BESS
Basic Enlisted Submarine School
A six-week course BESS provides students entry-level skills to join the Navy’s elite submarine community.

Photo by MC2(SW/AW) Jhi L. Scott

Countering Extremism
in the Horn of Africa
At the only military installation in Africa, Sailors work side-by-side with Soldiers, Airmen and Marines to fight violent extremists without firing one single shot.

Photo by MC2 Joshua Bruns | Illustration by Tim Mazurek

Soaring with the Eagles
Environmental specialists from Naval Support Facility, Indian Head, Md., work in a program that for the last three years has successfully restored the population of eagles in the area, saving not only the beautiful birds but also a national icon.

Photo by MC1 R. Jason Brunson

[Next Month]
All Hands brings you an update of the training individual augmentees receive at Fort Jackson, S.C., to prepare for boots on the ground deployment.
An SH-60F Sea Hawk helicopter assigned to Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron 15 lands aboard USS Bunker Hill (CG 52) while participating in Southern Seas 2010.

Photo by MC2 Daniel Barker
Speaking with Sailors
Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) (JS/SH) Rick D. West

Your Part in a Ready Navy Family

Shipmates!

I want to discuss something that is very important to you and our Navy, and that’s family readiness. Family readiness has a direct impact on your job satisfaction, performance, and retention. So, I ask you, what are you doing to fully prepare your family to meet the demands of Navy life and to be a ready Navy family?

As Sailors, we train and prepare to deploy in support of our Navy’s missions. Now, think about your spouse, significant other, parents and other family members who stood by you when you joined the Navy and who continue to stand by you today. Are they trained, educated and prepared for Navy life during deployments? How about day-to-day operations?

The key to prepare your family is to talk to your chain of command and ask questions about what they need to navigate through Navy life. Navy life is a good life made better when armed with the knowledge of all the great programs we offer. In a recent post on my Facebook page (www.facebook.com/MCPON), I asked the question, “How do you remain informed about your Sailor’s command and family readiness programs and opportunities?”

The majority of answers were that families don’t feel like they are informed and don’t know where to get the information from. Shipmates, it has to start with you!

There are many family support services and quality-of-life programs and benefits available to military families. We must continue to effectively get the word out about these programs that support our Navy through word of mouth–our ombudsman network, Family Readiness Groups, social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and newsletters and internet sites, like the Fleet and Family Support Center and Military OneSource website.

Our Navy’s family readiness programs, policies and services continue to evolve to meet the needs of our Sailors and their families. Shipmates, get to know your families involved and keep them involved. It’s important that we realize that without our families, we could not meet the demands of today’s Navy environment and increased mission requirements.

Finally, I would like to say, “Thank you,” to all of our Navy spouses and families who continually support and serve our great Navy. Your role in your Sailor’s life and the Navy is vitally important.

HOYAY!!

• Does your command write a family newsletter?
• Does your command have a Family Readiness Group?
• Does your command offer any programs to family members such as command indoctrination?
• Are your nearest Fleet and Family Support Center, TRICARE and DEERS offices, Navy Marine Corps Relief Society and medical treatment facility? Have you taken your spouse there?

Communication is the key. At the end of the day, you may not feel like talking about work, but it is very important that you are talking to your loved ones and giving them the access and information they need to navigate through Navy life. Navy life is a good life made better when armed with the knowledge of all the great programs we offer.
Top Navy Official Says Minding Your ‘Ps’ Can Take Careers Far

Steffanie Easter, the assistant deputy chief of naval operations for manpower, personnel, training and education, says that the three ‘Ps’ – preparation, positioning and positive attitude – can empower individuals to succeed.

“The three Ps to success are preparation, positioning and a positive attitude,” said Steffanie Easter, who serves as the civilian executive advisor for the planning and program management of all manpower, personnel, training and education resources for Navy’s active duty and civilian employees.

Easter said the three Ps and mentorship have guided her throughout her career. She entered civil service at general schedule (GS) 5 and in 24 years has advanced to the senior executive service ranks – the civil service equivalent of admirals and generals.

“Preparation has to do with knowing what you do, being good at what you do, being able to communicate it to others and making sure everything associated with getting you through the door, like your resume or application, is lined up and correct,” said Easter.

“That means educating yourself continuously. That means reaching out for help when you need it. That means being able to communicate your vision, your thoughts and your ideas.”

According to Easter, positioning is being able and willing to accept the advice of others and step outside your comfort zone.

“It means being available to those who are trying to help you and being willing to do the tasks and take on the jobs you normally wouldn’t do,” she said. “It is about stepping outside of your ‘comfort zone.’”

“There was a time when I actually resisted taking a new position. I was in the [comfort] zone. Life was good and that was where I wanted to stay,” said Easter. “That is an example of a point in my career where I knew exactly what I wanted to do. Everybody else was telling me to do something else, but I thought I knew what was best for me.”

After taking the new position and learning new skills, opportunities opened up for Easter and she was offered a promotion she truly desired.

“That was literally a life-changing event. If I had not eventually opened up to the change in jobs, I would not be standing here today. That is positioning. You have to make yourself available and be open,” she said.

The third P is positive attitude.

“When you’ve prepared, have done everything you felt you needed to do and you still don’t get the promotion or the opportunity, that is when positive attitude comes into play. ‘I’ve done everything that I can do. I’ve taken the risk. I’ve learned from my mistakes. This just isn’t my time right now.’ That is not the time to get a negative attitude. That is when you can use the help of a mentor. That is what mentors are for – to help guide you through those tough times,” said Easter who also challenged everyone without a mentor to get one.

“If somebody can develop a relationship with, who you are comfortable with, who can help guide you through your careers,” said Easter. “You need to find somebody who is willing to invest in you and give you the time, whether they look like you or not. You need somebody who will support you and give you what you need.”

Easter ended her speech by reiterating her message and offering a last bit of wisdom.

“Empowerment starts with you,” said Easter. “Even though somebody can empower you – they can give you the opportunity, you need to take it and be on the responsibility. With that responsibility, comes a requirement to give it to you best, a requirement to walk-the-talk, as you talk-the-talk, and a requirement to share it with others.”

New Program Allows Sailors to Verify Medical Readiness Online

Navy Medicine Information Systems Support Team (NAVMISSA), based in San Antonio, recently announced the development of an online program that will support every Sailor. NAVMISSA’s new Web-based application allows Sailors to monitor their individual medical readiness (IMR) status online for the first time. Sailors can now verify IMR medical and dental data from the Medical Readiness Reporting System (MRRS) via BUPERS Online (BOL). IMR status determines if a Sailor is medically eligible to deploy.

“This additional application within BOL allows Sailors to ensure that all of their IMR requirements are current and see what their current IMR status is,” said Elaine A. Shortey, a NAVMISSA external liaison and project lead.

