● Saving the *Roberts*
● Navy single parents
A memorial service was held at Arlington National Cemetery May 17 to mark the first anniversary of the Iraqi missile attack on USS Stark (FFG 31).

In a tender moment, Kathleen Ciletta touched her son's tombstone. Boatwain's Mate 3rd Class John Anthony Ciletta Jr. of Brigantine, N.J., was one of the 37 crewmen who died in the attack. Area school children paid their respects, as the Navy's ceremonial guard rendered honors. Photos by PH1 Chuck Mussi.
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Seabee diplomacy — Page 18

4 ‘To see the dawn’
Saving USS Roberts

12 ‘Sammy B.’
A proud history

14 Roberts’ return
Rebuilding FFG 58

16 Leapfrogs
The Navy’s parachute team

18 Vanuatu
Seabees ‘can do’ in Pacific

22 Pulling into port
Navy retirement homes

24 Team Spirit ’88
Teamwork highlighted

28 Juneau shows spirit
The Navy and Team Spirit

30 Single parents
Sailors share ups and downs

41 Rights & Benefits, 8
Veterans Benefits

2 Navy Currents / 38 Bearings / 48 Mail Buoy, Reunions

Front Cover: A worker stands in the shade of the dry dock walls, sizing up the repairs to the mine-damaged Roberts. See story, Page 14. Photo by PH1 Chuck Mussi.

Back Cover: A Marine keeps watch at Tok Sok Ri, Republic of Korea, awaiting the second wave of landing craft during the amphibious assault phase of Team Spirit ’88. See story, Page 24. Photo by PHC Chet King.
DC rating open to HTs
Opportunities in the damage control rating are available to both male and female hull maintenance technicians.

The DC rating was re-established last October to focus on damage control readiness. In order to compete in the September 1988 E-4 through E-6 exam cycle for advancement in the DC rating, personnel must have taken the DC exam. If the DC first class and chief rate training manual is not available, personnel may substitute the HT 1 and C rate training manual.

Sailors in the diver, explosive ordnance disposal or SEAL specialties (NEC 53XX) are not eligible for conversion to DC. HT personnel receiving selective reenlistment bonus for NEC 49XX are also ineligible for DC conversion until they are within six months of completing their SRB enlistment.

Hull maintenance technicians who want to volunteer for conversion should submit a NavPers 1306/7 or message request to Naval Military Personnel Command (NMPC 402).

Overseas banking improves
A major initiative is under way to improve the delivery of financial services by overseas banking facilities using state-of-the-art automation and communication.

Improvements through this initiative will, by the end of this year, include linking existing banking facilities' automated teller machines with stateside ATM networks so that DoD personnel may access account balances and funds from stateside banks; more customer service and streamlined branch operations; and installing on-line terminals to allow bank tellers to rapidly access current customer balance information.

The biggest savings in this initiative will be in time. Banking transactions will be faster because of shorter lines. In addition, the overseas banks will continue to offer free checking to direct deposit account holders and allow personnel who maintain stateside accounts to withdraw money from those accounts without any charge, once the ATMs are connected to stateside networks.

Frequent flyer program
The Comptroller General of the United States has decided that mileage accumulated on official travel may not be used for accommodation upgrades in any frequent flyer program. However, the change, which took place May 1, does not apply to free seat upgrades that do not involve an exchange of mileage credits earned on official travel.

A Navy person trading in mileage credits earned on government-paid travel may be required to reimburse the government the difference between costs of the two seats. The possibility of fraud may exist in some cases.

Change 19 in the Joint Federal Travel Regulations, Volume I, will reflect the Comptroller's decision.

Education program changes
If you're planning to continue your education while in the Navy and need tuition assistance, check the Navy's voluntary education program — changes in tuition payments have recently been made.

Since June 1, 1988, any tuition assistance application approved has had a payment limit applied as follows:
- Undergraduate courses — 75 percent of a maximum of $125 per credit hour, not to exceed $285 per course.
- Graduate courses — 75 percent of a maximum of $175 per credit hour, not to exceed $395 per course.

Tuition assistance for Navy people pursuing a high school diploma remains at 100 percent.

VHA cost survey
The Navy wants to know how much compensation is needed by service members to meet housing costs. To find that amount, the Navy is...
conducting a variable housing allowance cost survey.

Results from the survey will be used to set VHA rates for housing costs for FYs 89 and 90.

For verification of the results, some Navy people as well as members from other military services will be randomly selected, from those who have responded, and asked to show documentation, such as leases and receipts. The documentation will be used to determine how people computed their housing costs.

Approximately 1,500 Navy people will be asked to fill out the one-page verification form. The same number of members from other branches will also be asked to submit the same form and documents.

Striker rating opportunities

More opportunities are available in the rating entry for general apprentices program.

Under OpNavInst 1430.5C, undesignated strikers have more chances in picking a specific rating to enter. The new changes were made by the Chief of Naval Operations in April.

Significant changes include:

- Undesignated strikers may compete for any rating they desire, with the exception of ratings with specific prerequisites, such as "A" school requirements and ratings not available to women.
- When necessary, maximum quotas for women will be established in certain ratings based on combat-exclusion requirements, sea/shore rotation, etc.
- Unless entry prerequisites change, ratings will remain designated as either "open" or "closed" for each exam cycle.
- Individual commands no longer have authority to designate strikers. Striker designations will be centrally controlled through the advancement system to provide better control of Navywide rating imbalances.
- It is no longer necessary to ask permission from the Naval Military Personnel Command to compete for a rating in the proper path of advancement.
- Semi-annual NavOps will be issued at least two months before each advancement exam to provide projected E-4 advancement opportunity ranges and the estimated number of women who may be advanced in designated ratings.

Ombudsman network

The Navy Wifeline Association is establishing a Navywide network of area ombudsman coordinators and councils.

To establish the network, the association requests that commands having coordinating responsibility for ombudsman councils identify a military point of contact, such as the command chaplain or command master chief. The point of contact must be a military member.

Isolated commands having an ombudsman who does not belong to a council are also strongly encouraged to respond.

Send the military point of contact's title, command mailing address and the number of council members to: Navy Family Support Program (NMPC 66), Attn: Ms. Decker, Dept. of the Navy, Washington, D.C. 20370-5660.

Journalist volunteers needed

The public affairs office of Naval Support Force, Antarctica, is seeking journalists, E-4 through E-6, for temporary additional duty with the public affairs office at McMurdo Station, Antarctica, for a period of three to four months.

Operation Deep Freeze's mission is to logistically support the scientific research of the antarctic continent. The annual deployment to "the Ice" is from October to February.

Journalists assigned to Operation Deep Freeze will be tasked with hard news and feature writing, radio and television broadcasting, electronic news gathering and photography.

Operation Deep Freeze is also seeking an interior communications electrician who has the NEC 4747 to augment the Navy broadcasting detachment at McMurdo Station.

All TAD costs, including travel, are provided by NavSuppForAntarctica. For more information, call Ens. D. Shook or Journalist 1st Class Dan Simon at Autovon 360-3273 or commercial (805) 982-3273.

AUGUST 1988
Thursday afternoon, April 14, started off quiet and pretty routine for USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG 58). Since arriving in the Persian Gulf, the ship and its crew had — on an almost daily basis — dealt successfully with the dangers of that volatile region.

They felt they were the best. Roberts had won the Battle “E” and earned the highest grades any ship had ever attained in damage control training at Guantanamo Bay before deployment. The men of the “Sammy B.” had good reason to feel confident. They even felt a bit invincible.

Ship and crew had been steaming hard all day to make their way to the southern part of the Gulf for a scheduled replenishment with USS Sun Jose (AFS 7). Afterward they would turn around and steam north for continued operations.

On Roberts’ bridge the crew was enjoying the break from tanker escort duty. Watchstanders talked about the bobbing dolphins the bow watch had reported, but bobbing objects in the waters of the Gulf — all manner of things such as dolphins, tree trunks and dead sheep — were really nothing new.

Chief Mess Management Specialist (SW) Kevin J. Ford brought his camera up to the bridge hoping to shoot some videos of the crew to send home to the families.

On the phone to the CO, the OOD, Lt. Robert L. Firehammer Jr., didn’t get a chance to finish telling Rinn about the three objects, equally spaced, about half a mile off the starboard bow. The CO dropped the phone and was on the bridge in what seemed a matter of seconds.

Because they had gone through this so many times before, with things like dead sheep or 55-gallon fuel drums, Rinn was pretty sure he wouldn’t actually see any mines — but he wasn’t taking any chances.

Through his binoculars, Rinn looked off the starboard bow. His first thought was, “Damn, those look just like mines.”

Rinn called for “all stop” and the OOD replied “all stop.”

Looking through the “Big Eyes” on the bridge wing, Quartermaster 2nd Class (SW) Dan J. Nicholson was frightened by his first glimpse of the floating objects. Normally, mines found in the Gulf were old and encrusted with sea growth. These were shiny — the sun glistened off them. Nicholson’s heart sank. “Whoa, this is real — big time!”

At 4:39 p.m., Gibson saw what he thought were three more dolphins. Only this time the “dolphins” weren’t going back under water. He grabbed his binoculars, spotted the spikes on the floating objects and immediately notified the bridge.

Boatswain’s Mate Seaman Bobby F. Gibson had been on the bow watch for about an hour. He often swapped watches with others in his duty section just so he could stand the bow watch. Others didn’t like the watch, but Gibson enjoyed it. Oh, sometimes it was real windy, or even cold. But today the sea was calm and the winds were light. “Pretty nice,” Gibson thought.

Other than the dolphins he had reported earlier to the bridge, it had been a quiet watch, and the lengthening afternoon seemed to hold the promise of a wonderful sunset.

At 4:39 p.m., Gibson saw what he thought were three more dolphins. Only this time the “dolphins” weren’t going back under water. He grabbed his binoculars, spotted the spikes on the floating objects and immediately notified the bridge.

Story by PH1 Chuck Mussi

Commanding Officer Cmdr. Paul X. Rinn was meeting in his state-room with the supply officer about doing something special for the men of the Sammy B. They talked about a special meal to celebrate “hump” day, the cruise’s midway point, and treats for the long trans-Atlantic crossing home. Rinn had just cornered the supply officer on an item he thought he was seeing too much of on the ship’s menu, when the phone rang. It was the officer of the deck.

Boatswain’s Mate Seaman Bobby F. Gibson had been on the bow watch for about an hour. He often swapped watches with others in his duty section just so he could stand the bow watch. Others didn’t like the watch, but Gibson enjoyed it. Oh, sometimes it was real windy, or even cold. But today the sea was calm and the winds were light. “Pretty nice,” Gibson thought.
ble — they looked brand new.

Still standing on the bow, Gibson stared in amazement at the shiny, peacefully bobbing objects. After three months in the Gulf, they had finally found some mines.

And then he thought, “What are we going to do now?”

* * *

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class James E. Lambert was covered with sweat. He had been grinding through his workout on the stationary bicycle for about 45 minutes. As he was getting off of the bicycle he noticed that Roberts’ engines were slowing down, but he didn’t pay much attention — he was headed aft to jump rope.

He was about to get the workout of his life, but it wouldn’t be from jumping rope.

* * *

Chief Ford was on his way to the mess deck to check on the evening meal. The newly appointed mess deck Master-at-Arms, Engineman 1st Class (SW) Mark T. Dejno, was already setting up for chow.

Their dinner plans were about to be interrupted.

* * *

Over the ship’s IMC, Rinn told his crew that their ship had entered a mine field. He called all hands to general quarters and told them to check that condition Zebra was set throughout the ship. He decided it was not necessary to sound the alarms.

As dusk gathered, Rinn worried about losing sight of the mines. He notified the Commander, Joint Task Force Middle East, about the mine field. He was turning forward when the mines were removed from the LAMPS helicopter. Boatswain’s Mate 2nd Class Kim T. Sandle, the landing signals enlisted, prepared to launch the helo to drop floats, flares and smoke near the spotted mines.

* * *

Rinn went to the starboard bridge wing. He looked back at Roberts’ wake. “I know I’m safe if I stay in my wake,” he said to himself.

He lowered the ship’s auxiliary propulsion units. Built into the forward part of the ship, the APUs are used to maneuver the ship in tight quarters and at very slow speeds. Gingerly, the ship began to back away from the mines.

For a time, it looked like Rinn’s attempt to tiptoe backward out of the mine field would work.

But, twenty-one minutes after the first sighting, they bumped into a submerged mine. It struck Roberts’ port side aft, near the keel.

At 5 p.m., the ship with the motto, “No higher honor,” was rocked by the exploding force of hundreds of pounds of TNT.

* * *

Immediately after the CO’s announcement of the mine sighting, EN1 Dejno ran from the mess deck to his general quarters station, auxiliary machinery room 3. He quickly set condition Zebra throughout the space. The word was passed that everyone in the lower levels should move to the upper levels, so Dejno was standing in the middle of the upper level of AMR3 when he heard the “BOOM!” and saw a wall of flame and water exploding toward him.

Although he was seriously burned on his face and one arm, Dejno did not lose consciousness. His first thought was to get out of AMR3 — he had to make a report. He climbed up and out of an escape trunk. By the time he got through the hatch, water was up to the deck plates.

* * *

The sweat was almost dry on “Doc” Lambert’s body when he reached his office and general quarters post — the main battle dressing station. He pulled on a set of coveralls. He wasn’t particularly worried about being in a mine field — he never thought the ship would actually hit a mine. As he said later, “You see an ice patch — you know it’s dangerous but you never think you’re the one who is going to fall on the ice. It happens to the other guy.”

Lambert sat at his desk, chatting about surface warfare questions with others at that GQ station — like a group of old-timers at a barbershop — when the explosion threw him out of his chair.

* * *

On the bow, Gibson turned a-round and saw everyone on the O2 and O3 levels looking at the mines. He was turning forward when the mine exploded. Suddenly he was airborne — looking down, all he could see was forecastle and water as he came flipping out of his dive. He landed heavily on his neck and shoulders.

Head spinning, Gibson stumbled aft to help break out a fire hose. He was only starting to feel the pain in his back.

* * *

Senior Chief Gunner’s Mate Thomas P. Reinert was on the O3
level looking at the mines. Although he'd brought his camera to take some pictures, his job was to operate the visual sights for the 76mm gun. He was hoping to get a shot at blowing up those mines. When he heard and saw the explosion aft, he immediately thought of the men — his men — who were back there manning the 76mm magazine. He wondered if they were still alive.

On the bridge wings, the reaction to the explosion was disbelief, followed by a lot of expletives. Some thought at first that the helicopter had crashed, but a quick look at the bridge monitor showed the spinning rotor blades of the helicopter on the fantail.

Nicholson got on the 1MC: "Mine hit! Mine hit! The ship has hit a mine!" Then he joined the rest of the 02 level personnel in breaking out hoses, while literally stamping out the fire from the engine room to come out through the gaping hole, just two feet below the upper deck plates. The blast also knocked the 150 feet of damage control reports.

On the fantail, the helo rebounded from the blast, its whirling blades flexing to within three feet of the deck.

BM2 Sandle said a short prayer of thanks that he hadn't been hacked to bits when he was thrown into the air, coming as close as he had to the arc of the spinning helicopter blades. He was stunned and bruised — but still in one piece.

In the main battle dressing station, Doc Lambert was receiving initial reports of injured personnel. He didn't have complete information about how many were hurt or how badly — the line was filled with urgent damage control reports.

He and his assistants grabbed their portable medical bags. They stuffed as much of what Doc thought they might need into their pockets, grabbed some morphine from the secured cabinet and started toward the mess deck. There was water on the deck, and Lambert slipped and fell. He became that "other guy" who always slips on the ice patch.

