UNITAS: Training with Our Southern Neighbors

First it was an attack of A-37 fighter bombers. Then they defended their ships against multiple surface contacts and by dusk, boarding parties were inspecting for contraband. And this was just the first day. Eleven days later, the multinational forces successfully completed the Caribbean phase of UNITAS.

Uniting Sailors’ Service

A Sailor is a Sailor, regardless of what Navy they serve. Their uniforms may be different, and their languages and cultures are often foreign to each other, but each shares a common bond of service at sea. Such is the case with UNITAS, an annual major exercise with our Central American, South American and Caribbean allies.

The Bluejacket’s Manual Turns 100

It’s small, blue and probably has had as much to do with making the U.S. Navy a world sea power as any ship or aircraft. Millions of new recruits have gotten their first glimpse of the Navy from the pages of The Bluejacket’s Manual. And as the 23rd edition rolls off the presses this month, it still remains the book to read.
IT3 Timothy Fredrickson and GM3 William Hunter, prospective Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobility Unit (EODMU) 7 students, practice “drown proofing” at Naval Station San Diego, to learn how to deal with stressful situations in the water.

One one-thousand, Two...

Photo by PH2 Aaron Ansarov
Aircraft tow tractor drivers aboard USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) watch as an S-3B Viking from Sea Control Squadron (VS) 33 launches during night flight operations. The San Diego-based aircraft carrier and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 9 were deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.
Is Career Status Bonus/REDUX Right for You?

Q: I'm an E-6 and have been in for almost 15 years. I've heard about this Career Status Bonus (CSB) and reversion to the REDUX retirement option, and I'm trying to figure out if it's the right choice for me. It sounds like a lot of money in my pocket now—but what do I stand to lose later?

A: Electing to receive $30,000 when offered the Career Status Bonus (CSB) and reverting to the REDUX retirement plan could mean the loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars in your future retirement pay.

That's why I recommend that Sailors and their families carefully weigh all the options and long-term consequences before they decide to take this retirement plan. It could mean the difference between actually retiring or working years beyond your anticipated retirement.

My fear is that Sailors might see this retirement option as an immediate solution to short-term needs. The "instant gratification" of the thought of paying off personal debt or getting that brand new car could cost a lot more in the long run.

A good example is an E-6 with 20 years of service at age 40. By selecting CSB and REDUX at 15 years, the Sailor is penalized 10.4 percent for the cash-out, and loses $193,630 in after-tax retirement income. This is assuming the Sailor lives to an average age of 79 years old.

The $30,000 bonus is treated like any other bonus payment for taxes. For those in the 15 percent tax bracket, the payment is $25,500 after taxes. For those in a 28 percent tax bracket the payment plummets to $21,600.

Depending on pay grade and length of service at retirement, Sailors will lose not only thousands of dollars in retirement each year with REDUX, but any Cost of Living Allowance change is reduced by 1 percentage point. Serious financial planning needs to be part of the equation when making the decision to elect to receive a CSB and revert to REDUX for retirement, or turn down the bonus and stay with the High-3 retirement system.

The bottom line is check the facts! Look, plan ahead and ask questions. Command career counselors, command financial advisors, command master chiefs and fleet and family service centers are standing by to assist in one of the most important decisions of anyone's financial life.

Additional help can be found on the DOD Web site pay2000.dtic.mil, where there is a retirement pay calculator to directly compare retirement benefits between both High-3 and REDUX retirement plans.

Editor, I had just finished reading the article, “Below Decks, the Unsung Jobs” in the March edition. I was glad, for the most part, that those who work behind the scenes on the aircraft carrier are finally getting the recognition they rightfully deserve.

The media always focuses, with fascination and awe, on the air wing and gives the rest of the departments a brief second in the spotlight. To have read this article was a refreshing view of the little-mentioned team players.

I was, however, disappointed that no interview of reactor department was done. Without those Sailors laboring around the clock, there truly would be no aircraft carrier. No water for drinking, cooking, or plane washing and steam for propulsion or aircraft launching. No electricity for lighting, innumerable pieces of equipment and creature comforts.

February 2002 article, “Turning Over a New Leaf” was no different. However, I was extremely disappointed that the Navy’s own Command Financial Specialist program was never mentioned.

The Navy has had its very own Financial Education program since 1990 (which has undergone changes in the recent release of OPNAVINST 1740.5A), to include financial counselors in EVERY COMMAND. These counselors conduct education and training, referral information and financial counseling to their fellow Sailors and families. In addition, fleet and family support centers provide the same services. It is important that Sailors know that regardless of where they are deployed in the world, there is always assistance when it comes to their finances.
Navy College Programs Offers Three New College Resources for Sailors Everywhere

The Navy College Program (NCP) has added three new partnerships with colleges and universities to offer more rating-related degrees via distance learning, making earning a degree easier for Sailors everywhere.

The three new Navy College Rating Partners are: Southern New Hampshire University, Excelsior University and Central Texas College. Partner colleges offer courses in a variety of formats, such as CD-ROM, videotape, and traditional correspondence courses over the Internet.

“We must have a commitment to education and learning that will give our Sailors the tools and opportunities to excel personally and professionally,” said VADM Alfred G. Harris Jr., Chief of Naval Education and Training (CNET). “These new education partnerships provide associate and bachelor degree programs related to every Navy rating and make maximum use of military professional training and experience to fulfill degree requirements. The program also provides opportunities to take courses through distance learning so that Sailors anywhere will be able to pursue a degree. Sailors will have the option to pursue the degree of their choice. Some may want to pursue a rating-related program as the quickest route to a degree, while others may choose to pursue other degrees within the liberal arts or sciences. The NCP supports both options.”

“In the future, we hope to grow the distance learning partnership to areas of expertise that are not related to specific ratings,” said CDR Brian Looney, director, Education Programs Division. “For example, the 9902 Navy Enlisted Classifications and the Master Training Specialist qualification both carry American Council on Education recommended credit. We are going to look for schools that can leverage those skills toward a degree that earns our Sailors teaching credentials.”

Some examples of distance-learning-rated degrees that will be offered through these partnerships are an Associate of Science (A.S.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Aeronautics for all aviation ratings. In addition, a B.S. in General Engineering Technology for 22 aviation and surface submarine ratings is available, as well as an Associate of Arts (A.A.) with specialization in photography for the photographer’s order of goals. The NCP focuses on helping Sailors obtain a college degree while in the Navy, when they are ready, and at their own pace. Since it was launched in October 1999, the NCP web site has logged more than [1.5 million] hits,” said Barry Nelson, director of the Navy College Center (NCC) at Sailafe Fields, Fla.

