



## SWA Region disestablished

By MC2(SW) Stephen Murphy  
Editor

Commander Navy Region Europe, Naples, Italy, assumed operational and administrative control of Navy Region Southwest Asia, formerly headquartered aboard U.S. Naval Support Activity Bahrain as well as remote bases and installations within its area of responsibility effective Jan. 21.

With responsibilities for support to USAFRICOM, established last October, and the disestablishment of CNRSWA, CNRE has been renamed Commander Navy Region Europe, Africa, Southwest Asia.

The realignment eliminates NSA Bahrain's regional support role, allowing the command to focus on its support to the facility and the 80 tenant commands assigned.

"Because of the small staff here in Bahrain, we had a lot of dual-hatted personnel," said former CNRSWA Chief of Staff and recently assigned NSA Bahrain Executive Officer Cmdr. Kyle Barrett. "They were serving as both installation-level and region-level program directors.

"They had to split their focus. One minute they would be doing work for the installation, and the next minute they would be taking care of region-level responsibilities."



Photo by Millie Slamin

**Naval Support Activity Bahrain provides operational support to U.S. and Coalition forces operating throughout U.S. Central Command's area of operation. The overall mission of the activity is to provide facilities and services to more than 80 tenant commands, their deployed assets, service members, DoD civilians and their dependents.**

He said the merger of the regions will not adversely impact NSA Bahrain's support to its tenant commands. The only noticeable difference will be the improvement in services to these commands.

"We can focus more on maintaining the base and interacting with the tenants than we could in the past," he said. "They will receive more tailored and specific support."

Barrett said because NSA Bahrain is now supported by CNREURAFSWA, it now has the advantage of being led by a flag officer.

"Most regions have flag-level commanding officers," he said. "Bahrain was the only region with an O6-level CO [commanding officer]."

"Having a flag-level CO takes away any disadvantage Bahrain may have encountered by having a junior leader."

Barrett also noted that prior to the regional realignment, NSA Bahrain dealt directly with CNIC, but will now have the advantage of having CNREURAFSWA as an intermediary to represent the command's interests.

He said the disestablishment of  
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Photo by MSgt Cecilio Ricardo

**Barack Obama takes the oath of office to become the 44th president of the United States as his wife Michelle Obama looks on.**

## Black History Month remembered: *African Americans in the military*

*From DefenseLink News*

### March 5, 1770:

Crispus Attucks is shot and killed while confronting British troops during the Boston Massacre.

### June 17, 1775:

It is estimated that more than 5,000 African Americans fought against the British during the American Revolutionary War, fought from 1775-1783.

### 1861 to 1865:

About 180,000 African Americans wore Union blue and earned praise for their military skill during the American Civil War, fought 1861-1865. Twenty-five African Americans received the Medal of Honor for bravery during that war.

### Sept. 29, 1864:

African American troops fighting for the Union  
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## MCPON Podcast focuses on Navy Working Uniform

From Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Public Affairs

**WASHINGTON** — Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (SS/SW) Rick West released his first podcast to the fleet this week and focused on the Navy Working Uniform.

West pointed out that Sailors in the Tidewater area will be the first to wear it and that soon the American public will have a chance to see it as well.

"When they think of Sailors, they think of crackerjacks, white hats and neckerchiefs," said West. "Seeing Sailors in a camouflage uniform is going to take some getting used to. It's up to us to make sure that when they do see us, we're wearing the NWU the way it was intended to be worn."

West emphasized the important role chief petty officers will play in training the rest of the Navy on the proper wear of the NWU. He underscored the cur-



Photo by MC1 Jennifer A. Villalovos

**Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick West speaks with Airman Mervin Laravasquez, assigned to the U.S. Navy Ceremonial Guard, during the Farewell reception for the Secretary of the Navy the Honorable Donald C. Winter.**

rent regulations that prohibit Sailors from wearing the NWU off-base but said that once the CPO Mess feels every Sailor has been trained to wear it correctly, that regulation may relax.

"Show the chiefs that you know how to wear the NWU and that's when we'll look at different situations that let you wear it off base."

MCPON West's podcast can be found on his web page on Navy.mil.

## Tax center eases filing process, saves money

By MC2(SW) Stephen Murphy  
Editor

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Center aboard NSA Bahrain opened Feb. 2 to provide tax filing services for service members, dependents, DoD civilians and retirees. The services are free and available until April 15.

