

WONE WAKE

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CAN YOU DECODE THE MESSAGE?



WHAT'S BUZZING?

What's your favorite holiday tradition?

LS2 Mendi Bakhouch

"Where I'm from, we do a polar plunge on New Year's with the entire town. It's meant to help raise funds and awareness for autism."



Cpl. Jacob Patton

"My favorite part has always been Christmas morning; opening presents with my family and then later that night we'll have a big dinner."



OS2 Jeffrey Hanshaw

"My family likes to grill out and light fireworks in my grandparent's backyard on New Year's."



RATE INFORMATION OF THE SYSTEMS MONTH TECHNICIAN

Responsible for smooth, continuous operation of hundreds of complex networked computer systems are the information system technicians. From ensuring all Sailors have network access to maintaining a constant radio communication system, the ship relies heavily on the ITs. They are vital in transmitting, receiving and storing all sorts of messages and data that is processed across the ship.



Flying Squad: First to Fight

By MC2 Amber Speer

Heavy black and yellow boots hit the ground with a slosh. Their feet were frozen with a sudden rush of icy water. The ballast tank, a compartment used to provide hydrostatic stability to the ship, was open. Now, the space was flooding, and as the water, now tinted brown with fuel, rose and flowed into the ventilation, more spaces began to flood too.

The flying squad aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1), named for their quick response time, had to know what to do. As the water poured over from the tank, they knew if they did not work fast, they were going to lose a space.

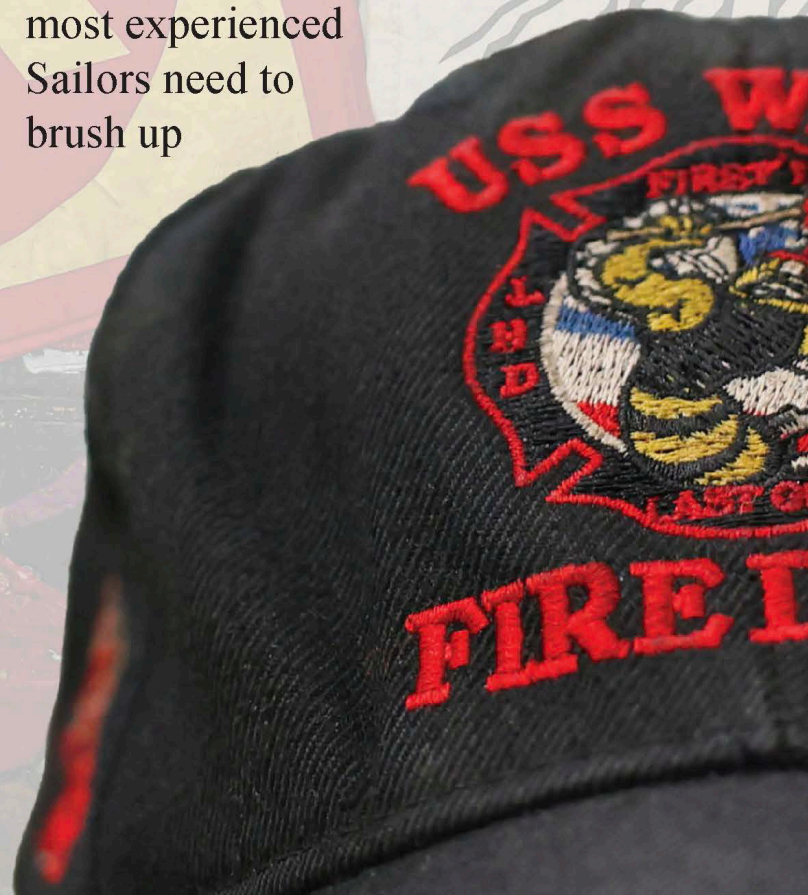
Damage Controlman 3rd Class Michael Kurey, Aviation Electrician's Mate 2nd Class Colton Kirby and the rest of the fast-acting Sailors on the scene were determined to put their heads together and stop the water.

Without fail, the members of the esteemed flying squad respond to the bells indicating a casualty within

minutes: fire, flooding, toxic gas. Every Sailor is a firefighter, but the flying squad is made up of the best.