The situation in AMR2 was critical. Everyone in the space knew that if the battered bulkhead gave way they would all be killed. Ford had been through damage control training in the "Buttercup," a simulator that teaches plugging and shoring techniques. He had attended the school with the men he was working with now. But this damage was worse than anything they'd ever fixed in a drill, and there would be no opportunity to try it again. Failure would mean the loss of lives and ship — their lives, their ship. They worked hard.

Initial damage control reports were getting to the bridge. To Rinn, it seemed everyone was moving in the right direction. The "real thing" was just like a Gitmo scenario — just with a lot more at stake — and Roberts' crew knew the scenarios.

Now, everyone went where he was supposed to and did what he needed to do. People slapped on OBAs with the confidence that comes with practice.

After escaping AMR3, Dejno put a quick dressing on his own arm. Then he found a friend — Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Electrical) 2nd Class Larry Welch — who was badly injured. He took him into the supply office and started to treat his wounds.

Dejno was burned, but Welch was much worse, with charred, dead skin hanging from his arms, hands and fingers. Dejno tried to trim away Welch's uniform with a boatswain's knife, but it wouldn't cut through the fuel-soaked cloth. Getting a pair of scissors out of a first aid kit, he cut away the clothes and dangling burned skin. He carefully wiped the fuel oil off Welch's face, wrapped him in a clean white sheet and they headed to the O2 level triage area.

Rinn's mind raced with questions:

— "How bad are we hurt?"
— "How many casualties do we have?"
— "Where exactly are the fires coming from?"
— "What's our engineering status?"
— "Can I get underway?"
— "Can we defend ourselves?"

After getting answers from his initial reports, he decided to get a look for himself.

Leaving the XO, Lt.Cmdr. John Eckelberry, to direct operations on the bridge, Rinn left to tour the ship. He needed to get his own answers.

** * * *

Doc had found some answers of his own. The first casualty he came to was Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Mechanical) Fireman Wayne J. Smith. The kid was burned. Doc had seen worse burns in the intensive care ward at the Naval Hospital in Jacksonville, Fla., but here was a young sailor, new to the ship, soaked with synthetic fuel, awake and sitting up, and real scared. He was burned on his face and arm, but for the most part he was OK. After doing what he could to make Smith comfortable, Doc moved on.

Sitting in the back of the same room, was a good friend of Doc's — Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Mechanical) 3rd Class Dave Burbine. They had often worked out together in Roberts' weight room. They knew each other pretty well. Burbine had shed his fuel-drenched clothes and was naked except for the blanket wrapped tightly around him. He shivered uncontrollably, but managed to give Doc a weak smile. As Lambert gave Burbine first aid, Doc thought that his friend seemed in good spirits, for a man who had been in an engine room when it blew up.

But it wasn't going out.

** * * *

Rinn was still making his way through the ship, learning first-hand of the damage done to the Sammy B. He entered the main engine room and stepped into ankle-deep water. The CO checked that space, saw the fires and headed for AMR2.

** * * *

"It's a hard fire to fight," QM2 Nicholson said to another man on the hose, GSE1 Michael Wallingford. He couldn't really see the fire, except for the flames coming out of the stacks. As number one hose man, he was standing up on top of the stack, putting all this water down into it. EW2 Fernando Cruz was maintaining contact with the bridge and still keeping a constant stream of foam on the fire. Nicholson thought they were making progress — the fire was cooling down.

But it wasn't going out.

** * * *

In AMR2, Chief Ford told his CO not to worry. "It's no big deal, Captain," he said. "We can hold the bulkhead." One look at the bulkhead, however, told Rinn that it could give way at any second, killing everyone in the space. Both Rinn and Ford recognized the danger.

But the key problem Ford showed was Rinn was the rising water in the space. Sea water was close to reaching the fire pumps. It was already splashing on the diesels. If they lost the diesels, they would lose fire pumps and the ability to dewater. The ship could be lost.

AMR2 became the central scene of the battle to save Roberts.

Despite the desperate situation in the engineering spaces, the CO felt a tremendous sense of confidence as he watched his men work. Ford led a team made up of BM1 (SW) Richard Fridley, RM2 Gary Jackson and OS2 Richard Raymond. They were confident, too. "We can win this one, Captain," one sailor said. "We can do it," another echoed. As he surveyed the situation, he made the decision that they were going to save the ship. At the hatchway Rinn looked back and said, "I'll see you again. I'll be back."

Rinn decided he didn't have time to check AMR3. He headed up to the bridge to report to the Commander, Joint Task Force Middle East. On his way, he found water running down through a crack that ran up the bulkhead and completely across the ship. The ship was breaking in half.

Water from the firefighting effort flowed across the deck and down into the spaces they were trying to dewater. He recalled the lessons learned from the Stark incident, about putting water inside the skin of the ship. As the firefighters put water down the stack, it flowed into the ship. He realized, "We're sinking ourselves!"

***

On the fantail, BM2 Sandle saw that the ship had sunk so low the "Samuel B. Roberts" painted across the stern was beneath the water. Sandle and several mechanics worked to prepare the LAMPS helo for flight. Thanks to the trap that had kept the helicopter locked onto the flight deck, the aircraft had suffered only minor damage from the shock of the explosion.

***

QM2 Nicholson hadn't seen any casualties as he was working the fire hose. But now, as he headed forward on the O2 level to the bridge to get a floodlight, he saw that many of his shipmates were hurt, some seriously. Most were burned. He didn't recognize anyone — he didn't know exactly who was hurt. He tried to think where his friends were, but he couldn't remember where he had
last seen everyone — nor exactly what had happened in the blur of activity following the blast. He went back to work.

***

Cmdr. Rinn was in contact with Commander, Joint Task Force Middle East. He summarized the ship’s status and voiced his major concerns: the extent of damage, his ship’s maneuverability, the number of wounded and the status of his combat systems. He and Rear Adm. Anthony Less agreed: It wasn’t a very pleasant picture.

Less: Considering your situation, what do you think about remaining with the ship?

Rinn: I haven’t thought about that at all. I have no desire to leave the ship. We’ll stay with the ship and fight it. Right now, I think we can win this thing. We have no other choice. In a nutshell, we’re in trouble.

Less: Do you have anything else to pass?

Rinn: Roger. “No higher honor.”

Rinn’s habit of signing off using his in the move from the 02 level. It immediately after the explosion, he didn’t get the chance to break out much fire hose. The pain from his back injury had quickly stopped him in his tracks — now he was pinned to a stretcher.

Doc grabbed handfuls of ice from the fire was still raging from the stack and from the cracks in the deck caused by the blast. He realized the ship’s condition was even more serious than he first thought. It had gone from a bad situation to a very bad situation. But everyone was working together to control it.

Rinn’s confidence was still high. They would save their ship.

From the triage area on O2 level, Doc had moved all his patients aft to the hangar bay for evacuation. So far, Welch was the only one to have left the ship. He had been flown out on the LAMPS helicopter. There was word, Doc had heard, that CH-46s were coming to the rescue from either USS Trenton [LPD 14] or San Jose. But he didn’t think Roberts’ flight deck could handle 46s — they were a lot bigger than the ship’s LAMPS helo.

But Doc had little time to worry about helicopters — he had to re-start an i.v. for a patient who had lost his in the move from the O2 level. It had to be done quickly, because Lambert didn’t have any time to spare — there were too many people to take care of.

He was sweating profusely. He apologized for dripping perspiration on the young seaman he was working on — BMSN Gibson.

When Gibson left the bow, immediately after the explosion, he didn’t get the chance to break out much fire hose. The pain from his back injury had quickly stopped him in his tracks — now he was pinned to a stretcher.

Doc grabbed handfuls of ice from bags in the triage area, chewing it as he worked from patient to patient. The worst case, so far, was Chief Gas Turbine Systems Technician [Electrical] [SW] Alex Perez. He had serious injuries to his head and back.

Perez had been trapped under the deck grating in the main engine room after the mine exploded. It was a close brush with death. Shipmates worked feverishly to rescue him. He escaped by swimming under oily water for 15 feet through mangled equipment to where a crewman was shining a battle lantern into the water to show him the way. Perez would have to leave on that first 46, Lambert thought — when it got here — if it could land.

***

“Stop putting water on the fire,” Rinn ordered. The XO asked the CO if he was crazy. Rinn explained, “No, we don’t have to worry about the fire. In a little while we’re going to be underwater and the fires won’t matter anymore. We’ve got to quit putting water into the skin of the ship. We’ve got to hold back on that until we can get control of the flooding.”

***

In AMR2, the struggle with the bulkhead continued. Despite the seam plugging attempt by Chief Ford and the others, the leaking was worse than ever. They tried plugging the leak with blankets, pillows and wedges. The process was chaotic, but it was organized chaos.

And still the battle continued. The portable eductors and fire pumps were beginning to get results.

The men of Roberts weren’t going to be beaten. They weren’t going to give up their ship without a fight.

***

The bulkheads of the 76mm magazine were getting hot.

GMCS Reinert didn't tell his working party that there was no pressure in the magazine sprinkler system. He didn't need to tell them details that they didn't have time to worry about.
They had to empty that magazine. The CO immediately gave permission to move the ammo. At first, they threw the 76mm ammunition over the side. Then they began to move the shells to the forecastle. Each round weighed about 50 pounds. They moved 700 rounds in 90 minutes.

* * *

The trap that had saved the ship’s LAMPS helo was now a problem, Sandle realized. The device was jammed — stuck right in the middle of the helo landing pad. He directed the CH-46 to land crosswise on the deck — across the fore-and-aft line of the ship. He stared hard into the darkness, concentrating on the wheels of the CH-46, willing it to land within the white lines.

Cmdr. Rinn had confidence in Navy pilots. This landing was dangerous, but in a pinch they would do it in the past. Failure was never in the equation.

Failure was not under consideration, Rinn knew, throughout the ship. "No surrender!"

"Don’t give up, damn it!"

"The Iranians have taken their best shot and they’re not going to beat us."

Rinn had heard it over and over again as he walked through the ship: "They’re not going to beat us!"

* * *

Doc went inside the 46 to put a blanket on one of the patients. He looked up and saw someone taking pictures. Doc thought, "What the hell are you taking pictures of?"

As he left the helo, Lambert saw what the sailor was photographing.

"All the doors were open — hoses were everywhere," Doc recalled. "You looked up at the top of the ship and saw sparks flying out — like a chimney. You couldn’t see the blaze of the fire, but you could see the sparks going into the night." Doc gazed at the damage control scene and thought, "I guess that would make a good picture."

The 46 lifted off into the night carrying eight more of the injured off Roberts.

* * *

During the first moments of the crisis, Cmdr. Rinn realized that the way he presented himself to his men would never be more important. The crew watched every move he made. It was time to earn his pay — time to do his job — as he’d been training to do it for years. It was time to lead this group of brave men in one of the most dangerous situations any of them would ever face.

Rinn and Less continued communications:

Rinn: "I’ve lost AMR3. I’ve lost the main engine room, I’ve got fires in the ship, but I’ve stopped putting water on them. This is why: AMR2 has four and a half feet of water in it. If it gets any higher we could lose the diesels — could lose the fire pumps. If I do, I’m in trouble. In fact I’d probably lose the ship. However, I think I’m winning in AMR2 — that’s the key space."

"I’m moving ammunition. The bulkhead temperature in the 76mm magazine is 134 degrees, and rising. I have at least eight casualties. There are problems with lost fire main pressure. I have P-250s running. Close-in weapons system is on line. My missile battery is operational. I can fight the ship, I can defend myself."

Less: "It doesn’t sound like it’s getting better. What are your considerations for remaining on board?"

Rinn: "We are determined to save the ship, period. That is our intention. We can save our ship. I intend to stay here and do just that."

Less: "Other units are standing by to assist."

Rinn: "We never saw the mine that hit us. Recommend you don’t send other ships. We’ll get out on our own."

* * *

The fire in the ship’s stack appeared to be dying down. The shoring in AMR2 was holding. The educators and fire pumps were doing their jobs.

By now, the crew had succeeded in moving most of the munitions forward to the forecastle.

The questions on Rinn’s mind now were: "How bad is that crack? Will the ship break in two? Do we still have a keel?"

He spoke to the crew over the 1MC. He explained the ship’s status, and then said again, "I think we can save the ship — there is no doubt in my mind."

There were really very few good alternatives to saving the ship. Going into the water meant swimming with sea snakes and sharks. Roberts was at least 80 miles from anyone — except maybe the Iranians. Since sending a ship in to assist meant putting another U.S. ship in the mine field, the men of the Sammy B. would have to find their way out of their predicament alone. Safe water was anywhere from four to seven hours away.

Rinn thought, "I hope we make it to morning. I hope we get to see the dawn."

* * *

Throughout the ship, the chances of staying afloat until dawn were slowly improving; situations in various crisis areas were stabilizing.

During breaks in unloading the magazine, Reinert sent all the AFFF — aqueous film-forming foam — he could find up to the O2 level. The
firefighters there needed it all. STGC John Carr spent the night moving five-gallon AFFF containers all over the ship.

With the plugging and shoring holding in AMR2, Chief Ford had left the secondary shoring to others and moved on. He stopped to rest against a bulkhead, and spotted more trouble. There was another fire. No rest now — back to work.

On the flight deck, Doc got his last patient off — ten casualties transported in less than two and a half hours.

EN1 Dejno was not evacuated; he volunteered to stay. His expertise was needed to keep the diesels running.

Rinn worried about the diesels, about maintaining power. If he lost the diesels, he’d lose everything; he wouldn’t be able to pump water out of the ship or fight fires. The ship wouldn’t be able to communicate, maneuver or defend itself. In his heart he repeated, again and again, “We’re going to save her, we can save this ship.”

Doc started hauling firefighting equipment, potable water and food off of the incoming helicopters. He had already resupplied the hangar bay triage. The resupply was important, in case the ship hit another mine.

Four hours after hitting the mine, the crew of Roberts was still hard at work. That work was paying off.

A daring investigation by the Chief Engineer, Lt. Gordon Van Hook, and BM3 Eduardo Segovia had pinpointed the source of the fire. An access plate on the O2 level had to be removed to get to the space where fuel oil had collected. Both Rinn and Van Hook watched as crew members, led by Lt. Dave Lewellyn, SM1(SW) Charles Dumas, HT1 Gary Gawor and HT2(SW) Tom Regan, removed the bolts and then pried the cover away with crowbars. Flames roared up in their faces, as a column of fire shot 15 feet into the air.

Van Hook tried to maintain his sense of humor as he turned to the CO and said, “Maybe this wasn’t such a good idea.” Fully aware that his men had to react in seconds to control the blaze, he added, “Maybe we should do this tomorrow.”

But his firefighters immediately applied foam to the fire with applicators stuck into the hatchway. The flames slowly died down. The smoke changed color, from black to white. It was the first good indication that they were winning the battle of the fires.

By midnight, conditions were stable aboard Roberts. Shoring watches and fire re-flash watches were set.

But Rinn was still worried. He worried that maybe there was a problem, like a leak into a void, that he was unaware of. He worried about the integrity of the ship’s hull. Roberts had suffered enormous structural damage, evidenced by the cracks he’d seen in the bulkhead, even though the fires were out and the flooding under control, the ship could still break apart.

