

Ethos

ISSUE 24
NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE



INTEROPERABILITY

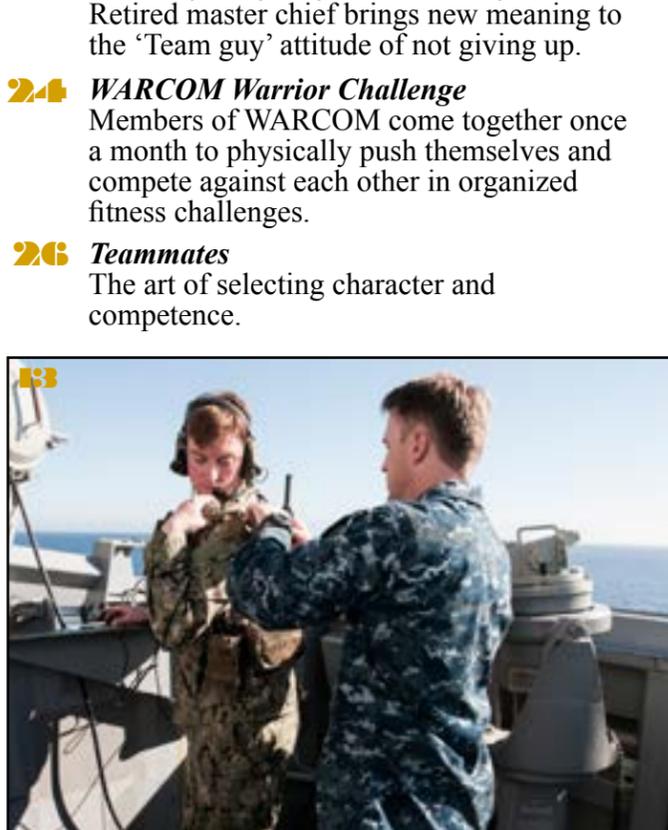
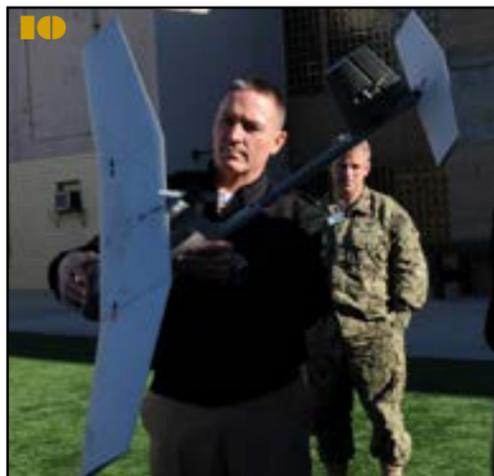
ON THE HIGH SEAS: FOR ACCESS, PLACEMENT AND PRESENCE



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A SWCC drives a rigid hull inflatable boat from USS Howard (DDG 83) as part of a mission integrating NSW with the Navy fleet. Photo by MC3 Paul Coover.



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SWCC: Evolution, Modernization and Integration

Command Master Chief Jimmy Ferens | NSWG-4



we are today, Naval Special Warfare Group 4.

The modernization of our surface maritime mobility systems also continues to evolve. This year we will begin to receive and integrate the combat craft assault into our coastal teams, starting on the West Coast. These crafts are critical to bridge capabilities until the combatant craft medium program is complete. We are about three years into the five-year year process of procuring the CCM, and testing is complete. However, we are still about 15 months away from seeing this addition to the modernization plan, and current fiscal concerns provoke the continuous questioning of assumptions with these programs.

Surface maritime mobility has been a part of Naval Special Warfare since the commissioning of Boat Support Unit 1 on Feb. 1, 1964. This initial union had SWCCs and SEALs working together to achieve our nation's goals during the Vietnam War. Evolution within the maritime component of NSW brought both reorganization and structure as we moved to Coastal River Squadrons in 1971, to Special Boat Squadrons in 1978 to what

These new platforms, however, are nothing without people and training, and over the past 20 years, SWCC training has evolved as well. SWCCs and SEALs are now complementing each other in the NSW preparation course at Great Lakes. And the latest change further integrates SWCC candidates (prior to basic crewman training) and SEAL candidates (prior to the commencement of BUD/S) with the initial three weeks of training in Coronado, now known as Basic Orientation.

The SWCC pipeline itself will undergo some cosmetic changes this year. The content will change very little, but training will be aligned to the BUD/S classes and mirror the same number classes. This will provide additional opportunities to complement both pipelines as well as gain tremendous efficiencies when it comes to resources.

The NSW enterprise has done a superb job integrating all walks of life from the Navy, other services and even interagency partners. This integration has spawned the effective and agile force we are today and promotes U.S. national interest and the national security strategy. As disciplined professionals, we all need to continue to look for ways to leverage and maximize others' contributions in pursuit of a common goal, especially in the resource-constrained environment.

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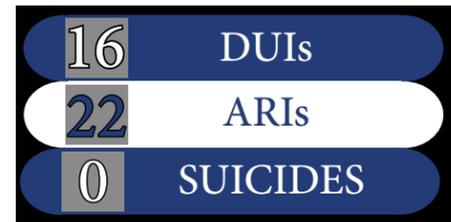
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MC2 Kristopher Kiszop

**NSW Force Incident Statistics
Jan. - Mar. 2014**



**The Leap Frogs Visit
Kindergarten Class**

It had been nine years since then Cmdr. Duncan Smith first visited the kindergarten class at Mary, Mother of Peace Catholic School in southwest Philadelphia, but Dec. 13 saw him returning to the same classroom. This time, he brought some high-flying friends.

Now a Navy captain and director of Naval Special Warfare's recruiting directorate in San Diego, Smith had travelled to Philadelphia with the Navy Parachute Team, the Leap Frogs, and the team couldn't say no to a chance to visit the current students and their teacher, Jenn Pyryt.

Smith had originally connected with Pyryt's class in 2002 when he responded to the kindergarteners' "Any Soldier" letter they'd written to service members operating in Afghanistan. That kicked off a two-year pen pal exchange between Smith and the

students which lead to Smith making an in-person appearance with the class in 2004.

"Everybody still talks about him," Pyryt said.

Within minutes, the kids were getting team stickers, trying on helmets and opening up parachutes.

"I don't even have words to tell you how special this is," Pyryt said. "To see such leaders come in as their friends...that can really change their lives."

Pyryt had a few surprise guests of her own, as she had invited three of the students who had originally written to Smith-- all of whom are now all in high school -- back into the classroom for a reunion. Together, they went through some of the old letters Pyryt had kept, and caught up on where their lives had taken them.

"I was really impressed," Smith said afterward. "Taking leadership in their football team, teaching karate...those little kids are already doing some great things with their lives."

"When I first met him, I was completely astonished," said Kyle, now a junior at George Washington High School. "It's good seeing he's still the same guy I met nine years ago."

Student outreach is nothing new for the Leap Frogs. They visit schools along with the demonstrations they conduct across the country. All agreed a nine-year reunion like this one was something special.

"Getting to interact with kids like these is one of the best perks of this job," said the Leap Frogs Officer in Charge, Lt. Dan Gibson. "But to form such a long term relationship with them like this is really something to treasure."

Smith and the Leap Frogs were in Philadelphia for the 114th Army-Navy football game.

*MC1 Fletcher Gibson
Leap Frogs Public Affairs*

**HMCS Protecteur, Crew Arrive
Safely in Pearl Harbor**

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR HICKAM – Her Majesty's Canadian Ship Protecteur, USS Chosin (CG 65) and USNS Sioux (T-ATF 175) arrived in Pearl Harbor March 6, following recovery efforts led by the U.S. Navy in response to a fire aboard Protecteur last week.

Chosin, USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112) and Sioux provided assistance to Protecteur and ensured its safe return to port.

Michael Murphy was first on scene, arriving immediately after the fire occurred the morning of Feb. 28. Shortly after, Chosin arrived and commenced towing operations. Chosin also transported food and water to Protecteur via embarked helicopter from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 37.

"This recent event is proof enough of the need to maintain consistent and continuous readiness," said Capt. Patrick Kelly, Chosin's commanding officer. "With but a few hours' notice, Chosin, along with Michael Murphy, Sioux and HSM-37, were able to respond to a call to action. We are honored to have been called and proud of the support we were able to provide our fellow mariners."

Sioux took over towing operations March 2, and towed Protecteur for the remaining four days into port. Michael Murphy returned to port March 4 with 19 family members and civilian contractors from Protecteur, as well as a Canadian Sailor with a hand injury.

"The incredible courage of the crew of Protecteur and the resiliency of their families during this tumultuous time is truly inspiring," said Rear Adm. Bill Truelove, commander, Maritime Forces Pacific, Royal Canadian Navy. "The RCN is appreciative of the tremendous support that has been provided by the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard and all those involved in helping get Protecteur and her crew safely back to Pearl Harbor."

Protecteur was operating within U.S. 3rd Fleet's area of responsibility, serving as the oil replenishment ship for other ships operating within the area for the month of February. The fire occurred during the ship's transit back to Esquimalt, British Columbia.

Protecteur will remain in Hawaii while the RCN conducts a damage assessment.

*Staff Sgt. Christopher Hubenthal
U.S. Third Fleet Public Affairs*

CNO; MCPON Visit JEBLC-FS

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA. – Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Mike Stevens held an all hands call with Sailors stationed at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Jan. 24.

The purpose of the visit was to recognize warfighters and their hard work.

During the visit, Greenert presented the Bronze Star Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device to two chief special warfare operators assigned to Naval Special Warfare Group 2, both stationed at JEBLCFS. Greenert also re-enlisted five Sailors.

After the re-enlistment and award presentations, Greenert went on to recognize service members' families and civilian employees at the command for their contribution and support.

"For the families and the civilians, you are our shipmates," he said. "Families are the wings for us who get to serve and I thank you."

Greenert also addressed the civilians about recent events they had faced and endured.

"It has been a rough year," said Greenert. "We had a continuing resolution, sequestration and we shut down. We furloughed and it was awful, but you are a major part of the team and I want to thank you for that."

Both Greenert and Stephens went on to answer questions from the Sailors and civilians in the audience on a wide range of topics, from the budget to the length of future deployments.

"Nothing is done on a whim," said Stevens. "It takes months and years often times before decisions are made. You will always be number one."

Stevens said his opportunity to attend boards for various defense agencies and associations allows him the ability to voice his opinion regarding issues concerning pay, compensation, and retirement that affect service members and their families.

"I want you to know an extraordinary amount of effort, thought and concern goes into these decisions and how they impact you and your families," said Stevens.

Stevens closed the all hands call by expressing what he believes are the three

keys necessary to building the foundation for success.

"Work hard, stay out of trouble, and be a good and decent person," Stevens said.

*MC1 Meranda Keller
NSWG-2 Public Affairs*

**ST 10, ST 8 Attend Retreat for
Resilience**

WILLIAMSBURG, VA., – Naval Special Warfare held a retreat at Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg, Virginia.

The purpose of the retreat was to afford recently deployed NSW personnel a series of workshops in a serene, third party location to shift psychologically from the battlefield and better integrate with family members.

Bob Delaney, a former undercover police officer who spent several years infiltrating the American Mafia under the pseudonym Bobby Covert, gave a seminar examining the effects of post-traumatic stress and methods of coping with it.

"This isn't just a military or police issue," said Delaney. "It's a human condition following trauma."

His years as an undercover police officer left him with medical conditions his doctor linked back to his post traumatic stress.

"Like exposure to sun causes cancer, prolonged stress can lead to other medical conditions later down the road," said Delaney.

He addressed stigma associated with post-traumatic stress and how fear of social retribution can cause people to internalize their feelings, choosing to never share them for fear of reprisal.

