

# THE DASHPOT



Issue 44    Newsletter of the Association of Minemen    Winter 2003



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

G. Paul Santa Maria

'Tis the season to be happy, joyful and, I think most of all, very thankful. May all your wishes and dreams come true and each be blessed in every way. I would like to share one of my wishes with you, and that wish is that our association will continue on for many more years, supporting our goals and ideals. We are now in our 30<sup>th</sup> year and our history shows we have accomplished much. However, let us not relax and rest on our laurels, but keep striving harder than before! We have the right ingredients to accomplish this, a highly motivated membership and dynamic leadership. Which brings us to the elections forthcoming at Charleston Reunion 2004. This is the election where we not only elect two directors, but the president and vice president as well. I do not believe there is one person NOT qualified for any one of these positions. Please don't wait to be asked, but step up to the plate and volunteer!

Hopefully, as you have been making out your Christmas gift lists, some consideration was given to our Scholarship and Museum Funds. It is all tax deductible!

Both my sincere apology and appreciation are extended to San Diego Reunion 2003 Committee members, Bill "Tex" Holloway and our BBQ team, Bill and Claire Bash, whom I failed to recognize in our last Dashpot.

I would like to share with all of you a most supportive conversation I had with COMOMAG Command Master Chief Williams on my return home from the reunion. I called Master Chief Williams to share with him personally, "face to face", on the board's decision and reasoning concerning the Mineman of the Year Awards. During our conversation, I made mention that Corpus Christie was our choice for Reunion 2005 and Immediately, and I mean without hesitation, Master Chief Williams offered to set up the whole reunion; hotel, food, etc., etc.! WOW! That was beautiful music to my ears, especially since we did not have a chairperson at that time, as Ron Swart had not volunteered as yet. Most

## 30TH ANNUAL ASSOCIATION OF MINEMEN REUNION

By Dick Schommer

REUNION DATES 8-9-10 OCTOBER 2004

A committee was formed, members are John Muessig, Bob Forbes, Roger Adams, Toby Horn, and Dave Walker.

Toby will head up the Golf Tournament, and he is going to try and set it up at the Charleston Municipal Golf Course. This is close to the reunion site. All you golfers let it be known to Toby or myself if you plan to play.

Dave Walker is the Command Master Chief at Unit 11, and he will be setting up tours on the Yorktown, and tours of the mine shop at the weapons station. He also stated that he has quite a few interested personnel willing to assist in making this the best reunion held in the past thirty years.

Tours of Charleston and the surrounding areas of interest can be arranged at the Town and Country Inn, Charleston tours provides this service.

All functions except golf will be held at the Town and Country Inn located at 2008 Savannah Highway Charleston, SC 29407 Reservations can be made now. Rates are \$74.00 per night plus 12% tax. These rates apply 3 days prior to and 3 days after the reunion dates. Phone # 1-800-334-6660 mention CODE: MINEMA when making reservations

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**2004 REUNION CHARLESTON, SC  
MAKE YOUR PLANS NOW!!!**

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important in that conversation with Master Chief Williams was the clear message that the active duty and reserve Minemen appreciate and support the purpose, accomplishments and goals of the Association of Minemen and that holding our reunions where the troops are shows our support for them. To further support this message, Charleston Reunion Chairman, Dick Schommer sent

out an e-mail of his Dashpot article found in this issue, updating activities and naming committee members. Please read it carefully as you will see MOMAG Unit ELEVEN Command Master Chief Dave Walker is not only a committee member, but also an organizer, rallying his people to be an integral part of our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion. Thank you Master Chief Williams and Master Chief

Walker, thank you so very much! I believe this is a positive indication that the decisions made in San Diego were right on target.

Once again, we can be very proud of an exceptional task undertaken by one of our members, MNC John Frank, USN, (Ret.); a 6" by 6" memorial tile donated by the Association of Minemen will be placed in the



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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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#### **AOM HOMEPAGE**

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World Trade Center Memorial. A picture and article can be found in this issue of the Dashpot.

On behalf of Bootsie and myself, we would like to wish you and yours a "Ho, Ho, Ho Merry Christmas and a very happy and prosperous New Year. God Bless America.

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### **30TH ANNUAL ASSOCIATION OF MINEMEN REUNION**

Continued

As plans take shape, information will be posted on our web site and in the Dashpot. Feel free to e-mail me or give me a call if you have any questions concerning the reunion. My contact information is 843-797-3715 and [rdschommer@hotmail.com](mailto:rdschommer@hotmail.com) Toby's e-mail is [Tobyone@ix.netcom.com](mailto:Tobyone@ix.netcom.com)

Refreshments will be available at the Earlybird plus other times as needed.

Hope to see the majority of the members and their families at our 30th.

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### **THE 29TH ANNUAL AOM REUNION WAS HELD IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA AUGUST 8-10, 2003.**

**By Warren Savage**

The 29<sup>TH</sup> Annual Association of Minemen (AOM) Reunion was a most memorable event. I want to thank everyone for a job well done and their assistance especially the hard work of the 2003 Association of Minemen (AOM) Committee, our President, our Directors, as well as all the involved members and friends. Our 29th annual Association of Minemen (AOM) reunion was held from Friday, 8 August to Sunday, 10 August 2003 in San Diego, California at the Handlery Hotel and Resort.

The 29th Association of Minemen Reunion was expertly planned and operated by a nucleus TEAM consisting of "Burger Grinders" BILL BASH, CLAIRE BASH, GARY CLELAND, W.C. "Tex" HOLLOWAY, JERRY CHIPMAN, JIM MILLER and WARREN SAVAGE as well as other southern California AOM members and associates and our "Bar-B Q Group".

The TEAM had the pleasure of putting together many activities, which included our annual EARLY BIRD, a banquet, a picnic and auction as well as our annual business meeting proved to be a great opportunity to greet, meet and mix as well as review photos from the past.

The Association of Minemen 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion Committee thanks everyone for their participation and assistance. We look forward to all taking part in the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion to be held in Charleston, SC in October 2004.



### **ASSOCIATION OF MINEMEN WORLD TRADE CENTER TILE**

**By G. Paul Santamaria**

To shipmate John Frank, on behalf of the Association of Minemen, I would like to extend to you our most sincere gratitude for your outstanding pride in our association. By assuming responsibility for all aspects of having a memorial tile made and installed in the World Trade Center Memorial you have assured that The Association of Minemen will be represented at that memorial.

I would also like to thank Swede Carlsen for his role in this project along with Director John Loonam who, once again with his computer wizardry, assisted me in the design of the tile. Not to forget the other members that contributed in a variety of ways, thank you.

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### **HARBOR DEFENSE VIDEO**

**By Bob (Willie) Wilson**

I am going to try and do a Video on the Army/Navy Harbor Defense Units (HDU), so I need some help from the Mineman who worked at or were Stationed at any HDU's.

I am going to be working with the Fort Hancock Historical Director and my son Chet who is an aerial cameraman for Warner Brothers TV and is going to assist me and make it somewhat professional. It will be digital so it may be used by anyone.

We are doing this to maintain the history of one of the elements that Mineman did for our country.

Any help would be greatly appreciated.

MNC Robert W. Wilson USN Ret  
E-mail address: [rivdiv592@att.net](mailto:rivdiv592@att.net)



## FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

y Curtis T. Christian

Seems to me that we just sent out the Fall Dashpot. It must be Bill making the time go so fast. I know that it has nothing to do with age.