One of the most requested items supplied by the NCP is the Sailor/Marine Corps American Council on Education Registry Transcript (SMART). The SMART is a computer-generated transcript that documents the recommended college credits a Sailor earns for military training and work experience.

“Sailors can also submit official copies of their SMART to accredited institutions of their choice. Every Sailor graduating from recruit training and evaluated military courses are given a summary of SMART,” said Nelson. As of April, NCC representatives have responded to more than 1 million requests for SMART.

To find out about education opportunities visit the nearest Navy College Office or the NCP web site at www.navycollege.navy.mil. You can also e-mail the NCC at ncc@cnet.navy.mil or call the toll-free number, 1-877-253-7122, or (DSN) 922-1828.

For more news about Navy education and training, go to the CNET NewsStand page at www.cnet.navy.mil/local/tfe/

Story by /j/O/Celina Cordonez who is assigned to the public affairs office, Chief of Naval Education and Training

Task Force EXCEL Initiative Gears Up to Reach Its Goal

The Task Force EXCEL (Excelsior through the CNET and Education and Learning) initiative is marching towards its goal of developing Sailors professionally and personally well. The program was started to help Sailors benefit and have more opportunities in the civilian sector. Task Force EXCEL is working to provide Sailors with the best training they can find, as well as helping them attain college credits and civilian certifications for their Navy training.

And by improving military training programs, Sailors will be more well-rounded, professionally and personally.

RADM Harry Ulrich, the commander of Task Force EXCEL said, "by encouraging our Sailors to be well-rounded, we benefit by having better educated and trained Sailors and that leads to better mission accomplishment.”

Ulrich added that this initiative goes hand-in-hand with the Chief of Naval Operation’s Covenant Leadership initiative. “We owe it to the Sailors who endure long working hours and deployments to provide them with the best personal and professional development we can.”

According to Ulrich, younger Sailors College are a time-consuming investment for their Navy training. Simulators are given a deep into their careers.

"Wherever we develop new tools and opportunities for younger or newer Sailors, we will also go back and look for ways to make our Sailors go deeper into their careers.

One example of this is a beta test that is coming up for the mess management specialist (MM) community. Two groups of 25 Sailors will take a 12-week course at the American Culinary Institute. Some of the students will be straight from ‘A’ School, while some some Petty officers will be sent to finish courses at the school. Technology bringing Task Force EXCEL find new avenues for training. Simulators are built for many areas of Navy training from security to anti-submarine warfare to non-nuclear engineering. All of these programs are designed to train Sailors in life-like situations they may face in their day-to-day jobs.

Ulrich said many of the programs are in development or being evaluated, but Task Force EXCEL is on the road to success.

“ar full and developed the deck plates in the way our vision has hoped for, but we’re beginning to get the policies, processes and structures all aligned and organized.”

RADM Ulrich also added that there are some things that you really need to see in action in order to learn what the information. The information acquired through the attainment of this pin covers a broad range from combat systems to deck. Everything and anything related to a ship at sea (ESWS) or the Navy’s AEW (EAWS), must be known to the individual pursuing this qualification. “I recommend walking around the ship with the Sailors on board so they can feel what it’s going to be like on the ship.”

“I am very excited about the changes and the fact that we have this set up now, it takes, on average, six months for someone to get pinned,” said Iannetta. According to Iannetta, six months is a reasonable time frame if a person is studying correctly and going the extra mile to make sure they absorb the information. The information acquired through the attainment of this pin covers a broad range from combat systems to deck. Everything and anything related to a ship at sea (ESWS) or the Navy’s AEW (EAWS), must be known to the individual pursuing this qualification. “I recommend walking around the ship with the Sailors on board so they can feel what it’s going to be like on the ship.”

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For more news about Navy education and training, go to the CNET NewsStand page at www.cnet.navy.mil/local/tfe/

Standing Above The Crowd: Challenge to Earn a Warfare Pin on “Ike”

The Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (EW/SW) and Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist (EAW/SW) pins are an essential tool for anyone. Every Sailor on board has this set up now, it takes, on average, six months for someone to get pinned,” said Iannetta. According to Iannetta, six months is a reasonable time frame if a person is studying correctly and going the extra mile to make sure they absorb the information. The information acquired through the attainment of this pin covers a broad range from combat systems to deck. Everything and anything related to a ship at sea (ESWS) or the Navy’s AEW (EAWS), must be known to the individual pursuing this qualification. “I recommend walking around the ship with the Sailors on board so they can feel what it’s going to be like on the ship.”

For more news about Navy education and training, go to the CNET NewsStand page at www.cnet.navy.mil/local/tfe/
Electronics Technician 3rd Class Jennifer Biard, of Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, was recently named Bluejacket of the Year for her work in the Air Operations Department. Biard saved the Navy $1,420 by salvaging a capacitor from an obsolete radar module and adapting it to fit her ship. "It definitely has been one to remember," said Garcia.

"If you have an E-4 trying to get his pin and an E-6 comes in who’s approaching the deadline, we need to admit the first class," said lanetta. "We’re not going to cheat the junior Sailor, though. To make sure that he’s not hurt by the move, we won’t start his time limit until he actually begins the class, instead of the date of enrollment. This is to make sure he gets the full 18 months to get his pin."

Currently, Ike only has five members who are past the time limit to obtain their pin. "Each of those individuals will have their pins on within the next 30 days," he said. "We got them in the program and we got them qualified.
And what if, after all of the signatures, studying, classes and boards, a Sailor decides he wants to go for the second pin?"

"We do nothing but encourage it," said lanetta. "A good deal of the information copies right over, so once that Sailor gets the prerequisites taken care of, they can launch right into the new material."

"In fact," he continued, "I’d say about 80 percent of those who get their first pin immediately sign up for the second one. It’s a great thing to see happen."

According to lanetta, there is no reason that any E-5 or above on board should not be actively working on their pins or already wearing their pin. To this end, Sailors on board Ike can expect getting their pins to be one of the challenges set forth by Ike’s leadership—and it should be one of the challenges they set forth for themselves. For more information on USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, go to www.news.navy.mil/local/cvn69.

