

SMART DESIGN LPD 17 >>>



NOVEMBER 2006

All HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY



USNS *Mercy*
Hope
on the **Horizon**



[On the Front Cover]

LT Kimberly Williams examines a patient aboard USNS *Mercy* (T-AH 19) during humanitarian efforts off the coast of Tarakan, Indonesia.

Photo by MC1(AW) Shane T. McCoy

[Next Month]

Take a look at today's Riverine Force and meet some of the Sailors who have moved off the big ships and picked up a weapon to fill positions in the newly-resurrected Riverine Group 1.

14 Smart Design

Even from the pier, the differences of USS *San Antonio* (LPD 17) over other ships in the fleet are obvious. And while the exterior changes are dramatic, what you will find inside is even better.

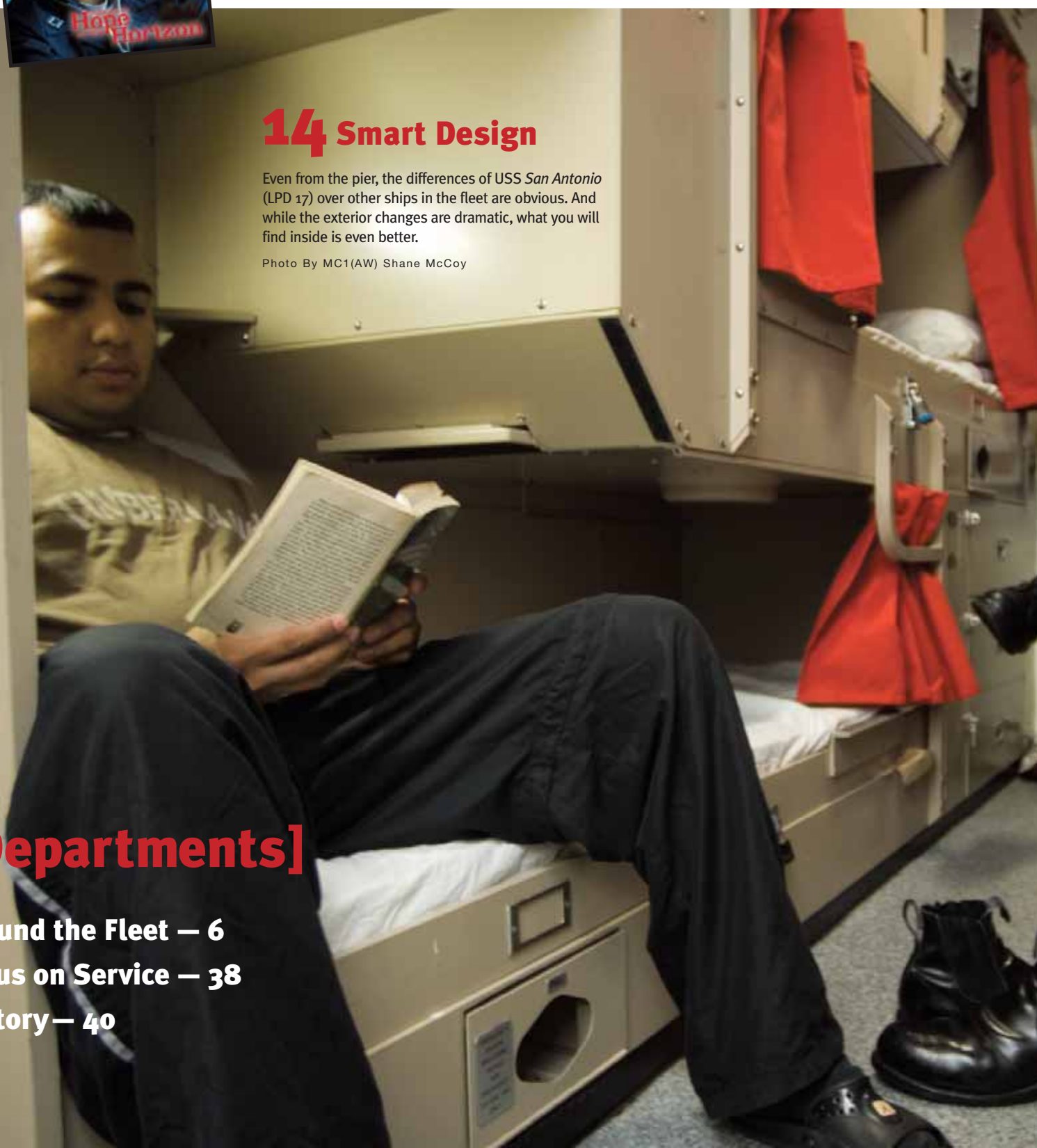
Photo By MC1(AW) Shane McCoy

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[Number 1075]

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November



22 Hope on the Horizon

When the U.S. Military Sealift Command (MSC) hospital ship was commissioned in the 1980s *Mercy's* first deployment was a humanitarian mission, but after serving in wartime support of the first Gulf War *Mercy* sat pierside, rarely getting underway for the next 13 years until the Indian Ocean tsunami struck in late 2004. This was a rebirth for *Mercy* and the beginning of new humanitarian missions to the Pacific throughout 2005.



Photo by MC1(AW) Shane T. McCoy

30 Finding the Look

New York City is the center of the world for the people who live there. But only those who actually live in the city, are between the right ages, have no criminal past, can pass the ASVAB test and are high school graduates can be recruited by Electrician's Mate 2nd Class (SW/AW) Nathan Lee. Part of his district is Times Square, and you'd have better luck bowling a perfect game than throwing a rock and hitting a New York City resident there.

34 PT 658

Known as the "Mosquito Fleet," the small, fast and heavily armed PT boats did much to turn the tide in the Pacific, in the Mediterranean and in the English Channel during World War II. But the whole story of the PT boats has remained largely unknown, until now.

The Capitol provides the backdrop to 184 beams of light projected from the Pentagon courtyard. The night-time illumination on the five-year anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks represents each life lost at the Pentagon.

Photo by MCC Johnny Bivera





Speaking with Sailors

Chief of Naval Operations
ADM Mike Mullen

The CNO Answers Your Questions

Having had the opportunity during the last several months to visit with Sailors and spouses as far away as Singapore and as close to home as Gulfport, Miss., I wanted share with you some of the questions I am asked.

1) What is the future of Individual Augmentation? How many more do we expect to send?

The Navy has deployed more than 46,000 individual augmentees (IAs) to joint and coalition commands since the beginning of Operation *Enduring Freedom*. In fact, there are approximately 10,000 IAs deployed globally right now, and more than half of our augmentees come from the Reserve force. More than 8,500 augmentees are in CENTCOM, with others in Guantanamo, Europe, Africa and South America. While the overall number of IAs fluctuates month to month, only a very small percentage of the Navy's manpower is actually committed at any one time to IA orders (approximately two percent of the total force).

It is the uncertainty of the process – *When am I going? Where will I be sent? How much time will I have to prepare?* – that raises concern. We stood up Task Force IA to reduce that uncertainty. Today, many Sailors receive two months notice of impending orders, and almost all get at least 30 days. In recognition of the sacrifice IA deployments incur, we are also enacting special incentives, including advancement points, shore duty credit, selection board consideration and PCS preferences.

This is a NATIONAL war. The Navy has an incredible amount of talent, and we are going to continue to pitch in. I expect the demand for IAs to continue, perhaps even increase. But I am committed to making sure those who serve as IAs are properly recognized for the effort.

2) The Navy continues to get smaller in terms of people. Where do you see that eventually going, especially as the need for Sailors in the war on terror increases?

We are nearing the end of a several-year process of force-shaping that started in 2002. It will bring us down in numbers to about 340,000 by the end of FY07. I call it a

“smart” decline because we looked first at the work people perform and then determined who and how many people were required to perform it. We considered the effect of technology and new manning constructs. And we took a total force approach, considering the role played by our civilian workforce and contractor support. This was never about putting more work on the backs of fewer people.

Since 2000, we have fully manned our fleet. We will continue to do so. The Chief of Naval Personnel is conducting a study right now of exactly how many people the Navy needs out past 2007, so I just don't have a specific answer for the long term. Regardless, because we are increasingly focusing on “fit” (right skills, right time) vs. “fill,” our future end strength will not in any way degrade our ability to support the war on terror. In fact, it may improve it. Since 85 percent of Sailors deployed on the ground in CENTCOM are working within their skill sets, this renewed focus means we will be in a much better position to meet operational requirements for Navy talent than ever before.

3) What are we doing to make Navy Knowledge Online and the Five Vector Model accessible to commands without the requisite bandwidth and/or IT capability?

There is nothing worse than staring at the hourglass on that computer screen. I don't like it any more than you do. Everyone in the senior leadership is aware of the issue and is working very hard to find solutions. For starters, we are going to begin outfitting small ships and submarines with tera-byte servers to open up some of that bandwidth. If that works well, we'll look at expanding their use to other commands in need.