We have a lot of members who have not paid 2004 dues. Dues were due in Aug. Look on the front of this Dashpot, the date is on it. If it reads 2003, you are late.

If you did not get one of the belt buckles that Paul has you missed out on a good deal. Give him a call.

See Yaw in Charleston in October.

Curtis

**NEXT DASHPOT ARTICLE  
DUE DATE IS  
MARCH 1 2004**



Vice President, Jack Smoot (left) receives his AOM Past Presidents medallion from Director, John Loonam at the November Retired Old Folks luncheon at the Yorktown Coast Guard Base Officers Club. (Old Mine Warfare School grounds) .

The medallion was presented on behalf of President, Paul Santa Maria. Jack was unable to attend the San Diego reunion.



## SCHOLARSHIP SCOOP

By Swede Carlsen

All of the 2003 nine applicants were awarded scholarships and attend various colleges from Maine to Texas.

Since it's the season for giving, we thought we would remind you that a donation to the scholarship fund (President's or general) would be greatly appreciated. The Association's membership has always been very generous at raising monies for the scholarship program.

Next year (2004) is close at hand and a gift for a worthy candidate would make it a wonderful Christmas. The gift of giving is heart warming.

Applications for scholarships can be had from the Secretary/Treasurer Curtis Christian or the Scholarship Chairman William (Swede) Carlsen. They also can be downloaded from the AOM website at <http://home.triad.rr.com/aom/index.htm>.

STAND TALL AMERICA

**THE SECRET OF STAYING  
YOUNG IS TO LIVE  
HONESTLY, EAT SLOWLY,  
AND LIE ABOUT YOUR AGE.**

Lucille Ball (1911 - 1989)

## BULLETIN BOARD

Shipmates,

I am trying to locate MN1(Ret) Bob Gormley. Was cleaning out some stuff here at MOMAU Ten and came across what looks to be his retirement flag complete with certificate. Would love to get this to him but I have no idea where he is or how to contact him and we never served together.

Anyone with any info on him please help.

John Bray

[John.Bray@kadena.af.mil](mailto:John.Bray@kadena.af.mil)





## BINNACLE LIST

### John Loonam Surgery 11-15-03

Hi Friends,

Things are going pretty good here. The surgery was later and we didn't get home until 5:30. More feeling in this foot so the pain is bothering me. I am not comfortable at the computer so email will be slow for awhile,

He put in a plate, screws, bone graft and elongated the Achilles tendon He also put a pain pump in the bandaging. If its working, I'm glad he did. Perkosette doesn't help much.

Bobbie is a great nurse!

Thanks for your prayers and words of encouragement.

Take care and enjoy your day

Bobbie & John

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### JOE BAKER UPDATE

For those of you that haven't heard, Joe Baker was in a terrible motorcycle accident on Highway 61 in Charleston, SC on the 7th or 8th of October. That accident placed him in ICU for many days and resulted in the loss of one leg.

Joe Baker, being a rather indomitable fellow, refused to let this get him down and pulled through.

Here is the latest updates from MNCM David Walker from Naval Weapons Station Charleston:

Ron, I'm sorry for not getting back to you sooner on this. I saw Joe last Thursday and he looked great (compared to previous visits). His color was good (red cheeks again), he was talkative and in good spirits. I knew at some point his sense of humor would resurface; he mentioned a parrot, a peg and a patch. Joe at his best making light of the worst. He is able to move short distances on a walker. He especially wanted everyone to know how much he appreciated the cards, thoughts and prayers. His attitude is what we would expect from one of our own. I'll likely go back down later in the week to see him and send another update. Take care, Dave

And from Roy:

Hey Ron, I drove down to see Joe last Friday and found him on Saturday. Boy is he looking good. His spirits were high and he was very thankful for all the

prayers. This was my first time getting down there to see him. From what I heard he wasn't doing very good two weeks back. Anyway he said he hoped to be going to therapy in about a week or two behind North Trident hospital. I will do my best to call him and visit him from up here in TN. See ya later.

Roy

Our prayers are still with you Joe. Hang in there. You have already overcome the worst.

---

### Bill Fortner Surgery 12-8-03

I am pleased to report that I woke up in the Cherokee Baptist Hospital around 12:30 Monday the 8th and found that I was missing my gall bladder and nothing else important. The gall bladder and I had become estranged when it attacked me without warning a week before. There were no tears upon our parting.

My doctor's prognosis is for a rapid, full and complete recovery, but what does he know? He was the one that said this operation would be almost painless, yeah, right. I have also experienced a first for me, staples instead of stitches. That does two things. It makes it impossible for me to take them out myself like I almost always do with stitches and it places me in fear of a blow out. A moderate sneeze might launch some of them and nail the cat to the bookcase.



**FROM  
DA  
GUNNER**

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### Now Hear This!!!

The association needs officers to fill positions during the upcoming elections to be held during the Charleston Reunion.

There are but three options available:

- (1) Volunteer to serve out of a sense of duty and caring for your fellow man.
- (2) Volunteer your fellow man to serve out of a sense of duty and self preservation.
- (2) Be volunteered by your fellow man.

I may be telephoned at 904-206-0296 or e-mailed at [gunnerjb@earthlink.net](mailto:gunnerjb@earthlink.net) Additionally, anonymous notes may be slipped under my door at 1417 Sadler Rd. #236, Fernandina Beach, FL 32034-4466



# TAPS

John Loonam and Richard Troutman send:

The December All Hands and December Fleet Reserve magazines lists the following Minemen in their taps list:

Beasley, Tom A MNCM Branch 110  
Siegel, Michael E MN1 Branch 172



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## MAIL BAG



September 8, 2003

Association of Minemen  
P.O. Box 71835  
Charleston, S.C. 29415

Dear Scholarship Committee:

Thank you very much for awarding me the Association of Minemen's 2003 Scholarship Assistance Award. The money will be put to good use, paying for tuition. Right now, I am at Maine Maritime Academy studying marine biology and having a blast Again I must say thank you, I am very grateful.

Sincerely,  
Ashley Lynn Gordon

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Dear Scholarship Committee:

I would like to say thank you for selecting me to receive the Association of Minemen's 2003 Scholarship Assistance Award. The money is greatly appreciated as college and books are a great expense. Once again, thank you!

Sincerely,  
Casey Keller

To the members of the Association of Minemen—

I would like to take this opportunity in order to express my gratitude upon receiving this 2003 Scholarship Assistance Reward

I can assure you that it will not go to waste. It will only be used in ways which will enable me to further my college education therefore fulfilling my dream of entering the Physical Therapy field.

I cannot thank you enough. My family and I are grateful for your assistance.

I will not let you down.

Sincerely,  
Erin E. Simmons

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To Mr. Santa Maria and the Association of Minemen,

Thank you very much for awarding me the Association of Minemen merit scholarship. This is my final year of medical school. Although my education will continue for many years to come, when I graduate in May 2004, I will finally have obtained my dream degree. The AOM has supported my education for several years, since I was an undergraduate student, and I am extremely grateful. I hope that one day I will be able to start a scholarship of my own to help others the way that you have helped me. I will not know for sure where I will spend my years as a resident physician until after the residency match in March 2004. Wherever I go, I will work hard to become the type of physician you can be proud to know.

Sincerely,  
Kumi Swart

---

Dear Mr. Santamaria and Association,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your generosity in awarding me this scholarship.

