USS Cole remembers 'hero Sailors' lost during 2000 attack

From Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. – On the eleventh annivesary of the terrorist attack againts *USS Cole* (DDG 67), 17 Sailors killed aboard the guided-missile destroyer were honored in a ceremony Oct. 12.

The ceremony was held on board Naval Station Norfolk at the *Cole* Memorial site along the shores of the Elizabeth River. Present and former *Cole* crew members, family and friends were invited to reflect and memorialize their shipmates and loved ones during the ceremony which included a wreath-laying and reading the names of those who sacrificed their lives.

Each individual's name was read, then followed by a bell-ringing and a moment of silence.

"Today *USS Cole* is not a museum; she is not a memorial. She is a living, breathing, fighting warship, and she is so because those Sailors refused to give up the ship," said Cmdr. Drew Ehlers, *Cole*'s current commanding officer. "Over the last year and a half it has been my great honor to command the *USS Cole*, and I am humbled in the knowledge that I share a history with those 'hero Sailors' of October 2000."

Surviving members of that *Cole* crew have become a tight-knit group with family members of the *Cole* "hero Sailors." They convene each year to console one another.

"It hurts so bad that I lost my son, and there is a lot of pain and tears in that, but I have to come to represent him," commented Dianne McDaniels whose son, Seaman James R. McDaniels, lost his life in the attack. "It makes me feel good to come to this ceremony because there are others who know what I'm going through."

"The fellowship is good, but it is a sad time for family, friends and shipmates," added Master Chief Sonar Technician (SW) Paul Abney, who was trapped in the *Cole*'s chiefs mess at the time of the attack.

Cmdr. Drew Ehlers, commanding officer of the guided-missile destroyer *USS Cole* (DDG 67), and Sailors assigned to *Cole* salute after the presentation of a wreath at the *USS Cole* Memorial during a ceremony at Naval Station Norfolk Oct. 12. The Norfolk-based ship was damaged by a suicide bombing Oct. 12, 2000 while refueling in the Port of Aden in Yemen, killing 17 and wounding 39 Sailors. *Cole* returned to the fleet in 2002 and has deployed four times since the attack.

U.S. Navy photo by Ensign Elizabeth Williams

"They are all in our hearts and close to us. We will also remember our heroes: the Marines, the HMS Marlborough, the *USS Donald Cook*, the shipyard workers, and all those who came over and helped us after the attack. They're all our heroes."

At the *Cole* Memorial site, 17 low-level markers stand for the youthfulness of the Sailors, whose lives were cut short.

Three tall, granite monoliths, each bearing brass plaques, stand for the three colors of the American flag. A set of brown markers encircling the memorial symbolize the darkness and despair that overcame the ship.

In addition, 28 black pine trees were planted to represent the 17 Sailors and the 11 children they left behind.

The memorial was funded by contributions from thousands of private individuals and businesses to the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, which gifted the memorial to the Navy.

Its design originated as a vision of *USS Cole* crew members, who then teamed with Navy architects and the Society to finalize the project.

Physical readiness control officers: Upholding new Navy Physical Readiness Program policy

By MC3 Andrea Perez,
Navy Personnel Command
Public Affairs Office

MILLINGTON, Tenn. – The newly established Physical Readiness Control Officer (PRCO) program will serve as a vital link between command fitness leaders and Navy Physical Readiness Program coordinators, officials said Oct. 11.

"We decided it would be beneficial to put a link between the commands and the Physical Readiness Program Office (OPNAV N135), where policy is written, to ensure accuracy and fairness to Sailors and commands," said Bill Moore, director, Navy Physical Readiness Program, OPNAV N135. "It lets us provide command fitness leaders (CFL) with more direct assistance and also gives each one of the echelons an opportunity to monitor the commands within their area to ensure compliance with the program."

In accordance with NAVADMIN 203/11, echelon III commanders must now appoint a PRCO to liaise with OPNAV and provide assistance to subordinate commands on physical readiness program policy and compliance and also ensure physical fitness assessment (PFA) compliance reporting semiannually.

The new collateral duty PRCO position and changes to the Physical Readiness Program took effect in July when the Navy announced the revision of OPNAVINST 6110.1J in NAVADMIN 203/11. It was the first major revision to the physical readiness program since 2005.

"Over the last two years we have turned over every component of this program to make sure that it's fair, equitable and standardized across the board," said Moore. "We have addressed the PRT, developed PRIMS 2011, and come up with new policy and associated operating guides that can be updated on an as needed basis to ensure a good, accurate program."

NPC officials hosted training for the first group of PRCOs in September.

"During training, the PRCOs went through everything that CFLs learn during the five-day CFL certification course," said Moore. "They learned all the major components of policy, frequently asked questions that we receive at headquarters, everything about the PRIMS 2011 and also what their role and responsibilities are as a PRCO."

"The Navy will benefit by having collateral duty PRCOs in place through the assurance that all commands are in compliance with the physical readiness program, how it is run, that it is administered in a standardized, efficient way and benefits each one of the Sailors, but most of all that it's fair," said Moore.

A Physical Readiness Program Operating Guide is also now in place and accompanied by an updated version of the Navy Nutrition Guide and Fitness Enhancement Program guidance available at www.npc.navy.mil.

The new guide incorporates policy guidance from OPNAVINST 6110.1H and NAVADMINs 293/06, 277/08, 073/09, 247/09 and 131/10.

For a full explanation of physical readiness program changes, read NAVADMIN 203/11 or OPNAVINST 6110.1J.