

Seabees receive Bronze Star

JO2 (SW) Chad V. Pritt

30th Naval Construction Regiment

Two Pearl Harbor Seabees were presented with the Bronze Star Medal at a ceremony in front of the Pacific Fleet Seabees headquarters building here on Dec. 19.

Commander, First Naval Construction Division Rear Adm. Charles R. Kubic presented the medals to Commander, 30th Naval Construction Regiment Capt. William L. Rudich and 30th NCR's chief staff officer, Cmdr. Mark Libonate.

The awards given at the ceremony are so far the highest given to any Seabees for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

Less than half of one percent of servicemembers have ever received medals as high as the Bronze Star, said Kubic.

"These Seabees have absolutely earned the awards they're given," Kubic continued.

During OIF, the 30th NCR staff was deployed with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group to Iraq, cutting a swath to Baghdad as the war progressed.

It was during this time that Rudich and Libonate earned their Bronze Stars by replacing the traditional role of the Seabee and replacing it with a more versatile and lethal force. OIF marked the first time that construction forces operated not from a fixed location, but from behind the Marines as they advanced across the battlefield.

"Wherever we ended up at the end of the day, we unrolled our sleeping bags and that's where we slept," said Rudich. "It was a whole new way of doing things."

Rudich and Libonate's leadership during OIF resulted in the comple-

tion of 10 missions from Kuwait to Baghdad, including the bridging of the Saddam Canal and Diyala River.

"It doesn't matter how many times it's said, it was a team effort by everybody who was involved," said Libonate.

Rudich, as commander of 1st Marine Expeditionary Force engineer group's lead element, anticipated the movements of combat elements to ensure his forces were ready to provide support.

"They proceeded into the most dangerous combat area for Seabees since Vietnam," said Kubic. "When they crossed the line of departure, these Seabees didn't know what to expect, but they succeeded at every turn ... even when their duties required them to operate under the stress of war."

Although 1st Marine Expeditionary Force engineer group came under fire on a near-daily basis at the beginning of major combat operations, there were no embedded media to tell the story.

"The coverage was at the front lines where it belonged," said Libonate, "with the men and women taking direct fire."

The 30th NCR was deployed in support of OIF and Operation Enduring Freedom from January to May 2003. As part of 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, the 30th NCR also earned the Presidential Unit Citation for its support during OIF.

The Bronze Star Medal may be awarded to individuals who, while serving with the armed forces of the United States in a combat theater, distinguish themselves by heroism, outstanding achievement or by meritorious service. President Roosevelt authorized the Bronze Star Medal by Executive Order 9419, dated Feb. 4, 1944 and retroactive to Dec. 7, 1941.



Photo by PH1 Arlo K. Abrahamson
U.S. Navy Seabees attached to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 (NMCB-133) rebuild the Sarabadi Bridge on the Tigris River near Hillah, Iraq.

Defense Finance and Accounting releases report

Bryan Hubbard

Defense Finance and Accounting Service Public Affairs

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) earned its fourth consecutive "unqualified opinion" from outside auditors, according to its recently released stakeholders' report for fiscal year (FY) 2003.

The unqualified, or clean, opinion from Urbach Kahn & Werlin LLP is the highest mark available and demonstrates DFAS' commitment to excellence in financial management. The DFAS FY 2003 Stakeholders' Report, along with the agency's audited financial statement, is available on the Web at http://www.dfas.mil/about/ar_index.htm.

"In fiscal year 2003, the DFAS team made great strides in improving our service to the people who defend America," said Patrick T. Shine, acting director of DFAS. "We pushed the quality of our products and services up while reducing the costs of finance and accounting for the Department of Defense."

The report also highlights the scope of the world's largest finance and accounting operation. Some of DFAS' accomplishments from fiscal year 2003 include paying 5.9 million military members, civilians, retirees and annuitants; processing 6.8 million travel claims; paying 12.3 million invoices from defense contractors; disbursing \$416 billion; recording 121 million accounting transactions; overseeing \$1.45 trillion in total liabilities; accounting for \$13 billion in foreign military sales and managing \$197.4 billion in military retirement and health benefits funds.

DFAS also focused on improving customer service by enhancing myPay (<https://mypay.dfas.mil>), which allows customers to take control of their pay account information securely and conveniently online.

"DFAS' success in 2003 prepares the ground for even better service to our customer and greater value for the American taxpayer in 2004," Shine said.

