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USS COLE 20-YEAR
COMMEMORATION

The Flagship®

CNO ASKS FLEET FOR MOMENT OF SILENCE

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Mike Gilday sent a message to the fleet asking for a moment of silence on Oct. 12, at 11:18 a.m. to honor the Sailors who died, and who bravely saved their ship after the terrorist attack on the USS Cole (DDG 67) 20 years ago.



CNO Adm. Mike Gilday

Below is the text of his message:
At 11:18 a.m., local time, on Oct. 12, 2000, the guided-missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67) was the target of a suicide attack by terrorists during a routine refueling stop in Yemen's Aden Harbor. Seventeen U.S. Navy Sailors were killed and 37 were injured in the blast, which tore a 40-by-60 foot hole in the ship's hull. The crew of Cole fought valiantly for more than 96 hours to save their ship and shipmates. Their actions are the reason why Cole remains a vital part of our Navy today.

As a Navy, it is important, and I am directing that we observe a moment of silence at 11:18 a.m. (local) that day to recognize the twentieth anniversary of this attack. We will pause to remember those who were tragically lost, pay tribute to the heroic actions of the crew, and reflect on our responsibility to carry their proud legacy forward.
Twenty years later, it is important to recognize how these acts of bravery and heroism were nothing short of extraordinary. Immediately following the blast and uncertain of the possibility of further explosions, Cole Sailors courageously ran to the scene and rescued severely injured and trapped shipmates, saving them from further injury and probable death. Well-organized and disciplined despite the chaotic conditions, they prevailed through 96 hours of sustained damage control efforts by dewatering the ship, plugging the inrush of further flooding, shoring ship's structures, and securing exposed electrical power sources. The example set by the Cole Sailors is clear: a well-trained crew, even after

a devastating blow, can rise to the occasion and save their ship.
The 17 Sailors who gave their lives that day are, no doubt, heroes. When their country called, they answered. And, for that, we are eternally grateful. Our responsibility is to honor them by remembering their sacrifices and ensuring they are never forgotten. The most powerful way to honor these sacrifices though, is our Navy's continued demonstration of resolve in the face of threats to our nation and its citizens.
For Sailors today, you should embrace your responsibility to honor the legacy of the Cole heroes. Their actions epitomized our Navy's fighting spirit, heroism, toughness, selfless sacrifice, and tenacious resolve to never give up. They carried forward our Navy heritage of fighting with Honor, Courage, and Commitment. Using their example as a guide, I am confident our Navy's proud legacy will live on for generations to come.
Our Navy is second to none. The American people count on you and so do I. Honored to be your CNO.



MORE INSIDE ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★



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USS COLE 20-YEAR COMMEMORATION



Courtesy of U.S. Navy

FINDING MEANING IN TRAGEDY

What the attack on USS Cole means to Our Navy, Our Nation and Our Adversaries

As we mark the solemn milestone of 20 years since the insidious attack on USS Cole, we should continue to reflect on where meaning is found in this tragedy. As a proud member of the U.S. Navy team who brought Cole back into the fight and now as a fleet commander, I believe the lasting meaning resides in the determined example they set for us all, and the message this sends to any potential adversary.

On October 12, 2000, al Qaeda terrorists perpetrated a cowardly attack against the U.S. Navy’s guided-missile destroyer during a routine refueling stop in Yemen’s port city of Aden. The blast, which tore a 40-by-60 foot hole in the ship’s hull, killed 17 Sailors and injured 37 more. The Cole crew fought valiantly for more than 96 hours to rescue their shipmates and save their ship under extremely dangerous conditions. I am proud to have led Cole as its commanding officer on its first deployment only three years after the attack. Because it was designed, built, and maintained to be battle-ready, Cole never even missed a beat. Moreover, the ship has deployed six times since, including twice to the Middle East.

On this 20th anniversary, our Navy will pause in places spanning the globe to remember those we lost too soon, pay tribute to the heroic actions of the crew, and reflect on the brave example they set for us all as we face today’s challenges.



Admiral Christopher W. Grady

Regardless of the source of our beliefs, we all want to know that our lives matter. When faced with senseless tragedy, we look to derive some meaning by using the loss to inspire us to make the world a better or safer place. We strive to prevent similar catastrophes from befalling others by stopping the problem at its source.

In the case of the Cole, our first instinct was to seek justice. We sought to prevent the perpetrators from doing evil again and to hold all those responsible to account. What is more, those most affected were jolted into a recognition that the al Qaeda threat was much more serious than commonly understood at the time. So, they endeavored to convince whomever they could to take more substantial action.

But, as our experience with the Cole attack proves, sometimes the circumstances are such that meaningful endings are harder to find. Our pursuit of justice for the Cole crew continues. And, sadly, it took the grievous attack on 9/11 for us to collectively realize that al Qaeda presented a truly consequential threat to America’s security.

While we will never abandon our dogged pursuit of justice for the Cole and will indeed eliminate the last remnants of al Qaeda, definitive outcomes will take time. So, while we resolutely confront this wicked problem, there is meaning in this tragedy.

As soon as I took command of Cole in 2003, I immediately recognized that the meaning resided not elsewhere, but within the Cole crew itself. The meaning from the Cole tragedy lives on through the legacy those heroes created. Their actions

epitomized America’s fighting spirit; bravery, toughness, and tenacious resolve to never give up, what though the odds. The Cole heroes grabbed the torch from the likes of their ship’s namesake and carried forward our proud naval heritage of fighting with honor, courage, and commitment. Now in the role of a fleet commander, I proudly embrace my responsibility to ensure the entire Navy continues to derive meaning from Cole’s sacrifice long into the future. Twenty years later, I am still inspired from my experience on Cole’s return deployment when my crew would respond to the tests we faced with, “We have to do this right, because the 17 would have it no other way.” You can rest assured that the legacy created by not only the 17 fallen Sailors, but the entire crew, lives on throughout the fleet today.

For the citizens of this great nation, know that I see reflections of the Cole heroes in today’s Sailors. This gives me tremendous confidence that the American spirit is alive and well. Finally, and most importantly as we enter a new era of great power competition, any potential adversary to the United States should recognize an obvious message that al Qaeda clearly missed: never underestimate our resolve. The U.S. Navy was undeterred by the attack on Cole. Our actions over the last 20 years prove that. The Cole heroes would have it no other way.

As a former Commanding Officer of USS COLE (DDG 67), Admiral Christopher W. Grady led the ship through its first overseas deployment following the October 12, 2000 terrorist attack in Yemen. He is currently the Commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command, headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia.

“The meaning from the Cole tragedy lives on through the legacy those heroes created. Their actions epitomized America’s fighting spirit; bravery, toughness, and tenacious resolve to never give up, what though the odds. The Cole heroes grabbed the torch from the likes of their ship’s namesake and carried forward our proud naval heritage of fighting with honor, courage, and commitment.”

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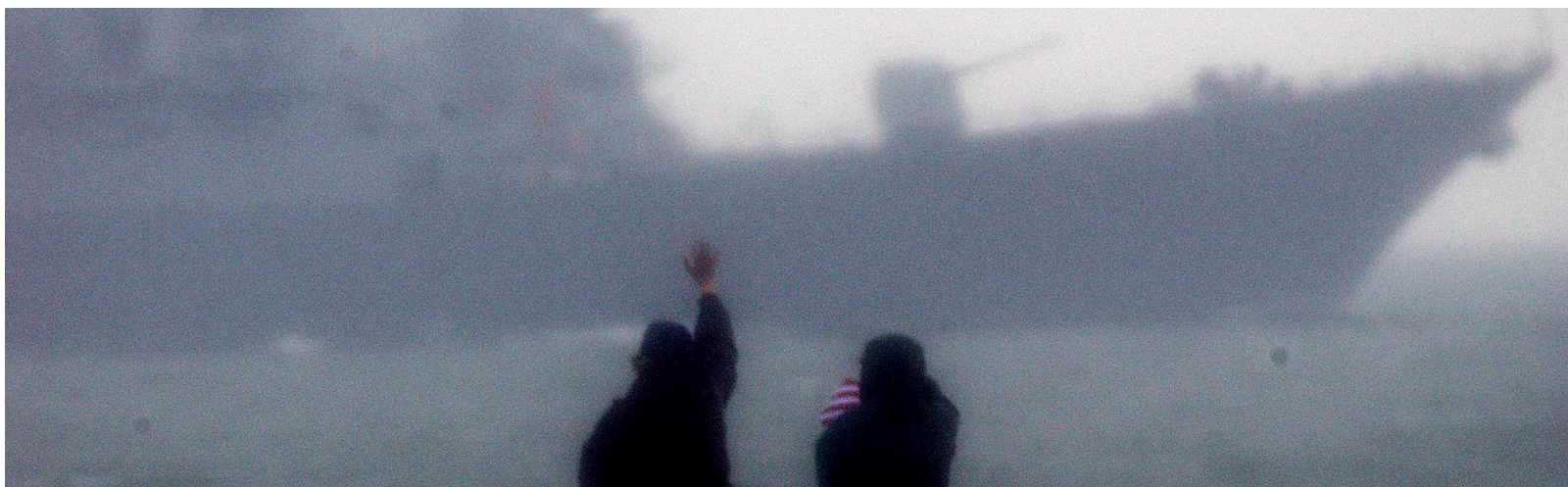
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USS COLE 20-YEAR COMMEMORATION



Chris Tyree/The Virginian Pilot
Anne Pope, left, and Bert Pipher watch as the USS Cole passes by Fort Monroe Thursday, April 25, 2002, as it returns to its home port at Norfolk Naval Station a year and a half after a suicide attack on the ship claimed the lives of 17 U.S. Navy sailors. The ship underwent massive repairs in Mississippi.

USS COLE, 20 YEARS LATER — WE REMEMBER

By CDR Edward Pledger

Twenty years after the attack on USS Cole, we remember the heroic efforts of a crew that didn't give up the ship and honor the sacrifice of the 17 Sailors killed. As Cole's current commanding officer, I believe it is important to reflect on the tragic events of twenty years ago and bear witness to today's Sailors who carry on the legacy of those who went before us.

On October 12, 2000, USS Cole (DDG 67) was deployed to the 5th Fleet Area of Operations, when the ship entered the harbor in Aden, Yemen for a refueling stop. At 11:18 am, al Qaeda terrorists in an explosive-laden boat detonated a suicide bomb along the port side of the ship. The blast killed 17 Sailors, injured 37 others and caused extensive damage which threatened to sink the ship.

The crew would spend the next 96 hours engaged in one of the most heroic damage control efforts in the history of the United States Navy. Immediately after the attack, countless agencies and military forces arrived to assist Cole in security and investigation efforts. Here in Hampton Roads, the community rallied around Cole families where they were embraced and comforted. Three weeks later, Cole departed Yemen, the American flag flying proudly, sending a message to our enemies that the crew never gave up the ship.

Upon returning to the United States, the nation and the Navy quickly got to work, making strides to get Cole back to fighting shape. Repaired by Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, MS, Cole returned to service and has deployed overseas six times since the attack. Today, Cole is a front line, guided-missile destroyer still homeported in Norfolk, VA. After completing a maintenance period in February 2020 where the ship received an extensive modernization package including upgrades to the BMD system and a new and improved sonar suite, we have been hard at work, training and preparing for our next deployment. The crew has completed certifications in damage control, seamanship and navigation, landed and launched helicopters, practiced hunting submarines and fired our guns, sharpening our cutlass and building combat readiness.

A combat ready crew is the hallmark of Cole Sailors. Twenty years ago, the crew worked hard and trained harder. When Cole was attacked, the crew was ready. Cole, named after Sgt. Darrell Cole, USMC, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions at Iwo Jima in WWII, is known as the "Determined Warrior." Her Sailors carry on his legacy through their work ethic and attitude and known as Determined Warriors. Every day, today's Determined Warriors work to embody the

fighting spirit of Sgt. Cole and the Determined Warriors who went before us.

The 17 Sailors killed by the attack and the Gold Star Families will never be forgotten. Laid into the deck of Cole's messline are 17 brass stars, each one memorializing a Sailor killed. Every morning, Sailors shine the stars as a humble tribute to those that made the ultimate sacrifice. The Gold Star Families they left behind have displayed unwavering fortitude in the face of devastating loss and hardship. We thank them for their courage and sacrifice, and we owe them a debt of gratitude we can never repay.

Every October 12, we pause and reflect on what it means to be a Cole Sailor and to remember the sacrifice of the Cole Heroes. Their toughness, fighting spirit and determination saved Cole. The extraordinary example set by those Determined Warriors serves as a powerful inspiration to today's crew. The Cole Sailors of today and a direct reflection of the honor, courage and commitment displayed 20 years ago by the Cole Heroes. Throughout my tour, Cole Sailors have always risen to the challenge, refusing to back down and accomplishing the mission. We will always remember the 17 Sailors who made ultimate sacrifice and the Cole Heroes, whose actions showed the world that the U. S. Navy doesn't quit, doesn't back down and won't be defeated.



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USS COLE 20-YEAR COMMEMORATION

‘IT’S DEVASTATING. YOU’RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BURY YOUR CHILD, LOSE YOUR CHILD AT 22 YEARS OLD.’

By Brock Vergakis

Mona Gunn was settling in for the day as the principal of Fairlawn Elementary School in Norfolk on Oct. 12, 2000, when her private phone line rang.

Her sister called early in the morning to ask what ship her 22-year-old son Cherone was stationed aboard. It was USS Cole (DDG 67).

“She said ‘It’s in the news,’” Gunn said.

The Cole had been attacked by terrorists while in port in Yemen, and cable news stations were broadcasting reports as they came in. Gunn hung up the phone and ran across the hall to the school library so she could find a television and learn what happened.

“There on CNN was a picture of the ship with a forty-foot hole and it said ‘Four killed.’ That was the initial report, that they had four that were killed,” she said. “And my heart sank.”

Gunn let her boss know she needed to leave. Families of Cole Sailors were gathering at Naval Station Norfolk to get more details about what happened, who was injured and who didn’t survive the attack.

As she waited with others who had loved ones on the Norfolk-based ship, she prayed that her mother’s intuition was wrong and Cherone was fine. Cherone was one of her four sons, and the only one to follow in his father’s footsteps and join the Navy.

Her husband Lou had served for 21 years and never experienced anything like what happened to the Cole. She expected her son to have a good naval career and then maybe go to college afterward when he decided to follow in his father’s footsteps.

But Cherone never got the chance. At Naval Station Norfolk, Navy officials told Gunn that Cherone didn’t survive.

“It’s devastating. You’re not supposed to bury your child, lose your child at 22 years old,” she said.

“He had gone into the Navy in January 2000 and his career ended in October 2000. So he only spent nine months in the Navy. We were so proud (of his service.)”

