



CHINFO NEWS CLIPS

Navy Office of Information, Washington, DC

(703) 697-5342

Thursday, October 14, 2004

NAVY NEWSSTAND 13 OCT 04

CNO, MCPON Praise Service Sailors In The Middle East

By Journalist 2nd Class Jason Trevett,
Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central
Command/Commander 5th Fleet Public Affairs
MANAMA, Bahrain -- Chief of Naval
Operations (CNO) Adm. Vern Clark and Master
Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON)
(SS/AW) Terry Scott met with Sailors assigned
to USS Spruance (DD 963), USS Juneau (LPD
10), and tenant commands from Naval Support
Activity (NSA) Bahrain Oct. 10 during a tour of
the Middle East region.

The CNO held an all hands call on the pier
to thank the crew for their service at the tip of
the spear. He also discussed present and future
policy changes to the fleet that he says will
transform how the Navy operates.

"You are living in a Navy where it is OK to
challenge the assumptions about why we are
doing things the way we are doing them," said
Clark. "I want you to bring forth your ideas
about how we can make this Navy a better
place."

The two leaders congratulated new chief
petty officers aboard, saying their service is
more important now than ever to the future of
the Navy.

"Large proportions of our chief's
community have college degrees," said Clark.
"We are looking for chiefs that are continuing to
grow and are anxious to grasp on to more
responsibility for the way the command is run."

Clark also said that continuing education is
vital to the growth of the Navy at all ranks,
officer and enlisted.

Scott told the destroyer's crew that they are
witnessing an incredible time for the U.S. Navy,

and that more changes are happening now than
in the last 30 years combined.

"As we continue to look at new mission
areas and new platforms," said Scott, "we are
looking at new ways of ensuring that our Sailors
will perform the roles needed for our nation in
the future."

After the crew had an opportunity to ask the
CNO and MCPON questions, Clark closed his
remarks by thanking the crew for their
contributions to their country.

"Thank you for your service, thank you for
your commitment, thank you for believing in the
principals and values that makes our nation
different," Clark said. "The belief in freedom
and democracy, and being one of those people
who believes in it so much they are willing to
stand up and say 'sir' and make a difference."

Spruance Commanding Officer Cmdr.
Jerome Hamel said he believed that many of the
things Clark said really hit home with his
Sailors.

"I think that one thing the CNO stressed,
that I know my Sailors are seeing, is that there is
a competition in the fleet -- competition for jobs,
competition for billets, and that each individual
Sailor needs to make a commitment to stay on
top of their career path," said Hamel.

Before his pierside all hands call, Clark
stopped to thank Coast Guard Sailors aboard
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Baranoff (WPB 1318).
Spruance, formerly commanded by Clark, has
been deployed for four months in the U.S. 5th
Fleet area of responsibility. The ship is
scheduled to decommission in March.

Navy Ships Leave Norfolk To Support The War On Terrorism

By Sonja Barisic, Associated Press

NORFOLK -- The Harry S. Truman carrier strike group pulled out of port Wednesday on a planned deployment to support the war on terrorism, as a few hundred friends and family members looked on.

The nearly 7,600 sailors aboard the ships can expect to be overseas about six months.

Jets from the Norfolk-based Truman were among the first to drop bombs when the war in Iraq began in March 2003, while ships in the strike group launched Tomahawk missiles into northern Iraq. The carrier returned from that deployment in May 2003.

About two-thirds of the Truman sailors were also aboard the carrier during the last deployment, including Airman Erin Bentele, 23, of Silverdell, Wash.

"It's difficult (to go back) but we've got a job to do," Bentele said. "We're in it for the people back here. We want to make sure we have freedom, and we want get rid of terrorism."

Martha Urban, of Elyria, Ohio, said she was proud of her son, 20-year-old Airman Jeffrey Crumpler. But she was also scared because Crumpler, who was aboard the Truman, was making his first deployment.

"It's the unknown. It doesn't take a war for someone to be injured," Urban said.

Accompanying the Truman out of Norfolk Naval Station were the guided missile cruiser USS Monterey and the guided missile destroyers USS Barry and USS Mason.

The USS Albuquerque, a fast attack submarine based in Groton, Conn., and the USNS Arctic, a combat logistics ship from Earle Naval Weapons Station in New Jersey, also are part of the strike group.

The strike group left in early June to take part in Summer Pulse '04, a groundbreaking exercise involving seven carrier strike groups, and returned in late July. During the exercise, the Truman also completed training exercises that included naval surface fire support training and air-to-ground bombing off the East Coast.

Duty Calls USS Lincoln Out To Sea Once Again

By Vanessa Ho

The last time Keith Jones shipped out on the USS Abraham Lincoln, his son was 2 and just learning to speak, and his daughter was a first-grader who could read a few words.

After the ship's record-breaking deployment, Jones came home last year to a son who spoke in complete sentences, a daughter who could read on her own and a wife who had sold their home and classic convertible in New Jersey. His dog had died.

"I missed a lot," said Jones, a 34-year-old petty officer first class and military journalist, who lives in Southworth.

He's about to leave his family again. Jones and 3,300 crewmates on the Lincoln are preparing to ship out tomorrow for the Western Pacific for a four- to six-month deployment. They will stop in San Diego to pick up a new air wing and 2,500 more personnel before heading for Pearl Harbor and the Pacific Rim.

It is the aircraft carrier's first deployment since it returned from spending almost 10 months at sea -- first in the North Arabian Sea for the war in Afghanistan in 2002 and later in the Persian Gulf for the war in Iraq. It ended up being the longest deployment of a nuclear-powered carrier.

The Lincoln was the ship President Bush swooped onto in an S-3B Viking jet in May 2003 and declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended; recently, images of the carrier and of Bush, standing beneath a "Mission Accomplished" banner, have been used in criticism of the mounting death toll in Iraq.

Chief Petty Officer Douglas Stutz said the most difficult aspect of deployment is missing family.

"Besides the holidays, there's always birthdays and anniversaries and kids' plays and soccer games," he said. "But the most difficult burden doesn't necessarily lie on those who are going on deployment, but more so on the people that are left behind." He said about 55 percent to 60 percent of the sailors are new to the ship since the last deployment.

The Lincoln is shipping out a day after the USS Shoup, a guided-missile destroyer with about 300 crew members that serves as part of the Lincoln's air strike group, departs this morning.

This afternoon, the USS Momsen, a destroyer commissioned in August, is scheduled to arrive at Naval Station Everett, its new homeport. With a crew of 325, the 509-foot warship took a two-month journey from Florida to the Panama Canal, San Diego and San Francisco on its way here.

