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### From the Chief of Naval Operations

Once again our Navy is responding to our commander in chief's call to arms. The American sailor's courage and bravery are a cherished part of our nation's honor and heritage. I am certain this generation of young Americans serving in our Navy will add their chapter to this distinguished history.

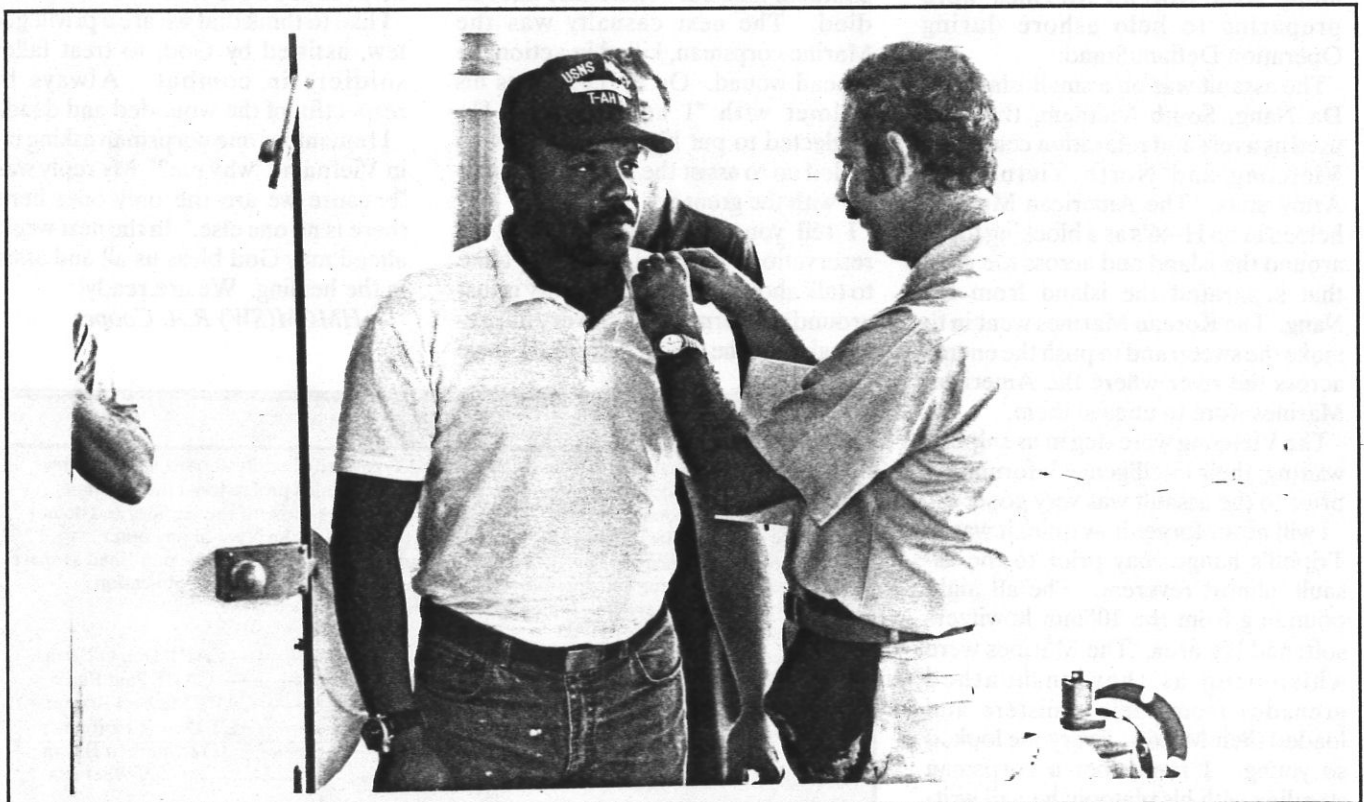
In our democracy, there are, and always have been, some who oppose our country's going to war, but all are in full support of those serving in the armed forces. As the President and Congress have stated, you will be

provided whatever is needed to get the job done.