Story by JO3 Benjamin Jarvela who is assigned to the public affairs office, USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69).

Bethesda Corpsman Received Patent for Physical Therapy Equipment

Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Raymond Garcia, a certified occupational therapist at National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) Bethesda, Md., received a patent for a device he designed that may help individuals with carpal tunnel syndrome avoid surgery. An injury or repetitive wrist movement usually causes carpal tunnel syndrome, characterized by weakness and pain in the hand and wrist due to pressure on the median nerve.

Garcia’s invention, the transverse carpal ligament stretch pad, thermoplastically stretches and strengthens stressed muscles, alleviating the symptoms. A six-month study completed in February at the Asbury Methodist Village outpatient rehabilitation service concluded that 91 percent of their patients who used the pad showed improvement. NNMC Bethesda, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Va., and U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa, Japan, will follow this study to see if they can further improve the results, trying out the new device as part of an additional 18-month long study. Garcia hopes this new study will further advance the device’s use and design.

"We hope to decrease the overall amount of money spent on carpal tunnel syndrome surgery by decreasing the need for surgery," said Garcia. “That’s good for the patient and the health provider.”

The pad isn’t Garcia’s first invention. Before he joined the Navy, he was a welder, and was often called upon to make new equipment to accomplish different tasks. He said that that experience helped him think of a device that would accomplish the task of stretching carpal (wrist) ligaments.

For more information on National Naval Medical Center, go to www.nnmc.med.navy.mil. For more medical news go to the Navy medicine NewsStand at www.navy.mil/local/mednews.

Story by JO2 Allen Mourer who is assigned to the public affairs office, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Md.

National Defense Service Medal Reinstated

The Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense has authorized members of the U.S. Armed Forces serving on active duty or on after Sept. 11, 2001, to be awarded the National Defense Service Medal (NDSM). All personnel who meet the active-duty eligibility criteria contained in Para. 430.8a of the Awards Manual, SECNAVINST 1650.1G (Ref. A) are authorized to wear the NDSM.

For personnel previously awarded the NDSM, Bronze Star (s) shall be worn on the medal ribbon and the ribbon bar, as prescribed in Para. 430.8b of Ref. A, to denote subsequent awards. Comands may order the NDSM through the supply system under NSN 8455-00821-3214. Service members may

Sent from the front of All Hands as a snapshot of life at sea. This issue showed readers another aspect of life underway aboard USS Mississippi (CG 60), then one of the Navy’s newest warships. We also looked at how the Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCCOL) screens new recruits for military service, and we checked out different types of individual sports, from swimming to racquetball, that are fun and help members stay physically fit.

Seven Years Ago – 1999

The cover of this issue of All Hands magazine showed Sailors on a motor whale boat as part of Surface Warfare Training Week (SWTW) 99, also known as “Sweat Week,” where members tested their surface warrior mettle in a variety of ship-related exercises. We also looked at some naval personnel who served under the U.S. Strategic Command and helped maintain the nation’s “ultimate insurance policy,” strategic deterrence. And we went to sea with a Sailor on his personal boat, a 40-foot ocean-cruising yacht he constructed by himself out of steel.

32 Years Ago — 1979

A highline transfer made the cover of this issue of All Hands magazine. Inside was a story about how this method of transfer is practical, especially between smaller vessels when helicopters aren’t available. We took readers to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., and showed them what it takes to be a midshipman. We also looked at some modern-day baby ironclads (by 1970 standardss); the Navy’s Assault Support Patrol Boats of Vietnam. These modern-day successors to the Civil War-era Monitor and Merrimack literally bristled with firepower; two 20mm cannons, two .50-caliber machine guns, an M-60 machine gun, two additional grenade launchers, and an 8mm mortor.

23 Years Ago — 1986

A lone Sailor was featured on the front of All Hands as a snapshot of life at sea. This issue showed readers another aspect of life underway aboard USS Mississippi (CG 60), then one of the Navy’s newest warships. We also looked at how the Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCCOL) screens new recruits for military service, and we checked out different types of individual sports, from swimming to racquetball, that are fun and help members stay physically fit.
Sailors to have their vision eye surgery.

NMCP Helps Sailors

Sailors to have their vision eye surgery. "We have a message for the fleet letting them know that in an effort to support them, we wanted to start a ship-of-the-month program," she said. "With that, we pick a ship each month and give them 30 appointment time slots, which is roughly one-third of the total (surprises) we do."

USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 77) Sailors to have their vision improved with refractive surgery eye surgery. "While they were out, they were contacted by their medical department asking how their Sailors could go about getting refractive surgery," said Mary Mitchell, clinic manager and surgical coordinator of Portsmouth's refractive surgery program. "Seeing this as an opportunity to support and help the fleet, we offered to them a set number of surgery time slots. It was something we thought we could do to help the fleet."

This is not the first time the clinic has aided the fleet by offering the vision-correcting surgery to Sailors aboard ships. "Last summer, we sent a message to the fleet letting them know that in an effort to support them, we wanted to start a ship-of-the-month program," she said. "With that, we pick a ship each month and give them 30 appointment time slots, which is roughly one-third of the total (surprises) we do."

The response has been so terrific and the clinic enjoyed helping the ship's crews so much that the ship-of-the-month program has been expanded to two-ships-of-the-month. The clinic leaves scheduling and selection of who gets screened for the surgery up to the ships. "We let the ship know we have 30 slots available for them and would like to see a [variety] of Sailors from different shipboard occupational fields come in," said Mitchell. "We get a good mix of different kinds of people at different ranks doing different kinds of jobs."
The business of war is not a 9 to 5 operation.
In the first minutes of the new year, crewmembers of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 147 find themselves preparing an F/A-18 Hornet for a night launch.

Photo by PH1 Craig McClure

AEAN Eddy Swagger from Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 147 chains down an F/A-18 Hornet take-off in the hangar bay.

Photo by PH2 Johnny Bivera

AA Emilio Agurcia keeps watch over one of three hangar bays in USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74). If a fire or other emergency should happen in the hangar, Agurcia would activate firefighting sprinklers and close the massive doors that separate the bays, to contain the emergency.

Photo by PH1 Craig McClure

While a naval aircrewman checks the cargo and passenger weight of the C-2A Greyhound carrier-on-board delivery (COD) aircraft, first-time Sailors bound for USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) anxiously wait for their flight to take off.

