

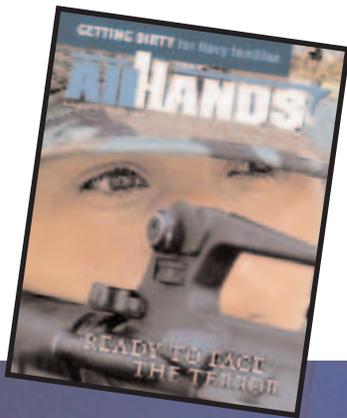
GETTING DIRTY for Navy families

FEBRUARY 2006

ALL HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY

**READY TO FACE
THE TERROR**



14 Ready to Face the Terror

After Sept. 11, 2001, the Navy changed the way their security forces do business. Now courageous patriots have an opportunity to join the ranks of the anti-terrorist/ force protection team, Mobile Security Detachment (MSD). But first, individuals must finish a Final Evaluation Problem. The force takes to the air, land and sea, while working under scenarios that can break the spirit of the most hardened warrior.

Photo by PH2 Todd Frantom

[On the Front Cover]

MA3 Christina DeLeon steadies her rifle on a target in sweltering, 100-degree heat during the Mobile Security Detachment 26 Final Evaluation Problem.

Photo by PH2 Todd Frantom

[Next Month]

Follow a Sailor's rite of passage upon entering the Seaman to Admiral Program.

And going green is not the easiest thing these corpsmen have done lately. Join them as they begin their quest to become "Docs."

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[Features]



Photo by PH2 Todd Frantom

22 Breaking Barriers

Al-Rahman ... The soft echoes of Muslim prayer fill the air. But, the religious recitation is not coming from a mosque, but from a berthing compartment aboard USS *Tarawa* (LHA 1). Jordanian and Egyptian soldiers have been welcomed aboard the multi-purpose amphibious assault ship, in sweltering heat, to strengthen military-to-military relationships during Exercise *Bright Star*, held in Egypt. This joint/coalition exercise has been conducted every other year since 1981. More than 70,000 troops from 10 or more countries normally participate.



30 Dirty Volunteers

Every year nearly 2,000 participants gather for an 8K race through the sand, surf, mud and muck of Little Creek Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Va., all for a good cause. Hosted by the Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA), Hampton Roads, Va., the organization raises money to improve the quality of life for junior enlisted military families.

34 Climbing Mount Fuji

While the operational tempo for forward-deployed Sailors is one of highest in the world, there are brief moments in which to savor the experience of living and working in Japan. Several members of USS *Fort McHenry* (LSD 43) in Sasebo, Japan, who had just returned from Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) in Malaysia, felt the need to get out and relax a little – by taking on a 16-hour hike up Mount Fuji, Japan's tallest peak.





HM1 Cynthia Donaldson conducts a pre-operative procedure on a patient in the surgical operating room aboard USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76).

Photo by PH3 Kevin S. O'Brien

Speaking with Sailors

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
MCPON (SS/AW) Terry D. Scott

This month's question came from a recent discussion with Sailors aboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71).

Q: When will I be able to have full access to Navy Knowledge Online while deployed or underway?

A. One of the biggest issues I hear from Sailors while I'm on the road is that the bandwidth aboard our ships is much too limited to be able to use Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) with any regularity.

To provide each individual with a career roadmap that will help them toward a more rewarding career, the Navy is continuing its work to fully populate the 5-Vector Model (5VM) which we expect will reflect the knowledge, skills and abilities of every Sailor. We are continuing to fully develop the 5VM and the JASS Career Management System (JCMS), which are increasing in capability, and are two of the prime elements of Sea Warrior.

Most importantly for our Sailors at sea, we are developing distance support capability which will provide connectivity to Sea Warrior while underway, as we continue to overcome restrictions of technology the shipboard Sea Warrior capability will become more fully operational.

Through NKO Afloat, also called Sea Warrior Afloat, we are looking to outfit every Navy ship with a server containing all of the information you would find if you went to NKO on your home computer.

Because all of the content that would normally



Photo by JO1 Preston Keres

take up the ship's bandwidth is stored locally, it leaves the text-based information as the only data that actually needs to be transferred from the ship.

By the end of the winter, we should have about 100 ships outfitted with the basic version of Sea Warrior afloat, which

includes NKO and JCMS. Starting this spring, we will be able to update the current ships and begin installing the second phase of the program.

This second phase will align more closely the Sailor's Sea Warrior experience at sea with what a Sailor would expect to see on their computer ashore. When finished, this will provide a 95 percent functional NKO; a more capable Sea Warrior portal and increased access to the Sea Warrior portal afloat; Navy E-Learning courses, 5VM, JASS Career Management System (JCMS), Navy Training Management and Planning System (NTMPS) Afloat; and the Electronic Training Jacket (ETJ), among other resources, such as content management and viewing systems.

The content management system will monitor the Sailor's progression through the training content and automatically update training jackets.

Once all of the ships have the proper systems installed, it will make it much easier for Sailors to use and update their accounts with the limited amount of bandwidth available at sea, while making most of the content as easily accessible as it would be ashore.

For more information about Sea Warrior, visit www.nko.navy.mil or www.npc.navy.mil or contact Captain Jean Roberts at (757) 444-7253. ■

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

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Winter Sworn In As Secretary of the Navy, Delivers First Message to the Fleet

Dr. Donald C. Winter was sworn in as the 74th Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) during a ceremony at the Pentagon, January 3. Deputy Secretary of Defense (acting), the Honorable Gordon England administered the oath.

In his first message as SECNAV, Winter outlined his five priorities, praised the Navy and Marine Corps team and expressed his pride in serving as secretary.

"Today, I was sworn in as your 74th Secretary of the Navy. At a time when we find ourselves at war, with Marines and Sailors in 'harm's way' in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is a challenge that I accept with a keen awareness of the solemn responsibilities of this office.

"In the wake of Sept. 11, 2001, President Bush declared, 'the best defense against terrorism is a strong offensive against terrorists.' The Navy/Marine Corps team is engaged in an aggressive campaign to defeat terrorist enemies not only in Iraq and Afghanistan, but globally. Protecting America against threats will remain our primary mission, a task that will require the service of war fighters who will never lose focus on the drive to victory.

"In my confirmation hearings before Congress this past October, I mentioned five priorities: people, the global war on



The Honorable Donald C. Winter

terrorism, shipbuilding, 2005 QDR Implementation and BRAC Implementation.

