

*Sandbox Sailor | Duty in Iraq »*

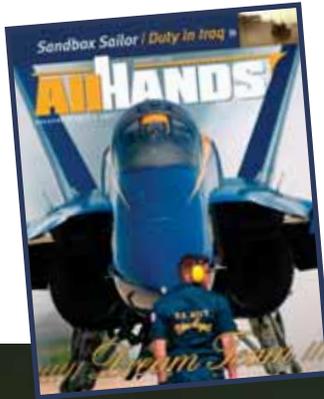
AUGUST 2006

# ALL HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY



*Dream Team*



### [On the Front Cover]

An enlisted crew chief stands statue-like in front of an F/A-18 *Hornet* as the aircraft goes to engine start during a recent demonstration of power at the air show on Andrews Air Force Base, Washington, D.C.

Photo by MC2 Todd Frantom

### [Next Month]

Ever wonder about taking orders to the Northwest? September's magazine will provide you many reasons why this area of the country should be your next duty station.

# [Departments]

**Around the Fleet — 6**

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## 14 Sandbox Sailors

Sailors are joining up with their fellow Army, Marine and Air Force counterparts in the desert. This is duty in Iraq. These courageous Sailors are making an evolutionary change, and desert camouflage and tent homes have become commonplace for many Sailors in the fleet.

Photo by MC2 Todd Frantom

[Number 1072]

**ALL HANDS**

# August



## 22 Dream Team

Screaming jet engines streak across the summer sky, providing the breathtaking sights and sounds that an air show produces. However, what goes on behind the smoke curtain is what makes this summer spectacle such a success – the combined effort of the Navy “Dream Team” – the *Blue Angels*.

Photo by MC2 Todd Frantom



## 30 The Navy's Third Coast

When looking for duty stations, some Sailors make a less common choice – they head for the Southeast. With Seabees in Gulfport, Miss., submarines in King's Bay, Ga., squadrons at NAS Jacksonville, Fla., and every other naval job in Mayport, Fla., there's something available for every Sailor.

Photo by MC1(AW)Shane T. McCoy



The Navy's Blue Angels perform a break-off maneuver from a delta formation during their air show at Andrews AFB, Md. The Blue Angels fly the F/A-18A *Hornet*, and perform approximately 30 maneuvers during their aerial demonstration that lasts more than an hour. To mark their 60th anniversary this year, the Blue Angels will fly in nearly 68 air shows at 35 locations in the United States.

Photo by MC2 Todd Frantom





# Speaking with Sailors

Chief of Naval Operations  
ADM Mike Mullen

## The Best of All Possible Ambassadors

**T**he attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, renewed our sense of what it means to be citizens of the United States. But as we prepare to observe the fifth anniversary of that terrible day, I believe it's also time for us to consider our role as citizens of the world.

To be sure, Sailors have always reflected well upon America wherever we put in or wherever we are based. Nearly 100 years ago, President Theodore Roosevelt welcomed home the Great White Fleet from its year-long cruise around the world by lauding its Sailors as "the best of all possible ambassadors and heralds of peace."

We still are. Just look at some recent headlines: "USNS *Mercy* Crewmembers Work with Non-governmental Health Organizations to Heal the Sick in Indonesia," *Patriot* Sailors Bring Smiles to the Children of Brunei," "Seabees act as Ambassadors of Compassion in Horn of Africa."

This last article told the story of UT2 Josener Jean Louis, a Haitian-born Sailor fluent in French, who by both his skill and ability to communicate directly with the Djiboutian people is having an enormous impact on their lives and their sense of security.

We are doing great things out there, and we are making a difference. Like Louis, we must take a broader view of the people with whom we conduct such good work. We must try harder to understand their cultures, norms and values. We must be able to look at life, with all its heartache and joy, from their perspective.

A month or so ago I was in Australia visiting my counterpart, Vice Adm. Russ Shalders, Chief of the Royal Australian Navy. During a briefing about the state of his nation's military forces, Shalders showed me a slide labeled "Current Operations." Smack dab in the middle of that slide was a picture of Australia with small silver stars speckled all around it, depicting where their forces were deployed.

There was a star over East Timor, where some 1,800 Australian soldiers and marines are conducting vital peacekeeping operations. There was one in India, one in Japan and, of course, there was a star indicating the more than 1,300 Aussies deployed as part of joint and coalition efforts in the Middle East. There was even a little star way up in the upper right corner next to the letters "U.S."

It was impressive to see just how engaged the Australians are, but I was struck by the picture on the slide itself.

Quite frankly, I am not used to seeing Australia at the center of things – or any other country for that matter. I'm used to hearing about where WE are engaged and about what WE are doing. We just can't afford to be so single-focused anymore.

The world is a small place and getting smaller every day. Thanks to the blinding pace of globalization, the old walls of the industrial age that Teddy Roosevelt helped usher in are literally crashing down around us. Call for technical support for your home computer, and you're likely to speak to an expert in India. Make reservations for that weekend getaway with your spouse, and your ticket agent could very well be someone working from home in Colorado or even Singapore. We live in a world far more interconnected and interdependent than ever before.

We need each other. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that the challenges we face today cannot be overcome by any one nation. They are transnational in scope. Threats like piracy, smuggling, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, human trafficking and yes, terrorism, affect us all – everywhere. Removing these threats, and preventing the conditions from which they flourish is not only vital, it's a team effort.

That's why I have been such a staunch advocate of the "1,000-ship Navy" concept, a fleet-in-being of like-minded navies and coast guards that can come together as needed to improve maritime security. Everyone brings what they can, when they can, for the greater good. It's based on a realization that the economic tide of all nations rises – not when the seas are controlled by one – but rather when they are made safe and free for all.

Safe and free for all. That's a much bigger vision than we have typically sought in the Navy. For us, defending the interests of the United States has mostly been about putting ordnance on target or delivering and supporting ground forces ashore.

Today, in many cases, we ARE those ground forces. And even though we'll still need to be able to strike offensively at our enemies, I think we've all come to realize what UT2 Louis already knows: that in some places we defend the interests of the United States best by defending the right of others to live free, by seeing the world through their eyes and by being the best of all possible ambassadors. 



# AllHANDS

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**True Story: A young Sailor was having fun doing this until...**



...he decided to dive into the water. He subsequently hit his head on a rock, fractured some vertebrae, and now is paralyzed from the chest down. What made him take such a risk? According to the casualty report, "Member was under the influence of alcohol." How many times do we have to say:

**Drink Responsibly!**

[www.safetycenter.navy.mil](http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil)



## MCPON Campa Takes Helm of Enlisted Force

**M**aster Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON)

(SW/FMF) Joe R. Campa Jr. took the helm of the enlisted force as the Navy's eleventh MCPON, receiving the ceremonial cutlass from MCPON (SS/AW) Terry D. Scott, in a change of office ceremony at the Washington Navy Yard, July 10.

The ceremony marked the conclusion of a 29-year Navy career for Scott, who held the office of MCPON the past four years.

"He led," said Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) ADM Mike Mullen. He elaborated, explaining how Scott's leadership engaged Sailors to "bring all manner of people together to solve problems."

