

THE DASHPOT

Issue 39

Newsletter of the Association of Minemen

Fall 2002



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Paul Santa Maria

Another great and successful reunion has come and gone, but certainly not forgotten. Just being on the old warfare school grounds brought about such strong nostalgic feelings, not only to myself, but to many others I'm sure.

To the reunion committee: Jack Smoot and John Loonam, Chair and Co-chair, to members Bill Beck, Bob Spencer, Dan Epperly, Eddie Atkins, "Mac" McCarty, and Ed Oyer, many "Kudos" for a "JOB WELL DONE".

As my first year as your President has come to a close, I would like to thank each and every one of the Officers, Directors, Chairpersons and their members, for having done an outstanding job for our great organization. Welcome to Bob Hart and Walt Peters our new directors who replaced outgoing Directors LCDR Coral MacIntosh and Jim McGoldrick. All appointments remain the same with the exception of historian. Ron Swart is our new Historian. I'm confident he will continue the outstanding job that Lyal Stryker has done for so many years. We are presently in the process of re-defining the duties of the Historian and Museum Coordinators. Director Bill Roberts is chairing that committee. Another step forward was taken when both the Board of Directors and the membership unanimously approved the much-needed changes to the by-laws. I would like to thank our Parliamentarian, Warren Savage, who worked very hard with me to bring these needed changes to light and fruition. Warren has also agreed to do some publicity in the various veterans and military publications.

In my opinion, the reunion was a huge success; the large attendance at all the functions, the sales of Minemen paraphernalia, thanks to Bill and Patty Johnson, and last, but not least, the auction did very well. Thanks to all who brought items and to those who so generously purchased them. The Association is very solvent, thanks to you all and the dedication of our Treasurer, Curtis Christian. Speaking of money, Bootsie and I would like to say "Thank You" to all those who so generously contributed to the Scholarship Challenge Fund. I was having little "anxiety" attacks right up to the last moment and at my age (72 years young today, Aug 29), I can't have too many of those. Congratulations on a great accomplishment; the Scholarship Fund is secured for the future.

Continued on page 2.

YORKTOWN REUNION 2002

By Jack Smoot & John Loonam

The final reunion committee meeting was held the Sunday before the reunion. Last minute tweaking and check off lists were finalized. The hospitality room turned out to be a bigger and earlier draw than we anticipated. An overflow crowd moved into someone's room. The drinks were cold and the food arrived by 6:30 and we were all off to an evening of fellowship and reestablishing old friendships. RADM Roy Hoffman and his bride honored us with their presence. The sea and shore stories bounced around the room until past midnight.

The Saturday Golf outing is covered elsewhere.

The co-chair for the reunion, Jack Smoot, turned up ill on Saturday and was unable to make the rest of the reunion. After all his work and worry about making sure this would be a reunion to remember, he got tangled up with an intestinal obstruction and a kidney stone. Jack was admitted to the hospital on Monday and didn't get released until Friday evening. Jack is recovering.

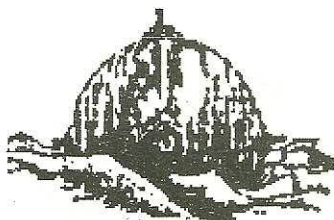
The set up for our reunion was thrown into a last minute shuffle as the hotel was hosting an airport screener's testing/training evolution that was extended and we got shuffled to make a secure area for them.

Meetings were held and business taken care of in a timely manner. John Loonam was making a reunion status report at the business meeting and describing the Admiral's participation when Phil Dechene got his attention to say the Admiral was sitting there next to him at the meeting! After hearing Swede Carlsen give his Scholarship report announcing we needed

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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 with the mission of perpetuating knowledge of undersea mine warfare and championing its necessity as one of America's first lines of defense.

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President continued.

Congratulations are also in order for Dan Epperly and Eddie Atkins for being the recipients of our coveted "Clock Cockers" Award for year 2002.

We all know and are looking forward to our 2003 Reunion in San Diego. For our 2004 Reunion, the membership voted for Charleston once again with Director Dick Schommer as Chairman. Our future looks great.

In a few days, Bootsie and I will fly to Corpus Christi to witness "Change of Command" and "Retirement" ceremonies for CDR Ron Swart. We feel very honored in receiving this invitation. It's a first time experience for both of us.

GOD BLESS AMERICA

Yorktown Reunion 2002 continued.

another thousand dollars for the scholarship match, the Admiral donated one hundred dollars and then Bob Wilson stood up and announced we had the thousand with his \$900.00 check!

The evening dinner for 127 started promptly at 7:30 after the social hour. Ed Oyer performed the job of master of ceremonies superbly. Ed gave us a little personal connection with many on the Taps list. President, Paul Santa Maria introduced Mary Fisher, widow of our first president, "Foxy" Fisher and their son Marty who introduced the Fisher table including his daughter, Karen, and granddaughter, Kristina, a midshipman at the Naval Academy. Their four-generation photo is in the gallery of photos. Jack Smoot had a photograph of the personnel of Mine Flotilla One dated 1939 enlarged and framed for presentation to Mary Fisher on behalf of the AOM. "Foxy" was pictured in the row of chiefs and listed as GMC PA for Gunners Mate Chief, permanent appointment. Both Mary and Marty made remarks to the crowd. Mary thanked the AOM for continuing to keep her informed with the Dashpot.

CDR Ron Swart, COMOMAG, was the guest speaker. CDR Swart gave us a thumbnail sketch of where we are and where we are going in minewarfare. He said the force is some 800 strong with men and women Minemen. A few years ago we were going below 500. CDR Swart's most encouraging remarks

Continued on page 3.

Yorktown Reunion 2002 continued.

centered on the recognition of minewarfare as necessary, at the highest levels, in our defense posture. RADM Hoffman followed up with the fact that if we don't keep minewarfare on the front burner it will be lost.

After the dinner meeting, MN2 Robert Smith introduced himself to the Admiral as one of the rescuers picking up survivors of his sweep sinking off Korea. (See related article in this issue).

As the evening wore on some of the group moved back into the hospitality room until past midnight again.

Sunday morning meant the team setting up and gathering items for the picnic. Some 132 folks including the Admiral honored us with their gathering at the old Mine Warfare School in Yorktown. The drive through the battlefield hasn't changed much, but the base seems to be a sea of brick. The Coast Guard Training Center campus is nearly all brick, multi story buildings. It was said that the gym, Captain's quarters, and firehouse are the only pre Korean-Hall buildings remaining. You wouldn't recognize the gym as they have brick and vinyl faced the entire building. Three of our members drove motor homes to Yorktown and stayed at the base campground a few steps from our outing.

The picnic area could have had additional seating but we managed to enjoy the day anyway (additional tables and chairs requested did not materialize). The AOM clothing sales boomed and the scholarship auction did a bang up business with Millie Reid's afghan stealing the show for hand made items. Ed Oyer conned several Williamsburg merchants to donate items for the auction. They all went to happy bidders responding to auctioneers Paul Santa Maria, Joe Balderrama, Bob Hart, Toby Horn and Warren Savage. Thanks to Jack Smoot and Bill Beck who each donated a bushel of hard crabs and Bobbie Loonam donated an entree of barbecued flank steak to add to the epicurean delight of all. June Sprecher and family honored us by attending all three events. Bill Roberts remarked "those boys Bryan and Barry sure look like their dad Ed Sprecher". The festivities ended about 4:00 PM and the crew did a bang up job of restoring the picnic area. Thanks and a job well done to Yorktown 2002 Committee members Bob Spencer, Danny Epperly, Eddie Atkins, Bill Beck, Ed Oyer and "Mac" McCarthy.



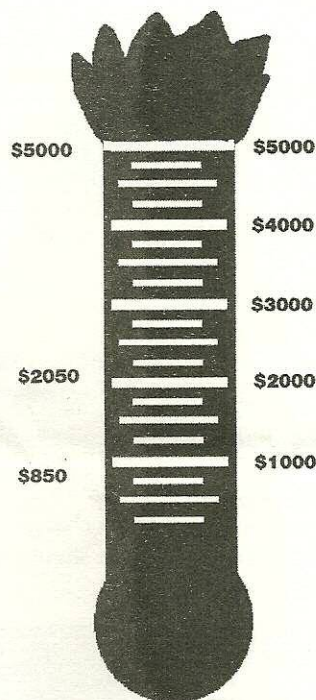
Mr. Dan Epperly and Mr. Eddie Atkins received the "CLOCK COCKERS" award for this year.



SCHOLARSHIP SCOOP

By Swede Carlsen

Congratulations to all! You have met the challenge our President and his Wife issued at the 2001 reunion. The AOM now has \$10,000.00 working in a CD. The annual interest it accumulates will be used towards one \$500 scholarship.



The award's of the AOM scholarships for 2002 are:
Sabrina Peters of Georgetown, SC (Winthrop University at Rock Hill, SC).
Andrew Peters of Pittsburgh, PA (Art Institute of Pittsburgh, PA).

The recipient of the Doreen Stryker Memorial Scholarship is Gino Marmorato of Bronx, NY (Pace University of Law, White Plains, NY).

The recipient of the Kay Branan Memorial Scholarship is Michelle Caputo of Bronx, NY (State University of New York at Binghamton, NY).

Congratulations to the scholarship awardees and recipients.

THINK SCHOLARSHIP! A Christmas gift to the fund is a good thought.

Check out "UPROMISE" on the internet. It's a new way save for college.

STAND TALL AMERICA



SECRETARY'S REPORT

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN WILLIAMSBURG VA. ON 10 AUG. 2002

(Some entries taken from the BOD meeting)

The President called the meeting to order at 1440.

Minutes of the meeting held in Reno NV. Were read and accepted.

The treasurer's report was given and accepted.

John Loonam reported on the 2002 reunion and informed the membership that Jack Smoot was sick and in bad shape. But all was in order for the reunion.

Warren Salvage reported on the 2003 reunion in San Diego. It will be at the Handlery hotel.

Toby Horn reported on the Yorktown museum. A letter was read concerning turning all display items over to the Yorktown committee. It was agreed to do so with a change to read that the AOM would have first recovery rights should any items be disposed of.

Sweed Carlson reported on the scholarships. We will give four scholarships this year. Names and schools will be published later.

Joe Balderrama presented Mr. Robert Hart and Mr. Walter Peters to serve on the BOD for the next three years. A vote was taken and the nominees were elected to the BOD.

The president announced that Mr. Dan Epperly and Mr. Eddie Atkins were recommended for the "CLOCK COCKERS" award for this year. A vote was taken and the recommendation was passed.

The President reported on the purposed by-law changes. A vote was taken and the following changes were adopted.

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS AND THEIR ELECTION.

PRESENT: Section 1. The officers of this organization shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Board of Directors that include ex-officio members as detailed in Art. V, Section 3 and Chapter Chairpersons designated in accordance with Article X, Section 2.

CHANGE TO: The officers of this organization shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Immediate Past President, Directors that include ex-officio members as delineated in Article V, section 3 and Chapter Chairperson designated in accordance with Article X, Section 2. This body shall be known as the Board of Directors.

PRESENT: Section 2. The officers shall be elected with the exception of the Secretary, Treasurer and those ex-officio members who are appointed by the President subject to approval by the Board of Directors. The position of Secretary and Treasurer can be held by the same person. Each elected official, and all Chapter Chairpersons in attendance, shall be a voting member at the Board of Directors meeting conducted by the President of the Association.

CHANGE TO: These officers shall be elected with the exception of the Secretary, Treasurer and those ex-officio members who are appointed by the President; subject to approval of the Board of Directors. The position of Secretary and Treasurer can be held by the same person. Each elected official, the Immediate past President, and all Chapter Chairpersons in attendance, shall be a voting member at the Board of Directors meeting conducted by the President of the Association.

PRESENT: Section 3. The Board of Directors will consist of six members who shall serve terms of three years. Two of these members shall be elected annually. Ex-officio members of the Board of Directors will include the Parliamentarian, Chaplain, and Quartermaster who are appointed in accordance with Article VI, Section 1. The Immediate Past President is an ex-official member of the Board of Directors. Ex-officio members act in only an advisory capacity and do not have a vote on matters of the Board.

CHANGE TO: The Directors will consist of six members, who shall serve terms of three years. Two of these members shall be elected annually, Ex-officio members of the Board of Directors will include the Parliamentarian, Chaplain, and Quartermaster who are appointed in accordance with Article VI, Section 1. The immediate Past-President is an automatic member of the Board of Directors. Ex-officio members act in only an advisory capacity and do not have a vote on matters before the Board.

ARTICLE VI. DUTIES OF OFFICERS.

