

Camp Bucca: Inside the Wire

JANUARY 2008

ANNALES

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY

Delivering Hope

to the Far Corners of the World





[On the Front Cover]
 Front Cover: Chocolate is a universal language everywhere. Here, a young Afghan boy receives candy coated chocolate from a Sailor in Khost Province.

Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Jason McCammack

[Next Month]
 All Hands travels to Great Lakes to discover what it takes to become a Recruit Division Commander.

[Departments]

- Around the Fleet — 6
- Something to Think About — 34
- Focus on Service — 36
- History — 40

January

10 Delivering Hope to the Far Corners of the World

Afghani children wait quietly as village elders speak at the ground-breaking ceremony for a new schoolhouse in the Khost province. The school will educate boys and girls – in separate buildings. PRT officials have insisted on providing education for girls prior to providing funds for construction of schools in Afghanistan.

Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Jason McCammack



18 Inside the Wire

Since the surge of 2007, there are currently about 24,000 detainees in Multi-National Forces-Iraq Theater Internment Facilities. The majority of the detainees are at Camp Bucca, Iraq, where the detainee population spiked significantly.

24 The Fighting Fourteen



A nation trying to free itself of tyranny needs many things to stand on its own and a capable, loyal military protecting its people is among the most important. The mission of the 14 individual augmentee Sailors assigned to the Navy's embedded training team at Camp Clark is to mentor the Afghan National Army (ANA) and help them develop into a mature fighting force.

Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Jason McCammack

30 On the Ground with the Navy's Bomb Hunters

The sight of Sailors serving alongside Soldiers in Iraq is not unusual. More than 100 Navy EOD technicians have conducted more than 11,000 missions to find and neutralize the enemy's weapon of choice and the single biggest killer of coalition forces – improvised explosive devices.



Photo by MC2 Michael Zeltakalns



Members of the Navy Ceremonial Guard fold the Medal of Honor Flag that is presented to Daniel and Maureen Murphy, the parents of Navy SEAL Lt. Michael Murphy during the special ceremony in honor of their son held at the United States Navy Memorial. Murphy was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor on Oct. 22 in a ceremony held at the White House. Murphy was killed during a reconnaissance mission near Asadabad, Afghanistan, while exposing himself to enemy fire in order to call in support after his four-man team came under attack by enemy forces June 28, 2005. Murphy is the first service member to receive the honor for actions during Operation *Enduring Freedom* and the first Navy recipient of the medal since Vietnam.

Photo by MC2 Kevin S. O'Brien

Speaking with Sailors

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
MCPON (SW/FMF) Joe R. Campa

Our Navy is filled with titles, some formal and others far less. I started my career as a deck seaman and I know the kind of respect that goes along with someone earning the right to be called “boats.”

To those who have earned it, little else carries as much weight as a shipmate referring to them that way. No matter the rank, boatswain’s mate 3rd class or BMCN, “Boats” is part of our Navy heritage and it’s a title respected around the fleet.

Serving in the Hospital Corps, I witnessed first-hand the courage and commitment of the men and women we call “Doc,” a word with special meaning to any of the thousands of Marines and Sailors who have a corpsman to thank for saving their life under fire.

Nothing has ever compared to the first time I was called “Chief.” Our newest chiefs, and even our oldest, know exactly what I mean. If you’re hungry for it, I’ll tell you it’s even better than you’ve imagined. That one-word title symbolizes several years of hard work and sacrifice and it’s a title with special meaning to all who have earned it.

There are other titles specific to our Navy, each with their own meaning and their own personal significance to each of you.

But of all the titles I’ve earned in 27 years, there has been one that has remained constant and one that belongs to every one of you. We are United States Sailors and that, shipmates, is a term in which we should all take a great deal of pride. It’s the word that comes to mind when I visit you at sea, in engine rooms and hangar bays.

When I see a young seaman or petty officer willingly working long hours because they know the mission requires it, I think to myself, “That’s a Sailor.”

In conversation, when I see and hear the character and the humor, the willingness to speak openly and frankly, I think, “That’s a Sailor.”

I’ve stood on piers watching ships pull away from spouses and newborns and thought, “That’s the life of a Sailor.”

We share a culture and a spirit, you and I. As Sailors, we defend this nation from the sea.

There is no greater privilege, and no greater challenge, than wearing the uniform of a United States Sailor. It symbolizes the Honor, Courage and Commitment we embrace as Sailors. That uniform is going to change soon, but the standards that guide the men and women who wear it will never waiver. As we execute our new maritime strategy, the expectations our Navy and our nation have of you have never been higher. I take great pride in that. I know you do, too.

Those standards and expectations, along with our great heritage, proud history and bright future, are part of who we are as United States Sailors, a title earned by all of you. 



ALL HANDS

Number 1090 • January 2008
www.navy.mil

Secretary of the Navy
The Honorable Donald C. Winter

Chief of Naval Operations
Adm. Gary Roughead

Chief of Information
Rear Adm. Frank Thorp IV

Commander, Naval Media Center
Capt. Gordon J. Hume

Chief of Production
Richard D. Welsh

Chief of Publishing
Lt. Cmdr. Fred Kuebler

Acting Chief of Publishing
Lt. Jennifer Cragg

Assistant Chief of Publishing
Lt. j.g. Marie Tillery

EDITORIAL

Editor
Marie G. Johnston

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

Photo Editor
MC1(AW) Brien Aho
MC1(AW) R. Jason Brunson

Editorial Staff
MC1(SW) Margaret Tyler
MC2 Washington Caicedo
MC2(AW/SW) Jason R. McCammack
MC2 David Beyea

LAYOUT & WEB DESIGN

Slice
Design + Project Management
Richard Rabil
Greg Aylsworth, Juana Merlo
Joanne DiGiorgio, Tory Hobson

ALL HANDS

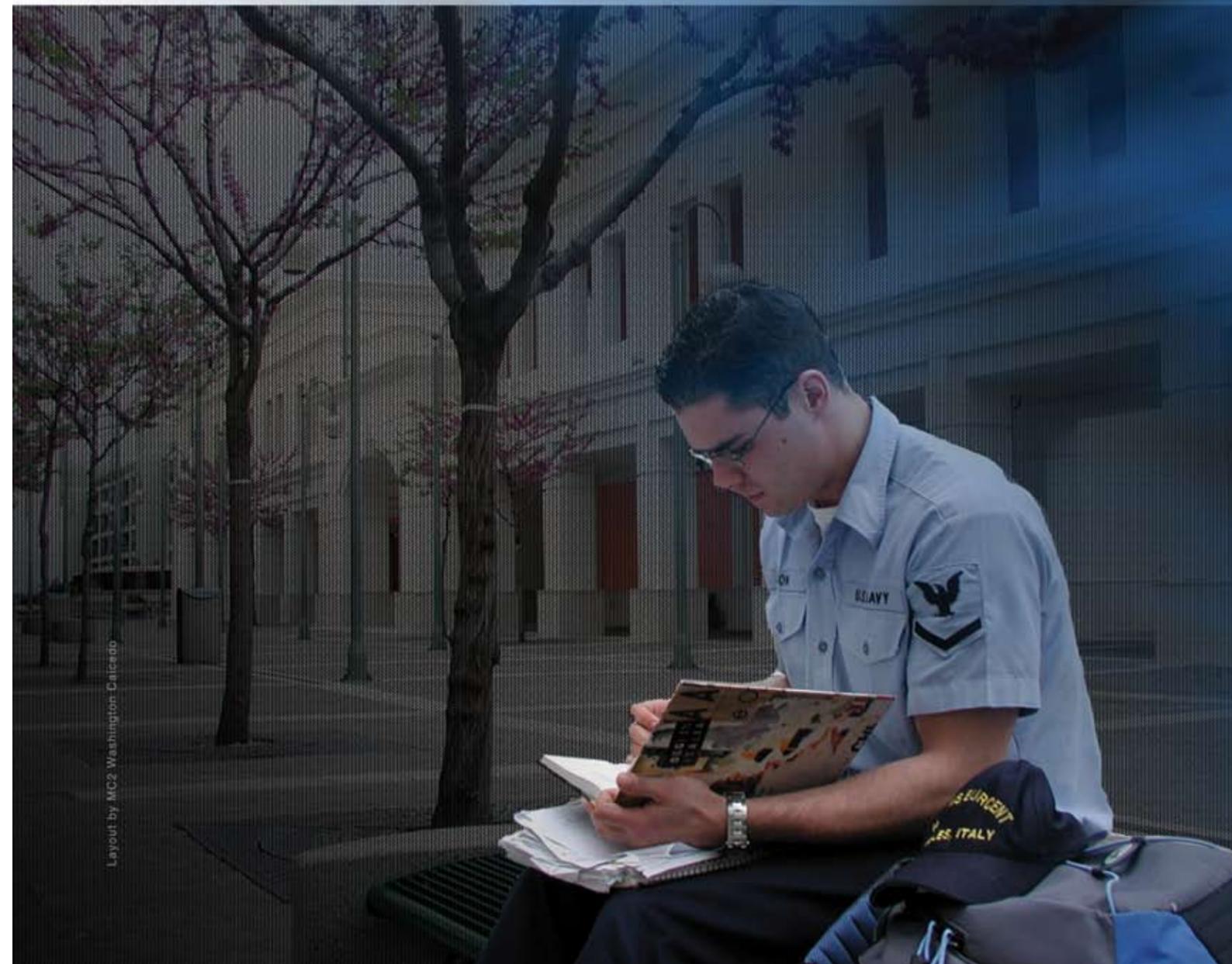
Recipient of the Thomas Jefferson
Award for Excellence



All Hands (USPS 372-970; ISSN 0002-5577) Number 1090 is published monthly by the Naval Media Center, Production Department, 2713 Mitscher Rd. S.W., Anacostia Annex, D.C. 20373-5819. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. **Subscriptions:** For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 or call 202/512-1800. Subscription prices \$45 (domestic)/\$54 (foreign); \$7.50 (single copy domestic)/\$9 (single copy foreign). **Postmaster:** Send address changes to All Hands, Naval Media Center, Production Department 2713 Mitscher Rd., S.W., Anacostia Annex, D.C. 20373-5819. **Editorial Offices:** Send submissions and correspondence to Naval Media Center Production Department, ATTN: Editor, 2713 Mitscher Rd., S.W., Anacostia Annex, D.C. 20373-5819 Tel: DSN 288-4171 or 202/433-4171 Fax: DSN 288-4747 or 202/433-4747 E-Mail: allhandsmagazine@navy.mil Message: NAVMEDIACEN WASHINGTON DC //32// **Authorization:** The Secretary of the Navy has determined this publication is necessary in the transaction of business required by law of the Department of the Navy. Funds for printing this publication have been approved by the Navy Publications and Printing Committee.

START EARLY

don't wait until the last minute to prepare for your next advancement exam.



Man Overboard Device Saves Sailors' Lives

USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) Sailors can rely on a new safety device to help save their lives. The Man Over Board Indicator (MOBI) was recently installed on all of the ship's float coats.

The MOBI is a new three-part system that will track and help to recover a Sailor who falls off a ship. According to Andrew Malleck, an engineer from the manufacturer, the new system drastically improves the recovery time of a man overboard.

"From the time a Sailor hits the water until they are standing back on the ship is only a lapse of eight to 10 minutes," Malleck said.

The MOBI is a three-part system: a transmitter on the float coat, a receiver in the pilot house and a directional finder on the rigid hull inflatable boat (RHIB).

The transmitter is a small blue square device with a long antenna running through the float coat. On newer Mark-1 float coats, the transmitter is in a pouch on the lower left side; with the antenna running up the inseam and around the neck. Older coats have the transmitter on the lower part near the belt buckle, and the antenna runs up the bladder and around the neck.

The transmitter is activated when fully

submerged in salt water for three to five seconds. At that time it will transmit two serial numbers; one number is assigned to the ship and one is specifically assigned to a Sailor; telling the ship exactly who fell into the water.

