

ALL HANDS

Celebrating One Hundred Years

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY

MAY 2023



A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR AND STAFF

Every month, we focus on the Navy's mission-focused people and technologies. As we survey how our naval forces continue to train, fight and equip the world's toughest Sailors, we look at our advantage at sea and the capabilities of Sailors deployed around the world.

It is our mission to reach Sailors, so please share this issue, scan the QR codes, and follow our social media channels for the latest information for Sailors by Sailors.



ALL HANDS MAGAZINE

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
The Honorable Carlos Del Toro

CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
Adm. Mike Gilday

NAVY CHIEF OF INFORMATION
Rear Adm. Ryan Perry

DIRECTOR, NAVY PRODUCTION
Robb Gensic

LCPO / MANAGING EDITOR
MCC Kristina Young

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
MC1 Lyle Wilkie

EDITOR
MC1 Tyler Gardner

LAYOUT AND DESIGN
MC2 Marianne Guemo

GRAPHICS
MC2 Marianne Guemo

All Hands Issue Number 05/2023 is published by
Navy Production Division
Defense Media Activity
6700 Taylor Avenue
Fort George G. Meade, Maryland 20755

Cover photo credit:
MC2 Zachary D. Behrend

IN THIS ISSUE

["SO OTHERS MAY LIVE."](#)

[NAVY HOUSING INTRODUCES
UNACCOMPANIED HOUSING "BILL OF RIGHTS
& RESPONSIBILITIES"](#)

[COAST GUARD SEIZES \\$30 MILLION IN DRUGS
WITH TASK FORCE](#)

[SAILOR TO SAILOR](#)

[PHOTOS FROM THE FLEET](#)

[FROM ENLISTED TO OFFICER: PROUD ASIAN
AMERICAN SOARS TO NEW HEIGHTS AS
NAVAL AVIATOR](#)

[USS BOXER: A FOUNDATION OF EXCELLENCE
IN DECK DEPARTMENT](#)

[THE NAVY'S SEA LIONS LOVE VIDEO GAMES](#)

We've always been
one hundred percent
committed to our Sailors.



Find out **here**
what we can
do for you.

"SO OTHERS MAY LIVE."

From Courtney Pollock, NAVSTA Rota Public Affairs



Petty Officer 2nd Class Eleodoro Perez, a Naval Aircrewman assigned to Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 79, was driving home when he saw a commotion on the side of the road, April 1, 2023. He quickly pulled over his car and approached the group.

"After asking if they needed any assistance, I came out to find the gentleman on the ground was unconscious and had not received any attention by those surrounding him," he said. "My patient assessment training quickly kicked in and proceeded to assess the gentleman."

Perez is referring to one aspect of his daily job duties as a Naval Aircrewman Tactical Helicopter (AWR) in the U.S. Navy.

Perez, originally from Chino, California, joined the Navy in 2019. Upon completion of boot camp, he attended Aircrew then Search and Rescue schools in Pensacola, Florida. He was then assigned to HSM-41 in San Diego, California, where he learned the ins and outs of his role as a search and rescue swimmer crewman, before heading to HSM-79 in Rota.

"My daily duty can vary on any given day which is what I love about this profession," said Perez. "I live by the search and rescue motto 'So Others May Live.'"

Perez quickly determined that the man's pulse was almost non-existent and he was barely breathing.

"I immediately went straight into performing CPR on the individual," said Perez. "After several rounds of compressions, the individual woke up in a state of shock and appeared to be extremely lost and confused."

Working with the other two individuals at the scene, they were able to calm the man and encouraged him to remain on the ground until emergency medical services arrived. Once the ambulance arrived, Perez relayed his initial assessment and actions to the emergency personnel.

"I'm a firm believer that if we all help, love, and respect one another this world would be in a much better position," said Perez. "Luckily, my career and title as a search and rescue swimmer has provided me with the proper skills and knowledge to always be ready to respond when the opportunity unfortunately arises."

In Perez's selfless act of coming to the aid of a stranger, he not only exemplified the search and rescue motto but according to HSM-79 Commanding Officer, Capt. John Anderson, is indicative of everything that is expected of a Sailor.

"I'm incredibly proud of his actions and very fortunate to serve alongside him," said Anderson. "These everyday interactions within our local communities are key to building upon the close relationships with our host nation friends and neighbors in Spain."

