

Tactical training facility under construction onboard NCBC

By MCC Rosalie Chang
 NCBC Public Affairs

Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport Security Department is constructing a shoot house aboard the installation to provide security forces with the ability to conduct scenario-based training in a secure environment. The facility is commonly used to familiarize personnel in infiltrating structures and methods used to overwhelm targets in the quickest and most efficient manner. A proper training facility is paramount to keep law enforcement officers and military personnel safe in real life situations. For NCBC, it all began with Security Tactics Training Officer, Maj. Jeffrey Graf.

"When I first arrived, they did not train with simunition rounds very often or have a place to use them," said Graf. "I asked if it was possible to create our own shoot house and was told to draw something up and that is what it took to get the ball rolling."

The main goal is to teach active shooter and response in various combat environments with the capability of using simunition rounds.

"The facility has about six entrances, so depending on which one we use and what walls we set into place, it will never be the same set-up because we can easily change the configuration of the building at any time," said Graf.

Master-at-Arms 1st Class Rodolfo Gallardo explained that the shoot house will give the department the more advanced training they need to fight the fight and build on their teamwork.

"I wanted to help build the training within our department to ensure we get that sense of awareness for each situation," said Gallardo.

"Now with the shoot house, we will be able to add more to it physically and mentally. By using simunition rounds, our team will be able to feel the effect of someone shooting back at them and know that it is something they have to deal with in a real world situation."

Realistic and dynamic training environments increase the successful outcome of real time scenarios when split second thinking is necessary. Graf explained that every aspect of the training



Ensign William Clark, the Security Officer for the Naval Construction Battalion Center showcases the training facility to news crews during a media day. The new shoot-house will be open for local law enforcement to use as well. Photo by MC3 Kohen Gillis.

involved focuses on police survival.

"It's a one-stop shop where our guys can come in at any time of day to knock out valuable training," said Graf. "We can conduct vehicle traffic stop training, weapons handling, hand-to-hand training, antiterrorism and so much more and it is all out of sight from the public's view."

Currently, security personnel have concerns due to not having a set area to conduct training without impacting a large portion of the base patrons. Problems also come from the weather shift to cold and rainy and not having access to any buildings for the training.

"One of the biggest advantages we have is the location of our facility," said Graf. "It is inside a warehouse, where we can pull in our own vehicles if needed and we can train without

anyone being able to see our tactics."

Security forces personnel will have access to the training facility, 24 hours a day, during both day and night shifts. Graf stated that it will allow the team set up exercises around their work schedules to become more familiar with their weapons and how to use them as well as fine tuning their tactical skill sets. The facility is expected to be completed in January 2019 and will be open to base security forces and local civilian law enforcement agencies.

"I'm excited to see this to completion, for my team to see what they have accomplished and ready to see and have personnel use it," said NCBC Security Officer Ens. William Clark. "It has been a long time coming and will be rewarding to see their hard work pay off."



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Seabee base resident spreads holiday cheer

By Ryan Labadens
NCBC Public Affairs

For some people, spreading a little holiday cheer is as much of a joy for the giver as it is for the receiver. One person in particular who likes to be on the giving end of the holiday-cheer spreading is Brillia Hudson, a resident living onboard Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport, Mississippi. For many of the holidays throughout the year, Hudson prepares meals or treats that she brings around to the various departments on base, all in the spirit of giving back to the military community and spreading a little holiday joy. "I love to cook, and I always liked to give back to others. So every holiday I like to try to give the security troops at the gate, or the fire department, or maintenance,

housing, and people in other departments a little something, whether it's a meal or treats, like candy or cookies, just to brighten their day," said Hudson. Hudson, who originally grew up in Gulfport, Mississippi, is the widow of James William Hudson, Sr., a U.S. Army engineer who died while serving during the Vietnam War. The couple had four children together, and upon her husband's death, Hudson decided to continue pursuing her goal of becoming a teacher. She initially taught at a few schools in Gulfport and Florida before she and her children moved to Williamsburg, Virginia, where she finished up her 40 years in education teaching at Berkley Middle School. Now that her children are all grown and she's retired from teaching, Hudson decided to move back to

Gulfport in 2011 and started living in base housing on the Seabee base back in 2014. The 74-year-old retired school teacher said that serving is something she always enjoyed doing, whether it was volunteering through her church, other military- or non-military-affiliated organizations, or just on her own. "It makes me feel good to do something to help out people in whatever little ways I can. I just like the idea of helping people, period," said Hudson. "When I was teaching, sometimes you'd have kids in your class who may be homeless or not have the opportunity to have a Thanksgiving meal, so I always liked helping them out in that way. And now after 40 years of teaching, I have this community here to help out however I can."



