Summer 2024
Number 165

Rotor Review

The Human Weapon

Also in this Issue:

On Leadership: It's Okay Not to Be Okay

The Human Weapon: A Holistic Approach to Naval Aviation Career Management and Mental Resilience Charting Your Course

The Seventh's First - September 20, 1965

Time to Double Down on Naval Combat Logistics with the Osprey

CAFS

CONFORMAL AUXILIARY FUEL SYSTEM

Average usable fuel
100 gals.

Since 1976, the U.S. Navy has trusted Robertson for helicopter fuel systems with proven survivability performance. Robertson continues to ***Extending The Reach Of Freedom.***

TBFDS

TACTICAL BULK FUEL DELIVERY SYSTEM

Average usable fuel
783 gals.

Call (480) 337-7050 or visit **robertsonfuelsystems.com**

ROBERTSON
FUEL SYSTEMS
A HEICO COMPANY

SEPTEMBER 7, 2024

PENSACOLA MEMORIAL 5K

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE
OF OUR BRAVE FALLEN NAVAL AND
MARINE CORPS AIR WARRIORS

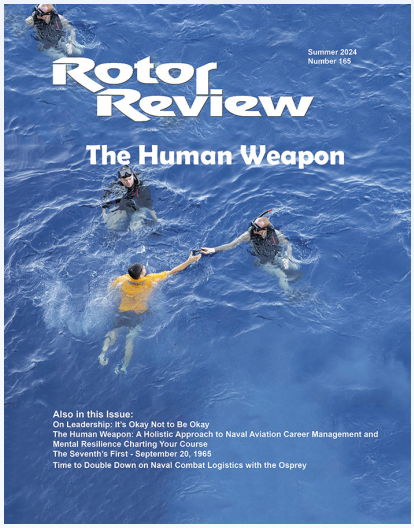
SEVILLE QUARTER
130 E GOVERNMENT ST

THE WINGMAN FOUNDATION

5K & 1-MILE
KIDS FUN RUN
@7:30 AM

Never Leave a Wingman Behind.

www.wingmanfoundation.org



Summer 2024
Issue 165

About the Cover

AWS3 Bailey McMahon, assigned to HSC-23, hands a portable camera to AM3 Efrain Solis during a swim call from amphibious assault carrier, USS Tripoli (LHA 7). U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Nick Brown.

Rotor Review (ISSN: 1085-9683) is published quarterly by the Naval Helicopter Association, Inc. (NHA), a California nonprofit 501(c)(6) corporation. NHA is located in Building 654, Rogers Road, NASNI, San Diego, CA 92135. Views expressed in Rotor Review are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the policies of NHA or United States Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard. Rotor Review is printed in the USA. Periodical rate postage is paid at San Diego, CA. Subscription to Rotor Review is included in the NHA or corporate membership fee. A current corporation annual report, prepared in accordance with Section 8321 of the California Corporation Code, is available on the NHA Website at www.navalhelicopterassn.org.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Naval Helicopter Association, P.O. Box 180578, Coronado, CA 92178-0578.

Rotor Review supports the goals of the association, provides a forum for discussion and exchange of information on topics of interest to the Rotary Force, and keeps membership informed of NHA activities. As necessary, the President of NHA will provide guidance to the Rotor Review Editorial Board to ensure Rotor Review content continues to support this statement of policy as the Naval Helicopter Association adjusts to the expanding and evolving Rotary Wing and Tilt Rotor Communities.

FOCUS: The Human Weapon

FEATURES

COLUMNS

DEPARTMENTS

Thank You to Our Corporate Members - Your Support Keeps Our Rotors Turning

To get the latest information from our Corporate Members, just click on their logos:

Platinum Supporters

SIKORSKY A LOCKHEED MARTIN COMPANY

BELL

V22 TEAM OSPREY

Gold Supporters

Global Medical Response

Bristow

Executive Supporters

ADS

ATC

AIR CENTER HELICOPTERS

AIRBUS

amentum Experience | Passion | Purpose

BAE SYSTEMS INSPIRED WORK

BluedropUSA TRAINING & SIMULATION

BREEZE EASTERN

CAE

Collins Aerospace

Elbit Systems of America

GE Aerospace

LEONARDO

LSI

MA METRO AVIATION

Navy Mutual

NORTHROP GRUMMAN

ROLLS ROYCE

ROBERTSON FUEL SYSTEMS A HEICO COMPANY

RECOIL

TELEDYNE FLIR

USAA

V2X

Small Business Partners

ADVANCE PLASTICS

LANDING COLLECTIVE REAL ESTATE SOLUTIONS

PROTECTIVE PACKAGING CORPORATION

Naval Helicopter Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 180578, Coronado, CA 92178-0578 / (619) 435-7139
www.navalhelicopterassn.org

National Officers

President.....CDR Tim Rogers, USN
Vice President .....TBD
Executive Director.....CAPT Jim Gillcrist, USN (Ret.)
Marketing Director.....Ms. Megan Buriak
Managing Editor, Rotor Review.....Ms. Allyson Darroch
Retired Affairs.....CDR Mike Brattland, USN (Ret.)
Legal Advisor.....CDR Chris Cooke, USN (Ret.)
VP Corporate Membership...CAPT Tres Dehay, USN (Ret.)
VP Membership.....LT Brendan McGinnis, USN
VP Awards.....CDR David Eckardt, USN
VP Symposium 2025.....CDR Tim Rogers, USN
Secretary.....LT Lena Reid, USN
Special Projects.....VACANT
NHA Branding and Gear.....VACANT
Senior HSM Advisor.....AWRCM Nathan Hickey, USN
Senior HSC Advisor.....AWSCM Shane Gibbs, USN
Senior VRM Advisor.....AWSCM Tom Kershaw, USN

Directors at Large

Chairman.....RADM Dan Fillion, USN (Ret.)*
CAPT Gene Ager, USN (Ret.)*
CAPT Chuck Deitchman, USN (Ret.)*
CAPT Dennis DuBard, USN (Ret.)*
CAPT Tony Dzielski, USN (Ret.)*
CAPT Greg Hoffman, USN (Ret.)*
CAPT Bill Personius, USN (Ret.)*
CAPT Mario Mifsud, USN (Ret.)*
CAPT Arne Nelson, USN (Ret.)*
CAPT Matt Schnappauf, USN (Ret.)*
LT Zoe Macfarlane, USN*
AWRCM Nathan Hickey, USN*
** Also serving as Scholarship Fund Board Member*

Junior Officers Council

Nat'l Pres..... LT Zoe "Latrina" Macfarlane, USN
Region 1.....LT Evan "Quiet Riot" Richards, USN
Region 2 .....LT Bryan "Schmitty" Schmidt, USN
Region 3.....LT Peter "Chick-a-Fil" Shelton, USN
Region 4.....LT Brian "Brain" Evertson, USN
Region 5.....LT Adam "Beaker" Grant, USN
Region 6.....LT Beth "Bambi" Hager, USN

NHA Scholarship Fund (NHASF)

President .....CAPT Arne Nelson, USN (Ret.)
Executive VP/ VP Ops ...CAPT Todd Vandegrift, USN (Ret.)
VP Plans.....CAPT Jon Kline, USN
VP Scholarships .....VACANT
VP Finance .....CDR Greg Knutson, USN
Treasurer.....Ms. Jen Swasey
Webmaster.....CDR Mike Brattland, USN (Ret.)
Social Media .....VACANT
CFC/Special Projects .....VACANT

Regional Officers

Region 1 - San Diego

Directors .....CAPT Will Eastham, USN
CAPT Ken Colman, USN
CAPT Justin McCaffree, USN
CAPT Nathan Rodenbarger, USN
President .....CDR Scott Lippincott, USN

Region 2 - Washington, D.C.

Director .....CAPT Ed Weiler, USN (Ret.)
President .....CAPT Tony Perez, USN
Co-President.....CDR Pat Jeck, USN (Ret.)

Region 3 - Jacksonville

Director.....CAPT John Anderson, USN
President.....CDR Phil Krites, USN

Region 4 - Norfolk

Director.....CAPT Steve Thomas, USN
President .....CAPT Matt Wright, USN

Region 5 - Pensacola

Director .....CAPT Kenneth Kerr, USN
President .....CDR Keith Johnson, USN
2024 Fleet Fly-In Coordinators.....LT Adam Grant, USN
LT Mike Twardy, USN

Region 6 - OCONUS

Director .....CAPT Manny Pardo, USN
President .....CDR Tommy McDonald, USN

NHA Historical Society (NHAHS)

President.....CAPT Bill Personius, USN (Ret.)
VP/Webmaster.....CDR Mike Brattland, USN (Ret.)
Secretary.....LCDR Brian Miller, USN (Ret.)
Treasurer.....CDR Chris Fitzgerald, USN (Ret.)
S.D. Air & Space Museum.....CAPT Jim Gillcrist, USN (Ret.)

NHAHS Committee Members

CAPT Dennis DuBard, USN (Ret.)
CAPT Mike Reber, USN (Ret.)
CAPT Arne Nelson, USN (Ret.)
CAPT Jim O'Brien, USN (Ret.)
CAPT Curtis Shaub, USN (Ret.)
CAPT Mike O'Connor, USN (Ret.)
CDR John Ball, USN (Ret.)
CDR Chris Fitzgerald, USN (Ret.)
LCDR Chip Lancaster, USN (Ret.)
AWRCM Dave Crossan, USN (Ret.)

Navy Helicopter Association Founders

CAPT A.E. Monahan, USN (Ret.)
CAPT Mark R. Starr, USN (Ret.)
CAPT A.F. Emig, USN (Ret.)
Mr. H. Nachlin
CDR H.F. McLinden, USN (Ret.)
CDR W. Straight, USN (Ret.)
CDR P.W. Nicholas, USN (Ret.)
CDR D.J. Hayes, USN (Ret.)
CAPT C.B. Smiley, USN (Ret.)
CAPT J.M. Purtell, USN (Ret.)
CDR H.V. Pepper, USN (Ret.)

It Has Always Been about the TEAM!

By RADM Dan "Dano" Fillion, USN (Ret.)

Symposium is in the "FINEX" Binder under the category of "HUGE SUCCESS!" It was the result of a total team effort by all the folks who the National President, CAPT "Smokey" Butts, USN and NHA Executive Director, CAPT Jim "Super G" Gillcrist, already called out. I also want to say thanks for making this event a Huge Team Win! NHA's success always falls on the shoulders of the totally committed JOs and Aircrewmen who volunteer to make it all happen, and without Industry Partners, it would not happen. My personal expression of gratitude is to each of you! Smokey, you made a DIFFERENCE Brother, thank you!!

New PRT rules mandate that testing will be once a year and I know personally from time in uniform that there are not enough mental health professionals to meet the demand signals of our Active Duty and their families. Since retiring, I have seen the same for the retired and civilian population. So I think that the situation is what it is and we (Active/Retired/DOD Civilians) have to ……..wait for it…. "Embrace the Suck." Okay, I know several of you (if any of you even read the Chairman's Corner) are waving the BS flag but hear me out.

The way the Rotary Force needs to get after this is by "Engaging." Prime example, bright and early FOD walk down underway in a "lousy zipcode." When you get in line you are not supposed to talk but I would always say good morning and just ask, "How is everyone doing?" to the Sailors and Marines on either side of me. I usually got an, "Outstanding, Great, Shitake Hot, etc," which would always be followed by, "CAPT, can you please lock it up!" FOD walkdown would commence. Sidenote, none of the Chiefs ever asked me to not talk while forming up for FOD walk down. Apparently it was a right of passage to tell me to "Shut up!"

One morning, I saddle up between the team and one Sailor who I knew personally and did not respond like I expected. You all know the type: that young, hard-charging professional who is a Motivation Bomb, always upbeat and believes that professionalism is measured by how loud you respond to any question! So I don't intrude at that point in time but I pull a Chief aside (yes, the one who told me to shut up that morning) and asked if she could look into it, her response, "on it CAPT!"

So the young man had a family back in Norfolk, wife, and one child. The family vehicle was in need of repair and it was expensive and the Sailor at sea would have to wipe out his savings to fix it. End of the story as you have all surmised, Chiefs' Mess solved it.

I share that scenario to say this: all of you and all of us out of uniform to a lesser extent have to be one man/one woman resiliency counselors. No formal training required, you just must pay attention to your shipmates and just ask folks, "How are you doing, you seem a little down, is everything all right?" Then, be willing to listen and here is the big lift, you have to be willing to ask for help if you personally need it and nobody has asked you if you are doing OK. There is no longer a penalty for seeking help; it clearly indicates that an individual is keeping check on themselves to be the best warfighter they can be. Lastly, I offer that the same approach can be utilized with respect to the new PRT Program, never work out alone or always bring, drag if necessary, a buddy to the gym.

The ability for the Rotary Force to remain vigilant when it comes to being resilient has never been required more than now, as those of you in uniform and your families look to the near future and prepare for what lies ahead.

Your NHA stands ready to assist in any way we can from back on the beach. We will be asking can we help and please do not hesitate to ask us to help. It has always been about the TEAM!

The Winner says, "Let me do it for you." The Loser says, "That's not my job."
Vince Lombardi, Hall of Fame NFL Head Coach

As always I am,
Vr and Committed Not Just Involved (CNJI)
Dano

Well-Being and Symposium Recap

By CAPT Tommy "Smokey" Butts, USN

Greetings from NHA here in San Diego!

This Rotor Review issue focuses on the physical and mental health of our Rotary Force as well as a recap of NHA Symposium '24.

I believe that it is safe to say that a vast majority of our Rotary Force, myself included, have failed at times when it comes to prioritizing our own personal physical and mental well-being. Collectively, are we cultivating a culture where a flyer or maintainer can "take a knee" to address their well-being without feeling career implications? There are examples from around the Fleet of leadership prioritizing a culture of physical and mental health well-being. We often ask for more resources (which we need); however, are we aware of and utilizing the resources that we currently have available? Military and Family Life Counselors (MFLC) are becoming the norm and psychologist billets are being assigned. I leave these questions for thought and discussion within your units and shops. We have a very long way to go; however, strides are being made.

Shifting gears, let's talk about NHA Symposium '24. The only way our marquee community event happens is with the incredible amount of support from our industry partners and the volunteers. The vast majority of volunteers comes from our Junior Officers and Senior Enlisted leadership. Thank you for all of the hard work that was done behind the scenes to further build the culture of our community.

Over the course of my tenure as NHA National President, I've had the opportunity to meet and spend time with a number of great people: active duty, retired, and civilians. I want to thank the NHA Staff for their support and helping keep Nr at 100%. I believe that many of you know, but our "motor" within NHA is CAPT Jim Gillcrist, USN (Ret.). He likes to give everyone else the credit, but he is the one who "moves the chains" for NHA. He has dedicated his professional life to our rotary and tilt-rotor community, both in and out of uniform. I know over the last year that RADM Fillion, USN (Ret.) and I drove him crazy with new ideas and "writing checks" that CAPT G cashed for us. The success of NHA Symposium '24 is a direct reflection of his dedication and loyalty to the community. Thank you CAPT G for the friendship and mentorship. It has been an absolute pleasure and honor to work alongside you.

This article serves as my last submission as your NHA National President. I'm passing the controls to CDR Tim "Buck" Rogers. Many of you already know Buck, and I assure you that our organization is in great hands moving forward. I'll continue to be involved and will see you at future NHA events. It has been an honor to serve as your National President of our professional organization. Buck, you have the controls!

V/r,
Smokey
NHA LTM #504

Read Rotor Review on your Mobile Device

Did you know that you can take your copy of Rotor Review anywhere you want to go? Read it on your kindle, nook, tablet or on your phone. Rotor Review is right there when you want it. Go to your App Store. Search for Naval Helicopter Association Events. If you already have the NHA App, you will need to refresh the App. On the home screen, hit the Rotor Review button. It will take you to Issuu, our digital platform host. There you can read the current magazine. Scroll down to "Articles." This option is formatted for your phone. You can also view, download or print the two page spread. You also have access to all previous issues by searching on Google for Rotor Review or browsing through Issuu's Website. If you have Issuu's App for mobile reading, please be aware that they discontinued it.

JO President's Report

Mental and Physical Health

By LT Zoe "Latrina" Macfarlane, USN

I want to start off by giving a huge thank you to all who came and made the 2024 Symposium such a success - it truly wouldn't have been possible without the support from our donors, vendors, volunteers, and military members who made the trip to Harrah's!

Diving into the issue of mental and physical health, while the military has always upheld a basic level of physical fitness, until recently mental health was never really a topic of discussion. During my time in the Navy, I have seen progress made with respect to addressing the mental health issues our service members face. And yet, we still have a way to go. Fleet and Family Support Centers and Chaplains are the two main resources for Sailors to discuss mental health issues they may be facing. Both resources typically serve multiple commands and don't have the staff required to support the volume of Sailors seeking assistance.

While I don't know what the right answer is to solve this manning problem, which is nothing new to the Navy, I do believe we are on the right path in continuing to provide better mental health care to our service members. At my previous command, I had a Commanding Officer who spoke openly with the JOs about how he used Navy resources for therapy. I never thought I would have a boss so candidly speak about how both the job we have and life in general are stressful. Using the tools we have available to us can help people through tough times.

Providing Sailors with resources and speaking openly about mental health has helped to challenge the old notion that if you're experiencing a mental health crisis, you must be unable to handle stress or solve your own problems. This, as we know, couldn't be further from the truth, and while discussion has moved the needle in the right direction, I believe there still needs to be more action in improving the Navy's mental health support system.

Fly Navy,
Latrina

2024 NHA National Symposium & More

By CAPT Jim Gillcrist, USN (Ret.)

Game time came and the Symposium Volunteer Team of JOs and Aircrew from HSC-3 and HSM-41 excelled to execute and make this event a spectacular success. Their committed hard work started last summer. The individual who got the effort underway and kept things on track was Skipper "Smokey" Butts, NHA National President. I served as his "wingman," and he made me feel valued through the entire planning cycle. It was fun. It was hard and frustrating at times. It was memorable. The rapport that we developed is really what the NHA experience is all about, and it filtered down from there through the Volunteer Team.

Big shout-outs and thanks for key individuals include: Smokey, Penny, Sparkles, AWRCM Nate Hickey, AWSC Kris Strand, ACE, Binky, Latrina, Quiet Riot, AWF1 Bruno Theo, Houston, Pinko, AWRC Tony Pettee, Fetus, KAM, Karen, Meat Dawg, Ludes, Amber, Wiper, Donkey, Moose, Deuce, Whitey, RIMM, Milky, Judy, BradChad, IKEA, BOT, DOM, Heater, LB, Regina, Downsy, Grudge, Eagle, Bus, Brain, Dusty Bottoms, Beaker, SKE, Dano, Chick-a-Fil, Bambi, Schmitty, HiSpeed, Ricky Bobby, Megatron, Devil Dog, Clown, Kat, TT, and many others.

With more than a few Symposiums under my belt, I am convinced that it is all about getting the entire Rotary Force together to enjoy each other's company. Sure, the keynote address and professional briefs add value, but the camaraderie, networking, and catching up with past squadron mates and shipmates are EPIC. Throw in The Challenge, Charity Golf Tournament, and I-Bar Det Harrah's in the evenings, and you end up with "time well spent" hanging out with each other. **The goodness of this annual event is priceless.**

This leads me to the magazine theme that looks at how physical and mental health support an engaged and resilient Rotary Force. Again, our professional organization plays a vital role in creating an identity and a sense of well being, through National and Regional activities, that bind us and add depth to our larger role within Naval Aviation.

Hope you enjoy RDML Reynolds' On Leadership Column and CAPT Chaney's Commodore's Corner plus of course our Symposium Photo Spread and much more … enjoy the read / enjoy your summer!

IMPORTANT STAFF UPDATE: We turned over the reins of Marketing Director from Linda Vydra to Megan Buriak. Linda joined the NHA Team in 2015 and did amazing things for the organization, most notably, turbo charging corporate membership and daily outreach to our corporate partners. Linda is now the Development Manager for Susan G. Komen for the Cure in San Diego, and we wish her tremendous success in this new capacity. In this regard, Linda's professional good fortune became NHA's good fortune. This afforded us the wonderful opportunity to hire Megan Buriak who already had a strong connection to the Rotary Force as a Gold Star Spouse. She brings a wealth of energy, passion, and refreshing ideas to her role as Marketing Director. We are truly blessed to have Megan as part of the NHA Team.

Please keep your membership profile up to date (mailing address and region affiliation). If you should need any assistance at all, give us a call at (619) 435-7139 and we will be happy to help – you will get Megan, Mike, Allyson, or myself.

Warm regards with high hopes, Jim Gillcrist / LTM #43

2024 Symposium "Partners in Crime," CAPT Jim Gillcrist, USN (Ret.) & CAPT Tommy Butts, USN.

Newly "Coined" Lifetime Members (LTM) in the Spotlight

CDR John Edwards, USN
LTM #319

AWR1 Ronald Pierpoint, USN / LTM #944
AWR1 Connor Olson, USN / LTM #948

LT Max Cherry, USN
LTM #871

CDR Jaden Risner, USN
LTM #883

LCDR Andrew Fitzgerald, USN / LTM #1491
CDR Justin Waskey, USN / LTM #949

AWRCS Chris Gotelli, USN
LTM #958

AWSCM Tom Kershaw, USN
LTM #893

CDR Dave Eckardt, USN
LTM #910

LT Mathew Kautzman, USN
LTM #981

LCDR Andres Rodriguez, USN
LTM #750

LT DeAndre Matthews, USN
LTM #912

LT Olivia Czerewko, USN
LTM #931

On Mental Health

By LT Elisha "Grudge" Clark, USN

I hope that by the time you read this, you're fully recovered from the fun and festivities of the NHA Symposium. For myself, I know there were a few dozen business days required for that to occur!

I also hope that by the time you are through reading this issue, you'll be well informed about the mental and physical health of our Rotary Force, and a strong sense of how our community intends to implement the newly disseminated Navy Culture of Excellence 2.0, launched in March of this year. Among these pages you'll find stories of new research and development by our very own Naval Aircrew Working Group, how generational differences can impact our views on mental health, and how the health of our people can further our goals toward a Culture of Excellence - just to name a few.

This issue comes from a very personal place. While physical health should be highly regarded, mental health took center stage for me in 2021. My COVID deployment experience had come to a close in December of 2020, and while I was ecstatic to be walking on dry land, I found it extremely hard to adjust. Faces were hidden behind masks, restrictions were more draconian and less predictable as time went on, and there was even a time I wasn't allowed to leave a 1.5 mile radius of my own home. It was only during an interview for a security clearance, during which I crumbled at a very simple question, that I realized how much my mental health had declined.

How would you describe your mental health?

It is something we can all easily crack jokes about - you almost have to when there is no other solution - but it was only until I was very candidly asked the question that I truly looked within myself for the answer. It's my hope that you all have something to gain from asking each other this question.

Our next issue deals with "Why We Fight." We brave through many trials and tribulations to make it to the next step - what keeps you going? For myself and my peers, it is coming quite close to the time to decide whether to stay or go; regardless of what your choice is, why are you making it? What motivates you, and what doesn't? What do you want leadership to know about retention, and what would you like to know as a leader? I look forward to hearing from you.

V/R and HAGS,
Grudge

Enjoying Soft Patch during Symposium 2024

Letters to the Editor

It is always great to hear from our membership! We need your input to ensure that *Rotor Review* keeps you informed, connected, and entertained. We maintain many open channels to contact the magazine staff for feedback, suggestions, praise, complaints, or publishing corrections. Please advise us if you do not wish to have your input published in the magazine. Your anonymity will be respected. Post comments on the NHA Facebook Page or send an email to the Editor-in-Chief. Her email is elishasuziclark@gmail.com, or to the Managing Editor at rotorreview@navalhelicopterassn.org. You can use snail mail too.

Rotor Review's mailing address is:

Letters to the Editor
c/o Naval Helicopter Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 180578
Coronado, CA 92178-0578

Rotor Review

Articles and news items are welcomed from NHA's general membership and corporate associates. Articles should be of general interest to the readership and geared toward current Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard affairs, technical advances in the rotary wing / tilt rotor industry, or of historical interest. Humorous articles are encouraged.

Rotor Review and Website Submission Guidelines

- Articles: MS Word Documents for text. Do not embed your images within the document.
- Send as a separate attachment.
- Photos and Vector Images: Should be as high a resolution as possible and sent as a separate file from the article. Please include a suggested caption that has the following information: date, names, ranks or titles, location, and credit the photographer or source of your image.
- Videos: Must be in a mp4, mov, wmv, or avi format. With your submission, please include the title and caption of all media, photographer's name, command, and the length of the video.
- Verify the media does not display any classified information.
- Ensure all maneuvers comply with NATOPS procedures.
- All submissions shall be tasteful and in keeping with good order and discipline.
- All submissions should portray the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and individual units in a positive light.

All submissions can be sent via email to your community editor (their emails are on page 3), the Editor-in-Chief (elisha.s.clark2.mil@us.navy.mil), or the Managing Editor (rotorreview@navalhelicopterassn.org). You can also use the USPS mail. Our mailing address is:

Naval Helicopter Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 180578
Coronado, CA 92178-0578

It's Okay Not to Be Okay

By RDML Ben Reynolds, USN and CDR Justin "Spam" Ott, USN

CDR Justin "Spam" Ott

So there I was in January 2023, talking to my older brother and twin brother on the phone and telling them "I wish I was diagnosed with a terminal illness and had 3 weeks to live. I just can't take the pain anymore." How could this be happening to me? I was on my post-command tour, on shore duty, and working in the Navy Budget Office (I love finance); yet I was going through so much pain and unable to process it that I literally did not want to live anymore. As to exactly how I got here, it is a much longer story that is deeply personal. The short version is that it stemmed from an extremely challenging XO/CO tour in Forward Deployed Naval Forces (FDNF) Japan, a collapsing marriage, and some unhealthy coping behavior dealing with those issues.

My XO/CO tour was during the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant long deployments, no ports, lockdowns on the military installation when we got home that were exacerbated by draconian Navy rules that, frankly, went extremely overboard, having an outsized negative effect on Sailors. We started off a deployment locked for 18 days in a barracks room. Then, on deployment, I had to explain to Sailors that they could not return to the States for the holidays. On top of all that, I had to tell the best wardroom in the Navy that they would not be getting port calls in their first tour as aviators, and instead would spend more time at sea than any other pilot cadre in recent memory, and oh by the way, do it while sitting six feet apart in the ready room.

For a time, I had to refrain from face-to-face contact with my Skipper. I knew my Sailors were struggling. I remember once walking into a workcenter (I was one of those COs who walked around, A LOT), and the group of Sailors had their heads down on the workbench and did not even look up - even after I greeted them. Wow, I knew some of them were in bad shape.

Of course, it wasn't all bad - I remember the little things the Sailors did to boost morale. One of our pilots organized a Christmas in July - we had done nine hours of VERTREP that day and they passed out all of the packages that came in like it was Christmas. I will never forget that - even I got a "gift" that day. Those kinds of things really helped.

Overall, it was not an easy experience, but I internalized all of it and kept on charging. I wanted to be seen as strong for my Sailors and my family. Times were hard, and I wanted to show everyone I was a focused and well put-together leader. My Sailors probably believed it. I am optimistic and usually wear a smile on my face. I was "good!" (I wasn't). I was a highly-trained aviator chosen for command. Everything in my career made me ready for this! (I wasn't). In the training pipeline for XO/CO, there is a lot of time spent talking about how to lead and help Sailors with whatever kind of issue might come up, but the training did not prepare me for recognizing that it might be me that needs help.

CDR Justin "Spam" Ott, USN

Well, I got to that point of needing help in a rather serious fashion in the moment I describe in my opening sentence. My brothers literally saved my life, giving me the short-term help I needed to continue a few more days. They called me daily, sent me multiple texts a day, invited me and my daughters to come visit them, etc. But it was time that I needed some professional help. However, it was not as simple as I thought it would be to get that help.

First, I went to Medical, told them the entire story, and the flight doc gave me a pamphlet for the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC). Thanks bro, I was hoping for a bit more, but oh well. I checked in with a great counselor at Fleet and Family, but I discovered that at this branch they are more suited for short-term triage, etc. "We don't write anything down, this is all anonymous," they said. No, I thought, I WANT you to write this stuff down, I don't know where it all comes from, and I need to explore this; I'm ready for some real work.

Back to the flight doc, where I told him point blank, "I need to see a mental health professional outside of FFSC who can do a little bit more long-term and deeper work, do not send me back to the FFSC." I do not mean to slight Fleet and Family here. They have some great tools and people there, and they are available immediately, but they did not have the long-term support for which I was looking. It was a great first step, but I needed more.

I was finally referred to Andrews Mental Health Clinic. At this point, I was about six weeks into the process. Once I got to Andrews, I found the mental health care there fantastic; they referred me to a therapist in the TRICARE Network (I could choose the one I wanted), and I found the therapist I see to this day. We see each other over FaceTime (all of them offer this now – thanks Covid!). I was skeptical of this at first, but it really worked for me - you can find me in the Pentagon courtyard now on FaceTime doing a therapy call, which is super convenient. I should emphasize again, I had NONE of these tools going into my CO tour. I could have surely used these tools during my DH tour as well. Seeking professional help and therapy is literally the best decision I have ever made in my life, and combined with my family support system, it is the reason I am alive today. It is the reason I am getting better, and the reason that I will never stop working on myself. It has made me a better father. I still have a long way to go, but I know I am going to make it.

It was not easy to admit I needed help; it was one of the hardest things I have ever done in my life. And as I described, I had to jump through some hoops to finally land on some lasting professional help. Do I wish it was an easier process? Of course I do, but it was worth jumping through the hoops. Additionally, it was not easy to admit it to my senior leadership. I cannot blame them for not recognizing the struggle I was going through. I still wore a smile on my face every day, and they saw me as a due course post-command O-5 ready to keep charging in the Navy. When I did inform them of my struggles, I found them overwhelmingly supportive of the time I needed to take to go to therapy, and the continued care that I am seeking.

