

May 2011

# ALLHANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY



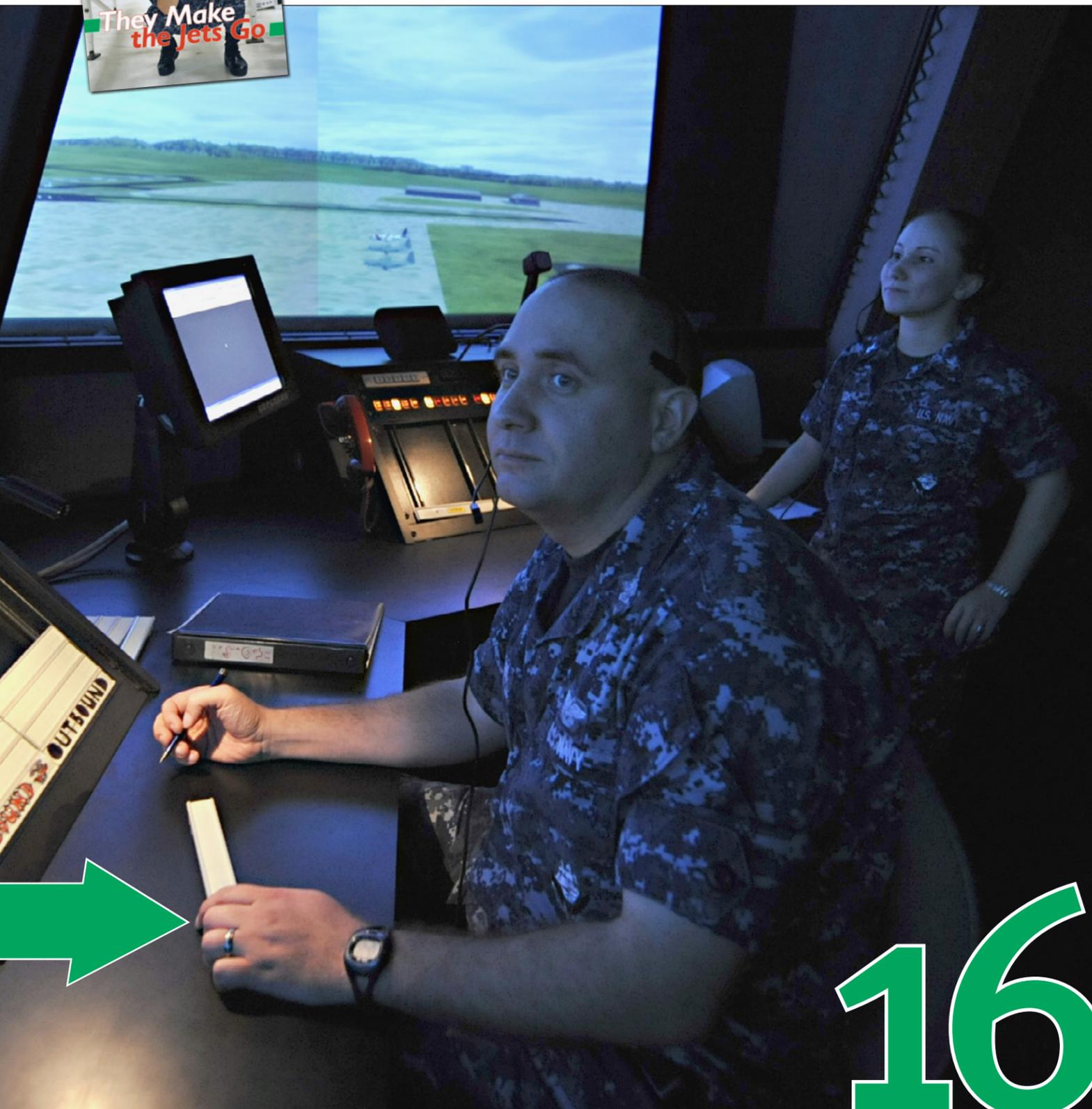
**They Make  
the Jets Go**



[On the Front Cover]

Students at NATTC learn how to repair exact engine models of the aircraft they will be working on out in the fleet.

Photo by MC2(EXW) Todd Frantom



### Echoes from Aviation Field Yorktown

Today, located just outside of Naval Weapons Station (WPNSTA) Yorktown, Va., along Old Williamsburg Road, Route 238, near Lebanon Church and Endview Plantation, stands a Virginia highway historical marker — a constant reminder of Aviation Field Yorktown.

Photo by MC2 Devon Dow



### Rebound to Wings

Then-Naval Flight Officer (NFO) Candidate Ensign Timothy Stecker was severely injured during a boating accident March 6, 2009, at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Fla. Despite having his leg amputated, Lt.j.g. Timothy Stecker recently graduated as a naval flight officer.

Photo by MC2(EXW) Todd Frantom

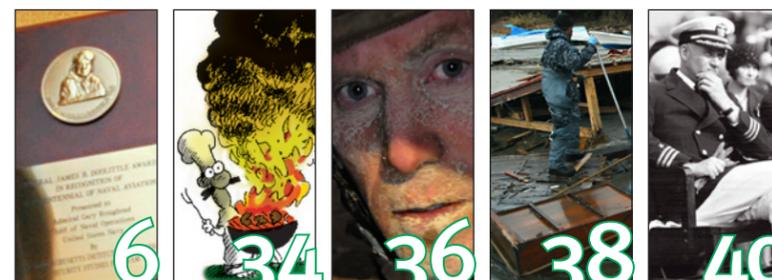


### Taking the Navy Plunge

The Sailors, and civilian employees assigned to the Aviation Survival Training Center (ASTC) aboard Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville, Fla., serve the single purpose of ensuring aviators from U.S. and allied installations around the world are prepared for what could happen when they fly.

Photo by MC2 Shannon Renfroe

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### They Make the Jets Go

It's essential that the Sailors know the importance of their tasks, whatever the capacity and to understand the concept of teamwork. The culture at Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC), Pensacola, Fla., is designed to not only teach technical proficiency in aviation, but also the fundamentals of being a good Sailor.

Photo by MC3 Leone Mynes

[Next Month]

All Hands recently visited the brig in Charleston, S.C., where inmates train working dogs for wounded warriors.



A plane captain performs a pre-flight inspection on an F/A-18C *Hornet* assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron 25, aboard USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70).  
Photo by MC3 Travis K. Mendoza

## Celebrating a Century of Naval Aviation Heritage

This year, our Navy is observing the Centennial of Naval Aviation, celebrating 100 years of heritage, progress and achievement in naval aviation. The enlisted men and women who have served in the aviation community are an important part of that heritage and legacy.

Some of the first pilots in the early days of naval aviation came from the enlisted ranks. In 1916, a class of enlisted men, selected from Bluejackets and Marines already on duty at Pensacola or aboard USS North Carolina, was formed and placed under instruction in flying. These Sailors were eventually commissioned as officers and designated as naval aviators, while some remained in enlisted pilot status.

After World War I, the Navy decided to select a certain number of enlisted men for flight training and duty as “pilots of heavier-than-air craft and directional pilots of dirigibles.” In 1920, Chief Quartermaster (Aviation) Harold “Kiddy” Karr received his “wings of gold” and was designated as the Navy’s first naval aviation pilot (NAP). Other notable members of that first class of NAPs were Chief Machinist’s Mate (Aviation) Floyd Bennett, who in 1926, flew then-Lt. Cmdr. Richard Byrd in his attempt to reach the North Pole and was awarded the Medal of Honor for his efforts; and MMC (Aviation) Eugene “Smokey” Rhoads. Rhoads, who shoveled coal on railroad steam engines before enlisting in the Navy, was a flight engineer and the only enlisted man on the crew of the NC-4, which made the first transatlantic flight in May 1919.

Another member of the first group of NAPs, MMC (Aviation) Francis Ormsbee Jr., was awarded the Medal of Honor for extraordinary heroism in a rescue of a downed pilot on Sept. 25, 1918.

NAPs also saw action and served with valor during World War II as fighter pilots. One such NAP, Chief Petty Officer Wilbur “Spider” Webb, a member of Fighting Squadron 2 aboard USS Hornet (CV 12), became an “instant ace” in June 1944 when he shot down eight enemy planes during the Battle of the Philippine Sea.

Another notable figure in naval aviation history was Chief Aviation Ordnanceman John W. Finn. On the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, Finn, who was stationed at Naval Air Station Kaneohe Bay, was at home when he heard the sound of gunfire. He drove to the aircraft hangars, and found the base under attack by Japanese planes and most of his squadron’s PBY Catalina planes in flames.



Finn’s Sailors were trying to fight back, using machine guns mounted in the PBYs, either by firing from inside the burning planes or removing the guns and mounting them on improvised stands. Finn mounted a .50 caliber machine gun on a moveable platform and pushed it into an open area. For the next two hours, Finn fired on the incoming Japanese planes, even after being seriously wounded, until the attack was over. After receiving medical treatment for his wounds, he returned to the hangars and helped arm the surviving planes.

For his actions that day, Finn was awarded the Medal of Honor. Until his passing last year at the age of 100, Finn was the oldest living Medal of Honor recipient and the last living recipient from the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Four of the 12 master chief petty officers who have served as master chief petty officer of the Navy (MCPON) were from the aviation community: MCPONs John Whittet, Tom Crow, Billy Sanders and Duane Bushey.

Bluejackets have been making their mark on our naval aviation heritage for the past 100 years, and continue to do so today. Whether they’re on the flight decks of our aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships launching and recovering aircraft in support of maritime security operations; in the air as part of a helicopter aircrew; or on the ground maintaining and servicing our aircraft at shore facilities worldwide, the men and women of our aviation force are making a difference around the world. I’m certain that 100 years from now, when we celebrate naval aviation’s bicentennial, the next generation will be reading about YOUR accomplishments in the history books.

Thank you for all you do, shipmates! Happy 100th! **AH**

**ALLHANDS**

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Photo by MCC Tiffini Jones Vanderwyst

CNO Adm. Gary Roughead receives the Doolittle Award on behalf of the Centennial of Naval Aviation in Boston.

## CNO Receives Prestigious Award on Behalf of Naval Aviation

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Adm. Gary Roughead, recently attended the James H. Doolittle Awards dinner in Cambridge, Mass., where he was the keynote speaker and received the Doolittle Award.

The award, named in honor of Air Force Gen. James Doolittle who flew the famous Doolittle Raid over Tokyo during World War II, is given by the Society of Experimental Test Pilots in recognition for outstanding accomplishment in technical management or engineering achievement in aerospace technology.

During his speech, CNO recognized the progressive innovation and audacious aviators of the Navy's aviation community.

"Looking back, we must applaud those early aviators for anticipating a need, for having a vision, of the operational importance of such an oddity as employing aircraft from the decks of ships," said Roughead.

Roughead went on to discuss the imperative role naval aviation has in today's operational successes, especially during humanitarian response and disaster relief efforts.

"The Navy's small footprint offshore and flexible range of capabilities gives our nation

attractive options to influence events," said Roughead. "In many respects, naval aviation remains the most visible element of our commitment to global capacity and flexible capabilities."

He highlighted the rapid innovation Doolittle applied and spoke about the challenges of quickly delivering innovative technology into the hands of Sailors today.

"The likelihood that Doolittle's raid could not have happened in today's defense acquisition, development, and test environments requires our most urgent attention," said Roughead.

CNO spoke of the increasing demand for the capabilities the Navy provides the nation, especially in the ever-evolving global security environment.

"With all that is changing in this information age, the requirement for us to come from the sea endures," said Roughead. "Naval aviation, for its part, forms a key component of the offshore options our nation will need in the

future and which will not be found anywhere else but in America's Navy." AH

Story by MC2(SW) Kyle Patrick Malloy, Chief of Naval Operations Office, Washington, D.C.

## Revised Family Readiness Group Instruction and New Handbook Released

Chief of Naval Personnel, in conjunction with Commander, Navy Installations Command and U.S. Fleet Forces Command, recently announced the release of the revised family readiness group (FRG) instruction and the new FRG handbook. The instruction changes are a result of feedback from fleet and spouse focus groups.

"The revised instruction provides commanders with more guidance and oversight for FRGs," said Rear Adm. Michael J. Browne, director, Personal Readiness and Community Support. "The policy revision and development of the handbook demonstrates the Navy's continued commitment to supporting our families throughout all aspects of the deployment cycle."