Part of the problem, though, lies in our own self-discipline. Bandwidth is a lot like money – the more you have the more you tend to spend. And we have a real bad habit in the Navy of finding all kinds of new ways to “spend” our bandwidth, particularly at sea. It seems each time we manage to save a little bandwidth, we find a new technology or capability to use it up. We need to get a whole lot smarter about that. **SE**



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New initiative for Navy IAs

The Navy recently announced approval of several initiatives aimed at rewarding Sailors who serve in designated combat zones.

Sailors who serve in Individual Augmentee (IA) billets are now eligible for several new benefits, such as points towards advancement and preferred duty location following release of NAVADMIN 273/06.

There are approximately 12,000 Sailors serving on the ground in the Central Command area of responsibility (CENTCOM AOR). More than 8,500 of those are IAs.

"We need to do everything we can to take care of our Sailors and their families while they are doing this very important mission," said VADM John C. Harvey Jr., Chief of Naval Personnel. "Every opportunity needs to be taken to make this assignment a positive one for their careers, and not a hinderance."

Specific initiatives vary depending on location and length of tour but can include awarding points

towards advancement for enlisted personnel, advancement exam flexibility for Sailors in designated combat areas, duty preference for next shore assignment, and continuation or suspension of assigned sea or shore duty clock during IA assignment.

In addition, IA tour lengths will continue to be addressed. For instance, some assignments to Djibouti as part of Joint Task Force Horn of Africa (JTF-HOA) will be shortened to six months from a year for augmentee personnel.

Notification timelines for IAs are continuing to increase. All IAs in the last two months were given greater than 30 days notice, with 68 percent being given greater than 45 days notice. The new target goal for notification is 60 days to fill recurring requirements.

"IA requirements are not going to go away," said Harvey. "We need to embrace this mission, make use of our volunteers, and provide them and their families with the support they deserve while they are deployed away from home."

The new initiatives will award




Sailors man their M-16A1s and sit a vigilant watch, as they conduct convoy exercises during the Navy's Individual Augmentee Combat Training course at Fort Jackson, S.C. The fast paced, two-week course is instructed by Army drill sergeants and designed to provide Sailors with basic combat skills training prior to being deployed as individual augmentees mostly to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

Photo by MC1 Jackey Bratt

two points towards advancement for an IA serving in a designated combat zone (Iraq, Afghanistan, HOA) for a period greater than 179 days. Advancement exam flexibility is also available for IAs. Personnel deploying to one of these billets may take their exam up to two months early or one month late to fit around their tour. However, no Sailor will be required to take an exam while they are serving in a designated combat zone. Specifics on these and the rest of the IA initiatives

can be found in NAVADMIN 273/06.

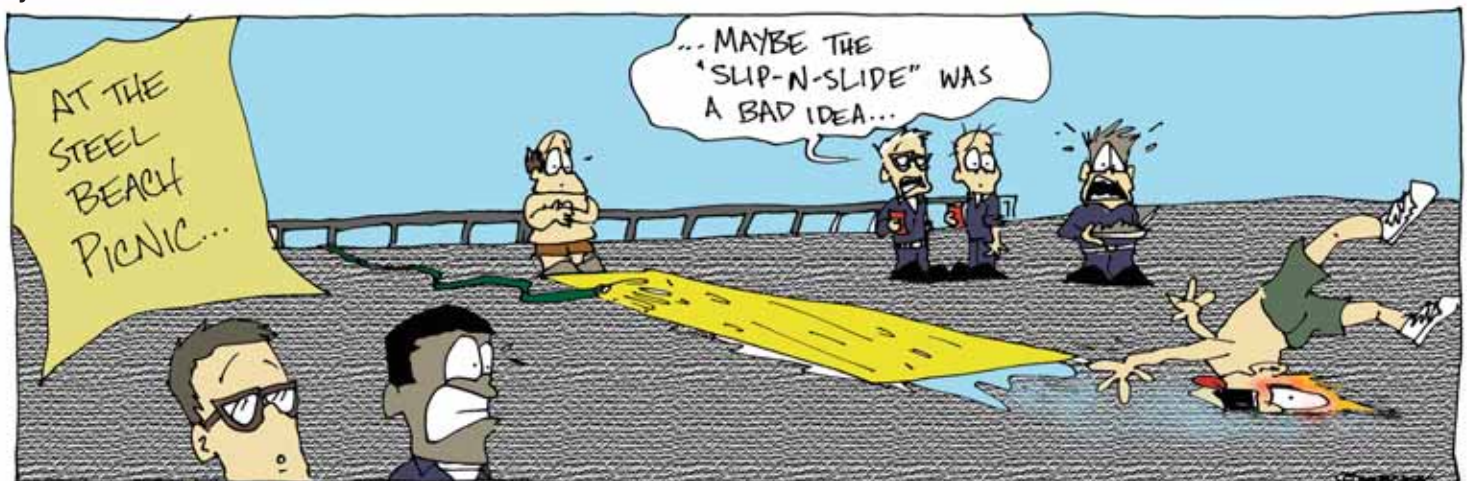
For more information on how to volunteer for an IA billet, please contact your community manager or visit www.npc.navy.mil/CareerInfo/Augmentation/.

For more information on advancement points go to NAVADMIN 280/06. 

Story courtesy of the public affairs office, Chief of Naval Personnel.

Ricky's Tour

By MC1 Mike Jones



Expeditionary Warfare Device Approved

The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) ADM Mike Mullen recently approved the Navy's first new warfare device in six years, the Expeditionary Warfare device. The new device is intended to usher in a change in the expeditionary community, improving the competitiveness of advancement and the likelihood of retention within the community.

Sailors assigned to Navy Expeditionary Combat Commands (NECC), primarily Type 2 and Type 4, as well as deployable Reserve units, will be eligible for the Expeditionary Warfare qualification program.

"The CNO approved it to recognize the Sailors who are performing those arduous duties deployed overseas in non-traditional roles," said CNOECM (EWS/SW) Anthony Santino of NECC. "There was no warfare for Sailors attached to these units, so this gives them the opportunity to earn a warfare [pin] and be competitive for advancement and selection boards."

The program requires completion of general expeditionary and unit-specific Personnel Qualification Standard (PQS), the general PQS to include weapon qualifications and maintenance, marksmanship, land navigation, field communications and expertise in setting up expeditionary camps.

Santino said he hopes that the new warfare device will assist in keeping Sailors assigned to expeditionary commands in that same community and stressed the importance of the expeditionary Sailor in today's Navy.

"The expeditionary Sailor is important because this is one area I believe the Navy is going to be involved in for many years to come," Santino stated.

The design of the new pin encompasses the essence of enlisted expeditionary Sailors, presenting the bow and superstructure of a patrol boat superimposed upon a crossed cutlass and M-16 rifle. The background is the traditional waves of the Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist pin.

"The waves represent our sea heritage," said Santino. "The cutlass represents the enlisted force, the M-16 represents our mission area and the boat, another mission area."

Sailors assigned to expeditionary units will have one year to complete the Enlisted Expeditionary Warfare qualification, and it will be mandatory for Sailors E-5 and above. **ES**

Story by MC3 Emily Zamora, Fleet Public Affairs Center Atlantic.

CNIC, Better Business Bureau Extend Educational Resources to Sailors

Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) VADM Robert T. Conway Jr. and President and CEO of the Council of Better Business Bureaus (CBBB) Steven J. Cole co-signed a Memorandum of Understanding recently at CNIC Headquarters, Washington, D.C., to formalize an already standing mutual partnership between the CBBB and the Navy.

"This is a natural alignment that will benefit both the Navy family by providing tailored tools to help them navigate their business actions throughout their active career and when they transition to civilian life, while also providing the CBBB with insightful information into an important domain of society, the military individual, and their role in the consumer-arena writ large," said Conway.

The CBBB Web site provides information and assistance ser-

vices, including business reliability reports, dispute resolution, consumer education, reviews of charitable organizations, and lists of online companies pledged to meet Better Business Bureau (BBB) standards. The CBBB has created a Web site tailored specifically for Sailors and their families worldwide (<http://navy.bbb.org>) to access BBB services and specialized Navy consumer services.

The CBBB will work closely with the Fleet and Family Support Program (FFSP) to develop special educational materials and services to help educate and protect military consumers.

"By working with the CBBB and local BBBs, we are ensuring that our service members and families have access to the best and most up-to-date consumer education and information to maximize the use of their purchasing power and consumer awareness skill," said CNIC Military Career Readiness Programs Manager and Principal Advisor David M. DuBois.

The CBBB will also analyze patterns of inquiry and complaint from Navy personnel and dependents, and meet with Navy representatives periodically to review and update a list of program activities.

The CBBB is a private, non-profit umbrella organization for the BBB system, consisting of approximately 120 local BBBs

Engineman 3rd Class Michael Shane Lilley recently saved the life of an infant by performing CPR. Assigned to Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron (HM) 15, While at home, Lilley heard a woman scream. Out on the street he found a woman and her baby that had drowned in a mop bucket. Lilley threw the mother his cell phone, directed her to call 911, and began CPR, which saved the baby's life.



located across the country. Supported by more than 375,000 local business members nationwide, the organization is dedicated to developing fair and honest relationships between businesses and consumers, instilling consumer confidence and contributing to an ethical business environment. **ES**

Story by MCSN Joshua Bruns, public affairs office, Commander, Navy Installations Command

PPV Housing Expands in Norfolk Area

Naval Support Activity (NSA) Norfolk and Lincoln Military Housing recently marked the end of the first year of a five-year development plan with the Navy's public-private venture (PPV) housing project throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

The objective is that Lincoln will provide Sailors, Marines and their families with more than 4,000 quality homes that must be self-sustaining over a long period of time.

