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Pony Express

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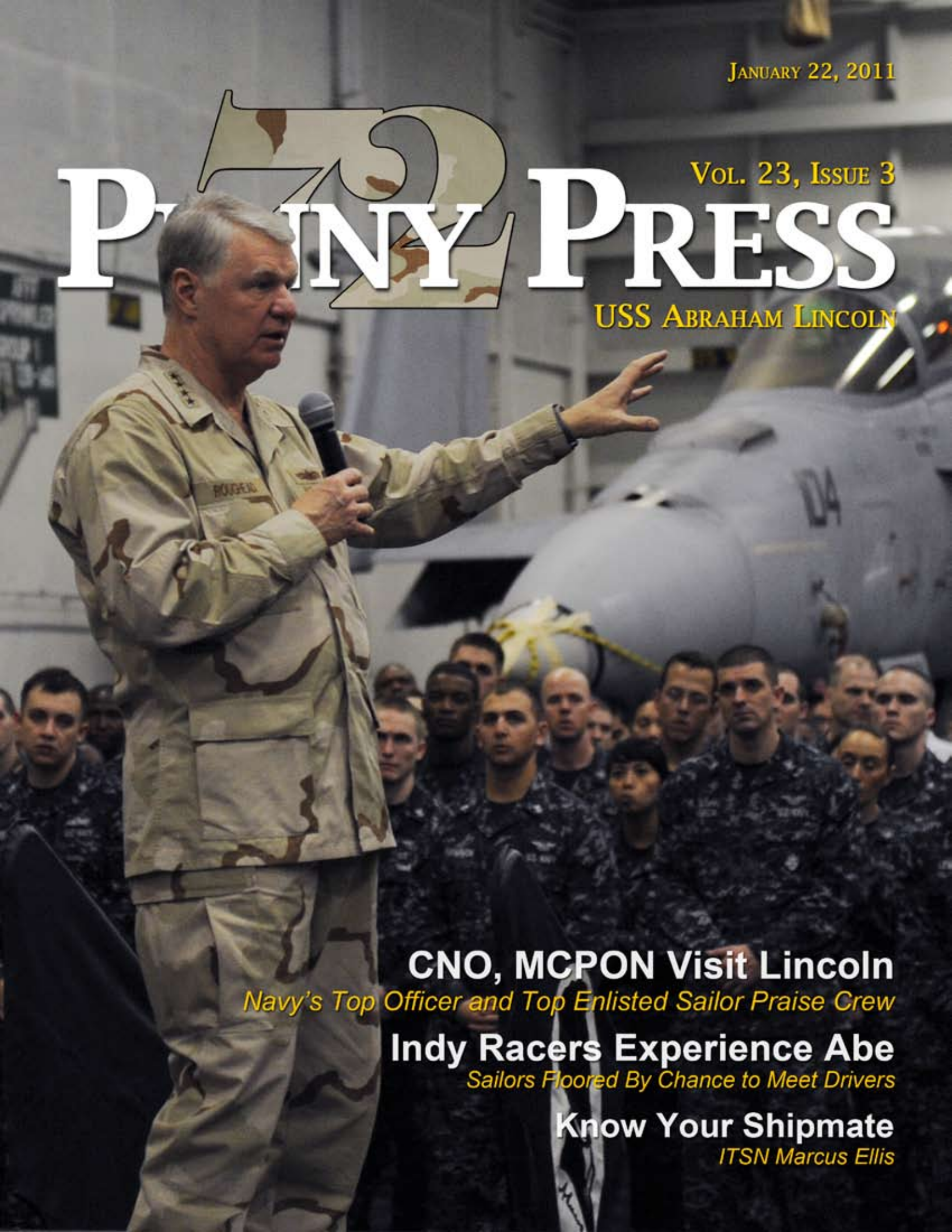
USS Abraham Lincoln



CNO, MCPON Visit Lincoln

Navy's Top Officer and Top Enlisted Sailor Praise Crew

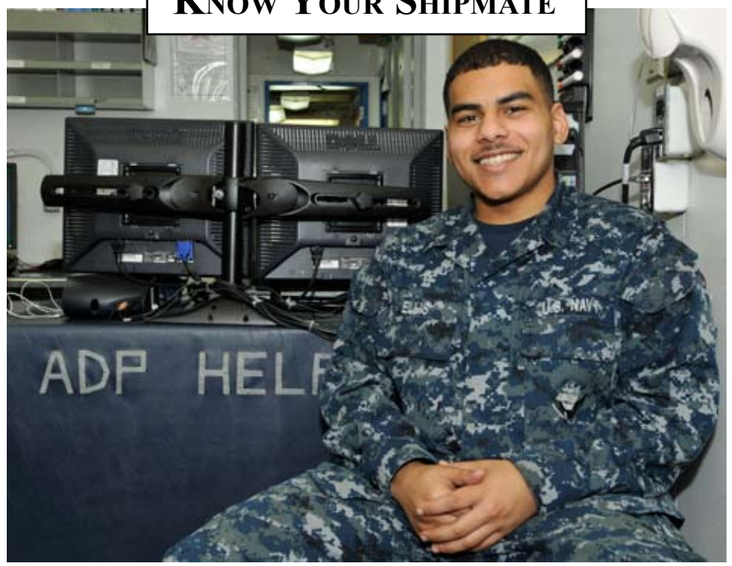
Indy Racers Experience Abe

Sailors Floored By Chance to Meet Drivers

Know Your Shipmate

ITSN Marcus Ellis

Know Your Shipmate



ITSN Marcus Ellis

Automated Data Processing (ADP) Office

Information Systems Technician Seaman Marcus Ellis, a native of Colorado Springs, Colo., works as a help desk technician in the Automated Data Processing (ADP) office.