FRGs are a part of the military support service network consisting of family members, Sailors and civilians connected to the command. The role of the FRG is to help plan, coordinate, and conduct informational, care-taking, morale-building activities to enhance preparedness, command mission readiness, and increase the resiliency and well-being of all Sailors and their families.

"Today's Navy family is faced with increased operations tempo and extended deployment schedules," said Kandi Debus, Southeast Regional ombudsman. "FRGs are important because they give families the opportunity to provide much needed support to one another."

FRGs prepare members for deployments and homecomings, provide family support during deployments, help families adjust to challenges and support one another in times of personal, unit or area crises. They welcome and mentor members who are new to the Navy lifestyle and coordinate social events, such as holiday celebrations.

The FRG handbook can be downloaded at [www.cnpc.navy.mil/navycni/groups/public/@hq/@ffr/documents/document/cnicpa197800.pdf](http://www.cnpc.navy.mil/navycni/groups/public/@hq/@ffr/documents/document/cnicpa197800.pdf). AH

Story courtesy of Commander, Navy Installations Command, Washington, D.C.

## Career Roadmap Updates to IT and CT Ratings

Comprehensive updates to Learning and Development Roadmaps (LaDRs) are underway with the posting of revised Cryptology Technician (CT) and Information Technology Technician (IT) rating LaDRs to Navy Knowledge Online (NKO).

The LaDR updates provide the latest Sailor development information and include the introduction of rank-specific certification information via Navy Credentialing Opportunities Online (Navy COOL) and the United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP).

"We designed LaDRs to be living documents from the very beginning," said Tom Smith, Naval Education and Training Command (NETC) enlisted education coordinator. "As the individual ratings make both major and minor calibrations, LaDRs will reflect the updates and remain the ultimate career reference tool. The added Navy COOL functionality was a logical step."

LaDRs are fleet-focused products that provide guidance to Sailors along a learning and development continuum specific to each rating. These online guides explain in detail what each Sailor needs to succeed at specific points in their career, including information about certifications that can help Sailors demonstrate their professional competency. The most significant change this year is the embedding of certifications and apprenticeships into the appropriate rank category for each rating.

"It can be intimidating when ITs look at their rate on the Navy COOL website and see 109 different certifications available," said Sam Kelley, Center for Information Dominance (CID) Navy COOL certifications program supervisor. "The obvious question is 'where do I start?' By identifying certifications appropriate to each rating by rank, Sailors can see where they should invest their time."

Certifications listed on the Navy COOL website with a 'Navy bucks' icon match 80 percent or greater of what a Sailor either learns or performs in their rating, and have also been approved for payment or reimbursement through the Navy's Credentials Program Office.

"The LaDR for each rating is organized around significant career phases and enables targeted learning opportunities," said Rick Nein, NETC program analyst in charge of LaDR updates. "Sailors new to the Navy will find that LaDRs provide a solid technical and

analytical foundation that help support tactical and operational competencies. LaDRs are also sequenced to meet growing and changing roles throughout a Sailor's career."

For a supervisor, LaDRs provide a navigable, rate-specific guide to assist in the effective mentorship of Sailors.

"Command indoctrination is the perfect opportunity for leadership to introduce the LaDRs to their new Sailors," said Master Chief Navy Career Counselor (SW/SCW/AW) Tod Shuls, NETC force retention program manager. "Introducing the LaDRs early on will result in every service member gaining baseline knowledge of his or her career progression and assist them in setting realistic goals toward upward career mobility. LaDRs also serve as an important guidance tool to use during a Sailor's career development board; review of LaDRs by leaders helps them recognize and reinforce a Sailor's forward progress and positive job and character traits."

Commanders are required to ensure distribution of LaDRs to every enlisted pay grade at all commands. This can be accomplished through Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) <https://www.nko.navy.mil/portal/home/>.

After accessing the NKO home page, a Sailor selects the 'career management' tab and navigates along the blue side banner and selects the Enlisted Learning and Development (LaDR) hyperlink. According to Chief of Naval Operations instruction (OPNAVINST) 1500.77, the LaDRs are required to be used during Career Development Boards.

Additional information about LaDRs is detailed in NAVADMIN 258-10, available through the Naval Personnel Command Web site at [www.npc.navy.mil/ReferenceLibrary/Messages/](http://www.npc.navy.mil/ReferenceLibrary/Messages/). AH

Story by Ed Barker, Naval Education and Training, Pensacola, Fla.

## EFSR Goes Paperless by Sept. 30

Navy Personnel Command reminds Sailors that the enlisted field service record (EFSR) closeout has been extended to Sept. 30, 2011, for Commander, Naval Air Forces (CNAF) activities.

The original closeout date was one year earlier and outlined in NAVADMIN 040/10.

"We are still assessing the closeout status on the shore side," said Jim Tanner, NPC director,



U.S. Navy Photo

## Bethesda Chief Named 'Legionnaire of the Year'

Chief Master-At-Arms (SW/AW) Robert Hebron, assigned to Naval Support Activity Bethesda, Md., was recently named "Legionnaire of the Year" by the American Legion's Henderson Smith Edmonds Post 86, Rockville, Md.

Hebron volunteered for numerous tasks at Post 86 including becoming the post historian; spending countless hours organizing and researching newspaper articles; and reviewing more than 1,000 pictures. Hebron also organized a membership drive that brought more than 50 new active-duty members into the legion post. The American Legion's involvement with wounded warriors inspired Hebron's volunteer service.

"I've seen what [the American Legion] has done here at the National Naval Medical Center and their integral role in helping individuals transition when returning home from combat," said Hebron. "Their support is fantastic." AH

Story by MC3 Alexandra Snow, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Md.

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Photo by McJennifer R. Hudson

FN Erica Williams, assigned to Personnel Support Detachment (PSD) aboard Joint Base Charleston-Weapons Station, Charleston, S.C., checks a box of personnel records to verify if the papers need to be shredded or stored.

Right—Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40 in Deh Dadi 2, Afghanistan, begin their journey back to homeport in Port Hueneme, Calif.

Above right — ITSN Stephanie Dasilva, a Saturday Scholar Mentor, jokes with a student at O.J. Semmes Elementary School during the graduation ceremony for the 52nd session of Saturday Scholars.



Photo by Gary Nichols



Photo by AFCE/Amber B. Williams

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Personnel Information Management. “For example, PSDs are receiving Sailors who have transferred from CNAF activities who have not had their records closed out yet. PSD will close out their record during the check-in process. A few squadrons are reporting that they are at 100 percent, but overall CNAF activities are at about 20 percent complete.

“We never know what contingencies could come up to slow their progress. Carriers needed scanners and of course, have operational commitments affecting their ability to complete this project. They are committed to getting their Sailors’ records closed out and we think they will get there by the deadline.

“They now have the ability to view their official military personnel file (OMPF) online and see what their command, Navy leadership and selection boards review,” said Tanner.

Commands were given the Records of Emergency Data (Page 2) and the Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI) forms from closed out records to retain for the duration of a member’s tour, plus 90 days after PCS transfer, or 180 days after separation.

“Eliminating the EFSR is a big hurdle that we are crossing, and it has not been without bumps,” said Tanner. “Moving to electronic military human resource records is the only way to go. They cut down on errors and provide real time transactions. This type of transparency gives Sailors more control over their careers.”

For more on the EFSR closeout, ESR or OMPF read NAVADMIN 040/10, call the NPC Customer Service Center 1-866-U-ASK-NPC, (1-866-827-5672) or e-mail at [cscmailbox@navy.mil](mailto:cscmailbox@navy.mil). **AH**

*Story by MC1(AW) LaTunya Howard, Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.*

## Rollout Approaches for Young Adult TRICARE Enrollment

Qualified young adults up to age 26 will soon be able purchase TRICARE military health plan coverage on a month-to-month basis.

TRICARE officials announced plans to roll out the new Young Adult Program — including an option to make coverage retroactive to Jan. 1, 2011, — in the near future.

This, officials said, will ensure military families aren’t left out as the new national health care reform law extends parents’ health insurance for their children up to age 26.

The new program will allow qualified, unmarried military children up to age 26 to buy health care coverage under their parents’ TRICARE plans through age 26. That’s up from the current maximum age of 21, or age 23 for full-time college students whose parents provide more than half of their financial support.

The fiscal 2011 National Defense Authorization Act signed Jan. 7, gave DoD the authority it needed to extend TRICARE coverage to young adults, TRICARE spokesman Austin Camacho said.

This ensures benefits extended are in line with those all American families receive under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which took effect in March 2010.

“We’ve been working hard to make sure we could put TRICARE Young Adult on a fast track,” Rear Adm. (Dr.) Christine S. Hunter, director of the TRICARE Management Activity, told American Forces Press Service. “Fortunately for our beneficiaries concerned about health care coverage for their adult children, the law signed by the president includes opportunities for military families to elect this new premium-based plan retroactive to Jan. 1.”

Qualified young adults who do not have access to employer-sponsored health care coverage will be eligible to purchase it through

TRICARE on a month-to-month basis, Camacho said.

TRICARE officials expect to announce premium costs shortly, before enrollment begins. But because the 2011 defense authorization specifies that the rates must cover all program costs, Camacho said, premiums will be based on commercial insurance data about the costs of providing care.

Once premiums are determined, officials encourage eligible beneficiaries to explore all of their health care coverage options to choose a plan that makes sense for them.

Hunter estimated that the program, once in place, could extend TRICARE coverage to several hundred thousand additional beneficiaries.

“The premium allows us to provide the excellent benefit to our military families while responsibly addressing the impact of health care costs on the DoD budget,” she said.

Officials plan to roll out the new program in two phases, first offering a premium-based TRICARE Standard/Extra benefit, Camacho said. Then, later this year, they plan to introduce the TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Prime Remote plan, including overseas options, and the Uniformed Services Family Health Plan.

Once the program is in place, eligible young adults may submit an application and premium payment to the appropriate regional or overseas contractor for processing, Camacho said. Cost shares, deductibles and catastrophic caps will vary, based on the plan selected and the sponsor’s status.

Young adult beneficiaries will receive an enrollment card after they buy coverage and their payment is reflected in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System, Camacho said.

The new beneficiaries may choose to pay premiums back to Jan. 1, which will entitle them to file claims for any health care costs they have accrued since that date.



Photo by MC2 Devon Dow

Juanita Reed (left) and CTRC Melanie Varner (right) serve food to children at the Biko-en Children's Care House during a community service project hosted by service members assigned to Naval Air Facility Misawa and Misawa Air Base.



Photo by MC2 Gary Ward

LS2 Darrius Jenkins, assigned to the pre-commissioning unit *Mississippi* (SSN 782) speaks with children at Central Mississippi Boys and Girls Club in Jackson, Miss..



Photo by MCSN Jesse L. Gonzalez

Marines assigned to USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65) push ordnance into place to arm an F/A-18C Hornet assigned to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251.



Photo by MC2 Julio Rivera

BM3 David Weir, assigned to USS *Bataan* (LHD 5), hugs his family pier-side at Naval Station Norfolk.

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To do so, officials advise that they save all receipts to ease claims processing.

For adults who need health insurance coverage but no longer qualify for TRICARE coverage, officials advise exploring the Continued Health Care Benefit Program. This premium-based program offers temporary, transitional health coverage for 18 to 36 months.

Coverage must be purchased within 60 days of losing TRICARE eligibility. Information about the program is posted on the TRI-CARE website. **AH**

*Story by Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service, Alexandria, Va.*

### Command Fitness Leader Course Updated

The Navy recently announced improvements to the five-day Command Fitness Leader (CFL) certification course as well as new resources available to support the physical readiness program in Navy administrative message (NAVADMIN) 118/11.

The Center for Personal and Professional Development (CPPD), in collaboration with the Navy's Physical Readiness program office (OPNAV N135F), and Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC), completed a comprehensive revision of the course in order to meet Navy education and training requirements for a certified Navy curriculum.

"CPPD was pleased to be able to work closely with our partners

in delivering this update to our fitness leaders," said Capt. Chuck Hollingsworth, CPPD commanding officer. "Keeping Sailors fit and operationally ready is one of our goals, and I believe these changes will enable the CFLs to increase Sailor readiness."

An official course identification number has been issued (CIN S-562-0612), and upon successful course completion qualifications will be documented in the member's electronic service record.

Effective May 1, course registration quotas must be requested through the Catalog of Navy Training Courses (CANTRAC), and the complete application package, including all required supporting documentation, must be submitted via e-mail to [cfl\\_training@navy.mil](mailto:cfl_training@navy.mil).

