



# FEEDBACK FROM THE FLEET

## Why are history and tradition important to the Navy?

“Look at it this way, no matter how mundane or monotonous, each day is a part of history. [It] is important because the one factor about history is that we can learn from it. [We can] learn from our mistakes and focus on our triumphs.

Tradition is another factor that makes us what we are. It gives us our strength, our hopes, our freedoms and our values.

This is what history and traditions say to me. I believe in our system of justice, I believe our government works for the best interest of the American people, and anybody that has chosen to serve honorably and proudly in any branch of the military has done the best thing that he or she can do to preserve our history and our traditions.”

—**QM2 Christopher Chesnut**  
*USS Higgins (DDG 76)*

“They keep in touch with where we came from and help us not lose sight of where we are going.”

—**IT2 Kyleen Abel**  
*USS Roosevelt (DDG 80)*

“The United States has the finest Navy the world has ever known. It’s not due to cutting-edge technology, but rather to the men and women who’ve given their minds, hearts and lives to building the world’s finest fleet. It is from them that our Naval heritage and tradition is forged. It is because of them that we as Americans have our freedom. It is because of them we can summon the pride and determination that it takes to face our present adversity. Let us instill Navy pride and core values into our young Sailors so that we as a Navy, as a country, as Americans can face the future with grit and confidence.”

—**ENS Peter Blameuser Jr.**  
*USS Roosevelt (DDG 80)*  
*(The son, grandson and great-grandson of a Sailor!)*

“Naval history is an accounting of the men and women who served before us and traditions are a way to keep them and their accomplishments alive. Small traditions can help us to remember great things.”

—**FC2(SW) Tylor Whitt**  
*USS Hopper (DDG 70)*

“The history of our Navy, and our traditions, taught to us how to be a united Navy following Pearl Harbor. Imprinted in the core values are honor, courage and commitment. This is what brings us together in the time of need. Shipmates rely on each other to help in the time of need — don’t let the ship sink!”

—**SK2(SW) Gregory Hollowell**  
*USS Roosevelt (DDG 80)*

“Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it. Traditions honor those who have served before us and remind us of their sacrifices.”

—**ET3 Joshua Dempsey**  
*USS Roosevelt (DDG 80)*

“History is important because it reminds us of the sacrifices Sailors have made in the past. Tradition is inspiring and drives today’s Sailor to excel above his or her capabilities.”

—**GM2(SW) Nelson Ramos**  
*USS Roosevelt (DDG 80)*

“History repeats itself and teaches us what not to do. Tradition is the foundation to build on to keep things simple.”

—**QMC(SW) Jeremiah Blackwell**  
*USS Roosevelt (DDG 80)*

“History is who we are, where we come from and how we got here. History reminds us of our past mistakes and keeps us from repeating them. Tradition, on the other hand, is that little string wrapped around our pinky that constantly reminds us *not* to forget.”

—OSCS(SW/AW) **Victor A. Collazo**  
*Operations Department*  
*Leading Chief Petty Officer*  
*USS Wasp (LHD 1)*

“That fact that we learn from the mistakes and triumphs of past conflicts has contributed to the Navy’s success during WWII and still is [helping] today during our conflict in Afghanistan and the war on terrorism. History helps us ‘know our enemy,’ which, according to Sun Tsu, is one of the basic and most important necessities of successful warfighting.”

—EW2(SW) **William Kegley**  
*USS Roosevelt (DDG 80)*

“History drives the expectations and motivations for today’s Navy. It gives us the reasons to continue doing what we do so well. It reminds us that nothing is ever free and the most important things in life are worth fighting for. Tradition binds us. The past, the present and the future are bound by traditions cherished and passed on from generation to generation. It creates a feeling of unity between the ideas and values of those that have fought and died before us and establishes the core values for those that will follow in our footsteps. Only the great traditions last. Our Naval traditions will last forever.”

—ENS **Carla Fornelos**  
*USS Roosevelt (DDG 80)*

“Why are history and tradition important in the Navy? History is important because it prepares us for the future. It teaches us what we did wrong, what we did right and why we do what we do today. It also lets us remember those who contributed and changed the Navy and the world. Tradition is important because it demonstrates respect and honor. It supports history and passes on a ‘belief’ from our shipmates in the past.”

—DTC(SW/FMF) **Norman**  
**“Kimo” Cruz**  
*USS Bridge (AOE 10)*

“History and tradition are important to the Navy because they bring heritage and pride. From our history come inspiring men like John Paul Jones. Our heritage is filled with a history of hard work and respect. Our traditions inspire Sailors and are important for continuity. History teaches us and tradition sustains us.”

—FCCM(SW) **Joel Timm**  
*USS Hopper (DDG 70)*

“History is important to the Navy because it teaches us lessons and gives us insights into what is expected of us and what we can expect from our shipmates. We can feel pride in the accomplishments of our past and know that we are writing history for future generations of Sailors. Tradition has set us apart from common citizens in the ways we do things.”

—OS1(SW) **Samuel Towery**  
*USS Boone (FFG 28)*

“Naval history is important to military personnel and civilians alike. Our history is one of change in the boundaries of race and equal opportunity. Because of this change, we can defend, as a mighty nation, the United States of America, maintain the freedom of the seas and protect our allies and those without the means to defend themselves.”