Perez has since remained in contact with the man and routinely checks in on him and his family. The man's family was extremely grateful that Perez was there to assist in this difficult situation.

"I am no hero by any means, just extremely grateful that God was able to place me at the right place at the right time to help the Spanish local in seeing another day surrounded by his loved ones," he said.

While everyone may not have the same level of training as him, he encourages everyone to learn the basic skills to help – and possibly save – a life.

"I highly encourage people to learn the basic lifesaving practices, like CPR," he said. "So that when moments like those arise, more people can jump into action and lend a helping hand."

The HSM-79 "Griffins" are the U.S. Navy's only Forward Deployed Naval Forces-Europe (FDFNF-E) aviation squadron. Homeported at NAVSTA Rota, Spain, HSM-79 FDFNF-E expeditionary detachments operate the MH-60R across the EUCOM AOR aboard Commander Task Force (CTF) 65 destroyers in support of Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet.

As the "Gateway to the Mediterranean," NAVSTA Rota provides U.S., NATO and allied forces a strategic hub for operations in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. NAVSTA Rota is a force multiplier, capable of promptly deploying and supporting combat-ready forces through land, air and sea, enabling warfighters and their families, sustaining the fleet and fostering the U.S. and Spanish partnership.

NAVY HOUSING INTRODUCES 'BILL OF RIGHTS & UNACCOMPANIED HOUSING RESPONSIBILITIES'

From Navy.mil



Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) has implemented a 'Bill of Rights & Responsibilities' for Unaccompanied Housing (UH), which outlines resident rights that are guaranteed by Navy Housing as well as resident responsibilities for maintaining the space where they live.

"The Navy is committed to providing high quality accommodations to all Sailors, especially those residing in UH," said Steve Drumm, CNIC Director of Housing. "This Bill of Rights & Responsibilities makes it clear what guarantees we promise UH residents while establishing what their obligations are for maintaining their housing. These barracks are their homes and they are expected to maintain cleanliness and report maintenance issues in a timely manner, which can be done quickly and conveniently by utilizing our new QR Code maintenance reporting process."

The Resident Rights for government-controlled Unaccompanied Housing are as follows:

1. The right to reside in a community that is safe, secure, and meets applicable health and environmental standards, with well-maintained common areas, and amenities.
2. The right to reside in a housing unit that has working fixtures, appliances, and utilities.
3. The right to verify the condition and cleanliness of the assigned room, shared space (if applicable), and the furnishings provided during check-in and check-out inspections.
4. The right to clearly defined regulations regarding occupancy of UH and use of common areas and amenities.
5. The right to report inadequate housing standards or deficits in habitability of the housing unit to the

UH staff, housing management office, and the chain of command without fear of:

- reprisal or retaliation;
- decreased services, or increased obligations as a resident;
- interference with right to privacy or harassment as a resident;
- refusal to honor the terms of occupancy; or interference with the career of a resident.

Resident Responsibilities for government-controlled unaccompanied housing are as follows:

1. The responsibility to take pride and ownership of your assigned quarters, common areas, and amenities, and to comply with UH Rules and Regulations.
2. The responsibility to maintain daily living standards in accordance with the Welcome Aboard Handbook.
3. The responsibility to allow access to your room and shared space for inspections, necessary maintenance, and repairs.
4. The responsibility to report any issues in the housing unit to the UH staff for corrective actions in a timely manner.
5. The responsibility to provide a minimum of 30 days notification prior to move-out and correct any discrepancies identified during the pre-termination inspection prior to the final checkout inspection.

The creation of the UH Bill of Rights & Responsibilities came about after the Chief of Naval Operations and fleet commanders identified unaccompanied housing as an area of improvement that would positively impact Sailor morale. Navy Housing worked with fleet commanders to come up with rights that succinctly addressed their Sailors' needs and concerns in unaccompanied housing, while setting clear expectations that residents must also do their part in maintaining high quality housing.

"The Bill of Rights & Responsibilities is just the first in a series of efforts that Navy Housing plans to roll out in the coming months," said Drumm. "Our hope is that by setting a collaborative tone with residents, we will be able to maintain and improve the quality of unaccompanied housing long-term."

Installation commanding officers must post the UH Bill of Rights & Responsibilities throughout the UH facilities and incorporate its content into all UH Welcome Aboard/new resident orientation handbooks by May 26, 2023.



