

The DASHPO

Issue 25

Newsletter of the Association of Minemen

SPRING 1999



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hi Shipmates,

Well lets see now, in the order of importance to the membership, I guess the completion of the history book should take precedence. I've read my copy from cover to cover twice and just couldn't be more pleased with the excellent job that the committee did. It is truly a professional compendium of the Mineforce and the sailors that have dedicated so much to the perpetuation of Minewarfare. my personal "Bravo Zulu" to the history book committee, and my special thanks to **Lyal Stryker** and **Toby Horn** for their unending dedication to the completion of this publication.

I suppose the next item of importance would be the relief of **Lyal Stryker** as the Secy/Treas (for the last 100 years). **Curtis Christian** assumed the duties during the turnover 6-8 February with the able assistance of **Toby Horn**. during that event we identified a few facets of the Sec/Treas responsibilities (as assumed over the years by **Lyal**) that

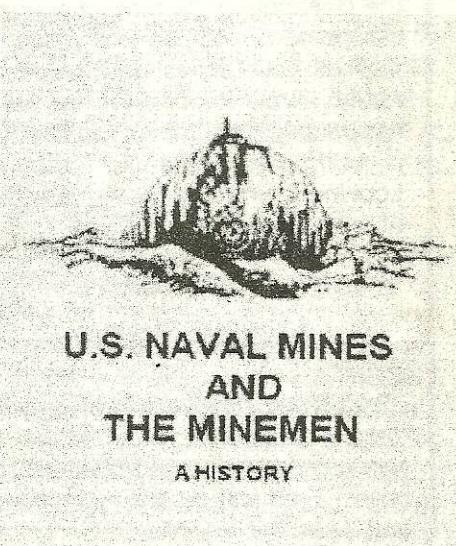
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History Book and Other Stuff

by Toby Horn

A milestone! Our History Books have been published and mailed.

There were a lot of last minute hurdles, but your Board of Directors pushed through some "gutsy" financial decisions to get the book published. These decisions combined with personal loans made by some of your most stalwart members of our organization in order to get the publication off of TDC. The mailing to those who bought the book - some as long as nine years ago - has been accomplished. Oh, yeah - we have a few unknown addresses of those we know have moved to other locations without a forwarding address - but with the help of the COMOMAG



gang and our internet home page, we have caught up with a lot of them. If you hear someone saying "I ordered a book but haven't received it yet..." ask them if they ever forwarded their new address?

To date, we have received nothing but accolades regarding the History Book. To me, that is a personal satisfaction.

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Corpus Christi AUG 13-15 '99 25th Annual Reunion

The reunion info is slowly coming together. We've found the perfect Motel, on the beach, near the Lex and the Texas State Aquarium, half way btwn NAS Corpus Christi and NavSta Ingleside. RV parking near by... bus service to downtown, bars, souvenir stands, banquet rooms (wedding chapel), etc. Just can't get the costs of tickets and all by deadline. I expect BIG active duty participation from Ingleside. We'll be able to tour ships, school house and bases. Rates at the motel go down on 10 Aug so they are working with us on the prices (two levels... sea view and not). Golf tourney is in the works and those that don't golf can tour, swim, etc.

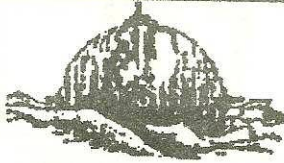
COMINEWARCOM
Change of Command
RADM **Jose L. Betancourt Jr.** relieved RADM **Dennis R. Conley** as COMINEWARCOM at Ingleside TX.

Mineman Rating in short supply

New Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) rates are out. MN's with the 0000 or 0325 NEC's have an award level of 3. For example, an MN3 with less than 4 years in the Navy and no NEC, reenlisting for six years, would receive an SRB of \$23,047. The initial installment would be \$11,523, with the remainder paid on five yearly installments of \$2304.72 (Foc'sle 12/11)

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**ASSOCIATION OF
MINEMEN
DEDICATED TO SERVING
THE
U.S. NAVY MINE FORCE**

The Dashpot, published quarterly, is the newsletter of the Association of Minemen, a non-profit organization incorporated in the state of South Carolina... to perpetuate a knowledge of undersea mine warfare, necessary to America's first line of defense.

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need to be broken out, and be administered by someone else. The first is that of a "Quartermaster" to manage the mine materials that we sell. another is that of Chaplain to track obituary's, send flowers etc. next is a "Publicly/PR Person" to advertise reunions etc. and last but not least we need a "Membership Committee" with an active chairman, any volunteers?

For those of you that know me, I would like to ask for a personal favor. come to think of it, if you know me you're probably in a great position to grant me that favor due to your longevity. what I'd like is for you to make every effort you can, to ensure that **John Loonam** receives input to the Dashpot. in the form of command sitreps/news etc. we old rascals as well as your active duty ship-mates really are interested in what's happening in the rest of the fleet. This is your publication, make it a success. Looking forward to seeing everybody at the next reunion in Texas.

Joe

Military Roster

Fred Dane, Webmaster, suggests a running roster of personnel at the various sites be posted on the homepage. Fred will do the maintenance and bear the expense. He recommends a list of personnel at each Site. First the Site email address then Rank/Rate and who are the top three such as CO, XO, Leading Chief then the troops by Rate.

Click on the Homepage then **Fred** and send him an email.

Fred is also working on an AOM items for sale page.

USS Terror CM-5 Reunion 16-20
Sept. '99 Cincinnati, OH (513)451-3585

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To many of you who have called me, or sent email messages, I am grateful for your thoughts and response. But, let me make one thing clear! It is "you" who make this book successful. "You" - who took the time to send in photos, stories, and bios. "You" - who believed and stood by. "You" - who put the blind faith in a few of us who knew nothing about assembling information and publishing a book. I wish I could express a personal "dedication" to you, but the dedication in the front of the book will have to do for now. It is meant for you - you know who you are - with the most profound sense of "thanks".