"Personal experience is universal. Whatever you're feeling, somebody else is feeling the same thing," said Delaney.

"The topics are relevant and the childcare is useful, but when I heard Bobby Covert (Bob Delaney) was speaking at this, there was no way I was going to miss it," said Roger, a Navy SEAL attached to an East Coast based SEAL Team. "The way he related everything truly is helpful."

His wife agreed, "He elevates conversations to meaningful topics. Bobby has a non-invasive way of talking to people that helps people identify their...potential problems."

The retreat proved successful in other ways as well.

"We have two kids, and without the childcare offered by the NSW volunteers, these kinds of events wouldn't have been possible for my husband and me," said Roger's wife.

*MC2 James Ginther
NSWG-2 Public Affairs*

**Afghan National Army
Conducts Training**

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Afghan National Army commandos from 8th Special Operations Kandak conducted a tactical training exercise with Afghan National Security Forces helicopter aircrews in Pul-E-Alam district, Logar province, Jan. 30.

The training was designed to sharpen skills needed while using Afghan helicopters, to and from the battlefield.

"This was the first time we have ever [trained] with these ANSF aircrews," said an 8th SOK platoon leader.

The commandos conducted the training in two phases. In the first phase, they practiced entering and exiting procedures using stationary helicopters.

Additionally, they practiced moving into positions to defend the aircraft during enemy attacks. During the second phase, commandos boarded the helicopters, flew out to a remote location, and performed tactical exiting procedures in a simulated battlefield environment.

The senior 8th SOK officer, who led the training, said he was pleased with the performance of the 8th SOK members. The officer added that he would be meeting with ANSF aviation leadership to discuss future training missions and to share ideas on ways to improve the training exercises.

"It is important that the commandos push themselves to be better every day," he said. "We have been fighting alongside coalition forces for 13 years. It is critical that we keep improving our skills so we can continue to defeat the enemies of Afghanistan."

"The capability and effectiveness of the ANSF has progressed to the point that they now conduct most of their operations independently, improving security."

By taking the responsibility for a secure Afghanistan into their own hands, ANSF continue to make progress and retain hard-won gains.

*MCC Bill Mesta
SOTF-SE Combat Camera*

**ST 10 Hosts Change of
Command Ceremony**

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA., – SEAL Team 10 held a change of command ceremony at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Jan. 31.

Cmdr. David Markle relieved Cmdr. Joshua Lasky as the commanding officer of SEAL Team 10.

"Now for me personally, losing Josh to



The Military Sealift Command fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux (T-ATF 171) tows the Royal Canadian Navy auxiliary oil replenishment ship HMCS Protecteur (AOR 509).

Special Operation Command Africa is a significant loss," said Capt. Robert Smith, Naval Special Warfare Group 2 Commodore.

"His honest feedback is what gave me the ammunition to fight for things such as body armor, Kevlar helmets, deployment locations, the justification to deploy extra personnel and the justification to get extra equipment to the guys on the battlefield," said Smith.

Lasky is a 1994 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. After serving as a Surface Warfare Officer, he laterally transferred to Naval Special Warfare in 1998 and graduated from Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training in June 1999.

Before relieving his command, Lasky said, "The best thing about being in command is that you get a front row seat to extraordinary people doing extraordinary things extraordinarily well every single day."

Markle graduated from Cornell University in 1996 and received a Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps commission. He graduated from BUD/S in 1997.

"It's an incredible honor and privilege for myself to return to SEAL Team 10 and I hope all of you feel the same way about being a member of this team," said Markle. "With that privilege comes an obligation to humbly serve. Over the next two years I will charge myself to fulfill that obligation and I will expect all the members of Team 10 to do the same." ☞

*MC1 Les Long
NSWG-2 Public Affairs*

USSOCOM Commander Presents First Alumni Award

TAMPA, Fla. – Adm. William H. McRaven, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, presented the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical

Training School's Distinguished Alumni Award to Rear Adm. Juan Pablo Rodriguez, Military Defense Attache, Honduran Embassy, Mexico City, in a ceremony held Feb. 26.

The Distinguished Alumni program was established in 2013 in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of NAVSCIATTS. The award is part of an overarching effort to engage senior-level officers and maintain relationships with alumni.

"This is really a memorable moment for us here at SOCOM," said McRaven. "This is the first ... very first Distinguished Alumni award in the 50-year history of NAVSCIATTS. I can't think of a more deserving person to receive the award. All you have to do is look back at Adm. Rodriguez's career to appreciate everything that he's done."

Rodriguez first visited NAVSCIATTS in 1980 to study basic coastal navigation and then again in 1983 to master celestial navigation skills. Rodriguez said those two courses at NAVSCIATTS provided the foundation for his naval career.

"I never imagined that 34 years later I would be here receiving this award in Tampa," said Rodriguez. "NAVSCIATTS is not only a school house that teaches courses, but rather an institution forged by men for a noble mission for which history has prepared an important pedestal. Today NAVSCIATTS is not just giving an award, it is cultivating fertile ground so that future students, like seeds, will sprout and grow and give fruit to a successful career."

Since completing his courses at NAVSCIATTS, he has commanded at every level, from a small boat squadron commander to the Inspector General of the entire Honduran armed forces.

"Adm. Rodriguez has been an ambassador at large for NAVSCIATTS," said McRaven.

"The motto of NAVSCIATTS is 'Stronger Together.' I think Adm. Rodriguez embodies that motto."

"He has invited naval officers from Honduras and other countries to come to NAVSCIATTS, and that has made us all better. In today's world, we have to work together. Honduras can't do it alone. The United States can't do it alone. The Europeans can't do it alone. We have to be together and we will be stronger together," said McRaven.

As the only Department of Navy Security Cooperation schoolhouse operating under USSOCOM, NAVSCIATTS offers the opportunity to foster and maintain relationships with foreign security forces from both special operations and general purpose forces through training and key-leader engagement, ensuring strong bilateral relationships between the U.S. and its partner nations.

"NAVSCIATTS is about much more than technical training," said McRaven. "I think everyone that has been there will tell you that NAVSCIATTS builds character, professionalism, and relationships. In today's world, character, professionalism and relationships are what really matter." ☞

*Kelly Flynn
NAVSCIATTS Public Affairs*

High School Students Visit NSW

More than 60 Mt. Miguel High School students visited the Naval Special Warfare recruiting directorate to participate in various BUD/S exercises and learn mental toughness strategies. Photos by MC3 Paul Coover.



IN MEMORIAM

Special Warfare Operator 1st Class William Bushelle was born Jan. 31, 1976, in St. Louis, and passed away Feb. 16, 2014. Bushelle was a BUD/S Class 202 graduate and was serving with SEAL Team 17.

Read more about Bushelle



Cryptologic Technician Collection 1st Class Steven M. Baglio, photographed at Naval Special Warfare Support Activity 2 in Virginia Beach, Va., was one of 31 recipients of the 2013 Copernicus Award.



COPERNICUS AWARD WINNER

Sailor assigned to NSWSA-2 recognized for his contributions to the force

Story and photo by MCI Les Long | NSWG-2 Public Affairs

Cryptologic Technician Collection 1st Class Steven M. Baglio, assigned to Naval Special Warfare Support Activity 2, was one of 31 recipients of the 2013 Copernicus Award, announced by the Armed Forces Communications Electronics Association that presents the award with the U.S. Naval Institute.

Established in 1997, the Copernicus Award is for Sailors and civilians in communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, information systems and information warfare jobs.

“It was an immense honor to be recognized for the work I’ve done,” said Baglio. “It wasn’t just work I’ve done, it was work everyone’s done.”

AFCEA and USNI present the award to both civilians and service members who demonstrate exceptional initiative, leadership, and insight in their area of expertise.

Baglio serves as the leading petty officer at NSWSA-2 Tactical Information Operations division and is responsible for overseeing a team of 23 cryptologic technicians.

He has been recognized for providing more than 350 hours of

analytical support to combat operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, which directly contributed to the streamlining of analytical coordination between deployed NSW units and interagency and coalition partners.

“I’m extremely proud and not surprised he got the award,” said Master Chief Cryptologic Technician Collection Kyle Roff, NSWSA-2 TIO senior enlisted advisor. “I have a lot of outstanding analysts but he’s obviously among the top.”

In addition, Baglio was instrumental in the development and implementation of the NSW TIO standard operating procedures for signal intelligence support to deployed TIO analysts, and standardized the request for information process. This standardization reduced the RFI response time by 70 percent, resulting in the identification of five violent extremist organizations.

“Always look for opportunities to support the guys downrange,” said Baglio. “Whether it’s simple or big, just work hard and love what you do.”

AFCEA and USNI will present Baglio’s award during a ceremony May 7 in Chantilly, Va. 

THE BEST
PHOTO
YOU’LL
NEVER SEE
STORY BY MCI PAUL COOPER | CNSWG PUBLIC AFFAIRS



On Oct. 19, 2012, a man named Bradley Houshour took a remarkable photograph that could well have become one of the Navy’s ineffaceable images of service, tradition and heritage. That photo will never be widely seen. This is the story of how the picture came to be, how it was lost and later resurfaced, and what the protection of the image says about service in the shadows as a member of Naval Special Warfare.

B

rad Houshour was sitting in his office near the coast of Coronado, Calif., on a warm day in October 2012 when a Navy captain, one of his bosses, asked him to grab a camera. It was a Friday, and outside men were preparing to cross one of the most revered thresholds in U.S. military special operations training; significantly, it is also rarely allowed to be documented. The boss' request was unexpected, but Houshour, a prior-service Marine who works as a videographer for the Naval Special Warfare recruiting directorate, was familiar with both military traditions and the skills needed to capture them visually. He wasn't nervous. After a quick conversation about the assignment, he grabbed his gear and headed out to the beach.

The captain, a SEAL approaching 30 years of service in the Teams, explained a group of young men were preparing to complete the Navy's infamous Hell Week during Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training -- training so notorious it is more commonly known by its shorthand, BUD/S. The captain thought Houshour might be able to get a few photos of the class so the students could keep them as a memory of their experiences that week.

Houshour grabbed a Cannon 5D Mark II and a flexible 100-400mm lens -- long enough to capture the scene from a distance, as he knew the event would span a fairly wide swath of sand. That Friday was a typically sunny morning in Southern California, so he attached a filter to dim the sunshine and to allow him to open his aperture. The effect was that the wide-open lens could narrow the depth of field, thereby focusing only on the men and their accomplishment. With the abundant sunlight, he knew his camera could still handle a quick shutter speed to capture split-second motion if it needed to.

The captain wanted a quick shot of the moment the training was secured, but Houshour snapped a few shots leading up to the week's

official conclusion as well. Later, he'd offer the photos to the entire group as mementos; perhaps too exhausted in the aftermath of their training to focus on such sentimentalities, none of the students would take him up on his offer. Only the captain, with the benefit of his years in the military and the perspective they afforded him, would take the time to leaf through Houshour's shots. One, especially, made him stop.

In the minutes preceding the students' dismissal, the class continued to stand in ranks and listen as several speakers did their best to assign meaningful words to a week that's felt more than it can be explained. Hell Week is renowned for its difficulty, and many Americans can even describe with some accuracy its importance. Very few, however, will ever truly comprehend its demands. As distinguished visitors and alumni, including the captain, made their way through the rows, congratulating each man, Houshour keyed into the emotion of the moment.

One Sailor in particular was situated ideally toward the outside of the formation, so Houshour, aided by his long lens, was able to position himself for the shot without seeming conspicuous. In an instant, the captain said a few words to the man, who turned to face him. Houshour clicked the shutter when he saw their eyes meet.

