

Ethos

ISSUE 15
NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE



**YEARS
OF
SERVICE IN THE SHADOWS**

50 Years of Navy SEALs

A close look at the establishment
of Navy SEALs and the
development of the community.



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Act of Valor

The film "Act of Valor," scheduled to hit theaters
Feb. 24, is the most authentic representation of
NSW and its capabilities to date.



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SBT 22 Leaves Iraq

After five years of continuous
service, SBT 22 returns from Iraq.



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50 Years and Counting



"We are living in a critical moment in history. Powerful destructive forces are challenging the universal values which, for centuries, have inspired men of good will in all parts of the world."

Who said those words? They could have been spoken by President Barack Obama last week or President George Bush in 2001, but they weren't.

They were written by President John F. Kennedy in a directive to American Ambassadors on May 27, 1961.

The "extraordinary times and extraordinary challenges" President Kennedy spoke of to Congress in 1961 helped build the framework for America's defense strategy 50 years ago. Rising tensions in the Cold War and turmoil in places like Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam had U.S. political and military leaders looking for solutions. Capitalizing on the Navy's efforts to dedicate a force to a range of unconventional warfare capabilities, President Kennedy committed to building up America's special operations forces.

Eight months later, in January 1962, SEAL Teams 1 and 2 were established. Soon afterwards, SEALs took to the jungles of Vietnam for reconnaissance, ambush, captures, raids, POW recovery, and other innovative and offensive efforts to disrupt Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army operations and infrastructure. "The Teams" were wildly successful, feared by the enemy, and were among the most decorated units in the war. You can read more about how the teams came about beginning on page 6.

SEAL capabilities have evolved dramatically from the days of KA-BARs, M-16s and PRC-77s. The use of unmanned aerial vehicles is paying huge dividends in intelligence gathering and target tracking. We communicate intra-squad and across the world in real-time, and with video. SEAL armories carry fearsome, hand-held weapons for every environment and situation. Hand-selected SEALs are wearing business suits, not camouflage, as they work from U.S. Embassies in key countries to advance partner capabilities and U.S. interests. An army of combat support and combat service support men and women provide critical capability to SEAL elements. National leaders recognize SEAL contributions to this nation's defense. The demand signal for SOF and SEALs has grown dramatically in the past ten years, forcing us to find the right ways to grow the force. On page 14, you can read about a movie about Navy SEALs that we supported, Act of Valor, and how we hope bringing the right story to the big screen can help us reach more of the right people to fill our ranks in the future.

However, before putting ourselves in the "limelight", intentionally or not, we all must carefully weigh the consequences. On page 28, Bob Schoultz's essay on the importance of being a Quiet Professional reiterates our ethos – we do not advertise the nature of our work, nor seek recognition for our actions. He discusses how we need not always be "quiet" – there are times when it is important and appropriate to tell our story – but we all must be careful of our motives and personal agendas.

As we move forward into the new year, know that the SEAL of 2012 has the same dogged determination, exceptional toughness, and all-in heart that the 1961 Plank Owner's possessed. Never quit, always win. These qualities define us, and we will not compromise them. Fifty years of legacy and legend will guide us deep into the 21st century. HOOYAH!

NSWU-1 Family Resiliency

GUAM – The families of Naval Special Warfare Unit 1 (NSWU-1), left the confines of their homeport at Naval Base Guam in Santa Rita, for a three-day family resiliency retreat at the Guam Hyatt Regency Resort and Spa, Sept. 30 through Oct. 1.

Recognizing that individuals, families, and communities form a dynamic support system against the inevitable stresses of life, the Naval Special Warfare Group 1 (NSWG 1) chaplain and Family Support staff joined forces with the NSW Family Resiliency Enterprise, a contracted program by the Navy's Bureau of Medicine (BUMED) to host the short getaway off-base, in an effort to remove participants from the pressures and entanglements of daily life, allowing them to relax and learn in a fun family setting.

The retreat kicked off with a dinner, where Capt. Jeff Tyer, NSWU-1 commanding officer, addressed the audience on the importance of family readiness and thanked NSW spouses for all they do for the community. Lectures included Strengthening Our Resilience, a session about relationships and their many phases – both good and bad, a cooking demonstration on the basics of feeding a family, delivered by Sarah Fragoso, an expert in the field of paleo-nutrition (caveman diet) and a New York Times bestselling author. Cmdr. Kirk Parsley, NSWG 1 physician,

delivered an expert in-depth lecture on Sleep Science and Strategies, Erwan Le Corre introduced the audience to Paleo Natural Movement and his MovNat workout regime - training that involves movements and skills that are adaptive, primal, instinctive, practical and vital in nature. According to Le Corre MovNat is unlike traditional strength and conditioning — it's learning (or re-learning) how to move naturally.

The retreat concluded with lunch and a children's recognition ceremony where each child was presented with a medal for patriotism and sacrifice.

NSWU 1 plays an important role in supporting the U.S. Pacific Command Strategy. As the only NSW command permanently assigned to PACOM, NSWU-1 provides both joint and fleet commanders with the ability to plan and conduct maritime special operations.

NSWU 1 personnel participate in every major war-fighting exercise in the region as well as approximately 20 partner-nation events in 15 Pacific and Indian Ocean nations each year.

*Wally Graves III
NSWG 1 Resiliency Program Manager*

NSW Celebrates Diversity with Hispanic Heritage Luncheon

CORONADO, Calif. – Military and civilian staff members from Naval Special Warfare Command enjoyed sunny skies, a mariachi band, food and a Pacific Ocean backdrop during a luncheon Oct. 12 to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.

Each year, Americans observe National

Hispanic Heritage Month from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose roots extend from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

"In our Navy, Hispanics make up six percent of the officer ranks and 18 percent of the enlisted force," said Master Chief Intelligence Specialist (SW/AW) Joe Gomez, guest speaker for the event. "We are one of the fastest growing minorities and it's estimated that by the year 2050, one in three Americans will be Hispanic."

Gomez spoke of notable Hispanic-Americans throughout history, highlighting celebrities and Medal of Honor recipients from past to present. After recognizing the community's accomplishments, he spoke of one area that he believes requires some improvement.

"Our history is full of achievements, but unfortunately, we as Hispanics have done a very poor job of educating others about those achievements."

At the conclusion of Gomez's speech, the command held a potluck lunch featuring signature dishes from the Hispanic culture.

"It was a great opportunity to experience some of the different Hispanic cultures; myself, I'm from Puerto Rico," said Yeomen 2nd Class Andrew Barragan, a diversity committee member. "Today was a great way to experience the differences in cultures and also what's the same. It was a really great turnout and all around a terrific day."

The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on Sept. 15 and ending on Oct. 15. It was enacted into law on Aug. 17, 1988,

on the approval of Public Law 100-402.

According to the 2010 Census, 50.5 million people or 16 percent of the population are of Hispanic or Latino origin. This represents a significant increase from the 2000 Census, which registered the Hispanic population at 35.3 million or 13 percent of the total U.S. population.

This year's national theme is "Many Backgrounds, Many Stories ... One American Spirit".

MC2 John Scorza

NSWG-2 Logistics and Support Celebrates 10th Anniversary

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. – Naval Special Warfare Group 2 (NSWG 2) Logistics and Support Unit (LOGSU) celebrated their 10th anniversary Oct. 24 at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek - Fort Story in Virginia Beach, Va.

Sailors and DoD civilians gathered at the Navy SEAL Heritage Center for a celebration with a cake-cutting ceremony and luncheon. Five plank owners who commissioned the logistics command attended the ceremony. Out of the five, three were active-duty Sailors during the commissioning and one is still on active duty.

According to Cmdr. Mark W. Morgan, LOGSU 2 commanding officer, the command comprises a highly diverse, motivated and dedicated group of Sailors. A total of approximately 390 personnel, including 100 Sailors temporarily assigned to various destinations, work within eight departments.

"Within these eight departments, we provide all aspects of combat service

support," said Morgan, "from medical, supply, weapons, Seabee support or Navy construction force work, such as carpenters, mechanics, electricians and plumbers to heavy equipment operators, to the multipurpose canine unit."

Morgan said LOGSU 2's primary mission is to provide logistical and other support services to NSWG 2 and its subordinate units in order to directly support NSW operations and training at home and forward deployed to the European, Central, Africa and Southern commands.

"With the growth of the SEAL community, so grows the NSW support community," Morgan said. "We continue to adjust to changing operational environments and we must continue to find innovative ways to support the warfighters," Morgan said.

Morgan said the command has matured over the years, taking advantage of best practices and lessons learned.

"We have certainly matured over the last 10 years, and we are still maturing every day in how we provide support to the SEAL teams. It is an ever-changing command. As the missions change for the SEALs, we will change as well to adapt," Morgan said.

Morgan said the diversity in people and skill sets continue to be the strength of the command, and he said it's what makes

Ken Leviste, a Naval Medical Center San Diego phlebotomist for the Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) Mobile Blood Bank Donor Center, prepares Chief Warrant Officer Kelvan Hall for a blood donation during an ASBP drive at Naval Special Warfare Command. ASBP is an organization that works with all branches of the military to provide blood products to service members and their families worldwide.



LOGSU 2 a great place to serve.

"This is a challenging, but a very rewarding job," Morgan said.

*MC2 Terah Mollise
NSWG 2 Public Affairs*

Navy SEALs Mentor Future Military Officers during Veterans Conference

WASHINGTON – A group of East Coast-based Navy SEALs spoke with cadets and college students from the Naval Academy, U.S. Military Academy, ROTC cadets, and teachers during a leadership speaker's panel at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C., Nov. 5.

The panel was sponsored by the American Veterans Center of Washington D.C., which held their annual conference on the grounds



Members of NSWU-1 participate in a team building exercise as part of a family resiliency retreat in Santa Rita, Guam.



Master Chief Intelligence Specialist Joe Gomez, assigned to Naval Special Warfare Command, gives a speech during a Hispanic heritage celebration. Hispanic Heritage Month begins Sept. 15 and ends Oct. 15 and is a time for people to recognize the contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans to the United States and celebrate the group's heritage and culture.



Vice Adm. Joseph D. Kernan, deputy commander, U.S. Southern Command, delivers remarks at the UDT-SEAL Memorial dedication, honoring the 18 Navy SEALs killed in action this year. More than 15,000 visitors converged upon the UDT/SEAL museum during Muster XXVI held Nov. 10-13, where every generation of Navy frogmen gathered to honor fallen teammates and reconnected with old friends.



Combat Service Support Detachment (CSSD) Seabees, assigned to Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Logistics and Support Unit 2, disassemble metal frames for a camp during training at the Eleanor, W. Va., maintenance facility. The week-long course teaches NSW CSSD Seabees how to build forward operating bases and small camps.

of the Heritage Foundation and also at the nearby Navy Memorial.