All told, 17 Sailors were killed in the attack.

Cherone was a seaman who had only been assigned to the Cole as a signalman a few months before it deployed. But he loved his job. He frequently talked with his father about work.

He was close with his family and his friends. He grew up in Virginia Beach and made sure to see as many people as he could before his deployment.

“He took time to visit all his friends, family, Godparents and everybody he could all before he left for deployment. ‘You’re going to miss me’ is what he would say. I said, ‘Yep, I’ll miss you. But you’ll be back.’ You know, his daddy came back from a few deployments that he had.”

Like others who lost loved ones, the Gunn family was consumed by grief in the wake of the attack.

“People don’t realize how much a death can change the lifestyle of a family, especially a father, that loses a son,” Lou Gunn said in a YouTube video in 2011 before his own death. “Because my wife always said, you know, ‘Like father, like son.’ ... It really hit me.”

Lou Gunn said it meant a lot to him that Cherone followed in his footsteps. It remains important to the Gunn family to tell Cherone’s story so he can be remembered as they remember him.

“He was also the kind of guy that will see the neighbor across the street, a married couple with two kids who never ever had a chance to go out on a date,” his older brother Anton Gunn said in another video on YouTube. “He would volunteer to babysit the six and seven year olds so mom and dad can go out on a date. You know, what 21 year old does that?”

Cherone was born on Valentine’s Day, which his mother said is appropriate for his sweet and loving nature.

He had always volunteered to help out others, whether it was people in the office at his high school or in the community. Serving came as natural to him as cracking a broad smile or singing karaoke with his shipmates.

A natural entertainer, he especially loved to sing Michael Jackson songs. His smile was ever



Courtesy photo

Signalman Apprentice Cherone L. Gunn

present.

The desire to keep memories of loved ones alive is one of the reasons Mona Gunn became so involved with American Gold Star Mothers, a support and community service group for people like her who have lost a child who served.

This past year, she served as the organization’s national president. She said everyone grieves in their own way on their own time. But she wants others to know support is available.

“The biggest thing is when you have a relationship with someone who’s on this journey, in experiencing this same journey, who got that knock at the door, who’ve had to bury a child, there’s a level of comfort when you know that you’re not out there alone,” she said. “There are others in this world who have been dealt that blow. So that’s the first important thing for other mothers to know. You’re not alone.”

On the 20th anniversary of the attack, Gunn will return to the Cole where survivors and family members who lost loved ones will reunite once again.

There, she can look around and know that she is not alone, that her son is not forgotten.

USS COLE
DDG 67
*Honoring
the heroes
of
USS Cole*



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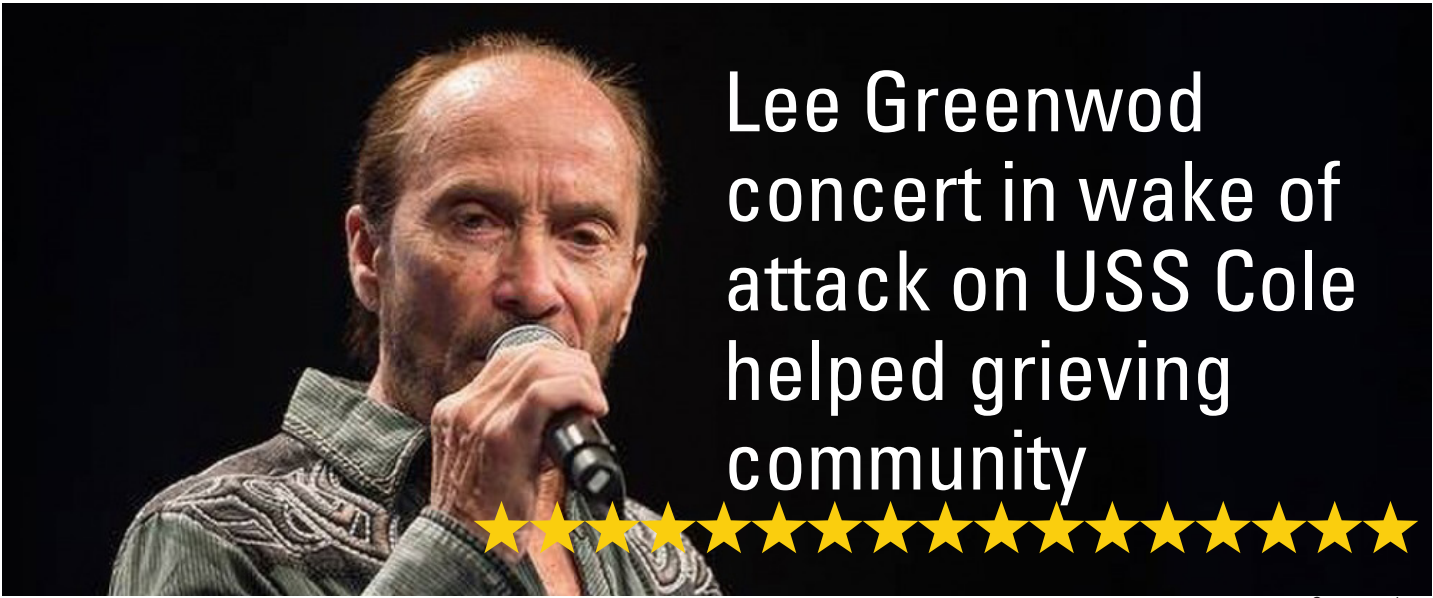
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USS COLE 20-YEAR COMMEMORATION



Courtesy photo

By Brock Vergakis

Hampton Roads was prepared for a party in October of 2000. The Navy and Norfolk were celebrating their rich ties together with a series of public Fleet Week events. A statue entitled “The Homecoming” featuring a Sailor being greeted by his family upon return from sea was set to be unveiled at Town Point Park in downtown Norfolk. A patriotic concert featuring recording artist Lee Greenwood was on tap for a Friday night in the same riverfront park. But the world changed the day before Greenwood was set to go on. The Norfolk-based USS Cole (DDG 67) had been struck by terrorists in Yemen. The community was in shock and mourning as news of deaths and injuries reached back home. “It was terrifying,” said Karen Scherberger, who was the executive director of Festevents, the Norfolk organization that planned the concert and other festivities. “There was confusion. There was fear. But immediately, you felt that resurgence of American patriotism and wanting to do something.” Navy, city officials and even Greenwood were suddenly confronted with a decision they couldn’t have imagined.

Should they postpone the concert? Should they cancel it? Was it appropriate to go on at a time of profound grief? The decision was unanimous. Norfolk needed to grieve. The Navy needed to grieve. And they needed to do it together. The concert would go on. “It was not only appropriate, it was very appropriate and very important for the community to hear from our Navy officials and to have a place to come together,” Scherberger said. Word spread that Town Point Park is where the community would come together to honor their friends, neighbors and fellow Sailors. The Festevents staff scrambled to gather candles to hand out to the crowd for a vigil to honor the victims. The park was packed as images from downtown Norfolk were broadcast around the world in the wake of the attack. Meanwhile, Greenwood met with family members of Cole Sailors backstage before the show. “In those days I would welcome anyone backstage who wanted to talk to me. And of course we were all sharing tears and emotions about this event,” said Greenwood, the son of a Navy World War II veteran. “It was a real strike against not

just America, and not just the military, but the branch of the service that I was connected to, and that was the Navy. And I do recall that afternoon very well.” As Greenwood took the stage, he felt a surge of emotion. “I could just feel this rally, not just behind the families that lost someone, but just as a way of rising up and meeting this threat,” he said. “And I knew that my performance would have something to do with that, and how I could encourage and not inflame, but encourage, and bring as much emotion and positive attitude as I could to those who were issuing the rallying cry.” Greenwood ran through a list of hits, including the song “Wind Beneath My Wings,” which he recorded before it was later made famous by Bette Midler. He said he sang that partly to pay tribute to those who were lost and to those who saved others, including those who worked across the river from the park at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth where some of those wounded in the attack would end up being treated. “I think the sense of the crowd was very emotional - tremendously emotional about the crew, about what had just happened,” said retired Rear Adm. Christopher Cole, the former command-

er of Navy Region Mid-Atlantic. “It was 17 of our shipmates and colleagues who had been killed, 37 were injured. Families were affected. It just affected everybody on a very emotional level.” “The presentation on stage was very emotional. Particularly when Greenwood sang his anthem.” Greenwood’s anthem was the smash hit “God Bless the USA.” Tears flowed as Greenwood belted out a tune that was first released in 1984. *And I'm proud to be an American
Where at least I know I'm free
And I won't forget the men who died
Who gave that right to me
And I'd gladly stand up next to you
And defend Her still today
'Cause there ain't no doubt
I love this land
God Bless the U.S.A.*

Those who were there still vividly remember the scene. “The waterfront was beyond capacity with candles and people singing along and tears and people hugging each other, holding hands,” Scherberger said. “I get goose bumps now just remembering the scene at Town Point Park. ... It was truly a life-changing moment for everyone who was present for that evening.” While Greenwood has performed at thousands of shows, this particular performance still stands out to him too. He remembers the sense of sadness he saw in the crowd and how he was intent on providing an uplifting performance. He said while the attack on the Cole may be a distant memory for some because 9/11 followed so shortly after, he said it’s important to never forget what preceded those attacks. “You have to remember those things that are truly important, and not just to you but the people around you who have suffered through that. So we don't forget,” Greenwood said. “And I think that's what I would tell the families or those who would embrace the fact that America stands up, even if we're knocked down.”

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*“Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm doth bond the restless wave,
Who bids the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep;
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.”*



USS COLE 20-YEAR COMMEMORATION

DETERMINED WARRIOR

Retired Cole CMC recounts memories of loss and courage



Retired Command Master Chief James Parlier is seen onboard Cole on Oct. 12, 2000, and going pier side in Yemen's Aden Harbor. He said the irony is that OS2 Timothy Saunders took this photo the day he was killed in the attack.

By MC2 Mark Thomas Mahmood

“That morning, before we pulled in, I was on the bridge wing with OS2 Saunders standing watch, and we talked a bit about the Navy,” said retired Command Master Chief James Parlier. “He said he couldn’t understand why some Sailors complained all the time. He loved what the Navy did for him. They fed him; they gave him a uniform to wear. Little did I know, that would be the last time I would see him before I treated him for a mortal wound.”

Parlier joined the Navy in 1978 when he was 21 years old, serving over 20 years as a hospital corpsman before becoming the command master chief of the guided-missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67) in 1999. He spent the previous 9 years as an independent duty corpsman (IDC), serving on sea and land alongside Sailors and Marines.

On the morning of October 12, 2000, USS Cole was scheduled for refueling in Yemen’s Aden harbor.

“It’s a hot, third-world country,” said Parlier. “As we were pulling in, I was looking at the houses, and they were so poorly made; no glass in the windows. It was like you were back in time.”

Parlier remembers that Thursday morning aboard the ship; walking the passageways, verifying the safety of the crew as they performed their duties, and hearing the captain arguing with the harbor pilot over which side of the ship they should pull up to the refueling pier.

Captain won. Starboard side.

“When we were entering port, I saw a half-sunk boat on our starboard side and abandoned Iraqi tankers on our left side,” said Parlier. “You just got an eerie feeling that something wasn’t right.”

However, according to Parlier, everything was running smoothly. The quarterdeck was being set up so small boats could pull alongside to pick up garbage. Chow was being prepared in the galley. Parlier made his way to his office on the mess deck. It was almost lunch time. Chicken fajitas, Parlier recalled nearly 20 years later.

Refueling was underway.

“I realized I had a meeting, so I started to make my way back aft,” said Parlier. “Had I remained in my office, I would not be here today. I passed ground zero within five minutes of the blast.”

It was a Morale, Welfare, and Recreation meeting with Damage Controlman 1st Class Ernesto Garcia and the ship’s executive officer, Lt. Cmdr. Chris Peterschmidt, so Parlier was required to be present. As they discussed getting new TVs for the berthing, a small leisure boat approached the port side of the ship.

The meeting ended.

It was 11:18 a.m.

The blast occurred.

“I saw a BM3 instantly come out of the boat-swain office in pain and screaming,” said Parlier. “Initially, I had thought the fuel pod we were refueling at had exploded, but that was not the case.”

Immediately, the executive officer hopped on the phone. It was dead.

“We went to [general quarters] by word of mouth, and the billion-dollar warship was rendered crippled, as we had no comms, no engineering, and no defense,” said Parlier.

Al-Qaeda suicide bombers had approached the port side of USS Cole in a small leisure boat laden with explosives; the detonation resulting in a 40-foot by 60-foot hole in the side of the ship.

The full extent of the damage was not yet known.

Battle stations were manned, and Parlier took his predetermined spot in the aft battle dress sta-

tion (BDS), where his skills as a former hospital corpsman would reemerge in a time of need.

Parlier had trained with USS Cole’s IDC, Chief Hospital Corpsman Cliff Moser, Hospitalman Tayinikia Campbell, and departmental striker, Seaman Eban Sanchez, before, and they had all agreed for Parlier to help in the event of a real-world situation.

This was the real-world situation, and nearly 20 Sailors needed immediate medical attention. “Doc” Moser was nowhere to be found.

“At this point, we did not know if Chief Moser was alive or not,” said Parlier.

Word had passed of more extensive damage in a forward part of the ship, and Campbell would have to take over for Parlier in the aft BDS.

More Sailors were injured on the mess decks and galley.

“As I went along travelling through the ship, I realized the extent of the damage and the extent of injured and dead,” said Parlier. “You had to remain calm and do what you were taught, and that happened with most all the crew. You had damage control going on at the same time patients were being treated and staged. Little did we realize that we only had power to the aft end of the ship, and the rest had no power. Some spaces were arcing and sparking, as we did have only one generator working, and the other two out of commission. The main engines were damaged, the biggest spaces on the ship were flooded, and bulkheads were collapsing and buckled. No potable water; fuel oil spilled into the ship. Then you had to worry about a second attack to finish us off.”

Chaos.

“It was hard as I helped put some of my shipmates in body bags,” said Parlier. “I actually lost one 19-year-old Sailor while performing CPR, and that was very hard. It was emotional, but once things settled down, I found out Doc Moser was alive. That was a relief.”

Parlier learned Moser had lost a chief petty officer while doing CPR, just as Parlier had done while performing CPR on Seaman Apprentice Craig Bryan Wibberley, the 19-year-old Sailor.

“We hugged and cried for a moment, and then knew we had to get it together and do our jobs for the Sailors of Cole and our mission,” said Parlier.

