

THE MAKING OF A FLEET MARINE FORCE CORPSMAN >>>



MARCH 2006

ALL HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY



*From Seaman
to Admiral*



14 Seaman to Admiral

Last year Lisa Lee was Operations Specialist 1st Class Lee. She was assigned to OI Division aboard USS *Winston S. Churchill* (DDG 81), navigating the guided-missile destroyer through international waters, carrying out the Navy's mission. Now Officer Candidate Lee is navigating her way toward a college degree and commission through the Navy's Seaman-to-Admiral (STA-21) program.

Photo by JO1(SW) Hendrick Dickson

[On the Front Cover]

OS1(SW) Lisa Lee is in her first year of the Seaman-to-Admiral program. She was one of 186 candidates chosen in FY05.

Photo-Illustration by JO1(SW) Hendrick Dickson

[Next Month]

Get your first look at the hybrid Sailor of the future, and visit the Sailors who honed their war-fighting skills during *Malabar '05* off the coast of India.

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March



22 “Going Greenside”

For seven boot camp-like, rifle-toting, blister-breaking weeks down south at Camp Lejeune, N.C., the Navy and Marine Corps team up at Field Medical Service School East to mold standard Navy-issue corpsmen into Sailors good enough for the Fleet Marine Force. The good ones will earn the Marines’ respect. The great ones earn the title, “Doc.”

Photo by JO1(SCW/SS) James G. Pinsky



30 Taking the Heat

The class of 11 students felt the suffocating heat as soon as they piled out of the air-conditioned van near Naval Air Facility El Centro, Calif. With civilization miles away for the next four days and midday temperatures around 110 degrees, it was time to cover up, hydrate and learn the skills of Desert Environmental Survival Training in the real, unrelenting desert.

Photo by PH1(AW) Michael Larson





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LION PRIDE



A Sailor assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 15 leaps up to clean the end of a fuel probe on an F/A-18 *Hornet* aboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71).

Photo by PHAA Nathan Laird

Speaking with Sailors

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

These questions came from the MCPON's discussion with Sailors during a recent visit to U.S. Northern Command.

Q: What has changed with the bibliographies, and why are there so many areas that I never see questions about on the actual exam?

A: Your bibliography is absolutely the best reference to study everything you should know for the exam. Not only does it list sources about where the questions come from, but it lists the instructions and training manuals you are expected to be familiar with for your daily job performances. Although you are responsible for knowing this information, there is no way the Navy can test you on each individual item listed in your bibliography in only 200 questions.

Another question I often receive regarding bibliographies is that some of the civilian references listed are not available online. Many of the references are now available in the Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) Net Library. For those books not available from NKO, I recommend talking to your chain of command about finding a way to purchase those books and make them available in your department or division's library.

E-learning courses have also been a recent addition to many of the bibliographies and are accessible through NKO. Make sure you are always studying the current

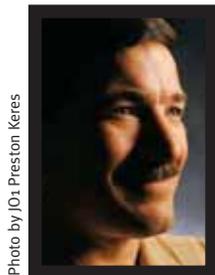


Photo by JO1 Preston Keres

bibliography, because the questions on the upcoming exam are taken from those references.

To check your current bibliography, visit NKO and click on the "Career Management" tab for the link to the Navy Advancement Center.

Q: Would it be possible to have joint commands carry a larger variety of uniform sizes?

A: Much of what your uniform shops carry on many of our joint bases depends on the policies of the uniform shop at your location. The best short-term solution I can offer is to visit the Navy's Uniform Support Center, available 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week by phone and can be visited online at www.nexnet.navy.mil. The site also provides toll-free numbers for areas in the United States as well as many countries overseas.

Free shipping only takes seven to 10 days and express shipments are offered for an additional fee. If you need to exchange the item for a different size, you can easily do so through the mail or take it to the nearest Navy Exchange if there is one available.

Not only does the Web site include a link to uniform regulations, but it also lays out all of the uniform items necessary for every uniform in our seabag. Additionally, you can order medals, ribbons and a variety of other uniform accessories like shoes, nametapes and outerwear.

For a more long-term solution, express your concern about uniform availability with your chain of command.

In the meantime, the Web site and toll-free numbers provide an excellent way for those stationed away from our fleet concentration areas to replace uniforms in their seabag. 

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

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New Program Provides Civilian Certification for Navy Jobs

The United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP), managed by Naval Education and Training Command, provides active-duty Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy service members the opportunity to improve their job skills and to complete their civilian apprenticeship requirements while they are on active duty.

“Providing our Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsman with opportunities to validate their skills through the USMAP certification is a vivid example of the Navy’s commitment for life-long learning,” said VADM Kevin Moran, commander of NETC. “We are making the Navy an

employer of choice for people looking for career opportunities that offer long-term growth potential while in uniform, and beyond if they decide to move on to careers in the private sector.”

The Department of Labor requires 144 hours of classroom instruction for every 2,000 hours of OJT. Kenneth Ledbetter, Subject Matter Expert USMAP Registrar said, the trades average from 2,000 to 10,000 hours and vary in the amount of time they will take to complete from one to four years.

Service members get recognition for their jobs in the civilian world just by logging their hours during on-the-job training (OJT) and meeting the knowledge specifications of the program. According to Ledbetter, it is also the largest apprenticeship program in the military, with 13,054 members enrolling in FY05.

“We have 124 trades that we offer apprenticeship certification,

which covers every rate in the military except for three: air traffic controller, cryptologic technician (interpretive) and musician,” said Ledbetter. “An average Sailor doing an eight-hour job can complete 2,000 hours in a year.”

USMAP, developed in 1976, was recently realigned to fit the certifications and qualifications vector of the 5-Vector Model, which has been continually under development since it was first launched in 2004.

The 5-Vector Model, a part of the Navy’s Revolution in Training, is accessible through Navy Knowledge Online. It is divided into five vectors (professional development, personal development, military education and leadership, certifications and qualifications, and performance), allowing Sailors to keep track of their careers in the Navy and take credit for their accomplishments.

For more information

on USMAP, Sailors may contact their career counselor or visit <https://www.cnet.navy.mil/usmap>. 

Story by Eva Kowalski, public affairs office, Training Support Center Great Lakes, Ill.

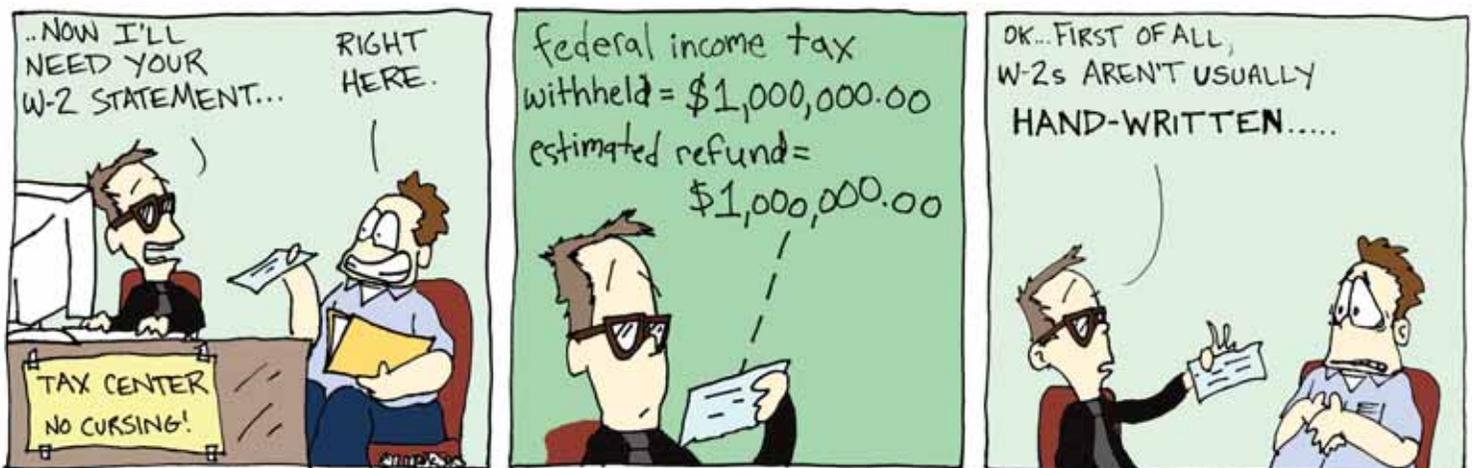
Navy Cracks Down on Urinalysis Cheaters

The Navy is cracking down on Sailors who cheat on their urinalysis tests and began prosecuting them early this year. The new policy will not change testing procedures, but may ultimately result in jail time and a separation from the Navy.

According to Aviation Machinists Mate 2nd Class Cheryl Coburn, assistant urinalysis program coordinator, National Naval

Ricky’s Tour

By J01 Mike Jones



Medical Center, Bethesda, Md. "The test is still standardized and random. But the use or possession of substances that mask drug use is now a violation of the [Uniformed Code of Military Justice]."

The new policy also designates punishment for any Sailor who helps or has knowledge of another Sailor defeating a urinalysis. Sailors who have information about cheating should go up their chain of command.

"It's simple, if you pop positive on a [urinalysis] you should get prosecuted," said Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Patricia Hazelrigg, assistant urinalysis program coordinator. "If you are caught trying to cheat the test, or know about somebody trying to cheat the test and don't report it, you should also be prosecuted."

Another change in policy is the end of fiscal year sweep. This requires commands to test Sailors not tested during the year.

"Since the testing process is random some people may not get picked to give a sample throughout the course of the year," said Coburn. "This new policy assures that everyone in the command is tested at least once a year, and urinalysis results will be posted privately on the Intranet and be available within a few days after testing."

