Carrier Strike Groups Securing the Gulf

JULY 2007

All Hands

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY

INDIVIDUAL AUGMENTEES

Preparing for Boots on the Ground

[On the Front Cover]
IS1 Jeffrey Marsh, wearing full "battle rattle," stands by during individual augmentee training at Ft. Jackson, S.C.
Photo by MC2(AW/SW) Jason McCammack

[Next Month]
Ever wonder if laser eye surgery is right for you? *All Hands* heads to National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Md., to find out how it's done and why it works.

[Departments]

Around the Fleet — 6
Something to Think About ... — 36
Focus on Service — 38
History — 40

[Number 1083] All Hands

July

24 12 Hours to Test a Sailor

It's the Navy's newest training tool, Battle Stations 21, which is the USS *Trayer* (BST-21), a simulated *Arleigh Burke*-class, guided missile destroyer. This pinnacle of Boot Camp training is now the most realistic, high-tech, challenging test ever put into use at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes.

Photo by Scott Thornbloom

30 Securing the Gulf

The modern carrier strike group (CSG) is comprised of an aircraft carrier and her embarked air wing. Escorted by four surface combatant ships and a logistical replenishment ship ensures CSGs are ready on arrival wherever duty may call to provide offensive firepower or perform humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions.

Photo by MC3 Ron Reeves

14 Preparing for Boots on the Ground

Take a look today's individual augmentee Sailors and read an account of their transition from Sailors trained to dominate the oceans to boots-on-the-ground warriors assigned to fight the war on terrorism in some of the most hostile regions in the world.
Photo by MC2(AW/SW) Jason McCammack

The U.S. Naval Academy "Class of 2007" takes their commissioning oath during graduation at Navy-Marine Corps Stadium, Annapolis, Md.

Photo by MC1(AW) Brien Aho

Speaking with Sailors

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

On June 18, 2007, we commissioned USS *Trayer* (BST-21), the centerpiece of Recruit Training Command's (RTC) Battle Stations-21, Great Lakes. *Trayer* will never leave her simulated surroundings, but to the recruits who board her, then leave her as Sailors, she's as real as any ship in our Navy.

I've visited *Trayer* twice in the past year. The first time she was in the middle stages of construction, then again during the winter as the design team from seven different states was putting on the finishing touches. Now she's complete and serves as the ultimate goal for anyone attending Boot Camp at RTC Great Lakes.

On any night of the week, any time of year, 352 men and women will walk up that pier as recruits and, several hours later, back down it as Sailors.

There has never been anything close to Battle Stations. It's a simulation, but it presents real-life scenarios no other training facility in the world could possibly replicate. The pier where *Trayer* is berthed looks exactly like Norfolk. You smell the sea and the diesel. You hear sounds familiar only to those of us who have approached a ship preparing to get underway.

And from the moment those recruits cross that brow they are presented with challenges they can meet only through teamwork and perseverance.

Each group of recruits is presented with multiple damage control scenarios and situations where they must rely on every bit of their training to succeed. More than that, no individual is going to pass Battle Stations. The concept prohibits isolated success, but rewards those who come together as a unit at a time where teamwork is most critical. Aboard *Trayer*, the recruits are confronted with the most realistic training environment the Navy has ever known.

Battle Stations-21 is the capstone of their Boot Camp experience and their final test before they reach the fleet. It is an evolution geared around "ship, shipmate, self." Those who pass know they have earned the title of U.S. Navy Sailor.

Terry Gregg was the first recruit to ever pass through the Great Lakes gates, 97 years ago. When he and 300 others graduated in front of President Taft later that summer, the president said he dedicated the installation, "to our Country, our God and our Flag."

Those words held the same meaning on June 18. I am convinced any Sailor who successfully navigates a night aboard *Trayer* is more than prepared to sail with any of us, and join us in defense of our nation, and our flag.

Speaking with Sailors **is a regular column initiated by the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy as a way of reaching out to the men and women of the fleet, whether they are stationed just down the road or halfway around the world.**

All Hands (USPS 372-970; ISSN 0002-5577) Number 1083 is published monthly by the Naval Media Center, Production Department, 2713 Mitscher Rd. S.W., Anacostia Annex, D.C. 20373-5819. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. **Subscriptions:** For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 or call 202/512-1800. Subscription prices $45 (domestic)/$54 (foreign); $7.50 (single copy domestic)/$9 (single copy foreign). **Postmaster:** Send address changes to All Hands, Naval Media Center, Production Department 2713 Mitscher Rd., S.W., Anacostia Annex, D.C. 20373-5819 **Editorial Offices:** Send submissions and correspondence to Naval Media Center Production Department, ATTN: Editor, 2713 Mitscher Rd., S.W., Anacostia Annex, D.C. 20373-5819 Tel: DSN 288-4171 or 202/433-4171 Fax: DSN 288-4747 or 202/433-4747 E-Mail: allhandsmagazine@navy.mil Message: NAVMEDIACEN WASHINGTON DC //32// **Authorization:** The Secretary of the Navy has determined this publication is necessary in the transaction of business required by law of the Department of the Navy. Funds for printing this publication have been approved by the Navy Publications and Printing Committee.

All Hands

Number 1083 • July 2007
www.navy.mil

Secretary of the Navy
The Honorable Donald C. Winter

Chief of Naval Operations
Adm. Mike Mullen

Chief of Information
Rear Adm. Gregory J. Smith

Commander, Naval Media Center
Capt. Gordon J. Hume

Chief of Production
Dennis Casaday

Deputy Chief of Production
Cmdr. Donald Savage

Chief of Publishing
Lt. Cmdr. Fred Kuebler

Assistant Chief of Publishing
Lt. Jennifer Cragg

EDITORIAL

Editor
Marie G. Johnston

Photo Editor
MC1(AW) Brien Aho

Editorial Staff
MC1(SW) Margarett Tyler
MC2(SW) Rebekah Blowers
MC2 Washington Caicedo
MC2(AW/SW) Jason R. McCammack
MC3 Christopher Newsome

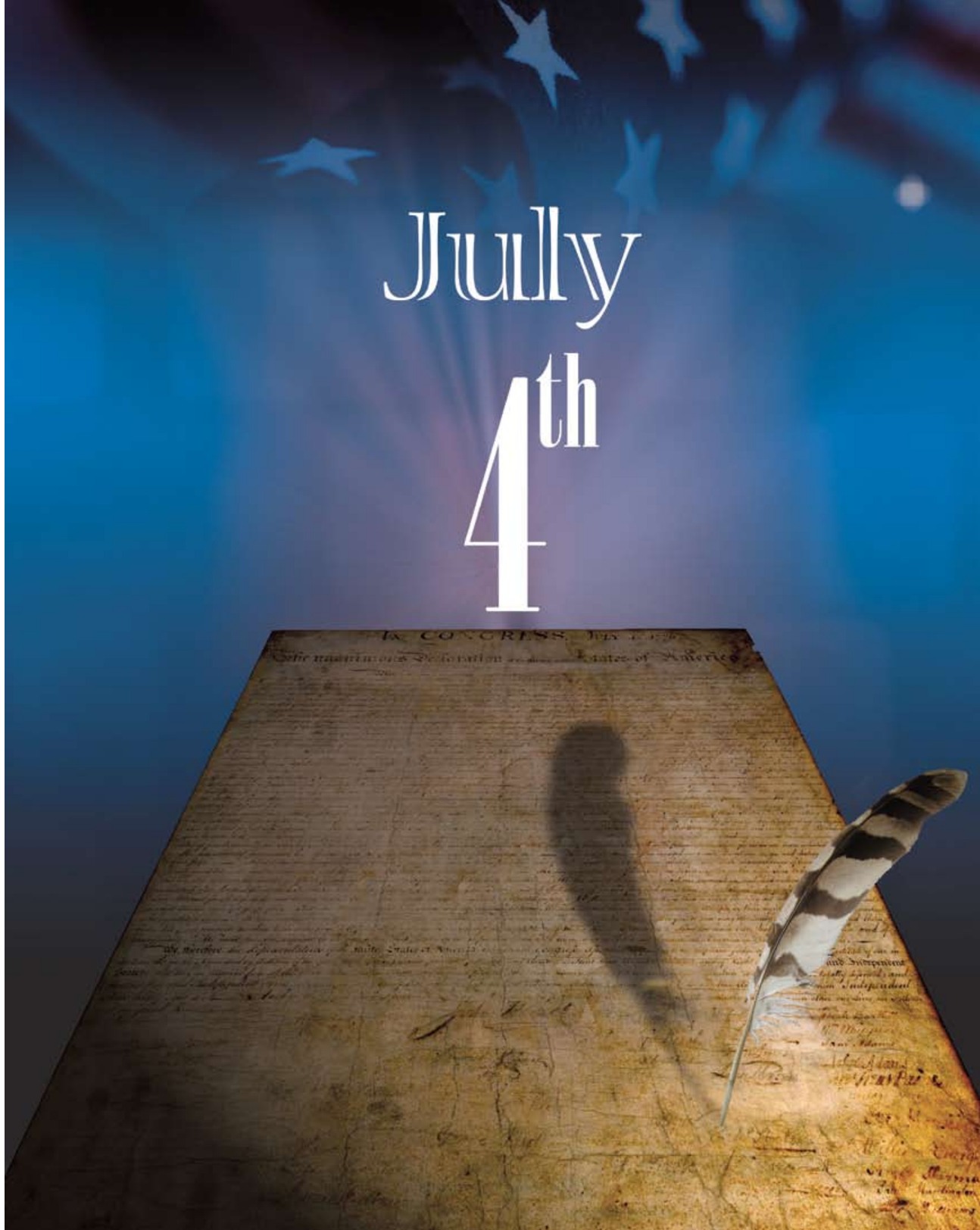
LAYOUT & WEB DESIGN

Slice

Design + Project Management
Richard Rabil
Natalie Taylor, Juana Merlo
Joanne DiGiorgio, Tory Hobson

All Hands

Recipient of the Thomas Jefferson Award for Excellence



Around the Fleet

Fraternization Policy Update Reflects Current Operational Tempo

The Navy's fraternization policy has been updated, clarifying what relationships are appropriate for Sailors, because today's current operational tempo and individual augmentee assignments have made it commonplace for Sailors to serve side by side with the U.S. Army and Air Force, and with our multinational partners in operations throughout the world.