Once eligibility has been confirmed, the requesting command will receive confirmation via e-mail. Step-by-step instructions for registration can be found at [www.NPC.Navy.mil/Command-support/PhysicalReadiness/](http://www.NPC.Navy.mil/Command-support/PhysicalReadiness/).

"We anticipate the release of the new curriculum in summer 2011," said Lisa Sexauer, CNIC program manager, Fitness Sports and Deployed Forces Support. "This curriculum represents the collective work of many and we feel certain it will better meet the needs of our CFLs. I think we have successfully integrated more relevant exercise content and reduced redundancy therefore providing a more efficient product."

In addition to revising all of the lessons in the course covering

such topics as administrative actions and improving Sailors' Physical Readiness Test (PRT) scores, all of the course graphics and exercise demonstrations were updated to ensure CFLs are given the basic tools to safely lead a command physical training (PT) session.

To provide further aid to CFLs, a new CFL page has been created on Navy Knowledge Online (NKO), under the personal development tab. Resources available on this new page include various physical readiness instructions, NAVADMIN messages, physical readiness information system (PRIMS) training videos, body composition assessment training and quota request information.

A new CNIC Physical Fitness website at [www.navyfitness.org](http://www.navyfitness.org) provides members with an assortment of fitness, nutrition, and Navy sports program information. It also includes deployed forces support such as mobile applications that Sailors can download and use while exercising. The new site also hosts Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling Series (NOFFS) program resources.

"The focus of NOFFS is optimal operational physical performance and fueling that includes more than 90 exercises," explained Diana Strock, CPPD senior advisor for health and fitness. "It is a series of four separate physical fitness programs designed to eliminate the guesswork in developing Sailor workout routines. It combines human performance, injury prevention strategies and proper nutrition designed for safer training and improving human performance."

For more information refer to NAVADMIN 118/11. **AH**

*Story courtesy of the Center for Personal and Professional Development, and Commander, Naval Installations Command, Norfolk.*

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A historical marker for Aviation Field Yorktown was unveiled recently during a dedication ceremony, sponsored by the Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society in Yorktown, Va..

# Echoes from Aviation Field Yorktown

Reflect on Naval Aviation History

Story by Leo C. Forrest Jr.

Located just outside of Naval Weapons Station (WPNSTA) Yorktown, along Old Williamsburg Road, Route 238, near Lebanon Church and Endview Plantation, stands a Virginia highway historical marker — a constant reminder of an almost forgotten air field.



## In 1919, Aviation Field Yorktown was established within the perimeter of present day WPNSTA Yorktown.

In the 1960s, President John F. Kennedy spoke about a "New Frontier," a new beginning. At the time, he said America was standing on the edge of a great new era, filled with both opportunities and challenges. Of course, it would be an era characterized by great achievements that even reached into outer space.

The early years of naval aviation can be described much the same way as the space program was in the 1960s, a time of pathfinders and pioneers.

In the summer of 1919, the Navy awarded a government contract to level an old farm field located on the Navy Mine Depot to S.R. Curtis, a local businessman. Only a year earlier, the government had acquired much of the property that is known today as WPNSTA Yorktown. The area the Navy cleared and leveled was roughly 35 acres in size and was located adjacent to the York River at the mouth of Felgate's Creek. Soon the outline of an "L"-shaped runway had taken form, measuring 1,000 feet in length.

Meanwhile, in Washington D.C., then-Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels was directing various government bureaus in support of establishing what would soon become the Navy's first advanced aviation training facility. At Yorktown, Navy pilots would receive advanced training, both in the classroom and in the air, in the areas of bombing, gunnery and torpedo operations.

First though, buildings had to be built; a source of fresh water had to be found; and electricity was needed. In fact, the aviation field was located in an area that was considered almost inaccessible. The dirt paths that led to the aviation field could not be used by motor trucks, so all the building materials received at the nearby railroad depot at Lee Hall had to be loaded onto wagons and brought in by horse teams.

Within a few months, all of these problems were overcome and the Navy's first advanced aviation training school was established. But an underlying problem existed—thousands of undetonated underwater mines that were returned after World War I were located all around the Navy Mine Depot. Although Yorktown provided an excellent location for an aviation field, the mines stored nearby presented problems.

In 1921, when routine flight operations began at Yorktown, the facilities were described as the best in the country. It boasted four aircraft hangers and facilities were built that met the support requirements for seaplanes that landed in the York River or Felgate's Creek.

The commanding officer of Aviation Field Yorktown was Lt. Cmdr. Harold T. Bartlett. As a veteran naval aviator of World War I, Bartlett was highly qualified and considered by many to be the right person for the job.

In early 1921, it was at Yorktown where Bartlett and his men first conducted a series of tests using torpedoes installed on modified land planes.

After the departure of the Atlantic Fleet Torpedo Plane Squadron in 1922, the Aviation Field at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown (then called Naval Mine Depot Yorktown) was used for the receipt and storage of TNT.

The aviation training school located at Navy Mine Depot (NMD) Yorktown, Va., circa 1920.



U.S. Navy Photo



U.S. Navy Photo

Later that same year, on June 21, 1921, airplanes from Yorktown joined those flying out of other air fields in the area to bomb an unmanned, obsolete submarine that was surrendered during World War I and was used as a target. This was the first demonstration that aerial bombs could be effectively used to sink enemy vessels. It should be noted that these tests were conducted before the much-publicized sinking of obsolete battleships. And when those obsolete battleships were sunk, Navy airplanes flying from Aviation Field Yorktown also participated in those tests.

The Navy later tested the first high-altitude bombsight at Yorktown. For generations this device would be known as the Norden Bombsight.

In August 1921, after having established itself as the Navy's first advanced aviation training school, the Navy began to downsize from World War I era structure and a memorandum was issued that directed Aviation Field Yorktown closed. Officially, the reason was related to the budget. Actually, the problem was related to operating an aviation field near where thousands of pounds of ordnance and underwater mines were stored.

Fourteen months later, the Navy needed an airfield located near a deep-water channel. Such a location was required to conduct experimental work in connection with the first United States aircraft carrier, USS *Langley* (CV 1). Within days, Aviation Field Yorktown reopened. On October 17, 1922, with *Langley* anchored in the York River, Lt. Virgil Griffin flew the first airplane off the flight deck of a U.S. aircraft carrier.

Later, on May 8, 1925, the first commercial airline flight landed at Aviation Field Yorktown. This marked the first overland airline passenger service scheduled in the United States. On board were passengers who had begun their flight from Roosevelt Field, N.Y. The flight was met at Yorktown by an official party that included the governor of Virginia. He was presented with a letter written only a day earlier by the governor of New York. After landing at Yorktown, radio operators immediately sent out details of the historic flight.

Today, as pilots take off from a carrier they are flying in the shadow of Lt. Virgil Griffin and the first flight made from USS *Langley* when she was anchored just offshore of Aviation Field Yorktown.

The name Virgil Griffin brings to mind another Virgil who made a name for himself some 40 years later – Virgil Grissom - the astronaut. Just a few miles away from Aviation Field Yorktown, Virgil Grissom was part of another generation of aviators who also came to this area to make history, as they took the first steps into outer space.

The pilots and air crewmen assigned to Aviation Field Yorktown were pioneers and true pathfinders. And in many ways, these individuals, whom we remember today, were the early astronauts who reached for the stars. AH

*Forrest is a mechanical engineer at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, and a lifelong resident of Poquoson, Va.*



# They Make the Jets Go

Story and photos by MC2 Shannon Renfro

**C**risp blue digi-patterned uniforms filled rows of desks in a classroom at Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC), Pensacola, Fla. Wide-eyed and eager, the students looked ahead to their instructor.

A student assists classmate during a dummy bomb lift exercise.



A student listens to his instructor, while learning how to drill holes in a sheet of metal.

Far left— The curriculum at NATTC teaches electricity, aircraft mechanics and the art of troubleshooting. A Sailor will begin their prospective rate training, after a few introductory courses.

As a team-building exercise, four students line up side by side, kneeling down and counting down to lift a dummy 500-pound Mark-82 bomb. As one student begins to lose her balance, another student runs in to assist in the lifting exercise before anything is dropped or anyone injured. Teamwork is literally built from the ground up in the classrooms.

Four weeks after finishing classroom instruction, the student will obtain hands-on opportunities, such as the Mark-82 bomb lift designed for aviation ordnanceman. They will also learn to disassemble parts of the machinery, put it back together, then perform accurate maintenance documentation and finally order parts. Of all classroom instruction, ownership of your equipment and tool control is the most important.

# “Hoo-yah!” was every response to many questions asked by their instructor.



Above center— Computer simulation in the classroom is used more frequently to completely immerse students in troubleshooting. Millions of dollars have been saved with the transition to computer simulators.

Far left— New students at NATTC go through a fire fighting school during their orientation. Students learn aircraft tower operations in a computer simulated tower.

“I have a multi-million dollar piece of equipment that I am responsible for working on and maintaining its upkeep,” said one student. “I have pilots’ lives in my hands. If I cut corners or cheat on any step, I can actually get someone hurt or killed, so it’s a lot of responsibility.”

Along with job responsibility and pride of ownership, Sailors also learn quality assurance as part of the curriculum.

Initially, students work on models and pieces of the equipment they will specialize in. For example, if a student is training for F-18s, they will deal with an actual F-18 engine model. If they are working on Prowlers, then Prowler engines and so forth. These engine models simulate actual fleet environment training scenarios to prepare each student.

Most of the training and assignments deal with tangible equipment, but with continuing technological advancements, computer simulation is more frequently used to completely immerse students in troubleshooting. In the past, hydraulic pneumatics simulators and circuit boards were used in classrooms but classroom space, hazardous material and maintenance upkeep was an issue. Millions of dollars have been saved with the transition to computer simulators.

According to San Angelo, some argue that simulators can’t replace hands-on trainers, but student capabilities and their success rates are consistent. “In the 15-week aviation electric circuit board training, computers have replaced the six-foot by four-foot trainers. They were so big that students were placed two to a single machine and mechanical errors with the machine made it difficult to differentiate it as student error.”

An instructor now has total control of the program and pacing. If any safety errors are made during classroom exercises, a student’s screen freezes until further instruction from the instructor. Additionally, different simulation scenarios can be loaded versus the ‘soon to be mastered’ training scenario.

Ninety percent of all students continue their training in ‘C’ schools or may go temporarily to the fleet and then return for more schooling.

“Every aviation rate is affected by the training we give here,” said Capt. Michael Price, commanding officer, NATTC. “They get the basic training theory of operation, some in C schools, and all of them have to deal with naval aviation. We teach the young students what they need to know to go out there and make the jets go.” **AH**

*Renfroe is assigned to Defense Media Activity – Navy, Washington, D.C.*

## The volume and unison in their voices gave way to their recent departure from boot camp.

“Why are you here? Why do we do what we do?” asked NATTC Instructor Chief Aviation Electronics Technician (AW) David San Angelo.

“To fix engines,” said one student.

“Quality assurance,” another chimed in.

A young Marine’s hand shot up. “One of my best friends is a grunt, and knowing I’ll be helping fix planes that are going to give him back up, give him his food or whatever he needs. It makes me feel like this is important. I’m backing up my friends who are out there fighting in a combat zone. So it makes me feel great,” exclaimed Marine Corps Pfc. Hugo Garcia.

This is an attitude that all instructors hope their students can relate to in finding purpose for future tasks once out in the fleet. All of the students were recent graduates of boot camp and expect to begin the second phase of their careers at NATTC. It’s essential that the Sailors know the importance of their tasks, whatever the capacity and to understand the concept of teamwork. The culture at NATTC is designed to teach technical proficiency in aviation, but also to teach the fundamentals of being a Sailor.

“They don’t see the meaning behind some of the little mediocre rules,” explained San Angelo. “Like, ‘Why do I have to stand watch? Why do I have to fill in logs and things like that?’ We try to teach them

the big picture - that this is a building process for when you hit the fleet to do your job.”

Between 800 to 1,000 Sailors and Marines come through every month, which equates to about 10,000 to 12,000 Sailors a year straight from Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, Ill. The aviation campus trains more than 22 rates and is the only training facility in the Navy that trains that many rates in one school house.

The sprawling campus sits on multiple acres and accommodates the students with a galley, a morale, welfare and recreation facility, a gym and dormitories. It’s a college in itself.

According to San Angelo, every course is a different length, some only two weeks while some stretch out to 15 weeks. The curriculum teaches a lot of electricity, aircraft mechanics and the art of troubleshooting. Sailors begin with a week-long indoctrination, professional finance management course, firefighting and then begin their prospective rate training. Training can range from seven days for an aviation ordnanceman, 10 days for an aviation support equipment technician or up to 40 to 60 days as a communications technician(CT).