PRESENT: Section 7. Four Directors shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of the Board of Directors.

CHANGE TO: Four voting members shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of the Board of Directors.

Continued on page 5

Minutes of the Meeting continued.

The President reported that the BOD had decided to continue to have the Dashpot printed on the web page.

The Secretary reported that the challenge for the scholarship CD had been met (at the last minute). Thanks to all who donated to this undertaking. We had donations from \$25.00 to \$1000.00. A new CD will be purchased and the interest will provide another scholarship.

Dick Schommer reported that he would take the reunion in 2004 at Charleston SC. To be held the second weekend in Oct.

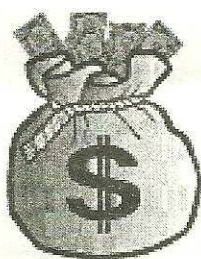
The President announced that the BOD had passed a rule that free dinners at the reunions would be given for the guest speaker and companion and mineman of the year and companion, active and reserve. The President/BOD must approve any additions to this list

The President stated that he would ask for a volunteer for publicity director. Warren Salvage volunteered.

1535 Meeting adjourned

Respectfully Submitted

Curtis Christian



TREASURERS REPORT

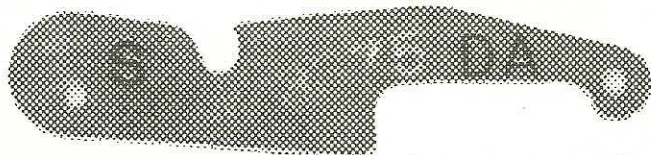
We have \$5090.78 in operating funds available for use this year. Of that we will need about \$1636.24 for the Dashpot. We will have some funds added to this as members pay 2003 dues.

Looks like we are doing OK as far as operating funds this year, but don't forget we need donations for the 2003 scholarships.

Thanks to everyone who rallied to meet Paul's challenge. As a result we were able to purchase the new CD. We now have two Scholarship CDs but remember we can only use the interest received from them.

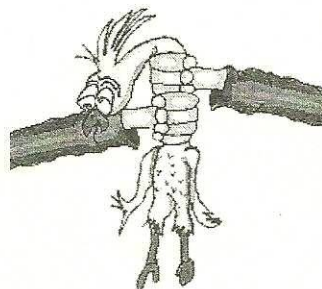
Our Books are always open. If you have questions, ask them.

See Ya,
Curtis



2002 AOM REUNION GOLF TOURNAMENT

By Robert A. Spencer



Saturday morning at Cheatham Annex's (now part of WPNSTA Yorktown) Deer Cove Golf Course a hung over group of Minemen rose early and braved the elements. A battle for the prestigious Rubber Chicken commenced. The winning team was comprised of Francis McCarthy, Bob Hart, and Bob Spencer and they did battle with a team consisting of Joe Balderrama, Jim Shultz and his son-in-law. It was a hard fought match, the winners were 3 over par, and won by 5 strokes.

The illustrious Rubber Chicken was presented to Francis McCarthy by Dick Schommer at the AOM banquet. Mac graciously accepted and will transport the chicken to San Diego for next year's golf outing. He will present this prestigious award to the so-called winners. Dick Schommer said he had tended to this chicken for a couple of years and was really glad to get rid of it.

ROFTS LUNCHEON

By John Loonam

The Port of York is the Enlisted Club on the Yorktown Coast Guard Training Center (old Minewarfare School). The first Thursday of each month, a band of retired old farts (ROFTS) meet for lunch at 11:30. The club has a fantastic menu with multiple choices on a hot buffet line, roll your own sandwich and salad bar, and a desert table that tempts everyone. The nominal fee of \$5.00 covers all you can handle.

This band of retired MN and NMEF civilians may well fit into the Dashpot's Rogues, Rascals and Renegades witness list. Retired NMEF OinC CDR Earl Roberts says "Its a great gathering of mine folks where there is no agenda, no minutes, no assigned seating, and just plain good old conversation." The group has been meeting for over 20 years at various eating establishments in the area. The Yorktown enlisted club has been the spot for over a year now. After taking July off with many attendees out of town, the August gathering of the group included Jack Smoot, Earl Roberts, Ray Ethridge, Ed Oyer; Charlie Miller, John Daniels, Fred Schrede, George Britton, Dave Spangler, Lorimore Hogge, Gus Gustafson, Bill Alexander, Reggie Beane, Bill Warren and John Loonam. If you're in the Yorktown area on the first Thursday of the month, drop in and join the group.

ITS A SMALL WORLD

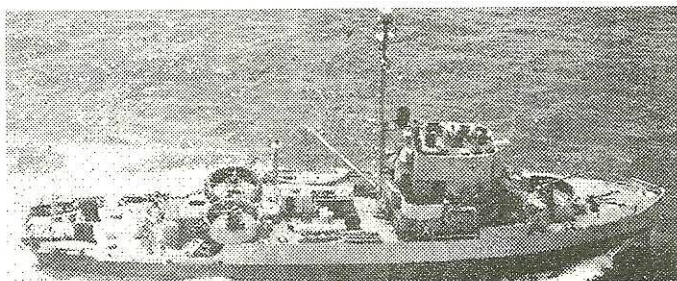
By John Loonam

During the Early Bird get-together for the AOM reunion at the Williamsburg Clarion, our first Honorary AOM Member, RADM Roy Hoffman, told a few of us that he was a young Ensign in USS *Pirate* (AM 275) during the Korean Conflict. Off the East Coast of Korea on Thursday, October 12th, 1950 the USS *Pirate* struck a mine as did the USS *Pledge* (AM 277) a few minutes later. The *Pirate* sank almost immediately while the *Pledge* remained afloat for a short time. Some 135 men were swimming toward shore when they encountered fire from North Koreans on shore. They turned around to go seaward where the sister minesweepers picked them up. Well now, we had something to talk about at the dinner meeting. Our honorary member had been on a ship that struck a mine and survived. The Admiral and his wife honored us and sat at the head table. RADM Hoffman made a few remarks reminding us that we had better make sure that minewarfare stays on the front burner or it will die. CDR Ron Swart provided the group with the latest decisions on rescuing and funding our programs and our future R & D plans.

After the dinner small groups gathered around to chat and low and behold a one tour Mineman on one of the rescue minesweepers told the Admiral he that helped rescue him in 1950! MN2 Robert O. Smith explained he was one of four MNSAs assigned to the Minesweeper Endicott (DMS 35) right out of a school in 1950. The Endicott was ordered in to pick up survivors after the sinkings. MNSN Charles N. Phillips was in the boat crew picking up survivors. Talk about a small world. Smith only did one tour and had no clue he would ever run into someone he helped rescue 52 years ago. The Admiral's wife said, "That story brought goose-bumps to my skin."

For a first person account of the *Pirate*'s sinking and subsequent crew rescue, see the Commanding Officers report on the loss of ship to the Secretary of the Navy at the following web site: www.history.mil/faqs/faq/103-3.htm You may also go to www.history.mil/faqs then click on 121 USS *Pirate*, then click on USS *Pirate* report of loss

USS PIRATE AM 275



- Admirable Class Minesweeper:
- Displacement: 625 tons
- Length: 184'6"
- Beam: 33'
- Draft: 10'
- Speed: 15 knots
- Armament: 1 3"/50
- Complement: 104
- Diesel-electric engines, twin screws, 1,800 h.p.
- Built at Gulf Shipbuilding Co. and commissioned 1944

LOSS OF USS PIRATE 12 OCTOBER 1950

On 14 August 1950, the U.S. Navy recommissioned USS *Pirate* (AM 275) to serve in the Korean War, which had begun the previous June with the North Korean invasion of South Korea. During her service in the war, *Pirate* served as a minesweeper off the east coast of Korea. On 12 October 1950, *Pirate*, along with several other ships, was sweeping the area of the Wonsan Harbor near Sin-Do island. During her sweeping activities, *Pirate* was alerted of the presence of several mines and that the first confirmed mine position was close to her. As she was turning to change her course, she struck a mine. Then several moments later the same fate befell USS *Pledge* (AM 277). Although she sank, *Pirate* helped to clear the waters allowing the UN ships better access to Wonsan harbor and the continuation of their attack on North Korea.

The Salvage of *Pirate*

The next day a helicopter flying over the area spotted a number of mines around the wreckage. This meant that for salvaging to occur, a sweep of the area had to be done. Once done when diving to the wrecks could begin, the main focus was the retrieval of the onboard encryption devices. Due to imperfect weather and the ship's location, a more complete salvage of *Pirate* and *Pledge* would have taken months to complete. Thus, after the salvagers established that no classified information of use to the enemy was on board, the demolition of the ship was ordered to destroy anything of possible use left on the ship. The officer's in charge of the salvage operation decided to use routine air surveillance to insure that the enemy did not try to salvage the ship.

An Item of Value

Contrary to the belief that there was only "a small chance of obtaining any item of value" from the wreck, one artifact of great value was recovered. When *Pirate* went down in 1950 so did her 48 star American flag. However, Captain Cornelius E. McMullen, Commanding Officer of *Pirate* at the time of her sinking, received an anonymous package sometime in 1952. Along with this package was a note stating that because he had been Commanding Officer of *Pirate* the sender thought that he, McMullen, would like to have the package's contents—the ship's American flag. On 28 May 1985, Captain McMullen donated the flag to the Naval Historical Center, where it is presently on display in The Navy Museum's Korean War exhibit.

**NEXT DASHPOT
ARTICLES ARE
DUE
1 DEC 2002**



MAIL BAG



DEAR PAUL:

8/19/02

SPEAKING FOR THE 4 GENERATIONS OF FISHER'S, I WANT TO THANK YOU AND THE ASSOCIATION OF MINEMEN FOR INVITING US TO THE REUNION BANQUET — AN THE OPPORTUNITY TO REMEMBER AND HONOR MY FATHER. IT WAS A MEMORABLE EVENING FOR ALL OF US.

I WISH THE ASSOCIATION CONTINUED SUCCESS IN ALL ITS ENDEAVORS.

Your kindness was greatly appreciated.

Thank You.

Mandy

From Mary Jo Beasley regarding Tom Beasley Membership No. 0050:

Tom's health is pretty good although he has COPD. We do not travel any more.

Sorry to say that he recognizes very few names in the "Dashpot" any more. Most of the older Minemen are gone. He would enjoy hearing from any who remember him.

Dear Friends,
A note to let you know all is well with us. The weather is simply beautiful, but would love to have some of the rain that fell so heavily in Texas.

Sorry to say we will not be making the reunion in Yorktown in August. Our lives continue to be very busy and happy to say we enjoy all that we do. Bob is still bowling in four leagues a week and very much involved with the Southern Los Angeles and the California State Senior Bowling Associations.

Willie Brooks' widow, Marie Brooks, is not too well and we help her all we can. Francis does all her paperwork and sees that she keeps her ID card and enrollment in DEERS up to date. Tricare for Life is a real blessing for all of us.

Thank you for the Dashpot and appreciate all the long hours of labor that goes into it.

Sincerely,
Bob and Francis Stickney

(Editors' Note: The entire staff of the Dashpot thanks you for your kind comments.)

Dear AOM,
It's been a good run, but I must request you drop me from the mailing list as of August 2002. (I appreciate your having kept the Dashpot coming during this last 12 month period — for which I paid no dues — so I enclose a check for \$15 to cover that period.)

Best regards to all in the AOM and the Mine Force.

Ludwell L Pickett

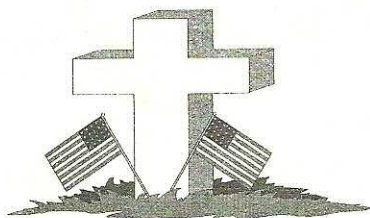
Bill,
I have never cared for the word "ex" or former. Mostly I just say Mineman. Unless an acronym resonates, they do injustice.

I feel that we are like the Marines — once a Mineman, always a Mineman.

Ed (Oyer)

Don't question authority.

It hasn't got a clue!!!!



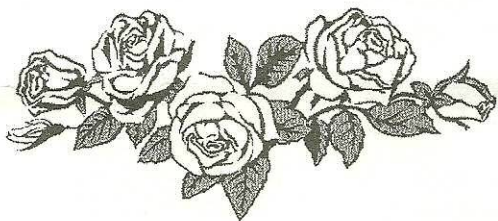
TAPS

Nelda L. Sikorski, wife of Anthony J. Sikorski MNM Ret.

