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UTR CONNECTS SAILORS AND FAMILIES

BY MC3 SOPHIE PINKHAM



(Above) Airman Gregory Bedford reads a Dr. Seuss book to his daughter as a part of the United Reading Program. Photo by MC3 Sophie A. Pinkham.

The United Through Reading (UTR) program aboard the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) allows the families of Sailors, especially children, to feel more connected to their parent or guardian during underways as part of the Optimized Fleet Response Plan (OFRP).

The program, ran by Ike's religious ministries department (RELMIN), facilitates video recording of Sailors reading a book to their children, so they can see their Sailor and hear their voice when they're separated.

For Navy Counselor 1st Class Cody Wood, a member of Ike's command career counselor team, the UTR program was a special opportunity to connect with his son while at sea.

"My son is four, and he doesn't really quite understand what I'm doing," said Wood. "This is a way to stay in connection with him, and yes I can't be there, but I'm still here for him. Without seeing their parent, they don't understand where you're at. In younger kids two and three years old, they may not realize who their father or mother is, and this allows them to continue bonding even though they're not present."

This wasn't the first time Wood has heard of UTR. As a Third Class he helped his friend, who was a Religious Program Specialist, with the UTR program on USS Germantown (LSD 42) in 2007.

"When I was helping out on the Germantown, people would do several books, that way the kid's not watching the same video over and over and getting

bored with it," said

Wood. "If you do four, five or six, they can do a different one each night, or if they have a favorite book they can pick one when they put the memory card in a laptop and play it."

Wood pointed out that along with maintaining a relationship with his son, the program would also help his son excel at reading.

"One of the biggest things about learning is mimicking," said Chief Religious Program Specialist Cecil Collins, RELMIN's Departmental Leading Chief Petty Officer. "Reading with your child helps them recognize the words and helps their vocabulary. It gets the thought process going and helping them understand what they're reading."

Collins also utilized the program in 2005 on USS Tarawa (LHA 1) to read to his own children before social media was popular.

"I was told by my wife that they would read it over and over," said Collins. "They could recite the book. My daughter was only about three years old but she knew every word in the book. They miss us just as much as we miss them, and it gives them that kind of virtual dad or mom and it helps them get through the day. You can do it monthly and every month they'll have a new book to read to fill up their library. Your child is able to sit and read a book with you because we all know that children love to look at videos and movies. What better way to have their own parent whom they miss and love, read a

bedtime story to them every day."

For Collins, the impact it had on his children even years later is apparent.

"We talk about it all the time even though it was 14 years ago, and they still have the book," said Collins.

Religious Program Specialist 3rd Class Chris Nixon has been running UTR onboard Ike for around two weeks and a handful of Sailors have recorded themselves reading.

"It's a nice program for Sailors at sea so they can read to their kids, cousins or nephews," said Nixon. "I had someone read to her friend who was having a baby."

There is no shortage of books to support the program, and UTR provides supplies.

"We get regular monthly shipments," said Collins. "Not only do we get the books, but we also get the SD cards that they send us. We purchased new cameras to try to get the videos to be the highest quality possible because it'll be something they'll cherish for years to come."

Wood emphasized that the program is not just to read stories to only your kids.

"If you have nieces, nephews or any family member you've bonded with or want to stay in touch with, you can take and continue to do that with them," said Wood. "You don't have to have children to use the program."

Sailors who want to record themselves reading a book can sign up for a 30-minute time slot in the library.

"I record them," said Nixon. "After they're done reading the book, I replay it back to them, and if they don't like it we can rerecord it. I've been giving them a memory card and then they can send the memory card and book through the post office."

Some Sailors might not want to be recorded or may feel uncomfortable in front of a camera.

"Your family loves you for who you are," said Collins. "Get in front of the camera because your loved ones want to see your shining face, they want to see you in your uniform and they want to see what you're doing out here."

Wood encourages Sailors to give the program a chance.