## Ground and aviation support are the two resonating themes taught at NATTC.

Operational readiness of all gear needs to be in place to support the aircraft. Not having the knowledge of being able to electronically

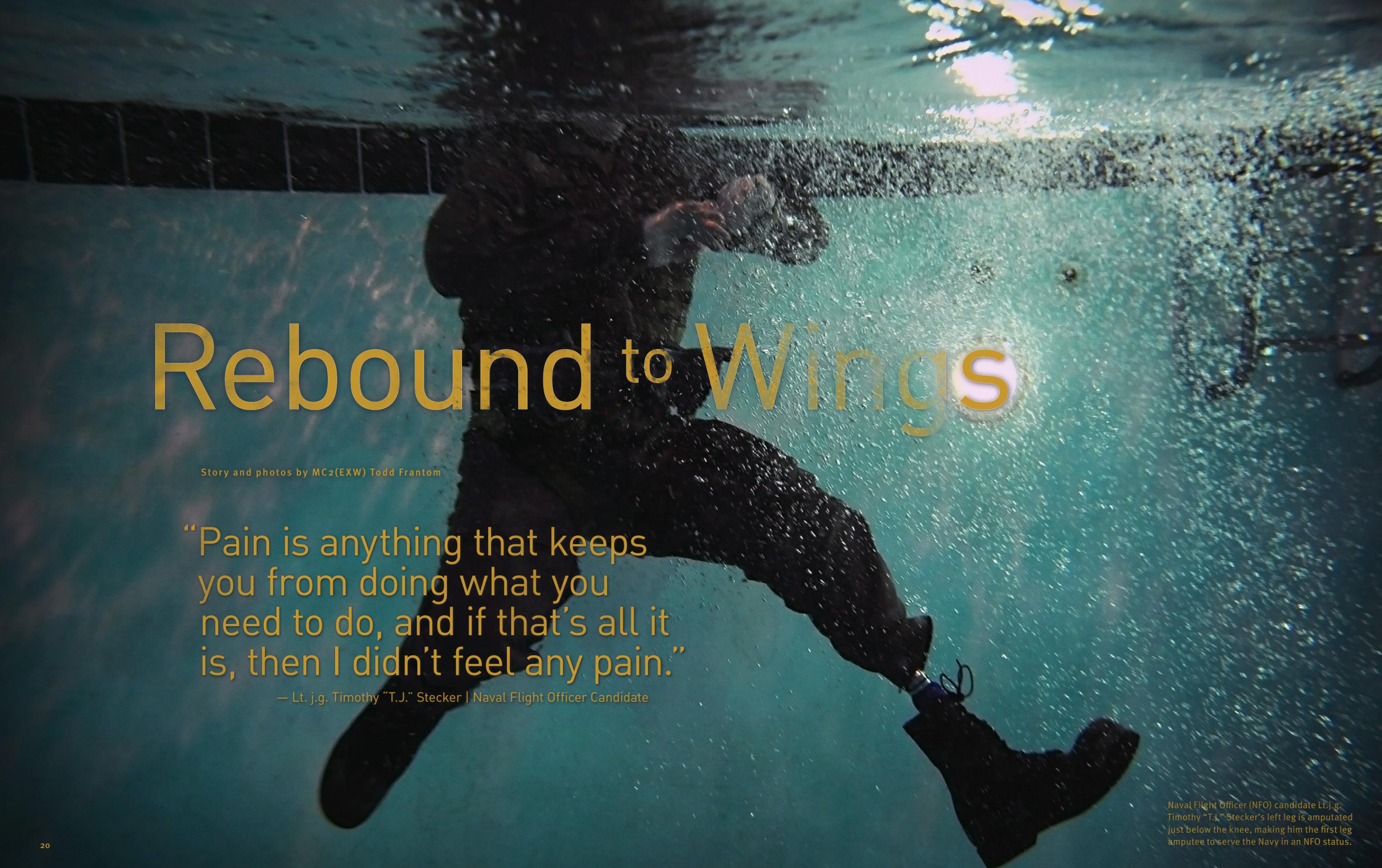
or mechanically trouble shoot an aircraft as quickly as possible affects the overall mission for many people. Aviation support also includes maintaining aircraft for reconnaissance, intelligence gathering, target tracking and immediate response time if ground troops need support. Students are continuously reminded there is a 15-minute response time for ground troops in combat areas.

“When we get that call, we’re going to load an aircraft on that catapult,” said San Angelo. We’re going to launch it off the pointy end of that ship and it’s going to fly 500 miles into country and drop an ungodly amount of arsenal on the enemy with more precision and accuracy than anyone can imagine.”

The instructors at NATTC go through a two-week Journeyman instructor training course, which deals with their personal presentation to the class, how to instruct, how to facilitate and finally test and evaluate.

## Each teacher acknowledges the weight of the responsibility they hold.

“It’s like having a kid,” said one instructor. “When they’re little they don’t know anything. When they get a little older they start learning how to write their name. Same thing for these Sailors, some of whom have never turned a wrench, never touched anything, but by the time they leave here they know how to work on an aircraft.”



# Rebound to Wings

Story and photos by MC2(EXW) Todd Frantom

“Pain is anything that keeps you from doing what you need to do, and if that’s all it is, then I didn’t feel any pain.”

— Lt. j.g. Timothy “T.J.” Stecker | Naval Flight Officer Candidate

Naval Flight Officer (NFO) candidate Lt. j.g. Timothy “T.J.” Stecker’s left leg is amputated just below the knee, making him the first leg amputee to serve the Navy in an NFO status.

**S**ervice members from all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces have undergone a nearly decade-long mission of contingency operations in areas of the world far removed from what they call home. And while some have paid the ultimate sacrifice, others have returned from conflicts facing years of rehabilitation and recovery.

For one naval aviation candidate, a 26-year-old North Carolina native who received his "Wings of Gold" pin this April, the struggle to even enter the conflict took a year-long detour.

After receiving what, even a decade ago, probably would have been considered a career-ending injury, Naval Flight Officer (NFO) Candidate Lt. j.g. Timothy Stecker is set to do this year - during the centennial of naval aviation no less - what thousands of NFOs have accomplished before him, with one difference; Stecker is an amputee, his left leg was amputated just below the knee.

"When people find out I have a prosthetic they're very surprised," he said. "They usually don't believe me, they're shocked. Especially in the Navy, and in my job - there's no other person in this job with the same injury."

Stecker was severely injured in a boating accident March 6, 2009, at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Fla., as an ensign in the dedicated NFO pipeline curriculum. He had been spending the afternoon boating with friends when the accident occurred; an instant he says he doesn't really remember.

"I remember falling overboard and I remember coming out of the water, but I don't remember the actual accident," he said. "I knew something was wrong, but I didn't know

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After what, even a decade ago, might very well have been considered a career-ending injury, Lt. j.g. Timothy "T.J." Stecker is set to graduate this year.



Perhaps one of the more challenging aspects of Stecker's return to flight status involved Aviation Water Survival Training, a qualification in which naval aircrew personnel must certify every four years.

what it was until I was getting on the boat. At first I was calm, but as we were progressing toward shore, I started to realize what was happening and at that point I was most concerned about my career in the Navy, and I was saying, 'I think my career is over.'"

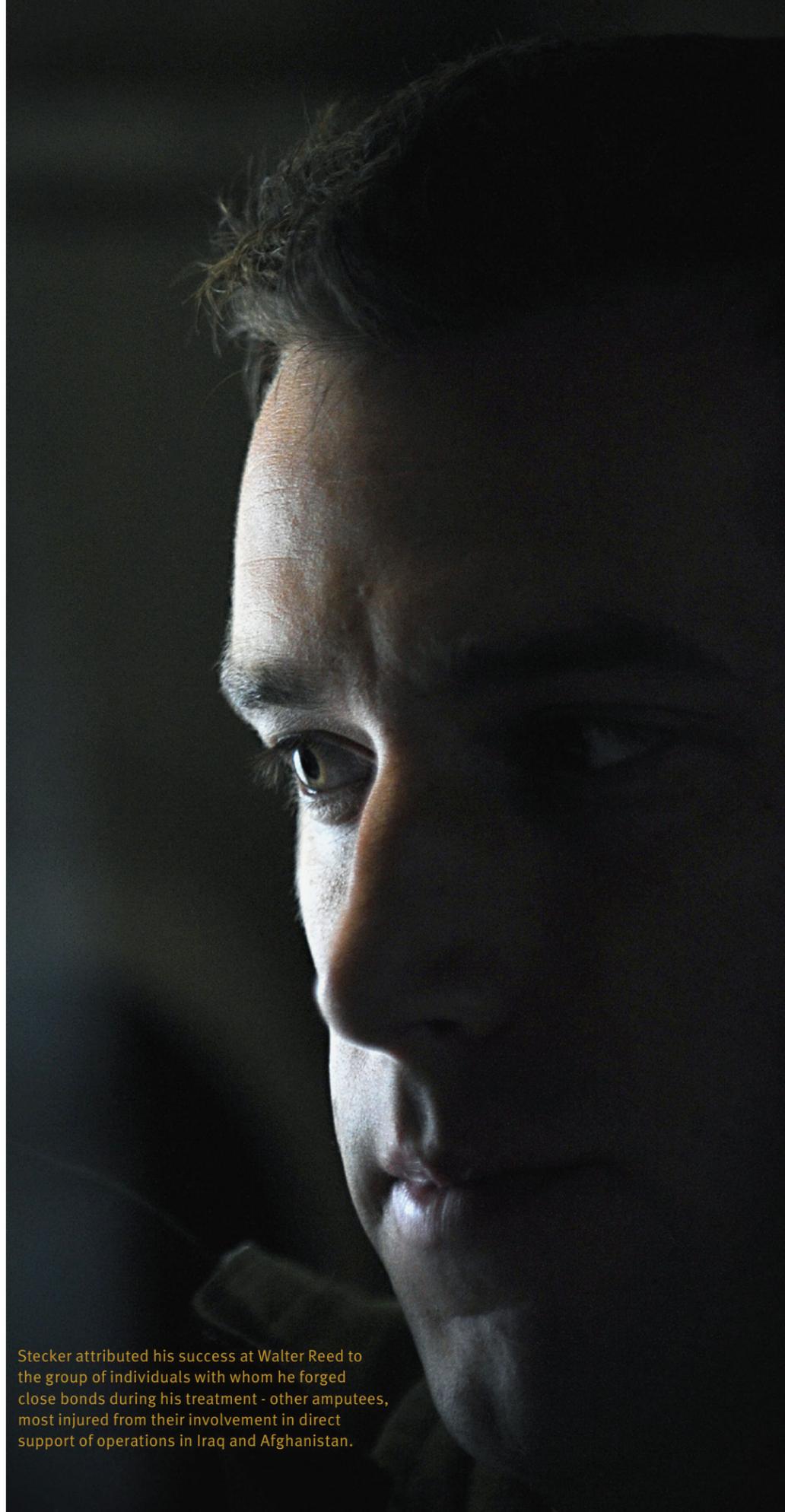
Stecker had fallen from the boat on which he and his friends were riding while turning, and as he went into the water, the back end of the water craft swept over the top of him, the propeller struck his left leg and forearm.

Stecker was able to swim back to the boat, unaware of the extent of his injuries until climbing back aboard. His two friends helped him, and as he was lying on the deck, Stecker realized the extent of his injuries.

His left leg severely cut and bleeding profusely, Stecker said he remembered one of his friends calling for emergency assistance while the other individual piloted the boat to shore. Upon his arrival, an ambulance was waiting to transport the ensign to a helicopter for a flight to Baptist Health Care Hospital in Pensacola.



Stecker attributed his success at Walter Reed to the group of individuals with whom he forged close bonds during his treatment - other amputees, most injured from their involvement in direct support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.





During the final phase of evacuation training, NFOs are required to safely exit the aircraft.



