

The Flagship

Serving the Hampton Roads Navy Family



Vol. 17, No. 47, Norfolk, VA

FLAGSHIPNEWS.COM

November 26, 2009

M/V Maersk Alabama captain receives valor award

BY MC3 LAUREN G. RANDALL

Navy Public Affairs Support Element, Norfolk

NORFOLK — The captain of M/V Maersk Alabama received the inaugural National Maritime Valor Award from the Nauticus National Maritime Center Nov. 19 at the Nauticus in Norfolk.

The ceremony held Thursday evening was a continuance of the reunion of Capt. Richard Phillips and the captain and crew of the guided-missile destroyer, USS Bainbridge (DDG96) and the Navy SEALs.

Speakers at the ceremony included the honorable Paul D. Fraim, mayor of the city of Norfolk, John Reinhart, president and CEO of Maersk Line, Limited, Adm. Gary Roughead, chief of naval operations (CNO) and Phillips.

"This is a celebration of the courage and dedication of Capt. Richard Phillips of the Maersk Alabama," said Fraim.

The CNO and Reinhart expressed their gratitude to the Bainbridge, the Navy SEALs and Phillips and the crew of the

Maersk Alabama for doing their job in keeping international waters safe for all aspects of American security from merchant trade to military endeavors.

During the ceremony Phillips presented 15 Sailors who had a direct role in his rescue with a commemorative coin that was minted in Norfolk with images of the Bainbridge, the Navy SEALs' pin and the Maersk Alabama on the face.

"You have served honorably and you have written a page in the history of the Navy," Roughead said.

Earlier Thursday, Phillips thanked the captain and crew of the Bainbridge and presented 16 additional Sailors with the commemorative coin during a ceremony on the fantail of the Bainbridge. A press conference with Phillips and Cmdr. Frank X. Castellano, commanding officer of the Bainbridge, was held afterward in the Nauticus.

For more news from Commander, Navy Region Mid Atlantic, visit www.navy.mil/local/cnrma/.



Photo by MC3 David Danals

Capt. Richard Phillips, former commanding officer of M/V Maersk Alabama, publicly thanks the commanding officer and Sailors assigned to the guided-missile destroyer USS Bainbridge (DDG 96) for his dramatic rescue at sea. On Easter Sunday, April 12, Navy SEALs positioned on the fantail of the Bainbridge opened fire and killed three of the pirates who were holding Phillips hostage.

USS Chosin Sailors seek to deter piracy in Gulf of Aden

BY MC2 MATTHEW A. HEPBURN

Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/Commander, U.S. 5th Fleet Public Affairs

ABOARD USS CHOSIN, At Sea — USS Chosin (CG 65), homeported in Pearl Harbor, assumed the role as flagship for the counterpiracy task force Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 Nov. 6 after arriving in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations as part

of a regularly-scheduled deployment.

"We're extremely well equipped to support this mission," said Capt. Timothy Smith, commanding officer, USS Chosin. "An Aegis class Cruiser has an awful lot of capabilities to search and identify, perform command and control operations, collect intelligence and

See CHOSIN, A9



Photos by MC1 Scott Taylor

The first of three men that were rescued from the water of the Gulf of Aden is helped aboard the guided-missile cruiser USS Chosin (CG 65), which rescued the men after a civilian cargo vessel spotted them and called for assistance. Chosin is the flagship of Combined Joint Task Force 151, a multinational task force established to conduct counter-piracy operations under a mission-based mandate to actively deter, disrupt, and suppress piracy off the coast of Somalia.



A boat crew from the guided-missile cruiser USS Chosin (CG 65) approaches three men that were spotted clinging to a piece of wood in the Gulf of Aden.

Foiled pirate attack encourages Defense officials

BY ARMY SGT. 1ST CLASS

MICHAEL J. CARDEN

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Defense Department officials are pleased with the Maersk Alabama's successful defense against suspected pirates off the coast of Somalia, Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said.

Four suspected pirates in a skiff used small-arms weapons in an attempt to board the U.S.-flagged ship, but were unsuccessful. The ship's security team responded with evasive maneuvers, acoustic devices and small-arms fire, which deterred the attack without assistance from the U.S. military.

"We are pleased that we had a ship that was able to take appropriate actions to prevent itself from being hijacked," Whitman told Pentagon reporters.

Whitman noted that the international shipping industry has been very engaged in sharing best practices against pirates. Pentagon officials have encouraged such talks, which involve evasion techniques, transit routes and protection teams, he said.

"It's clear, at least in this particular case, some of those practices were employed," he said.

But piracy in the region remains a concern, Whitman said, and the department is looking for ways to help in reducing the threat. But in addition to U.S. military involvement, he said, efforts from the international community and continued measures within the shipping industry are necessary.

"There is no single solution to piracy," Whitman said. "It's something that has to be dealt with internationally and across the broad front with a broad array of tactics and techniques."

"We're seeing that employed more often," he continued. "This, I think, is an example not only of evasive techniques, but defense posture ... making it more challenging for pirates."

No injuries or damage were reported aboard the Maersk Alabama, which is proceeding to its destination of Mombasa, Kenya.

Suspected Somali pirates briefly seized the Maersk Alabama off the coast of Somalia on April 8 and held the ship's skipper, Capt. Richard Phillips, hostage for five days on a skiff. U.S. naval forces rescued Phillips on April 12.

See CHILD, A9

Official calls military child care 'Model for Nation'

STORY AND PHOTO BY SAMANTHA QUIGLEY

Office of the Secretary of Defense Public Affairs

WASHINGTON — The Military Child Care Act of 1989 has made the military child care sys-

tem the one to emulate.

"We have come a long way," said Tommy T. Thomas, deputy undersecretary of defense for military community and family policy, during the opening remarks of the department's annual

child development conference. "The Department of Defense Child Development System is ... a model for this nation."

Before 1989, care for military children was little more than on-post drop-off and nurseries, Thomas said. What was available often was housed in converted stables, Quonset huts, basement or attics. Many facilities were operated by private organizations or staffed by volunteers, and often care was available only for social events. Retaining trained, qualified caregivers was extremely difficult.

In the 20 years since enactment of the Military Child Care Act, military child care has undergone enormous change. Those changes have led to recognition by a number of organizations, including the National Association of Regulatory Administration and the National Women's Law Center for the department's commitment to high-quality, accessible, affordable child care.

Military child care service improved after the act became law, Thomas said in an interview after the opening session of the conference. "My kids experienced a whole new, different type of [care] than the earlier military kids," he said.

"When my kids were dropped off to the child care center, the first thing my wife would say is, 'That's a very clean environment. The peo-



Sesame Street Muppets Rosita, right, and Elmo, accompanied Melvin Ming, Sesame Workshop's chief operating officer to the Defense Department's 2009 Child Development Conference in Washington. Ming was one of the conference's two keynote speakers Nov. 17. Elmo and Rosita helped him explain the Workshop's "Talk, Listen, Connect" videos designed to help military kids deal with many of the challenges they face.

INSIDE:

WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER A8

Who let the dogs out??? Homeless dogs help soldiers recover at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.



FRONT & CENTER B1

Wings for Warriors Pilot Program

Equi-kids now offers a program specifically geared towards wounded service members.



OFF DUTY C2

Griffin evens score against Ortiz

Griffin avenged his 2006 split decision loss to Ortiz with a split decision win at UFC 106.



Energy savings performance contract to save NAS Oceana \$4 million per year

BY CATHY HEIMER
Jet Observer

Ground was broken at Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana, Nov. 19, for Phase 2 of the Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC), which is expected to save the Navy more than \$4 million each year in energy costs when completed in 2011.

The contract partners Oceana, Naval Engineering Facilities Command Mid-Atlantic and Trane to replace the aging heating and air conditioning equipment with a state-of-the-art heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. Attendees at the ground breaking included Virginia Beach Mayor William Sessoms and a representative from Rep. Glenn Nye's office.

By replacing the aging, above-ground steam pipes and boiler plant with a state-of-the-art HVAC system, the project will not only save needed money on maintenance costs but also allow NAS Oceana to exceed federal energy reduction goals several years early. The goals were set by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Construction on the \$44 million project is scheduled to begin immediately and expected to be completed by June 2011.

"When this performance contract is complete, we will accomplish 100 percent of NAS Oceana and Dam Neck Annex's mission, using less than 50 percent of the energy used per square feet per building than we used in 2003," said Andrew Porter, Oceana deputy public works officer.

The extensive project "physically impacts almost all the buildings on Oceana," explained NAS Oceana Commanding Officer Capt. Mark Rich.

The project includes five bachelor housing buildings, six hangars, the galley, seven maintenance facilities, eight office buildings, the chapel, three aircraft simulator buildings, along with many other buildings, for a total of 42 buildings on Oceana.

The changes at Oceana include installing ground source heat pumps in three buildings, decentralizing the heating system, adding digital control systems allowing temperature fluctuations to receive the maximum efficiency from the system, lighting retrofits to maximize lighting and water conservation measures.

Rich sees several benefits for those



Photo by MC2 (AW/SW) Jamica Johnson

Helping to break ground Nov. 19 on the Oceana 2 Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) are (left - right) Jim Wells from Public Works Department (PWC) Oceana; PWC Oceana Construction Manager Greg Hedley; PWC Oceana Assistant Public Works Officer Lt.j.g. Patrick McCullough; Oceana Deputy Public Works Officer Andrew Porter; Naval Air Station Oceana Commanding Officer Capt. Mark Rich; NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Executive Officer Capt. John Heckmann; Trane Company Federal Sector Executive David Hayden; Trane Oceana 2 ESPC Construction Manager Eric Snyder; Roger Shull from Damuth Trane; and Jody Wilkens from Trane. Oceana 2 ESPC replaces the aging heating and air conditioning systems throughout the base and will save more than \$4 million in energy and water consumption. The \$44 million project is scheduled to be completed in June 2011.

who work and live on Oceana. "We're getting a state of the art HVAC system put in for the majority of our buildings that right now are on old steam system, have old conventional air conditioning systems in them as well. These are unreliable, they're expensive to maintain and they break a lot," he said.

Rich explained the new, efficient and effective systems will be much more reliable than the old system, which dates back decades. He said the project also gives Oceana the ability to identify how much electricity and water each building is using, something they have not been able to do under the current system.

The other advantage for the base is that as part of the contract, Trane is now responsible for repairing the system, Rich added.

Phase I of ESPC was completed last year at Dam Neck Annex. "Because of some great work done by our partners, Trane, we are meeting those goals," having already saved nearly \$3 million for the Navy, said Rich.

Because of ESPC, NAS Oceana was one of only two Navy installations to earn the 2009 Presidential Award for Leadership in Federal Energy Management, which recognizes federal agencies for their support, leadership and efforts in promoting and improving federal energy management

Capt. John Heckmann, NAVFAC

executive officer, said the project at Oceana is one of a number of such projects throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region, aimed at improving the quality of life for those who work and live on base, as well as conserving energy and saving much needed dollars.

"They're growing more and more everyday as we get more pressure to try to reduce our energy consumption," explained Heckmann about the projects.

Heckmann explained the "unique financing" that has resulted in the contracts with Trane. Prior to 1992, he said, "We had to really scrape our budget hard to do any energy conservation projects and it was hard to actually justify that with all the other priorities."

But with the legislation enacted to allow the financing based on savings, "we are now able to finance projects off of that expected savings we will get from these projects. It's just a tremendous boon for us to finance these projects without having to sink into our budget," said Heckmann.

"Our goal is to perform the full Navy mission using less energy, using renewable energy and using energy from alternate sources. The important part is performing the Navy's mission. Energy consumption can be reduced by reducing operations and mission but we can never forget the Navy's mission is our number one goal," said Porter.

THE FLAGSHIP'S LEEWARD SHOUT

What are you thankful for during this holiday season?



