Executing our Maritime Strategy:
All in a Day’s Work
You Call It, They Haul It

The men and women of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 53 (VR-53), one of only five C-130 squadrons in the Navy, work around the clock to make sure Sailors and Marines worldwide have the provisions and supplies they need, whether they’re at the tip of spear or at the pier.

Photo by MC1 Dave Gordon

From Cook to Chef

In galleys around the fleet, culinary specialists (CSs) may cook three to four meals a day for up to 5,000 Sailors at a time, but it’s all part of their daily life. A few CSs throughout the Navy have taken the opportunity to become certified chefs – truly a recipe for success.

Photo by MC1 Joe Garcia

All in a Day’s Work

Across the globe, Sailors were at the forefront of world events again this summer, demonstrating all six core capabilities of the Maritime Strategy: deterrence; forward presence; maritime security; power projection; humanitarian assistance and disaster response; and sea control.

Photo by MC1 Dave Gordon

September

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On the Front Cover

ABAM Christopher Duguay assists in the movement of aircraft on the flight deck aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72). Lincoln is currently deployed to the 5th Fleet area of responsibility in support of maritime security operations.

Photo by MC2 James R. Evans

Next Month

Watch for the Any Day in the Navy issue. This year we’ll highlight the Maritime Strategy through the camera’s eye.

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Speaking with Sailors

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy MCPON (SW/FMF) Joe R. Campa Jr.

I made a recent one-day trip to Tampa, Fla., and the few hours I spent there served as a stark reminder of the level of sacrifice made by our men and women in uniform and their families.

I went there because a Sailor named HM3 Anthony Thompson was being advanced to petty officer second class. In many respects, it was like any other promotion ceremony, his family was there. His shipmates and his chain of command were, too. I pinned a second-class crow on his collar and did so proudly.

What made this ceremony unique, though, was that “Doc” Thompson never left his wheelchair and didn’t say a word. He’s a patient at the James A. Haley Veteran’s Hospital. He was injured in Iraq in 2007 and now faces a new battle, one that he may have to fight for the rest of his life.

We have service members just like HM2 Thompson in treatment facilities all over the country, men and women who have met the full measure of responsibility to this nation. The question we must ask ourselves is whether we are meeting our full responsibility to them.

Many young Americans joined our Navy out of a strong sense of patriotism, never expecting to hear shots fired in anger. But when they found themselves in places like Iraq or Afghanistan, they showed the kind of bravery and commitment that our forefathers would look to with great pride.

What made this ceremony unique, though, was that “Doc” Thompson never left his wheelchair and didn’t say a word. He’s a patient at the James A. Haley Veteran’s Hospital. Thompson is recovering from injuries received during his second combat tour in Iraq. He suffered a traumatic brain injury April 20, 2007, when a suicide bomber’s improvised explosive device detonated under an overpass where he was standing post.

The character of this nation can be defined by how we care for all our returning war veterans. Several months ago a World War II veteran told me, “You don’t have to bleed to be wounded.” We are just beginning to grapple with the reality that many Sailors return from war with injuries not apparent to the untrained eye.

We’ve come a long way in our ability to treat all manner of injuries. But some of the best medicine we can provide is a continued and sustained in battle. It’s up to you, as their shipmates, to keep them in your thoughts and prayers and never forget them. Our entire nation owes these wounded warriors a debt of gratitude. So many of them have injuries that will last a lifetime, so must our relationship with them.

Navy leadership is making sure these Sailors and their families are well provided for and that their sacrifices have not been made in vain. We will continue to do that by working with Congress and by providing all the support we can to programs like Safe Harbor, an organization dedicated to supporting injured Sailors.

The question we must ask ourselves is whether we are meeting our full responsibility to them.
Standing up for Freedom

The story of Omer Balingit, a native of the Philippines who enlisted in the Navy, is a testament to the power and promise of the U.S. Constitution. Balingit, a native Arabic speaker, was assigned to the Naval Special Warfare Development Group (DEVGRU), where he served as a native Arabic speaker in the Technical Information Systems Technician (TIST) specialty. His linguistic skills were learned when he was four months old at the hands of his parents, who were both native Arabic speakers.

Balingit said he was drawn to the Navy by his desire to serve his country and his family. "My family is very patriotic," he said. "They served in the military, and I wanted to do the same." Balingit also said he was attracted to the Navy because of its diversity and its commitment to serving the needs of the community.

Balingit's linguistic skills were put to use in his role as a TIST, where he was responsible for communicating with Middle Eastern tribal leaders and other individuals in the region. "I was able to communicate with a wide range of people," Balingit said. "I was able to speak five more Middle Eastern tribal languages, which allowed me to communicate with a wide-range of detainees." Balingit's linguistic skills were critical to his success in his role, and he was proud of the work he was able to do.

Balingit's story is just one of many that demonstrate the value of diversity and inclusion in the Navy. The Navy is committed to recruiting and retaining the best and brightest Sailors, regardless of their background or experience. The Navy is a place where all hands are welcome, and where all hands are valued.

For more information on the Navy, visit www.usnavy.mil.
A L L  H A N D S  •  w w w . n a v y . m i l  •  S E P T E M B E R  2 0 0 8  •  A L L  H A N D S

**Around the Fleet**

**SA Giovanni Magallon pulls himself along a rope while participating in an obstacle course at the Naval Special Warfare Center aboard Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, Calif. Magallon is a Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman (SWCC) student in the second week of Basic Crewman Training (BCT). BCT is the first phase of SWCC training.**

*Photo by MC2 Dominique M. Lasco*

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**Photo by MCCS Andrew McKaskle**

NDs Johnelisha Andrews, assigned to Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 2, walks across the seabed with a pipe wrench during a dive supporting Navy One Global Fleet Station 2008 off the coast of St. Kitts.