"I will have much to say about all of these items in the months ahead. Today, I will only mention one. People are our most valuable asset. Since the early days of the republic, Americans have relied on a strong Navy/Marine Corps team to defend them against her enemies. Nothing can play so decisive a role as well-trained, highly motivated Sailors and Marines who believe in their mission.

"You should feel honor – honor in knowing that today, during this time of war, the American people turn to you to keep our country safe. You have chosen a noble profession, and you join a long honored tradition as guardians of our liberty and defenders of a great nation. I am honored to serve you as your Secretary." ■

Story courtesy of Navy News Service.

BAH Rates announced for FY06

DOD announced Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates for FY06.

Service members will receive an average housing allowance increase of 5.9 percent. An estimated \$13.9 billion will be paid to nearly 950,000 service members in 2006. In total, the planned increase in housing allowance funds for FY06 above the FY 2005 amount is about \$1.6 billion.

Three components are included in the BAH computation: 1) median current market rent; 2) average utilities, including electricity, heat, and water and sewer; and 3) average renter's insurance.

Total housing costs are calculated for six housing profiles, which are based on dwelling type and the number of bedrooms, in each Military Housing Area (MHA). BAH rates are then calculated for each pay grade, both with and without dependents.

Data is collected annually for about 400 MHAs in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. An important part of the BAH process is the cooperation from the services and local military housing offices in the data collection effort.

Input from local commands is used to determine in what neighborhoods data is collected and to direct the data collection effort towards adequate apartment complexes and individual housing units.

For members with dependents, average increases in the BAH is about \$53 per month. A typical E-4 with dependents, for example, will find his/her BAH about \$45 per month higher than last year, while an E-8 with dependents will receive about \$56 more than last year. ■

Story courtesy of DOD.

Housing Allowance Rules Change for Single Members

About 30,000 single service members who live off base and pay child support are likely to see a slight change in their military pay – an increase for some and cut for others – beginning in January.

The rules regarding the basic allowance for housing differential – an allotment for single members who pay child support – changed Dec. 31, 2005.

The change is one of the last parts of a seven-year phase-in of the basic allowance for housing that began in 1998. The BAH system replaced the old variable housing allowance system.

Under both the old law and the transition policies that have been in effect to implement BAH, single members who pay child support get a BAH differential. After Dec. 31, only members who live in government quarters and pay child support will continue to receive the BAH differential.

Members who live off base and pay child support will receive BAH at the “with dependents” rate. Previously, they received BAH at the “without dependents” rate, plus the BAH differential. ■

Story by Donna Miles, who is assigned to the public affairs office, American Forces Press Service.

Traumatic Injury Protection Implemented

DOD announced the implementation of traumatic injury protection insurance under the Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program as enacted by Section 1032 of Public Law 109-13.

The program, which will be known as TSGLI, is designed to provide financial assistance to service members during their recovery period from a serious traumatic injury.

As of Dec. 1, 2005, all members eligible for SGLI became insured for traumatic injury protection of up to \$100,000 unless they decline

SGLI coverage. A flat monthly premium of \$1.00 was added to the monthly SGLI deduction, regardless of the amount of SGLI coverage that the member has elected.

TSGLI is not disability compensation and has no effect on entitlement for compensation and pension benefits provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs or disability benefits provided by the Department of Defense. It is an insurance product similar to commercial dismemberment policies.

TSGLI provides money for a loss due to a specific traumatic event while disability compensation is intended to provide ongoing financial support to make up for the loss in income-earning potential due to service-connected injuries.

The retroactive provision of PL 109-13 provides that any service member who suffered a qualifying loss between Oct. 7, 2001, and Dec. 1, 2005, will receive a benefit under the TSGLI program if the loss was a direct result of injuries incurred in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom.

For more information, service members should contact their

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class

Dexter Lewis earned the Purple Heart Medal with citation for injuries sustained during combat while stationed in Iraq with the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Director of the Navy Nurse Corps, RADM Christine M. Bruzek-Kohler presented Dexter with his medal in a ceremony at Naval Hospital Pensacola, Fla., where Dexter is currently stationed.



individual service.

Point of contact for the Navy is Master Chief Ralph Gallaugh at (800) 368-3202 or ralph.gallaugh@navy.mil. ■

Story courtesy of DOD.

Health Longitudinal Technology Application), its global electronic health record system at the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Md.

AHLTA is the largest, most significant electronic health record system of its kind with the potential to serve more than 9 million service members, retirees and their families worldwide. When fully implemented, about 60,000 military healthcare professionals at DOD medical facilities in the United States, and 11 other countries will use this electronic health record system.

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Electronic Records for Military Health System

DOD achieved a major milestone with the launch of AHLTA (Armed Forces

Ricky's Tour

By J01 Mike Jones



Around the Fleet



◀ An MH-60S *Seahawk* helicopter, assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 28, aboard USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) makes its way toward USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) during a vertical weapons offload evolution.

Photo by PH3 Kristopher Wilson

▼ Sailors aboard USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) man the rails as the ship prepares to cross under the Golden Gate Bridge prior to a port call in San Francisco.

Photo by PHAN Justin R. Blake



◀ HN Faith Huffman prepares a typhoid shot in the medical clinic during a medical recall aboard USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75).

Photo by PH3 Kristopher Wilson

▼ An aviation boatswain's mate shows a weight

board to the pilot of an AV-8 *Harrier* prior to launch from the flight deck of USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7).

Photo by PH3 Christian Knoell



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"Beneficiaries health records will be available around the clock and around the world, available to healthcare providers, yet protected from loss and unauthorized access," said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. "Our electronic health record has matured to a point that its size and complexity are unrivaled. Most importantly, this new system was built in partnership with America's leading information technology companies."

Today, many thousands of military medical providers are using the system, and nearly 300,000 outpatient visits are captured digitally every week. Full deployment of the system in DOD's 800 clinics and 70 hospitals will be complete by December 2006.

The long-term vision, expected to be achieved in the next two to three years, is a continuously updated digital medical record from the point of injury or care on the battlefield to military clinics and hospitals in the United States, all completely transferable electronically to the Veterans Health Administration.

More information on AHLTA can be found on their Web site at www.ha.osd.mil/AHLTA. ■

Story courtesy of DOD.

