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Settle In For 'Long War,' Says Navy Chief *Fighting Terrorists Will Go Beyond 'Even Years'*

By Debera Carlton Harrell

Secretary of the Navy Gordon England, reflecting on past conflicts involving Navy servicemen and women, told a Seattle gathering yesterday that the war on terrorism "is going to be a long war."

"We are a nation at war, and this is not a war of months or even years; this is going to be a long war," England told a group of Navy veterans and active personnel gathering to celebrate the Navy's 229th birthday and to honor 22 Washington state veterans who participated in the D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944.

Recalling World War II and the Cold War, in which the United States fought fascism and communism, respectively, England said terrorism poses an unprecedented global challenge.

"Terrorism is a threat that is far greater than the first two 'ism's,'" he said. "For the first time in the history of the world, a small group of people has shown they can wreak untold havoc on citizens, friends and allies. We have never had this before. This is a very profound war that will take very profound action."

The event was hosted by the Seattle Council of the Navy League of the United States, a self-described bipartisan, civilian organization focused on education and support of Navy men and women and their families. It took place at the Odyssey Maritime Discovery Center at Pier 66.

In an interview after the awards ceremony, England elaborated on his comments, saying, "I'm not sure the American people have fully transitioned to this war on terrorism.

"It's not removing a mole, it's removing a cancer," he said. "It will take total commitment and absolute resolve to fight this war. I'm not sure the public fully realizes that you can't put

the lid back on Pandora's box; that it's not the same world as it was before 9/11 and it never will be again."

England declined to discuss specific policies, Iraq or the political differences between Sen. Patty Murray, a Democrat running for re-election, and her Republican challenger, Rep. George Nethercutt. Nethercutt was present yesterday, continuing a two-year effort to honor D-Day veterans from Washington state who were unable to receive honorary medals from the French government in 1994 during a 50th anniversary commemoration of the Normandy invasion.

However, England did say in an interview: "The president is trying to lead the nation. He understands that it takes an aggressive policy to fight terrorism. Four years ago today (Oct. 12), the USS Cole was attacked in Yemen. The U.S. did nothing in response, and it bred more terrorism."

Those attending yesterday said they appreciated England's understanding and gratitude for the sacrifices their military service demanded.

But most said the highlight was meeting the aging veterans of "The Longest Day," D-Day.

Julia Pierce, 85, of Seattle proudly received her medal in a wheelchair, recalling her service in a Normandy hospital as a registered nurse.

"We were very busy," she recalled solemnly. "They created a tent hospital that filled up immediately."

Chad Peabody, 24, of Tacoma, who received the Bronze Star in July for his service in Iraq, said he was ambushed along with others while serving with the Marines' 3rd Battalion, 11th Division.

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"We shot our way out, basically; I did what I was trained to do," Peabody said, declining to say where the ambush occurred.

"But what I've been through was nothing compared to what (D-Day veterans) have been through. I can't even imagine."

Raymond Rayniak, 78, received a standing ovation, a medal and a photo that replaced one that had been lost in a fire along with his military service records. The photo showed a 17-year-old Rayniak with fellow crewmen who were in the first wave to hit Omaha Beach on D-Day.

Rayniak, who received head and hand wounds, refused an offered Purple Heart, saying "the guys who gave their lives should have Purple Hearts, not me."

"The stuff I saw was like the opening scene from the movie '(Saving) Private Ryan,' " said Rayniak, who now lives in Vancouver, Wash. "There was too much gunfire, people and tanks damaged by mines, sunk in shallow water, gunfire setting everything ablaze. I don't like to let my mind go back to the beach."

Navy Secretary To Return To Guam

By Gene Park

Secretary of the Navy Gordon England is expected on Guam tomorrow to meet with commanding officers and sailors on island.

Rear Adm. Arthur Johnson, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Marianas, invited England to Guam to attend the U.S. Navy's 229th Birthday Ball scheduled for Friday. England will interact with Navy sailors, U.S. Coast Guard members and local government and business officials.

England also will be the guest speaker at the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Sequoia

commissioning ceremony at 10 a.m. Friday on the Navy base. His wife, Dotty England, is the sponsor of the 225-foot buoy tender that recently made Guam its home port.

England is the 73rd secretary of the Navy, and the second person to serve twice as leader of the Navy and Marine Corps, and the first to serve consecutive terms.

England's last visit to Guam was in February, when he commended Guam sailors during the Navy League Silver Plate Awards.

Evolving ESG Concept Could Lead To New Uses Of Marine Forces

By Jason Ma

ABOARD THE AMPHIBIOUS SHIP

TARAWA IN THE PACIFIC -- To better serve an expeditionary strike group's littoral warfare and antiterrorism missions, the use of Marine forces could change, according to Rear Adm. Robert Conway, commander of ESG-1.

When asked what aspects of the ESG concept need to mature further, he replied, "everything," including the relationship with Marine assets. During the deployment of the Pelelui (LHA-5) ESG last year, Marine aircraft supported the Marine Air-Ground Task Force and protected the ESG in littoral areas, he said. Marine aviation previously supported Marine units, he noted.

"You've got to also realize you're supporting all seven ships as you're doing the missions and we've got to come to grips on how that's going to be done," he told Inside the Navy in an interview Oct. 4.

ESG-1 deployed on the Peleliu in August 2003 and plans to deploy again next year, this time aboard the Tarawa (LHA-1). The Tarawa left San Diego last week to conduct Trident Warrior '04 exercises.

While Marine Harriers and helicopters do not have long ranges, they are ideal for littoral operations, Conway said. Navy and Marine Corps assets still are largely "stovepiped," or

segregated, he said. So the integration of Marine aviation in support of the ESG's ships, which happened once during the deployment, "caused this kind of hullabaloo," he said. "The MEU commander had the vision, 'Hey, I got to support when we're operating in this littoral.'"

Previously, Marine aviation did not need to support Navy ships because the amphibious ships served as "bus transportation" for Marine forces, Conway said. But that is changing with the ESG concept. Now the amphibious ships are integral fighting ships that also can serve as command centers for flag or general officers, he said. As new aircraft, such as the MV-22 Osprey, begin entering the Marine Corps inventory, the use of Marine aviation to support the ESG ships will need further examination and could change doctrine, he said.

Commodore Dennis DuBard, the captain in charge of ESG-1's amphibious squadron, said the war on terror and the emphasis on littoral operations could prompt Marines to perform visit, board, search and seizure missions. As the ESG concept evolves, issues on how to employ Marines will be addressed, he predicted.

Officials must examine how they look at "these different threats" and "the capabilities we bring to the fight in the littorals" DuBard said in an interview.

Ex-Gitmo Thugs At It Again

By Niles Lathem

WASHINGTON — Twelve men recently released from the terrorist prison at Guantanamo Bay were involved in carrying out attacks on U.S. military and coalition targets in Afghanistan, the Pentagon said yesterday.

The Defense Department released the figures in the wake of reports that a former Guantanamo prisoner, "Commander" Abdullah Mehsud, who has forged ties with al Qaeda since his release, now leads a group whose members have strapped explosives on two Chinese engineers they kidnapped near the Afghanistan border.

Pentagon spokesman Lt. Commander Alvin Plexico said the United States knows of at five released detainees who have "returned to the battlefield," and said that there are uncorroborated reports that another seven "have participated in attacks or provided support to anti-coalition forces in Afghanistan."

One released prisoner killed an Afghan judge leaving a mosque and another was recaptured firing on U.S. forces during a raid on a suspected training camp.

Two other freed detainees were killed in action during battles against U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

"Reports of previously transferred detainees returning to al Qaeda and the Taliban is further evidence that these individuals are dedicated to their cause and have been trained to be deceptive," Plexico said.

"From the beginning, we recognized the assessment process is not risk-free. There are inherent risks in transferring detainees for release."

The United States has released 202 prisoners from Guantanamo.

In Pakistan, local leaders are trying to negotiate the release of the two Chinese, who were building a dam when they were kidnapped Saturday by terrorists led by the one-legged Mehsud.

Mehsud, 28, who calls himself "Commander Abdullah," returned to Pakistan in March after about two years' detention at the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He had been captured by U.S.-allied Afghan forces in December 2001 while fighting for the Taliban, Pakistani officials said.