*Photo by MC2 Andrew Mahalski*

**MMFN Samuel Dondo, assigned to Riverine Squadron (RIVRON) 3, pulls a security watch as he and his fellow riverine Sailors prepare to be extracted from the Watah Peninsula, near Rawah, Iraq, on a riverine patrol boat. Riverine units are actively engaged in waterborne operations to update census details, improve security and deter insurgent activity.**

*Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Seth Maggard*

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**Photo by MC2 Timothy Cox**

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Fleet Surgical Team 4, along with their partner-nation colleagues, perform several surgeries per day aboard Kearsarge, while also providing medical treatment, bio-medical repair, medical education and veterinary assistance to various locations ashore. Kearsarge serves as an enabling platform through which military and non-governmental organizations can coordinate and carry out humanitarian efforts. Kearsarge’s flexibility and configuration make it an extraordinarily effective ship for performing humanitarian assistance missions.

“Kearsarge has a robust on-board medical capability to include four fully-functional operating rooms,” said Cmdr. Brian Alexander, an optometrist from Portsmouth Naval Hospital, Norfolk. “Even though it’s a simple surgery, it will have a big impact on this child’s life. His appearance is completely different now. He’s going to be a much happier person, and his life is going to drastically improve.”

The CP mission exemplifies the U.S. Maritime Strategy which emphasizes deploying forces to build confidence and trust among nations to improve health, promote training and enhance prosperity.

“Continuing Promise 2008 is an excellent opportunity to display our friendship and cooperation with the other countries in the Americas,” said Alexander. “Not only that, but to provide care on an individual basis to people who really need it is very rewarding.”

After the surgery, Ches gave medical personnel a huge smile and told them he looked forward to the future.

“I can now read my text books,” said Ches. “I want to read, so I can finish school and become a teacher one day and then the principal of my school. I am very happy this happened to me.”

Kearsarge’s mission is to conduct civil-military operations including humanitarian and civic assistance as well as veterinary, medical, dental and civil engineering support to six partner nations and to send a strong message of U.S. compassion, support and commitment to Central and South America and the Caribbean.

USS Kearsarge is under the operational control of U.S. 4th Fleet. Headquartered in Mayport, Fla., the 4th Fleet directs U.S. naval forces operating in the Caribbean, and Central and South American regions and interacts with partner nation navies to shape maritime environment.

The CP Caribbean Phase is the second of two HCA deployments to the Southern Command area of focus for 2008. The first CP deployment was conducted earlier this year by USS Boxer (LHD 4) in the Pacific.

Story by MC2 Erik Barker, aboard USS Kearsarge (LHD 3).

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All over the world, the summer months are a time for family holidays and taking a break from the daily grind of work and school – but not for the men and women of the U.S. Navy. In fact the hottest months of 2008 were a time of incredible productivity, even by their own high standards. For Sailors constantly on the move, summer 2008 was spent just how they like it – in the fast lane.

Across the globe, Sailors were again at the forefront of world events this summer, demonstrating all six of the core capabilities of the Maritime Strategy: Deterrence; forward presence; maritime security; power projection; humanitarian assistance and disaster response; and sea control.
Among the most important objectives of the Maritime Strategy are three themes that dominated “Conversations with the Country,” a series of public forums between the sea services and the American people. Those objectives are necessary to remain strong; protect American citizens and the homeland; and contribute in this part of the world, making them safer for the maritime community.

This has been a terrific operation and a great example of coalition effort, of nations working together for a common cause,” said Deputy Task Group Commander, Cmdr. Scott Everett. “This operation is leading to a greater sense of security in the region, for merchant seamen and fishermen alike. Ultimately, this work forms part of the comprehensive economic regeneration for Iraq in particular and the Northern Arabian Gulf in general.”

The areas searched during this operation were the remnants of the MDAs created in 1991 and 2003 where Iraq laid, or was suspected of laying, anti-invasion minefields. A considerable mine clearance effort was previously conducted during which 1,300 mines were destroyed. But, very shallow areas remained inaccessible for the past 17 years. Using the very latest in mine warfare technology, coalition forces have searched these remaining areas in an effort to declare them former mined areas. At any given time, there were also several coalition ships providing security around two Iraqi oil platforms.

USS Ashland (LSD 48) conducted maritime security operations as part of Combined Task Force (CTF) 158 in the Northern Persian Gulf. CTF 158’s mission is to maintain maritime security in and around the al Basra Oil Terminal (ABOT) and the Khawar al Amaya Oil Terminal (KAAOT) in support of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1790. The task force also helps train Iraqi marines.

These oil platforms, which produce about 90 percent of Iraq’s annual revenue, are critical assets for the economy and future of Iraq,” said Lt. John Erickson, Ashland’s operations officer. “The coalition’s commitment to the future of Iraq is evident by the security operations we conduct to ensure the safety and security of ABOT and KAAOT and now and into the future.”

While operating in the NPG, Ashland served as the CTF 158 Afloat Staging Base (AFSB). “One of our main missions was to train Iraqi VBSS (visit, board, search and seizure) teams,” said Machinery Repairman 2nd Class Victor Natividad, assigned to the Naval Training Team (NATT), CTF 158. “Ashland served as a platform to practice these types of operations and give us the opportunity to greatly enhance training.”

Part of this training consisted of Iraqi VBSS teams performing security missions. Several times a week, teams departed Ashland via Iraqi aluminum fast boats and proceeded to large oil tankers to perform security sweeps of tankers waiting to come alongside ABOT or KAAOT to receive oil. VBSS team inspections included visiting small ships in the area. These interaction patrols, or IPATS, are an element of maritime security operations (MSO). The patrols help generate support and awareness among commercial vessels sailing in the region of the coalition’s efforts to ensure a safe and secure maritime environment. Coalition forces also conduct MSO under international maritime conventions to ensure security in international waters, so commercial shipping and fishing can occur safely in the region.

“This training is a success story in Iraq,” said Royal Navy Lt. James Walton, officer in charge of the embarked naval training team. “The Iraqi Navy is increasing their ability to provide security for the oil platforms 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.”