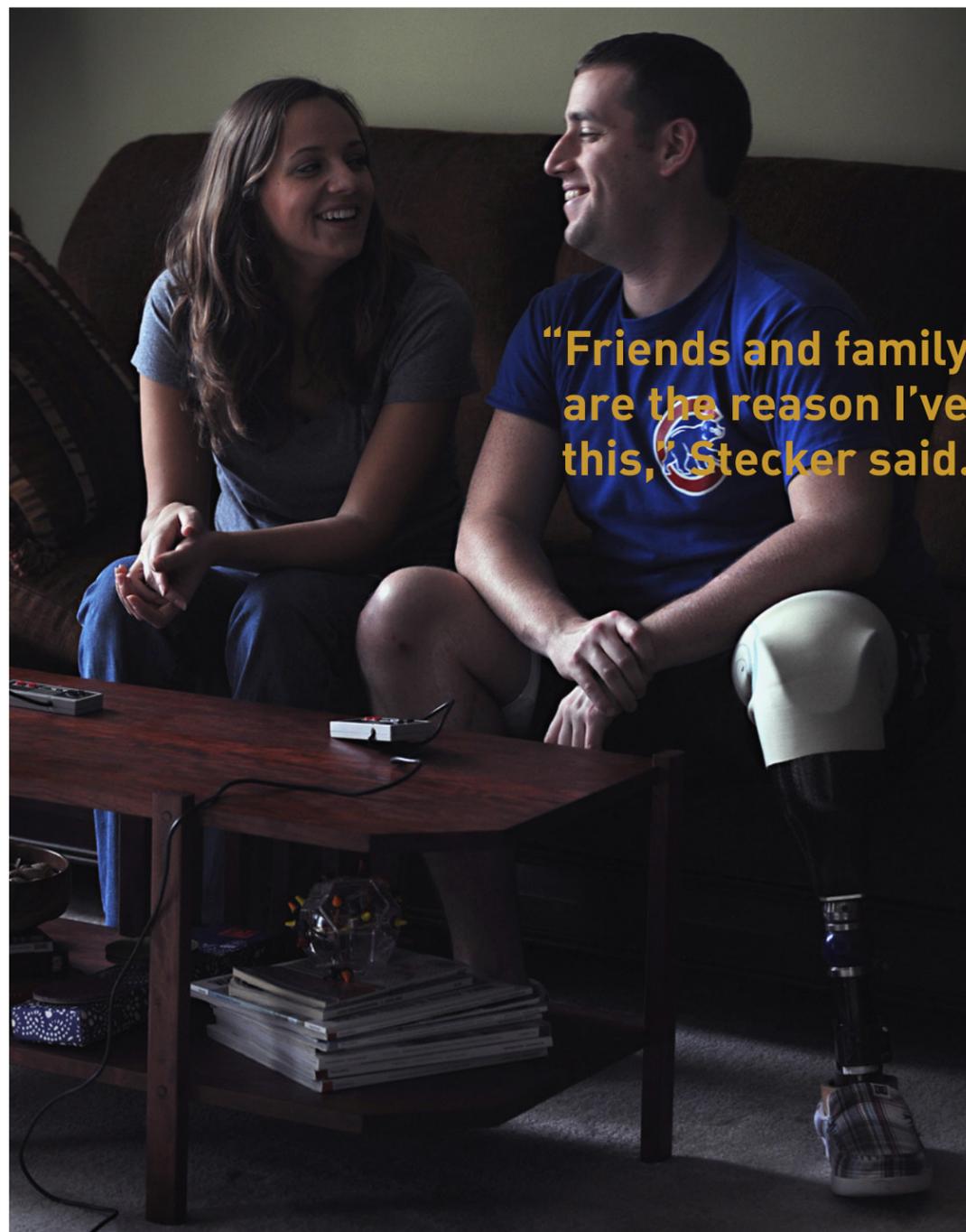
Instructors teach emergency response techniques to NFO students.

Stecker awoke in the hospital, two days after the accident and said he remembered seeing his former commanding officer, a moment he said proved inspirational in his eventual recovery.

“I remember seeing my commanding officer and the first thing he said to me was, ‘Don’t worry, you’re still going to fly,’” he said. “Everyone was so supportive and there was never one person who said, ‘You’re not going to be able to do this, or whatever you want to do.’ It was this positive attitude they put out, and that’s all I really needed.”

The prospective NFO said his desire to finish in the program he began - despite the seemingly insurmountable odds he would face - hinged around a simple fact, something Stecker said never occurred to him during his year-long recovery process.

“I never had time to think about how bad things were - from the moment I woke up, I had a goal to look toward as opposed to an accident to look back on,” he said. “I never had to make the decision to return; I just never made the decision to stop trying.”



**“Friends and family and Navy support are the reason I’ve been able to do this,” Stecker said.**

Aircrew service members need to maintain a high level of physical readiness to maintain a strong performance during long distance flights at high altitudes.

Meanwhile, medical professionals were still trying to save Stecker’s left leg, and informed him of the possible outcomes of the complicated surgeries he would need. Stecker learned that saving his leg was possible, but some functionality would be lost, and he would more than likely never run again and would walk with a limp.

With the advent of new, innovative advances in prosthetics, Stecker elected to have his severely damaged leg removed, opting for a prosthetic that would enhance his quality of life as well as provide him the opportunity to pursue becoming an NFO.

“Friends, family and Navy support are the reasons I’ve been able to do this,” Stecker added. “The support they’ve given me has been amazing, and I think that’s what a person in my situation needs. I can’t thank them enough for the things they’ve done for me. I was in the hospital for 30 days and between friends and family, I had at least one visitor every single day.”

Stecker’s road to getting his wings would require something most people take for

granted - the use of his legs. Before he could fly, Stecker had to learn to walk again, this time with a prosthetic leg.

“Of course I felt it was a major loss - I still do,” he said. “I guess I had moments when I was down, but I don’t think I ever got depressed. I don’t dwell on things. I knew I had to move forward from it, and I got better on my prosthetics every day.”

Three days after having his leg amputated Stecker began rehabilitation, undergoing hours of seemingly simple motions - lifting his leg, straightening it and bending it - motions designed to keep his muscles from completely atrophying. Stecker next moved to inpatient therapy with a series of sessions using large exercise bands and different core exercises to keep his movement and strength intact.

Then he was transferred to the Andrews Institute in Pensacola, a facility providing more advanced and intense exercise routines. Stecker said this four-month stay was necessary, facilitating his strength and core further to ensure he was strong enough to support the eventual fitting of the prosthetic limb at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

A week after arriving at Walter Reed, Stecker received his prosthetic limb, something he said would prove instrumental in a personal goal he had set for himself.

“By the end of the first week, I was able to walk with my prosthesis using crutches, and was able to go to another NFO’s wedding using crutches,” he said. “The week after that I was able to walk with just one crutch and went to my brother’s wedding in North Carolina; that was one of my main goals, to be able to walk at his wedding.”

Stecker attributed his success at Walter Reed to the group of individuals with whom he forged close bonds during his treatment - other amputees, most injured from their involvement in direct support of contingency operations around the globe.

“Going through Walter Reed was eye-opening,” he said. “There were mostly combat-related injuries which require a lot more surgeries. Just seeing these guys work and get through this - and they would have constant setbacks - how could I sit there and not work as hard as I could knowing what they were doing, what they had gone through? It was inspiring to see what they were doing, and it made it easy for me to work with such great guys around me.”

By training daily with other amputees, Stecker said he also realized just how important and expansive the network of support available to Sailors truly was, something of which he said he was never previously aware.

“This has opened my eyes to the support system the Navy provides, of how we [as Sailors] take care of our own, and that was something which was constant through my ordeal, how they were taking care of me,” he said. “If I’m ever put in that same position, if I can ever help any Sailor that I know of, then I will do the same.”

During the 17-month rehabilitation process, Stecker remained focused, eagerly waiting for the day he could return to the training he so abruptly left. Friends and classmates he had made while stationed in Pensacola before the accident were successful NFOs, some already returning from deployments in Afghanistan and other areas.

But on July 21, 2010, Stecker finally demonstrated his ability to successfully complete the tasking required of him to return to flight status, something VP-30 Flight Surgeon Lt. Samir Mukherjee said is a rather intense ordeal.

“Naval aviation places a unique and significant demand on its service members to maintain flight status,” he said. “Specifically, members need to maintain a high level of physical readiness to maintain a strong performance over long distance flights at high



In-flight training aboard a P-3C *Orion*, assigned to Patrol Squadron (VP) 30. VP-30 is the U.S. Navy's Maritime Patrol Fleet Replacement Squadron whose mission is to provide aircraft-specific training for pilots, naval flight officers, and enlisted aircrew men prior to returning to the fleet.

altitudes. Most importantly, members need to be physically fit to maintain the ability and dexterity to safely egress an aircraft in the event of a crash on land or in to the sea.”

Mukherjee also said that aircrew service members found not physically qualified need to obtain a waiver of the physical standards to return to flight status from the Naval Aerospace Medical Institute, Pensacola. The process can be long, typically involving medical treatment, a resolution of symptoms and a demonstration of the service member's ability to perform the physical tasks associated with duty on the aircraft. Also necessary is complete, written documentation in the form of what is essentially a case study, all of which Stecker accomplished.

Perhaps one of the more challenging aspects of Stecker's return to flight status involved Aviation Water Survival Training, a qualification in which naval aircrew personnel must certify every four years. According to Mukherjee, that training involves a significant amount of swimming and flight training events in the pool in full flight gear, something he said could have been difficult for Stecker.

“It's very important for all members of naval aviation to be comfortable in the water,” he said. “Service members in aviation must be able to egress his or her platform under a vari-

ety of circumstances - daytime, nighttime and in a high sea state.”

Stecker successfully completed the aviation survival training water-based courses, and has maintained a steadfast swimming regimen since, something he said has only helped him strengthen his body.

“Now I swim several days a week, and do it just as well, if not better, than I did before,” he said. “I do most of my recreational swimming without the leg on, and do my Navy training in the water with the leg on, and it doesn't seem to affect me. I'm able to tread water. I'm able to do all my water safety survival techniques with the leg without any problems.”

Mukherjee also noted that Stecker's successful completion of all requirements and impending completion of coursework designating him an NFO is something that can provide an impetus for other service members facing what could be viewed as limiting characteristics.

“Lt. j.g. Stecker's perseverance in the face of adversity will certainly inspire other service members with similar medical conditions to carry forth in the same manner,” he said. “[Stecker] has single-handedly demonstrated that a medical condition - once permanently disqualifying - can be overcome and he has made a successful return to the field of naval aviation.”

Stecker acknowledged that his situation remains markedly different, but downplayed his role in shifting the focus on the functionality of personnel previously thought to be disabled, and how that might be perceived in the military. He maintained that policy has not changed, saying his case - the first of its kind - is more of a roadmap for someone else.

“I don't think I've changed the rules, but I've definitely cut a path, and if anyone comes through in my situation, they have an example they can follow to achieve their goal,” he said. “If someone else has an injury and they still want to be able to fly or do whatever job they had, then they can use me as an example, and hopefully that will help them toward their goal.”

Along with the potential of changing the manner in which amputees might be viewed, Stecker also said that his role has not changed; the Navy core values are something he continues to employ in addition to maintaining a positive outlook on what was at one time a very serious situation, but now is just a fact of his life.

“Being the first NFO amputee helps enforce the fact that I have to work my hardest and set a positive example for other amputees,” he said. “It doesn't change the fact that I have to set a positive example, not just as a naval officer, but I have to set a positive example for a whole

other group of people who might have a similar injury. They need to follow in the footsteps of someone, and I need to do it well.”

Stecker, on the cusp of making history in U.S. naval aviation, coincidentally a century after the formation of the U.S. naval aviation program, has succeeded. The prospective naval aviator joined his classmates April 1 in the VP-30 hangar on board NAS Jacksonville and received his wings, having overcome what would seem insurmountable odds, a daunting training regimen and the unintentional scrutiny of both peers and command.

There is, however, something he said he never truly had to face, an almost unthinkable issue which seems impossible to comprehend; Stecker said he never felt any pain during his ordeal.

“I think my definition of pain is if it stops me from doing something,” he said. “I think everyone has pain in some part of their life, but I don't consider myself as having any pain. The injuries were never painful, not to the point where it would stop me from doing what I needed to do. Pain is anything which keeps you from doing what you need to do and if that's all it is, then I didn't feel any pain.” **AH**

*Frantom is assigned to Defense Media Activity-Navy, Washington, D.C.*



Aircrew service members need to be physically fit to maintain the ability and dexterity to safely egress an aircraft in the event of a crash into the land or sea,” said VP-30 Flight Surgeon Lt. Samir Mukherjee.

On July 21, 2010, Stecker returned to flight status by demonstrating his ability to successfully complete the tasking required of him to return to active flight status, something Mukherjee said is a rather intense ordeal.



Students exit the 9D6 dunker during a simulated aircraft water landing exercise at the Aviation Survival Training Center (ASTC), Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla.

