12 Eyes in the Sky

During Operation Desert Storm, 27 Iraqis signaled their desire to surrender to a 16-foot wingspan, unmanned aerial vehicle. At the same time in Cincinnati, young Timothy Davis discovered the wonders of radio-control aircraft. Little did he realize his new hobby would lead to a Navy career as an aviation structural mechanic with Fleet Composite Squadron (VC) 6 Detachment Patuxent River, Md. – the same command whose aircraft the Iraqis surrendered to in 1991.

Photo by PH2 Todd Frantom

20 The Laws of Engagement

Usually, the only imminent dangers Legalman 2nd Class Rachel Christofferson faces are paper cuts. Now, Christofferson’s primary legalman responsibilities are the same, but the hostile environment of Iraq has made her a soldier of sorts.

28 The Ingleside Navy

Sea-borne mines have wreaked more havoc on American warships and account for more than 75 percent of all battle damage to those warships since World War II. The threat is so great that Mine Warfare Command has a fleet of specialized ships, helicopters and explosive ordnance disposal personnel dedicated to hunting, sweeping and eliminating mines.

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HMC Jeffrey Cavallo, an independent duty corpsman assigned to Health Services Detachment, Marine Expeditionary Unit Service Support Group 11, 11th MEU (Special Operations Capable), examines a 13-year-old Iraqi during a Humanitarian Assistance Operation (HAO) in the village of Ash Shafiyah, Iraq. The HAO provided medical and dental treatment to more than 115 Iraqis.

Photo by Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Chago Zapata
Speaking with Sailors
Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
MCPON (SS/AW) Terry D. Scott

These questions came from discussions with Sailors at recent All Hands calls

Q: What resources are available to help me study for my upcoming exam?

A: There is no quick or easy way to study for an advancement exam. It takes a lot of work and it’s important that you start early to prepare for your upcoming exam. Your first step should be to get your bibliography from the Navy Advancement Center online at https://www.advancement.cnet.navy.mil.

To find everything you need to properly prepare for your exam, the Navy Advancement Center also has the Enlisted Advancement Exam Strategy Guide for your rating. This strategy guide also contains your bibliography and gives you a reference list for professional military knowledge, rating-specific knowledge and sample exam questions.

Inside the strategy guide you’ll find tips to help you better prepare for your exam, a list of instructions, self-study plans and training manuals to provide you with all of the information you need to pass the exam.

Once you have all the material you need, create a study plan, follow your plan and consider forming a study group with your shipmates.

Your strategy guide is really the best source available to study for your upcoming exam. It explains how the advancement system works and the variables that go into determining your final grade.

Q: I’m in danger of losing the leave that I’ve accrued due to my command’s deployment schedule. How will I be able to keep the leave days I’ve earned?

A: As many of our shipmates continue to serve on the front lines of the global war on terrorism, the opportunity for taking leave in some individual cases may be limited.

If you’re deployed for more than 120 consecutive days aboard a ship or with a mobile unit, check the new regulations that became effective with NAVADMIN 244/04. These new regulations limit the number of leave days you can earn.

If you plan on going over the maximum of 60 days, make sure to send your request for special leave accrual through your chain of command by the end of the fiscal year.

You work hard to earn the ability to take a break from your duty as a Sailor, so don’t let the opportunity slip away. Make sure you don’t lose the time off that you’ve earned and deserve.

Blue Angels 2005 Show Schedule

The Blue Angels soar through the bottom of a looping maneuver with the speed breaks extended to slow the aircraft’s airspeed during a 2005 air show in Davenport, Iowa. Photo by PH1 (AW) Shane T. McCoy

The Blue Angels Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, have announced their schedule for the 2005 show season. Following winter training, the Blue Angels will begin their 94th season at Naval Air Facility El Centro, Calif.

The Blue Angels are scheduled to perform 69 demonstrations at 35 air shows throughout the United States during the 2005 season. While the following dates have been approved, they are subject to change. For the most updated schedule information, log on to www.blueangels.navy.mil throughout the air show season.

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If you’re deployed for more than 120 consecutive days aboard a ship or with a mobile unit, check the new regulations that became effective with NAVADMIN 244/04. These changes allow qualifying Sailors the opportunity to now carry over up to 120 days of leave. The previous maximum allowance that could be requested was 90 days, and the standard maximum allowance remains at 60 days.

If you plan on going over the maximum of 60 days, make sure to send your request for special leave accrual through your chain of command by the end of the fiscal year.

You work hard to earn the ability to take a break from your duty as a Sailor, so don’t lose the opportunity to take a break from your everyday responsibilities that comes with serving your country. We want to make sure that you don’t lose the time off that you’ve earned and deserve.

The Blue Angels soar through the bottom of a looping maneuver with the speed breaks extended to slow the aircraft’s airspeed during a 2005 air show in Davenport, Iowa. Photo by PH1 (AW) Shane T. McCoy

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MARCH 2005 • ALL HANDS
This message, updated following the junior petty officer advancement exams, provides rating availability for non-designated strikers, advancement forecasts, CREO rating classifications, a list of critical skills and Perform to Serve (PTS) guidance.

Perform to Serve (PTS) guidance, a list of critical skills and advancements in the junior petty officer ranks has passed. The application deadline for the September cohorts is July 15. Applicants must ensure that all PCS orders are entered in the format listed in NAVAED 268/04 and sent, along with a copy of undergraduate transcripts, via the candidate's activity commanding officer to the Naval Postgraduate School, EMBA Director, Code GFFL. See NAVADMIN 268/04 for specific details and other qualification requirements.

