

# The DASHPOT



Issue 45      Newsletter of the Association of Minemen      Spring 2004



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

**G. Paul Santa Maria**

Now that the holiday season has come and gone and Santa fulfilled everyone's wishes, it is back to the exciting challenges of our great association. Several projects are in the works. The History Channel put together a program titled "Landmines," but it included some sea mines as well. One of the speakers was our very own Historian, Ron Swart. In their appreciation for his participation the producers sent him a complimentary tape of the program. In his dialog with the producers, Ron tried to get authorization to for the Association to reproduce the tape for our membership. Their copyright prohibits reproducing in whole or in part, charging to view, etc. Therefore, our portion will be shown Friday night of the reunion (October 8<sup>th</sup>). We will take it from there.

Since I have been a member, this is the third time our reunion is in Charleston. I do not remember having a scheduled visit to either MOMAU ELEVEN or the USS Yorktown. So I have asked Reunion Chairman, Dick Schommer, to arrange for us to do just that. Master Chief Walker is our point man for these visits. Realizing that our reunion is only three days long, the only day that is feasible is Friday (October 8<sup>th</sup>). The tentative schedule is to see MOMAU ELEVEN in the morning. Because of the tight security, there is a certain requirement to come aboard the area. That requirement is, whether you are retired or not, you must submit to Reunion Chairman Dick Schommer, a letter stating your full name, address, and social security number no later than September 1, 2004, the drop-dead date. A list of attendees will be prepared from that information. **E-mail is NOT acceptable.** Let's go and show our support for those on active duty who now proudly shoulder the burden that once we did.

After lunch, we will go aboard the Yorktown as a group. Again, I believe it to be very important that we have a good attendance, especially for Board of Director members, because I believe we should

## 30TH ANNUAL ASSOCIATION OF MINEMEN REUNION

By Dick Schommer

Folks, just a reminder that reservations at The Country Inn can be made now using the following information: phone number 1-800-334-6660; reservation code: MINEMA. Rates are \$74.00 per night plus 12% tax. Rates are good 3 days prior to and 3 days after the reunion dates.

Three nearby campgrounds are listed below:

1. Oak Plantation Campground, 3540 Savannah Hwy., phone number 1-866-658-2500, web site: [www.oakplantationcampground.com](http://www.oakplantationcampground.com).
2. James Island County Park, 871 Riverland Dr., James Island, SC, phone number 1-843-797-7275.
3. US Air Force Base Rec Center Campground, phone number 1-843-963-5271.

Don't forget to bring items for the Auction. All profits go to the Scholarship Fund.

The prices for the dinner and the picnic will be published in the next Dashpot. They are not firm at this time. If you have any questions about the reunion give me a call at 1-843-797-3715 or send an e-mail to [rdschommer@hotmail.com](mailto:rdschommer@hotmail.com).

See you in October.

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

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know the status of our museum in order to make knowledgeable decisions.

I hope you are all collecting items for the Auction so that we can insure having the necessary funds for the Scholarship Program. I am still working on submitting our history book to the Library of Congress. Toby is giving invaluable assistance. I hope to have this in place by the time my watch is over.

Rereading my article in the last issue of the The Dashpot, my statement "Dynamic Leadership" can easily be interpreted as patting myself on the back. Please, that is by no means what I meant. We are where we are because of outstanding boards of directors and a highly motivated membership for almost 30 years. Thank you, each and every one of you. On that note, remember that this year we elect a president, Vice President, and two

Directors. Now I don't want you to break a leg rushing to submit your name to Joe Balderrama, but do get it in as soon as possible.

The months are whizzing by and, before you know it, October and the reunion will be upon us. Bootsie and I are anxiously waiting to share quality time with the greatest family in the world, Minemen. God bless you all and our great country.



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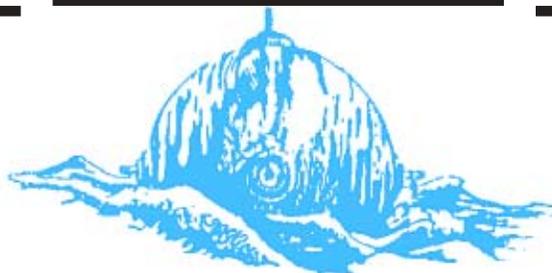
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The Dashpot, published quarterly, is the newsletter of the Association of Minemen, a non-profit organization incorporated in the state of South Carolina with the mission of perpetuating knowledge of undersea mine warfare and championing its necessity as one of America's first lines of defense.



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## SCHOLARSHIP SCOOP

By Swede Carlsen

It is that time again! The Scholarship Committee is looking forward to receiving applications for the AOM scholastic assistance Scholarship Program. It gives us great pleasure to read the applications of worthy students.

Last year, nine (9) scholarships were awarded and we're hoping to see at least ten (10) applications submitted in 2004.

Remember, the Scholarship fund has two (2) divisions, the AOM President's Fund and the general scholarship fund. The President's Fund is a working fund. It has over \$12,548.78 in it. The interest of this fund is used towards at least one assistance scholarship. The general fund is from your designated donations during the present year.

Please designate where you want your donation to go, the President's Fund or the general Scholarship Fund.

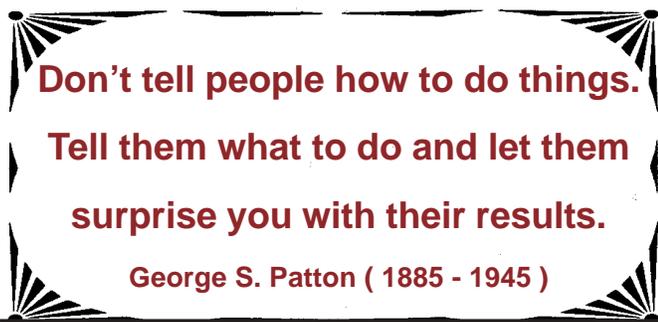
You can send your donations to the AOM Secretary/Treasurer Curtis Christian. Since this is our 30th annual AOM Reunion why don't we give a dollar for the 30 years the AOM has been serving the naval mine warfare forces and our country. It sure would build up the President's Fund.

Don't forget the auction at the picnic in October being held at the Town and Country Inn, Charleston. You can bid on some wonderful items that are furnished or made by the membership or their wives and some given by local merchants.

Applications for scholarships can be had from the Secretary/Treasurer Curtis Christian or the Scholarship Chairman W. (Swede) Carlsen. You can download forms from the AOM Website @ <http://home.triad.rr.com/aom/index.htm>.

Hint: Check out your local American Legion and VFW Posts for their scholarship programs.

STAND TALL AMERICA



## Creative Challenge

There has been much interest in a special badge or patch that can be worn on jackets or other clothing to proudly identify AOM members. We have a lot of artistic and creative talent in the mine community so the AOM is sponsoring a contest for the design of an official badge/patch for the association. You may submit as many entries as you like. Judging will occur and the winning design will be announced on Saturday, October 9<sup>th</sup> at the Dinner Meeting. A prize will be presented for the winning design. Please submit your entries to Curtis T. Christian or G. Paul Santa Maria. Contact data for them is found in the masthead on page two of The Dashpot.