"By partnering with Lincoln Family Housing, they were able to go out to banks and private lending agencies to get the funds needed up front based on the

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Around the Fleet



▲ Navy Expeditionary Combat Command

members perform High Value Asset (HVA) escort training between Inshore Boat Units (IBU) 41 and 42 assigned to Naval Coastal Warfare Squadron (NCWS) 4. This exercise provides the final test for Level II Combat Coxswains and Gunners' qualification to handle small boats with weapons capability in defense of multiple-size U.S. Navy vessels transiting narrow waterways.

Photo by MC2 Justin K. Thomas

◀ AM2 Chris Daupert installs an afterburner

mixer, designed to help ignite the exhaust of an F/A-18C *Hornet* engine in the jet shop aboard USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65).

Photo by MC3 Marcel A. Barbeau



▲ **LT John Weidner checks the catapult during preflight checks** before flight operations on the flight deck of USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65).

Photo by MCSN Jhi L. Scott

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

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revenue that they will earn through basic allowance for housing (BAH)," said CAPT Michael A. Collins, commanding officer, NSA Norfolk and program director for Regional Support Services, which includes family housing in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Regardless the size of the home, the Sailor's BAH pays the rent of the home.

"The wonderful thing about our relationship with the Navy is that a Sailor's BAH is their rent regardless of rank," said Jim Brady, vice president of Lincoln Military Housing. "We provide utilities and a renter's insurance policy to cover up to \$10,000 of the families' personal belongings."

Brady highlighted the accomplishments so far that Lincoln Military Housing has improved and completed in the past year.

"We are moving actually ahead of schedule with the renovation of 380 homes in the first year, and we have approximately 750 new homes that are in development throughout Hampton Roads," said Brady.

The new housing community, Whitehurst Farms, near Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek will consist of large multifunction community centers with recreation and education programs, pools, basketball courts, playgrounds and trails. Additionally, the new homes will come with ample storage space along with one and two-car garages.

"The new homes are single family, duplex or triplex starting from 1,300 square feet to 2,000 square feet, with wood vinyl floors on the first floor and brand new appliances," said Brady.

The hard work done by the Navy and Lincoln Military Housing is bringing quality housing for military families.

"The goal is to take down these old houses, build brand new houses, renovate houses that need

renovation and give our Sailors top-notch housing," said Collins. **NS**

Story by MCSN Kenneth R. Hendrix, Fleet Public Affairs Center Atlantic.

'Universal' ID Card Part Of Federal Security Upgrade

New identification cards are being issued to DOD employees to help standardize workforce identification and security access systems across the government, a senior DOD official said recently.

The new common access card eventually will be issued to all federal employees and is part of a standardized, secure credentialing system that was mandated after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, said Mary Dixon, deputy director of the Defense Manpower Data Center in Arlington, Va. during a joint interview with American Forces Press Service and the Pentagon Channel.

Starting Oct. 27, the new "super CAC" ID cards will be issued to employees during the next three years as the old cards reach their expiration dates, she said.

The new cards interface with a secure, encrypted credentialing database and are interoperable for personal identification as well as access to federal buildings and facilities, she said.

However, each facility will still determine who is authorized access, Dixon pointed out. Information embedded on the cards is quickly referenced and compared to centrally stored personnel security clearance data, she said.

"It is an effort to try to improve the security in the federal government," Dixon explained. The new cards also help employees secure their computer networks, she said, as well as providing

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Around the Fleet

▼ **MU3 Matthew Anderson, assigned to the 7th Fleet Navy Band,** plays the trombone during a welcoming ceremony for the crew of USS *Shiloh* (CG 67) as she pulls in to Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan.

Photo by MCSN Adam York



▲ **GM3 James Hegedususich and his fiancé** depart the pier to get married upon his return from deployment aboard USS *James E. Williams* (DDG 95).

Photo by MCSN Joshua Adam Nuzzo

▼ **Navy Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 1** fill buckets with concrete during a concrete placement in San Fernando, Republic of the Philippines. NMCB-1 deployed 23 Seabees to the Philippines to participate in *CARAT 2006* and to work and train with the Philippine Seabees.

Photo by MC3 Ja'lon A. Rhinehart





▲ **USS Constitution's mizzen mast crew stands on the fighting top as safety observers, while chief petty officer selectees climb the shrouds during up-and-over exercises in the second week of CPO leadership training.** Each year, *Constitution* hosts approximately 300 CPO selectees for training, which includes sail handling, gun drill training and community outreach designed to instill leadership and teamwork skills.

Photo by MCSN Nick Lyman

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improved security for federal buildings, military installations and campuses.

"So, I can use this card, not just in the DOD, but it can be read in other agencies," Dixon said. "If they choose to give me access, they can then read my card," she said.

The new card features the user's photograph, like other cards now in circulation, Dixon said. But its computer chip also will contain two encrypted fingerprints, as well as a unique personal identification number.

The new card can be read, either by swiping it or by waving it near a special card reader, she said.

Issuance of the new card has the potential of reducing the number of agency security badges, Dixon said, because federal agencies will refer to a standardized credentialing system. However, agency security administrators still have the authority to approve or deny access.

"Every time you use the card, it is authenticated, meaning somebody checks to make sure that that card is a 'good' card issued in DOD to you, and that it is still valid," Dixon said.

As always, employees who believe their government-issued ID card has been lost or stolen are required to notify security administrators, Dixon said, who then deactivate the card.

This ensures that cards reported stolen or missing can't be used in DOD, she said.

*Story by Gerry J. Gilmore,
American Forces Press Service,
Alexandria, VA.*

Predatory Lending Continues to Affect Navy Readiness

The Navy continues to raise awareness of predatory lending by informing Sailors and families of the pitfalls of payday loan cycles.

According to Keith Goosby, financial coordinator for Regional Support Office Task Forces in San

Diego, predatory loans may be putting Sailors in financial peril, affecting job performance, and in some cases, jeopardizing security clearance.

"Overall readiness of the Navy is impacted when financial aspects of personnel are not what they should be," said Goosby. "Additionally, shipmates are impacted when they have to deploy because of someone else's lack of financial readiness."

Francis H. Dong, associate director of the National Association of Securities Dealers (NASD), said 75 percent of pay-day loan center customers are unable to repay their loan in two weeks, the normal length of a loan. Dong also said, active-duty members are three times more likely to use a predatory loan center than a civilian.

"Predatory loan centers target active-duty with tricks like special military loans," said Dong. "Military personnel are their best clients, because they know they're paid every two weeks."

Along with impacting fellow shipmates, financial readiness can affect performance at work.

"Sailors who find themselves caught up in predatory lending can lose focus on the job, which in many cases can be very dangerous, because their minds are on personal issues, not on the mission their job requires," said Goosby.

"Education and learning how to leverage your income is a way to avoid going to extremes to seek financial stability," said Goosby.

Deborah Lane, career services supervisor for Fleet and Family Support Center San Diego said, "Developing a realistic spending plan, living within your means and not spending more than you make, are probably the best things Sailors can do to put themselves on the road to financial security." ■

*Story by MCSA Jonathan G. Husman,
Fleet Public Affairs Center Pacific,
San Diego.*



A “1000-SHIP” NAVY?

By Pacific Fleet Master Chief (SS/SW) R.D. West

Hoo-yah, Warriors.

During my Navywide travels, some shipmates I ran into were asking about all the exercises and operations we've been doing lately, especially in the joint and allied arena. They were interested in the point of it all and what it means to them.

So I asked them if they had ever heard of the "1000-ship navy."

Some Sailors thought we were planning on cranking up the shipyards and pumping out ships left and right. Others just didn't have a clue what it was.

It is one of the main points to all the joint and allied exercises and operations we conduct. It's about changing the concept of sea power.

Right now, the 1,000-ship Navy is a concept the CNO, ADM Mike Mullen is talking about. In several of his speeches and interviews, he's talked about changing the concept of sea power from just the U.S. Navy ensuring maritime security to combining the capabilities and talents of all freedom-loving nations of the world; sort of a loose framework for building partnerships, both enduring and emerging.

He's talking about forming temporary teams for specific challenges, but over time, build them into general and enduring cooperation. Everyone brings to the table what they can for as long as they can, depending on where and when the event occurs.

So what's he talking about here?

Well, down to the bottom line it's bringing the best and brightest of all countries together to form a fleet of unmatched capability ready to conduct ANY MISSION, ANY TIME, ANYWHERE. Put another way, it's team-building.

So the 1,000-ship Navy brings together our friends and allies to create a huge fleet that draws on the strengths and capabilities of each. This is how the CNO explains it:

"As we combine our advantages, I envision a 1,000-ship navy – a fleet-in-being, if you will, made up of the best capabilities of all freedom-loving navies of the world. Can you imagine the possibilities if we worked toward increased interoperability through more standardized training, procedures, and command and control protocols?