—ABH1(AW) **Cornell Walthour**  
*USS George Washington (CVN 73)*



From The

# DECKPLATE

## Blue-Green EXERCISE

By LTJG John Perkins  
Task Force 76 public affairs

▲ An amphibious assault vehicle (AAV) of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit enters USS *Fort McHenry's* (LSD 43) well deck. The AAVs, embarked aboard USS *Juneau* (LPD 10), were conducting well deck training for the Sailors and Marines of both ships.  
(JO3 Wes Eplen/USN)



**F**our forward-deployed amphibious ships recently concluded a *Blue-Green* exercise as part of the same amphibious ready group (ARG) for the first time since June 2000.

USS *Essex* (LHD 2), USS *Juneau* (LPD 10), USS *Germantown* (LSD 42) and USS *Fort McHenry* (LSD 43), embarked by the 31<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), got underway from the White Beach Naval Facility to take part in an integrated amphibious exercise off the coast of Japan.

ARGs normally deploy from the United States with three ships, according to CAPT Andy Karakos, commander of Amphibious Squadron 11 (COMPHIBRON 11).

“We have four ships forward-deployed to Sasebo [Japan], so we can operate a three-ship ARG while one [ship] is undergoing routine maintenance and upkeep.”

What makes having the fourth ship available for a *Blue-Green* exercise so special?

“The fourth ship gives us an extra flight deck and well deck to conduct training and the opportunity to train another ship and its crew,” Karakos said. “Each of the four ships are routinely experiencing turnover in personnel. A fourth ship at *Blue-Green* workups enables each ship to build upon its existing corporate knowledge and experience level.”

“The importance of *Blue-Greens* is to learn how we [and the Marines] operate so that we can combine to become an efficient fighting force during amphibious operations,” said LT Nathan Moyer, *Fort McHenry’s* first lieutenant. “Marines are our primary offensive weapon, and the more we practice with them and hone each other’s skills, the better we all are.”

The training that Sailors receive during *Blue-Green* exercises helps minimize the danger to life, limb and equipment posed by the combination of ship, sea and landing craft.

“During *Blue-Green* workups, you’re going to see deck department



▲ Landing Craft Utility 1634 of Assault Craft Unit 1 prepares to enter USS *Fort McHenry's* (LSD 43) well deck. (JO3 Wes Eplen/USN)

heavily flexed,” said Moyer. “We’re responsible for all the equipment that handles the Marines. We’re responsible for the cranes, the flight deck, the small boats and the well deck, which becomes an inherently dangerous environment when we’re conducting well deck operations.”

Launching an amphibious assault vehicle, utility landing craft or an air-cushioned landing craft is no simple task. It requires perfected skills and thorough job knowledge by everyone involved. The flurry of activity isn’t isolated only to the flight or well decks. Spilling over to the rest of the ship’s crew, everyone aboard gets a taste, and some really enjoy it.

“You have 18- and 19-year-old men and women operating a 50-ton

crane lifting ‘Humvees’ and other Marine equipment onto the deck that then has to be moved,” Moyer said.

“By the time you’re a third class boatswain’s mate, you know how to run a crane, signal a crane and signal cargo around the deck. You’re a professional rigger, and you know all there is to know about the preservation of the ship.”

Throughout the ship, day and night, all Sailors and Marines are actively involved in operations supporting the exercise.

“Some of the engineers prefer to work at night, because they get to do a lot of training and hands-on work that they can’t always do during the day,” MMC(SW) Donald McDougal said. “They get more opportunities to learn the equipment, get more profi-

cient and gain more knowledge about our rate, which also helps them advance.”

Proficiency and in-rate knowledge open more doors than advancement, according to McDougal. Every training opportunity leads to more qualified watch standers and more hands to help with the workload.

“We’re striving to work on qualifications so we can get everybody on a better work schedule,” he said.

Life isn’t much different for watch standers on the bridge, except they often have a better view of the “midnight oil.”

“The majority of our watch standers prefer standing watch at night, because the schedule is not as hectic,” said QMC(SW) Anthony Hafer.

▼ USS *Fort McHenry's* (LSD 43) deck department Sailors work to secure a utility landing craft of Assault Craft Unit 1 as it enters the ship's well deck. Well deck operations were one of the many amphibious training events conducted during *Blue-Green* workups. (JO3 Wes Eplen/USN)



“Night watch standers get a view of the starry sky that is unmatched by any view from shore, and they can watch the sunrise in the morning.”

Such exercises always include casualty scenarios, and that is where medical department comes into the picture.

Shortly before the workups, *Fort McHenry* received a mock medical evacuation (medevac) flight. As with the rest of the crew, teamwork plays a very large part during a medevac. The crew first assists the pilot in landing his helicopter. They then examine the casualties, assess their conditions, provide initial first aid and transport them to the ship's sickbay for further medical attention.

“As it relates to amphibious warfare, generally what happens is casualties come from the beach to the ship,” said LT Gerald Cooke, *Fort McHenry's* medical officer. “If they have further surgical needs, those can be met by large deck ships like *Essex*.”

By the end of the *Blue-Green* workups, there was no doubt that this forward-deployed Navy and Marine Corps team was ready to deploy, put combat-ready Marines on the beach and bring them home again.