I am enjoying the academic and social environment here at the University of Rhode Island. Along with attending class, I am working at the Coastal Institute on Narragansett Bay. I am a research assistant helping with eelgrass research. The Coastal Institute works in conjunction with the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography. This is a great opportunity for me to meet people in the field of oceanography as well as the opportunity to look into the graduate school.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Cleland



## MORE MAIL

Shipmates:

I do enjoy reading the Dashpot, but I do not know very many of the “youngsters” that are still around.

I enjoyed Arthur Cook’s story. I followed him through the Pearl Harbor Mine School 1940-1941, CPO DeForrest was now a “pin stripe Gunner,” Foxy Fischer was CPO Instructor. I was a “flashing, dashing” seaman who made 3/c while in school or just before Tanager, Quail, Lark and Whippoorwill departed for the P.I. to lay the minefields in Subic and Manila Bays the summer of 1941, 3 months before Pearl Harbor.

You know the rest of the sea story.

Best regards to all.

Gunner A. E. Caruthers  
Gunnerc@samlink.com



Please find enclosed a check for \$50.00 for the AOM Scholarship Fund.

Although we have been unable to attend the last couple of reunions, our thoughts have been with you. We are hoping that we will be able to attend the upcoming one in Charleston next year

Very truly yours,  
Richard and Charlotte Cox

Howdy Shipmates:

Missed the Association of Minemen re-union in San Diego, seems like my first born Daughter planned a wedding for Dad to attend in Chicago. However, I was thinking about my old shipmates while having a few calibration drinks at the wedding. Must keep oneself in fine tune.

My friend Pat Saunders, whom escorted me to a couple past Minemen re-unions, fell in a store parking lot and broke her elbow. She is in a brace and will be out of service for a while. Since she is my dance partner and back seat motorcycle rider, I have permission to find an unbroken substitute, until she gets well. I am sure she will be well for the reunion in Charleston next year.

I am still writing for the car magazines and judging car shows. This keeps me as busy as I want to be, plus adds to my front pocket TAD [Traveling Around Drunk] money. I have one 1951 Mercury convertible to finish and then retire from that kind of business. Playing more ‘Black Devil’ motorcycle rider. Trying to fool those young biker ladies that I am not over 45, just had a hard life in the Navy that makes me look like I am 60+.

I am looking for a Warrant Officer’s [W-1] hat device. Crossed anchors, no shield or eagle. Check that junk box for me.

Enclosed are my annual dues.

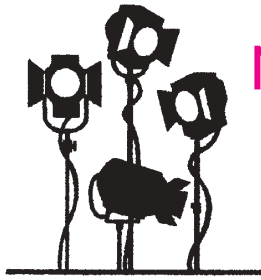
Take care; see everyone at the next reunion.

Your Shipmate,  
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## RECOGNIZE AN OLD FRIEND?







## MINE FAMILY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### MR. AND MRS. C. V. CUMMINGS CELEBRATE THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY



Happy Anniversary Mom and Dad!

CV (Mike) and Patricia Cummings of North Charleston, South Carolina, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Sept. 19, 2003. They celebrated this special occasion with an anniversary party given by their ten children, on Sept. 28, 2003, at Alhambra Hall.

The Cummings were married Sept. 19, 1953, in Honolulu, Hawaii in Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church. The Reverend Avery performed the original ceremony.

Their children are Edward E. Cummings of Charleston, Timothy Cummings of Charleston, Don Cummings of Harrisburg, Pa., Diane C. York of Charleston, Lisa C. Blevins of Charleston, Sandy C. Euper of Charleston, Maggie C. Brock of Charleston, Tammy C. Cox of Waldorf, Md., Kelly C. Kirk of Charleston and Jany C. Pooser of Charleston.

The couple have 26 grandchildren: Olivia, Michael, Phillip, Nicholas, Greg, Jill, Frank, Lauren, Lindsay, Ben, Tyler, Tiffany, Claire, Meghan, Kevin, Andrew, Patrick, Matthew, Hayley, Tradd, Katelyn, Ryan, Sara, Shawn1 Chelsea and Trey. They also have three great-grandchildren: Devon, Ben and Kayla

Mr. Cummings retired from the United States Navy and BP Oil. Mrs. Cummings retired from Charleston County E.M.S.



### EDITOR'S CORNER

As another year draws to a close, I want to take this opportunity to thank the fleet units for the tremendous articles and photos they provided this year. They have provided a unique window into today's mineforce and it is a most encouraging one. When asked, "In which ships have you been," no longer can a Mineman smile and reply with a smug, "I sink 'em, I don't sail 'em." Shipboard sea duty is a reality for all Minemen and they have risen to the challenge and enjoy it. My hat is off to the new generation.

Speaking of fleet input, I want to thank MNCS(SW) Dave Ostrom for his masterful Winter submission from Unit 5. All of the input from the sites has been great, but this particular one was top drawer. He

took the outstanding pioneering work done by LCDR K. L. Miller at Unit One a subtle step further. The manner in which it was done was exactly what I have been trying to formulate as an organizational method to pass on to others, but had been unable to do so. Thank you Kevin for the tremendous ground work and thank you Dave for the simple picture placement and captioning device you employed.

This year, the Dashpot saw another first I think. We were fortunate to have a most welcome article from the USS Cormorant, MHC 57, an afloat unit. In the coming months I hope to generate more afloat interest. I do not know what the percentage is, but I suspect that there are more Minemen at sea than ashore at this point. They need to know who we are and what we stand for. I also think our older readership will enjoy the afloat articles and photos as well. I learned from the Cormorant article.

The **entire** staff of the Dashpot wishes you all a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.





# LEANING ON THE TAFFRAIL

## Home For Father's Day

By Robert E. McCorry, Jr. USNR (Ret.)

The wonderful "Home For Fathers Day!" photo provided by the Navy Department which appeared on page 20 of the Fall 2003 Dashpot brought back memories. It reminded me of my 1970 NOREUR/MED deployment aboard USS Dash (MSO 428) as part of MINEDIV 43 (the "Dirty D's") comprised of the Dash, USS Detector (MSO 429), USS Direct (MSO 429), and USS Dominant (MSO 430). A number of us became fathers for the first time on that deployment.

The Dirty D's were General Motors main propulsion plants and we steamed like crazy. I joined the ship and the division in March of 1970 in Panama City. I was a brand spanking new ensign. Never been aboard any type of ship before, let alone a Navy one. (I ultimately ended up serving four years of active duty and twenty-three years in the Reserves.) We returned to our homeport in Charleston from Panama City in mid-April of 1970 to begin preparations for an unaccompanied transit to Northern Europe for the first half of the deployment. We left Charleston on 10 June 1970. Unaccompanied meant that we carried huge vulcanized fuel cells on the minesweeping deck. I forget how many thousands of gallons worth, but it was a lot. We first drew down from our main tanks, then purged the cells into the available space in the tanks. The cells were then stowed and ultimately offloaded and shipped back to the states from the other side. The transit over hopped from Charleston to Halifax, Nova Scotia, to St. John, Newfoundland, to Scotland. As I recall we got there with about 15% left in the tanks.

Once there, we participated in multiple NATO exercises with British, Danish, Dutch, Belgian, then West German, and French minesweeping forces. The weather was usually marginal at best, but the camaraderie was always top-drawer when we got to port.

We made the chop into the MED and the Sixth Fleet at Rota, Spain in September. The second half of the deployment saw a bit of everything: ALNAV exercises and NATO exercises with French, Italian, Greek, Turkish, and British minesweeping forces. There was some political intrigue too when Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nassar died while we were in port in Italy. At the time, Italy had diplomatic relations with Egypt, which of course was friendly with the former Soviet Union. The Italian base went to half-mast; the 'sweeps quietly and diplomatically left port! I seem to recall that we were involved in a standby role because of civil conflicts and other intrigues in the eastern Mediterranean and Mideast as well. We also participated in SPECOPS. And therein

lies the real story I wanted to share with Dashpot readers.

