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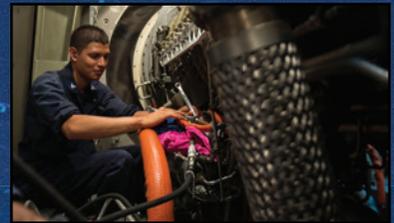
SURFACE WARFARE MAGAZINE



COMBAT READINESS



PERSONAL READINESS



MATERIAL READINESS



Sharing stories and news from Sailors across the U.S. Navy's Surface Forces

COMMANDER'S CORNER



Editorial by:
Vice Adm. Tom Rowden

Commander, Naval Surface Forces

SWOs are always busy and this summer is no exception, but a lot of what's going on will be fun, instructive, and possibly both.

Everything done in my command must support warfighting first. I am serious about this and have done my best to communicate this point. We live in changing and challenging times where the capabilities of potential adversaries are increasing every day. According to a recent list of "The 35 Most Powerful Militaries in the World," published in Business Insider, North Korea, China, Russia and Iran have increased the size and capability of their submarine fleets. Increasing our ASW proficiency is critical given the number and capability of the submarines navigating the oceans somewhere below our ships. I sent a warfighting serial on this subject in June and encourage all SWOs to read it.

We must increase the combat proficiency of every ship and be prepared to be where it matters when it matters. Shoot at every opportunity while underway; train like you fight. Keep your spaces squared away and report to

your ship each day as though you could be called on with little or no notice to deploy, to fight and win.

On this note, the ceremony to stand up Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center (SWMDC) took place June 9 at Naval Base San Diego. Rear Adm. Jim Kilby has been working hard to be ready for this day and has been talking with wardrooms around the fleet to let JOs know what career and force benefits there will be with SMWDC up and running.

SWMDC is the first step in creating tactically proficient operators in our ships with new programs to create Weapons Tactics Instructors, update and create doctrine, and lead advanced training events to improve how the force fights! This is watershed moment for the Surface Community as we now have an organization whose sole focus is improving our warfighting ability. I am excited for the entire community as we move forward with this new command.

Additionally, our HQ staff has been working to reduce burdens on ship and I have been impressed by how much has been taken off the backs of our ships and crews since August. Administrative burdens have been reduced, processes have been streamlined, and program analysts have been hired to manage safety reports, just to name a few results. We are improving the lives of sailors without sacrificing warfighting and safety requirements!

It is also CORTRAMID/PROTRAMID season, and we have been hosting weekly visits of USNA and NROTC Midshipmen. They will make the rounds of Navy communities and the experiences they have this summer will help them ultimately decide on which community best suits them and their career goals. I encourage you to take the time to welcome them to your ship and remember what it was like when you were doing the same thing and what experiences influenced you to the SWO community. These visits will help shape their expectations and provide them with a basis to make an informed decision on how they will serve in the world's finest Navy. It's a great time to be a SWO. See you on the waterfront! ⚓

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Surface Warfare Magazine is the professional magazine of the surface warfare community. Its purpose is to educate its readers on surface warfare missions and programs, with a particular focus on U.S. surface ships and commands. This journal will also draw upon the Surface Force’s rich historical legacy to instill a sense of pride and professionalism among community members and to enhance reader awareness of the increasing relevance of surface warfare for our nation’s defense.

The opinions and assertions herein are the personal views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Navy.

Contributions and Feedback Welcome

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Cover: The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Anzio (CG 68) transits the Atlantic Ocean during exercise Joint Warrior. Photo by MC2 Class Abe McNatt.

COMMAND CHANGES



Carrier Strike Group 8
Rear Adm. Bret Batchelder
April 2015



USS America (LHA 6)
Capt. Michael Baze
May 2015



Expeditionary Strike Group 3
Rear Adm. Daniel Fillion
June 2015



USS Arlington (LPD 24)
Capt. Sean Bailey
June 2015



Destroyer Squadron 14
Capt. Glenn Kuffel
May 2015



USS Ashland (LSD 48)
Cmdr. Daniel Duhan
May 2015



Destroyer Squadron 28
Capt. Richard Brawley
March 2015



USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6)
Capt. Jeffrey Ward
April 2015



**Littoral Combat Ship
Crew 101**
Cmdr. Michael Atwell
April 2015



USS Carney (DDG 64)
Cmdr. Kenneth Pickard
May 2015



**Tactical Air Control
Squadron 12**
Cmdr. Ryan Phillips
April 2015



USS Chief (MCM 14)
Lt. Cmdr. Shane Dennis
March 2015



USS Chung-Hoon (DDG 93)
Cmdr. Thomas Ogden
May 2015



USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52)
Cmdr. Judd Krier
April 2015



USS Gettysburg (CG 64)
Capt. John Schmidt
March 2015



USS Russell (DDG 59)
Cmdr. Gill McCarthy
June 2015



USS John S. McCain (DDG 56)
Cmdr. Chad Graham
May 2015



USS Sampson (DDG 102)
Cmdr. Patrick H. O'Mahoney
June 2015



USS Lake Erie (CG 70)
Capt. Douglas Kunzman
April 2015



USS Spruance (DDG 111)
Cmdr. Manuel Hernandez
May 2015



USS Mitscher (DDG 57)
Cmdr. Milciades Then
April 2015



USS Vella Gulf (CG 72)
Capt. Francis Castellano
April 2015



USS New York (LPD 21)
Capt. Kenneth Coleman
May 2015



Welcome to SMWDC

Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center Established at Naval Base San Diego



Photo by MCI Trevor Welsh



From: SMWDC Public Affairs

Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center Public Affairs

“I’ve been waiting 33 years for this day; what a great day this is for our surface warfare community” said Vice Adm. Thomas Rowden, commander, Naval Surface Forces.

Naval officers and midshipmen gathered at Naval Base San Diego (NBSD) for the inaugural ceremony of the Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center (SMWDC) June 9. The pep rally style ceremony was held at Pier 2 and led by Rowden, who introduced the new advanced tactics and training command to the NBSD waterfront.

“The establishment of SMWDC signifies a major milestone in how we support CNO’s ‘Warfighting First’ focus; advancing combat capability and warfare competencies of our Surface Force,” Rowden said. “We’ve needed this command for a long time.”

SMWDC will increase the tactical proficiency

of the surface fleet by synchronizing multiple warfighting mission areas under a single command – headquartered at NBSD.

“This has been a long time coming for our community,” said Rear Adm. Jim Kilby, commander of SMWDC. “We will align the Surface Warfare community through synchronized tactics, doctrine, and training in Air Warfare, Amphibious Warfare, Ballistic Missile Defense, Mine Warfare, Surface Warfare and Anti-Submarine Warfare. This is an exciting time to be a Surface Warfare Officer.”

SMWDC will also provide advanced tactical training and warfighting tactics, techniques and procedures across mission areas to develop a standard for warfighting tactical excellence.

Akin to ‘Top Gun’ for Surface Warfare Officers, SMWDC will train junior officers in advanced tactics to become Warfare Tactics Instructors (WTI) in Amphibious Warfare, Anti-Submarine Warfare/ Surface Warfare, Integrated Air and Missile Defense,

and Mine Warfare. These WTIs will be the tactical subject matter experts for ships and staffs and help their commands by teaching, writing, validating, and revising warfare doctrine.

“It’s a different construct for the surface community that is based largely on the naval aviation training and doctrine communities,” said Kilby. “NSAWC, which is now the Naval Air Warfighting Development Center (NAWDC) has been very successful for decades. The surface community is the Navy’s oldest community yet we need to learn from the aviators’ proven model.”

“The best place to invest is in our people,” said Capt. Frank Olmo, deputy commander of SMWDC. “We’re in the initial phase of this new command. Our goal is to produce 110 WTIs per year with an emphasis on quality over quantity” he said. “These WTIs will act as force-multipliers on every ship and tactical training commands [Afloat Training Groups or Tactical Training Groups] to implement the best practices in each warfare area to achieve a single warfighting standard.”

Kilby said the select cadre of WTIs, will be post second-tour division officers who will go to ships as department heads to supplement senior warfighters with the latest in-depth tactical knowledge.

SMWDC will also reemphasize mission readiness by leading the Surface Warfare Combat Training Continuum (SWCTC) in coordination with the Optimized Fleet Response Plan.

“The SWCTC will encompass individual training, unit-level training and integrated training in the advanced levels of a ship’s life-cycle,” said Kilby. “We will look at closing gaps and make sure we’re growing tactically proficient Surface Warfare Officers.”

Kilby elaborated further on SWCTC as an incremental approach to tactical proficiency by linking a ship’s underway basic phase to the soon-to-be added Surface Warfare Advanced Tactical Training (SWATT). The SWATT insertion is aimed to prepare ships and commanders for advanced tactical readiness prior to their final integrated certification before deployment.

A Surface Warfare Officer for 29 years, Kilby said he was energized by this new opportunity to help unify a future surface force that is ready for the threat – today and tomorrow, where it matters, when it matters.

“I’m excited to be leading this command,” he continued. “I think it is an awesome opportunity for our community to connect in a way we haven’t before; I believe this effort will ensure that we keep our focus on keep warfighting first.” ⚓



Photo by MC1 Trevor Welsh

Jack of all Trades

CNO Stresses Versatility of Independence Variant LCS



Story by:
Ensign Michael Torres

Naval Education and Training Command Public Affairs

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Jonathan Greenert and Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Fla.) stressed the versatility of the Independence-variant littoral combat ships (LCS) April 1 during a press conference at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola.

After touring USS Independence (LCS 2) with the congressman, the CNO highlighted the value of the LCS's ability to be repackaged for multiple missions.

"The thing that is of value about the LCS is that she has great volume, high speed, and is modular," said Greenert. "What that means is you can change out packages to perform different missions.

"Currently the Independence is configured for mine countermeasures operations, but she can be reconfigured for other missions including maritime security or anti-submarine warfare. These packages could be forward deployed around the world in hot spots, where in a matter of a few days, the ship could be changed as necessary to meet the demand."

The ship has been testing its new anti-mine warfare technology in the Gulf of Mexico since Feb. 20, and will be docking between sorties at NAS Pensacola throughout its training operation.

Greenert praised the experience of the crew testing the new LCS saying it allows the Navy to be more efficient with crew management.

"These Sailors on board the ship are more senior than the average Sailor," he said. "They've been in the Navy for four to six years. This enables us to keep the crew to half of what it would normally be on a conventional ship."

The CNO also addressed the pace of



Photo by Ed Barker

construction for these new ships.

"In the future I expect to see continued construction of the LCS platform," said Greenert. "We took a pause and decided we need 52 of these ships. The secretary of defense asked us to take a look at this and see if we could make these more survivable and more lethal. We've done that and we are all guns ahead."

The CNO thanked Miller for his work in Congress in aiding military personnel and veterans. The representative likewise thanked the CNO for letting him visit the ship.

"It's been an outstanding tour of a great new capability that we have in the United States Navy," said Miller. "I appreciate not only seeing this great vessel, but being able to talk to the men and women of the USS Independence." ⚓

Bilateral MCM Foil Eagle 2015



Story and Photo by:
MC1 Abraham Essenmacher

Naval Forces Korea Public Affairs

The U.S. and Republic of Korea (ROK) navies conducted a successful mine countermeasures exercise March 30 - April 11 as part of Foal Eagle 2015.

The bilateral training is designed to increase readiness and interoperability in mine countermeasures operations and enhance theater security cooperation between the two navies.