Lt. Cmdr. Jeffrey Orberon, the ship's maintenance manager, said the transmitters can be manually activated should the water not trigger them.

The third part of the system is the direction finder on board the RHIBs. Unlike conventional GPS-based systems, which send a signal all the way up to a satellite, the MOBI system uses a signal broadcasted out on an AM/FM frequency air distress channel, coded to ensure that only the Navy can decipher it.

RHIBs can track and locate the Sailor's position based on the signal strength. The approximate range of the system is eight to 12 nautical miles.

The system will help prevent false man overboard drills, and help the ship to maintain operational commitments such as flight operations, Orberon said.

"These systems are designed to cut down on time trying to locate the Sailor, and ultimately save lives," Orberon said. **S**

Story by MCSN Matthew Williams, USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75).

NECC Establishes First Civil Affairs Squadron

Navy Expeditionary Combat Command established Maritime Civil Affairs Squadron 2 (MCAS 2) during a recent ceremony at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Va.

MCAS 2 missions include engaging with civil authorities and civilian populations to enhance the effectiveness of ongoing military operations.

"Essentially, what we do, at the request of the host government, is go into underdeveloped and under-governed regions and work with other agencies to assess the local civil infrastructure," said Capt. Ken Schwingshagl, commander, Maritime Civil Affairs Group (MCAG). "We try and see what's not working and offer our expertise and assistance to coordinate improvements to their infrastructure."

Civil affairs operations include humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, evacuation, and providing assistance to restore local infrastructures following military operation or natural disasters.

"We are showing our commitment to help other countries get on their feet in order to create a global alliance," said Rear Adm. Don Bullard, commander, NECC. "We want to help them establish better living conditions

in order to fend off terrorist footholds."

Because MCAS 2 is the first civil affairs squadron to be formally stood up in the Navy, they are currently operating throughout the world. When MCAS 1, headquartered at Imperial Beach, Calif., is established in fall 2008, MCAS 2's area of operations will be North and South America, Europe and Africa.

"Civil affairs to me is about displaying a deep respect for foreign cultures," said Cmdr. Jeffery Whitaker, commanding officer, MCAS 2, "and engaging the civilian populations to help them gain ownership of their government and countries."

Once the squadron is fully manned, it will consist of 16 five-man teams. Eight of the 16 teams will be Reserve personnel stationed out of Yorktown, Va., Ft. Dix, N.J., and Miami. Each team will include a coxswain, communications specialist, hospital corpsman, Seabee and a command element that will provide direction and leadership to the team.

Since the Navy was established more than 200 years ago, it has been conducting civil-military operations through port calls and community relations, said Bullard.

"So this is nothing new for us. But what is new is the Navy is now showing a dedicated effort by using specially trained Sailors to provide their expertise in the maritime environment," continued Bullard.

Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) is a global force provider of adaptive force packages of expeditionary capabilities to joint warfighting commanders. NECC serves as a single manning functional command to centrally manage the current and future readiness,

resources, manning, training and equipping of the Navy Expeditionary Force. **S**

Story by MC1 Jen Smith, NECC Public Affairs, Norfolk.

Final Multiple Scores increase for Sailors with Degrees

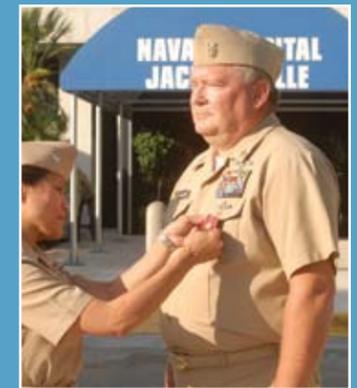
Recognizing the importance of a strong educational foundation for career progression, Vice Adm. John C. Harvey Jr., Chief of Naval Personnel (CNP) recently announced the introduction of education points into the E-4 to E-6 Final Multiple Score (FMS) for advancement.

Beginning with advancement cycles in August 2008, E3-E5 Sailors will be awarded two points for an accredited associate degree, and four points for an accredited baccalaureate degree. For those going before the E-7 to E-9 selection board, education will be recognized by including an emphasis on education in the selection board precepts.

"The implementation of these points towards advancement for E-4 through E-6 and in the precept language for E-7 to E-9 selection, reflects the importance the Navy places on education," said Harvey. "As the Navy continues to develop highly-technical capabilities, Sailors will be called on to perform in new and challenging ways. Adapting to these challenges requires leaders that have strong educational foundations, both professionally and personally."

Documentation is required for degree completion to count towards advancement. Official transcripts that indicate proof of

Master Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/SS) Rick E. Wilson was recently awarded the Bronze Star for distinguished service as an individual augmentee (IA) from March 4, 2006, to Feb. 3, 2007. Wilson was deployed to Afghanistan as an IA where he served as the liaison officer between joint coalition forces, several non-government organizations and the Afghan Ministry of Public Health.



Wilson arranged securing resources of one hospital and four medical clinics. As the senior non-commissioned officer he spent a great deal of time helping newly arrived Navy enlisted personnel learn the ropes of their assignments, orient them to their new mission and environment, while continuing their Navy careers. Wilson, is currently assigned to Plans, Operations and Medical Intelligence department head, Naval Hospital Jacksonville, Fla. The Bronze Star was presented by Naval Hospital Jacksonville Commanding Officer Capt. Raquel Bono.

Story by Loren Barnes, photo by HM1(SW) Michael Morgan, who are assigned to Naval Hospital, Jacksonville, Fla.

degree completion must come directly from the degree granting institution to the Navy College Center in Pensacola, Fla.

Sailors eligible for advancement to E-4 to E-6 must ensure official transcripts are received by the NCC no later than the first of the month in which their advancement exam takes place.

Transcripts for Sailors competing for advancement to E-7 to E-9 must be received by the Navy College Center by the cut-off dates specified in the corresponding selection board NAVADMIN.

"It's always been important to document education in your records," said Cmdr. Sharon Bemis, Naval Education and Training Command (NETC) Voluntary Education Program Manager. "CNP's announcement makes documentation even more crucial. This new policy should give Sailors a greater incentive

to validate all of their education records and ensure they have the highest FMS possible toward advancement."

To assist Sailors in pursuing a degree, the Navy has developed an education roadmap that is available through Navy Knowledge Online (NKO). Sailors using the roadmap will first verify their existing academic transcripts contained in their Electronic Training Jacket on NKO. This information is compiled from the individual's Sailor/Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript.

Once this information has been verified, Sailors can consult with their local Navy College Officer or the Navy College Center to develop their specific education plan.

"Taking advantage of Navy Voluntary Education opportunities is now more important than ever," said Master Chief Electrician's Mate (SW)

Ricky's Tour

By MC1 Mike Jones





▲ An MH-60S *Seahawk* assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 85, dumps water from a 420-gallon extinguishing trough onto one of the many areas in San Diego County that suffered through wildfires. The blaze forced more than 250,000 people from their homes.

Photo by MC2 Chris Fahey

◀ CSSN Troy Shenker peers through a hatch during a general quarters drill aboard USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) during a Composite Training Unit Exercise.

Photo by MCSN Brandon C. Wilson



▲ Sailors with Riverine Squadron 2, Det. 1, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Haditha, Iraq, demonstrate to the Chief of Operations (CNO) Adm. Gary Roughead for the capabilities of their riverine patrol boats. CNO and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Joe R. Campa Jr. visited Sailors throughout Al Anbar Province, Iraq, and thanked them for their dedicated service.

Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Caleb Gomez



▲ A curious little girl watches OS3 Ashley Moore, paint a wall at Barretto Elementary school during a friendship building project, Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines. Sailors were offered a chance to participate in cultural exchanges, goodwill-generating activities and build friendships while in port.

Photo by MC1 Jeffrey H. Ballge

continued from page 7

Tom Smith, enlisted education coordinator for NETC. “There are numerous programs in place that allow Sailors, whether deployed or on shore, to work toward their degree, and get those advancement points.”

The Navy’s educational initiatives are designed to support a continuum of learning and development throughout a Sailor’s career, including distance learning available in multiple formats almost anywhere around the globe.

Under the Navy College Program, several opportunities are available that give Sailors a head-start in earning their college degree. A visit to the local NCO is a logical first step to learn about the wide variety of college level examinations available, such as the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) Examination Program, the College Level Examination Program and the DANTES Subject Standardized Tests program.

In these programs and others, Sailors can take tests in a variety of subjects and receive recommended college credit for each test successfully completed. There are also several college admission tests given through the NCOs, including the Scholastic Assessment Test, and the American College Test assessment program. The Graduate Record Exam may be taken at certain testing sites off-base and DANTES will reimburse the Sailor for the cost of the test. The Sailor must personally fund the test administration fee.

There is a great chance for Sailors to earn college credit for things they already do in their job. Rating-relevant degrees are offered and supported by the Navy College Program Distance Learning Partnerships (NCPDLP),

as part of the Service members Opportunity College (SOC).

NCPDLP degrees maximize acceptance college credit recommended for Navy Training and experience as well as credit by examination, and offer distance learning opportunities to complete the remainder of degree requirements.

The Tuition Assistance (TA) program is one of the Navy’s most popular educational assistance programs. Through TA, Sailors can apply for financial support to help them complete their college degree.

The Navy funds 100 percent of tuition and mandatory course fees (max of \$250 per semester hour) for up to 16 semester hours per fiscal year. The \$250 per semester hour (or semester hour equivalent) payment applies only to tuition and mandatory course fees related to course enrollment. TA does not cover books or other expenses, and this policy applies to all pay grades.

Another Navy College Program designed to help Sailors continue their education while on sea-duty assignments is the Navy College Program for Afloat College Education (NCPACE).

All NCPACE college courses are provided by accredited colleges and universities, and both undergraduate and graduate level courses are available. NCPACE courses are funded by the Navy with the individual Sailor only paying for books. **S**

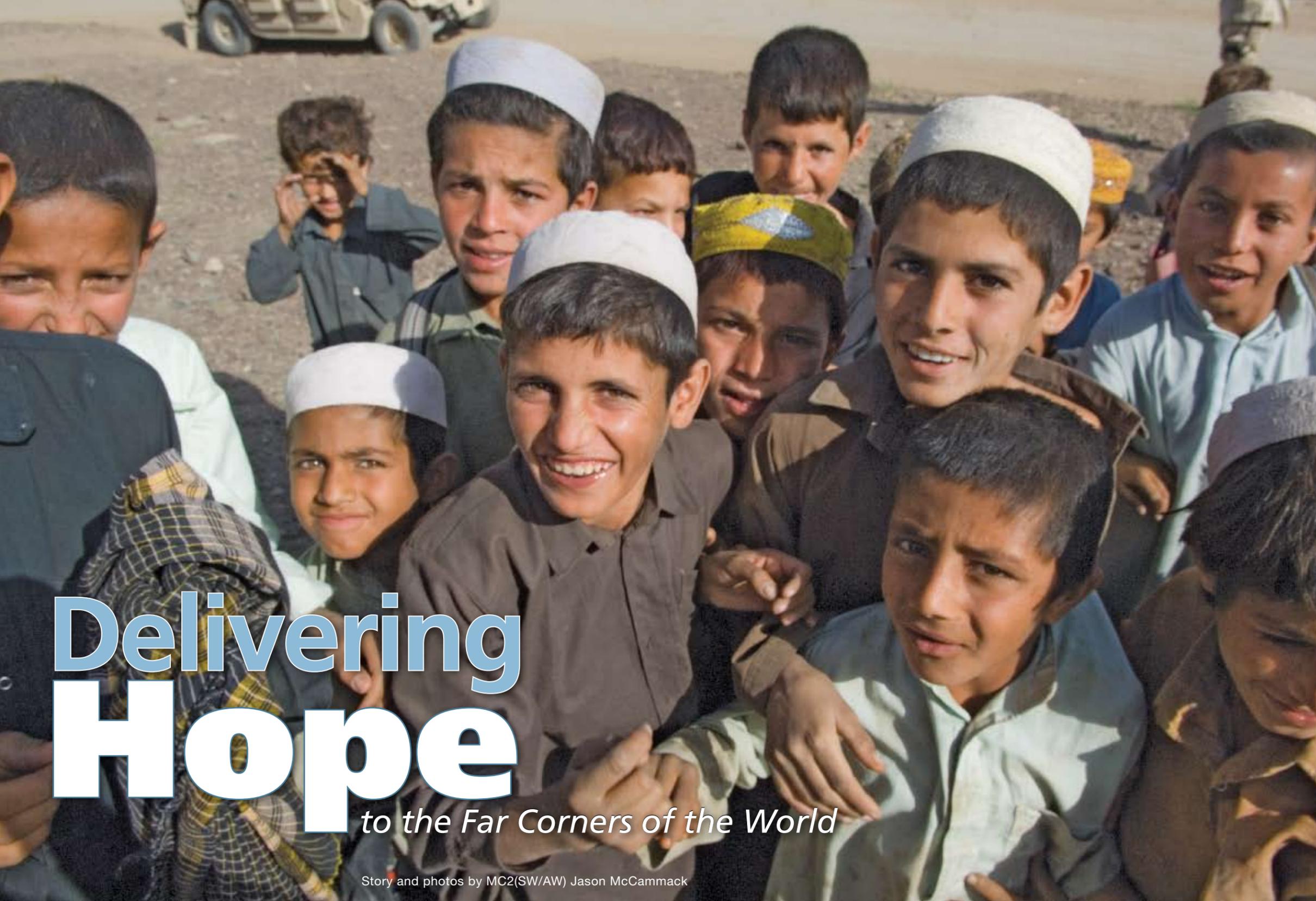
Story by Ed Barker, Naval Education and Training Command.