All potential EMBA applicants are encouraged to visit the NPS Web site and complete an online interest form at their earliest convenience. For additional information on the program or the Naval Postgraduate School, visit the school’s Web site at www.nps.navy.mil.

For related news, visit the Naval Education and Training Command Navy NewsStand page at www.navy.mil/local/ctet.

Story by Jon Gagne, who is assigned to the public affairs office, Naval Education and Training Command.

C R E O / R E G A C a t e g o r i e s U p d a t e d

The Career/ Reenlistment Objectives (CREO), Rating Entry for General Apprentices (REGA) and the critical skills Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) codes have been updated and released in a naval message.

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recovery allow many more wounded service members to resume their careers.

"Today, if wounded service members want to remain in uniform and can do the job, the military tries to help them stay," Molino recalled the president telling the patients.

"This statement, this attitude," Molino continued, "has implications for everything from accessibility policy on military installations to the long-standing expectation that every active-duty service member must be able to deploy to combat anywhere in the world. We're re-examining our basic assumptions, and basic changes are on the way."

The department is committed to doing all it can to bring those changes about, Molino told the group.

"We're moving aggressively to help service members remain on active duty if they wish to do so," he said. "This is the news in DOD disability policy today."

Noting that with Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld wholeheartedly supporting keeping capable service members in the military, Molino said defense personnel officials are looking for ways to improve opportunities for veterans with disabilities in DOD's civilian work force.

**Career Management System Offers Expanded Service**

**Navy Personnel Command (NPC)** has launched a new, improved JASS (Job Advertising Selection System) currently used by commands, career counselors, Sailors and detailers to make career choices.

The new system is referred to as JCMS (for JASS Career Management System) and will be rolled out in several "spirals" or phases over the next several months.

"It has been a seamless transition for Sailors looking at available opportunities and applying for jobs," said Master Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (AW) Bill Place, the enlisted assignments leading chief petty officer at Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn. JCMS bridges the gap between the legacy distribution systems (JASS) and the Sea Warrior CMS functionality utilizing today's legacy environment.

"The system provides Sailors a Web-based distribution system linked to the Five-Vector Model (5VM)," explained Place.

The initial applications of JCMS introduce the concepts of Job Family/Job Code and Job Title. Job Family classifies work that is similar in nature. The Job Title would be specific jobs within the rate. For instance, for culinary specialists (CS), the Job Code would numerically break down to the first three digits representing the job family and the last three digits representing the job title, such as baker, recordkeeper or watch captain. The Job Code is still in development and will break things down even further as additional applications are brought into play.

Sailors who have logged on to NNK (Navy Knowledge Online) have already begun to see the benefits of CMS. They now have a direct link to their 5VM and access to their enlisted master file, which is a reference page containing personal career and contact data. Detailers are noticing the difference, too, as they take advantage of an additional avenue of direct feedback to the service member.

"Our MMs can now get a quick response through email telling them whether they were selected for the job they want," said Surface Machinist's Mate CPO detailed, Chief Machinist's Mate (SW) Joseph Deblan.

The recent activation of JCMS is just the beginning, though. Sailors are already seeing more information at their fingertips than ever before. Via NNK, they're receiving alerts and notifications of billets that will enhance their careers and meet personal criteria they entered in the system.

"We are seeing about 9,000 hits between the NKO and JASS access to JCMS such requisition cycle," said Master Chief Operations Specialist (SWAN) Pat Lumley, FEBS-4 senior enlisted advisor. "This system provides customized data for each Sailor to help them make the best job choices to apply for."

JCMS is easy to access through www.nko.navy.mil, the www.bupers.navy.mil or the www.bupersaccess.navy.mil sites.

Sailors will only be able to access their five-vector model (5VM) using the www.nko.navy.mil link.

"In JCMS, every Sailor will have the opportunity to select open requisitions and compare career growth opportunities via the 5VM," said Lumley. "Delivering these capabilities is a huge win in allowing Sailors to make a more educated career decision, which directly impacts career growth."

For more information on JCMS, visit www.bupers.navy.mil or call 1-866-U-ASK-NPC.

**Story by JDCS Karen Saich, who is assigned to Navy Personnel Command Communications.**

**MARCH 2005 • ALL HANDS**

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**Ricky’s Tour**

**By JO1 Mike Jones**

www.rickystour.com

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**Around the Fleet**

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**Story by JDCS Karen Saich, who is assigned to Navy Personnel Command Communications.**

**MARCH 2005 • ALL HANDS**
Sailors throughout their careers and intellectual horizons of that we broaden the professional success, “said Harms. “It is essential of education to mission and management-oriented learn- esences learning opportunities for the components of PME. "JPME will provide under- standing of the principles of joint- that underpin Seapower 21. Education in joint matters will enhance the ability of naval leaders to provide unique and comple- mentary warfighting from the sea to joint force commanders. Timely completion of appropriate JPME will be a key consideration in identifying future Navy leaders. According to Harms, NPME will provide a broad, common understanding of the Navy and its full capabilities, and better prepare Sailors to effectively perform their missions across the full spectrum of naval and joint military operations. NPME will also be sequenced across a career, and address three core competencies of the naval profession: military studies, professionalism, and national and global security. NPME will also be incorpo- rated into the Five Vector Model for all Sailors, and will become a staple in both officer and enlisted accession training. The Center for Naval Leadership has taken the lead, in conjunction with the Naval Post Graduate School, Naval War College, the Naval Historical Center, Naval Justice School and the Center for the Study of Professional Military Ethics at the U.S. Naval Academy, in developing a primary level course that will be implemented later this year. Content from this course will be used as the base- line for developing an intermedi- ate level course for senior enlisted personnel. Officials hope to have the first intermediate level course available by mid-fiscal year 2005. Harms’ senior enlisted leader, NETC Force Master Chief FORCM Michael J. McCalip, said the program is coming at the right time. "The Navy is experiencing transformation everywhere," McCalip said, "and providing a relevant PME program for all Sailors directly supports the Sea Warrior of the 21st century. We believe PME will provide us with a smarter, more agile force ready to meet every mission challenge." The McNair enlisted leader, NETC Force Master Chief FORCM Michael J. McCalip, said the program is coming at the right time. "The Navy is experiencing transformation everywhere," McCalip said, "and providing a relevant PME program for all Sailors directly supports the Sea Warrior of the 21st century. We believe PME will provide us with a smarter, more agile force ready to meet every mission challenge."

