Sea Lion Security
SWIDS Deployed in the Persian Gulf

A STRONG Foundation
Seabees Build Navy Operations from the Ground Up
34 Empowering Palau

These Sailors from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74, Gulfport, Miss., have come a long way to provide community construction, apprentice training, medical assistance and community relations programs to the people of Palau.

18 If You Build It They Will Come

With more than 300,000 U.S. and coalition forces in the Central Command (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility, the Seabees assigned to CENTCOM have been busy. Building roads, camps, bridges and aircraft pads, these "Can Do" Sailors are ready to complete any mission thrown at them.

14 Shiloh Shooters

With eyes on their consoles and their fingers on the trigger, Shiloh’s Tomahawk Strike Team defends America’s interests.

26 Running in the Shadows

Highly trained and highly motivated, this team of California sea lions and their trainers, from Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR), San Diego’s Shallow Water Intruder Detection System (SWIDS) program are deployed to the Central Command Area of Responsibility (CENTCOM AOR) as underwater sentries to protect ships from terrorists.
Jubilant Iraqis cheer as a U.S. Army soldier maintains order at a humanitarian aid compound in the city of Najaf. The U.S. military is working with international relief organizations to help provide food and medicine for the Iraqi people in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“Thumbs Up”
Photo by PH1(SW) Arlo Abrahamson

Jubilant Iraqis cheer as a U.S. Army soldier maintains order at a humanitarian aid compound in the city of Najaf. The U.S. military is working with international relief organizations to help provide food and medicine for the Iraqi people in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.
Fleet Hospital (FH) 3 staff members grab a quick break just outside the operating room during a lull between patients. Personnel of FH-3, the Navy's first Expeditionary Medical Facility to be deployed in a combat zone, conducted surgical procedures on more than 120 coalition forces, displaced citizens and Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW) during their first week in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Operation Iraqi Freedom is the multi-national coalition effort to liberate the Iraqi people, eliminate Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction and end the regime of Saddam Hussein.

Rest for the Weary
Photo by JOC Al Bloom
Speaking with Sailors

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

These Questions are from a Recent MCPON All Hands Call on NAS Fallon, Nev.

Q: As a third class petty officer, what can I do now to begin preparing to make chief? A: That’s a great question, and I love hearing from a junior petty officer! It is never too early to begin mapping out and planning your career path. And that’s exactly what “Task Force Excel” is going to enable all Sailors to do. We’ve heard a lot about Task Force Excel, and the role it plays in our revolution in training. All Sailors will be given a clear career roadmap, outlining how they progress from seaman to master chief, or from ensign to admiral. The best way to ensure your advancement success is to always look toward the next step in your career and your professional development.

Another question I’m often asked is, “What type of educational opportunities and training does the Navy offer?” A: We used to count our attrition numbers — those who leave the Navy before the end of their enlistment — in with our retention numbers, but those numbers are now measured separately. When we started doing so, we noticed our retention numbers actually were very good. More than 70 percent of all Sailors who are eligible to reenlist do so. Drugs are not a reason for attrition in the Navy; they are a symptom. What I see in the majority of these cases, is that Sailors who use drugs use them as a way out of the Navy after they’ve decided that their expectations don’t align with the expectations of the commands in which they serve. When it comes to drugs, we are not going to back off from the Navy’s zero tolerance policy. There is a misconception that some drugs are harmless or can’t be detected. The fact is, drugs like Ecstasy can do great harm, and they can be detected by the Navy’s drug screening programs.

Q: Do people who are discharged from the Navy because of drug use count against a command’s retention figures? A: We used to count our attrition numbers — those who leave the Navy before the end of their enlistment — in with our retention statistics. To put the right focus on retention and attrition, those numbers are now measured separately. When we started doing so, we noticed that our retention numbers actually were very good. More than 70 percent of all Sailors who are eligible to reenlist do so. Drugs are not a reason for attrition in the Navy; they are a symptom. What I see in the majority of these cases, is that Sailors who use drugs use them as a way out of the Navy after they’ve decided that their expectations don’t align with the expectations of the commands in which they serve. When it comes to drugs, we are not going to back off from the Navy’s zero tolerance policy. There is a misconception that some drugs are harmless or can’t be detected. The fact is, drugs like Ecstasy can do great harm, and they can be detected by the Navy’s drug screening programs.

Q: I was reading about the recent MCPON All Hands Call on NAS Fallon, Nev., and it was mentioned that there’s a roadmap for career development. Can you explain what this roadmap entails? A: Speaking with Sailors is an opportunity to hear from junior petty officers, and it’s never too early to begin mapping out and planning your career path. And that’s exactly what “Task Force Excel” is going to enable all Sailors to do. It’s a different Navy today. The racism in that picture is something foreign to me. I could not imagine a Navy today that is not made up of all of the different colors of the rainbow, working together as a team. Times sure have changed. Seeing that picture today made me realize, now more than ever, that we should value our diversity. Not because we are all different, but because we are all different together. Thought of all of the friends I’ve made in my career that I would never had been allowed to meet 60 years ago. I think of all of the times same friends have come to my aid when I needed it, and where I would have been without them there by my side. It’s a different Navy today. Grown up, Professional. Delineated. And thankfully today, fair.
Around the Fleet

“Walk With Pride,”
Top Admiral in Arabian Gulf
Tells Tarawa Sailors, Marines

W ith combat operations in Iraq winding down, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and 5th Fleet made a brief visit to USS Tarawa (LHA 4) to talk to Sailors and Marines serving in the Arabian Gulf.

During a recent all hands call VADM Timothy J. Keating thanked every unit embarked on Tarawa for their contributions to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“Your arrival allowed me to report to the President of the United States on the day the war started, and I told him that you were ready to go,” said Keating. “It’s been hard work, but make no mistake, there’s nothing more important going on anywhere in the world except what you’re doing right here, right now.”

Keating told the packed crowd of Sailors and Marines in the ship’s upper vehicle deck that their hard work and effort has made a difference to an oppressed nation.