Ashland’s ability to serve as a logistics hub is a very dynamic environment up here,” said Cmdr. Jeffrey Ward, Ashland’s commanding officer. “We are taking part in a very important mission, and the crew is excited about doing our part toward enhancing training and security in the region.”

The scope of naval service is always expanding, and that is certainly the case in CENTCOM’s area of operations. In western Iraq, Riverine Squadron 2 turned over with Riverine Squadron 3 after wrapping up its eight-month maiden deployment during which the squadron completed more than 600 combat missions. Reserve Sailors from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 17 built combat outposts, conducted camp maintenance, made bridge repairs, conducted security upgrades to permanent facilities and executed force protection projects in Iraq and Afghanistan this past summer in support of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and Navy special operations forces.

In Garissa, Kenya, Sailors and Soldiers, deployed in support of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, helped municipality leaders begin a new garbage disposal program.

The Maritime Strategy, officially known as “The Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower,” was signed by the chiefs of all the sea services – the Navy, Coast Guard and the Marine Corps. The unique talents of the men and women of each service are necessary to put the Maritime Strategy into action.

Among the most important objectives of the Maritime Strategy are three themes that dominated “Conversations with the Country,” a series of public forums between the sea services and the American people. Those themes are: Remaining strong; protecting American citizens and the homeland; and contributing in this part of the world, making them safer for the maritime community.

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Ashland’s ability to serve as a logistics hub helps to keep the operation running smoothly.

It is a very dynamic environment up here,” said Cmdr. Jeffrey Ward, Ashland’s commanding officer. “We are taking part in a very important mission, and the crew is excited about doing our part toward enhancing training and security in the region.”

The scope of naval service is always expanding, and that is certainly the case in CENTCOM’s area of operations. In western Iraq, Riverine Squadron 2 turned over with Riverine Squadron 3 after wrapping up its eight-month maiden deployment during which the squadron completed more than 600 combat missions. Reserve Sailors from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 17 built combat outposts, conducted camp maintenance, made bridge repairs, conducted security upgrades to permanent facilities and executed force protection projects in Iraq and Afghanistan this past summer in support of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and Navy special operations forces.

In Garissa, Kenya, Sailors and Soldiers, deployed in support of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, helped municipality leaders begin a new garbage disposal program.
European Command (EUCOM) In July, navies from 16 countries, including the United States, took part in Sea Breeze, a joint invitational and combined maritime exercise held annually in the Baltic Sea. “During the exercise, Sailors and Marines work side-by-side with other personnel from partner ships while they are underway and ashore and become familiar with the other militaries’ operating procedures and consistent practices,” said Capt. John Moor, exercise deputy commander and commodore of Combined Joint Task Force 367.

The exercise included 14 ships, 17 aircraft and more than 2,200 personnel. “The exercise is a key part of the U.S. Navy’s strategy to enhance our partnerships in the region and work together to improve maritime security and safety,” said Cmdr. Tim Schoon, commanding officer USNS McFaul (DDG 74). Another example of the maritime strategy in action this summer was the continuation of Africa Partnership Station (APS). APS is a U.S. Naval Forces Europe-led, long-term initiative with a goal of enabling maritime safety and security in West and Central Africa. The program operates with the cooperative support of a variety of military, governmental and non-governmental organisations from the United States, Africa and Europe.

Earlier this year was the first time High-Speed Vessel Swift (HSV 2) operated in the Gulf of Guinea. Its mission of maritime partnership fostered safety and security, while bringing humanitarian aid to the region. Following Swift, U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Dallas (WHEC 716) conducted a three-day visit to the West African nation of Equatorial Guinea July 11 after completing an at-sea exercise involving five Equatorial Guinean naval vessels. The exercise was in support of U.S. Naval Forces Europe’s APS initiative.

The at-sea exercise, which included both counterterrorism and search-and-rescue drills, reinforced shore-side training. During Dallas’ visit, several crew members teamed up with Equatorial Guinean naval officers to train in VBSS tactics as well as search and rescue (SAR) procedures.

The visit marked the first collaborative at-sea tactical exercise between naval assets of the United States and Equatorial Guinea in decades. EUCOM Sailors were also busy on the cool, northern seas within their area of operations. USNS Elrod (FFG 55), the Russian anti-submarine ship Svrzomork oil, and the Norwegian Coast Guard cutter Senjo (IV 321) worked together to simulate tracking and destroying a decoy submarine late July, as part of Exercise Northern Eagle 2008.

The exercise, held in the Norwegian and Barents Seas, focused on maritime interdiction operations, SAR and tactical interoperability to improve maritime safety and security in Northern Europe. “The exercise tested all of our crew’s abilities to work together in a coordinated environment, using our anti-submarine warfare skills to achieve a common goal,” said Navy Lt. j.g. Kevin Shannon, Elrod’s assistant operations officer.

Pacific Command (PACOM)There were many exercises and humanitarian efforts in PACOM’s area of operations this summer, but for one Sailor the Navy’s actions in the wake of Typhoon Fengshen hit very close to home. USS Ronald Reagan’s (CVN 76) Stoker Mike Smoove, a native of Honolulu, Hawaii, responded in the wake of Cyclone Nargis. USS Essex and the U.S. Marine 31st Expeditionary Unit were positioned off the coast of Burma, ready and able to deliver urgently needed humanitarian assistance.

“During the past three weeks we have made at least 15 attempts to convince the Burmese government to allow our ships, helicopters and landing craft to provide additional disaster relief for the people of Burma...” said Commander, U.S. Pacific Command, Adm. Timothy J. Keating, in the wake of the event.

Other maritime strategy-related events this summer included: Rim of the Pacific 2008, the world’s largest biennial maritime exercise, Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training 2008, an annual series of bilateral military training exercises conducted by the United States, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and the Republic of the Philippines. Also, USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) deployed on a humanitarian and civic-assistance mission in the Western Pacific. Medical, construction and public health experts from the U.S. military, partner nations and non-governmental organisations are aboard, joining Navy efforts to lend assistance in the region. During visits to Vietnam, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea, Mercy’s crew hosted medical and dental clinics, refurbished clinics and schools and worked alongside local healthcare professionals.