Harms added, “The flexibility this approach provides, and they want it.” Under PME, advanced educa- tion will emphasize the develop- ment of a technical or analytical knowledge base, critical thinking skills, an innovative mindset, and competencies to lead the Navy in the future. These education opportunities will include certifi- cates, degree programs, and courses and seminars tailored to meet the professional requirements of all Sailors. "We are transforming the way our Navy develops and equips the extraordinary men and women who choose to serve as members of the world’s finest military," said Harms. "As our Navy becomes more high tech, our workforce will get smaller and smarter. We’re going to need critical thinkers and agile learners if we’re going to achieve the Seapower 21 Navy that the CNO envisions. What we’re pursuing here is a future force that we believe will both want to be, and need to be, more educated than ever before.” For related news, visit the Naval Education and Training Command NewsStand page www.navy.mil/local/ctn.

Story courtesy of the public affairs office, Naval Education and Training Command, Pensacola, Fla.
It’s 1991 and Operation Desert Storm is in full swing near Kuwait City. A choking smoke fills the air, the result of oil refinery fires intentionally set by Iraqi soldiers. Machine gun fire can be heard in all directions, along with constant explosions from mortars. War is everywhere, but something is different – there’s a buzzing in the air.

While holding down defenses on Faylaka Island off the coast near Kuwait City, a group of 27 Iraqis experienced the new buzz first-hand. Flying at a low altitude just over the soldiers’ heads, they recognized there could soon be 2,000 pounds of bombs landing at their feet from the battleship USS Wisconsin (BB 63). The Iraqis made the right choice, and using handkerchiefs, shirts and sheets, they signaled their desire to surrender – to an unmanned vehicle with a 16-foot wide wingspan.
Meanwhile, on the other side of the world in mid-America, a teenage boy’s curiosity for these buzz makers came alive.

“While working at the local airport in my hometown of Cincinnati, I became interested in radio-control aircraft,” said Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class Timothy Davis. “I bought my first plane, used, at a local hobby shop. The plane was called an *Eaglet* about 60 inches wide, fully assembled. I was hooked immediately, just watching the aircraft fly, knowing I had full control. Then bringing it home with a safe landing was awesome,” he added.

Little did Davis know that his new-found addiction would become his career. Three years later, those two worlds collided when Davis was stationed at Fleet Composite Squadron (VC) 6 Detachment Patuxent River—the same command whose aircraft the Iraqis surrendered to during *Desert Storm*.

“When I was a teenager, I never dreamed that I would grow up and be able to work my love of radio flyers into a job, not to mention be a pilot of a multi-million dollar aircraft that flies combat missions. It’s just ironic that while I was just starting with remote control aircraft they were actually playing a vital role in wars around the world,” said Davis.

Like the small-scale *Eaglet* he started with prior to his Navy career, Davis now remotely pilots a *Pioneer* unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), the first of its kind for the Navy. *Pioneer* provides intelligence imagery for tactical commanders on land and at sea. Since its inception in the 1980s, *Pioneer* has flown more than 23,000 hours in direct support of Navy operational commanders.

*Pioneer* has a low radar cross section and a small infrared signature that minimizes its detection.

According to Davis, flying *Pioneer* isn’t much different from controlling his old flyers, according to Davis. “The plane we use, called the *MIG*, is about six feet across, only half the size of *Pioneer*,” said Davis. “I think all of us who pilot *Pioneer* have developed a love for flying in one form or another. We are the only enlisted personnel in the Navy who get to call ourselves pilots. I have a strong pride in what I do, especially when I go TAD and land one of those suckers on board a ship during a real mission, which I had the pleasure of doing a couple of years ago.”

The enlisted pilots of Webster Field, Patuxent River, Md., seem to have established a brotherhood among themselves, taking time after work and on weekends to further pursue their love of flying.

“We’ll get permission from the Webster Field flight control for air space at certain times so that we can fly our personal planes,” said AMS2 Harry Canter, also a pilot for VC-6. “Although it seems to be play time, the truth is that we are actually getting valuable practice for actual missions.”

Piloting the *Pioneer* UAV is only a small part in the overall operation of this remote-control aircraft. VC-6 is a squadron like any other in the Navy. They test and evaluate the *Pioneer* system along with other UAVs for integration into Navy and Marine units. Although the jobs are unique for the air community, the UAVs are handled just like any full-scale aircraft before and after each flight.

AMS2 Christopher Watters recently joined the squadron and found the small aircraft challenging.

