Ethos

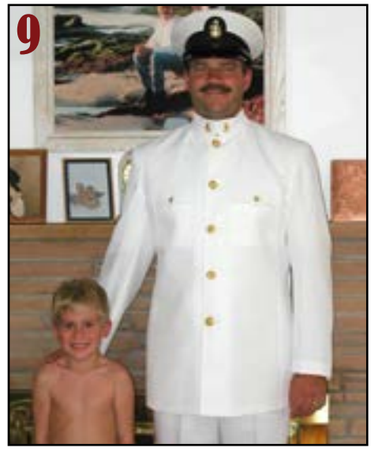
ISSUE 22
NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE

Soundless. Lifesaving.

This robot may not look like much, but it is proving its worth as an operator's eyes and ears.

Issue 22 Contents

On Our Cover:
A SEAL controls a Throwbot, a new tool in the NSW arsenal
Photo: MC2 Megan Anuci



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Constant Change and NSW's Role in the Global SOF Network

After 27 years away from the home of NSW, Ivy and I are happy to rejoin you in Coronado. Everything that made the memories of this place and our community great has only gotten better. More importantly, everything that you have done in the last 12 years in our fight against violent extremists and extremism around the globe has significantly advanced the role and legacy of the NSW Community. NSW has made critical contributions attaining US national security objectives and in working toward security and stability where it is most desperately needed - and, there remains much to be done.

We naturally take comfort in constant and stable environments. Ironically, in our activities to help create and support such environments, the one constant we can be assured of is that of CONSTANT CHANGE. Our effectiveness as a part of USSOCOM, and in concert with USSOCOM components, is dependent upon our ability to detect, assess and act on changes in the global security environment; most importantly, those that impact Americans and American Interests.

Even as we look to the future and begin to apply a higher level of effort to operationalizing Admiral McRaven's Global SOF Network, we can see indicators in several key areas of the world where the potential for major regional conflicts, if not potential war, exist and are being agitated. Some things we know well - that we are not good at predicting key aspects of the next conflict, and, that the next conflict seldom looks like the last conflict. As we operationalize the Global SOF Network, we will be an important part of a whole of government approach, working collaboratively with our counterparts in the diplomatic, intelligence, and development communities, and working by, with, and through regional and host nation military counterparts to enhance regional security and stability. At the same time, we must be prepared to shift at a moment's notice to hard power military contingency and crisis response operations, and potentially, broader and deeper theater conflict scenarios.

We will remain 100% engaged - this means we will continue to maintain stability and predictability in our Force and in our work up schedules so that we can surge to higher levels of effort in the special circumstances that require it. What 100% is, will be determined by the level of resourcing afforded to us.

Our primary purpose is to fight and win in complex, dynamic and sensitive environments. Excellence in execution underpins every Naval Special Warfare endeavor. I want to convey some points that have become increasingly important to NSW over the years - it is about People, how we take care of our own, and how we interact with others to accomplish the Mission. These points apply equally to all who serve in NSW - SWCCs, techs, direct support enablers, and SEALs:

- You are the key ingredient of Mission Accomplishment. In NSW, more than any other community, you and your Teammates determine the outcome of the Mission.
- Your importance to the Mission is not based solely on your proximity to the target.
- Our credibility is earned in our operational effectiveness, our actions, our relationships, and the trust and confidence we generate.
- Our credibility will directly influence our access, placement, influence and freedom of action. We MUST have these to execute our Mission.
- The support of our Families is crucial to our sustainment and mission effectiveness. Supporting our Families is equally crucial, and is foundational to taking care of our People.
- Our diversity is a strength multiplied by Teamwork. The world is torn by religious, racial and ethnic strife and further stirred by resource competition. Diversity in our Force reflects America's values and is an operational imperative. We support all with motivation and desire to meet the high and uncompromising standards of Service in Naval Special Warfare.

It is a truly challenging and dynamic time to Serve. It is an honor to serve with you. HOOYAH!

Rear Adm. Brian L. Losey
Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command

NSW Force Incident Statistics for Fiscal Year 2013

33	DUIs
28	ARIs
7	SEXUAL ASSAULTS
5	INCIDENTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
1	SUICIDE

Operators Earn Associate Degrees from FTCC

SAN DIEGO – Five SEAL and five SWCC operators were presented their associate degrees from Fayetteville Technical Community College (FTCC), based in Fayetteville, N.C., in a graduation ceremony held July 15. These 10 NSW Sailors excelled in a proof-of-concept course that links credits earned from their military training to a degree plan. Beyond personal achievement, they undertook this endeavor with the hope to encourage more participation across the force – enlisted SEAL and SWCC pursuing formal, voluntary education.

"Just do it," said Master Chief Special Warfare Operator Arik Burks. "There is never a good time to knock out your education, especially with the job we do as SEALs and SWCC operators. However, Fayetteville Tech made it as easy as humanly possible for an operator to begin this journey into higher learning. When I finished up with the associate degree, I looked back at what I had done and felt proud of the accomplishment. Everyone who is contemplating doing this or is on the fence should work with the Center for SEAL and SWCC on starting voluntary education."

The Center for SEAL and SWCC is Naval Education and Training Command's learning center for Naval Special Warfare (NSW) and is responsible for building this program with FTCC. Laura McIntyre, the command's education specialist, worked to make this a reality for NSW operators. McIntyre knows the value education brings to both the fleet and Sailors. As a retired master chief personnelman who served 24 years in the Navy, she is NSW's advocate for providing educational opportunities to the community.

"We're building a more educated force, as well as setting Sailors up for success in their future," McIntyre said. "Eventually, everyone will exit the military, and when it is time to join the civilian workforce, we owe it to our Sailors to make them as competitive as possible to secure future employment outside of the military."

The men completed the required 17 credits at an accelerated rate, earning their associate degree in general education in just 16 weeks. With the financial support of Navy's Tuition Assistance program, they were able to complete it with minimal out-of-pocket expense. When asked about the pace of learning and the expectations for members looking to pursue this program, McIntyre said, "We wanted to start with the accelerated program to assess the challenges of taking eight-plus credits while at the same time working full days. This group proved it can be done and we know the program will be less time-consuming for future students if they take the classes at a slower rate."

Future students will have the option of taking one or two classes per semester to fit into their personal schedules.

Dr. J. Larry Keen, Ed.D., president of FTCC, was present for the graduation ceremony, and in his address to the cohort, he espoused the value education brings to NSW as a new weapon to their arsenal, "the power of critical thinking, strategic analysis and academic reasoning." His thoughts echo those of Adm. William McRaven, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command.

To say this education program and these men represent the future of NSW is no stretch. The push for education within the force is well underway and their achievements align with Admiral McRaven's education vision. Our people are our best asset; through voluntary education programs like this, NSWcontinues to increase the value of that asset and its warfighting capabilities.

Lt. Gina Becker
CENSEALSWCC

NAVSCIATTS Provides Expertise for Nigerian Course

JOHN C. STENNIS SPACE CENTER, Miss., Jul 16, 2013 — A program to assist African security force partners develop security capacity culminated in the delivery of patrol craft and the establishment of ongoing training efforts designed to improve Nigerian coastal and riverine security.

The program, which includes a training partnership between Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS) and the Nigerian Joint Maritime Security Training Center (JMSTC), is specifically designed to address recent piracy trends. For the first time, incidents of piracy in western Africa have overtaken incidents in eastern Africa, as reported by the International Maritime Bureau.

JMSTC initially opened in 2010 as a capacity-building initiative with help from the government of the United Kingdom. JMSTC is Nigeria's first fully-dedicated maritime security and littoral and riverine operations training center.

NAVSCIATTS' role as the only Department of Navy security cooperation enabling schoolhouse operating under the United States Special Operations Command led to numerous exchanges between the two organizations, according to Cmdr. John Cowan, NAVSCIATTS commanding officer. All of the exchanges were intended to support the upcoming launch and success of JMSTC's first Tactical Riverine Operations Course (TROC) in Lagos, Nigeria, from July 13 to Sept. 6, 2013.

"From the beginning, JMSTC coordinated through Security Force Assistance channels to send key leaders to NAVSCIATTS' in-resident and instructor development training," said Cowan. "They also requested support from NAVSCIATTS Mobile Training Teams (MTTs), who deployed to Nigeria to teach best practices and provide their staff on-the-job training."

As a result, NAVSCIATTS personnel have conducted three MTT events to include Patrol Craft Officer Riverine and Outboard Motor Maintenance (OBM) training in 2011, Instructor Development and OBM training in 2012, and Patrol Craft Hull Maintenance and OBM instruction in 2013. A pre-deployment site survey team deployed to Nigeria in 2010 to meet with JMSTC leadership to better understand the personnel, equipment and training requirements of the center.

In addition, Nigerian partners have filled nearly 30 in-resident training slots at NAVSCIATTS since 2010, according to Cowan, to include training in riverine and coastal operations, hull maintenance, outboard motor maintenance, instructor development, tactical communications, and strategic-level small craft to combat terrorism.

The training partnership also supports U.S. Africa Command's (AFRICOM) guiding principles, which state, in part, that AFRICOM activities, plans, and operations are centered on the fact that a safe, secure, and stable Africa is in our national interest. In the long term, it will be Africans who will best be able to address African security challenges, and AFRICOM most effectively advances U.S. security interests through focused security engagement with our African partners.

"TROC was tailored after the training that many of our personnel have already received during the NAVSCIATTS Patrol Craft Officer - Riverine course," said Lt. Jibril Umar Abdullahi, a JMSTC instructor and graduate of the NAVSCIATTS Strategic Level Small Craft Combating Terrorism Course in July 2012. "This new course and training would not have been possible without the support and training we have all received from NAVSCIATTS."

At least four of the TROC instructors were trained at NAVSCIATTS, according to Abdullahi, and the center will also benefit from the training that the maintenance officer received at NAVSCIATTS.

"He has been relentless in transferring all the skills he learned to the technicians under him in an effort to achieve planned maintenance of equipment goals at the center," said Abdullahi.

Nigerian Defense Headquarters planned the new course as part of an ongoing initiative to develop JMSTC into a regional "Training Center of Excellence" for the entire western African sub-region. Such efforts reinforce the intent of NAVSCIATTS' leadership and staff, who consider building such centers under the "train-the-trainer" model as a core component of their mission.

"We were very honored when asked to work with JMSTC as their personnel are primarily provided by the Nigerian Navy Special Boat Service, a group that is well-known for high levels of professionalism, tactical skill, and maturity as well as their use of restraint in complex situations," said Cowan. "As our daily focus here is on building relationships, professional leadership development, operational level engagement, maintenance, strategic level instruction and human rights development; this seemed like a great opportunity to work together."

"The fact that JMSTC recently took delivery of six 25-foot patrol boats facilitated by the U.S. Embassy through the Foreign Military Sales program shows that the system is working and that we are all committed to a long-standing relationship with Nigeria and its quest to collaborate in securing the region's maritime domain," he said.

Darian Wilson
NAVSCIATTS Public Affairs

Naval Special Warfare Hosts College Fair

SAN DIEGO – Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command held its first college fair Aug. 22 to promote educational opportunities available to Sailors and their families.

Fifteen different colleges and universities had representatives at the event, which also included a Fleet and Family Service Center course titled 'Scholarships 101.'

"Holding an education fair is another opportunity to enhance careers and/or prepare for the next chapter in life upon separation or retirement from the Navy," said Religious Program Specialist 1st Class (FMF) Eric Bryan.

The colleges prepared displays, fliers, tuition information and course catalogs to help the Sailors learn more about their specific programs. Many of the college representatives showed service members how easy it is to find desired classes and what is available in a traditional classroom setting, as well as distance learning.