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

Directions on how to properly submit photos can be found at www.navy.mil/photo_submit.html

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

Click on the **Navy’s** home page, www.navy.mil, for fresh images of your shipmates in action.



◀ **Afghani children run from their homes to wave at the troops, as an American Humvee convoy rolls past.**

Delivering Hope

to the Far Corners of the World

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

As the armored Humvees roar by on their far-flung missions, the children of Afghanistan come barreling out of their homes in a mad sprint, their faces full of wonder.

They raise their arms above their heads and salute the passing Americans with the “thumbs up” sign, using both hands to convey their enthusiasm. They smile and wave at the gunners sitting in the turrets on top of the armored trucks. It is a moment of hope for the new Afghanistan that repeats itself during every convoy mission in the Khost province. It is a daily reminder of the great responsibility entrusted to every Sailor deployed to Afghanistan.

Twenty-seven individual augmentee (IA) Sailors are assigned to Camp Chapman in mountainous Eastern Afghanistan as part of Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Khost.

“The PRTs were set up to provide three lines of operations: security, reconstruction and governance,” said PRT Khost Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Dave Adams. “The mission is to reconstruct the country and to connect people to their government.”

The first step for the PRT was to identify the most basic needs of the people in the Khost province.

“We worked with the Afghan government and their Provincial Development Plan, looked at their priorities and decided to do what we could to help them with their reconstruction priorities,” said Khost PRT Engineer, Lt. Cmdr. Robert Traeder.

“That’s water, education and roads – when you get right down to it,” said Traeder.

PRT Khost provides the blueprints and expertise for each project then contracts the work out to local Afghan construction companies, providing jobs and a cash infusion for the fledgling democracy.



▲ Lt. Cmdr. Robert Traeder (right), Khost PRT engineer and Dawlat Qaymi, an Afghani architect, discuss the construction of a local city center in Khost province. Qaymi's construction team works with PRT Khost on a number of projects.

“I can actually see the difference that we’re making and the difference we’re making in the lives of these people.”

— CM1 (SCW) Jerry Jump



▲ Cmdr. Dave Adams, commanding officer, PRT Khost, joins local village elders at the ribbon-cutting for a rural schoolhouse in Khost province.

“All the work is done by local contractors,” said Traeder. “Our responsibility is funding them, providing the design and then making sure they are built to a quality standard.”

Opening the Doors to Prosperity

Fifty school buildings in 25 locations are either in the planning stage, under construction or completed. Most of the school construction projects place a boy’s school directly next to a girl’s school, with a wall separating the two buildings. Educating girls is a new idea in Khost, but the PRT made this a top priority.

“It’s a cultural thing,” said Traeder. “They want them (boys and girls) separate – but we also want to see them complete some girls schools. If they are built adjacent to each other there will be a wall in between them. It’s rather unique. Some of the resistance to sending girls to school here is that parents don’t want the girls to walk to school alone. This way they can walk with their brothers and then they each go in a separate entrance. Each school will have its own latrine and its own hand-pumped well, and, culturally that’s important to them.”

The significance of the school’s construction projects was evident at a groundbreaking celebration for a rural school for girls and boys in the Khost Province was held on Oct. 10, 2007. Local elders, regional political leaders, PRT personnel and local youth were among the guests on hand at the event.

“The most important thing here in Afghanistan is education,” said Adams. “If we can educate the girls and the boys, and this is a combined school, then that will really allow them to build a solid country. Under the Taliban, education was really at the lowest level. Here in Khost, there were less than 1,000 kids in school. Today, we have 88,000 kids in school, most of them sitting outside. Building these schools allows them to come indoors and really have a chance to learn without dealing with the weather and the heat. This

is the future generation of Afghanistan that will lead them toward prosperity instead of another 30 years of war.”

Life at the End of the World

Camp Chapman was formerly a Soviet base during their occupation of Afghanistan during the 1980s. Inside its gates are dozens of rusting Soviet aircraft, left behind to slowly fade away through the ravages of wind, sand and time. To say that the camp is remote would not be doing its location justice. To a Westerner, it feels as far from home as one could ever imagine. Just to travel to the U.S. military’s hub of transportation in Afghanistan, Bagram Air Force Base, personnel at PRT Khost will endure an often days long expedition that will likely include convoys and twin-engine aircraft.

The weather in Khost is a moody beast with 40-60 degree swings between night and day. Bats, scorpions and, everyone’s favorite, cobras, are just some of nature’s scourges with which Camp Chapman inhabitants keep company.

Despite the logistical and cosmetic challenges, the Sailors have adopted the camp as their temporary home and, speak of their turf in measured terms when talking to outsiders. Rarely is a disparaging word spoken in regards to life on the camp.

“It’s very self-contained, very self-sufficient,” said PRT Khost Communications Officer, Chief Electronics Technician(SS) David Keelan, “We have everything we need here on this little FOB (Forward Operating Base).”

Despite its small stature – PRT Khost at Camp Chapman is nothing more than a stone’s throw from end to end – the Sailors are very protective of their tiny parcel of land. Possibly, the feeling of ownership is just a Sailor’s natural response to life away from their natural habitat. Sailors taking pride and ownership in their job and their ship is the goal of every skipper, and clearly this has carried over as IAs take their mission ashore.

“This is cake. This is the easy life,” said

Information Systems Technician 2nd Class (SW/AW) Joshua Jorns. “We’ve got 10 times more living space here than you do on a ship.”

As is the case for most IAs, the Camp Chapman Sailors have learned to adapt to living in an Army dominated culture.

“At first it took us a while,” said Information Technician 2nd Class Carl Bahls. “When we first got to Fort Bragg, where we did almost three months of training before deployment, we were pretty segregated from each other at first. Then we started living in tents together and learning each others different quirks and ways of getting things done – I think that’s where we began to come together.”

“Each service has its own intricacies on how they do things so being there (Fort Bragg) for almost three months was a great help,” said Army 1st Sgt. Dino Cosio, PRT Khost’s senior enlisted leader. “The majority of our little differences got ironed out there. The



▲ The term groundbreaking still carries its original meaning in the hard-scrabble soil of Khost.



▲ Children sit quietly as village elders speak at the groundbreaking ceremony for their new schoolhouse in the Khost province. The school will educate boys and girls -- in separate buildings. PRT officials have insisted on providing education for girls prior to providing funds for construction of schools in Afghanistan.



▲ A chalkline is drawn before the groundbreaking ceremony for a rural schoolhouse in the Khost province.



▲ CM1(SCW) Michael Fall tests a new hand-pumped well.



▲ ET2(SW/AW) Joshua Jorns stands watch in the turret of an armored Humvee as PRT officials discuss plans to pave the road in a small village in Khost.

lingo, well, we're still working on that. It's a continuous process. A word will pop out from the Navy side of the house or the Army side of the house and everyone will look at that guy funny and then you just kind of figure out what they're talking about. Before you know it, almost by accident, the Soldiers began talking like Sailors and the Sailors are using all kinds of Army terms."

Once divided by language and experience, they now share a friendly, good-natured rivalry born through commonality of a simple lack of understanding of how the other side lived has now evolved into a friendly, good-natured rivalry among the service members.

Battling More than Conditions

Visiting the construction projects to keep track of their progress is a never-ending process. To do this, the Sailors load up in their armored Humvees and convoy throughout the province. The terrain in Khost is among the most rugged and difficult to travel in the world. The treacherous mountain passes are better suited to pack animals. They navigate dusty, desert landscapes and stone-covered riverbeds. Through it all, the Sailors must be ever vigilant for Taliban fighters. Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and rocket attacks are a constant threat throughout the province. Most of the Sailors spend one to two weeks each month exclusively manning the convoys,

often as gunners and drivers.

Despite being assigned to operations that they never thought they would experience when they joined the Navy, the Sailors say they're experiences at sea have served them well in their new surroundings.

"When we were at Fort Bragg, I was trained as a gunner, so usually when I go I'm in the turret," said Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW) Richard Rietch, PRT Khost cook and convoy gunner. "I'm pretty adaptable. I think that most Sailors are, because when you're at sea you don't have a fire department, a post office, janitors or anything else. It's the Sailors who man those jobs and you learn to adapt and overcome any challenges that may come your way. Besides, being in a convoy gets

you out of your daily routine and gives you a better perspective of what life is really like for the people here in Afghanistan."

Despite the picturesque landscape provided by the mountains and the Afghan countryside, the Sailors must train their eyes for the dangers that lurk behind every rock – and with every passing vehicle.

"We've been through so many counter-IED classes that we're well prepared, but you have to fight the tendency to become complacent and always keep your focus on the job at hand," said Shopkeeper 2nd Class Troy Ulshoeffter, Supply leading petty officer. "If we see anything like pavement that's been dug up or stray wires, that's going to send up a red flag. The hardest thing is that you're

never looking for one specific thing. As soon as we find a way to overcome a certain type of device, they come up with something new. It's like [cat and mouse] and you just want to make sure that we're always controlling the game. Anything out of the ordinary is suspect. This is the real thing, out here. You never want to be the one who didn't act on something that could've saved your buddy's life."

Foundations of Trust

Through their efforts, a new found trust is maturing between the local Khost population and PRT personnel. The benefits of their labor are immediate and help the Afghani people at a fundamental level. Village by village, they are seeing medical clinics open to care for

the ill. Water wells are dug to provide clean drinking water. Diversion dams are built to help cultivate crops where there was once just dust and stone. Schools are opening to enlighten the young, providing hope where they're once was only the oppression wrought by the extremism of the Taliban.

When PRT Khost personnel travel through the province, the warm embrace of smiling children and grateful men and women regularly greet them.

"I can actually see the difference that we're making and the difference we're making in the lives of these people," said Construction Mechanic 1st Class (SCW) Jerry Jump, PRT Khost Humvee mechanic and convoy operator. "Just in the short time that I've been here, I can see a real change in the attitude that they have toward us. There is openness and friendliness toward us. I think they recognize that we're doing good things that can only help them."

"[Ninety-five out of 100] people here in Khost want development, they want a future for their children and they want international assistance," said Adams. "The welcome mat is out."