New Wellness[■] Support Program Announced

DOD announced the recent implementation of a Post-Deployment Health Reassessment Program that reaches out to service members three to six months after returning from deployment.

This new commanders' program complements health assessments currently being conducted for service members before and immediately upon return from deployment.

"Our number one priority is the health and wellness of our service members," said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for Health Affairs.

The department realizes deployments, especially to theaters of combat operations, may result in health or adjustment difficulties for some service members. Many of these conditions and concerns take several months to become apparent following a service member's return home.

The new assessment program will provide additional health education to service members on deployment-related health problems and treatment resources.

For more information about the Post Deployment Health Reassessment visit the Web site at <https://fhp.osd.mil/pdhrainfo>. ■

Story courtesy of DOD.

JCMS Adds Time to Requisition Cycle

Sailors will see changes in both their order negotiation window and requisition cycle, as both are adjusted to better take advantage of the JASS Career Management System (JCMS) capabilities.

The order negotiating window is going from the former nine-to-six month window, to a nine-to-five month window, while the requisition cycle will go from two looks a month, to one.

"It was time to overhaul the cycle and get it in line with what future capabilities we're going to

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Around the Fleet



▲ A Navy Seabee, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74, watches a bulldozer clear debris in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan.
Photo by PH2 Eric S. Powell



▲ Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force personnel stand watch in the Combat Direction Center (CDC) aboard USS *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) as part of a bilateral Annual Exercise 2005 (ANNUALEX).

Photo by PHAN Kyle D. Gahlau

► Navy Chaplain, LT Jeffery R. BorneMann, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, reads a Bible passage during a religious service in Husaybah, Iraq, during Operation *Steel Curtain*.

Photo by Marine Corps Cpl. Michael R. McMaugh

▼ AEAN Cedric Sims, left, receives training from ABH3 Jeremy Troutman on proper fire-fighting nozzle handling techniques during a drill aboard USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65).

Photo by PHAA Brandon Morris





▼ **ET2 Brandon Schurr connects radio frequency lines to a universal exciter upgrade (UEU) during preventive maintenance and trouble shooting in the AIMD shop aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71).**

Photo by PHAN Derek Allen



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deliver with JCMS,” said OSCM (SW/AW) Pat Lumley, Navy Personnel Command. Lumley is the PERS-4 (detailing) senior enlisted advisor and the JCMS team leader. “We needed to provide adequate opportunity for commands to conduct the ranking and comment on applicants who are applying for jobs within their command.”

When Spiral 2.0 of JCMS was released in February 2005, commands were given the opportunity for the first time to rank and comment on perspective applicants applying for their command. The change to a monthly cycle will provide commands a full seven days on average to review applicants.

The change will also provide a longer application phase (about 14 days) for Sailors to review jobs and decide what’s best suited for their career path. Sailors will receive five or six looks at prospective jobs while in the negotiating window.

The new JCMS upgrades also allow more time for Sailors to weigh options when they’re incorporating families into their career decisions.

“Sailors today are much different than Sailors of yesterday because the spouse plays a very important role,” said Lumley. “When you negotiate a set of orders you need to be concerned not only about the career growth of the Sailor, you need to be concerned about the spouse, as well. It’s key that, as detailers and distribution people, we take both into account.”

“It’s important to have the family provide an input,” said NCC (SW) Reuben Hilerio, Navy Region Hawaii, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific and Naval Station Pearl Harbor career counselor. “You want to be able to discuss with your family ahead of time what options are available. You have to have that

family support.”

The improvements to JCMS are part of the overall Sea Warrior transformation, which is moving forward to align Navy Knowledge Online, the 5-Vector Model (5VM) and JCMS together to better aid and educate Sailors about their futures.

“We are tying JCMS in with the 5VM where the Sailors will have a career path established on their 5-Vector Model, and with JCMS they can use the job mapping capability to look for jobs they qualify for and submit applications,” said Lumley. ■

Story by JO3 Ryan C. McGinley, who is assigned to the public affairs office, Commander, Navy Region Hawaii.

Perform-to-Serve Program Extended to All First-Term Sailors

The Perform-to-Serve (PTS) program, designed to balance the manning of specific ratings and provide Sailors with greater advancement opportunity, has been expanded to include all first-term Sailors.

When implemented in March 2003, the program redistributed Sailors in CREO (Career/Reenlistment Objectives) 3, or overmanned, to CREO 1, or undermanned, ratings with such positive results that it was expanded in January 2004 to allow CREO 2 rating Sailors to apply, as well. This expansion now includes all first term Sailors regardless of CREO category.

Designed primarily with fleet input and to meet fleet readiness needs, PTS offers first-term Sailors in ratings with stalled advancement opportunity the

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Around the Fleet



▲ A Sailor assigned to *USS Key West (SSN 722)*, reunites with his family after returning home to Pearl Harbor following a regularly scheduled Western Pacific deployment.

Photo by PHC David Rush



▲ **HM2 K.J. Griffin**, assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 21, delivers first aid to a training mannequin during air ambulance training in the desert near Naval Air Facility El Centro, Calif. HSC-21 flies the MH-60S *Seahawk* helicopter and is preparing for an upcoming scheduled deployment to Iraq.

Photo by PH1 Michael Larson

▼ A member of Navy Band Southwest sounds his trumpet during a change of command ceremony for *USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76)* at Naval Air Station North Island, Calif.

Photo by PH3 Kevin S. O'Brien





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chance to reenlist and retrain in a rating where advancement is better and the fleet most needs skilled people.

“Navy leadership is committed to providing opportunity for Sailors in ratings with stalled advancement opportunities,” said Chief of Naval Personnel VADM Gerry Hoewing. “In some cases, this may mean Sailors converting to ratings that match their skills and interests. One of the critical goals of the program is providing choices for Sailors and ensuring we do not leave any capable, top-performing Sailor behind.”

The Fleet RIDE, or Rating Identification Engine, is a Web-based program designed to assist Sailors in making a more educated choice about which career path to choose. Using input from the Sailor, the program optimally pairs the Sailor’s career interests and qualifications with undermanned rating options.

“It is important for all first-term Sailors to sit down with their career counselors to review their opportunities in Fleet RIDE,” Michael Breh, Fleet RIDE program manager, explained. “The program not only identifies what ratings Sailors are eligible for, it also assists Sailors desiring a specific rating to identify areas needing improvement or waivers required.”