As a result of the BOD decision to transfer some of the AOM "operating funds" to the History Book account so we could meet publication (and cost) deadlines, out "operating" coffers are kinda low going into the close of this fiscal year. That's how it should be anyway, 'cause we're a non-profit organization and the IRS does not look favorably on us carrying a lot of funds. However, we are looking to some "after-publication" sales of our history book to get some money back into the coffers to cover expenses (storage, P.O.Box, license fees, museum maintenance costs, etc.). We also have the personal loans to pay back. Along these lines, some of you who made the personal loans may want to consider the purchase of additional books to offset the payback. Personally, I have purchased a book for each of my children and inscribed them (I ain't gonna be here forever - but the book will be) with sentiments from their Father. You might want to consider doing the same. Oh yeah! - you can let them fight over the single copy you got - but...??? Also, with a local capability we have been able to establish, we can now accept orders to have your books "personalized" with your name inscribed in gold. Do it!!!

On other matters! In my capacity as an independent observer for the Secretary/Treasurer turnover, I think

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that it went extremely well. Our new S/T is exuberant, enthusiastic (are they the same?) and eager to get on with the job. Our outgoing S/T, **Lyal Stryker**, is relieved (and I mean that as no pun). It became apparent in the turnover process as to just how much responsibility we have "demanded" from one person in the past. In this regard, I made a personal appeal to the BOD to have them immediately recruit a "Quartermaster", a "Chaplain" a "Publicity" person/committee, and a "Membership Committee" (required by our CBLs) in place as soon as possible. I also sent them my ideas as to what responsibilities these persons and/or committees should have in order to relieve our new S/T of inordinate burdens.

The S/T turnover took place over a three day period. The AOM President, outgoing and incoming S/T and I were present for the process. All duties were reviewed and discussed "infinitem". We went over the existing records (books) tooth and nail. No discrepancies. We visited the storage sites and inventoried/viewed physical assets held there. We went to the bank and registered/secured new signatures. Action items resulted in post-turnover development of new book-keeping methods and a budget that will allow tracking of individual line item receipts/expenditures. We are using the computer program Quicken to manage our accounts. I think your officers and your association have made decisions that will lead you into the 21st century.

I will make a singular observation. It may be time to look at a dues increase. The AOM organization - your organization - is borderline solvent. The cost of newsletter printing, publication and mailing has gone up on a steadily increasing basis. We have taken on the subsidy/maintenance of two museums now. Our rank and file membership profile is changing - unfortunately downward - as we lose some of our older shipmates - or cut membership due to unpaid dues. As we lose members at one end of the

spectrum, we must gain at the other. We must make a concentrated effort to recruit our new Minemen, both to sustain our organization efforts and to show them they have "heritage". I urge everyone out there to make a new commitment - it doesn't take much. We need new members. We need volunteers for the tasks at hand. We need you!!! Be in touch.

Working Party??

Last Summer Toby Horn, Museum Curator suggested a 1999 Summer working party on board Yorktown in Charleston. Any volunteers?? Brains and brawn needed. We need to make some plans as a group and need input now to *organize* things. Call or email Toby ASAP <tobyone@ix.netcom.com> (843)762-3552

Area Code Change

Effective 13 February 1999 the Coastal Bend Area Code (Ingleside, TX) changed to 361. The old 512 and 361 are acceptable until 18 September then only 361 will be accepted.

What about those Reunion Dates??

We hear many responses about the high cost of travel and accommodations during the Summer months. Each Reunion a vote is put to the floor on changing the date to early October when tourist prices fall. Each time it is favored to the month of August. Knowing that the vote is taken while the choir is present, it was suggested we run a survey to all the membership (some may not be at the meetings for that very reason) asking preferences. Of course, we hope if you vote for an alternate month that you will attend then. We don't want to lose some

folks in exchange for no shows in the Fall. Tell us what you want by mail, phone, email or fax. The next two are already scheduled. The next one to be voted upon will be West of the Mississippi 2001 at the Corpus Christi Reunion.

Scholarship

by Paul Santa Maria

Scholarship applications are requested and issued through the AOM secy. Because of the change over of the secy. position, the scholarship committee will accept any completed applications the secy receives by July 1. please make sure the application requirements are met. **GOOD LUCK!!** And get those applications in.

Scholarship's Past

During the San Diego Board meeting the Scholarship Committee asked if we ever had any feedback on the contribution the AOM had on any recipients completion/career/goals? No one had heard anything on the eventual progress other than submissions for additional years grants. Anyone out there wish to convey their accomplishments as a result of these scholarships? Please inform Curtis Christian or Paul Santa Maria so they can inform the Board and Membership

Corrections

Lyal Stryker sent in the following corrections to the Fall issue of Dashpot: Taps: **MNCM Anderson** first name is **Roland** not Randol. I reported **Ken Harder** was looking into an AOM ring. Not so as it is **John Keen**. The statement concerning the "Hero's" Capt. **Kenney** said he would have to add **Cecil Martin's** name to the list of "Where have all the heroes gone?"



Navy Unit Commendation - Vietnam

The Secretary of the Navy authorized the awarding of the Navy Unit Commendation to the Naval Advisory Group and the Marine Corps Advisory Unit, Vietnam, for service from 10 May 1965 to 28 March 1973 for services in the Republic of Vietnam.

In my conversation with Minemen who were eligible for the award, I have found out that they had not received the award. Some had retired before the award was authorized and others were not knowledgeable of the award. I wrote BUPERS Retired Activities Office to determine how they might apply for this award. BUPERS provided me with the forms that allows you to request BUPERS to check your service record to determine your eligibility. What BUPERS does after determination of eligibility was not provided, however, I assume that the Award Section would provide the award and make the appropriate entry in your service record. I received my award in October 1973.

If you know that you qualify for the award and have not received it, you can contact me and I will provide you with the needed information. Don DeCrona, 2320 Wide Horizon Dr., Reno, NV 89509-5079; or (775) 826-3081; or E-mail: <decronadl@aol.com>

**Association Logo
Paraphernalia (shirts,
hats, tie tac, sweat shirts,
jackets etc) available. For
order blank & prices
Contact Curtis Christian (address P2)**

MNCS(SW) Richard Bell, MWTC Patented his idea for a mine location marker system. The idea provides a marking system that can be deployed from remotely operated vehicles greatly enhancing personal safety

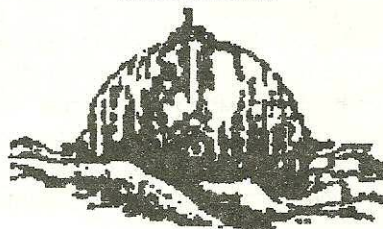
1999 Dues are past due. Send your check for \$10 to the Secretary /Treasurer. Year on your mailing lable indicates dues are paid through August of that year. Dues notices are not mailed to members .