Photo by PH1 James Farrally
A Secret is a Weapon and a Friend

Night Shift

Members of HN-1510/804 load cargo and mail packages in a C-2A Greyhound carrier on-board delivery (COD) aircraft bound for USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71).

The flight deck crash crane, “Tilly,” raises an S-3B Viking of Sea Control Squadron (VS) 32 on USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71). The Viking’s landing gear failed upon its landing on the flight deck. No personnel were injured.


Marine Cpl. Phillip Tomaszewski from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314 checks an access panel to ensure it’s properly secured after completing a maintenance check on an F/A-18 Hornet.

Photo by PH2 James Farrally
A Sailor is a Sailor, regardless of what Navy they serve. Their uniforms may be different, and their languages and cultures are often foreign to each other. But each shares a common bond of service at sea. So, when sailors from other countries come together to exercise their talents, the motivation to unite comes easy. Overcoming the technicalities and cultural differences is sometimes a little more difficult, but it’s nothing that a little salt and a similar sea story can’t solve.

Such is the case with UNITAS, a major annual exercise with our Central American, South American and Caribbean allies. Latin for “unity,” UNITAS brings sailors from many nations together for the common good of defending each other’s national interests, as well as deterring drug trafficking and fighting the war against terrorism.

Many factors come into play during a multi-national exercise of this magnitude. Much of the time, it’s Sailors like Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Adam Spicer, on his third UNITAS, who have the opportunity to keep communication running constant and the exercise ongoing. The results are good relations with our counterparts and a successful mission overall.

“There are a lot of differences and hurdles we must overcome to make this run smoothly,” said Spicer. “Because this is with the South American countries, there are the obvious language barriers, different technologies, as well as ships that are used to doing things one way having to learn how to do them the other ship’s way so everyone can work together.”

It’s easy to recognize the many differences among the various countries’ navies, but unless you have the opportunity to serve aboard one of these foreign vessels, the similarities aren’t so obvious.

“This exercise shows me that you need to have an open mind and not get stuck in a certain thought where everything has to be done the way you do it,” said Spicer. “That’s what’s so good about UNITAS. It takes all this different equipment and languages and brings us all together to where we have to communicate. We have to gain a better understanding of what the other ships and other sailors do, so you can gain a better respect for what they do for their navy and for their country.”

Photos by J01 Preston Keres

When I served on the Brazilian ship, the first thing they wanted to know was your rank, and when they found out, that’s how you were treated. As an E-5, I was treated pretty well, especially by anyone who ranked below me. The officers were a little standoffish though. What was a shock to me was when they found out I was an E-5 on their ship. Initially they felt I wasn’t that important, but when they got the chance to come on our ship and actually see what we do in our Navy at this level, their respect changed a lot. They’re not used to seeing E-5s and E-4s with the amount of responsibility the U.S. Navy gives us.”

All Hands took a look at UNITAS shipmates united in sea service.

Adam Spicer
Country: United States of America
Hometown: Jackson, Mississippi
Age: 24
Ship: USS Yorktown (CG 48)
Years in Service: 3.5
Department: Communications
Rank: Petty Officer 2nd Class

UNITING SAILORS’ SERVICE

When I served on the Brazilian ship, the first thing they wanted to know was your rank, and when they found out, that's how you were treated. As an E-5, I was treated pretty well, especially by anyone who ranked below me. The officers were a little standoffish though. What was a shock to me was when they found out I was an E-5 on their ship. Initially they felt I wasn't that important, but when they got the chance to come on our ship and actually see what we do in our Navy at this level, their respect changed a lot. They're not used to seeing E-5s and E-4s with the amount of responsibility the U.S. Navy gives us.
Since I was a little boy, I've always wanted to be a sailor. I've wanted to protect my country through the navy. I am Colombian and want to serve my country. I think UNITAS is a great opportunity to encourage better communications between us and the Americans, as well as other countries’ navies, such as Mexico and Honduras. This exercise will allow for more control of the coast, because there is a lot of drug trafficking. And of course, stopping drug trafficking is our main concern.

Country: Columbia
Hometown: Arjona, Columbia
Age: 29
Ship: ARC Almirante Padilla (CM 51)
Years in Service: 10
Department: Deck
Rank: Su Official Segundo (Petty Officer 2nd Class)
UNITING SAILORS’ SERVICE

**Jose H. Astorga**

Country: Mexico  
Hometown: Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico  
Age: 22  
Ship: Abasolo (ARM 212)  
Years in Service: 5  
Department: Supply  
Rank: Marinero (Seaman)

“**This has been the farthest at sea that I have ever been. The Mexican navy is more just to protect the coast of Mexico. Only for an operation like this that we come out this far. I think that the operation is important because I think it’s important for all these navies to get more familiar with each other, so in case we had to work together in the future, things would go smoother. I think what separates us from the navies is our work ethic. I think we have more discipline, willing to do more labor, at least that is what I think. I am proud to be part of the Mexican navy. I thought it was funny when the Americans came through the food line and asked for hamburgers and hot dogs. I would tell them that we are in a Mexican ship and only serve Mexican food. Then, they would say that this isn’t the same Mexican food we eat in United States, and I would say you are right, for this is real Mexican food. After that they were really excited when it came time to eat, for I think they liked our food, but they couldn’t handle our hot sauce.**”

**Eluberto Garcia Heredio**

Country: Dominican Republic  
Hometown: Haina, Dominican Republic  
Age: 23  
Ship: Almirante Didiez (C 457)  
Years in Service: 6  
Department: Engineering  
Rank: Sagto (Petty Officer 3rd Class)

“**This was great training for us to have worked together with the Americans, especially your Coast Guard. We have learned so much from them, like how to fight fires on board ship more effectively, and how deal with mishaps and stay in control in case of a disaster or something. I think that this operation is very important, because being united is great thing. I think this is how it should be, for we are somewhat neighbors, and maybe you will need our help. I am just glad that we are able to work well together; not only the United States, but with all these different countries as well. I think the Americans on board were happy to be here. They were always smiling and looking like they were having fun; very upbeat. They loved our food and always ate a lot; it seemed that they were always hungry.**”
What UNITAS has shown, is that it proves that we are capable to work effectively with the United States. When we actually performed the fuel transfer, that was a big accomplishment for us. It just proved that this ship will be able to serve in a wider spectrum towards unity and the possibility to conduct real missions with United States in the future.