It is clear to me that I waited too long to seek this help, almost getting to the brink. If I could have done it over again, I would have sought help earlier. Of course it is easier to say this now. It does get me thinking about how preventative care for mental health is not as prominent as what we do to take care of ourselves physically. I have always been a rabid fitness person, working out every day to keep in physical shape. What if I had taken even a fraction of that time to work on my mental well-being? Nowadays I take a lot of time to do meditation, journaling, and other exercises, to keep ahead of this and maintain.

Why do I write all of this here? It is personal, and evokes such strong emotions (yet cathartic at the same time) in writing it all down. I hope for others in the Naval Aviation profession to read and learn from my experience. If nothing else, you can know that if you find yourself struggling, you are not the only one.

Once you recognize that you may need some help, go and get it! The hard part is recognizing it. We are ingrained as officers and especially as pilots to compartmentalize and unfortunately, we continue to do that long after the engine water wash is done. Compartmentalization has some great advantages, but eventually, trauma needs to be unpacked.

Realize that your personal support system is paramount in this endeavor. They want to help you. It could be a spouse, siblings or family, coworker, friend, even a leader, or all of the above. Whoever that is, seek the help of somebody you trust. This person or people are out there for you. For me, it was my older brother and twin brother, who sacrificed hours of their time checking in with me while I repeatedly vented my problems. The patience and support they showed is something for which I am truly grateful.

Going further and seeking therapy is what allowed me to explore the root of my mental health struggles, and it gave me the tools to continue the work on myself. My therapist is an amazing individual; I could not be doing this alone. I urge you to get the help you need. I did, and it changed my life. It can change yours as well.

I also want to stress that in the therapy journey, I confirmed that there was a lot more to my struggles than the superficial need to blame my struggles on things that have happened. It would have been too easy to just blame the Navy, the stress of the job, an imploding marriage, losing my parents at a relatively young age, etc. All of these events played a prominent role in my struggles, but I am strong enough and have the tools to embrace and overcome all of it.

Doing the work also emphasizes how many things are still great in life – the Navy career was and is still a load of fun, and being a father is still the best thing in my life.

The best part of my story? It's not over yet (it almost was). And neither is yours. Honor your flaws, recognize if you need help, and above all - be kind to yourself. Understand that sometimes it is okay not to be okay.

RDML Benjamin Reynolds, Director of Maritime Headquarters U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet talks with evacuees from Afghanistan after their arrival at Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, August 30, 2021. **U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class John Owen.**

RDML Reynolds

In aviation, we are comfortable rationally assessing and discussing our tactics and our maintenance. We review aircrew and maintainer qualifications based on qualitative data. Likewise, in my job as the Navy's Budget Officer, we spend a lot of time making decisions on our funding for new platforms and weapons, as well as sustaining our existing platforms and weapons. These tangible subjects are easy to assess, measure, and discuss. We can quantify progress and outcomes and draw conclusions based on all of the information we have. In our people, we again tend to gravitate toward tangible, quantifiable metrics - rank, ratings, and qualifications. We also measure medical readiness. We are not as comfortable with assessing and discussing our mental health - and the impact on ourselves, our teammates, our families, and our ability to operate and fight.

Our people are the lifeblood of our service - the fighting men and women of Naval Aviation are what make these weapons systems work. It is for this reason I am excited to see an issue that explicitly talks about mental health.

Spam and I don't have expertise in mental health and, honestly, I was reluctant to accept the invitation to write a short article. But I hope that our unique perspective will add to the conversation. We are leaders who have commanded at different levels and have gone back to the Pentagon to use our experiences to influence Navy decisions. We opened with Spam's story and I'll briefly remind you of our Navy leadership's commitment. I'll provide two particular areas where Spam and I think that we can make a difference. Finally, as you read in Spam's opening, I want to remind you that leaders must also maintain our mental health - a subject we don't talk about enough.

Supply and Command

When we discuss mental health, we often first think about our organized healthcare system and the improvements that are still required to get the access we need for our warfighters and their families. Good mental health providers are in high demand across our nation - this is no different for our Navy.

In some cases, it's even harder for our military. Half of DOD installations are in "Health Care Deserts."[1] Our Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) often don't have the staff they need for the patient demand (often with unfilled billets) so doctors refer Sailors and their families to a civilian provider. But, fewer and fewer civilian providers accept TRICARE, so a person in need may go weeks or months waiting to get help.

A 2020 DOD IG report found that DOD did not consistently meet mental health access to care standards at CONUS MTFs.[2] Our Sailors and families in Fallon and Lemoore wait over a month for an appointment. A recent DOD IG report found that it takes an average of 52 days to get an appointment in Pearl Harbor.

This is no surprise to me personally. We have had tremendous difficulty finding a therapist for a member of my own family because providers don't accept TRICARE. My wife, who is a psychologist, regularly runs into obstacles as she tries to help military families find a provider who accepts TRICARE.

There is no question that we still have work to do, and our Navy's current actions will take time. But I'm optimistic in our leadership's commitment and resolve. Our Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Navy, and Chief of Naval Operations all continue to express commitment and then back that commitment with resources. DoD has increased spending for mental health over the past few years, spending $1.4B in our 2025 Presidential Budget. As Budget Officer, I get to directly see where we put our funding for mental health.

In 2023, under CNO's guidance, we pulled money from other areas into Quality of Service initiatives, and we continue that trend in 2024 and our follow-on budget request. For mental health in particular, our Navy is increasing funding by 64% from FY23 to FY25. You can trace our priorities by looking at where we spend our money, and this is a top priority for SECNAV and CNO.

An Ounce of Prevention to Tip the Scale

With all of these additional resources, I'm confident that we will see improvements to our healthcare system and provider support. But I believe that our biggest gains can be made in our ships and squadrons and work centers - the places where we live and work every day. This is where we perform the "preventative maintenance" on our mind, body, and spirit before we need help from a healthcare provider. My friend, RDML Brett Mietus (recent Director of Navy's Culture and Force Resilience), likes to refer to this as a car and a tow truck. If you take care of your car and perform the maintenance, you have a much better chance that you won't need the tow truck.

Navy Culture of Excellence 2.0 has loads of information on how we can set better conditions for mental health for ourselves and in our commands. The Mental Health Playbook in particular provides valuable information and references. Two areas that stand out to us are improving awareness (to include eliminating stigma) and the value of being connected.

In contrast to mental health, physical health is relatively easy to assess and discuss. The more time you spend on your physical fitness and physical health, the better results you will see; and these results are measurable. The more time that we work on physical health, the better the results. We spend time on this preventative maintenance, and then there is no stigma in seeing a doctor if we need it.

But what about mental health? How do we measure that? We do not have metrics like PFA scores and blood pressure. As leaders in the Navy we tend to think everyone is either 100% good-to-go mentally, or we are writing a SITREP for suicidal ideations or attempted suicides. We pay some attention to it in our ORM pre-flight discussions, and we attempt to assign a number 1-5 to something that is so complex and bound to different interpretations.

Mental health is HARD to measure. Compounding this, we don't know how to talk about mental health. So we don't measure it. We don't talk about it. And this keeps us from building a culture of trust and communication.

It Takes a Village (Or a Squadron)

In addition to building a climate of trust and communication, we must build on our strength as a team. One of our greatest strengths in the Navy is the way that we fight as a team – as a Flight, as a Squadron, as a Ship. Our Navy embodies connected, cohesive, inclusive teams because we know that these strong teams fight better and win in combat. We must lean more heavily on this core strength as we think about the mental health of ourselves and the person who fights beside

1. Lawrence, Quil, and Brent Jones. "Half of U.S. Military Bases in the Country Are in 'Health Care Deserts.'" NPR, NPR, 17 June 2024, www.npr.org/2024/06/13/g-s1-4187/military-bases-shortage-health-care-troops-army-navy-marines#:~:text=An%20NPR%20analysis%20found%20that,called%20%E2%80%9Chealth%20care%20deserts.%E2%80%9D.

2 DOD IG report 2020-112

us. People want to join the Navy because they want to be part of a team - part of something bigger than themselves. They strive to be connected, and being connected happens to help with our mental health.

This is intuitive to us in the Navy, but recent research continues to confirm it. A 2015 study showed that an increased depression severity was significantly associated with low belonging and that a sense of belonging protects against depression at every stage of the deployment cycle, from pre-deployment preparations, through deployment, and post-deployment adjustment.

We see this in research for both men and women. "Limited social connection and support negatively impact boys' and mens' health outcomes over time. More programs and interventions that promote social connection and build skills associated with healthy, supportive friendships are needed to positively impact health outcomes throughout their lives," according to Dr. Dominick Shattuck of Johns Hopkins University.[3] Similarly, 83% of women reported that social support benefited symptoms of depression, and 83% of pregnant women with low social support had increased postpartum depression symptoms.[4]

Research has shown that we are particularly at risk during times of transition - to include post-deployment. Again, this is intuitive to Navy leaders because we value the team that we build.

To that end, we as leaders can always work harder to increase that sense of belonging in our units, for all of our Sailors and officers. While we may not be professionals in treating mental health, we are experts at building. Harnessing this skill and increasing a Sailor's sense of belonging can reduce depression and mental health issues amongst our ranks. Just as important as this is to make sure all of your Sailors know that it is ok to seek help if needed, and to be able to point them in the right direction if needed.

Take Care of Others (By Taking Care of Yourself)

It doesn't necessarily get easier as we become more senior. There is truth in the phrase, "It's lonely at the top." Senior enlisted and officers have fewer peers. How many people want to go out on liberty with the XO! Triads must stick close together…same thing with a group of DHs, and we all know the force is strong with JOPA.

I had my own challenge when I was stationed in Naples, Italy. This was my first Flag tour, and for all kinds of important family reasons, my wife, Mo, and I made the decision that I would geo-bach. The job was important, rewarding, and I traveled a lot - all over Europe and Africa. I led one of our Operation Allies Refuge locations and then found myself immersed in building NATO and partner resolve as Russia built up on Ukraine's border and then attacked. As I became immersed in my tasks, I found myself becoming more and more isolated. I started sleeping worse, eating worse, exercising less, and repeated that cycle. It's like my whole ecosystem was in decline. At one point, I recall filling out those numerous long questionnaires at my annual physical and checking "yes" on several boxes about mental health - "Are you sleeping?" "Are you depressed?" etc.

That was a very tough time for me, but I was fortunate - and this is why it's so important to have a culture of trust and communication, and to build a team. My boss (the 6th Fleet Commander) was an involved leader and ALWAYS checked in on his people, always mentored, and always demonstrated empathy. He openly talked about mental health like he talked about physical health and he commanded a culture of communication. He was also a warfighter, who worked hard on building a connected team.

At one point in one of our many mentoring sessions, my boss said: "Hey, you know the Chaplain is very good. I talk to him all the time. Check in with him." He empowered the Chaplain to connect our team.

I'm not particularly religious, but I talked to the Chaplain a few times and it really helped. I started thinking about my priorities in life, started slowly changing my habits, and, most importantly, improving my connections. I made myself walk over to a neighbor's house for dinner. I accepted invitations to go out and see friends. I started working out more, which led me to eat healthier and sleep better. I didn't get better in a day, but I started to turn it around. I was still away from my family, and that was hard, but my perspective changed and I was able to handle my situation. I attribute that completely to a commander who set a culture of trust and communication, and to the team around me.

The upkeep of mental health is paramount for us as leaders in the greatest Navy in the history of the world. We must continue to improve our healthcare system and our leaders are putting money behind these efforts. We will make our greatest gains in our squadrons and ships as we do the preventative maintenance on our minds and bodies just as we do on our aircraft. While we may not be there yet in fully embracing a culture of positive mental health and the sustainment of it, we are trending in the right direction. We must lean heavily on our core strength of building a team. As a leader, you can advance this cause - get out there and do it. If you find yourself struggling, get the help that you need; it is out there. The more help we get ourselves, and the more we facilitate this for our Sailors, the more ingrained the process will become. Enjoy the journey!

3. Desmon, Stephanie. "For Boys, Deep Friendships May Have Lasting Health Impacts." Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs, 3 June 2024, ccp.jhu.edu/2024/06/03/friendships-male-health-impacts/.
4. Wickramaratne, Priya J, et al. "Social Connectedness as a Determinant of Mental Health: A Scoping Review." PloS One, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 13 Oct. 2022, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9560615/.

The Human Weapon: A Holistic Approach to Naval Aviation Career Management and Mental Resilience Charting Your Course

By CAPT Dewon "Chainsaw" Chaney, USN

Naval Aviation is an inherently dangerous and demanding profession that requires individuals to possess exceptional physical and mental stamina. The Human Weapon, an interesting term that describes the essence of any successful military unit, is dependent upon the mental and physical capacity of its members. In this case, the U.S. Navy, and Naval Aviation, depend upon resilient Naval Aviators to carry out the nation's tasking. The high-stress environment of Naval Aviation can take a toll on the mental health of aviators, sometimes compromising their performance and overall well-being, and there must be a path to swift recovery. Effective career management and mental health support are essential to optimize the performance of Naval Aviators and ensure the success of naval operations. The adage "Mission First; People Always" underscores that people matter more than hardware.

The Human Weapon is the critical component of Naval Aviation, as it encompasses the abilities of aviators to operate complex aircraft systems, to make split-second decisions, and to engage with violence when called. To maintain peak performance, Naval Aviators must prioritize their mental and physical health, adhering to rigorous fitness regimens, and engaging in stress-reducing activities. Moreover, effective career management is crucial to ensure that aviators are adequately trained, equipped, and supported throughout their careers. A career built on nothing but flying sounds nice but sometimes you need a break mentally/physically…I know blasphemy, right, but trust me it's true in some cases!

The Navy recently rolled out its Culture of Excellence 2.0 which focuses on building Great People, Great Leaders, and Great Teams, with the knowledge that this is the best way to prepare for victory in combat, innovate and solve hard problems, and prevent harmful behaviors. It is built on the following key tenets:

- Everyone is a Sailor...both Officer and Enlisted.
- Civilians are a critical part of the Navy Team...providing continuity and expertise.
- Our Core Values drive what we do...every day.
- Great People are shaped by Great Leaders...to become Great Teams.
- Our People are tough and resilient...strong in Mind, Body, and Spirit.
- Our Leaders demonstrate great character and competence and build great culture.
- Our Teams are Connected and Inclusive creating a sense of belonging for their People.

The mental health of Naval Aviators is a critical concern, as the high-stress environment of Naval Aviation can lead to anxiety, depression, and other medical concerns. The consequences of untreated mental health stressors can be very devastating. Therefore, it is essential for us all to prioritize our mental health and seek out the available support and resources even when we think it's something minor. What am I saying here? Just as we review the "I'M SAFE" Checklist before a flight brief, take that a step further beyond the cockpit. At all leadership levels, Naval Aviators must be encouraged to prioritize their mental health and seek help without fear of stigma or repercussions.

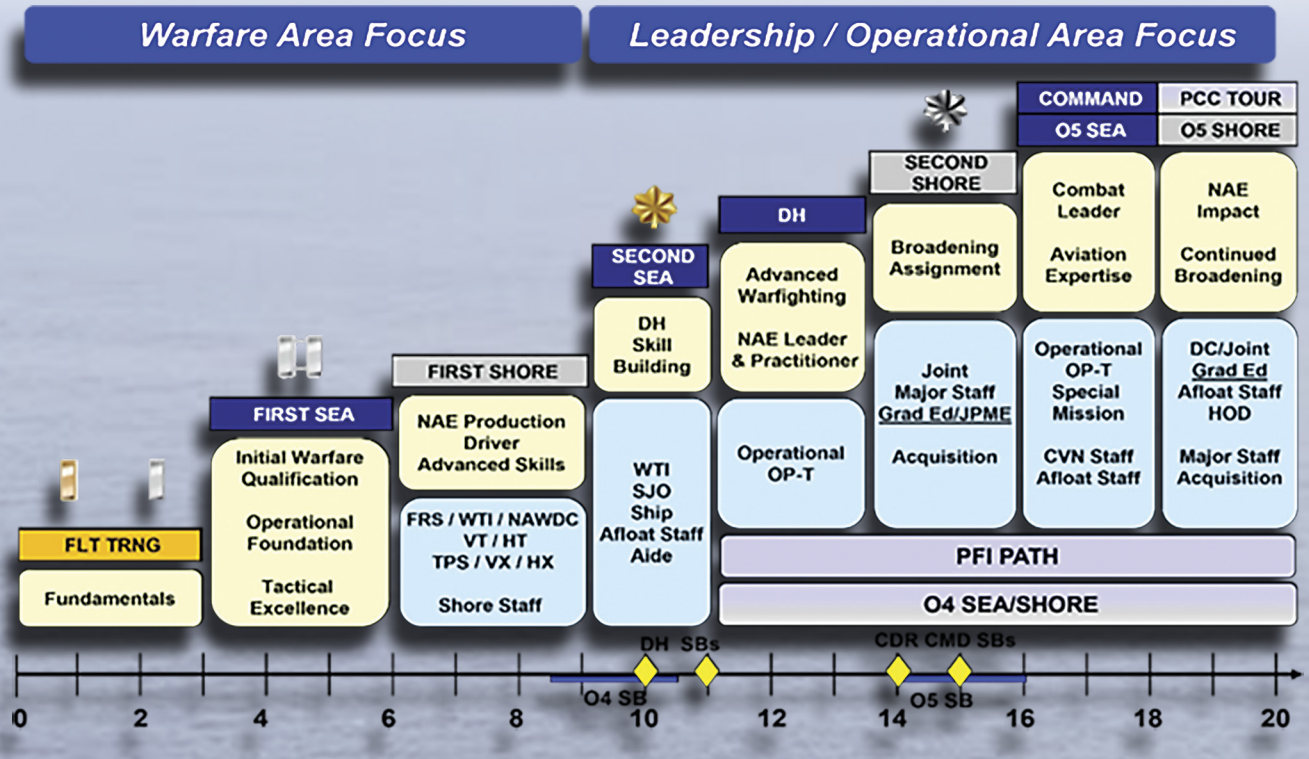
Career management can sometimes be a source of mental anguish and stress, but it doesn't need to be. Effective career management involves providing aviators with regular training and professional development opportunities, as well as mentorship and coaching opportunities. Most of this training is guided by the Commander, Naval Air Forces Leadership Development Plan, but understanding the career path is essential. The PERS-43 Team provides regular career management training through Fleet engagements and professional development through lessons learned notes sent back to Aviation Leadership. It can be very mentally draining for aviators to not understand the "why" behind career management. Trying to keep the career management/officer

distribution side of the NAE as simple as possible enables aviators to stay focused on the latest Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs), ensuring that they remain competent and confident in their abilities up to the point when the next generation must carry the knife in their teeth. Getting back to the "why," the standard and approved Naval Aviation Career Path can lack detail on how each tour builds upon the next to develop leaders so I had the PERS-43 Team put together the chart below. You can see the overarching focus areas (Blue Boxes), the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities, or KSAs, (Yellow Boxes), and the tours that provide for some of the KSAs (Light Blue Boxes). Again, this is really a bar napkin representation of the career path that helped me, and hopefully you, understand the career path differently.

In addition to prioritizing mental health and career management, Naval Aviation recognizes the importance of a healthy work-life "scale" in maintaining the well-being of aviators. Long hours, deployments, and frequent relocations can take a toll on aviators and their families. The PERS-43 Team is constantly working to do what's best for our constituents, their families, and the Navy within the constraints of current law and policy. Within PERS-43, while needs of the Navy can at times be primal, we advocate for aviation officers and their families to support positive mental health. We look at things like reducing/preventing back-to-back deployments, known recovery time from existing medical issues, co-locations, and overall support from a distribution perspective to minimize additional mental stress. I'd foot stomp here that this requires constant communication with a lack of assumptions on both sides, detailer and constituent. We cannot always accommodate every concern completely, but we do our best to provide support when made aware of a situation.

Finally, the Human Weapon is not just limited to Naval Aviators but also extends to maintenance and support personnel who are critical to the success of Naval Aviation. These Sailors are equally important to the success of Naval Aviation and must be provided with the same level of support and resources as aviators. Remember that!!

In conclusion, the Human Weapon is the most critical component to Naval Aviation. Effective career management and mental health support are crucial to maintaining the peak performance of Naval Aviators, ensuring they remain physically and mentally resilient as great people, who become great leaders, as a part of this great team…Naval Aviation.



From the Annals of the Mail Room of Naval Aviation: The Message or the Messenger

By CAPT Arne Nelson, USN (Ret.), President, NHASF (LTM #4 / RW # 13762)

In 1990, as CO of HC-4, then the Navy's premier heavy lift logistics helicopter squadron, I led my squadron's deployment for Desert Shield. Saddam moved across the border on August 2nd and we arrived at Royal Saudi NAS in southern Jedda on August 10th. Along with VR-24, the Mediterranean Carrier Onboard Delivery (COD) and Vertical Onboard Delivery (VOD) Force commenced flight ops with daily (and nightly) flights from Jeddah to the two Carrier Battle Groups in the Northern Red Sea; a daily 400 - 450 nm trek (one way) often at night for a first light overhead. We had a problem - we could not clear the beach of Passengers, Mail, and Cargo (PMC), and our transfers of PMC seemed to center on the carrier to sort out who goes where and how, adding days to the destination timetable.

We gave ourselves a goal: (1) Clear the beach daily and (2) deliver aircraft carrier (CV) cargo to the CV only - all other PMC to the 2 Combat Logistics Force (CLF) ships. This would streamline logistics ops by getting high priority PMC to the right ship and minimize intermediate touches.

I talked this concept over with my flight crews and we laid out the basic idea…using one CV overhead around noon with two aircraft separated by 15 minutes. The first helo would be in and out with passengers (pax) only. Then, the second loaded for CV-only mail and cargo - requiring the bulk of the time to unload engines, afterburners, ammo, and mail bags.

Armed with our concept, I took the next flight to the CV to pitch it to the Air Boss. On landing, I unstrapped and made my way to Air Ops, the plan in my hip pocket. I found the Air Boss taking a breather while our angry palm tree clobbered spot 5 while refueling and unloading a CH-53E worth of mail and cargo. In total, it was about 15,000 lbs. of mostly mail bags piled in a neat pyramid aft of the tail rotor. I introduced myself, and briefed our proposal - "one overhead, two 53s one pax only, the other mail and cargo only."

The brief did not go well. He looked at me, then around the room, then started laughing.

"No way will I risk one or two 53s going down on my flight deck."

That settled it, I left, back to the drawing board.

The flight back to Jeddah was uneventful though my mood was grim and, adding injury to insult, our box lunches were no prize - stale white bread, greenish baloney (no condiments), and a half gallon can of hot tomato juice to slake our thirst. All that and a long flight home in a hot helicopter.

Not dismayed, I had to figure out another way to skin the cat. Hours later, back at our Jeddah American compound the flight crews circled the wagons, and I went over the brief. We decided to give it another go, so I asked one of our junior pilots, an Ensign fresh out of the Fleet Replacement Squadron (FRS), to fly out to the ship with me and redeliver the concept. She agreed. We flew out to the ship, taking the four-hour transit to bone up on the change in delivery of service. After landing, she unstrapped, gave me a thumbs up, and headed to Air Ops armed with the new knowledge.

30 minutes later she approached the aircraft, head down, and jumped up into the seat and strapped herself in next to me. She sat there quietly laughing. I started to ask the result of the meeting and she interrupted saying, "Skipper, they loved the idea and said we could start tomorrow!"

And, thanks to her, we did. We began our new concept the next day, hitting the CV with CV-only PMC, and it opened up the CLF decks; a move that cut days of transit time particularly for personnel travel.

But should I have been angry that as the CO of the squadron I was turned away and that a young H2P got the concept approved? Or should I be glad that we got what I wanted? I decided to be content with the way it worked, not worrying about who got the credit. The proof is in the pudding: through the Red Sea logistics hub, letter mail and cargo was reaching the Red Sea CVBG from Norfolk in six days, and we cleaned the beach daily.

About the Author

During the Gulf War, while in command of HC-4, Captain Nelson was the 1991 recipient of the Navy League of the United States Stephen F. Decatur Award for Operational Competence recognizing his superior excellence and competence in logistics operations.

The NHA Scholarship Fund 2024- 2025

"Apply and Donate!" Shipmates, greetings from the Scholarship Fund. We are in our 32nd year. Founded in 1993, over five hundred scholarships and over $1.5M have been awarded to eligible active-duty officer and enlisted personnel, and their family members - spouses, children, and grandchildren. Annually, a minimum of fifteen scholarships are awarded.

Vision: Provide a sound, growing fund base to incrementally increase the dollar value of the fifteen annual awards total to reach $75K ($5,000 each) by 2025 and for our members, be a premier scholarship choice in Naval Aviation in 5 years (2025)

Mission Statement: To award college scholarships to eligible members of the Naval Rotary Wing / Tilt Rotor Community and their families (USN, USMC, and USCG) to pursue their educational goals. Quite simply, to increase the amount of each scholarship to $5,000 and then sustain that growth. For our report card through 2025 see the table below.

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Awarded / Planned	$39,500	$54,000	$56,000	$68,000	**$67,500**	$75,000
# Scholarships (Performance and Plan)	15 / $2500 1 / $2,000	15 / $3,000 6 / $1,500	16 / $3,500	17 / $4,000	**15 / $4,500**	15 / $5,000

Apply. We open online applications on 1 September 2024. All required documentation must be received by 31 January 2025. For more information please visit the Scholarship Fund Website at https://www.nhascholarshipfund.org.

Donate. In May 2024, we awarded 16 $4,500 Scholarships. In 2025, we intend to award a minimum of fifteen $5,000 scholarships. Fundraising Goal: $100k target: operating/ scholarships, investment growth, IT costs, admin. As you reflect on donating, please consider giving to our general memorial fund or establishing a new memorial or legacy fund (ex., NHASF general memorial fund, the HS-5 Night Dipper Memorial Fund, the H-53/Big Iron Fund, or the Magnum 445 Memorial) to preserve the legacy of our communities and remember the heroes who make up our proud Rotary Wing heritage. See our donation options at https://www.nhascholarshipfund.org

The NHA Scholarship Fund is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit charitable California corporation: TAX ID # 33-0513766. A gift to the NHA Scholarship fund is tax deductible. Thank you for your support in the 2023-24 scholarship rounds. I look forward to your support in the 2024-25 efforts.

Arne Nelson, Captain, U. S. Navy (Ret.)
President, NHA Scholarship Fund
NHA LTM #4 Rotary Wing # 13762

To APPLY or DONATE, go to our website:
https://www.nhascholarshipfund.org
https://www.nhascholarshipfund.org/prescreening/https://www.nhascholarshipfund.org/donate/

Application Season for 2025 opens 1 September 2024
Donate: Anytime

Congratulations to NHA's

Region One

*** Sarah Reilein
Auburn University
HS-5 Night Dipper Legacy
(Rick Grant Memorial)

Owen Purvis
Seattle University
Gold Star Family Member
NHA / NHAHS Mark Starr Award

Olivia Chavez
University of Texas
Austin
USS Midway
Foundation

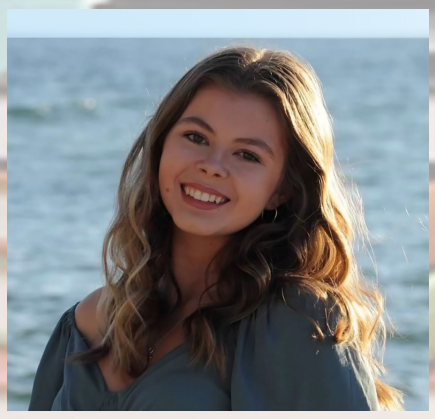
Region Two

James Ervin
Auburn University
Teledyne FLIR Memorial

** Anderson Loesch
University of North Carolina
Wilmington
Teledyne FLIR

Annalise Aaron
University of Maryland
NHA

Region Three



Emma Hatch
Mississippi State
Raytheon STEM / NHA

*** Lauren Adams
Washington University St Louis
NHA Chairman's Award (NHA)

2024 Scholarship Awardees

Region 4

**** Carly Vigeant
Arizona State University
HS-5 Night Dipper Legacy
(Craig Reynolds Memorial)

*** Julia Bates
PHD candidate
U Virginia
Big Iron (HM, Heavy HC) Legacy

Region 5

Ashley Beam
Purdue University
Leonardo Helicopters US

Region 7 (Functional Group)

** Mekenna Ledbetter
Navy Spouse
Grad Student, Brown University,
NHA

Riley Jones
Veteran E-5,
Medical Student
University of Central
Florida
NHA

Megan Geib
Navy Spouse
Penn State
Ream Family / Burdett Family
Memorials / NHA

SSGT Andrew Gregory
University of Maine
Charles Kaman Memorial

AWR1 Tyler Hanson
University of Charleston, WV
Magnum 446 Memorial

** Denotes mulitple year awards*

SH-60F Update

By CAPT Bill Personius, USN (Ret.), President, NHAHS (LTM #46 / RW#16213)

It is finally happening! We have a confirmed date for the CDR Clyde E. Lassen, USN (Ret.) SH-60F Medal of Honor Memorial Dedication! The ceremony will take place on Saturday, January 25, 2025 at the NBC/NASNI Front Gate.

Wednesday, June 19, 2024 was the 66th Anniversary of the heroic 1968 Lassen Rescue, during which Clyde and his crew recovered two downed aviators while under hostile fire in North Vietnam. There is still time to make a donation to the project and push the effort across the finish line, while leaving an enduring message on a brick at the base of the monument. Donations can be made HERE or by going to the NHAHS Website and clicking on SH-60F Donations. Don't delay… the time is now if you want to secure a personalized brick. The ordering deadline is September 27, 2024 to place your brick at the base of the monument prior to the Dedication Ceremony.