**Time sneaks up on you  
like a windshield on a bug**

Jon Lithgow

**GUNNER  
JOE  
SEZ ...**



Don't give those so called "friends" of yours the pleasure of dropping your name in the hat for a leadership position in the Association of Minemen during the upcoming October election. You know they are going to do it when you aren't looking. Outsmart them and volunteer first! That ought to frost their frijoles. Give Gunner Joe a call, send him a telegram, an e-mail, a snail mail, or even a smoke signal and tell him you are ready and willing to serve.



## FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

Curtis T. Christian

We are having a good year with donations for the scholarship funds. The donations that you send in, be it \$2.00 or \$200.00, make a difference to some student in collage. Please read the letters in the Dashpot that the youngsters we support send to us. Should you have an extra \$2.00 or \$200.00, it sure will help one of the kids.

We still have a few members who have not paid 2003 dues. Please look at the mailing label on your Dashpot. If it is 2003, this will be your last mailing. I must drop you after this posting.

Should you get a few extra minutes, send Bill Fortner a note and thank him for the work he does putting the Dashpot out each quarter.

See all y'all in Charleston in October.

**SUMMER DASHPOT  
ARTICLES ARE DUE ON  
1 JUNE 2004**

**MAIL  
BAG**



5 January 2004

To: Whom It May Concern  
From: Verna E Powell

Subj: Death of Daniel G. Powell

1. It is with a deep sorrow that I notify you that CDR D. G. Powell, USN, Ret. passed away 6-28-03.

2. Please remove him from your mailing list.

Verna E. Powell  
Widow of D. G. Powell

Dear Verna,

May your sorrow be eased by knowing that Dan was loved and respected by countless shipmates. He is sorely missed by us all. Though he be removed from the mailing list, he will reside comfortably in our hearts and memories.

Bill Fortner, Editor



### **BUTT, Jim, CDR, USN (Ret.)**

CDR Jim Butt, USN, (Ret.), 80, died Sunday in Aydlett, NC. He was a member. He retired at NWS Yorktown and civilianized the Admin Officer job. He retired and continued in the job for over 12 years. Jim was Ordnance Officer in FASRON 201, Malta as department head for MN.



### **CUSTIS, George R., Jr. MNC**

Fred Dane reports a friend advised him that the February 2004 issue of Naval Affairs magazine listed MNC George R, Custis, Jr. as having passed away. No details were available.



### **MNC Luker, Billy, USN (Ret.)**

MNC Billy Luker passed away on 22 Jan 04. Billy resided with his wife Madonna, in Mesa, AZ. Bill was a MN detailer in the late 70's early 80's. He retired and went to Washington State where he worked as a civil servant. He was laid off and moved to Arizona.



### **MNC Charles Mace, USN (Ret.)**

Richard (Pooch) Troutman reports that the Fleet Reserve Magazine listed MNC Charles E. Mace, USN (Ret.) as having passed on.





# Rogues, Rascals, and Renegades



## THE PERSUASIVE POWER OF COFFEE

Few commodities the world over have the magical lure as does a can of coffee on a military base populated by civilian workers (sand crabs to the anointed). Be it a one pound can, a three pound can, or the aircraft carrier purchasing power of the 20 pound tin, coffee stands alone as the single most effective instrument of cumshaw in the United States Navy.

For the uninitiated, cumshaw is wrongful procurement of something for rightful purposes. An example of cumshaw is when a sailor trades 2 pounds of coffee to a civilian worker for a small sandblasting job for his ship because normal priorities would put the job into the next century (Submariners got EVERYTHING and got it first!). This is distinctly different from theft as that would be the case if that same sailor traded 6 pounds of coffee to get his '42 Chevy sandblasted and red leaded.

Out of sheer necessity, due entirely to a chronic lack of adequate funding by shortsighted fiscal twits, Minemen were no strangers to cumshaw and were in fact renowned for it. A few even made cumshaw history by acquiring trucks, major equipment, and things best not mentioned as there may be supply types still poring over records trying to locate some item that apparently vanished into thin air. I suspect that small cadres of Minemen were secretly, but intentionally put in ships and at aviation commands to keep the flow of materials to the places they were really needed most. In short, cumshaw was the great equalizer that leveled the playing field with those who could command the highest priorities for material and services and who did so, not out of need, but out of arrogance or ignorance or both. Minemen were also stationed on US Air Force bases that were near naval facilities to ensure the proper and constant flow of material from the Air Force which had way too much stuff to begin with.

I recall a small cadre of Minemen stationed aboard a ship. I use the term "aboard" loosely as they were rarely aboard. In fact, this five man group was scarcely permitted aboard except to eat, collect coffee donated by grateful shipboard departments, and to receive "shopping lists" from those same grateful shipboard departments. The coffee locker maintained by these five "procurement specialists" was routinely stocked between 80 and 120 pounds depending on the pending fleet inspection schedule.

Fleet inspections were a major concern as ships were big and the opportunity for an inspection "hit" was great. Too many hits and division officers, or department heads, or even captains suffered significantly. Minemen were THE emergency supply professionals.

Case in point, in the very midst of an ORI (Ordnance Readiness Inspection) a call was received from a frantic CPO who needed eight 2 inches thick by 4 feet long turnbuckles to support the weapon outriggers. They had to be weight tested, certified, and had to be in place before daylight the following morning ... it was 11:00 p.m. The ships own equipment was languishing at a commercial testing company two states away. The CPO had been on the phone checking since dawn. There were absolutely none to be had as far north as Norfolk and as far south as Jacksonville that had been tested and certified. Two Minemen climbed aboard their vehicle of choice, a mobile crane, lashed 9 pounds of coffee into the weapons tray, and sallied forth to the facility that had no turnbuckles and, even if they did, they weren't tested.

Arriving at the facility, one Mineman engaged the shop foreman in friendly conversation for a few minutes and learned that there were, in fact, no turnbuckles to be had. The only ones close to fitting that description were being held for a foreign flag combatant that was at sea. The second Mineman casually sauntered into the rigging loft with the 9 pounds of coffee under his arm and set it on the shop foreman's desk. Without so much as taking a breath between sentences, the shop foreman said he would be back in a few minutes and for the two Minemen to relax and have a Pepsi on him. They did so. A few minutes later, the smiling foreman returned and said that the Minemen should be getting on back to the ship since he couldn't help them. They walked out and climbed aboard their chariot "astonished" to see what looked to be eight 2 inches thick, 4 feet long turnbuckles sporting brand new test and certification tags lashed in the weapons skid.

Upon arrival at the ship a few minutes short of midnight, they were greeted by a much relieved CPO near to tears, a Division Officer who was practically genuflecting, a Department Head who was obviously in deep communion with some deity, and a Full Bird Captain leaning over the main deck rail casually sipping a cup of coffee and smiling. The Captain had never a doubt of the outcome. Had not the Base Commander's right eyebrow assumed a permanent, quizzical up angle because the Captain always had a much better appointed official vehicle than did he?

The "infallible" inspection party never suspected that the turnbuckles were metric.



