

The Sailor Cowboy



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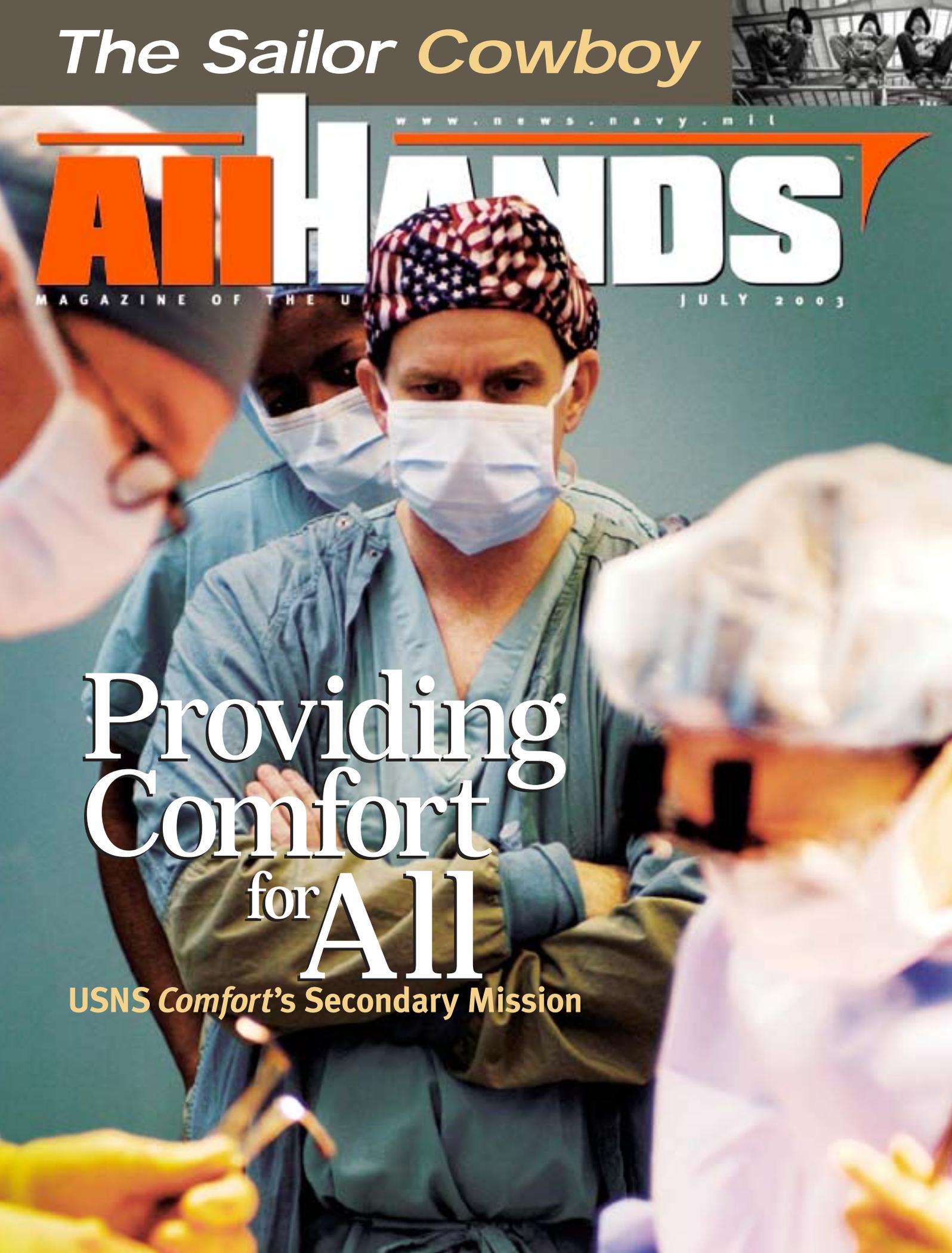
ALL HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U

JULY 2003

Providing Comfort for All

USNS Comfort's Secondary Mission





14 Up on the Roof

July

Up early and late to bed is the standard for these Sailors. They're expected to work hard. They know the routine and it gets tiresome, but they know they have to get the job done. The working conditions are less than hospitable. It's hot, hectic and dangerous. It's the flight deck of an amphib, specifically, *USS Tarawa* (LHA 1).

[On the Front Cover]
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist LT David Stewart and Nurse LT Cynthia Wilson observe an EPW's shoulder surgery.

Photo by PH1 Shane T. McCoy

[Next Month]
Find out how Navy families cope with deployments, especially in time of conflict. We'll also look at the backload of *USS Rushmore* (LSD 47) as she prepared to depart the Arabian Gulf.

[Features]

Providing 16 Comfort for All

When *USNS Comfort* (T-AH 20) left her homeport of Baltimore in February, the crew knew they would treat war casualties. They didn't know how large a role they would play performing their secondary mission — humanitarian aid.



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32 The Sailor Cowboy

A ragged breath escapes his lungs and veins bulge on his forearm, as he wraps the rope around his gloved hand. He flexes his grip one last time. The last thing he hears is, "GO!" as the gate flies open, and the ton of solid muscle beneath **Interior Communications Electrician 3rd Class Billy Don Dempsy** lurches out of the stall. He's thrown forward, then back, then forward again amid the cheers of the crowd.



Supporting the Troops

Photo by PH3 Gregory Badger

Students and faculty from both Akers and R.J. Neutra Elementary Schools aboard **Naval Air Station Lemoore**, Calif., show their appreciation for the members of the U.S. military by constructing a human U.S. flag.



Move 'em Out

Photo by PH1(SW) Aaron Ansarov

As they were digging out from a sand storm, the members of **Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74** were told to pack up in the early morning hours and move out after receiving their first assignment to build a medium girder bridge, in a remote location during **Operation Iraqi Freedom**.

Speaking with Sailors

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

These Questions are from a Recent MCPON All Hands Call on NAS Fallon, Nev.

Q: What happened to Task Force Excel?
A: Task Force Excel was originally formed as a result of recommendations by the team established by the CNO, to review how the Navy trained our Sailors. The Executive Review of Navy Training made several large-scale recommendations to changing the way we train and invest in our people.

The CNO knew we needed a group of forward-thinking people he could entrust with the primary mission of changing the way we train, without being held hostage to the idea of following the same old way of doing business.

This group became the Task Force for Excellence through Education and Learning, a.k.a. Task Force EXCEL (TFE). TFE started the

Revolution in Training. From the beginning, CNO knew that TFE would not be the organization to sustain and continue the revolution, and they

would eventually pass the baton off to another organization that could maintain the effort.

TFE built the foundation that will support the training organization of our future Navy, implemented processes and mechanisms, and recommended policies that will guarantee the Navy's continued ability to meet their mission

well into the future.

With the establishment of the Naval Personnel Development Command (NPDC), TFE turned over the leadership role in the Revolution in Training. Many members of the original team and much of the experience gained now resides in that organization.

But, that doesn't mean that TFE faded into the sunset. There is great value added in having a group of people who are chartered to 'think outside the box' when it comes to looking at what current industry practices in training are, and how they can apply to the Navy.

Task Force Excel continues to exist as a separate department in NPDC, and will continue to be a player in making sure we are on the cutting edge of training our Sailors in the future. **ES**

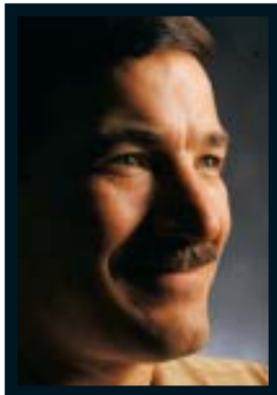


Photo by JO1 Preston Keres

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

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Editor,

I retired from the Navy in 1990. I remember looking forward to every issue of *All Hands* when I was on active duty. I have just found *All Hands* on the Web, and I'm glad to get reacquainted with an old friend.

I want to commend you on your outstanding Web site. I like the flash application. It's very well put together, but that doesn't surprise me. After all, we're talking about a Navy production here. Thanks for all you do. Keep up the great work.

Chuck Fry
Fairmont, W.V.

Editor,

Before I retired in June 1987, I read *All Hands* faithfully. Now I have found it on the

Web, and you have archived all copies, too! I have a lot of catching up to do. Thank you.

EO1 Leonard R. Webbe, Ret.
Gulfport, MS

Editor,

I am from Mt Morris, Mich., and I have been in the Navy for almost a year now. I have seen a lot of things that I wouldn't have seen if I hadn't joined.

I have four other brothers who are in the Navy, too. I would say that all five of us joined so that we could make a better life for ourselves. We weren't always the best kids in the world. We all ended up quitting school in the 10th grade and we had to try to make ends meet.

I remember it like it was

Mail Call

Letters to the *All Hands* Editor

yesterday when my brother James decided that he would join the Navy. "Join the Navy," I asked him, "Why the &%@#! would you do that?" I didn't realize then what the big deal was until I was there for his graduation at boot camp.

Then it hit me. He had done something that none of us had actually done at least once in our lives. He succeeded!

One by one, we went to the recruiting station hoping that we, too, could make that kind of change in our lives, and soon enough we were on our way to Boot Camp.

My brother Bill and I went to Boot Camp the week my brother Donald was graduating, and after we graduated, we went to see my brother Edmund during his first week at Boot Camp.

Bill, Donald, Edmund and I went to the aviation side of the Navy and my brother James became a deck seaman. ... We have all succeeded.

AEAA Gregory Schafer
USS Tarawa (LHA 1)



Pentagon Revises Smallpox Vaccination Policy

DOD is taking a watchful approach to its smallpox vaccination program after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta reported investigating whether a sequence of cardiac deaths was associated with the vaccine.

The government has suggested that anyone with certain heart-related risk factors not take the vaccine. It continues to examine several suspected cases, including that of a 55-year-old National Guardsman who died of a heart attack five days after receiving the smallpox vaccine.

Following the CDC's recommendation, Army Col. John Grabenstein, deputy director for military vaccines for the Army's surgeon general, said DOD is revising its policy for some 500,000 military personnel whom it plans to vaccinate against smallpox.