Next month, the USS Ford, a frigate with fewer than 300 sailors aboard, is expected to return to Everett after a four-month deployment.

Kate Reardon, a spokeswoman for the city of Everett, said businesses in town will have "appreciation days" for Navy families this month. Volunteers have been stuffing bags with candy and gift certificates for Momsen sailors who are single.

"We want them to know they're part of our community, and we support them," she said.

For the Lincoln's crew, the latest deployment means missing out on major holidays with family: Eid al-Fitr, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year's Eve.

And even though this deployment is expected to be shorter than the last one, Barbara Jones, Keith's wife, is dreading it.

Last time, her kids, now 4 and 9, needed surgery. She packed up the house alone to move from New Jersey to Washington.

Her son might need another operation, and she has to pack up again for another move to Hawaii, where Keith will be stationed after his return.

She figures that with drills and training at sea, her husband saw the kids just 17 days in an 18-month period in 2002 and 2003.

"It's a challenge, but it's the way of life," she said. "Either you can sit and decide you're going to drown in it or go ahead and just face it and just get through it."

This will be Stutz's sixth deployment in the past nine years, but his wife, Liza, didn't mind. She said she's busy as a receptionist at a veterinary hospital and has her friends, a 13-year-old dog and three cats to keep her company.

Her husband writes often, and she likes to eat her dinner while reading his e-mails.

"I do miss him when he's gone, but e-mail is wonderful," said Stutz, who is 38 and lives in Port Orchard.

U.S. Navy's Second Fleet Staff Moves To 'Distributed' Structure

By Christopher Cavas

The staff of the U.S. Navy's Second Fleet no longer is based aboard its floating command ship, Mount Whitney. The fleet is shifting to a "distributed staff" structure, with headquarters ashore at Norfolk Naval Base, Va., and aboard ships.

The new arrangement will, according to a fleet statement, "rely on a thoroughly capable staff ashore for more extensive planning and administration functions."

Eighty members of the 350-strong Second Fleet staff are moving aboard the assault ship Iwo Jima, which will be a floating headquarters for exercises as the new concept is tested out and developed. Iwo Jima will not be a permanent flagship; rather, the fleet will make use of a suitable warship as it is available.

Mount Whitney transferred to the Military Sealift Command (MSC) on Oct. 1, but remains a commissioned U.S. Navy ship with a Navy captain in command. A civilian mariner will oversee a civilian crew, who will steam and operate the ship, while Navy sailors continue to man the ship's command-and-control areas. After an overhaul at Norfolk to upgrade the ship to MSC habitability standards, the Mount Whitney is scheduled to head to the Mediterranean Sea and replace the La Salle as Sixth Fleet flagship.

The manning scheme aboard the Mount Whitney is similar to one instituted last winter aboard the Pacific Fleet flagship Coronado, which temporarily replaced the Blue Ridge as Seventh Fleet flagship while the Blue Ridge was overhauled.

U.S. Considers Reopening Inquiry Into Possible Abuse Before Iraq Prison Scandal

By Norimitsu Onishi and Eric Schmitt

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Several weeks after two major reports detailed the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison, the Pentagon is reviewing whether to reopen an inquiry into the case of four Iraqis who said they were abused in January at an American base in Iraq.

The case of the Iraqi men, employees of Western news organizations, was dismissed by the Pentagon months before the abuse at Abu Ghraib was first reported. The case, which involves reports of practices similar to those carried out at Abu Ghraib, could provide evidence that maltreatment of prisoners occurred elsewhere in Iraq.

The Iraqis, who were arrested Jan. 2 after trying to report on the downing of an American helicopter near Falluja, said they were physically abused while being held for about three days at Forward Operating Base Voltorno. They said American soldiers hit them, deprived them of sleep and made them assume painful positions. They said they were threatened with sexual assault and photographed while being forced to simulate sex acts.

Lawrence Di Rita, a Defense Department spokesman, said that civilian and military lawyers at the Pentagon were reviewing the case to determine whether more review in Washington was necessary. Until now, the Pentagon has deferred to the commanders in the field and their investigations.

Mr. Di Rita said it was likely to be a matter of days before the lawyers decided what, if anything, to do next.

He said the decision to begin the current evaluation, mainly by lawyers on the military's joint staff, was not influenced by the release in August of two reports that offered new details into detainee abuse, one by three Army generals and another by a panel led by former Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger.

Those reports criticized the leadership of Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, then the American commander in Iraq. Until now, his own review of the case was the highest-level scrutiny it received. Some Defense officials have privately

suggested the Pentagon should reopen the case in light of that criticism.

Three of the Iraqis work for Reuters and the fourth for NBC News. Reuters and NBC officials expressed frustration at what they described as the Pentagon's incomplete inquiry case and nonresponsiveness. The three Reuters workers, who were initially ashamed to speak about the abuse, were interviewed separately here in Baghdad, while the NBC cameraman was interviewed by phone from Falluja.

"The fact is that these allegations came before the Abu Ghraib allegations - they are not copycats in any way - and deserve to be investigated seriously and objectively," said David A. Schlesinger, global managing editor for Reuters. "But the Pentagon appeared eager to quickly put the investigation to a close."

Bill Wheatley, vice president of news at NBC News, said that after the Abu Ghraib scandal came to light, he sent a letter to General Sanchez asking that the inquiry be reopened but never received an answer. "We do not feel to our satisfaction that the matter has been investigated thoroughly," he said.

General Sanchez declined to comment.

Maj. Amy Hannah, a spokeswoman for the 82nd Airborne Division, which was accused in the incident, also declined to comment on the case beyond the executive summary of the unit's investigation.

According to the four Iraqis, the incident began in Falluja after Friday Prayer on Jan. 2. Word had spread that an American helicopter had been shot down west of the city. The four headed separately toward the site, where American soldiers were recovering the body of the captain and evacuating the co-pilot.

Three of the Iraqis began filming from a distance. According to the 82nd Airborne Division's executive summary of its investigation, the soldiers received fire from the area where the Iraqis were clustered and returned fire. Eventually, the soldiers chased the four Iraqis and took custody of them, taking them to the Voltorno base. The Iraqis, who were initially accused of being insurgents posing as

MORE

reporters, denied having anything to do with the firing.

E-mail exchanges between the Baghdad bureau chief for Reuters, Andrew Marshall, and officials at the 82nd Airborne show that the military was notified immediately that the men worked for Reuters. The military detained the men for about 60 hours, the summary said.