EDITOR

by john loonam


What a book!! All references about the Book are filled with praises for a fine product. The Stryker/Horn team did one fine job with your material. Sad note is the missing stories and articles from so many of the Community. Sad that those memories will not live on and be available for historians and family. I dabble in family history and see a great dis-service to future generations by not putting things down on paper. The book in its finest still leaves holes in the "happenings" because some were too selfish to share or just plain "let George do it". Most inputs were edited to share space. How about YOUR story? Fred Dane could post it on the Homepage, it could appear in Dashpot. Before your memory slips off into fuzziness, why not jot down those thoughts and send them in. Once published, the original could be sent to the Sec/Treas for historical files. Who knows, a subsequent book may be in order.

Sorry to see so many Activities that do not submit articles for Dashpot. We had all Sites and the School in one issue since I have been editor. Sure made me feel good that the whole Community was participating.



THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

by Lyal Stryker

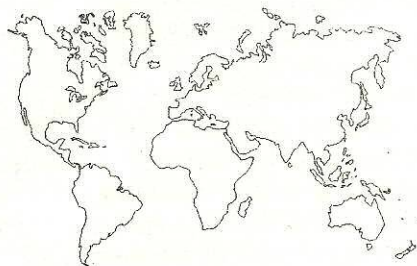
 Pardon me for using the **Bob Hope** closing but it pretty much sums up my feelings. At the reunion here in Charleston this past August I was honored by the members present with a citation citing my contribution to the Association of Minemen. A copy was in the last Dashpot. I had requested to be relieved as Secretary/Treasurer and we are proceeding to accomplish this by January 1999. In the future I hope to enjoy the status of elder statesman in the AOM and provide whatever advice may be requested. It has been my privilege to serve you for over 20 years in some capacity and I do not regret one minute of it. I am proud to be a Mineman and I guess the one thing that concerns me is the apparent lack of interest of our active duty and reserve Minemen that choose not to join us.

Secretary/Treasurer

Curtis T Christian has assumed the duties as the AOM Secretary/Treasurer. He says he is up and running although a bit overwhelmed with all the "extras" involved. His mailing address and phone numbers are listed in the masthead. Additionally, a work email address is: christianct@efdsouth.navfac.navy.mil

**NEXT
ARTICLE DUE
DATE
JUNE 10 1999**

■ FULL FORCE NEWS



COMOMAG News

by CDR Ron Swart

The MOMAG Staff hosted the first MOMAU CO's Conference the week of 22 Feb 99. This was the first opportunity to get together in four years and, as you might imagine, the faces and experience levels had changed dramatically. The Mineman background CO's have dwindled to three: LCDR Iwaniec from Unit Ten, LCDR Simmons from Unit One and CWO3 Riggins from Unit Twelve. The other CO's were LT Tom Mathison, MOMAU 3; LT Gary Martin, MOMAU 5; LCDR Matt Wiesniewski, MOMAU 7; LCDR (sel) Mike Zahn, MOMAU 11; LT Ken Dalton, MOMAU 14; and LT Sandra Oliver, MOMAU 15. All of these officers have significant surface ordnance experience and brought a wealth of leadership and professionalism to the table. They received briefs on the role of Mine Warfare from Surface, Air and Underwater Mine Countermeasures to Mines and Mining. They toured and received briefs aboard USS Inchon, USS Warrior MCM-10 (Rotational Crew Delta embarked) and USS Heron MHC-52, HELMINERON Fifteen with their MH-53E Air Mine Countermeasures Helicopters at NAS Corpus Christi, EOD Mobile Unit Six Det's Two and Four in Ingleside and the Mine Warfare Training Center. Additionally, they discussed Mineman training, manning, mine shop supply and logistics, mine assembly and readiness issues. One of the highlights was a visit from the new COMINEWARCOM, RADM Jose L. Betancourt, who shared his leadership goals with the group. We had a chance to socialize and get to know

each other better and judging by the feedback after the conference, it appears to have been a success. I'm sure we'll do it again next year.

● The Naval Reserve MOMAG community celebrated the grand opening of their new Mine Shop at Joint Reserve Base, Ft. Worth, Texas ON 13 March 99, with a ribbon cutting ceremony and a mine assembly demonstration. On hand to dedicate the former B-52 Jet Test Cell was RADM Jose L. Betancourt, COMINEWARCOM, CDR Ron Swart, CO, MOMAG and Captain Craig McDonald, CO, NAS JRB. All eleven NR-Mobile Mine Assembly Unit CO's were in attendance with their Sailors. Special recognition in the form of Flag Letters of Commendation were awarded to: MNCS Jose Lopez, MN1 Joseph Oszvart, MN2 Rebecca Beaver and MN2 Keith Hardiman at the ceremony in Ft. Worth Central Drill Site Ribbon Cutting on Saturday. Following the ribbon cutting ceremony, the Minemen put on an excellent Quickstrike assembly demonstration. The Commanding Officers and Gunners then met with CDR Swart for a Reserve CO's Conference which concluded Sunday afternoon.

A special Bravo Zulu goes to CWO4 Bob Stegge, MNC McGuire, MN1 Finney and CWO3 Haugen for their exceptional efforts to make this weekend a success.

● I had the opportunity to pay a visit to MOMAU Three, Colts Neck, NJ and to MOMAU Eleven in Charleston with Master Chief John Reeve. We found these two Units to be exceptionally squared away. I got to talk with these Sailors at Captain's Call about their concerns, their goals, the future for Mine Warfare and where the Navy was headed. My sincere thanks to the CO and Sailors of MOMAU Three and MOMAU Eleven for their hospitality and impressive readiness. Well Done!

● While in Charleston I got to call a few old friends and enjoyed the chance to have dinner with Lyal and Toby. It was great to see them both

again (and by the way, thanks again for the steak, Lyal!)

● Getting female Minemen aboard MCM Ships has been an issue since the decision to expand the Mineman rating into sea billets. Well, the Navy leadership has now given the green light and will allow Female Minemen the opportunity to go to sea along side their male counterparts. Starting with the MHC Class ships, they will soon receive the necessary shipboard modifications to allow females to embark. Female Officers, too, will get the opportunity to serve in the surface mine force. The first billets could be open as soon as October '99. Look for more on this subject as the information becomes available.