To those of you in harm's way, be certain you have the full support and resources of all of us in the Navy. We admire and respect your courage and dedication to your duty and to your country. Our prayers for your safety and strength of courage go with you. We are dedicated to take care of your loved ones. Get the job done so we can get you home.

Let none of us rest until peace and stability are restored. —Admiral Frank B. Kelso

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Ordinary Seaman Charles E. Preston is presented with a tenure pin from Capt. Dan O'Brien, master of the USNS Mercy. (Official U.S. Navy photo)

## From the Commanding Officer

As you read this, Secretary of Defense Cheney and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Powell should be in the neighborhood. They are checking things out so they can brief the President on Monday, and he can make a decision about the ground war. If you believe the "experts" in news reports, it could be anytime now. If anybody tells us, I'll let you know!

Speaking of news reports, we got our teletype back, so we're getting more information. We've also installed a short-wave radio into the SITE system, so we can put out a little bit more radio news. The reception isn't always that good (that's just the nature of short-wave), but at least it's something. We're evaluating a couple of other options to expand our news ser-

vices, so stay tuned. In the meantime, we're doing our best to keep you in touch with the real and not-so real world.

I'm sure by now everyone knows this is Black History month. The kickoff barbecue last weekend was terrific -- great ribs and chicken! Did you ever notice how much we focus on food? Many thanks to everyone who stayed up all last Saturday night preparing the goodies. If you haven't checked out the 01 level portrait board featuring prominent Black Americans, I strongly recommend you do so. HM2 Paul Reyes is an extremely talented artist!

For stress management purposes, MWR is planning some events over the next few weeks. February 16 is the

Gong Show, organized by some of our wilder friends (aka Dolly "please shave your legs" Parton and Kenny Rogers) so it should be a most interesting night!

There'll be an encore performance of the Coffee House on the 23rd. To avoid crowding and to give everyone a chance to enjoy the singing, there will be three performances with tickets passed out in advance for one of the shows. March activities include a country/western night sponsored by the third wavers and a "geek and frump" night (don't ask me, I don't know either).

**And, saving the best for last...only 14 more days til beer day!! - Me**

## From the CMC: Operation Defiant Stand, Vietnam reflections

The doctors, nurses and anesthetist that are departing for the amphibious ships in the Northern Arabian Gulf will witness Marine amphibious assaults they will never forget. I would like to relate my combat experience in amphibious operations.

It was an early dawn day in April of 1970 aboard the USS Tripoli (LPH-10). Units of the 3rd Marine Division along with Korean Marines were preparing to helo ashore during Operation Defiant Stand.

The assault was on a small island off Da Nang, South Vietnam, that was used as a rest and relaxation center for Vietcong and North Vietnamese Army units. The American Marines heloed in on H-46's as a blocking force around the island and across the river that separated the island from Da Nang. The Korean Marines went in to make the sweep and to push the enemy across the river where the American Marines were to engage them.

The Vietcong were dug in as snipers, waiting; their intelligence information prior to the assault was very good.

I will never forget how quiet it was in Tripoli's hanger bay prior to the assault, almost reverent. The all night pounding from the 105mm howitzers softened the area. The Marines were whispering as they unsheathed grenades from their canisters and loaded their M-16's. Everyone looked so young. I remember a corpsman standing with his platoon; he had writ-

ten on his helmet, "I heal." I talked briefly with him, it was only small talk, and I wished him luck.

The assault went as planned and a short time later, the casualties started to coming in. The first two were Korean, then they brought in an American Marine who had been hit by a grenade. His left arm was gone, as was part of his back. We did what we could for him, but a short time later he died. The next casualty was the Marine corpsman, killed in action, by a head wound. On his chest was his helmet with "I heal" on it. He neglected to put his helmet on when called up to assist the Marine that was hit with the grenade.

I tell you these things with some reservations because I really don't like to talk about it much, but reality is just around the corner. War is very unpredictable in the small picture. I have

learned to expect the unexpected and to accept the things I cannot change.

As the casualties arrive we must be mentally ready to treat the worst trauma cases. We need to pace ourselves and take time out to rest. Reading books and exercising are great ways to release the stress of combat.