During their captivity, the Iraqis said they were often hooded and repeatedly struck, elbowed and slapped. But they said the more serious abuse occurred in individual interrogations, and then when they were in a small cell together.

Each said the interrogations were conducted by two American soldiers - they said they did not know whether they belonged to intelligence or military police units. An Arabic interpreter was present, they said.

Salem Ureibi, 54, a Reuters cameraman, said one of the soldiers repeatedly jabbed a pen up his nostrils and forced him to kneel with his hands in the air. The soldier, he said, threatened to make him sit on a stool with a nail sticking out that was attached to a wire.

During his interrogation, Ahmad Mohammad Hussein, 26, another Reuters cameraman, said an American punched him whenever he said, "I swear to God." He said he was forced to chew and lick a slipper and suck his fingers.

His cousin and driver, Sattar Jabar, 26, said he was forced to chew on a slipper and insert his fingers into his anus. "Then he forced me to put two of the fingers into my nostrils, put the slipper into my mouth and raise my left hand," he said. "He said I just looked like an elephant."

All four said that they were forced to do push-ups, and that while doing so were told to pretend that they were having sexual intercourse by moving their buttocks. Many of the soldiers brought cameras and took photographs, they said.

On Jan. 8, four days after their release, the three Reuters workers were interviewed separately by Mr. Marshall, the bureau chief. A 22-page transcript, which contains most of the

details they gave in recent interviews with The New York Times, was given to the military. On Jan. 9, Reuters sent an official letter of complaint to General Sanchez, after which the 82nd Airborne opened an investigation.

On Jan. 29, Reuters received a three-page copy of the inquiry's unclassified executive summary. It said none of the soldiers involved in the detention of the four "admit or report knowledge of any physical abuse or torture."

"The detainees were purposefully and carefully put under stress, to include sleep deprivation, in order to facilitate interrogation; they were not tortured."

Pointing out that Ahmad Hussein and Mr. Jabar are cousins, it said: "The cousins' statements are not credible and may have been purposefully exaggerated as part of an anti-coalition information campaign."

Reuters complained that the inquiry was inadequate, saying that investigators had not independently interviewed the Iraqis and had relied only on the testimony of soldiers. Through August, the news agency sent several letters to the Pentagon demanding that the investigation be reopened. But Pentagon officials wrote back that the case was closed.

In a short letter to Reuters dated March 5, General Sanchez wrote that he was "confident" that the investigation had been "thorough and objective." He added that investigators had concluded that the "soldiers involved acted within the applicable rules of engagement, policies and procedures."

Soldier in Scandal Gives Birth

Pfc. Lynndie R. England, who is scheduled for court martial in January in the abuse of Abu Ghraib prisoners in Iraq, gave birth to her baby on Monday, her lawyer said.

Private England, who is stationed at Fort Bragg, has said the father is Cpl. Charles Graner Jr., who also is charged in the case.

She faces 19 charges including maltreatment and assault of prisoners and sexual misconduct. Her lawyers say she was under the sway of officers senior to her.

Family Marks 2000 Attack On USS Cole

By Sig Christenson

On the fourth anniversary of their son's death in a terrorist attack that foreshadowed 9-11, the Swenchonises visited Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery as they have each Oct. 12.

Gary Graham Swenchonis Sr., wife Deb and daughter Shalala sat near a red, white and blue wreath and rows of white headstones, one marking the resting place of Gary Graham Swenchonis Jr., one of 17 sailors killed aboard the USS Cole.

But unlike past years, they had company Tuesday. Three dozen members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary came, too, in a show of strength and solidarity.

"We're honoring an individual who has sacrificed his life for his country, someone who had high ideals and was motivated to serve our country, to preserve our freedom, our lives — a true hero," said retired Army nurse Sylvia Sanchez, 57, of San Antonio.

Terrorism has transformed America since terrorists linked to Osama bin Laden blew a huge hole in the Cole, a guided missile destroyer making a port call in Aden, Yemen.

The blast sparked a Pentagon re-examination of security that caused Fort Sam Houston to be closed to the public months before 9-11. But it was only after bin Laden masterminded attacks on New York and Washington that terrorism became a primary focus for policy-makers.

The Swenchonises haven't forgotten that. The United States killed one suspect and six people were sentenced for the crime, but the family says neither former President Clinton nor President Bush has exacted retribution for the Cole.

They say they've lost faith in politicians of all stripes to do justice to the memory of their son, a Rockport-Fulton High School graduate who served initially in the Army and later joined the Navy.

"We've moved on. Of course we'll always miss our son very much, and we miss him every

day," said Swenchonis, 49, of Rockport. "But as for moving on, we've gotten rid of a lot of the resentment and anger. That's gone, thank God. And we realize the government was never going to do anything, or wouldn't do anything, and we accepted that and dropped it."

On Tuesday, they embraced the VFW members who gathered for a 28-minute ceremony at the cemetery.

Air Force veteran Bob Utley, 48, of La Vernia recalled the young man's journey: his birth at Fort Hood, his childhood in Rockport, his service in the Army and, finally, the Navy.

"He was well-known and liked by his teachers. Every time he came home on leave, Gary always went back to school to visit them," Utley said. "He loved football; he was a trainer for the team. He also loved soccer and was the team's manager."

The Yemeni port was the final stop for the younger Swenchonis and two other Texans among the 17 killed. Not long after the Cole began refueling, a small boat approached the ship and exploded. Ronchester Santiago, 22, of Kingsville and Timothy Gauna, 21, of Ennis also were killed, and 39 sailors were injured.

A tolling bell rang as Utley called out the names of the dead.

Retired corrections officer Rob Warfield, 67, of San Antonio played "Amazing Grace" on his bagpipe. A poem was read.

VFW chaplain Elvira Fajardo, 65, of San Antonio, led a prayer.

Swenchonis took the podium.

"A lot of people don't take the time to do what y'all did today. When we pulled up to see this many cars, it really touched our hearts that so many people that we don't even know had come out to do something like this for not just our son, but for those other 16 sailors," he said.

"To me it was terrible," Fajardo said. "My sympathy goes to the parents, the way they're hurting now. Their hearts are crying for what happened. It never stops."

S.Korea Says Ship Loss Not Linked To N.Korean Subs

By Rhee So-eui

SEOUL (Reuters) - A South Korean navy vessel sank overnight in bad weather but the accident was not linked to a possible intrusion by North Korean submarines, the Defense Ministry said on Wednesday.

One sailor was rescued but the other four crew members were missing from the small training ship that sank about 25 miles off the port city of Ulsan on the south coast of South Korea, ministry spokesman Nam Dae-yeon told reporters.