Parlier, Moser, and the rest of the crew fought tirelessly to free shipmates trapped by the twisted wreckage and limit flooding that threatened to sink the ship. The crew’s prompt actions to isolate damaged electrical systems and contain fuel oil ruptures prevented catastrophic fires that could have engulfed the ship and cost the lives of countless men and women. Skillful first aid and advanced medical treatment applied by the crew prevented additional death and eased the suffering of many others. Drawing upon their Navy training and discipline, the crew heroically conducted more than 96 hours of sustained damage control in conditions of extreme heat and stress.

Through all the destruction and mayhem, Parlier and the rest of USS Cole crew fought to save their ship and shipmates. 17 did not survive.

“Bottom line is: we all had our own way with dealing with this attack,” said Parlier. “Some were medevac’d home, and others remained and were ‘Determined Warriors,’ determined to stay and complete the mission at hand.”

The mission at hand was to get USS Cole steady and out of that harbor.

The Marine antiterrorism unit was the first to arrive. Then Navy SEALs. Then HMS Marlborough. Then the Marine amphibious ready group. Then the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Over a

period of a week, Navy and Marine forces would arrive on scene to help the Sailors on that guided-missile destroyer.

The USS Cole would survive.

“When the USS Hawes first came to our ship with a small boat, I knew the CMC, and he asked me what we wanted after days of eating snack food and drinking bottled water,” said Parlier. “I asked for ‘chili mac.’ Boy, did that reenergize the crew and reinvigorate their spirits.”

Some Sailors would have a tougher time than others recovering from the terror that was experienced on that day.

“All our minds are different, and we all deal with traumatic events differently,” said Parlier. “There were a lot of young minds there, so some had a tough time, and others did not, but I would say the most important thing was we had each other and were able to talk about and share our experiences and how we dealt with it. That really does help.”

Nearly 20 years later, Parlier still shares his experiences and lessons with ears that desire to hear them.

“I think of it every day, as something always reminds me; some days more than others,” said Parlier. “I have been speaking about my experience to various different organizations for the past 20 years now, and that does help. I volunteer my time, and do not charge anything. I feel things will come back to me in life in different ways.”

Parlier’s story is one filled with emotion, passion, and lessons.

“Comradeship is so important, as well as crew integrity,” said Parlier. “We had that. This crew met the Core Values of our Navy, and I am so proud of them. This crew is an example of when you follow those who lead and inspire and have confidence in them, you will succeed. I truly believe we had the right leadership in place, from the wardroom, to the CPO Mess, to the deck plates. We were truly blessed.”

Parlier’s story extends a message to the current ‘Determined Warriors’ serving on the still-operational USS Cole, homeported in Norfolk, Va.

“I am honored to be called a ‘Determined Warrior,’ as we proved that day and weeks after,” said Parlier. “We were those warriors and stood fast. Our inspiration was the soiled American flag flying back aft, and that is what we as Sailors and Americans are all about. As we know, freedom is not free, and we saw some of our shipmates give their lives to keep our country the way it is today.”

Sailors aboard the USS Cole during the attack on October 12, 2000, felt as if it was ground zero for the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Less than a year after the attack, a then-emboldened enemy would conduct terror attacks on U.S. soil on Sept. 11, 2001. The GWOT is one that is still being fought today.

Thousands of U.S. service members from all branches of the military have lost their lives in action since the beginning of the GWOT.

Operations Specialist 2nd Class Timothy Saunders, who Parlier spoke to on the bridge wing that morning, was one of those 17 Sailors who gave their lives in sacrifice for their country aboard the USS Cole on October 12, 2000. After suffering heavy injuries from the blast, Parlier tended to his wounds, but unfortunately could not do enough to save him.

“You learn to cherish what you have and life itself,” said Parlier, who retired from naval service in 2006. “We who survived Cole understand that in our own ways, and appreciate the time God has given us to remain on this earth, and continue to live for ourselves and our families and for our faith.”

USS COLE 20-YEAR COMMEMORATION



CONSIDERING THE HISTORY OF THE COLE, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO GET TO SERVE ABOARD THIS SHIP?



Kaleigh Morgan
Sonar Technician 3rd Class
Liberty Center, Ohio

“What it means to serve aboard the USS Cole to me, is to continue the legacy of up-keeping a ship. It has a lot of history to it, so with that, we are model for the rest of the fleet, and we hold a higher standard for everyone across the board given our history, so we have to continue to be a leading example. “



Jacqueline Estrada
Operations Specialist 2nd Class
Downey, California

“I stepped aboard this ship at the tail end of their deployment, so I’ve seen basically the full life-cycle of a ship, from us being out there, to us getting back home, and going into the yards, then coming out of the yards, getting all new equipment installed really is something special.”



Taylor Vonderheide
Gas Turbine System Technician Fireman
Delan, Florida

“It’s an honor to serve aboard this ship. It gives me more confidence and a sense of duty because you don’t want something like that to ever happen again. I feel proud that I am able to serve and give back to the families of those whose lives were lost that day.”



Madison Williamson
Intelligence Specialist 2nd Class
Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

“When I got here I didn’t really know much about the history of this ship. The first time walking the decks I found two plaques from two ITSN’s that died that day when the bombing happened, and it really just made it more realistic. Seeing that really brought the whole thing in perspective for me, two ITSN’s who were in the same position I was, their first ship, first couple months in the Navy, and sadly they were killed that day. It also really hit home for me when we were doing the first-call memorials. I was just an ITSN standing by at one of the doors letting the Cole hero families come through, telling them where to go sit, and the family of ITSN McDaniel’s came by and the lady tapped me on the shoulders and said ‘It’s so good to see ITs still doing this,’ and continued to walk by. That really just hit home for me and made me realize the importance of what we do every day.”



Luke Small
Gas Turbine System Technician 2nd Class
Hanover, Pennsylvania

“It is an honor for me to get to serve aboard the Cole. You hear about everything that happened to this ship, you hear everyone’s stories, you can look it up on the internet and you can read articles about it, but nothing compares to actually walking the decks, knowing what happened and how it happened, and now everything that we do nowadays to prevent anything from happening like that again, makes it an honor to be able to carry the tradition of serving aboard this ship.”



Jhosep Quispe
Logistics Specialist 1st Class
Queens, New York

“I feel a lot of pride serving aboard the Cole. When I was up for orders this time around and I saw the Cole on the list I knew that that was where I wanted to go ... The Cole bombing wasn’t just about the crew of the ship but for the entire Navy to realize that we have to improve our damage control equipment and capabilities, as well as our anti-terrorism force protection procedures and trainings. Now we run these drills and give all the different types of trainings, so that if something like this ever happens again, we know that our Sailors will be able and capable of handling the situation.”



Larry Keyser
Fire Controlman 1st Class
Trappe, Maryland

“It is an honor for me to get to serve aboard the Cole. You hear about everything that happened to this ship, you hear everyone’s stories, you can look it up on the internet and you can read articles about it, but nothing compares to actually walking the decks, knowing what happened and how it happened, and now everything that we do nowadays to prevent anything from happening like that again, makes it an honor to be able to carry the tradition of serving aboard this ship.”



Kendell Grissett
Yeoman 3rd Class
Chula Vista, California

“I feel a great honor to get the opportunity to serve aboard the Cole as my first duty station. Once you’re aboard and you get to learn more about the history of everything that happened, it just makes it even more fulfilling to be here.”



Jennifer White
Retail Services Specialist 2nd Class
Lane, South Carolina

“It was surreal and intense when I first came aboard, walking through the passageway with the stars on the floor, getting taken through the mess decks where we have memorials honoring those who had fallen that day, really put everything into perspective for me.”



Cole Dean Broughton
Gunner’s Mate Seaman Apprentice Cole
McKenny, Virginia

It’s a great honor to serve aboard this ship because I know there were Sailors who lost their lives on this ship. I’m proud to be serving on a ship that has history behind it, other than just getting a name from a hero, that actually had heroes aboard that helped save the ship and that prevented the ship from going down and keeping it intact today to continue to be used as a warship.”



USS COLE 20-YEAR COMMEMORATION

Unexpected, lifelong friendship formed following USS Cole tragedy

By Brock Vergakis

Retired Senior Chief Nick Burnworth remembers a pair of Navy recruiters coming to his home when he was a teenager in Florida and his mother asking them if her son would be safe if the nation was at war.

Not to worry, they said.

“I remember the recruiter just flat out telling mom, you know, your son is safe. I mean there’s nothing going to happen to your son. He’s going to be on a ship. Ships don’t get in trouble. Ships have got missiles,” Burnworth said. “I mean, he just, he sold it like never before.”

Burnworth’s brother was in the Marines, his father was in the Army and his grandfather served in the Navy. He was ready to be like them.

He joined the Navy in 1999. He was 18.

The following year, he was one of the crew members fighting to survive aboard the destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67) after it had been attacked by terrorists while in port in Yemen.

The surprise attack changed what the United States thought it knew about war and conflict. Seventeen Sailors died in the attack and 37 were injured, including Burnworth.

The tragedy was a watershed moment for the Navy, which sprung into action to save the ship, changed the way it operated to better guard against terrorism, and placed a premium on caring for the families of victims and those who survived.

And in Burnworth’s case, the promise to look after him once he got home wasn’t something that was temporary until things got back to normal. It was the beginning of an unlikely, yet lifelong friendship.



Burnworth worked in the ship’s engineering department and he was in their berthing area writing down some of his thoughts about his first deployment when the explosion hit.

“The first thing that went through my mind was that we had a fuel explosion. We had some kind of explosion, based on feeling. I didn’t think in any way, shape, or form that we had had a terrorist attack,” he said.

Burnworth had just taken his boots off before the explosion so he could change out of his coveralls. But after the lights went out, he couldn’t find them anymore. He found a pair of firefighting boots that were much too big for him, but he wore them anyway.

As he walked up a ladderwell, there was water everywhere.

“I mean it looked like someone had just stabbed an inflatable pool, and it just burst down the scuttle, I mean that’s just how much water was coming down,” he said. “And that’s when I think I even got more freaked out because I associated, you know, now the ship is sinking.”

Burnworth heard people yelling and screaming. There was haze in the air. Electrical lines had been severed.

Eventually, he made it topside where his des-



Senior Chief Nick Burnworth and Georgia Monsam at his retirement ceremony last year.

Courtesy photo

igned lifeboat position was. It was there — with burning fuel and debris falling from the air and hitting him in one of his eyes — that he learned from another crew member the explosion was caused by a bomb.

What happened next is foggy. Burnworth remembers joining someone else to look for injured crew members. But his friend hit his head hard on a pipe he didn’t see.

Burnworth said he recalls being worried about being electrocuted with so many frayed wires as they waded through waist-deep water.

“I wasn’t as heroic as I think I should’ve been,” he said. “It scared the (expletive) out of me.”

He said he thinks his friend found some injured people, but it was so chaotic it’s hard to remember. He said he was on the ship for several hours before he was taken off with injuries.

At some point, something had hit him hard in the back. One of his feet had been crushed. Most concerning, he had gotten an infection from something in the water.

“I was not in any way, as seriously injured as some of my friends and by some of those guys from the Cole. In no way,” he said.

Still, Burnworth was taken first to a hospital in Yemen. Then he was transferred to one in Germany. Eventually, he was taken to Norfolk.

He didn’t know it at the time. But it would be there where he would meet the person he still calls his ‘Navy mom,’ 20 years later.



Georgia Monsam was serving as the command master chief at Navy Region Mid-Atlantic in Norfolk when the attack happened. The command oversees Navy bases in the region as well as the services they provide to Sailors and their families.

It was her job, she said, to make sure people were taken care of the wake of the attack. Whatever people needed, she got: Hotels, flights, food. The hour didn’t matter. She slept at work

in those first hectic days.

Often though, it was a shoulder to cry on or just someone to listen to that families and victims needed. She offered that, too.

Burnworth’s mother had told Monsam she was worried because her son wasn’t opening up to her about what had happened.

“I’m like, mom, that’s pretty natural. You know a 19-year-old boy’s not gonna tell his mom what it’s like to have this but blown up out at sea for fear of worrying you and all that. But you know if you get Nicholas home and he’s struggling you can send him back to me and we’ll get him in touch with people where he can process that, he can be with people that went through a similar process,” she said.

A few weeks after the memorial ceremony and after some time home in Florida, Burnworth returned for duty in Norfolk and showed up in Monsam’s office.

“From that day forward, I became his Navy mom,” she said.

Monsam was there to advise Burnworth every step of his career. He didn’t want to leave the Navy after the attack. He was determined to stay in and not be defined by it.

If he ever needed someone to talk to - about anything at all — Monsam was there.

After his mother went through a divorce and moved to California where his brother was stationed, Monsam helped Burnworth get an assignment out there too.

“That helped out our family. That helped keep us together,” he said. “It was a hard time for me and my brother.”

Monsam remained close with his mother too. They visited each other from time to time and kept in touch through illnesses and celebrations.

“Georgia became a support group for my mother as well. So, Georgia has always been in my life,” he said.

Monsam is such an important part of Burnworth’s life, that she is who he asked to speak at his retirement ceremony last year.

JOIN US FOR THE HISTORIC USS COLE (DDG 67) VIRTUAL SHIP TOUR

Premieres at 12 P.M. EST

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USS COLE 20-YEAR COMMEMORATION

20 YEARS LATER

Former USS Cole Sailor remembers attack

By MC3 Jordan Bair and
MCSN Sawyer Connally

It was 11:18 a.m. on Oct. 12, 2000, aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67). The ship arrived in Yemen that morning for a brief fuel stop after completing a lengthy transit through the Suez Canal the day prior. Suddenly, the lights went out and all ventilation stopped. An explosion occurred on the port side of the ship. Then-Damage Controlman 3rd Class William Merchen was one of three Sailors putting tools away after completing their morning maintenance in the filter cleaning shop.

Cole was bombed in a terrorist attack, killing 17 U.S. Navy Sailors and injuring 37 others. October brings with it a stark reminder of the lives lost and the invaluable lessons learned, reinforcing the gravity of what it means to wear the uniform of a U.S. Navy Sailor. Today, Senior Chief Damage Controlman William Merchen remembers the attack in vivid detail.

“We were standing there speaking one moment, and then the next moment we were on the deck on the other side of the shop and it was dark, the room was starting to fill up with smoke and we couldn’t breathe so well,” said Merchen.

Merchen said his shop contained light bulbs and cans of paint that had exploded. Paint spilled all over the shop and broken glass covered the floor. Suicide bombers created a 40-by-60 foot hole on the port side of the ship causing major flooding and fires midships. The three Sailors made their way out of their work space and down the port side ladderwell to don self-contained breathing apparatuses and helmets equipped with flashlights on the damage control deck. Once they got on air, they began to hear voices in the Chiefs Mess.