By way of an update on the status of the SH-60F Display Aircraft, the restoration process was completed before the winter holidays last year. Clementine Two is currently in the FRCSW Hangar 325 having the mounting plate attached to her belly, along with the supporting infrastructure fabricated by the civilian artisans who do all the reworking of our MH-60R/S aircraft. We expect this work will completed by the end of July.

The construction of the stanchion at the front gate will start after the Labor Day Weekend on Tuesday, September 3, 2024. A footing will be dug and a re-bar framework erected that looks exactly like the stanchion supporting the VADM Stockdale A-4 Skyhawk by the same company that built the A-4 stanchion. The work to complete the stanchion will take about two months, and then the concrete needs to cure for 30 days prior to mounting the aircraft on top of the pedestal on the proposed date of January 16, 2025 - the anniversary of Clyde's Medal of Honor Award from then President Lyndon Johnson.

There is also a finished coating that needs to go on the concrete before the aircraft can be craned into position the week before the Dedication Ceremony. The aircraft will have a MK-46 torpedo on the starboard pylon, and there will be a rock monument like VADM Stockdale's with Clyde's Medal of Honor Citation located beneath the aircraft that will be visible from the road.

We just completed what I think was one of the best NHA Symposiums since I have been around. Now, that is saying a lot, as I was the Executive Director for six of them during my tenure from 2014-2019. The Midway Members' Reunion and Red Bull Helicopter Demonstration sticks out in my mind, and the year we had the helicopters land in the Town and Country Parking lot to be displayed inside the exhibit hall was another good year. However, this year's Aircrew Competition was outstanding, the Members' Reunion by the pool was a really great event, and the Harrah's I-Bar Annex was certainly a hit, not to mention the Soft Patch Pep Rally. NHAHS and the Scholarship Fund hosted another great Golf Tournament at Admiral Baker, and everyone had a good time while making some money for the two non-profits. Thank you very much for your support.

Thank you to all those personnel who participated in the Opportunity Gift Basket Auction by purchasing tickets for what was a banner year of baskets. A big thank you goes out to Katherine Gillcrist, who led the event that raised close to $6.5K. Again…the proceeds were shared by NHAHS and NHASF. Thank you for your efforts and continued support of both organizations.

Have a safe summer and keep your turns up!
Regards,
CAPTAIN P

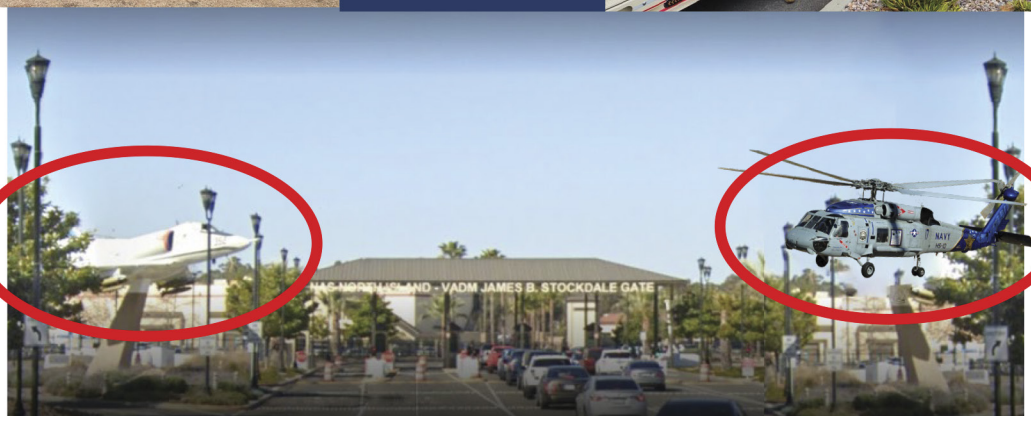
Naval Helicopter Association Historical Society (NHAHS)
https://www.nhahistoricalsociety.org/
PO Box 180578, Coronado, CA 92178-0578

Help Fund the Lassen SH-60F

"Helicopter on a Stick"
VADM Stockdale Gate
Master Helicopter Base

Make a Donation

Give Today!



Computer Rendition of NASNI Stockdale Entrance with SH-60F on a Pedestal

Mail Checks to: ***Naval Helicopter Association Historical Society, Inc. (NHAHS)***
(Preferred) ***NASNI SH-60F Project***
P.O. Box 180578, Coronado, CA 92178-0578

Or, Donate Online: ***https://sh60fhoas.navalhelicopterassociation.org/***

A Profile of one of our Editors, CDR John Ball, USN (Ret.)

CDR John Ball, USN - 46 Driver

John Ball was the second Editor-in-Chief of Rotor Review and has been involved with NHA since 1987. A native of Fairview Park, Ohio, John graduated from the Naval Academy in 1971 and served with HC-6 in Norfolk, flying the H-46 Sea Knight helicopter on two Mediterranean deployments. He earned an M.S. in Aeronautical Engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School, followed by a tour with HC-11 in San Diego as Officer-in-Charge on a WESTPAC deployment. In 1980, John was selected as an Aeronautical Engineering Duty Officer and attended the Rotary Wing Course at the U. S. Naval Test Pilot School, graduating with distinction.

At Pax River, John traveled extensively while testing various Navy and Marine helicopters. In 1982, he made the first ship landing of a tilt-rotor aircraft in the Bell XV-15 Tilt Rotor Research Aircraft aboard USS Tripoli (LPH-10) off North Island. He was a Program Officer at the Naval Plant Representative Office at Sikorsky Aircraft in Connecticut, where he flew government acceptance flights on new Army UH-60A Blackhawks, Navy SH-60B Seahawks, and Marine CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters. It was a real treat to fly helicopters that smelled new and were nearly spotless.

He returned to San Diego as an Engineering Officer at the Naval Aviation Depot, North Island, and flew post-overhaul check flights on H-46 helicopters. His final tour was on the AIRPAC Staff as Helicopter Engineering Class Desk, retiring in 1991. During his Navy career, John became a member of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots and was a 1987 NASA Fnalist for astronaut mission specialist.

While at AIRPAC, John became involved with NHA and relieved CAPT Wayne Jensen, who had started Rotor Review in 1981 as a black-and-white newsletter. Wayne, who passed away in 2012, was truly the Father of Rotor Review, publishing it for six years out of his home in Chula Vista.

In 1985, a permanent NHA Office was established - in the same building as today - at North Island, with Pam Vultè as its first Executive Director. His wife Gay was even NHA's Membership Coordinator in those days. John retired from the Navy in 1991 and passed the reins to John Driver, starting a succession of active-duty Editors that continues to this day.

John joined Bell Helicopter in Texas as an experimental test pilot and enjoyed nine years flying nearly every model of Bell helicopter. He performed development flights on new models; flew production tests on the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior; trained pilots from all corners of the globe; flew sales tours overseas; and demonstrated the experimental XV-15 Tilt Rotor in a daily routine with the V-22 Osprey in the 1995 Paris Air Show. During his aviation career, John accumulated over 6,000 flight hours in 30 different aircraft models.

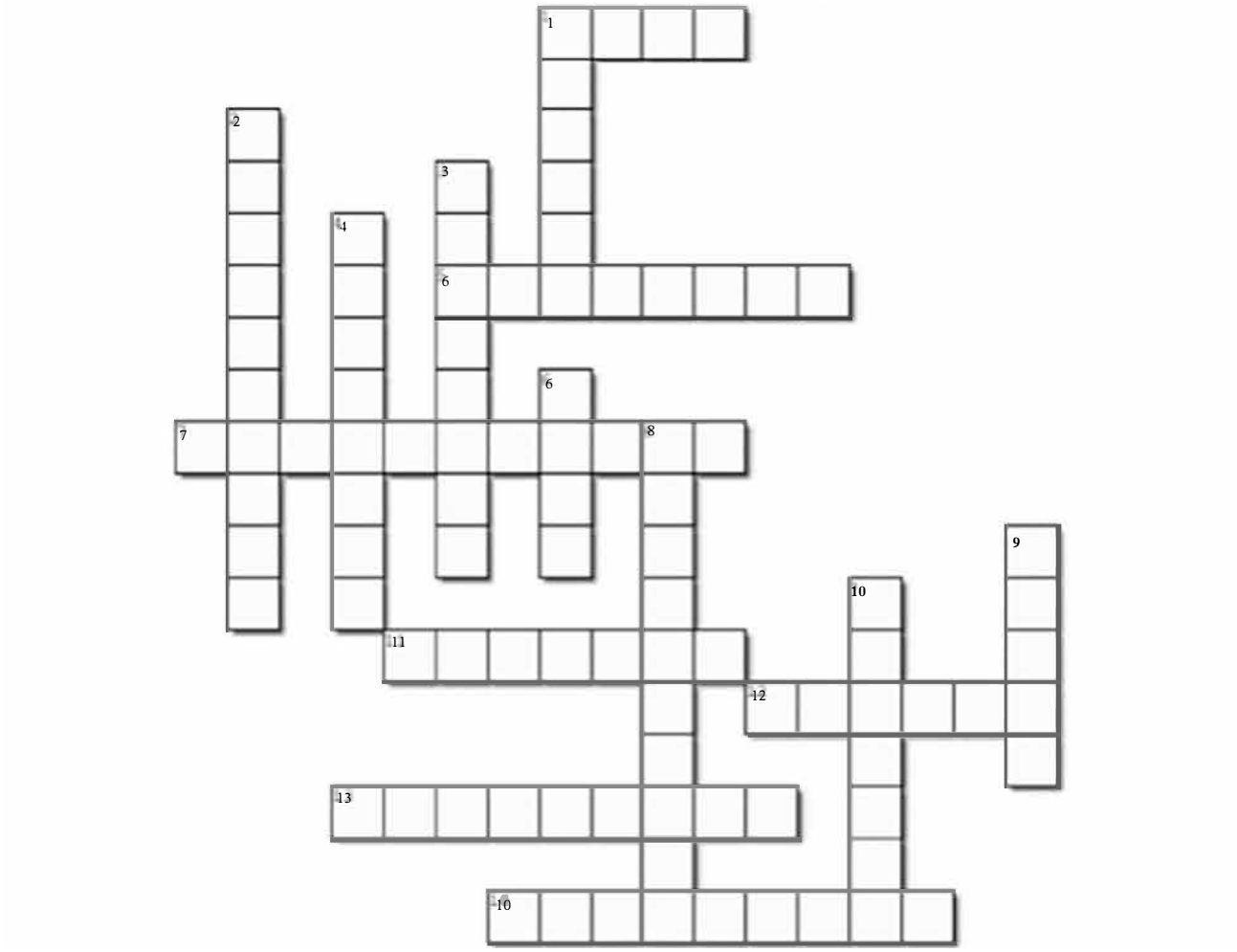
CDR John Ball, USN (Ret.) - World Traveler

In 2003, he joined Northrop Grumman in San Diego, flying a desk as an Engineering Manager for Fire Scout unmanned helicopter programs. Fully retiring in 2012, John reconnected with NHA, joining the NHA Historical Society and serving as a Copy Editor for each issue, as well as writing a number of articles over the years. John has the distinction of being not only an Editor-in-Chief of Rotor Review, but also a Copy Editor - thereby improving the content and quality of this professional magazine.

John has traveled extensively in Europe, learned Italian, and enjoys sailing, surfing, photography, building aircraft models, and aviation history. John was married to the former Katherine Gay Bowell for 47 years until her passing in 2019. Together, they have two married sons and four grandchildren

The Human Weapon
Try your hand at this crossword puzzle. Good luck!

By Maj. Michael Ayala (USMC)



Horizontal:

1. Possibility of loss or injury
5. Relating to or situated on the shore of the sea or a lake
7. Shared or spread out
11. Immediate charge and control (as over a ward or a suspect) exercised by a person or an authority
12. Stand or wait around idly or without apparent purpose (similar to airborne holding)
13. The aspect of military science dealing with the procurement, maintenance, and transportation of military material and sustainment
14. Something (such as a tune, style, shape, sound) that serves to set apart or identify

Vertical:

1. A cylindrical projectile that can be propelled to a great height or distance by the combustion of its contents
2. Relating to, living in, or suited for both land and water
3. Air to ground anti-tank missile launched from a variety of platforms to include helicopters and UAVs
4. Used to classify something, or suggest that it can be classified, in terms of its position on a scale between two extremes
6. Legendary Assault Support platform that saw action originally in Vietnam and is still in service with the USMC
8. A journey or voyage undertaken by a group of people with a particular purpose, especially that of exploration or as part of a military excursion
9. Legendary Attack helicopter named after a large and venomous snake (typically found in the jungles of several countries within INDOPACOM AOR)
10. A mechanism that initiates a process or reaction; a mechanical linkage that discharges a firearm (something you should always keep your finger straight and off of until you're ready to fire)

Answers on page 85

The Panels & Presentations

The Captains of Industry Panel members include Bell's Tyler Harrell, Sikorsky's Audrey Brady, C3I's Ben Medley, and Team Osprey's Kurt Fuller.

The Flag Panel, with Admirals Cheever, Gumbleton, Spencer, and Walt.

The Enlisted ProDev Panel Members includes Jay Johnson, Shelby Mounts, and Chris Pinar.

JO Call with the Airboss

The Commodore Panel with Commodores Eastham, Richards, McCaffree, and Anderson.

JOPA Panel - Alive and Well!

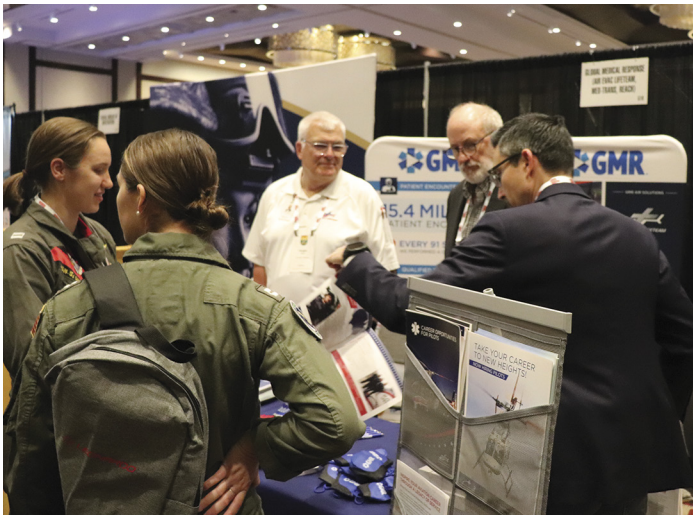
The Exhibit Hall

Naval Special Warfare Command

Massif

Team Osprey

AWS1 James Buriak Foundation



Global Medical Response (GMR)

Bluedrop USA

The Awards

The Captain Arnold Jay Isbell Trophy, sponsored by Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company, was awarded to HSM-73 “BattleCats,” HSC-12 “Golden Falcons,” HSM-48 “Vipers,” and HSC-26 “Chargers.”

The CDR James R. Walker Tactician Award, sponsored by Bluedrop USA, was awarded to LT Luke Aleksandravicius, USN of HSMWSP.

The Admiral Jimmy S. Thach Award, sponsored by Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company, was awarded to HSM-70 "Spartans."

The RADM Steven Tomaszeski, USN (Ret.) Squadron Commanding Officer Leadership Award, sponsored by GE Aerospace, was awarded to CDR Andrew Countiss, USN, Commanding Officer of HM-15.

The Battle "E" Awards were presented to HSC-6, HSC-5, HSM-51, HSM-48, HSC-23, HSC-28, HSM-73, HSM-70, HM-15, and VRM-30.

The Awards

Aircrew of the Year (Non-Deployed) was awrded to the crew of CGNR 6588 CGAS Detriot HAC: LT Keith Kraker, USCG, Copilot: LT Kyla Hughley, USCG, Flight Mechanic: AET3 Dan Brown, USCG, Rescue Swimmer: AST2 Benjamin Woodward, USCG and sponsored by Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company.

Aircrew of the Year (Deployed) Sponsored by Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company was awarded to the helicopter crews of CARRIER AIR WING 3.

Fleet Instructor Pilot of the Year, sponsored by Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company, was awarded to LT Edwin Stephens, USN, of HSM-40 who was deployed.

Pilot of the Year, sponsored by Navy Mutual Aid Association, was awarded LT Christopher Jacobsen of HSC-5.

Shipboard Pilot of the Year, sponsored by V2X,was awarded to LCDR Casey Vann, USN, currently aboard USS Tripoli (LHA 7).

Training Command Instructor Pilot of the Year sponsored by V2X, was awarded to LT Christopher Stuller, USN of HT-8.

Aircrew Instructor of the Year, sponsored by Robertson Fuel Systems, was awarded to AWS1 Benjamin Lazarus, USN.

The Awards

Aircrewman of the Year, sponsored by Breeze Eastern, was awarded to AWR1 James Corr, USN of HSM-46.

COMNAVAIRLANT Enlisted Aircrewman of the Year was awarded to AWS1 Brennan Oakley, USN of HSC-28.

Rescue Swimmer of the Year, sponsored by Breeze Eastern, was awarded to AWS2 Luke Stoll, USN of NAS Lemoore SAR.

Junior Enlisted Maintainer of the Year, sponsored by CAE, was awarded to AD2 Jesse Garman, USN of HSM-75.

Maintenance Officer of the Year, sponsored by V2X, was awarded to CWO3 Jayvenyl Superales, USN of HSM-48.

Senior Enlisted Maintainer of the Year, sponsored by CAE, was awarded to AM1 Robert Detzel, USN of HSM-73.

The Awards

Air Vehicle Operator (AVO) of the Year (Pilot), sponsored by Northrop Grumman, was awarded to LCDR Angelo Lonero, USN of HSC-21.

Air Vehicle Operator (AVO) Instructor of the Year (Pilot), sponsored by Northrop Grumman, was awarded to LT Austin Grow, USN of HSCWSP.

Mission Payload Operator (MPO) of the Year (Aircrew), sponsored by Northrop Grumman was awarded to AWS2 Matthew Nyitray, USN of HSCWP.

Mission Payload Operator (MPO) Instructor of the Year (Aircrew), sponsored by Northrop Grumman, was awarded to AWS1 Devin Haswell, USN, HSCWSP.

CNATRA Flight Instructor of the Year was awarded to LT Daniel Kuerbitz, USN of HT-28. The award was presented by CAPT Dave Kennedy, USN (Ret.) for ANA.

The ANA Helicopter Aviation Award was presented to the HSM-50 crew of Raven 555: LCDR Daniel Kutz, USN, LT Paul McClanahan, USN, and AWR3 Collin Shilts, USN. The award was presented by CAPT Dave Kennedy, USN (Ret.) for ANA.

Images from Symposium

Guest Speaker, CAPT Tamara "T Lo" Graham, USN (Ret.) poses with attendees of the Female Aviator Breakfast.

NHA Volunteer of the Year was awarded to LT Evan Richards, USN of HSM-41.

The CAPT Mark Starr Award, sponsored by North Island Credit Union, was awarded to CAPT E. Earle Rogers II, USN (Ret.). CAPT Dennis DuBard, USN (Ret.) accepted on his behalf.

The Lifelong Service Award, sponsored by Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company, was presented to Mr. Robert Thompson, the H-60 Technical Representative, Cherry Point Fleet Support Team at the VIP Lunch.

Service to NHA Award, sponsored by Robertson Fuel Systems, was presented to Ms. Linda Vydra.

The NHA Historical Society Golden Crew Chief Award was presented to AWSCM Robert Thomas Kershaw, USN.

The Winners of The Challenge

First Place Winners
HSM-41 A-TEAM: AWRAN Nikolas Lee, AWRAN James Dalton, AWRAN Nathan Bruner, and AWRAN Peyton Yurek.

Second Place Winners
HSM-73 BattleCats: AWR2 Jacob Louderback, AWR2 Eric Ordaz, AWR3 Carlos Narte, and AWR3 Joseph Kennedy.

Third Place Winners
HSC-25 Island Knights: AWS2 Matthew Grillo, AWS3 Hunter Reichert, AWS3 Oliver Coric, and AWS3 Andrew Weber.

"The Swim" in the Lazy River

"The Litter Carry"

"The Truck Pull" ...technique over brawn!

Scenes from the Aircrew Challenge

"Pure grit and determination!"

"Burpees forever!"

"Guns on fire!"

The Soft Patch was a huge hit with "Fetus" stoking the fire!

Newest Eightballers

Newest Wolves in the Pack

Newest Raptors

Newest Magicians

Newest BattleCats

Newest Warlords

Newest Wildcards

Indebted to our Industry partners and Supporters

Additionally, there were so many great moments captured by our photographers: AWR1 Ronald Pierpoint, AWR1, Connor Olson, and Raymond Rivard!

We can't print them all but you can. Visit the NHA Symposium 2024 Page on the NHA Website and click on the link, (https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NkVVrtoqc6ehT2Ns-ePSP_yNu82O0BrN?usp=sharing).

If you were at Symposium this year, you or your squadronmates are probably in them.

You can also take a look at the highlights on the slideshow, or watch the panels on the recorded livestream. Go to https://www.navalhelicopterassn.org/symposium-2024.

Be Informed. Be Entertained. Be NHA!

BELL V-280 VALOR

REVOLUTIONIZING THE FUTURE OF NAVAL AVIATION

Tested, validated and ready to win the fight. The only aircraft with flight-proven agility, speed and range for the future Maritime Strike mission.

Learn more at bell.co/V280-MS

Enhancing Operational Health for Naval Aircrew: Insights from the Readiness, Resilience, and Recovery (R3) Study

By Dr. Marcus K. Taylor*, Dr. Anu Venkatesh*, Ms. Lisa M. Hernández*, LT Albert "Podunc" Snipes, USN, AWSCM Robert T. Kershaw, USN, and AWSCM Shane H. Gibbs, USN
****These authors contributed equally to the article.***

Introduction

The well-being of Naval Aircrew is vital to operational readiness and ensuring mission success. As front-line warriors, these individuals face unique day-to-day challenges that demand a tailored approach to sustaining peak psychological and physical condition. At the request of Commanders, Helicopter Sea Combat Wing Pacific, Helicopter Sea Combat Wing Atlantic, and Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Wing, our NHRC and NIWC Pacific collaborators have initiated the Readiness, Recovery, and Resilience (R3) Study. Led by a cross-functional team composed of personnel from COMHSCWINGPAC and COMVRMWING and research scientists from the Naval Health Research Center (NHRC) and Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC), Pacific, the R3 Study collects survey data and biomarkers of stress and resilience to assess the mental and physical status of the Aircrew Community. Importantly, personally identifying information (e.g., name, birth date) is not collected for this study, ensuring that participant privacy is protected. Appreciating that the warfighter is the most important link in the defense chain, the R3 Study promotes the welfare of Aircrew members by identifying unmet or unknown operational health requirements.

Naval Aircrewman (Helicopter) 1st Class Troy Roomes, assigned to HSC-5, performs aircrew operations aboard an MH-60S Knighthawk at Naval Air Station Fallon. **U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communications Specialist Seaman Samuel Wagner.**

Study Procedures

The study team visits individual commands and delivers an informational brief about the study. Members who choose to volunteer complete an electronic consent document on a computer tablet. Following this, participants begin an electronic survey composed of validated measures of readiness, resilience, and recovery. While participants complete the survey, the study team measures their resting blood pressure and heart rate with an automatic blood pressure cuff. The last component of the study is the self-collection of a saliva sample. Participants place a cotton-like swab under their tongue for two minutes and then place the swab in a collection tube. These samples are used to test for stress-related biomarkers. Study data are organized and analyzed using a statistical software program.

Initial Results

To date, 182 Aircrew members have participated in the R3 Study. After analyzing the data collected from these individuals, our scientists identified five primary operational health concerns: (1) injury history and pain, (2) stress-related symptoms, (3) sleep and fatigue, (4) physical inactivity, and (5) mental health symptoms (e.g., anxiety). However, study results also showed that there were relatively high levels of social support, commitment to the Navy, and leadership satisfaction—all of which are known to be protective factors and contribute to positive long-term health outcomes. Altogether, this information serves as actionable intelligence to inform leadership decisions.

The Way Ahead

The R3 Study is ongoing, with a target sample size of 500 members. However, this is already a significant step toward addressing the operational health needs of Naval Aircrew members. By leveraging modern research methodologies and focusing on the pillars of Readiness, Resilience, and Recovery,

LCDR Heather Nance, (left), and LT Jordan Witt, both currently assigned to Patrol Squadron (VP) 30, fly a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft during a scheduled all-women flight. **U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Curtis D. Spencer.**

the study aims to revolutionize support for our front-line warriors. Detailed R3 Study results will be forthcoming in future issues of Rotor Review.

Further, the ultimate objective of the R3 Study is programmatic transition, including establishing a Naval Aircrew Tactical Athlete Program (NACTAP) as a Program of Record. By collecting data on Aircrew status, this study provides evidence to justify the development of targeted interventions and support, such as access to human performance specialists and on-site physical therapy services. Such data-driven resources will help to address current health concerns, mitigate future injuries, and promote overall Aircrew well-being. We believe this approach can improve resilience across the Aircrew Community, and thereby reduce the impact of future threats to operational health by extending mission endurance and reducing long-term injury risk. As we move forward, let us continue to prioritize the operational health of our Aircrew Community, ensuring that they remain fit to fight and ready to defend our nation.

Naval Aircrewman (Helicopter) 1st Class Jacob Glende (left), hoists Naval Aircrewman (Helicopter) 2nd Class Javier Lopez, both assigned to the "Fleet Angels" of HSC-2, during an over-water hoist demonstration. **U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Zachary Melvin.**

Questions about the R3 Study can be directed to the Principal Investigator, Dr. Marcus Taylor, at marcus.k.taylor2.civ@health.mil.

Acknowledgments

We thank all R3 Study volunteer subjects for their time and participation.

Disclaimer: M.K.T. is an employee of the U.S. Government. This work was prepared as part of his official duties. Title 17, U.S.C. §105 provides that copyright protection under this title is not available for any work of the U.S. Government. Title 17, U.S.C. §101 defines a U.S. Government work as work prepared by a military service member or employee of the U.S. Government as part of that person's official duties. Report No. 24-34 was supported by the Naval Health Research Center Rapid Response Program and the Defense Health Agency Military Operational Medicine Research Program under work unit numbers 62362 and N1522. The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Navy, Department of Defense, nor the U.S. Government. The study protocol was approved by the Naval Health Research Center Institutional Review Board in compliance with all applicable federal regulations governing the protection of human subjects. Research data were derived from approved Naval Health Research Center Institutional Review Board protocol number NHRC.2023.0005.

U.S. Naval Aviators, Aircrew, Maintenance Teams, and other personnel assigned to the "Merlins" of HSC-3 pose for a photograph in front of an MH-60S Seahawk Helicopter during a community engagement at Page Municipal Airport in Page, Arizona, April 26, 2024. **U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Sara Eshleman.**

Resiliency: Recovering from Unrecognized Complacency, Naval Aviation's Silent Killer

By LCDR Tim "Pickle" Dinsmore, USN (Ret.)

One of the hardest challenges any aviator will ever have to overcome is complacency. Overcoming it becomes harder as you gain in experience and flight hours. Recognizing it, fighting it, and recovering from it is much easier said than done.

What is complacency? Merriam Webster defines it as a sense of unaware and uninformed self-satisfaction. But it is much more than that, it is a mindset that affects individual behavior, decision-making, and error recognition. Psychologists know what causes complacency, ask any, and they will generally list eight reasons:

A U.S. Navy helicopter that crashed into a forest while making an emergency landing.

1. Previous success breeds a sense of overconfidence and invulnerability.

2. Routinization causes familiarity and predictability that prevents people from seeing deviations that affect safety - too many sets and reps.

3. Lack of constructive feedback creates a mindset that performance deviations are acceptable.

4. Group think inadvertently promotes deviations, by tolerating them.

5. Monotony and boredom - not enough sets and reps.

6. External pressures, especially time restrictive deadlines, cause people to prioritize efficiency over thoroughness.

7. Lack of accountability fosters complacency, especially for minor deviations.

8. Becoming too comfortable in a single role that a person no longer finds challenging.

A quick look at any job in Naval Aviation, and you can quickly see, any aviator, no matter how great they might be, is susceptible to complacency. There are two issues at hand that will cause an aviator to not realize they are complacent. These two issues work together and sometimes work against each other, but always lead to complacency.

The first is normalization of deviance. Normalization of deviance is a socially learned behavior. There is a correct way to complete any task. As aviators we know this. We are held to a standard, tested against that standard, and as experts, we know the standard by heart. In many cases, the standard might be impossibly narrow, for example 500' AGL and 100 KIAS. We all know that those numbers really mean "about" or "around"…right? "Sure the course rules manual says 500' and 100 KIAS, but these winds are crazy and turbulent." "Yes the precision approach speed for helicopters is 90 KIAS, but it's VFR and we both need 6." If you ever entered into this type of informal social contract, then you normalized deviance. You have deviated away from the standard. Normalization of deviance always starts with the smallest most insignificant deviations that are easily justified socially to one another. But, over time, as a group (especially as you add new members to that group) those deviations become normalized. Once the normalization of deviance ball starts rolling, the group will continuously deviate further from the standard. Five years on someone will say "We've always flown these course rules at 500' AGL and 120 knots, but we need to get there, are you good with pulling max torque?" "Every time it's VFR, we fly these approaches at 120 knots, it's efficient." Until robots take to the skies, aviators will suffer from the pressures of social conformity and normalization of deviance.

The second is drift. Drift is an attitude. Like normalization of deviance, drift manifests itself in tiny, nearly imperceptible errors that are easily justified to yourself. "I didn't follow the checklist and recharge the APU accumulator because I needed to get off the spot. I'll get it on external power." "I was all over the place on the numbers today, but I'm knocking off some rust." In this case, drift is insidious. Drift is so easily explained away, that as soon as you justify it to yourself you forget you drifted. The million dollar question is when does it stop? You are the only person who knows you drifted. How far do you allow yourself to drift? For most aviators, it's the first time they scare themselves half to death.

