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Repairs in Sasebo

Friends of Torrey

***Naval Academy
Combat Arms Team***

Coronavirus

Combatting the Virus at Sea

LANDMARK MAGAZINE

TABLE OF CONTENTS



THE COMMAND TRIAD

COMMANDING OFFICER

Capt. Michael D. Luckett

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Cmdr. Ritchie L. Taylor

COMMAND MASTER CHIEF

CMDCM Nicholas J. Wallace

LANDMARK MAGAZINE STAFF

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STAFF JOURNALIST

MC3 Chase Stephens

STAFF JOURNALIST

MCSN Zachary Grooman

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ESL is manned by an integrated crew of Sailors and civilian mariners under the administrative control of Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and operational control of the Commander, Task Force 74. As a forward-deployed naval force, ESL is tasked to provide expeditionary, intermediate-level maintenance and repairs, hotel services, and logistics support to deployed Guided-Missile and Fast-Attack submarines deployed in the 5th, 6th and 7th Fleet areas of operation.

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LEADERSHIP

Pg. 03 - Commanding Officer

Pg. 05 - Executive Officer

Pg. 07 - Command Master Chief

FEATURES

Pg. 09 - COVID-19: Combatting the Virus at Sea

Pg. 11 - ESL Repairs Ships in Sasebo

Pg. 13 - Friends of Torrey

Pg. 15 - Naval Academy Combat Arms Team

Pg. 19 - Through the Lens



Capt. Michael Luckett

Commanding Officer, USS Emory S. Land

How do you feel about the constant schedule changes?

Well, I know that they're frustrating for the crew. It adds uncertainty to what we are doing, but frankly schedule changes are part of being in the military. Our job is to support the nation's security around the planet, and sometimes the situations we need to respond to are out of our control. Whether it's a global pandemic or the actions of an adversary nation, or just relations with our allies and partners; things are going to continue to change and it's our job to be responsive to those changes. I know it's challenging, and people would like to have certainty, but I don't see that as something that we can ever really get away from. I just see that as a fundamental part of the job. I've experienced changes throughout my career and in every job I've been in.


Has the schedule ever changed this much in your career?

I will tell you a sea story here. When I was in command of the Missouri, we finished a six-month deployment in December and at the time we came back, we went into a stand down, and after that we were going to do an 18-month workup cycle towards our next deployment. We came back from stand down and we went to sea for a week or so to start our basic training phase of the cycle, and we get told, 'stop what you're doing in Florida and return to Connecticut. When you get there, you've got less than a

week and you're going back on deployment. Again. We don't know how long you're going to be gone for, so be prepared for an indefinite deployment with essentially less than two weeks' notice.' As we are coming back, we are frantically planning, trying to manage personnel and equipment and so forth. So we get back and frantically run through the deployment preparations, get the ship out on time and head out on our unknown deployment, which lasts about two and a half months. We get back in June and put the crew into another stand down period. A few days before the turnover for stand down, I get another call to recall the crew again and get ready to execute another mission. Again, duration unknown. In the space of three or four days, we recall the crew that was on leave and tell the rest of the crew that their leave has been canceled, get ready to get underway again. 11 o'clock, the night before we get underway, we get a call again saying, 'go ahead and stand down, we don't need you this time.' So that's probably my best sea story about how the operational requirements can sometimes drive unexpected and drastic schedule changes.

How do you feel the crew is responding to everything going on lately?

Overall, I think the crew has been responding pretty well. As I said, I know there are concerns, and some people get anxious about the changes and uncertainty, particularly with COVID-19 and the guidance that is coming out with that, and I see the crew dealing pretty well with that. As an individual,



you have to figure out what your way of dealing with uncertainty and stress is and just go with that. Whether that is working out, reading a book, focusing on quals or ESWS; something to keep their mind off it instead of worrying about things. Try to find whatever works for you to keep your mind off of the things you can't control. I think the crew has been doing pretty well with that.

What quality of yours has best enabled your success in the Navy so far?

I've had about 15 jobs in the time I've been in the Navy, and one thing that I have found that they all have in common is the differences. No two jobs I've ever had in the Navy are alike. I think that the most important characteristic is being able to learn new things because everything you do is going to be different than the thing before, and you have to learn new things and be willing to adapt.

How important is it for us to sail and operate in the South China Sea?