“The things they were saying were beyond just ‘I’m trapped’ and ‘get me out of here,’” said Merchen. “People were describing how they were injured. We knew we had to get in there as quickly as possible, but that wasn’t going to be as easy as opening the door.”



MC3 Jack D. Aistrup

Senior Chief Damage Controlman William Merchen, an inspector with Afloat Training Group Atlantic (ATG), speaks with members of the damage control training team aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67).

One of the two Sailors with Merchen constructed a plan to create an opening in the bulkhead that had collapsed on the Chiefs Mess. They began rescuing the trapped Sailors inside. The rescue was just the beginning in the fight to save the ship. Cole’s Sailors fought fires and flooding for the following 96 hours to keep the ship afloat.

Merchen said everyone put their own safety and feelings aside to save the ship and their shipmates. People who would have otherwise succumbed to their injuries survived because others stepped up and responded to the crisis.

“It has shaped everything that I’ve done at every command I’ve been to,” said Merchen. “There hasn’t been a single one of those trainings or drills that I haven’t thought about the attack on Cole.”

Today, Merchen is assigned to Afloat Training Group Atlantic as a damage control mission readiness inspector, where he is able to deliver first-hand knowledge to a new generation of Sailors, better preparing them to effectively combat casualties. Merchen has recently been assigned

to work with Cole’s damage control teams to ensure they are up to speed and ready for any threat or casualty they may face while operating at sea.

“Senior Chief Merchen - he’s a professional,” said Cmdr. Edward J. Pledger, commanding officer of Cole. “I often talk about Cole heroes, and the honor of being able to meet any of them. He’s a Cole hero and having him on our ship and training us — it’s very special to have that opportunity.”

Merchen described his opportunity to work with Cole Sailors again as a fantastic way to reconnect with a ship that he is deeply proud to have served on.

“After several years, I hadn’t been aboard Cole, except maybe once since the attack,” said Merchen. “As I go through the spaces, I do think about what they looked like after the attack. I do think about where I know certain people passed away or where they were injured. It’s good to remember that stuff. It does a service to those people that were injured and honors the people that were killed.”

Merchen’s experience and the dedication he brings to damage control make his teaching and advice invaluable.

“When he speaks, our Sailors listen, because they know this isn’t somebody who just has been teaching it from a book,” said Pledger. “This is somebody who has done it in real life and understands that if you don’t do it right, people could die or you could lose your ship.”

As Merchen nears retirement, he finds pride and hope in today’s junior Sailors throughout the Navy, specifically, those serving on Cole.

“When I look into the news today and I see Cole is off on another deployment or completing another exercise or working with a foreign Navy, I see the ship floating in the water,” said Merchen. “I see it out executing missions to keep us safe in the United States. I know that the ship wouldn’t [be doing those things] if it wasn’t for the actions of so many brave people and the sacrifices of so many fantastic Sailors back in October of 2000 in Aden, Yemen.”

USS Cole namesake was driven by uncommon valor

From Naval History and Heritage Command

Next Monday marks the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attack against the U.S. Navy guided-missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67) while she was refueling in Aden Harbor, Yemen. The explosion from a small boat claimed the lives of 17 Cole Sailors and injured another 37.

Like the aptly nicknamed Marine who gave his name to their ship, the “Determined Warriors” of Cole’s crew also shared the common virtue of uncommon valor, enabling them to prevent further loss of life and save their severely damaged ship.

It was an epic damage-control effort born of readiness and training, plus grit and determination that traces its roots back more than 80 years before the attack to the northeastern Ozarks region of Missouri in a town now known as Park Hills.

The ship’s namesake, Darrell Samuel Cole, was born July 20, 1920, in Flat River, Mo. Until he graduated from high school in Esther, Missouri, in 1938, his main interests in life were playing basketball, hunting and photography. During his youth, he learned to play the French horn, an accomplishment that would help to shape his destiny later.

Soon after graduating from high school, Cole joined the Civilian Conservation Corps, where he became an assistant forestry clerk and assistant educational advisor for his company. Leaving the CCC after one year, he went to Detroit, Mich., where he found employment as a skiver machine operator for a firm that specialized in the manufacture of engine gaskets.

On Aug. 25, 1941, Cole enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve for the duration of the national emergency. He was sent to Parris Island, S.C., for training, where his proficiency with the French horn marked him as a logical candidate for Field Music School—a “field music” being the Marine Corps equivalent of a bugler.

After completing Field Music School, he was transferred to the 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division. On Aug. 7, 1942, he found himself wading ashore with his buddies of Company H, 2d Battalion, on the beaches of Guadalcanal, the first American offensive of World War II.

Field Music First Class Cole had not been very happy about being assigned as a field music. His friends had often heard him complain that he had joined a fighting outfit to fight, not blow a horn. Consequently, when a regular ma-

chine gunner of his unit fell wounded, he assumed the role of gunner and acquitted himself in such a manner as to win the praise of his commanding officer.

Immediately after the Guadalcanal campaign, Cole submitted a request to have his rating changed from field music and to allow him to perform the regular duties of a private first class in the weapons company to which he was assigned. His request was disapproved, “due to a shortage of field musics.” He returned to the United States on Feb. 2, 1943, still saddled with his bugle.

In March 1943, he joined the 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, which were then forming at Camp Lejeune, N.C., as part of the 4th Marine Division. Waiting until the unit moved to California, he submitted another request to be relieved of his duties as a field music and permission to perform “line” duties. Again, his request was disapproved, and for the same reason, as the Marine Corps was still short of field musics. In January 1945, Cole was on his way overseas for the second time with the 4th Marine Division.

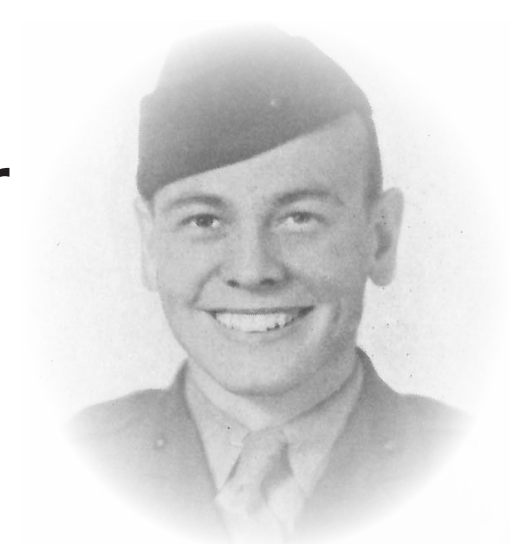
During the division’s first engagement, at Roi-Namur in the Kwajalein Atoll, Cole, forsaking his bugle, went into action as a machine gunner.

Four months later, the 4th Marine Division stormed ashore at Saipan, where Cole had managed to be assigned to his beloved machine guns. Because of his proven ability in combat, he was designated as a machine gun section leader. During the battle, his squad leader was killed and Cole, although wounded himself, assumed command of the entire squad and acquitted himself in such a manner to be awarded the Bronze Star Medal for “...his resolute leadership, indomitable fighting spirit and tenacious determination in the face of terrific opposition...”

A few days after the battle of Saipan, he led his squad ashore in the invasion of the neighboring island of Tinian and continued to live up to his fast growing reputation as “The Fighting Field Music” throughout the campaign.

After the Marianas campaigns, Cole requested a change of warrant for the third time. Pointing out his experience and combat record, he stated that he felt he would be of more benefit to the Marine Corps performing line duties rather than those of field music. This time his request was approved, and he was redesignated as a corporal.

In January 1945, Sgt. Cole, who had been promoted the previous November, sailed with



his company for an unknown island that was to become one of the most famous battlefields of American history—Iwo Jima.

On D-Day, Feb. 19, Sgt. Cole led his machine gun section ashore in the assault on Iwo’s shifting beaches. One of his squads had hardly reached dry land before their advance was halted by a deadly hail of fire from two enemy positions. Taking stock of the situation, Cole crawled forward and wiped out the two positions with hand grenades. His unit continued the advance until they were again halted by fire from three Japanese pillboxes. One of Cole’s machine guns silenced the most threatening position and then jammed.

Armed only with a pistol and one hand grenade, Cole made a one-man attack against the two remaining positions. Twice he returned to his own lines for additional grenades and continued the attack under the fierce enemy fire until he had succeeded in destroying the Japanese strong point. Returning to his own squad, he was killed instantly by an enemy grenade. By his one-man attack and heroic self-sacrifice, Cole enabled his company to move forward against the remaining fortifications and attain their ultimate objective.

The nation’s highest military award, the Medal of Honor, was posthumously awarded to Cole for his unselfish act of heroism. The field music who had desperately wanted to be a great fighting man had at last achieved his ambition. The Medal of Honor was presented to his wife on April 17, 1947.

Sergeant Cole was buried in the 4th Marine Division Cemetery on Iwo Jima. At the request of his father, his remains were returned to the United States and were reinterred in the Park View Cemetery near Farmington, Missouri.

In addition to the Medal of Honor and Bronze Star Medal, Sgt. Cole was awarded the Purple Heart with Gold Star in lieu of a second award, the Presidential Unit Citation, American Defense Service Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

USS COLE 20-YEAR COMMEMORATION



MC2 Justin Wolpert

A Sailor visits the Cole Memorial on the 18th anniversary of the attack on the ship, Oct. 12, 2018. Seventeen Sailors lost their lives and another 37 sustained injuries while the crew worked for 96 consecutive hours to keep the ship afloat.

HISTORY OF THE USS COLE MEMORIAL

“The USS Cole Memorial is a beautiful tribute to the honor, courage and commitment displayed by the determined warriors on Oct. 12, 2000. Every time we sail past the memorial when departing and returning to Norfolk, we pay our respects to the Cole heroes by rendering honors to the memorial.”

Cmdr. Edward Pledger

By Kelly Wirfel

Exactly one year after and with a promise to never forget the U.S. Navy dedicated the USS Cole monument to honor and remember the 17 Sailors killed in the tragic bombing that took place to the Norfolk-based destroyer in Yemen on Oct. 12, 2000.

During the dedication at Naval Station (NAVS-TA) Norfolk in 2001, more than 1,000 crew members and relatives gathered at the memorial that overlooks Willoughby Bay where ships leaving and returning to NAVSTA Norfolk pass by.

The memorial consists of three sections. The main plaza of the memorial contains three 10-foot monoliths that represent the three colors of the American flag. Encircling the monoliths are 17 low level markers that represent the victims of the bombing. Three plaques are placed at the monument. The two outside pillars contain the names of the Sailors killed during the bombing and the

center pillar contains the USS Cole emblem and an inscription that reads “In lasting tribute to their Honor, Courage and Commitment.”

Along the path to the memorial are 28 pine trees that represent the 17 victims and the 11 children who lost their parent during the bombing. Also along the path is a plaque that marks the location of the USS Cole Memorial Tree that was planted by the Hampton Roads Council of the Navy League during the dedication ceremony. The plaque reads “You will forever be in our thoughts, our memories never forgotten, you will live in our hearts, and may this tree remind every ship rolling by, of your sacrifice.” At the end of the path is a raised plaque that details the events of the bombing and amplifies the heroic efforts to save ship and their shipmates. Part of the inscriptions reads “As a permanent symbol of that strength and resolve, steel from the ships damaged hull is forged into this plaque. The crew of the USS Cole personified honor, courage and commitment.”

“The USS Cole Memorial is a beautiful tribute to the honor, courage and commitment displayed by the determined warriors on Oct. 12, 2000,” said Cmdr. Edward Pledger, commanding officer of the guided-missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67). “Every time we sail past the memorial when departing and returning to Norfolk, we pay our respects to the Cole heroes by rendering honors to the memorial.”

The monument was designed by John Blackburn, a landscape architect with the Navy’s worldwide engineering corps. Blackburn took input from USS Cole crew members while developing his design. Donations through the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society paid for the \$143,000 project.

As we recognize the 20th anniversary of the USS Cole bombing, the memorial stands as a solemn reminder of the 17 Sailors who lost their lives, those injured and the all those impacted by the events of that tragic day.

Cole Sailor creates 20th anniversary logo

By MCSN Ashley Croom

Monday, October 12th, 2020, marks 20 years since the terrorist attack that claimed 17 brave Sailors and injured 37 others in Aden, Yemen.

To commemorate the day and honor the memory of those lost, the USS Cole presented a challenge to the crew to create a logo. The winner of that challenge is FCA2 Emilio McPherson, attached to the guided missile destroyer USS Cole.

“I saw the competition for the logo design and instantly knew what I wanted to do,” said McPherson, an El Paso, Texas native who has been in the Navy for nearly six years. “Creating the logo, I knew I wanted a silhouette of the ship and 17 stars.”

The actual attacked happened on the port (left) side when terrorist, on a small dinghy, approached the ship and set off explosives, killing themselves in the process.

When it came to the orientation of the ship on the logo, McPherson had an idea of how he wanted it read and be interpreted.

“I had a few people tell me I should flip the ship around to show the side that was attacked,” said McPherson. However, “By keeping the ship heading right, I could show the Cole moving forward away from the attack and into the future while still asking people to remember what happened in the past.”

The Sailor, who is a self-taught artist, was able to see how serious this challenge was when it was

presented.

“It means a lot to know that something I created is being utilized so widely and for something as big as this,” said McPherson. “My father actually teared up a bit when he found out that my logo was picked, so the magnitude of this isn’t lost for me.”

McPherson’s leadership is also proud that he took the time to create the winning logo.

“I feel humbled and extremely proud of FCA2 McPherson,” said CMDCM Jorge Reyes-Velez, command master chief of the guided missile destroyer USS Cole. Reyes-Velez also added that, “FCA2 McPherson demonstrated this unique ability by harmoniously employing his valuable time as a technician with his creative human ability. The result is an excellent 20th anniversary remembrance scene that encompasses our commitment to the 17 warriors that paid the ultimate sacrifice aboard Cole.”

Creating a winning logo, which will be featured across multiple media outlets, while also being a standout Sailor is the kind of thing that makes others proud.

“FCA2 McPherson is an amazing technician always in search of the place where his help is needed the most,” said Reyes-Velez. “He illustrates flexibility and team work by selflessly volunteering for any and every additional task to be performed by his division or department. While on duty he never hesitates to train, all Sailors alike, to the standards of excellence onboard the



FCA2 Emilio McPherson

ship; whether it be at noon or in the wee hours of the morning this energetic Sailor radiates positive energy and performs with a smile, his charisma is beyond reproach.”

It’s not only McPherson, though, that shows, and proves, time and time again what determination looks like.

“Sailors are the epitome of service and dedication,” said Reyes-Velez. “And on USS Cole the “Determined Warrior” spirit influences our actions in search of excellence while keeping in our forefront USS Cole’s namesake, heritage and tradition.”