What benefited me the most about interacting with the Americans on board the ship was learning their customs and how they operated. It pleased me on how their rank system works, on where it is possible for a seaman to be an officer; that was gratifying to hear. And I feel like I made some new friends.

Being my first time involved in this [exercise] UNITAS, it was the biggest thing I was ever a part of. Witnessing all this navies from all this different countries working together, learning from each other, seeing how it effects each one’s way of conducting business, was truly an impressive thing to watch. What impressed me the most, was that even with the differences between the countries and language barriers, different in ways of communication, even differences in technology, we still manage to organize so well.
First they fended off an attack of A-37 fighter-bombers. Next they fired machine guns and launched grenades, defending their ships against multiple surface contacts. Then at dusk, boarding parties armed with shotguns and M-16 rifles inspected several ships in search of contraband. This was just a day’s work for a multinational task force of warships from Mexico, the Netherlands, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Colombia and the United States.

After 12 days of naval exercises in the Caribbean, the ships and aircraft arrived at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, in early March after successfully completing the Caribbean Phase of UNITAS.
Today’s new exercise, has been conducted since 1959, and is the largest annual field exercise south of the U.S. border. It’s about multinational coalition building, and the defense of the Americas. The social events have not gone entirely away, but the training is more intense, challenging and relevant than ever before. Specifically, UNITAS focuses on advanced multinational training with the armed forces in Latin America so the U.S. Navy can effectively conduct joint operations in the region.

The 2002 Caribbean phase of UNITAS introduced first-time participation of naval units from Mexico and the Dominican Republic. The Mexican navy sent the Knox-class frigate Abasolo (ARM 212) (ex-USS Marvin Shields (FF 1066)) and the Dominican Republic sent the buoy tender Almirante Didiez (C 457). In addition, the Venezuelan replenishment ship Cuidad Bolivar (T 81) made a world premier during the Caribbean phase. LT Jose Ramon Bautista Alatorre, communications officer on board Abasolo said, “UNITAS is new for the Mexican navy and it is the first step to an increased involvement in operations with the United States Navy and ships from other nations in the Caribbean.”

The UNITAS task group of five U.S. ships is under the command of RADM Kevin Green, Commander, United States Naval Forces Southern Command, headquartered at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico. Green, the Naval Component Commander to U.S. Southern Command, assumed command of the UNITAS exercise in the summer of 2000, and effectively shifted the mission and purpose of the exercise to concentrate on realistic multinational training operations based on real world scenarios.

“UNITAS offers comprehensive and realistic training opportunities which have proven to be successful in preparing naval and Marine Corps forces to effectively respond to world situations and crises as a multinational team,” Green said.

In addition to changing the face of UNITAS, Green also shifted the focus of the exercise from separate, bilateral exercises with individual nations, to the current series of three multinational phases. Each phase ranges from two to four weeks in length. The Caribbean Phase is typically conducted in early spring, followed by the Pacific phase in June and the Atlantic phase in November. A bilateral Amphibious phase is also conducted for several months each summer with naval and Marine Corps forces throughout Central and South America.

“Now, more than ever, a strong relationship with our American neighbors and aggressive training is essential to enable regional security and cooperation,” Green said.

None of this is lost on U.S. Sailors who participated in the exercise. Petty Officer 1st Class Marcelino Villero on board USS Doyle (FFG 39) stated that the presence of a multinational coalition of naval and Marine Corps forces in the Americas is a positive statement of the cooperative commitment to security in the region. “It also sends a clear message to our enemies not to do anything that they would seriously
regret later,” he said.

The UNITAS 43-02 Caribbean phase flagship is the Aegis guided missile cruiser USS Yorktown (CG 48), homeported in Pascagoula, Miss., with Commander, Destroyer Squadron (CDS) 6, RADM Bill Marlowe, embarked. In addition, the Mayport, Fla.-based Guided Missile Frigate USS Doyle (FFG 39); the Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Pittsburgh (SSN 720) based in Groton, Conn.; the Coast Guard cutter USCGC Thetis (WMEC 910) homeported in Key West, Fla.; and the auxiliary ship USNS Prevail (T-AGOS 8) homeported in Little Creek, Va., participated in the Caribbean phase of UNITAS. U.S. Navy P-3C Orion patrol aircraft from Patrol Squadron (VP) 11, along with SH-60 Seahawk helicopters from Mayport, Fla., embarked in Yorktown and Doyle provided air support to the UNITAS task group.

The multinational task force of warships and aircraft began the UNITAS exercise off the coast of Colombia on March 24, 2002, conducting traditional at sea operations and live-fire gunnery and missile drills using remote controlled aerial target drones and unmanned floating targets. During one of the live-fire exercises, the ships made several gunnery approaches on a floating target called a ‘killer tomato,’ which is a bright red inflatable target used for small arms training.

“The killer tomato lets us practice using .50 and .60 caliber machine guns as well as M-14 rifles to protect our ship from small boats like the one that hit USS Cole (DDG 67),” said Fire Controlman 2nd Class William Tominson, on board Yorktown.

As part of the ongoing training schedule, task group ships conducted coordinated tactical formation operations on the high seas, allowing the surface combatants to execute advanced ship handling drills in a confined space.

The Caribbean phase of UNITAS finished with a complex war game involving all participating ships and aircraft in a realistic, full scale naval combat exercise. The 24-hour ‘freeplay’ exercise required each of the UNITAS units to split into two different task groups, each with a particular mission to accomplish.

“The idea is to provide a challenging, no-notice scenario that allows both sides to practice skills across all warfare areas, from boarding operations and rescue missions, to air defense and anti-submarine operations,” Lt Joe Ross, deployed intelligence officer for U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command explained.

Ross added that during engagements, ships went to general quarters and exercised internal damage control procedures. “This was not just for the watch standers on the bridge, or in the Combat Information Center; all hands had to fight the ship.”

Today’s UNITAS is high-tech and realistic, and is now more significant than ever in building a strong coalition in the Americas. Equally important, UNITAS reinforces the multinational commitment to security and stability in this dynamic region of the world.

Barker is a public affairs officer with U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command

Photo by PHN Antoine Themistocleous
It’s small, blue and probably has had as much to do with making the U.S. Navy a world sea power as any ship or aircraft.

