

May 2009

# AI H HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY



# GROWLER

*Delivering Warfighting Readiness to the Fleet*



**[On the Front Cover]**  
EA-18G Growlers from VX-9 'Vampires' fly near mountains over California during a test mission.  
Photo Courtesy of Ted Carlson, Fotodynamics

**[Next Month]**  
*All Hands* gives you the lowdown on the Navy's career tools as it develops its Total Force.

## [Departments]

- Around the Fleet — 6
- This Just In — 32
- Something to Think About — 36
- Focus on Service — 38
- History — 40

[Number 1106]



# May

## 18 USS Carter Hall (LSD 50): Supporting Iraqi Freedom

Situated in the northern reaches of the Arabian Gulf lie Iraq's two oil platforms (OPLATS) - Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminal (KAAOT) and Al Basrah Oil Terminal (ABOT) - pump oil out to the global market. The revenue generated, fuels Iraq's economy and reconstruction. To help protect the OPLATS, and to develop the Iraqi's Navy capability to provide for security, USS *Carter Hall* (LSD 50) recently served as an afloat staging base (AFSB) as part of Combined Task Force (CTF) 158.

Photo by MC2 Flordeliz Valerio



## 12 Growler: An Electronic Attack Warfare Revolution

The EA-18G *Growler* is an electronic attack version of the F/A-18F *Super Hornet* and will replace existing EA-6B *Prowlers* completely within the next several years. Leading the sea change are the Sailors of Electronic Attack Squadrons (VAQ) 129 "Vikings" and 132 "Scorpions" out of NAS Whidbey Island, Wash.

Photo by MC3 Torrey W. Lee



## 26 Running for Country

Hundreds of runners from near and far gather at the start line in Derwood, Md. The gun goes off, and the six men and five women of the Navy Cross-country team are pushed to their limits at the 2009 Armed Forces Cross-Country Championship, held in conjunction with the USA Track & Field's Winter Classic early each year. And these runners train and compete while serving their country full time.

Photo by MC2(AW/SW) Jhi L. Scott



Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL students lift "Old Misery," during a physical training evolution at Naval Special Warfare Center, Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, Calif.

Photo by MC3 Blake R. Midnight



# Speaking with Sailors

Force Master Chief (AW/SW) James DeLozier  
Commander Naval Air Forces Pacific

**S**ome have said, "You can't teach leadership; you're either born with it, or you aren't." I disagree. I see deckplate and flight line Sailors teaching leadership and showing how to be a leader every day.

That's why I'm glad to be a Sailor, surrounded by the best of the best young Americans this country has to offer.

During my previous assignment aboard USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76), we hosted many distinguished visitors including CEOs from corporate America. After witnessing the day-to-day operations aboard an aircraft carrier, each CEO would tell you that the thing they took away from their visit was the age of the average Sailor – typically 19 to 23 years old – and how well those

**"Leadership" is a phrase we hear every day, and I have seen it firsthand at every location I've visited during my first five months in this job.**

young Sailors operated as a team. The CEOs all marveled at our Sailors' performance and could only wish for similar successes for their companies.

I see positive leadership at every level of the Navy, but I'm most proud of the gifted enlisted Sailors we have today.

A couple of weeks ago, I hosted our annual Sailor of the Year week at Naval Air Forces Pacific. We honored eight outstanding Sailors representing our enlisted personnel at sea and ashore.

These Sailors are at one of the many pinnacles in their careers. They will tell you that getting to this level doesn't happen without a few bumps and bruises or an occasional setback.

I had a few of those in my career when I was young, and I am thankful that I had great first class petty officers and chiefs who led, never wavered in their confidence and helped me learn from my mistakes.

I was truly humbled by their presence for the week. Working around such stellar Sailors truly brings out the best in you.

These Sailors of the Year will all tell you that their

success is attributed to the enlisted Sailors that they have worked beside, supervised and mentored during their careers. If they are an indication of our enlisted force of the future, we are in superb shape.

I want to thank each and every enlisted Sailor for your ability, sacrifice and dedication – no matter what bilge, sheave damper room, airframe or trench you may find yourself in as you're reading this.

Keep leading!



U.S. Navy photo

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# AllHANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY

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To be considered for the "Any Day in the Navy" issue, forward your high resolution (5"x7" at 300 dpi) images with full credit and cutline information, including full name, rank and duty station to:  
[anyday@dma.mil](mailto:anyday@dma.mil)

## Any Day in the Navy

Photo submissions are due by July 17, 2009.

## Tracking of Sailors Post-deployment Health Assessments Revised

**T**he Navy recently announced that commands may now access the Deployment Health Assessment (DHA) Program instruction online. OPNAVINST 6100.3. cements the requirements for periodic assessments prior to and after deployments.

“When leadership takes an active role in making sure that the assessments take place, then we know we are really taking care of Sailors’ physical and emotional needs,” said Fleet Master Chief Mike McCalip, Office of the Chief of Naval Personnel.

“Sometimes Sailors in a hurry to get demobilized or back to their pre-individual augmentee (IA) job may not spend the time on the post-deployment assessment that they should, and issues arise months after a deployment. The post-deployment re-assessment (PDHRA) is designed to pick up those issues,” he added.

Sailors frequently rate their overall general health worse three to six months after returning than they did immediately upon return. The process is designed to identify stress injuries and other health concerns that require further assessment or treatment.

Sailors are required to undergo a pre-deployment health assessment (Pre-DHA) or complete Form DD 2795 no earlier than 60 days prior to the expected deployment date. Then, when the Sailor returns from deployment a post-deployment assessment (Post-DHA) or Form DD 2796 should be completed as close to their homecoming date as possible but not earlier than 30 days before the expected redeployment.

Reserve Sailors should complete the Post-DHA before being released from active duty. The PDHRA or Form DD 2900 should be completed between 90 and 180 days after return from deployment.

To make life easier, deployment health assessments are all submitted electronically by a nurse, corpsman or medical technician. If a service member gives positive responses to some questions, the assessment may be bumped up for review by a physician, physician’s assistant (PA), nurse practitioner (NP) or independent duty corpsman (IDC). The PDHRA can only be done by a physician, PA, NP or IDC.

For more information on the assessments and reassessments, review OPNAVINST 6100.3 available in the reference section on the Navy Personnel Command Web site at [www.npc.navy.mil/channels/](http://www.npc.navy.mil/channels/).

*Story courtesy of Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.*

## CNP Wants Sailors to ACT to Prevent Suicide

The chief of naval personnel, Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson, recently spoke to Sailors on the importance of suicide prevention during a visit to



U.S. Navy Photo

▲ **HM3 Robert Stillwell, from Lake Forest, Ill., draws blood from AE3 Shandra Jackson, from Spokane, Wash., for a Post-Deployment Health Assessment aboard USS Enterprise (CVN 65).**

Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

“It is an all-hands responsibility for shipmates to recognize when someone may be in distress. It is the responsibility of leadership to ensure the programs are in place and Sailors have access to them,” said Ferguson.

“Suicide is generally a response to stress – to a person feeling hopeless or distressed with their personal situation. It is a tragedy that can be prevented,” said Ferguson, adding that Sailors may be able to help prevent suicide if they ACT.

“If people remember to ACT – ask, care, treat – they will be on the right path,” said Lt. Cmdr. Bonnie Chavez, behavioral health program manager for the Navy. Chavez recently introduced a series of suicide prevention posters designed by Sailors to help teach Sailors to ACT.

“Don’t be afraid to ask someone if they are thinking

of taking their own life. Care enough to let the person know that suicidal feelings are temporary and that depression can be treated. Then get help. Treat – take them to an emergency room or walk-in clinic. Don’t leave them alone. Take action; remove the means, such as guns, stockpiled pills, ropes and sharp objects,” said Chavez.

Suicide prevention education is among the 12 general military training topics required for all hands in 2009. The new course titled Introduction to the Stress Response Continuum and Suicide Awareness is available at Navy Knowledge Online.

Commands can find more information about suicide prevention in OPNAVINST 1720.4, Suicide Prevention Program, which provides guidance for commanding officers and senior enlisted leadership on suicide prevention training.

According to Chavez, early intervention is vital to suicide

prevention efforts at all levels of the Navy. She pointed out that most people give some warning of their suicidal intentions – to a friend or family member – and that all suicide threats should be taken seriously.

To find out more information, download a poster or view a list of the warning signs, visit [www.suicide.navy.mil](http://www.suicide.navy.mil).

*Story courtesy of Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.*

## Million Dollar Sailor Program Teaches Sailors How to Build Wealth

The Navy recently rolled out a standardized wealth-building program, “Million Dollar Sailor” that teaches Sailors how to develop good financial habits, how to become savvy consumers and how to save and invest to become future million dollar Sailors.

Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSCs) are offering the program fleetwide.

“Million Dollar Sailor is a two-day, personal wealth-building program that teaches Sailors and their families to successfully navigate the transitions of Navy life and the financial challenges that accompany them,” said David M. DuBois, deputy director, Fleet and Family Support Programs, Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC), Washington, D.C.

Navy Region Hawaii’s Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC), initially created the program that benefited more than 5,000 Sailors and family members. Initial success in meeting the program’s learning objectives and positive

participant feedback helped contribute to the creation of a standardized Million Dollar Sailor program for the entire Navy.

“I had two of my guys attend the Million Dollar Sailor class the other day,” said Chief Aircrew Survival Equipmentman (AW) Robert Colgan, division leading chief petty officer, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24, Marine Corps Base Hawaii. “Both of them came back to work raving about the class. They were very impressed with the content, learned a lot and highly recommend it for anyone.”

“Our vision is for the Navy community to be financially fit through a comprehensive overview of key money-related areas,” said DuBois. “Understanding the basic building blocks of money management, consumer awareness, insurance, car and home-buying, as well as wealth-building, Sailors and their families can reap the benefits of sound financial decisions.”

Personal financial management professionals, many of whom hold national certification as accredited financial counselors, teach the course that provides a basic understanding of financial issues, an awareness of available resources, financial problem-solving skills and strategies for achieving financial growth.

“This is a time to focus on reducing debt, building emergency savings and developing strategies to increase personal net worth and family readiness,” DuBois said.

*Story courtesy of Fleet and Family Readiness Marketing, Commander, Navy Installations Command, Millington, Tenn.*

**Fire Controlman 2nd Class Jason Murphy** was recently awarded a Navy and Marine Corps Medal, for his heroism while saving the life of a fellow Sailor involved in a motorcycle accident last year.



On the morning of March 22, 2008, Murphy and two shipmates witnessed Brian Anthony Davis, then a Sailor stationed aboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), lose control and crash at the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel, Norfolk. Davis was flung into the chilly waters of the Chesapeake Bay.

Murphy and his shipmates, Aviation Support Equipment Technician 3rd Class Edgar Ardon and Damage Controlman 3rd Class Elisandro Leal, approached the scene where they spotted Davis still in his helmet, floating face down.

While Leal called emergency services for help, Murphy and Ardon dove into the 52-degree water and swam about 25 yards in the morning darkness to retrieve Davis, who was unconscious and drowning. They pulled Davis back to shore, initiated cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and revived him while waiting for paramedics to arrive.

“There wasn’t much time to think,” said Murphy. “We saw the situation and knew what had to be done, so we turned our thoughts into action.”

“This is a real honor and privilege,” said Murphy. “I am very appreciative, and I am really proud to have been a part of something that deserves an award like this. Mainly, though, I’m just happy [Davis] made it out OK and is back with his family now.”