Senior Chief Boatswain’s Mate (SW) George E. Frost came up with an idea to keep the front half of the ship attached to the back half. The ship’s BMs began stringing steel cables across the huge cracks in the deck and superstructure, attaching them fore to aft wherever possible. It was hard work, but soon they were showing the bystanders gathered around how it was done. Everyone wanted to get in on the “fun.” Under the stars, the ingenious sailors lashed their ship together to prevent the cracks from growing larger.

As Nicholson gazed into the waters around his ship, it seemed to be family reunion night for all the lethal sea life in the area. He was at the starboard aft search light, looking for mines, but all he saw were sea snakes and sharks. He was glad he wouldn’t be abandoning ship.

Aboard Roberts, crewmen were having reunions, too. They sat in groups on the O2 level; no one was allowed below deck without a buddy. They ate sandwiches, drank sodas, told stories and, at long last, rested.

On the forecastle GMCS Reinert slept for a few hours.

A helicopter circled the ship, searching the water for mines. The LAMPS III helo of HSL 44’s Det. 5 had done a heroic job. OIC Lt.Cmdr. Tim Matthews and Lt. Steve Blaisdale flew all night with a damaged helo, taking the wounded off and bringing badly needed supplies aboard, and still found time to search for mines.

By 3:00 a.m., the ship was quiet. Fires were out, leaks were plugged and flooding was under control. USS Roberts was slowly, carefully sailing to safety.

As Rinn walked the decks, he looked at his crew, exhausted, collapsed, some sleeping, some talking quietly. He reflected on what they had done in the last 10 hours. His men fought for their lives and their ship — a ship that was burning and sinking. They fought and won.

He felt a powerful bond with them. They were Samuel B. Roberts.

Their survival made all the tough work and long, boring drills, exercises and training worthwhile.

At 5:07 QM2 Nicholson made the entry, “observed sunrise” in the ship’s deck log. 

Mussi is assigned to All Hands.
The crew of USS Roberts had the chance to live up to the ship's motto, “No higher honor”—and did.

In a ceremony in the Persian Gulf May 3, medals were presented to the crew of the guided missile frigate USS Samuel B. Roberts [FFG 58] by Adm. William J. Crowe Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The ship was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation because of the crew’s tremendous achievement: keeping Roberts afloat after it hit an Iranian mine April 14.

Individual awards were presented to 31 crew members. The Legion of Merit was presented to:

Cmdr. Paul X. Rinn, Roberts’ commanding officer.

The Bronze Star with Combat Distinguishing Device was presented to three crew members for rescue efforts on behalf of Chief Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Electrical) Alex Perez. Their actions were taken with heroism and at risk to their own lives:

Chief Electrician’s Mate (SW) Robert C. Bent
Chief Engineman (SW) George A. Cowan
Electrician’s Mate 2nd Class Edwin B. Copeland

Seven of the crew received the Bronze Star with Combat Distinguishing Device for Valor and Outstanding Leadership. They organized damage control efforts to save the ship in the face of uncontrolled fires, flooding, and probable breakup and sinking. For accomplishment of damage control duties under the worst possible conditions these men received medals:

Lt.Cmdr. John R. Eckelberry, Roberts’ executive officer
Lt. Gordon E. Van Hook
Lt.j.g. Johnny D. Sims
Lt.j.g. Michael L. Valliere
Ens. Kenneth J. Rassler
Senior Chief Boatswain’s Mate (SW) George E. Frost
Chief Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Mechanical) (SW) David J. Walker

The Navy Commendation Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device was presented to 13 of the crew for heroic damage control efforts and leadership in the fighting of fires and flooding. They were instrumental in the successful damage control and ship control efforts which saved the ship and crew from great peril and near certain loss. Recognized for their personal risk and leadership:

Lt. Robert L. Firehammer Jr.
Lt. David A. Lewellyn
Lt. Bradley G. Gutcher
Ens. Robert B. Sobnosky
Chief Mess Management Specialist (SW) Kevin J. Ford
Hull Maintenance Technician 1st Class Gary W. Gwor
Signalman 1st Class (SW) Charles R. Dumas
Signalman 1st Class (SW) Serge E. Kingery
Electician’s Mate 1st Class (SW) James E. Whitley
Boatwain’s Mate 1st Class (SW) Richard L. Friddle
Hull Maintenance Technician 2nd Class (SW)
Timothy Regan
Quartermaster 2nd Class (SW) Daniel J. Nicholson
Mess Management Specialist 2nd Class Scott W. Frank

The Navy Commendation Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device was presented to Roberts’ only corpsman for superior response to and management of wounded crew members. He coordinated the movement of 10 personnel casualties, emergency treatment, triage and medevac, controlled all medical patients, resulting in successful medical evacuation with no loss of life:

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class James E. Lambert

Awarded Purple Hearts:

Engineman 1st Class (SW) Mark T. Dejno
Boatwain’s Mate Seaman Bobby F. Gibson

Purple Hearts were also awarded to four Roberts’ crew members who were hospitalized at the Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, by Vice Adm. Joseph S. Donnell III, Commander Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. The awardees were:

Chief Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Electrical) (SW) Alex Perez
Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Electrical) 2nd Class Larry Welch
Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Mechanical) 3rd Class David J. Burbine
Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Mechanical) Fireman Wayne J. Smith
The original ‘Sammy B.’

USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG 58) is not the first ship to bear that name.

The courageous deeds of the men of USS Samuel B. Roberts (past and present) were very much in keeping with the character of their namesake, a young sailor killed in combat off Guadalcanal in the South Pacific during World War II.

Early on the morning of Sept. 27, 1942, Coxswain Samuel Booker Roberts Jr. volunteered for a rescue mission to save a unit of Marines who had been surrounded by a larger Japanese force. The rescue group was under heavy enemy fire, when Roberts volunteered to distract the Japanese forces by running his boat directly in front of their lines to draw their fire.

His decoy act worked: all the Marines were saved. But as Roberts was about to pull out of range of the Japanese guns, his boat was hit and he was mortally wounded.

For his courage in the face of enemy fire, Coxswain Samuel B. Roberts was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross.

As a further tribute to the coxswain who died at Guadalcanal, USS Samuel B. Roberts (DE 413) was laid down on Dec. 6, 1943. After the 413 was stricken from the Navy list, the second Samuel B. Roberts (DE 823) was laid down on June 27, 1945 and served until Nov. 2, 1970. The third Samuel B. Roberts, (FFG 58) was laid down May 21, 1984. But what follows is “the blood-song of the ‘Sammy B.’”—the story of the first ship of that name.—ed.

Story by Lt. Cmdr. J. Morgan Smith

Silhouetted against the dawn, the little destroyer escort steamed at flank speed. The crew was at battle stations. Surrounded on three sides by Japanese battleships, cruisers and destroyers, the men aboard USS Samuel B. Roberts (DE 413) didn’t know it at the time, but the battle off Samar had begun. The date was October 25, 1944.

The Roberts task unit was in charge of protecting the small American escort aircraft carriers from the Japanese warships. The ships had just finished laying down a heavy smoke screen when all hell broke loose.

Steaming through the San Bernardino Strait toward Leyte Gulf, in the Philippines, the Japanese force began pounding away with its 18-inch guns. The thin-skinned destroyer escort, with its 5-inch guns, was no match for these heavyweights, but on it sailed, maneuvering radically, closing to within 4,000 yards of a heavy cruiser and unleashing a spread of torpedoes.

For 50 minutes the “Sammy B.” blazed away at the steel-clad monsters. Firing from point-blank range, USS Roberts boldly engaged the enemy, despite suffering heavy hits.

Serving as gun captain on Roberts’ aft 5”/38-caliber gun mount was a taciturn, All-American farm boy from eastern Oklahoma. Paul Henry Carr was just 20 years old and had never seen the ocean before he joined the Navy in 1943. Now here he was in the middle of one of the most important naval battles of World War II.

The only son in a family of nine children, Carr grew up on a farm in Checotah, Okla. Paul learned responsibility at an early age. There were always chores to do, from feeding the livestock and cleaning the hen house to milking the cows and hauling water from the well. Paul’s work seemed never to get finished. His chores controlled where Paul went and how long he stayed. Perhaps it was this informal education in self-discipline and responsibility that would later make Paul Carr a leader among his shipmates.

America was at war when Paul graduated from high school and in 1943 he enlisted in the Navy and was sent to San Diego for boot camp and gunner’s school. Five months later he returned to Oklahoma and
married Goldie Lee Jameson, who later joined him in San Diego, where they spent the next six happy weeks together while Paul attended advanced gunner’s school. Paul and Goldie then returned to Oklahoma, where Goldie stayed while Paul continued on to Norfolk, Va. en route to his new duty station — USS Samuel B. Roberts.

It didn’t take him long to get the hang of shipboard life. Carr soon began to mold his gun crew into an effective fighting unit.

“Paul was just like an old lady with her kitchen, the way he made us keep that gun mount clean,” said Samuel Blue, a fuse-setter in Carr’s gun crew during the famous battle.

George Bray, one of Carr’s shipmates, said, “I never heard Paul say a bad thing about anyone. He was gentle and could get things done without jumping on people. Paul showed them how to do it and stayed with them.” Bray was in the ammunition handling room below Carr’s gun mount when the furious battle started.

Paul Carr and his crew fired over 300 rounds during the battle off Samar, scoring at close range and severely damaging a Japanese heavy cruiser, knocking out an 8-inch turret, demolishing its bridge and starting fires aft.

His crew had inspired every man on the ship, a ship that was now in very grave danger of sinking. The massive blows by the Japanese had taken their toll. The Sammy B. was without power, compressed air, hydraulics or communications. The ship was a floating cripple and taking on water fast through one of the gaping holes left by a 14-inch shell from the Japanese battleship Kongo.

Knowing the hazards involved, Carr’s close-knit crew loaded, rammed and fired six charges by hand, without the safety device of the gas-ejection system. In attempting to fire a seventh round, the powder charge “cooked off” before the breech was closed, wrecking the gun and killing or wounding all but three men in the gunhouse.

After the order to abandon ship had been given, one petty officer entered the gun mount to find Paul Carr, literally torn open from neck to thigh, holding a 54-pound projectile, trying, unassisted, to load and ram the only shell available. Carr begged the petty officer to help him get off the last round, but the man, seeing the gun had been destroyed and its breech rendered an unrecognizable mass of twisted steel, took the projectile from the gunner’s hands.

Helping one of the other wounded men to the main deck, the petty officer returned to find Carr again attempting, although horribly wounded, to place the projectile on the loading tray of the inoperable gun. A few minutes later Paul Henry Carr was dead. George Bray and Samuel Blue were among the lucky ones. They had survived.

About an hour later, USS Samuel B. Roberts sank to the bottom. For the next 50 hours, Bray and Blue drifted with the other survivors, clinging to anything that would float. Sharks were everywhere, and the men huddled together trying to stay afloat. “I was picked up on the third day,” said Bray from his home in Montgomery, Ala. “It was an awful experience. Men were burned and bleeding and we were all worried about sharks.”

“My group floated in an oil slick for a long time,” said Blue. “There were so many men burned that I think the oil may have helped them. A couple of the Japanese ships passed by us and we thought they were going to shoot us, but they didn’t.”

The CO of DE 413 concluded his report of the battle with these words: “... the men zealously manned their stations wherever they might be, and fought and worked with such calmness, courage and efficiency that no higher honor could be conceived than to command such a group of men.”

The phrase “No higher honor” became the motto of the present-day USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG 58).

Carr’s memory lives on. On July 27, 1985, the Navy commissioned a new ship as USS Carr (FFG 52) honoring a man who gave his life for his shipmates and his country.

Smith is assigned to Navy Internal Relations Activity, Washington, D.C.
Roberts' return

It will take a lot of work, but FFG 58 will be back.

Photos by PH1 Chuck Mussi

The dramatic, overnight, life-and-death struggle to save USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG 58) gave way to the less-than-dramatic reality of cutting and welding as the extensive repair work, necessary to again make Roberts seaworthy, began. It was a job that wouldn't be done overnight.

Once preliminary repairs were done, the ship was loaded onto a commercial heavy-lift ship and transported back to Bath Iron Works, in Maine. Bath was chosen because it is near Roberts' home port of Newport, R.I., and because its shipyard has the full capability to perform the complete rebuilding work required.

The ship was built and commissioned in Bath in 1985.
Before Roberts left the Persian Gulf, extensive rebuilding of frames, bulkheads, hull and deck plates was required. As crewmen surveyed the repair work, they remembered the night the terrible damage was done.
Your first impression of the "Leapfrogs" may be that they are a bunch of cocky smart alecks. But the members of the Navy's Parachute Team are not cocky. They are simply self-assured.

"I'm sure of my abilities — I have to be," said Hull Maintenance Technician 1st Class James Boswell, leading petty officer of the team. "It's what helps keep me alive when I'm out in the field."

Boswell knows the difference between confidence and over-confidence. "There is a fine line — you get too sure of yourself and that could get you killed."

Operating out of Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, Calif., the Leapfrogs are a Navy showpiece and have performed at the Indianapolis 500, the Kentucky Derby, numerous community holiday celebrations and hundreds of state and county fairs. These select Navy SEALs—Sea, Air, Land team members—have performed around the country, captivating audiences wherever they go. "The Leapfrogs belong to the Naval Special Warfare Command and work in support of Navy recruiting," said Senior Chief Boatswain's Mate Clay Jackson, senior chief petty officer in charge and a veteran of more than 2,800 free-fall jumps. "Most times people identify the Navy with ships at sea and men on ships. It's exciting when we can create a graphic aerial display for a group of people and give them a different look at the Navy."

Audiences everywhere are enraptured by team members who fall to the earth at 176 feet per second (120 miles per hour). Spectators strain their necks back to watch as the jumpers — thousands of feet overhead — gather effortlessly into impressive formations. Depending on the show site, the team can make jumps from altitudes as low as 2,500 feet or as high as 12,500 feet. Once the jumpers float to the ground, they patiently, politely and proudly answer questions, pose for pictures and sign autographs.

The Leapfrogs team holds two world records. The first was set in 1982, for performing what is known as a "10-man speed star." This formation is timed from the moment the first jumper leaves the plane until the star is formed. The Leapfrogs formed their star in .57 seconds, breaking the Soviet record by a full second. Their second world record was set in 1983, for a 25-man diamond. This was the biggest formation ever launched out of an airplane as a group. Jumpers form up inside the plane before leaping and after jumping must hold their formation for the judges, thousands of feet below.

The Leapfrogs will put on 50-70 shows this year, requiring the team to be on the road for almost every weekend from April through November. They don't mind — they love jumping out of airplanes. With a gleam in his eye, Boswell describes the experience.

"It's not like you're falling. It's more a sensation of flying your body. It's like driving your car at 120 miles per hour with your head stuck out the window. You adjust your moves with your arms and legs. You can do anything an aircraft can do — barrel rolls, flips—you name it."

Competence and confidence are the keys to the Leapfrogs' spectacular success, a success that proves the difference between cockiness and confidence.
‘Can do’ in Vanuatu

Seabees rebuild schools on South Pacific island nation.

Story and photos by JOCS Barbara A. Cornfeld

On Efate Island, Republic of Vanuatu, the destruction from Cyclone Uma is still visible. The storm, which tore across the western South Pacific island nation Feb. 7-9, 1987, was declared to be the worst disaster to hit the islands in living memory. Damage estimates reached $100 million, with most of the destruction centered on the west side of Efate, where Vanuatu’s capital city of Port Vila sits peacefully.

For a year, nearly 500 children in and around Port Vila attended school in makeshift classrooms — some in a library, others in tents or under tarpaulins.

But a 24-man Seabee detail from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 62 changed all that.