“I came from a squadron where I worked on the P-3 *Orion*, which is a large aircraft. Working on the *Pioneer* is totally different; I feel like an airman again,” said Watters. “I joined the Navy for diversity in my job, and coming here has certainly afforded me that. Regardless of the small size of our aircraft, nothing is overlooked in the vehicle’s operation.”

For testing and evaluation of the *Pioneer* at Webster Field, shore-based procedures are used. The *Pioneer* system can also be deployed aboard LPD-class naval vessels. A normal flight day for the *Pioneer* starts at 5:30 a.m. with a mission brief and flight plan. Pilots and operations personnel must calculate normal and emergency air vehicle capabilities with existing conditions and mission requirements.

*Pioneer* can be drastically affected by
station (GCS) a small, highly transportable shelter about the size of a small room. After systems are up and ready, Pioneer is pulled out of its hangar bay by a vehicle adjacent to the runway for startups. First and foremost a foreign object damage (FOD) walk-down takes place. Although, seemingly absurd for a remote control aircraft it’s very necessary. Pioneer has a screaming 27-horsepower, 2-stroke engine capable of turning a small pebble into a deadly projectile. Not to mention a single spinning blade that could leave a person with a really bad day. “Safety is ultra important. Even with this remote control flyer,” said Ross. “The Pioneer makes the most annoying buzzing sound, there is no question why protective hearing equipment has to be worn during the operation of the aircraft.”

Prior to starting the engine, a qualified fire guard is stationed near the engine and remains in readiness with a fire bottle until the engine is operating.

Driven by a pusher propeller, the aircraft relays video and/or telemetry information from its payload to the ground control station (GCS) and/or portable control station (PCS) in real time. Pioneer is used for reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition, fire support adjustment and battle damage assessment.

Weather, so careful attention is taken in the planning for flights,” said Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class (AW) Robert Ross “If it’s raining, snowing or even drizzling, we aren’t flying.”

With weather permitting, all systems are made operational aboard the ground control station (GCS) a small, highly transportable shelter about the size of a small room. After systems are up and ready, Pioneer is pulled out of its hangar bay by a vehicle adjacent to the runway for startups. First and foremost a foreign object damage (FOD) walk-down takes place. Although, seemingly absurd for a remote control aircraft it’s very necessary.

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With weather permitting, all systems are made operational aboard the ground control station (GCS) a small, highly transportable shelter about the size of a small room. After systems are up and ready, Pioneer is pulled out of its hangar bay by a vehicle adjacent to the runway for startups. First and foremost a foreign object damage (FOD) walk-down takes place. Although, seemingly absurd for a remote control aircraft it’s very necessary.

Pioneer has a screaming 27-horsepower, 2-stroke engine capable of turning a small pebble into a deadly projectile. Not to mention a single spinning blade that could leave a person with a really bad day. “Safety is ultra important. Even with this remote control flyer,” said Ross. “The Pioneer makes the most annoying buzzing sound, there is no question why protective hearing equipment has to be worn during the operation of the aircraft.”

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Even starting the Pioneer is similar to its larger manned aircraft. Beginning with preflight inspections overseen by a qualified mission commander who ensures a complete system inspection has been accomplished prior to flight and ending with the chief pulling chocks and tie-downs. There is also a fire guard stationed near the engine who remains in readiness with a fire bottle until the engine is operating. "Although a lot is set in place for starting Pioneer, the actual start-up closely resembles that of my remote control airplanes," said Davis. "Like placing a T-rod drill bit into the nose prop and spinning it up, which starts the engine; however this is on a much larger scale."

Once Pioneer is started, the aircraft is moved onto the flight line and positioned in the proper wind direction. Closely resembling a launch from an aircraft carrier, the crew chief signals the final launch sequence for the UAV. But there are events taking place that seem almost absurd and comical. "For my first launch, I was the hold back, which means you stand at the back of Pioneer and hold on for dear life, not letting the aircraft go until the crew chief signals me to do so," said Watters. "That has to be the most ridiculous thing I have ever done in my Navy career."

But there is a logical explanation for everything that takes place during the launch and recovery of Pioneer. "We launch Pioneer using a control from the PCS then switch to a basic radio controller and that’s when the fun begins. It’s much more intense to fly, with speeds reaching 50 miles per hour and reaching altitudes of 1,200 feet, it far surpasses my personal radio flyers."

"The range of it is also impressive," added Davis. "It can fly about 100 miles on the GCS and 20 miles on PCS for approximately four hours. This is an incredible job. Just think, I’m getting paid for flying remote control aircraft," said Davis.

"WE ARE THE ONLY ENLISTED PERSONNEL IN THE NAVY WHO GET TO CALL OURSELVES (AERIAL) PILOTS."
— AMS1 Timothy Davis

The Pioneer system also has protocols for automatically returning the aircraft or sending it to a designated location if it goes off course. Enlisted pilots like Davis, train and evaluate the Pioneer system every day. What started as a teenage interest for him paved the way for technology and the evolving unmanned vehicles. Today’s enemy hears a sound coming from a dot in the sky. It’s a mere speck to the wayward fighter, especially one expecting large, swift planes streaking through the sky at light speeds. But, the sound is coming from a UAV. Meanwhile, Pioneer successfully touches down and takes off again, guided by enlisted pilots and crews at Webster Field—the place where the buzz is born.

Fantom is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

Prior to starting the Pioneer, flight personnel conduct a foreign object damage (FOD) walkdown on the flight line. While it seems absurd for an unmanned aerial vehicle, it’s necessary for safety.