It's very important. The U.S. Navy is supporting the nation's interests around the world to enforce the rights of all nations to use the high seas in accordance with international law and international treaties. Our Navy's presence in the South China Sea is part of ensuring that we retain those freedoms for everyone around the world. A lot of the laws are based on things that are "customarily recognized," and so if rights are not asserted for a long time and we don't challenge claims that are contrary to the laws of the sea, then it becomes "customarily recognized" and it becomes harder to challenge the claims in the future. So it's important to keep the drumbeat of operating where international law allows to maintain the freedom of the seas.

What keeps you sane during deployment?

I'm a bit of an introvert. I like me time. I often find time in the evening to read a book or watch a little TV or a movie or play a game. A lot of people see me walking the decks in the evening or at sunset. It's one of the significant differences between submarines and surface ships; you get fresh air and sunlight. So I try to take advantage of that.

How do you feel like the crew has been performing during this long underway?

I think the crew is adjusting pretty well. I know that this

is unusual for a lot of us. In some cases, this is far longer than some people have spent at sea for their whole career. One thing that I've found that is important for the crew to deal with a long underway is getting into a rhythm; whether that is a daily or weekly rhythm. One level is the individual; when do you go to work out, when you take your shower. On another level for the divisions and departments, what's your routine? When you get your routine, the days start to kind of blend together. Time kind of stops passing until you're done.

Why is it important for us to stay "clean" moving forward in deployment?

Right now, ESL is the only COVID-free maintenance activity in the Western Pacific. Frank Cable is setting up a path to getting to be a clean maintenance activity too. If you think about the shore side maintenance facilities in Japan or Hawaii or San Diego, they all have daily communication with the population, and those are all places with COVID. We have ships in 7th Fleet that are out at sea that will need repairs, and our ability to remain clean and set up a clean perimeter for them to pull into port and for us to work on them to support the readiness of the fleet without putting the crew at risk is important. We uniquely bring that to the table, and it's important that we retain that so we are ready to support the operating forces.

How do you feel about the PFA amongst other things being postponed or canceled?

I fully support the measures that the Navy is taking to mitigate the risk of spreading this virus across the force. The priority for the Navy is to protect the health of the forces, so the measures that they are putting in place are reasonable, and as we evolve our understanding of this virus, those are going to continue to evolve with the changing threat. We protect the force so we can support the other objectives of the Navy and be ready to transition to combat operations. We can't lose our combat readiness. The Navy is trying to balance the risk to the health of our people while maintaining daily operations and combat readiness.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Stay flexible. Things are going to continue to change. I will keep the crew updated with information as I have it. As the situation changes, things might change again.



Cmdr. Ritchie Taylor

Executive Officer, USS Emory S. Land

How do you connect with the Sailors onboard?

Well, I think a couple ways. One, I just try to be real. Sailors are smart, so I don't try to BS them. Also, I went to boot camp. I was enlisted for 13 years, so I think they already feel a little more comfortable with how they talk to me. But the main thing is just being upfront.

Now that we are half way done with the second half of deployment, what would you tell Sailors to keep them motivated?

