EARNING THE YELLOW SHIRT

Cuban Sanctuary
22 Earning Yellow

Injury or death is only a moment’s inattention away when you work on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier. Choreographing this dance with danger are the flight deck’s masters of this supercharged environment – the “yellow shirts.”

Photo by PH3 Todd Frantom

14 Cuban Sanctuary

Ninety miles off the coast of Florida, an enclosed society resides on America’s oldest overseas base – Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, also known as “Gitmo.” Surrounded by barbed wire, the forced seclusion has created a fragile balance of life, in limbo between two adversarial nations. The U.S. Navy is at the forefront of preserving and protecting this remote enclave of Cuba’s environment.

Photo by PH3 Todd Frantom

30 Fixing the Fleet

Ships in the Mid-Atlantic region do not have to go far to find their favorite mechanics. They place their trust with the Sailors at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center (MARMC), formerly the Shore Intermediate Maintenance Activity (SIMA), in Norfolk, MARMC Sailors provide global support to the fleet, perform thousands of jobs and save the Navy millions of dollars in the process.

Photo by PH3 Todd Frantom
An aviation ordnanceman, assigned to the Weapons Department aboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), cleans the cover of an ammunition storage box on a catwalk.

Photo by PHAN Christopher B. Long
This question is from a discussion with Sailors during a recent visit to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Q: What resources are available for Sailors currently in the process of transferring to a new command?

A: One of our many benefits of being in the Navy is having the opportunity to continue to work for the same employer while moving to new and interesting places all over the world. But it’s also understandable to be apprehensive about an upcoming transfer when it’s something we do only once every few years. At times it can be a stressful period for you and your family, but there are many resources available to make your transition easier.

The process of gathering information on your new command begins as soon as you start looking for available billets on the Job Advertising and Selection System (JASS) at https://www.jass.navy.mil. If a command’s website is available there, you will be able to click on their “GIC” to link to their site.

Upon receipt of your orders, it’s important to read every page to find helpful resources for locating and applying for housing, setting up your household goods shipment and tips on relocation.

If you’re transferring from sea to shore, your command’s sponsorship coordinator will be able to help you get in touch with someone at your next command to act as your sponsor. Your sponsor is someone you can contact for apartment/home rental information and to act as a resource to answer any questions you may have about the local area to which you are moving. A sponsor is always important, but one is imperative if you’re transferring to an overseas area to which you are moving. A sponsor is always important, but one is imperative if you’re transferring to an overseas area to which you are moving. A sponsor is always important, but one is imperative if you’re transferring to an overseas area to which you are moving. A sponsor is always important, but one is imperative if you’re transferring to an overseas area to which you are moving.

There are also many online resources available to assist you with your relocation.

As soon as you know the location of your next duty station, you should visit the DOD SITES website (http://www.dodsc.osd.mil/sites/). Once you log in, you’ll find information on planning your Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move, as well as a printable booklet providing you with check-in procedures, base regulations and an overview of the base activities and local culture.

Your base Fleet and Family Support Center will be able to help provide you with helpful information on transferring to a new command. For those who don’t have immediate access to an FFSC, Military One Source (http://www.militaryonesource.com) is a great place to go for help with the many issues a local FFSC would provide. One Source also offers a 24/7 helpline.

Navy Personnel Command’s website (http://www.npc.navy.mil) has relocation assistance information as well, with links to stateside and overseas locations to assist with learning about different commands on base, area schools, housing and TRICARE information.

Don’t forget to ask your chief or a shipmate who has recently transferred - they are two of the most likely people to have the experience or firsthand knowledge to help you prepare.

A transfer is much easier when you are organized, know what to expect, and plan for any possible changes along the way. By using your available resources, you should be able to help ensure yourself and your family a successful PCS.

Additional online resources:
- http://www.housing.navy.mil
- http://www.militarymooringcenter.com
- http://www.navy-lodge.com

What are you building your nest egg with?

Beginning July 1, 2005, you can make changes to your Thrift Savings Plan anytime. For more information visit www.tsp.gov.
New Campaign Medals Recognize Iraq, Afghanistan Service

The new campaign medals were established by presidential order for service members who have been assigned, attached or mobilized to units operating in these areas, officials said.