It was not clear why U.S. authorities released Mehsud.

Ex-Detainee Leading Pakistani Militants

2 Chinese Held In Tribal Area

By Associated Press

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan, Oct. 12 -- A former prisoner at the U.S. Navy facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, thought to have forged ties with al Qaeda since his release is leading a militant band whose members kidnapped two Chinese engineers in a lawless region of Pakistan near the Afghan border.

With Pakistani security forces deployed in the mountainous tribal area where the kidnapers are holed up, local leaders sought Tuesday to negotiate the release of the two Chinese, who were kidnapped Saturday. Both are engineers who were helping Pakistan build a dam.

The five kidnapers have strapped explosives to the hostages and threatened to kill them unless the militants are allowed safe passage to a nearby area where their leader, Abdullah Mehsud, is believed to be hiding, officials said.

"We will not accept this demand," Brig. Mahmood Shah, chief of security for Pakistan's northwestern tribal regions, said in a telephone interview. Shah said troops surrounded the kidnapers but were refraining from the use of force for the safety of the hostages.

Mehsud, 28, came to Pakistan in March after about two years' detention at Guantanamo Bay. He was captured by U.S.-allied Afghan forces in Kunduz in northern Afghanistan in December 2001 while fighting for the Taliban, Pakistani officials said.

It was not clear why U.S. authorities released Mehsud. After he returned to his tribal homeland in South Waziristan, he became a rebel leader and had opposed Pakistani forces hunting al Qaeda fighters in the semiautonomous area.

A Pakistani intelligence official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Mehsud was believed to have recently forged ties with al Qaeda and was receiving financing from the group. Foreign militants, mainly from Uzbekistan, are loyal to Mehsud, the official said.

At least one former Afghan detainee at Guantanamo returned to his militant past. Abdul Ghaffar, who fought for the Taliban, was released in 2002 after eight months in detention, to become a commander for the Islamic militia in southern Afghanistan. He was killed by U.S. forces in a gun battle last month.

Pakistan's military has staged a series of offensives this year targeting al Qaeda fighters in South Waziristan and claims to have broken up several hideouts and training camps. Dozens of guerrillas, soldiers and civilians have been killed in the fighting.

The remote region is also a suspected hiding place of Osama bin Laden, the al Qaeda leader, and his top lieutenant, Ayman Zawahiri, although there is no firm evidence on their whereabouts.

Military Influence In Elections On The Rise Since Bush-Dukakis Race

By Matthew B. Stannard

For much of the nation's history, the American military has tried to maintain at least the appearance of political detachment, considered crucial to the concept of civilian control of the military as enshrined in the Constitution.

Reality didn't always match appearances. Abraham Lincoln is said by historians to have worked hard to make sure that Union troops fighting the Civil War could vote -- ballots that some say ensured his re-election. Harold Cox, archivist at Wilkes University in Pennsylvania, has documented a case during the Revolutionary War when an officer marched troops to the ballot box and ordered them to vote a preselected slate under threat of whipping if they refused. And several of America's earlier presidents -- Ulysses S. Grant, Andrew Jackson -- were generals first.

Nevertheless, the military maintained a certain distance from politics until fairly recently, helped in part by the difficulty of voting from the battlefield in an era before absentee ballots.

Voting became easier with the establishment of the Federal Voting Assistance Program in the 1950s, but open partisanship was kept in check by federal laws barring polling of the active military, rules barring those on active duty from many forms of politicking, such as publishing partisan articles, speaking at political gatherings or soliciting funds for a candidate.

Some well-known military leaders took that premise further, such as World War II general George C. Marshall, who became famous for eschewing voting altogether. But his commanding officer, Dwight Eisenhower, allowed himself to be drafted as the Republican nominee for president in 1952, even though he had refused to disclose his party preference until then. But the fierce political arguments surrounding the Vietnam War, plus the advent of an all-volunteer military that attracted a less politically diverse group of career soldiers than the draft collected, began to erode the apolitical ideal. By the 1980s, increasing numbers of military officers identified themselves as partisans - more Republican than Democrat.

At the same time, presidential campaigns began tapping the military like never before. In 1988, both George H.W. Bush and Michael Dukakis tried to buff their images by turning to

military symbolism -- Bush brought news cameras onto a military base to film him watching missiles destroyed under a new arms control treaty, and Dukakis raised guffaws with his ill-advised ride in a tank, Snoopy helmet firmly in place.

Bush also is recalled as one of the first candidates to win a public endorsement from a retired flag officer, former Marine Corps Commandant P.X. Kelley, who stated publicly in 1992 that "I would follow President Bush anywhere -- I wouldn't follow Bill Clinton around the corner."

Clinton went one better, getting nearly two dozen flag officers to endorse him, including former Joint Chiefs Chairman Adm. William Crowe. By the 2000 Bush-Gore election, so many former officers were lining up not only to endorse but to actively campaign for the Republican candidate that a Gore staffer anonymously groused to the New York Times that "this is the kind of thing you see in the Third World."

Elements of the old apolitical military ethos remains -- only about two dozen of the more than 200 living retired four-star generals have ever endorsed anybody, according to Richard Kohn, chair of the Curriculum in Peace, War, and Defense at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Colin Powell, the onetime chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was not initially identified with either political party during his brief flirtation with a presidential run in 2000. Even Gen. Wesley Clark, commander of U.S. and NATO forces during the 1999 Kosovo War, had been a registered independent who voted for both Republicans and Democrats, before running for the Democratic presidential nomination this year.

But experts agree that there has never been a campaign like the current one, in which the two candidates, both veterans, have donned military apparel for photo ops, actively courted the troops at military conventions and invited slates of former generals to speak at their own conventions.

"They're cloaking themselves in the nonpartisan tradition of the military, but committing a partisan act," Kohn said. "It has a special traction, or at least they think it does, with the American people."

Worried that the partisanship could erode the

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civil-military relationship and public respect for the military, Kohn suggested that flag officers still following the apolitical traditions should bring their colleagues back in line.

"They should not be permitting a tiny percentage of their colleagues to be loosening a very important element of the civil military relations of this country and particularly civilian control of the military," Kohn said.

How the military votes

According to Charles Abell, deputy undersecretary of Defense for personnel and readiness, absentee ballots are being expedited to military members, outside of the normal military mail system. Every military unit -- from conflict zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan, to military bases in Europe, Asia and the United States -- is to receive and help administer requested absentee ballots under a directive issued by Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld last March.

Military members can apply for absentee ballots by using the Federal Post Card Application, by mail, by fax, or downloaded from the Department of Defense's Web site at www.fvap.gov, but must mail them back, although some states -- including California -- are allowing military voters to fax their ballots home.

Military voters have been urged to mail their ballots by Friday to ensure they arrive by Nov. 2 to be counted. Delivery of the returned ballots will also be expedited, according to the Defense Department.

In addition, military officials have been instructed to ensure that all returned ballots are properly postmarked, in order to avoid the controversy surrounding ballots that were not adequately postmarked in the 2000 election.

Military voices

Conversations with Iraq and Afghanistan veterans serving, or who have recently served, in the active duty, National Guard and reserves showed a diversity of opinion on the presidential candidates.

"I've lost confidence in the current guy who is my commander in chief. John Kerry has been a

career politician, and that's fine. I think he has a better chance of taking this nation in a better direction than we're currently heading. We need a change. ... I just feel like we've lost credibility in the world. There are places we stopped in Europe on the way back and we told people we were Canadians, they were so pissed off at us. Even as a proud member of the armed forces, I didn't feel comfortable telling them I was American." -- Air Force Senior Airman Ben Therriault, 22, Sacramento

"Having listened to both candidates ... (Bush) just comes across as a man of conviction, a man who takes charge and responsibility. ... He says things like, 'These things are not going to happen - not on my watch.' As a beat cop, I can totally appreciate it. ... There's still problems in Iraq, there's still problems in Afghanistan, but we as a country have not been attacked since Sept. 11." -- California Army National Guard Capt. Vic Artiga, 35, Fremont

"This guy (Bush) is throwing our weight around and acting tough, but he couldn't serve in the Air National Guard when he got out of combat. ... When he stood behind a podium and said bring it on ... we were furious. If he's cocked, locked and ready to rock with an M-16 in Fallujah or Baghdad and wants to bring it on, all right then. But ever since then, for those of us in combat, they brought it on." -- California Army National Guard Spc. Daniel Caddy, 21, Corte Madera

"What impresses me over the last few years with (Bush) is he has stayed focused on what I think are the issues of this country, sticking with a plan of fighting terrorism in this world. He has not been distracted by name-calling and other roadblocks that are thrown in his way. ... If John Kerry were president today, I probably would vote for John Kerry, because I think it's a mistake to change leaders in the midst of this crisis. ... I think it's important to support (the president) and the plan and follow through for at least another four years." -- Air Force Reserve Major Debra Muhl, 53, San Francisco

Gay GOP Group Sues The Military

The Pentagon's 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Policy Is Targeted By Log Cabin Republicans.