COAST GUARD SEIZES \$30 MILLION IN DRUGS WITH TASK FORCE

From U.S. Naval Central Forces Command Public Affairs



A U.S. Coast Guard fast response cutter seized more than \$30 million of heroin and methamphetamine from a fishing vessel transiting the Gulf of Oman, May 8.

Operating in support of Combined Task Force (CTF) 150, USCGC Glen Harris (WPC 1144) seized 580 kilograms of methamphetamine and 35 kilograms of heroin from a vessel transiting international waters. CTF 150 is one of four task forces that form the world's largest multinational naval partnership, Combined Maritime Forces.

Naval forces supporting CTF 150 have seized illegal drugs worth a combined estimated U.S. street value of nearly \$200 million in 2023.

Glen Harris arrived in the Middle East last year and operates from the U.S. Navy base in Bahrain where CMF is headquartered with U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. 5th Fleet.

The fast response cutter is part of a contingent of U.S. Coast Guard ships forward-deployed to the region under Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA). PATFORSWA deploys Coast Guard personnel and ships

alongside U.S. and regional naval forces throughout the Middle East.

"The dedication and expertise of Glen Harris's leadership and crew embody our commitment to interdict and remove illicit narcotics from the sea, denying malign actors the ability to destabilize the region," said Capt. Eric A. Helgen, PATFORSWA's commander. "I could not be more proud of our fast response cutter crews."

Currently led by the United Kingdom, CTF 150 conducts maritime security and counter-terrorism operations in the Gulf of Oman and Indian Ocean to disrupt criminal and terrorist organizations and their related illicit activities, including the movement of personnel, weapons, narcotics and charcoal. These efforts help ensure legitimate commercial shipping transits the region free from non-state threats.

U.S. and international naval units in the Middle East seized illegal drugs totaling \$1 billion in value from 2021 to 2022.

INFORMATION
SECURITY



SAILOR TO SAILOR

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MYNAVYHR

APRIL 2023

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call the Veterans Crisis Line.



IMPORTANT DATES:

Feb. 1 to Nov. 1: CY 23 PRT Cycle

June 6 to June 8: Association of Naval Services Officers Eastern Region Professional Development Symposium: Norfolk, VA.

June 29 to July 1: Sea Service Leadership Associations Joint Women's Leadership Symposium: San Diego, CA.

July 31 to Aug. 4: National Naval Officers Association Annual Leadership, Professional Development and Training Symposium: San Diego, CA.

AWARDS AND APPLICATIONS DEADLINES:

FY24 Advanced Education Voucher Program applications **due May 5**

FY24 Navy Legislative Fellowship Applications **due May 12**

U.S. Naval War College Fleet Seminar Program Applications **due May 31**

Naval History Essay Contest Submission **due May 31**

2022-23 MCPON Delbert D. Black Leadership Award Nominations **due June 30**

STA-21 Applications **due July 1**

Medical ISPP Applications **due July 31**

Nurse Corps MECP Applications **due Sept. 1**

CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL:
Vice Adm. Richard J. Cheeseman Jr.

FLEET MASTER CHIEF OF MANPOWER, PERSONNEL, AND TRAINING:
FLTCM Delbert Terrell Jr.

[MyNavyHR Website](#)

FY-24 NAVY ACTIVE AND RESERVE COMPONENT ENLISTED ADVANCEMENT SELECTION BOARDS FOR CHIEF PETTY OFFICER

[NAVADMIN 080/23](#)

NAVADMIN 080/23 contains the eligibility criteria and timelines for the active duty and reserve component Chief Petty Officer selection boards.



BEREAVEMENT LEAVE PROGRAM

[NAVADMIN 091/23](#) ■ [FACT SHEET](#)

The Navy implemented a bereavement leave program that entitles Sailors whose spouse or child dies to take 14 days of non-chargeable bereavement leave if the member has less than 30 days of leave accrued.



