GW Fun Boss raises morale of Sailors while out at sea or in port

Story and photo by MC3(SW) Devon Dow, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

It is a known fact among the crew that *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) (*GW*) has its fare share of bosses. Ranging from the Air Boss to the Gun Boss, each boss plays a critical role in carrying out the daily tasks needed to maintain the forward-deployed readiness of *GW*.

There is one boss, however, whose job is very different from the rest; a boss who focuses her efforts on providing a mental break from stresses of Navy life at sea. Her primary mission – provide Sailors with leisurely alternatives and boost the crew's morale.

She is the Fun Boss.

Rebekah McKoy, a native of Mililani, Hi. is a civilian who has been serving as the *GW* Fun Boss since arriving on board Aug. 1. She leads the *GW* Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Department, which provides quality support and recreational services that contribute to the retention, readiness, mental, physical and emotional well-being of *GW* Sailors.

Rebekah McKoy serves as the Fun Boss for the *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Morale, Welfare and Recreation Department. She coordinates weekly recreational and leisure events while underway and tourism resources for Sailors when the carrier visits a foreign port.

"I feel that it is important for Sailors to have an outlet," McKoy said. "We provide them with the opportunity to attend our weekly events or come to our MWR booth located in the mess decks and check out video games, movies or pick up freebies we offer. With MWR, I think that there is something for everybody. Without MWR, I feel that the deployments would seem a lot longer for Sailors than they really are."

McKoy is no stranger to MWR. Growing up as an Army brat, wherever she has traveled with her family, MWR has always been there. "I use to work for MWR when I was in Hawaii," she said. "I learned a lot there and it helped me build for the transition of coming to the *George Washington*."

Not only does she have the previous MWR experience, McKoy is a proud graduate of the University of Hawaii where she earned a bachelors degree in Recreation Management and Business Administration.

Since being on board, McKoy said she has been impressed with the ship and its crew. While she was initially worried about seasickness, her adjustment to *GW* has come full circle as she plans events Sailors can enjoy in their downtime. The trick to making her events a success is a simple one.

"Communication is the key," she said. "I like getting out when I have the chance and talking to Sailors. The more I talk to them, the more I can ask them what they like to do in their off time. I feel that the interaction helps me find out a lot about what Sailors are interested in and I can put together events that they will enjoy."

Friday nights in the ship's forward mess decks you can hear some of your favorite or least favorite songs being sung by *GW* Sailors to the delight of a crowd or maybe hear the cheers and screams from Sailors during a video game tournament. These are only a few of the weekly events MWR hosts that Sailors take full advantage of throughout the week.

"I enjoy the nights MWR hosts video game tournaments," said Yeoman Seaman Randall Adkins from Baltimore. "I'm a big football fan so the fact they hold Madden tournaments sometimes is great. You can even win prizes like gift certificates to the Navy Exchange or phone cards to call your family while you're underway, its real cool."

While *GW* is at sea, McKoy and her team at MWR work hard keeping Sailors morale high. It is at its highest she said when the ship prepares to pull into a port. This year, *GW* has visited the Republic of South Korea, Singapore, the Republic of the Philippines and Thailand. MWR provided tours and hotels for Sailors to purchase which is a popular request.

McKoy said she is happy to be able to offer the services to Sailors because it helps give them the opportunity to experience much of what the countries they visit have to offer.

"When it comes to port visits, my main goal is to provide opportunities so Sailors get a lasting experience of being in a foreign country," she said. "I like to think my job is to provide Sailors with an outlet; to check out the country and have fun. There are always great people to meet when traveling who are just as excited to meet you as you are to meet them."

Airman Angela Enisco from Menifee, Calif., has signed up for MWR tours in the past and is currently working for MWR. She says that MWR is a great resource for Sailors and that working for McKoy has really helped her understand the work that goes into making these events a reality for Sailors.