"This 1,000-ship navy would integrate the capabilities of the maritime services to create a fully interoperable force – an international city at sea."

Now I hear the next question, and that's, "Why is this important to me, the deckplate Sailor?" Fair enough. Here's why it's important.

There's no one who can match a U.S. Navy Sailor. You all are simply the best, and we will continue to get better. But good as we are, we cannot do everything, and we certainly can't go it alone, especially since we've declared the war on terrorism.

Each star player relies on the whole team, and to win the war on terrorism, to ensure freedom of the seas and promote stability and peace, we are going to need help. Simple as that.

Did you know we recently finished the *Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC)* exercises in Pearl Harbor? It's a biannual exercise held in the Pacific, and it's not so a bunch of Sailors can gather in Hawaii for a nice vacation.

It's so we can build social, working and training relationships all over the Pacific, so in a time of need we can react as a team. We invite Japan, Australia, South

Korea, Canada, Chile, Peru and even the United Kingdom to participate in this huge naval exercise.

Those countries send their best and brightest; we all combine together to train and learn; and the result is a much larger, more capable fighting force with longer reach and longer sustainability.

Combat readiness and warfighting are not the only beneficiaries of the 1,000-ship navy. It's about being able to respond to anything – sort of like a global neighborhood watch.

A great example would be responding to disasters and providing humanitarian assistance (HA) anywhere in the world. We have combined international militaries and nongovernmental organizations with our folks to not only provide HA to people in need, but to also build relationships, develop training and operational protocols and prepare for greater challenges in the future – and all as one team.

In closing, I would like to pass along something I saw during *RIMPAC*. It was on a banner on the side of a South Korean destroyer, and it read: **THE SEA MAKES US ONE!** I think that says it all right there. **NS**

**A LOOK AT USS
SAN ANTONIO
(LPD 17)**

SMART DESIGN

Story By MC1(SCW) Jess M. Johnson,
Photos By MC1(AW) Shane McCoy
and MC1(SCW) Jess M. Johnson



▼ **With all the technology aboard**

this ship, it's easy to forget she is designed to carry Marines and all their equipment. USS *San Antonio* (LPD 17) not only carries them, she carries more of them than previous LPDs.

“This is the most unique, best designed amphib I’ve ever seen,” said Chief Engineman (SW/AW) Eric Hovan of his latest amphibious ship, USS *San Antonio* (LPD 17).

Even from the pier, the differences between *San Antonio* and other ships in the fleet are obvious. The profile of the ship is so different from previous classes of ships that it just might not register that you’re looking at a U.S. Navy warship and not a cruise liner.



▲ **The first thing you notice about *San Antonio* is that she looks like no other**

ship on the waterfront. From her enclosed masts to the hidden RHIB boats, the ship is designed to have a much smaller radar footprint than any other ship of her size.

“Just the sheer design first and foremost as you walk down the pier will strike you as new and unique,” commented LCDR Jon Haydel, *San Antonio*’s executive officer. “She’s a very clean, very sharp and just a very good looking ship.”

The look is not just cosmetic. By enclosing the masts and anchor wells, and with the angular design of the hull, the ship has a much smaller radar cross-section, making it harder to recognize on enemy forces’ radar.

The exterior changes are dramatic, but nowhere near what you will find inside.

“The passageways are wider than on other ships,” said Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class Jack Bustillos. “It makes it a lot easier to move around the ship with your gear.”

The airlocks in these main arteries of movement are now large enough for a full squad of fully-loaded Marines to move as a group from their berthing or work spaces to the well deck to maintain their small-unit integrity and deploy rapidly.

The added room aboard *San Antonio* was accomplished in part by substituting conventional systems and their related

equipment with the next generation of modern systems that take up less space and operate more efficiently.

“There is no steam aboard *San Antonio*,” said Hovan. New energy efficient electrical systems, which take up less space and have fewer moving parts to break, are now making water and cooking the food aboard *San Antonio*.

Since the entire ship is run on electricity, power management was a big concern for the designers of *San Antonio*, who again turned to current technology to ensure the ship doesn’t lose power.

“We have the capability to produce 10,000 kilowatts of power at one time,” said Hovan. “This is enough to power a



small city. At any given time, we run anywhere from two to four generators on the line. Each generator makes 2,500 kilowatts of electricity, and that's more than enough power to do everything we do. The ship is amazingly energy efficient for the amount of gear that we run."

With so much relying on these generators, a backup system was needed just in case a generator failed.

"We use an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) to make sure all our equipment and computers will keep working if the power were ever to go out," explained Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Emily Lewis.

"The UPS is a battery backup that gives

us time to get the power back on in the space," said Lewis.

San Antonio is the first ship to combine on one platform many of the innovative technologies developed and implemented around the fleet. Many of the computer-based improvements have been tied together, creating new possibilities for the crew.

"The technology has definitely changed during the past five years," Lewis said.

The days of coaxial cable being run haphazardly around the ship are over. The backbone of the system is fiber optic cable, which was designed into the ship's wiring from the first day.

"We have 24 switch-cabinets that are

spaced all over the ship," added Lewis. These switch cabinets are all interconnected, creating a huge, highly reliable network.

According to *San Antonio's* Command Master Chief CMDCM (SW/AW) Guillermo De Santiago, these advances and innovations make living and working aboard the Norfolk-based ship like nothing else in the fleet.

"The potential of this ship and her sister ships to follow will be immense because of the connectivity created by the Shipwide Area Network (SWAN). This allows Sailors to work in their office spaces and, in the case of officers and chiefs, they have connectivity in their bunk rooms or staterooms so they can work out of that area," explained De Santiago.

With the exception of a few critical systems, Sailors aboard *San Antonio* can jump on just about any computer anywhere on the ship and access the information they need.

"There is also an electronic classroom, plus the Learning Resource Center which has its own way of conducting training," explained De Santiago.

This new training takes the place of many of the Rate Training Manuals and Personnel Qualification Standards Sailors aboard *San Antonio* need to progress in their career.

"The new way to do it is called Interactive Courseware, which is a computer-based training program that will take you through the whole course. A good portion of the training required of the personnel on this ship can be done right here," De Santiago added.

Not having to spend time sending personnel all around the ship or money to send Sailors to specialty schools allows *San Antonio's* crew to finish their qualifications faster and get back to the job sooner.

The technological advances aren't limited to training. By using materials proven on other platforms to reduce manpower needs, *San Antonio* can have more people working in their rate.

Damage Controlman 1st Class (SW) Patrick Edwards says the new materials being used on *San Antonio* let the crew concentrate on the mission.

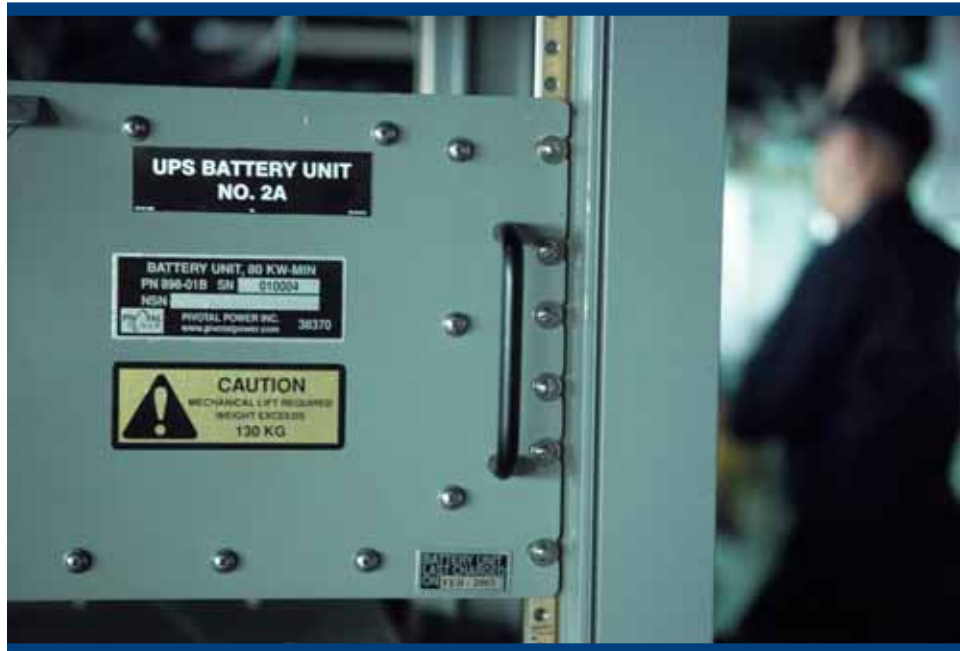
"Our people are able to get more done



▲ Even the fo'c'sle of *San Antonio* has improvements, including a fresh water sprayer that washes the anchor chains as they are recovered to reduce corrosion.

▼ *San Antonio* was designed to avoid any potentially crippling power loss

uninterruptible power supply (UPS) units are placed throughout the ship and keep power constant even if a generator goes down.



because they don't have to spend time buffing and waxing decks," said Edwards.