The vessel had been returning to port after an overnight exercise. It was not immediately clear what caused the accident.

Asked whether there was any link between the loss of the South Korean vessel and reported North Korean submarine activity, he said: "That has nothing to do with the sunken ship. Even the locations are far apart."

Earlier, Yonhap news agency reported the U.S. military had advised South Korea about two suspected North Korean submarines operating in South Korean waters on Monday.

"We have not found or detected anything," Nam said.

He said the military was carrying out a routine additional search, but declined to give any details.

South Korea takes seriously any reported sightings of North Korean submarines or other naval vessels in or near its waters.

In September 1996, a North Korean submarine ran aground off South Korea's east

coast with two dozen North Korean agents on board.

Almost all of them were killed, either by South Korean troops or their comrades, in a mountain search operation that lasted nearly two months. Eleven South Korean soldiers, two police officers and two civilians were also killed.

South and North Korea are technically at war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a truce rather than a peace treaty. Despite economic rapprochement since a North-South summit in 2000, military tensions remain high on the divided peninsula.

Generals from the two Koreas met in May for the highest-level talks between military officers since the war and agreed to introduce a hotline between naval commands to help prevent deadly maritime clashes.

In recent years, the rich Yellow Sea fishing grounds have been the scene of naval clashes during the crab season in May and June that have killed or wounded scores of sailors on both sides.

Separately, Yonhap reported North Korea had asked Seoul for 100,000 tons of fertilizer but the South had indicated it could not oblige because Pyongyang has stayed away from planned bilateral talks.

North Korea is also at loggerheads with the United States, China, Japan, Russia and the South over its nuclear ambitions. (Additional reporting by Kim Yeon-hee and Lee Jun-goo)

SEALs Charged With Iraqi Abuse In Court

By Seth Hettena

SAN DIEGO -- Charges against seven Navy SEALs accused of abusing Iraqi prisoners -- including one who died at Abu Ghraib prison -- were initiated by a disgraced former member of the unit who was trying to save his own career, lawyers for two of the accused said Wednesday.

One of the defense attorneys said the Iraqi who was found dead in November in a shower at Abu Ghraib was in good condition until the CIA took custody of him.

Cmdr. Jeff Bender, a spokesman for Naval Special Warfare Command in Coronado, the SEALs' headquarters, said it was inappropriate to comment on an ongoing investigation. A CIA spokeswoman declined to comment.

Members of a Sea-Air-Land, or SEAL, unit known as SEAL Team-7 are facing military charges including aggravated assault, obstruction of justice and conduct unbecoming an officer. Members of Seal Team-7 were part of a special operations-CIA unit hunting targets in Iraq, according to an Army report on Abu Ghraib.

The names of the accused SEALs have not been released.

Milt Silverman, a civilian lawyer in San Diego representing one of the accused sailors, said the accusations of prisoner abuse were made by a SEAL who earned the nickname "Klepto" for stealing a fellow SEAL's body armor in Iraq.

"Klepto" made the allegations of prisoner abuse while appealing a decision to kick him out

of the SEALs for the theft, Silverman wrote in an opinion piece published Wednesday in The San Diego Union-Tribune.

Silverman was out of town Wednesday and could not be reached by telephone, but John Tranberg, a civilian defense attorney for another defendant, supported Silverman's account in an interview. The accuser is no longer a SEAL but remains in the Navy, Tranberg said.

Some of the accused SEALs were implicated in the death of Manadel al-Jamadi, whom Silverman described as a terrorist bomb supplier who worked for Saddam Hussein.

Al-Jamadi was thought to have been connected with an attack on a Red Cross facility, according to a report by Army Maj. Gen. George Fay into the role of Army intelligence units in Iraq prisoner abuse.

In subduing al-Jamadi on Nov. 4, 2003, a SEAL hit him on the side of the head with the butt of a gun, Fay wrote.

Two CIA personnel brought al-Jamadi into Abu Ghraib and put him in a shower room with a sandbag on his head. He was dead 45 minutes later. An autopsy determined he died of a blood clot in his head, probably caused by being hit with the gun, the Army has said.

Silverman said al-Jamadi had suffered cuts and bruises but was in good condition when he was handed to the CIA.

Three forensic pathologists reviewed al-Jamadi's autopsy and concluded he did not suffer a blood clot to the brain and did not die of blunt-force trauma, Silverman said.

Navy Personnel Clerk Accused Of Running Identity Theft Ring

By Kate Wiltrout

NORFOLK — Middle-class merchandise from Target and predictable purchases from Home Depot on one end – and Cadillac, BMW and Lexus cars on the other.

Both ends were allegedly part of the spoils from an identity theft ring that struck more than 20 naval officers assigned to the Norfolk-based carrier George Washington last year.

Navy lawyers say names, Social Security numbers and other personal information were “stolen” by Curtis L. Phillips, an enlisted personnel administrator aboard the ship.

Phillips, 28, has been charged with illegally accessing government information to open fraudulent accounts, stealing vehicles, wrongfully using a government computer and exceeding authorized access to obtain personal information of other sailors.

At an Article 32 hearing – the military equivalent of a preliminary hearing or grand jury proceeding – at Norfolk Naval Station on Wednesday, the government added on an additional charge: fraudulently enlisting in the Navy in 2000, a charge stemming from Phillips’ not admitting that he had been arrested numerous times, according to testimony.

Lt. Mark Takla, the government’s attorney, said Phillips’ actions resulted in the theft of more than \$250,000 worth of property. A key piece of evidence tying Phillips to the crimes: the key to a BMW 528 that Baltimore County police said they found during a search of Phillips’ house in January.

According to a microchip embedded in the key, the 2000 model car was registered to Ensign Eric M. Laettner, a fellow sailor on the GW. Laettner testified Wednesday that he didn’t purchase the \$31,000 car – or an \$11,000 Suzuki motorcycle that later showed up on his credit report, or an \$840 television from Sears.

Laettner, who appeared to be one of the ship’s first victims, said he reported the identity theft to credit bureaus in June 2003 and filed a report with the Portsmouth Police Department.

About three months later, while at sea, Laettner found out he wasn’t alone. A Naval Criminal Investigative Service special agent stationed on the ship, Lee Young, got word of a possible ID theft ring from a Baltimore County police detective.

Young said Wednesday that once he learned of the problem, he e-mailed all the officers on the ship, urging them to check their credit reports.

It was the Baltimore detective who apparently cracked the ring. The detective – who because of undercover work asked not to be named in print – also testified.