By David Rosenzweig

A national organization of gay Republicans filed suit in Los Angeles federal court Tuesday seeking to overturn the Defense Department's "don't ask, don't tell" policy governing homosexuals in the military.

The Log Cabin Republicans claim in their lawsuit that the policy violates the rights of gay service members to freedom of speech, due process and equal protection under the law.

Under "don't ask, don't tell," gays are allowed to serve in the military provided they do not disclose their sexual orientation and do not engage in homosexual conduct.

Since it was implemented by the Clinton administration in 1994, nearly 10,000 military personnel have been discharged for violating the policy, according to the lawsuit.

The suit seeks injunctions barring the government from enforcing the policy and a ruling that it is unconstitutional.

"Public opinion, the experience of our allies and the national security interests of our nation all lead to the inescapable conclusion that gays and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly

and honestly in our military," Patrick Guerriero, the organization's executive director, said in a statement Tuesday.

In Washington, a spokesman said the Defense Department declined to comment on the lawsuit.

Though previous legal challenges have failed, the gay Republicans' suit says that any legal rationale for the policy has been undermined by recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions.

The lawsuit cites a Supreme Court ruling last year that gays and lesbians have a constitutional right to engage in private, intimate sexual conduct without interference by the state.

The lawsuit alleges that the policy has been applied more frequently in peacetime than during periods of armed conflict.

Since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, it says, discharges of gay and lesbian military personnel have decreased by 40%.

The policy has also had a disproportionate impact on women in the armed forces, according to the suit.

High Court Declines To Decide The Media's Right Of Access To Combat Troops

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON – The Supreme Court declined Tuesday to decide whether the Pentagon is constitutionally obligated to give news media access to U.S. troops during combat.

The court, without comment, rejected the appeal by Larry Flynt, the self-described smut peddler who publishes Hustler magazine. He was challenging a lower ruling earlier this year that the First Amendment does not shield journalists from government interference in gathering news from the battlefield.

"During war or other times of armed conflict, press representatives play a unique role in providing the American people with an independent source of information concerning the government's actions ... in a setting where the vast majority of Americans do not have personal access," Flynt stated in his legal filing.

Flynt sued the Defense Department after officials declined his request to have reporters

accompany the first wave of U.S. troops sent to Afghanistan shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Defense officials then said only a small number of troops were in Afghanistan and that "the highly dangerous and unique nature of their work make it very difficult to embed media." They also noted that the media was given access to other aspects of military operations.

In their legal filing, government lawyers also argued that a First Amendment right of access does not extend to "government property or information that is not open to the public."

In February, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit sided with Pentagon officials, concluding there "is nothing we have found in the Constitution, American history, or our case law to support" the claim that reporters have that constitutional right.

The case is Flynt v. Rumsfeld, 04-33.

Wielding A Mighty 'Hammer'

An Exercise Aboard The Submarine USS Georgia Features Many New Technologies That Will Be Used By The Navy's Transformed Tridents.

By Chris Barron

ABOARD USS GEORGIA In the aptly named battle management center, a busy, tight space where intelligence is gathered and missions are planned, several personnel examined a sports page brought aboard the submarine that day.

As the military and civilian workers monitored real-time data and streaming video on rows of colorful screens, much of their talk centered on the previous night's playoff baseball scores. To the delight of those stuck in the sub the previous few days off the California coast, the visitors brought coveted information.

Then the irony was pointed out. With all the advanced and futuristic technology surrounding them, wasn't it odd they couldn't acquire simple baseball results?

"That's a very good point," said one special forces member with a laugh. "I hadn't thought of that. We'll note that in our next report."

Of course, those aboard the Georgia, which left the Bangor submarine base for good last month en route to its eventual conversion to a cruise-missile launcher, had more important duties than checking box scores.

In an exercise called "Silent Hammer," they were testing many of the systems and concepts that will be placed on four subs that will be transformed from Tridents to guided-missile launchers and special operations platforms, called SSGNs.

Those subs, three of which are already undergoing conversion, including two at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, will move from a Cold War mission of deterrence to an active, quick-strike mission for today's world. Each will have a payload of 154 Tomahawk cruise missiles and 66 special forces personnel.

New to the submarine community will be the SSGNs' ability to serve as command and control centers for missions at sea and on the ground. With their advanced data and intelligence-gathering technology, the stealthy

subs will be able to lead missions anywhere at any time.

And for the first time, a task force commander with a staff of Air Force, Army and Navy special operations personnel will serve aboard each of the four SSGNs.

"This is new business for us, to be submerged and in communication with ground forces ashore and executing a mission," said Rear Adm. Mel Williams, commander of the Bangor-based Submarine Group 9. "It will be a multi-mission platform operated and commanded by Navy, but in support of joint forces.

"That is a big deal. That is transformation." And the crews of the SSGNs will be remarkably transformed while at sea.

Although still primarily Navy-manned, the subs will carry entire joint special operations teams much the way an aircraft carrier picks up its air wing of planes and personnel for deployment.

The special ops command staff will represent all branches of service, leading a team of more than 60 Navy SEALs, who can change a dynamic aboard a sub with their free-wheeling yet intense ways.

Having a wide variety of personnel hasn't gone unnoticed on the Georgia. "We've gone from our own little world to a great big world," said Cmdr. John Tannen, commanding officer of the Georgia.

Walking through the submarine, one could observe those in Army and Air Force uniforms. Also, many wore uniforms with no identifying insignias of rank, branch or names.

With the super secret world of special ops aboard, the "Silent Service" of submarines is taken to a whole new level. Many people were unable, or unwilling, to reveal whom they worked for or what their jobs were.

That makes for a somewhat confusing time for regular Georgia crew members, who many times aren't sure who is who.

"Some of them don't wear their insignias for obvious reasons, but it's not been difficult, just

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different," said Culinary Specialist 1st Class Tony Allen, a nearly 20-year Navy member.

"We're not all Navy around here anymore, so we keep our Ps and Qs straight and keep the Air Force jokes to ourselves."

More than 1,000 people are participating in the 10-day Silent Hammer exercise, which ends this week.

Air Force and Navy planes, with cameras aboard, simulated unmanned aerial vehicles launched from the Georgia, and teams of SEALs left in small rubber crafts to simulate going ashore via mini-sub that will be attached to the decks of the SSGNs.

In January 2003, USS Florida, the former Bangor sub now undergoing a conversion in Virginia, participated in the first SSGN exercise, called "Giant Shadow." It launched an unmanned underwater vehicle from one of its massive 40-foot-long tubes. That exercise paled in comparison to Silent Hammer.

"We took the concepts of Giant Shadow and put them into a much more real-world scenario with real-world operators," said Cmdr. David Duryea, the former Florida commander now in charge of advanced technologies for the SSGN program. "The goal is to collect the data and the analysis and to get the feedback of the joint operators to allow us to make the decisions (about the SSGN program)."

USS Ohio, the first Trident to be converted, will be out of Puget Sound Naval Shipyard by early 2006 and back in the fleet in late 2007. The Michigan, also undergoing conversion at PSNS, will follow the next year.

The Georgia, the last of the four, will begin its conversion in March at Norfolk Naval Shipyard. After completing Silent Hammer, It will head for the East Coast, leaving Bangor and its Trident past behind.