Maintaining accurate IMR status through MRRS is a high priority within Navy Medicine and directly supports Navy Medicine’s goal of a fit and healthy force.

“The ability for individuals to monitor their IMR status will help to promote a healthy naval force and ensure our warfighters are medically prepared to meet their mission,” said Capt. Tina L. Ortiz, NAVMISSA commanding officer. “It’s every Sailor’s responsibility to maintain their individual medical readiness. This tool empowers them to keep track of their IMR status and update it as necessary.”

The new application is a module that displays information in an easy-to-follow format that resembles a report card. Sailors can review their physical health assessments, laboratory results, dental readiness, and any medical conditions that may prohibit or limit deployment and post-deployment health assessments. It also shows when immunizations should be administered and when upcoming assessments should be completed.

“A Sailor’s overall IMR status is assessed into one of four categories: fully medically ready, partially medically ready, not medically ready and medical readiness indeterminate. A fully ready status means the Sailor is current in all medical categories and is not considered at risk to experience a dental emergency, thus deployable worldwide. A partially ready status means the Sailor has one or more immunizations, laboratory results or medical equipment such as a gas mask insert. These limitations can be quickly resolved and allow the Sailor to deploy once corrected. Not medically ready means the Sailor has a chronic or prolonged medical condition that cannot be corrected in time for deployment.”

Story by MC3(SW) Maria Yager assigned to Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

A Shipmate

Volunteering Earns Sailor “Spirit of Service” Award

A viation Electronics Technician 2nd Class Matthew Stroup, stationed in Ocena, Va., was one of five service members to recently receive the “Spirit of Service” Award by the American Legion at their annual Spirit of Service Awards Ceremony held in Louisville, Ky. The awards ceremony gave Stroup the opportunity to present a short speech while on stage with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen, Commander, U.S. Central Command Gen. David Petraeus and American Legion National Commander David Reeblin.

Stroup explained to his audience that it’s important to instill volunteerism in peers to improve an organization’s community involvement.

“Having gotten other people moving in the direction to volunteer, I think community involvement is very important, especially for a government organization," said Stroup.

Stroup has a bachelor’s degree in business administration and was recently accepted to Officer Candidate School to become a public affairs officer.

Story by MCF(AM) Jonathan W. Hutto Sr. assigned to Defense Media Activity - Anacostia, Washington D.C.
The Comfort surgical team has performed more than 800 surgeries while (CVN 69) while in the Gulf of Oman. Indoor and outdoor sports are morale boosters for many service members. Melinda R. Brown, NMSC command career counselor and administrative leading chief petty officer, “Know- ing who’s in and who’s out could turn a bad situation into a manageable one. For a leading chief, this is ground breaking.”

To view medical readiness status, visit www.bol.navy.mil and select the “IMR Status” link under the BOL “Application Menu.”

“The IMR status has long been a potential problem for deploying Sailors,” said Rivera, who has served aboard three ships. “IMR verification will allow Sailors simple access to helpful medical information as they prepare to deploy.”

For Chief Storekeeper (SW) HM2 Bradley Beckman, NAVMessa’s new Web-based application is a major breakthrough.

“I’ve served on four ships,” said Elam, NMSC command career counselor and administrative leading chief petty officer. “Know- ing who’s in and who’s out could turn a bad situation into a manageable one. For a leading chief, this is ground breaking.”

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ABAN Elliott Taylor stands on a forklift waiting for a load of stores to drop to the hangar bay of USS Bataan during replenishment at sea with USNS Scappose (T-AKE 2) during Operation Unified Response in Baie De Grand Goave, Haiti.

CWO2 Thomas Milam, from Sycamore, Ala., stands watch as a safety observer while Sailors aboard USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) drop anchor off the coast of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during Southern Seas 2010.

A participant in the 16th annual Swamp Romp in Honolulu, wipes mud from his face after jumping in a pond. More than 300 six-person teams, including Navy and Marine Corps teams, participated in the event hosted by Combat Logistics Battalion 3.

DC2 Michael Sisco, from San Diego, and DC3N Edward J. Morrison, from Rehoboth Beach, Del., participate in a general quarters drill aboard USS Moosu (LHA 4).

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Directions on how to properly submit photos can be found at www.navy.mil/photo_submissions

Mail your submissions to:
Navy Visual News Service
2200 Navy Pentagon, Rm. 4854
Washington, DC 20350-1200

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

The Information Domi-
nance Corps will create a cadre of information specialists, who come with individual community identities and units to be managed as a corps, developed as a corps, and to fight as a corps,” said Vice Adm. Jack Dorsett, deputy chief of naval operations for information warfare. “This warfare pin represents a command identity for the Information Dominance Corps.” The IDC will consist of more than 44,000 active and Reserve Navy officers, enlisted and civilian professionals who assess extensive skills in information-intensive fields to develop and deliver dominant information capabilities in support of U.S. Navy, joint and national warfighting requirements.

These fields include information professional officers, information warfare officers, naval intelligence officers, meteorological and oceanography officers, space cadre officers, aerographer’s mates, cryptologic technicians, intelligence specialist, information systems technicians and civilian personnel.

The new officer insignia is a gold matte metal pin, 2.75 inches by 1.125 inches, showing a background of ocean waves, a crossed naval officer’s sword and lightning bolt with a fouled anchor and globe.

The enlisted insignia is a silver oxidized metal pin, 2.75 inches by 1.125 inches, showing a background of ocean waves, a crossed naval enlisted cutlass and lightning bolt with a fouled anchor and globe. Both pins will also be available in a miniature size.

“Command leadership plays a vital role in the referral process as they are often one of the first entities to know about a Sailor’s situation,” said Navy Safe Harbor Program Director Capt. Key Watkins. “Safe Harbor works collaboratively with the Sailor’s command to identify and provide non-medical support, allowing the Sailor to focus on recovery often while continuing to contribute to the Navy’s mission.”

Identifying shipmates who have become seriously ill or injured quickly and referring them for enrollment will aid commands in executing their leadership responsibility to support their ill or injured Sailor’s recovery.

A service member may also self-refer by calling Safe Harbor’s 24/7 toll free number, 877-746-8563, or by sending an e-mail to safeharbor@navy.mil.

“Leaders as we have to be aware of our Sailors’ issues and their families’ issues, being especially vigilant of deployment related problems,” said Greenert. “Work with your Sailors to get them the necessary care and support they have earned.”

Navy Safe Harbor’s goal is to return service members to duty and when not possible, to work collaboratively with federal agencies to ensure successful reintegra-
tion into their communities.

For more information on Navy Safe Harbor, visit the Safe Harbor Web site at www.safeharbor.navy.mil or follow the program on Facebook and Twitter.