U.S. CEREMONIAL GUARD APPLICATIONS

[NAVADMIN 084/23](#)

This NAVADMIN solicits motivated officer (O3-O5) and enlisted (E4-E9) applicants for duty with the United States National Ceremonial Guard. Interested volunteers, who meet the criteria are eligible to apply for billets as early as 15 months from their projected rotation date.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024 U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE FLEET SEMINAR PROGRAM

[NAVADMIN 083/23](#)

This NAVADMIN announces the U.S. Naval War College Fleet Seminar Program which offers intermediate level Joint Professional Military Education through a set of three courses: Strategy and War, Theater Security Decision Making and Joint Maritime Operations. Each course normally requires one academic year to complete, which runs from September through the following May. All three courses are not offered simultaneously at all locations. There is no tuition fee, and course materials are provided on a loan basis at no cost to the students. Applicants must apply by 31 May 2023.



2023 BOB FELLER ACT OF VALOR AWARDS

[NAVADMIN 081/23](#)

This NAVADMIN solicits nominations for the eleventh annual Bob Feller Act of Valor Award for a Chief Petty Officer and for the Junior Sailor Peer-to-Peer Mentorship Chapter Award for both afloat and ashore commands.

SCREENING BOARD RESULTS AND PROMOTIONS

ACTIVE-DUTY PROMOTIONS TO THE PERMANENT GRADES OF CAPTAIN, COMMANDER, LIEUTENANT COMMANDER, LIEUTENANT, AND CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER IN THE LINE AND STAFF CORPS: [NAVADMIN 077/23](#)

NAVY RESERVE PROMOTIONS TO THE PERMANENT GRADES OF CAPTAIN, COMMANDER, LIEUTENANT COMMANDER, LIEUTENANT, AND CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER IN THE LINE AND STAFF CORPS: [NAVADMIN 078/23](#)

FY24 NAVY RESERVE E8 AND E9 ADVANCEMENT SELECTION BOARDS RESULTS: [NAVADMIN 085/23](#)

ACTIVE-DUTY PROMOTIONS TO THE PERMANENT GRADES OF CAPTAIN, COMMANDER, LIEUTENANT COMMANDER, LIEUTENANT, AND CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER IN THE LINE AND STAFF CORPS: [NAVADMIN 093/23](#)

NAVY RESERVE PROMOTIONS TO THE PERMANENT GRADES OF CAPTAIN, COMMANDER, LIEUTENANT COMMANDER, LIEUTENANT, AND CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER IN THE LINE AND STAFF CORPS: [NAVADMIN 094/23](#)

FY24 ACTIVE-DUTY ACTIVE-DUTY NAVY CAPTAIN LINE SELECTIONS: [ALNAV 031/23](#)

WEB LINK UPDATES

MAKE SURE TO UPDATE YOUR BOOKMARKS!



<https://www.nsips.cloud.navy.mil>



<https://np2.cloud.navy.mil>



NAVY VICTIMS' LEGAL COUNSEL PROGRAM

SAFEGUARDING THE LEGAL RIGHT OF VICTIMS OF SEXUAL OFFENSES OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Navy JAG Corps' VLC Program links survivors of a sexual offense or domestic violence to a skilled, independent and dedicated attorney – someone who offers vital individualized representation and support during a challenging period of their lives. VLC helps survivors understand and navigate investigation and military justice processes. VLC connects survivors to a wide range of resources that can assist in their recovery. VLC ensures their legal rights and interests are protected. To learn more – or to access assistance – visit: https://www.jag.navy.mil/legal_services/vlc.htm

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

The DoD's 24/7 Safe Helpline is the sole secure, confidential, and anonymous crisis support service specially designed for members of the Department of Defense community affected by sexual assault.

Call 877-995-5247 or chat to a professional online.
www.safehelpline.org

Leaders should print and post the Victim Reporting Options Guide in workspaces:

https://sapr.mil/sites/default/files/public/docs/victim-assistance/Victim_Reporting_Options_Guide.pdf

GET SOCIAL WITH US: [FB](#) | [IG](#) | [TWITTER](#) | [LINKEDIN](#) | [YOUTUBE](#)

GET SOCIAL WITH US: [FB](#) | [IG](#) | [TWITTER](#) | [LINKEDIN](#) | [YOUTUBE](#)



PHOTOS FROM THE FLEET

The Naval Service—forward deployed and capable of both rapid response and sustained operations globally—remains America’s most persistent and versatile instrument of military influence.