During the leadership panel, four SEALs and one Naval Special Warfare supply corps officer offered their philosophies on leadership and shared their personal experiences of SEAL training and serving the nation while in harm's way.

"To get through BUD/S training, you learn to rely on the guy next to you," said a SEAL commander. "You learn the concept of teamwork from the beginning. This sense of brotherhood not only carries you through training; it also guides us in everything we do as Special Operators."

Responding to a ROTC cadet's question on keys to success, a SEAL team commanding officer on the panel said finding the right approach and mental framework are essential for competency as military professionals.

"Your attitude says a lot about your success," said the SEAL commanding officer. "You must maintain diligent optimism even in the most difficult of times. Those who sustain and carry through tasks even in challenging situations will likely be successful in their military careers."

After the main panel, cadets from the military academies and ROTC units gathered in a nearby room to speak one-on-one with the Naval Special Warfare contingent. During this session, students received additional information about Special Warfare programs and other initiatives for service members aspiring to work in the Special Operations community.

"I've supported many warfare communities during my tenure in the military," said a Navy supply officer who commands a Naval Special Warfare logistics unit. "But working in Naval Special Warfare has been one of the most rewarding, because I get to support

some of the finest warriors the Navy and our military has to offer."

At the end of the conference, the Naval Special Warfare team members all said the experience of mentoring cadets and talking about leadership was a worthy outreach experience that they would do again.

"Part of leading is giving back," said a SEAL master chief. "This was our opportunity to come and talk to future military leaders about the keys to success in their careers, and impart some of the things that have motivated us to continue our own service in the Navy and in Special Operations."

Lt. Arlo Abrahamson
NSWG 2 Public Affairs

NSW, SDPD Teach kids through YMCA leadership program

SAN DIEGO – Naval Special Warfare (NSW) joined the San Diego Police Department and San Diego Lifeguards for a four-day community leadership program for the youth at the Jackie Robinson Family YMCA Dec. 19-22.

The Community and Aquatics Safety Awareness Team Program's purpose was to provide the participants with water safety skills, important life lessons, engaging activities to stimulate growth and development, and information on possible careers after school.

On the final day, a Navy SEAL presentation was given to the students on the basics of how to become a SEAL. The presentation included a speech about goal setting and mental toughness, a video of the BUD/S process, and a question-and-answer session to engage kids interested in the SEAL program.

"Set your goals and visualize yourself achieving those goals," said Master Chief Special Warfare Operator Zerben P. Hebert. "If you can do that, you can achieve anything you put your mind to."

After the presentation, the SEALs and lifeguards jumped in the pool with the kids to show them how to kick in the water while wearing fins and save someone who is drowning by using a floatation device.

"We're building basic water competency skills," said Senior Chief Special Warfare Boat Operator Daniel Lawson. "This is hugely important if you want to come into NSW and operate in the SEAL or SWCC lifelines."

Capt. Bill Wilson, commander, NSW Center, and Capt. Tony D. McElroy, commander, San Diego Police Southeastern Division, were the initial undertakers of the program. Wilson and McElroy proposed their idea to Bob Rohrbach, director of operations, Naval Special Warfare Recruiting Directorate, who put their idea into motion.

"We wanted to do something for these kids who don't have access to pools," said Wilson. "I live in Coronado, where there are plenty of pools, but around here kids don't have the opportunity to swim and learn water skills. We're trying to build these skills and other life skills that will benefit the kids' futures."

"The police department has been reaching out to the kids in the Southeastern Division," said McElroy. "When we started our partnership with the Navy SEALs, we discussed ways to enrich the children's lives and help them stay on track in school. The SEAL bread and butter is swimming and a mentorship program about safety and leadership in the water where the kids could interact with the Navy SEALs seemed to be perfect."

The Community and Aquatics Safety Awareness Team Program is only the beginning. Plans between NSW and the San Diego Police Department have already started forming to have children interact with SEALs and policemen through a friendly obstacle course race.

"We want to show the kids that there are other paths they can take besides becoming an athlete or rockstar," said McElroy. "Through this interaction they can see joining the military or police department can lead to a rich and fulfilling career."

MC3 Megan Anuci

Leap Frogs end year at Bridgepoint Education Holiday Bowl

SAN DIEGO – The U.S. Navy parachute demonstration team, the Leap Frogs, kicked-off the 34th annual Bridgepoint Education Holiday Bowl, in San Diego at the Snapdragon Stadium Dec. 28.

In their last jump of the season, the Team performed for more than 55,000 college football fans, including more than 100 local Marines who paraded an American flag that spanned the football field.

"The Leap Frogs have been a tradition at the Holiday Bowl every year, so it's one of the more exciting moments that we have at the beginning of the game," said Chuck Wasker, president of the 2011 Holiday Bowl. "They're always precision perfect, and we're delighted to have them. They are special to us."

The game hosted the University of California's Golden Bears and the University of Texas' Longhorns. Texan fans screamed with excitement while watching two fellow



Sailors assigned to Logistics Support Unit 1, unload boxes of the new Navy Working Uniform Type III (NWU III) at Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado. The NWU III was issued to all Naval Special Warfare personnel as the new day-to-day working uniform. The roll out began Oct. 4.

Texans jump out of a C-2 Greyhound plane. The aircraft, piloted by Fleet Logistics Squadron (VRC) 30, stationed at Naval Air Station North Island, Coronado, Calif., escorted the Team to the field.

The jumpers used colored smoke to help spectators track them as they soared across the sky, traveling at a rate of 120 mph. Each of the eight team members exhibited a different jump style while navigating their way onto the field.

"It was exhilarating, exciting," said Aircrew Survival Equipmentman First Class Thomas Kinn about his jump. "A sunset jump at the stadium in front of my hometown team. I jumped last year, and I jumped this year. Represent [Texas] all the way!"

Michelle Oestrick, a Longhorns fan that followed the team from Austin, Texas, said it was an honor to see them jump from the

plane live. "It was absolutely amazing. I have an overwhelming sense of patriotism and there's just not enough words to say thank you [to all the men and women in uniform]. So it's really amazing to see it experience it in person."

The Leap Frogs are based in San Diego and perform aerial parachute demonstrations across America in support of Naval Special Warfare and Navy Recruiting as a "Global Force For Good." The team is composed of parachuting experts from Naval Special Warfare including Navy SEALs, special warfare combatant-craft crewmen, and an NSW parachute rigger, in addition to support personnel.

MC2 Shauntae Hinkle-Lymas



Provincial development planners and district elders hold a planning shura, in Gizab district, Urugzan province, Afghanistan, Dec. 11. The purpose of the meeting was to talk about future development projects for the region and district. SOTF-SE is a Navy led task force.



Members of the SEAL and SWCC Scout Team lead a group of children in performing push-ups at a San Diego YMCA as part of a community outreach project Dec. 19.



A wounded service member from Naval Medical Center San Diego participates in the obstacle course at the Naval Special Warfare Center at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, Calif. Naval Special Warfare Center is working with Naval Medical Center San Diego to host wounded service members in various training activities.



Aircrew Survival Equipmentman 1st Class Thomas Kinn, center, a member of the U.S. Navy parachute demonstration team, the Leap Frogs, holds up a Longhorns sign as he exits the field after performing at the 2011 Bridgepoint Education Holiday Bowl at Snapdragon Stadium.

FOCUS
ON THE
FORCE

70

Years of SEALS

With our roots firmly planted in the past with groups like Scouts and Raiders and Naval Combat Demolition units, we have come a long way in 70 years. 2012 marks 50 years since the establishment of "the Teams." Let's look back on how we got there.



a new chapter in the history
of **Special Operations**
opened with the establishment of
SEAL Teams 1 and 2.
Look how far we've come

Editor's note:

The information for this article has been compiled from Faircount publishing and contains written pieces from Tom Hawkins and John Gresham. This is the first in a five-part series that will focus on our history. This one focuses on our establishment.

Most of us woke up on the morning of Aug. 6, 2011, to learn the devastating news that our nation had lost 17 courageous U.S. Navy SEALs along with five other Naval Special Warfare (NSW) personnel, Air Force Special Operations support personnel, U.S. Army air crew, and an Afghan security element. This happened when their CH-47 helicopter crashed after being hit with a rocket-propelled grenade in Afghanistan's eastern Wardak province. As a former SEAL Team operator, and with a son currently serving as a SEAL, this kind of news is simply the worst. Sadly, too, there have been equally devastating missions, including June 28, 2005, when 11 other terrific SEALs lost their lives – also in Afghanistan – during a foiled mission and doomed rescue attempt, where another Chinook crashed with all aboard.

Men don't get assigned to a SEAL Team; they volunteer for this routinely extreme and often arduous duty. From World War II and into the modern-day conflict, very exceptional men have volunteered for some very tough assignments, and many have made the ultimate sacrifice. But who are these men? What is their heritage? And what is it that separates them from all others?

Navy SEALs trace their capability origins back to four formidable legacy units formed during World War II. They were the Amphibious Scouts and Raiders, formed in August 1942 for amphibious reconnaissance and commando operations in Europe and the South Pacific; Naval Combat Demolition Units (NCDUs), assault demolitioners formed in June 1943 and trained almost exclusively for beach obstacle-clearance operations at Normandy and Southern France; Underwater Demolition Teams (UDTs), combat swimmers formed in December 1944 to conduct hydrographic reconnaissance and demolition of obstacles before amphibious landings throughout the Pacific; and the maritime operators of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

There was for many years a prevailing understanding that UDT and SEAL Team origins derived from a school and training program set up at the Amphibious Training Base (ATB) at Fort Pierce, Fla., in June 1943. This story was perpetuated by newspaper articles and books written during the postwar period, and, as a result, it became the common understanding among the SEAL and UDT men for decades thereafter. While the great majority of training was conducted at Fort Pierce, recently discovered documentation now portrays a larger picture.

On May 6, 1943, the "Naval Demolition Project" was directed by the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) "to meet a present and urgent requirement."

Lt. Cmdr. Draper Kauffman set up the now-famous Naval Combat Demolition Unit training program at Fort Pierce in June 1943. He was assisted by officers brought with him from the Bomb Disposal School in Washington, D.C. (which he established), and he too acquired most of his volunteers from the Seabee training school at Camp Peary. Kauffman is given credit for instituting the infamous "Hell Week," a period of intense instruction that remains today in the SEAL Basic Underwater Demolition/ SEAL, or BUD/S, training program. One of the most significant aspects of this was that it set the stage for both officers and enlisted men to complete the same qualification training side-by-side, which today remains one of the core strengths of the SEAL Teams, and something not duplicated anywhere else in the military.