*Story by MC3(SW) Candace Villareal, assigned to USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70).*

## SRB Award Levels Changed

The Navy announced revised selective reenlistment bonus (SRB) rates recently in NAVADMIN 050/09.

“We adjust SRBs as a retention incentive to provide the critical skills needed in the fleet,” said Vice Adm.

Mark Ferguson, chief of naval personnel. “We’re experiencing great retention in nearly all zones and NECs (Navy Enlisted Classifications), and we’ve adjusted SRB levels in response to this change in behavior.

While not every Sailor qualifies for an SRB, all Sailors are important to the successful execution of Navy missions,” added Ferguson.

The new message approves 35 increases in SRBs, many in the nuclear field, and 412 decreases. The increased award levels are effective immediately, and decreased levels have been effective since March 11. These award levels are continually reviewed and evaluated. This NAVADMIN supersedes NAVADMIN 240/08.

The SRB Program enhances the Navy’s ability to size, shape and stabilize the force by using a monetary incentive to encourage Sailors with critical skills the Navy needs most to reenlist. SRB is a market-based incentive allowing the Navy to strategically adjust award levels as retention needs dictate.

Changes to the SRB policy earlier this year allowed Sailors to reenlist early for SRB as long

# Around the Fleet

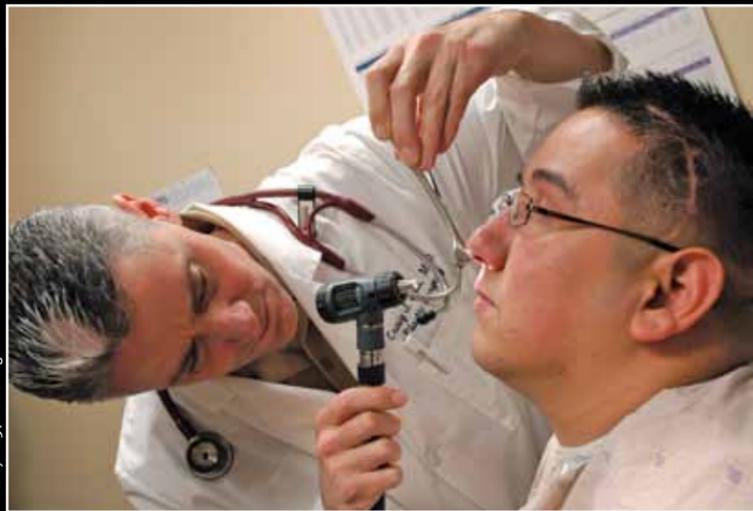


Photo by MC3 Jake Berenguer

▲ Cmdr. Craig Salt, department head of plastic surgery at Naval Medical Center San Diego, examines the nasal cavity of Lance Cpl. Anthony Guererro during a pre-operation examination. Salt is spearheading Project Comprehensive Aesthetic Recovery Effort (Project C.A.R.E.) to improve aesthetic appearance of combat injuries and improve the patient's quality of life.



Photo by MC2 Matthew D. Jordan

▲ OS3 Glenn Mupas, assigned to USS *Blue Ridge* (LCC 19), changes the view on the camera to observe an approaching security boat while standing bridge status board watch as *Blue Ridge* pulls into Okinawa, Japan, during her routine spring patrol.



Photo by MC2 RJ Strachko

▼ Officers and chief petty officers assigned to Amphibious Construction Battalion 1 take cover as an "enemy" is spotted during a khaki field exercise at Camp Pendleton, Calif. The annual exercise increases situational awareness of the battalion's staff members by focusing on scenarios junior personnel might encounter.

► Special warfare combatant-craft crewmen assigned to Special Boat Team 22 conduct live-fire drills at the riverine training range at the John C. Stennis Space Center, Miss.



Photo by MC2 Brian P. Caracci

▼ Sailors assigned to air department perform fire drills on the flight deck aboard USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75).



Photo by MC2 Ricardo J. Reyes

Continued from page 7

as they are within 90 days prior to their expiration of active obligated service (EAOS) and within the current fiscal year of their EAOS. A Sailor whose SRB award level decreases or is removed is eligible to reenlist in the first 30 days following release of a new SRB award plan only if their hard EAOS is within 90 days of the effective date of the message. In the case of NAVADMIN 050/09 this date is calculated to be May 9, 2009.

"By reducing the time frame for SRB reenlistment, the Navy can better project and manage end strength while continuing to provide incentive to Sailors with critical skills and valuable experience to stay Navy," said Jeri Busch, head, military pay and compensation policy branch for the chief of naval personnel.

The policy change is part of an overall effort to stabilize the force at about 329,000 active-duty Sailors by the end of this fiscal year.

Some other requirements under the SRB policy include:

- All SRB reenlistment requests must be submitted 35 to 120 days prior to the requested reenlistment date.
- SRB requests submitted less than 35 days in advance of the requested date of reenlistment may be rejected.
- Sailors who are eligible for combat zone tax exclusion (CZTE) and have an EAOS that falls in the current fiscal year are exempt from the 90-day policy and may reenlist early for SRB outside the 90-day window as long as they are eligible for CZTE at the time of reenlistment. These Sailors, along with command career counselors, must annotate in the remarks section of the pre-certification request whether they are currently CZTE eligible.

- All rates and NECs were extensively analyzed for bonus levels, and the corresponding increases and reductions were not taken lightly," concluded Ferguson. ■

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

## Navy Recognized Internationally for "Best in Class" Training Programs

The Navy received international recognition recently from the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), winning two awards and two citations in ASTD's annual "Excellence in Practice" awards competition.

"These awards recognize proven practices that meet a demonstrated need, have appropriate design values, are aligned with other performance improvement initiatives and deliver clear and measurable results for their organizations," said Carol Chulew, ASTD awards administrator.

The Navy's awards were received for its Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL) program in the category of Career Development and the Center for Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Diving (CEODD) Preparatory Training for Entry Level Diver Courses program in the category of Performance Improvement.

The COOL program and Navy's Task Force Life Work (TFLW) program also won recognition as "citation" winners in the categories of Workforce and Development, and Managing Change, respectively. Citation winners represent those programs that are innovative in design and are expected to meet an organizational critical

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Continued on page 11

# Around the Fleet

▼ **CTT1 Courtney Laurent**, a Saturday Scholar Mentor from Madison, Wis., makes faces with a West Pensacola Elementary School Saturday Scholar student during the graduation ceremony for the 48th session of Saturday Scholars hosted by Center for Information Dominance Corry Station, Pensacola, Fla.

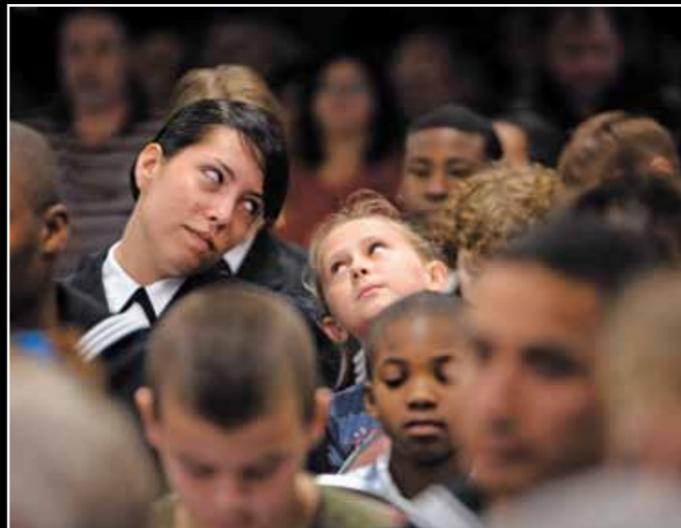


Photo by Gary Nichols



Photo by MC3 Kyle Stekler

▲ **AW2 Dale Stanton**, from Grand Rapids, Mich., (left), and **AW3 Christopher Lyons**, from San Diego, wait aboard an MH-60S *Sea Hawk* helicopter assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 8 as it makes its approach over USNS *Pecos* (T-AO 197) during a replenishment at sea with USS *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) during a scheduled six-month deployment to the western Pacific Ocean.



Photo by MC1 Christopher DeLano

▲ **Sailors from USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7)** and Marines from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit volunteered their time cleaning the Cassa Della Beneficenza during a community relations project in Augusta Bay, Sicily.

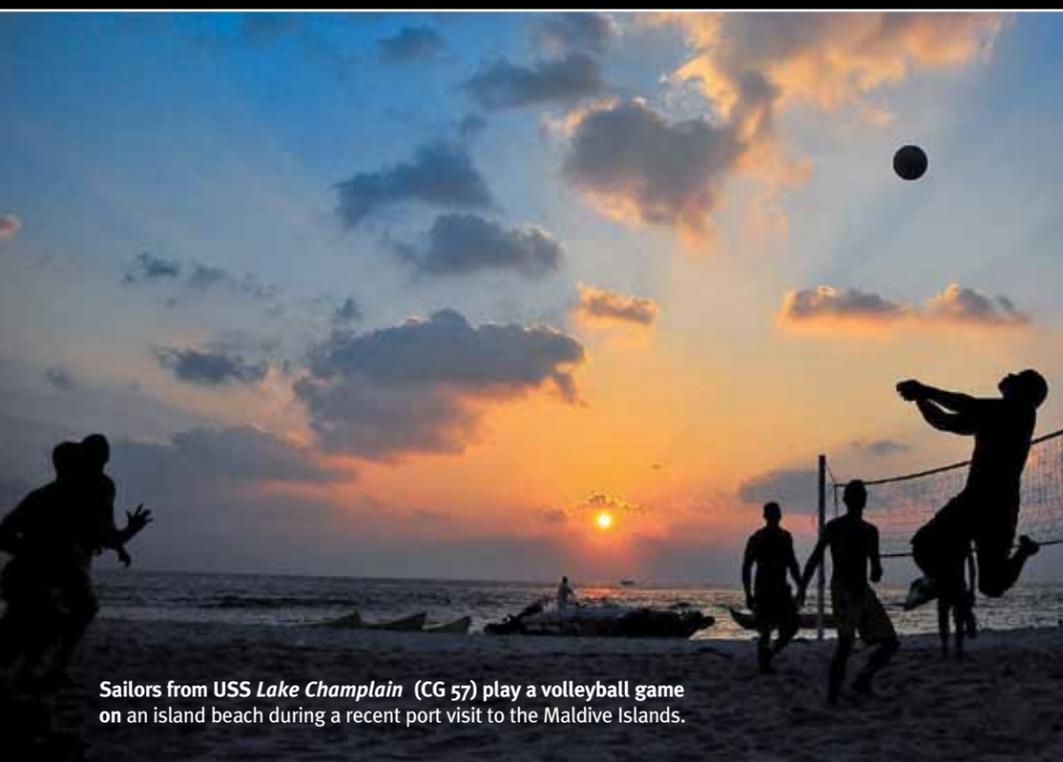


Photo by MC2 Daniel Barker

Sailors from USS *Lake Champlain* (CG 57) play a volleyball game on an island beach during a recent port visit to the Maldive Islands.

▼ A Sailor assigned to USS *Rhode Island* (SSBN 740) stands at attention while top military leaders board the submarine during a ceremony marking the 1000th *Trident* submarine patrol at Kings Bay, Ga.



Photo by MC2 Kevin S. O'Brien

Continued from page 9

need but have not yet been able to analyze data confirming the return on investment.

