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1) Sailor Tablets – Testing at Great Lakes Starts Soon; MCPON Wants One for Everybody / 30 JUN 14

By Mark Faram, Navy Times

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2) USS – United States Sailor / 1 JUL 14 [\[LINK\]](#)

By Adm. Michelle Howard

Our Navy is our people - our Sailors. They are the lifeblood of our Navy and they bring our core values of courage, honor and commitment to life in every mission. I have been privileged to serve with Sailors over the last three decades. U.S.S. to me means United States Sailor. Like our warships, you are strong, sharp and at the ready. I am proud to serve with you and I feel fortunate that my blessings of liberty include that I will continue to serve with you.

We serve in the Navy as volunteers. We do not wear this uniform because we have to; we wear this uniform because we believe in the Constitution and in the words of the Declaration of Independence.

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Adm. Michelle J. Howard relieved Adm. Mark Ferguson III as the 38th vice chief of naval operations.

Prior to the change of office, Howard was promoted to the rank of admiral in a ceremony presided over by the Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Ray Mabus. Adm. Howard is the first female four-star in the 238 year history of the United States Navy.

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1) Sailor Tablets – Testing at Great Lakes Starts Soon; MCPON Wants One for Everybody / 30 JUN 14

By Mark Faram, Navy Times

It may be 2014, but fleet sailors know it takes way too long to get onto a shipboard computer. Waits are often like the doctor's office or a Soviet breadline. A few wake up in middle of the night to use the computer to get their work done or write home.

Officials recognize that this computer shortage hurts sailors' capacity to manage their careers, family life and education actions that have become increasingly dependent on the kind of high-quality, frequent Web access that's so fickle in the fleet.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (AW/NAC) Mike Stevens is pushing forward with what he thinks is the solution: putting a tablet computer in every sailor's hand.

The off-the-shelf devices could allow you to complete your training or work, correspond with your friends or study for online courses without the long computer lines that make that make sea duty more frustrating.

"When you are looking at using touchpad and wireless technology, this is, I believe, a very significant step forward in our sailors' ability to move forward and access information," Stevens told Navy Times.

Stevens is the driving force behind a pilot starting this fall involving 200 sailors in the foremost attempt toward the ultimate goal: issuing each sailor an iPad, Android- powered tablet or other device that can connect to shipboard networks a vision MCPON wants to reach within five years.

The upcoming pilot to be held at boot camp will test three different types of devices, to be chosen shortly based on cost, security and connectivity, with an eye toward expanded issuance, officials said.

The fleet has been left behind by the speed of technological innovation, and many top officials believe it's time to catch up.

"All a person has to do is go to any command and they'll see the ratio of computers to people is not favorable to our sailors," said Stevens, who estimated in a June 23 phone interview that there's one computer for every five sailors on a destroyer, for example.

From Navy Knowledge Online to the Bureau of Naval Personnel Online, sailors need a lot of time connected to get their work done.

"When we look at the volume of information we're pushing out to our sailors and the totality of the requirements we're putting on them, and compare that to what their reality is to access and complete it, I think there's a disconnect," Stevens said.

Electronic Bluejacket's Manual

The logical first place to test the devices is at Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, Illinois, where the Navy often issues recruits items and can track their use closely.

This fall, two divisions of recruits, or roughly 200 sailors, will be issued new tablets and begin tapping away during boot camp training and instruction sessions. Whether the pilot starts in September or October depends on the contracting process now underway.

Recruits will test at least two types of tablet like devices, which have yet to be chosen.

“We haven’t really decided on the tablet, per se. That’s going to be decided through contracting,” said Capt. Heedong Choi, director of strategy and plans at Navy Service Training Command, in a June 24 phone interview. Choi is working with RTC to implement the test.

The devices will be chosen based on user-friendly features and embedded security. It’s likely that many tablets will qualify, with some modifications, including popular options like the Samsung Galaxy, Amazon Kindle Fire, Google Nexus, Microsoft Surface Pro or Apple iPad. All are capable of being used for email, slideshow viewing and podcast listening, and can connect wirelessly to a network.

“We’ll be testing probably at least two types of devices,” Choi said. “As with all [Defense Department] contracting, we can’t necessarily specify the device, we can only put the requirements on what the device should be based on our research, and the contractors will meet those requirements.”

Choi says they expect they’ll know which device later this summer. In the meantime, they’re working on what to test.

MCPON’s vision is to have recruits use the tablets for their training and to stay in touch with their families steps useful to measure how they would work in the fleet. Some goals may have to wait until RTC installs a Wi-Fi network, which is being considered.