The military has medically screened vaccine recipients since the program's beginning, Grabenstein said. He noted DOD would now take an even closer look at risk factors such as tobacco use, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and family history of heart disease before giving the vaccine.

"People with three or more of those conditions would be

exempted," he said. Grabenstein cautioned anyone, vaccinated or not, to seek healthcare if they experience chest pain or shortness of breath with exertion.

Military personnel currently receiving the smallpox vaccine are those deployed or deploying to the Central Command area of operation; those who would go into a smallpox outbreak area to help control the disease; and healthcare workers at DOD hospitals and clinics who would treat smallpox patients.

Grabenstein said there is no plan to vaccinate everyone in the military at this time. "It's a pretty focused and targeted program," he noted.

Even with the public concern over the safety of vaccine, he said the recent deaths seem to be in proportion with usual rates of death.

"The evidence that we have so far shows that these are not linked in a cause and effect way," Grabenstein explained. "The deaths seem to be just the

A vial of the Smallpox vaccine used to inoculate the crew of **USS Constellation** as part of the fleet's "Forward Deployed" vaccination program. *Constellation* was deployed to the Persian Gulf in support of *Operation Enduring Freedom*.

natural level of heart attacks that occur among unvaccinated people. But the investigation is not finished, and to be on the safe side, this extra precaution is being taken."

More than 350,000 service members have been vaccinated, with "the expected number of post-vaccination symptoms and few serious reactions," he said.

"Lots of people had itching at the vaccination site and swollen lymph nodes under the arms, which are fairly common," Grabenstein said. "In terms of serious reactions we've had few; in fact fewer than we would have expected looking at the histori-

cal figures. We're pleased with the success of the program."

President Bush announced a nationwide smallpox vaccination plan, Dec. 13, 2002, out of concern that bioterrorists could use the germ that causes smallpox as an agent to attack the United States. Although smallpox was eradicated in 1980, the germ was kept in two laboratories in the United States and the former Soviet Union for study. Whether the germ is in other locations is unknown. **S**

Story courtesy of American Forces Press Service



Photo by PHZ Felix Garza Jr.

USS Gettysburg Saves Fishermen at Sea

USS *Gettysburg* (CG 64) recently rescued four civilian mariners in distress at sea. The mariners were rescued approximately 50 miles east of Mayport, Fla.

The Mayport-based guided-missile cruiser was conducting routine operations when it received a radio distress call. The crew responded immediately, racing to the scene and recovering the four mariners with one

happens, you know, it's a great feeling, and we did something good and positive."

Once aboard, the rescued mariners received fresh water, food, blankets and medical attention and then were transferred to a Coast Guard unit for transportation back to shore.

The capsized vessel was subsequently sunk by *Gettysburg* to eliminate any hazard to navigation. **S**

Story courtesy of the public affairs office, U.S. 2nd Fleet



The cruiser **USS Gettysburg (CG 64)** on patrol in the Mediterranean Sea as part of **USS Enterprise's** Carrier Battle Group (CVBG).

of the ship's small boats.

The *Capolla* had been at anchor earlier in the morning, when a large wave capsized the 23-foot fishing vessel, throwing the four mariners into the Atlantic Ocean. They had spent 10 hours in the water prior to being rescued.

"When I talked to them," said LCDR Steve Saunders, *Gettysburg* chaplain, "they were really glad to see us. There were sharks swimming around the boat. After firing off the flares and nobody responding, they began to have thoughts that it might be their last day, they might not be recovered."

"When we're out there, we're also helping people," said ENS Frank Gasperetti, *Gettysburg* officer of the deck. "When it

Misawa Honors Shipmate

Naval Air Facility (NAF) Misawa recently honored a fallen shipmate, by naming its Navy Combined Bachelor Housing (CBH) barracks "Draughon Hall."

Torpedoman's Mate 3rd Class Matthew Draughon, a U.S. Navy diver, was lost during a dive recovery operation of a U.S. Air Force F-16 off the coast of Misawa Training Range exactly two years ago.

Along with the naming, a display case was constructed, filled with memorabilia revolving around Draughon's dedicated service, including his award, personal diving equip-

ment and pictures.

"As service members look upon this display case that honors this young Sailor, they will be reminded of his great commitment to be a Navy diver," said CAPT Richard D. High, commanding officer, NAF Misawa. "They will wonder of the amazing courage it took for this Sailor to carry out his assignment. And finally, I would think they would walk away with pride and honor to be serving in the same Navy that Petty Officer Matt Draughon so honorably served."

The CBH, which has won four consecutive ADM Zumwalt Awards and the 5-star accreditation that comes with it, sets a high standard. High commented that Draughon is the standard that we set here today.

"A building honored for its excellence in service and capability is now honored by the name of Matthew Draughon, a Sailor that performed to the highest of standards, a Sailor to emulate, a Sailor dedicated to the Navy Core Values, to his duty, to the mission, and finally and most assuredly, his shipmates that will walk through these doors."

Shipmates



LT Kevin Moller has been selected as the 2002 Officer Instructor of the Year for Naval Education and Training Command, Pensacola, Fla. Moller is a naval science instructor and sophomore class advisor at the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps unit on the campus of Marquette University, Marquette, Wis. He teaches naval weapons system classes to seniors, naval engineering classes to sophomores and advises sophomores in the NROTC program on academics and military professional development. He also advises the commanding officer on all nuclear power accession programs and serves as the unit's information technology officer.

Air Force Col. Jeff Stambaugh, 35th operations group commander and acting installation commander said, "Getting to the bottom of the mishap's cause required going to the ocean's bottom, because that's where the facts were. Were it not for the brave crew of **USS Safeguard (ARS 50)** recovering the engine and other vital components from the ocean floor, we never would have known why the aircraft crashed and thus could not have prevented similar mishaps in the future."

With tears welling in her eyes as she spoke during the ceremony, Betty Draughon, the mother of Matthew Draughon said, "For the first time in two years, I have tears of joy and gratitude; not tears of sorrow."

A surprise was added during High's speech, as he mentioned that Gen. John P. Jumper, U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff, approved the re-designation of Misawa Training Range as Draughon Training Range in a letter dated April 25, 2003. **S**

Story by JO1 Donald P. Rule, who is assigned to the public affairs office, Naval Air Facility, Misawa, Japan

South Florida Welcomes Ships of Fleet Week U.S.A.

Fleet Week U.S.A. recently kicked off in South Florida, as part of what organizers are calling a National Salute to the U.S. Military.

The community welcomed five Navy warships featuring Norfolk-based, guided-missile destroyers **USS Cole (DDG 67)**, **USS Stout (DDG 55)**, **USS McFaul (DDG 74)** and destroyer **USS Thorn (DD 988)**; as well as the guided-missile cruiser **USS Gettysburg (CG 64)**, based in Mayport, Fla..

The South Florida community has welcomed the Navy with open arms. Welcoming activities included a party at the Las Olas riverfront in Fort Lauderdale, where the ships' crews were treated to free food and beverages.

Chief Fire Controlman John D. DeAngelis, aboard *Cole*, said Fleet Week offers the community an opportunity to get a closer look at the Navy. "I think it's awesome that we're here. It gives the public a chance to see what the Navy really does."

In port, Sailors anticipated

keeping busy while enjoying their special liberty. "I'm looking forward to meeting all types of new people and seeing everything Fleet Week has to offer," said **Gas Turbine System Technician (Mechanical) 2nd Class Edwin Gonzalez** aboard *McFaul*.

Throughout the week, participating ships offered special tours to civic and social organizations, **Reserve Officer Training**

Corps (ROTC) units and school groups, giving them a chance to interact with crew members and learn about the Navy.

Students of all ages, Junior ROTC cadets and local residents were met by smiling red-jacketed volunteers who led the groups to their Navy escorts, who then led them aboard their respective ship as its tour guide.

Jessica Montero, a Felix Verala High School (Miami)

senior and Navy Junior ROTC cadet, was "really impressed" with her group's tour of *Stout*.

Retired CDR **Charles R. Leo**, senior naval science instructor, enjoyed watching the students' excitement as they climbed from deck to deck.

"We've been planning this trip since January," Leo said. "It's the first chance we've had to visit a ship. It's a little disappointing that we can't go into the skin of the ship due to security restrictions, but it'll still be valuable training. Hands-on beats classroom learning every time."

Their visit to the bridge, from where the captain gives directions, was the highlight of the tour, as one student after another posed for photos "at the helm" or "in the chair."

The ships were in port for four days before returning to training in preparation for their upcoming deployment with **USS Enterprise's (CVN 65) Carrier Strike Group.**

Story by JO2 Amy Pomeroy, who is assigned to the Public Affairs Center, Norfolk, and JOC Celeste B. Rubanick, who is assigned to NR MOPAT DET 208



MMSN Brandon Martinez, from Wellsville, Kan., and Executive Chef Chris Neelson of the local Aruba Beach Café, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., put the finishing touches on the main course aboard **USS McFaul (DDG 74)**. Celebrity chefs visited ships attending Fleet Week USA. Fleet Week USA is a week-long salute to the U.S. military which includes a four-day visit by the U.S. Navy ships and a three-day air show.

Ricky's Tour

By JO2 Mike Jones

mikejones43@hotmail.com



Time Capsule

This month we look back in the *All Hands* archive to see what was going on in the month of July. To view these issues in more detail on the Web, go to www.news.navy.mil/allhands.asp?x=search



43 Years Ago – 1960

The Navy's missile inventory was the hot topic in this edition of *All Hands*. All systems and their methods of delivery were featured. We also looked at the Royal Norwegian Navy, which also had the third largest merchant marine in the world at that time. After 84 days at sea and approximately 36,000 miles of submerged travel, **USS Triton (SSR(N) 586)** surfaced off the coast of Delaware. Excerpts of her log, written by her skipper, **CAPT Edward L. Beach**, chronicle her journey.



