

DECEMBER 2008

ALL HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY



BATTLE GROUP IN THE SAND



[On the Front Cover]
 During combat scenario training, Fire Control Officer Ensign Carrie Hovland of Greensboro, Md., has the opportunity to work with live radars at the Ship Self-Defense System Training Facility at Wallops Island, Va.
 Photo by MC1(AW) R. Jason Brunson

[Next Month]
 The new year brings the 2009 Owners' and Operators' Manual to a mail room near you.

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For an HSL-44 air crewman or pilot, there is no such thing as a routine mission. They aren't limited to any specific mission or skill set. They carry out missions that run the gamut of SH-60B capabilities, take them across the globe at a moment's notice and demand a constant state of readiness for the Sailors assigned there. In the helicopter community, HSL-44 is the jack-of-all-trades.

Photo by Lt. Justin Cooper

18 Battle Group in the Sand



Wallops Island houses two fully operational ship replica facilities, which are regularly used in training and battle group interoperability testing. Both facilities have control centers that can support test and training operations on their own or in conjunction with each other to form the "Battle Group in the Sand."

Photo by MC1(AW) R. Jason Brunson

24 The Portrait of Family Readiness

When a Sailor deploys, two parallel stories are created in the same space of time. The Sailor's story is about taking on America's challenges abroad, while never ceasing to be brothers, sisters, fathers and mothers to the loved ones they must temporarily leave behind. For military family members on the homefront, the story is about overcoming the daily challenge separation brings and dealing with the stress of having a loved one in harm's way.

Photo by MC3(AW/SW) Jhi Scott



AOAN Jessica Jefferson attaches cables to a crate of ammunition as a helo lifts cargo off the flight deck of USS *George Washington* (CVN 73) during a weapons transfer with the USNS *Shasta* (T-AE 33).

Photo by MCSN Anthony R. Martinez



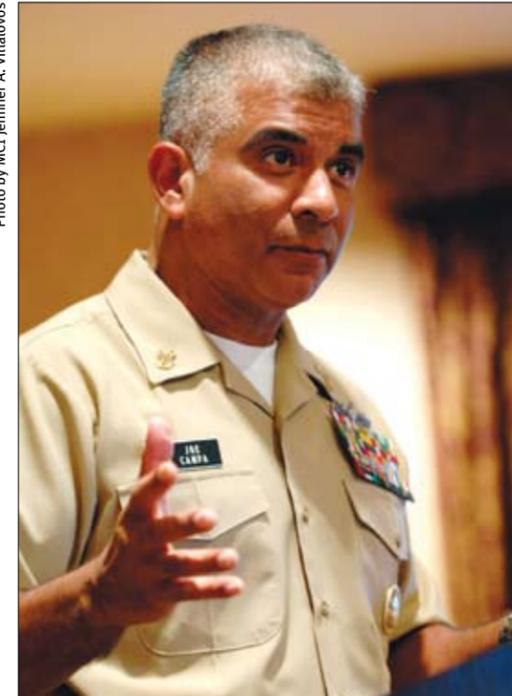
Speaking with Sailors

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

Shipmates,

I've reached the end of my Navy career. After nearly 30 years wearing the uniform of a United States Sailor, I've decided the time has come to go ashore one last time. As I do, I want you to know what an honor it has been to serve you as the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy.

The memories I'll take with me are not those of personal achievements or accomplishments. What I'll remember most are the friendships forged at sea and



▲ Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (SW/FMF) retires after nearly 30 years of naval service. Campa, who assumed the duties July 10, 2006, said he feels an immense sense of pride at the opportunities he's been provided to lead the Navy's enlisted force.

the leaders who influenced me, who saw something in me that I hadn't seen in myself.

A great leader told me something when I took this job. He said, "be bold." I would pass that on to all of you. There is no limit on the potential of a United States Sailor. You belong to a generation that history will look back on as one that changed the face of our Navy. The opportunities you have in front of you are endless. But you can't sit back and wait for them. Be bold. Lead your fellow Sailors to success.

I've had the privilege of visiting you at sea and in some of the world's most dangerous places. I've visited you in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa, and I've seen you take on jobs none of us could have imagined you'd be doing 10 years ago. I've sat across from Army generals and sergeants major who told me they never had much use for the Navy until a Sailor reported to their unit, and now they want more.

You've introduced a Navy culture and a Sailor's spirit to our sister services. They find that when a Sailor reports aboard their command, what they're getting is a leader and a professional. They're learning what we've known for more than 200 years. Give a Sailor a job and they'll find a way to get it done.

Shipmates, there is no greater honor than leading men and women in service to their country. I've had the privilege to do that and I'll be forever grateful. You are the reason I took this job and the reason I'll look back on it with pride. Your excellence inspired, but never surprised me. I appreciate your candor and you challenged me to be better.

In a few short weeks I'll be leaving. But, thanks to you, the culture and the rest of our great Navy, this experience will stay with me for the rest of my life. I thank you for the support you've given me and for what you continue to do for our Navy and our nation.

I'll miss every one of you. 

All HANDS

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Equal Opportunity and Diversity Key for Navy Success

The theme of this year's Navy Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA) and Diversity Training Symposium, held in Memphis, Tenn., "Accentuate the Positive: Pathway to a Healthier Command Climate," promoted the concept that a healthy organizational climate is critical to mission readiness.

Rear Adm. Scott Hebner, assistant commander, Navy Personnel Command for Career Management, spoke to an audience of approximately 300 EOAs, command managed equal opportunity (CMEO) officers, command master chiefs and civilians, during this event.

"Equal opportunity and diversity are both very important elements of our Navy total force and are an absolute necessity as we go forward to continue to remain highly competitive with the private sector workforce," said Hebner.

"Everyone is different. Diversity is based on the concept of recognizing and embracing these differences. We must respect and encourage those differences to further our mission and to remain the best."

The primary goal of the symposium was to conduct professional development training for command-level EOAs, CMEOs and other leaders who address equal opportunity and diversity issues.

"We are way more diverse now than we were when I was on my first ship," said Cmdr. Bill Garren, executive officer, Navy Recruiting District (NRD) Atlanta, a prior-enlisted limited duty officer who has served more than 30 years in the Navy.

The Navy continues to demonstrate its commitment to equal opportunity and diversity through continued training extended to its Sailors and civilians.

"It has been very enlightening. There have been some great speakers including the CNO's advisor for diversity, who shared the CNO's guidance," said Chief Electrician's Mate (SW/AW) Jeffery Sampson, CMEO for NRD Atlanta.

The CNO's guidance on diversity includes driving toward a Navy that reflects the face of the nation.

"An area that's of great interest to me, of great focus to me, is the issue of diversity within our military. The military of the United States must reflect the nation. We have to work today to put in place the demographics of 40 years from now," said Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead, earlier this year.

For more information about equal opportunity and diversity in the Navy visit: www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/Diversity or www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/EqualOpportunity.

Story by MC2(AW) LaTunya Howard, Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

Navy Announces Updates to IA/GSA Assignment Policies

The Navy announced updates to the Individual Augmentee Manpower Management (IAMM) and Global War on Terrorism Support Assignment (GSA) programs, the two programs used for manning the Navy's joint manning doctrine requirements.

"Our efforts are focused on meeting our operational and



Photo by MC3 Tyler Jones

▲ Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead speaks to Sailors during an all hands call aboard the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Russell (DDG 59).

GWOT support requirements, while providing our Sailors and their families the support they deserve," said Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson, III, Chief of Naval Personnel.

"Our goal remains to move the majority of GWOT assignments into normal PCS rotation window; increase predictability and stability for our Sailors and their families; and improve manning stability at the unit level," added Ferguson.

NAVADMIN 276/08 provides updates on follow-on detailing, IA advancement rates, suitability screening, enlisted and junior officer IA/GSA assignments, and it also discusses the effect of Status of Forces Agreements on GSA Sailors whose families wish to remain overseas.

Advancement data show that IA/GSA Sailors have a higher overall average advancement rate than Sailors who have not served an IA/GSA. In the most recent chief petty officer selection

board, IA/GSA Sailors had a higher-than-average selection rates to chief. Selection boards are directed to give favorable consideration to those candidates displaying superior performance while serving in direct support of GWOT.

The NAVADMIN lists detailing guarantees for junior officers in pay grades 0-1 to 0-3 who complete an IA or GSA tour from shore slates. Guarantees include choice of fleet concentration area or homeport upon completion of a GSA/IA tour, and slating credit, which ranks an officer who has completed an IA/GSA above peers with similar qualifications and fitness reports.

The NAVADMIN discusses options for Sailors who wish to have their families remain overseas while serving on the GSA. In those instances where a Sailor is disadvantaged by GSA, and the overseas commander agrees to host family members

while the Sailor is on the IA, IA management module (IAMM) may be allowed in lieu of GSA orders. Requests for IAMM vice GSA orders from overseas Sailors must be made to detailers during the orders negotiation process and must be positively endorsed by the command indicating sponsorship for the entire IA tour.

Sailors interested in serving an IA or GSA should review NAVADMIN 276/08 in its entirety. The NAVADMIN can be found under messages at www.npc.navy.mil.

Additional guidance is also available in NAVADMINs 002/08 Individual Augmentee Manpower Management Business Rules and 003/08 GSA Detailing Business Rules.

Story by MCC(SW) Maria Yager, Naval Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

DOD Authorizes Adult Family Members to Return to Bahrain

Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT), in cooperation with the American Embassy in Bahrain, announced that DOD personnel permanently assigned in Bahrain are authorized to be accompanied by adult family members.

This decision marks a change to the DOD policy that has been in place since July 2004 when families were required to relocate following security concerns.

"We are extremely pleased with the policy change," said Vice Adm. Bill Gortney, commander,

U.S. Naval Forces Central Command. "The return of our adult family members reinforces the security and stability of the region, demonstrates our enduring commitment to Bahrain, and will make the quality of life for our service members and DOD civilians even better."

School-age dependents and below school-age dependents will be considered at a later date, after the DOD Education Activity completes its supplemental support review.

DOD personnel currently serve 12-month unaccompanied tours in Bahrain, with some assignments designated as 18-month tours. This authorization will return accompanied tours to 24 months.

Story Courtesy of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, Bahrain.

Physical Readiness Program Updated

According to NAVADMIN 277/08, the Navy has made progress in attaining a culture of fitness, and announces several policy revisions to strengthen the Navy Physical Readiness Program (PRP).

"Navy Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA) failures have decreased more than 50 percent during the past four years. We're really seeing a change in culture and change in lifestyle. Better fitness ultimately leads to better quality of life, better performance and better readiness," said Rear Adm. Daniel P. Holloway, director, Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education, (N-13).

In recent years, the Navy

Aviation Machinist's Mate 2nd Class (AW) Jesse L. Alvarado Sr., assigned to Fleet Readiness Center, Norfolk, recently received the Samuel T. Northern Military Citizen of the Year award in recognition for his service as a volunteer firefighter and a Cub Scout leader. He completed 475 off-duty hours of community service and earned the title of 'Rookie of the Year' from the Chesapeake Fire Department.



"My head is spinning right now. It feels good to win this award," said Alvarado. "I hope it inspires others to push the bar and achieve greater things than I have."

"He has a special talent of being able to balance his work life, his family life and his community life all in one and still be extremely effective at all three," said Command Master Chief Timmy R. Collie, Fleet Readiness Center, Norfolk. "He is the epitome of today's Navy Sailor. He's extremely well rounded."