The testing will be done in three phases. Each phase will take about six months, followed by another six of collecting and analyzing the feedback.

Among the first phase’s main goals: eliminating as much of the paper and books recruits get now, putting that information on the tablet instead, a move that will have some snags.

“There’s several layers of complexity to that. For example, we don’t own the copyright for The Bluejacket’s Manual, so ... we’ll still have to issue that book for now,” Choi said. “At this point in time, we do have a lot of the curriculum for the RTC that we’re able to put on the tablet device.”

RTC will work to match its curriculum to the tablet, so that sailors can follow videos and slideshows on their own device during training and keep them there for reference. Qualification checklists and bibliographies could also one day be stored on the tablets.

RTC initially will decide the apps and content loaded onto the devices, but sailors will be able to customize them once they have Internet connectivity. The recruits are expected to turn in the tablets after the testing for research; later pilots may allow them to keep them.

Protect Your Device

Officials are working through the rules for how sailors can use their issued tablets, including what can be put on them and how to maintain and repair them. Then comes the sailor-proofing.

“We also want to understand how the tablets will stand up to eight weeks with the sailors will they drop it, are there certain places we can’t take it or allow them to use them, from a safety or security standpoint?” Choi said. One option officials are weighing: tablets protected by strong cases, like those made by Otter Box, against scuffing or being dropped on the non-skid.

As a result, Choi says he expects these standard operating procedures to be a constantly evolving set of rules that will change as the tests move to new levels and increase in complexity.

RTC officials want to set up a Wi-Fi network so they can take full advantage of the pilot test, although it’s unclear whether they’ll have it up in time for the first test. Like most things, it comes down to dollars.

“If we do receive more funding, that is the direction we want to go,” Choi said. “An e-tablet device not utilizing the cloud is not using it to its full potential. So we are looking at how we properly configure a Wi-Fi system within RTC to provide that connectivity and content while taking into account security.”

Even this test must comply with DoD and Navy security rules.

“We don’t want to put out a system that is vulnerable to hackers and other threats that are out there,” he said. Eventually, the tests will involve sailors working together in the cloud and virtual environment and other more advanced operations.

“Let’s look at possible visions and talk about the realm of the possible and what it could be,” Choi said. “This could be a whole ship, fully Wi-Fi enabled, and within that self-contained environment have a firewall and control when email goes out and comes in.”

“Ship,” in this case, means one whole RTC barracks, but being able to network multiple tablets during the tests is essential if the devices are to meet long-term goals.

“We are not trying to make an e-reader device, where we simply load the device up with content and go cheaply,” Choi said. “What we’re looking at is how to be part of innovation, where we can allow the sailors to be innovative and learn how to collaborate with each other.”

‘A Gaming System’

RTC isn’t doing these tests in a vacuum.

They’ve researched how the Army has used similar devices, and they’ve also talked to experts who oversaw tablet testing on aircraft carriers and submarines, which have experimented with using e-readers for maintenance checks. In addition, some ships are outfitted with Wi-Fi hotspots, a feature of the latest IT network. RTC is conferring with the Navy’s training and simulation gurus at the Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division to try out new concepts and approaches to teaching recruits about the Navy which could expand beyond boot camp during follow-on tests.

“We are talking with them as to what different kinds of content we can put on these devices,” he said. “As you know, millennial [generation sailors] are into gaming, and our thought is whatever content we can partner with them to possibly change things in our current curriculum content into a gaming system ... will help their learning experience and enhance the impact the device can have.”

That vision is a long way off from today's fleet. MCPON said he's constantly hearing from sailors annoyed with the growing number of training and survey requirements, and the burdens of managing their service records and careers, which takes Internet access that's hard to get in the fleet.

"Even at the command level, we push a lot of information to sailors electronically, but we have an expectation that everyone will see that information," Stevens said. "But the more senior you become, and this includes me, you become slightly disconnected from what the reality is for sailors at the junior level, and that reality is often that sailor won't even see that information for days."

MCPON views the tablets as a "professional career companion" – a digital wheelbook that sailors can learn on, communicate through and better manage their careers with.

The idea came to him when his wife was showing him all the Navy apps that are available already to help sailors. "I realized that sailors wouldn't have access to them unless they did it on a personal device," Stevens said. "So, what if the sailor was issued a device and these things were already on it?"

And in an era of budget constraints, Stevens says the Navy's senior leadership, including Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jon Greenert and Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Bill Moran, have come up with the money to test the tablets now.