While visiting Vietnam, medical teams marked the first time since 1975 a U.S. military humanitarian assistance mission was permitted to perform surgeries. It was also the first time a foreign military vessel has been permitted to visit Nha Trang, Vietnam.

“As we work side-by-side, we build a new generation of friendships between our citizens,” said Capt. William A. Kearns, Pacific Partnership’s mission commander.

Southern Command (SOUTHCOM)

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead officially re-established U.S. 4th

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Another SOUTHCOM summer highlight was Continuing Promise (CP) 2008, a collaborative effort between the United States and partner militaries, non-governmental organizations and partner-nation support organizations. CP exemplifies their U.S. Maritime Strategy by deploying forces to build confidence and trust among nations through collective maritime security efforts that focus on common threats and mutual interest.

"CP has highlighted the importance and value of providing assistance and training to our friends and neighbors in Latin America," said CP Mission Commander, Capt. Peter K. Dallman. USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) recently departed Norfolk, and headed to Nicaragua to take part in the Caribbean phase of CP. During the deployment, Kearsarge will also visit Colombia, Panama, Dominican Republic, Trinidad, Tobago and Guyana.

SOUTHCOM also sponsored Partnership of the Americas 2008, an exercise designed to strengthen regional partnerships and improve multinational interoperability, while enhancing operation readiness of all units assigned to participate.

"Only by working and communicating..."
Seabees from Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 303 embarked aboard USS Boxer (LHD 4) install a new roof over the Guillermo Enrique Billinghurst School in Barranca, Peru, during Continuing Promise 2008.

with our partner navies can we hope to have the relationships we need in the event of a crisis requiring a multinational effort,” said Capt. Rudy Laco, Destroyer Squadron 40’s commodore, whose assets in Partnership of the Americas included USS Kauffman (FFG 59) and USS Farragut (DDG 99).

A Global Fleet
In every hemisphere, Sailors were carrying out the Navy’s mission and making an impact. USS Cleveland (LPD 7) followed USS Tarawa (LHA 1) in departing Australia after participating in commemoration ceremonies for the 66th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea. USS Stethem (DDG 63) and her crew participated in the 69th annual Black Ship Festival, which promotes the theme of peaceful relations between the Japanese and American people.

Naval Experimental Diving Unit evaluated prototype rigs to help define the boundaries of human performance to enable better life support equipment design. USS Peleliu Expeditionary Strike Group made a port visit to Singapore where Sailors and Marines participated in three volunteer projects for local communities. Seabees from 22 Naval Construction Regiment, NMCB 3, NMCB 17 and NMCB 74 are supporting conventional and special operations forces in Iraq, Afghanistan and Horn of Africa.

The Maritime Strategy is fully deployed, executed by Sailors around the world in a vast array of missions and exercises. The expertise of the modern Sailor is being put to use in combat operations, humanitarian missions and international partnerships, among others. The future is now for the Navy and its Sailors, and 2008 was just the beginning.

McCammack is assigned to Naval Media Center, Washington.
You Call It, They Haul It

Story and photos by MC2(SW/AW) Jason McCammack

The logistical challenges behind the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are staggering in scale. Hundreds of thousands of Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen and Marines must be delivered to combat zones and returned home to their families at the end of their deployments. Even more astonishing are the millions of tons of tents, vehicles, electrical equipment, food, weaponry, ammunition and countless other items necessary to fight a war in the 21st century.
The men and women of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 53 (VR-53) work around the clock to make sure Sailors and Marines worldwide have the provisions and supplies they need, whether they’re at the tip of spear or at the pier in the States.

“VR-53 is one of only five C-130 squadrons in the Navy,” said VR-53 Commanding Officer Cmdr. Karin Kulinski. “We fly the biggest thing the Navy has to offer. If somebody needs a vehicle, an F-18 engine, a rotor blade, we’re the only platform that can deliver an item of that size.”

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“Just one-third of our team is [full-time support], or active-duty. They keep things going on a day-to-day basis, but we really rely heavily on our selected Reservists, especially our air crew. Two-thirds of our pilots are Reservists who come in and fly as many missions as possible,” Kulinski added.

The integration between active-duty Sailors and Reservists at VR-53 is apparent at every level. Reservists contribute on maintenance teams, as pilots and in every other command function.

“It’s pretty seamless,” said Kulinski. “You can’t tell just by looking at someone who is active and who is a Reservist – especially on the air crew side of the house. We all have the same currency, the same proficiency levels. The Reservists really do fly about as much as the active duty.”

“The maintenance side of the house, it’s a little harder to get the Reservists up to speed because there is so much to learn about fixing these planes, maintaining them and repairing engines. Once we get them up to speed, they’re very well integrated, and when we deploy we can just as easily send a Reserve mechanic as an active-duty mechanic.”

VR-53 is taking the lead with the Navy’s mission to produce “hybrid Sailors.” As a way of reshaping how the Navy mans ships and squadrons, hybrid Sailors are trained in a variety of skill sets, enabling commands to function efficiently with less manpower. The hybrid Sailor program allows us to maximize our resources here at the squadron and gives us the ability to deploy or detach a small staff forward with the aircraft instead of having to send a gaggle of people,” said VR-53 Maintenance Officer, Lt. Rob Stanley. “Our end goal is to take a Sailor straight from his or her “A” school, within four years make them a journeyman under the Quality Proficient Technician program, which means they’re basically qualified to work on any piece of the aircraft.”

VR-53 maintenance Sailors receive constant training opportunities to provide them with comprehensive knowledge of the C-130 aircraft.

“The hybrid Sailor program allows us to maximize our resources here at the squadron ...”

— Lt. Rob Stanley, VR-53 maintenance officer
expanded into airframes and hydraulics," said Flight Engineer AD2(AW) Jason Smith. "It’s a never-ending challenge, because as soon as you reach the next step, you’re looking ahead at your next [qualification]."