28 Years Ago – 1975

The role of the U.S. Navy in the rescue and evacuation of American and Vietnamese citizens from South Vietnam was a heroic and humanitarian endeavor. **USS Durham** was the first U.S. Navy ship to pick up more than 3,800 refugees and bring them to safety. Around the same time, a cyclone, with winds of 174 mph, struck the island nation of Mauritius where **USS Camden** was scheduled to pull in for three days of liberty. Upon arrival, *Camden* Sailors joined in relief and repair efforts to get the port back in working order. In 1975, the changes to the Navy's uniforms were unveiled and *All Hands* got the first glimpse of what our Sailors would look like from "Seaman to Admiral."



18 Years Ago – 1985

In this "bi-polar" *All Hands* issue, we made a stop at McMurdo Station, Antarctica, the primary jump-off point and main hub of activity for all work done in Antarctica. During the summer, about 900 people from National Science Foundation, the Army and Navy and other scientists, gather to work on scientific research projects. We joined the CNO, **ADM James D. Watkins**, and headed for the polar cap to Camp Opal, another scientific research center aboard the submarine **USS Trepang (SSN 674)**.

Enterprise Flies High in Retention

USS Enterprise (CVN 65) is flying the Retention Honor Roll Pennant for the second quarter in a row. Commander, Atlantic Fleet (COMLANTFLT) awards the pennant to ships that exceed standards of personnel retention during a quarter. *Enterprise* is one of three Atlantic carriers to win the award.

"During an arduous yard period, *Enterprise* has still been able to maintain its retention goals," said **Senior Chief Navy Counselor (SW) Scott T. Ross**, command career counselor. "That means a lot to me."

Ross credits the departmental career counselors with achieving this goal. While not all departments met the standards, winning the pennant was a shipwide effort. **Ross** understands tough working conditions can negatively impact reenlistment rates, but that just creates more opportunity for praise.

Reactor department, despite a difficult job involving 12-hour shifts, seven days a week, still retained more than 60 percent of its Sailors who were up for reenlistment. Their numbers aren't the highest on the ship, but that's still a noteworthy achievement, said **Ross**.

He singled out combat systems (CSD) as one of the best departments, retention-wise, both in numbers and programs. With 91 percent retention, CSD is an example of a successful retention program.

"Their whole chain [of command] is involved in making sure their retention programs aren't taken lightly," said **Ross**.

Chief Interior Communications Electrician (SW/AW) **John L. Hunt**, CSD's career counselor and former Navy recruiter, said keeping his Sailors informed of programs and incentives is the best tactic for making them want to stay Navy.

"The best thing that any individual in a leadership position can do is make that information available to them," said **Hunt**.

He said the last thing he wants to hear from one of his Sailors is, "If I had known about that program, I would have reenlisted."

The pennant competition also tracks Sailors who leave the service before they're up for reenlistment. Anybody who leaves the Navy more than three months before the end of his enlistment is counted under "attrition."

"A lot of ships didn't make it because of attrition," said **Ross**.

Enterprise scored 2.7 percent, well below the maximum allowable of 18 percent.

Ross wants to win the pennant every quarter, but winning awards isn't the only reason he wants to see high numbers. He sees it as a show of pride.

"I'd like to retain 75 percent of first-termers, because that would tell me people like their jobs," he said. "Fifty percent doesn't tell me that."

Earning the Retention Honor Roll pennant requires a minimum reenlistment of 56 percent of eligible first-termers. *Enterprise* exceeded that with 72 percent retention.

The pennant carries an additional incentive for continuing excellence. A command that wins the award two quarters in a row for the same fiscal year wins the Golden Anchor Award.

Enterprise's two consecutive

awards took place over two separate fiscal years. However, numbers remain high going into the second quarter, paving the way for continuing excellence and possibly earning

Enterprise another retention award. **S**

Story by JO3 Fletcher S. Gibson, who is assigned to the public affairs office, USS Enterprise (CVN 65)

Supply Ship Passes Major Milestone

Newscasts these days are replete with images of ships launching *Tomahawk* missiles and jets taking off from the decks of aircraft carriers. But, behind these scenes is the continuous sup-

port effort required to keep these ships and aircraft moving. Ships and aircraft need fuel. Without it, they can't get on station to complete their mission. The demand for diesel fuel marine (DFM) and JP-5 jet fuel during *Operation Iraqi Freedom* has been high. *USS Rainier* (AOE 7) has been meeting that demand every day since her arrival in the Arabian Gulf in December.

Rainier's crew recently surpassed the 100 million gallon mark of fuel transferred during 172 underway replenishment (UNREP) operations since the ship left its home port of Bremerton, Wash. "Our customer list is huge," said LTJG Michael Ward, *Rainier's* fuels officer. "The schedule can change on a moment's notice, so we often

have to add or delete a ship at the last minute. Two of the three aircraft carriers in our area are conventional-fueled, and they need fuel every four or five days," Ward said. "We need to be there for them. Otherwise, they don't get on station, and the planes don't fly."

With only 10 people, fuels division is one of the smallest on *Rainier*. "My guys are awe-

for a long workday, but they get the job done."

Along with the enginemen in his division, Ward has a couple damage controlmen lending a helping hand. "They fill some of the gaps as console and station operators and topside supervisors. I really appreciate what they do for us," Ward said.

"We pride ourselves on getting the job done safely," added Engineman 1st Class Brad Yenerich, leading petty officer of fuels division.

According to Yenerich, the consequences of a mishap could be catastrophic.

"There are no second chances when we are transferring fuel. We have to get it right the first time," he explained.

Over-pressurizing a fuel line or failing to stop pumping at the correct time could spill fuel into the sea or cause a mishap on the receiving ship.

"We haven't spilled a drop in [more than] a hundred million gallons. I think that's pretty good," said Yenerich. ☞

Story by JO1 Ron Poole, who is assigned to the public affairs office, USS Rainier (AOE 7)

some," said Ward of his division. "They're out on station, transferring fuel during every UNREP, then they go and do the preventative maintenance on their equipment. It makes



PHOTO BY PHAN JOHN P. CURTIS

TM Jeremiah Good and AN Billy Sunday fire a shot line from *USS Constellation* (CV 64) to the *Supply*-class, fast-combat support ship *USS Rainier* (AOE 7) during a refueling at sea, while *Constellation* was deployed in support of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

Comfort Faces Different War

Since March 20, *USNS Comfort* (T-AH 20) has performed more than 590 surgical procedures during the five weeks of *Operation Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom*.

That's at least 250 more than the number of surgical procedures *Comfort* performed during *Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm*.

While those numbers might not be staggering, they should be kept in perspective. During *Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm*, *Comfort* was deployed to the region for a total of nine months and performed a total of 337 surgical procedures.

Although these numbers provide a comparison between both Iraqi conflicts, they are anything but the same for *Comfort*.

"You can't compare the two wars. It's like apples to oranges - you just can't," said CDR Anne Diggs, head nurse of the intensive care unit (ICU).

For Diggs and the ICU staff, they are taking care of more critically wounded patients than in *Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm*. This includes a total of nine severely burned patients, which is the most *Comfort's* ICU has seen. In fact, most major burn units in the United States have rarely taken in nine burn patients at one time.

With more than a decade between the two conflicts, the technology aboard *Comfort* has changed just as much as the wars are different.

In 1990-91, *Comfort* did not have the capabilities to perform angiograms. This time, 30 angiograms were performed

on *Comfort*. An angiogram is a type of interventional radiology, which allows radiologists to view and repair blood vessels without having to make an incision.

"This procedure has undoubtedly saved some of our patients' lives," said CAPT Jeffrey Georgia, an interventional radiologist aboard *Comfort*.

Radiology is another department that has surpassed the numbers from the last war.

In 1990-91, radiology performed a total of 1,240 radiographic studies, including 141 Computed Tomography (CT) scans in nine months.

This time, *Comfort's* radiology department has performed almost triple the number of radiographic studies and CT scans, with 3,026 and 311 respectively, all in four weeks time.

However, the medical field is not the only area where technology has changed. Communications has made vast improvements over the past decade. During *Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm*, the only way Sailors could communicate with family and friends back home was through regular mail. Now, Sailors can talk on telephones and send e-mail in real-time. There is also satellite television, which allows Sailors to see the news as it's happening.

"Last time, we only had two televisions without news capabilities. We had no e-mail," Diggs said. "It is totally amazing that we can keep up to date with e-mail and the news."

"No deployment is ever the same, and this war is definitely not like the last one," said ICU Nurse, LCDR Mary Ann Brantley.

If there is one thing that is the same about *Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm* and *Operation Enduring*

Freedom/Iraqi Freedom it is the care that has been provided to patients on *Comfort*.

"The best thing about *Comfort* is that we always provide the best quality care to our patients no matter who they are or where they come from," said Diggs. ☞

Story by JOSN Erica Mater, who is assigned to the public affairs office, USNS Comfort (TA-H 20)

Center for Naval Cryptology No Secret

The 14,000 members of the Navy's cryptology (CT) community took an

exceptional step forward with the recent establishment of the **Center for Naval Cryptology (CNC)**, in a ceremony held at Corry Station, Fla., this spring.

The center will work with the fleet to define all curriculum, educational tools, and professional development continuums for all cryptology (CTA, CTI, CTM, CTO, CTR, CTT) and electronic warfare technician (EW) ratings and related officer communities.

Because education and training are essential to the success of the Navy's mission and imperative to operational readiness, training will be more responsive to the needs of the fleet and will give Sailors the right education at the right time, in the right place.

"We are aggressively transforming naval cryptology," said **Commander Naval Security Group Command, RADM Joe Burns**.

"Key to this transformation is shaping the CT and EW ratings to meet the demands of *Seapower 21*, and the Information Age. Imperative to achieving this goal is the support of the **Naval Education and**

Training Command (NETC) and the **Naval Personnel Development Command (NPDC)**."

The center is also responsible for certification and qualification continuums for all cryptology community personnel, and will serve as the knowledge managers for all training, education and career development information.

