

The idea for Keystone grew out of USJFCOM and NDU's co-sponsored Capstone program that provides joint warfighting foundations for general and staff officers.

"Our first course was a pilot course that lasted only two days, but feedback from the pilot course showed we need more time, and our second course is a full four-day JOM," said Ripka. "It's the only really joint professional military education that enlisted leaders get right now at that level."

The first version of Keystone took shape in April 2004, when enlisted leaders participated in the two-day CSEL Capstone JOM at USJFCOM's JWFC.

"Up to that point, we hadn't done anything to provide CSELS with any joint education," said Ripka. "The joint operations module, which will be incorporated into a larger Keystone program, creates an opportunity for the CSEL to be an immediate impact player to the joint force staff and the joint force commander."

Ripka said the course gives CSELS confidence to build teams in a joint, multinational, and interagency force integration environment, and provides them an understanding of base operating support capabilities and requirements in those environments.

Participants for the latest JOM total more than 40 command senior enlisted leaders. Students are coming from all services and

coalition partners, including Canada and the United Kingdom.

Keystone JOM learning objectives include forming/organizing the Joint Task Force (JTF) and joint manning document development; operational level planning; joint command and control; joint deployment planning; leadership challenges of building and maintaining an integrating environment; maintaining discipline and standards in the joint environment; and Special Operations Forces integration.

Other course topics include operational level joint lessons learned, the JTF and public affairs, coalition perspectives, logistics and base operations, joint information operations and rules of engagement, and legal issues.

The Keystone CSEL JOM, which runs twice a year, will be offered again in July 2005. By early 2006, USJFCOM and NDU officials said the course will be incorporated into a larger Keystone program, lasting 15 days with an "aggressive" travel schedule that includes visits to several combatant commands.

Story by Army Sgt. Jon Cupp, who is assigned to the public affairs office, U.S. Joint Forces Command.

JCMS Spiral 2 Rolls to Fleet

Sailors across the Navy began using the latest in a series of Job Advertising and Selection System Career Management System (JCMS) 'Spirals,' or upgrades, recently.

The spirals bring additional functions and capabilities to Sailors' fingertips with a single click of a mouse.

New roles, such as Command and Career Policy Administrators (CPA), were introduced to provide key career management personnel

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Around the Fleet

► Deputy Commander, First Naval Construction Division, RADM Raymond K. Alexander (right), arrives to visit with the Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 23 at work sites near Fallujah, one day prior to Iraq's historic democratic elections.

Photo by PH3 Todd Frantom



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critical information concerning not only the individual Sailor, but also the billet the Sailor fills. Commands can now see multiple applicant profile summaries in order to compare and rate applicants.

“CPAs, such as Rating Assignment Officers, establish and monitor qualification weights reflected in the indicator lights displayed to Sailors,” said ABCM(AW) Bill Place, Enlisted Assignments leading chief petty officer at Navy Personnel Command in Millington.

The indicator light system compares three critical areas utilized during a normal negotiation window for Sailors: skills, preferences and permanent change of station (PCS) costs.

“When a Sailor logs onto the system and applies for jobs, the system takes a snapshot [of the three areas, helping] to decide on the best matches for that Sailor,” continued Place. “Job skills are already in the system, and each job already has the desired skill set requirements attached. When a Sailor pulls up their JCMS homepage, it will show the Navy’s first five jobs, the first five jobs matching the Sailor’s preferences and the first five jobs with incentives. Each Sailor has a light indicator to help determine best matches based on their resume of skills,” he said.

“Commands have access to see the status of their jobs and are able to anonymously view an applicant’s pay grade, rate, NECs (Navy Enlisted Classification Code), school and platform history,” said OSCM (SW/AW) Pat Lumley, PERS-4 senior enlisted advisor at Navy Personnel Command. “This access allows commands a real-time capability to track command manning and view potential gains.”

Sailors receive alerts throughout the negotiation process to keep them abreast of their current status and the status of any jobs

they have applied for.

“The first time they log into JCMS upon entering their nine-month negotiation window, they are required to fill out their duty preference sheet to ensure the system captures the latest choices of the Sailor,” said Lumley. “It is very important for Sailors to ensure their duty preference sheets are updated with the most accurate information, as one of the primary indicator lights extracts data to formulate an indicator,” he said.

Sailors who have a Five Vector Model will be able to look at how a specific job would affect their career if they were selected for it. Being able to see how various jobs impact their careers gives Sailors insight before applying for a job.

To access JCMS, log on to www.nko.navy.mil or www.npc.navy.mil.

More information on JCMS is available at www.npc.navy.mil or call 1-866-U-ASK-NPC.

Story by JOCS(SW) Katie Suich, who is assigned to the public affairs office, Navy Personnel Command.

► Family members wave goodbye to their loved ones aboard USS *O’Kane* (DDG 77) as she leaves Pearl Harbor on a scheduled deployment.

Photo by PH3 Ryan C. McGinley



▼ BM3 Tony Layton directs a Landing Craft Air Cushion, assigned to Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 4, as it enters the well deck aboard the amphibious assault ship USS *Bataan* (LHD 5). *Bataan* is completing its final certifications to ensure the ship is ready for deployment.