AMC Frank Paulus and AM2 Harry Canter hone their flight skills on the "MIG," a training aircraft used to acclimate pilots to the proper use of control "sticks."

AT1(AW) Robert Ross prepares a personal aircraft for flight at Webster Field.

Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200503/feature_1/
Attention! Applebees!, the leader of the hovering pack loudly bellows to the diners in the restaurant while motioning to everyone to clap along with her and her posse. “Today, we’re celebrating Rachel’s last day of work at the base’s Legal Services Office before she leaves on a six-month deployment, and we’d like everyone to help us celebrate her farewell.

“So, Sailor,” the waitress demands, turning her attention back to Legalman 2nd Class Rachel Christofferson, “where ya headed?” After recovering from being put on the spot, Christofferson replies in her soft voice, “Iraq.”

Although anxious about leaving her family behind and what ultimately lies before her in Iraq, Lt. Rachel Christofferson eagerly and adeptly tackles each new challenge.
The effect of her response is instantaneous—as if the entire establishment has been frozen in time.

The waitstaff stops mid-clap and looks as if someone had just popped all their balloons. Loud gasps and quiet, anxious murmers ripple through the lunch crowd. In the back corner booth a woman whispers not at all discreetly, “They’re sending that little girl to Iraq? Good Lord, that’s no reason to celebrate.”

Only Christofferson and her co-workers manage to maintain their light-heartedness by bursting into fits of laughter at the overwhelming absurdity and awkwardness of the moment.

Almost a month to the day following her memorable farewell luncheon, Christofferson (who has since traded her crisp, starched working whites for some slightly dusty desert cammies) sits half a world away from the cramped restaurant table. She’s administering an IV to Pablo Fonseca, a civilian firefighter and fellow student at the three-day Combat Lifesaver Course (CLC) at Camp Victory, Iraq.

With an array of needles, tubing and bandages spread out on the sterile white cloth in front of her, Christofferson tightens a rubber tourniquet-like strap across Fonseca’s bicep, hovers a 14-gauge needle over his rapidly fattening vein and listens attentively to last minute details on the optimal number of drips per minute. She’s administered an IV as first responders to the scene of an accident in the states, only certified medical personnel would be permitted to start an IV. “Well, it’s not exactly the same, but it’s important that my children know what I experienced while I was separated from them,” said Christofferson.

Minutes later, another instructor ducks into the trailer with news of the explosion. A suicide driver has detonated his vehicle-born improvised explosive device (VBIED) on Route Irish (a notoriously dangerous five-mile stretch of road connecting Camp Victory to downtown Baghdad), killing a civilian medic and injuring three other passengers. Attacks along the route have become so frequent that helicopters have become a means of travel to and from the city.

This is not the case for Christofferson. Her office continues to make the trip by convoy three days a week. And tomorrow she’ll be driving—hence, the need for a Navy LN to learn about IVs. But if news of the fatal attack has shaken her, it certainly doesn’t show. She continues to joke with Fonseca while adjusting the amount of saline flowing through his IV, and waits for the instructor’s remarks.

After checking to make sure Christofferson has secured all excess tubing with medical tape, Galvan nods approval and asks, “Ready to be on the receiving end of the stick?”

Christofferson’s transition from a medic and CLC instructor, to which she’s currently assigned, and prepares for the next morning’s convoy. The Detainee Operations Legal Office acquires from the Army just may serve to bring her home safely.

With medical kit in hand, Christofferson returns back to the Camp Victory Detainee Operations Legal Office, to which she’s currently assigned, and prepares for the next morning’s convoy. The Detainee Operations Legal Office acquired from the Army just may serve to bring her home safely.
The five-mile stretch of road from Camp Victory into downtown Baghdad, Iraq, nicknamed "Route Irish," is notorious for the number of insurgent attacks that occur almost daily. Camp Victory's Legal Office staff travels Route Irish three days each week for the Criminal Review Boards. Says Christofferson, "I'm not messing around, if any vehicle tries to cut into our convoy, or separate us — I will knock them off the road."

"Irish is attacked almost daily by RPGs, IEDs, VBEDs and small arms fire. Fortunately for us, our group hasn't been targeted yet," continued Wynn. "In part, it's just plain luck. But it's also because when we go out that gate, we're ready for a fight. We're armed to the teeth; we're hauling down the road at high speeds; and we're constantly shifting lanes. We look like we're ready for anything, and most terrorists out there are lazy and look for a soft target." True to Wynn's description, Christofferson looks more like a soldier than a paper-pushing Sailor. Packing up her weapons while watching movies in her room, her characteristic half-smile is replaced with a look of aggressive determination.

"One of my co-workers who just left hit it right on the head when he described the drive down Irish as an eight-minute adrenaline rush," said Christofferson. "Your nerves are in hyperdrive because you're constantly looking for an attack."

As the six Hummers roll down the asphalt, most civilian traffic immediately moves aside. Drivers look straight ahead, hands gripping their steering wheels tightly, as if afraid to give any wrong signals to the intimidating group. And, when traffic suddenly begins to stop for unknown reasons, Christofferson and her fellow convoy drivers avoid the danger of being trapped by instinctively cutting over the median and barreling down the on-coming lanes.

Although the crew arrives without incident on this particular morning, attacks along the motorway and incoming mortars aren't the only dangers to be faced in Iraq. Later the same week on another trip into Baghdad's International Zone (IZ), the CRRB legal team begins their morning as usual. Military police have already swept the offices for suspicious materials, and a few of the Iraqi panel members had begun to arrive when a VBED with 1,081 pounds of explosives is detonated at the checkpoint only 200 meters from the building.