Their stares locked. The younger Sailor's face is covered almost entirely by sand, and his eyes betray the near-sleepless week he had just survived. His uniform was soaked through, likewise covered in sand, his sleeves rolled loosely one cuff above the wrist, just enough so they might stay

out of his way during never-ending physical training. The captain's uniform is dry, his sleeves rolled crisply and carefully above the elbow. But the look between men is a knowing one. And the story behind it teaches an important lesson about what it means to be a part of Naval Special Warfare.

So what happened to that image, then? The Navy publishes hundreds of photos each day, many of which are used by news outlets around the world.

It stands to reason that the SEAL and SWCC communities could benefit from such an approach: Photographs highlighting the unique characteristics of NSW help educate the public about a small but critical side of warfare that has been, by

necessity, conducted out of public view; as awareness grows, so too does the interest in the force, deepening the talent pool of applicants; with the nation's best athletes and most successful thinkers vying to join the fight, the Navy can be highly selective, training only the best and brightest and...

"...the better the nation is defended." The captain finishes the sentence himself, predicting the conclusion.

It's an obvious line of thought, after all. If that's how many top schools and companies attract premier talent, what's missing?

Houshour's photo provides an important part of the answer.

When the captain's eyes met the younger man's, Houshour's camera settings were perfect. The photo is exposed properly, the depth of field large enough to keep both men in focus but small enough to make them the center of interest in the image, the shutter speed quick enough to freeze the moment.

The image is simple, stark. Two men stand a few feet apart, their gazes intense, their only interaction the interplay of eye contact. Neither man smiles. While almost every other part of America has changed in unimaginable ways since the captain's beginnings in the SEAL Teams, Hell Week itself has changed very little. The moment is a bridge between eras.

But it also created a more intimate bridge. When the captain looked at the student, he was looking at his own son -- the two had kept it a secret as long as they could. The younger Sailor, in the tradition of those who had gone before him, wanted no special treatment, no favors. He wanted to earn his Trident on his own. The captain, too, realized this is the only real approach to a job as arduous as that of Navy SEAL. Amidst a crowd of exhausted Sailors and proud leaders, these two men had carved a moment for themselves that would be preserved forever in a photograph, kept amongst only family and friends, never to be shared with the public.

And Houshour's shot might have been lost altogether had it not been for a family friend who thought enough of the photo to save it on his own computer. Many of the files saved to drives at the recruiting directorate were reorganized or deleted, and among those lost were the photographs of the securing of one particular Hell Week in October 2012.

As far as anyone knows, a single black-and-white version is all that exists, preserved in a few tiny crevices of the digital world.

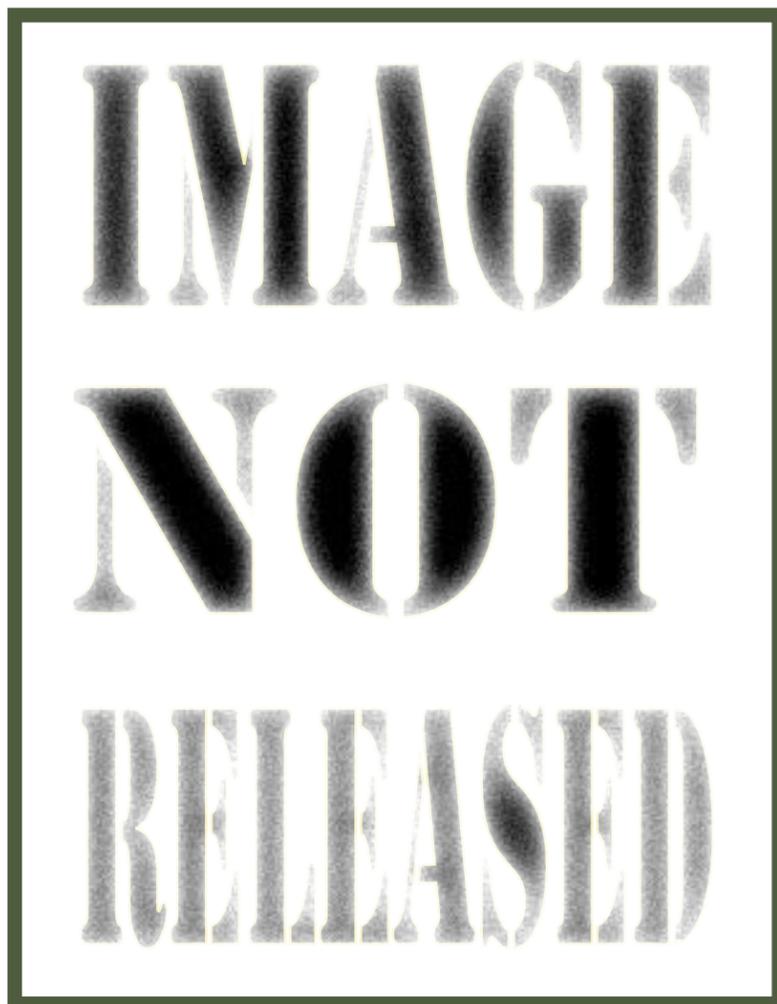
The captain's son likely has years of service ahead of him. The odds are good that his name will never appear in a newspaper, that his face will never again be photographed quite the way it was that day on the beach.

But nothing is really known, and that's why Houshour's photo can never be released. None of us can know what secrecy might be worth to Americans tasked with carrying out some of the country's most dangerous work. What we do know is that such missions are so trying that they demand humble warriors devoted to service, not public recognition. Keeping photos like Houshour's out of the public eye ensures the NSW community continues to attract those types of men.

When the son locked eyes with his father, generations intersecting in that singular instant, he really wasn't looking into the future; despite their shared experiences, he will face challenges in the coming years remarkably different than those his father faced.

It is an uncertainty he has embraced. After Hell Week, he kept pressing, and his training continued.

"It's right that image doesn't go around," the captain says. "Training's not done. The job is not done. There is no celebrating. There's just the next hurdle." 



NSW: SERVICE IN THE SHADOWS

I humbly serve as a guardian to my fellow Americans always ready to defend those who are unable to defend themselves. I do not advertise the nature of my work, nor seek recognition for my actions.

-NAVY SEAL ETHOS

I am a Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman: a quiet professional; tried, tested and dedicated to achieving excellence in maritime special operations.

-NAVY SWCC CREED

"I learned that if you are in combat, move to where the action is the hottest Whatever position or branch you are in, find the toughest, most dangerous job in your unit and go do it. I learned that you won't get a lot of thanks in return. I learned that you shouldn't expect it."

-ADM. WILLIAM MCRAVEN
COMMANDER, U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

"We want a force of people who are the smartest, fittest, most resourceful that they can be, who serve with an intended reward being the job itself."

-CURRENT NAVY SEAL CAPTAIN



MCPON Mike D. Stevens examines an unmanned aerial system during his visit to West Coast Naval Special Warfare commands.

MCPON Visits NSW

During trip to Coronado, the 13th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy discusses leadership, the roles of NSW enablers, interoperability and more

Story by MC3 Paul Coover | CNSWC Public Affairs
Photos by MC2 Martin L. Carey

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Mike D. Stevens has a story he likes to tell about his experience with NSW. While serving as an aircrewman early in his career, he was tasked with playing the role of a member of a downed crew in need of rescue during a training mission. A SEAL team was sent in to practice rescue tactics – Stevens assumed that when they arrived, his job was finished. What he forgot was that a SEAL team's first responsibility is to determine if the crew in need of rescue is made up of friends or foes; Stevens quickly found himself face down in the mud during a cold Virginia night while the team verified his identity.

He laughs about the memory now, but his retelling of it serves as an indicator of the respect he has for the professionalism of NSW. During a recent trip to San Diego, Stevens stopped by Special Boat Team 12 and sat down for a brief interview about his visit and his messages for the force.

How does Zeroing in on Excellence fit into NSW's mission?

I would say that the special warfare community, NSW, embraces all three aspects of Zeroing in on Excellence. First, they continue to develop great leaders, and they've embraced new

leadership opportunities and courses to ensure that they remain relevant and experts in the area of leadership.

Number two, good order and discipline: It goes without saying that they cannot do what they do unless they are an organized and disciplined organization. I had a great brief today about how they identify people who have some areas that might need improvement, and that they quickly get after that and help those people to be successful.

And number three, which is as important as anything we do, they take ownership. They control those things within their organization that they own. They're not an organization that looks for excuses or reasons not to do something. They're always looking for how to be successful given whatever the circumstances are.

So Zeroing in on Excellence is something that I certainly didn't deliver to them, it's something they've been doing since the conception of NSW.

What role do enablers play within the NSW community?

Until about maybe four years ago, I really didn't appreciate or understand just how important a role these enablers played. One of the most fascinating briefs that I received was one

that ... exposed [me] to the depth of involvement of these force enablers.

What I'd like to say is that probably more so now than ever before, the SEAL and SWCC communities have really worked hard and gone out of their way to make sure these people are recognized, that they're properly led and trained and that they have as good, if not better opportunities for advancement as anybody else serving in those rates in their traditional fields.

You take an engineman, you take a mass communication specialist embedded with our special warfare community – [NSW] works really hard to make sure you're not disadvantaged by working out of your community, that you receive the same opportunities that everybody else does. They've really worked hard at that and it's something I feel good about because it's not something I have to worry about; it's something I know is being done.

What has impressed you most about Navy SWCCs?

They possess the same attributes that the SEAL community does. When you put a SWCC and a SEAL together you have Naval Special Warfare – their attitudes, their professionalism, their competencies are really one and the same in how serious they take them.

What I really appreciate about our SWCCs is how they have really worked hard to take ownership within their own community, first by making it a source rating so they could better professionalize that force. And then the brief that I received today about what they're doing to enhance their training capabilities and how they're really embracing the opportunity to have their own schoolhouse, to have standardized training across their entire organization, and be able to deliver the best possible SWCC member that they can, that's consistent in how they do business no matter where they are in the world. That gives them a lot more flexibility. Someone can transfer from the East Coast to the West Coast and vice versa and not have to learn the business over again, but essentially get on the treadmill while the belt's still turning.



Stevens answers a question from a SWCC candidate.

<https://www.facebook.com/13MCPON>

What does the future look like in terms of NSW integration with the Navy fleet?

I would say that by and large, the fleet and NSW have operated very well together. The fleet is procuring and developing resources and capabilities that I think will enhance that in the future – things like the littoral combat ship.

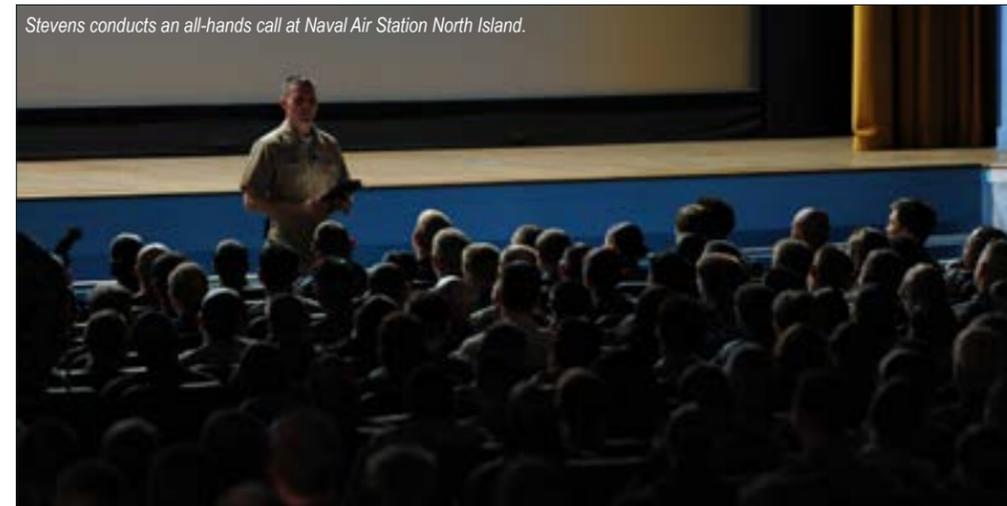
It's going to be a platform that's special operations-capable, and can provide a new and unique capability to them.