In Port Vila, during the schools’ three-month winter recess, the team built two new schools and repaired another. This major construction effort marked the first time U.S. service members had been here in 43 years. Two major Allied bases were located in Vanuatu (formerly New Hebrides) during World War II.

The Seabees who made up the Vanuatu detail were deployed in Guam with the battalion’s main body when they formed in early November 1987. The battalion, headquartered in Gulfport, Miss., is deployed in the Pacific.

It took three C-130 flights by the U.S. Air Force’s 374th Tactical Air Wing at Clark Air Base, Republic of the Philippines, to transport the detail with its tools, equipment and support vehicles from Guam to Vanuatu, which is 500 miles west of Fiji and some 1,100 miles east of Australia. “The C-130s are the largest military transport aircraft capable of utilizing the short runway at Baurfield in Port Vila [the international airport],” said Lt. S. Keith Hamilton, the detail’s officer in charge. The flights arrived in December.

“Everyone was handpicked,” Hamilton said. “We looked for those with superior technical ability. There was tremendous pressure on the men to maintain schedules, and it’s something they had been well aware of since the planning phase of the exercise. We had to complete all the buildings before the beginning of the new school term — Feb. 8.”

The men worked 13 hours, six days a week throughout the deployment.

Two of the three school projects
were located in Port Vila — the public school (or “Ecole Publique”) and the Central Primary Kindergarten — and one was in Mele Village, about seven miles from Port Vila.

“Replacing the roof of the Ecole Publique was our largest and most complex project,” Hamilton said. “The men had to come up with in-the-field solutions for problems that occurred during construction.”

The 50- by 250-foot building — nearly the length of a football field — is part of a two-building school complex. Its old shed-type roof was crooked, with different types of construction going in different directions. The wall heights and widths varied greatly.

Removing the damaged concrete and wood of the old roof was long, slow, hard work, according to Hamilton. “We had to use small hand tools, such as hammers and chisels, and we had to take special care when removing concrete columns and roof beams to prevent exterior walls from collapsing when those supports were removed. Then we discovered structural weaknesses in the building.”

The roof structure was redesigned to eliminate the weaknesses and the existing walls were strengthened with cast-in-place reinforced concrete sections.

Fifty-one trusses were used to re-roof the building, and since a crane was not available to set the trusses in place, the seven-man crew placed them by hand.

According to Hamilton, 55,500 pounds of roofing materials were manually lifted to the top of the building and it took more than 2,000 pounds of nails and enough timber to stretch more than 3.5 miles to build the new roof. The men put together four different size trusses, and each truss was custom-fit in its location to provide a single roof line. Finally, five concrete buttresses were added to provide extra lateral support.

“The really hard stuff was getting the trusses up,” said Construction Mechanic 3rd Class Kenneth Southard. “They’re nearly 1,000 pounds each, and it took six of us. We put up about 16 in a day. That’s hard!”

When the project was completed, the crew had constructed and installed the new three-level wood truss roof topped with corrugated metal, installed a new electrical system and new lighting fixtures, completely scraped and repainted the exterior of the building and replaced broken windows.

The Central Primary Kindergarten and Mele Village schools had sustained such heavy storm damage that new buildings had to be constructed.

“The Central Primary Kindergarten was a major topic at local PTA meetings where parents urged the public works people to get the new kindergarten building erected before the upcoming school term in
Seabee builders require exact measurements (below) for the job. BU2 Todd Heck (right) wears the dirt of a hard, but satisfying, day's work.

February,” Hamilton recalled. The new concrete block project included a new foundation, a new roof of corrugated metal, a new electrical system and florescent lights, covered walkway, a concrete entrance ramp, new sewer lines, new plumbing fixtures and fresh plaster and paint, inside and out.

At the Mele Village project, the Seabees selected a new site farther from the shore and more central to the village, surveyed and excavated for the foundation. The two-classroom, 24- by 64-foot concrete block building is the first of a five-building school complex and serves as a model for future construction of the other buildings.

This project included a covered porch running the entire length of the building, 30 new windows, two doors, plastered and painted interior, extensive electrical work and new lights.

Three men from the village — John Malas, Andre Ova and “Old George” Danadicka — were with the seven-man Seabee crew at the site every day, helping with the construction, learning the trade and making friends.

“They did a lot of small, time-consuming things, and we were teaching them something,” said Builder 3rd Class Armand J. DeAreu Jr. “Because it’s a foreign country, they do things different from us and our techniques are new to them.”

“Old George,” now 77, and John Malas’ father, whose health kept him from helping with the project, worked long ago as laundry men for the sailors and Marines who were stationed on Vanuatu during World War II.

Rossie Kaltoi, daughter-in-law of “Old George” and sister of Malas, took lunch and snacks to the Seabees each day at the construction site.

“We were here about a week, and Rossie had us to her house for lunch,” said BU3 William R. Quackenbush. “After that, she began to bring us food on the job. At first it was just fruit, then tea and sandwiches, then their own types of food for us to try.

“The best part about this job was interacting with the Mele people. How many people in the States would bring you food every day?”

Rossie was glad to bring the Seabees food. “When I was a little girl,” she said, “my grandfather used to tell us stories about the Americans who were here. ‘When they come back,’ he would say to us, ‘help them all you can, be nice to them, for they will be here to help you.’ So, they are here, and I help.”

The Seabees of the kindergarten
and Mele projects finished early enough on their jobs to add varnished plywood to the ceilings and install electric ceiling fans; also, an additional overhead storage area and a new perimeter fence were added to the kindergarten.

The Seabees faced a lot of challenges on their projects. Ensuring material procurement stayed ahead of construction efforts was a major difficulty, according to Hamilton.

"Because the projects had to be designed as we went, materials had to be determined and then purchased," Hamilton said. "We found that many of the materials needed were either not available at all or were not available in the quantities we needed, so we had to change the plans to match the materials available.

"We were put in a situation where all the nice tools were not available, but we still had to complete the task — and that's what we've done. In spite of those difficulties, the men not only completed all the required tasking, but also completed several items that were not part of the original goal."

Each building meets or exceeds hurricane construction standards, according to Hamilton. "Some locals have told us that in any future storms, they are heading to the Seabee buildings for shelter," he said.

"The local people were always talking about the Seabees and really looked up to us to do a good job," said BU3 Dave Coughlan, who worked at Mele. "What I liked about this job was that we set out — from nothing — to build a school 30 by 60 feet, and two months later, it was complete — foundation, block and roof. There was a lot of good work done in Vanuatu."

"It's the best job, as far as job satisfaction is concerned, that I've ever done," said BU1 John Hix, the detail's operations chief. "What makes it all worthwhile is being able to complete a job that we started and know that somebody's getting something good out of it," he added. "The kids will have a decent place to go to school."

When, in mid-February, the C-130 flights left Port Vila for Guam, the Seabees of Battalion 62 left behind new friends and new memories of American sailors.

"I've been to three countries now, and Vanuatu is the best," said BU2 Todd Heck. "How many people get to shake hands with the president of a country? I did — we all did — in Vanuatu."

Cornefeld is assigned to Commander, NMGB Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor.
Pulling into port

Sailors find safe harbor at Navy retirement homes.

The U.S. Naval Home in Gulfport, Miss., and Carl Vinson Hall in McLean, Va., are committed to meeting the needs of retired senior citizens within the Navy family.

U.S. Naval Home

The U.S. Naval Home in Gulfport, referred to by its residents as the “Navy Hilton,” is right on the beach on the Gulf of Mexico. The home, featuring a main building with two 11-story residential towers and single-story attached support facilities, is surrounded by a wide expanse of manicured lawn crowned by majestic stands of live oak. The 580-room high-rise residence is designed to provide its tenants with a sweeping view of the Gulf.

The home is a self-contained “mini-city.” In addition to the comfortably furnished, air-conditioned, carpeted rooms, the complex includes a cafeteria-style dining room, a bank, an inter-denominational chapel, barber and beauty shops, a recreation room, bowling lanes, a Navy exchange, snack bar, library, hobby shop, swimming pool and greenhouse.

Residents enjoy the nautically decorated Fiddler’s Green lounge or relax in the lounge’s adjacent game-room that has pool tables, video games, darts and cards for the residents’ relaxation.

There is a picnic area on the grounds and an exercise trail with non-impact exercise stations.

The home’s recreational services department offers trips to plays, exhibitions and other special activities in the Gulfport area. A regular bus route serves the main entrance of the residence building. The surrounding communities offer boating, fishing and local tours.

Residents are allowed five months’ annual leave to travel, go on vacation or visit relatives. It is presumed that anyone gone longer than that probably isn’t making full use of the facility, and should make their space available to someone else. As one resident said, “I come and go as I please. And, I can decorate my room any way I like, as long as it’s neat and clean.”

The home has a hospital offering both inpatient and outpatient care on a 24-hour basis. This 60-bed medical facility provides long- and short-term care while the outpatient section cares for acute illness and provides follow-up therapy. The hospital also assists residents in arranging for care beyond the hospital’s capability. Rehabilitation, physical therapy and intermediate care services are also available.

Carl Vinson Hall

Since it first opened in 1969, Carl Vinson Hall has been a safe and comfortable anchorage for retired sea service officers and their spouses and survivors. Located on a 13-acre tract of Virginia countryside surrounded by trees, the modern brick and stucco building is home for some 225 retirees. The hall is named in...
honor of the late Carl Vinson, member of Congress from 1914 to 1963, a long-time chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee, and later, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

Living quarters at the residence range from efficiencies to two-bedroom apartments. All apartments have wall-to-wall carpeting and tenant-controlled air conditioning and heating units. Each apartment has a well-equipped kitchen with a refrigerator-freezer and garbage disposal. The bathrooms have ceiling-mounted heat lamps for comfort and tub guard rails for safety.

The comfort of residents is the main concern at the hall. To ensure their satisfaction, prospective tenants are encouraged to visit the hall and stay in one of the five guest units to get a feel for what their new home will be like.

Although there are fine dining facilities at the hall, residents are also able to prepare their own meals in their apartment kitchens.

In addition to the comfortable quarters, Vinson Hall has a library, chapel, beauty parlor, lounges, laundry rooms, a craft studio and hobby shop. There is also a MARS radio shack on the premises for amateur radio enthusiasts. And, for those with an itchy “green thumb,” space is set aside on the grounds for private gardens.

The hall has a large and well-equipped sick bay with treatment, examination and physical therapy rooms. A nurse is on duty 24 hours a day and a physician holds a daily sick call. Free bus service to Bethesda Naval Hospital is also provided.

A fund drive is under way to raise money for an on-site, extended-care facility for those residents who require health and physical services beyond the capability of the staff and facilities of the Hall. This addition, to be called the Vinson Pavilion, will be a 100-bed, assisted-care unit located on 4.28 acres of land immediately adjacent to Vinson Hall.

There is convenient public transportation to many attractions, especially in the Washington, D.C. area.

But R & R doesn’t have to be away from the hall, as there is plenty to do right on the premises. Bridge, bingo, poker and Friday night movies provide light diversion for some, while others may look forward to monthly lectures on various topics of interest. The craft studio and hobby shop also provide pleasure for artisans and do-it-yourselfers. Yet, the residents are by no means pressured into staying busy. Their time is their own and they are completely independent and can come and go as they please.

As one resident summed up the Carl Vinson Hall lifestyle, “We’re all on a cruise here — either rest or recreation — and the sailing is fine.”

This story was compiled from printed information obtained from both the U.S. Naval Home and Carl Vinson Hall. 102 Mike McKinley contributed to this story.

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**Eligibility requirements**

**U.S. Naval Home:** The U.S. Naval Home is open to any officer or enlisted person, male or female, who has served honorably in the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard, who is receiving retired pay or, generally speaking, has served in period of war or armed conflict. Applicants must be unable to support themselves by manual labor but still be ambulatory and in good physical and mental health, and able to care for themselves and their rooms.

Married couples are accepted as residents of the Naval Home. However, the Naval Home does not have quarters for joint occupancy. The husband, therefore, is assigned to a room in the men’s section of the Home and the wife to a room in the women’s section. There are no entry fees or charges for residents in the Home since it is an independent agency of the federal government whose annual expenses are part of the Navy’s budget. Therefore, all residents receive room and board, laundry service, haircuts, use of the pool and other recreational areas.

For more detailed information about the U.S. Naval Home and admission procedures, write to: U.S. Naval Home, 1800 East Beach Drive, Gulfport, Miss. 39507-1597.

**Carl Vinson Hall:** Retired officers of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard, their spouses, or close dependents, are eligible for admission to Vinson Hall, providing they are in reasonably good health.

The Hall is supported by a private foundation at no cost to the government. Thus, entry fees and monthly service charges must be paid by residents. However, financial assistance is available to widows and widowers and a resident may remain at the Hall even after the point he or she becomes unable to pay the monthly service charge.

For more detailed information about Carl Vinson Hall, application procedures and fees, write to: General Manager, Carl Vinson Hall, 6251 Old Dominion Drive, McLean, Va. 22101.
"We worked well together right from the beginning," Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handler) Lawrence MacKenzie said of the Marines who teamed with his flight deck crew. They were aboard USS Peleliu (LHA 5) during Team Spirit '88 exercises held this spring in the Republic of Korea.

"This was the first time I've had the opportunity to work with Marines," said MacKenzie, "and they were super. We got together and stressed the concept of a Navy-Marine team. We also emphasized the importance of flight deck safety to the Marines, since most of them had never worked on a flight deck before. They, in turn, showed us the safety aspects of their aircraft."

This was the type of teamwork that made the difference for the more than 28,000 U.S. sailors and Marines assigned to U.S. 7th Fleet forces participating in Team Spirit, one of the largest military exercises in history, with combined military forces of the United States and Republic of Korea numbering more than 200,000.

The goal of Team Spirit was to demonstrate the re-
solve of both countries to deter aggression by training in the reinforcement and defense of the Republic of Korea. The exercise tested the capabilities of sailors, Marines, airmen and soldiers, both American and Korean, to work together to prevent a recurrence of the bloody conflict that raged through the South Korean peninsula 35 years ago.

The focus of Team Spirit for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps was the amphibious land assault — getting Marines, weapons and equipment ashore safely, efficiently and on time.

Aboard the 7th Fleet flagship, USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19), the intricate planning required was carried out. It was also where the combined-forces aspect of Team Spirit took shape. Both U.S. and Korean staffs coordinated the landing operations during D-Day and the initial thrust inland.

Several days later, command of the fleet landing force and the Marine Expeditionary Force transferred its head-quarters inland. Naval forces continued to control the vital missions of logistics, naval gunfire support and carrier air support at sea.

Sailors and Marines of Amphibious Ready Group Alpha were tasked with carrying out the landing and helicopter assault operations from the amphibious assault ship Peleliu; amphibious transport dock ships USS Juneau (LPD 10) and USS Dubuque (LPD 8); amphibious dock landing ships USS Alamo (LSD 33) and USS Fort Fisher (LSD 40); tank landing ships USS Bristol County (LST 1198) and USS San Bernardino (LST 1189); and the amphibious cargo ship USS Saint Louis (LKA 116). The men pulled everything together to make the pre-dawn landing at Tok Sok Ri a success.

This was also the first Team Spirit appearance for the new landing craft air-cushioned vehicle. The LCAC delivered tanks and heavy equipment ashore, while Marines drove their tracked amphibious assault vehicles to the beach in several waves.
A Navy beachmaster unit drove lighter amphibious resupply cargo vehicles ashore and set up operations for the utility landing craft and tank landing ship offloadings. Korean LSTs offloaded tanks, trucks and troops.