“Bilateral training in mine countermeasures is critical for our strategic ROK-U.S. alliance,” said Capt. Mike Dowling, commander, Mine Countermeasures Squadron 7 (MCMRON 7). “It also enhances our combined capabilities and interoperability with the ROK Navy. These live force exercises continue to support our commitment to maintaining maritime stability in this region.”

Approximately 300 U.S. Navy personnel assigned to MCMRON 7, mine countermeasures ships USS Warrior (MCM 10) and USS Chief (MCM 14); along with teams from Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 5, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 1, Naval Oceanography Mine Warfare Center, Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 14, and Mobile Mine Assembly Group participated in the training

alongside their ROK Navy partners.

“We took ‘warfighting first’ to heart and took advantage of every opportunity to maintain and improve our mine warfare capabilities,” said Lt. Cmdr. Michael Tyree, executive officer of Chief.

During the exercise, U.S. and ROK Navy ships and explosive ordnance disposal divers practiced clearing routes for shipping and conducted training surveys for clearing operational areas. In addition to ships, remotely operated vehicles were also used to rehearse mine countermeasures operations from under the sea.

“Operating in waters near the Korean peninsula provided us the most realistic training we could hope for in preparing for contingency operations,” said Tyree. “The geography and bathymetry can’t be replicated anywhere else and it’s good for our sonar operators, Mine Neutralization Vehicle (MNV) pilots, and Mine Warfare (MIW) evaluators to experience it firsthand.”

Foal Eagle is an umbrella of regularly-scheduled, annual exercises that are the culmination of many months of planning and are based on realistic training scenarios. The naval portion of the Foal Eagle exercises take place in international waters around South Korea and features a full spectrum of maritime operations.



Drug Interdiction Super Team

USS Gary, Coast Guard intercept more than 5,200 kilos of cocaine



Photo by MC2 Shannon M. Smith



Story by:
Ensign Michael Singer

USS Gary Public Affairs

The Oliver Hazard-Perry class guided missile frigate USS Gary (FFG 51), embarked Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 49, Det. 4 and U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (USCG LEDET) successfully intercepted a suspected narcotic-trafficking vessel in international waters off the coast of Central America in early March.

This interdiction conducted in coordination with U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Boutwell (WHEC-719) and the Canadian Navy vessel HMCS Whitehorse (MM-705) is estimated at more than 5,200 kilograms of cocaine, the largest seizure in the eastern Pacific Ocean since 2009.

This marks Gary's tenth successful interdiction since October 2014, disrupting a total of 11,700 kilograms of cocaine shipments off the coast of Central America.

While conducting routine patrols off the Central American coast, Gary located and trailed a small

coastal freighter. After launching her SH-60B helicopter to assess the vessel, Gary observed the merchant vessel's crew jettisoning suspected contraband into the water.

Gary quickly launched her small boat with a joint Navy and Coast Guard boat crew to recover the suspected contraband. Upon confirming the suspect objects in the water tested positive for cocaine, the USCG LEDET team boarded and assumed control of the merchant vessel along with Gary crew members who

“Teamwork and persistence are the keys to success in countering and translating criminal organizations behind the drug trade.”

Cmdr. Chris German

Deputy Chief of Law Enforcement, 11th Coast Guard District

helped search the ship and provided, engineering and navigation teams.

Gary's Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Steven McDowell, stated, "This particular interdiction called for a much larger 'footprint' than we have typically needed to conduct routine operations. It is situations like this where superb training and flawless execution are critical to success. The crew absolutely delivered."

"Teamwork and persistence are the keys to success in countering the transnational criminal organizations behind the drug trade," said Cmdr. Chris German, deputy chief of law enforcement operations for the 11th Coast Guard District.

"U.S. and Canadian navy ships extend the reach of Coast Guard's law enforcement teams, and the cooperation and assistance of partner nations help us keep deadly drugs off the streets of all our nations. Stopping this shipment saved lives and helps degrade the smugglers' deadly and corrosive enterprise," he said.

The Oliver Hazard Perry-class guided-missile frigate USS Gary is currently deployed to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations in support of Operation Martillo,

which began in January 2012.

Operation Martillo, a joint, international law enforcement and military operation involving the U.S., European and Western Hemisphere partner nations, targets illicit trafficking routes in the waters off Central America. U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) leads the U.S. military involvement in the Joint Operation Task Force.

Overall coordination of counter-drug patrols and surveillance in the Eastern Pacific is done by a joint agency task force headquartered in Key West, Florida. U.S. maritime law enforcement and the interdiction phase of operations in the region occur under the tactical control of the 11th Coast Guard District headquartered in Alameda, California.

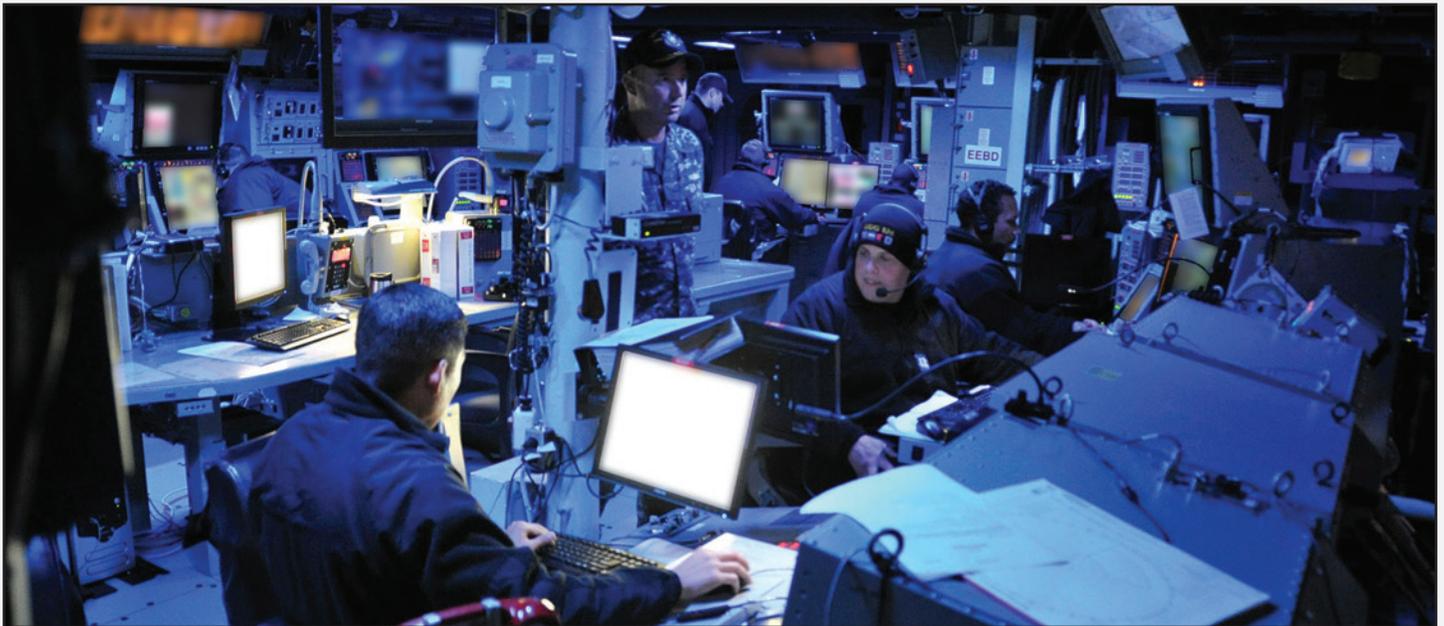
U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command and U.S. 4th Fleet support USSOUTHCOM's joint and combined military operations by employing maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations to maintain access, enhance interoperability and build enduring partnerships in order to enhance regional security and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the Caribbean, Central and South American regions. ⚓



Photo by MC2 Corey T. Jones

Surface Warfare Advanced Tactical Training

SMWDC, John C. Stennis Strike Group Team up for Tactical Readiness



From:
SMWDC Public Affairs

Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center Public Affairs

Twelve staff members from Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center (SMWDC) closed their San Diego office April 24-May 1 to get underway with the USS John C. Stennis Carrier Strike Group (JCS CSG) for the command's maiden exercise. A pilot event, SMWDC held the first ever Surface Warfare Advanced Tactical Training (SWATT) event aimed at improving warfighting proficiency within the Surface Forces.

SMWDC teamed-up with JCS CSG along with Destroyer Squadron 21 (DESRON 21) during a multi-ship Group Sail (GRUSL) and an Independent Deployer Certification Exercise (IDCERTEX) to introduce SWATT: a new prospective training standard aimed to increase the tactical readiness of the surface fleet.

"The concept of SWATT is to bridge the gap between the completion of a ship's basic underway training phase and the integrated/advanced phase," said U.S. Navy Capt. Darren McPherson, SMWDC's training and readiness officer. "SWATT will enable ships to come together in a multi-warfare environment. They'll conduct reps and sets during pre-defined warfighting training

that will increase their proficiency prior to their Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX) and deployment."

Individual U.S. Navy ships are required to complete a taxing basic underway training phase prior to an integrated COMPTUEX. A ship's training stages can be compared to scholastic milestones: deployment equates to graduation, COMPTUEX is the final exam, and basic phase is the core class prerequisite. According to McPherson, SWATT will be inserted as a needed "mid-term to satisfy training gaps for surface warfare ships prior to COMPTUEX."

"I learned from several strike group commanders that ships were challenged to finish their maintenance, or basic phase prior to arriving at COMPTUEX," said Commander of SMWDC, Rear Adm. James Kilby.

Whether classroom or wardroom, it's arguable that an education is only as valuable as its instructors. SWATT is not SMWDC's first test project. Dating back to the summer of 2014, SMWDC has been on a ship-to-ship missionary campaign to recruit the most tactically hungry junior officers. These command endorsed hand-selected surface warfare officers receive an intensive five-month training regimen to become Warfare Tactics Instructors (WTI).

WTIs are expected at a junior level to

systematically institutionalize the Chief of Naval Operation's top priority: Warfighting First. These tactical leaders act as force multipliers for their ships by teaching, writing, and validating warfare doctrine.

Five WTIs embarked USS Mobile Bay (CG 53), USS Stockdale (DDG 106), and USS William P. Lawrence (DDG 110) during SWATT to monitor and teach watch standers during four surface warfare exercises.

"We supported an air defense exercise, anti-submarine exercise, a surface warfare exercise, and a live-fire integrated fast attack craft /fast in-shore attack craft exercise," said Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Cox, SMWDC WTI.

Cox continued. "I went through 19 weeks of intensive Integrated Air and Missile Defense training in Dahlgren, Virginia. "We [WTIs] are expected at a junior level to set and maintain the standard for our specific warfare area in the surface Navy, and that's what we demonstrated during SWATT."

SMWDC's tactical teachers utilized a fresh 'crawl, walk and run' approach to the planning of warfighting exercises that was leveraged upon the latest doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures.

"We were heavily involved in the Plan, Brief, Execute and Debrief (PBED) process for each exercise," said Cox. "We wanted to make the planning processes more tactical, more doctrine-oriented and more measurably discrete. I

believe our efforts were well received by the ship's leadership and the watchstanders due to us showing the benefits of a robust planning process."

Rear Adm. Ron Boxall, JCS CSG commander, concurred and was impressed by the execution of SMWDC's pilot SWATT. He said, "The level of talent that SMWDC can bring to bear far exceeds that which is currently available and will definitely result in better trained warfighters. Conducting a SWATT exercise puts surface ships on much better footing to be tactically prepared for strike group integrated operations. This pilot effort should definitely become a model for future strike groups prior to going on COMPTUEX."