Before the naval demolition project was established, however, there were other units formed that developed legacy capabilities to accomplish what we now know as Naval Special Warfare. Two were formed at ATB Little Creek, Norfolk, Va., in August 1942 almost simultaneously. Each was to perform

UPWARD BOUND, THEN AND NOW
Left - A member of a Naval Combat demolition Unit climbs the ladder of a submarine.
BUD/S students climb the rope obstacle on the "O" Course in Coronado, Calif.



specific missions in Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa in November 1942, and yet it is doubtful that either knew about the other or their assigned tasks.

The Amphibious Scouts and Raiders (Joint) were formed to reconnoiter prospective landing beaches and also to lead assault forces to the correct beach under cover of darkness. The unit was led by Army 1st Lt. Lloyd Peddicord as commanding officer and Navy Ensign John Bell as executive officer.

During the same period, a specialized naval demolition team was formed with two naval Reserve officers and 17 enlisted men. All were U.S. Navy trained salvage divers. Their single mission was to demolish a heavily cabled boom blocking the Wadi Sebou River so that USS Dallas (DD 199) could proceed up the river and train her guns on the Port Lyautey airdrome in preparation for Morocco's attack by embarked Army Rangers.

NCDU personnel trained at Fort Pierce between June 1943 and April 1944 were largely sent to England for the Normandy invasion; however, eight NCDUs were sent to the Pacific, and six of these remained together for the war's duration. They were the only NCDUs to do so.

Probably the most influential World War II unit that would ultimately impact the capabilities of the UDTs, and subsequently the SEAL Teams, was a joint-service component of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Many of its capabilities were later adopted by the postwar UDTs, and many of

the same capabilities can still be found in today's SEAL Teams.

On Jan. 20, 1943, a Maritime Section was established within the Special Operations Branch of OSS, with responsibility for planning covert infiltration operations from the sea. On June 10, 1943, the Special Operations Branch was reorganized as the Maritime Unit (MU), with branch status. Its responsibilities included planning and coordinating the clandestine infiltration of agents, supplying resistance groups, engaging in maritime sabotage, and developing special equipment for operations from the sea. OSS MU pioneered U.S. capabilities in maritime sabotage through use of special-boat infiltration techniques and tactical combat diving using flexible swim fins and facemasks, closed-circuit diving equipment, submersible vehicles, and limpet mines. These capabilities were adopted by the UDTs in 1947, and became hallmarks

of SEAL Team capabilities lasting through the modern day.

The Korean War was a very pivotal period for the UDTs and a prime example of their versatility and adaptability. When hostilities began on June 25, 1950, a 10-man UDT detachment was in Japan with Amphibious Ready Group One. UDT men were performing routine operations involving administrative beach surveys and also assisting U.S. Marine Corps personnel with the training of U.S. Army regimental combat teams in reconnaissance techniques. UDT men were quickly dispatched to Korea, where, on the night of Aug. 5, members of the detachment infiltrated ashore from USS Diachenko (APD 123) aboard inflatable boats to conduct a demolition raid against a train bridge-tunnel near Yosu. This single mission-event in the war became the catalyst that subsequently altered UDT doctrine by providing UDT men with vastly expanded

operational capabilities that they employed throughout the war.

By adding to their traditional roles of amphibious reconnaissance and mine and obstacle clearance, the UDT mission, if only temporarily, expanded greatly to include stealthy infiltration from submarines and surface ships to conduct raids and attacks on enemy shipping, port, and harbor facilities; infiltration and intelligence gathering; and covering the withdrawal of friendly forces. UDT men worked closely with CIA personnel, U.S. Marines, Royal Marine Commandos, and South Korean naval commandos in a variety of missions from the sea and ashore.

After the Korean armistice began, the decade of the 1950s was a relatively calm and somewhat "sleepy" period operationally for the UDTs. They honed diving and submarine operational skills, began attending U.S. Army airborne schools,

continued

Why it's important to remember our roots.

- Trust**
Members of the community reflect on what they feel makes this community special.
"It is critical that you absolutely trust the guys in your platoon - you will give your life for your teammate if need be."
David Godshall
BUD/S Class 118
- Leadership**
"Leadership is not autocratic. The best leaders are not those who exercise power, but empower."
Eric T. Olson
BUD/S Class 74
- History**
"Over the past 50 years, Navy SEALs have become one of the finest irregular warfare forces in the world today."
Rear Adm. Sean A. Pybus
Commander, NSW, 2011
- Legacy**
"The SEALs today, they're like superheroes. They're my heroes actually. They come up and thank me, but I thank them. They say it's God and country, but it's really team and family."
William Burbank
ST2 Plankowner

developed maritime parachuting techniques, and experimented extensively with a host of swimmer propulsion and delivery vehicles. Operationally, they made routine deployments with the Amphibious Forces to the Pacific, Atlantic-Caribbean, and Mediterranean areas and conducted numerous training exercises and amphibious landings. World events surrounding places like Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam, however, would soon change all of that.

In the late 1950s, there was a growing and recognized need for military forces with special operations capabilities. This included the Army Special Forces or "Green Berets," Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance Units, and Navy Underwater Demolition Teams. During his final years in office, President Dwight D. Eisenhower began to proactively engage these specialized forces in small conflicts involving U.S. interests. Foremost were the civil conflicts in Laos and Cuba.

As early as April 1960, the CIA began to recruit anti-Castro Cuban exiles in the Miami area. At least through July 1960, assessment and training were carried out on the barrier islands of Florida and at various other facilities in South Florida,

such as Miami and Homestead Air Force Base.

On the night of April 17, 1961, two landing craft with a CIA "operations officer" and five UDT frogmen entered the Bay of Pigs (Bahía de Cochinos) on the southern coast of Cuba. UDT men

also embarked the USS Sea Lion (SS 315) at Mayport, Fla., and evidently were inserted near Havana to conduct harbor and beach reconnaissance. It has never been acknowledged that any U.S. advisors went ashore with their trained operatives.

Operation Mongoose was a somewhat prolonged effort conducted between late 1962 through 1965. It was a highly secret CIA operational plan for the overthrow of the Communist regime in Cuba that aimed to have insurgent operations be performed by Cubans from within Cuba, with outside help from the United States and elsewhere. Personnel from SEAL Team 1 and SEAL Team 2 participated in much of the "unconventional" planning and worked directly with the CIA to establish and operate a series of "safe houses" in and around Miami. SEAL Team personnel trained Cuban commando teams in small boat operations, beach reconnaissance, and combat swimmer methods. Much of this training was accomplished in austere base situations focused in and around the Florida Keys.

Few conventional thinkers believed that brush-fire wars like Cuba and terrorism would dominate the world scene. Historically, special operations units in most nations have been created to conduct specific missions that conventional forces were either incapable of performing or saw no merit in performing. As a result, and with rare exception, such special units have seldom been recognized for their contributions, and more often than not were disbanded and allowed to fade into obscurity. Moreover, special mission units, by their very nature, conduct covert, clandestine, and other highly sensitive operations, which necessarily place their activities, both past and present, under a cloak of secrecy and generally

at odds with conventional thinkers and planners.

In early 1960, CNO Adm. Arleigh A. Burke directed the Pentagon's Operational Navy (OPNAV) staff to organize new or existing Navy units for smaller conflicts. He directed the OPNAV staff to study the Navy's options with respect to unconventional warfare. Among other things the staff suggested "... that the Underwater Demolition Teams and USMC reconnaissance units are organizations capable of expansion into unconventional warfare." On Sept. 13, an Unconventional Activities Working Group was formally established and reported to the deputy CNO (Plans and Policy). This group was directed to investigate "naval unconventional activity methods, techniques and concepts, which may be employed effectively against Sino-Soviet interests under conditions of cold war."

The concept for development of an improved "Naval Guerrilla/Counter-guerrilla Warfare" capability within the U.S. Navy and first-time mention of "SEAL" units was delineated in a March 10, 1961, memorandum, wherein Rear Adm. William E. Gentner, Director Strategic Plans Division (OP-06), approved preliminary recommendations of the Unconventional Activities Committee (successor to the Unconventional Activities Working Group). These recommendations were provided to Burke for review, validation, and approval. Included was a recommendation for a wide range of "additional unconventional warfare capabilities within, or as an extension of our amphibious forces." Operations conducted in "restricted waters" were emphasized – "One unit each is proposed under the Pacific and Atlantic amphibious commanders and will represent a center or focal point through which all elements of this specialized Navy capability (naval guerrilla warfare) would be

SIGNIFICANT NAMES IN NSW

You may or may not have heard of these men, but they all hold a special place in NSW's history books.



Draper Kauffman

Draper Kauffman set up the first Naval Combat Demolition Unit training program at Fort Pierce in June 1943. He is credited with instituting "Hell Week," a period of intense instruction that continues at BUD/S today.



Phil Bucklew

Phil Bucklew is known as the "Father of Naval Special Warfare" and the NSW Center in Coronado bears his name. He served from 1942 to 1969, fighting in conflicts in Europe during WWII, Korea and Vietnam. Not only was he the first commander of Group 1, he was also a professional football player and had a PhD from Columbia.



Rudy Boesch

Rudy Boesch was in Scouts and Raiders and UDT is a plankowner of SEAL Team 2. His distinguished career included multiple combat deployments, becoming NSW's "Bull Frog" and was the first SEAL master chief to be the senior enlisted advisor at USSOCOM. He retired in 1990 after 45 years of continuous active service.



Neil Roberts

Neil Roberts completed BUD/S in 1992. He was the first SEAL killed during Operation Enduring Freedom. On March 5, 2002, Roberts was part of Operation Anaconda when his helicopter was struck by enemy fire. He fell from the helicopter and was killed by enemy forces. The mountainous ridge where the battle ensued was renamed Roberts Ridge in his honor.



Marc Lee

Marc Lee became a SEAL in 2004. He was killed while on patrol in Ramadi, Iraq in Aug. 2, 2006 and was the first SEAL killed during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He exposed himself to direct enemy fire and was mortally wounded during the engagement. His actions saved the lives of many of his teammates.

1. A photo of a SEAL taken in Vietnam. They came to be known as "The Men with Green Faces."

2. SEALs assist in the recovery of an Apollo Capsule.

3. An LCPL inserts a SEAL squad during combat operations in Vietnam.



channeled." The same memorandum stated that, "An appropriate name for such units could be 'SEAL' units, SEAL being a contraction of SEA, AIR, LAND, and thereby, indicating an all-around, universal capability."