(JOC(SW/AW) Roger Dutcher, USS *Essex* public affairs; JO3 Wes Eplen, Task Force 76 public affairs; and JOSN Rob Sealover, USS *Fort McHenry* public affairs contributed to this article.)



# NO REST FOR THE HUNGRY

By JOC(SW) Robert Benson  
USS *Mount Whitney* public affairs

A few months ago, life was probably miserable for the guy in charge of food inventory aboard USS *Mount Whitney* (LCC 20). Hand-by-hand, he counted hundreds of thousands of pieces of food unloaded prior to a two-month underway: 5,000 pounds of ground beef; 1,500 dozen eggs; 3,200 pounds of bacon; 8,000 pounds of chicken; 3,400 pounds of french fries.... Sailors humped 300,000 pounds of food, totaling more than \$450,000, aboard the 2nd Fleet flagship for five straight days.

Calorie counters may as well hang it up — only the mess management specialists (MSs) knew the dizzying number of mouths to feed. They knew, more than anyone, that the flagship's population would swell during Exercise *Strong Resolve '02*. The exercise, conducted every four years, is one of the largest NATO exercises ever, and the flagship provided command and control capabilities, a sea-based platform, a top notch NATO staff and some really good meals. In all, about 1,200 people worked aboard *Mount Whitney*, manning the ship at 100 percent.

And they all got hungry three times a day.

"Flexibility is the operative word for the MS community," said MSCS Jerome Carney. "On this cruise, the wardroom MSs were tasked to almost quadruple their work load. They went from 30 officers to 360 officers and never skipped a beat."

Numbers in the chief's mess swelled, too.

"We usually have 36 chiefs to feed, then we had 115," said MS3 Oscar Jamerson.

The command ship did get some extra help, like MS3(SW) Jermaine

Cotillier from Naval Station Jacksonville's Oasis Galley.

"This has been a great learning experience," he said. "Serving this many people was hectic. At first we couldn't quite keep up; it was killing us!"

*Mount Whitney's* five messes churned out meals around the clock. Shift workers could eat any time of the day or night. The busiest time of day was lunch, according to Carney, "unless we served lobster. Then, it was busy during dinner.

"My MSs never knew what kind of day their shipmates were having, and the crew had no idea what kind of day the MSs were having," Carney continued. "The MSs are in the lime-light all day long and constantly under the crew's scrutiny, especially

during this large an exercise. We've been working just as hard if not harder than a lot of rates. You have to remember we are probably the only rate in the Navy that works 365 days a year: breakfast, lunch and dinner."

And during *Strong Resolve '02*, *Mount Whitney's* MSs added mid-night rations or "midrats" as another meal. For the mess specialists aboard *Mount Whitney*, and the 500-plus augmentees from 16 NATO nations and 12 Partnership for Peace Nations working around the clock, there was no rest for the hungry.



▲ MS3(SW) Jermaine Cotillier displays a chicken and fish dinner in the chiefs' mess aboard USS *Mount Whitney* (LCC 20). The mess management specialists worked overtime during Exercise *Strong Resolve '02*, supporting an overflowing complement of nearly 1,200 crew, staff and augmentees. (JOC(SW) Robert Benson/USN)

# Twenty-four ships earn Ney honors

The Ney Awards recognize quality food service in the Navy. Key areas of food service are evaluated by random unannounced inspections of customer service, restauranturship, cleanliness and management. Independent inspection teams are made up of senior Navy mess management specialists and representatives from IFSEA.

First place surface ship galley awards in the Atlantic Fleet went to USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) (aircraft carrier), USS *De Wert* (FFG 45) (small afloat), USS *Leyte Gulf* (CG 55) (medium afloat) and USS *Bataan* (LHD 5) (large afloat).

This is the second consecutive Ney for the crew of *Bataan*.

“Winning this award is a rare honor,” said CWO2 Kerry Stephens, *Bataan’s* food service officer. “Having been an MS (enlisted mess management specialist) for the first 18 years of my career, I have competed for this award many times — always coming up short. However, here on *Bataan*, I’ve now been part of two Ney winners — first as a chief and now as the food services officer. Being part of a team like this is a great feeling.”

In the Pacific, the ships earning first place surface galley awards were USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) (aircraft carrier), USS *Salvor* (ARS 52) (small afloat), USS *Curtis Wilbur* (DDG 54) (medium afloat) and USS *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6) (large afloat).

Like *Bataan*, *Bonhomme Richard’s* food service officer is also a chief warrant officer. According to

CWO2 Kathy Wiseman, winning this award is the Navy equivalent of a restaurant earning a five-star rating.

“It’s the largest, most prestigious food service award and if you’re a part of winning it once in your career, you’re lucky,” she said. “It means we have the best team and that command support, from the captain, the senior supply officer, the engineering department on down to the entire crew, has been great.”

Crews aboard other ships also helped their commands earn recognition. USS *Gladiator* (MCM 11), USS *Carney* (DDG 64), USS *George Washington* (CVN 73), USS *Ingraham* (FFG 61), USS *Cowpens* (CG 63), USS *Peleliu* (LHA 5) and USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) received runner-up Ney awards.

The only third place award went to USS *Kearsarge* (LHD 3), while USS *Samuel Eliot Morison* (FFG 13), USS *Monterey* (CG 61), USS *La Salle* (AGF 3), USS *Reuben James* (FFG 57), USS *Stethem* (DDG 63) and USS *Coronado* (AGF 11) earned honorable mention.