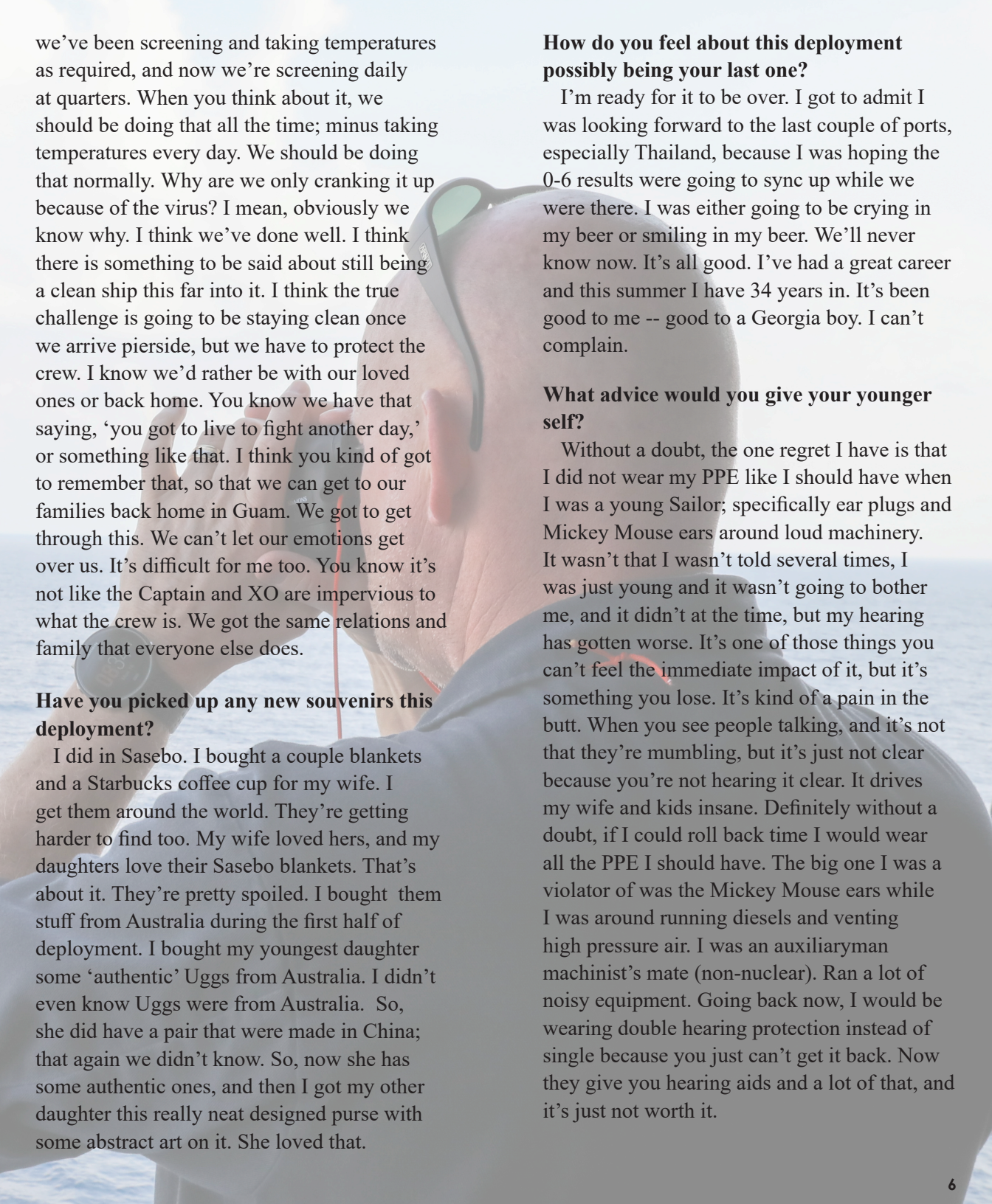
A little bit has changed since then. This is still technically a nine-month deployment. Our scheduled time off was May 8th, but with the world pandemic things are changing. It's different this time. So we've got to stay flexible. Try to stay patient, take a deep breath. This is probably a deployment we'll never forget. It's one of those things you'll remember. I hate to say, but it's going to be an event like 9/11. The world is going to remember this beginning of 2020 like no other time. I've never seen anything like this in my time in the Navy. The Captain has also never seen anything like this. It's new territory for all of us.

When you're not working, what do you do to pass time while underway?

I try to make sure I get a run in at lunch. That's just when I like to run. It breaks the middle of the day up, but I do kind of work later than normal. So, I do take an hour or two at lunch, but I pay it back after dinner! You know, don't use the word 'later.' That's one of the things I do. The other is: I like to watch movies, especially on the weekend. If I get a little time, I watch some movies and just kind of zone out. I like to do that. I got to admit, I kind of wish I was with my family doing that, but I just try to keep a level head. It's always good to go outside and watch the sunset. It's a beautiful part of the day, so that's another thing I try to do every so often.

How have you felt our response to COVID-19 has been so far?

So far, just a couple months ago we were in two of the four high risk countries at the time, and we talked a lot then about what to do. You know, coughing in your elbow, sneezing in your elbow, washing your hands for 20 seconds. You know



we've been screening and taking temperatures as required, and now we're screening daily at quarters. When you think about it, we should be doing that all the time; minus taking temperatures every day. We should be doing that normally. Why are we only cranking it up because of the virus? I mean, obviously we know why. I think we've done well. I think there is something to be said about still being a clean ship this far into it. I think the true challenge is going to be staying clean once we arrive pierside, but we have to protect the crew. I know we'd rather be with our loved ones or back home. You know we have that saying, 'you got to live to fight another day,' or something like that. I think you kind of got to remember that, so that we can get to our families back home in Guam. We got to get through this. We can't let our emotions get over us. It's difficult for me too. You know it's not like the Captain and XO are impervious to what the crew is. We got the same relations and family that everyone else does.