Alvarado was chosen from among 13 finalists whose contributions to the Hampton Roads community had gone above and beyond.

"We are lucky to have a generation of people who want to be a part of something bigger than themselves. They don't ask for much, and they give so much," said Adm. Jonathan Greenert, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

"Without the support of the military, both economically and their service to the community, Hampton Roads wouldn't be the great area that it is," said Ruthie Goodbow, chair of Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, Norfolk division.

Story by MC3 Mandy Hunsucker, Fleet Public Affairs Center Atlantic, Norfolk.

has promoted fitness through programs and policies. The addition of elliptical and stationary bike options for the cardio portion of the PFA was welcomed by many Sailors. A general military training program on Navy Knowledge Online in 2008 provides Sailors greater insight for physical training and preparing for the PFA.

"Since 2005, the Navy has made significant strides to support and encourage physical fitness," said Holloway, citing the addition of new testing options. "The majority of Navy personnel performs the PFA semi-annually and can easily meet or exceed

the minimum physical fitness standards. I challenge each of you to continue the excellent progress we've made to improve Navy's overall physical fitness for the improved health and readiness of the force."

The new NAVADMIN builds on the Navy's culture of fitness and supports the rigors of shipboard life, global missions and individual augmentees, according to Holloway.

The changes announced in NAVADMIN 277/08 include: Effective Oct. 1, 2008, unless the most recent PFA was passed, Sailors who have failed two PFAs in the past three years



▲ Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jeffrey Lindaman steadies the fuel probe before it's hoisted to USS *Halsey* (DDG 97) during a refueling at sea aboard USS *Peleliu* (LHA 5). *Halsey* implemented a fuel conservation program while deployed, saving as much of 900 gallons of fuel daily.

Photo by MC2 Dustin Kelling

◀ The firing detail aboard USS *Ohio* (SSGN 726) fires three volleys as part of a burial-at-sea in the Philippine Sea for World War II veteran BM2 Eugene Stanley Morgan, one of the 316 survivors of the sinking of USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) in the Philippine Sea, July 30, 1945. Morgan died June 18, 2008.

Photo by Lt. Gabriel Hernandez



▲ Dr. Eliecer Cruz Alvarez, right, a general surgeon with the Dominican National Police, and Lt. Cmdr. Heliodoro Andres Salas Cablera, an anesthesiologist with the Dominican Republic navy, embarked aboard USS *Kearsarge* (LHD 3), conduct a cooperative surgery with medical personnel.

Photo by MCSA Joshua Adam Nuzzo

▲ MU2 Carlton Shippee plays the trombone as he marches up 5th Avenue in New York City during the 64th Annual Columbus Day Parade. The parade is sponsored by the Columbus Citizens Foundation annually as part of the Columbus Day celebration. This year's festivities commemorated the Great White Fleet Voyage in 1907, when President Theodore Roosevelt sent out 16 battleships around the world on a goodwill mission to display American naval power.

Photo by MC3 Kenneth R. Hendrix

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shall not be assigned to overseas, pre-commissioning, instructor duty, special programs billets, or Global War on Terror Support Assignments. Special programs billets include recruit division commander, recruiting duty, joint duty and Washington-based staff.

Additionally, individuals who have not passed the current PFA and have failed three times in four years, will not be allowed a short-term extension for the purpose of passing the PFA.

Software upgrades to the Physical Readiness Information Management System (PRIMS) will allow commands to enter all waivers, including current progress and readiness waivers. Commands are required to enter all PFA waivers into PRIMS. Current waivers must be entered no later than Dec. 15, 2008.

This upgrade will allow the Navy to track the progress of Sailors who need administrative separation processing due to multiple PFA failures.

The Navy will discontinue waivers for progress, effective Oct. 1, 2009. The present requirement for processing for administrative separations for three PFA failures within a four-year period remains.

For more information read NAVADMIN 277/08, posted on the NPC Web site at www.npc.navy.mil.

Story by MCC(SW) Maria Yager, Naval Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

DOD Develops Compensation & Benefits Handbook

DOD recently announced it has developed a comprehensive handbook describing compensation and other benefits service members and their families would be entitled to upon separation or retirement as a result of serious injury or illness.

"The Compensation and Benefits Handbook is the one source of information that covers everything a seriously ill and injured service member will need during his or her recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration," said Ronald A. Winter, principal deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for manpower and reserve affairs.

The handbook was compiled in cooperation with the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and the Social Security Administration. Additionally; there are references to assistance provided by other governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations.

"The handbook describes the disability eligibility process, various program qualifications, application procedures, and numerous resources with associated contact information," said Sharon Gunselman, policy and resource analyst for the Department of Defense

Web sites and toll-free numbers are provided, and the electronic version includes hyperlinks. The electronic version of the handbook will be updated frequently and the hard copy of the compensation and benefits

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▲ Following the homecoming for USS *McInerney* (FFG 8) to Naval Station Mayport, Fla., after a six-month deployment, a baby falls asleep in her father's arms.

Photo by MC1 Leah Stiles

► Sailors on the stern gate of USS *Rushmore* (LSD 47) await the arrival of a small craft during an early morning passenger transfer off the coast of British Columbia.

Photo by MC3 Damien Horvath



▲ HM3 Edwin L. Daniel, assigned to 3rd platoon, Fox Company, 2nd Battalion 7th Marine Regiment, examines an Afghan citizen before dispensing aspirin while on a patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. The 2nd Battalion is a 7th Marines reinforced light infantry Battalion based out of Twentynine Palms, Calif., and deployed to Afghanistan to support *Operation Enduring Freedom*.

Photo by Sgt. Freddy G. Cantu

▼ Seabees assigned to Alpha Company, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 7, erect concrete barriers as part of a project to complete a new motor pool in al Anbar Province, Iraq.

Photo by MC2 Michael B. Lavender

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handbook will be updated annually.

The electronic version of the handbook can be found on the five Web sites listed below:

<http://turbotap.org>

<https://www.nko.navy.mil>

<http://www.npc.navy.mil>

<https://www.aw2.army.mil>

Story courtesy of DOD, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Pacific Fleet Commander Addresses Motorcycle Safety

In his latest edition of the "Rat-Pac Report" podcast and blog, posted Oct. 15, Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet in discussing motorcycle safety and the responsibilities of those who ride such vehicles.

"The Fleet Master Chief and I had a recent discussion regarding motorcycles and the impact that they're having on our Navy," said Adm. Robert F. Willard. "We recently experienced four Sailor deaths in two weeks due to motorcycle accidents. This has been a particularly bad year for motorcycles and motorcycle safety."

According to Navy Safety Center, personal motor vehicles (PMV) accidents resulted in 111 deaths in FY2008. Of those, 58 occurred on motorcycles and 51 were on sport bikes. Sport bikes differ from standard motorcycles in that many weigh less than 450 pounds, come with engines 600cc and higher, are tuned for racing and are highly maneuverable.

"We are still not doing our

part as Sailors in ensuring we are adhering to the rules and regulations governing this extremely important safety matter," said Fleet Master Chief Tom Howard. "If you own a motorcycle of any sort, it is your responsibility to have the proper personal equipment (PPE) and the proper training to operate that bike. Whether you ride the bike on base or off, PPE and training are required."

Riders are required to take a Motorcycle Safety Foundation safety course in order to ride on or off base. Additionally, the Navy and Marine Corps have teamed with the foundation and developed a course tailored specifically for sport bikes. The goal is to reduce the risk of injury and death.

"This is something that we must contain, and you have to help one another do it," said Willard. "I need every Sailor that operates a motorcycle and every Sailor that knows a Sailor that operates a motorcycle, to support one another to ensure that we're adhering to all of the training."

The Basic Rider Course (BRC) is a three day course required for all military service members riding a motorcycle on or off base. Military Sport-bike Rider Course (MSRC) is a one-day course designed specifically for all sport bike riders.

For more information on these courses contact your local safety office or visit <http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil>.

The latest podcast and blog are available for download on the Pacific Fleet Web site, www.cpf.navy.mil.

A new "Rat-Pac Report" is scheduled to appear on the site weekly.

Story by MC1 Luke J. Perry, Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor.

HSL-44 Sailors install a weapons system on the exterior of an SH-60B helo.

HSL-44

Jack-of-All-Trades

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

Inside the Navy's helicopter community, there are several distinct squadron classes, each with specific missions and capabilities. These squadron classes add their own unique warfare capabilities to the Navy's total arsenal.



▲ Sailors listen during a training session in the HSL-44 hangar at Naval Station Mayport, Fla.



▲ According to the HSL-44 skipper, Cmdr. Mike Patterson, "The real story is the guys who get the aircraft ready to fly," day-in and day-out.

The men and women of Helicopter Squadron Light (HSL) 44 are a breed apart. They aren't limited to any specific mission or skill set. They carry out missions that run the gamut of SH-60B capabilities that take them across the globe at a moment's notice and demand a constant state of readiness for the Sailors assigned there. In the helicopter community, HSL-44 is the jack-of-all-trades.

"One of the challenges we have that we really enjoy is having to train for an extremely diverse range of missions," said HSL-44 Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Mike Patterson.

For an HSL-44 air crewman or pilot, there is no such thing as a routine mission. Operations change by the day, and they are expected to perform with tactical precision whether performing a search-and-rescue mission or supplying the troops aboard a frigate by vertical replenishment (VERTREP).

"Our sister communities focus on one specific mission, like the HSC [helicopter sea combat] community really focuses on VERTREP; the jet guys do attack and reconnaissance; and the HS [helicopter anti-submarine] guys do carrier operations and sea search and rescues," said Lt. Derek Bintz, HSL-44 SH-60B pilot.

"We do a little bit of everything. One

day, we're shooting *Hellfire* missiles, then we'll turn around and do a VERTREP or an emergency medical evacuation, and the next day we'll be doing a personnel transfer [for] an admiral. Our community is really diverse, and that is unique in the Navy helicopter community because we have secondary [missions] that span all kinds of operations."

HSL-44 deploys in very small numbers. When a mission is announced, a detachment is quickly established from the men and women at the squadron's headquarters at Naval Station Mayport, Fla.

"HSL is a [different] community because we don't go with the typical interdeployment readiness cycle, where the command works toward a deployment as a unit," said HSL-44's Command Master Chief (AW/SW) Mark Dubiel. "Most squadrons work up together with an [air] wing or a ship, and



▲ Sailors go over the maintenance schedule for an SH-60B helo.

► An HSL-44 Det. 8 Sailor is lowered from an SH-60B helicopter during search-and-rescue training.

the whole squadron develops that way. HSLs, on the other hand, work on what we call a detachment concept. We're constantly in flux. We have Sailors in each phase of a deployment cycle, so we have to place a priority on properly managing our Sailors. It's a leadership challenge, and it can also be tough on Sailors."

Patterson said the small detachments that deploy eventually become a very tight group that depends on every detachment member to



U.S. Navy photo

carry their own weight.

"One of the challenges of an HSL squadron is that we're not all together as a unit in the training and deployment cycle," said Patterson. "HSL-44 is approximately 350 Sailors strong, and our detachments are made up of 25 to 28 people and are a mini-squadron. They have an OIC [officer in charge], maybe four or five pilots; a maintenance chief is usually the LCPO

[leading chief petty officer], three first class petty officers, and the rest are all maintainers. They live, breathe and fight as a one or two-plane detachment. They do everything that a squadron does within that little group."