The Navy also recognized USS *Constitution* in this year’s Ney ashore general messes category.

(JO1 Todd Hansen, *USS Bataan* public affairs; JOC Jon McMillan, *USS Bonhomme Richard* public affairs; *USS Curtis Wilbur* public affairs; and Commander, Naval Reserve Force public affairs made contributions to this article.)



▲ USS *Theodore Roosevelt’s* (CVN 71) MS2 Aaron Riel decorates a cake for the Chaplain Corps’ birthday celebration. Thanks in part to his effort and the efforts of the rest of *Roosevelt’s* supply department, the ship recently earned an Atlantic Fleet first place surface ship galley Ney award. (PHAN Phillip Nickerson/USN)

Secretary of the Navy Gordon England recently recognized 24 ships for outstanding food service. He announced the 2002 winners of the CAPT Edward Ney Memorial Awards during the International Food Service Executives Association (IFSEA) conference in Tampa, Fla.

# Battle



By Naval Surface Force,  
U.S. Atlantic Fleet public affairs

# sharpens the fleet

**F**riendly competition can sharpen the crew of a ship in the same way that rubbing a knife blade against steel can give it a finely honed edge. Each year, every Navy ship competes with others in the fleet to win the Battle Efficiency Award.

Each ship's operational proficiency and achievements across a broad spectrum are judged, and the best ship in a squadron or group earns the Battle "E." The "E" officially recognizes a ship for sustained superior performance in an operational environment.

USS *San Jacinto* (CG 56) led the way for all surface units as it earned the award for the ninth consecutive year. USS *Hue City* (CG 66), USS *Mitscher* (DDG 57), USS *Chancellorsville* (CG 62) and USS *Philippine Sea* (CG 58) have won at least three consecutive awards, while USS *Chosin* (CG 65), USS *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6), USS *Comstock* (LSD 45), and USS *Salvor* (ARS 52) showed their dedication for a second year in a row.

The tough criteria for winning the "E" require dedication to more than just completing the already arduous day-to-day duties of a ship and crew.

"Winning the Battle 'E' is a testimony to a ship and crew who truly meet the 'one team, one fight' concept," said RADM Willie Marsh,

Commander, Amphibious Group 3 (COMPHIBGRU 3), "and it takes the full efforts of each Sailor to win this award."

One of COMPHIBGRU 3's winners, *Bonhomme Richard*, demonstrated that level of effort. "*Bonnie Dick*" served as flagship for two flagstuffs during Exercise *Kernel Blitz '01*, and prepared for and deployed early in support of Operation *Enduring Freedom*.

"We beat out all the competition," said CDR Paul Shock, *Bonnie Dick's* operations officer. "We're the best big deck amphib on the West Coast."

Another ship that won the "E," USS *Vincennes* (CG 49), had nearly all the time in the world to perfect its operations, spending 223 days of 2001 underway supporting both regularly scheduled training exercises and *Enduring Freedom*.

"We have worked together so much over the past year, you get the feeling you are part of a finely-tuned machine," said OS3 Jonathon Elosequi of *Vincennes*. "In combat, if a person makes a mistake, there is always someone there who has your back and picks up where you left off."

*Vincennes* completed two deployments and various exercises during a full training cycle that spanned the entire year.

▼ A USS *San Jacinto* (CG 56) Sailor relays information to the on-scene leader during a fire drill. Conducting such drills helped "*San Jac*" win its ninth consecutive Battle Efficiency Award. (J01 Joshua Hudson/USN)



“It feels great to receive the recognition and know all our hard work has not gone unnoticed,” said **Vincennes** crew member IS1 Scott Bouck.

One of two aircraft carriers to win the “E” made a deviation from its regularly scheduled six-month deployment to respond to America’s distress call. USS **Carl Vinson’s** (CVN 70) real world operations helped them secure a Battle “E.”

“Most battle-ready carriers are graded on missile shoot performances, hours flown, number of sorties and their safety records,” said CDR Michael Manazir, **Carl Vinson’s** executive officer. “Each department also has a specific set of requirements it must meet.”

**Carl Vinson** excelled in almost every category. The medical department was selected “best in the fleet” for materiel condition and received an “outstanding” rating in clinical care, pharmaceutical care and medical logistics.

“In order for us to achieve excellence, we must have total commitment from the crew,” said Manazir. “We demonstrated our ability to conduct warfare in Operation *Enduring Freedom*. I am extremely proud to be a member of the crew that had that type of performance.”

(JOC Jon McMillan, USS **Bonhomme Richard** public affairs; USS **Vincennes** public affairs; and JO2 Galloway Looney, USS **Carl Vinson** public affairs contributed to this article.)