When our deployment began, a number of us had left behind wives who would be giving birth. As I said earlier, it was the first time for a number of us. Even the skipper was expecting to become a grandfather for the first time. Had our deployment ended as scheduled, pretty much all of us — including myself — would have made it back home in time. But in a classic tactical feint, the Navy let us get almost to Rota for the OUTCHOP, then quietly turned us around and extended us so that we could perform about three weeks of SPECOPS. Which we accomplished without any interference from Soviet bloc forces. The American Red Cross messages began pouring in, announcing one birth after another. At one point we were even the bearer of the good news for a sailor aboard our trigger ship, a DLG that was always just over the horizon for good measure. The DLG had been experiencing some comms problems at the time. That earned us a box of cigars when we eventually got close enough for a ship-to-ship.

My own message came just as we were getting turned around. I remember it as if it were yesterday. We had just left port and were about to switch to normal underway steaming when one of the ships in the division reported a fire on board. I was at the con and as we were maneuvering alongside to render assistance the skipper tapped me on the shoulder and said that he'd take over. It was uncharacteristic of the skipper to do that; he never conned the ship. He saw the doubt registered on my face and cocked his head back over his shoulder where I caught the smile on the face of the radioman standing with a clipboard behind him. I immediately knew what was going on. I still have the AMCROSS WASHDC message from that clipboard.

We made it back to Charleston about five weeks later. This time it was an accompanied transit. The Shenandoah served as our unrep vessel most of the way back. The sight of 'sweeps in formation transiting home will always be special for me and will always remind me of the first time I became a father. Thanks again for a wonderful photo.

P.S. Ironically, eight years later, I was assigned to the Dash as a reservist. The Dash by then was homeported in Newport. We were operating in the Charleston OPAREA on a minewarfare certification exercise when my third child, our only daughter, was born three weeks ahead of schedule back home in Rhode Island. I still have the handwritten message I received from a squadron messenger who met the ship in Charleston at the piers when we pulled in.



# Rogues, Rascals, and Renegades

## WELDING 101

By Joe Beetar

Here's another Yokosuka story for *Rogues, Renegades & Rascals*:

One fine summer day, I was assigned to cutting the grass on the revetments around the magazines. I was using a scythe and watching out for the poisonous snakes that hung out in the tall grass. I happened to be on the revetment opposite the Mine Assembly building and noticed some activity between Mine Assembly and the building to its left - I think the MK 27 Shop. Strategically parked between these two Butler buildings was a gas bowser where we would refuel the dock mules.

The gas bowser had developed a leak and been drained of its contents. Rather than wait for the Japanese welders from the main base to come over and repair the bowser, one of the Chiefs - who shall remain nameless - decided that, since he knew how to weld, he would repair it himself. He and an assistant - who shall also remain nameless - proceeded to repair the crack in the tank. About five minutes into the operation, there was a tremendous explosion. I immediately fell to the ground and covered my head with my hands. After about 30 seconds, having not heard any additional explosions, I tentatively stood up and looked around. No smoke, no fire, just other concerned sailors standing up and looking around. After about another 30 seconds there was a loud clanging as the large, round fill cap - normally affixed to the top of the bowser - descended from the heavens into the street. It seems that the Chief (welder) forgot to vent the tank before applying the welder's torch. Given what was stored in the magazines, several folks needed to change their skivvies. After we all stopped laughing, of course.

## THE HALF INCH FLAT WASHER

By Bill Fortner

Back in those dark, dark prehistoric days when mines were assembled screw by screw, wire by wire, lug by lug and component by component there was a built-in golden opportunity to spread hate and discontent among friends and foe alike. These archaic times required that a mine assemblyman draw every part needed to assemble a single mine, proceed to an empty mine case, and then do so. You began to use the parts you had drawn and you were finished when you ran out of parts. While Henry Ford had pioneered the assembly line concept in the early 1900s, it had just never quite caught on in the mine force.

In the "early days," only a few mines were maintained in a higher state of readiness as it was a maintenance nightmare to change the batteries. We

look today on a battery that will store on a room temperature shelf for 10 years as the bare minimum. Back then, 2 years was an ENORMOUS unrefrigerated shelf life for a mine battery.

I was stationed at Naha, Okinawa where a few Mk 25 mines were kept in "Bravo." It came time to change the batteries in those weapons and my best friend Bill Terry and I were assigned to the crew to make the change.

At the time, the Mine Shop was quonsets on the flight line and we had no approved or even decent facility to work on explosive weapons. I am sure arms were twisted and we were permitted to use the torpedo shop on Senaga Shima Island to do the work. Torpedomen are a snooty lot and would not turn on the air conditioning in the bay where we had to work ... broken AC my foot!!

Believe it or not, there are some minemen among us that are unscrupulous and will surreptitiously add a spare nut, bolt, screw or washer to an unguarded pile of parts. This unscrupulous group includes the entire mine assembly force. It was not unusual to see minemen who could not wait any longer stuff the remaining parts into a mine and fasten some screws on the tailplate to prevent mischief then bolt for the head. This is one of the reasons a "buddy system" was informally instituted in mine assembly areas.

Bill had just about finished hooking up the large terminal board that went across the entire end of the tail opening when he rose up from his little four wheeled metal stool and asked me to watch his parts pile while he went to the head. While he was gone, I slipped a half-inch flat washer under all the remaining bolts and washers. He returned refreshed and continued assembling his mine. As he neared the point to op check the mine, he spied the lone washer in the bottom. With a mighty oath he roundly cursed the washer, its maker and their entire family, such was the difficulty to install this washer at this point. Bill decided to unbolt the terminal board, ease it aside and reach behind to check to see if all the washers were installed on the circuit breaker. It WAS hot and his t-shirt was soaked as he maneuvered his arm in the narrow spaces to feel for the washers. It was during this process that his wet belly came in full contact with the terminal board that was hooked up to all the mine batteries.

I have never before or since seen a body react like that to electrical stimulus. His arms and legs straightened out instantly and propelled him on his little metal stool at an astonishing rate of speed some 6 feet into a concrete block wall where he impacted with a loud thud and went out cold as a mackerel.

As he regained consciousness, I helped him up to go back to the barracks and I told him that I would fix his mine for him. I NEVER told Bill Terry that there was a spare washer in his parts pile.



## HISTORY LESSON

By LCDR Donald A. Decrona, USN, (RET)

### MINE FORCE SEPARATE COMMAND OF ATLANTIC FLEET

The following information on the Atlantic mine force is extracted from an article written marking April 1, 1966, the 20th anniversary of the Mine Force as a separate command of the Atlantic Fleet. Don

Mine Warfare long has been a facet of Naval Operations. During World War II, in the Atlantic, this task was performed by Service Squadron 5, part of the Atlantic Fleet Service Force. At that time mine warfare ships consisted largely of destroyer types and steel hulled minesweepers. These ships included fleet minesweepers, auxiliary minesweepers, minelaying destroyers and minesweeping destroyers, and coastal minesweepers.

On April 1, 1946, Mine Force became a separate organization of the Atlantic Fleet under the command of Rear Admiral R. F. Old, with headquarters in Norfolk, VA. Three months later, June 15, 1946, the main body moved to Charleston, SC. At that time the Mine Force consisted almost entirely of ships used during World War II.