"The overall goal is to assist Sailors with filing their taxes, but it's open to any branch of service and anyone else who is eligible to receive legal-assistance services," said Legalman 1st Class (SW) Armelda Collins, a tax officer with NSA Legal Services. "It alleviates the burden of trying to figure out how to do it themselves and saves them money."

She said those filing taxes



Photo by MC2(SW) Stephen Murphy

**Legalman 1st Class (SW) Armelda Collins, NSA Legal Services, reviews tax documents for Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Franklin Hamilton, from Naval Computer and Telecommunications Station Bahrain Feb. 3.**

with VITA can make the process easier by bringing documents such as wage and earning statements; proof of identi-

fication; birthdates for filer, spouse and dependents [if applicable]; power of attorney

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distinguished themselves again at the Battle of Chaffin's Farm, Va. Fourteen African Americans received the Medal of Honor for their heroism at that engagement.

**Aug. 1, 1941:**

Benjamin O. Davis Sr. is promoted to brigadier general, becoming the first African American general officer in the regular Army and the U.S. armed forces.

**Dec. 7, 1941:**

Navy Ship's Cook 3rd Class Dorie Miller shoots down four Japanese planes during the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and earns the Navy Cross.

**March 7, 1942:**

The first group of African Americans to graduate from military flight school at the Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Ala., was inducted into the Army Air Corps.

**Aug. to Nov. 1944:**

Thousands of African American truck drivers in the "Red Ball Express" risked life and limb to deliver desperately needed fuel, food and ammunition to Gen. George S. Patton's 3rd Army as it pushed German forces eastward out of France during World War II.

More than 1 million African Americans served in the U.S. armed forces during America's participation in World War II from 1941 to 1945.

**Oct. 29, 1947:**

President Harry S. Truman's Committee on Civil Rights' landmark report, titled, "To Secure These Rights," was issued. It condemned racial segregation wherever it existed and specifically criticized the practice of segregation in the U.S. armed forces. The report recommended legislation and administrative action "to end immediately all discrimination and segregation based on race, color, creed or national origin" in all branches of the U.S. military.

**July 26, 1948:**

President Harry S. Truman signs Executive Order 9981. It states: "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the president that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin." The order also established

a presidential committee on equality of treatment and opportunity in the armed services.

More than 600,000 African Americans served in the armed forces during the Korean War [1950 to 1953]. Two African American Army sergeants, Cornelius H. Charlton and William Thompson, earned the Medal of Honor during the conflict.

By the end of 1954, the last all-African American U.S. military unit had been disbanded, while African American enlistment in the U.S. military grew.

**1954:**

Brig. Gen. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. became the first African American general in the U.S. Air Force.

**1962 to 1975:**

During the Vietnam War African Americans continued to join the armed forces in large numbers. Many volunteered to join the prestigious and high-risk airborne and air mobile helicopter combat units. There were 20 African American Medal of Honor recipients during the Vietnam War.

**July 1, 1973:**

The United States ends military conscription and adopts an all-volunteer military. African Americans made up about 17 percent of the military's enlisted force in 1973. By the early 1980s, African Americans made up nearly 24 percent of the enlisted force.

**Sept. 1, 1975:**

Air Force Gen. Daniel "Chappie" James becomes the first four-star African American general in the U.S. armed forces.

**Oct. 1, 1989:**

Army Gen. Colin L. Powell becomes chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the most-senior African American military officer in U.S. history. During his tenure as chairman Powell managed military participation in the Gulf War [1990 to 1991]. He served as JCS chairman until Sept. 30, 1993. Powell later served as Secretary of State in President George W. Bush's administration.

**Jan. 20, 2009:**

Barack Obama takes the oath of office to become the 44th president of the United States and the first African American to do so.



U.S. Navy photo

Lieutenant Robert Goodman, accompanied by Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., arrives at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Jan. 4, 1984. Goodman had been held captive in Syria as a prisoner of war.

## African American NFO makes history as POW

By MC2 (AW) Jonathan W. Hutto Sr.

Defense Media Activity - Anacostia, Washington

On Dec 4, 1983, Lt. Robert Goodman Jr., a Navy bombardier/navigator attached to Carrier Air Wing 3 aboard USS John F. Kennedy, and his pilot Lt. Mark Lang, were shot down in the mountains east of Beirut, Lebanon. Lang and Goodman were part of a contingent comprised of 28 war planes retaliating against Syria for attacking U.S. aircraft a day prior.