"A lot of people feel weird reading to a camera," said Wood. "But in the long run it's a way to stay connected with your family. It's a way to be there without being there, and overall the program is phenomenal. Have fun with it. Don't be stiff and robotic, use the funny voices that your kids can imitate and have fun with it because your kids will enjoy it more if it feels like you're there with them."

Wood was enthusiastic about recording more stories for his son in the future.

"We were the 'guinea pigs' to test the new equipment," said Wood. "But it's been working so well that it's like the program is fully ready now. It's really easy, and you get a free book and a lifetime story."

For more information on the United Through Reading program, contact Nixon or visit unitedthroughreading.org.

HURRICANE SEASON IS COMING: DO YOU "KNOW YOUR ZONE?"

BY MC3 DEVIN WALRATH



The guided-missile destroyer USS James E. Williams (DDG 95) departs Naval Station Norfolk after the announcement of Sortie Condition Alpha ahead of Hurricane Florence, Sept. 10, 2018. Photo by MC2 Justin Wolpert.

Winds over 74 miles per hour whip through trees, bending them over as if they are made of rubber as what was once a calm street lined with two neat rows of parked cars becomes a rushing mess of water, mud and broken branches. Now is too late to plan; the hurricane has already struck.

The "Know your Zone" tiered-evacuation zone map serves roughly 1.25 million residents in the Coastal Virginia area, the region of the state most vulnerable to hurricanes and other tropical zones. Being aware of what zone their residence falls under can help USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) Sailors and their families determine both what they need to do to prepare for an emergent weather event and when it's time to evacuate.

"Hurricane preparedness represents a methodical approach to mitigating risks before hurricane conditions are forecast for your area," said Lt. Cmdr. Travis Wendt, Meteorology and Oceanography (METOC) Officer aboard Ike. "This is important because an effective hurricane preparedness strategy could mean the difference between life and death for residents in some coastal areas."

Now that Ike is afloat and operational again, Sailors need to prepare their families in case the ship is directed to sortie and leave their home port, according to Wendt.

"Sailors should plan ahead," said Wendt. "Develop a plan that is tailored to your family and your personal property. Write down your plan and make sure all members of your family are familiar with it. Update the plan as your personal needs and operational commitments change."

Now is the time for Sailors to take action and begin planning. Hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30, peaking between the middle of August and late October. Should the need to evacuate occur, Sailors and their families will be alerted through local news sources and on social media on what zones are evacuating and instructions will be passed down through their chain of command.

Zones are designated "A" through "D", with zone "A" being the first to evacuate. These designations are based on physical street address and the nature of the emergency.

According to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, these

zones provide clarity for residents on whether or not they should evacuate in an emergency or take shelter at home.

Hurricane preparedness doesn't exclusively include Sailors evacuating their homes. There are a variety of factors involved, such as building an emergency kit, financial planning and an evacuation plan.

According to the National Weather Service, there are seven key aspects of a successful hurricane preparedness strategy in their Weather-Ready Nation program: determine your risk, develop an evacuation plan, assemble disaster supplies, get an insurance check-up, strengthen your home, help your neighbors and complete a written plan.

The Navy recognizes the difficulties that accompany emergency situations, which is why there are several programs in place to aid Sailors, such as the Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS) to account for Sailors and their families during a catastrophic event.