"I am very proud of all of your efforts in building a Top 50 organization," said Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson, chief of Naval Personnel, when learning of the awards. "Keeping the Navy a competitive option for our Sailors, as well as potential recruits, is a strategic imperative. It is rewarding to be recognized for our achievements."

More than 130 entries from nine countries were received. Seventeen programs received the prestigious "award" designation, with the Navy being part of an even more elite group of three organizations (CISCO and Farmers Insurance) that received two awards and additional citations. It was the only government agency to receive an award.

A formal awards ceremony will recognize Navy along with its corporate peers June 1 at the ASTD International Conference and Exposition in Washington.

For more information on COOL, visit [www.cool.navy.mil/](http://www.cool.navy.mil/). 

*Story courtesy of Chief of Naval Personnel - Diversity Directorate, Washington, D.C.*

## Navy Offers Wide Variety of Topics in New List of GMT

The new list of general military training (GMT) was recently announced via NAVADMIN 033/09.

The curriculum materials for the first six GMT topics have been distributed to commands and are also posted on Navy Knowledge Online (NKO). Seven additional topics were delivered to commands in March and will also be available for download on NKO.

"The effectiveness of this training will be enhanced by the

presence and participation of officers and chief petty officers who can mentor their fellow shipmates by passing on knowledge of the Navy's Core Values through the four main GMT subject areas," said Cmdr. George Michaels, training director for the Center for Personal and Professional Development. The development command oversees curriculum updates and manages the development and distribution of GMT materials for command use throughout the fleet.

The 2009 topics include: code of conduct, introduction to stress management, combating trafficking in persons awareness training, introduction to anger management, sexual health - unplanned pregnancy prevention, equal opportunity - religious accommodations, introduction to the Navy's hazing policy, introduction to time-critical risk management, law of war, domestic violence, personal financial management - surviving the holidays, alcohol awareness - enabling alcohol misuse, and introduction to stress response continuum and suicide awareness.

Web-based lessons are available through Navy e-Learning located on NKO. Once training is completed, it is automatically recorded in Fleet Training Management & Planning System (FLTMPS) and reflected in the Sailor's electronic training jacket. Commands can also download the GMT topics from NKO and deliver them locally. Commands using this delivery method will have to ensure course completion for their Sailors is recorded in FLTMPS by their command training officer.

For more information read NAVADMIN 033/09, or visit [www.nko.navy.mil](http://www.nko.navy.mil) and select the Personal Development link and go to the GMT page. 

*Story by Susan Lawson, Center for Personal and Professional Development, Pensacola, Fla.*

# GROWLER

## *An Electronic Attack Warfare Revolution*

Story and photos by MC2 Tucker M. Yates

**T**he EA-18G *Growler* is making its debut in the electronic attack community, setting the stage to open up a whole new world of capabilities for the fleet.



An EA-18G *Growler*, assigned to Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 129, takes off during a training exercise. VAQ-129 began transitioning and training pilot instructors to fly the *Growler* that replaces the fleet's current carrier-based EA-6B *Prowler*.



Photo by MC3 Torrey W. Lee

▲ An EA-18G Growler assigned to Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron 129 aligns itself for an at-sea landing aboard USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76).

The EA-18G *Growler* is an electronic attack version of the F/A-18F *Super Hornet* and will replace existing EA-6B *Prowlers* completely within the next several years. Leading the sea change are the Sailors of Electronic Attack Squadrons (VAQ) 129 “Vikings” and 132 “Scorpions” out of Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash. As the Fleet Replacement Squadron, the Vikings were the first ones to transition to the new platform. VAQ 129 flight crews are responsible for training additional *Growler* squadrons as they are phased into service.

“We are doing a lot of instructor training with the *Growler* platform to make sure we understand, execute and instruct all the different missions before the first student pilots check in,” said Lt. Adam Drayton, a native of Chippewa Falls, Wis., and a VAQ-129 pilot instructor. “We are getting ourselves up to speed with the aircraft and its new advanced capabilities.”

Facilitating a crucial part of that process, USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) served as the training platform for the first VAQ-129 carrier landings. *Growlers* turned heads all over USS *Ronald*

*Reagan*, with Sailors lining the catwalks of the ship’s superstructure to watch flight operations.

“It’s really cool,” said Interior Communications Electrician 3rd Class Joshua Smiley of *Ronald Reagan*’s air department. “It’s awesome how we’re using the F/A-18 platform to its full capabilities. It’s amazing how they do so much with it.”

Concurrently at NAS Whidbey Island, VAQ 132 Sailors make preparations to become the first operational squadron to receive the aircraft in August 2009.

### Maintaining the Legacy

Last year, the Scorpions held a final flight ceremony for the EA-6B *Prowler*, to bid farewell to the venerable aircraft after 37 years of being the bread-and-butter of their electronic attack war fighter capability.

VAQ-132’s Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Matt Vandersluis talked about the importance of honoring those who have gone before you and, for those going through this transition, to remember the ideals and traditions that made the EA-6B community so successful.

“We need to take that feeling, that community that we had in the *Prowler*, and put it into the *Growler*. It’s a new platform, but we’re still the electronic attack community, that hasn’t changed. We now have a platform that can do more things,” said Vandersluis. “We can’t lose all the successes we’ve had in the EA-6B electronic attack community. We have to keep our traditions [and] our sense of community – in Oak Harbor, Wash., in naval aviation and on Whidbey Island – and put it into the *Growler*.”

After the event, transition efforts began in earnest. Maintenance crews began receiving technical training and were sent to schools to be educated on the new equipment and technology with which they will be working. Tool turnover for the *Prowler* was completed with the squadron awaiting tool issue for the *Growler*. Aircrews are training with VAQ-129 to become familiar with the enhanced flight systems now available to them.

“I’m excited, the [Sailors] in VAQ-132 are excited, everybody here has signed up to transition,” said Vandersluis. “They all want to do it, and you can just see there’s an excitement for the new plane.”

### Leveraging New Capabilities

Among the realm of improved capability will be air-to-air defense with the introduction of the advanced medium range air-to-air missile (AMRAAM) to the domain of electronic warfare which allows for better integration into strike-fighter packages. The *Growler*’s predecessor had no such capability which prohibited the *Prowler* from conducting missions without a fighter aircraft escort.

“The *Prowler* is a high-value asset, and it has to be protected in the battle space, so a lot of time we have what we call a high-value asset combat air patrol (CAP) attached to us,” said

▼ **Sailors assigned the Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 129 and VAQ-132 perform an EA-18G *Growler* acceptance inspection in Hangar 12 on NAS Whidbey Island, Wash.**



Photo by MC3 Kenneth Abbate

Capt. Brad Russell, commander, Electronic Attack Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet. “With the advent of the *Growler*, and with our own ability to be in the link and shoot forward-firing ordnance – specifically AMRAAM – and our ability to act in a self-protect role as a fighter, the carrier strike group commander will at least have the option of not assigning a high-value asset CAP to that *Growler*. [It’s a] more efficient use [of] strike fighter assets depending upon the threat environment.”

Additionally, the *Prowler* tops out at just under 600 mph, whereas the F/A-18F *Super Hornet* airframe of the *Growler* reaches a maximum speed of Mach 1.8 (about 1,200 mph).

“When you’re doing strike planning for events with the air wing, you’re going to be able to bring your *Growlers* along at essentially the same profile; the same speed, the same altitude and the same kind of flight you would

normally take for all the other strikers in the air wing,” added Russell. “This is going to make planning a lot more efficient, getting in and getting out of the threat envelopes.”

The *Growler* also features fly-by-wire technology as opposed to the *Prowler*’s hydraulic system, as well as a host of new and updated computer aids for stand-off and escort radar jamming. Along with the major upgrades in performance, the *Growler* also has shown a serious reduction in maintenance time.

“The *Prowler* averaged about 60 manhours in the hangar every time it came in for maintenance,” said Chief Warrant Officer John Covar, maintenance material control officer for VAQ 129. “The *Growler* gets it done in less than 11 hours.”

For Sailors used to working on the *Prowler*, it takes some time to get used to the new configuration and the electronic maintenance libraries and records.

“Maintenance on these is slim to none, and it’s a lot easier. When you take off a panel you can actually get to an actuator and it comes out a lot easier. I’m kind of blown away with the different systems this has – all the electronics and computers – the hydraulics are completely different not even close to the *Prowler*,” said Aviation Structural Mechanic 3rd Class (AW) Matthew Morris, of VAQ-132, from Ash Flats, Ark., who has worked on *Prowlers* for more than four years. “This is the Rolls Royce of jets compared with the *Prowler* being an old Chevy. It’s about the difference.”

According to Master Chief Aviation Administrationman (AW/SW) James Campbell, VAQ-132 maintenance master chief, the maintenance may occur less often and take less time with the *Growler*, but it requires a higher skill level by those conducting the maintenance.

◀ **Sailors assigned the Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 129 and VAQ-132 look over and verify airframe components during an EA-18G *Growler* acceptance inspection in Hangar 12 on NAS Whidbey Island, Wash. The two squadrons are working alongside one another to prepare VAQ-132 for their upcoming *Growler* transition.**



Photo by MC3 Kenneth Abbate

▲ Sailors conduct maintenance on an EA-6B Prowler from Electronic Warfare Squadron 138 in the hangar bay aboard USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74).

▼ A shooter launches an EA-6B Prowler assigned to Electronic Attack Squadron 141 aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) during routine flight operations in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility. After 37 years of service, the Prowler airframes are being replaced by the Growler.

“The actual skill involved in working on this airplane is a lot more intense; your tools are more critical, using them for the right job. It’s getting more and more critical to be totally aware of everything that you’re doing,” said Campbell.

There are adjustments being made by air crews as well. The Prowler was handled by an air crew of four, a pilot and three electronic countermeasures officers. Being that the Super Hornet airframe is a two-seater, it will only facilitate a pilot and what will now be an electronic warfare officer. The smaller crew means added responsibility to each individual, but the aircraft and the systems on board provide a more efficient way of doing business.

“The amount of technology and the information that’s available to the crew right now is just light years away from what it was in a Prowler,” said Lt. Brad Jansky, a VAQ-129 instructor, from Apple Valley, Minn.

“The way information is presented to the pilot has changed,” said Jansky. “In a Prowler it was a more [traditional cockpit]. Now the

modern EA-18G is a glass cockpit and heads-up display with all the information displayed in front of you. You just have to absorb it.

“It’s a different means of getting the information; the information is the same, it’s just how it’s presented. The pilot today has to determine how and when to apply or get some of that information when it’s needed. Once you know how to use it, it’s a lot more convenient,” added Jansky.

The electronic attack community conducts both carrier-based and ground-based deployments. NAS Whidbey Island maintains three expeditionary squadrons that participate in ground deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan in support of the war on terrorism and 10 squadrons that support carrier operations and deployments.

Although the readiness of a deployable EA-18G squadron in the near future is a major turning point in naval aviation, there were many preparations necessary at NAS Whidbey Island to make this a reality.

The EA-18G Growler Support Center was established in May of 2008 to eventually



▲ Aviation ordnancemen from Electronic Attack Squadron 129 move an advanced medium-range air-to-air missile into position for loading onto an EA-18G Growler as they go through their aircraft weapons loading procedures during a conventional weapons technical proficiency inspection at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash.



Photo by MC3 Jonathan Snyder

accommodate 24 people who act as consultants, with representation from all groups involved in the aircraft systems to help Growler squadrons ensure their aircraft are ready and operational.