Until now, service members deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq during the designated timeframes were awarded the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal. "By awarding separate medals, we will recognize the specific contribution that our servicemen and women have made in Afghanistan and Iraq," said Bill Carr, deputy undersecretary of defense for military personnel policy. "It’s appropriate that we present them with an award that truly honors their heroic service in these operations."

Service members with the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal remain qualified for it, but officials said they may apply for the appropriate new campaign medal, as well.

Military personnel may receive both of the new campaign medals if they meet the requirement for both awards. However, officials said the qualifying period of service for one award can’t be used to justify eligibility for the other.

Just one award of each of the new medals is authorized, as no service member is entitled for one award can’t be used to justify eligibility for the other. Each military department will serve as the awarding authority for the new campaign medals and issue regulations for processing, awarding and wearing them, officials said. Story courtesy of American Forces Press Service.

Afghanistan Campaign Medal (top), Iraq Campaign Medal (bottom)

The Navy Legal Service Office, Europe and Southwest Asia, is reminding Sailors of the dangers of identity theft.

Mail fraud and e-mail fraud are two forms of identity theft that service members can easily protect themselves against.

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Around the Fleet

An Indonesian patient receives a Computed Axial Tomography (CAT) scan aboard the hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19).

Photo by PHN Ricardo J. Reyes

The pilot of an F/A-18A+ Hornet, assigned to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 115, checks his speed prior to launch aboard USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75).

Photo by PH3 Jonathan Chandler

AM2 Keith Killian repairs a wing tip position light on an F/A-18F Super Hornet, assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 102, aboard USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63).

Photo by PH3 Christopher J. Ray

To be considered for the “Around the Fleet” section, forward your high resolution (5” x 7” at 300 dpi) images with full credit and cutline information, including full name, rank and duty station to:
navyvisualnews@navy.mil

Mail your submissions to:
Navy Visual News Service
1210 Navy Pentagon, Bldg. 14554
Washington, D.C. 20350-1210

Click on the Navy’s home page, www.navy.mil, for fresh images of your shipmates in action.

Burley, Military Career Readiness PFM specialist, Commander, Navy Installations (CNI), Millington Det. “They don’t have to wait to sign-up, and they can start saving right away.”

As of April 15, TSP participants could file contribution elections at any time. Through June 30, these elections will be processed under the current rules. Starting July 1, contribution elections will be processed under the new rules, which means that contribution elections will be processed the first full pay period after they are filed.

“TSP is a great way to build wealth and start securing your financial future,” continued Burley, “and given the advantages of compound interest, this is the perfect time to start planning for retirement.”

In 2005, TSP offers participants the freedom to contribute up to 10 percent of their base pay and all special pay and bonuses, up to a maximum of $14,000. Combat-zone participants are allowed a higher contribution dollar limit, up to $40,000 a year. Contributions are tax-deferred until withdrawal, and TSP is available with several flexible withdrawal options.

Initial enrollment can be completed online at https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx or by completing a TSP Election Form (TSP-U-1) submitted to the local Personnel Support Detachment. For more information on TSP, contact a Fleet and Family Support Program personal financial management specialist, command financial specialist, or visit the TSP Web site at www.tsp.gov.

Additional information is available from Navy One Source at www.navyonesource.com or by calling 1-800-348-4123. Story courtesy of Fleet and Family Support Program Marketing, Commander, Navy Installations, Millington Det.

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Click on the Navy’s home page, www.navy.mil, for fresh images of your shipmates in action.

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Hoewing. “Quality and competitiveness will receive additional emphasis and further ensure enlisted communities maintain healthy career progression.”

The Navy estimates approximately 1,520 E-5 Sailors will be affected by the HYT change after the transition period ends. A decrease of about 600 fewer retirements is expected once the new policy is fully implemented in FY09.

While waivers to HYT dates may be requested via the chain of command to Navy Personnel Command, they are rarely granted and only if justified by mission readiness requirement.

For more information on the HYT adjustment see NAVADMIN 056/05 available soon on the Web at www.persnet.navy.mil/navadm/05605.html. Complete information on the Navy's HYT policy is contained in Military Personnel Manual (MILPERS-MAN) 1160-120.

Story by Sharon Anderson, of the public affairs office, Chief of Naval Personnel.