After considerable study within the Navy staff, it was determined that expanding the UDT mission would likely hinder their traditional and now doctrinal responsibilities to the Amphibious Force. Thus, it was considered that new units should be established possessing the characteristics of the UDTs, but incorporating new capabilities like those developed and practiced during the Korean War. Because the UDTs were doctrinally tied to Amphibious Force doctrine, they had been consistently denied opportunities to utilize U.S. Army and Marine Corps training schools, or given funding or authorizations to purchase the kinds of equipment needed for expanded naval missions originating from the sea, air, or land. It was intended, therefore, that these new SEAL units would not be doctrinally hindered and would be given freedom to establish a broader and more flexible mission.

Finally, and almost routinely, in a letter dated Dec. 11, 1961, the CNO officially authorized establishment of SEAL Teams in the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets with an effective date of Jan. 1, 1962. SEAL Team 1 was officially established under the command of Navy Lt. David Del

Giudice, and SEAL Team 2 under the command of Navy Lt. John Callahan. Organization of these new units represented the culmination of almost four years of investigation into a special naval warfare capability within the Navy.

Several officers on the OPNAV staff signed much of the official documentation that led to establishment of the SEAL Teams. They included Admirals Ulysses S. Grant Sharp Jr., Wallace Beakley, Gentner, and CNO Burke and his successor, Adm. George Anderson. Much of the early work in 1961 was accomplished by Capt. Raymond S. Osterhoudt; however, the vast amount of work can be attributed to Capt. Henry S. Warren, who originated much of the studies, analysis, and correspondence to the fleet commanders. Little did these men know that they were creating a Naval Special Warfare community that would eventually promote many officers to the rank of admiral – including the second and consecutive four-star admiral that currently leads the 60,000 members of the U.S. Special Operations Command.

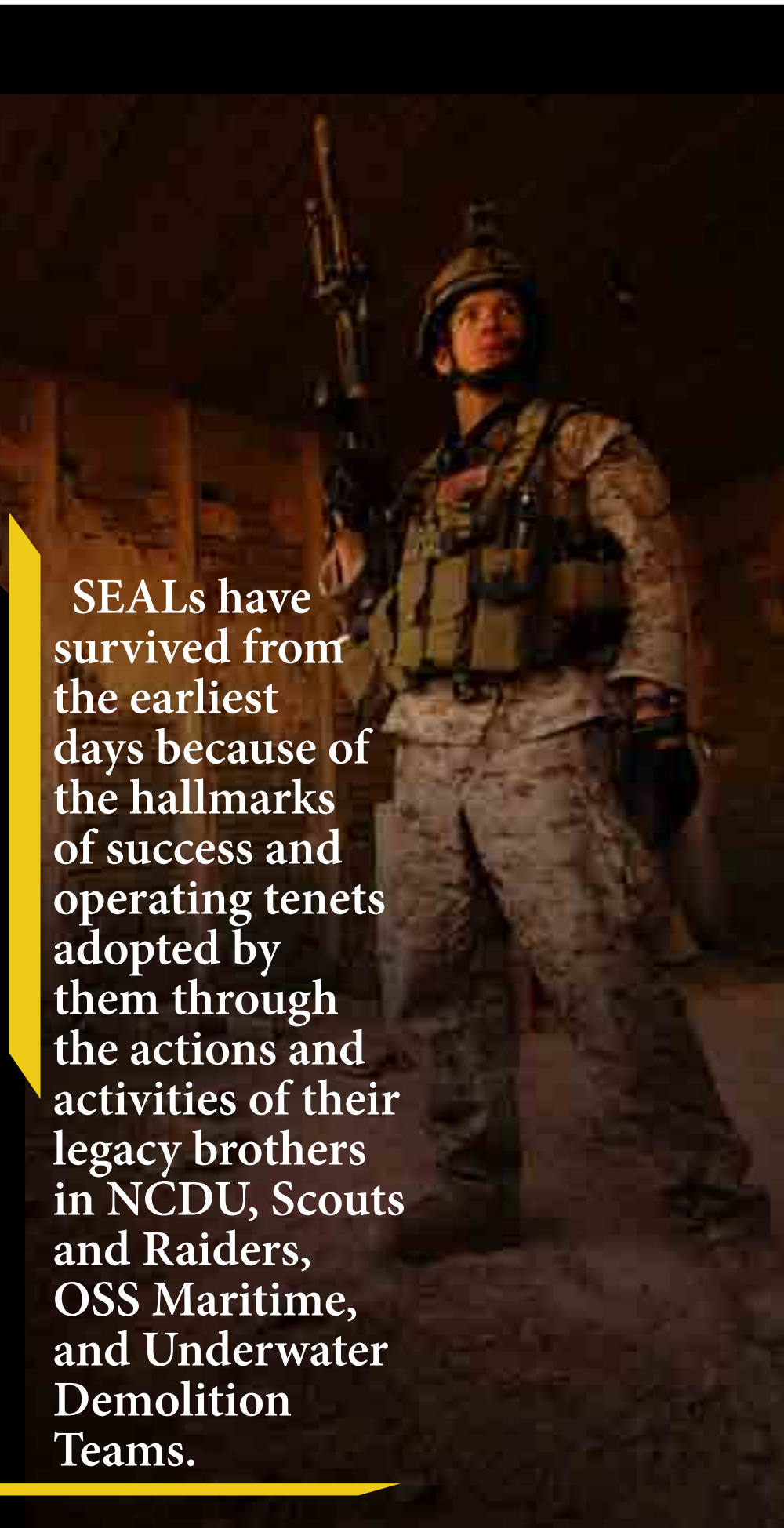
In November 1963, the SEALs, UDTs, Beach Jumper Units (BJUs), and Boat Support Units (BSUs) were organized as subordinate commands under new staffs called Naval Operations Support Groups (NOSGs). One staff each in the Atlantic and Pacific were established as collaborative planning staffs for the combined

units. These NOSGs were the forerunners of the Naval Special Warfare Groups that remain today. BJUs had a classified mission involving fleet cover and deception; however, during this period they were reorganized and tasked for support of smaller conflicts worldwide, especially Vietnam. BJUs were special-mission units originated during World War II, but were eliminated at war's end. They were established again for Korea, and survived and expanded into the modern day under a series of different names.

The BSUs were a new concept, and the SEALs might not have been as successful as they were in Vietnam without their support. They were made up of fleet personnel specially trained to provide dedicated maritime mobility and boat maintenance. Today's NSW Special Boat Teams generally trace their origins to BSU-1, which deployed men and boats to Vietnam as Mobile Support Teams (MSTs). These men were tasked with the operation of the Light SEAL Support Craft (LSSC), Medium SEAL Support Craft (MSSC), and Heavy SEAL Support Craft (HSSC).

SEALs began to establish what would become an exceptional record of accomplishment in Vietnam. The result was that a budding NSW community of specially trained SEAL officers and men continued to strengthen after Vietnam. The Navy established an NSW Naval Officer

continued



SEALs have survived from the earliest days because of the hallmarks of success and operating tenets adopted by them through the actions and activities of their legacy brothers in NCDU, Scouts and Raiders, OSS Maritime, and Underwater Demolition Teams.

Billet Code (NOBC) on Jan. 7, 1969, when the Vice CNO Adm. Bernard A. Clarey approved special warfare as one of the Navy's four warfare area specialties (surface, subsurface, air, and special warfare) within the unrestricted line 1100 designator system (113X). This was vital to maintaining professionalism, knowledge, and understanding of this special kind of warfare. It is the reason that there are SEAL flag officers today.

At the time of their formation and throughout much of the Vietnam conflict, the existence of the SEAL Teams remained highly classified. It's difficult to grasp that when the SEAL Teams were formed in January 1962, there was only one team in each fleet, both were commanded by a Navy lieutenant with a complement of 10 officers and 50 men, and that they actually remained that size until a buildup with the rest of the Navy in Vietnam during the mid- to late-'60s. Moreover, both teams struggled to survive drastic downsizing after Vietnam, since there was no doctrinal place for them in the U.S. Navy. While terms like special operations, special warfare, and combat divers are commonplace today, not many years ago they were not used in polite military circles. Moreover, there were only a few in the Navy that fully understood their meaning, and those that did were largely the men in the UDT and SEAL Teams, who reverently referred to themselves as the "Naval Special Warfare community," which became, and remains, extremely strong and cohesive.

Today there are 10 active-duty SEAL Teams, each made up of more than 200 men and women (SEALs and support and mission-enabling personnel), and each commanded by an O-5 commanding officer. Two additional SEAL Teams have been organized within the Naval Reserve Component.

SEALs have survived from the earliest days because of the hallmarks of success and operating tenets adopted by them through the actions and activities of their legacy brothers in NCDU, Scouts and Raiders, OSS Maritime, and Underwater Demolition Teams.

With a proud heritage and a bright future, NAVSPECWARCOM today is the most powerful and structurally balanced NSW unit in history. From its humble origins in the small, elite units of beach jumpers, combat swimmers, PT boat squadrons, and Underwater Demolition Teams of World War II, through the activation of the first SEAL Teams in 1962, to their vital and ongoing fight today against terrorist organizations, NSW professionals have been at the tip of the spear for our nation. The rewards for such skill and boldness can be very high, but so can the price, and while we commemorate the achievements of these quiet professionals, we also remember and honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Naval Special Warfare celebrates 50 year legacy, continues tradition at Muster at Fort Pierce

Each year, on the historical grounds at Fort Pierce, Fla., the birthplace of the Naval Special Warfare Community and home of the Navy SEAL museum, Frogmen young and old assemble for a traditional gathering known as the Muster.

This year was no different, and those in attendance received a grand entrance of the newest generation of Navy SEALs befitting of Frogman tradition.

During the opening ceremonies, a platoon of Navy SEALs arrived by air and humvee on the grounds of the UDT SEAL Museum. When leaving the SEALs filled the air with gun fire, colorful smoke, and loud explosions creating a dazzling display.

Such was the scene mid-afternoon in Fort Pierce during the National Navy UDT-SEAL Museum's annual Veterans Day ceremony and SEAL/UDT Muster.

The two-day event honored SEALs past and present, featuring a memorial ceremony in honor of Veterans Day, a 5k run, the Navy Leap Frogs jump team, and a live capabilities demonstration conducted by East Coast-based SEALs from SEAL Team 18 and Naval Special Warfare Group 2.

This year's muster was particularly special, according to organizer Rolf Snyder. "We timed this year's festivities into the approaching 50 year anniversary of the Navy SEAL community," said Snyder.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy directed the commissioning of the first two SEAL teams; SEAL Teams 1 and SEAL Team 2. The commissioning of these SEAL Teams marked the transition in the Naval Special Warfare community from Underwater Demolition Teams to the modern SEAL Teams.

Some of the retired SEALs on hand said they remember that day in January 1962 when the

SEAL teams were established.

"It was a new concept and the President (Kennedy) wanted the Navy to have a force that could conduct unconventional warfare," said Master Chief (retired) Rudy Boesch, the former Command Master Chief of SEAL Team 2. "During this muster we remember and celebrate our rich history, from the Scouts and Raiders, to UDT Teams, to our evolution as SEALs."