SMWDC's SWATT was an experimental pick-up team effort supported by Commander, U.S. Third Fleet, Destroyer Squadron Thirty One, Carrier Strike Group 15, Center for Surface Combat Systems, Naval Air and Missile Defense Command, Naval Surface Warfare Center Corona, and the Surface Tactical Development Group.

"We received universal support from all involved for this pilot event," said Kilby, who went underway with John C. Stennis and Stockdale. "This will be a relationship and a product forged over time. The key is for us [SMWDC] to focus on advanced tactical training. When we deliver, ships will welcome it."

The next trial SWATT is scheduled for fall 2015 with the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group.

SMWDC is headquartered in San Diego and commanded by Rear Adm. James Kilby and Deputy Commander, Capt. Frank Olmo. ⚓



Be Ready

SPAWAR Enhances Combat Readiness



Story by:
Krishna Jackson

SPAWAR Public Affairs

Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) integrated a system of systems operability testing (SOT) capability for combatant ships onboard USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54), which just completed an availability and sea trial period utilizing the new SOT combat readiness testing, March 6.

SOTs are part of ensuring interdependent command and control systems work seamlessly. Combat systems command and control is referred to as C5I and encompasses everything C4I (command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence) does, but includes combat systems. SPAWAR Fleet Readiness Directorate (FRD) along with associated Program Executive Offices (PEOs) oversee many of these C4I and C5I systems onboard Navy ships, including acquisition, installation and support for command and control of advanced military information technology (IT) systems. However, the process of modernizing and upgrading a ship's command and control system has proven challenging.

"I know that some of the discrepancies discovered would have taken months for the ship to finally realize, troubleshoot, find and fix on their own without system SMEs onboard," said Cmdr. Ryan Mahelona, SPAWAR FRD C5I SOT test director on the effectiveness of the C5I SOT aboard Curtis Wilbur. "As a forward deployed naval force ship, time is critical, especially when operational demands warrant the need to be ready."

The concept of a C5I SOT test was initially formulated in 2010 and was first implemented on a limited scale on a few force level ships. Since then, C5I SOT testing has evolved into the current format which has been largely driven by the fielding of the Navy's newest C4I system: Consolidated Afloat Network Enterprise System (CANES).



Photo by Ensign Kelly Wu

"In recent years, the level of system to system interoperability has grown and the sophistication of software and hardware elements more complex," said Mahelona referring to CANES. "As a result, a higher level of system interoperability is required, which has led to greater concern in combat system interdependence on C4I systems."

CANES is the latest tactical network being



installed on Navy ships. It consolidates five legacy network systems into one, increasing operational effectiveness and interoperability. It will influence the advancement of C4I and C5I testing processes and, according to Mahelona, influence the way the Navy looks at C4I and C5I.

“This all came about because of the gaps that existed with C4I testing and emphasis on interoperability,” said Mahelona. “When we talk about asymmetric warfare, we need to look at how we deliver the ships to the fleet in the highest readiness form that we can. In order to do that, we came up with this concept of doing a systems of systems operability test, because the system operability verification tests (SOVTs) being done are specific to a particular system.”

The FRD developed SOVTs to address operational efficiency and to validate the functionality of respective systems, but ships that receive modernized/upgraded installs like CANES often experience problems with interoperability. In addition, a lack of emphasis on C5I testing prior to a ship’s basic training phase frequently resulted in discrepancies being discovered late in the training cycle, and in some cases, just prior to the ship deploying.

“This SOT is a level six and level seven test that

tests systems of systems interoperability, which typically require higher level link testing,” said FRD Installations Program Manager Capt. Allan Walters. “The SOT is primarily at the end of an availability to bring together legacy testing and new system testing. The ship will then have the confidence that the systems work properly prior to going into their workups.”

C5I SOT testing currently is not a fleet requirement, despite increasing requests from the fleet. Since October 2013, C5I SOTs have been executed on eleven destroyers, one amphibious assault ship and two aircraft carriers.

“By design, the C5I SOT brings a C5I testing emphasis earlier into the training cycle and before the ship’s basic training phase,” said Mahelona. “Based on the ships we have done, we’re definitely heading in the right direction.”

As the Navy’s Information Dominance systems command, SPAWAR designs, develops and deploys advanced communications and information capabilities for the warfighter. With nearly 10,000 acquisition professionals located around the world and close to the fleet, the organization is at the forefront of research, engineering and support services that provide vital decision superiority for the warfighter. ⚓

KILL MINES!



Story and Photos by:
MC1 Jason Perry

Navy Public Affairs Support Element West

Mine hunting operations are inherently dangerous. Sailors on deck are strategically putting floats, sweep wires and kites into the very same waters as the mines that are specifically designed to destroy anything that gets near them.

The Avenger-class mine countermeasures ship USS *Champion* (MCM 4) conducted mine sweeping and hunting operations off the coast of Southern California during a week-long underway in partnership with several San Diego-based commands to include Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Mobile Unit 3, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) and others as coordinated by Capt. Edmund B. Hernandez and his staff at Mine Countermeasures Squadron 3.

“Simply put, this is the best mine hunting crew in the Navy,” said Senior Chief Intelligence Specialist Jeremy Embree, *Champion*’s command senior chief. “They set the standard for others to follow.”

Minemen must fill the role of so many other rates in order to do their jobs well. Out of the 80 enlisted Sailors serving aboard *Champion*, approximately two thirds of them are minemen. When they’re not actively hunting mines, they are handling the

multitude of other tasks aboard the 224-foot vessel. From driving the ship to helping make the food they eat, these Sailors are truly multi-faceted.

They arm their systems as gunner’s mates; they are the ship’s boatswain’s mates and sonar technicians. There is simply too much work to be done and only a limited number of Sailors to accomplish it. The crew aboard *Champion* lives up to their namesake and accepts the challenge. Although minemen make up a majority of the enlisted crew, it takes a full-team effort to ensure mission success.

“It’s a different job than most others in the Navy because we take everything into consideration. We do the work of gunner’s mates on deck and operations specialists up in the Combat Information Center,” said Mineman 3rd Class Craig Dahl. “I think we may work a little bit harder in most cases since we need to do so many things at once.”

Because hard work comes naturally to this crew, it should come as no surprise that they earned the inaugural Vice Adm. Thomas H. Copeman III Material Readiness Excellence Award in the 15 year and older category.

As Commander Naval Surface Forces and Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Vice Adm. Thomas S. Rowden, said in the award citation, “*Champion*’s superb performance during last year’s inspection reflected their strong commitment to establishing and maintaining a shipboard culture of material readiness, their steady-strain approach, pride in ownership, and self-sufficiency, ensured their ship was kept consistently material fit to fight.”

They are not only fit to fight but they are excited to do their job. Mineman 1st Class Garrett Coates says there is nothing better than sweeping for mines.

“The double O sweep is by far my favorite part of this underway,” he said. “It’s the first time we’ve put one out on this hull and now we know we’re ready for that sweep anytime we need to be.”

The double O sweep is a proven technique against moored mines. The ship tows their cables known as sweep wires deep into the ocean with cutters strategically placed to cut the anchor lines and chains of potential mines. Multi-plane kites, bridles and tensiometers are terms that might confuse even the most educated Sailor, but to these hardened Sea Warriors; they are the backbone of their jobs, used to



USS Champion's Crew Attribute Teamwork, Perseverance to Successful Minesweeping



ensure the safest and most accurate mine hunting evolutions.

Sometimes, even the most well thought out plans and preparations are still met with challenges. Laying mines is typically done via aircraft but this crew stepped up to the challenge.

Having already successfully laid two moored mines and a test floor mine this underway, they moved next to lay the never before attempted Versatile Exercise Mine (VEM) Mk 74. The VEM mine shapes however could not be released as the lowering line would foul on itself so at the risk of losing the valuable test shapes, the decision was made to continue on course and mission with the others in play.

"You will get a great opportunity to see the fruits of your labor," said Champion's Commanding Officer, Lt. Cmdr. Christopher W. Petro. "This is why we are here."

Aboard a U.S. Navy minesweeper there are a variety of mine detection options available, including a remote operated underwater vehicle and a shipboard mine hunting sonar capable of searching for mines at variable depths from the keel to the ocean floor.

While underway this past week, the crew met with many challenges during each evolution but they persevered. They fixed the sonar when it blew a fuse, rebuilt a tensiometer and quickly changed out O-rings to prevent leaks. They also successfully and safely recovered every mine they laid, putting them securely on deck.

"Equipment problems seem to be our biggest challenge that we've needed to battle through," added Coates.

Despite the often challenging task at hand, Petty Officer Dahl still finds a way to put a smile on his face.

"Sometimes we're out on deck for what seems like 18 hours, but at the end of the day we are all toughing it out together and since we all have each other's backs I stay positive."

There are so many moving parts on deck and a myriad of risks for each evolution so every Sailor must keep their head on a swivel to prevent injuries.

No matter what issue came up inside or outside the ship, the crew found a way to fix the issue or adjust to the temporary change for the duration. Each member of crew Dominant looked for ways to improve themselves and their contributions to the team. Once one of them would start, he would immediately inspire others to follow.

"One of my favorite things about this underway was being the Harnessman," said Dahl. "Being able to get into the middle of the action was awesome and being able to say I was actually part of the sweep was nice. I also loved learning about new stuff like figuring out that we can lay mines as well as recover them, it was really interesting."

Dahl and his fellow minemen of crew Dominant have one goal aboard Champion and that is as he says with proud grin, "Kill Mines!" ⚓



Developing Strong, Ethical Midshipmen

SURFLANT Hosts Virginia Military Institute ROTC



Photo by MC3 Nathan Wilkes



Story by:
MC3 Ellen Hilkowski

Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Public Affairs

Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic (SURFLANT), hosted the Navy ROTC unit from the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) March 30, to promote the development of strong, ethical midshipmen.

Alongside several of his key staff members, SURFLANT Commander Rear Adm. Pete Gumataotao addressed a couple dozen midshipmen in an open forum and spoke about the importance of integrity, procedural compliance, and team building.

"The real test of your relevance is reflected in the actions of your Sailors," said Gumataotao. "Seek out those who inspire and aspire to excellence and learn from them. Set and exemplify the standards for the Sailors you will lead and they will follow you anywhere."

The VMI visitors also got to meet and receive guidance from Force Master Chief Suz Whitman and several other SURFLANT staff members.

"I think this was an awesome experience for the midshipmen because the admiral didn't talk to them as a two-star," said Cmdr. Randy Zamora, VMI Navy ROTC executive officer. "Instead, he brought it down to their level and made it relatable by recalling

what it was like to be a junior officer. They are very intimidated by the fleet but the admiral encouraged them to be confident and gave them guidance on how to be successful."

Whitman spoke to the midshipmen from the perspective of a chief petty officer and offered advice on how to communicate effectively with their future chiefs.

"We have been there and done that," said Whitman. "Listen to your chief; they will not lead you astray. Our sole job as a chief petty officer is to take care of Sailors and that includes you. We are there to mold you, mentor you and motivate you, but more importantly, we are there to make sure you are successful."

Gumataotao also emphasized the importance of understanding and following standard shipboard operating procedures, doing the right thing under pressure and building their knowledge bases. To conclude the discussion, he and the other speakers answered questions about ethical decisions, how to integrate themselves into deployed crews and suggested literature on how to be effective leaders.