Christmas tree recycling pick up

Discarded Christmas trees will be picked up in all Navy housing neighborhoods on Jan. 3 and Jan. 10. The trees will be recycled and made into mulch for use in Hawai'i's botanical gardens and other locations. The Christmas Tree Recycling Project is state-sponsored.

Trees should be placed at curbside by 7 a.m. on pickup days in the same vicinity where trash containers are placed for regular refuse collection. The trees must be clean and free from nails, screws, wires, tinsel, stands or decorations. Also, no flocked trees are accepted. If trees are picked up that do not meet these specifications, the entire truckload of trees will be rejected at the tree-recycling center.

Notice to readers: The staff of Hawai'i Navy News is taking a well deserved leave of absence. While they are away we hope you enjoy this special edition of Hawai'i Navy News, publishing news from both the U.S. Navy and Army. This publication does not reflect the views or opinions of Hawai'i Navy News, U.S. Army or the U.S. Government.

Bush praises service members

Rudi Williams

American Forces Press Service

Among other thoughts at Christmas, Americans think of the brave military men and women who are fighting terrorists in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere "so we do not meet these killers on our own streets," President Bush said in his weekly radio address last week.

"We're grateful for the courage and commitment of our troops, and we're safer because of their skill and sacrifice," Bush said. "Separation from loved ones is always difficult, especially at this time of year. All our men and women serving abroad can know that their families miss them, millions are praying for them, and their nation is proud of them."

The president said Americans also think of those who spend the holidays in sadness or solitude. "We think of those facing illness, or the loss of a loved one, or the hardships of poverty or unemployment," he said. "And across our country, caring citizens are reaching out to those in need by volunteering their time. By serving a cause greater than themselves, Americans spread hope in our country and they make our nation better, one life at a time."

People who serve others are living out the spirit of the Christmas season, and the holidays can deepen the sense of gratitude for life and for all the family and friends, Bush noted.

Noting that Christmas centers on the birth of a child and the message of hope and peace, Bush said, "We hear that message in many ways at Christmas, and it never loses the power to lift our hearts. In this great and prosperous land, we remember how much we have been given and how much we have to share."

Good samaritans save apartment building

Lake Erie Sailor among four who rush to rescue

ENS Jared W. Samuelson

USS Lake Erie Public Affairs



OS3 Chris Hower

The only thing missing was a damsel in distress as a USS Lake Erie Sailor and three other bystanders fought a fire on the third story of an apartment building last week.

Operations Specialist 3rd Class Chris Hower was on his way home from work when he saw smoke coming from a third-story window in Pearl City.

With no one answering, Hower and Troy Carriaga, another bystander, did the only thing they could and began

scaling the building via the apartment balconies.

After reaching the second story, Hower proceeded to the third story while Carriaga remained below to pass up fire extinguishers. After checking to make sure there was no one in the apartment, Hower began fighting the fire.

"My first reaction was to start screaming: Are there any people in here?" Hower said. "Half the apartment was on fire. I used five total CO2 extinguishers before we finally got a hose. The residents got me a regular garden hose with a spray nozzle. Once I got the hose, I started just spraying down everything inside."

At that point, Carriaga joined Hower on the third floor and the pair began moving furniture aside to combat the flames at close range. Within five minutes, Hower and Carriaga had the fire under control and began hosing down the room to prevent a reflash. Two more civilians entered through the front door with a second hose to assist in soaking the room.

The apartment's residents, a mother, daughter and grandmother, were not home and damage to the building was estimated at \$100,000. The cause of the fire is still under investigation, a fire department official said Tuesday.

The firemen appreciated the group's quick actions, but urged caution before civilians attempt to fight fires.

"They did a great job in stopping the fire. It was exciting, but I want all of them to be safe for their families," fire captain Kenison Tejada told KGMB 9 in a taped interview.

Hower wasn't your average civilian, however. The Montana native spent two years as a wildlands firefighter in the Bitterroot National Forest before joining the Navy.

"It was nowhere near as severe [as a wildfire]," Hower said. "A house fire can be contained a lot easier than a wildfire, but it did pose its own challenges."

All four personnel involved were treated for smoke inhalation and released.

Commissaries respond to reports of "mad cow" disease

Bonnie Powell

DeCA

In response to news reports concerning an incident of "mad cow" disease, the Defense Commissary Agency has issued a response. "We are always very concerned about our customers' safety," said Col. Mark Wolken, chief of public health, safety and security for DeCA. "We are taking every action to make sure our stores and customers are informed about the situation, but I can't emphasize enough that we will continue to follow the USDA lead on any further action to insure the beef in our stores is safe," he said.