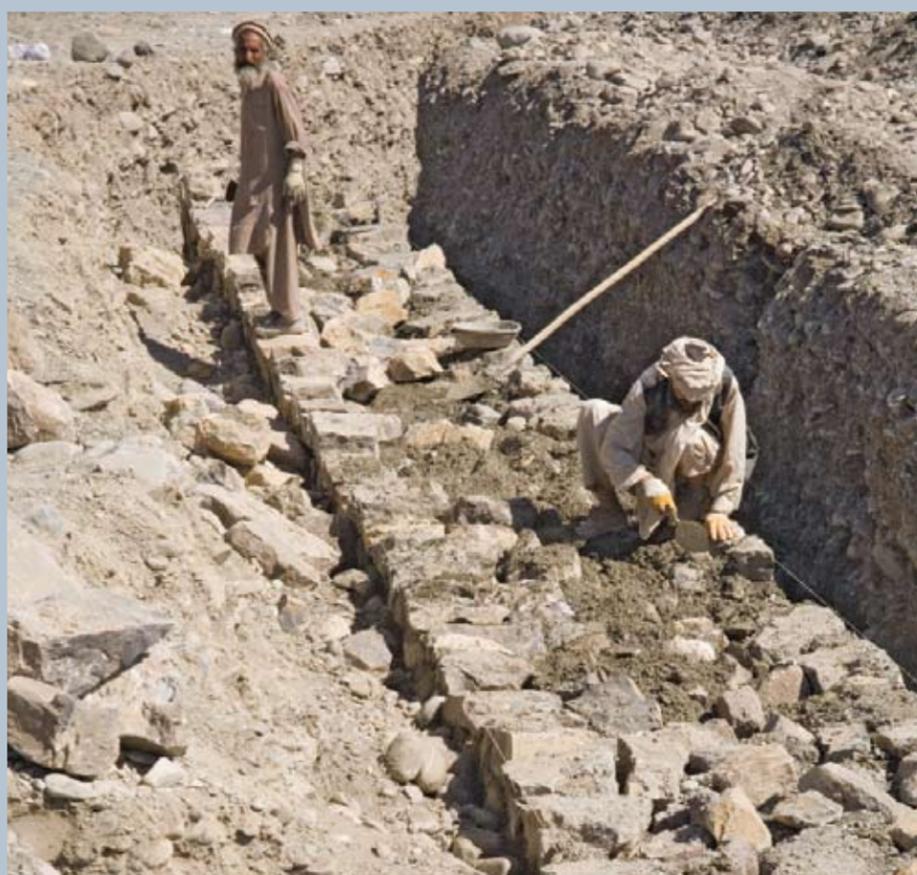
Just a few years ago, Khost province was a stronghold for Al Qaeda terror cells and its people were under Taliban control. Today it is alive with a new found freedom and a burgeoning economy.

"This is so important because less than 15 miles from here were two of the [Al Qaeda] training camps. One was where Mohammed Atta trained for some time," said Adams. "So 9/11 really started here. It's important that we help the Afghans cast off that tyranny and terror and be able to lift up the future. It's important for the hope of their children and our children. We want to make this a place where terrorism can no longer fester." ❏

McCammack is a photojournalist at Naval Media Center, Washington, D.C.



▲ A cornfield is harvested in the Khost countryside in early September. Water from diversion dams, designed, funded and overseen by the PRT, is used to strengthen local agriculture.



▲ Local labor is used to build a diversion dam designed by PRT Khost engineers. The dam diverts water that flows from the mountains in the springtime to local farmland. Using local workers infuses the Afghanistan economy with cash and provides jobs for the Khost workforce.



▲ Camp Chapman is home to 27 Sailors assigned to PRT Khost. The forward operating base, located in mountainous Khost province, was a former Soviet base during their occupation of Afghanistan.



▲ A local Afghani boy arrives at the future site of his schoolhouse.

◀ SK2 Troy Ulshoeffter, supply leading petty officer (standing) enjoys the video game action of his roommates on base at Camp Chapman.

INSIDE THE WIRE

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

As the helo approaches Camp Bucca in the pre-dawn hours, a moment of déjà vu sets in. The overwhelming electric candlepower illuminating the facility set against the stark, black nothingness of the Southern Iraqi desert brings to mind the wattage of the Las Vegas strip. But this is not Sin City ... or the City of Lights. Camp Bucca is the largest detainee facility in Iraq.

“The surge” of American forces in the spring and summer of 2007 netted thousands of individuals considered impending threats to Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I), Iraqi Security Forces or the fledgling Iraqi government. During this period the detainee population in Iraq spiked significantly.



◀ A guard inspects the fence for integrity inside the wire at Camp Bucca, Iraq.



▲ AMAN Dustin McCasland, assigned to Navy Provisional Detainee Battalion (NPDB) 3, Camp Bucca, Iraq, stands watch at Compound 17's Alpha Quad tower at the Theater Internment Facility.

Currently, there are about 24,000 detainees in MNF-I Theater Internment Facilities. Specific populations at individual facilities are not provided for security reasons, but the majority of the detainees are at Camp Bucca.

Detainee operations is not glamorous duty. There are no battlefield heroics for the press to laud. Day-to-day life is largely a series of repetitive tasks performed by the numbers with constant vigilance.

"We like to call it 'Groundhog Day,' because every day is the same," said Navy Provisional Detainee Battalion (NPDB) 3 Command Master Chief Richard Rose.

There will be little outside recognition for the Sailors on this mission or about the Herculean effort by MNF-I to maintain safety and security at internment facilities.

It is against this backdrop that the 412 Sailors of NPDB-3 perform one of the most vital missions in Iraq. The Sailors are individual

augmentees (IAs) from 214 worldwide Navy commands. Most of the Sailors had little or no background in security operations. In fact, NPDB-3 is comprised of Sailors from 63 different Navy ratings. Their extraordinary efforts are re-shaping the image of detainee operations in Iraq and safeguarding Iraqi civilians from some of the most dangerous and volatile extremists in the global war on terrorism.

Camp Bucca is a joint-forces operation and the Navy runs Compounds 14 to 19.

"Right now the Navy is setting the tone for everyone on this base," said Senior Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (AW/SW) Terry King, Compound 19 assistant officer-in-charge. "There is no one who can run a compound like the Navy. Even the detainees will tell you, 'I want to go to this compound because the Navy runs it.' My philosophy, and I believe you can see it all around, is one of

dignity and respect. That's what we give them along with consistency. The detainees know we aren't wishy-washy and we don't flip-flop. We set the tone, we set the policy – and that's what we live by."

King said working side-by-side with Army and Air Force personnel was initially a challenge for the Sailors but the experience has deepened the respect between the service members.

"It was hard at first because there is a communication barrier in the lingo," said King. "But through the training process and up until now the barrier has closed itself because we understand each other's subtle little differences. I always tell my guys that we're all one big family and we're here to complete a mission no matter what."

Inside the Wire

The daily routine at Camp Bucca is made excruciatingly difficult by the extreme climate of Southern Iraq. In mid-summer, 140-degree temperatures are the norm. Outfitted with 50 pounds of body armor, a Kevlar helmet, an M-16 rifle and any number of accoutrements, the heat-born assault on the senses is physically and mentally exhausting.

Sailors work 12-hours on/12-hours off, six days a week. They are in direct contact with detainees who would stop at nothing to escape the compound or kill the troops guarding them.

"Our guys literally work face-to-face with an enemy," said Cmdr. John Lathroum, NPDB-3 executive officer. "There are quite a few of these guys, who, if they had their way, would do harm to U.S. service members. Most of them are here because they already have. We face that on a daily basis. Every time they walk inside that wire they have to bring their 'A' game."

Detainees craft weaponry from the most rudimentary materials. Knives, machetes, nunchakus (numchucks), whips, swords and any number of other armaments have been found and confiscated during regular searches of the detainee shelters.

Some of the most violent Bucca detainees have burnt their own shelters to the ground and rioted against the guards. They have dug tunnels and fashioned uniforms designed to resemble those of U.S. troops, out of material ripped from their tents, in failed attempts to escape the facility. For the most hardened insurgents, Camp Bucca is now their battlefield.

One of the most basic (and common) weapons made by detainees are known among the guards as "Chai Rocks."

"They have a tea. It's super sweet and called chai," said Quartermaster Seaman Troy Johnson, Compound 17 guard. "The tea is blended with dirt and made into balls which harden in the sun and become like hard rocks. Then they make slingshots out of anything they can find, even the elastic bands in their pants. Some of them are actually pretty accomplished with the slingshots. It's just one more thing to keep you on your toes."

The detainees are placed within the facility



▲ DCFN Nicholas Schwertfager, assigned to the Navy Provisional Detainee Battalion, processes a relative of a detainee held at the Theater Internment Facility. In addition to guaranteed due process reviews, access to 24-hour medical care and culturally appropriate meals, detainees are authorized to receive family visits.

in like groups (Sunni, Shia, various tribal factions) to ensure their safety from other detainees, to prevent violence, deter insurgent activity and to facilitate group recreation within the compounds. Third country nationals are normally detained separately from Iraqis. Females are kept separate from the male population and juveniles are kept

at a separate facility away from the hardened adult population.

Each quad (there are four quads in each compound) can hold approximately 250 detainees. NPDB-3 Sailors control compounds which house some of the most violent insurgents at Camp Bucca. Inside the wire at these compounds are Islamic extremists who



▲ Temperatures at Camp Bucca regularly hit upwards of 140 degrees.



▲ AMC(AW/SW) William Trombley, Compound 19 guard duty officer (center), makes the rounds inside the wire at Camp Bucca.

will maim or kill fellow detainees for behavior they consider against Islam.

“Sharia courts enforce a lot of rules inside the compounds,” said Lt. j.g. Kevin Taylor, Compound 17 officer-in-charge. “Anyone who takes part in behavior which is seen as ‘Western’ is severely punished by the extremist elements in the compound. They’ll beat other detainees for taking part in these activities. It’s quite appalling sometimes.”

Victims of the extremist justice are taken from the compound by ambulance and given medical care equal to what any member of U.S. Armed Forces would expect. Information on their attackers is rarely provided by the victims because of the threat of further violence against them or their families.

At Bucca, the Navy-controlled compounds are known as “The Southside” and the Sailors have gone to great lengths to develop respect from the detainees they guard 24/7. The constantly evolving dynamic between the Sailors and detainees is critical to maintaining safety and security within the compound.

“We have a strong sense of pride in ownership of our compounds,” said Lt. Rey Castro Jr., Compound 15 officer-in-charge. “Interpersonal communications between the Sailors and the detainees is very important. Showing a respect and understanding of their religion and culture is the only way you can build this and, trust me, we are very respectful of the detainees.”

The hard-won trust between detainees and the Navy guards sprung from the consistent

treatment reinforced over weeks and months by the Sailors.

Sailors assigned as compound guards have open communications with the detainees to manage their concerns and quell any issues, reducing the threat of violence and fostering a sense of well-being among the detainees.

“Each quad has its own detainee chief - basically the man in charge,” said King. “Each of the QSLs [quad section leaders] builds a rapport with that chief. ‘This is what I need chief, this is what I need you to do,’ - and he makes sure the detainees do what needs to be done. What we want to do is build that rapport with that chief and the detainees and let them know that, ‘hey, we’re here to help you and facilitate what you need in the quad until your court date comes up or until you’re able to go home.’”

“We try to maintain communications at the lowest possible level,” said Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic (AW/SW) William Trombley, Compound 19 guard duty officer. “If I go over there and speak to them they would expect me to do it every time and that would compromise the authority of the guards.”

Through it all, the Sailors must endure their omnipresent enemy - the scorching desert heat.

“Honestly, I’ve tried to explain it, but I don’t think I can really make someone understand the heat at Bucca,” said Boatswain’s Mate 2nd Class Darryl Huckleberry, a tower guard at Compound 17.

“It actually feels like you’re in a microwave.”

No amount of inclement weather stands in the way of the mission at Bucca, though.

“Sandstorms, blistering heat... whatever,” said Aviation Electrician’s Mate 2nd Class (AW) Manuel Bautista. “There’s still a job that has to get done. There are no black flag days in Iraq.”