You'll see our special warfare community embarking on what we call afloat-forward staging bases, and this will give them a maritime platform that will allow them to conduct their missions anywhere in the world without needing a land base to do so.

And in the future, you'll see more and more of enablers, because we know that the special operations community is a growth industry. We've seen the value that they have brought to our fighting capabilities over the last decade-plus.

How can your Foundations to Success help NSW Sailors?

Foundations to Success is something we can all live by, whether you're a civilian, whether you're part of Naval Special Warfare, whether you're in a traditional rating in the fleet – you name it. It's



Stevens conducts an all-hands call at Naval Air Station North Island.

something I've been saying for years. One day, my wife, Theresa, said, 'You should share that. You should put that down, pen to paper, and talk to your Sailors about that.' She really convinced me to widen the dialogue. So work hard, stay out of trouble, and be a good and decent person. It's really self-explanatory. There are really many, many things people can do to allow them to be successful, or at least be successful in part, but you cannot deny the fact that those three things are what you can build your foundation on.

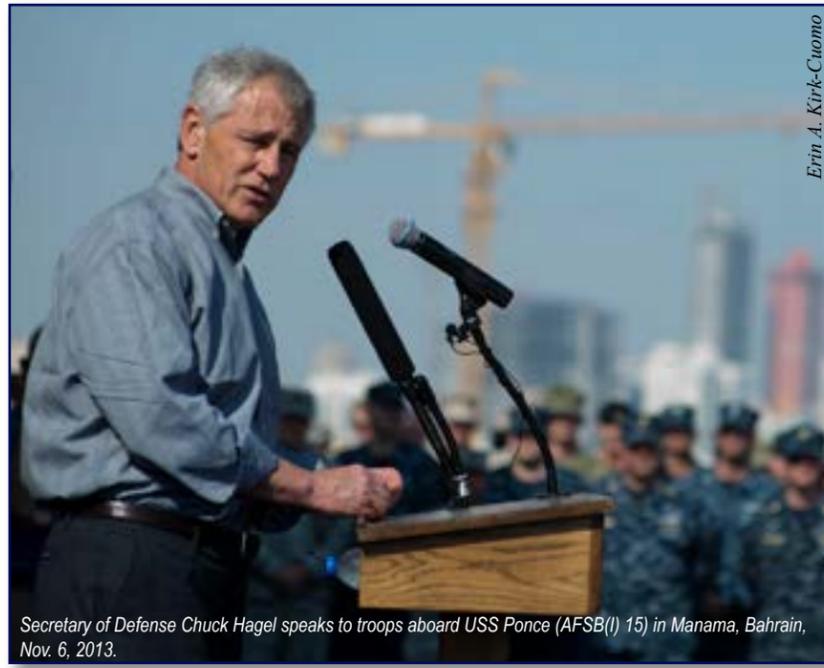
And I want to emphasize being a good and decent person. I believe that if we embrace that, then many of the troubles we face, many of the challenges we have – whether they be integrity or ethics issues, sexual assault, domestic violence or alcohol and drug abuse – if we embrace the 'good and decent person' piece to Foundations to Success, then many of those things fade away. They don't become the issues that they are today.

So I want to encourage all Sailors to embrace being a good and decent person. If I could only choose one, that would be it.

Finally, how would you summarize your visit?

Theresa and I are so excited to be here and be able to visit our shipmates, families and friends out here. We want to hear what their issues and concerns are and, just as importantly, the things that they're doing well. Theresa is really excited to meet with families and significant others and ombudsmen. If anything, Theresa is here to listen. She's here to tell them that she loves them and cares about them and, you know what? Just give them a hug. We're really excited about being here, and we appreciate all the support the commands in San Diego have given us to make this a great visit.

SECDEF on Ethics



Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel speaks to troops aboard USS Ponce (AFSB(I) 15) in Manama, Bahrain, Nov. 6, 2013.

On Feb. 7, 2014, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel spoke to reporters in Washington, D.C., about ethics in the military. Below are several of his answers to questions on the topic.

Public Release | Defense News

I DON'T THINK THERE IS ONE SIMPLE ANSWER to the issue of ethics, values, a lapse in some of those areas that... we do know about. That's why we're taking a hard look at this.

I THINK WE NEED TO FIND OUT, IS THERE A DEEP, WIDE PROBLEM? If there is, then what's the scope of that problem? How did this occur? Was it a constant focus of 12 years on two long land wars, taking our emphasis off some of these other areas? I don't know. We intend to find out. This is an inter-service issue. This is an issue that cuts across all lines and all commands. And that's why I am putting this as a number-one priority for this institution.

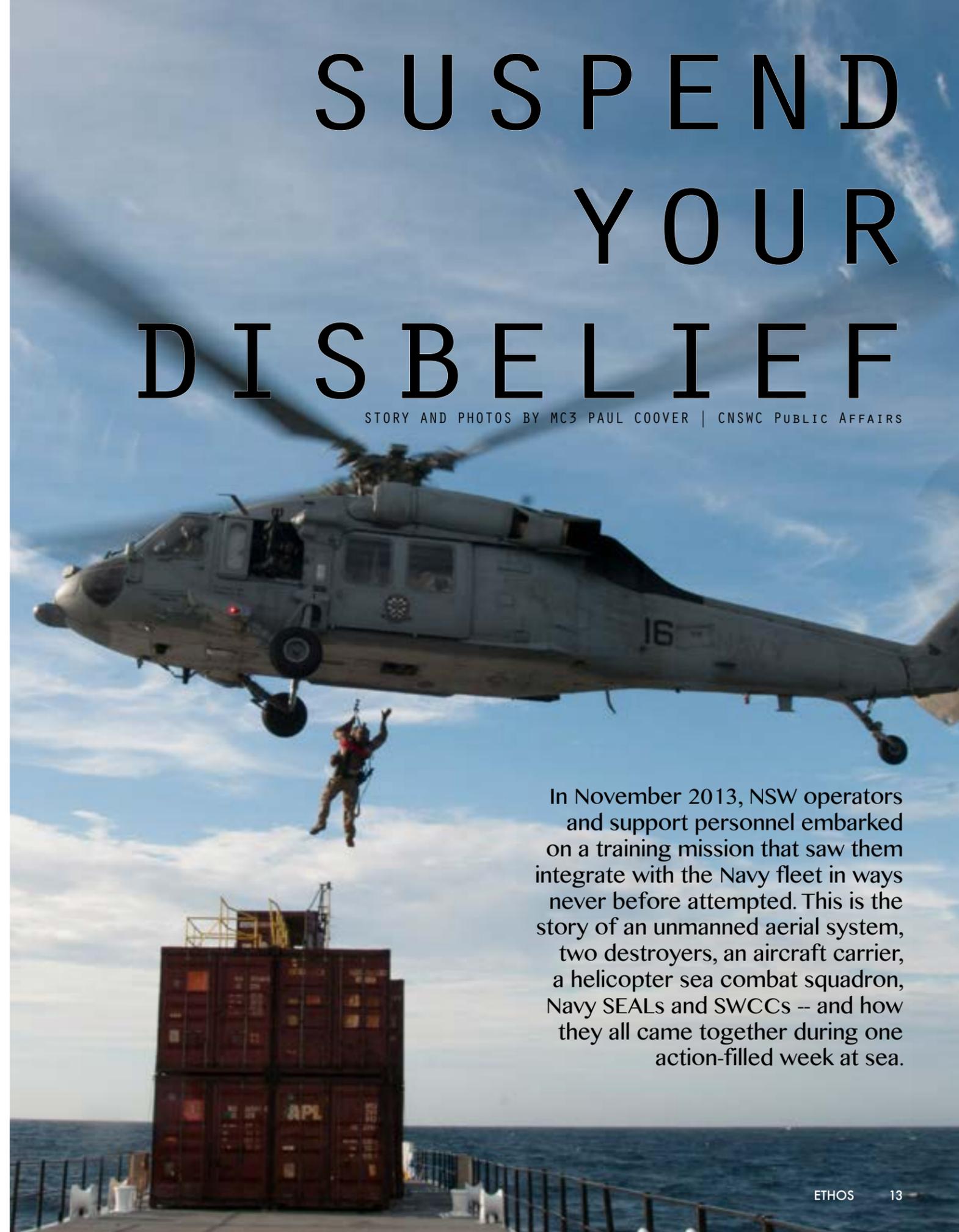
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO DEAL WITH AN ISSUE, a problem, you take it on. You don't apologize for it. You don't hide it. You don't run the other way. You say it straight up.

I DON'T KNOW OF AN INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD THAT DOES THAT BETTER THAN THIS INSTITUTION. It is this Department of Defense that puts the problems up in front with the press -- when we find we've got a problem somewhere, we open it up. We let you know about it. We know the American people need to know about it, the Congress. So we're not afraid of that.

BUT THE ISSUE IS THEN, HOW DO YOU FIX IT? What do you do about it? And as I said, I don't know all of the depth or the width of this. We know we've got issues. You all report on it. We're not trying to back away from that.

SO LET'S GO -- LET'S GO FIGURE IT OUT, whether it's sexual assault or what it is, but we are going to fix it. And we're going to be honest about it and transparent about it. And I give this institution tremendous credit in that.

AND WE WILL GET TO WHATEVER WE NEED TO GET TO, to assure as much as we can -- you said it, I used it in my language -- trust and confidence, complete trust and confidence that the American people have in -- in this institution. I think most people have that today. But as I've said -- and you heard me say this often -- there's no margin of error in a lot of this. And if you... choose this profession, there's an expectation... and a standard. But that's your choice, but you must live with that expectation and standard. 



SUSPEND YOUR DISBELIEF

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MC3 PAUL COOVER | CNSWC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In November 2013, NSW operators and support personnel embarked on a training mission that saw them integrate with the Navy fleet in ways never before attempted. This is the story of an unmanned aerial system, two destroyers, an aircraft carrier, a helicopter sea combat squadron, Navy SEALs and SWCCs -- and how they all came together during one action-filled week at sea.

A Naval aircrewman assigned to Naval Special Warfare Support Activity 1 controls a Scan Eagle unmanned aerial system from the flight deck of USS Kidd (DDG 100). Kidd was participating in an independent deployer certification exercise off the coast of Southern California.



NOVEMBER 12 | A Navy MH-60S Seahawk makes a slow arc across a gray Southern California sky. Several ships sail below it; an island is barely discernable on the horizon.

The visibility was supposed to be perfect. The ocean was supposed to be calm. Neither is proving true.

Somehow – at least to the men who make a living here – the conditions aren’t much of an issue. Inside the helicopter, two Navy SEALs are situated almost identically near the starboard door. The men rest on the deck, feet crossed, legs extended, reclining against the back wall of the helo’s cargo bay. One man cradles a weapon, the other talks on the radio, helping plan the minutes and hours lying ahead. Both wear black sunglasses, helmets, ear protection and desert camouflage. Neither wears standard-issue boots, opting instead for the more tactical footwear they prefer for missions like this one.

The sea beneath them spits white caps, enough to warrant serious attention.

The sound of the rotor drowns out all noise except for voice chatter in the men’s headsets, and if you were to look at the SEALs -- at them and their immediate surroundings -- the image would be, well, normal: SEALs on a training mission to practice core special operations forces skills. It happens daily all over the world.

It just doesn’t happen like this.