Four HSL-44 squadrons are currently deployed to missions across the globe.

"We go to frigates, destroyers and cruisers – all small boys," said Patterson.

"I have two detachments that are deployed right now with the *Theodore Roosevelt* Strike Group. I have one detachment on USS *McInerney* (FFG 8) that is finishing up a counternarcotics terrorism deployment, and we have another detachment deployed aboard USS *Doyle* (FFG 39). They just got underway for seven weeks for a joint-warrior exercise in the Northern Atlantic."

Dubiel said some of the same things that make life in an HSL squadron so challenging are the very same things that develop unmatched leaders for the Navy.

"Of all of the communities I've been in, I think HSL is a great opportunity for midgrade Sailors to develop their leadership skills," said Dubiel. "They go out to a ship or a detachment, and they're thrown into leadership responsibilities earlier than maybe they [would've been] in other communities. When our guys go to sea, they deploy in a very small detachment – usually only around 18 enlisted in the det," said Dubiel.

"You have to be a performer. Everybody is key. You're either in your rack or you're up working on an aircraft. In a traditional squadron, where everyone goes to sea together, you may have three or four airmen from each rate on a shift, but in an HSL squadron, it's



Photo by Lt. Justin Cooper

vital that everyone contributes in a big way," Dubiel said.

The Sailors of HSL-44 wake up in an ever-changing world and must be prepared to tackle new challenges each day.

"On a two-plane det to the [Persian] Gulf when we detach with a strike group, our primary missions are anti-surface, anti-submarine (ASW), but our secondary missions include medical evacuations, personnel transfers [and] vertical replenishment operations," said Bintz. "In our primary roles, we function as a sensor extension of the ship – that is the anti-

surface part. For the ASW platform, we track known submarine contacts."

One of the most unique missions HSL-44 supports as the wings for small boys is the counternarcotic operations in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific Ocean.

"We've seen a lot of success in counternarcotics terrorism missions. With the recent stand-up of 4th Fleet, we now have an increased focus on what is going on in that area of the world. Our detts. are deploying with night-vision goggles and forward-looking infrared; things that make it easier to detect

◀ **Maintaining the squadron's SH-60B helos is a never-ending job, whether on land or at sea.**

drug-carrying vessels. We had a det that returned about five months ago, and they had four busts during their time in the southern area of operations. That's \$250 million of drugs that were kept off our streets as well as a number of people who were detained for eventual prosecution. That mission is awesome, and it's emerging as it continues to grow, and it's an exciting place to be."

Working in conjunction with the ship crew, embarked Coast Guard law enforcement detachments and other agencies, HSL-44's SH-60B helos are used to track and detect drug-runners before their cargo can be sold on American soil.

"When we deploy to the Caribbean or off the coast of South America and focus on anti-drug, counternarcotics operations, we track fast boats and fast movers with cocaine or other narcotics. We work in conjunction with our ship and the Coast Guard," said Bintz.

The squadron also plays a pivotal role in support of the combatant's commander mission in the Central Command theater.

"We have involvement in the [war on terror], particularly in the 5th Fleet area of operations," said Patterson. "We do lots of patrols and maintain the safety and security of Iraqi oil platforms."

The squadron also plays a vital role in force protection as HSL-44 helos are used to guard military personnel and assets as they traverse some of the most dangerous maritime straits and channels.

"Whenever we make a critical strike group transit, like through the Strait of Hormuz or the Strait of Gibraltar – any vulnerable position – our aircraft are either flying or ready to respond if there is a threat to the strike group."

The squadron has both sea and shore duty billets, but the personnel assigned to HSL-44 on a shore rotation are expected to contribute every bit as much as their sea-rotation counterparts.

"When you come to an HSL squadron on shore duty, it's challenging. What I tell



Photo by Lt. Justin Cooper

▲ **An HSL-44 SH-60B drops a torpedo. One of the squadron's primary missions is anti-submarine warfare operations.**

my shore-duty guys is that it's like you're on sea duty," said Dubiel. "My responsibility is ensuring the success of the detachments that are deployed so that means that if one of our detachments needs help on a Saturday, we don't wait until Monday morning. We'll bring somebody in; we'll ship them something; we'll look up the information they need; and we'll communicate with them. In terms of focus and dedication, my shore [personnel have] a sea-duty mentality."

According to their commanding officer, the Sailors turning wrenches and making sure the birds are able to perform their missions at sea are the backbone of HSL-44.

"The real story is the guys who get the aircraft ready to fly," said Patterson. "They work 12 on and 12 off, every day while they are underway. It's because of their commitment first and foremost that we're able to accomplish our mission time after time." ❏

McCamack is assigned to Defense Media Activity - Anacostia, Washington, D.C.



◀ **PRAN Eric Tysinger gets his gear ready during pre-flight.**

BATTLE GROUP IN THE SAND

Story and photos by MC1(AW) R. Jason Brunson and MC3 Chelsea Kennedy

FOR SAILORS, THE SIGHT OF ANOTHER SHIP PASSING ON THE HORIZON IS A FAMILIAR AND OFTEN WELCOME SIGHT, BUT THE LAST THING A SAILOR EXPECTS TO SEE WHEN LOOKING TOWARD LAND IS THAT FAMILIAR SILHOUETTE OF A U.S. NAVY SHIP'S MAST COMPLETE WITH SWEEPING RADARS JUTTING OUT OVER THE SEA WALL.

Though many Sailors may never have heard of Wallops Island or the "Battle Group in the Sand," its impact on the fleet and the way we equip and fight our ships is enormous.

Wallops Island houses two fully-operational ship replica facilities, which are regularly used in training and battle group interoperability testing.

One is an *AEGIS* facility, which currently replicates all the *AEGIS* cruisers and destroyers active in the fleet today and can support four independent combat systems laboratory configurations.

The second is the Ship Self-Defense (SSD) Facility, which replicates the MK-1 Ship Self-Defense System (SSDS) deployed aboard LSD 41-class ships and supports development of the MK-2 SSDS planned for aircraft carriers, amphibious transport docks and amphibious assault ships. The SSD Facility can simultaneously support two lab configurations.

Both facilities have control centers that can

support test and training operations on their own or in conjunction with each other. These form the "Battle Group in the Sand."

Surface Combat Systems Center (SCSC) former Commanding Officer, Capt. Michael D. Anderson, said Wallops Island is much more than just an unusual sight. The men and women of SCSC employ a powerful combination of geography, airspace, combat systems equipment and know-how to provide a broad range of direct support opportunities to the Navy's current and future warfighting capabilities.

The facility's unique location on a barrier island of Virginia's Eastern Shore – just 150 yards from the ocean – gives them the capability of radiation or the ability to track live targets on and above the water, which is a capability other facilities around the United States do not have.

"We can simulate every CIC

[Combat Information Center] environment in the fleet, so we can cater to what they need," said Fire Controlman 1st Class (SW) Scott Roane, the leading petty officer for the *AEGIS* Weapons System division. "We can go as far as to simulate any location in the world. If you are [operating] in the Middle East or off the coast of Korea, we can simulate that."

Roane noted it's not just their ability to "go live," but also the various partnerships they have on board and the connectivity they can achieve with other assets, that allows them to be very versatile.

"We work directly with the customers to test and install new



► **Wallops Island** facilities are located just 150 yards from the ocean. This allows them to easily track live targets.

Photo courtesy of Surface Combat Systems Center, Wallops Island



hardware and software here at the site with all of the different AEGIS baselines that encompass the Navy's fleet – the cruisers, destroyers, all the newest baselines," Roane said.

In addition, Roane noted, they are working on retrofitting cruisers with updated hardware and will soon be installing a new lab to support the reconfiguration.

Roane gestured up and down the shore line to the SSD facility then toward the ocean and added, "Because, we can go out to our carrier right across there, go to our cruiser right over here and because of the fact we have the contractors and the U.S. Navy stationed here, the customer support level is very high. The customer is No.1 here."

Roane said for the most part, what their customers do is develop new hardware and

software configurations to introduce to the fleet, which they bring to Wallops Island because of the facility's live simulation ability. He said that is also why they have such a rich training environment for Sailors.

SCSC is the only land-based facility that can perform all the sophisticated mission support roles they currently have underway, Anderson said. This capability makes Wallops Island the perfect environment to conduct research and development of combat systems equipment. This also allows them to provide hands-on training for the Sailors who will actually fight the ship.

Operations Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) Deltria Antoinette Hines of New Bern, N.C., is one of those Sailors. She is assigned to PCU *Truxton* (DDG 103) and recently went

through the AEGIS Console Operators Course. She said her experience on board her previous ship, USS *Nitze* (DDG 94), gave her a small head start for the class, but she still gained a great deal at Wallops Island.

"I learned a lot. I only sat one watchstation on my last ship, and in this class you learn all the watchstations in CIC," Hines said. "By the time I get to go back to my ship, I'll be able to work with every single console. I'm leaving with a lot more knowledge than I came with."

Hines said she expects to be assigned as air intercept coordinator when she reports to *Truxton*, so the experience she gained while training in that position was of particular value to her.

OSSN Cassandra Tran of Provincetown, Mass., had recently completed "A" school and was also a student in the Console Operators Course, and en route to her first command, PCU *Stockdale* (DDG 106).

"I haven't used the equipment on a ship, yet. I've only gone to the schools for it. I'm waiting to see what happens," Tran said.

She said having less than a year in the Navy, and having never been aboard a ship, made much of the material hard for her to grasp. The new terminology was a challenging, but she added, her classmates and instructors helped her through it.

"Otherwise it was pretty interesting, learning how to use the consoles," Tran said. "To actually see the consoles and have the chance to go to a training environment like they have the DDG set-ups here, allowed me to make my mistakes and learn how to use the systems here instead of on the ship."

Lt. Robert Wiley, the officer in charge of training for Center for Surface Combat Systems (CSCS) Det., Wallops Island, said the AEGIS Console Operator Course is mainly geared toward providing training for

pre-commission ships and personnel from ships that are being upgraded.

"Many students are operations specialists coming here straight out of "A" school or are transferring to an AEGIS platform ship from a non-AEGIS ship," Wiley said. "We put them through an intense three-week course that teaches them the vocabulary and the interactions between the different elements of the AEGIS Combat System."

Students also gain knowledge on the weapons control system and AEGIS command and display system.

"Our primary mission is to bring them up to speed on the system before they get to the ship," Wiley said.

He said the majority of the personnel who come to the console operator course eventually return to Wallops Island with their fellow CIC crew members, for the AEGIS team training course. The two-week team training course is where they focus more on tactics and procedures. He said it prepares them to function together as a well-rounded combat team with not only operations specialists, but also fire controlmen, sonar technicians, cryptologic technicians, as well as the officers who sit in the warfare commander positions.

The courses are advanced level training and can be especially challenging for the students who come through straight out of "A" school.

"On the flip side of that," Wiley said, "We can train them the way they should be trained, up front, before they develop bad habits."

AEGIS Console Operator Course Supervisor, OSC(SW) Timothy Smith also attached to CSCS Detachment said the students are generally very motivated when they get to Wallops Island.

"They want to train, and they want to learn," Smith said. "They love the hands-on aspect of the training they get here."