● The Mineman rating is now one of the most undermanned in the Navy. MOMAG is suffering as the most undermanned shore activity in the Navy at 43%. Why? The entire Navy is 22,000 personnel short and must recruit over 50,000 potential Sailors to fill the shortage. A Selective Re-Enlistment Bonus (SRB) for selected NEC's within the Mineman rate have been increased significantly, earning our Minemen a sizable cash bonus for re-enlisting.

● Congratulations to CWO2 David Lauffenberger, on his selection for promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Junior Grade, Surface Ordnance LDO. Dave is currently stationed in USS Seattle, AOE-3 as the Weapon's Officer. He is a Mineman with significant talent who earned his sea legs aboard USS Falcon MHC-59 prior to receiving his commission. Dave and his also very talented wife, Jennifer (MN1, MOMAU Three's Sailor of the Year) reside at WPN-STA Earle, NJ.

● The proposed consolidation of MOMAG is now at CINCLANTFLT for review. Under consideration is the consolidation of the three East Coast Units into one, closure of Det Seven Hawaii, reduction of Unit Twelve Misawa to detachment size and movement of Unit Fifteen to Ingleside, TX from Kingsville, TX. This consolida-

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tion is being done for good business and fleet support reasons but it is sad and painful to think about closing some of our Mine Shops, especially those with the deepest roots... like Hawaii. If you have NAD Oahu or West Lock stories, I'd like to collect them for the decommissioning should it be approved. Send them to **Lyal Stryker** (Our Historian), to me (and I'll see that he gets them) or the Dashpot. For those of you who wished that they had submitted something for the History Book, this is a good chance to get your story told...

● I plan to initiate a feature article on Minemen in key places or with noteworthy accomplishments, etc. Kind of a "Who's Who in the Zoo". for future Dashpot's. Look for the first one in the Summer issue.

MNCM John A. Nolen retired on the 29th of Jan. I spoke at the ceremony conducted by his CO, LT **Sandy Oliver**, which took place at MOMAU 15, Kingsville, TX. He moved to NJ with his new bride, **Sally**. Attending was his Son, **Steve** (a first LT in the USMC) and his Sister, her husband and their three sons.

MNCM Wayne "Arnie" Helgerson was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal at ceremonies at COMOMAG on 10 Feb 99 for his exceptionally meritorious service as COMOMAG Command Master Chief and for 30 years of outstanding service to the Mine Force and Minemen. He will be greatly missed. Arnie is retiring in Corpus Christi and is working as a supervisor aboard the USS Lexington Maritime Museum.

Hope to see y'all in South Texas this Summer!

MNC Rita Nicely was pictured in the 12/23 Foc'sie about family holiday traditions

News from MOMAU One

by LCDR Ed Simmons

Saw the History Book and was impressed. The committee did a super job on it.

CO's CORNER: Sorry I missed the deadline for the Winter Dashpot, but here are a few things that happened at Seal Beach. I just got back from CO Leadership Conference held in Corpus Christi Texas. It has been some time since we got together, and this was an exceptional time for us to meet & interact with the new folks coming into our community. I'm satisfied that when retirement comes I can retire knowing that the new crop of Officers will keep the torch lit and provide the direction and leadership necessary for us to excel. A Big BZ to CDR **Ron Swart** and his staff, who did a superb job in coordinating the conference, making presentations, and running us around. Local news, we sponsored the Destroyer Escort Association (DESA) Children's Christmas party here at the command. These wonderful folks provided a potluck luncheon for us and Santa showed up to hand out presents to all of our young children. We even had Beanbop the Clown entertaining us before Santa showed up. The DESA also supplied 15 Christmas baskets full of goodies including Ham, Turkey, and store coupons to help out our junior married folks. The true spirit of Christmas is real and is found in the men and women of the DESA. A big BZ for their support. We provided personnel to Hawthorne NV to work MK 6 mechanical sweep mines. You older folks remember them? Over 60 MK 6 balls were refurbished, painted, and assembled so we could requisition them for our site allocations. Want to send a big thanks to MOMAU 11 (MN2 **Kwekel** & **MNSN Coleman**) and MOMAU 15 (MN3 **Flores**) for providing additional folks for this project. Continuing to work with Air Force B1-B folks. We conducted a couple of exercises with Mountain Home ID and Ellsworth SD folks, using MK 62 laying mines with MK 16 tail sections. This

joint military exercise allows the Air Forces another contingency for their aircraft and provides us with some valuable training. Getting geared up for Kernal Blitz 99 happening in near term. I will cover that on the next edition of the Dashpot. For those of you who are not aware, we had installed the high pressure water and powder paint system back last September. I want to report that this environmentally safe high tech system is working and working exceptionally well. Due to **Chris Mahendra**, many of our local PW folks headed up by **Bill Morgan**, and my creative crew headed up by **MN1 Despres** and **MN1(SW) Dohman** has ensured success of the system. I want to thank **LCDR John Iwaniec** for starting this project and I hope some of the lessons learned will help LT **Sandy Oliver** at MOMAU 15 and at MOMAU 10 when **Chris** comes out to install his blaster in a few weeks. If you are in the area, come by and I will give you a personal tour!

Awards and BZ's:

● **Command Awards:** Received Letter of Recognition by Orange County CFC for support of 98 CFC. LOC by Commander 419th Flight Test Squadron, Edwards AFB for B1-B support of MK 65 Sea Mine Test Missions. LOA by HQ 53 Wing ACC for support of B1B Block D Force Development & Evaluation. And received from Jerry Shultz, Long Beach Councilman Ninth District, who extended a personal letter of appreciation to us for support of the North Long Beach Veterans Day Parade and Celebration. Personal Awards include:

● **Navy Achievement Medals** to **YN1 James Telford** -ADMAT, **MN1 Whitmore-98 SOY**, **YN3 Ballard-98 JSOY**, **MN3 Crawford-End of Tour**. All are super performers and medals well earned.