He said in Baghdad, the Iraqis have been mostly thanking the Sailors and Marines they have encountered on the streets.

“They give them big bear hugs, men are crying and young children come up to our folks and kiss their hands, they are so glad you all showed up to do your very important work.”

Keating’s visit to Tarawa came as part of a whirlwind tour to several amphibious assault ships in the region that included USS Nassau (LHA 4) and USS Bataan (LHD 5).

During the visit, he also briefly met with the senior Navy leaders for their contributions to the world except what you’re doing right here, right now.

“Walk With Pride,”

VADM Timothy Keating, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Central Command/Commander 5th Fleet, provides words of encouragement to Sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63).

Story by JO 3 William Polson who is assigned to the public affairs office, USS Tarawa (LHA 4)

GTMO Celebrates soth Anniversary

A special ceremony was recently held to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the lease agreement between the United States and Cuba.

The lease, signed in 1903 by then-President Theodore Roosevelt and Cuban President Estrada Palma, grants us use of 45 square miles of land and water by the United States. A reaffirmation of the lease in 1921 stated that the United States was to pay $50,000 in gold each year, the equivalent today of $4,085.

The lease is still in effect in terms of how we operate today, said CAPT Robert A. Buehn, base commander. Both the United States and Cuba must mutually consent to terminate the lease.

U.S. Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay (Dona), is the oldest U.S. base overseas and the only one in a communist country. The Cuban-American relationship began in 1898 when U.S. Marines linked up with Cuban insurgents to drive back Spanish troops. This led to the liberation of Cuba from Spain.

Since their arrival more than 170 years ago, Sailors and Marines at Guantanamo have served with distinction, making significant contributions to the defense of the United States, the cause of freedom and the promotion of American values—values which are universal and are reflected in the values of the men and women stationed here,” said guest speaker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense W. Clyde Marsh.

Diplomatic relations with Cuba ended in 1961, when Fidel Castro assumed leadership of Cuba. Many Cubans sought refuge in the base, and U.S. Marines began patrolling the base fence line, and continue to do so today.

Family members and some employees were evacuated from Guantanamo in October 1962, during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Then-President John F. Kennedy ordered a naval quarantine around the island until the Soviet Union removed its missiles.

“None of the war against global terrorism,” said Fisk. “While the base is not only an outpost of freedom, the mission performed by those families who accompany the troops we hope will one day be restored to them,” said Fisk.

Since January 2002, the base was given an additional mission. “You’re at the forefront of the war against global terrorism,” said Fisk. “The base is not only providing the legal war place to detain and interrogate captured illegal combatants from the Taliban and al Qaeda, it is also providing logistical support to Joint Task Force Guantanamo.”

Fisk didn’t leave out GTMO families.

“We know well the stresses and hardships that come from oversized deployments, so I want to recognize the important contributions made to the base by the families who accompany the members of our military and civilian team to Guantanamo.”

You have heartfelt appreciation for the sacrifices you are making to be here. Your presence and your support and is equally essential to the success of the mission performed by those assigned to this base,” he said.

Students from the base high school concluded the ceremony with a re-employment of the lease.

CAPT Robert E. Buehn, commanding officer of U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, salutes during the playing of the National Anthem as the Naval Station commemorates the one hundredth anniversary of the lease agreement between Cuba and the United States.

For related news, visit the Naval Media Center Broadcasting Affiliate, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Story from Naval Media Center

“Taraa Crew Gives Helping Hand to Stranded Fisherman”

Several hungry fishermen in the Indian Ocean recently received an unexpected gift from USS Tarawa (LHA 4) 12 days before Valentine’s Day. They had found that the ship with a big deck had a crew with heart to match.

The San Diego-based amphibious assault ship was on route to the Arabian Gulf as part of a scheduled six-month deployment, when approximately 400 miles off the coast of India, a fishing vessel was spotted drifting off the starboard side.

This ordinary situation took an unusual turn when the crew, a small group of local nationals, waved desperately to catch the attention of someone on Tarawa.

“A call came over the bridge-to-bridge radio, ‘U.S. Navy warship, we are in need of food and water,’” said Officer of the Deck, LTJG Jacqueline Hayes. “I told them to stand by.”

After the distress call was relayed to Tarawa’s Commanding Officer, CAPT Jay Bowling and CAPT Ronald Thomas, Commandore of Tarawa Amphibious Ready Group, the request for aid was approved and a relief package was prepared.

“The crew of the fishing boat requested enough food to last for only two days, but we felt it was best to give them four days’ worth of food to ensure their safe trip home,” said Mess Management Specialist 1st Class Brian Russell.

“We gave the fishing boat 15 pounds of assorted fruits, 15 large pieces of fried chicken, 15 egg rolls, bread and plenty of water, said MSCS Brian Russell. “It was easily enough food to last for four to five days.”

“Considering how much food...
**Around the Fleet**

"It was a great feeling to be able to help someone during times like these," said Wilder.

For related news, visit the USS Tarawa (LHA 1) Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/thai.

Story by JOSN David Senn who is assigned to the public affairs office, USS Tarawa (LHA 1).

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**Time Capsule**

This month we look back in the All Hands archive to see what was going on in the month of May. To view these issues in more detail on the Web, go to www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/

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**Shipsmates**

**Mechinist Mate 1st Class (SW) Mark Medina,** assigned to the Public Works Department (PWD), Naval Support Activity (NSA) Naples, Italy, was selected as the 2002 Regional Sailor of the Year, Medina is the leading petty officer (LPO) of the Seabee Division at PWD. He is also a member of the Command Training Team, an instructor for the Navy Rights and Responsibilities and Petty Officer Indocitation classes, a facilitator for the Alcohol and Drug Abuse for Managers class, the PWD Drug and Alcohol Program advisor, PWD Sponsor Coordinator and the Command Career Counselor.

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**Ricky’s Tour**

*By JO2 Mike Jones*  
mikejones43@hotmail.com

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**Navy SEAL Joins 299 Others to Break World Record**

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woy-one thousand feet above the Arizona desert, a plane carries a U.S. Navy Sea, Air, Land (SEAL) commando, one who never cared much riding in planes, and is eager to get out of this one.