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Since 1870, when Jules Verne’s book *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* was first published, millions of people have read his work of science fiction and thought about what it would be like to travel around the world, under the sea. Today, what was once a dream has become a common reality.
After finishing basic training at Recruit Training Command (RTC), Great Lakes, Ill., Sailors who have requested entry into the submarine service can begin their training at the Basic Enlisted Submarine School (BESS), Submarine Base New London, Groton, Conn. This is an initial requirement for Sailors who will one day operate one of the U.S. Navy’s most secretive and powerful operational platforms – submarines.

BESS teaches initial technical proficiency training, advanced team operator and team training in electronic and combat systems employment, navigation and damage control skills. A road guard makes sure oncoming traffic stops as BESS students march to their weekly general military training.

With an average of 1,600 Sailors daily, BESS encompasses initial technical proficiency training, advanced team operator and team training in electronic and combat systems employment, navigation and damage control skills.

MMC(SS) Christopher Frank watches Sailors learn basic submarine operations as the students train aboard the submarine trainer.

Students learn basic submarine controls while participating in the basic ships control cab.

“BESS is the first step for any submariner’s career because the majority of the Sailors we receive here are straight out of boot camp,” said Malone. “These Sailors are pretty young and are still trying to adapt to military life so one of the first things we put them through is called ‘Sailorization.’ We teach them how to better interact with each other, how to work with one another and pretty much teach them how to become a team while they are here.”

Teamwork is the core of any Navy operational platform, and operating one of the most advanced machines ever built requires a tremendous amount of skill, knowledge, personal discipline and unit cohesiveness. More than 100 Sailors work and live together for months at a time aboard each submarine, silently defending their country and protecting U.S. interests around the world. New underwater warriors learn about teamwork by learning about the theory, history, rich heritage and proud tradition of the sub-surface fleet.

“We are taught early to look out for our shipmates, and they pound the team concept into our heads,” said Machinist’s Mate 3rd Class Matthew Brunson, a BESS student and class leader. “If there is someone in your class who is struggling with something, we automatically assist them. We have mandatory night study sessions that everyone has to attend no matter where you are in the class.”
“...if you make a mistake here, we can hit the reset button and start over,” Frank said.

According to MMC(SS) Christopher Frank, the RESS Ship Control Trainer division officer, the Ship Control Trainer (also known as the "F2 Cab" or the "Drive and Drive") is a fundamental portion of any submariner's immersion into the sub-surface fleet.

“They go through the F2 Cab, which gives them a basic understanding of what they will go through when they get to their ship,” said Frank. “It teaches them the basics on ships control. ‘You pull rise, this is what happens, you push dive and this is what happens,’ along with basic order and repeat backs while they’re driving.”

Frank said the multi million dollar ship control trainer provides students the opportunity to understand how a submarine will handle during a variety of scenarios. Frank, a 14-year veteran of the submarine community, noted that what he has learned helps him prepare younger Sailors for the tasks they will encounter as U.S. Navy submariners in a safe training environment without injuring themselves or their shipmates.

“I’d rather teach you here and have you mess up in the trainer because if you make a mistake here, we can hit the reset button and start over,” Frank said. “When you’re on your boat and you make a mistake at sea, you’ve got the lives of 150 or so Sailors in your hands. So we train you properly; you make mistakes here, figure them out and don’t do them when you get to your boat. This is very intense training that the students go through, and I feel this prepares them for their next command.”

While surface vessels often employ teams of Sailors trained to respond to routine maintenance procedures, damage control activities including flooding and firefighting, and other instances which could damage the ship, submarines employ the entire crew in the event of a casualty. The RESS Fire Fighting Trainer is designed to teach students the differences between submarine and surface ship firefighting, as well as the unique gear used in combating a sub-surface fire, said MM2(SS) John Vandenburg, RESS Fire Fighting Trainer safety chief.

“The Fire Fighting Trainer gives the students an idea of what kind of fires they could possibly see on a submarine,” said Vandenburg. “On the first day, the students receive instructions and watch videos on what to expect. The second day, they actually go into the trainer, split into their teams and then it’s like a free for all. We throw different scenarios at them so they learn different hose handling techniques and the different ways to combat certain fires, whether it’s using [aqueous film-forming foam], [potassium bicarbonate] or [carbon dioxide] extinguishers. So they fight the fires, we grade them and tell them where they could possibly improve.”

Despite their relative inexperience with actual submarine incidents, after training, RESS students can identify and explain what their role in a shipboard disaster might be. Their quick understanding is a testament to the training team and the hands-on approach of the firefighting trainer.

“The trainers are awesome; you get to fight a lot of different fires, and they are more realistic than the ones thrown at us while we’re at boot camp,” said Brunson. “When we go to our [boat], we are going to actually be the firefighting force, so we need this training. It’s very important that we go through this because if something happens when we’re out there and we don’t have this training, then the lives of our shipmates, as well as our own lives, are at risk. It’s a very long day, but it’s a very rewarding day in the end.”

Thorough training results in quick and efficient responses in any and every emergency situation and helps ensure safety throughout the fleet. The Submarine Escape Trainer is designed...
to build skill and confidence in submarine escape procedures. But before students are allowed anywhere near the unique Submarine Escape Trainer, they are subjected to an extensive medical screening, during which the BESS Submarine Escape Trainer medical team reviews the students’ medical history and records, focused physical exam and spirometry (a lung function test), as well as a recompression chamber pressure test.

The SEIE MK-10 is a complete-body suit which allows submariners to escape from a downed submarine. The suit provides protection against hypothermia and allows Sailors to surface from depths as deep as 600 feet.

“I believe this training is absolutely necessary,” said Senior Chief Master Diver William Carlyle Hargray, master diver for the Submarine Escape Trainer. “It’s a two-part course where we put the students through a variety of exercises. The first day we bring them in to see who will be able to participate in the escape trainer. We’ll put them through a recompression dive, [to see if] they can keep up with the pressure and ensure they are not claustrophobic. There are students who don’t get to proceed to day two because of medical reasons.

“The rest of the class gets to go through a variety of exercises from surface survival training that shows them how to use the equipment. We take them down to do 15-foot ascents. The significant part of that exercise is just to make sure that they are not holding their breath or panicking underwater. This is a build up to the 37-foot ascent that shows students how to properly ascend from 37 feet with an MK10 suit.”

“The 37-foot ascent was amazing,” said MMFR Adam Thompson. “This training is extremely useful because you don’t want something to happen and you not know how to reach the surface. For us to do it here and prepare for the future, this will come in handy. This is by far the best training that I have received in the Navy so far. Just in case something does happen, I know that I have this training and I can survive.”

With such a small and close-knit community, having the right leadership is essential to the success of any sub-surface command. For Capt. Paul F. McHale, commanding officer, Naval Submarine School, leading by example and teaching teamwork is one of his top priorities.