Mullen stressed that many of the new programs for today's Sailors were a result of Scott's efforts, such as greater educational benefits, redesigned uniforms that

are more attractive and durable, plus incorporating a "culture of fitness" aimed at improving both physical and mental health.

The CNO also recognized that Scott continued to work until his very last day in office, giving a recent interview to a major news station about the problem of predatory lenders, businesses targeting Sailors for payday or title loans with enormous interest rates.

Mullen then congratulated the newest MCPON.

"Master Chief Campa is not just an exceptional corpsman, he's a terrific leader - a command master chief with an enormous wealth of experience in the fleet that makes him the right Sailor at the right time to follow MCPON Scott," Mullen said. "Master Chief Campa, you must know how big the shoes you must fill are, and I have every confidence in you. I appreciate your service and your willingness to step up to this enormous responsibility,"

Campa thanked Scott and his wife in a speech after he accepted the office, offering his deep



Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Joe R. Campa Jr. offers his first remarks as MCPON after receiving the ceremonial cutlass from MCPON Terry D. Scott during a ceremony at the Washington Navy Yard, July 10, 2006. Scott became the 10th MCPON April 22, 2002, and will retire with 29 years of service. Campa was selected to become the Navy's 11th MCPON while serving as Command Master Chief Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay.

Photo by MC1 Brandon W. Schulze

appreciation for their hard work improving the lives of Sailors and Navy families.

"Together you have made the Navy a better place," he said.

Campa then acknowledged

his predecessors and set the direction for his term in office.

"I want every Sailor to achieve the full measure of their potential because it not only makes them better Sailors - it

## Ricky's Tour

By MC1 Mike Jones



www.rickystour.com



**Senior Chief Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EWS/FPJ) Mark Wynalda (left) and Hull Maintenance Technician 3rd Class (EOD) Michael Stilb** were recently awarded the Army Commendation Medal for their actions while attached to 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Forward Operating Base Falcon, Iraq. The two Sailors rescued three soldiers from a tank that overturned into a water-filled canal on a collapsed road. Wynalda and Stilb used their hands to dig a hole to the tank hatch under four feet of water, and pull the soldiers out.

makes them better citizens,” said Campa. “And like my predecessors, this is where my commitment lies and this is where my energy will be focused.”

Campa most recently served as Command Master Chief, Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay after graduating from the Naval War College, Newport, R.I.

For related news, visit the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy NewsStand page at [www.news.navy.mil/local/mcpon/](http://www.news.navy.mil/local/mcpon/).

*Story by MC1(SCW) L.A. Shively, public affairs office, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy.*

members who did not make an IRA contribution during 2004 or 2005, because they were not eligible due to combat zone tax exclusion, have until May 28, 2009, (three years from the date of enactment) to make a contribution to an IRA for those years. **ES**

*Story courtesy of DOD.*

## Identity Theft, Personal Financial Management Training Available on NKO

**T**he Center for Personal Development (CPD) has posted a course through Navy Knowledge Online’s (NKO) e-Learning to reduce Sailors’ risks of becoming victims of identity theft.

The course, Identity Theft, is designed to educate Sailors on the simple steps they can take to avoid becoming a victim and the consequences they could have, both personally and professionally, if their information falls into the wrong hands.

The push for this course comes on the heels of news disclosed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that a duplicate database with data files was recently stolen from a VA employee’s home. This robbery enabled the thief to gain access to the Social Security numbers and birthdays of more than 26.5 million veterans.

Master Chief Damage Controlman(SS/SW/SWCC/DV) Jon Manifold is the Learning Competency program manager for CPD. He stressed that it is imperative individuals obtain and review their credit reports carefully with the recent compromise of VA records.

“CPD is also creating the

Personal Financial Management (PFM) Web page, which is linked via NKO,” Manifold said. “It provides a centralized area that can be accessed at any time by service members and their families to help guide them in the right direction toward financial security.”

The PFM Web page allows service members and their family access to important financial information.

Manifold added that the law entitles everyone to one free credit report per year.

The PFM Web page can be viewed by clicking on the following link and then logging onto NKO:

<https://www.nko.navy.mil/portal/page?pagelId=pg15500042>.

To enroll in the Identity Theft course, click on Identity Theft under What’s New on the e-Learning homepage.

For more information on identity theft, go to the Federal Trade Commission’s Web page at [www.ftc.gov/idtheft](http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft). **ES**

*Story by Colby Pierce, public affairs office, Naval Personnel Development Command.*

## President Signs New Tax Legislation for Military Personnel

**P**resident George Bush recently signed the Heroes Earned Retirement Opportunities (HERO) Act, which amends the Internal Revenue Code to allow service members to still exclude their military compensation from federal income tax, but also contribute to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) while serving in a combat zone tax exclusion area.

Military compensation earned by members of the Armed Forces while serving in combat zone areas is excluded from federal income tax. Enlisted members and warrant officers exclude all such military compensation. Commissioned officers exclude up to the maximum enlisted pay plus imminent danger pay for the months they serve in a combat zone tax exclusion area.

The HERO Act is retroactive to tax year 2004. Therefore,

## VA to Provide Free Credit Monitoring

**A**s part of the continuing efforts by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to protect and assist those potentially affected by the recent data theft that occurred at an employee’s Maryland home, Secretary of Veterans Affairs R. James Nicholson recently announced that VA will provide one year of free credit monitoring to people whose sensitive personal information may have been stolen in the incident.

“VA continues to take aggressive steps to protect and assist people who may be potentially affected by this data theft,” said Nicholson. “VA has conducted extensive market research on available credit monitoring solutions, and has been working diligently to determine how VA can best serve those whose information was stolen.

“Free credit monitoring will help safeguard those who may be affected, and will provide them with the peace of mind they deserve,” he added.

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# Around the Fleet



▲ **ETCS Rick Straney, assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 6, Det. 14,** shouts orders to members of his team immediately before a fast-rope rapid insertion exercise from an HH-60H *Seahawk* helicopter.

Photo by MC2 Milosz Reterski

◀ **Crew members aboard USS *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74)** are fit tested for gas masks in preparation for chemical, biological and radiation drills. *Stennis* is currently conducting carrier qualifications off the coast of Southern California.

Photo by MCSN Corey Oesch



▼ **MMFN Shane Romero prepares a sample canister of liquid oxygen for purity testing aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72).**

Photo by MCSN James R. Evans



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VA is soliciting bids from qualified companies to provide a comprehensive credit monitoring solution. VA will ask these companies to provide expedited proposals and to be prepared to implement them rapidly once they are under contract.

After VA hires a credit monitoring company, they will send a detailed letter to people whose sensitive personal information may have been included in the stolen data. This letter will explain credit monitoring and how eligible people can enroll or "opt-in" for the services. VA expects to have the services in place and the letters mailed by mid-August.

People who believe they may be affected by the data theft can go to [www.firstgov.gov](http://www.firstgov.gov) for more information or call the toll free number 1-800-FED INFO (1-800-333-4636). 

*Story courtesy of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, D.C.*

## **Navy COOL Web Site Launches as Hub for Sailor Credentialing Information**

**T**he Navy Credentialing Opportunities On-Line "Navy COOL" Web site launched in June as a hub for comprehensive information to guide Sailors in pursuing occupational credentials related to their Navy work experience and training.