# LEANING ON THE TAFFRAIL

## THE END OF AN ERA

### NICK'S SEAFOOD PAVILION YORKTOWN

By John Loonam

©2003 Sunbird Photos by Don Boyd  
#USD030902



Nick's Seafood Pavilion in happier times before the ravages of Hurricane Isabel.  
Photo courtesy of Don Boyd [www.pbase.com/airlinerphotos](http://www.pbase.com/airlinerphotos)

Yorktown Minemen know of the Yorktown Beach and a few of the establishments at waterside. Gus's comes to mind in the early 1950's. Across from the Yorktown Post Office was Nick's Seafood Pavilion where many folks dined. It was not uncommon to see lines lasting two hours outside the restaurant on a typical summer weekend evening. The Washington Post carried articles of its fame. Those tired of waiting went across the street next to the Post Office to the Wharf where all four of my boys worked during high school. The Wharf burned down several years ago.

Nick Mathews was a Greek immigrant who settled in Yorktown in the late 1930's with his wife Mary. They built a fabulous relationship with the U.S. Navy and especially the Naval Mine Depot/Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown. Many times Navy personnel in uniform had their tab picked up by Nick.

The USS Yorktown, a new CG was to be commissioned in Pascagoula, Mississippi. Nick was chosen as the namesake for the Yorktown. On the flight to the commissioning ceremony, Nick died on the plane. His wife, Mary, stood in for him at the ceremony in Pascagoula. The crew of the Yorktown were guests at Nick's on many occasions in subsequent years. Nick donated the land where the Yorktown/Jamestown museum stands overlooking the York River. His Mausoleum stands on the hill overlooking the York River near the intersection of the Colonial Parkway entrance and the Jamestown/Yorktown Museum.

A couple of years later Mary Mathews died. She willed most of the property to the foundation and rests with Nick in the Mausoleum. AOM Vice President, Jack Smoot of Yorktown fame is the executor of the Mathews estate.



**Nick's boarded up after Hurrican Isabel.  
Photo by John Loonam**

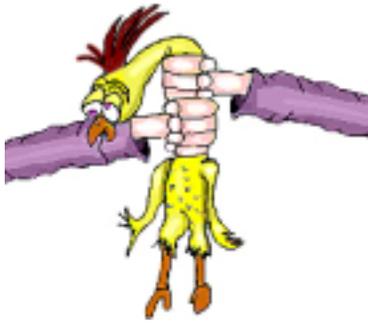
The foundation sold their interest in the restaurant to York County. York decided the restaurant was aging and needed to be replaced. It was scheduled for demolition (over many objections) in November 2003. A new restaurant would be built on the river side (on higher ground) near the old post office. Hurricane Isabel speeded things up by coming ashore in September and as Jack said "There was four feet of water in the back dining area that day". Nick's never re-opened. The before pictures were taken a few weeks after the closing.

York County is in the process of redesigning the waterfront area with a river-walk, parking garage and improvements to the swimming beach. Some improvements are complete. The land where Nick's was is being turned into a multi-level parking garage. The after pictures show Nick's gone and site work underway. The pictures were taken from about the same place looking toward the south with the river to the photographer's back. The overhead signs on the new York River bridge can be seen in the before and after shots.



**The end of an era. All that remains are fond memories.  
Photo by John Loonam**

**Though the cold, winter wind still howls fiercely up the York River, there are no longer sleepy, travel weary sailors climbing down from Greyhound buses into the silent, blackness of a Yorktown night . . . and there is no longer a welcoming light over the door at Nick's promising a warming cup of coffee and a respite from the harsh wind that had teeth 12 inches long and devoured pea coats.**



## DEAD RED ROOSTER REPORT

by Toby Horn

I am exploring some alternatives for our upcoming October reunion golf outing. Dick Schommer mentioned use of our municipal (Muni) golf course - an excellent choice that is inexpensive and convenient, but it is rife with scheduling difficulties. We (I) cannot contract with Muni inside of a month before our reunion - and even then, we are subject to cancellation if a local (Muni-based) club wants the same date.

On the other hand, I have been talking with the club pro at our newly renovated Stono Ferry course, and I can secure arrangements there almost immediately. Some info: the course is newly renovated and has gained national recognition as a "must course to play"; the travel distance if we select Stono is only an additional 5-6 minute drive from the hotel; we will probably pay an additional \$6.00 (I will negotiate) per person to play this course versus Muni; clubhouse facilities (bar, food, pro shop, restrooms, etc.) are much better; and (I'm told) Stono will arrange all our little extras (longest ball, close to pin, close to line, number of balls into the inland waterway, etc.). If we have a large group and start early enough, we can probably manage a shotgun start.

In the regard, I need input from you golfers. I need to know if you intend to play (no "maybes" please - I have to contract). I want to know your format preference (stroke play, captain's choice, best ball, other). Keep in mind that we have a 1400 business meeting at the hotel. I need your handicap (real one please - let's make this interesting) or best guess of what you'd shoot on a par 72 course (medium hardship/slope).

Now - the "guts" of the matter. I need to know who were the last winner(s) of the prestigious "Dead Red Rooster" perpetual golf outing award. They are committed to return to Charleston to defend their championship. If their team is here intact (with all team members present and playing), they can play as the defending team (regardless of crutches, intravenous transfusion bags, oxygen respirator apparatus, neck-back-leg braces, etc.). If the team cannot make a coordinated appearance, the Dead Red Rooster must be returned for award to this year's winner/team. We prefer it be returned in person, of course, but if that's not possible, it can be returned to Dick Schommer or to me.

We encourage everyone to join in and play in this annual event. Believe me, every skill level will be present. And...it is more often than not that the beginner duffer is the one who holes out the long putt and brings home the team bacon. The women particularly seem to have a great time, and the cold beer and lying after the match make for some great and memorable laughs. Let me hear from you. Sign up early!

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Editor's Note: After perusing the vast hysterical files of **The Dashpot**, it has been determined that the Dead Red Rooster, also known as the Illustrious Rubber Chicken, the highly esteemed and much sought after AOM golf tourney prize, was last held by Francis McCarthy of the team Francis McCarthy, Bob Hart, and Bob Spencer after a smashing victory over the forces of evil and chaos at Yorktown in 2002. Available records do not show any similar tournament being held at San Diego in 2003. If such a momentous occasion did occur and the prize did, in fact, transfer to another august group, will the guilty parties please 'fess up.

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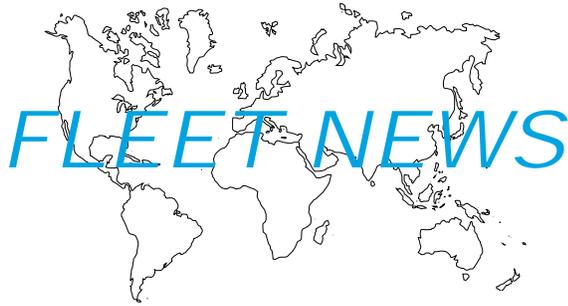


## EDITOR'S CORNER

As I watch this newsletter evolve, I never cease to be amazed at the innovation and creativity of those individuals and commands that participate and the ever increasing quality of the articles they present. A common format for articles has been emerging over the last two years. That format is generally written in some e-mail client or in Word and attached to e-mail and inserts the **actual image captions** in small open spaces where the author desires images to be placed, but does not include the image itself. The images are sent separately. That does two rather nice things. First, it tells me where you want a particular image to go and secondly, it eliminates trying to extract images from the body of an article. The extraction process almost always results in a very poor quality, most often unusable, image.

