

PALANews

July 11, 2010



VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE



D.A. SCHNELL, Commanding Officer

Hello to the Sailors and Marines of PELELIU, as well as to all our friends and families ashore!

Shortly after I last wrote, Peleliu transited the Lombok Strait en route the Java Sea. The Lombok Strait runs between Bali and the island of Lombok and is famous for being one of the deepest passages connecting the Pacific Ocean with the Indian Ocean. It is used frequently by very large tankers whose draft is too deep to transit the Strait of Malacca. The strait is so deep in fact that many thousands of years ago it separated two major land masses before the continents shifted and separated. To this day, animals and plants inhabiting the islands and land masses to the east of the Strait are those common to Australia, while animals and plants inhabiting the islands and land masses to the west of the strait are those common to Asia.

We then spent several days in the Java Sea with the large islands of Borneo on

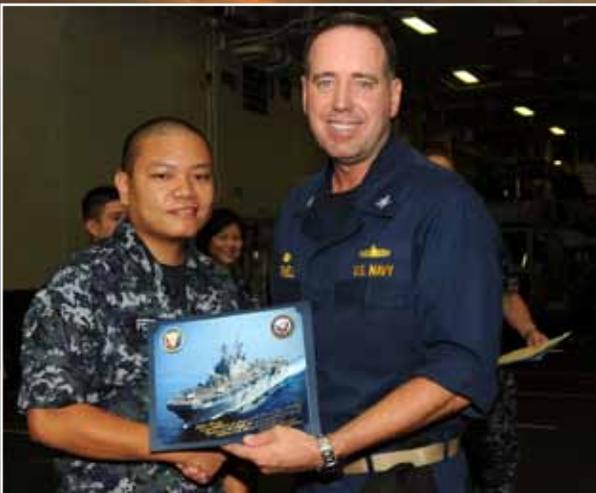
our right and Java on our left. Borneo is known for its extensive network of natural caves and underground rivers, extending for many miles throughout the island. The longest cave, called Deer Cave, is home to over 300 million bats and it is reported that in some areas of the cave guano is stacked 330 feet high. So do we have any spelunkers out there? Another interesting place we passed at close range was the island of Pulau Bawean. This small island is only 7 miles across and the 65,000 inhabitants live on the slopes of a massive extinct volcano. The volcano's crater has filled with water, creating a beautiful freshwater lake. What makes the island really interesting though is that the inhabitants believe that if you swim in the lake, you will be cursed and die. So none of them swim in the lake.

While in the Java Sea we celebrated the 4th of July with a Steel Beach Barbecue that included steaks, ribs, burgers, chicken, hotdogs, and even eight roasted pigs! It was a great feast with county fair-style events like a hotdog eating contest, a balloon throwing contests, sumo wrestling bouts, and capped that evening with a Cinemat-Sea in the Hangar Bay showing "Private Ryan." I know we all would have loved to be home with friends and family for the 4th, but I appreciate the efforts of everyone involved to make the holiday as special as possible for our Sailors and Marines.