Prior to reporting to Camp Bucca for their nine-month IA tour, NPDB-3 Sailors received almost two months of Army-led training.

“We flew into Fort Bliss, Texas, then we went to Camp McGregor, N.M.,” said Rose. “We did 51 days of training which consisted of urban ops, convoy ops, IED [improvised explosive device] and close-quarters training, live-fire drills and gun qualifications, Humvee driving training, [tear] gas chamber and OC [oleoresin capsicum] spray training and combat life-saving skills. In the evening, we did FOB [forward operating base] exercises. We manned towers, sally-ports (gates), entry control points and basically learned to secure the FOB.”

Rose said the grueling mission at Bucca has given the Sailors a chance to learn about their own personal strengths and weaknesses.

“I don’t think everybody realizes the magnitude of this place,” said Rose. “With the number of detainees and the redundancy of day-to-day [duty], [providing] fair and humane treatment of detainees and running the compound - in the heat of the summer days. It’s a constant challenge. I think it’s a very rewarding experience.

“A lot of people find out a lot things about

themselves. They’ve learned about some of their limitations, or that maybe they don’t have some of the limitations they thought they had. ... My personal feeling is the most important experience is the things they’ve learned about themselves.”

Battlefield of the Mind

In recent months, MNF-I Detainee Operations (Task Force 134) has developed new strategies for tackling the challenges at theater internment facilities, and the new mindset has filtered down to the Sailors assigned to guard duty at Camp Bucca.

Anti-extremist reeducation programs began in mid-July at Camp Bucca. The program includes Islamic clerics working with detainees, psychologists and behavioral scientists working one-on-one with detainees, expanded family visitation policies and basic literacy and education programs.

“The detainees come into the system here and many of them are illiterate - they don’t even know how to read the Koran,” said Task Force 134 Deputy Commander, Rear Adm. Garland Wright. “They’re unduly influenced by others who are misinterpreting the Koran for their own uses. Those who leave detainee operations have at least a fifth-grade education. They’re able to write and read at a fifth-grade level. That’s a huge gain. That’s beyond anything they’d get on the outside and they’re able to interpret the Koran themselves and see the beauty of that book and understand it. They can argue with those trying to corrupt the Koran. That’s one small step in the right direction to creating stability and security in this country.”

“Nothing worth doing is easy”

“As long as you get a group of Sailors together you can make anything happen,” said King. “This is a prime example. We’re all from different walks of life. Submariners, aircraft carriers, squadrons - you name it. It doesn’t matter. We all came together. It’s imbedded in us since we went to boot camp. ‘Sailors come together and overcome.’”

The Sailors of NPDB-3 took on a mission of critical importance that will directly affect the future of Iraq, knowing full well they would receive little notice or fanfare for their efforts.



▲ Sailors on Camp Bucca guard duty work 10- to 12-hour shifts no fewer than six days a week.

They endure a daily routine that is difficult for them to explain to their own loved ones. They work in an environment foreign to men and women trained to dominate the seas. They treat insurgents hell-bent to do them harm with dignity and respect. It’s a hard job done with uncompromising honor and that in itself is reward enough for the Sailors of NPDB-3. **ES**

McCammack is a photojournalist at Naval Media Center, Washington, D.C.

NOTE: Since this report was filed, the IA Sailors featured in the article have redeployed to their parent commands across the globe and have been replaced at NPDB-3 by a new group of Sailors who are diligently carrying on their work at Camp Bucca in the Southern Iraqi desert. [JM]

The Fighting Fourteen

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



▲ Lt. Cmdr. Michael Williams, Medical Corps, USN, medical advisor to the ANA Khost Garrison, supervises an Afghan medic as he bandages the wound of an ANA soldier.



▼ Camp Clark is located in the mountainous Khost province in eastern Afghanistan. Fourteen Sailors are part of the team mentoring Afghan National Army forces on an adjacent base.

Photo by MC1 Steven Smith

“**D**arken Ship” is a familiar refrain to Sailors accustomed to life at sea, but this is something entirely new. At night, they navigate the camp in blackout conditions with tiny, keychain flashlights – nothing more than tiny specks of blue, green or red light are allowed after sundown.

The cover of night is a friend to the Sailors here. It limits the enemy’s ability to get a proper fix on their location from the imposing mountains that surround the camp, diminishing their accuracy when they attempt to fire on the camp with rockets or mortars. On the downside it also severely limits a Sailor’s ability to find the latrine on their first night at Camp Clark.

A Sense of Family

A nation trying to free itself of tyranny needs many things to stand on its own and a capable, loyal military protecting its people is among the most important. The mission of the 14 individual augmentee (IA) Sailors assigned to the Navy’s embedded training team (ETT) at Camp Clark is to mentor the Afghan National Army (ANA) and help them

develop into a mature fighting force.

Prior to deployment, these Sailors reported to Fort Riley, Wash., for three months of comprehensive training.

“It was very good training,” said Cmdr. Jay Green, officer-in-charge of the ETT at Camp Clark. “The guys at Fort Riley do a fantastic job. It gave us training on how to operate in an Army environment. We learned how

to convoy, operate their radio equipment, conduct Humvee maintenance and, above all, there was a whole lot of training on weapons and time spent at the range. The Navy’s requirements for weapons don’t prepare us for this environment, so the training at Riley was invaluable for us.”

The Navy team at Camp Clark is a diverse group. They include medical personnel, pilots



▲ Sailors walk to chow together at Camp Clark.



▲ Cmdr. Jay Green, commanding officer Navy ETT, Camp Clark uses an interpreter to chat with his counterpart in the ANA.

and communications experts. They are active-duty and reservists, yet despite the different career path each Sailor took prior to their deployment to Afghanistan, they have formed a tight-knit, cohesive unit.

“We’re a close group,” said Lt. Cmdr. (Dr.) Michael Williams, medical advisor to ANA



▲ A Sailor uses an interpreter to question an ANA unit leader about the absence of several soldiers at a muster.

Khost Medical Clinic. “We’re about half active and half reserve and we come from commands spread across the globe. Everyone on our team – the officers, the senior-enlisted and the junior-enlisted – is very professional. It’s something that’s very unique, because we are such a small group in such a remote part of Afghanistan. We’ve really developed a sense of family.”

Setting the Example

Camp Clark is divided into two sides. The coalition forces inhabit the smaller side, while the ANA troops have their own facilities just down the street. Most of the Navy personnel spend a great deal of their time on the ANA side of the camp, mentoring and training their ANA counterparts.

“The Navy is basically the garrison staff. They support all the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen who are on this FOB (Forward Operating Base) and take part in projects on this side. They also act as the Afghan National Army Garrison Support Staff,” said Army Lt. Col. Brian Drake, 1st Brigade, ETT team chief. “They help them function as a garrison which supports the ANA FOB. They mentor the ANA in the tasks that they should be doing.”

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Brian Hill mentors medics at the ANA clinic.

“On any given day I’ll go over to the clinic and we’ll do sick call in the morning, then

we’ll break so they can have lunch, and their prayers start just after lunch,” he said. “In the afternoon we’ll do some training on combat life-saving skills or basic bandaging. They’re a pleasure to work with because they pay attention and they want to learn.”

Executive Officer, Navy ETT, Camp Clark, Lt. Rick Breitweiser mentors the ANA Headquarters Company Commander, ANA Maj. Anwer Shah.

“Being Navy folks, we had an idea of how to efficiently run an Army garrison. But I knew even less about what the Army’s idea of what a headquarters company did. But I did my research and I spoke to Maj. Shah about his job. He handles the galley, the field point, an ammo collection point and all transportation for the garrison.”

Breitweiser said the expansive set of skills Sailors develop in the Navy is critical to success as an IA.

“One thing about Navy people in general – you gain so much experience just by being on ships and going all over the world, and that experience translates into training. The things I’ve learned in my Navy career prepared me to take on this job,” said Breitweiser.

Maj. Shah said his relationship with his American counterpart is based on mutual respect.

“Lt. Breitweiser is a cool guy,” said Shah,

through an interpreter. “When we have problems in some of our departments, he helps solve our problems. He’s doing two jobs. He’s helping me and he’s also executive officer [of the Camp Clark Navy ETT].”

“Keep your head on a swivel”

The Sailors at Camp Clark are a team in every sense. They work together, live together and their lives depend on each other.

The Navy ETT members take part in regular convoy missions throughout the Khost province along Afghanistan’s mountainous eastern border. During their tour, they have seen firsthand the devastating power of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Near the beginning of their tour a vehicular-borne IED exploded by the lead Humvee during a routine convoy. A single-passenger vehicle driven by an insurgent made a last-second hard steer in front of the convoy and self-detonated upon contact with the Humvee.

Fortunately, the results were not what the insurgent had in mind. The lead Humvee was completely devastated in the explosion, but despite appearances, the armor had done its job. There were no severe casualties to the convoy personnel, but the insurgent was killed.

That experience gives each convoy the Sailors travel in a heightened level of focus.



▲ ANA soldiers and an interpreter follow their Navy mentor down from a Camp Clark watchtower.

“If you’re in the gunner position you’re always looking for people with weapons, handheld phone devices or something that could set off an IED,” said Electronics Technician (SW/AW) Paul Nienow, ANA communications mentor. “If you’re in the front of the vehicle you’re looking for trip



▲ The ANA holds an all hands muster for accountability purposes.



▲By mentoring the ANA, Sailors strengthen the new democracy in Afghanistan by training their troops to operate as a professional military.

wires, pressure-plate IEDs and you've also got to always keep your eye out for suspect vehicles, especially single occupant vehicles."

Chillin' on the FOB

Life at the camp is much more relaxed in the few hours they are able to steal for themselves. The group at Camp Clark, prior to the current team's arrival, made great improvements to the standard of living and the current Navy team has built upon their efforts.

Everywhere in Afghanistan, one hears whispers of a remote FOB that has its own swimming pool. No one seems to have seen it

with their own eyes and the prevailing theory is that the pool is nothing more than urban legend. It is not. Camp Clark has the pool. It is crystal clear and just one of the homemade amenities on the FOB.

With nothing more than hammers, nails and a little bit of sweat, the Camp Clark team has created an oasis in the Afghani wilderness.

"It's not bad here at all," said Information Systems Technician 2nd Class (SW) Joshua Stewart, networks systems administrator. "The guys who were here before us did a great job of building this place up. It's way nicer than I expected out in the middle of nowhere."

The Sailors call their berthing spaces "beehives." They are typically 8 to 10-man buildings with dividers separating each personal space.

"Honestly, we have it pretty good," said Hill. "The beehives give each of us our own personal space, we've got a nice gym and pretty decent chow. Trust me, I've had orders to places that didn't have it anywhere close to what we've got around here. I don't want to make it sound like we're at a four-star resort, because we're not, but it's much better than any of us expected."

And even though they are separated from

their loved ones by mountains, continents and oceans, the group has formed bonds much stronger than your average co-workers.

They live, work, eat together and sleep under the same roof. They solve their problems by bouncing ideas off one another. They quarrel and make up. The Sailors at Camp Clark have clearly formed a cohesive, self-reliant team, but most importantly, they have become a family. 

McCammack is a photojournalist at Naval Media Center, Washington, D.C.



▲▼ Convoy team members are always the center of attention when they navigate Khost's narrow, congested roads.



On the Ground

with the Navy's Bomb Hunters

Story and photos by MC2 Michael Zeltakals



▲ EOD1(EWS) Scott Crawford prepares the C-4 charge he will use to destroy an improvised explosive device during operations on Main Supply Route Tampa.



▲ EOD1(EWS) Ed Hart of EODMU 11 Co. 3/15 readies his equipment before a mission. EOD technicians accompany Army Soldiers aboard nightly helicopter missions to disrupt insurgent activities in Iraq.

It is just after nightfall in the Diyala province of Iraq, an old pickup truck ambles down a winding dirt path. From the *Blackhawk* helicopters hovering above, the truck's bobbing headlights stand in stark contrast to the surrounding checkerboard of dark palm groves and farmland cut through with irrigation canals.