Twenty-two ships, including the aircraft carrier USS Midway (CV 41) and its destroyer and frigate escort ships, provided an important multilayered defense for the amphibious assault in Team Spirit. The addition of a carrier battle group provided a protective envelope toward the sea, while F/A-18 and A-6 aircraft flew simulated air strikes at the beachhead and further inland.

In addition to the strike aircraft from Midway, Marine Corps and Air Force aircraft also flew numerous air support sorties.

Once the landing had begun, the delivery of support equipment to the beach went on for days. U.S. Navy beachmasters and their ROK counterparts directed the vehicular traffic coming off the amphibious craft ashore, while CH-46 Chinook and CH-53 Super Stallion helicopters brought more men and vehicles ashore.

Additional supplies and equipment were brought in by the ships of Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron 3. The MPS ships, part of the Military Sealift Command, carry the large quantities of equipment needed to sustain the operations in the field.

The “aggressor” ground forces were from 2nd Marine Battalion/2nd Regiment deployed to Okinawa, Japan, from Camp Lejeune, N.C. Air opposition was provided by Fleet Composite Squadron 5 from Cubi Point Naval Air Station, Republic of the Philippines. Their roles as the “bad guys” in the exercise provided a highly realistic tactical opponent for the onslaught of advancing Marines.

Teamwork — it paid off for everyone. □

Winter and King are assigned to the 7th Fleet Public Affairs Representative, Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines.
Each year, *Team Spirit* provides the United States and Republic of Korea the opportunity to train together, combining operations on land, sea and in the air. The success of *Team Spirit '88* depended on important variables — men, machinery, resources and organization.

Getting men ashore is the mission of USS *Juneau* (LPD 10). The ship is a multifaceted amphibious transport ship. The 569-foot vessel has a large well deck that holds 13 Marine Corps tracked vehicles and several lighter amphibious resupply cargo vehicles.

It also carries the new landing craft air cushion vehicle. "Since the ship's well deck was modified, we can accommodate the LCAC," said Lt. Cmdr. Charles F. Webber, *Juneau*'s XO.

*Juneau*'s flight deck was also the temporary home for four CH-53D Marine Corps helicopters, plus Cobra helos. The ship's boat skids carried two Seafox boats and two landing craft for vehicles and personnel.

While the well and flight decks were filled with equipment, the living spaces were filled, too. Normally manned with just under 400 crew members, *Juneau*'s complement swelled to more than 1,100 men. Each day, 120 loaves of bread, 2,160 eggs, 132 gallons of milk, 120 pounds of lettuce, 120 pounds of sugar and 20 pounds of coffee were used to feed the men. For the typical evening meal's main course, the galley crew served up 560 pounds of chicken, or 800 pounds of spareribs.

"To keep up with the demand, we used three galley crews working shifts around the clock," said Lt. D.R. Dugan, *Juneau*'s food service officer. Dugan has a crew of 14 Navy mess management specialists and 21 mess deck workers to serve the ship's crew. During *Team Spirit*, the Marines beefed up the galley with seven more cooks, two bakers and 33 mess cooks.

Marine cooks had to adjust to working in the cramped spaces aboard ship. "Our bakery at headquarters is as big as the mess decks on the ship," said Lance Cpl. Raymond Davey, stationed at 3rd Battalion Headquarters, Okinawa, Japan. "Everything is more compact on board the ship." *Juneau*'s bake shop...
is little more than 10 feet by 15 feet.

"It's hard to make cakes and puddings," he said. "The rocking motion can cause a cake to fall. I guess that's why the Navy bakes a lot of cinnamon rolls."

In the age of information, a fighting force of Marines and sailors needs computers, typewriters and office space to do the paper work — an inescapable fact of military life.

"We're used to having Marines and other groups embarked aboard Juneau," said Chief Petty Officer Harley Felch. "We make room in our offices for their admin personnel to use our equipment and computers so they can keep up with their paper work. We're here to help."

"The ship is designed to carry close to 1,200 men," said the XO. "The challenge is to make everything run smoothly."

Despite the population tripling aboard Juneau, the ship was running smoothly. There was still hot water in the showers and the galley didn't run out of food. General quarters drills brought the daily routine to an abrupt halt at the most unexpected times. Marines ducked out of passageways as sailors charged to GQ stations.

Juneau repair parties practiced pipe patching, bulkhead shoring and firefighting. The Marines took part in the training, joining in firefighting drills, donning oxygen breathing apparatus and attending damage control lectures. In the event of an emergency, the entire crew, sailors and Marines, was ready to put out a fire or control any flooding of the ship.

"Safety is of paramount importance in all operations," said Master Chief Electronics Technician (SW) Larry Wilson, Juneau's command master chief, "whether it's routine transits, unrepss, beach landing exercises or flight operations."

When D-day was moved up 48 hours, the Juneau crew and the rest of Amphibious Ready Group Alpha was fully prepared to meet the challenge.

"The amphibious landing went off without a hitch," said Vice Adm. Paul D. Miller, Commander 7th Fleet. "When weather forecasters predicted some bad weather approaching, we took full advantage of the good weather we had and moved the landing up 48 hours. I think it demonstrated the preparations of the sailors and Marines to execute such a large operation on short notice."

Winter is assigned to 7th Fleet Public Affairs Representative, Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines.
It didn’t take 12-year-old Heather Christensen long to sum up her first impression of her new home. Substandard Navy housing was all her mother, an E-2, qualified for. “Gross,” Heather said, looking at the rusty backyard stair railings, the chipped paint and the leaking faucets. She remembered her family’s previous home in Dallas, where they lived in a brand-new apartment complex with a swimming pool, clubhouse, jacuzzi and gym.

But Seaman Apprentice Lorraine Christensen, Heather’s mom, viewed those Navy quarters as the solution to a problem. The Christensens — Lorraine, Heather, Nicole, 9, and Kyle, 16 months — were about out of money, with no place to live.

Christensen became an active duty Navy single parent after her husband filed for divorce while she was in mess management specialist “A” school last summer.

She soon learned how tough uprooting her family was going to be. After reporting for duty in Norfolk in December, she ran through three months of advance pay.

“We stayed in the Navy Lodge for 30 days, looking for housing, and that exhausted my money,” Christensen said. “I was just about to sign a lease on a two-bedroom town house for $500 a month. I couldn’t afford the rent, but it was all I could find. Someone suggested I check with the Navy housing office. I thought I was too junior to qualify for anything they had, but they had a four-bedroom apartment available for us to move into right away.”

“Like Christensen, many Navy people who need help and resources do not know about all of their benefits and where to go find the answers to their questions,” said Adriana Kuhn, chief of services at the Norfolk Naval Base Family Services Center. “Single parents are especially vulnerable, because there are not two adults in the family to share the financial and emotional responsibilities.”

Changing times and statistics

Kuhn attributes military leaders’ increasing concern about single parents’ issues to the need to retain people for the all-volunteer armed forces, and to the fact that increasing numbers of people are choosing the military as a career.

“Before the all-volunteer force came about, most of the people in the services were draftees who didn’t marry, and didn’t become career soldiers or sailors,” Kuhn said.

“Once those statistics change, and you rely on retaining volunteers, you have to deal with the fact that most people will choose to marry and have children during a 20-year military career. The national divorce rate has been steady at 50 percent for the past 20 years,” Kuhn pointed out. “If you have more married people with children on active duty, you also have more single parents — the services have recognized this.”

Kuhn emphasized however that combining single parenthood with a Navy career is not a “female” problem. Norfolk’s FSC chief of services also pointed out that 80 percent of the single parents she talks to at Norfolk’s FSC are men.

San Diego area FSCs document this also — for example, the Naval Air Station North Island single parent support groups are all male. In fact, of the Navy’s estimated 11,000 single parents, 65 percent are men.

“Increasingly, men are realizing that maybe they can be single parents and remain on active duty,” Kuhn said. “Perhaps this is because men’s attitudes have changed about becoming involved with their child-
dren, and also perhaps it's because they see the women doing it. Ten years ago, you almost never saw this. If a wife died or left, he just got out of the service, or gave the children to a relative to rear."

**Child care is the No. 1 concern**

As the number of single parents in the Navy increases, more family service programs, like counseling, single parent workshops and child care referral services, have been developed.

The number one concern of military single parents is finding good-quality child care that the family can afford, say family service center officials, command master chiefs and single parents themselves.

"There are a lot of people out there who want to make money babysitting, but there are not a lot who are good babysitters," said Ens. Catherine Brooks. Brooks is a limited duty officer stationed aboard a ship and is the single parent of two daughters.

"There are no standards for choosing a sitter," Brooks said. "Someone advertises, you call her up, you think, 'This person sounds nice.' Maybe you check a couple of references, then you leave your kids there.

"It could be months before you decide this person really isn't good for your child, and the wrong babysitter can do an amazing amount of emotional damage to your child in that time."

Now on sea duty, Brooks solved her child care problems by convincing her sister to live with her. But it wasn't easy, she said, to swallow her pride and ask her family for help.

Even checking references and licenses doesn't guarantee quality child care, as Journalist 2nd Class Gwendolyn Jackson of the Navy Public Affairs Center in San Diego discovered.

"When I first arrived in San Diego, I had decided to leave my four-month-old daughter with a licensed babysitter I found through a community services listing. I had never met the woman, but I called her and told her I would bring Tiphany over the next day at 7 a.m.

"I got there and the house was filthy. As I was talking to the babysitter, I watched a cockroach crawl by. I almost cried. I felt I had no choice but to leave my daughter there, because I had to be at work in half an hour."

Nancy Scott, Norfolk FSC child care referral specialist, recalled when one desperate single parent arrived at family services at 7:30 a.m. "She had her child in tow, and said, 'I am UA and I don't have anyone to watch my child.' I told that person to call the command. I recommend that anyone with an emergency call their command first.

"Do the commands get involved? Well, I have had a chief petty officer sitting across from me in one chair, and a seaman in another chair, and had the chief tell me, 'He [the seaman] needs child care right now' — this is how involved some commands get."

People with other types of child-care emergencies have found help at
the Norfolk FSC, Scott said. A single parent once called the center at midnight from the hospital, needing someone to pick up her child because the single parent had been admitted. Another called at 6 a.m. needing child care in two hours, Scott said, adding that Norfolk FSC answers its phone around the clock.

Scott maintains a current list of Navy-certified home care providers who live on the bases in the Norfolk area. Some certified care givers provide extended home care during TAD, on duty nights, weekends and during long deployments at sea. She also has contacts at community day care centers.

FSCs in San Diego give single parents access to a countywide listing of licensed child care providers. But despite getting a listing of local babysitters, Sonar Technician 1st Class William J. Dunbar said trying to find a babysitter that could accommodate his work schedule was difficult.

“At the school, we run three shifts, from 5 a.m. to noon, noon to 7 p.m., and 7 p.m. to 2 a.m.,” explained Dunbar, an instructor at the Anti-Submarine Warfare Training Center in San Diego and father to Destinee, 5. “As a single parent, I am stuck on the noon to seven shift because it’s hard to find a babysitter who will get up at 4:30 a.m., or one who will stay up until after 2 a.m.”

Single parents help each other

Single parent Navy men and women have begun to look to each other for help in finding solutions to child care problems.

Aboard the submarine tender USS Hunley (AS 31), homeported in Norfolk, some single parents have worked out reciprocal child care for duty nights to defray babysitting expenses, said Lt. Cmdr. John Diaz, Hunley’s chaplain. Diaz set up a workshop on the ship for single parents to help get them started.

Capt. Richard N. Lee, the CO of USS Dixon (AS 37) in San Diego, initiated a shipboard support group after working with a number of single parents. “I had been spending from six to nine o’clock at night dealing with some heartbreaking situations,” Lee said. “And I had just finished interviewing a parent who had refused to sign the dependency certification form.” Refusal to complete the form, providing a complete child care plan for children, can result in discharge from the service, since the Navy knows it may not be able to rely on sailors who don’t have responsible child care.

“A chief petty officer was taking a newly arrived second class petty officer around for a tour,” Lee continued. “I asked her if she was a single parent. She said yes, she had been widowed when she was nine months pregnant two years before. I talked to her for 45 minutes. The next day, I set up the single parent support group with the chaplain.”

The first meeting aboard Dixon drew 25 crew members, from E-2s to E-9s. They described their family situations and their most immediate difficulties. Some child care problems were solved at the meeting when people in different duty sections agreed to watch each other’s children on duty nights. Some parents also volunteered their phone numbers to the chaplain for referrals in case of short-fuse problems with child care.

Whose responsibility?

Just how far the Navy should go in providing child care is a matter of debate.

“If the Navy is going to allow single parents to remain on active duty, and say they must meet operational commitments, then the Navy has a responsibility to make sure these people have the resources they need,” Diaz said. “Certainly, at a base as large as Norfolk, I believe that the child care center should extend its hours to evenings and weekends, so people could stand duty — even to 24 hours, so people could stand overnight duty.”

Disbursing Clerk 1st Class Dorine Favara disagrees that the Navy must help parents find child care. A detailer at the Naval Military Personnel Command in Washington, D.C., she is a single parent with three children, ages 7, 6 and 3. She says it is not the Navy’s responsibility to find adequate day care for her children.

“It would be nice if they offered more day care, but I’m not going to say it is their responsibility to take care of it for me,” Favara said.

However, those responsibilities grow more burdensome when unpredictable sea duty schedules offer challenges to single parents that shore duty does not.

“When we are tied to the pier, many days we work until ‘TC’ [task completion],” said Chaplain Diaz. “But if someone comes to us and says he has to go, the sitter won’t watch the kids late that night, what can we do? We let him go. His shipmates have to carry an extra share of the load. Most of the time the single parent is a good sailor, and feels guilty. Everyone loses.”

The stress of balancing a demanding job schedule with child rearing has forced about one third of the 30 people who attended the Hunley workshop in January to request to get off the ship, either through hardship transfers, or in some cases, administrative discharges.

One Hunley sailor who is determined to stick it out five more years, until retirement, is Hull Maintenance Technician 1st Class Bruce Hall, supervisor of the sheet metal shop. Hall supports a son, 7, and a daughter, 5, and must take them to a sitter at 5 a.m., returning many nights as late as 9 or 10 p.m.

“The command understands to a
YNC Nancy Gomez helps daughter Anita dress for preschool graduation exercises.

ing me, too, saying I will make E-5 in no time.”

Ens. Brooks, who was a senior chief petty officer before making LDO, experienced a different reaction when she reported to her ship, even though her Navy record, she thought, spoke for itself.

Brooks decided to work 14- or 15-hour days to prove she could pull her share of the load, even working through a duty day when her youngest daughter, who has spina bifida, was admitted to the hospital for an operation.

“They told me I could go, but I said, ‘No, I have duty. I am staying.’ Looking back, I wouldn’t make that decision again. It wasn’t a good solution, because I was under a terrible amount of stress, trying to prove I was good at my job. What suffered was my home life. Stephanie had been sick, and I had been taking her to the emergency room well after midnight. I was so tired by the time I got to work — there is a point when the babysitter understands to a point,” Hall said. “I survive with the situation from day to day, and I feel like I am living on the edge all the time.”

Personnelman 1st Class Cynthia LaCoste, a single mother of two who is assigned to Dixon, is able to rely on her ex-husband, who lives nearby, to help out when the ship goes to sea. But she sees how other single parents struggle. “Not all single parents on the ship have someone close by who can watch their children during all these short cruises. I don’t know which way is right,” LaCoste said. “I’ve heard people say the ship should leave them behind because they’re single parents, but I feel the rest of the crew has just as much right to be on the stay-behind crew that repairs subs while we’re out.”