Images do not have to be extremely large or have extraordinary resolution. Most places still use dial-up and that is not fast. The image dimension I am most concerned with is the width. An image needs to be 4" wide and have a resolution of 200 dpi. That results in an image of about 1.8 Mb raw and much smaller when compressed into the jpg format. For those of you that have the ability to manipulate the size of your images, this is ideal for me. The average digital camera uses sizes 25" by 37" at 72 dpi. That can result in a raw file of almost 14 Mb and upwards of 3 to 5 Mb when jpg compressed. That will do as well if you have the time. I have a relatively fast ISP and it is no trouble for me.

Thank you all.



## HIGH SPEED VESSEL SWIFT JOINS NAVY STARTING ROTATION

From U.S. 6th Fleet Public Affairs

**ABOARD HIGH SPEED VESSEL SWIFT (Nov. 19, 2003)** — High Speed Vessel Two (HSV 2) SWIFT, a wave-piercing aluminum-hulled catamaran, might be a glimpse into the U.S. Navy's future. Although its use is experimental, it's operational and earning its keep while proving its worth.

The ship can chew up ocean at more than 45 knots per hour and operate in only 12 feet of water.

Ship's company is a mere 40 Sailors, including Commanding Officer Cmdr. Mark Sakaguchi and Executive Officer Lt. Cmdr. Kevin Morrison.

HSV 2 is the evolutionary offspring of HSV X1 Joint Venture, a two-year consortium conducted by the Army, Marine Corps and Navy. The newest model was accepted from Australian builders in July, brought to Bahrain by Ingleside, Texas', Blue Crew, and turned over to Little Creek, Virginia's, Gold Crew in mid-October. Following crew certification from the Afloat Training Group, the ship departed the Central Command area of responsibility in late-October.

"We basically had 30 days to go from cold iron to our Final Exercise Problem," said Senior Chief Mineman (SW/AW) Garrett Cecilio, a SWIFT plankowner and one of five people presently

operated to drive the ship. "We had no written instructions, no maneuvering doctrine, no navigation bills and no training program. From Sept. 1 to Oct. 1, we took our experiences from Joint Venture and the operating manuals from Bollinger/Incat and came up with a plan."

The plan has worked. Despite being a crew for just a few weeks, the ship is now supporting bilateral exercises during West African Training Cruise 2004 (WATC) 04. For the next month, SWIFT Sailors will work with U.S. Marines and servicemembers from seven West African nations to develop interoperability, promote engagement and apply mission configurations for the ship.

Everything about SWIFT is a learning curve. Crewmembers compose and amend documents that define day-to-day existence for successors.

"Almost everyone on the ship is a volunteer," Cecilio said, "so they wanted to be here. The crew is motivated and enthusiastic, because they realize we are the first Sailors to get this opportunity and they want to leave an impression. Everybody's ideas are considered. We have great people with better ways to do things. They take a lot of pride in being part of this team, and it shows in how quickly we've gotten things together."

SWIFT is equipped with automatic fire suppression systems in every space. The watch team can remotely activate firefighting agents and monitor conditions in engineering spaces from the cockpit-like bridge. Three people can effectively man the bridge underway.

A cavernous 28,000-square-foot mission deck and vehicle ramp, a 4,000-square-foot flight deck, a boat crane, and turn-on-a-dime maneuverability provide SWIFT with the resources to assume countless mission configurations, including maritime interdiction, mine warfare, littoral access, homeland security, expeditious troop and equipment transport and a host of other possibilities. Some see the ship as a stepping-stone to the littoral combat ship. Despite the presence of so much commercial equipment, the crew subscribes to as many standard practices as possible.

"We really try to instill Navy tradition where it's practical, and where's it not, we come as close as we can. We want the Sailors to stay proficient in their rating and remember they are in the Navy," Cecilio said.

The Gold Crew will return to Little Creek after completion of WATC. They will turn over SWIFT to the Blue Crew early next year for their four months at the helm.

Editor's Note: Senior Chief Mineman (SW/AW) Garrett Cecilio was the past command Senior Chief at MOMAU 1 Seal Beach.

# MINE ASSEMBLY NEWS



## COMOMAG

By MNCS (SW) Cecil H. Fish  
(Texian Cowboy)

Howdy! Shipmates. Well everyone down here in the South Texas (COMOMAG) have rolled into the New Year with all our horses in a full gallop. In case you're wondering, they finally got a true Texan writing the COMOMAG Dashpot news article. Image that Ha! Command Master Chief Mineman Jerry L. Williams thought how great this is, to have a real root'en-toot'en Texian Cowboy as PAO to write the article for the Dashpot. Enough about that, the weather down here in South Texas has not been too bad this year, but we still have a chance for a few cool days before spring arrives. The rainfall has been improving in the first month of this New Year, so maybe the cows will have a little more grass to graze on. Remember, lets keep those service members in our thoughts and prayers that are in the hot spots and away from their families.

Down here in the South with the Staff we are re-organizing our structure so we can more efficiently support world-wide Mine Warfare Services that support various organizations, MOMAU's, and MCM/MHC units. There will also be a new vessel in the near future, home ported close by, in Ingleside Texas. It's the new HSV-2 Swift. Looking forward to seeing what kind of supportive impact that it will have on the Mine Warfare Community and we welcome them to the area.

We have a Shipmate that will be retiring soon, Lieutenant Commander Sandra D. Downing. She started serving the Mine Warfare Community in November of 1995 in Panama City Florida as the Fleet Liaison Officer at Coastal Systems Station. At her next duty station, LCDR Downing was assigned Commanding Officer of Mobile Mine Assembly Unit FIFTEEN, Naval Air Station Kingsville, Texas from November 1997 to December 2000. Then to



LCDR SANDRA D. DOWNING

wrap up her Mine Warfare Community involvement, in December 2000 to May 2004 she was assigned as Minefield Plans and Requirements Department Head and filled in temporarily as the Chief Staff Officer here at COMOMAG. We will surely miss her aggressive and supportive traits that added many successes to our command goals and missions. Lieutenant Commander Downing, we all wish you Fair Winds and Following Seas.

From MNC(SW) Laura Rodriguez (**Career Counselor**) here at COMOMAG, to all unit CCC's, need to ensure that you have access to the Navy Training Management and Planning System (NTMPS). Go to [www.ntmps.navy.mil](http://www.ntmps.navy.mil) and download the application. For assistance call CONUS 1-866-438-2898.

### Other events this Quarter

#### Awards:

- |                  |                                      |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| SK1 (SW) Wallach | - Good Conduct Award                 |
|                  | - Sailor of the 4th Quarter 2003 LOC |
|                  | - MWR Ltr. of Appreciation           |
| MN1(SW) Cook     | - Good Conduct Award                 |
| MN2(SW) Campion  | - Good Conduct Award                 |
| MNC(SW) Kent     | - Good Conduct Award                 |
| IT1 (SW) Dennis  | - Sailor of the Year 2003            |
|                  | - MWR Ltr. of Appreciation           |
| MN2 Dillabough   | - MWR Ltr. of Appreciation           |
| OS1(SW)Davis     | - MWR Ltr. of Appreciation           |

MN3 Wilson - MWR Ltr. of Appreciation  
 SK2 (SW) Defro - MWR Ltr. of Appreciation  
 YN2 (AW) Pratt - MWR Ltr. of Appreciation

**New Arrivals:**

CWO2 Carl Washington (New Operations Gunner)  
 MN1(SW) Williams  
 MN1(SW) Grant  
 Ms Brenda Davis  
 IT2 (SW) Reeder

Well, from the Cowboy Country of the World, thats 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 keep your horse on the trail, and be safe.