"This is a great time to be a Sailor. This is a great time to be in the cryptology field," said CNC's Commanding Officer, **CAPT Edward Deets**. "We have the best and brightest volunteers. They are very smart and highly motivated. For their service, we must ensure they are given all the tools and opportunities they need to succeed. The Center for Naval Cryptology is sharpening the point of America's spear."

To learn more about the Center for Cryptology and the Navy's Revolution in Training, visit Navy Knowledge Online at www.nko.navy.mil. ☞

Shipmates

Electronics Technician (SS)

1st Class Jeremiah Smith was selected as the 2002 Enlisted Instructor of the Year for Naval Education and Training Command, Pensacola, Fla. Smith is assigned to the Trident Training Facility, Bangor, Wash., where he serves as lead instructor for the Electronics Technician Maintenance School. He teaches the three phases of instruction for electronics technicians, including classroom instruction, laboratory troubleshooting and component level repairs to electronic circuits. He also holds collateral duties as a testing officer, information systems specialist officer, auxiliary security force member and Intranet Web designer.



environment of lifelong learning to support the growth and development of Sailors.

"We are taking training and education to a new and unprecedented level," said **Commander Naval Personnel Development Command RADM Kevin Moran**. "We will make the greatest Navy in the world and the best Sailors in the world even better. Together, we are going to create an educational system that will be the standard all others will follow."

To learn more about the Center for Cryptology and the Navy's Revolution in Training, visit Navy Knowledge Online at www.nko.navy.mil. ☞

Story by JO2 Ed Flynn, who is assigned to the public affairs office, Naval Personnel Development Command

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UP ON THE ROOF

Up early and late to bed is the standard for these Sailors. They're expected to work hard. They know the routine and it gets tiresome, but they know they have to get the job done. The working conditions are less than hospitable. It's hot, hectic and dangerous.

It's the flight deck of an amphib.



▲ **Buffeted by the rotor-wash,** ABH1(AW/SW) Luke Willdigs, one of *Tarawa's* LSEs, lands a Marine MH-53 on the deck.

“The flight deck isn't a job for everyone,” said Senior Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate—Handling (AW/SW) Rene Blake, V-1 division flight deck leading chief petty officer aboard USS *Tarawa* (LHA-1). “A lot of people look at us like we're crazy and say, ‘How can you work like that?’ But for us, it's a point of pride. “Working on the flight deck is dangerous, very dangerous,” said Blake. “You've got hundreds of people up there on deck, and if you don't know what you're looking at, you'd think it was chaos. To us it's controlled chaos.”

The core of this highly trained and effective team is an unlikely source — undesignated Sailors. Most are young, inexperienced and just out of high school, but on the flight deck, they are in charge of multimillion dollar aircraft and the lives of their shipmates.

UP ON THE ROOF



▲ The flight deck crew takes its jobs very seriously, as they are responsible for other people's lives and multimillion dollar aircraft.

"We've got a lot of undesignated personnel. Air and deck are the departments that get the majority of the undesignated Sailors," said Blake. "We get a few designated ABHs, but a lot of the undesignated end up becoming yellow shirts, and some strike out to other rates."

And with the harsh working conditions, you'd think most would try to strike a different rate as soon as possible.

"We get a lot of people who come in thinking they want to be a yeomen or some other kind of office job, but after they learn the ropes up on deck, they realize that they really love it up there and decide to stay," said Blake. "We encourage them to go for whatever job in the Navy they want. I don't push the flight-deck rates, because what's right for me might not be right for the next person."

"I came in right out of high school," said ABHAN Christina Duvall, "and when I joined, I had seen all the Navy commercials showing the flight deck guys, and that's what I wanted to do."

Before the Navy, she worked at K-mart – now she lands *Harriers* and helicopters.

While the desire to work on the flight deck may be born of TV commercials, the flight deck safety rules are born out of necessity. The most important rule on the flight deck is safety. There's always an opportunity to get hurt up there. You

can get run over by a tractor, flattened by a helicopter or knocked around by a *Harrier*. Keeping situational awareness at all times is paramount.

"We keep pounding it into their heads about the dangers of working up on deck," said ABH1 Luke Willdigg, one of *Tarawa's* senior yellow shirts. "It doesn't matter who you are – from E-1 to O-9 – you still have to keep your head on a swivel."

Sometimes that's hard to do for young Sailors, but those who have been around awhile are always there to keep an eye on their junior charges.

"We had a big turnover after the last deployment, but the new, young Sailors have done a great job filling in the holes," said Blake. "They've done nothing but impress me at all times, and I've got my little group of veterans who keep everything in line. They keep me worry free."

No one sets a foot on the flight deck before they know what's going on.

"When they first get here, they spend some time up on Vultures Row, just watching and learning how things work and who does what," said Willdigg.

"Later, they'll spend a few weeks shadowing someone doing their job up on deck to get a hands-on feel for it," he continued. "Once they're on their own, we try to rotate them through each of the jobs up on deck so they know the whole



◀ ABH3 Jorge Quezada and AN Clint Schindewolf, from *Tarawa's* crash and salvage team wait on the sidelines, always hoping their skills won't be needed.

▼ With helos landing and launching; passengers coming and going; and supplies being loaded and unloaded, the flight deck is a scene of controlled chaos.



The closeness of *Tarawa's* flight deck crew, at work and off the job, helps them perform even more smoothly when they are called to fight for their country.

▶ The days up on the roof start early and end late. A landing signal enlisted (LSE) launches the first aircraft of the day on *Tarawa*.

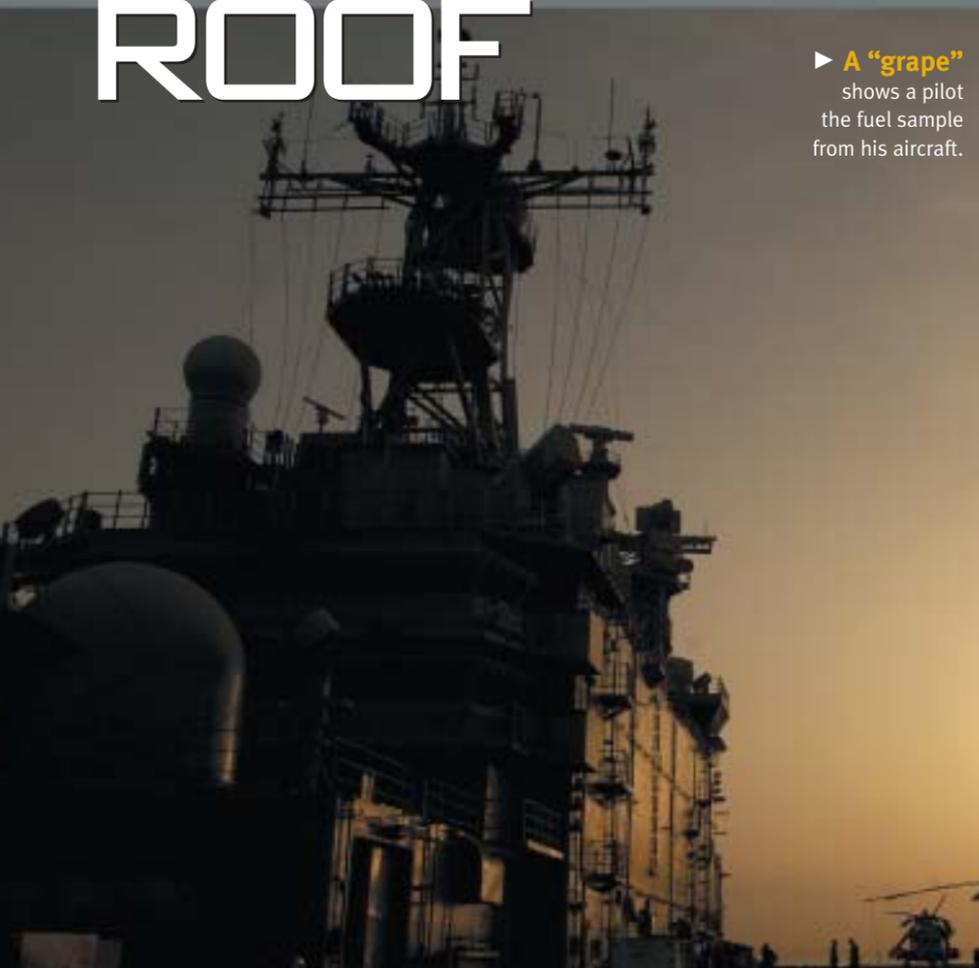


▲ AN Joey Jack keeps an eye on an aircraft fueling evolution, while relaying messages from below the flight deck.



▲ AN Erica Ryan keeps an eye out as she moves a CH-46 to a parking spot on the edge of the deck.

UP ON THE ROOF



▶ A “grape” shows a pilot the fuel sample from his aircraft.



▶ “Blue shirts,” AN Jessica Jaramillo, AN Mirna Molina, AN Erica Rya and AN Christopher Colyn, wait on a crash tractor for their time to move aircraft.

▼ In an environment where the noise levels are so high, it’s all about hand signals. ABH3 German Marrero uses his hands to direct an elevator evolution to move a helo from the hangar bay up to the flight deck.



supporting the war,” said **Duvall**. “I get letters from my family and friends every day telling me how proud they are of me. They worry, but they know I’m pretty safe.”

From the newest recruit to the most senior leader, the flight deck crew has a feeling of pride that more than makes up for the long hours and the time spent away.

“The flight deck guys are all really proud of what we’re doing over here. We’re out here defending our country,” said **Blake**. “Some of the younger guys may not know what it means to them now, but as they get older, they’ll feel it just like I do.”

“Being out here in support of **Operation Iraqi Freedom** is incredible!” said **Willdigg**. “I tell people it feels like I’ve been practicing my whole career for the big game and now I get to play. It’ll be a feeling of pride, plain and simple, to be able to go home and tell my son that his daddy helped liberate a nation. You just

can’t beat that. It’s dangerous, but you have to put that beside you so you can keep a good head on your shoulders. You can’t run around scared all day. You have to keep alert. No matter what.”

Houlihan is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands

▲ The sun sets after a long day of flight ops in the Arabian Gulf.



