

"DOMINANT IN BATTLE"

THE DOMINANT NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 7 APRIL 2012

Over the past two months Crew DOMINANT has been busy. We executed our hull swap onto USS CHIEF, completed our training certifications and started CHIEF's Planned Maintenance Availability in BAE shipyard. As you have probably heard, the Mine Warfare community has been very busy too. It was reported in the news about two months ago that the Senior US Commander in the Middle East requested additional Mine Countermeasures (MCM) forces. In response to that request, the Navy is sending four more MCM Class Vessels from San Diego, more MCM capable aircraft and EOD personnel to Fifth Fleet over the next year. The ships chosen for this deployment are being prepared for transport to CENTCOM.



Crew DOMINANT embarked in USS CHIEF conducts an astern refueling with USNS KAISER on 01MAR12.

Although CHIEF wasn't selected, the deployment of four additional ships will affect each crew's deployment cycle. If the last two months are any indication of the future, our plans and schedules may continue to shift and we will continue to adjust accordingly. That is why it is even more important now that we stay in touch so that we know who to turn to for information and help (if needed), and we can better plan for the future. That is why we have so many great resources and information in this issue. One new resource we have launched is a group page on [Facebook!](#) We will continue to share pictures of events and post information and resources to help keep you informed while we are away. Special thanks to our OMBUDSMAN, Valerie Williamson, for heading up the page! You will also find a good list of sources from our XO and SEL on page 3.

Don't forget to check in with our departments to hear their own takes on the last three months, see if you can succeed in our first ever mustache matching competition, and see pictures of our recent operations, including Friends and Family day. Lastly, I hope every Sailor and their family takes a few moments to digest the financial advice offered on the last page, as it could have a huge impact on your future.

We'd love to hear from you! If you would like to contribute an article from the perspective of a family member of a Sailor or have another idea please forward them along to clcass@me.com. We also want to continue to present informative articles on the last page; if you have questions or topics you think would be relevant, leave a note on Facebook!

-Chris Cass, Operations Officer

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CO's COMMENTS

Greetings, Crew DOMINANT family and friends! I hope that everyone is doing well. Your Sailors have done quite a bit since the last newsletter was released. The time has passed by quickly, and Crew DOMINANT is now fully recertified to be deployed. We had the distinction of being the first MCM Crew and only the second "ship" in the Navy to complete the new Certification Verification. With only 5 days notice (including the working weekend), your Sailors swiftly executed the inport and underway events. The week-long event passed by quickly and we set the standard by which each MCM Crew has and will be executing this training event. Your Sailors performed extremely well and earned the praise of the Afloat Training Group San Diego's Commanding Officer and also from our own Commodore of Mine Countermeasures Squadron Three.



As I write this, half of the crew is enjoying their pre-deployment stand-down leave. We dead-sticked CHIEF into BAE shipyard on April 16th, which seems a bit like repeating the past. We hull swapped to USS CHIEF two months ago from USS CHAMPION after we started her yard period at BAE last December. USS CHIEF has entered a extended maintenance availability so that she can receive some needed repairs and equipment upgrades that will help her meet her extended lifespan. We will be deploying in a few weeks to embark USS GLADIATOR (MCM 11), but until that happens we are committed to the maintenance and material improvement efforts that are ongoing onboard CHIEF and on our own training.

It was nice to see the Family and Friends that were able to attend our Crew Picnic at Mariner's Park on February 17th. It was a nice time for everyone and our First Class Petty Officers did a fine job of organizing and executing the event. At the end of last month, we were able to take 63 Family and Friends out on CHIEF on a family day cruise. Even though the sun never broke through the marine layer, it was a nice day for all. We were able to conduct several demonstrations, including a Mine Neutralization Vehicle (MNV) Demonstration, Crew Served Weapons Familiarization Live Fire, Man Overboard Rescue and a few other events. On top of these events, most of our guests were able to view a variety of marine life including a pod of over 50 dolphins that materialized during the MNV demonstration. All in all, it was a great day at sea and your Sailors executed it flawlessly. We will have a final family event the first Friday in May. More information will follow as the planning is finalized. Additionally, stay tuned to our website and the e-mails that our OMBUDSMAN (Mrs. Valerie Williamson) sends out for additional events that will be occurring for family members and friends of MCM Crew DOMINANT while the crew is deployed. If you are not receiving these e-mails and you would like to be added to the e-mail list, please contact her at (619)-250-3298, or e-mail her at "dominantfamily@gmail.com". You can also become a fan of our crew's Facebook page to receive up-to-date information concerning Crew DOMINANT and special events and activities for dependents in the San Diego area.