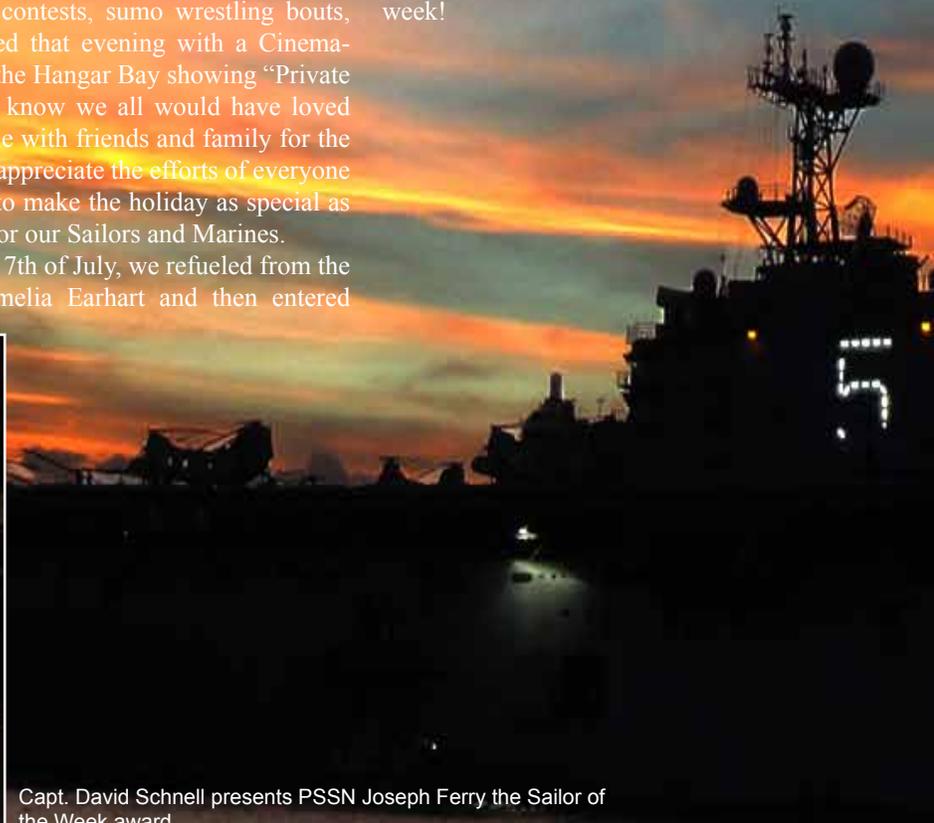
On the 7th of July, we refueled from the USNS Amelia Earhart and then entered

the famed Strait of Malacca. The Strait of Malacca is a narrow stretch of water between the Malay Peninsula (Singapore and Malaysia) on your right and the Indonesian island of Sumatra on your left. At 500 miles long it is the busiest shipping lane in the world, carrying nearly 100,000 vessels per year with one-quarter of the world's traded goods. Close to Singapore the strait narrows to 1.5 miles wide, creating one of the world's most significant traffic choke points. There are 34 shipwrecks there, some dating to the 1880s, that pose a collision hazard in the narrow and shallow strait. Fortunately, we have a terrific Bridge team supported by Combat Information Center that ensured our long transit was uneventful. I thank everyone for keeping us safe!

In a few days we'll be entering the waters of FIFTH Fleet and I look forward to commencing operations there. To our families and friends back home, thank you for your continued support of our deployment. Be safe and have a great week!



Capt. David Schnell presents PSSN Joseph Ferry the Sailor of the Week award.



FROM THE DECK PLATES



By CMDCM
(SW/AW/SS)
Brent Williams

Good Day Shipmates,

Well, once again here we are reading another edition of the PeleNews and another week in the history books. As we come up on our second month of deployment, you are probably realizing that the time is going by rather quickly, for some anyway.

Now, as we get into the meat of the deployment, is the time to ensure that you are 100 percent committed to achieving whatever goals you have set for yourself. Be it professional or personal. Goals can be anything that you set out to do. Professionally, you may want to cross rate, get a warfare pin, advance to the next paygrade or reenlist. Personally, you may want to

save some money, get married upon return to port, or start a family. There could be many things that you are working on simultaneously.

Properly set goals that are thought out and organized can be the most motivating thing we can do. Some goals are short term and many take longer. Another positive aspect of goal setting is that over time, you will get into a habit of setting and achieving your goals, and then you will realize that self confidence improves greatly.

For those of you that have mentors onboard, goal setting is a great discussion that can really benefit the protégée. I guarantee that 99 percent of the successful Sailors and Marines sailing with us have a solid understanding of setting and achieving goals. I have found over my military career and personal life that there is always the next goal, the next achievement. Are they all successful? Of course not, but for the most part the successes outweigh the, well I'll say, "not so successful."

So sit back and take a hard look at your future, where do you want to be in a year, five years, or even longer? Answer that and then you will find that other goals will develop and must be achieved prior to the original "big picture" plan. Deployment is a great place to start; you have the time, resources, and the support that is needed to be successful.