“There are currently 13 government and industry employees in the building. The technical expertise resident in the Growler Support Center does not just reside in the local employees. They are a reach-back capability to the factory and to all suppliers” said Bob Papadakis, EA-18G NAS Whidbey Island integration lead. “The center, along with the base’s existing supply chain management facility, ensures logistics support for new Growlers is readily available.”

In February 2008, the refurbishing of Hangar 5, the hangar which houses VAQ-132, began, to accommodate five Growler squadrons, the Electronic Attack Weapons School and the Electronic Attack Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet. The undertaking is a three-phase, three-year project, with an anticipated completion date of June 2010.

“The biggest thing I think NAS Whidbey Island is doing is ensuring that all military construction happens in time for VAQ-132 to meet initial operating capability,” said Capt. Gerral David, NAS Whidbey Island commanding officer.

Additional variations to facilities on NAS Whidbey Island included new flight line electrical distribution system, which is undergoing installation due to the variation in power requirements for the Growler vs. the Prowler, modifications to the EA-6B simulator building to accommodate an EA-18G trainer, as well as renovations to the Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit Whidbey Island.

“The bottom line is, lots of moving parts orchestrated very carefully, [to] ensure VAQ-132’s transition happens on time, so they’re ready to fight our nation’s wars,” said David. ✎

**Yates is assigned to Navy Public Affairs Support Element West, Det. Northwest, Oak Harbor, Wash.**

# SUPPORTING *IRAQI FREEDOM*

Story and photos by MC2 Katrina Parker

Situated in the northern reaches of the Arabian Gulf lie Iraq's two oil platforms (OPLATS) – Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminal (KAAOT) and Al Basrah Oil Terminal (ABOT). From these two steel structures, Iraq's oil is pumped to the global market. The revenue generated fuels Iraq's economy and reconstruction.

Members of the naval transition team stationed aboard USS *Carter Hall* (LSD 50) train Iraqi sailors and marines proper visit, board, search and seizure procedures.

► Iraqi sailors and marines prepare for training exercises conducted by coalition forces aboard the amphibious dock landing ship *USS Carter Hall* (LSD 50).

▼ Sailors conduct small boat operations aboard *USS Carter Hall* (LSD 50) in the Persian Gulf.



To help protect the OPLATS and to develop the Iraq Navy's capability to provide for its security, *USS Carter Hall* (LSD 50) served as an afloat staging base (AFSB) as part of Combined Task Force (CTF) 158.

CTF 158 is one of the primary task forces of the Combined Maritime Forces, a coalition of more than 20 navies that operate in the region to support security and stability. Since 2004, coalition forces have helped provide security for the Iraqi platforms and adjacent waters, enforcing a standoff area and inspecting all incoming tankers.

In her role as an AFSB, *Carter Hall* supported other warships in the North Gulf. As an amphibious ship, *Carter Hall* has a well deck, boat deck and flight deck that allows it to provide food, water,



Photo by MCz Flordeliz Valerio

BM3 William Holland directs an SH-60B helicopter from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 26 aboard *USS Carter Hall* (LSD 50).



maintenance, communications and medical care to other coalition warships, as well as Sailors serving on the OPLATS themselves. This versatility allowed other warships on station to dedicate themselves to the defense of the OPLATS.

"The services that *Carter Hall* provided were critical to coalition efforts in the North Arabian Gulf," said Cmdr. Jeffrey Sinclair, *Carter Hall's* commanding officer. "We not only contributed to the security of the OPLATS and supported other warships in the area, but most importantly, we served as a training platform for Iraqi sailors and marines."

The ship's size allowed her to act as an at-sea forward operating base to provide vital support to other coalition vessels in the area.

"*Carter Hall* was an excellent example of the surface fleet pushing the envelope and taking the fight to the enemy," Sinclair said. "The crew's around-the-clock performance was above and beyond the call of duty during all operations, exercises, drills and day-to-day conduct."

Aboard *Carter Hall*, the job of training Iraqi sailors and marines fell

to the British-led naval transition team (NaTT). The NaTT, based in the southern Iraqi port of Umm Qasr, consists of sailors from the Royal Navy and Coast Guardsmen from a U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment (LEDET). As part of Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, the NaTT works with Iraqis to ensure they are ready and able to provide security for the OPLATS and waters that surround them.

Each week, a platoon of Iraqi personnel arrived aboard *Carter Hall* to work with the LEDET and NaTT teams to prepare them to sweep the oil tankers and conduct other ship boardings. During the first phase of training, the NaTT team reviewed navigation and communication procedures and small boat handling techniques with the Iraqi sailors.

Simultaneously, the LEDET worked with Iraqi marines to review VBSS techniques, inspections and security sweeps. These lessons were designed to enable the Iraqis to react quickly and efficiently to any shipboard situations they may encounter as part of their operations.

"Most of the Iraqis were willing and



Photo by MCz Flordeliz Valerio

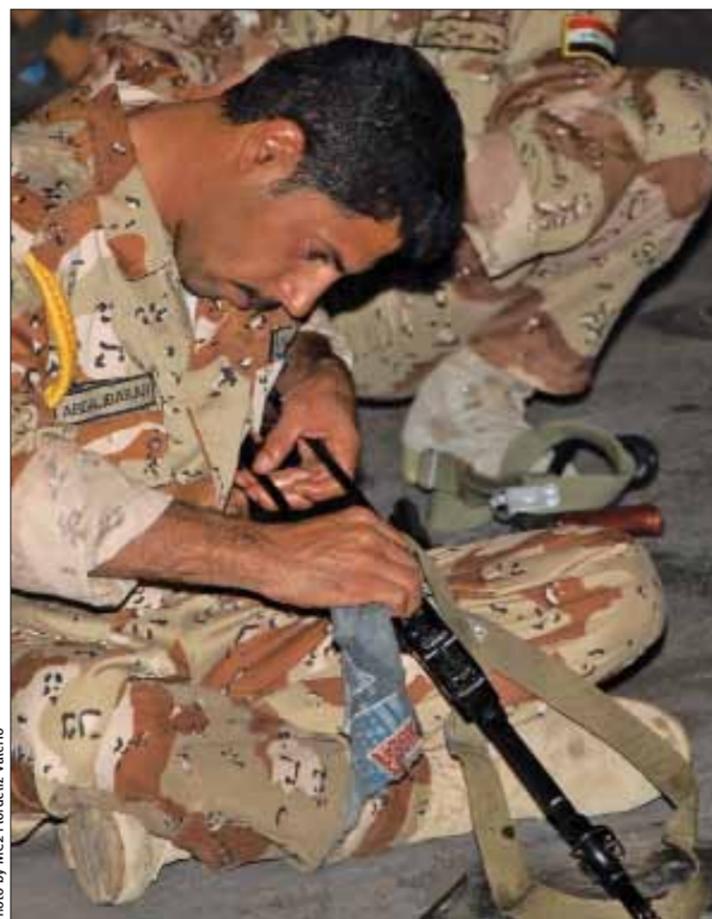


Photo by MCz Flordeliz Valerio

eager to learn,” said Royal Navy Lt. Alex Kopsahilis, the afloat NaTT operations officer. “Great strides have been made by the Iraqis toward autonomy.”

Once initial training concluded, Iraqi sailors and marines performed a simulated boarding, during which *Carter Hall* served as a simulated merchant tanker to be boarded. The Iraqis were evaluated on techniques, professionalism and the ability to adapt to various situations. Successful completion of this exercise qualified the Iraqi sailors and marines to conduct actual boardings. Most of the Iraqi teams going through the training were working together for the first time. Frequently the teams had new members who had never performed this specific mission.

Kopsahilis said *Carter Hall's* role in training is extremely important for the Iraqi VBSS teams to operate at sea.

“*Carter Hall's* presence and willing participation has allowed coalition training efforts to continue,” he said. “The ship operated with extreme flexibility to adapt their plans to short-notice training, and I am very grateful for all the support offered in the form of engineers, communications and manpower [needed] to maintain this level of training.”

Before the final training problem, Iraqi sailors and marines planned and conducted their security sweeps of ships and tankers entering the security zones surrounding the OPLATS using *Carter Hall* as a staging platform while members of the NaTT were

▲ **HM2(FMF) Sergio Hernandez treats an Iraqi Sailor during a medical procedure aboard USS *Carter Hall* (LSD 50).** Having a doctor, dentist and an independent duty corpsman aboard provides a higher level of care on station.

◀ **An Iraqi Marine performs maintenance on rifle while in the Gulf.**

▶ **Iraqi Sailors and Marines watch *Carter Hall* (LSD 50) pulling alongside Military Sealift Command's USNS *Tippecanoe* (T-AO 199) for a replenishment at sea.**

on hand to advise Iraqi sailors and marines.

To make their transition living aboard an American warship as easy and comfortable as possible, the Iraqi teams stayed in berthing usually reserved for embarked U.S. Marines. They were also served halal meat and meals, that were specially prepared for them. The food was prepared in a specific way that makes it religiously acceptable to eat.

“I think it was very important for us to accommodate our Iraqi guests as best we can,” said Lt.j.g. John Van Wagoner, one of *Carter Hall's* liaison officers for embarked Iraqi teams. “Riding on foreign ships surrounded by people you do not know can be an uneasy experience. When the Iraqis stepped aboard *Carter Hall*, it was our privilege and responsibility to represent our country to the best of our abilities by making sure they had what they needed.”

Culinary specialists aboard *Carter Hall* ensured the availability of halal items to help make the Iraqi members as comfortable as possible.

“The Iraqis were our guests while they conducted their training, and the halal food helped them feel a little more at home,” said Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW) Kevin McShane. “Our guests have some different customs in their culture, and food is one of them.”

Lt. Robin Simon, *Carter Hall's* dental officer said while *Carter Hall* served as an AFSB, the medical department provided urgent care needs for personnel in the area.

“We treat service members with the highest standard of care,” said Simon. “The benefit of *Carter Hall's* medical team is that we have an independent duty corpsman, in addition to a doctor and dentist on board.”

“The hard work of my Sailors was critical to our success up there,” said Sinclair. “The AFSB mission is one that has challenged every division to step up. *Carter Hall's* success in simultaneously carrying out their varied missions was only possible through the crew's hard work and the ship's versatility.”

Simon said smaller vessels in the area are not as well-equipped to handle emergent



Members of the naval transition team monitor Iraqi Marines as they conduct a visit, board, search and seizure exercise.



Photo by MC2 Fiordeliz Valerio

rigorous and dynamic schedule. Daily mission requirements for the ship's deck department included frequently launching and recovering small boats from the well and boat decks. Most days, operations began before sunrise and lasted well into the night.

"The hours were long, but we always accomplished the mission," said first division's leading petty officer Boatswain's Mate 1st Class (SW) Kyle Luna. "Deck department understood this, and the team worked seamlessly to accomplish *Carter Hall's* mission. We handled many simultaneous evolutions each day."

▼ **USS Carter Hall (LSD 50)** transits the Suez Canal as part of the *Iwo Jima* Amphibious Ready Group supporting maritime security operations in the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of responsibility.

Deck department also conducted crane operations, anchoring evolutions and helped refuel the ship as well as dozens of other essential operations that allowed *Carter Hall* to remain at sea as an AFSB.

The engineering department was equally challenged by *Carter Hall's* role in the North Arabian Gulf. Engineers kept the ship's diesel generators running to supply power throughout the ship, operated the ballast and well deck equipment and kept the small boats in peak operational condition.