We've had a few new crewmembers join Crew DOMINANT over the past two months that I'd like to recognize: ENS Morgan, CS1 Davis, EM2 Adams, IT2 Watkins, MNSN Walker, and MNSN Montgomery. Welcome to the Crew DOMINANT family!

I hope to see you at the next Family and Friends event and remember to enjoy every moment you have with your Sailor!

M. T. Erdner
Commanding Officer

XO's POST

LCDR Laird

Many thanks to all who made the **Friends & Family Day Cruise** a great success. It was great being able to give your Sailors a chance to show off some of their skills and the challenges that they face on a daily basis while underway. We hope that those of you who were able to attend gleaned a better understanding of Navy life from the experience and I hope you all had as much fun as my daughter did!

We are now coming down to the last few weeks of time available for us all to make sure both our families and ourselves are prepared for deployment. Now is the time to make sure big things like wills, powers of attorney and housing leases are squared away as well as little things like where the spare light bulbs are kept. Ensure you've got good plans for keeping up communications with your significant others set before deployment to keep the stress of figuring it out after we're out there to a minimum. Crew members are encouraged to use their chain of command to assist



them in these preparations, especially our newly arrived Shipmates. Friends and family are encouraged to keep in touch with our wonderful **Ombudsman**, Mrs. Valerie Williamson, at the e-mail address dominantfamily@gmail.com and to keep an eye on our command website <http://www.public.navy.mil/surfor/mcmdominant/Page/default.aspx> for updates of events and milestones we encounter over the next few months.

SEL's BLOG

As we prepare for deployment and think of ways to stay connected with family and friends through online social websites, a new Defense Department website (www.militarykidsconnect.org) is connecting military children whether it's across town or across the world, who are dealing with a loved one's deployment. This website offers military children an online community where they can learn about deployments, recognize and share feelings, and develop coping skills.

This site features tools for all stages of the development through reintegration. To help prepare kids for an impending separation, the site includes an interactive map that offers information on numerous deployment locations. As kids progress through the site, they can earn passport stamps in a virtual passport by completing games and activities. The website focus really is on the kids and providing them with coping skills for the different challenges they face. However,

BMCS (SW/AW) Bernard

there is a parent module that explains behavioral changes and parenting strategies that you can use to help your kids work through this deployment.



I want to thank you for all your support; you have truly made your Sailor and this command a SUCCESS. Remember to enjoy your day, because YOU deserve it!

CHENG's PIT

The New Year has been quite an exciting time for MCM Crew DOMINANT's Engineers. At the beginning of the year Crew DOMINANT was onboard USS CHAMPION while she was in the yards getting some needed repairs and upgrades. The Engineering Department worked hard and did an absolute superb job supporting and coordinating with the BAE contractors in starting the necessary repairs to the engineering plant. Even though we did not get to bring CHAMPION out of the yards and through her sea trials, the ground work was definitely laid for the incoming crew to succeed and ensure CHAMPION completed all repairs on time.

OPS's STAND

The critical role of Mine Counter Measures has seen an exponential increase in visibility and national interest this last quarter. Far gone are the days of the "TEXAS NAVY;" our availability and capability as a whole is now a CNO priority warfare area. In February, Congress approved orders to send four San Diego based MCMs to Fifth Fleet as part of a strategic surge campaign. Consequently, MCM crews' schedules have radically changed. Crew DOMINANT's schedule has not been affected as much as our fellow crews in the short term, but we are looking at a nine to eleven month deployment while we embark USS GLADIATOR. The overall crew rotation schedule will likely be driven by global geopolitical situation, so we are standing by per-say to execute the orders we receive.

In March we had back-to-back weekly town hall meetings, each chaired by a top Commander: General Mattis (CENTCOM, pictured above to the right) and VADM Hunt (Third FLEET). General Mattis gave an exceptionally informative and clear picture of his perspective as CENTRAL COMMAND Commander on our importance and roles that MCM ships may be

In the beginning of February, Crew DOMINANT shifted gears and swapped hulls to USS CHIEF. Shortly after taking over CHIEF the engineers immediately started making repairs and correcting several long standing casualties. As the Engineers were still getting settled into the new hull and making required repairs they quickly took on a short notice Certification Verification and excelled in true DOMINANT fashion.

From all the Engineers, "Thanks again for your continued support and understanding!"

utilized. He also noted that he was impressed by the sharp and knowledgeable questions our Sailors asked when given the opportunity.



Crew DOMINANT also received a Bravo Zulu from our Commodore for being the first crew to successfully complete the new certification process, not to mention completing it on a new hull with less than a week of preparation. Our Friends & Family Day Cruise on March 30 was a great time and we enjoyed hosting everyone onboard and showing you some of what we do underway.

I am continually impressed by the resilience and performance of our men. None of us could have anticipated the curveballs and changes we faced in the last year, nor can we begin to guess the challenges that lie ahead. The one thing I know for certain is that Crew DOMINANT will continue to rise to the occasion and display their professionalism and pride as US Sailors!