When you pair drift and normalization of deviance to the eight reasons aviators become complacent, you have a recipe for disaster. The result is unrecognized complacency, and it will kill you. Can you learn to recognize it in yourself and your squadron-mates? How can you recover from it?

The adage, there are two types of aviators, those who are complacent and those recovering from it rings true. If you find you are complacent, attack your complacency with grace knowing you aren't alone. Here are some questions to ask yourself to see if you are being complacent:

1. Are you too comfortable with certain tasks? Do you go through the motions of the preflight, or do you still look at every single item in detail with the fervency of your first day at the FRS?

2. Are you still learning on every flight? Do you come home from a flight and think you are just a little bit better? Do you have a mindset of constant improvement, no matter how small?

3. Have you ever asked another trusted aviator if you have any blind-spots? Have you ever asked your best friend in the squadron if they think you are complacent?

4. Do you guard yourself against personal drift by not making excuses (to yourself) for errors/deviations?

5. Are you cynical or apathetic about your cockpit environment, crew, mission, or squadron? Do you non-maliciously choose to not to do something because it doesn't really make a difference, isn't that important, is there to make someone else look good, is doing someone else's work for them?

6. Do you always feel like you are clubbing alligators closest to the boat, pressed for time, forced to accept ambiguity? Will you let things slide a little to get a task done?

7. Have you ever thought about where you started, where you are now, and where you want to be as an aviator?

8. Do you make minor, easily justifiable errors, frequently?

9. Are you willing to accept deviations from standards if someone else agrees? Or, is that how your squadron has always done it?

10. Do you know the correct procedure, and also have some workarounds ready in case you need them?

Resilient aviators deal with their complacency and overcome it. Admitting to yourself you have been complacent is a hard pill to swallow, and for most aviators it's a constant career-long struggle. Here are some strategies to overcome complacency if you recognize it in yourself:

1. If you find yourself skipping a checklist item, or not looking hard enough at a preflight, or deciding the numbers are impossibly strict, then become an expert at that thing. Teaching yourself the why and how will cause you to be more conscious of that task. You can also set a goal for yourself and hold yourself accountable. "The next ten times I do this, it's going to be as close to the standard as I can get."

2. Practice self-discipline. Are you following a routine or are you falling into a rut? Question if your actions and habits are standardized, and safe. Be deliberate, and know why you do what you do.

3. Talk about your drift with trusted friends, verbalize your plan to correct it, ask them for their feedback.

4. Set specific personal limits and challenge yourself to meet them.

5. Maintain your momentum with mindfulness. Recognize self-success in correcting the area you became complacent. Compare the past you, to the current you and acknowledge your self-improvement.

6. Question your priorities. Why are you focusing on this one task, are you forgetting about another equally or more important one.

7. Recognize small errors as a sign of complacency. Do not justify them to yourself or your peers, instead state how you are going to not make the mistake again.

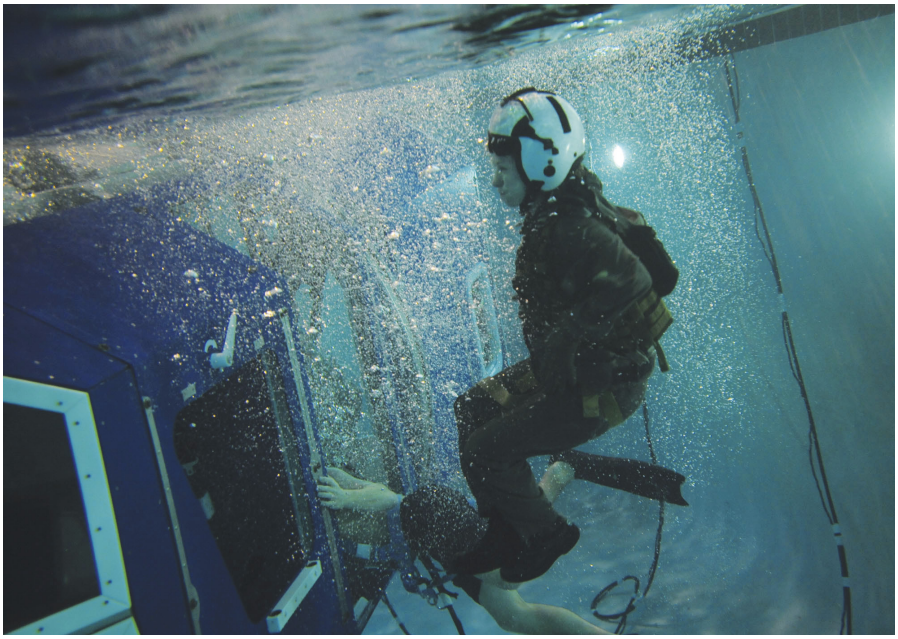
8. Challenge the status quo / normalization of deviance with thoughtful, non-threatening questions. How come we always do it this way when the manual says we should do it like this?

Complacency is a hazard of the job, but it is not an acceptable part of the job. Complacency affects safety, and unrecognized complacency certainly kills. Overcoming it is a personal choice. At brief time, no one ever asks you about your complacency level. It is your responsibility to fix it. Knowing how, when, and why you have the potential to be complacent is part of learning to recognize it. If you find you have become a little complacent, with one or many tasks, it doesn't mean you are a terrible aviator, it just means you are a human.

A Mindfulness Guide for the Dunker Ride

By CDR Jess "INTAKE" Phenning, USN, and Dr. Leigh Ann Perry

Many of us experience anxiety leading up to our quadrennial helo dunker qualification - I know I do. While not very severe (i.e., no emergency services), I had a near-drowning experience as a kid that I still remember vividly. Being underwater in certain circumstances, even in the shallow end, can send me into near-panic.



A student swims to the surface after exiting the 9D6 Dunker during a simulated aircraft water landing exercise at the Aviation Survival Training Center at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. **Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Todd Frantom, USN.**

For me, the weeks leading up to the dunker typically look like random bouts of acute "fight or flight" feelings that increase in frequency as the date approaches. Really, all I have to think about is getting water up my nose and I'm mentally there. I'll be driving on the freeway - statistically far more dangerous than dunker training - and suddenly I'm in a dunker simulation in my head. That intrusive dunker simulation keeps visiting me, along with anxiety, reaching a peak on classroom day and the morning of pool day. The classroom day might as well be in a different language. The common pool deck gripe of "why can't we do this part on day one and get it over with" indicates that at a minimum, others have similar trouble focusing on the classroom training on the first day. Why? Because we are worried and stressed. It is uncomfortable training. We have to get that Q to keep flying. We like flying.

I am also one that tends to get a lot of attention from the safety folks as I "swim" very slowly in gear with my "combat" sidestroke, then coughing, sputtering, and drown(proof?)ing my way through inflating the LPU orally, praying that they don't think I'm struggling enough to stop the progress I've made. Most of my previous dunker adventures have included re-rides, but I've ultimately passed every time. Usually I walk out the door thinking it wasn't as difficult as I remember it being (and chastising myself for spending so much time thinking about it), but the mental lead-up to the dunker is always a distraction.

So, if you get distracted like me, my goal here is to provide you with a few things that I did this time that made the training easier and improved my confidence by allowing me to focus on the right things.

I like to think about "what's different this time" beyond flying. Call it a reflex by this point. In 2020 as a CAT 3 FRP, what was different about AC REF 3 was COVID (meaning we didn't actually use the dunker) and being in the best physical shape. In 2024 as a CAT 3 FRP, what was different about AC REF 3 was a solid baseline of mindfulness practice that included training from mindfulness experts at the U.S. Naval War College (NWC). One of these experts is Dr. Leigh Ann Perry, Associate Professor of Psychology and Behavioral Science in the College of Leadership and Ethics. She also teaches at Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island, and has recently started conducting mindfulness training for SURFLANT ship triads. She is insanely busy, but spreading the word about the benefits of mindfulness is important to her, so she's kindly lent her voice here. Her knowledge follows throughout in italics.

While research into the benefits of mindfulness practice is relatively young and more work still needs to be done, results have been promising. Based on these findings and the importance of maximizing both cognitive capacities and emotion regulation for military members, I began offering weekly mindfulness practices at the NWC so students, faculty, and staff could learn about and practice various types of mindfulness such as mindful breathing and mindfulness meditation. At the NWC, we also discuss the science behind these types of practices during Lectures of Opportunity (LOOs) and in an elective on Psychological Concepts for Military Leaders. Similar to how we think about the benefits of physical exercise for wellness, we wanted to begin the conversation about mental exercise for a more holistic approach to health and well-

being. After all, our minds and bodies are constantly interacting and affecting each other. They do not operate in isolation.

The NWC mindfulness classes helped me much more than being in good shape did. I can't guarantee this will work for everyone, but it worked so well for me that I think it's worth sharing. Here are four mindfulness-related things I did to prepare for the dunker.

1: Meditate. Practicing meditation sets the baseline you need in order to recognize your thoughts and let them pass. If you've never meditated before and you're going swimming next week, these ideas may not be as helpful as they would be to someone who has a solid practice. Still, the best time to start is now, and the best frequency is as often as you can. I use the Peloton App or Insight Timer for guided meditation, but guided meditation can also be found on the Headspace App, the Calm App, or on YouTube, to name a few resources (some of which also have free versions). Even 5 minutes a day can start you towards a solid practice. If you're skeptical and/or want to know more about what benefits this practice actually has for your brain, I highly recommend reading "Peak Mind" by Dr. Amishi Jha (2021). She discusses military-specific studies and applications in her book as well.

I started meditating on my own in August 2021 and was more or less consistent through my department head tour. The summer between my second and third terms at Naval War College in 2023, the faculty began offering guided meditation twice a week, as Leigh Ann mentions above. I was a regular attendee, and learned concepts and techniques from actual experts. I saw improvement in my own focus, mental clarity, and equanimity.

As Jess notes, practicing mindfulness only one or two times will not build that mental muscle - just like going to the gym two times in eight weeks and doing a set of bicep curls each time won't build your bicep muscle. It takes consistency and repetition. That is part of why we offer the sessions two times a week at the NWC. It allows for practice reps and hopefully gives each person the confidence over time to begin practicing on their own and establishing consistency in their routine.

2: If you get episodes of "fight or flight" in the days or weeks before dunker training, remind your brain that you are not in danger at this moment, then do your best to focus on the feeling. Do your hands go cold? Does your chest get tight? Let it ride, DO NOT suppress it. You ARE NOT in danger, but the feeling is there for a reason, and noticing what that feeling actually feels like is helpful. Usually by the time I got to the second part, my anxiety was actually fading.

Mindfulness practice offers benefits for both enhancing focus and regulating stress responses - two things from which most of us could surely benefit! By cultivating an awareness of the present moment, individuals can train their minds to focus more effectively on the tasks at hand, minimizing distractions and improving overall productivity. This heightened focus stems from the practice's emphasis on observing thoughts and sensations in the present moment without interpretation or judgment, which helps break the cycle of rumination and worry that often disrupts our attention. When we ruminate, our mind shifts to thinking about what has happened in the past. When we worry, our mind gets caught up in what might happen in the future. When we are able to stay in the present moment, we allow our brain to focus its energy on the here and now, enabling maximum effort to be directed to the task we are tackling in that moment.

By examining our thoughts, sensations, and emotions objectively - without interpreting why we are having that thought, what that sensation means, why we would experience that emotion, etc, - we allow ourselves to examine it for what it objectively is as opposed to getting caught up in our subjective interpretation of it. That subjective interpretation is what can keep us in fight or flight mode when we don't really need to be there! Jess gives an example of how she did this before the dunker training in her previous suggestion. Focusing our attention without interpretation or judgment allows us to have more control over how we respond to stressors that may arise. Instead of becoming overtaken by emotions we may be feeling, we can instead be aware of their presence, take notice of them, and then direct our attention back to where we want it to be in that moment to tackle the task at hand.

3: Go into the classroom day with the intention of being present. When your thoughts wander, recognize that and guide them back (see tip 1). You'll get much more out of that survival training. You can't physically put yourself in the pool that day, so why be there mentally? And again, you aren't in danger. You aren't even really in danger in the pool, but sometimes your brain needs an explicit reminder of that. I had to bump myself back to the present a few times, but I ended day one this time feeling like I learned and retained much more than I had previously.

I think the final tip is the one that made the difference for me in the pool.

4: If you read "Peak Mind," you'll learn that attention has three modes, one of which - the orienting mode - is metaphorically described as a "flashlight."[1] While there's more than one mode, you only get one flashlight, and your brain points that flashlight toward where it wants your attention to go. Meditation helps you learn how to wield more control over that flashlight. When I found myself thinking too much about my upcoming survival training, I would take a moment and hold my breath. When I started feeling like I needed to breathe, I practiced shifting my focus from my breath to my hands (moving my metaphorical flashlight from breath to hand), just for a few seconds. I did not do this back to back; it's probably not great for you health-wise. Just one time in

1. Jha, Amishi. Peak Mind. New York, Harper Collins, 2021. pp.34

reps, and just occasionally in sets. This is a bit counter to what you'll find when starting a meditation practice. Breath is often the subject of your focus. It has been the start or focal point of many practices I've done. Underwater, though, breath means very little. Your hands will save you, and I wanted to be focusing on what my hands were doing instead of whether I needed air. Using the flashlight concept as a way of directing my attention helped me to do that.

Additionally, mindfulness has been shown to promote relaxation and emotion regulation, enabling individuals to respond to stressors with greater calmness and resilience. As a result, regular mindfulness practice not only sharpens cognitive functions but also fosters a more clear and composed mental state, contributing to overall well-being. If you are interested in diving deeper into the science behind attention and how mindfulness can play a role in this, Dr. Daniel Goleman's book "Focus: The Hidden Driver of Excellence"[2] provides an easily digestible overview no matter your science background.

In addition, Dr. Goleman co-authored "Altered Traits: Science Reveals How Meditation Changes Your Mind, Brain, and Body"[3] with Dr. Richard Davidson, providing a look into the research on how mindfulness and meditation affect multiple facets of our well-being.[4]

I'm going to caveat the above - I wasn't successful every time I tried doing these things leading up to water survival, I just kept doing them. The results paid out in the actual dunker, where I was successful on every ride. Once I was upside down, I was calm and focused. I realized with surprise the first time I popped up - I didn't think about my breath at all. I was taking my last breath as soon as my feet hit the water, and then I was completely focused on the steps of the EP and the task at hand. The real test came on ride four: a day-time, immediate ditch (windows underwater) no supplemental breathing ride. We flipped, and the person in front of me struggled with our exit for a few seconds. Previously, I would have immediately thought about air and grabbed my HABD (which would have prompted a re-ride). This time, I gave it a few seconds. Suddenly, he was gone and my way was clear. I had plenty of time to get out.

Dunker training is the safest way to practice the worst case scenario, but many of us dread it. The blurry eyes, the water up the nose, the idea of being trapped underwater - it's all uncomfortable, but it is very safe. Multiple professionals are supervising each evolution and are totally focused on making sure we get the space to practice. This was the first time I walked away not only feeling like it was easier than I remembered, but actually feeling confident in myself that I could calmly and effectively do the procedures - which is the stated objective of the training!

2. Goleman, Daniel. Focus: the hidden driver of excellence. HarperAudio, 2013.
3. Goleman, Daniel and Richard J. Davidson. Altered Traits: science reveals how meditation changes your mind, brain, and body. New York, Avery, 2017.
4. Dr. Goleman also wrote Emotional Intelligence, a book I recommend to any leader. If you don't have time, he discusses elements of this book on Episode 312 of Dax Shepard's podcast "Armchair Expert."

LSI

www.lsijax.com

The Leader in Innovative Training Solutions

CMV-22 / MV-22
Virtual Aircrew and Maintenance Training

The CMV-22 and MV-22 are desktop and mobile applications that provide a set of maintenance tools enhancing the training of the fleet and future CMV-22 and MV-22 technicians in theories of operation and critical maintenance procedures.

H-1 Training Device Modernization Program

The H-1 TDMP project includes the Modernization of 16 fielded AH-1Z and UH-1Y Flight Training Devices (FTDs) and Full Flight Simulators (FFS).

MH-60R/S Operator and Maintenance

MH-60R/S courseware and training is a blended solution employing Interactive Courseware (ICW), Instructor-guided Computer Aided Instruction (CAI), interactive examinations, and curriculum packages supporting laboratory events.

NAVAL HELICOPTER ASSOCIATION

NHA

The Human Weapon: Prioritizing Physical and Mental Readiness in Naval Aircrew Service

By CMDCM (NAC/AW/SW) Keith "Flip" Griffin, USN (Ret.)

In the demanding world of the Naval Helicopter Community, the human element stands as the most critical asset, often referred to as "The Human Weapon." This concept encompasses the essential prioritization of both physical and mental readiness among pilots and enlisted aircrew. Drawing from my 23+ years of experience in the Search and Rescue (SAR) Community as a Search and Rescue Corpsman, I can attest that this focus is not merely beneficial, but vital. The ethos of "So Others May Live" and "The First to Launch, Last to Land" embodies a dedication and resilience that is ingrained in every member of the helicopter community. This attitude is forged through countless hours of rigorous training and real-world experiences that test the limits of human endurance and fortitude. The unique challenges of over-water and overland rescues, coupled with the evolving nature of mission sets brought by multi-mission aircraft like the MH-60S and MH-60R helicopters, underscore the necessity of maintaining peak physical and mental fitness. This comprehensive readiness is not just about meeting the demands of the job but excelling in it, ensuring that every mission is executed with the utmost precision and effectiveness.

The mantra of "So Others May Live" captures the relentless spirit and unwavering commitment of Naval pilots and aircrew. This attitude is not just a statement but a way of life, requiring rigorous training and exceptional mental fortitude. As the first responders in critical situations, aircrew members must be ready to deploy at a moment's notice, often operating in high-stress environments for extended periods. This level of preparedness demands a comprehensive approach to physical fitness, ensuring that all personnel can endure the physical rigors of their duties. Strength, endurance, and agility are not just desirable traits but essential capabilities that can mean the difference between life and death in rescue operations. The physical training regimen for aircrew is meticulously designed to build these attributes, incorporating activities such as swimming, running, weight training, and high-intensity interval training (HIIT). Additionally, mental resilience is cultivated through scenarios that simulate the pressure and unpredictability of real missions. This holistic approach to training ensures that aircrew members are not only physically capable but also mentally prepared to handle the stresses of their roles. The demanding nature of these preparations fosters a culture of excellence and readiness, where every member understands the gravity of their responsibilities and the importance of their readiness in safeguarding lives.

The physical and mental demands of Search and Rescue operations are unparalleled. Over-water rescues, for instance, involve navigating the complexities of open seas, dealing with harsh weather conditions, and locating individuals who may be in precarious situations. The uncertainty of the ocean, with its unpredictable currents and vast expanse, requires

SAR teams to possess exceptional navigational skills, physical stamina, and psychological resilience. The physical strain of over-water operations is immense, as rescuers may have to swim long distances, manage heavy equipment, and endure prolonged exposure to cold and rough seas. Meanwhile, the mental demands are equally challenging, with rescuers needing to stay focused, make quick decisions, and maintain composure under extreme stress. On the other hand, overland rescues present their own set of challenges, such as difficult terrain, limited visibility, and the need for precise coordination with ground units. These missions often require SAR personnel to hike through rugged landscapes, carry out complex extraction procedures, and maintain communication in environments where technology may be unreliable. The ability to adapt to these varied scenarios, while maintaining a high level of performance, underscores the critical nature of physical and mental readiness. The diverse challenges of SAR operations highlight the importance of specialized training that prepares aircrew for the full spectrum of rescue scenarios. This training not only enhances their technical skills but also builds the resilience needed to face the unpredictable and often dangerous nature of their work.

The ever-expanding scope of the job and the mission sets associated with multi-mission aircraft like the MH-60S and MH-60R helicopters further emphasize the importance of comprehensive readiness. These helicopters are designed to perform a wide array of tasks, from anti-submarine warfare to medical evacuations, search and rescue, and beyond. The

versatility of these platforms requires aircrew to be proficient in multiple disciplines, constantly updating their skills and knowledge to keep pace with evolving mission requirements. This adaptability is rooted in a strong foundation of physical fitness and mental resilience, allowing aircrew to transition seamlessly between different roles and responsibilities. The MH-60S and MH-60R helicopters, equipped with advanced technology and versatile capabilities, demand a high level of proficiency from their operators. Pilots and aircrew must be adept at using sophisticated navigation and communication systems, managing complex mission profiles, and operating in diverse environments ranging from open oceans to dense urban areas. This level of versatility necessitates ongoing training and professional development, ensuring that aircrew remain at the forefront of operational readiness. The ability to swiftly adapt to new technologies and mission parameters is a testament to the dedication and skill of Naval Aircrew, who continuously strive to enhance their capabilities and effectiveness in ever-evolving operational landscapes.

Over the course of my service in the Naval Helicopter Community, I have witnessed firsthand the transformation of the SAR Community and the increasing complexity and diversity of our missions. The integration of advanced technology and the expanding operational capabilities of our aircraft have undoubtedly enhanced our effectiveness. However, it is the unwavering dedication to physical and mental readiness that remains the cornerstone of our success. Ensuring that every member of the aircrew is prepared to meet the demands of their role is not just a priority but a necessity. The commitment to being "The First to Launch, Last to Land" is a testament to the resilience and determination of our aircrew, who stand ready to face any challenge with unwavering resolve. This ethos is not only about personal excellence but also about fostering a culture of mutual support and teamwork. Each member of the aircrew relies on the others, and their collective readiness ensures the success of every mission. The camaraderie and trust built through shared experiences and rigorous training create a cohesive unit capable of overcoming the most daunting challenges. This collective strength, grounded in a shared commitment to readiness, exemplifies the true spirit of Naval Aircrew service and its enduring legacy of excellence.

As I will never write an article that points out potential issues without giving potential solutions, I submit that to ensure the optimal physical and mental readiness of Naval pilots and aircrew, it is imperative that both Wing-level and Command-level decisions prioritize dedicated time for mandatory physical training (PT) and annual mental health checks. At the Wing level, leaders must recognize the critical importance of physical fitness in enhancing operational performance and reducing injury rates. Implementing mandatory PT sessions into the daily schedules of aircrew ensures that physical conditioning remains a consistent and non-negotiable part of their routine. These sessions should be designed to address the specific physical demands of their roles, incorporating cardiovascular, strength, and flexibility training. By institutionalizing PT at this level, we create a culture where physical readiness is viewed as an integral component of mission success, rather than an optional activity.

Command-level decisions play an equally vital role in ensuring the mental health of aircrew members. The high-stress nature of Naval Aircrew service necessitates a proactive approach to mental health care. Annual mental health checks should be mandated for all pilots and aircrew to identify and address any psychological stressors before they escalate. These assessments can help in recognizing early signs of burnout, PTSD, or other mental health issues that could impair performance and overall well-being. Additionally, promoting a stigma-free environment where aircrew feel comfortable seeking mental health support is crucial. Command leaders must advocate for mental health resources and integrate mental resilience training into the standard curriculum. Having been on the medical side of aviation my whole career, and now looking back being retired, I would go out on a limb to submit that the mental health side of this critical issue should be taken out of the hands of Naval Flight Surgeons and put into the hands of trained Naval Mental Health Services Personnel. This is not to take anything away from the Flight Surgeon Community, but they are not experts in mental health. By putting it in the hands of a neutral party, we can more effectively treat things early and be better in avoiding the very common “I’ll be taken off flight duty” attitude that so often happens in Naval Aviation as a whole. By prioritizing mental health at the Command level, we not only support the well-being of individual aircrew members but also enhance the overall operational readiness and effectiveness of the Naval Helicopter Community.

Integrating these initiatives requires a coordinated effort across all levels of leadership. Wing leaders must collaborate with Commanding Officers to ensure that resources are allocated appropriately, and that policies are enforced uniformly. This includes providing adequate facilities for PT and mental health services, as well as scheduling flexibility to accommodate these critical activities without disrupting operational duties. Moreover, regular evaluations of these programs are essential to ensure they are meeting the intended objectives. Feedback from aircrew members can help refine PT regimens and mental health initiatives, making them more effective and tailored to the unique needs of the Naval Helicopter Community. By fostering an environment where physical and mental health are prioritized, we not only improve the individual readiness of our aircrew but also strengthen the overall resilience and capability of our forces.

Furthermore, the commitment to these priorities must be evident in the leadership’s actions and attitudes. Leaders at all levels should actively participate in PT sessions and mental health initiatives to set a positive example. Their involvement

demonstrates that these activities are valued and essential, encouraging aircrew to take them seriously. This top-down approach ensures that the emphasis on physical and mental readiness permeates the entire organization, creating a cohesive and supportive culture. Ultimately, the health and readiness of our Naval pilots and aircrew hinge on the decisions made by their leaders. By prioritizing dedicated time for PT and annual mental health checks, Wing and Command leaders can significantly enhance the operational effectiveness and long-term well-being of the Naval Helicopter Community.

In conclusion, the concept of "The Human Weapon" highlights the critical importance of prioritizing physical and mental readiness in Naval Aircrew service. The enduring ethos of being "The First to Launch, Last to Land" encapsulates the dedication and resilience required to excel in this demanding field. The rigorous demands of SAR operations, both over-water and overland, and the evolving nature of mission sets with multi-mission aircraft like the MH-60S and MH-60R helicopters, underscore the necessity of maintaining peak physical and mental fitness. Drawing from over two decades of experience in the SAR Community, I can attest that this focus is essential for ensuring the success and safety of our aircrew, enabling them to perform their duties with excellence, and unwavering commitment. The ongoing evolution of SAR operations and the increasing complexity of mission sets demand that we continue to prioritize comprehensive readiness, investing in the physical and mental well-being of our aircrew. By doing so, we not only enhance their individual capabilities but also strengthen the overall effectiveness and resilience of our operational forces. The dedication to readiness, rooted in a deep understanding of the demands and challenges of Naval Aircrew service, ensures that we remain prepared to face the future with confidence and resolve.

About the Author

Master Chief Keith "Flip" Griffin is a retired CMC and 20-year Search and Rescue Medical Technician. He was fortunate enough to have been a part of every aspect the SAR HM Community afforded until his retirement in 2019 from the Navy. He has the unique perspective of being the first SAR HM to stand up a forward deployed carrier-based fleet squadron SMT Program with HS-14, in Atsugi, Japan and being TAD in the first year of the 2515th Naval Air Ambulance Detachment's (NAAD) existence on Wave 2. He has accumulated over 1200+ hours in various rotary and fixed wing military aircraft and was selected as the 2009 NHA Region One Aircrewman of the Year. He holds undergraduate degrees in Counter Terror Studies and Military Organizational Leadership, and an International Master's degree in Disaster Management & Risk Mitigation. He is a graduate of the CMC/COB Course (Class 161), the Senior Enlisted Academy (Class 198, Gold), and the Coast Guard CPO Academy (Class 200).

A search and rescue swimmer, assigned to the "Chargers" of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (HS) 14, jumps from an HH-60H Seahawk during SAR training at Fleet Activities Yokosuka. **Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Bryan Reckard, USN.**

V22 BELL BOEING

THE CMV-22B, DESIGNED FOR SUPERIOR AIRBORNE LOGISTICS & MULTI-MISSION CAPABILITIES

LOGISTICS • SPECIAL OPS • COMBAT • RESCUE • HUMANITARIAN

V-22 Ospreys make a critical difference around the globe - executing carrier onboard delivery, humanitarian assistance, MEDEVAC and special operations missions in a fraction of the time of conventional rotorcraft. The tiltrotor's unique blend of helicopter and turboprop performance makes it the platform of choice where speed, range, and runway independence make all the difference.

READY TO WIN THE FIGHT

bell.co/v22

boeing.com/defense/v-22-osprey

Is This Generation "Too Soft" or Are Previous Generations "Too Tough"

By LT Elizabeth "Mickey" Jagoe, USN

It's no secret that there is an ongoing issue with mental health in this generation of Sailors. Everyone is looking for the magic formula to fix recruiting deficiencies through bonuses, lowering recruitment standards, and even desperate calls to ask previous service members if they'd like to rejoin. The answer is and always has been simple, but we are continuously missing the mark. I want to begin with a personal story.

As a Division Officer, our Sailors were amongst some of the least qualified, with some being two years behind on basic qualifications. A majority of them shared major signs of trauma in their personal lives. I heard stories of parents in prison, parents who died tragically, substance abuse, abuse from their spouses, PTSD, and much more. I was admittedly like some other Division Officers in the beginning, where I took a very neutral role - I mainly observed, and did not enact many changes. Until everything changed.

In our dynamic environment of service, there are a myriad of circumstances that can contribute to a Sailor experiencing a mental health crisis. For instance, the pressure of combat deployments may trigger symptoms of PTSD, leading to severe anxiety or flashbacks. Alternatively, the isolation of long deployments or the strain of balancing family commitments with operational duties can exacerbate feelings of loneliness and depression. Additionally, the rigidity of military hierarchy and disciplinary actions for minor infractions may intensify stress levels, pushing some Sailors to the brink. My call to action was when I found myself retrieving one of my Sailors from the hospital following a mental health crisis. Shortly afterwards, they were reassigned out of my division to be processed out of the Navy. This loss added to our shortage of qualified personnel, further burdening the division and deepening our collective sense of dismay.

To comprehend this situation fully, it's crucial to acknowledge that mental health extends beyond individuals confined to mental institutions. It's not merely a modern excuse for avoiding responsibilities. Mental health is a well studied scientific field that shows how trauma profoundly impacts both the body and brain, and influences behaviors across a spectrum. Everyone has a physical and mental response to trauma when their sympathetic nervous system is overloaded. On a very basic level, we can categorize these responses as fight or flight. Based on my experiences, I believe the responses exhibited by individuals of different generations reflect the distinct environments and educational influences that have shaped their behaviors. Let me explain why.