**Beautiful Mount Etna**

*Salve da Sicilia!* Starting out CY04 saw MOMAU FIVE's participation to several Mine Warfare Planning Conferences for MOMAU FIVE's direct support and involvement with our NATO/Partnership for Peace nations. Some outstanding MIW training evolutions are now confirmed on our schedule and the crew is eager to get started! This quarter we have deployed two Mine Assembly Teams to continue recovery operations in support of MIREM 27. Those ET/MCMTT shapes are making there way back to MOMAU FIVE, thus the crew is hard at work completing the total refurbishment of these assets.



**MOMAU ONE SEAL BEACH, CA**

LCDR Kevin L. Miller was relieved by LT Bart D. Hall as CO of Unit ONE. I, and the ENTIRE staff of The Dashpot, wish him the best of luck and fair winds and following seas at his new duty station. It was Lcdr Miller that pioneered sending in descriptive images that supported his articles. It made the articles much more informative and he started a welcome trend. I am going to miss you Kevin.



**MN3 Jeremy Chittenden MK6 MSM refurb**



**MOMAU FIVE SIGONELLA**

By MNCS(SW) Dave Ostrom

We keep making great strides with our Explosive Safety Inspection (ESI) POA&M, as the crew has completed all ESSA checksheets and now correcting any outstanding discrepancies. Our ESI is scheduled for June. The Supply Department has completed an entire "wall to wall" inventory, ensuring their on hand stock balances are accurate. Mine Production has ensured our Lightning Protection and Grounding System is ready for inspection, and validating all of our SOP's. QA Department has looked hard at all our QUAL/CERT records and documentation and ensuring each individual's record is complete. We have this quarter worked with NASSIG Weapons

personnel during scheduled AUGUSTA BAY ordnance offload evolutions, and we will be completing over 100 lifts of Ammunition Rollback from the old MK52 ET Actuation Mine System. All of the explosive items and associated flight gear will be gone and headed back to CONUS. We had tech reps from CSS Panama City visit us and we packed up our VEMS DATE/STS system for shipment back to CONUS. MNC(SW) Steve Sanders, Ken Struve, and John Kealy were onboard for this evolution and provided outstanding MK74 training to our VEMS crew before departing. We had representatives from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) onboard for a scheduled visit, and we closed out the first quarter of CY2004 with our Quarterly Mine Readiness Assessment.

**BRAVO ZULU's:** our 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2003 Sailors of the Quarter are IT1 Irene Martinez (SOQ) and MN3 Anthony Bedard (JSOQ). Our 2003 Sailors of the Year are MN1 Mary Jackson (SOY) and MN3 David Reinertsen (JSOY). And I also want to congratulate MN3 Anthony Bedard and his lovely wife Courtney on the birth of their beautiful son Cole. Dad, Mom and Cole Anthony are all doing well! .

**WELCOME ABOARD:** to MN1 Ernesto Trius from the USS CHAMPION, and MN1 Irving Flores from the USS BLACK HAWK.

**TRANSFER:** BM3 Matt McDonald transferred to the USS LA SALLE, Gaeta Italy.



MN3 Lou Marroletti preps for upcoming exercise commitments



MNSN August Sorvillo MK52 Hunting Mine refurb

**In Closing:** I will end this submission with the crew hard at work for our first dedicated commitments for CY04. They are putting together 84 each ET/MCMTT training shapes in support of SPANISH MINEX 04 and BLUE GAME 04.

Next edition I will update you on our participation with BALTOPS 04 and DAMSEL FAIR 04. Until then, the best wishes for continued success. Stay safe, take care, and God Bless.



## MOMAU EIGHT GUAM

By MNCS(SW) Paul King

HAFADA to all. MOMAU 8 is putting the final touches on our MRCI preparations. MNC(SW) Ward (MPO) and the hard working folks in Production Department have been tweaking and peeking the mine flows. This has been exceptionally challenging due to the facilities remodeling that have been ongoing since May 2003. MOMAU 8 is looking forward to the three MOMAU Reserve Units 9, 10, and 11 arriving mid March. Their expertise will be put to good use as they are intergraded on the mine flows for MRCI.

Logistic Department, led by MNC(SW) Crocker, have been extremely busy conducting wall to wall inventories and making sure Production build up stations have all the required piece parts for their mine flows in preparation for MRCI .

MOMAU 8 had a nice break from all the MRCI preparations on February 28 when the Tennessee Titan Cheerleaders came to MOMAU 8 to meet and greet our sailors.



MOMAU 8 Sailors taking a break from MRCI preparations and enjoying the company of the Tennessee Titan Cheerleaders

Congratulations to these MOMAU 8 sailors for receiving the following awards:  
 SSOQ – SK1(SW) Brown (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2004)  
 JSOQ – MN3 Trammell (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2004)  
 BJSOQ – MNSN Gonzalezcarmona (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2004)

MOMAU 8's Sailors of the Year 2004  
 SSOY – MN1(SW) Reeves  
 JSOY – MN3 Trammell  
 BJSOY – MN3 Ayres

MOMAU 8's nominees for the Navy League's Silver Plate Sailor of the Year Dinner were:  
 SSOY – MN1(SW) Reeves  
 JSOY – MN3 Trammell  
 BJSOY – MN3 Darby

Some of MOMAU 8's sailors had a chance to meet the Secretary of the Navy, Gordon England, at the Navy League Silver Plate Dinner on February 21.



MNCS(SW) King meeting the Secretary of the Navy Gordon England



MOMAU 8 Sailors at the Navy League Silver Plate Sailor of the Year Dinner. From left to right: MN1(SW) Reeves, MN3 Trammell, MN2(SW) Vanmatre, MNC(SW) Crocker, MN2(SW) Keefer, CW03 Forsythe (XO), LCDR Kurz CO, MNCS(SW) King (CSC), MN3 Darby

Congratulations to CW03 Forsythe (XO) on his promotion to CW03.

Congratulations to MN1 Kazmaier on his re-enlistment February 27.



MN1 Kazmaier being re-enlisted by the XO, CW03 Forsythe. The background is Asan Beach Overlook near Nimitz Hill

**Departures:**

MN3 Trammell                      USS Sentry (MCM 3),  
 Ingleside, TX

**Arrivals:**

MNC(SW) Lavake                      USS Devastator (MCM 6),  
 Ingleside TX  
 MN2(SW) Vanmatre                      USS Dexterous (MCM 13),  
 Bahrain  
 MNSN Whaley                      MWTC, Ingleside TX  
 MNSN Higgins                      MWTC, Ingleside TX

That's about it for this Quarter. Take care and please be safe.



**MOMAU TEN KADENA**

by MNCS John Bray

Happy days to everyone in the AOM; I hope spring has “sprung” wherever you are and that old man winter is about gone. As I write this, I am in Thailand for the CARAT 04 Final Planning Conference and it is a steamy 94 degrees complete with the tropical humidity that only a WESTPAC Sailor could love. Now that I have all you guys who are still freezing flustered at me, I guess its time to get down to input for this issue. Challenges are all around as we are just about three weeks away from the 2004

MRCI. We also have a crew up in mainland Japan riding a JMSDF ship in support of Exercise 04-1JA. We will also be sending our Korea team out for the annual Foal Eagle Exercise right about the time the MRCI kicks off for us.