"During these events we are able to come see the Sailors and make the extra step so they don't have to take time out of their busy schedules," said Tamika Clark, admissions advisor at National University.

Many Sailors were not aware that they have acquired credits within the Navy, and that with their Sailor/Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript (SMART), they may have only three or four classes remaining to complete an associate degree.

"Along with the SMART, Sailors could have their first degree for free within a year," said Bryan.

Colleges also spoke about the importance of a college degree to the modern Sailor, and encouraged prospective students to stop by the Navy College Office to find out when each school is holding its registration for upcoming classes.

MC3 Geneva G. Brier

Navy Names 2013 Stockdale Award Winners

WASHINGTON -- Cmdr. Richard N. Massie and Cmdr. Leif E. Mollo are the 2013 recipients of the Vice Adm. James Bond Stockdale Leadership Award, according to NAVADMIN 252/13 released Sept. 26.

The award was established in honor of Vice Adm. Stockdale whose distinguished naval career symbolized the highest standards of excellence in both personal conduct and leadership. It is presented annually to two commissioned officers on active duty in the grade of commander or below who are serving in command of a single unit and who serve as examples of excellence in leadership and conspicuous contribution to the improvement of leadership in the Navy.

Massie, commanding officer of the USS Maine (SSBN 741 - Gold) is the Pacific Fleet winner and Mollo, commanding officer of SEAL Team FOUR is the Fleet Forces Command winner. The two men were nominated by their peers and were chosen from among nine finalists to receive the award.

Massie was nominated by six of his fellow SSBN commanders for his commitment to excellence and highly successful integration of women into the submarine force.

"It is clear that his personal initiative and performance has infused his crew with a sense of honor and commitment that embodies the essence of the war-fighting spirit ," wrote Cmdr. Tiger Pittman, commanding officer of USS Pennsylvania (SSBN 735 -Gold), about Massie. "His clear expectations of dignity and respect foster a command culture that encourages teamwork and cohesiveness among all crew members."

Mollo was nominated by fellow SEAL, Cmdr. J. Lasky, commanding officer of SEAL Team TEN, for the leadership he provided through a time of change and adversity at two SEAL teams.

Mollo was commanding officer of SEAL Team EIGHT when its mission was changed from operations in Afghanistan to operations in Africa. He led the Team to become the "vanguard of Admiral McRaven's vision for the Global Special Operations Forces Network," wrote Lasky.

Mollo was then hand-selected to assume command of SEAL Team FOUR following the death of the previous commanding officer two months in to the Team's eight-month combat tour in Afghanistan.

"Within weeks, through his ability to achieve excellence and balance, and to keep people focused on the mission, the Team built needed resiliency into the Afghan Local Police Program, drove Afghan Special Operations Forces into the lead, and laid the foundation for transition," wrote Lasky. "Cmdr. Mollo exemplifies the SEAL Ethos and our Navy core values."

Massie and Mollo are scheduled to receive their awards from Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jonathan Greenert at a ceremony later this Fall.

Vice Adm. James Bond Stockdale, for whom the Stockdale Award is named, articulated five roles for a leader - moralist, jurist, teacher, steward and philosopher.

A Naval Academy graduate and pilot, Stockdale ejected from his A-4E Skyhawk over North Vietnam in September 1965 and was held prisoner and frequently tortured until February 1973. He received the Medal of Honor in 1976 and served as president of the Naval War College from October 1977 until August 1979.

He died in 2005 and is buried at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. He is survived by his wife Sybil, his four sons and eight grandchildren.

Chief of Naval Personnel

Dan Cnossen's Journey

On days when it may seem grim, there is the quiet example of U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Dan Cnossen to give us all hope.

Cnossen is a leading contender to make the U.S. Paralympic team at next February's Sochi 2014 Games in Nordic skiing. He has a real shot to win a medal in both cross-country skiing and in biathlon, the skiing-and-shooting sport.

It's not just that, though.

Dan Cnossen, a Navy SEAL, lost both legs just above the knees in an explosion in Afghanistan in September, 2009.

It's how he has come back, how he can walk and run, and ski, and how it's all a new normal.

This is the way it's going to be now for those wounded in the Boston Marathon bombings.

Dan Cnossen's tale can show the way.

"We are a high-performance sports organization, and that means we work day in and day out with a pretty remarkable group of people," Max Cobb, the president and chief executive of USA Biathlon, said.

"And then there are times when for a moment you reflect on an athlete like Dan Cnossen, and on his progress, on his story, on his phenomenal tenacity. It's emotional. Dan makes you proud to be an American, proud to be on his team."

Cnossen says about the suggestion that he might be an example, "It's pretty humbling," adding, "I hope it can help."

Dan was born and raised in Kansas, on the outskirts of Topeka. He and his sister, Leslie, are the fifth generation in his family to grow up there, on a family farm.

He went to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. The academy has a triathlon team that competes at the Olympic distance; he was on that team. Meanwhile, twice while in college, he ran the Boston Marathon. His best time, in 2000 — 3:05.57.

After the academy, he made it into the SEALs. There can be no doubting his work ethic and mental toughness.

The explosion in Afghanistan took place on Sept. 8, 2009. Cnossen stepped on an IED, an improvised explosive device. He was unconscious for eight days.

When he woke up, in intensive care in Maryland, it was not much of a shock to realize what had happened. "I just kind of knew," he says now.

Dan's first year home is chronicled on a website that features a beautifully written collection of posts, many from his sister, Leslie. This one is from the first post, not even three weeks after the blast, from his mother, Alice:

"The medics who saved his life, the surgeons in Bagram and Landstuhl who stabilized him for transport to National Naval Medical Center at Bethesda, the excellent medical teams who have cared for him daily since his arrival here — all have converged to bring him to his destiny today: to embark upon many new adventures and turn over a new leaf in his life: healing, recovery, rehabilitation, reconnection with family and fellow wounded warriors, perhaps serving as an inspiration to many as he starts this long, arduous journey toward renewed health and joyful living."

The goal, Dan said, was not just walking. It was running. That was what he had done on the afternoon before the bomb blast that night in Afghanistan. That was what he had done on the beach in San Diego, training for and with the SEALs. Or on the many trails wherever he was. "I was," he said, "always a runner."

On Sept. 8, 2010, exactly a year to the day later, Cnossen ran four laps around a track in Rockville, Md. "It was," he said, "a struggle," adding, "I wanted to quit after two. But I got four in."

Part of the struggle had to do with the technology he was using. He switched prosthetic devices and learned how to run with a straight-leg style, with his hips out wide. That made him more stable, meaning he could run not just on a track but venture out into, as he calls it, "the real world," onto pavement.

The switch also made him a lot faster.

He has, he said, run five kilometers, or 3.1 miles, in 17:50.

"Now I'm at the point I can do 5:10, 5:15 [per mile] if I'm going hard," he said.

He also has gotten back to the marathon. At the 2011 New York Marathon, he hand-cycled the first 16 miles. Then he ran the final 10-plus. His finish time: 2:38.

At the 2011 Warrior Games, Cnossen won three gold swim medals and a bronze in the 800 in track and field.

The 2013 edition of the Warrior Games wrapped up May 16 in Colorado Springs, Colo.; Cnossen was not there; he was in Bend, Ore., at a ski camp.

The beauty of biathlon is that it involves, as Cnossen phrased it, "moving and shooting." That's the same principle that drives infantry and special operations.

"As a sport," he said, "I thought this might be a way to represent something a little bigger. The community I come from, and thanks to the complete support of my chain of command, I have been able to remain on active duty. And I have come to love it."

On skis, "I can cover 30 to 40 kilometers through trails in the woods, and it's hard to do that in any other way. For me, I had really liked trail running before my injury. I am a good runner but I need pavement. Cross-country skiing gives me the ability to do that, the ability to get out into the woods."

The challenge in biathlon for Cnossen — who this past winter won a silver medal at an IPC World Cup biathlon event in Wisconsin and finished sixth at the long-course cross-country skiing championships in Sweden — is both the shooting and the skiing.

Of course he learned to shoot in the military. But that's different than acquiring the pacing it takes to shoot after racing hard.

Then there's the skiing itself. And, as Cnossen notes, he has only been skiing for just a little bit over two years.

That's why he's in the Oregon mountains in May.

"In the scheme of things," he said, "I can become good enough at shooting to win. It becomes hard to develop strength and stamina to ski fast."

Of course, a 2014 Sochi medal is the goal. But so many things have to come together, cautioned James Upham, the U.S. biathlon team's Paralympic coach.

"It's about setting that goal that's a little beyond your reach and going for it and following the plan," Upham said, adding a moment later for emphasis that while winning would be fantastic it simply cannot be — in this arena — the measure of all things.

"When you hear whatever national anthem it is that's playing, can you say, 'I had my best day? My best year?' Can you say you are satisfied in that deeply spiritual way you can be as an athlete?' "

If you had to bet on anyone to develop strength and stamina to ski fast, wouldn't you like Dan Cnossen's odds?

This next passage is also from the family website; it's included in the final post, written a year after the blast in Afghanistan. Dan's sister, Leslie, wrote:

"Dan has no solid plans for the future quite yet – he is just going one day at a time – but I know that wherever he ends up taking himself and the rest of his life will make these triumphs of the past year seem like just a small fraction of what he's capable of."

Alan Abrahamson
3 Wire Sports

Lt. Cmdr. Dan Cnossen's Journey to Sochi 2014


MCz Kevin S. O'Brien


Photo courtesy of Dan Cnossen


Photo courtesy of U.S. Paralympics


MC2 Sarah Bitter

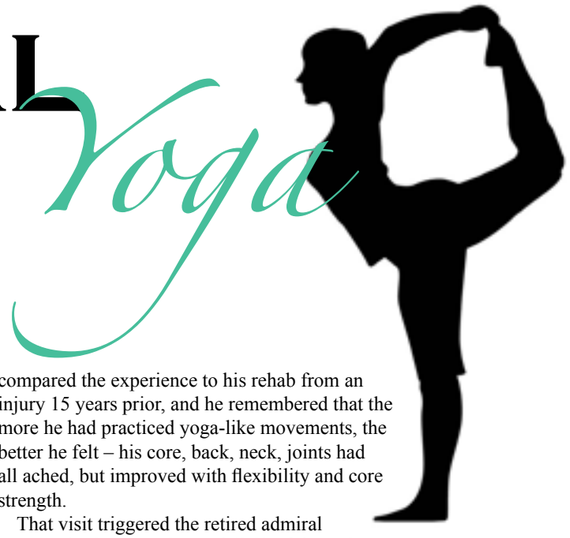
(Counter clockwise from top left) Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) the honorable Ray Mabus awards the Bronze Star with Valor medal and a Purple Heart medal to Lt. Dan Cnossen. Cnossen lost both legs just above the knees in an explosion in Afghanistan on Sep. 8, 2009.

Cnossen competes in a 5k in Denver, Colo.

Cnossen competes on skis during the 2013 U.S. Paralympics.

Cnossen warms up for the Warrior Games 800 meter run at Garry Berry Stadium.

Tactical Yoga



A new fitness program develops muscles that service members rarely exercise

If you walk through the empty, quiet north hallway on the second floor of building 632 at the Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Training Detachment (TRADET), mild music becomes audible as you approach a high-ceilinged room floored with Tatami matting. There, you can meet a group of service members and some civilian employees practicing body movements in an effort to perfect the art of flexibility with rhythmic breathing: yoga.

A Sailor's personal physical enrichment, which might include personal physical fitness programs as well as the Navy's elite fitness programs, is an ongoing process, and a wide variety of health and wellness programs are available in the military for those seeking to improve strength and conditioning. Recently, Tactical Yoga was added as an additional option for increasing personal fitness, especially for those who believe yoga is an effective form of training to improve physical and mental resiliency.