The official ceremony included remarks from Rear Adm. Sean Pybus, commander, U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command; and former presidential candidate Ross Perot.

"Freedom is a privilege," Perot said. "Freedom is fragile, and you can lose it in a minute. You are the guardians at the gates of freedom."

On day two of the muster, veterans and family members gathered on the beach at sunrise to honor 50 members of the Naval Special Warfare community, active duty and retired, who have passed since last year. Two SEAL team members delivered a wreath and the ashes of one of the fallen members to his final resting place at sea, in accordance with his last wishes.

After the memorial dedication ceremony, the "Leap Frogs" skydiving team entertained the crowd by jumping onto the beach area delivering an American flag to members of the official delegation.

"What you do for our country makes all the difference in the world in the lives of every citizen," said Perot while addressing the many retired and active duty members in the crowd. "The service and sacrifices by the men of the Naval Special Warfare community have helped provide our nation with the freedom we have today."

MC2 Meranda Keller
NSWG 2



ACT OF VALOR



After two years of filming and another 18 months of post-production, the much anticipated film, “Act of Valor,” directed by Bandito Brothers, is scheduled to be released Feb. 24. The film follows a SEAL platoon on a mission to find a kidnapped CIA agent and take down terrorists planning attacks on U.S. soil.

“Act of Valor” is the most authentic representation of the NSW community, its capabilities and missions to date. For the first time, a movie will show the world what it is that SEALs do. People will see – not actors, but active-duty SEALs, play out scenarios on screen that display NSW operations, the fighting spirit of the warrior, and a small taste of the sacrifice made by service members and their families.





The Bandito Brothers camera team films Navy SEALs breaching the cartel gate. The SEALs infiltrate the gate to hunt down terrorists plotting attacks on U.S. soil.

A SEAL fires his weapon from the bed of a truck during a chase scene after the team rescues a kidnapped CIA agent from terrorists.

That's right, the actors in the movie are real active duty SEALs. The NSW community has always prided itself on being "quiet professionals" and many believed it to be against the SEAL Ethos to participate in a feature film. Only after being convinced that it was for the greater good of the community, did the men agree. Many wonder how a film about SEALs, starring SEALs, ever get off the ground, let alone to the point of being prepped by a major Hollywood production company for a 2500 theater nation-wide opening in early 2012.

Background

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) resulted in changes being promulgated in the Program Decision Memoranda for FY07 – FY11 that resulted in the largest increase in SOF personnel strength in USSOCOM history. NSW was directed at that time to grow its force by 500 personnel. In 2005, the community only grew by a single new SEAL. That year, 135 SEALs retired, left active service, or were killed in combat and only 136 newly minted SEALs earned their Tridents.

With an urgent requirement for more SEALs, NSW decided to take an innovative approach to its recruiting efforts. One of those innovations was to grant access to a filmmaker who could credibly provide a compelling and accurate window into the Teams. Together with Navy Office of Information West (NAVINFOWEST), NSW contacted three production companies that had each previously expressed interested in producing projects about Navy SEALs and asked them to submit outlines of their ideas along with examples of their previous work. Only one would be chosen. While the need to educate potential candidates about the opportunity to become a SEAL was important, training for war was a far higher priority and NSW leadership determined that only a single project could be supported at the time.

Two of the three production companies submitted proposals. An eight-person panel, chaired by Mr. Bob Anderson of NAVINFOWEST and consisting of members from the Navy's Special Warfare, Aviation and

Surface Warfare components voted unanimously to select Bandito Brothers for the project.

Panel members said their decision was based on Bandito Brothers outstanding sports cinematography in the films "Step into Liquid" about surfing and "Dust to Glory" about the Baja 1000 motorcycle race; the two largest grossing sports documentaries to date. Panel members also felt that the professional stunt backgrounds and athletic accomplishments of directors Scott Waugh and Mouse McCoy would be beneficial in building a rapport within the NSW community, which is known for being an extremely tight-knit group.

"Initially, I was a little overwhelmed by the responsibility that was given to us," said Waugh. "This was a once in a lifetime opportunity and we wanted to make sure we got it right."

When asked why he wanted to make the movie, Waugh said, "I didn't know a lot about the community at the time, but I knew enough to where I felt that Naval Special Warfare had been misrepresented for so long by the media. I wanted to give back to the community by setting the record straight and present who the community really is and the quiet professionals within it."

NSW hopes the film will inspire young American men to become Sailors, specifically Navy SEALs and SWCCs dedicated to serving their country and the ideals for which it stands.

The Project Takes Shape

NSW appointed Capt. (SEAL) Duncan Smith to lead the project. Smith was also the first NSW Recruiting Directorate commander and had been the NSW senior tech advisor or producer on over ten films internal to the Navy. In 2004 he had produced the NSW Force video that he and two combat camera members filmed on a variety of actual missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Many of the films and television programs that NSW had supported in the past were focused entirely on the basic elements of BUD/S. At the same time, commercial films made without NSW support inaccurately portrayed the operational life of SEALs after training and misrepresented the SEAL ethos. Network projects that dealt only with BUD/S were often attracting candidates whose sole aim was to test themselves and see if they could complete Hell Week and follow-on training.

"We need men whose focus is on serving as a SEAL operator, not on being a BUD/S student," said Smith. "This film falls in line with other NSW targeted recruiting efforts built around communicating the SEAL Ethos to a wide audience. The project was designed to deliberately dovetail with the

mentoring and athlete outreach efforts initiated in 2006 by NSW."

In the research and development phase of the project, Bandito Brothers set out to learn as much as possible about the NSW community in order to understand the attitudes, beliefs and characteristics of Navy SEALs. NSW facilitated more than 40 interviews between Bandito Brothers and SEALs, SWCCs and enablers who had completed multiple post-911 combat tours. Additionally, Bandito Brothers toured Naval Special Warfare facilities across the force.

"Working with NSW was fantastic," said Waugh. "It's such a professional outfit. It's working with the best of the best. If they say they're going to be somewhere, they're always there on time and on target. It was a sheer pleasure to experience their missions and be able to wrap our cameras around it."

Bandito Brothers crafted a storyline that centered around a SEAL squad on a mission to find a kidnapped CIA agent and take down terrorists plotting an attack on U.S. soil. Not only was the story influenced from the headlines, but it aligned with civilian artistic templates traditionally relied upon to generate compelling scripts.

Filming for the project began in 2009 under the working title "I Am That Man," a phrase taken from the SEAL Ethos. Initial footage for a scene depicting maritime interdiction operations was shot in Key West, Fla., April 27-28. After audience testing in January 2010, the film's name was officially changed to "Act of Valor."

Authenticity

NSW's collaboration on this project ensured authentic and accurate representation of the people and missions of NSW.

"Act of Valor" was the first opportunity to accurately portray a SEAL platoon. It honors the legacy of some of our bravest warriors since many of the plot lines come straight off the battlefield," said Smith. "NSW's goal was to give young men a view into the life of real "team guys" while honoring our fallen brothers and the families that support NSW operators. I'm convinced no other production company could have captured the essence of who we are the way that Bandito Brothers did. Because Waugh, McCoy and their team are, at their core, athletes as much as filmmakers, they were uniquely suited to film in a dynamic and demanding live-fire environment."

Of the 40 NSW members interviewed in the research and development phase, nine SEALs were asked to participate in the project as on-screen members of a SEAL platoon. As previously stated, each SEAL initially declined, but later seven agreed to support the project when the recruiting value of the film was explained to them.

"We chose to use the SEALs because who better than the real guys to

accurately portray them,” said Waugh. “We felt that to date, actors have misrepresented them and their complexity of character, how intellectual they are, emotionally stable and physically capable. That complexity is very hard for an actor to portray.”

Waugh explained that originally, the plan was to cast all the characters in the movie, but that plan changed after meeting the SEALs face to face.

“[The plan] changed once we got to hang out with the community for six months and we got to know the Lieutenant and the Chief in particular. Here’s one man that’s got a master’s degree and another one that’s a 6 ft. 6 in. Staten Island native. The Chief is an incredible man who’s a father of five and is the toughest, most sensitive man that I’ve ever met. After meeting them, we knew we had to cast the real guys.”

Each of the SEALs who are in the platoon the film follows, have made multiple combat deployments or are currently deployed to a combat theater.

“These weren’t guys going to acting school at night. They are warriors in the truest sense of the word,” said Smith. “As a group, their combat awards include the Silver Star, multiple Bronze Stars w/ combat “V” and two purple hearts.”

NSW collaborated with Bandito Brothers to ensure dialogue and interaction between the SEALs was authentic. Often, their writer would present the atmospherics of a certain scene and the SEALs would provide examples of dialogue that likely transpired in that particular scenario.

“The great part about having a partnership with NSW was involving them in all the planning processes that come with a film like this,” said Waugh. “One example is, we would ask, how would you take down a 180 foot yacht with a bad guy on it? Then we let the operators architect their plan around that. We would sit back and say, ‘Wow, that’s incredible,’ and wrap our cameras and our team around their mission.”

Although it may sound easy to let someone else figure out what to do and only worry about capturing the action, Waugh says differently.

“This was a pretty unorthodox way to make a movie,” said Waugh. He explained that they had to come up with a whole new process of filmmaking. “We laid out a skeleton script, plot points and story beats that we had to get through so it still made story sense, but the way in which those plot points came out was really governed on from the SEAL teams.”

Filming of ranges, vessels, aircraft and other assets was part of regularly scheduled training. Training always took priority over film activities, and at times, long stretches of time passed before a training opportunity surfaced that supported filming. For example, it took nine months before the production team was able to capture footage of an Army CH-47 insertion of Special Operations Craft –Riverine boats at Ft. Campbell, Ky. Filming was coordinated around scheduled training and as a result, there was no cost to the Navy or American taxpayers.

Traditionally, Hollywood feature films are shot over a three to four-month period. However, filming schedules were dictated by the operational commitments of the SEALs supporting the movie, the community’s operational tempo and the schedule of supporting assets such as submarines.

“Filming was complicated and took us nearly two years to complete,” said Waugh. “That really lent us to filming in a new style of film making that would

allow us to be nimble and adapt to shooting over that type of period.”

Another challenge faced by Bandito Brothers was relinquishing control on the set. No one was in the director’s chair yelling “cut” and “action” in many of the operational scenes. Much of the filming was a one shot deal with very little, if any, say in what was going to happen.

“Because we were filming real training operations, we couldn’t really interfere that much,” said Waugh.

Although filming was challenging, one thing the movie provides is something Bandito Brothers is known for, great cinematography. The movie provides the viewer with angles rarely seen. Waugh explained that at any given time, there were up to 16 cameras filming a scene simultaneously. One of the views shown is from helmet cams.