**KUDOS/AWARDS:** MN2 Fiora Vallez and MN3 Justin Bolyard were both awarded a CO's Letter of Commendation for their selection as our 4Q03 Senior and Junior Sailors of the Quarter. MN2 Rebecca Diehl and MN3 Matt Everingim were selected as our 2003 Senior and Junior Sailors of the Year and were both awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for their superb efforts in the command during 2003.

**ARRIVALS:** We officially welcomed SK1(SW) Napoleon Spencer who joined us from EODMU-11. Finally having an SK onboard and avoiding that billet gap is a really big deal for us and we're absolutely tickled pink.

**DEPARTURES:** We said good-bye to CWO4 Gary Riggins on January 18<sup>th</sup> at a command luncheon held at the Awase Meadows Golf Course. LCDR(Ret) Ed Hutsell was the guest speaker and even LT(Ret) Mike Ledbetter showed up as well to send the Gunner off. It's a rare treat when retiring from overseas to have old buddies (and former Minemen) at your ceremony and I know Ed and Mike being there meant a great deal to the Gunner. Since Gary, Ed, and Mike are known by many in the AOM, I have included a picture to show that both Ed and Mike still don't look a day older than when they were on active duty.....o.k., well maybe that's a stretch. Gary and Son-Hei decided to move to Seoul were they could be close to their children and grandchildren and Gary slid into a great job working for the Army in Seoul - doing what else?...computers.



Left to right: LT (Ret) Mike Ledbetter, CWO4 Gary Riggins, and LCDR (Ret) Ed Hutsell

As I close this issue, it comes with a bit of sadness as this will be my last submission. Retirement looms and civilian life calls. I have enjoyed 24 great years working with the Navy's best and it has truly been an honor writing these Dashpot inputs. I leave this duty in the capable hands of MNCS(SW) Tom

Robertson. We are moving back to Guam (this time as a civilian though) and will kick back and enjoy some warm tropical sun and deep sea fishing before finding a job hopefully on the Naval Magazine there. I will never be too far from the Mine Force though with MOMAU Eight being right down the road. To all shipmates past and present, it has been my privilege to have served with you and I wish each of you the very best in the future and look forward to staying close to the association. Take care shipmates from Westpac's finest.



## MOMAU ELEVEN GOOSE CREEK

By MN3 Wheeler

### GREETINGS FROM THE LOW COUNTRY!

Hope the start of 2004 has found all of you well and ready to face another year. This year certainly began with a bang for us. With service and MET maintenance, various fleet exercises and an ongoing MK 67 mission, we have our work cut out for us.

The team of MN1(SW)Brady, MN2(SW) Bufano, MN2 Percy, MN3 Quinn, MN3 Jones and MN3 Harvey are executing their own brand of choreographed bedlam back in the SLMM area. With meticulous care, attention to detail and a few laughs, they are producing twelve perfect Main Mine Assembly's a week. Not bad for having to test systems that have not been touched in years.



MN3 Jones cleans the surfaces on a main mine assembly.

The service and MET side of the production house have their own matters to attend to with requests for MET mines coming at them from all angles. Even

now MNCS(SW) Shelton, MN1(SW) Watkins, MN3 Rishovd and MNSN Durham are in the arctic climate of Brunswick, Maine in support of a Combat Patrol Reconnaissance Wing 5 (CPRW-5) exercise. Later this month MNC(SW) Elsbury, MN1(SW) Bowman and MN2 Gipson will be traveling to the warmth of Barksdale, Louisiana for the 340WPS exercise.

Along with preparing large numbers of MET mines and equipment for these exercises, there is still the ongoing maintenance to catch up on and the quarterly buildups to prepare for.

In fact, this quarter's buildup was completed not long ago. Though the South Carolina weather did not cooperate, the supply crew of MN1(SW) Bowman, MN2(SW) Bailey, MN3 Bowen, MNSN Nix, MNSN Durham and MNSN Nichols did not let the wet weather interrupt their smooth transport of necessary mines and components. The movement was done in excellent time even with the compounded hassle of tarping weapons in the cold and rain.



(L to R) MN3 Harvey, MN3 Wheeler, MN2(SW) Bufano, MN3 Carruth and MNC(SW) Collins wonder where their Girl Scout cookies are.

Our Reserve counterparts of NR MOMAU Units NR06 and NR07 also continue to maintain the highest standards of readiness each month. Completing their own MAT team training and PT tests with excellent results.

In retrospect over the winter months, things were of a much slower pace. Christmas stand-down permitted the crew a few weeks of much needed relaxation with family and friends. The command Christmas party was held at the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) and was a hit with all. MNCM(SW) Walker, MNCS(SW)Allston, MNCS(SW) Morus and MNC(SW) Elsbury gave the crew a very rare treat and serenaded them with a karaoke song. The crew is thankful that this is a rare occurrence. Unfortunately for this article, pictures of the event have gone missing.

As always, time passes causing friends and shipmates to move on, leaving us to bid them farewell. Soon though, new faces arrive fitting into the empty spaces of those who left us behind....

## HAILAND FAIRWELLS

### Departures

LT Ashton  
MN1 Bryant White  
MN1(SW) Gibbs

### To

SPECWAR, Bahrain  
Fleet Reserve  
USS Pelican

### Arrivals

LT Gulley  
YN1(AW) Thompson  
YN1(SW) Thomas  
MN2 Willis  
MNSN Kline  
MNSR Musante

### From

AFWTF, Puerto Rico  
CFAMED, Naples Italy  
USS Winston Churchill  
MOMAU Eight, Guam  
MWTC, Ingleside Texas  
MWTC, Ingleside Texas

### KUDOS

MN1(SW) Gibbs  
MN1(SW) Martell

Navy Achievement Medal  
Navy Achievement Medal  
Good Conduct  
Sailor of the Year  
Sailor of the Quarter  
Navy Achievement Medal  
Navy Achievement Medal  
Navy Achievement Medal  
Navy Achievement Medal  
Junior Sailor of the Year  
Good Conduct  
Junior Sailor of the Qtr

IT2(SW) Quillen  
MN2 Percy  
MN2 Wholgemuth  
MN3 Wheeler

MN2(SW) Wood  
MN3 Harvey

"War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself."

**John Stewart Mill**

## NOTE

All Association of Minemen Officers, Officials, Board of Director members (voting, non-voting, ex officio, ipso facto, pro bono, sonny bono, semper fi, e pluribus unum) are invited to peruse the **Masthead** located on page two of this august document, review their information, and advise **The Dashpot** Editor (me) of any error. I note that some individuals do not list more than an e-mail address. I would appreciate all your particulars so I may fill page two with this information to the exclusion of other material.



# MINE COUNTERMEASURES NEWS



**USS CORMORANT MHC 57**

## ***"CORMORANT LEADS THE WAY"***

By ENS Dan Follett

SAN DIEGO - On her first deployment to the West Coast USS CORMORANT (MHC 57) has proven the endurance and operational readiness of a coastal mine hunter. During JOHN C. STENNIS STRIKE GROUP COMPTUËX, CORMORANT showcased the ship's capabilities and the warfighting spirit of her crew. Thanks to timely and quick repairs by IC2 Michael Mehlig and EM1 Scott Lile to one of the ship's main propulsion diesel engines, CORMORANT was able to get underway on time with USS ORIOLE (MHC 55) and USS SHRIKE (MHC 62) to participate in the exercise.