“We have a lot of heritage in the submarine force, going back to World War II and what the submarine force did during that period,” said McHale. “This is a brotherhood—a very tight-knit group—but each Sailor is welcomed. We want them to see what our values are, look at the rich history and learn about the heritage, because I think that gives them a real sense of value. They are joining a very unique and special community that has done a lot of great things, and we have a great future in front of us.”

Scott is assigned to Defense Media Activity—Anacostia, Washington, D.C.
Countering Extremism in the Horn of Africa

Story by MC2 Larry Foz

Overshadowed by nearby Somali, porous borders, vast waste land and the Gulf of Aden, Camp Lemonnier seems outsized and out of place, yet U.S. military leaders are calling this small U.S. Navy expeditionary command in Djibouti, Africa, the future model in combating violent extremism. It’s home to Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) — the only U.S. installation on the continent intended to improve stability and reduce conflict in volatile East Africa.
CJTF-HOA is fighting violent extremism without firing a shot, and doing it with fewer than 2,500 military personnel from all branches of service, including approximately 1,000 active and Reserve Navy personnel, in an area larger than the continental United States.

"The unique thing about HOA is how we envision the future in those areas where we don't already have an area of conflict," said Rear Adm. Tony Kurta, former commander CJTF-HOA. "We still have the same basic mission of countering violent extremism, and that's why we're here, because there is an extremist threat in HOA. But the mission has evolved into what it is today, which is countering violent extremism by indirect methods. We take an indirect approach. We work with our partner nations to fill their security capacity so that when there are security challenges, they have the capability and capacity to respond."

Approximately 750 Sailors work here as individual augmentees (IA), including many in Global War on Terror Support Assignments (GSAs). The other Navy personnel are Seabees and P-3 Orion patrol squadron members. The IA Sailors are assigned to Camp Lemonnier or as support to CJTF-HOA to work on joint missions or projects with team members across the rate, rank and service spectrum. Each person provides support to CJTF-HOA's non-kinetic mission model that helps Africans help themselves through development, defense and diplomacy. Most of the IA Sailors in HOA for the first time are surprised at how much they can contribute.

"I am really glad I came here. The experience here has been a lot different than anything I expected it to be," said Electronics Technician 3rd Class Richard McCalmont, assigned to CJTF-HOA's J6 communications division. "It's more than I expected it to be. Initially, I was slated to be a perioperative nurse. I was thinking I was going to do strictly operations and things of that nature. But I have been able to do more than just that. The command supports us spearheading outreach opportunities. There's a lot of freedom to explore things in the community to make it better."

Lt. Cmdr. Kimberly Taylor, a senior nurse working with Army Psychological Operations, has been eye-opening. "I am really glad I came here. The experience here has been a lot different than anything I expected it to be," said Electronics Technician 3rd Class Richard McCalmont, assigned to CJTF-HOA's J6 communications division. "It's more than I expected it to be. Initially, I was slated to be a perioperative nurse. I was thinking I was going to do strictly operations and things of that nature. But I have been able to do more than just that. The command supports us spearheading outreach opportunities. There's a lot of freedom to explore things in the community to make it better."

Lt. j.g. Michael Rucker, an emergency nurse, treats the infected feet of 7-year-old Asia Wata in a children's classroom that is used as a clinic on the weekends in the Caritas Djibouti complex in Djibouti. Rucker volunteers his medical services most weekends at the clinic and is currently assigned to CJTF-HOA, Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Africa.
Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa was created in 2003 and is a subordinate of Africa Command, Stuttgart, Germany. The East African countries under the command’s operating area are Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia and Sudan. East African countries of interest are Liberia, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Mauritius and Comoros. For more information, go to the command’s Web site at www.hoa.africom.mil.

This busy walkway connects CJTF-HOA area of Camp Lemonnier to the expansion area, Container Living Unit area, and most of the construction that’s taking place to build up the camp. The small Navy Exchange, souvenir shop, barbershop/hair stylist and gymnasium (right side) are along the pathway. In the distant horizon to the East you can see the Gulf of Aden.

HM2 Mercedes Blackshear, from Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Va., looks at a blood smear using a BX40 Olympus Microscope in the lab of the Medical Center Portsmouth, Va., HM2 Mercedes Blackshear, who is on her first IA assignment, is not disappointed.

“I’m making a difference. You definitely get that sense of accomplishment. I’ve been here two and a half months, and already I’m about to get my EXW pin, and I’m doing community work. You definitely feel good … it’s not like you just come here and sit. You have so many opportunities to better yourself,” said Blackshear.

Taylor sees broad dividends from serving in HOA.

“People who are thinking about coming to Djibouti and want to know what makes it unique - I believe it’s one of the only areas you can deploy to and be able to engage in the community in a way that gives life-long deposits. While our mission may be a little bit different, our ultimate goal is the same. It’s not just a checkmark in the box. It’s about professional and personal growth that you can experience in a venue that surpasses any other area that I’m aware of,” said Taylor.

Kurta is keenly aware of the importance of this command and the affect it can have on a Navy member’s career.

“I think it does a [lot] for the Sailors because they get to work in a very expeditionary environment. We’re a combined joint task force, that by its nature is not permanent, and we’re on a land-centric mission. So it’s very broadening for the Sailors and it’s great for their careers,” added Kurta.

By outward appearance, Camp Lemonnier doesn’t look like much. But it is a very busy community with a people who are making outsized contributions every day, embodying the motto “one team, one fight.”

Foss is assigned to CJTF-HOA Public Affairs.

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“People who are thinking about coming to Djibouti and want to know what makes it unique - I believe it’s one of the only areas you can deploy to and be able to engage in the community in a way that gives life-long deposits. While our mission may be a little bit different, our ultimate goal is the same. It’s not just a checkmark in the box. It’s about professional and personal growth that you can experience in a venue that surpasses any other area that I’m aware of,” said Taylor.

Kurta is keenly aware of the importance of this command and the affect it can have on a Navy member’s career.

“I think it does a [lot] for the Sailors because they get to work in a very expeditionary environment. We’re a combined joint task force, that by its nature is not permanent, and we’re on a land-centric mission. So it’s very broadening for the Sailors and it’s great for their careers,” added Kurta.

By outward appearance, Camp Lemonnier doesn’t look like much. But it is a very busy community with a people who are making outsized contributions every day, embodying the motto “one team, one fight.”

Foss is assigned to CJTF-HOA Public Affairs.

This busy walkway connects CJTF-HOA area of Camp Lemonnier to the expansion area, Container Living Unit area, and most of the construction that’s taking place to build up the camp. The small Navy Exchange, souvenir shop, barbershop/hair stylist and gymnasium (right side) are along the pathway. In the distant horizon to the East you can see the Gulf of Aden.