Navy COOL catalogs detailed information on occupational credentials, including certifications, qualifications, licenses, apprenticeships and growth opportunities, that correspond with every Navy rating, job and occupation, and outlines the paths to achieve them.

According to CAPT Kevin R. Hooley, commanding officer for

the Center for Information Dominance (CID) Corry Station, Pensacola, Fla., and Navy COOL project leader, the site is a top-rate Web-based tool that is another innovative blended training solution of the Revolution in Training.

"Navy COOL is for Sailors and it's all about professional development and Navy readiness," Hooley said. "It puts a vast amount of credentialing information from numerous federal, state and local sources at Sailors' fingertips, and provides them a road map for earning occupational credentials to boost their knowledge, skills and abilities in the Navy and beyond."

Navy COOL hosts links to credentialing organizations and cross-references programs, such as Tuition Assistance, Montgomery GI Bill and the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), that may help Sailors pay for credentialing fees. It also contains links to the United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP) and Web sites that provide information on college programs available to Sailors.

For Sailors with limited Internet access, such as those stationed on ships or at remote locations, a portable copy of Navy COOL has been developed.

"COOL to Go" is downloadable from Navy COOL to a hard drive, compact disc or thumbdrive. It offers the same information as Navy COOL, minus connectivity to external sites if used offline. With an Internet connection, COOL to GO is identical to Navy COOL including links. Additionally, COOL to Go mini-CDs are being developed for distribution.

Navy COOL is being delivered in two phases. The Phase I launch of Navy COOL contains information for every Sailor in every rating. During Phase II, which is already in progress, the Navy Credentials Office is conducting a

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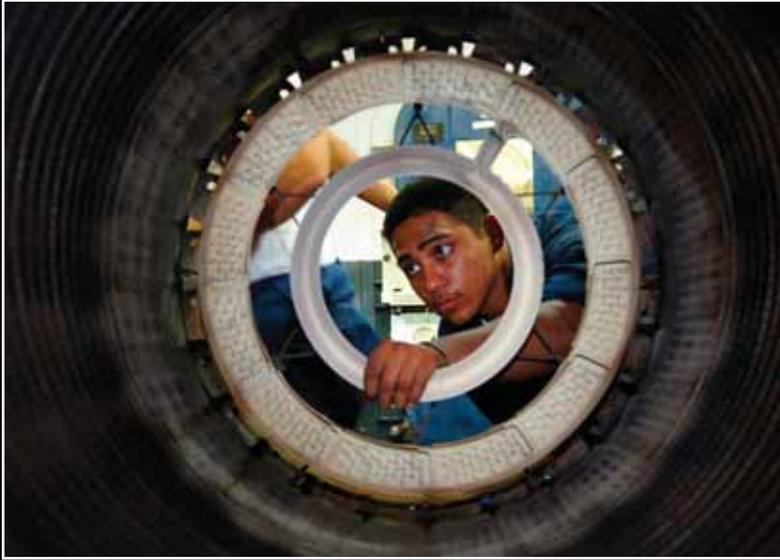
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Click on the **Navy's** home page, [www.navy.mil](http://www.navy.mil), for fresh images of your shipmates in action.

# Around the Fleet



◀ **ADAN Hillario Arreola** inspects an F/A-18C jet engine in the jet shop aboard USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65).

Photo by MCSN Brandon Morris

▼ **A child remained in high spirits** as HM1 Tracey Waycaster examines the 7-year-old for injuries at 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade disaster assistance team's mobile hospital after suffering minor scrapes and bruises during a 6.2 magnitude earthquake that devastated Central Java, Indonesia.

Photo by Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Warren Peace



◀ **FC2 Andrea L. McCellan reads to her son through the United Through Reading Program (UTRP) while aboard USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7).**

Photo by MCSN Joshua T. Rodriguez



▲ **1st Sgt. Adrian Tay from the Republic of Singapore navy and MM3 Scott Gee are raised from the water with a stage from the side of rescue and salvage ship USS *Salvor* (ARS 52) during the Singapore phase of Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT).**

Photo by MC1 Kathryn Whittenberger

▼ **AD3 Donald West, and AD2 Kent Spandonis perform routine maintenance on an F/A-18E *Super Hornet* assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 27.**

Photo by MCSN Thomas J. Holt



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detailed comparison of the Job Task Analysis (JTA) for each Navy rating with thousands of available occupational credentials.

Hooley said that may lead to additional funding options for Sailors pursuing credentials.

As Phase II is completed over the next 14 months, the credentials that most closely relate to each Navy rating will be flagged on Navy COOL," Hooley said. "As these credentials are identified and the related policies are approved, we expect Navy funds to be made available, subject to budget constraints, to cover fees for these designated credentials."

In the future, specific credentialing information for naval officers and civilians will be added to Navy COOL, as associated JTAs are completed. Until then, officers and civilians can refer to the Web site for general credentialing information to help them pursue personal and career goals.

Sailor interest in Navy COOL appears to be high, given the statistics for the launch week and informal feedback via the Web site. Daily activity averaged 1,154 visits and 65,000 hits, with most visitors viewing about six pages over a 13 minute period.

RADM Dave Gove, commander, Naval Personnel Development Command and Navy Personnel Command, encourages all Sailors to visit Navy COOL.

"This is really a great product and we believe that Sailors who are provided the opportunity to enhance their professional development are not only better performers on the job, but these top performers are more likely to choose to continue their service in the Navy," said Gove. "We are striving to create and retain the most highly skilled workforce possible, and this key investment in the professional development of our workforce is a win-win for the Navy and the nation."

Visit Navy COOL at <https://www.cool.navy.mil>.

For more information, refer to NAVADMIN 193/06 or contact the Navy Credentials Program Office via email at [crry\\_cqcredentials@navy.mil](mailto:crry_cqcredentials@navy.mil). ✉

*Story by Darlene Goodwin, Center for Information Dominance Public Affairs, Pensacola, Fla.*

## **DOD Announces Increase in Foreign Language Pay**

According to Air Force Lt.Col. Ellen Krenke, a Pentagon spokeswoman, the maximum monthly pay for active-duty service members who are proficient in another language will be increased from \$300 to \$1,000, effective June 1, 2006. For National Guard and Reserve members, a \$6,000-per-year bonus will be offered.

This increase comes under the FY05 National Defense Authorization Act and will be focused on languages that are strategically important to DOD, such as Middle Eastern languages and Mandarin Chinese.

The goal of this increase is not necessarily to boost recruiting and retention, but to identify already qualified service members whose skills are untapped, Krenke said.

"This will encourage them to self-identify so we can get a better handle on what we have," Krenke said. The increase is also meant to motivate service members to study languages, so the military can develop a strong corps of language professionals, she added.

"It's another way that we have to encourage people to pursue this skill as part of a military career," she said.

According to Pentagon figures, about 247,000 service members have some language proficiency,

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# Around the Fleet

▼ **OS2 Charles Miranda** stands watch in the Combat Information Center (CIC) aboard *USS Mobile Bay* (CG 53).

Photo by MCSN James R. Evans



▲ **Sailors aboard USS Hopper (DDG 70)** lower the American flag on the ship's fantail as *Hopper* shifts colors while getting underway.