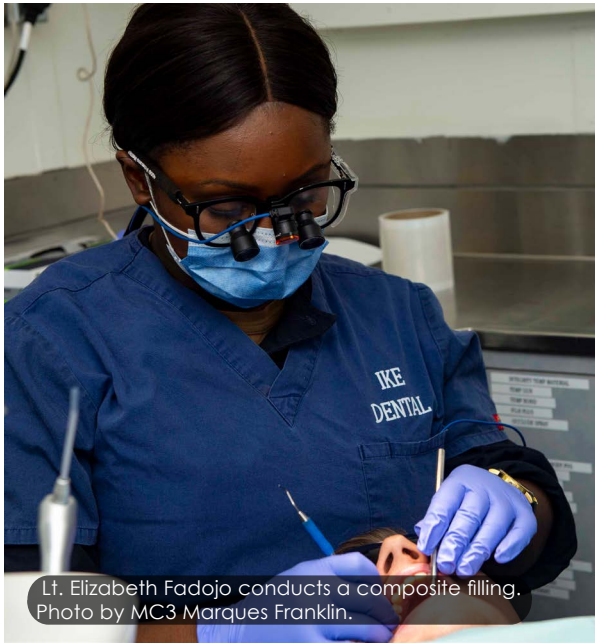
"During a weather-related emergency, Sailors should pay careful attention to the guidance provided by their leaders," said Wendt. "The Navy carefully monitors the public safety recommendations provided by state and local officials and Ike Sailors will receive specific instructions appropriate for their roles and operational tasking."

Some Sailors might find the map confusing as not everyone is located in an evacuation zone.

According to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, just because a home isn't located in any of the evacuation zones, it doesn't mean that they will never need to evacuate. Everyone should be prepared for hurricane season, regardless of their zone.

"Tropical cyclones are a powerful and beautiful demonstration of the laws of physics in the ocean and atmosphere," said Wendt. "However, they must be treated with respect and caution. Listen to the guidance provided by your chain of command and heed the recommendations of state and local emergency managers. It may just save your life!"

For more information on the "Know your Zone" map and hurricane preparedness, visit www.vaemergency.gov.



Lt. Elizabeth Fadojo conducts a composite filling. Photo by MC3 Marques Franklin.



Airman Trevon Thomas, right, receives mail from Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Malcolm Williams in the post office. Photo by MC3 Ashley Estrella.



Sailors participate in a mentorship rodeo on the aft mess deck. Photo by MC3 Marques Franklin.



Sailors prepare to lift a patient during a Mass Casualty drill. Photo by MC3 James Norket.



An F/A-18C conducts a fly-by after completing JPALS testing. Photo by LCDR Rick Chernitzer



An MV-22B Osprey, attached to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 263, prepares to land on the flight deck. Photo by MCSA Trent Hawkins.

SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS IN THE AFRICAN THEATER

BY U.S. NAVAL FORCES EUROPE-AFRICA/U.S. 6TH FLEET PUBLIC AFFAIRS



Adm. James G. Foggo III, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa and commander, Allied Joint Force Command Naples, Italy, left, and Nigerian Vice Adm. Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas, chief of naval staff, Nigeria, salute during the closing ceremony for Exercise Obangame Express 2019 in Lagos, Nigeria, March 22. Photo by MC2 Jonathan Nelson.

Admiral Foggo recently released his 8th episode of the podcast “On the Horizon: Navigating the European and African Theater.” The April Podcast highlights his trips in Africa and discusses what the U.S. Navy has been doing in and around Africa. This is his second podcast devoted to the continent and a continuation of the discussion about how the U.S. Navy can support our African partners in finding African solutions to regional challenges.

Trip to Cabo Verde and Nigeria

Foggo begins the episode by discussing his trip to Cabo Verde and then to Nigeria during exercise Obangame Express 2019. While there he met with civilian and military leaders from Cabo Verde and Nigeria, where they discussed maritime security and the unique relationship between the United States and Cabo Verde. In Nigeria, Foggo talked about his time with the Nigerian Chief of Naval Operations, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas, a good friend and gracious host.

Exercise Cutlass Express

The next topic centered on exercise Cutlass Express, held in January. Foggo said, “It brought together a number of maritime forces and several international organizations to improve maritime law enforcement capacity, and to promote national and regional security in East Africa.”

When asked about the exercise he said, “I think it was

a huge success in terms of a massive maritime domain area that stretched along the East African coast, from Djibouti to the north, to Mozambique in the south, and going as far east as the island nation of the Seychelles. Participating nations in Cutlass Express 2019 included Canada, the Comoros, Djibouti, France, India, and it was the first time that the Indians sent an Indian navy frigate.”