▲ Without the hard-working members of combat cargo, no supplies or passengers would move on or off the flight deck of the ship.

little group of veterans who keep everything in line. They keep me worry free.”

No one sets a foot on the flight deck before they know what’s going on.

“When they first get here, they spend some time up on Vultures Row, just watching and learning how things work and who does what,” said **Willdigg**.

“Later, they’ll spend a few weeks shadowing someone doing their job up on deck to get a hands-on feel for it,” he continued. “Once they’re on their own, we try to rotate them through each of the

jobs up on deck so they know the whole operation from start to finish.”

It’s a fast-paced place to work with no room for error. These Sailors can’t afford to make mistakes. Lives are at stake.

“They grow up real fast here on the flight deck,” said **Blake**. “A lot of my troops were in study hall at this time last year, but they’re doing a good job of it.”

With the war going on and aircraft moving everywhere, the emphasis is usually on the machines, but it’s the people behind those machines that make things work.

“My junior Sailors are a good bunch of people,” said **Blake**. “I’m pleasantly surprised at the attitude that they possess. For having to do some of the worst jobs on the flight deck — cleaning, chocking and chaining — they keep in really good spirits. I think the upper ranks have instilled a sense of pride in them about their job, and that if they work hard at some of the less interesting jobs, one day they can become yellow shirts.”

The closeness of **Tarawa’s** flight deck crew, at work and off the job, helps them perform even more smoothly when they are called to fight for their country.

“The people I work with up here are the greatest. They make it all worthwhile,” said **Duvall**. “We’re a really close

team, we’re all best friends. We hang out together — some of us live together — we do everything together, and that closeness just makes our jobs easier.”

Being deployed is hard. Sailors miss their families and friends. They miss their homes, but they are out there doing something important.

“I feel great about being out here



▼ With Harriers landing the flight deck is a scene of controlled chaos.



▼ A stuffed animal or toy was placed on every child's bed.

Story and photos by PH1 Shane T. McCoy

Providing Comfort

for **All**

USNS Comfort's
Humanitarian Aid

While coalition forces were fighting their way toward Baghdad, Iraqi citizens tried to go about their lives in as normal a fashion as possible. Unfortunately, at times, their everyday life is as perilous as it is during wartime.

A young Iraqi boy was in his house and accidentally knocked over some cans of kerosene, starting a fire. He and his parents were badly burned. Coalition forces found the family and rushed to have them med-evaced. In the haste to save their lives, the family was separated.

Imagine the terror this young boy felt, as he suddenly found himself surrounded by people speaking a foreign language, taking him off to who knows where.



◀ **HM3 Ollie Oliver** and **HN Ronald Belt** remove the stitches from an Iraqi EPW's leg wound.

"We weren't expecting to get that many civilian patients, but we got them," said **CAPT Charles Blankenship**, commanding officer of the Medical Treatment Facility on *Comfort*. "At any one time, we have had close to 150 Iraqi patients, both EPW and civilian."

Several of those patients spent a lot of

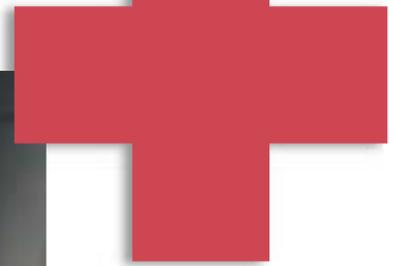
time working with **HM2 Bobbi Bowman**. Bowman is a physical therapist whose job is to help patients with wounds from car accidents, to gunshots, to rocket-propelled grenades.

"We used translators when we were building a relationship with the patient and all the barriers were up. We asked

them to come in and try to communicate what we are trying to do to help. Once we facilitated a trust between a provider and a patient, it then became working one on one with them."

A lot of the simple things that might only take five minutes in the United States, like crutch training, become nearly

Providing Comfort for All



Although he didn't know where he was going, he also didn't know how lucky he was to be going there. As the helicopter touched down on the deck of **USNS Comfort (T-AH 20)**, a team of emergency medical technicians, including **Hospital Corpsman Matthew Moritz**, met him and the other patients on the flight deck.

"It's hard to get through the language barrier. It's more body language, and you try to talk calmly to them so they know we are trying to help," said **Moritz**. "The translators told me after I had tried to calm down an Enemy Prisoner of War (EPW) and keep him on the stretcher, that he thought we were going to kill him. Some thought that was why we brought them here. That of course was not the case; we're trying to heal them. We give everyone the same treatment here."

When *Comfort* left her homeport of Baltimore in February, the crew knew they would treat war casualties. They didn't know how large a role they would play performing their secondary mission — humanitarian aid.



◀ **A child** is quickly moved from ICU to another ward.



◀ **Returning from a break** on deck, HMCS (AW/NAC) Jorge Minana keeps “Elvis” slippers dry with a piggy-back ride. *Comfort’s* crew nicknamed the Iraqi boy “Elvis” because he was always fixing his hair to look good for female crew members.

physical therapy. Through translators, we were told that she felt we were trying to torture her, because she had never been exposed to people coming in and trying to help heal something before.”

Something as simple as taking a bath or a shower was very frightening to this young girl. **Bowman** later found out that

“Admiral” had never been in a shower before. “The whole concept of water pouring out of the wall and someone holding her up there was completely different to her.”

Bowman said there is a definite learning curve when working with the Iraqis. “My first instinct as a (medical)

provider, and even as a mother, is to try to help this child – to make her pain go away.”

One thing that *Comfort’s* crew doesn’t have to worry about while working with their Iraqi patients is the work environment. *Comfort* is not your typical ship. It’s the size of a large tanker,

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impossible with a person who speaks another language. “You’re not only trying to tell them how to do something,”

Bowman said, “you’re telling them to do something they have never seen before.”

One of her examples of the challenging cases they worked with, was a teenage girl the crew nicknamed “Admiral,” the Arabic word for princess. “At first, dealing with this girl was difficult for me because I have a young daughter of my own,” said **Bowman**. “This girl was very young and beautiful, and now her whole world has changed because of her injuries.”

Dealing with a fractured femur is difficult. So is learning how to walk all over again. But when someone who doesn’t speak your language is trying to provide that care, it makes it all the more difficult. “In our world,” **Bowman** continued, “if we try to explain to a child why we are doing something and they understand, it makes our job a little bit easier, but you still have to develop the whole tough-love syndrome.

When we first started working with this girl, she wanted nothing to do with



◀ **HM2 Robert Glass** uses a suction tube to remove secretions from the airways of a young boy.



◀ **Strapped to a stretcher** for safety during transport, a young boy waits to be flown off *Comfort* with his father.



◀ **All of the Iraqi patients** are called John or Jane Doe during their stay on *Comfort*. This is done to protect the identity of any who don't want to be known.

Providing Comfort for All



and if you can imagine removing the insides and placing an entire hospital in its place, then you have a pretty good picture of this floating building. The halls – not p-ways, but halls – are wide enough to wheel hospital beds side-by-side in some places.

Some of the upgrades the ship has received recently have already paid for themselves on this mission. A newly installed angiography suite, which is used to take pictures of blood vessels, helped save the life of a Marine by helping to stop bleeding from a massive pelvic injury.

Saving lives may be the reason *Comfort* was sent to the Middle East, but it is not the only thing the crew is doing to help the lives of patients on the ship.

LCDR Patricia McKay, an orthopedic surgeon, has been using her sewing machine to make dresses for some of the young girls on board. “I enjoy sewing as a hobby and brought a sewing machine on board anticipating some free time,” McKay said. “As it turned out, I didn’t have much opportunity to use it.”

When she would go down to see her patients though, many of whom were



◀ **One of the many** elevators on *Comfort* carries patients up on deck for some sun.



◀ **Even though the identities** of the Iraqi patients were known by many crew members, all were documented as Jane or John Doe to protect their identities from media coverage.

returning home.

While some of these patients will make a full recovery, many will need extra care for a long time to come. "These are devastating, life-changing injuries that have happened to some of these people," said **CDR Claude Anderson**, one of four orthopedic surgeons on *Comfort*.

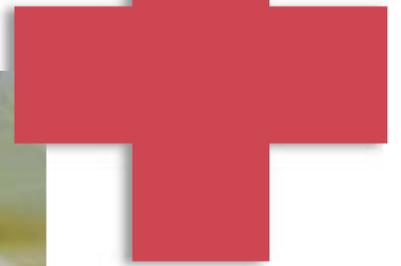
"Regardless if they were Iraqi soldiers, coalition forces or Iraqi civilians, these are things that could affect them the rest of their life and be a permanent part of them getting around. What I'm saying is that war is hell. We go in saying, 'we are going to war and I'm going to do what I'm trained for.' But, the things that

happen to people are devastating, and as a surgeon, as the doctor taking care of them, it hits home."

The civilians and EPWs who were brought to this floating hospital are aware of just how lucky they are to get this level of care and skill.

Anderson said these patients told him

Providing Comfort for All



wearing only pillowcases with holes cut out for their arms, or torn sheets around their heads to cover up, she realized she could make a difference. "It seemed a shame to have all this fabric and a sewing machine and not use it," said **McKay**. "So we started making clothes for the children on board."

She said one of her biggest concerns when they were heading over to the theater was that the Iraqi civilians were going to suffer the brunt of the war. "I'm glad we were able to help them through their suffering in some way, make their lives a little better, and do a little diplomatic work for the United States. We can show them we are not bad people, and I'm glad to be a part of it."

McKay is not the only one who used her free time to help make the patients more comfortable. Many of the crew spent the few off-hours they have in the wards, collectively called, "The Village," because of the community and family atmosphere. Some have even made friendships they want to continue after



◀ **HN Lashae Cain** checks the vital signs of all the patients in her ward at the beginning of her shift.



◀ **Physical therapy technician, HM2 Bobbi Bowman** (right), brushes the hair of a young Iraqi girl before starting physical therapy. **Bowman** and **HM3 Erin Murphy** have been working daily with recovering patients to increase the speed of recovery.

the wrong person, unable to recognize her with her hair gone and her face horribly burnt.