## Battle Efficiency Award Winners:

USS **San Jacinto** (CG 56)  
USS **Hue City** (CG 66)  
USS **Mitscher** (DDG 57)  
USS **Philippine Sea** (CG 58)  
USS **Anzio** (CG 68)  
USS **Arleigh Burke** (DDG 51)  
USS **Bataan** (LHD 5)  
USS **Black Hawk** (MHC 58)  
USS **Boone** (FFG 28)  
USS **Carney** (DDG 64)  
USS **Carter Hall** (LSD 50)  
USS **De Wert** (FFG 45)  
USS **Detroit** (AOE 4)  
USS **Elrod** (FFG 55)  
USS **Gonzalez** (DDG 66)  
USS **Grapple** (ARS 53)  
USS **Mahan** (DDG 72)  
USS **Monterey** (CG 61)  
USS **Nashville** (LPD 13)  
USS **Oscar Austin** (DDG 79)  
USS **Osprey** (MHC 51)  
USS **Pioneer** (MCM 9)  
USS **Ponce** (LPD 15)  
USS **Ramage** (DDG 61)  
USS **Samuel B. Roberts** (FFG 58)  
USS **Scout** (MCM 8)  
USS **Shrike** (MHC 62)  
USS **Ticonderoga** (CG 47)  
USS **Carl Vinson** (CVN 70)  
USS **Warrior** (MCM 10)  
USS **Wasp** (LHD 1)  
USS **Princeton** (CG 59)  
USS **Chancellorsville** (CG 62)  
USS **Port Royal** (CG 73)  
USS **Chosin** (CG 65)  
USS **Shiloh** (CG 67)  
USS **Essex** (LHD 2)  
USS **Fort McHenry** (LSD 43)  
USS **Bonhomme Richard** (LHD 6)  
USS **Dubuque** (LPD 8)  
USS **Comstock** (LSD 45)  
USS **Boxer** (LHD 4)  
USS **Salvor** (ARS 52)  
USS **Rainier** (AOE 7)  
USS **Wadsworth** (FFG 9)  
USS **Benfold** (DDG 65)  
USS **Ingraham** (FFG 61)  
USS **Vincennes** (CG 49)  
USS **Jarrett** (FFG 33)  
USS **Oldendorf** (DD 972)  
USS **O’Kane** (DDG 77)  
USS **Theodore Roosevelt** (CVN 71)

By Striking Fleet Atlantic public affairs

# STRONG RESOLVE

## musters exceptional support

**T**raining is a part of every Sailor's life. Day in and day out, every department on every ship conducts some form of training, from individual rate and general quarters training to fleetwide and multi-service/international exercises.

For Sailors aboard eight Navy ships, and 25,000 other NATO and Partnership for Peace (PFP) troops that were involved in NATO Exercise *Strong Resolve '02* (SR02), training has been taken to a new level.

This year's Exercise *Strong Resolve*, one of NATO's and PFP's largest training exercises since the Cold War, involved a total 33,000 military personnel. The 26 NATO and PFP nations conducted the exercise, the final test of NATO's four-year training cycle, in Poland, Normandy and the Baltic Sea.

"Our aim is to rapidly deploy multinational forces in two simultaneous operations," said VADM Cutler Dawson, Commander, Striking Fleet Atlantic (CSFL). "These missions encompass the full spectrum of NATO missions. We also seek to implement and validate NATO's afloat CJTF (combined joint task force) capabilities."

One scenario involved an Article Five Operation, taking place in and around Norway. Article Five mandates the defense of a NATO ally, and this operation included participation

by 13 NATO countries. The second scenario involved a Crisis Response Operation with 19 NATO and 11 PFP nations participating.

More than 450 personnel from Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Slovak Republic, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden augmented the CSFL staff. PFP integration for *SR02* was the highest ever.

USS *Mount Whitney* (LCC 20) operated as the joint command center (JCC) for NATO's sea-based CJTF during the crisis response operation, the larger of two scenarios.

Together with USS *Tortuga* (LSD 46) and the experimental multiservice high-speed vessel *Joint Venture*, (HSV-X1) they acted as an amphibious battle group.

USS *Donald Cook* (DDG 75), USS *Oscar Austin* (DDG 79), USS *Briscoe* (DD 977) and USS *Hawes* (FFG 53) with staff from Destroyer Squadron 22 acted as the opposition force for the exercise.

Before *SR02* began, *Mount Whitney* received additional personnel including U.S. reservists and foreign military members. CSFL personnel provided them with a shipboard

▼ EW1 Kendall Kilgore loads a chaff launcher on USS *Briscoe* (DD 977) while en route to the NATO and Partnership for Peace Exercise *Strong Resolve '02*. (JO1 Kevin Elliott/USN)



orientation and training on NATO operations and all facets of the upcoming exercise. Combining forces in this way provided an interesting opportunity to learn about each NATO country as well as the mission at hand.

“It was very enjoyable,” said Petty Officer Wendy Whitney, from the United Kingdom’s Royal Navy, who served as a maritime command and control information system operator during the exercise. “I met many different people from all different nations, and learned a lot.... All of this gave me a very good insight into the exercise.”

This exercise was the third in which American ships have had a role. For some Sailors, like OS1(SW/ASW) Harry Sundheimer, a reservist from Red Hook, N.Y., *Strong Resolve* provided another opportunity to work with an international force.

“Personnel from Bulgaria, Poland and Uzbekistan are fun to work with,” said Sundheimer. “Their standards regarding military life are similar to ours in certain ways. We work well together in attempting to accomplish our goals.”

One goal of the exercise was completing the testing of *Joint Venture* (HSV-X1), a low-cost ship able to perform several different missions from coastal mine hunting to command and control. During the exercise, the ship performed amphibious landings and transported Marines.