"I'm most grateful for my friends in the military, my friends back home and all of my family members that I know and love."

SN
Daniel Worzer
USS Wasp



"I'm thankful for my family and right now I'm thankful that I'm able to have a job that supports my family because a lot of people don't have that right now."

BM2
Christopher Falcon
Port Ops



"I am thankful for my son, Raymond William Lane, Jr."

GSE3
Keisha Robbins
NLSO Midlant



"I am thankful that I am able to provide a comfortable life for my son."

IC3
Alexia Phillips
NLSO Legal Assistance



"I am thankful for my family and friends, and that I am able to life to see another day."

ABAN
Tochukwu Tiko-Okoye
NLSO Legal Assistance



"I am grateful to be able to have two weeks off of work, spend the time eating delicious food and getting to spend time with friends and family."

AT2
Michael Ellard
FRC MIDLANT

Photos by SA Brian Auker

Commander Navy Region
Mid-Atlantic is:
Rear Adm. Mark S. Boensel

The Flagship

The Flagship® is produced by Commander Navy Region Mid-Atlantic staff. The editorial content of this newspaper and any supplement is prepared, edited and provided by the public affairs office of Commander Navy Region Mid-Atlantic.

Regional program manager for Commander Navy Region Mid-Atlantic is

Public Affairs Director
Beth Baker

Editorial Staff
Managing Editor
Micheal Mink

Deputy Managing Editor
MC1 (AW) Tim Comerford

Editorial Assistants
MC2 Mandy Hunsucker
SA Brian Auker

Graphic Designer
David Todd

Off Duty Editor / Designer
Tim Rafalski

The Flagship® is an authorized publication for members of the military services and their families. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy or the U.S. Marine Corps and do not imply endorsement thereof.

The appearance of advertising in this newspaper, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense, the Navy or Marine Corps, Commander Navy Region Mid-Atlantic or Flagship, Inc. of the products and services advertised.

Everything advertised in The Flagship® shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. If a violation or rejection of this equal opportunity policy by an advertiser is confirmed, the publisher shall refuse

to print advertising from that source until the violation is corrected. The Flagship® is published by Flagship, Inc., a subsidiary of Landmark Communications, Inc., a private firm in no way connected with the Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy or the U.S. Marine Corps, under exclusive contract with the U.S. Navy.

Questions or comments can be directed to the public affairs officer or the editor. The Flagship® can be reached at 322-2865 (editor), 322-2864 (assistant editor). The fax number is 444-3029 or write Commander, Navy Region, Mid-Atlantic, The Flagship®, 1510 Gilbert St., Norfolk, VA 23511-2737. All news releases should be sent to this address. Stories may be submitted via e-mail to news@flagshipnews.com. You can visit The Flagship's Web site at www.flagshipnews.com.

The Flagship® is published every Thursday by Flagship, Inc., whose offices are at 143 Granby St., Norfolk, VA 23510. Minimum weekly circulation is 45,000.

Flagship, Inc.
General Manager
Laura Baxter, 222-3964
Creative Director

Tricia Lieurance, 222-3968
Free Classified Advertising, 222-3967
Distribution, 446-2881
Home Delivery, 222-3965
© 2009 Flagship, Inc.
All rights reserved.

ESG 2 welcomes newest Navy warship USS New York



MC1 Tiffini Jones Vanderwyst

Sailors man the ship and bring her to life during the commissioning ceremony of the amphibious transport dock, USS New York (LPD 21) in New York City. New York has 7.5 tons of steel from the World Trade Center in her bow.

BY LT. JOHN FAGE

Expeditionary Strike Group 2 Public Affairs

NORFOLK — Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 2 welcomed the newest member of its amphibious fleet, Nov. 7, when the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock, USS New York (LPD 21) was commissioned during a ceremony held in New York City.

“By preparing USS New York for active service, you are getting ready to join the fight against those who would destroy our way of life,” said Rear Adm. Michelle Howard, ESG 2 commanding officer, in a message to New York’s crew. “Let the seven and a half tons of salvaged steel from the World Trade Center be a reminder of why we all serve. Let it also be a reminder that the cost of freedom is high, and our individual sacrifices count for generations to come.”

Carrying nearly seven and a half tons of steel salvaged from the World Trade Center attacks in 2001, New York joins its sister ships, the San Anto-

nio-class USS San Antonio (LPD 17) and USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19), as well as the Austin-class amphibious transport dock USS Ponce (LPD 15).

“New York will be an outstanding addition to our ESG 2 family,” said Col. John McElroy, ESG 2’s deputy commander. “The spirits of those killed in the World Trade Center attacks will live on through the hard work of New York’s Sailors and Marines and their dedication to duty as they strive to make the world a better and safer place as a global force for good.”

ESG 2 also maintains oversight of the multipurpose amphibious assault ships USS Wasp (LHD 1), USS Kearsarge (LHD 3), USS Bataan (LHD 5), USS Iwo Jima (LHD 7), USS Nassau (LHA 4) and dock landing ships USS Whidbey Island (LSD 41), USS Fort McHenry (LSD 43), USS Gunston Hall (LSD 44), USS Ashland (LSD 48), USS Carter Hall (LSD 50) and USS Oak Hill (LSD 51).

For more news from Expeditionary Strike Group 2, visit [www.navy.mil/local/ESG 2/](http://www.navy.mil/local/ESG2/).

Commander Rowland honored by building dedication

STORY AND PHOTO

BY ROBIN HOLLAND

Training Support Center Hampton Roads Public Affairs

NORFOLK — The Center for Naval Engineering (CNE) damage control wet-trainer building located at the Norfolk International Terminal was named the Cmdr. Mervin Rowland building at a dedication ceremony held on Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

More than 100 friends, family members and shipmates were present at the event. Adm. William Small, former 1981 Vice Chief of Naval Operations was the ceremonial guest speaker.

“We are about to do more than just put a name on a structure. If naming a building in honor of someone causes others to reflect on the life of that individual, then everyone who passes through these halls will find something about Commander Rowland to emulate,” Adm. Small told the crowd. “This dedication is not just based on the 48 hours in

which Cmdr. Rowland’s damage control efforts as the chief engineer during the catastrophic fire aboard the USS Forrestal. This dedication focuses on the man Merv Rowland was and his whole life. Merv’s dedication to damage control and the training drills he conducted during the 16 months before the Forrestal disaster helped save the ship and many lives. Cmdr. Rowland conducted himself with dignity, determination and self-reliance throughout his 91 years,” said Small.

Cmdr. Mervin Rowland, 91, of Sumner, Maine died peacefully at the Maine Veterans Home on July 31. Merv was born June 21, 1918 in Marble, NC. He enlisted in the Navy in 1939. During the next 30 years, he served at numerous sea and shore commands. In 1952, he was commissioned an ensign and rose through the ranks to retire as a commander in 1969. He served on many ships but the one he was proudest of was the USS For-

restal and its crew. Aboard this ship while in the Gulf of Tonkin Vietnam, on July 29, 1967 a disastrous fire broke out on the flight deck. Fire exploding 1000 lb. and 500 lb. bombs took the lives of 134 young Sailors and came near to sinking the ship. As Chief Engineer, Rowland was in charge of damage control and the fire fighting response, making him the one individual most responsible for saving the ship. His actions that day earned him the Bronze Star Medal.

“Today is a celebration of Commander Rowland’s life and the legacy he leaves our Navy. The message he would want to be passed along to the future trainees here at the school house is that damage control teams, properly trained, properly outfitted and properly led, can accomplish any task assigned, no matter how insurmountable it may seem,” said Small.

During the ceremony, Cmdr. Rowland’s grandson, Jason presented Senior Chief

Damage Controlman Terry Wylie, CNE, with his grandfather’s cutlass.

“We are very honored at the wisdom my grandfather passed on to his crew and family. To know that the Sailors and Marines that train in this building will depart with some of his knowledge is my

grandfather’s legacy – he was a great man,” said Jason.

“From my perspective, to name this building after Cmdr. Rowland on Veterans Day was just the right thing to do. It’s important to remember those that have served our country before us,” said Capt. William

Morales, Commanding Officer, CNE. “Often we get so caught up in the job, we forget history. It’s so very important to remember those that have done this job before us and the challenges that they have faced. If they can do it; then we need to be reminded we can do it.”



Senior Chief Damage Controlman Terry Wylie (Left), Center for Naval Engineering (CNE), is presented Cmdr. Mervin Rowland’s cutlass by Rowland’s grandson, Jason (right), during a building dedication ceremony in Norfolk, Nov. 11. CNE, located at the Norfolk International Terminal, named the damage control wet-trainer building the “Cmdr. Mervin Rowland building” in honor of the namesake’s life and dedication to damage control and training.

Local service times

LDS PROGRAMS

JEB Little Creek Chapel Worship Schedule:
Noon — Sun. Worship (Chapel Annex Classroom 4)
8 p.m. — Wed. Bible Study
(Chapel Annex Classroom 4)

NAVAL STATION NORFOLK

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Our Lady of Victory Chapel

Mass Schedule:

5 p.m. — Sat.

(fulfills Sunday obligation)

10 a.m. — Sun.

11:45 a.m. — Mon.- Fri.

(except holidays)

Confessions:

4:15 p.m. Sat.

PROTESTANT

David Adams Memorial

Chapel Worship Services:

10:30 a.m. — Sun.

Worship

Wednesday Services:

8:30 - 10:15 a.m. — Bible

Study Noon "Lunch

with the Lord"

**For more information call
Naval Station Norfolk Chapel 444-7361**

JEWISH PROGRAMS

Commodore Uraih P. Levy Chapel: Jewish services are at Norfolk chapel in Building C7 on the Second Floor every Friday at 7:30 p.m. Building C7 is located at 1630 Morris St. on Naval Base Norfolk. For more information call 444-7361 or 7363.

MUSLIM PROGRAMS

Masjid al Da'wah

2nd Floor (Bldg. C-7): Muslim services are at Norfolk chapel every Friday at 1:30 p.m.

JEB LITTLE CREEK CHAPEL

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Mass Schedule:

5 p.m. — Sat.

(fulfills Sunday obligation)

9 a.m. & 12:15 p.m. — Sun.

11:30 a.m. — Tues. - Fri.

(except holidays)

Confessions:

3:30 - 4:30 p.m. — Sat.

PROTESTANT

9 a.m. — Sun. School

(4 years-Adult)

10:30 a.m. — Sun.

Divine Worship,

Children's Church

(Ages 4-10)

PWOC: Bible Study at the Chapel Annex Every Wed.

Fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Bible Study: 10 a.m. - noon

PWOC: Evening Bible Study Every Mon.: 7 p.m.

Latter Day Saints

11:30 a.m. — Sun.

Coffeehouse

6 p.m. — Sun.

**For more information call JEB
Little Creek Chapel 462-7427**

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Face of defense: Chaplain helps others fight stress

BY SAMANTHA L. QUIGLEY

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Readers of Mark Bowden's "Black Hawk Down" can put the book aside when they've had enough of their mind's reaction of the brutal 1993 battle of Mogadishu, Somalia.

But Chaplain (Maj.) Jeff Struecker isn't that lucky. The decorated Army Ranger was charged with leading the ground assault force on all the targets that the task force hit in Somalia.

"I had been shot at and seen many dead warriors [before Mogadishu]," Struecker said. "I never experienced anything like the violence and the overwhelming sense of desperation like I experienced in Somalia. After losing one of my men and having many others wounded around me, I found a great sense of peace and courage through my faith."

Struecker, who also deployed to Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1989 and Operation Desert Storm in the Middle East in 1991, went back and forth into Mogadishu three times during the main firefight.

His experience in the Somali capital was a turning point for the Soldier who's currently deployed to Afghanistan with the 75th Ranger Regimental Special Troops Battalion.