All Officers Commissioned Regular Navy

I1 officers commissioned to the active-duty list in the Navy will be given regular appointments regardless of commissioning source beginning May 1, 2005; this change is directed for all services by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2005.

“This furthered the Navy’s efforts to create one aligned and integrated force for the 21st century under our Human Capital Strategy,” said VADM Gery Hoewing, Chief of Naval Personnel. “We are seeking ways to reduce barriers, eliminate unnecessary or duplicated processes and create a more efficient Navy; there is no reason to have these designations.”

Reserve commissioned officers currently on the active-duty list will transition to regular officer status no later than May 1, 2006, as long as they meet the necessary requirements set forth in Officer Appointments, Law 10 U.S.C. § 532. The officers’ rights and obligations under their original contract remain unchanged, and their oath of office remains in effect.

This change in law will also eliminate the need for future augmentation selection boards. Redesignation boards for officers seeking to change competitive categories will continue to be held.

For more information, see NAVADMIN 041/05 available on the Web at www.npc.navy.mil/ReferenceLibrary/Messages/NAVADMINs/MessageDetails/041_05.htm.

Story by LT Kyle Raines, of the public affairs office, Chief of Naval Personnel.

New Program Offers Subsidized Child Care to Guard, Reserve

ODD has joined forces with national agencies to help Guard and Reserve families find and afford child care while Mom or Dad is deployed in support of the global war on terrorism.

“Child care is one of the top [concerns] voiced by families, as well as by commands on what’s needed,” said Jan Witte, director of the Pentagon’s Office of Children and Youth. Her office monitors the new program, dubbed Operation Military Child Care (OMCC).
DOD, in partnership with the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), which administers the program, designed this initiative to benefit those who do not live near military installations, Witte said.

“We have a contract with NACCRRA to assist us in finding spaces outside the military community for those Guard and Reserve [members] who are deployed and active duty [people] who are not near a military installation,” Witte said. “We also hope to assist in reducing the out-of-pocket expense to the service member.”

According to Witte, when a parent is deployed, the remaining parent may discover that child care is something the couple had not had to think of before. And need is not the only consideration. The extra expense can be shocking.

While OMCC doesn’t fully subsidize child care, it does work to reduce the financial burden, Witte said. The fees are based on a sliding scale that takes into consideration total family income and the care provider’s actual cost, among other things.

To take part in the program, a family member would apply through NACCRRA via a special Web site or by a toll-free call to (800) 424-2246. The child-care provider also must apply—an important step because of how the subsidy, which comes through the Children and Youth office, is paid out, Witte noted.

“The subsidy goes to the program, not to the individual,” she said.

The program officially kicked off March 3, but has been operational as a pilot program since late November 2004, Witte said. “We feel like this is one area to provide assistance for the total force,” she said. “We had not been doing much prior to this time for the Guard and Reserve as far as child care and school-age programs have gone.” She said the new program could get about 5,000 Guard and Reserve service members’ children into child care.

But that number could fluctuate if there is a change in the funding, she pointed out, which comes in the form of supplemental funding through Congress. Congress has funded the program for $7 million, Witte said, though officials hope to expand the program in the future to try and accommodate some of the 38,000 children of active-duty service members in need of child care.

NACCRRA also supports the Guard and Reserve through a program called Operation Child Care (OCC). OCC is a voluntary NACCRRA program that provides up to six hours of free child care to Guard and Reserve families whose deployed service member is returning home for rest and recuperation.

For more information on Operation Military Child Care, visit www.naccrra.org/OMCC. To apply for Operation Military Child Care, visit www.childcareaware.org/en/.

For more information on the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, visit www.naccrra.org.

Story by Samantha L. Quigley, of the American Forces Press Service.
Anthony Mynie, a contracted builder from Jamaica, spends leisure time after work fishing on the banks of Guantanamo Bay. "I catch lots of fish, 'mon' - it keeps my mind occupied," said Mynie.
Ninety miles off the coast of Florida, an enclosed society resides on America’s oldest overseas base – Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, also known as “Gitmo.” Surrounded by barbed wire, the forced seclusion has created a fragile balance of life, in limbo between two adversarial nations.