Photo by PHAN Jeremy L. Grisham



▲ AM2 Jerry Grueser, left, and AM2 Edward Lapushchik, both assigned to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (HS) 7, perform maintenance in the cabin of an HH-60H *Seahawk* in the hangar bay aboard USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75).

Photo by PHAN Ricardo J. Reyes



▼ **October 15, 1942**



Photo from Press Association, Inc.

The court of Neptune Rex, Ruler of the Raging Main, convenes on the deck of a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier as part of a “Shellback Ceremony” while crossing the Equator.

Photo courtesy of the U.S. Navy Historical Center.



A Home Away From Home

For residents of the Fisher House near Walter Reed Army Medical Center, home is truly where the military sends them.

Story and photos by JO1 Charles L. Ludwig



► **Help is needed as Doc Worley** stands on his prosthetic leg for the first time. This point of a leg amputee's recovery is typically an emotional one, with tears shed by patients, families and sometimes, doctors.

At the big, nondescript house near the 16th Street gate of Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC), life is as normal as anyone could imagine.

Just ask Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class (FMF) Joseph "Doc" Worley. For Doc, every morning is as routine as any other married father in America.

Nearly every day at the Fisher House, just before 7 a.m., he rises from his bed, checks on his seven-month old baby, and gets a shave and a shower. Then he ambles down the hallway of his home to the kitchen and fixes himself a considerable bowl of chocolate-flavored cereal. After putting away the bowl and grabbing a quick cup of "joe," Worley takes in some of the local news telecast before he glances at the clock beside him.

Everything is just like anyone would expect.

Well, not quite everything. "I feel like I am like everyone else, with one exception," said Doc. "Fact is, I have no left leg. And until I can get up on a prosthetic, I have to somehow deal with that."

Dealing with it is something Doc learned to do very quickly after a firefight on Iraqi soil in September 2004.

It was in that circumstance that he was injured in Fallujah, Iraq while serving as part of a Marine expeditionary force. As a result of the battle, Worley, the unit's lead corpsman, lost his left leg and had his right leg reduced to shambles.

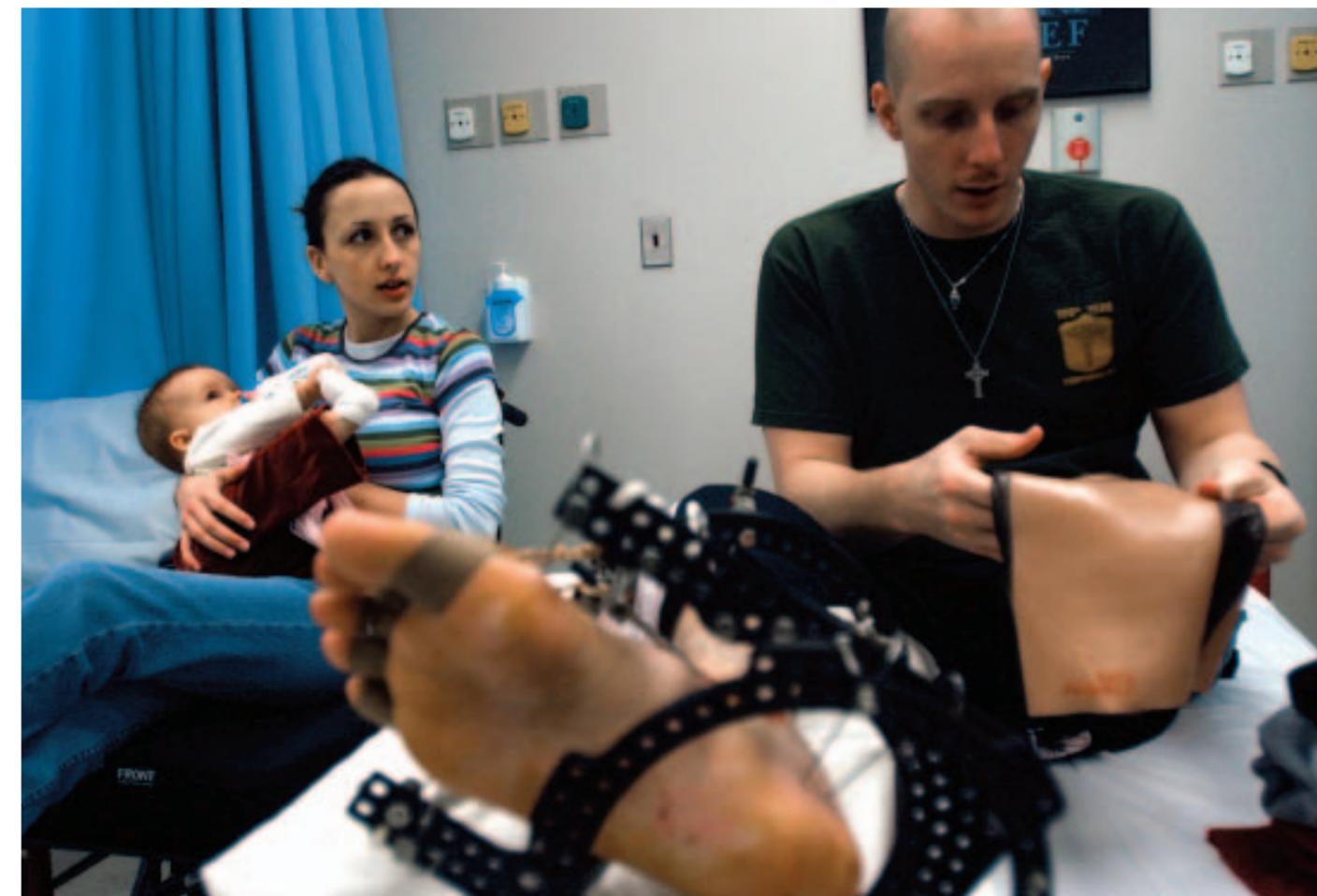
"We were in a rough spot and had a vehicle in the front of our convoy attacked by an IED (improvised explosive device). So I jumped out of our vehicle and tried to get to the [damaged] vehicle to treat my guys," Doc said. "But I never got there."