Retired Rear Adm. Tom Steffens, a former Navy SEAL, recently published an article in Navy Medicine Live about his experience more than seven years ago, when he visited a wounded SEAL at Walter Reed Medical Center. He watched an injured service member's ongoing therapy, which he described as "terrific." According to his observation, however, the patient was focusing on strength components but not stretching or core work. Steffens compared the experience to his rehab from an injury 15 years prior, and he remembered that the more he had practiced yoga-like movements, the better he felt – his core, back, neck, joints had all ached, but improved with flexibility and core strength.

That visit triggered the retired admiral to meet the Surgeon General (SG) of the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and raise the idea of incorporating yoga into the treatment of wounded warriors. Steffens was with Annie Okerlin, his yoga teacher, during his visit to the USSOCOM SG. Steffens then was linked up to the head of therapy at Walter Reed Military Medical Center, who was open to introducing adaptive yoga to both her staff and patients. For the next two years, Steffen's network linked components of what would become an integrated yoga program together, and as he travelled to and from Walter Reed, he witnessed the program develop as Okerlin implemented adaptive yoga procedures for various patients.

In San Diego, the yoga class at TRADET is carefully monitored by "Kat," as everyone calls Katherine Alfredo, the NSW yoga instructor. Alfredo leads the execution of each move with verbal instruction as she teaches.

"I've been teaching yoga full time since 2005," Alfredo said. "I taught on the USS Ronald Reagan in 2010, then [Morale, Welfare and Recreation] hired me for Naval Air Station North Island and the Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado."

Currently, Alfredo teaches yoga in four NSW locations: Special Boat Team 12, TRADET, Advance Training Command (ATC) and Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command.

During classes, Alfredo walks around the room to focus on each participant's performance. She corrects their movements, body position, timing of execution and breathing.

"I developed a type of yoga that is unique," she said. "It works for NSW commands. I believe NSW took interest in yoga primarily to decrease injuries and to alleviate stress. The physical aspect - that yoga poses - is to improve flexibility, range of motion, balance, muscular symmetry, core strength, and calm the nervous system and so much more."

"Look beyond the poses," she says, "and you see that the practitioner is experiencing an internal transformation as well. While in a complicated yoga pose, concentrating on one focal point, the chatter of the mind starts to subside and heightened dynamic awareness occurs. Yoga brings light to the subjective experience: the physical, the mental, intellectual, energetic, and spiritual aspects of being human."

Chief Warrant Officer 5 David Turner witnessed how yoga started in NSW on the West Coast and is one of the pioneer practitioners of yoga at ATC. Turner said he started practicing yoga when the ATC combatants program had contracted out to get an instructor, in early

Rebecca Perron

MCC Geronimo Aquino


MCC Geronimo Aquino

2012.

"I was too hesitant at first, to be honest with you, the first couple of sessions that I [participated in]," said Turner. "I was actually very angry when I left. You know, my initial thought with yoga was, 'calm and relaxing,' but personally for me, [it] was very frustrating. It's because, like a foreign language, you don't understand what you're saying. You've never done these physical poses before, and it's kind of bizarre – and that was my initial impression. Well, because of the Naval Special Warfare 'Never quit' attitude, I was going to give a few tries before I made my final determination whether I wanted to do it or not. So whenever I talk to somebody now and try to encourage them to go, you have to go at least five times before you can really make a valid opinion as to whether it suits your lifestyle or not."

Turner went a few more times, and yoga began to grow on him because of what he described as almost immediate positive results.

"It's like everything that we do in NSW: we have a kit bag of all these responsibilities, whether it is jumping out of the airplanes, whether it's diving, or shooting or talking on radios, we have exercises that we have to do," he said. "This is just another variety of exercise and it fits right in well with the Tactical Athlete Program, [in] that it's very much [focused on] endurance, strength and flexibility."


MCC Geronimo Aquino

According to Turner, the general fitness and flexibility gained through yoga are very important. But it also does more than that - it develops muscles in areas that many service members rarely exercise. A lot of the poses are very difficult, and require a lot of balancing, so practitioners develop control over very fine muscle movements.

"I will recommend yoga to my family and to everybody," Turner said. "Aside from physical fitness activity, yoga is very relaxing. It takes a little bit of practice, but it requires you to focus internally on your own body."

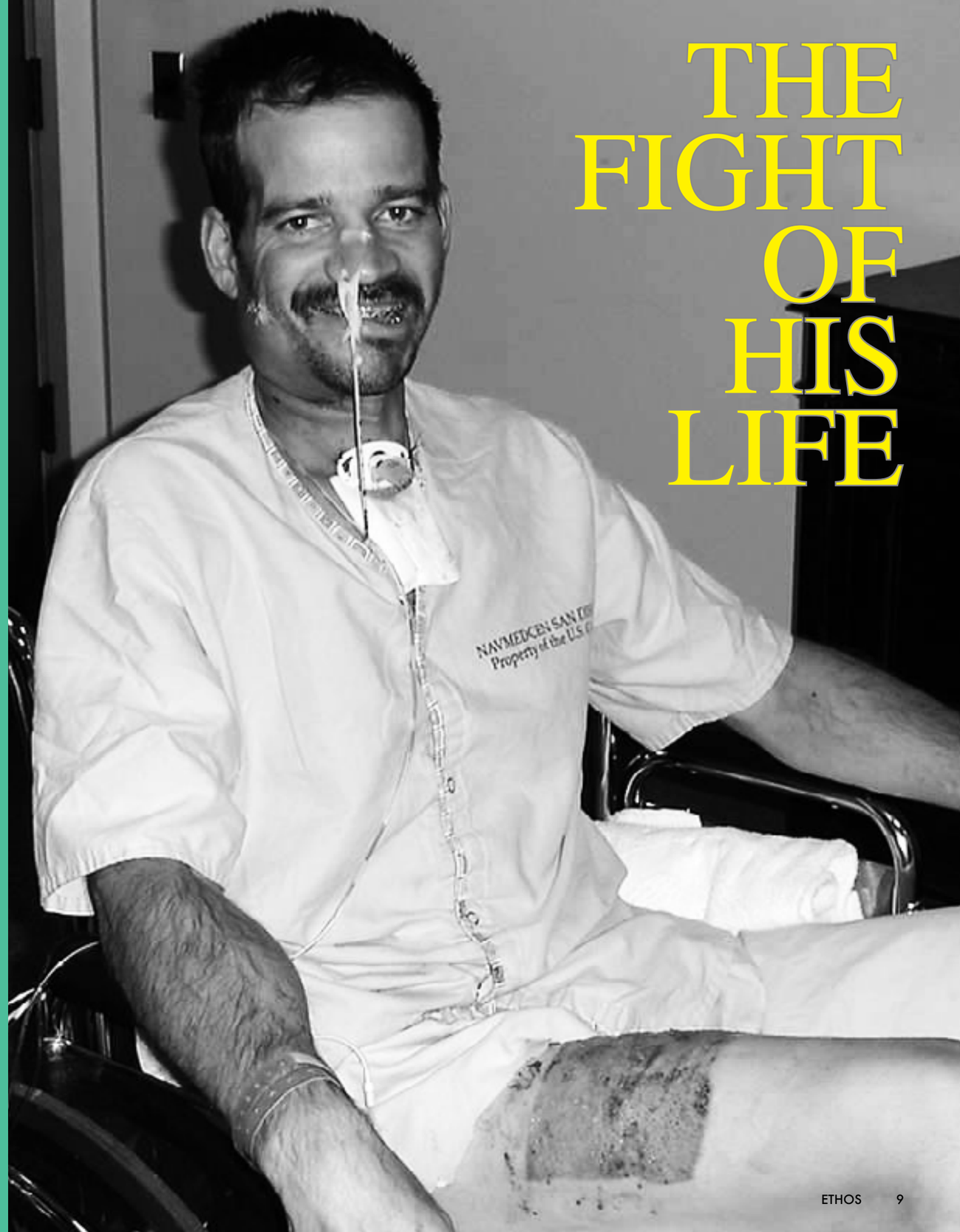
There are two pipeline courses that come through ATC: the SEAL Qualification Training (SQT) class for prospective SEALs and the Crewmen Qualification Training (CQT) class for prospective SWCC operators. When students come to do combatants training on Mondays and Thursdays, yoga is incorporated in training for both the SQT and CQT students and is conducted in conjunction with the Tactical Athlete Program.

"If they start doing training in Yoga as young SEALS or SWCC and if they continue to do it within their entire career, then there is a good chance that they reduce their injuries," said Turner. "And there will be a great resiliency and flexibility through their entire career."

MCC Geronimo Aquino


MCC Geronimo Aquino

THE FIGHT OF HIS LIFE



Cancer: A word that makes people anxious, uncomfortable and nervous. There are hundreds of different kinds, and no one – no matter how strong, tough or smart – is guaranteed immunity from the disease. Not even a United States Navy SEAL.

The Beginning

Chief Scott David Atherton is a 49-year-old Navy SEAL with three beautiful, healthy children and a happy marriage of almost 20 years. Atherton, who goes by "Chet," a nickname that stuck during his time at Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training (BUD/s), is described by fellow teammates as a constant motivation.

In 2004, Atherton, now the SEAL and SWCC Recruiting Directorate chief petty officer of operations, was living a comfortable life, planning a remodel on his home and anticipating the birth of a baby girl when he found a lump in his throat while shaving during an urban combat training trip. He'd dipped tobacco his entire Navy career, so he was immediately concerned, and decided he needed to consult a doctor. He was told he was probably under the weather and had swollen lymph nodes. Shortly after training, his concern grew and he returned to the hospital for a more definitive answer. After several tests, an ultrasound and weeks of uncertainty, final tests showed atypical cell growth that indicated possible cancer.

It was a few months later when doctors confirmed Atherton had stage four, Squamous Cell Carcinoma, the second most common type of skin cancer. Stage four cancer is considered progressive and dangerous, and in his case classified as severe due to the vast amount of lymph nodes that were infected with cancer tissue.

Atherton's wife, Donna, was 36 weeks pregnant with their third child. As a result, Atherton insisted on delaying radiation and chemotherapy treatments in order to be a part of his daughter's birth and not add more stress to his wife's life.

"The doctors didn't like the idea of delaying my treatments because it was necessary to be aggressive, but they allowed it," said Atherton, "and Samantha Grace was born Oct. 18, 2005."

After the birth of his third child, reality hit. It was time to start treatments. The first step was surgery followed by radiation treatments used to locate the actual tumor. An incision in his neck from his ear to his shoulder was cut, leading to the discovery of three infected lymph nodes, and resulting in the removal of all his lymph nodes on his left side. However, the doctors were unable to find the tumor, leading to numerous biopsies on Atherton's sinuses. They eventually found the cancer at the base of his tongue, near his gag reflexes.

"The doctors were happy to find the tumor – it meant they could focus the radiation treatments on the cancer-specific side," Atherton said. "The alternative was radiating my entire face, which would have probably killed me or come close to it."

The next step would be healing and preparing for radiation.

Radiation

Radiation therapy treats cancer by using high energy to kill tumor cells. The goal is to kill or damage cancer cells without hurting healthy cells. There are many possible side effects and they differ from case to case. Atherton was informed the treatments would not be easy and that doctors would first need to pull all the molars near the rear of his mouth – three on each side.

Atherton also received one treatment of chemotherapy at the beginning of his radiation treatments and then another treatment halfway through the completion of his radiation. Because the chemotherapy was used to increase the effectiveness of radiation, rather than as an individual and consistent treatment, Atherton was fortunate enough not to endure typical side effects associated with chemotherapy, such as hair loss.