Web-based reporting is mandatory for all Sailors attached to a non-deployed command and began Jan. 31. After that date, urinalysis results will no longer be sent via naval message. Sailors will be able to check their results using Web-based reporting with the Alcohol and Drug Management Information Tracking System. ☞

Story by JOSN Austin Rice, public affairs office, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Md.

Corporate Partners Offer Free Tax Filing Service to Military Members

Military members and their families can now file their taxes for free, thanks to a partnership between a group that helps military people deal with financial issues and a civilian financial services company.

"Military OneSource" has partnered up with Intuit, a financial services company, to provide the TurboTax basic product for federal and state returns at no cost. Military members can download this program and also benefit from tax consultations and have access to appropriate resources. The Military OneSource Web site will provide annual upgrades to the TurboTax software at no cost.

"This tax consultant support for filing 2005 taxes is available telephonically toll-free (800-342-9647) and at no cost to the service members from any deployment location in the world," acting Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy Jane Burke said. "Military OneSource tax consultants are also familiar with the IRS publication 'Armed Forces Tax Guide.'"

According to Burke, "For many years, help has been available at many installations through the Voluntary Income Tax Assistance program. VITA volunteers will continue to be available through legal centers at most installations and help service members to file their taxes free of charge." ☞

Story by JO3 Chris M. Hwang, office of communications, Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn., Special to American Forces Press Service.

Fire Controlman 2nd Class Dustin S. Parker recently graduated Magna Cum Laude from Texas A&M, Kingsville, Texas. Parker, assigned to the Morale, Welfare and Recreation aboard Naval Air Station Kingsville, began working toward his degree in the fall of 2003. With the help of his senior leadership, Parker worked nights, went to school during the day and skipped vacations to get his degree in psychology. During this time, Parker has maintained his involvement with major MWR events, such as the Navy Ball and the 2004 Air Show.



Trial Warrant Officer-to-Pilot Program Established

The Navy is seeking applications from highly-qualified and hard-charging Sailors for a pilot program that will place 30 selected Chief Warrant Officers (CWO) in aircraft cockpits as pilots and naval flight officers.

The intent is to create flying specialists unencumbered by the traditional career paths of the unrestricted line (URL) community.

Targeted communities include Patrol (VP), Electronic Attack (VQ(P) and VQ(T)) and the HSC and HSL helicopter communities. Enlisted candidates include those between pay grades E-5 and E-7 and also young enough to be commissioned by their 27th birthday (29 for NFOs); they must also possess an associate's degree or higher, meet aviation physical qualifications, pass Aviation Standard Battery Test (ASTB) minimums and be eligible for a secret security clearance. Enlisted Sailors from the Nuclear, Naval Special Warfare (SEAL/SWCC), Naval Special Operations (EOD/Diver) and the Master-at-Arms communities are not eligible.

Selectees will not be eligible for department head (DH) tours and will fill junior officer (JO) billets only. The intent is for flying CWOs not to fill JO billets that are normally considered career milestones for URL officers.

Sailors will be selected for the pilot program, commissioned as CWO2 prior to LDO/CWO indoctrination and will then undergo flight training. Once they receive their wings, the new CWOs incur an 8-year minimum service requirement for pilots (6 years for NFOs) and complete traditional sea/shore rotations between operational units and shore-based aviation production sources only (FRS, TRACOM, NSAWC, and Weapon schools).

The new aviators will receive Fleet Replacement Squadron (FRS) training and then report to the fleet. Applications are due to Navy Personnel Command (PERS-432M) no later than March 31.

For more information, refer to NAVADMIN 022/06, available at www.npc.navy.mil or contact your Command Career Counselor. ☞

Story courtesy of the public affairs office, Chief of Naval Personnel, Washington, D.C.

Around the Fleet



▲ **AE1 William Cockshutt**, assigned to Patrol Squadron (VP) 26 removes a wing tip from a P-3C *Orion* to check an electronic system.

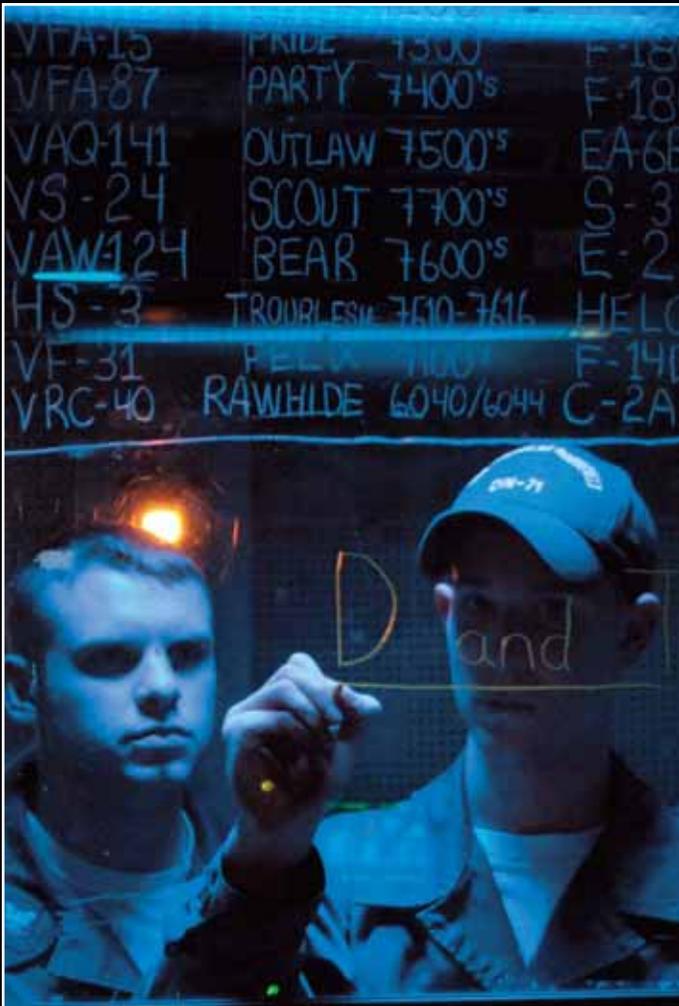
Photo by PH2 Jonathan Roark

◀ **AO2 Michael Piccone** assigned to Navy EOD Mobile Unit 11, Whidbey Island, Wash., links explosives together for a test detonation at Range ASP4, Ad Diwaniyah, Iraq.

Photo by PFC Timothy J. Villareal

▼ **OS3 Richard Taylor (left) and OSSN Zachary Machnics** post updates in their workstation in the Combat Direction Center aboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71).

Photo by PH2 Matthew Bash



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

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

Voting Guidelines for Overseas Citizens

U.S. service members and federal employees stationed overseas need to act quickly to request absentee ballots for this year's primary and general elections.

This year, U.S. citizens will elect 34 senators, the entire House of Representatives, 37 state governors, and hundreds of state and local officials. Primaries begin in March, and the general election is Nov. 7.

To participate in their home states' elections, service members and overseas citizens need to complete a Federal Post Card Application requesting an absentee ballot, said Scott Wiedmann, deputy director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

"The application needs to be completed and returned as quickly as possible, to give the local election office time to mail the ballot to the citizen and then time for the ballot to be returned before the state's deadline," Wiedmann said.

All U.S. service members, federal employees and their families, and U.S. citizens living overseas are allowed to vote in their home states under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

Federal Post Card Applications are available from military voting assistance officers, who are part of every unit, and at U.S. embassies and consulates, Wiedmann said. The forms can also be accessed on the Federal Voting Assistance Program's Web site, www.fvap.gov.

The Web site also offers instructions on completing the form. Service members can receive extra help from their voting assistance officers, who have access to the voting assis-

tance guidebook. The guidebook has specific instructions for each state, including deadlines for registration and how to fill out the application form, he said. ☞

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

Navy Extends Early Transition Program for FY06

The Navy is again offering Sailors whose active-duty obligated service (EAOS) ends before Oct. 1 the opportunity for early separation under another installment of the Early Transition Program.

"Sailors have the opportunity to continue service to their country through the Navy Reserve," said VADM John C. Harvey Jr., Chief of Naval Personnel. "They may also continue service in the Army through the Blue-to-Green program."

Sailors interested in early transition must request a separation date no later than Aug. 15, 2006. All requests must be received by PERS-4832 no later than Aug. 1, 2006, through their commanding officers.

Commanding officers have final disapproval authority for all requests and may grant separation leave, but permissive temporary duty and involuntary separation pay are not authorized.

This voluntary program applies to most Sailors in the active, Reserve, full-time support and canvasser recruiter communities. It does not apply to selected Reserve Sailors (including mobilized Reservists), those Sailors under a selective reenlistment bonus or eligible for SRB reenlistment contract.

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Around the Fleet



▲ Sailors launch a “killer tomato” prior to executing a live fire exercise aboard USS *Curtis Wilbur* (DDG 54).

Photo by PH3 Yesenia Rosas

► AE3 Michelle Shepard repairs minor nicks and scratches on the nosecone of an F/A-18F Super Hornet in the ship’s hangar bay aboard USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76).

Photo by PH3 Aaron Burden





► **Deck**
department
Sailors paint USS
Kitty Hawk (CV
63) as part of the
Ship's Restricted
Availability (SRA).

Photo by
PHAN Kyle D. Gahlau

▼ **IC2 Josh Stoneman, assigned to USS *Chosin* (CG 65),**
embraces his son for the first time after returning from a six-month
deployment.

Photo by JO2 Ryan C. McGinley



continued from page 9

Also ineligible for the early transition are those in the nuclear ratings, SEAL, SWCC, EOD or Diver programs or who enlisted under the National Call to Service program.

For more information on the early transition program, refer to NAVADMIN 022/06, available at www.npc.navy.mil, or contact your Command Career Counselor. ☞

Story by Sharon Anderson, public affairs office, Chief of Naval Personnel, Washington, D.C.

other countries in the region.