The fleet, the Office of Naval Research, the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), the Navy’s Surface Warfare Directorate and Naval Sea Systems Command will review the results of *Joint Venture’s* participation in *SR02*, according to RADM Robert Sprig, Commander of Naval Warfare Development Command. The data collected will aid the Navy in establishing requirements for future shipbuilding programs like the



▲ USS *Mount Whitney* (LCC 20) was the command ship for NATO’s first afloat combined joint task force in Exercise *Strong Resolve* ‘02. (Navy News Stand/USN)

DD(X) destroyer, the future cruiser or CG(X), and the littorals combat ship or LCS(X).

The designers and crew of *Joint Venture* weren’t the only ones to benefit from the exercise, which provided some excellent international training for all 33,000 military members.

“This was a great opportunity to train with our NATO and partner allies in a realistic environment,” Dawson said. “The support from all of the nations involved has been outstanding, and the exercise provided beneficial training for all participants.” 

# FOAL EAGLE



▲ An amphibious assault vehicle assigned to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit launches from USS *Juneau's* (LPD 10) well deck during a mock amphibious landing. The landing was part of Exercise *Foal Eagle*, an annual joint and combined field training and maritime exercise between the armed forces of the United States and Republic of Korea. (PH3 James Davis/USN)

**S**ince March, the Sailors of the USS *Essex* (LHD 2) amphibious readiness group (ARG) and Marines of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit have shared living conditions, food, bingo games, small talk, frustration, smiles, a common mission and bad weather.

The ARG recently participated in Exercise *Foal Eagle*. All four branches of the U.S. armed forces obtained experience operating with each other and with their Republic of Korea counterparts through real world scenarios. As in all real world operations, not everything went according to plan.

"The weather had the biggest impact, but every operation is impacted by weather and we overcame that," said CDR Scott Gordon, the operations officer for *Essex*. "Flexibility is the key to success."

Every exercise has its own set of challenges that arise and need to be "flexed" around. Flexing around an approaching storm can be difficult at times.

"We had a very well developed, almost record book low storm front. As it came across, it picked up a lot of sand from the Gobi Desert in China and brought it all with it," said

AG1 Jed Johnson, aboard *Essex*. "I have never seen one this intense."

With a powerful storm brewing on the horizon, the weather turned from overcast with a chance for bad weather to heavy downpours and high seas. The likelihood of *Foal Eagle* flawlessly coming together had a hitch thrown into it.

"Unfortunately, as with most plans, it didn't work out the way we had it on paper," said Marine Maj. Thomas Smyth, *Essex* air operations officer.

"We adjusted, looked at the schedule and saw which events we could complete and which we could not," said LTJG Derrick Clark, Amphibious Squadron 11's *Foal Eagle* action officer. "Then we discussed it with our Korean counterparts and resolved the situation in a way that would carry out the training to the fullest extent possible."

Intent on finishing up the exercise, Koreans and Americans alike rethought what they were able to complete.

"The key to being flexible is communication," said Gordon. "You start out with a plan, but you identify what can go wrong. Up front you say, 'what's going to go wrong? Who should I tell, and how should I overcome this?' All the players in this case were developing alternate plans."

"Not only are we talking about Korean and U.S. Navy and Marines, but we're also talking about Army and Air Force assets, submarines that are out there operating, and all the logistical support on shore from the

# NEARLY RAINED OUT

forces in Korea that are supporting this exercise,” said Clark.

After completely reworking the exercise’s plan, a break in the weather allowed the exercise to continue with the next objective, putting Marines ashore. As the landing craft cleared the well deck, Sailors aboard USS **Fort McHenry** (LSD 43) honed their communication and coordination skills between ships of the ARG and the Korean navy.

A major part of any operation is the communications between the units involved. The task of maintaining constant communications between the ARG ships became more challenging than usual because of 14 foreign ships that were part of *Foal Eagle*.

“Communications were extremely different with this operation,” said OS2 Juan Calloway, who stands watch in **Fort McHenry’s** combat information center. “Our watch standers were trying to decipher transmissions in Korean and in English with strong accents. The difference from normal operations also provided good first hand training for junior personnel that most people can only read about.”

With any international interaction, the communication barrier between two people can cause some problems, even with a trained crew interpreting messages and passing them on.

The Koreans wanted to bring distinguished visitors to **Essex** by air for a tour. They arrived in aircraft that had not been tested on the ship’s

flight deck; however **Essex** quickly adapted to the situation and got the aircraft safely aboard.

“We made it work,” said Smyth. “It shows that the **Essex** crew members in the air department really are professionals. They can adapt to a change readily and make it work out.”

Remaining flexible though tongued and tempest tossed, the exercise participants continued nearly as planned with Navy and Marine Corps from both countries conducting a mock amphibious landing, to

include the advanced force and all supporting operations.

*Foal Eagle* demonstrated and built the combat readiness of Korean and American Naval forces. Mother Nature may have interfered; however, the exercise wrapped up as intended even though not exactly as planned.