The police officer, a member of the Baltimore County police department’s economic crimes unit, said Target Corporation alerted them to fraudulent credit accounts started in Maryland last November. Further investigation showed that multiple victims were stationed on the GW, so the detective notified Young.

The detective also testified to a second link between the ID theft ring and Phillips, saying that a suspicious employee at a motorcycle dealership thought something was wrong when four individuals arrived to pick up a motorcycle that had been purchased by someone else.

The officer said that a clerk wrote down the license plate number of their car – a Crown Victoria registered to Phillips, whose wife lives in Maryland.

Navy Mid-Atlantic regional spokeswoman Beth Baker said Phillips, who is not in custody, still serves aboard the carrier – though not in the personnel office.

Phillips has two lawyers defending him – one from the Navy and David Price, a retired captain who practices privately.

Price said the government has not proved that Phillips stole other sailors’ identities, even if he did have computer access to their records.

Price called the BMW key and the license plate connection to Phillips circumstantial, and noted that Phillips was never seen at the stores where individuals used the stolen identities to apply for fraudulent accounts.

Price also disagreed with the newest charge – that Phillips fraudulently enlisted by not disclosing at least 10 arrests in the late 1990s, on charges that ranged from theft to trespassing to possession of a deadly weapon with intent to injure. Price said the government didn’t submit documents showing that Phillips failed to include his record.

Investigating Officer Karen Somers – a lieutenant commander and the judge of whether the case has merit – didn’t issue a ruling Wednesday.

She said she has a range of options, from recommending that the charges be dropped to recommending a court martial or “captain’s mast,” a non-judicial punishment decided by a sailor’s commanding officer.

New Submarine Virginia Turned Over To The Navy

By The Associated Press

GROTON, Conn. -- After a short ceremony, the USS Virginia was formally delivered to the Navy - 104 years to the day the submarine service was launched with the commissioning of the USS Holland.

"This is the end of a long period of testing and trials and the beginning of its new life in the Navy," Capt. David Kern, the Virginia's commanding officer, said Tuesday. "This is now the Navy's ship."

The formal commissioning ceremony will take place Oct. 23 in Norfolk.

After a year of being put through its paces, the sub will return to the Electric Boat shipyard for what is known as a "post-shakedown

availability," when any repairs needed will be carried out and some of the finishing touches, such as a sound-absorbing coating on the hull, will be completed. The Navy and EB wanted to complete the delivery Tuesday because of the historical significance of the Oct. 12, 1900, anniversary of the commissioning of the USS Holland, also built by EB.

EB President John P. Casey said the Virginia represents an entirely new way of doing business for the shipyard. The design-build process, in which those who build, operate, maintain and even decommission the ship were brought in to suggest improvements, has been lauded as a model for shipbuilding.

Northrop Grumman Will Move LPD-17 From Avondale Yard To Pascagoula

By Lorenzo Cortes

With the amphibious warfare ship San Antonio (LPD-17) 92 percent complete, Northrop Grumman [NOC] will move the ship from its Avondale yard in Louisiana to its facility in Pascagoula, Miss.

“LPD-17 will soon be bound for Pascagoula for final outfitting and sea trials,” a company spokesman told Defense Daily yesterday. “Movement of the LPD-17 from Avondale to Ingalls represents not only a milestone in the build and completion of this first of a class ship, but also in the realization of a new business approach in which Northrop Grumman Ship Systems truly operates as ‘one shipyard.’” Avondale is currently short 600 craftspeople to meet production schedules, but the Pascagoula yard has excess capacity. Sending LPD-17 to Mississippi allows the Avondale personnel to continue construction of

LPD-18, LPD-20 and a commercial tanker. Moving the ship to Pascagoula also allows the ship to perform trials in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico. LPD-19 is under construction in Pascagoula.

“There will be no lost time between trials,” the spokesman said. “In fact, trials planning has already included trips to Pascagoula where the tactical air navigation and other antennas were already under construction. Additionally, the Pascagoula operations experience from building LPD-19 will make this a seamless transition and, in fact, may give the facility further experience that can be leveraged into LPD-19 construction as the ship nears launching.” The Navy is currently planning to buy 12 LPD-17-class ships. However, the FY '06 shipbuilding budget may include cutting two ships, trimming the buy number to 10.

Boeing Joins Pilotless Plane Race

\$766.7 Million Contract Extends Northrop Rivalry

By Bloomberg News

Boeing Co. has won a \$766.7 million contract to develop three unmanned combat aircraft, pitting the company against Northrop Grumman Corp. in a competition to be the first maker of aircraft that could be worth \$12 billion.

Boeing's contract to develop three of the X-45C planes through 2010 was awarded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the U.S. military's research arm. The agency awarded Northrop Grumman a \$1.04 billion contract in August to develop its X-47B model simultaneously.

Chicago-based Boeing, maker of the Navy's F-18 fighter, and Northrop Grumman, the biggest maker of unmanned aircraft for the U.S. military, might compete for contracts from the Air Force and Navy to build about 300 planes worth around \$40 million each.

Once testing is completed in 2010 for the two aircraft, the Pentagon will decide on one of the aircraft or both.

"Near the end of the decade, the goal is to have a decision by the services and the Department of Defense as to what role this system or this class of system will play," said Michael Francis, director of the Joint Unmanned Combat Air Systems program for the research agency.

Both companies will build three planes and conduct flights starting in 2007 to demonstrate their abilities to perform such missions as

dropping bombs, performing reconnaissance in hostile territory and jamming enemy radar.

The aircraft "are about dull, dirty and dangerous," Francis said. "They've given us the most dangerous missions, which is one of the reasons for them being unmanned in the first place."

Boeing has a head start in testing with its two X-45A planes, which flew for the first time in 2002, designed for demonstration purposes under contracts worth almost \$848 million with the defense agency.

Since the first flights, the planes have dropped dummy bombs, flown in formation and communicated with manned aircraft. Testing of those aircraft will be complete next year.

The new contract is a modification to previous contracts for Boeing.

"We have learned a heck of a lot operating two unmanned airplanes in a coordinated manner," said Darryl Davis, head of Boeing's unmanned combat aircraft program. "It's been extremely valuable."

Scott Winship, head of Northrop's program, said he has some catching up to do because of Boeing's testing in the past five years.

Still, Los Angeles-based Northrop is ahead of Boeing in terms of creating an aircraft for Navy carrier landings. Winship wants to be able to test an aircraft carrier landing in 2008, something Boeing says its X-45C won't be able to do.