The first home of the Mine Force upon its arrival at Charleston was a 21-acre site on the Ashley River. Headquarters was the historic old West Point Rice mill built in 1862. The base was designated the Naval Minecraft Base and had facilities for most of the 50 ships assigned.

In February 1955, the decision was made to construct a modern Naval minecraft base on the site fronting the Cooper River. Construction began in May 1956 and the base was officially designated on January 12, 1959.

While intelligence or the loss of shipping may indicate an area is mined, it is never easy to detect and disarm the mines. It takes a highly trained crew of specialties working together to maneuver the ship into a minefield and clear the area of all threat to safe navigation.

### HISTORY OF THE PACIFIC MINE FORCE

The ships of the Pacific Mine force during World War II included not only minesweeping ships, but relics from World War I, converted shrimp boats and new, quickly assembled ships. This unusual assortment of minecraft led every invasion in the Pacific, almost without public notice.

Before the invasion of Okinawa, 100 minecraft were given seven days to, "sweep", clear channels prior to the main assault on April 1, 1945. These ships encountered not only mines, but also Japan's last ditch defense of Kamikazes. However, the mission was accomplished and the invasion went on schedule.

At the end of the war, the Pacific Mine Force numbered over 550 ships and craft but post-war defense reductions resulted in the merger of the Mine Forces with other Pacific Fleet commands. A total contingent of 39 ships were in commission at the outset of the Korean engagement.

The importance of the mining and mine countermeasures resurfaced with the Korean conflict. During the first two years, mines caused 70 percent of all U.S. Navy casualties afloat. As a result of this heavy casualty trend, Mine Force, Pacific was reactivated as a separate command on February 19, 1951. Minesweeping ships and craft were assigned the extremely hazardous task of clearing the harbors and landing approaches for the amphibious forces. The minesweeper forces alone suffered 32 percent of the personnel casualties in the Far East, as well as four sunk by mines. These minesweepers were the only ships lost by the U. S. Navy in Korean waters.

In South Vietnam, minesweepers were among the first U. S. ships to be assigned a mission of assisting the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam. U. S. Navy MSO's joined Vietnamese Navy ships in barrier patrols south of the DMZ. In 1965, when Operation Market Time was established as a program to interdict coastal infiltration, minesweepers of MINEFLOT THREE were made a significant element of that deterrent.

In addition, river and harbor craft played a vital role in clearing mines from major waterways in Southeast Asia. This mission was carried out by the divisions and detachments of Mine Squadron ELEVEN for more than five years. During several periods of intense enemy activity, Mine Division 112 and 113 were involved daily in river ambushes and their efforts were a major factor in the neutralization of the mine threat on the shipping channels to Saigon.

At the end of 1970, the Chief of Naval Operations directed a major reorganization of the Mine forces.



Effective July 1, 1971, the Pacific and Atlantic Fleet Mine Forces were consolidated into a single command headquartered in Charleston, S.C. under the title of Commander Mine Warfare Force. The Pacific Fleet retained Mine Flotilla ONE headquartered in Guam, and Mine Flotilla THREE in Long Beach. Mine Squadron FIVE (Naval Reserve Forces) headquartered in Long Beach to direct the activities of Naval Reserve Training ships homeported on the West Coast.

Commander Minecraft, Battle Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet

MAY 1935 Rear Admiral George F. Neal, USN  
 JUL 1937 Captain David W. Bagley, USN  
 MAY 1938 Rear Admiral Wilhelm L. Friedell, USN  
 JUN 1939 Rear Admiral Edward J. Marquart, USN  
 DEC 1941 Captain George D. Hull, USN

Commander Minecraft, U. S. Pacific Fleet

OCT 1944 Rear Admiral Alexander Sharp, USN  
 SEP 1945 Rear Admiral Arthur D. Struble, USN  
 JUN 1946 Captain Andrew G. Shepherd, USN

Commander Mine Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet

JAN 1951 Rear Admiral John M. Higgins, USN  
 APR 1952 Rear Admiral John A. Snackenber, USN  
 JUL 1954 Rear Admiral Roland N. Smoot, USN  
 NOV 1955 Rear Admiral Marion E. Murphy, USN  
 APR 1957 Rear Admiral Victor D. Long, USN  
 APR 1959 Rear Admiral Charles K. Bergin, USN  
 JUL 1960 Rear Admiral F. Julian Becton, USN  
 OCT 1961 Rear Admiral Kenneth L. Veth, USN  
 FEB 1964 Rear Admiral Odale D. Waters, Jr., USN  
 AUG 1965 Rear Admiral Carlton B. Jones, USN  
 MAY 1967 Rear Admiral Horace V. Bird, USN



**DOES THIS PATCH GENERATE ANY MEMORIES?**



**COMOMAG**

By MNCM(SW) Jerry L. Williams  
 Command Master Chief

Greetings Shipmates. The holiday season is upon us and I know everyone out there is preparing for family and friends in this most joyous time of the year. The cold weather has begun to blow here in Texas, but as always, we have the random warm day here and there to balance the picture. Surprisingly, rainfall has been weaker this year than last, but we're hoping for a bit more as the winter sets in good and takes hold, especially since I'm tired of watching the grass die of thirst. Despite the occasional cold front, as well as the more severe weather many of you have to deal with, I'd ask that we all take some time this season to not only remember the real reason we come together and celebrate, but also bring the family together and prayerfully remember the brave men and women that proudly serve our mighty Nation. While many of us are blessed with the embrace and comforts of home, family and dear friends, countless thousands more dedicated service personnel are far from their loved ones this time of the year. They are standing guard on the front lines, deployed far from land across the seas, and each devoted to protecting each of us from the tyranny of evil regimes and their fanatical supporters. With thoughts and prayers of our troops in our hearts and minds, remember if you happen to see a service member in the airport or in/around town, please make the effort to shake their hand and thank them for their sacrifice and service, it means more to them than many will ever know.

Back at MOMAG, the year-end closeouts have been as hectic as ever. Every Department is wrapping up 2003 as quickly as possible, with more to do than time available to do it, isn't that always the case. We just had our Christmas Party at the Holiday Inn in beautiful Emerald Beach downtown, and it was one of the best we've had on record. Not only was the music just the right flavor at the right times, but the food was particularly outstanding. We also conducted retirement festivities for a dear and long time

member of the staff here, Mr. Archie Hanna. Most of you know Archie and have worked with him countless times over the past 24 years that he has been a part of the Mine Warfare Community. He came to COMINEWARCOM as a Master Chief in 1980, retired in 1984, but stayed on with WARCOM in Civil Service until 1989, then moved over to COMOMAG permanently in 1990. He has been at the heart and led every computer infrastructure endeavor we have been involved with MOMAG-wide for as long as anyone can remember. Our success in this area is a direct result of his dedicated service and impressive professional expertise. Archie and his family are moving back to South Carolina for retirement and is looking forward to fishing and family. We will dearly miss him and not soon replace his contribution.



Other official news included the announcement of the MN "A" School Pipeline being restructured. After fleet inputs, MWTC has developed a new pipeline for all Minemen "A" School students, designed to tailor their training specifically towards their ultimate duty station. This effort will ensure MOMAG-bound Sailors receive the skills most necessary for Mine Shop Operations, and the MCM/MHC-bound Sailors will receive only ship specific training. Final details are being worked now, but expect the pipeline to come online in 2004. Will keep you all advised as plans solidify.