AT3 Kirsten Goldick
[@USSWasp](#)



CT3 (Technical) Devon Ablonsky
[@USSAntietam](#)



ATAN Jenna Osborn
[@HELMARSTRIKERONFIVEONE](#)



CS3 John Banner
[@StatusEtPugno](#)



Lt.j.g. Chance Davis
[@StatusEtPugno](#)



FC2 Stephen Terrazas
[@DDG51](#)



AMAN Alexzandra Thompson
[@USSGeraldRFord](#)



SN Brock Studer
[@USS Bunker Hill CG 52](#)



ANAN Jared Boykin
[@USSGeraldRFord](#)

**CULTURE CHANGE
IS A VERY COMPLEX ISSUE,
BUT I THINK IF WE PRIORITIZE
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
AND EMPOWER OUR
LEADERS TO FOSTER
DIVERSITY AND
PRIDE AMONGST SAILORS, WE
CAN CREATE A POSITIVE
CULTURE THAT HELPS WITH
RETENTION AND
BOOSTS
MORALE**



FROM ENLISTED TO OFFICER: PROUD ASIAN AMERICAN SOARS TO NEW HEIGHTS AS NAVAL AVIATOR

From Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

As a U.S. Naval Recruiting and Talent Acquisition Officer and future naval aviator, Ensign Songhong Peng strives to be a role model for all Asian immigrants.

"Coming from a small town in China to becoming a naval aviator in the United States Navy shows that you can be anyone you want to be if you put in the work," Peng said. "I want to pass down my knowledge and skills to the next generation of Sailors and show them that we can all do something good."

Prior to his time in the Navy, Peng served as an Army Combat Medic Sergeant from 2018 to 2022, where he supported multiple dispersed construction missions, field training exercises, and the Department of Defense's initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reflecting on his diverse military career and his experiences as a Chinese American, Peng commented, "I have been looked down upon a couple times in the U.S. because people see my face and they automatically think 'oh, you're not American' or 'you're just some China-man.' These experiences make me mad, but they also motivate me to work harder. I want to be a great American, and I want to give back to this country that took me in."

Peng is also a proud member of the Chinese American Military Support organization (CAMS), where he serves his local community, mentors other Sailors, and receives support from Navy leaders.

"CAMS is very supportive of all service members and is a great resource to learn the 'right' way to do things in the military, Peng said. "CAMS leaders have always said, 'hey, don't be afraid to dream bigger and do bigger; you can do it.' I wish every Sailor, leader, and team in the Navy was like this."

As a leader, Peng noted the value of empathy, open communication, and active listening to ensure positive team dynamics.

"A leader should be able to understand and relate to the concerns of their team members," Peng said. "Empathy is also a very valuable quality that helps build up the trust and rapport within the team. By discussing our issues and thoughts openly, we can address and prevent conflict while ensuring everyone is on the same page."

Through his exemplary performance and continued leadership, Peng hopes to inspire more Asian Americans to serve their country and shape the future of Navy culture:

"Culture change is a very complex issue, but I think if we prioritize leadership development and empower our leaders to foster diversity and pride amongst Sailors, we

can create a positive culture that helps with retention and boosts morale."

Throughout May, the U.S. Navy joins nation in recognizing Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders of various nationalities and ancestry, including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Asian Indian, and Polynesian, have a rich legacy of service and sacrifice in the Navy dating back to the 19th century.

Retired Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr. once said, "When we recognize and capitalize on the strength that diversity brings to the Navy, we are better able to develop new ideas and reach out to partners in the world."

**"EMPATHY IS ALSO A VERY VALUABLE
QUALITY THAT HELPS BUILD UP THE
TRUST AND RAPPORT WITHIN THE
TEAM. BY DISCUSSING OUR ISSUES
AND THOUGHTS OPENLY, WE CAN
ADDRESS AND PREVENT CONFLICT
WHILE ENSURING EVERYONE IS ON
THE SAME PAGE."**

**ENSIGN SONGHONG PENG
U.S. NAVAL RECRUITING AND
TALENT ACQUISITION OFFICER**

The Navy is committed to enabling a workforce demographic similar to that of the nation it serves. The MyNavyHRTeam, comprised of more than 26,000 dedicated professionals stationed worldwide, attracts, develops and manages the talent that ensures our advantage at sea while providing exceptional HR service to Sailors and their families.



USS BOXER:

If you want to see a Navy team dedicated to keeping a culture of excellence, look no further than the deck department aboard the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4).

The officers, boatswain's mates (BMs) and undesignated seamen who make up the deck department on Boxer maintain the highest Navy standards because they know their work is essential to the mission.