They ejected from their A-6E Intruder after it was hit by a Syrian ground missile. Lang suffered a leg injury and died after being found by the Syrians.

Goodman was also found by Syrian soldiers with three broken ribs, an injured shoulder and knee.

Goodman became the first American prisoner of war (POW) since the end of the Vietnam War. Upon being found, Goodman was taken to a military compound in Damascus, Syria. He would eventually be fed three times a day and brought books to read by his captors.

The Naval Academy, Naval Flight Officer training and POW training at the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape school had prepared Goodman for his captivity. He faced deprivation and physical and psychological pressure. In accordance with the Code of Conduct, he understood his job was to avoid assisting the enemy by giving vague answers and never compromising national security.

Goodman also understood the sacrifice of service to country. The son of a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel, Goodman was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1956. Due to his father's service, Goodman was accustomed to moving frequently in his childhood, settling in Portsmouth, N.H., as a teenager. His role models growing up were his father and the late Air Force Gen. Daniel "Chappie" James, the first African-American four-star general. As a youth, Goodman always envisioned

himself as a Navy pilot.

Upon learning of Goodman's capture, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger attempted to open negotiations to secure Goodman's release, to no avail. The Syrians were determined to use Goodman to force the United States to remove all troops from Lebanon.

The negotiations were at a stalemate until civil rights leader and then-presidential candidate, Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., sent a telegram to President Al-Assad advocating the release of Goodman as a humanitarian measure. Assad responded with an open invitation to Jackson and a delegation of his choosing to visit Damascus to discuss the release of Goodman.

In Syria, Jackson was allowed to meet with the imprisoned flight officer. Goodman described himself as comfortable and had only one request - to be sent home to his family.

On Jan. 3, 1984, a day after Jackson's meeting with Assad, Goodman was released. The Syrian government stated Goodman's release was in response to Jackson's human appeal and to the demands of the U.S. government.

President Ronald Reagan dispatched a plane to return Goodman and Jackson's delegation to Andrews Air Force Base, Md. Goodman stated on the flight his intention to stay clear of politics.

"I'm a naval officer, not a hero," Goodman remembered Lang saying. "It's just a matter of fate that it happens to be me sitting here, instead of Mark."

Reagan held a hero's welcome for Lt. Goodman in the Rose Garden of the White House. He thanked Jackson for making the trip to Lebanon, and Goodman for his courage under difficult circumstances.

After his return, Goodman was assigned to Attack Squadron 85 in Oceana, Va. He went on to graduate from the Naval Postgraduate School in 1987, receiving a masters of science in systems technology. Goodman retired from the Navy in 1995 as a commander.

### the Bahrain DESERT Times

www.cnic.navy.mil/bahrain

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# FAST Company sets sights on security mission

By MC2(SW) Stephen Murphy  
Editor

The Marine Corps Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team-Central Command aboard NSA Bahrain plays a vital role in supporting both fleet and fighter in U.S. Naval Forces Central Command area of operation.

The Team consists of two platoons, each with approximately 50 personnel assigned, and provides limited-duration, expeditionary security force protection for vital naval and national assets in Bahrain.

"What's most visible is the security support we provide for embassies and consulates," said Marine Corps Maj. Michael Taylor, FASTCENT commanding officer. "We support assets as identified and directed by NAVCENT throughout the entire CENTCOM region of operation."

He said FASTCENT's role with U.S. embassies and consulates is to provide a security force to protect those facilities in the event of a threat. Members of FASTCENT are on standby, ready to deploy at a moment's notice should the need arise.

Each FASTCENT Marine is highly trained in counter surveillance, physical security, urban combat techniques and martial arts. Their overall mission is to detect, deter and defend against threats, focusing on antiterrorism.

There are Yorktown, Va. 2nd FAST Company platoons currently assigned to FASTCENT for a six-month tour. Here, they

are supported by FASTCENT's headquarters staff, which consists of 14 Marines providing administrative, logistical, communications and training support to the platoons.

The FASTCENT also provides security protection to U.S. Navy ships in ports throughout the CENTCOM area of operation.

"We can be, and have been tasked with augmenting Navy security forces aboard ships for canal transits and port calls as well as landward security operations during port visits," said Taylor. "During those operations, FASTCENT Marines perform duties such as entry and vehicle control point security operations, vehicle and pedestrian search operations, and mobile mounted or dismounted patrols within a secure perimeter."