Navy's Lab Brought Research To The Fleet

By Robert A. Hamilton

Groton—Capt. Garry A. Higgins' tour as commander of the Naval Submarine Medical Research Laboratory was marked by some key advances, including development of curtains filled with lithium hydroxide that can be hung in passageways to preserve the air in a disabled submarine.

The chemical breaks down carbon dioxide in the air, and was tested when the USS Dallas tied up to a pier for three days in March 2003 and turned off its ventilation system and oxygen generators to simulate a sunken, powerless submarine.

"It doubled the survivability of the crew," Higgins said during an interview last week as he prepared to turn over command to Capt. J. Christopher Daniel. "This is major, breakthrough technology."

But perhaps the most enduring impact of his tenure will be a change in the way research is directed.

As a former Independent Duty Corpsman on submarines who later earned a commission and an advanced degree in radiation health physics — in the 1990s he was hand-picked to accompany then-Vice President Al Gore on a fact-finding trip to the Chernobyl nuclear power plant — Higgins knew that Navy medical labs could more strongly focus their efforts on health issues that confront sailors.

"I thought we should go right to the source, go to the fleet, and find out what they needed," Higgins said. "And maybe also get the funding we need to do the jobs they needed done."

Normally the medical labs compete for funding from the office of the Chief of Naval Operations, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery or Naval Sea Systems Command. Higgins began discussions with the Commander of Naval Submarine Forces, Vice Adm. Kirkland Donald, about the medical problems inherent in undersea warfare.

It helped to test noise-canceling stethoscopes that are so effective, they can be used to check heart sounds not only in the noisiest areas of a warship, but on the battlefield — the Marine Corps was so impressed with them it ordered 3,000 of the devices.

"We're looking at things that will save lives and meet immediate needs, right away," Higgins said. "We're doing stuff that has an immediate use. We can't afford to do hobby science. We do stuff that has direct application."

Today, NSMRL is a line item in the submarine fleet budget, the only one of the 10 medical labs to have that kind of direct funding stream, he said.

"That drives our overhead down, because we have salaries coming in, which makes us more competitive against academia and other laboratories on other projects," Higgins said. "We had about \$5 million a year in funding when I got here two years ago, and now we're moving towards \$9 million."

Higgins said the lab is now looking at a concept called "human capital strategy," designed to make the most effective use of people. For years the lab has advised the submarine force how to screen out candidates who won't adapt to life on a submarine, but now it is taking an approach from the other direction: trying to devise a way to find the people who will really excel.

The submariners who advance to engineer, executive officer, captain or squadron commander typically have a strong sense of situational awareness, which is going to become even more important on the Virginia-class submarine that goes into service starting this month, and which will put sonar, radar, communications, weapons and other systems all in the same room.

The hope is that the study can help predict which characteristics make someone successful in a submarine environment.

"We're building ships that present people with an amount of data that they never had before, so we need to go back and look at how to identify people with great situational awareness who will be able to handle it," Higgins said.

Higgins' next job is as the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery's liaison to the U.S. Embassy Office of Defense Cooperation in Singapore, an area of the world that has become vitally important to the Navy because of the 50,000 ships a year that pass through there

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every year, carrying oil from the Persian Gulf to the east, and trade goods from southeast Asia to the west.

His relief, Daniel, is a graduate of Jefferson Medical College whose most recent assignment was as executive officer at U.S. Naval Medical

Research Unit No. 2 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Daniel is a fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians, and is board certified by the American Board of Family Practice in both family medicine and adolescent medicine.

Northrop Grumman To Move Ship From Avondale To Miss.

By A.J. Mistretta

NEW ORLEANS — Northrop Grumman Ship Systems plans to move a large ship that's nearing completion at its Avondale shipyard to its Ingalls shipyard in Pascagoula later this month, the company confirmed today.

The ship, the USS San Antonio (Landing Platform Dock 17), is the first in a series of new amphibious assault vessels being built at the West Bank shipyard. The company will perform the final testing on the ship in Pascagoula before delivering it to the Navy.

The San Antonio is scheduled to be complete in November and was supposed to be delivered out of New Orleans. However, Woody Oge, director of business affairs at the Avondale facility, said that with the next ship in the series, USS New Orleans (LPD-18), scheduled to be christened in November, crews now working on the San Antonio have to be switched to the next vessel.

"We were fortunate enough to have some capabilities in Pascagoula available to do the final testing such that we can get (the ship) out to sea trials," he said. "This is a talent issue more than anything else."

Oge said there have been "grooming problems" associated with the construction of the San Antonio, but added that is not unusual for the first ship in a completely new series of vessels. "It has to do with taking design from a CAD drawing and making it a reality," he said. "Everything that is marketed as a product today has a prototype, but ships are the only products built that the first one actually has to go out and serve."

The decision to move the San Antonio will have no affect on employment at the Avondale yard, Oge said. The facility employs approximately 6,500 workers.

The LPD vessels are designed to transport up to 700 Marine landing forces, along with helicopters and amphibious assault equipment. Each ship is 684 feet long and 105 feet wide. The series will replace older vessels currently active in the Navy.

Besides the San Antonio and the New Orleans, two other ships in the series are under

construction at Avondale, Green Bay (LPD 20) and New York (LPD 21).

Oge said that Northrop Grumman has decided the San Diego, the sixth ship in the series that was to be built at Avondale, will now be constructed at the Ingalls yard. "It looks like, from the overall manning across the sector between both shipyards, there is more opportunity for that ship to get its correct manning levels in Pascagoula," he said.

Oge said Northrop Grumman officials discussed the decision to build the San Diego at Ingalls with Louisiana Sens. Mary Landrieu and John Breaux in June. Spokespersons in both Landrieu and Breaux's offices confirmed those conversations.

When the LPD program was announced several years ago, it was supposed to include 12 new ships. The Navy has already committed to funding nine of the vessels to be built by Northrop Grumman Ship Systems, the subsidiary of the defense contractor that operates both the Avondale and Ingalls yards. But in recent months reports have suggested the Navy could be forced to cut its shipbuilding programs, including the LPD project, due in part to budget constraints.

Oge said today that the three vessels following the San Diego, Anchorage (LPD-23), Arlington (LPD- 24) and Somerset (LPD-25) will be built in New Orleans.

In August 2003, state officials signed a \$110 million agreement with Northrop Grumman designed to ensure jobs and future growth at the Avondale facility. Under the agreement, the state and Northrop Grumman would put up \$56 million each to fund equipment purchases, worker training initiatives and a new manufacturing facility.

According to the agreement, Northrop Grumman agreed to employ a minimum of 5,200 full-time workers in at least half of the fiscal quarters through 2013.

Oge said the sale of securities for \$39 million of Northrop Grumman's contribution should be final later this month and made available to the company Oct. 22. He said the state is living up to its end of the agreement.

With Touch Of History, Virginia Joins The Fleet

Delivery To Navy Marks 104 Years Of Submarining

By Robert A. Hamilton

Groton — The USS Virginia was formally delivered to the Navy in a short pierside ceremony Tuesday at Electric Boat, 104 years to the day after the Navy entered the submarine business with the commissioning of the USS Holland, which also was built by EB.

“This is the end of a long period of testing and trials, and the beginning of its new life in the Navy,” said Capt. David Kern, the Virginia's commanding officer. “This is now the Navy's ship.”

Although the formal commissioning ceremony will not take place until Oct. 23 in Norfolk, Va., Executive Officer Charles H. Dunavant observed that the next time the Virginia puts to sea, it will be without the EB inspectors who have augmented the crew on the submarine's trips so far; it will be an actual part of the fleet, subject to being sent on a mission.

“On the list of hills to climb, we just climbed a big one, and it looks great from the top of the mountain,” said Chief of the Boat Casey L. White.

Thomas C. Berl, the ship's manager for EB, said he had mixed feelings about the delivery because the ship has been a major part of the shipyard going back 12 years, when it started taking shape in a computer-aided design program.

But he acknowledged the delivery is a big step for the sailors who started arriving 18 months ago and have been taking responsibility for ship systems over the last year.

“It's sort of like hiring a contractor to build your house — at some point, you're going to want the contractor to go work on someone else's house,” Berl said.