Command reactions

“I thought when my new command found out I was a single parent, E-2 with three kids, they would tell me to get out,” Christensen said. Instead, she was surprised to discover, her commanding officer sped up the paperwork for her promotion.

Christensen, who works in the enlisted galley, earned a promotion to E-4 by graduating at the top of her mess management specialist “A” school class.

“The CO told me that I was in the best place I could possibly be, in the Navy and in Norfolk. The command career counselor is always encourag-
expect a couple of hours of your time, too," Brooks said.

Aboard Dixon LaCoste deals with that pressure, too. "One of my biggest problems is the delicate balance between what I give the Navy and what I give my children," she said. "Sometimes the scale tips to one side or the other. Sometimes I don't feel like I'm giving the Navy as much as I'm giving my children, and sometimes I feel like my children are being ignored."

A need for emotional support

Family service counselors say it is common to see cases where guilt, coupled with parental responsibility, make it hard to cope. A single parent doesn't have a partner to offer emotional support. However, Scott at Norfolk's FSC said that single parents are usually resilient and often creative at finding solutions to anxiety and stress.

"Military single parents always seem to find each other," Scott said. One segment of the Norfolk FSC's eight-week single parent workshop deals with emotional needs. Diaz and Brooks both noted that, on their respective ships, the workshops often turn into support groups after the official seminar is over.

"If someone is having a bad day, he or she can talk to someone else who isn't, but who really understands," Diaz said of Hunley's support group.

Lt. Jeff Deitz, of Naval Communications Area Master Station Atlantic, Norfolk, elected to attend the single parent workshop at his command because he thought he could learn to communicate better with his son Jason, 12. Neither Deitz, nor Chief Yeoman Nancy Gomez, who enrolled in the FSC Norfolk program, with daughter Anita, 5, say they are experiencing financial, child care or work difficulties as single parents, yet both wanted to reach out to other single parents.

"I know there will be problems and pitfalls raising Jason and I want to do it right," Deitz said, who recently received custody of Jason. "I know I don't have all the answers and the seminar seemed to be the right thing to do. I thought I could contribute, too."

Gomez, who works for Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light 30, said she finds that junior people who are single parents in her command look up to her as a role model and come to her for advice. "I send them to family services, most of the time," she said. "They are the people who have the answers, or at least know where you can find an answer."

Sometimes the psychological hardship leads to depression and it becomes more than a support group can handle. Yeoman 3rd Class Johnell Spikes, 24, knows how that feels. Spikes lives in a small off-base apartment with daughter LaQuinta, 2, whom he has cared for since she was just a few months old.

Spikes works with Gomez, and came to the squadron when he was released from shipboard duty for humanitarian reasons while fighting for custody of his daughter.

"I was introduced to the FSC by Chief Gomez. She took a special interest in my situation," Spikes said. "She told me about the social services there. I used their referral to find my babysitter. I found someone really great. She picks my daughter up on weekends if I need time to myself and doesn't even charge me anything. For Easter, she took the babysitting money and bought LaQuinta an outfit."

Generous babysitters notwithstanding, finances are tight for Spikes, especially when he runs up big phone bills talking to his mother long distance.

"My mother finally said, 'Son, I can only do so much for you. I am not saying you are crazy, but I think you should seek professional help."

Lt. Jeff Deitz (left) and his son Jason work out at Langley AFB gym.
Everyone needs someone to talk to, and a professional counselor can help you in raising LaQuinta,” Spikes recalled. He now sees a team of Navy counselors, a psychiatrist and a social worker.

“I was embarrassed to admit I had problems at first. I had to get past that. It was one of those growing stages,” he said. “When I leave the counseling session, I feel relieved. I find answers, I can do things. I didn’t want to bring LaQuinta up the wrong way. I wanted to make sure I was stable, that it didn’t just seem right, it was right.”

Psychological counseling is also available for children when they have trouble adjusting after a divorce, death or separation. Hall, aboard Hunley, began using these services when his seven-year-old began to have nightmares.

“The boy still has the fear that I am going to leave him, since his mother left,” Hall said. “He comes in my room in the middle of the night, looking for me.”

Hall said that he has taken his son to a counselor for the past 18 months and that military benefits have covered about 90 percent of his costs.

Money, isn’t everything, but...

Although Hunley has a less demanding deployment schedule than some other types of ships, Hall still has to plan for the extra expense of future separations.

Finances are tight for Hall because he must save for child care costs while he is deployed.

“I have learned how to shop. I don’t buy new clothes for the kids or myself — we go to the thrift shop. And I buy 99 percent of my groceries at the commissary,” Hall said.

Money is also the worst difficulty for Christensen. Even with her promotion to E-4, and a refund of 25 percent of the basic allowance for quarters because she lives in substandard Navy housing, she found herself recently with $5 in her checking account, and nothing to feed the kids.

“They had eaten everything, even down to the last cracker,” Christensen said. “I was waiting for child support from my husband. Even with Heather watching Kyle sometimes, my babysitter takes $125 to $160 each payday — about half my check. I am paying back my advance pay and a loan from Navy Relief.”

Ashamed to go back to Navy Relief again after “blowing $20 on a pizza for the kids” a week before, Christensen took out a loan at 30 percent interest from a finance company. “They said, ‘sure, no problem, just put up your car for collateral,’” Christensen said. “So I did.”

Financial concerns sometimes trouble senior-ranking single parents, although they say they are doing fairly well overall.

“You don’t go from two incomes to one, without feeling the financial stress,” Brooks said, who has paid as much as $500 over three months for her portion of Stephanie’s medical bills. “You could say, that I can’t afford to get out of the Navy because of the medical benefits alone. When Stephanie was hospitalized for her operation, it was about $15,000.”

Deitz feels the stress, too — he pays to run two households. He and Jason set up housekeeping in an apartment, without cutting back on his ex-wife’s alimony or child support for their other three children. Now, Deitz trims expenses he did not need to worry about when he lived in bachelor officer quarters in Norfolk. He eats at home most of the time, and he and Jason use the Langley Air Force Base gym two nights a week, instead of going to a popular health club nearby. This gives Deitz and Jason time together — they work on Jason’s weight problem and it helps Deitz keep in shape, too.

“The base gym has the same equipment as the health club, along with a sauna, steam room and pool, and it’s free,” Deitz said.

Benefits for single parents

Why do these people keep fighting this battle, instead of giving up?

Kuhn supposes that the senior-ranking single parents stay because they are not about to give up the time they have invested unless they absolutely have to. She believes the junior single parents try to make it because of the financial security, if they like their jobs and the Navy.

Women who are single parents often find they can’t match the upward mobility outside the military.

“The men who are single parents are more likely to get out, believing they can get a comparable job on the outside,” said a senior petty officer in Norfolk. “The women are afraid they will be back where they started, trying burgers for the minimum wage — or worse, on welfare.”

Christensen agrees. “In ‘A’ school, when I got the divorce papers, I cried a lot,” she said. “The chaplain there advised me to get a discharge and to go back and work on my marriage.

“But I knew my husband didn’t want me back, and how was I going to support three kids? Go back to being a bank teller at $11,000 a year, just scraping by and no medical coverage to speak of, and no chance of advancement, ever? I think I can do better in the Navy. I am planning to go to sea eventually. I think with my family’s help, I can work it all out.”

Heather Christensen has ideas about the future, too.

“I wish we could have a nice house again, and I wish we could go overseas, maybe Greece.”

Her mother answers, “it’s on my ‘dream sheet.’”

Lefler is assigned to NIRA Det. 4 in Norfolk. JO1 David Masci contributed to this story.
A guide for single parents

Navy programs and regs that can help

Stories by JOC Robin Barnette

Knowing what assistance the Navy offers and understanding the "rules of the game" can help you cope more effectively with the challenges of single parenthood. The following two stories provide some basic information to get you started.

Easing the strain

Navy single parents have more help available to them than ever before, because of Family Service Center programs and expanding child care options.

"We have three core functions," said Meg Falk, head of Family Service's Navy Family Support Program, headquartered in Washington, D.C. "The first is information and referral, the second is education and the third is short-term counseling. All three of these functions can help single parents."

Information and referral can provide listings of licensed day care providers or referrals to resources in the local off-base community.

Many different classes are offered by FSCs that can help single parents learn to deal more effectively with their situations. Classes include parenting skills, stress management, communication, financial management, how to cope with latchkey child situations, and even what to look for when arranging for day care.

Counseling can be a real help to single parents, according to Falk. "Say you're a single parent with two children, money is short and the watches long — you're having life coping problems. You need a little one-on-one counseling," she said. "We've found that people like this can learn to deal with those problems in a few counseling sessions.

"We are not there to 'fix people,'" she said. "We're there to help people fix themselves, empower them to solve their own problems. It's only when people get the right information and enhance their skills that they feel they have control over their own lives. That's what FSCs are all about — empowering people."

FSCs are also ready and willing to help single parents form support groups. "Let's say a group wants to get together for mutual support," said Falk. "FSC helps them make it happen, but the parents have the ownership." An FSC may be able to provide such help as publicity, meeting space, or a group facilitator. But the success of the group depends on the commitment of the single parents involved.

In addition to FSC help, single parents can get assistance from Navy Relief, including financial counseling and layettes for newborns. Chaplains, command ombudsmen, and community resources off base can also help single parents.

Child care is always a big concern — and often a big headache — for single parents. The capacity of Navy-operated child care facilities is inadequate for the number of children eligible to use them.

"Space for child care is a key problem," said Carolee Callen, head of the Navy's Child Development Services. The branch is part of morale, welfare and recreation department under the Naval Military Personnel Command. "We have 112 child care centers at 88 commands, but there is a desperate need to at least double our capacity."

Because money is tight for child care center construction projects, the Navy is looking for other ways to help parents. Callen said she is looking into the possibilities of leasing facilities to use as temporary child care centers. Help may also come from Congress — legislation is being developed that would allow service members to deduct money for child care from their pay before taxes. But the best answer so far to the child care crunch is the Family Home Care program.

Under FHC, spouses can care for children of Navy personnel in their government quarters. FHC is in operation at 29 commands stateside and overseas. To open their homes for day care, people must complete
training that includes CPR instruction. Child care providers under the FHC program must purchase insurance. Insurance is available through NMPC at a nominal fee. A professional monitor ensures that the child care offered is of the highest quality by providing training, screening and background checks, and monthly visits to FHC homes.

The demands of the Navy lifestyle makes single parenthood rough. But by taking full advantage of the resources available, single parents can make their lives, and their children's lives, more rewarding and less stressful. The key is taking responsibility and getting control of the situation.

“I can't emphasize enough that they'll feel a lot better about themselves,” said Family Service's Falk. “It will build their self-esteem to know, I am in charge. I have control. I know I have a lot of stresses — this is reality — but I can handle it.”

The Navy requirements

Compared to the total Navy population of 593,000, single parents are decidedly in the minority. An estimated 11,000 single parents — single adults with physical custody of one or more children — serve in the Navy today. The majority of single parents are men, numbering approximately 7,000. About 4,000 of Navy single parents are women.

Single parenthood in the Navy isn't easy, but an understanding of Navy policy can help a single parent's naval career run more smoothly.

This is the bottom line: Single parents are fully responsible for care of their children and their on-the-job requirements.

MilPersMan article 3810190 outlines the dependent care policy. It tells what information must be on a Navy dependent care certificate which is required to be in a single parent's service record.

According to the MilPersMan, at each new command single parents (and others to whom it applies, such as military couples with children) must provide a plan for dependent care arrangements. The plan has to include such details as who will provide care for children during normal duty hours, TADs and deployments; a will with guardianship provisions; and a power of attorney authorizing medical care, as well as other information.

Although failure to comply with the MilPers article can result in a discharge from the Navy, the best reason to complete a dependent care certificate is that it protects a single parent's child. The reality of Navy life is that a sailor can be deployed or sent TAD anytime. If it happens, the arrangements in the certificate will enable single parents to leave their children behind on short notice with some peace of mind.

Of course, a single parent reporting to a duty station for the first time, or a sailor who has just become a single parent, may need time to make the arrangements required. The instruction allows COs to give single parents extra time to put together a dependent care plan, but the deferment cannot be more than 60 days.

Although DoD policy does not allow an ID card to be issued to children under age 10, an exception is made for single parents whose duties require TADs or deployments for more than 30 days at a time. Any child over 10 must have a valid ID card.

To get medical care, registration in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System is, of course, always essential.

It's important, too, for single parents to keep the Page 2s in their service records up to date. In the event of an emergency — death of the parent, for example — this information could make a big difference in proving eligibility for survivor benefits and insurance.

In terms of duty, single parents can be assigned anywhere — ship or shore, stateside or overseas. That's not to say that a detailer won't take into account special needs. "We will try to extend single parents if they need it," said Disbursing Clerk 1st Class Dorine Favara, a DK detailer. "And that applies not just to single parents but to anyone who can't transfer because of a special situation with a child." Extensions can't be unlimited, of course. If the situation can't be resolved during the extension, a humanitarian transfer or discharge may be the only answer.

If the child of a single parent needs special health care or education, the detailer should be informed. The parent should fill out a duty preference card and use the remarks section to explain the circumstances. It's a good idea to follow up a "dream sheet" with a phone call to discuss special needs with the detailer.

The parent of a special child should also consider participation in the exceptional family member program, outlined in NavOp 98/87. See your personnel officer for details.

Single parents are evaluated for overseas assignments in the same way as other Navy members. They are eligible for both accompanied and unaccompanied tours. The main thing for single parents to keep in mind is that they can't expect preferential treatment from detailers, but can expect cooperation.

Some people worry that their status as single parents may hurt their Navy careers, but this is simply not true. As long as a parent keeps an up-to-date dependent care plan in his or her record, there are no limits to what a Navy single parent can achieve.
Hispanic Heritage Week set for Sept. 11-20

The Department of Defense will celebrate Hispanic Heritage Week Sept. 11-20. The theme of this year's celebration is, "Hispanic Heritage: A Legacy of Involvement."

Hispanics played a vital role in the early Navy and continue that role in the Navy of today. Adm. David Glasgow Farragut, the Navy's first Hispanic admiral, distinguished himself through repeated acts of bravery during the Civil War. While leading his forces to victory at the Battle of Mobile Bay in 1864, Adm. Farragut gave his famous order:

"Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!"

During the Vietnam conflict, Lt. Cmdr. Everett Alvarez, then a lieutenant junior grade, was the first American pilot to become a prisoner of war and remained the longest continuously held POW of the war.

In post-Vietnam years, Edward Hidalgo became the first Hispanic Secretary of the Navy and held the position from 1979-1980. Hidalgo was also the highest ranking Hispanic civilian to serve in DoD.


All Navy commands are encouraged to participate in this year's celebration marking the contribution of Hispanics to our nation.

Navy flag officer heads NATO force in its 20th year

The first active, multinational naval squadron ever operated in peacetime is celebrating its 20th birthday this year. NATO’s Standing Naval Force Atlantic officially began its duties in January 1968.

StanNavForLant, with five to nine surface combatant ships, steams more than 50,000 miles each year and takes part in international exercises under the NATO flag.

For the first time in its history, the organization is headed by a U.S. Navy flag officer. In a recent change of command ceremony, Rear Adm. John Scott Redd relieved a Canadian Forces officer as commander. Commanders of StanNavForLant are appointed for one year terms. They are nominated by the nations permanently assigning ships to the squadron in rotation.

The squadron is versatile. In times of tension or crisis, it is immediately available for rapid deployment and a more powerful naval force can be built around the core it forms. Through its ongoing training, NATO teamwork is improved. Because it operates continuously as a single force, it shows the solidarity and cohesiveness of the NATO alliance.