The update, OPNAVINST 5370.2C, was recently released.

"As a result of a scheduled policy review, it was determined the policy needed to be updated," said Cmdr. Dean Stewart-Curry, lead for the Navy Equal Opportunity program. "Navy leadership wanted Navy personnel to be clear on the fact that the policy also applies to joint services, as well as foreign militaries."

Fraternization, generally, refers to personal relationships between officer and enlisted members that are unduly familiar. Examples of unduly familiar relationships include dating, sharing an apartment or house, engaging in intimate behavior, gambling and borrowing money.

These types of relationships are prohibited because they undermine the respect for authority that is essential to the Navy's ability to accomplish its mission. In other words, if Sailors see an officer having one of those types of relationships with an enlisted Sailor, they might wonder whether the officer is giving preferential treatment to that Sailor in situations like duty assignments or special privileges, which could create morale problems.

Typically, personal relationships among officers or among enlisted members are not prohibited. It is prohibited if the relationship calls into question a senior's objectivity; if it results in actual or apparent preferential treatment; if it undermines the authority of a senior; or if it compromises the chain of command; among others.

For example, the executive officer (XO) of the command holds a Monday Night Football party every Monday night during football season. She invites the wardroom and the chief's mess. She is guilty of fraternization because the XO is in a leadership position, and she is creating an unduly familiar relationship with members of her command.

But, if she held a Super Bowl Party annually and invited the entire command, or the wardroom and the chief's mess, this would not be fraternization as it would be considered a social event, not unlike a holiday party. That XO cannot invite only selected enlisted members, as that constitutes disparate treatment and it would be prejudicial to good order and discipline.

"The key is whether or not the relationship is prejudicial to good order and discipline," said Stewart-Curry. "Appropriate social interaction among Navy members has always been encouraged as it enhances unit morale and esprit de corps."

Fraternization rules also apply to chief petty officers. Chiefs, by long-standing custom and tradition, are considered separate and distinct leaders within their assigned command. They serve as leaders to the entire unit, not just to those within their chain of command. Based on that philosophy, unduly familiar personal relationships between chiefs and junior personnel who are assigned to the same command are prohibited.

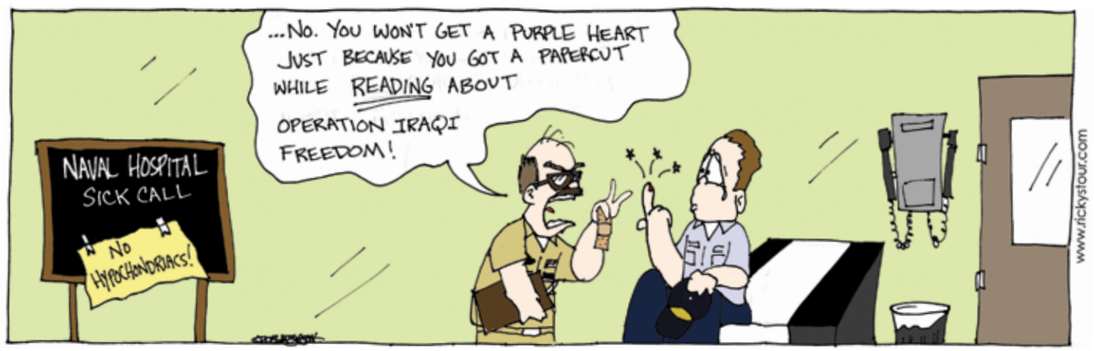
The revised policy also clarifies the definition of an applicant and a prospect, reinforcing the fact that recruiters are prohibited from having a personal relationship with their prospects, applicants or Delayed Entry Program members.

The fraternization regulation was last updated in 1999. The current version can be found at: www.npc.navy.mil

Story courtesy of the Chief of Naval Personnel Diversity Directorate, Millington, Tenn.

Ricky's Tour

By MC1 Mike Jones



CNO to Produce Regular Podcasts

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Mullen will continue his "ongoing conversation" with Sailors, their families and the American public by producing regular podcasts.

Available for download on the Navy's flagship website, www.navy.mil, as well as by subscription through most podcasting software, the podcasts will serve as a means for the CNO to communicate directly on a wide variety of issues.

Mullen – an iPod owner himself – appreciates the convenience of the technology and wants to use it to talk about things in a more informal and frequent basis, according to Mullen spokesman Senior Chief Mass Communication Specialist (SW) Dave Rea.

The podcasts will vary in format.

"This first one takes the form of an interview," said Rea, "but we expect the podcasts to also include speeches and commentary as well. We want to be flexible and not get married to any particular format."

Rea said the CNO plans to record his podcasts weekly, schedule permitting.

"The great thing about this technology is that it doesn't really require a lot of time or resources," Rea said. "All you need is the ability to record the audio at a high enough quality and the software to share it. It gives all of us – including families and the public at large – the opportunity to stay better connected to leadership and to hear firsthand about the things affecting us."

Mullen's first podcast was posted on the Navy's home page June 4.

Story courtesy of the public affairs office, Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C.

Incentives for IAs Improve

The Task Force Individual Augmentation update recently announced in NAVADMIN 136/07, contains the Navy's latest improvements to incentives for Sailors who serve as individual augmentees (IAs).

NAVADMIN 136/07 modifies incentives previously listed in NAVADMIN 273/06 and NAVADMIN 280/06.

The modifications include:

- Tours more than 270 vice 365 days will be considered equivalent to forward-deployed naval forces tours. These Sailors will be given the same benefits, including coast selection preference and priority choice of follow-on duty assignments and locations.
- Sailors who have completed an IA tour greater than 90 consecutive days of service in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Horn Of Africa, Kuwait, Cuba, Joint Task Force 515 or the Joint Force-Philippines and have parent command endorsement, are now authorized two award points towards advancement. Additional flexibility will also be given to operational commanders to administer advancement exams in those locations.
- IA detailing: Within the next several months, the Navy will begin assigning Sailors to Joint Manning Document (JMD)-validated missions through normal detailing channels (using PCS orders). This was designed to allow people an opportunity to normalize a GWOT tour with other career assignments, provide increased stability, and deliver more notification time before a GWOT deployment.
- Streamline the awards process for GWOT Sailors to make sure they are properly recognized for their service.

For more information, go to http://www.npc.navy.mil.

Story by MCSN Ken Ingram, Navy Personnel Command Communications Office, Millington, Tenn.

Navy Introduces New SRB Award Levels

The Navy recently announced increased award levels for Selective Reenlistment Bonuses (SRB) in NAVADMIN 125/07 to encourage Sailors to "Stay Navy."

The new message approves 78 increases in SRBs in Zone A for Sailors who have been in the Navy for under six years, and it adds 14 Navy enlisted classifications (NECs) to the list of those eligible for the bonus.

Ratings and NECs affected by the increases have been deemed by the Navy as essential to the continued success of the global war on terrorism and the Navy's warfighting effort.

The increases in SRBs are part of the Navy's plan to make itself the "employer of choice" through quality of life and quality of work. Sailors and their families remain a top priority as the Navy focuses on health care, housing, proper work environments, career training, educational opportunities and providing adequate pay and incentives.

continued on page 9

Shipmates

Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Matthew J. Rollen was awarded the Bronze Star for his superior performance of leadership and support of 3-101st Brigade Combat Team combat operations with his Military Working Dog (MWD) during a recent command quarters at Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu, Calif.

Rollen and his MWD completed 525 open area searches, 206 walking patrols, 549 building raids and searched 1761 vehicles for Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), ammunition and insurgent forces in support of Operation *Iraqi Freedom*.

When Rollen's vehicle was struck by two IEDs while en route to an explosives sweep, he cleared the kill zone, provided first aid to his unconscious gunner until the squad's medic relieved him and once relieved, cleared the remaining area for possible IEDs to allow a MEDEVAC team to transport the wounded gunner to a medical treatment facility.

Rollen was advanced to petty officer 1st class under the Combat Meritorious Advancement Program.

Story by MCSN Eva-Marie Ramsaran, Naval Base Ventura County Public Affairs, Point Mugu, Calif.

Around the Fleet

▲ A *Standard* Missile-3 (SM-3) is launched from USS *Lake Erie* (CG 70), during a joint Missile Defense Agency/U.S. Navy ballistic missile flight test. Approximately three minutes later, the SM-3 intercepted a unitary (non-separating) ballistic missile threat target, launched from the Pacific Missile Range Facility, Barking Sands, Kauai, Hawaii.

U.S. Navy photo

◀ Sailors aboard USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) cross the flight deck giving it a clean scrub down using deck brushes and aqueous film forming foam.

Photo by MCSN Joe Painter

▲ ND1 Larry Polendey, of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, searches for additional wreckage using an underwater metal detector near a World War II site off the coast of Koror, Palau.