Locally, the team provides security support for Naval Security Force Bahrain, as needed.

"We bring a punch that could plug a gap and reinforce NSF," he said. "It wouldn't be to take over, but instead, it would be to work with NSF."

"We have skills and tools available to us that NSF doesn't have yet," he said. "They are working to rebuild their MAA [Master-at-Arms] community to be more expeditionary and combat-oriented."

Fleet antiterrorism security teams were established in 1987 and are part of the United States Marine Corps Security Force Regiment in Norfolk. They are designated as 1st FAST and 3rd FAST, Norfolk, and 2nd FAST based in Yorktown, Va. The teams maintain forward-



Photo courtesy of U.S. Marine Corps

Marines from Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team participate in advanced urban combat training. Each team member is trained in counter surveillance, physical security, urban combat techniques and martial arts.

ward-deployed platoons at various naval facilities around the globe and possess alert forces capable of rapidly responding to unforeseen contingencies worldwide.

In addition to FASTCENT, platoons also deploy to FAST Company Europe in Spain, FAST Company Pacific in Japan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

## Marine armorer plays vital role for deployed troops

By MC2(SW) Stephen Murphy  
Editor

His passion for working with and fixing mechanical components goes back as far as he can remember in his 24 years of life.

It is this mechanical inclination that led Marine Cpl. Zerpa Camacho to his current position as an armorer with Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team, Central Command, aboard NSA Bahrain.

"I've always been interested with cars and with learning how to do mechanical work on them," said the Augusta, Ga. native. "This is something I learned from my father. He liked to work on cars, so I was always out there with him trying to learn."

In 2003, shortly after graduating from Harlem High School in Harlem, Ga., Camacho went to Houston, Texas, where he enrolled in an automotive mechanics program at a vocational school.

"I'm a big fan of Ford cars – especially Mustangs," he said. "This was the closest school I could find that offered Ford-specific training."

Camacho completed the 11-month program and soon landed a job as a repair technician with a car dealer in Augusta. He said he was happy to make a living by doing something he enjoyed, but after a while he began taking an interest in something else.

"Beside automobiles, I've always had a fascination with weapons. I enjoyed shooting

them, but I never really knew how to work on them. That was a big part of why I joined the Marines," he explained.

He said he also liked challenges and that is one of the reasons he enlisted in the Marine Corps.

"I wanted to push myself and hold myself to the standards of the Marine Corps," he said. "Life was getting to be a little bit too predictable for me. I just wanted a change of pace."

Camacho enlisted in the Marine Corps in June 2006 and completed basic training the following September. He then enrolled and completed a three-month armorer school before reporting to his first duty station at Headquarters and Service Battalion, Parris Island, S.C., in December 2006. At HSB, he worked as an armorer in support of recruit training.

Camacho reported to his current duty assignment in October 2008. Once there, his mission shifted from supporting recruits to supporting Marines involved with rapid deployment missions throughout the Region.

He said he has always understood the significance of why weapons should function properly. With his current assignment with the FAST Company, this role is even more critical.

"If an armorer fails maintenance and the weapon fails a Marine in combat, he would be in a world of hurt," said Camacho.

Gunnery Sgt. James King, FASTCENTCOM gunnery sergeant, said Camacho and other armorers working for commands with similar missions contribute greatly to the overall mission by assisting in rapid deployment preparations throughout the Middle East.

"He is one of many armorers throughout the Marine Corps who play a vital role for deploying units," said King.

Camacho said he is thrilled to work as an armorer and is already broadening his horizons with another interest he recently developed.

"Since I've been here, I have been doing a lot of reading about Bahrain," he said. "I'm trying to learn about the culture and the language."

"Normally, when I'm back at home, I spend a lot of time toying with cars and trucks, but I don't have that luxury here. This might be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and it would be foolish not to learn about Bahrain while I'm here."

As far as his future plans, Camacho said he is definitely planning to stay in the Marine Corps. He is just debating on whether or not to stay as an armorer.

"As much as I love being an armorer, I'm thinking about trying something different," he said. "I think it's time to diversify myself a little bit."

He said regardless of what he



Photo by MC2(SW) Stephen Murphy

Marine Cpl. Zerpa Camacho, an armorer with Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team, Central Command, aboard NSA Bahrain, enlisted in the Marine Corps in December 2006 to enhance his knowledge of weapons.

does while in the Marine Corps, he is glad he enlisted.