After a year of being put through its paces, the sub will return to the yard for what is known as a “post-shakedown availability,” when any repairs needed will be carried out and some of the finishing touches, such as a sound-absorbing coating on the hull, will be completed.

The Navy and EB wanted to complete the delivery Tuesday because of the historical significance of the anniversary of the commissioning of the USS Holland, the Navy's first submarine. Finally, as the sun set over the Thames River, a small group gathered on the pier beside the Virginia.

“On behalf of Electric Boat, this ship is ready for delivery,” Will Lennon, Virginia program manager at EB, said in a solemn tone.

“On behalf of the Navy, it's an honor to accept the USS Virginia,” said Capt. Jeff Reed, the Navy's supervisor of shipbuilding at EB, who handed the paperwork to Kern. Kern reminded the shipyard employees that the Virginia is only the first of an entire class of submarine.

“We want to build 30 Virginia-class submarines, so I just want to remind you it's one down and 29 to go,” Kern said.

EB President John P. Casey said the Virginia represents an entirely new way of doing business for the shipyard. The design-build process, in which those who build, operate, maintain and even decommission the ship were brought in to suggest improvements, has been lauded as a model for shipbuilding.

The ship was the most modular of any submarine ever built, to the point that the entire combat control center was constructed, tested, and then put into the hull in one piece. And the Virginia was the first nuclear sub ever built without a land-based prototype reactor. Its S9G power plant, a ninth-generation submarine reactor built by General Electric, was tested for the first time at sea.

“This is the most advanced, most capable war platform in the nation's arsenal today,” Casey said.

The 12,000 men and women of EB worked long hours to finish the job, he said, and when the Virginia needed a four-week repair period after extensive sea trials last month off Virginia, EB workers traveled to the Norfolk (Va.) Naval Shipyard to do the work themselves.

“Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, time away from their family — I absolutely appreciate the sacrifice,” Casey said. “That's what makes Electric Boat special.”

White, the chief of the boat, noted that a submarine delivery is often an exercise in paperwork. But he said the Virginia crew wanted this one to be special because of the day, because of the ship, and because of all the work that had gone into getting it there.

The ceremony allowed the crew and the shipyard workers to focus on what the delivery means in real terms. Stepping down from the podium, Kern quipped to Dunavant, “Well, XO, it looks like we bought a submarine.”

Rear Admiral's Flying Career Takes A Back Seat To New Job

By Jack Dorsey

NORFOLK — A G-suit, oxygen mask and helmet hang on a coat rack in his office, symbols of a past that he would love to relive again.

In his 25-year flying career, Rear Adm. Stephen A. Turcotte logged more than 5,500 hours in 15 different aircraft, including 500 carrier landings. He had hoped to continue flying in this new job as commander of the Navy's sprawling Mid-Atlantic Region, but after a year on the job, Turcotte realizes that was wishful thinking.

"I tried and one of my goals was to be a flying admiral," he said, "but no way. I'm not here to be an aviator any more."

Now Turcotte says he's excited just to catch a ride in a jet's back seat. There's no time to fly and do his landlubber's job.

There has been no time for vacations, either — or even free weekends. Most work days are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., frequently extending to 10 p.m.

"Coffee's the key," said his aide, Lt. Troy Denison. "Lots and lots of coffee."

Turcotte hasn't had a weekend off all year and his calendar, which Denison schedules, doesn't call for one through Christmas.

Such is life for the man in charge of the Mid-Atlantic Region. His area of responsibility includes Norfolk Naval Station, the world's largest Navy complex; the Navy's master East Coast jet base, Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach; and numerous other Navy properties in a six-state territory.

Turcotte, 51, said he pictures himself as somewhat of a "governor" for the Navy's real estate in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and parts of North Carolina.

Unlike three- and four-star admirals who have a right to an aircraft for business trips, the one-star Turcotte usually travels by car. Denison drives him on frequent trips to the Pentagon, or perhaps to a small Navy support center near Philadelphia, a speaking engagement in Raleigh, N.C., or a dozen places in between.

Turcotte is city manager, judge, police chief, CEO, CFO, ambassador, hurricane tracker and sometimes chili cook-off judge. He learned some of those traits when he commanded the naval air station in Jacksonville, Fla., from 1998 to 2001.

Little of it came from his "poli-sci" degree from Marquette University, he said.

Base skippers are the Navy's "mayors," according to Turcotte. They run naval stations that frequently are the equivalent of small towns with populations of 20,000 to 30,000.

Eight base commanders, plus a host of officers in charge, work for him: in Norfolk, Little Creek, Oceana, Yorktown, even small support activities in Philadelphia and Mechanicsville.

He oversees an operating budget of about \$500 million. The Navy's utility bill in Hampton Roads alone is \$70 million.

Turcotte is the Navy's point man in the civilian community. He keeps a check on critical projects such as the proposed airfield in Washington County, N.C., encroachment issues at Oceana, traffic congestion, environmental, health and school issues affecting the 100,000 active duty sailors and Marines assigned locally, plus their families.

He's a frequent visitor to the Virginia Beach City Council, tracking noise and real-estate issues. He serves on 16 boards and commissions, struggles to learn all he can about Super Fund sites and the Clean Water Act and tries to field questions about upcoming base realignment and closing proposals — all without becoming political.

Turcotte was born in 1953 at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, just off the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. His father, who served in World War II and later became a test pilot, was killed in the crash of an experimental jet at Patuxent River in 1956, when Turcotte was just 3.

"Right before that, his brother — my uncle — was killed flying behind the deck of a Navy carrier," he said.

His mother remarried a civilian physician and the family moved to Grand Rapids, Mich., far from active Navy life, but not far from Turcotte's fantasy.

"Aviation was obviously in my blood," he said.

He entered the Navy ROTC program at Marquette, graduated in 1975 and immediately entered flight training, becoming a pilot in 1977. His mother never objected to his decision to pursue the inherently dangerous career, and "my father the doctor said: 'Go for it.'"

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The gold aviator wings Turcotte wears over the left breast of his uniform were those his father earned in World War II.

From 1990 to 1994, Turcotte served as flag lieutenant to Adm. Frank B. Kelso II, then commander of the 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean and chief of naval operations.

“He’s very personable and one of those people who makes everyone feel good around him,” Kelso said. “That’s a great trait to have in your life.”

They served together during a time of hostilities in southern Lebanon, including the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks and the retaliatory air strikes.

As a pilot, Turcotte flew primarily the four-seat S-3 Vikings, which performed a variety of tasks: hunting submarines, surveillance, aerial refueling and limited ground attacks.

Turcotte became an instructor pilot and eventually squadron commander of VS-24, attached to the carrier Theodore Roosevelt in 1992. He served as navigator aboard the carrier Kitty Hawk in 1994.

Turcotte spent most of 2002 as commander of the Naval Safety Center in Norfolk. As the war with Iraq was looming early last year, he was headed back for a second stint with Central Command in the Middle East when his orders changed abruptly.

“I was at the Safety Center that morning, with my bags packed, when the space shuttle Columbia crashed,” Turcotte recalled.

He spent the next nine months with his team of 30 accident investigators determining why the shuttle broke up upon re-entry over Texas, on Feb. 1, 2003, killing all seven astronauts aboard.

“It was very intense,” he said. “We learned a lot about human nature, culture and dysfunctional organizations, and what a good and bad organization looks like.”

The resulting report was highly critical of NASA. While Turcotte is mostly serious at work, there’s another side that makes him fun, said long-time friend and colleague Gregory A. Scovel, executive assistant director for criminal

investigations with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service in Washington.

“He’s an affable guy who has a sense of humor that includes being self-deprecating,” Scovel said. “He loves to tell stories about himself, like when he was trying to ride a horse bareback, fell off and broke some ribs while clowning around.

“He’s got all sorts of talent. He’s a tremendous golfer, a marksman and skeet shooter. And he’s a great cook.”

Turcotte’s main challenges today are to operate the Navy’s Mid-Atlantic Region efficiently while it is undergoing constant change, facing pressure to save money and working with an infrastructure that in some cases pre-dates World War II.