The U.S. Navy is at the forefront of preserving and protecting this remote enclave of Cuba’s environment.

“The still-standing virgin forest has become the last safe place for several plant and animal species on the island,” said Paul Schoenfield, head biologist for Gitmo. “This includes numerous marine animals and sea life.”

This wasn’t the case 30 years ago, when the forests of Cuba were home to more than 80 rare and endangered plant and animal species. But Cuban citizens, hard pressed by economic crisis, cleared much of the island’s forest for fuel, and hunted to near extinction several indigenous species to supplement their food supply, thus rendering the Navy base a de facto nature preserve.

“Gitmo holds the richest vegetation of its kind in all the West Indies,” according to Dr. Alberto Arecas, chief botanist of the National Museum for Natural History in Havana, Cuba. “Because the U.S. Navy has never used the entire 35 square miles of land in the bay area, the base has preserved sections of pristine vegetation.”

Miles of metal fencing separate the base from Cuban territory. The fence also encloses the pristine natural island habitat now found only on the base.
Like any nature preserve, effective game and wildlife resource enforcement is a must. Therefore, Naval Security Forces (NSF) Cuba personnel serve as base game wardens.

“My job out here is to enforce laws that are directly linked to vegetation and wildlife,” said a Base Game Warden, Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Noland Edwards.

On land and in the water, ecological policy plays a key role in maintaining the fragile reserve of the base. The main way the Navy conserves Gitmo’s environment is by leaving the land alone, allowing vegetation and wildlife an opportunity to flourish.

“There are certain areas of the base that are strictly off limits to people. [This] allows the local plants and animals to thrive,” said Edwards. “The animals here are unusually large and abundant because of the protected woodlands, as well as the policies that we have in place to protect the species on the base,” said Edwards.

“For example, the rock iguana, protected here from predation, grows to a length of five feet on the coast of the bay,” said Edwards, “which is much larger than the average Cuban iguana that is constantly hunted outside of the base.”

The most visible animal on the base is the hutia, known as the “banana rat” by residents here. Outside the confines of the base, they have been ruthlessly hunted. At least seven of the 10 known species in Cuba are in danger of extinction, but not on Gitmo. In fact, controlling the overpopulation of this rodent is the main question for this species.

“We have population management in place [so] traps are set in areas of concern to capture the animals,” said Edwards. “Whether it’s making sure a fisherman is within his limits, or cleaning a

The management practices of the Navy are not only focused on the wildlife, but also on all natural resources present, including the marine ecosystem within the base perimeter.

Twenty-three of Gitmo’s 71 square miles are water and populated by crustacea, coral and thousands of species of tropical fish. To protect this fragile ecosystem, Navy patrols spend countless hours watching over all activity on and in the water.

“I drive a boat all over the bay, enforcing laws that protect and preserve marine life,” said Edwards. “Whether it’s making sure a

Fire Chief Eric Tucker enjoys sailing the boats provided at the MWR marina. Anyone with the proper license can choose from a variety of sailing vessels for a relaxing time on the water.

Four large windmills now adorn the Gitmo skyline while providing 30 percent of all electric power on the base.

Although often referred to as the “banana rat,” the correct name for this large-bodied rodent is the Hutia. At least seven of the 10 known species in Cuba are in serious danger of extinction, however, the species found at Gitmo flourish in this natural sanctuary.

A Cuban Iguana may appear ferocious, but these animals are actually harmless creatures that play a vital role in the island’s eco-system. For many of the creatures living at Guantanamo Bay, the base represents the last safe haven of natural habitat.
During the day plays a direct part in my ability to enjoy the water when I leave work. The future preservation of Gitmo looks promising. To reduce impact on all life residing within the confines of the base, a first-of-its-kind energy producer has been implemented on the base – four large windmills. Not only are the large propellers energy efficient, providing 30 percent of all energy on the base, but there are no waste emissions to contaminate the air or sea. The Navy's commitment to environmental stewardship aboard Naval Station Guantanamo Bay provides a safe haven for vegetation, wildlife and marine life, and for Sailors stationed there, as well.

"I know my family is in a safe environment," said McGuffey. "I don't know of a safer and more enjoyable place for my family than on this base."