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced Dec. 23 that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has diagnosed a presumptive positive case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), also known as "mad cow" disease, in an adult Holstein cow in the state of Washington.

"Despite this finding, we remain confident in the safety of our beef supply," Veneman said.

"All beef sold in commissaries is USDA-inspected and all commissaries



Photo by JO1 Jim Williams
An employee stocks beef at the commissary at The Mall at Pearl Harbor.

follow USDA guidance," said Wolken. As always, customers who wish to return products they have purchased in a commissary for a full refund may do so without question.

Customers should check the food safety link at www.commissaries.com for the latest news on the situation as well as links to fact sheets and the latest information from the USDA.

Navy seeks participation in Vector test

Naval Education and Training Command Public Affairs

The Navy is soliciting feedback on a test of the 5 Vector Model (5VM) which will soon become the primary career management tool for all Sailors.

In a recent message to the fleet (NAVADMIN 307/03), Vice Adm. Alfred G. Harms Jr., director of Naval Education and Training, announced the BETA test, a second in a series to prepare the 5VM for introduction to the fleet. The BETA test includes additional enlisted ratings not previously tested, including those from aviation, surface engineering, cryptologic technician and construction career fields.

Harms projects having all ratings included on the 5V by March or early April 2004.

"The 5 Vector Model will eventually be a key part of every Sailor's career tool box," said Harms. "It will play a critical role in professional and personal growth and development, the distribution process, learning opportunities and delivery of knowledge, and improved fleet readiness."

When fully functional, the 5VM will help Sailors determine their professional status, pinpoint career milestones and identify the skill requirements they need for specific jobs in the fleet. They will also be able to review and compare their career path with alternative routes, view their electronic training jacket and enroll in online courses.

Sailors can now access a demonstration and tutorial for the 5VM via the Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) website at www.nko.navy.mil. Those in ratings that are part of the BETA test can also provide feedback through NKO.

"Constructive Sailor feedback is vital to this process," said Harms. "Input from the fleet will enable us to work out any system bugs, enhance usability and make necessary upgrades."

Sea Shadow premier test platform



Photo courtesy of Lockheed Martin

The Sea Shadow was developed under a combined Navy, Lockheed Martin Missiles and Space Company program. Its purpose is to explore a variety of new technologies for surface ships. These include ship control, structures, automation for reduced manning sea-keeping and signature control.

JO1 (SW) Jason McKnight
Navy Region Southwest
Public Affairs

In a rusty hulk of a barge beside dry dock on Naval Base San Diego's Mole Pier, the source of much of the Navy's sophisticated ship stealth technology waits for its next wave of classified experiments.

The result of the combined efforts of the Navy, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and Lockheed Martin, Sea Shadow (IX 529) is nearing its second decade of service as the premier test platform for ship stealth and experimental technologies.

Sea Shadow is used to test advanced hull forms and structures, automation for reduced manning, sea keeping and signature control, said Paul Chatterton, Naval Sea Systems Command program manager.

In the early 1980s, the vessel was built modularly under tight secrecy by different manufacturers and assembled inside the Hughes Mining Barge (HMB) at Redwood City, Calif. There, the HMB would be moved out to sea in the dead of night and halfway submerged, to let Sea Shadow out to be tested without being overly exposed to public observation.

"It was never intended to be mission-capable," said Chatterton.

And so it was never designated as "USS," but contrary to what some might believe, it is listed in the Navy's inventory as a miscellaneous craft.

The radically sleek, angled sides of the vessel show the origins of similarly sloped sides and superstructures of the Arleigh Burke-class destroyers and the forthcoming DD-X class destroyers, said Chatterton.

Part of Sea Shadow's unique shape, its small water-plane area twin hull (SWATH) design, isn't all that new. SWATH hull forms have been used for more than 30 years by many countries in ferry designs due to the very good stability inherent in the concept.

Sea Shadow doesn't have traditional rudders to steer with, said Chatterton. Aft stabilizers and forward canards on the inboard side of its submerged twin hulls control steering. Combined with the angled sides, this also helps the ship remain stable even in very rough water of up to sea state five, which means waves of up to 18 feet high.

T-AGOS 19- and 23-class oceanographic ships have inherited the stabilizer and canard method to help perform their stability-sensitive surveillance missions.

At only a bit over 160 feet long, Sea Shadow doesn't have much room for a large crew. In fact, with only 12 bunks aboard, the maximum she's ever taken to sea at once is 24. With only one small microwave oven, a refrigerator and table, creature comforts plainly aren't what the ship is about.