● **FLAG LOC** to **MNC McGinn** by **RADM Betancourt** for nomination to COMINWARCOM Senior Enlisted Leadership Award; and **MN1(SW) Dohman** and **MN3 Killip** from Brig

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from Brig Gen Richardson, USAF, HQ 53 Wing ACC Eglin AFB.

* CO LOC/LOA's for MRCI presented to MNC McGinn, MN1 Whitmore, MN1 Despres, MN1 King, MN1 Ciccarello, MN1(SW) Dohman, MN2 Medina, MN2 Nason, MN2 Geisler, SK2 Adams, MN3 Siangco, MN3 Killip, MN3 Crawford, MN3 Koski, MN3 Stafford, YN3 Ballard, MNSN Burton, MNSN Willis, MNSA Martinez & MNSR Donovan.

* CO LOC for ADMAT presented to MN1 Whitmore, MN1 King, YN3 Ballard.

* CO LOC for End of Tour presented to YN3 Ballard.

* CO LOA for Long Beach Veterans Day Parade presented to MN1 King, MN2 Nason, MN3 Mayfield, MNSN Burton & MNSA Martinez.

* CO LOA for B1-B Support presented to MNC McGinn, MN1(SW) Dohman, MN1 King, MN1 Despres, MN2 Morgan & MN2 Siangco.

* Promoted MN2 Geisler on 16 Nov & MN2 Nason on 16 Dec; MN2 Siangco and MN2 Arthur frocked from Sep 98 Exam.

* Reenlisted MN2 Siangco for 3 years, MN3 Koski for 3 years & YN3 Ballard for 3 years.

* SOYs for 1998 are MN1 Whitmore (Senior) & YN3 Ballard (Junior).

* SOQs for 4th quarter - MN1 King (Senior) and MN2 Siangco (Junior).

Hails & Farewells: Hails to MN2 Arthur who reported on board from MOMAU 5 & Farewells to YN3 Ballard who PCS'd to VQ1 at Whidbey Island, Washington; MN3 Crawford and MNSN Harmon who both separated from the U.S. Navy.

MN2(SW) Matt O'Connell, Mine Countermeasures Squadron Two was pictured in the 12/23 Foc'sle as an Ingleside Sailor.

A feature article on Stinger Missiles as the primary defense on MCMs forward-deployed to the Gulf. MNSN Brian Payne was pictured demonstrating the weapon.

MOMAU FIVE

by MNCM Zinnell

Ciao from, now that winter seems to have passed through, Sunny Sigonella!

Reports of the Mt Etna eruptions seem to be overplayed on the news in the states, Moms keep calling to make sure their Sailors are safe, I told mine that when I'm standing on her porch she'll know something happened.

More improvements in the works here, the Italians are re-wiring the Mine Assembly building and scheduling the Admin Building, been down there for a week, so far we have lights in half the building, hey, it's progress!

Got some new MHE to replace the antiques we've kept running, kind of nice seeing zero hours on a meter and knowing it isn't a roll-over.....

Lots of painting and patching, have that MRCI on the way, want to look our best....

As with all sights, we've had to say goodbye way too often and hello not enough. MN1 Lowery and MN2 Traynor departed for recruiting duty, MN2 Arthur is now at MOMAU One, MN3 Fels is at ROTCREW Bravo in Texas, MNSN Sanders has gone to CIVPAC, MNSA Digeronimo left for the USS Avenger in Texas, MN3 Paternoster is heading for CIVLANT at the end of March, MN2 Rambo leaves for MOMAU Twelve in April and our one arrival will be MNC Kaiser from MOMAU Ten, looking forward to having him aboard.

Lots of advancements from the Sept exam, MN1 Lowery, MN2 Arthur, MN2 O'halloran, MN3 Carlisle and MN3 Vallez are all wearing new devices, we are proud of them all. The March cycle numbers look good so we are hoping for more!

Getting ready for the St Patricks "Shake you Shamrock" week-end, seems to be one of three big events at NAS Sigonella, so lots of food and fun to spoil any dieters at the command. The Sicilians just celebrated the festivals of St. Agata in Catania,

Almond Blossom in Agrigento (Greeks ruins abound there) Carnivale in several cities (think Mardi Gras) and attending those made the whole winter worth dealing with here.

Spring is coming, the geckos are out, flowers are blooming and the Reserve Units are booking hotels, can't wait for the heady aroma of geep buy products to waft through the windows again.....Arrivederci!

MOMAD SEVEN

By MNCS(SW) Campbell

As we at DET Seven look forward to Spring, we have found out we will be closing our doors for good in December 1999. I guess my last article about how cold it got in Hawaii at night during the winter struck someone the wrong way and they decided the duty was just too arduous for anyone to have to put up with! So for the next few months we'll have to do a lot of packing and shipping of our assets to places unknown.

MN2 Pamela S. Smith departed March 1st for Naval Recruiting District, Atlanta. We wish Pam good luck as she tries to become one of the Navy's top recruiters. As far as new personnel, I expect we will not see any new arrivals and that the majority of the remaining crew will be here through the tentative closure in December.

LCDR Wisniewski is tentatively scheduled to leave here around the September/October time frame and take command of MOMAU Eight in Guam. He is actively recruiting personnel from DET Seven to go with him however, all he gets in return are blank stares.

MN2 Steven Brashier was selected as DET Seven's Sailor of the Quarter for 4th QTR CY98. Steve has done an outstanding job as the logistics department head and KARDEX Petty Officer.

Until next time, if there is a next time "ALOHA".

MOMAU EIGHT GUAM

by MNCS Williams

Hafa-Adai Shipmates,
Now that the holidays are over and 1999 is well underway, everyone is back onboard and hard-chargin. As usual, we have a full plate of maintenance, upgrade training, inspections, roll-backs and a myriad of other tasksings underway and on-track. The dry season has begun, but since we had an unusually dry wet season last year, we continue to see a lot of rain now, thank goodness. Water rationing has been cancelled, and the Navy's Fena Lake Reservoir is full once again.