So back up. Widen the lens. Look at the SEALs, then to the rescue swimmer riding alongside in case something goes wrong -- he’s attached to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 4, which isn’t a special operations detachment. Look at the bird itself -- it’s an MH-60S launched off an aircraft carrier as imposing as any ship in the world, hardly the type of vessel associated with small-footprint operations. Look at USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), slicing through the waves below, flanked by the ships in the carrier strike group, USS Howard (DDG 83), USS Kidd (DDG 100), USS Wayne E. Meyer (DDG 108), all steaming toward the horizon during a certification exercise

in which warfighting capabilities are tested and proven.

Now look at the scene once more, from a mile above the white caps, the fast boats and the ships, above even the helicopter carrying the two SEALs, from a height at which the human eye is altogether useless. There’s an unmanned aerial vehicle called Scan Eagle up there, providing intelligence for the mission, pulling the whole operation together. Scan Eagle’s capabilities in operations like this one have never been explored.

The scope of ambition required for this level of integration between special operations and conventional forces is impressive. While many see special operations and large-deck ships as separate warfighting tools, this week at sea is a step in the continuing process

of bringing NSWs flexible, mobile assets into a more perfect union with the firepower and forward presence of the Navy’s fleet. That’s no insignificant capability.

“SUCCESS IS GETTING OUT THERE AND DOING IT.”

-LT. CMDR. JIM CELANI
NSWSA-1 UAS TROOP COMMANDER

NOVEMBER 7 | A little less than a week before the scene on the helo. Aboard a Navy warship. Gently rolling decks indicate the ship is underway. Hatches swing open periodically, with Sailors moving through them, talking amongst themselves.

Minutes into his first day aboard a Navy ship, one Navy aircrewman stands lost amidst a maze of passageways and ladder wells. The three other Sailors with whom he arrived are nowhere to be found, and he pauses at an intersection contemplating which direction to head, conspicuous in green camouflage, clashing with the crew’s blue coveralls. He looks forward, then left, then behind him. He takes a stutter step and stops. After a few more head-scratching moments, another member of the team finally comes looking for him and calls him over. He exhales and rejoins the group.

For the duration of the aircrewman’s Naval career, he’s worked in aviation, first with traditional aircraft and then, after applying for special training, with the unmanned variety. A broad-shouldered redhead from Florida, the aircrewman is assigned to Naval Special Warfare Support Activity 1 and has deployed to both Iraq and

Afghanistan in support of the U.S. military missions there. Until now, he has never been asked to serve aboard a ship.

NSW – including the SEALs and SWCCs who form the nucleus of the force – is highly successful in ground operations around the globe, but its roots have always been in maritime operations. The young aircrewman easily adjusts to Kidd’s layout, and NSW as an organization continues to work with the Navy’s surface ships to ensure the capabilities of the fleet and force are synchronized.

With plenty of light left before sunset, the aircrewman sets about testing the gear he’s there to employ. He dons a vest designed to act as body armor that has instead been outfitted with an antenna and computer tablet he can use to control Scan Eagle. The rig looks simultaneously retro and progressive: its green, brown and tan camouflage exterior is rooted in traditional military aesthetics, while its headset, protruding cables and video game-like controller project a more futuristic image. (Over the course of several days aboard Kidd, the outfit will prompt copious comments from Sailors curious about the aircrewman’s role in the ship’s activities. “What’s up, Rambo?” asked a startled chief gunner’s mate at one point when the aircrewman enters the ship’s combat information center.)

Once outfitted, the aircrewman heads from the hangar bay onto the flight deck to find the signal for a Scan Eagle launched from the Navy’s range on San Clemente Island. His objective now isn’t to simply fly the vehicle – UAVs have been operational for years – but instead bring the controls for the plane to a ship that can then use Scan Eagle’s intelligence-gathering, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities to support select missions.

Unlike other UAVs that are more portable and can be thrown airborne, the larger Scan Eagle requires a sizeable catapult system

to get the plane flying. In order to support a ship without such a setup – and almost all Navy ships currently lack it – the UAV must be launched remotely, from land. Traditionally, any Scan Eagle participation in a ship’s mission would require the plane to be controlled from the launch site, and requests from the ship for Scan Eagle intelligence would have to be sent from the ship to the UAV’s operators, who could then adjust accordingly. Similarly, any information gathered by the plane would have to be retransmitted back out to sea. The problems with the setup are twofold: First, communications between ship and shore are often challenging; second, even with reliable comms, the back-and-forth conversation creates a delay between the ship’s requests and Scan Eagle’s response.

The vest the aircrewman wears now is positioned to eliminate those issues. With the setup, called a modular tactical system, or MTS kit, Scan Eagle could be launched from afar, flown over a ship in need of aerial ISR, and handed over to an operator like the young Floridian, who can take control of the bird and respond to the ship’s

needs as soon as they develop. The MTS kit can even be connected to ship monitors so the commanding officer and crew can get a real-time feed of what Scan Eagle is seeing.

The potential uses for this type of technology are virtually limitless.

On the flight deck, the aircrewman monitors his screen for Scan Eagle to appear, which it does soon after flying off the island. He tracks the plane, pilots its movements, dictates the direction of its camera and returns control back to the team ashore. There are several small bugs to be worked out to make the system more reliable, but that’s why he’s here -- to remedy any issues that inevitably arise while operating in a new environment. Satisfied, he shuts down his gear and stows it for use over the next two days.



A Navy SEAL prepares for a helicopter visit, board, search and seizure exercise launched from USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76).

SCAN EAGLE’S CAPABILITIES IN OPERATIONS LIKE THIS ONE HAVE NOT YET BEEN FULLY EXPLORED.

By the time the SEALs are flying in the helicopter over the Pacific, the aircrewman knows how

Scan Eagle works in maritime settings. So do some of the decision-makers in NSW, who understand the flexible options afforded them when SEALs and SWCCs are staged on Navy ships. Before returning home to Coronado, however, the NSW team at sea also wants to demonstrate the UAV’s worth to the Navy at large.

Indeed, NSW’s presence at sea provides a spectrum of benefits. In Scan Eagle, the Navy gains a powerful camera that provides enhanced situational awareness in critical situations. In having SEAL and SWCC teams on board, the Navy gains the unique tactical abilities of special warfare and special boat operators. NSW missions launched from large-deck ships have the same Scan Eagle oversight, and missions themselves gain dimensions when the fleet’s ability to sustain itself at sea indefinitely can be used by small teams of SEALs and SWCCs.

“The fleet can obviously deliver us further using their [afloat-forward staging bases],” says the SEAL lieutenant in charge of the platoon that will test various pieces of this

An aviation boatswain’s mate attached to Reagan works the flight deck prior to an NSW training operation launched from the ship.



integration. “Radar systems really pick up vessels a lot further than we would be able to; they fuel aircraft and just increase our time on station ten-fold.”

Cmdr. T.J. Zerr, Kidd’s executive officer, uses counter-piracy missions as an example of instances ships could benefit from Scan Eagle and NSW’s presence on board.

“One of our biggest problems is just identifying, when somebody calls for a piracy issue, where they are, what the disposition looks like,” Zerr says. “Your average merchant just says, ‘I’m being attacked by pirates.’ You don’t know if they’re talking about one small skiff with a couple guys in it or a mother ship with a bunch of people. So you get that long look to see what you’re going into.”

“You can actually prepare to defend yourself,” says Lt. Cmdr. Jim Celani, the unmanned aerial system troop commander for NSWSA-1. “It’s a little bit better than being reactive.”

The NSW team’s time at sea will have them test multiple scenarios in which NSW/fleet integration could be employed. Between November 7 and November 11, 2013 the aircrewman participated in three separate exercises enhancing the fleet’s already considerable capabilities.

There was the anti-piracy exercise, in which Kidd’s VBSS team embarked toward a mock foe; a mission that once relied on the naked eye, binoculars and zoom camera lenses was enhanced by a full aerial view of both friendly and enemy forces. Scan Eagle’s video feed was so clear the boats’ wakes appeared vibrantly white as a visual history of their movements.

There was the surface warfare exercise, a late-night drill that required an officer of the deck to find and identify ships spread out over the open ocean. Scan Eagle was able to provide a clear view of one ship so quickly, finding the metaphorical needle in the haystack began to seem inevitable.

And there was the straits transit exercise, which simulated USS Howard’s trip through a narrow waterway, where limited options for evasion make attacks especially dangerous. Scan Eagle flew overhead then, too; in a real transit, it would also be capable of flying out in front of a ship to give the captain a glimpse as to what lies ahead.

And all the while, the SEALs and SWCCs prepped for missions of their own.

“What we’re doing out here is showing the Navy what we can provide,” Celani says. “The goal is not to be permanently attached to the ship, but to be more of a ‘just in time’ SOF: There’s something immediate on the horizon, the information is beyond the capability of the fleet, so they would request NSW support to get them from whatever their shortfalls are and solved so they can proceed on with their mission. We would go out there and support them in that endeavor until it’s resolved, and then we would be able to go home.”

The infrastructure and training needed to integrate NSW with the fleet is already in place. When the SEAL and SWCC teams came aboard, all they needed was food and a place to sleep. Everything

else – the helicopter operations, the boat launches, the intelligence and communication requirements – have already been fine-tuned by both NSW and ships like those in Reagan’s strike group. The only thing left to do is decide which missions to pursue.

NOVEMBER 12 | *Back on the helicopter. Daylight, gray skies -- the opening scene, revisited. The rehearsal before the final evolution.*

Their objective is to take control of a hostile ship. The SEALs move to the door of the helicopter, then descend by a wire line onto the deck of a ship small called the Atlas, which is often used as a target vessel for simulated raids like this one. The SEALs climb a ladder into the ship’s pilot house, where two civilians drive the ship out in front of Howard, to watch the rest of the training evolution unfold. HSC-4 pilots have no trouble hovering over Atlas to allow more operators to fast-rope onto her deck; the rough seas are manageable for SWCCs capable of handling much worse, and SEALs climbing off the RHIBs assault the ship from the water as planned.

The pilots make several more rounds, allowing the SEALs to practice fast-rope, while the SWCCs drive back to Howard. The daytime familiarization is complete. Now they just have to be able to do it under the cover of darkness.

NOVEMBER 13 | *One day later. The last test. Sailors move quickly on the moonlit deck of a destroyer. Voices call out instructions. Other voices reply with confirmation of receipt.*

The deck division of Howard is buzzing as boatswain’s mates shuffle around each other on unforgiving non-skid, moving into position to lower a RHIB into a bucking, black ocean. SWCC traditionally drive their own, faster RIBs (even the acronym they use is their own), so two Howard crewmembers will ride along in case there’s engine trouble with the unfamiliar crafts. For the past several days, operators walking through Howard’s passageways have been treated with the curiosity given any new visitors; yet on the night of the final at-sea evolution, two of Howard’s own will ride shotgun. If the two machinist’s mates are overwhelmed by the idea of joining a special warfare training mission, they don’t show it. They don helmets and climb into the small boats.

On Howard’s deck, one SEAL runs through his mental and physical checks. He pulls his weapon up to his shoulder, taking aim at an imaginary point in the distance, careful to avoid pointing the rifle at anyone nearby. He lowers it and then repeats the



A sailor assigned to USS Howard (DDG 83) helps plug an NSW modular tactical system (MTS) kit into the ship’s video monitors. The MTS kit allows a UAS operator to fly an unmanned vehicle and transmit the video feed to augment a ship’s intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities.

motion, again and again in quick succession, like a professional baseball player taking his cuts in the on-deck circle. Dialed in, he boards a waiting RHIB.

When the RHIBs hit the Pacific and break free of Howard, they move so quickly into the night they seem to just vanish. One moment the crew is visible, navigating wind chop in matte helmets and night vision goggles. The next, they’re gone.