"At sea, we have a four-person watch team," said Chatterton. "Three stand watch on the bridge and one is available as a rover. We stand a six-hour-on, six-hour-off rotation with the other half of the normal eight-person crew."

Chief Engineer Tony Furrh said the bridge's displays enable a watchstander to cycle valves, transfer fuel, take suction from the sea or do almost anything else that needs doing, all remotely.

Lessons learned from Sea Shadow have affected current ship designs, equipment and concepts and will continue to well into the future, said Chatterton.

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USS City of Corpus Christi completes first deployment

U.S. Naval Forces Marianas
Public Affairs

With family and local Navy officials waving pier-side, USS City of Corpus Christi (SSN 705) returned to Guam on Dec. 23 after completing its first deployment since being homeported here last year.

The submarine was the first of three Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarines to be homeported in Guam as part of Submarine Squadron 15 and the first to deploy to the western Pacific from Guam.

"Corpus Christi's success is a milestone achievement marking the first U.S. Navy SSN [fast-attack submarine] operations conducted from a forward based homeport," said Rear Adm. Paul Sullivan, commander of Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

City of Corpus Christi left for deployment to the western Pacific on Nov. 22. Submarines homeported in Guam can expect shorter, more frequent deployments because of shorter transit times.

"Although it's a short deployment, it's going to be a repetitive process," said Capt. Joseph Mulloy, commander of Submarine Squadron 15. "They [Guam-based submarines] end up with more time doing 7th Fleet and national operations than the average in San Diego or Pearl Harbor."

Guam's location in the western Pacific significantly reduces distance and transit times and increases time to perform missions in forward deployment areas, effectively doubling the days they are available for operations, compared to submarines homeported in Hawai'i or California.

'Any Soldier' letter leads to 'happily ever after'

Spc. Shauna McRoberts
Special to American Forces
Press Service

It was late November 1990 and the build-up of troops, equipment and supplies for the first Persian Gulf War had begun.

Capt. Mark Olinger, a logistics officer, was serving with the 528th Support Battalion, U.S. Army Special Operations Task Force, at the King Fahd International Airport in eastern Saudi Arabia.

During his time in Desert Storm, Olinger often visited Saudi Arabia's King Khalid Military City. During one visit for a planning conference, Olinger happened to grab a letter out of a stack of "Any Soldier" mail.

"I grabbed it because I liked the handwriting," said Olinger, now a lieutenant colonel serving in Iraq as the 1st Armored Division's logistics officer. "And it was different; it was addressed with purple ink."

The letter was from Sandy Martin, a middle school choir teacher from Quilan, Texas. Little did Olinger know that this particular letter would change the rest of his life.

"My dad was in the Army and my mom's dad was in the Army," said Sandy. "It was just our patriotic duty to be supportive (of the troops)."

Olinger called it a "standard, patriotic" letter and said he wrote back a few days later with "the normal response: 'Thank you for your support.'"

Within the next few weeks, Olinger received another letter from Sandy and the two continued to correspond throughout the rest of the deployment.

"Her letters were nice and upbeat," said Olinger. "But there wasn't really a special connection."

However, when Olinger re-deployed to Fort Bragg, N.C. in March 1991, Sandy extended an invitation for Olinger to visit her in Texas.

"Something intrigued me, probably something in one of



U.S. Army photo
Army Lt. Col. Mark Olinger, 1st Armored Division logistics officer, sits inside a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter in Baghdad, Iraq. Olinger met his wife, Sandy, through "Any Soldier" mail during the first Persian Gulf War.

her letters," said Olinger, who took her up on the offer to visit.

"I was excited to meet him," said Sandy. "But not because there had ever been anything romantic in our letters. We were a little too mature for that."

"I was looking forward to seeing her," said Olinger. "I even sent her flowers at school."

The two met in early May 1991. Olinger, on block leave, drove from North Carolina to Texas to see Sandy before flying to his home state of California.

"It was love at first sight, however silly that sounds," said Sandy. "It was just a chemical reaction. It struck me that I was just so comfort-

able to be around him from the start, and knowing already from our letters that we shared so many of the same beliefs and priorities in life made everything so easy."

"Right away we clicked," added Olinger.

The two spent several days together, dining at restaurants, visiting the Dallas fairgrounds and meeting Sandy's parents.

"The days were very fun and

very relaxing," said Olinger. "They were good times."

Eventually, Olinger headed to California, but the two kept in touch by telephone while he was home on leave. "I couldn't eat a thing the whole two weeks he was gone," said Sandy.