Also, Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) is in effect for all ratings for MOMAD 12 – Misawa, and MOMAU 5 – Sigonella. This new program enables Sailors to bid for orders and receive extra pay each month if assigned orders to either location. The extra money is substantial and on top of OHA/COLA for the areas. See your Command Career Counselor or Command Chief for details.

#### Other events this Quarter:

##### Awards:

Mr. Archie Hanna – Civilian MSM  
 YN1(SW) Reyes – Volunteer Service Medal  
 LT Lauffenburger – NCM  
 LT Arthurs – NCM  
 YN1(SW) Reyes - NAM  
 SK1(SW) Wallach – LOA  
 MNC(SW) Rodriguez – LOA  
 YN2(SW) Kennedy - LOA  
 YN2(AW) Pratt – 3Q03 Sailor of the Quarter

##### Frocted:

OS1(SW) Davis  
 SK1(SW) Wallach

##### Departures:

SK2(SW) Larry Thorn – Medically Retired  
 MN3 Edward Gardner – USS Scout



YN1(SW) Elido Reyes – USS Detroit  
LT Kathy Arthurs – USS James E. Williams  
Mr. Archie Hanna - Retired

Arrivals:

LT Shelia Bowman  
IT2(SW) Michael Ramirez  
OS1(SW) Adrian Davis  
ISC(SW) Randy Bubar  
LCDR Thomas Mathison  
LT David Lauffenburger

That's a wrap for this quarter, remember to visit COMOMAG's world wide web site for updates on issues, useful www links to Navy and other programs, and current contact information. The address is [www.comomag.navy.mil](http://www.comomag.navy.mil). As always, if you need assistance from the staff here, don't hesitate to call, email, or otherwise contact us for help. Take Care and Stay Safe.



## MOMAU ONE SEAL BEACH, CA

By LCDR K. L. Miller

**CO's CORNER.** I wish to extend our warm and sincere wishes for a joyous holiday season. As I look at the weather outside, I must look at a calendar to remind me that December is almost here. I talked with my Mom yesterday, she lives in Ohio and told me of the early Christmas present of 8" of snow from the storm that swept through the state and blanketed the East Coast. I was happily wearing shorts and flip-flops during our chat, as the weather was perfect in Sunny Seal Beach!

We wrapped up August with a Hail and Farewell at the Weapon Station "Q" on the 29<sup>th</sup> before breaking for an enjoyable Labor Day weekend. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, we remembered those that lost their lives during the events of that tragic day. The remainder of September centered on our Explosive Safety Inspection (ESI) 2003. The crew had prepared diligently for the scrutiny the inspectors. Their hard work paid handsome dividends as only two discrepancies were noted! LOGS/ADMIN department held an MWR luncheon on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Fajitas were grilled to perfection as IT1(SW) Sheila Loe and YN2(SW) Coates flexed their culinary skills. We hosted a few sailors from NRMOMAU EIGHT and FIVE on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> as MN2(SW) Vernon Saunders took them under his wing and

taught them the intricacies of the Type III Bridge Crane.

October was hailed with a fury and dollar signs as our sailors went on the annual MWR trip to Las Vegas. With the exception of a few of the lads meeting Miss Hawaiian Tropic, many of them took a liking to the new Vegas slogan, "What happened in Vegas, stays in Vegas" as the stories were few and far between! We celebrated Hispanic Heritage on the 10<sup>th</sup>, inviting families for a presentation conducted by IT1(SW) Loe and a potluck luncheon. Petty Officer Loe's bravo-foxtrot, Chris Wompler, added some humor to the power point presentation. The afternoon was capped off with the children enjoying a traditional Piñata. We celebrated the Navy's birthday a few days late, on the 17<sup>th</sup>, after the Winter Uniform Inspection.



All were invited to a Pizza and Beverage Extravaganza luncheon and Toast ceremony at Dave's Other Place.





MNC(SW) Greg Williams' Production Department sponsored the monthly MWR fundraiser on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The menu of the day featured your choice of Sushi Rolls or succulent charbroiled Hamburgers. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, we delivered six MK25's to the USS Cormorant for their use in EOD training in support of USS John C. Stennis STRKGRU COMPTUEX. All enjoyed our Halloween Costume party on the 31<sup>st</sup>. A motley collection of costumes were on parade at Bunker 33 with MNSA Christopher Ricks, MN1(SW) Jacob Mazurek, and IT1(SW) Loe winning "Best Overall Costume"; MN3 John Golden, MN2 Mario Barrientos, and MN3 Kelly Tupper's son Jayden earned "Scariest Costume" honors; MNSN Arlan Madison, MN3 Stanley Kaboskie, and SK2(AW) Rene Morales-Perez as "Funniest Costume."

Ballots were cast for our representative government on 4 November. MNCM(SW) Mark Zinnel and his Mine Assembly Team {MN1(SW) Mazurek, MN3 Golden, MN3 Kaboskie, MN2 Barrientos, and MNSA Ricks} deployed to the USS John C. Stennis, in support of COMCARAIRWING FOURTEEN for a rare COMPTUEX MINEX from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup>. It was indeed a pleasure for our Team to get underway and support the fleet! We were blessed with clear blue skies for the annual Veterans Day Parade in Long Beach on the 10<sup>th</sup>, we even video taped "Seasons Greetings" video to be play to our deployed troops.



On the 17<sup>th</sup>, we took advantage of free admission at Knots Berry Farm amusement park for veterans and their family. MN1(SW) Ronald Chabot's QA department did their share in raising much-needed MWR dollars holding a childog and hamburger sale on the 19<sup>th</sup>. MNSN Madison headed our efforts in the Combined Federal Campaign, raising \$2,109. We conducted NR&R stand down on the 21<sup>st</sup>, refreshing all with knowledge as we think about the upcoming Thanksgiving Day feast.

HAILS & FAREWELLS. Only one new addition to our family this quarter to report. MN3 Tupper and his wife Teresa brought a new sailor into the world on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November, her name is Samara.



We have had several members of our family depart for their next adventure. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, MN3 Christopher Miserlian, his wife Melody, and daughter Morgan headed toward Ingleside, Texas for the USS Defender. YN1(SW) Roland Coates and his wife Lani moved South of Seal Beach, to Lemoore for assignment to VFA 137. MN2 Michael Caprioglio set sail on 24 September en-route to USS Ardent, in Manama, Bahrain. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, YNSN Vernon Severin and his wife Jennifer separated from the Naval Service. MN2 Michael Busch, wife Shelly, and daughter Emily departed for USS Patriot in Sasebo, Japan. SK1(SW) Pierre Rhinehart departed to the excitement of NAS Keflavik, Iceland on the 24 of November.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION. YN1(SW) Coates' service merited an EOT NAM. CO Letters of Commendation awarded to MN1(SW) Saunders and MN3 Kaboskie on selection to Sailor of the Quarter and Blue Jacket of the Quarter, respectively. YN1(SW) Coats, MN1(SW) Saunders, MN1(SW) Mathew Heyer, MN3 Madison, and MN3 Kaboskie "did it right", advancing to their respective ranks. Bravo Zulu to all!!

IN THE TARGET QUEUE. As we decorate our facility, we look forward to the Christmas holiday. The local chapter of the Destroyer Escort Sailors Association has again graciously volunteered to provide Christmas baskets and presents for our annual Children's Christmas Party on December 6<sup>th</sup>.



We look forward to our Holiday Party on the 12<sup>th</sup> at "Taste of Napa" in Sunset Beach, complete with secret Santa and cheer for all.