As always keep up the great work and also take care of your shipmates and the ship, and she'll take care of us as she always has. See you on the deck plates.



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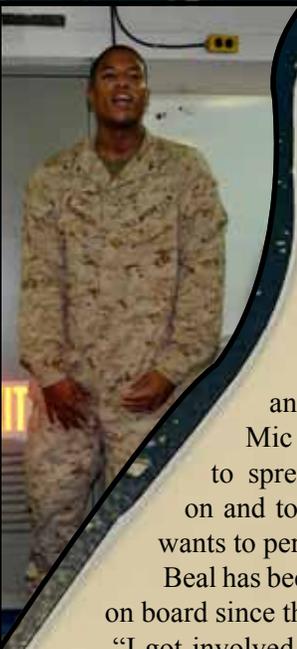
MCSA Destiny Cheek



OPEN MIC NIGHT

July 11, 2010

Photos and Story By MC3 Foster Benford



In the classroom next to the library on the third deck, a group of Sailors and Marines sit in chairs, some laugh and talk, some are quiet, all are waiting for 8:15 p.m. Ship's Serviceman 3rd Class (SW/AW) Rashad Beal sits at the front of the room, holding a sheet of paper with a list of names.

At 8:15 p.m., Beal stands up and welcomes everyone to Open Mic Night. He encourages everyone to spread the word about what's going on and to find anyone that has a talent and wants to perform.

Beal has been heading up the Open Mic Nights on board since the 2008 deployment.

"I got involved with it because in 2008 when we got underway on deployment, they had a poetry club onboard," said Beal. "It was fairly small and it was a couple people who just liked to write poetry and talk about it."

Beal has been writing poetry since his early teens, so it was a natural fit.

"We'd just kind of share our poetry within the group. Then it started falling off, the original people who started it, just eventually stopped coming around," he said. "So I decided to keep it going and at the time I was heavily influenced by Def Poetry Jam."

The ship already had talent shows. But Beal noticed that there were people on board that had talent, but were reluctant to perform in front of the entire ship, he said.

"So, in trying to figure out how we could do it, I came across the idea of doing a small group, open mic, poetry thing," said Beal.

After the initial idea, Beal had to find somewhere intimate to play host to the event. He found the classroom

next to the ship's library.

"It's small, it's closed off. If you want to come, you can come. If you don't, you don't, but you won't have people walking by seeing what you're doing," said Beal. "That's how we started on the boat, and it eventually turned into something that was really well taken by the crew."

According to Beal, the largest number of performers in a night was somewhere around twenty, at its peak in 2008.

"I hadn't really thought about doing it again after the 2008 deployment ended," he said. "But coming up on the workups for this deployment, I started having people come up and ask me about it."

When he started planning the resurrection of the Peleliu Open Mic Night, his main concern was having enough talent to have an actual show.

"A lot of people that were here in '08 were gone, but you'd be surprised at how much talent is actually on the Peleliu," said Beal. "People that can play instruments, excellent writers, people who like to do poetry or whatever. I just wanted to give them an outlet to get away from the mundane monotone everyday life."

The first show of the deployment had eight performers and a few of them have become regulars.

"I think it's important for the morale, there are always rumors going around and no one knows what's going on," said Beal. "So, you know, I just wanted to try to do what I could to boost the crew up. Give them something to do, give them something that's different from what they're usually doing and something to help them relax. It's something that I feel is important, giving people a getaway."

Underway Replenishment for the Soul

By MC3 Foster Bamford

It happens to most of us during the months at sea: 'What's happening at home? Work is driving me nuts! I just want to see their faces. I don't know if I can take this anymore. I'm so ... stressed.'

The Navy Chaplain Corps exists because stress happens to most of us. When problems seem overwhelming, when word from home isn't comforting, when there isn't enough sleep or even rest, they are ready to listen, ready to help.

"Stress and communication with home are two of the big problems," said Cmdr. Gary Clore, the Command Chaplain on board USS Peleliu. "The hardest part of my job, just like everyone else, is being away from my family."