It’s The Bluejacket’s Manual, and this year, it celebrates its 100th birthday. Millions of new recruits, spanning six wars and countless operations, have gotten their first glimpse of the Navy by studying the pages of this classic reference book.

And like an old fighting ship, it’s had a few overhauls along the way. Through 23 formal editions, and many smaller revisions, the book has kept pace with those topics that any “Man-o-Warman,” as Sailors were called at the turn of the 20th century, needs to know to function as a member of a ship’s crew.

Editor’s Note: The placement of the apostrophe in The Bluejacket’s Manual has changed a number of times during the last 100 years. For consistency all of our references will reflect the title as published June 2002, The Bluejacket’s Manual.
Bluejacket’s Manual Turns 100

By JO1 Mark Faram

The Bluejacket’s Manual has stood the test of time precisely because of its sound advice and because of a steady stream of new editions that keep it fresh and up-to-date. While the passages that follow may sound a little odd to modern ears, much of the advice is as sound as it was when it first appeared.

Leadership Hints for Petty Officers — The Bluejacket’s Manual, 1902

Petty officers are men rated for their superior knowledge and for their ability in handling men. They are selected for the purpose of assisting the officers of the ship to promote its efficiency in every way.

A petty officer is not a man who is paid a larger salary because he is expected to perform extra manual labor. He is paid for his knowledge and his ability to superintend and direct the work of those placed under him. He should be able to correctly and intelligently instruct men of lower ratings in all their duties. He should at all times correct laborly and untidy habits of other members of the crew.

Your Naval Career — The Bluejacket’s Manual, 1940

You are young and your future is before you. Many of you have not thought seriously of your future. You will now have 12 weeks of training, and at the end of that time you will be sent to various ships for service in our Navy. In every case, this training is for the sole purpose of making you a useful man, a trained man and a leader of men.

Keep this always in mind: You are being trained to be a future leader of men. The hardest workers among you may become chief petty officers. The rest of you will be petty officers, warrant officers and commissioned officers. The rest of you will only get as far as your work, study and efforts entitle you to go.

Military Requirements — The Bluejacket’s Manual, 1973

No man can be a good leader without having some willing followers. Recruits in the Navy are, by the nature of things, expected to be good followers, but they should learn the qualities of leadership in order to assume such responsibilities in the
been published for 100 years, its roots go back even farther. During the Civil War, LCDR Stephen B. Luce was teaching at the U.S. Naval Academy, which had been moved during the war to Newport, R.I. He’d taken a midshipman’s cruise to England and France and while there, observed how many Sailors were unable to read. Twenty years later, the apprenticeship program was being touted as a success, but for the officers who were in charge of the training, problems still existed. The Navy was beginning to enlist more “landsmen” as well as apprentices, and it became apparent that the present methods of training were becoming obsolete. In 1891, ENS A.P. Niblack was recognized by the U.S. Naval Institute for writing the outstanding essay of the year on “The Enlistment, Training and Organization of Crews for our New Ships.” In it, he laments at the time that there was no “uniformity of drills and routines,” between ships. A solution to this problem, he wrote, was “hand-books on different drills, accessible to officers and men alike, and a series of short and condensed text books outlining the duties of petty officers, and what they should be required to know to qualify in the ratings they hold.” Rising to the rank of rear admiral during World War I, Niblack would remain an advocate of Sailors his entire career. For example, it was Niblack who started the practice of granting chief petty officers the same liberty rights as officers. But it was a contemporary of his, LT Ridley McLean, who over a decade later, brought Niblack’s vision to paper with the first issue of The Bluejacket’s Manual in 1902, when 3,000 copies were printed. In fact, 1902 saw an explosion of texts dedicated to the enlisted Sailor. Along with The Bluejacket’s Manual, another, smaller text, known as the Recruit’s Handy Book was produced. A more advanced book, The Petty Officer’s Drill Book also hit the fleet that same year. Sized to fit in a Sailor’s pocket, the Handy Book was the first text to catch the eye of the Navy’s leadership. On November 17th of that year, the Navy Department issued General Order 114, requiring every recruit be issued a copy of the book and know its content. Both The Bluejacket’s Manual and the Handy Book talked about pay, promotion, discipline and shipboard routine, but The Bluejacket’s Manual also went into depth on small arms, infantry drill and the details of sails and sailing under wind power. Another feature of the early editions was discussions of ratings and the required knowledge of petty officers and chiefs of each of the Navy’s main ratings at the time. By World War I, The Bluejacket’s Manual was issued alongside the Handy Book to every recruit entering boot camp. Discipline Discipline and Duty — The Bluejacket’s Manual, 1917 This “little talk” is put in the very beginning of the book because it refers to the very first thing you should learn when you come in the service. It tells you of the necessity for obedience and good behavior; what will happen to you if you violate the rules, as well as the rewards the service offers in case you pay strict attention to duty and obey the regulations. The Navy is a profession in which many people spend their entire lives. There is much work to be done, and success in battle — the primary aim in every military organization — necessitates the implicit obedience to orders. Discipline is the habit of obedience by which a man obeys an order naturally and without question, without stopping to consider whether he wants to obey it or not. He must learn to obey simply because the order comes from higher authority. Discipline, therefore, is based upon a respect for authority; it means that you must hold higher in your esteem than anything else, the authority that is placed over you.

Discipline and Duty — The Bluejacket’s Manual, 1940 Discipline does not mean curtailed liberties; restrictions of personal conduct and forced obedience to all sorts of rules and regulations. It means, rather, self-control, a cheerful obedience to necessary laws and regulations, and a square deal to your fellow man. Through discipline, you wield a strong, unified power that means success in emergencies. You must learn discipline, as you would learn a trade. While it is often necessary to have recourse to punishment for those who deliberately violate orders, it must not be supposed that discipline and punishment go hand in hand. Discipline is obtained by a constant attention to the minor detail of life on board ship.

The Bluejacket’s Manual Turns 100

As: “The commanding officer shall encourage men to engage in athletics, fencing, boxing, boating and similar sports and exercises. Gymnastic outfits will be furnished by the department to vessels requesting them.”

Q: What is customary in regard to the arrangement of the watches of men engaged in athletics?

A: The watches should be so arranged that no hardship shall be worked on the men engaging in athletics, or upon other watch standers, by requiring those who participate in athletics at such times as their watches interfere with athletic preparation or with contests.