"My wife, Dawn, and I had a great relationship before Somalia, but after the operation we both understood just how fragile human life is and how valuable our relationship is," he said. "Somalia helped me put my priorities in order."

It also led him to consider pursuing a different aspect of his military career.

"After the big firefight was over, I had many men that I worked with asking me questions about matters of faith and how to deal with the trauma of an event like this," Struecker said. "It was this experience — talking with my friends about combat stress and faith in Jesus Christ after the big firefight — that caused me to start thinking about becoming an Army chaplain."

Since 2001, every time Struecker has deployed, it's been as a chaplain, drawing on the combat experiences he's had during his 22-year military career to help service members dealing with the traumatic stress they may be feeling.

"I talk to them about what has helped



Courtesy photo

Chaplain (Major) Jeff Struecker was born in Fort Dodge, Iowa. He entered the Army as an enlisted Soldier in Sept., 1987 and remained on active duty until April 2000 when he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the US Army Reserve as a Chaplain Candidate. He was called to the ministry while serving with the 75th Ranger Regiment in Ft. Benning, Ga.

me and others in similar situations like theirs," he said. "I [also] work diligently to stay abreast of resources for warriors who are struggling with the weight of their profession."

Those resources are much more plentiful than they were in the days surrounding Mogadishu, Struecker said.

"The task force had a unit psychologist and a chaplain available to answer questions and work with guys, but most of them were overloaded with the amount of people coming to see them," he said. "The U.S. military, and specifically the [Department of] Veterans Affairs, has done greater work in the past few years helping warriors deal with the stress of combat than I have ever seen in my life."

Struecker is deployed to Afghanistan from Fort Benning, Ga. He and his wife, Dawn, are both from Fort Dodge, Iowa, and have five children — six, if you count the family's black Labrador retriever.

"[He] acts like one of our children most of the time," Struecker said.

Struecker, who enjoys reading and running in his off-duty hours, said he feels strongly about helping other service members deal with the traumatic stress they may feel after combat.

"It is an enormous burden to carry for those warriors that have been directly affected by the stress of severe combat," Struecker said. "Our nation

owes all our warriors a debt of gratitude. We especially need to honor these courageous men and women for their service to our country and for the sacrifices that their families have made for our freedoms."

Struecker recently received the "Unsung Hero" award for using his experiences to help others dealing with the effects of traumatic stress. The award was presented at the Country United Gala here, the final piece of a two-day event that included the Partnership for Military Medicine Symposium.

The symposium highlighted discoveries in military medicine and fostered collaborations among military and civilian partners to further advance research and clinical care. The Country United Gala recognized the efforts of medical researchers, clinicians, and educators, as well as friends of military medicine.

The Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine joined with the Tug McGraw Foundation to present the symposium and gala.

The Tug McGraw Foundation was established in 2003 to enhance the quality of life of children and adults with brain tumors, and in 2009 expanded programs to include post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

USS Ronald Reagan Sailor sets world record

PRESS RELEASE

From USS Ronald Reagan
Public Affairs

LAS VEGAS — A Sailor from USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) broke the world record in the bench press Nov. 11 at the World Powerlifting Federation (WPF) Championships in Las Vegas.

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 3rd Class Eric Olmstead, a 22-year-old Michigan native and four-time national powerlifting champion, lifted 352.74 pounds, shattering the previous record for the 165-pound weight class of 341.72 pounds.

"My favorite lift is the bench press because it's the one I know I'm the strongest in," said Olmstead who weighs 162 pounds. Immediately after

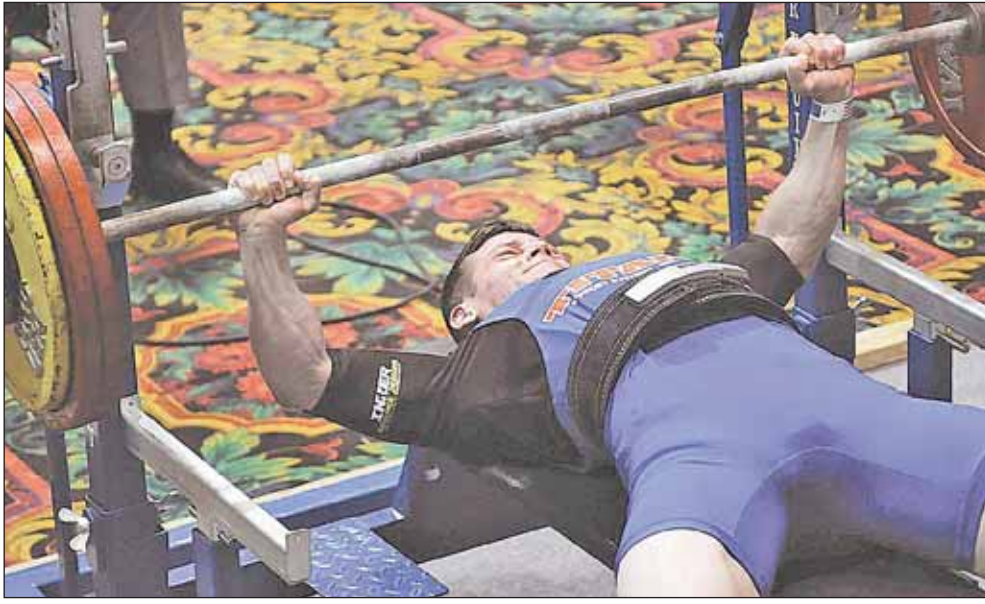


Photo courtesy of Erik Hohenthauer

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 3rd Class Eric Olmstead lifted 352.74 pounds, shattering the previous record for the 165-pound weight class of 341.72 pounds., during the World Powerlifting Federation Championships in Las Vegas, Nov. 11.

his initial record breaking lift of 347.23 pounds, he requested another attempt to beat his own record. "If I

set a record I might as well set it as high as I can so no one else beats it," said Olmstead.

In the overall competition, which includes the bench press, deadlift and squat, Olmstead lifted a

combined weight of 1,383.4 pounds, earning him second place and a silver medal in the international competition. He represented the U.S.A. against competitors from Ireland, Mexico and the United Kingdom.

Olmstead accomplished this remarkable feat just three short weeks after returning to San Diego from a five-month deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

"I trained harder than I ever have a couple weeks before," said Olmstead.

As an aviation boatswain's mate, Olmstead endured 16 or more hour workdays in maintenance support, providing upkeep to the arresting gears and catapults. His service and

contributions resulted in approximately 4,500 successful aircraft launches and recoveries.

Being out to sea, Olmstead had some restrictions on the capacity of his training. With no personal trainer, he relied on the support of his family and shipmates.

"I didn't have all of the equipment I needed and I couldn't do certain lifts," said Olmstead. "My buddies on the ship helped me out and spotted me. I still did well so I'm pretty proud."

He has won four national gold medals in his division and now wears a silver medal on the world level. He met his goals and set a world record. Olmstead is planning to come back next year for the gold.

Tomahawk test demonstrates time-critical use

PRESS RELEASE

From Naval Air Systems Command
Public Affairs

WASHINGTON — A U.S. Navy Tomahawk Block IV cruise missile was launched during an operational test, Nov. 5, which demonstrated the effectiveness of the missile's new anti-jam GPS system and successful use against time-critical targets.

The Tomahawk Block IV was launched from the USS Princeton (CG-59), a Ticonderoga-class Aegis cruiser underway in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Southern California. The missile flew a land attack mission into San Nicolas Island in support of a Special Operations team.

"This test proves that Tomahawk provides a key enabler for time-critical strike," said Tomahawk Program Manager Capt. Dave Davison. "As the only network-enabled, land attack weapon, Tomahawk can re-tar-

get, loiter, or provide last minute weapons coverage to deployed forces from on-station naval combatants."

The missile destroyed a time-critical target after receiving targeting information from a combined U.S./United Kingdom Special Operations Team on the island using the Precision Strike Suite - Special Operations Forces (PSS-SOF) and Joint Strike Planning and Execution Auto Router (JSPEAR) portable units. Live target updating was conducted from the field using these portable units and confirmation was provided by satellite and unmanned systems imagery.

The mission was initiated from JSPEAR and sent to the fleet commander and USS Princeton. Seconds after launch from the ship's vertical launch system, the Tomahawk missile transitioned to cruise flight.



Photo by MC1 Leah Stiles

A test missile, launched on Nov. 5, demonstrated the effectiveness of the missile's new anti-jam GPS system and successful use against time-critical targets.

The total flight time was short and the test was conducted to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Tomahawk's new eight channel anti-jam GPS receiver (AGR-4). The results of this test confirmed the ability of Tomahawk Block IV to be used in

time critical strike operations to meet the requirements of U.S. Special Forces.

The Tomahawk is ship and submarine launched, and was first employed operationally during Desert Storm. The enhanced capabilities of Tomahawk Block IV

increase fleet effectiveness, with network enabled communication, battle damage imaging, while at the same time significantly reducing acquisition and life cycle costs.

Tomahawk missiles are deployed throughout the world's oceans. Tomahawk operational test launches are conducted throughout the year from Navy surface ships and submarines. These tests are designed to maintain the operational readiness of the Atlantic and Pacific fleets, as well as test and prove upgrades and enhancements to the missile, platforms, or control software.

The Tomahawk program, PMA-280, is managed by the Program Executive Office, Unmanned Aviation & Strike Weapons at Patuxent River, Md. The missile is manufactured by Raytheon Missile Systems in Tucson, Ariz. The weapon control system aboard the combatants is integrated by the Navy.



Photo by Lt.j.g. Theresa Donnelly

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 1 Seabees assigned to Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines erect a wall for a school construction project. Seabees are working with local contractors and are renovating classrooms and a science building at the Lanao Agricultural College.

U.S. Navy Seabees, locals build school together

BY LT.J.G. THERESA DONNELLY

*Joint Special Operations Task Force
Philippines Public Affairs*

LANAO DEL SUR, Philippines — Service members from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 1, assigned to Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P), are in the final stages of building classrooms at the Lanao Agricultural College with the help of local contractors and school officials.

“It is a wonderful feeling we can assist the community and help build the school. It has been an honor to work with the local contractors and the school superintendent to make this project happen,” said Construction Electrician 1st Class Michael Kelley from New Castle, Pa., the project supervisor.

The JSOTF-P Seabees are working side-by-side with the community, as two local electrical engineers and two staff members are also working on the project. Additionally, the school donated building supplies.

Reconstruction began last June for the two-building project, which includes the college’s main 5,800 square-foot building and a 1,000 square-foot science building. The team is currently working on dividing

the main building into six classrooms and constructing a separate bathroom facility.

The project also includes a septic system, electrical power distribution, lighting, fans, and a generator.

“We are very happy our people are working together on this school with the U.S. forces. Our people will greatly benefit from this project,” said Jasmine B. Asum, high school instructor.

Based out of Gulfport, Miss., NMCB 1 Seabees arrived in August and relieved NMCB 40, to continue building the school.

Working 12-hour shifts, six days per week, crews are working nonstop to finish the project. Plans are in place to celebrate the opening of the buildings with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

“The crew here and local contractors working on this project have been absolutely phenomenal. They have such pride in their work and we constantly hear from the school officials what a great job they are doing,” said a U.S. Army Special Forces officer in charge for the Marawi area.

For more news from U.S. Pacific Command, visit www.navy.mil/local/pacom/.

Enduring tips for trying times: A positive response to the Fort Hood tragedy

BY BRYAN DAVIDSON

Ph.D., Director, Psychological Health and Team Chief, Traumatic Stress Response, Langley AFB

The economy is down. Unemployment is up. And now one of our military members has committed an atrocious act against fellow Americans. Events like the Fort Hood shootings may leave us feeling exposed and vulnerable. The grief and fear can add to an existing unease during trying times.