Just a short note to let you know of the passing away of my wife of 46 years Nelda L. Sikorski. She passed away in her sleep on April 2, 2002. Sorry it took so long to notify you, but really never gave it a thought until I was reading the latest edition of the Dashpot

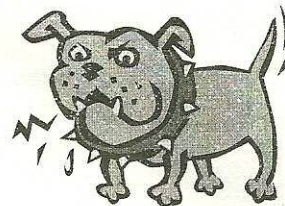
In case you don't remember me, Anthony J. Sikorski MNM Ret. I served from 1947 until I retired on Aug. 2, 1976. Last duty station was Charleston S.C. After retiring we moved to Florida and have been here, about 30 miles north of Orlando, FL. ever since and, as of now, I plan on staying here. Thank you for your time.

Tony "SKI" Bigchiefski@aol.com



Troy Shawn Pricer; son of CWO-4 Bob Pricer Ret

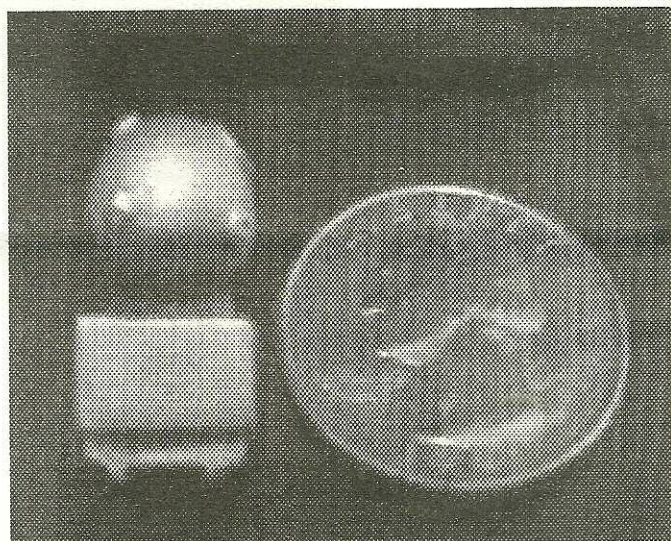
Troy Shawn Pricer, Bob's son, 25 years of age, passed away Wednesday Aug 7 and was buried on Monday. His parents CWO4 Bob and Margaret Pricer, USN Ret., his wife Amy and son Troy, a twin sister, and five brothers survive him. He is buried in Williamsburg Memorial Park, VA



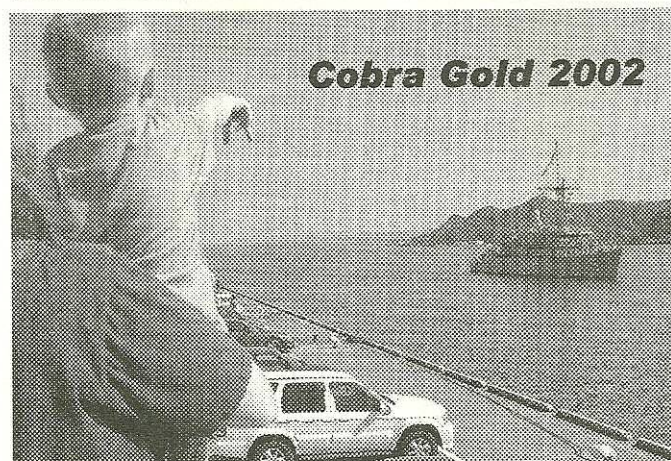
FROM THE STOREKEEPER

By MN1 Stephanie Cowart

I hope everyone enjoyed the new items presented at the AOM Reunion. Thanks to Paul Santa Maria for ordering and purchasing them! He and Harold Elston also set up an online AOM Stores page on the AOM webpage. Now, you can get online and see pictures of the items we have for sale. The only item missing is the MK 6 tie tack. Here is a picture of one, and I'll be sending Harold a pic to add to the site. (I finally figured out how to use my digital camera for close up shots) You can contact me at cowdawg1@ite.net or Paul for orders. He will be helping me out until early next year, since he has all of the items. I should be returning to the states in February, a bit earlier than expected. I will be reporting to the USS Cormorant in Ingleside, TX. If you have any questions regarding any of the items, feel free to contact me.



The AOM Mk 6 Mine tie tack



Cobra Gold 2002
FLEET ACTIVITIES SASEBO, Japan — Family members wait to greet the sailors of USS Guardian (MCM 5) July 22, as they return to India Basin, Sasebo, Japan after nearly three months underway for Exercise Cobra Gold 2002.

Rogues, Rascals, and Renegades

WHEN 3 WHITE STRIPES MET 5 SILVER STARS

By Jim Trick MNC/USN ret

It was a warm fall day on a Sunday in 1953. I was on guard duty at Ft. Constitution at Newcastle, NH (I think it was a Navy way, to stand watch as there was nothing at all to guard) The sweet smell of the sea at low tide wafted up to the Guard shack also the screech of the ever present gulls punctuated the otherwise quiet solitude. Newcastle sits on an island where the Portsmouth harbor meets the mighty Atlantic Ocean. Ft Constitution dates back to the French and Indian War and was originally built in 1692. It saw use in all wars. Outside the "old fort" a new system of fortifications was built between 1897 and 1903. A mine storage house, net pad, and cable tank as well as gun batteries were added. It has been used as part of the harbor defense system in every war. The fort was returned to the state in 1961 and joined the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. A Coast Guard base now occupies a portion of the Fort. Dan Priest and I were stationed at the HDU (Harbor Defense Unit) with headquarters at Fort Stark. We lived for a long while at Camp Langdon. These, as well as other installations, composed HDU Portsmouth. It was on this peaceful Sunday afternoon while on duty I met Fleet Admiral Ernest King.

A horn beep interrupted my day dreaming. I thought some one must be lost as no one ever comes here on purpose. I slung my M1 carbine on my back (They gave us NO ammunition. Even Barney Fife got 1 bullet.) I guess the powers that be thought we could use the gun like a club. I sprang to the gate and unlocked it. A red cross car drove up to me. The woman driver

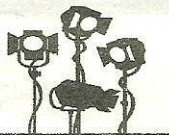
said, "Admiral King would like to look around." An old gent was seated in the back of the car.

Now I was a MNSN and had never seen an Admiral, but nothing in that first glance could convince me that the old gent in a gray suit was indeed an Admiral. He reached inside his coat and withdrew a wallet and presented me a retired ID card and I noted the words Fleet Admiral. I saluted so many times, I probably invented new ways to salute. I allowed as how, not only could he look to his hearts content, he could have the fort if he so desired. On his way out I had a nice conversation with Adm. King. In the ever present logbook (I wonder if anyone ever reads or checks the book), under "Conditions normal" (whatever normal was) I wrote that Fleet Adm. King visited and that visit has stayed with me all these years. This is no sea tale. It is true. I was the MNSN. I don't know how many Minemen ever met a 5 star Admiral, but I know that this Mineman did.

For those of you that are "on line", more information about the Portsmouth, NH forts can be found at:

www.nhparks.state.nh.us/parksops/parks/constitution.html.

Let me encourage you old timers who have stories to tell to relate them to the young men and women Minemen of today for your experiences comprise our proud history. Write your tales for all to enjoy. "Home is the sailor, home from the sea and the hunter home from the hills



MINEMEN IN THE SPOTLIGHT



MN1 SCOTT FINNEY MINEMAN OF THE YEAR

Petty Officer Finney was born in 1962 in Torrance, CA. He enlisted in the Navy in July 1981 and received recruit training in Great lakes, IL.

He stayed on at Great Lakes as part of the Blue Rope Program where they keep some recruit back for 6 months to help train other companies going through the pipeline. After completion of the Blue rope program Petty Officer Finney reported to the Naval Aircrew Candidate School in Pensacola, FL with follow up orders to the USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70) in June 1982. While assigned to the Antisubmarine Warfare Module

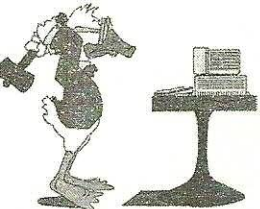
(ASWMOD) onboard the USS Carl Vinson he struck for the Ocean Systems Technician Analyst rating and was designated an OTA3 in July 1984.

As an Ocean Systems technician Analyst Petty Officer Finney did assignments at the Naval Ocean Processing Facility Dam Neck, VA, Argentia, Newfoundland, Readiness Training Facility (where he was an instructor for PCO/PXO's, Analysis, and scenario development in addition to the Mobile Training Team). In April of 1992 he transferred to the Naval Ocean Processing Facility in Whidbey Island, WA where he was the Safety Officer and Hazardous Material Coordinator for the Command while assisting in the Disestablishment of two commands. His next tour of duty took him to Keflavik, Iceland where he was assigned for 18 months.

Following Iceland came the Naval Ocean Processing Facility Dam Neck, Va again which this time Petty Officer Finney did numerous assignments aboard FFG's/ DDG's and Carriers in support of exercises and a tour in Bahrain working with several agencies on security. During this tour he requested a change of rate to Mineman and was sent to Mineman "A" school in January 1998.

Upon completing "A" school Petty Officer Finney was assigned to the Naval Reserve Center Fort Worth as one of two Active Duty Instructors for the Reserve Mineman Units located throughout the United States.

Petty Officer Finney has been awarded one Navy Commendation medal, six Navy Achievement Medals, the Navy Unit Commendation, the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, Navy "E", six Good Conduct medals, the Armed Force Expeditionary Medal, the Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, and the Sea Service and Overseas Service ribbons. He has one Son Joshua Robert Finney who is 10.



EDITOR'S NOTES

The reunion was a hoot and it was great to be able to get away from home for a while. My shy and retiring bride of some 40 years, Miz Dee, enjoyed the trip, visiting with everyone, and renewing old friendships. Since we are not able to get away often, we had to combine the reunion with a short visit with our son and grandson in Charleston. We are grateful for our time in Yorktown.

Several members have suggested that the Dashpot include a history page or section. I heartily agree. Toward that end, I will include interesting historical tidbits in each issue. All Dashpot readers are encouraged to submit historical information for inclusion in the history page(s). In this issue the "Leaning On The Taffrail" section is the first part of a discussion of the history of the DST 115. It is lengthy and will continue next issue with additional information from Toby Horn.

In an effort to stir historical fervor and dust the cobwebs off of our collective memory I would like to lay some names on the table: the Dirty Thirty, the Ten Frenchmen, the Orleans Parish, the Terror, and the Epping Maru. Do any of us remain that have served aboard any of these?

SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF THE DST 115

By Jack Shreve (jackandterry@aol.com)

Ron Swart's e-mail of 7/7/02 regarding DST 115 prompted me to brush away some cobwebs from my brain and I had a few thoughts that might trigger memories in others that were in the business at the time. I was in the mine RDT&E Branch at BUWEPS then and was in charge of the MK 52/55/56/57 developments and the DST 115. This may ramble a bit but I thought I would jot it down anyhow.

As I remember it, the nomenclature was DST 115 (w/o a MK in front of the 115). I definitely remember a meeting at CNO when we were directed to call it a destructor and not a mine. In hindsight, I think this was because at that time we couldn't "MINE" in Vietnam, but it was apparently OK to "DE-STRUCT" them. The word Destructor was chosen because the same office in OPNAV that ran the mine program also ran the EOD and Swimmer Weapons programs and one or both of those programs had devices called destructors. BUWEPS (the forerunner of NAVORD and NAVSEA) had the same organizational setup; i.e., the division that I was in had a mines branch, an EOD branch and a swimmer weapons branch. I guess the idea of the nomenclature gymnastics was to prevent a new mine from appearing on lists of weapons under development and on budget documents.

Anyhow, OPNAV laid out the general operational requirements for this new destructor and directed BUWEPS (and we directed Naval Ordnance Lab, White Oak) to get hot on this ASAP. Oh, and by the way, there were some strange requirements and constraints laid on, such as:

1. The hardware could not contain any markings, serial numbers, or anything else that could tie it to the United States. This caused some difficulties with off the shelf items like batteries, electric/electronic components and the like, but it wasn't a problem with manufactured items. One rather insignificant item caused a problem however: we wanted to use a non-inflated bicycle tire as a protective guard around the firing ring. Bike tires came in the right size and offered enough protection but we couldn't find a manufacturer that would make them without having his name emblazoned on them. I have forgotten how this one was solved.

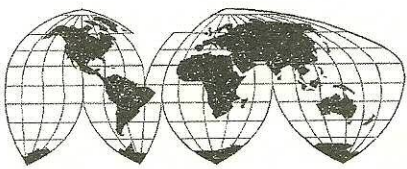
2. The handbook could not contain any written language — only pictures and cartoons were permitted. No photographs of people were permitted and any cartoons of people had to depict a generic oriental appearance.

3. The only users of this weapon were to be nontechnical Vietnamese — NOT U.S. personnel. This changed later, I think in conjunction with the addition of a helo launch requirement.