Deployment can be difficult. Sailors and Marines sometimes feel like they left their whole lives back home and they have no control over anything.

"Everything can be right with their life and something may happen socially or with their family back home, that news can affect them personally," said Clore. "It can take them into a depression. It can make them panic, and if they don't have good coping skills, it can render them useless at work. That's

where the chaplain is going to see a situation and try to get them through it."

Clore contends that a deployment will reveal a person's character.

"It'll make you or it'll break you," said Clore. "For 99 percent of the people here, it's going to make them. I compare it to martial arts. In martial arts, you spar and get your body harder. Spiritually, deployment is like body hardening. It'll make you tougher - it'll make you better, spiritually."

When on a deployment, spiritual readiness is an important factor to many Sailors.

"It's broader than saying a prayer or going to church, it's understanding who I am as a

human as well,"

Clore. "It's very important because it means understanding what goes on socially and psychologically with all the stressors. It provides a cover for us, some would say it's a crutch, but I say it's active involvement in what you believe."

Friends and coworkers can provide an invaluable safety net, on deployment, offering advice and camaraderie.

"The key to spiritual readiness is in relationships," said Clore. "Love your neighbor as yourself. There is this fidelity involved in that which is going to preserve you. Spiritual readiness is going to keep you strong while you're away for a long time. It's those values, morals and a spiritual network that's going to keep you strong."

A big part of a chaplain's job is caring for others in their time of need.

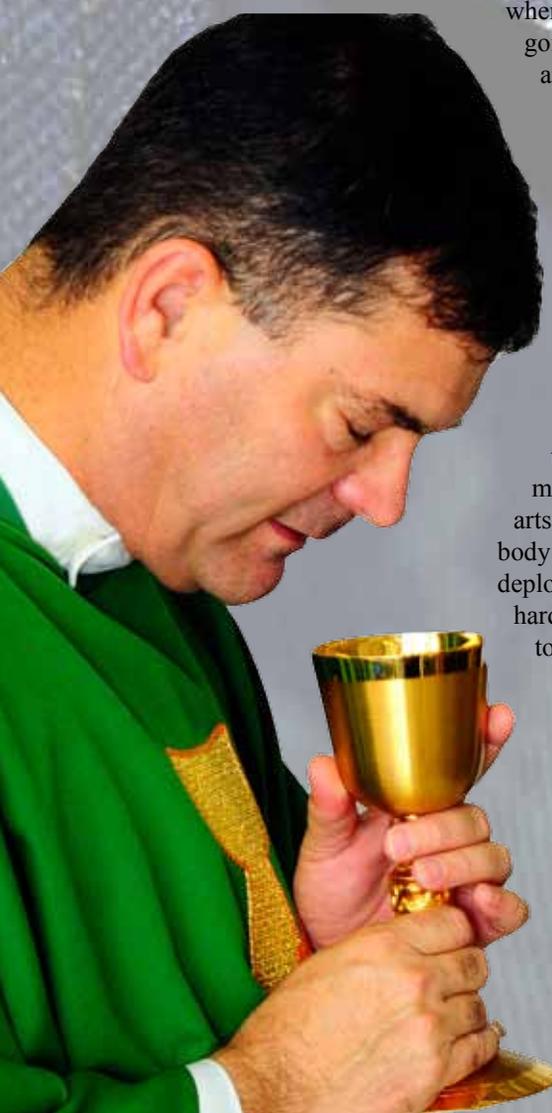
"I know that if I'm having a problem or getting really stressed with work, I can go to the chaplain and he'll do everything he can to help," said Electrician's Mate 2nd Class (SW) Wesley Johnson, who works in the Rewind Shop on board.

Being a chaplain is rewarding because of the opportunity to help people get through their problems.

"My own peace of mind is the most rewarding part of my job," said Clore. "When I first came into the Navy as a young chaplain, I wondered what difference I was really making, but then I started getting letters and thank you cards, and after enough time, I started looking back and realized that I really had made a difference."

