McCampbell Sailors relax, unwind in new library "A-loft"

Story and photo by MCSN (SW) Declan Barnes, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

PACIFIC OCEAN – Somewhere inside the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer *USS McCampbell* (DDG 85) there is a space dramatically unlike the others. As the mighty warship steams through the water, the crew bustles in action all over – performing their necessary duties around the clock to ensure the vessel maintains peak operational readiness. In the midst of it all, among the haze gray bulkheads and hot engine rooms, there is one place that emanates peace and tranquility. This is a haven, a place to unwind – a temporary escape from the demands of a long deployment.

This is *McCampbell*'s new library, "A-loft," which serves as a place for Sailors to relax and improve themselves, and Operations Specialist 2nd Class Janis Jackson, *McCampbell*'s librarian, is working diligently to keep it that way.

When the previous ship library was replaced by a weight gym as part of a space reassignment, Jackson was worried that there wouldn't be anywhere else to have a library on the already space limited warship. She believed in the importance of a place for Sailors to relax from their daily stresses and read, and she convinced her chain of command to allow her to re-invent the ship's training office as the new library for the crew.

"I think it's important that the people onboard have somewhere to escape the stress of being a Sailor and relax," said Jackson. "I think having that is as necessary as having food to eat or somewhere to sleep. When I created 'A-loft' I wanted to provide that place."

With the help of a few volunteers, Jackson filled the space with books and various decorations to help stimulate the mind. She raised money through fundraisers that allowed to her to add a few comforts to the place, such as bean bag chairs for visitors and a rug for the space. Books of all kinds line the shelves, from fiction, non-fiction and informational guides to study material for common exams such as the ASVAB, GED, and SAT.

The crew has responded well to the space and many have taken advantage of "A-loft." It has proven particularly beneficial during the *McCampbell*'s current deployment, conducting a Western Pacific patrol with the George Washington Strike Group.

"'A-loft' has all kinds of books and resources to help me figure out my career," said Seaman Christopher Mulhollon. "Everywhere else on the ship is full of people working, and this place is like a little 'fort of relaxation'. I think OS2 has done a really great job."

OS2 Janis Jackson, assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer *USS McCampbell* (DDG 85), organizes books in the ship's new library that she developed, "A-loft."

Many others share Mulhollon's perspective and embrace the serenity of the space.

"It's one of the few relaxing places on the ship. It's somewhere I can go and sit and clear my mind," said Operations Specialist 3rd Class Zachariah Ball. "This is one of the few places I can have my five minutes of privacy."

Jackson is pleased with the crew's response to A-loft and is going to continue to maintain the library and improve *McCampbell*.

"People need this, and I'm going to do what I can to make sure it stays around," said Jackson. "I'm proud of this place."

George Washington conducts burial-at-sea ceremonies

By MCSN Tatiana Avery, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

PACIFIC OCEAN – The U.S. Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) held a burial-at-sea for retired Lt. j.g. Paul Shivell and retired Chief Mess Management Specialist Peter Schiavo Sept. 14.

The burials consisted of a ceremony held in accordance with the deceased's spiritual affiliation and was officiated by the command chaplains, followed by full military honors.

"Burials-at-sea are conducted in recognition of and in appreciation for distinguished service to our nation," said Capt. Kenneth Reynard, *George Washington*'s executive officer. "Each is regarded as a solemn and sacred obligation."

Naval traditions like this are a unique occasion for the crew of *George Washington*, which rarely hosts ceremonies of this nature due to the difficulty of transporting remains from the U.S. to the Asia-Pacific region.

"Ships based at Norfolk typically conduct more than one-thousand burials-at-sea a year," said Cmdr. Dan Mode, *George Washington*'s command chaplain. "It's a great honor to do something like this, and more importantly, it brings closure to the families."

Captains William Shivell and Sandra Schiavo attended the ceremony and participated in the traditional "Committal to the Sea" of their fathers' ashes in a wooden urn.

"Being the crusty Sailor that he was, my father made it clear to me that he wanted to be cremated and buried at sea," said Schiavo. "He actually told me that he wanted to be put into a Navy-issue coffee can and be committed while the ship was underway."

Both Schiavo and Shivell expected a much simpler ceremony and were surprised to see that a full 21 gun salute, funeral detail, specially hand-crafted urn and playing of taps were provided for the occasion.

"I wasn't expecting a full detail or taps at all. It was so touching that the chaplain and the crew would do all of this for me and my family," said Shivell. "I know my sisters and the rest of my family will appreciate the video and pictures so much."

Lt. j.g. Shivell enlisted in the Navy in 1939; while deployed to the Western Pacific area in 1941, Shivell's ship was bombed by Japanese aircraft two months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was accepted into an aviation commissioning program in 1942 and flew patrol aircraft until the end of World War II.

"He was extremely proud of his service to the Navy and I loved being able to share this one last tradition with him," said Shivell.

Chief Schaivo was drafted into service in 1956. According to Capt. Schaivo, his brothers urged him to avoid joining the Army and he jumped at the chance to become a Sailor. He retired as a chief petty officer 24 years later.

"I feel that the chaplains and staff went above and beyond," said Schaivo. "Everything came together so well and I think he would've loved this."

The family members will be given a letter of condolence with a national ensign, photographs and video of the ceremony, the empty shell-casings of the 21-gun-salute and navigational chart of where the burial-at-sea took place.

HM2 Jessalyn Beleno, from San Jose, Calif., prepares to ceremoniously deliver the remains of retired Lt. j.g. Paul Shivell into the ocean during a burial-at-sea aboard the U.S. Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73).

U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Brian H. Abel