Think safety and be alert. Don't be afraid to talk about it and yes, it even helps to cry a little, in a private place.

I like to think that we are a privileged few, assisted by God, to treat fallen soldiers in combat. Always be respectful of the wounded and dead.

I remember one corpsman asking me in Vietnam - "why me?" My reply was, "because we are the only ones here; there is no one else." In the next weeks ahead may God bless us all and assist in the healing. We are ready!

- HMCM(SW) R.A. Cooper

### 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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## Food for Thought

About 99 percent of the body's calcium is located in the bones and teeth and acts as a reserve to help maintain blood calcium at a constant concentration. The other one percent is found in body fluids and helps to maintain cell membrane integrity, intercellular cohesion, transport of substances in and out of the cells, and transmission of nerve impulses. It also has a role in blood clotting and acts as a co-factor in some enzyme systems.

### **A balanced diet that supplies a variety of foods is the best guarantee of adequacy for all essential nutrients**

The calcium in blood is held within a very specific range by drawing on calcium from the bones and teeth whenever the blood level drops. Therefore, a lack of dietary calcium has its impact on bone, not blood. A chronic dietary deficiency of calcium or a chronic deficiency due to poor absorption can, over the course of years, diminish the calcium in the bones. This can lead to osteoporosis. The best prevention for osteoporosis is to drink plenty of milk

or eat calcium rich foods while you are young to have strong bones later in life.

Calcium is found almost exclusively in milk and milk products. Two glasses of lowfat milk provides nearly all the calcium an adults needs per day. Cheese, yogurt and cottage cheese are also good sources of calcium. Some people cannot tolerate milk products due to a lactose intolerance. The largest single nutrient in milk is a complex natural sugar, lactose. In order to digest lactose, it is necessary for the body to produce an enzyme called lactase. Unfortunately, in some cases, as we get older this lactase deficiency becomes more prevalent and symptoms such as gas, cramps, bloating and/or diarrhea occur when ingesting milk products. Persons who have this deficiency can sometimes tolerate half a cup of milk with no problem. Some people are even able to tolerate yogurt, cheese or cottage cheese, but not milk. There are also products that break this lactose down which then enables the body to avoid the symptoms of lactose intolerance. If no milk products are tolerable, calcium can be found in collard greens, 148mg a cup; spinach, 245mg a cup;

broccoli, 177mg a cup; salmon, 167mg in three ounces; sardines, 371mg in three ounces; and oysters, 226mg a cup.

The word daily should be stressed with respect to food sources for calcium. Because of its limited ability to absorb calcium, the body cannot handle massive doses periodically, but instead needs frequent opportunities to take in small amounts. The calcium in a calcium supplement is combined into an organic salt such as calcium gluconate or calcium lactate - a process that makes the pill extremely bulky. Because supplements are poorly absorbed, calcium supplementation should be spaced out throughout the day and used only when sufficient dietary intake cannot be adequate.

A balanced diet that supplies a variety of foods is the best guarantee of adequacy for all essential nutrients. For most people, the obvious way to meet calcium needs is to include two servings a day of the milk group or some of the other foods that contain calcium. -- *Lt. N.A.B. Dickey*

## Safety corner: Safety check your electrical equipment

Looking around us we see many new faces. With so many third wavers, third and a half wavers and third and three quarters wavers, now seems like a good time to review the electrical safety program on board Mercy and to answer a few questions that seem to be causing some confusion.

### **If you see anybody using a personal electrical item with a red "X," please report the person to safety or the berthing LPO**

First of all, our new shipmates must understand that our ship has a different electrical environment than you might find ashore. Our electrical system is ungrounded and anything that plugs into it must be grounded or double insulated. Consider the possibility of someone using a curling iron

standing in a puddle of water in one of the heads. All around that hapless person is metal (bulkheads, deck, sinks), and the chances are very high that the person may receive an electrical shock from an unsafe electrical item. Why take that kind of chance?

All electrical gear that plugs into any electrical receptacle on this ship must be safety checked as required by Mercy instructions and by order of the commanding officer. No electrical item is exempt, including the Skipper's coffee pot!