"A couple of the most important lessons I took away from this experience is the significance of team-based leadership and having a questioning attitude as an ensign," said Midshipman 1st Class Killian Buckley, from Auburn, Massachusetts. "The more we learn, the more effective our warfighting team will be." ⚓

Two-Wheel Responsibility

LCSRON 1 Promotes Motorcycle Safety With Standdown



Story and Photos by:
MC2 Zachary Bell

Naval Surface Force U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

The staff of Commander, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron (LCSRON) 1 sponsored a motorcycle safety stand-down for command personnel at Naval Base San Diego, May 21.

The course was held to refresh riders on the importance of proper safety while operating a motorbike and included exercises that focused on overall safety techniques as well as tips for driving in San Diego.

“There is a lot of responsibility when it comes to two wheels,” said Capt. Warren R. Buller II, Commander, LCSRON-1. “You have to watch the other guy more than you have to watch yourself. You have to make sure you are 100 percent on board with the PPE [personal protective equipment] because that’s what the Navy dictates and it all makes sense.”

Topics covered included making sure riders are protected and wearing the proper PPE. Knowing how and performing maintenance checks on a motor vehicle’s tires, controls, lights, oil, chassis and kickstand was also explained to participants.

Event organizers stressed being observant while searching one’s surroundings to evaluate what actions to take in a given situation and how to safely execute those actions.

“We lose more Sailors and Marines to motorcycle accidents than to combat, so we brought in members of our community because a lot of times safety



presentations turn into a PowerPoint presentation, sitting in a classroom and looking at stuff on a piece of paper,” said Chief Operations Specialist Paul Reynolds, the coordinator of the event. “The reason we brought in the motorcycle professionals is because we wanted a non-pressure environment where Sailors can interact while establishing a culture of safety.”

Members of the California Highway Patrol also gave a presentation about highway safety and drove the point home about setting the example for younger Sailors.

“Today we are getting really good training on being as safe as possible,” said Gunner’s Mate 2nd Class Jeremy Roberts, one of the Sailors who organized the event. “Make sure you are prepared with the proper motorcycle gear, the correct [insurance] coverage and everything needed to ride safely. It comes down to if I’m setting the correct example, my junior Sailors will follow by being well trained, and follow the rules and regulations of the Navy and the road.”

According to Vice Adm. Tom Rowden, Commander, Naval Surface Forces, health and safety programs are key elements to maintaining personal readiness. Combat readiness, material readiness and personal readiness are the focus of Rowden’s efforts at the type command level to support the Chief of Naval Operations’ three tenets of Warfighting First, Operate Forward, and Be Ready. ⚓



Small Ship **BIG** Family

USS Chief's Crew of 94 is "Tight-Knit"



Story and Photos by:
MC1 Abraham Essenmacher

Naval Forces Korea Public Affairs

The mine countermeasure ship USS Chief (MCM 14) is 224 feet long and 39 feet wide with a crew of 94 Sailors. The ship may seem small compared to other U.S. Navy vessels. Yet rather than letting size impact their mission, these Sailors harness their tight knit command climate to achieve mission success.

"While tactically employed, the crew is in two duty sections, while conducting neutralization or sweeping operations the crew collapses to a single section, making nearly every mission that we do an all hands effort," says Lt. Cmdr. Shane Dennis, commanding officer of Chief, "It bonds this 'Band of Brothers' together in a way that I've never experienced before in the three other ships that I have served aboard."

In the times between their port and starboard watch schedule, Sailors dedicate their time to seeking out qualified crew members to earn qualifications and facilitate in-rate training.

"Due to the size of our ship and crew, Sailors quickly become leaders and subject matter experts in their rates at an early stage as well as pay grade. With every challenge and hardship we face onboard, we become a stronger team."

*Senior Chief Randy Bell
Command Senior Chief*

Command Senior Chief Randy Bell said this high state of readiness directly contributes to the ship's high morale, low disciplinary problems, and safe execution of tasks as well as mission accomplishment.

"Due to the size of our ship and crew, Sailors quickly become leaders and subject matter experts in their rates at an early stage as well as pay grade," said Bell. "With every challenge and hardship we face onboard, we become a stronger team."

Between officers and chiefs, MCM-14 has 21 E-7 through O-4 Sailors, which puts nearly 20 percent of the crew in key leadership positions. The other 73 Sailors on Chief are made up of E-6 and below.

"We face many of the same challenges as other ships do. One unique issue to this small ship is the depth of bench we have to draw from, so it's important that each Sailor bring their 'A' game," said Dennis. "It's really encouraging to see what this group of 94 Sailors can do when the stakes are high, and when the challenges seem insurmountable. Their ability and willingness





to come together as one ship, one mission is beyond anything I've experienced."

In the early 1980's, the Navy began developing two new classes of mine countermeasure ships including the Avenger class. There are currently eleven mine countermeasure ships in service, which are designed to clear mines from vital waterways ensuring that U.S. naval components can get into the maritime environments where they are most needed.

"If we have to go into harm's way, you have to know that the Sailor standing next to you is able to do what they're expected to do when the stakes are high," said Dennis. "We've imbued into our Sailors a sense that thousands of shipmates are waiting out in the deep water until we've cleared the way for them. This makes their purpose singularly important and that's part of what helps."

Combining the ship's overall mission with the demanding qualifications, these naval warfighters will continue to provide an overall sense of "one team, one fight" aboard their mine countermeasure asset. The 94 Sailors carrying

out the strategic support of USS Chief are doing so with the support of each other.

"It's truly been an honor and privilege to serve the Sailors and their families onboard USS Chief," said Bell. "These Sailors are the hardest working bunch I have ever served with and I believe they deserve the utmost appreciation and respect for their continuous efforts aboard this arduous duty assignment." ⚓





Reducing the Burden

From: **CNSP Public Affairs**
Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet

The Navy's top surface warfare officer says his staff is continuing to reduce unnecessary administrative functions for ships on the waterfront in order to improve warfighting readiness.

Vice Adm. Thomas S. Rowden, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, said the entire type command (TYCOM) staff is working hard to take the burdens off of the ships. "We work for the ships on the waterfront," said Rowden. "We are here to unburden them,

to free-up the ships to concentrate on developing their warfighting skills. We need to listen and welcome feedback from the waterfront so we can properly align resources and eliminate burdens and inefficiencies."

Recent improvements have included moving the process of hazard and mishap reporting from the ship to shore, standardizing the hazardous material lasting on amphibious ships for improve Marine Expeditionary Unit support, and increasing minimum firefighting skills for new accessions to the surface force. According to Rowden, the TYCOM staff has also been working to reduce inefficiency in Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) surface ship maintenance availabilities and lost operational days.

Rowden said the goal is a dedicated and focused effort to deliver a ready warfighting unit, a command in which deckplate procedural compliance and a deep-rooted culture of ownership and self-sufficiency are the standard. "Barriers to warfighting readiness must be addressed openly and accurately," said Rowden. "We need to be able to identify who can remove the barriers we encounter, what action needs to be taken, and when the barrier will be removed."

Rowden said he also highly encourages all commanding officer, executive officers and senior enlisted leaders to review and critique their current programs, examine both what works and what does not, and share best practices with one another.

Combat readiness, material readiness and personal readiness are the focus of Rowden's efforts at the type command level to support the CNO's three tenets of Warfighting First, Operate Forward, and Be Ready. ⚓

“Step Up, Step In”

SURFLANT Highlights the Importance of Bystander Intervention



Story by:
MC2 Amber O'Donavan

Naval Surface Force U.S. Atlantic Fleet Public Affairs

Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic (SURFLANT) Sailors participated in a series of peer-led, Bystander Intervention to the Fleet (BI2F) training sessions, which began in mid-February and concludes in early April.

“This training provides Sailors the skills to recognize potentially risky situations and take appropriate action to help shipmates avoid those destructive decisions that could have negative consequences,” said Senior Chief Logistics Specialist Brian O. Garfield, BI2F command facilitator.

BI2F training is required for all active duty and reserve personnel who must complete the training no later than Sept. 30, 2015. Divided into two-hour sessions, the training supports the chief of naval personnel’s requirement that all hands complete this training which emphasizes the significant role every Sailor plays in the prevention of destructive behaviors.

“Bystander intervention is a very important asset that is available to all Sailors,” said Quartermaster 1st Class (SW) Vera Smith, SURFLANT BI2F trainer. “Some Sailors are just unsure of how and when to intervene. I volunteered to teach the course because I believe I have a very approachable and open way of communicating that can make Sailors, especially junior Sailors, feel comfortable speaking about certain things included in the training.”

To receive the information, personnel were divided into the following groups: junior level for E-1 to E-5; mid-level for E-6 to E-8; an O1 to O3 group, and one for senior level personnel, for E-9s along with O-4 and above. The groups were relatively small, with no more than 30 Sailors in each. Alongside Aviation Boatswain’s Mate (Fuel) 3rd Class Keosha Henriquez, Smith led the junior-level training.

“It opens up a forum on issues Sailors are having; that was my biggest take-away from the training,” said Air-Traffic Controller 2nd Class Matthew Venon. “These are legitimate concerns which are affecting everybody. I can’t think of any commands that aren’t affected by these issues.”

The SURFLANT BI2F course covered various subjects such as hazing, fraternization, sexual assault and harassment, by showcasing videos, role playing different scenarios and discussing personal opinions. The training highlighted different ways to “Step In and Step Up” through direct, indirect, distraction and protocol interventions.

“Bystander intervention is significant to me because, as I was coming up in the Navy, I had seen quite a few things that I wish I would have intervened in,” said Smith. “Some of the things that I did intervene in, I was made to feel as though I was in the wrong, but now I know differently. I don’t want another Sailor to go through the things that I went through.”

With the goal of eliminating or at least significantly reducing destructive behaviors, Rear Adm. Pete A. Gumataotao, SURFLANT Commander, last year formed a Health of The Force (HoTF) Team. It takes existing programs and resources such as equal opportunity, career counseling, drug and alcohol prevention, religious ministries, sexual assault prevention and response, suicide prevention and family advocacy, and makes them as robust as possible for use across the force.

“Our HoTF initiative will utilize tools like BI2F to help shape the culture, mindsets and attitudes across our organization in order to combat destructive behaviors. It is an investment that we owe our Sailors,” said SURFLANT Force Master Chief Suz Whitman.

“Bystander intervention training can be used in combating all destructive behaviors in the Navy,” said Whitman. “We need to look out for each other and get to the left of destructive behaviors. Now is the time to ‘Step Up and Step In.’” ⚓



Photo by MC3 Gabrielle Joyner

Iron Ships,

New Orleans and Navy Chefs Team Up



Story and Photos by:
MC2 Justin Wolpert

USS Wasp Public Affairs

Sailors from the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1), the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Cole (DDG 67), USS James E. Williams (DDG 95) and Coast Guard Cutter USCGC Dauntless (WMEC 624) competed alongside Royal Navy frigate, HMS Lancaster (F229) and Royal Canadian Navy Destroyer HMCS Athabaskan (DDG 923) in the “New Orleans Fleet Week Seafood Cook-Off” during New Orleans Fleet Week April 26.

Culinary Specialists from each of the nations’ participating ships were paired with local chefs to create unique dishes out of local produce and freshly caught seafood.

The dishes were judged by a panel consisting of top Navy and Marine Corps leadership including Rear Adm. Cynthia Thebaud, commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 2, Rear Adm. Timothy Gallaudet, commander, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command, and Lt. Gen. Richard Mills, commander, Marine Forces Reserve.

The event began with cook-off participants taking a trip to a local grocery store, located in downtown New Orleans, to shop for fresh ingredients for their recipes.