**Master Chief Boatswain’s Mate (SEAL) Lu Lastra** is not on a typical flight. He’s sti

This flight is different, mentally visualizing the mission ahead.

Finally, the waiting is over.

“Green Light!” A voice pipes from the rear of the plane. Now it’s time to meet up with 299 of his peers while following the ground well above 200 mph.

Lastra is currently assigned as a demonstration parachutist with the U.S. Navy Parachute Team, also known as the Leap Frogs, in Coronado, Calif. Recognized as a skydiving expert, he was hand-selected to participate in the world record-breaking 300-person freefall formation, or “300-way” in Eloy, Ariz., “giving on your own is challenging enough,” Lastra said, “but add 299 more people and you have an air traffic controller’s worst nightmare.

Making matters worse, according to Lastra, is that in this airspace, there will be no one on a radio directing all 300 people. Each participant has to fly on their own, around 299 other people, to their exact position in the formation. Each jumper has to fly their own body—no small feat for a species without wings.

“All of the skydivers have participated in the sport for many years,” said Lastra. “Many are either national or world champions, some are both. Even with thousands of jumps years of experience, you can never get compliant with the sport, due to its inherent dangers.”

Lastra said he was honored to be a part of the attempt. This would be the second time he has participated in an event of this magnitude. In 1998, he was part of the 246-person freefall world record in Ottawa, Ill. Unfortunately, Lastra’s 246-person world record fell the following year when 222 skydivers broke the 246-person world record in Udon, Thailand.

“I know the 300-person mark would be hard to accomplish.” Three hundred people in the sky may be too much traffic, but Lastra was very confident the group brought together had the ability and the drive to get it done.

And they did. On the 11th of 30 planned attempts, a new world record was set — 300 people, each from a different aircraft, above the Arizona desert, with more than seven seconds, flying.

The effort did not last very long for flying together for seven seconds, the participants reached 7,000 feet in altitude and had to separate from each other to safely open all 300 parachutes. All parachutes opened by 2,000 feet and, eventually, everyone landed safely. Mission accomplished.

While Lastra enjoys the challenge of competing in events like this, his current job is as the team chief for the Navy Parachute Team. He is the senior enlisted member of the Leap Frogs in both years of service and number of jumps.

“I’ve been a SEAL for more than 22 years,” said Lastra, “and being on the Leap Frogs, I get an opportunity to tell America’s youth about what I have been fortunate enough to do.”

Lastra is currently assigned to the public affairs office, USS Oak Hill (LSD 51), one of the Navy’s newest amphibi

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**US Navy Media Affairs**

**MAY 2003**

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**Time Capsule**

This month we look back in the All Hands archive to see what was going on in the month of May. To view these issues in more detail on the Web, go to www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/

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**25 Years Ago – 1977**

The cover of this All Hands features a Sicilian farmer who lives near Naval Station Sigonella, the hub of naval air operations in the Mediterranean. In this issue, All Hands reported on in-depth on Soviet submarines. These subs were almost the length of two football fields and had about 20 multiple warheads each. These internal Typhon-class boats are key players in the silent contest for control of the ocean depths. In 1985, Moscow also had the worlds largest submarine fleet numbering more than 300. In all, the Soviet Navy had 37 ballistic missile submarines. More than 90 of these vessels were capable of striking the United States from Soviet home waters.

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**18 Years Ago – 1985**

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**26 Years Ago – 1977**

This cover of All Hands features a Tartar missile being fired from the Tartar-D surface-to-air launcher on the forward deck of the nuclear-powered, guided-missile cruiser USS California (CGN 36). All Hands also explained what it was like to be an Air Traffic Controlmen (AC). While AC’s are a small part of the Navy, they hold a very important job. AC’s work long hours reading screens and deciding when and where planes should land. And, AC’s must know various aspects about all aircraft, such as, Can it land safely with a crosswind? Does it have a fast or slow landing speed? How long a runway does it need to land on? With all these questions it’s easy to understand why only a few Sailors are ready to take on this responsibility.

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**MAY 2003**

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**Time Capsule**

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A round the Fleet

As the search for remnants of Space Shuttle Columbia continued, Navy salvage and diving teams were on scene to provide assistance searching several

- Navy Salvage and Diving Teams Assist in Shuttle Columbia Recovery
- Shipmates
- Hospital Corpsman First Class (SW/AW) KevinDean, assigned to the YongSAN Health Clinic, Seoul, Korea, was selected as the Commander, Naval Forces Korea (CNFK) Sailor of the Year 2002. Dean extended his command responsibilities to include teaching CPR training, providing medical support for command activities and instructing junior Sailors at the Petty Officer Indocination Course. He is a charter member of the CNFK Teaching Command. Dean recently completed his second Master's Degree in Education from National-Louis University.

- pounds of food, an amount Hochhalter said would take her a whole day to do by herself. She depends solely on volunteers to get most of the food sorting done in her area, since she is the only paid worker in the department.

- Story by LG(SW) Brandon W. Schulze who is assigned to the public affairs office USS Oak Hill

- BM2 Arick Hiles, a naval reservist from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 2, Cleveland Detachment, hands a compact sonar unit to 3C1 Ralph Leete, also from MDSU-2. The sonar unit, an AN/Pos-2A, is a handheld sonar device used to aid in the search of the Toledo Bend reservoir for debris from the Space Shuttle Columbia.

- The Navy was requested by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to assist in salvage and diving operations. Due to the scope and complexity of the diving environment, it is appropriate for the Navy to come in, said Capt. Jim Wilkins, supervisor of salvage and diving.

- Summer 2003 winners of the Space Shuttle Columbia. They are the lead agent in the underwater salvage and diving operations. The mission is appropriate for the Navy due to the modest conditions they have yet encountered. “We are reworking the book on Navy diving operations,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Roger Riederle, officer in charge of Navy Diving and Salvage Unit 2. Among the divers on scene are civilian contractors that operate and analyze data from side-scan sonar being used to map dive sites, and identify and locate potential underwater material for the divers to recover. Though Navy divers are accustomed to working in the most arduous conditions, they are quickly discovering that diving in a forested, flooded area brings a whole new set of difficulties to the mix of one of the world’s “least-visited” areas: the ocean.