It doesn't matter whether you bought the item in the ship's store or in Dubai; it has to be safety checked. If it isn't and you get caught using it, you can expect to be disciplined and to have the item's electrical cord cut. There are no excuses for putting your life and the lives of others in danger.

Clothing irons have been provided in the berthing compartments for our use in ironing our clothes. The irons are

not there to provide safety tags for personal electrical gear people are too lazy or too ignorant to take to O2N2 for a safety check.

The tags on these irons are now marked with a red "X" to distinguish them from normal safety tags. If you see anybody using a personal electrical item tagged with a red "X," please report the person to safety or the berthing LPO.

### **No electrical item is exempt, including the Skipper's coffee pot!**

Finally, some electrical receptacles on board Mercy are of a different type called "marine plugs." People have tried to use these plugs by using international plug converters. This is an extremely dangerous practice and will not be tolerated on this ship. Please don't try it. -- *by HM2 Knapp*

## Up close with MTF Mercy staff members

### LCDR Goldie J. Brown

*Current career area:* Medical surgery, ward 10/11 ortho/urology.

*Your job:* Staff nurse.

*Marital status:* Single.

*Children names:* Ovey D. Brown.

*Hometown:* Houston, Texas.

*Hobbies:* Reading and needle crafts.

*Dislikes:* Brussels sprouts and beets.

*What is the most challenging part of your job?* Being informed about accurate and current Navy affairs and translating them from reserve to active-duty standards of procedures then disseminating that information to the reservists on board.

*What is your immediate goal?* To prepare the hospital corpsmen and inexperienced nurses by stressing the importance of practicing and perfecting their skills. Making it possible for certain basic skills to become second nature to them as well as myself.

*What is your long-term goal?* To become active after this period is over, then to request an assignment as part of the staff at HSETC - Health Science Education and Training Command.

*If I could do it all over again, I'd:* Realize the importance of digesting

nursing theory and translating it into nursing practice for the hospital corpsman. I'd concentrate my training plans and actions on basic health care procedures derived from PARS requirements then work on the nice-to-know items.

*I wish I could stop:* Panic and frustration when misinformation is given out. Also, stop rumors from spreading about our current situation, and our future at the end of this crises.

*I respect myself for:* Staying current in nursing skills and military (Navy) standards and regulations. Also, for present achievements and continuing on a road that leads to my goal in life.

*Role Models/heroes:* The high-tenure, high-ranking female officers serving in the armed forces. It amazes me how they keep their military and family lives separate. Yet both are well-planned and successful achievements.

### LCDR Mahlayna Edwards

*Current career area:* Nurse Corps.

*Your job:* Certified registered nurse anesthetist.

*Hometown:* Dayton, Ohio.

*Hobbies:* Crafts, cooking, sewing and singing.

*Likes:* People who aren't afraid to share themselves or their knowledge with others.

*Dislikes:* People who use the Lord's name in vain and people who won't forgive themselves or others. They put themselves above God because even he forgives.

*What is the most challenging part of your job?* Giving not only safe but compassionate care...doing my best!

*What is your immediate goal?* Living my faith.

*What is your long term goal?* I promised God when I came back on active-duty (prior Army nurse) that if he'd allow me to do 20 (Feb 95), I'd do whatever he wanted of me after that.

*If I could do it all over again, I'd:* be a doer rather than a listener of the word.

*I wish I could stop:* having such a snarly tone/voice.

*I respect myself for:* finally taking a stand in my spiritual beliefs, rather than in atheist beliefs.

*Role models/heroes:* Jesus/Paul.

## From the Command Career Counselor

After being at Naval Hospital Oakland for two years, and now being the command career counselor for MTF Mercy, I have a better understanding of why I had so many sailors at my door in Oakland when their ship hit the dock.

There are limitations at sea. You are not able to phone Washington, D.C., to ask the "what if" questions. You can't take D-LAB tests, retake ASVABs, CLEP college classes, take dive qualifications or meet many other requirements necessary for obtaining advanced naval training.