The truck could be hauling farmers returning from a late night in the fields, or insurgents hoping to avoid detection by taking a side road. In this region, one of the most dangerous in Iraq, anything is possible.

As the helicopters descend from the sky to intercept the vehicle, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician 1st Class(EWS) Ed Hart shares his gut feeling with the Soldiers riding along in the rear.

"I don't know what they've got, but these guys are bad," he yells over the roar of the rotor blades.

When the lead chopper shines a spotlight on the vehicle, the driver speeds up as passengers toss weapons from the windows. When the vehicle does stop, Hart and his

partner, EOD1(EWS) Brian Franke, both of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 11, Company 3/15, join Soldiers from Task Force Lightening in discovering a small cache of weapons including assault rifles and homemade explosives. After detaining the suspects, Franke destroys the weapons with a small explosive charge.

The sight of Sailors serving alongside Soldiers in Iraq is not unusual. Throughout the country, more than 100 Navy EOD technicians are locked in a daily battle with Iraq's insurgents.

During the past year, they have conducted more than 11,000 missions to find and neutralize the enemy's weapon of choice and the single biggest killer of coalition forces – improvised explosive devices (IEDs), while disrupting the terrorist networks that plant them.

In this war, they are rarely fortunate enough to choose the time and place of their battles. Instead, they hunt the hidden enemy alongside their Army counterparts on Iraq's urban streets and wind-swept desert plains. The hours are long and unpredictable, the work



▲ Sailors assigned to EODMU 11, Co. 9/13 inspect the remains of a rocket fired by insurgents which landed on Contingency Operating Base Speicher. No injuries were reported as a result of the rocket attack, although several buses suffered shrapnel damage.



▲ A Joint Explosive Ordnance Rapid Response Vehicle shown at Balad Air Base. The vehicle is a 45,000-pound vehicle that allows explosive ordnance disposal teams to safely travel to and from an incident site and allows them to work inside the vehicle during a call.

environment grueling and unforgiving, but their work saves lives everyday. They are the Navy's frontline Sailors on the ground in Iraq.

Each morning, Lt. Kevin Gamble, officer in charge of Company 9/13, based at Contingency Operating Base Speicher near Tikrit, wakes early to check his e-mail. There is rarely good news in the overnight reports that fill his inbox. When the enemy is active – planting roadside bombs and attacking checkpoints – it means his men are in harm's way. When the enemy is silent, "it usually means they're planning something, getting ready for something big."

If that "something big" were to happen, it would likely occur on Main Supply Route Tampa. The roadway is one of Iraq's main thoroughfares connecting north and south. Military convoys carrying equipment and supplies travel the route daily, making it a popular place for roadside bombs planted by insurgents looking to disrupt military supply routes. Keeping Route Tampa open for business is one of Company 9/13's biggest challenges.

Men from the company patrol the route

on a regular basis while looking for anything out of the ordinary. In a country where the roadside is littered with everything from animal carcasses and shredded tires to trash-filled plastic bags, the Sailors rely on experience to help identify threats.

"It gets to the point where you've driven this road so much that you can immediately spot something that doesn't look right," said EOD1(EWS) Bert Marley.

But perhaps the most deadly threat along Route Tampa lurks unseen beneath the ground. Tunnels, called culverts, once provided an irrigation path for the farms that line Route Tampa. Today, they provide a place for insurgents to hide explosives, unseen, beneath the roadway. Since January, the number of culvert IEDs has increased dramatically. In response, the military has blocked access to the culverts with concrete barriers and concertina wire, but still the sailors of 9/13 are wary each time they pass over one.

"Your heart beats a little faster every time you have to cross one of those things," said



▲ Lt. Kevin Gamble, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 11, Co. 9/13, explains the workings of a mock explosive to members of the Iraqi Army Bomb Disposal Company during a training exercise between the two units. EODMU 11, Co. 9/13 is based at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.



▲ Sailors from EODMU 11, Co. 9/13 brief an Iraqi EOD team prior to conducting training.



▲ EOD₁(DV) Joel Presson prepares a mock explosive device for a training exercise with an Iraqi EOD team.

EOD₁(EWS) Ryan Swanson. He should know. He has been rocked by IEDs six different times during the span of his two deployments in Iraq. The last blast, hidden in a culvert along Route Tampa, was the largest yet.

“It definitely rang my bell,” Swanson admitted.

But the result could have been much worse if not for the fact he was riding in the military’s latest class of vehicle—specifically designed to resist IEDs.

The Joint EOD Rapid Response Vehicle (JERRV) is part of DOD’s Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle program. These rolling bank vaults employ thickened armor and a V-shaped underbelly to deflect the force of a blast away from its occupants. While the JERRV undoubtedly saves lives, its large size and unique outline make it easy to spot in a convoy of vehicles. The enemy knows the vehicle carries EOD technicians—who they refer to as “minesweepers” — and often single them out as prime targets.

“JERRVs are bigger and badder than anything else out there. But they also stick out like a sore thumb,” said EOD₃(EWS) Ryan Lartigue. “But, if someone has to get hit, it might as well be us. We’re better protected.”

Hunting terrorists and defusing bombs is a full-time job in Iraq. Each week, Sailors from Company 9/13 travel into Tikrit’s city center to conduct training and strengthen bonds with their Iraqi army counterparts. The 15-mile journey requires hours of planning and takes a three-man team the better part of a day to complete. Although Gamble can hardly spare the men, these meetings are important.

“It requires a lot of energy to get out there every week, but transitioning to Iraqi forces is one of our top priorities,” Gamble added.

Since Company 9/13’s arrival in May, they have watched the Iraqi Bomb Disposal Company (BDC) take on an increasing amount of responsibility in Tikrit. Currently, the Iraqi army BDC is responsible for Tikrit City. Their goal is to one day be able to handle the entire region.

“It’s crawl, walk, run. They’re coming along,” said Gamble.

EODMU₂ Commanding Officer, Cmdr. John Coffey said the task of creating an EOD capability where none existed is daunting.

“It takes the Navy 15 months to make an EOD technician. We’ve been working with them for less than a year, and they’ve come a long way.”



▲ EOD₁(EWS) Scott Crawford (left), and EOD₃ Ryan Lartigue (right) of EODMU 11(EWS), Co. 9/13 test the hands of two Iraqi men for the presence of explosives after the Sailors discovered two separate Improvised explosive devices on nearby Main Supply Route Tampa. IEDs are the single biggest killer of coalition forces in Iraq.

The Sailors of Company 9/13 risk their lives every day seeking out the roadside bombs that service members serving in Iraq try to avoid. Many of them are on their second or third deployments to Iraq, often returning home for six months between deployments.

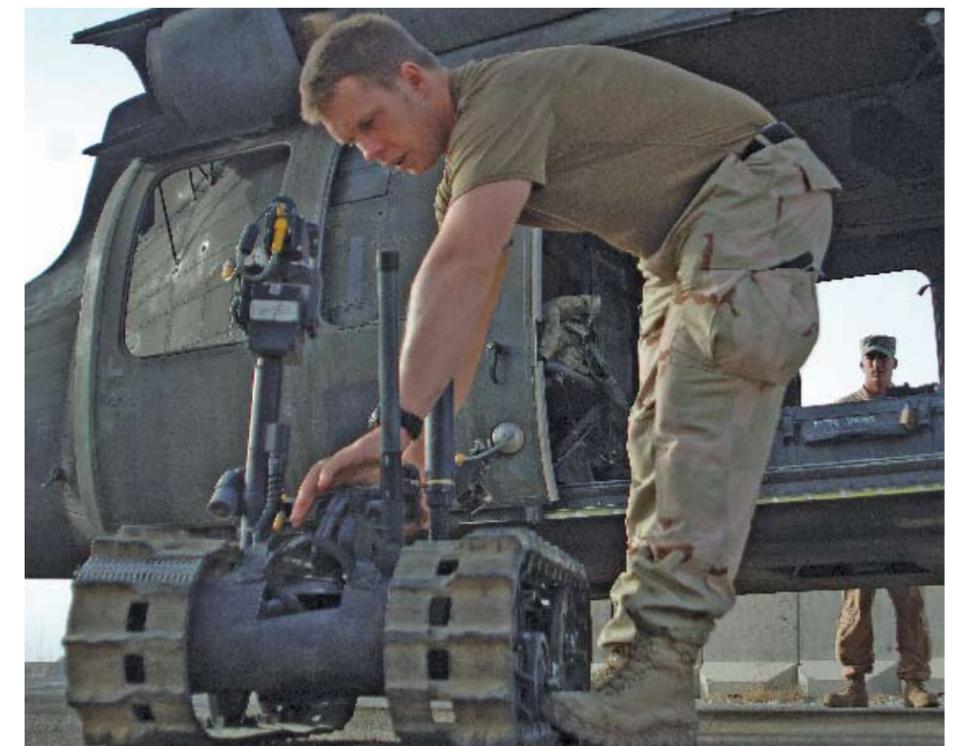
“It’s tough,” said Marley. “I’ve seen my family for two months out of the past year and a half.”

His story is not unusual. The teams live together, fight together and sometimes die together. Ten Navy EOD technicians have died in the line of duty since 2003. In June 2007, a culvert IED claimed the lives of two of 9/13’s brethren while severely injuring a third. But the men of Company 9/13 carry on with their dangerous mission.

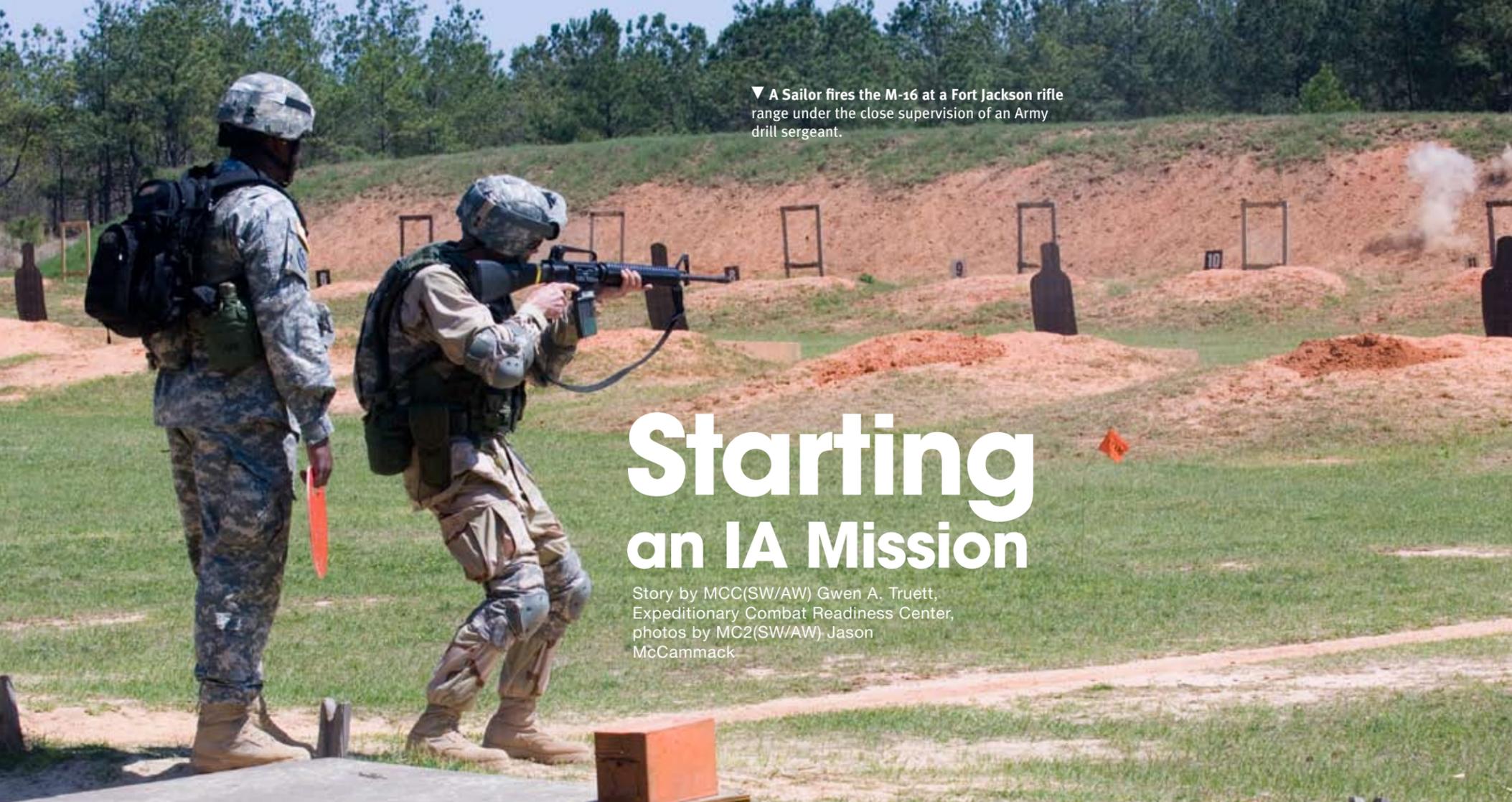
“We owe it to the guys who are living to keep going, so they can go home to their families,” said EODCM(EWS) Michael McLean, command master chief of EODMU 2.