While I was speaking with a Vietnam War Veteran, I asked about his experiences with mental health. He talked about

encounters in combat, extreme hardships, and getting into verbal and physical altercations. By the end of the interview, I felt like I had learned nothing about how he handled his trauma. As I was sharing this story, a friend commented: "What do you mean? He told you everything you need to know. He engaged in his fight response."

That's when it hit me - previous generations were most likely taught to deal with trauma via their fight responses. This response may be the result of a series of many wars, older generations (i.e., parents and grandparents) encouraging them to fight back against bullies, and that real men and women don't cry. In today's generation of no military drafts, being told bullying is bad, and "fighting will get you expelled," I've observed that younger generations are dealing with trauma via quiet quitting, ghosting, or being left hospitalized and determined unfit for duty. All of these are potentially forms of a flight response. In observing responses to trauma, I suspect that different generations may have distinct ways of coping, and recognizing and respecting these varied strategies can foster empathy and support for individuals across generations.

So, who is going to budge? Will the newer generations "toughen up" or will the older generations "soften up?" If the unhealthy responses to trauma include fight or flight, the healthy responses can be boiled down into the scientifically studied parasympathetic nervous system: Eat, Sleep, Relax. Furthermore, it can be broken down into the "5 Pillars of Mental Health." They consist of Spiritual, Mental, Emotional, Physical, and Social Health. As these pillars are practiced, it's been shown that human beings are stronger, smarter, and more resilient overall. I now understand why the Navy has focused heavily on the concept of resiliency after COVID - many support structures were stripped away from our Sailors during that time. As our Sailors are our best recruiters, this situation has likely contributed to a drop in recruitment and retention.

To maintain the well-being of our division, our leadership recognized the importance of ensuring the health of our

Sailors. We focused on instilling those essential pillars to empower them to bring their best selves to work every day.

First, we established a positive and uplifting community through an organized group chat, sharing interesting articles, research, meetups, and health information to foster connectedness.

Secondly, we praised and encouraged them each time they became qualified, rather than punishing them for falling behind, which quickly led us to become the most qualified shop in our unit.

Lastly, we showed we cared by learning their needs personally and professionally, and working hard to meet them. After multiple MAPs, numerous qualifications, and winning the coveted "Shop in the Spotlight" Award, it was clear our approach was successful.

I recently paid a visit to the new squadron HSM-79 that was essentially stood up from the ground up. I asked their CO the secret of his success and he said simply “We take care of our people first." If you take away anything from this article I challenge you to understand that everyone responds to trauma differently. We should all strive to recognize our responses and lean into the key components of mental resilience. I also challenge you to care for your own and other’s mental well being, and not to wait until it reaches the emergency room. The path forward for our Navy lies in the hands of compassionate leaders who prioritize the mental well-being of our Sailors. Let's seize the opportunity to enact proactive wellness initiatives, propelling our Navy towards a future defined by resilience and excellence.

Culture: How We Think, Act, and Operate

By CAPT Brannon Bickel, USN

Everyone has a journey in the Navy, and while most are unique, we share a common purpose in the oath we take upon service entry and every time we promote or re-enlist. Our service is based on the defense of the Constitution and our commitment to the principles of democracy and freedom. To answer the nation's call to service, we must care for ourselves and embody character, competence, and dedication to our mission.

In my current tour with the OPNAV Staff, I have the opportunity to see the initiatives senior leadership has put in place to shape our future. From programming money for future warfighting platforms and capability to improving recruiting efforts and retaining our best and brightest, the Navy is focused on thinking, acting, and operating differently than it did when I entered the service over three decades ago.

The most significant initiative that will have a profound impact is Culture of Excellence 2.0 (COE 2.0). The concept is straightforward - through concentrated efforts on our culture, we will evolve into the best versions of ourselves and be capable of doing the most valuable work of our lives alongside our fellow Sailors and civilians. We will intentionally enhance the resilience of our people, foster teamwork, and elevate the culture of Navy leaders through a focus on mind, body, and spirit. I understand that this might sound like I'm advocating for yoga retreats and wellness lectures, but COE 2.0 is fundamental stuff that can be both practical and applicable. By prioritizing the wellness of our people, we foster trust and respect. This is crucial to building great teams. Great teams thrive because they are tightly knit, support each other during times of stress, and are more connected. Great teams reject toxicity and destructive behaviors. Great teams prioritize their people. Embracing COE 2.0 not only benefits the Navy as a whole, but it also enhances your personal growth and well-being.

Now, you might be thinking, "That all sounds good, but how do we put COE 2.0 into action?" First and foremost, I urge you to read the COE 2.0 Playbook released in March 2024. I have included the link below for your convenience. Inside, you will discover that COE 2.0 is all about building great people, great leaders, and great teams, with the understanding that this is the best way to prepare for victory in combat, innovate and solve hard problems, and prevent harmful behaviors. To reiterate what I said earlier, success is based on bringing key principles to life through consistent action. We take care of our Sailors, and our Sailors take care of us. We build trust and our teams become stronger and more interconnected. COE 2.0 is not just a theory, it is a practical and applicable approach that you can confidently implement in your daily operations, knowing that it has been designed with your success in mind.

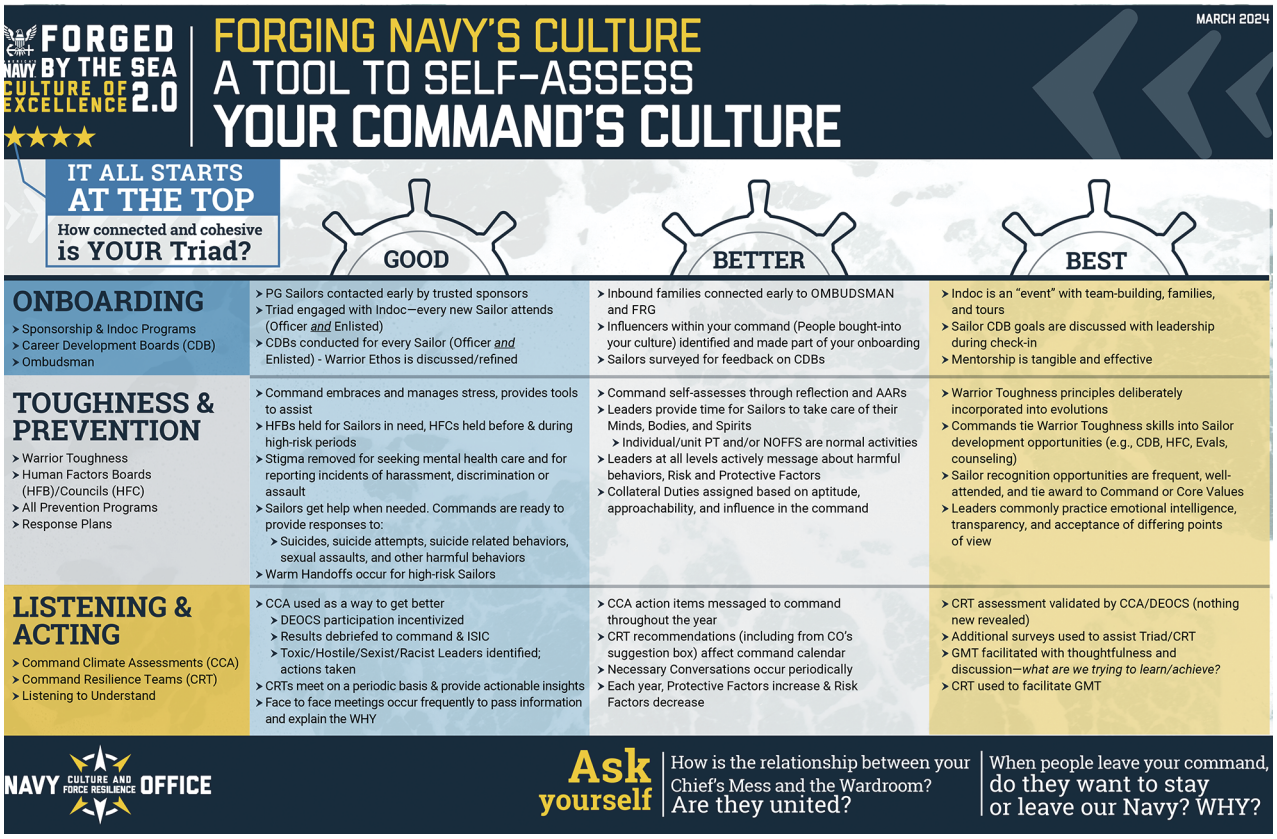
Another helpful tool is the COE 2.0 Placemat. The placemat allows you to self-assess your command's culture. It provides specific examples of what it takes to produce connected and

cohesive teams. There are examples of best practices and measures for what is good, better, and best. It also provides thoughtful questions for reflection. How is the relationship between the CPO Mess and the Wardroom? How do you best onboard Sailors? Are you able to listen and understand? If not, there are recommended best practices. I encourage you all to review both the COE 2.0 Playbook and Placemat. The subject is ripe for discussions during maintenance meetings, all-officer meetings, or during conversations with your Commanding Officers and Wing Commanders. It is then important to put the concepts into action.

At the unit level, we can prioritize fitness and personal well-being better. A simple starting point is actively mentoring our Sailors to encourage them to be the best versions of themselves. By actively promoting protective factors, we can reduce the harmful behaviors within our commands. Just as we focus on Aviation Safety, we can also focus on personal wellness at the unit level so that instances of discrimination and harassment can be eliminated. Encourage Sailors to spend time at the base fitness centers, discuss the availability of services at the Fleet and Family Support Centers, make time for Sailors to schedule appointments with Deployed Resiliency Counselors, and reward those who become involved in community service projects. Promote spiritual fitness to foster a sense of meaning and purpose within our Sailors. Speaking with a chaplain can relieve stress and promote wellness. Those conversations are confidential and include all religious beliefs. Spiritually fit Sailors are less susceptible to depression and more tolerant to the stressors in life. Ultimately, spiritual fitness means we are connected to groups that add meaning and purpose to our lives.

As we commit to becoming the best versions of ourselves by focusing on mind, body, and spirit, we bring COE 2.0 to life. Concepts become action, and action becomes repeatable behavior. We improve by building great people who work together to form great teams. With the end objective in mind, we build great teams to achieve warfighting excellence. If we embrace the concepts and take action to bring COE 2.0 to life within our commands, we ultimately prepare ourselves to be the dominant naval force that our nation demands, and we ensure that we will be ready to deter conflict and decisively fight and win in combat. Remember, the success of COE 2.0 is not just an individual effort, it is a collective responsibility that we all share. By embracing COE 2.0, we strengthen our Navy and achieve our mission, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose among us all. Each one of us plays a crucial role in this journey, and together we can make a significant impact.

MyNavy HR website for COE 2.0 Playbook:
https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Support-Services/Culture-Resilience/Culture-of-Excellence/ The Placemat and Playbook links are found under the "Essentials" Menu.



Mental Hell: LT Paul Johnson's Transcontinental Run Brings Awareness to the Status of Mental Health in the Armed Forces

By LT Elisha "Grudge" Clark, USN

A Runner With a Cause

"Every morning was the worst moment - it was cold, I was stiff, I was tired. I just wanted to curl up and die."

He could have been describing anything. A hike along the PCT, a long deployment, or really any other "type II" fun activity. What LT Paul Johnson was actually describing is rarer and more notable - the transcontinental run. Less than 400 runners have completed the "transcon"[1] across the United States; Paul became one of those people on April 21st, 2024.

"I was on four to five hours of sleep a night, which I know sounds bad to you pilots, but is pretty normal around these parts," said Paul with a chuckle. A few months ago, he teamed up with Team Red, White & Blue (RWB) to make the transcontinental run a reality, while simultaneously building a social media following. Across the country, everyone waited to see what this seemingly normal Naval Officer from the suburbs of Philadelphia could do.

As his full title might suggest, Paul wasn't always an ultra-runner social media personality. In fact, he is still an active-duty Surface Warfare Officer, teaching at Surface Warfare Officers School in Newport, RI. He was previously stationed in San Diego aboard USS Cowpens (CG 63) after having served on his first ship in Rota, Spain aboard USS Donald Cook (DDG 75).

Paul's choice to champion mental health as a cause stemmed from his own struggles with mental health. He recounted his time in Spain as a low point in this regard: "Forward deployed in Spain, a lot of my peers, friends, and Sailors all struggled with these issues." Paul's transcon run attempts to put a spotlight on an issue he holds near and dear.

Mental Health in the Navy

Mental health is a hurdle many Sailors find themselves attempting to overcome. A career in the Navy is demanding, fast-paced, and can take a toll on a Sailor's home and family life. In Paul's eyes, the issue doesn't get enough attention: "The world struggles with mental health because it is an intangible object. If I see someone with a broken leg, you look and don't think twice." It can be difficult to admit you're having a problem no one can see. Paul recounts his own silent struggle: "You look fine, but you're not."

While the stigma of mental health issues in a grin-and-bear-it culture (among other factors) contributes to Sailors' struggles with mental health, one particularly challenging hurdle is the availability of providers. While assessing its manpower needs in early 2024 for FY25, Naval Aviation specifically looked at the "return rate" of Sailors back to a

Paul running through Penn State on the last few legs of the Transcon.

deployable status by a mental health provider. Psychologists who were deployed with Sailors were able to return them to duty at a 95% rate, versus a 40% return rate for Sailors sent home from deployment. That is, if you were able to see a psychologist. Many of these providers were seeing 154 patients per month, which is double that of their counterparts at a typical Military Treatment Facility. Patients were waiting 22 days on average to be seen by a mental health specialist - a lifetime if you're a Sailor dealing with mental health problems.

The logical response to this data is to add more providers, which is exactly what will be happening in the coming fiscal year. Billets will be added to ensure every wing has a mental health provider, as those wings that do have them enjoy a return to duty rate that is 49% higher than those who don't.

Overall, Naval Aviation is the one of the healthiest communities in terms of retention rates among Sailors. It follows that if the "happiest" community is struggling with resource limitations in regard to mental health issues, it is possible that other communities are struggling too, and potentially to a greater degree.

That is the way Paul sees it, "At the end of the day, we are a voluntary service. That's one of the luxuries we have. When you have extreme situations that are detrimental to mental health, it makes it very difficult to try and retain individuals who have [the power of] choice."

Technically… Alcohol is a Solution

If a Sailor is unable to cope with mental health with the help of a professional, they may need another outlet for their stress. Absent healthy outlets for this stress, many Sailors will turn to alcohol for comfort.

While many can maintain a healthy relationship with drinking, up against a compounding volume of stress, this relationship can take a turn. When alcohol consumption

1. https://ridefar.info/races/transcontinental-race/overall/#:~:text=Finish%20Times&text=Many%20people's%20goal%20is%20to,achieved%20this%20goal%20(37%25)!

increases to match mounting stresses a Sailor can undergo in a typical deployment cycle, this can turn healthy habits into binge drinking and alcohol abuse.

Alcohol abuse is an issue the Navy has faced for decades. As one of the only legal substances out there (at least for Navy Sailors) it is a popular drug of choice, and therefore is the most commonly abused. According to American Addiction Centers, "more than 35% of active military were identified as hazardous drinkers or possibly having an addiction to alcohol." [2]

That is at least one out of three Sailors - and while there isn't any data out there with specific regard to Sailors who are forward deployed overseas, it follows that the number is likely higher, as deployment cycles are suspended in the peak readiness period.

This means that forward deployed service members must always be ready to deploy, and there are no "work-up" cycles or "wind-down" periods during which a Sailor might be able to catch their breath. The operational tempo demanded of Sailors compounds already high volumes of stress, thereby leading to an increased rate of alcohol consumption and abuse.

Being stationed overseas aboard a Forward Deployed Naval Forces (FDNF) ship during a global pandemic, as Paul was from 2018 to 2021, didn't make things any easier. "Alcohol was a way to cope," he recalled.

Upon Paul's return to the U.S., he continued to use alcohol in an unhealthy manner, until he began to take running seriously. He had a friend who was training for the highly competitive Boston Marathon. Qualifying for the race in the 18-34 age group requires a sub-three-hour total time.[3] That's when Paul realized that things needed to change.

"I [couldn't] really binge drink all night long, and then try to do a long run in the morning. It wasn't working, and that turned into 'okay well I gotta drink less if I want to be able to do this run with him," Paul recounted, describing the transformation. "Then I started drinking less and less and the alcohol was masking all the other symptoms that were going on, like anxiety, depression, and a whole gambit of other things, and that's also the time that a lot of my other friends, when removed from [FDNF], realized how much it [had affected] them too."

Running was helping Paul ditch the alcohol and cope with his problems in a healthy manner: "I realized how much physical activity is connected to mental health."

Staying in the Game

When asked what the best part of the race was, without hesitation, Paul answered: "The community involvement." During the transcon's 2,939.98 miles, Paul ran through 322 cities, some of which were very small 5,000 person towns. He recounts questioning, "How do this many people know what we are doing?" The importance of community support shone through Paul's efforts, as the run raised over $500,000 toward Team RWB.[4]

Before the transcon, Paul had never done anything like it. Since he began the healing process by training for the Boston Marathon, he started as an ultramarathon runner, beginning to run 100-mile races in 2023. Then he heard about the transcon. Pushing through a few injuries and setbacks, he began training in October of 2023, teaming up with Team RWB on the advice of an old mentor. To train, Paul began his five-month workup, running every single day, increasing his mileage from 125-150 miles a week to 200-210 a week.

By the time the transcon rolled around, Paul was ready to attempt a world record. Unfortunately, due to some re-routing required by sandstorms along the first legs of the route, Paul was just 10 days short of this goal, clocking in at 51 days, 2 hours, 54 minutes, and 29 seconds. At 42 days, Pete Kostelnick holds the record for the fastest transcontinental run.[5] Despite falling short of his record-busting goal, Paul is among less than 400 to have ever completed the run and was able to champion a noble cause along the way.

Paul's transcon run mirrored the hills and valleys encountered on a deployment. Quitting was always on his mind: "That's part of the 'every day.' That is what is crazy about ultra-running; you hit so many highs and lows in the same one-hour period." Paul recounted hoping he would get hit by a car so that he had a reason to quit. What kept him going was always having his goals in mind - not unlike a deployment. With the goals of the team in mind, Sailors are forced to find any way they can to stay in it. Paul speaks about the run in the same way: "It's just part of the game - this incredibly tough physical, but also mental challenge of just trying to stay in it."

If you or someone you know needs help staying in the game, there are resources available to you:

-Military One Source: https://www.militaryonesource.mil/non-medical-counseling/

-DoD Safe Helpline: https://www.safehelpline.org/

-Veterans Crisis line: https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/

For more information about Team RWB, visit https://teamrwb.org/

2. "U.S. Navy: Substance Abuse and Mental Illness among Veterans." American Addiction Centers, 26 Apr. 2024, americanaddictioncenters.org/veterans/substance-abuse-navy.
3. "Qualify for the Boston Marathon." Qualify | Boston Athletic Association, www.baa.org/races/boston-marathon/qualify. Accessed 27 June 2024.
4. Fundraising Campaigns, donate.teamrwb.org/fundraiser/5143120. Accessed 27 June 2024.
5. Here's How Pete Kostelnick Ran across the Country in Record Time | Runner's World, www.runnersworld.com/runners-stories/g20849234/heres-how-pete-kostelnick-ran-across-the-country-in-record-time/. Accessed 27 June 2024.

Time to Double Down on Naval Combat Logistics with the Osprey

By CAPT Sandy Clark, USN (Ret.)

CMV-22B Ospreys, assigned to Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron (VRM) 50, conduct routine training at Naval Air Facility El Centro, California, June 12, 2024. **U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Keenan Daniels.**

It is axiomatic that, “Soldiers win battles, but logistics wins wars." Never in recent memory have combat logistics been more important to the U.S. Navy, whose distributed lethality doctrine calls for widely dispersed forces. Yet, there aren’t enough of the aircraft that makes it work – the CMV-22B Osprey.

Logistics and Distributed Lethality

Today, the U.S. Navy operates using a modern doctrine of "distributed lethality" - more ships, with more weapons, more widely dispersed.

With this operating concept permanently in place, the requirement to support an expanding network of deployed and ashore naval forces calls for increasing the numbers of combat logistics forces and modernizing them sooner rather than later. Robust logistics are more than "nice to have" for distributed forces: they’re mandatory.

Threats in the maritime domain and to our now widely dispersed surface combatant missile shooters, amphibious forces, and Carrier Strike Groups are increasing. Non-state actors like the Houthis have impacted the operating tempo of these dispersed ships and, in turn, put a spotlight on the criticality of a robust logistics network to support them.

Our ships must be rearmed, refueled, and resupplied frequently to maintain high combat readiness. Accordingly, Fleet Commanders need more flexibility - not less - when it comes to re-supply.

From Greyhound to Osprey

For 50 years, the Navy has relied on the lumbering C-2 Greyhound for the Carrier Onboard Delivery (COD) mission. The Greyhound, a fixed-wing aircraft at the end of its useful life, can land only in daylight on aircraft carriers and 6,000-foot protected runways ashore.

The Greyhound has served the Navy well for decades, but it is clearly unsuited for the challenges of today’s maritime warfighting domain.

That’s why, building on more than 750,000 flight hours and proven capability to support remote forces, the Navy opted in 2015 to replace the Greyhound with the CMV-22B Osprey, with the potential for a greatly expanded mission set. Today, there are 48 of the aircraft in the Navy’s Program of Record.

Time to Open the Throttle

Unfortunately, the Navy has adopted a cautious, “go-slow” approach to the CMV-22B, with expansion of CMV-22B tiltrotor mission sets taking longer than expected.

The CMV-22B tiltrotor is a capable aircraft whose reliability and availability matches that of virtually all “new-technology” aircraft introduced to the Fleet. New machines and operating capabilities come at a price. Integrating new aircraft, fresh operating techniques, and newly trained pilots and crew for the Fleet takes time.

Things break, parts wear out, early program delays are expected. Welcome to Naval Aviation, where the pace is fast, work is hard, and the mission is always critical.

But let's be clear. Tiltrotor technology isn't exactly new. DoD has already fielded nearly 450 tiltrotor aircraft.

As the lead service, the Marines bought more than 350 MV-22 Ospreys. They were first to employ them in combat, and they used them with great effect in the harsh environments of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Likewise, the U.S. Air Force skillfully employs 50 CV-22s, with their attendant unique flight capabilities for demanding special operations missions. There's a reason why this one-of-a-kind aircraft type was chosen for such important missions.

RADM Doug Verissimo, Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic, speaks with CDR Mason Fox, Executive Officer of VRM-40, the "Mighty Bisons," following the arrival of the first East Coast-assigned Navy tiltrotor vertical/short takeoff and landing (V/STOL) aircraft CMV-22B Osprey at Naval Station Norfolk. **U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Sylvie Carafiol.**

The Future of Combat Logistics

Now, the fleet of U.S. Navy CMV-22Bs offers the long-sought promise of expanded versatility, speed, range, payload and landing capabilities.

At sea, in addition to aircraft carriers, the CMV-22B can land on large amphibious ships - without catapults and arresting gear. Ashore, the Osprey can land and take off from unsecure, unimproved landing zones.

The CMV-22B can fly farther, be refueled in flight, and even refuel other aircraft ashore, at night, in any weather, off the grid - nearly anywhere on the globe.

The CMV-22B can resupply urgently needed parts, including the crucial F-35 "Hot Section," carried internally. And it can deliver critical materiel, combat troops, and conduct medevacs in a combat environment to and from almost anywhere.

For search and rescue, the Osprey can cover vast ocean environments, such as in the Indo-Pacific theater, with its speed and range. The Air Force routinely conducts hoist operations, so using the CMV-22B in a Search and Rescue (SAR) role is not out of the question.

Above much else, modern warfare requires healthy doses of innovation and flexibility. The Navy's CMV-22B provides both.

As the linchpin of future Naval logistics, the CMV-22B Osprey offers much needed versatility that Fleet Commanders desperately need to support forces that are spread out geographically. They are the perfect aircraft to support our modern, distributed, forward-deployed forces.

The Case for More

Because the nature of supporting those forces has changed, we need more of these versatile tiltrotors, and soon.

Current Osprey numbers are simply too low, spreading our combat logistics capability precariously thin, especially in opposed, distributed combat scenarios, forcing Fleet Commanders to forgo critical resupply and degrading our combat capability.

The Navy has taken delivery of over half of the eventual fleet. However, in my estimation, in a near-peer conflict where logistics are contested, the U.S. Navy will need as many as 70 CMV-22Bs.

When it comes to operationalizing and procuring the Osprey, now is not the time to press "pause" on combat logistics.

About the Author

Sandy Clark is a retired Navy Captain and Naval Aviator whose experience includes a wide variety of domestic and overseas military operations.

NextOp: Serving Enlisted In Career Transition

By CAPT Shelby Mounts, USN (Ret.)

NextOp was founded in 2014 by veteran and industry leaders who sought to build a strong military talent pipeline to industries. Our founders identified a gap between Enlisted military members and companies looking to hire military talent. Transitioning service members and veterans are a talented group who bring years of experience and leadership to the table. NextOp's goal is to bridge the gap by connecting these talented individuals to existing career opportunities. Through one-on-one mentorship, we help them understand how their training and experiences translate into valued qualifications in the workforce after their military commitment.

NextOp Advisors

Our services are free for military and veteran candidates. Our team of Employment Coordinators work one-on-one with veterans and transitioning service members to identify civilian professions that are right for them, translate their military experience, refine resumes, build professional networks, prepare for interviews, and ultimately start new careers. As veterans themselves, our Employment Coordinators understand the hurdles and struggles of transitioning from the military and are best equipped to provide the necessary skills translation.

Headquartered in Houston, TX, NextOp started placing candidates in the oil & gas industry, but quickly broadened into construction and logistics. In 2018, NextOp started its first geographic expansion into Louisiana and continued that expansion across the Gulf of Mexico. Today, NextOp matches candidates from across the entire United States to careers from a variety of industries. Regardless of where a candidate is, they can connect with a NextOp Employment Coordinator who can provide transition services.

NextOp partners with employers across many industries, many of whom have a strong desire to recruit and retain veterans. We actively work with recruiters and corporate leadership to ensure the translation of military skills to civilian experience is not a barrier for veterans when being considered for the workforce. We match work-ready individuals to employers who are passionate about hiring military members.

We also partner with supporting organizations for recruiting, marketing, and large scale employer engagement, as well as those that provide specific expertise like career coaching and financial education, or provide services outside NextOps mission. These partnerships ensure efficient and effective services for our candidates and employers.

In October 2022, retired Captain Shelby Mounts, a former Navy helicopter pilot, took over as the Executive Director of NextOp. His primary responsibility is to ensure the NextOp Team has the strategy, resources, and leadership required to deliver the mission as efficiently as possible with maximum impact. His strategy includes a focus on driving employer engagement to enable employment opportunities across the entire United States. Part of that focus is on aerospace and defense, an industry that is keenly aware of the value this military talent provides. This has already created new opportunities with a wide range of employers, as well as pathways for training and certification to enable easier access for transitioning service members.

An example of this is a partnership with Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM https://atdm.org/). ATDM is a training center of excellence in Danville, VA., partly funded by the U.S. Navy, they have created five certification pathways for high demand skills in the Defense Industrial Base (DIB), particularly the Submarine Industrial Base (SIB), with a goal to address critical skill shortfalls. Each intensive training pathway is free, includes housing, and is

NextOp at the NHA 2024 Symposium's Enlisted Professional Development Session.

four months long. To maximize the attraction for transitioning service members, NextOp helped create a pilot program where candidates are hired by DIB employers and paid during training. This "earn while you learn" model removes the significant barrier associated with lack of pay during training and guarantees a job at the end of the training period - making it a win-win for the employers and the candidates. The expectation is that this pilot program will prove a successful model to then be scaled to meet the demand for trained and certified workers in the DIB/SIB.

Transitioning service members can enroll with NextOp up to a year prior to separation (or two years prior to retirement) at www.nextopvets.org. Once connected with an Employment Coordinator, they will soon have a clear understanding of the multiple opportunities available to them and how to attain them. For those interested in a training pathway, they can take advantage of numerous training opportunities available while still on active duty in order to achieve qualifications required for certain jobs.

Regardless of individual readiness or areas of interest, the NextOp Program is a proven, valuable service that has already enabled the successful transition of over 4,000 candidates. If you are a post-9/11 Enlisted service member or Veteran, please reach out for more information and take advantage of our years of experience helping military veterans like you.

For more information visit the NextOp Website, https://nextopvets.org/ or email us at info@nextopvets.org.

Will You Be a Happy Camper?

By CDR "Dangerous Dave" Diamond, USNR (Ret.)

When you walk to your aircraft, are you ready to be a happy camper? I learned early in my career that in helicopters you don't always land where or when you planned. When I was flying off frigates, the more seasoned pilots advised me to always carry my checkbook and wallet in a waterproof bag when I made a run to an airfield. You never knew if the aircraft or ship might have an issue that would require you to spend one or more nights ashore. You also never knew if that flight might end with an unplanned swim call.

When I later became an instructor at HT-18, I needed to be that seasoned pilot and guide students to bring their jackets during winter flights. I would explain even if it's warm now, it will be cold tonight. If the aircraft breaks, you will need your jacket. During the summer, I would remind them to bring water in case we had to make an emergency landing.

Student Naval Aviators assigned to Helicopter Training Squadron (HT) 28, walk out to the airfield for a scheduled training flight in a TH-57 Ranger helicopter at Naval Air Station Whiting Field in Milton, Fla. **U.S. Navy photo by LT Michelle Tucker, USN.**

On a hot August afternoon, I somehow missed reminding two RI-18X students to refill their water before the return leg from Keesler AFB to NAS Whiting Field. About an hour into that flight, the TH-57C TR CHIP Light illuminated. The bird had a previous gripe for the same issue and with a tail wind, it felt like we had secondary indications. We were over a heavily wooded area of Alabama and my best landing option was a dirt logging road aligned with the current winds.