Physical Fitness, Swimming and Lifesaving — The Bluejacket’s Manual, 1944

Navy men must be agile, strong and have great endurance. The physical fitness program will prepare you to meet the most difficult and challenging physical duties.

It is one thing to get into condition and another thing to keep in shape. There are emergencies in war that make it necessary for you to take personal responsibility for keeping in good shape.

Every man should have from 20 minutes to an hour of vigorous exercise daily. Remember that the man in good condition feels better, looks better, is stronger and is better able to carry out his duties than a man in indifferent shape.


Exercise invigorates and stimulates the whole body. Mild exercise, for a few minutes every day, is important for efficiency in your naval job. If an exercise area is not available, or an exercise period is not provided in the daily routine, work your own system of conditioning exercises and follow them every day.

These should include warming up exercises in various positions: standing, kneeling, sitting and lying prone. Follow with limbering exercises: body stretching, twisting, bending knee bending and running in place. Include deep breathing exercises.

Personal Hygiene — The Bluejacket’s Manual, 1940

So much sickness and suffering is caused by ignorance of the simplest matters pertaining to personal hygiene and it is so easy to learn the fundamental rules necessary to preserve health.

Clothes must be kept clean, and only clean clothes may be worn after working hours or drills. Baths must be taken frequently, especially after strenuous work or drills and clean underwear put on. The best type of bath is the shower, as it is the easiest to learn the fundamental rules necessary to preserve health.

Foram is a photojournalist assigned to Naval Media Center Reserve Detachment

So great was the demand for both books, that the U.S. Naval Institute, which had been producing and printing both volumes with the help of the Navy’s Bureau of Navigation, released its copyright. This allowed the Navy to get the volume printed by various printers, meeting the demands of an enlisted force that expanded from 25,000 in 1902, to more than 200,000 by the end of the war.

“Thanks are due to the U.S. Naval Institute, Annapolis, Maryland, for their courtesy in waiving their copyright to the title, text and plates of the Bluejacket’s Manual,” Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels wrote in the front of the book, starting with the 1913 issue.

It was Daniels who made the manual a permanent part of the Navy’s educational experience when he issued General Order 63 in December 1913, requiring every non-rated Sailor to get two hours of instruction in the “basics every seaman should know;” during their first two years in the Navy. The Bluejacket’s Manual has been the primary text for teaching young Sailors ever since.

The Bluejacket’s Manuals line the shelves of the Navy Library at the Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C. Navy Yard. The library’s collection, along with that of the Nimitz Library at the Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., are two of the most complete.

The responsibility for updating the manual became that of the enlisted division of the Navy’s Bureau of Navigation, the predecessor to the Bureau of Personnel, and now the Navy Personnel Command. Each year until 1918, the book was revised. After the war, it wasn’t revised again until 1923, and then not again until 15 years later. The depression, and a lack of funds, was partly to blame for the delay in updating it. Not before or since have there been such long gaps in updating the manual.

In 1938, the Naval Institute again took over responsibility for revising the book, and has done it ever since. Another change came in the title as the singular “Bluejacket’s” was replaced with the plural “Bluejackets.” During the 1920s, the Recruit’s Handy Book disappeared and The Bluejacket’s Manual became the enlisted Sailors’ one and only general reference book.

But for Sailors, there was talk of adding more content to the manual and splitting it into two volumes: one for recruits and non-rates, and “Volume II” for petty officers and chiefs. But in the end, it was realized that the manual should stay what it is today, a basic reference for Sailors on the major topics they need to know in their Navy careers.

Cutler noted that there are some similarities between the 1962 and the 2002 editions. Military drill and discipline, as well as seamanship are still part of the book. “That’s always in there and should always be in there, but it doesn’t evolve some,” Cutler said. “Every Sailor needs to know how to march and handle a line.”

But much of the earlier books worked to teach Sailors their responsibility to get back from liberty on time and the consequences of “overstaying your leave,” the new manual discusses topics of sexual harassment, hazing and personal relations as well.

But Cutler didn’t stop there. “For this edition, I added a section on public relations,” he said. “Every Sailor is responsible for public relations. Each time you put on the uniform, you are representing the U. S. Navy.”

During the last 100 years, The Bluejacket’s Manual has reflected a traditional, yet current, image of the sea service that has stood the test of time. The Pre-Commissioning Unit Virginia, a new nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, is named in honor of the late President John F. Kennedy, a decorated Navy Reserve lieutenant and World War II veteran.

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It's all about the power, and Electrician's Mate and Class (SW) Michael Cardenas has it. His underway watchstation aboard USS La Salle (AGF 3) is the electrical switchboard in the number one main machinery room. He stands EMOW (Electrician's Mate of the Watch) where he monitors one of the switchboards that distributes power created by the ship's standard turbine generators throughout the 6th Fleet flagship.

Four hundred and fifty volts of juice come out the end and is channeled all over the ship, like telephone signals are channeled to people's phones. Even though his watch on the switchboard is a routine one, he's found that he becomes the center of attention real quick if the power goes out. "The CO on down will want to know what's up," he said. "Particularly on our ship, with it being a flagship and there's an admiral aboard."

Until Cardenas joined the Navy and became an electrician, he knew electricity was some mysterious, unknown energy source — just something invisible that was always there when you flipped a switch. "You need respect in dealing with electricity. It can kill you," he said. "You can't feel its effects until it's too late."

"On my last ship, a second class got shocked at the power panel," Cardenas recounted. "I saw the effects; pale skin, smokey fingertips. That made it very real for me. From that point on, it was more than just what I learned in school. It really opened my eyes to the dangers of electric shock."

Most crewmembers don't appreciate the kind of danger that electrician's mates put themselves in during this watch, just to make sure power goes where it needs to so the lights go on. "One thing about standing EMOW on the switchboard is that, just like my chief said, 'you know you're doing your job when people take you for granted,'" Cardenas observed.

No one has to worry when Cardenas is on watch. He's not corrupted by power. He just goes with the flow.
**Eye on the Fleet**

*Eye on the Fleet* is a monthly photo feature sponsored by the Chief of Information Navy Visual News Service. We are looking for high impact, quality photography from Sailors in the fleet to showcase the American Sailor in action.

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**Water Warriors**

Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAV) assigned to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) enter USS Fort McHenry’s (LSD 43) well deck. The AAVs, embarked from USS Juneau (LPD 10), are conducting well deck training for the Sailors and Marines of both ships during Blue-Green Workups, a semi-annual amphibious integration training period between the USS Essex (LHD 2) Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and the embarked 31st MEU.