▲ **FC1(SW) Scott Roane, leading petty officer of the AEGIS Weapons System division, works with contractors to maintain, operate and provide customer support for the commands AEGIS radar and weapons systems.**



▲ **Before his promotion, Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Walsh, tactical action officer aboard USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) attended the Aegis team training group before deploying. He said, "The training at Wallops Island is difficult if not impossible to duplicate at the unit level."**



▲ **OSSN Cassandra Tran of Provincetown, Mass., attended the console operators course at Wallops Island en route to her first command, PUC Stockdale (DDG 106). She said being able to see the consoles for the first time in a training environment allowed her to make her mistakes and learn how to use the systems there, instead of on the ship.**

THE FLEET PERSPECTIVE

The place where every minute of this training translates into faster, more precise responses is CIC, the ship's brain. Here, each piece of information converges to provide the picture of the battle space, and every command must be executed with precision to ensure mission accomplishment.

"The training at Wallops Island is difficult if not impossible to duplicate at the unit level," said Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Walsh, tactical action officer aboard USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76). "Think of it as varsity level training where

everyone is qualified but it gets us to the next level of understanding on both the weapon system and the means in which to apply it in defense of the ship."

The training honed the skills of *Ronald Reagan* Sailors as they prepared to deploy.

"Through the training, I [learned] how to optimally use the system I operate. This includes proper configuration to combat an anticipated threat. There was a lot of information regarding system capabilities and operation," said Fire Controlman 2nd Class (SW/AW) Robert Hinman, an NSC (NSSMS)

Supervisor Console) operator aboard *Ronald Reagan*. “As the NSC, I was responsible for receiving status of target tracking from each of the TIC (tracker illuminator console) operators and passing as necessary to the DWC (defense weapons coordinator).”

Hinman received training on the new capabilities of NATO *Sea Sparrow*, which were added during the ESSM upgrade before the carrier deployed.

“It is my belief that the ship and my team have gained a lot from this experience. By providing an optimal environment for learning along with the instruction of experts, I believe the training at Wallops provided us with a level of training that could not be achieved aboard a ship utilizing BFTT [battle force tactical training],” said Hinman. “I feel that the training was important because it gave us an opportunity to focus on making our team more combat effective, without all the distractions of a typical day aboard a ship.”

The benefits of the training at Wallops Island do not stop with the students.

“The training allowed the members that attended to train other crew members on particulars that are not necessary fully explained in text, also of course is the ability to ask questions for further detailed discussion on why it works the way it does,” added Walsh.

BUILDING CAPABILITIES

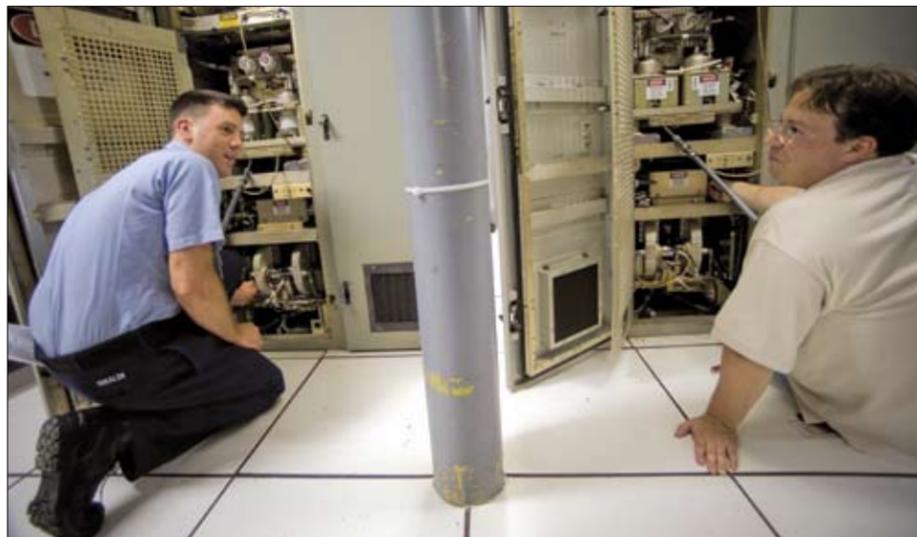
According to Anderson there are three key elements from the Chief of Naval Operation’s priorities that are embodied in the command’s mission and carried out through the hard work his crew at Wallops Island do every day.

He said the first is to build the future Navy.

“We need to build 313 ships. We do that here two ways, one is by helping to deliver the new systems that will go onto the ships of the future,” Anderson said. “The second way you get the 313 ships is by keeping what you have.”

He said working in ship modernization, helping to bring the new combat systems baselines forward, certifying them, getting the products associated with them, solving fleet problem and providing distance support are all part of the daily work at Wallops that helps keep ships out there working well on the waterfront, so they will stay around longer.

“We support surface combat systems at the platform level, at the battle group level and are now looking forward to the joint task force and coalition level,” Anderson said.



▲ FC1(SW) Dan Rinaldi of Marlboro, N.J., and Greg McCord, a contracted senior field engineer, work together conducting maintenance on a radar system’s power amplifier.

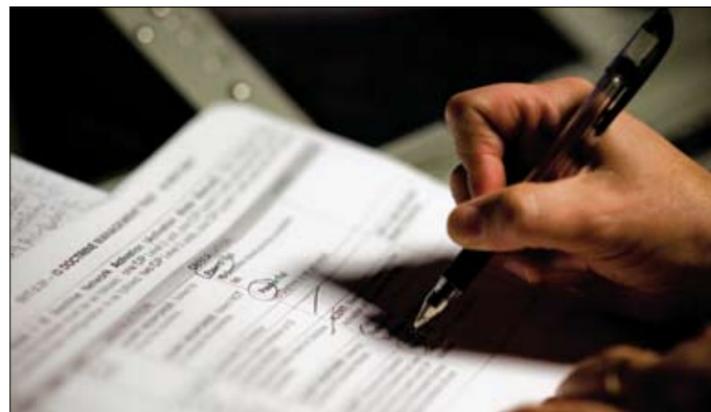
Wallops Island supports combat systems from development to deployment and beyond.

“For example, developers and organizations like Johns Hopkins University’s Applied Physics Lab (APL) come here with new mathematical algorithms, which they connect to a radar signal processor. This helps the developer determine how they will design the next generation of Navy radar,” said Anderson.

He said other developers might take advantage of SCSC’s over-water environment by installing equipment prototypes on the roofs of their ship replica facilities for testing.

SCSC’s staff works with developers from the early stages all the way up to mature programs, which are getting ready for delivery to the fleet. They then do the certification tests and burn-ins (beta testing). SCSC also trains the initial crews of pre-commissioned ships on the new capabilities and validates the training packages, technical manuals and documentation.

“We do the hard scrub and the hard work,”



▲ John Johnston, a contractor from Fredricksburg, Va., records results from tests performed on a cooperative engagement capability system to be installed aboard a destroyer.

Anderson said. “We make sure these systems are really ready for the fleet before they get there.”

On the training side, Anderson said, they provide the same kind of beginning and beyond support. It starts with the arrival of a new capability. Then, the very first training packages get validated. Subsequently, the trainers provide feedback to the developers on what works and what doesn’t work; what the displays need to look like; and how the fleet intends to operate these systems. Next, they move from working at the requirements level through impacting design and maturing the training products.

From this point, Anderson said, they begin training pre-com personnel and fleet training, supporting the console operator courses and



▲ The crew of the combat information center aboard USS *San Antonio* (LPD 17) work with civilian and military subject matter experts conducting battle scenario training. Because the scenario is held in the Ship Self Defense System, team training facility at Wallops Island, Va., the crew can train as they will fight, as a unit with live radars, tracking live targets.

the replacement crews as they start to cycle through.

He added supporting the training pipelines to the fleet, which keeps the Sailors sharp and on the edge, is also something they take very seriously. The objective is to develop the 21st century workforce.

“Obviously there is a lot of training that goes on in house with the students who come through,” Anderson said. “But there is also lot of professional development that happens with our own Sailors here.”

Anderson said having exposure to the civilian workforce, who have been working on these systems their entire lives, working directly with the developers and engineers, gives the Sailors at Wallops broader insight and more expertise to carry back to the fleet with them. ☞

Brunson is assigned to Defense Media Activity – Anacostia, Washington, D.C., and Kennedy is assigned to USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 73).



▲ Wallops Island’s facilities are also used for test and development of new capabilities. In addition, the command supports combat systems at the platform and battle group level and is pursuing joint force and coalition level support possibilities.

► A family portrait of the Peau family prior to HM1(EXW/SW) Fealofani Peau's deployment to Iraq.



The Portrait of Family Readiness

Story by MC2(SW) Elizabeth Vlahos, photos by MC3(AW/SW) Jhi Scott

The deployment of a Sailor creates two parallel stories, each unfolding in the same space of time. The Sailor's story is about taking on America's challenges abroad, while never ceasing to be a brother or sister, father or mother to the loved ones temporarily left behind. For military family members on the homefront, the story is about overcoming the daily challenges and dealing with the stress of having a loved one in harm's way.

For Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (EXW/SW) Fealofani Peau and his family, another chapter of parallel stories is to be revealed in the coming months.

Fealofani's unit, Riverine Squadron (RIVRON) 1, is deploying to Iraq in a matter of days. He's not too worried about the challenges he may face on the job, since this is his second deployment. He knows what to expect as a professional Sailor.

His greatest concern is the well-being of his family while he's away, so the family is doing everything they can to prepare for his deployment before it begins.

Fealofani's wife, Jessica, a former Navy hospital corpsman, and two children, Vianca and Jonathan, must each step into roles usually filled by Fealofani.

For him to be able to fully concentrate on his impending mission, Fealofani needs to be certain his family can tackle any curveball thrown their way while he's gone.

"Fortunately, my wife is an incredible multi-tasker," said Fealofani. "[But] it'll be difficult for her, [especially]

the first month because it takes a little time to adjust and get everything in balance."

With their mother attending school and a younger brother requiring supervision, Fealofani's 15-year-old daughter Vianca said she's ready to take on more responsibility and help out her mom around the house.

"With my mother going to school now, my brother and I have to be more dependent on each other. My mom needs her space to get her homework done. I need to take more responsibility for everything that needs to be done in the house. With [my dad] gone, there's more pressure, and I guess I just have to step up more."

Even though she's prepared for her larger role, Vianca said nothing can replace everything her father does while he's deployed.

"I don't like the fact that he's leaving," said Vianca. "My dad is always there for me, pushing me to do better. He's the one I go to when I have problems – my teenage problems. ... Emotionally, it's just ups and downs. One day, I'm like, 'Oh, my God, my dad's gone. I miss him so

► **HM1(EXW/SW)** Fealofani Peau is normally the first person his son, Jonathan, sees in the morning and the last one he sees at night before going to bed, but that will soon change due to an upcoming deployment. Peau is preparing to deploy to Iraq for the second time in two years. He is attached to Riverine Squadron 1.



much, and I can't stop crying.' The next day, [you realize] it's just another day, and you're going to get through it, and he's going to be back."

For Jessica, her husband's safety is her top priority.

"Of course my No. 1 concern is that he's safe," she said. "He told me the area he's going to this year is a little safer than where he went last year, but there is no safe area in Iraq. I still feel very, very scared."

Jessica said she wants everything in her household to run smoothly while he's away, so Fealofani doesn't have to worry about his family while he's in harm's way.

"I just want to support him all the way, so he doesn't have to worry about us here, and he can just do his job."

anchors Aweigh

The Peau family is a prime example of how today's Navy families are supporting the war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as vital maritime security operations around the world.