# TAKING THE Navy Plunge

Story by MC1 Bruce Cummins | Photos by MC2(EXW) Todd Frantom

For 100 years, naval aviators have taken flight, combining efforts with other elements of the U.S. Armed Forces and allied services in an ever-advancing arena that has proven instrumental in conflict and peacetime. The very nature of what these service men and women do, however, requires meticulous planning, a philosophy designed to ensure the best while preparing for the worst.

The 21 active-duty Sailors and officers - along with three civilian employees - assigned to Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville Aviation Survival Training Center (ASTC) serve the sole purpose of ensuring aviators from U.S. and allied installations around the world are prepared for what could happen while in flight, according to Lt. Cmdr. Leslie Kindling, ASTC Jacksonville Director and Aerospace/Operational Physiologist.

"As part of the Naval Aviation Survival Training Program (NASTP), ASTC Jacksonville is a force-enabler," said Kindling. "Our mission is to assist the warfighter in winning the fight, to prevent losses due to mishaps and hostilities and to ensure survival in the event of a mishap or hostility."

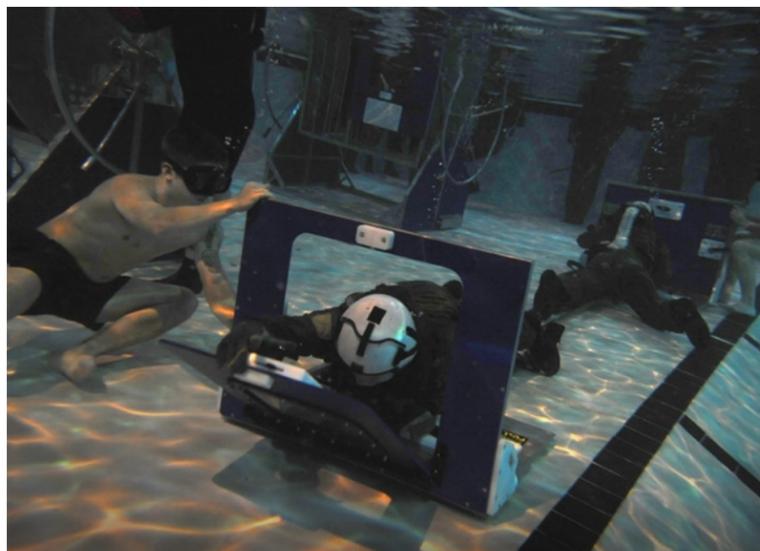
As one of eight such facilities in the U.S. operating under the Naval Survival Training Institute (NSTI) - a subsidiary of the Naval Operational Medicine Institute (NOMI) - ASTC Jacksonville facilitates aviation survival training as a subject matter expert on all military operational medicine, providing aviation survival and safety training for Navy and Marine Corps aviation personnel and supporting all DoD activities.

More than 1,200 students train annually attending classroom lectures, using simulator devices and experience a curriculum that emphasizes hands-on exposure to survival skills.

"Our primary purpose is to maintain fleet readiness and enhance aircrew survivability through aviation survival training to fleet aviation, ground forces and joint service aircrew," Kindling said. "We advance naval aviation survival through education and training."

Kindling added that courses offered through ASTC Jacksonville include Initial Aircrew Training (primarily provided at ASTC Pensacola), Refresher Aircrew Training, Non-Aircrew Training and non-aircraft-specific training, all requirements for personnel whose duties involve frequent flights aboard Navy and Marine Corps aircraft.

"Aircrew must complete the training every four years to maintain their flight status - this is the operational readiness part of what we do," she said. "Force preservation is supported first by our training aircrew to respond to physiological threats which, if left untreated, could result in mishaps. Force preservation is



Above and top—  
Students receive a safety brief prior to training evolutions at the Aviation Survival Training Center (ASTC) at Naval Air Station Jacksonville.

again addressed by training aircrew on post-mishap procedures which improve their survivability."

Classroom lectures center around physiology and aeromedical issues, necessitating the presence of the three Medical Service Corps aviation physiologists and eight hospital corpsmen (HM) with the Navy enlisted classification code of 8409 (aerospace physiology technician). Classes in altitude physiology, sensory physiology and situational awareness, acceleration physiology and other flight- and medical-related issues are generally precursors to the hands-on practicum.

Kindling said the practical application of some of the devices ASTC Jacksonville personnel use during training - including the low pressure chamber and the reduced oxygen breathing device - can provide a realistic overview to situations naval aviators might face.



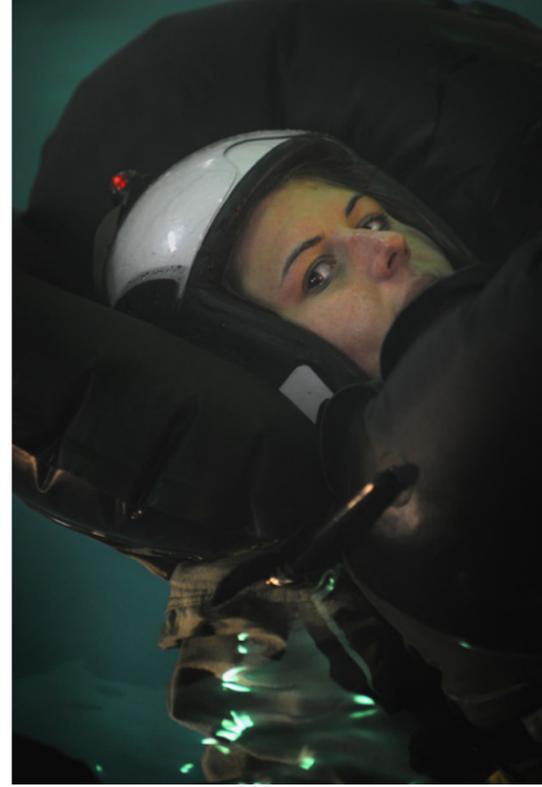
A naval aviator swims to the surface after exiting the 9D6 'dunker' during a training exercise.



Students perform long distance swims, showing proper breathing and form.



Students are required to tread water for long periods of time before advancing to the second phase of training.



“With these we can allow the student to feel the effects of hypoxia - one of the most common hazards in the tactical air operations community right now,” she said. “This training allows crews to experience the signs of hypoxia so it will be easier for them to recognize the same sign in the aircraft. Easier recognition leads to quicker response and better survivability.”

Kindling also said the center’s ejection seat trainer and virtual reality parachute descent trainer also provide lifelike experiences for aircrew members. She added that ASTC Jacksonville’s \$1 million, two-year-old modular egress trainer, a device designed to simulate an aircraft involved in a water mishap from which aviators must evacuate, is also of critical import, citing the knowledge and professionalism of the active-duty Sailors, civil service employees and support staff attached to the center as instrumental to the overall success of the practical training evolutions as well as the classroom-based settings.

“Without a doubt, the credit for our success goes to the motivated, knowledgeable and professional Sailors and civilian instructors we have on staff.”

Along with Navy divers and medical presence at the training center, other aviation rates, including aviation warfare systems operator (aircrew), aviation structural mechanic - safety equipment and aircrew survival equipmentmen are also involved in the day-to-day operations of ASTC Jacksonville, something the train-



Ejection Seat Trainer and Virtual Reality Parachute Descent Trainer also provide real-time experience for aviation crew members.

ing center’s senior enlisted advisor (SEA) attributed to the teamwork, professionalism and knowledge of the Sailors serving as instructors, equipment maintenance personnel and safety observers.

“These Sailors are tasked with one of the most difficult jobs – preparing for something we all hope never happens,” said Senior Chief Naval Air Crewman (SW/AW/

NAC) Brantley Lowe, ASTC Jacksonville SEA. “They keep the students trained and ready, and they do their job well. Without their expertise and practical knowledge, people could get hurt or even die.” **AH**

*Cummins is assigned to Naval Operational Medicine Institute (NOMI), NAS Jacksonville, Fla.*



# Keep Your BBQ from Going 'Boom' and Other Summer Safety Tips

Story by April Phillips | Graphic by Tim Mazurek



**Summer is prime season for everything. People are more active, the temperatures are warmer and the daylight hours are longer. All of those things factor in to our eagerness to have a good time and enjoy ourselves. But, hold on. Let's not throw caution to the wind and end up a statistic. That's not the best way to get into the record books.**

## Summer Cookouts

Warm weather, good friends, and grilled meat combine to form a perfect afternoon for many Sailors, Marines and their families. Unfortunately, every year casual afternoons are ruined by fires resulting from improper use of barbecue grills.

The National Fire Protection Association reports that from 2008 – 2011, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 7,700 home

fires involving grills, hibachis or barbecues per year. These fires cause an estimated \$70 million in property damage. They also kill 13 people and seriously injure 120 every year.

A third class petty officer found this out the hard way while preparing to cook on a propane grill. He tried to use the button that provides a spark to light the grill, but it didn't work. He kept trying for about 30 seconds, which allowed 30 seconds-worth of gas to flow. When he pulled out his cigarette lighter, he ignited the gas and ended up with burns to his hand and four days of light duty. The Naval Safety Center sees reports of similar mishaps each summer.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission says there are routine checks that can easily be performed on gas grills and significantly reduce the risk of a fire:

- Check the tubes that lead into the burner for blockage
- check hoses for cracking, brittleness, holes, or leaks.

Other tips include:

- Use the grill at least 10 feet away from your house or any building.
- Don't use it in a garage, breezeway, carport or under any surface that could catch fire.

While charcoal grills cause fewer fires annually than gas grills, the biggest safety concern is lighter fluid – or the various substitutes Sailors and Marines often use to try to light the grill. Only use lighter fluid that is meant for charcoal, never gasoline, kerosene or other volatile fluids, and, never add lighter fluid to coals that are already warm.

No matter what type of grill is used, the most important thing is to keep an eye on it. Never leave it unattended, and watch out for children. Ultimately, common sense is the secret ingredient that will keep cookouts from leaving a bad taste in your mouth.

## Do-It-Yourself Home Repair

The summer season is also a great time for Sailors and Marines to take a week of leave and

chip away at all those home repair projects piling up around the house. Any Bob Villa wannabe knows the pride and sense of accomplishment that can result. Not only that, but do-it-yourselfers can save themselves serious amounts of money. However, without proper planning and/or tools, it's probably best to just pull out the checkbook and plan to wait around for the professionals because a simple slip of a screwdriver, miss with a saw, or stumble from a ladder can injure or kill.

"Around the house, falls are the biggest problem," said John Williams, the recreation and off-duty safety coordinator at the Naval Safety Center.

Often, these falls are from unsafe ladders, a crucial piece of equipment required for many jobs around the house. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that every year, more than 164,000 people wind up in emergency rooms after falling from a ladder.

In the past, Sailors and Marines have been extremely creative and just as unsafe when it comes to ladder usage, making do with swivel chairs, sofas and the ever-popular paint bucket. But, Williams urges everyone to use the right ladder for the job.

Part of finding the right ladder involves knowing how high and how strong the ladder should be. Williams said that for every four feet in length, the ladders should extend one foot from the wall.

It's also important to be vigilant when using a ladder near electricity. Williams has a good rule of thumb: "A metal ladder, plus electricity, equals death."

Other home repair debacles that lead to emergency room visits involve power tools. The best way to avoid this is by following the manufacturer's recommendation for personal protective equipment. It's also important to do a quick check of the tool before firing it up. Williams recommends looking for frayed cords and damaged plugs.

While it seems like common sense, Williams said it's also important to avoid using alcohol while performing home repairs.

"Alcohol is the largest contributing factor in home-repair mishaps, and it's also the most under-reported," he said.

Even simple tasks can have unexpected outcomes. Every summer, Sailors and Marines get injured doing simple things but smart decision making and solid planning can improve the odds of a home improvement job done well and safely.

As mentioned earlier, slips and falls are the most common problem in the home. Here are a few tips from the National Safety Council to reduce these types of mishaps:

- Reduce clutter and safely tuck telephone and electrical cords out of walkways.

- Clean up grease, water and other liquids immediately. Don't wax floors.
- Use non-skid throw rugs to reduce your chance of slipping on linoleum.
- Install handrails in stairways. Have grab bars in the bathroom (by toilets and in tub/shower).
- Make sure living areas are well lit. We can all trip and fall in the dark.
- Be aware that climbing and reaching high places will increase your chance of a fall.
- Use a sturdy step stool with handrails when necessary.