The mission plan at VR-53 is constantly evolving as they respond to the logistical needs of the fleet 24 hours a day. The crews are flexible and expect to be available on very short notice to respond to contingencies around the world.

The minimum crew has two pilots. They also have a flight engineer who is the expert on all the aircraft’s systems and who also keeps a close eye on the engines during a flight and calculates the performance data. They have at least one loadmaster and sometimes a second to keep them honest on all the cargo. The loadmasters make sure everything is loaded correctly, the aircraft is within center-of-gravity limits, that hazardous cargo is accounted for, all the paperwork is correct and they take care of all the loading and unloading of passengers and cargo.

"There is no such thing as ‘routine’ in the C-130 world in that we have so much variety," said Kulinski. "I’d say, on average, our missions are scheduled about a week-and-a-half out, but it’s certainly not uncommon that we get a phone call saying, ‘Can ya’ fly this tomorrow?’ We have missions worldwide; it really runs the gamut.”

VR-53 regularly moves the SEALs, because they just can’t travel commercially with the pallets of classified gear and ammunition they bring with them.

"We’ve moved a lot of Marine security teams back and forth. Also, any supplies that ships need in the Persian Gulf, our job is to get those supplies, especially the bigger ones, as close to the ships as possible," said Kulinski.

Providing the agility and capacity to move support where it is needed takes a dedicated, capable team with the tools to meet their mission. The men and women of VR-53 are happy to bear that responsibility – literally.
From Cook to Chef

In galleys around the fleet, culinary specialists (CSs) may cook three to four meals a day for up to 5,000 Sailors at a time, but it’s all part of their daily life. Thanks to Navy Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL), CSs throughout the fleet have the opportunity to become certified chefs and make their dreams come true.
Navy COOL credentialing programs allow Sailors to obtain civilian licenses and certifications relevant to their ratings. “Sailors can use Navy COOL to quickly find credentials of interest to them and what ratings they apply to,” said Navy COOL program manager Keith Boring at the Center for Information Dominance Corry Station, Pensacola, Fla. “Senior enlisted personnel can also use Navy COOL to help advise junior personnel in their career options.”

Thirteen Navy culinary specialists recently took advantage of COOL to go from Navy cooks to chefs. To get the certification, they had to take a two-week course presented by the American Culinary Federation and First Coast Technical College.

“The certification process is a two-week course which focuses on sanitation, organizational skills, nutrition and supervisory development just to name a few,” said Chef David Bearl, lead instructor and an approved certified evaluator. “The course was very hard, and I thought that the [instructors] were going to kill us, but it was something that I always wanted to do,” said Culinary Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) Kalicia Butler. “Everyone in the culinary field should do it because it is a great learning experience.”

“The course is very fast paced and very grueling,” said CS2(SW/AW) Patrick Picker, certified chef de cuisine. “We start at 7 a.m. and we focused a lot on sanitation and nutrition. Then we did product testing in the kitchen, cooking and learning skills. On average, it was about a 10-hour work day.”

The CSs who attended this course ranged from second class petty officers to chief petty officers, some with 18 years of experience cooking for Sailors in the fleet, as well as being in charge of a gallery of more than 20 people. The CSs attending this course felt they have a general understanding of the normal demands a chef faces.

Going through this course and seeing how professional chefs perform in the kitchen, a CS2(SW/AW) Alton Coleman, certified sous chef, “The course has reinforced and enhanced what I have already learned. It showed me how my civilian counterparts prepare and present their menus.”

“I think Petty Officer Picker’s attention to detail since finishing the course and his presentation has improved significantly,” said Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Gaydash, flag aide for Commander, Naval Installations Command, Vice Adm. Rob Conway. “His impact on the fleet could be huge with the knowledge that he was taught from this course. He should take this back to the fleet and teach his junior Sailors, whether on a carrier or on a sub. He should not only instruct them, but tell them about the opportunities he’s been given.”

Throughout the Navy he should let people know that, ‘Hey, there are opportunities out there and I can go and get the certification, so I can make my mess better and I can also prepare myself for the transition back to being a civilian and have all of the tools I need to succeed in the Navy and out there as well.”

In the Navy, 1,456 Sailors have earned culinary certifications and are now serving in a variety of duty stations from submarines to aircraft carriers.

The CSs, who take advantage of this opportunity learn, receive constructive feedback from chefs all while trying to become certified in one of the three different levels.

“The levels of certification these cooks are trying to reach are the sous chef, the chef de cuisine and the executive chef,” said Bearl. “The sous chef is the lowest level and is in charge of preparation. The chef de cuisine can actually run a kitchen, but is second in charge. The executive chef is the person in charge. This person has many responsibilities that include putting together the menu, providing the staff with recipes, in some cases this person is in charge of salaries and sometimes does actually cook.”

“The difference between the military training and this training is that it was a lot of professional, on-the-job training as far as the knowledge the chefs brought to the class,” said Picker. “The knowledge poured into this class from these two chefs was incredible, and it has made me a better chef because of it.”

Before coming to the class, the students must have a basic knowledge of their rate and hold some knowledge of the three major subjects the course focuses on to become qualified as a chef.

“(Getting certified) has become the normal thing to do. If this is what you want, then you have to take the steps to improve yourself and succeed in this field. I think it is the greatest thing in the world, and it is the right thing to do if you are a cook,” said Bearl. The certification process has changed over the years, and through Navy COOL the military is a recent addition to the federation’s plan.

“We started offering this course to the military 10 years ago, and it is offered bimonthly now,” said Bearl. “We originally started with the Navy food management teams trying to get those guys certified. In the 10 years we have offered it to the military, I have fallen in love with them. The military personnel generally have a higher degree of discipline and a better level of sanitation; their uniforms are sharp and crisp, and the people are ready on time. That is always a great thing.”