Other nations included, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Portugal, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, the Netherlands, and the United States.

Exercise Obangame Express – Efforts to Combat Sea Blindness

He then went into the second exercise of the year, Obangame Express takes place in West Africa in the Gulf of Guinea.

“There were 33 nations from Africa, Europe, and North America that participated. We had 2,500 personnel on the land, in the littoral, or at sea. Ninety-five ships of varying sizes... Twelve aircraft conducting intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, and sharing a common operating picture.”

Foggo compared 2010 to now in reference to African maritime security when he said, “Back in 2010, there were not a lot of ships, there were not a lot of facilities, there were

not a lot of Maritime Operations Centers... Today, in 2019, West African nations have a series of facilities and radar to enable them to coordinate and collaborate across maritime borders, and work to combat this sea blindness.”

The Admiral also discussed the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Thetis’ rescue at sea of two fishermen who had been lost at sea for three days. The fishermen, rescued the day before the exercise began, were given gas and Gatorade by the Americans and then helped back to port by the Sierra Leonean Coast Guard.

“And you know, it sounds like something that came right out of a Hollywood script, but a real-life situation with a happy ending,” Foggo said.

Phoenix Express and Enhancing Maritime Cooperation

The final exercise addressed by the Admiral was Phoenix Express, held off the coast of North Africa in April.

The aim of Phoenix Express, he said, has been “to promote national and regional security, informed planning and operations, and improve military capabilities.

“And I think through this enhanced cooperation in maritime domain awareness and information sharing, we can all get after the problems that affect all of us, stability in the maritime domain, illicit trafficking, criminal activity, and piracy,” the Admiral said.

Welcome Back

STRIKE FIGHTER SQUADRON THREE TWO (VFA 32)



Our primary mission in VFA-32 is to provide combat-ready aircraft and personnel to conduct missions in support of U.S. foreign policy objectives ranging from presence operations to delivery of ordnance, on target, on time.

Critical Self-Assessment

“The first step to correcting a problem is recognizing there is one in the first place.”

-LSCS Burke

For more stories on the CO’s guiding principles, see videos posted in the Media Public Photos share drive.

Holy Week

Good Friday

Oceana Base Chapel 1900

Holy Saturday

Dam Neck Chapel 1500

Easter Sunday (at NOB Chapel)

Easter Sunrise Worship 0700
Roman Catholic Mass 0930
Protestant Worship 1030

Easter Sunday Services (on Ike)

Roman Catholic Mass 0900
Protestant Worship 1000

SAILOR OF THE DAY



1ST DIVISION

SN THOMAS HALPIN

FROM JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

JOINED THE NAVY AUGUST 15, 2018

REPORTED TO IKE APRIL 2, 2019

WANTS TO REENLIST AND MAKE FIRST CLASS

FAVORITE MOVIE: STAR WARS: A NEW HOPE



IKE'S MOVIE PLAYLIST

★★★ FRIDAY, APRIL 19TH, 2019 ★★★

CHANNEL 5

0815/2015: *SAILOR OF THE DAY'S CHOICE*
 1045/2245: PULP FICITON
 1315/0115: MISS BALA
 1545/0345: THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN
 1815/0615: TOMMY BOY

CHANNEL 6

0815/2015: SUFFRAGETTE
 1045/2245: HEREDITARY
 1315/0115: THE LIGHT BETWEEN OCEANS
 1545/0345: PAPER TOWNS
 1815/0615: LADY BIRD

CHANNEL 7

0815/2015: ISLE OF DOGS
 1045/2245: GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY
 1315/0115: GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL 2
 1545/0345: HAIL, CAESAR!
 1815/0615: ROBIN HOOD (2018)

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ON THE COVER:

Cmdr. Brad Converse, assigned to the "Wildcats" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 131, signals to an aviation boatswain's mate on the flight deck aboard the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69). Photo by MC3 Kaleb Sarten.



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