Redd’s flagship is USS Hayler [DD 997]. Each commander sails in the flagship of his own country’s navy. Previous commanders have hailed from the United Kingdom, The Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as the United States and Canada.

A cross-training program is stressed in StanNavForLant, which is active both at sea and in port. It helps build a greater professional understanding among sailors of different countries, and also offers them a chance to get acquainted with the customs, cuisines and living standards of their counterparts on other ships.

The squadron focuses on the interoperability of its ships, regularly testing ways to improve coordination and cooperation. However, standardization of equipment among NATO allies is a controversial subject.

Proponents of standardization maintain that it makes it easier for the units of various nations to work together. It also saves money that would be spent designing and producing several different weapons systems.

On the other hand, some StanNavForLant commanders have found the flexibility of the squadron sometimes is enhanced by lack of standardization. It complicates any opponent’s problems while giving NATO commanders a variety of options that make the squadron a credible military force in nearly all environments.

But what’s most important is StanNavForLant’s dedication to a common purpose — 20 years of cooperation and looking forward to many more.

—Story by JOC Robin Barnette, All Hands.
National disaster exercise tests Naval Hospitals

Naval Hospitals in Philadelphia and Great Lakes, Ill., were put to the test in April when *April Touchdown ’88* took place to test the National Disaster Medical System.

The NDMS is a comprehensive medical system that provides emergency care for mass casualties in the event of a civil disaster. The system would be activated to supplement state and local resources in instances where the severity and magnitude of a civil disaster would require additional assistance, or in the event of an overloading of the military treatment facilities.

NDMS includes medical response units for preliminary treatment and evacuation of civilian casualties, and approximately 100,000 pre-committed beds in hospitals nationwide.

As federal coordinating centers for their respective geographical areas, Naval Hospitals Great Lakes and Philadelphia tracked the type and location of bed availability for all participating VA and civilian medical facilities, and gave reports to the Armed Services Medical Regulating Office.

Naval hospital personnel also supported the exercise by simulating injuries with theatrical make-up. Local commands provided volunteers to act as patients.

—Story by Lt. Liza Collins, PAO, NavMedCom, Northeast Region, Great Lakes, Ill.

Navy pilot completes mission in a ‘heartbeat’

A Navy pilot became a relay runner in a race for life in April, in which the winner was an Illinois cardiac patient.

Cmdr. Jim Noland, executive officer of Attack Squadron 122, based at Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif., flew non-stop from NAS Alameda, Calif., to Chicago to deliver a donor heart to Loyola University Hospital.

Flying a two-seat training version of the A-7 Corsair II, Noland met officials of Oakland’s Highland Hospital at NAS Alameda, to pick up the human heart.

With the heart container strapped in the aircraft’s back seat, Noland then flew to Chicago’s Midway airport where he was met by Loyola officials. The heart container was transferred to a commercial emergency flight helicopter and transported to the hospital.

Time was a crucial element in getting the heart to Chicago because it had to be at Loyola Hospital in less than three and a half hours to be usable for transplant. Noland’s flight time was two hours and 26 minutes.

Quick action and professional performances by Noland and doctors at both hospitals resulted in a successful heart transplant.

—Story by JO1 Linda Creesy, NAS Glenview, Ill.

Voting — it’s your responsibility

American citizens have the right to choose those government officials who will serve them. We also have the duty to ensure that we participate in the democratic process. Your duty to preserve American freedoms by serving in the defense of our country is important, but your duty to vote is just as important.

Yet, sometimes making your voice heard isn’t easy — the Constitution is clear on who can vote, but specific voting regulations can be complex.

Questions like, “Where do I register?” or “How can I get an absentee ballot?” are prevalent among Navy people. These complications sometimes make it seem like it would be easier just to avoid the hassle.

Still, it is your responsibility to vote.

You are also urged to organize yourselves with the idea of getting other military people to vote. Learn the procedures for registering and the locations of voting in the primaries, as well as local, state and federal elections.

Through heightened military voter awareness, military people are increasing their influence at the polls. For example, in 1984, voting participation by military members and their dependents increased to its highest level — 55.3 percent.

When you vote, you participate in the process that will determine whether the military will remain strong, and whether Navy families will continue to be well cared for.

Help preserve America’s freedom by casting your vote.
National observance honors POWs and MIAs

National POW/MIA Recognition Day will be observed Sept. 16 throughout the United States and worldwide by U.S. service members and other concerned Americans. The focus of this special day is on Vietnam POWs and MIAs, but it also honors prisoners of war and those missing in action from other wars, and their families.

When the Paris Peace Accords were signed on Jan. 27, 1973, the Vietnamese released 591 American prisoners. However, evidence indicates that Indochinese governments have information about many others who are still missing.

Approximately 2,000 Americans remain unaccounted for, including POWs and MIAs in Vietnam and approximately 550 servicemen still missing in Laos.

One year ago, the President’s special emissary for POW/MIA affairs, retired Army Gen. John W. Vessey Jr., led a delegation to Hanoi. The group met with the Vietnamese foreign minister and came away with an agreement that Vietnam would cooperate in the effort to account for MIAs.

Vessey’s meeting has produced results: the Vietnamese returned the remains of three Americans in September and five in November. What are believed to be the remains of another 44 men were returned in March and April. These remains are still being identified.

Discussions with the Vietnamese continue. Five technical-level meetings have been held in Vietnam, at which experts from both sides have exchanged information on specific details of the POW/MIA issue.

Files on 70 “discrepancy cases” have been passed to the Vietnamese to help with the search for MIAs. These cases involve Americans known to have survived an initial incident and who came under Indochinese control.

For example, an air crew may have witnessed the downing of another aircraft, saw the pilot eject and parachute safely to the ground and then saw him led away by hostile forces. Several such cases remain unresolved.

National POW/MIA Recognition Day is an opportunity to remember and honor the many people who have suffered — the prisoners of war, those missing in action, and those described as “the real heroes” by President Ronald Reagan, the families. ■

—Story by JOC Robin Barnette, All Hands

Manitowoc’s ‘French’ cook adds touch of class to meals

Not very many ships in the fleet, if any, can boast of having a wardroom supervisor who’s been to a French cooking school. One exception is USS Manitowoc (LST 1180), homeported in Little Creek, Va.

Mess Management Specialist 3rd Class Dominic Simeone attended the prestigious L.E.P. Du Golf Hotel Cooking School in Hyeres, France, for nine days last November for a brief indoctrination in French cooking and baking.

Simeone enlisted in the Navy in 1984. On board Manitowoc, the Pittsburgh native is assigned as wardroom supervisor, planning meals and monitoring the quality of the food served.

“This ship is lucky to have someone as talented as MS3 Simeone,” said Cmdr. J.E. Schill, Manitowoc’s commanding officer. “He likes to add a personal touch to meal preparation.”

The goal of the French cooking school is to offer complete culinary training. The school prepares many of the 18- to 21-year-old students from all over the world, for careers in the various facets of restaurant services, including bartending, table service, etiquette and, of course, cooking.

For those desiring to become official, full-fledged chefs, even the entire two-year school is only a steppingstone.

At the end of MS3 Simeone’s two-week training period, the teachers and students were invited to have lunch aboard Manitowoc.

The French visitors were impressed with Manitowoc’s galley, which was much different from the kitchen they were accustomed to cooking in.

One feature the students were particularly interested in was the salad bar in Manitowoc’s enlisted dining facility.

Following the lunch, Cmdr. Schill and MS3 Simeone gave the teachers and students a tour of the ship. ■

—Story by Ens. S.K. Thomas, USS Manitowoc (LST 1180).
Navy Rights & Benefits

Veterans Benefits
A wide range of services and benefits is available to help veterans — eligible military members who leave the service after retirement or after their military obligations have been met. This is a part of what you earn when you serve your country.

This edition of Rights and Benefits contains general information about medical, education and other benefits, mostly available through the Veterans Administration. For more specific information and requirements, you should call your nearest VA office, located in major cities throughout the country.

If you are an active duty service member, you can also get information on veterans benefits from your command career counselor, personnel officer or education officer.

**U.S. VIP**

The lack of medical coverage after a member's discharge, or dependent's loss of eligibility, is a concern of military members and their families. The Uniformed Services Voluntary Insurance Plan is designed to ease these concerns. U.S. VIP is offered by a major insurance company through an agreement with DoD at a lower cost than that charged for private commercial policies.

Service members separating from active duty have 30 days after their separation to purchase U.S. VIP for themselves, as well as their dependents. Former spouses of active duty or retired personnel are eligible to purchase the insurance up to 90 days after their divorce. The unmarried children of active duty, deceased or retired personnel who lose their military coverage because of age, may purchase the insurance up to 90 days after their 21st birthday, or 90 days after their 23rd birthday if they are full-time students.

In addition, minor children — children under 19 — who become legal wards of active duty or retired personnel, as well as minor dependent grandchildren living with active duty or retired personnel and minor wards and "pre-adoptive" children are eligible for the policy.

U.S. VIP replaces the Majorcare 90 plan. U.S. VIP provides benefit coverage similar to CHAMPUS, with two notable exceptions — maternity benefits are limited and there's a one-year waiting period before preexisting conditions are covered. There are also some special procedures designed to help keep the cost of the policy lower.

In most cases, the plan pays 80 percent of covered costs, with an annual deductible of $250. The plan pays 100 percent of costs after the subscriber has paid $2,500 of covered expenses in a calendar year. There is a lifetime maximum benefit of $1 million.

Policy holders are responsible for all costs of U.S. VIP coverage, although the Navy will provide information on eligibility, enrollment and cost to all interested individuals at personnel offices, family service centers and medical facilities. Members leaving the service will be provided information and assisted to enroll in U.S. VIP as part of separation counseling.

**VA medical/dental services**

Veterans discharged or released from active military service under conditions other than dishonorable may be entitled to medical and dental care at VA health facilities.

Veterans requiring hospitalization because of injuries or disease incurred while on active duty have top priority for admission to VA medical facilities. Veterans who were discharged or retired for disability and need treatment for some ailment not connected with their service, will be admitted as space is available.

Other veterans who cannot pay for hospital care elsewhere may be treated or admitted to VA hospitals on a space-available basis. Ability to pay does not apply to any veteran who is 65 or older, or is receiving a VA disability pension.

VA facilities also provide outpatient services to veterans in need of medical examinations, consultation or counseling, and prescription medicines.

Outpatient medical treatment includes home health services such as structural alterations and home improvements deemed necessary for treatment at home.

VA medical and dental assistance is dependent upon the veteran's needs and eligibility.

**Unemployment compensation**

Veterans returning to civilian life who need jobs should register with the nearest local state employment commission office and apply for unemployment compensation payments as soon as possible.

After leaving the service, veterans may file in any state where they plan to reside or work. It is beneficial to file promptly. Weekly unemployment checks are not retroactive;
Veterans Benefits

they begin only after a veteran files for unemployment compensation.

Full-time jobs

Although employment assistance is not one of its basic responsibilities, the VA provides employment guidance and information whenever possible. VA personnel, with regional offices in all states, counsel veterans on available benefits and privileges.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management can assist veterans who seek jobs with the federal government. Other sources of employment information and assistance are:

- Federal Job Information Centers. Consult a telephone directory for an address, or ask the operator for the toll-free telephone number.
- Any VA regional office.
- Any federal agency personnel office.
- State and local government employment offices.

Many levels of government — state, county and municipal — give returning service personnel veterans preference. The preference is generally in the form of additional points added to job testing scores.

Vocational rehabilitation

This program provides assistance to service-disabled veterans to live independently and to become employable and to find and keep new jobs. Evaluation and counseling services help the veteran plan a suitable vocational rehabilitation program, or a program to improve the potential for independent living.

Eligible veterans may enroll in schools or colleges, train on the job or on a farm, or enter programs that combine school and job training. While enrolled in a rehabilitation program, veterans receive a monthlysubsistence allowance in addition to compensation or retirement pay. Seriously disabled veterans may pursue training in their own homes, in rehabilitation centers, or in other training facilities.

Each program of rehabilitation is tailored to meet the special needs of the individual veteran. Medical care and other supportive services, such as tutorial assistance and reader service, may be provided. Advancements from a revolving fund and work-study program are also available, as are counseling, job placement and post-placement services.

Eligibility for comprehensive training and rehabilitation services — Veterans who served in the armed forces are eligible for comprehensive training and rehabilitation services if the following conditions are met:

- They suffered a service-connected disability in active service, which entitles them to compensation, or would do so but for receipt of retirement pay, or they are hospitalized in a military hospital for a condition likely to be found to be compensable;
- They were discharged or released under other than dishonorable conditions or if the dishonorable discharge is later changed;
- The VA determines they need rehabilitation services because of an employment handicap.

Eligibility for employment services — Employment services may be provided to those veterans who fall into two basic groups:

- All veterans eligible for (or found to have an employment handicap who are current participants in) the chapter 31 training and rehabilitation program if the VA determines they are job-ready; and
- Other employable veterans who have a service-connected disability and meet certain other conditions.

Period of eligibility — Generally, a veteran must complete a rehabilita-

Table 1: Vocational Rehabilitation Monthly Rates

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<tr>
<th>Type of Training</th>
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<th>1 Dep.</th>
<th>2 Deps.</th>
<th>Each Add'l. Dep.</th>
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<td><strong>Institutional</strong>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>$310</td>
<td>$384</td>
<td>$452</td>
<td>$33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three-quarter</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Half-time</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm cooperative/Apprenticeship/OJT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Extended evaluation/independent living</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>384</td>
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<tr>
<td>Half-time</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>193</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quarter-time</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>9</td>
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</table>

*Institutional training also includes no-pay or nominal-pay OJT or work experience in a federal agency
Veterans Benefits

Duration of programs — Eligible veterans may generally be provided training and rehabilitation services up to a total of four years, although additional training may be authorized under certain conditions. Employment services may be provided for up to 18 additional months.

Special programs — Veterans in receipt of pension: Veterans who are awarded a pension from Feb. 1, 1985, through Jan. 31, 1989, may elect to participate in a vocational training program if found eligible for services. Under this pilot program, a veteran may receive up to 24 months or more of vocationally oriented services and assistance as well as up to 18 months of placement and post-placement services. Work income will generally affect the continuing receipt of pension.

Veterans in receipt of individual unemployability rating: During a temporary period (Feb. 1, 1985, through Jan. 31, 1989) the total disability rating due to individual unemployability of a veteran who returns to work will be protected for 12 consecutive months of employment. Also, during the same four-year period, participation in a vocational rehabilitation program would be required of veterans newly assigned individual unemployability ratings unless the VA determines that a vocational goal is not feasible for the veteran.

Education assistance

The VA administers four basic educational assistance programs for veterans and service personnel — the non-contributory GI Bill, the Veterans Educational Assistance Program, the Montgomery GI bill and the Selected Reserve Education Program.

Noncontributory GI Bill — Veterans who served on active duty for more than 180 consecutive days, any part of which occurred after Jan. 31, 1955, but before Jan. 1, 1977, and who: (a) were released under conditions other than dishonorable, (b) were discharged for a service-connected disability, or (c) continue on active duty, are eligible for educational benefits under the non-contributory GI Bill.