"To me, being a Marine brings a lot of self-pride," he said. "By making it into the Corps, I attempt-

ed and accomplish something most people wouldn't try. I'm not saying we are better than any other branch of service. We are just different."

# Commander Task Force 56 serves multiple roles

By MC2 Matt Snodgrass

**MANAMA, Bahrain** — In the U.S. 5th Fleet Area of Operations, the men and women of Commander Task Force (CTF) 56 play a vital role in the region by providing operational oversight for all naval expeditionary combat forces.

CTF-56 supports nine different task groups including expeditionary combat, logistical support and combat service support forces.

"The mission of CTF-56 is to properly assign and manage Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) forces in the theater," said Capt. Michael Jordan, commander, CTF-56. "We provide expertise in Navy Expeditionary Combat Forces and NAVCENT initiatives with these forces."

CTF-56 has several different task groups that fall under their command. These task groups include: Naval construction force, Navy explosive ordnance disposal, mobile diving and salvage, maritime expeditionary security forces, Navy expeditionary logistics support forces, combat camera, riverine squadrons, expeditionary intelligence units, maritime civil affairs teams and expeditionary training teams.

CTF-56 task groups provide various services to the commands they are assigned to in Bahrain and throughout the region.

"We are unique from other task forces in



Photo by MC2 Kevin S. O'Brien

**Sailors assigned to Riverine Squadron 1 race along the Euphrates River in riverine patrol boats.**

5th Fleet because we have such a wide range of capabilities," said Lt. Cmdr. Eric Bray, CTF-56 operations officer. "Our task groups cover multiple roles throughout the U.S. 5th Fleet; from security, construction

to ordnance disposal."

CTF-56 task groups deploy throughout the U.S. 5th Fleet Area of Operations to support various commands.

"Our task forces are deployed to seven

countries throughout the region," said Bray. "Our task groups are serving in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom as well as conducting maritime security operations."

Members of the EOD task group regularly deploy to front line commands.

"We get called to clear IEDs a lot in Iraq," said Explosive Ordnance Disposal 1st Class (EWS) Phillip Morrison, who deployed there in 2006 and 2007. "If EOD wasn't there to remove IEDs, they might still be there killing or wounding our Soldiers."

EOD Sailors also help gather information on the IEDs being used in Iraq, which enable investigators to hunt the terror cells that plant them.

CTF-56 also provides intelligence information that helps NAVCENT operate effectively.

"Being part of CTF-56 has given me a bigger view of how and why we operate the way we do," said Intelligence Specialist 1st Class Douglas Kelley, Jr. "Doing this job allows those in command to make informed decisions on how to best use our troops and resources."

"I'm glad to be supporting the troops on the front lines," said Morrison. "I always want to be as involved as possible in supporting the troops who are in harm's way. That's the greatest honor that a Sailor can have."

## Defense Department establishes civilian expeditionary workforce

By Gerry J. Gilmore

American Forces Press Service

**WASHINGTON** — The Defense Department is forming a civilian expeditionary workforce that will be trained and equipped to deploy overseas in support of military missions worldwide, according to department officials.

The intent of the program "is to maximize the use of the civilian workforce to allow military personnel to be fully utilized for operational requirements," according to a Defense Department statement.

Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England signed Defense Department Directive 1404.10, which outlines and provides guidance about the program, on Jan. 23.

Certain duty positions may be designated by the various Defense Department components to participate in the program. If a position is designated, the employee will be asked to sign an agreement that they will deploy if called upon to do so.

If the employee does not wish to deploy, every effort will be made to reassign the employee to a nondeploying position.

The directive emphasizes, however, that volunteers be sought first for any expeditionary requirements, before requiring anyone to serve involuntarily or on short notice. Overseas duty tours shall not exceed two years.

Employees in deployable-designated positions will be trained, equipped and prepared to serve overseas in support of humanitarian, reconstruction and, if absolutely necessary, combat-support missions.

The program also is open to former and retired civilian employees who agree to return to federal service on a time-limited status to serve overseas or to fill in for people deployed overseas.

Program participants are eligible for military medical support while serving in their overseas duty station.

All participants will undergo pre- and post-deployment medical testing, including physical and psychological exams.

Defense civilians reassigned from their normal duty to serve overseas will be granted the right to return to the positions they held prior to their deployment or to a position of similar grade, level and responsibility within the same organization, regardless of the deployment length.

Families of deployed Defense Department civilian employees shall be supported and provided with information on benefits and entitlements and issues likely to be faced by the employee during and upon return from a deployment.

