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From the Commanding Officer

I can hear the fat lady tuning up

Wow, what a week! We've been busier in the last few days than during the entire war!! First came the dramatic arrival of the first group of seven (six Americans and one Italian) ex-POWs released by Iraq. Then we welcomed the second, and apparently final, group of sixteen folks (fifteen Americans and one more Italian). Then came the very emotional farewell to over 600 of our shipmates. Finally, our special friends left us for Andrews Air Force Base to be reunited with their loved ones. It was one of the most emotionally rewarding and draining weeks of my life, and I wouldn't have traded it for anything.

I won't gloat, but I'm really happy we were selected to receive the ex-POWs on board Mercy, the finest hospital ship in the Gulf (that's not just my opinion, even Doonesbury said so!). I think it made our seven months of

hard work, training, and occasional boredom worthwhile. I felt especially proud of America and our armed forces when I watched those heroes get off the bus and come up the brow. It was a moment I'll never forget, and I feel honored to have been here. Last week I said we were a part of history; this week, that's even truer.

Speaking of real-life, world-class heroes, my personal favorite, Gen. "Stormin" Norman Schwarzkopf sure brightened up the week. Talk about charisma -- the man's got it! His leadership was largely responsible for how well the war went and how few casualties we had. He was very touched by the bear, too. When we got on the elevator to leave, he looked kinda sheepish and said, "Can I really keep this?" You bet, General.

The most emotional part of the week was saying goodbye to our shipmates

who headed home. I'll miss them all, and I hope it won't be much longer before we join them. The ship is going to seem a bit empty without them, but I'm glad they got the chance to go home to be reunited with their families. Besides, I told 'em to start planning the party for when we hit Oakland!

So, when's the ship heading home? I don't know for sure, but I expect it to be real soon. If you're looking for a specific date, I suggest you follow the advice on my door -- ask CNN! We'll probably make one liberty stop before we hit Subic, where we'll probably spend a few days to get spiffed up for our homecoming. Notice the "probablies" there -- as usual, I'm just guessing about the plan. Semper Gumby. *Me*.

Breaking up is hard to do

by C. J. Cummings



Mood should be euphoric, but still alert

As we embark on a period of euphoria let us not forget that for us it is never over. We are surrounded by systems that do not have any sense of world events. Fuel oil leaks still cause fires, improperly maintained or flown aircraft still fall uncontrolled to the earth. Improper conduct ashore can place you in harm's way. Frayed wiring or improperly grounded electrical equipment can still shock, and for all you mine watch personnel, you won't find white flags flying from those mines.

Safety is a state of mind with a large dose of self-discipline required. Each and every person in this force has to rely on absolute perfection by some other person's performance; don't break the chain. I want each and every one of you to get home and bask in the well-deserved tribute that you have earned by your outstanding performance in Desert Storm.

*Vice Adm. Stanley R. Arthur, Commander
U.S. Naval Forces Central Command*

Kudos for MSC performance; nothing less than stellar

With the cease fire now in effect, I look back on your accomplishments over the past seven months with pride and gratitude. The performance of Military Sealift Command units, both ashore and at sea, has been nothing less than stellar.

I am honored to belong to the outstanding seafaring team of Navy civil service, Naval Reserve, and merchant marine men and women

You have every right to be proud of your achievements. Almost 500 MSC shiploads of cargo resulted in an eight million ton "mountain" of weapons, armor, food, fuel and munitions which has led to the allied liberation of Kuwait.

Please accept my sincere appreciation for all your efforts and accomplishments. In addition to your fine performance in strategic sealift, the men and women who sail and sustain our NFAF, special mission ships, hospital ships and aviation logistics support ships deserve a well-earned pat on the back. Units in all of these categories operated in the thick of naval activities in the Persian Gulf, the Northern Arabian Sea, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. Suffice to say that naval operations could not have been sustained without you.

As you know, we successfully met our initial goal of preparing and sustaining our forces for the war. Now, we are tasked with rapid redeployment as peace prevails in the region. As you are well aware, there are millions of tons of equipment and munitions which we must safely redeliver.

I request your continued strong support as we enter this final phase of Operation Desert Storm.

I am honored to belong to the outstanding seafaring team of Navy civil service, Naval Reserve and merchant marine men and women. Well done to all hands. *Vice Adm. Donovan, Commander, Military Sealift Command*

Congratulations from COMSCPAC

I want to add the admiration and pride we all feel in your performance to those you have already received from the highest levels.

Without doubt your performance in support of Operation Desert Storm will be remembered as a highwater mark in the history of Military Sealift Command. You've set new records of performance. On behalf of all of us here, we congratulate you and thank you for your loyalty and commitment to our country. Well done.

Capt. Addicott, MSC PAC

From the CMC

Now that Operation Desert Storm is coming to a close, it's time to turn our thoughts to getting home safely, and once again being members of the peacetime Navy.

This means taking a look at routine things we may have let slide during the last seven months. One of those things is the proper wearing of the Navy uniform. One of the newest items available for all Navy members is the navy blue pullover sweater.

According to the Navy Uniform Matters Office, the sweater is authorized for wear in place of the service dress blue coat. This uniform is authorized for daily wear to and from work, in public places and for

attending working level meetings/briefings.