I know that LCDR Tom (Windy) Roberts, Marv Friedenber (a NOL/WO engineer) and another civilian engineer from NMEF/YKTN went to Vietnam and took part in at least one deployment of the weapon. I think this was the first use of the weapon.

Early on in the development program, I learned from my OPNAV boss that the idea for this weapon had come from a device known as the P-mine or Plank Mine, named after a Commander Dick Plank, USN, who had invented it 15 or 20 years earlier. CDR Plank had some sort of advisory job with the Chinese Navy on Taiwan (then called Formosa). The Chang Kai Shek Chinese on Formosa were afraid of an invasion by the mainland Chinese (some things never change!) and Plank told them what they needed were anti-invasion mines. Good idea, they said, but we don't have any money or technology for that sort of thing. So Plank designed a jury-rig moored mine that was very cheap and easy to build (but don't ask about safety). It consisted of a 55-gallon drum containing an explosive and some sort of triggering mechanism that was activated when the target hit the drum. I'm not sure, but the US may have provided the firing system. I don't think any batteries were required but there was a component inside called a chemical pencil. I recall that the anchor was a concrete clump with a fixed length mooring line long enough for the drum to be awash on the surface. I believe that the Chinese actually planted fields of these mines at potential invasion sites but I don't know if any targets ever came in contact with them.

Gravity...
It's Not Just a Good
Idea ...
It's the Law



FLEET NEWS

AUBERRY ASSUMES COMMAND OF MOBILE MINE ASSEMBLY GROUP

By LT Marc Boyd

NAS Corpus Christi, Texas — Command of Mobile Mine Assembly Group will change hands Friday, Sep. 6, 2002 when Cmdr. Terry Auberry relieves Cmdr. Ronald Swart during a 10 a.m. change of command ceremony at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi.



CDR T. Auberry
COMOMAG

Cmdr. Auberry was previously assigned as Asst. Chief of Staff for Ordnance, on the staff of Commander, Naval Forces Marianas. Cmdr. Swart will retire after 33 years of Naval Service.

The Mobile Mine Assembly Group (COMOMAG) staff, based at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, and its seven active Mobile Mine Assembly Units (MOMAU) and one Mobile Mine Assembly detachment (MOMAD) located in key locations around the world—store, maintain and assemble the U.S. Navy's stockpile of underwater mines. Each unit is prepared to mobilize in support of operational plans at a moment's notice. Additionally, they maintain and prepare exercise and training mine-like targets in support of fleet training and naval exercises.

COMOMAG is the principle advisor to Commander, Mine Warfare Command and the Fleet for underwater mines and mining. The MOMAG staff prepares mining plans for all the Commanders-in-Chief in support of their operational plans. Cmdr. Auberry was born in 1956 in Oakland City, Ind. He enlisted in the Navy in May 1974 and received recruit basic training at Great Lakes, IL. He attended Mineman "A" school in Charleston, S.C., and officially joined the Navy's Mine Force in Aug. 1974. For the next ten years, Cmdr. Auberry served at numerous Mobile Mine Assembly Groups throughout the world including assignments in Yorktown, Va.; Sigonella, Italy; Souda Bay, Greece; Campbeltown, Scotland; and Charleston, S.C. During these tours he also supported over 25 exercises and deployed to numerous maritime patrol squadrons, mine sweepers, amphibious ships and aircraft carriers. The highlight of his enlisted career was selection as the Mineman of the Year in 1984.



CDR R. E. Swart

Cmdr. Auberry was commissioned as a Limited Duty Surface Ordnance Officer in 1984. Follow-on assignments include: Commander, Mobile Mine Assembly Group (COMOMAG); Officer-in-Charge, MOMAG Det 6, Souda Bay, Greece; Officer-in-Charge, MOMAG Det 2 Machrihanish, Scotland; Commanding Officer, MOMAG Unit 8 Guam; College Degree Program, The Citadel, Charleston, S.C.; Operations Officer, COMOMAG Charleston, S.C.; ACOS for Mining, COMINELWARCOM Corpus Christi, Texas; Chief Staff Officer, COMOMAG, Corpus Christi, Texas; and Deputy Program Manager for Conventional Ordnance, Crane, Ind. Cmdr. Auberry graduated with honors from Charleston Southern University, Charleston, S.C., with majors in Management and Economics and graduated with honors from Texas A & M with an MBA. He was also selected to the Navy's Acquisition Professional community in 1999.

Cmdr. Swart is a native of Carrington, N.D., and a 1967 graduate of Carrington High School. He attended Minot State College before enlisting in the Navy in 1970. After Recruit Training at RTC, Great Lakes, Ill., he completed Mineman "A" School at Naval Schools Mine Warfare, Charleston, S.C. in May 1971. His first assignment was Naval Ordnance Facility, Sasebo, Japan. Follow-on tours at U.S. Naval Magazine, Republic of the Philippines; Mineman Class "C" School and MOMAG Unit Nine, Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines, led to his advancement to Chief Mineman in 1979.

Cmdr. Swart earned his Associates Degree in Electronics from Los Angeles City College during this period and was subsequently assigned to the staff of Commander, Mobile Mine Assembly Group, Charleston, S.C. In 1979, he was assigned special duties to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, deploying twice to the Indian Ocean in USS Nimitz and USS Dwight D. Eisenhower as the Mine Warfare expert for the "Operation Evening Light" Iranian hostage rescue effort. Cmdr. Swart was selected for a commission to the rank of Ensign (Surface Ordnance) under the Limited Duty Officer program on April 2, 1980. His first assignment was to the staff of Commander, Mine Warfare Command, in Charleston, S.C., as the Assistant Mine Readiness Officer. During this tour he qualified as a tactical minefield planner and was instrumental in the fleet introduction of the MK 60 CAPTOR and Quickstrike mine systems. From 1984 to 1992, Cmdr. Swart commanded Mobile Mine Assembly Unit Five in Sigonella, Italy; Mobile Mine Assembly Unit Nine in Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines; and Mobile Mine Assembly Unit Twelve in Misawa, Japan. Commander Swart then reported as the Mine Readiness Officer on the staff of Commander, Mine Warfare Command, Charleston, S.C. in July 1992. After the homeport shift to Corpus Christi, Texas, in 1993 he assumed the duties as the Assistant Chief of Staff for two departments: ACOS for Mining Plans and Policy and ACOS for Information Systems and Communications. He reported as the Chief Staff Officer for Commander, Mobile Mine Assembly Group, Corpus Christi, Texas in July 1995, acting as interim Commander until November 1995. In June 1997, Cmdr. Swart reported to COMINELWARCOM as the Assistant Readiness and Requirements Officer. Cmdr. Swart assumed command of Mobile Mine Assembly Group on Aug. 7, 1998.

Cmdr. Swart is authorized to wear the Meritorious Service Medal (4 awards), Navy Commendation Medal (3 awards), Meritorious Unit Commendation (3 awards), the Good Conduct Medal (2 awards), the Navy Expeditionary Medal, the National Defense Medal (2 awards), the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.





AIR COMMODORE JOHN HUGH CHAPLIN, THE FATHER OF AERIAL MINESWEEPING, DIES IN THE UK.

The inventor of airborne minesweeping, Air Commodore John Chaplin, died in the UK on 18 July, 2002. Here is his obituary.

Air Commodore John Chaplin, who died on Tuesday aged 91, was the first to undertake the perilous but imperative task of detecting and destroying powerful German magnetic sea mines in the Second World War.

When, in late 1939 and early 1940, magnetic mines began to present a new and unexpected menace to shipping in the Thames Estuary and Strait of Dover, Chaplin developed and led a specialized unit to counter the threat.

Winston Churchill, while First Lord of the Admiralty, had been alarmed by the mining of the main channels leading to the Port of London, and had urged Vickers to convert several Wellington bombers into flying minesweepers. As Chaplin awaited the first such aircraft, Dr Barnes Wallis (who later developed the bouncing bomb) helped to supervise the suspension of a massive "hoop", 24 ft in diameter, below the wings and fuselage; a generator, coupled to a Ford V8 car engine, supplied current to a magnetic coil in the hoop, creating a magnetic field which would explode any mines.

Recognizing the dangers of blowing up a mine while flying as low as 35 ft above the sea, and sometimes even lower than that, Wallis assisted Chaplin in calculating the speed required to escape the effects of each explosion. When the first converted Wellington was ready, Chaplin placed at the controls Squadron Leader "Bruin" Purvis, a pilot with naval experience, and employed Lieutenant Commander Ben Bolt as navigator; Chaplin himself was on board looking after the generator.

In the early stages of operations the crew nearly came to grief several times. On January 13, 1940, flying low over the North Goodwins, Chaplin was momentarily knocked out when a mine blew open the hatch under the Wellington's nose, as well as another hatch under the cockpit and the dorsal exit cover.

From February 10, Chaplin led three Wellingtons from Manston on the Kent coast on sweeps in search of mines as further aircraft were ordered. For this vital work he received a congratulatory telegram from Churchill, and was awarded a DFC.

John Hugh Chaplin was born at Cambridge on June 18, 1911. When he was six he lost his father, who was killed on the Western Front. John was educated at Eastbourne College in Sussex, then went up to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he read Theology and English. In 1933, he motored across America before returning to Cambridge as a post-graduate law student.

The next year Chaplin was articled to Slaughter & May, the solicitors in the City of London; but two visits to Germany convinced him that war was inevitable, and he was accepted for pilot training and granted a permanent commission in the RAF. In 1937, he was posted to No 201, a flying-boat squadron. He moved to the Marine Aircraft Experimental Establishment at Felixstowe, Suffolk, in 1938 as a flying-boat test pilot.

Following his minesweeping exploits, Chaplin was ordered to

Egypt, amid fears that magnetic mines would menace the Suez Canal and the approaches to Alexandria. In June 1941, he was posted to command the RAF station at Gaza, in Palestine, where he was responsible for training some 2,000 Greek airmen. Desertion had been rife, but Chaplin restored morale and was awarded the Greek Air Force Cross by the King of the Hellenes.

Posted in October 1941 to command No 38, a Wellington bomber squadron in the desert at Shallufa, he masterminded the squadron's conversion for torpedo operations and led it in daring attacks on ships supplying the enemy in North Africa.

The following March Chaplin was shot down in flames over the Western Desert by a pair of Me 109 fighters. Although he was wounded, and his second pilot killed, he made an emergency landing, praying that his two armed torpedoes would not explode. Having crawled from his burning aircraft, Chaplin was approached by a British Army Jeep, and he stood up to greet his rescuers. But, being blue-eyed and fair-haired, he was mistaken for a German pilot; and, as a captain took careful aim, Chaplin called out "Steady on, old boy!"

In April 1942 he resumed command of No 38 Squadron. On the night of June 3/4 he led a force of seven Wellington torpedo-bombers over the central Mediterranean to attack a 30,000-ton enemy merchant vessel escorted by three destroyers. In the face of an intense anti-aircraft barrage from the target ship and its escort, Chaplin pressed home his attack at close range and sank the ship. He was awarded an immediate DSO.

Shortly afterwards Chaplin attended the staff college at Haifa in Palestine as a preliminary to desk work at a joint naval and air headquarters at Alexandria. In June 1943, he moved on to command No 247, a bomber and torpedo wing at Benghazi in Libya.

By now a youthful acting group captain, Chaplin returned home in December to command the U-boat hunting and convoy protection flying boat station at Oban in Scotland. From October 1944, he attended United States Army, Navy and Air staff colleges before being appointed to the directing staff at the Army Staff College at Camberley, Surrey.

After the war Chaplin joined Transport Command, and in 1948 was posted to Wunstorf in Germany where he supervised Berlin Airlift operations and piloted York aircraft delivering supplies to Berliners.

In 1949, Chaplin returned to take over Transport Command's station at Abingdon, and in 1951 he took command of RAF Gutersloh in Germany. In September 1953, Chaplin was posted to the RAF station at Wahn, near Bonn, before returning in 1955 to the Air Ministry for transport operational staff duties. The next year he was appointed air adviser to Malcolm Macdonald, High Commissioner in New Delhi.

Shortly before he was due to retire in March 1960, in the rank of air commodore, Chaplin joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as an information officer. There followed a series of overseas postings until he returned home at the end of 1969 to serve as First Secretary in the FCO's cultural relations department.

In 1971, Chaplin retired from the active list of the diplomatic service. But he rejoined immediately as a disestablished officer and, for the next 19 years, commuted from Sussex to work in the FCO's library and records department. He was finally obliged to retire for the third and last time in 1990, at the age of 79.