When we feel vulnerable, it is easy to assume there is little that we can do to make any difference. The truth, however, is more encouraging than that. Many of the choices that are best are also less obvious, so it requires some dedicated effort if we are going to pursue health.

Consider a few wise choices in response to tragic situations.

DO stay informed.

DON'T overload on media.

All too often, in a frantic attempt to gain a sense of control, we fool ourselves into thinking that as long as we are getting the next tidbit of fact or rumor, we can somehow be self-assured. Too much media, however, actually has a detrimental effect and only makes us more fearful and helpless. This was especially evident following the Sept. 11 events. Don't get sucked into spending hour after hour in front of the TV or glued to the Internet. Get the basic information and then take a break from it.

DO focus on loving the important people in your life.

DON'T dwell on hating the perpetrator.

Another mistake is to focus on hating the one who committed a crime. Sure, anger or rage can be a common and even warranted response to such terror, but do not let it consume you. Not only does it make you miserable, it detracts from the REAL and positive possibilities that exist right before you. For example, instead of railing against this appalling stranger, why not spend time telling friends and family just how much they mean to you and how you are so thankful they are a part of your life? This focuses your energy on a real action and can provide a place of peace amid the storm of stress.

DO make preparations.

DON'T be consumed with worry about what might happen.

When bad things happen to good people it is only natural, and at times healthy, to worry that something similar might happen to us. The healthy choice is to focus on what is within our control here and now. Define what it is you fear in specific terms, and then make an action plan of things you may do practically to prepare or to minimize the likelihood it will occur. This could even be something as simple as having a "go bag" for hurricane evacuation. Preparation takes time and resources, so



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback

Soldiers gather for a twilight vigil at the North Fort Hood training site in remembrance of comrades and loved ones who were killed or wounded in the shooting tragedy at Fort Hood, Texas

this may also prompt you to consider how you are currently spending your money. The vast majority of Americans fear tragedy, yet they have financial habits that deny any emergency could ever befall them. Plan for the bad, hope for the good, and anxiety will subside.

DO grieve.

DON'T push away the impact of this event.

Grieving is a sign of health,

not weakness. For some, this may be through time alone; for others it could be with a trusted friend. No two people grieve the same way. The important thing is to allow it to come in the manner it does and give it its due. There is no denying the horror of this event. Even if we didn't know anyone directly involved, it can remind us of other losses much closer to home. Be prepared to allow yourself an opportunity

to accept this loss and begin to heal.

DO take time to reflect.

DON'T get caught up with daily demands and let this go unnoticed.

Events such as this tend to rattle our trust in other people. But the demands of life often call us to focus only on the next task and not the bigger picture. This situation offers an opportunity to ask yourself, "What is important

in my life? What are my values, goals and aspirations? Do they make sense in light of all that has occurred?" The process can be a bit scary at first, but may lead to growth as we relinquish trivial pursuits and embrace a surer future and greater hope.

To help with this process, remember the resources available to help you:

- Military & Family Life Consultant (anonymous, confidential, and free) – 777-4172

- Military One Source Support (on-line, phone, and local support with 12 free confidential sessions) – www.militaryonesource.com or (877) 877-3647

- Free and anonymous on-line assessment - www.militarymentalhealth.org/Welcome.aspx

- Airmen and Family Readiness Center – 764-3990 Health and Wellness Center (numerous classes available) – 764-6321

- Mental Health Clinic (professional counseling on base) – 764-6840

- Chaplain Services (Spiritual support and counseling) – 764-7847

Editor's note: This article is courtesy of the Traumatic Stress Response Team at Langley AFB. We are comprised of individuals from the Airman and Family Readiness Center, the Chapel and the Mental Health Clinic.

Homeless dogs help soldiers recover at Walter Reed Army Medical Center

STORY AND PHOTO BY
FRED W. BAKER III
*Office of the Secretary of
Defense Public Affairs*

WASHINGTON — Army Capt. Lawrence Minnis met his pitbull pup, Ebony, through the Humane Society's Dog Tags program. The program allows soldiers recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center to help the shelter dogs learn to behave. It's a program in which everyone benefits, because the soldiers get out of the hospital and learn to care for and train dogs and the dogs learn better behavior, making them more likely to be adopted.

"They're really loving those relationships with the animals," said Diana Foley, behavior and training counselor with the Humane Society. "It gives them a way to get away from Walter Reed and interact with the animals."

The society now offers two classes weekly that teach soldiers about dog behavior.



Army Capt. Lawrence Minnis sits with his two adopted pit bulls at the Washington Humane Society's Behavior and Learning Center, Nov. 12. Minnis met the dogs through the humane society's Dog Tags program.

havior and training. The mix of hands-on and classroom training offers the troops enough expertise that they can use the skills as a launching pad for a career.

"We want the program to be educational so that if there are service members in the program that want to potentially pursue this as a career, ... they're getting as much information as possible and as much hands-on time as possible with the dogs," Foley said.

The six-month program is split into three levels, ranging from beginner to advanced. In the beginner class, troops learn basic animal body language and obedience commands such as "sit" and "stay." In the advanced classes, troops learn to evaluate the dogs' temperament and how to begin working with aggression issues and separation anxiety.

The skills the dogs learn in the classes translate to better placement opportunities, Foley said. The program has far expanded the amount of training the shelter's dogs received previously.

"This is another

way our dogs are outside of their kennels being talked to and touched and interacting with people," she said. "That's extremely beneficial to reduce the stress levels of the animals in our kennels, and at the same time, it makes the animals far more successful in their new homes if they come into it with some basic obedience training."

But for all of the good it is for the dogs, it is equally beneficial for the recovering troops, Foley said.

"It's really just an outlet to be social with people and social with the animals and have time away from the hospital," she said.

Foley described one soldier who came to the class who was having difficulty interacting with people. He didn't make eye contact and kept to himself. Working with the dogs built his confidence and helped to bridge his shyness with the staff.

"It really helped him develop social relationships with people," Foley said. "He went from being a very, very shy person when he first entered. [Now] he's totally not that same shy person that he came into the program

being." Some of the dogs are at the shelter for a few months, and many of the soldiers develop close relationships with them. Others devel-

op friendships with the staff. Some soldiers remain on as volunteers at the shelter long after the classes end, Foley said. Minnis continues to work with the shelter.

After a viral infection in his brain stem left him temporarily unable to walk and barely able to talk, the Army officer found himself recovering at Walter Reed. He was deployed to Iraq at the start of a promising Army career when he got sick. At Walter Reed, he found out he couldn't deploy again.

In May 2008, his occupational therapist recommended him to the Dog Tags program. Minnis said he had wanted to get a dog for a pet anyway, so he thought it would be a good opportunity to learn a few skills. The shelter had several of his favorite breed on hand, and the dogs were good companions and good for his physical therapy.

"It helped me while I was still trying to walk, being active, having to walk around with the dog. [During training], I'm not focused on me having balance issues or [not] being able to speak. I'm concentrating on what I need to do to train the dog," Minnis said.

But Minnis' interests soon expanded, and often he would visit the shelter just to sit and play with the dogs. He said it was his quiet time.

"You don't have anybody asking you what's going on. You don't feel a threat. It's a just a dog to bond with and have fun with," he said.

As it looked more like he would be medically retired, Minnis said the training took on a different perspective. He was a business major in college, and always wanted to be an entrepreneur. He figured a dog training business would be easy to start and not require a lot of money or overhead.

"I figured it's a perfect op-



Kevin Simpson, with the Washington Humane Society's Behavior and Learning Center, teaches a class of soldiers and staff about dog training, Nov. 12.



Army Staff Sgt. Keith Maul, left, plays with Ebony, a pit bull adopted by Army Capt. Lawrence Minnis from the Washington Humane Society's Behavior and Learning Center, Nov. 12.

portunity," he said. "I get to learn how to train [and] have a business I can work on, or at least a side business."

Minnis eventually adopted Ebony, one of his favorite dogs. The two now regularly attend the shelter classes, helping to train others on animal behavior. Minnis also takes Ebony to the Metropolitan Police Department when he speaks to cadets going through training there, noting that he hopes to cast a more positive light on a breed that has captured a lot of negative attention.

He teaches the cadets to read a dog's body language so they can tell when there is a real threat.

"I would take her with me ... so they can get used to seeing a pit bull that's not what they see on TV," Minnis said. "Often, officers don't really know if the dog is friendly, scared or ready to attack."

In fact, Ebony is one of the friendliest dogs the cadets will meet, he said - friendly enough that he felt comfortable bringing her home to his two small boys.

"Anywhere you go, there are going to be dogs that need training and soldiers who are going through some type of therapy that will benefit from it," he said. "I want to make sure that's going to be able to expand and reach out to a lot more soldiers. It's a great program."

CHILD: Defense Department's 2009 Child Development Conference, Nov. 17

Continued from page A1

ple are warm. They welcome you. They open arms to you," he said. "And the kids loved their providers. That's the experience that I have received with three of my children. Every one of them, at some point, has used the child care facility."

Military child development centers today are staffed with permanent, well-trained employees, and offer care for children 6 weeks to 12 years old that fits most parents' schedules at more than 300 locations. In fact, Thomas said, 97 percent of the more than 300 military child development centers serving more than 200,000 children are accredited through the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Nancy Duff Campbell, co-president of the National Women's Law Center, lauded the military's approach to improving its system. The Military Child Care Act was particularly important, she said, because it applied a systemic approach to improving the quality, affordability, and availability of child care for all service members, regardless of rank or income.

"The military child care system has been faithful in adhering to these goals in operations and furthering them in a systemic way," she said.

By contrast, she said, the private-sector child care industry is a patchwork of legislative initiatives resulting in an incomprehensive approach to addressing the challenges of providing affordable child care to the civilian population.



Photo by Samantha Quigley

Nancy Duff Campbell, co-president of the National Women's Law Center delivers one of two keynote addresses during the Defense Department's 2009 Child Development Conference in Washington on Nov. 17.

While the issue of child development for military children centers on the programs offered by on-post facilities, organizations such as Sesame Workshop take it a step further.

"We are television, but like Cookie [Monster] says, cookies are a sometimes food," said Melvin Ming, Sesame Workshop's chief operating officer, the conference's second keynote speaker.

"Television is not designed to be the baby-sitter all the time," he said. "[However], we want to harness the power of the media ... to encourage children to learn so that they can reach their highest potential. So the opportunity to work with the military ... on TLC, the Talk, Listen, Connect project, has just been wonderful."

Ming didn't have much chance to talk about the project, a series of DVDs aimed at helping military children cope with the challenges of military life, before his

"boss," Elmo, showed up and stole the show.

Elmo and his best friend, Rosita, explained TLC to the more than 500 laughing conferees, as only the perpetually 3-and-a-half-year-old Muppet can.

"Military kids have so much to deal with," Elmo said.

"Yeah, but you know what can help a little? Talk, Listen, Connect," Rosita replied. "Talk, Listen, Connect is the way grown-ups can help military kids when they're going through hard times."

"Right!" Elmo responded. "You talk to the kids, tell them what's going on."

"And listen to what they have to say, and what they might be worried about," Rosita added. "And don't forget, keep connected."

The conference, which includes a number of sessions to give military child care providers more tools with which to do their jobs, will continue tomorrow.

NEXCOM takes theft at NEXs seriously

BY KRISTINE M. STURKIE
Navy Exchange Service Command Public Affairs

VIRGINIA BEACH — The Navy Exchange Service Command's (NEXCOM) Loss Prevention/Safety Department takes protecting Sailors' dollars and preventing theft seriously.

Theft is a big problem for all retailers, costing \$36.3 billion last year, according to a joint study recently released by the National Retail Federation and the University of Florida.

NEXCOM's aggressive efforts to deter and catch theft at NEXs has paid off. Over the past five years, NEXCOM has seen inventory shrink or loss of goods remain below one percent to sales. This is a good thing considering the national average is at approximately 1.50 percent to sales.