N.E. Lawmakers Join In Shipyard Effort

By Bryan Bender

WASHINGTON -- New England lawmakers are urging the Defense Department to keep open the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard when US military bases are reviewed next year for possible closings, saying the submarine overhaul facility "plays a critical role in our national defense infrastructure now, and must be allowed to do so in the future."

In an Oct. 8 letter to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld that was released yesterday, members of Congress from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine said the shipyard, located 50 miles north of Boston in Kittery, Maine, meets all the standards that the Base Realignment and Closure Commission will consider in deciding whether to keep facilities open.

"In key areas, including shipyard performance, mission capability, and the ability to transform to perform future missions, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard measures up positively against the criteria being utilized," the bipartisan group of lawmakers told Rumsfeld and other senior Defense Department and Navy officials.

Lobbying efforts to inoculate military bases around the country from the politically charged process, set to get underway next May, are picking up steam.

The lawmakers said that the Portsmouth shipyard, which accounts for 4,600 jobs in 38 surrounding communities, is a primary location for submarine maintenance. They argued that there would be a significant economic impact both on the Navy and on the region should the Pentagon decide to close the shipyard.

Separately, officials are worried that reduced construction of Navy submarines in the future will adversely affect Portsmouth and other submarine construction and repair facilities in New England, such as General Dynamics Electric Boat Corp. facilities in Groton, Conn., and Quonset Point and Newport, R.I., which together account for 16,000 jobs.

Another selling point for Portsmouth, lawmakers said, is the availability of land and air space around the shipyard for future missions. The shipyard is home to three US Coast Guard ships and has the capacity to add more cutters for maritime security, they said.

The shipyard also has expertise in dealing with dangerous materials because it refuels nuclear-powered submarines. That expertise could "serve as the foundation for expanded emergency response missions supporting homeland security," the lawmakers said.

They asserted that Portsmouth is the least costly naval shipyard to operate, and shutting it down would not make economic or security sense.

The letter, along with a 12-page report outlining the yard's benefits, was signed by Senator Edward M. Kennedy and Representative John Tierney, Massachusetts Democrats; Senator Judd Gregg, Senator John Sununu, and Representative Jeb Bradley, New Hampshire Republicans; Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, Maine Republicans; and Representatives Michael Michaud and Thomas Allen, Maine Democrats.

It is the latest effort by New England's elected officials to preempt a potential base closure; the commission will make its recommendations to the president in September 2005.

Last month, Massachusetts proposed that the Air Force invest \$440 million to expand Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford.

Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, Kennedy, and Representative Martin T. Meehan, a Lowell Democrat, briefed officials last week at the Air Materiel Command at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio on the state's plan to create as many as 5,000 additional jobs by expanding the high-tech research mission of Hanscom, home to the Electronic Systems Center.

The plan was first pitched to James Roche, secretary of the Air Force, at a Pentagon meeting last month.

Lines Snap During Storm; USS Vincennes Bumps Into USS Coronado

By Nancy Montgomery

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan —

Trees snapped, mud slid, a roof blew away, a porta-potty tipped over — and just minutes before it was supposed to start, the Navy Ball was postponed. If that weren't enough, Saturday's typhoon sent the USS Vincennes out of its berth and into the USS Coronado, damaging both ships.

A Pacific Fleet team of investigators was on its way to Yokosuka to determine why the Vincennes was blown from its berth and into what had for months served as the Seventh Fleet flagship, moored two berths over. But everyone already agrees that it started with the winds from Typhoon Ma-on.

Winds gusting to 91 miles per hour and sustained winds of up to 72 miles per hour snapped the lines tying the ship to the pier.

"I was shocked when I saw us pulling away, and we were free, floating," a Vincennes sailor said. "There really was nothing we could do."

Cmdr. Mark J. Englebert, the Vincennes captain, could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Yokosuka base weather forecasters had predicted that the storm would not bring sustained winds of 58 miles per hour or more — the standard for when naval bases are recommended to go into "Tropical Cyclone Condition of Readiness 1." Instead, the base was on "storm watch."

"Storm watch" means that although destructive winds are not forecast to occur, there is still a possibility of danger because of the storm's nearness and the possibility its course could alter, said Lt. Allon Turek, assistant operations officer at the base Naval Pacific Meteorology and Oceanography Center.

But for two periods of about 10 minutes each, Turek said, Saturday's storm did bring sustained destructive winds, starting at about 5:15 p.m.

About half an hour later, about 5:45 p.m. or so, according to base spokesman Mike Chase, Yokosuka went into Tropical Cyclone

Condition Emergency 1 and the base gates were shut.

But the Vincennes already had broken loose, at about 5 p.m., according to a news release. There was some concern it might hit the USS Chancellorsville, berthed next to it — which some sailors said the Vincennes crew actively tried to prevent. They cut the remaining lines, dropped their anchor and started the ship's engine.

None of it worked. The anchor dragged, the engine was started too late to propel the ship to safety and, a sailor said, they were pointed in the wrong direction to steer it anyway.

The hit punched several holes above the waterline on the starboard side of the Vincennes. The damage to the Coronado was "minor," according to naval officials.

Both ships remained "mission capable," according to Lt. Cmdr Mark Boyd, a Seventh Fleet spokesman.

"I think we came out with the best possible outcome," a sailor said. "We could have run aground. That would have been worse."

Naval public affairs officers would not comment on the incident.

Saturday was the second time in as many months that a tropical storm pushed a ship berthed at Yokosuka somewhere it was not supposed to be. In September, the USNS Yukon, an oiler, was grounded on soft mud about 400 yards from its anchored position during wind gusts of 51 mph from Typhoon Songda.

At the base weather center, Lt. Turek said the "storm watch" warning should have been sufficient for people to take precautions. "The potential for destructive winds is there," he said.

Yokota Air Base was in a higher level of alert because the Air Force, which must protect planes, has different readiness standards from the Navy, which focuses on keeping its ships safe. Wind gusts of more than 58 mph will send Air Force bases into the highest state of readiness, which the Navy doesn't enter until expecting sustained winds of more than 58 mph.

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Turek acknowledged that the center's forecast — sustained winds of 46 mph and gusts of 69 mph — was a little bit off.

“We wish we could forecast to 100 percent. If we could, we'd be the golden child of the scientific community,” he said. “We issue a storm watch for ones that we feel there's a possibility for this to go awry. In this case, that's exactly what happened. It did alter its track and give us winds that were in excess of what we forecast.”

By Tuesday afternoon, most of the debris and damage the storm caused had been cleared away. “As we speak, the only cleanup operation that is ongoing is beautification — crews picking up leaves and small branches,” said Yokosuka spokesman Chase.