Have you picked up any new souvenirs this deployment?

I did in Sasebo. I bought a couple blankets and a Starbucks coffee cup for my wife. I get them around the world. They're getting harder to find too. My wife loved hers, and my daughters love their Sasebo blankets. That's about it. They're pretty spoiled. I bought them stuff from Australia during the first half of deployment. I bought my youngest daughter some 'authentic' Uggs from Australia. I didn't even know Uggs were from Australia. So, she did have a pair that were made in China; that again we didn't know. So, now she has some authentic ones, and then I got my other daughter this really neat designed purse with some abstract art on it. She loved that.

How do you feel about this deployment possibly being your last one?

I'm ready for it to be over. I got to admit I was looking forward to the last couple of ports, especially Thailand, because I was hoping the 0-6 results were going to sync up while we were there. I was either going to be crying in my beer or smiling in my beer. We'll never know now. It's all good. I've had a great career and this summer I have 34 years in. It's been good to me -- good to a Georgia boy. I can't complain.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Without a doubt, the one regret I have is that I did not wear my PPE like I should have when I was a young Sailor; specifically ear plugs and Mickey Mouse ears around loud machinery. It wasn't that I wasn't told several times, I was just young and it wasn't going to bother me, and it didn't at the time, but my hearing has gotten worse. It's one of those things you can't feel the immediate impact of it, but it's something you lose. It's kind of a pain in the butt. When you see people talking, and it's not that they're mumbling, but it's just not clear because you're not hearing it clear. It drives my wife and kids insane. Definitely without a doubt, if I could roll back time I would wear all the PPE I should have. The big one I was a violator of was the Mickey Mouse ears while I was around running diesels and venting high pressure air. I was an auxiliaryman machinist's mate (non-nuclear). Ran a lot of noisy equipment. Going back now, I would be wearing double hearing protection instead of single because you just can't get it back. Now they give you hearing aids and a lot of that, and it's just not worth it.



CMDCM Nicholas Wallace

Command Master Chief, USS Emory S. Land

What can we expect the mission to be over the next weeks and months?

Flexibility in military operations goes hand-in-hand. Everything we do across the military they always say 'be flexible and maintain that flexibility.' The mission is changing every day. The amount of emails and message traffic coming in and out of the ship dealing with the current situation is enormous right now. With the unknowns that are out there, we have to maintain a flexible mindset. We don't have all the answers right now. We don't know what the next week or month is going to bring, but we have to maintain that flexibility in the Navy, especially in our role as the deployed tender so that we are ready to support the fleet.

There are a lot of Sailors who have to wait longer than expected for things like transferring to a new duty station or being selected for their next promotion. What is the command doing to help speed the process along?

We and the Navy haven't forgotten about you. It's easier said than done to just be patient and

just wait it out, but it's kind of what we have to do. When I was advanced to Senior Chief years ago, Millington had a hundred year flood, and all the boards got delayed and canceled. They had to start them over, and it slowed down the process. It's not the greatest thing, but we will survive this process. You have to give it the time and maintain that flexibility to allow the Sailors and the commands that are charged with the advancements and selection boards to do their jobs. Patience is all we can ask for. It's easy to get frustrated because you're waiting and waiting, but this time too shall pass, and eventually the schedule will get back onto course.

In March, we celebrated Women's History Month. Why do you think it's important that we celebrate and recognize diversity in the Navy?

Diversity is a key aspect to our military, our Navy way of life. We all come from different types of religious and ethnic backgrounds. The fact that we all come together, and fight together under one flag with a common goal, is pretty awesome. It's pretty awesome that we

celebrate the different aspects and contributions that everybody brings to the team. So with Women's History Month, we're celebrating the contributions that women have made to the United States and recognizing the specific achievements that women have made over the course of American history; including space exploration, medical, military and politics.

The families at home are also dealing with the uncertainty of the schedule. What would you like to say to them about the uncertainty of the schedule?