Defense civilian employees who participate in the expeditionary program shall be treated with high regard as an indication of the department's respect for those who serve expeditionary requirements.

Expeditionary program participants' service and experience shall be valued, respected and recognized as career-enhancing.

Participants who meet program requirements would be eligible to receive the Secretary of Defense Medal for the Global War on Terrorism.

## Navy cites Fox News cameraman for bravery

From Stars and Stripes

**BAGHDAD** — A news cameraman who saved a U.S. Marine's life in Afghanistan in 2003 has been awarded the Navy's second highest honor given to civilians.

Chris Jackson, who was working for FOX News in August 2003, was presented with the Department of the Navy Distinguished Public Service Award last week in a ceremony on Camp Victory, Iraq.

Jackson was embedded with the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines when a Humvee in which he was riding hit 50 pounds of homemade explosives, according to military officials. Three Marines were able to get out of the burning Humvee, but the vehicle commander, Sgt. Courtney Rauch, had been knocked unconscious.

Jackson, who had suffered shrapnel wounds in the attack, moved back to the vehicle and pulled Rauch out to safety.

Marine Maj. Gen. Paul Lefebvre, deputy commander of Multi-National Corps-Iraq, presented Jackson with the award.

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CNRSWA and NSA Bahrain's incorporation into CNREURAFSWA's region is a positive change that will greatly benefit personnel in Southwest Asia. Barrett anticipates an easy transition with minimal issues.

"As with any large shift in an organizational structure, there will probably be some growing pains," he said. "This will probably be between the installation program managers and the region, in Europe, as they develop this new relationship. However, this will not have a negative impact on NSA Bahrain or any of its tenant commands."

In addition to NSA Bahrain, the new region takes over to support former CNRSWA facilities in Djibouti, Fujairah, and Jebel Ali, and other remote bases and facilities within Southwest Asia, adding them to CNREURAFSWA's bases in Rota, Spain; Sigonella, Sicily; and Naples.

### TAX from Page 1

[if applicable]; and bank routing account numbers for direct deposit purposes. However, the types of documentation required will vary, depending on the type of tax filed.

Collins noted that in some cases filers may have to utilize resources outside of the tax center.

"We don't do complex returns," said Collins. "The tax center is geared toward junior Sailors. Our volunteers aren't trained on filing extensive claims."

Those who have to file a more complex return have resources available to them on the Internet. Military One Source: [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com) and the Internal Revenue Service: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) are Web sites offer free electronic filing.

Collins said personnel stationed overseas and in combat zones are entitled to tax filing

extensions of up to 180 days following a deployment or PCS assignment. Assistance with extensions can be obtained at the VITA Center.

"These options are good for people with complex tax claims and also for instances where the dependent back home doesn't have a power of attorney to file a claim or when a service member doesn't want to have someone file on their behalf," she said.

She also noted the VITA Center files returns based solely on the information provided by its patrons and is not responsible for false claims.

"We will assist with getting the most amount of money back by legal means," said Collins. "If someone gets audited, it's between them and the IRS. It's their liability and not that of the tax center."

Volunteers who work at the VITA Center are required to complete extensive online training provided by the Internal Revenue

Service through the VITA Web site.

Information Systems Technician 1st Class (SW/AW) Angela Martin, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, is one of 30 service members aboard NSA Bahrain volunteering at the VITA Center.

"This is a great way to help out my fellow shipmates," she said. "I especially like to help out the juniors Sailors. This will keep money in their pockets, so they can put it to better use elsewhere."

In 2008 the NSA Bahrain VITA Center filed more than 800 tax returns, which resulted in more than \$1,000,000 in refunds.

The center is located in building 185R near the NSA Chapel. Operating hours are Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and from 1 to 5 p.m. Fridays. Arrangements can be made for Saturday services for personnel assigned to ships. For more information, call 439-6119.

# Liberty Center receives complete makeover

By MC2(SW) Stephen Murphy  
Editor

The Liberty Center aboard NSA Bahrain reopened Jan. 25 during an unveiling ceremony, showcasing more than \$100,000 in upgrades and renovations.

More than 100 service members attended the noon-hour event that featured free food and prize giveaways.

"This was an extreme makeover," said Kristie Kader, Liberty program manager. "The atmosphere has been completely changed. Now it's more inviting and relaxing. It's like a nice local hangout spot or lounge."