So what can you do? Many people on board have time in rate but have not completed the requirements for advancement. For a great percentage of personnel on board, this is their first duty since joining the Navy. Here the opportunities for them to obtain a 4.0 evaluation are endless. There are also many opportunities for receiving a letter of appreciation or commendation; it may take some of your off

duty time - find a group, goal, interest, or some significant way to contribute to the mission of MTF Mercy. Everyone has good ideas; talk to your LCPO or department head about any special skills you have.

Are you thinking about going to a "C" school or even changing rates? If so, use your off-duty time and spend a few hours a week to gain a better understanding of required qualifications and skills (department heads generate letters of interview and recommendation from this type of on-the-job training.)

The choice is yours - you can walk the 01 decks, watch trash burn, catch up on the latest tunes. Or you can think about the goals you want to obtain and act on them now. The choice is yours. Congratulations to HM2 Crawley and ABH2 Patterson who reenlisted for orders this week.

-- HMC Black

## Chaplains Corner

At the gates of Amiens, France, a young soldier, Martin of Tours, met a poor man trembling in the cold and begging from passers by at the city gate. Martin had nothing but his weapons and his clothes. He drew his sword, cut his cloak in two pieces and gave one to the beggar and wrapped himself in the other half. Some of the bystanders laughed at his now odd appearance; others were ashamed at not

having relieved the man's misery. That night in his sleep Martin saw Christ dressed in the half of the garment he had give away. He heard him say: "Martin, still a catechumen, has covered me with his garment."

Martin's part of the cloak was preserved and became the sacred banner of French kings. The officer tasked with the care of the cloak and carrying it into battle was called the

Chaplain or Cloak Bearer. Chapete in French means short cloak. Later priests or chaplains rather than field officers were charged with the care of the sacred cloak. This is how the title "Chaplain" came about. The name of chaplain remains for Chaplain Weadick and myself a most cherished title. -- Chaplain Mattie



## Black History Month: Mentors and Community

In America, we spend less than \$2,000 per pupil per year to educate our children. Also in America, we spend over \$30,000 per inmate, per year, to keep an ever increasing number of criminals - usually grown up formerly-abused kids - behind bars...This week, as part of Black History Month, I will discuss the role of mentorship and community within the context of Afro-American culture.

Last month, I got an unexpected package in the mail. It contained a letter from my mother, and the obituaries of two important people in my life. The first described the short, tragic life of Reginald Jones. "Big Reg" was a high school friend, and captain of our football team. He was the hardest hitter on the team, and the general leader of our high school set.

### As an adult, however, he couldn't seem to find his place

After graduation, though, Reg found that the road to "the pros" is a tough one. He eventually joined the Navy, got in trouble, and was administratively discharged. I remember how when we were growing up in St. Louis, Reggie's parents benignly tolerated his poor grades and occasional drug use (I always got teased as being L7, or square). As an adult, however, he couldn't seem to find his place. In November, feeling hopeless, he shot himself through the skull in the men's room of a department store where he worked as a janitor. His picture still hangs at our high school as a former captain of one of Missouri's best prep teams - his greatest achievement in life.

The second obituary detailed the eighty-nine year life of the Rev. Dr. Joseph W. Nicholson, or "Father Nick," who passed away in December after a distinguished career as a scholar, historian, theologian, educator, author and pastor and mentor to countless youths like myself. As I reflected upon his loss, I thought of how fortunate I am to have had a man such as Father Nick take the time to introduce me to books, to tell me about growing up Afro-American in the early part of this century, and about the importance of service, and

community. It was Father Nick, in fact, who led my mother to pursue a degree in education and a career as a teacher, before I was born. Those whom he touched are his living legacy. His memory is a very personal example of a tradition of mentorship which has its roots in the village "griots," or storytellers, and elders who still keep the oral histories of Africa today.