Inside Howard’s bridge, the SEAL lieutenant is monitoring the progress of all of the moving pieces. He’s still wearing his green camouflage, but he’s donned a blue baseball hat with USS HOWARD printed in yellow stitching with the ship’s crest. Tonight, he’s part of the crew.

The bridge is quiet and glowing red, to save the crew’s night-adjusted eyes, in the final moments before this latest test of NSW-Fleet integration. The helicopters are in the sky; the RHIBs are somewhere off in the distance, patiently hiding; the aircrewman is outside, geared up, monitoring Scan Eagle and giving Howard a visual they otherwise would not have.

Howard can’t get too close; a Navy ship her size needs stay over the horizon, invisible to the enemy, so she’ll practice those maneuvers tonight. The conning officer calls out an order.

“All engines stop,” he says.

“All engines stop, eye,” says the master helmsman.

“Sir,” the SEAL lieutenant tells the captain, “they’re one minute out.”

Atlas is now visible in the distance.

The helicopters appear from above, and the RHIBs draw alongside simultaneously. The scene is ghostly from a distance, the lethal capabilities of Naval Special Warfare on full display as men

drop from the helos and run toward Atlas’s bridge while others toss a ladder over her side and assault the ship from the sea. Weapons are drawn, and the operators move with coordinated precision, some from the air, others from the sea, taking control of the vessel in a matter of

“THERE SHOULDN’T BE A FIXED TEMPLATE TO OUR MISSION SET OTHER THAN MARITIME DOMINANCE.”

- SEAL TEAM OFFICER IN CHARGE

minutes.

Aboard Howard, two separate visuals show the assault in real time. Scan Eagle is providing a top view, and the aircrewman transmits the images onto a red screen, on which the Atlas appears as a black target while the helicopters glow white with heat. Outside, on Howard’s bridge wing, the ship’s binoculars provide a more traditional night vision appearance: The Pacific, a vibrant green, the details of the crafts grainy and imperfect.

If there is a moment the integration seems immediately tangible, it’s this one. Three Navy warships sail in unison. On the horizon, two helicopters dot the sky. Small craft buzz just below and men from elite naval special operations units move with calculated purpose, all shadows and silhouettes.



The Scan Eagle’s recovery system on San Clemente Island.

NOVEMBER 15 | *Epilogue. Aboard a massive ship, launching aircraft toward shore with noisy regularity. The carrier heads for port.*

All week, the crew aboard Reagan treated NSW operators with deference. Sailors didn't simply give directions to SEALs who were unfamiliar with the ship's sometimes confusing layout – they offered to escort the operators wherever they needed to go. Other Sailors stepped aside in chow lines to let SEALs eat first (though the SEALs generally declined and stood in line like everyone else), and a few ambitious crewmembers peppered the operators with questions about their training or experiences, making no secret about their own desire to join the NSW ranks.

The SEALs didn't hesitate to ask about ship protocol or, conversely, to answer questions when asked. Still, they traveled as a pack in the new environment, prompting chuckles from members of the ship's company who too-well remembered their own days of learning the rhythms of the small city that is a United States aircraft carrier.

"They even brush their teeth together!" exclaimed one member of the Reagan crew after seeing a line of operators taking up a full row of sinks. He talked about how he admired the obvious closeness of the platoon, and about how their camaraderie must pay off during missions.

But before the SEALs left, he learned their sense of team wasn't limited to others wearing Tridents. As Reagan prepared to pull into port, a deep cleaning of her spaces was required. No one tasks "riders" – those Sailors aboard a ship who are not part of the permanent crew – with routine cleaning tasks, but several members of the SEAL platoon took it upon themselves to wash down the

showers and scrub sinks alongside Reagan Sailors.

"They're a force, too," one SEAL said later, impressed with the ship's company.

"The team mindset isn't fixed to the SEAL teams," said another. "I thought that was pretty impressive."

On a grander scale, too, the interoperability opened eyes.

"When SPECWAR came on board, immediately we integrated," said Cmdr. David Zook, commanding officer of USS Howard. "We got radio techs on our radios, we got operators together in combat systems, we got our folks together in the wardroom, and only about an hour afterward, we started discussions about an interoperable mission. The first things that came up were, 'All right, how do we manage our flight deck? How do we manage our RHIBs? How do we manage the fuel associated with all of the things that are going to be involved?'"

And we started to see the capabilities that came with the SPECWAR team. That was just phenomenal. It really enhanced our situational awareness and really gave me a much broader perspective of what the common operating picture was."

By the time Reagan pulled into port, operators were excited about pursuing further interoperable missions in the future.

"Early on in my career I was told flexibility is the key to Naval Special Warfare," the SEALs' officer in charge said. "It's one of the catchphrases of the community, so if you come in with a closed mind -- you think you're going to be doing X and you're doing Y -- you need to start thinking about Z."

Partnering with the fleet after years of land wars fits that model.

"There shouldn't be a fixed template to our mission set," he said, "other than maritime dominance." 

The Only Easy Day Was Yesterday

**Retired master chief brings new meaning to the Team guy
attitude of not giving up**

*Story by MCI Dominique Canales | CNSWC Public Affairs
Photos courtesy of Mike Faketty*



SEALs prepare for a night training operation aboard USS Howard (DDG 83).



Mike Faketty (center top) poses for a photo with triathlon relay teammates Ray Hohenbeck (left), Dave Schmek (right) and Superfrog race coordinator Moki Martin after finishing the 2013 Superfrog Triathlon.



“My main focus is trying to stay healthy. I don’t set my clock. I do whatever I want.”

On the outside Mike Faketty looks like a normal, healthy 62-year-old. As a retired Navy SEAL, he maintains the active lifestyle many former Team guys do; he exercises, gets together with friends, vacations with his wife. Looking at him, it would be impossible to guess that only two years ago, doctors told him he had six months to live.

His story up to that point was a fairly common one for a retired SEAL master chief. Born and raised in San Diego, Faketty joined the Navy to become a SEAL, a choice inspired by his uncle, Frank Faketty, who was one of the original Frogmen of World War II.

“I got to talking to him when I was fairly young, [he] motivated me, and I figured well, let’s give it a try,” said Faketty.

He went on to spend 30 years in the teams, serving in several campaigns, pushing candidates through BUD/S training and leading the Navy parachute team. Transitioning from active to retired life wasn’t difficult for him because of the support of the NSW community.

“I have always been connected with NSW, especially when I worked at Naval Special Warfare Command,” he said. “So it was

like, even though I am a civilian, I never left the community. I came back to WARCOM and I worked air and diving and couple other programs and I got to deal with guys that used to work for me in the teams are now the senior enlisted of NSW.”

But while working at WARCOM, he started feeling ill.

“I was working in operations department as the air and dive program manager,” he said. “It was during one of my workouts in the gym. I started riding a bike and got real light-headed. I almost felt like I was going to pass out. So I figured, being a Team guy, that it’s just a phase, so I tried it again and almost fell on my face. I stopped, thinking I maybe was having a heart attack – that was the first thing that came to mind. I went to the locker room, got changed, [and] told the guys I have to go home.”

After waking the next day, he went to the doctor, still feeling sick. “[The doctor] says, ‘I can’t hear you breathe – go get an X-ray,’” said Faketty. “A normal X-ray looks black; mine was white.”

The doctor told him fluid in his chest was causing him to have difficulty breathing.

Faketty was then sent to the emergency room, where a pulmonary

doctor drained approximately two liters of fluid from his lungs. He was sent home and the fluid sent out for testing. Almost six days later, he still hadn’t heard anything back from the doctor. Finally, he got a call.

“That was July 6, 2012 and that’s the day I found out that I had stage four lung cancer,” said Faketty. “The doctor gave me two to six months left to live.”

According to Faketty, the fluid they drained from his lung contained an anaplastic lymphoma kinase gene – a gene responsible for non-small-cell carcinoma, a type of lung cancer. The diagnosis came as a surprise for Faketty, because he has been a non-smoker all his life. What Faketty was told about his disease is that it is nicknamed the “non-smokers cancer,” and 90 percent of those diagnosed with this type of cancer have never been regular smokers.

His wife of 40 years, Jari, was by his side when he received the news.

“She did well,” said Faketty. “She didn’t say anything in front of the doctor. In the car was where things started to sink in and for the next couple days, while we were waiting for people to call us and tell us what to do, it really hit her emotionally.”

Faketty had a somewhat different reaction to his news.

“I slept that night. The next day started thinking about it,” he said. “I spent all this time in the teams, survived, and all of a sudden now I get hit with this a few years after I get out. It just works your mind a whole lot. You’re thinking about, what’s going to happen if [you die], and things you should have done. With the build up of stress on both of us, dampening out spirits, I spoke with my wife and said to her ‘I love you. Let’s figure out some game plan here. We’ll always fight this thing together.’”

Faketty’s lung fluids went through more testing to verify the diagnosis and come up with a treatment plan. Because of the cancer type, he isn’t on a traditional chemotherapy regimen, instead undergoing an experimental treatment program called targeted therapy.

In August 2012, Faketty began his first round of the program. The drug caused his health to decline, and he was still required to have fluid drained from his lungs on a weekly basis. After 43 weeks, doctors determined the drug was no longer effective. In June 2013, Faketty was transferred to the University of California San Diego Cancer Center and placed on a new clinical trial for different targeted therapy drug.

“[The new drug] has improved my quality of life and allows me to do things I have not been able to do for quite some time,” said Faketty. “This is probably the healthiest I have been in over a year and a half since I was diagnosed.”

Faketty is so healthy, in fact, that he joined fellow former SEALs Ray Hohenbeck and Dave Schmek to compete in the 2013 Superfrog Triathlon relay.

“The motivation and ‘Team guy’ attitude given to me by Ray and Dave was inspirational in the completion of the swim,” said Faketty. “I continue to work out and the goal is to stay healthy and compete in 2014 Superfrog with Ray and Dave as a team again.”

Mike’s goals are seemingly simple now. He has fully retired from working, but never takes a day for granted.

“I just turned 62,” he said. “My long term goal is to hit 63, because you just never know. There are people that I have befriended since I started the treatment – they’re no longer with us. So, I play it birthday to birthday, which is also anniversary to anniversary. I’ve been married to the same woman for 40 years and it’s been a lot more quality time with her than what I was able to do when I was in the teams. My main focus is trying to stay healthy. I don’t set my clock. I do whatever I want to do.”

Since joining the clinical trial at UCSD, Faketty has surpassed the original diagnosis more than three times; living 18 months past the originally predicted date. He is on the tenth round of treatment with the trial, and the cancer remains stable and is not metastasizing to any other part of his body. He attributes his success to attitude, mental toughness he learned from his time at the SEAL Teams, and the vast support network around him.

“The doctors say medical treatment is only part of the solution,” says Faketty. “A positive attitude and willingness to fight is just as important. Support from my wife of 40 years, teammates, friends [and] co-workers goes a long way towards keeping that positive attitude.”

According to Faketty, this type of cancer, while rare, can happen to anyone. SEALs are not immune. But he offers advice in the form of the Team guy attitude.

“Know there are options there, and when one of doctor tells you two to six months – take it with a grain of salt,” said Faketty. “A fellow retired teammate of mine, Bill McNally, who is also fighting cancers says it best ‘Never give up, don’t quit, and the only easy day was yesterday.’”

Eating for Optimum Health and Performance

Meet Cheryl Zonkowski, NSW's Nutritionist

Interview and photo by MC2 Geneva Brier | CNSWC Public Affairs

Cheryl Zonkowski is the performance dietitian for Naval Special Warfare Group 1 (NSWG 1). Prior to employment at NSWG 1 Training Detachment, she worked full time at the University of Florida as their director of sports nutrition for the athletic association. Zonkowski assists NSW operators, enablers, spouses and dependents with all nutrition concerns. She received her undergraduate and graduate degrees in nutrition from University of Florida.