She said the center's previous appearance did not suit Liberty's target audience.

"What was here was not tailored to the enlisted members in the 18 to 25-year-old age group we are catering to," she explained. "We have painted the facility and laid all new carpet to make it more appealing."

The center features an Internet Café; a movie room; a video gaming room; a television lounge; a phone center; and a recreational area with pool tables, foosball and dartboards.

In addition to renovating the facility, there were technological upgrades added like new computers, televisions, sound systems and recreational equipment.

Liberty Center now features two giant-

screen televisions – one in its movie room and another in the lounge that has been outfitted with all new furniture, new lighting system, and modern artwork.

Kader said one of the biggest improvements is the new audio equipment in the movie room and lounge.

"We put in brand new surround-sound systems in each," she said. "Now it creates more of a theater environment."

Master-at-Arms 2nd Class (SW) Clarence Judd, from Naval Security Force, was on hand for the event.

"This is a much better place now," he said "The environment is more relaxing, and it's just a great place for us single Sailors to come and enjoy ourselves."

In addition to services and events offered at the center, Liberty offers trips to various locations throughout Bahrain. Kader said she places a huge emphasis on ensuring Sailors have the opportunity to experience the Bahraini culture.

"We are operating in an overseas location, so it changes our focus from that of a Liberty program in the U.S.," she said. "It's good for the junior Sailors to have a taste of home while they are here, but it is also important for them to get out of the barracks, step out of their normal routines, and experience the local culture."

The Liberty Center is a Morale, Welfare and Recreation-run facility with programs



Photo by MC2(SW) Stephen Murphy

Service members watch a wide-screen television as others check out computers and sign up for games at the Liberty Center aboard NSA Bahrain. The center was closed for a two-week period while renovations were made. More than 100 service members were in attendance for the reopening.

that are subsidized, so trips offered by the Center are free.

Kader said this is a good incentive for Sailors to take part in Liberty events.

"The Liberty Center is an extension of their barracks," she said. "It's our mission to offer junior Sailors as many opportunities as possible, so they can make the most

of their tour while stationed in Bahrain."

The Liberty's programs are available to single service members and geographical bachelors.

Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturdays through Wednesdays, and 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. Thursdays and Fridays. For more information, call 439-3192.

## CTF 53 reaches out to local Bahrain community

By Lt. Kristen Christensen  
Commander Task Force 53 Public Affairs

**MANAMA, Bahrain** — Commander Task Force (CTF) 53 Sailors volunteered at the Bahrain Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BSPCA) three times in the past five weeks, most recently Jan. 23.

The group spent several hours each Friday morning walking dogs, socializing newly arrived kittens and making new friendships.

Capt. Steve Kelley, commodore, CTF 53, said this opportunity is an excellent way to give back to Bahrain.

"We are hoping to make this a weekly event and to get as many Sailors involved as possible. Service members often reap the fruits of being deployed overseas without giving back to the host nation, so this is a fun and rewarding experience that can change that mentality."

Approximately 20 Sailors volunteered over the past several weeks walking more than 45 dogs and socializing about 20 kittens.

While the nature of CTF 53's mission precludes every Sailor from participating each time the command conducts the community-relations project, Sailors still help indirectly by donating material items that the BSPCA needs and have donated approximately \$150 worth of items such as canned puppy food, kitty litter, and rice.

"This is a great way to spend Friday morning in Bahrain," said Lt. Cmdr. Bobby Martinez, CTF-53 Requirements Department. "I walked a total of five dogs; we walked everywhere and saw camels, horses, turkeys, and chickens. I am happy

that the BSPCA helps keep dogs and cats from roaming the streets of Bahrain. By interacting with the dogs and getting them use to being around people, it may make them more likely to be adopted."

Storekeeper 1st Class (SW) Wankeisha Ross said the dogs were excited to go for a walk and that was quite a workout for everyone.

"This was the best exercise, because it wasn't just for me," Ross said.

Two Sailors from the command will also be adopting rescued animals within the next few weeks.

CTF 53 is actively seeking new opportunities to volunteer in Bahrain. Not only will CTF 53 continue to show support for the BSPCA, but will also begin to assist with the Bahrain Road Runners Club. Races are scheduled throughout the country requiring race marshals, course monitors, water/aide station attendees, and other positions in order to be successful.