For the main event, each team was paired up with a well-known Louisiana chef and had 20 minutes to prepare a dish.

Along with the ingredients they purchased, competitors also had to use some combination of



Iron Chefs

o During Fleet Week Seafood Cook-off

Louisiana's crab, oyster, shrimp, fish, or crawfish to assemble a unique and delicious creation.

"The opportunity to work with local professional chefs was invaluable," said Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Steven Desnoyers. "Being able to compete against the best that each of the services has hones your skills and really promotes unity...not only among U.S. Sailors, but also the other nations represented here as well."

When the timer ran out, the finished (and some unfinished) dishes made their way to the judges' table. Judges rated the culinary creations on three factors: presentation, creativity, and taste.

"Honestly, all of the dishes were phenomenal," said Rear Adm. Timothy

Gallaudet. "It's great to see the various service members having some good-natured competition while getting to know each other. On the most basic level, it's how you create such a strong and unified force."

When all was said and done, Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Julie Ngyuen, assigned to Wasp, was named the overall winner.

"It was a great learning experience," said Nguyen. "We all learned so much and I hope we get the chance to do something like this again."

New Orleans Fleet Week 2015, a weeklong celebration, is an opportunity for the citizens of New Orleans and the surrounding area to meet Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, as well as witness firsthand the latest capabilities of today's maritime services. ⚓



The Foundry

First Class Petty Officers - Deckplate Leaders



Story and Photos by:
MCCM Donnie Ryan

Naval Surface Force U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

A group of 52 first class petty officers from commands throughout Navy Region Southwest graduated from “The Foundry” Class 003 aboard the USS Midway (CV 41) Museum in San Diego, April 17.

During the week of activities participants took part in leadership training, mentoring sessions, physical fitness events and Navy history and heritage activities both on board Midway and in the local area including a trip to the Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in nearby Point Loma, California.

“Leaders are not born, they are forged, they are created,” said Command Master Chief Joe Grgetich, the senior mentor for The Foundry

003 class and keynote speaker for the graduation ceremony. “During the past week these Sailors received leadership insight from both civilian and military leaders.”

Grgetich spoke in detail about how The Foundry works with, but doesn’t replace current Chief Petty Officer 365 training for first class petty officers.

“These graduates will continue to begin to inspire a sense of speak, share and shadow in every Sailor they guide, mentor and train,” said Grgetich. “You can ask each of them about speak, share and shadow and why this is a requirement for leadership.”

Grgetich also recognized the committee chairman, Senior Chief Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician Dean Ferguson, and the other chief petty officers who served as mentors for the program.

“It was a team effort, and I had a fantastic team that helped me put The Foundry together,” said





Ferguson. “Thank you very much to this week’s mentors for all your hard work and effort that you put in with these students. It definitely shows in the final product we have here today.”

While each participant came aboard Midway with their own expectations for The Foundry, all walked off the ship with a greater understanding of what it takes to be an effective leader in today’s Navy.

“I expected to learn about leadership, heritage and taking my career to the next level,” said Firecontrolman 1st Class (SW/AW) Brandon York, currently assigned to the staff of Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet. “The best thing I took away from the training is the importance of communication skills. Communication is the basis of good leadership.”

York said the chief petty officers who served as mentors for the group played an invaluable role during the training.

“The role of the mentor for our group was to guide us through any confusion we might have had during the course,” said York. “The mentor always

gave good input to guide us in the right direction.”

Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Kent Hall, assigned to the Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit San Diego-North Island, was named as the honor graduate for The Foundry Class 003.

“It really means a lot to me and to be recognized by my peers is a greater compliment than I could ever imagine,” said Hall. “I learned more this week than I have learned anywhere, ever. It really put my life into perspective.”

Hall said he has been working hard for a long time in hopes of being selected to the rank of chief petty officer.

“It’s going to happen when it happens,” said Hall. “But I could never be more proud to be a first class petty officer in the United States Navy than I am right now.”

Sponsored by the Navy Region Southwest Chief Petty Officers Foundation, The Foundry is in its third year of existence and was established to help first class petty officers develop into stronger deckplate leaders. ⚓

Staying Informed

SURFLANT Waterfront Symposium Aims to Improve Maintenance Knowledge



Photo by MC3 Robert S. Price



Story by:

MC1 Josue Escobosa

Naval Surface Force Atlantic Public Affairs

Aiming to improve maintenance efforts and increase ship operational availability across the surface force, Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic hosted a Waterfront Maintenance Symposium, March 3.

Designed to inform officers and enlisted of maintenance process changes across the surface force, nearly 300 officers and chiefs shared lessons learned and ideas during the seminar.

“We all have an important role to ensure we are constantly vigilant on what we can do to make this maintenance program work,” said Rear Adm. Pete Gumataotao, commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic. “We are not here to point fingers; we’re here to support everyone working together. This event is for us to ask questions like, ‘what are we doing as individuals and as a force to make things better.’”

“Maintenance is not easy; we all have to do our part to make maintenance work,” said Cmdr. Tom Myers, USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) executive officer. “We have to plan better. We have to work better and we have to know our ships better to do a better job of adhering to procedural compliance.”

The event included a number of topics intended

to update ship’s force and waterfront leaders regarding the latest maintenance planning, compliance and training issues currently affecting the fleet.

“As a 3M coordinator, procedural compliance is a major topic for me,” said Chief Gunner’s Mate (SW) Shane Miville from USS Truxtun (DDG 103). “It’s good to know what they’re looking for and I’m excited to take what I learned today back to the Sailors on the deckplates.”

The conference also addressed the importance of training, communication and delivering war-ready ships to the fleet. The speakers focused on the importance of operator knowledge, chain-of-command planning and force budgeting.

“I thought this gave us a good idea on the way forward and where the maintenance community within the surface is headed,” said Myers. “We still have a lot of bugs to work out, but the fact is we are working to make it better, to make it more efficient and more cost-effective for the fleet.”

“We need to educate and most importantly equip our Sailors to do their maintenance the way it needs to be done,” said Ensign Tony Mason, from James E. Williams (DDG 95). “There’s a lot coming our way as far as maintenance is concerned and this helped us better understand what those things are and how we can better prepare for it.” ⚓

Fit to Fight

SWO Boss Focuses on Warfighting Readiness Through Zone Inspections



From:
CNSP Public Affairs

Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet

The Navy's top surface warfare officer is focusing attention on material condition and readiness through the shipboard zone inspection program, the subject of his latest warfighting serial message to the fleet released Feb. 19.

Vice Adm. Thomas S. Rowden, Commander, Naval Surface Forces, is reminding commanders and commanding officers of the importance he places on the zone inspection program and how the program contributes to overall warfighting readiness.

"Warfighting is our number one priority and material readiness is essential to warfighting readiness," said Rowden. "No shipboard program is more critical to material readiness than the zone inspection program."

In his message to the fleet, Rowden cited a recent letter from the president of the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) which stated the primary reason for ships doing poorly on INSURV is due to lack of preventative maintenance and an ineffective zone inspection program.

"The empirical evidence is clear," said Rowden. "Ships with good zone inspection programs are more materially fit to fight."

Rowden's renewed focus on the zone inspection program focuses on three types of inspections. These include the daily informal inspections done by all khaki on board, the executive officer's daily

"The empirical evidence is clear, ships with good zone inspection programs are more materially fit to fight."

*Vice Adm. Tom Rowden
Commander, Naval Surface Force U.S. Pacific Fleet*



Photo by MC2 Karolina A. Oseguera

inspection of messing and berthing, and formal zone inspections conducted on a weekly basis.

"At a minimum, a successful zone inspection program must include ownership, rigor and follow through," said Rowden. "Triad involvement in the zone inspection program is key."

Rowden also encourages all commanding officer, executive officers and senior enlisted leaders to review and critique their current programs, examine both what works and what does not, and share best practices with one another.

"We must do better in this area," said Rowden. "Zone inspections are critical to self-assessment and identifying material deficiencies that impact overall material readiness."

Material readiness, personal readiness and combat readiness are the focus of Rowden's efforts at the type command level to support the CNO's three tenets of Warfighting First, Operate Forward, and Be Ready. ⚓

Surface Warfare Officers School Emphasises *Maintenance Readiness and Engineering Training* for Board of Visitors Event



Story and Photos by: **Lt. Andrew Bartholomeaux**

Surface Warfare Officers School Command Public Affairs

The staff of the Surface Warfare Officers School (SWOS) hosted its annual Board of Visitors (BoV) event May 5-7, with a specific focus on material readiness and engineering training.

The SWOS BoV is a recurring forum designed to review SWOS curricula and ensure training wholeness and effectiveness, and to maintain alignment with the vision of Navy Surface Warfare leadership.

According to SWOS Commanding Officer Capt. David Welch, an additional benefit of conducting the BoV annually is the identification of important funding issues for consideration by the Surface and Expeditionary Warfare Training Committee (SEWTC).

"SWOS recently updated our strategic five-year plan for 2014-2019," said Welch. "Restoring engineering wholeness remains a key component and our number one goal in the plan."

Welch added that the BoV process is very important to SWOS and the entire Surface Warfare community.

"This event provided us an opportunity to showcase how far we've come, as well as capture feedback from key stakeholders including waterfront leaders," said Welch. "It allowed us to take a fix and adjust our plan to meet the goals of the surface community's leadership to restore engineering training and improve readiness."

Welch explained that, starting with delivery of the Fleet Review Plan in February of 2010, there has been considerable effort by surface warfare leadership to address material problems and increase readiness.

"One of the most important initiatives to address the challenges of surface readiness was the establishment of the SEWTC, first convened in August 2010," said Welch. "Under the sponsorship of the Chief of Naval Operations Surface Warfare and Expeditionary Warfare Directorates, Commander Naval Surface Forces (SURFOR) and Commander

Naval Surface Force U.S. Atlantic Fleet (SURFLANT), the SEWTC was chartered to address the training and manpower underpinnings of readiness.”

Concurrent with establishment of the SEWTC, Naval Education and Training Command (NETC) directed SWOS to conduct an engineering training wholeness review to identify shortfalls and make recommendations to close those shortfalls.

According to Welch, from the wholeness review, SWOS developed a Five-Year Enlisted Engineering Training Restoration Plan that, with SEWTC support, would progressively address major engineering training issues over several years to rebuild engineering skills in the surface force.

“As the final year of that five-year investment plan approaches, SWOS wanted to consult all stakeholders to ensure that major shortfalls and issues were appropriately addressed,” added Welch. “This year’s Board of Visitors accomplished that task.”

This year’s board was conducted in phases. The first phase consisted of a series of four separate waterfront and fleet engagements conducted throughout March. They focused on apprentice and journeyman level training, as well as officer and master level training. The board also looked at waterfront training programs such as damage control, firefighting, and chemical, biological and radiological training, all of which generated a wide-

ranging list of 86 issues.

The second phase of the board was conducted during the first week of May in Newport, Rhode Island. This is where the issues were reviewed, binned, and prioritized by an advisory group consisting of 20 Navy captains representing key stakeholders from the type commanders, afloat training groups, afloat major commanders, the Navy Personnel Command, the Board of Inspection and Survey, Regional Maintenance Command, Naval Sea Systems Command, and the Center for Surface Combat Systems.

“The SWOS BoV process is very much aligned with the SEWTC,” said Welch. “Some of the major issues identified by the BoV are already in budget plans. Other issues will be further developed and submitted to the SEWTC in the fall of 2015 for consideration in Program Objective Memorandum 2018 (POM-18).”