“Our goal is to get to the scene of any casualty and stop it right then and there before it spreads to the rest of the ship,” said Chief Damage Controlman Christy Edwards, fire marshal aboard Wasp.

The job is not an easy one. Not every vessel is the same, so even the most experienced Sailors need to brush up



on the basics with each new command they arrive at. Understanding the inner workings of an individual ship is vital to being proficient in damage control.

“You need to be very knowledgeable about your ship,” said Kurey, a member of the flying squad for two years. “We’re the first people on the scene, and we have to know every different angle from which you can attack a casualty.”

The flying squad was created for the damage controlmen, a rate specifically trained to be first responders in preventing and stopping accidents throughout the ship.

It is not only damage controlmen that can be members of the flying squad, though. Sailors of every rating are welcomed and encouraged to join the elite squadron of firefighters.

“You have a chance, why not do it?” Kirby

said. “I have this philosophy to try to learn everything on the ship—to get as much experience as possible.”

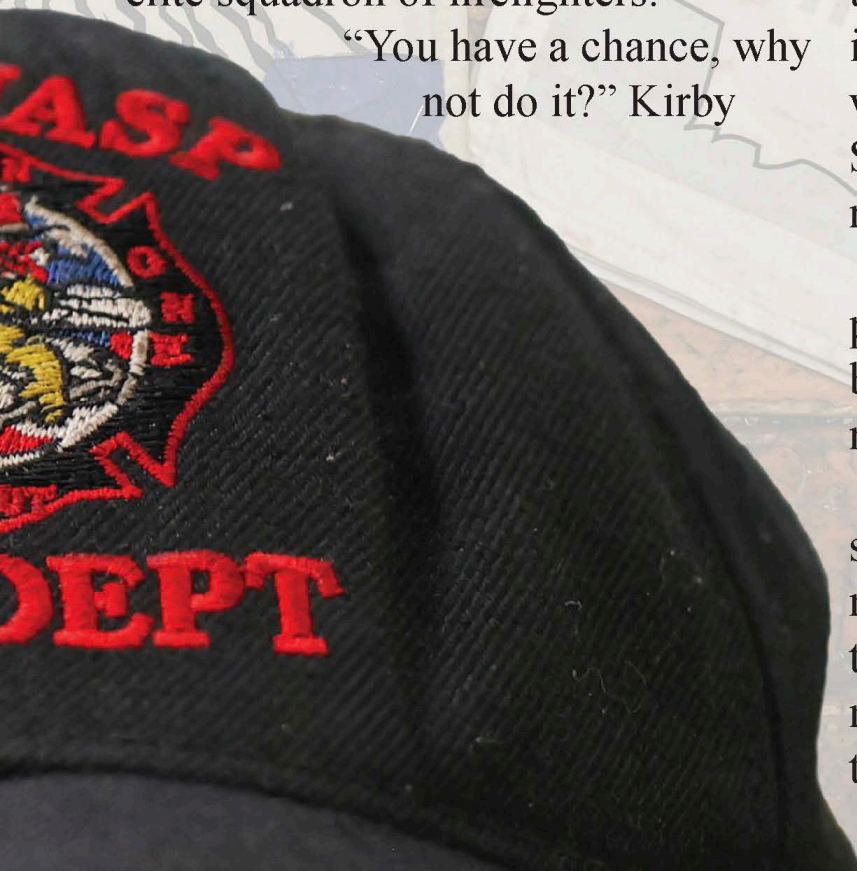
There are a limited number of damage controlmen on any given ship. So, with the assistance of out-of-rate Sailors, the flying squad can utilize their general shipboard knowledge to find the most efficient way to battle any casualty thrown their way.

“If you’re part of the initial response, you’re part of the group that stops the casualty before it really gets started,” Edwards said. “The [damage control] division alone is not enough to have back up teams in case the fire’s out of control; it’s not enough Sailors to combat the whole ship.”

Without a full team, a casualty can become far more dangerous. It takes trust, dedication and teamwork to join in the fight. Freezing up is not an option when the ship is on the line, Kirby said. Standing face to flame with a raging fire requires the strength to fight it.