In May he called for \$25 million in cuts to services, involving some telephone accounts, government vehicle use, on-base bus service and port operations. Some were difficult to make, he said, admitting that he might have gone overboard in eliminating some features such as telephone voice mail.

“That may have been a bit of overreaction, and we’ve turned a lot of it back on,” he said. “But it was a quick and easy thing to do to save us money right off the bat.”

As he prepares for his second year as regional commander, he continues to keep his flight gear handy, just in case someone else in the family may need it.

He doubts his two older children will. They live in Florida, where John is a housing contractor and Sarah is a librarian. Nor will his wife, Jane, a psychologist who is busy with military spouse projects, charity boards and education programs.

But there is always their daughter Anne, 12. She wants to be a naval aviator and is elated whenever there is talk about airplanes and aviation.

“I’ve gotten her up in some helicopters and other planes and she’s real excited,” Turcotte said. “She is one of those kids who goes to Busch Gardens and rides the roller coaster 12 to 14 times and there’s no fear.” “So, I know I got one.”

Ocean Exploitation Surfaces As Crisis

Widespread Pollution, Overfishing Spur Presidential Panel To Urge New Rules

By Juliet Eilperin

KEY WEST, Fla. -- Every year in late July, about 30,000 boats descend on this tourist mecca carrying tens of thousands of scuba divers who scour the coral reefs in search of tasty spiny lobsters to catch and eat.

Government officials say the two-day frenzy nearly doubled the monthly reports of boats ramming fragile coral heads or grounding on delicate sea grass compared with the month before. And while no one has an exact figure, researchers estimate the fishing fest took 80 percent of the legal-size lobsters in several Keys habitats.

"It's a consumptive ritual," Phil Frank, project leader for the Key West National Wildlife Refuge, said of the underwater wreckage.

The fate of the slow-growing corals in the Keys is just one small example of the pervasive damage being done to the world's oceans, damage that has been documented by a rapidly accumulating library of studies and reports. The reports -- from governmental, private and academic sources -- all say the same thing: The seas are much worse off than they were just a few decades ago. Oceans across the globe are showing signs of strain in dramatic ways, including declining fish stocks and polluted waters.

Inside and outside the government, a conviction is taking hold that policymakers need to act quickly to avert the looming crisis. Bush administration officials and lawmakers are drafting new rules and changes to the federal bureaucracy to protect fish species, improve water quality and restore coral reefs. Some of these plans were unveiled last month when the presidentially appointed U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy issued its final report to Congress.

"Ocean conservation is poised to become the next global warming issue," said Gerry Leape, who runs the marine conservation network for the National Environmental Trust. "The science is settled. The debate can move on

from whether or not there is a crisis to what to do about it."

Scientists and policymakers point to a variety of ominous signs. Ninety percent of the world's large predator fish -- those at the top of the food chain -- have disappeared over the past 50 years, two Canadian scientists reported last year in a widely publicized study. At least a third of the fish stocks that the federal government monitors are overfished, officials say, and the status of hundreds of other species is unknown. The motor oil dropped on American streets ends up in the oceans at the rate of 10.9 million gallons every eight months -- the equivalent of the Exxon Valdez spill. And the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico -- an area the size of Connecticut where high nitrogen levels kill all marine life -- expanded again this summer.

"There is a consensus that our oceans are in crisis and that reforms are essential," a massive study funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts concluded last year.

James L. Connaughton, who is President Bush's top environmental adviser as head of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, said the seas sustain "our economy, our environment and our society."

"Restoration, wise use and conservation of the oceans has come to the forefront of environmental priorities, not just for the nation, but for the world," Connaughton said. "There's a massive bipartisan and regional consensus toward embarking on a new generation of progress."

For centuries, the various studies note, Americans have treated coastal waters as theirs for the taking, seeking bounty with little government oversight. Fishing boats trawled and trapped at will, oil companies built huge rigs to tap offshore resources, and cruise ships crisscrossed sensitive habitats so tourists could gawk at marine life.

"It cannot be viewed as the Wild West anymore," said retired Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher Jr., who heads the National

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Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "There need to be some sort of property rights. That sort of cultural change is very hard."

He and others note that U.S. territorial waters are the country's largest public domain: Spanning nearly 4.5 million square miles, they are 23 percent larger than the nation's land area. Commercial and recreational saltwater fishing is worth \$48 billion a year, and weather- and climate-sensitive industries, which are heavily influenced by the ocean, account for \$3 trillion, or more than one-quarter of the country's gross domestic product.

Yet the seas command relatively little attention. Ninety-five percent of the globe's oceans remain unexplored below the surface, and donations to environmental groups that focus on marine issues are 5 percent of the amounts that go to their terrestrial counterparts. The nation has marine sanctuaries, the rough equivalent of national parks on land, but most Americans have never heard of them.

Elliott A. Norse, president of the Marine Conservation Biology Institute in Redmond, Wash., said much of the devastation being done to the oceans has gone undetected. The Gulf of Mexico's population of oceanic white-tipped sharks has declined more than 99 percent since the 1950s, but no one noticed until 2003. The eel grass limpet, a snail that used to be ubiquitous on the New England coast and Canada's Atlantic coast, went extinct in 1929, but its demise did not come to public attention until 1991.

"Nobody's out there looking," Norse said. "Nobody's out there measuring what we need to measure."

Despite the commissions and studies, "this is a battle between people who care about the oceans and those who are at best disinterested, or at worst, exploiters," Steven Miller, director of the National Undersea Research Center at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, told ocean experts in Key West in August. "It's a war, and we're losing."

But with calls for action mounting, policymakers are beginning to pay attention. The Commission on Ocean Policy, a 16-member panel, called on Bush in April to appoint a special assistant for oceans issues and to make broad policy changes. The Pew Oceans Commission, a privately funded group that

issued its own set of recommendations in May 2003, recommended retooling federal fisheries management and making NOAA independent of the Commerce Department.

Last month, the Senate Commerce Committee endorsed legislation to set a new national oceans policy featuring some of the commissions' recommendations, such as making NOAA more independent. Ted Morton, federal policy director for the marine protection organization Oceana, called the vote "a welcome first step in ocean management reform."

Connaughton said the administration is also reexamining how to govern the seas.

"We're not waiting for anything," Connaughton said. "We are past the ignoring stage. We have collectively moved over the past three years toward action."

The administration has proposed new water quality regulations for beaches near ocean waters and the Great Lakes, stricter curbs on sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from marine diesel engines, and new zoning restrictions in Florida's Dry Tortugas National Park, he said. But some new protections that have long been under consideration have yet to materialize: In 1994 the United States signed the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, which would create new international standards for protecting marine mammals and fisheries as well as curbing marine pollution, but 10 years later it has yet to be ratified by the Senate.

Experts say existing and proposed national and international measures do not go far enough to address the four major challenges that threaten the oceans: overfishing, incidental bycatch, habitat destruction and pollution.

The sharp decline in fish stocks over the past few decades is one of the clearest indicators of trouble. The list of species whose numbers have plummeted -- some of them edging toward extinction -- is lengthy, from New England cod to California's white abalone. Ellen Pikitch, executive director of the Pew Institute for Ocean Science at the University of Miami, said we may witness "the end of wild fish fisheries in a matter of decades."

In many cases U.S. fishermen have gotten caught in a vicious circle, in which they take so many fish there are not enough left to perpetuate the species. This depletes fish stocks, which in

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turn makes it even harder to catch enough to turn a profit.

For consumers, the depth of the crisis is obscured, in part because of the rise in fish farming and the fact that some relatively common fish are being mislabeled and sold as valuable but increasingly scarce species, such as red snapper.

Found in the Gulf of Mexico and the western Atlantic, red snapper has been overfished since 1988. For captain Ronald Waters, who has spent a quarter of a century fishing in the Gulf, the outlook is grim. He estimates that half the fish he pulls up are too small to sell, but by the time he throws them back they are dead.

"I need fish there to earn my living," Waters said in an interview. "As the stock's going down, it's taking us a lot longer to catch fish."

Bycatch -- unwanted fish that are hauled in by mistake -- account for more than 25 to 30 percent of the total world catch, which means 60 billion tons of fish is being caught and thrown dead into the oceans. Although NOAA regulators have doubled the number of observers it has on ships in the past four years to monitor bycatch and other fishing practices, they only covers 42 of the 300 U.S. fisheries.