- Navy and Marine Corps executive excellence in food service in the Navy and Marine Corps.

- Formal presentation of the awards will be made during the International Food Service Executives Association (IFSEA) conference April 13, in Dallas.

- The Navy awards encourage excellence in Navy and Marine Corps food service programs, with the objective of improving the quality of life for our Navy and Marine Corps personnel,” said RADM Justin D. McCarthy, commander, Naval Supply Systems Command. “I commend all of these commands for their hard work and commitment to excellence.”

- Large Afloat - First Place: USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) Runner-up: USS Carney (AGF 31) Cruiser/Destroyer - First Place: USS Cowpens (CG 63) Runner-up: USS Stethem (DDG 63)

- Story by LT John Daniels who is a public affairs officer at the Navy Office of Information Southwest

- Allfloat General Mess Winners in the Atlantic Fleet are:

- Strategic Missile Submarine - First Place: USS Florida (SSBN 728) (Gold) Runner-up: USS Georgia (SSBN 729) (Gold) Attack Submarine - First Place: USS Los Angeles (SSN 688) Runner-up: USS Kay Wight (SSN 722)

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The message comes in, and this time it’s for real. It’s time to rock and roll. The team is assembled, mission planning is completed and consoles are manned. Eight long months of deployment time have led up to this moment, and the strike team and the ship are ready. The final word comes down and a button is pushed.

“Missiles away!”

“It’s a pretty big project,” said Fire Controlman 1st Class (SW) Jeffrey Witherow, USS Shiloh’s (CG 67) Tomahawk Strike Team supervisor. “The best thing I can say about Tomahawk’s is that it’s a real team effort, both off-ship and on.”

Shooting orders come down from the upper chain of command and lay out exactly what the Tomahawk team is going to do. Once those messages get to the ship, the strike team is assembled on station in the Combat Information Center (CIC), by setting Condition 2 Strike. This designation basically means a ship is setting a Tomahawk team up for action, so everyone knows what’s going on. Other people with jobs related to a launch also know they have to get ready and be on station.

“The actual planning process usually takes several hours,” said Witherow. “There’s a whole sequence of events that has to happen and be reported up the chain of command before a launch.”

Shiloh has four stations or consoles that perform the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM) function, two engagement consoles where the over-water portion of the missions are planned, and two casualty control/launch consoles. During an actual missile launch, there are operators manning both launch consoles, so if the primary shooter has a casualty, the other operator can take over and continue launching.

“Defending my family and our freedoms is the main reason I’m out here,” said Fc1(SW) Jeffrey Witherow, Shiloh’s Tomahawk Strike Team supervisor. “I wholeheartedly believe in our way of life and that Iraq is a danger to that.”

With eyes on their consoles and their fingers on the trigger, Shiloh’s Tomahawk Strike Team defends America’s interests.
There are two versions of the TLAM; the Charlie that carries a unitary 1,000-lb. warhead and has a range of 1,000-plus nautical miles, and the Delta that is capable of deploying up to 166 bomblets at different locations within its 700-nautical mile range.

"Defending my family and our freedoms is the main reason I’m out here," said Witherow. "I wholeheartedly believe in our way of life and that Iraq is a danger to that. It means something to fight for freedom and to do what the boss says, because it has an effect on a lot of different people."

Eight months on-station in the Arabian Gulf can seem like an eternity, but these Shiloh Sailors know that they are out there making a difference in the world and ensuring the safety of their families back home.

"It’s my turn to be out here. My family has been in the military fighting in wars since way back," said FC3 Aaron Bernat, the junior member of Shiloh’s Tomahawk Strike Team. "It’s hard to be away from our loved ones, but it’s our job. That’s what I told my son when I left. It’s my turn."

Houlihan is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

GM3 Kyle Allicock mans the forward Vertical Launch System (VLS) aboard USS Shiloh (CG 67). Shiloh is deployed and on-station in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.
With more than 300,000 U.S. and coalition forces in the Central Command Area of Responsibility (CENTCOM AOR), the Seabees assigned to CENTCOM have been busy. Building roads, camps, bridges and aircraft pads, these “Can Do” Sailors are ready to complete any mission thrown at them.

As the afternoon sun sets, Seabees from NMCB 133 finish a bunker designed to keep them safe from SCUD missiles and bombs.

They will come.
for when we have to work with on-site materials,” said Equipment Operator 1st Class Karen Clough.

“The Bees are building soil-stabilized roads, and it takes a certain type of fill dirt with the right mixture of sand and clay to build them correctly. Dry cement is mixed with the fill dirt and after it’s all compacted, the Bees roto-till it all together with a soil stabilizing machine and then add water. The end result is a concrete-topped road without having to bring in concrete vehicles.

“Anywhere else, they’d just deliver us the materials, but here we dig it up ourselves and see what we find,” said Clough. “We got lucky this time around. Hopefully we’ll get lucky every time out here.”

The training the Seabees are doing is designed to take the element of luck out of the equation.

“The Seabees’ mission is primarily to support the Marines,” said Clough. “If we can build them roads, then we can get them where they need to be, by the truckload, and that’s the name of the game.”

Hidden in an out-of-the-way corner of the camp is one of the Seabees best-kept secrets: the people who keep everything running—the mechanics and the machinery repairmen. Most of the equipment is older than the people working on it, and due to the increasingly heavy tasking, the machinery gets abused, sometimes running 24 hours a day with little time between shifts to grease it.

“The mechanics are vital to what we’re doing here. They play a major role in keeping us going. We couldn’t survive without them,” said Clough.

“I’m one of only three MRs in the battalion, and we keep everything running,” said Machinery Repairman 3rd Class Jose Freytes. “We have a lot of things here that get broken and we can’t get the new parts on time, so we make

“They will come” said Senior Chief Utilitieman (SCW) James Trocke, project manager for Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 133. “We’re ready to step up to any contingency and support any elements that may need us out here in-country. As Seabees, we have to remain flexible.”