This is a tough problem, not just for the Sailors onboard, but also for the families and friends back on the beach. There's no easy way to absorb this information, absorb the unknown of the schedule, the unknown of when we'll be able to get off the ship and the unknown of when we will see our loved ones. It's not the greatest thing since sliced bread, but it's where we are at right now. The homefront mission is as important as the warfighting mission. We just have to be flexible. I know it's easier said than done, but that's all we can do at this point and time. This is probably as close to a war-time scenario a lot of families have seen in a long time. We just need to maintain that flexibility as we explore this new world together. I know that there's a lot that the families back home are taking care of. I truly appreciate everything that is being taken care of on the homefront while we are out here concentrating on the warfighting mission.

Health Services Department has been busy since this COVID-19 outbreak started. In your opinion, how have they been doing during this global pandemic?

Health Services Department has a tough job right now. They're fighting a virus, an enemy that nobody can see or easily detect. They have a tough job right now in keeping all of us safe and healthy, and they're doing a bang-up job

at it. From the beginning, having no guidance to their team pretty much writing the playbook for the entire 7th Fleet on how to deal with this; they have been getting ahead of the fleet in being ready to deal with the aspects of this war on COVID-19. They've been doing a remarkable job at it. They're putting in long hours, making sure the crew stays safe and healthy. I appreciate it, and I know everybody on this ship appreciates the work that they are doing up there. They're kind of the unsung heroes of the ESL fight on COVID. There are a lot of behind the scene heroes up there that are doing their job every day, and that's really important right now.



Covid-19

COMBATting THE VIRUS AT SEA

Story and photos by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Chase Stephens

In the past months since the submarine tender USS Emory S. Land (AS 39) departed from Guam the world has gone through some significant changes. While it is natural for the world to change while Sailors are on deployment, few expected what was to come.

Coronavirus or COVID-19 emerged as a new strain in a family of discovered viruses in the province of Wuhan, China, and in the last three months it has gone from a localized outbreak to being declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization.

Since Jan. 17, Land has been in the 7th Fleet area of responsibility performing its mission, despite the increasing threat COVID-19 poses.

Between Japan and the Republic of Korea, Land's Sailors have been repairing various surface ships and submarines.

"[COVID-19] poses the same threat to us in the Navy as it does to everyone else," said Capt. Mae Pouget, Land's senior medical officer.

How have the Sailors stayed healthy and virus free while working in areas that are known to have the virus?

The credit goes to the Land's health services department. Medical personnel have been putting more work on top of their already hefty

workload to ensure the safety of the crew and maintain a virus free environment to ensure the Land can continue its mission.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Brittini Laroya said that the past few months have been hard work but she's confident that in time the situation will get better.

Land's health services department has several functions in treating those who are infected by the virus. The hospital corpsmen and medical officers will treat Sailors as well as civilian mariners who are sick. Since Sailors across the fleet have

been coming into medical regularly, officials are working on preplanned responses to potential events such as discovering an infected individual and executing

isolation and quarantine.

Since Navy ships are out to sea, it is easier to keep the virus away from Sailors, but the caveat is that staying in close quarters for so long makes it much easier to spread viruses like COVID-19, said Pouget. That's where the health services department comes in. Medical personnel have been doing screenings for the virus, as well as scheduled temperature checks, to ensure that anyone who is symptomatic is getting quick, efficient and proper treatment.

"America depends on us to provide security and stability to this nation and we will do just that."

-Adm. Mike Gilday-



Pouget said getting treatment isn't the only step to staying safe amid this pandemic. There are steps everyone can take to potentially avoid needing medical attention at all.

"Wash your hands. Correctly," said Pouget. "That means singing the happy birthday song or whatever takes 20 seconds, washing your fingers, getting under your nails, using warm water, rinsing thoroughly and using a paper towel to dry your hands."

Other ways to combat the virus are to try to keep your hands out of your face and cough and sneeze into a tissue.

Social Distancing is another method being implemented to reduce the

spread of COVID-19. Social distancing is maintaining roughly six feet from other people to reduce the odds of coming into contact with someone who is affected by the virus.

Maintaining social distance aboard a ship is a challenge by itself. Six feet may not seem like much for the average person, but aboard a ship, having six feet between you and the closest person is a rarity.

The Navy is also implementing new policies and changing policies temporarily to combat the spread of COVID-19 including postponing the Navywide E-4 advancement exam, suspending the spring physical readiness test, reducing manning and increasing telework, according to Adm. Mike Gilday, Chief of Naval Operations, in a statement he made, March 19.

"Our focus right now is three-fold: We must protect our people, maintain mission readiness and support the whole-of-government effort," said Gilday.