"I firmly believe that it's not matter of if, but when, this will become a reality," Stevens said. "But there's a lot of infrastructure as well as policy – not the least of which is protecting sailor personal information as well as classified information.

"But it's being done in industry as well as in secondary schools and colleges, so why not in the Navy?"

What's Next

If MCPON's vision is to come to fruition, these devices must become part of the culture not only in the training world, but in the fleet.

For now, the tablets won't be a sea bag issue for sailors, which is the eventual goal once testing is complete.

"As you can imagine, the MCPON's vision, he wants these devices to be issued throughout their time in the Navy – so in all likelihood, in these pilots, there probably will be the possibility that once our pilots here are done, this would then go from boot camp to 'A' school and then on to 'C' school to eventually out to the fleet," Choi said. But existing fleet tests could help what's being called the "E-Sailor Initiative" to become a reality.

The tablet push dovetails with the Navy's campaign against paperwork and unnecessary administration, where officials canvassed sailors for ideas and then sailors collaborated to sharpen the ideas, which ranged from cutting down on maintenance to overhauling the reenlistment approval process.

That process is also looking for ways to harness the Wi-Fi coming to ships, which could be used to automate the admin-intensive maintenance system.

Another initiative is to set up a sailor wiki site – sailors could share ideas there and problem solve together, often between commands and even in communities on a Wikipedia-like site in which users create the architecture and content.

Choi, the former skipper of the destroyer Chafee, says he's excited where this can go.

“This effort is a little bit overdue, I think,” said Choi, who noted that smaller navies already have cell antennas and allow their sailors to make calls and use smartphones at sea.

These advances could bring new challenges and untold improvements.

“If we are to imbue our sailors with how the technology works and what the standard operating procedures are and we work together and understand the necessary security restrictions are, I think we can have substantial benefit to our sailors and our Navy over the long term,” Choi said.

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By Adm. Michelle Howard, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans and Strategy

On 1 July, I will take the oath of office and, again, I will swear to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. It is an important coincidence for me; I will take the oath as we start our national commemorations celebrating the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration led to the revolution, the founding of this republic, and the Constitution. The Constitution is a document that enshrines the concepts of democracy and rights of individuals.

We serve in the Navy as volunteers. We do not wear this uniform because we have to; we wear this uniform because we believe in the Constitution and in the words of the Declaration of Independence.

I understand that many before me have given their blood to ensure the ideals of the Constitution are preserved. We serve and sacrifice so that all may live free. Benjamin Franklin captured this belief in his statement, “Where liberty dwells, there is my country.”

I serve in the finest Navy that the world has witnessed. We have global reach, we protect the economic lifeline of this country, and when our citizens need us, we are there.

Where liberty dwells, there is my country. Where liberty dwells, there is the United States Navy.

Our Navy is our people - our Sailors. They are the lifeblood of our Navy and they bring our core values of courage, honor and commitment to life in every mission. I have been privileged to serve with Sailors over the last three decades. U.S.S. to me means United States Sailor. Like our warships, you are strong, sharp and at the ready.

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From Vice Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs

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Adm. Michelle J. Howard relieved Adm. Mark Ferguson III as the 38th vice chief of naval operations. Prior to the change of office, Howard was promoted to the rank of admiral in a ceremony presided over by the Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Ray Mabus.

Adm. Jonathan Greenert, the chief of naval operations commended Ferguson on his leadership during challenging times.

"Mark has been a stellar partner - his unique perspectives and approach to legislative affairs, manpower, and training allowed us to tackle dynamic challenges," said Greenert. "His unparalleled energy, judgment and foresight saved our Navy billions in reduced expenditures during his tenure as VCNO."

Greenert presented Ferguson with the Distinguished Service Medal. The award highlighted Ferguson's efforts in establishing the 21st Century Sailor office (N17) and advancing various Sailor and family initiatives, instituting a Navy-wide contracting court and better business practices that will pave the way for full auditability, improving infrastructure for forward deployed forces and leading a delegation on behalf of the CNO to China to visit Gen Wu Shengli and the PLA Navy.

"It has been an honor to serve the CNO as the 37th Vice Chief of Naval Operations", said Ferguson. "I leave with great pride in the OPNAV staff and their accomplishments over the past three years. The CNO and I have enjoyed a great relationship that empowered me and the staff to improve the Navy and the lives of the Sailors we serve."

Ferguson, who served as VCNO from August 2011 to June 2013, is scheduled to relieve Adm. Bruce Clingan as commander, Allied Joint Force Command, Naples; commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe; and commander, U.S. Naval Forces Africa in a change of command ceremony scheduled for July 22.

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