With four Seabee battalions in the AOR, there is a massive amount of construction going on, as well as preparing to follow the Marines wherever their mission takes them. Plans are being drawn, contingencies are being laid out. The “Bees” are ready to roll.

Around Camp Moreell, named after Ben Moreell, the founder of the Seabees, there are a lot of people doing the every day tasks to keep things up.

“Right now, were continuing to build this camp to improve things for the troops—better berthing, quality-of-life issues,” said Trocke. “Every day we do little things around the camp and the AOR just to make things better for the troops out here”

Getting a large amount of equipment and supplies to where you need them in a short time takes trucks — lots of trucks, and trucks need roads.

“We’re building horizontal roadwork and trying out procedures we can use

they will come
Only one group could work this construction magic in what seemed like an overnight project: The Seabees.

To keep the surface workable, a Seabee from NMCB 133 uses a broom to splash water on the concrete.

The Seabees use huge cranes to pour concrete for an aircraft staging area capable of being used by aircraft as large as a C-130. The area is the largest single battalion concrete project since World War II and will be used to support future operations.

The galley tent is a busy place at Camp Coyote. MSs serve Unitized Rations, Ground (URGs) for breakfast and dinner.

The importance of these masters of metal is apparent almost every day. “We just fabricated a drive shaft for one of our vehicles that was down and we couldn’t get the part on time. Without that piece, the vehicle won’t move and jobs don’t get done,” said Freytes.

“We took a piece of steel sewer pipe of the same diameter, filled it with sand for balance, welded it to the ends of the existing piece, and that truck was moving again instead of having it down for weeks waiting for a part from the United States.”

As you look around, concrete stretches all around you for acres. And only 90 days before it was nothing but rolling sand dunes — now it’s a 12-inch thick, 19.9-acre parking lot for fighter jets. Six-acres of AM-2 matting, a Lego-like snap-together material has been added to the end of the concrete pad, creating additional aircraft parking and taxiways.

Only one group could work this construction magic in what seemed like an overnight project: The Seabees.

That pad was absolutely crucial to the MAW’S mission,” said Marine Brig. Gen. T.B Robling, 3rd Marine Air Wing (MAW) deputy commander. “That pad will hold just about all the MAW’s aircraft, including F/A-18s and AV-8 Harriers.

“It was tiresome, lots of long hours since we were on such a tight deadline,” said Builder 3rd Class Kristalyn Nelson, “but we joked around a lot and tried to keep morale up and it worked really well.”

The crews had to move nearly 1.5 million cubic feet of earth. Some portions of the concrete pad had to be raised more than six feet to make it level. The earth leveling work had to be done six inches at a time. Putting fill material down, rolling it flat, checking it for compaction and then placing six more inches down. During this one project, the Seabees clocked 12,000 man-days. That’s more than an entire battalion accrues in a normal six-month deployment.

“We collapsed the local market’s fill material,” said BUC(SCW) Wayne Jensen, one of the site foremen. “The local concrete makers couldn’t keep up with the Seabees’ either. “We poured approximately 1,000 meters of concrete a day, for 44 days,” said BU2(SCW) Castillo Huggins.

The four companies hired would bring as much as they could each day, but it was never enough. “We poured as much as they supplied,” said Jensen. “We could have been done sooner if they had supplied more material sooner.” BUC(SCW) Ray Roberts echoed.

NMCB-74 managed to complete the largest, single-battalion construction project ever undertaken by a corpsman.
Keeping the Bees safe is a full-time job, and the security force at Camp Morell takes that job very seriously. “We maintain the entry control point at the entrance to the camp, and have rovers throughout the camp to promote good order and discipline and to make sure no one is messing with our fence line,” said Caanan. “But our primary tasking is convoy security. Anything that goes out of the camp needs to have some sort of protection, and that’s us.” Caanan continued. “It’s a big job, lately with an increase in the number of convoys that are going out, so we’re feeling pretty thin inside the camp with having to pull people who may have been rovers and switching them over to convoy detail.”

Though the main focus is directed towards the perimeter, the Seabees keep an equally vigilant watch within. “On watch, we’re always looking for things that don’t belong; third country nationals without escorts, extra wires hanging from a vehicle, holes in the fence line, anything that doesn’t look right,” said Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Rebecca Ingram, a Seabee assigned to security. “We’re just here to keep everyone safe. That’s our main job.”

“It’s interesting being out here in the desert,” said Caanan. “It’s different. In the fleet we’re usually offshore launching planes or missiles. We’re in the AOR, but we don’t actually get to see much of the country. Right here, we’re out in the sand doing the job and seeing the people, so it’s definitely a different experience in my career. I wasn’t expecting it, but I’m glad I’m here to do it.”

Houlihan is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.
They’re highly trained and highly motivated. They are the sea lions and their trainers who make up the Shallow Water Intruder Detection System (SWIDS). Although an unconventional tool, the SWIDS program is a crucial part of the ongoing war on terrorism, both at home and in the Central Command Area of Responsibility.
As the swimmer makes his way through the dark waters of the Persian Gulf, only one thing is on his mind — destroying those he hates. He tows behind him a deadly package of explosives to attach to one of the haze-gray hulls in the distance. As he gets closer, he is confident the dark night and the dark water will hide his passage. Suddenly, huge eyes and sharp teeth block his view. It’s something he has never seen before in these waters, but as quickly as it appeared, the apparition is gone. His feet feel something hit his leg and suddenly he’s caught in a spring clamp. Moments later bright lights shine his way and a boat full of armed Sailors pull into view. Divers drop over the side and take him into custody before he can deliver his deadly package. Once again, Zak has done his job.

Zak, a 375-pound California sea lion, is part of a team of California sea lions and their trainers, from Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR), San Diego’s Shallow Water Intruder Detection System program deployed to the Central Command Area Of Responsibility (CENTCOM AOR) as underwater sentries to protect ships from terrorists.