“If someone gives you a job, you do it to the best of your ability,” said **Bowman**. “In the medical field we are trained to provide health care, and we will do it to the best of our ability, whether it is for an

Iraqi or for coalition forces. If we want to be able to lay our heads down at night, then we need to look beyond who they are. We need to do our jobs well, because this is why we are out here.”

McCoy is a photojournalist for All Hands

Providing Comfort for All



they would not have gotten the same type of care at home that was given to them aboard the ship.

Although **Comfort's** crew did their best to provide the finest care possible, it still took its toll. **Bowman** told of one day in which she had her high point and low point, all within a half-hour.

First **Bowman** helped an 18-year-old amputee walk on crutches for the first time, a skill the injured woman had to master so she could care for her two children back in Iraq. Then on her way back to her office **Bowman** ran into the boy this story started with. He was being taken to the burn ward to identify his parents, both badly burnt and on respirators. The boy recognized his father but when shown his mother claimed it was

▼ **During off hours**, the crew of **Comfort** can visit their steel beach to work on a tan or just relax.



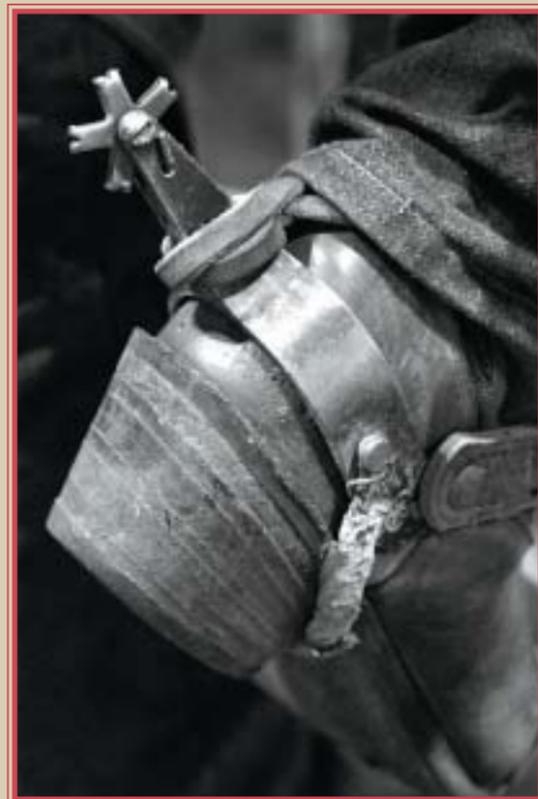
◀ **As an Army Blachawk lifts** off the deck of **USNS Comfort** a teenage boys waves goodbye to freinds he made during his stay.

“Go!”

The gate flies open, and the ton of solid

muscle beneath Interior Communications Electrician 3rd Class Billy Don Dempsey lurches out of the stall. He's thrown forward, then back, then forward again amid the cheers of the crowd. The arena is a blur as the bull beneath him spins and bucks.

“Ride him; Ride him, Billy Don!” yells a cowboy standing on top of the chute. Steam and saliva spew from the mouth of the huge animal as he tries to dislodge his unwelcome passenger. The bull leaps and turns, becoming horizontal in the air. As the bull's hooves dig into the earth, Dempsey's leg is thrown high, and he hangs onto the side of the beast, dangerously close to the horns. Another spin and his grip is gone, leaving him in a pile on the ground. A cloud of dust envelops him as the hind legs of the bull kick just over his head. The enraged bull spins to attack his



▲ Spurs used in rodeos are required to be square and dull so no animal can be injured.

The Sailor COWBOY



▲ Bulls weighing close to 1,500 pounds seem gentle until they enter the chute. They seem to know it's time to work.

A ragged breath escapes his lungs and veins bulge on his forearm, as he wraps the rope around his gloved hand. He flexes his grip one last time.



▼ Dempsey gets set before the chute opens and the eight-second thrill ride begins.

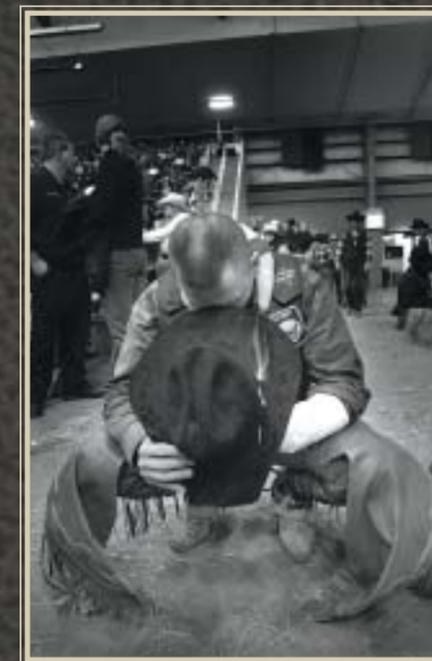
The Sailor COWBOY



▲ **Before the bull riding**, which always comes last in the rodeo, riders watch barrel racing from atop a fence.



▲ **After a bad ride**, IC3 Billy Don Dempsey waves his arms to keep a bronco away, while HM2 Christopher Maurer and other cowboys tend to an injured rider.



▲ **HM2 Christopher Maurer** takes a moment to pray before riding a bare-back bronco.

"My leg was quivering; I thought I was stupid. I was thinking, 'What in the world am I doing?'" After his first ride though,

he was hooked. He explained it's a mixture of fear, adrenaline and excitement that make the sport addictive.

"I can't remember what it was like not riding," said **Damage Controlman 2nd Class Adam Fisk**, one of two SRA cowboys stationed aboard **USS Normandy (CG 60)**. "It's all I think about now – what I've done and how to get better. I'm a rookie still, so for me, it's more losing than winning, but everyone has to pay their dues."

According to **Dempsey**, it's a big "adrenaline rush" that's over in a flash the first few times you ride, but after you have a few rides under your giant belt buckle, it almost seems to happen in slow motion.

"I can see his shoulder drop, I can see the turn of his head and know I need to be over there. I track him the whole time, and the eight seconds seem forever.

► **Dempsey is shocked** by the size of the horns on the bull he was assigned to ride.



Today's cowboys can trace their roots back to long trail drives and the following round-up. Ranch hands would have friendly contests to see who could rope and tie a calf the quickest, or who could stay on an unbroken horse or bull the longest. From there, it grew to challenges against the best riders and ropers in the area, then the state, and soon the country. Since those first days of rodeo, the sport has gone international. You can now find cowboys in many countries around the world.

Unlike the sports many of us are used to, cowboys are cowboys all the time. It's not a thing they leave behind when they leave the arena. From the cowboy boots, pressed jeans and huge belt buckles, to the "Yes, ma'am" and "Thank you, darlin,'" the cowboy culture runs deep in these men and women.

Why else would they risk injury to ride a bull or horse for eight seconds? Most people wouldn't even contemplate doing it. **Dempsey** admits he was scared the first time he climbed atop a bull.

The Sailor COWBOY



▲ Maurer gets his rigging in place before his bare-back bronco ride.



▲ DC2 Adam Fisk and IC3 Billy Don Dempsy are two of the four Sailors who ride in the Southern Rodeo Association.

Eight seconds may seem a long time for the riders, but to the children in the crowd who have never seen a rodeo before, those seconds last a lifetime. Wide-eyed and awestruck, children line the arena watching “Cowboys,” – real live cowboys. These are the heroes who were only seen on television and read about in books. Many of the children who ask for autographs, or have their parents ask,

to compete is just a bonus; the reason people come is for the show, and it’s the fans who pay our winnings.”

In a sport where winning really depends on the luck of the draw – determining which bull or bronco you get – you know that money is not the draw for these Sailors. They just have the need to continue riding the unridable, and will go to any length to pursue it.

can only watch, awestruck, as their hat, photo or paper is signed.

“I think it’s pretty neat when a guy who has a long drive in front of him, who should be getting on the road, takes the time to stop and visit with some kids. They look up to us, and they’re the future of rodeo,” said Dempsy.

“I end up signing quite a few autographs. Getting

In the morning, Dempsy wakes up in the huge cab of his pickup truck, which he calls his “Cowboy Cadillac.” Sitting there with his dog Jed, he isn’t thinking of how sore he is, or the long drive home, his thoughts are focused – on the next weekend; the next bull; the next eight-second ride. ♣

McCoy is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands

► Young bulls streak past a cowboy on their way to a pen outside the arena.



I’ve thought I had been on well over eight seconds, pulled my rope and jumped off just to find out it’d only been six seconds and I didn’t get a score. In fact, I’ve done it more than once.”

Fisk also tells stories about just how much can happen in eight seconds. “When you come out, it’s just you and him. I don’t hear the crowd. I don’t hear my buddies on the fence. It’s just the two of us; and I’m trying to match him move for move. I get so focused on what he’s doing that everything else just goes away.”



▲ As the gate opens, bull and rider burst into the arena.

24 Seven

On Duty On-the-Hour Every Hour

Story courtesy PCU *Ronald Reagan* public affairs,
photo by PH2 Chad McNeely

Precommissioning Unit (PCU) *Ronald Reagan* crewmembers recently took part in a series of damage control training scenarios, developed by the ship's Damage Control Training Team. The training, as part of the ship's crew certification process, was designed to reinforce basic damage control skills and build the crew's ability to work as a team to combat fire, flooding and any other threat to the ship.

According to CDR Jene Nissen, Commander Naval Air Force U.S. Atlantic Fleet (COMNAVAIRLANT) Aircraft Carrier training and readiness officer, "*Ronald Reagan* Sailors passed their Phase II Crew Certification with flying colors. "The ship did extremely well," he added.

Crew Certification determines the ability of the crew to evaluate its own training, and its competency to train to Type Commander objectives.

Ronald Reagan Sailors not only passed the certification process, but also saved valuable resources in the process.

"We are the first PCU aircraft carrier to perform Crew Certification from assets taken strictly from our own crew members," said CDR Judy Lee, training officer. "All previous carriers have had contractor support costing approximately \$1 million dollars that [our crewmembers] saved by doing it themselves."