Also eligible are those who contracted with the armed forces and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Education Training Rates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Column I</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE OF PROGRAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition cost, not to exceed rate of $376 for full-time; $283 for 3/4 time; $188 for 1/2 time or less but more than 1/4 time; $94 for 1/4 time or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
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<td>Three-quarter</td>
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<td>Half-time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
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<td>Active Duty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Or Less Than Half-Time</td>
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<td>APPRENTICESHIP OJT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Periods of Training</td>
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<td>First 6 months</td>
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<td>Second 6 months</td>
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<td>Third 6 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fourth and any succeeding 6-month period</td>
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<tr>
<td>FARM COOPERATIVE Basis</td>
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<td>Full-time</td>
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<td>Three-quarter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Half-time</td>
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</table>
were enlisted in, or assigned to a reserve unit before Jan. 1, 1977, and who, as a result of this enlistment or assignment, served on active duty for more than 180 days, any part of which began within 12 months after Jan. 1, 1977, and who were discharged from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable.

Each eligible person with 18 continuous months or more of active duty is entitled to 45 months of full-time education benefits, or the equivalent in part-time benefits. Those with less than 18 continuous months of active duty are entitled to 1.5 months of full-time benefits (or the part-time equivalent) for each month of active duty served.

As an example, a veteran (with spouse and one child), having 12 months of continuous service, will have 18 months of full-time benefits available. If the veteran attends school on a half-time basis, $255 will be paid directly to the veteran for 36 months (approximately four school years). Table 2 (Page 44) shows various monthly amounts a veteran may receive under the current rates for non-contributory GI Bill users. These payments are non-taxable.

Full-time institutional training means 14 semester hours unless the school has certified to the VA that it considers 12 hours to be full-time.

Eligible personnel may select a program of education, an apprenticeship or on-the-job training program, or farm training at any approved educational or training establishment that will accept them. Vocation or education counseling will be provided by the VA on request. A change of program is permitted under some conditions.

Veterans who have not received a high school diploma (or equivalency certificate), or who need deficiency or refresher courses before enrolling in a program of education or training may pursue these courses without charge to their basic entitlement.

GI Bill eligibility generally ceases at the end of 10 years from the date of the veteran's last release from active duty or Dec. 31, 1989, whichever comes first.

**Tutorial assistance** — Veterans who use the non-contributory GI Bill may also be eligible to participate in a program of tutorial assistance. Its purpose is to assist veterans to successfully complete an educational goal by providing special help to overcome deficiencies in required subjects.

Veterans may receive up to $84 monthly for a maximum of $1,008 with no charge against basic entitlement. Payments are made as reimbursements, not as advance allotments. Applications for reimbursement should be made promptly after completion of the month or term in which tutoring was received. Benefits may only be paid, however, for tutoring received within the one-year period preceding the date the claim was received by the VA.

**VA work-study program** — Veterans using their non-contributory GI Bill educational benefits who enroll full-time in college degree, vocational or professional programs may "earn while they learn" under the VA work-study program. Veterans in a vocational rehabilitation program are also eligible to participate in the work-study program.

Veterans who work the maximum of 250 hours per semester (or other enrollment period) receive $837. A student who works fewer hours gets a proportionately lesser amount.

Under the work-study program agreement, veterans will receive payment for 40 percent of the hours of services in advance.

Services performed under the VA work-study program must be VA-related in nature. Examples of such services include VA outreach services under the supervision of a VA employee, preparation and processing of VA paper work or VA domiciliary and medical treatment services. Other VA-related activities could be performed with approval of the administrator.

**VEAP** — The Veteran's Educational Assistance Program replaced the old non-contributory GI Bill for Navy people who entered the service after Dec. 31, 1976. Individuals who entered the Navy on or after Jan. 1, 1977, are eligible to participate. See "Education Opportunities," February 1988 All Hands.

**VA education loans** — A veteran whose eligibility period under the non-contributory GI Bill has expired and who has remaining entitlement may borrow up to $2,500 per academic year to continue to pursue a full-time course leading to a standard college degree, or to a professional or vocational objective which requires at least six months to complete, during the first two years after the end of eligibility. The six-month requirement may be waived by the VA under certain circumstances. Veterans enrolled in vocational flight training, who are reimbursed at 60 percent, may also apply for an educational loan.

**Montgomery GI Bill Act of 1984**

The Montgomery GI Bill established a program of education benefits for individuals initially entering military service from July 1, 1985, through June 30, 1986. See "Education Opportunities," February 1988 All Hands.

**VA home loans**

The VA guaranteed home loan program offers advantages that other
loan programs do not. The major advantage of the VA home loan program is that most VA loans are made with little or no down payment. The borrower also has the right to repay all or part of the indebtedness at any time without penalty.

The home loan offered under the VA’s major program is not a direct loan but a guaranteed loan covering 50 percent of the mortgage, up to a maximum of $45,000. For loans over $45,000, a different percentage applies. The exact amount of a veteran’s entitlement is shown on the Certificate of Eligibility that many veterans receive from the VA shortly after discharge. Veterans who do not have this document should contact their nearest VA regional office.

Veterans can use their entitlement to purchase, build, alter, improve, refinance or repair a home. There is no requirement that the entitlement must be used within a certain period of time. VA home loan eligibility remains available until used.

To be eligible for a VA home loan, a veteran must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, after serving a minimum period of time on active duty. Generally, the minimum period of time on active duty is 90 days of wartime service, or 181 days of continuous service during peacetime, or 24 months of active duty service if enlistment began after Sept. 7, 1980. A shorter period of service may be sufficient if a veteran was discharged or released sooner because of a service-connected disability. Men and women on active duty are eligible after having served on continuous active status for at least 181 days. Active-duty-for-training purposes does not qualify an individual for VA home loan benefits.

To obtain a home loan, veterans should contact a real estate broker or one of the usual lending institutions — banks, savings and loan associations, insurance companies and mortgage companies. Although there is no maximum loan amount, some lenders will limit loan amounts to four times a veteran’s entitlement. For example, a veteran with full entitlement ($45,000 guarantee) might be able to obtain a $100,000 home loan subject, of course, to the veteran’s ability to qualify for the loan from an income and credit standpoint. In all cases, however, the greater the guarantee entitlement in relation to the loan amount, the more favorable will be the prospect of obtaining a loan.

Memorial Affairs

Burial in a VA national cemetery is open to any veteran who has been discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.

Although the law does not provide for gravesite reservations, veterans can make things easier for survivors by expressing a desire to be buried in a national cemetery, keeping military service records accessible and verifying eligibility with VA.

To be eligible for burial, military service must have been for other than training purposes. Reserve or national guard personnel who do not meet those requirements, but who die as a result of their active duty or training, may also be eligible. Service members who die on active duty are also eligible. Burial is available to an eligible veteran’s widow, widower, minor children and, under special circumstances, unmarried adult children.

When a veteran or dependent dies, the documents verifying eligibility should be presented to the funeral director handling the burial. The funeral director then contacts the national cemetery to determine eligibility and space available.

Of the VA’s 111 national cemeteries, 65 have grave space available, and 46 are closed. A closed cemetery does not have space for new interments. However, those who have a spouse or dependent buried in a closed cemetery may still be buried in the family gravesite. Once eligibility and space are determined, the VA will open the grave, handle the burial, furnish a headstone or marker and provide perpetual care and maintenance.

Questions regarding burial in a national cemetery or other VA burial benefits can be answered by the nearest VA cemetery or regional office. Toll-free numbers are located in the white pages of your phone book under “U.S. Government.”

Keeping VA posted

If you are a veteran who holds a government life insurance policy, you need to keep the VA informed of your current address.

Changes should be sent to the following address, giving your name, VA insurance file number and your mailing address:

Veterans Administration Regional Office and Insurance Center
P.O. Box 8079
5000 Wissahickon Ave.
Philadelphia, Pa. 19101

A final word

For many of the veterans programs, there is no time limitation imposed. Eligibility for other benefits, however, does expire. Table 3, (Page 47) “Veterans Benefits Timetable,” gives several VA programs and eligibility expiration dates.

### Table 3: Veterans Benefit Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time You Have (after separation from service)</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Where to Apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 years or until Dec. 31, 1989, whichever comes first</td>
<td><strong>GI EDUCATION</strong>: The VA will pay you while you complete high school, go to college, learn a trade, either on the job or in apprenticeship program.</td>
<td>Any VA office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years</td>
<td><strong>VEAP</strong>: The VA provides financial assistance for education and training of participants under the voluntary contributory program.</td>
<td>Any VA Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No time limit</td>
<td><strong>GI LOANS</strong>: The VA will guarantee your loan for the purchase of a home, manufactured home, or condominium.</td>
<td>Any VA Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No time limit</td>
<td><strong>DISABILITY COMPENSATION</strong>: The VA pays compensation for disabilities incurred in or aggravated by military service. (Payments are made from date of separation if claim is filed within 1 year from separation.)</td>
<td>Any VA Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No time limit</td>
<td><strong>MEDICAL CARE</strong>: The VA provides hospital care covering the full range of medical services. Outpatient treatment is available for all service-connected conditions, or non-service-connected conditions in certain cases. Alcohol and drug treatment is available for veterans in need of help for drug dependency.</td>
<td>Any VA Office or hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 days</td>
<td><strong>DENTAL TREATMENT</strong>: The VA provides one time dental care for certain service-connected dental conditions. The time limit does not apply for veterans with dental disabilities resulting from combat wounds or service injuries.</td>
<td>Any VA Office or hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year (from date of notice for VA disability rating)</td>
<td><strong>GI INSURANCE</strong>: Low cost life insurance (up to $10,000) is available for veterans with service-connected disabilities. Veterans who are totally disabled may apply for a waiver of premiums on these policies.</td>
<td>Any VA Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 days (or 1 year and 120 days with evidence of insurability); or up to 1 year if totally disabled.</td>
<td><strong>VGLI</strong>: SGLI may be converted to a 5-year nonrenewable term policy. At the end of the 5-year term, VGLI may be converted to a policy with a participating insurance company.</td>
<td>Any VA Office. (for information)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No time limit</td>
<td><strong>EMPLOYMENT</strong>: Assistance is available in finding employment in private industry, in federal service and in local government.</td>
<td>Local or state employment service, U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Any VA office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited time</td>
<td><strong>UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION</strong>: The amount of benefit and payment period varies among states. Apply immediately after separation.</td>
<td>State employment service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 days</td>
<td><strong>RE-EMPLOYMENT</strong>: Apply to your former employer for employment.</td>
<td>Employer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 days</td>
<td><strong>SELECTIVE SERVICE</strong>: Male veterans born in 1960 or later years must register.</td>
<td>Any U.S. Post Office; overseas at any U.S. Embassy or consulate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HEED: safety in question

Your article on the helicopter emergency escape device (HEED) in the February 1988 issue of All Hands raises questions about how well-intentioned Marines pursued approval of their solution to the problem of helicopter drownings. They apparently felt that by taking matters into their own hands, they could simply cut through the red tape and save lives. They did help to get HEED on the street. But in so doing, they exposed themselves to potentially unsafe conditions.

The article discusses how the Marines took off-the-shelf diving equipment, mated it to a modified, high-pressure cylinder filled with breathing air after the cylinder had been used on a life raft, and tested their homemade device with volunteer pilots. Several questions come to mind: Who tested the diving equipment for proper flow and would it work when required? A malfunction after the helicopter ditches is too late. Did the cylinder modification weaken the integrity of the cylinder shell and was it suitable for the depth and pressures to which it might be exposed? Life raft charging bottles have different design criteria than those designed for breathing systems and some are not suited for the high pressures required of underwater breathing systems. What gas was in the cylinder before it was filled with carbon dioxide? It should be cleaned before charging with breathing air. Otherwise the user may pass out from the lack of oxygen. Finally, what emergency procedures were considered during the manned testing of the device (e.g. air embolism, near-drowning, etc.)? Air embolism — a potentially fatal diving disorder — is recognized by the diving medical community to be possible in as little as three and one-half feet of water. Obviously, any of the above situations could have had disastrous consequences.

Everyone agrees that the HEED is long overdue and a necessary lifesaving device. I feel that the enthusiasm the Marines showed in getting this lifesaving device to the fleet is commendable. But, we cannot overlook the fact that there is only one way to get gear like the HEED approved for use and that is the Navy way: through official channels and then only after proper test and evaluation.

—Lt.Cmdr. Rodger E. Nisley
Defense Nuclear Agency
Washington, D.C.

HEED: safety first; paper work to follow

In response to the issues raised by Lt.Cmdr. Nisley concerning the HEED article, which appeared in the February 1988 issue of All Hands, they indicate his familiarity with the risks of scuba diving. He probably was unaware that HEED was brought into the Navy by divers who were also helicopter crew members. They had first seen HEED in a diving supply shop and understood its potential for solving a problem which was completely unrelated to scuba diving (at least intentional diving).

HEED has already saved five crew members who were certain to drown, trapped in the wreckage of helicopter mishaps. The “well-intentioned Marines,” who determined to “cut through the red tape and save lives,” achieved both of their goals! The red tape they cut was part of a “business as usual” plan that would have provided HEED to the fleet sometime in 1989 — subject, of course, to the slashes of the budget knife.

After three years of testing in OPTEVFOR and at NADC Warminster, HEED was found to be OK for use, essentially as it came in the door. Faster means of evaluation could possibly have saved more lives. HEED is an NDI (non-development item), by definition, that’s “off-the-shelf” technology. When field level personnel (you know . . . the ones with the problem), using common sense and judgment, recommend an “off the shelf” fix for a known problem, we should be able to bypass much of the “system” on an initial buy, and follow through with a product improvement program if needed. The cost of failing to be “expeditious,” in areas such as HEED, is written in lives; keeping in mind that expeditious does not mean recklessly fast.

The Office of Assistant Deputy Under Secretary [Safety and Survivability], which pushed HEED into procurement well ahead of the plan of action and milestone, is actively engaged in developing an alternative procurement method for other non-development items. Sec-NavInst 4210.7A mandates an effort to do this at all levels in the Navy, with the expressed purpose of using technology in a timely way.

The best interests of the Navy and the country require continuous attention to the risks confronting our operational people on a daily basis. Lt.Cmdr. Nisley’s sincere concerns about “potentially fatal” problems associated with the development phase of HEED are immediately overridden by the simple fact that drowning is fatal — and, good or bad, HEED gives the trapped aviator a chance to avoid death. Training has been devised which addresses the embodiment problem and others, maximizing the positive potential of HEED while dealing realistically with the risks.

“The Navy way” of getting items approved for use was developed over many years; and in many, if not most cases, the Navy way is the right way to ensure that all loops are closed, all imperfections are not taken care of, all potential problems addressed. But we cannot always afford the time it takes to make everything “perfect” before we put it to use — especially in the saving of Navy lives. An 80 percent “fix” in place today is far better than zero percent during the time it takes to develop a 100 percent fix.

In the case of HEED, “Safety first; paper work to follow” proved to be a way of doing business that at least some of us can “live” with.

—Capt. Richard F. Healing, USCG
Staff Director, ADUSN(S&S)
Washington, D.C.

Reunions


- **USS Major (DE 796)**—Reunion Oct. 5-8, 1988, in San Diego. Contact Bob Young, P.O. Box 251, Gardena, Calif. 90247; telephone (213) 321-5949.

- **USS Consolation (AH 15)**—Reunion Oct. 7-9, 1988, in San Diego. Contact Robert Peckinpaugh, 480 Valley View, Barrington, Ill. 60010; telephone (312) 381-0042.


Crew members of USS Samuel B. Roberts returning from the Persian Gulf were met by their overjoyed families at an airport near Providence, R.I., June 20. Gunner’s Mate 3rd Class Randy Thomas had no trouble finding his wife Cynthia in the crowd. Photo by PH2 Dolores L. Pariato.