Photo by MC2 John L. Beeman

► **HM1 Jason Conley** assigned to Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., pulls the slack from his rope as the UH-1N *Huey* search and rescue helicopter lands during a routine training exercise.

Photo by Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Cory A. Tepfenhart

▼ **Sailors aim their 9mm weapons down range during a small arms qualification exercise aboard USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) during Exercise Valiant Shield.**

Photo by MC3 Kevin S. O'Brien



*continued from page 11*

but only about 20,000 have had their skill certified and receive proficiency pay. About 7,249 service members are listed as proficient in Arabic. ❧

**Story by Army Sgt. Sara Wood, American Forces Press Service, Alexandria, Va**

## DOD Offers Free Anti-Spyware for Personal Use

The Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) has licensed free anti-spyware software for all government employees and armed forces personnel for use on personal computer systems.

According to the Federal Trade Commission's Web site at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov), spyware is software that monitors or controls the use of your computer. It could send pop-up ads, redirect browsers to certain Web sites, or even record your keystrokes. A pop-up ad could even try to trick someone into typing in bank account information, leading to identity theft.

Users may also be able to get the software through their respective Automated Data Processing (ADP) offices.

"ADP can burn the software to a CD for the user to take home," said Intelligence Specialist 1st Class (SW) Eric Rucker, an information security officer for Navy Computer Defense Operations Command (NCDOC). "Once the software is downloaded at home, it will automatically update periodically. With the amount of people that use e-mail and zip drives to bring work home and back, the risk of bringing spyware to work is much greater, and that could create a weakness that may exploit DOD computers."

Steve Saunders, a Network Security Analysts for the NCDOC,

said caution should be exercised when visiting Web sites if pop-ups start appearing, or if a users' computer starts showing constant or required requests to install browser components and other applications.

"Any offer for free software, or 'upgrades' by big names is another thing to watch out for," Saunders said. "The best thing to do is to go to a company's registered Web site to get the legitimate downloads available."

"Professional analysts have found that survival time of a brand new computer, just connected to the Internet, is 18 minutes," added Saunders. "Out of 6 trillion IP addresses out there, that is like a blink of an eye."

To download the free anti-spyware software, go to the DISA Web site at <https://iase.disa.mil/sdep>, or the Navy's Information Assurance Web site at <https://infosec.navy.mil>. At the INFOSEC site, click on the COMPUTESEC tools tab and scroll down to the anti-spyware link, second from the top. The software can then be saved a local hard drive for writing on a CD-ROM or other portable media for home use. Users must be on a ".mil" workstation to download the software.

For more information about spyware and other computer security threats, go to <https://infosec.navy.mil>, or call the NCDOC 24/7 hotline at 1-888-NAVCDOC. ❧

**Story by MC2(SW/AW) Jennifer Goulart, public affairs office, Naval Network Warfare Command.**

### CORRECTION

The June issue of All Hands listed MA1 Valerie Valdivia as the Kennel Master at CNRSWA Bahrain on Page 23. It should have been MA1 Jennifer Valdivia.

Also, on Pages 28 and 29, MA2 Christopher Reduc should have been MA2 Christopher Leduc.

Story and photos by  
MC2 Todd Frantom

# Sandbox Sailor





◀ **Navy Seabees**  
assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 23 patrol the streets of Fallujah, Iraq. Seabees convoy to construction sites throughout the country while rebuilding the country's infrastructure.

***A SAILOR TIGHTLY GRIPS A JOYSTICK, TRYING NOT TO BLINK AN EYE,***  
*steadying his pixilated rifle's sight on the target as best he can. Shipmates cheer him on from the foyer of the crammed berthing as he takes down the last enemy with his true and straight shot. He has reached the level of "ultimate desert warrior."*

*Computer gaming is one of very few leisure activities for many Sailors in the fleet, where carrying guns and avoiding enemies is a make-believe challenge. With the advent of individual augmentee deployments in support of combat operations in Iraq, more and more Sailors find themselves in a real-life war scene.*

These courageous Sailors are making an evolutionary change. Sailors are joining up with their fellow Army, Marine and Air Force counterparts in the desert. This is duty in Iraq.

Desert camouflage and tent homes have become commonplace for many Sailors in the fleet.

“If you wear the uniform, you are not on the sidelines. You are on the front lines,” said VADM John C. Harvey, the Navy’s chief of personnel, in a letter to the fleet. “That is a fact of our life, and all of us are going to have to get used to it.”

There is no simple answer to how to adapt to such a non-welcoming environment.

A Sailor will more often than not find him or herself gripping the seat of an Air Force C-130 as it bounces through the desert sky and plunges down to Baghdad International Airport, or hovering above Baghdad in an Army *Blackhawk* helicopter, like a bird circling and looking for a safe place to rest. Regardless of branch, every service member is here in direct support of one another’s mission. To help, the Navy does have personnel in place to ease the Sailors transition into the desert.

“The efforts in Iraq are an amazing example of all forces working together as one team,” said Personnel Specialist 1st Class Darrell Marshall, whose main job is to support the Navy personnel movement into the Iraqi region. “This is evident the second a Sailor steps off a plane.

“I do everything I can to make sure that all the needs of incoming Sailors are met,” said Marshall. “I can always hear their nervousness and stress when speaking to them on the phone; although I take pride in doing what I can to make this transition as easy for them as possible.”

Marshall has greeted many wide-eyed Sailors at the Baghdad airport during the wee hours of the morning upon their arrival, where he has an SUV ready to take them to where they can rest their heads for the night, following hours of overseas flights. He explains in detail what each new sand Sailor can expect while traveling throughout Iraq.



▲ Sailors’ clothing dries in the desert sun and heat outside the tents they call home while in Iraq.

▼ Sailors relax in their berthing – a tent located at Camp Duke along the outskirts of Najaf, Iraq.



*“You can definitely feel the brotherhood when you see another Sailor. It’s like running into a long-lost relative.”*

— Builder 1st Class David Robinson  
CAMP FALLUJAH, IRAQ



Not much is easy when you leave your country and loved ones behind and head to a place where bombs and bullets are used in everyday life. To top off the obvious threat to life is the extreme change in sights, smells and sounds that are tell-tale Iraq.

“It does take some time to get used to the initial shock of differences out here,” said Marshall “But, the tent life isn’t so bad.”

This is a Sailor’s first desert home while in country – a small cot located in a makeshift tent. It’s kind of like camping out at the Scout Jamboree as a kid, except for the sounds and smells. Surely to the average metal-housed Sailor this is as different a lifestyle as night and day.

“The stale, mildewed air is definitely something that takes time to get used to,” said Builder 1st Class David Robinson. “I have spent many a night in the large tarps with Soldiers and Airmen. But this is only while in transit through the region.”

Once a Sailor reaches his or her new duty station they will get a more suitable place to reside.

“I was thankful when I finally got to Camp Fallujah where I would be for the next year,” said Robinson. “There was a sigh of relief when I was given a room and my own area to lay my stuff. It’s crazy how the simple things can mean so much.”

Sailors adapt to their living conditions in Iraq just like they would to living in berthing while at sea.