With about 50 meters to go until he

reached the damaged vehicle, Worley fell victim to a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG), which blasted through his left knee and knocked him to the ground within 25 feet of a second IED. "That's what took my leg off," he said. "At that point, I had a choice. I could have lain there, and I would have been with my Maker. But I thought about my wife and [daughter] Abby and decided I owed it to them to at least try to live."

While he lay there on the bridge, the IED went off, but not before Worley managed to move a few feet away from the blast. It still peppered him with shrapnel

▼ **Whether he is at the Fisher House** or at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for therapy, Worley's wife and daughter are never far away. That's one of the benefits many Fisher House residents say they would not want to be without.



all over his body. From there, Worley managed to tie a tourniquet on his leg while the firefight raged on around him.

Within minutes, the firefight ended, but Doc had taken four bullets in the torso before it was done.

Once the battle was over, the combined military forces in Iraq were quick to act on his behalf.

“Within three days I was out of Iraq and in Germany,” Doc said. “A few days after that, I arrived at [National Naval Medical Center] Bethesda, [Md.]. I was taken care of almost immediately.”

Then, after spending several weeks as a patient at Bethesda, Worley was transferred to WRAMC in Silver Spring, Md.

With that, Doc, who had treated many Marines in combat, had gone from being a “doc” to being constantly treated by them. It’s a harsh reality for him that requires some adjustment.

And that adjustment has already begun at Fisher House.

Fisher House is a non-profit organization that runs a group of homes across America where severely injured troops live while going through their rehabilitative process.

The houses themselves, while large, don’t necessarily look any different from normal homes on the outside.

Once inside, however, it doesn’t take long to realize this isn’t a typical home. With eight guest rooms to go along with an extra-large kitchen and dining room, the Fisher House has everything needed to make someone feel at home, even if they are thousands of miles away from home.

“That’s what we strive to do for these

“I’ve never quit on anything before, and I couldn’t imagine letting all these people down now.”



▲ **One of the high points** of Worley’s recovery was the day he was fitted with his prosthetic leg. Each leg is tested to make sure it can hold the patient’s weight and equalize a patient’s height.



[people],” said Fisher House Manager Vivian Wilson. “We take injured service members from around the world and try to make them forget about the fact that their house and other worldly belongings are far away. It’s something that helps in their recoveries.”

Making everyone feel like Fisher House is a home away from home is an ongoing process. Since the injuries suffered by troops staying there are severe, a service member’s time at the house could go on for several years.

For the Worley family, that means relying on family and friends in their home state of Georgia to take care of things back home.

“That’s what gets a little tough for them sometimes,” Wilson said. “These people have lives, have homes and possessions back in Georgia or California or Germany. Leaving that for years at a time can be rough. We have to make them feel like it is all right.”

◀ **Despite the assistance Worley receives** at Fisher House, there can still be rough days, days where pain from his injuries overtakes the relief the foundation helps him feel. “On those days, I sometimes feel like I should just lay in bed and do nothing,” Worley said. “But I know that sooner or later, I need to get up and get back to work.”

Those kinds of feelings can be persistent, but Fisher House does what it can to make sure a service member is as close to home as possible.

As part of the house’s operation, a service member’s wife and children may stay with him. Having family there makes a huge difference to the injured, according to Doc.

“This little girl is the best kind of inspiration I can possibly have here,” he said while playing peek-a-boo with his only child, Abigail. “Any time I even think about this being too tough, I look at her and I get a second wind.”

Together, Doc, his wife Angel and Abigail live in a room large enough to hold a queen-sized bed flanked by nightstands, a television entertainment center and a few recliner chairs. For Abigail, there is also a crib and playpen on either side of the bed.

Also, the house has a fireplace, living room and laundry room for the residents to share. It’s in these areas that they all use each other for informal group counseling.

“The families here are all good friends,” Wilson said. “They all know to a degree what each other is going through, and they lean on each other for support when they need it.”

Between having Angel and Abigail with him and being surrounded with the support of other amputees at the house, Worley

says he is living a fairly comfortable life.

"I love what this place has been able to do for me. You know, all in all, everything I do with my rehab is pretty much impossible without the support that Fisher House provides."

It was there that he began to learn to handle his daily activities from the black, cushioned seat of his hand-powered wheelchair. And he did it all with his wife at his side.

"Being here with Joe has helped me as well as him," said Angel. "As a wife, you want to know that your husband is in good hands. And even though you know the military is taking care of him, it's good to see it for yourself."