The Board of Visitors capstone event included a brief of the high priority issues to the Navy’s surface community leadership.

“The BoV sends a powerful, positive message to the warfighters, trainers and maintainers on the commitment SWOS has in equipping our Sailors to competently and confidently drive our ships, fight our ships and steam the plants,” said Dan Spagone, the intermediate-level maintenance director for the Norfolk Regional Maintenance Center, who also participated in the board. ⚓



NO MORE FOR



Story by:
William Kelly

Naval Sea Systems Command, Maintenance Engineering Division

Let's face it, there are some things in life that are just difficult to deal with and we have to accept that they aren't going away; flies, taxes, spam (email, not the canned stuff). And as a Sailor, Force Revisions (FR) can be added to that list. Or can they? This pesky, paper dependent process has long been a drain on time and a headache for Sailors everywhere. Still, they're necessary in today's Planned Maintenance System (PMS).

Could life on a Navy Ship actually exist without FRs? It might not be as far-fetched as you think. U.S. Fleet Forces (USFF), Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), and Commander Pacific Fleet (CPF) are looking into this concept as well as other steps to reduce the administrative burdens on Sailors. Thankfully, many initiatives have helped to bring these issues to light. They include the CNO Reduce Administrative Distractions (RAD) initiative of 2013, Commander Naval Surface-Force Pacific (CNSP) 3M Summit Survey of 2014, as well as feedback on today's PMS from maintainers.

While a successful program since the 1960s, current Navy PMS is not perfect. Of course, nothing is, but that is not stopping leadership from continuously challenging themselves to give Sailors the best tools and processes available. Reducing the burdens that can be such a large part of PMS today is a high priority. That's why USFF, NAVSEA and CPF have commissioned a joint venture called the Future of PMS (FoPMS). This program is a modernization of the Navy's Planned Maintenance System. FoPMS ties the many current PMS initiatives into one streamlined program that will bring about much improved software and procedures. Current initiatives include tools like SKED 3.2, Tailored Force Revision (TFR) Packages, Configuration-based PMS, PMS Change Indicators and TFR templates. All are independent projects to be blended together into a cohesive, improved system.

So what are all of these burdens on Sailors? Well,

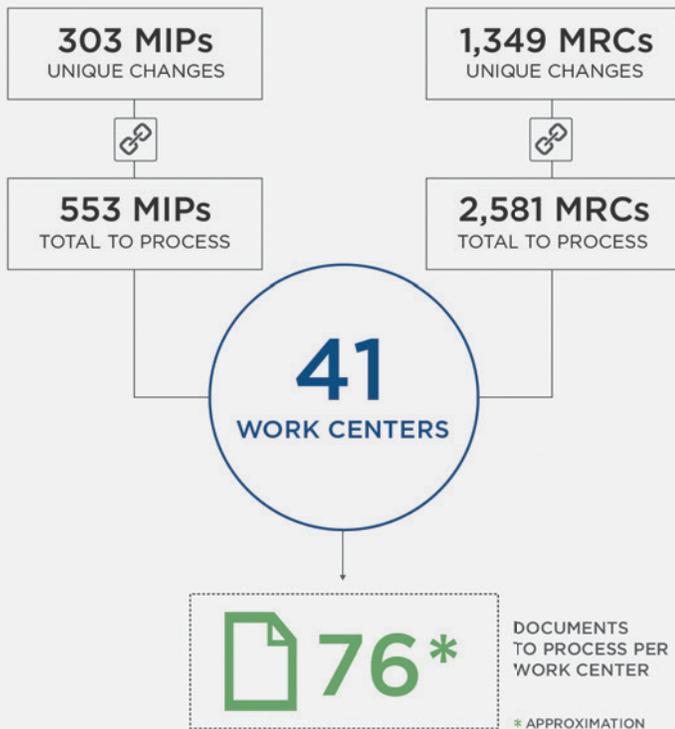
let's start with the one whose name is in the title of this article: Force Revisions. Today FRs are sent to ships via DVDs in the mail. This is a necessary mechanism to periodically update over 85,000 PMS documents. Unfortunately, at this time, there is no other way to digitally transmit this bulk upload of changes. The Fleet receives these changes quarterly for submarines and carriers and semi-annually for Surface ships and shore activities. One thing to note about these DVDs is they contain all of the documents that apply to ships, not just revisions. As of right now, infrastructure doesn't support sending only the changes. It's all of the documents including the changes. Chances are you're reading this because you've had to implement an FR which is not fun to say the least. It's not fun because the PMS program is a very paper dependent process and that is especially true for implementing FRs. Current policy drives the need for administrative focused 3-M inspections and requires hard copy PMS documents like the 13 week File and numerous Lists of Effective Pages (LOEPs), MIP and MRC reports. Managing all this paper work and the changes that go along with it, is very time-consuming.

Let's look at an example of a quantity of documents processed for an FR (See figure 1). The most recent Force Revision (FR 2-15) for DDG 100 had 303 MIP changes and 1,349 MRC changes. MIP and MRC use often overlaps between multiple work centers which means DDG 100 will process 553 MIPs and 2,581 MRCs creating an excessive amount of man-hours in FR processing.

To give a better idea of just how time consuming this can be, assume it takes one minute to process a change for a document. The latest FR for DDG-100 would see sailors spending over 52 hours processing PMS document changes (See figure 2). So if there are 62 DDGs in the Fleet, that's over 3,238 man-hours. This 52 hour requirement is solely for prioritizing and replacing changed documents and does not include even more time consuming tasks like line-outs, initials and approvals. More on that in a bit.

Why do we need all these hours for paperwork? Isn't this the digital age? Wouldn't it make more sense for

CE REVISIONS!



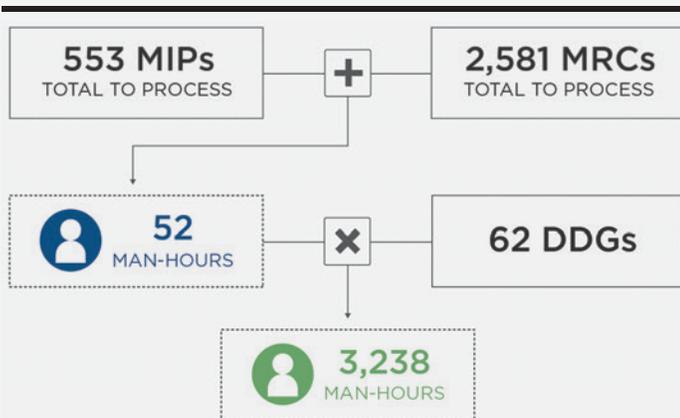
and TFR packages are helping to ease the burden of Force Revisions until the Future of PMS eliminates them completely.

Since we're talking about MIPs and MRCs, we can't forget about lineouts. PMS documents can be complex, ambiguous, and contain excessive warnings, cautions and notes. It's up to the Sailor to identify problems and recommend improvements and since these procedures can contain multiple equipment variants, Sailors must determine what does and does not apply to them when scheduling maintenance. They then have to go through the documents and lineout all the steps that do not pertain to them.

How can lineouts be a thing of the past? The following short term enhancements have been implemented in SKED to aid in the FR review and lineout process. PMS Change Indicators is a tool built into SKED 3.2 to help quickly identify changes to documents. Additionally, SKED 3.2 has electronic documentation features that reduce the need for pen and ink changes. But much more is in the works with TFR packages, Equipment Maintenance Plans (EMP) and Configuration-based PMS. These efforts give sailors equipment specific MRCs so they can spend more time working on procedures that pertain to them rather than deciphering what is relevant and what is not. This will ultimately eliminate the need for scheduling aids and procedure step line-outs.

With so much of the burden on Sailors to manage all facets of PMS including improving the accuracy and quality of PMS documents, their feedback is needed more than ever. Unfortunately, the current Feedback Report system (FBR) does not make this easy. This brings us to our next administrative burden on Sailors that needs some relief.

In addition to FBRs being hard to track once they're submitted, alerting the engineers ashore of issues with technical applicability or accuracy of the PMS document in question is placed on the maintainer. There are also the burdens that go with processing Advance Change Notices (ACNs). While ACNs provide rapid resolution to urgent or critical maintenance issues, the process is suboptimal and not integrated



Sailors to log into a computer, see the tasks at hand and perform them? Tasks, it should be noted, that are up to date? Of course it would. This is something called "continuous distribution" and it is in the plan for the Future of PMS. Think of it as having the latest information available to you. You wouldn't have to worry about updating all your changed MRCs each Force Revision. The MRC would already be in its latest form because, internet connection permitting, it's continuously updated. Right now the infrastructure for this is lacking but that is being addressed. In the meantime, PMS Change Indicators



Photo by MC3 Robert S. Price

with the standard PMS scheduling software in the Fleet.

The Future of PMS initiative is going to change this with a fresh, new tool called the PMS Service Request (PSR). The PSR will be a tool meant to inspire customer service and communication. Unlike the Feedback Report, after a PSR is created and approved by leadership, it will become visible to the engineers as well as to all PMS Activities who use the same configuration in question. This added visibility will hopefully foster communication. The Activities will be able to add their comments and give a “thumbs up” if they agree with the PSR or give a “thumbs down” if they disagree. This could really help an engineer come up with an optimized solution. In addition, the Sailor who initiated the PSR can track it easily and see what others have to say about it. By leveraging network technology and increasing visibility to all involved activities, the PMS Service Request will be more streamlined and allow for quicker responses.

So if we were able to get rid of Force Revisions, end lineouts, and fix Feedback Reports, would that put an end to Sailors’ administrative burdens? It would certainly chip away at them but another issue still remains: inefficient use of Sailor manpower.

Because 3-M tools are being developed and maintained by various organizations, they don’t work smoothly together. This results in a sailor having to enter and track data in multiple, disconnected

applications. For example, if Sailors find a discrepancy on a piece of equipment, they might have to put it in a safe condition and then go to another application to order parts and so on and so on. In an ideal world, the world that will be the Future of PMS, all of these applications will be connected. If Sailors run into an issue while conducting PMS that requires parts, they could simply click on a link that would take them to R-supply, or whatever the supply program of the future is, and order the part. FoPMS won’t be taking over the applications, just connecting to them which will save Sailors’ time.

Finally, no one likes bad grades. At least no one who takes pride in doing their job well. Nothing will make good Sailors cringe more than seeing their PMS accomplishment rating go down, especially if it’s due to situations beyond their control. But that can happen since some maintenance is not being accomplished due to a lack of tools that support PMS logistics forecasting. MRC documents are not always consistent and don’t specify volume or quantity of parts and materials needed so that Sailors can successfully complete maintenance requirements. Making this problem even harder to manage, systems are not tied to logistics for forecasting what is needed to support PMS. This leads to reduced PMS accomplishment ratings and aggravation for the Sailor. Again, it goes back to linking systems together. If all the applications could network with the supply system, Work Center

Supervisors could order what they need. SKED 3.2 is making improvements to this but the ultimate solution to networking systems lies with the Future of PMS. FoPMS will update the documents to contain this necessary information. Data collection points will also be added so Sailors can input how much of their supplies they actually use so that supply quantities of the requirements become more accurate over time. For example, if it takes one pump of grease to grease a bearing, a data collection point could see just how much is being used per pump and predict when you'll need a new tube of grease.

It's clear that USFF, NAVSEA and CPF are making serious efforts to reduce the administrative burdens Sailors face every day when performing PMS. We've already hit on some of the current initiatives in place that are helping but it's important to note that this is an ever-evolving process. SKED is constantly being upgraded to improve the overall user experience and make scheduling maintenance easier. TFR Templates, with equipment maintenance plans, are being tested this year with an expected arrival to surface ships in 2016. These Templates are being created using TFR data to assist with PMS schedules, standardize MIP and MRC usage, and tie PMS to configuration.