When Olinger returned to Sandy's house, he proposed. "I felt like she was the one," he said. Sandy accepted the proposal and six months later they

were married. The Olingers celebrated their 12th wedding anniversary this month.

"During Desert Storm, I wrote 12 letters and ended up with six pen pals and one husband," joked Sandy.

"We'd barely known each other a year, and most of that time together was spent apart, but I have no regrets," said Olinger. "The two best things I've done in my life (have been to) join the Army and marry Sandy."

U.S. delivers supplies, experts to aid Iran



Photo by SSgt Suzanne M. Jenkins

Five pallets containing 20 thousand pounds of medical supplies are loaded onto a U.S. Central Air Forces C-130 to be flown to Kerman, Iran on Dec. 28, two days after a devastating earthquake destroyed the city of Bam, Iran. According to initial estimates, up to 20-thousand people were killed and thousands injured in the massive earthquake.

Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Proving that disaster knows no politics, U.S. service members are delivering humanitarian aid to Iran in the wake of an earthquake that has left an estimated 25,000 Iranians dead.

A magnitude 6.7 earthquake struck the area near the city of Bam. Unreinforced mud brick buildings crumbled, killing thousands as they slept. Iranian officials said the death toll could reach 40,000 in Bam and the surrounding countryside.

Soon after word of the catastrophe spread, President Bush was informed about it. "We are greatly saddened by the loss of life, injuries and widespread damage to this ancient city," Bush said in a written statement Dec. 26. "I extend my condolences to all those touched by this tragedy. The thoughts of all Americans are with the victims and their families at this time and we stand ready to help the people of Iran."

A senior U.S. government group met Dec. 26 to see what humanitarian aid

the United States could provide. At first, the group worked through the Swiss government. The Swiss are caretakers for the United States in Iran and have an interest section in the Swiss embassy here. But U.S. officials soon decided to speak directly to the Iranian government. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage called Iran's counselor in the Swiss embassy in Washington, Mohammad Zarif, with the U.S. offer of assistance. "It was favorably received," said a State Department spokesman.

"Due to the urgency of the situation, we decided direct contact was the most appropriate channel," said the State Department official. He said the direct contact does not alter the tone or content of other issues the United States has with Iran. The humanitarian concern is paramount to the United States. "Our only mission is to alleviate the human suffering caused by the earthquake," the official said.

The U.S. government decided to deploy civilian teams composed of more than 200 experts in urban search and rescue, emergency surgery and disaster

response coordination. These included medical response teams from Boston and local disaster response teams from Los Angeles and Fairfax County, Va. Disaster response experts also will be drawn from the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the State Department.

The U.S. military began deploying more than 150,000 pounds of medical supplies from bases in Kuwait to the people of Iran. It was the first U.S. aircraft to land in Iran since the end of the Iranian hostage crisis in 1981.

At least seven C-130 Hercules flights went from Kuwait to Kerman, the Iranian provincial capital near the affected areas. In addition, a C-17 Globemaster III from Charleston AFB, S.C. delivered personnel and equipment to Kerman. News reports said U.S. airmen and Iranian Soldiers worked side by side to unload the giant airlifters.

The United States will continue to work with the Iranian government, international agencies and the Red Cross and Red Crescent as recovery efforts continue, officials said.

DoD budget reforms aid relationships with private sector

Paul Stone
American Forces Press Service

Transformation of DoD budgetary practices during the past few years is having a rippling effect, reaching far outside the Pentagon and positively influencing how private industry views working with the Defense Department.

That's the assessment of Dov Zakheim, DoD's undersecretary of defense (comptroller) and chief financial officer.

Zakheim, one of the chief architects in the effort to transform DoD budgetary practices, said in a recent interview that private industry – including both established defense contractors and those with whom the department has not traditionally conducted business – now view DoD as a more attractive business partner.

He credits this primarily to changes in the way that DoD programs funding and how it looks at its budget.

Zakheim said the first step

he took upon taking office was to streamline the budget process and provide a "degree of consistency that wasn't there before." He explained that budget process basically was broken down into two parts: the program review, performed by the Office of Director of Program Analysis and Evaluation, and the budget review, performed by Zakheim's office – two processes that were more independent than integrated at the time.

"The program review traditionally looked at programs – did you want to buy an F-16, as opposed to an F-18, as opposed to an aircraft carrier – and they were decisions made in the summer prior to the start of the new fiscal year," Zakheim explained. "What then happened was we would review the actual budget proposals and those who didn't get what they wanted in the program review looked at the budget review as a vehicle for overturning prior decisions. And in many cases,

that happened. The two reviews did not share a common database, nor did they harmoniously integrate the people who were managing each of the reviews."