HM2 Mercedes Blackshear, from Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Va., looks at a blood smear using a BX40 Olympus Microscope in the lab of the Medical Center Portsmouth, Va., HM2 Mercedes Blackshear, who is on her first IA assignment, is not disappointed.

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Soaring with the Eagles

So the smock eagle, stretched upon the plain,
To mock through rolling clouds to soar again,
Viewed his own feather on the fatal dart,
And wing’d the shaft that quivered in his heart.

—Lord Byron

Dr. Bryan Watts, director of the Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary, gives this seven-week old juvenile bald eagle a moment to relax after lowering it from its nest. “I have worked with birds since I was a young boy. This is all that I have ever wanted to do,” Watts said. “What we do at the center is satisfying because we feel like through the research that we do we have a positive impact on species of conservation concern.”
The bald eagle has long represented the strength, majesty and, above all else, the freedom of the American people. Much like the ideals it represents, this proud creature meets its fair share of opposing forces, yet somehow always finds a supporting breeze upon which to soar. Unfortunately, it’s often the actions of people that threaten or endanger the survival of a species. But, it’s very often the efforts of man that fuel population recovery.

One shining example of such a proactive and dedicated conservation effort is underway just a few miles south of the nation’s capital at Naval Support Facility (NSF) Indian Head, Md.

NSF Indian Head is not like many other Navy bases. You won’t find a massive pier lined on one side with huge gray-hulled ships. You also won’t find the hustle and flow of thousands of Sailors shuffling back and forth to work.

By day, the men and women assigned to Indian Head carry out its mission, ensuring operational readiness of U.S. forces within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed (fish and other species). Should any negative impact on the eagles, said Barry. Mitigation efforts included retrofitting the base’s electrical distribution system with flight diverters on the utility lines and installing plastic phase covers and fiberglass cross arms to prevent electrocutions.

These deaths promoted the NRO to start informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to discuss eagle deaths and mitigation efforts. In 2005, this consultation resulted in the NRO developing the Raptor Electrocution Prevention Study, which surveyed the base electrical distribution system to determine which zones had the highest risk of having a negative impact on the eagles, said Barry. Further efforts included the base recognizing nest protection zones during the nesting season, which meant all base activities, construction, training programs, projects, and development projects that fall within the protection zone, said Barry. "Based on the potential to have a negative impact during the nesting season, these activities would have to be delayed.”

Though there are as many as three per site, only one, a seven-year-old juvenile bald eagle is nested approximately 55 feet high in this lobolly pine aboard Naval Support Facility Indian Head, Md. The nest is built of large sticks and lined with soft grasses and tree boughs.

The base is prime real estate for both migratory and resident bald eagles, and numbers have risen from as low as one nest in 1989 to 12 nests and a thriving communal roosting site in 10.

“The base is proud of its historical accomplishments in the protection and recovery of the bald eagle,” said Barry. “We are committed to finding a solution to this problem so that we can continue to enjoy this majestic bird in our backyard. We’re proud to work with our partners at the USFWS to develop and implement a plan to mitigate deaths and protect nests.”

As part of the base’s efforts to mitigate unnecessary bird mortalities, its electrical distribution system was retrofitted with flight diverters on the utility lines, plastic phase covers and fiberglass cross arms. These efforts have resulted in the reduction of electrocutions and line-strikes, said Barry.

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“Most of the activities impacted are related to new construction or demolition projects that fall within the protection zone,” said Barry. “Based on the potential to have a negative impact during the nesting season, these activities would have to be delayed.”

Through the efforts of the Natural Resources Office, the number of bald eagles nesting, roosting and foraging at NSF Indian Head has flourished due to the lush forest, extensive shoreline and surrounding waterways.

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In 2006, the NRO began formal consultations with the USFWS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which led to preparation of the Indian Head bald eagle biological assessment (BA) and to the creation of the Indian Head bald eagle management plan. Both the BA and management plan were reviewed by the USFWS, and USFWS concluded that, in addition to the efforts already in place, the base must also conduct a three-year study ensuring that nest productivity is not impacted. The productivity study was launched in 2007. The study partnered the NRO with the Center for Conservation in Biology at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va. It consisted of data collection from all bald eagle nests, by banding eaglets and blood sampling, to determine levels of environmental contaminants.

According to Berry, the folks at William and Mary brought the expertise needed to conduct the work. Dr. Bryan Watts, the center's director, says the project is focused on birds with conservation needs. "This is good news for Indian Head and good news for this portion of the Chesapeake Bay," said Watts. "We have to climb into nests, lower chicks to the ground and process the chicks.

Bald eagles are not simply important as symbols of freedom and patriotism. They also fill a very important ecological niche. "Eagles exist at the top of their food chain and are good indicators of environmental health," said Watts. "They eat the same fish from the Chesapeake Bay that [people] do, so in some ways they serve as an early warning system for us."

Barry says the NRO efforts at Indian Head often exceed those in the civilian sector due to the level of funding toward conservation efforts and the daily involvement of the natural resources staff.

Funding and labor required in retrofitting the extensive electrical distribution system at Indian Head and balancing time-of-year restrictions requirements also presented obstacles. From Watts’ perspective the challenges lie in working with wild animals that nest 100 feet above ground. "We have to fly over these nests twice to determine breeding activity and to age chicks after they hatch so that we know when it will be safe to enter the nests," said Watts. "We have to climb into nests, lower chicks to the ground and process the chicks."

A partnership between the Navy, Trane Corporation and the Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) has not only resulted in significant energy savings at Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana Dam Neck Annex, Va., but also garnered Oceana the 2009 Presidential Energy Award for Leadership in Federal Energy Management. Thru the energy savings performance contract (ESPC), established three years ago between NAS Oceana’s Department of Public Works and Trane Corporation, the Navy has surpassed saving expectations and significantly reduced the amount of pollutants generated from cooling and heating buildings on base. The ESPC replaced the old central steam plant with a combination of distributed boilers and geothermal heat pumps. The new system at Dam Neck uses a 450-ton ground source geothermal hit pipe, coupled to a 4,400-ton cooling water condenser loop.

In the original plans, the condenser water loop would have been cooled using ground source heat pumps, where the cooling would take place in water from pipes buried several feet below ground level. But Trane Corporation engineers came up with another idea when they saw the large six-foot diameter HRSD pipe that ran across Dam Neck. If they could use the treated waste water from that pipe, it would prevent the necessity of the wells. As it turns out, HRSD was updating their nearby Atlantic Treatment Facility. HRSD maintains the plant that pumps nearly 50 million gallons of highly-treated waste water each day from the nearby cities of Virginia Beach and Chesapeake, a mile and a half offshore. The pipe runs from the treatment facility through Dam Neck Annex, both above and below ground.