It’s that same spirit of service, dedication and determination that rang true in the hearts and souls of the brave Sailors who endured the attack on the USS Cole 20 years ago.

“It’s ... awe-inspiring to think about the people who fought to keep this ship afloat and the fact that 20 years later, we’re still here,” said McPherson.



Doing your best is enough

These days, maintaining a positive mindset is vital. Remember to practice self-care and reach out to your loved ones. Refocus your priorities and stay connected so that when normal life resumes, you will be more motivated than ever to move forward in even better ways.

BEST[👑]REVIEWS
Everyday advice and ideas





One year anniversary
Sailors aboard the Navy's newest Ford-class aircraft carrier, Pre-Commissioning Unit John F. Kennedy, celebrate the one-year mark of establishing a ship's crew and officially becoming a command.

» See **B3**

SECTION B | FLAGSHIPNEWS.COM | 10.8.2020



MC3 Marissa Vermeulen
Julianna Byron, a Sewells Point Child Development Center (CDC) lead, feeds lunch to children at the CDC, Oct. 2. The newly renovated facility is a state-of-the-art CDC, offering quality child development programs.

Naval Support Activity Hampton Roads opens new Sewells Point Child Development Center

From Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Public Affairs

NORFOLK

Naval Support Activity (NSA) Hampton Roads opened its doors to the new Sewells Point Child Development Center (CDC) on Oct. 1. This newly renovated 27,230 square foot facility is a state-of-the-art CDC offering quality child development programs for up to 276 children, ages six weeks to five years old. Initially, due to COVID-19, the center will be open primarily to children ages three years old and under, which is the greatest demand on the current

» See **CHILD SUPPORT | B7**

Accelerated NRC transformation: Out with the NRDs, in with the NTAGs

By Jordan Smith
Navy Recruiting Command Public Affairs

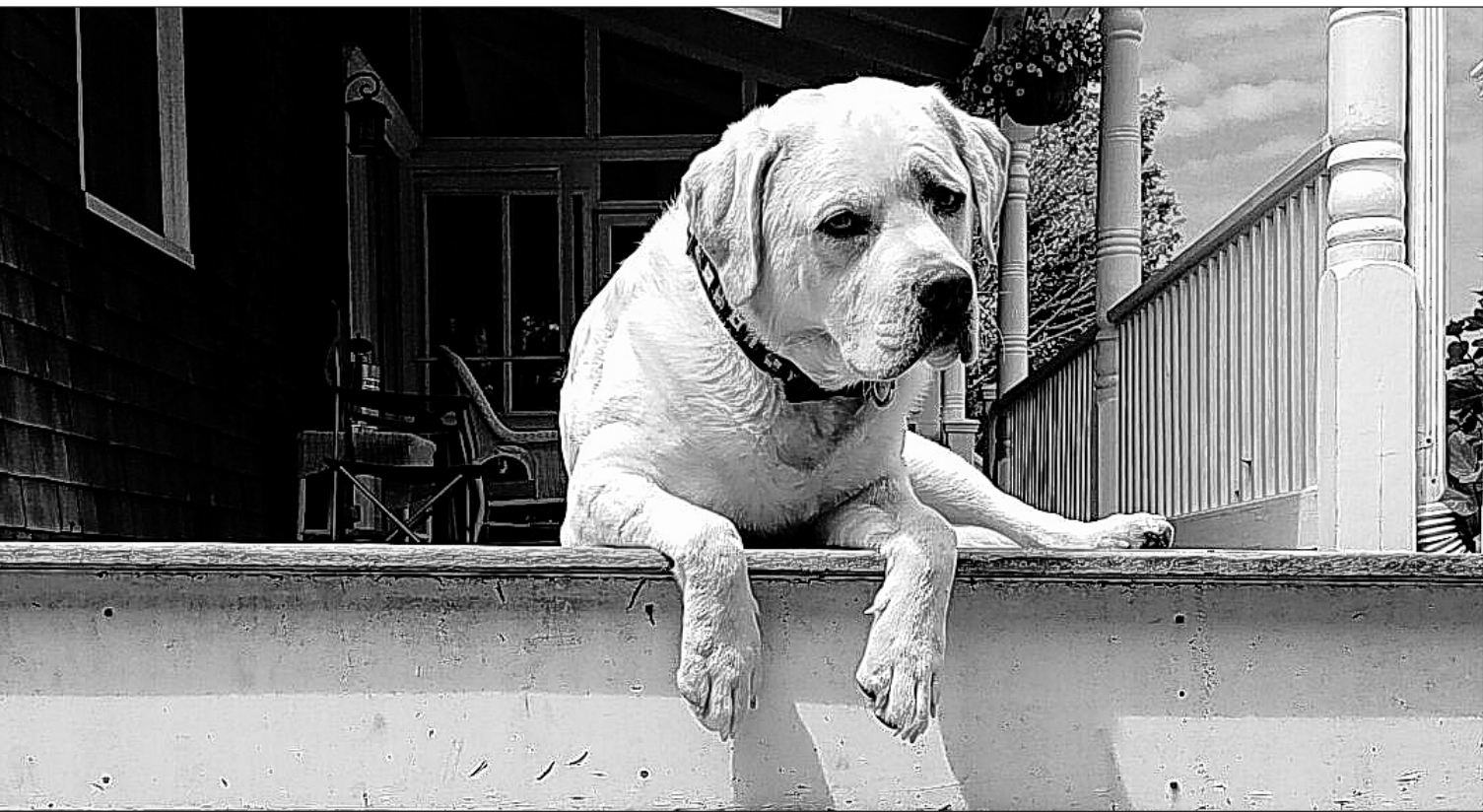
MILLINGTON, TENN.

Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) has accelerated the transformation of its Navy Recruiting Districts (NRDs) into Navy Talent Acquisition Groups (NTAGs). In light of the recent pandemic, Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, commander, NRC, challenged the Navy recruiting enterprise to accelerate the transformation process in order to provide better service to the recruits, optimize available technologies, create expertise that allows for a single focus on the elements of recruiting and set the organization on a single operating model by the end of 2020 – far ahead of the original schedule of 2023. “The coronavirus pandemic highlighted the benefits that our upgraded technologies, organizational structures, and e-



» See **NRC | B7**
Senior Chief Aviation Ordnanceman George Slusher cleans the quarterdeck of Navy Recruiting Command, Region Central, Oct. 2.

MC3 Tyler Priestley



By Lisa Smith Molinari/

Moby.

Military life lessons from last of litter

By Lisa Molinari Smith

The cranberry farmer reached a calloused hand into the crate and grabbed the loose scruff of one pup’s neck. Holding the limp six-week old yellow Labrador retriever, the farmer grumbled, “You can take this one if you want. The rest are spoken for.”

We cradled the squishy bundle of puppy breath, pretending to decide if he was the one. He might be hyperactive. He might chew my leather boots. His tail might clear coffee tables. He might scoot his rear end across the carpet in front of company.

But he was already ours.

The farmer put our deposit check into the pocket of his dingy jeans, then took out a knife. Quite matter-of-factly, he carved a swath of fur from the back of our pup’s neck so we could identify him at the eight-week pick up time. As we drove back down the long country road, we couldn’t help feeling like we were meant to rescue our puppy from the harsh realities of farm life.

As one might expect when an impossibly adorable yellow Lab puppy moves into the neighborhood, our base neighbors fell in love with “Moby.” The two-year old Golden Retriever next door named Charlie tolerated Moby’s boundless energy with the compassion of a saint, playing until they were both damp with slobber.

Once he was six-months old, Moby burst out the door of our military quarters in search of Charlie every day. Sometimes we would find Charlie waiting for Moby on our front porch, and other times Moby would find the door of Charlie’s house wedged open, and race inside to wreak havoc.

But then one day, Charlie’s house was empty. Like several other military families on our street, our neighbors had packed up and moved away.

We realized that Moby is not just a family pet. He is the pet of a military family and must handle the challenges of our mobile lifestyle.

Our first pet was a cat. “Zuzu” was small, fat, and afraid of her own shadow, but she moved with us four times, including three long flights and one six-month quarantine while we were stationed in England. She gave up the ghost at 15, and we laid her to rest in a shady spot in our back yard while stationed in Virginia Beach.

Our first dog, Dinghy, wasn’t easy to transport, seeing as he was 110 pounds and almost three and a half feet tall. We nearly went bankrupt paying for the “giant breed” crate required for flying him overseas. When not in the cargo hold of a jumbo jet, Dinghy moved with us in the back seat of our

minivan, fogging up the windows and depositing hairballs on the seats. But just like the rest of our family, Dinghy adapted to each new environment, chasing moles in Virginia, hares in Germany, crabs in Florida, and rabbits in Rhode Island. After four moves, Dinghy went to the great dog park in the sky during a trip to Maine one Thanksgiving. There is a grave marker bearing his name in the woods near the cabin we were renting.

Moby is five years old now and has moved with us twice. Moby thought movers were simply there to play with him, so he brought them socks and squeaky toys. In each new home, Moby wondered why his bowls and bed had been moved to a strange new kitchen.

Just recently, our civilian neighbors moved away. Moby stood at the fence between our properties, waiting for the treats they had always offered him. But, just like when he sniffed at Charlie’s empty porch, Moby distracted himself with sticks, rotten apples and ratty old tennis balls, and eventually learned a new routine.

At times, I felt sorry for Moby and wondered if he would’ve been better off on the cranberry farm in Massachusetts.

But then, I realized that Moby has served as our family’s role model. Every morning, he steps out into the world to sniff the ever-changing breeze, blissfully ignorant but eternally hopeful that with each rising sun comes the opportunity for new friends, new experiences, and new adventure.

www.themeatandpotatoesoflife.com

Staying safe while staying healthy: Tips for military families

By Military OneSource

The Department of Defense is committed to keeping you and your family safe 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. The coronavirus pandemic is no exception.

During this uncertain and unpredictable time, there are ways to promote the safety, health, and well-being of yourself, your spouse or partner, and your children — even if your family unit is feeling tested or strained. Emergencies, unexpected events and disruptions to our workplace and home can increase stress and put added pressure on our family and personal relationships. You may have increased anxiety about the health and safety of family members who are deployed, or worried about older parents who live far away.

To reduce the threat of COVID-19, we have all been asked to modify our habits and activities. If self-quarantine and social distancing have made you or your children feel anxious, stressed or even depressed, know that you are not alone. There are practices you can take to reduce your stress, increase your safety, and still allow your connections with friends, loved ones and your community to thrive.

MAINTAIN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE.

For the mental wellness of both you and your children, it is a good idea to stick to your usual routine as much as possible while homebound.

Going to bed and getting up in the morning at your normal time, sharing meals as a family, and sticking to an exercise regime you can do indoors or outside on your own, or with your kids or partner, are all ways to stay resilient. Sticking to a routine is also especially nurturing for young children.

TAKE STEPS TO PROMOTE CHILD SAFETY IN THE HOME.

If you have made the decision to self-quarantine, your family may not be used to being home together at all times.

To reduce risk of accidents or injuries to your



Military OneSource

children, take care to make sure any dangerous or potentially deadly items are safely stored, locked, and inaccessible to children. These items may include certain medications, chemical detergents or bleaches used for cleaning (for especially young children) or firearms.

This is a new and frightening time for all of us, kids and adults alike.

There are ways to communicate the seriousness of the pandemic to your children, while taking care not to alarm them. Child development experts have recommendations for how you approach this conversation with your children.

REMEMBER THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE.

Taking time to create daily rituals for yourself is a vital strategy to preserve and strengthen your mental health during this challenging time.

Self-care is unique to you, whether that’s a quiet bath, a jog, or even video-chatting with friends and loved ones. By making your well-being a priority, you are building the resilience you need to guide your kids and your family through this period.

TALK TO SOMEONE.

It is normal to feel scared and lonely during this time, even while at home surrounded by your children. You can strengthen your coping skills by taking advantage of Building Healthy Relationships specialty consultations that can help with communication, relationships and so

much more.

If you are feeling hopeless or disconnected, there are a number of options for you to speak with someone who can help. A great first step is Military OneSource, where you can speak with a confidential, non-medical counselor 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Military OneSource counselors are available to talk with you about any concern, big or small, and can also connect you with other helping professionals, like the Family Advocacy Program.

SEEK HELP.

If self-quarantine and social distancing have made you or your children feel less safe, know that you are not alone.

If you are quarantined with a spouse or partner who threatens, intimidates you, or makes you feel afraid, call your installation’s Family Advocacy Program. Family Advocacy Program staff can help you think through ways to stay safe while staying at home, or plan to stay with a friend or family member.

You may wish to consult the tips from the National Domestic Violence Hotline regarding COVID-19, or call 800-799-7233 to speak with an advocate, or chat with someone at thehotline.org.

The coronavirus national emergency and global pandemic is causing difficulty and uncertainty for everyone. The military community will get through this challenge together, and the Department of Defense and Military OneSource are standing by to help.



Q: Will I be assigned to housing that is less than what I am authorized?

A: Service members will not normally be involuntarily assigned to housing at less than assignment criteria for their pay grade except when military necessity is declared in writing by the Commanding Officer of the installation. You can request a house that is less than what is authorized as long as you sign an acknowledgement that you are voluntarily accepting less than what you are authorized and that you understand you will not be moved to other housing at a later date. Subsequently, if your bedroom requirement increases, you may apply to be placed on the wait list for the appropriate bedroom entitlement.

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 - Information & Referral
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 - Family Advocacy Program
 - Deployment and Mobilization Support
 - Ombudsman Support
 - Relocation Assistance
 - Parenting Programs
 - Stress and Anger Management
 - Command Support
 - Crisis Support
 - Suicide Prevention
 - SAPR Support



Little Creek/Fort Story (757) 462-7563
Newport News (757) 688-6289
Norfolk/Portsmouth (757) 444-2102
Northwest (757) 421-8770
Oceana/Dam Neck (757) 433-2912
Yorktown (757) 887-4606

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Sailors receive command patches, Oct. 1. CVN 79 is the second aircraft carrier to honor John F. Kennedy for his service to the nation, both as a naval officer and as the 35th President of the United States. MCCS Jayme Pastoric

JFK crew celebrates one year anniversary

From USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) Public Affairs

NEWPORT NEWS

Sailors aboard the Navy’s newest Ford-class aircraft carrier, Pre-Commissioning Unit John F. Kennedy (JFK) (CVN 79), celebrate the one-year mark of establishing a ship’s crew and officially becoming a command.

The one-year anniversary serves as a day to reflect on all the command has accomplished throughout the last year. “I am extremely proud of the team we are building and how far the command has come in a relatively short period of time,” said Cap-

tain Todd Marzano. “The crew’s incredible dedication and hard work have enabled many historic milestones over the past 12 months, and it’s an absolute honor to serve as the ship’s first Commanding Officer.”