The tremor from the blast shakes the building's massive frame and windows. After ensuring everyone is safe (including the panel members still en route), the board presses on as usual.

"The danger to every person on the board—military and civilian alike—is ever-present. Yet despite the threat to life and limb, members of the CRRB continue to come together three days a week because this is our country," explains an unnamed Iraqi panel member whose car was flipped onto another vehicle 20 yards away during the checkpoint explosion.

"What we do here is important because of the many our neighbors, friends or family. In some cases, men have just been in the wrong place at the wrong time," he continues. "Others pose serious threats to our way of life. It's up to us to weigh each case thoroughly and thoughtfully."

Army Col. John Phelps, officer-in-charge and legal advisor of Camp Victory's Detainee Operations office, additionally stresses the importance of his office's joint-service atmosphere.

"Having a team comprised of military members from all branches of service brings together people with various levels of education and experience. And, in so doing, allows us to view legal matters from a variety of perspectives," says Phelps.

"Christofferson and other Sailors, Marines or Airmen like her play an important role to our office's overall success."

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The hardships and dangers Christofferson has become accustomed to in her new field office are many. But the most difficult challenge for the 24-year-old has been the separation from her family.

Maintains approximately 33,000 records of all detainees held at Abu Ghraib prison since the beginning of the war. While a majority of detainees have since been released from the prison, records remain on file at Camp Victory. Three days every week, the office's small staff, comprised of legal workers from all branches of service, convos to Baghdad to present detainee records to Iraqi panel members at Combined Review and Release Boards (CRRB). Christofferson's job is to track each detainee's record and be familiar with its status, ensure the records up for review are transported to CRRB on the appropriate date and that the panel's ultimate decision is documented in the computer system for subsequent reports.

"Most people make the mistake of thinking that because these guys work in a legal office at Camp Victory, they somehow have it easy," said Non-Commissioned Officer-in-Charge (NCOIC) Army Master Sergeant Evan Wynn. "What they fail to recognize is that these men and women work extremely long hours. All the paperwork they process must be done correctly the first time around due to the documents' high visibility. And, on top of everything, they convoy down some of the nastiest, deadliest roads in the region several times each week."

"Trish is attacked almost daily by RPGs, IEDs, VBEDs and small arms fire. Fortunately for us, our group hasn't been targeted yet," continued Wynn. "In part, it's just plain luck. But it's also because when we go out that gate, we're ready for a fight. We're armed to the teeth; we're hauling down the road at high speeds; and we're constantly shifting lanes. We look like we're ready for anything, and most terrorists out there are lazy and look for a soft target."

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The hardships and dangers Christofferson has become accustomed to in her new field office are many. But the most difficult challenge for the 24-year-old has been the separation from her family.
“When I left, my little boy, David, was barely crawling, and in the short time I’ve been here he’s already walking,” said a downhearted Christofferson.

She often stays later than the 8 p.m. office hours to call home. And, as any front-line soldier would do, she deliberately avoids revealing any details of her day that might cause them worry.

“It seems to be particularly difficult for my middle child. My husband, Chris, says that every time Aubry speaks with me she regresses to acting and talking like a baby for days afterward,” Christofferson says.

“So, we’ve decided that it’s best that I don’t talk with her every phone call. I know it’s hard on the kids, but I couldn’t use them as an excuse not to come over here and do my part.

“I think duty in Iraq is something every legalman should experience,” continues Christofferson. “It is a chance to do and learn more than our rate typically offers. And I like knowing that the work I’m doing here is making a difference and is a part of history,” she concludes.

There are those who may argue that a Sailor’s place is at sea, while a soldier’s is on the ground. Yet, as operational needs in Iraq continue to increase, so will the Navy’s presence in theater.

LN2 Rachel Christofferson is only one of many Sailors voluntarily reporting for duty in dangerous combat zones doing exactly what the Navy has trained her to do—perform her rated specialty under extraordinary circumstances. As it turns out, Sailors (even the administrative type) can make damned fine soldiers, too.

Darby is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.
“When you can’t go where you want to, when you want to, you haven’t got command of the sea. Command of the sea is the bedrock for all our war plans.”

– ADM Forrest Sherman, CNO
Korea mine crisis, October 1950
Don’t rush Petty Officer Chiles while he works. The fate of your ship might someday depend on his patience.

“We hold everyone’s lives in our hands,” said Mineman 3rd Class Jonathan Chiles, of USS Devastator (MCM 6). “This is no job, it’s life or death.”

Cheap, stealthy and deadly, sea-borne mines have wreaked more havoc on American warships and account for more than 75 percent of all battle damage to those warships since World War II. “Mines are the biggest threat to our vessels, and they’re everywhere,” said George Betz, operations department head, Naval Support Activity (NSA), Panama City, Fla.

The threat is so great that Naval Station Ingleside, Texas, (home of the Navy’s Mine Warfare Command), has an entire fleet of specialized ships like Devastator, helicopters and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) personnel dedicated to hunting, sweeping and eliminating mines. Known as the mine countermeasures (MCM) triad, these Sailors sail, fly and dive into the perils of the world’s waters.

Sailing such treacherous seas demands a Sailor with the right attitude.

“Not everyone can do it. You have to have the right personality,” said Electronics Technician 3rd Class Jimmy Rush, of USS Devastator. “When people are first exposed to the “Ingleside Navy,” it freaks them out. We’re a lot like airline security – slow, meticulous and irritating. But, like them, if we don’t take our time and do as good a job as we can, then we put the whole fleet in danger.”