He married Simone Lorphevre in 1949; she died in 2000. They had two sons and three daughters.



MINE ASSEMBLY NEWS



CDR R. E. Swart

The eight MOMAU Commanding Officers and Officer in Charge spent a productive week at COMOMAG headquarters 26-31 August 2002. The annual conference, normally held in late winter, early spring was postponed until the last week of August to take advantage of the Prospective Commander's presence. CDR Terry Auberry joined the CO's and included the week-long series of discussions and meetings as a part of his turn-over. The eleven Naval Reserve MOMAU CO's and senior enlisted joined the conference on Friday for combined discussions and continued with a day of reserve MOMAU-related topics on Saturday. Well done to Mr. Jay Burton, MNC Hardeman and MN1 Finney for setting up and supporting the conference this year.

Congratulations to MN1 Scott Finney of Central Drill Site Ft. Worth on his selection as the active duty Mineman of the Year for 2002. MN1 Finney has been the primary "mover and shaker" for training our Naval Reserve personnel and is most deserving of the honor! BZ!!!

The COMOMAG staff is busy with preparations for the Change of Command and retirement ceremony set for 6 Sep 2002. The officiating officer and guest speaker will be RADM Paul Ryan, COMINEWARCOM.

Plans are proceeding full speed ahead for the High Speed Vessel (HSV) that will serve as the temporary replacement for USS Inchon. The HSV will usher in a new era for Mine Warfare command and control and mission support with its ability to stay up with the Battle Group while supporting both MCM helicopters, EOD and surface mine countermeasures ships.

COMINEWARCOM expects the brand new HSV to arrive early summer 2003.

Welcome aboard to LCDR John Cross, who will report as the new CO for MOMAU 10, Kadena, Japan this coming October. LCDR Cross, who comes to us from CINCLANTFLT staff, will relieve LCDR Theresa Wright who departs for her next job at Atlantic Ordnance Command, Yorktown, VA. Theresa has served as both XO and CO for Unit 10 and may need a visa to get back into the USA!

Congratulations to the following officers on their new promotions: CDR (sel) Steve Anderjack, CO, MOMAU 11, Charleston, SC; LCDR Theresa Wright, CO MOMAU 10 Kadena, JA; LCDR (sel) Alex Brown, CO, MOMAU 3, Colts Neck, NJ; LCDR John Cross, (PCO) MOMAU 10 Kadena, JA; LCDR Pete Bachand, OPS, COMOMAG staff.

It was an honor to have the opportunity to address the Association membership at this years annual banquet. It was a wonderful turnout for both dinner and picnic. Masako and I had a wonderful time. Our sincere thanks to all for the invite.

Thanks to the Association of Minemen and it's membership for serving as the foundation and inspiration for maintaining a strong sea mining capability for the defense of our country. I depart active duty knowing that you have helped me with my service to our beloved Mine Force, our Navy and our Nation. May God Bless you all.
CDR Ron Swart



MOMAU ONE SEAL BEACH, CA

By LT K. L. Miller

CO's CORNER. Here it is, one year fully complete in command of this lovely oasis in the mine community. I reflect with pride and joy on the milestones we have completed, and eagerly anticipate what is yet to come. I recently took a short leave to my childhood home in Ohio, I thoroughly enjoyed spending time with my family, but unfortunately the weather was definitely not on par with that of Sunny Seal Beach!

We kicked off June with a Commemoration of the Battle of Midway. Delmar Wiley (Aviation Radioman First Class), assigned to USS Yorktown and a survivor of the battle, shared his experiences of the battle and his following years of naval service including being marooned on a tropical island. On the 14th, we celebrated the March advancement results with a wetting down at Dave's Other Place.



A few of us followed Team USA in their quest for the World Cup while MNC(SW) Greg Williams and MN1(SW) Frank Mendenhall enjoyed a working vacation on Oahu and Kauai, Hawaii, in support of RIMPAC 2002.

I have discovered that Independence Day is truly spectacular here in Seal Beach. One can view the marvelously jeweled aerial artwork from the RMS Queen Mary or one of the many beach communities. On the 10th of July, QA Department sponsored an MWR fund raising event, MN1(SW) Dean Carr and MN2(SW) Matthew Heyer thrilled us with their culinary skills cooking up scrumptious BBQ chicken, hamburgers, and hotdogs. We hosted NRMOMAU 11 from the 15th to the 19th. Also gracing us with their presence during the same time frame was MNC(SW) Allen Alt and Mrs. Francis Rose of Coastal Sea System, Panama City. MN1(SW) Carr and MNSN Michael Pendley made use of their sea legs during a rare Whisky Anchorage off-load of the USNS Shasta on the 16th. MN2(SW) Heyer and MN2(SW) Vernon Saunders played a vital role during Fleet Battle Experiment "Juliet" providing assistance during the delivery of over fifty ET assets during the weekend of the 19th.



July is Fair time here in Orange County. Many of our sailors spent a fun filled afternoon on the 22nd. We completed our Quarterly Upgrade Assessment, flexing to our full capabilities on the 30th. On the 31st, CDR Schoenfeld (NWSSB XO), Major Dolan and Capt. McAlester (USMC 5th 14th) conducted an officer selection board for MNCS(AW/SW) Garret Cecilio and MNC(SW) Williams. Both are applying for selection as Chief Warrant Officer. Please join me in wishing them the best in their pursuit of this great program!

Good news was delivered on the first of August. We received notice that MN1(SW) Carr had proved his mettle, being selected to join the ranks of Chief Petty Officer. Well done indeed! Additionally, he raised his right hand on our quarter-deck, re-enlisting for three years on the 9th. The 9th was a busy day as we enjoyed a Hail & Farewell at the Combined Bachelor Quarters. Mrs. Rose and STG2(SS) Shelton, of CSS, with MNCS(AW/SW) Cecilio joined MN2(SW) Heyer and MN2(SW) Saunders in the recovery of FBE"J" assets from the 9th to the 16th.



Production Department pitched in on the 14th grilling up mouth-watering hotdogs topped with sauerkraut or chili and delectable California Burgers raising those much needed MWR dollars. August will wrap-up with the Commander's Conference at COMOMAG.

HAILS & FARWELLS. We have had a few new additions to our family. MNCM(SW) Mark Zinnel, his wife Pamela and son Benjamin, departed MOMAU Five in Sigonella, Italy, joining us on the second of August. MN2(SW) Charles Garner arrived after a tour on the USS Ardent in Bahrain on the 5th. MN3 Mario Barrientos reported from the USS Champion located in Ingleside, Texas.

Our newest arrivals came in small packages. YNSN Vernon Severin's wife Jennifer gave birth to their daughter Skye on the 6th of July. MNSN Jason Hughes wife Sabrina gave birth to Raina on the 19th of July.

On the first of July, we bid farewell to MN1 Kecia Nason. She entered her new life as a civilian at a memorable event held in the "Yard House" in Long Beach.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION. CO Letters of Commendation awarded to MN1 Laura Arthur and MNSN Christopher Miserlain on selection to Sailor of the Quarter and Blue Jacket of the Quarter, respectively. MN1 Arthur, IT1(SW) Sheila Loe, and SK1(SW) Pierre Rhinehart joined the ranks of First Class Petty Officer. MN2 Christine Beal, MN3 Travis Baxter, and MN3 Donal Meade "did it right", advancing to their respective ranks.
Bravo Zulu to all!!

IN THE TARGET QUEUE. As always, we look to the next quarter and see a calendar yet again filled with multiple events. We look forward to our participation in Kernal Blitz 2003, BLQ-11 Minex, C2X, and many other events.

PERSONAL NOTE. Please join me in wishing Commander Ron Swart, and his wife Masako, "Fair Winds and Following Seas" after completing thirty-two years of superb service to our country. His leadership will be sorely missed, not only in the Mine Community, but also the LDO Community where he has made such a dynamic impact. All the best to you Commander!

From sunny Seal Beach California, Sea Ya!



MOMAU THREE EARLE

By MNCS Brieno

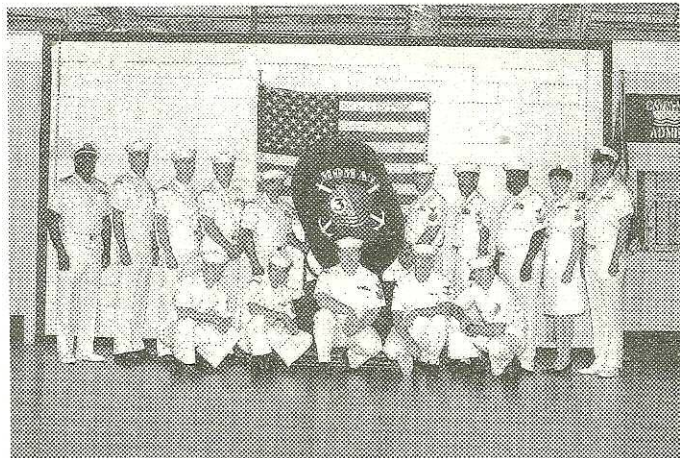
GREETINGS FROM MOMAU THREE

This Will be the last article from MOMAU Three as we gear up toward our decommissioning date of 30 September 02. Our official ceremony will be conducted on 13 September. Admiral Ryan and Commander Auberry will be the guest speakers.

Maintaining all the programs required of an operational unit, the first year here included a grueling inspection cycle including an MRCI, ESI, ADMAT, and DDESB. Upon receiving authorization to decommission in December of 2001, we began an aggressive shipping and work schedule to meet the 30 September deadline. This included migrating our operational mission to Unit Eleven and all the materials that went with it, not to mention the redistribution/demilitarization of the MK 56 and MK 67 weapon systems. All total we shipped over 2500 tons of

material, and the packaging and handling of enough material that filled over 170 trucks. All done without injury or mishap, a true testament to our crew.

This tour of duty has been extremely rewarding. I have had the opportunity to work with a great group of people, watch them develop and advance personally and professionally. I could not complete this article without personally recognizing them. First the Decommissioning Crew of MOMAU Three (with follow-on duty stations):



LT Alex Brown, Commanding Officer (LCDR select), Office of Naval Intelligence, Suitland MD

MNCS Keith Brieno, Mine Assembly Officer, (USS Pioneer, Ingleside TX)

YN1 Billy McDonald, Admin Officer (Fleet Reserve)

MN1 (SS) Gregory Eleckelbecker, Mine Production Department Head (MOMAU Fifteen, Kingsville TX)

MN1 (SW) Juan Santos, Special Projects (Fleet Reserve)

IT1 (SW) Rafael Santiago, ADP Officer (IANTN DET, Roosevelt Roads, PR)

MN1 Jarad Herbig, Logistic Department Head, (USS Blackhawk, Ingleside TX)

MN1 April Morehouse, Quality Assurance/Operation Department Head (RTC, Great Lakes IL)

MN1 Mathais Ramon, Production Deck Supervisor (USS Raven, Manama Bahrain)

MN1 Brian Smith, Test Set Maintenance (USS Falcon, Ingleside TX)

SK2 Michael White, Financial Supervisor (USS Enterprise, Norfolk VA)

MN2 Miguel Pasilan, Logistics (MOMAU Eleven, Charleston SC)

MN3 Richard Schmidt, Logistics (USS Cardinal, Manama Bahrain)

MNSN Seth Holdcroft, Production (BUDS/SEALS)

MNSN Jerry Simpson, Production (EOD)

YNSN Loureann Laureano, Admin Assistant (attached to AOC DET Earle)

In addition, the support from the personnel of Naval Reserve MOMAU's Three, Four, and Five was crucial. Breaking up their Annual training time provided the necessary manpower required to complete this monumental task. In addition, the Naval Weapons Station, Atlantic Ordnance Command, and Public Works Command provided us excellent service and support.

On a final note, we bid farewell and best wishes to Commander Swart and his family and welcome Commander Auberry as the new Commander, Mobile Mine Assembly Group.



MOMAU FIVE SIGONELLA

By MNCS(SW) Dave Ostrom

SALUTO dalle isole belle di Sicilia! First, let me start out by congratulating our new Mineman Chiefs! An important milestone in your career, welcome to the proud ranks of the U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officers! Here what's happening out here in the Mediterranean:

-the highlight for MOMAU FIVE this past quarter was COMOMAG's visit in May for an ADMAT Assist Visit. Commodore Swart, CW04 Buyo and Mrs. Olivia Martinez were onboard to provide training and assistance in our Admin and Supply areas. It was great to have the Commodore back home here in Sicily. I had the honor of serving under his command here, back in 1985, when he was then the Commanding Officer. We all will certainly miss this "Warrior" when he retires, many of us that have been around the past 20 years know him well and wish him and his family the best of luck and continued success!