The crew is growing every day. The diverse group of experiences has given JFK the ability to face modern problems with the best and brightest. “The crew has grown so much and has come a long way,” said Information Systems Technician 1st class Chandler Ragland, one of PCU JFK’s first Sailors. “It’s exciting to see the crew grow. It seems like someone new joins our team every day, bringing their prior experiences with them to help our team grow, ultimately

bettering the crew as a whole.”

“Being part of the first crew and seeing the ship and crew grow is pretty fun and interesting,” said Personnel Specialist Seaman Apprentice Christopher Elzner. “When I got my orders in boot camp, I had no idea what a PCU was. It isn’t what I expected because it isn’t the traditional Navy experience I expected when I joined the Navy earlier this year. I am grateful for being part of team JFK because I get to grow with the ship and learn as much as I can to become a better Sailor and leader.”

This past year has been a rewarding experience for Sailors of all ranks. “It has been so nice to see everyone take control of the respective role in the command and help it grow,” said Senior Chief Legalman Rasha Shankle. “Being at a PCU can be a big culture shock at first because we are the foundation of the crew, the building requires policies and setting the standard for all the Sailors coming to the JFK.”

Through hard work and commitment to the ship’s namesake, the crew has set a standard of excellence for all future Kennedy Sailors to achieve and exceed.

“We have become a self-sustaining force,” said Shankle. “When we started, we worked with the Ford crew and used their experience to help guide us. Now we are working together as a JFK team to accomplish our mission.”

PCU John F. Kennedy has been under construction at its Newport News location since 2015 and continues to make preparations for its commissioning. CVN 79 is the second aircraft carrier to honor John F. Kennedy for his service to the nation, both as a naval officer and as the 35th President of the United States.

For more information on PCU John F. Kennedy, follow the ship’s fan page on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CVN79JFK. Or at <https://www.navy.mil>

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As a chairperson for the Norfolk Naval Shipyard Federal Women's Program, Alfreda "Frieda" McCray helped bring breast cancer awareness to the shipyard, Oct. 25. She helped organized Pink Out Day, breast cancer awareness walks and more.

Aldo Anderson

Norfolk Naval Shipyard celebrates Breast Cancer Awareness Month, remembers one of our own

By Kristi R Britt
Norfolk Naval Shipyard Public Affairs

PORTSMOUTH

Every October, Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) joins the nation in celebrating Breast Cancer Awareness Month – a month dedicated to bringing awareness to a disease that has rocked the core of both women and men alike. Breast cancer is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells from within the tissues of the breast develop a mass that forms a lump, growth, or tumor. One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime. Though it's rare and affects less than one percent of all known cases, men are also susceptible to this disease. Because of this and the importance of detection, efforts during the month of October go directly into research for causes, prevention methods, diagnosis, treatments and the cure for breast cancer.

For Oct. 2020, NNSY wanted to take a moment to reflect on the recent passing of one of our history's biggest advocates for Breast Cancer Awareness and Prevention, and the impact she brought to her fellow shipyarders – Alfreda "Frieda" McCray.

McCray had been part of the shipyard family for more than 35 years, officially beginning her journey April 4, 1974. "Frieda was a champion and a great influence to those around her," said former coworker Marilyn Dixon-Grant. The two had met in 1979 in a training course and quickly became friends. Dixon-Grant said that McCray was always enthusiastic and excited to be part of each new day with her NNSY family. "She was able educate rising shipyard apprentices and employees on working beyond their believed capabilities. She knew the importance of her students work-

ing together to achieve their academic goals and was able to foster a working relationship with each of her students who wanted to excel in the shipyard." She added that McCray also spearheaded community outreach programs, such as the Personal Partnership Excellence Programs (PPEP), Angel Tree Drive, and more.

Dixon-Grant continued, "Frieda had a profound connection with women in and around the shipyard. She wanted women to know they could aspire and achieve at any level. In addition, she was a huge advocate for our breast cancer survivors. Frieda encouraged those women to continue to share their stories and ensured that they knew that they always had a family at NNSY. It was her mission to help our survivors flourish and thrive – especially every October for National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. As the Federal Women's Program (FWP) Chairperson, she knew there was hope for those survivors who felt alone and afraid to share their stories. She helped them all feel heard; feel appreciated, and helped bring awareness to the shipyard at large."

Code 900R Project Resource Manager Zuleika "May" Aldegeon shared, "I met Miss Frieda in 1998, when she was one of my apprenticeship mentors. She mentored me not only at work, but throughout life. She helped me unlock so much untouched potential within myself that I did not know I possessed. She helped me as I transitioned from the military to the waterfront. She was a pathfinder for most women in the shipyard. Failure and quitting was not an option. Many days I wanted to quit as a female in the shipyard, but she would impart so much wisdom, prayers and unconditional love in me that I fought for my place, and now 22 years later, I

am glad that I didn't give up. She was one of my best friends and a mother figure. Ms. Frieda was full of life and would assist ANYONE who requested or required her mentorship, an ear, or wisdom."

Code 740 Quality Assurance Manager Lolita Lea said, "I recalled meeting Frieda when I came to work in Shop 72 in 1987. She was truly a sweet and warm lady, who was always willing to help anyone. She was genuinely a true friend. As years past, she became another "loving family member" to my entire family and me. She became my big sister! We shared so many memorable moments together. I was grateful for her support as a big sister, when I was experiencing some trying times. When my 2 month old son was diagnosed with cancer, she was right there with me through it all and he is now 16 years old and doing fine. My son, family, and I are so grateful for her beautiful support. I will forever be thankful for her kindness, love and compassion during those uncertain days in my life. Before retirement, I observed how she became a driving force in and around NNSY. Frieda was indeed a shipyard icon! She made a difference in the lives of many shipyard employees and managers. Her hands-on knowledge and leadership skills with shipyard apprentices were not overlooked. She gave us all hope that we could work and learn beyond our potential."

McCray retired in 2014 and spent her time following continuing her efforts outside NNSY's gates. The next year, McCray discovered she had breast cancer and began her treatments. "Frieda was unstoppable even then, and continued to encourage and support other survivors, even as she set out on her own breast cancer journey," said Dixon-

Grant. "Frieda's pep talks and her vision for a better day for shipyard women inspired me to move forward. She wanted women to have exposure and visibility in the workforce. Many times, she told us we were winners and overcomers. She was indeed a true friend, who left an impressive impact on me. She will be truly missed."

Frieda passed away from breast cancer Aug. 28, 2020; however, her legacy remains as strong as ever from her efforts in life. The FWP and many others whom McCray influenced during her time here work hard to bring awareness to this disease and host events to help spread the word. For example, the FWP sponsored the Chesapeake Regional Healthcare Breast Center in bringing in their 3D Mobile Mammography Unit, allowing employees to schedule screenings while on the installation.

"Both the Waterfront Ombudsman and Community Outreach Committees ensure that FWP maintains a strong focus on the health and well-being of the workforce," said Carlynn Lucas, a member and former chairperson of the FWP. "Among their many initiatives are the progress we are making together to defeat breast cancer. We will continue to uphold the legacy of Frieda McCray in our future programs and projects with a focus on awareness – breast health seminars, prevention- screening via mobile mammography mobile, support- showing solidarity/unity of cancer patients, as well as survivors and honor – remembering those lost to the disease."

"There are so many things that can be expressed in regards to who Frieda McCray was, but to put it simply; she was an instructor, a mentor, a leader for change; she encouraged all those she touched to do their very best, no matter what their career aspirations. She was very spiritual in her beliefs, was a faithful friend to many, but above all, faithful to GOD," said Code 301.11 Ships Force Training Liaison April Dotson. "Frieda will always hold a special place in my heart. She was my instructor, my mentor, but above all, she was a truly special friend. We that were close with her, already miss her dearly. She will forever be in our hearts."

NAVSUP reminds Sailors of 2020 holiday peak mailing season deadlines

By Debbie Dortch
Naval Supply Systems Command Public Affairs

MECHANICSBURG, PA.

"NAVSUP Postal personnel provide postal services all year long and are ready for the significant increase in holiday mail. Help us help you. Mail early, use Click-N-Ship to minimize time spent in line when mailing; and when packages arrive, pick up as soon as possible after email notification is received," said Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) Navy Postal Operations Manager Dale Pinchart.

"For a successful holiday mailing season, customers should focus on adequate packaging, proper addressing, and following recommended mail-by dates to make sure their packages arrive by December 25," said Tommie Tate, NAVSUP Deputy Postal Operations Manager. To be sure packages and letters arrive by Dec. 25, Tate recommends sending items no later than these mailing dates:

- Nov. 6 – For military Retail Ground Mail addressed to and from:**
- APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIPs 090-092
 - APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIP 093
 - APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIPs 094-099
 - APO/FPO/DPO AA ZIP 340
 - APO/FPO/DPO AP ZIPs 962-966
- Dec. 9 – For Priority and First-Class Mail, Letters, and Cards addressed to and from:**
- APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIP 093
- Dec. 11 – For Priority and First-Class**



Kambra Blackmon

Logistics Specialist Petty Officer 3rd Class Karina Mora assigned to Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) Fleet Logistics Center (FLC) Bahrain, scans a package into the automated military postal system database at the fleet post office onboard Naval Support Activity Bahrain, Sept. 24.

- Mail, Letters, and Cards addressed to and from:**
- APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIPs 090-092
 - APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIPs 094-099
 - APO/FPO/DPO AA ZIP 340
 - APO/FPO/DPO AP ZIPs 962-966
- Dec 18 – For Priority Mail Express Service addressed to and from:**
- APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIPs 090-092
 - APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIPs 094-099
 - APO/FPO/DPO AA ZIP 340
 - APO/FPO/DPO AP ZIPs 962-966
- * Note that this deadline is NOT applicable to APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIP 093



MC2 Michael Lehman

The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG 60) transits the Atlantic Ocean July 23, 2019. Normandy is underway conducting a composite training unit exercise with the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group.

USS Normandy joins Carrier Strike Group 12

By Lt.Cmdr. Desiree Frame
Carrier Strike Group 12 Public Affairs

NORFOLK

The guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG 60) officially joined Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 12 to support air and missile defense operations, Oct. 1.

Normandy, named after the battle of Normandy and the beach landings of D-Day, brings a history of excellence and unparalleled combat capability as an Aegis baseline nine cruiser to the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group.

Normandy recently completed back-to-back deployments as a member of the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group, under the leadership of CSG-8. Their first deployment was the first under the Dynamic Force Employment model deploy-

ing for two three-month stints with a month return to their homeport in the middle, followed by a second deployment nine months later.

Normandy re-deployed in September 2019 as the Task Force (TF) commander for TF26, leading a surface action group above the Arctic Circle before proceeding to the 5th Fleet area of operations. After re-joining HSTCSG, in February 2020 Normandy conducted the largest seizure of conventional weapons in history during operations in the Gulf of Aden.

"CSG-12 is in the midst of an exciting and daring time, preparing Ford Strike Group for its initial deployment," said Capt. Charles Hampton, Normandy's commanding officer. "I am excited as Normandy's Captain, to bring a varsity level performer into the fold as CSG-12's Air and Missile Defense Commander."

Normandy has recently entered a year-long planned maintenance period, in which the 31-year-old Ticonderoga class cruiser will undergo operational repairs and modernization.



Office of Naval Research

A panel of judges listens to a virtual presentation during the educational challenge at the 2020 Naval Agility Summit, held Sept. 21-25 in Alexandria, Virginia. Clockwise from left: Vice Adm. Lisa Franchetti, deputy chief of naval operations for Warfighting Development; Joan Johnson, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, Test and Evaluation; Rear Adm. Lorin C. Selby, chief of naval research; and the Hon. James Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition.

Incubating ideas: Agility summit showcases innovative solutions to naval challenges

By Warren Duffie
Office of Naval Research Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, VA.

A mobile app allowing Sailors and Marines to collaborate with leadership to solve problems. A Wikipedia-style platform for the entire Navy—which can be shared in a Cloud environment and serve as a repository of institutional knowledge.

Streamlining the use of Microsoft SharePoint and Teams to reduce unnecessary meetings. An online portal where videos outlining best practices and procedures can be placed—lessening the risk of knowledge loss through retirements or re-assignment.

Four teams from the U.S. Naval Academy, Naval Postgraduate School and Navy Information Operations Command Texas pitched these ideas virtually during an educational challenge at last week’s Naval Agility Summit—held Sept. 21-25 in Alexandria, Virginia.

The event—which people attended virtually and physically—was hosted by the NavalX Agility Cell (also known as NavalX) and supported by multiple partners, including the Office of Naval Research (ONR).

“Ideas like yours will change the Navy and Marine Corps for the better,” said Chief of Naval Research Rear Adm. Lorin C. Selby. “This shows that the best solutions to problems come from those on the deck plates.

“We at the leadership level want you to keep pushing forward,” Selby continued. “We’ll remove barriers, but we need your ideas.”

The Hon. James Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition, echoed this sentiment: “We’re all inspired by your zeal and enthusiasm. We’re committed to creating an environment where you can bring about change and refine the art of the possible.”

The purpose of the educational challenge was to foster innovative solutions to pressing naval problems. The competing teams—selected from a pool of applicants—presented to a panel of judges that included Selby; Geurts; Joan Johnson, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, Test and Evaluation; and Vice Adm. Lisa Franchetti, deputy chief of naval operations for Warfighting Development.

The Naval Academy team pitching the mobile app won the challenge. The app provides a platform for warfighters to share work-related issues and solicit solutions and suggestions.

The team will receive follow-on support and access to requirement holders, end users and subject matter experts at warfare centers and naval labs to develop their idea. Afterward, team members will present the prototype or proof of concept to naval leaders and stakeholders.

The educational challenge was just one facet of the week-long Agility Summit. The summit was designed to build partnerships in the Department of the Navy (DoN) on matters of innovation, acquisition and transition—to share best practices and discuss problems facing the fleet. It highlighted innovation success stories from throughout the Naval Research and Development Establishment, through

presentations and workshops.

Discussion topics included technology transfer, transition, contracting and program management.

“It is imperative that the Department of the Navy finds ways to better access and transition emerging technologies into programs,” said NavalX Director Capt. Frank Futcher. “The Naval Agility Summit served as a platform to attack that challenge by bringing together diverse organizations, people and experts to highlight proven methods to transition new technologies with speed and urgency. This will help us assure relevancy and lethality in the future war fight.”

NavalX is designed to enable collaboration; accelerate the pace of discovery, learning and experimentation; and foster the naval workforce’s capacity for innovation and agility. It is developing valuable tools for solving problems and translating ideas into actionable solutions.