“If you were a bad guy and saw a big wet smelly black thing with big eyes and big sharp teeth patrolling the area you wanted to get into, you’d think twice about going in the water,” said CDR Jon Wood, Naval Forces Central Command Special Operations Branch head.

Running in the Shadows

As time went on, California sea lions and Beluga whales were added to the program and trained to deliver equipment to divers, locate and retrieve underwater mines and conduct underwater surveillance. According to Wood, sea lions are now used almost exclusively because of their very sensitive underwater directional hearing and low-light level vision. They are easily trained for a variety of tasks, and are capable of repetitive deep diving. "These particular sea lions are Mark V animals that were initially trained to do deep water recovery, but have been retained in an enhanced capability," said Wood. "They can actually find swimmers that may be a threat to our ships and can swim along the piers and in the shallows to locate things most of us would never see or hear," Wood continued.

Navy marine mammals have also been used to search for people and objects like cars under the water. In 1993, a Navy-trained sea lion in Charleston, S.C., helped the local sheriff’s department find a car that had fallen into a river. Although human divers had tried many times without much luck, the sea lion,
with its acute hearing and ability to see in near darkness in the water, found it on the first try.

“A lot of hours go into the training. It usually takes a year and a half of training until the animals will be ready for SWIDS,” said Bryan.

“In the beginning, most of it has to do with getting them used to wearing a harness and holding a bite plate in their mouth. Then it progresses to attaching a device to an intruder,” she continued.

The close relationship the sea lions have with their trainers is what keeps them from just swimming away. The life they lead is good, since they don’t have to worry about predators and they get to take naps more than wild sea lions would.

“Mainly we build relationships with them through the years. They’ve learned to trust us and they get that all positive things come from being with us,” said Bryan. “It’s their own choice, and they choose to come back to us every single day.”

Each time a SWIDS team deploys, an Army veterinarian with a mobile veterinary hospital is sent out with them to provide constant care for the animals. They receive frequent physicals, are inspected daily for nicks and cuts they might receive swimming among the piers and ships and their diets are strictly monitored. Each sea lion gets a set amount of food each day to make sure they maintain their weight.

“The animals are treated incredibly well,” said Wood. “Their food, restaurant-grade fish, is flown in regularly from the states.”

“These guys have a great reputation for not being aggressive” said Bryan, “but any wild animal can become aggressive at any time, so you really need to be aware of what you’re doing.”

A sea lion’s demeanor is similar to that of dogs; they’re out to please their trainer, they really enjoy the work they do and they look forward to going out on patrol every day.

“The biggest reward of working with these animals is that they’re fun to be around and always out to please you,” said Bryan. “When you’re both having a good time, it’s just completely fun.”

Although an unconventional tool, the SWIDS program is a crucial part of the ongoing war on terrorism. “The capabilities that we’re demonstrating here with SWIDS is very applicable to homeland defense and the protection of our troops and ports overseas,” said Wood. “In today’s high-threat environment, I see this program growing.”

Houlihan is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.
So there I was, sitting in the airport, waiting for the flight that would take me to a dot in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. One dot comprised of nearly 200 smaller dots about 830 miles southwest of Guam. To be honest, I hardly knew where the Republic of Palau was, let alone what I would find when I got there.

The facts: I knew I was doing a story on Navy Seabees— but not just any Bees. These 13 guys are some of the best Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74, homeported in Gulfport, Miss., has to offer. Their mission was broken down into four separate parts— Civil Action Team community construction, apprentice training, medical assistance and community relations programs. But what they were doing exactly was still somewhat of a mystery to me, even as I boarded the only flight going from Guam into Palau.

I had been told what to expect— hot weather, crystal clear water and long hours. I was caught by surprise though when it reached 104 degrees with what felt like 5,000 percent humidity by 10 a.m.

The ocean looked cleaner than the water in our office drinking jugs, and was packed to the hilt with what seemed like every ocean critter known to man. And as for the long hours— well, let’s just say these guys worked hard, and played hard as well, in this tropical paradise full of fishing and diving opportunities rivaling any other location in the world.

That’s not what drew me to this story though. Rather, it was the unique chance to see that “Can Do” spirit at work in a unique location— at least from a Navy standpoint. There isn’t a whole lot of haze gray hull that has made it this way since World War II, which makes for a unique relationship between the Sailors and the locals.
“Here, we’re self-reliant, making our own water and pretty much depending on ourselves. It doesn’t get any better than being a chief of a CAT team.”

“When this country thinks of the Navy, they think Seabees,” said Chief Builder (SCW) James Chasse, the assistant officer in charge of Civil Action Team (CAT) 7401. “For the most part, we are the only Navy they know.”

That relationship is what makes this mission a chance of a lifetime for this community.

“It was ironic Chasse would mention water, because during this trip, one of the more significant projects they were working on was a water storage tank at an elementary school in the state of Ngiwal (pronounced KNEE-WALL). Although it’s located only 26 miles away, it’s a three-hour drive from the gates of the base camp. After navigating a loaded pickup truck through pothole-ridden dirt roads, thoroughly mixing our innards from the bumpy ride, we drove into Ngiwal just as the sun was going down.

The children are happy to see the Seabees arrive and race next to the truck as they pull up to the elementary school.

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The morning briefings in the galley keep the crew up to speed with the progress of the deployment and the goals for that day’s work.

Helgah Sharp has been cooking meals for the Seabee teams for five years and truly enjoys her part in the overall mission, but “not as much as they enjoy my cooking,” she said with a big smile.

Palm trees line a section of oceanfront road as the ‘Bees make their way to a local town for part of their mission.

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Empowering PALAU

Palm trees line a section of oceanfront road as the ‘Bees make their way to a local town for part of their mission. The morning briefings in the galley keep the crew up to speed with the progress of the deployment and the goals for that day’s work. Helgah Sharp has been cooking meals for the Seabee teams for five years and truly enjoys her part in the overall mission, but “not as much as they enjoy my cooking,” she said with a big smile.