Photo by MC1 Eric Lippmann

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

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

Mail your submissions to:
Navy Visual News Service
1200 Navy Pentagon, Rm. 4B514
Washington, D.C. 20350-1200

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

continued from page 7

"Last fiscal year, we approved more than 16,000 SRBs," said Chief Electronics Technician (SW/AW) Scott McCann, enlisted incentives program manager, at Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

"The most significant change with this NAVADMIN is the addition of paragraph 11 which allows LCS (Littoral Combat Ship) Sailors, or 'Hybrid Sailors' to receive SRB for something other than their rate," he said.

McCann strongly encouraged Sailors to read the entire message and not just the list of changes in paragraph 12.

NAVADMIN 125/07 adjusts award levels for regular component and Reserve component full-time support.

For more information, or to read the NAVADMIN, visit www.npc.navy.mil.

Story by MC2 Trevor Andersen, Navy Personnel Command Communications, Millington, Tenn.

Seabees Help Build Facility for Iraqi Police

Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 28 recently joined efforts with Marines from Combat Logistics Battalion 6 to build a new facility for the Iraqi police.

The first challenge the Seabees faced was to transform the existing muddy, uneven and debris-ridden project site into a level area suitable for construction.

A team of Seabees, commonly referred to as the "Rockhounds," hauled in numerous truck loads of soil and gravel to fill in mud holes and level the construction site. More than 6,000 cubic meters of fill (enough material to cover an entire football field more than three feet deep) was needed, according to Equipment Operator 1st Class Steven Snow, the assistant officer in charge of the Rockhounds.

"Looking at the site now, one would never know that just days ago, this site was a swampy area, impassable for vehicles," said Snow, who is a firefighter when he isn't mobilized. "Now, it looks like a smooth gravel parking lot."

Once the construction site was leveled, the Seabees set the prefabricated berthing units in place, laid plumbing, installed bathroom facilities, ran electrical wiring, installed perimeter lighting and erected concrete "Alaska" barriers that protect the area from precision small arms fire and mortar blasts.

According to the project supervisor, Master Chief Constructionman Evans Adkins, it has been a very positive experience to get to work side by side with the Marines and the Iraqi Police.

"We have been doing good Seabee work supporting the Marines the way we were intended to do," said Adkins. "This project has given the guys a much greater appreciation for what they have back home."

Despite the challenging workload due to the harsh environment, lack of amenities like showers at the site and difficulties in obtaining construction materials, Adkins said morale is high and everybody has a great attitude.

Construction Electrician 1st Class Brian Landreneau, a master electrician, has been living at the project site for nearly two weeks working to keep the existing generators running and installing electrical wiring and components for the new facility. He said the best part of his experience on this project is how well everybody works together to get the job done.

"Everybody is friendly here ... including the Iraqi police," said Landreneau who insists the worst part about being out on the

continued on page 11

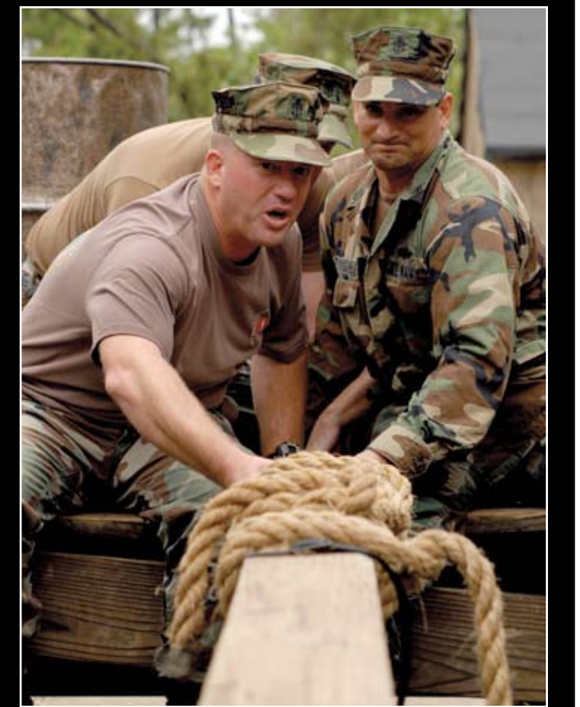
Around the Fleet

◀ **HT3 Tyler Nilsson (left) and BM3 Matthew Loeffler,** rescue swimmers aboard USS *Lassen* (DDG 82), recover a practice torpedo amid a cloud of green marker dye released by the torpedo.

Photo by MCSN Gabriel S. Weber

▼ **USS *Ashville* (SSN 758), nicknamed "The Ghost of** the Coast," enters the floating dry dock *Arco* (ARDM 5) for a scheduled maintenance period aboard Naval Base Point Loma, Calif.

Photo by MCC Yan M. Kennon



▲ **EOCS Mark Thomas and CMC Ronaldo Rodriguez,** assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1, use teamwork to maneuver a wooden plank at the Leadership Reaction Course.

Photo by MC3 Ja'lon A. Rhinehart

▲ **A U.S. Navy SEAL shows Secretary of the Navy** Dr. Donald C. Winter a Special Operations Peculiar Modification (SOPMOD) M-4 at the shooting facility, Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Va. The M-4 Carbine is a gas-operated, air-cooled, magazine-fed, selective-rate, shoulder-fired weapon with a collapsible stock.

Photo by Lt. Cmdr. Keith Williams

continued from page 9

project is dealing with the heat. "The convoys have done a very good job keeping us supplied with fresh ice, but some days it has been so hot that the ice melts between the convoys."

"One of the most positive things I've seen out on this project is the camaraderie between our guys and the Marines," said Builder 2nd Class Martin Calveneau, a firefighter from Grand Rapids, Mich., who is augmented to NMCB 28 from NMCB 26 for the duration of this deployment.

He also misses the showers and other comforts available at the main bases, but he is proud to be part of the work that has been accomplished and the teamwork he sees between the Seabees and the Marines.

"It's amazing how much work has been done out here in such a short period of time," said Calveneau.

Utilitiesman 1st Class Kevin Geegan, a high voltage lineman from the Houston area, says working on this project has afforded him the opportunity to do what the military has trained him for.

"It's been a good operation so far. It's been a test of the skills we have been training for such as establishing operational security and doing construction work on the fly," said Geegan.

He added it was rewarding to be able to do something to help the Iraqi people.

"The Iraqis seem to be very good people. They are the ones we are really here for. They have been through a lot. Seeing what they are going through makes me want to do more. We can't pull out now. We have to support these people or it could get a lot worse for them," said Geegan.

The Seabees' work at the Fallujah facility will result in a 250-person capacity facility that the Fallujah Police can use as a temporary holding space.

NMCB 28 is part of nearly 1,100 Sailors and Marines supporting critical construction efforts in the Al Anbar province of Iraq.

Story by Lt.j.g Christopher Wald, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 28, al Fallujah, Iraq

Pacific Partnership 2007 Launches Aboard USS *Peleliu*

Pacific Partnership 2007 was launched early last month as USS *Peleliu* (LHA 5), departed Pearl Harbor for Southeast Asia and Oceania.

The four-month humanitarian mission will bring together host nation medical personnel, partner nation military medical personnel and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide medical, dental, construction and other humanitarian-assistance programs ashore and afloat in the Republic of the Philippines, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and the Marshall Islands.

In a brief pierside ceremony prior to the ship's departure, U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander Adm. Robert Willard praised all involved with the mission.

"The United States is a Pacific nation, and as such, we share many interests, values and beliefs with our Pacific neighbors. You are members of a unique team formed from organizations with very different skills and capabilities but unified in purpose to conduct a very important mission," Willard said.

"This is an exciting time for us. As we start writing the next chapter in U.S. history of conducting humanitarian operations, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, this great warship behind us, *Peleliu*, while built to maintain and operate across a full spectrum of warfare, has been outfitted and manned

continued on page 13

PREPARING FOR Boots on the Ground

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

▲ **As the sun begins its ascent in Kuwait's Udari Desert, a lone Sailor makes** his way to a convoy of humvees in preparation for the day's exercise.

After a 22-hour, globetrotting flight, the Navy's newest IAs arrived at "Camp Virginia," Kuwait. Sleep was at the forefront of everyone's mind, but an epic desert storm was blowing through the camp and prevented the bleary-eyed Sailors from fading into that peaceful respite. Fifty to 60 mile-an-hour winds fueled a driving, sideways thunderstorm-sandstorm, which blasted the 12-man tents with rain and sand and it seemed like the canvas would tear from its hitches at any moment.

▲ **IA students were issued M-16 rifles, 9mm pistols, or both, depending** on their orders. The weapons became their constant companion.

▲ **Students received four full seabags of gear while at Fort Jackson.** Drill sergeants helped out as the Sailors inventoried the newly-acquired gear.

The days that followed would prove to be just as memorable for the Navy's newest individual augmentee (IA) Sailors. The following is an account of their transition from Sailors trained to dominate the oceans to boots-on-the-ground warriors assigned to fight the global war on terrorism in some of the most hostile regions in the world.

FORT JACKSON, S.C.

The Sailors reported to Navy Individual Augmentee Command Training (NIACT) at Fort Jackson, S.C. The two-week training was designed to orient 154 Sailors to the rigors of ground combat and prepare them for their IA deployments in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Iraq and Kuwait.

"Our mission at the NIACT is to provide Sailors who are going into theater with basic survival and combat skills," said Army Capt. Richard Jones, Task Force Marshall officer-in-charge. "That includes the primary shooting of weapons, convoy, improvised explosive devices (IED), land navigation, first-aid and communications training. It's an incredibly important mission, to provide Sailors with the skills necessary to accomplish what they've been called on to do."

As the Sailors reported to NIACT, they were divided into two companies, Alpha and Bravo. Each company was then divided into two platoons.