Enlisted community managers will continue to assign monthly reenlistment quotas based on fleet needs and rating manning. Those not offered in-rate reenlistment might be offered conversion to one of their rating choices. If conversion is not an option, the Sailor will be separated from the Navy at the end of their service obligation.

For more information regarding Perform to Serve, visit www.npc.navy.mil/CareerInfo/PerfomtoServe/ or call Navy

Personnel Command’s Customer Service Center at 1-866-U-ASK-NPC. ■

Story by LT Sarah T. Self-Kyler, who is assigned to the public affairs office, Chief of Naval Personnel.

Navy College Expanding Hours

To better serve Sailors stationed in fleet concentration areas, Navy College Offices began offering “fleet hours” at selected sites last month.

The new fleet hours are designed to help ensure Sailors have the opportunity to obtain personal educational counseling and testing services.

The locations and their new hours are: Northeast Region (NAVSUBASE New London, Groton, Conn.) 6:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Mon. to Fri.); Southeast Region (Norfolk Naval Station-Gilbert St, Va.) 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Mon. to Fri.) 7:00 to 3:30 (Sat.); Western/SW Region (San Diego on 32nd St/Naval Base Kitsap, Wash.) 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Mon. to Fri.) 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Sat.); Far East (Pearl Harbor, HI/Yokosuka, Japan) 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Mon. to Fri.) 8:00 a.m. to 1200 p.m. (Sat.). ■

Story by LT Susan Henson, public affairs office, Naval Personnel Development Command, Task Force EXCEL, Norfolk.

1953



Sailors aboard USS Tarawa (CVA 40) prepare to stow supplies during an at-sea replenishment.

▼ The “Ravens” ability to swiftly and properly secure an airfield is testimony to the MSD’s high mobility.



READY TO FACE

Terror has struck.

The events of Sept. 11, 2001, have changed how Americans view national security. The Navy has also changed the way they do business among their security forces. Now courageous patriots have an opportunity to join the ranks of the anti-terrorist/force protection team, Mobile Security Detachment (MSD).

THE TERROR

To become part of this specialized unit, individuals must first finish a Final Evaluation Problem (FEP). The force takes to the air, land and sea, working under scenarios that can break the spirit of the most hardened warrior.



Story and photos by PH2 Todd Frantom



◀ **The mobile** security team goes through many different scenario's during their final evaluation problem (FEP). They must be vigilant in how they handle what is literally thrown at them.

“After my ‘A’ school I chose the MSD force because they promised a lot of training and this was a new form of Navy security,” said Master-at-Arms 3rd Class Christine DeLeon.

These armed Sailors are no run-of-the-mill security guards. They are well-trained warriors focused on protecting DOD high-value assets, such as ships, cargo and people, against terrorist attacks, at sea and on land. The expeditionary force works where U.S. shore infrastructure does not exist, which means they must be highly deployable and ready to move at a



moment's notice.

They go through hundreds of hours of preparation and several different schools before attending the final test. Training includes topics such as Army Sentry, close combat weapons, hand-to-hand combat and combat lifesaving to name a few.

"The training is rigorous and what we go through can test the human spirit," said DeLeon.

"We faced drill after drill, from peaceful demonstrations to chemical/biological attacks."

Everything the Sailors go through

during their final evaluation is set up to simulate when the real world events turn ugly. The mobile security force must be vigilant in how they handle what is literally thrown at them. These Sailors must think "outside the box," while working as a cohesive unit.

First, they must pack out and convoy to a secured location. They have four hours to set up a secure base camp.

"I got really sick of concertina razor wire or C. wire," chuckled DeLeon.

"Like chickens with our heads cut off, we worked all hours setting up a perimeter.

▲ MSD teams swiftly maneuver rigid-hull inflatable boats (RHIB) during the training evolutions of the final evaluation.

We put up triple strands of C. wire and set vehicle inspection zones as well as personal inspection areas. Several crews guarded weapons and stations with ballistic shields, [and] .50 calibers on these locations."

Crews worked together to secure a pier with deployed boat teams for waterside protection. Other crews back up the boats and help protect a high-value asset, such as a ship.



▲ **“Ravens,”** are an air security team whose sole purpose is to protect and secure high-asset loads against terrorist attacks.

◀ **MSD teams** spend countless hours setting up concertina wire as perimeter security, then stand many hours of watches during FEP.

A Military Sealift Command ship played the role of a high-value asset, while a plane was brought in to further enhance realism.

“Once we had a secure home, the watches began,” said DeLeon.

“They were grueling. Imagine spending 18 hours a day staring at the same boring sights, waiting for something to happen.

► **“We faced drill after drill from peaceful demonstrations to chemical/biological attacks,”** said MA3 Christine DeLeon.

I could feel my mind and body starting to weaken, especially with such extreme circumstances and heat.”

The trainers did all they could to simulate real life challenges to the problems these Sailors faced. Such situations included snipers, improvised explosive devices (IEDs)/booby traps, demonstrators and suicide bombers.

“Personally, I had a hard time dealing with all the snipers,” exclaimed DeLeon. “It’s hard to track them without getting shot or leaving the perimeter – they were like ghosts.”

To top off all the ever-changing scenarios was the environment, itself.

For DeLeon’s detachment, MSD 26, the final training was held during the sweltering summer heat, off the coast of Portsmouth, Va. The temperature ran upwards of 115 degrees during the entire seven-day evolution.

“During the final evaluation, I was sweating from head to toe and smelled like a horse most of the week,” she said.

DeLeon was not alone; many of her shipmates were feeling the same way. MA3 Nick Day compared the heat to his experiences of fighting fires back home in northern California and said that his week of FEP was by far the hottest week of his life.

“Everybody was feeling it,” said Day.

“I felt lucky because I had the kind of background to draw endurance and frame of mind from, but I guess everybody out there had some kind of reserve of their own.”

People start doing some bizarre things after so long in the field along with such extreme heat. The Sailors of MSD 26 saw this first-hand.

“I recall myself and another guy coming back into the tactical operations tent, a place where the plans begin, and feeling plain out beat down,” said Day.

“We both pawed our way through an ice



chest of dirty water and ice just to feel something cold, considering our regular drinking water was literally as warm as bath water. We were acting like a couple of dogs that got locked out for a week without water.”

The heat these Sailors are forced to operate in is not by chance. The evolutions are purposely set up during the summer

heat to prepare the MSD teams for real-world operations held in places such as the Arabian Gulf. Like so many of the tests that these Sailors go through during their final evaluation, the process is set in place to test both the mind and body for a real casualty.