It's a scene repeated regularly in the Navy – and has been for more than 200 years. Families – wives, husbands, a child or two maybe, even more sometimes – standing on the pier waving good-bye to their Sailors as a ship pulls away from the pier for an extended deployment. Navy families have always carried their weight with honor and determination.

Extended deployments have been a reality since the days of the Great White Fleet. At any time, approximately 50 percent of Sailors are underway or otherwise deployed away from their families.

The issue of family readiness has come to the forefront of the way the Navy does business. A couple of generations ago, Sailors were expected to put family on the back burner to focus solely on the mission. But, time has shown that a more inclusive approach to family readiness produces better results for the Navy and the families.

"The fleet's readiness is directly tied to the readiness of the Sailors who make up the fleet," said Capt. Joe Hinson, director of U.S.



▲ **HM1(EXW/SW)** Fealofani Peau talks to his daughter, Vianca, over breakfast before going to school.

Fleet Forces' Fleet Training Branch. "The most technologically-dominant platforms in the world are mere skeletons without our professional Sailors serving as their heart and brains."

Family readiness directly affects mission and warfighting readiness. The old, worn-out attitude of "a wife wasn't issued with the seabag" has given way to more enlightened attitudes concerning family readiness.

"If Sailors are not able to focus on their jobs when deployed because their [families are] suffering at home, it's inevitable that the quality of their service will suffer," said Hinson.

In effect, family readiness fleetwide serves as the very keel of the Maritime Strategy.

"Family readiness is part of every Sailor's responsibilities," said Hinson. "Our forces are in high demand, and the flexibility required to provide commanders credible combat power whenever needed, requires Sailors to sustain a high level of family readiness."

Hinson was quick to stress that family readiness should not be solely reserved for "known" deployments, taking into consideration recent deployments to carry out unexpected missions such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

"In today's environment, family readiness must be maintained consistently."

Are they ready?

Before a ship leaves the pier, the crew spends months getting ready for the inevitable cruise. Sailors work hard readying the ship through extended maintenance programs. They train long and hard, readying themselves through work-ups, qualifications and inspections. But what about the families and the loved ones they're leaving behind?

The Navy has a variety of programs to help Sailors like Peau and their families. The programs that assist these families helped position the Navy as a Top 50 employer.

"The Top 50 initiative [recognizes] all that the Navy does in this and other arenas for our total force. The Navy strives to provide our workforce a career that is both professionally and personally rewarding, [and] part of that is through our life/work programs," said Cmdr. Lisa Truesdale, from the office of the Chief of Naval Personnel. "Some of those programs include, but are not limited to: 12 months operational deferment for new mothers; child care centers; IVF reimbursement; telecommuting; paternity leave (new in

Talk, Listen, Connect: Elmo and the Gang Reach Out to Military Families

Story by MC2(SW) Elizabeth Vlahos, photo by MC2(SW/AW) Jason McCammack

Even Elmo gets by with a little help from his friends. He and his lovable furry friends from Sesame Street have been bringing a message of hope, experience and love to military families worldwide.

Sesame Workshop, the brains behind the legendary children's show, has teamed with DoD and Military OneSource to bring to the front lines "Talk, Listen, Connect," or TLC, an outreach initiative specifically targeted to military families.

Since 2006, this initiative has helped military families worldwide communicate with their children when parents deploy and what to expect afterward.

The TLC project was born out the desire to meet unfulfilled needs of military families.

"[Our chief executive officer] said to me, 'Please go do some research, and see what resources are out there for military families, specifically with young children. It seems like there isn't a lot, and it sounds like something we should be doing,'" recalls Lynn Chwatsky, the senior project director for the Sesame Workshop Outreach Division.

Chwatsky and her team did some research, and after speaking to experts and actual military families, the outreach division found a need for materials.

"Back in 2005, the real need we saw was about deployment," Chwatsky recalled, "helping the families cope with the challenges of deployment."

Shortly thereafter, TLC was born.



▲ Elmo and his friends stopped by Naval Station Mayport, Fla., during his recent "Talk, Listen, Connect" tour.

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► Jonathan Peau rides his skateboard in the front yard of his house while his father watches.



▲ HM1(EXW/SW) Fealofani Peau spends time with his children, Vianca and Jonathan, as he prepares for his upcoming deployment.

FY09); career intermission (new in FY09). Additionally, the Navy provides an incredible number of benefits that is on par with or better than most corporate institutions.”

These types of programs allow the Navy to recruit and retain talented people and their families, but when it's time to pack the seabag, Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) has a whole menu of services and support to get Sailors and families through deployments.

With classes focusing on how to get ready for a deployment, how to cope when a parent is away; and what to expect when that parent returns; and resources as the family employment readiness program; personal

financial management; and counseling; the FFSC offers a wealth of services and information to families.

FFSC is also responsible for giving basic training to command ombudsmen. Each command, active duty or Reserve, appoints an ombudsman to maintain communications between the chain of command and the families therein.

“The ombudsman basic training gives the building blocks to structure our role,” said Christine Kiefer, the ombudsman for Navy Operation Support Center (NOSC), Columbus, Ohio. “One of the things I learned was how to get hold of a deployed Sailor in

case of an emergency. We also learned about how to handle crises and plan events.”

The command ombudsman is a volunteer, appointed by the commanding officer and trained to serve as an information link between command leadership and Navy families. Being the ombudsmen of a Reserve unit presents its own unique challenges.

“We have about 600 Sailors spread all over the map, from Iowa to California. About 90 are deployed to places like Iraq and Afghanistan. They do not deploy as a unit,” said Kiefer. “The families left behind could feel pretty isolated.”

Kiefer focuses the bulk of her efforts in supporting the families of deployed Sailors. She helps the NOSC commanding officer to make a monthly call to each family.

“A lot of times what is most needed is a sympathetic ear. They need to know they are not alone and that they're cared for,” she said.

The role that ombudsmen play in family readiness cannot be overstated. They are often instrumental in helping to resolve family issues before the issues require extensive command attention, and they can provide resource referrals when needed. Navy Reserve ombudsmen are fully trained to assist both activated and non-activated families.

Family readiness groups (FRGs) are also an invaluable resource to families of deploying Sailors. FRGs usually consist of fellow military spouses, parents, siblings, relatives and approved friends of military personnel. They are generally organized through a unit before a deployment. They help each other and their children adjust to their Sailors'



▲ HM1(EXW/SW) Fealofani Peau gets a steady hand from his son Jonathan as he tries to mount the skateboard in their driveway.

absence. They also provide a helping hand should a fellow spouse or child suffer a hardship of any kind.

Another program, United Through Reading (UTR), enables deployed parents aboard Navy ships, at air stations abroad and in tents throughout the Middle East to share their love and support with their children by reading books aloud on DVDs. The readings are recorded, then DVDs of the sessions are

delivered to their homes along with the book.

This program is unique in that, while in the past military personnel have been able to write letters, e-mail and send audio cassettes, UTR offers children a chance to see their parents' faces, listen to their voices and read along as their

The official TLC kit contains a DVD story featuring Elmo and his friends. In the DVD, Elmo's dad has to get ready to go away to do “important work.” While Elmo's dad's job isn't explicitly described, the nature of his departure mirrors that of a military deployment.

“Elmo's sad; he's a little scared, but with the help of his friends and his mom, he's able to go through it,” Chwatsky explains. “Then Elmo's dad comes back, so they go through the whole deployment cycle.”

The DVD also features live-action footage of military families going through the deployment cycle to augment Elmo's story.

“[The families] talk about how they cope with the challenges of deployment,” said Chwatsky.

In the summer of 2006, the Sesame Workshop produced 400,000 TLC kits that were distributed worldwide to military families and supporting organizations. The project was successful – not only were families happy to receive the materials, but the materials themselves were working. The kits gave military parents the tools to discuss deployments with their young children.

“We've seen the movie, and I think it's really going to help a lot in preparing them because it's so surreal to them that their dad is somewhere else,” said Marguerite Carroll, a military spouse.

“Who better than Elmo to model [the behaviors of a deploying parent's child]?” said Chwatsky. “When he was upset, he went to talk to his mom and his friends. He was able to communicate with his dad using the computer, sending him letters, looking up at the moon. Not only were the kids doing better, but [so were the parents].”

In April 2008, after speaking again with their advisors and with military families, Sesame Workshop released the second phase of TLC, called “Deployments, Homecomings, Changes.”

The second-phase kit contained not only Elmo's initial deployment story, it also dealt with the adjustments a family has to make when the deployed parent comes home. In the second story, Elmo's family has to adjust to his dad's presence at home after his extended absence. Also, Elmo's dad gets word that he has to leave again sometime in the near future.

This kit also addresses the sensitive topic of an injured parent. In the third story, “Changes,” Elmo's friend Rosita has to adjust to a “new normal” when her dad is injured on the job and is confined to a wheelchair. This

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▲ HM1(EXW/SW) Fealofani Peau prays with his family (from left) Jonathan, Vianca and Jessica prior to dinner in their home.

parents read to them. It also allows the child to spend as much time with the deployed parent as they wish by watching the DVD over and over again. UTR is available directly through military commands and at numerous USOs throughout the world.

Individual Deployments

The challenges that individual augmentees (IA) and their families must tackle are also being addressed by the Navy.

“Family Readiness for the IA process is no different than family readiness for the rest of the Navy,” said Capt. Jeffrey McKenzie, commanding officer of Expeditionary Combat

Readiness Center, Norfolk. “The Navy has support and resources in place to assist all Navy families during deployment as well as plans and processes to provide assistance for families in the event of a natural disaster.”

McKenzie was quick to clarify that the IA process faced many obstacles in its infancy.

“When the IA process first started, some

families felt isolated because the rest of their parent command was not on the same type of deployment,” he said. “IA families had very little information about what an IA deployment was like and what they could expect.

“As the IA process has evolved and improved for the IA Sailor, the Navy has promoted education and information about the process with more emphasis on command

story deals with challenges and emotions children may face when a parent comes back from a deployment with a significant change or injury, such as paralysis, an amputation, depression, post-traumatic stress or traumatic brain injury.

“The feedback has been incredible,” said Chwatsky. “We went into this with high hopes, and I think we have exceeded beyond our expectations.

“First, the appeal factor. Elmo is just loved and adored, and for these families, to know that Elmo is there for them ... they are so thrilled and so happy. Second, the materials are working. We’re showing from the assessment work that these materials are giving parents feelings of hope, and that they have the tools available to communicate with their children. We’re seeing kids develop fewer negative behaviors through all these difficulties. We have had this wonderful partnership with [DoD], and they are so grateful that they have these tools for their families.”

The kits are distributed through Military OneSource at no cost to families. Print resources for adults and children, in addition to the TLC material, are available at www.sesamestreet.org/tlc.

In June, Sesame Workshop and the USO announced “The Sesame Street Experience for Military Families,” a touring live-action extension of the TLC initiative. The tour, which started in July and ran through November, brought smiles to service members, spouses and children at 43 military installations nationwide.

“The Sesame Street Experience for Military Families brings the TLC DVD and materials to life and directly to the families who face the challenges of military life each day,” said Gary E. Knell, president and CEO, of Sesame Workshop. “Our partnership with the USO further extends this initiative, visiting installations across the nation, to help these families bond through emotionally difficult times, by providing an educational and entertaining show and other outreach activities they can share.”

Military families who attended the experience were treated to a live character performance and received giveaways and outreach materials from TLC and other partners.