"A lot of the systems and material they used on this ship were triggered primarily to make the ship maintenance-free, which is almost an impossibility, but it gets really close," explained De Santiago.

"On *Whidbey Island* (LSD 41)," explained Hovan of his first amphibious ship, "we used to have 16 or 17 people on watch. Now we do it with eight. We run more equipment than what we did on a '41-class' with fewer personnel."

This manning decrease is a testament to the efficiency of modern technology. *San Antonio's* crew consists of about 350 personnel. That's less than half of the crew required on earlier LPDs. By fully using the skills of their Sailors, *San Antonio* is leading the way in building Sailors for the 21st century. Each Sailor aboard this ship must know their job completely.

"Our rovers now are better trained than they ever were when I was coming up," said Hovan, "because they have to be almost like an engineman of the watch [and] be able to respond to any system and any issue that comes along in the space."

Hovan described the Engineering Control System as, "the computerized

monitoring multiple sensor system, where everything is displayed for you in what we call CCS, and that allows us to monitor all the critical systems from a central location with just key watch standers – a console operator, an electrical plant operator, damage control console operator, an engineering officer of the watch (EOOW) and three rovers. That's really been unheard of."

The engineers behind the new class of amphibious ship had Sailors and their work in mind as they designed many of the systems, but there is one crucial area where it wasn't just Sailors who would benefit.

According to *San Antonio's* Commanding Officer, CDR Brad Lee, "When the Marines embark on this ship, what they will find is the berthing spaces are designed equally for Marines and Sailors so they will have the exact same berthing spaces for the first time."

The berthing spaces aboard *San Antonio* boast some of the best accommodations of any Navy ship at sea. Berthing spaces have been revamped with "sit-up" racks for all junior enlisted. The new sit-up racks have more storage and more room for personnel to use as they wind down for the night. A Sailor or Marine can sit in their rack comfortably and read a book, watch a movie or play a game on a laptop computer.



▲ **Well deck personnel make final** checks before LCACs arrive to begin load tests.

► **When getting underway, the bridge** crew still maintains paper charts and logs even while using the Voyage Management System – a computer-based chart system.



The only difference between the services' berthing spaces is the color of the curtains. Sailors' spaces have blue curtains while Marines have red.

The racks are still stacked three high, but Sailors and Marines won't be stepping over each other as much since there won't be as many people to a berthing space as on older classes of ship.

"There's a lot more room to store your gear in the berthing," said Bustillos. "The sit-up racks are great, and the storage space lets you have a full seabag and a few sets of civilian clothes."

Another modest but still appreciated improvement has been the location of head facilities inside the berthing, making the morning "commute" a much shorter trip.

Once a Sailor arrives at his work center there is also a noticeable difference in the number of co-workers. This ship is part of the "leaner, meaner" Navy, under the optimal manning concept, meaning fewer Sailors are aboard .

According to Lee, the way the advances in technology are put into practice allows fewer Sailors to accomplish the same



▲ While it is transparent to most of the crew, the ship's computer network called the Ship-Wide Area Network (SWAN) is fiber-optic and can become wireless in the future.



▲ All the no-wax decks aboard USS *San Antonio* ever need is a quick mopping and an occasional sweeping.

tasking other amphibious ships are required to complete.

“A lot of ‘smart ship’ technologies that have been put into place on other ships are resident here on *San Antonio*,” said Lee. “We also have spaces that are essentially remotely manned, and that improves the ability of our Sailors to manage their time and cuts down on the manning of the ship.”

A smaller crew offers more possibilities aboard *San Antonio* for Sailors to hone their skills and to experience the Navy of the 21st Century.

“If you’re coming to sea [duty] and you want to touch the edge of the envelope of technology for ships, this is where you want to come,” Hovan stated. “This is 21st century technology at its best.”

Johnson and McCoy are photojournalists assigned to the Naval Media Center.

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Find more photos online at www.navy.mil



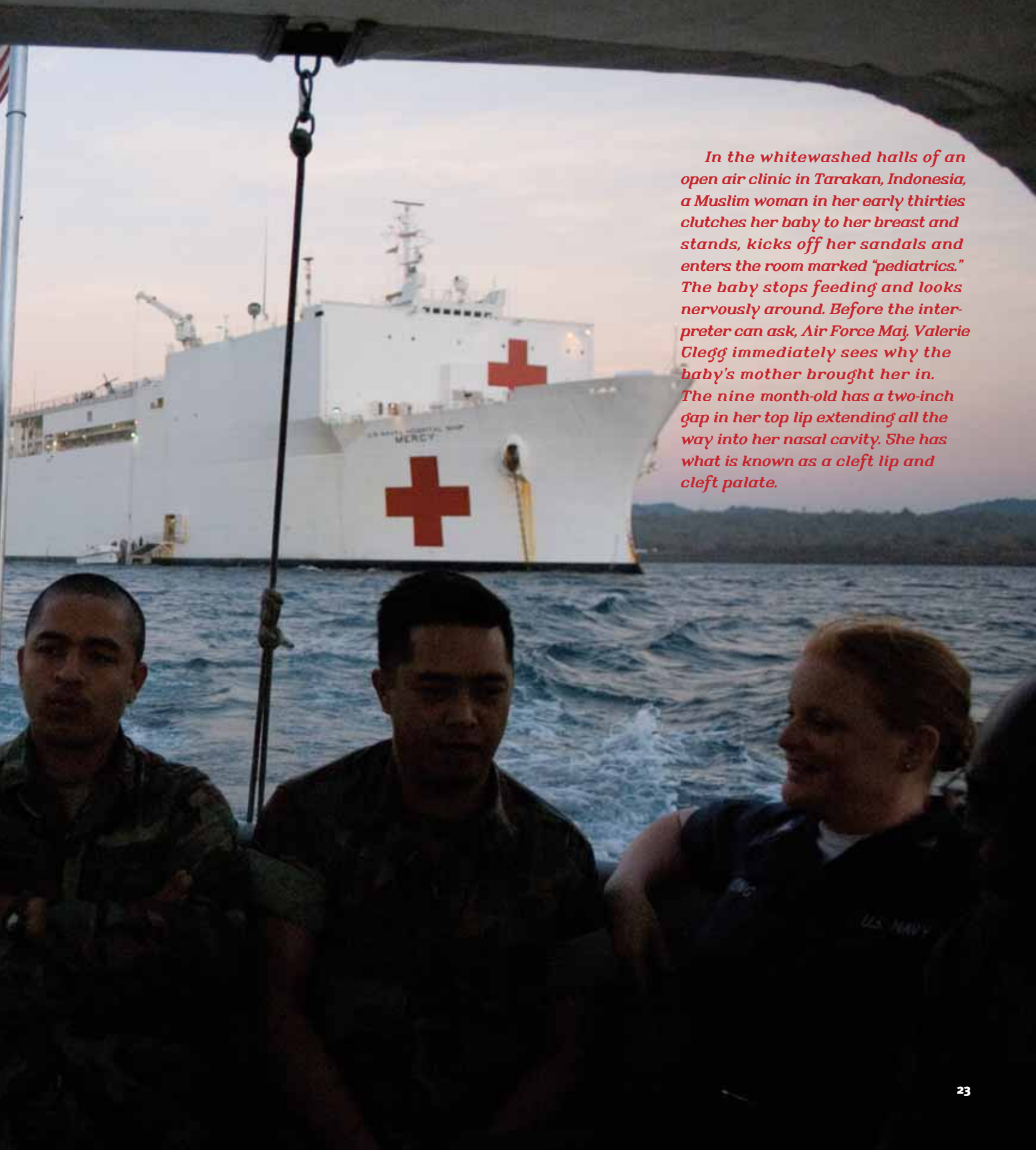
Hope on the Horizon

Story and photos by MC1(AW) Shane T. McCoy

USNS *Mercy* is Reborn with a Brand New Mission

▼ **Before the sun rises over Kupang,** Indonesia a medical team leaves USNS *Mercy* for a day of providing medical aid in a remote part of the island.

In the whitewashed halls of an open air clinic in Tarakan, Indonesia, a Muslim woman in her early thirties clutches her baby to her breast and stands, kicks off her sandals and enters the room marked “pediatrics.” The baby stops feeding and looks nervously around. Before the interpreter can ask, Air Force Maj. Valerie Clegg immediately sees why the baby’s mother brought her in. The nine month-old has a two-inch gap in her top lip extending all the way into her nasal cavity. She has what is known as a cleft lip and cleft palate.



For the last nine months, her mother has been convincing herself that her daughter could somehow have a normal life. She could learn to adapt. After all, she had learned to breastfeed. But until this morning she was sure her daughter was going to have an extremely difficult life. This morning USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) anchored just off the coast. By the end of the week the child's life would be changed forever.

“Our team of U.S. Navy and foreign military doctors, partnering with medical professionals from several nongovernmental organizations, were able to bring state-of-the-art medical attention to tens of thousands,” said ADM Gary Roughead, commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet. “This not only improved the lives of people who sorely needed the help, but it also enabled us to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the United States and our regional friends and allies that started after the 2004 tsunami.”