SUPPO's BIN

During the past few months the most notable change to Supply department has been on the personnel side. To begin with we had two CS'S TAD to the crew and both were a huge help and brought a great amount of experience to the galley. We will also be saying goodbye to CS2 Gant as he moves on to another command and Seamen Hancock and Reuter who transitioned out of the Navy last month. We wish them all the best of luck.

We are also beginning to look ahead to the upcoming months in Bahrain and all of the challenges that we will likely face. Parts have been put on order and healthy menus are being planned far in advance. As always, prior to deployment we have stand down leave and then we got a welcomed surprise as deployment was moved back almost three weeks. This will hopefully give our crew some much needed time off and time at home before heading out to the Middle East. I hope everyone can enjoy this time!

THE PODIUM

AWARDEES

Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal Recipient: CS2 GANT

Senior Sailor of the Year



HM1 (SW/FMF) MARTINEZ

Junior Sailor of the Year



QM2 (SW) Marrero

Blue Jacket of the Year



EN3 Hailey

RE-ENLISTMENTS

HM1 (SW/FMF) Martinez, EN3 Hailey.

NEW ARRIVALS

ENS Morgan, CS1 Davis, EM2 Adams, IT2 Watkins, MNSN Walker, and MNSN Montgomery

FAIRWELLS

MN3 White, CS2 GANT,

"DOMINANT IN BATTLE"

FIRST ANNUAL DEPLOYMENT MUSTACHES CHALLENGE!

One thing all members of our crew can look forward to on deployment will be the growth of the "deployment mustaches". There were several lively stashes that started to grow out of control last year. Can you match the mustaches with the crew member? (see answers on our [Facebook](#) page)