“I actually have more freedom out here than I ever did on a ship,” said Robinson. “It’s really like being on shore duty. The base has most everything, like a shoppette where I can buy the basics such as shaving cream and toothpaste and military gear I may need. There’s a phone center where I can call home, a recreation center and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR), where I can rent movies.”

◀ **UT2 Scott Taylor reads as a way to keep himself focused on why he’s in Iraq.**



▲ A Slinky® is used by BUC Eric Tucker to keep his mind off the constant threat of death while on convoy patrols in Iraq.

▼ An Iraqi police officer prays routinely throughout the day. Iraqi police are working directly with American forces to learn new skills so they can protect their own communities.



All bases throughout Iraq have support facilities for the troops. Some also have eateries from the states such as Pizza Hut, Burger King and Taco Bell, to name a few. There are also numerous sporting venues located on Camps Victory and Fallujah.

“All I do is workout and eat,” said Marshall of his off-duty time. “Sometimes I even play basketball with the guys on the courts.”



Marshall lives on Victory, where he works in one of Saddam Hussein's former palaces alongside many naval officers and enlisted personnel. The palace is the command center for operations throughout Iraq, but here, the Army runs the show.

"You have to know your ranks here," said Marshall. "There's a lot of brass walking around, and most are from other branches of service."

But, like most new arrivals in a neighborhood back home, Sailors are becoming a common sight among coalition forces in Iraq.

"When I first arrived, the only other Sailors I saw were Seabees, like myself," said Robinson. "However, I've seen many corpsmen with the Marines and have also run into some intelligence specialists and explosive ordnance disposal guys as well.

**▲ EO2 Ken Langdon tosses a football to a shipmate prior to the daily convoy into the still-hostile city of Fallujah, Iraq.**

You can definitely feel the brotherhood when you see another Sailor. It's like running into a long-lost relative."

For a Sailor who is called on for duty in Iraq, the thought of staring the Grim Reaper directly in the face becomes a genuine



feeling that is undeniable. How an individual deals with this could become their true challenge.

“It is easier for me to do my job out here when I think of all those guys who have made that ultimate sacrifice,” said BUC Eric Tucker as he slides a *Slinky* in and out of his hands, like a mesmerized child. “I use this toy to keep my mind occupied while we are on convoys.”

Tucker is the convoy Chief, in charge of Naval Construction Battalion 7 which frequently convoys to different war-torn

construction locations in the area.

For many Sailors, their first convoy ride is the hardest to handle.

“You get used to the smells,” said Tucker. “But you never forget that around any corner something could blow up.”

Traveling in Iraq feels more like being a conveyor-belt duck in a carnival shooting gallery, except you know you won’t just pop back up if you’re hit. This is why leadership and professionalism have a different face when you’re in the sand.

“Being a boss out here is no joke,” said

Tucker. “It’s not like being a supervisor on a ship; if there’s a problem, you could possibly deal with it by reprimanding that individual. But out here, if someone screws up, it can mean the life of another individual.”

All Sailors go through some basic combat training before entering Iraq, at places like Fort Jackson, S.C., where Navy individual augmentees take a two-week platoon intro course. Here Sailors learn the basic training and how to be more of a warrior than a shipboard Sailor.

The evolution of Sailor into a “soldier”



▲ Dealing with the dust and heat of Iraq are just another part of the job for the Seabees of NMCB 23.

◀ Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7

hand out sunflower seeds to local Iraqi children. These Seabees work with the residents of a small bedouin village on the outskirts of Najaf, Iraq.

shows on every American base in Iraq.

“Some of the Sailors who get here find Iraq to be unforgiving and struggle with the fear and mind games of war,” said Tucker. “I cannot stress enough to my Sailors that they need to take breaks and find something to occupy their time when not working out in the sand.”

All Sailors in Iraq eventually find something to keep their heads focused. Whether they toss a ball around or read a book, they find something to connect with their fellow service members and keep morale

high and their sense of purpose clear.

According to Marshall, the galleys located throughout Iraq are some of the best in the Navy. This may seem ironic in the middle of the desert, but the smell of fresh baked bread and simmering meat fills the air on the American military bases almost around the clock.

“There is always an ample amount of food to eat,” said Marshall. “I’m not talking about MREs, I mean what ever you like from salad bars to luscious ice cream and cake after every meal, It’s like Thanksgiving every day in there,” said Marshall.

Despite a new way of life and the extra challenges that come with duty in the desert war zone, Sailors quickly realize the importance of their assignment. They find a connection and a reward in their everyday dealings with the Iraqi people.

“The kids rush out to greet our convoy every day we arrive at the construction site,” said BU2 Derek Cullins. “It makes us feel good to give them anything that may

help them and also show their families that we are only here to help.

Sailors like Cullins are also positive role models for the Iraqi people.

“I get upset when I see nothing but negative coverage of what is happening over here,” said Cullins. “The truth is in those childrens’ smiles.”

What a Sailor can get from duty in Iraq could very well be the best experience in his or her Navy career.

“I am a changed man because of the time I spent in Iraq,” said Cullins. “I’ll take nothing for granted back home anymore.”

*Frantom is a photojournalist assigned to Naval Media Center*

Website Exclusive

Find more photos online at [www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200608/feature\\_1/](http://www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200608/feature_1/)

# Dream Team



Story and photos by MC2 Todd Frantom



▲ **Maintenance crews are a perfectly choreographed unit when performing in front of** thousands of spectators during an air show. The Blue Angels will travel to as many as 34 cities in the country during each season of demonstrations.



## *Somewhere in the Pacific Ocean, 1945...*

An enlisted crew chief, overwhelmed by choking fumes, hastily tightens screws on a Grumman F-6F *Hellcat*. His life and the life of his pilot depend on it. Overhead rages an onslaught of Kamikaze pilots raining death from the air; the Sailor's Navy

training is being put to the ultimate test. After some incredibly quick and precise work the aircraft roars to life and leaps off the deck to battle the enemy.

This type of courage on the deck under fire, while now mostly only read about or

seen on the History Channel, lives on in the fast-paced, precision dance of the Blue Angels' ground crewmen. The *Hellcat* crews continued the gutsy tradition when they were again called for duty as the Navy's Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels. And those same heroes set the stage for 60 years of precision and



◀ **AO2(AW) Katie Kilbourn climbs down out of the cockpit of an F/A-18 Hornet** after checking that aircraft systems are working properly.

▼ **Nothing is overlooked by the maintenance crews because they know that** the life of a pilot depends on how well they do their job.



excellence before crowds across the United States.

Screaming jet engines streak across the summer sky, providing the breathtaking sights and sounds that an air show produces, bringing out the child in all of us – like watching a fireworks show for the first time. However, what goes on behind the smoke

curtain is what makes this summer spectacle such a success – this combined effort of the Navy “Dream Team” – the Blue Angels.

Only the best of the best enlisted Sailors are asked to maintain and support the aircraft of the elite demonstration unit. The squad was formed after World War II to commemorate the Navy’s war-fighting

ability along with enhancing recruitment.

“There is nowhere else quite like this where you can serve your country and put a smile on a person’s face at the same time,” said Aviation Electronics Technician 2nd Class Myra Balina.

“We can do everything a fleet squadron does with half the people.”