Today, all that has changed. Zakheim said that during the past year, the two staffs have become fully integrated, working hand-in-hand to ensure that what happens during the program review does not change in the budget review. "We simply issue a document that confirms, in budgetary terms, the decisions made in programmatic terms," he said.

Another significant change is Zakheim's initiative to examine the budget from a two-year perspective. "This has allowed us to make a commitment not to tamper with financial resources from one year to the next," he explained. "So in effect, what we're doing is carrying forward the full vision of transformation that really began last year."

What this means for those

who do business with DoD, Zakheim said, is it gives them an increased sense of security that what DoD commits to invest in one year will not disappear the next. "Industries are always concerned about planning stability," he said. "Corporate planners want to know what their orders will look like next year and the year after that. And by incorporating that (long-term) view into our practices, by minimizing changes and by building on previous (budgetary) decisions, we're giving industry a better sense of where we're going."

Zakheim used the shipbuilding industry as an example. "Each year we promised that the following year (we) would do something more with shipbuilding. And it's not unfair to say that the shipbuilding account is more stable than it has been in years," he said. "That's important, because it's a

volatile industry in which people move out very quickly if they don't see jobs. They go elsewhere and don't come back. And it's extremely hard and costly to get started back up again."

Transformation of budget practices is also attracting business outside of the traditional defense firms and Zakheim credits that, in part, to integration of some corporate practices in the DoD budget process.

"My emphasis on having clean audits – financial statements that make sense to the outside world – I believe is helpful," he said. "It shows them that we understand how they do business and it helps them understand us."

As a result, Zakheim said that increasingly more businesses from the high-tech sector are showing interest in doing business with DoD, espe-

cially as they recognize how much the department now relies on information-based technologies.

"My colleagues in acquisition and technology have also tried very hard to create a more company-friendly environment so we can attract the leading edge of American business," he said. "And we believe that has begun to occur."

"So now we have two constellations: One is [made up of] traditional vendors and the second is [made up of] less traditional vendors, many of which sell off the shelf," he continued. "The result is we've expanded our reach and probably increased competition in ways people haven't thought about, which means a better price for the taxpayer. And the end product is pretty clear. We are unchallenged around the world. That doesn't happen by accident."

Navy Prowler pilot trains to fly Air Force B-2

Capt. Kat Ohlmeyer
U.S. Air Force Public Affairs

While the B-2 bomber has already seen many milestones in its first 10 years, the 394th Combat Training Squadron (CTS) is currently training the program's first Navy pilot, who will fly his first B-2 sortie here next month.

Lt. Michael Orr, a native of California, has been flying the EA-6B Prowler for the Navy since 1998 and began his B-2 training with the 394th CTS in April.

The Prowler is the only platform that denies, disrupts and degrades the enemy's radar, so the crews are charged with supporting inter-service assets.

Since the Prowler helps the B-2 elude radar through electronic attack, the 509th Operations Support Squadron (OSS) began bringing Prowler students from Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash. to Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. in 2000 to teach them about the B-2 mission. Orr was one of the students in the second class to visit Whiteman and that was when his assignment with the 509th

Bomb Wing (BW) started to take shape.

"While I was out here, I started talking to some of the guys in the OSS and I asked them how you become a B-2 pilot," Orr said. "And I just happened to casually say, 'Well, have you ever had a Navy B-2 pilot?'"

The response Orr received was not what he expected because OSS members said they would like to have a Navy pilot in the program, specifically a Prowler pilot and a graduate of the Prowler Electronic Attack Weapons School. In fact, Orr was asked that day what he would be doing in a couple years.

Orr said he just laughed off the question. However, just five months later as he was preparing for deployment on USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) for Operation Enduring Freedom, he received a call from 509th BW officials saying they were serious about having him come fly for the wing. But the process of getting a Navy pilot orders to an Air Force base to learn how to fly an Air Force plane is not easy.

"It's probably the greatest

personnel story ever," Orr said. "Not only did I have complete support by our bureau of personnel to do this, but also from the Prowler community."

In fact, Orr said he was slated to go to the Fleet Replacement Squadron (FRS), which is similar to the 394th CTS, as a Prowler instructor pilot at the end of his deployment. But the Prowler community didn't let that stand in the way of his opportunity to be a part of the 509th BW.

"They basically agreed that allowing me this opportunity to expand my professional experience was in the best interests of the Prowler community and my contribution to it," he said. "Fortunately, the commander of the FRS was willing to fall one pilot short in manning for this to happen."