The sweater remains an optional item with winter blue, winter working blue, summer khaki, working khaki and dungarees.

Shirt collars will be worn inside the sweater collar with all uniforms. Officers wear soft shoulder boards on the sweater epaulets. Enlisted wear no rate/rank insignia on the sweater.

The Pulse

The Pulse is the official publication of the Medical Treatment Facility aboard USNS Mercy (T-AH 19). It is intended for shipboard personnel and contains professional information relative to members aboard the ship. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Department of the Navy or any other governmental department or agency. Contributions are welcome and will be published as space permits, subject to editing and possible abridgment. The Pulse is a weekly publication, submissions must be received by the editor by Tuesday COB.

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Train, don't strain!

Without the proper precautions, workouts can be a killer

by HM2 James Knapp
Safety Division

The following excerpts from the latest issue of "The Safetyline" illustrate the dangers involved in starting a crash exercise program:

"A 44-year-old senior chief completed a combined run and bicycle ride, collapsed, and died of a heart attack brought on by over-stressing a diseased coronary system."

"A 19-year-old seaman apprentice was playing basketball with friends when he suddenly collapsed. He was rushed to a local hospital where he died from cardiac arrest. The cause: exceeding his physical limits."

Now that the threat of war has receded and the possibility of mass

casualties has been reduced, our thoughts are on going home. Wanting to look great for the significant other waiting patiently back home means many people are starting exercise programs or increasing existing programs. It is important to remember, however, that of all recreational activity related deaths between 1985-89, 16 percent were due to vigorous exercise.

There are a few simple rules you can follow to help avoid injury and death in your exercise program.

- Get examined by a doctor before you start, especially if you are over 40.
- Know your target heart rate, 220 minus your age multiplied by 0.60 - 0.75. Your goal should be to reach but NOT exceed your target heart rate.
- Warm-up and stretch for 5-10

minutes before you begin exercising.

- Don't exceed your limit; if you feel unusual discomfort, disorientation, chest pains or excessive fatigue, stop and rest and don't hesitate to see a doctor!

- Don't forget to cool down slowly after you're done, and let your body readjust gradually to the decreased physical demand.

- Drink plenty of water before and after exercising to avoid dehydration

The benefits of a good exercise program are numerous and it's always riskier not to exercise than it is to exercise. The expression "No pain, no gain" may be true to some extent but you must use common sense -- don't overdo it. There's another expression relevant to exercise: "If it kills you, it ain't healthy!"

MWR chairman praises committee members

by Lt. Cmdr. Scott A. Trezza
Morale, Welfare and Recreation Committee

After nearly three months as chairman of Morale, Welfare and Recreation, I would be negligent if I failed to recognize those hard-working folks who made MWR a success.

SK1 Melissa Kudla, my co-chairman, used her expertise while ashore in Bahrain, to acquire the Yamaha sound system featured at our last two events. (No falling minispeakers.)

By the way, special thanks to Lt. Ed Bates for taking the trouble to select the necessary system components.

HM3 Nick Pantaleo has truly been my right-hand man in MWR. No, not because of the valium he threw at me before the lip synch and gong shows, but for all his tireless enthusiasm and motivation. In addition to producing the New Year's Eve lip synch contest he almost single-handedly ran the video-messages-home program -- with a little help from SK2 Corrine Huffman and the Barn Animals.

Lt. Mary Gloeb had the onerous task of being MWR secretary (yes, we do generate a fair amount of paper) as well as always working behind the scenes at most MWR activities. If there is an MWR event, Mary is there helping.

HM2 Ed Mastrovito has completely managed the sale of cruisebooks, with the generous help of Lt. Charles Goldstein and Lt. Sue Getz. In addition, he handled the sound system at the lip synch contest.

HM3 Barbara Newkirk, our connection with S-8, is always there helping behind the scenes at events including clean-ups.

Ensign Danny Jackson, Mercy's movie mogul, skillfully managed the AG Video Store, and organized the whole thing down to a gnat's posterior. Thanks Danny, we couldn't do it without you.

The triumvirate of Spanky, Cooter and Dawg (HN Chuck Marlof, HN Mark Cotter and HM3 Mark Morris) helped organize and host the gong show and country-western night. Their creative energies and endless enthusiasm gave us all lots of laughs. I can always count on these guys for help. (Now, if I could just keep Spanky from harassing the Skipper...)

HN Kayla Haval and her fellow Cajuns are responsible for the outstanding Mardi Gras party, as well as the Cajun menu we all enjoyed. Les bon temps never would have roullez'd without ya'll. Merci!

Of course, our funds custodian, Lt. Henry Villareal, gets a big thanks. He puts up with my regular barrage of "Henry, I'm spending money."

And lastly, for all their support, advice and guidance, many thanks to Capt. Michael Roman, Cmdr. Henry Rosas and Lt. Cmdr. Carol Bohn.

All of the MWR events would not have been possible without the complete support of Capt. Paul Barry. Thanks, Skipper, for allowing us to do our wild thing for your Wild Thing.

I have doubtlessly overlooked someone. It is purely unintentional. MWR has been a success only because of the fine people who worked so diligently on all the events we have staged so far.

I am proud to work with every one of them.

Cartoons

