

Vol. 2, No 27

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## Kudos from COMUSNAVCENT

### Vice Adm. Arthur congratulates all Desert Shield participants

Well the woodpile has been cleaned up and the copperhead turned out to be a garden snake.

It has been a fast 43 days and we have all grown professionally and learned a lot of new tricks and relearned some valuable old ones.

Again, the close relationships that

our navies have established will stand us in good stead for many years to come. As always, sailors at sea share a strong and common bond.

It has been an honor to serve with you and I congratulate each and every member of this force for a job extremely well done. BZ.



**Bravo Zulu**

**Happy Birthday**

### Navy medicine receives birthday salute after participation in Desert Storm

As we successfully conclude Operation Desert Storm on the eve of your 120th anniversary, the accomplishments of the Navy Medical Corps have never been more evident.

Navy medicine has met the challenge of providing the finest care possible to our Navy/Marine Corps team and any others in need. Your dedication to duty and care of our forces in the field and our families at home are ac-

complishments for which you may take pride.

You begin a new year self-confident and assured that the Navy medical department is up to any challenge.

In Desert Shield and Desert Storm Navy medicine has represented the epitome of excellence, a legacy for those who follow. Happy birthday and congratulations on a job well done.

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## From the Commanding Officer: Ready, set, ...?

Another wild week! Who could have predicted that the war would be over so quickly? It's almost too hard to believe. I think it's phenomenal that we could liberate Kuwait with so few casualties, but I'm sure thankful it's true.

Have you thought about our part in the war? At first you may think that we didn't do much out here, but don't believe it for a minute. Like I said in Captain's Call, those soldiers and Marines in the sand knew we were here and knew that they would get the best medical care in the world if they were hurt. I'm absolutely positive that their knowing that made them better prepared to do their jobs, and they obviously did their jobs real well.

I know the next question: "When will we go home?" I don't know, and I don't even want to guess! I also don't know whether we'll all ride the ship home or if some of us will fly back.

The powers that be (the guys in suits, not uniforms) are working those issues even as I write, and believe me, the minute I find out all the details, I'll let everyone know. These decisions, unfortunately, are political, not military, so it's anyone's guess when we'll travel.

With thoughts of heading home, it's easy to let our guards down and to think this is all just about over. Even after we get our sail orders, though, there's still a lot to do before we can put this behind us. We have to deactivate the ship, which will take time and hard work. Also, it's a long ride from here to there; even if we head straight back with no stops, it will take nearly a month. Once we do arrive home, there will still be loose ends to tie up. So even though it looks like the end of this phase of the deployment may be in sight, keep your spirits up and keep in mind that we've still got a job to do.

Speaking about working hard and getting the job done, the Black History Month Committee, chaired by Ensign Kimberleigh Brooks, really did an excellent job with all the presentations in February but especially with last Sunday's musical chronology. The show started with the West African slave trade and progressed through the "Be-Bop" era and the civil rights movement, right up to the 90s. It was an absolutely wonderful evening, not only entertaining but also educational. Well done also to show coordinator Lt. j-g. Pamela Smith and musical director HM2 Devenius Willcox.

Hopefully as the next few days unfold, we'll find out what our future holds -- when we'll go home, how we'll get there, where we'll stop along the way, etc. We're all a very real part of history now; be proud of yourselves.

— Me

## From the Command Master Chief

### Deployment teaches valuable lessons

by *HMCM(SW) R. A. Cooper*  
Command Master Chief

President Bush has ordered a cease fire, and it appears that Saddam Hussein has surrendered and accepted the conditions set by the United Nations.

Now that it looks like we won't be receiving the casualties that we expected, it seems our mission is over. Many may feel that our six months of waiting and training have been for naught, but I don't think that's true.

While we were in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, more than a thousand soldiers waited in line just to get a look at a hospital ship. Just knowing we were here made a difference in the resolve and morale of the fighting forces. Our country asked them to go in harm's way, and it was important for them to know expert medical care was available if they needed it.

Another factor that made this deployment worthwhile is the fact that now we know just how ready we are to answer the call of our country. When we deployed, we were a ship carrying some of the most talented individuals

of realizing that we could take a diverse group of individuals from all over the country and turn them into a cohesive medical team; and the success of being resolutely ready to face whatever challenges came our way in fulfillment of our mission.

the Navy medical community had to offer. Now, after only six months, we are a hospital staffed with the finest team of medical professionals in the Navy. In less time than it takes to turn a new recruit into a sailor and a corpsman, we have built a hospital, and more importantly, built and trained a team to run it.