Conservation and respect for ecology are a huge part of military life on Gitmo. Residents feel the close interaction between Sailors and nature yields a sustainable and rewarding relationship for both. The preservation of natural resources offers Sailors stationed here outdoor recreation unlike any other naval base in the world.

With Guantanamo’s tropical surroundings, water sports are the main form of recreation for Sailors. The reefs in and around the bay are known to be some of the best waters for diving in the world.

"I’ve been scuba diving all over and I must say, the diving here is unbeatable," said Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Shance McGuffey, harbor patrol. “It’s like having your own personal reef in your back yard.”

"No matter where you go, the reefs are untouched and free of human debris. Tropical fish are simply everywhere," he added. "It’s gratifying to know that my job during the day plays a direct part in my ability to enjoy the water when I leave work."

The beautiful Guantanamo Bay is situated in the belt of the Caribbean trade winds, and is home to many endangered species of vegetation and wildlife. Residents of Gitmo have an opportunity to learn to scuba dive. Sailors can enjoy the island's underwater world by taking a PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) Open Water Diver course to become dive certified.

Snorkeling is a popular pastime at Gitmo. The bay's waters are populated with thousands of species of tropical fish and are considered to be some of the best dive waters in the world.

Residents of Gitmo have an opportunity to learn to scuba dive. Sailors can enjoy the island's underwater world by taking a PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) Open Water Diver course to become dive certified.
A Yellow Shirt stands amidst clouds of steam while he directs an S-3B Viking onto a catapult for launch. Steam is used to thrust an aircraft off the flight deck, allowing planes to reach more than 120 miles per hour in less than three seconds.
green shirt catapult operator approaches a screaming EA-6B Prowler positioned at full power on a catapult, when, like dust to a vacuum, the Sailor is sucked into one of the aircraft’s large jet intakes.

This is a familiar “shock and awe” video that aviation boatswain’s mates and undesignated airmen watch dozens of times until respect for what they are about to undertake becomes second nature. Working on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier, where injury or death is only a moment’s inattention away. Choreographing this dance with danger are the flight deck’s masters of this supercharged environment—the “yellow shirts.”

Yellow shirts, or aircraft directors, occupy the most coveted enlisted positions aboard an aircraft carrier. As rulers of the flight deck, yellow shirts have the ultimate

Although the flight deck of an aircraft carrier seems to be chaotic, it is actually a well-controlled atmosphere that requires all Sailors to work together in careful unison with one another.

Yellow shirts spend their down time away from the flight deck in their Yellow Shirt Locker located behind the island. Located on the starboard side of all aircraft carriers, the island is the control center of the ship and of flight operations.

Blue Shirts, or aircraft handlers, position an F/A-18 Hornet on the fantail of USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71). Individuals wearing blue operate tow tractors, place chocks around aircraft tires and secure aircraft with chains.
responsibility for all aircraft movement on the most dangerous 4-and-a-half acres of flight line in the world. Using hand signals and headset communications, yellow shirts arrange an imposing mix of combat aircraft for fueling, launch, recovery and elevator moves, among other things, day in and day out, around the clock and in all kinds of weather.

“On the flight deck, aircraft directors are accorded the status of officers and everyone must abide by their instruction,” explained Aviation Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class James K. Priest, USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) leading petty officer, V-1 division. “They’re the ones who run the show.”

Yellow shirts create poetry in motion by bringing order to the carefully choreographed ballet on the carrier flight deck. Success depends on focus and attention to safety.

“One moment of distraction can mean the difference between a successful launch (or recovery) and a crash,” said Priest. “An incorrect placement can wreck a multimillion dollar aircraft. Complacency can kill us when we stop thinking about our jobs and ignore the risk.”

“I’m anxious to go on the flight deck,” said Airman Eric Shriwise, a Sailor recently assigned to Air Department (V-1). “We go through extensive training and are fully aware of the dangers on the deck, such as aircraft constantly moving and the risk of being blown overboard.”

With most of the flight deck crew barely out of high school, the responsibility of...
It’s dangerous out there, and that is exactly what new Sailors must learn if they are going to respect every move they will be asked to perform,” Priest said. “It’s not a clean job, and stresses will be peaking. The individuals who handle themselves best are the ones who are the best candidates for the yellow shirt.