After Trane Corporation and HRSD discussed the feasibility and any possible environmental restrictions of using the treated waste water, it was determined to be a viable option and the Navy formally requested to "tap into" the huge concrete pipe that was running across the base. "Twenty or thirty hundred wells would have been needed. But one pipeline replaces all of that," said Shull.

"We wouldn’t have had the project without some very forward-thinking people at Oceana and public works," explained Porter.
David Titley, oceanographer and rear admiral on the U.S. Navy’s Task Force Ocean, is among the areas seeing the greatest climate change, with sea ice coverage during summer months steadily diminishing. The ice has also been thinner when the Arctic Ocean freezes in the winter. According to Titley, the implications are significant for the Navy’s fixed assets as well as current and potential operations. Navy leadership will have to decide how to respond.

What the Navy Is Doing

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of the Navy recently announced that leadership from the two departments have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to encourage the development of advanced biofuels and other renewable energy systems. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus emphasized how partnering with USDA supports his vision for the future of the United States, create a more nimble and effective fighting force, and protect our planet from destabilizing climate changes, I have committed the Navy and Marine Corps to meet aggressive energy targets that go far beyond previous measures,” said Mabus.

From a strategic perspective the objective is to reduce reliance on fossil fuels from volatile areas of the world. On the battlefield, the cost of transporting fuel has increased exponentially; in extreme cases, a gallon of gasoline could cost up to $400. Even more sobering is the fact that these fuel convoys often run into the enemy, with deadly results.

Mabus set five ambitious energy targets for the Navy and Marine Corps, with biofuels being a major component of four of those goals. These targets are summarized below:

• By 2015, cut petroleum use in half
• By 2012, demonstrate a Green Strike Group composed of nuclear vessels and ships powered by biofuel. By 2016, sail the Strike Group as a Great Green Fleet
• By 2020, cut petroleum use in half
• By 2020, half of DoN’s total energy consumption for ships, aircraft, tanks, vehicles and shore installations will come from alternative sources.

This MOU complements USDA and the Navy and Marine Corps’ existing renewable energy programs and efforts.

While the Navy does its part to conserve energy and meet its goals, there are a number of things that you can do. Saving energy isn’t as difficult as it may seem; a lot of it is just plain common sense. Here’s what you can do to decrease your personal footprint.

Let’s talk cars, shall we?

Pump up the tires and get the junk out of the trunk! An unnecessary 100 pounds can reduce your fuel efficiency by 2 percent, whereas properly inflated tires can increase your gas mileage by 3 percent. Find someone to carpool with and hit the high occupancy vehicle lanes! Car pooling and ride-sharing decrease congestion and reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

If you don’t have a car or are ready for a trade-in, think about getting a hybrid or a clean diesel vehicle. These models can save up to $1,500 in fuel per year. They also come in all shapes and sizes, so you don’t have to drive around in the smallest car on the road.

Now, let’s tackle the home front

If you live in a typical American home, your appliances and home electronics are responsible for about 20 percent of your energy bills. “ENERGY STAR” models exist for many different appliances – water heaters, air conditioners, refrigerators, washers and dryers, windows – the list is growing. The savings per year, though substantial in the pocketbook, extend beyond financial benefits – we’re talking millions of kilowatt-hours of electricity, billions of gallons of water, millions of BTUs of natural gas. If you purchase an energy-efficient appliance or renewable energy system for your home, you may be eligible for a federal tax credit; visit www.energystar.gov for more information.

For more information on energy tax credits, appliance rebates and energy efficient financing, go to www.energysavers.gov/financial/70022.
Ensign Renekia Mewborn’s connection to the military and the global community literally began at birth. Born in Germany to an Army family, Mewborn’s childhood was spent growing up in Germany, England, Amsterdam, Netherlands, Belgium and Spain.

“I grew up in the military so I’m used to moving every couple of years and meeting new people,” said Mewborn. “My Dad is retired Army, so military life is pretty much ingrained in me. I’ve adapted to new communities and embraced different cultures most of my life.”

Her adaptability helped prepare Mewborn for her role as a production division officer within the Public Works department in Atsugi, Japan. With a total staff of 300, both American and Japanese, Mewborn is responsible for the 25 Seabees assigned to Atsugi.

“I always wanted to work within the government,” said Mewborn. “The opportunities in the Civil Engineering Corps mirrored exactly what I wanted to do in the civilian sector. I’ve adapted to new communities and embraced different cultures most of my life.”

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Last year, Mewborn’s dreams took her to Samoa for Pacific Partnership. As an embedded engineer, she was in charge of the engineering aspect of the mission. Mewborn traveled to Samoa to research potential projects, establish relationships and assess capabilities. She did a follow-up visit to the country two months later to finalize sites, gather materials and solidify relationships with her Samoan contacts before the project began.

“Once [USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE 4)] pulled in, we began troubleshooting making sure the job could be accomplished,” said Mewborn.

Mewborn and her team accomplished several projects in Samoa to include: replacing a roof and lighting upgrade of a building at Apia National Hospital; replacing two broken sonar panels as part of their water beautification system; and installing roll-up doors at a pharmacy so it could be secured at night along with installing additional gutters to a building in Apia.

For Mewborn, the global partnership in Samoa is connected to our global fight against terrorism.

“The Navy’s global partnerships allow us to strengthen our relationships with countries around the world,” said Mewborn. “These partnerships give a great impression of us that we’re the good guys. Our hope is these countries’ be on our side if and when we need them.”

Mewborn is currently working to obtain her professional engineers license with the goal of working with a Seabee battalion post her duty in Japan.

“There’s a mountain behind my house with a beach 20 minutes away. This along with being a junior officer and having this much responsibility entrusted to me has been rewarding.”

“After my [tour] in Japan, I would like to go to a Seabee battalion and obtain my warfare qualification while working directly with Seabees,” said Mewborn. “A Seabee battalion would have more of an operational flow with deployments and regular building projects.”

For now, Mewborn is satisfied with her duty in Japan personally and professionally. “I love it here in Japan,” said Mewborn. “I love that it’s a different culture from my previous experiences. The country is very beautiful and living out in town helps with the integration into the culture. There’s a mountain behind my house with a beach 20 minutes away. This along with being a junior officer and having this much responsibility entrusted to me has been rewarding.”

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Story by MC2(AW) Jonathan W. Hutto Sr.
Photo by MC2 Shannon Renfroe
Academy Women to Be Among First Female Submariners

Navy leaders recently told a Senate committee female Sailors will begin serving on submarines by the end of 2011, with this year’s new Naval Academy graduates leading the way. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Navy is in a good position to move forward with integrating women onto submarines.