## Severe Weather: Stay Alert, Stay Alive

Across the fleet, Sailors and Marines cross their fingers and hope for sunny skies during their summer vacation leave periods. Unfortunately, it's a fact that summer corresponds to the start of hurricane season. Hurricane Katrina still lingers in our national psyche and tornados make big news whenever a destructive funnel cloud touches down. But, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports that thunderstorms, which many people view as routine during the summer, can be nature's most violent storms.

Thunderstorms are always accompanied by dangerous lightning, and often the atmospheric conditions created during a thunderstorm can actually trigger a tornado. Each summer, thunderstorms, which can form quickly and strike without much warning, kill or injure people, damage houses and equipment, and wreak havoc whenever they hit.

According to NOAA, on average, tornados kill 70 people and injure another 1,500 each year. Lightning is responsible for an average of 80 deaths and 300 injuries per year. Flash flooding is the No. 1 cause of deaths associated with thunderstorms, killing nearly 150 people per year.

NOAA says the best way to prepare for the unexpected is to develop a family disaster plan. Pick two places to meet. One should be outside your home during an emergency such as a fire, and another place should be away from your neighborhood, in case you can't return home, such as in the wake of a tornado that causes heavy damage. Make sure you choose an out-of-state relative or friend as a "family check-in contact" and make sure everyone knows to call this person if you get separated.

A disaster supply kit should include a three-day supply of water and nonperishable foods, a change of clothes and shoes for everyone, blankets, a first aid kit including prescriptions, a battery-powered radio with extra batteries and an extra set of car keys.

Nearly 2,000 thunderstorms occur at any moment around the world. That's 16 million per year.

The recipe for a thunderstorm is simple: moisture, added to unstable air, mixed with a little lift, caused by cold or warm fronts, sea breezes, mountains or the sun's heat. These ingredients are most likely to mix during the summer.

NOAA recently charted the risk of being hit. Open fields (parks, playgrounds) account for 27 percent of lightning-strike deaths. People under trees accounted for 14 percent. Water-related strikes were 8 percent and golf courses were 5 percent.

The best way to avoid becoming a statistic is to be prepared. Watch the weather reports, check the sky, and plan your events so weather doesn't become a factor. If you are caught in a storm, find shelter, and avoid tall, isolated trees or other tall objects. If you're stuck in an open field, get as low as possible, preferably in a ditch, and put your hands on your knees with your head between them. Don't lie flat on the ground.

You should also avoid taking showers or talking on the telephone when storms are present or imminent.

A little common sense can go a long way toward making sure thunderstorms are more of a nuisance than a disaster.

## Motorcycle Safety

As the weather improves, more and more Sailors and Marines who ride motorcycles are dusting off their bikes, revving their engines and having daydreams of that "Easy Rider" life-style. Fortunately, most riders quickly return to reality and carefully follow the rules of the road they learned in the free courses offered by the military. But motorcycle safety is not just the responsibility of the rider.

Motorists and other road users are reminded to safely "share the road" with motorcycles and to be extra alert to help keep motorcyclists safe. Motorcyclists are reminded to make themselves visible to other motorists. All road users are reminded to never drive, walk or bicycle while distracted.

And with that in mind, pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers of all vehicles, including SUVs, passenger cars or trucks, need to be extra attentive and make sure you 'share the road.' A motorcycle is one of the smallest vehicles on our roads, often hidden in a vehicle's blind spot. Everyone needs to aggressively look for them.

It's crucial that motorists and bicyclists always make visual checks for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections. Pedestrians should also scan for motorcyclists who might be hidden by other traffic.

Motorcyclists have responsibilities, too. They should follow the rules of the road, be alert to other drivers, never ride while impaired or

distracted, and always wear a Department of Transportation (DoT)-compliant helmet and other protective gear.

A motorcyclist is much more vulnerable than a passenger vehicle occupant in the event of a crash. Research from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration shows that per vehicle mile traveled, motorcyclists are about 37 times more likely than passenger car occupants to die in traffic crashes. **Here are several tips for drivers to help keep motorcyclists safe on our roadways:**

- Remember, the motorcycle is a vehicle with all of the rights and privileges of any other motor vehicle on the roadway. Always allow a motorcyclist the full lane width—never try to share a lane;
- Always make a visual check for motorcycles by checking mirrors and blind spots before entering or leaving a lane of traffic and at intersections;
- Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging with traffic;
- Don't be fooled by a flashing turn signal on a motorcycle – motorcycle signals are often not self-canceling and riders sometimes forget to turn them off. Wait to be sure the motorcycle is going to turn before you proceed;
- Allow more following distance, three or four seconds, when behind a motorcycle so the motorcyclist has enough time to maneuver or stop in an emergency. And don't tailgate. In dry conditions, motorcycles can stop more quickly than cars.
- Never drive while distracted.

## Motorcyclists should remember the following tips to increase their safety:

- Avoid riding in poor weather conditions;
- Wear brightly colored protective gear and a DOT-compliant helmet;
- Use turn signals for every turn or lane change, even if you think no one will see it;
- Combine hand signals and turn signals to draw more attention to themselves;
- Use reflective tape and stickers to increase conspicuity; and
- Position yourself in the lane where you will be most visible to other drivers.
- Never drive while impaired.

The message to all drivers and motorcyclists is: make this the first year in recent years when motorcycle fatalities do not increase. Help to share in the responsibility and do your part by safely "sharing the road."

Let's have a great summer and stay out of the record books.

For more information about any safety issues, visit [www.safetycenter.navy.mil](http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil). **AH**

*Phillips is assigned to the Naval Safety Center, Norfolk.*

# 3x a Sailor, 2x a Chief

Story by MCC(SW) Terrina Weatherspoon

**G**etting selected for chief petty officer is tough. And that's only the beginning. With selection results comes induction and with induction comes the opportunity for selectees to prove to themselves and their mess they are ready for the responsibility that comes with the golden anchors. It's a training experience that chiefs are proud to say they went through – once.

**But, it's a process CEC(SCW/SW) Orrin T. Greene is proud to say he went through – twice.**

When EMI Greene was selected for chief in 1989 with only eight years in, he knew it wasn't going to be easy, but he was ready. He grew up in a Navy family where it was expected that he would join the military and succeed; and he had done both.

As a young chief he said he was confident in his abilities to sort out complicated situations and give solid direction. He loved his job and was having the time of his life.

Just three years later – after his son asked him a question – Greene reprioritized his world.

"He asked me if I was going to get a chance to visit him that year," said Greene, currently deployed to Afghanistan with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 18. "I knew at that point it was time to stop mentoring Sailors and start mentoring my own son."

Greene was honorably discharged from the Navy in 1992 after 11 years of service.

"I know I made the right choice," said Greene. "In the fall after I got out of the military, my son and I went elk hunting together. I realized that day I wasn't really out there to hunt – I was out there to spend time with my son, and recover some of the moments I had lost. I didn't shoot an elk that day, but instead left with something much more valuable – a better relationship with my boy."

About a year later, Greene enlisted in the Navy Reserve. They weren't taking any electrician's mates at the time, so Greene was given the option to come back in as a construction electrician with the Seabees. But instead of being a chief, he would have to enlist as a first class petty officer.

"It was a very humbling experience. But as a chief, we learn that we need to be humbled at times," said Greene. "I had to realize that it wasn't about what was on my collar. It was about serving my country. It wasn't about me; it was about the needs of the Navy at the time."

Eventually, even as a Reservist, full-time civilian life won out again. He transferred into the Inactive Ready Reserve for four years, and was discharged from the Navy for the second time in 1999.

"Civilian life had just become too busy," said Greene. "The economy was doing well and I was intent on going back to school."

And he did. He earned a Ph.D.

"Greene is humble," said Chief Mass Communication Specialist Leif Herrgesell, public affairs officer, NMCB 18. "Very few people know that he has a Ph.D. He never talks about it. He's a steadying influence and very level headed."

It was his level head he was using when in 2009, almost 10 years after being discharged from the Navy, he decided to join for a third time.

"There was a program in place that allowed you to rejoin with your same rank and rate if it hadn't been more than 10 years and if you were still actively in a job that corresponded with your rate," said Greene. "So I was back in the Navy as a CEI."

Within two months of being back in the Reserves, his command informed him that they would be deploying within the year.

"My wife said she thought we were past this, and honestly, I thought we were as well," said Greene.

Nevertheless, he began to gear up to deploy with NMCB 18. In July while in Gulfport, Miss., he heard the news that he had been selected for chief.

"It was such a great feeling. Like I was home," said Greene.

"Greene's level of commitment to the Navy and the mess were humbling," said Herrgesell. "He didn't tell anyone about his history with the Navy. Very few people were aware of his background. That speaks volumes about the kind of person he is. He never bragged or complained."

Once his story got out, the respect for "Genuine Chief-Select" Greene grew.

"I do feel like there is an underlying respect for my situation, not just among the Mess, but also among the other selectees," said Greene. "I wanted to go through the process again. I wanted to be able to bond with my fellow selectees. And I wanted to see things from their perspective."

"I know that our Mess is very proud of him, not just for his past accomplishments, but also for the humility it takes to go through induction again, and not degrade the journey and the training for his fellow selectees," said Herrgesell.

"We are definitely proud to have him go through the process with us," said Chief Information Systems Technician Teresa Alavarez, automated data processing chief, 3rd Naval Construction Regiment (3NCR). "He's able to provide insight and guidance behind closed doors. We commend and respect him, and he upholds the Navy traditions and keeps them dear to his heart. But he wouldn't let us read his charge book!"

The charge book is something each selectee is required to carry around. It is essentially a notebook containing wisdom and guidance from other chiefs. Greene is simply adding to the book he started more than 20 years ago.

"I'm glad I'm going back through the process," said Greene. "There are positive changes being made across the board and we are more in line with current policies. Besides, there is always more to learn. There is a takeaway from every situation. I'm able to stand outside the mess and see what is really coming out of there, and I'm able to go behind closed doors with the selectees and see what they are really gaining from the experience. I'm able to offer them a level of calm."

"I have to honestly say I'm not sure I'm as good a man as he is," said Herrgesell. "I'd like to think that I'd volunteer to go through induction again, but not having walked in his shoes I can't honestly say I would. That is truly what sets him apart. Greene would be a master chief by now if not for the breaks in service and coming into the Reserves without his anchor."

"Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick D. West was two companies behind me in boot camp," said Greene. "My brother is a retired master chief. I know what I would have been able to accomplish, but honestly, I'm a chief twice over, and I'm pretty proud of that." AH



Sailors assigned to USS Essex (LHD 2) help clean up debris from Uranohama Harbor on Oshima Island, Japan.

## Essex Sailors Assist Oshima Island Residents With Cleanup Efforts

**M**ore than 40 Sailors and Marines assigned to USS Essex (LHD 2) recently volunteered to assist with clean up efforts on the island of Oshima, Japan.

The Sailors assisted residents by cleaning up homes, streets and the harbor. They spent the day removing debris and fallen trees from a fishing pier and providing assistance to local residents on the island.

Oshima Island was devastated by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, which destroyed houses, means of transportation and the way of life for residents. Locals lived without electricity, fresh water and warm meals for more than 16 days before the Sailors and Marines of the Essex Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) arrived to assist. Since then, ARG and MEU have worked with Japan Self Defense Forces on numerous relief efforts to aid residents.

During the most recent mission, Sailors reached the island on Landing Craft Utility 1634, assigned to Assault Craft Unit 1, bringing with them chemical, biological and radiological (CBR) suits, gloves, fresh water and meals ready-to-eat. Sailors donned CBR suits as a precautionary measure to avoid possible radiological contamination.

"We faced some challenges cleaning up the debris by not having any equipment or tools,"

said Personnel Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Angel Long, Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 11.

The group worked together for more than eight hours, clearing away pieces of houses, personal belongings, boats, fishing nets and other debris. Some found items that touched them emotionally, such as a pearl necklace, children's shoes and handmade gifts.

"Seeing the smiles on the resident's faces after we finished cleaning made me feel a sense of accomplishment, and it moved me," said Information Systems Technician 1st Class (SW/AW/EXW) Alexander Lee, PHIBRON 11. "If I get another opportunity to go ashore to assist with relief efforts, I will go again because I see them as family."

As the service members were clearing debris, they took time to help local residents sort through the rubble to find personal belongings in what was left of their homes.

"The Japanese are on an island by themselves and are secluded from getting help," said Long. "It's important for us to help them start the clean up and get their lives back together."

The Essex ARG, with the embarked 31st MEU, is operating near Uranohama Harbor, Oshima Island's primary ferry harbor, in support of Operation Tomodachi. The island is dependent upon ferry service for its fresh water supply, food and gas from the mainland, which

has been largely unreachable since the tsunami washed its ferries ashore.