Even though we never saw the level of action we expected, we have truly achieved success: the success of knowing that we could put together a medical treatment facility on remarkably short notice; the success

of realizing that we could take a diverse group of individuals from all over the country and turn them into a cohesive medical team; and the success of being resolutely ready to face whatever challenges came our way in fulfillment of our mission.

Far from being wasted, I feel our time here has been well-spent. We have learned about ourselves as individuals and as a team. We now know that we are ready to confidently face whatever the future has to bring -- in this conflict or the next -- as medical professionals and as Americans.

### 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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## Reservists' pay accounts now open; more news on Desert Storm allowances

by Ensign Charles Moore  
Disbursing Officer

Let's see, this week we've had some historic moments. First, we saw V. I. Day (victory over Iraq). Then, Friday we witnessed a truly momentous occasion -- V. R. Day -- victory over reservists. As of this week all reservists have master military pay accounts and will receive direct deposits or local payments, as applicable. We are aware of the problems which remain, and are taking corrective action. Please see your disbursing clerk during customer service hours for more information.

We are pleased to welcome aboard two new disbursing clerks. DK2 Pat

Baker is TAD from Naval Hospital San Diego. He was on USS Independence during its stint in the Gulf, and has fond memories of those of you who rendered appropriate military honors during the photo op a few months ago. Our other new teammate is DK3 Deanna Ritchey, who comes to Mercy from the Defense Finance Accounting Service, Cleveland-Center, Cleveland, Ohio. She brings a wealth of knowledge about the "big picture," and is a welcome addition.

I'm sure many of you are concerned about what happens to our pay now that hostilities have ended. Well, I'm going to go out on a limb a little bit here and speculate. I would bet that we've seen the last of our combat zone tax-exclusion and savings plan. Al-

though no official word has come yet, it only makes sense that these programs, which were activated as of the outbreak of hostilities, would end with the official cease fire. As for hostile fire pay, my guess is that it will continue to accrue until we leave the HFP zone. We still need W-4 input from all officers, however, due to the more than 40 days of war.

That's about all the new information I'd like to pass on right now. We are in a period of transition, and I'm sure that in the next week we'll get a much clearer picture of what the deactivation process entails. I just hope my family recognizes me now that I'm a shell-shocked, paranoid and burned out combat disbursing veteran. For the Pay Guys, Peace.

## Emergency egress training can save lives

by HM2 James Knapp  
Safety division

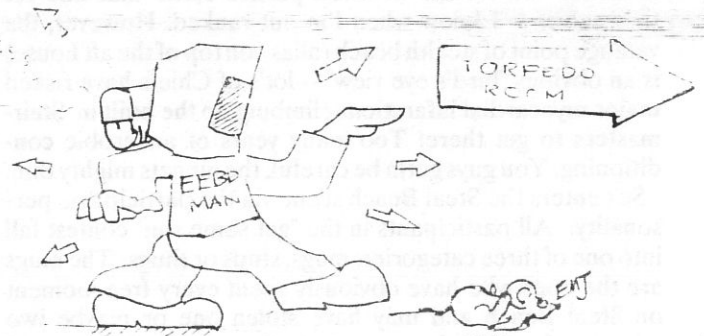
You're asleep in your rack when suddenly at 2 a.m. the general alarm goes off! Rubbing sleep out of your eyes you hear a voice over the 1MC, "Fire! Fire! Fire in compartment 01-71-2! This is not a drill!" You grab your emergency escape breathing device and start to depart berthing. Before you reach the door, the lights go out. It's so dark that you can't see your hand in front of your face and you remember your flashlight is still in your locker. What do you do in this situation?

We hope no one ever has to face the above scenario, but the possibility is always there. Being prepared for emergency egress will help you and your shipmates. If you're not ready, you may panic and people around you may panic. Even if you are not in any real danger from the fire, trying to evacuate berthing with a couple of hundred panicking shipmates could put everyone in danger. It does not have to be that way.

Emergency egress training is a requirement every six months in the "gray hull" Navy. One by one each person in berthing is blindfolded. Using the buddy system (the buddy isn't blindfolded) the person tries to find his or her way out of berthing or the work center. For the sake of realism take an EEBD along with you (please don't break the tamper seal and please don't don the EEBD!) It's not as easy as it sounds but it's certainly not impossible.

Emergency egress training can be a lot of fun for everyone -- from the person trying to grope his or her way around the ship, to the person helping the trainee. But even though this training may be good for a laugh, it should always be taken seriously. The training is no good if someone gives the trainee directions.