Once on task during the exercise, CORMORANT quickly took the lead in mine warfare (MIW) exercises. The first event scheduled was the San Clemente Kingfisher Mine Range. CORMORANT found 14 of 16 mines in the range and never came within 100 yards of any mine. After the exercise, the range master lauded CORMORANT's performance, stating CORMORANT set the record for the best detection and avoidance performance by any ship to date.

MN1(SW) Stephanie Cowart, who was the sonar supervisor for the exercise, said, "Participating in MCM (mine countermeasures) Operations in the Kingfisher Range was an excellent opportunity to take all the hard work and training we have done, apply it to a real-time scenario, and receive a third-party evaluation of our performance. For several sailors, this was their first time to actually hunt for mine shapes, which was very valuable experience. Setting the range record was icing on the cake and

definitely provided an extremely proud and memorable moment for the deployment."

CORMORANT enjoyed this great success due to the outstanding work of the entire combat team led by the MIW Evaluator LTJG Justin Smith.

The next major exercise event for the ship was on the SWAT II Range. CORMORANT was tasked to locate MK 65 Quickstrike mineshapes that had been laid by USS SHRIKE, and then neutralize those shapes using Mission Package II shots. CORMORANT was allotted two windows to acquire and neutralize two mineshapes. CORMORANT successfully relocated and neutralized two MK 65 mine shapes. MN1 Peter Placek and MN2 Kenneth Ullman each successfully flew Mine Neutralization Vehicle (MNV) missions and were able to place the MP2 bomblets within 5 feet of the mine shapes.

After completing exercises on SWAT II, F/A 18's from USS JOHN C STENNIS conducted an aerial MINEX, and CORMORANT was tasked to relocate the MK 62 mineshapes that were dropped. There were a variety of other mineshapes remaining from previous exercises that were in the same area. During three days of minehunting CORMORANT flew 15 MNV Missions locating 6 of 12 MK 62 shapes dropped by the Carrier Air Wing, 2 MK 82 general purpose bombs, and 2 MK 65 mineshapes.



**USS Cormorant crew with a Mk 65 mine shape**

MN3 Dennis Dowthitt, who piloted his first MNV missions during these exercises said, "I know when I personally flew my first real MNV mission it was great, something I'll never forget. I believe I may have stated it best how I felt when I said, 'I got it under control. .... I'm a cowboy.'" He also had something to say about the crew, "The Combat crew during the exercise felt a confidence and pride that I don't think was typical back home in the Corpus Christi Operations Area."

In the midst of COMPTUËX, CORMORANT conducted timely repairs to both main propulsion diesel engines while operating off the coast of San Clemente Island. The engineering department completed a turbocharger changout to one engine and repaired the electrical wiring to the governor on the other engine. CORMORANT's engineers worked for more than 48 hours straight to keep the

ship on station and fully operational during the COMPTUEX.

For the final week of COMPTUEX, CORMORANT, SHRIKE, and ORIOLE were tasked with mine-recovery of various mineshares off the Silver Strand. After the mines were relocated, EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) divers from MOBILE UNIT 11 DETACHMENT 3 dove on the mineshares and used MK 2 lift balloons to raise the shares or they attached pennants to the mines for the ships to raise with the multi-purpose crane. With the assistance of the EOD Detachment, CORMORANT relocated and recovered a MK65 Quickstrike, MK63, Manta, and a Rockan mine. CORMORANT's LTJG Justin Smith and ENS Dan Pick both dove with the EOD divers and recovered 5 mineshares on their own.

During MIWRG 4's unprecedented West Coast Deployment, CORMORANT continues to showcase what MHCs can do. CORMORANT's strong performance during COMPTUEX and unrivaled mine hunting are testament to the outstanding capabilities of the coastal mine hunter and the stellar performance of her crew.

CORMORANT is one of five ships that deployed from their homeport, Naval Station Ingleside, in August. They traveled through the Gulf of Mexico, Panama Canal and up the West Coast.



USS Cormorant's remote mine neutralization vehicle

CORMORANT is an Osprey Class coastal mine hunter. Ships of the Osprey Class are the world's largest mine hunters to be constructed entirely of fiberglass, and are capable of performing reconnaissance, classification, and neutralization of moored and bottom mines in coastal waters in support of worldwide Navy operations. The ship is armed with a high definition, variable depth sonar, a remotely-operated robotic submarine used to neutralize mines and two .50-caliber machine guns.

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**Don't Insult the Alligator ....  
till AFTER you cross the river**

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## LCS TO RIDE THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE

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### ORGANIC MINE COUNTERMEASURES

#### **The interchangeable multi tasking concept**

A new naval warfighting vessel called the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) may give the Navy the organic mine countermeasures capability it has long wanted and needed. As we all know, it takes "forever" to get deep water minesweeping assets to forward deployed areas. One doesn't have to remember back too many years when a mighty American armada stood off the North Korean harbor of Wonsan and waited until MCM assets arrived in the area and then for several more days while mines were cleared for the invasion. By the time we landed, there weren't many people at home and the landing was virtually unopposed. That was great for the grunts, but bad for the war. The opportunity to cut off from retreat, encircle, and defeat the North Korean army was lost and the war dragged on for several more years costing thousands of lives.

How different that scenario might have been had submarines been able to launch remotely operated vehicles to scout the area and determine the seriousness of the mine problem prior to the fleet sailing? How different could it have been had surface vessels been able to suddenly appear on the horizon and rapidly approach the shore with guns much larger than .50 caliber blazing on the surface while remotely controlled underwater vehicles located and destroyed underwater mines and other obstacles?

#### **Definition of Littoral Warfare**

The ability to mass overwhelming joint and allied military force and deliver it ashore to influence, deter, contain, or defeat an aggressor. Expeditionary maneuver forces, surface fires, air wings, mine warfare forces and Special Operations Forces provide the joint task force with the ability to conduct military operations anywhere in the world that is within several hundred miles of the sea. Supporting coalition naval forces provide anti-submarine, anti-surface, and anti-air capability. The littoral area of control extends from the open ocean, to the shore, and to those inland areas that can be attacked, supported and defended directly from the sea.

Enter the Littoral Combat Ship  
The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) will take advantage of the newest generation hull form and tailored, modularized combat systems package designs which will enable the LCS to defeat enemy littoral defenses including mines, fast swarming small boats, and

submarines, ultimately ensuring maritime access in any environment.

This vessel, this LCS, may not be a dream much longer. Competition is keen to produce it and, get this, the interchangeable warfighting modules that will configure and reconfigure it to the task at hand. Ron Swart says, "... the first plug in mission package will be for Mine Countermeasures. We hope to see the first LCS in '07. Right now, the transition and experimentation platform for the LCS is the HSV-2 "Swift". Swift'll be down here on the sunny coast of the Florida Panhandle (otherwise known as LA or "Lower Alabama") the week of the 22nd of March.