“It is definitely a shocking experience to be out there for the first time,” said Airman Apprentice Kenneth Gibson. “There is so much going on at one time. People run everywhere, planes turn and you can’t hear what anyone is saying over the loud aircraft. It’s intimidating but I do love the excitement, and just being a part of the whole thing is amazing to me.

Once a new Sailor completes observer time, it’s time to complete a Personnel Qualification Standard (PQS). Only specified supervisors may signify completion.

“PQSs are the most important part of the new Sailors’ training process,” said Priest. “It helps them get familiar with most all aspects of how the flight deck operates, especially safety. Details such as proper wear of personal protective equipment (PPE) is critical to operating safely on the flight deck; so are the signals we use, flight deck markings and aircraft firefighting skills.”

Following completion of flight deck quals, the Sailor can now don a full flight deck uniform, which in addition to the blue cotton turtleneck shirt and blue “float coat” inflatable life vest, includes a “cranial” helmet with a big “T” located on the back, signifying trainee status.

Within a matter of weeks—sometimes months depending on the individual Sailor—who master the skills of proper plane handling, driving tractors, being safety observers and chock-and-chain crew (and who complete their PQSs) may be given the opportunity to retire their blue jersey for a yellow one marked “UI” for “under instruction.” With more training, the UIs are within reach of becoming a full-fledged yellow shirt.

At this level, the “shock and awe” training film becomes a reality.

“The dangers are evident in everything we do on the deck,” said Priest. “Being the masters of the deck, we must make sure all evolutions are carefully and safely worked through. Nothing is overlooked, from reassuring that the deck is free of foreign object damage (FOD) to the locations of all personnel on this dangerous workplace, the responsibilities are immense.”

Only those individuals possessing the skills and courage necessary will earn the most coveted enlisted position on the flight deck, yellow shirt. But once there the sense of pride and accomplishment equals the awesome responsibility.

“The challenge and chance to feel so important and in charge doesn’t come easy but I am up to the task,” said Gibson. “It’s like nothing I have ever done before or will ever do in my life and one day I can say that I was once master of a flight deck.”

Frantom is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.
BM2 Billy W. Day uses a band saw to carve a design in a piece of wood. Day works in the Carpenter Shop at Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center Portsmouth Detachment. MARMC Sailors use their skills to do jobs in the fleet which saves the Navy millions of dollars.
Everyone has their favorite auto shop and mechanic when it comes to their personal vehicle. This is the person customers trust to have their best interest – and the interest of their automobile – in mind when they tell them how to keep their car running and offers what he says is “the best deal around.”

The ships in the Mid-Atlantic region do not have to go far to find their favorite mechanics. They place their trust with the Sailors at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center (MARMC), formerly the Shore Intermediate Maintenance Activity (SIMA), in Norfolk. MARMC Sailors provide global support to the fleet, taking on thousands of jobs and saving the Navy millions of dollars in the process.

“We provide technical support, maintenance and repairs for the fleet. It’s almost like providing one-stop shopping for ships,” said Master Chief Machinist’s Mate William D. McVay, Production Department’s leading chief petty officer. “We have the capabilities to fix almost anything involved with the operations of the ship – small jobs and some depot-level repairs.”

Last year, SIMA merged with Fleet Technical Support Center Atlantic, Norfolk; Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Conversion and Repair, Portsmouth, Va.; and Regional Support Group, Norfolk; to streamline Navy ship maintenance organization and operations, making the new MARMC the single point of contact for ship maintenance.

MARMC can do almost any job, from lagging and sandblasting to underwater ships’ husbandry, to machining a bulkhead shaft seal. Last year, the Sailors performed approximately 32,000 jobs for the fleet.
saving the Navy nearly $40 million in the process.

From the pump shop to the ship fitters shop, the fleet never has to be suspicious about mechanics who may be interested only in padding their pockets. These Sailors’ only concern is getting the job done and keeping the fleet ready to go.

“We are here to provide the ships with continuous maintenance,” said McVay. “When ships come out of the shipyards, we are here to do jobs for them that might come up during their regular training cycle. We also take care of their immediate and urgent maintenance needs—right now.”

“Ships preparing for deployment have the most urgent needs. It’s during this time that things shift into overdrive around MARMC. Deploying ships have priority over other jobs, and when the urgency increases, so does the unexpected work load.”