“We came up with helmet cams and let them do the whole operation with it on so the audience could really feel what it’s like to be a Navy SEAL,” said Waugh.

Security Review

Bandito Brothers accommodated NSW’s request to thoroughly review all footage to ensure there was no inadvertent disclosure of sensitive information, tactics, techniques or procedures. The NSW project officer, along with uniformed experts in the aviation, submarine, SEAL, SWCC, Surface Warfare and JAG communities executed a rigorous review of 1700 hours of footage over an eight-week period. Any questionable material was edited by the production team. There were no security violations and all footage remains unclassified.

Bandito Brothers also agreed to provide NSW with the entire catalogue of raw film footage to repurpose for the Navy’s own use following the release of the movie.

“The thorough scrub of the footage ensures that no trade secrets are given away,” said Smith. “This will be a powerful recruiting tool and legacy to our fallen brothers, not just today, but for decades.”

“For Mouse and I, it was truly a once in a lifetime opportunity to work with such incredible men,” said Waugh. “It’s something he and I will never forget. We’re completely humbled by what these guys are capable of.”

MC2 John Scorza

Leaving IRAQ



An important chapter in Naval Special Operations Forces riverine history drew to a close in 2011 with the return of the last members of Special Boat Team 22 from Iraq after five years of continuous combat operations.



“Act of Valor” directors, Scott Waugh (left) and Mouse McCoy run back to the filming area after a helicopter brief.



Students conduct riverine operation exercises at NAVSCIATTS.

Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman assigned to SBT-22 are well-known within the SOF community as the professionals who live and fight on the river. In Iraq it was more than just SWCC on the river.

A short list of major mission accomplishments would have to include: 139 insert and extract SOF missions; more than 300 Tier Level One, Two, and Three force insertions; 288 expeditionary ground movements; 207 vessel interdictions and boardings; 139 detainees transported; countless visit, board, search, and seizures; significant and expanded ground mobility capabilities; on-going surveillance and intelligence gathering operations; sustained and coordinated foreign internal defense and security assistance efforts; numerous humanitarian and medical missions; not to mention several of the largest riverine fire-fights seen anywhere since the end of the Vietnam War.

“SBT 22 has earned serious credibility for our time and work in Iraq,” said Senior Chief Petty Officer Ryan, a SWCC who deployed to Iraq three times in 2006, 2008 and 2009 – 2010. “We are the only boat team that sustained continuous combat operations for that length of time and in that intense of an environment.”

“During our time there, we also had a 90 percent jackpot rate and lost none of our own men,” he said.

SBT 22 had already proven itself in Iraq after a six-month deployment in 2003 in which the unit acted as the spearpoint for maritime special operations in southern Iraq, patrolling waterways during the war in what was, at the time, reported to be the largest use of the Navy in river combat operations in decades.

This time around it was Riverine Task Unit 2, which was the first to return when new operations resumed in early 2006.

“We landed at Al Taqaddum, since nobody knew what to expect, we got all jocked up in the plane – body armor, rifles ready, condition one – ready to hit the ground and start firing,” said Petty Officer 1st Class

Two members of the Iraqi police observe a patrol boat where classmates are practicing boating techniques at Lake Quadsyah, Haditha, Iraq, July 6, 2008. Iraqi police are learning to carry out waterborne operations in order to increase security in the vicinity of Haditha Dam.



Army Cpl. Seth E. Maggard



Two members of SBT 22 work together to secure a Special Operations Craft Riverine to a trailer for transport.

Brad, a Special Warfare Boat Operator who deployed to Iraq three times in the six years he has been assigned to SBT 22. “Fortunately, it wasn’t like that. We were able to spend the first couple of days getting the boats ready, finding places to stay and figuring out the surroundings and what it was we needed to do. Getting the mission done was definitely our number one priority.”

Despite not having many opportunities to engage the enemy during that first 90-day deployment, the operations tempo was usually pretty high speed and many days there wasn’t much time for more than four or five hours of sleep per day, he said.

“Literally, if the phone rang and they needed something done anywhere near the river, we did it and we wanted to do it,” Brad said.

The new environment and the fact that they knew the enemy was nearby also meant that operators had to stay alert at all times.

“The enemy was smart,” he said. “We weren’t on the roads. We didn’t go out during the day. We were something that they needed to check out first. The enemy tended to watch us those first couple of weeks. They would do certain things to see how we reacted. I think they were just checking us out before targeting us and going into full combat mode.”

About a week before a scheduled turnover with Riverine Task Unit 3, the enemy attempted a first strike from the banks of the Euphrates River, but they were too far away to engage effectively. On the actual turnover mission, however, the enemy attacked again in the same location, this time hitting with a riverbank improvised explosive device (IED) and heavy AK-47 fire.

Four 500-pound bombs delivered courtesy of two F-16 escorts and 18,000 rounds of fire suppression quickly ended that engagement as the four Special Operations Craft –Riverine sped back to base to medically evacuate two wounded personnel who had sustained non-life threatening injuries. (See ETHOS edition 11 for a full account of this incident.)

“Usually, we’d go to a new area and find ourselves in a firefight after the enemy had some time to watch us for a while,” said Ryan. “Then, after that initial engagement, they would never mess with us again until we went into a new area with new players. Shooting at one of our boats is kind of like awakening a sleeping giant. After that first time, you know you don’t want to do it again.”

That same lesson was learned by another group of enemy combatants on June 8, 2007, but this time it was a coastal SWCC team from SBT 20 who delivered the message.

“At that time, Naval Special Warfare did not have the numbers to support all of the various riverine mission and training requirements, so they put out a call to the Naval Special Warfare Group 4 claimancy

“We landed at Al Taqaddum, since nobody knew what to expect, we got tcked up in the plane – body armor, rifles ready, condition one – ready to hit the ground and start firing.”

-SBT 22 team member



A Special Warfare Combatant Crewmen, assigned to Special Boat Team 22, fires a fired crew served weapon on board a Special Operations Craft Riverine.

attack were high,” said Strachan. “We also had aircraft flying ahead of us but they didn’t see anything.”

The first two IEDs hit at near the two o’clock position of Boat One and the three o’clock position of Boat Two at about 4:30 a.m., near the end of the mission, just as the unit was returning to base. The width of the river at this point was only about 40 meters, with a slight bend to the left, so the enemy was probably hoping that the boats would slow down, so that they could then hit and disable the first two boats and jam everything in the kill zone, Strachan said.

“Fortunately, we already had this area mapped out and so were coming in at good speed and good distance,” he said.

The concussion from the blast knocked down personnel in Boats One and Two, but nobody was injured and they were all able to get back up. As soon as the IEDS went off, two enemy RPGs were launched. Moments later as many as seven firing positions opened up from the west bank of the river with both light and heavy machine gunfire.

Riverine Task Unit 5 immediately began to lay down return fire.

The river had a small bend that broke to the southeast at this point, so Boats One and Two made their way around the bend as Boats Three and Four continued to take fire from the 500-meter stretch of river that led to the bend.

Once around the bend, the firefight continued for another 500 meters as the enemy used firing positions set up on the east bank of the river. The battle continued until the final enemy position was shut down, at which time a call was made to check fire.

Of the 30 Army personnel and the 30 to 32 SWCC operators on the boats, nobody was injured and the entire team made it safely back to base.

“This was a complex and well-executed attack, but the guys positioned their boats beautifully. The gunners put immediate and effective fire on the firing points and, when it was done, everybody made it back safe and sound,” said Strachan. “The enemy probably didn’t understand the firepower we had and that the guys were trained as well as they were to do their jobs.”

Asked to sum up the effectiveness of the SBT 22 training program, including taking a coastal team and putting them in a riverine combat environment, one operator put it this way.

“I don’t have to talk about the training we receive at SBT 22 too much,” said Brad. “I have deployed three times on high-level combat missions and I am still here to talk about it. So are all of my friends. That pretty much speaks for itself.”

Another operator had this to say about the training and how it evolved over time based on the lessons learned.

“It took about a year for the training back home to catch up with

A student climbs on board a Special Operations Craft Riverine during training exercises at NAVSCIATTS.



Naval Special Warfare Combatant Crewmen (SWCC) raise the National Ensign as they perform morning colors on a camp in Iraq, June 17, 2008. A small team of SWCC, assigned to Special Boat Team 22, operated in Iraq supporting the War on Terrorism until 2011.

what we were seeing and experiencing in Iraq,” said Senior Chief Petty Officer Daniel, a leading chief petty officer. “There were so many more things to deal with in the real world than what we had been trained for.”

For example, communicators might have to plug into as many as five different networks and frequencies to coordinate message traffic from air traffic, the Joint Operations Center, the troop commander, Quick Reaction Forces, partner nation forces and so on, he said.

“We had to learn how to implement all of these kinds of things into the training cycle, at a time when many of our senior enlisted personnel were deployed and not available to train or help create new training programs,” he said.

Things also move faster in a combat environment.

“We always trained that you had 72 hours to mission plan,” said Ryan. “But in reality it didn’t happen like that. More often than not we had time-sensitive targets, giving us two hours to plan if we were lucky, and then we were out the door and on our way to the river.”

Study your Riverine Handbook, know riverine characteristics, know how to adapt, and remember, anywhere there is a river we can go, said Ryan. These are the things that will help you survive and succeed in getting the mission done.

This can-do attitude and ability to adapt did not go unnoticed by others.

“By my second deployment, we were being used a lot more as Task Force commanders realized that they didn’t need to do a lot of planning for us,” said Daniel. “They could tell us something and we would be ready to go.”

“We’d go in fast, quiet and close. Operators would get off the boats, literally walk in a room and the bad guys would still be sleeping and they would always wonder why they hadn’t heard a chopper or heard us coming in,” said Ryan. “The SEALs, Rangers, Green Berets and others that we worked with all really learned to like this after a while.”

“Speed, stealth and firepower are a SWCC’s three best friends,” he said.

The past five years have shown the ability of the SWCC – both coastal and riverine – in their core and in their heart, that if something needs to be done, we can and will pull together to get it done, said Strachan.

NAVSCIATTS trains Iraq Police Riverine Unit

At almost the same time that the first Riverine Task Unit from Special Boat Team 22 was preparing to go into Iraq for the first time in almost three years, Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School, co-located with SBT 22 at the John C. Stennis Space Center, Miss., was also making an important contribution to the overall Naval Special Warfare effort there.

As part of an on-going and coordinated Security Assistance program, 15 sailors from the Iraqi Police Riverine Unit trained at the

U.S. Navy schoolhouse starting in late 2006, with a second group of ten officers being trained in the summer of 2007.