Rear Adm. Jeffrey S. Jones visited Sailors and Marines on Oshima, to convey his gratitude for the work they have accomplished so far.

"I can't be more proud of the work these Sailors and Marines are doing to help the residents of Oshima," said Jones. "We are here to do what we can to help these people, our friends and allies." **AH**

Story and photo by MC2(SW) Eva-Marie Ramsaran, USS Essex (LHD 2).

## USS Theodore Roosevelt Sailors Assist Special Olympics

Approximately 50 Sailors from USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) recently volunteered, at Old Dominion University (ODU) in Norfolk to help more than 200 elementary school children from Norfolk Public Schools participate in this year's Special Olympics event, dubbed "Little Feet Meet."

The event was put together by Patrick Doyle, an Adapted Physical Education teacher with Norfolk Public Schools. Doyle has been the director of this event for the last two years, and explains that last year's attendance of 88 children grew to more than 200 children this year.

"This is a great opportunity to advocate for these children," said Doyle. "My goal is for this event to grow and include every child."

Doyle said he is excited by the turnout - both the kids and support.

"This is the first year the Navy has come out and we are very proud to see them out here," said Doyle.

When TR Sailors took the field they were divided into groups, each assigned to a corresponding group of students.

Sailors participated with the students in 18 events that were well rounded and offered a variety of exercises such as a 50-meter dash and standing long jump, as well as: softball throw, hula hoop toss, football throw, golf putting, tee-ball hitting, tossing station, parachute activities, obstacle course, soccer kick, weightlifting, bean bag toss, fitness station, ladder ball, track events, hockey shot and races.

"Just to see the smiles on their face, that's enough for me," said Engineman 1st Class (SW) Ryan Giddens. "This means a lot to me. It felt like something I had to do."



EN1 Ryan Giddens, assigned to USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), helps children during a beanbag tossing game at the Little Feet Meet at Old Dominion University in Norfolk.

Giddens explained that while he does not have a special needs child, he loved spending time with them and was laughing, smiling and interacting with the students.

The Navy and other volunteers were not the only ones enjoying themselves. The students were very excited.

"The kids love it. You can tell by the big smiles on each of their faces," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) Airman Mitchell Mackenzie.

Mackenzie said that throughout the exercises his child kept saying "I'm winning, I'm winning!"

Mackenzie noted, "It shows that we care for the community and are willing to give back for everything we get from them."

With most of the year still ahead, TR plans to maintain an active role within the community and keep giving back in any way possible.

Theodore Roosevelt is currently undergoing her scheduled midlife Refueling Complex Overhaul (RCOH) at Newport News Shipyard. During the 39-month maintenance period, TR is scheduled to have her fuel replenished and significant upgrades made to the combat and communication systems. This will extend the ship's service life for 25 years or longer. **AH**

Story and photo by MCSA John Paul Kotara, USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71).

## NAS Whidbey Island Dives into Recycling

Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island's recycle center recently conducted the 15th annual characterization study, nicknamed "Dumpster Diving," with volunteers from Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit (CNATTU), CNATTU Fire School, Marine Aviation Training Support Group (MATSG) 53, Base Security, the NAS Whidbey Island First Class Petty Officers Association and civilian contractors all contributing to the project.

"It's a training exercise we use as a waste characterization study to tell people what's in the trash that shouldn't be, and what kind of recyclables that they might not know are recyclable," said Cassandra Gale, NAS Whidbey Island recycle center recycling office technician.

The Navy's theme for Earth Day 2011, "Partnering for a Greener Future," emphasized the Navy's partnerships with other military services, federal and state agencies, non-government organizations, industry, and civilians.

"On a dumpster dive we will typically have 75 to 80 percent of the total volume recycled at the end of the day," said Gale. "So if we have 1,000 pounds, you're going to see somewhere about 750 to 800 pounds are recyclable and the rest is trash."

During the event, staff from the recycle center assisted with categorizing materials and explained how and where to put the different items.



AWAN Francesco Schittino and AWAN Steve Platt, both assigned to Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit, look through recyclable materials during the kick-off of Naval Air Station Whidbey Island's 21st Earth Day.

"I came here this morning to learn a little about what can be separated from regular trash and the reason for it and the painstaking process of sorting it," said Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Lee Ducan, assigned to NAS Whidbey Island supply department. "I also encourage my kids to recycle because it's the right thing to do. If we don't take care of our environment, no one will."

Of 1,420 total pounds of waste sorted, 1,135 pounds were recycled, and 285 pounds were sorted after the morning event.

The volunteers said they were happy to lend a hand and help improve the local environment.

"This event gave me a lot of information and knowledge about the recycling process and the stuff that goes to waste," said Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class (AW) Chad Hodges, an instructor assigned to CNATTU. "I think we all need to be educated better because a lot of us still throw out things that can be recycled."

Gale noted the two-hour event went very well. "This turn-out was great. I was very pleased with the enthusiasm and the effort put forth by all the Sailors and Marines who were in and around the bins," said Gale.

Earth Day began April 22, 1970, and is designated as a day to reflect on the planet, environment, and ways to help keep them healthy. **AH**

Story and photo by MC2 Nardel Gervacio, Navy Public Affairs Support Element West, Det. Whidbey Island, Wash.



Cmdr. John Towers (foreground) with Rear Adm. William A. Moffett, watch the Curtiss Trophy Races, Washington, D.C., May 14, 1926.

## “Mr. Naval Aviation” and 100 years of Courage and Commitment

Story by MC2 Geraldine Hawkins

**T**hanks to Navy aircraft carriers, those on any corner of the planet who would harm the United States or its allies have to contend immediately with the firepower of the U.S. Navy. Navy personnel within the aviation community take deep pride in this as they celebrate the Centennial of Naval Aviation. The global sea presence that today’s Navy maintains is still influenced by the dedication of one exemplary officer: Adm. John H. Towers.

“If any naval officer could be considered ‘Mr. Naval Aviation’ it had to be Georgia-born Jack Towers,” wrote James and William Belote in *Titans of the Seas*. A 1906 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Towers reported to the Curtiss Flying School in Hammondsport, N.Y., in 1911 for aviation training. He would be test-flying what the Belotes referred to as “the stick-and-wire hydroplanes of Glenn Curtiss.”

Towers flew the Navy’s first airplane — the *Curtiss A-1* seaplane. In October 1911, he made aviation history piloting an A-1 from Annapolis, Md., to Old Point Comfort, Va., a distance of 112 miles in 122 minutes.

As a lieutenant, Towers set another record in 1913 when he flew a Curtiss “flying boat” from the Washington Navy Yard down the Potomac, then up the Chesapeake Bay to land at Annapolis in three hours and five minutes. Lt. Towers was then Officer In Charge of the aviation

unit at Annapolis, consisting of nine officers and 23 Sailors. By January 1914, Towers and his crew moved their equipment to Pensacola, Fla., to create the first naval aviation training unit.

With three *Curtiss NC* flying boats, Towers planned and led the first air crossing of the Atlantic in May 1919. Due to thick fog, two of the planes were forced to land in rough seas. Towers and his crew kept their plane afloat 52 hours, managing to water taxi more than 200 miles to Punta Delgado on San Miguel Island. For his leadership, Towers was awarded the Navy Cross.

Between the two world wars, Towers tirelessly advocated naval aviation, in particular carrier aviation. This was at a time when there was very little support for aviation both in and out of the Navy. During the early years of naval aviation, Navy planes were used primarily for observation purposes. Towers explored the possibilities of using naval aircraft for aerial reconnaissance, bombing military targets, photography and communications.

As a result, he became commanding officer of the first aircraft carrier, *USS Langley* (CV 1) from January 1927 to August 1928. After serving in various billets, both at sea and ashore, Towers was named Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics on June 1, 1939, with the accompanying rank of rear admiral. This made him the first naval aviator to achieve flag rank.

During World War II, Vice. Adm. Towers served as Adm. Nimitz’s principal assistant for naval affairs. “Towers was the natural leader of those officers whose interest was entirely in naval air,” wrote the Belote brothers. But Towers also understood the “black shoe” Navy and the submarine service. “It was to a well-rounded man that Nimitz now wisely turned to when review procedures for using the fleet carriers in the forthcoming mid-Pacific offensive.”

On Jan. 1, 1947, the new United States Pacific Command stood up as one of the first unified commands with Admiral Towers as its first commander. He served in that position for only two months before being reassigned to succeed Adm. Raymond A. Spruance as commander in chief Pacific Fleet. Towers was “dual-hatted” as both commander in chief, Pacific Fleet and commander in chief, Pacific Command.

Towers retired on Dec. 1, 1947. After retirement, Towers served as president of the Pacific War Memorial, as assistant to the President of Pan American World Airways and as president of the Flight Safety Council. He died at age 70 in St. Albans’ hospital, Jamaica, N.Y., on April 30, 1955, and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. *USS Towers* (DDG 9) was named in his honor and commissioned in June 1961.

Today, U.S. Navy planes fly approximately half of the aerial combat missions in Afghanistan. They also play a key role in recent humanitarian missions including the recent tsunami in Japan and Hurricane Katrina relief. This legacy of heroism began because of the vision and dedication of John H. Towers. **AH**

Hawkins is assigned to Defense Media Activity-Navy, Washington, D.C.

U.S. Navy Photo



## Pentagon Sailor Returns from Seven Month Deployment in Afghanistan

Story by MC3 Shannon Burns

**B**eing an individual augmentee (IA) can be an exciting, challenging and sometimes frightening experience. It can also give Sailors the opportunity to do something that may not be a part of their everyday Navy job. Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class (SW) Liz Murray had the chance to experience something out of the ordinary when she went on a seven-month IA assignment to New Kabul Compound (NKC), Kabul, Afghanistan, where she was the Kabul Bureau Chief for Armed Forces Network (AFN) Afghanistan.

“My job at the Pentagon Channel requires me to be in front of the camera rather than behind it covering stories. In Afghanistan, I was able to shoot, edit and report what was going on,” said Murray.

Before Murray could be sent to Afghanistan she received training that prepared her for life in a war zone. She learned tactics that many Army Soldiers go through in training. This was a pertinent step in the process because Army culture can be quite different from Navy culture.

Murray’s training included the Combat Lifesaver Course, that gave her a different view of Army life and a whole new level of respect for the combat medics.

“My deployment helped me be more confident in my ability to step outside my comfort zone and not be afraid,” she said. “Although I was nervous at the beginning because of what I had seen in the news, I have a lot more pride in the Navy and the military as a whole.”

While there, Murray worked off base with the local population on a daily basis. Because of her job-related engagements she was usually doing a variety of stories in the local villages, schools and orphanages.

“I was with the South Carolina National Guard during a trip to a local school that they were helping to renovate. Overcrowding in schools is a big problem in Kabul, and the students go to school in shifts because there aren’t enough classrooms,” added Murray.

“These soldiers were working to get more classrooms built in this particular school. The way the children responded to seeing the soldiers was the kind of reaction you would expect to see American children respond to a celebrity.”

Of her many memories, one will always stand out in her mind.

“The general from Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command was doing a site visit of the different village stability operations [VSO] locations,” Murray said. “VSO has Special Forces working and living with Afghan forces and local citizens in remote locations to help increase security capabilities.”

She was shooting video of the commander’s visit to a village in western Afghanistan called Dari Bum, when she heard her first non-training explosion.

“We all ran behind a barrier,” said Murray. “U.S. and Afghan troops immediately laid down suppressive fire as the enemy attempted to use direct and indirect fire.”

Murray said in a matter of minutes she saw a tremendous change of pace. She witnessed how highly trained Special Forces could react in a devastating situation. She also realized that she was capable of doing her job while combat around her continued.

“My camera kept rolling. I wanted to capture all of it on video,” said Murray. “The pace out there [in Afghanistan] is fast and your senses are heightened. In that moment, I realized that I wanted to stay in the military and go to combat camera. Despite all of that, I would go back in a heartbeat.”

Murray went on to add, “What we’re doing there is so important. I felt I needed to do my part. When I saw the strain deployments are putting on the Army, I decided that I couldn’t just sit back and not contribute to the mission there.”

Upon returning to the United States, Murray reported back to her previous command and hopes to fulfill her dream by getting orders to combat camera. **AH**

*Burns is assigned to Defense Media Activity – Navy, Washington, D.C.*



*This year...*

*Whom will you  
Remember?*

*May 30, 2011*