For Angel, that includes overseeing nearly every step of her husband's recovery process.

Every morning, Doc goes through a routine that is intended to keep him in shape and prepare his body for walking again. "I wheel the half-mile to the hospital every day and PT," he said of his daily schedule. "Everything builds for the day that I get up on my leg."

Five months after losing his leg, Doc's big day finally arrived, and he stood using a prosthetic leg provided by WRAMC.

It was an emotional and refreshing day for the Worley family. "I was just so proud of him," Angel said. "It's been a very long couple of months for us, and to see him standing again, even for a short time, was worth it."

Doc Worley, while understanding the emotional effect the moment held, also had a more light-hearted reaction to standing again.

"Well, I still didn't walk since my leg is still messed up, but at least I got to be 6-foot-4 again," he said. "Being a little person gets old when you are used to being a giant."

Worley explained that's what has proven to be the hardest adjustment to make.

"I do try and reach for things when [Angel] isn't looking," Worley said. "I know my limits, and I will ask for help when I need it. But I will give it my best shot first."

It's that attitude, along with the support Fisher House provides, that keeps Worley going full bore in rehab when so many

others may be inclined to lay off or even give up.

"I can't quit. Not now," Worley explained. "I've never quit on anything before, and I couldn't imagine letting all these people down now. Between my family, the hospital staff, the Fisher House and everyone I've met over here, I have a lot of people in my corner."

And so life goes on for the Worley family, with every day serving as another step in the healing process that began five months earlier.

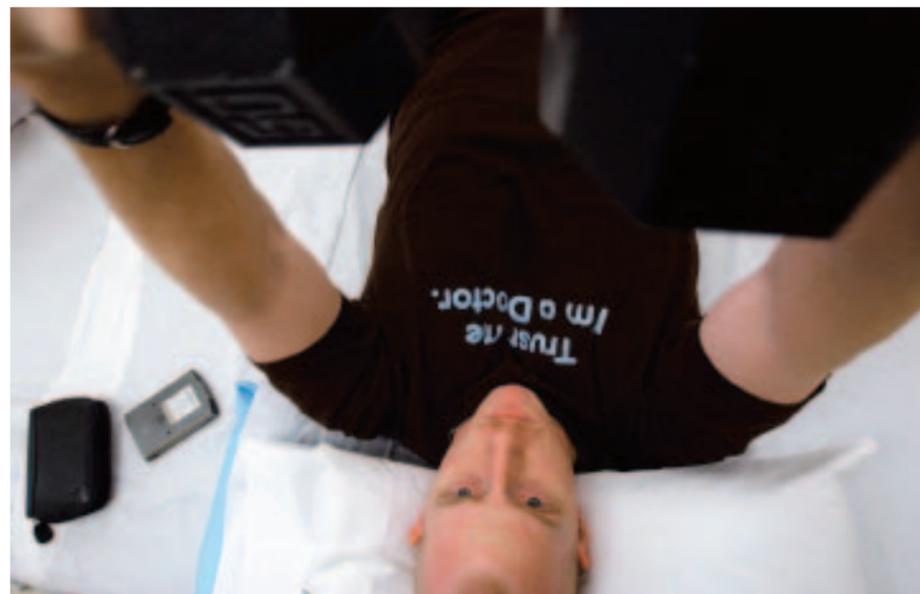
Every morning, he still wakes up, checks on his daughter, fixes a big bowl of cereal and watches the news. It's all part of the normal life at the big, nondescript house near WRAMC's 16th Street gate.

And after everything Doc and the other Fisher House residents have been through, normal sounds just right. 📻

Ludwig is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands

Website Exclusive

Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200504/feature_1/



▲ **A big part of Worley's day** is dedicated to keeping himself in top physical shape. That job has gotten harder since the 6-foot-4, 240-pound corpsman was injured in Iraq.



◀ Living from the seat of a wheelchair

can make some of life's most routine tasks a little more troublesome. Now instead of getting his face close to the wall mirror while shaving, Worley uses a handheld mirror to make sure he is within regulations.

▼ As they feed their daughter

Abigail in the dining room at Fisher House, it becomes apparent that life will go on for Worley and his wife, Angel.





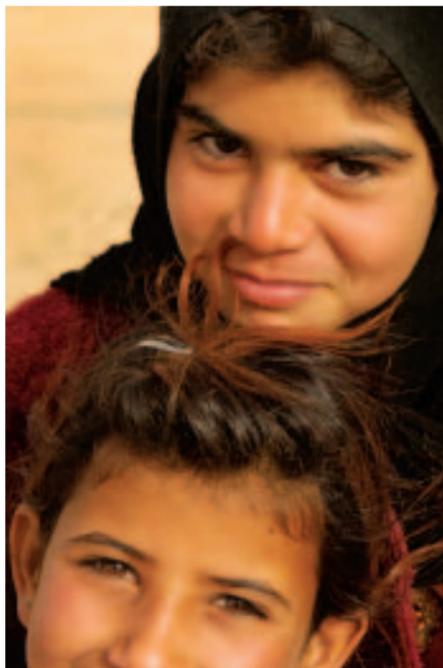
Building Democracy in IRAQ

Story and Photos by PH3 Todd Frantom

▲ **Early morning checks** are an important part of the maintenance process for the Seabees of NMCB 4. These Sailors work in the hostile terrain of Iraq and deal with the elements on a daily basis. On top of the fact that nature can wreak havoc on equipment, the threat of incoming rockets is always there.