But Atherton's experience throughout radiation was far from easy. The treatments caused nausea, vomiting, swelling, trouble swallowing and overall exhaustion and discomfort.

The type of radiation treatment he received is called hyper fractionated radiation. They chose this specific type because Atherton was the youngest person doctors had witnessed with this type of cancer.

"I was their first 40-year-old guy with this disease," Atherton said. "They normally do treatments on throat cancer on patients who are 60 to 80 years old. The treatments were prescribed for 10 to 12 years, so in my case they would need to get a good 40 years in order to allow me to have a full life."

The sessions take place in a less-than-inviting room equipped with a large, three-foot-thick steel door to protect those assisting with the treatment.

"Radiation is a pretty medieval thing – they mold a mesh covering over your face and basically bolt your head down to the tables," said Atherton "They cut the material around your eyes so you can blink and in my case they cut around my mouth and put something in to lower my jaw. That way, they can try to radiate just my jaw rather than any other part of my body."

Every day, and sometimes twice a day, Atherton would arrive to the doctor's office, each visit a repeat of the last.

"The second radiation of the day was horrible," said Donna Atherton, who's also a pediatric nurse practitioner. "We would park and get out of the car and Scott would start vomiting. It took us three times as long to get to the radiation clinic because we would have to stop after every few feet so he could vomit."

The radiation sessions began with Atherton getting secured to a table. He would then hear a beep, similar to when you receive X-rays – except this treatment is 5,000 times stronger. He would wait for the first beep, signifying the beginning of treatment, then look at the clock and count. The process takes 18 seconds and leaves most patients feeling near death.

"Throughout the radiation you don't feel anything, but the smell is terrible," said Atherton. "It smells like burnt flesh or hair, and afterwards you just hit rock bottom."

Although recalling the radiation was difficult and emotional, Atherton remembers thinking, 'Just get through this one more time.' He was not concerned with the future, the next day, or next week. He just needed to get through one agonizing treatment at a time.

During one of his appointments, he noticed other radiation "head pieces" similar to his throughout the room. The difference was they were much smaller and decorated with Spiderman stickers.

"Knowing little kids were doing this along with me bolstered my confidence," he said. "I knew I was not alone in that room and there were kids like mine doing the same thing every day. That was something I will never forget."

The last two weeks of radiation were filled with incredible weakness and constant vomiting, but six weeks of radiation came to an end and Atherton successfully completed all the necessary doses.

"I was so relieved that I didn't have to walk into that building one more time," Donna said. "It was done. It was over."

Ironically, upon completion of treatment, there is a bell that is located in the radiation ward that you ring when you have successfully finished. Although Atherton never rang the bell throughout his SEAL training he willingly rang this one.

"I can say that ingrained in every SEAL is to not ring the bell, but I can also say I was more than happy to ring this bell when the time came," said Atherton. "It was a very big relief to ring that specific bell to signify my radiation treatments were over."

Post Radiation

Atherton finished the radiation, but the journey had just begun for him and his family. There was an 85 percent chance that his cancer would return, and in the majority of the cases the return of Squamous Cell Carcinoma is fatal.

In the beginning of 2005, Atherton's throat was too inflamed to swallow solid food. His doctors inserted a stomach tube to work around these radiation side effects.

Despite significant weight loss, he had to eat through a stomach tube, and the ill effects of radiation were far from gone, Atherton decided to go back to work. Although his efforts cannot be discredited, he was unable to do much. At this point Atherton was on numerous medications, including pain killers and was unable to swallow his spit, which led to constantly spitting in a cup. His body was exhausted.

A year and a half post radiation he was able to start eating solid food again, using the only eight teeth he had left. Consequently, he quickly ground his teeth down to the underlying soft tissue and found himself in a predicament, due to the fact the doctors were hesitant to attempt to put new teeth in any areas that had been radiated.

After several treatments in a hyperbaric chamber to try to prevent the bone tissue from falling away from his jaw, doctors were unsuccessful and came to the conclusion that Atherton's jawbone was going necrotic. After two attempts of debriding, or medically removing dead, damaged, and infected tissue to improve the healing potential of remaining healthy tissue, Atherton awoke in the middle of the night realizing he had broken his jaw in his sleep.

"I woke up and my jaw was sideways," he said. "I freaked out while looking at my sideways jaw in the mirror, wondering what happened."

Atherton's main concern, next to staying alive, was staying in the SEAL community. The doctors told him they would need to replace parts of his bone jaw due to the fracture and displacement and his response was, "What can you do to keep me active?"

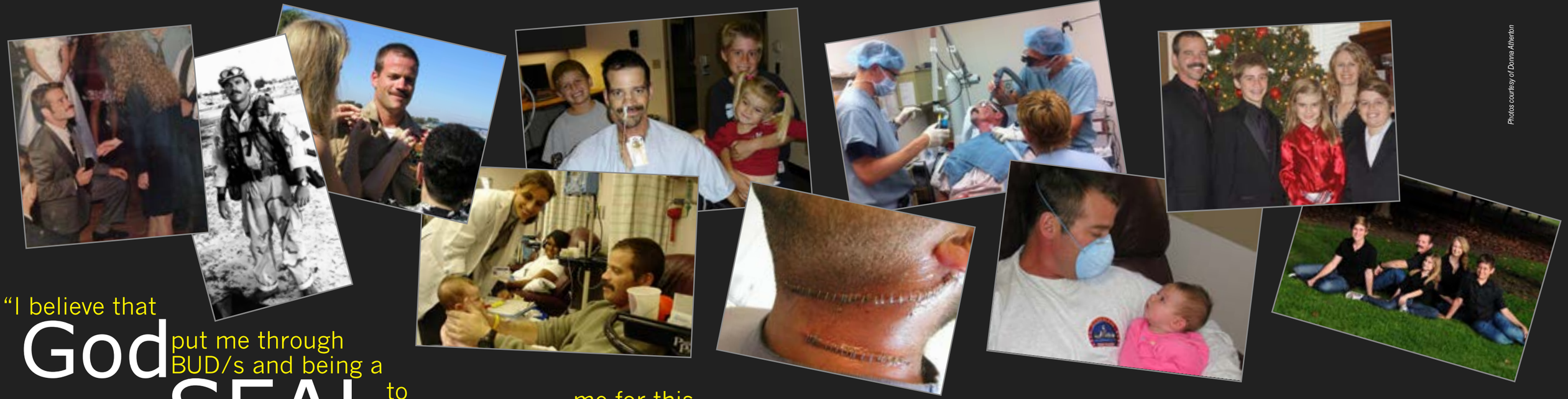
Although his then-doctor concluded the only option was a medical discharge from the Navy, Atherton was in luck. Just in time, he received a new doctor with experience performing jaw replacements. The new doctor deemed him able to remain on active duty and decided he would be taking pieces of his fibula from his right leg and be placing it in his jaw, securing it with titanium straps.

"I don't think my husband would have survived if he was medically discharged," said Donna. "The SEAL teams is what he focused on. He wanted to prove he could do it."

After another very invasive and intense surgery, Atherton was put into the intensive care unit and an induced coma for six days while his wife was taking care of their three children.

Fortunately, the Athertons had some help: Their children's school provided meals for them three times a week for about five months; teammates' wives and girlfriends were more than willing to babysit; one friend, a SEAL corpsman, helped the family with medical needs at home.

After six days in a coma, Atherton and his family had to undergo another recovery. Twelve weeks with his jaw wired shut, it was now imperative for him to receive tooth implants. He had no lower teeth at



Photos courtesy of Donna Atherton

"I believe that God put me through BUD/s and being a SEAL to prepare me for this part of my life."

-Chief Scott Atherton, on his battle with cancer

all, which made eating a nearly impossible task. The doctor decided to build a new set of teeth, similar to dentures only these would be permanent and have titanium straps that would anchor to his bone. Atherton, eager to get back with his SEAL team and deploy overseas inquired about the possibility of getting his entire set of teeth in titanium.

"If I am able to be an operator again, even if it's brief, I wanted something strong, I wanted titanium, bullet-proof teeth," said Atherton.

The doctor, who had not known any other person who has titanium teeth, did his research and found that it was possible. Atherton now has an entire bottom row of exactly what he requested: strong, titanium, bullet-proof teeth.

Career

Atherton's primary desire was to be involved in combat in Afghanistan, but he deployed to the Philippines instead. Although it was not his first choice, he deployed nonetheless, and in the process proved to himself, to his family and to friends that he was able to fight.

"I was 47-years old and I felt strong and I went through all the training and did fine, I didn't get hurt and I carried my weight," said Atherton.

Not only did Atherton carry his own weight, but he was essential in recovering captive Americans and several other successful missions.

Atherton will be retiring in 2015, and although his Navy career will be coming to an end, his life journey is sure to continue.

Remission

In the beginning of his diagnosis the doctor gave Atherton a survival percentage and Atherton had no desire to hear that number due to fact that he believed there was no "if" about his survival chances.

He left the room when his doctor revealed the number to his wife, and they had an agreement that when he reached five years of being cancer-free and officially in remission, she would reveal that number to him.

In 2009, Atherton marked five complete years of living cancer-free — a huge milestone for Atherton and his family. They celebrated with a dinner, and Donna told her husband his predicted survival percentage was 20 percent.

"I believe that God put me through BUD/s and being a SEAL to prepare me for this part of my life," said Atherton. "If I had not had the tenacity that I was normally walking around with, there were many times I could have given up and decided I couldn't go through this anymore."

Although Atherton and his family had no idea that nine years after being diagnosed with cancer their family would still be struggling with obstacles from radiation, they got through it and will continue to get through it by leaning on each other and with the help of their community and teammates.

"The little stuff doesn't matter anymore," Donna said. "I feel that we could handle everything together."

MC3 Geneva G. Brier

Ignorance is NOT *Bliss*

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

RISKS	SYMPTOMS	PREVENTION
Sun exposure	Firm, red nodule	Wear suncreen
Tanning Beds	A red sore or rough patch inside your mouth	Avoid tanning beds
Fair skin	A new sore or raised area on an old scar or ulcer	Check your skin regularly

An estimated **700,000** cases of squamous cell carcinoma are diagnosed each year in the U.S., resulting in approximately **2,500** deaths.

Over the past **three decades**, more people have had skin cancer than all other cancers combined.

One in five Americans will develop skin cancer in the course of a lifetime.

THE SHARP END

The KA-BAR knife dates back to World War II, when it was issued to American service members heading to fight overseas. Today, it plays a role in a somber ceremony for men set to join the Navy's warrior elite.

The dimensions of the knife are unremarkable: a fixed, 7-inch blade made of chrome vanadium; a blood groove built into that blade for combat; stacked leather washers for a handle. It's among the most enduring symbols of U.S. military strength, and more than 70 years after the knife first gained notoriety as both a weapon and a tool, the design still drives the sales of the company that manufactures it. The KA-BAR knife -- made in Olean, N.Y., carried around the globe -- also plays a prominent role in one of the final evolutions for students graduating from the most difficult military training in the world. The day after the knives are carried to a somber ceremony at a historic cemetery in San Diego, the men holding them become U.S. Navy SEALs.

The tradition can be traced back to at least 2003, though its exact origins remain with its creators. What's known is that students preparing to complete SEAL qualification training (SQT) are presented with a KA-BAR knife on the Monday of their graduation week. A name is inscribed on the blade, along with a date and the name of a military battle. Taken together, the engraving honors a single member of Naval Special Warfare (NSW) killed in action, and each graduating student receives a knife marked with a different name. Over the next three days, the students are responsible for learning about a teammate who gave his life for others. On the Thursday of that week, the students journey with their knives up to Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, a revered plot of land perched high above the Pacific. They visit the graves of fallen SEALs or, in some cases, men whose service predated the teams but led to the creation of NSW. The ceremony has undergone several changes over the years, but in the current version students wear camouflage -- their combat uniform -- to honor their heritage as fighters.

