



Bravo Zulu

Naval Brig Ford Island

Naval and Marine Corps Achievement Medal
SM3 Imani Gudger
Sgt. James Bigelow, USMC

Staff Member of the Month
MM2 Israel Mendoza

Around the Fleet

Battleship Wisconsin finds new home in Norfolk

Questions about the future of the mothballed Iowa-class battleship USS Wisconsin (BB 64) were answered Tuesday when Navy officials announced that a contract was awarded to berth the 56-year-old vessel alongside Nautilus, the National Maritime Museum in downtown Norfolk, Va.

The massive, 888-foot-long, 45,000-ton warship will be towed from its current location at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, Va., to its new home on the Elizabeth River adjacent to the museum.

Under the agreement, the Navy will maintain Wisconsin and eventually make the ship available for public visiting.

"It will serve as a symbol of the enormous contributions, for nearly 100 years, by the citizens of Norfolk and nearby communities who have given a home to the Sailors, their families, and ships of the greatest Navy in the world," said Virginia Senator John Warner.

Rear Adm. R. Timothy Ziemer, Commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, said Tuesday's announcement marked a major milestone in making USS Wisconsin available for visits by the American public.

"I look forward to the day when all citizens can see, touch and experience this icon of Navy capability and tradition," said Ziemer. "It is altogether fitting that Norfolk becomes the home of this magnificent ship."

Since her commissioning at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard in April 1944, Wisconsin has seen action in three conflicts - World War II, Korea and the Persian Gulf. On Sep. 30, 1991, the battle-hardened Wisconsin was decommissioned for the third time.

First Virginia Class submarine keel laying ceremony held

A keel laying ceremony for the lead ship in the Navy's new attack submarine class was held yesterday. The ceremony for Virginia (SSN 774) will be hosted by Electric Boat at their Quonset Point Facility in North Kingstown, R.I.

Sen. John W. Warner, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee,

will inscribe his initials on the keel of the submarine, which is named for his home state, and will serve as the principal speaker. Navy Adm. Frank L. Bowman, director of Naval Nuclear Propulsion, will deliver remarks and introduce Warner.

The Navy's next-generation attack submarine, the Virginia A class, will provide the U.S. Navy with the capability required to maintain the nation's undersea supremacy well into the 21st century.

With enhanced communications connectivity, Virginia also will provide important battle group and joint task force support, with full integration into carrier battle group operations.

The Virginia class attack submarines surpass the performance of any current or projected threat submarine, ensuring United States undersea dominance well into the next century.

Seabees in Kosovo receive a distinguished visitor

A top government official for military construction had an opportunity to see for herself the accomplishments of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Three (NMCB-3).

Staff Director of the Military Construction Subcommittee, House Appropriations Committee, Elisabeth Dawson, recently visited NMCB-3 at the Camp Monteith in Gnjilane, Kosovo, where the Seabees are building 64 Davidson SEAHuts, which are semi-permanent living quarters for U.S. peacekeeping forces associated with Operation Joint Guardian. The lead engineer for the U.S. Army task force in Kosovo, Col. Robert McClure, accompanied Ms. Dawson to Camp Monteith.

During her visit, Lt. Cmdr. Richard Cook, NMCB-3 executive officer, and Lt. Cmdr. Darius Banaji, the operations officer, gave Dawson a tour of the construction site where she met Seabees and surveyed their progress.

Dawson left here with nothing but good things to say about the Seabees of NMCB-3. "The Seabees are doing great work here. When I go back to Washington I am going to tell the Navy bosses what a wonderful job you are doing," said Dawson before boarding the helicopter.

NMCB-3, homeported out of Port Hueneme, Calif., is currently on a regularly scheduled seven-month European deployment.

FISC Sailor awarded for saving infant's life

By Jim Murray &
J02 Greg Cleghorne
FISC PAO & HNN Editor

On most people's lunch menu, the item, 'save someone's life' isn't listed next to the cheeseburger column.

But, for Damage Controlman 2nd Class Ric Smith, that's exactly what he had.

Smith is a warehouse supervisor at Fleet Industrial Support Center's Hazardous Minimization Center (HAZMIN), Pearl Harbor, and volunteer emergency medical technician at Makalapa Medical Clinic, Pearl Harbor.

As an average workday approached the halfway mark, he was preparing for his lunch break. Just then, he heard a distress call over his emergency radio of a life and death situation and rushed to the scene.

Just outside Pearl Harbor's gates in Hale Moku housing, a baby had stopped breathing. A frantic baby sitter had been clearing the baby's lungs with a battery operated suction device to keep his air passages clear of suffocating fluids. Exhausting the batteries, the situation turned critical; fluid blocked the infant's lungs and he stopped breathing.

The sitter ran outside to a Honolulu police officer who was directing traffic at the Hale Moku housing construction site.