“You can’t stop,” said McClean. **NS**

Zeltakalns is a journalist assigned to Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/Commander, U.S. 5th Fleet.



▲ EOD₁(EWS) Ed Hart of EODMU 11 Company 3/15 readies his equipment before a mission. EOD technicians accompany Army Soldiers aboard nightly helicopter missions to disrupt insurgent activities in Iraq.



▼ A Sailor fires the M-16 at a Fort Jackson rifle range under the close supervision of an Army drill sergeant.

Starting an IA Mission

Story by MCC(SW/AW) Gwen A. Truett, Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center, photos by MC2(SW/AW) Jason McCammack



▲ Sailors learn advanced soldiering techniques at the Udari Range in the Kuwaiti desert. The training at Udari is the final step before they report as IAs.

The release of NAVADMIN 297/07 allows Sailors to negotiate for IA orders as part of permanent change of station (PCS) orders under the Global War on Terror Support Assignment (GSA) detailing system. The GSA system provides Sailors and their families greater predictability in IA assignments.

The plan allows Sailors to negotiate eight- or 14-month PCS orders to Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center (ECRC) for an assignment in theater.

- GSA billets are currently available on Career Management System-Interactive
- Officers can contact their detailer directly for information on GSA billets.
- Contact your detailer for additional information and billet descriptions.

Use the following tips to navigate a successful IA tour:

- Read your orders. Your orders contain point of contact information that will be helpful during your tour. Your orders also outline specific instructions and prerequisites that you must complete before leaving your current command.
- Complete and submit the mandatory ECRC IA Checklist within 14 days of receipt of your orders. The official version of the ECRC IA checklist mandated by your orders is only located on the individual augmentee page of Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) and on the ECRC website. Other checklists located elsewhere or developed locally are not acceptable.
- Complete the mandatory e-learning courses located on the IA page of NKO. Print out a completion certificate at the end of each course and take a copy of the certificate with you.

- Security clearance. You must meet the security clearance requirement stated in your orders. Your clearance must remain current for the duration of your IA tour. Your command security manager must sign the last page of your orders stating that your required clearance is reflected in JPAS. If your clearance needs to be updated, your current command must ensure this step is accomplished before you transfer.
- Ensure your ID card is CAC activated (your pin) and your PKI Certificates are updated. This cannot be stressed enough, it affects JASS, BOL, NPC and many official websites you will need to access. Your current command must ensure your CAC is up to date before you transfer.
- Get a Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) now. You will need your GTCC before you transfer from your current command. If you do not have one,

your current command must get it for you before you transfer. Your current command retains agency program coordinator (APC) responsibility or the monetary means to cover expenses. Be sure to provide your current command a good e-mail address once you are in country so they can contact you regarding your GTCC. If you have GSA orders, ECRC will assume your GTCC account only after your current command has established it.

- Establish a My Pay account and remember your pin.
- Your orders will specify if you will need a passport and/ or visa. If required, your current command must take all steps to expedite your official passport application. All personnel receiving orders to or traveling anywhere in Africa will need a passport. Due to travel assignments associated with an Africa

deployment, official passports are essential. Personnel assigned anywhere in Africa might be ordered to travel to various countries in CENTCOM AOR including but not limited to; Comoros, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Yemen. Use one of these country codes when applying for an official passport.

- All of the uniforms and the gear that you need for your IA mission will be issued to you at a Naval Mobilization and Processing Station (NMPS) and at your follow-on training sites. But, you must report to NMPS in utilities or equivalent and have enough clean uniforms for the few days you will spend processing. Coveralls or flight suits are not accepted.
- Does your family need a Power of Attorney? Have you considered drafting a will? Does your family know your rank/rate and social security number? Take care of these important matters now, before you leave your current command.
- Have you given your family point of contact information for your command ombudsman, your command IA coordinator and vice versa? Have you and your family made a plan in case of natural disaster or emergency at home?
- Where will your family move to and do you have the new address/phone number/emergency information with you?

- Many IA Sailors have found it useful to have a commercial e-mail account while deployed in an IA billet. You may want to get one but it is not a requirement.
- Remember your Noble Eagle (NE) number and be sure to give that number to your family and to your parent command. The Navy uses NE numbers to identify and locate you. You can find your NE number in your orders.

Your main sources of support during an IA deployment are still your parent command/NOSC and your command ombudsman. The Navy established the ECRC to provide supervision and coordination of all administrative processing, equipping, training, certification, deployment, reach back, re-deployment and proactive family support of Navy IAs. ECRC provides support for the IA Sailor and their family throughout the entire IA deployment process and until the Sailor returns safely home again.

Additional information and answers to frequently asked questions are available at the ECRC Web site www.ecrc.navy.mil.

IA Sailors can contact the ECRC Helpdesk at ecrc.hq.fct@navy.mil.

ECRC also maintains an IA Family Helpdesk at ecrc.fs.fct@navy.mil and a 24-hour toll free Family Careline at 1-877-364-4302 for any emergency situations that may occur. 

Truett is assigned to Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center, Little Creek, Va.



◀ A Seabee from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 awaits orders during a concrete pour for a C-130 aircraft staging area in Kuwait. The C-130 staging area was the largest single battalion concrete project since World War II.

U.S. Navy Seabees: We Build, We Fight

Story by Daryl C. Smith
Photos by MC1(AW) Brien Aho

▼ BU3 David Cergol, from Amphibious Construction Battalion 1, holds one of the many lines that tie down the tent used for the dining facility at a base in Kuwait in 2003.



The U.S. Navy Seabees were formed shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in World War II. Because there was a need for massive military construction, and civilian labor in war zones was impractical, Rear Adm. Ben Moreell, Chief of the Navy's Bureau of Yards and Docks, established the first construction battalions, March 5, 1942.

This was the beginning of the Seabees, who obtained their name from a transliteration of "CB" for construction battalion. Moreell also gave them their official motto: *Construimus, Batuimus — We Build, We Fight*. Their symbol became a flying bee with a hammer, a wrench and a machine gun in its hands.

The first Seabee enlisted men came primarily from the civilian construction industry, many having helped build the nation's bridges, highways, skyscrapers and dams. Due to their construction experience, they were usually older than the average Sailor. With an emphasis on experience and skill, these craftsmen were quickly trained and shipped to overseas assignments. By the end of the war, 325,000 such men had enlisted in the Seabees.

Civil Engineer Corps officers, many with prior military and construction experience, were commissioned to serve in the units.

Nearly 11,400 officers joined the Civil Engineer Corps during the war, and 7,960 of them served with the Seabees.

During World War II, the Seabees performed now legendary deeds in both the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters of Operation. They constructed more than 400 advanced bases along five figurative "roads to victory" which all had their beginnings in the continental United States. The South Atlantic road wound through the Caribbean Sea to Africa, Sicily and up the Italian peninsula. The North Atlantic road passed through Newfoundland to Iceland, Great Britain, France, and Germany. The North Pacific road passed through Alaska and along the Aleutian Island chain. The Central Pacific road passed through the Hawaiian, Marshall, Gilbert, Mariana, and Ryukyu Islands. The South Pacific road went through the South Sea islands to Samoa, the Solomon Islands, New Guinea, and the Philippines.

The first organized Seabee battalion deployed overseas to Bora Bora in the Pacific, where it began construction of a fuel tank farm. The first Seabee unit to debut in a combat zone did so on Sept. 1, 1942, when elements of the 6th Naval Construction Battalion went ashore at Guadalcanal. Using mostly captured Japanese equipment, they

finished Henderson Field. This work was accomplished under trying conditions, not only from the enemy, but from the weather as well. Fighting rain, mud, sniper fire, artillery and bombing, the field was finished and maintained by the Seabees.

After Guadalcanal, Seabees took part in every island invasion in the Pacific. They could be found building airstrips, roads and camps within hours of the invasion's start, quite often working while under fire. Eventually, the Seabees participated in every theater of operation during World War II.

The Seabees built 111 major airstrips, 700 square blocks of warehouses, hospitals for 70,000 patients, storage tanks for 100 millions gallons of gasoline and housing for 1.5 million men. In nearly every major invasion in the Pacific, Marines were followed by Seabees to support the invasion and provide long-term facilities for the troops. In Europe, their greatest construction project was the building of the artificial harbor at Normandy, immediately after the invasion.

In the Atlantic, Seabees cleverly adapted pontoons so that they could be quickly assembled to form causeways, piers, and other structures. In Sicily, the enemy was quickly outflanked and overpowered as large numbers of men and huge amounts of equipment poured ashore over the Seabees' pontoon causeways with a minimum of casualties and delay. These causeways were also a key element during the invasion of Normandy.

Seabees also manned the large ferries known as Rhinos that carried men and supplies from the larger ships to the beaches. These ferries were actually floating pontoon structures powered by giant outboard motors. Huge amounts of much needed equipment were hauled ashore on Rhinos during the first few days of the invasion.

On March 22, 1945, Army Gen. George S. Patton, with Seabee assistance, put his armored forces across the Rhine at Oppenheim in a frontal assault which swept away the German defenders. To support Patton's advancing army, the Seabees built pontoon ferries similar to the Rhinos of D-Day fame and used them to transport Patton's tanks across the river.

In all, the Seabees operated more than 300 craft which shuttled thousands of troops into the heart of Germany. One Seabee crew even had the honor of ferrying Prime Minister Winston Churchill across the Rhine on an inspection tour.



▲ Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5 constructed a 500-man climate controlled tent camp that consisted of more than 26 strong back tents, head units, laundry units and a full service galley in Kuwait.

Due to their effectiveness in World War II, the Seabees became a permanent part of the Navy. They continued to serve in Korea, where they participated in both the Inchon and Wonsan landings and built advance bases in the Pacific.

In 1965, the Seabees made their first deployment to Vietnam and built an expeditionary airfield at Chu Lai. As the demand for Seabees rapidly escalated, they constructed roads, bridges, airfields and

hospitals, and helped in many civic action projects.

In the 1970s, they resumed peacetime deployments including construction at the strategic Indian Ocean Base - Diego Garcia.

During Operations *Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm*, more than 5,000 active-duty and reserve Seabees served in the Middle East. They built 10 camps for more than 42,000 personnel, three galleys, 10 aircraft parking aprons, three ammunition supply



▲ EA3 Alexander Sanchezaguirre of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5 takes a land survey of an AH-1 and CH-53 helicopter staging area in Kuwait.



▲ Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 listen to Quarters held every morning at 6:30 a.m., while operating in the Persian Gulf region.

points, a 500-bed hospital, two runways, two hangars and a prisoner-of-war camp to hold 40,000. And it was the Seabees who built and maintained a 200-mile, four-lane road in the desert. The road became the major supply route to support the Marine attack on Kuwait, allowing spare parts, ammunition, supplies and thousands of troops and trucks to cross the sand.