Photo courtesy of NSW Archives

When KA-BAR was approached about engraving the knives, there was no hesitation from the company. KA-BAR began making knives that were issued to troops in World War II, and the history of the knife is inextricably linked with service. Though the small company rarely performs engravings, they agreed to do so for NSW.

"We felt obligated to do it out of a sense of our own company's history and, in a way, thanking these guys for everything they've done for us," said Joseph Bradley, an employee at KA-BAR. Bradley calls the work "an honor."

At the cemetery, guest speakers talk about different men who've fallen, SEALs the speakers might have known personally. By then, leaders say, the reality of Naval service has hit home for the students. Sacrifice is preached throughout the training pipeline, and during this, the final evolution aimed at instilling the SEAL ethos into the Navy's newest special warfare operators, many students finally put faces and names to that ideal. Standing in front of the gravestone of a teammate killed in action, students read aloud the names engraved on their knives.

Master Chief (SEAL) Darrin Isham, the senior enlisted advisor at SQT, has helped shape the ceremony students see today.

Photo courtesy NSW Archives

"We do talk about it, and it's reinforced throughout training," Isham says of the emphasis on selfless service. "But it's not tangible until we get up to the national cemetery."

In many cases, the rich history of NSW allows students ready access to stories of valor. But the names of some of the fallen, like the origins of the tradition itself, have been faded by the passing of time. In 2012, one SEAL officer received a knife bearing a name he'd never before seen. For the next three days, he searched for information about the man and still couldn't learn anything about his life or death. He had read about men who'd earned the Medal of Honor, men whose faces were later memorialized in plaques that hang in a room in the Naval Special Warfare Center, through which every prospective SEAL must pass. He knew too well that many who had gone before him into fights overseas had never returned -- on the day the officer traveled to Kodiak, Alaska for one of the final phases of his training, 17 SEALs were killed when their Chinook helicopter was shot down in Afghanistan. But he couldn't find any information about the name engraved on his knife.

That fact was unsettling. Somehow it was also empowering.

"There's not much known about him," the officer says about the name on his knife, "but we do remember his name."

On clear days, visitors to Rosecrans can often see the Navy's boats, ships and aircraft operating near the horizon. On cloudy days, those missions -- both training and live -- are shrouded in a thick fog that envelops the peninsula. The carriers and rigid-hull inflatable boats, the planes and helicopters and people all working toward the same purpose become invisible, but that doesn't mean they cease to exist.

MC3 Paul Coover

MC2 Megan Anuci

A WINDOW INTO THE FUTURE

A physical shooting range consists of little more than open land and a collection of targets - but its purpose cuts to the heart of what it means to conduct Naval Special Warfare

IT IS AMONG THE MOST SYMBOLIC IMAGES of military training: on an otherwise barren spot of earth, a young man with a gun takes aim at a target down range, pulls a trigger, and in so doing measures his effectiveness with a deadly weapon. The objective and the results are simple. Clean. Necessary.

The story of a military shooting range is the story of the land on which it sits - the way geographic contours collect bullets, the enormous empty spaces left undeveloped in case of stray rounds, remote locations that allow some of the more sensitive parts of military training to be conducted in relative privacy.

But beneath that more obvious narrative, the story of a shooting range is really the story of the people who work quietly to allow it to exist. Because you can't simply fire a weapon toward a mountain without knowing what the long-term environmental impact of that might be; you can't take aim at a target without knowing if a civilian neighborhood lies behind it, just out of sight; you can't navigate through a kill house with a rifle without being sure that its walls are strong enough to allow your partner on the other side to remain safe. It takes people to make those checks, to sketch out maps, to build those walls.

Outside San Diego, a construction project at La Posta Mountain Warfare Training Facility is underway that will allow Naval Special Warfare (NSW) to conduct several specific types of training its operators need to be effective around the world. An examination of the project is really an examination of what it takes to make that training possible, and why it matters. Because ultimately, a shooting range is a vision of the future.

A TRUCK ROLLS STEADILY EASTWARD, away from the Pacific and toward a small patch of land in the desert only a select group of Americans will ever see.

Few regions of the country offer such a study in contrasts as does this portion of Southern California. Highway 8, along which the truck moves, cuts through some of the most extreme landscapes the area has to offer, meandering from its origins near the sea through mountain passes to the east. It is not a glamorous road. Its design is utilitarian, offering 12 lanes of commuting space in some stretches and just four in others.

A little more than 40 miles east of Coronado, where NSW's headquarters is located, the highway veers dramatically to the south; the terrain is mountainous and rocky. Truth be told, it's at about this point that the drive becomes something of an exercise in patience. The next major city along the road is El Centro – roughly 70 miles away. It's a long, desolate stretch of dry earth and high winds.

Barry Francis makes this drive often.

His figure is a formidable one, strong not in the way of athletes but in the manner of construction workers and ranchers -- in the manner of the rare man for whom work remains a verb. Francis wears jeans and heavy leather boots, graying hair parted to one side, black sunglasses covering his eyes. One calloused hand rests atop the steering wheel in his government-owned, American-made truck. He steers it casually around highway corners, pointing out this landmark or that, until only empty land remains ahead of him.

Francis spent 30 years in the United States Navy as a gunner's mate, traveling the world and retiring as a command master chief before settling down for good in a suburb outside San Diego. He says he wanted to have the time to walk his kids to school, and for a time he did just that. He'd left the military life and had even begun a little contracting business to keep him busy; years growing up near Folsom, Calif., where manual labor is a way of life, turned him into something of a handyman. But he never knew anything as well as he knew weapons and ranges, and this knowledge followed him.

In 2007 he was working on a small concrete pour and his cell phone rang. The voice on the other end asked him if he was "the range guy." Francis said he supposed he was.

NSW was calling and asking him back into military service, this time as a civilian, and he took the job. Officially, he's the Naval Special Warfare Group 1 range director, meaning he is the man on the ground, ensuring multi-million dollar construction projects proceed according to plan, fixing any number of issues that invariably arise with projects of that size and scope. Unofficially, he's still the range guy.

Which is how he finds himself out on any number of these open roads in Southern California, driving from shooting range to shooting range, helping ensure Naval Special Warfare operators will continue to be able to fire as many hundreds of thousands of rounds as they need to in order to prepare for combat deployments around the world.

The diversity of landscape Francis encounters in this part of the country mirrors the skill the SEALs hope to hone in order to be able to operate in the water, from the air, and -- Francis' specialty -- on land. Southern California is as good a place as any in the country to learn to fight in all of these arenas. And the range Francis now approaches is a 1,100-acre symbol of the training requirements that Naval Special Warfare continually evaluates and improves.

THE LOCATION TO WHICH FRANCIS NOW DRIVES isn't exactly secret, but it's not well publicized, either. It's east of San Diego on Highway 8, but everything is east of San Diego on Highway 8. Beyond that, unless you happen to live within a very few miles of the range or are intimately involved with the U.S. Navy, you probably won't ever know it exists.

Francis steers his truck off the main thoroughfare, on to a sequence of anonymous roads and up to a gate that announces the range's entrance. Nearby, a simple red flag hangs quietly, lowered. Neighbors know that when the flag is raised, bullets are flying. Francis manually opens the lock to the facility and begins to slow climb into the heart of the property, which begins atop the mountain that guards its entrance.

Beyond the gate, the rest of the world falls away. Wind whistles through mountain passes and blows dry earth miles from its origin, permeating every crack and crevice of buildings and rendering traffic silent and invisible. Rattlesnakes native to the land can grow more than four feet long. Hawks make circular passes in the sky


MC3 Paul Cover

and retired SEALs who work the range appear and then vanish, navigating pickup trucks into and out of hidden valleys that reveal buildings with terraces and courtyards and uneven staircases.

This is Francis' domain.

THE EVOLUTION of a military shooting range is, in theory, a model of efficiency.

The men who help run NSW's ranges adhere to what might be referred to as the three P's: proximity, primacy and privacy. Those tenets inform almost any decision NSW makes regarding live-fire training and that's how La Posta continues to be developed as well.

"WE DESIGN OUR RANGES BASED ON TRAINING REQUIREMENTS."

-Paul Farr, NSW range operations manager

The proximity of a range to an operator's command allows him to train frequently without requiring him to leave family and friends any more than necessary. Primacy refers to NSW's access to the range - if too many personnel from outside the community have access to it, scheduling conflicts can cut down on training time. Privacy, of course, is the ability to train in secret, which cuts to the core of what it means to work in special operations.

Beyond the three P's, a range is created organically, borne of legitimate needs identified by operators and trainers. A trainer who notes that training could be bolstered with enhanced facilities would submit his recommendation for an improvement through a chain of command leading to Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, where it would be reviewed and evaluated. In some cases, improvements to existing structures provide the most cost and time-effective means of meeting training requirements. In others - as was the case at La Posta - new ranges must be built. The value of either option is determined by evaluating both price and functionality, but in every instance, the mission is the priority.

"We design our ranges," says Paul Farr, NSW's range operations manager, "based on training requirements."

Really, the start of the process is that straightforward. If a new facility is required, money is requested through the U.S. Special Operations Command and ultimately considered by Congress. If it passes, a new military construction project, or MILCON, can begin. La Posta's new facilities will consist of two separate MILCONs, such is the complexity of the undertaking.

From there, a facilities code handbook guides many of the decisions being made. The handbook lays out requirements for the construction of virtually any new structure in extraordinary detail. If a building will include offices, ergonomic guidelines determine the size of the cubicles that will be built.

"It makes it very easy," Farr says of the book.

What comes next is more complicated. Each range must be safe, which sounds at once simple and obvious. Though range safety officers (RSOs) supervise each range exercise, they cannot protect against every dangerous situation. So every range must be built to handle a negligent discharge in which a shooter pulls the trigger when his weapon is aimed above an outdoor range's intended limit. Even a round from an M9 pistol can travel nearly 2,000m, which means all of that land must be protected and kept clear of people. If aircraft frequently fly overhead, someone must work to monitor flight paths and ensure no rounds are fired that could hit a plane or helicopter. Further, the definition of a range is broader than the popular conception of an open area with stationary targets at which to aim - for operators, dynamic targets and rooms with doors and angles mimic what they might see in a hostile environment and therefore can't be ignored in training. On indoor ranges, and especially in kill houses, in which multiple shooters might be operating, walls must be of a precise thickness and designed to eliminate hazardous bullet fragmentation and ricochet.


MC3 Paul Coover

And those are just the fundamentals. For every contingency there is a contingency, and men like Francis must carefully monitor each step of a construction project.

At one point during Francis' walk-through on this day, he notices something amiss. On a wall across one range, he sees a thick piece of rubber that seems out of place. This is significant, because when a bullet passes through the material, the rubber expands and then shrinks back almost to its original dimensions so any shrapnel is caught between the steel wall and the rubber guard; the result is that bullet holes end up looking like pin pricks. It's a critical safety mechanism for operators, and one that must be regularly evaluated. On this day, no maintenance is scheduled, but that doesn't mean Francis can ignore something that looks wrong.

He walks over and inspects the questionable piece, pushes and pulls it to test its functionality, and only after finding it satisfactory does he move on. Later, on the drive home, he remembers the incident as an example of how pieces fit together on a range, both literally and figuratively.

"Realistically," he asks, "is that RSO going to lift that piece of rubber and check that it's good to go? No, he's not, and he shouldn't be involved in that. That's our job."