"We are trying to get as involved in as many different activities within the community as possible," said Senior Chief Storekeeper (SW) Eduardo Roque. "Volunteering provides a rewarding experience for the Sailor and shows our sincere appreciation to Kingdom of Bahrain."

CTF 53 provides operational logistical support for the entire U.S. 5th Fleet and coalition forces both ashore and afloat. They coordinate replenishment-at-sea efforts and deliver passengers, mail, cargo, ammunition, provisions and fuel throughout the 5th Fleet area of operations via air, land and sea modes, helping to ensure Sailors aboard ships have what they need to complete their mission.

## Training, leadership, standards are key

*Surface Fleet Commanders emphasize 'Back To Basics' for readiness*

By Rebekah Gordon  
Inside the Navy

The Navy's surface forces must return to an emphasis on the fundamentals of operating and maintaining ships to ensure readiness for missions, the commanders of the Atlantic and Pacific surface forces recently said.

Vice Adm. D.C. Curtis, the commander of naval surface forces and the commander of the naval surface force for U.S. Pacific Fleet, calls the initiative "back to basics."

"We just want to make sure that with all your evolution with simulators, with all our evolution with metrics, with a lot of things we depend on, are we actually paying attention to the right areas?" Curtis said in an interview with Inside the Navy following a Jan. 13 speech at the Surface Navy Association's annual symposium in Arlington, VA.

"It's just really a calibration."

"I don't want people to be just dependent on -- yes, we have modern technology, seeing some of the things we have on our ships are great, we have the most powerful ships in the world here -- but we want to make sure things are working," he continued.

Curtis said he wants to ensure that those working on ships are asking the right questions to assess readiness and identify maintenance needs. For example, Curtis said a technician would be properly trained to know "this gear's working the way it should. Or, we say, 'Hey contractor, we really need some adjustments here. We really need to take a look at this.'"

"So we don't have that sense of complacency," Curtis added. "I never want to get there. I think when you get there, you lose the ball game."

"Back to basics" encompasses areas such as training, customs and traditions, and leadership on the deck plates.

Rear Adm. Kevin Quinn, the commander of the naval surface force for U.S. Atlantic

Fleet, said that surface forces must return to "time-proven principles" of leadership.

"Leaders being out, around their ship, being down in the lower level of the engine room, being up there in the gun mount taking a look at the material condition of their gun mounts and their launchers," he said. They must be "throughout the ship, insisting on the high standards that are the hallmark of surface warfare, so that their ships not only achieve their personal standards, but they achieve the standards that the leaders of the surface force and the leaders of the Navy expect of them."

Quinn said "back to basics" also encompasses adhering such maintenance and operation practices and standards as officer zone inspections, the Integrated Class Maintenance Plan, and standard operating procedures for ships and systems, all of which will lead to more accurately defining maintenance requirements.

"I'm convinced if we do that, we will solve a large part of the issues that we're facing," Quinn said. "And if we couple that with getting requirements right, properly funding them, putting the right processes in place, we will have the readiness that we need in the surface force."

The "back to basics" idea also dovetails with the Surface Ship Life Cycle Management Activity (SSLCMA), a new activity of Naval Sea Systems Command to centrally plan, budget and manage class maintenance requirements throughout the life cycle of surface ships. It is expected to formally stand up in April.

"We're beating the drum about the fundamentals of properly running and maintaining a warship," Quinn said. "Those fundamentals are as true today as they ever were in the Navy. And the more we emphasize them, the more we adhere to those fundamentals, the better off we're going to be in the readiness of the surface force."

# NAVCENT defeats Security, wins third straight championship



Two members of team "Security" gang up on "NAVCENT" team member Marcus Jones as he heads to the end zone. Photos by MC2(SW/AW) Sunday Williams.



Team NAVCENT cheers while holding up their first place flag football championship trophy after winning for the third season in a row.



Team NAVCENT proudly stands together with NAVCENT Vice Commander Rear Adm. Scott E. Sanders and NAVCENT Chief of Staff Capt. Scott T. Craig as they hold up their first place flag football championship trophy Jan. 22 after winning against team Security 22-12. This is the third season in a row that NAVCENT has won the championship.



Team Security's quarterback Johnny Abner rushes past a team member from NAVCENT keeping his flag from being pulled.



The Miami Dolphin Cheerleaders surprise team NAVCENT and team Security after the championship game Jan. 22. The cheerleaders presented both teams with trophies and posed for photographs with the team members.



Marcus Jones with team NAVCENT goes head-to-head with a Security team member.