You never know when you may have to evacuate your berthing or work space in the dark. It happened on my last ship after I had been assigned there less than a month. Having no idea where you are or what's in front of you is a very scary feeling. I was lucky not to have fallen over the side or run into something sharp. I can imagine how terrible it would be with 200 other lost individuals climbing out of berthing. It's easy to see how very important it is that divisions hold training to see that this doesn't happen! Think smart, think safety.



## Turning Chinese

Taking tips from Eastern diets may help you live longer

by Lt. N.A.B. Dickey  
Food Service Division

"Diet, Life-Style, and Mortality in China" is a study published by Cornell University Press. The 6,500 Chinese people in 65 primarily rural Chinese counties studied from 1983 to 1990 were primarily vegetarians who ate small amounts of meat, virtually no dairy products and less fat than Americans. Some of the results found:

\*Rural Chinese eat 20 percent more calories than Americans and are 20 percent thinner.

\*Their exercise level is far higher: people bike everywhere and poorer people walk.

\*In rural China, peasants eat less than 15 percent of their calories as fat

and 77 percent of their total calories come from complex carbohydrates -- rice, grains, vegetables. In China, animal protein intake is a third less than the U.S.

\*While the Chinese eat few dairy products, they have far less osteoporosis. But the Chinese don't live long enough to get the fractures that we see in the United States and therefore this low calcium intake may be misleading. Add in the exercise factor, and very few elderly in the U.S. exercise the way the Chinese peasants do.

\*According to this study, the average Chinese adult whose fiber intake is three times greater, is two to three times less likely to develop colon cancer than an American.

\*In China, the people eat few animal products, cholesterol levels are low and heart disease is rare.

Vegetarianism is not for everyone, but people can benefit by keeping meat intake to a healthy, moderate level in their diets. The American Heart Association recommends four to seven ounces of meat per day which generously meets the requirements of the recommended daily allowance. Because red meat is so high in saturated fat it should be limited to three times per week and fish, chicken or meat-less meals should be used to round out your balanced diet.

This study still leaves a lot of unanswered questions but a balanced diet, low in fat and high in complex carbohydrates has been shown to reduce disease risks and give us a healthier diet.

## Steel Beach

### Lifestyles of the tanned and bored

by Lt. Shari Marsh  
Nursing Department

In my previous articles for "The Pulse," I have refrained from four major topics.....God...sex...money...and politics. Now that I have your undivided attention, this week's subject of physical exertion is our very own and world renowned (Well...at least in the Gulf, "For sure, dude & dudettes!") Steel beach!! The "PRIMO" spot is the center of the Red Cross...

God watches over Steel Beach, making a list and checking it twice to find out who's naughty or nice. He (or She) obviously has the best view! It is rumored that several helicopter pilots and at least two satellites dispute that claim to fame! I'll let the involved parties settle that one for themselves -- I know when I'm out-ranked. However, the vantage point of stealth beach (alias - on top of the aft house) is an obvious "bird's eye view" -- lot's of Chiefs have risked major myocardial infarctions climbing up the built in Stairmasters to get there! Too many years of anaerobic conditioning. You guys gotta be careful, the air gets mighty thin.

Sex enters the Steel Beach scene via the participants personality. All participants in the "get some sun" contest fall into one of three categories: mugs, studs or thugs. The mugs are the ones who have obviously spent every free moment on Steel Beach and may have stolen one or maybe two minutes of working hours too! (Don't worry -- all names and sun-tanned mugs are privileged information under the First

Amendment.) Who is behind those Foster Grant sun glasses anyway! Deep breathing is aerobic but sighing lowers oxygen saturation -- emergency ventilators are on stand-by status in the barn. Tattoos are studly and the kind of tattoo the participants have determines the sex of its wearer. Everyone knows that roses are for girls and anchors are for boys! The thugs are the poor MAA's dressed in long sleeve camouflaged uniform assigned to sweat out the afternoon!

Money is a monumental problem. Where do those folks put their quarters for the soda machine? I haven't ever seen a bathing suit with pockets! And you and I both know that one soda does not last through eight hours of fun in sun! Beach chairs are a must! Some folks invested in a Lazy-Boy Recliner but it required a battalion of Marines to haul it up from berthing.

Politics on Steel Beach are easy to understand. Capt. Bill Littman is the Mayor because he is the dermatologist and everyone knows he has the best tan around! There are only a few laws enforced by the thugs! The rule for attire is: less is best! There is required Steel Beach orientation and training given by "Rambo Nurse" Lt. Cmdr Carol Bohn. Proper military bearing is strictly enforced by the thugs measuring the distance between all parts of bodies with baton or PR-24! The Military Militia tries to enforce a "no cooking" rule but the fried eggs and grilled cheese sandwiches are great! (Absolutely no fried rice is served -- too difficult to stir fry with your fingers!!!)