ON BARRY FRANCIS' DESK is a small, framed picture of a butterfly. Beneath the image are the words, "Know your enemy."

Know this: Barry Francis does not hate butterflies. But


MC3 Paul Coover

the picture is a not-so-subtle reminder that building a range can be sensitive business, and even butterflies must be considered in the process. If fulfilling training requirements toward mission success is the ultimate goal of a range, butterflies can, in fact, present something of an issue. Not a problem, per se - an issue. The military, contrary to what many might believe, is quickly becoming one of the biggest and best protectors of natural resources in the country.

Just this year, several major media outlets ran stories about this exact phenomenon. National Public Radio ran a story titled, "Military quietly becoming a major environmental steward." A Los Angeles Times article, "On Navy's San Clemente Island, endangered species stage a comeback," looked at a range off the coast of Southern California. The Washington Post picked up an Associated Press story and ran it under the headline, "Home on bombing range: Some endangered species thrive on military training ranges." All three stories focused on the military's unique ability to preserve natural habitats for both plants and animals. Remember all that open space required of an outdoor range to ensure no one gets hit by a stray bullet? That regulation serves a second purpose: in keeping it free of development, it becomes one of the best existing guarantors of long-term stability for threatened species. Coupled with an increased awareness about specific environmental concerns (certain Marines at Camp Pendleton, for example, undergo training to help care for endangered tortoises there) surface danger zones, as the undeveloped areas are termed, remain flourishing, diverse landscapes.

La Posta is no exception. Here, wildfire is a primary concern. While naturally-occurring fire is an integral part of the ecosystem, man-made fire -- say, the kind that could be caused by a carelessly tossed cigarette or from a lack of understanding about the heat produced in weapons training -- could be disastrous. La Posta has held up its end of the environmental deal, working to both preserve delicate habitats and avoiding any major fires.

"If the next fire that burns down the county runs through here, that would be bad," Francis says, alluding to major San Diego wildfires in 2003 and 2007. "But not as bad as if the point of origin is here."

DESPITE THE CHALLENGES of firing live ammunition during training, it is an irreplaceable part of an operator's development.

Randy Jackson, the Naval Special Warfare range programs manager, says nothing can replace shooting live ammunition for developing combat readiness.

"If you're using live rounds it changes the whole mindset of the training environment," he said. "Realistic live-fire training is invaluable for combat readiness."

The goal, he said, is for operators to get training as close to what they'll see in theater as possible.

"When you're in a combat environment," he said, "it's so second-nature that your instincts just kick in."

That's the goal for every mission. It's a lofty ambition, and not always possible on rapidly-changing battlefields. But the men who operate within a maze of safety regulations, environmental concerns, and budgetary constraints do their jobs so that when an NSW operator looks down the barrel of an M-4, he's thinking only about his target, and not about any of the myriad obstacles that might have otherwise prevented him from accomplishing his objective.

What begins with a recommendation for new training facilities from NSW operators becomes an evaluation of the training requirements themselves, which morphs into an examination of resources required, which turns into a request for improvements, which prompts an analysis of existing and forthcoming budgets, which spurs environmental research and land and facility requirements, which finally gives way to actual construction.

It's exhausting.

It's necessary.

The two MILCONs at La Posta are nearing completion. On the day Francis walks through, a young man named Joe Noriega is tightening bolts on a wall that will someday be able to absorb rounds from an M-4 without releasing so much as a single dangerous fragment of stray metal. Noriega is a civilian just like the laborers on any number of other jobs in San Diego county -- the difference is that he's building a structure that will have a lasting impact on the way his country wages war for years to come.

"It feels good," he says.

BEHIND THE FUTURE, there are plans. Behind those plans, there are people.

We like to believe that the future is, as the saying goes, unwritten -- that men and women cannot shape it from where they now sit. And perhaps they cannot. But the story of a shooting range is really a story about what it means for a small team to work and turn the unpredictable into the predictable -- to control, to whatever degree is humanly possible, situations others previously dismissed as fate or chance.

At the heart of the story is the question of what it means to conduct special warfare around the world. It's a story about what is gained when a man with a gun is as prepared as he can possibly be to protect and defend the United States.

The future may be unwritten, yes, but in Naval Special Warfare offices around the country, men and women are working quietly to sketch its direction.

MC3 Paul Coover

The Undercover Agent

The small motor softly whirs as the device smoothly travels across the concrete. The small antenna waves back and forth as it hits tiny rocks, but the device's course stays true, due to its powerful, gripping wheels. Its operator swiftly steers the device with a remote controller, or Operator Control Unit II (OCU II), tracking its moves on a small screen that is the device's eyes. As the device paces the room, searching for threats, its controller, a Navy SEAL, assesses any possible threats seen by the video camera or heard by the small microphone on the top of the device.

This device is commonly known as a Throwbot, developed by Recon Robotics and largely tested by the U.S. Army in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Named for its main purpose – it's designed to be thrown – this lightweight robot has the capability to enter a foreign space containing unknown threats and mitigate the risk for operators worldwide.

"The operator sees exactly what the robot is seeing," said Maj. Andrew Christian, the U.S. Marine Corps Special Forces Command (MARSOC) liaison to Naval Special Warfare (NSW). "They see it on a digital display and can control the robot with a joystick, kind of like a video game."

Due to the unique risks associated with the terrain and infrastructures of modern combat environments, the military was in need of a device to combat the threats of entering enemy territory. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) hidden in small spaces or on the higher floors of decrepit buildings couldn't be easily spotted, and increased operator's risk of being wounded or killed.

"There was a special need for this robot," said Christian. "The men in Afghanistan wouldn't carry a 25-pound robot; they needed something lightweight."

The Throwbot weighs a mere 1.2 lbs. and is able to be thrown up to 120 feet in the air. Its compact build gives operators the ability to carry it almost anywhere and can start patrolling in under five seconds with the pull of a pin and a toss into an unknown space.

Another feature of the Throwbot is its audio capability – it operates at just 22 decibels and at a distance of 20 ft., which means an operator can hear what the robot is picking up simply by wearing headphones plugged into the OCU II.

In addition, the robot can swivel to point straight up to the ceiling to reduce overhead threats to operators. Its camera has a wide angle view, giving operators a full picture of the space to be infiltrated. This is extremely important when entering a space, as threats can be placed in the corners of rooms.

"You can look directly up or down," said Ernest Langdon, Recon Robotics, director of military programs. "You can also flip it over and drive it upside down if you need to. Ideally, you want to drive it straight, so the antennas point straight up, but it does have that capability."

The Throwbot has an infrared optical system, or night vision setting. In the cover of darkness, certain visuals can be lost, causing a mission to fail. If not for the Throwbot, operators may not realize the threats hiding in the darkness. This system is automatically adjusted whenever the ambient light is too low. In addition, the robot is water-resistant for up to five minutes at a depth of one foot.

"The screen [OCU II] is black and white in the night time," said Langdon. "The reason this is, is that the night time use is with infrared. Once it's dark, you turn on the illuminator and the controller can only see in black and white, to get a clearer picture."

As if this wasn't already a powerful tool in an operator's arsenal, the Throwbot may be specified as a certain transmitting frequency, which allows operators to deploy up to three robots at once. This way, more ground is covered in a shorter span of time, giving threats less time to react and a better chance for the operators.

"The best deployment concept is to have multiple robots," said Christian. "If you needed to clear a room and you thought there was a suspected shooter in the room, obviously you could send a dog forward, but the robot gives you capabilities in lieu of a dog. It's just another tool."

This tool has many capabilities that operators can use to combat or deter threats of an unknown space. Explosives, enemies, weapons or any other harmful element in a hostile environment are detected by this soundless, can-shaped robot.

"Its scope and application is really to be a first responder," said Christian. "It's your eyes and ears."

When the Throwbot is no longer needed it comes to a halt and remains motionless, waiting for its controller to collect it. The SEALs secure the building and lock down the threats the Throwbot encountered. In one swift motion, an operator scoops up the small robot and quickly stuffs it into a backpack. This is where the Throwbot will stay until its front-line action is needed once more.

In the 21st century, robots are making strides in protecting military personnel from harm. It is these robots that detect the threats so operators can react appropriately. It is this robot that can save lives.

If Operators believe the Throwbot fills a current capability gap, NSWC encourages them to submit operational deficiency reports through their chain of command to compete for resourcing, either at the team, group, or headquarter level. Please see you command Combat System's Officer for more details.

MC2 Megan Anuci

> "Its scope and application is really to be a first responder. It's your eyes and ears."
>
> -Maj. Andrew Christian, MARSOC liaison to NSW


MC2 Megan Anuci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Click here to learn more about Throwbots

Mental Health Awareness

Naval Special Warfare Command hosts a workshop series on brain health to offer tools and resources for dealing with issues that can affect our community.

On Aug. 21, Naval Special Warfare Command Family Support (NSWFS) hosted the third and final event in a workshop series on brain health. The event, "Making a Good Brain Great," focused on how sleep deprivation, nutrition and stress, among other factors, affect brain function and performance.

Participants said they have been impressed with the workshops, which offer service members tools and resources for dealing with issues that can affect the Naval Special Warfare (NSW) community.

The first event in the series, a brain injury seminar, featured a discussion with Dr. James Kelly, the director of the National Intrepid Center of Excellence, which is dedicated to providing cutting edge treatment for those service members and their families who are dealing with the complexity of both a mild brain injury, as well as psychological health issues.

NSWFS hosted the second event in the series, July 18.

That workshop, "Understanding Anger and Other Strong Emotions," featured two separate seminars from Dr. Ronald Potter-Efron, who has authored several books on coping with anger and rage.

Jane Worthington, the family support regional manager for the west region, said the workshops cover topics that NSW service members and families, as well as care-providers embedded in the community, have identified as issues or stressors.

"The overall intent of the NSW Resiliency Program," Worthington wrote about the relatively new initiative, "is to provide mechanisms for individual service and family members, as well as the overall command and community, to strengthen and build resilience in order to maintain and enhance healthy lifestyles, quality relationships and job performance despite experiencing crisis or trauma, daunting external conditions, threats and prolonged high op-tempo. The focus is not on treatment, but on positive skill building, support and prevention."

In Potter-Efron's workshop on understanding anger, an afternoon session open to active-duty service members focused on anger mistakes and strategies for avoiding them; an evening session, which included service members as well as their families, dealt with phases of an anger episode and how to manage strong emotions.

Dr. Chuck Stecker, a former service member who now works to help families connect across generational lines, facilitated both events.

Stecker said he was proud of the courage it took to address anger issues that many say can become a problem for those in the military community.

"This was not an easy event to sign up for," he told service members at the start of the afternoon session. Stecker said he has struggled with anger issues since leaving the Army.

"I wish I would have had this training for my wife and I, for my soldiers and for my Rangers 40 years ago," he said. "It's that important."

Potter-Efron identified twelve common anger mistakes that individuals often make. But he was careful to stress that he didn't simply want to focus on problems.

"The flip side," he said before introducing the issues, "is 12 ways to correct those mistakes."

Potter-Efron said most individuals express anger in one or more of these ways, including sudden anger; shame-based anger; using anger to control situations; relying on anger for excitement; avoiding anger altogether; passive-aggressive behavior; self-attacking behavior; habitual hostility; developing anger based on mistrust; righteous anger; lingering resentment; and rage.

"It turns out," Potter-Efron said, "that it is incredibly easy to get angry."

Yet he also identified ways to cope with the emotion, such as identifying it early on in the process of becoming upset and taking a break from stressful situations when possible.