▲ **BUC Eric Tucker prepares his Sailors** for the day's convoy into the hostile city of Fallujah, Iraq. Seabees have installed a temporary pump allowing the water to once again be drained out of the city and back into the Euphrates River.



Under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, Iraqis had no experience with democracy, no control over public services and viewed the government as a predator. They lived in fear of a knock on the door at night, possibly leading to prison, torture and murder. Now, however, the Iraqi people have a chance to build a country of their own, rebuilding hope from the ruins of oppression with a good deal of help from the United States. Navy Seabees now lead the way with relief and reconstruction in war-torn Iraq.

◀ **Two small girls take time away** from playing on the desolate land where their future school is being built by Navy Seabees. It will be the first school for the children of around 500 bedouin tribesmen who settled in the desert near Najaf, Iraq, to escape the dangers of war.

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 4 and NMCB 23, both units of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Engineering Group Task Force (I MEG), are working directly with coalition forces to help establish a democracy in Iraq. They provide not only force protection and construction support, but also provide the Iraqi people the knowledge to fend for themselves.

“The Seabees are involved in a three-part mission in Iraq—military support, contract support and municipal support,” said CDR Alan Flenner, officer in charge of the Fallujah Reconstruction Cell. “We recognize the people’s needs and are putting forth all effort to give the Iraqi people ownership of their municipal facilities.”

For the first time in history, Seabees moved more than 400 miles during



◀ **Seabees maintain a temporary pump station** on the banks of the Euphrates River. The station was destroyed by mortar fire during Operation *Phantom Fury*.



▲ **BU1 Kevin Green** communicates as best he can with an Iraqi ICAP student. The Seabees and students work well together, even sharing a laugh from time to time.

► **With the success of the Iraqi Construction Apprenticeship Program (ICAP)**, members of Naval Construction Battalions began additional rounds of teaching construction skills to Iraqi civilians. The goal is to give the Iraqis the know-how to rebuild their own country.



Operation *Iraqi Freedom* with Marine forces, contributing to the campaign's success. Later, as part of Operation *Phantom Fury* in Fallujah, Iraq, Seabees provided support to Marines during night offensives while simultaneously completing construction projects. Throughout the theater of operations, NMCB 14 and NMCB 74 Seabees built troop facilities and camps and improved roads, living up to their "build and fight" motto.

"During the course of *Phantom Fury*, Marine Engineer Group, Seabees and Army engineers followed the offensive operation, and assessed the damage—within hours sometimes—so there was a clear picture of what needed to be done," said Flenner.

After the fall of Fallujah, Seabees began work to reconstruct and repair the infrastructure of the city. One of their first tasks involved the city's pump stations. One station was completely destroyed, leaving the Marines with flooded base camps and



▲ **The skills the Iraqi civilians** have learned from the Seabees are instrumental in giving them a sense of ownership and pride as they rebuild their own country. Soon, many local communities will see the benefits of increased stabilization because of what the Seabees are doing.

▼ **An Iraqi prepares mortar** the old fashioned way. Americans and Iraqis are working together to build a schoolhouse on the outskirts of Najaf, Iraq.

sewage in the street. The Seabees solved the problem by hooking up one of their portable pumps at the station.

"The pump station is a good example where Seabees and the MEG as a whole find a quick solution to a problem, and stabilize the situation until civil engineers can follow with a contract to rebuild," said Flenner.

Everything the Seabees and coalition forces do in Iraq is focused on stabilizing the country, to allow the people of Iraq to take full control of their own affairs and rebuild their country. To help make this a reality, the Seabees have cleared the streets of debris, built troop facilities and barricades and supplied water to the citizens of Fallujah.

"There never seems to be just one focused job over here; we could be building a small shelter one day, then doing force protection in a convoy the next," said

continued on pg. 29





◀ **ENS Majid Awab**, supervising project manager of the school project near Najaf, Iraq, grew up in Bahrain and is fluent in Arabic. His ability to communicate with the children sent a positive message that the Americans are here to help. The children of the war-stricken community accept this more readily than anyone.

▼ **Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7** hand out cookies to local Iraqi children. These Seabees are working with the residents of a small bedouin village on the outskirts of Najaf, Iraq, to build a school and improve the village water, electricity and sanitation facilities.

continued from pg. 27

Explosive Ordnanceman 3rd Class Todd Dickison.

Force protection is not limited to convoys. For the Seabees of the MEG, it is routine and necessary for survival.

“We are in Condition 1 every time we leave the secured compound,” said Chief Builder Eric Tucker. “We also wear full body armor, helmet and vest.”

Everything the Seabees do in Iraq represents the Bees’ ability to adapt to their

environment and take on any task. Near the outskirts of Najaf, Iraq, within a small farm community, Seabees are helping local Iraqis stake a claim to the future of Iraq. Along a lonely strip of blacktop, Seabees of NMCB 7 are constructing a six-classroom school for 250 poor Iraqi children.