"The constant evolutions and surrounding environment placed *Carter Hall's* engine equipment under tremendous strain," said Lt.j.g. John Horwath, *Carter Hall's* auxiliaries officer. "The Sailors did a great job maintaining the engines, periodically cleaned heat exchangers and ensured the engines did not overheat. Engineers were repeatedly

called upon to manufacture ingenious and novel solutions to repair a variety of equipment throughout the ship."

As *Carter Hall* completed her deployment cycle and prepared to return home, the Sailors reflected on the significance and impact of their everyday jobs.

"This [was] a very unique mission, one that our Sailors are going to speak of with pride for years to come," said Van Wagoner. "To have an opportunity to assist in rebuilding the Iraqi infrastructure and Navy is awesome. I believe the Sailors share this sentiment to various degrees and are excited to have [had] the Iraqis on board." ❧

Story by MC2 Katrina Parker, Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group.



Photo by MC2 Fiordeliz Valerio

▲ **BM2 Melvin Davis (left)** assists an Iraqi Sailor in pulling alongside *Carter Hall* (LSD 50).

► **Iraqi Sailors and Marines disembark** *USS Carter Hall* (LSD 50) during visit, board, search and seizure training.

medical needs. *Carter Hall* provided a higher level of medical care on station or coordinated with support clinics if necessary.

"We were able to save time and sometimes lives by providing treatment at sea instead of sending patients elsewhere for medical care," Simon said.

*Carter Hall's* deck department also played an important role in the ship's success as an AFSB and was responsible for executing an extremely



Photo by MC2 Fiordeliz Valerio



Photo by MC2 Jason R. Zalasky

# Running for Country

Story and photos by MC2 (SW/AW) Jhi L. Scott

**T**he smell of freshly cut grass fills the early morning air in Derwood, Md. Hundreds of runners from near and far gather at the start line, while volunteers hustle around stacking water and other supplies for the participants.

Bang! The gun goes off, and the women's 8-Kilometer race begins. The U.S. Air Force takes an early lead but the women representing the All-Navy Cross-Country team are close on their heels.

"Run! Run! Catch up with her! We need you to catch her," screams Cmdr. James Felty, head coach of the All-Navy Cross Country team, who is trying to motivate one of his runners to catch a runner from the All Air Force team. "Close that gap and on the last lap, you got her."

The six men and five women of the Navy Cross-Country Team pushed their limits at 2009 Armed Forces Cross-Country Championship, held in conjunction with the USA Track & Field's Winter Classic

early in the year. The Navy started off very strong with Lt. j.g. Will Christian and Lt. j.g. Aaron Lanzel finishing first and second in the men's 12-Kilometer run. At the end, both Navy teams – women and men – took second place as the team championship was determined by adding the placement finishes of the team's top three runners. The second place finish is a very respectable result for a group of runners who do this in addition to full-time work.

"Many of the runners there are professionals, and their job is just to run," said Lanzel, a three-year member of the team. "They compete to make the U.S. National Team with large amounts of money and endorsements hanging in

the balance. It's a welcome challenge to measure yourself against the best, even with only a fraction of the time to prepare and train like they have."

Trying to balance a military career with training can be challenging for most of these runners, but like all Sailors, they're used to multi-tasking.

"Everyone in all of the military services have different jobs; therefore, they have different training schedules. Some will be able to train better than others based on their work schedule," said Lt.j.g. William Christian, a two-year member of the team. "Being a surface warfare officer at sea, my schedule can be very hectic. My work day usually starts at 0630 and ends around 1630



Lt.j.g. Jenny McDonagh warms up prior to running in her 8-Kilometer cross country meet. McDonagh placed in the top 10 with 33:13 and helped the women's team finish in second place.



and sometimes can run much longer than that. I try to run before work and when the workday is over, I usually run home. When I am at sea, I have to stand three watches, and I normally run on the treadmill in between those watches.”

But as the most junior and only enlisted person on the team, Seaman Cory Duquette made evident that the opportunity is available for those who work hard as he placed third in last year’s Marine Corps Marathon.

“It feels good. I always let the other service members know that I am enlisted because I try to get the point out that you don’t have to be an officer to be selected to compete,” said Duquette, who is assigned to USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72). “It has to do with the level of competition, the support of your command and the belief that you can compete at that particular level.”

The All-Navy Sports program offers Sailors the opportunity to compete at a professional

◀ **SN Cory Duquette, the only enlisted member on the All-Navy Cross-Country team, finished with a time of 41:26 at the 2009 Armed Forces Cross-Country Championship held in Derwood, Md.**

level in 22 sports, including boxing, wrestling and softball among others.

“Depending on the sport, we will invite roughly 20-30 Sailors to camp to try out. The coach will then select the final team which will go on to represent the Navy at the armed forces competition,” said John Lucas, interim program manager, Navy Sports Regional Fitness and sports director MWR Navy Mid-Atlantic Region.

Applying for an All-Navy Sports team is as simple as typing [www.mwr.navy.mil/mwrprgms/sports.htm](http://www.mwr.navy.mil/mwrprgms/sports.htm) and printing out an application. Besides having the talent, skill and dedication to compete successfully, Sailors also need command support.

“Sailors need to have their commanding officer endorsement as well as their base fitness director prior to sending the application to our office,” said Lucas. “Between the tryout camps, the armed forces tournament and the follow-on nationals, some Sailors could be [temporarily assigned] to the program anywhere from as little as four days to as long as six weeks.”

In the case of cross-country running, the runners must provide records of their times.

“The application [process] considers your

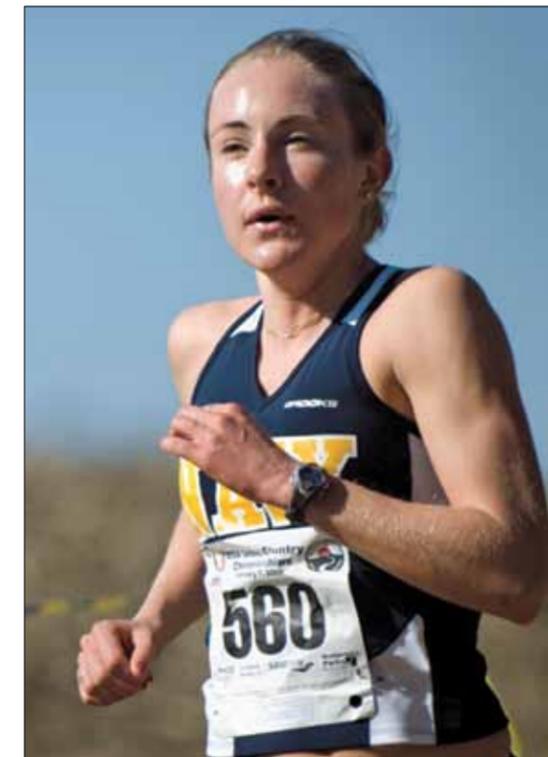
past accomplishments as a runner and the time you have run,” said Lanzel.

The invitations to camp usually go out within a day or two of the application deadline. Interested applicants need to make sure that they get their forms submitted on or before each posted deadline. From there, commands will cut no-cost orders, and Navy Sports will make and fund travel and berthing arrangements. For this investment, the Navy benefits in a variety of ways.

“We’ve had athletes go on to compete at the Olympic level in years past. Moreover, the Navy is routinely well-represented at the Ironman Triathlon World Championships at Kona, Hawaii. I think the greatest success comes from the pride that these service men and women get from representing the Navy and the impact that they have on young kids who are considering a career in the Navy,” said Lucas. “Additionally, our athletes are proof-positive of the Navy’s commitment to a culture of fitness.”

These athletes must have a strong supporting cast at home as well. Being away from family members is a part of military members’ normal life, but when you add in the training on top of normal duties, the time that they are away from home can really add up.

▼ **Lt. Aiden Van Cleef, the only member representing the U.S. Coast Guard, finished second among military members during the women’s 8-Kilometer race with a time of 30:29. Van Cleef has been a member of the All-Navy Cross-Country team since 2008.**



▲ **The All-Navy Cross-Country Team walks back to its hotel in Derwood, Md., after checking in for the USA Cross-Country Championship where they compete against civilian runners and military members. The runners compete in a sub-competition, the Armed Forces Championship, against the All-Marine, All-Air Force and All-Army Cross-Country teams.**

► **Lt.j.g. Will Christian leads a pack of runners down a hill during the Armed Forces Championship. Christian finished first among military members during the meet at the Agricultural History Farm Park, Derwood, Md.**





▲ The women runners of the All-Navy Cross-Country team come up with a last minute game plan prior to their 8-Kilometer meet during the Armed Forces Championship.

▼ Lt. j.g. Gina Shaw treats shin splints by wrapping her leg in ice following her 8-Kilometer run after participating in the 2009 Armed Forces Cross-Country Championship. The women's cross-country team finished second behind the Air Force.



"My wife is very supportive. She sometimes thinks I am a bit crazy because I'm always on the go and have a lot of ambition," said Duquette, a freshman member of the team. "I am a Sailor who wants to be a more competitive runner, and I also want to be a Navy SEAL."

Felty, the cross-country team coach, is part of that support system. Although the runners train independently, Felty helps them design their work-out schedule and develop strategy and plans for the race when the team comes together the week before the nationals and a week before the Marine Corps Marathon.

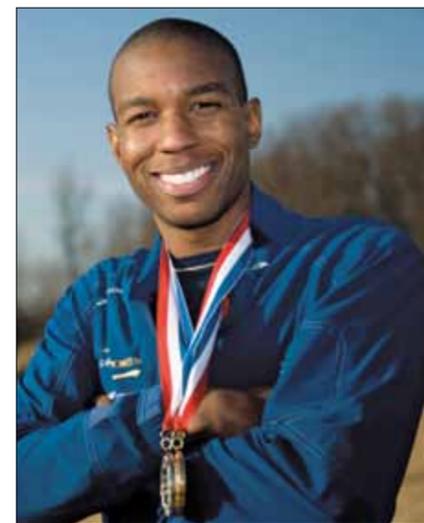
"During the past several years we have grown the distance running program significantly as many of the qualities from our core values of honor, courage and commitment are required to be a successful elite distance runner representing the Navy," said Felty. "Serving as the head coach for the past six years has been a tremendous honor and experience as I have had the opportunity to work with some amazing Sailors and runners."

In 2008 the Navy won first place in individual and team categories at the Marine Corps Marathon and in the nationals.

Prior to the race, the Sailors and Coast

Guardsmen on the cross-country team try to spend as much time with one another and support each other as much as possible.

"The team gets along great. We go out to eat and hang out to talk about past races, our goals for future races and strategies for the cross-country championships," said Christian. "We like to go on group runs a



▲ Lt. j.g. Will Christian took first place in the Armed Forces Cross-Country Championship held in Derwood, Md., and the All-Navy Men's Team took second place in the event behind the U.S. Air Force.

couple days before the event to get a feel for each other's fitness and to check out the course we will be competing on.

"For those few days we are together, we are as close as any professional team," said Duquette. "After the dust has settled and the medals are handed out, we go out with the All-Marine, All-Army and All Air-Force teams to celebrate at the Armed Forces meet no matter who wins that day. Without a doubt, running on the All-Navy Cross-Country team had to be one of the two best experiences I have had while serving."

Going back to their commands and telling tales about their travels and competing against other services is something in which these Sailors take pride.

"I feel great about [representing the team] every time I run," said Duquette. "When I get the chance to stand on the starting line in big competitions, I feel like I am fortunate to compete against some of the better runners in the United States. They see me wearing the Navy on the front of my uniform, and it instantly lets my competitors as well as spectators know that I am in the Navy, and I am competing for not only my service but also for my country."