Q How would you describe what you do?

A I educate operators and support staff on nutritional health both for performance, career longevity, pre-rehabilitation, injuries and rehabilitation. I am also qualified to help them if they have medical nutrition therapy-related issues such as cholesterol or blood panel problems,[or] if they are inquisitive about any sort of diet, whether it's a kind of Food and Drug Administration (FDA) diet or a dietary trend that they have questions about. I also get a lot of curbside counsels when I am in the gym during lifting groups or group workout sessions, usually regarding supplements, quick and easy tips for weight loss or gain and muscle building.

Q Is there a certain diet or routine you lean toward?

A My genre is that I am a foodie, a whole food person. I don't fall under a certain diet and am not 100 percent FDA, food guide pyramid or paleo. I believe it is important to find the best practices for the individual person.

Q What is an average day like?

A Typically I see individuals for appointments in the afternoon. I can see anywhere from zero to five people per day and generally the initial counsel lasts anywhere from 35 to 45 minutes, depending on their questions, how in-depth they want to go and what their current knowledge and background is. I do everything from individual consults, safety stand-downs to platoon and command briefs.

Q Do you interact with BUD/S students?

A I have currently been asked for the last year to consult with Naval Special Warfare Center to create a standardized menu for Hell Week that is different than the main galley diet in order to facilitate and support the increased energy expenditure of Hell Week training. In addition, I am creating some basic recommendations to perhaps allow students in the future to take a basic multi-vitamin. I work with corpsmen on what supplements to recommend for certain lab related values, such as iron, zinc, magnesium, fish oil or vitamin D. So, it's not just me and my practices, I am trying to insert myself into all of the pre-existing military systems and standards to basically reach the most amount of people that I can while I am here.

Q Is the menu proving successful?

A It is anecdotal because it is not a research study, but we have done four classes so far and it has shown to be successful. Basically it is taking the foods that are already within the galley catalogue and specifically selecting things based on what evolution they are coming from and what evolution they are going into. So, we are not bringing in any new food, just readjusting how we are using the food that is available. The feedback we have received from medical is that they are having less gastric reflux and they are having less bowel movement issues and seeing less inflammation. Pretty much anything that is related to nutrition and digestion, the menu is having a positive effect but again it is anecdotal, not research-based.

Q Do you offer assistance to spouses as well?

A Yes, as part of the Tactical Athlete Program have participated in some of the pre-deployment retreats, so we have given our overview to the operators and their spouses as well as helped family services with deployed spousal retreats and programs. I have also done a couple of cooking classes and cooking demonstrations.

I do general sessions with spouses who have deployed partners as well as with spouses and their children, teaching them about fruits and vegetables, different food groups and how to make snacks taste good and that are good for them. The kids actually get to participate and build all their own meals.

Q How is your job important to NSW?

A As far as the nutrition component, it's crucial. I have recently spoken with some of our tactical athlete team members, strength and conditioning coaches, sports psychologist and physical therapist and they believe the nutrition is the biggest piece of the puzzle, because if you are not fueling your body correctly and taking care of it from the inside out, you are definitely going to be predisposed to injury and illness.

I got into this profession because I do in fact believe it's important. I travel to the unit level training sites and do menu assessment and needs. I have measured individual hydration statuses during ULT as well as blood glucose to see if their energy stores are high enough to support the energy expenditure to meet their training demands and then I translate that into applied recommendations.

Q After so much extensive training, what do you think SEALs can continue to work on?

A Recovery is huge part of our program here. From the very beginning of all operators' training and any support training,, it's 'Go, go, go as hard as you can with everything that you have.' It's crucial that they learn when to give it all they have and when to take a rest day or an active recovery day. It is important these guys know what kind of practices are appropriate to help them recover if they are going to do back-to-back workouts, so they can get the most out of the workout without breaking themselves down every day. Career longevity is the most important [goals] that we have.

Q What is the main piece of advice you would give somebody about nutrition?

A Maintaining your body over time is huge, doing all the little things day to day to make that happen is very important. So, appropriate meal planning, packing, knowing what and how much to consume, whether it's in the galley or whatever is available at your location. Also, knowing how much fluid you specifically need to drink over time adds up to you staying healthier and being active and operable. ☺

WARCOM Warrior Challenge

Story and photos by MC2 Geneva G. Brier | CNSWC Public Affairs

A new workout regimen has begun at Naval Special Warfare Command and everyone is invited to participate. The program is called the Warrior Challenge, and takes place the last Friday of each month. The idea behind it is to introduce workouts most Sailors and civilians at WARCOM would not normally perform during daily physical training sessions.

"The WARCOM Warrior Challenge is an idea I came up with to spice things up a little," said Yeoman 2nd Class Jasmine Moraleslicea, coordinator of Warrior Challenge and assistant command fitness leader. "I would like to challenge people to step outside of their comfort zone and see what their bodies are really capable of doing."

The Warrior Challenge schedule has been planned through the end of 2014 and includes workouts such as timed exercises, log physical training and obstacle courses. A workout named "The Murph" kicked off the Warrior Challenge on February 28. The Murph is a workout completed for time in running, push-ups, pull-ups and squats. It is named in memory of Navy SEAL Lt. Michael

Murphy, who was killed in 2005 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

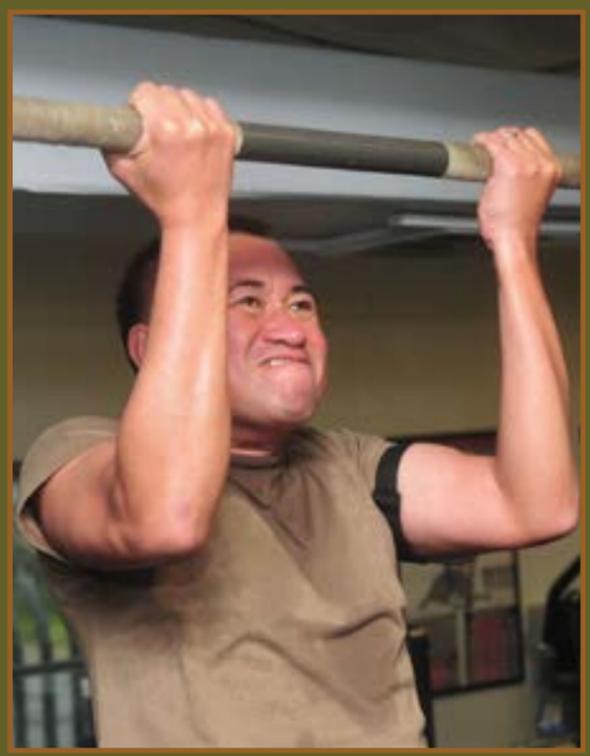
"The Naval Special Warfare community will forever remember June 28, 2005 and the heroic efforts and sacrifices of our special operators," said Matthew Suder, program analyst at WARCOM and the winner of The Murph challenge. "My participation today was to honor Lt. Murphy and the brave men of Operation Red Wings who gave their last full measure of devotion for their teammates and their country."

The main message behind these collective challenges is most people get comfortable with their workout routines, which results in plateaus in progress.

"Your body is an amazing machine, but after a while it will get used to the workouts and food you eat," said Morales. "You can't expect to see results if you keep running two miles and doing the same workout every day without pushing yourself to go longer and harder."



During the Warrior Challenge featuring "The Murph," participants perform an arduous routine featuring running, pull-ups, push-ups and squats.



The Murph
FOR TIME:
 1 Mile Run
 100 Pull-ups
 200 Push ups
 300 Squats
 1 Mile Run

Throughout the workout you are able to partition the pull-ups, push-ups, and squats as needed, though you must begin and end with a one-mile run. If you have a 20-pound vest, wear it.

The workout is named in memory of Navy Lt. Michael Murphy, 29, of Patchogue, N.Y., who was killed in Afghanistan June 28th, 2005.

This workout was one of Murphy's favorites and he had previously named it "Body Armor." Beginning August 18, 2005 the workout named was officially changed to "Murph" in honor of the warrior who wanted nothing more in life than to serve this country and the people who make it what it is.

2014 SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 28	>>>	The "Murph"
MARCH 21	>>>>>	Push-Up Challenge
APRIL 25	>>>>>	The "Fran"
MAY 30	>>>>>>	200-Sit-up Challenge
JUNE 27	>>>>>	Filthy Fifty
JULY 25	>>>>>>	200 Squat Challenge
AUGUST 28	>>>>>	5000 Meter Row
SEPTEMBER 26	>>>>>	Log Obstacle Course
OCTOBER 31	>>>>	Halloween Challenge
NOVEMBER 14	>>>>	Ring Challenge
DECEMBER 12	>>>>	The "Ryan"

The Art of Selecting Character and Competence

By Cmdr. Jay Hennessey, commanding officer, NSWBTC



“Have you ever served in a platoon or boat detachment and wondered how someone made it through training?”

THE PROBLEM:

All selection and training programs try to avoid two fundamental mistakes: deselecting/dropping good candidates and selecting/qualifying bad candidates. While it is nearly impossible to measure the missed benefit from those who attrite, we have seen first-hand the impact of selecting and qualifying the wrong guy – it can be catastrophic. This is especially true in an organization like NSW, where the strength and success of the unit relies heavily on each individual’s contribution to the Team. Accordingly, leaders at the Naval Special Warfare “Schoolhouse,” Basic Training Command, continuously seek ways to mitigate this risk and ultimately select and qualify only the best candidates.

Over the past 18 months, the Navy SEAL and SWCC training cadre identified two opportunities to mitigate this risk. The first opportunity identified was the historic over-valuing of physical performance and undervaluing of character attributes. Simply put, the cadre sought to eliminate selection error, or the process of graduating fit athletes who were not good teammates.

Senior cadre members often felt their hands were tied. They observed behaviors of trainees not consistent with the SEAL and SWCC Ethos. However, since the trainees were passing all their test gates, they were progressing. Or, as the First Phase Master Chief once commented, “Sir, this guy may be passing our test gates, but I would not want him on my Team. I don’t trust him and he’s not a team player. I see it, my cadre sees it, and his classmates see it.”

The second opportunity identified was for the school house to track each trainee’s character and performance throughout each pipeline. The only time the command flagged a trainee’s record was when he failed a test gate (usually due to physical performance). However, there was no method to track the character attributes both fellow students and experienced cadre members observed. To the cadre, these were best explained as the blind spots of the pipeline.

The SEAL and SWCC pipelines are 63 and 28 weeks long, respectively. Intuitively, this should be enough time to select and assess trainees; however, the staff recognized blind spots occurred at the transition of each phase of training with very little turnover between staffs. Each staff usually was aware of the most and least successful students – they always stood out. The problem was

mapping the progress of the rest of the pack.

The blind spot became most evident when a student failed a test gate. At this time, the trainee would go to a student performance review board. In this board, the command’s most experienced cadre would assess the trainee’s performance and determine if this trainee should remain in the pipeline. Has he been a good teammate? Has he been trustworthy? Did he show up on time with the right gear? Did he prioritize team over self? Would his classmates and instructors choose him for their team? These critical questions are at the root of selecting the right teammate.

Unfortunately, the board found cadre members were often ill prepared to answer those questions. Instead, the answer was usually something like, “In assaults he is really struggling. Otherwise, I don’t know -- we have only had him for 2 weeks.”

In this scenario, the trainee is in his second week of assault training, but has been in the SEAL pipeline for 42 weeks. After that amount of time, the expectation would be to know a bit about the trainee’s character.

THE SOLUTION:

The answer was clear – determine what matters most to being a SEAL and SWCC operator and measure it. Then, create a process mapping each trainee’s performance and progress.

What matters most in selecting Teammates?