On behalf of my crew, I wish you our heartfelt joy and prayers for a healthy and prosperous 2004.





## MOMAU FIVE SIGONELLA

By MNCS(SW) Dave Ostrom

*Buon Natale a tutti dalla squadra di UNIT 5!* First, this submission for MOMAU FIVE has me catching up on all the news covering the Fall and Winter seasons. I apologize for missing last issues input, so let me get started on what's happening out here in the Mediterranean. I do want to congratulate our new Mineman Chiefs, this a very important milestone in your career. Welcome to the proud ranks of the U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officers!

- July saw UNIT FIVE putting the final touches and completions on our MRCI POA&M. Naval Reserve Units THREE from Kearny, NJ and FOUR Albany New York were onboard for their two-week augmentation to support us for our MRCI. We integrated both NR Units into our Mine Assembly Upgrade flows, and they did a superb job! We had a chance to perform two upgrades with them prior to the Inspection Team arriving onboard.



UPGRADE TRAINING FOR MRCI



AERO-51 LOAD



### TEAMWORK WINS

- first part of August had the COMOMAG MRCI Inspection Team arrive onboard. LCDR Bachand, MNCM(SW) Williams, MNC(SW) Kent and Wayne "Arnie" Helgerson were onboard 4-8 August and we started the Inspection process. UNIT FIVE's efforts during preparations in all areas really paid off. When we completed all Admin areas, Supply and Mine Production operations, UNIT 5 was awarded a 100% Weapons reliability (122 total mines assembled) and a 98% Supply validity. The Chief Inspectors comments were as follows: "*MOMAU FIVE stands mission ready and motivated to accomplish its assigned mission. UNIT personnel and augmenting Naval Reserve personnel integrated as one team and worked very effectively. All assigned spaces and equipment were maintained to the highest standards. WELL DONE to UNIT FIVE for a superb MRCI Inspection!*" Also, I am very happy to announce that MN3 Lou Marroletti and his lovely fiancé Shawna had a beautiful and healthy baby boy, William Zander!



### NORTHERN LIGHTS 03 PREPS

- August and into late September: immediately following the MRCI, we deployed our 4-person Surface Launch Team and supported Exercise NORTHERN LIGHTS 2003. Myself, MN1 Tina Bibby, MN3 Jeremy Chittenden and MN3 Craig Bruner were on TAD assignment working with the British Royal Navy Fleet Mining Team. This exercise involved the Surface Launch of 86 U.K. and U.S. exercise mines. We did return home for a very



brief period, then myself, MN1 Bibby, MN2 Ryan Long and MN3 Lou Marroletti were back on TAD assignment as the 4-person Recovery Team. An OUTSTANDING exercise, and we enjoyed getting underway and working very closely with the British Royal Navy during the whole exercise. We are all ready to go back and do it again!



U.S. ET/MCMTT ASSETS NL03



READY TO LAUNCH!



MOMAU 5 AND THE BRITISH ROYAL NAVY FLEET MINING TEAM NL03

- September was a great month of events. We saw the advancement of MNC(SW) Steve Pierce, who is an outstanding new addition to our CPO Mess. 18-19 September had Commodore Auberry onboard to finalize our COMOMAG ADMAT/Facilities Visit. Our workload schedule kept us all busy with required maintenance in accordance with our 5-year Perpetual and putting the final touches on required assets in support of Exercise MIREM 27.

- October and November saw UNIT FIVE support Exercise MIREM 27. 96 ET/MCMTT shapes were provided, and our first phase of evolutions had MNC(SW) Pierce, MN3 James Batman, MN3 August Sorvillo and MN3 Walter fix on TAD assignment in support of Surface Launch operations. They returned, and then we had LTJG Tillinghast, MN1 John Dominguez, MN3 Batman and MN3 Brandon Vollm on TAD assignment in support of Recovery operations.

- December has UNIT FIVE involved with the total refurb of NL03 and MIREM assets, our Quarterly Mine Readiness Assessment, MK75 VEMS training, upgrade and PQS qualifications/ QUAL CERT Boards.

***BRAVO ZULU's:*** go out to MN2(SW) Richard Weldon who received the NAVY COMBAT ACTION RIBBON for his efforts on USS DEXTEROUS (MCM 13) in direct support of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. MN2 Long, MN3 David Reinertsen, MN3 Chittenden, MN3 Vollm and MN3 Anthony Bedard who were all awarded the NAVY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL for their outstanding support and dedicated efforts for our August 2003 MRCI. GOOD CONDUCT awards went to IT1 Irene Martinez (2<sup>nd</sup> award), MN2(SW) Weldon, MN2 Jeramie Lane, MN3 Reinertsen & MN3 Matt McDonald. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2003 SOQ is MN1(SW) Matt Greer and our JSOQ is MN3 Vollm. September 03 advancement results brought good news our way, the following personnel were advanced to their next higher pay grade: to Petty Officer First Class IT1 Martinez, to Petty Officer Second Class MN2(SW) Weldon and MN2 Lane. And to Petty Officer Third Class MN3 Chittenden, MN3 Bruner, MN3 Vollm, MN3 Fix, MN3 Bedard & MN3 Marroletti. WELL DONE!

***WELCOME ABOARD:*** to MNC(SW) Keith "K.D." Dixon from the USS SENTRY (MCM 3) and MN2(SW) Weldon from the USS DEXTROUS (MCM 13).

***TRANSFERS:*** MN2(SW) Burel Jones to USS WARRIOR (MCM 10) & MN3 Nick House to USS BLACK HAWK (MHC 58).

***In Closing:*** as I reflect back on this whole year, I feel like I am the luckiest and most fortunate Mine-man Senior Chief in the U.S. NAVY. What a crew we have out here at UNIT FIVE! These fine and outstanding Sailors gave it their all these past twelve months. We started out with a Tech Assist with CSS



Panama City Reps. Completed our annual NASSIG Safety Inspection, CNR Europe Environmental Assessment. NR MOMAU's 3 & 4 two-week augmentation, AUG03 MRCI. COMOMAG ADMAT/Facilities Visit and successful OCT03 AMHAZ Inspection. Directly supported and participated in 5 NATO/PFP/C5F/C6F MIW Exercises that delivered 257 ET/MCMTT shapes. And keeping our Mineman skills sharp, we assembled 418 MK62/63/65 QUICKSTRIKE UMN's during Quarterly Mine Readiness Assessments. This crew remains highly motivated, trained and always ready to meet all mission objectives. They are extremely focused and ready for TAD assignment in support of Fleet MIW Exercises throughout Europe. For any of you "hard chargers" out there looking for a very challenging and rewarding tour overseas, strongly consider a tour at MOMAU FIVE, Sicily. An excellent career choice, you will have the opportunity to serve in highly visible command wide collateral duties. Off duty education opportunities are OUTSTANDING here in Sigonella. The Universities of Maryland, Embry-Riddle and Excelsior College offer many classes and several may be even completed on-line. Our military housing locations continue to grow with the recent edition of Marinai (close to 500 new units). We have one of the finest DODD's schools within Europe here in Sigonella. And I have not even started to mention the great liberty you will enjoy here on the beautiful island of Sicily and great travel opportunities throughout Europe while in a leave status. Interested? Drop me a line anytime at [ostromd@nassig.sicily.navy.mil](mailto:ostromd@nassig.sicily.navy.mil).

We all at UNIT FIVE wish each and every one of you and your families the best of holidays and joyous New Year! Stay Safe, take care and God Bless.