It's their Superman-like appearance and impeccable display of attention to detail that keeps air superiority fresh in the minds of most Americans with the Blue Angels amazing display of naval power.

Balina has been with the Blues for three years, a veteran on the team. She is the head trouble-shooter or leader of the "pit crew." Although, this is not your normal pit, complete with all the usual greasy hands and sloppy rag-tag uniforms worn by the crew.

Where the Blues work is more like a stage with thousands of onlookers. They are probably the showiest of maintenance personnel, anywhere. Every move they make is choreographed and in sync with the launch and recovery of the intimidating, metallic blue F/A-18 *Hornet*.

While the Blues' aviators are some of the most highly-skilled "Top Gun" pilots the Navy has to offer, no one rests on their

laurels. Every aspect of the squadron pushes individuals to the very top of their game.

"We are all carefully selected," said Aviation Structural Mechanic (Equipment) 2nd Class Douglas Ickson. "Sailors must be recognized as outstanding in their rate and submit an application, for starters. Then the wait begins."

It's like standing in the never-ending line at the DMV office for a car tag. The delay can be long and stressful. Sailors skilled and lucky enough to be considered for the team then go through a personal interview.

"We are judged on our character, and that can be just as important as how hard we work. Our personalities must meet the standards that the team wants to portray, how well we work together in a team or under high stress," said Ickson.

Selectees who survive the daunting face-to-face interview will then be allowed

► **The Blue Angels perform the four-way diamond formation.** Muscling the jet through a loop is testimony to not only the pilots' skill, but the brute power of the jet as well.

to wear the famed, official gold crest and blue uniform that has stood for excellence since World War II. Sailors who wear these uniforms know they are involved with something special.

"It is a dream of a lifetime for me," Ickson said. "When I was accepted to work for the Blues, the way I felt was different than any other duty station swap. I believe this to be the top job of a Navy mechanic. Working here is like working for the Dale Earnhardt Jr. [NASCAR] pit crew of the air show world."

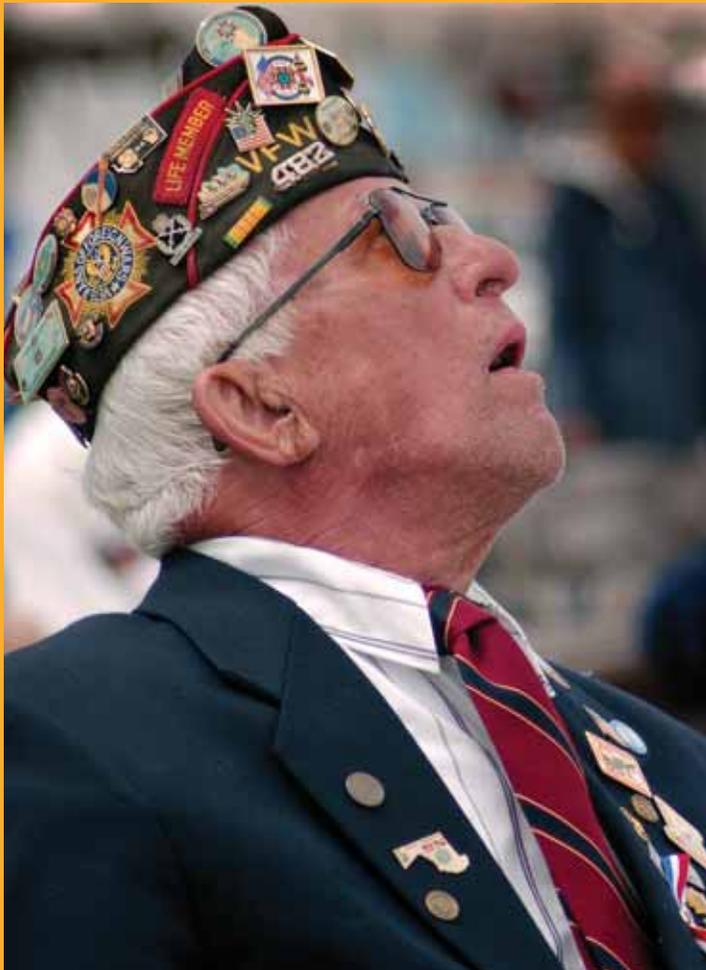
Ickson has been with the Blues for six months and recalls how glorious it is to be part of the team. "I wanted to be part of the Blues' fast-paced organization," Ickson said.

"I had always heard that the Blues' teams could change a part in half the time it would take a fleet squadron mechanic to do the job. What mechanic wouldn't want to be part of the best team possible?"

A tradition that started with the blood and sweat of squadron Sailors lives on as a choreographed ballet of crews and aircraft. The repetitive training is the reason the Blue Angels' shows remain as jaw-droppingly precise as they are.

According to Balina the crews train constantly, day in and day out for 2 1/2 straight months out of each year on all aspects of being a Blue Angels' team member. Aside from keeping the aircraft in tip-top shape, the squad learns the history, traditions, regulations and basic formations that make the show a success. Tradition is the name of the game.

"I think one of the greatest things I've experienced while on this team is the way we operate," said Balina. "There are hospital corpsmen and yeomen who are trained on how to fuel, tow, or service an aircraft. We do so much cross training



#### ◀ **The spectacle**

of naval air power is enjoyed by many war veterans who can personally appreciate the air show demonstration. Each show day, the six Blue Angel demonstration pilots perform many of the same maneuvers in the F/A-18 *Hornets* that the first team displayed in F-6F *Hellcats* 60 years ago.





▲ AD2(AW) Roberto Garcia (left) and Marine Corps Sgt. Steven Ferwerda discuss proper signaling during an aircraft turn. The combined effort of both Navy and Marine Corps personnel is one of the most important factors in the Blue Angels success.

because we need to be able to carry each other's weight."

The Blues operate every weekend with seven aircraft and a minimal crew of about 30 to 35 maintenance Sailors of different rates. These hybrid Sailors are the "poster Sailors" for squadron personnel.

"One of the great things about this team is that everyone knows what needs to be done," said Balina. "From the minute we step off "Fat Albert," (the C-130 that the

crews use to travel to and from different show locations), people know their jobs and just do them. This is different from my experience from the fleet squadrons where there are a lot of junior Sailors who need to be told what to do."

What happens when the crowds have left also makes the Blue Angels show and the enlisted Sailors running it such a success. These Sailors are more like "roadies" for a "Metallica" concert than

your everyday maintenance crews.

"In this business, you have to be flexible. Anything and everything can change at the drop of a dime, because we are involved with a live show, not just maintenance in a hangar," said Balina. "We have to be able to adapt and overcome quickly. So we train for every scenario possible. In a nutshell, we are the ones who get up before the birds to turn, fuel, fix and set up the jets for the pilots. After the demonstration, we put the planes to bed."

## ► The Blue Angels

serve as positive role models and goodwill ambassadors for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. Young fans have an opportunity after the demonstration to meet their heroes and have autographs signed, even on the back of their shirts if they want. An estimated 15 million spectators view the squadron during air shows each year. Additionally, the Blue Angels visit more than 50,000 people a show season (March through November) during school and hospital visits. Here, LT Thomas Winkler, one of the Blue Angel pilots, signs an autograph for an admirer.