“Sometimes we work in [night and day] shifts,” said Machinery Repairman 1st Class (SW) Chris Scheminant, leading petty officer of Inside Machine Shop/935-K. “Shop 935-K machines and manufactures parts and conducts depot-level repairs for the fleet. “We’re making parts for the ships 24/7. Whatever the ships need, there is always somebody here to do the job. There’s always something that’s hot, and when a ship needs to get underway, we do the best we can to make sure the job is done so that the ship can stay on schedule.”

“We keep these ships deploying,” added Hull Technician 2nd Class (SW) Jeremy Houske, a welder with the Shipfitter’s Shop/934-D. “If we don’t get our work done, they don’t deploy.”

Unlike your typical repairmen, not all work takes place within the facility. If the job cannot be brought back to the shops, the Sailors go to the ship to do the work. MARMC’s reputation is such that when the crew sees them coming, they know they are coming to fix something. MARMC Sailors feel this is why they are welcomed whenever they step foot on the quarterdeck.

“The ships are very supportive when we come aboard—they are very appreciative,” said Houske. “They know when we get there, we’re ready to work, and they are there to give us whatever help we need. It’s a big team effort.”

But MARMC is not just about maintenance work aboard the ships. They also provide maintenance training for Sailors aboard ships. When MARMC Sailors are aboard, they conduct on-the-job training (OJT) for the crew while they fix the equipment. They also train Sailors at their facilities, introducing Sailors to industrial equipment and machinery that might be pertinent to their rating, but may not be available aboard their ship.

“Sailors come here and ask for training, and we never turn anyone away,” said Houske. “A lot of the pre-commissioning ships will send their Sailors here TAD (temporary assigned duty) just to get trained. The best maintenance training they’ll ever get is at a repair facility.”

As the Sailors are very aware, training goes both ways, and for MARMC Sailors, working at MARMC is a chance to better their own careers by gaining experience they won’t get during a typical shore duty tour.

“Without our capabilities, a lot of ships would have to pay outside contractors to come in and fix their pumps and their motors, but at the same time, we’re performing repairs and gathering valuable OJT,” said Electrician’s Mate 1st Class (SW/AW) Latonna T. Shelly, lead electrician in the MARMC Pump Shop/935-L. “Being here and working in this shop, I get the experience I need and learn about the type of pumps that are on the CGs, DDGs and carriers; I would not get this if I wasn’t at a command like MARMC.”
Through all the training and experience they might gain, the bottom line for these Sailors remains getting their job done. The enthusiasm for what they do can be seen when walking through the hallways, relaxing in the break rooms and even while grabbing a bite to eat in the deli and grill located within the facility.

“If you walk around here and talk to these Sailors, you’ll see that they are extremely passionate about their work,” said McVay. “And they enjoy what they do because they know they’re benefiting the overall mission of the Navy, enabling continued operation of the ships.”

The way the Navy does business has changed since the Chief of Naval Operations introduced the Fleet Response Plan to the fleet. Today, MARMC plays an important role in making sure ships are ready to respond. The resources for maintenance are there. Now it’s a matter of letting the fleet know their mechanics are waiting.

“Since the merger, a lot of ships out there don’t know all that MARMC can do for them,” explained McVay. “I’ve spoken with people on the ships and told them some of the jobs our Sailors do, and I’ll get the response, ‘You guys can do that?’ because they don’t know the full capability of MARMC.”

“I’m here every day at 6 a.m., and I invite those people to come here and take a tour of the facility and see what happens on the floor around here. I bet they’ll go back to their ships with a better appreciation for what we do and how we get it done,” concluded McVay.

Try getting that offer from your favorite mechanic.

Dickson is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

Website Exclusive
Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200505/feature_3/
Focus on Service

LITTLE-KNOWN PROGRAMS, LIKE THE ALL-NAVY BASKETBALL TEAM, ABOUND IN THE NAVY

At first light, in his home in Mississippi, Herman Myers would wake, rush outside with his three brothers and play basketball in the backyard all day until sundown. The next day he did it again. And the next, and the next, and the next – all summer long. Later he played in high school, and for the University of Southern Mississippi. But that wasn’t enough. The 6’6” forward, who earned a degree in coaching and sports administration, wanted more.