CD-ROMs for Europe and the Middle East are also in production. Sailors can request copies to learn more about Rota, Sigonella, Naples, Bahrain, Dubai and much more in Summer 2006.

To request a copy of the Japan and Asia CD-ROM, visit www.mwr.navy.mil.

For related news, visit the Navy Personnel Command Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/npc/. ☞

Story by JO3 Chris M. Hwang, office of communications, Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

Navy MWR Can Assist Those Heading to Asia

Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) can now provide Sailors a sneak peek of what foreign lands, such as Japan and other parts of Asia, have to offer through a new series of interactive CD-ROMs.

The CDs contain informative and entertaining videos about quality of life resources. The interactive function allows Sailors and their family members to link directly to Web sites that contain valuable information on travel, culture and other practical topics.

Topics include housing, currency rates and language. Links in the CD-ROM easily direct Sailors to apartment floor plans or convert dollars to yens.

To make shopping and traveling less challenging, the CD translates frequently used phrases from English to Japanese. Phrases range from "thank you" to "where's the restaurant?"

Although the CDs are primarily focused on Japan, they also contain information about Diego Garcia, Guam, Korea and

BGCA Offers Free Memberships to Navy, Marine Corps Children

Through a DOD initiative, children of active-duty and Reserve Sailors and Marines can receive free memberships to their local Boys and Girls Club of America (BGCA), effective immediately.

"These free memberships allow our Sailors to stay focused on the Navy's mission because they know their children are in good hands while they're away from home," said Larrie Jarvis, Child and Youth Programs analyst for Commander, Navy Installations Command. "We are very fortunate to have this partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America."

According to Jarvis, every Navy youth center is a BGCA affiliate, which means that youth center members are provided with consistent programming, stable support, and the same quality services and programs

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Around the Fleet



◀ **LT. Jerry Graven, a Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) officer,** inspects cargo netting aboard *USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72)*.

Photo by PHAA James R. Evans

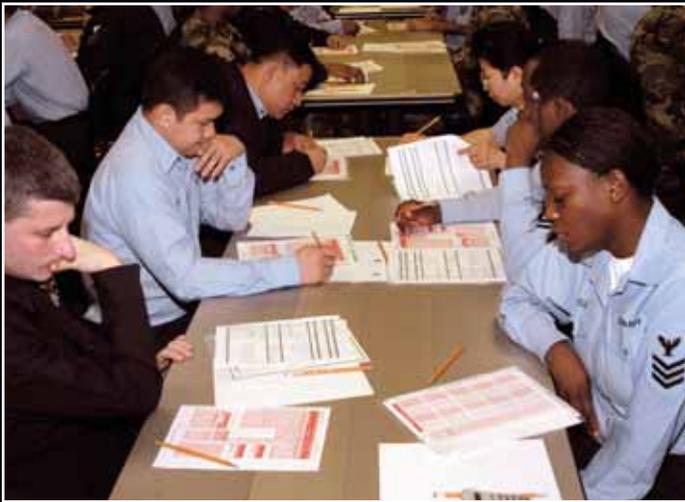
▼ **Sailors in a rigid hull inflatable boat (RHIB) from *USS Carr (FFG 52)*** assists a distressed vessel off the coast of Sierra Leone, Africa.

Photo by JO1 Kurt Riggs



◀ **USS Iwo Jima (LHD 7) operates in dense fog in the Atlantic Ocean while conducting exercises in preparation for deployment.**

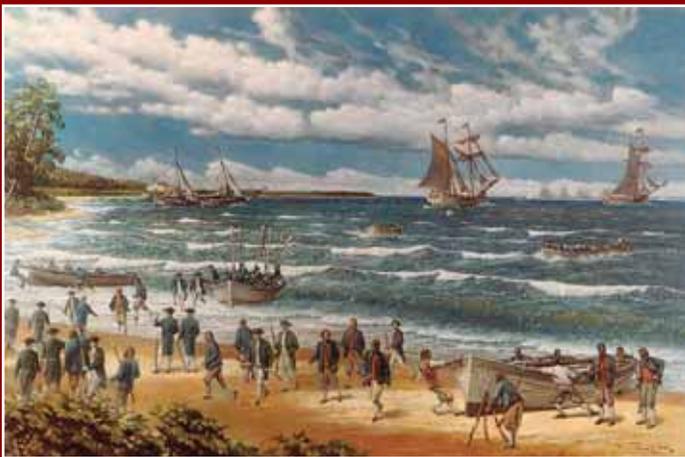
Photo by LISA Bryant Kurowski



▲ **Sailors review their answer sheets prior to taking the Chief Petty Officers' (CPO) exam at Club Alliance on board Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka.**

Photo by PH3 Yesenia Rosas

March 1776



Continental Sailors and Marines land on New

Providence Island, Bahamas, March 3, 1776. Their initial objective, Fort Montagu, is in the left distance. Close off shore are the small vessels used to transport the landing force to the vicinity of the beach. They are (from left to right): two captured sloops; the schooner *Wasp*; and the sloop *Providence*. The other ships of the American squadron are visible in the distance and the mission was one of resupplying the American forces. The operation was commanded by Commodore Esek Hopkins.

continued from page 11

regardless of where they are located. For military families who do not live near a Navy base, a local Boys and Girls Club can be found using BCGA's club locator at www.bgca.org/military.

Whether on or off base, all BCGA clubs offer programs designed to develop good character, build leadership and provide guidance to youth between the ages of 6 and 18. Examples of BCGA programs include computer instruction, sports leagues, photography, tutoring, arts and crafts, social events and field trips. More than 25 national programs are available in the areas of education, the environment, health, the arts, careers, alcohol, drug and pregnancy prevention, leadership development and athletics.

For additional guidelines and information, visit www.bgca.org/military or call (800) 854-CLUB (2582).

For related news, visit the Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/navymwr/.

Story by Steve Buckley, Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation Marketing, Millington, Tenn.

Tarawa Sailors Excel in Warfare Qualifications

Early this year, the 471st Sailor aboard USS *Tarawa* (LHA 1) earned the coveted enlisted warfare qualification since the ship's departure from her homeport of San Diego six months before for the current Western Pacific/Indian Ocean deployment.

During this deployment, *Tarawa* Sailors and their counterparts from embarked commands achieved 275 Enlisted

Aviation Warfare Specialist (EAWS) qualifications and 196 Enlisted Surface Warfare Qualifications (ESWS) by demonstrating general knowledge in all aspects of surface or air warfare.

"That number is outstanding," said Chief Damage Controlman (SW/AW) Raul Randle, *Tarawa's* ESWS coordinator. "It shows that our Sailors are showing a lot of initiative and motivation to learn outside of their specific career fields."

According to Randle, *Tarawa* Sailors averaged about two months of preparation and study before going in front of the ESWS and EAWS review boards. The board is comprised of senior first class petty officers and chiefs who administer a thorough oral examination in their respective fields of knowledge.

"Taking the board is real challenging," said Information Systems Technician 3rd Class (SW) Constance Gilbert. "But it's going to look good on my eval, and it's going to get me where I want to be. I would like to make the Navy a career, and this is one step toward that."

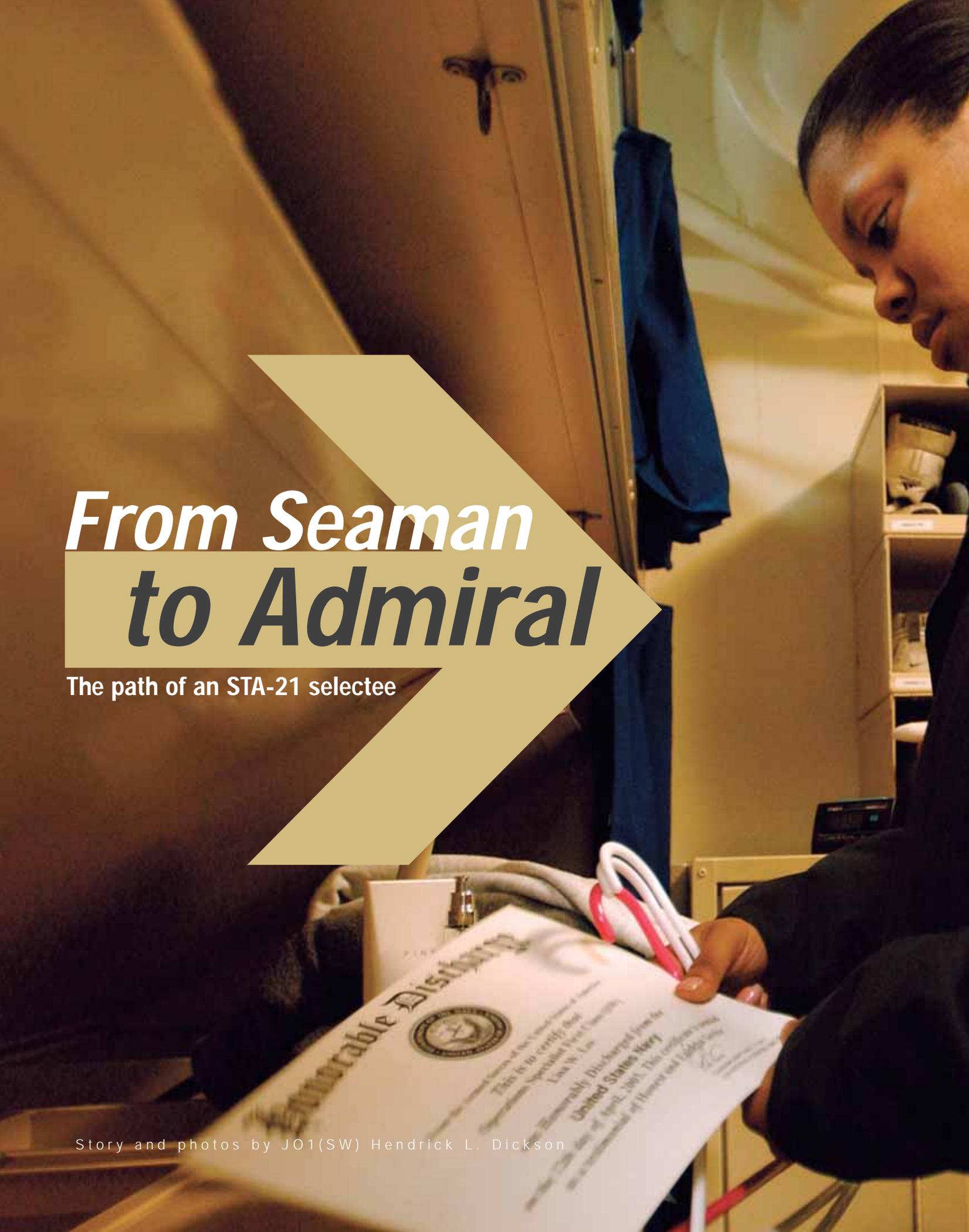
According to *Tarawa's* EAWS coordinator, Command Master Chief (SW/AW) Michael Schanche, the ship will exceed the 500-pin milestone by the end of her deployment.