The MSD teams not only take to the land and sea but also have air security



▲ **MAC Derek Holman assesses team procedures during** the Mobile Security Detachment (MSD) 26 final evaluation. MSD 26 successfully passed their FEP and was certified “deployable.” In this rapidly growing community, nine of the Navy’s 12 mobile security detachments are ready to deploy or are already on deployment.

► **Craney Island Fuel Terminal and Naval Auxiliary** Landing Field provided command posts and supported the training team with the use of various facilities.



▲ **Security teams remain vigilant during** final evaluation. The role they play in a real-world scenario is a well-staffed, well-organized and well-equipped team providing point defense expeditionary anti-terrorism protection, operating independently, but in close coordination with the assets being protected, and the host nation’s security and military forces.

teams called “RAVENS.” These Sailors’ sole purpose is for aircraft protection and high-asset loads. Their ability to swiftly and properly secure an airfield was testimony to the detachment’s ability to be highly mobile.

MA3 Joseph Acuna recalled the intense

pressure he was under while undertaking a RAVEN training mission to North Carolina, during final evaluation.

“Our team had a plan on how we would secure the bird,” said Acuna. “There were hostile targets walking the perimeter and approaching vehicles at the same time, we





were definitely swamped with chaos, but thanks to our extensive training we were able to handle most everything we faced with ease.”

The MSD warriors are put through some of the best training the Navy, along with joint military forces, has to offer.

“I’ll tell you what, when you have 80 individuals with one goal in mind and this thoroughly trained, you have an unstoppable force,” said DeLeon.

“MSD 26 is ready to face the new terror, and I look forward to being deployed with this elite anti-terrorism team.” ■

Frantom is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

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Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200602/feature_1/

▼ Exercise *Bright Star* is a biannual, joint/coalition exercise that has been conducted since 1981. Here, QM1 Stephan Rodriguez, craftmaster of LCU 1630, aligns his craft for a beach landing during *Bright Star*'s final evaluation demonstration.

Breaking Barriers

Story and photos by PH2 Todd Frantom



AL-RAHMAN, AL-RAHMAN, AL-RAHMAN ...

Soft echoes of Muslim prayer fill the air. The religious recitation is not coming from a mosque, as one might think, but from a berthing compartment aboard USS *Tarawa* (LHA 1).

Here, Jordanian and Egyptian soldiers have been welcomed

aboard the multi-purpose amphibious assault ships, during the sweltering heat of summer, to strengthen military-to-military relationships during Exercise *Bright Star*, held in Egypt. This joint/coalition exercise has been conducted every other year since 1981. More than 70,000 troops from 10 or more countries normally participate.



▼ **Jordanian Sergeant Osama Salem Quasen and TM1 Ronald Rosser**
head toward USS Tarawa (LHA 1) aboard LCU 1630.





During the training, service members have a unique opportunity to share cultures, customs and professional military procedures, including beach landings, assault scenarios and numerous other operational exercises. Just as importantly during this time, these war-fighters break their cultural boundaries, increase awareness and add appreciation for the joint commitment of fighting terrorism.

"I was skeptical of how we would work together," said Quartermaster 1st Class Stephan Rodriguez, craftmaster of Utility Landing Craft (LCU) 1630, a 135-foot boat used to land and retrieve personnel and equipment.

"This was my first real mission as head of one of the four LCU's aboard *Tarawa*, and I was feeling the pressure," said Rodriguez. "Not knowing what to expect, I was extremely frustrated and stressed out. To top everything off, we were to

▲ **Bright Star is an important part of** U.S. Central Command's theater engagement strategy, and is designed to improve readiness and relationships between American, Egyptian and other participating forces.

bring the coalition force aboard during the middle of the night in the pitch dark."

Egyptians and Jordanians loaded onto the small craft, along with their equipment, which included tanks, artillery and motor vehicles, under bright moonlight.

"I knew when their vehicles streaked aboard, nearly running over me, I was in for quite a ride back to *Tarawa*."

According to Rodriguez, an unusual silence was in the air on the rocky sail back to the ship, which lasted about an hour.

"No one said much of anything, and I think everyone was feeling uncomfortable. I know I was," Rodriguez said.

"That is, until I met Maj. Mohammad Sabre, officer in charge of his Jordanian



▲ **A Jordanian soldier follows the** daily Muslim ritual of praying to, Allah, or Al-Rahman (the All-Merciful) in a berthing aboard *Tarawa*.



▲ **Egyptian soldiers prepare their M-1 Abram's tank in the well deck of USS Tarawa (LHA 1)** for the day's show-of-power demonstration, held on Egyptian shores. The exercise and events are designed to familiarize coalition forces with personnel, equipment and tactics of the participating nations.

special force detachment.”

Sabre, a towering, intimidating individual, stood over his troops like George Washington crossing the Delaware.

“I led him down a cramped ladderwell into the craft's small galley for coffee, which he gladly accepted,” said Rodriguez.

“We shared stories and experiences of our different militaries. He talked about his rigorous ‘Green Beret’ training at Fort Bragg, N.C., while in America and how he grew to respect the U.S. military way of instruction.

“He told me how American fighters are no joke,” Rodriguez said.

“Sabre is well-traveled and met President Bush while training in the United States,” said Rodriguez. “He told me

▼ **Jordanian Sergeant Osama Saleem**

Qasem exchanges covers with SMSN Wesley Runyan while transiting to the Egyptian shore.



a funny story about how his men took the photo and cut out the major's face with the President. Each had a photo of them put in his place. The smile on major's face when he told me this was priceless."

Sometimes differences between people located around the globe aren't that remarkable. Sabre has two children that have grown up influenced by the American way of life.

"My sons love Fruit Loops," exclaimed Sabre. "Both also enjoy watching American films. I recall one argument that humored me between them, who would win in a battle, Spider-Man or Batman?"

By the time Rodriguez and Sabre arrived at *Tarawa*, in the wee hours of the morning, a new understanding and respect had already been established.

"We were able to communicate, and I was reassured that the mission and

their stay aboard would be a success," Rodriguez said.

"I didn't feel like we were strangers anymore; I had made a new friend."

LCU 1630 made her way into the well deck of *Tarawa* and tension grew as the guests readied up their gear in hopes that they would be welcomed aboard.