Alpha Company, 1st Platoon was made up of 37 Sailors – the most junior Sailor was a seaman and the senior, a commander. For the next two weeks rank would bring few privileges as the officers and enlisted shared the same mess facilities, wore the same PT gear (standard boot camp issue blue shorts and Navy T-shirt), slept under the same roof on bunks and trained as a platoon with little to no recognition of rank. Separate quarters are only for O-6 and E-9 IA trainees.

After a 0500 reveille on Monday, the Sailors experienced what was to become their new early morning ritual. They mustered on the drill pad for a PT session, devoured some breakfast at the mess facility and hit the showers.

By 0800, the platoon was off to weapons issue, where, depending on their orders, they were issued 9mm pistols, M-16 rifles or both. In the coming weeks (and extending through their IA deployments), the Sailors would become intimately familiar with their firearms as they trained to assemble, clean and fire them. The weapons were their constant companions unless entrusted to the care of a "battle buddy".

IA training is conducted at "Camp McCrady," which is located inside Fort Jackson. Despite the presence of hundreds of Sailors, the camp is decidedly Army in character and function. Army drill sergeants conduct the training and a certain level of military culture shock is to be expected.

"The Army drill instructors appreciate what the Navy is contributing to the mission and understand that many of the Sailors haven't served on the ground before," said Lt. Jason Ayeroff, an IA trainee. "They're taking the time to fully explain everything and mentor when necessary. It's a good balance between mentorship and discipline. In the event that I need to call upon the skills I learned in this training environment, what I learned from the drill instructors could be the difference in getting me through a tough situation."

Slight and overt differences in language between the Army and Navy are hashed out early in the training schedule.

For example, in Navy jargon, to "secure" means it's time to go home or "call it a day," while in Army lingo "secure" means to take an item (often a firearm) into your immediate possession.

"Being in a joint forces environment, we all do things a little different," said Ayeroff. "We speak a little different. So we all have to make that adjustment and make the extra effort to familiarize ourselves with the customs of the other services."

Next up for the wide-eyed trainees was

▲ **Students regularly assembled for a post-workout muster on the drill pad.**

▲ **IA students learned to properly** assemble their M-16 rifle prior to heading downrange for "live-fire" exercises.

▲ **Sailors wait their turn at Fort Jackson's M-16 range. Targets appeared** randomly at a range of distances while the Sailors fired from several positions under the pressure of a timed event.

▲ **One of the biggest adjustments** for the Sailors was learning to carry the additional weight which came courtesy of the body armor, water and dozens of other items included in the "full battle rattle."

a two-session gear issue that would see them shuffle from station to station, filling up four sea bags with every imaginable uniform or tool necessary for life in Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan or Djibouti. As the sea bags began to swell and backs began to ache, many of the Sailors were surprised by the extent of the gear distribution.

Items issued included: five desert camouflage uniforms, wet weather gear, entrenching tool (fold-up shovel), a three-piece sleep system, neck gaiter, canteens, water-carrying backpacks, undershirts, boots, sunglasses, Kevlar helmet, gas mask and the soon to be dreaded, yet undoubtedly appreciated, individual body armor (IBA).

While Sailors accounted for their gear and received instruction on how to properly wear the IBA and gas mask from the drill sergeants, MREs were distributed and rapidly consumed by Sailors who had just experienced their first seven hours of duty as IAs-in-training.

Over the course of the next few days, the Sailors would learn the ins-and-outs of their firearms and attend numerous training courses on topics specifically tailored to their needs as IAs. By mid-week they filed onto buses for the first of many trips to Fort Jackson's abundant firing ranges to begin the process of qualifying on a firearm, or firearms, they are required to carry while deployed as IAs.

The first range the Sailors visited was a simulator featuring a wide-screen video replication of an actual range. The trainees got down on their bellies in the prone position, supported their weapons on sandbags and fired at virtual targets on the screen, which recorded their proficiency.

The next step was a live-fire range exercise where the trainees "zeroed" their weapons. Zeroing is customizing a weapon's sight to an individual's personal visual perspective, to assure accurate and consistent performance.

After the weapons were zeroed, the Sailors were off to the neighboring ranges to qualify on their M-16 rifles and 9mm pistols.

Under the vigilant supervision of the Army drill sergeants at the pistol range, the Sailors were required to fire from several positions during a timed qualification. They removed and replaced their ammunitions magazines and fired at targets down-range.

Nearby, at the M-16 rifle qualifier, trainees were confronted with numerous targets that randomly popped-up, at a wide range of distances up to 300 yards. The targets were only visible for a few seconds and often appeared hundreds of yards from the previous target. Sailors fired from various positions with their rifles set to semi-automatic. They changed clips several times – all while being under the pressure of a timed evolution.

As hot brass shells exited the chamber and beads of sweat dripped into their eyes, each and every Sailor proved worthy of qualification on their assigned weapons.

During the second week of training at Fort Jackson, while the annual blooming of the dogwood trees marked the beginning of spring in South Carolina, the IA trainees were confronted with several practical exercises designed to develop skills necessary to survive the rigors of land combat.

When the land navigation exercise began, Sailors used knowledge acquired in Camp McCrady classrooms to plot and locate carefully marked stakes hidden in a lush forest. With only rudimentary maps and a compass the Sailors walked miles into the dense woodland and found their way back using teamwork, skill and, above all, attention to detail.

The final exercises at Fort Jackson forced the platoons to demonstrate all of the new-found knowledge and ability instilled in them by the drill instructors.

During the Convoy/IED Exercise, mock IEDs exploded in the platoons path and enemy forces attacked them from multiple positions, forcing the Sailors to improvise their plans and overcome the mounting challenges.

Sailors quickly learned to navigate a hostile urban environment during an exercise that demonstrated the dangers of security patrols. Actors were employed to represent insurgents. One of the hostiles, a young boy, offered a Sailor a drink of his soda. When the boy was allowed to come

▼ **Army Staff Sgt. Wade Russell gives the IA students instructions prior to their M-16 rifle qualification** exercise at Fort Jackson, S.C.

▲ **The students assemble at dawn at a rifle range in Kuwait's Udari** Desert. The morning-long range session provided advanced soldiering training.

within several feet of the Sailor, the soda was revealed to be an IED. Lesson learned.

As the Sailors packed their bags and prepared for deployment, the gravity of their experience at Fort Jackson set in.

"The training was awesome," said Electronics Technician 1st Class (SS) James Caddell, an IA trainee. "The drill instructors understood what we are, which is Sailors, and what we're not, which is Soldiers or Marines. They shared with us the knowledge we need to accomplish our mission and come home safe."

Caddell said the tone of the instruction given by the drill sergeants was appropriate and said he felt a mutual respect develop between the Sailors and the Soldiers assigned to train them.

"This could have been a boot camp environment, but that wasn't the case," said Caddell. "They took into consideration that we're not newbies, straight out of boot camp. They treated us with the respect and dignity that an eight-year Sailor like myself deserves, and, of course, we were professional with them as well. It was a two-way street. It's been incredible. They've done nothing but help, praise and teach."

Drill sergeants urged their students to call on the knowledge they acquired at NIACT when they got to their IA destination.

"Take the training we've given you and stay alert," said Army 1st Sgt. Mark Golliday, Alpha Company senior non-commissioned officer. "Always be watchful of the enemy and watch over your battle buddy or shipmate. Anything can happen, but if you keep your training in mind and stay alert you should be successful in your mission."

▲ **MCPI Instructor Ruiz goes over the tactics of enemy combatants to provide the latest information from inside** the theater of operations to ensure students receive the most up-to-date training possible.

CAMP VIRGINIA, KUWAIT

Jet-lagged and travel-weary, the IA trainees, now reduced to 144 Sailors, arrived as a unit at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, just before midnight.

At a late-night briefing, the IAs slated to deploy to Djibouti were informed they would leave immediately for their assignments. As for the others, they were told to get some sleep and acclimate themselves to the time zone and weather in the Middle East. They gratefully obliged.

Just after the Sailors were assigned their tents and began to drift off to sleep, a savage storm appeared on the desert horizon. Kuwait's rainy-season was going out like a lion as Mother Nature peppered the camp with gale force winds, creating a rain and sandstorm, the likes of which few of the Sailors had ever experienced.

"I wrote my wife an e-mail and told her about the storm," said Caddell. "I've never experienced anything like that before. I was prepared for high temperatures in the desert, but I never expected to see such a ferocious storm. I told her I felt like I was getting cheated out of the real desert experience because the temperatures are actually pretty mild, but there'll be plenty of hot days to come, I'm sure."

The Sailors spent the next two-and-a-half days clearing up any pay or administrative tasks they needed to finalize. They also had time to contact family and friends, explore Camp Virginia and catch up on some much-needed sleep before the intense final stage of their training began.

After recharging their batteries, the Sailors loaded up their gear, filed onto buses and began the trek to Kuwait's Udari Desert.

At an expansive desert range, a government contractor, Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI), staged a 48-hour training exercise designed to give the IAs a realistic desert training experience prior to heading into theater. Each of MPRI's instructors has a distinguished military background.

"The reason we're here is to give the troops that final push," said Steve Wells, an MPRI training instructor. "They get a chance to exercise their tactics here. We show them the current enemy trends and try to provide them the best possible base of knowledge and training before pushing into theater."

On the first day of training at Udari Range, the Sailors attended courses to identify the latest tactics of enemy forces and learned the best course of action to counteract the enemy's deadly intent through convoy protection techniques and counter-IED procedures.

After class, the Sailors tore into MREs and then filed into their tents for the night.

The 12-man tents of Camp Virginia had given way to 60-Sailor tents at the Udari Range. Showers and indoor plumbing were non-existent. Baby-wipes and a strong sense of camaraderie were the order of the day. The trainees laid down sleeping bags, shoulder-to-shoulder, as another storm began to wail in the Kuwaiti desert.