This past quarter, the command received its third Meritorious Unit Commendation, and everyone onboard also received a Humanitarian Service Medal for relief operations following Super Typhoon Paka- We recognized the following outstanding Sailors as well: SOY for Unit Eight and COMOMAG - MNI **Sullivan**; JSOY- MN3 **Betz**; SOQ- MNI(SS) **Eckelbecker**; JSOQ- MNSA **Brown**; and COMINEWARCOM Shore Senior Enlisted Leader - MNCS **Williams**. Unit Eight is privileged to have one of the best crews found anywhere in the Navy and we congratulate each of these fine Sailors for their accomplishments. Manning is a prime concern for all of us, so we welcome the arrival of LT **Berries**, our new XO and his family. They arrived from COMOMAG, and are enjoying all the great things Guam has to offer. Our new Storekeeper also arrived, SKI (SW) **Bryan**, and has gotten right to work. She was already on-island, serving with the Military Sealift Command, so her transition has been a breeze. We also had two personnel get married this past quarter, MN3 **Barrett** and MN3 **Patton**. Both are doing well and enjoying their new lifestyle.

That's about it for this quarter here at Unit Eight. We'll cast off now and look forward to seeing any of you out there for duty here on the beautiful tropical island of Guam- Till next

time, Happy Easter and may God Bless all of you and your families.

MOMAU TEN

by LCDR John Iwaniec

Help, we need people, we're down to 15 folks and not much relief in sight.

We just lost Chief **Thomas Kaiser** who left for sunny Sigonella and gained MN1 **Pendelton** who is quickly finding out what big shoes he has to fill. MN3 **Reed** also transferred for Sea Duty and is currently in Ingle-side TX for training. MN3 **Curtis Stanley** just made the big plunge and got himself married at the tender age of 20....We hope him the best of luck.

On the workload side of things we have exercises up the Wazoo in horrible places like Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Korea. Unfortunately, when a team goes on deployment there isn't anyone left to get the job done on the homefront. I was wondering if some of those old retired Minemen out there would like to come out here to Okinawa and give us a hand. Our old building is getting all kinds of work done on her lately and we get our refurb equipment hooked up next week. The Aircon unit is next, including a new Paint Spray Booth System. We should have the reserves on board from NRUnit Eleven in April and there is a ton of work to keep them occupied. On other fronts: I just got back from the CO's Conference in Corpus Christie TX and it was great to see all the other CO's who have integrated into our community. I was impressed with their level of competence and how well they compliment our community as we continue to integrate into the "go to sea" side of the house.

By the way, this was one of the best Mine Conferences we have to date and it was truly terrific to feel that we were there to assist in solving problems in our community AS A TEAM, gee what a novel concept....A lot of good changes coming to the Mineforce. We are truly fortunate to have

Commander **Swart** at the helm during this transition process since he is the most knowledgeable guy left to charter new grounds. We also have a great new Admiral, **Battencourt**, who has risen through the ranks from some incredibly humble beginnings, seems like we actually have a guy who wants to visit a mine shop. I invited the Admiral out here to Unit Ten for a visit and was immediately jumped on by my new CO brethren for sucking up to the Admiral, man what a hard bunch these guys are....They might be smart, but hey, they were a little slow on the draw, Know what I mean Vern ?. Anyway guess that's it for now, sorry for the punctuation but this was kinda rushed seeing the deadline is tomorrow and I don't have a Yeoman to correct my vocabulary.....

USS Black Hawk MHC-58 Change of Command

LCDR **Mark Williams** turned over the helm of USS Black Hawk to LCDR **Bradley Smith** during a change of command ceremony on Friday, Feb. 5, on the Naval Station waterfront. CAPT **H.L. Broughton**, Commander, Mine Countermeasures Squadron Two, was the keynote speaker.

Smith's most recent assignment was maintenance manager for USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72).

Williams' next assignment is operations officer for U.S. Southern Atlantic Force Command.

Black Hawk is the eighth ship in the U.S. Navy's Osprey Class of coastal mine hunters, which are designed with a primary mission of clearing harbor, coastal and ocean waters of acoustic, magnetic, contact and pressure mines.

USS Robin (MHC-54) Change of command

LCDR **Roman Bowles** turned over the helm of USS Robin (MHC 54) to LCDR **Matt Beaver** during a change of command ceremony held March 5,

(Continued from page 8)

on the Naval Station waterfront. CAPT **Thomas Davilli**, Commander, Mine Countermeasures Squadron One, was the keynote speaker. **Beaver's** most recent assignment was as flag secretary for Commander, Mine Warfare Command, in Corpus Christi, Texas. **Bowles'** next assignment is as commanding officer, Naval Marine Corps Reserve Center, Greensboro, N.C. Robin is the fourth ship of the U.S. Navy's Osprey Class of coastal mine hunters, which are designed with a primary mission of clearing harbor, coastal and ocean waters of acoustic, magnetic, contact and pressure mines.

Fleet Support Activity stands up

February 1 marked the official "standing-up" of Fleet Support Activity (FSA) Ingleside.

"Non-maintenance-related support billets, that are currently assigned to Regional Support Group (RSG), will be consolidated into a separate command (FSA) whose primary mission will be to provide support to the ships," explained CDR **Jeffery Carlson** of the Mine Warfare Command.

FSA ship support will include administrative assist visits; reserve training coordination; staff readiness; legal, medical, and chaplain's assistance; as well as ADP/communications assistance and certification. The officer in charge will be CDR **Bill Huguen**.

RSG's mission is as a "maintenance broker" for ship's maintenance requests. In cases where the ships require outside repair assistance, RSG allocates the jobs to the appropriate command or civilian contractor. RSG also provides logistic support for material requirements related to the jobs. With FSA in place, RSG will be able to focus solely on the maintenance mission. The commander is CAPT **David Austin**.

MOMAU 15 supports MIW training objectives

BY Frank Gregory, NCCS Panama City

Working in a hangar on Naval Air Station Kingsville, TX, a group of 20 Sailors are engaged in a little known aspect of mine warfare. The Sailors make up Mobile Mine Assembly Unit Fifteen, one of ten units under Commanding Officer, Mobile Mine Assembly Group, NAS Corpus Christi, TX. Other MOMAU units are located in Seal Beach, CA; Earle, NJ; Sigonella, Italy; Barbers Point, HI; Guam; Kadena Air Base, Okinawa; Charleston, SC; Misawa, Japan; and Yorktown, VA.