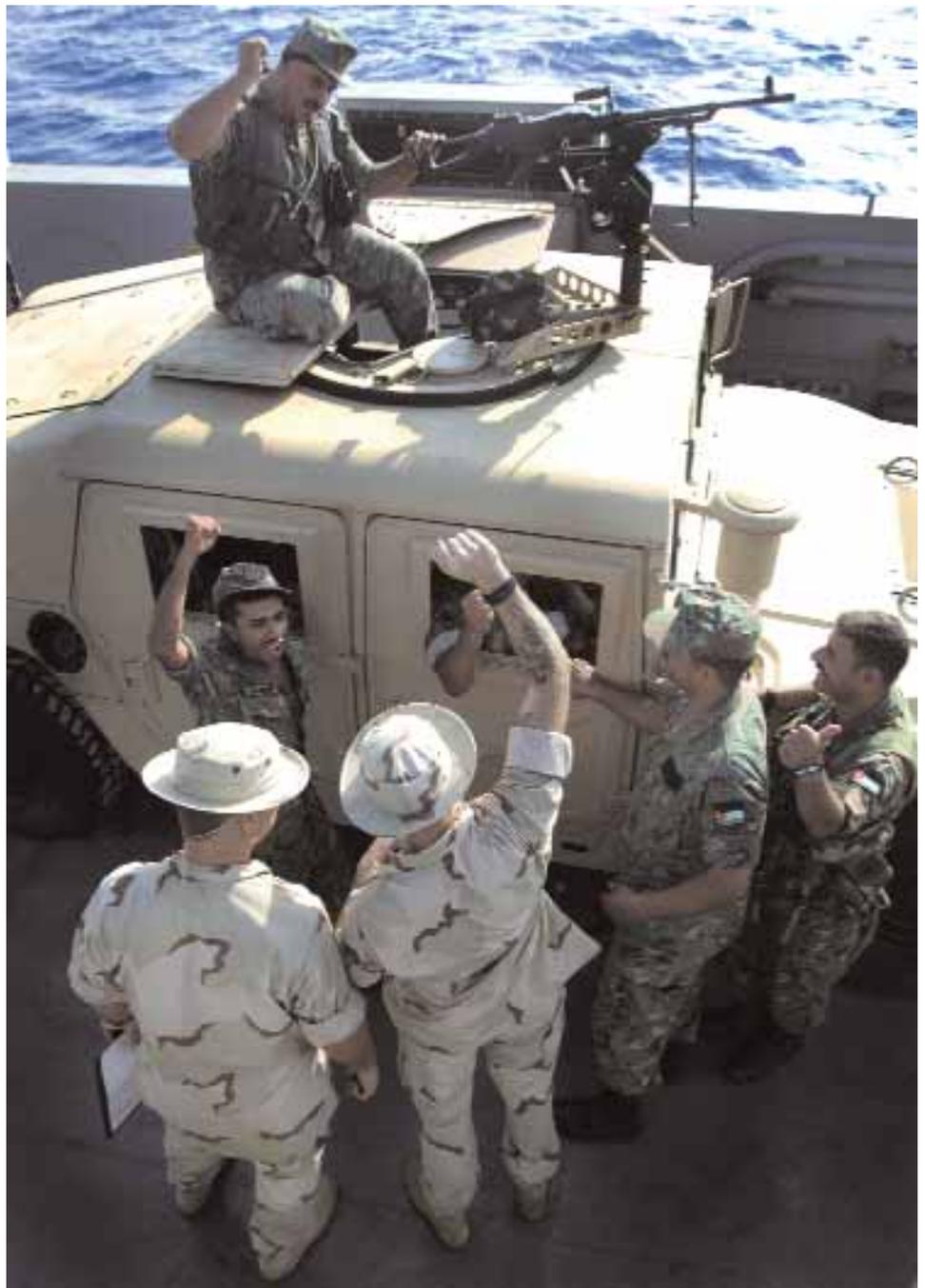
Once the craft was secured, the soldiers

made their way to the bow of the craft, where a smiling face greeted them, Aviation Machinist's Mate 1st Class Mohammad Khan, a volunteer interpreter for the new visitors.

▼ **Joint forces give one last "hoorah"** before demonstrations begin. *Bright Star* provides military forces at all levels with unique opportunities to strengthen military-to-military relationships.

▼ **USS *Tarawa* has impressively**

demonstrated during *Bright Star* the ability to accomplish her primary mission to embark, deploy and land elements of a Marine Landing Force in an assault by helicopters, landing craft, amphibious vehicles or any combination of these methods.







◀ **A utility landing craft returns to USS *Tarawa* after delivering Egyptian and Jordanian soldiers to the beach.**

▶ **AD1 Mohammad Khan (right) discusses daily plans with Jordanian Major Mohammad Sabre in a berthing area aboard USS *Tarawa* (LHA 1).**



“They looked scared,” said Khan.

“However, once I started speaking Arabic, broken at best, they perked up. I was someone who understood their language and I think that reassured them they would be in good hands during their stay here.”

Khan was born in Pakistan, grew up in Saudi Arabia and moved to America with his family when he was 19.

“I never realized when I enlisted how handy my heritage would be,” said Khan. “I felt proud to be able to help out the soldiers who came aboard.”

After a few greetings, Khan led the wary men to their respective berthing. It was obvious that a ship was unfamiliar territory for them.

“They were awestruck at the size of the small bunk beds and chuckled among themselves as they scurried around choosing their racks,” said Khan.

After unpacking their belongings and claiming a small piece of sanctuary, they made themselves at home. Curiosity was at a peak as the soldiers timidly introduced themselves to the U.S. Sailors in the berthing.

“I really didn’t have to do much speaking for the guys,” said Khan. “It seemed that simple gestures and hand signals, along with lots of smiles worked well enough.

“Especially for the Jordanians. They were very friendly and went out of their way to learn and share their differences with the Sailors,” Khan continued. “I was

amazed at how well everyone got along. I could tell that my job was going to be easy.”

The Egyptian soldiers, unlike the Jordanians, were separated from their upper chain of command in their berthing arrangements and were much more reserved with the American Sailors.

“I believe it is because they don’t get much social interaction with the people in charge of them. That’s the reason they’re more reserved,” said Khan. “But the Jordanians became acquainted with us extremely fast, especially because their officer acted as a mediator for anyone interested in speaking to them.”