*(JOSN Robert Sealover, USS Fort McHenry public affairs, and JO1 John Domalewski, USS Essex public affairs contributed to this article.)*



▲ Republic of Korean amphibious assault vehicles (AAV) formed into assault waves for a mock amphibious assault demonstration. A few moments later, U.S. AAVs from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit aboard USS **Juneau** (LPD 10) joined them. (PH3 James Davis/USN)

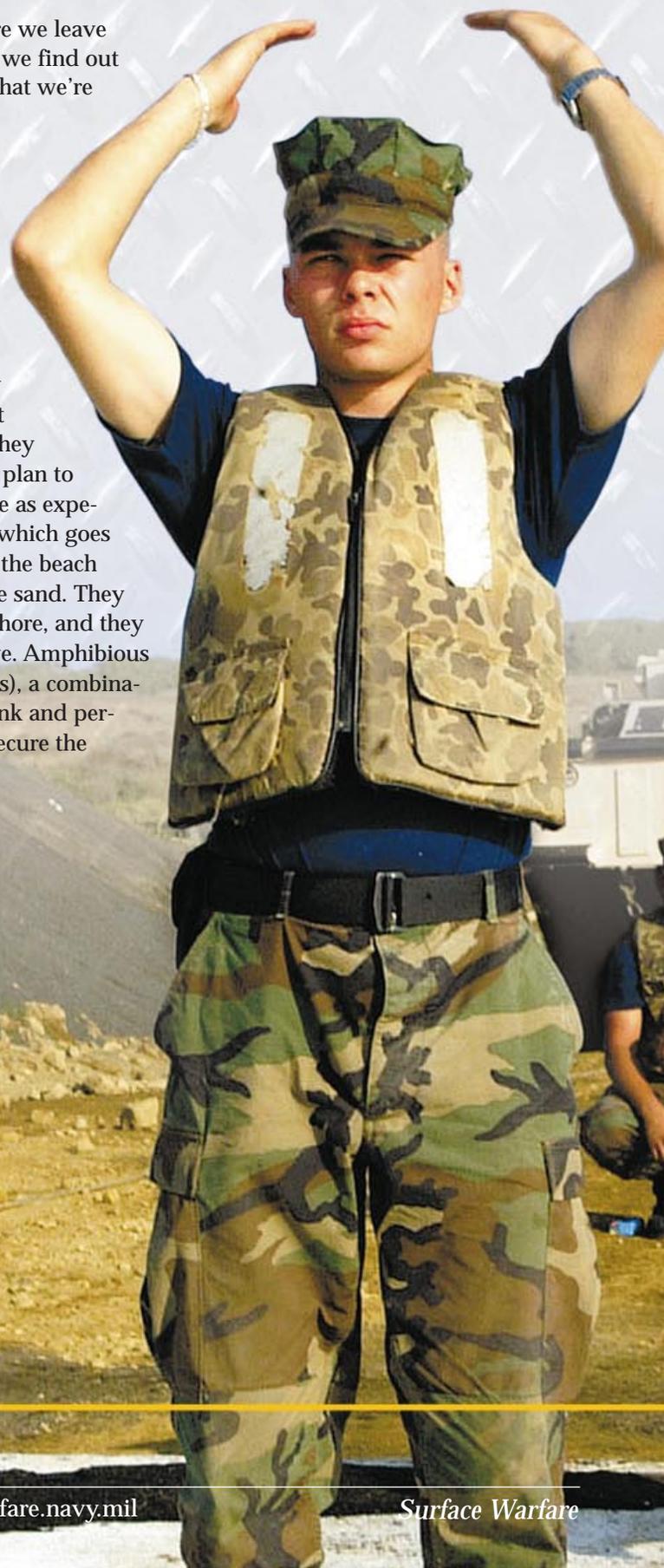
**T**he USS *Essex* (LHD 2) Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and Marines of the 31<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) currently make up Amphibious Force, U.S. 7th Fleet. They are the Navy's only forward-deployed amphibious force, and one of their primary missions is to move Marines ashore. This is no easy task. It requires insightful planning, perfect skills and a tireless dedication to duty. So to accomplish this task they call on one team, the only team tried and practiced in the forward-deployed environment, Beach Master Unit 1, Detachment Western Pacific (BMU 1 Det WestPac).

"Whenever Marines get underway, we get underway with them," said BM2 Victor Guerrero. "While the Marines are in the field, we stay on the beach. We're the link between the ship and the Marines."

"Our main job is to move equipment, vehicles and personnel from the ships to the shore," Guerrero

added. "It starts before we leave Sasebo (Japan), when we find out where we're going, what we're doing and who we're going with."

From there, BMU 1 Det WestPac goes to work. Once they know where they will be going, they consider the mission, the geographic conditions and the delivery timing to choose what gear and equipment they need. They develop a plan to get the Marines ashore as expeditiously as possible, which goes into action as soon as the beach masters set foot on the sand. They are among the first ashore, and they will be the last to leave. Amphibious assault vehicles (AAVs), a combination of amphibious tank and personnel carrier, often secure the beach for BMU 1.



► Sailors from Beach Master Unit 1 (BMU 1), Detachment Western Pacific, watch as one of their Beach Masters directs an amphibious craft to a landing ramp on the island of Iwo Jima in Japan. BMU 1 helped to transport personnel and equipment from the USS Essex (LHD 2) Amphibious Ready Group and Marines of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. BMU 1 is forward deployed and homeported in Sasebo, Japan. (JO3 Wes Eplen/USN)

“We fall in right behind the ‘tracks,” said CWO3 John Bell, BMU 1 Det WestPac’s officer in charge. “AAVs come in, our two LARCs (light amphibious reconnaissance craft) come in, and then we bring the first LCU (landing craft utility) ashore with our gear.”