"When merchandise gets stolen from the NEX, it hurts not only our customers and command, it hurts the Navy as a whole," said Tom Ruane, NEXCOM's Loss

Prevention/Safety, Investigations/Systems program manager. "Seventy percent of NEX profits are given to Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) to support quality of life programs. In 2008, that contribution totaled over \$45 million. When theft and loss of merchandise occur at the NEX, profits decline and so do our contributions to MWR."

Shoplifting losses vary by store type, but can account for about one-third of the total inventory shrinkage.

"The key to preventing theft in our locations begins with providing exceptional customer service in our stores and continuously promoting our loss prevention awareness programs to our associates," said Ruane. "Our associates have the ability to report internal or external theft directly to their supervisor, loss prevention department or through a confidential Alertline, a third-party anonymous tip phone line."

In addition to its awareness programs, NEXCOM Loss Prevention/Safety uses electronic article surveillance (EAS) systems for electronic and high value merchandise as well as extensive closed circuit TV (CCTV) surveillance systems at all NEXs worldwide.

"Our CCTV systems, coupled with digital video recorders, give us the ability to see everything within our stores and identify incidents of theft," said Ruane. "Our EAS systems have been very successful in preventing unpaid merchandise from leaving our stores and, at the same time, allowing our customers to see and handle merchandise they are interested in purchasing."

NEXCOM continues to be vigilant in the pursuit of preventing theft and reducing inventory shrinkage in all of its locations throughout the world. These efforts allow NEXCOM to give back to Sailors and maximize its MWR contributions.

CHOSIN: USS Chosin assumed role as flagship for the CTF 151, Nov. 6

Continued from page A1

maintain communications related to counter piracy."

Reflecting the capabilities Smith described, Chosin recently sighted a suspicious group of dhows, and within 10 minutes coordinated and intercepted with ITS Lebeccio (F 572), an Italian frigate. The two ships operated in close quarters and coordinated all operations to ensure the safety of the boarding team.

"There is an extraordinary level of communication

and cooperation among all of the nations conducting counterpiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden," said Rear Adm. Scott Sanders, commander, CTF 151. "Because of our close cooperation with the European Union (EU), NATO and independent navies, we've been able to prevent several suspected pirate attacks."

The presence of coalition Navy vessels in the region demonstrates a commitment to regional security and stability. To continue to counter and

deter piracy successfully, coalition efforts must be complimented by proactive measures by commercial shippers, regional governments and the international community.

CTF 151 was established in early January and has a mandate to deter and disrupt piracy in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. CTF 151 currently includes naval forces from the United States, Spain, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Australia and Turkey.

FRONT & CENTER

SECTION B

FLAGSHIPNEWS.COM

November 26, 2009

Maersk Alabama captain thanks Bainbridge crew



Photo by MC2 Mandy Hunsucker

Capt. Richard Phillips gave out 16 coins thanking the Sailors that helped save his life.

BY MC3 LAUREN G. RANDALL
Navy Public Affairs
Support Element - East

NORFOLK — Former M/V Maersk Alabama Capt. Richard Phillips thanked the captain and crew of the guided-missile destroyer USS Bainbridge (DDG 96) for his rescue from Somali pirates in April during a ceremony held on the fantail aboard the Bainbridge Thursday, Nov. 19.

Phillips addressed Cmdr. Frank X. Castellano, commanding officer

of the Bainbridge and the ship's crew for their efforts contributing to his rescue.

"I could see it was a crew who was working united and together as a team to save myself for no other reason than it was your duty, your job, your role," said Phillips. "And I want to thank you for that."

Phillips was held hostage by the pirates on a 25-foot lifeboat for four days 240 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia after he

traded himself to save his crew aboard the Maersk Alabama.



Photo by MC3 David Danals

Former M/V Maersk Alabama Capt. Richard Phillips and Cmdr. Frank X. Castellano, commanding officer of the guided-missile destroyer USS Bainbridge (DDG 96) answer questions after a ceremony publicly thanking the Bainbridge for his dramatic rescue at sea. Capt. Phillips' visit corresponds with the Nov. 21 opening at Nauticus of the National Geographic exhibit, "Real Pirates," and the adjunct exhibit created by Nauticus and the Hampton Roads Naval Museum entitled, "Piracy Today: Terror on the High Seas."

On April 12, U.S. Navy SEALs positioned on the fantail of the Bainbridge

shot and killed three of the pirates holding Phillips hostage. Phillips was

then rescued by Bainbridge Sailors and brought home.

"You are a dedicated team, the true heroes in the story involving me," said

Phillips.

During the ceremony onboard the ship, Phillips presented 16 of the Sailors who took a direct role in his rescue with a coin com-

memorating their efforts.

The coin was minted in Norfolk, Va., and has images of the Maersk Alabama along

See PHILLIPS, B7



Photo by MC2 Rafael Figueroa Medina

An EA-6B Prowler of the "Patriots" of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 140 prepares to recover on the flight deck of aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower. Capt. Dee Mewbourne, Commanding Officer of IKE was in the aircraft and achieved the feat of 1000 arrested carrier landings.

Rare aviation feat accomplished twice on USS Dwight D. Eisenhower

BY MC1 AMY KIRK
USS Dwight D. Eisenhower
Public Affairs

USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER — The commanding officer of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) and the executive officer of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 143 became members of an elite club after successfully completing their 1,000th carrier arrested landing, or "trap", Nov. 18.

Capt. Dee L. Mewbourne and Cmdr. Joe W. Barnes both completed their historic landings within minutes of each other aboard Eisenhower while transit-

ing the Atlantic Ocean during the ship's Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX).

Both men said the credit for this extraordinary achievement really goes to the men and women who have worked behind the scenes throughout the years.

"The focus should be on those who have committed their lives in keeping us safe. I am extremely grateful," said Mewbourne. "We need to recognize how much goes on behind the scenes. I am humbled by their cumulative effort."

Barnes, who made his first trap aboard USS Saratoga (CV 60) in 1991, echoed the same sentiment

saying he was also very humbled by the experience and wanted to thank all the Sailors and Marines who have helped keep him flying safely over the years.

"I am humbled by all the work that goes into every evolution," said Barnes. "Putting all that teamwork to launch that jet — almost 5,000 people, that is amazing teamwork."

The ability to land a 50,000-pound aircraft traveling more than 120 knots on a small moving runway one time is an incredible feat; however, performing that task 1,000 times is something to

See TRAP, B7

Equi-Kids open house offers preview of Wings for Warriors Pilot Program

BY REBECCA PERRON
Military Newspapers of Virginia

Equi-Kids Therapeutic Riding Program, a non-profit organization that offers riding instruction to young people who have mental, physical, emotional or learning disabilities, will held an open house Nov. 14 offering information about their Wings for Warriors Veteran and Family Pilot Program.

The program offers therapeutic horseback riding for wounded service members; group interaction



Photo by Harry Gerwien, Military Newspapers of Virginia

Equi-kids now offers a program specifically geared towards wounded service members.

See WINGS, B7

Operation Jingle

NMCRS brings some holiday relief for single Sailors, their families

BY MC1 (AW) TIM COMERFORD
Staff Writer

NORFOLK — The program that helps Service members find a place for their families and themselves to stay in Hampton Roads during the holidays now has been taken over by the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS).

Operation Jingle gives Sailors' families hotel rooms for \$10 a night for Dec. 23-26. The money is then donated to the NMCRS. The program is aimed at Sailors and Marines who don't have the opportunity to go home.

"Maybe a Sailor can't leave the area because they are on duty and have to stay here in the region. If they live on the ship or in barracks they have no place to host them," said Kathy Nelson, director, NMCRS, Norfolk. "Through the generosity of the hotel and motel association who have donated rooms, Sailors have the opportunity to have family members come and spend the holidays with them. They recognized the service the Sailors and Marines have given and said 'Hey we'd like to help out.'"

"This is a program that has been going on for a long time in Navy Region Mid-Atlantic," Nelson said. This will be the first year the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society will be running the program in its entirety.

"This is the first time I have been involved with the rooms," said Loretta Russell, who is managing the program for NMCRS. "I usually write the receipt when the money is brought to us from (Commander Navy Region Mid-Atlantic). It is worth it for us to show service members that we are out there to help."

"It's a great way for Sailors to benefit," Nelson agreed.

The NMCRS wants this to be a happy holiday for all involved.

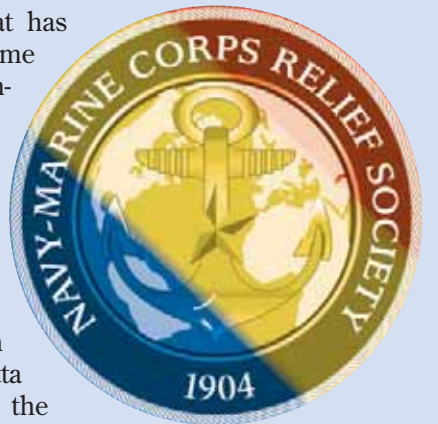
"We have been working with people to make it happen," Russell said. "There was a ship that won't be back until the 23rd of December. I told them to E-mail me the forms and bring me the money when you get here, we don't want sailors to miss out on the opportunity. They can have their families waiting for them when they get here."

"This program is open up to service members not only Sailors, with fort story and little creek combining, we may get some Army personnel," Russell said.

"We are more and more become a joint based organization, with Joint Expeditionary Base (JEB) Little Creek-Fort Story, we have expanded our view point," Nelson said. "If you are soldier stationed at JEB Little Creek, living in the barracks, if we received an application we would not refuse it."

"Everybody wins. Sailors win because they can spend time with their families, Hotels win because they have an opportunity to give back to the community and we win because we get donations that we can turn around and use to help Sailors and their families in need," Nelson said.

Deadline for submissions is December 14. To find out more about Operation Jingle service members can contact Loretta Russell at 322-1175 or E-mail at Loretta.russell@nmcrs.org. Service members can also download the lodging request form at <http://bit.ly/5CcNH4>.



SPOUSE SPEAK!

Thanksgiving traditions

BY SUE HOPPIN

Deputy Director for Spouse Outreach, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

Whenever I get together with other military spouses around November and start chatting about our holiday prep and menus, we invariably start reminiscing about all the strange Thanksgivings we have had overseas. Don't get me wrong, I loved both of our assignments overseas, but holy cow, how convenient is it to still be able to find all your Thanksgiving necessities on the commissary shelves just a couple days before the big holiday?!?! Too great! This might seem like an over the top reaction for some of you, but have you ever tried to find a ginormous whole turkey outside the United States? Rest assured that I believe we're alone in our fascination with poultry that comes in sizes as large as some Japanese refrigerators!

I remember when we were in Germany; our landlords had never seen an entire turkey roasted before. Looking through our scrapbooks, they noticed our holiday pictures and were curious about the whole notion of Thanksgiving. It seemed only right to invite them to join us at our table and share our traditions with them.

Anyone who's been stationed overseas will appreciate the special care that has to be taken in preparing a basic holiday meal in a foreign country. The commissary ensures that we have all the necessities: pumpkin pie fixings, all the components for chestnut stuffing, a monstrously large turkey and all the accoutrements that go along with it. However, as we quickly learned, just because you have a turkey and an oven, that doesn't necessarily mean you'll be roasting that turkey in that oven!



We lived on the economy in Germany and didn't have the luxury of American appliances. Not being much of a baker, I never gave

it much thought - until the holidays rolled around and it became time to prepare those huge family meals. It was with much surprise that we learned many of our American cooking tools were incompatible with our German appliances, most markedly...our roasting pan meant to snugly accommodate a large Thanksgiving turkey or Christmas rib roast. Our compact European oven was having nothing to do with it! We had to go out and buy a much smaller disposable pan that would fit in the oven; that required downsizing our turkey - really, at this point, it was more of a very large chicken. Not quite the impact we were hoping for (I was really quite excited about seeing our German friends' expressions when we carted that 20 lb turkey to the table!!!), but you adjust.