"The harder these Sailors work to learn about what the ship is about, the more we are able to get our job done," added Schanche.

For related news, visit the Expeditionary Strike Group 1 Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/esg1/.

Story by JO3 Nathaniel Bates, public affairs office, Expeditionary Strike Group 1

Oil painting on canvas by V. Zveg, 1973 is courtesy of the U.S. Navy Art Collection, Washington, D.C. Photo by U.S. Naval Historical Center.

A woman in a dark uniform is looking down at a document in a ship's cabin. The document is a discharge certificate with the heading "Honorable Discharge" and a seal. The background shows a wooden door and a shelf with various items.

From Seaman to Admiral

The path of an STA-21 selectee

Story and photos by JO1(SW) Hendrick L. Dickson



On the campus of University of Maryland – College Park, students not only contend with the pressure of exams, quizzes and handing in assignments on time, but they also have to hurdle obstacles beyond the hallways. Paying for tuition and books, finding room and board, even peer-pressure of going to the frat party the night before a big exam are just a few.

Newly-enrolled student Lisa Lee sits in her classroom surrounded by these “tormented” students, with the comfort of knowing that she doesn’t have to face many of those challenges. But then again, Lee is not an ordinary student.

Last year Lisa Lee was Operations Specialist 1st Class Lee. She was assigned to OI division aboard USS *Winston S. Churchill* (DDG 81), navigating the guided-missile destroyer through international waters, carrying out the Navy’s mission. Now she’s navigating her way toward a college degree and commission through the Navy’s Seaman-to-Admiral (STA-21) program.

In 2004, Lee applied to STA-21 and was selected to be an officer candidate. Each year STA-21 gives selected Sailors the opportunity to attend college, while still receiving full pay and allowances for their enlisted pay grades. They also receive up to \$10,000 a year toward tuition, fees and books and have 36 months to complete their degree.

“The goal of the program is to provide our highly-motivated, active-duty personnel with an opportunity to obtain their undergraduate degree and become commissioned as naval officers,” said LT Doug Johnson, STA-21 selection and placement officer. “Our mission here within Officer Development Lifelines is to select, train and produce the highest quality of naval officers.

OS₁(SW) Lisa Lee reminisces about

the past six years as an enlisted Sailor while cleaning out her coffin locker aboard USS *Winston S. Churchill* (DDG 81), where she was stationed for nearly two years. When she returns to the fleet in about three years, she will not have to cram everything into coffin locker, but will more likely share a stateroom with another ensign.



▲ **Nearly one year ago OS1(SW)**

Lisa Lee was plotting courses in the OI Division aboard USS *Winston S. Churchill* (DDG 81). Today, she is a student at University of Maryland-College Park under the Navy's Seaman-to-Admiral program and earning her degree in Criminal Law and Criminology.

◀ **Lisa Lee flips through the pages**

of her mathematics books during an afternoon class. The 25-year-old officer candidate will have her degree within the next three years and return to the fleet as an ensign. "It's going to be exciting to be on the other side when I go back," said Lee.

▶ **Officer Candidate Lisa Lee tackles**

PT like a pro at the Naval Science Institute (NSI), Newport, R.I. NSI takes officer candidates through a fast-paced, nine-week program of military, academic and physical training.

“In FY05 we selected 186 candidates for the STA-21 program,” added Johnson. “In FY06, that number will increase to 207. The program is getting more and more competitive each year. Selection boards are looking for the cream of the crop, those top-notch Sailors who go above and beyond their normal duties and do everything within their power to stand out from the pack.”

Either it’s the maturity and focus that the 25 year-old Lee harnessed while growing up in Lancaster, Va., or the professionalism that earned her the respect of her shipmates aboard *Winston S. Churchill*. Whichever it is, Lee definitely stood out.

Lee exudes a confidence and seriousness that lets you know she has no problem putting forth every effort to achieve her goals. And for the six-year Navy veteran, earning her degree while in the Navy was always one of those goals.

The soft-spoken Lee seems to communicate her thoughts with her eyes as well as her voice. It’s her straight-forward way of always telling you what you need to know

at that time, which is the first indicator she could be a great leader.

“Honestly, I always wanted to continue my education,” Lee said. “The first time I saw the program was in a Navy magazine. I thought it was good because they would send me to school and pay for it. But at the same time, I would still be getting my regular pay. I thought that would be better than trying to stay active duty and take classes here and there, because you don’t have as much time to do that.

“I never really worried about being accepted or not, because I learned when I was growing up to always do the best I can and go for whatever I wanted,” Lee continued. “It was instilled in me when I was growing up by my parents. My mom always taught me to go for it, whatever it was.”

Her mom’s advice carried Lee through the application process, a series of interviews and evaluations from the very officers and commanders she aspired to be. From Lee’s reputation aboard *Winston S. Churchill*, it was obvious she was exactly what STA-21 was looking for Sailors who

would take advantage of this educational opportunity then return to the fleet as extraordinary leaders.

“When [Lee] first checked on board, I was very impressed with her,” said LCDR Steven R. Marshall, *Winston S. Churchill’s* supply officer. “On a small ship, you can always tell who the hot-runners are. I noticed that her bosses always went to her for the answers. And those are the kind of things that get your attention. So I had already recognized her potential.”

The Wardroom wasn’t the only place to recognize this potential. Standing watches six hours on and six hours off in the barely lit Combat Information Center is a lot like driving down a dark highway at 3 a.m. after driving 10 hours already. It is easy to get lulled to sleep, so it is always good to have someone to help you get to the finish line. And that’s exactly what Lee had been to *Winston S. Churchill’s* OSs. On and off watch she had been a team player.

“I’ve never heard her say, ‘I quit or I don’t want to do this anymore,’” said OS1 (SW) Michael Harris, also assigned to the OI Division.

continued on page 20







▲ According to LT Doug Johnson, STA-21 selection and placement officer, 186 candidates were selected for the STA-21 program in FY05. Here officer candidates at the Naval Science Institute, prepare to fall out in formation to march to class.

◀ No longer OS1 but an officer candidate, Lisa Lee does some last minute cramming with her roommate, Officer Candidate Lorelei Hughes, at the Naval Science Institute, Newport, R.I., before an important quiz.

▶ “I think it benefits you when you become an officer after being prior enlisted,” said Officer Candidate Lisa Lee. “It’s good to have the other perspective with you. To know what will get your crew’s morale up or down. It will be good to be able to relate and know what they are going through rather than being an officer who never had that experience.”



continued from page 17

“She has always pushed and gone on to the next job. If she’s here for 12 hours, give her 12 hours worth of things to do and she’ll do it. She keeps herself squared-away and stays on the younger people to do the same.

“We’re absolutely going to miss Lee,” added Harris. “She carries a big load around here.”

In April 2005, Lee began her race toward her degree, leaving *Winston S. Churchill* and joining other STA-21 selectees for a rigorous nine weeks at the Naval Science Institute (NSI), Newport, R.I.

These Sailors, who were in the fleet just a month before, were now officer candidates. They worked every day in the classrooms, aboard simulated ships, on the parade field and followed the path to compress two years worth of Naval Reserve Officer Training Candidate’s (NROTC) academic, military and physical training into a little more than two months at Naval Station Newport.

“NSI challenges students academically, militarily, professionally and physically,” said Marine Corps Maj. Thomas G. Citrano, director, NSI, Newport, R.I. “Personal success at NSI is proportional to your level of commitment. Accountability, responsibility, authority all comes with gold bars.”

“It was a lot like an “A” school, as far as instructions and everything, but they don’t keep such a tight leash on you,” explained Lee. “The classes were hard because we had everything – navigation, engineering, sea power – and it was a lot of reading. Basically, we just had a lot of information that we had to learn in a short period of time. I think the main thing was to try to get us in the routine of going to class and doing school work.”

In August Lee stepped onto the Maryland campus of University of Maryland – College Park, for the first time, not just as a Sailor, but as a student.

Nowadays, if you didn’t know Lee, you would never recognize her as being in the Navy. In fact, the only time she wears a uniform is on Fridays when she drills with her NROTC unit. Now having to find time to get college credits around the ship’s mission is not a problem. Lee would even tell you she has too much time.

“I have a lot of free time now. The first semester I would have a couple of days where I would have three or four classes and then the other days, maybe Tuesdays and Thursdays, I would have just one or two,” she said smiling. “And every Friday morning we have drill from 7 a.m to 9 a.m. So I only had to wear my uniform when we went to drill and then sometimes for the leadership class I took the first semester and that was it.”