“We think we learned a lot about integrating women in the services years ago, and those lessons are relevant today,” Mabus said. Those lessons, he said, include having a “critical mass” of female candidates, having senior women to serve as mentors and having lessons learned to make sure any questions are answered, and we’re very open and transparent on how we’ll do this. We think this is a great idea that will enhance our warfighting capabilities.”


Roughead changed his policy to allow women to serve on combatant ships in 1993.

“We have a great plan, and we’re ready to go for the first women to come aboard in late 2011,” Roughead told the Senate committee. In a prepared statement to the committee, he said the change would enable the submarine force “to leverage the tremendous talent and potential of our female officers and enlisted personnel.”

Besides the incoming officers from the Naval Academy, ROTC and OCS, the first women submariners will include female supply corps officers at the department head level, Roughead said. The change will be phased in over time to include enlisted female sailors on the SSBN and SSGNs, he said. Women will be added to the Navy’s SSN fast-attack submarines after necessary modifications can be determined, he said.

The new ship components include variable speed drives (VSDs) and integral motor pumps (IMPs). They were developed, tested and installed by engineers at Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division’s Ships Systems Engineering Station (NSWC Carderock-SSES) in Philadelphia, a NAVSEA field activity.

The VSD and IMP projects are two of more than 30 initiatives managed by ERM, a NAVSEA Fleet Readiness and Engineering Office program which seeks to reduce high-cost shipboard maintenance burdens in the U.S. Navy fleet.

The VSDs automatically regulate rotation speeds for motors on pumps feeding fire main piping systems, ensuring the systems maintain an optimal 150 pounds per square inch (psi) water pressure. Legacy pump motors often run at speeds generating much greater psi than the systems can handle, causing leaks and frequent breakdowns. The VSDs keep the water pressure constant, reducing system corrosion, and they cut energy costs by running the motors at lower speeds.

Four VSDs have been installed on the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) said Parrish. Recent data compiled by NSWC Carderock-SSES revealed the VSDs improved the pumps’ overall energy efficiency by more than 30 percent. Parrish added once VSDs are installed on all LHD-class ships, they could save the Navy more than $50 million over 20 years.

“While the cost savings are significant, our first concern was improving fire main system reliability,” Parrish said. “The systems are critical to Sailors’ ability to fight shipboard fires. The VSDs ensure the fire mains deliver peak performance whenever Sailors need them.”

The IMPs are designed to replace bulky, two-part motor and pump combinations, combining the motor and pump into a single, compact unit. In addition to saving space, a prime commodity on Navy ships, the components last longer and require less maintenance than the two-part systems because they have fewer moving parts.

“The IMPs are permanent magnet motors that combine the pump rotor and the motor rotor into the same piece, resulting in an extremely powerful dense unit,” explained Jesse Schmeller an NSWC Carderock-SSES engineer. “Since the motor and pump are in one casing, it eliminates alignment issues and seal maintenance.”

The IMPs are being installed on Whidbey Island-class amphibious dock landing ships as they undergo mid-life upgrades. Schmeller said the IMPs act as circulation pumps in new hot potable water systems being installed on the ships.

The new hot water systems, which replace the ships’ legacy individual steam heaters, are more efficient and, thanks to the IMPs, require less maintenance than the steam heaters. USS Gunston Hall (LSD 44), USS Germantown (LSD 42) and Whidbey Island have also received the IMPs.

Story courtesy of Naval Sea Systems Command, Washington, D.C.
"I think this is a great event for the children - really enjoy it," said Rieko Komatsu, a community relations specialist at the detachment. "Inviting the local community on base gives them a better understanding of what the base provides. I hope they see the good things that this base does for people."

Upon arrival, 60 third-grade students were greeted with a variety of art supplies including homemade lanterns, a bat creation station full of colored feathers and assorted decorations, a painting center, and clay and miniature block areas which provided the visiting students the opportunity to explore their artistic capabilities.

"These children are very talented artists," said Boatwain’s Mate 2nd Class (SW) Stanley Anyanwu, a native of Baltimore, who volunteered on his day off. "It is a great feeling when the children come over and show us the art they have created. Events like these create a more substantial relationship between the detachment and our local community, and this definitely boosts the morale of the Sailors and volunteers here. It is a good day to come out, have fun, and let the children enjoy themselves on base."

One child’s artwork left a lasting impression on Anyanwu and fellow volunteer, Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Juan Layman of New York.

"There was a young boy here today who created a U.S. flag and a Japanese flag at one of the art stations that blew my mind," Layman said. "It made me feel like the children really appreciate what we are doing over here and that we are making a difference. It was my first time volunteering at this event and if the opportunity comes up again, I will be here."

The top student-artists were recognized with a command coin from the detachment’s officer in charge.

"To make an event like this work requires a lot of people to help organize," Komatsu said. "This is a great day for the students and for the volunteers who help make this possible."

Story and photo by MC3 Devon Dow, Navy Public Affairs Support Element West Det, Japan.

Gates Issues Terms for ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ Review

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates has released the guidelines and parameters of a DoD review of the so-called "Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell" law in place since 1993.

The 10-month review should include input from service chiefs and all levels of the force and their families, Gates said in a memo to Army Gen. Carter F. Ham, the commander of U.S. European Command, who was chosen to head the effort along with Jeh Johnson, the Pentagon’s top lawyer.

"To effectively accomplish this assessment, I believe it essential that the working group systematically engage the force," Gates wrote. "The participation of a range of age, rank and warfare community members, including families, in addition to active outreach across the force, is a critical aspect that will undoubtedly lead to insights and recommendations essential to the department’s implementation of any change."

Seabees Provide Electricity to Cap-Haitien Orphanage

Seabees assigned to Naval Special Warfare Group 2, Logistics and Support Unit, worked for five days on an electrical project to install electrical outlets and provide lighting to a new orphanage in Cap-Haitien, Haiti. The new facility is providing shelter for displaced children after the recent earthquake.

"Being able to provide electricity to these kids was a rewarding experience," Kaulfod said. "I will remember my time here for the rest of my life."

The Eternal Hope in Haiti Foundation runs three orphanages that help critically ill, disabled and homeless children.

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The Eternal Hope in Haiti Foundation runs three orphanages that help critically ill, disabled and homeless children.

"The support of the military, specifically the Seabees dedicated to the orphanage, has been instrumental in ensuring we can provide a loving, nurturing home for many children displaced as a result of the earthquake in Port-au-Prince," said Angie Haynes, vice president, Eternal Hope in Haiti Foundation.

Haynes is also a nurse practitioner who has volunteered her time at local clinics for the past 25 years in Cap-Haitien. Prior to the Seabees’ project, the construction site for the orphanage was not fully prepared to accept abandoned or recovering children from Port-au-Prince. Now the site includes access to water and electricity, and the orphanage has electrical outlets and lights for the children.