A. LTJG James Brown B. LTJG Matt Reilly C. MNC Anthony Stone



1. _____

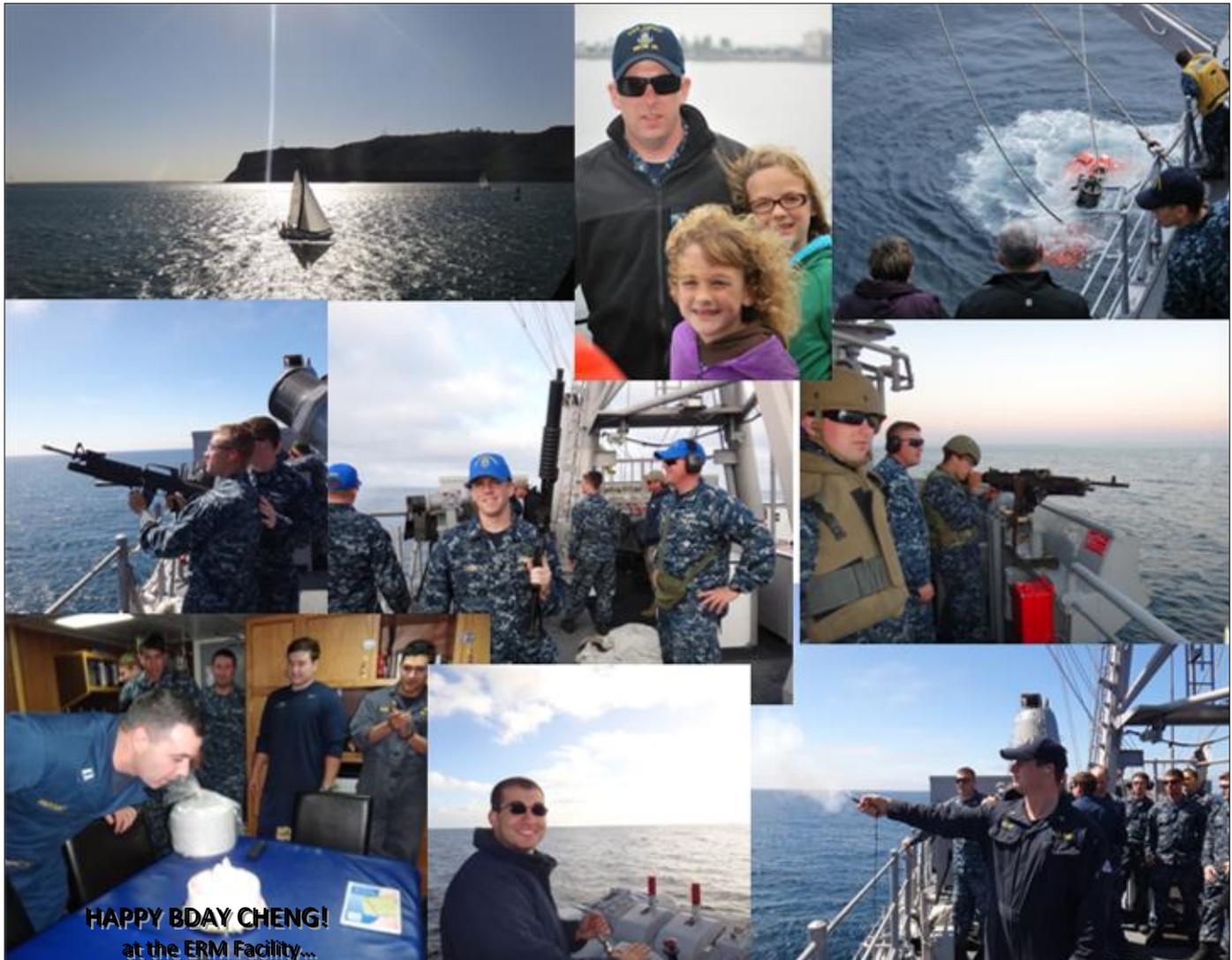


2. _____



3. _____

MONTHS IN PICTURES



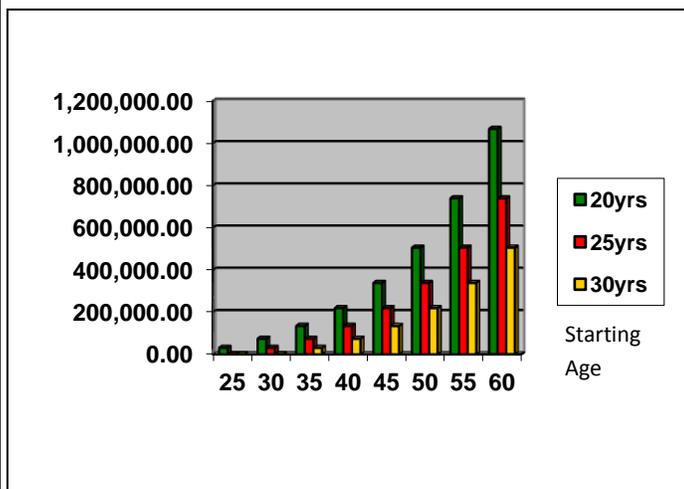
Financial Planning – Looking Ahead Towards Retirement

Retirement may seem too far away to worry about, but the first few years of your career are the most crucial in establishing disciplined saving habits for the future. The law of compound interest means starting a savings plan early in life leads to exponentially greater returns in the future. Two possible avenues to start saving today are **Thrift Saving Plan (TSP)** and a **ROTH Individual Retirement Account (IRA)**.

If you entered the Navy after 2010 you may have already been automatically enrolled into a TSP. If you are not enrolled yet you can visit your DFAS MyPay website to get started. Similar to 401(k)s, by designating a percentage of your pay (3% is the default) to be automatically transferred to your TSP you will start saving in a tax-deferred account. This means when you are eligible to withdraw funds at 59 ½ years of age you will pay taxes, but your yearly contributions will not be taxed. A very appealing factor of the TSP is its simplicity. By selecting one of five index funds that follow the market average or one of five slightly riskier mutual funds you will not strike enormous returns but can guarantee yourself a safer and more reliable yearly return.

If you already enrolled in the TSP and want to do more or want more control over your investing, a Roth IRA is a strong option. IRAs can easily be opened up with your current banking service. USAA and Navy Federal offer great service and control of your account. In a Roth IRA you are allowed to contribute up to \$5,000 annually. A strong advantage to a Roth IRA, as opposed to regular IRA, is that you are taxed up front on your contributions. Once you are eligible to withdraw penalty free at 59 ½, all your savings are tax-free. Once you've established capital in your account you can choose to invest in just about anything; options range from safer mutual and index funds and bonds to riskier (meaning higher risk/reward potential) stocks and ETFs. Selecting individual companies and buying stocks is not beyond the reach of anyone so long as they commit themselves to at least a small amount of education, research, and planning.

If you remember one thing in particular, remember the importance of starting early. As the graph below illustrates, the power of compound interest is very powerful. Just look at these examples illustrating how waiting to start a Roth IRA can result in a large difference in the end.



Accounting for a conservative average return of 7% and \$5,000 contributions every year, your resulting savings at age 60 would be as follows:

Started at 30 - \$505,000

Started at 25 - \$740,000

Started at 20 - \$1,068,000

Learn More:

The Neatest Little Guide to Stock Market Investing by Jason Kelly

Rich Dad's Guide to Investing by Robert Kiyosaki

Beginner's Guide to Investing by Alex Frey

www.fool.com (A contrarian, common sense approach to investing)

www.morningstar.com (Specializes in Mutual Fund Coverage)