As each semester passes and each credit unit accumulates, Lee has never forgotten what it took to get to where she is, and she has a few words of encouragement for other Sailors who might be thinking about exchanging ship’s coveralls for fresh, new university sweats.

“Hopefully, by me getting picked-up, it will encourage others to try,” Lee explained. “You’ll never know unless you try. I think there are a lot of good Sailors out there who will make good officers. They should go for it and put their package in. And if they don’t get picked-up

on the first try, they should keep trying until they do get picked-up.”

Although the uniform is away and there aren’t any quarters, field days or personnel inspections, Lee still has the same hard-charging mindset she had while aboard *USS Winston S. Churchill*. And as for getting back to the fleet, it seems she hasn’t completely rinsed all of the salt from her shoulders.

“This is basically my shore-duty. I haven’t had that yet. But I’m hoping I can pick up more classes here and there and not have to take the whole three years to finish. I don’t want to be off the ship too long. That will make it really painful when I go back to sea,” she said with a chuckle.

Once a Sailor, always a Sailor. ✎

Dickson is a photojournalist for All Hands.

Website Exclusive

Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200603/feature_1/





▲ **OS1(SW) Lisa Lee packs away a few loose ends, as she prepares to move** from her apartment in Hampton, Va., and relocate to College Park, Md., to attend the University of Maryland with a brief stop at the Naval Science Institute, Newport, R.I., in between.

◀ **LT Rebecca Summers, navigation instructor at the Naval Science Institute** gives Officer Candidate Lisa Lee and her team post-analysis after a simulated navigation brief. From left to right: Officer Candidates Andrew Martin, Lee, Cherita Hofer, Kathryn Brooks and Louis Streb.

▼ **“A lot of times it feels funny walking around campus,”** said Lee. **“I feel so much older than all the other students.** But it might be just because I’m used to being on my own in the Navy and most of my classmates are just out of high school.”



► **Countless Navy corpsmen**

have received battlefield commendations for their often heroic behaviors to save fellow Marines in the field. That reputation has earned the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) corpsman the beloved title “Doc” by his Marines.

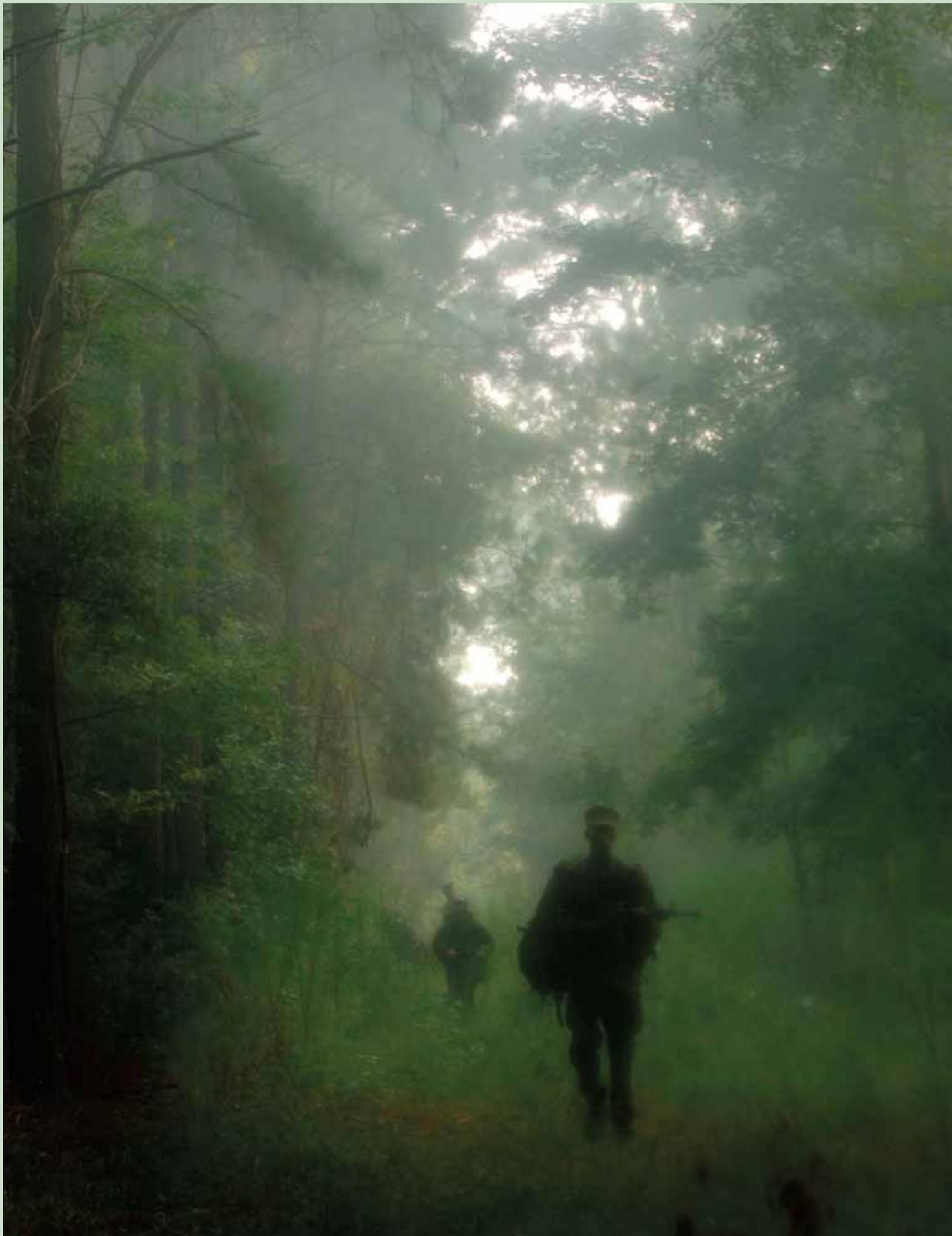
THE MAKING OF A **FLEET MARINE FORCE CORPSMAN**

“GOING GREENSIDE”

[Story and photos by JO1(SCW/SS) James G. Pinsky]



▼ **FMSS graduates are required to know far more than just battlefield medicine,** they must know how to walk, talk, and act like Marines in the field. Classes on patrols, offensive and defensive tactics and land navigation help the Sailors blend in with their Marine Corps counterparts.



For seven boot camp-like, rifle-toting, blister-breaking weeks down south at Camp LeJeune, N.C., the Navy and Marine Corps team up at Field Medical Service School (FMSS) East to mold standard Navy-issue corpsmen into Sailors good enough for the Fleet Marine Force (FMF). The good ones will earn the Marines' respect. The great ones earn the title, "Doc."

"There are corpsmen and then there are 'docs,'" said Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Richard Lister, an advisor at FMSS East. "A doc is someone you can count on. He's someone in your platoon that when something happens to one of our fellow Marines, you can call on him and not have

▼ Marine Corps advisors like SSgt.

Steven Cox, work with every class of FMSS candidates to ensure they receive Marine Corps training doctrine.

to worry. He's your buddy, a comrade in arms, a person who you count on to cover your back, to lay down fire, dig fighting holes or do whatever the hell Marines are doing. That's who a doc is."

That's why FMSS exists – because Marines need docs on the battlefield.

"If they [students] don't look like Marines, act like Marines and talk like Marines," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (FMF) John Buchanan, "the Marines aren't going to like them, and worse, they aren't going to trust them."

And to the Marines, a corpsman they can't trust is a corpsman they'd rather not have.

"A bad corpsman is worse than no corpsman at all," said Buchanan, "because a corpsman who doesn't know tactics, or walk, talk and act like a Marine is going to compromise the mission and get a lot of people killed."

And the top priority at FMSS is saving Marine Corps lives.

The FMSS instructors teach their students this every day, and not because it's part of a smart curriculum. They teach it because they've experienced it and believe in it, both as Marines and as corpsmen.

"The school prefers instructors with combat experience, people who have been to Iraq or Afghanistan recently," said Buchanan. "It's not mandatory, but they want the instructors to be able to explain first hand why things have to be a certain way. They want the instructors to be able to say why they have to have more discipline than the average Sailor, why they have to know combat tactics, why they have to know the Marine Corps customs and ceremonies. And they want them to be able to answer why because they experienced it, not because they read it in a manual."



Hospital Corpsman Pledge

“I solemnly pledge myself before God and these witnesses to practice faithfully all of my duties as a member of the Hospital Corps. I hold the care of the sick and injured to be a privilege and a sacred trust and will assist the Medical Officer with loyalty and honesty. I will not knowingly permit harm to come to any patient. I will not partake of nor administer any unauthorized medication. I will hold all personal matters pertaining to the private lives of patients in strict confidence. I dedicate my heart, mind and strength to the work before me. I shall do all within my power to show in myself an example of all that is honorable and good throughout my naval career.”



Drawing on that experience yields answers to many of the students' questions, most of which, surprisingly, don't center on staying out of harm's way. One of the first things a good FMF corpsman learns at FMSS is that the very last thing he's worried about is himself.

“In combat it goes through your mind, ‘OK, there's a guy that got shot,’” said Buchanan. “And you say to yourself, ‘I can stay here and I'll be safe. And if I do, that Marine's probably going to die.’ And that's every corpsman's worst nightmare – not that we'll get shot, but that we won't be able to fix a Marine who's hurt, that we won't have the ability, the knowledge or the nerve to do it. And nobody knows whether they do or not until they do it.”

Still, having the self-confidence needed by a successful battlefield corpsman can

grow at FMSS, and many of the scenarios the medical and Marine Corps advisors put their students through are centered on precisely that – building confidence in the Sailors' knowledge and their abilities. The students are taught what the Marine Corps will demand of them from the very first day with boot camp-style inspections, relentless physical fitness training and unyielding tolerances for Marine Corps discipline, all the while being tested academically both in the classroom and in the field. Being book- or street-smart alone isn't enough to make it as an FMF corpsman. You have to be both because being with Marines means always thinking outside the box, way outside the box.