When the U.S. Military Sealift Command’s (MSC) hospital ship was commissioned in the 1980s *Mercy’s*, first deployment was a humanitarian mission, but after serving in wartime support of the first Gulf War *Mercy* sat pier-side, rarely getting underway for the next 13 years and then only for a port change or short exercise. There was talk in Washington of getting rid of the hospital ship program altogether. That is, until the Indian Ocean tsunami struck in late 2004, and *Mercy* quickly got underway to assist in the rescue efforts.

“At that time the impression of *Mercy* was that it was ‘Building 19,’” said CDR Henry Villareal, executive officer of the Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) and her OIC when the ship was in port. But when called upon for tsunami relief, the ship was ready to sail. “We were activated on New Year’s Eve, a Friday, and we were ready to go on Tuesday.”

The success of the tsunami aid, called Operation *Unified Assistance*, was immediately evident. The staff of *Mercy’s* MTF treated more than 100,000 patients and performed 466 surgeries. This mission was a rebirth for *Mercy* and the beginning of new



▲ Air Force Maj. Valerie Clegg, a pediatrician with the Medical Treatment Facility aboard USNS *Mercy* (T-AH 19), examines a baby girl before admitting her to *Mercy* for cleft lip surgery.



▲ **Doctors from all** countries worked as one team as the “Band-Aid” boats were loaded each day for the medical outreach programs.

humanitarian missions for both *Mercy* and her sister ship USNS *Comfort* (T-AH 20).

“We worked as many cases out there on a daily basis as you might see in a major metropolitan hospital,” said LCDR V. Franklin Sechriest, an orthopedic surgeon. “But I can guarantee that doctors in those hospitals are never working on month-old compound fractures. If we hadn’t been there, many of our patients never would have walked again, if they had lived at all.”

In contrast, the humanitarian mission that started in April 2006 was different from anything done before, because of the diversity of the team.

“We stood up a robust team of specialists in surgery, cardiology, infectious diseases and critical care and brought them aboard *Mercy*,” said CAPT Joseph Moore, commanding officer of the MTF. “Then we integrated them with civilian non-governmental organizations (NGO) and allied military medical [personnel from] Australia, India, Malaysia and Canada.”

The NGO volunteers were from Project HOPE (Health Opportunities for People Everywhere), Aloha Medical Mission of

Hawaii, International Relief Teams, Operation Smile and the University of California at San Diego Pre-Dental Society. Also included were medical units from the Air Force, veterinarians from the Army, a couple of helicopters and their crews, NMCB 40 and even the U.S. Navy Show Band.

Bringing together so many different people from different places with different ways of doing the same job was a top concern.

“Admiral Roughead told us that, you could see and treat every person in Indonesia and the Philippines, but if you can’t integrate with your civilian counterparts and the foreign military, you failed this critical part of the mission,” said Moore. “So we knew what we had to do, but not how to do it.”

He explained they did it by putting doctors with doctors and nurses with nurses. They mustered together every day, berthed together and worked the same schedule together every day. Differences in uniform quickly became transparent as they got to know each other for their skill sets, not rank or service. Each country and service also brought their own expertise to the mission.



▲ **CDR David Hartz and CDR Jan Delorey-Lytle** take a moment to rehydrate during a long hot day of pulling teeth in Tarakan, Indonesia.

▲ **Always trying to take a child's mind off getting a shot,** band-aids were decorated.

◀ **Army Spc. Becky Holmbeck,** a veterinarian assistant from the Medical Treatment Facility trims a goat's hoof at a Medical and Dental Civic Action Project (MEDDENCAP) during *Mercy's* visit to the city of Tawi-Tawi, Philippines

Photo by MCSN Ryan Clement



▲ LCDR Graig Salt, a plastic surgeon on *Mercy*, reconstructs the cleft lip of a 9-month-old girl.

“Because we belong to the tropical regions, many of the illnesses like malaria, tuberculosis and Legionnaire’s Disease are on the rise and they are not new to us,” said Indian Naval Surgeon CDR Diviya Gautam. “We have been seeing cases like these in India so we have been able to exchange our knowledge with U.S. doctors.”

The NGOs were already prepared to work with the crew, having assisted in the disaster response in 2005, and it was only fitting that they were there, many of them belonging to Project HOPE, an organization started in 1958 with a former U.S. Navy hospital ship named *Hope*. The ship spent more than a decade on humanitarian missions led by a former Navy doctor.

“Last year, when we helped with the tsunami mission, we didn’t know that the people working in the kitchen were medical people pulled from hospitals, serving meals and doing dishes, and that we were doing some of the jobs they would normally do,” said Olinda Spitzer from Project HOPE. “Once we found that out we wanted to do our part, and now we help in the kitchen too. I’ve served meals and I’ve done dishes. We are a team on *Mercy*, and we wanted to show that.”

*Later that day, mother and daughter make their way down a long wooden pier to twin utility boats, shining bright white in the midday sun. They look nothing like the fishing boats the mother is used to seeing and each of the boats are being tossed against the pier by the surf. She sees the red crosses painted on the hulls – recognizing the universal medical symbol – and is reassured. A few moments later *Mercy*’s civil service mariners help her and her daughter aboard and they take a seat with 15 others who were to be seen by doctors that morning.*

The boat marked with a red cross and the No. 1 on the helm casts off and they head for the little white ship sitting a couple of miles off shore. The ship doesn’t remain little for long, though, and as they enter the ship’s shadow the patients look up at the looming hull in awe of her size.

They are helped off the boat and head up the sloped ramp for the next four floors. The ramp opens into a huge room that anyone



► **Unable to tell the doctor what hurts,** this elderly woman placed the hand of *Mercy's* doctor on her forehead.

► **On the last day in Kupang, Indonesia, Project HOPE** volunteer Susan Mortensen explains through an interpreter to the mother of a young girl with a bad heart murmur that her daughter will die if she does not have surgery right away.



► **In Chittagong, Bangladesh, patients from the Chittagong Medical College Hospital** prepare to board an MH-60 *Knighthawk* from the Guam-based Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC)-25, to be shuttled to *Mercy* after being screened for surgery by members of Operation Smile, an organization dedicated to repairing children's facial deformities.

Photo by MCC Edward G. Martens

◀ **The "Band-Aid" boats from USNS *Mercy*** carried thousands of patients and staff to and from the hospital ship during the five-month mission.

in the U.S. would take for a hospital, not a ship. Both mother and daughter take in their new surroundings and see the eyes of the other patients that peek over the top of surgical masks everyone must wear to protect against any active cases of tuberculosis. An interpreter stands before the group and relays the English spoken by a nurse in blue coveralls. Her daughter's check-in has begun.

Before *Mercy* pulled into her first port, while most of the hospital staff had been preparing for the upcoming mission, one doctor wasn't able to get the memories out of his head of the patients he had seen the year before as part of Operation *Unified Assistance*.

"LCDR Sechriest came to me asking if he

could do follow-ups from last year's visit to the area," said Villareal. "After I said, 'yes,' I was surprised as he pulled out a list of names."

There were 50 patients between Nias and Banda Aceh, Indonesia, on the doctor's list, and though they tried to find all of them, they only found four.

"I'm glad we found those four, though, because they were four of the most complicated patients I treated," said Sechriest. "I knew them by name and really wanted to find them so I was so happy we did."

One thing that all of the staff of *Mercy's* MTF agreed upon was the need to stay a little longer at each place so there could be more post-operative care given, and this was Sechriest's chance to follow up on a few of his patients.

Of the four patients found, two had learned to speak English, and the boy, Jose, had decided to become a doctor and a girl decided to become a nurse. They spent the day on *Mercy*, touring the ship and talking with the doctor who had given their lives back to them.

The theme of bringing hope to those in need followed *Mercy* to each port. Michael Keller, *Mercy's* Chief Mate said, "If you want to win people over, there is nothing better you can do than park a huge white ship just off the coast and give free medical and dental aid."

During their visits to the Republic of the Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia and East Timor, try as they might, there was no way to see every person who needed to be seen. No



The mother sees the door swing shut and watches it for a moment longer before she is escorted down to the recovery ward where she will wait for her daughter's return.

While medical treatment consumed the attention of those aboard *Mercy*, Seabees from NMCB 40, were out sweating in the sun, while building benches at hospitals, installing air conditioning units, building basketball courts and pouring tons of cement. They worked closely with local contractors and *Mercy's* civilian mariners to improve each location visited.

"Everywhere we have been they have asked us to return – and not just *Mercy* or the Seabees – but when the Navy will return to help them," said Chief Construction Electrician Mike Gallagher.

On this five-month deployment *Mercy* was able to treat 60,000 patients, changing the lives of many of those for the better and changing the lives of her crew, hospital staff, NGOs and foreign military members too.



*It's been four days since her baby's surgery, and the little girl is recovering quickly. The mother constantly looks at her daughter's small scar, the only indication she will have that there was ever a gap in her lip. The surgeon stops in as the mother is packing her belongings to go home. Her eyes are damp as she hugs the doctor, thanking him for his help. She will never forget the staff of *Mercy's* MTF. She can't distinguish between the different services and organizations involved in her daughter's new life, but she will remember the huge white ship and make sure her daughter knows *Mercy* came to her family from America.*

"Some people say doctors are like gods," said Gautam. "Well for some people out here *Mercy* has been God's gift to them."