▲ **Round after round was fired under the watchful eye of MCPI instructors at the Udari Range.**

▲ **IS1(SS) Paul Ellis prepares to** pivot and shoot while training in the Udari Desert.

Reveille arrived uninvited at 0400, and the consensus among the Sailors was that very little sleep occurred in the Udari Desert.

After a bottled-water assisted morning hygiene session and another MRE for breakfast, the Sailors were told to "strap on their full battle-rattle." This is a dreaded phrase among the Sailors. It informs them it's time to wear their Kevlar helmet, ballistic goggles and full IBA.

"The IBA takes some getting used to," said ET2(SW/AW) Jonathan Pollard, an IA trainee. "By the time you get all that gear on and you're wearing your camelback (water-carrying backpack) you've probably increased your body weight by 20 to 30 pounds. You'll sweat off a few pounds wearing this stuff, but it's more than worth it if it helps to save your life."

At the desert weapons range, as herds of grazing camels roamed in the distance, the Sailors were motivated by the high-energy training of the MPRI instructors and got to fire off 60 more rounds of ammo while employing newly-learned advanced soldiering techniques.

Fatigued from a lack of sleep and their initiation into desert combat instruction, the Sailors had little problem catching some shut-eye on their second night in the desert.

The Sailors began day two by loading their gear into Humvees and setting off into the miles-long Convoy Lane Training Course.

The convoy exercise was the culmination of their three weeks of training at Fort Jackson and Kuwait. All of their training was about to be put to the test in a highly coordinated supply-training mission.

During the next five hours, the Sailors encountered simulated insurgent attacks, searched for deadly IEDs of all variety and communicated with local law enforcement officials. They also practiced convoy radio communications throughout the exercise and applied protective convoy stances to minimize the danger of attack by enemy forces.

▲ **Actors were employed during convoy training to give the Sailors a realistic feel for interacting with both** friendly civilians and hostile insurgents.

▲ **Along the roadside at the expansive convoy trainer in the Udari Desert, the remains of a bombed-out vehicle** lays witness to Sailor's searching for hidden IEDs and enemy combatants.

Convoy drivers learned to navigate the harsh desert terrain while gunners mounted on the Humvee turrets surveyed the landscape for hostile activity.

The course quickly ratcheted up the stress level of the Sailors and built to a crescendo. Adrenaline and a sense of purpose drove the convoy teams as they each completed their mission.

"They prepared us for the worst," said Caddell. "If I get out there and I find myself in this kind of scenario, I'm going to be damn glad I had this training."

The Sailors returned to Camp Virginia and began to pack their sea bags in preparation for their flights to Iraq and Afghanistan, which would come in just a matter of hours. The transition the Sailors had made from masters of surface and undersea warfare to boots-on-the-ground troops was evident in their demeanor. It wasn't lost on the men and women assigned to manage their training either.

"I'm so impressed with the ability of Sailors to change their mindset," said MTCS(SS/SW) Joseph Pastorella, training leading chief petty officer, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC), U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, Det. Kuwait.

"We're talking about a Navy that for more than 200 years is traditionally sea-centric," said Pastorella. "If you ask anybody about the Navy they'll say, 'the Navy is boats and ships - men and women at sea.' Now we're telling them, 'shift that, you're now ground-pounders,' and they're doing it. It's truly awe-inspiring."

AFTERWORD

It is estimated that between January 2006 and July 1, 2007, 6,869 Sailors are expected to have completed NIACT training. These men and women, many of whom volunteered for this extraordinary duty, have served or are serving as IAs in some of the most dangerous operational areas in the global war on terrorism. A new day has come to pass in the U.S. Navy, and these Sailors are leading the way.

McCammack is a photojournalist assigned to Naval Media Center, Washington, D.C.

Editor's Note: To view the multimedia presentation for this story, go to www.navy.mil.

◀ **When the night is over and all** the stress has passed, the facilitators at BST-21 take a moment to impress upon the new Sailors that what they have experienced in the last 12 hours is what sets them apart from the rest of the world. This test has forged them into vital components of the U.S. Navy.

12 Hours to Test a Sailor

Story and photos by MC1(SCW) Jess M. Johnson with additional reporting by MC1 Matthew Oldham and MC3 Aaron Hubner

For 10 years it has been a right-of-passage for everyone coming out of Recruit Training Command (RTC), Great Lakes. For the recruits it's their last test before they head out into the world as full-fledged Sailors. For the recruit division commanders (RDC) this is how their success in training their company is gauged. When it was conceived, this test, known as Battle Stations, was described by then-RTC Commander, Capt. Cory Whitehead as, "… one of the most important things the Navy's done in Boot Camp in the last decade."

Not much had changed since then. Sailors about to graduate Boot Camp have spent the night being subjected to this test to prove to their facilitators and themselves they have what it takes to be a Sailor in the U.S. Navy. But no matter how impressive or extensive the test was, there was still room for improvement.

Battle Stations, as it had been conducted for several years, consisted of 13 events and took about 14 hours to complete. According to Operations Specialist 1st Class Michael Carr, a recruit division commander and a Battle Stations facilitator, these events were historically accurate but not completely seamless.

"Those 13 events were based on historic events that took place in the fleet anywhere from World War II, to the Vietnam era, through the 1990s and the attack on USS *Cole* (DDG 67) in 2000," said Carr. "Those events operated independently from each other."

"There was no continuity between the different scenarios," added Chief Aviation Electronics Technician Tim McKinley, Battle Stations-21 leading chief petty officer.

Suggestions for improvements were constantly coming in. Due to space and configuration limitations, the infrastructure of Battle Stations was difficult to update. It was clear the concept was sound, but the facilities had to be improved to allow for expanded improvements to the total system.

According to Airman Recruit Tamikca Smith, a newly-capped Sailor, the legacy Battle Stations was good but lacked realism.

"You have to use your imagination as to what it would be like on a ship vs. actually being on a ship and seeing it firsthand," said Smith.

To add to the realism, a structure was conceived and constructed to house a new training tool, Battle Stations-21, which is the USS *Trayer* (BST-21), a simulated *Arleigh Burke*-class, guided missile destroyer. It is now the pinnacle of Boot Camp training. It's now the most realistic, high tech, challenging test ever put into use at Recruit Training Command, but much like the legacy Battle Stations everything is based on events that have shaped the Navy of today.

"Everything we do at Battle Stations-21 is steeped in naval history," said McKinley. "Every event is based on something that actually occurred in the Navy or is something that they will do. A perfect example of that is the mass casualty [scenario]. It's based on the events aboard *Cole*. That portion of the simulator closely replicates what happened on *Cole* in October 2000, as close as we could possibly make it. The sights, the sounds, the smells, that level of realism will hopefully enable Sailors to recognize that if they work together as a team they can save a ship with a huge hole in the side of it from sinking. That's what those Sailors on *Cole* did and that's what we're trying to impress upon these [recruits]."

Attaining that level of realism has taken a great deal of effort. There are specially designed effects and extremely realistic settings that transform *Trayer* from a classroom into what appears to be a fully functional U.S. naval warship.

The entire pier is like a set on a giant stage with interchangeable pieces that can make it appear as though the ship has traveled from Norfolk to Yorktown, Va., without having moved an inch. While the crew is conducting at sea watches, the facilitators are moving the backdrops and changing the location of key pieces of equipment to create the illusion that *Trayer* has sailed and is pulling into a different port.

It's not just the surroundings that add to the realism, there are several people

▼ **Recruits try to fix a broken pipe during one of the Battle** Stations-21 scenarios.

▲ Recruits prepare for the firefighting scenario aboard USS *Trayer*.

▲ **According to the team facilitators,** there are miles of computer network cables and wireless connections in place aboard BST-21 to access information that will keep their teams safe.

who work behind the scenes to monitor and control the entire night. Everything involved in this marathon of a test is tied together through miles of computer network cables and wireless connections that allow the facilitators to access a world of information to keep their teams safe.

According to Electronics Technician 1st Class Jeff Gustafson, an RDC and a BST-21 facilitator, there isn't a place on *Trayer* he can't access the network to ensure his team is tracked and safe.

"In every scenario there are controls on the bulkhead that let us stop the scenario if we have to," noted Gustafson. "We also have personal digital assistants (PDAs) we carry with us that let us access the objectives, safety brief point and debrief information for each scenario."

The PDAs also allow the facilitators to note anytime a recruit isn't following their instructions.

"Each of our teams are entered into the PDA and we can assign strikes to those who fail to follow instructions or aren't paying attention to detail," said Gustafson.

The PDAs also give the facilitators the ability to control the events even when they aren't in one of the scenario compartments.

"We can call for a training time out from our PDA," said Gustafson. "That really makes things easier because we could be in a location where we can't get to one of the controls, but we need to stop things. I can just hit the stop on the PDA and everything is shut down immediately."

This level of control gives the facilitators the security to allow their recruits to find their own way.

"I was put into a leadership position and it was very rewarding to be able to lead my team and do a good job and make it through each scenario," said Smith a recent BST-21 test run graduate. "It was rewarding to step up to the plate and to challenge myself in a leadership position because I'm not normally that kind of person and I just kind of stepped out of my box and that felt good."

By allowing the recruits to lead themselves, with plenty of guidance and supervision from the facilitator of course, these future Sailors can really immerse themselves in the situation.

"At no time during the simulation do we ever say, 'If we were on a real ship,'" explained Lt. Andrew Bond, BST-21 division officer. "It's very important to us that we stay in the story line the entire night so that we're not expecting them to do something that is based on being coaxed into doing it. They are responding to cues.