-the end of May saw us involved with Exercise DAMSEL FAIR 2002. MNC(SW) Steve Sanders, MN1 Pat Haley, MN3 Jim Gipson and MN3 Tim Wilson were our Final Prep/Surface Launch Teams for operations involving aerial laid MK62 QUICKSTRIKE Laying Mines and the surface launch/recovery operations onboard USNS APACHE that included MK74 VEMS and inert MK82/83 bomb bodies.

-middle June saw our participation in BALTOPS 2002. An outstanding training exercise that had us working with VP-5, VP-10 and VP-45 P3 Squadrons. Myself and MN2 Wendy Sims, MN2 Jeff Tucker, MN2 John Reece and MN3 Duncan Harvin were the Final Prep Team for aerial laid MK62/63 QUICKSTRIKE Laying Mines

-end of July saw MMU5's participation in underway evolutions onboard USNS APACHE. MN1 John Carlos Dominguez and MN3 Jason Allen were our Team for NOBLE MELINDA 2002, which involved the surface launch and recovery of MK6 and MK52 exercise and training shapes.

- August saw us successfully complete our Field Calibration Assessment (FCA). MN1 Pat Haley and MN2 Debra Spangler ensured all checklists and preparations were completed and we had a good hard look at our program by Mr. Rob Phillips of FTSCANT.

BRAVO ZULU's: 2nd QTR 02 SOQ: MN1 John Carlos Dominguez, JSOQ MN3 Tim Wilson. Congratulations to our recently advanced Petty Officers: E-6: MN1(SW) Jayson Calton and MN1(SW) Wayne Hinton. E-5: MN2 John Reece,

MN2 Fred Denson and MN2(SW) Burel Jones. E-4: MN3 Jason Allen, MN3 Jody Casey, MN3 Richard Crane, MN3 Heath Cruse, MN3 Duncan Harvin, MN3 Brandy Hastings, MN3 Jessie Jochims, MN3 Jeramine Lane, MN3 Mat McDonald, MN3 Jesse Rupe and MN3 Tim Wilson. MOMAU FIVE received the CINCLANTFLT Retention Honor Roll for 2nd & 3rd Quarters FY-02. UNIT FIVE received a "BRAVO ZULU" from COMNAVSURFLANT for outstanding efforts in maintaining an effective calibration program readiness of 80% or higher for the months of May and June 2002.

Welcome Aboard: CW02 Baron Tillinghast from USS ARCTIC (AOE 8), MNSN James Batman from MWTC Ingleside TX, MNSR Anthony Bedard MWTC Ingleside, MNSR Craig Bruner MWTC Ingleside, MNSR Jeremy Chittenden MWTC Ingleside, MNSR Louis Marroletti MWTC Ingleside, MNSN August Sorvillo MWTC Ingleside, MNSA Brandon Vollm MWTC Ingleside, MNSA Walter Fix MWTC Ingleside and MN2 Tina Bibby MWTC Ingleside.

Transfers: MN3 Wesley Adams to USS FALCON (MHC 59), MN2 Rudy Altema VFA 87 Virginia Beach Oceana VA, MN3 Timothy Gatlin USS BLACK HAWK (MHC 58), MN3 Charles Jackson USS RAVEN (MHC 61), MNSN Randy Kubin USS GLADIATOR (MCM 11), MN3 Ian Schaming USS ORIOLE (MHC 55), MN3 Christopher Shuck USS GLADIATOR (MCM 11), MN3 Christopher Wisor USS ROBIN (MHC 54), MN3 Luis Lopez USS RAVEN (MHC 61).

In closing: Another busy quarter for us, with NATO/Partners For Peace (PFP) Mine Warfare exercises here in the MED, Spain and Germany. We are busy putting the finishing touches on all the exercise and training mines for DESTINED GLORY 2002 (over 80 shapes). Lots of new faces, we continue to be focused on meeting all ET requests. This crew is highly motivated, trained and therefore ready to meet all mission objectives. Our training qualification/certification level is in the 90 percentile due to an aggressive training/PQS program. If you are in the window for transfer orders and looking for a challenging and rewarding experience at a MOMAU establishment overseas, drop me a line anytime at ostromd@nassig.sicily.navy.mil. Talk to you all next issue!



MOMAU EIGHT GUAM

By MN1 Stephanie Moss Cowart

Hafa Adai from soggy Guam! Rainy Season has greeted us with full force and with 14 inches of rain for the month August, we haven't seen much of the sun, lately. Typhoon Season has started and boy did it start with a bang. Guam hasn't had a direct hit since Super Typhoon Paka in '98, and I suppose we were due. Typhoon Chata'an made landfall on July 5th with her 100+ mph sustained winds. While it seemed like a Texas

Thunderstorm to the few of us here that survived Paka, for the "Typhoon first-timers", it was a heck of an event. The island, including the base, experienced quite a bit of damage leaving us without power, water, and telephones for a significant amount of time. Many ended up living out of hotels, while others suffered through the heat and dark nights of living without electricity. If that wasn't bad enough, another typhoon, Typhoon Halong was right behind her. Halong missed us a little to the North on July 10th, but rains, and storm surges were definitely felt. It was a little over a month before power was restored for everyone, the water is still contaminated in some parts of the island, and the clean up efforts still continue.

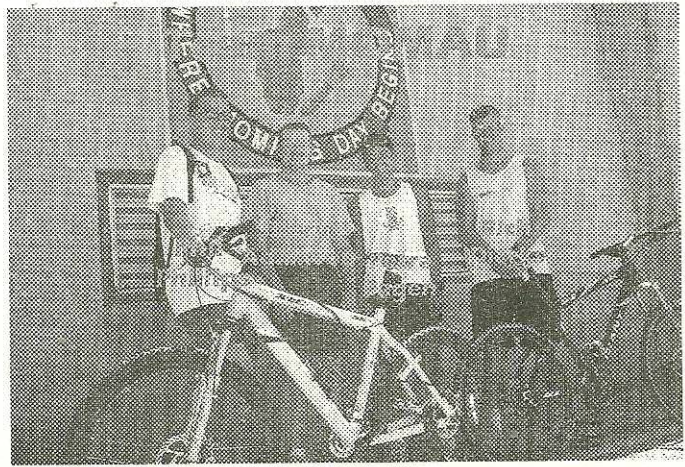


Utility pole down on marine drive.

With that sort of destruction, as anyone who has been at Unit Eight knows, we begin ice making operations for ourselves, base housing members, and the local community. Ice making operations lasted for several weeks, yielding in the production of roughly 50,000 lbs of ice. Our command personnel were thankful after delivering ice to our Sister Village, Talafofo, and seeing the devastation they suffered and their living conditions.

Prior to the typhoons, MOMAU Eight command members supported the Navy League Sea Cadet Corps, Marianas Division, 2nd Annual Bootcamp. This was a two-week "mini" bootcamp for the League and Sea Cadets. They stayed in the barracks, were awakened quite early for PT, marched, sat through hours of BMR training, completed DC fire fighting training, and almost anything else you can think of. It was extremely realistic and provided an awesome opportunity for some of our junior sailors to be mentors and professionally develop some of the Navy's "future sailors". (Plus, they got to make them "drop.")

Shortly after the typhoons blew through, command members competed in the, now infamous, Guam Extreme Adventure Race (GEAR Race) on July 13th. This is one of those "ECO-challenge" races that requires teams to swim, kayak, bike, hike, and run through 40+ miles of rough waters, flooded rivers, dense fields of swordgrass, and knee deep mud up mountains and down into valleys. Team MOMAU was comprised of LTJG Adamson, LT Petra Pagen of SPECWAR, MN2 Phil Phillips, MN3 Rich Dierks, and a 4-man support crew of MNCS LeeAnn Baker, MN1(SW) Kevin Handy, MN1 Stephanie Cowart, and MN2 Kelly Freeman. Our team competed strongly and it was quite an experience for everyone involved.



GEAR Team Members

This past quarter has been full of surprises and unexpected events, and not just with the weather. Even our normal workload schedule took some twists and turns. The arrival of SLMMs from Unit 3 has left us deck testing and systems testing an enormous amount of MK 4 MMA's. (Sometimes it feels like we will be testing these things until FY04) We started in June and are expecting to finish in Dec. With deck testing done, systems testing will ensure almost all of production are "SLMM gurus".

Along with the SLMMs, we also received a tremendous amount of kits, some of which had been at sea since '93. (A MOMAU believe it-or-not.) With the help of Andersen Air Force Base, some of our crew members have gotten to experience what most newly reporting junior personnel get to experience at MET sites; the joys of sandblasting and painting!! I firmly believe you are never truly indoctrinated into a MOMAU unless you get to experience that, granted they didn't have the pleasure of doing it for 6 months or more, or having to do it in that old monster of a sandblaster at MOMAU 11 when it was on the Air Force Annex on Remount Rd. Still, prepping over 1000 ammo cans was truly a unique experience for our MOMAU first timers.

We recently began fund raising for our annual Christmas Party. We held a MOMAU Eight Bowling tournament in early August, raising just shy of \$300 for our fund. The MOMAU 8 "Seaman For A Day" fund raiser has just begun, and a whole slew of other fund raisers are to follow.

Along with all the hard work, Unit Eight continues to show its versatility in getting the job done, and being successful. This year's streak of success just keeps getting better and better! Starting with MNCS LeeAnn Baker, who was recently the 1st Runner Up for the prestigious Capt Joy Bright Hancock Leadership Award! This is an award sponsored by the Women Officers Professional Association (WOPA), which recognizes one female officer and one female senior enlisted who show inspirational leadership, who are innovative, and show perseverance. She and our XO, LTJG Adamson attended the awards ceremony in August in Washington DC, and then reported to the AOM reunion to represent Unit Eight. We are very proud of MNCS Baker.

Our Sailors of the Quarter continue to be successful outside of MOMAU 8, and lead the way for COMNAVMAR. Our 2Q02

SOQ's were: SSOQ-YN1(SW) Victoria Poynter, JSOQ-MN2 Phil Phillips (2nd quarter in a row), and BJOQ- MN3 Kyle Halle (2nd quarter in a row). Not only did MN2 Phillips and MN3 Halle make SOQ for MOMAU 8, they were also chosen by COMNAVMAR as the Regional JSOQ and BJOQ for all of Guam! It had been quite awhile since someone from MOMAU had been selected as a Regional SOQ, now in the last 2 quarters, 3 Unit 8 SOQs have been selected. (And there are still 2 quarters to go Watch Out!)

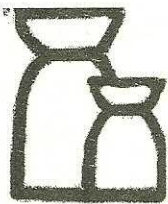
Other awards this quarter include: FLAG LOCs for MN1(SW) Denny Jenkins, MN1 Jeremy Koski, MN2 Jerry Perez, MN2 Phil Phillips, MN2 Matthew Wilhoit, MN3 Matthew Greene, and MN3 Kyle Halle.



We have had several new command members report on board, and we are very happy to welcome **MN1 Cary Kazmaier**, his wife, and their 3 daughters from MOMAU Three, **MN2 Greg Brown** from the USS Ardent for his 2nd tour here, and **MNSR Jeremy Gaines**, **MNSN Anthony Crum**, and **MNSR Harold Ayers** all from MWTC.

Right now, Unit 8 is mustering approximately 40 enlisted! Not for long though, between now and January, our numbers are cut in half. (Anybody out there looking to go to a MOMAU, get your orders to Unit Eight!) Come October we are saying "Farewell and Following Seas" to the following personnel: **MN2 Robert McQuiddy** reporting to EOD MU 5 here in Guam, then to EOD training in Jan 03, **MN3 Rex Taylor** is going to the USS Raven, **MN3 Chad Hill** to USS Devastator, **MN3 Cody Beyers** to USS Devastator, **MN2 Matthew Wilhoit** to PHYSEC duty in Yorktown VA, and **MN3 Rich Dierks** to PHYSEC Duty in Puerto Rico. As well as transfers, we have 2 retirements coming up on Oct 11th. **MN1 Jerry Weller** and **MN1(SW) Kevin Handy** will both be retiring in a joint retirement, after 20 years of faithful service to the Navy. We wish them and their families the best of luck in their new adventure in the "civilian" world.