Sometimes all a person needs is a little help to get them going again. When Sailors and Marines feel like they're running on fumes, a chaplain is always there to lend an ear and, if needed, a bit of advice.

"My job is kind of like doing an underway replenishment. I get to come alongside and give them what they need, enough fuel to keep them going," said Clore.



being said

“DETECTING THE WEATHER”

By MCSA Destiny Cheek

Every forty minutes an Aerographer's Mate (AG) goes up to the 08 level to perform a METAR. A METAR is a routine observation for weather operations conducted daily. The AG takes weather operations using a Kestrel, records the readings, and relays the numbers to the rest of the shop.

AGs are a vital part of the ARG's mission because both ship drivers and pilots rely heavily on their predictions. AGs are only attached to 'big deck' ships like Aircraft Carriers or amphib. Unless the Iron Nickel is at flight quarters, or during significant changes in the daily weather like a thunderstorm, SPECIs are taken. SPECI (special observation) is for special circumstances and a similar process to a METAR. A Kestrel is a handheld, pocket-sized instrument with a fan attached, which detects the temperature, dew point, and the 'Wet Bulb' which is the temperature that the thermometer shows taking into account the evaporation in the air.

There are a number of unique pieces of equipment related to the meteorological business on board, some used for routine uses and others for more specific reasons.

“When we passed a volcano on the 18th of June, we had to do a SPECI for the weather readings,” said Aerographer's Mate 3rd Class (AW) Anthony Francis.

Francis is one of nine Sailors manning the METOC (Meteorology Oceanography) shop. The shop is broken up into two jobs, the forecasters and the techs.

“Since Peleliu is the big deck ship in the PEL ARG, we forecast the daily weather for Dubuque and Pearl Harbor and relay the weather readings to their ships,” he said.

Besides keeping up with the daily weather for the PEL ARG, they also can keep tabs on where each ship is located.

“From the ‘GCCS’ navigation system we can see the location of our ship and find out the location for the rest of

the ARG,” said Aerographer's Mate 2nd Class Jon Rossman.

‘GCCS’ is a navigation system that shows the exact location of US military ships and other ships.

For any incidents connecting the ship and weather or mishaps on the flight deck, investigators will generally go straight to the METOC shop, explained Francis.

“For the barge incident in Dili, they came straight to us to find out more information,” he said. “We pulled up the observation sheet from the night before to find the readings because it was said the incident occurred due to high seas.”

An observation sheet is used to record the weather readings just in case the AGs need to refer back to them.

Although the daily weather is available to all hands on board, the bridge is updated regularly.

“We update the bridge twice a day to verify the weather and see if there is weather ahead that the ship needs to avoid and take a different route,” said Chief Aerographer's Mate (AW/SW) David Hutchinson.

Aside from the weather, they are also responsible for calculating sunrise and sunset.

G F M P 2 (Geophysics Fleet Mission Program Library) is the system used to

determine the sunrise and sunset.

Aside from the Kestrel, ‘GCCS’ and GFMP2 the AGs also have a satellite receiver in the METOC shop. It's used as a primary and backup source.

“If the whole ship loses power, we can use the satellite receiver as a backup for satellites to do our job,” said Hutchinson. “This machine is crucial for our job.”

Rossman enjoys his job because it's different everyday and “it doesn't become a drag doing the same thing over and over,” he explained.

“To other people, it looks like we don't do anything,” said Francis. “We're a small shop that does not get a lot of recognition, but we are a vital part of the mission because without the weather readings there are no flight operations.”



Aerographer's Mate 2nd Class Jon Rossman and Aerographer's Mate 3rd Class(AW) Anthony Francis discuss the information shown on the satellite receiver in the METOC shop.

Personnel Specialist: Managing our Pay and Service Records

By: MC1 Kenneth W. Hunter

Personnel Specialists (PS) on board Peleliu maintain and audit pay and personnel records of military personnel, determine military pay and travel entitlements and deductions. They prepare the financial and accounting reports related to individual pay and travel transactions, and operate associated accounting systems like MyPay. They also assist enlisted people and their families with special problems or personal hardships.