"It was good to see the smiles on the children’s faces when the lights came on," Brown said. “We’re here to help in whatever way is needed. It feels good to help.”

Seabees also ran underground wire to other buildings that will be used as a medical clinic and a kitchen. As a result, the orphanage has now accepted approximately 20 children from Port-au-Prince and is awaiting another 32 children who are recovering post-operation patients at the Milot hospital.

Even more children are being identified daily and placed in the orphanage.

"We are truly grateful and humbled to have earned the support of the U.S. military," Haynes said.

The story and photo by MCCS Robert J. Fluegel, assigned to Joint Forces Special Operations Component Command.

"As a reward for returning something in new condition, employees will receive a $50 gift card. As a reward for returning something in poor condition, employees will receive a $25 gift card. As a reward for returning something in very poor condition, employees will receive a $15 gift card."

"Our combined team of ship’s crew, (LCS Surface Warfare Mission Package, aviators, and air assets) were instrumental to the successful interdiction of narcotics."

"To make an event like this work requires a lot of people to help organize," Komatsu said. "This is a great day for the students and for the volunteers who help make this possible."

Story and photo by MC3 Devon Dow, Navy Public Affairs Support Element West Det, Japan.

Gates established the review earlier this year, saying there would be a pursuit mission to ensure a smooth transition if the law that bans gays from serving openly in the military is repealed, as President Barack Obama has proposed. Gates and Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have stated their support for the repeal.

"The review also should encourage Congress members to continue to influence the timing of potential service member and other stakeholder groups. It should also take into account the experience of service members and their families."

"To be successful," Gates said in the memo, "we must understand all issues and potential impacts associated with repeal of the law and how to manage implementation and minimize disruption to a force engaged in combat operations and other demanding military activities around the globe."

"Should Congress take this action," he continued, "strong, engaged and informed leaders will be required at every level to properly and effectively implement a legislative change."

Gates directed that the review should:

• Determine how repeal of the law would affect military readiness, effectiveness, cohesion, recruiting, retention and family support.

• Determine leadership, guidance and training on standards of conduct and new training on how to manage implementation in a way that minimizes disruption to a force engaged in combat operations and other demanding military activities around the globe.

"In a professional, thorough and dispassionate manner."
Senior Salts
The Backbone of the Navy

The backbone or keel of our Navy are the men and women who make up our crews. The underpinnings or "ways" upon which that keel is laid and launched are the traditions of our service. Many of our traditions can be traced back to colonial times before there was a U.S. Navy and just as many more are traced to the Navy’s infancy – in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. These traditions trace their origins to ceremonies, best practices or long-held beliefs that became widely accepted over time.

Today’s chief petty officers are the deckplate leaders - guardians of ceremony and heritage, the keepers of arcane knowledge specific to their rating, the first arbiters of good order and discipline, and the keepers of tradition. But, it wasn’t always that way.

Before April 1, 1893, there were no chiefs as we know them today, but there was something every Sailor would recognize – a veteran salt. This was probably someone who had been around Cape Horn – a man who could splice a line quicker than spit, who could reef a t’gallant sail miles from the nearest shipyard.

This veteran salt was a first class petty officer who probably had 30 or more years on the rolling decks of a man-of-war. He crossed the Equa- tor more times than a landsman had been to the big city. He pled arctic waters while exploring for the Northwest Passage as an able-bodied seaman. As a petty officer, he maintained the blockade of Charleston, S.C., during the Civil War and finally reached the pinnacle of his trade as a captain gunner’s mate, chief boatswain’s mate or chief master-at-arms.

General Order 409 was signed by President Benjamin Harrison, Feb. 23, 1893, officially establishing the rating of chief petty officer, effective as of April 1, 1893. The insignia used was that of a gold fouled anchor surmounted by the silver letters U.S. There was one more order to follow. General Or- der 431 was issued Sept. 24, 1894, establishing the arrangement of a "crown," the chevron and rocker as we know them today. That order also established crowns for the other ranks of petty officers.

Two innovations were left. In 1938, the stars of the senior chief and master chief were added to the badge worn on the left sleeve and also to the collar insignia of the fouled anchor. In January 1967, the Navy described the responsi- bility and established the authority of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. Master Chief Delbert D. Black was the first master chief to add a third star to the non-legend- ary gold fouled anchor.

It is the responsibility and the honor of every Sailor to maintain and respect the traditions that make our Navy great. Every master chief’s career began as a seaman recruit and each of them learned and became experts in their rate, leadership and Navy heritage throughout the course of their ca- reers, it is the task of each genera- tion of Sailors to remember where our Navy came from, ensure our keel is strong for tomorrow and remember the lessons of the past.

In those days, the title of chief only applied to the senior-most petty officer in each rating and he was not entitled to superior rank, nor was he recognized by a device or badge. Nowhere was the rank officially established, but it was assigned at the discretion of the commanding officer. He was a spinner of yarns and held court in taverns from China to Panama and Massilles to Cape Town. His sea-stories were gospel. He always had a seat by the fire and officers valued his knowledge.

As the Navy prepared to head into the 20th century, senior leadership recognized that the technical knowledge and experi- ence of these senior salts needed to be rewarded, respected and re- tained. By 1893, the Navy seldom relied upon sail. Coal-fired boilers and internal combustion marine engines provided a constant source of horse-power to drive the massive screws of the rapidly- evolving dreadnought battleships, new destroyers and torpedo boats. The second generation of steam Sailors, machinists, coxswains, firemen, blacksmiths and others, would advance to the new rank of chief petty officer.

One Sailor currently provides the hid- den pieces while serving as an individual augmentee (IA) at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq - Logistic Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Junar Bulatao. His job is to validate all open purchase material-requests from our unit, Base Command Group, Al Asad, and make sure that we have all the required ac- counting documents. "[I]f you use finan- cial accounting and database-systems to perform inventory and financial manage- ment functions. Some of my duties [also] are associated with personnel control and management. I’m also the unit’s command career counselor, and I work directly with the command’s master chief," said Bulatao, a Los Angeles-native.

Bulatao has at least seven months left in his current assignment with the depart- ing Marine Expeditionary Force II and will soon join 1st Army Division, 2nd Airborne with its partner the 307th Bri- gade Support Battalion. When asked why he became a Sailor, Bulatao offered this: "I was influenced by my brother, Chief Aviation Machinist’s Mate Bulatao who’s also an instructor at CPPD Det. West, San Diego, along with my relatives who are retired Navy. I was in school when he joined in 1997. I told him what the Navy had to offer me. I joined in late September 1998. [I enjoy the opportunity] to teach leadership courses and provide training and guidance to my fellow IA Sailors for their personal and professional development, and have never regretted being in [the Navy]."
In the Zone?
Be in the know

Don’t leave the details to the detailer,
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