Chase said no monetary damage estimate was available yet.

But, he said, Saturday's storm caused more damage than any since 1996's Typhoon Violet, which brought wind gusts of more than 115 mph.

Role Of Navy Medicine Evolves Over 229 Years

By Eric Steinkopff

The U.S. Navy marks its 229th birthday today, and at Camp Lejeune - where only a couple thousand sailors work alongside 40,000 Marines - the celebration will be particularly special.

Most of the sailors stationed locally, like Naval Hospital commander Capt. Richard C. Welton, are medical specialists. And just like the rest of the Navy, its medical component has evolved greatly over time and now boasts a rich history.

These days, with U.S. troops operating abroad in hot zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan, Navy medics need to focus on readiness, said the 57-year-old Welton.

"We have to make sure we are ready to go wherever the Marines are going," said Welton, who has served in the military for 34 years. He's held his current post since May 2003. "We're looking at Navy medicine as a defensive weapon."

But that wasn't necessarily the government's top priority on Oct. 13 1775, when Congress established the Continental Navy. At that time, having procured and outfitted two armed vessels, the Navy was on the lookout for British ships bringing munitions to America. It would be almost another 20 years before doctors were formally recruited to deploy aboard Navy ships.

"When Congress authorized the first frigates to be built in 1794, there was a provision in the law that included manning them - with surgeons and surgeons mates," said Harold D. Langley, former curator of Naval history at the Smithsonian Museum of American History, in Washington, D.C. Langley authored "A History of Medicine in the Early U.S. Navy" in 1995.

In 1798, Congress funded four frigates for an undeclared naval war with France, Langley said. As more ships were built, civilian doctors were recruited to serve as both physicians and as surgeons. And for young doctors at the time, the Navy was a good place to start, Langley noted.

"(A new doctor) could stay in town and compete with his mentor or move into a small town and try to make a living," Langley said.

"(But in) the Navy... at least you had a paycheck and ready patients. You also had the opportunity to... be exposed to other people and learn to treat gunshots, saber wounds and falls from great heights" - from the mast or riggings of a ship, he said.

"Just a few years in the Navy might (provide) experience... that you wouldn't see in your small town where the local doctors were lancing boils, fixing broken arms or giving cough medicine."

Individual surgeons were attached to a particular ship, and they answered to the Navy secretary following a deployment. The first permanent naval hospital was built in 1830, six years after Congress allocated the money, Langley said. Although they liked to call themselves a medical corps, it wasn't until the creation of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in 1842 that they had true status in the Navy.

Staff of 1,600

Today, the Navy comprises 374,000 men and women, 4,108 aircraft and 318 ships.

Of the 1,600 people presently working at the Camp Lejeune Naval Hospital - about 850 of whom are in uniform, the rest are civilians and reservists - roughly 400 compose the nucleus of a well-organized, deployable fleet hospital, one of six such mobile units nationwide. The others are based in Portsmouth, Va., Pensacola and Jacksonville, Fla., Camp Pendleton, Calif., and Bremerton, Wash. They take turns as the duty fleet hospital from each coast.

With most of Lejeune's 43,000-member II Marine Expeditionary Force preparing to deploy for Iraq early next year, the fleet hospital here is busy getting ready to support them, Welton said.

"We'll be Tier I ready in late October and next in the batter's box to be ready to deploy... this winter," Welton said. "That (also) means that this (Naval) Hospital becomes a primary receiving center for casualties."

Although Lejeune's unit can operate like a 500-bed mobile hospital, Welton said typical deployments included about 100 beds or fewer depending on the need.

The entire unit deployed last during Operation Desert Storm in 1991. A 36-bed facility with about 150 doctors, nurses and corpsmen deployed to the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in December 2001 and maintained a presence there caring for Taliban and al-Qaida prisoners through most of 2002.

Members of the base's Naval Hospital and fleet hospital deployed to the Middle East for Operation Iraqi Freedom I in early 2003 and to Haiti in last March.

Wounded Marine's Wife Has Quintuplets

By Don Babwin, Associated Press

CHICAGO — As Marine Sgt. Joshua

Horton recovered overseas from wounds suffered in Iraq, his wife was in a maternity ward in suburban Illinois, making him a father five times over.

Horton knew his wife was expecting quintuplets but decided it was his duty to go to Iraq last month with Marines he helped train — even if it meant leaving his wife and two children behind.

"He was taking them into combat for the first time. He wanted to get them there safely and return," said Dean Fisher, the bishop of Horton's church in Oswego, a Chicago suburb.

Yesterday, a day after his wife, Taunacy, gave birth to three girls and two boys, Horton was back in the U.S., but not with his family. He was transported from a hospital in Germany to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

A Marine spokesman said Horton, 28, is expected to recover but was so heavily sedated that he probably was not aware he is a father again.

Meanwhile, the quints — each weighing less than 2 pounds — were in critical but stable condition.

Friends and relatives said Horton chose to put his life and family on hold to serve his country.

"This guy is my hero," said Bill Powell, a lieutenant with the Aurora Police Department, where Horton is an officer.

Like many others, Horton felt he had to do something after terrorists struck the U.S. on Sept. 11, 2001. Horton had been in the Marines and his wife had been in the Navy, and they thought one of them should volunteer for duty.

The couple agreed Horton would enlist in the Marine Reserves. Then came news that Taunacy Horton was pregnant.

When Sgt. Horton's Chicago-based unit was activated in June for training in preparation for deployment to Iraq, he had a decision to make.

"One of his greatest comments was, 'There are other mothers waiting for their sons to get home and I need to give some other men relief,' " Fisher said. "Taunacy, as a military mother, she understood that and actually encouraged him."

Maj. Rick Coates, the unit's information officer, said Horton's decision makes sense to those who have served.

"He has, quite frankly, two families — his wife and kids and the Marines," Coates said. "He felt he had two obligations, one to his family and one to the other family."

Open Season Begins For TSP With A Push For Long-Term Savings

Federal Diary

By Stephen Barr

The Thrift Savings Plan kicks off an "open season" tomorrow with slogans designed to remind government employees that long-term savings can increase their income in retirement.

"Let It Flow" is TSP's reminder to federal employees to keep making contributions. About 87 percent of workers covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System and about 67 percent covered by the older Civil Service Retirement System deposit tax-deferred dollars in the 401(k)-type program.

"Save For Later. Start Now." markets the TSP to military personnel and other members of the uniformed services. Congress opened the TSP to these government employees in January 2002 and about 18 percent are using the program to save for retirement.