This helps naval organizations like ONR to better serve warfighter needs by connecting individuals promoting innovative ideas with experts who can experiment with those ideas, invest in them or help turn them into something tangible for the Navy and Marine Corps.



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MC2 Michael B Zingaro/

An MH-60S Sea Hawk attached to the Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9 lands at the rally point during a combat search and rescue training exercise, May 13, 2018.

HSC-9 completes unit-level training in the Appalachian Mountains

By Cmdr. Jennifer Cragg
Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic Public Affairs

CHARLESTON, W.VA.

More than 100 pilots, maintainers, and aircrew personnel assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9 the “Tridents”, based out of Naval Station (NS) Norfolk are conducting a nine-day unit-level training in the Appalachian Mountains, Sept. 25-Oct. 4.

Other services such as the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, and the 130th Air National Guard utilize the West Virginia National Guard Hobet All-Hazards Training Center located in Charleston, which is a little more than an hour’s flight from Norfolk. The area provides a unique training

opportunity for HSC-9 personnel.

In June 2019, the Yeager Airport’s flight center was renamed the Hershel “Woody” Williams Military Flight Operations Center after retired United States Marine Corps warrant officer and Medal of Honor recipient from Quiet Dell.

HSC-9 Operations Officer Lt. Cmdr. John Rashap, a native of Randolph, New Jersey, earned his officer commissioning from the U.S. Naval Academy in 2007, and appreciates the ongoing support from the 130th Air National Guard and Yeager Airport in providing assistance in space allocation during their training event for their unit.

“They have been extremely helpful and forward leaning in allowing us to get what we need to set-up a detachment,” said

Rashap, who explained the uniqueness of training environment to include minimal vertical obstructions such as phone towers or power lines provide ample opportunities for effective training. “This training environment is a bit novel for HSC squadrons, while other squadrons have flown through this area before, this marks the first time they have providing multiple training locations near the airfield for our utilization.”

Having that access near the airfield and utilizing the Yeager Airport’s hangar space is crucial for the squadron’s maintainers who can complete their required maintenance without being impacted by weather elements.

HSC-9 Commanding Officer Cmdr. Michael Marks also appreciates the com-

munity’s response during their training event adding how these types of experiences are game changing for their entire crew.

“Any time you can do something different then just routine it will widen your aperture for experience,” said Marks, who also appreciated the support from the city, 130th Air National Guard, and officials at Yeager Airport. “Operating out of our own assigned hanger during this training event is conducive for effective maintenance requirements.”

The training HSC-9 pilots have access to include the surface coal mine sites that provide anywhere from several thousand acres up to over 25,000 acres for training.

“Some units simply wish to land in the dirt and experience brown out conditions, which is very difficult to do at their home stations,” said Nick Keller, Yeager Airport director, and Central West Virginia Regional Airport Authority, who added that allied nations utilize the area for training to include all five of the military services.

NRC | In light of the recent pandemic, Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, commander, NRC, challenged the Navy recruiting enterprise

Continued from B1

talent teams can offer to Navy recruiting,” said Velez. “We are on a solid path with transforming our enterprise. After seeing how successful our transformed NTAGs were at the beginning of the pandemic, I determined that accelerating the transformation throughout all Navy recruiting by the year’s end is the right answer.”

The technological upgrades offered through transformation are helping Recruiters become more efficient, and enhancing the experiences of applicants.

“We have got to provide a better customer experience for applicants; speeding up transformation will allow that to happen,” said Jennifer Kelly, NRC division director of N94, which is the department responsible for leads generation and distribution.

“Recruiters benefit by having a modern IT solution via Salesforce, which is used by all of the top contenders in customer service to manage their customers. Transitioning us into a fully submersed system is key, especially in a COVID-19 world. Traditionally, our systems lagged quite a

bit, and it could take up to a week to contact an applicant from the time that they gave us their information. The beauty of Salesforce is that it runs in real time, so when an applicant gives us their information, it is immediately available to the Recruiters.”

Utilizing up-to-date technology and social media has been integral to the success of NRC’s recruiting efforts, especially during COVID-19, and the e-talent teams have played a pivotal role in this.

“None of us could foresee COVID-19 and what was going to happen, but what if none of the transformation teams had developed an e-talent group and division within their commands?” asked Chief Navy Counselor Martha Noe, E-Talent Central DLCPO for Region West. “What if the position of social media prospecting and brand development never came into effect prior to COVID? The e-talent team really helps get the Navy image out there.”

Transformation is not only modernizing Navy Recruiting’s technologies and platforms, but is maximizing the unique talents of each Recruiter by matching them with the recruiting pillar (sales and sourcing, assessing, onboarding, or e-talent) that best suits their talents.

“Accelerating transformation allows us to standardize processes across the enterprise and realize the benefits of functional specialization much sooner,” said Cmdr. Patrick Copeland, Deputy Commodore of Region Central. “In legacy recruiting, a Recruiter was required to be good at every function including prospecting, sales, administration, and Future Sailor management. If a legacy Recruiter struggled throughout any of the process, they would ultimately strug-

gle to achieve their assigned goals and be considered unsuccessful. Functional specialization allows a Sailor to become a Subject Matter Expert in the area that is best suited for them. We put the right person in the right job and they become efficient throughout the whole recruiting process.”

Overall, the NTAG model is proving to improve work-life balance for Navy Recruiters while gaining a more consistent mission outcome.

“NRC Transformation will provide the Recruiter the best Quality of Life in order to meet increased mission requirements,” said Neil Higgins, NRC transformation officer. “The feedback we are getting from the field is that NRDs who have transformed are especially enjoying the quality of life. Instead of working so many hours, they’re able to manage their time accordingly with production rates moving in the right direction.”

Copeland added that the expected outcomes from transformation not only include increased Sailor quality of life, but also an increase in Local Effective Accession Delivery System (LEADS) conversion, an increase in the quality of contracts, an increase in Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) conversion, an increase in Sailor advancement at Recruit Training Command (RTC), and a potential decrease in Delayed Entry Program (DEP) and RTC attrition.

At the end of this year, Navy Recruiting Command will consist of a command headquarters, three Navy Recruiting Regions, 26 NTAGs and 64 Talent Acquisition Onboarding Centers (TAOCs) that will serve more than 1000 recruiting stations around the world. Their mission is to attract the highest quality candidates to assure the ongoing success of

Child Support | Naval Support Activity (NSA) Hampton Roads opened its doors to the new Sewells Point Child Development Center (CDC) on Oct. 1

Continued from B1

waiting list. Over time, the classrooms will evolve to serve an equal balance of all age groups up to five years old.

“The Navy remains committed to addressing the childcare needs of our military families and delivering a superior facility in Hampton Roads,” said Capt. Jonathan

Kline, commanding officer of NSA Hampton Roads. “It remains a priority especially in the current COVID-19 environment and we are pleased to be in a position to offer such a large capacity safely in the future.”

Edward Cannon, Commander Navy Installations Command Fleet and Family Readiness director, said that access to quality, affordable child care is key to our Navy’s mission. The importance of great childcare directly affects readiness and family retention.

“My wife and I are active duty and with three young boys we are balancing, and sometimes more delicately than others, the responsibilities of our service and our family,” said Lt. Cmdr. Steven Bednash, Sewells Point CDC family representative. “To us, the CDC offers the flexibility to focus when we are at work with peace of mind that are children are in a safe, nourishing and enriching environment.”

In addition to a complete overhaul of all interior floors,

walls, fixtures and mechanical systems, the renovation also included the addition of state-of-the-art closed-circuit television (CCTV) monitoring systems, Wi-Fi, children’s computers, and all new furnishings. The kitchen has been transformed into a working classroom for all our childcare cooks in the Hampton Roads area to continue to sharpen their culinary skills.

“This project is a nine million dollar investment into our children, our Navy, and our mission,” said Cannon. “Like an American air craft carrier coming out of overhaul, Sewells Point CDC is now reentering the fleet to serve our Navy families.”

“Navy Region Mid-Atlantic is responsible for providing support programs and services for the Fleet, Fighter and Family. Follow Navy Region Mid-Atlantic’s Facebook at <https://no-click.mil/?www.facebook.com/CN-RMA.PAO>”

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Ginger Pork Meatballs

Lime zest, fish sauce, tons of fresh ginger, and a bit of jalapeño season juicy pork meatballs before they're cooked until gorgeously golden brown in the air fryer. Served with rice noodles and crunchy veggies, it's a fresh and delicious dinner.

» See **C4**

FURTHER REVIEW

PAPPY

By Charles Apple | THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Seventy-five years ago, fighter pilot and squadron leader Maj. Gregory “Pappy” Boyington received the Medal of Honor from President Harry Truman. It had been only 36 days since Boyington had been freed from a prisoner of war camp near Tokyo.

Boyington was known as a hard-drinking, hard-partying man in his free time but a gifted flight leader and skilled pilot in the South Pacific. At one point, flying out of Vella Lavella in the Solomon Islands, Boyington shot down 14 enemy planes over 32 days.

After his celebrated return to the U.S., Boyington wrote an autobiography — which was entertaining but not particularly accurate — which, in turn, received the Hollywood treatment with a made-for-TV movie and an entertaining — but not particularly accurate — TV series starring Robert Conrad as Boyington that ran for three seasons on CBS.



Pappy goes to war

Born in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho and raised in St. Maries, Idaho and then in Tacoma, Wash., Gregory Hallenbeck earned a degree in aeronautical engineering the University of Washington in Seattle and briefly worked for Boeing before he decided to become a U.S. Marine pilot in 1936. He found he couldn’t sign up because he was married. But then he discovered that he wasn’t *really* a Hallenbeck — the man he *thought* was his father was really his stepfather. There was no legal record of a “Gregory Boyington” being married, so off to flight school he went.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Boyington liked his alcohol and he loved a good party. As a result, he found himself repeatedly on disciplinary reports during his time in Pensacola, Florida — first as a flight student and then as an instructor. With a bleak future ahead of him in the Marines, Boyington resigned his commission as a first lieutenant in 1941 to fly for Gen. Claire Chennault and his American Volunteer Group in Burma — a group that would become famous as the “Flying Tigers.”

Pappy in the Pacific

As a flight leader for the Flying Tigers, Boyington officially shot down two Japanese planes and destroyed more on the ground. He would later claim six victories, but there are no records to prove that. However, Boyington’s disciplinary issues continued, causing friction between him and Gen. Chennault.

After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the U.S. suddenly needed all the pilots it could get — especially those with combat experience — so Boyington moved back to the Marines and was given a commission as a major.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Boyington spent several months on Guadalcanal before he was moved to Vella Lavella in the South Pacific. In September 1943, he took command of Marine Fighter Squadron 214, which became known as the “Black Sheep Squadron.” His men called him “Pappy” because, at age 31, he was a decade older than the rest. VMF-214 quickly developed into one of the most successful fighter units in the South Pacific. Press coverage back in the States brought fame to Boyington and his pilots.

Capture and return to the U.S.

While on a mission over Rabaul on Jan. 3, 1944, Boyington shot down his 26th plane since he had rejoined the Marines but then was shot down himself. He was picked up by a Japanese submarine and spent the next 20 months in Japanese prisoner of war camps on Rabaul, Truk, Ōfunu and then near Tokyo. He and other prisoners were freed on Aug. 29, 1945. He arrived at the Navy base in Alameda, in San Francisco Bay, two weeks later where he was met by 21 of his former “Black Sheep Squadron.” Their homecoming party was covered by Life magazine.



U.S. NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

During his captivity, Boyington had been promoted to lieutenant colonel. He was flown to Washington, D.C. where he received the Navy Cross from Marine Corps Commandant Gen. A. A. Vandergrift on Oct. 4 and then the Medal of Honor from President Harry Truman on Oct. 5.

Boyington retired from the Marine Corps in 1947 and worked a variety of odd jobs and also dealt with a series of divorces and marriages.

“Baa Baa Black Sheep”

In 1957, Boyington wrote his autobiography , “Baa Baa Black Sheep.” Nearly two decades later, TV writer and producer Stephen J. Cannell — who had co-created “The Rockford Files,” “Baretta,” and went on to co-create “The A-Team” and “Wiseguy” — bought the rights to Boyington’s book and turned it into a TV movie that served as a pilot for a TV series. Robert Conrad played Boyington. Other stars included Dirk Blocker, Dana Elcar and Jon Larroquette — the latter in his pre-“Night Court” days.



STEPHEN J. CANNELL PRODUCTIONS

Boyington served as the show’s technical adviser and even appeared as a Marine general in three episodes. But several of Boyington’s former squadron members were irate at the pure amount of fiction in the show. Boyington himself called the show “hogwash and Hollywood hokum.” “Boyington realized how upset we were and apologized to us,” at a reunion in Hawaii, squadron member Fred Avey said. “And he was not one to apologize very often.”

Pappy’s legacy

Boyington spent his later years working in sales and even as a wrestling referee. But although he tried from time to time, he was never able to kick alcoholism. He eventually had to give up his hobby flying. Having been a heavy smoker his entire life, Boyington battle lung cancer.

Boyington died on Jan. 11, 1988, under hospice care near his home in Fresno, Calif. He was 75. Boyington was buried at Arlington National Cemetery across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C.



KATHY PLONKA/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Boyington would make headlines again in 2006, when some members of the student government at the University of Washington questioned why the university should create a memorial to someone who killed others. The resolution failed by one vote.

In September 2007, the airport in Coeur d’Alene was renamed Coeur d’Alene Airport-Pappy Boyington Field. A statue of Boyington was installed at the airport in 2013.

Sources: “Black Sheep One: The Life of Gregory ‘Pappy’ Boyington” by Bruce Gamble, Navy History and Heritage Command, Military.com, The Washington Post, American-FighterAces.org, History.net, WarHistoryOnline.com, National Park Service, The Aviation Geek Club

Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program



James Throwing Shade in the Shade.

Christopher Taylor

VIRGINIA ARTISTS JURIED EXHIBITION RETURNS TO THE CHARLES H. TAYLOR VISUAL ARTS CENTER

From the Visual Arts Center

HAMPTON, VA

The Charles H. Taylor Visual Arts Center will host “Virginia Artists Juried Exhibition” from October 17, 2020 through November 14, 2020.

This much anticipated, annual juried exhibition showcases many of Virginia’s finest artists and artisans. This year’s exhibition features \$4,000 in cash prizes awarded to Best in Show, First, Second, and Third Places, and several awards of distinction in a variety of media. Artists from all across the Commonwealth, who work in all styles,

genres, and media, were invited to submit artworks for consideration.

“It is only fitting that we open our Welcome Home Season at The Charles H. Taylor Visual Arts Center with the 2020 Virginia Artists Juried Exhibition, a collection of 2D and 3D pieces that come directly from the community we serve. I’m proud to reopen our beloved Arts Center knowing the safety measures that we have in place allow our audiences to culturally enrich their lives during this pressing time,” said Hampton Arts Artistic Director Richard M. Parison, Jr.