Sailors aboard USS Tripoli (LPH 10), USS Princeton (CG 59) and USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG 58) know those dangers all too well. All three ships were damaged by mines in recent times.

Though mine warfare’s true beginnings are undocumented, Americans first used the sneaky, sea-lane booby traps during the Revolutionary War. Colonists used powder kegs with slow-burning fuses to attack aggressive British ships entering American harbors. Since then, debate has raged among modern war fighters as to the ethical basis for using such a weapon.

“Rogue nations are going to do what they think they need to do to inhibit an opposing force,” said CDR Bob Findley, commanding officer, Naval Support Activity (NSA) Panama City, Fla.

Honorable or not, nations all over the world use mines because of their relative cheapness and ease of employment to persuade aggressive enemies to launch their attacks somewhere else. Once a mine is deployed, it doesn’t need food, a paycheck...
periscopes through the surface of the water to attack their prey, minemen like Chiles have to look for shapes.

One of the ways MCM Sailors do this is with a bottom mapping sonar system that can identify mine-like shapes as small as a tin can. The process is tedious, but effective. On occasion, mine searches can reward the steadfast, serious-minded hunters with light-hearted discoveries.

“We’ve found file cabinets, soda machines or liberty calls. All it needs is a very unlucky ship to cross its path. While a mine doesn’t have to be high tech to work, searching for them does. “A needle in a haystack is a lot easier to find than a mine,” said Findley. “Three fourths of the earth’s surface is water. Finding a mine is more like finding something the size of a speck of sand on the beach.” Since mines don’t emit sounds, produce heat, make transient sounds or poke

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“They’ve found file cabinets, soda machines and downed airplanes,” said Rush. “But the most interesting thing we found was a toilet, which I think is pretty neat because it’s made entirely of porcelain.”

Here’s how a mine-like shape scenario might take place on an MCM like Devastator. Once the Sailors in the combat information center (CIC) identify a mine-like object on sonar, the ship’s commanding officer and the EOD detachment’s officer-in-charge make a decision about the best way to visually verify the contact as a mine.

On Devastator, a remotely-piloted submersible vehicle, known to her crew simply as “Willy” and highly-trained EOD technicians are at the CO’s disposal. “Willy,” officially named the SLQ-48 Mine Neutralization Vehicle (MNV), carries video surveillance cameras that transmit real-time imagery to the MNV pilots back aboard Devastator. Robotic arms at the front of Willy allow the pilots to move, cut and search

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for mines.
for flying the sub-aquatic craft because of the complexity involved in mastering their flight. "Officers usually only have a two-year tour aboard Devastator, so there’s no time to become proficient," said Mineman 2nd Class (SW) Ralph Kersey, an SLQ-48 mine neutralization vehicle (MNV) pilot. "We’re here for four and five years, so we get much better at it."

While finding mines is tough, it’s not the only challenge. Sailors aboard Devastator have to face. At an operational cruising speed of between one and three knots, life aboard Devastator can be slow – real slow. And that suits her crew just fine.

“We have to be overly cautious,” said Chiles. “I’d rather identify a lobster trap than classify it as a mine-like object – O.K. We live to hunt mines again tomorrow, but if it’s not, we’re dead.” Devastator’s sloth-like pace isn’t the only downside to serving aboard MCMs.

"Compared to a destroyer," said LCDR Kendall Gennick, USN Devastator’s commanding officer, "this ship rides rough. It’s affected by the wind more, especially when we’re trying to hover. Everyone gets seasick eventually on one of these things.” Despite sailing on a ship that rocks more than a bobble-head doll, most Sailors aboard MCMs refuse to serve on any other ship.

“I get to do more aboard here than I’d ever do on a bigger ship,” said Kersey. “I get to learn other people’s rates and other people’s fields. I know everyone’s names, their kid’s names, their wives’ names and where they went to school. I have friends in a lot of rates. And, [Naval Station] Ingleside is such a small base that I know most people on the other MCMs too.”

A smaller crew does more than breed familiarity; it serves as a factory for super Sailors. "Minemen are jacks of all trades," said Chiles. “We are all the rates, QMs, FTs, OSs, STGs, ETs. It’s tough, but it makes us better Sailors. The ship is too small to have a lot of people, so we learn everyone’s job. If they ever put me on a different platform, they’ll be able to put me just about anywhere.”

MCM crews aren’t the only ones who notice the crew’s camaraderie. “On a carrier you’re just another body,” said frequent MCM rider, Builder 1st Class (EOD/SW) Denis “J” Smaistrla, EODMU 6 Det 2. “Nobody notices you. There are so many people, so what’s seven to 14 more? On a carrier you stand in line just to think. The crew is a lot tighter on a small ship because you have an opportunity to meet everybody. I prefer MCMs over carriers because of the crew.”

Meanwhile, the helicopters that fly mine countermeasure missions are the biggest birds on the flight line, much to the delight of all aboard. “There’s plenty of room to wander around on a Sea Dragon,” said Aviation Structural Mechanic (Equipment) 3rd Class (NAC) Renee A. Pestel, second crewman Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron (H(MC) 15, “SH-60s are real small. Compared to a destroyer, it’s almost like an aerial deep-sea fishing boat trollling for Blue Marlin.”