Before Father Nick became the pastor of All Saints Episcopal Church in St. Louis, Mo., he co-authored with Dr. Benjamin Mays the first study of the African-American church, "The Negro's Church," in 1933. Years later, Dr. Mays would change the world. As a young student at Morehouse College, Martin Luther King Jr. had decided that he wanted to become an advocate for racial equality. Yet, he was undecided as to how best to pursue his dream. Early on, the future leader of the civil rights movement believed that he should become an attorney or politician. As King's most influential mentor, however, Professor Mays advocated the power of the pulpit in the Afro-American community. He instructed young Martin to search his heart and consider the ministry. King often reflected upon Mays' influence upon his formative years, in later life.

El Hajj Malik al Shabazz, or Malcolm X, also had a mentor. When he was simply Malcolm Little, or "Detroit Red," a hustler and an inmate in prison, Malcolm X discovered the teachings of Elijah Muhammad. Functionally illiterate when he entered prison, Malcolm taught himself to read and articulate by transcribing a dictionary and studying the Koran. After his release, he joined the ranks of the fledgling Muslim movement and became a personal spokesman for Elijah Muhammad. The rapid spread of Islam in America may be directly traced to Malcolm's energetic proselytization in its ghettos and prisons. Throughout his short life, Malcolm X strove to learn, and before he died he came to greatly admire Dr. King, and sought to bring orthodox, multi-ethnic, Islam to the United States.

In his novel "Roots," author Alex Haley provides a quintessential example of mentorship of a more common sort, and the tradition's continuity from Africa to America. Kunta Kinte has two mentors, an elder in his village and Fiddler, a slave on the Virginia plantation to which he was sold into captivity. It was Fiddler who taught him how to survive the brutality of slavery. Thus, the tradition has been preserved and perpetuated generation after generation.

### Today, mentorship, community and religion, continue to influence our lives

Lastly, much of the Afro-American's sense of community emanates from the church. The first Afro-American Christian church was the African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in the early 1800s. Before the 1960s the church, as it does in South Africa today, offered a safe haven from an oppressive society. The church was a meeting place, and often, the pastor or minister was the most prominent man in the community. Gospel music, which resonates within church walls around the world, has as its roots the spirituals sung by workers in fields across the South. Its inspirational lyrics are heavy with the balm of salvation, and deliverance from earthly suffering. And it is no coincidence that many of our greatest leaders have been clergymen.

Today, mentorship, community and religion, continue to influence our lives. Teachers, pastors and conscientious citizens lend their time to programs like scouting, Big Brothers and many other worthy endeavors. In the Navy, we call our mentors "sea daddies," and they teach us well what we could never learn at the academy, boot-camp, Officer Indoctrination School or "A" school. Yet, many perceive the drug and education crises to be indicative of a general erosion of these essentials in our society. Again, Black History Month is a time for heroes, a time to examine and share the past, a time to plot our collective future as Americans. -- *Ensign Charles Moore, Peace*

## Physical exercise: Just exactly where is the weight room?

Just exactly where is the weight room? Well... Go aft young man (or woman), go aft!!! I might add this journey is very similar to "Dante's Inferno," but don't worry, the weight room is very close to the chapel. After going aft on the main deck, find the stairtower by ICU #4; this can be referred to as winding down the River Styx. Do not stop in the first cave called disbursing; Ensign Moore's (alias Circes) bark is as bad as his bite!!! Yes, venture further into the caldrons of Hell and somewhere below the chapel and after CPO berthing you can merely "follow your nose" to the weight room.

The attire of the weight room's regular participants is your first clue that you are in the right spot. Lots of these "lifters" wear leather belts, wide ones, without the Western motif or rhinestone buckles able to transmit laser beams to Baghdad found on our "third wavers" from Texas. The "lifters" also wear leather gloves, without finger tips. After all, we are in a warm climate, or do these muscles have malice on their minds? Just a liii...ttle bit too, too much leather for me, ya' know! The attire here is completely unfamiliar except that maybe I remember a box of rags my Dad kept

in the garage to change the oil and work on other "garage stuff;" I think these people are wearing them. None of the T-shirts have sleeves, and they're tattered and torn. The gym shorts are faded and worn. The towels they bring to wipe their brows look like they have just been used to wipe up a quart of multi-viscosity Penzoil that leaked on the garage floor when I gave my 68 VW its 500,000 mile oil change. Obviously, the Roman Gladiator Barabus was not a fashion coordinator for these folks!!!!