The rest of the meal stayed the same: cranberry sauce (jellied, sliced and with ridges, thank you very much), chestnut stuffing (a throwback to my childhood), Stove Top (because our son still likes it best), homemade giblet gravy, mashed potatoes, peas, freshly baked rolls, pumpkin and pecan pies with lots of freshly whipped cream. As we began to bring the food to the table, our friends became somewhat overwhelmed. Their eyes got larger and larger until they really were the size of saucers!

Once they got over the largesse, we sat down and took turns telling everyone what we were thankful for. Not until then did they understand the significance of Thanksgiving for us. They began to realize it had nothing to do with: the fancy linens, china, crystal or the massive amounts of food and everything to do with: friends, family and blessings.

I have always appreciated Thanksgiving the most of all the holidays because it crosses over cultural and religious lines; this is a day when all Americans take a pause from their daily lives, gather around friends and



Annual USO Holiday Party

Set for Dec. 5 at Little Creek

The United Service Organization of Hampton Roads (USOHR) will host their annual Holiday Party on Dec. 5 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Rockwell Hall Gym on Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek. The celebration will feature a first class holiday show, plenty of free food, give away items and a visit from Santa.

Commands can use this as their Dependent Children's Holiday Party or tape group video messages from families of deployed units from 2 to 4 p.m. Rooms are available in half hour increments. To book a room for a command party or to sign up for the command tapings, please e-mail Ruth Hendricks at ruth@usohr.org.

New book donations will be accepted for the United through Reading program. All active duty military families are invited and encouraged to attend.

For more information about United Service Organization of Hampton Roads (USOHR), visit www.usohr.org.

family and give thanks for all the blessings in their lives.

A few years ago, we started a new tradition in our family. We have a book that we bring out every Thanksgiving. Every year, everyone in attendance takes turns writing what they're thankful for. Every year, I find people flipping back to earlier pages to remember past Thanksgivings. It's kind of neat. However, if you flip through the book, you'll find that my husband's handwriting is missing from many of the pages documenting the annual celebration. That'll be the case again this year as our family finds ourselves celebrating Thanksgiving on opposite sides of the world; an experience that will be shared by so many of our other military friends and their families. One of my Twitter friends whose husband is coming home just in time for the holidays remarked that she often wonders if Americans understand what a rare treat it is these days for our military families to spend the holidays together.

As we do every year, when our family gathers around the table, we will end our thanks with a remembrance for the troops overseas. While they are always on our minds and in our hearts, it is especially around the holidays that we pray for the safety of our troops,

their families and for a safe and speedy return.

Sue Hoppin has been a military spouse since 1992 and has accompanied her service member spouse on assignments to countries all over the world, including Japan and Germany as well as numerous installations stateside. She has held numerous high profile volunteer positions, was named to the Who's Who of Military Spouses in 2007 and 2008 and is the co-Author of "A Families Guide to the Military (for Dummies)" which was released in October 2008. Sue was hired by MOAA in April 2005 to spearhead outreach efforts to military spouses. Sue advises the staff directors, the President and the Board of Directors on issues affecting spouses and services. She identifies the needs of military spouses and works daily with other MOAA staff departments to coordinate the Association's overall military spouse initiatives. Sue provides advice and assistance to MOAA members, their dependents and survivors concerning benefits and entitlements. She also authors a blog for military spouses that can be found at: <http://moaablogs.org/spouse/>. Portions of this article first appeared in the MOAASpouse Blog. For more information about MOAA, check out the Association's Web site at www.moaa.org.

Family FOCUS

Help children celebrate, survive the holidays when a parent is deployed

As the weather is beginning to get colder and Thanksgiving is right around the corner, thoughts are turning toward the upcoming holiday season. Soon it will be almost impossible not to notice all of the holiday hustle and bustle. But for many military children, this joyous time of year may mean celebrating with mom or dad deployed.

Many of these children may understand that holiday deployments are part of military life. However, those with a deployed parent are particularly susceptible to feelings of sadness during the holidays. The constant reminder that someone they love is absent can often be upsetting. But with some planning, the adults can make sure this year is just as full of warmth, cheer and treasured memories as any other holiday season.

Continue family traditions and start new ones: The continuity and predictability of traditions are comforting to adults and children, and they may be the biggest part of helping kids get through the season. This will help them realize that life continues even when things are different because of a deployed parent. It is important to determine which holiday traditions you cannot do without and which ones may be too time consuming, which can be simplified or which can be skipped altogether without interrupting expectations. If a tradition becomes overwhelming, skip it and do not feel guilty. Children won't enjoy the celebration if the parent is stressed out over it. Do not forget to include children in the discussion even if they are not old enough to help in making the decisions.

And there is nothing wrong with starting new traditions. Mix things up a little bit - spend the holidays in a different location, assemble a gingerbread house kit, or bake

a holiday dessert and take it to a homeless shelter. This may be enough to keep the focus on the positive elements of the season. Again, kids should be involved in these decisions. And who knows, these new traditions may become permanent in future seasons and something the deployed parent can participate in next year.

Celebrate with the deployed person: Include the deployed family member in the family celebration even if they are thousands of miles away. Allow the children as much contact with the absent parent as is feasible. Write letters, send e-mail and instant messages, video chat or call. Kids need some way to share what's going on in their life, and this contact with a child is as important for the at-home parent as well as the deployed one.

Send a care package to your deployed service member with special treats or ask the deployed person to send home a homemade ornament or decoration. Take pictures while decorating and celebrating and help the children assemble a scrapbook to send complete with photos, drawings and handmade cards. And keep it simple. Do not be surprised if it is difficult for the deployed parent to look at photos or watch video of the holiday celebrations back home. Being away from home is painful for them as well, and they will look at them when they are ready.

Document some events: Even when our deployed family member does not get to be there to see everything, they certainly wish they could be. Get out the video recorder, camera, and journal and get the kids involved. This will shift the kids' focus, allowing them to enjoy the holidays from a different perspective and have plenty of fun. The activities that are photographed and videotaped can be as simple as singing songs by the fire

or decorating the tree. Everyone will appreciate that the event was recorded and will be a preserved memory for the future.

Remember what the holidays are about: This time of year is about caring, love and peace, regardless of which holidays are celebrated. Therefore the focus should be on the things that you are thankful for. One of the best gifts that you can give your children is to teach them to be selfless and to appreciate the joy in their lives despite any difficulties.

Take care of yourself: It is important for children to have a safe, predictable and happy home. You will not be able to provide this if you do not take care of yourself. You can be most helpful to your kids when you recognize and attend to your own needs as well as theirs, including health concerns.

Set aside time for yourself so you have time to shop, mail packages and decorate. Spend time with friends doing something fun or relaxing. Set limits on what others ask of you, and make sure you have a support system in place through friends and family, especially for overwhelming events.

Don't be alone: Leaving town to visit family or hosting family from out of town here may be the ideal way to celebrate while a loved one is deployed, as the presence of family can be comforting. For those who can not do this, friends, neighbors or even acquaintances in your extended "military" family can fill in. Regardless of who is nearby, asking for support is a good thing. And if people ask how they can help, be ready with an answer. They often want to help but don't know how; so it's up to you to tell them what you need. Swap babysitting time with another solo parent so you can shop by yourself, or share a holiday potluck dinner. And don't worry about the house being immaculately clean - your guests will understand your tremendous undertaking.

Talk: Talk to children about the parent who is deployed and the holiday in terms they can understand. Preschool aged children only need basic information. As a child gets older and understands more, you can talk about feelings and the challenges of being apart. You may also consider telling your child's teacher about your spouse's deployment. It may help explain changes in behavior or per-

formance at school.

Let kids express their thoughts, feelings and fears. Encourage them to ask questions. Let them know you want to hear what is on their mind. Often, honest conversation can lift spirits. If you are stressed and angry, they might think it is their fault - unless you tell them it is not. If the kids know you are sad, too - but still hopeful and happy - they will feel much better. Be generous with hugs and cuddles time too. Your children need hugs, and so do you.

And be honest about the deployment. Be clear about which holidays you will be spending without mom or dad. Don't promise things such as "this is dad's last deployment" or that "mom will be home in time for the holidays" if there is a chance it won't happen.

A family night where everyone shares memories and feelings would be a great way to begin celebrating the holidays. Look at pictures of past holidays or pass a journal around to share memories to be sent to the deployed person.

Don't forget to have fun: Schedule plenty of fun activities and make sure to laugh to ease the tension. Just because your loved one is deployed doesn't mean that you have to completely cancel all festivities and wait until they return to celebrate. But do celebrate when they return too. Have fun now, and make sure your kids know you are planning another celebration when mom or dad returns - even if you have to make due with a ficus tree in place of a Christmas tree in July.

Spread the cheer: Reach out and help someone else - it can really change a person's perspective, including a child's. Whether you are helping a new military family, donating toys, visiting a nursing home, or simply vowing to genuinely wish everyone you see a happy holiday season, this focus on helping others is good for you and is a great role model for your kids.

Remember that deployments are not forever. It may be hard, but it is not permanent. Sometimes it feels like we just have to keep smiling and forging ahead or the holidays will be ruined, and it will be our fault. There are ways to survive the holiday season, in spite of the stresses of deployment. Try out a few things to see what works for you and your family.

South Hampton Roads gains momentum as CFC finishes week nine

COMPILED BY MC1 (AW)
TIM COMERFORD
Staff writer

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) has passed its midpoint and it looks to be an even better year than last for the charities.

"I highly encourage all people to participate," said Capt. George Womack, Local Federal Coordinating Committee Representative for south Hampton Roads. "This is an event where no matter what your itch; you can find a charity to scratch it, whether it its people or animals or places. This is a great opportunity to give consistently to help others."

Commander Navy Region Mid Atlantic's CFC representative couldn't agree more.

"The CFC charities can hit close to home," said Chief Aviation Ordnanceman Roy Castetter. "Just about all of us know someone that is affected by cancer or something that needs help. With the CFC you can find a charity that will support what you want to help."

The CFC today is known to be the most inclusive workplace giving campaign in the world with the number of participating charities estimated at over 20,000 nonprofit organizations worldwide. The charities supported through the CFC range from nascent community groups to large, well-known charities.

Partnerships with nonprofit organizations are a core part of the CFC structure. In each of the 320 CFC areas throughout the country, local and national nonprofit organizations collaborate closely with committees of volunteer Federal employees to design marketing strategies for the campaign and to process the receipt and

distribution of Federal employee contributions to the charities they choose.

CFC also directly involves participating nonprofit organization leaders in the design of new policies and programs that are shaping the future of the Combined Federal Campaign. These partnerships are promoting greater direct giving from Federal employees to local and national non-profits while helping nonprofit organizations use these contributions to leverage financial resources from other sources.

CFC campaigns are delineated geographically along county lines. While the structure of the campaign and parameters of responsibility established in the early 1980s remains essentially the same, an emerging trend is for greater collaboration among campaigns through the merging of local campaign operations and other arrangements. Each campaign is managed by a volunteer group



of Federal employees who work with experienced nonprofit executives in their communities to generate contributions and distribute them to eligible charities. This partnership provides an opportunity for Federal workers to become involved in their communities and adds great value to the Combined Federal Campaign for both Federal employees and the participating nonprofit organizations.

The increase in the number of participating charities over the past decade has been great. The number of

Combined Federal Campaign contributions world-wide

2008 \$275.1 million

2007 \$273.1 million

2006 \$271.6 million

2005 \$268.5 million

2004 \$256.2 million



participating national Federations increased from three to 27 and the number of national and international charities has grown to more than 1,600. Many federations also operate a network of local affiliated federations which participate in the CFC locally.