The purpose of the training was to provide knowledge and know how on such tasks as boarding suspicious vessels and evading ambushes from riverbanks and, more importantly, returning incoming fire. An assessment team from the school had earlier visited Iraq to determine the requirements for the course, and to see what was needed most to help the Iraqi officers secure their own waterways.

At the time of the training, the Iraqi unit had a 250-person team and six boats in country but had inadequate training programs to support them.

“I cannot wait to go back and put this training on the field,” said one of the Iraqi students at the time. “We will take this training and give it to our friends. They need it.”

Ultimately, the goal of the training was to give the Iraqis the basic maritime skills needed to return and build their own riverine unit, preparing for the day when U.S. troops would leave the country.

“We eventually got word back that this training probably saved a lot of lives,” said Francisco Melara, international military student officer at NAVSCIATTS. “The students that went through this course were actually involved in an ambush when they got back to their own country, and they told us that because they were able to apply the lessons learned here, they were able to successfully repel an overwhelming number of insurgents during the attack and greatly limit the number of casualties sustained.”

The training in Mississippi also tied in well with the reality on the ground as SBT 22 moved away from kinetic operations in that country and began focusing more on Foreign Internal Defense efforts.

“By my third deployment in 2009, our mission was more by, through and with - meaning by the Iraqis, through the Iraqis and with the Iraqis,” said Senior Chief Petty Officer Ryan, a Special Warfare Boat Operator currently assigned to SBT 22 as senior enlisted advisor and leading chief petty officer. “At the end of the day, for us to be able to get out of a country and go home, they are going to have to be able to do the job themselves. That is why we worked so extensively in the end to help train the Iraqi Police Riverine Unit how to drive boats, fight in boats, board boats and become proficient in all the other skills they needed.”

The Iraqi students were also able to participate in a Department of State funded Field Studies Program while they were in Mississippi, which provided them an opportunity to see and experience a bit of Americana. The idea being to give them not only an expanded skill set in small craft maritime operations, but also to let them build relationships in this country so that they would go home with a greater understanding of what America stands for.

This relationship building fits right in with current as SOCCOM intent, and goes a long way towards getting the mission done - wherever that might be.

“By the end of my time in Iraq, I had developed very strong relationships with some of my Iraqi counterparts and I even consider a couple of them as really close friends,” said Petty Officer First Class Brad, a Special Warfare Boat Operator currently assigned to SBT 22. “I would do mission sets with them like they were anybody else on my team, and not be worried or concerned as I knew they were top performers and could handle themselves.”

It became very collaborative near the end, which is more difficult and time consuming but is necessary so that they can prepare to do the mission on their own,” he said. “It just takes a different mindset to get the job done. What you put into it is what you get out of it.”

Darrian Wilson
NAVSCIATTS Public Affairs



The Other Honor Guard

They gather clad in grimy jeans, bandanas and riding gear. Their long hair, full beards and colorful tattoos are cause for notice. These men and women exude a tough and hard-bitten vibe, oozing attitude and effortless cool. Their black leather vests and jackets are adorned with patches from various clubs and events. They muster as few as five and as many as 100. Rather than marching, they ride loud, powerful and stunning two-wheeled machines. As they roll through the streets in a two abreast formation, American flags mounted to their chassis flap proudly in the wind behind them. They aren't your stereotypical motorcycle club or organization. When members of the Patriot Guard Riders roll through big cities and small towns of the American landscape, their simple mission is noble and seemingly uncommon – they proudly and solemnly escort fallen service members to their final resting place.

The Naval Special Warfare community reaped the benefits of this non-traditional honor guard, as Patriot Guard Riders from all regions of the U.S. volunteered their services as family, friends and Teammates mourned and memorialized the 17 SEALs and five enablers killed when the CH-47 helicopter they were traveling in was shot down by an insurgent-fired rocket-propelled grenade while supporting operations in Wardak Province,

Afghanistan. While military honor guards rendered 21-gun salutes and played taps during memorials and services, volunteers of the Patriot Guard Riders led funeral processions, stood watch and paid tribute to the fallen with their motorcycles and flags.

According to the club's website, the organization was first established in 2005 after groups such as the American Legion Riders chapter 136 from Kansas began standing between protestors at military funerals and the mourning families. As word spread of this kind of action, Jeff "Twister" Brown, from Broken Arrow, Okla., decided to do more than just ride. He saw a need to get a strong nation-wide communications and recruiting program in place. He contacted the original riders in Kansas and told them of his plans. They openly shared their experiences, suggestions, and encouragement. Within a matter of days, Brown had formed the Patriot Guard Riders and began a national campaign to garner support.

Since its establishment, Patriot Guard membership has grown to more than 250,000 volunteer members from diverse backgrounds and areas across the nation. The only prerequisite for joining the club is sharing a mutual respect for those who serve their country.

"To those of you who are currently serving and fighting for the freedoms of others, at home and abroad, please know that we are backing you."

- Patriot Guard Riders Mission Statement

LEFT: A member of the Utah Chapter of the Patriot Guard Riders stands in respect as the Honor Guard carries IT1 Jared Day to his final resting place.

RIGHT: Members of the New Jersey Chapter of the Patriot Guard Riders stand in attention in a flag line as the funeral procession of SO3 (SEAL) Denis Miranda passes by.



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Photo by MC2 Dominique Lasco



LEFT: Members of the Louisiana Chapter of the Patriot Guard Riders muster to distribute flags for their flag line.



BELOW: A member of the Utah Chapter of the Patriot Guard Riders looks on while standing in a flag line outside the memorial for IT1 Jared Day.

“We, as an NSW community and the military as a whole, owe them our deepest gratitude for their selfless support.”

-SOCM Bradley Lucas
Casualty Assistant Calls Officer

“Our mission statement is to come and stand to honor the families of the fallen as invited guests,” said Peggy Morrill, state captain for the Patriot Guard Riders in Utah. “We are a nonprofit service organization. We are not a motorcycle club. We don’t have meetings and we don’t pay dues. Everyone comes on their own dime and their own time.”

The organization calls their services “missions.” According to members, a mission starts when the service member is brought home and may include several steps depending on what the family requests. They start by escorting the procession down a street then gather to stand in a flag line.

“We set up flag lines to help show the family that they are loved and supported. In the unforeseen circumstance that we have to deal with people the family does not want to have around, we act as their shield so they don’t have to hear or see anything disruptive,” said rider Matthew Munk of Salt Lake City. “They are suffering enough; they don’t need to experience more.”

Missions have varied over the years to include homecomings and farewells of deploying service members, but the riders remain true to their promise - to provide non-violent intervention between those who wish to disrupt and families celebrating or mourning their service member.

Families like John and Celeste Thibeault who were able to receive the support of the Patriot Guard after their son died in 2008 while serving his second tour in Iraq

“It was just an awesome service and a lot of support. It’s almost indescribable,” said Celeste. “I was really touched by the support and the respect they gave to us and how they honored our son. It gave me a sense of security. I felt comforted by them; it felt like a great big hug the whole time they were with us.”

“By being present at the services, we let the families know they are not alone and that there are people out there who love and support them, even though we may not know them personally,” said Munk. “They have given the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms we enjoy and without them, we wouldn’t have it.”

According to the Thibeaults, they joined the team after the heartfelt support the Patriot Guard Riders provided them when they lost their son. They are not alone. Many people, from veterans to military supporters, look beyond the leather and chrome and find inspiration in the organization’s

selfless acts and become members themselves.

“They might look tough on the outside, but they are all just big teddy bears,” said Celeste. “You have to be sensitive and loving and compassionate to do what they do. They stand in blizzards, in heat and in rain. Some of them have their own physical challenges, but they still come. ‘Stand for those who stood for us,’ that’s one of our mantras.”

“It’s an honor to be invited and do this,” said Morrill at an August memorial in Utah. “I wish we didn’t have to be here under these circumstances, but it’s an honor.”

Members like Robert Zimora and Bill Fox use the missions to illustrate to their children the importance of honoring those who have served and standing up for what they believe in.

“I brought my son here to let him see what this organization does and to let him see that there are still people out there that believe in our service members and what they do,” said Zimora.

“I feel that he needs to know what patriotism is,” said Fox about his son. “What better way than to show him? These missions are the ultimate way for him to see for himself, how important it is to show respect for those serving his country and their families.”

Some families and service members don’t even know of the service the organization provides until tragedy strikes. For NSW casualty assistance calls officers like Master Chief Special Warfare Operator Bradley Lucas, who was assigned to help families of the 17 SEALs and five enablers killed Aug. 6, this was their first and very memorable experience with the organization.

“Prior to this assignment, I had never interacted with the PGR,” said Lucas. “My only knowledge of them was from news articles about their participation in ceremonies where anti-military funeral services demonstrations might take place in order to ‘counter protest’ the protesters.”

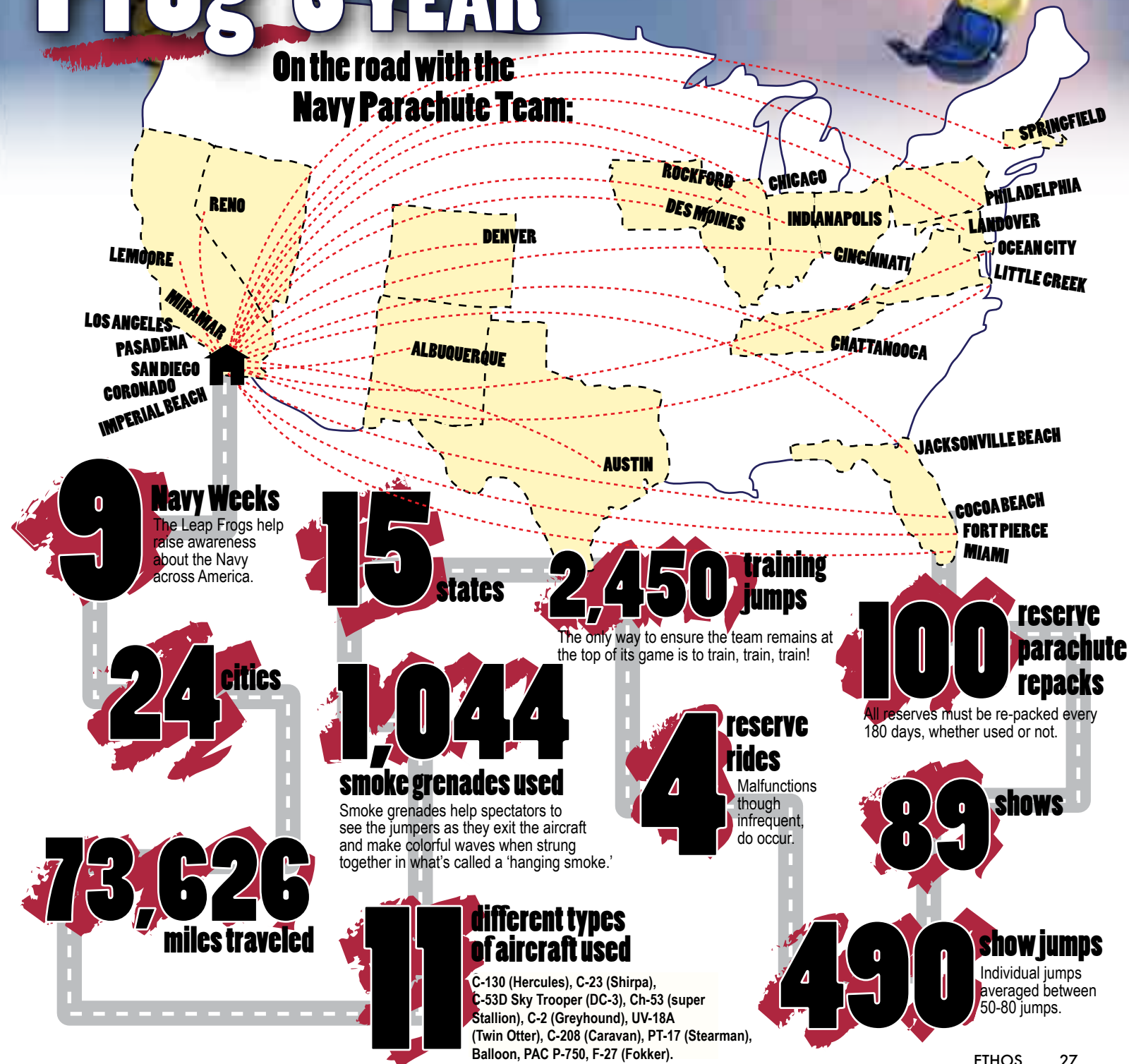
Lucas witnessed firsthand the support of the organization and the impact it made on the family he supported.