A special warfare operator 1st class who attended the morning session said he saw the workshop as a way to become stronger in an area some might neglect. Being able to control emotions, he said, could be critical both in operators' personal lives and also on the job.

"You have to earn it every day," he said of choosing to attend the optional, lunchtime session. "You have to earn your Trident."

Worthington expressed a similar sentiment, saying the goal of the series is in line with CNSWC goals on the whole.

"We're trying to enhance resilience in the Force as well as the Family," she said.

MC3 Paul Coover

MC3 Geneva G. Brier

NSWFS also sponsored a "Making a Good Brain Great" seminar aimed at giving service members and their families tools to optimize brain power, Aug. 21.

Dr. Daniel G. Amen, a physician, double-board-certified psychiatrist, teacher and eight-time New York Times bestselling author was the speaker for the seminar. He is widely regarded as one of the world's experts on applying brain imaging science to everyday clinical practice.

The event was held to raise awareness about injuries to brains from stress, lack of sleep and improper nutrition. The seminar also sought to offer specific strategies for improving brain health in order to improve performance and to enhance health and wellness.

There were two sessions held: one during the day for service members, and one in the evening for service members to attend with their spouses and families. Ninety-seven service members and families registered for the two classes.

"I suffered from a brain injury during a deployment several years back and I came today hoping I am able to learn ways to improve the damage," said Chief Warrant Officer David Turner, assigned to Advanced Training Command Coronado.

During the seminar, Dr. Amen spoke about how individuals use physical activity to keep their bodies in shape but often ignore their brain's health.

"If you damage your decision-making organ," said Amen, "nothing is as good as it can be."

The seminar is mirrored off Dr. Amen's book of the same title, and is based on years of cutting-edge neuroscience research and the experiences of thousands of people.

"I was interested in attending because the flyer mentioned Dr. Amen would show us how we unknowingly endanger and injure our brains," said Chief Yeoman Christy Garcia, Naval Special Warfare Command. "I learned specific strategies for improving brain health in order to improve performance and to enhance health and wellness throughout my life span."

MC3 Geneva G. Brier

12 Common Anger Mistakes

1. Sudden Anger
2. Shame-Based Anger
3. Using Anger to Control Situations
4. Relying on Anger for Excitment
5. Avoiding Anger Altogether
6. Passive-Agressive Behavior
7. Self-Attacking Behavior
8. Habitual Hostility
9. Developing Anger Based on Mistrust
10. Righteous Anger
11. Lingering Resentment
12. Rage

12 Ways to Optimize Your Brain for a Better Life

1. Love Your Brain
2. Increase the Brain's Reserve
3. Protect Your Brain
4. Stop Poisoning Your Brain
5. Protect Your Memory
6. Good Sleep is Essential
7. Learn Brain Healthy Ways to Deal With Pain
8. A Brain Healthy Diet
9. Physical Exercise
10. Mental Exercise
11. Notice What You Love About Your Life, a Lot More Than What You Don't
12. Notice What You Love About Other People, a Lot More Than What You Dont

CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT UNIT

It's no secret that locals are often the best resource for good shopping, restaurants and entertainment when traveling in a foreign city. Every city and country has its own niches, slang and culture, and tapping into local knowledge can pay dividends in the way one navigates and understands a local environment. That same concept can be seen in the enablers assigned to Naval Special Warfare's (NSW) Cultural Engagement Unit (CEU).

The CEU, a component of NSW Group 10, trains former foreign nationals, both male and female, to become enablers fit to assist NSW operators with language, regional and cultural barriers the operators may face overseas. Originally established as a troop under NSW Support Activity 1 in 2010, the unit was designed around Language and Regional Experts (LREs); in practice, a Sailor native to a special operations forces (SOF) area of operation that speaks the local language and can assist deployed operators with cultural knowledge the operators themselves might lack. The LRE concept was developed utilizing a larger Department of Defense program called Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI). This DoD program allows foreign nationals living in the United States legally as students, workers or refugees the opportunity to expedite their naturalization by serving in the military.

In 2009, Lt. Jason Booher and former SEAL Dan Gearheart were tasked with tailoring the MAVNI program to create a new cultural combat support enabler for NSW. Booher, the CEU officer in charge (OIC), explained that NSW built on the MAVNI program to recruit culturally-attuned Sailors and then fit them to the needs of the NSW Mission.

"So we expanded past MAVNI," said Booher. "[NSW] realized there are already a lot of native-born individuals – folks born overseas that immigrated here themselves – serving in the Navy. So we built a process that would capitalize on that expertise and provide NSW with someone that can deploy next to SOF, advise leadership, and really educate operators on the second, third order of effects of our missions in certain regions."

In mid-2011, NSW recognized that village stability operations (VSO) in Afghanistan had a need for women to work alongside SEALs. Cultural Support Teams were established with women trained to support SEALs during VSO missions. While women deployed with NSW have assisted teams before, the female enablers developed by the CEU were trained to not only assist in Afghanistan, but to set the standard for a long-term female combat support enabler capable of supporting NSW across its multiple mission areas. To this end the CEU created a broader training program to produce what NSW now calls Female Support Technicians (FSTs).

"So that mission was also tasked to us - as a secondary mission here at the CEU - because it really tied in neatly with the program that was already developed," said Booher. "It was an easy fit."

NSW FSTs are currently NSW's answer to U.S. Special Operations Command's requirement for a female support to SOF program. These two parts, the LRE and the FST, work and train side by side and sometimes produce a dual-qualified enabler to deploy with operators. This means a Sailor who makes it through the training could be both an LRE and an FST.

The screening and training processes for LRE and FST candidates is selective, difficult and unique to the NSW community. Currently, the recruitment for both divisions of the unit is done mainly by word of mouth. Hearing about the program is what interested Builder 2rd Class Gilbert Nalelia and led to his eventual application. Born in Kenya, Nalelia found out about this program in 2009 through former SEAL and friend Paul Zimmerman while attending Gonzaga University's business school in Spokane, Wash. Nalelia, fluent in three languages, including Swahili, has since earned his citizenship and deployed where he was able to use his cultural and language skills in direct support of NSW operators.

"I went for a six-month deployment but I wish I was there longer," said Nalelia. "It was fulfilling after a long training schedule."

Word of mouth also helped the officer in charge of a deployed CST find the CEU. In her case, she heard about the CEU from a former NSW employee at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif.

"She had previously worked with NSW and heard about this program and put me in touch with the folks here at the Cultural Engagement Unit, and I came down and screened for the program and got selected," said the lieutenant.

A former surface warfare officer, she was attracted to the challenge of something different.

"It just seemed like a great opportunity to branch out; a very different kind of leadership which was something that I wasn't used to; just venturing a little bit outside the box," the lieutenant said. "It's the chance to learn and grow and do something different. This is small unit leadership and it is just completely different, especially leading a team of all women. It's like night and day when compared to the surface Navy. [The CEU has] a lot of strong personalities, and it's been a great challenge and I think it's made me more well-rounded as a leader."

Training for the Mission

Having an enabler turn into a hindrance rather than an asset is a risk operators take every time anyone accompanies them on a mission. The standards for operators are set high, and enablers built at the CEU are treated no differently.

"We're not building SEALs here and we are not building shooters. And, frankly we don't need them to be shooters," said Booher. "What we need are cultural enablers that understand NSW and that can function in the field."

Booher approaches the training of the enablers at the CEU with a philosophy used by the Norwegian Olympic biathlon team: find the best skiers in the country (the more difficult skill of the two events), then teach them to shoot. Booher applies that same concept to the selection and training of LREs and FSTs: find Sailors who already have the required critical skill set (language and deep cultural expertise) then train them to be NSW enablers.

The staff employs some of the same drills and exercises used to train operators during Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training with members of the CEU. According to Booher, CEU members have to be able to understand what operators experience on a mission. CEU candidates must undergo three stages of a training program lasting more than six months. During the first stage, or assessment phase, candidates endure two weeks of physically strenuous team-building training.

"What we're doing here that's different, is making the support person earn his or her spot on the NSW CEU team, which is different from the other NSW groups and support activities," said Booher. "They will experience slivers of what SEALs experience during BUD/S. They will be getting wet, doing pushups, remediation and team building. The intent is not to make anyone quit - the intent is team building.."

The second stage focuses on soldiering skills, known as "green skills." This is the longest portion of training, because unlike the Army or Marine Corps, the Navy does not teach these skills in boot camp. The members attend the basic soldiering course and a direct support course, learn rope and rappelling skills, attend fast rope training, and spend a few weeks doing land navigation and field work. In addition, another three weeks is devoted to weapons training and range time, all instructed and supervised by operators.

"During this portion of the training, they receive field skills that will enable them to go out and work with Navy SEALs," said Booher.

The final stage is academic. Among other things in this stage, the candidates are taught about SOF and its history.

"Once we've done that," said Booher, "we focus on NSW."

"The need for the micro-regional expertise provided by CEU LREs has been clearly articulated by the Department of Defense, U.S. Special Operations Command and Naval Special Warfare Command."

- Lt. Cmdr. Joseph Bingham
CEU program director, NSWG-10

The instructors then start teaching the candidates their jobs and what will be expected of them as an LRE or FST. Until this point, the two groups train together. Booher explains that the academics are ultimately broken up between LREs and FSTs because of NSW's different needs.

"We provide LREs the interpretation/translation techniques, the core of how to do it correctly, and conflict resolution," said Booher.

LREs and FSTs are also taught to be instructors to better teach other SOF members how to utilize their unique skills correctly and to their advantage. Where the FST training differs is in its mission. Currently, most FSTs train to deploy as CSTs in support of VSOs in Afghanistan.

"We are bringing in folks from the Defense Intelligence Agency who teach at the current village stability operations academic weeks that all other SOF components attend," said Booher. "We bring the same people here, they teach onsite; cross culture communications, Afghanistan and Pakistan culture and governance and all those courses taught at the current academic week, we do here onsite."

While the training pipeline may seem simple enough, fitting in with the SEAL team is the most important part of the process. Throughout the training, the staff of operators at the CEU continues to emphasize that successful integration with the teams is largely the responsibility of the member.

Future of the Unit

The Cultural Engagement Unit training pipeline is still evolving, but upholds the reputation and expectations of the NSW community: it is highly selective, features difficult physical training and maintains high standards. The process of training the enabler to support the operator is constantly refined by lessons learned on the battlefield.

"One of the most salient lessons learned from counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan was that SOF operators lacked the micro-regional expertise and access to the population required to most effectively conduct those operations," said Lt. Cmdr. Joseph Bingham, the Cultural Engagement Unit program director at NSW Group 10. "The CEU will provide this capability to NSW in advance of future conflicts, in compliance with the fundamental SOF truths that, SOF operations require SOF support and you can't build capability after a crisis occurs."

Lt. Booher expects that future CEU recruitment will be even more tailored to the needs of NSW.

"In the future what we want to do is have the NSW community provide us their prioritized requirement list," said Booher. "Then we want to go out there and target those exact requirements and fill each seat to the best of our ability, with the language and gender that's needed."

The personnel that have been trained by the CEU have already been vital assets in the field and their unique skill set is in high demand.

"The need for the micro-regional expertise provided by CEU LREs has been clearly articulated by the Department of Defense, U.S. Special Operations Command and Naval Special Warfare Command," said Bingham. "Additionally, we've received intensely positive feedback from tactical level operators with regard to the capability we are producing."

With this increased demand, members of the CEU can count on the need to continue to produce the caliber of enablers that they do - one who can continue to stand with a SEAL team and provide them with the intelligence and specialties to complete their missions.