It is a great pleasure to welcome the Curator of the Peninsula Fine Arts Center,

Diana Blanchard Gross, as the 2020 Virginia Artists Juried Exhibition juror and judge.

“The pandemic has not curtailed the incredible creativity and immense talent of artists throughout Virginia; the selection process was not easy and the competition was stiff. 215 artists submitted 555 artworks for consideration. Juror Diana Blanchard Gross has selected 94 works to be displayed in this year’s exhibition,” said Visual Arts Center Manager Jennifer Morningstar.

Running concurrently in the Annex Gallery is Surface Tension by the 2019 Virginia Artists Juried Exhibition Best in Show winner, Ashley McEwen. Ashley

McEwen’s paintings “deal with the concept of time as a network of possibilities that are intentionally tampered with, or left alone purely out of the desire to see what happens.”

The Virtual Award Ceremony will take place on Saturday, October 24 from 3:00-5:00 p.m. The livestream, available on The Charles H. Taylor Visual Arts Center’s Facebook page, is free and available to the public.

The Charles H. Taylor Visual Arts Center
4205 Victoria Boulevard
Hampton, VA 23669
757-727-1490

Hours:
Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays |
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Visitors to the center are required to adhere to COVID-19 guidelines while in the galleries. To ensure the health and safety of our visitors, the Visual Arts Center will have limited capacity. To view the gallery, please schedule an appointment by calling 757-727-1490.

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Mike Garten/

Gingery Pork Meatballs

By the Good Housekeeping test kitchen

Lime zest, fish sauce, tons of fresh ginger, and a bit of jalapeño season juicy pork meatballs before they’re cooked until gorgeously golden brown in the air fryer. Served with rice noodles and crunchy veggies, it’s a fresh and delicious dinner— all in under an hour.

- Ingredients
- For Noodles
- 6 oz. rice noodles
- 1/2 c. Asian-style sesame dressing
- 1 large carrot, shaved with julienne peeler or cut into matchsticks
- 1/2 English cucumber, shaved with julienne peeler

- or cut into matchsticks
- 1 scallion, thinly sliced
- 1/4 c. cilantro, chopped
- For Meatballs
- 1 large egg
- 2 tsp. grated lime zest plus 2 Tbsp lime juice
- 1 1/2 tbsp. honey
- 1 tsp. fish sauce
- Kosher salt
- 1/2 c. panko
- 1 cloves garlic, grated
- 2 scallions, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp. grated fresh ginger
- 1 small jalapeño, seeds removed, finely chopped
- 1 lb. ground pork

1/4 c. cilantro, chopped

Directions

Prepare noodles: Cook noodles per package directions. Rinse under cold water to cool, drain well and transfer to large bowl. Toss with dressing, carrot, cucumber and scallion; set aside.

Prepare meatballs: In large bowl, whisk together egg, lime zest and lime juice, honey, fish sauce and ½ teaspoon salt; stir in panko and let sit 1 minute. Stir in garlic, scallions, ginger and jalapeño, then add pork and cilantro and mix to combine.

Shape into Tbsp-size balls and air-fry at 400°F (in batches, if necessary; balls can touch but should not be stacked), shaking basket occasionally, until browned and cooked through, 8 to 12 minutes. Fold cilantro into noodles and serve with meatballs.

Halloween Cake Pops

By The Good Housekeeping test kitchen

There aren’t any tricks to this tasty treat: We’ll show you how to make this easy cake pop recipe by mixing cake crumbs with buttercream frosting, dunking them in melted chocolate, and giving them ghoulish and gory decorations. It’s is a foolproof Halloween dessert that’s easy to make!

- Ingredients
- 2 c. cake crumbs
- 1/2 c. buttercream or premade frosting
- 1 1/2 lb. white candy melts or dark chocolate, finely chopped
- Coconut oil (1 Tbsp per 8 oz candy melts)*
- Silicone cake pop molds
- Wooden craft sticks
- Corn syrup, red gel food coloring, and fondant, for decorating

Directions

In large bowl, combine cake crumbs and frosting.

To decorate: Working in batches, in medium bowl, melt 8 oz candy melts with 1 Tbsp coconut oil in microwave at 50% power in 30-sec. increments until melted and smooth. Place two-thirds of chocolate in second bowl and microwave at 50% power in 30-sec. increments, stirring in between, until melted and smooth. Add remaining chocolate, stirring until melted. Working 1 at a time, spoon 1 Tbsp melted chocolate or candy melts into each pop mold and use back of spoon to evenly coat sides, allowing excess to pool evenly in center. Refrigerate until firm, about 5 min. Push wooden craft sticks partially into molds and coat sides with chocolate or melts again. Let set.

Remove sticks. Fill each pop with 1 Tbsp cake mix, leaving gap between top of mold, then gently push sticks back in. Spoon over an additional 1 Tbsp melted chocolate or candy melts, and use small offset spatula to smooth and scrape away any excess. Refrigerate until firmly set, about 5 min. Gently remove each pop, pushing stick through mold and further into pop once it is fully removed. Repeat steps to make 16 pops.

For blood: In small bowl, combine 1 tsp corn syrup with few drops red gel food coloring. Place cake pops on large piece of parchment paper. Use wooden skewer



Mike Garten

to splatter onto finished cake pops.

For skeleton hand: Lightly dust silicone skeleton hand mold** with cornstarch. Press fondant into cavities, then take small rolling pin and roll back and forth over fondant until excess is removed. Carefully remove fingers one at a time. Use a little melted chocolate to adhere to cake pop.

For chocolate spiders: Make piping bag. Starting with large sheet of parchment paper, fold one corner over until edges line up to make a triangle. Cut off and

discard excess. With folded side toward you, take bottom right corner up to meet top point of triangle, curling paper inward to line up. Holding points together with one hand, use other hand to wrap final point around to meet points. Fold points into piping bag.

Fill bag no more than halfway with melted chocolate and fold down open end to seal. Cut small point off bottom of piping tip and pipe spiders directly onto pops.



Austin Shaffner

Although a great communication tool with friends and family, service members need to be mindful of the pitfalls of social media

Maintaining positive social media interactions during COVID-19

By Military Health System Communications Office

As the Department of the Air Force’s chief of chaplains, Maj. Gen. Steve Schaick has seen firsthand the power of social media to forge connections during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, airmen have signed onto Facebook Live events in increasingly higher numbers, said Schaick, who’s also a chaplain. Participation has been so strong that the Air Force likely will continue to incorporate aspects of social media into religious outreach efforts even after physical distancing restrictions are lifted.

But sometimes, Schaick said, nothing beats IRL – in real life.

“I think social media is kind of like having plastic plants in the house,” he said. “From a distance, they look good. And of course, they don’t need to be watered so there’s nothing to maintain.”

But the rewards of caring for live plants are exponentially more satisfying, Schaick said. “Social media creates an illusion that we’re having the meaningful connections our souls long for. And during this pandemic, even introverts have discovered their inher-

ent need for actual social interactions, and the emptiness that comes with social media alone.”

“People who used to think they were fine with just, you know, a good book and a comfortable chair are now saying, ‘There’s something missing in my life.’ Humans are wired as social creatures. It’s a piece of our DNA.”

As the pandemic stretches into eight months and counting, more and more people are turning to social media as a substitute for risky in-person interactions. Facebook and other social media platforms have reported record use, compared to a year ago.

But is that always a good thing?

Social media “allows us to maintain connections with [far-flung] family members, and to reengage with people we may have lost touch with,” said Nancy Skopp, Ph.D., a research psychologist with the Defense Health Agency’s Psychological Health Center of Excellence.

“Social media also may serve as a creative outlet, as a means of self-expression,” she said. “It can impart a sense of belonging for some and promote offline interactions.”

But Skopp also recognizes the poten-

tial harmful effects. She was lead author of a 2018 study of Facebook use among 166 active-duty U.S. service members deployed to Afghanistan. For all of social media’s benefits, “It makes it easier for people to make social status comparisons,” she said. “This could be a risk factor for anxiety and depression among vulnerable people.”

Social media engagements also may lead to aggression and exposure to bullying, she said, noting a study that found almost 25% of Facebook users felt regret about something they posed online. Skopp also points to another study of social media that was conducted before the pandemic. It found that over the course of 10 days, greater everyday use of social media resulted in lower feelings of overall well-being.

“I don’t think anyone can make a blanket statement that social media is good, or social media is bad,” Skopp said. “It’s all about how you use it,” even in times when in-person interactions are considered too risky, health-wise.

So participating in an interactive event is more beneficial, she said, than “just sitting around and scrolling through social media posts. That can be

a little demoralizing and contribute to negative feelings and moods.”

Skopp also says there are benefits to using social media to remain active and engaged in hobbies or topics you really care about – or have always wanted to explore. “This can help increase feelings about positivity for the future,” she said.

Researchers can’t say for certain how much time engaged in social media is too much. But it’s important to spend quality time off line. For example, “there’s a very large body of literature attesting that a regular exercise regimen is extremely helpful for mood regulation and just overall long-term mental and physical health,” Skopp said.

Schaick said he rides his bicycle regularly and also goes for runs and walks. “Exercise is important for me,” he said. “But so is this idea of taking control of myself – there are a lot of things I can do even in this restricted environment.” He and his wife have created a social bubble with another couple and “carefully and responsibly” spend time together on the weekends.

“I think it’s going to be years before we fully understand the psychological and emotional impact of COVID-19,” Schaick said. “But even though the news seems bad and discouraging, I’m absolutely certain that we’re going to get through this. And we will emerge as better, more resilient people.”

DoD pharmacy innovation improves patient safety and convenience

By Military Health System Communications Office

Military health beneficiaries across the Department of Defense will soon have the option to pick up their prescriptions from lockers by using two forms of authentication. With a quick scan of their ID (Common Access Card or a state ID), and by inputting their date of birth or fingerprints, beneficiaries can unlock their medications.

The pharmacy equivalent of an automated teller machine, or ATM, that dispenses medications instead of cash is cutting-edge technology that’s not new to the DoD, according to Air Force Maj. Jennifer Wang, a pharmacy flight commander at Vandenberg Air Force Base in Lompoc, California.

“For the Air Force, we jumped on this train pretty early. The first unit was installed in June 2009,” Wang said. There are currently 27 units at Air Force bases in the U.S. and Europe, with plans to add more than 20 units throughout the Military Health System beginning fall 2020 through 2021. “There will be a phased rollout based on each site’s unique circumstances. Some sites already have power and network in place, so those sites will likely go first,” said Wang. Other sites must transition to the Defense Health Agency’s common network security system Medical Community of Interest or Med-COI in order to install the locker units.

Over the past decade, the technology



Mercedes Porter

Staff Sgt. Dustin Stevens, 7th Medical Support Squadron pharmacy technician, opens a locker in the ScriptCenter at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, Feb. 26, 2020. Larger refill prescription orders will be available in the lockers beside the machine.

evolved so that the pharmacy can load multiple prescriptions in the dispenser at one time. The system is safe and secure for patients to use, said Wang. “The technology is pretty robust in ensuring the right person receives the right medication. Just like picking up in person, it requires two authentication factors before the robot retrieves the medication,” she added.

But don’t expect the machines to replace face-to-face or even mail-order prescription options. The machines are meant to expand options and add convenience for

patients, said Wang.

“These ‘ATMs’ can extend pharmacy operations beyond the MTF by acting as an additional remote prescription dispensing window,” said Wang. The pharmacy machine is available 24/7, reducing potential long lines and waiting times. The units will one day have video capabilities, allowing a patient who has a question to speak to a pharmacist via video when the pharmacy is open. “Like how a lot of our lives have evolved during this special time, remote video conferencing is just the way of life in

the future,” said Wang.

Patients can pick up prescriptions at their convenience and are no longer bound to the pharmacy’s time, which Wang sees as a big bonus for patients. “It’s more useful now to protect both our patients and staff by decreasing potential exposure risk from face-to-face interactions,” she said, adding the units reduce potential crowding in the pharmacy lobby, especially for elderly and high-risk patients. “This is definitely an example of innovation on the part of the MHS.”

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ONE TOO MANY

ACROSS

1. Enthusiast
4. Full of
8. One playing
14. Away from
20. To do
21. Get through
22. "Greatest"
23. "Greatest"
24. "Greatest"
25. "Greatest"
26. "Greatest"
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DOWN

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last week's answers

COASTAL COASTAL B. HOVAN
SAVOR A. D. S. F. R. O. N. T. I. A
T. A. P. L. H. W. E. R. E. O. U. G. M. U. L. Y
R. E. I. T. E. R. A. Y. S. A. N.
A. C. T. I. A. N. A. G. O. S. P. O. L. E. S. A. I. S.
H. E. L. F. S. T. A. C. O. U. P. L. E. O. F. A. V. O. K.
H. O. U. S. E. S. A. C. O. U. P. L. E. O. F. A. V. O. K.
Y. L. A. S. T. I. A. N. H. E. L. L. S. P. R. I. N. T. S.
A. F. I. N. S. T. A. N. T. A. R. Y.
A. L. C. U. R. E. S. E. N. S. I. V. E. S. H. A. P. E.
G. O. O. D. F. R. O. M. S. O. M. E. O. F. A. L. O. T.
C. R. U. S. O. F. I. S. L. A. M. I. C. S.
I. H. O. S. T. I. F. E. N. D.
W. H. A. T. I. S. H. I. S. A. N. S. W. E. R. S. K. E. E. P.
H. A. N. O. I. S. I. A. N. O. K. I. N. A. W. A.
A. D. S. A. I. M. G. H. E. G. I. V. E. R.
C. A. S. H. C. H. O. P. S. L. A. N. T. E. R. S.
C. H. O. P. S. L. A. N. T. E. R. S.
A. S. P. I. R. I. T. S. H. A. L. L. E. G. I. V. E.
C. U. S. I. N. E. R. E. F. U. S. E. S. H. I. S. M. A. F.
I. O. N. S. I. O. N. H. I. S. T. A. N. T.

6	9	7	2	3	1	8	4	5
8	2	5	6	4	7	1	3	9
4	3	1	8	9	5	6	2	7
7	5	2	3	8	4	9	1	6
3	8	4	9	1	6	5	7	2
9	1	6	7	5	2	3	8	4
2	4	3	1	6	9	7	5	8
1	7	9	5	2	8	4	6	3
5	6	8	4	7	3	2	9	1

CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: R equals G

KG N SWYLHQ WG SWWKVR IKZJU
EKQJ OWY YL NVJ JZNRQJ OWY
WGG, OWY DWYHJ IQ LKRQWV-
EWDQJ.

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