“To see how many dedicated PGR were willing to spend personal time and effort supporting a family of the fallen during a very emotional time of bereavement provided a great sense of pride and appreciation for the family,” said Lucas. “It literally brought tears to the eyes of all those that observed them to see them in action, both on their motorcycles and lining the streets standing at attention with American flags. My feelings are that we, as an NSW community and the military as a whole, owe them our deepest gratitude for their selfless support.”

MC2 Dominique Canales

a Leap Frog’s YEAR

On the road with the Navy Parachute Team:



QUIET Professionals

"Resilience" is a new buzzword we're seeing in a variety of contexts. The government is creating programs to help develop "family resilience" to better cope with the stresses of military life. The military seeks to develop "resilient soldiers," less susceptible to traumatic stress disorder, better prepared to positively respond to stress and change.

We can all agree that resilience is probably a good thing. So what exactly is it, and how do we develop it?

Resilience, like many things, is both simple and complex. In essence, it seems to come down to an ability to cope and respond well to adversity and stress. The opposite of resilience might be fragile, rigid or delicate. Persistence is often, but not always, associated with resilience.

When we talk about people being resilient, it's important that we define the context in which they are resilient, since being resilient in one context does not necessarily transfer to another context. Coping or responding well to adversity may demand physical, mental, emotional or spiritual resilience – or some of each, depending on the context. In combat, we normally call on one type of resilience to think clearly, keep our wits about us, and not be overcome by fear or horror. But the resilient, combat-hardened warrior may not cope well with the complexities of life in the headquarters environment, or in an emotionally charged family crisis. These environments pose different challenges, and require a different type of resilience.

How does one become more resilient in a specific context, or in general?

Aristotle believed that if you want to become courageous, you need to do things that require courage. I would argue that likewise, to become resilient, you need to get out of your comfort zone. The most resilient warriors have confronted physical fear and risk of failure by training under varied and challenging conditions. The most resilient managers have sought and confronted new administrative challenges in unfamiliar settings. The most resilient families are willing to try new approaches or call on professional counseling when communications breakdown and relationships are in jeopardy. All of these involve bending to new challenges, and confronting and working through discomfort and even fear.

To become resilient, we must be willing to risk failure. We must go where we are not at ease, and not in complete control – where we must assume risk and force ourselves to adapt. Only by trying and not succeeding, and then trying again, do we develop the resilience to deal with uncomfortable truths, and unwelcomed developments. Without learning to deal with failure, there can be no resilience. No one succeeds all the time. The resilient bounce back.

Basic training, as well as unit level and pre-deployment training for SEALs and SWCCs is very much about developing physical and mental resilience to respond to adversity in combat. Instructors and cadre create a somewhat artificial adversity in a controlled training environment that serves as a crucible to develop the resilience needed to manage the fear and adversity of real combat.

A recent graduate from SQT told me that the 'Big Four' he learned in BUD/S helped him to succeed in NSW Basic training, and he believed would work in combat, and other stressful environments

First, positive visualization. Visualize and believe in your own success, whatever that looks like. Done beforehand. Use as many senses as you can. Feel the emotions in advance.

Second, goal setting/segmentation. View the adversity you are facing in bite-size pieces – this event, this hour, this day. Don't look beyond getting through the challenge of the moment, but get through the challenge of the moment.

Third, arousal control. Learn techniques to calm yourself when the natural human reactions of fear, panic and anxiety seem ready to overwhelm you. These techniques include meditation, deep breathing, heart-rate management.

Last, self talk/positive attitude. Find a positive spin to put on whatever is happening, and try to

truly believe it. Keep your sense of humor when things aren't going your way. Constant and positive self-talk, before, during and after stressful events: "I can do this." "This too shall pass." "This is my opportunity."

These are variations on what sports psychologists teach to professional athletes to help them perform their best under stress and pressure.

The best literature I've read on developing resilience of the human spirit to withstand great adversity comes from the Roman Stoics, and from Viktor Frankl's classic short book, "Man's Search for Meaning." Medal of Honor recipient Vice Adm. James Stockdale wrote extensively about how Stoicism helped him survive seven years as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam. In "Man's Search for Meaning," Frankl discusses how he found meaning in his suffering in a German concentration camp, and how his belief in his own life's purpose was key in his survival. Both Stockdale and Frankl would argue that a strong will to adapt and prevail is an essential component of resilience.

As with leadership and character, resilience seems to be at least partly innate – some people seem to be naturally more resilient and adaptable than others. But as with character and leadership, resilience and strength-of-will can be improved through experience, training and education. We can intentionally develop more flexible mental models, a broader perspective, and we can learn to imagine things differently than they are. It helps to have a resilient and inspiring teacher, leader or mentor who believes in us.

Resilience is an essential component of success and even survival in stressful and rapidly changing environments. Perhaps that is why Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection put such a high premium on resilience.



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Breathing the Fire



(Left) CBS correspondent Kimberly Dozier is carried on a stretcher to an ambulance after arriving from Iraq at the U.S. Air Base in Ramstein, Germany.

(Bottom) U.S. soldiers inspect the scene after a car bomb exploded in Mosul, May 31, 2006. (Khaled al-Mosy/Reuters)



On Memorial Day 2006, CBS news reporter Kimberly Dozier was critically injured in an explosion on the streets of Baghdad that claimed the lives of her two crewmembers, an Army captain and an interpreter.

Her book, "Breathing the Fire," is a painstakingly honest reflection of her struggle to regain her life after coming so close to losing it.

It truly takes an army to care for someone wounded in combat, service member or not. The level of trauma that a roadside bomb can inflict is shocking. Dozier does in this book, what she did so well on the evening news, tell the hidden story of the often unsung heroes of a wounded member's recovery. Her story is an accurate portrayal of what it takes to get someone from a war zone and on the road to recovery.

Through her many travels from Germany to Iraq, Dozier discusses with brutal honesty her path to recovery. From the people who touched her life, and the pain of coping with the loss of her crew and escorts, she retells the stories of her surgeries, her pain, and sometimes her self-pity. Dozier's narrative strikes a nerve with the reader, because her story is a real-life reflection of survival. Email and interview accounts by the nurses, doctors and friends who had a hand in Dozier's treatment, lend an additional layer of credibility to Dozier's story of the painstaking journey to survival, treatment and recovery. Their stories add perspective, and insight into times for which Kim has no memory, but these are not the same as hearing it from Dozier herself.

It is painful, and yet hopeful to hear her tell of how she overcame repeated setbacks and difficulty. She faced what so many experience after major trauma – multiple surgeries, infection, painful skin grafts, donor rejection, and ultimately months upon months of rehab to regain strength, independence, and a career.

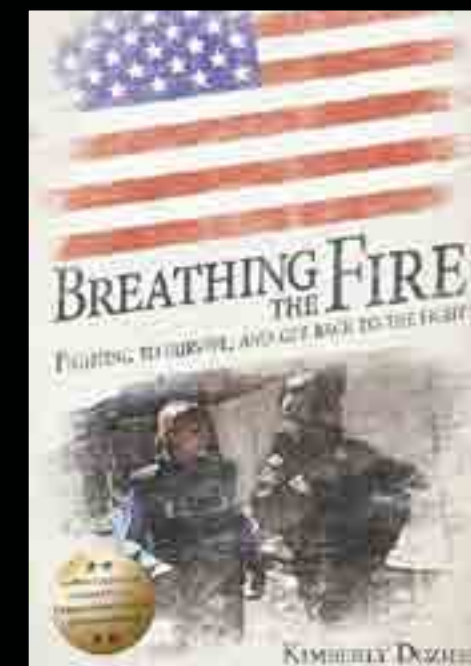
Like any credible reporter, Dozier is quick to tell both sides of the story. For example, she complains about people who were entrusted with her care, only to rationalize that given the circumstances, better care was unavailable. Her reluctance or refusal to follow a doctor's recommended treatment was then reflected with the outcome, even if in retrospect, it meant she made the wrong call.

What struck Dozier were the stories of how much people cared about her - from her family, her coworkers, the doctors, other injured patients and even the American public. She was often overcome with gratitude by the well wishes of mostly strangers, and as a reader, I was too.

This story is not of a victim of a roadside bomb; it's merely one story – of many – of survival. She has used her talents as a skilled writer and investigative journalist to tell her own story. Her story is just one of thousands of recovery and survival from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Military, civilian or otherwise, a human's will to survive and a fighter's resilience – like Dozier's is important to read.

In the face of adversity, determination, patience and courage are the only things needed to overcome. Dozier has all of these qualities in spades.

Mandy McCammon



Breathing the Fire: The book tracks Dozier's relentless determination to get the story, get it right and to get well again after a car bomb changed her life forever.: Paperback | 8.9 x 5.9 in | 288 pages | ISBN 978-1-56523-615-8 | 2011 | Fox Chapel Publishing