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“This is the top deployment we’ll ever get,” said Chasse. “Here, we’re self-reliant, making our own water and pretty much depending on ourselves. It doesn’t get any better than being a chief of a CAT team.”

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Kids were greeting the ‘Bees with smiles and laughter, while the adults were...
“Here, there is the opportunity to talk to kids, teachers and locals. The people and experiencing their culture is probably the best part. It’s awesome to be able to learn from them as much as they learn from us.”

Cultural education wasn’t the only learning happening in Palau either. One of the main reasons the military is involved with these deployments is to train the locals in the various construction trades.

Through the apprentice training program, the “Bees are able to teach 15 locals residents valuable job skills they need to help with future island projects. Every morning during the week, the CAT team’s well-traveled green pickup truck would make it’s way back into camp with a full load of eager students in the back, ready to take on the day’s instruction in hopes of a better future.”

“A lot of Palauans,” he said. “When you see a kid filling a water bottle from the rain off the roof, because they aren’t sure about the water supply, that makes you want to do as much as you can,” said BUC(SW) James Chasse.

As the Navy works to install a water storage tank next to the school, children line up behind a barrier to watch the action before the morning bell sounds. “I wish the kids would learn something from the Seabees, instead of just standing around watching,” said Principal Lorenza Okenil.

Heading back to their rack for some rest. This trip was different. The locals gained something different... the troops gained something different.

“On regular battalion projects, you don’t get to interact with civilians as much,” said Steelworker 1st Class (SCW) William Bell, who in his 12 years of service has had the rare pleasure of participating in two CAT deployments. “Here, there is the opportunity to talk to the kids, teachers and locals. I think meeting the people and experiencing their culture is probably the best part. It’s awesome to be able to learn from them as much as they learn from us.”

Like many Sailors who try to learn the engineering aide rate, the math sometimes stumps the local apprentices. But also like the successful Sailors, they continue to plug away at the challenges to reach their goal and gain certification.

Rand Alexander, an apprentice from Palau, has spent the last five months in the equipment operator apprenticeship program, and considers himself one of the lucky ones. “A number of people try to get in with the Seabees, but only a few get the chance,” he said. “I think I’ll be thanking the Navy for the rest of my life.”
As the day wound to an end, and the apprentices were driven back into town, and there was time to assess what I had actually seen. Outside of the obvious hands-on schooling that has flashes of typical Navy training – safety briefings, book tests, etc. I witnessed something a little unexpected. After talking with the Sailors, I began to realize they too gained something special from this trip. “They’re getting a whole lot more out of this place, because they’re learning to network and work with a whole lot less,” said Chasse. “It’s a true growing experience,” added Bell. “You always have to think outside of the box.”

According to Chasse, after completing the apprenticeship they will not only have an “A” school education in their rate of instruction, they’ll also have a full year of hands-on training on top of it, preparing them quite well for pursuing employment in the construction field. “We’re thankful for this service and what they offer,” added Elwais. “They respect us, and we respect them. It’s a good thing for everyone.”

Empowering PALAU

What was special about these top performers was just how easy it was for them to find a new or different way of doing things. While working in this environment, it is crucial for them to do just that.

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Many of the locals came to the Seabees camp in the evenings to play basketball or work out in the gym. This creates yet another opportunity for the Sailors to develop bonds with the people they are here to help.
And for the help keep something to

locals and the Sailors who this mission alive, there is definitely be gained from the hard work and dedication they give each day.

with “island time.” Whatever it takes in the United States, you need to double it, add 30 percent and don’t get upset if it’s late. “There are no worries there though. During my trip, it seemed the Seabees never wavered, despite being faced with many hurdles. I assumed it was because they always kept their eye on the mission and their purpose for working on these dots in the Pacific Ocean. “I don’t think the people here have the resources or money to do what we do here for them,” said Chasse. “There is more than 100 years of experience on this team, and if you got that on the outside, you’d end up paying a whole lot of money. “We’re not here to make a buck though,” Chasse added. “We’re here to promote better living.”

Now, I am always hearing that saying, “think out of the box,” but much of the time it’s tough to really see it in action. What was special about these top performers was just how easy it was for them to find a new or different way of doing things. While working in this environment, it is crucial for them to do just that.

They don’t always have all of the needed supplies and/or tools to get a job completed at a scheduled time. So they adapt and overcome by either rescheduling, or more impressively, by finding alternate ways of conducting business.

There are definitely some unique challenges that must be dealt with when you’re living and working on islands in the middle of nowhere. It’s not uncommon for things to take a little longer than expected. Chasse would often say, in a way only a chief could articulate, “The only downside is dealing with the Seabees who have worked near his home.

A local elementary school kid is quick to show off what he has learned from the Seabees who have worked near his home.

Keres is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

Passing the time while on deployment to a remote location can be challenging, but E6(SSW) Shane Breyette pulls out his guitar and strums a few chords of Jimmy Buffett and other artists to stay entertained. Everyone knows who the Seabees are and what they are doing for the Republic of Palau, and when they see the green trucks coming down the road, they are quick to wave and say hello.

Everyone knows who the Seabees are and what they are doing for the Republic of Palau; and when they see the green trucks coming down the road, they are quick to wave and say hello.

Sunny skies and palm trees are the offices for the ‘Bees as they conduct their business in Ngiwal.
Everyone has heard the saying “We’re operating from the tip of the spear.” Well, what happens when you break down on the tip and can’t afford to go all the way back to the end of the handle to get repaired? That’s where Hull Technician 3rd Class (SW) Chris Bonn and his shipmates in the HT shop aboard USS Frank Cable (AS 40) come into play.

Homeported in Guam, they stand constant watch, ensuring the players on the front line stay there and continue with their assigned mission. “If we weren’t here, everyone would have to go back to the United States for repair,” said Bonn.

Being stationed aboard this forward-deployed submarine tender is a heavy burden, especially when the ships you repair play critical roles much of the time in operations halfway around the globe, and steaming back to stateside homeports is not an option.