The PS rating was established as a merger of Personnelman (PN) and Disbursing Clerk (DK) ratings on October 1, 2005. Disbursing Clerks dealt with pay, maintained pay records and processed travel claims for the Navy. DKs were also responsible for compiling the financial reports for all ships and shore bases. DKs learned banking, cash handling, bookkeeping and auditing. Personnelmen performed clerical and administrative duties involved in maintaining personnel records, preparing reports and conducting certain accounting procedures. The new PS must know it all.

"When a Sailor has any concern pertaining to pay or what's in, or not in, their record, we are there for guidance," said Chief Personnel Specialist (SW) Merlin Krieger

"If a Sailor's pay issues are a little more critical than normal, we'll have a sit down session one-on-one so that we can resolve their issues."

Beyond pay issues, the Navy's technological advances have assisted in the movement to going paperless and allowing Sailors more first-hand control of their records. Electronic Service Records allow military members to have worldwide access to service record data via the Internet.

"You can now review and make changes to your personal information without going to a PS," said

Krieger. "It gives the Sailor a certain control of their career with information that you don't normally have access to. You can make your corrections online, and it limits the time spent to go to a Personnel Support Detachment or to the personnel office to check and see if an award or letter is in your record."

Another new digital system managed by the Personnel Office is the Navy Cash Card Program. It is designed to improve quality of life on board the "Iron Nickel" by providing reliable access to Sailors bank and credit union accounts while they are at

sea.

"The Navy Cash System provides access to your personal bank and credit union accounts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, whether at sea or in port," Kreiger said.

"The most important thing about Navy cash is that you have to wait at least within 72 hours to a week to access your money or else your card will go negative."

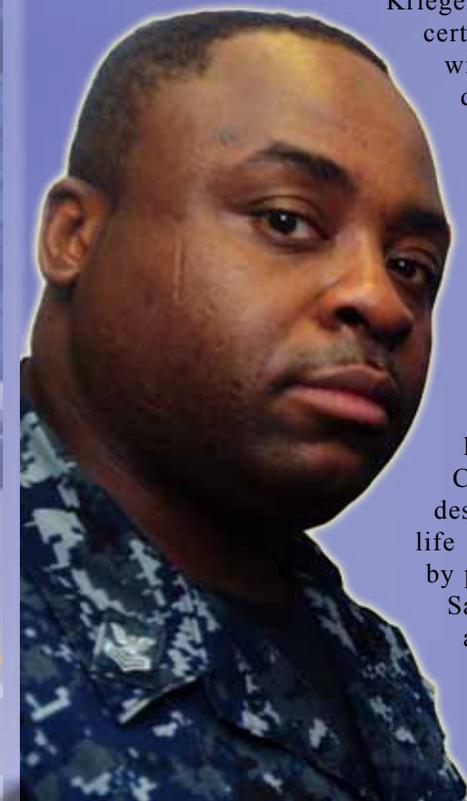
While on WESTPAC, some Sailors may wonder when they'll receive FSA (Family Separation Allowance), or when Hostile Fire Pay begins.

"All married members and members with dependents who have full custody of their children who are away from their homeport more than 30 days receive FSA (Family Separation Allowance)," said Personnel Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Eric Dickerson. "Special pay types are all summed up in the Financial Management Manual in Personnel. It stipulates where the ship has to be in order to receive the different types of pay we are entitled to when we are in the 5th Fleet Area of Operations,"

The PS community is undergoing a transformation over the next several years. The primary aspect of the transformation is the Personnel Support Detachment Afloat Initiative which will reduce PS manning aboard ship and remove the majority of those functions from ships, squadrons and other deployed units. This will cause the PS rating to be more shore intensive. As billets are moved ashore over the next several years, the rating will become smaller as civilian substitutions take place at PSD Afloat and in other PS jobs. The civilian substitution process began in fiscal year 2008 and is scheduled to be complete in FY 2012.

As the PS rating downsizes, a large amount of their abilities to process pay and records will rely on digital technology.