“Hunting mines in a helicopter is like fishing, you just have to find the right lure,” said Kevin Oakes, Inspection and Survey Airborne Mine Countermeasure Tactics project engineer. “As part of MINEWARCOM’s commitment to keeping the fleet safe, MCMs and MH-60E and MH-60S helicopters are forward deployed to Bahrain. In typical MCM triad missions, EOD and STG personnel launch MH-60E helicopters to search for and destroy mines. EOD teams are then flown to the hunt area by MH-60S helicopters.”

"Minemen aren’t any braver than other Sailors," said Gennick. “All Sailors are willing to serve their country no matter what the danger is; they’re all ready to go into harm’s way.”

“You can’t buy the experience that comes when you’re working aboard Devastator. Every day you’re out in the field hunting mines; it’s just different.”

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Religious Program Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Rita Hurts has an unhesitating streak of determination coursing through her. She has seized every opportunity during seven years in the Navy, and recently took the position as the top Sailor in her field.

Hurts, the only religious specialist for Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, forward-deployed to Yokosuka, Japan, was named the Navy's Religious Program Specialist (RP) of the Year for 2004.

"I think it verifies the kind of work she's done," said DESRON 15 Staff Chaplain (LT) Robert Jones, about Hurts' achievement. "It sets her in the upper direction of the Navy and validates the unique work of RPs. When you see her, you see how an RP is supposed to function," he said. "She's a self starter, self-motivated; she's mature, with a wide range of experiences, and she is seasoned because she has a great attitude combined with that."

Hurts is the second person to receive the award, which is intended to recognize top professionals who work in that field. She finished as the Pacific Fleet RP of the Year in 2003.

According to CDR Newman Evans, Hurts' commanding officer and chief staff officer for DESRON 15, "It's one of those things that's easy because it's something she did. It's already done. The types of things she does for us speak for themselves."

Hurts serves as a key player in management, coordination and training of lay leaders aboard the seven ships of DESRON 15.

"When the chaplain is not personally available to one of the ships, we use a lay leader under his direction who answers to the captain of the ship," said Hurts. "We provide training for them, and I make sure they have all the materials they need—things like bibles, books and study materials."

Through her work with the ships, and after diligently completing necessary qualifications, Hurts managed to qualify as an Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist aboard USS Cushing (DD 985) on Dec. 7, 2003.

At the Chapel of Hope aboard Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Hurts again seized an opportunity in the Navy. She reenlisted and received a selective reenlistment bonus of $15,000 for taking orders to the Training Support Center, Great Lakes, IL, where she will help coordinate and facilitate A-school training, and maybe even help some determined junior Sailor embark on a journey toward RP of the Year.

Dille is a photojournalist assigned to the public affairs office, Commander, Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan.

Story and photo by JO2(SW) Patrick Dille
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.

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: navyvisualnews@navy.mil

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For a new Eye on the Fleet every day, click on the Navy’s home page, www.navy.mil, for fresh images of your shipmates in action.
I’m not the kind of guy that gets easily taken in by motivational stories. Never have been. So when I pass through a bookstore on the way to the sports section (the only section for me), I try to run through the self-improvement and motivational section as quickly as humanly possible, lest something actually rubs off on me.

But it always takes longer than I would hope. Apparently, there are a lot of people out there willing to write a lot of things so that we can all become a better, more enhanced public. And it makes for one heck of a big section in the bookstore.

In that section, you could find any number of books written by everyone from Dr. Phil to the dean of American self improvement, Donald Trump. If you have a problem, you better believe you can learn how to solve it there.

But if anyone ever asks me about how to become a better, more motivated person, I’m not sending them to Barnes & Noble. Nope, inquiring minds coming to me will be sent straight to Naval Air Reserve Point Mugu to see Yeoman 2nd Class Nancy Aguirre.

After years of not having the drive, impulse or time to put herself through the physical torture that comes with running a half-marathon, Aguirre found her inspiration in the form of a 14-year-old nephew of a co-worker. His name was Jerod. And at the time, he was dying of leukemia.

“I always had trouble making time to train for something as serious as a half-marathon,” said Aguirre, who ran nothing longer than a 5K race before participating in the Santa Barbara News Press Half-Marathon on Nov. 6. “I’ve been wanting to do one for awhile, but between work and school (she’s a full time student), I never felt like I had the time.”

All that changed when she heard about Jerod Johnson, the leukemia-stricken nephew of Chief Aviation Maintenance Administrationman (AW) Jill Stack. “For some reason, I just felt like I needed to do something to help,” Aguirre said. “So I decided to run the race in his honor.”

But running the race was the smallest part of what she did. As Aguirre began training for the 13-mile event, she also started raising money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. “I just started accepting donations and talking to people about the disease and what it does to you,” she said about her fundraising efforts. “A lot of times, the fact that I was running a race for Jerod never even came up. I just wanted to help the cause.”

And help she did, raising more than $1,000 for leukemia and lymphoma research before the run (she continues to raise money to this day). As for the actual race, Aguirre represented herself well, running the course in one hour, 43 minutes, good for 190th place out of more than 2,500 runners.

Aguirre’s efforts were not lost on Stack. “It takes someone with a big heart to put their body through something like that in order to help others,” she said. “I thought it was a great idea.”

Unfortunately, Jerod wasn’t able to see Aguirre run the race for him. He died Sept. 25, before Aguirre even had the chance to meet her teenage inspiration.

“It was hard on all of us,” Aguirre said of Jerod’s death. “There were a lot a tears flowing that day. I wish I could have met him and told him how important he was to us, but somehow, I think he knows.”

You know what? Maybe I am the kind of guy that can get taken in by a motivational story after all.
Physical Training

“What’s Your Game?”