“The Marines are a different animal than anything known to man,” said HM2(FMF) Shannon Book, an FMSS instructor. “They

take what little they have and do a lot with it – all the time. As corpsmen we need to be prepared to do that just as well as them, if not better, and be ready for situations you won't find in any field manual.”

And by situations, FMSS instructors are usually talking about combat. And these days going into combat is no longer a what-if scenario, but a when and where. The FMSS instructors prepare their students for that, too.

“Students ask us about combat all the time,” said Buchanan, “and we have to answer them carefully, but we always answer them honestly.”

Still, the combat veterans know no amount of training or lecturing is going to make anybody, especially corpsmen ready for war.

“No matter how hard you try to get ready for combat, you're never ever truly

◀ **Being with Marines means walking**
like them, talking like them and fighting like them.

▶ **During the final field week of FMSS**
students role play as aggressors, medical personnel
and front-line Marines to put their learned skills
to practice in simulated battlefield environments.

prepared for it,” said Book. “There’s nothing else on earth like war. It’s not simple. It’s not fun. And it’s definitely not cool.”

And without setting foot on the battlefield some students have already felt the realities of war. For some it is a wake-up call, while for others it provides confirmation that they’re going “greenside” for all the right reasons.

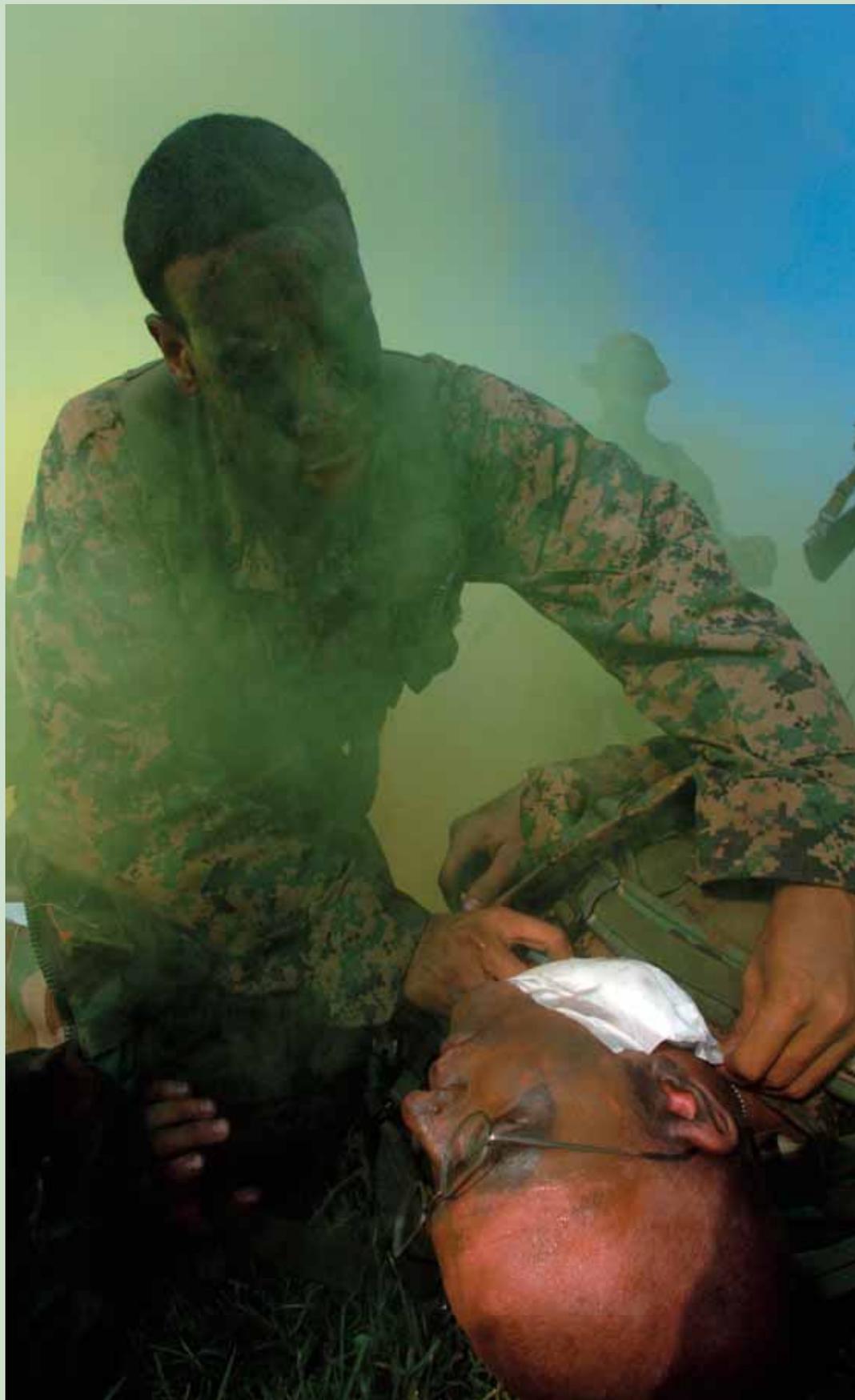
“When I saw my first Marine come in from combat,” said HN Patrick Coyle, a student stationed at Naval Hospital Camp LeJeune prior to classing up for FMSS, “it just reaffirmed in me that there was a job out there that needed to be done, and I wanted to be one of those people who makes a difference. When these guys got hurt, there was a corpsman who did their initial assessment and kept them alive well enough to get to me. They didn’t lose their limbs, they didn’t lose their life and that’s what we’re here to do – save Marine lives.”

Coyle’s mindset is precisely what FMSS instructors hope to instill in all their graduates, and if history is any indication, whatever they’re doing works because Navy corpsmen are one of the most combat decorated rating in the Navy, and most of those medals were earned by corpsmen serving with their Marines.

It’s a glory only a select few dare to chase.

“I knew if I chose greenside there’d be a greater chance I might go to war,” said HN Maurice Butler, an FMSS student. “But my wife and I pray, and we prepare for the worst and hope for the best. Even with the dangers, this is definitely where I need to be to become a great corpsman.”

Butler’s desire to become an FMF corpsman stems from a reputation the Marine Corps has for expecting a lot more



“NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY TO GET READY FOR COMBAT, YOU’RE NEVER EVER TRULY PREPARED FOR IT. THERE’S NOTHING ELSE ON EARTH LIKE WAR. IT’S NOT SIMPLE. IT’S NOT FUN. AND IT’S DEFINITELY NOT COOL.”

HM2(FMF) Shannon Book FMSS instructor

responsibility from its junior personnel, especially their corpsmen. And it’s a character trait FMSS instructors look for on the very first day of school.

“We can tell within a few days if a corpsman has it or he doesn’t,” said Lister, “and by that I mean discipline. A lot of petty officers show up here and they’ve never been in charge of anybody. So, we put them in charge of people. If they don’t do the job right we fire them, and don’t think twice about putting an HN or HNSA in charge of a whole platoon [of students] if they can do the job. And believe me those fired petty officers will listen to that HN or HNSA because if they don’t, they have to answer to me.”

The Marine Corps’ straight forward, show-me attitude encourages young Sailors like Butler to prove their worthiness to the FMSS instructors, their shipmates and themselves. And that’s exactly what brought Butler to FMSS.

“When I went to the naval hospital for my first assignment out of ‘A’ school, they put me to work in supply,” said Butler. “That’s not where I’m going to get the hands-on experience I need to be a good corpsman. Going greenside, I’ll have a lot more people depending on me to know

what I have to do, and I’ll have the opportunity to do it. By serving with the Marine Corps I’ll learn more about what a corpsman ought to be sooner rather than later.”

Buchanan understands why Sailors like Butler gravitate towards the Marine Corps way of life.

“As an E-2 in the Navy, if you’re on a ship or in a hospital, you don’t have a whole lot of responsibility,” said Buchanan. “When I went to *Desert Storm* with the Marines as an E-2, I was 17 years old, but I had an immense amount of responsibility, more than I really wanted. I had a group of Marines whose medical care was assigned to me – just me. I was in charge of everything that happened to them. I had their medical records. I was in charge of making sure their immunizations were up to date.

“If they got hurt I had to fix them, and if I got hurt they had to fix me. You’re never going to be a leader of a group of individuals in a hospital as an E-2, but in the Marine Corps, when it comes to medical care for the Marines, you are. And that’s the most rewarding thing there is, to take a group of people like that into combat and bring them back alive”

While no experience outside the realm of actual combat prepares a Sailor for what

awaits him on today’s battlefields, FMSS gives their students the kind of instructors and life tools they need to reach their full potential out in the field.

“Whether or not FMSS prepares you for everything you’ll see in combat is a tricky question to answer,” said Buchanan, “because this is an entry level school. When I went through, they taught you how to apply a bandage, how to stop bleeding, etc., but when I was over there during Operations *Desert Shield/Desert Storm* I was scared. I wasn’t scared I was going to get shot or something like that. No, I was scared I was going to make a mistake or hurt somebody. Things are much different now for the corpsmen going through FMSS because we work hard to build their self-confidence. I don’t think they have the same apprehensions coming out of here that I did in 1990.”

War stories fresh from the front lines of Iraq defend Buchanan’s beliefs.

“When I graduated from FMSS,” said HM3(FMF) Paul Haggerty, Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines, Camp LeJeune, N.C., “I had the idea that the training at FMSS was kind of lax, and that I would never be sent to a front-line Marine platform because I worked at a naval hospital. I was wrong. When I got orders telling me I was deploying with 3/8 I was nervous because I thought I wouldn’t be ready. But it turns out that the training at FMSS was everything I needed out there. It was right on cue.”