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Henry Williams has been assigned to Boxer for a year. He explained that BMs consider themselves a "jack of all trades," responsible for everything from steering the ship while at sea, to managing heavy equipment during underway operations, to constant shipboard preservation.

"BMs are one of the first rates we had in the Navy and we really take pride in that," said Williams.

Williams emphasized that deck department operates like an engine.

"Every functional piece has to work for the engine to actually flow and work. You have to be connected," explained Williams. "The ship can't run without personnel, personnel can't run if they're not committed, and when you take away that connection piece, there's going to be a failure somewhere – and that can be catastrophic."

Catastrophic is no exaggeration. Underway operations are inherently dangerous. Boxer is more than 800 feet long and weighs more than 40,000 tons. Add a contingent of Marines, their vehicles, and all their equipment, and operational risks only increase. Keeping that sense of unity and focus on teamwork helps mitigate risks in complex and arduous underway environments.

This is one example of why professionalism, pride, and discipline are fundamental elements of the concept of readiness. A professional crew working like an engine is what makes a ship ready to complete any mission it is assigned. This is a mindset professionalism and high performance that creates a culture where crews thrive.

According to Williams, no one knows this better than deck department as material readiness and shipboard preservation are core to the mission of any ship.

"I think one of the things that a lot of people don't think about is that no matter what you're doing, once you take pride in that responsibility, everything else will just start flowing and aligning," said Williams.

Underway, Boxer sports 116 life rafts in case of emergency. Every five years, these rafts are removed for inspection and re-packing and then re-installed. With the help of a crane, several safety harnesses, and skilled line handling, the deck department spent a day installing 50 rafts off the starboard side of the ship.

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Aaron Walker spent most of that day tying lines, giving helpful directions, and ensuring

the safety of his shipmates throughout the project. Though it's hard work, the team was all smiles and kept count proudly with each installation.

Walker never took his eyes from his work when he said about the job, "I couldn't see myself doing anything else in the world."

Williams' passion for the job is also clear when he recalls past operations.

"My favorite thing about this platform is the well deck," he said, grinning proudly. "I think it speaks dividends of what our job scope is, the camaraderie that we have with the Marines and the Navy, and how you get those two branches to work together to actually accomplish a mission – it's powerful. And it's fun."

Whether in port or at sea, the work never stops to keep a ship in working shape. Shipboard preservation is a priority balanced with operational requirements because a preserved ship is one that can successfully stay on mission. This work takes a mindset of professionalism, discipline, and high performance – and Boxer's deck department embodies these traits.

"I think this community instilled in me a sense of purpose outside of just the scope of my duties," said Chief Boatswain's Mate LV Rosebud, also assigned to Boxer.

Rosebud has served in the Navy for 10 years and transferred to Boxer three months ago.

"Having pride in our job is important because it amplifies the importance of what we're doing and it gives us a sense of ownership," said Rosebud. "It goes beyond just doing the job to also doing it well."

Maintaining a ship is both a sprint and a marathon. Part of the marathon is keeping the crew invested in the importance of readiness. Deck department is a place where that pride begins and can spread across the crew and the whole fleet.

"I think of pride like an overflow," said Williams. "Once you fill that cup, next thing you know you're filling up another cup – and that's how you build great leaders. It's contagious."

U.S. Navy ships deploy for longer periods and more frequently than any other Navy in the world. As a result, our ships face greater maintenance and preservation challenges. Preservation efforts are constant, even while out to sea. Walking the weather deck of a ship underway, it's common to find deck department working hard to eliminate rust and corrosion. Rust is an unfortunate but normal part of being out to sea, and the crew's efforts to fight it never stop.

"At times it seems like it's not the best job or the most glorified one, but it's definitely vital to movement and vital to mission accomplishment," said Rosebud.

A shipshape unit means a mission ready unit, but it also means greater speed in identifying safety hazards and equipment failures. The faster problems are identified,

A FOUNDATION OF EXCELLENCE IN DECK DEPARTMENT



From Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Claire DuBois

the faster they can be solved and the ship can return to its responsibilities.

Every member of the crew makes readiness possible. For Williams and Rosebud, though, they can't imagine doing any other job.