In addition, NAVSEA is also engaged in other PMS content initiatives designed to reduce PMS complexity and ambiguity which will lessen the strain on Sailors. These include Reliability Centered Maintenance based Fleet Maintenance Effectiveness Reviews (FLEETMERs),

streamlining HAZMAT and PPE requirements, as well as standardizing situational requirements and their applications across maintenance activities. In case you haven't heard, FLEETMERs bring together specialists and Sailors to verify the applicability and effectiveness of MRCs as well as to improve the quality of the procedures.

The ultimate solution for reducing the administrative burdens on Sailors lies with the Future of PMS. By tying the current and short term initiatives together with new ideas and technology, the Future of PMS will reimagine the Navy's Planned Maintenance System. It's an overhaul and modernization effort that will bring Navy PMS into the 21st century and standardize it across the Fleet. The end-state of the Future of PMS is a streamlined system with continuous distribution, Equipment Maintenance Plans and improved software tools. More importantly, it's an effort to let Sailors know their voices are being heard and something is being done.

The Future of PMS won't happen overnight. This is a six year plan that will solve the problems of today's Navy PMS. However, reducing administrative burdens on Sailors is a priority right now.

For more information on the Future of PMS or anything you've read in this article, go to the "Reinvigorate PMS" milBook page on milSuite.mil. You can also provide feedback or request information by sending an email to pms@navy.mil. We look forward to hearing from you. ⚓

	CURRENT	FUTURE
PMS CONTENT MODEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMS associated to equipment in SKED locally on ship and requires Sailor interpretation for multi-variant procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMS tied to specific configuration records and eliminates Sailor interpretation for multi-variant procedures
PMS DISTRIBUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Released quarterly to submarines and semi-annually to surface ships and carriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Released continuously
PMS SCHEDULES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sailors make equipment associations and build schedules for their ship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance Planners build ship schedules ashore through O-Level Maintenance Plans (OMP), Sailors only assign resources and dates
PMS FORMAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed paper at point of performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper and digital formats that support mobile and multimedia components (video)

Heritage and Service

Lt. Michael Murphy Honored in Ireland



Story and Photos by:
MC1 Sean Spratt

Navy Public Affairs Support Element East, Det. Europe

“Seventeen years ago, in 1998, as more a quirk of fate than anything else, I began the identification of the Irish who lost their lives in the Vietnam War at a time when no one believed any Irish had ever been there,” said Declan Hughes, Founder of the Irish Veterans. “The quirk of fate was I had been given a ring that belonged to a dead GI after a battle and I was charged with finding the family of the late owner.”

Hughes, who was born in Dublin, explained that his research led him to Washington D.C. in 1999 where he worked with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. He was instrumental in bringing the replica Vietnam Memorial to Ireland in 1999. Out of his research he was able to meet many Irish in Ireland who had survived Vietnam. With their help in 2002 he set up the charity Irish Veterans Historical Research Centre Ltd., which is now known as Irish Veterans

Association.

“Our mission is to tell the stories of the Irish and those of Irish heritage who have served in other forces over the years,” said James Sikora, Executive Director of the Irish Veterans. “We are trying to join all the dots and speak to all Irish and those of Irish heritage globally...to create a network of people who identify as being Irish and as being veterans.”

The association held a dedication ceremony to commemorate the first Irish Veterans Post in honor of fallen American Lt. (SEAL) Michael Murphy in the chapter’s headquarters April 18.

Sikora, who grew up in Ireland but served eight years in the U.S. Army infantry - having deployed to the Middle East, Europe, Latin America, former Yugoslavia and Iraq - explained that the Irish Veterans chose to name the first post after Medal of Honor recipient, Lt. Michael Murphy because of his Irish heritage and his actions in Afghanistan in June 2005.

“Michael’s story is remarkable and we hope





that through research and by connecting Irish Veterans around the world that we will be able to document the remarkable unknown stories of Irish veterans,” Sikora said. “These stories are important for the Irish people and Irish veterans from other countries, to know.”

Murphy’s story has become well known due to the book *Lone Survivor*, and the subsequent movie of the same name, as told by the single surviving special operator from Operation Red Wings, Marcus Luttrell.

“It goes without saying that we would have preferred that Michael was here with us to share a pint or two,” said Hughes. “Instead we gather to remember and celebrate a life that was everything a parent would want for a child no matter how brief.”

Michael Murphy’s mother, father, brother and other extended family made the trip from Long Island, New York to Kinsale, Ireland to attend the Irish Veterans first post naming ceremony.

“The Irish Veterans chapter named after our son, Navy SEAL Lt. Michael P. Murphy is more than a bright symbol of all our veterans of Irish heritage,” said Dan Murphy, father of Michael Murphy. “It represents the character of a nation and the strength of its citizens whose heritage is celebrated

and whose service and sacrifice are drawn from the very Irish people in this very land where we celebrate the Irish story and the strength of its culture and people.”

The members of Irish Veterans are hoping to have several more Irish Veterans Posts throughout Ireland as well as other countries as a place where veterans of Irish descent can share the common bond of both heritage and military service.

U.S. Ambassador Kevin O’Malley, representatives from the U.S. Naval Special Warfare community and the guided-missile destroyer USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112) were in attendance at the ceremony in the White House Hotel where the Irish Veterans Post 001 dedicated a plaque to the memory of Lt. (SEAL) Michael Murphy.

“It’s incredible to have a member of the U.S. Navy SEALs’s and Sailors from the USS Michael Murphy here in Kinsale for this ceremony,” said Sikora. “Their presence, and that of Michael’s parents, Dan and Maureen, and brother John, made the event unbelievably special.”

Lt. (SEAL) Michael Murphy was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in October 2007 for his actions in the mountains of Afghanistan in June 2005. USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112) was commissioned in New York city on Oct. 6, 2012. ⚓

SWO of the Year

Pacific's Top Surface Warfare Officer Recognized



Story by:
Ensign Jacob Moore

USS Dewey Public Affairs

Vice Adm. Tom Rowden, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CNSP), announced Lt. Matthew Johnson, assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Dewey (DDG 105), as the 2014 CNSP Surface Warfare Officer of the Year (SWOY) April 15.

The award recognizes the finest officers in the surface warfare community and the competition was extremely keen.

"Everyone nominated for this elite award is to be commended for their dedication to our culture of professionalism and demonstrated superior performance," said Rowden.

This award was instituted in 2009 to recognize the SWO who best personifies the ideals of excellence in warfighting and leadership, expertise in tactics, engineering, and weapons systems, and a commitment to mission accomplishment through superior professionalism and personal example.

Fourteen officers from across the U.S. Pacific Fleet surface force were nominated for the award. Johnson's record rose above the rest after a thorough review of all submissions.

"I am deeply humbled to have received this distinction," said Johnson. "I know many of the other finalists personally or by reputation on the waterfront. All are fantastic officers and SWOs, so it was quite an honor to be picked from amongst such a stellar field of candidates for which I have the highest respect and admiration."

He also credits his success to the hardworking Sailors of Dewey.

"I accept this award on behalf of the officers and crew that made this possible," said Johnson. "Everyday, I have the privilege of working side by side with them to accomplish tasks and missions that have real-world geopolitical impacts. They pull together as a team and have performed brilliantly in every inspection, mission, and evolution we've encountered – Dewey does it right, and I could not be more proud of our team."



Dewey's Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Mikael Rockstad was very confident in his nomination of Johnson.

"[Johnson] exceeds my expectations of a department head and makes a positive difference in the personal and professional lives of every Dewey sailor," Rockstad said.

A native of Port Clinton, Ohio, Johnson was commissioned through the Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Norwich University, where he graduated in 2005 with a Bachelors of Arts degree in Political Science. He holds a Masters of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College. He reported to Dewey in 2013 as the weapons officer, and currently serves as combat systems officer. Johnson has since been promoted to Lt Cmdr. Dewey recently returned from at 10-month deployment as part of the Carl Vinson Strike Group. ⚓

Warfighting Ready

Wayne E. Meyer Awarded Spokane Trophy for Operational Proficiency



Story and Photo by:
MC1 Trevor Welsh

Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

The crew of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Wayne E. Meyer (DDG 108) assembled on the forecastle to receive the prestigious Spokane Trophy during a ceremony, May 7.

The Spokane Trophy is an annual award sponsored by the Spokane, Washington, Council of the Navy League of the United States and is presented to the U.S. Pacific Fleet's surface ship with the highest level of operational readiness in areas ranging from coordinated air warfare, surface warfare and undersea warfare operations.

"The ships that have won this award are absolutely fabulous," said Bruce Rasche, Spokane, Washington, Council of the Navy League. "You have put your name on a list of great ships. From all of us in Spokane who wave the Navy flag, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for what you do."

During the ceremony, Rasche, who flew from Spokane to present the award, spoke about the colorful history of the Spokane Trophy, its beginnings as an award for excellence in naval gunnery marksmanship, and its unique ties to Theodore Roosevelt and the silver industry in the Spokane area.

Competing against 10 other ships from the U.S. Pacific Fleet, Wayne E. Meyer came out above the rest and received the award for demonstrating excellence in

combat system's readiness and warfare operations.

"Wayne E. Meyer's accomplishments have been nothing short of extraordinary," said Vice Adm. Thomas Rowden, commander, Naval Surface Forces. "Her impressive operational performance in numerous mission areas across the warfighting spectrum is clear evidence of the ship's combat readiness. The crew excelled in all areas of operational readiness during a highly successful deployment to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility setting new standards for others to follow."

The award was established in 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt to recognize naval warfighting proficiency. The actual trophy, created from 400 ounces of silver, was created by veterans of the Spanish-American War and cost \$1,500. Due to level of prestige the trophy has gained from the ships who have won the award, the trophy was appraised in excess of \$4 million. The trophy was donated by the Navy League and is kept on permanent display at the Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet headquarters building in San Diego.

Commissioned Oct. 10, 2009, Wayne E. Meyer is named after Rear Adm. Wayne E. Meyer, who is known as the father of Aegis combat system. The Aegis combat system uses powerful computer and radar technology to track and guide weapons to destroy enemy targets. ⚓

Petty Officer of the Deck

Sailor Becomes First Enlisted Crew Member to Obtain the Qualification



Story by:
MC2 Stevie Tate

Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Public Affairs

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Peter Whitaker made history March 20 when he became the first enlisted crew member to be qualified as underway officer of the deck (OOD) aboard the amphibious transport dock ship USS Arlington (LPD 24).

"I remember when I was a deck seaman standing watch in the pilot house; I always wanted to be the OOD," said Whitaker. "It has been a dream of mine and I hope that my junior Sailors will dream big like I did and continue to reach for higher goals."

The OOD stands watch in the pilot house and is the captain's direct representative for carrying out the ship's mission, including the safe navigation, control and execution of the ship's daily tasking.

"The importance of the OOD cannot be overstated," said Lt. Cmdr. Emily Bassett, Arlington executive officer. "The person standing the watch is not only responsible for the ship, but the lives of every Sailor and Marine aboard. The commanding officer must be able to implicitly trust the OOD to keep the ship running effectively and safely."

"Typically, on a smaller deck you would see a senior enlisted Sailor standing those advanced watch stations," said Arlington command master chief Brian McDonough. "On a ship like Arlington however, it is a pretty rare thing to see a first class standing OOD



Photo by MC2 Stevie Tate

while underway. The motivation and drive has to be very strong to achieve the level of knowledge that is required to be an OOD."