Do we really get a "Bronzed Star" for steal beach???

## Returning to hearth and home means more than great expectations

by Cmdr. Deborah Wear  
Psychiatric Division

I know, I promised I wouldn't be serious for two weeks in a row. Sorry, I lied. Looking around me the past several days, amidst the exuberance (which we are all sharing), I thought it might be an appropriate time to offer some thoughts from past experience (AKA learning the hard way).

Of course we will be going home SOON (realizing that this is a relative term), or at least sooner than many of us expected. It is quite easy to get caught up in the excitement and anticipation of the long-awaited reunion with family, or return to a life of normalcy (for those of you who had one to begin with).

I don't want to throw a wet blanket on the excitement, but rather offer some tempering observations to ponder in a free moment. Having been both the returning spouse and the one waiting at home, believe me, things aren't always quite as we expect.

I won't go into great length on this point as we will cover these areas during the deployment debrief classes next week, but here is a simple true-false test to see how sharp you are.

1. REUNITING WITH YOUR SPOUSE OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER WILL BE LIKE A SECOND HONEYMOON: WITH NO CARES, IDYLIC INTIMACY, AND MAD PASSIONATE SEX. T/F? Well... False, false, and maybe. Have you ever looked forward to something for weeks and when it finally arrived, it didn't seem quite as expected? Beware that frequently, folks return from deployment with the ex-

pectation that everything will be wonderful and both parties think there's a major problem if it isn't. DON'T WORRY. There may well be a feeling that something is not quite right; maybe a little like two strangers sharing the same physical space but not quite in synch. We expect to return home and have everything exactly as it was before. But as we've been stuck out here in our little time warp, life goes on back home. The roles and responsibilities we filled are now filled by others. Even if the adaptation was difficult for those at home, they HAVE adapted. Particularly for a spouse who has developed a new sense of independence in a variety of areas: financial, decision-making, taking responsibility, child rearing. They probably feel pretty good about these changes and are NOT going to want to go right back to the way things were. You may feel a bit extraneous or unneeded (VERY difficult for health care providers!). Or perhaps, YOU have developed a new sense of independence and don't want to revert to previous roles. Realize that you both have changed at least a little and there may need to be some renegotiation of roles in the marriage or family. Be patient as this will not happen overnight, but if talked about can enhance the relationship.

2. OUR CO-WORKERS WILL WELCOME US BACK WARMLY AS RETURNING HEROS. FALSE! Very likely there will be at least a little resentment from those who have been busting their butts while they know many of us have not been overly taxed (is that the best understatement you've ever heard, or what?).

To help in a painless reintegration process, it will behoove you to swallow your pride, don't swagger and thank them for holding down the fort (except of course, those who have ignored us for seven months).

3. AT LEAST YOUR KIDS WILL BE GLAD TO SEE YOU. ER... TRUE, AND FALSE. Yes, your kids will be very glad to see you, but it may not seem like it. Depending on numerous variables (child's age, stage of development, length of separation, prior relationship, etc.), the response may not be quite what you would like. For example, a young child going through a normal stage of stranger anxiety may act frightened when you rush up and hug them. Again, DON'T WORRY this is normal and will pass. Be patient.

4. WE CAN BE PROUD OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS - TRUE. For many of us it is easy to feel like "I didn't do anything," and lose sight of the fact that we HAVE accomplished the mission we were given: to be ready and prepared to care for any casualties we may receive.

5. Actually, the only response which is probably EXACTLY as expected is the welcome-back from the family dog.

So get ready. . . jump-jump, slobber-slobber, and enjoy these simple pleasures.

Our return home CAN be a wonderful time. You will be more likely to make the most of it if realistically prepared.

Good luck and bon voyage... whenever...

NEXT WEEK:

TOP TEN RUMORS ON THE MERCY!

## Mail buoy

by PC2 Adolf Chavarria  
Postal Division

Today we are going to discuss what probably has been on the minds of many people -- the-money-order-carbon-copy-controversy.