Seabees are also known for their worldwide humanitarian efforts. In recent years, Seabees have aided the victims of hurricanes, like Hurricane Katrina, floods and earthquakes. They drilled wells, erected tents and built roads to help the Kurdish refugees in Iraq and helped citizens in the Republic of the Philippines dig out from tons of volcanic ash following the eruption of Mount Pinatubo. Seabees also deployed to Somalia and Haiti to support humanitarian efforts there and constructed tent camps for more than 40,000 Haitian and Cuban migrants in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In December 1995, Seabees deployed to Croatia and Bosnia to support Operation *Joint Endeavor*. The Seabees constructed six tent camps to support 6,200 U.S. Army troops and renovated seven buildings to serve as various headquarters facilities.

In May 1999, Seabees deployed to Albania to repair a road used to transport refugees. They later convoyed to Kosovo, where they were joined by more Seabees. They helped build camps to support the 7,000 U.S. military personnel assigned to the U.S. patrolled sector.

About 135 Seabees recently deployed to Indonesia, Thailand and Sri-Lanka to provide

humanitarian support in the wake of the massive tsunami that devastated the area in December 2004.

Seabees in the Global War on Terrorism

In the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, about 450 Seabees deployed from Guam to support a mission to establish a forward operating base in Afghanistan. This base was key to Operation *Enduring Freedom*, as it allowed for the build-up of combat power and subsequent combat operations against the Taliban regime and Al-Qaeda forces. Seabees repaired and maintained a dirt runway at Forward Operating Base Rhino, then moved to Kandahar to perform Rapid Runway Repair at the Coalition-bombed international airport and perform other contingency construction.



▲ BU2 Scott Fabacher of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 shaves outside near a field shower tent.

As the focus of effort began to shift from Rhino to Kandahar, additional personnel and equipment were moved in as needed. Seabees repaired crater damage from Coalition bombing and got the runway open for C-130 and C-17 flights within 48 hours. Seabees also built a Short Term Holding Facility to house Taliban and Al-Qaeda detainees. They were then tasked with improving the runway temporary repairs to permanent repairs so that other types of aircraft, including the C-141 needed to transport the detainees from Afghanistan to Cuba, would be able to use the airfield at Kandahar.

Other Seabees deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to build temporary holding facilities for about 300 Taliban and Al-Qaeda prisoners.

Seabees also deployed to Basilan in the Philippines to support counter-terrorism efforts there. Seabees built roads, bridges and water wells and repaired ports and airstrips to allow access to isolated areas where the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group was trying to gain a foothold.

Seabees supporting the First Marine Expeditionary Force were among the first U.S. forces on the ground to support U.S. efforts in Iraq. With about 3,000 Seabees in theater, they had the largest Navy role ashore during Operation *Iraqi Freedom*. Before hostilities, Seabees constructed a 20-acre airfield parking apron, prepared 10-acre and 20-acre areas for matting, constructed two munitions storage areas, a 48,000-square foot concrete pad, and a 1,200-person camp in Kuwait.

When hostilities began, Seabees maintained 11 breach lanes as U.S. Marines crossed the line of departure and entered Iraq. Seabees erected bridges over the Diyala River and

Saddam Canal in spans ranging from 40 to 60 meters. They repaired and constructed various roads to provide U. S. Marines with effective paths to move northward. Seabees also constructed a 14,400-person prison camp that covered 42 acres. Seabees performed work at the port of Umm Qasr, including building an elevated causeway to offload supplies and humanitarian aid and building a road to access the ferry landing there. Seabees also constructed a 116-bed Expeditionary Medical Facility and 250-bed Fleet Hospital Facility.

Continuing their worldwide reputation as ambassadors of goodwill, Seabees renovated schools and municipal facilities to help the Iraqi people. This included 7 bridges, 74 schools, 13 government buildings, 16 police and fire stations. They also completed 20 utility restoration projects, including the Al Hillah Water Irrigation Facility that provides water to 125,000 acres of farmland.

Seabees returned to Iraq in March 2004. Their efforts included force protection, troop housing, border outposts, expeditionary camps, community outreach centers, medical clinics, community cleanup and restoration and camp improvements. Seabees negotiated 300 projects valued at over \$100 million in contracts in Al Anbar to improve education, sanitation, transportation, water and sewer, primary care clinics, courthouses, police stations, and Iraqi security facilities. Seabees also created an apprenticeship program for local Iraqis to teach them job skills to help rebuild their communities.

Seabees in Iraq are currently providing force protection and habitability improvements for forward operating bases and coalition forces. This includes construction of hardened facilities, force protection barriers, temporary berthing structures, storage facilities, wastewater treatment ponds, upgrades to electrical systems, and runway repairs.

They are also constructing operating bases for Iraqi civil defense forces and border patrol units and providing assessments of roads, bridges and facilities to support the Marines.

During the past 65 years the Seabees have repeatedly demonstrated their skills as fighters and builders. In peace and in war, no matter what the task, they have responded with a simple but proud, "Can Do!"

Smith is assigned to 1st Naval Construction Div., Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Va.

Aho is a photojournalist at Naval Media Center, Washington, D.C.

SIGNIFICANT DATES IN SEABEE HISTORY

- Sept. 14, 1892 – Admiral Ben Moreell's birthday
- March 2, 1867 – Civil Engineer Corps established
- Jan. 5, 1942 – Bureau of Naval Personnel authorizes formation of Construction Battalions
- Jan. 27, 1942 – Bobcat detachment sent to Bora Bora, first Navy construction unit to be sent overseas
- March 5, 1942 – Seabees established
- March 13, 1942 – Camp Allen commissioned as first Seabee training station in Norfolk, Va.
- March 19, 1942 – CEC officers given military authority over construction units
- Aug. 11, 1942 – Camp Endicott commissioned in Davisville, RI as original home of the Seabees
- Sept. 1, 1942 – 6th NCB arrives in Guadalcanal, first Seabees to enter a combat zone
- Oct. 16, 1942 – Eight Seabees of the 6th NCB killed at Guadalcanal, first Seabees killed in action
- Nov. 26, 1942 – Seabees land in North Africa with American assault forces
- June 30, 1943 – Seabees land with 9th Marine Division on Solomon Islands
- June 6, 1944 – Seabees land at Normandy as Naval combat Demolition Units
- June 15, 1944 – Seabees land on Saipan
- July 26, 1944 – Seabees land on Tinian
- Feb. 19, 1945 – Seabees land with 5th Marine Division at Iwo Jima
- March 22, 1945 – Seabees ferry General Patton's armored units across the Rhine River into Germany
- April 1, 1945 – Seabees land on Okinawa
- Dec. 31, 1947 – Seabee Reserves established
- Sept. 15, 1950 – Seabees land at Inchon, Korea
- May 7, 1965 – NMCB 10 is first battalion to deploy to Chu Lai, Vietnam
- May 28, 1965 – NMCB 3 is first battalion to deploy to Da Nang, Vietnam
- June 10, 1965 – CM3 Marvin Shields killed at Dong Xoai, Vietnam and earns Medal of Honor
- Dec. 25, 1972 -- The first C-141 transport lands on the newly completed 6,000 foot runway at Diego Garcia with the Bob Hope Christmas Troupe
- May 27, 1974 – Seabee Memorial is dedicated at Arlington, Va.
- June 15, 1985 – SW2 (DV) Robert Stethem killed by terrorists in Beirut and posthumously awarded the Bronze Star
- August 13, 1990 – First Seabees arrive in Saudi Arabia in preparation for Operation *Desert Shield/Desert Storm*
- August 24, 1992 – Hurricane Andrew strikes Dade County, Florida. More than 800 Seabees provide disaster relief by repairing government buildings and approximately 270 schools.
- April 5, 1994 -- The first woman reports to a Naval Mobile Construction Battalion
- Oct. 21, 1995 – USS Stethem commissioned in honor of SW2(DV) Robert Stethem (DDG 63)
- Nov. 28, 2001 – First members of NMCB 133 arrive at Camp Rhino, Afghanistan during Operation *Enduring Freedom*
- Aug. 9, 2002 – 1st Naval Construction Division established at Little Creek, Va.
- March 21, 2003 – Seabees cross the line of departure into Iraq with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force during Operation *Iraqi Freedom*
- April 10, 2003 – Seabees cross the Diyala River into Baghdad, Iraq during Operation *Iraqi Freedom*
- May 2, 2004 – Five Seabees from NMCB 14 killed in mortar attack near Ramadi, Iraq
- Aug. 29, 2005 – Hurricane Katrina strikes Gulf Coast. More than 3,000 Seabees support recovery efforts throughout the area
- July 18, 2006 – Navy approves the establishment of the 25th NCR and NMCB 11.
- Sept. 14, 2007 – 25th NCR and NMCB 11 commissioned in Gulfport, Miss.



▲ Members of the U.S. Air Force Security watch over an undisclosed airfield demonstrating force protection in the Central Command area of responsibility.

The Liberation of Kuwait

Story compiled by MC2(SW/AW) Jason McCammack

Just six days after Saddam Hussein's Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait, Aug. 2, 1990, American forces began deploying to the Saudi Arabian desert. During the same time period, U.S. diplomats, led by then-Secretary of State James Baker, were urging other nations to join a U.N. coalition and condemn Hussein's invasion of its peaceful neighbor.

On Nov. 29, 1990, the United Nations passed Resolution 678, which gave Iraq a withdrawal deadline of Jan. 15, 1991. The resolution authorized "all necessary means to uphold and implement Resolution 660."

The response to the U.N.'s measure was swift and near unanimous. By the time combat operations began Jan. 17, 1991, 34 nations had assembled an awesome array of manpower and weaponry along Iraq's border.

The naval presence in the Persian Gulf was truly remarkable. Navy assets in the *Desert Storm* theater of operations included an astounding six aircraft carrier battle groups.

Against this overwhelming naval presence, the Iraqis managed to deploy just a few gunboats.

Hussein's aggressive action in Kuwait had united the world against him – this included many of his neighbors. Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were among the 34 nations who contributed to coalition efforts.

On Jan. 17, 1991, two days after the resolution's deadline, a massive air campaign, Operation *Desert Storm*, was launched.

At the same time, Navy BGM-109 *Tomahawk* cruise missiles were striking targets in Baghdad. The next generation of precision guided-missiles was revealed to the world, as events unfolded on live



The battleships USS *Wisconsin* (BB 64) and USS *Missouri* (BB 63), with their historic symbols of naval firepower, the 16-inch guns, and modern weapons including *Tomahawk* cruise missiles, were the centerpiece of the Navy's seapower to eject Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1991. Here, *Wisconsin* fires her 16-inch guns during Operation *Desert Storm*.

Photo by PH1 Morris

television.

The assault on Iraq continued through the night and was broadcast around the world. The glowing, green Iraqi anti-aircraft rounds, which made such an impression on television, did little to slow the assault.

In the months that followed, ground forces would eventually sweep into Iraq, advancing much quicker than U.S. generals predicted. By Feb. 26, 1991, Iraqi troops were retreating out of Kuwait, setting fire to Kuwaiti oil fields as they left.

Then-President George H. W. Bush declared a cease-fire on Feb. 27, 1991, declaring that Kuwait had been liberated. The ground campaign lasted just 100 hours.

The Gulf War was an unmatched success for coalition forces and verified the technological superiority both on land and at sea of the American forces. **■**

McCammack is a photojournalist assigned to Naval Media Center, Washington, D.C.

NKO

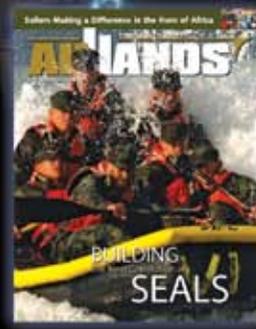
Advance your career

Layout by MC2 Washington Calcado

NAVY. MIL



DNU



Layout by MC2 Washington Caicedo

get connected...

to Navy Media