If you are feeling any of the symptoms of COVID-19; fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose and congestion, you are required to contact health services immediately.

"Above all, take care of yourself, your families and each other," said Gilday. "Your safety remains our primary concern as we continue to carry out the Navy's mission in defense of our nation."



ESL Repairs Ships in Sasebo

Story by Mass Communication Specialist Jason Behnke

Photos by USS Emory S. Land Public Affairs



The submarine tender USS Emory S. Land (AS 39) departed Sasebo, Japan, March 7, after completing a two-week port call to assist in repairing Sasebo-based ships.

Although Land is a submarine tender, the ship is fully-equipped with machinery, supplies and a repair department to handle a variety of repairs and maintenance jobs for any tended ship.

Land's hull repair (R-1) division production officer, Chief Hull Maintenance Technician Jason Hobson, said the expertise and capabilities Land and crew provided were much needed for the ships homeported in Sasebo.

"Our guys did an awesome job there. They rose to the challenge and stayed busy," Hobson said, Land's R-1 division production officer. "I'm very proud of all of them."

Land's crew completed approximately 150 repair jobs during their time in Sasebo, to include welding, machining parts and fixing lagging.

"We did a lot of work in the machine shop and sheet metal shop, especially for the [mine countermeasures ships] (MCMs) and Naval Boat Unit 7," said Land's repair officer, Cmdr. Andrew Maurice. "We manufactured a lot, and

we continue to manufacture because we're not completely finished. It will all be shipped to them."

Land's mechanical repair (R-2) division machined thousands of parts and made numerous engravings. Although the crew said the jobs were fairly simple, the time involved meant much of the crew worked late into the evenings to get the mission accomplished.

"We did something like 3,500 engravings for the MCMs. This means doing something so tedious as typing in what they request, pressing play and watching the engraver do its job, but they don't have that ability," said Chief Machinist's Mate Adam Yourtz, R-2 division production officer. "So, without us, they would not be able to get support. They were extremely grateful for the work that we put in as a repair department."

Land's crew also helped with several repairs for the Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship USS Ashland (LSD 48) as the ship was nearing the end of its shipyard availability period.

"It's unique for the ships that are here, because they don't have a lot of the support services that we can provide like lagging and sheet metal services,"

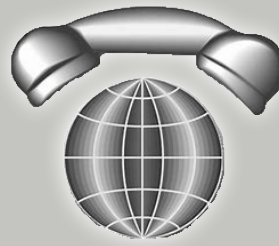
said Hobson. "Everybody I talked to on the ships was extremely happy that we were there to help them out and do these jobs."

Some of Land's Sailors said this in-port period helped them gain more than the satisfaction of a job well done. Since much of the ship is operated by civilian mariners, who are responsible for navigation, engineering and maintenance of the ship, Sailors often do not get hands-on experience in their rating.

"When you're on the Land, our Sailors are very specialized," said Electrician's Mate 1st Class Matt Kram, assigned to Land's electrical/electronic repair (R-4) division. "We have people that are really good at repairing motors, but don't know a whole lot about shipboard electrical distribution. So, it was a really good exchange of information."

Land's crew proved that even with a very short time period, they could do a lot to help support the fleet. According to Maurice, it's an accomplishment they are very proud of.

"Our Sailors were happy," he said. "They get to take the trade skills that they have learned, and they get to improve those skills."



— FRIENDS OF TORREY —

Story by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Zachary Grooman



His name is Chief Electrician's Mate Torrey Coates, but when you're attending his Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor (DAPA) meeting, just call him Torrey. "Friends of Torrey" is exactly how it sounds: A safe place to talk to a friend. Coates wants to have an open conversation about how alcohol has affected a Sailor or someone they know.

"It's personal, there's no rank," said Coates. "I ask for people to be in civilian attire. I want you to be able to have an open discussion."

Coates is the assistant DAPA for the command and the only advisor underway. He was the DAPA for his past two commands. When the Land's deployment started, he was approached by the Senior Medical Officer who asked him if he could start something similar to alcoholics anonymous.

Alcoholics Anonymous is trademarked and has its own set of guidelines such as participants stating their name and that they're an alcoholic. Coates didn't agree with the fact that a guest has to state they're an alcoholic. Another program he looked at was Friends of Bill, which also had

its own official guidelines and rules. In early March, Coates decided on combining ideas from both programs and created Friends of Torrey.

Coates stresses the importance of taking the first step and talking to someone. However, he is not there to lecture anyone on alcohol use.