McCoy is a photojournalist assigned to the Naval Media Center.

way to help every illness that needed helping, and at times the medical staff felt the strain.

"I didn't like it when we had to leave a location [when] there are still so many patients we haven't seen," said Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Shannon Dawkins.

They tried to see each situation from a glass-half-full perspective, dwelling not on those who weren't seen but on those who were helped.

"Even if we can't help someone," said Gautam, "we can at least give them an idea of how their ailment might affect them in the future because some of these people might not have seen a doctor before in their lives."

The number of people who would not be seen at times outweighed those who could.

"The biggest problem we've seen is people

thinking they need medical attention more than the person in front of them in line," said Master-at-Arms 2nd Kristen Maxwell.

She and the rest of Mobile Security Squadron 7, Det. 72, kept order during the medical missions and patrolled the waters around *Mercy*.

Every person who has helped her daughter check in has been friendly, brought food and something to drink and now the mother holds her daughter's hand as the little girl is prepped for surgery. Everyone is smiling. The interpreter explains what the surgeon is saying, how long surgery will last and what she can expect to see afterwards. She is nervous but excited and the interpreter reassures her as her daughter is rolled into the operating room.

Website Exclusive

Find more photos online at www.navy.mil

Story and photos by MC1(AW) Shane T. McCoy


EM2 FLOWING




► **EM2 Nathan Lee is one of the** top recruiters in New York City, and he's not afraid to show his love for the city in which he grew up.

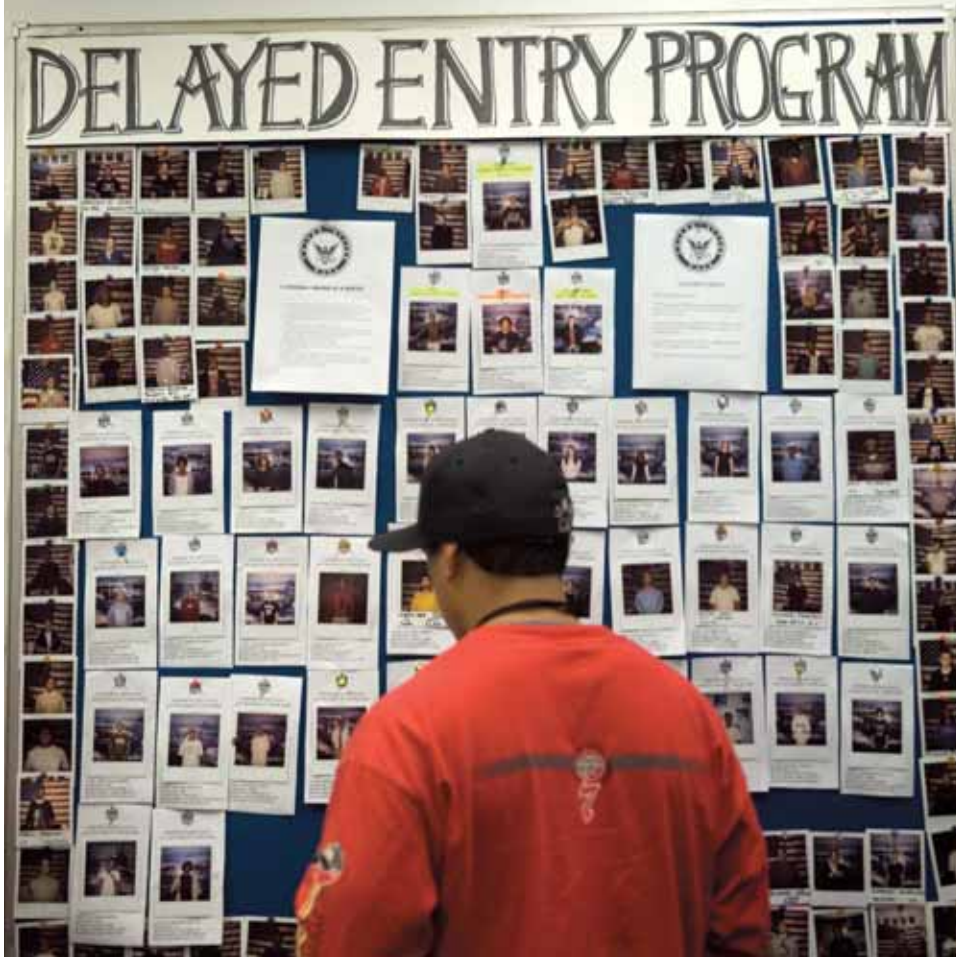
THE LOW

RECRUITING IN THE BIG APPLE



 Imagine yourself fishing on a small lake. The lake is stocked with 8.5 million fish. Every time you cast you get a bite, but you are only allowed to catch rainbow trout, and they make up a small percentage of the 8.5 million fish. The rest you have to throw back and try again. This scene is just a glimpse of what it's like to be a New York City recruiter.

New York City is the center of the world for the people who live there. Its population is more than some countries, but only those who actually live in the city, are between the right ages, have no criminal past, can pass the ASVAB test and are high school graduates can be recruited by Electrician's Mate 2nd Class (SW/AW) Nathan Lee. > > >



◀ As people are added to the Delayed

Entry Program (DEP) their photos are added to a board showing their name, where they are from, who recruited them and their position in the DEP, from athletic petty officer to leading petty officer.

Resources like Storekeeper 2nd Class Yoanay Jose help Lee every day. Jose uses her experiences with getting her citizenship in the Navy and her fluent Spanish to work with prospects Lee could not communicate with on his own.

“A lot of people here are immigrants,” Jose said. “And I use my own testimony to help recruit them.”

One of Lee’s recent prospects was interested in joining the Navy but was discouraged by her mother who only spoke Spanish. Lee was on the phone with Jose in minutes, setting up a meeting for the mother to understand the opportunities available for her daughter.

For most of us the thought of working in NYC is daunting – the traffic alone is enough to keep sane people out of town – but Lee takes it in stride. The city was his home before he joined the Navy, and he plans to return when he leaves it.

“I used to work as an overnight delivery person at one time and I know these streets backward and forward,” Lee said. “There’s traffic everywhere, but it’s not too big a deal for me.”

Driving the streets is when Lee finds many of his prospects. He might be driving along and suddenly pull over, jump out and start talking to a kid walking down the street. To most people this would seem a completely random act, but for Lee there is method to his madness.

“When I’m driving down the street and see a kid looking at me in my uniform and cover, I see a big question mark go off in his head. That’s ‘The Look,’” said Lee. “And, when I see that look, I pull over.”

The accuracy of “The Look” is amazing. When Lee pulls over he is not at all surprised to hear a response like, “I’ve always wanted to join the Navy but didn’t

Doesn’t sound too hard, but then you find out that part of Lee’s district is Times Square, one of the top destinations for tourists in the city. You’d have better luck bowling a perfect game than throwing a rock and hitting a New York City resident there.

“The more people there are in a city the more you have to search to find one who’s qualified,” Lee said. “That’s one of the challenges. I always talk to everyone. They might not be qualified, but they may have a friend who is, and I want to plant that seed in their head so they will talk to others.”

Talking one-on-one is really the only way to sift through the masses of people in the city. Lucky for Lee it’s one of his strong points, making him one of the top recruiters

in the city. On any given day, Lee might talk to 50 people, trying to find one who meets the Navy’s requirements. He might come back to the office with information on six candidates for the day, but if one of those six joins the Navy he is ahead of the game.

“Prospecting” is what they call it – digging through the masses for the few gems – and it’s not something easily done in a city as large as New York.

“Even though Petty Officer Lee is doing very well, he would be non-existent without the team,” said Chief Navy Career Counselor Guil Mongalo. “It’s all about the team here. Anyone who thinks it’s one man is wrong. He is what he is because he knows how to use his resources.”



▲ Even police officers are not above being asked if they would like to join the Navy. Lee reminds them “there is always the reserves.”

◀ One of Lee’s signature phrases “I was looking for you.”

pulls in three possible candidates and his car is a great place for them to fill out their information and set up appointments to come into the station.

know where your office was.”

He doesn’t just see people on the side of the road, either. He picks them out of a crowd as he strolls along the streets and simply says, “I’ve been looking for you,” or “Have you ever been given information on the Navy?”

It doesn’t work every time, of course. Plenty of the looks he sees come from those thousands of tourists or people who don’t meet the requirements of the Navy, but enough pan out to make it worth the time it takes to check it out.

Lee’s presence and attitude also have a lot to do with the way people respond to him.

“The biggest reason he gets people to join the Navy is, he’s real,” said Mongalo. “He’s honest and truthful with his prospects. They feel it when he first talks to them, and they can relate.”

Lee explained that the best part of his job is being able to work in his city and give back to the neighborhoods where he grew up by giving the kids a chance to see

► **This job is not a 9 to 5.** After a long day, it’s common to see Lee and his co-workers head home at 11 p.m.

the world he has seen. He is also giving the Navy some of the finest Sailors, and hopes to work with them someday after leaving recruiting duty.