Lee credited ABCM(AW) Dwayne Dubie with much of the success. "He

headed up the Crew Certification Cell and has invested two long years in preparing for today's success," she said.

"The crew has to be trained and qualified to perform all tasks and functions in a coordinated manner to accomplish its operational mission," Lee said. "Crew Certification is a three-step process that focuses initially on administrative accomplishments (completion of Ship's instructions, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and watch bills), the Level of Knowledge tests, and culminating in assessing the ship's ability to successfully perform Phase Two required drills on the schedule the ship writes for itself.

Almost every functional area was reviewed to ensure *Ronald Reagan* crewmembers are ready to take the ship to sea - safely, professionally and on time.

"This is the kind of event that allows us to press on and get this warship ready," said Commanding Officer CAPT Bill Goodwin. "The Sailors on the deck plates did a great job getting themselves ready. The drive was for a sense of excellence, not to settle for second best," Goodwin said.

Just on the timeline horizon lies Builder's Sea Trials and Acceptance Sea Trials after which the event many crewmembers have been waiting for — the commissioning of the Navy's newest aircraft carrier on July 12. 

THEY'RE HOT!

Eye on the Fleet

Eye on the Fleet is a monthly photo feature sponsored by the Chief of Information Navy Visual News Service. We are looking for **high impact**, quality photography from **Sailors** in the fleet to showcase the American Sailor in **action**.



◀ Homecoming

A Sailor greets his daughter after disembarking from **USS Cheyenne (SSN 773)** upon return from deployment in support of **Operation Iraqi Freedom**.

Photo by PHAN Benjamin Glass



▲ Metal Master

Sparks fly as **HTFN Mike Jascur** cuts a piece of sheet metal aboard **USS Constellation (CV 64)**.

Photo by PH3 Casey D. Tweedell



▲ Full Throttle

An **F-14 Tomcat** from **Fighter Squadron (VF) 211** goes to full afterburner during a sunrise launch from **USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74)**.

Photo by PH3(AW) Jayme Pastoric



◀ Ridge Watch

MS3 Carmen Maldonado relays a message via radio to another lookout while standing Force Protection watch on **USS Blue Ridge's (LCC 19)** main deck, while in transit to Saipan.

Photo by PH2 Edward Holland



Traffic Control ▶

AC2 Odarius Chambers mans the approach radar watch in the Carrier Air Traffic Control Center (CATCC), aboard **USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71)**.

Photo by PHC(AW) Eric A. Clement

To be considered, forward your **high resolution (5" x 7" at 300 dpi) images** with full credit and cutline information, including **full name, rank and duty station**. Name all identifiable people within the photo and include important information about what is happening, where the photo was taken and the date. Commands with digital photo capability can send attached .jpg files to: navynewsphoto@hq.navy.mil

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Eye on the Fleet

◀ Awaiting Orders

USS Boxer (LHD 4) waits pierside with a full deck of aircraft, hours before she deploys to conduct missions in support of **Operations Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom**.

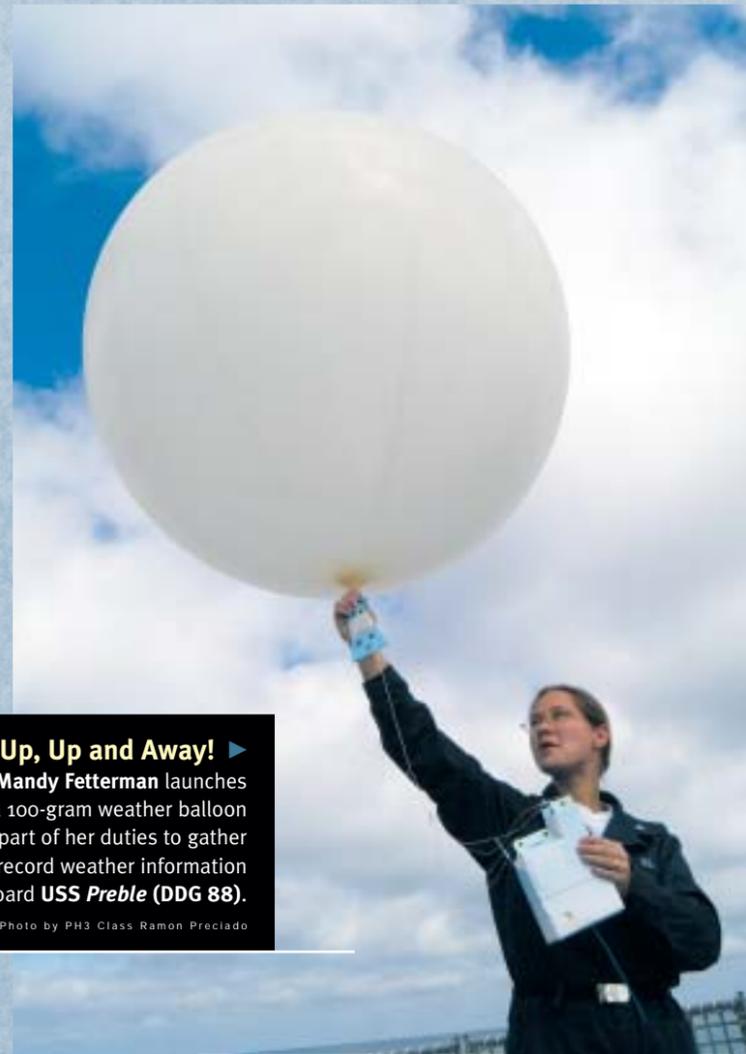
Photo by PH2 Class Michael D. Kennedy



Up, Up and Away! ▶

AG3 Mandy Fetterman launches a 100-gram weather balloon as part of her duties to gather and record weather information aboard **USS Preble (DDG 88)**.

Photo by PH3 Class Ramon Preclado



SAR Sim ▼

Helicopter Combat Support Squadron (HC) 8 and **Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 6** personnel, **AD2 Joseph Harris** (left) and **AT2 Chad Black**, are hoisted upward to the **CH-46 Sea Knight** helicopter, as part of a search and rescue training exercise.

Photo by PH3 Jose Ponce



Stable Repairs ▶

AEAN Paul Bailey performs maintenance on a stabilizer actuator assembly of an **SH-60 Sea Hawk** in the hangar bay of **USS Nimitz (CVN 68)**.

Photo by PHAN Shannon Renfroe



Quicksilver ▶

An **F/A-18 Hornet** makes a night-time catapult launch from the flight deck of **USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75)**.

Photo by PH3 Danny Ewing

Putting Aside Our Differences

By EWSN Thomas J. Gianadda

I'm a relatively young Sailor, but I've seen and learned quite a bit so far during my two and a half years in the Navy. I've been exposed to people within the Navy, not only from many parts of the United States, but from all over the world. Serving on the only U.S. ship out of six during a six-month Standing Naval Forces Atlantic (SNFL) deployment, I have been exposed to a variety of people and cultures from other navies as well.

Initially, being introduced to so many new and different people, places and cultures was overwhelming, and in some ways shocking. It was quite an adjustment. Honestly, it still is an adjustment to get used to this ever-changing lifestyle.

I have found it to be very interesting at times, but also very difficult. I have been forced to humble myself and just bite my lip and take a deep breath to avoid conflict in certain situations. I've learned that there are always going to be differences in interests and opinions, and that we all have to learn to adjust and to respect each other.

This is not always an easy thing to do by any means. In fact, it has proven to be difficult more often than not. Factors such as where we're from and how we were raised influence every aspect of our lives. I've noticed that people have a natural tendency to get along better with those with whom they have things in common.

I am fortunate though, that my Navy experience has taught me how to exercise patience and tolerance with people so that I'm able to work with them, despite our differences in interests and opinions.

I know that the military isn't for everyone, but it does offer an excellent working and learning experience and many valuable life lessons. I've seen this first hand. From talking with people from other navies, I've learned that many countries have a mandatory policy of military service for a minimum of two years for all eligible citizens.

I think it's a great idea to have such a policy. The military is based on principles such as respect and discipline for one's self and for others. I think this is one of the main reasons why citizens and/or voters often prefer the leaders of our country, including the President, to have previous military experience before they are truly

qualified to fill their political positions.

Despite all our differences, on Sept. 11, 2001, a positive display of unity and togetherness was displayed, not only in our military, but also throughout our entire nation. We were forced to drop everything we were doing and share a common fear.

Days, weeks and months after that infamous day, we all came together as one nation and one military, and put all of our differences aside to focus our concern on our nation's recovery and well-being. It has since been a time of healing and an amazing display of patriotism and brotherhood, not only within our country, but also among our brothers and sisters throughout the world. Maybe it

shouldn't have taken an incident so extreme and drastic for this to happen, but sometimes that's just what it takes for us to truly realize how precious life and liberty really are.

Out of all of this, the most important lesson that I have learned is that we **must** put aside our differences and disagreements – whether it is race, religion, sex, etc. – for us to reach a common goal. We **all** need to learn how to work together as a team to strive for efficiency and success.