Photo by JO3 Wes Eplen

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**Freedom FRIES**

U.S. Navy SEALs train members of the Republic of the Philippine’s Naval Special Warfare Unit on Fast Rope Infiltration and Exfiltration System (FRIES) concepts. FRIES is a method of dropping off and picking up special operations groups from a variety of field environments. U.S. and Philippine forces are training together in an “advise and assist” mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Photo by PH2(AW) Andrew Meyers

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**Net Check**

During a training scenario on the flight deck of USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67), an aircraft handling officer inspects an aircraft recovery net used to stop aircraft making distressed carrier landings.

Photo by PH2 Travis Anderson

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**Shipboard Security**

A Marine from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit maintains security of a passageway on board USS Essex (LHD 2), as other members of the platoon continue searching the ship during close-quarters training.

Photo by Lance Cpl. Kenji Szczepanski

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**Night Fight**

Two Navy firefighters train to contain a blaze during a night fire exercise at the NAS Whidbey Island Aviation Firefighting Training School. All Sailors receive basic firefighting instruction at recruit training. Additional shipboard and aviation damage control firefighting is provided throughout an individual's career.

Photo by PH2(AW) Mike Larson

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**To be considered**, forward your high resolution (5”x7” at 300 dpi) images with full credit and cutline information, including full name, rank and duty station. Name all identifiable people within the photo and include important information about what is happening, where the photo was taken and the date. Commands with digital photo capability can send attached .jpg files to: navynewsphoto@hq.navy.mil

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June 6, 1942

Japanese heavy cruiser Mikuma, photographed from a USS Enterprise (CV 6) SBD aircraft during the afternoon, after she had been bombed by planes from Enterprise and USS Hornet (CV 8). Note her shattered midships structure, torpedo dangling from the after port side tubes and wreckage atop her No. 4 eight-inch gun turret.

June 4, 1942

USS Yorktown (CV 5) is abandoned by her crew after she was hit by two Japanese Type 91 aerial torpedoes. USS Balch (DD 363) is standing by at right. An oil slick surrounds the damaged carrier as an inflatable life raft deploys off her stern.

June 7, 1942

ENS George H. Gay at Pearl Harbor Naval Hospital, with a nurse and a copy of the “Honolulu Star-Bulletin” newspaper featuring accounts of the Battle of Midway. He was the only survivor of the June 4, 1942 Torpedo Squadron (VT) 8 TBD torpedo plane attack on the Japanese carrier force. Gay’s book, “Sole Survivor,” indicates that the date of this photograph is probably June 7, 1942, following an operation to repair his injured left hand and a meeting with ADM Chester W. Nimitz.

June 4, 1942

The scene on board USS Yorktown (CV 5), shortly after she was hit by three Japanese bombs. The dense smoke is from fires in her uptakes, caused by a bomb that punctured them and knocked out her boilers.

June 7, 1942

At about noon, combat air patrol intercepted an incoming Japanese dive bomber raid on USS Yorktown (CV 5). Most of the Japanese planes were shot down by F4 Wildcat fighters, but several survivors dropped bombs on or near Yorktown.

Eye on History

Eye on History is a monthly photo feature sponsored by the Naval Historical Center. For more photos pertaining to naval history, go to www.history.navy.mil.

DO YOU KNOW WHO’S LISTENING?

U.S. Navy Photos Courtesy of the Naval Historical Center.
Does Your Flag Still Wave?

Story by JOCS(AW) Dave Desilets

If it can be said that something good came of 9/11, it would have to be the renewed sense of national unity and patriotism that overwhelmed our country in the midst of its mourning and response. A powerful symbol of our singular stand during the aftermath was the United States Flag.

And as we recovered and responded, our national ensign was everywhere. It was erected amid the World Trade Center rubble by heroic New York City fire fighters, draped over the Pentagon by proud volunteers, signed by its free people as a petition for democracy and independence and later flown above a newly freed Afghanistan. It was stretched across ball fields, and in its most solemn duty, our flag covered bodies and coffins. It was cried upon, sung to, prayed under and embraced as the one common emblem this melting pot of a country—and of a world—could hold on to in a uniting gesture of understanding and care.

In a time of tragedy, our flag has been a bright beacon of hope and fortitude. Much like in the War of 1812, when rockets glared red in the perilous night sky over Baltimore harbor, and Francis Scott Key saw the next morning that our Star Spangled Banner was still there. The Stars and Stripes has valiantly carried our nation in its majestic ripple during the months following terror on its soil.

Since September 11th, there have been many flag days. Every day it has flown, it has made the same strong statement of "united we stand" in a free and democratic country for which it tirelessly represents. And as time goes by, as we resume life's routine, as we fight a very long and hard battle against the evil of this world, one might ask if our citizens would tire of it?

In this particular war, one could argue that our flag has never been more visible as a symbol of pride and freedom. Then again, ever since its early stripes and circle of stars, "Old Glory" has rallied its citizens through battles and victories, hardships and celebrations.

Because of its importance and national service, Flag Day, June 14th, was proclaimed by President Woodrow Wilson in 1916, and later signed by President Harry S. Truman as an Act of Congress in 1949. But the idea of properly recognizing our flag dates back to 1885, when a Wisconsin schoolteacher gathered students to celebrate a Flag Birthday. Through the following years of local commemorations, a national day of recognition was spawned. In 1996, then-President Bill Clinton expanded Flag Day to a week.

Prior to official declarations in a 1914 Flag Day address, then-Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane summed up our national banner's role in a simple inspiration, "I am what you make me; nothing more. I swing before your eyes as a bright gleam of color, a symbol of yourself."

In times like these, it is said that we should not grow complacent in the matters of our country's business and welfare. Nor should our unity wane. Keeping the nation and the civilized world safe from terror may be a difficult and daunting task, but maintaining our united stand could be simply accomplished by waving America's flag.

Forever may it wave.

Desilets is managing editor of All Hands

The Final Word
HM1(FMF) Tonya Carlson:

She’s Your Detailer... Your Advocate

And her focus is on your future.

PROJECT SAIL

For more information on Sailor Advocacy through Interactive Leadership (SAIL), go to “Squawk Box” at www.staynavy.navy.mil