"Each of our teams are entered into the PDA and we can assign strikes to those who fail to follow instructions or aren't paying attention to detail"

– ET1 Jeff Gustafson, BST-21 Facilitator

They receive a 1MC announcement and they act on it just as they would on a ship. There's no one there to hold their hand."

The original incarnation of Battle Stations had to make due with what space and equipment could be made available for training. Now, aboard *Trayer,* Battle Stations-21 has the equipment and

▼ **BST-21 facilitators prepare** for a new batch of recruits. The facilitators don't teach during this training session, they act as the records LPOs and LCPOs.

"The recruits are in the scenario of being on a ship at sea conducting a mission that has been pre-briefed to them by their commanding officer. The recruits stay in that mode, they stay in that timeline for the entire night"

– AEC Tim McKinley, LCPO, BST-21

personnel dedicated to providing future Sailors an experience that is second to none in the military, and all under one roof.

The new facility has taken a huge step in building a seamless experience that has eliminated the lack of continuity that was due in great part to the fact that many of the events were in different locations around RTC.

"In fact we used to run between the scenarios," McKinley continued, "approximately three to four miles per night."

Now that the training is centralized, the combinations of scenarios has become one virtually seamless event.

"At Battle Stations-21 it's a continuous story line from beginning to end. The recruits are in the scenario of being on a ship at sea conducting a mission that has been pre-briefed to them by their commanding officer. The recruits stay in that mode, they stay in that timeline for the entire night," said McKinley.

With the time saved in the new facility, the facilitators will now have time to debrief the recruits on their performance and to share personal stories about their experiences in the fleet.

"There's much more interaction between the facilitator and the recruit. Before we were evaluating them, but almost from afar. We were kind of removed from the process. At BST-21 the facilitator is involved in the scenarios with the recruits almost as if they were their LPO (leading petty officer) or shift supervisor and going through the events with them. They stay in that role all night long," said McKinnley.

Even with the changes to Battle Stations the basis of the recruits' final exam are still intact.

"The uniqueness, the values and the test remain the same. We're able to capture more details of the test. As opposed to the legacy Battle Stations, which was a shotgun start and may have seemed a little disjointed, but all the events happened during the course of the evening," explained Bond. "This one is a story line. It's based on receiving a mission brief, manning their ship, taking their ship out on a mission, being attacked and then saving their ship and bringing it home."

For a new recruit who has never seen a ship or been put into a situation where their action, or in some cases inaction, could have devastating consequences, this final exam can be overwhelming if they don't rely on the lessons they have been taught during Boot Camp.

According to Smith, who has completed both the legacy Battle Stations and the improved BST-21 the new system gave her a more convincing experience.

"Not knowing what a ship would be like, I thought that it was very realistic and I think that it's going to prepare those who will be in the fleet soon," said Smith. "It gives you a feel for what life is going to be like on a ship. The simulations conducted during battle stations were very realistic and I could see myself being able to think fast and act quickly in a real life situation."

Being able to act fast and to perform at the standards set by the Navy's Core Values is exactly why Battle Stations was instituted.

"Everything that the recruit has done up until this point was to prepare them for Battle Stations," explained OS1 Michael Carr, a recruit division commander and a BST-21 facilitator. "Everything they learned at boot camp relates to what they do here. The way they fold their uniforms and stow them gives them the attention to detail they are going to need to put into place here."

The Sailors who have completed Battle Stations agree everything they learned plays a part in their final exam at Battle Stations.

"You have to use everything you learned in the classroom because it comes right up there in your face," said Seaman Recruit Jae Joon Kim, another new Sailor who completed both versions of Battle Stations.

"Every problem is exactly like it was done in the past," continues Kim. "So everything you learn in the classroom, what your RDC has told you, what your instructors told you, you have to string that out of your brain. Some of the stuff we learned right when we got here or a couple weeks after we got here and we never even talked about it [again] and then it will hit you in the face right here in Battle Stations-21. All my shipmates and I will all have to strain that out of our heads trying to get through one event."

▲ **The control room is used for teaching and safety purposes.**
There are very few places aboard USS *Trayer* that are not covered by a camera.

▲ **After completing BST 21, recruits wait to receive their "Navy" ball caps.**

Because of where Kim grew up he was able to see a real naval vessel before he joined the Navy, a luxury not many recruits could afford before joining the Navy.

"I'm from Hawaii so I had a chance to actually go on one of the Navy ships and [Battle Stations] is pretty much exactly like a Navy ship. It's very realistic compared to Battle Stations legacy," said Kim.

By preparing these Sailors for Battle Stations the instructors and the facilitators are also preparing these recruits for their first deployment aboard a ship.

"We're doing things at Battle Stations-21 aboard *Trayer* that we couldn't do at legacy. One perfect example of that is at legacy we used to do the abandon ship drill. We don't do that anymore. Now at Battle Stations-21 we do a man overboard drill exactly as it is done in the fleet. So the first time a Sailor does a man overboard drill aboard his or her new ship they'll know what to do," said McKinley.

"I can't stress enough the real-life scenarios," said Smith. "Being able to leave a smoke filled compartment through the escape hatch, or pass through the different compartments and find them using the numbers that they're labeled with. It's not the same feeling as when you walk into a building. [At legacy Battle Stations] you have to use your imagination as to what it would be like on a ship vs. actually being on a ship and seeing it first hand."

By building this new facility the Navy has invested a great deal not just in the training of future Sailors but in the future of the Navy itself.

Ten years ago when Battle Stations began, then-Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Jay Johnson called Battle Stations, "… the capstone event that gives recruits the key skills and confidence they need to graduate and take to the fleet."

The attention to detail evident aboard *Trayer* proves Battle Stations-21 will continue the proud tradition of polishing recruits into solid Sailors.

Johnson, Oldham and Hubner are photojournalists assigned to Naval Media Center, Washington, D.C.

Securing the Gulf

Story by Lt. Nathan Christensen

Since the dawn of the 20th century, the U.S. Navy has played an instrumental role in shaping and molding American foreign policy abroad. President Roosevelt's Great White Fleet demonstrated the unequivocal influence forward deployed U.S. ships could have throughout the world. Perhaps no group of ships have had as significant a role in projecting power at sea or ashore than carrier strike groups.

▲ **Lightning rages above the flight deck of USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74)** during a dual-carrier exercise with USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower*'s Carrier Strike Group and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 7 held during March 2007. This is the first time the two strike groups have operated together in a joint exercise while deployed to 5th Fleet, and demonstrates the importance for both strike groups to plan and conduct dual task force operations as part of the Navy's commitment to maintaining maritime security and stability in the region.

Photo by MC2 Heidi J. Giacalone

During World War II, the U.S. Navy first relied heavily on aircraft carriers and their escort ships to win important victories in the Pacific against the Empire of Japan. Some 60 years later, U.S. aircraft carriers and their strike groups are still the focus and centerpiece of naval warfare helping to ensure security and stability throughout the world.

The modern carrier strike group (CSG) is comprised of an aircraft carrier and her embarked air wing. Escorted by four surface combatant ships and a logistical replenishment ship ensures CSGs are ready on arrival wherever duty may call. CSGs are capable of conducting a whole host of operations ranging from providing offensive firepower to performing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions.

"Our strike group provides an agile, flexible, responsive and robust set of capabilities ranging from humanitarian assistance all the way up through major combat operations," said Rear Adm. Kevin Quinn, Commander, Carrier Strike Group 3, aboard USS *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74). "We are ready, we are sustainable, we are flexible, and we provide awesome combat capability."

Led by Quinn, the *John C. Stennis* Carrier Strike Group (JCSSG) is currently conducting operations in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations. The 6,500 Sailors who comprise JCSSG conduct a broad spectrum of missions in the Persian Gulf and North Arabian Sea. These missions include maritime operations, providing support for ground forces operating in Afghanistan and working alongside coalition partners, including a French nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and its battle group.

While operating in 5th Fleet, *Stennis*' primary role has been to provide support for Operation *Enduring Freedom* (OEF), Operation *Iraqi Freedom* (OIF) and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops.

"Our current mission is to provide air support to the coalition forces on the ground in Afghanistan," said Capt. Brad Johanson, *Stennis*' commanding officer. "There are currently 35,000 coalition security force personnel from 37 different countries providing assistance to the government of Afghanistan to help stabilize their nation. We are providing an opportunity for the government of Afghanistan to establish a secure foundation for democracy in their nation."

Quinn noted the success *Stennis* has provided thus far to the soldiers, Marines, Sailors and other coalition forces on the ground.

"Reports from ground forces in combat say our aircraft are providing the support they need and are making a real difference in the fight against the Taliban," said Quinn. "Not only are we helping our troops on the ground and saving lives, but we're helping the Afghan people."

As a Combined Forces Air Component Command (CFACC) asset, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 9 integrates closely with multinational coalition forces to prevent and counter Taliban attacks. Carrier aircraft provide close air-power support and deliver ordnance on enemy positions designated by ground forces.

Johanson noted that everyone aboard *Stennis* plays an important role in achieving mission success.

"Support for coalition forces on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq starts here on the deckplates of *Stennis*, where everyone plays a vital role in achieving overall mission success in OEF and OIF," said Johanson. "From those preparing food in the galley to personnel on the flight deck maintaining and launching aircraft to the engineers who provide propulsion for the ship, everyone has important responsibilities. The men and women of *Stennis* ensure that the ship is able to successfully launch aircraft to execute operations in support of OEF and OIF."

More importantly, *Stennis*' Sailors know they are key to achieving success wherever a CSG's mission tasking may take them.