Smith arrived moments later. He and the officer performed rescue breathing on the infant. Moments later, their efforts were rewarded when the boy's chest shuddered and a faint breath of air escaped from his lungs as he began to breathe on his own.

The infant's air passage remained partially obstructed; he wasn't out of danger yet.

An ambulance arrived moments later. A doctor and paramedics took over, working feverishly on the infant inside the vehicle. Smith, who is also a certified emergency vehicle operator, took the wheel and drove the rescue team to Tripler Army Medical Center. Happily, the boy recovered an hour after treatment.

This is the second incident involving an infant and a happy ending Smith was involved in.

A year ago, he answered a call at Manana housing where a child had al-



Jim Murray photo

DC2 Ric Smith received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement medal for saving the life of an infant. He volunteers as an emergency medical technician at Naval Medical Clinic Makalapa.

so stopped breathing.

"Her skin was gray and she had no pulse," Smith reported. Smith had to assist her breathing three times before she began breathing on her own.

In actuality, Smith is as much a regular warehouse worker, as Clark Kent was just another reporter.

Although he is now a well-trained Sailor, his life goal since childhood has been to become a firefighter and emergency medical technician. He's only saving lives in Hawaii because of a twist of fate.

Originally from Anaheim Calif., Smith began his journey to becoming a firefighter by competing for a position there. Initially unsuccessful, but not giving up on his dream, he joined the Navy for the training and for Veterans' points he'd earn in the military service for better scores on the firefighting exam.

While stationed in San Diego, he was

accepted as a reserve firefighter in the Bostonia fire department. The Navy also sent him to 2,000 hours of firefighting training and numerous courses in life-saving.

When he arrived in Hawaii, he sought out opportunities to continue his quest. Once a week - for the last three years - after working his regular day at the HAZMIN center, he crosses the street to the Makalapa clinic to volunteer for a 16-hour, emergency response shift.

Most of us may never experience the emotions that arise after saving a life, but Smith says that when he's performing a rescue, the fact that he may be saving a life never enters his mind.

"Your training just kicks in," he said.

On Aug. 6, DC2 was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for his life-saving efforts.

But for him and those children, his reward is much greater.

Frederick: CARAT '99 wraps up, Project Handclasp rolls out

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of the Amphibious Task Force during the exercise. Frederick's planning team consisted of the operations officer and several operations specialists. The 'in port team' worked together with representatives of Landing Force CARAT, USS Comstock (LSD 45), Assault Craft Unit Five and Royal Thai naval officers from HTMS Surin and their amphibious squadron.

Development of a comprehensive assault plan took more than 180 man-hours.

The goal of the plan was to produce and conduct a tactically sound and well-timed evolution. The plan included embarking Royal Thai marines and U.S. Marines and their equipment aboard amphibious ships, followed by movement to Hat Yao beach for a rehearsal. The rehearsal was an opportunity to make revisions and smooth the evolution.

Following the rehearsal, the ships moved to a position off of Rayong Beach to carry out an exercise assault.

Once all the Marine evolutions ashore were completed, the plan orchestrated recovery of all troops and equipment.

Often completed in as little as six hours, the plan was reviewed by all key players at the Amphibious Confirmation brief.

The underway exercise started out as expected, in that it confirmed the accuracy of the assault timetable and prepared the two countries to perform the amphibious assault the next day.

Unfortunately, a strong littoral current created unsafe

conditions for personnel and forced cancellation of the assault.

Even though the assault did not occur, the two countries benefited from operating together at sea and during the conferences the week before. This cooperation helped to develop a stronger bond and improved military relations between the two countries.

During the cooperative amphibious exercise with the Royal Thai navy, Lt. j.g. Jeff Walker, of Palestine, Texas and Chief Electronic Technician (SW) David Starr, of Weirton, W.Va., cross-decked to the Thai ship HTMS Surin, an amphibious tank landing ship.

On the ship, they provided mission critical assistance by setting up and operating radio-telephone communications. They also offered insight to the Thai on how Frederick operates during amphibious operations in order to improve inter-operability between the ships.

"The opportunity to be a part of a foreign navy's operations was rewarding and interesting, especially living with the Thai's for four days and getting to experience their culture first hand," said Starr.

To promote the friendly relations between the U.S. Navy and the Western Pacific nations participating in CARAT '99, Frederick participated in a community relations project and presented Project Handclasp materials.

Each project Frederick Sailors volunteer for is tied into Project Handclasp, which provides materials, donated from American com-

panies and charitable organizations.

The materials range from medical supplies and food to health and comfort items, books and toys.

A group of Sailors, volunteered time from their busy schedule and visited Ban Hnong Clinic, a health care clinic located just north of Pattaya, a coastal city on the Gulf of Thailand.