"I'm not going to sit here and tell you what to do," he said. "Let me just tell you my experience and you can take it how you want. We go by first names and whatever is said in there stays in there. I'm not here as a job, I'm here for a conversation."

Some people go to listen

to stories in order to help them understand what other people are going through. He explains he is not there to judge people but to help. It is important to him that people don't go through their problems alone.

"We're a village," said Coates. "We're here on a ship, on a mission, the same fight. If you're going through something, then I'm going through something."

According to a Department of Defense study, the military has the highest rates of drinking compared to all other professions.

"We're Americans, we kick down doors and take names later," he said. "It's our society, but then it also tells you that you're weak if you talk about it. The Navy is a binge-drinking culture. You look at other ships who spend two to three weeks out to sea and only three to four days in port. So that's when that 21 or 22-year-old goes to drink, they black out and don't remember anything. It's built in, it's how the Navy is. Other branches are usually on land, but for the Navy, we have those gaps so we binge drink."

Coates believes everyone has a different standard when it comes to drug and alcohol abuse.

"My standard is that I'm not going to be like my dad," he said.

For as long as Coates has been alive, his father has been an alcoholic. His father's constant drinking habits eventually led to a drug addiction. Coates has previously tried to confront his father on his issues. He told his father to admit he had a problem, but his father looked him in the eyes and simply said "no."

**"We're here
on a ship, on
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"I don't want your grandkids to know you as a crackhead," said Coates. "I'm not going to be like you."

Coates eventually found resolve between him and his father but concluded he was going to be a better father than him. He learned from his father's destructive behaviors and his experiences help him relate to Sailors going through difficult periods.

Coates also had complications early on in his naval career. He went to Level III treatment in Norfolk. He was required to attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings every day; hearing from people all across the Department of Defense. There, he learned the true importance of listening.

"As humans, it needs to come out, and it's either going to come out as emotion, depression, or anxiety," he said. "If you don't talk about it, or share your story and your experiences, it will consume you."

Every Sailor has a story. It usually takes a bad incident for someone to realize they have a problem, but by then it might already be over.

"I know it's not popular, but go talk to somebody about it," said Coates. "I know Sailors have stories. Even if you don't have a problem at all just come here and hear the stories. You might know someone else who could use the knowledge. You just don't know what people are going through. 'Are you really okay?', 'what are you trying to get off your chest?' Ten or twelve drinks isn't going to fix it, but being sober and talking about it, remembering it, and getting it off your shoulders could."

Get it off your chest...



NAVAL ACADEMY COMBAT ARMS TEAM

Instructor and Student Turned Shipmates

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Jordyn Diomede

The Naval Academy, located in Annapolis, Md., is home to 4,400 midshipmen, who come from all over the world to complete four years at the academy in order to earn a commission in the United States Navy or the United States Marine Corps.

Although the academy's curriculum consists of college-level education, it also incorporates military instruction to ensure midshipmen are prepared to take on the role of an officer in the United States military upon graduation.

Much like college, the academy offers more than 70 varsity sports and extracurricular activities to midshipmen. One of those activities is the Naval Academy Combat Arms Team (CAT), and aboard USS Emory S. Land (AS 39), Gunner's Mate (GM) 1st Class Derek Washington, a former team instructor, and Lt. j. g. Ryan Chang, a former competitor on the team, now serve together as shipmates in their respective departments.

"The primary focus of the team was to train future officers in realistic marksmanship techniques that could potentially be used in our careers in the future," said Chang.

The team is comprised of four midshipmen from each year, creating a team of 16. To be selected as a member of the team, midshipmen have to complete a try-out process that includes physical training, interviews, and weapons training to determine a candidate worthy of a spot on the team.

When Washington arrived to the Naval Academy in 2014, he became a part of CAT as a coach and the primary armorer for the team.

"What I remember most is how quick and eager the students were to learn," said Washington. "A lot of ranges GMs normally run during their career are just to qualify watch standers and consist of people who don't even want to be there. Actually being part of coaching a team that likes what they do and being able to build upon skills rather than just run the same standard Navy qual over and over was real fun."

Chang said the majority of the people on the team had aspirations to become Marines, work in special warfare or be a part of explosive ordnance disposal. For him, he wanted to be a Marine, but with an engineering background, the Navy believed he was a better fit in the submarine community.