“I think it brings family together; it’s something for the family to do. The kids love it, [and it’s] quality time together,” said Dusten Rivera, a military spouse. “I’d like to thank USO for putting this on ... I think the kids are going to enjoy it. I really appreciate it.”

According to Chwatsky, the office of the Chief of Naval Operations recently ordered the production of 100,000 more of the original TLC kits to be distributed to deploying Sailors’ families.

“These kits will be ready by the end of December, and they will be shipped all over the world,” she said. “We are thrilled about that, and we’re grateful that the CNO sees the value in these materials.”

Chwatsky had some final thoughts on the TLC project.

“The more I think about the title of this project – Talk, Listen, Connect – the more powerful I think these three words are, and that’s why I am so proud that is the title. Talk to your children. Children, talk to your parents. Parents, be able to listen to your children. They may not be able to verbally tell you that they are stressed or sad, but be able to listen to some cues they may be exhibiting, whether verbally or nonverbally. Connect not only with your loved ones here with you but also connect to your loved ones that are away. If that is the total takeaway package that families can get, then we have really done the job that we set out to do.”

Vlahos and McCammack are assigned to Defense Media Activity - Anacostia, Washington D.C.

outreach and communication with our IA families. Fleet and Family Support Centers provide many briefs about IA deployments for Sailors and their families to attend as well as IA handbooks, group meetings and webinars. ECRC keeps track of the latest Navy initiatives and family resources to better assist Navy IA families. As the communication and support process has improved, so has the family feedback.”

The Paper Trail

Before a Sailor deploys, he or she must make sure all important paperwork is in order. This applies to both married and single Sailors. Single Sailors often overlook this formality when their families – whether parents, siblings or grandparents – could be the most affected should an emergency arise and their paperwork is not in order.

Sailors should have a current will on file, designate someone to hold power of attorney in their absence, designate beneficiaries in writing, ensure that Servicemember Group Life Insurance (SGLI) coverage and beneficiary information is current and consider drafting a living will to be on file should they become unable to make medical care decisions.

Life-changing events such as marriage and births of children require detailed attention. Sailors must review and update their Record of Emergency Data (Page 2), which lists the next of kin that should be contacted in an emergency, and the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) and review SGLI elections and beneficiaries as necessary.

Sailors need to know that updating one system does not automatically feed the other.

“Most Sailors assume that changing their Record of Emergency Data will automatically update their DEERS status,” said Pamela Thomas, who works for Naval Personnel Command’s customer service center. “[Unfortunately for them], it doesn’t.”

Since enrollment in DEERS is necessary for life-insurance and TRICARE benefits, a good rule of thumb for Sailors to follow is to update DEERS within 60 days of a major change in their life or legal status, such as getting married or divorced, or having a child, whether by giving birth or by adoption. It’s especially



▲ **HM1(EXW/SW) Fealofani Peau** kisses his wife after returning home from a dental appointment with his daughter. Peau will be deploying with Riverine Squadron 1 to Iraq.

important that a Sailor take care of this if his wife is expecting a child. Neglecting this can result in loved ones being denied insurance payments and benefits.

Dual-military couples have good reason to stay on top of their status – if they don’t update DEERS properly, they could erroneously receive double insurance benefits, creating a steadily mounting debt each month.

Peau learned a few lessons about legal and financial readiness from his first deployment.

“The last time around, [I had] some financial issues where something wasn’t properly taken care of prior to leaving,” he said. “I’ve learned a lot from my last deployment. [I’ve ensured that] our credit card bills and direct deposits are in order, and I have allotments placed. [I ensured] that any

of the bills dealing with credit are as low as possible, so I don’t have any issues with that this time around.”

For Sailors not wishing to learn these lessons firsthand, a pre-deployment checklist is available at www.nffsp.org and can help provide a good head start. The list includes items such as insurance coverage, and arrangements to pay taxes, bills and emergency expenses.

RIVRON 1’s administrative department was proactive in dealing with any legal issues Peau and his fellow Sailors had.

“They were on top of us in ensuring that all powers of attorney were completed,” Peau recalled, “[as well as] our wills. I had [my will] in place my last deployment.”

As important as it is for a Sailor to make

sure his or her spouse and children are ready before deploying, the emphasis on family readiness applies also to extended families.

“It’s equally important that single Sailors do not fall through the cracks. Single Sailors, just like their married shipmates, need to make sure their affairs are in order before deploying as well,” said Catherine Stokoe, CNIC Family Readiness Program manager.

Single Sailors need to make sure their SGLI and Page 2 cover the person they wish to be contacted in an emergency, such as a parent, fiancé or sibling. This is especially crucial for single parent Sailors, who need to make sure all legal, administrative and financial aspects of deployment are in order for the welfare of their children.

“It’s certainly true that single Sailors have many of the same concerns as their married counterparts, particularly when it comes to issues relating to leases, contracts, accounts and other property interests,” said Cmdr. Steven L. Haycock, deputy assistant judge advocate general.

The Personal Side of Family Readiness

Once the legal, financial and administrative issues are taken care of, the most crucial elements of family readiness come into play: Shoring up the bonds and strengthening the communication lines.

For the Peaus, this meant spending as much time with the family as possible. As his deployment approached, Peau and his wife worked to make sure their family bonds were as strong as ever while he serves in Iraq.

“We have tried to spend every second that we can together and concentrate on the good times and not the little disagreements,” said Jessica. “He’s been very involved with the kids. He took two weeks leave, and he took them to school and picked them up. Then, as soon as they got home, he had them do their homework, and then he’d spend time playing with them. He really made a special effort to spend as much quality time as we could, as a family and as a couple.” ☞

Vlahos and Scott are assigned to Defense Media Activity – Anacostia, Washington, D.C.

Helping Children to Understand Deployments

ELMO

In His Own Words

Story by MC2(SW) Elizabeth Vlahos

All Hands Magazine had an opportunity to actually talk to Elmo about how he feels when in this case his daddy has to go away – far away for a long time – to do “important work.” Like many Navy juniors, Elmo and his friends have to adjust when their parents deploy and then again when they come home. Elmo shared with us how he and his parents get through long separations.

Does your daddy go away? Tell me about that.

Elmo’s daddy went away for lots and lots of days. He does grown-up work and helps some people. It’s a very important job.

How do you feel when your daddy leaves?

Elmo misses his daddy when he leaves, but every night Elmo and Elmo’s daddy said goodnight to the moon – just like we did when daddy’s home, and every night we would think of each other. And Elmo’s mommy was there to tuck in Elmo while daddy was away and read Elmo bedtime stories. When Elmo’s daddy came home, we say goodnight to the moon together, the way we always did. Elmo even got to talk to daddy on the computer.

How do you feel when your daddy comes home?

Elmo was really glad when Elmo’s daddy’s came home, but Elmo was just used to Mommy doing everything for him.

What did you do when daddy was away?

Elmo marked an X on the calendar for each day daddy was gone, and Elmo helped his mommy around the house. While Elmo’s daddy was away, Elmo learned how to play hopscotch and read a book with mommy, and Elmo made his bed and brushed his teeth every day.

How do you let daddy know you miss/love/worry about him very much?

Elmo wishes daddy never had to go away, but Elmo always talks about it with Elmo’s mommy and daddy.

What do you do when you miss your dad and you feel really sad?

Elmo would look at his dad’s picture, and Elmo and Elmo’s mom would talk about it.

What would you tell your friends who may be going through the same things?

It wasn’t always easy when Elmo’s daddy went away, and we sure did miss him a lot. But we did it. And Elmo had all his friends, like Rosita and Telly, to play with him and keep him company while Elmo’s daddy was away. Elmo thinks it’s very important to talk to your family and friends and tell them how you feel. ☞

Vlahos is assigned to Defense Media Activity – Anacostia, Washington, D.C.

SECNAV Names New Zumwalt-Class Destroyer USS Michael Monsoor

Secretary of the Navy, Donald C. Winter announced Oct. 29 at a Navy SEAL Warrior Fund Benefit Gala at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City, the name of the newest Zumwalt-class destroyer will be USS Michael Monsoor.

Designated as DDG 1001, the name honors Master at Arms 2nd Class (SEAL) Michael Monsoor, who posthumously received the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions in Ramadi, Iraq, Sept. 29, 2006.

Winter discussed the qualities, values and dedication to duty that Navy SEALs exemplify, including the extraordinary acts of Michael Monsoor.

"Tonight I would like to single out one of those heroes from the community of Navy SEALs," Winter said. "Those who served with Michael Monsoor will remember him always as a consummate professional who faced terrorist enemies with aplomb and stoicism."

"The full extent of Michael's courage, gallantry and selfless heroism were revealed on the 29th of September, in Ramadi. When his team was surprised by an enemy grenade, Michael could have escaped and saved himself," Winter said. "But he chose a different path, a path of honor that embodies the way of a Navy SEAL. For having chosen that path, Petty Officer Michael Monsoor joined the ranks of those who have earned our nation's highest distinction, the Medal of Honor."

Winter concluded that Michael Monsoor's heroism and self sacrifice for his teammates and his nation epitomize the Navy's core values and will forever provide prideful admiration for our Sailors.

"Michael Monsoor's name will now be linked with one of our nation's most visible examples of military power, a U.S. Navy warship," Winter said. "His legacy will inspire the hearts of future Sailors who serve on the ship that bears his name."

USS Michael Monsoor will be a multi-mission surface combatant tailored for advanced land attack and littoral dominance.

The ship's mission is to provide credible, independent forward presence and deterrence and to operate as an integral part of naval, joint or combined maritime forces.

USS Michael Monsoor will be the second Zumwalt-class destroyer. The ship will be 600 feet in length, have a beam of 80.7 feet and displace approximately 15,000 tons. Michael Monsoor will have a crew size of 148 officers and Sailors; it will make speed in excess of 30 knots. **S**

Story courtesy of DOD.

Navy's Shoreline Project is Largest in Chesapeake Bay Watershed

The remains of an asphalt road follow the edge of a crumbling bluff towering 30 feet above the river's edge below. Pieces of concrete building slabs are all that's left of former technical facilities that had to be vacated and demolished because of the encroaching shoreline.

The Naval Support Facility (NSF), Indian Head, Md., situated on a long peninsula bounded by the Potomac River and the pristine Mattawoman Creek watershed, was losing about one-and-a-half feet of real estate per year along stretches of the base's 17 miles of waterfront.

But, thanks to emergency congressional funding and with the support of local and regional conservation groups, the Navy has embarked on the largest shoreline stabilization project in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

"The Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure, and the shoreline restoration at Indian



▲ A photo-illustration commemorates the Medal of Honor presented posthumously to MA2(SEAL) Michael A. Monsoor.

Head is one of many projects in which DOD is investing to revitalize the bay," said Donald Schregardus, environmental deputy assistant Secretary of the Navy. "The project also represents a significant long-term investment in the Indian Head facility and community."

At the average annual erosion rate of 1.5 feet per year, approximately 12,000 cubic yards of sediment per year was entering the surrounding waterways. NSF Indian Head developed a shoreline management plan in 2002 that surveyed shoreline erosion along the



▲ Daniel Barth from Sioux Falls, S.D., plants one of 1,400 small trees and shrubs along a stretch of the Potomac River that the Navy is working to stabilize at Naval Support Facility Indian Head, Md. Barth, one of more than 70 volunteers who helped with the planting project, drove 22 hours to join the effort as a volunteer with the Maryland Conservation Corps.

installation's waterfront.