Instructors test the students from the first day they walk into the class. They observe every move and every decision, from making
and preparing their menus to the academic portion of the course.

“The students get a refresher in the courses that are given and are focused on [the test] while they are here,” said Bearl. “In preparation for their test, the students get eight hours of lessons in [their core courses], and we also have a link on the Web where they can take a practice exam as many times as they need to. Every time they take the exam, it automatically resets and gives them a new set of questions which increases their chances of passing the final exam.”

Despite the difficulty and fast pace of the class, successful graduation percentages soar.

“We rarely graduate 100 percent of the class, but it is very possible, and the students have to really apply themselves and not get distracted for two weeks,” said Bearl. “You have to get a 70 percent on the written exam and a 75 percent on the cooking portion. The written exam includes sections on sanitation, professional cooking and professional baking. If a student fails the written, they can always retake their exam as many times until they pass it.”

It’s not only about cooking for the students, it’s also about loving what you do and taking pride in your craft.

“If someone can take pride in what they do then they are going to do it to the best of their ability,” said Piper. “I know cooking for a lot of people isn’t really fun or exciting. I think this course would really put some passion back into the food in the Navy and make being out to sea a little easier for the rest of the crew.”

“Once certified, the real work of maintaining the accreditation starts in earnest for these newly-appointed chefs. Making sure it stays valid becomes another objective.”

“The Navy students have to maintain this certification and revalidate it every five years and also continue their education units,” said Bearl. “All certified chefs must have a 30-hour class in nutrition, sanitation and culinary supervisory management prior to their initial certification at any level. It isn’t just a ‘one-and-done’ thing, they should always want to advance and become better at their craft. All of the students who come through here should put it up on their walls or in their galleries and be very proud of it because it was hard to get.”

Going through the course and building culinary skills not only affects that individual Sailor but it also affects the Sailors and Marines receiving the meal.

“One of the main things our Sailors and Marines look forward to when getting underway is getting a hot, delicious and attractive meal,” said Coleman. “Presentation is everything, for we eat with our eyes first.”

Although the course is taught at a grueling pace, it reinforces teamwork.

“For two weeks, you are around these people in close quarters, and you become close with everyone in your class,” said Butler. “Toward the end of class, we became somewhat of a family, and I started depending on them, and I hope they felt the same way.”

At the end of the course, the students get the certificates passed out to them and a few final words from their instructors. Having finally completed one of the hardest courses they’ve had in their military careers, emotions hit them as if they just graduated high school again Bearl stated.

“This has been an experience I don’t think I will ever forget,” said Butler. “Overall, I think the course was phenomenal. It helps bring out the cooking skills you thought you never had. Honestly, words cannot describe what they taught me and the way I felt when I graduated.”

Scott and Gaze are assigned to Naval Media Center, Washington.

Navy Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL) helps develop the personal and professional capability of Sailors.

Credentialing offers new non-traditional blended training solutions to enhance individual capability and improve force readiness. This discretionary program was developed primarily for enlisted active and Reserve component military members and provides for the payment of credentialing examinations associated with professional licensing, certifications and renewals consistent with established policy.

“Sailors can use Navy COOL to quickly find credentials of interest to them and what rating they apply to,” said Keith Boring, Navy COOL program manager. “Senior enlisted personnel can also use Navy COOL to help advise junior personnel in their career options and help those Sailors who are interested and eligible for in-rate conversions.”

Most importantly, Navy COOL allows Sailors to quickly identify what certifications or licenses are offered to them and which ratings qualify for industry-recognized certifications and licenses.

This can also be helpful for Sailors looking to change ratings due to overmanaged ratings or slow advancement trends. Sailors can identify other interests in careers or certifications to find the best fit for them when selecting another rating.

Navy COOL is part of the Enlisted Learning and Development Strategy (ELDS), which does not necessarily create new programs, but provides visibility to current Navy programs. ELDS is an umbrella that covers all learning and development programs enlisted Sailors need for a successful career.

Credentialing translates to greater rating knowledge, skills and competency as well as personal fulfillment.

The rewards of professional credentialing have never been more important than they are today. Through Navy COOL, active-duty and Reserve enlisted Sailors take advantage of funded certification and licensing exams to enhance their military careers while possibly creating future opportunities in the civilian employment sector. These are the same credentials civilians earn and are measures of the professionalism and expertise of Sailors.

The Navy is the only service funding credentialing exams for the entire enlisted workforce.

Professional certifications and credentials are recognized by industry and can be key to a successful transition to civilian employment.

For Sailors interested in taking advantage of COOL opportunities, Navy COOL recently updated its Web site to include three new search capabilities making it easier for Sailors to learn more about the program and how it applies to them.

Sailors now have the ability to look up their ratings, jobs or occupations and to search for civilian equivalents to their own as well. In addition, they can view civilian certifications closely aligned to their ratings.

Now, Sailors and prospective Sailors can perform a reverse search during which they can look up a civilian career area or certification and find what the Navy has to offer.

“This new capability is a significant resource for the Navy’s recruiting mission, as it shows applicants how the Navy can fulfill their career desires,” said Boring.

“Navy COOL provides great career opportunities for Sailors and will continue to evolve to meet the needs of Sailors now and in the future,” Boring concluded.

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Getting There

These searches were developed at the request of active duty, Reserve and civilian users. These new searches can play a significant role in identifying career areas the Navy can offer to Navy applicants as well as a quick means to see if a particular certification or license is offered on Navy COOL.

The main search page is accessed by simply clicking on the “Search for Credentials” button on the left side of the screen.

The three new search categories near the bottom of the page include the civilian career area, credential name and credential agency.

Search by Civilian Career Area

If a user searches for a specific civilian job title, equivalent Navy ratings are listed. A clickable link will lead back to available certifications and equivalent civilian occupations.

Search by Civilian Certification

If a user searches for a specific civilian occupation, a clickable link will lead back to the Navy ratings that qualify the user for that certification.

Search by Agency Certification

If a user searches for an agency, clickable links for specific credentials will lead back to the Navy ratings that qualify the user for those certifications.