I knew we were screwed. It was an hour before sunset and we were landing in a very remote location. We let ATC know our issue and our plan to execute the PEL. The student exercised good crew coordination when he said "Sir, you concentrate on landing, I'll talk to ATC." We landed safely, and within ten minutes of shutting down, a T-34C marked on top of us and we were able to relay over the PRC-90 we were safe on deck. That is when the real fun began. We attempted to walk to a main road and encountered two snakes within a quarter mile of the aircraft. I had noted when we were contacting the T-34C, both students wanted to use their PRC-90s at the same time. They also wanted to shoot a flare in a wooded area that hadn't seen rain in weeks. I asked, what did they teach you during land survival? They said land survival was not included in API any more. I knew I now had to train some things that weren't covered in the HITU Syllabus. I did a quick inventory of our gear and realized neither student had water. I split what I had in my CamelBak between the three of us.

Twenty minutes after landing, another TH-57C landed with room for one passenger and I sent the first student home. About fifteen minutes later, a second TH-57C landed and the second student headed home. In the rush to get them airborne prior to sunset, I forgot to get back my water. I was now alone with a third of a CamelBak in August in a snake filled field. In Naval Aviation, it doesn't get much better than that. I was getting paid to go camping. I had a cellphone with limited battery life and made contact with the squadron duty officer (SDO). He had the coordinates from the T-34C and the TH-57Cs that recovered my students. He had the duty driver searching for the entrance to the logging road. It looked like I might get lucky.

As darkness approached, I knew I would be sleeping that night not in my king-sized bed, but crunched up in the back of my Bell SeaRanger. My phone battery was quickly draining and my water supply was about empty. I called the SDO and told him I was calling it a night and would contact him when I woke up the next morning. I asked him to make sure the maintenance recovery crew brought me water when they came to get me.

As I tried to sleep, the small sliding windows were letting in too many bugs, so I closed them and my TH-57 now became a sweat lodge as I tried to sleep. Just about the time I had some semblance of comfort and was about to drift off in sleep, I heard a rumbling noise and the sky lit up with lightning. After weeks without rain, the drought would be broken with me trying to sleep over a fuel tank and inside the only piece of metal for miles. Being a true Naval Aviator, I slept right through it.

The next morning I awoke to a very dry mouth and an equally dry CamelBak. I practiced recycling by wiping the condensation that left my body and collected on the

windscreen and returning it to my mouth. I called the SDO and the maintenance recovery aircraft was on the way and I confirmed they had a couple of one gallon jugs of water.

About twenty minutes later, I heard the helo and contacted them with guidance on how to land. The road was in a depression surrounded by berms. I recommended landing aligned with the road to provide tail rotor clearance. The maintenance crew had trouble seeing me, so, I got to pop smoke. Although I had provided landing guidance and tried guiding them with hand signals, they proceeded to land perpendicular to the road with less than a foot of clearance from the ground to the tail stinger.

There was a student in the right seat when I climbed in the aircraft and drank my first water in hours. The maintenance crew pulled the chip detector, found fuzz and would perform a penalty turn to make sure it was safe to fly back to Whiting. I would take control of their aircraft, fly overhead to relay messages back to Maintenance Control and trail them back to Whiting.

I was concerned that I could place the tail rotor in the dirt with a normal takeoff. I asked the student if he had ever heard of a no hover takeoff. He said no. I told him it was a NATOPS approved maneuver and explained why I needed to do it. The takeoff went smoothly, the penalty turn had no issues, and both of the aircraft made it safely back to Whiting.

By the time I got back to Whiting, I was hydrated again, but my t shirt and flight suit were stiff and crusty with salt and sweat. If it had taken the maintenance crew longer to find me, or if they didn't bring water, I would have been too dehydrated to safely fly. Either one of those conditions would have tied up additional aircraft and aircrew to get me and my original aircraft home.

From then on, I warned all the instructors that their students didn't have land survival training. I told them to take extra care that their students carried the supplies they would need if things didn't go as planned. Otherwise, they and their students would not be happy campers.

About the Author

CDR David D. Diamond (NHA Lifetime Member #367) flew the SH-2F Seasprite (LAMPS MKI) with HSL-30 Det ALFA, Neptune's Horsemen, and HSL-34, the Greencheckers. He was a Selected Reservist assigned to CTW-5 NR Det 282, the Elks, and providing direct support to HT-18, the Vigilant Eagles, when he got to take this all expenses paid camping trip. He retired with over 3,600 Mishap Free hours of flight time. He also holds the unique distinction of wearing five different ranks and holding three different designators while assigned to HT-18.

Be Ready, Desert Storm Version

By CDR Mike Capasso, USN (Ret.)

I was a senior Lieutenant and I had just reported to Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron Light 42 (HSL-42) in February 1990. I was assigned to Detachment (Det) 6 as the Maintenance Officer and we had completed several short deployments/workups onboard USS Moosbrugger (DD 980) in anticipation of a long deployment sometime that October or November. Moosbrugger, affectionately nicknamed the "Moose" by her crew, was a Spruance-class destroyer homeported in Charleston, South Carolina. She was named in honor of Vice Admiral Frederick Moosbrugger, who is best known for his service in World War II as a highly successful commander of destroyer squadrons.

Friday, 10 Aug 1990 - Notification

I had just finished Combined ASW Training School (CATS) at NAS Jacksonville and returned home early on a Friday afternoon. My wife needed to run to the store, so she left our two boys, both under two years old, with me and headed out. She had not been gone long when the phone rang. It was the Squadron Duty Officer (SDO) calling to tell me the CO wanted to talk to me and to report to the squadron immediately. I replied that I was alone with my boys and that my wife would be back in about an hour. He said it was important, and to come as soon as possible, and to bring my boys with me if I couldn't have someone watch them.

Since we lived on base, it took me only a few minutes to get to the squadron. I left my boys in the CO's outer office under the supervision of the SDO. The CO and XO were both there. They informed me that our detachment might be deploying on short notice, to support what would eventually be called Operation Desert Shield. When I asked how short, they said possibly as soon as Monday. They advised me that it wasn't confirmed yet and not to take any action or tell anyone. Additionally, our Officer in Charge (OIC) was transferring out of the Squadron shortly, so I was going to be promoted from Maintenance Officer to OIC of the Det. I was then dismissed and left the office. In the outer office, I found my boys had been playing with a helicopter model on the coffee table that belonged to the CO and had broken a part off of it. Not a good start to a deployment.

I took my boys, left the office, and walked down to the Det spaces in the hangar to see if anyone was there. Given current events, I knew that the deployment was more likely than not. I also knew that if we had any chance of deploying on Monday, we would need all hands to prepare as soon as possible. I felt that if I waited until the next day, Saturday, it would have been difficult to get everyone back to the squadron as the Det personnel would have been who knows where on an off weekend. I made the decision to have everyone report to the hangar the next morning at 0700. I figured that if the deployment was called off, I would have inconvenienced the men only for a short time on a Saturday. But if the deployment was a go, I could notify the entire det and get to work, giving us a head start. Luckily, my Chief Petty Officer (CPO) was still there. I told the Chief what was going on and had him call everyone in the Det to have them report to the squadron at 0700 on Saturday morning. It turned out to be the right choice, because the decision was made later that night and we were able to get everyone to the hangar early with a lot of work ahead of us.

USS Moosbrugger (DD 980)

Pack Up

The next two days were hectic with all the Det personnel arriving early in the morning to late at night at the squadron. We transferred our current aircraft to another det and received a MEF (Middle East Force) configured aircraft. While the maintenance team packed the tools and equipment in cruise boxes and Tri-Wall containers, they also had to prepare our new aircraft for inspection, as well as repair any outstanding discrepancies that might have impacted our departure.

The pilots spent the entire two days renewing our NATOPS and instrument checks so that we would be current for the entire deployment, while coordinating the completion and pack-up of any operational and administrative records. It has always been my contention that a good pilot can pass both the NATOPS and instrument checks, including the written tests, without studying. My belief was put to the test that weekend and I wasn't disappointed. All five pilots passed with flying colors.

Conclusion

As one might imagine, there was quite a lot of stress on the team. There was not much family time during the pack-up, but the team pulled together and, with outstanding support from the home-guard squadron personnel, they met the scheduled departure. The equipment truck and van with the majority of the Det personnel departed on Monday morning for Charleston and the aircraft were ferried later that afternoon. HSL-42 Det 6 was onboard the "Moose" and ready for departure by Monday night, 13 August 1990. The ship with the Det onboard departed Charleston on 16 August 1990, less than a week after learning we were going to deploy.

Epilogue

In August 1990, USS Moosbrugger was part of the initial United States response to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. She deployed on six days' notice, with HSL-42 Det 6 onboard, for Operation Desert Shield to join the rapidly formed USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67) Battle Group. She deployed from Charleston, South Carolina and joined the battle group en route to the Red Sea via the Mediterranean Sixth Fleet. In the months of coalition build-up prior to the beginning of hostilities, the Moosbrugger performed several important tasks. She was first tasked to delay her Suez Canal transit by several weeks to provide the U.S. contribution to the formation of NATO's Standing Naval Force Mediterranean, making port calls in Italy and Balearic Islands. Completing her short stay with NATO, Moosbrugger transited the Suez Canal in early September to rejoin Kennedy and immediately took a station in the northern Red Sea entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba, tasked with visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) to support enforcement of UN sanctions against Iraq. In September and early October, she stopped and boarded nearly 30 merchant ships bound for Jordan. Following a short maintenance period in Jidda, Saudi Arabia, she took onboard small contingents of U.S. Coast Guard personnel and Navy SEALs, both trained in VBSS, and continued search and seizure operations until transiting back north through the Suez Canal. Moosbrugger spent Christmas 1990 in Haifa, Israel, departing the following day back to the Suez Canal and Red Sea.

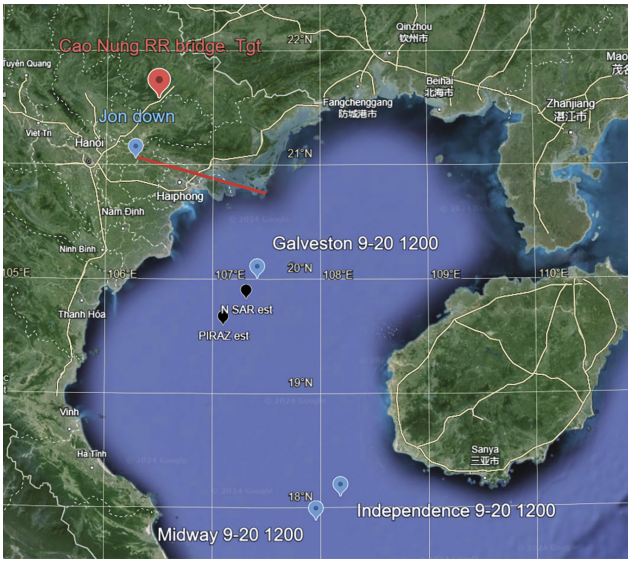
When Operation Desert Storm began in January 1991, Moosbrugger was again assigned maritime interdiction patrol at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba. Her assignment was to stop, board, and search merchant vessels flagged by nations sympathetic to Iraq; and to prevent any war materials found onboard from reaching Jordan and, ultimately, Iraq. When hostilities ceased, Moosbrugger made ports-of-call in Egypt, Crete, and Gibraltar before crossing the Atlantic for the United States. Moosbrugger was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation for service during the Persian Gulf War.

The Seventh's First - September 20, 1965

By AQF2 Doug Bohs, USN (Ret.)

The following is an account of the first land rescue in the Vietnam War by an all-Navy complement, thanks to LTJG Laurence "Woody" Woodbury, LTJG Jon Harris, and LTJG Kent Vandervelde. Woody provided the great "map" graphic, photos, and helped with several proof readings. Jon sent Woody, Kent, and me a copy of his book *Wings of the Morning*. The book provided some great detail. Jon also sent several photos. Kent provided the helo rescue details and several photos. Thanks also to Holt Livesay of VA-25 whose log book provided the author with Woody's and LCDR Ettinger's names as the pilots on the RESCAP mission. Thanks to D.D. Smith who found Jon Harris for me. Thanks to Jack Woodul AKA Youthly Puresome. Believe it or not, Jack flew the same mission as Jon and provided additional detail for the story.

At the beginning of the Vietnam Conflict there were two rail lines connecting Hanoi with Communist China. These were the Hanoi-Lao Cai and the Hanoi-Dong Dang Rail Lines, with the latter carrying the heaviest traffic. "Operation Rolling Thunder'' was a joint Seventh Fleet Navy and Air Force operation designed to slow the movement of war material from North to South Vietnam. Located 45 miles northeast of Hanoi on the Hanoi-Dong Dang Line, the Cao Nung Railroad Bridge became the target of an Alpha Strike by Air Wing 7 of the carrier USS Independence (CV 62). It was composed of approximately 30 aircraft including one A-6 division, two A-4E divisions, aircraft from other squadrons for flak suppression, Target Combat Air Patrol (TARCAP), Barrier Combat Air Patrol (BARCAP), tanker, radar, and photo recon capability. On Yankee Station (pictured below) with the Independence was the carrier USS Midway (CV 41) and on the North SAR Point (pictured below) was the Guided Missile Cruiser USS Galveston (CL 93).



Map showing Cao Nung Bridge, Jon Harris "downed" location and Galveston, Independence and Midway positions @ 1200 hours on 20 September 1965.

On 20 September 1965, the strike group launched from "Indy" (our colloquial term for USS Independence) at 1000 hours.

After refueling, the strike group passed over the Gulf of Tonkin at 20,000 feet then dropped to 3,500 feet during the run-in to the target. Before reaching the target, they would "pop-up" to 12,000 feet to drop their bomb load. The drop to 3,500 feet was an attempt to avoid the threat of several SAM sites they would encounter. The strike group was led by the VA-75 "Sunday Puncher" A-6s, with the VA-86 "Sidewinder" A-4Es, and the VA-72 "Blue Hawk" A-4Es in trail.

As the strike group approached the target, a SAM missile exploded near the lead A-6 filling the air with a huge brownish/orange cloud. Someone called SAMS! BREAK! BREAK! This was quickly followed by a launch of four more SAM missiles, several flak-bursts, and the strike group dove for the deck. For a short time, it was mass confusion with planes turning and diving in all directions. The initial point for the run into the target was a small reservoir.

LTJG Jon Harris of VA-72 spotted the reservoir and joined several aircraft trying to circle the reservoir and avoid a mid-air. It was at this time Harris felt a movement of his aircraft that was "just different." Following the lead A-6's, Harris started climbing back to altitude. Over the target he dropped his bomb load, started "jinking" to avoid being hit, and headed east to the coast. He joined with an A-4 from VA-86 and they looked each other over for battle damage. Seeing none, the other A-4 took the lead and they headed out to "feet wet." They soon joined an A-6 and flew a loose formation toward the coast. Harris was just beginning to relax when he received the shock of his life; a "Fire Warning" light. His next indication of trouble was the smell of burning electrical insulation coming through his oxygen mask. Next, he felt the rudder pedals "slip" as they moved back a short distance. His aircraft started a roll to the right and Harris slapped the stick twice to stop the roll but the stick was frozen. Now he was convinced the fire had burned through the hydraulic lines. He learned later the back half of his aircraft was in flames and had separated behind the cockpit just as he ejected. The ejection occurred in a 90 degree bank as the plane continued to roll.

Suddenly everything went quiet. He saw his plane burning on the ground and noticed he was floating into a valley. To his right was what appeared to be a village and he pulled on the risers to steer clear of it. He came down into some medium-sized trees, short of the village and prepared for a tree landing. His parachute hung up in the trees and he stopped falling just as his feet touched the ground. Harris noticed an A-4 circling above and was confident his position had been given to Search and Rescue. He released his harness, stepped out of the chute, and compulsively looked at his watch. The time was 12:29.

LTJG Harris checked his survival radio and noticed the antenna had broken off which left it inoperable. Without a radio to assist in guiding a helicopter to another location, he was reluctant to move too far away. Flares, smoke, and tracers from his pistol were all an option but, depending on the enemy's position, these could be risky. Every minute lost by Rescue Combat Air Patrol (RESCAP) aircraft and the helo in spotting him, as well as finding a hover location, could make the difference between a successful rescue, death, or imprisonment. In order to reach a compromise position between his parachute and a possible rescue site, he started climbing the increasingly steep slope of the valley. Leaving the trees and bushes he found himself waist-high in elephant grass. He continued climbing until he was able to see his parachute between himself and the village. He decided this was going to be his location for a rescue attempt. After about 30 minutes, while collecting his thoughts and organizing himself for a rescue, he heard the welcome sound of propeller-driven aircraft.

The HC-1 Det Alpha crew that was assigned from USS Midway to USS Galveston on September 19, 1965.

The aircraft were two VA-25 A-1H Skyraiders from USS Midway piloted by CDR Harold "Harry" Ettinger (Canasta 1) and LTJG Laurence "Woody" Woodbury (Canasta 2).

Ettinger and Woodbury had been loitering fifty to seventy-five miles southeast of Hanoi. Their mission would also take them inside the SAM and AAA envelope. Normally, the first Midway RESCAP A-1's would be launched at 0600. Due to the scale and time of this Alpha Strike, the Midway launched their RESCAP aircraft at 0930. About 30 minutes after LTJG Harris was on the ground, Ettinger and Woodbury received Harris' coordinates from the assigned PIRAZ (Protective Identification Radar Zone) ship and were headed inland to begin their search. Their aircraft were equipped with two 300-gal drop tanks, four rocket pods with 19 rockets each, and four 20-mm cannons. They received AAA fire on the way to Harris' position, but did not take the time to determine its exact source. Flying about 200 feet above the valley they quickly located Harris' parachute. While they were not able to see or make radio contact with Harris, CDR Ettinger stayed on scene while LTJG Woodbury flew back to the coast to rendezvous with a rescue helicopter.

On the day prior to the Alpha Strike, the cruiser USS Galveston had come alongside USS Midway. An eight–man detachment from Midway's Helicopter Squadron HC-1 Detachment Alpha had been transferred to the Galveston with all of the support equipment required to conduct helicopter operations from the cruiser.

The helo, a Kaman UH-2K Seasprite, was now assigned to USS Galveston, which was the flagship for RADM R.F. Dubois, Commander Task Group 70.8 and Commander of Cruiser Destroyer Flotilla 9. The HC-1 flight crew included the C.O. LCDR Wes Wetzel, LTJG Kent Vandervelde, and ADJ1 Charles Bowman. That same day, the Galveston's ship log showed the departure of RADM Dubois on Helo #35 for the Midway. LCDR Wetzel was the pilot. RADM Dubois and LCDR Wetzel met with RADM Marshall W. White, Commander Carrier Division Seven, and Midway Captain James M. O'Brien. LCDR Wetzel was given a special mission in this meeting. What follows was the result of that meeting.

Early on the morning of the 20th, Galveston had steamed to its strike location with HC-1's Helo #35 sitting on the helipad. Wetzel and Vandervelde were in CIC listening as the Alpha Strike progressed. ADJ1 Bowman had their helo on external power listening to the chatter on the guard channel. Almost immediately after hearing an A-4 pilot was down, Wetzel, Vandervelde, and Bowman were in the helo with the rotors spinning. They had no map of the area and no rescue training in a "jungle" environment. If someone from Galveston hadn't handed a Thompson sub-machine gun to Bowman the day before, they would have had no armament. Every rescue they had made to date was over open water. USS Galveston's ship's log recorded their departure at 12:57; just twenty-eight minutes after LTJG Harris checked his watch.

Helo #35 had almost reached the coast when they came under enemy fire from a small island. They made it to the coast and rendezvoused with LTJG Woodbury. They took fire again on the way inland. The dense black smoke indicated it was probably 57mm. Woodbury led the helicopter about 20 miles inland to Harris' location. The area was sparsely populated and they could see an occasional fire. Meanwhile USS Galveston was making flank speed toward the coast. The helo made three passes over Harris' chute but failed to see him. After their last pass, Woodbury reported sighting orange smoke halfway up the hill. LTJG Harris had been trying to light a flare since he spotted the helo but the cap would not snap off. Finally, it lit. "I'm out of here," the young aviator likely thought.

With high hopes, he waited for them to hover over his position, but to his dismay they flew overhead and disappeared over the top of the hill. Wetzel and Vandervelde knew if they tried to move up the slope of the hill after LTJG Harris was in the "horse collar," the hot humid air would present a lift problem. When a helicopter tries to hover on the side of a hill, the ground effect wants to slide down the hill and you lose lift. To increase their chances, they left Harris' position to dump fuel in an effort to reduce their weight as much as possible. Helo #35 had dumped a substantial amount of fuel and was down to 650 lbs. While circling on the other side of the hill and dumping fuel they came under small arms fire. They alerted Ettinger and Woodbury who rolled in and strafed the area. The firing promptly ceased.

They wanted to keep the A/C above the ridge line in-order to "wave-off" straight ahead. With 100 feet of cable out, they were still too high for Harris to reach the collar. They gradually lowered the helo until the sling touched the ground and Bowman announced Harris was in the collar. As they winched in the cable they began to lose power. They dumped the nose, "kicked right rudder" and slid down the other side of the ridge with Harris dangling about 30 feet below the aircraft, and suddenly about 400 feet in the air. They came to a high hover and reeled in their man. With the encouragement of Canasta 1, they climbed to 3,000 feet and headed back with Harris safely in the helo.

When they crossed the main road along the coastline, they again came under fire from 57mm with about 20 black puffs appearing at 2 o'clock. Vandervelde grabbed the stick, both saying later they thought there was "some kind of maneuver" they should have been doing. When they were dumping fuel they had called Galveston, and advised them to keep closing as they would be arriving in a low fuel state. They landed with 2 minutes of fuel until redlight.

The total elapsed time from when Harris checked his watch to landing safely aboard the Galveston was 2 hours 5 minutes.

They checked the helicopter for damage and found one round had penetrated the tail pylon "under" the tail rotor. To pass through that section of the helicopter, the round had to pass between the spinning rotor blades. A hit on a rotor blade would have likely resulted in the aircraft crashing. The next day, Wetzel, Vandervelde, and Bowman returned Harris to USS Independence. Indy was in stand-down, as the two carriers on Yankee Station were doing alternate midnight to noon flight status. When LTJG Vandervelde landed #35 on the flight deck, a loud cheer went up and a crowd rushed forward and surrounded Jon as he stepped out of the helicopter.

Recovery crew indicating a AAA crease.

Soon there was a lot of back slapping and hand-shaking with Vandervelde, Wetzel, and Bowman. When things quieted down they headed back to Midway. Soon after landing on Midway, LCDR Wetzel was told he was scheduled to have an interview with CBS News. While preparing for the interview, he was told the Admiral had classified the mission. Naturally, the interview did not go as initially planned. Later that evening, LCDR Wetzel, LTJG Vandervelde, and ADJ1 Bowman were invited to dine with Admiral White and Captain O'Brien. After finishing their meal, a CBS cameraman entered. They were all awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Admiral White pinned the medal on all three of them.

When CDR Ettinger and LTJG Woodbury landed on Midway, they recorded a flight time of 6.5 hours. There was no cheering crowd to meet them, the flight deck crew directed them to their shut-down area and they debriefed as usual. Midway's big screws kept turning. CDR Ettinger and LTJG Woodbury were each awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in early 1966 after returning to NAS Lemoore.

Considering the Pentagon's micro-management of the war, the decision by Admirals White and Dubois to re-assign a helicopter and crew from an aircraft carrier to a cruiser could be considered bold. There may have been an element of career risk involved had it not gone as planned, but it was after all, a war. LTJG Jon R. Harris was the first U.S. Navy pilot rescued on land in the Vietnam War by an all-Navy Team. Not only was this a Seventh Fleet first, it was an all-Navy first.

Return to Galveston

Cormorants, Pelicans, Herons, and Ospreys Let Ideas Take Flight! HM and HSC Drive the Future of MCM C2

By LT Eric "TOD" Mott, USN, HSCWSL

Buzzzzzz! Suddenly applause breaks out around the room. Like a moved audience having just been transported on a roller coaster of emotions, this curtain call has been one of many. But the clapping doesn't last long. After all, there's no star performer to applaud. Instead, this congress has been well trained, when the timer goes off, everyone claps. The show must go on, but there's no stage, no spotlights, or marquees - only sharpies, sticky notes, and whiteboards. Welcome to TANG, or Tactical Advancements for the Next Generation. Hosted by Johns Hopkins Applied Research Laboratory, TANG is a three-day ideation workshop convened to solve some of the Navy's most challenging problems. Sourcing participants from around the world, the goal of TANG is to harness the power of an interdisciplinary force of military and civilians alike, led by a passionate team of facilitators, including embedded artists, to tackle a challenge statement through a deliberate and well-orchestrated process that drives creativity, openness, and out of the box thinking, ultimately yielding concepts that can be further solidified for funding.

TANG Participants

The challenge statement this time around: "How might we strengthen cohesion between the operator and developer communities in order to design improved user experiences (UX) for MCM C2 Users?" Difficult, sure, but not insurmountable. What makes such a statement intimidating is its vagueness. Most of us are creatures who thrive in certainty, but TANG is all about dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity. While there is indeed a script to follow from the buzzers which advance the day's events, each evolution is more ad-libbing than anything else. On threat of expulsion from the workshop if you write with anything but sharpie, your tools are simply sharpies, sticky notes, and a pocket-size notebook - TANG is different, and for good reason. From the "crisp aloha" dress code to the timer driven applause, from the simple tools and background music playing whenever someone's not speaking, everything is set up to take down barriers, open people's minds, and let creativity take its course so as to not leave any ideas on the table. Put it on a sticky and put it on a whiteboard; the rules of engagement are that simple. TANG caters to the human element at play. Everyone has something to contribute, they just might not know it. But during this process, everyone has a seat at the table, and everyone gets to speak.

Sticky Note

Split into multifaceted teams named after Lapwing-class minesweepers, Teams Pelican, Heron, and Cormorant featured operators and tacticians from all corners of the MCM landscape, while Team Osprey featured MCM stakeholders including the overall sponsor of the workshop: PMS-495. From the MCMRON 7 Commodore, CAPT Antonio Hyde, down to one of the LCSRON 1 Minemen, MN2 Daniel Kern, TANG is set up to be chain of command agnostic.

As for AMCM, flyers included HM-15's LT Jolie "Elsa" Slavens and AWS1 Nicholas Stevenson, HSC-23's LCDR Mark "Elsa" Meyer, HSC-3's AWS1 Patrick de Ferrari, and this author from HSCWSL. Through three full days of structured ideation exercises, concepts emerged that culminated in short skits for the stakeholders, akin to a frugal mix of "Shark Tank" and "Whose Line Is It Anyway." Shortly after the skits, all participants have a chance to engage with each other on each of the concepts and vote for best skit and best overall concept.

Without revealing too much, Team Pelican, featuring AWS1 Stevenson and this author, emerged top of the flock for overall concept, looking to harness the power of generative AI and a decentralized platform of community-sourced knowledge that not only connects developers with operators but connects the MCM Community at large. In this manner, we put the human weapon in the driver's seat, and directly plugged the software used daily into the development cycle to train, fight, and win.

Routine Tuesday

By LCDR Chris "Tweak" Leung, USN

Most Naval Aviators start the day with a clear picture in their mind of what a routine day at Homeguard has in store. Brush your teeth, get to FOD walkdown, drink some coffee, write some gradesheets, do some DivO reviews, drink more coffee, go fly. Rinse and repeat. Stationed in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, HSM-37 challenges that notion regularly. We send out detachments in support of the Maritime Homeland Defense mission with only 96-hour notice, we support underway detachments as the backstop for U.S. 3rd Fleet, and we provide 24/7 Search and Rescue support to U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) District 14. This "routine Tuesday" was scheduled as an NVD TACFORM and night fundamentals training flight, but quickly evolved into a single crew launching on a challenging nighttime, long-range MEDEVAC mission in degraded weather conditions. As it turns out, the SAR/MEDEVAC mission is never truly routine.

HSM-37

The HSM Community conducts advanced training such as SAR or HELLFIRE missile and torpedo employments, but rarely performs these tasks operationally (if ever). Quarterly SAR training flights typically include daytime swimmer deployment practice, standard NATOPS calls, mark on top procedures, and windline rescue patterns. I'm pretty sure no one practices hoisting with a trail line to a confined deck on their SAR training flights. On this routine Tuesday, we gathered the SAR duty crew – LT Michael 'Sweet Baby' Brady, AWR1 Joseph Luongo, AWR2 Jonathan Gilmore, and me – to fly 185 miles cross-country from Kaneohe Bay, Oahu to Hilo, Hawai'i, followed by another 120-mile flight offshore to the NOAA research vessel, Oscar Elton Sette (RS 335). The mission was to MEDEVAC a mariner suffering from acute eye trauma. Initially the situation seemed to be a straightforward MEDEVAC: All we had to do was identify the hoisting point, method of recovery, and appropriate medical facility for patient drop-off. However, much like any deployment, the adversary gets a vote. On this day, rough seas, degraded weather, and confined deck space were our adversary.

"Expect the Unexpected…" What an absurd saying.

The HAC process teaches us valuable tools for flight planning, to include the identification of hazards and development of risk mitigations to balance minimization of operational risks with mission accomplishment. Our crew thought we had covered that. We dodged the typical HAC Scenario "gotchas" for a Long-Range MEDEVAC. Obtain accurate location of vessel: check. Starlink and USCG District-14 had that covered. Maintain reliable VHF/UHF communications range: check. We arranged for dedicated overhead USCG C-130 support with a satellite phone. Maintain real-time communications with the ship: check. Turns out, maritime radios are useful when you tune up something other than Maritime Channel 16. Schedule PPRs for gas and hospital arrival: check. Our biggest hurdles on this day were far from the expected. In all our practice scenarios, training, and mission planning, I doubt that we would have ever considered the challenges that we encountered that night. No Aircraft Commander goes into a mission questioning whether they can successfully conduct a low hover over a ship, yet on this day we struggled mightily to hold a steady hover over the ship's pitching and rolling bow. In all our routine SAR training, we typically assume that we can get a swimmer down on deck in one attempt and can wrap up a recovery via the rescue basket within 15 to 20 minutes. I never would have expected to need three tries to lower our rescue swimmer to the deck. Had we known, we almost certainly would have planned to be in a HOGE for longer than 45 minutes (we actually needed a full 42 minutes). My final flawed assumption was even if our rescue rolled into nighttime, it would be no big deal; we were a senior and experienced crew with extensive NVD time. Flip 'em down, hit the switch, make it green and grainy. Who knew that hovering so close to a small ship would prevent me from looking through my goggles?