He went pro, moved to Helsinki, Finland, and played for the European League for four years.

So why did this court sensation join the Navy?

“It wanted to do something different in my life,” said Ship’s Serviceman 3rd Class Myers, now aboard USS Germantown (LSD 42). “I needed a change of pace, and I found it.” Aboard Germantown, Myers met the assistant coach for the All-Navy Basketball Team, applied for the program and was selected. He’s played on the All-Navy team for the past four years.

“The Navy gave me the opportunity to explore sports and basketball,” he said. “We work hard in the Navy, and there’s a certain strain, but I still had the ability to play ball. My command supported me the whole time I was playing ball.”

Myers is transferring to the Reserves, and will move with his son and wife to Madison, Ala., where he will coach and teach at Madison Sparkman High School.

“I’ve learned a lot of discipline in the Navy, and I’ll pass that on to the kids I help in the future.”

Benson is a photojournalist assigned to the public affairs office, Naval Special Warfare Group 3, San Diego.
It’s a little worn, but it still reads, "Queen of Peace, lead us to victory and safely home." It continues to read, "I am a Catholic, please call a Priest." It is more than 60 years-old now. It’s not a “dog tag,” but has seen its share of combat. It is a small reminder of my veteran Father.

June gives us a day to honor our fathers, but honestly, most of us honor our dads every day. It could be in the way we treat our siblings. It could be the way we talk to our spouses. It could be the way we approach life, teach our children and ultimately, do the very best we can, because that’s the way he did it.

June was a special day for me. It was my 19-year-old daughter’s birthday. I’m 19-years older than her. I guess that makes it a ‘mother’s day’ for her.

My Dad was born in 1922. He had three siblings and grew up in the small town of Manasquan, New Jersey. His father had been a Firefighter in New York City. Service was something that was not unknown to the family. History tells us about the fateful date when Pearl Harbor was attacked. My Dad, like so many young men in America, was ready to stand up.

My Dad “joined” the Army in the spring of 1942. He wanted to join the Navy, but they were fussy, and said he was overweight.

It was June 6, 1944, a day that marks the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, I can’t help but try to connect my military experience to my Pop’s.

From there his unit waited in Germany to transfer to the Pacific theater, to end the war. His unit never got that call however, due to President Truman’s decision to “drop the bomb.”

In December, 1941, my Dad had been out of Manasquan High School for six months. He was working as a car mechanic in Farmingdale, N.J. His father before him had retired from the Fire Department in New York City. Service was something that was not unknown to the family. History tells us about the fateful date when Pearl Harbor was attacked. My Dad, like so many young men in America, was ready to stand up.

Pop gave me his medallion, upon my graduation from boot camp, 23 years ago. I guess he thought I could use it. Like I said, it’s a little worn, but it still works.

I’m convinced that my 23 years of service pale in comparison to his three years, due to the overall importance and intensity of his combat experience. I’m not sure he would agree with me. Men of his generation were very humble and knew nothing else but to step up and serve this great country of ours.

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After several months, going into years of training, my Dad’s artillery unit, like so many other units was finally called to the plate on “D” Day, June 6, 1944. (Is this why June was selected to honor Fathers?). Dad didn’t hit the beach in the first wave at Normandy, France, that day, but in a few weeks, he would. After that, his unit made its way to the front lines in France, Belgium and Germany. He remembers the extreme cold days and nights of the Battle of the Bulge, in Belgium, before the Allied Forces finally ended the war in Europe.

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James Dorey didn’t receive the Bronze Star or Medal of Honor. He was “just” a soldier. Like millions of others at that time. The newspapers inform us of thousands of World War II vets passing away each day. Whether they are fathers, grandfathers, uncles or brothers, they have left a legacy of service that we as Americans still have today. Through the Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War, the current War on Terrorism in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom and several other conflicts in between, it has been the pride and example of our veteran fathers that has put that lump in our throats when we stand for the national anthems.

It is the veteran fathers of America who I salute this and every month. These fathers have taught us well. With or without a medallion, they remain close to our hearts.
If you need help with planning your financial future, talk to your command financial specialist or contact The Fleet & Family Support Center.

http://www.ffsp.navy.mil/