A quick congratulations to MOMAD 12 for the successful completion of their ESI this past month. That wraps it up from Unit 8, the "Best" MOMAU in the Navy. As always, MOMAU 8 stands ready, "Anytime....Anywhere"



MOMAU TEN KADENA

by MNCS Bray

Hey folks...hope everyone had a dandy summer. Its been a little slower around here with the exercises finally winding down to a close for 2002 and we have been able to enjoy a great couple of months with family, friends, and of course the beautiful Okinawa beach scene. First and foremost, we will soon say good-bye to LCDR Wright who will be relieved in a Change of Command Ceremony on 18 October by LCDR John Cross who is joining us from CINCLANTFLT. LCDR Wright will transfer to the Atlantic Ordnance Command after five long years onboard. Her significant contributions to MOMAU Ten and its mission over those years have been significant and she will not soon be forgotten. We are very happy that our new Commodore, CDR Auberry will be joining us as the ceremony's guest speaker. Also, our new COMOMAG CMC MNCM(SW) Jerry Williams will be accompanying the Commodore on his swing out here. Its good to have the Master Chief back in the MOMAU world after his time in the Gulf. The crew really is looking forward to showcasing the command to our new leadership.

ADVANCEMENTS: Well, what do ya know, one of our own made Chief this time. A special congrats to SK1(SW) Ed Bajarias for being selected this year. Ed has been onboard for two years now and will be a very welcome addition to our "growing" CPO mess of one. He has really busted his tail during his tour keeping things straight in Supply and it has paid off for him. BRAVO! I would also like to mention the following personnel who were recently advanced to their present ranks: **MN1(SW) McMillian**, **MN1(IUSS) Pelski**, **MN2 Bell**, **MN2 Diehl**, **MN3 Smith**, **MN3 Rodriguez**, and **MN3 Everingim**.

KUDOS: **MN1 Pendleton** was awarded the Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal for his contributions to the command during his long tour and upon his retirement. **SKC(Sel) Bajarias**, **MN2 Astin**, and **MN3 Vallez** were all recently awarded Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medals for their significant contributions to this year's inspection cycle. Lastly, we congratulate **MN2 Astin** and **MN2 Diehl** for being selected as 2Q02 Senior and Junior Sailors of the Quarter respectively.

OTHER NEW ARRIVALS: **MN3 Roberts** checked aboard from MOMAU Eight and **MN1(SW) Kopp** recently came to us from the USS Guardian up in Sasebo. Two outstanding additions to the crew for sure.

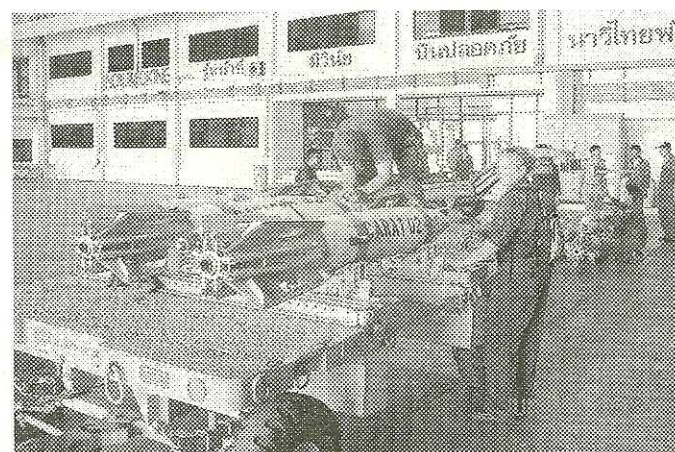
DEPARTURES: We recently said good-bye to **MN1 Black** who left us bound for the USS Guardian, and by the time you read this, **MN2 Bell** will have left us for the USS Kingfisher.

These Sailors and their contributions to the command will surely be missed.

EXERCISES: On the exercise front, we completed our last two stops for the year.....CARAT 02 in Thailand and 02-2JA up in Misawa. We want to thank LTjg Wangelin, MNCS Cantrell, and the whole MOMAD Twelve crew for their help in making 2-JA a success. As is the case with every exercise we participate in, there are the constant logistical hurdles and last minute schedule changes to overcome and this was no exception. As a special bonus this issue, I have included a few digital pictures of the CARAT exercise in Thailand for your viewing pleasure



The planning conference swing for the 2003 exercise season is just about here and already it looks as though this could be a busy year with both a MIREM and an extra exercise in Singapore thrown in the mix with all the other usual stops. Can you read between the lines fellow Minemen? Talk to our friendly Detailer and get your orders out here. This is still the MOMAU to come to if you want to see nearly all of Asia in a tour of duty AND collect some of the highest COLA rates in the Navy. That's about it for this edition from Westpac's TAD capitol, take care and have a great fall.



MOMAU ELEVEN CHARLESTON



MOMAD TWELVE MISAWA

By MNCS Jack Cantrell

Greetings from MISAWA. I Just arrived on board in June from Guam and I have been cold ever since, however the supply department did issue me a foul weather Parka and long johns! Never had to wear that much gear in July since Scotland.

Anyway a lot has been going on. We have been in the inspection mode (seems like a year) finished our ADMAT inspection and received a Bravo Zulu from the inspection team. Then came the MRCI reinspect (did not fair too well) and finally the ESI and came out with a SAT. I would like to say the crew here never got down and has really stepped up in getting ready for the ESI. They never missed a beat and the inspectors praised the command on how the facilities looked and our ammo accountability. I still swear the MRCI inspection group and the ESI inspection group are in "Cahoots" together.

MN1 Gilliland spearheaded the building of MOMAD-12's entry into the 16th annual Navy Boat Regatta held here at the base beach. His hand picked crew of MN3 Amanda Dugdale, MNSN Courtney Harleson, MN3 Robert Marx, MNSN Russell Stratford, MNSN John Staggs, and MN3 Justin McAndrew shall battle "rough seas", "icy waters", and "navigation hazards" to try and bring home the 1st place trophy.

Also we have some athletes. LTJG Wangelin and MN3 McAndrew are on the NAF Soccer team however I have yet to hear if they have won any games! Also MNSN Harleson plays football for the MISAWA MARAUDERS. His position is tail back. He gets off the bench and the coach says Harleson get your tail back!!

Congratulations to the following personnel: MN1 Boatright, MN3 Kyle Mann, MN3 Robert Marx and MN3 Benjamin Hunt on their recent promotions. In addition:

MN3 Amanda Dugdale: Junior Sailor of the Quarter
MN2 James Graham: Senior Sailor of the Quarter

We welcomed aboard MNSN John Staggs from the school house and he has hit the deck plates running.

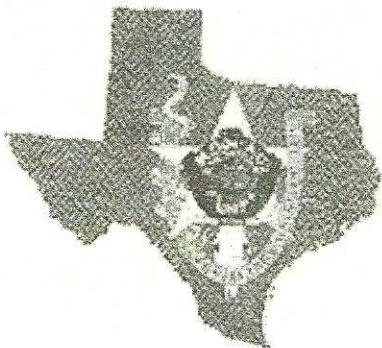
As always when someone new reports on board that means you always are going to lose somebody so we had to say goodbye to the following personnel:

MNCS Rita Nicely, reporting to SIMA, Ingleside, TX.
SK1 Archimedes Jusayan, reporting to the USS Cowpens Yokosuka, Japan. MN2 James Graham, reporting to Security Det., Sigonella, Italy

"FAIR WINDS and FOLLOWING SEAS"

Well, that's about it from Misawa until next time all of you take care and God bless.

MOMAD 12 standing by!



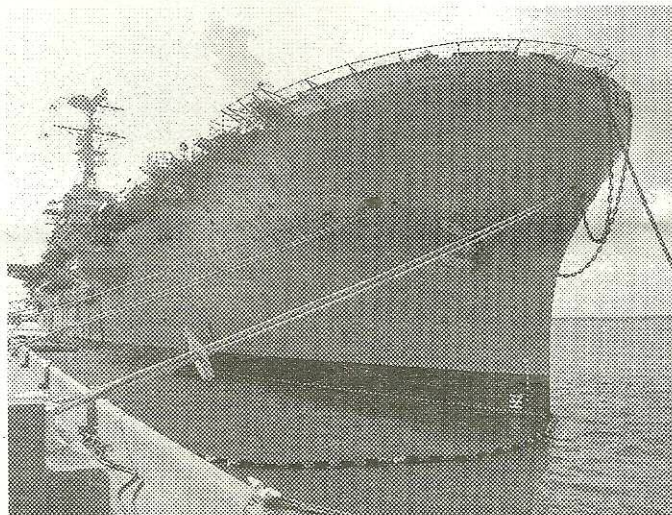
MOMAU FIFTEEN INGLESIDE



MINE COUNTERMEASURES NEWS

USS INCHON DECOMMISSIONED AFTER 32 YEARS OF SERVICE

By Lt. Marc Boyd, Mine Warfare Command Public Affairs, and JO1(SW) Victor Brabble, USS Inchon Public Affairs



USS Inchon sits at the pier waiting for its decommissioning ceremonies to begin. After 32 years of service to the fleet, Inchon was decommissioned today. (U.S. Navy photo by LT Marc Boyd)

"Officer of the Deck, haul down my pennant and debark the crew." With that order from USS Inchon (MCS 12) Commanding Officer Capt. Charles E. Smith, the legacy of a proud warrior came to an end. USS Inchon, America's only mine countermeasures command and support ship was decommissioned June 20, 2002, during ceremonies held in the ship's home port of Ingleside, Texas.

Hundreds of local government officials, former crewmembers and sailors from around the area gathered under sunny skies to say farewell to a ship that had served the fleet for over three decades.

"We had sailors from the past 32 years here today to say goodbye to their warship," Capt. Smith observed. "Every sailor,

every Captain, every crewmember, gets certain attachments to their ship and their shipmates. That's why we're out here today - to formally render honor and respect for this warship."

Vice Adm. Albert Konetzni, Deputy Commander, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, echoed those remarks. "When we decommission the ship, it's not so much that we honor the gray steel and equipment on board, we really honor those that have served. Here's a ship that has been around for three decades, with thousands of Sailors who have served aboard her. We're talking about a real legacy here of Americana, nationalism and national defense," he said.

Inchon sailors, past and present, had similar sentiments. Jim Long, a former Boatswain's Mate Third Class who served aboard Inchon from 1981-1984, said the ship would never be forgotten.

"I feel it's a sad day when any Sailor's ship is put out of commission," Long said. "I know she has served our country well. But as all great things must come to an end, so will Inchon. The Inchon will live in our hearts forever."

"I'm very sad to see this ship go," Capt. Smith expressed. "These shipmates have been through good times and bad times. We've been at sea nearly nine of the last 18 months with all of us sailing together, halfway around the world, in fact. That is a permanent part of your life, and to see her go away today, and disband this tremendous crew, is a very sad time for us." Inchon was named in honor of the highly successful historic amphibious landing by Gen. Douglas MacArthur at Inchon, Korea on Sept. 15, 1950. The ship 600-foot, 20,000-ton warship was one of a series of amphibious assault ships built by Ingalls Shipbuilding of Pascagoula, Miss., and was the first to bear the name Inchon. The keel was laid on April 8, 1968, launched May 24, 1969, and was commissioned at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, Va., on June 20, 1970, under the sponsorship of Mrs. Jack Brooks. Cmdr. Jaime Navarro, Inchon's Operations Officer agreed about the ship's historic significance.

"Inchon will be remembered in the same manner as the event from which she was named," he said. "She impacted Naval history and tradition in a positive and enduring way."

Steve Gramlich, a former operations specialist third class aboard Inchon from 1976 - 1978, said the ship not only held historic value, but it was also vital to national security.

"The decommissioning of the Inchon brings to an end an era in Naval history," he said. "She was of definite importance to national security as she proved to be — time and time again."

The ship was originally designed to conduct amphibious force landings by providing helicopter support to transport troops and assist in establishing air superiority in the designated landing area.

In 1994, Inchon deployed to the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean to conduct Operation Continue Hope off the coast of Somalia and Operation Deny Flight off the coast of Bosnia. Following a six-month deployment, Inchon remained in homeport for only two weeks before it was called upon to assist in Operation Support Democracy off the coast of Haiti. In March 1995, Inchon commenced a 15-month conversion/overhaul by Ingalls Shipbuilding to assume a new mission as the

Navy's only mine countermeasures command and support ship.