Once his training in the 394th CTS is complete, Orr will be assigned to the 509th OSS as the wing electronic warfare officer, working on projects to maximize the B-2's stealth capability.

"I knew if I took this job I would be able to work on some interesting projects involving the B-2 and that was probably

the biggest lure for me," Orr said.

Lt. Col. Brian O'Rear, 509th OSS commander, said the 509th benefits tremendously from having Orr integrated in the B-2 program.

"We usually go to war with EA-6B support and strengthening our ties with that community is mutually beneficial. It makes the whole team stronger," said O'Rear.

Another benefit of Orr's assignment, for him and the 509th BW, is seeing how another service works. "Having a Navy pilot in the B-2 helps us continue to increase interoperability with our sister services," O'Rear said. "No service goes to war alone. It takes a team effort. Bobby brings a slightly different perspective to our program and makes us a more lethal fighting force."

But Orr admits there is a small part of him that is proud to be here because he'll be able to look back and know he was the first Navy pilot to become a B-2 pilot.

"It's not the overriding reason, but it's kind of cool," Orr said. "I hope that when this is all said and done, they [the



Photo by U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Nick Martin

U.S. Navy Lt. Michael "Bobby" Orr is the first pilot from another branch of the U.S. military to fly the B-2 stealth bomber. He will be assigned to the 509th Operations Support Squadron at Whiteman AFB, following an extensive training program.

509th BW] will look back and say this was definitely worth it and that they got out of me what they hoped. And in the

same regard, I hope the Prowler community finds that this was worth it because if they don't, I will have failed."

Soldier's Medal awarded for minefield rescue

Pfc. Ryan Smith
Army News Service

A Soldier with the 27th Engineer Battalion was awarded the Soldier's Medal at Fort Bragg, N.C., Dec. 18 for his actions in Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. Scott Smullen, while serving as a squad leader in C Company, 27th Engineer Battalion in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, risked his life to save an injured Soldier and was presented the award by Lt. Gen. John R. Vines, XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg commander.

"Our platoon was conducting mine-clearance operations at Bagram Air Base," Smullen said. "We cleared safe lanes for further mine-clearing operations to be conducted. We use titanium probes - we push them into the ground and feel for land mines."

During the April 21 operation, one of the Soldiers, Sgt. Camilo Molina, was injured in an explosion.

"While we were clearing the lanes, (Molina) stepped on a mine and blew his left foot off," Smullen said.

At first, the engineers didn't realize anyone had been injured.

"Initially, I didn't think (the explosion) was anything. (Explosive ordnance disposal teams) had been working in the area, so my first thought was that they had blown up some unexploded ordnance," Smullen said. "Then the mine-detector operator who was working in that area yelled for help, so we knew that something had happened."

Once the rest of the platoon was aware of Molina's injury, they had to negotiate the minefield to get to him, Smullen said.

"We were all pretty close to the area, so me and my team leader ran over there and started clearing a safe area up to him," he said. "The first thing we did was make sure he was conscious. He was a little disoriented, of course. My team leader Sgt. (George) Day and I took our belts off and threw them to him - he was about 10 meters away - and instructed him to apply them as tourniquets. He'd injured both his legs in the incident. Once we cleared up to him, the rest of the platoon was on the scene and got him to safety."

Smullen said Day stayed behind him, watching to make sure he stayed in the area he had already cleared as he made his way to Molina.

"From the time he stepped on the mine to the time we evacuated him 500 meters to the road took less than 10 minutes," Smullen said. "It was really quick."

Day said that thanks to the training the platoon had received, the rescue went smoothly.

"All the training we did for casualty evacuation and how to probe a minefield really came into play. It flowed like clockwork," Day said. "Everybody just came together."

Day also said that Molina remained calm and in good spirits throughout the ordeal.

"He actually made a joke - he asked if we could hurry," Day said.

1st Lt. Joshua Finley, Smullen's platoon leader at the time, said that Smullen definitely earned his award.



Photo by Ken Kassens

Staff Sgt. Scott Smullen, while serving as a squad leader in C Company, 27th Engineer Battalion in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, risked his life to save an injured Soldier and was presented the Soldier's Medal by Lt. Gen. John R. Vines, XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg commander.

"(The Soldier's Medal) is outstanding recognition for what (Smullen) did," Finley said. "I saw it with my own eyes, and it really was an act of heroism. He really deserves this award."

Finley said that Smullen and the other Soldiers involved in the rescue reacted quickly and efficiently because they had rehearsed similar scenarios before.