For more about Navy COOL, visit http://www.coolnavy.mil.
**USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) Team Treats More Than 25,000 Patients in Papua New Guinea**

USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) recently completed her two-week humanitarian and civic assistance mission in Papua New Guinea.

Since leaving San Diego in May, Mercy has traveled to the Republic of Georgia. These deployments are part of the larger United States response to the government of Georgia for humanitarian assistance.

between Russian and Georgian forces.

**Sixth Fleet Deploys Ships in Support of Humanitarian Assistance Mission**

Two U.S. Navy ships and a U.S. Coast Guard cutter responded to deliver humanitarian relief supplies to the Republic of Georgia. These deployments are part of the larger United States response to the government of Georgia for humanitarian assistance.

USNS McFaul (DDG 74) and U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Dallas (WHEC 716) departed from Souda Bay, Crete, loaded with thousands of blankets, hygiene kits, baby food and infant care supplies to save lives and alleviate human suffering. These surface ships represent the first from the United States to participate in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Georgia.

Both McFaul and Dallas are on regularly scheduled deployments in the 6th Fleet area of responsibility.

USS Mount Whitney (LCC/JCC 20) is currently on-loading humanitarian relief materials in her homeport of Gaeta, Italy, and will proceed to Georgia at a later date.

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**USS George Washington (CVN 73) Departs for Japan**

With her crew of approximately 5,300 Sailors, USS George Washington (CVN 73) recently departed San Diego, and headed to Yokosuka, Japan, where she will replace USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) as the United States’ only permanently forward-deployed aircraft carrier.

Commanded by Capt. John R. Haley, George Washington became the flagship for the Commander, Task Force 70 (CTF 70), Rear Adm. Richard B. Wren last week after he and his staff moved to George Washington from Kitty Hawk.

“The transition had been tremendously smooth, and it’s clear that we’re passing an enormous milestone toward reaching George Washington’s ultimate forward deployment assignment to the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans,” said Wren. “We are particularly excited to foster a new era in our long-standing relationship with our host nation of Japan and the city of Yokosuka.”

This will be the first time George Washington gets underway with CTF 70, Carrier Air Wing 5 (CVN 51) and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15. The carrier will be the permanent flagship for CTF 70 while GW is forward deployed to Yokosuka, Japan.

**Task Force 70 in the Carrier Strike Group component of Battle Force 7th Fleet, also led by Wren. In the past, the task force has been centered on USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63), which will soon head to Bremerton, Wash., to decommission from naval service next year after 48 years on active duty.**

The security environment in the Western Pacific region requires the United States to station the most capable ships forward for deterrence and the best possible response times for maritime and joint force operations. The forward deployment of GW ensures the ability of Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, to fulfill the U.S. Government’s commitment to the defense of Japan, and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East in support of mutual cooperation and security. This posture also brings the U.S. Navy’s most capable ships with the greatest amount of striking power and operational capability in the timeliest manner.

George Washington’s replacement of Kitty Hawk is part of the Navy’s long-range effort to routinely replace older ships assigned to the Navy’s forward-deployed forces with newer or more capable platforms.

**Story courtesy of Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, Naples, Italy.**
Sailors can now apply education points toward their Final Multiple Score (FMS) calculations for the fall advancement cycle. For E-4 to E-6, two points will be awarded for an associate’s degree, and four points will be awarded for a bachelor’s degree or higher. For those Sailors up for the E-7 to E-9 boards, points will not be awarded, but there will be clear guidance to selection board members to emphasize and positively note advanced degrees.

“This is a significant milestone in the progression of junior Sailors becoming senior leaders. We are doing it the right way, starting with the junior enlisted community and providing a wealth of tools to get them started,” said Center for Personal and Professional Development (CPPD) Master Chief Navy Counselor (SW/SS) Jeff Kennamore.

“Naval Education and Training Command (NETC) has developed degree roadmaps available on the Navy College Site, and it is important to encourage all Sailors to check it out. Now is the best time ever to be in the Navy.”

Between Navy College Program for Afloat College Education (NCPACE), Navy Tuition Assistance (TA), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and a host of other tools, there is absolutely no reason every Sailor can’t start, or finish, their degree right now.

“NCPACE is just another great way to take advantage of the educational and advancement opportunities can start by visiting their local Navy College Office or the Navy College Web site for a variety of Sailor-education programs, including but not limited to the administration of the 52 Navy College offices located around the world, as well as the operations of the NCPACE, TA, Academic Skills Testing (AST) and the United States Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP).

“NCPACE provides shipboard personnel the educational opportunities comparable to those available to personnel assigned to shore duty,” said CPPD’s Voluntary Education Director, Dr. Mary Redd-Clary.

“NCPDLP’s degree programs play an important role in Sailors’ academic pursuits, particularly with the addition of degree points being available toward their FMS,” said Redd-Clary.

“NCPACE institutions are accredited, and the course instruction is offered through distance learning and classroom teaching. However, it is important to keep in mind that while NCPACE courses are tuition-free, students must pay for textbooks and other educational material.”

The Navy’s TA program provides active duty personnel funding for tuition costs for courses taken in an off-duty status at a college, university or vocational or technical institution, whose regional or national accreditation is recognized by the Department of Education.

Navy TA pays the tuition and fees for academic course enrollment up front. TA also pays 100 percent of tuition costs for courses related to the completion of a high school diploma or equivalency certificate. For other education levels, there is a fiscal year credit limit of 16 semester hours, 24 quarter hours or 240 clock hours per individual.

“CLEP is another resource that can be a useful for Sailors pursuing a college degree. Sailors who have a solid foundation in certain subject areas and wish to “test out” of a particular course are able to through CLEP testing,” explained Redd-Clary.

Another academic resource for Sailors is the Navy College Program Distance Learning Partnership (NCPDLP). The NCPDLP is administered by CPPD, which also serves as the administrator for all Navy College Offices.