When something does go wrong, the crews must react with stealth as well as lightning speed and flawless skill. If the thousands of spectators don't recognize the problem, it never happened.

"I saved the show!" exclaimed Aircrew Survival Equipmentman 1st Class Rich Torino hours after he discretely climbed aboard an aircraft during an air show. "I had to squirrel a reach bar past a pilot to recover a harness belt that had fallen under his feet, breaking the routine. Although, I bet no one noticed."

Sometimes the problem may simply be a uniform problem that could dampen the routine. Like a wedding on a rainy day, the show must go on.

"My 'ears' fell off while I was running in the parade formation!" said Ickson, describing the oversized, bright yellow hearing protection that is worn by the crew during aircraft start-ups.

"When my ears rolled into the crowd, I felt like everyone was staring, just at me, although I am sure they were more interested in the jets."

The crews may not be the highlight of each show, but like the front line of a football team's offensive squad, with the quarterback getting all the glory, their jobs are the backbone to the Blue Angels' long success.

"We all know that what we are doing is important, and we take a lot of pride in our work," said Balina.

What people do notice is the remarkable sight of Navy Sailors at their best. For 60 years the amazing formations of planes and crew showmanship have been marveled at when the Blues come to town. What we witnessed back then and continue to see today, is a demonstration of the same skill and precision that led to victory 60 years ago.



▲ A child plays with a replica of an F/A-18 *Hornet* flown by his beloved Blue Angel pilots.

"The Blue Angels' squadron is a dream team of Sailors," said Balina. "I'm very proud to be a member." 

*Frantom is a photojournalist assigned to Naval Media Center*

### Website Exclusive

Find more photos online at [www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200608/feature\\_2/](http://www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200608/feature_2/)

► **NAS Jacksonville,**

Mayport and Kings Bay are within a short drive of shopping, restaurants and a beautiful waterfront in downtown Jacksonville, Fla.



Story and photos by  
MC1(AW) Shane T. McCoy

# THE THIRD COAST

## LIVING & SERVING IN THE SOUTHEAST

**T**he choice comes up for Sailors every once in a while in their career. For some it's only on a "dream sheet" in boot camp. The age-old question is, "Where should I be stationed, on the East or West Coast?"

For some it's easy. "My family is in Richmond, Va.; I'm going to Norfolk." For others it's just as easy: "My family is in Richmond. I'm going to San Diego."

But, there are a relative few who make a less common choice. They head for the "third coast," and many of them never leave it.

"I checked in to Kings Bay, Ga., July 3, 1989, and I'm still here," said Senior Chief

Electronics Technician Burdus Galbraith, an instructor at the Trident Training Facility, Kings Bay, Ga. "I love the warm weather. I'm originally from Wisconsin and I hate to shovel snow. The economy and cost of living is good down here. Even the mayor only makes \$35,000 a year, so a senior chief is living well."

The Southeast plays host to NAS Jacksonville, NAF Key West, NAS Whiting Field, NAS Pensacola, NS Mayport, NSA Panama City and NSA Orlando in Florida; NAS Atlanta, Naval Supply Corps School in Athens and SUBASE Kings Bay in Georgia; and the Construction Battalion Center (CBC) Gulfport, NAS

Meridian and NS Pascagoula in Mississippi. With Seabees in Gulfport, submariners in Kings Bay, squadrons at NAS Jacksonville and every other naval job in Mayport, there's something for every Sailor in the Southeast.

The weather has always been a draw to the South; it's where a huge number of retirees end up moving to spend their twilight years. All the sunshine and warm weather sets up the Southeast to have some of the most interesting plants and animals in the country. Where else could you take your kids to the beach one day and the Okefenokee Swamp the next?



▲ **HM2 Shannon Rodriguez and** husband CM2 Anthony Rodriguez live in better accommodations in Gulfport than in more expensive parts of the country.

One of the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) offices would be just the place to go for a Sailor to get out and see some of what Georgia and Florida has to offer.

“I love the Kings Bay MWR, I’m here almost every day,” said Seaman James Thomas. “Last weekend I went to Orlando and got to see Sea World. Two weekends before that we went to Panama City Beach, Fla.

The trips planned by MWR are not going to cost a young Sailor anywhere near what you would pay as a civilian.

“The most expensive thing we have done is when we went to Panama City Beach,” said Thomas, “and it cost us \$20 for the weekend. Most of the time the trips are free, or at least the transportation to get there.”

If trips to Sea World and swamps are not your thing there is always Cumberland Island, just a short hop from Mayport, NAS Jacksonville and Kings Bay. There are some of the most amazing camping locations on Cumberland as well as historical sites and wilderness preserves. Just make sure you only take what you can carry on the ferry



because on Cumberland you're on foot the entire time.

Weather is a large part of why Sailors enjoy living in the Southeast, but lately it has also been one of the reasons to not be stationed there. Fear of hurricanes can be a major concern for Sailors, especially if they are about to move their families into the area.

Nowhere is this more of an issue than in the area from Gulfport, Miss., all the way to Pensacola, Fla. But the Sailors stationed in Gulfport seem to be ideally suited to handle emergencies and capable of fixing the damage.

Gulfport's Seabees responded immediately to the needs of the storm-damaged Gulf Coast, delaying a scheduled deployment to Iraq to help restore quality of life to the community.

"The Seabees of Gulfport helped each other and they helped the community. That's what they're here for," said Chief Steelworker (SCW) Michael Clodfelter. "When something like the storms happen we pull together as one team to take care of the public and our own."

Living in base housing on the Seabee base really helped many Sailors. Rather than having to wait four to six months for repairs by private contractors to homes out in town, those Sailors' families whose houses needed repair were back inside them within a month.

"The base in Gulfport is in great shape already compared to what some of the outlying community has to face," said CMDCM Danny Duval, Construction Battalion Center 20th Seabee Readiness Group. "And we will be receiving \$300 million in appropriations from Congress for infrastructure rebuilding."

When the rebuilding is done, the base will be better prepared to weather a storm than it was in the past.

"We found out during the storm that steel and metal buildings just don't hold up,"

▼ **After a six-month deployment to Iraq, Sailors assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 133 return to Gulfport, Miss. NMCB-133 had been slated to leave on a deployment in October, but remained a month longer in Gulfport to provide hurricane relief.**



► **The Southeast teems with wildlife** and wilderness preserves. You could take an air boat ride on the Gulf Coast at this gator farm or head to a swamp in Georgia.

▼ **MWR at King's Bay, Ga., constantly** schedules activities for Sailors from trips to Sea World to this canoe race on a base pond.



Duval said. “We’ll be building with more concrete and brick this time.”

Duval also said that with the amount of new Navy housing being built right now they would soon be able to knock down the oldest of the housing now in use. Improvements to the bases are not the only things changing in the post-hurricane Gulf Coast. Dozens of new companies are moving to the area.

“There are several new stores coming here now ... so the coast is coming back to life,” said HM2 Shannon Rodriguez, Naval Branch

Health Clinic, Gulfport.

Rodriguez is optimistic about the future of the Gulf Coast.

“It’s really not bad here,” she said. “They are getting things rebuilt pretty quickly. The casinos are opening, restaurants are open [and] they have all kinds of events at the coliseum. New Orleans is not too far, Pensacola is not too far and Mobile, is close so you are centrally located to do anything you can think of.”