“We are giving back to the Iraqi community by teaching the people the skills and the know-how, but most important, we are a good presence in the area,” said ENS





▲ **Amidst the destruction** of the city of Fallujah, Iraq, children emerge to greet American Seabee convoys. More than 147,000 residents of the city recently returned to their homes after coalition forces drove out insurgents during Operation *Phantom Fury*.

◀ **Navy Seabees set up a perimeter** on the banks of the Euphrates River so that a pump site can be safely surveyed. Fallujah, Iraq, has a high water table and floods easily, so pumping stations are necessary to dewater the city.

Majid Awab, supervising project manager. “What we are doing at the school sends out a message that America is here to help.”

Iraqi civilians are involved in the Iraqi Civilian Apprentices Program (ICAP). New apprentices learn basic construction skills critical to developing a solid foundation for constant, quality construction practices. The program was created to increase the number of skilled construction workers in Iraq, help reduce unemployment and provide a new way for Iraqi youth to enter the workforce with the skills to rebuild their own country.

“We teach them what we know and then build from there. They also teach us in the process. We are able to apply their custom of construction with our practices,” said BU1 Jason Smith.

“We really work well together, and they have a lot of enthusiasm and are proud of

their work,” said Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Albert B. Johnson. “You can also tell that they gain confidence in their work as the project progresses.”

What may be the most important message of all is what the children are getting out of their experiences with American service members. When a convoy rolls in, small children swarm the vehicles. Their excitement about the Americans is overwhelming, and the Seabees enjoy their presence, as well.

“We all love the kids here and bring them whatever we can muster up from our camp to give them as gifts. Cookies, candy, power-bars, even things to help them out like toothpaste and baby wipes,” said Smith.

“Our hearts pour out to these children,” Smith added. “They are so adorable, and their smiles are heart warming. They give us high hope that what we are doing out

here is well worth it.”

“I love America,” one boy exclaimed as a convoy arrived. “I am happy Navy is here.”

This sentiment is just one example of the overall appreciation for Seabees’ role in constructing a foundation for democracy in this war-torn country.

True to their heritage, Seabees are supporting the Iraqi people in achieving that goal, ensuring that the new, free Iraq will remain an ongoing constructive process in the hands of its own people. ✚

Frantom is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands

Website Exclusive

Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200505/feature_2/

Story and photos by JO1 Charles L. Ludwig

► **One of the tour's show stealers** was the Navy Band's newest performing group, the Cruisers. Led by vocalist MUC John Fisher, they dazzled audiences with high-energy renditions of Motown hits of the 1960s, including "Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch," "My Girl" and "Shout."

Live from

Celebrating their 80th anniversary, the U.S. Navy Band showcases talent on a Southeastern U.S. tour





Most deployed Sailors could have related to Petty Officer 1st Class Andy Wheeler as he spoke to his master chief, Bob Snider, early one sun-drenched but windy Sunday morning.

“So,” Wheeler said while taking a break from his morning routine, “it’s Tuesday. I guess we’ll be in ...”

“No, it’s Sunday,” Snider interrupted with a chuckle. “You’re way off. Jacksonville was yesterday ...”

“And Sumter is today, right?” Wheeler jumped in, trying to finish Snider’s thought.

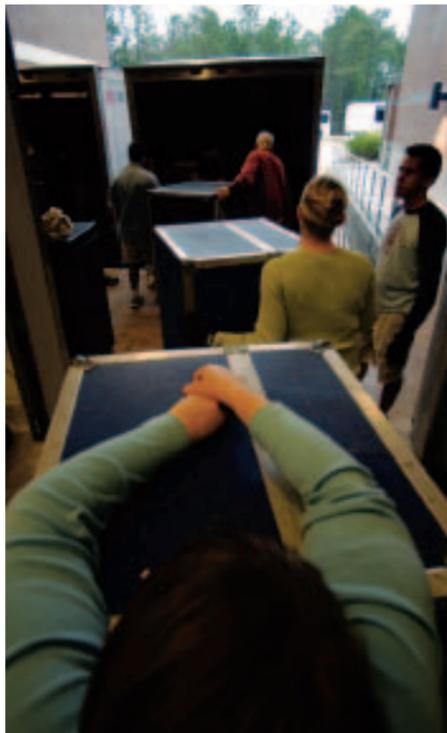
“Nooo, you’re still thinking of Tuesday,” Snider quipped. “Savannah is today. Did you lose track of what day it is again?”

“Yeah, that’s the third time in a week I think,” Wheeler sheepishly answered.

Losing track of what day of the week it is has been a time-honored tradition in the Navy, but what made Wheeler’s conversation unique was the setting.

If someone didn’t know much about

▼ **Members of the band serve** as their own road crew, with a rotating set of musicians working to set up and break down all of their equipment. They then transport the gear from city to city.



the Navy, they may have thought these two Sailors were talking about their ship hitting foreign ports. But instead, these two musicians were talking about the next several stops of the Navy Band’s three-week, 20-performance 80th anniversary tour.

For the tour, the band put on a show that they have never taken on tour before. For the first time, the concert band was joined on stage by the Navy Sea Chanters chorus and a 1960s rock act, the Cruisers, for a series of shows.

In all, the tour took the band through five states, with performances in high school and college auditoriums, convention centers and outdoor band shells. Fans in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida turned out to see the free 90-minute live show.