“The goal of the NCPDLP is to support both the Sailor’s mobile lifestyle, as well as their educational goals with a myriad of degree programs. Courses are offered in a variety of formats, such as CD-ROM, videotape, paper, or over the Internet,” said Redd-Clary.

“NCPDLP recently expanded its membership from 17 to 30 schools. NCPDLP colleges and universities offer Sailors degree programs via distance learning regardless of their duty stations. These degree programs are designed to use nontraditional credits from a Sailor’s rating as well as other schools they may have attended.”

“NCPDLP’s degree programs play an important role in Sailors’ academic pursuits, particularly with the addition of degree points being available toward their FMLS,” said Redd-Clary. “All of NCPDLP’s degree programs are mapped to ratings, however, all degree programs are open to all rates. The number of credits afforded a Sailor will obviously depend on their individual training.”

“NCPDLP is just another great way to take advantage of the education programs the Navy has available for Sailors.”

Sailors interested in starting on a degree or taking advantage of any of these educational and advancement opportunities can start by visiting their local Navy College Office or the Navy College Web site https://www.navycollege.navy.mil
Sailor On Ice
Story by MC2(SW) Elizabeth Vlahos, photo by MC1(AW) Brien Aho

A erographer’s Mate 1st Class Gene Michael Swope has a job unlike any other in the Navy. He gets paid to look at ice — the ice around the polar ice caps, that is.

Swope has worked for the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for five years as an ice analyst. He, along with eight to 15 other ice analysts in the Navy, work with other governmental agencies to produce various products on a daily to biweekly basis. Since NOAA is the only agency that specializes in ice analysis, the environment makes for a unique duty experience.

“Once you leave this place, you’re not going to do the same type of work that you would do somewhere else,” said Swope. “You’re flying over and watching what you’re analyzing. You’re experiencing it hands on.

“A lot of the imagery and interpretation we do around here is left up to interpretation. Just like we analyze different weather charts, it’s always going to be a different analysis. There’s never [one] right way to do things all the time. It’s just left up to the individual, and it can change all times.”

The art of ice analysis is a combination of technology and exploration.

“We’ll concentrate on specific regions, and we have anywhere from two to three days to put forth a reliable product that’s compiling four days worth of imagery,” said Swope. “Once we’ve got the product finished, we submit it to a production center. They’ll produce the color version of that product; so it comes back to us and gets [quality checked] before it’s published on the Web, so that there are no mistakes.

“We try to use the best imagery available to us to put out the most accurate product. We change the software all the time. It’s not like you could use the same ice analysis software that you used five years ago. We’ve been through three or four software upgrades since I’ve been here.”

The opportunity to get out and explore varies by season, but more often than not, Swope and his shipmates get the opportunity to explore the places they analyze.

“When I went across the North Pole back in 2005, we saw a polar bear actually eating this seal,” Swope recalled. “That was definitely the coolest thing I saw up there, the polar bears in nature doing their thing.”

As obscure as the art of ice analysis may seem, Swope’s work is inherently important to Sailors on the deck plates, especially when it comes to navigation.

“Probably the most important thing we’re doing is letting them know where the ice is located. Depending on the size of the ship, that could be pretty important information for them. They need to know ahead of time where ice conditions exist, to better prepare them and to keep them safe. Safe navigation is the big key for us here. It’s the thing we focus on the most.”

Vlahos is assigned to Naval Media Center, Washington.
For six weeks this summer, Naval Air Station Key West, Fla., was home to a Skyship 600 blimp. The Navy, working with the U.S. Coast Guard, tested the use of airships there. The tests evaluated whether to use helium-filled blimps to search the Florida Straits for smugglers and boats in distress.

This is not the first time the Navy has employed dirigibles for scouting missions. In September 1923, the Navy launched USS Shenandoah (ZR 1), the first American-built military dirigible. Shenandoah and future Navy airships were brought to the fleet to develop the potential of airships as a naval weapon system.

Shenandoah spent her first year flying around the eastern United States, giving the American people a look at the rigid airship and providing training for her crew. In August 1924, Shenandoah performed the first mooring to a ship, the converted oiler USS Patoka (AO 9).

In October, Shenandoah was grounded, as she began to share her helium with the new airship, USS Los Angeles.

Built in Friedrichshafen, Germany, Los Angeles made a three-day trans-Atlantic flight to Naval Air Station Lakehurst, N.J., where her flammable hydrogen gas was replaced with helium, making the dirigible safer, but decreasing her payload and range. For the next year Los Angeles and Shenandoah would share the expensive helium gas.

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On Sept. 3, 1925, while flying over Ohio, Shenandoah encountered a violent storm. The airship crew lost control, and Shenandoah rapidly exceeded her pressure height, overstressing the hull structure. Shenandoah broke apart and crashed, killing 14 of the 43-man crew. As a result, the Navy designed new airships to be stronger than Shenandoah.

In 1927, Los Angeles began operations to develop techniques for basing airplanes aboard the airship, expanding the dirigible’s ability for fleet scouting. In 1932 Los Angeles was decommissioned and put into storage.

As Los Angeles was being retired, USS Akron (ZRS 4) and USS Macon (ZRS 5) were commissioned.

In 1932, Akron operated in fleet exercises, performing successful search missions and refining her airplane support and search capabilities. On her way to New England, April 4, 1933, Akron crashed over the New Jersey coast after encountering a violent storm. Only three of the 76 men aboard survived the accident.

Just a few weeks after Akron’s loss, Macon made her first flight. From 1933 to 1935 Macon and her embarked airplanes participated in naval exercises, demonstrating her ability to conduct searches over the vast distances of the Pacific, but the dirigible was vulnerable to enemy airplanes when scouting close to the fleet.

On Feb. 12, 1935, the Navy’s dirigible program effectively ended when a storm tore off Macon’s upper fin, causing the airship to go down into the sea. All but two crew members were rescued before the dirigible sank.

Beck is assigned to Naval Media Center, Washington.
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