Putting our differences aside and helping others, especially in time of need, is what life is all about. This is a difficult task and a constant battle, but I firmly believe that by disciplining our-

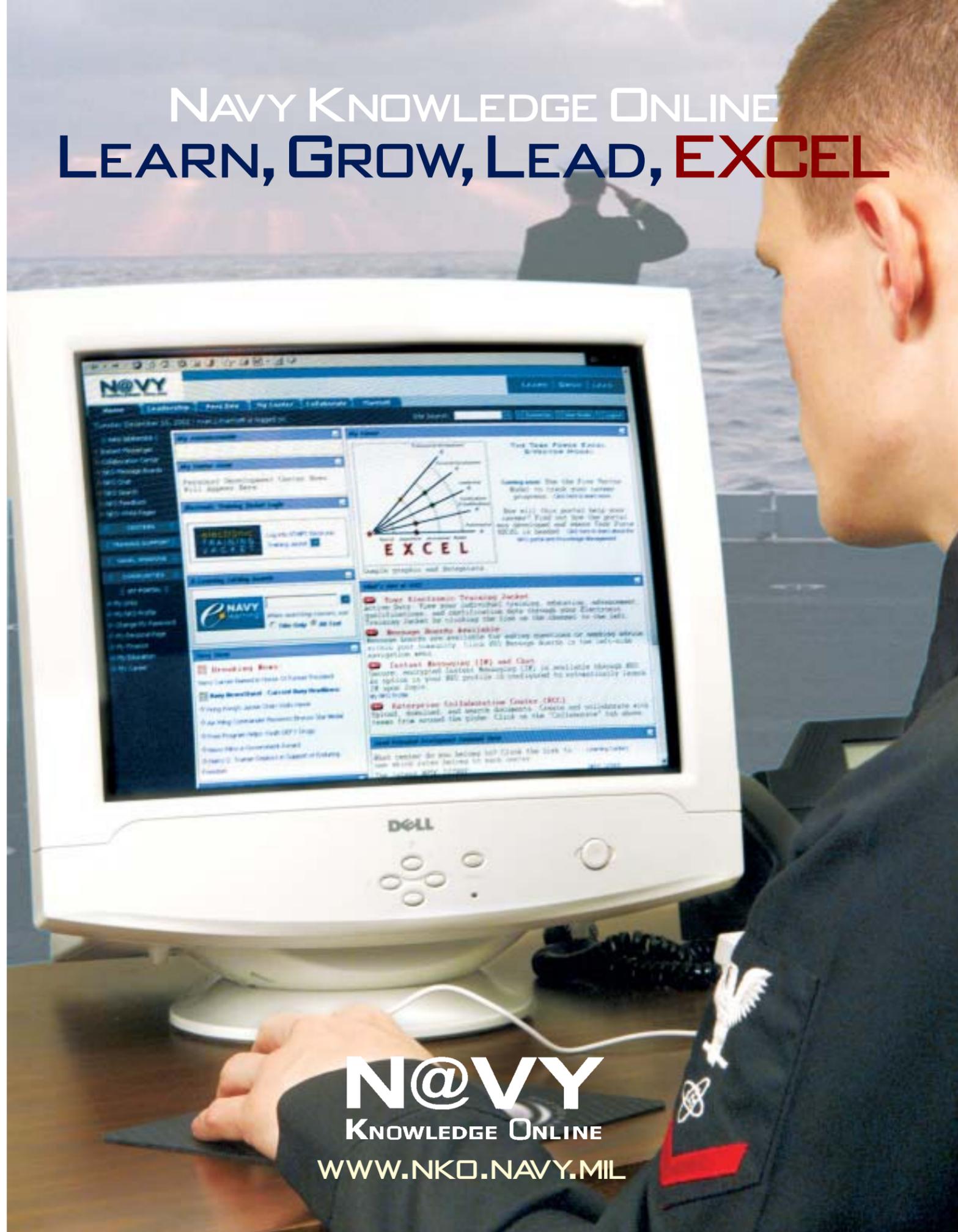
selves to work together as one, it is the **only** way to achieve true peace and happiness. So, let our differences go by the wayside, and let us live and work as a successful team and nation.

May God bless our country and may God bring peace throughout our world. ✉

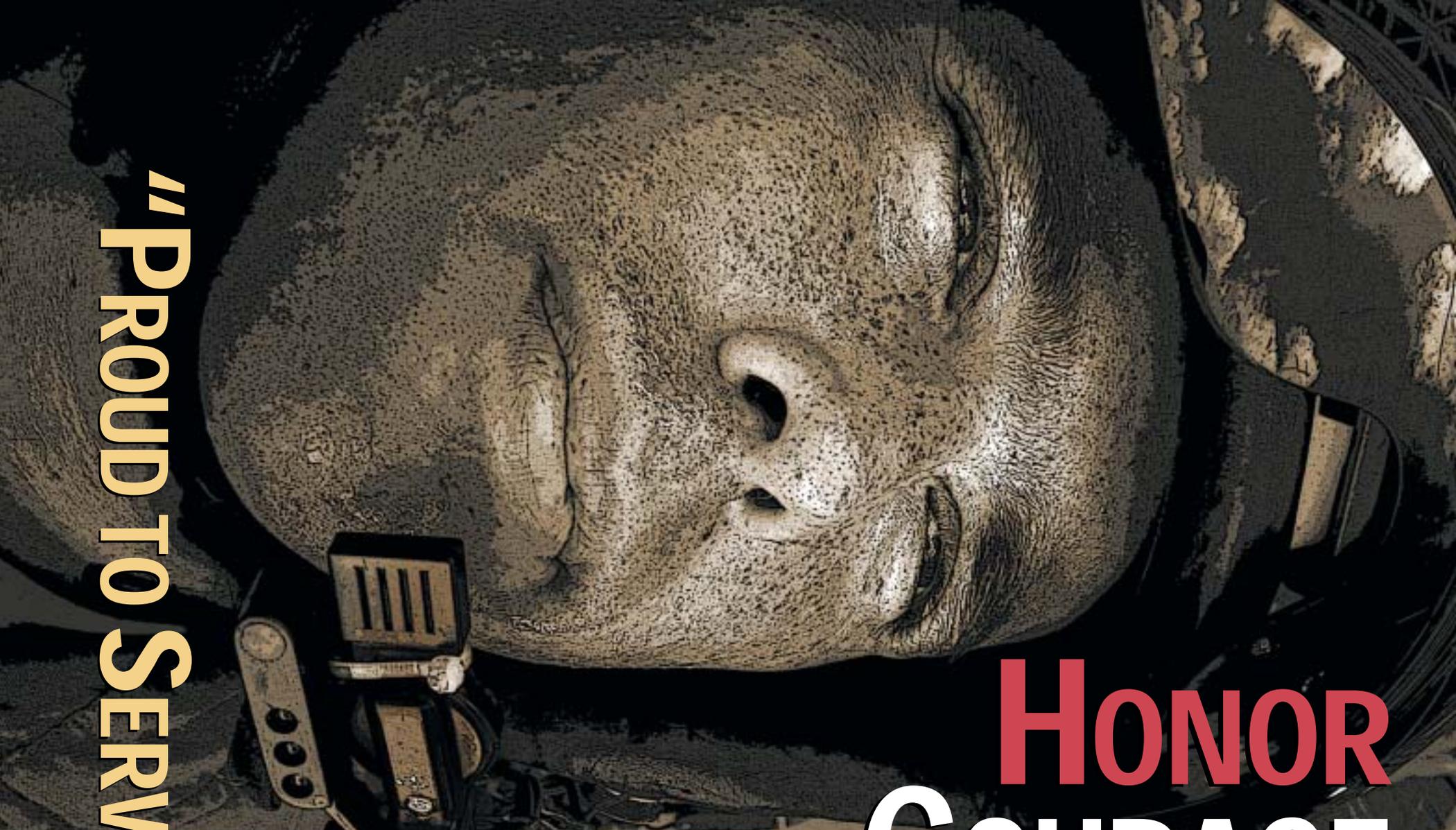
Gianadda is assigned to USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG 58)



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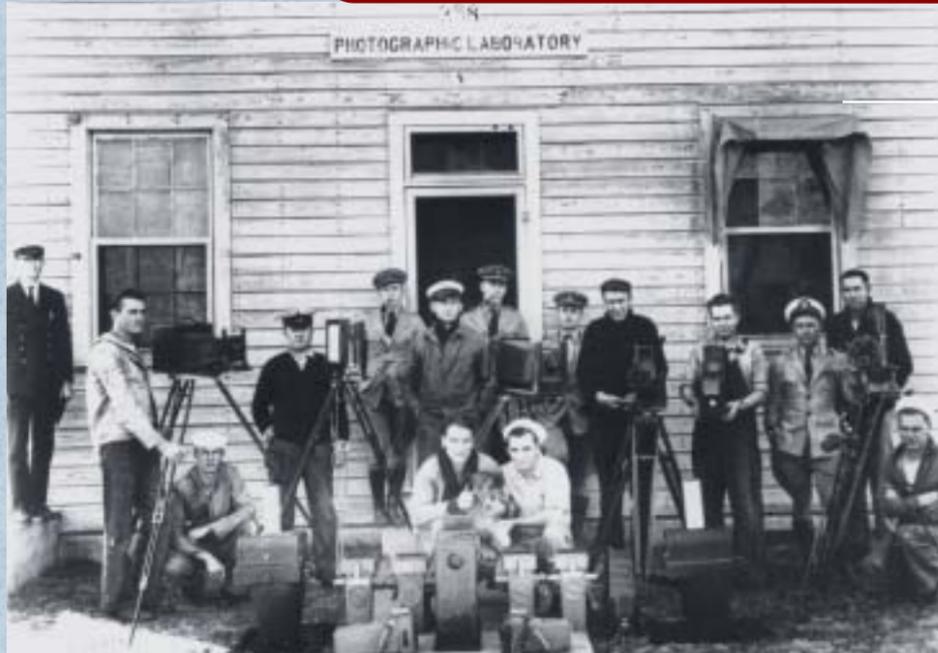
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◀ **1926**
Instructors and students of a 1926 photo class at the **Naval School of Photography** pose for an informal group photo outside Building 258, the combined photo school and station photo lab.

▼ **1974**
AC1 J. E. Shaffer loads sonabuys into a mount for deployment during **Operation Springboard '74**, at Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico.



1953 ▲
On board **USS Manchester (CA 83)** in Korean waters, **MM2 Stanley Ograysko** turns out a spare part on a lathe in the machine shop.



1967 ▶
Standing on the signal bridge of **USS Alstede (AF 48)**, **SM1 Glen Braden** sends a message to a fellow signalman on board **USS Northampton (CLC 1)**. Braden recently returned from South Vietnam where he received the Silver Star and Navy Commendation Medal for action against the Viet Cong, while commanding a river patrol boat.



1944 ▶
PhM2 Betty Shute and **PhM1 E. L. Johnson** perform an X-ray scan of **PhM3 M. L. Moache** at Bethesda, Md.



U.S. Navy Photos Courtesy of the Naval Historical Center