"I am in the Navy, and I compete for the Navy and there is no greater feeling," said Duquette. "This is one of the best experiences that I've had in my naval career!"

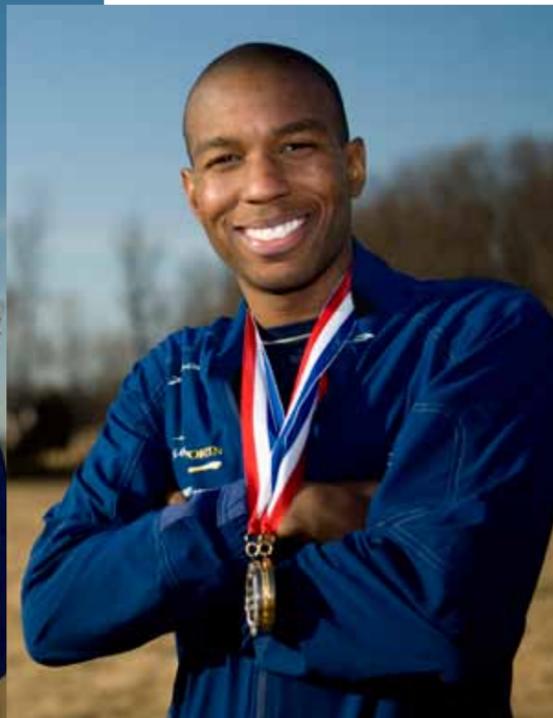
For more information on Navy Sports programs, visit [www.mwr.navy.mil/mwrprgms/sports.htm](http://www.mwr.navy.mil/mwrprgms/sports.htm).

**Scott is a photojournalist assigned to Defense Media Activity-Anacostia, Washington, D.C.**

► Lt. j.g. Will Christian grabs some water from a volunteer on his second lap of the Armed Forces Cross-Country Championship held at the Agricultural History Farm Park, Derwood, Md. Christian finished in first place with a time of 38:42 beating out his teammate Lt. j.g. Aaron Lanzel.

▼ Lt. j.g. Aaron Lanzel placed second at the Armed Forces Cross-Country Championship behind his teammate Lt. j.g. Will Christian with a time of 39:32. Lanzel has competed with the cross country team for five years while mentoring some of the junior runners.





## Boarding Exercises Enhance Fleet Irregular Warfare

Sailors from USS *Porter* (DDG 78) and USS *Philippine Sea* (CG 58) visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) teams recently participated in comprehensive fleet irregular warfare training, during a Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 24 Group Sail in the Atlantic Ocean.

The group sail's primary function is to augment the battle group's abilities to execute the U.S. maritime strategy. Various scenarios provide individual unit commanding officers the opportunity to practice flexible responses to emerging threats. It is a precursor to the upcoming *Joint Warrior* Exercise that will encompass thorough training in less traditional areas, like counterpiracy and theater security.

"We've always rehearsed normal warfare techniques, but we have new emergent threats," said Fire Controlman 1st Class (SW) Ben Hostetler, mechanical breacher and security team leader for *Porter's* VBSS

team. "Every chance we get to rehearse the execution and fundamentals for these emergent tasks is a big benefit in making our team's dynamic assets for any real-life occurrences."

Because current worldwide scenarios like piracy, hostage situations and drug trafficking usually require means other than traditional engagement for optimal results, boarding exercises are an invaluable tool for the Navy.

"All of the exercises employed during the group sail allow us to get away from the normal, core fighting tactics," said Lt. j.g. Samuel Robinson, a *Porter* VBSS boarding officer. "Right now, we're completely focused on the more detailed functional aspects of new warfare."

Both *Porter* and *Philippine Sea* VBSS teams focused on essential mission areas that include positioning, approach, apprehension and protocol. Personnel from each team boarded the opposing team's vessel and conducted fast-paced, hands-on training,

while leadership observed the drills to note their performance and efficiency.

"We went through some great training," said Ensign Rob Ackerman, *Porter's* first lieutenant and VBSS boarding officer. "The experience and lessons learned today will help us train for our future at sea. Really, it's all about being prepared to flex and meet any mission, at any time." **S**

*Story by MC3(SW) Candice Villarreal, public affairs, Commander Destroyer Squadron 24.*

## Joint, Combined Training Increases Interoperability with Partner Nations

Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS) and the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) recently conducted a joint field training exercise with students from 24 different partner nations at Stennis Space Center, Stennis, Miss.

The training was the first time NAVSCIATTS and WHINSEC worked together in a joint effort.

"It's a phenomenal opportunity for two organizations that have been doing security cooperation for years to come together in joint efforts, enhancing their skills and expertise by bringing a number of countries together to execute training pertinent to the challenges that we all face," said Col. Felix L. Santiago, commandant, WHINSEC. "It's truly remarkable to see that this training is able to make a difference when folks return to their countries and implement the skills in mitigating the threats."

NAVSCIATTS and WHINSEC schoolhouses train international students in maritime and ground-based operations respectively. Both have particular strengths in cultural sensitivity and cadre with robust language capabilities enabling students to focus more on training and less on language barriers.

"At the beginning, training was difficult because all the countries were not used to working together, but in a couple of days, our confidence has become better, and at the end we work very well together," said Lt.



Photo by MC2(AW/SW) RJ Stratchko

▲ A guest instructor debriefs students from the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation and Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School after a field training exercise in Stennis, Miss.

Estuardo Antonio Carbaoluna, Guatemalan Navy, WHINSEC student. "The experience of working with all the students from all the countries and to take procedures and security tactics and new knowledge is important."

WHINSEC and NAVSCIATTS students will use the training to support U.N. peacekeeping operations, interdict drugs and capture drug runners, respond to disasters and ultimately help save lives.

"The students get a unique opportunity to work in a multinational environment, often the first, but likely not the last time, for many of the students," said Cmdr. Bill Mahoney, commanding officer, NAVSCIATTS.

"The demand for maritime focused training - especially in riverine and littoral environments - is growing exponentially.

"Combatant commanders, embassy security assistance officers and theater special operations commands are increasingly looking for training opportunities like NAVSCIATTS to train their partner nations," he added.

His command recently transitioned to fall under Naval Special Warfare Group 4 to further operationalize the school's mission and improve the lash-up between NAVSCIATTS riverine and littoral training with the State Department's and U.S. Special Operations Command's goal to build partner nation maritime capability.

"NAVSCIATTS is unique in many ways. We're the only command in the Navy that

exclusively trains international students, and our location on Stennis Space Center provides superb riverine and littoral training for our students to work in this maritime environment. They'll leave here with an increased ability to build their nations small craft capacity," said Mahoney. The training is closely aligned with the Navy's maritime strategy of increasing security and alliances in waterways across the world.

"I think WHINSEC as well as NAVSCIATTS have become a strategic

tool and is significant to what we do, not only in our hemisphere but throughout the world as long as we have institutions like this that can enhance skills, foster security cooperation and build relationships and partnerships," said Santiago. **S**

*Story and photo by MC2(AW/SW) RJ Stratchko, Naval Special Warfare Group 4, Stennis, Miss.*



▲ MA2 Michael Hartter (left), and MA2 Jeye Pena, both assigned to Naval Station Pearl Harbor Security, conduct bite-work training with military police working dog Body at Naval Station Pearl Harbor. The Pearl Harbor security department uses and trains military police working dogs for searching buildings, ships and submarines for explosives and narcotics, as well as routine patrols.

## Canine Detachment Gives Criminals a 'Ruff' Time

The canine detachment at Naval Station (NAVSTA) Pearl Harbor's trains for a variety of scenarios to assist in providing security on base.

Military working dogs are used for searching buildings, ships and submarines for explosives and narcotics, along with routine patrols around the base.

"We use the dogs as an extensive tool to help protect all of our personnel and assets here at NAVSTA Pearl Harbor," said Master-at-Arms 1st Class Sasha Martinez, kennel master for NAVSTA Pearl Harbor's canine detachment.

Personnel assigned to the unit spend more than 40 hours a week training the detection dogs with the use of real explosives and narcotics.

"Being able to use real explosives and narcotics for training helps prepare the dogs in case of an actual scenario," said MA2 Michael Hartter. "The dogs play a major role in the deterrence of bomb threats."

Along with the detection dogs, security personnel also train patrol dogs daily in vital bite-work techniques.

"Bite-work training is important because it allows us to help locate and apprehend

suspects that have committed crimes and provide an extra measure of security to our personnel," said MA2 Jeye Pena.

Along with helping keep NAVSTA Pearl Harbor personnel safe, security department personnel and their military working dogs help keep service members on the other side of the world safe while deployed as individual augmentees (IA).

"It is a rewarding experience to be able to bring the dogs with us half-way across the world to



▲ Lt. Constance Denmond checks the weapon of STS2 William Imfeld during a safety check on all the weapons of the members of the visit, board, search and seizure team of USS *Porter* (DDG 78).

Photo by MC3 Joshua Nisttas

help protect my fellow service members,” said MA3 Michael Holland, who recently returned from an IA assignment in Djibouti. “While being deployed, we did a lot of explosive detection training and patrolling for camp security, along with performing missions with explosive ordnance disposal units.”

While the military working dogs are often praised for their ability to sniff out explosives and narcotics along with helping apprehend suspects, NAVSTA Pearl Harbor Security personnel deserve just as much credit for their part in helping the dogs perfect their skill.

“We have a great team of handlers that work cohesively together, providing another great security measure,” said Martinez. “We put in numerous hours training the dogs to always provide the best security here at NAVSTA Pearl Harbor.”

*Story and photo by MC3 Robert Stirrup, Commander, Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs, Pearl Harbor.*

## ATG Western Pacific Embarks GW, Verifies Combat Readiness

Sailors aboard USS *George Washington* (CVN 73) recently completed a limited training evaluation with Afloat Training Group (ATG) Western Pacific Detachment Yokosuka, Japan.

ATG’s limited training team, at the invitation of the carrier, helped ensure damage control training is still operating at the ship’s high standards.

“We hope to learn from ATG any areas that may need more focus or attention to meet fleetwide standards necessary to fulfill our role as the Navy’s forward-deployed aircraft carrier,” said Lt. Cmdr. Stephen Sims, GW’s damage control assistant.

“We’re evaluating the damage control watchstanders in the repair locker – how they respond to simulated scenarios as well as their damage control knowledge,” said Damage Controlman 1st Class (SW) Osbert Forde, an ATG instructor. “Additionally, we’re observing and evaluating the ship’s damage control training team and ensuring they are effectively interacting with and guiding the junior Sailors.”

One of the most important aspects of running damage control drills and general

quarters simulations is to train on proper communications, so the watchstanders’ responses are as close to automatic as possible, he continued.

“Without effective communications, command and control cannot effectively manage a casualty or provide assistance, and training is the key to making effective communications second nature to all watchstanders,” Sims added. “When an actual casualty occurs, there isn’t time to train or to learn how to communicate – it must be automatic, and training is the key to that.”

Sims said this is especially important for GW Sailors, who serve as part of the forward-deployed naval forces.

“As the Navy’s forward-deployed aircraft carrier, there is no question that the damage control organization must be ready for any situation,” said Sims. “It is crucial for the ship’s survivability and to be able to meet any tasking we may receive from a higher authority. GW has to be ready to deploy safely and be able to conduct sustained flight operations to meet mission requirements.”