MOMAU 15 maintains a Navy stockpile of underwater training mines in support of peacetime exercise and training activities of the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. Under the leadership of LT **Sandra Oliver**, the unit's commanding officer, personnel of MOMAU 15 are uniquely qualified to maintain these mines in a high state of readiness. Although presently charged with maintenance of exercise and training (ET) mines only, they have the adaptability to rapidly assume responsibility to assemble and prepare Prepositioned War Reserve Service Mines to support mining operations directed by appropriate authority.

Many of the unit's personnel are relatively new to the Mineman rating and to a MOMAU operation. "When I first arrived here I had no experience with mines. I had never even seen one and had no idea how they worked," said MN1 (SW) **Todd Kumro**. "My previous assignment was as a drug and alcohol abuse counselor. When I joined the unit I told them they'll have to teach me." After a little over a year with MOMAU 15, Kumro is now the unit's Quality Assurance Inspector, responsible to ensure the ET mines are correctly assembled and ready for deployment. "Of all the duties I have had, QA is the best," he said.

MN2 **Raymond Farr** is one of the "old timers" of the unit. Having always

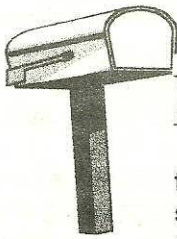
held a Mineman rating it often falls to him to help acclimate and train those new to the field to the stringent demands of the rating. It is obvious that Farr takes this role seriously. "I see the changes going in a positive direction. The older rates must ensure we keep the Mineman standards high and the quality even higher," he declared. "Training of our new personnel is a must for Minemen."

The unit recently prepared a group of Mines MK 6 for deployment during Gulf of Mexico Exercise (GOMEX) 99-1. The exercise was conducted in January in preparation for future exercises in the Mediterranean and in the Arabian Gulf.

According to Oliver, the unit has achieved an enviable record of on-time delivery of ET mines. "In the past two years we have met every one of our deployment objectives," she said. "That's quite a tribute to the hard work of the professionals we have here."

MOMAU 15 is also charged with maintenance of various mine displays located throughout the Corpus Christi area. Displays at the Corpus Christi International Airport, Mine Warfare Command, Mobile Mine Assembly Group and Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15 at NAS Corpus Christi, and Mine Warfare Training Center at NAS Ingleside are among those maintained. In addition, a mine display has now been made a part of the "Lady Lex (USS LEXINGTON (CV 16) Museum" permanently berthed off Corpus Christi Beach.

High morale and dedication was evident throughout the unit and their efforts reflected a great deal of pride in what they do. The words of ADM Jay Johnson, Chief of Naval Operations in December 1998 seem appropriate to this unique group of Sailors; "We're so richly blessed right now with the quality of men and women who are in the Navy."



Incoming

H Heard that **Don Costa** was recuperating nicely from multiple bypass surgery. When reported he was already on the golf course. Probably the next day.

Bob Benentende will undergo serious surgery the middle week in March. He had a malignant tumor removed from his bladder the beginning of March. He will lose his prostrate and bladder but says he

Rotational Crew Golf welcomes new commanding officer

LCDR **John B. Bowie** turned over the helm of Mine Countermeasures (MCM) Rotational Crew Golf to LCDR **Gary R. Parriott** during a change of command ceremony on Tuesday, Jan. 26, on the Naval Station waterfront. CAPT **Michael D. Simpson**, Commander, Mine Countermeasures Squadron (COMCMRON) Three, was the keynote speaker.

Parriott's most recent assignment was as operations officer for COMCMRON Three.

Bowie will move to Washington, D.C., where he will serve on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations.

NOTE

Articles submitted are printed without verification and are as perceived by the author. Editing by the Dashpot (to reduce space) is for length not content. The AOM does not assume responsibility, accuracy or authorship on submitted articles.

MN2(SW) **Patrick Richardson**, USS Oriole MHC 55, was pictured in the 12/23 issue of Foc'sle as a member of the Mine Warfare Center of Excellence team.

Where's Charlie?

jpowell33@aol.com is looking for anyone that knew Minemen on the USS Gwin DM-33? He is looking for information on the following names: **Gerkins, Rose, Shaffer, Shumpert, Dejockomo, Briggs, Schmit**. Said he talked to Retired Capt. **Benbo** (Gwinn) last summer in Virginia Beach. **Dejockomo** was also an employee at NWS Yorktown and reactivated and assigned to the Gwinn.

Who was the first FL Officer at Mine Engineering Facility in Yorktown? **Phylis Pierce**, OIC Secretary remembers some names but can't put her finger on the first. LT **Wallace Richards** (Aviation Community) was there early on. In the late 50's early 60's a LT **Cotter** and Ens **Caldwell** and ENS **Jacobs** also come to mind. LT Ben Randle was on an inspection team representing NMEF in late '59 It had to be someone prior to **Don DeCrona** ('61)

John Waldrop was discharged July '78 as an MN3. Now lives in Pasadena TX with my wife and three kids and one granddaughter. A few years ago, while shopping in the local army navy surplus, I found a renegade patch from MOMAG Det 6. This patch was created after I got out. Do you, or anyone else might know if there are any other patches from the various unit? If so I would like to get the ones from the units I was stationed.

Speaking of MOMAG Det 6, If anyone has any photos of the buildings, I painted the MOMAG emblem and LOGO on the Main Building doors in the fall of '76. I have a photo of it, but it is temporarily misplaced.

I am looking forward to becoming a member of the AOM and look forward to talking to fellow Minemen.

[<nightwatchman55@hotmail.com>](mailto:nightwatchman55@hotmail.com)

From: Mine Countermeasures Forces Command <mcdrag@tin.it>
Reply-To: amletog@hotmail.com

Organization: Italian Navy
I ve understood that you have a large experience in mine warfare. I'm 35, graduate in electronic engineering, and I'm working in mine warfare from 5 years. I'm specialized in underwater acoustic and in mine technology. I'm collaborating with USN in many projects and my last visit in USA was on August at Coastal System Station (Panama City, FL). Now I'm teaching mine warfare in the IT Naval Academy in Livorno, too. I'm happy that you enjoyed yourself in Italy and in La Spezia. I stay in La Spezia only for work but I live in Pisa (do you know the leaning tower?).

My future wish is to work as Technical Officer at the Italian Embassy in Washington to have the opportunity to live for 3 years in your wonderful country.