"Eighteen hours a day I'm down here in the bakery," said Culinary Specialist 3rd Class (SW) Eugene Ward, *Stennis*' head baker. "A lot of people might wonder if the ship's baker contributes to the success of the mission. But I know I do. When I bake, I know that I'm not only ensuring the crew is well fed, but am also bringing the crew happiness and a sense of home even though we're in the middle of the ocean."

Aviation Machinist Mate 1st Class (SW/AW) Zachary Bursnall is the leading petty officer of *Stennis*' jet repair shop and helps to keep the air wing's aircraft engines running.

"Here in the jet shop, we make sure that any discrepancies or deficiencies in aircraft engines are repaired so that airplanes can fly and conduct their assigned missions," Bursnall said. "The aircraft on board have flown thousands of hours and it's our job to ensure they are able to keep flying."

At the midway point of *Stennis*' deployment, CVW 9 had flown 5,671 sorties and put in more than 14,800 flight hours since departing San Diego Jan. 19. In the 5th Fleet area of responsibility alone, CVW 9 had flown 6,939 hours and delivered more than 56,000 pounds of ordnance in support of coalition forces operating on the ground in Afghanistan.

Although Bursnall's job isn't high profile, he keeps it all in perspective.

"While my job here is important, I know I'm just a small part of the 6,000-piece puzzle," he said. "Without everyone in the strike group working together, the mission wouldn't be able to be completed."

Fire Controlman 1st Class Bret Levinton is the leading petty officer for the Close-In Weapons System (CIWS) work center and oversees the maintenance and upkeep of the 20mm Gatling gun. Like other Sailors aboard *Stennis*, he thinks the ship is making a difference in the region.

"I think we're making a huge difference here, especially for the troops on the ground," said Levinton. "We're maintaining zero casualties in our communication and weapon systems, we're launching planes every day, and our tactical operating system is always ready. We're able to do this, all while interacting with the rest of our strike group ships and coalition navies. It's impressive to think of all of the teamwork that's involved in this and how it goes off without a hitch every day."

Along with supporting OEF, OIF and ISAF troops, another mission JCSSG ships are conducting in 5th Fleet is maritime operations. Operating as part of the JCSSG, USS *O'Kane* (DDG 77) and USS *Preble* (DDG 88) have been primarily conducting maritime operations inside the Persian Gulf since arriving in the region.

U.S. and coalition forces conduct maritime operations to help set the conditions for security and stability in the maritime environment, as well as complement the counter-terrorism and security efforts of regional nations. These operations seek to disrupt violent extremists' use of the maritime environment as a venue for attack or to transport personnel, weapons or other material.

"Conducting [maritime operations] in the Persian Gulf send a signal of security and stability to the region," said Capt. Michael Salvato, commander, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 21.

Photo by MC3 Ron Reeves

▲ **USS *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) and USS *Denver* (LPD 9) transit** the Gulf of Oman. *Denver* is part of USS *Bonhomme Richard*'s Expeditionary Strike Group on deployment in support of Maritime Operations.

Photo by MC2 Joseph R. Vincent

▲ **Using a rigid hull inflatable boat, a visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) team from USS *O'Kane*** (DDG 77) conducts an Interaction Patrol with a small fishing dhow in the North Persian Gulf .

"We're all working to achieve the same objective; ensuring the free flow of commerce across the seas. Coalition ships working together are able to respond to any threat that might interfere with the stability of that objective."

Interaction patrols are one of the missions that comprise maritime operations and focus on putting a friendly face on the coalition's mission in the region. These visits to local mariners help to deter illegal activities on the high seas, as well as reassure them that coalition forces are operating in the region to ensure the sea lanes remain open and are safe to navigate.

O'Kane has been conducting these operations since arriving in the region. These visits to merchant vessels, or dhows, help local mariners understand what coalition ships are doing in the region to ensure security and stability on the seas.

Ens. Thomas Scazzafavo serves as one of the ship's Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) officers and leads *O'Kane*'s team conducting interaction patrols.

"Our mission out here is three-fold: We want to make our presence known, render assistance if needed and create a friendly environment with the locals," said Scazzafavo. "By sending a small team in the RHIB (rigid hull inflatable boat), we appear less intimidating."

"If we go out and make just one dhow's crew feel comfortable and build their trust in the coalition and its mission, then our job has been a success," he said. "In the long run, we will build a network of support that will prove to be beneficial."

One of *O'Kane*'s boarding team members, Damage Controlman 3rd Class Brain Adkins, expressed similar sentiments. "I think it's good that the local mariners see we are out here to help," said Adkins. "We give them food, water and ways to contact us if they need to. After we complete our visit, they seem very happy we've come aboard."

Maritime operations are important because they help keep the seas safe and ensure the commerce and trade of the region that is so vitally important to the rest of the world is able to move freely.

"The sea is the great equalizer of us all," said Salvato. "Our goal here is to strengthen and build relationships and help mariners feel safer. That's the basic idea of maritime operations – coalition nations working together in order to keep the maritime environment safe."

Whether conducting missions in support of maritime operations or ISAF troops in Afghanistan, *Stennis* has operated in an environment where both joint and coalition execution is essential to ensuring the mission success of OEF and maritime operations. Aboard *Stennis*, there are Navy, Marine Corps and Army personnel who work together on a daily basis.

"This is the epitome of a joint operation," said Quinn. "Our primary mission is to conduct air operations in support of joint and coalition forces on the ground in Afghanistan. Every single mission we conduct is a joint one."

The DOD publication JP-1, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, describes joint warfare as team warfare. It "requires the integrated and synchronized application of all appropriate capabilities. The synergy that results maximizes combat capability in unified action."

"Retired Vice Adm. Dennis McGinn stated that carrier aviation could be considered 'the world's largest and most complex team sport,'" said Capt. Sterling Gilliam, Commander, CVW 9. "That analogy resonates with me because one only has to observe the activities on the flight deck to make the connection."

OEF mission planning on *Stennis* exemplifies this team concept and unified action of joint warfare. Not only are there Navy personnel supporting coalition ground forces in Afghanistan, but there are Army soldiers and Marines stationed aboard *Stennis* that give a traditionally blue Navy ship, a more purple operation.

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 323 embarked *Stennis* for the first time last year as part of CVW 9 during JCSSG's operational work-up cycle.

The squadron consists of 18 Marine Corps pilots who fly the all-weather carrier strike fighter F/A-18C *Hornet*, capable of ground and air attacks, and 145 Marines that help maintain, repair and service the aircraft.

"Ultimately, a Marine squadron operates just like a Navy squadron," said Marine Corps 1st Lt. Bradley Byers, a VMFA 323 pilot. "We bring a different perspective and help provide close-air support to Marines and soldiers on the ground operating in support of OEF and OIF. We have a great respect and understanding for what the Marines and soldiers on the ground deal with. We put a heavy emphasis on doing what it takes to help those on the ground and are here to support them."

Stennis' purple mission focus is also enhanced by soldiers serving on board *Stennis*. Army Maj. Dave Lander and Army Sgt. 1st Class John Reardon work in *Stennis*' carrier intelligence center as liaisons to coordinate operations between the pilots of CVW 9 and the soldiers on the ground in theater.

In short, Lander and Reardon translate Army language for Navy pilots and then translate back again to Army speak for ground forces operating in Afghanistan.

"The incorporation of the ground liaison officer team has made a tremendous difference in the effectiveness of CVW 9," said Gilliam. "Their combat expertise, insight and ability to communicate rapidly with the ground elements have allowed our air crews to arrive on station with much better battle space awareness."

Lander said their mission aboard *Stennis* is to support joint OEF operations and make sure the pilots are better prepared to support ground forces. "We've got the same mission. We bring the ground forces together with the Navy air power in the same place to defeat the enemy."

Not only has *Stennis* operated jointly in 5th Fleet with other U.S. forces, but the aircraft carrier has also operated with many other coalition forces as well. A highlight of JCSSG operations has been *Stennis*' interaction with the French aircraft carrier, *Charles de Gaulle* (R 91). Working alongside the French task force was the first opportunity for JCSSG to work with coalition forces in a maritime environment in 5th Fleet.

Upon the recent arrival of *Charles de Gaulle* to the region, the two ships provided support to ISAF troops on the ground in Afghanistan, conducted bilateral exercises at sea, as well as conducting personnel exchanges between strike group ships.

No matter what the task or assignment *Stennis* and its strike group might receive, the Sailors of JCSSG are working around the clock and remain focused on the mission at hand while deployed to the 5th Fleet area of operations.

"We are committed to supporting coalition troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and to conducting maritime operations in this region so that trade, which is critically important to the economies of the world, can flow freely," said Quinn. "We are committed to the security and stability of the region so that the countries of the Middle East can be prosperous and that the people of the region will have hope and see a brighter future."

Christensen is the deputy public affairs officer, USS* John C. Stennis *(CVN 74).

▼A visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) team member lowers himself into a rigid hull inflatable boat from USS *O'Kane* (DDG 77) prior to conducting Interaction Patrols in the North Persian Gulf.