The issue of selection errors and blind spots sparked incredible dialogue among senior cadre members. Collectively, the comments from the cadre were similar. One senior enlisted stated, “I don’t really care how fast a guy is on the four-mile run, or two-mile swim, as long as he is fast enough; I want to know if he is going to be a good team guy. Will he have my back? Can I trust him? That’s what we need to be testing.”

Reputation is the currency of NSW: Most would agree establishing a strong reputation as an operator and a Teammate is crucial to succeeding in the Teams. With this in mind, the cadre believes providing ongoing and constructive feedback to a trainee on his performance will not only help address the challenges of selection errors and blind spots, but will also help future trainees succeed – our ultimate goal. Too often struggling students are unaware of their substandard performance, or they have not been properly counseled on how to improve.

STEP 1:

Solicit feedback. BTC staff formalized an anonymous peer evaluation system which had been used in a variety of ways for many years. In the new system, students would answer more questions about fewer classmates. Rather than trying to evaluate their entire class, each trainee would provide and receive feedback from trainees in his squad. In addition, each trainee would be asked three additional questions:

- Is anyone in the class performing so well, or so poorly, that he is worth mentioning?
- Is anyone in the class at risk of embarrassing NSW or himself due to his conduct?
- Are there any natural leaders in the class?

STEP 2:

Squad mentors. BTC cadre leveraged the strengths of this “squad-model” by assigning a single instructor to each squad - rather than a group of instructors looking at an entire class, one instructor can get to know a squad of trainees. By the end of a block of training, the instructor should know how everyone is performing and while the trainees are conducting peer evaluations, the mentor answers similar questions on every member of his squad.

Selecting the right men to join the ranks of Naval Special Warfare cannot be based on physical performance alone...

STEP 3:

Provide feedback. At the end of each phase of training, the squad mentors and phase leadership provide feedback to each trainee. At this time, the trainee receives the anonymous feedback from his squad members, and direct feedback from his mentor. Each trainee should be well informed on his performance and any areas in which he needs to improve.

What’s the “so what?”

Remember the first question presented?

Have you ever served in a platoon or boat detachment and wondered how someone made it through training?

The “so what” is the measurable data with which cadre can make

decisions – decisions determined by trends, not sporadic occurrences. It is common, however, to see peer evaluations reflecting a stressed friendship, or others illustrating an immature perspective of someone in the class. The cadre is well-armed to sift through the data and determine legitimate issues versus personality conflicts. The cadre is better able to be intrusive with problems in the class. From potential alcohol issues to trainees exhibiting behaviors inconsistent with the NSW Ethos, the cadre is informed with quantitative and qualitative information to make decisions.

In the end, this methodology has removed students from the pipeline who have passed every single test gate but did not meet the character standards; similarly, it has provided additional training opportunities to candidates who have stood out as stellar teammates.

End of the gray-man: The methodology provided cadre with insight on the rest of the class – the guys typically referred to as gray-men. Assigned mentors are now able to have tighter relationships with a smaller number of trainees, and if the mentor missed noteworthy behavior, the peers picked it up. In the end, the methodology enabled mentors to be more informed and better equipped to lead, coach and mentor all trainees to be successful teammates.

Informed cadre – informed trainees: Trainees have become better Teammates by providing them honest and anonymous

feedback. Some might argue evaluations and fitness reports are designed for that purpose; in reality, those reports are really only used for promotion and are completely void of any constructive criticism.

Conversely, this methodology is not designed to influence promotion or advancement – it is designed to tell the individual operator how he is meeting the mark of a teammate, and how he could do it better.

POTENTIAL WAY AHEAD:

As the BTC codifies this process at the schoolhouse, NSW is exploring how this may apply to the rest of the command by evolving “word of mouth” feedback, into a consistent process for the Teams. 

COURAGE:

Can it be taught? Can it be learned?

BY RETIRED CAPT. ROGER HERBERT

MCC Christopher Menzie



University of Virginia’s sports psychologist recently invited me to speak to their women’s basketball team. The topic was courage.

During the question-and-answer session that followed, the team captain posed a no-nonsense question that stuck with me long after I left the locker room. She wanted more than philosophy and a few war stories. She wanted to win – that’s all. If I could help with that, great; if not, she was ready to move on.

“So what does this mean for us?” she asked. “Can we learn to be courageous, or is this just something SEALs are born with?”

What a great question. Where does courage come from? Are people born courageous, or do they learn it?

The reason her question kept nagging me was that I gave her such a crappy answer. I responded—correctly, I think—courage can be learned. But then I started citing Aristotle. A real conversation killer! Instead of Aristotle, I should have cited a conversation I had with one of my BUD/S instructors eight years ago when I commanded the Naval Special Warfare Center.

Quick story. It was my first “hell week” as CO. I was impressed with what I had seen, but I was new and still didn’t really “get it.” On Thursday morning I was crossing the grinder and observed the oncoming shift clearly dialing up the intensity. I wondered why. No one quits after Wednesday night. Why not ease up a little? I pulled the shift chief (a superb Senior Chief who later picked up E-9) off to the side.

The Senior Chief answered my questions diplomatically but directly. “Sir, hell week starts now. This is the most important part.”

He was right. Despite my many years in the teams, I had never fully grasped the true purpose of “selection phase,” that initial “2 x 4 across the forehead” prospective SEALs and SWCCs must endure. I had bought into the conventional wisdom: it’s all about culling the herd, separating the weak from the strong. Not even close. Selection isn’t about attrition; it’s about educating those who don’t attrite. It’s about blazing into the hearts of future SEALs and SWCCs the virtues of our community...and the principal virtue is courage.

So going back to the question posed by Virginia’s basketball captain: courage can be taught and it can be learned. We in NSW have been doing it for decades. Here’s how:

Our instructors incrementally and almost daily expose trainees to challenges they’ve never before faced. In confronting these challenges, BUD/S and BCT (basic training and selection for SWCCs) students learn three things: self-knowledge, self-control and love. (I wish I had a better word for this last one, but I don’t.)

If you were ever a SEAL or SWCC instructor, this may be obvious to you. But since it wasn’t obvious to me until my tour at the Center, I’ll elaborate.

Self-knowledge. For every individual there is a point of exertion beyond which body and mind shut down. Because our species evolved to retreat long before collapse—a prudent survival strategy—very few people possess even vague familiarity with where that shutdown point actually resides. Trainees who decide they’re “done” are simply responding to a very rational impulse. But those who decide to stick around, to take one more step even though it seems irrational to do so, discover a basic truth about human endurance: our “reserve tanks” go much deeper than we imagine.

Self-control. Chaos is a killer. People unaccustomed to chaos seize up when confronted by it. They try to control everything and end up controlling nothing. They become victims. By contrast, those who survive selection learn that there is always one thing they can control: themselves. Although I contend no one “thrives in chaos,” the man who can control his own emotional response to chaos seems to thrive; he perseveres when others shut down.

Love. Instructors pile on tasks that no individual could accomplish. Our students, particularly those who have little experience with teams, fail miserably, painfully, and repeatedly. But at some point a light comes on...it happens every class. They “come together.” It starts with simple cooperative routines. The relationship is instrumental at first—they “use” their classmates to get themselves through training. But they soon learn to appreciate their classmates’ “usefulness” and admire their skills. They soon develop a genuine trust and then a desire to reciprocate. Ultimately, when they discover that there’s almost nothing they can’t accomplish when they work as one, they find that the welfare of their teammates has become at least as important to them as their personal wellbeing. This, I maintain, is love.

Self-knowledge, self-control, and love. Armed with self-knowledge, SEALs and SWCCs persevere when others pack it in. They respond to real—not imagined—human limitations. Armed with self-control, SEALs and SWCCs are coolheaded when others panic. Their minds are clear. Their trigger fingers are steady. The game slows down for them. Finally, SEALs and SWCCs who love their teammates are ready to sacrifice much (perhaps all) for them. They go into harm’s way knowing their teammates “have their backs” in every conceivable way.

This is courage. It can be taught and it can be learned.

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

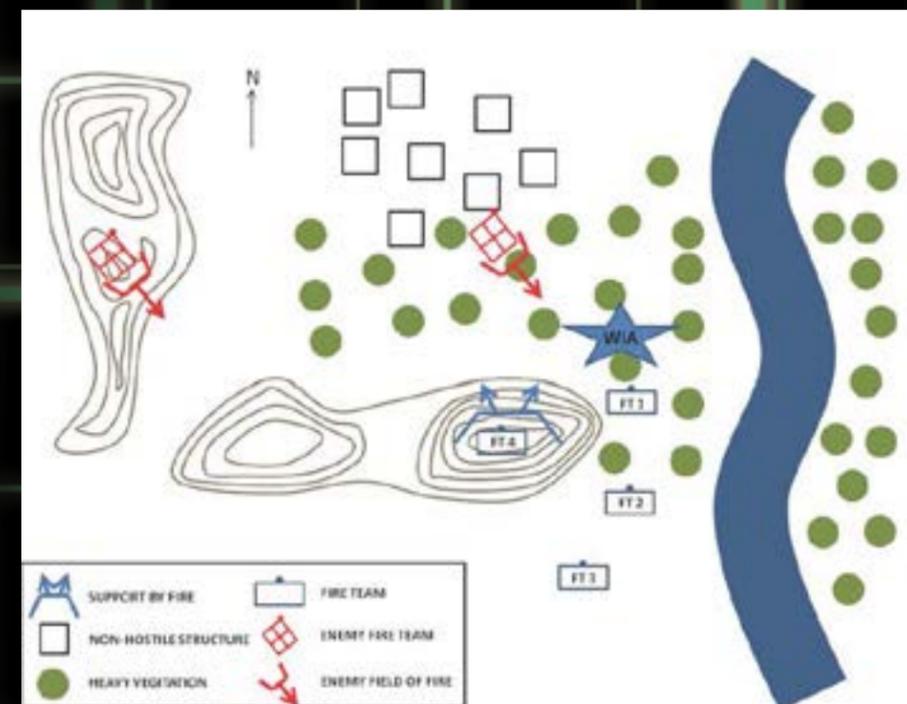
In each issue of Ethos, the reader’s position in the patrol will change. However, the specified title does not exclude others from completing the exercise – every leader in the patrol should be familiar with all levels of command. Additionally, the scenarios are intentionally vague so make any assumptions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

SITUATION

Your platoon is conducting a day light patrol through a river valley in Afghanistan in order to conduct a shura. While approaching a small village, the platoon is forced to travel through a tight pass defined by a deep river to the east and sheer cliffs to the west. Fire team four is able to find a route to high ground overlooking the pass and established a support position prior to the platoon traversing the choke point. Just as fire team one exits the pass, heavy automatic weapons fire erupts from two enemy positions and one SEAL receives a gunshot wound to the leg. Fire team four assesses at least two well-fortified fighting positions and returns fire, however is unable to suppress the contact.

Available Resources

- AWT SUPPORT is approximately 15 minutes out after the request is made.
- MEDEVAC is 45 minutes out.
- 1 x 60 mm mortar system with 15 rounds with fire team 4.



REQUIREMENT

Define the roles and responsibilities of the OIC and SEA of the operation. Prioritize the decisions that should be made in both roles and explain.

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 editor@navsoc.socom.mil.

APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH



Every **two** minutes
Someone in the United States
is sexually assaulted.

80% of sexual assault victims
are under the age of 30.

YOU can help
break the silence
and build survivors.

DOD SAFE HELPLINE:
877-995-5247

**5K WALK/RUN & SHINE THE LIGHT CEREMONY
FRIDAY, APRIL 25TH**

START TIME: 0900 AT THE QUAY WALL ON NAVAL BASE CORONADO
POINT OF CONTACT: AOC EVANS; EDREAL.EVANS@NAVY.MIL