*Story by MC2 James Kimber, USS George Washington (CVN 73).*

▼ **DC1 Harold Chalmers trains Sailors during a general quarters drill aboard USS *George Washington* (CVN 73).**



Photo by MCSN Christopher S. Harte

## San Antonio Concludes Maiden Deployment

USS *San Antonio* (LPD 17), part of the *Iwo Jima* Amphibious Ready Group, recently returned to Naval Station Norfolk, concluding the ship’s maiden seven-month deployment.

The ship left Norfolk in August and launched the legacy of the *San Antonio*-class amphibious assault ship as a technologically advanced warship.

“The crew did an exceptional job in overcoming myriad challenges to complete all assigned missions during a very robust deployment,” said Cmdr. Eric Cash, *San Antonio*’s commanding officer. “The crew always believed in the crew. That’s the mindset of winners, warriors and champions, and that is the mindset of *San Antonio*’s Sailors and Marines.”

*San Antonio* participated in several bilateral training exercises with foreign navies and was selected as the inaugural flagship for Combined Task Force 151 for staging international counter-piracy operations.

This was also the maiden deployment for several Sailors aboard *San Antonio*.

“The opportunity the Navy has given me has been life altering,” said Yeomen 2nd Class Henry Gauthier. “Never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined seeing Italy, Turkey,



Photo by MCSN Chad R. Erdmann

▲ **A landing craft air cushion from Assault Craft Unit 4 passes near USS *San Antonio* (LPD 17), in background, after disembarking Marines and equipment from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit.**

the Middle East, Egypt and Croatia, let alone all in the time span of seven months. This is an experience I will never forget.”

The experiences and perseverance of the crew led to the overall success of the deployment.

“I attribute all of the success to the crew,” Cash continued. “In all areas – through exceptional planning, aggressive coordination, continuous training and well-executed operations – the crew found a way to always get the job done. [This] reinforces the fact that the men and women serving in the Navy are some of the best and brightest in America.”

*Story by MC1 Erik Hoffmann, USS San Antonio (LPD 17), Norfolk.*

## APS Nashville Team Celebrates Ghana Independence Day

Just seven weeks into its deployment in support of Africa Partnership Station (APS), the APS *Nashville* (LPD 13) team took a break from their mission of helping to develop maritime safety and security in the West and Central African regions to celebrate Ghanaian Independence Day.

The day marked the country’s 52nd year of independence, and USS *Nashville*’s crew, along with the embarked staff of Destroyer Squadron 60 and international maritime professionals, celebrated the occasion with a number of events in the Sekondi-Takoradi area.

“I was grateful I had the opportunity to take part in Ghana’s celebration,” said Capt. Cindy Thebaud, commander Africa Partnership Station *Nashville*. “I was looking forward to it from the start, and the fact that we were here to celebrate their independence with them is something we’ll not soon forget.”

The APS team’s independence day festivities started with a celebration

in the village of Essikado, where the Commander, Naval Forces Europe and Africa band, ‘The Diplomats,’ performed with the Ghanaian Navy’s band. With hundreds in attendance, the evening event, ‘Reliving Ghana’s Independence’ highlighted the role of the Essikado region in Ghana’s history and featured a variety of music and dancing.

“It was definitely one of the highlights of this deployment so far,” said Musician 1st Class Adam Stuble. “Being able to play with our host’s Navy band and playing their music is special. Being able to do it on their nation’s birthday doubles that.”

The celebration continued the next day, Ghana’s actual birthday, and featured formal parades across the country. Many of the APS team attended the western region’s parade, which was led by Lt.

Cmdr. Faustina Anokye, the senior-most female officer in the Ghana Navy.

“[*Nashville*’s Commanding Officer, Capt. Tushar Tembe] and I were much honored to be included in the official reviewing party,” Thebaud said. “The pride and precision displayed by all participants, whether military, other security forces or school children, was inspirational to all, and the parade leadership and intensity displayed by Lieutenant Commander Anokye left us absolutely speechless.”

APS is an international initiative under the auspices of Naval Forces Africa that aims to work cooperatively with U.S., European and African partners to enhance maritime safety and security on the African continent. APS provides a unique venue to align maritime engagements by using an international team of expert trainers in a variety of military capacities and civilian fields such as fisheries management, port security and meteorology.

*Story by MC1 Charles L. Ludwig, Africa Partnership Station Nashville Public Affairs, Sekondi, Ghana.*

▼ **Coast Guard BM2 Gregory Belkin and the International Training Division, work with a Ghanaian Sailor during visit, board, search and seizure training as part of Africa Partnership Station (APS) 2009 aboard USS *Nashville* (LPD 13), in Sekondi, Ghana.**



Photo by MC2 David Holmes

# Stay Fit and Healthy in the Summertime

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

**N**ow that summer's coming, Bring out the burgers and grill. With all of the nice weather, Who needs that darned treadmill?

OK, maybe that's not my best poem, but here's the point: You've just finished your spring PFA, and as the summer approaches there is always a risk to slack up on your fitness routine. For those who worked hard on the PFA, the temptation can be even greater. But first, ask yourself: How hard was it? Did you do well or just barely pass? Did you meet your personal goals?

For those who failed ... then there is even more to ponder and more work to do.

First, here are the administrative implications of PFA failures. According to NAVADMIN 073/09, if you've tanked three or more PFA's in the last four years, you can't transfer, reenlist or extend without a waiver from Navy Personnel Command.

Also, effective Oct. 1, 2008, Physical Readiness Information Management System (PRIMS) data is now a major factor in whether or not you advance. If you fail your most recent PFA, don't expect to tack on that crow until you meet the standards.

More food for thought: If you don't complete a PFA, your command needs to enter the reason for it in PRIMIS. You also must meet body fat standards

in order to pass semi-annual requirements. Even if you have a medical waiver for certain parts of the PFA, you still have to pass a body composition assessment (BCA) unless that's also medically waived.

One last thing: after June 30, progress waivers will go the way of the Commodore Amiga 64 – into the sunset, never to return. So put down that cheeseburger and take a walk.

You know what the PFA consists of – curl ups, push ups, and the one-and-a-half-mile run (or 500-yard swim). You're also thinking, "If I have to do this for the umpteenth day in a row, I'm going to scream." This is perfectly understandable. If you would prefer to undergo unanesthetized root canal than continue, it's time to shake up your fitness routine.

At my local Morale, Welfare and Recreation gym they are offering 11 different classes a week from kick boxing to spin cycling and cross-fitness. If you check the class schedule of your local gym, I'm sure you can find something appropriate for your fitness level and your interest.

Summertime is the perfect opportunity to venture off the beaten path when it comes to fitness. The Navy has plenty of intramural

sports teams for you to try out – basketball, soccer, baseball, rowing – talk to your chain of command about trying out if you're interested.

It may seem daunting at first to get out and work out instead of seeking the comfort of your couch, but exercise can be habit-forming as well – in a beneficial manner. Morgan Freeman said it best in the movie "Clean and Sober." "The best way to break old habits is to make new ones."

## "Fat, Drunk and Stupid Is No Way to Go Through Life, Son!"

Of course, I'm using the Honorable Dean Wormer's quote to refer to nutrition rather than alcohol abuse. I have just two words about alcohol, though: Empty calories. This is yet another reason not to drink to excess, and I'll leave it at that.

Now, the "fat" part: Part of fitness means feeding your body correctly, and a steady diet of fast food is not proper nutrition, no matter how you spin it.

Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains and lean proteins (lean meat, low- or non-fat dairy, legumes, etc), as well as small amounts of unsaturated fats. Eat about six small meals a day rather than three huge ones – smaller amounts of food are easier to digest and metabolize, which means you don't fall into a gastronomical coma after lunch or dinner.

Summertime means barbecue season, which means enjoying whatever flies off the grill. Don't be tempted to go back for seconds immediately after finishing what's on your plate. Eat slowly, and wait half an hour or more for your food to settle before going back.

If you're having a barbecue, try something other than the standard burgers and dogs.

Granted, turkey burgers and turkey dogs have less fat than those with

## Something to Think About

beef, but shish kebab and souvlaki – meat that's been marinated and skewered before grilling – are wonderful substitutes with more flavor and less fat. Also, the mystery meat factor is eliminated.

## "Trust Me, I Know What I'm Doing"

Safety is a paramount concern when you're working out. You don't want a jog in the park to turn into a medical emergency or have a pick-up game become a catastrophic letdown. Keep the following pointers in mind:

■ **HYDRATE. HYDRATE. HYDRATE.** Summer temperatures can reach to the point where you sweat more than you urinate. Keep drinking water – not tea, not pop, not beer, water. Drink until you're not thirsty, and then drink some more.

■ **STRETCH.** Many injuries happen because of inadequate stretching and little to no warm-up. Don't be in such a rush to hit the court or your playing time will be cut woefully short and rather painful, I might add.

■ **WEAR SUNSCREEN.** The sun-kissed look is attractive; the boiled-lobster look, not so much. The sunscreen you pick should have an SPF of at least 15 and a shot-glass worth should cover your body. Reapply every two hours. This is especially important if you have fair skin.

■ **WATCH OUT FOR HEAT INJURIES.** If you don't feel well, seek shade and hydrate. Check for signs of heat stress. Heat cramps and heat exhaustion can be

treated by moving the victim into shade and giving them some water; heat stroke is a medical emergency.

■ **IT'S HOT, BUT IT'S NOT.** Believe it or not, hypothermia can also happen in the summertime, especially if you've been swimming in extremely cold waters, like Lake Michigan. Take steps to warm up if exposed to such conditions.

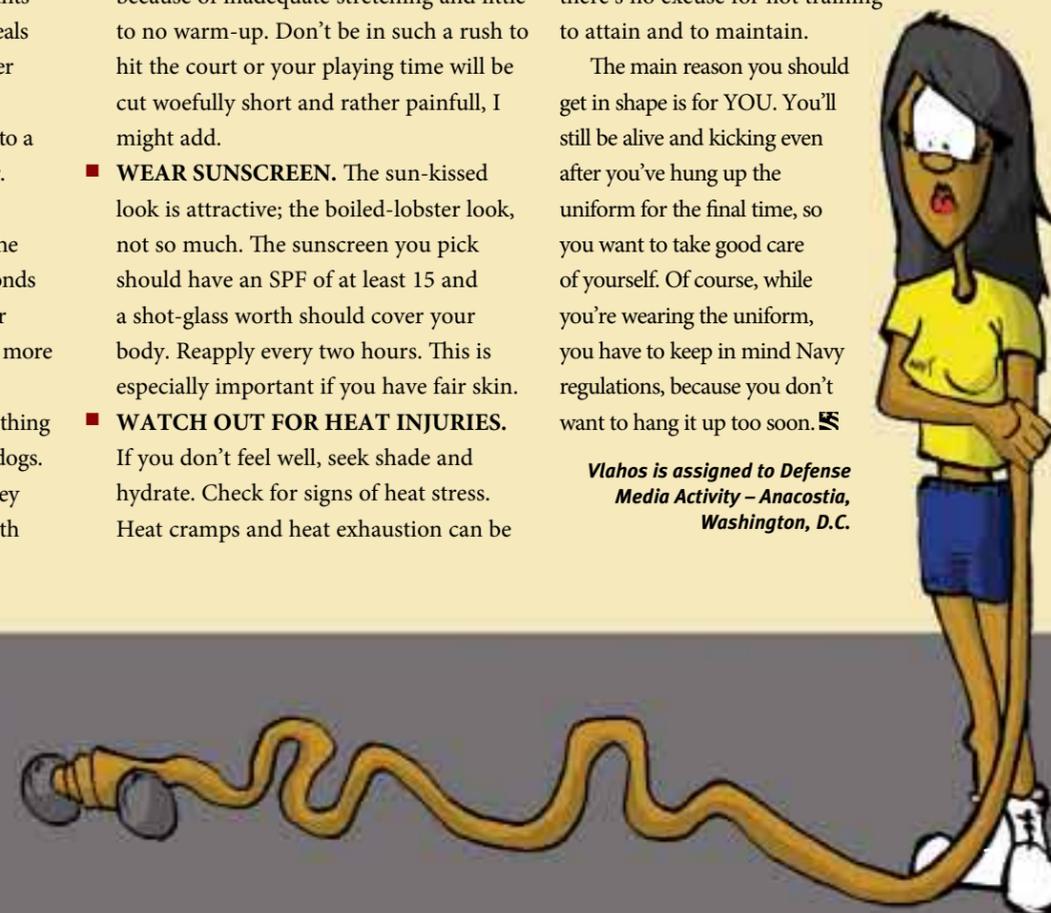
■ **CHECK THE FLAGS.** Don't work in the heat if you're not acclimatized to it. Pay attention to the heat condition flags. If you see the black flag, go for a swim or a class in the gym. If that's not possible, it won't kill you to skip your workout for the day – literally.