Lee may be just one of the little fishermen on the big lake of New York City, but with the help of his team he’ll continue to catch his limit in the Big Apple.

So, if you’re in New York City and hear an echo of “Mama, Mama can’t you see, what the Navy’s done for me?”

bouncing off the walls of an apartment building, it just might be Lee fishing for his next look. ☞

McCoy is a photojournalist assigned to Naval Media Center.

Website Exclusive

Find more photos online at www.navy.mil



▼ **SAVE THE PT BOAT INC.,** was formed by a group of gray-haired, ex-PT boaters to take custody of a historic relic, PT 658, a Navy-owned World War II torpedo boat, and restore it to original operating condition, with full armament and three 1,200-horsepower Packard V-12 engines.



“A tremendous blast blew me sky high!”

exclaimed retired Torpedoman’s Mate 2nd Class Richard “Dick” Lowe, a Sailor manning the 37mm gun on the bow when a *Kamikazi* hit his boat. “My first thought while I was floating in the air like a rag-doll was whether or not I would land on the boat or in the water.”

Lowe did splash down in the water, surviving the Japanese suicide plane attack on PT 323, in Leyte Gulf, Dec. 10, 1944. And today he is joined by other courageous former Sailors sharing stories of heroism and remembrance.

The men aren’t sitting in a coffee house or on park benches discussing the past like one might think. They are on the first cruise aboard a restored boat like the one Lowe was blown out of. And according to these veterans, PT 685 is the only working Patrol Torpedo (PT) boat in existence.

PT 658

WOODEN BOATS AND IRON MEN

Story and photos by MC2 Todd Frantom





“We intend to operate and display the boat in the Pacific Northwest as a living memorial to the thousands of U.S. Sailors who manned these tiny warships in nearly every World War II theater: the Atlantic, the English Channel, the Mediterranean, the South Pacific, the Aleutians and the Philippines,” said Harry Weidmaier, a former Navy Reserve captain and president of Save the PT Boat, Inc. “We have been able to do this with generous assistance from the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps, among other contributors.”

As the Navy’s smallest, fastest and most maneuverable World War II fighting craft, they were frequently used for close-range contact with enemy naval vessels, darting into convoys to launch their torpedoes.

Known as the “Mosquito Fleet,” the small,

▲ **Bob Alton, Jim Burnette and Frank LaSarge** celebrate the success of their 13-year odyssey that these men have sunk their hearts into.

► **One of the two Mark III torpedoes** on display aboard PT 658 was purchased on E-bay from a California dealer.

fast and heavily armed PT boats did much to turn the tide in the Pacific, in the Mediterranean and in the English Channel during the war. But the whole story of the PT boats has remained largely unknown, until now.

“Now people can marvel at a real working boat – and what a sight she is,” said Weidmaier. “There’s a lot of history on these



craft and we are privileged to finally have one that represents all that we fought for.”

PT 685 was built in 1945 by Higgins Industries, Inc., New Orleans, but it was too late to be armed and used in World War II. Instead it was put up for sale and purchased by a private owner.

Weidmaier explained that the new owner of the craft, like many who bought items as war surplus at the time, thought this seemed like a wonderful opportunity to have an 80-foot yacht that was purchased cheaply.

“The owner had replaced the gas guzzling Packard and put a smaller engine in,” said Weidmaier. “But when he took it out for a

spin on the open ocean the boat beat him around so much that he just gave up his yacht dream, parking PT 658 in the water up against a dock in the San Francisco Bay, where it sat and rusted for almost 50 years.”

Eventually 658’s ownership reverted to the U.S. Navy. In 1994 the boat was moored at the Navy dock on Swan Island Lagoon, behind the Navy and Marine Corps Reserve Center in Portland, Ore.

That’s when the Oregon PT boat veterans began to resurrect this PT boat from the ravages of time and neglect, 60 years after the war’s end. Their aim was to restore PT 658 to its original state, complete with armaments and the original complement of three 1,500-horsepower Packard engines.

“We worked with volunteers to get this baby up and running for many years,” Weidmaier said. “It has been well worth the effort. The look on the veterans’ faces when they are cruising again is priceless. In 2004 we did just that, and after 13 back-breaking

years she was ripping through the water once again! What an amazing accomplishment, but we are still making improvements.

“The restoration of PT 658 was a daunting task,” Weidmaier continued. “It is not an ordinary boat, but then, these are not ordinary men, and their memories of combat on the high seas illustrate just how special these boats were.

According to Weidmaier, PT boat crews suffered more casualties than any other surface units and were some of the most highly decorated Sailors in the U.S. Navy.

“These boats may be made out of wood, but the men who ran them are made of iron,” said Lowe. **ES**

Frantom is a photojournalist assigned to Naval Media Center.

▼ **Bob Hostetter, a veteran war hero** and former Sailor makes his way to PT 658. “We worked like dogs to get this boat up and running,” he said.

Website Exclusive

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IN GOOD HANDS



Focus on.
Service

Story and photo by MC3 Davis J. Anderson



The Navy recently retired one of its most famous working symbols – the F-14 *Tomcat* which has been synonymous with naval aviation for more than 30 years.

Throughout the aviation community, Sailors have switched from working on and flying in *Tomcats* to the Navy’s new aerial weapon – the F/A-18 *Hornet*. One of those Sailors is Chief Aviation Machinist’s Mate (AW) Howard Fedlar of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 32, Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia Beach, Va., who began his Navy career in 1986 working with a helicopter squadron.

“When I joined the Navy I wanted to work on F-14s,” said Fedlar. “The Navy had other plans for me. They sent me to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (HS) 1 in Jacksonville, Fla., working on H-3 helicopters. When it came time for me to go to sea duty they gave me my ‘dream come true.’ They sent me to the F-14s.

“I just like the jets better,” Fedlar said about his current line of work. “They go faster.”

Fedlar has spent most of his career working on *Tomcats*. Having just switched to the *Hornet* in November 2005, he said there are things he likes about both aircraft.

“I just love [the F-14]. It’s a big, intimidating airplane,” said Fedlar, who still has fond memories of working on the *Tomcat*. “Everything’s computerized on the F/A-18. where a lot was mechanical on the F-14. Just by pushing a few buttons here and there, you can troubleshoot the airplane with the airplane running and it’ll tell you what you need to change on it.”

But he noted that sometimes the F-14 could surprise the uninitiated.

“[One time] we were down at ‘high power,’ where we take the airplane down to a spot here on the base, chain it with a big chain and run the engines through afterburner. We always end up getting the new kids from the line shack – trainees. We were down there high-powering [the jet] and I was jockeying with the throttles. When I rammed the starboard throttle the second time the engine stalled and blew fire out of the intake. All we saw of that startled trainee was his back as he was running through the woods.”

Of the F/A-18, Fedlar noted, “It’s a lot easier to work [on], it’s a lot easier to maintain and it’s a lot easier to troubleshoot. The airplane will troubleshoot itself.” ❧

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

Remembering the Veterans

In all of American history there have been warriors — men and women who put their civilian responsibilities on hold and fought for the greater good of their nation. As the number of these patriots has grown so has the need to remember what their sacrifices have meant to the stability and success of this nation.

It was only right when in 1919 President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed November 11, as *Armistice Day*, that a specific day was set aside for every citizen to take a moment to contemplate the sacrifices of those men and women who have served in the Armed Forces.

President Wilson dedicated the day with a proclamation that included: “To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country’s service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations...”

Originally the day was to be celebrated with parades and meetings and a brief suspension of business beginning at 11 a.m. in honor of the Treaty of Versailles which solidified the original armistice that went into effect at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918.

An Act signed on May 13, 1938, made November 11 *Armistice Day* an official holiday to be celebrated each year. This day was dedicated to the memory of those who fought in World War I, or the “Great War” — the first war to end all wars.

In 1954, after World War II and Korea and under pressure from veteran services organizations, the Act of 1938 was amended to be a day to reflect on all service members who have ever served during armed conflict by replacing the word armistice with veterans.

There would be many more modifications to the day now known as Veterans Day including a one time celebration on Oct. 25, 1971, that confused many of those who had become accustomed to the now stable day in November.

But no matter what day or under what name it has been celebrated, Veterans Day is a time for all of America to reflect on the sacrifices of their citizens who have answered the call to duty and served their nation without question and in their service guaranteed the freedoms for which all citizens should be grateful. **✍**

Editor’s Note: The Department of Veterans Affairs recently began the *Veterans Pride Initiative* which mirrors a tradition in Australia and New Zealand, countries who honor the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) on April 25. ANZAC Day sees veterans wearing their military decorations whatever they are doing on that day.

The Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs said he hopes a U. S. tradition will ensue to emulate this pride in being a veteran and in honoring our veterans.

Information about the campaign can be found at www.va.gov/veteranspride/ where veterans also can learn how to replace mislaid medals and confirm the decorations to which they are entitled.



Retired YN1 Al Shoehigh places a lei on each plaque at the Submarine Base Memorial, Pearl Harbor, in memory of each submarine lost during World War II.

Photo by MCSN John T. Jackson

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