"We went through a lot of training once we were in-theater, learning how to do a minefield check. Then we'd practice it and practice it," he said. "When it actually happens, you just go on autopilot; everything shuts off and you just do it."

Finley also said that even in the wake of the accident and the subsequent rescue, the engineers in the unit didn't forget their mission.

"After the adrenaline stops pumping, you get

a sense of, 'Wow, what did I just do?'" he said. "You can get a little gun-shy, but the Soldiers we work with wanted to get back out there. They didn't want to leave off just because they had a setback. They wanted to keep going with the job."

Smullen said that he was surprised to receive the Soldier's Medal for his actions that day.

"(Getting the medal) is kind of surreal. It's unexpected, and sometimes I think it's unwarranted - I think the whole platoon deserves the recognition," Smullen said.

"We all just worked and executed what we were trained to do. It was a group effort - the whole platoon pulled together that day. The whole platoon saved (Molina's) life," said Smullen.

Department of Defense considers creating new military force

Paul Stone
American Forces Press Service

The Pentagon is considering creating a military force that would be dedicated to stability and reconstruction operations, according to retired Navy Vice Adm. Arthur Cebrowski, chief of the Defense Department's Office of Force Transformation.

Although it may be some time before a final decision is made on whether such a force becomes reality, Cebrowski - one of the department's chief architects in the effort to transform the military - said the ever-changing post-Sept. 11 security environment, as well as the lessons of history itself, make a strong case for stability and reconstruction operations.

"We're going to need this capability. And we're going to need it repeatedly," he said in a recent interview. "Just because we need it today in Iraq doesn't mean that's the only time."

In its broadest sense, a stabilization and reconstruction force most likely would be used under conditions that now exist in Iraq - between the end of major combat operations and the formation of a stable government, although Cebrowski was quick to point out that the need for such a force would not be limited to just that one scenario.

"The need for stability operations could happen at any time and in places we haven't necessarily considered," he said.

The transformation chief said a stability and reconstruction force would include such elements as combat arms, military police, civil affairs, military intelligence, psychological affairs, engineers and explosive ordnance teams. But he emphasized that the heart of the force would be the combat arms element.

"Stability operations are difficult, are very important and very dangerous," he said. "This is no place for a pick-up team. This is meant to be part of the broad combat arms capability of the military. This is not the place where you put other than your best people and best equipment because these are the people who are going to wrest victory and wrest our political objectives from an enemy dedicated to defeating us."

While pointing to the importance of the combat arms elements, Cebrowski said such a force must include the long-held belief that "everyone's a rifleman."

"The fact that you may be working civil affairs, psychological operations, military intelligence or whatnot does not make you less of a Marine or less of a Soldier," he said. "All would need to be prepared and ready to engage in combat because these are dangerous types of operations."

Cebrowski envisions such a force also interacting with and building relationships with allied forces, coalition partners, U.S. government agencies and perhaps some nongovernmental bodies, such as relief agencies.

"What we're really talking about here is a joint capability," Cebrowski said, "one that would require a strong mix from all the services in some cases, while relying more heavily on one service in other cases, and including the ability to work with others outside of DoD."

Phantom menace: Hypertension can be symptomless

Lt. Michael Wentworth
Medical Corps, U.S. Naval Hospital
Keflavik, Iceland

Here's a riddle for you.

What illness is common and potentially life threatening, yet easily detected and treated? You're right if you guessed high blood pressure, called hypertension in medical-speak.

Even though tens of millions of Americans have this problem, many aren't being treated or are

being treated insufficiently. The reason is simple -hypertension has no symptoms. Nobody wants to take a pill every day when they feel fine. However, uncontrolled high blood pressure, in the long run, will wear down the arteries in your heart and brain.

You have high blood pressure if you consistently have either a systolic pressure of over 140, or a diastolic pressure of over 90 (this is written on your chart as 140/90). Usually, you find out when you go

to the doctor for some other issue and he or she notices that your blood pressure is high - say, 147/80.

This doesn't automatically mean you have hypertension; you'll usually need to return for additional checks to confirm the diagnosis. And even if you do have it, you may be able to control it by simply shedding a few pounds or running a little more often.

Regardless, you should know your blood pressure. Both Navy

and medical facilities check blood pressure during your annual exam. If you don't remember your blood pressure, most clinics are happy to check it for you. It's quick, easy and painless. If it's high, make an appointment with your health care professional.

Ignorance may be bliss, but knowledge is healthy.

More information about high blood pressure can be found at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/hbp/intro.htm>.