## "Get Busy Living or Get Busy Dying"

Whether you're in shape or on the fence as far as your physical fitness is concerned, there's no excuse for not training to attain and to maintain.

The main reason you should get in shape is for YOU. You'll still be alive and kicking even after you've hung up the uniform for the final time, so you want to take good care of yourself. Of course, while you're wearing the uniform, you have to keep in mind Navy regulations, because you don't want to hang it up too soon. **S**

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



# “Have a Drink on Me”

Story and photo by MC1(AW) R. Jason Brunson

**N**o, no, no... Midshipman 3rd Class Stephen Honan isn't offering to buy the next round. He is far too busy for that. In addition to his busy academic schedule, the 20-year-old is a member of the Naval Academy Marathon Team, which at the time of this interview he said was looking forward to beating Army on Heartbreak Hill in the Boston Marathon.

At his age and with all that on his plate, it is hard to believe he has found time to improve the lives of millions of people.

In an essay titled “Innovative Approach to Providing Safe Water to Bangladesh,” Honan proposed a water filtration system he developed when he was 16 years old that could potentially remove arsenic from drinking water in rural villages through use of an easily cultivated fern.

His essay recently won the Anwarul Quadir Prize, which is sponsored by the Center for International Development (CID) at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and the Anwarul Quadir Foundation, a U.S.-based foundation promoting innovations for Bangladesh.

**AHM** – Please explain to our readers what life was like for you growing up that led you to where you are today.

**Honan** – I grew up in a Navy family. My dad graduated from the Naval Academy in 1980, and one of my sisters is a senior who is about to graduate this May. My dad flew helicopters, so I enjoyed watching him come home from six-month deployments and sharing all of the gifts he collected from around the world. He taught me a lot about service.

**AHM** – Tell us about your involvement in science and more specifically in your filtration project?

**Honan** – I have always been interested in science, and I love learning about how the world works. My interest in arsenic contamination began with a magazine article I read. It explained that there are over

88 million people in Bangladesh who are drinking toxic water, and moreover there are no reasonable filtration systems that can be used in third-world countries. It sparked my interest and led me to research where else arsenic was affecting people. What I found shocked me. It is a worldwide problem, there are even estimations of 2 million Americans drinking the toxin! This inspired me to find a way to filter the toxin out of water.

So then, at the ripe old age of 15, Honan set up shop in his basement and did just that.

**AHM** – How does it work?

**Honan** – The fern [*Pteris mayii*] is grown directly in the water. I found that this specific type of fern has a very efficient transport system, which accumulates phosphate [a similar compound to arsenate] very rapidly. Essentially, the fern's roots are suspended in tainted water and absorb the toxin directly out of the water without reintroducing any new contaminants that could potentially harm humans. It requires no special nutrients in large quantities because it does not flower, and it thrives in a similar climate to Bangladesh. So it is definitely possible to set up the filters across the country and purify their drinking water. Luckily, the fern can accumulate a very large capacity of the toxin, over a long period of time, and in a very efficient manner. The filter can filter 1.5 liters from a toxic level down to a drinkable standard every minute.

**AHM** – Wow, that is huge. You have received some recognition and awards for this project, what has this meant to you personally and to the future of the project?

**Honan** – Winning the award from Harvard was a huge honor. As I understand it, there were over 70 applicants from around the world, many with far superior credentials to mine. The contest prompted applicants to develop a proposal to help the low-to middle-income people of Bangladesh socially and economically, so there were a lot of lawyers,

doctors, and professors in the competition.

Personally, I am more excited about the recognition the award has brought to the situation facing the Bangladeshi people. It has sparked the interest of philanthropists interested in pursuing my research on a mass scale. I see a lot of potential for this research being applied in order to benefit millions of smart, hard working Bangladeshi people who are currently in a very grave situation. Eliminating this major health threat will help them live more productive and prosperous lives.

**AHM** – You must be excited by the potential to help so many people. What do you think will be the future for this project?

**Honan** – I am very optimistic. Iqbal Quadir, the sponsor of the Anwarul Quadir Global Essay Contest, is eager to meet with one of the premier banks in Bangladesh to start the process of acquiring funding and initiating implementation.

I have no intention of making any money off of the people of Bangladesh, but I do hope that one day I can visit villages around the country and see people drinking clean water that won't eventually kill them.

I would have never guessed my initial curiosity in this problem could have ever led to such progress. I cannot even fathom how many people this research can potentially benefit worldwide. It is incredibly exciting to know that this very serious health risk can be entirely eliminated, and to be a part of helping millions of people is rewarding beyond all belief.

Honan concluded, “I am excited about all of the opportunities that the Navy has to offer whether it be at the Naval Research Lab or out in the fleet as a line officer. I look forward to serving America and making a difference in the world.”

Honan is thinking of selecting the aviation field and possibly pursuing a career with NASA. **S**

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

## Hurricane Camille: Forerunner to Katrina and Navy Disaster Relief

Story by MC2 Geraldine Hawkins

When U.S. Sailors brought relief and hope to the desperate victims of Hurricane Katrina, it must have seemed like déjà vu to some of the older folks, who remembered when the Navy came to the rescue of the Gulf Coast in 1969.

August 17 of that year, Hurricane Camille practically demolished the Mississippi Gulf Coast, cutting an entire island in half and creating what are now West and East Ship Island. The howling winds of more than 200 miles per hour damaged the lighthouse.

The Navy immediately dispatched submarine tender USS *Bushnell* (AS 15) to provide emergency aid to the population of Pilottown, La. The ship's medical officer and corpsmen tended to the victims ashore, while the rest of the crew delivered food and fresh water. Volunteers from Naval Air Station (NAS) New Orleans went to Bay St. Louis, La., and Sailors from NAS Memphis contributed truckloads of food to the entire Camille aftermath response.

Her winds had hardly died down when Sailors were searching the wreckage of buildings for survivors, clearing tons of fallen trees and other debris from the streets to allow rescue vehicles to pass. Sailors also set up communications for local Civil Defense headquarters.

U.S. Navy Seabee Training Squadron Eight

(HT-8) and Mobile Construction Battalion (MCB) 128, who were just returning from their second tour in Vietnam, helped evacuate Pass Christian, Miss., Aug. 20, airlifting more than 1,400 people.

The Construction Battalion Center, Gulfport, Miss., itself suffered a body blow, destroying 46 buildings and injuring 13 Sailors, but this did not stop the Seabees from carrying out their mission to aid civilians in the area. The Seabees opened their facility to house approximately 500 highway repairmen and Georgia Power Company employees, while over 1,700 Seabees cleared roads and worked on salvage operations, including the loan of 45 generators to nursing homes and hospitals.

"Without what you have done, we could not have made it through the crisis," said John Bell Williams, governor of Mississippi.

Another citizen put it more briefly: "Thank God for the Navy and the Seabees." ❧

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

▶ **A Seabee digs through a collapsed building in Pass Christian, Miss.**

▼ **A Navy helicopter unloads supplies at Walnut Grove High School, one of the few buildings left standing in Gulfport, Miss.**



◀ **A Navyman aids an elderly victim of Hurricane Camille.**



# A World of Opportunities

## Individual Augmentee

Story by MCSN Richard Two Bulls, photo by MC2(SW/AW) Jhi Scott

**In support of the global war on terrorism, Sailors are finding themselves in unfamiliar territory as many are faced with the option of serving an individual augmentee (IA) billet or a global war or terrorism support assignment (GSA).**

For Anniston, Ala., native, Yeoman 2nd Class (SW/AW) Robert Perry Jr., an assistant to the Naval Operation's command master chief in Washington, D.C., the experience of serving as an IA in Iraq at Camp Victory from July 2007 to July 2008 goes into the once-in-a-lifetime category.

"I went through training twice at Ft. Bragg, N.C., and another refresher course that lasted 10 days once we got to Kuwait," said Perry, who divided his time in Iraq between being in the office doing administrative work at the command headquarters and working out in the field with the Army's 360th Civil Affairs Brigade as a driver, gunner and convoy commander.

"Being a yeoman helped me in the office with all the administrative stuff, but everything else was new to me mainly because I was predominantly with the Army," said Perry. "I was a convoy commander at one time, but that was [when I was qualifying to become one]. Either you volunteered or you were picked, and I volunteered."

"The role of the convoy commander was basically being the leading petty officer of a Humvee, the one in charge. So you're

responsible for the safety of everyone in that vehicle," said Perry. "I was also a gunner and a driver, but mainly I was a gunner."

By definition, civil affairs units help military commanders by working with civil authorities and civilian populations in the commander's area of operations. Civil affairs units help to lessen the impact of military operations on all parties during peace, contingency operations and declared war.

Being on a civil affairs convoy that delivers much-needed supplies to other units and humanitarian aid to Iraqi citizens, Perry went to various locations in Iraq and stayed there anywhere from two to 15 days.

"We provided assistance and security for commanders or the brigade commander, we transported medical supplies, medical personnel, and we pretty much transferred supplies to other battalions below us [and Iraqi civilians]," said Perry. "We traveled all over Baghdad and Iraq."

Because humanitarian aid was offered to Iraqi civilians, integrating with them was an experience Perry will never forget.

"Interacting with the Iraqis was a noteworthy experience," said Perry. "We would feed the people who didn't have food and provide them fresh water when there was nothing to drink...that was something to really remember."

Not only was it a noteworthy experience for Perry, but he also learned a profound lesson from the Iraqi citizens.

"I learned how much life is worth,"



said Perry. "To see how [Iraqi civilians] live compared to how we live, you really get a sense of humbleness and a great amount of value out of life."

For the Sailors thinking about going IA or GSA, or are about to ship out, Perry has some advice.

"I only recommend [going IA] to other Sailors if they really [have] their stuff squared away, because you have a lot more responsibility going over there, and there is always that possibility of being killed because of irresponsibility," said Perry. "Also, if you go [to Iraq] with a negative attitude the whole experience will more than likely turn out to be a negative experience. You really have to go into it with a positive outlook." ❧

*Two Bulls and Scott are assigned to Defense Media Activity-Anacostia, Washington, D.C.*

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