With that, the groundwork had been set for *Bright Star* to succeed. While not yet on the front lines or in the heat of simulated battle, *Tarawa* became the perfect platform to lay the groundwork for successful coalitions to come.

“I missed you,” expressed Sabre to Rodriguez, one day later, upon returning from a successful training exercise.

“That’s what *Bright Star* is all about,” Rodriguez responded. ■

Frantom is a photojournalist for All Hands.

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Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200602/feature_2/

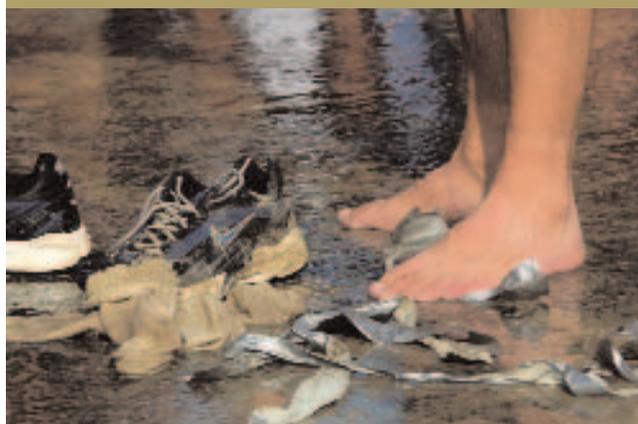




DIRTY VOLUNTEERS

Story and photos by PH2 Todd Frantom

▲ “It is so hot out here, I just enjoy wallowing like a pig in each mud pit,” said one participant in the 2005 Mud Run.



▲ **The Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA)** is a charitable, non-profit organization that receives funding from the United Way/Combined Federal Campaign, fees charged for programming and fund-raising efforts like the 2005 Mud Run.

◀ **After running through 8 kilometers of obstacles** such as surf, sand, mud and muck aboard Little Creek Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Va., some runners just gave in to the soothing properties of mud.

Splat!

“We get muddy for fun,” said Kim Fadley, a YMCA volunteer.

Nearly 2,000 participants gather each year for an 8K race through the sand, surf, mud and muck of Little Creek Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Va., all for a good cause.

These runners painstakingly slog through muddy water, scale towering walls and sink down in sandy beaches.

Scooping up a handful of mud and slathering it on her face, Fadley exclaimed, “Why not put this mud to good use!”

The Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA), Hampton Roads, Va., does exactly that, by hosting the annual event to raise money to improve the quality of life for junior enlisted military families.

The funds improve child-care and child development; sponsor spouse support activities, aerobic classes and baby-sitting classes;

host ship support group meetings, provide unit arrival support; and sponsor the military lounge at Norfolk International Airport. ■

Frantom is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

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Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah20061/feature_1/

▼ A majority of the participants simply enjoyed taking in the whole mud experience rather than compete for the best time.





Task Force 76 Sailors Climb Mount Fuji

Story and photos by JOSN Adam R. Cole

▲ The steep slope of Mount Fuji is made up of different levels of once-molten lava.

In the morning it was, *Ohayoo gozaimasu*. In the afternoon it was, *Konnichi wa*, and by evening it became, *Konban wa*.

Sailors, forward deployed in Sasebo, Japan, exchanged these greetings with Japanese hikers during a recent 16-hour hike on Mount Fuji, Japan's tallest peak.

While the operational tempo for forward-deployed Sailors is one of the highest in the world, there are brief moments in which to savor the experience of living and working in Japan. Several members of USS *Fort McHenry* (LSD 43) who had just returned from Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) in Malaysia, felt the need to get out and relax a little—by taking on Fuji.

Eighteen outdoor enthusiasts (and four guides) began the trek up Fuji at 7:30 a.m., on a slightly misty and overcast day. The group, mostly Sailors and a handful of civilians, were all smiles at the start and end point—also known as the fifth station.

"[Fuji] is special because it is the highest mountain in Japan," said Kyoko Okuma, MWR's Travels and Tours representative, who provided essential translations on the trip. "If you make it to the top, you gain confidence. It is spiritual because it is pure."

After purchasing traditional Fuji walking sticks—professionally carved wooden walking sticks with a Japanese flag and two bells attached—the Sasebo crew was ready to launch from the fifth station, about 6,560 feet above sea level.

There are nine total stations on the way up to the top of the mountain. Most people start at the fifth station because it is the only paved access to the trailhead. Along the way,

there are Japanese stations, where hikers can eat, drink and get their walking sticks branded with an insignia from that particular station.

From the first step of the Fuji trek, the climbers enthusiastically faced an uphill battle that would take the entire day to push through.

The first 1,640 feet is mainly a smooth switchback trail all the way up to the sixth station. Vegetation is abundant, reflecting the lush green that marks the entire country. Past the sixth level the green fades away and the landscape transforms to rocks and the remains of molten lava. The ascent becomes trickier.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Catherine R. Funderberg, of *Fort McHenry* and HM2 Guy Duke of the Branch Health-Clinic Sasebo, fought hard through the challenges of altitude and endurance throughout the climb.

But despite being winded, both choose to press on, aided by the entire group with helping hands and positive words.

"I think it meant a lot more to be able to help someone reach the top," said Midshipman 1st Class Karen J. Lu, an ROTC student from the University of California, Davis.





▲ **Sailors assigned to USS Fort McHenry (LSD 43)**, lead the charge to the top of Mount Fuji. Some, who had climbed the mountain twice before, fought for every step but pushed through.

▶ **A well-worn hiking stick**, is about to get its last brand—the one from the summit.

▼ **Renee Ward, lead outdoor recreation assistant**, receives a special branding on her Mount Fuji walking stick. Branded insignias are available at huts at rest stops along the long route to the top of Mount Fuji, the 12,389-foot peak that is a national symbol of Japan.





▲ **Kyoko Okuma of MWR's Travels and Tours and M/1C Lisa M. Schrodt**, a Reserve Officer Training Corps student from the University of Florida, view the first marker on their journey to the top. Hikers also found meter markers that tell them how far they are from the summit.

Each resting point, which leads to another brand on the walking stick, becomes the incentive to keep going. The group steadily moved from checkpoint to checkpoint as one linked chain, slowly but surely filling their wooden poles up with etched markings.

Another motivating symbol and a true sign of progress are elevation signs positioned at each hut rest area. By mid-afternoon, the group reached the eighth station—elevation 11,319 feet.