Photo by MC2 Joseph R. Vincent

Photo by MC3 Ron Reeves

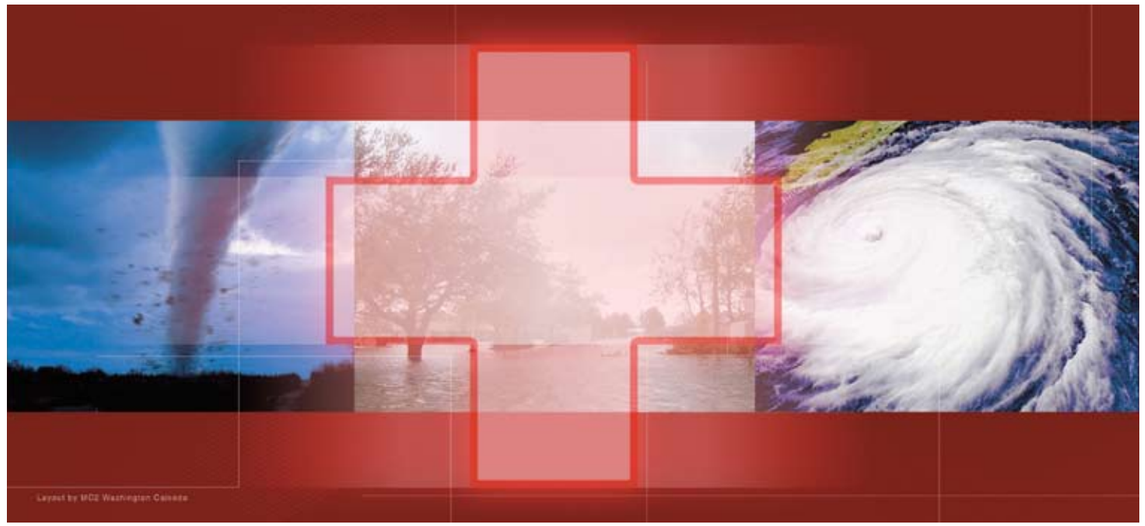
▲Visit, board, search and siezure (VBSS) team member EN3 Blain Churchill from the guided-milssile destroyer USS Preble (DDG 88) drives a rigid hull inflatable boat across the Persian Gulf during an afternoon of Interaction Patrols (IPATS).

JCSSG includes:

- USS *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74)
- CVW 9, DESRON 21
- USS *Antietam* (CG 54)
- USS *O'Kane* (DDG 77)
- USS *Preble* (DDG 88)
- USNS *Bridge* (T-AOE 10)

CVW 9 squadrons include:

- "Black Knights" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 154
- "Blue Diamonds" of VFA 146
- "Argonauts" of VFA 147
- "Death Rattlers" of VMFA 323
- "Yellowjackets" of Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron (VAQ) 138
- "Golden Hawks" of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 112
- "Top Cats" of Sea Control Squadron (VS) 31
- "Eightballers" of Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron (HS) 8
- "Providers" of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 30



ARE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY READY FOR AN

EMERGENCY?

Story by Zona Lewis

Every member of the Navy community has a role in planning for emergencies. Preparedness is your duty. Individuals and families can now go online to get simple, ready-to-use fact sheets, checklists and forms on how to prepare for a variety of natural and manmade disasters, thanks to ***Operation Prepare***, a public awareness program initiated by Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC), Washington, D.C.

The ***Operation Prepare*** web pages are located on the CNIC Web site, www.cnic.navy.mil and can be found under "Emergency Preparedness and Recovery."

According to Owen McIntyre, CNIC emergency management program director, "Staying informed, developing a plan and making an emergency kit is the theme of this initiative so that every member of the Navy community can learn to prepare and respond in the event of an emergency.

Preparedness is the individual's responsibility, and accessing CNIC's Web site is a great way for personnel to get ready for any situation."

STAY INFORMED

- Become familiar with the full spectrum of hazards in your area and how you will be notified about them.
- Give special consideration to hazards that affect your local area, such as severe winter weather, hurricanes or earthquakes.
- Be prepared to take appropriate actions: evacuate, move to a civilian shelter, move to a designated safe haven or temporarily shelter in place.
- Know your command's established procedures for reporting and mustering.

DEVELOP AND PRACTICE A FAMILY EMERGENCY PLAN

- The surest way to be prepared for an emergency is to develop and practice a family emergency plan.
- Discuss in advance what you will do during various types of emergencies, pick places to meet and have contact information for everyone.
- Formalize your preparations in a written family plan so everyone knows what to do in an emergency. Incorporate special concerns such as caring for very young and very old family members, protecting your property, retaining critical financial or insurance records and caring for your pets.
- Practice your emergency plan at least once a year. Choose a disaster that would be most likely to affect your family. Describe a hypothetical event and instruct family members to follow the family emergency plan. Practice gathering your emergency kit, communicating with one another and meeting at designated places.

MAKE A PREPAREDNESS KIT

- Community emergency responders focus on the most critical needs when disaster strikes. It's your responsibility to ensure your family's well-being during times of crisis. Emergency preparedness kits are an essential tool for meeting that challenge.
- Gather supplies for every family member for at least three days. Main items to include are water, food, first aid supplies and critical family documents.
- Emergency preparedness kits can be bought, but the most effective kits are those you assemble yourself to suit your family's particular needs.
- Depending on your family, you may need special items for babies, medications and supplies for pets.
- Make your kit portable in case you go to a shelter or evacuate. Make smaller emergency kits to keep at work and in your car.
- Evaluate emergency kits regularly and update them as medications and food expire.

VISIT THE *OPERATION PREPARE* WEB SITE

Operation Prepare offers a wealth of resources such as:

- Information - Nearly 40 fact sheets on a variety of hazards and emergency preparedness steps, derived from several reputable sources such as the Department of Homeland Security and the Centers for Disease Control and tailored especially for the Navy community.
- Plans - Planning checklists and printable forms for emergency contact and communications cards, including space for your command's muster information.
- Kits - Printable checklists for basic emergency supply kits that you can tailor to your own family needs.

Lewis is assigned to Commander, Navy Installations Command, Washington, D.C.

IT'S ALL IN THE STYLE

Story and photo by MCSN Kiona McKissack

Inside Forrest Lawn Cemetery, Norfolk, U.S. Navy Musician 2nd Class Aaron Deaton plays his trumpet. Part of his job as a Navy musician is to perform during military funerals.

"I can't explain why I love music, but it was something I was born with," said Deaton. "The military band was the next step after college to make money doing what I had been studying."

Deaton has been playing the trumpet for 18 years, six of those years for the Navy. Part of being a Navy musician includes performing in marching, concert, stage or dance bands and playing all musical styles. And there's also the conducting, rehearsing and performing with these same groups for radio, television and stage.

He feels it's his job as a Sailor to be prepared for everything, so his job as a Navy petty officer comes first.

"Sometimes you have to 'put down the trumpet' as we say, and pick up the axe or whatever else they tell you to do," said Deaton. "To be a musician in the Navy you have to have an open mind and be ready for anything."

Navy musicians came together in 1775 as a morale booster and later formed the U.S. Naval Academy Band in the 1840s. The musician rate is one of the oldest enlisted rate in the Navy.

"I am honored to be a part of our long-standing tradition," said Deaton. "It wouldn't be a Navy ceremony without the Navy Band."

McKissack is assigned to Fleet Public Affairs Center Atlantic, Norfolk.

Neil Armstrong – The First Man on the Moon

Story by MCC Margaret Reborchick

"Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed." Astronaut Neil Armstrong announced these words upon landing on the surface of the moon July 20, 1969. The moment of touchdown, 4:17:39 P.M. EDT, was one of jubilation for the entire nation.

It marked the achievement of a goal that had seemed so lofty and almost unthinkable in 1961, when President John Kennedy set it. In his speech to Congress on May 25, 1961, he said, "I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to Earth."

Neil Armstrong was the man chosen to be the commander of NASA's first manned lunar landing mission, *Apollo 11*. He had a crew of two for this mission, Buzz Aldrin, lunar module pilot and Mike Collins, command module pilot. On that July day in 1969, when the eyes of the nation, and the entire world, gazed up at the sky and at their televisions, Mike Collins was orbiting the moon in the command module and Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin were landing on the moon in the lunar module, spending 2.5 hours on its surface. Neil Armstrong stepped out of the lunar module first, making him the first man to walk on the moon.

For Neil Armstrong, this 250,000 mile epic journey to the moon and back began in Wapakoneta, Ohio, where he was born Aug. 5, 1930. Growing up in rural Ohio, Armstrong was an avid reader and model airplane builder, developing a life-long interest in aviation and learning to fly before he had his driver's license. He was also active in the Boy Scouts and reached the rank of Eagle Scout.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautical Engineering in 1955 from Purdue University, Lafayette, Ind. To pay his tuition, he participated in the Holloway Plan, where his four college years were split by three years' service in the U.S. Navy. He served in the Navy from 1949 to 1952 and was assigned to Navy Fighter Squadron (VF) 51, an all-jet squadron.

He, along with his squadron, set sail for Korea aboard USS *Essex* (CV 9). During the Korean War, he flew a total of 78 missions, amassed 121 flight hours and reached the rank of lieutenant junior grade. After earning his degree, Armstrong became

Photo courtesy of the Naval Historical Center

an experimental test pilot at the High-Speed Flight Station, Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., and flew many of the early high-speed aircraft.

Armstrong joined NASA as an astronaut in 1962, and in March of 1966, served as command pilot for the *Gemini 8* mission. During this mission, he was the first to successfully dock two vehicles in space. After the *Apollo 11* mission, he decided not to fly in space again and in 1971 resigned from NASA and returned to Ohio to pursue a career in teaching and lecturing.

To learn more, read James R. Hansen's authorized biography, *First Man: The Life of Neil A. Armstrong.*

Reborchick is a photojournalist assigned to Naval Media Center, Washington, D.C.

Are you ready for this adventure...

Layout by MCC Washington Chicedo

In times of war or uncertainty there is a special breed of warrior ready to answer our Nation's call. A common man with uncommon desire to succeed. Forged by adversity, he stands alongside America's finest special operations forces to serve his country and the American people, and to protect their way of life.

I am that man.

U.S. Navy SEAL

Are you that man? To find out more about becoming a U.S. Navy SEAL go to www.SEAL.navy.mil or call 888-USN-SEAL

U.S. Navy Photo & Illustration by MC1 Brien Aho