With Frank Cable in the region, it’s not uncommon for them to come to you. When they do, the work schedule is drastically increased. “Hardly ever work? That’s funny!” he said. “We work continuously on all ships, at all times. My shop worked through our Christmas stand down to make sure jobs were finished.”

Bonn and his shipmates definitely have the work ethic expected in today’s Navy. It’s also safe to say they have good reason to be proud of what they do on a daily basis, every day of the year. “There is pride in knowing the work I have done is being sailed around the world,” added Bonn. “Even though we are not on the front lines of the war, we still feel the effects of it here and it’s a good feeling doing our part.”

Keres is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands
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.

Early Bird
An F/A-18 Hornet aboard USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) is readied for launch during early-morning flight operations. Photo by PH2 James Farrally II

Buddy Check
Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40 practice changing out air filter canisters to make sure there’s a good seal around their gas masks. Photo by PHAN Lamel J. Hinton

Test of Fire
Students at Fleet Training Center, San Diego work as a team to extinguish a Class Bravo fire, while an instructor observes their performance. Photo by PH2 Angela Gonzalez

Dress Rehearsal
HM3 Joshua Schuster, a Search and Rescue crew member, evaluates the vital signs of “victim” HM2 Hollie Bray during a rapid extraction training exercise at Naval Hospital Pensacola, Fla. Photo by JO2 Scott New

Room to Spare
Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40 load equipment onto an Air Mobility Command C-5 Galaxy cargo plane. Photo by PH2 James Farrally II

To be considered, forward your high resolution (5” x 7” 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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Why We Do What We Do

This speech was given by Navy Seaman Anthony McCarty at the graduation of the U.S. Navy’s Intelligence Specialist (IS) “A” School Class 90 on May 31, 2002.

Seaman Anthony McCarty said …

"Today I was asked to speak to you all, as a representative of Class 90. I was asked to speak on our reasons for joining, our inspiration, our spirit and any wisdom we've picked up along the way. These are all heart-felt subjects, full of emotion for all of us. Bear with me if I get a little corny. I believe we all joined for our own reasons. After all, we came into the Navy as individuals. Whether because of money for college, patriotism, family tradition, need to prove oneself or that Wendy's wasn't hiring, we all came into the service with our own hopes and dreams and desires. For whatever reasons we had, we all made the same decision, heard the same promises from our recruiter, signed on the same dotted line and took the same oath. From that moment on, we were united by that choice, the choice to leave our friends, family and lives, and literally sail off to distant shores.

Joining when I did, I'd always asked if September 11th was the reason I joined the Navy. … I had already joined by then, I was in DEP (Delayed Entry Program) at the time. I realized I would be taking the same oath. From that moment on, we were united by promises from our recruiter, signed on the same dotted line and we had, we all made the same decision, heard the same promises from our recruiter, signed on the same dotted line and took the same oath. From that moment on, we were united by that choice, the choice to leave our friends, family and lives, and literally sail off to distant shores.

Here at IS 'A' School, we've heard time and again that we are at war. But it's a war unlike anything the Navy has fought before. It's not a war at sea, they have no Navy, and we have the greatest fleet that's ever been afloat.

It's not a war in the air, they have no air force, and we would fly circles around them even if they did. It's not a war on the land, they have no standing army as such, and when we do meet them on the ground, it's a matter of how few casualties we take, not a matter of if we will win. This is a war fought in the caves of third world countries, in the streets of our major cities, in the communications in the airwaves, in the depths of the Internet, in quiet nighttime covert operations, and on the screens of CNN. The only way they can beat us is by being smarter than us, trickier than us, by coming up with something we hadn't thought of, or hadn't prepared for.

Instead of running from this responsibility, I hope you embrace it. I think it would amaze most IS 'A' students to find out how many people truly do envy you. You're young, you're intelligent; you're in a war with a horrible enemy that needs to be stopped, and you're in a position to truly affect that conflict. You have the love and thanks of a grateful country. You have a job that can lead you to anywhere on Earth, doing anything. You have all the elements of a great story in your life. Without taking away from the seriousness of what you do, or sounding like a recruiting commercial, you truly have the chance to live an adventure, if you choose to look for it.

By far the greatest challenge in writing this speech was trying to define the spirit I've seen in both my class, IS 'A' School, and the Navy as a whole.

I've met so many people who give of themselves selflessly and seemingly on instinct. One person in particular I would like to thank is Chief Jordan, on behalf of all the BUD/S (Basic Underwater Demolition/School) candidates.

This is a man who wakes up every morning at 3:30 a.m., Monday through Friday, and leads us in two hours of intense PT. He does this for no other reason than he doesn't want a group of young men to give their all and fail. But he is by no means the only person I've seen give themselves in small acts of heroism everyday.

I've seen the staff and instructors teach their trade with patience, humor and devotion. I've seen it in my classmates and shipmates. It's humbling to look around you and see so many people who give of themselves. It makes you want to try harder to be a better person, just to fit in.

There's one quote I have kept with me since I joined the Navy. Months before I left for Boot Camp, I had the chance to go to Coronado, Calif., and tour the BUD/S facility. My recruiter was a SEAL and a BUD/S instructor, and he pulled some strings for me. There is a T-shirt shop in Coronado, one that sells shirts to all the graduating members of various BUD/S classes. Each class has their own T-shirt design, and there is a book filled with all the patterns of the T-shirts, some of them going back decades. Most of them were hoo-yah macho stuff, or funny little witticisms, but there was one that stood out in my mind. I memorized it, and put up in my locker at BUD/S.

It came the closest to capturing for me what it is to be in the Navy, and to do the job all of us in IS 'A' School will start to do. On the back of the T-shirt was a silhouette of a lone man, holding a rifle, standing watch on a hill.

Above him was a small quote, and these are the words I'll leave you with. It was quote from the Bible, Isaiah 6:8: And I heard the voice of the Lord say, 'Whom shall I send, and whom will you go for us?' Then I said, 'Here I am. Send Me.'

The only way they can beat us is by being smarter than us, trickier than us, by coming up with something we hadn't thought of, or hadn't prepared for.

The Final Word
But, he’s up to the challenge of being a...

... are you?