Bottom trawlers that scour the ocean floor pose another serious threat to marine ecosystems, given that 98 percent of known ocean animals live on the bottom. The trawlers' giant nets -- some of them wide enough to accommodate two Boeing 747 jumbo jets, bring in massive amounts of fish, but they decimate ocean-bottom habitats in their path.

The result is like forest clear-cutting, but on a much larger scale, advocates and researchers say. Worldwide nearly 40,000 square miles of forest are clear-cut each year, Norse said, an area the size of Indiana or Kentucky. By contrast, nearly 6 million square miles of ocean floor are swept clean by nets every year, an area twice the size of the lower 48 states, he said.

The impact of pollution is even broader, though it is difficult to gauge and even harder to regulate. Runoff from agriculture pours nitrogen into the seas, which in turn spawns algae blooms that deprive marine creatures of oxygen. Nancy Rabalais, chief scientists for hypoxia research at Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium, said agriculture accounts for 50 percent of the nitrogen that deluges the Gulf of Mexico's dead zone.

Lawmakers have proposed revamping the nation's marine management system based on the recommendations of the U.S. Ocean and Pew commissions, and advocates say they may now have their best chance in decades to institute new protections for the seas. It is less of a partisan issue than other environmental questions: Bush administration officials are in discussions with conservation groups, which also see Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kerry as a potential ally.

"This is a seminal moment," said Roger T. Rufe, president of the Ocean Conservancy.

"It's just like the Grand Canyon or Yosemite or other wonderful areas," said Richard Grathwohl, a third-generation charter boat captain. "We're loving it to death."

Congress Orders Pentagon To Review Sexual Misconduct Policies

By Daniel Pulliam

Responding to increasing complaints about the Pentagon's policies regarding sexual misconduct, Congress has ordered the Defense Department to develop a comprehensive response and prevention policy, and to review how sexual assault cases are handled by the military justice system.

The \$447.2 billion fiscal 2005 Defense authorization bill, which passed the House and Senate last week, requires the Pentagon to review the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the Manual for Courts-Martial, and to propose changes for how sexual offenses will be addressed by March 2005. The bill is headed to President Bush for final approval.

The authorization bill requires a militarywide policy based on a report from the Task Force Report on Care for Victims of Sexual Assault by the end of the year, but Pentagon officials must first develop a single definition of sexual assault. By March 1, 2005, the five branches of the military must modify their policies to conform with the Pentagon's recommendations.

The authorization bill also extends the Defense Task Force on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies by an additional 18 months so that the panel of civilian experts and senior military personnel can examine the issue of sexual assault across the military. But that will occur after the panel completes its review of the Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., and the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., which began last week.

"This dual track approach will help keep all groups focused in order to prevent tunnel vision," said Brig. Gen. K.C. McClain, commander of the Pentagon's Joint Task Force on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response.

McClain's task force is in charge of turning the recommendations from last month's closed-door conference on handling sexual harassment and assault into Pentagon policy.

An Oct. 6 summit, involving McClain and senior Pentagon officials, was supposed to result in new Defense Department policies that would help the armed forces prevent and respond to sexual assault, but no information has been released.

Members of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues pushed for the amendments.

Rep. Loretta Sanchez, D-Calif., asked for the service academies task force extension and expansion and for the review on how the military justice system handles sexual assault. Reps. Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y., and Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., spearheaded the amendments to require an inclusive Pentagon policy for handling and preventing sexual assaults.

According to a congressional aide, if the Defense Department is not able to come up with a better means of providing aid to soldiers who have been sexually assaulted, update its definition of sexual assault, modernize the code of military justice, and create privacy provisions of victims, then the caucus will work to get Congress to rewrite the Pentagon's policy.

The Miles Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides services to victims of violence associated with the military, was quick to point out that the defense authorization bill did not include provisions for an Office of the Victims' Advocate at the Pentagon. The National Defense Appropriations Act, which was signed by the president Aug. 5, included \$1.8 million for the office and \$3 million for victim advocates within the military departments.

Constellation To Visit Naval Academy, Where It Trained Midshipmen Long Ago

By Childs Walker

One of the Inner Harbor's best-known tenants, the sloop of war Constellation, will visit an old home this month when it returns to the U.S. Naval Academy for the first time in more than 110 years.

The Constellation served as a training vessel at the academy from 1871 to 1893 but has not been there since. The ship will be towed by tugboat from Baltimore to Annapolis on Oct. 26 and be moored along the academy's Farragut Seawall for six days as part of the ship's 150th anniversary celebration.

The Constellation, a 186-foot wooden vessel with 23 guns, has not traveled any farther than the Key Bridge since it was docked permanently in Baltimore in 1955.

"This is the big one," said Christopher Rowsom, executive director of the USS Constellation Museum. "She hasn't traveled this far on her own keel since the '40s."

The voyage will offer a rare opportunity to watch and photograph one of the nation's oldest seaworthy ships of war in open water.

Rowsom said he hopes the trip, which will include five days of public tours in Annapolis, will remind people of the ship's history.

"Even though for her first few years she was an active combat ship, for almost all of her career she has been involved as a training ship, as an educator," Rowsom said.

Rod Gibbons, the academy's public affairs officer, said alumni and students alike are looking forward to the historic visit from "a great ship that taught a generation of midshipmen about practical seamanship."

The Navy built the sloop of war Constellation in 1854 as a replacement for the frigate Constellation, built in Baltimore in 1797. The sloop of war was the last all-sail fighting ship built by the Navy.

From 1859 to 1861, the Constellation led the Navy's African Squadron, which intercepted slave ships leaving the West African coast. The ship subsequently was used for diplomatic and training missions, including its stint at the academy.

During its 23-year residence at the academy, the ship was the chief training vessel for first- and third-year midshipmen. They took the Constellation down the Chesapeake and out to sea for three-month voyages to New England ports such as New London, Conn., and Newport, R.I.

Rowsom said letters from those midshipmen show the difficulty of coordinating operations on the sloop of war and of sailing the open seas for the first time.

"They're all about, 'Here I am, out to sea, I'm seasick, and I don't know if I can make it in this Navy,'" Rowsom said.

In one of many letters collected by the Constellation museum, midshipman Edward H. Campbell wrote in 1890, "For pure, unadulterated, indefinable misery I will heartily recommend seasickness. I haven't fully recovered yet, and I expect that I will get sick again as soon as this calm is over."

Other letters describe the ship captain's "fiendish" penchant for rousing midshipmen at 2 a.m. and giving extra privileges to the first crew that could get a cannon shot off in the dark.

William A. Moffett, later a rear admiral known as the father of naval aviation, wrote in 1889 of how the ship ran aground while trying to exit the bay near Norfolk, Va. In addition to describing all-out efforts to take down the ship's rigging, Moffett spoke of the ship's flustered captain - and asked for money from home so he could participate in on-board recreation.

"Just like today's college kids," Rowsom said.

Midshipmen also wrote home with tales of wonder. In 1873, Alexander R. Mitchell wrote that during "my watch some nights since I saw a tremendous meteor. I never saw anything so brilliant. I did not know at first what to make of it. ... We see a great number of all sorts of marine animals, Dolphins, Porpoises, Black fish, the latter are considered a species of whale, there are also great numbers of sea gulls flying about the Ship."

The ship eventually became known as the "cradle of admirals" because nearly all high -

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ranking naval officers at the turn of the 20th century had trained on its decks.

The Constellation made its last major voyage in 1999, when it returned to its downtown pier after 2 1/2 years of repair and restoration at a Locust Point dry-dock. The \$7.3 million restoration, paid for by private and public funds, reversed a physical decline caused by decades of rot and neglect. The ship still has about half of its original wood.

Rowsom said the vessel might not have been able to make the voyage to Annapolis before its restoration. Even now, the Constellation's rigging and ballast are not in shape to actually set sail, and he said the ship would not be taken out in bad weather or choppy seas.

But Rowsom said the ship will make the eight-hour trip without any last-minute repairs or enhancements.

"She's in good shape to make it down the bay and back without any trouble at all," he said.