The slogans, which appear on brochures being distributed to employees, are part of a renewed effort by the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, which oversees the TSP, to improve program services. The board has installed a new mainframe computer and contracted for a second telephone service center in an attempt to improve TSP operations.

The TSP has about 3.3 million participants and had about \$141 billion in assets at the end of September, making it one of the largest retirement savings programs in the world.

Starting tomorrow and ending Dec. 31, government employees can enroll in the TSP, or, if already participating, can change the amount of their biweekly contributions.

The maximum biweekly contribution is rising to 15 percent of salary for FERS participants and to 10 percent of base pay for CSRS participants and military personnel.

Investments also are subject to a dollar cap, set in the tax code. That limit is rising to \$14,000 for calendar year 2005.

Highly paid FERS employees, however, should manage their contributions carefully. If they hit the dollar cap before the last pay period of 2005, their contributions will shut off and so will the government's matching contributions.

The government, as employer, pays up to 4 percent as a match and provides an automatic 1 percent contribution for FERS employees.

Experts advise that FERS employees make sure they can contribute at least 5 percent of salary in every pay period in order to capture the maximum government contribution. In doing so, they effectively force the government to give them a raise.

For employees who are worried about bumping up against the dollar cap, the TSP provides a fact sheet, work sheet and an online calculator (www.tsp.gov) to help figure out what biweekly contributions should be. If you expect to earn more than \$93,000 in 2005, the limit may affect you.

Since CSRS employees and military personnel get no government contribution, those considerations do not apply to them.

This could be TSP's last open season. A bill pending in Congress would allow federal employees and military personnel to start or change their TSP contributions at any time instead of just during the open seasons held twice each year.

The Senate has approved its version, but the House has not acted, apparently because of concerns about the costs of certain provisions in its bill. Congressional aides hope to clear up the differences between the bills when Congress returns for a lame-duck session in November.

The most recent TSP tally, from Aug. 31, showed that government employees were contributing \$1.35 billion monthly.

Of that, \$555.2 million was invested in the common-stock fund, called the C Fund, and \$533.8 million went to the government securities fund, known as the G Fund. The rest was spread among a bond fund, a small capitalization stock fund and an international stock fund. Except for the G Fund, all track market indexes.

Next year, the TSP will likely add a new option -- "lifecycle funds," which are designed for participants who do not have the time or

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knowledge to manage their accounts and need help with asset allocation.

Under current plans, participants would be asked to predict when they will start withdrawing retirement savings. For employees far from retirement, the investment strategy

would be heavily weighted toward stocks. As an employee's "draw down" date approached, the strategy would become more conservative, or tilted toward fixed-income investments.

Diary associate Eric Yoder contributed to this column.

Coast Guard Cutter Crew Makes 2 Cocaine Busts

Crew members from the Charleston-based Coast Guard cutter Gallatin last week confiscated nearly 8,000 pounds of cocaine in two drug busts in the Caribbean.

The most recent case began early Friday when the Coast Guard's command center in Miami learned a Navy P-3 aircraft had spotted a suspicious "go-fast" speedboat, the Coast Guard said in a statement.

The Gallatin and its armed helicopter from Jacksonville, Fla., were sent to intercept the boat, but the suspects refused to stop. The helicopter's crew fired warning shots, then shot out the boat's engines.

Four people on board and 58 bales of cocaine, weighing about 3,880 pounds, were brought onto the Gallatin.

The earlier case began Oct. 2 when a 40-foot drug-smuggling boat was spotted by the Gallatin's helicopter crew. As soon as the boat crew knew they had been spotted, they began throwing bales overboard and a chase ensued with similar results.

"Stopping \$80 million worth of cocaine from hitting America's streets is not a bad week's work," Capt. Mike Parks, the Gallatin's commanding officer, said in a statement.



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Thursday, October 14, 2004

YAHOO.COM 13 OCT 04

Ernest Borgnine Returns To DC To Receive Navy Honor

By PR Newswire

WASHINGTON -- Academy Award-winning actor, Ernest Borgnine, is making his way back to the nation's capital this week to revisit friends and shipmates -- and to show one of his latest films -- at the U.S. Navy Memorial and with The United States Navy Band.

On Saturday, Borgnine, a World War II Sailor, will serve as master of ceremonies of the October 16, United States Navy Band concert at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. The band is celebrating the 229th anniversary of the United States Navy.

Borgnine enlisted in the Navy in 1935, serving on destroyers and submarine chasers. During World War II, he served at sea in the Pacific Theater. Throughout his 10 years in the Navy, Borgnine rose to the rank of gunner's mate 1st Class, but Ernie says he always wanted to "make chief."

As a special surprise, just prior to the concert, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Terry Scott will present Borgnine with an "honorary promotion" to chief petty officer.

"Mr. Borgnine is without a doubt, one of our nation's greatest treasures," said Scott. "Throughout his life he has been a strong supporter of the U.S. Navy and our Sailors. His service to our Navy and our nation have been immeasurable. I am honored to have this opportunity to welcome him into the Navy's chiefs mess."

At 87 Borgnine is still going strong. Best known for his role as Lt. Cmdr. Quinton McHale in the 1960s television series, "McHale's Navy," Borgnine has played in many

other major movies, television and theater productions. He won an Oscar for his dramatic role as a butcher in the 1955 movie, "Marty." He also starred in classics like, "From Here to Eternity," and "The Catered Affair" with Bette Davis.

Most recently, Borgnine played the commissioner's father in the television series, "The District." And in one of his lighter roles, he is the voice of the character, "Mermaid Man," on the Nickelodeon cartoon "SpongeBob SquarePants."

Borgnine's newest movie -- a western -- is "The Trail to Hope Rose." The film is a Hallmark Channel Original movie, which premiered Saturday, July 3, 2004. Borgnine stars with Lee Majors, Lou Diamond Phillips and Marina Black. The movie will be shown this Sunday, October 17, in the U.S. Navy Memorial's Theater. Borgnine will meet with guests of the Navy Memorial at the movie's showing, which begins at 3:30 p.m.

Borgnine will be available to media beginning at 4 p.m. Sunday.

For more information, call Tami Faram, U.S. Navy Memorial Foundation Public Relations Director at (202)-380-0718.

The United States Navy Memorial Foundation is located on 7th and Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. The Navy Memorial's Arleigh and Roberta Burke Theater is located in the Naval Heritage Center, which is adjacent to the Navy Memorial. The Navy Memorial is located at the Archives/Navy Memorial METRO stop on the yellow and green lines.