While at the clinic, the Sailors helped improve the appearance of the facility by painting several rooms and an outside porch. The refurbishment continued as they cleaned and painted six large, cement potable water containers.

After a few hours of work in the hot sun, the Sailors shared refreshments with the grateful clinic personnel.

"COMREL projects and other humanitarian efforts offer a chance to see people immersed in their own cultures usually allowing you to better appreciate your own culture as a result," said Hull Technician 3rd Class Leona Natani of Table Mesa, N.M.

"I found the experience very rewarding because I really felt like I was making a difference in the lives of the people," Natani said.

"A small amount of physical labor is a small sacrifice to make to help out these people," said Engineman 2nd Class Steve Banks of Battlecreek, Mich.

Crew members took advantage of the liberty opportunities in Thailand while Frederick was in port.

Morale, Welfare and Recreation arranged overnight city tours of Bangkok, elephant rides in the jungle and diving excursions in the

Gulf of Thailand.

Seaman Apprentice Jack Purcell, of Kingfisher, Okla. attended the Bangkok City tour and was most struck by the Buddhist culture of the Thai people.

"I was not permitted to wear shoes in the temple, but the Golden Buddha was a spectacular sight," he said.

Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class David Dodge of Tillicum, Wash., agreed that Bangkok was "spectacular."

"The MWR people worked extra hard to accommodate every duty section, making the trip better for everyone because we could all get out in town and enjoy ourselves."

For those a little less interested in traveling, Pattaya was an alternative.

Only a short bus ride from the ship in Sattahip, Pattaya was shopping bargains and a wide array of dining selections for those brave enough to experiment.

Chief Radioman Belvelyn Williams of Putnam Hall, Fla. found "exquisite food" selections in a shopper's paradise and had a "fabulous time" discovering what the city had to offer.

"The Thai people were very polite and happy but also passionately hardworking," said Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Roy Grider of Honolulu, Hawaii.

For those Sailors like Mess Management Specialist 2nd Class Branden Pollack of Honolulu, Hawaii, who had visited Thailand before, a return trip to Pattaya was a pleasure.

"It was easy to slip back into a culture that was already familiar, making the experience twice as fantastic," he

VP-4 Sailor gets spot promotion

VP-4 PAO

Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class Anthony Lamar Johnson of VP-4 was spot promoted under the Command Advancement Program (CAP) to First Class by Cmdr. Mac Bollman, VP-4 commanding officer.

The squadron's guest speaker at the ceremony held in Hangar 104 at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay was Rear Adm. Michael Holmes, Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Force Pacific, who shared in congratulating Johnson.

The Command Advancement Program gives the Commanding Officer of any sea duty unit the authority to promote a Sailor up to the rank of E-6. Johnson earned his promotion as a standard P-3 Orion Flight Engineer, with VP-4's Combat Aircrew One, and as parachute rigger shop leading petty officer and quality assurance representative inspector readying aircraft for flight and monitoring systems and engine instrumentation in flight.

The Skinny Dragon's are proud to have AME1 Johnson on board as a leader and as a First Class Petty Officer!

Kearsarge ARG assists Turkey with earthquake relief

Navy Wire Service

The Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) arrived off the coast of Turkey to assist in ongoing humanitarian and medical relief efforts following the Aug. 17 earthquake.

The quake, which has killed more than 12,000 people, buried thousands under tons of concrete. The deadly quake has left many thousands more homeless.

The 7.4-magnitude earthquake struck Turkey in the early morning hours, flattening many homes, destroy-

ing roads and burying thousands of sleeping residents.

Upon departing Palma de Mallorca, Spain, Aug. 19, Kearsarge ARG Sailors and attached Marines from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) began preparing the ship's medical ward to carry out their new mission of caring for injured Turkish citizens.

During the four-day transit across the Mediterranean Sea, however, the mission's focus changed.

"Our mission has shifted from a medical effort to assisting the people of Turkey in transporting supplies to

the hardest hit areas with our helicopters," said Capt. James Bolcar, Commander, Amphibious Squadron Two (COMPHIBRON Two).

The Kearsarge ARG brings many special tools to the scene to help ease the suffering in Turkey.

"We have the ability to move water and supplies into the region," continued Bolcar. "There are a lot of supplies at local airports that can't get to where they are needed because of the road conditions between airports and the hardest hit areas. With the transportation that we can provide, we can

and will get the materials to the people who need them."

The humanitarian mission in Turkey continues what has been a busy deployment for Kearsarge ARG Sailors and the 26th MEU since departing their respective homeports in mid-April.

During the first half of the deployment, helicopters and Harriers attached to COMPHIBRON Two participated in NATO led air strikes during Operation Allied Force. Then in June, 900 Marines from the 26th MEU deployed to Kosovo in support of NATO peacekeeping efforts there.