Brillia Hudson (left), a resident living onboard NCBC delivers hot cocoa mix – or "Snowman Soup," as she calls it – to the security department Dec. 11. (U.S. Navy photo by Ryan Labadens/released)

Former Navy fighter pilot brings cheer as cashier to Seabee base

By Ryan Labadens
NCBC Public Affairs

Sometimes it's the smallest gestures – a hearty 'good morning,' a vibrant conversation, or even just a friendly smile – that can help brighten a person's day. That's something that Doug Clark, a cashier at the Mini Mart onboard Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport, Miss., strives for whenever he interacts with customers going through his line during the day. It might not be obvious just by looking at him, but the white-haired, gregarious, 77-years-young man was – and is – more than just a cashier. Back during the Vietnam War, Clark was a U.S. Navy fighter pilot, screaming his F-8 Crusader jet fighter off the deck of the Essex-Class aircraft carrier USS Hancock (CV 19) and flying sorties over the Gulf of Tonkin off the coast of Vietnam between 1966 and 1968. His time in the Navy is something he remembers fondly, judging by the glint in his eyes when he speaks of his former fighter pilot days and by the energy in his voice as he flips through faded photos from his time in the military. "Boy, those were some fun times, let me tell you,"

he said, shaking his head wistfully. Clark grew up in Seattle, Wash., with his mother and younger brother. His father, a musician who had his own music show on a local radio station, died of encephalitis when Clark was only four-years old. Growing up, Clark often remembered seeing U.S. Navy planes flying overhead since he lived near what used to be Sand Point Naval Air Station, and that helped spark his interest in aviation. He initially served in the naval reserves after graduating from high school in 1960, while attending college for aeronautics and astronautics engineering at the University of Washington in Seattle. Just after receiving his bachelor's degree, one of the recruiters on base suggested he pursue becoming an officer so that he could apply for flight training. A year after he finished his bachelor's, he completed his master's degree in the same field, went right into officer boot camp in December 1965 and completed all of his training to become a fighter pilot by March 1966. It wasn't long after that before Clark had his first of two tours in Vietnam. "I'll never forget the first time we were in the Gulf of Tonkin – we had just got there – and the first day of flight operations (ops), I got in my cockpit on the flight deck and turned my radio on to hear strike ops, and I could hear them give the code word of the day to let us know that bandits, the MiGs (fighter jets), were airborne and were heading south (toward South Vietnam). And I thought, after all those months of training, this was finally the real thing. I'm going into combat," said Clark, his eyes wide with excitement. "So we vectored toward them and tried to intercept and engage them, but then right before they got into range they hooked around and flew back north of the border again. They knew we weren't allowed to follow them across the DMZ (demilitarized zone)," he said, throwing up his hands in remembered frustration.

Clark's squadron flew what he called 'barrier cap' missions, flying patrols in between the aircraft carrier and land to provide protection for strike groups flying out to perform bombing raids and rocket strikes on enemy facilities. Sometimes they also escorted the strike groups or photo-reconnaissance aircraft all the way to their targets to provide protection from enemy fighters. While he would often have to dodge surface-to-air missiles and small-arms fire, Clark never got the chance to actually engage with enemy fighters, even though he was scrambled to intercept them on numerous occasions. After his tours in Vietnam, Clark continued to work in various assignments for the active duty Navy and Naval Air Reserves, eventually retiring at the rank of commander in 1987 after having served 22 years in the military. He then landed jobs working for civilian airline companies, flying cargo in Boeing 727 aircraft. When he finished his airline career in 2004, Clark and his wife Roberta moved down to the Mississippi Gulf Coast since his wife was originally from Bay St. Louis. His wife had three daughters from a previous marriage, and Clark and Roberta adopted a fourth girl to raise together. After the girls had grown up, Clark decided he wanted to get back into the workforce to have something to help fill his daily schedule. He worked a few odd jobs before deciding to check out what part-time jobs were available at the Seabee base in Gulfport, where he eventually got hired on as a cashier at the Mini Mart in 2015. One of the things he enjoys most about working at the Mini Mart is getting to interact with the customers he sees each day, especially the military members. Having been in the Navy, one of the things he enjoyed most was the bonds he formed with his squadron members during his interactions with them.



Commanding Officer
Capt. William Whitmire

Public Affairs Officer
Brian Lamar

Assistant PAO
Ryan Labadens
Courier Staff
MCC Rosalie Chang
CE2 Alyssa Ware
MC3 Kohen Gillis

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