“No matter who is on the beach, when we land, we take control,” Guerrero said.

Once the beach masters arrive on land, they are responsible for and control everything from the three-fathom curve, or 18 feet out in the water, to the high-water mark. From there, Marines take over.

“Our job is to get them ashore. Then they go do what they have to do, and when they come back, we get them back aboard,” said HM2 Stuart “Doc” Dodd.

With 60 personnel, BMU 1 Det WestPac is mostly deck and mechanical personnel. A boatswain’s

mate chief warrant officer is the officer in charge, and the only officer on the team. A chief boatswain’s mate serves as the assistant officer in charge, with three leading petty officers. A construction mechanic first class oversees all the mechanical operations, a boatswain’s mate first class runs the boat operations, and an informational systems technician first class oversees the team’s communications.

Each individual has a specific job or jobs in the unit and is cross-trained to perform the duties of any one of his teammates.

“I try to train myself out of a job. That is my job,” said BMC Mike Hunter, BMU 1 Det WestPac’s assistant officer in charge. “I train them so they can do anything I can do.”

The workday begins at 5 a.m. The beach masters are soon at the waters edge, signaling the various amphibious landing craft, guiding them

safely ashore and directing the offload of their cargo.

“Every movement is coordinated with the ships cruising just off the coast, and every person and piece of equipment is accounted for whether coming ashore or returning to the ships,” said IT1 Charles Smith.

The day ends when the job is done, and the beach masters often work through the night. Regardless of whether operations are underway or not, watches remain on post all night, monitoring various radio frequencies and ready to spring into action on a moment’s notice.

Despite the long hours and rugged conditions, everyone in BMU 1 Det WestPac and everyone around them seem to have a good time.

“This is definitely not the Boy Scouts,” said SA Brandon Rhode. “It’s a blast.”

Bell agrees, “This is the best job in the Navy.” 

By JO3 Wes Eplen,  
Commander Task Force 76 public affairs

# BEACH MASTERS: FIRST ON, LAST OFF

# Master helmsmen right on course

When USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) must be less than 200 feet from another ship, the captain calls upon master helmsmen QM3 Chris Shans or SH3 Danielle Kiogima to steer the course.

“We have the most training and experience, so the captain asks us to take control of the steering,” said Shans. “I had about 1,000 hours of time at the helm before I even became a master helmsman.”

Helmsmen are the Sailors who steer the ship from the bridge. On a carrier, they steer 95,000 tons and 4.5 acres of steel on a course ordered from the conning officer while considering seas, winds and speed, among other variables.

Master helmsmen take this skill to another level. They keep the ship on an accurate heading during some of its most difficult or dangerous maneuvers — underway replenishments (UNREPs), sea and anchor details and leapfrog drills among others — and exercise considerable authority.

“If we ever see something that isn’t right with the way another helmsman is steering, we have the authority to relieve [them] and get the ship back on course,” said Shans.

It’s not an easy task to maintain control of a ship the size of *Abe* and to maintain the ship’s heading within one-half degree of its ordered course.

“They have to focus solely on a course, and there’s a lot of distractions up here,” said LCDR Joe Gadwill, assistant navigator.

“There are helicopters flying around and other ships that they can

▼ SH3 Danielle Kiogima and QM3 Chris Shans are the only two qualified master helmsmen aboard USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72). (JO3 Jason Tross/USN)



see out of the corners of their eyes. Sometimes they look really close, but they can't be distracted by that."

Sea and anchor detail requires some of the most precise steering and maneuvering a master helmsman must perform. UNREPs can have hundreds of course changes in just a short time.

"That's more course changes than any other time and requires more attention," said Kiogima.

Both Kiogima and Shans have their personal reasons for accepting the extra workload and responsibilities that come with this position.

"I'm the best 'driver' on the ship, and that's a good feeling," said Shans.

"I like coming up here because it's fun," added Kiogima. "We get special recognition because of what we're capable of doing."

According to Kiogima, the scariest part of being a master helmsman is "that split second when you're pulling alongside and knowing if you're just a little off course, you could slam into the other ship. I just sort of tuck that away in the back of my head and get past it.

"I was an undesignated deck seaman, and I used to stand watch on the helm all the time," she said. "I talked to Shans, who had just qualified, and he told me what was involved. I just knew I wanted to do it."

The process of qualifying goes much further than the personnel qualification standards and an oral board.

"Usually, they have a good feel for the ship," said Gadwill. "They can anticipate the swing of the ship, and they can always maintain course. We

watch them drive for a while. We see how well the helmsmen keep course, what kind of tolerances they give themselves, and how much we have to correct them."

LT Mike Chaparro, an officer of the deck, has spent many evolutions with both master helmsmen. "It always gives me a great deal of confidence to have either of these two at the helm. Knowing that his or her skill level is matched by no one else sets him or her apart from everyone else," he said. 



## STUDY HALL

◀ IS1 Dennis Northerner from Tell City, Ind., studies for his Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) final board. USS *Bonhomme Richard's* (LHD 6) forecabin is one of many quiet locations on the ship used for studying. Northerner was one of nearly 150 crew members who earned their pins much faster than normal because they attended the ship's weeklong ESWS "School of the Ship" or Surge Week. (PH3 Johansen Laurel/USN)