The Constellation is scheduled to leave Baltimore the morning of Oct. 26, pass under the Bay Bridge about 2:30 p.m. and dock at the U.S. Naval Academy, where it will be greeted with a ceremony around 4 p.m. Free tours will be available from Oct. 27 to Oct. 31. The \$50,000 cost of the voyage and Annapolis docking is being paid for by Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems.

Navy Discredits Sailor's SEAL Story

Justin McCauley armed jets with bombs and other munitions on the deck of the carrier USS Kitty Hawk as the United States began its air campaign in Afghanistan.

But McCauley, a Navy aviation ordnanceman, 21, liked the idea of being a Navy SEAL better. Though he never had qualified for even a single day of SEAL training, he told his mother and three brothers in Roseville that he was a rising member of the Navy's elite Sea-Air-Land special forces. And in doing so, he joined the growing number of people who publicly claim military status and valor that are not rightly theirs.

And so it was that, on Jan. 20, The Bee chronicled the family story of a Navy SEAL impostor. McCauley posed for family photos in a military jacket with a Navy SEAL patch on the breast, said he suffered slight shrapnel wounds while on the ground in Afghanistan, talked of a 9 ½-month SEAL training stint in San Diego.

This week, his family and The Bee learned the truth from a watchdog group of retired Navy SEALs and, subsequently, Navy officials at the Pentagon and on the Kitty Hawk itself:

McCauley is not a SEAL. The jacket patch is a fake. He was never on the ground in Afghanistan nor injured by a fragment grenade.

Reached at the home of his fiance in Cleveland, where he was completing a month's leave, McCauley admitted that he fabricated many details of his military service to The Bee. In the same breath, however, he still claimed: "I wasn't in (SEAL) training for more than a week, but my mom didn't know that I had dropped training, and I didn't want to let her down. So I just kind of went along with it."

But the truth is that McCauley never entered SEAL training for any length of time, according to records kept by both the Naval Personnel Command and the Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) school in Coronado. McCauley has been assigned to the Kitty Hawk since April 2000, barely six months after he enlisted.

The repercussions for McCauley's deception could be dire. Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Gordon, spokesman for the U.S. Pacific Fleet

headquarters at Pearl Harbor, refused to speculate on the full range of disciplinary possibilities, but confirmed that they could include administrative penalties on board the Kitty Hawk, or demotion in rank, or even a bad-conduct discharge from the Navy.

Gordon said the Kitty Hawk was conducting its own investigation and that the matter of discipline would be left to the carrier's commanding officer, Capt. Tom Hejl.

"When sailors misrepresent themselves, that's a disappointment to us all," Gordon said.

The revelations were a shocking blow to McCauley's mother and three younger brothers, who had earnestly told The Bee of the worries and pride that engulf the family of a Navy SEAL.

"We're very disappointed," said McCauley's mother, Maria Domingue, who added that she sobbed all day Tuesday when she learned the truth. "I would have accepted him even if he was a janitor on the Kitty Hawk. He was in the Navy. I was very proud of him. He didn't have to fabricate a story. It's hurt the family, and it's hurt his brothers."

Since being recalled from leave to the Kitty Hawk in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, McCauley had told his family about his special-operations ground raids in Afghanistan and of being struck by shrapnel from a "frag grenade" while in a ground conflict.

McCauley's tales reached a friend in Roseville, who contacted The Bee to tell the newspaper of the family. What resulted was a story with a picture of McCauley displaying his "SEALs jacket" while surrounded by his supportive family.

Retired SEALs across the country, however, have seen this kind of thing before. Members of an unofficial "authentication team" keep an updated database of every man who has ever graduated from BUD/S school, and nowhere on it could they find a Justin McCauley. By Monday morning, scores of alerting e-mails were pouring into The Bee, into the Kitty Hawk command, and into the Navy Bureau of Personnel at the Pentagon.

"I feel a sense of accomplishment in exposing these people," said Steve Nash, a

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former Navy SEAL who lives in Fairfield and was one of the first to raise questions about McCauley. "It's really sad that we have to do this. It's part of what our society has become.

"At times, we really feel bad for the families. But guess what? We're not the ones who (hurt them). We have outed the truth, and the people that are phonies are the ones hurting their families."

Nash and other Navy veterans say that the war on terrorism has bred a new wave of fabricated heroes. But stolen valor was an issue even before Sept. 11.

In August, Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb., was exposed after he falsely claimed to be a former Navy SEAL and Purple Heart recipient. Pulitzer Prize winner Joseph J. Ellis had claimed to be a platoon leader with the 101st Airborne in Vietnam, but last year it was revealed that he spent the war teaching history at West Point.

And in 1996, the Navy's top admiral, Mike Boorda, killed himself after revelations that he had been wearing Vietnam decorations he had not earned.

"There are college professors out there doing it, there are ministers, police officers, Boy Scout executives -- you name it," Nash said. "There are weekends we get over a thousand calls asking about these guys."

In McCauley's case, one red flag was the photo that showed a Navy SEAL patch on the left breast of his jacket. At least, it looked to any civilian like a blue Navy SEAL patch, with the SEAL trident insignia and the words "AO1 (S.E.A.L.) McCAULEY" stitched in gold.

But several Navy sources, including Cmdr. Ryan Zinke of the BUD/S training facility in Coronado, confirmed that such a patch existed nowhere within the Navy. Likely, they say, it was purchased and customized at a collector's shop.

Gordon, of the Pacific Fleet headquarters, said the wearing of unauthorized insignia was a violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. By the UCMJ's definition, Gordon said, this constituted "conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline and was of a nature to bring discredit to the armed forces." Such offenses are punishable by a bad-conduct discharge, he said.

Zinke also was suspicious after hearing McCauley's tales of being wounded in Afghanistan.

"That's impossible," Zinke said. "Of the SEALs that are forward-deployed in that theater, none have received any wounds, or listed any casualties, however minor. It's absolutely for certain that he was not involved in any naval special warfare capacity."

Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group To Deploy

From Commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. -- Nearly 7,600 Sailors will leave their homeports when the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group (HSTCSG) deploys Oct. 13 in support of the global war on terrorism.

The strike group wrapped up Summer Pulse '04, a groundbreaking exercise involving seven carrier strike groups, in late July. During this exercise, Truman also completed its Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX), successfully performing a series of complex training events, which included naval surface fire support training and air-to-ground bombing off the East Coast of the United States.

COMPTUEX is an intermediate level exercise designed to forge the strike group into a cohesive, fighting team and is a critical step in the pre-deployment training cycle.

Commanded by Rear Adm. Michael Tracy, commander, Carrier Strike Group 10, HSTCSG includes the Norfolk-based aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman with its embarked air wing, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 3, the Norfolk-based guided-missile cruiser USS Monterey (CG 61), the Norfolk-based guided-missile destroyers USS Barry (DDG 52) and USS Mason (DDG 87), the Groton, Conn.-based fast-attack submarine USS Albuquerque (SSN 706) and the combat logistics ship USNS Arctic (T-AOE 8) from Naval Weapons Station Earle, N.J.



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Wednesday, October 13, 2004

U.S. NAVY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION 12 OCT 04

Navy Celebrates 229th Birthday At The Navy Memorial

WASHINGTON -- As the U.S. Navy celebrates 229 years of service to the nation, a ceremony will be held Wednesday October 13, at the U.S. Navy Memorial, to mark the occasion.

A commemorative wreathlaying will be hosted by Naval District Washington beginning at 1 p.m.

Rear Adm. Jan Cody Gaudio, USN, Commandant, Naval District Washington, will host the ceremony with Retired Rear Adm. Pierce J. Johnson, USNR, President and CEO of the U.S. Navy Memorial Foundation.

During the ceremony, the admirals will place a wreath at The Lone Sailor statue to

commemorate the Navy's birthday. The United States Navy Band will perform on the Memorial with the Navy Ceremonial Guard also participating in the annual event.

There is no cost and the public is invited to attend.

The ceremony will be held outside on the Navy Memorial located on 7th and Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C.

In case of inclement weather, call the Navy Memorial Foundation's events hotline at (202)-380-0768.

The U.S. Navy Memorial is located on the Archives/Navy Memorial METRO stop on the yellow and green lines.