With the support of the Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Board and the Charles Soil Conservation District, work began in November 2007 with the construction of a series of breakwaters and sills along approximately 3,500 feet of the eastern shore of the Potomac River. These stabilization efforts will greatly reduce or eliminate impacts of wave action on the shoreline. As a result, approximately 2,900 feet of shoreline will naturally stabilize.

In addition, extensive erosion along a 600-foot section of the stabilized shoreline required bank grading to stabilize the slope and protect two office buildings within 35 feet of the top of the shoreline.

Behind the breakwaters and sills, an area of nearly 11 acres was backfilled to create more than an acre of intertidal vegetated wetland habitat and 9.5 acres of wetland habitat suitable for scrub-shrub, riparian floodplain forest and upland trees and shrubs.

The National Aquarium in Baltimore, through a partnership with NSF Indian Head, mobilized volunteers for two field planting events to complete the first phase of the shoreline project. For the first event in July 2008, more than 40 participants spent two days to place 10,000 wetland plants along approximately 1,700 feet of Potomac River shoreline. Plantings occurred in the intertidal wetland zone created by placing sediment behind the sills and breakwater that have been constructed in the initial phase of the shoreline restoration project.

In a second field planting event that spanned four days this month, more than 70 volunteers from communities throughout Maryland and Virginia labored to plant native wetland grasses, shrubs and trees.

David Nemerson, conservation biologist for the National Aquarium who directed the four-day project, estimated that volunteers logged a total of nearly 1,000 hours of labor.

"We typically work on three or four projects a year of this size and scope," he explained. "But we tend to do more in Chesapeake Bay proper," as opposed to freshwater tributaries like the Potomac, he added.

Altogether, between the two field events, the volunteers placed 15,000 wetland plants in the intertidal zone of the shoreline as well as 1,400 trees and shrubs in a riparian floodplain zone.

The riparian floodplain zone extends from the mean high water line to the toe of the existing slope of the shoreline. This area, once

revegetated, will increase protection of the toe of the existing slope, enhance wildlife habitat and improve water quality.

In the broadest perspective, said Schregardus, "This project is good for the Chesapeake Bay, the surrounding environment, the Indian Head community and the economy." **S**

Story and photo by Gary R. Wagner, Naval Support Activity South Potomac, Indian Head, Md.

Navy Athletes Display Core Values at Ironman World Championship

Athletes from the Navy athletic team and Naval Special Warfare completed the 30th Ford Ironman World Championship triathlon held annually in Kailua-Kona on the "Big" Island of Hawaii Oct. 11.

The athletes say they drew upon the strength, determination and commitment they have learned while serving the nation to compete among the world's most elite athletes. The triathlon included swimming 2.4 miles through rough ocean currents, biking 112 miles and running a 26.2 miles over challenging volcanic rock-covered terrain.

"Six Navy athletes took serving their country one step further by pushing themselves to their physical limits in a world-class test of human endurance," said Capt. Duncan Smith of Naval Special Warfare Command. "Navy is proud to celebrate our 30th year of participation in Ironman. Athletes of this caliber and the Ironman organization at large share many of the core values we hold dear in the Navy: pursuit of excellence, personal fitness and unwavering commitment."

Representing the Navy in the triathlon were Cmdr. Kristin Barnes, officer in charge of Afloat Planning System, Pacific and a native of Vermillion, Ohio; Cmdr. Keith Davids, a native of Miami and commanding officer of SEAL Team 1; Lt. Cmdr. Damon Dixon, a native of San Francisco and executive officer of the Naval Oceanography Special Warfare Center; Lt. Cmdr. John Marinovich, a native of Davis, Calif., and combat systems officer for littoral combat ship USS Independence (LCS 2); Lt. Jeff Tomazewski, a native of Pittsburgh and aviation maintenance duty officer assigned to the Naval Post Graduate School; and Special Warfare Operator 1st Class (SEAL) David Goggins, assigned to



▲ Cmdr. Kristin Barnes, officer in charge of Afloat Planning System, Pacific, is welcomed with a Hawaiian lei as she crosses the finish line at the 30th Ford Ironman World Championship in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. Six Sailors from the Navy athletic team and Naval Special Warfare competed alongside 1,800 other athletes in the triathlon.

Naval Special Warfare Center.

For the Navy athletes, it wasn't about finishing first or last but finishing with pride and distinction.

"I'm here to represent the Navy, and I'm here to have fun," said Barnes.

"I think what you need to do is evaluate what your definition of winning is - is my definition of winning coming across the finish line first or is my definition of winning being able to represent the Navy in a manner that displays the core values?"

Each athlete found different ways of keeping themselves motivated during the race.

"Later in the race, your body starts breaking down, and physically and mentally your body wants to shut down, but you've got to find ways to kind of push through and just keep moving forward," said Tomazewski.

"I owe it to all the folks who have ever done anything for me; the guys who have worked overtime to fix my airplanes, the guys in admin that have worked overtime to make sure that my pay is correct, my skippers that have worked overtime to make sure that I have the guidance and the leadership training that I need," said Barnes. **S**

Story and photo by MC2 Paul D. Honick, Fleet Public Affairs Detachment, Hawaii.

Home (And Safe) For the Holidays

Story by MC2(SW) Elizabeth Vlahos, graphic by MC2(SW) William E. Blake

“A few things at Christmas that are such a pain to me...

Candles burning curtains,
Returning recalled toys,
Cars stuck in a snowstorm,
Snowball fights gone south,
Five weeks in traction!
Drunken chefs with knives,
Christmas Story reruns,
Turkey goes kaboom,
And a spot in the Friday Funnies!”

Yes, the holidays are officially here. If you want to sing a happier tune than the “Twelve Days of Murphy’s Law,” read the following safety primer, brought to you by the mishaps of others.

“Clark, Is Your House On Fire?”

“No, Aunt Bethany, those are the Christmas lights.” Considering everything that happened after that, Clark Griswold should count his blessings that his house was still standing afterward.

Fire has three places in the holiday season: candles, the fireplace and under the roasting chestnuts ... nowhere else. Here’s how to keep it that way.

- If you’re starting a fire in a wood stove or a fireplace, use smaller branches and old newspapers for kindling; never use gasoline to start a fire.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended. If you’re lighting candles around a crèche, a menorah for Hanukkah or a kinara for Kwanzaa, keep an eye on it. Also, while a candle in the window may create an inviting glow outside, you don’t want to risk the curtains catching fire.

- Everyone loves a holiday feast, but not so much if the cook burns the kitchen down in the process. Keep potholders and dishcloths away from the burners, and keep a large pan lid handy should the entrée du jour spontaneously flambé itself. Speaking of which ...
- Exercise caution with turkey fryers always used them outdoors at safe distance from buildings and other materials that can burn. Place the fryers on a flat surface, but not on wooden decks or in garages or under eaves or overhangs. To prevent overfilling the fryer, test it out using water before heating the oil.
- Electrical fires are also a hazard this time of year, especially with Christmas lights. Make sure the lights you buy to put outdoors or on the tree are UL (Underwriters’ Laboratories) listed. If not, put them back on the shelf.
- Don’t try to plug too many lights into one socket – you don’t want the whole mess to overheat and spark a conflagration.
- If you have a live tree, water it daily to keep it hydrated. You know what you call a tree with pretty lights and no water? Firewood
- Speaking of trees, if you decide to get a live tree, go to a Christmas tree farm and skip the forest. You don’t want to find out the hard way how irate a squirrel can get when his home is chopped down.

“You’ll Shoot Your Eye Out!”

Anyone who’s seen “A Christmas Story”

knows that toy safety is not a new concept. Always consider potential risks such as choke hazards, lead paint and harmful chemicals. Who can forget Dave Barry showing David Letterman how to set a pair of boxers on fire with Rollerblade Barbie?

When you’re doing your holiday shopping, keep the following in mind:

- Go to the Consumer Product Safety Commission site at www.cpsc.gov/ and check the recall site before you go shopping. You’ll feel a lot safer knowing what toys not to buy.
- Use common sense. Certain toys with small parts present a choking hazard and should be avoided by those under the age of five. Supervise older children with these products and make sure the parts don’t end up in the children’s mouths.
- Choose age-appropriate toys. For a three-year old, a “Tickle Me Elmo” doll would be appropriate; an “Acme P-36 Flame Thrower”, probably not. (Actually, you should probably learn from the numerous mishaps of Wile E. Coyote, and never trust anything from Acme, period.)
- Supervise your children as they play with their new toys. Continue to keep an eye on the Consumer Product Safety Commission recall site just in case one of your child’s gifts does end up on the recall list. If your child’s new toy does end up presenting a hazard, you’ll be well informed.

These guidelines should give you some peace of mind around the holidays.

“Stupid is as Stupid Does”

Alcohol has never been proven to ever make any one who consumes it smarter. This hazard never goes away ... it just takes a different form with each season. The beers and shots of tequila have been sidelined for the season in favor of hot toddies, mulled wine and eggnog. While there is nothing wrong with enjoying

these holiday libations in moderation, it starts to become a problem when certain variables such as automobiles, sharp objects or fire are factored in.

Here are some points to keep your good time from going bad:

- DON’T DRINK AND DRIVE. Cars, motorcycles, snowmobiles – anything if you’ve had even one drink. It’s not worth it.
- Use a designated driver – a buddy who has not had any alcohol at all.
- Have the number for a cab service or your command’s Tippy Taxi service handy just in case your driver slips up and has even one drink. It’s better to fork over \$20 for cab fare and pick up your car the next morning when you’re sober than to risk your life or someone else’s by driving impaired.
- Don’t drink if you’re working in the kitchen. Alcohol will make you unsteady with a chef’s knife, which is just plain unsafe. Also, do not try to prepare the flambé dish mentioned earlier if you yourself are lit.

Bottom line: Eat, drink, and be merry – just be smart about it.

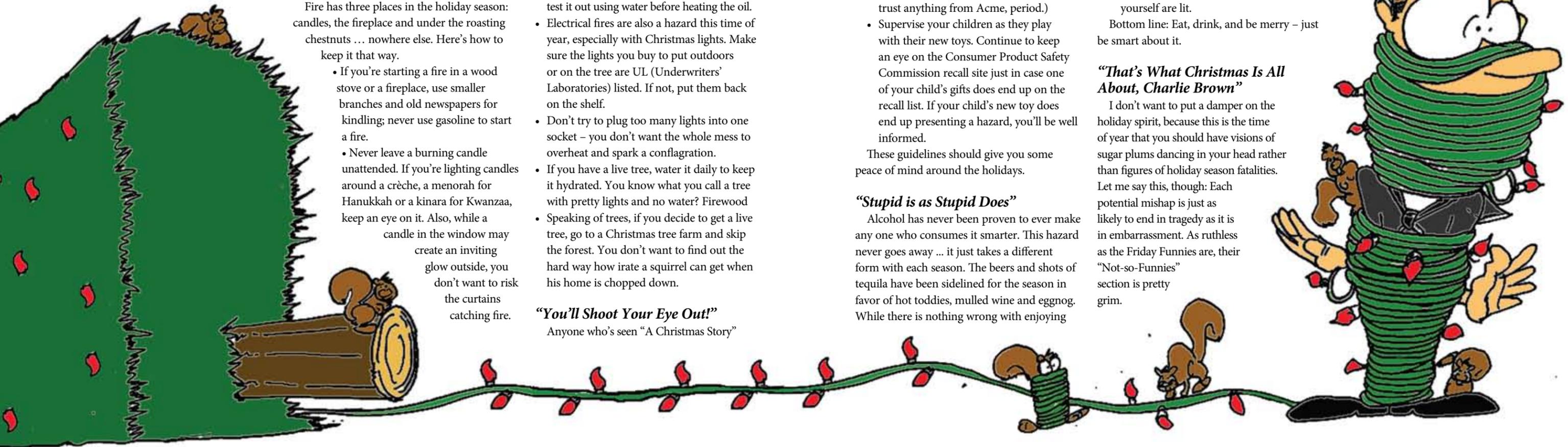
“That’s What Christmas Is All About, Charlie Brown”

I don’t want to put a damper on the holiday spirit, because this is the time of year that you should have visions of sugar plums dancing in your head rather than figures of holiday season fatalities. Let me say this, though: Each potential mishap is just as likely to end in tragedy as it is in embarrassment. As ruthless as the Friday Funnies are, their “Not-so-Funnies” section is pretty grim.