"What made me choose boatswain's mate was that sense of pride that we have when we are getting things done in the major evolutions," said Rosebud. "They're always exciting for me. I like the thrill of it being inherently dangerous,

but also knowing that we have safety measures in place. You have to have a lot of trust, a lot of communication and a lot of rehearsals and time spent together as a team."

"I think the ship will always depend on a boatswain, with everything we do around the ship," said Williams. "That's why I take so much pride in my job and my love for the military. I love what we do and the impact we have on the world. I know when I see a ship out there that's 'haze gray and underway,' it couldn't get underway without the boatswain's mates."

THE NAVY'S SEA LIONS LOVE VIDEO GAMES

From Maison Piedfort, Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific



Meet Spike, the most avid gamer in a sea pen floating in the San Diego Bay. He likes fish, ice, naps, and when people cheer his name. He was last of three male sea lions to learn how to play video games, but first to complete training on a game system Navy scientists created as part of their latest research on cognitive enrichment for marine mammals.

His name isn't really Spike; you can think of it more like his gamertag. His ability to understand the concept of controlling a cursor on a screen, then progress through a series of more challenging games, marks the first recorded success in testing cognition of California sea lions with an animal-controlled interface.

On paper, it's a clear win for the U.S. Navy Marine Mammal Program, under which scientists from Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) Pacific and the National Marine Mammal Foundation (NMMF) come together to care for the Navy's sea lions and dolphins. A proven method for cognitive enrichment opens doors for more research on keeping marine mammals happy and healthy longer.

On the deck of the sea pen, it's pure delight: Spike uses his snout to press a button and maneuver a cursor through a maze. His eyes track the cursor with laser-like focus. When he crosses the finish line, we cheer and his trainer rewards him with herring. The joy in the eye contact

between him and his trainer as they celebrate a job well done — Spike with his side-to-side dance and victory yelps — is palpable and infectious. He turns back to the screen and positions himself to win the next game.

"That's why I'm doing this, you know?" said Kelley Winship, NMMF scientist and principal investigator for research using the Enclosure Video Enrichment (EVE) system. "I really care about these animals and the lives they lead. I love all the cool stuff we can look at with this research, but at the end of the day, I want to see them happy and enjoying themselves." Winship co-leads EVE research with Mark Xitco, NIWC Pacific's director for the Marine Mammal Program. Both hold Ph.Ds. in cognitive psychology.

Spike is clearly enjoying himself, just like you or I would when noticing our practice transform into mastery. For Spike and his fellow gamers, that joy has translated into three years of voluntary sessions, some without the positive reinforcement of food. Over that period, Spike showed improved weight maintenance and performance in voluntary health checks, though the research hasn't definitively linked the two to gaming just yet.

So far, research on sea lions' interaction with EVE centers a simple goal: Are they having fun? Do they want to keep playing it? More than 450 sessions among Spike

and his two friends say yes. Now that other sea lions in the program have learned to play video games with EVE, that number has climbed to more than 750.

For the Navy, sea lions enjoying themselves means meeting standards laid out by the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, which calls on NIWC Pacific to deliver the highest quality of care for marine mammals. Since 1959, the Marine Mammal Program has been answering that call: dolphins and sea lions part of the program are healthy, happy, and live longer than those living in the wild thanks to world-class veterinary care.

Roughly 300 people care for the program's more than 120 sea lions and dolphins, all of which are trained in reconnaissance and recovery tasks marine mammals can perform better than humans. But enrichment activities such as open-ocean swims, playtime with toys, and now video games, remain central to their care programs.

"My favorite part of my job is how multifaceted it is," Winship said. "I find a lot of fulfillment working with animals trained to protect our Sailors and Marines, especially because these animals are so capable and they find their systems tasks so rewarding. And with EVE, I get to work on providing them with additional mental challenge and stimulation with a sole focus on their welfare."

Testing the first enrichment system of its kind for marine mammals took some ingenuity: they needed a device that could be portable, inexpensive to build, quickly assembled and disassembled between sessions, and manipulable by pinnipeds — semi-aquatic, fin-footed marine mammals. Previous research on cognitive enrichment in pinnipeds required large contraptions and proved only that they could identify stimuli on a screen, but fell short of proving they could control and interact with it.

That ingenuity took the form of a plastic utility cart outfitted with a 27-inch monitor and lockable wheels. An acrylic glass sheet protects the monitor from water and animal contact on the bottom of the cart; a computer rests in a case on top. An external speaker connects via Bluetooth. The game controller connects via USB and consists of a 6-inch by 6-inch electrical box fitted with four 2.4-inch plastic arcade buttons at compass orientations.