While hurricane season comes every year, many Southeast Sailors remain optimistic

about the area – with some pragmatism thrown in for good measure.

“You go to California and you have the chance of an earthquake. I lived in Sicily and Mount Etna erupted. I was in the Philippines and Mount Pinatubo erupted,” said Clodfelter. “So no matter where you go you’re going to

#### ▼ The unique landscape of the

southeast is one of the few places where you can see sights like Spanish Moss hanging from oaks and pines.





- ▲ **Before last year's hurricane season, tourism was the No. 1 draw to the Gulf Coast.** To get tourists to return, the beaches were cleaned and opened for business. Families covered this beach across the river from Biloxi, Miss.
- ▶ **The small towns of Mississippi can take you back to a time when it was not uncommon to say "hello" and "good morning" to a stranger on the street.**
- ▼ **Base housing in Gulfport, Miss., is not only in good shape, but new houses are being built, making life on base better than out in town for many Seabeets.**



have natural disasters, it's just a matter of how you deal with them."

Clodfelter stands firmly by his duty station, stating a number of reasons to live in the Southeast, including fishing, hunting, the cost of living and the school system.

"Of all the places I've been stationed in the states, this is the best for my family," Clodfelter said. "The schools are great. Even at my kid's public school there is a uniform



policy. I would recommend any Sailor come here single or married.”

With all the wonderful weather, beaches and attractions in the Southeast the No. 1 reason Sailors from Gulfport to Mayport claim to love living in the South – the pace of life. Things just seem to move a little slower down there. It’s not that things don’t get done – there just isn’t the same frenetic cloud that hangs over other areas of the country.

“Aside from all the storms – and in the tropics you are going to get storms – the pace of life is more relaxed. The people are very nice, and they stop and say, ‘hello’ and ‘good morning’ to you around here,” said Duval. “I’ve been stationed in California and, no offense to California, but it’s just all hustle and bustle out there.”

So, if you hate the snow, are tired of city life and would like to live in one of the few

places in the country where you can still find a house for under \$100,000, you might want to check out the area; and who knows, you might just stay. **SS**

**McCoy is a photojournalist assigned to Naval Media Center**

**Website Exclusive**

Find more photos online at [www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200608/feature\\_3/](http://www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200608/feature_3/)

# Focus on Service

**“We call it the ‘Gator 8,’”**

said Ship’s Serviceman 2nd Class (SW) Felix Vicente, as customers rushed in and out of the two-aisle, precisely-stocked ship’s store.

With a crew of only five Sailors in S-3 division aboard USS *Dubuque* (LPD 8), Vicente is currently the only ship’s serviceman working in Gator 8.

The ship’s in-port crew of 400 transforms into a mass of nearly 1,000 Sailors and Marines when deployed, and it’s Vicente’s job to ensure the ship’s store stays stocked 24/7 with everything they need. Whether it’s a meal or snack, a uniform item or just checking out new compact discs and DVDs, his main concern is to make sure his crew has what they need and want to make it through the day.

“[I do] anything to help the morale of the crew,” said Vicente. “I just want to see my customers happy.”

*Jones is a photojournalist assigned to the Public Affairs Center, San Diego.*

Story and photo by MC2(AW/SW) Tiffini M. Jones

# The Customer is EVERY



thing

## The Badge of Military Merit (PURPLE HEART)

**A**t his headquarters in Newburgh, N.Y., on Aug. 7, 1782, Gen. George Washington devised two new badges of distinction for enlisted men and noncommissioned officers. To signify loyal military service, he ordered a chevron to be worn on the left sleeve of the uniform coat for the rank and file who had completed three years of duty “with bravery, fidelity and good conduct;” Two chevrons signified six years of service.

The second badge, for “any singularly meritorious action,” was the figure of a heart in purple cloth or silk edged with narrow lace or binding. This device, the Badge of Military Merit, was affixed to the uniform coat above the left breast and permitted its wearer to pass guards and sentinels without challenge and to have his name and regiment inscribed in a Book of Merit. As Washington intended, the road to glory in a patriot army was thus open to all.

Three badges were awarded in the waning days of the Revolutionary War, all to volunteers from Connecticut. On May 3, 1783, Sgt. Elijah Churchill and Sgt. William Brown received badges and certificates from Washington’s hand at the Newburgh headquarters. Sgt. Daniel Bissell Jr., received the award on June 10, 1783.

The award fell into disuse following the Revolutionary War and was not proposed again officially until after World War I. On Oct. 10, 1927, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Charles P. Summerall directed that a draft bill be sent to Congress, “to revive the Badge of Military Merit.”

For reasons unclear, the bill was withdrawn and action on the case ceased on Jan. 3, 1928, but the Office of The Adjutant General was instructed to file all materials collected for possible future use.

The rough sketch accompanying this proposal showed a circular disc medal with a concave center in which a relief heart appeared. The reverse carried the legend: For Military Merit.

A number of private interests sought to have the medal reinstated in the Army. One of these was the board of directors of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum in New York.

On Jan. 7, 1931, Summerall’s successor, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, confidentially reopened work on a new design, involving the Washington Commission of Fine Arts. His object was a medal issued on the bicentennial of George Washington’s birth.

The War Department announced the new award in General Order No. 3, Feb. 22, 1932:

“By order of the President of the United States, the Purple Heart established by General George Washington at Newburgh,

Aug. 7, 1782, during the War of the Revolution, is hereby revived out of respect to his memory and military achievements”

By Order of the Secretary of War,  
General Douglas MacArthur, Chief of Staff.

Elizabeth Will, an Army heraldic specialist, was named to redesign the newly-revived medal, which became known as the Purple Heart. Using general specifications provided to her, Will created the design sketch for the present medal of the Purple Heart.

As described in Army Regulation 600-35 of Nov. 10, 1941, the design consisted of a purple enameled heart within a bronze quarter-inch border showing a relief profile of George Washington in Continental uniform. Surmounting the enameled shield is Washington’s family coat of arms. The reverse side features the same heart shape and the coat of arms without enamel; within the heart lies the inscription, “For Military Merit,” with space beneath for the engraved name of the recipient.

At that time, the Navy Department saw no reason to authorize the Purple Heart for its officers and men, maintaining that the award was “purely an Army decoration.”

In Executive Order 9277 of Dec. 3, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt extended the use of the award to the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard after Dec. 7, 1941, and established a uniform application of standards for the award in the Army and the Navy.

President Harry S. Truman, in Executive Order 10409 of Nov. 12, 1952, retroactively extended Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard eligibility for the Purple Heart back to April 5, 1917, to cover World War I.

On April 25, 1962, President John F. Kennedy issued Executive Order 11016, which extended eligibility to “any civilian national of the United States, who while serving under competent authority in any capacity with an armed force has been, or may hereafter, be wounded.”

Today the Purple Heart is perhaps, the most unique of all United States military awards. Though relatively low in the order of precedence on the Pyramid of Honor (it ranks below the Bronze star), it is one of the most widely recognized and respected medals. It cannot be earned just by courage or by exceptional service or achievement. The Purple Heart signifies one thing ... sacrifice. **S**



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