"There are positive and negative consequences to this transition" said Krieger. "Although we'll be moved from Navy vessels in the future where we are mostly used, the positive side is the stability of Navy knowledge that will be handed down to our civilian counterparts when they come aboard. That's what makes the Navy great, because of what we bring to the table to our future of the military."



THE UNITED STATES NAVY

CORE VALUES



THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, THE NAVY HAS SUCCESSFULLY MET ALL ITS CHALLENGES. AMERICA'S NAVAL SERVICE BEGAN DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, OCT. 13, 1775. THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS AUTHORIZED A FEW SMALL SHIPS. CREATING THE CONTINENTAL NAVY, ESEK HOPKINS WAS APPOINTED COMMANDER IN CHIEF AND 22 OFFICERS WERE COMMISSIONED, INCLUDING JOHN PAUL JONES. FROM THOSE EARLY DAYS OF NAVAL SERVICE, CERTAIN BEDROCK PRINCIPLES OR CORE VALUES HAVE CARRIED ON TO TODAY. THEY CONSIST OF THREE BASIC PRINCIPLES.

HONOR

"I WILL BEAR TRUE FAITH AND ALLEGIANCE..." ACCORDINGLY, WE WILL: CONDUCT OURSELVES IN THE HIGHEST ETHICAL MANNER IN ALL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS, SUPERIORS AND SUBORDINATES; BE HONEST AND TRUTHFUL IN OUR DEALINGS WITH EACH OTHER, AND WITH THOSE OUTSIDE THE NAVY; BE WILLING TO MAKE HONEST RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACCEPT THOSE OF JUNIOR PERSONNEL; ENCOURAGE NEW IDEAS AND DELIVER THE BAD NEWS, EVEN WHEN IT IS UNPOPULAR; ABIDE BY AN UNCOMPROMISING CODE OF INTEGRITY, TAKING RESPONSIBILITIES IN OUR PUBLIC AND PERSONAL LIVES TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY. ILLEGAL OR IMPROPER BEHAVIOR OR EVEN THE APPEARANCE OF SUCH BEHAVIOR WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR OUR PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL BEHAVIOR. WE WILL BE MINDFUL OF THE PRIVILEGE TO SERVE OUR FELLOW AMERICANS.

COURAGE

"I WILL SUPPORT AND DEFEND..." ACCORDINGLY, WE WILL HAVE: COURAGE TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF OUR PROFESSION AND THE MISSION WHEN IT IS HAZARDOUS, DEMANDING, OR OTHERWISE DIFFICULT; MAKE DECISIONS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE NAVY AND THE NATION, WITHOUT REGARD TO PERSONAL CONSEQUENCE; MEET THESE CHALLENGES WHILE ADHERING TO A HIGHER STANDARD OF PERSONAL CONDUCT AND DECENCY; BE LOYAL TO OUR NATION, ENSURING THE RESOURCES ENTRUSTED TO US ARE USED IN A HONEST, CAREFUL, AND EFFICIENT WAY. COURAGE IS THE VALUE THAT GIVES US THE MORAL AND MENTAL STRENGTH TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT, EVEN IN THE FACE OF PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL ADVERSITY.

COMMITMENT

"I WILL OBEY THE ORDERS..." ACCORDINGLY, WE WILL: DEMAND RESPECT UP AND DOWN THE CHAIN OF COMMAND; CARE FOR THE SAFETY, PROFESSIONAL, PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING OF OUR PEOPLE; SHOW RESPECT TOWARD ALL PEOPLE WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, RELIGION OR GENDER; TREAT EACH INDIVIDUAL WITH HUMAN DIGNITY; BE COMMITTED TO POSITIVE CHANGE AND CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT; EXHIBIT THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF MORAL CHARACTER, TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE, QUALITY AND COMPETENCE IN WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TRAINED TO DO. THE DAY-TO-DAY DUTY OF EVERY NAVY MAN AND WOMAN IS TO WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF OUR WORK, OUR PEOPLE AND OURSELVES.