Getting started took some creativity, too. Before EVE, sea lions had been trained to ignore irrelevant stimuli and focus on trainers. First they needed to be taught that the screen contained relevant stimuli. Sea lions were directed to sit in front of the monitor while researchers controlled gameplay, and sea lions were rewarded when their eyes tracked movement on the screen.



It took a single session of hearing the “success” tone for gamers to respond like they do when their trainers say “good” after successful behavior. They progressed from exploring an unconnected game controller with their snouts, to watching their trainers point to the correct buttons, to pressing buttons themselves. They were first trained on a cursor tracking game, in which success was moving a blue dot across the screen to meet a black square. Later, more challenging iterations provided the variability needed to prevent habituation, key for enrichment programs over the long term.

Over time, Spike and his friends could switch directions when the cursor bumped up against a wall, complete levels at an average clip of six seconds, and win in fewer than seven button presses.

An automatic feeder comprised of a USB controller, 8-foot tube, and water tank could reward sea lions for successful gameplay, but was mostly used in earlier trials. Researchers found a slight preference by sea lions for sessions in which trainers functioned as feeders and cheerleaders over sessions using the automatic feeder. Because the automatic feeder requires regular cleaning, assembly, and disassembly, it proved less labor intensive for trainers to act as feeders for short sessions. Plus, it’s just more fun that way.

“It took so many people at the Marine Mammal Program to implement the EVE system, from building the carts to training the animals to interact with the games,” Winship said. “Our success relied on that collaborative effort, and I’m thankful to work with such bright and dedicated people.”

What’s next, now that the team has proven that pinnipeds can operate a complex interface? “The research possibilities with this are endless,” Winship said, including the possibility of interspecies and multiplayer games. “We built a game where we can compete against Spike — he can chase us around and we can move away. He hasn’t seen it yet. He’s going to be really excited.”

And in case you were worried about the program’s dolphins feeling left out, they’ve been gaming on their own EVE system rigged for the gamer who never leaves the

water. Gaming dolphins need a large screen visible from the water, and sunlight interferes with visibility of a projector set up on the pier, which means gaming sessions happen after sunset. What looks like an eerie pierside movie night has a way cooler explanation: it’s just bottlenose dolphins controlling joysticks with their mouths to play video games late into the night. (It could also be a TV night — the dolphins like watching “SpongeBob Squarepants.”)

Like us, sea lions and dolphins exhibit intense focus when facing increasingly difficult tasks which lie at the edge of their abilities: challenging and engaging enough, but not impossible. They show delight when they win; they want to play even when they aren’t getting positive reinforcement for winning. They get tired and quit to take a nap, some days more quickly than others. One way they differ from humans, noted Winship, is the absence of frustration. “You don’t really get a sea lion scoffing and throwing the controller down,” she said. Sessions last only as long as gamers are interested.

When they are, it is a marvel to watch. On the deck of a sea pen in the San Diego Bay, off the coast of Point Loma, Spike gets a fish, does his victory dance, and we all cheer his name. A sea lion navigates a cursor through a maze in five seconds flat, six humans clap, and the small notebook in my pocket is empty, because capturing the depth of the moment with words seems unthinkable.

If one had to try, the words might look like this: they are so much like us, they are more patient gamers than us, and they are smarter than I realized before watching them play video games. Xitco, however, isn’t surprised: “I knew they were smart enough to use EVE. But it took Kelley to figure out how to make it happen.”

Then there’s the gravity of the potential ripple effects: studying the outcomes of sharing this human experience with them could be huge for their health and longevity. We already know it makes them happy.

“The EVE system itself is proof of how much we care about marine mammals,” Winship said. “We built them something that nobody else did. We trained them on it, and now we just get to enjoy watching them love video games.”



HAVE YOU UPDATED YOUR NFAAS?



the
Game
of

N

A

V

Y

TAPS

REENLIST

SEPARATE

TAPS

UNIFORM
ALLOWANCE

SHORE
DUTY

DD-214

C-SCHOOL

WAR
COLLEGE

SW/AW

SWO

PCS

SEA DUTY

RTC

ENLISTED
CAREER

OFFICER
CAREER

OCS

Navpro