Haggerty deployed to Iraq Jan. 17, 2005, and returned safely Aug. 14. Less than a month after stepping foot in the desert, he was put to the test as a FMSS graduate.

“It was early February, two weeks after the elections,” said Haggerty, “and my platoon was rolling down the main supply route when a seven-ton truck was hit by an

► The initial

care that a corpsman gives his patient can spell the difference between life and death. Sure thinking, quick actions and creative first aid can add life-saving minutes to a critically-wounded Marine.





▲ FMF corpsmen aren't often fortunate

enough to have sterile operating rooms, an army of nurses and state-of-the-art medical equipment so they are conditioned to improvise any advantage they can to save lives. Bunkers become operating rooms, shirts become tourniquets, and corpsmen become miracle workers.

improvised explosive device [IED], and shots were fired. It was another platoon's convoy, and they had no corpsmen in that platoon. It was just me. And there were five to six wounded Iraqi civilians dying right in front of me. They had massive trauma, sucking chest wounds and there I was taking care of five, six people all by myself. None of the Marines were hurt, and I saved all the civilians.

Help eventually arrived, but what was so weird about it was when it happened I was moving so fast. It was just like the training at FMSS – battle assessments, ABCs, prioritizing patients, etc. The training was almost exactly to what the real situation was, and I never hesitated.”

The words, “never hesitated” are music to the ears of any FMSS instructor as proof that what they teach down at Camp LeJeune their west-coast partner, FMSS West, Camp Pendleton, Calif., works.

And while stories like Haggerty's are told and retold down at the school house with a smile, instructors and students alike know not every beginning will have a happy ending, no matter how well they train.

“The toughest thing I've had to deal with so far in my life was the loss of a loved one,” said Coyle. “And what I'm about to do will be tougher because when you live, eat, and sleep with Marines every day you build up a camaraderie that is every bit the same – if not stronger than your family back home. And there will probably come a time when I will lose a fellow Marine in the field. That will be my toughest day.”

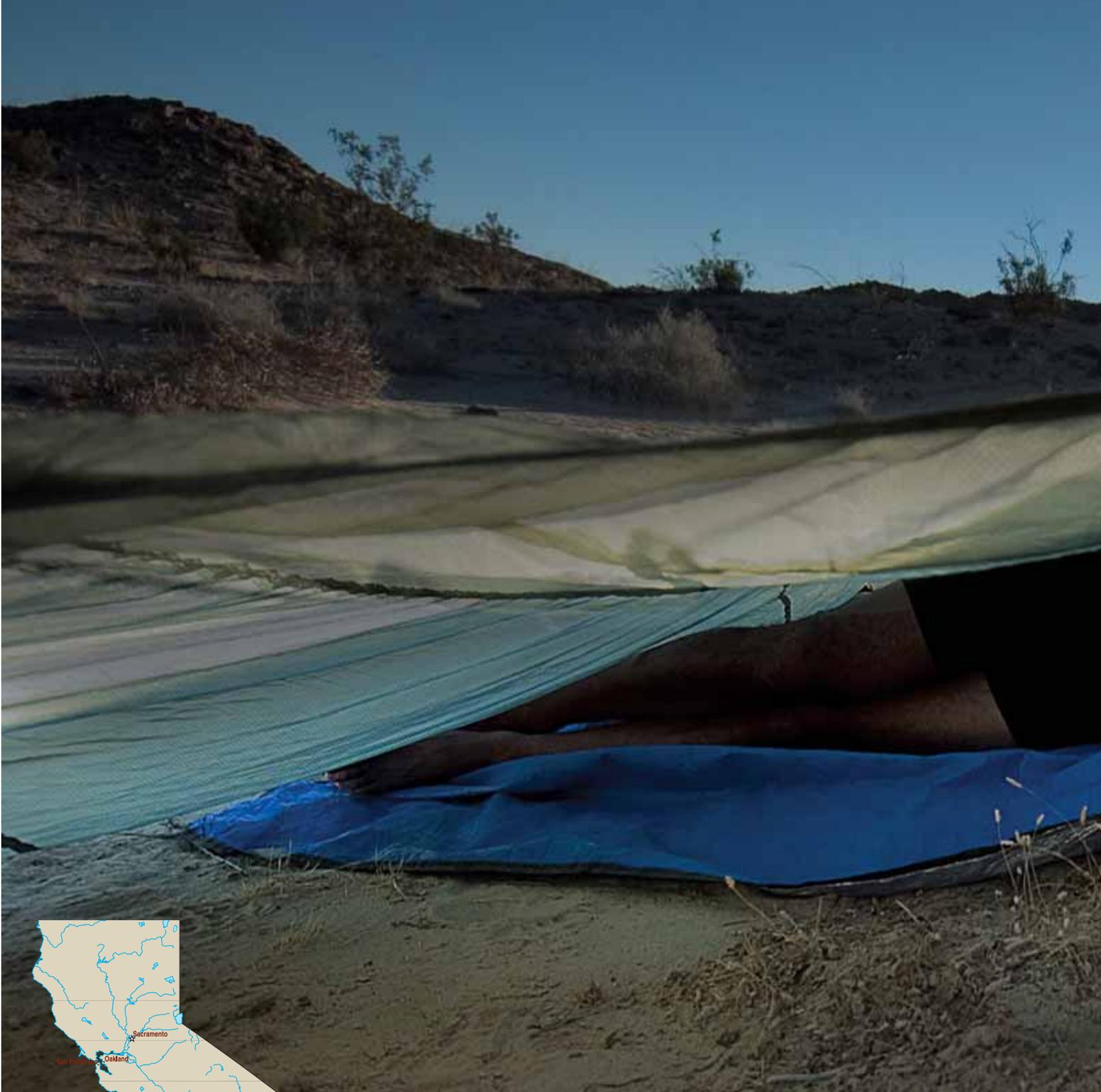
And it always will be, for a “doc.” ❧

Website Exclusive

Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200603/feature_2/

Story and photos by PH1(AW) Michael Larson

TAKING THE HEAT^o



**Naval Air Facility
El Centro, Calif.**

▼ After an all night hike across the desert, PH1 James Christopher sleeps under an improvised shelter made out of parachute material as the sun rises.



HOT. JUST PLAIN HOT.

The class of 11 students felt the suffocating heat as soon as they piled out of the air-conditioned van near Naval Air Facility El Centro, Calif. With civilization miles away for the next four days and midday temperatures around 110 degrees, it was time to cover up, hydrate and learn the skills of Desert Environmental Survival Training (DEST) in the real, unrelenting desert.

The students' scenario: Their aircraft strayed into hostile airspace and was shot down. They are now on the run and must evade the enemy while trying to reach friendly forces. But before they start evading across the desert, they have to learn a few things.

"We take pride in realistic and relevant training," said Marine Corps Capt. David Humphreys, the DEST officer-in-charge. "We take lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan and teach the students the critical survival skills needed to survive in a desert. The big three of those skills are procuring water, making a shelter and navigation."

A team of 14 instructors from Fleet Aviation Specialized Operational Training Group Pacific run the 15-square mile course. Only a small core group of instructors will have face time with students teaching hands-on lessons. The rest are behind the scenes, handling logistics, water replenishment and planning how they will play the enemy later in the course.

During the morning hours they teach classes on how to procure water, prepare food from live snakes and build shelters, out of parachute material. The students then build their shelters on their own. The rest of the days are spent under the shelters, gulping water and trying to sleep, for it's too hot and dehydrating to do much of anything else.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience," said Gunner's Mate 1st Class Martin Edgil. "I grew up in the woods of Mississippi and



▼ **The four day course puts students into a hostile scenario in**

the desert near Naval Air Facility El Centro, Calif. where joint service instructors teach desert evasion, shelter construction, water procurement and night navigation. The instructors also play “enemy” roles by pursuing the students who evade across the desert as they work toward their safe recovery by friendly forces.



▼ **Operations Specialist 2nd Class Darryl**

Hickman and Aviation Electrician 1st Class Ryan Johnson skin a ball python snake during a food procurement lesson.



◀ **Water is the most vital resource for**

surviving in the desert. The human body may last only 24 hours without it if stranded in the desert. Students in Desert Environmental Survival Training (DEST) use a water procurement method of evaporation to extract drinkable water from salt water. The salt water in the hole evaporates leaving the salt at the bottom, but with a plastic cover over the hole, the water has nowhere to go and drops back down into the jar as potable water.

I'm learning survival skills I've never heard of. I'm going to Iraq soon, and I am glad I came to this school."

Nightfall is the most active part of DEST. With shelters torn down, everything they brought with them on their backs and all traces of a camp site eliminated, everyone turns to their maps and global positioning systems (GPS) for night navigation.

The first night, field instructors accompanied the students and made sure everyone knew how to traverse the diverse terrain and reach an objective when given specific coordinates on their maps.

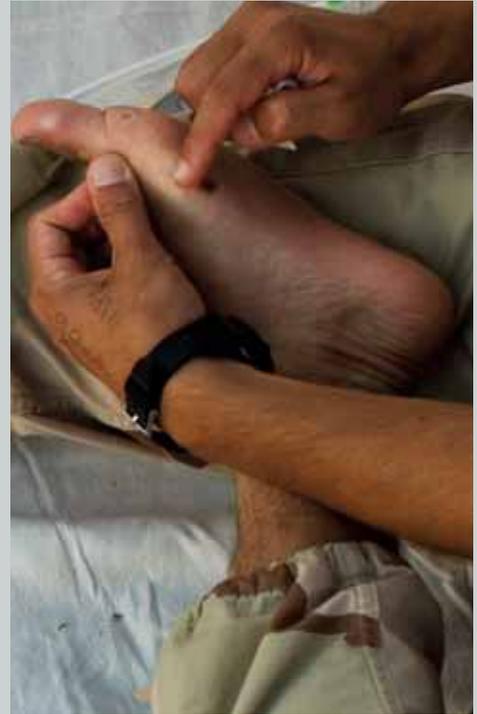
"Navigation at night is flat out hard, you could end up going in circles or drifting left and right if you're not careful," said Operations Specialist 2nd Class Dennis Carin, another DEST instructor.