Performing those 20 shows in 20 different cities over 21 days makes some members a little worse for wear when it comes to the calendar, Musician 1st Class Wheeler observed. “That’s something that happens a lot with some of the guys here,” he said after his conversation with MUCM Snider. “You get out on the road and you get so into the routine of traveling that you forget everything else—even what day it is. [That] seems to happen to everyone at least once.”

It may not be so bad to the band’s performers if that was the worst thing about the tour. But performing a show a night is really just the easy part.

“If performing was the hard part, we’d always be happy,” said Navy Band Leader CAPT Ralph Gambone. “But it’s the other things that go into a tour that wear people out. Everything from scheduling the tour to traveling can be a pain.”

A Navy Band tour, especially one with the prominence of an 80th anniversary, is an ordeal to arrange, explained Snider, the band’s tour coordinator.

“Some of the appearances are easy to take care of, since you know the sponsors and have worked with them before,” he said. “But even then, you still have to make sure everything else on the tour is ready to go.”

To do that, Snider heads out to the various tour stops and surveys the cities, including the hotels they may stay in,

the surrounding areas and potential performance halls.

Everything must be up to the Navy Band’s standard before a tour is officially set. “We’ve had to move shows to other cities before for a variety of reasons,” Snider said. “But we check everything out before we go. We even send people out to drive the actual tour route to make sure the rides aren’t too tough.”

Once the plans are set and the tour begins, that’s when the headaches start for band members. “On a tour, everything gets

▼ **Camaraderie was always evident**

among the band’s three performing groups on tour. Here, MU1 Andrae Alexander and MU1 Benjamin Grant discuss jazz fusion during a sound check in Jacksonville, Fla.



► **Touring can prove** to be an exhausting experience. During their daily bus rides from city to city, many band members, including MU1 Sue Appel, choose to use the rides as a chance to catch up on much-needed sleep.

thrown out of whack,” said MU1 Andrew Oppenheim, one of the band’s tuba players. “I would imagine that it’s like going on a deployment. Your body gets used to eating at different times and just everything changes for your daily routine.”

Instead of waking and arriving for work early in the morning, on tour most Navy Band members wake, eat breakfast and prepare for an hours-long bus ride to the next city.

There, after checking in and unpacking the few things they have the time to unpack,





◀ **MU1 Andrew Oppenheim warms up** before a show in Sumter, S.C. The show was part of the U.S. Navy Band's 80th anniversary tour.

▼ **Band members warm up** on stage before a performance in Sumter, S.C. Audience members who showed up early enough were able to watch the band prepare for the concert.



it's time for lunch, usually around 2 p.m. "That can be seen as a positive and a negative of life on the road," Wheeler said. "For some people, eating in restaurants and getting served is pretty cool, but for those of us who may have some trouble keeping off weight, constantly eating out can be trouble. I usually gain about 10 pounds on the road."

After the late lunch, buses start rolling from the hotel several hours before a show to begin shuttling musicians to the concert hall. Then, after warm-ups and the actual show, band members return to their hotel rooms around 10 p.m., leaving time for a late dinner and sleep.

Also in the mix is a rotating set of band members who serve as the "crew." They take off from the hotel earlier than the other band members to take two moving trucks worth of equipment to the concert site to be set up.

"The crew is as important a group of people as we have," Snider said. "They are

always ahead of everyone else to make sure all the groundwork is set up. Without them volunteering to get there early and have everything together, we'd have a heck of a time doing a quality show."

All in all, it makes for a full schedule, according to MU1 Benjamin Grant. "It works out to not leave a lot of time for anything but music," said Grant, the bass player for the Cruisers. "But it's not bad, because everything is pretty much scheduled out for you."

But sometimes even the best schedules can have things go awry. Just ask MU1 David Malvaso.

Malvaso, the usual lead guitar player for the band's Commodores jazz ensemble, was sitting at home when the tour began in February. Several days into it, though, he was called to replace the Cruisers guitar player, who had to leave the tour for personal reasons.

Within a day, Malvaso found himself flying out to meet the band. Once there, he

learned the music on the fly and was performing nightly with the Cruisers during their 20-minute Motown set.

Having backups readily available is a requirement before going on tour, Gambone said. "We make sure everyone has a backup before we leave," he said. "It adds to the workload for everyone, but it comes in handy. We had people miss a show every time out this tour."

That included having nearly half the band catching either the flu or severe head colds while passing through their various stops. "It seems like everyone has gotten sick this time around," said euphonium player MUCM Dave Miles. "About halfway through, I think every person [on the concert band bus] had something. We were all feeling it."

But as the saying goes, the show must go on. And it did, much to the delight of those in attendance for concerts.

Those fans were treated with the never-before-toured mix of concert marches,

► **When on tour**, band members, such as guitar player MU1 David Malvaso, keep their uniforms in near-immaculate condition.

Broadway show tunes and Motown hits of the 1960s. It wasn't quite what everyone was expecting.

"I never thought it was going to be this big of a deal when I first heard about it," said Jessica Watkins, a resident of South Carolina who caught the show in Sumter. "You know what to expect at a band concert, but it is so much more than that. I know I'll remember this show for a long time."