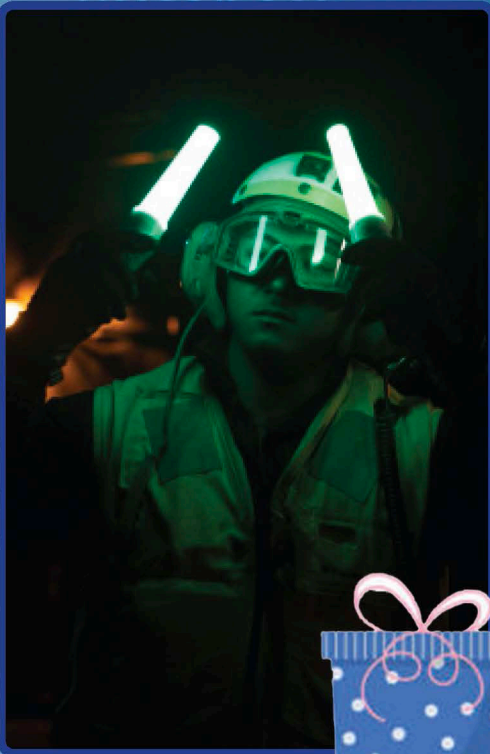
“It takes guts and to be able to not panic under pressure,” Kirby said. “The biggest thing about the flying squad is to not crack.”

The importance of the flying squad shows when the bells ring. It takes moments to lose a space to fire, flood or toxic gas, but when instinct kicks in, the members of the flying squad are always to first to fight.



On





Deckplates *the*

RED, WHITE, BLUE AND GREEN

BY MCSN JUSTIN KEMBLE

“Man overboard, man overboard,” booms the one main circuit. Boots rapidly strike the decks as Sailors and Marines aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) hurry to their muster locations for a man overboard drill. For Sailors, this is a familiar event. For Marines who have never been on a ship before, confusion and panic bloom.

“I was confused,” said Cpl. Victoria Hutt. “People started scrambling. I had to ask Sailors for help to figure out where I was going.”

More than 1,000 Marines joined the crew of Wasp for an exercise combining Amphibious Squadron 4 (PHIBRON) and the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) known as PHIBRON and MEU Integration (PMINT), nearly doubling the personnel aboard Wasp. The blue and green branches of the military combined to prepare the Wasp amphibious ready group (ARG) for a scheduled future deployment.

“We need to start at the absolute basics—it is an education piece,” said Capt. Nakia Cooper, commodore of PHIBRON 4. “We have got to educate our Marines on how to operate at sea; it is inherently dangerous.”



PMINT exposed the MEU to many unfamiliar training evolutions, such as damage control, mass casualty and emission control drills to present the unfamiliar Marines with potential real-life scenarios when out to sea. Cooper said it is imperative they learn to not put themselves and others at risk while integrating with and assisting Sailors when appropriate.

“Our drills have proven we can work competently as a team,” said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Stacie Marturano, assigned to the 24th MEU. “It is impressive how far we have come as a team in a few days.”

Drills are only one component to building a warfighting team. In assisting Marines with ship-life basics, such as navigating passageways, Sailors are helping PHIBRON 4 and the 24th MEU get



accustomed to their new environment.

“A lot of the Marines are starting at the basics,” said Col. Todd Mahar, commanding officer of the 24th MEU. “How to embark a ship; how to understand the battle rhythm of a warship; how to stay sharp physically and mentally while aboard.”

While the 24th MEU is embarked aboard Wasp, Marines are assigned to assist Sailors with manning issues that arise from such a high influx of personnel. Marines joined the food service attendant Sailors working in the mess decks and galley, providing the extra manpower needed to push through lines of hungry personnel that

doubled with the start of the exercise. Navy hospital corpsmen and Marines joined forces and provided aid to their shipmates when a mass casualty drill tested their skillsets.

“PMINT is all about developing relationships between our blue and green team,” Cooper said. “Relationships matter, you have to understand how people think and act. It’s all part of forming a team and understanding each other.”

Throughout the stress, confusion and traffic in the passage ways, the time spent together turns into a respect, an understanding and a growing bond between Marine and Sailor.

Deployment Pet Care Options



Close family and friends

Dogs on Deployment

www.dogsondeployment.org

Guardian Angels for Soldier's Pet

www.guardianangelsforsoldierspet.org

PACT for Animals

<http://pactforanimals.org>