"Night navigation is all about teamwork. If my students are ever in the desert for real, as a survivor or evader, they will have the tools to find their way to friendly forces or safety."

The last two nights, after the students have learned new skills, DEST applies the pressure. All instructors join the training with their own role to play. Dressed as the enemy, some instructors fire blanks from

► **JO2 Brett Cote checks his feet for blisters and sores** after an all night hike in the desert near Naval Air Facility El Centro, Calif. Students walk an average of 30 miles in four days during the training.

▼ **AM3 Marty Bullwinkel and PH1 James Orosco** use parachute material to improvise a ground-to-air-signal to catch the attention of overflying aircraft during desert survival training.







▲ **Marine Corps Sgt. Tad Eckerle** plays the role of a special operations operative and authenticates two students who evaded across the desert to a safe location to be recovered and rescued on the final night of the training.

◀ **DEST Instructor AO1 Jared Kernozek**, dressed as the enemy, discovers a class of survival students in a truck. They are in the scenario as military members whose aircraft crashed in a hostile country. Upon their discovery, the students bail out of the truck and begin a full night of evasion through the desert to reach their recovery zone.

modified AK-47s, launch flares that light up the terrain and pursue the students through the night.

“I learned how far I could physically push myself,” said Edgil. “We traversed more than 30 kilometers in two days while being chased and hearing gunfire. It’s thrilling, yet challenging. I feel confident I can survive over in the Middle East if it ever happens for real.”

When the final objective is reached, exhaustion takes hold on both sides, but it

doesn’t hold back the overwhelming pride of a job well done

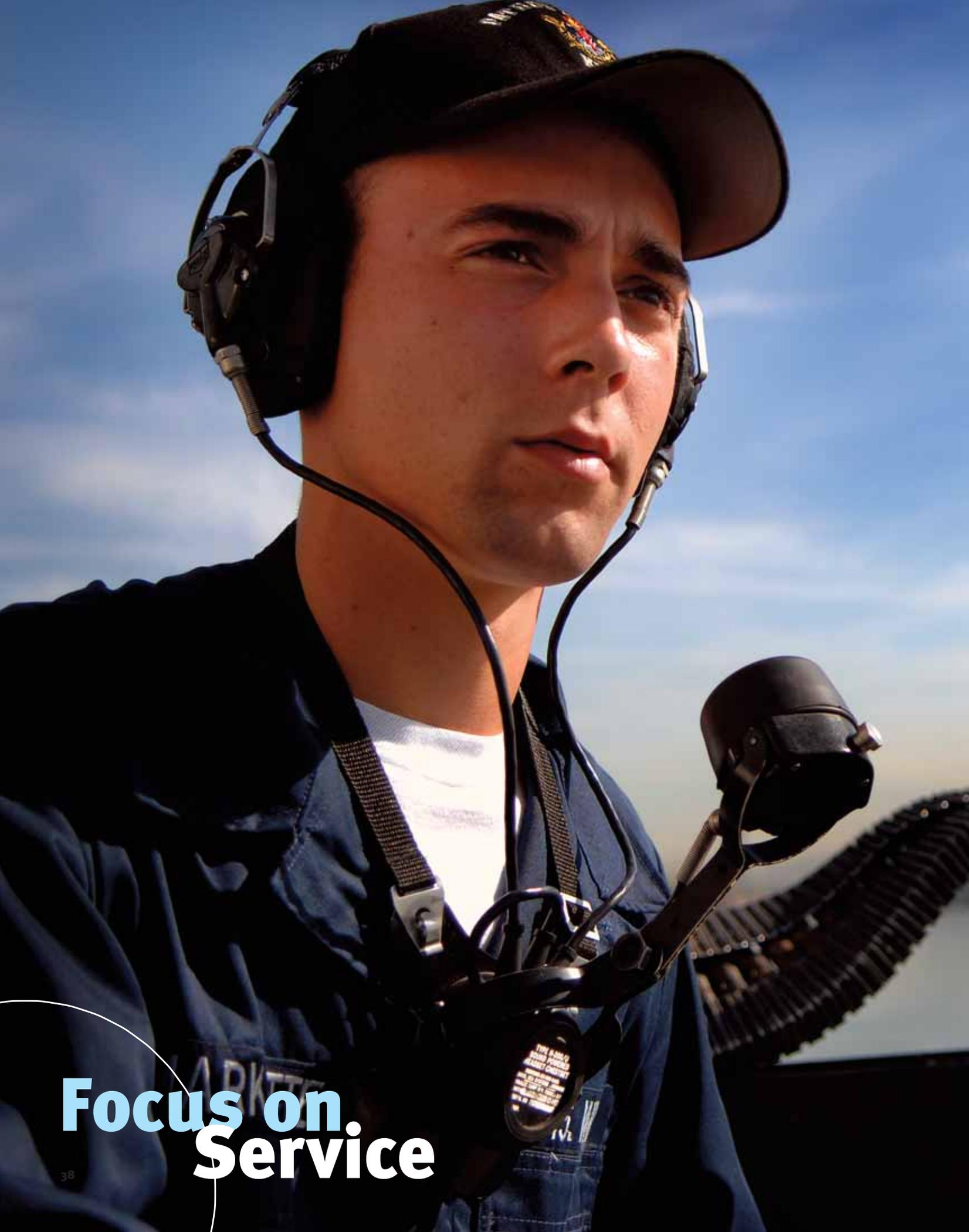
“When I see the glimmer in a student’s eye when our teachings sink in, that’s what I love about this job,” said DEST Instructor Damage Controlman 1st Class Scott Heger.

Teaching Sailors and Marines how to take the heat is the heart and soul of DEST. Whether a student or instructor, at the end of the day everyone is confident they can survive a real-life desert emergency and come home in the fashion in which they left – alive with honor. 🇺🇸

Larson is a photojournalist assigned to Combat Camera Pacific.

Website Exclusive

Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200603/feature_3/



Focus on.
Service

Bearings on the Future

Story and photo
by PH2 Todd Frantom



Quartermaster Seaman Chris Markette joined the Navy to see the world and mature. He got more than he bargained for. Less than a year after becoming a Sailor, Markette found himself peering over the smoky horizon of the Persian Gulf at an approaching threat to his Coastal Patrol boat USS *Sirocco* (PC 6). And, never did he imagine that he would be firing a shotgun, warning that craft of imminent danger.

“The small merchant ship cut right behind our position and the captain had just given the order to shoot a round of birdshot into the

air,” said Markette. “My heart started racing, at that very moment I realized how important my job as lookout was regardless of my rank.”

Normally, a naval quartermaster is responsible for the watch-to-watch navigation of the ship, under the direction of the navigator. In addition to his normal duties on the bridge, it is Markette’s responsibility to take into account all vessels in the immediate area. This comes from being a “hybrid” Sailor – one who is cross-trained in other jobs outside the scope of their traditional rating.

“I think the coolest part about my job

is always knowing where we are going,” Markette said.

“I also get to work directly with officers and the upper chain of command. Because of this, I get a lot of hands-on training and mentoring. I believe I am one step ahead of most Sailors in any rate.”

So while you sleep, all cozy in your rack, you can bet your life that there is a tenacious shipmate peering over the horizon, a Sailor with bearings on the future.

Frantom is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.



The Final Word

TR Traps Last *Tomcat* from Combat Mission

Story by JO2 Stephen Murphy

A chapter in naval aviation history drew to a close recently aboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) with the last recovery of an F-14 *Tomcat* from a combat mission.

Piloted by CAPT William G. Sizemore II, commander, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8, Fighter Squadron (VF) 213's aircraft 204 was trapped at 12:35 a.m. and marked one of the final stages of the Navy's transition from the F-14 to F/A-18 E/F *Super Hornet*.

"It's the end of an era and it just kind of worked out that I was the last trap," said Sizemore. "This is one of the best airplanes ever built, and it's sad to see it go away. It's just a beautiful airplane. It's powerful, it has presence and it just looks like the ultimate fighter."

LT Bill Frank, a VF-31 pilot, also took part in the last mission, and is credited with being the last pilot to ever drop a bomb from an F-14 *Tomcat*.

"We were called on to drop, and that's what we did," said Frank. "It's special and it's something I can say I did, but what's more important is the work of the Sailors who made it possible. They have worked so hard during this cruise to make every *Tomcat* operational."

"I don't think there is anything better than a *Tomcat*, but it's probably a good time for it to go away," said Senior Chief Aviation Machinist's Mate (AW) Gene Casterlin, VF-31. "The Navy is getting smaller and more efficient, and it will only get harder to maintain the *Tomcat*. But no matter what, the *Tomcat* is the sexiest airplane in the sky."



Photo by PH3 Randall Damm

During their final deployment with TR, VF-31 and 213 collectively completed 1,163 combat sorties totaling 6,876 flight hours, and dropped 9,500 pounds of ordnance during reconnaissance, surveillance, and close air support missions in support of OIF.

"As we near the end of the *Tomcat's* last deployment, we are proud of our legacy and take solace in the fact that the *Tomcat's* is going out at the top of its game, but also regret saying farewell to an old, revered and trusted friend," said CDR Richard LaBranche, VF-31 commanding officer.

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Murphy is assigned to the public affairs office, USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71).



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