In the past, the post office has given out the carbon paper with each money order purchased. This has not been in accordance with DOD postal manual 4525.6-M volume one,

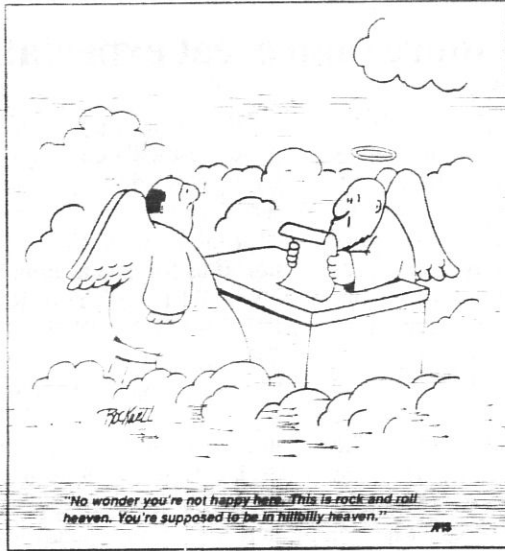
chapter six, money order. The manual states that "carbons shall be removed." There have been cases where people have tried unsuccessfully to alter money order amounts through carbons. This serves to protect the post office and its personnel.

When purchasing military money orders, fill out both receipt and money order as soon as possible. It takes only a few seconds to fill out both without the carbons.

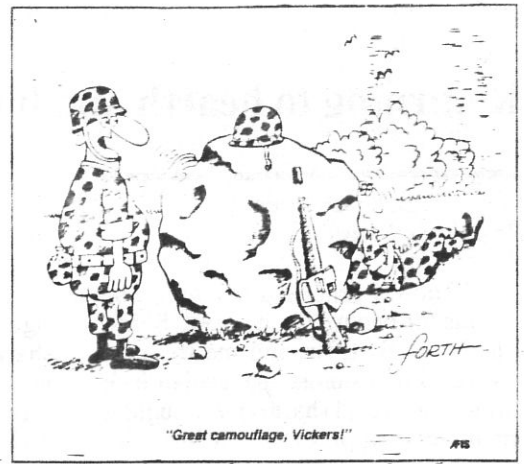
Remember that a blank money order is equivalent to cash. Your receipt guarantees 100 percent refund if your money order is mutilated, lost or stolen.

No longer will the post office issue carbons with money orders.

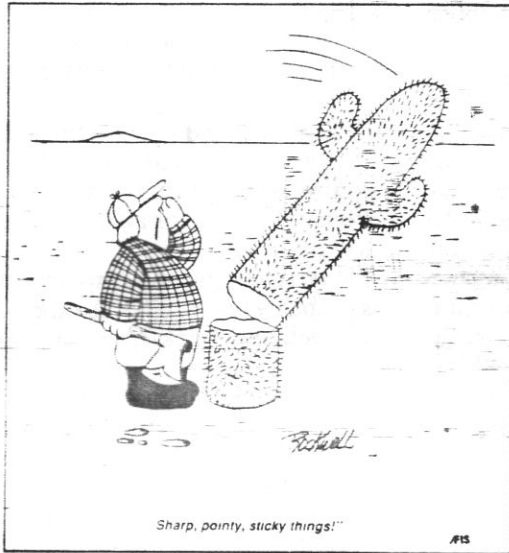
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"No wonder you're not happy here... This is rock and roll heaven. You're supposed to be in hillbilly heaven." #15



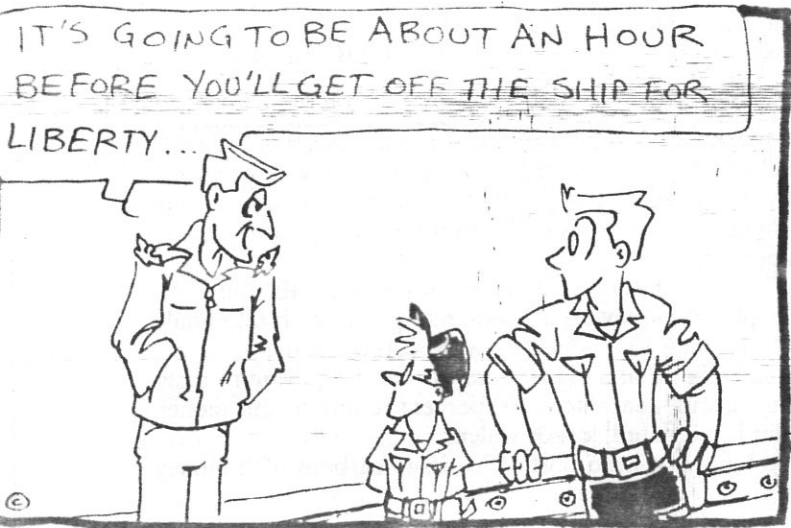
"Great camouflage, Vickers!" #15



"Sharp, pointy, sticky things!" #15



"Well, this is good! I see by your resume that you're crazy." #15



IT'S GOING TO BE ABOUT AN HOUR BEFORE YOU'LL GET OFF THE SHIP FOR LIBERTY...



THAT'S ALRIGHT, SIR. I WAITED LONGER FOR A HAT