One of the biggest show-stealers was the over-the-top performance turned in by the Navy Band's newest act, the Cruisers. For their nightly appearance, the group, led by singer MUC John Fisher, whipped the crowd into a frenzy with renditions of Motown classics such as "Soul Man," "My Girl" and "Shout."

In performing Shout, Fisher garnered attention by running into the crowd to dance and sing directly to audience members. "Unbelievable. He was absolutely unbelievable," said Charles Davis, a retired Navy veteran and resident of Jacksonville,



Fla. "He really got everyone into it."

And, according to Snider, the Sea Chanters and the Cruisers added something else to their show.

"They brought a younger crowd into it," he said. "Our organization is already big with the retirement community. That's not

going to change. But bringing in a younger crowd and entertaining them was something we had hoped we could accomplish."

In doing so, Gambone says the band may already be molding future Navy Band members. "You never know who is out there watching and saying, 'Hey, I'd like to do that one day too,'" he said. "Those are the people who will help the Navy Band continue for 80 years past this."

So despite some hiccups due to sickness and forgotten city names, the tour will be remembered as a success. "We had a good tour overall," said MU1 Jen Bowerman, a member of the Sea Chanters chorus. "We had some good crowds, some great crowds and some that we would have liked to see bigger. But I know we entertained people, and that's what matters most." ❧

Ludwig is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands

► **Website Exclusive**

Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200505/feature_3/



◀ **The tour served as a spotlight** for the Navy's Sea Chanters chorus. One of the show's themes was a salute to Broadway hits of the past, including a performance by MU1 Christina Phillips and MU1 Adam Tyler.

Keeping Pilots Safe

Photo and story by JO2(SW) Brooke Armato

When a Navy pilot takes off, he always has a hidden source of safety. Out of the limelight, Aircrew Survival Equipmentman (PR) 2nd Class Brian K. Nick is the last to let the pilot down.

"Our job is to keep them alive. From ejection until they're recovered, we make sure [the pilots are] in the best condition we can keep them in," said Nick, one of the head supervisors at the Intermediate Aviation Maintenance Department, Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia Beach, Va.

PRs are responsible for inspecting and maintaining parachutes, life rafts, personal flight gear and other survival aviation equipment that pilots use in emergency situations.

"We work on any system that supports life after the pilot ejects," said Nick.

When something happens in the air, the pilots rely on equipment to keep them alive, whether it's a backup oxygen regulator or a parachute. Nick, along with all PRs, puts many hours and tedious attention to detail into his work, because if something goes wrong with the equipment, lives could be lost.

"When I hear about one of our pilots going down, the first thing I want to know is if the pilot is all right," said Nick. "Second, I want know if my stuff worked."

Behind the scenes, PRs are saving lives. Every time a pilot takes off, he can rest assured that there are Sailors like Nick who are making sure pilots are coming back in one piece.

"When you haven't heard anything about a PR, that's when we know we did a good job." ❧

Armato is a journalist assigned to Navy/Marine Corps News, Washington, D.C.

Brothers in Arms

Story and photo by PH3 Todd Frantom

I joined the Navy to be a Sailor. I wanted to go aboard ships, sail to exotic foreign ports and witness the awesome power of jet engines aboard an aircraft carrier. Thoughts of walking up the brow, wearing my dress blues and becoming a “Shellback” all sounded good to me because I wanted to be different, and I knew no other service did things quite like the Navy. Little did I know that I’d learn what it means to be a Sailor and a service member in the desert of Iraq, hundreds of miles from the closest ship.

In the sand, only the well-trained eye can pick out a Sailor from a Marine, Airman or Soldier. We all wore the same uniform, literally. Hidden beneath a thin, universal coat of desert sand, we all wore the same vests, gloves, boots and Kevlar helmets. In fact, the only way to tell that I was a Sailor was the crows on my collar.

But, that’s where the differences ended.

My level of respect quickly grew for the men and women of our Armed Forces because I ended up spending time with members of each branch during my journey through Iraq.

The Air Force and Marines got me to and from my designated locations with their aircraft. Once on the ground, the Army was extremely accommodating when I needed a place to stay. And, when air travel became fruitless, it was the Marines who welcomed me on one of their convoys.



Nobody cared that I wasn’t an Airman, Soldier or Marine. And thankfully, I was learning it didn’t matter if they weren’t Sailors. For the first time in my career, I saw our military as one unit, and it’s a beautiful sight.

Iraq is a work in progress. For people to go from a life where every thought and need was dictated by Saddam Hussein to a state of personal freedom is a frightening evolution. And it makes sense to me that we are still there to

help the Iraqis walk before they run. But it takes a lot of work, and that leaves little time for petty inter-service differences. What the combined military forces are accomplishing through joint service cooperation is nothing short of spectacular.

I’ve discovered that in Iraq there is no segregation between the Armed Forces when it comes down to serving our country. What I witnessed was complete unity for one mission. The lessons I learned and the realization of the good we are doing over there will

stay with me forever. The Navy is my home, but my appreciation for the other branches has grown by leaps and bounds.

Throughout my travels, it didn’t matter that I was in the Navy. I wasn’t a “shipmate” or “petty officer,” and they weren’t “Marines” or “Airmen” or “Soldiers”. We were all brothers-in-arms. ✍

Frantom is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

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