"I stayed on the team even after I found out that I was being 'sub-drafted' and forced into the nuclear pipeline because even though I would likely never use the skills I had been training, I was still a senior member of the team who could help out the younger guys," he said. "I also figured that I never knew what might happen in the future, and it is never a bad idea to know how to use a weapon well. At the end of the day, it was also just super awesome to be able to shoot guns all day with my classmates."

The team would practice twice a week, firing approximately 400 rounds downrange. The practices mainly focused on realistic scenarios and training techniques to include shooting and moving, room clearing, short range marksmanship and other weapons drills, said Chang.

About 90 percent of the time, the team was training with the M4 and M11 service weapons, but they also spent time on other weapons like the MP5 submachine gun and the M500 shotgun, among others.

Their practices led to competitions, in which the Naval Academy would compete against other service academies, local police departments, civilian shooters, and shooting teams from other countries.

"CAT competitions consisted of pistol, rifle, and shotgun shooting competitions," said Washington. "The



Lt. j.g. Ryan Chang (front center) and Gunner's Mate 1st Class Derek Washington (far right) pose for a photo with the Naval Academy's Combat Arms Team.

course of fire would often include either two or all three of the weapons. There was a lot of moving and shooting, and the shooters had to figure out the best way to tackle the challenges since there were often multiple ways to go through the course. All the shooters had to be very proficient and understand all the safety concerns involved. They were judged on speed and accuracy. Safety violations would result in a disqualification.”

Chang said some competitions not only involved marksmanship, but also integrated other infantry-type skills like land navigation and physical training. Aside from the competitive aspect, he found other values in competing.

“Although the focus was

marksmanship, it was a good time to network with other organizations where we could talk to current service members and people with a lot of experience from the fleet,” he said.

Washington said he remembers Chang as one of the better shooters on the team. He also noticed how he took the time to help other midshipmen.

“When the team would get new members, he was always ready to help them get accustomed to how the team worked, which was good because it was a steep learning curve for the new kids,” said Washington.

The majority of a midshipmen’s interaction with enlisted personnel was through E-7s and above at the instructor-level, so for Chang, it was nice to be able to talk to a Sailor like Washington about the fleet and what

they would see upon graduation. He remembers Washington as the only gunner’s mate to actually interact with the midshipmen.

“I really felt he cared about us as midshipmen in our development and we all bonded with him,” he said. “We were able to establish a more personal relationship that bettered all of us more than any other GM we had at the range.”



Women's Hi

Celebrating 33 years of observan



“I’ve never felt more a part of something while I’ve been on the ESL before, and I’ve never seen my shipmates all come together so fast. I’ve never seen all of my shipmates come together and have such a great time and really experience what it’s like to really be a team. I have to say the entire diversity committee did an amazing job, and I’m happy to have been a part of it.”

-Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Steven Maciel

History Month

ance!

ESL Sailors participated in a Women's Empowerment Run that consisted of a 3.3k run around the ship while underway.

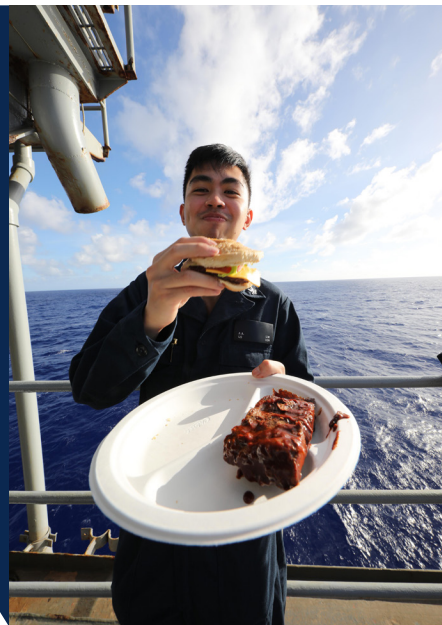


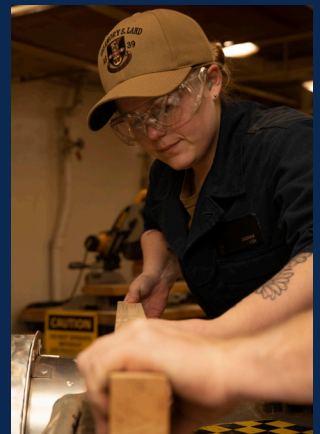
Photo by MCT Jason Behnke

THROUGH THE LENS



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