The leading petty officer of Arlington's Deck Department, First Division, it took Whitaker approximately eight months to complete his OOD qualification. Having a support network that motivated him helped make the difference in realizing his dream.

"I received so much support from both my chain of command and my junior Sailors as I was studying and meeting the requirements for the qualification," said Whitaker. "The other first class petty officers stood in for me during the various special evolutions I couldn't attend and my junior Sailors kept the division running and the work going anytime I was on watch."

McDonough hopes Whitaker is only the first of many Sailors to reach for higher qualifications both inside and outside their ratings.

"I'm hoping that this lights a fire under everyone aboard," said McDonough. "We want every Sailor on Arlington to know that if they are motivated and driven enough, there is no qualification out of reach, no matter what their rank. Whitaker has set an excellent example for the rest of the crew and I hope everyone follows that example." ⚓



US Navy Photo

Certified “E”ffective

Naval Surface Force Announces 2014 Battle “E” Award Winners



Story by:
MC1 Trevor Welsh

Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Fleet Public Affairs

Commander, Naval Surface Forces (SURFOR) announced the 2014 Battle Effectiveness (Battle “E”) winners March 17.

The Battle “E” is awarded annually to ships and crews that present the maximum condition of readiness in their group, and their capability to perform assigned wartime tasks.

Vice Adm. Tom Rowden, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Rear Adm. Pete Gumataotao, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet congratulated all the winners in the official message message.

“Your success in meeting mission area excellence standards is noted with pleasure,” they said.

Battle “E” awardees sustained superior performance in the following six excellence categories: Maritime warfare; engineering and survivability; command, control, communications, and information warfare; logistics management; Commander Naval Surface Force Safety Award and the Efficiency Excellence Award.

Forward Deployed Naval Forces, Japan announced the following winners: USS Antietam (CG 54), USS Mustin (DDG 89) and USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19).

Pearl Harbor, Hawaii award winners included: USS Hopper (DDG 70) and USS Chafee (DDG 90).



San Diego winners included: USS Lake Champlain (CG 57), USS Mobile Bay (CG 53), USS Sterett (DDG 104), USS Wayne E. Meyer (DDG 108), USS Kidd (DDG 100), USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51), USS Spruance (DDG 111), USS Howard (DDG 83), USS Donald Cook (DDG 75), USS Boxer (LHD 4), USS Peleliu (LHA 5), USS Anchorage (LPD 23) and USS San Diego (LPD 22).

Mayport, Florida winners included: USS Philippine Sea (CG 58), USS Gettysburg (CG 64), USS Carney (DDG 64) and USS Farragut (DDG 99).

Norfolk included the following winners: USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81), USS Nitze (DDG 94), USS Gonzalez (DDG 66), USS Elrod (FFG 55) and USS Bataan (LHD 5).

The littoral combat ship crew winners were LCS Crew 101 and LCS Crew 202.

The mine countermeasure ships were USS Avenger (MCM 1) and USS Devastator (MCM 6).

The mine countermeasure crew was Crew Devastator.

The patrol coastal ship winners were USS Sirocco (PC 6), USS Typhoon (PC 5) and USS Shamal (PC 13). ⚓



US Navy Photo

Surface Line Week

SURFLANT Hosts 1,400+ Sailors for Competition “Celebrating 240 Years of Naval Heritage”



Story by:
MC3 Ellen Hilkowski

Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Public Affairs

Sailors, Marines and civilians from Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic (SURFLANT) and its tenet commands and subordinate units competed in the Surface Line Week (SLW) 2015 Challenge May 11-15 at Naval Station Norfolk and Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story.

SLW 2015 is a resurgence of a SURFLANT tradition which allows commands to come together as a Surface Force with the ability to showcase athletic and professional skills in a week-long friendly competition.

“SLW is a SURFLANT tradition,” said Lt. Barbara Duncan, SLW 2015 coordinator. “The goal is to allow our Sailors to display their athletic and professional talents while building camaraderie throughout the Surface community and the waterfront.”

More than 1400 Sailors from 23 ships and commands in the Norfolk area demonstrated their skills in more than 15 events. The events highlighted this year’s motto; “Celebrating 240 Years of Naval Heritage.”

Competitors had an opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency in shipboard skills through events which included the corpsman relay, marksmanship, ship handling, Bosun Olympics, Damage Control Olympics and Search and Rescue swimmer competitions. Physical abilities and teamwork were also tested in a fitness competition, softball, basketball, volleyball, and bowling tournaments.

“SLW brings all the surface combatants

out together for some good old fashioned teamwork,” said USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) Chief Gas Turbine Systems Technician(Mechanical) Jeremy Costly. “It’s a challenge for everyone and a break from the monotony.”

In addition to competing in the events, SURFLANT subordinate commands were also active in the creation and coordination of the week’s events.

“It’s nice because it brings together Sailors from divisions that wouldn’t necessarily work together,” said Ensign Kelly Brockra, gunnery officer aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51). “It gives them a chance to have fun and work in a team environment with their shipmates.”

SLW 2015 concluded May 15 with a chili cook-off and best burger competition at Breezy Point Park on Naval Station Norfolk.

“You all made me very proud by representing your commands even though I know how busy you are,” said Rear Adm. Pete Gumataotao, commander, SURFLANT. “And more importantly, you being here is a testament to how proud you are of your command, shipmates and what you do.”

Awards for the week were given for first, second, and third place in large command and small command categories.

The amphibious category overall champion was the amphibious transport dock ship USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19), the crudes category overall champion was the guided-missile cruiser USS San Jacinto (CG 56), and the overall grand champion of SLW was Mesa Verde. ⚓



Photo by MC3 Amber N. O'Donovan

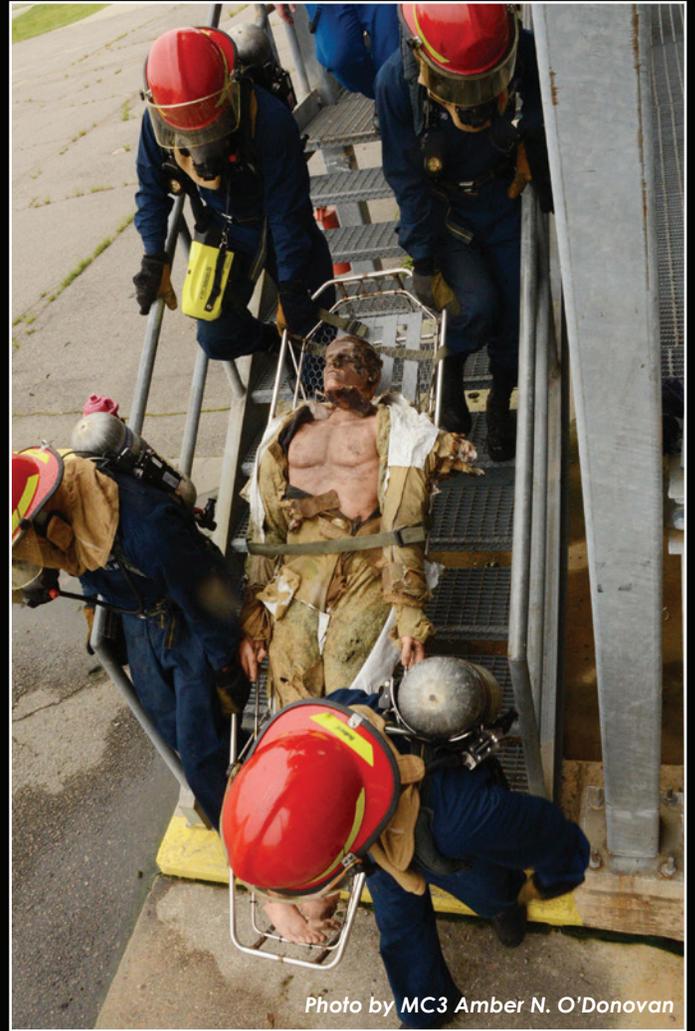


Photo by MC3 Amber N. O'Donovan



Photo by MC3 Amber N. O'Donovan

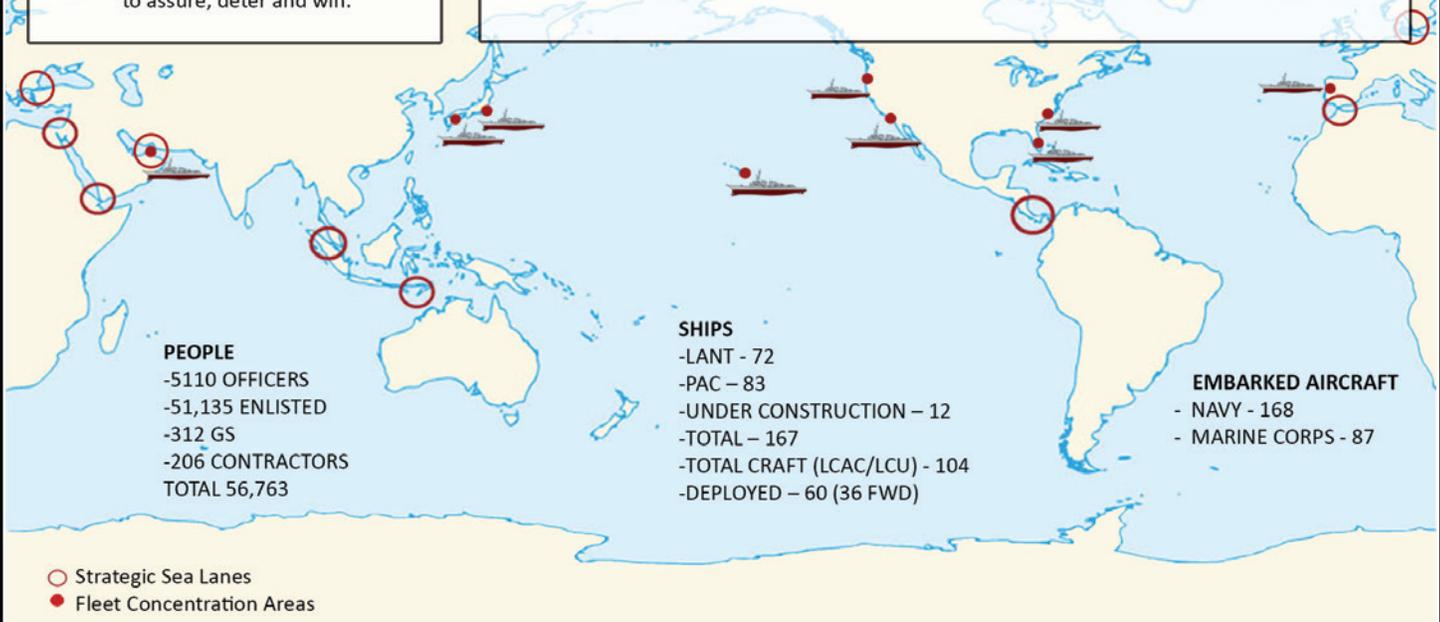


U.S. Naval Surface Force

July 2015

VISION:
Providing Combatant Commanders with **lethal, ready, well-trained, and logistically-supported Surface Forces** to assure, deter and win.

MISSION:
As Commander of Naval Surface Forces, I have **one and only one priority**, and that is to ensure that **everything we do makes us better warfighters**. Warfighting comes first and is enabled by three enduring pillars: Combat Readiness, Material Readiness and Personal Readiness.



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