Today, the vast majority (75 percent) of the charities that participate in the campaign as national organizations do so as members of national Federations.

While it is estimated that the total number of CFC participating charities in the country exceeded 20,000 in 2004, national organizations and Federations alone received more than 45 percent of the \$256 million recorded in campaign contributions in 2004.

Contributions have also increased steadily. Despite dramatic downsizing in the Federal workforce during the 1990s, the amount received in donor contributions rose steadily - with half of the nearly \$5 billion in contributions raised since results were record-

ed in 1964 received in the last 10 years since 1990. This upward trend in giving continues strong. In 2001 alone following the September 11 terrorist attacks, Federal donor's contributions rose by 8 percent more than in the year 2000 for a total of \$241 million, the largest increase in 12 years. By 2004, contributions increased to \$256 million.

According to Ann Painter, director of the Combined Federal Campaign for South Hampton Roads, her area,

which includes Portsmouth, Norfolk and Virginia Beach, has raised \$1.79 million.

New opportunities are lending their expertise in Web-based philanthropy to bring new efficiencies to giving in the Federal workplace through the use of automated giving.

The proliferation of this technology campaign-wide presents a rare strategic occasion for the CFC to become an even more efficient campaign in the future. The CFC Program is

endeavoring to bring these advances to donors as well.

For example, non-profits are lending their expertise in Web-based philanthropy to bring new efficiencies to giving in the Federal workplace through the use of automated giving.

Without doubt, the ability to apply web-based technology while preserving donor trust, in involvement and ownership represent among the greatest challenges facing the CFC as it moves into the 21st Century.

Prepare for takeoff



Photo by MC3 Chad R. Erdmann

An F/A-18 Hornet from the 'Rampagers' of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 83 prepares to catapult from the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69). The Eisenhower is conducting a three-week Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX) in preparation for an upcoming 2010 deployment. COMPTUEX is a joint, combined exercise conducted off the east coast from Virginia to Florida.

Eisenhower increases awareness with SAVI program

BY MC2 (AW/SW) GINA K. WOLLMAN

Navy Public Affairs
Support Element, East

USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER — USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) emphasizes the importance of the Navy's Sexual Assault Victim Intervention (SAVI) program during the ship's indoctrination to ensure all Sailors understand that sexual abuse and assault are not tolerated.

The SAVI program also ensures victims of sexual assault have someone who can help them through the healing process.

The SAVI program is a comprehensive, standardized and victim-sensitive system to prevent and respond to sexual assaults Navywide. Eisenhower's program is comprised of a group of advocates who are ready to assist victims of a sexual assault from the moment they seek help to the final stages of the SAVI process.

Air Traffic Controlman 1st



Photo by MC2 Kevin S. O'Brien

Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) the Honorable Ray Mabus created the Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response and held the Navy Sexual Assault Advisory Council meeting at the Pentagon, Oct. 27.

Class Shannon Gibson, an Eisenhower SAVI volunteer advocate, said that though the volunteers are not trained counselors or professionals, SAVI can help victims by finding the appropriate people to talk to and offering them counseling services, emotional support and medical attention.

"We are a 'point person' for a

victim," she said. "We are a voice for them when they feel like they do not have one."

Gibson explained that there is some important information about the program's reporting procedures Sailors around the fleet should know.

"We have two different types of reporting," said Gibson. "Re-

stricted reporting is when a victim wants to keep total privacy and seek medical or psychological care, but they do not want to alert anyone else. We also have unrestricted reporting. This enables NCIS and the chain of command to get involved, pursue the alleged offender and start an investigation."

No matter what type of reporting procedure, the privacy of the victim is a priority, said Gibson.

"We highly suggest that a victim get in contact with an advocate very early," said Gibson, who explained that many sexual abuse victims wait too long to find help, and this may limit reporting options.

Eisenhower's chain of command stands firmly behind the mission of the SAVI program, said Gibson.

The Navy has worked to clarify the myths and realities of sexual assault, explained Katherine Robertson, deputy manager

for Fleet and Family Support Program with Commander, Navy Installations Command, testifying in March before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel on the subject, "Sexual Assault in the Military."

Robertson further explained that the Navy is rolling out a comprehensive, phased prevention strategy with specific goals to reduce sexual assaults and increase Sailor propensity to report these crimes.

In her testimony, Robertson described the growth of and commitment to the Navy's SAVI program as breathtaking. The Navy is the first service to have a dedicated program for sexual assault response, and the SAVI curriculum has since been adopted by other branches.

For more news from USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), visit www.navy.mil/local/cvn69/.

Sailor shores the ship



Photo by MC3 Matthew D. Williams

A Sailor practices shoring to reinforce a bulkhead that has sustained simulated damage during a general quarters drill aboard the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75).

Returning Warrior Workshop welcomes Marines, families

BY CPL. SYDNEY

PURSCHWITZ

Defense Media Activity
- Anacostia

ARLINGTON, Va.

— Marine Corps Reservists, Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) Marines and their families gathered in Arlington, Va. Nov. 13 - 15 for a Returning Warrior Workshop (RWW).

The weekend workshop is designed for service members and their spouses to assist families in the reintegration and reunification process.

Most Reserve and IRR Marines deploy and return as individual augmentees. They are back home within hours of their return to the U.S., and many are away from a base and the services provided post-deployment to help transition into daily life.

This is difficult for many and has caused relationship problems, anger problems and increased use of alcohol or other substances. The Marine Corp recognizes this is normal due to the exposure to war

and has created these workshops to assist the Marine and their families with reconnecting.

"The difficulties, particularly with our Reservists warriors, are they've gone alone and they've come back alone and then they transition alone," said retired Cmdr. Darlene Bennett Greene, RWW founder and program development team commanding officer. "Without a unit around you and without people who understand you back in your civilian job; and your family who may not understand anything that you've gone through, can be a challenge. The Reservists need to be able to talk to people that understand what they've been through; to understand that they are very similar in their common experiences."

Marines and families attended all hands presentations, breakout sessions and discussion groups.

Topics such as "Warrior Transition", "Telling Your Story" and "Combat Operational

Stress" were facilitated by the RWW founder, chaplains and other personnel that are apart of the workshop. Individual counseling was available at all times for the attendees.

"Every person, regardless of their circumstance in life and regardless of the challenges that they face, has an opportunity to grow even during difficult times," said Capt. Terry Pletkovich, development team chaplain, who taught classes on returning and transformational growth. "And we like to use those opportunities of growth to be transforming within ourselves; and so that we see life perhaps a little bit differently. It gives us a little different perspective and helps us to get throw those challenging times."

Returning Warrior Workshops are key components of the Department of Defense Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program and were developed by the Navy and Marine Corps together.

More workshops will be held in the future in different locations around the country making it possible for Marines, Sailors and their families to participate.

To see a schedule of future workshops, visit www.ia.navy.mil and click on IA News.

WASP receives Jamaican visitors

BY MC1 (SW/AW)
JOHNNY MICHAEL
USS Wasp (LHD 1)
Public Affairs

CARIBBEAN SEA – Sailors and Marines from Task Group 40.7 aboard the multipurpose amphibious ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) welcomed Isaiah Parnell, the Chargé d’Affaires, Deputy Chief of Mission for the United States Embassy in Kingston, Jamaica, as well as Lorna Golding, wife of Jamaican Prime Minister Bruce Golding. Parnell and Golding ar-

rived onboard Wasp via a CH-53E Super Stallion at approximately 12:30 p.m. to observe Wasp’s Southern Partnership Station (SPS) interoperability concept, and to discuss community relations events Wasp undertook in Jamaica. Wasp sent more than 50 personnel and 44 pallets of medical, medicinal and hygiene supplies to the island nation Nov. 19–20 as the ship steamed just off the coast.

The possibility of future interaction between Wasp and the people of Jamaica was also addressed dur-

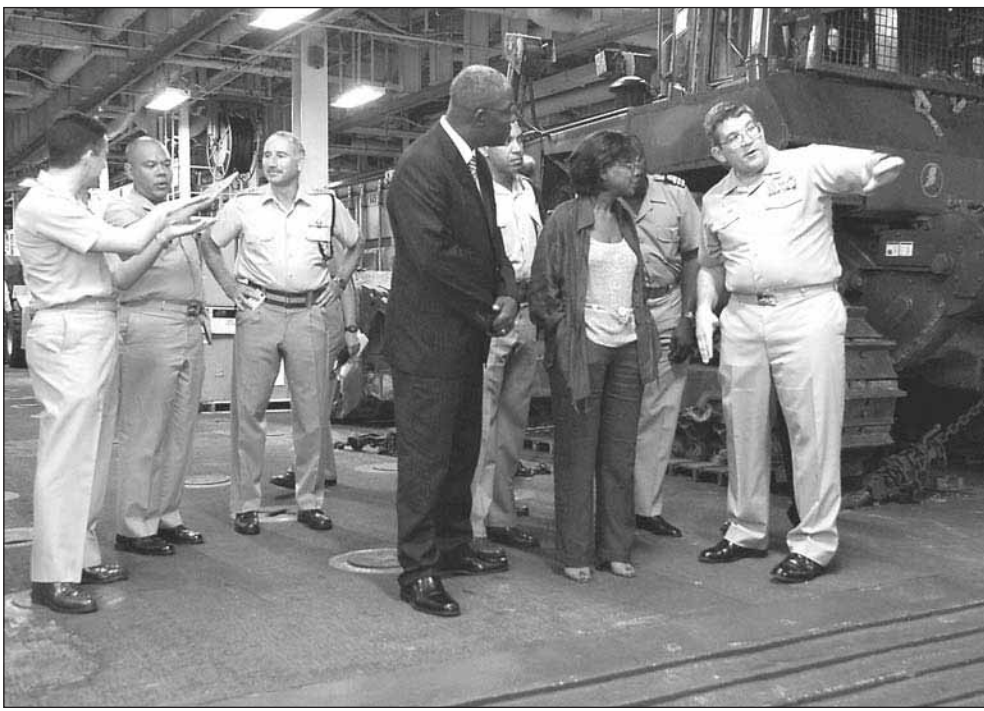


Photo by MC3 David Smart

Capt. Lowell D. Crow, commanding officer of the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1), gives a tour of the well deck to distinguished visitors from Jamaica recently. Wasp is currently deployed on Southern Partnership Station-Amphib with Destroyer Squadron 40 and embarked Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force.

ing the visit.

“This is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the unique contribution the amphibious Navy and Marine Corps team is making in the region and to demonstrate the professionalism of our Sailors and Marines,” said Wasp

Commanding Officer, Capt. Lowell D. Crow. “The United States continues to enjoy warm relations with Jamaica, and we discussed the likelihood of Wasp coming back once a berthing could be secured for the ship.”

The distinguished vis-

itors were given a tour of Wasp and treated to lunch. The two parties exchanged gifts and promised to continue to foster the strong bond between the two nations before the Jamaican delegation flew back.

Isaiah Parnell’s U.S.

State Department biography states that he assumed the position of Chargé d’Affaires at the U.S. Embassy, Kingston in August 2009. He is a member of the Senior Foreign Service and holds the rank of Minister Counselor. He most recently served as the Minister Counselor of Management Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City from 2006-2009.

According to the U.S. State Department, Jamaica is home to more than 2.6 million people spread out over the island’s 4,200 square miles. The United States maintains close and productive relations with the government of Jamaica, and is Jamaica’s most important trading partner. In addition, some 10,000 American citizens, including many dual-nationals born on the island, permanently reside in Jamaica.

Wasp is currently deployed on SPS-Amphib 2009 with Destroyer Squadron 40 and embarked Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force.