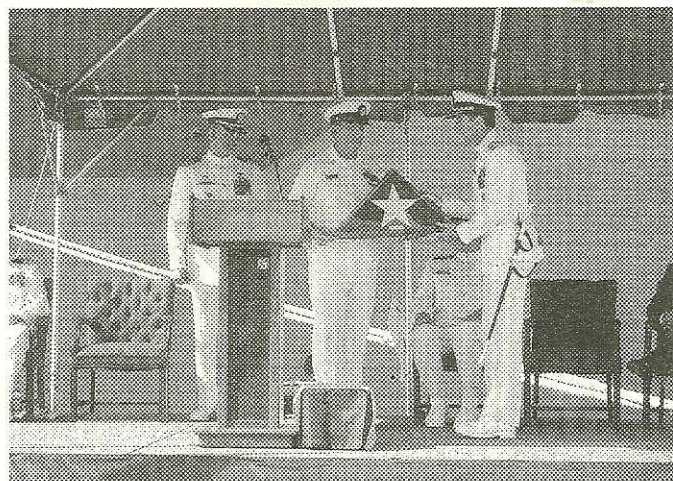
In July 1996, Inchon changed homeports to Ingleside, Texas, home of the U.S. Navy's Mine Warfare Center of Excellence. From March-July 1997, Inchon made its first deployment in its new capacity, successfully demonstrating its capabilities. Inchon once again deployed in 1999 and the crew provided critical heavy lift support to Operation Shining Hope, part of the humanitarian relief effort for Kosovar refugees in the Balkans.

"Since it's conversion, Inchon has been the key element of the dedicated mine countermeasures triad, which provided an ability to meld surface mine countermeasures, airborne mine countermeasures, and undersea mine countermeasures forces into the most capable MCM force worldwide," Maj. Gen. Bill Whitlow, Director, Expeditionary Warfare Division (N75), Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, explained in a citation read at the decommissioning ceremony. "Serving as the Navy's first mine countermeasures command and support ships was a daunting task at best. Inchon always faced this challenge head on and excelled."

In April 2001, Inchon set out for what would be its last deployment. It steamed 28,000 nautical miles to the Western Pacific Ocean, accumulated more than 1,400 flight hours, conducted seven replenishments at sea, visited seven ports on three continents, evaded a typhoon, and made 27 restricted transits including two separate trips through the complex waters of the Panama Canal.

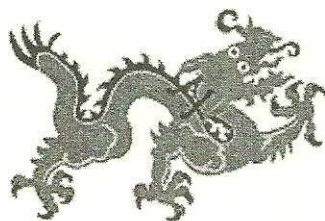
Capt. Smith, said the final crew performed flawlessly until the end and lived up to Inchon's reputation as a warship.

"If the Navy is indeed an expeditionary force that goes in harm's way to project power as directed in foreign lands, then this crew earned the best we have to offer," he said. "I am pleased with their performance and extremely proud to be their Commanding Officer."



USS Inchon (MCS 12) Commanding Officer, Capt. Charles Smith looks on as Inchon Command Master Chief, Master Chief Navy Counselor (Surface Warfare) Joesph Burton presents Rear Adm. Paul J. Ryan, Commander, Mine Warfare Command, with his flag, which was flown aboard Inchon as it served as the Mine Countermeasures Command and Support Ship. (U.S. Navy photo by LT Marc Boyd)

The warship has an impressive history and has made her mark over time by contributing significantly for the past 30 years of service," Smith said. "From Vietnam to the Gulf War and Somalia - in peacetime to an armed conflict, Inchon has answered the call. There is a sense of sadness and pride and a feeling that it is time to move on. But the Inchon's spirit now lives on throughout the fleet, and this Nation's fleet is taking care of business."



SQUADRON EXERCISE PROVIDES REALISTIC MINE WARFARE TRAINING

By Lt. Marc Boyd

"Underway. Shift colors!" crackled over the ship's announcing system as the shrill blast of the ship's whistle pierced the air. USS Champion (MCM 4) was underway, participating in one of the most demanding and challenging military exercises on the Gulf Coast. Gulf of Mexico Exercise (GOMEX) 02-2 wrapped up Friday after nearly two weeks of at sea and in port events. The exercise, held July 15-26, 2002, in the waters off Corpus Christi, Texas, allowed more than 500 Sailors to test their mine warfare proficiency.

The ships of Mine Warfare Readiness Group Two, including mine countermeasures ships USS Champion (MCM 4) and USS Pioneer (MCM 9), along with coastal minehunters USS Osprey (MHC 51), USS Pelican (MHC 53) and USS Falcon (MHC 59), participated in the exercise. Also participating in the exercise were aircrews from Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15 (HM 15), based at Corpus Christi, Texas; divers from Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) SIX, Detachment TWO based in Ingleside, Texas; and EODMU SIX, Detachment TEN, based in Charleston, S.C. Inshore Boat Unit 15 and Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit 108, Naval Reserve units based in Corpus Christi, Texas, conducted port security and force protection exercises while the Mine Warfare Command Mobile Integrated Communications Facility provided a shore-based command and control platform during the exercise.

GOMEX marks the transition of a mine warfare readiness group from training to ready-to-deploy status and includes integrated surface, air and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) mine countermeasures (MCM) operations. "During GOMEX, we send our ships out to exercise all of their weapons systems in tactical scenarios. We also exercise our core competencies. We minehunt, we neutralize mines, and sweep for mines using all of our systems," explained Capt. Barry F. Dagnall, commander of Mine Countermeasures Squadron One, based in Ingleside, Texas. "This is basically the final training exercise for MCMRON 1 ships in their training cycle. We focus on how to integrate our helicopters, our ships and our divers, into a

cohesive unit." "We set up an exercise operating area, then create an objective. Today, we're practicing a humanitarian aid scenario where we have mined waters. We have to clear the water space in order to allow the ships providing that aid to get in and out of the port safely. We'll create a series of 'safe routes' to get in and out of port, then create operating areas in the sea where ships can conduct flight operations. The whole GOMEX exercise is the effort to get that area cleared," Dagnall explained. A key aspect of the exercise is realism, explained USS Champion Commanding Officer, Lt. Cmdr. Phil Roos. "Maintaining realism in the exercise is the only way to train. That way the crew will know what's required if we ever have to do it in a real-world scenario," he said. "We come out here and fight the ship the way we'd expect to do it in wartime. We're stressing our ship to the maximum. We're testing the crew. We brief them and train them to take it seriously. That way we can really see how our ship operates together as a crew." "Exercises like GOMEX help us get more familiar with our equipment and how we would actually use it during wartime," explained Mineman Second Class Brad Costas, from Bay Area, Calif. "The exercise also helps us prepare for our upcoming deployment."



ABOARD USS CHAMPION (July 22, 2002) — Mineman Second Class Brad Costa, from Bay Area, Calif., removes the power distribution unit from the AN/SLQ 48 mine neutralization vehicle aboard USS Champion (MCM 4) after searching for mine shapes. The ship, homeported in Ingleside, Texas, is participating in Gulf of Mexico Exercise 02-2, in training areas near Corpus Christi, Texas. During the exercise, USS Champion was tasked to search for and clear exercise mine shapes from critical waterways leading to port. (U.S. Navy photo by LT Marc Boyd)

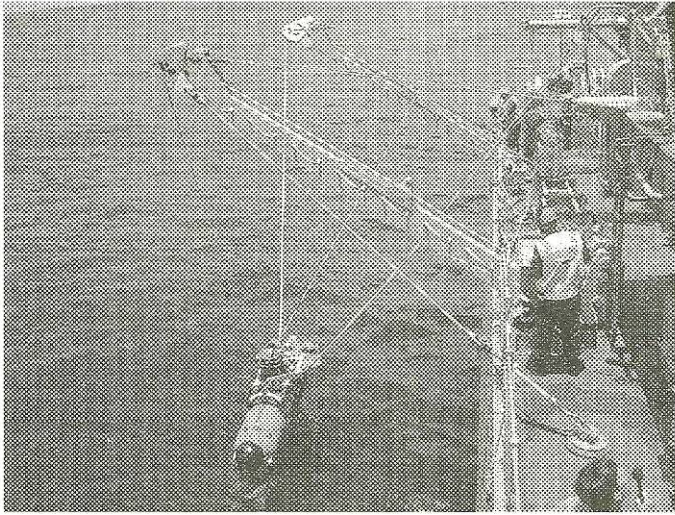
"The exercise is difficult because we're always working," Costas, who is responsible for maintaining Champion's AN/SLQ 48 Mine Neutralization Vehicle, commented. "We go on watch, then, when we go off watch, we go back to work. We operate 24-hours a day, just like we would if it was for real."

Exercise or not, adding realism to the scenario keeps crews focused. "You focus on your job and you won't have any problems whether it's the scenario or a real thing," said Mineman Third Class James Blanton, a crane operator, sonar operator and helmsman aboard Champion. Maintaining realism also includes placing mine shapes in the water. Some mine shapes, called Versatile Exercise Mine Shapes, or VEMS, collect data on whether the mine would have detonated when

NAVAL STATION INGLESIDE HITS 10-YEAR MARK IN JULY

By Mike Antoine

the ship passed over it or used various sweep or neutralization techniques. "An exercise control group places the mines in the training area so we won't know where they are. If we did, our job would be easy!" Dagnall explained. "Those mine shapes simulate, as close as possible, what we think the threat might be. That allows my crew, without knowing where those mine shapes are, to take the exercise seriously," Roos said. "If they run over one, then find it, not a good feeling."



ABOARD USS CHAMPION (July 22, 2002) — Sailors aboard USS Champion (MCM 4) prepare to lower the AN/SLQ 48 Mine Neutralization Vehicle into the water. The vehicle is remotely operated and uses sonar and video cameras to find and identify underwater objects. If the operators find a mine, the vehicle can place small explosive charges near the mine to neutralize it. USS Champion is participating in Gulf of Mexico Exercise 02-2, in training areas near Corpus Christi, Texas. During the exercise, USS Champion was tasked to search for and clear exercise mine shapes from critical waterways leading to port. (U.S. Navy photo by LT Marc Boyd)

The murky waters off the coast Corpus Christi add to the difficulty of the exercise. "This is a very good exercise area because it's very challenging. The sea bottom has varying conditions: mud, sediment, and sand. On a sandy bottom, the mines will sit on top of the sand, while other times they will be buried in mud. When they start to bury, you won't get as good of sonar return so it makes them harder to find. If there's a lot of clutter, it becomes more difficult to determine what's a mine and what's not. So the conditions here are more challenging," Dagnall explained.

"That's good because we want to learn how to operate in all kinds of environments, but it's like searching for a needle in a haystack when you're looking for a mine."

But it's that one needle in the haystack that can bring an entire fleet to a standstill. "The Navy's mine warfare program is absolutely critical," Dagnall said. "Mines are a very inexpensive weapon that many countries can acquire and use to deter freedom of navigation and safe naval operations. "If we get a report of mining in an area, it's that threat of mining that can actually slow down naval operations until we can confirm or remove the presence of mines," Dagnall continued. "Mines are going to continue to be a weapon that we'll have to deal with as a Navy. It's vitally important that we can keep waterways clear and safe."

Naval Station Ingleside was officially established on July 6, 1992. However, the story of Naval Station Ingleside actually begins about 20 years ago. Early in the 1980s, then Secretary of the Navy John Lehman announced the Navy's intention to establish a number of homeports around the United States. This expansion was dubbed the "strategic homeporting plan."

Chiefly, the plan provided for sufficient berthing space for a 600-ship Navy, including 15 deployable aircraft carriers and 100 attack submarines. The plan decentralized the fleet in order to make nuclear targeting and harbor mining more difficult.

Other reasons for strategic homeporting were to position Naval forces closer to potential crisis areas such as Central America, to broaden the normal Naval operating areas such as in the north Pacific Ocean, to enhance industrial shipyard capability by increasing the number of private shipyards available to compete for overhauls and repair availabilities, and to increase the integration of Reserve and active-duty forces.

Among the sites selected in July 1985, was a site on Corpus Christi Bay, near Ingleside.

Funding to acquire land and construct the new Naval Station at Ingleside comprised an unusual mix of federal, state and local monies. Nueces County issued \$25 million in bonds and the state of Texas put \$25 million up front to acquire land from the Corpus Christi Port Authority, construct roads provide utilities and dredge the station's basin.

On Feb. 20, 1988, Navy and local dignitaries gathered along the beach which is now Naval Station Ingleside's wharf to break ground.

On Sept. 29, 1990, a ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the impending completion of the waterfront.

The Security Department and Fire Division moved into their facility in November, and the remainder of NAVSTA personnel moved into the headquarters building on Dec. 14.

On May 3, 1991, Secretary of the Navy Lawrence Garrett III announced the move of 14 Avenger Class mine countermeasures ships, eight Osprey Class coastal mine hunters and three Knox Class frigates to Ingleside.

On July 6, 1992, NAVSTA officially "opened." More than 500 guests, including military officials, dignitaries, elected community officials and the general public witness an historic twofold event — the dedication of Naval Station Ingleside and the station's first change of command.

The first mine countermeasure ship, USS Scout (MCM 8), arrived in June 1992, and enjoys the distinction of being the first U.S. Navy ship to be homeported in Texas since World War II.

Today, NAVSTA is home to 46 tenant commands, nearly 3,100 military personnel, DoD civilians and contract employees.

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