"She is great to work with and is very easy going," Enisco said. "I think she is beneficial to the ship because a lot of people at the end of the work day need some time to unwind and the Fun Boss coordinates activities that Sailors enjoy and take advantage of."

Aviation Machinist's Mate Airman Dana Segali from Boise, Id., said the opportunity to be apart of the MWR team and to work for McKoy is a great experience for her.

"She is a very, very, very friendly, polite and a great person to work for and to be around," Segali said. "She is always supportive of our ideas for events when we have them and is a great communicator around the ship. She is a great person to have on board to help raise the morale of Sailors."

McKoy's vision for lifting the morale of service members will not end with *GW*, she aspires one day to work in the joint forces sector and coordinate special events. While that is in her future, she said she is currently proud and impressed by the professionalism she sees everyday as she walks through the passageways on board *GW*.

"Being apart of the *GW* team is a great military experience for me," she said. "I am so proud of all of the hard work the men and women of this ship do day in and day out. I am very happy everyday to be afforded the opportunity to do my part in raising the morale of Sailors while they are at sea supporting our country and making their families and friends proud."

The editor asks:

"Did you know, Navy Personnel Command (NPC) has an all new 'My Personnel Information' link on the NPC homepage, directing Sailors to a single grouping of web links for personnel information and career management?

"The 'My Personnel Information' page (the first listing under quick links) is a first step in response to requests from the fleet for a single self-service-online site for personnel service delivery capabilities. NPC is also working to develop an enhanced 'portal' that provides Sailors direct access to the most commonly used applications and sources of career information.

"The 'My Personnel Information' page has four main functions; personnel records, self-support, training and education, and Customer Service Center support. Sailors can access their official military personnel file, their physical readiness information, submit an electronic-leave request, enter the Defense Travel System or request a Sailor or Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript.

"Feedback and lessons learned from the 'My Personnel Information' page will be put into the requirements for the future Navy Human Resources Portal under development for active duty and reserve Sailors.

"For more information or to provide direct feedback on 'My Personnel Information' visit http://www.npc.navy.mil (quick links to the left), or contact NPC Customer Service Center at CSCMail@navy.mil or 1-866-U-ASK-NPC."

Drowsy driving

By CFAY Traffic Safety Office

Your eyelids droop and your head starts to nod. Yawning becomes almost constant and your vision seems blurry. You blink hard, focus your eyes and suddenly realize that you've veered onto the shoulder or into oncoming traffic for a moment and quickly straighten the wheel. This time you were lucky; next time you could become the latest victim of the tragedy of drowsy driving.

According to the National Sleep Foundation's Sleep in America poll, 60 percent of Americans have driven while feeling sleepy and 37 percent admit to actually having fallen asleep at the wheel in the past year. However, many people cannot tell if or when they are about to fall asleep. And if sleepiness comes on while driving, many say to themselves, "I can handle this, I'll be fine." Yet they're putting themselves and others in danger. What they really need is a nap or a good night's sleep.

Here are some signs that should tell a driver to stop and rest:

- Difficulty focusing, frequent blinking, or heavy eyelids.
- Daydreaming; wandering or disconnected thoughts.
- Trouble remembering the last few miles driven; missing exits or traffic signs.
- Yawning repeatedly or rubbing your eyes.
- Trouble keeping your head in an upright position.
- Drifting from your lane, tailgating or hitting a shoulder rumble strip.
- Feeling restless and irritable.

So, if you are planning a trip back to the states for the holidays, plan accordingly. Getting off the plane and right into a rental car is fine; however, even though you may have slept during the long flight, it doesn't account for good rest. You adrenaline is what has you going for about an hour after you get off the plane. If you have to travel longer than one hour from the airport to your destination, have someone pick you up or use public transportation.

Not only do you put yourself and your family at risk, you also endanger the lives of other drivers on the roads. The holidays are a time to celebrate, not mourn. Plan ahead, travel smart and drive safe.