## MOMAU EIGHT GUAM

By MNCS(SW) Paul King

Hafa Adai to all! As summer ends and fall begins our facilities are receiving a much-needed makeover. While maintaining a demanding work schedule, MOMAU 8 sailors have shifted from one workspace to another staying just ahead of the contractors. All of the facilities work will be completed around February 2004.

All of our Mine Readiness Certification and Inspection (MRCI) preparations are on schedule. By the time we return, in January, from our Christmas break, we will be putting the finishing touches on

our pre-MRCI checks. MRCI is scheduled for March 2004 with an Administrative and Material Inspection (ADMAT) scheduled shortly thereafter. MOMAU 8 is looking forward for the opportunity to show just how well we take care of business here in Guam.

I would like to share with you just a few of the many accomplishments that MOMAU 8 has achieved this quarter. We screened 571 Mau fins. We completed maintenance on 60 MK-65s, 76 MK-155 kits, 60 MK-45 S&As, 80 MK-1 Mod 1 explosive heads, 586 MK-164 kits, 45 gas generators, and 529 MK-130 kits. We completed our quarterly upgrade and downgraded 36 AUR SLMM (MK-37).

MOMAU 8's Flag Football team has played in the COMNAVMAR Captains cup competition. Currently their record is 3 wins with 2 losses.

MOMAU 8 has several personal achievements for this quarter. Our Commanding Officer (LCDR Kurz) was promoted to LCDR. MN2(SW) Perez was frocked to MN1. MNSN Lipscomb, MNSN Morales, MNSN Darby, and MNSN Ayers were frocked to MN3. MN1(SW) Reeves was selected as MOMAU 8's Sailor of the Quarter. The Junior Sailor of the Quarter was MN3 Crum. MN3 Lipscomb was selected as the Bluejacket of the Quarter.

MOMAU 8 had several HAIL and FAREWELLS this quarter. MNCS(SW) King, new CSC/SEA, reported onboard in October from Naval Undersea Warfare Command, Keyport WA. SK1(SW) Brown reported onboard from Navy Recruiting District, Indianapolis. YN1(SW) Wright reported onboard from Military Sealift Command Far East. YN1 Poynter departed for Norfolk, VA. We wish her fair winds & following seas.

MOMAU 8 would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



## MOMAU TEN KADENA

by MNCS John Bray

Greetings and salutations to everyone in mineland and the AOM. I hope everyone had a good Halloween and didn't get too "thick" from all the candy. As 2003 winds down, challenges are all around us in the upcoming year with our biennial inspection cycle right around the corner. With all the exercises done for the year, the crew remains busy and hard at work getting us ready to go for our five big inspections during 2004. In the midst of all the hard work, we found time to kick back and celebrate our third annual Thanksgiving Potluck. This year's event was as good as ever and we all settled down for some

quality time (read that eating) and yacking with friends and family. As in previous years, we used this event as a "springboard" to commence fundraising in earnest for the command Christmas party by holding various raffles and auctions. Its always full of energy and light-hearted fun trying to out-bid the next guy - especially when its for something like a "Seaman for the Day" chit. I think some of these younger guys actually think the khakis were born wearing brown and never got their fingernails dirty before.

**KUDOS:** Congratulations go out to SKC(SW) Ed Bajarias who was awarded a COMOMAG Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for the superb job he did leading our Supply Department through thick and thin during his tour. Ed recently left us for staff duty at CTF-76 right on the other side of the island so he'll never be far away from his old "buddies". I secretly snicker when I say that as there is more to the story. You see, when Ed first got orders here as an SK1 onboard USS KITTY HAWK, he was told by fellow SK's he was making a bad career decision going to independent duty within MOMAG. "They only take care of their own", they'd say and "You'll never stand a chance at shining or advancing in that community". Here I sit for, let me see, the sixth time in my career where the Command SK1 excels, is awarded numerous commendations, makes Sailor of the Year, and ultimately makes Chief. Hey Ed, be careful who you listen to buddy. Not to be outdone, congratulations also go to our Third Quarter Sailors of the Quarter: MN3 Jeremy Snow (Junior) and MN2 Rebecca Diehl (Senior). These two are shining examples of MOMAU Ten's best and brightest and both deserve a well-deserved pat on the back for their significant work in keeping our Supply Department afloat and squared away.

**ARRIVALS:** We officially welcomed MNCS(SW) Tom Robertson and family aboard recently. Tom brings a wealth of experience from the sea side of the rating and is an excellent leadership addition to the MOMAU Ten team. We wish him and his family all the best for a great tour here. We also welcomed MNSN Fry (really) aboard from MWTC. Seaman Fry is one of the very first new MN's to get immediate follow-on orders out of A School to Test Set Maintenance C School. What a deal some of these guys now get, a 1205 NEC right out of A School. For the really old timers out there, the 1201 NEC was replaced by 1205 some years back.

**DEPARTURES:** We will soon say good-bye to MN3 Royce Parfait who is leaving us for the USS GLADIATOR (MCM 11). MN3 Parfait has been a key player in our Production Department and has never been afraid of work or getting his hands dirty. We wish him the best in his new assignment. What do ya know.....the XO got himself an approved retirement date. CWO4 Gary Riggins (AKA Ra-Ra) will retire effective 1 Feb 04 and has already commenced terminal leave as I type this. This hit us out of left field as we had expected him to leave around late May but the opportunity presented itself and the

Gunner went for it. He was just as surprised as we were and is now busy trying to figure out what to do after 29+ years. I see green pastures for him though as he has many opportunities right out here in Asia knocking at his door. Along with Gary goes a ton of MOMAU experience out the door; he is one of the last senior Minemen left among us and his loss will surely be felt. There goes my plan down the drain for having an easy last few months on active duty before I retire next year; with our XO billet gapped and the Gunner's replacement not arriving till next September, looks like I better get busy and tighten the belt. Although exact details are still being smoothed out, looks like his retirement ceremony will occur on or about 30 January here at the Butler Officer's Club at Camp Foster Marine Base. As it will be fairly short notice by the time many of you read this, mementos, congratulatory and/or well wishes can be forwarded to Gary via the command's official address as follows:

Commanding Officer  
Mobile Mine Assembly Unit Ten  
PSC 480 Box 54  
FPO AP 96370

Alternatively, I'm sure even a simple e-mail wish sent to him at [amariltex@yahoo.com](mailto:amariltex@yahoo.com) would mean a great deal to him. He has put his heart and soul into the Mine Force for over 29 years and myself along with many others owe this superb Mineman a great deal for the wisdom and experience he imparted on us all.

That's about it for this issue. The "calming" WESTPAC tropical waters of Okinawa have cooled off to near "anatomy-shrinking" temperatures so the diving and water activity are about over. I can just hear Big John Iwaniec's response when he reads that last line...."Bray, you big chicken, get your 7-mil wetsuit on and stop whining". Of course, coming from Big John, we all know it would be much more colorfully worded. Hey Johnny, the fish stocks are finally coming back to Japanese waters since you left :-). I jumped on a rare chance a few weekends back to go diving with LCDR(Ret) Ed Hutsell and we had a blast. Ed is alive and well as the CEO of Marine Corps Community Services here but is busy as all get-go and seems to rarely find down time these days.

He remains an exceptional diver in great shape though - thanks Ed! Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from everyone at MOMAU Ten. We wish each of you the very best for a safe and prosperous 2004.

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A DOG DOESN'T WANT MUCH AND IS  
HAPPY TO GET IT..

A CAT DOESN'T KNOW WHAT IT  
WANTS AND WANTS MORE OF IT.

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