"The nitty gritty"

On paper, this seemed like a straightforward night. Cross-country from Kaneohe Bay to Hilo International, top off on gas, fly out to a ship, deploy the swimmer, recover the patient and swimmer, fly back to Hilo, refuel again, drop off the patient at Queens Medical Center in Honolulu, return to base. Simple, right?

The transit phase was fairly benign. We launched from Kaneohe Bay, despite the marginal VFR weather (1,500 foot ceilings, 4 miles visibility), when the SS Oscar Elton Sette was 150 miles from land; this allowed for a total of three hours to transit to Hilo, get gas, and complete the transit to the vessel by the time the ship was approximately 120 miles offshore. During the refueling at Hilo, the weather further degraded to ceilings at 600 feet and 1 mile visibility, which necessitated an IFR flight clearance to get out to the NOAA vessel. The plan worked out great— we op-checked our aux tank, established communications with the USCG C-130 for vectors and communications relay, and arrived on station in significantly better VFR conditions, and above ladder for fuel. We then executed as briefed, conducting a recce pass and making our first attempt to lower our rescue swimmer, from a 150' hover into the wind, perpendicular to the vessel as it charged into 8-10 foot swells. The ship's radome and mast were the only visual references available from this position, visible only in the bottom corner of the right-seat window. That's when the nighttime, degraded weather conditions, and confined deck space started to work against our plan.

Hovering high above such a small vessel with limited visual references stressed the entire crew in our attempts to lower our rescue swimmer to the deck. Our Crew Chief was tireless in his efforts to thread the needle between the ship's anchor chains, taking into account the required proximity to the pilot house in the hover. These obstacles led to excessive control corrections and drift however, leaving the rescue swimmer swinging in the wind. Attempts to use RADALT hold were unsuccessful as the forward mast and slanted deck precluded consistent readings as the deck pitched and rolled diagonally underneath us. BARALT hold was also ineffective, as we saw oscillations of +/- 30 feet due to the low-pressure storm system passing through the area.

As I struggled to maintain steady altitude in a centered position over the bow, I coordinated with my copilot in the left seat to make light inputs to the collective to steady us out. Although this helped, our hover was still too unsteady to effect a safe recovery. We made the call to divide the controls; I had cyclic control in the right seat and my copilot had collective control from the left seat. This method of dividing the scan and controls improved our hover significantly, with more moderate altitude fluctuations of only about +/- 10 feet. However, after 12 minutes in a hover, it was still too unsteady to continue, so we briefed a lower hover height of 125 feet. Over the next 15 minutes, we heard the constant directives, "left 5, forward 2… left 3, forward 1" from the crew chief enough to last us the rest of our lives. After almost half an hour in a HOGE, I made the call to wave-off and reassess the situation.

"Third Time's a Charm"

On our third and final approach, I briefed a 115-foot hover and a hard deck of 100 feet, set new bingos to Hilo and Kona International, and pushed inbound to effect the rescue. The crew executed our secondary recovery technique utilizing a trail line recovery for both the swimmer and rescue basket. With the assistance of the NOAA crew, our Crew Chief was able to place our intrepid Rescue Swimmer on the least obstructed area of the bow. The survivor was quickly loaded into the basket and expeditiously recovered, shortly followed by our rescue swimmer. Once the rescue station was secured for forward flight, we commenced our transit back to Oahu for patient delivery to medical care.

"Never have I ever…"

The good book of NATOPS has answers to all the typical questions. Low oil pressure? EMIF. Input Chip? Main Transmission Emergency Procedure - Perform. Single engine failure on takeoff? Set level attitude, eliminate drift, cushion landing. Weather almost below mins? …YOLO send with a special instrument rating…? On that day our crew encountered so many cases where "no manual can address every situation completely or be a replacement for sound judgment." Sending a trail line to the ship's crew to assist in getting the rescue swimmer on deck is certainly not something that we had ever read in the Special Procedures Chapter of NATOPS. When have you ever considered handing off the collective to the copilot to maintain altitude for a rescue hoist recovery? I've only talked about that in AUF and LSF intercepts. For those in possession of special instrument ratings, it's always thought, "If you've been around the block enough to have a Special Rating, then you're smart enough to never use it." Fortunately, on this day the rule still held; we had takeoff minimums for the runways in use and the capability to divert…but it was close!

There is always a delta between training for routine missions and the curve balls thrown at you in real life. It's easy to look at a problem set from the perspective of a HAC scenario and think to yourself that you have all the answers, and everything is straightforward. Our crew learned that our collective years' worth of training resulted in a safe and successful mission. Hundreds of practice nighttime windline rescue patterns (though valuable) didn't save the day; it was the vast experience and CRM skills we'd collectively developed over years of training and operational deployments. It was a moment of great pride to put all those years of constant training to use to accomplish the mission safely and get the patient the urgent medical care that they needed.

A German Ship Visit, June 18, 2024

By LCDR Chip Lancaster, USN (Ret.)

From June 10th to June 17th, San Diego was visited by German Navy ships and aircraft. On Monday the 10th, two Westland Lynx helicopters arrived overhead the San Diego Bay, landing at NAS North Island to park on the HSC-3 Flight Line. The ships were a combat support ship and a frigate which were berthed at Naval Base San Diego.

The air detachment arrived on Monday afternoon after a quick reconnaissance trip around San Diego County. The detachment consisted of eight personnel with the two Westland Lynx helicopters, along with eleven maintenance technicians who arrived on the ships. The air detachment is under the leadership of Commander Markus Gawlitza. Markus is a former German exchange pilot instructing the MH-60S at HSC-3. One of the Lynx aircraft was equipped with a dipping sonar while the other aircraft was not. The dipping sonar was removable and could be switched to either aircraft. The Lynx has a tricycle landing gear with two main mounts and a nose wheel. While the nose wheel can caster, the two main mounts are locked in place at an angle which only allows the Lynx to turn in a circle. The configuration is for single spot ship deck operations and does not allow for taxiing at the airport. Consequently, the Lynx can only air taxi. Both aircraft were also equipped with rescue hoists for SAR or MEDEVAC operations.

The two German ships tied up at Naval Base San Diego on Pier Three the next day. They were the 570-foot combat support ship Frankfurt am Main and the 492-foot frigate Baden-Wurttemberg. The helo detachment came over aboard the combat support ship and they were scheduled to transfer over to the frigate while in San Diego. Each ship had a large helicopter landing deck on the stern painted similar to USN single spot ship flight decks. Each of the flightdecks was equipped with a circular Heligrid harpoon rapid securing system to keep the aircraft secure on deck in heavier sea states. Each was also equipped with two large hangars, a double hangar on the supply ship and two single hangars on the frigate. The hangars were tall and roomy, large enough to accommodate an AW101, NH90, or a Sea King. Also located on Pier Three was an Italian naval vessel, Raimondo Montecucoli (PPA3), a 469-foot frigate sporting a large flightdeck and dual hangars with an AW101 spread on the deck being serviced and washed.

German Air Det

All of the ships were scheduled to leave the following week en route to Hawaii. In Hawaii, they will participate in a multinational RimPac Exercise. RimPac will feature 40 surface ships from 30 different countries including three submarines and more than 150 aircraft. After the exercise in Hawaii a new German crew will be flown there to relieve the helo det that we met on the ramp at HSC-3. The ships are then scheduled to go to Japan and ultimately going back through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean to return to Germany.

The Trouble with Twist Grips

By CDR "Dangerous Dave" Diamond, USNR (Ret.)

As the Navy transitions from the TH-57 Sea Ranger to the TH-73A Thrasher, one common danger remains with the new aircraft: both of these airframes use twist grip throttle controls. At first glance this shouldn't be a big issue, but based on years of experience with students making errors with the twist grip I would like to explain why these can and do occur.

Most students are exposed to twist grip style throttles from multiple platforms prior to arriving at flight school. This can be on motorcycles, all terrain vehicles, jet skis, or even outboard boat motors. While these twist grips are fairly common, they work opposite in a couple of ways than a helicopter twist grip.

The majority of non-helicopter twist grips are twisted toward the user to increase power. A helicopter twist grip is twisted away from the user to increase power. Also, the majority of non-helicopter twist grips are manipulated with the right hand, whereas helicopter twist grips are manipulated with the left hand.

So, previous experience with twist grips could actually be negative training for a helicopter twist grip. And, in a stressful situation, this negative initial training can be what the student defaults to using.

While serving as an instructor in HT-18, I saw numerous times a student would roll off power rather than increase power. It was usually during a maneuver when twist grip was a bold face item. When they felt resistance turning it away from their body, they became confused and rolled it towards the idle position. This could make things pretty interesting for me as I attempted to avoid terrain and over-torquing the aircraft simultaneously.

When I taught new instructors in the HITU, I would do this as a common student error and it usually caught the instructors under training by complete surprise. I had one new instructor tell me he was so glad I demonstrated that because a student did it to him during his first few weeks as an instructor.

Another thing students do when stressed is what I like to call going into the fetal position. When they become overloaded, they don't see or hear as well, and as they draw within themselves, they will sometimes inadvertently roll the twist grip towards idle.

Also, the mundane task of starting the aircraft can cause problems if the student makes twist grip errors. I have had students overtorque and overtemp aircraft during the start sequence. During the overtorque, instead of moving the twist grip to idle on start, the student rolled it to full open. The engine fuel control scheduled fuel normally and sounded normal until a rapid acceleration that actually caused the aircraft to yaw and placed the plane captain in danger. The overtemp was caused during a hung start where I directed the student to abort the start. Instead of turning the twist grip off, the student turned off the starter switch. All of the fuel pooled in the combustion chamber ignited and no air was being moved through the chamber to cool it. I immediately turned on the starter switch and rolled off the twist grip, but saw the TOT gauge hit 900 degrees Celsius. We were lucky, the starter cooled it back down quickly and no damage was noted during the inspection.

If you get orders as an instructor, remember training devices will break. My CO told me when I checked in, "It's Driver's Ed, before you leave here, you will probably overtorque, overtemp, and have a hard landing with a student." I managed to have two out of three and both involved the twist grip when starting the aircraft. Do your best to keep an eye on what the student does with the twist grip. Lightly monitor with finger tip pressure the twist grip to feel if it is rotating and check the stripe when necessary to make sure it is full open.

I used to ask my onwings prior to their first flights if they rode motorcycles, all terrain vehicles, or jet skis. I then told them they were banned from using any of those devices until they completed their solos.

Also, never forget, the Flight Training Instruction lists "Common Student Errors." You never know when your student is an innovator and will find new ways to make errors. If you have an innovator, let other instructors know. It may save their lives.

About the Author

CDR David D. Diamond (NHA Lifetime Member #367) flew the SH-2F Seasprite (LAMPS MKI) with HSL-30 Det ALFA, Neptune's Horsemen, and HSL-34, the Greencheckers. He was a Selected Reservist assigned to CTW-5 NR Det 282, the Elks, and provided direct support to HT-18, the Vigilant Eagles. He retired with over 3,600 Mishap Free hours of flight time. He also holds the unique distinction of wearing five different ranks and holding three different designators while assigned to HT-18.

Women in Aviation International (WAI) Conference

By LT Samantha "Amber" Hein, USN

From left to right: LT Alix "Braino" Membreno, LT Sam "Amber" Hein, LT Elisha "Grudge" Clark, and LT Mary "Bobo" Brass.

When I received an email about an all-expense-paid trip to Orlando, FL from the Navy's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Office, I jumped on it. Who wouldn't love a free trip to sunny Orlando? It was my first time hearing about the Women in Aviation International (WAI) organization, and being a woman who enjoys aviation, I saw it as a great opportunity to meet other people like me.

WAI is a nonprofit organization that aims at increasing the involvement of women in the aviation sector. Created in 1990, WAI held its first conference that same year in Prescott, AZ. Since then, it has hosted a conference every year in a new location where various vendors and organizations gather for lectures, workshops, and networking opportunities.

The setup resembled the NHA Annual Symposium, but with a slightly stronger emphasis toward fixed-wing aviation. The booths included all the major airlines, training organizations and schools, aerospace companies, and each branch of the armed forces. The underlying theme transcended aircraft types and focused on this question: How do we, as women, insert ourselves into and thrive in a male dominated industry?

All of the lectures did a great job at addressing the challenges of being a woman in aviation, but one in particular really stood out to me. The panel titled "Striking a Balance While Building a Resilient Warrior" focused on mental health in military aviation. One of the panel members, CAPT Chandra "Mamasan" Newman, put it best when she said, "As aviators, we understand unscheduled maintenance for aircraft, but do we understand unscheduled maintenance for ourselves?" This stuck with me because it speaks beyond gender. I think we forget that we can be aviators and humans at the same time. It's okay to take time for yourself. When we don't prioritize our own mental health, we not only put ourselves at risk, but also the people with whom we fly.

Many lectures referenced an incident that occurred right before the conference when Minnesota Senator Gene Dornink called a female Delta Pilot a stewardess right after she introduced herself as a pilot. This was a common topic among many of the speakers, where people have the preconceived notion that women are not traditionally thought of as pilots, maintainers, or engineers. Their advice was that women must continually insert themselves into roles traditionally filled by men, thereby actively dispelling the notion that women are unable to do the same job.

At the Navy's sponsored booth, I engaged with women who were interested in Naval Aviation. It's exciting to see young women consider military aviation for the first time. Additionally, while milling about the booths, I was happy to discover the Women Military Aviators, or WMA. This organization connects female aviators from every branch of the military. Toward the end of the week, WMA held a flightsuit social where I was able to see some old friends and make some new friends across the Army, Air Force and Coast Guard. Who doesn't love a good flightsuit social?

I loved this conference for many reasons, but the shining star of the week for me was volunteering at the Girls in Aviation Day (GIAD). GIAD was a special day dedicated to girls aged 8-18 to explore the world of aviation. It was particularly memorable because I had the opportunity to teach little girls how to fly the simulator, interpret charts, take pictures together, build paper airplanes, and just generally talk about flying. There is no better feeling than hearing a little girl say she wants to be just like you when she grows up.

Overall, I had a great time at WAI. It was a good opportunity to meet new people, catch up with old friends, hear unique perspectives from a diverse group of aviation professionals, and interact with the next generation of female aviators. I plan on being here again next year, and you should too!

For more information about WAI and how to attend next year's conference in Denver, CO, visit www.wai.org.

From top left to right: LT Nikki "Ray Charles" Moyle, LT Sam "Amber" Hein, LT Elisha "Grudge" Clark, LT Mary "Bobo" Brass, and LT Alix "Braino" Membreno.

LT Nikki "Ray Charles" Moyle runs a flight simulator with a prospective aviator.

Change of Command

HSMWINGPAC

CAPT Kenneth Colman, USN
relieved
CAPT Christopher Richard, USN
July 16, 2024

HSM-73 Battlecats

CDR Matthew Henrich, USN
relieved
CDR Scott Lippincott, USN
July 12, 2024

HSM-49 Scorpions

CDR Justin Waskey, USN
relieved
CDR Kent Gebicke, USN
July 11,2024

USCGAS Sitka

CDR Rand Semke, USCG
relieved
CAPT Vincent Jansen, USCG
June 28, 2024

SUPPORTING THE TILTROTOR INDUSTRIAL WORKFORCE

Team Osprey, the backbone behind the world's only active production line for tiltrotor aircraft, comprises more than 500 U.S.-based suppliers across 44 states and employs more than 27,000 people. Working together, Team Osprey enables operators, end-users, and industry leaders to create opportunities to support and improve the exceptional V-22 platform.

V22 TEAM OSPREY

READY TO WIN THE FIGHT

bell.co/v22

boeing.com/defense/v-22-osprey

VX-31 PHOTOEX

By LT Kristen Boye, USN and Mr. Raymond Rivard

VX-31 Search and Rescue utilizes the MH-60S for both military and civilian SAR in the vicinity of Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake (NAWSCL). NAWSCL utilized the SH-60F from 2008-2010. We've been using the MH-60S since 2010. VX-31 utilizes the aircraft for inland SAR, overwater SAR, overwater weapons testing SAR, EOD operations, aerial firefighting via Bambi Bucket, and drone range recovery. We often conduct search and rescue missions on Mt. Whitney, along the Eastern Sierras, and in Death Valley National Park. Some of our recent missions include a blizzard rescue where four individuals were rescued via basket in Death Valley, saving an individual who fell while hiking in the vicinity of Heart Lake, CA at 12,900 ft. DA, and rescuing two individuals who were suffering from injuries and hypoxia at night on Mt. Whitney.

VX-31 SAR operates three MH-60S helicopters from NAWS China Lake as search and rescue/medical evacuation (SAR/MEDEVAC) platforms for the EA-18G, F/A-18A-F, AV-8B, as well as other platforms assigned to both Edwards AFB and NAWS China Lake. Pursuant to the National SAR Plan of the United States, the unit may also be used for civil SAR/MEDEVAC needs to the fullest extent practicable on a non-interference basis with primary military duties according to applicable national directives, plans, guidelines, and agreements; specifically, the unit may launch in response to tasking by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (based on a California State Memorandum of Understanding) for inland missions when other assets are unavailable.

We often operate at our aircraft's maximum ceiling around 13,000 DA with minimal power margin. Our pilots, crewmen, and SAR Medical Technicians endure a rigorous syllabus in order to be cleared to stand SAR Duty. Mountain flying poses a challenge not only for power margins but also wind utilization. We operate at the tallest peak in North America - Mt. Whitney, which is 14,505 feet above sea level, and the lowest point in North America, Badwater Basin, which is 282 feet below sea level. We conduct missions at the hottest place on earth and during the winter months we perform in negative temperatures. VX-31 SAR has conducted 102 rescue missions in the H-60 since 2008. The crew who participated in the PHOTOEX were LT Kristen Boye, LT Shawn Semana, HM1 James Garvey, AWS1 Vince Meza, and Mr. Jesse Peterson.

Photo by Mr. Raymond Rivard

The Future is Now: The TH-73A Transition

By LT Hailey "Pug" Brunette, USN, Instructor Pilot with HT-18

The next generation of helicopter training platforms has arrived and is being rolled out at NAS Whiting Field. Leonardo began delivery of the TH-73A "Thrasher" in 2022, with the HITU training Conversion Instructor Pilots (CIPs). Once enough Instructor Pilots were trained to begin production, HT-8 began their transition, which completed in 2023. HT-18 is the second squadron to transition, and is approximately halfway through the process.

The Vigilant Eagles winged their first TH-73A Naval Aviator in April of 2024, just as the total number of designated aviators passed 37,000. At the time of this article, there are 84 TH-73As on the flight line, approximately equal to the number of TH-57As. The conversion process is driven by the average number of "up" or mission capable aircraft available each week. HT-18 has stopped loading TH-57 students and expects to wing their last Bell student in November 2024. Simultaneously, the Eagles are increasing their number of TH-73A students and IPs.

Under current projections, the final squadron to transition, HT-28, will begin training CIPs in October 2024, anticipating their first TH-73A Student Naval Aviators (SNAs) in January 2025. Expected completion of the transition is October 2025.

TH-73A students who have completed the syllabus and received their Wings of Gold are currently at their respective Fleet Replacement Squadrons and will reach the Fleet shortly. While there has been no official feedback on notable differences of the training delivered by the two aircraft, the CIPs are hopeful that the TH-73A students will have a smoother transition to Fleet aircraft.

The TH-73A boasts a larger engine than the TH-57. The TH-73A's PT-6B-37A can deliver 1000 shaft horsepower compared to the TH-57's Rolls Royce 250-C20J, governed at 317 shaft horsepower. This additional horsepower provides improved range and maneuverability. It also has modern systems such as a Flight Director and Glass Cockpit. With increased performance and hardware changes including a new rescue hoist, a rigid rotor head, a crew belt, and a cargo hook, the hope is this capability which mirrors Fleet systems will allow for a seamless transition to Fleet aircraft.

The Thrasher is suited to teach students the basics, such as hovering without assistance and full autorotations, maneuvers that define helicopter pilots, while also bringing the next generation of aviators up to speed with Fleet systems earlier. This integration is needed in a time when we are preparing our Fleet Replacement Pilots for the future fight, and any time saved in training is critical in gaining the edge on a potential foe.

HSM-77 Combat Readiness Drill 2024

By LT Jordan Camacho, USN

Located in Naval Air Facility Atsugi (NAFA), Japan, Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 77 (HSM-77) is a Forward Deployed Naval Forces (FDNF) Squadron tasked with employing the MH-60R Seahawk for the primary mission sets of Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) and Surface Warfare (SUW). With increasing tensions in 7th Fleet's Area of Responsibility (AOR), training is absolutely critical to ensure seamless integration with foreign allies and the flawless execution of the squadron's primary missions. Due to the unique deployment schedule of Carrier Air Wing 5 (CVW-5), HSM-77 deploys for roughly half of each year in the 7th Fleet AOR. With limited time for a traditional deployment work-up cycle, they must maintain both proficiency and readiness during their at-home period. The Saberhawks of HSM-77 accomplish this by annually engaging in a week-long Combat Readiness Drill (CRD), where they integrate with the Seahawk Weapons and Tactics Instructors (SWTIs) of Helicopter Maritime Strike Weapons School Pacific (HSMWSP).

This year's exercise took place from March 04-07, 2024, and consisted of three days of Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) training, tracking the MK-39 Expendable Mobile ASW Training Target (EMATT) and one day of Surface Warfare (SUW) training, utilizing the mission systems that would be required to employ AGM-114 Hellfire Missiles. By tracking a subsurface target with multiple aircraft and coordinating with one another to remotely designate surface targets, the aircrews increased proficiency in both internal and external tactical coordination. Additionally, tactical simulator events were completed all throughout the week with a focus on ASW Coordinated Exercises and Long Range Maritime Strike Missions. These simulator events emphasized the coordination required by HSM-77's aircrews when integrating with dissimilar ASW platforms or air assets in a Carrier Strike Group.

On March 5, for just the third time in HSM-77 history, the Saberhawks executed a MK-54 Recoverable Exercise Torpedo (REXTORP) expenditure in Japan's Sagami Wan. To accomplish this, HSM-77 integrated with the SH-60K Seahawks of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force's (JMSDF) VX-51, the MH-60Rs of HSM-51, and the JMSDF Utility Landing Ship JS LCU2002. Together the partners completed a Photo Exercise (PHOTOEX), MK-54 REXTORP Expenditure, and EMATT Tracking Exercise (TRACKEX).

For the Saberhawks, the event began with the departure of two aircraft from NAFA for REXTORP onload at a designated ordnance handling site at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY). This required prior coordination with Yokosuka Port Authority as well as a need to pre-stage the required Aviation Ordnancemen (AOs). At this time, the HSM-51 aircraft launched from NAFA to deploy the EMATT in the Sagami Wan and began tracking in preparation for the TRACKEX that would follow the PHOTOEX. Following REXTORP onload, the Saberhawks launched for a join-up with HSM-51 and VX-51 aircraft in the Sagami Wan and flew in tactical formation for the PHOTOEX. Upon completion of the PHOTOEX, the aircraft immediately began tracking the EMATT to set up for REXTORP employment. With coordination from VX-51, the recovery of each of the two REXTORPs by JS LCU2002 was accomplished swiftly and with seamless communications. The HSM-77, HSM-51 and VX-51 aircraft continued to track and complete simulated attacks on the EMATT for the remainder of the event. This defining event for CRD not only showcased the Saberhawks' tactical proficiency for the aircrew, maintainers, and ordnance handlers involved, but also demonstrated increased integration and partnership with the JMSDF.

In total, HSM-77 executed 59.4 hours and completed 23 sorties. The Saberhawks expended two REXTORPs, five EMATTs, and 112 SSQ-53/62/36 Sonobuoys. Additionally, the Saberhawks completed nine Air Combat Training Continuum (ACTC) Grade Sheets and four ACTC Tactical Evaluations. Most importantly, the Saberhawks executed their primary mission with an important ally through this bilateral event.

REXTORP Crew

Coast Guard Air Station Sitka holds Change of Command Ceremony

PRESS RELEASE | June 28, 2024

Coast Guard Air Station Sitka personnel held a change-of-command ceremony at Air Station Sitka, Friday June 28, 2024.

During the ceremony, CAPT Vincent Jansen transferred command of Coast Guard Air Station Sitka to CDR Rand Semke.

As Commanding Officer, Semke will be responsible for an area of operation encompassing approximately 180,000 square miles of water and land stretching across Southeast Alaska from the Dixon Entrance to Icy Bay, and the Alaskan-Canadian border to the central Gulf of Alaska. Air Station Sitka's operating area is one of the most demanding flight environments in which Coast Guard aircraft operate.

During the ceremony, CAPT Vincent Jansen, USCG transferred command of Coast Guard Air Station Sitka to CDR Rand Semke, USCG.

CDR Semke previously served as operations officer of Air Station Sitka and as Military Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security at DHS Headquarters in Washington, D.C. He received his commission from the Coast Guard Academy and then served aboard Coast Guard Cutter Reliance in Kittery, ME. Following Naval Flight Training, Semke flew the HH-60J and MH-60T helicopters at Air Stations Clearwater and Kodiak and at the Aviation Training Center in Mobile, AL. He holds a master's degree from the USAF Command and Staff College.

CAPT Jansen, who took command of Air Station Sitka in July 2022, will be transferring to the Coast Guard 17th District in Juneau, Alaska, to serve as chief of incident management.

A change-of-command ceremony marks a transfer of total responsibility and authority from one individual to another. It is a time-honored tradition conducted before the assembled crew, as well as honored guests and dignitaries to formally demonstrate the continuity of the authority within a command.

Feeding the Hungry Market

By CAPT George Galdorisi, USN (Ret.)

Since Rotor Review is a quarterly publication, there is a faint chance that what we read in one issue has a half-life and might not be remembered when we look at the next issue. It happens.

Recently, we teed up two articles to help all NHA members accelerate their journey to put their thoughts on paper and get them out into the world. The first piece talked about writing in general, the small "w" - writing at work, as well as the big "W" - writing for a mainstream audience. The next one offered some tactics, techniques and procedures for crafting an article for a professional magazine like *Rotor Review*.

This column moves into books, specifically non-fiction. Without putting too fine a point on it, nine times out of ten, when I meet someone who says they want to write a book, they have a novel in mind. Great aspiration, but long odds.

This column will suggest, but not oversell, the idea of writing a non-fiction book. There are compelling reasons why you might want to do so. And while all non-fiction books aren't about history, I'm reminded of my friend Norman Polmar, who is fond of saying, "History is what the historians and writers say it is."

Now before we get all liquored up to sit in front of our desktop, laptop, tablet or whatever and start pounding the keys for twelve or more hours a day, there is one essential prerequisite for anyone who wants to take on a book-length writing project. Here is how Virginia Woolf put it:

"When the Day of Judgment dawns and the great conquerors and lawyers and statesmen come to receive their rewards - their crowns, their laurels, their names carved indelibly upon imperishable marble - the Almighty will turn to Peter and say, not without a certain envy when he sees us coming with our books under our arms, "Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them here. They have loved reading."

Yep, while there may be exceptions, reading non-fiction, whether it is history, biography, autobiography, memoirs or whatever, gives you an essential "pole-position" to take on a non-fiction book project of your own.

Why non-fiction and not a novel? Frankly, it's all about getting the odds in your favor. If you want to get a publisher to buy your novel, you have to write it first. That's typically a 70,000 to 90,000 word effort, and if it doesn't sell, your only alternative is to self-publish. Conversely, most non-fiction is sold to publishers based on a proposal. In other words, you put together a sales pitch which is vastly shorter than an entire book. If it doesn't sell, it doesn't sell, but you haven't made a substantial investment of time and energy.

Crowds at the New York Book Fair

Another thing to note is the breadth of non-fiction works. It is a hungry market. Check it out. Go to a bookstore and take a look at the shelves. There is a cornucopia of non-fiction books, but not that many novels. Book stores are in business to make money. They stock what sells.

So if you want to embark on a non-fiction book project, there are some essential "first order" questions you should ask yourself:

- Is this something you're passionate about?
- Do you have enough "street creds" that you're an expert?
- If not, is there a way you can acquire those street creds?
- Do you really want to spend a year or more doing this?

If the answer is yes…get ready to dive in, but first, decide what your non-fiction book is. Sounds simple, and it is, but this is where many people get tripped up. There are two types of non-fiction:

- Narrative Non-Fiction: A book that tells a true story, often using the techniques of fiction: biographies, autobiographies, and memoirs.
- Prescriptive Non-Fiction: A book offering information and advice, this includes helping readers improve their lives or learn a new skill.

These are vastly different, and just to elaborate a bit more, for narrative non-fiction:

- Most narrative non-fiction is produced by someone who has some experience as a writer.
- Most good narrative non-fiction entertains through storytelling as much as it informs.
- Biographies typically require an enormous amount of research and need a "hook" if the subject is familiar.
- Many aspiring non-fiction writers focus on memoirs. The "art" is finding something new to say. At the end of the day, narrative non-fiction will succeed or fail based on the author's writing skill.

Conversely, for prescriptive non-fiction:

• Prescriptive non-fiction requires decent writing, but the bar isn't as high as for narrative non-fiction.

• This kind of book is sold on the basis of the author's platform or visibility.

• Readers don't want to be entertained, they want to learn from the wisdom of your experience or insights.