Now, many members of the group faced swirling clouds, colder temperatures, general fatigue and altitude sickness, but they remained determined.

The ninth station is marked by a constant haze. “It was a battle all the way through,” said Duke. “I hated looking up, but I loved looking down, seeing how far we had actually come. I owe a lot to the positive words of the guides in getting me moving forward.”

Just before the sun faded, the group reached the summit through an endless

path of switchbacks. The travel-worn group pushed through the second *torii* gate, the Japanese symbol for holy ground, flanked by *Kornainu* or *Shishi*, (lion statues that stand guard at such spiritual places). This entrance was the end of the journey.

In a country that is naturally spiritual, shrines and temples are as commonplace as parks. Legend has it that the summit of the mountain has been home to a fire god, a Shinto goddess of flowing trees and a Buddhist god of wisdom. Japanese culture associates the peak to heaven because of how high it reaches into the sky.

The Sasebo climbers may not have realized the same spiritual enlightenment on top of Fuji as some Japanese do, but they did feel relieved to be finished with their 12-hour ascent to the summit.

“Being from Florida, I’m not used to mountains and hills, so climbing that high was really cool,” said Mid/1C Lisa M. Schrodt, an ROTC student from the University of Florida also training aboard *Fort McHenry*.

”I loved looking out over the side and being above the clouds.”

“I had no doubt I’d make it,” said Funderburg, who has climbed Fuji two other times, once in 1993 and again in 2004. “It just takes perseverance. One step at a time.”

To mark the summit victory, the group sat down on benches, slurping up instant noodles with chopsticks that had been purchased earlier in the trip.

The smiles finally returned to the group and the Sailors couldn’t contain their excitement about what they had accomplished once back at the bottom.

“We did it!” exclaimed Seaman Charles A. Neal of *Fort McHenry*, as he charged onto the bus. “That wasn’t that hard.” ■

Cole is assigned to the public affairs office, Commander, Amphibious Group 1

Website Exclusive

Find more photos online at www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200602/feature_4/



Focus on
Service

Story and photo by
PH2 Todd Frantom

WATER + RESCUE

October 2004, *The Fort Huachuca Scout*, the headline reads; “SAR swimmer Boatswain’s Mate 3rd Class Pepe Montoya, 32, from Lima, Peru, rescued Marine Corps Capt. Jack Harriman, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit’s Force Reconnaissance Platoon commander. During a vessel boarding, search and seizure training operation with elements of Expeditionary Strike Group 5, a series of large waves caused a 12-meter rigid hull inflatable boat (RHIB) and a simulated enemy vessel to separate, causing Harriman to fall off the RHIB.”

Montoya jumped into the frigid, 62-degree water, battling four- to five-foot swells, risking his own life to stabilize a dazed and shocked Harriman near the rescue boat.

“That was one of the proudest days in my Navy career,” said Montoya.

When any Navy vessel sets out to sea you can bet your life that a search and rescue swimmer will be on board.

Montoya is now a BM2 and has many missions under his belt. He is currently assigned to search and rescue aboard USS *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6).

“Being a rescue swimmer has to be one of the most rewarding jobs in the Navy,” said Montoya. “I know that I am proud and would risk my life any day to save a shipmate.”

*Frantom is a photojournalist assigned to
All Hands.*

Valentine's Day

Story by PHCS(AW/SW) Joe Dorey

Perhaps you've heard of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre (SVDM). Or perhaps you've been part of an SVDM.

Well, massacre might be too strong a word (or acronym), but not fulfilling the duties expected of you on this annual festival can make you wish you were dead.

As the story goes, back in 1929, several members from a rival gang of the famous Chicago mobster, Al Capone, were machine-gunned down in a North Chicago garage on February 14th, ergo, the title "St. Valentine's Day" massacre.

But for us modern-day, non-criminal types, it still behooves us to take extra care not to be caught with our valentines down.

Society has taught us to participate in this ritual at an early age.

I can remember the days of a "secret valentine" in grammar school, where I, and several other young boys sent anonymous wishes to a girl in our class named Julie. Some other guy got a reply from her. Maybe it wasn't so secret after all.

As we got older SVD became more important to the love struck than birthdays and holidays. Real anniversaries didn't exist yet.

Of course what makes it most difficult is that it is one of those *romantic* days that everyone else *celebrates* at the same time. Nothing like the pressure of, "What did you get?" to spice up your teenage years.

By the time you have to give someone a valentine gift for the second year in a row – you know you are a goner.

I've been a goner for my wife for 20-something years now. (I actually know exactly how many, but don't want to appear completely spanked). And in that time, have I missed recognizing any festive occasions? NO! Technology and society have seen to that.

There's plenty of advertising (like this piece) with SVD specials and packages available for purchase. Even at sea, the Navy Exchange can hook you up if you haven't planned ahead.

Back before the proliferation of e-mail, I had prepared myself for deployment. Yes, I brought a full sea bag aboard, but I thought I had everything else covered by packing away a birthday card, an anniversary card and voila! – an SVD "get-out-of-jail-free" card. But low and behold, when time was getting close to mailing it (you know, five minutes after "shift colors") I couldn't find it! Woe is me. Blaming the lost card on an errant "mail buoy" wouldn't work even for such a remote wish.



After toying with the idea of making my own card, complete with stick-figure drawings, I recruited the help of an illustrator/draftsman friend. He helped me create a very unique, one-of-a-kind card for my wife, including a few Spanish phrases. I managed to get it in the next mail buoy in time to get home by the 14th. That was a close one – massacre averted.

Of all the roses and jewelry and store-bought cards I have given my wife through the years, she seems to treasure that one most. Maybe money really isn't everything.

In some ways I miss the challenge of keeping my presence home while at sea. It is always part of the reason homecomings are so overwhelming. The anticipation of celebrating all the missed special events is what helps get us through those lonely days of deployment.

Now it's not my job or intent to try and make you feel guilty about SVD. Your secret someone can handle that one. I'm not in the business of selling flowers or perfume or flak jackets. Just remember, we're all in this together; as such it is written.

So if you're reading this and you don't have an SVD survival plan initiated – duck! I feel an act of complete destruction coming on. And while waiting for the next mail buoy to come along, you should do the right thing (while supporting the economy) and let your secret someone know you appreciate them as they've supported you during your Navy tour, *every day*.

Dorey is the managing editor of All Hands.

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