Assault Craft Unit 4 changes command



Capt. Kenneth C. Levins



Capt. Robert Anderson

Capt. Kenneth C. Levins assumed command of Assault Craft Unit Four from Capt. Robert Anderson, recently, at Joint Expeditionary Base, Little Creek. Levins, born in Camden, New Jersey attended the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Newport, RI prior to entering the U.S. Naval Academy. He graduated in 1983 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. In June of 1983, he married the former Johnna Lynne Pettineo of Laurel Springs, NJ. Completing Basic Surface Warfare Training, he reported to USS John King (DDG-3) home ported in Norfolk as Combat Information Center Officer and Missiles Officer. Transferring to USS Moinester (FF-1070), he fulfilled duties as the Navigation and Administration Department Heads. He has served on USS Kalamazoo (AOR-6) as Operations Officer, USS Bainbridge (CGN-25) as Operations / Safety Officer, Programs

and Requirements Officer for U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Pacific, Executive Officer, USS Reuben James (FFG-57), Senior Maritime Planner for U.S. participation in NATO Operations Allied Force/Just Guardian, the 23rd Commanding Officer of Assault Craft Unit TWO and Chief Staff Officer at Surface Warfare Development Group, producing war fighting doctrine in all mission areas for the U.S. Navy’s Surface Fleet.

Levins is the Assistant Chief of Staff for Surface Warfare at Operational Test and Evaluation Force.

He and Johnna reside in Virginia Beach with their four children: Domencia, Kristina, Kenneth and Philip.

Levins’ awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (fourth award), Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy Commendation Medal and the NATO Medal (second award).

Hue City conducts boarding exercise on Prevail

A Sailor assigned to the guided-missile cruiser USS Hue City (CG 66) conducts a visit, board, search and seizure exercise aboard the modified tactical auxiliary general ocean surveillance ship USNS Prevail (TSV-1).



Photo by MC1 Leah Stiles

BY MC2 DANIEL GAY
Navy Public Affairs Support
Element East Detachment Southeast

USS HUE CITY — Members from the Ticonderoga class guided-missile cruiser USS Hue City's (CG 66) visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) team conducted a boarding exercise aboard USNS Prevail (TSV 1) Nov. 16 as part of their final pre-deployment training.

The boarding team, consisting of 16 members, boarded Prevail under compliant conditions and was quickly faced with multiple scenarios including hidden weapons, non-compliant crew members and a space that needed to be forcefully

accessed.

"This training is preparing us for situations we may have to deal with if we encounter them during our deployment," said Lt. j.g. Bill Schute, the VBSS team's boarding officer. "This type of training is great for us because it gives a chance to actually go hands on with these different scenarios."

After boarding Prevail, team members in the pilot-house quickly discovered a hidden weapon, and the members on the foc'sle had to deal with a non-compliant crew member.

"When you are going into a situation that you have no knowledge of, against people you don't know, it really gets

you to remember your training and how to employ it," said Schute. "In the event today we started out expecting to deal with a compliant situation but after finding weapons it quickly escalated into a non-compliant situation and we all had to react accordingly."

The training aboard Prevail was the final test for the team.

"This is it, this is what prepares the boarding team for their job," said Lt. Cmdr. Michael Ball, one of the training team members on Prevail. "This is the most realistic training this team will receive before going on deployment."

Near the end of the scenario the team came upon a

simulated welded hatch that would require breaching.

This type of training is invaluable to the team, especially getting a chance to use some of the skills and tools they don't get to use very often like the cutting equipment said Schute.

After the team successfully breached a steel door with a cutting torch they were brought together for a debrief.

"Overall it was a successful boarding, but as with anything, we are always looking for ways to improve," said Schute.

Training Support Vessel Prevail is the Navy's only dedicated training vessel on the east coast.

'Black Hell Squad' competition commemorates heritage

BY UT3 FRANCISCOE CARDONA, BU2 MARCOS LOPEZ AND ENSIGN JAMES COLLINS

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 Public Affairs

GULFPORT, Miss. — Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 133 held a "Black Hell Squad" competition between squads within the battalion to commemorate the proud heritage of NMCB 133 and the Seabees from years past.

"Black Hell Squad" is an annual competition to those NMCB 133 Seabees who participated in the battle of Iwo Jima during World War II. The competition itself showcases Seabee skills and their "Can Do" attitude.

On Feb. 19, 1945, the 133rd NCB joined the Fifth Marine Amphibious Corps and the Fourth Marine Division for the amphibious assault on Iwo Jima. The entire force

landed on Iwo Jima on D-Day with the first assault waves of the Fourth Marine Division.

The 133rd suffered severe casualties during the bitter fight for Iwo Jima where it distinguished itself in both front-line combat and construction. The 133rd had 370 casualties, more than 40 percent of the 875 men that landed, the highest in Seabee history.

The competition also provides excellent training opportunities for squad leaders and junior troops.

"Black Hell Squad" gave squad leaders a chance to show their leadership, management and organizational abilities as small unit leaders in a competitive environment," said Builder 1st Class Phillip Baranowski.

The competitions included events and scenarios designed to test knowledge, team work



Photo by Lt. Cmdr. Joshua Gamez

Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 133 assemble an M-240B machine gun during the Black Hell Squad competition at Naval Construction Battalion Center, Gulfport, Miss.

and leadership of the squad. The competition was conducted in three phases. Phase one military block training was a classroom refresher course. Medical and first aid, operational risk management, safety, chemical, biological and radiological environments, convoy

security operations, communications, defensive operations, fighting positions and patrol maneuvers where a few of the topics that were covered. At the end of phase one, each squad member took a written test.

Phase one scores were based on each squads test

results.

Phase two offered Seabees hands-on training.

Squads focused on physical training, defensive positions construction and patrol planning. Physical training consisted of a mock PRT. Squads constructed two-man M-16 fighting positions and one crew-served weapon fighting position during the defensive portion. Squads were also graded on planning a patrol and briefing the patrol order.

"It was a learning experience, being that I am a prior fleet Sailor, it is my first time doing any of this," stated Builder Constructionman Anthony Amicone.

The top five ranked squads from the first two phases moved on to phase three.

The third and final phase tested the ability to perform the skills correctly and in a timely manner. The scenarios tested skills

in communications, weapons familiarizations, medical actions, land navigations and CBR operations.

The squad with the highest score who was named NMCB 133's 2009's Black Hell Squad was Bravo Company, 1st Platoon, 3rd Squad led by Utilitiesman 1st Class John Meyer. Second place was Alfa Company, 2nd Platoon, 2nd Squad, led by Construction Mechanic Petty Officer 1st Class Brandon Jeffery, and finishing third was Bravo Company, 1st Platoon, 1st Squad led by Construction Electrician 1st Class Manuel Perez.

"I thought 'Black Hell Squad' was a fun learning experience. I was given the opportunity to learn about things that will better prepare me for my first field training exercise and deployment," said Builder Constructionman Bonnie Longoria.

PHILLIPS: Captain recognizes Navy teamwork, grateful for help

Continued from page B1

with the Bainbridge on the face.

Following the ceremony there was a news conference next to the Maersk lifeboat with Phillips and Castellano. The Maersk lifeboat is displayed at the Nauticus as part of the National Geographic exhibit, "Real

Pirates."

Phillips will be receiving the inaugural National Maritime Valor Award from Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead in a ceremony held at the Nauticus Thursday evening. Phillips was also presenting 15 additional Sailors with the commemorative coin.



Photo by MC2 Mandy Hunsucker

Capt. Richard Phillips, former captain of the container ship MV Maersk Alabama, publicly thanks Sailors assigned to the guided-missile destroyer USS Bainbridge (DDG 96) for his dramatic rescue at sea. On Easter Sunday, April 12, Navy SEALs positioned on the fantail of the Bainbridge opened fire and killed three of the pirates who were holding Phillips hostage. Phillips was later rescued by the crew of the Bainbridge.

WINGS: Help comes in the form of 'Horses for Heros'

Continued from page B1

for children of these service members through arts and crafts, grooming sessions and interaction with farm animals; and workshops, grooming sessions and nature walks for spouses.

Equi-Kids moved to a brand-new facility off Sandbridge Road in Virginia Beach in August, with the acreage about three times of their previous location. With a larger space available, the farm allows more opportunity to provide new and expanded services.

Equi-Kids was established in 1989 to offer horseback riding lessons to individuals with mental and physical disabling conditions such as Down Syndrome and Cerebral Palsy and learning disabilities. Barbara S. Ford founded the program that today is a premier accredited center through NARHA (formerly the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association) that accredits nearly 600 programs across the country. Equi-Kids is one of the largest therapeutic programs in Virginia and the only one in the Hampton Roads region to provide year-round services.

Ford has begun the prospect of offering such therapy traditionally offered there to children to adult service members to assist in their recovery after being wounded in the line of duty. As one of the first of many steps, Ford has applied for grant funding for therapy services for veterans with Traumatic Brain Injuries.

"Several Horses for Heroes programs have been started for veterans around the country, including at Fort Hood and Fort Myer," Ford said. "Since there are many steps to the process and many people we must bring into it, we are looking to stand up the program in the spring or summer, and are beginning the dialog with the military community to make this happen. The open house is one way service members and their families, commanders, veterans and military medical professionals can visit our facility, take a tour and become familiar with our proposed program."

Through equine activities, riders develop self-awareness, self-confidence and improve their concentration. Therapeutic riding offers physical benefits such as muscle strengthening and stretching and increases fine motor skills. The horse provides the challenged rider with a feeling of freedom and independence that may be limited in their everyday life.

"Next spring, we will hopefully have raised the funds to build an indoor riding facility, as well as build the therapeutic gardens and trails we have planned," Ford said. "In addition to the goats and bunnies we also have, we will bring in more farm animals. Once completed, our program will not just be about getting on a horse, but rather coming to a farm and participating in activities that feel more recreational than therapeutic."

Ford's plan is also to match active duty volunteers who would fill roles such as sidewalkers and horse leaders for the veterans, so their assistants are their peers. Equi-kids has a wide-variety of volunteer opportunities available for the regular program for those 14 and older.

Equi-Kids is located at 2626 Heritage Park Dr. in Virginia Beach. For more information about the Equi-Kids program, visit www.equikids.com.

TRAP: Two aviators reach milestone within minutes of another

Continued from page B1

celebrate.

"I wasn't nearly as nervous this time," said Mewbourne with a laugh as he recalled his first trap in 1984 on board USS Nimitz (CVN 68). "Each and every landing is exhilarating."

Mewbourne said he was very grateful that he had the opportunity to make his 1,000th trap aboard the ship that he is proud to lead and serve.

"I wish America could see the extraordinary work these people do out here every day," he said. "They could see that their country is in great hands."

For many naval aviators, achieving 1,000 arrested landings marks an important milestone in their career, and is something few achieve. For two aviators to reach this milestone on the

same day, let alone within minutes of each other, is extremely rare.

"I've never heard of this happening before. It's akin to two ball players hitting their 500th home run in the same game, or perhaps two golfers having a hole-in-one on the same hole," said Capt. Ted Williams, Eisenhower executive officer.

An arrested landing is different from most aircraft landings and involves catching a hook attached to the aircraft on one of four steel cables stretched across the flight deck of a carrier. The trap brings the aircraft to a complete stop in roughly 325 feet.

"This is quite a milestone for the Captain as it marks his incredible career of valor and heroic flight in A-6's and EA-6Bs," said Williams. "This achievement also exemplifies the pro-

fessionalism of all those who made it happen.

As the aviators exited their aircraft, they shared this special achievement with many of the ship's personnel who gathered to congratulate them during a special reception and cake-cutting ceremony.

The "Pukin' Dogs" of VFA 143 are assigned to Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 7, embarked aboard Eisenhower.

Eisenhower's COMPTUEX, scheduled by Commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet and conducted by a training team led by Commander, Strike Force Training Atlantic, is a joint/combined exercise conducted from Nov. 3-24 off the East Coast of the United States.

For more news from USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), visit www.navy.mil/local/cvn69/.