How different it will be to have an MCM capability able to get to the battle area before the fleet and be able to effectively defend itself with anti aircraft, anti missile, and anti ship modules while it clears the way for the fleet. At this moment, General Dynamics-Bath Iron Works, Bath, Maine; Lockheed Martin Naval Electronics & Surveillance Systems – Surface Systems, Washington, D.C.; Raytheon Co., Integrated Defense Systems, Portsmouth, R.I., are each being awarded a contract for the performance of flight littoral combat ship (LCS) preliminary design.

Preliminary designs from the major contenders, Raytheon, General Dynamics, and Lockheed Martin look vastly different externally, but the interchangeability of warfighting packages is the key to this new concept.



**Raytheon Design**

### Quick change artists?

How quickly will these tigers be able to change their teeth and where can it be done? Glen W. Goodman, Jr. says, "At any given time, the LCS core 'sea frame' will host one of three different focused mission packages: mine warfare, anti-submarine warfare (ASW), and littoral surface warfare. Each package will consist of mission modules housed in standard shipping containers for easy transportability. The current LCS requirement calls for the ship to be able to switch from one mission package to another within one to four days in a friendly but undeveloped port."

By now, we are familiar with the "CONEX" boxes and the Sea/Land containers that have been modified

to house Remotely Controlled Vehicle (ROV) control system monitors as well as for many other functions. We have seen them placed aboard a variety of ships to perform various functions. The idea of not "building in" a capability, but providing a platform suitable for quick conversion to a different, or many different, capabilities is one that is long overdue I think. The world situation changes rapidly and it is much too expensive to reconfigure a single naval combatant in today's fleet to meet a new threat even if time would permit. It is not so hard or nearly as expensive to design and add pre packaged capabilities to existing platforms to keep abreast of the ever changing threat environment.



**Lockheed Martin Design**

### What do the MCM packages look like?

Again, Mr. Goodman provides the following: "The Remote Minehunting System (RMS), developed by Lockheed Martin Maritime Systems and Sensors-Syracuse is the most mature of the new organic MCM systems. Launched over the side of a surface ship, the remotely controlled, diesel powered RMS tows the AQS-20 variable-depth sonar for up to 24 hours at speeds exceeding 10 kts and can transit at 16 kts. It is used for real-time, beyond-line-of-sight detection and classification of bottom and moored mines in deep and shallow water regions. The 23' long, 4' diameter vehicle's snorkel/mast - it's only visible feature above the waterline - draws air into the diesel engine and mounts radio antennas and an obstacle-avoidance camera. The vehicle's nose houses a forward-looking sonar for detecting and avoiding underwater objects. Sonar data and imagery are relayed over encrypted data links to an operator station on the host ship. The RMS vehicle is preprogrammed to perform search patterns autonomously, or can be manually controlled via data link.

Raytheon's AQS-20 will be towed by the RMS as well as the MH-60S helicopter. The AQS-20 carries a forward-looking sonar, port and starboard side-looking sonars, a gap-filler sonar between and below the long side-looking sonars and a volume-search sonar behind the forward-looking sonar in the vehicle's front end. The system's signal processing and computer algorithms can detect and classify objects from the sea floor to the surface and provide the exact coordinates of minelike objects. On board

the ship or helicopter, an operator can view the high-resolution underwater image on a video monitor and identify objects. The latest AQS-20A can carry an electro-optical identification device in lieu of the volume-search sonar.”

This system is no “pie-in-the-sky.” It was tested on board the Aegis destroyer Pinckney (DDG-91) and will operationally deploy with her in 2005.

Mr. Goodman continues. “The new Sikorsky MH-60S Seahawk helicopter is a combination of a Navy SH-60 Seahawk and an Army UH-60 Black Hawk. The Black Hawk was “marinized” with the Seahawk’s existing folding rotor system and tail, and a digital cockpit was added with state-of-the-art communications and navigation systems. The first version of the MH-60 Sierra has a logistics mission and is providing vertical replenishment support to the fleet. The Sierra will receive a block upgrade incorporating the five airborne MCM systems, with initial fielding slated for 2006.



Sikorsky MH-60S

The four other MCM systems to be carried by the MH-60S, in addition to the AQS-20A, are the Airborne Mine Neutralization System (AMNS), the Airborne Laser Mine Detection System (ALMDS), the Rapid Airborne Mine Clearance System (RAMICS) and the Organic Airborne and Surface Influence Sweep (OASIS).”



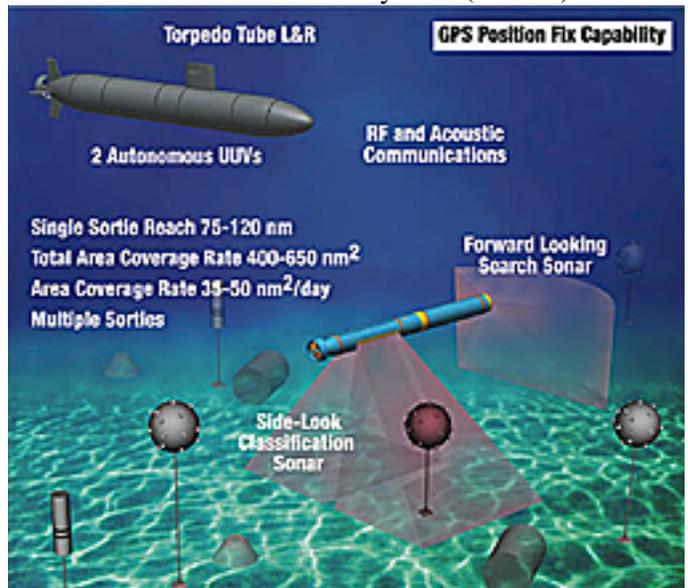
General Dynamics Design

### Everybody’s getting into the act!

It looks as though even the submariners are finally

shaping up. Remember when getting submariners to even acknowledge that there was mine warfare and that it was a threat to them was like giving birth? I do. Some of the old diesel boat submariners I talked to remembered the the sound of a mine cable scraping down the side of their boat and said it was much worse than the “click” when a descending enemy depth charge armed. They knew where the depth charge and the launch vessel was, but they had no idea about the mine. They did not know the size of the field, the direction it lay, how many mines there were, what depth they were moored, and, worst of all, if the cable was going to snag and pull the mine down on top of them. The advent of bottom mines eliminated the “mine threat” ... no sound. no sweat.

There is an interesting submarine MCM tactical tool for submarines and it will be delivered to the fleet late this year. (I would like to call your attention to page 5 where the author said that submariners got everything and got it first.) It is a most capable device and has the potential of protecting some very expensive capital ships as well as highly trained and dedicated sailors. This device is called the Long-term Mine Reconnaissance System (LMRS).



Long-term Mine Reconnaissance System Concept

The LMRS is to be launched from a standard 21-inch-diameter torpedo tube on Navy Los Angeles- and new Virginia-class nuclear-powered attack submarines. The untethered, 20-foot-long UUV also is recovered through a torpedo tube using a robotic arm after it completes a 40- to 50-hour surveillance mission. LMRS is fitted with a forward-looking search sonar to detect minelike objects that are tethered on or near the sea bottom, and a side-scanning classification sonar that forms digital images of the objects that are compared to a library of images of known mines by specialists aboard the submarine. The Navy will start buying a couple of these a year starting next year. I, for one, am excited about the future of our Navy and mine warfare.

Info for this article was gleaned from various Navy and contractor web sites as well as the page 36 of the Armed Forces Journal of Jan 2004.

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