But I'll quit with the weight room folks for a minute and focus on the "state of the art" Spartan equipment. Actually A-N-T-I-Q-U-A-T-E-D is more like it, and we have only the USNS DisComfort to blame. In the center of this "hot spot" is an erector set disguised as a universal gym; it looks more like it should be used by Jungle Jim because Cheetah is close by scratching his arm pit and checking out his new found biceps and triceps. Lots of wire and lead bricks are attached to this erector set, but it is chrome plated and shiny - four people can use it at the same time! Maybe this is a group sport?

Near the door are the bicycles from hell. These bikes get "rough riders" no

where, fast!!! Just around the corner from these sadistic Schwinn's is the Stairmaster. Somebody clue the users and body abusers of this devise in - this ship has built in Stairmasters. Just ask anyone from "H" Berthing, they can tell you how to get rid of those "thunder thighs!" That sure would save some money on the weight room's refurbishing.

The weight room participants have their own dialect. Their speech pattern contains monosyllabic words like: reps, pecks, cepts, sets, quads and flex. The workouts are divided into upper body and lower body. The upper body works on coopers droopers and the lower body streamlines those "thunder thighs." Obviously, I didn't stay with this work-out program. I didn't see Arnold Schwarzneger or Venus de Milo there, but Val Salva is a regular participant as is her buddy, Flat U. Lensce. Could Lt. Coetzee please hold back on the cabbage and bean soup!!!

Now my idea of exercise is purely hedonistic, and I do not ascribe to the "no pain, no gain" weight room gang! So could the waiter please bring the dessert cart to the table?

— by Lt. Marsh

## Shrinks Corner: Frequently odder and funnier than fiction

I'm sure you expect me to talk about how we all need to pull together more than ever during the next week or two, with the imminent expectation of ground action beginning soon (in all probability); or maybe you think I'll say we need to be gentle with ourselves, acknowledging that we will all have some reaction to casualties we may see. Well you're wrong, I'm not going to say those things. I'm going to review my experiences over the past few days to make a point that reality is frequently odder (and funnier) than fiction.

I received a call Saturday from patient administration asking what to do with one of my patients. Apparently, several days before when the 70 or so new replacements arrived, so did a certain petty officer 3rd class with orders from his ship to the Mercy. He was placed in orientation with all the new arrivals, and it was only four days later they realized he was sent here for psychiatric evaluation; he probably

returned to his ship telling glowing stories about the hospitality on Mercy! Wouldn't it have been interesting if they hadn't figured it out for several weeks?

Sunday must've been a tad bizarre for all the newly arrived Marines. We are here in the middle of a war, and there are more folks sunbathing than Memorial Day in Ocean City, plus a barbecue with everyone in civvies followed by a "social." What a rush! You can bet a couple of them are scratching their heads wondering why they didn't join the Navy.

I spent 30 minutes Monday listening to my short-wave radio and various news stations. I was pleased to hear about several large demonstrations in Washington, D.C., last weekend which were in support of all the men and women serving in the Arabian Gulf; not pro-war but pro-support. Apparently the T-shirt vendors were out in full force. One of the slogans I like was, "If you're not a PATRIOT you're

a SCUD!" Nice, simple, to the point, American.

Tuesday was a challenge. I chose to have a haircut early in the day to decrease the risk that Petty Officer 3rd Class Sawicki would get called away for flight quarters. So of course, halfway through the haircut was the fire drill. Great, guess I should be thankful I wasn't getting a Sinead O'Connor style.

So, on Wednesday, to recover from these trying experiences, I took Lt. Nierman's relaxation class. I'm sure you heard about the great hand massages. The good news is directly from the Skipper, and I quote, "hand massages are not fraternization as long as they stop at the elbow." Of course when I related this to several of my colleagues one of them said, "wow that's great - is it true we start at the feet?" I'll pass that on to you Skipper.

— Shrink



Mercy Cartoons