Best,

Amleto

Walter "Toni" Kibe MNC Ret. says:
Hello Gunner,

Good to hear from you!! I hope you and your family are doing well. Yes it was at least a century ago, I'm glad that none of us has to ever go back to that place(Subic Bay).

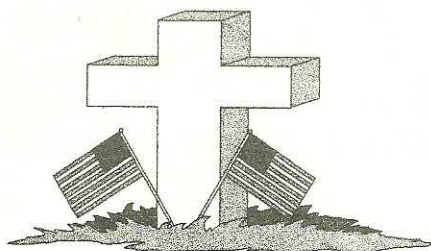
Walter

Cold War Recognition Certificate

Bob Wilson tells us to click in on <<http://147.10318.2321>> for instructions how to apply for the new Federal Government Cold war Recognition certificate. All Military and Government employees of the cold war era (9/2/45 to 12/26/91) are eligible. Registration begins 4/5/99. Instructions for applying will be posted on 3/29/99.

Jim Longway tells us his Daughter Tina has her own Homepage with Husband Jay down at NAS Pensacola.
<angelfire.com/tmandtina/>

TAPS



Since our last report the following deaths have been reported:

MNC USN Ret. Frederick Trestrail, Jan 19, 1999 Suffolk, VA. AOM Member Ed Oyer attended the service and provided Nancy decedent affairs documentation. Ed was dissapointed with the Navy Honor Guard's performance.

William Zahn, Ex MN3 passed away 17 May 1981. (Sister reported)

MN3 Michael R. Gibson, MOMAU 14, forklift accident at the Site. 2 November 1998.

MNC, Ret. Dale "Fuzzy" Gardner 11/98 at Walland TN

Edna Eck, wife of MNCS Ret. Frank Eck 14 Jan 1999 at Brainerd MN

Joe Balderrama, President AOM

I write to you today to introduce myself. My name is **ENS Chuck Bell**, the new public affairs officer at the Mine Warfare Command Just wanted to let you know that I have read your most recent AOM newsletter and find it very valuable. The info from the MOMAUs and the like is terrific.

On another note, the Texas Maritime Museum, located in Rockport, will be hosting a Mine Warfare exhibit, March - August 1999. The curator, Mr. Fred Poyner, is in search of mine warfare artifacts of all types. After having read his request letter, and having seen your newsletter, I thought that perhaps some of your members might be willing to contribute to the exhibit. A trip to the museum might be a nice event during your upcoming 25th reunion. Mine Warfare Command/COMOMAG will be contributing models, photos, mines, etc.

Crews combine to increase duty sections

W e all would like more time at home to be with friends or family, or to just relax -- especially shipboard Sailors.

Mine Warfare Command (MINEWARCOM) officials recognized that need and are implementing a program that would allow Sailors on mine countermeasures (MCMs) ships and coastal mine hunters (MHCs) more time at home.

During the Christmas and New Year holiday period, a number of ships homeported at Naval Station Ingleside, Texas, nested together to combine duty section responsibilities. Some are continuing the process, as their operational schedules allow, according to Mine Countermeasures Squadron One officials.

A "trial run" was conducted this past summer with USS Kingfisher (MHC 56) and USS Heron (MHC 52). The two ships were nested together and their crews joined to increase the number of duty sections from three or four to eight. The "shared asset" plan was put on hold in August however, due to the implementation of Threat Condition Alfa, said Squadron One officials.

One of the obstacles in implementing the program was finding two ships with similar underway schedules to allow for maximum participation and maximum time at home. Mine Countermeasures Squadrons (MCMRON) One and Three took up that challenge in December when MINEWARCOM decided to revisit the concept.

Another challenge facing MCM Sailors is that MCMs have two different shipbuilders, so there are differences in the layout of the ships and sometimes a difference in the equipment on board. In order for the program to work efficiently, crew members have to become familiar with both ships and the locations of fire stations, extinguishers, and other emergency equipment, officials at Squadron Three said.

Commanding officers of the ships nested together outlined joint policies

for the combined duty sections -- plans varied between each set of nested ships, according to Squadron One officials.

"The emergency in-port parties combined, and food services for both ships were being served on board Pioneer, closing the galley on Gladiator," explained LCDR **William Harris**, commanding officer of Rotational Crew Bravo on board USS Pioneer (MCM 9), whose ship was nested with USS Gladiator (MCM 11) during the holiday period. Other watches, such as sounding and security, officer of the deck, and command duty officer, were combined by other ships nested together to allow the maximum number of duty sections, and more time at home for Sailors, according to Squadron Three officials.

"I think it's a good idea. It doubles the number of duty sections so I can spend twice as much time at home now," said MN3 **Lee Beggs** of USS Falcon (MHC 59), which is nested with USS Pelican (MHC 53).

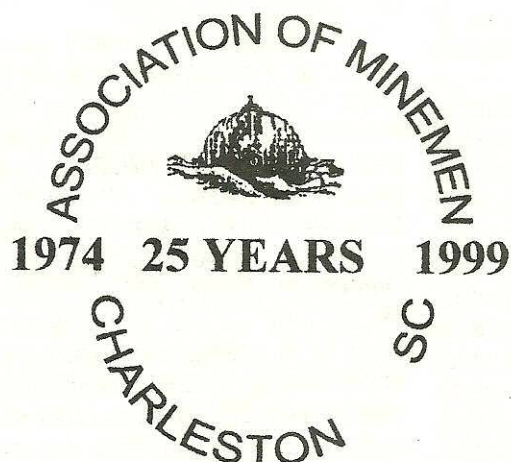
Crew members from other ships agree. Squadron officials said the maintenance and operational schedules of the individual ships is key to sharing assets, and that the process will continue to be refined and put into action whenever possible.

USS Gladiator and MCMROT Crew Foxtrot participated in a test gun shoot trying several new weapons systems for Avenger class ships. The tests included a 25mm gun, a 7.62mm, 6 barrel, minature gun, a .50 caliber, 3 barrel, Gatling gun. Over 5000 rounds were fired. Participating in the test were MN2(SW) Gregory Wisniewski, MN3 Lorne Hancock, MNSA Vernon Saunders. Foc'sle 12/23

MNSN **Abel Lunacasas**, USS Scout (MCM 8), was recognized for his efforts in the ship acheiveing a high score on the food service portion of the Logistics Management Assessment. (Foc'sle 12/23)

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