• Most popular categories of prescriptive non-fiction:
  - o Religion
  - o Business
  - o Self-help: diet, health, fitness, self-improvement.

Now that we've sorted all that out, there is an art to putting together a proposal. As you do so, you must address the first three hurdles an agent or publisher will push back with:

• It's an article, not a book.

• It's been done before, or it's on Wikipedia.

• You don't have a platform.

These three hurdles bear a bit of explanation. Publishers are risk adverse. Many people have a great idea about telling a non-fiction story, but is it enough - 50,000 words or more - for a book? In most cases, the answer is no. In a narrative or prescriptive book you are basically transmitting information. Is that information better than what has been written before on the subject or what appears online for free? You have to convince a publisher your book is new and unique. Publishing has changed dramatically over the years. The days of launching authors on all-expenses-paid book tours are over. You are expected to market your book. Want to publish a cook book? Do you have a cooking show on TV? I think you get the idea.

When you have your book proposal put together, you must write a query letter. We don't have column space here to walk through the "how to" of these letters, but that's okay. There is a cottage industry of courses on how to write a query letter, and a number of books on how to write a query letter. There are an array of experts on how to write a query letter. Additionally there is a massive amount of information on the internet on how to write a query letter. Here are two sources, "The Great Courses: How to Publish your Book," or you can Google: http://www.agentquery.com/writer_hq.aspx. These are only two, there are many, many more.

If your query letter works and the agent or publisher says those magic words, "Great, I'd love to see your proposal," you are ready to go, you have it ready, right? Here are some tips on that front.

Before You Write the Proposal:

• Come up with a "purpose statement" for your book and write it down in one sentence.

• Put this into a working question: This book is the answer to….

Two sources for writing your proposal are: John Boswell - "The Awful Truth About Publishing" and Jeff Herman - "Write the Perfect Book Proposal." There are a multitude of them in print.

Now that you have done that, here are the questions your proposal must address:

• Who would read your book?

• Why would they buy it?

• Where would they use it?

• What else is available like your book?

• How does your book differ from others?

• When did you decide it's better than Wikipedia?

While all this may sound daunting, it can and has been done. While this column has gone long enough, there is more help to impart if you are interested. Feel free to reach out to me via my website and I'm happy to share a book proposal for the book that fellow helo bubba and frequent *Rotor Review* writer, Tom Phillips, did a few years ago, "Leave No Man Behind." You can borrow the book from the NHA Office. The link to my website is here: **https://www.georgegaldorisi.com/.**

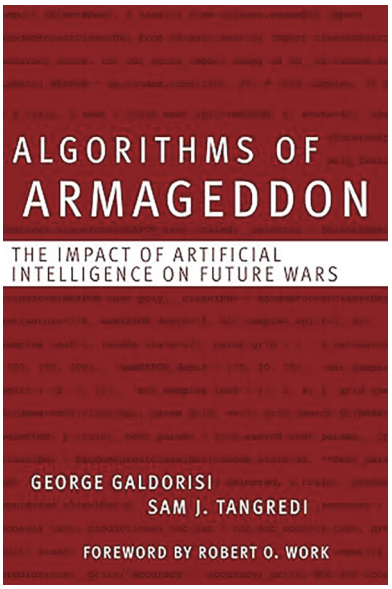
Finally, a word of advice from writing coach Gordon Burgett: "The toughest hurdle you must scale is getting a publisher to agree to handle your book. You are a new name, a new risk to them. They will judge you on what you send, the thought behind it, the obvious professionalism, how it reaches them, sometimes your expertise or previous writing output, and always on how your book will increase their profit line."

There is a human condition called "Need to share." Most of us have it. Whenever I find an article online or in print that I find useful in upping my writing game, I put it on my website: https://www.georgegaldorisi.com/. If you go to the site, you'll see "Blog" at the top and the pull-down menu takes you to "Writing Tips." You may find some TTPs to help you with your writing journey.

Have fun…it is a trip, and do reach out for help.

Algorithms of Armageddon: The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Future Wars by George Galdorisi and Sam J. Tangredi

Reviewed by former LCDR Kevin McDonald, USN
Author of "Life Inside the Dead Man's Curve," and "A Nation Interrupted"



In the interest of disclosure and by way of introduction, let me state up front that I am an associate and former squadron mate to one of the two authors who produced this insightful and prophetic book. George Galdorisi was my skipper when I was attached to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light 43 (now Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 73) onboard Naval Air Station North Island more than three decades ago. In recent years, since the time when I first began to consider writing books of my own, he has become a close friend and valuable literary mentor.

Ten years ago, George penned the foreword to my first book. Since that time, he and I have collaborated on several literary projects, including "Braveship Writers Share Their Secrets," a "how-to" book on writing. Having offered all this as background, I wish I could take a share of the credit for "Algorithms of Armageddon," written by George (who is Director of Strategic Assessments and Technical Futures for the Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific) and Sam J. Tangredi (Leidos Chair of Future Warfare Studies and Professor of National, Naval and Maritime Strategy at the U.S. Naval War College).

Both authors are retired Navy Captains (Galdorisi an aviator, and Tangredi a surface warfare officer), and both—as evidenced by their current positions—are experts on national security. Throw in the fact that Galdorisi is a New York Times best-selling author and you have the makings of a highly informative, entertaining read about artificial intelligence as it relates to current and future warfare.

As Galdorisi and Tangredi put it, "One of the ways that nations prepare for war is to ensure that their military services are equipped with emerging technologies. If we have established anything during the course of this book, it is the fact that the technological peer competitors of the United States—the PRC [People's Republic of China] and Russia—are investing enormous sums of money in developing AI-enabled systems and adapting them for military use." They go on to say, "The problem is that the bad international actors already have AI. They have the capacity to develop it on their own—perhaps not as fast as the Silicon Valley corporations, but steadily. They currently are developing autonomous weapons to be controlled by AI, and they don't care what any public influencer in the United States or other democracy says about it."

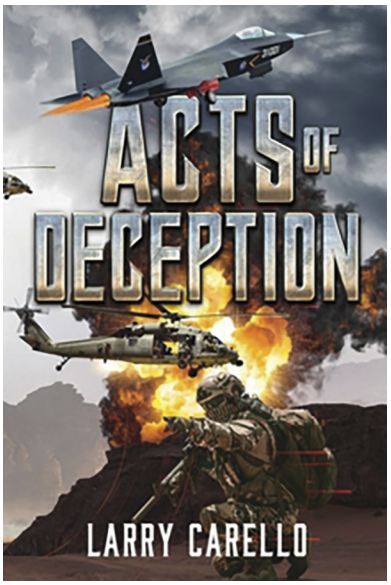
In short, the AI genie is already out of the bottle. That is a given. There is but one remaining question: How should U.S. foreign policy and military planners respond to this new and already-evolving threat? This is the question Galdorisi and Tangredi artfully address.

In this informative and sometimes sobering read, the authors examine the potential repercussions of artificial intelligence on both free and politically oppressed societies. Even more chilling are their revelations regarding the inevitable military applications for AI. In much the same way the world has been forced to deal with the specter of nuclear war since 1945, we must now learn to deal with the threat of autonomous weaponry in the hands of people who mean us harm. As the authors correctly point out, the only recourse for freedom-loving nations at this point is a "fight-fire-with-fire" strategy, in which we must constantly one-up the other side.

Replete with detailed footnotes, "Algorithms of Armageddon" is a comprehensive compilation of the most thorough combat AI research to date. It is a must-read for anyone—particularly anyone in the Naval Service—who wants to stay well informed on the nuanced geopolitics of a technological world. I highly recommend it to junior officers, flag officers, and everyone in between.

Acts of Deception by Larry Carrello

Reviewed by LCDR Chip Lancaster, USN (Ret.)



Larry Carello has given us another Westpac adventure with Johnny Jack McGirt. This is the third novel comprising a trilogy of McGirt adventures. Readers were first introduced to LT McGirt at the controls of an H-46, struggling to get it back aboard the ship in foul weather; now he's an admiral many years later. As in all of Carello's novels, the circumstances come right off major newspaper headlines and news websites. This time, there has been a major incident near a Chinese artificial island on the Scarborough Shoals resulting in the possible loss of a naval helicopter and crew while gaining a state-of-the-art Chinese fighter with sophisticated weaponry.

The novel literally starts with the bang of a cat-shot off a Chinese aircraft carrier followed by bigger bangs, intrigue and, as the title mentions, deception. The Chinese are busy building their island in the South China Sea while their latest aircraft carrier conducts flight operations in the vicinity. Throw in nearby Philippine fishing boats with an overeager Chinese fighter section and an international situation quickly erupts. A U.S. Navy H-60 crew on a routine log run stumbles on the aftermath and is quickly engulfed, out of comm range, and overdue. Admiral McGirt is on R&R in Manila and apprised of the circumstances with presidential orders to investigate the situation. The action rapidly unfolds and picks up pace bouncing between the Chinese, the Admiral, Washington DC, and the Philippines. There is deception on all fronts with the implication of super-secret laser tech as a prize.

As in all of Larry's novels, the characters, situations and places are well developed and familiar to those who have encountered similar circumstances, and quickly become so to those who have not. New characters arise, flying new aircraft, and operating new ships. The characterization and place descriptions are in-depth, colorful, and amplified continuously as the story unfolds. I felt that I was actually taxiing down the inclined taxiway to the helo ramp at Cubi Point in one part of the story.

Carrillo has a clear and concise writing style, making "Acts of Deception" a quick read but with plenty of substance to keep you wondering what is going to happen next. This may be the final chapter in McGirt's trilogy, though the book leaves us with hints of possible future actions. I give the book two thumbs up, check it out, you won't be disappointed. It's in our library. If you like it, you might also want to try Larry's other two books highlighting the McGirt saga: "Rotorboys," and "Verbal Orders," both of which are also in the NHA Library. If you are an avid reader, check them all out and make it a marathon.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Horizontal

1. Possibility of loss or injury....RISK
5. Relating to or situated on the shore of the sea or a lake..... LITTORAL
7. Shared or spread out.....DISTRIBUTED
11. Immediate charge and control (as over a ward or a suspect) exercised by a person or an authority.....CUSTODY
12. Stand or wait around idly or without apparent purpose (similar to airborne holding).....LOITER
13. The aspect of military science dealing with the procurement, maintenance, and transportation of military materiel and sustainment..... LOITER
14. Something (such as a tune, style, shape, sound) that serves to set apart or identify.....SIGNATURE

Vertical

1. A cylindrical projectile that can be propelled to a great height or distance by the combustion of its contents.....ROCKET
2. Relating to, living in, or suited for both land and water. AMPHIBIOUS
3. Air to Ground anti-tank missile launched from a variety of platforms to include helicopters and UAVs....HELLFIRE
4. Used to classify something, or suggest that it can be classified, in terms of its position on a scale between two extremes....SPECTRUM
6. Legendary Assault Support platform that saw action originally in Vietnam and is still in service with the USMC....HUEY
8. A journey or voyage undertaken by a group of people with a particular purpose, especially that of exploration or as part of a military excursion.....EXPEDITION
9. Legendary Attack helicopter named after a large and venomous snake (typically found in the jungles of several countries within INDOPACOM AOR)....COBRA
10. A mechanism that initiates a process or reaction; a mechanical linkage that discharges a firearm (something you should always keep your finger straight and off of until you're ready to fire).....TRIGGER

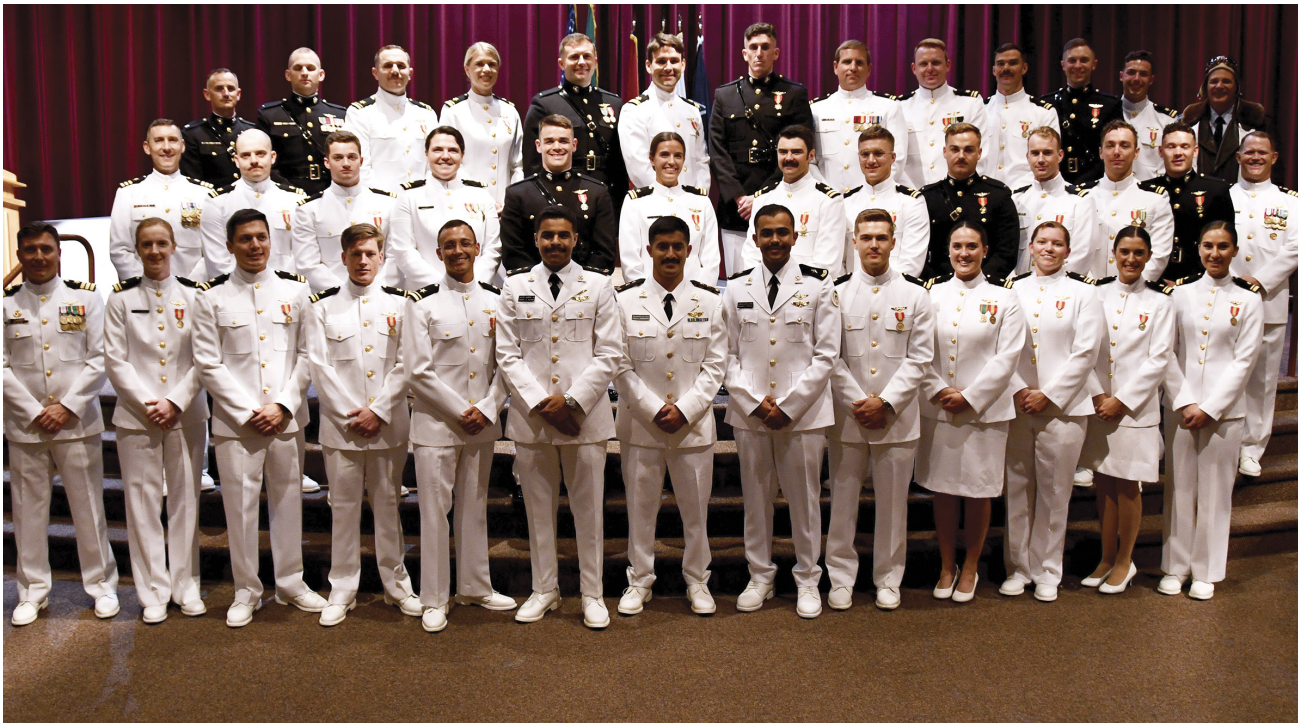
Congratulations to the next generation of Naval Aviation warfighters who received their Wings of Gold at NAS Whiting Field. These aviators will move to the Fleet to learn their designated platforms.

Congratulations to the New Naval Aviators
July 12, 2024

Congratulations to the New Naval Aviators
June 28, 2024

Congratulations to the New Naval Aviators
June 14, 2024

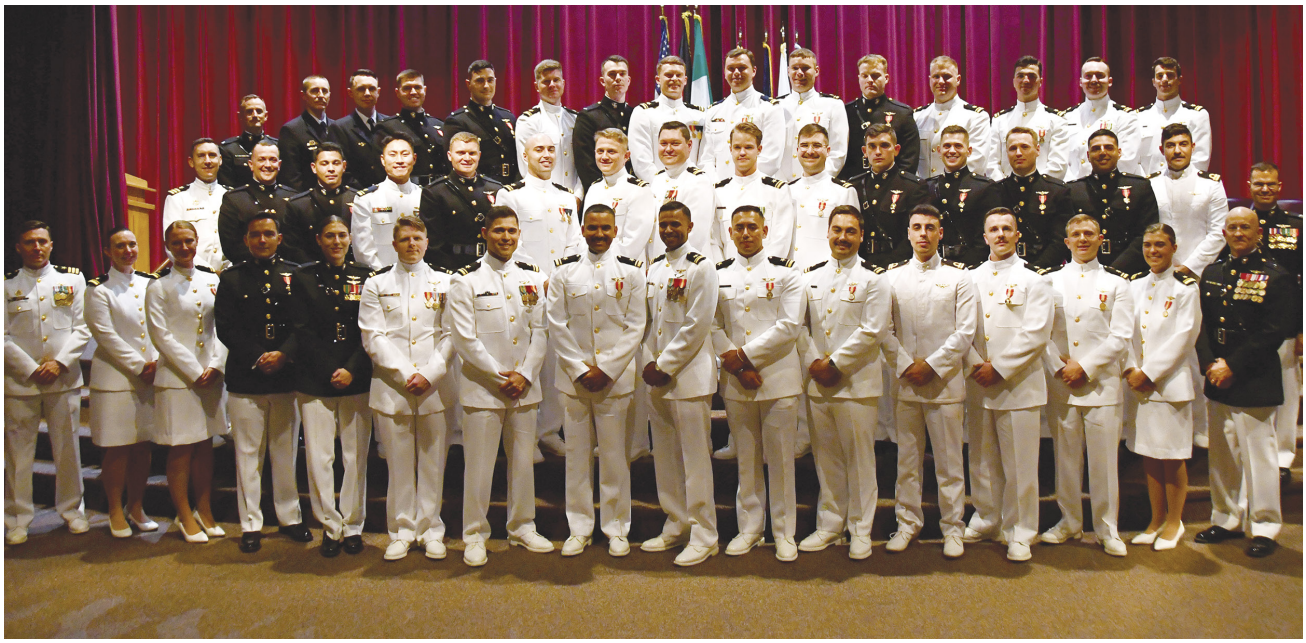
Congratulations to the New Naval Aviators
May 23, 2024



Congratulations to the New Naval Aviators
May 10, 2024

Congratulations to the New Naval Aviators
April 26, 2024

Congratulations to the New Naval Aviators
April 12, 2024



Signal Charlie

CAPT Dick Catone, USN (Ret.) following a memorial service for a fellow helicopter pilot, is credited with the following statement: "I guess we are all in the starboard delta waiting for Signal Charlie." Starboard Delta is the holding pattern for the airborne Search and Rescue helicopters on the starboard (right) side of the aircraft carrier. They fly at a low altitude so as not to interfere with the fixed-wing aircraft recovery pattern, and only land when the last fixed-wing aircraft is safe on board. When tower calls the helicopter to pass "Charlie" to a landing spot, the crew knows the fixed-wing recovery is complete, all is well, and it is time to come back. Hence, the statement appears appropriate that someday we will receive our own "Signal Charlie" and will be called home for a final landing.

Signal Charlie has been created to inform our membership and honor the passing of fellow unrestricted aviators. It is only as good as the information we receive. If you have an obituary or other information that you would like to provide concerning the passing of a shipmate, co-worker, or friend of the community, please contact the NHA National Office at signalcharlie@navalhelicopterassn.org and we will get the word out.

Chief Naval Aircrewman Peter "Pete" Lagosh, USN

Please help us support the family of Chief Naval Aircrewman Peter "Pete" Lagosh.

On Tuesday, June 4th, 2024, Pete gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country when he lost his life during a training evolution in Jacksonville, FL.

Pete was born on April 8th, 1983. He graduated from high school in Cudahy, Wisconsin in 2001 and joined the Navy in February 2007. Pete completed his initial recruit training in Great Lakes, IL and reported to Pensacola, FL to embark upon the rigorous training pipeline to become a Navy Rescue Swimmer and Helicopter Aircrewman. He served two tours as an MH-60S Aircrewman at Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 28 (HSC-28) where he completed multiple deployments in defense of our great nation. Additionally, he served as a Fleet Replacement Instructor at HSC-2 leaving a legacy of strong aircrew generations to come. Most recently, he served as the Warrior Challenge Coordinator at NTAG Richmond where he inspired many to take the same oath he took 17 years ago. Never afraid of a challenge, Pete volunteered to serve at HSC-12 in Atsugi, Japan. He passed away during a training evolution in the execution of his orders.

Pete was a loving father and husband, who always had a smile and was ready to lend a hand to anyone who needed it. This fundraiser will help the Lagosh Family as they navigate this difficult transition.

If you are able, any contribution is appreciated and funds will be utilized for living expenses, housing expenses, childcare, and education costs.

The GoFundMe Page is here:
https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-for-pete-lagoshs-family

Fair Winds and Following Seas Chief Lagosh

CDR Robert L. "Bob" Roberts, Jr., USN (Ret.)

ENS Roberts became a Naval Aviator on December 10, 1976 at HT-18, NAS Ellyson Field, Pensacola, Florida. ENS Roberts is Navy Helicopter Pilot Designator Number R-14096.

Born to Robert L. Roberts, Sr. and Frances Roberts-Barlow in Ironton, Ohio. A 1970 graduate of St. Joseph Catholic High School, Bob went on to earn a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry from Ohio State University (OSU). Bob married his wife Jennifer Asch in September of 1974. As a boy, Bob always dreamed of flying, and upon graduation from OSU in 1975, he entered the U.S. Navy Aviation Officer Candidate Program earning his Navy wings of gold in 1976. He went on to complete 22 years, retiring as a Commander. As a pilot aboard aircraft carriers, he made several deployments and was able to see much of the world. Post Navy, Bob flew for American Eagle Airlines for 5 years, followed by 16 years with Northrop Grumman Corporation. Having flown everything from helicopters to sail planes, to fixed wing props and jets, he had a well rounded love of aviation.

Bob loved to talk, sharing stories, laughs, and experiences with family, friends, and acquaintances. He and Jennifer enjoyed river cruising and had planned on many trips in retirement but due to his illness that was not to be. Bob was very proud of the accomplishments of his son, Fletcher, and his daughter, Kaelyn. Bob is survived by his wife of 49 years, Jennifer, his children Fletcher (Nancy Cuevas) and Kaelyn (Sean Powers), his mother, Frances Roberts - Barlow, sister Kathi Motycka (Larry), sister Julie Payne (James), brother Brian Roberts Sr. (Dorothy), nephew Michael Motycka (Ann), niece Laura Hanley (Mark) and nephew Brian Roberts Jr. (Sara), as well as much loved grand nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his father Robert L. Roberts Sr., sister Melinda, and niece Allison Payne Rose. A funeral mass was celebrated at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, in San Diego, on June 4, 2024, with a private inurnment at Miramar National Cemetery. A memorial service will be held in Ironton at a date to be determined. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to San Diego Food Bank or St. Jude's Hospital for Children. To plant trees in memory, please visit the Sympathy Store. *Originally Published by San Diego Union-Tribune on May 26, 2024.*

Fair Winds and Following Seas CDR Roberts

CDR George E. Hurley, USN (Ret.)

George Hurley passed away on July 4, 2024. ENS Hurley became a Naval Aviator on December 5, 1966 at HT-8, NAS Ellyson Field, Pensacola, Florida. ENS Hurley is Navy Helicopter Pilot Designation Number R-8716.

He was a native of Boston, MA and graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy with the class of 1965. While at the academy, he excelled in golf, playing for the academy golf team. If you competed in golf, you wanted him on your team. When he beat you, his smile always made you feel good about losing.

CDR Hurley entered flight training following graduation and after completion, he reported to HS-2. While in HS-2, he deployed to the Gulf of Tonkin flying search and rescue missions. Following his tour with HS-2, he reported to Test Pilot School in Patuxent River, MD. After he completed his tour as a test pilot, he attended the Naval War College. He was ordered back to HS-2 as the Operations Officer. Following HS-2, he reported to Naval Air Systems Command as a Class Desk Officer. He participated in the development of the V-22 Osprey and the AV-8B Harrier. CDR Hurley was selected for command and reported to HS-6 for his XO/CO tour. During this time, HS-6 deployed with USS Constellation. After serving as CO of HS-6, he was assigned to OPDEVFOR. Next, he reported to Patuxent River Test Center as the Chief Test Pilot for Rotary Wing aircraft. He became a member of the Society of Experiential Test Pilots having over seven First-in-Flights. CDR Hurley was selected for Captain and Director of the Test Pilot School. At this point, he decided to retire and attend law school.

After completion of University of San Diego Law School, he practiced business law, specializing in commercial real estate and estate planning. He served on the County of San Diego Board of the American Cancer Society, the Real Property Executive Committee for the California State Bar, and the Supervisory Committee of the North Island Credit Union. He retired in 2021.

He is remembered by his wife, Alice, and daughters, Jennifer and Cynthia. All of those who served with him will long remember his smile, friendship, and certainly his accomplishments. A farewell was held on July 27, 2024 at the Corpus Christi Church in San Diego.

Fair Winds and Following Seas CDR Hurley

CDR Harry A. Heatley, USN (Ret.)

CDR Harry "the Hat" Heatley passed away on June 22, 2024. He is the son of Charles and Marjory Heatley, born and raised in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He earned his commission through NROTC at the University of Colorado where he graduated in 1978 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and was commissioned on 26 May 1978. He was stashed for six months in San Diego at TOPGUN, Navy Fighter Weapons School while awaiting flight school training in Pensacola. He earned his Wings of Gold from HT-18 on 15 April 1980, pinned on by his then girlfriend, Kim.

Following flight school, he reported to HS-1 in Jacksonville, FL, where he received training in the SH-3G Sea King with a follow-on tour with HS-1 Sea Component including six-month cruises to the Persian Gulf on USS Coronado and in Gaeta, Italy aboard USS Puget Sound. His second J.O. tour was with HT-8 from June 1983 to February 1986. He returned to HS-1 to earn a warfare specialty in Antisubmarine Warfare, and then reported to HS-9 from August 1986 to December 1988 and made a Med cruise on USS Nimitz. He returned to HS-1 as the AIRLANT SH-3 NATOPS Evaluator and stood up the first HS Strike Rescue/Combat SAR School on the East Coast within HS-1. He moved down the sea wall to HS-17 for his Department Head tour in December 1989, but that tour was cut short to deploy to the Red Sea aboard USS Saratoga in July 1990 for Desert Shield and Desert Storm as the Maintenance Officer of HS-3. Upon return, HS-3 was the first East Coast HS squadron to transition to the SH-60F where he served as Operations Officer. CDR Heatley earned his Masters Degree at the Naval War College in June 1993 after which he served three years at U.S. Space Command in Colorado Springs as CO from 1993-1996. In August 1996, CDR Heatley moved his family to London, England, for a four-year NATO tour in CINCEASTLANT at HMS Warrior. He returned in 2000 to Naval Aviation Schools Command as the Director of the Aviation Enlisted Aircrew School and the CRM Instructor School. He then finished his career at NAS Whiting Field as the TW-5 Aviation Safety Officer and TH-57 Instructor Pilot. He flew over 4,500 hours, mostly in the SH3 and the TH-57 helicopters.

CDR Heatley's awards include: Defense Meritorious Service Medal (2), Air Medal (one Strike Flight), Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, Navy Expeditionary Medal (2), National Defense Service Medal (2), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Kuwaiti Liberation Medal, and Southwest Asia Medal.

After CDR Heatley's 28 years of service to the Navy, he spent the next three years as the Chief Pilot for the Air Unit at Escambia County Sheriff's Office. He taught an NJROTC class at Escambia High School in Alabama, before earning his teaching certification in math and science. The next three years he taught Algebra 1 and Biology at Gulf Breeze High School. He continued his love for teaching at Holley Navarre Middle School (8th grade Science classes) before completely retiring in 2022. He resided in Gulf Breeze. Harry was fun! The laughter in his voice resonated so well you could hear him across any crowded room and know that "Heatley" was there. His competitive spirit was in everything he did, whether it was sports, Pictionary, Poker, Corn Hole or cheating at Scrabble with a secret stash of extra letters, any challenge, and Harry was in for the win. His gym work-out ethic was fierce, three times a week for three hours at a time, his actual work-out was half that since he spent the other half chatting. Harry loved to dance and sing. He could be seen in his yard on his riding mower, shirtless with headphones singing his head off. He loved planting flowers. However, weeding was not a skill set known to him. His love of music and laughter paled in comparison to the love he had for his four children and two grandchildren. Harry was the proud Dad, attending his daughter Brynne's singing gigs and would not miss any performance. He was her #1 fan. He loved sunsets and strolling along the beach pier with Kim. He loved golfing with his buddies even if his golf didn't love him. He made friends all over the world and in all walks of life. Harry was a Christian, Retired Navy Commander, Helicopter Pilot, Veteran, Patriot, Schoolteacher, Coach, Snow Skier, Football Player (a walk-on at the University of Colorado, Boulder), Rugby and Basketball Player, Golden Glove Boxer, Bowler, Karaoke singer extraordinaire, and an avid Eagles fan.

He spent his last day busily doing everything he loved. It was a good day; his heart just couldn't keep up. He loved this country, he loved his family, he loved his friends, and he loved his life! He is survived by his wife, Kim, his daughters, Brooke (Amit) and Brynne, and sons, Ben and Brett (CJ), grandchildren, Sage and Imogen, his mother, Marjory Heatley, his brother, Charles "Heater" Heatley, sisters, Catherine Sechler, Cindy Sommers, and Heather Yany.

Fair Winds and Following Seas CDR Heatly

YOUR MEMBERSHIP HELPS US BUILD ON EXCELLENCE!

Now is an exciting time to become a NHA Member!

Naval Helicopter Association

P.O BOX 180578
CORONADO, CA 92178-0578

Membership Application (circle selection)

Name _____ Rank / Grade _____

Branch of Service: USN USMC USCG Active Duty Retired

Profession: Pilot Aircrewman Maintainer Civilian Other

Aircraft Flown: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State_____ Zip Code_____

Unit / Squadron _____ Current Assignment_____ Ship / Station_____

Warfare Community (I.E. HSC / HSM / HM / VMM / CG) _____

Primary Phone Number: _____

Secondary Phone Number *(optional)* : _____

Email Address: _____

Levels of Membership:

1 year - $40.00 3 years - $110.00 5 years - 175.00 1 year Enlisted Membership - $15.00

2 year - JO Nugget *(O-1 / O-2 ON FIRST TOUR)* $40.00 2 Year - Enlisted Nugget $15

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP - SEE THE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS

Join online:

https://www.navalhelicopterassn.org/join

THE MULTI-MISSION MH-60R AND MH-60S SEAHAWK® TEAM

ENSURING THOSE WE SERVE ALWAYS STAY

AHEAD OF READY

SIKORSKY
A LOCKHEED MARTIN COMPANY