MC1 Dominique Canales

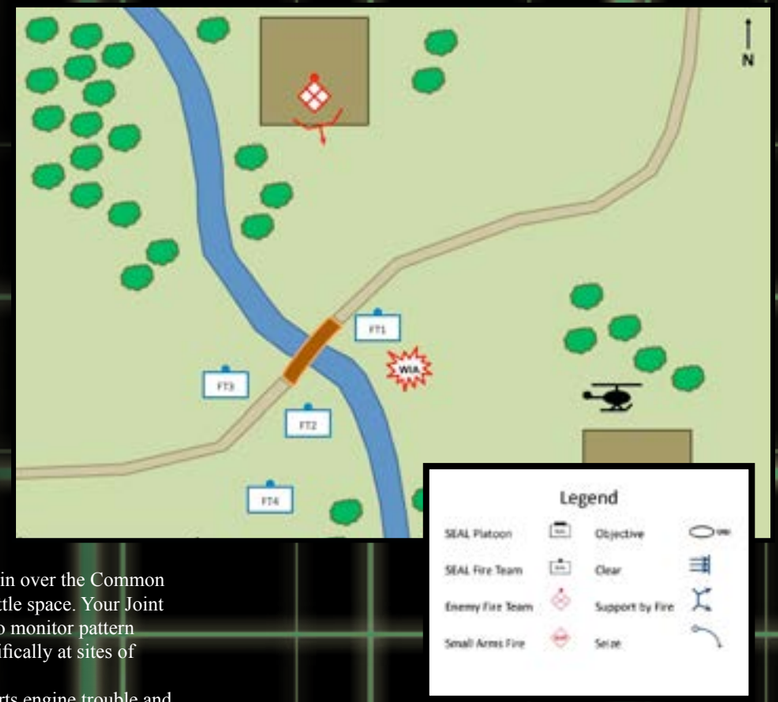
CRITICAL THINKING

tactical decision

The following is a Tactical Decision Exercise – a role-playing drill in which you will be asked to make a combat decision in a limited amount of time. The goal is to improve your tactical decision making, pattern recognition and communication skills. There is no right answer.

OVERVIEW

In each issue of Ethos, the reader's position in the patrol will change. However, the specified title does not exclude others from completing the exercise – every leader in the patrol should be familiar with all levels of command. Additionally, the scenarios are intentionally vague so make any assumptions that are essential to complete the exercise. Read the situation as many times as needed before moving on to the requirement.



SITUATION

You are a SEAL platoon commander conducting Village Stability Operations in a remote region of eastern Afghanistan. You have been working in your Operations Box for four months and assess the area one kilometer around your Village Stability Platform (VSP) to be semi-permissive.

While conducting a routine early morning patrol through your village, two OH-58s check-in over the Common Air-Ground Net while transiting through the battle space. Your Joint Terminal Attack Controller directs the aircraft to monitor pattern of life in the neighboring villages, looking specifically at sites of previous rocket attacks on your VSP.

Twenty minutes later, one of the aircraft reports engine trouble and states that he will need to make an emergency landing. A short time later, the remaining OH-58 relays that the pilots made a safe landing and are in a qalat two kilometers east of your patrol. As the remaining helicopter provides overwatch, you re-task your platoon to secure the down pilots until recovery assets arrive. You are located in Fire Team 3.

As your platoon crosses a small bridge on the final approach to the pilots, small arms fire erupts from a qalat 100 meters to the north. Fire Team 1 immediately returns fire and the fire team leader hails you on the radio stating that one of his SEALs has a gunshot wound to the left thigh.

REQUIREMENT

In two minutes, write down the decisions you must make at the Ground Force Commander and prioritize their order of execution. Provide the rationale for your plan of action.

This Tactical Decision Game does not intentionally represent any previous, current, or planned United States military operations.

make your choice

Have an idea for the next TDE? Send your input to tde@navsoc.socom.mil.

On Becoming a *(good)* SEAL

To avoid the awkward "SEAL or SWCC" construction, and because my background is primarily in the SEAL world, l address SEALs in this essay. But nearly all of what I write applies to SWCC, (or Special Operation Forces from other branches, or Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians, or other professions.)

What does it mean to become a SEAL?

Technically speaking, one becomes a SEAL by graduating from Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) and SEAL Qualification Training (SQT) and being awarded a SEAL Trident. In the eyes of the public, if you wear the Trident, you are a Navy SEAL, and are deserving of full association with all that has become part of the SEAL tradition, including its reputation and legacy. But newly-pinned SEALs soon learn that the thrill of that achievement can be short-lived. The only easy day was yesterday.

On reporting to a Team, the newly-pinned SEAL learns that graduating from BUD/S and SQT hardly makes him a complete SEAL; he still has to prove himself to his teammates and earn their respect to become a SEAL in their eyes. He quickly learns that the respect and admiration of one's teammates is much harder to earn than the respect and admiration of the public.

I tell young men who want to be SEALs that they should set their bar higher. They should aspire not to merely become SEALs, but to become good, or outstanding SEALs. Graduating from BUD/S-SQT is a necessary but interim step.

So what is the difference between earning a Trident and becoming a good SEAL?

Certainly experience helps – a few deployments, perhaps some time in combat, maybe a promotion or two. But these are simply credentials and don't justify the qualifier good in good SEAL. While the SEAL Ethos may define the ideal SEAL, within the Teams a man's reputation is usually defined by two primary criteria: being a good operator and being a good teammate. Indeed, those serve as a solid foundation for becoming a good SEAL. A SEAL who can't shoot straight, is shaky or unreliable entering a house, one who consistently misses his drop zone or who is a danger to himself and his swim buddy underwater is at no risk of being called a good SEAL. Nor is the SEAL who always puts his own comfort and wellbeing over the needs of his teammates and Team.

But over the long run, being a good operator and teammate is still not enough. We've all known good operators and good teammates who have failed in important roles outside of the platoon or Team, either in other military contexts, or in their personal lives as citizens and members of our community. In so doing, they have failed their teammates and occasionally even brought discredit upon themselves and the Teams.

With time, experience, and increasing seniority, being a good SEAL requires a different and evolving set of skills to succeed in different contexts, whether that means running a Team or task group or serving on a joint task force. Being a good SEAL gets even more complicated on a theater commander's staff, or in the Pentagon, or in an embassy, fulfilling a wide variety of unfamiliar and often thankless tasks. Excelling as a leader at any level requires perspective, judgment and decision-making that are not always inherent to being a good operator and good teammate. In these environments, a SEAL is assumed to be physically tough and tactically proficient, but patience, adaptability, perspective, and a certain amount of bureaucratic acumen are required to successfully support teammates, Team and missions. Becoming a good SEAL in these contexts can make the challenges of BUD/S seem simple in comparison. (Not easy, but simple.)

With the recent spotlight on SEALs as all-American heroes, the public has come to expect SEALs to be great at all they do – as operators, of course, but also as husbands, fathers, citizens, icons of American courage and virtue. Sometimes, the role of American hero can be even harder to fill than being a good operator and teammate.

My point: It is a lot harder to become a good SEAL than to merely become a SEAL, and being a good SEAL requires advanced skills and mindsets in different settings and contexts, and at different points in one's career. When a good SEAL either chooses or is forced to leave the role of tactical operator, he earns his Trident every day by stepping up to serve his teammates and mission in new ways, by doing whatever the context and mission require, as well as he possibly can. Fulfilling the imperative, "I will not fail" in these new environments can demand more – often much more – than being a good operator and good teammate. One becomes a SEAL in 12- 14 months; becoming a good SEAL is the commitment of a lifetime, and extends well beyond one's time in the Teams and the Navy. The only easy day was yesterday.

Bob Schoultz retired after spending 30 years as an NSW officer. Schoultz can be reached at schoultz@sandiego.edu

Team Leadership: An Open Letter to Prospective SEAL Senior Enlisted Advisors

(Part 2 of a 3 Part Series)

In the last issue of Ethos, I discussed the commander's expectations of leadership from senior enlisted advisors. Leadership is first and foremost among the qualities that a senior enlisted advisor must bring to the position, but along with leadership, intellect is imperative. The dynamic, complex and ambiguous circumstances in which special operations forces (SOF) often find themselves require us all to be critical thinkers and problem solvers.

In December 2012, the Joint Staff completed lessons-learned research titled Decade of War, Volume I. The study noted that a primary shortfall in our military's 10 years at war was the failure to understand the operational environment. That lack of understanding occurred at all levels in the chain of command.

Senior enlisted advisors no longer have the luxury of focusing only internally. At Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, my planning guidance included the following statement about operating in an increasingly globalized world: "Plan knowing that everything, everywhere, matters all the time." Or, as commander, U.S. Special Operation Command, Adm. William McRaven recently stated, "There is no such thing as a local problem." As commander, I will be looking up and out. While I will look to you to monitor and shape our readiness as a command, I will also expect to bounce ideas off of you, get your assessment about what an ambassador said or ask for your take on our alignment with our higher commander's mission two echelons above us. I expect you to be my trusted and sage counsel. I don't expect you to be right all the time, but I expect you to be right so often that I will always listen. In discussions I will glance over to see your reaction and take verbal and non-verbal cues from your assessments of people, situations, challenges and opportunities. In the end, I will need your foresight in anticipating problems and visualizing second and third order effects from the actions or inaction of our force.

I expect you to be technically good at your craft and possess the expertise to employ our operational capabilities in effective and efficient ways to complete mission. I will look to you for tactical expertise and operational advice. Not all-knowing, but always learning. It is critical that senior enlisted advisors think critically, question assumptions and explore the analysis and logic of proposed solutions. SOF senior enlisted advisors must be contextual thinkers with intuitions tuned to see patterns, trends and relationships between seemingly disparate information. I expect you to see opportunities I would not see and ready me to meet challenges for which I am not prepared. Lead by example as a problem solver and cultivate in our subordinate enlisted leaders and junior officers new, unconventional ways of looking at problems while not overlooking the simple solution.

When I am over-thinking a problem, I expect you to show me the simple and clever choice. In Iraq, I commanded a task force of SEALs, Special Forces, intelligence analysts and supporting elements tasked with destroying a specific terrorist/insurgent network. It was imperative that we not only kept unrelenting pressure on the network but be as efficient with our resources and capabilities as possible. It was a sophisticated blend of intellectual analysis, intuitive decision-making and courageous physical combat. We pored over our analysis together every afternoon in preparation for action during the following 24 to 48 hours. Our course of action development required a combination of intellect, experience and fresh thinking, and it was the senior enlisted leaders who most consistently punched through our occasional intellectual 'vapor locks.'

As a Task Force, we had worked a section of Baghdad for several weeks in order to erode the viability of the adversary network. The enemy continually adjusted to the methods of insertion we used to maintain surprise and was closing the gap between our actions and their ability to anticipate them. We had to utilize an increasing variety of insertion techniques and force combinations to be successful. Each day was increasingly frustrating as our approaches became less and less unique, straining our limits for potential collateral damage and risk to force. Our options pointed toward increasingly complex and unsupportable combinations of mobility and supporting forces to penetrate the adversary's area. Finally, one afternoon we felt we had exhausted all possibilities, and it was a senior enlisted leader who provided the simple solution – the assault force would drop off outside the city and walk into the urban target. In execution, the approach successfully frustrated enemy preparations and counter-actions that night. More importantly, it unhinged the adversary's confidence for anticipating our actions. It was the simple wisdom of Alexander resolving the Gordian knot. I once heard genius defined as the ability to recognize the obvious before anyone else does. The senior enlisted advisors and senior enlisted leaders I've had the pleasure of serving with had this genius in abundance.

Capt. R. V. Gusentine

Photo of ITC(IDW/SW) Carlos Rodriguez
SEAL Team 3

CONGRATULATIONS CHIEFS!