One final thought: With all the shopping you want to get done ... who wants to shell out money to pay a speeding ticket? Or to pay for emergency expenses? Folks would much rather shell out cash for a new game system or portable media player. Do your family a favor and stay safe – trust me, they’ll appreciate it.

Have a safe and happy holiday season – and we’d better see you next year. ☞

Vlahos is assigned to Defense Media Activity - Anacostia, Washington, D.C.



HSL-44: Immigrant, Sailor ... American

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

America is a nation of immigrants. Whether they arrived before the Revolutionary War in the Colonial days, at Ellis Island in the 1890s or just yesterday, American immigrants share a special bond – and a unique appreciation for their new country.

Aviation Structural Mechanic 3rd Class Markland Grant, Helicopter Squadron Light (HSL) 44 line shack night supervisor is living his own American dream.

“I moved to Orlando, Fla., from Jamaica in 2005, and I would see interviews with military guys on television, and I watched the commercials,” said Grant. “I was always drawn to the military and wanted to become a pilot. I found out that the military trained the best pilots, so I did my research to see which service would be right for me.

“I fell in love with the Navy. I like the way the Navy does it. They send you to school for a specific job that you love, and you have a real career.”

It didn't take long before Grant would make two things his top priorities – joining the Navy and becoming an American citizen.

I went to the recruiting office, and I told them I wanted to join, but they told me only officers are pilots and [to become an officer] I have to be a citizen,” said Grant. “So I knew what I had to do. I joined and immediately started working on my citizenship papers.”

The immediate eligibility for service members to become naturalized citizens is based on Executive Order 13269, signed by President George W. Bush on July 3, 2002. The order authorized expedited citizenship during periods in which

the United States is engaged in armed conflict with a hostile foreign force. For example, service members who have served honorably for any period of time beginning on or after Sept. 11, 2001, are eligible to apply for expedited U.S. citizenship.

“My citizenship ceremony was Sept. 16, 2007. It was awesome. There were more than 1,000 people, and we were all so happy and congratulating each other. What I love about America is that no matter where you are from you can come here and they'll receive you with open arms.”

Grant said the lessons he learned while studying to become an American citizen gave him a greater appreciation for his new country and instilled in him a great sense of pride.

“When you're studying American history to become a citizen, you realize what America really went through to become this great nation. You understand the reasons why they fought. America didn't just suddenly become this great nation. People worked for it. They did all this, and now I can come here and live free, so I really appreciate what it means [to be an American.]”

Working in the HSL-44 line shack, Grant has developed a reputation as a leader with a bright future.

“You don't even have to ask him to do stuff,” said Lt.j.g. Adam Shreders, line shack division officer. “He seeks out tasks and is always looking for the hard jobs. He trains our newer guys. He's a junior guy himself, but that doesn't stop him from being a leader. He believes in what we're doing. He's really a credit to himself and the Navy. He doesn't just look to get his qualifications and advance

his career, he also spends a lot of time with other junior guys helping them get their qualifications. Even though he's a junior Sailor, he performs at the level of a first class [petty officer].”

Grant remains focused on his dream of becoming a pilot. He is working toward a commission through the Seaman to Admiral-21 program and is taking college courses. His major is professional aeronautics with a minor in management.

“I would love to fly the P-8s, the new upgrade for the P-3s, but I'll fly whatever the Navy wants me to fly,” said Grant. “That's my philosophy. Wherever the Navy needs you, that's where you're going. You've just got to man-up.”

“Grant can do anything he puts his mind to,” said Shreders. “I can't wait to see what he's going to accomplish - whether it's as an officer or as a chief. That guy is going to be an incredible leader.”

Grant said he is extremely proud to be serving in the Navy, and that sense of pride is evident in the way he carries himself.

“He has such a sense of pride about him,” said Shreders. “Just look at his uniforms. Everything's creased up, crisp, and his boots are always shiny. It's not like he has an easy job in an office. He's got a dirty job out there climbing all over planes. He's the real thing. He looks the part, and he acts the part. There's a reason he's our best guy.”

McCammack is assigned to Defense Media Activity - Anacostia, Washington, D.C.



Focus on
Service

How the Rough Rider Revived Army-Navy Rivalry

Story by MC2 Geraldine A. Hawkins

Baseball may be our national pastime, but the Army-Navy game is the sports event in which our love of country and its military traditions is concentrated. Throughout the fleet, even the most “sports-impaired” individual sits up and takes notice of one of the longest running rivalries in college football.

Every year, seniors from both academies summon all that is in them – mentally, spiritually and physically – for this last game before launching their military careers.

At the first Army-Navy game Nov. 29, 1890, Navy won 24-0. This must have been especially galling to Army, as the game was played at West Point.

At the turn of the century, football was not the same game we know today. In those early years, the public was appalled by the wrenched backs, twisted knees and even fatalities involved; even spectators got into brawls. After Navy’s 1893 victory, a dispute between a brigadier general and a rear admiral nearly led to a duel.

That was enough for then-President Grover Cleveland, who called a cabinet meeting in February 1894. This resulted in a decree that Army and Navy were prohibited from playing each other.

It took Theodore Roosevelt – that champion of “the strenuous life” – to see in football fundamental life lessons and a laboratory for the development of character. In 1897, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt wrote to Secretary of War Russell Alger: “I should like very much to revive the football games between Annapolis and West Point. ... If the authorities of both institutions agree to take measures ... to prevent any manifestation of an improper character. ...”

The games were resumed in 1899, and they were as brutal as ever. But by 1905 Theodore Roosevelt was president and rather than prohibit the game as Cleveland had done, he characteristically decided to reform it. He invited leading players and commissioners to a White House conference to set some ground rules for playing the game “on a thoroughly clean basis.”

This led to the establishment of the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States, now known as the NCAA. It was decided that Philadelphia was a neutral spot for the contest, although it has occasionally taken place in other cities, most recently in Baltimore.

Theodore Roosevelt rescued the Army-Navy game and football itself, but the traditions have evolved over time. In 1901, Roosevelt began the practice of crossing the field during halftime. Since then, all presidents attending the game have done this: For the first half of the game they sit on the home team’s side and then at the midway point cross to the other team’s side.



Photo by MC1(AW) Brian Aho

▲ At last year’s 108th Army-Navy game, held in Baltimore, the midshipmen won their sixth straight Army-Navy game with a score of 38-3.

Some of Roosevelt’s actions were unique to him. In 1901, he was so excited after a Navy touchdown that he ran to the team’s sideline and slapped the players on the backs. In 1905, he walked up and down each sideline, cheering on both teams.

Since then, the game has been canceled five times: 1909, when an Army cadet was killed during a match with Harvard; 1917 and 1918, following orders from the War Department, and 1928 and 1929 when Army and Navy could not agree on eligibility standards for players.

Other commanders-in-chief have attended periodically. Woodrow Wilson came his first year in office (1913) but stayed in his box seat; Calvin Coolidge came in 1926, the only president to have his photograph on the event’s program cover. In 1930, during the Depression, Herbert Hoover requested that the game be played to raise money for the Salvation Army.

The encouragement of the commander-in-chief can be crucial to the success of the team. Harry Truman seemed to be good luck for Army; he attended the game four times, and Army won three games out of the four. Eisenhower is the only president to have actually played for Army; but Army lost 6-0 in 1912 when he was a linebacker.

Navy veteran John F. Kennedy was present in 1961 and 1962 and established the tradition of the pre-game coin toss. Just a few days before the 1963 game was scheduled, Kennedy was assassinated. The players were stunned, and the game was canceled, but the President’s widow, remembering how devoted Kennedy was to the team, said that for Army and Navy to play would help the nation and serve as “a fitting tribute” to the President. The game was rescheduled for December 7. Navy won 21-15. It was indeed a fitting tribute. The next year, Municipal Stadium in Philadelphia was renamed John F. Kennedy Stadium.

President George W. Bush set a precedent of his own in 2004 when he visited both teams’ locker rooms before the game and thanked them for choosing careers of service to their country. ☞

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A World of Possibilities

Chief Boatswain’s Mate Zsyrexe Agonoy

Individual Augmentee

Story and photo by MC1 Shawn Graham

The Afghan National Security Forces will receive more than 4,000 up-armored vehicles from Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, and Chief Boatswain’s Mate Zsyrexe Agonoy will be leading the historic vehicle fielding effort.

Agonoy, who is assigned as the officer in charge of the National Weapons Depot and who serves as mentor for three Afghan National Army officers, said the introduction of the Humvees will increase survivability for the Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers and Afghan National Police.

“This impacts the stability of the country,” said Agonoy. “The ANA will become a modernized army with Humvees. We are giving them the right tools to combat the Taliban and other insurgent groups.”

Agonoy, a 15-year Navy veteran, works as a loadmaster at his home-duty station, Naval Beach Group 1, San Diego. He said his individual augmentee assignment is fulfilling and Sailors throughout the country have represented the Navy well.

“No one would ever think of Sailors in Afghanistan,” said Agonoy. “In the middle of a landlocked country, you have Sailors performing non-traditional jobs that we have never performed before and we are excelling.”

Like many IA Sailors, Agonoy found the transition from active-duty Sailor to IA awkward at first, but after extensive on-the-job training, things became easier and the job less stressful.



▲ BMC Zsyrexe Agonoy of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, Kabul, Afghanistan, stands in front of up-armored Humvees that will be issued to the Afghan National Security Forces. Agonoy is assigned as the officer in charge of the National Weapons Depot, Kabul.

“It was tough at first, learning the Army’s structure,” said Agonoy. “You have to learn their way of conducting business. But one thing that does mirror the Navy is accountability.”

Since arriving in Afghanistan in November 2007, Agonoy has been responsible for millions of dollars worth of vehicles and equipment, issuing hundreds of vehicles to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

ANA Maj. Hasim Habiullah, a company commander who will receive the new vehicles, said they will allow the Afghan Army to protect the country more effectively.

“The Humvees are already preferred because

of the heavy armor,” said Habiullah. “All of our soldiers realize that it is safer to travel in them, too. These vehicles will give us an edge in battle we didn’t have before.”

Agonoy, has already issued more than 600 Humvees, with more than 4,000 more being issued to the ANSF during the next year. ☞

Graham is assigned to Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Editor’s note: Information on GSA billets is available on Career Management System-Interactive Detailing at <https://www.cmsid.navy.mil>

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