"I troubleshoot hardware, software and network systems throughout the ship," said the 21-year-old. "Usually problems are fixed over the phone, such as rebooting the computer or making sure all the network cables are connected properly."

After a six-month information systems technician "A" school, Ellis reported aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), July 2010, as his first duty station. He said he hopes to learn as much as possible.

"I want to get security plus qualified (for the security of the network) and hopefully have my enlisted surface warfare specialist pin by the end of deployment," he said.

Like most Sailors on board, Ellis tries to cope with the stress of shipboard life. He combats it by working out; he said he likes to run about three miles every other day. But that's not his only form of stress relief. He is also an avid player of video games.

"I like to play Halo," he said smiling. "I would have to say I'm the best … well, if I were given a vehicle, I would be the best in my shop."

After completing more than half the deployment already and made a few port visits, he said his favorite was Malaysia.

I ate a lot of great food and went go-carting with some of my buddies from the shop," he said. "I'm also looking forward to visiting whatever port we go

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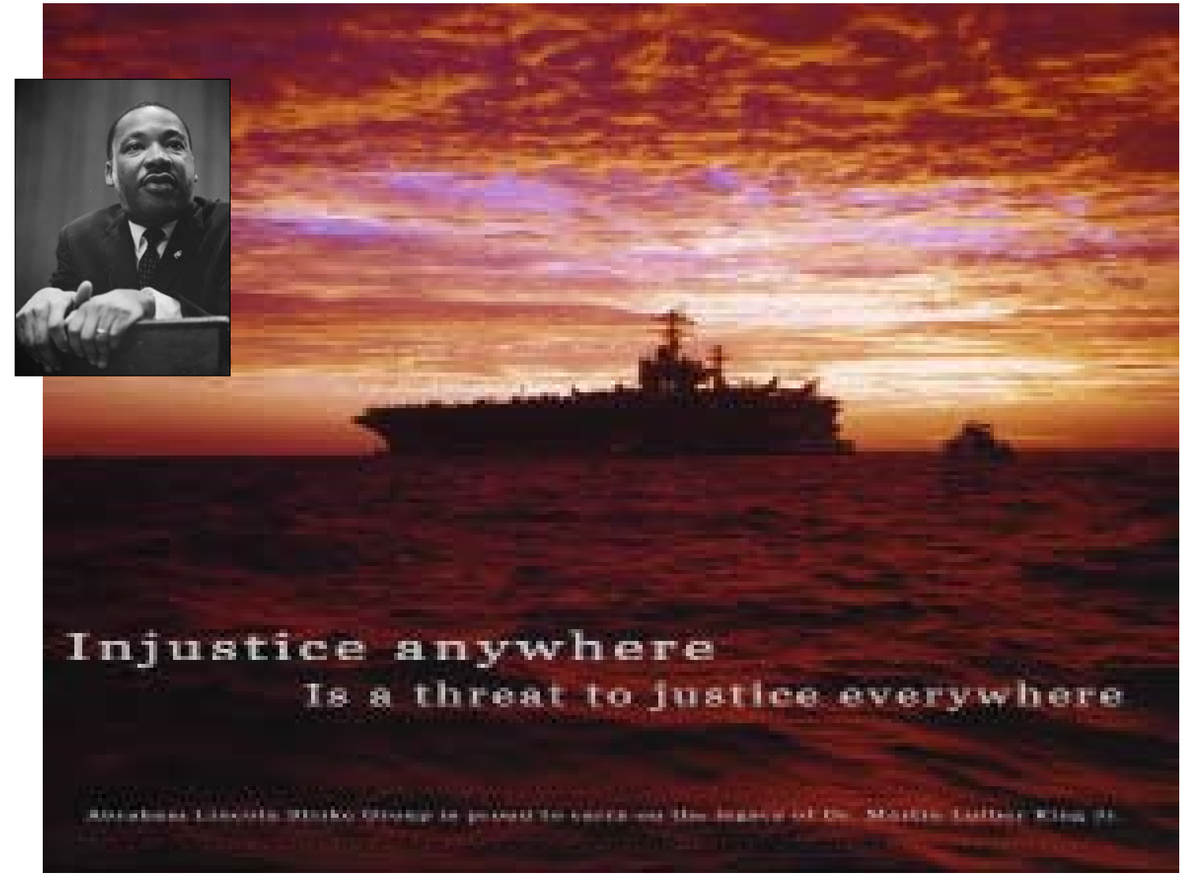


Story and photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brian Morales

Today's world continues to be influenced by some of the greatest leaders in history. Aboard the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), Sailors are honoring civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. throughout the month of January by reading some of his notable speeches as well as their own poems inspired by his leadership, Jan. 3-31.

Chief Navy Counselor Leslie Alston, from Pittsburgh, Penn., said the tribute is a great way to remind Sailors of the role King played in the fight for equality for all Americans.

"It is important we pay homage to those who paved the way for us in history," Alston said.

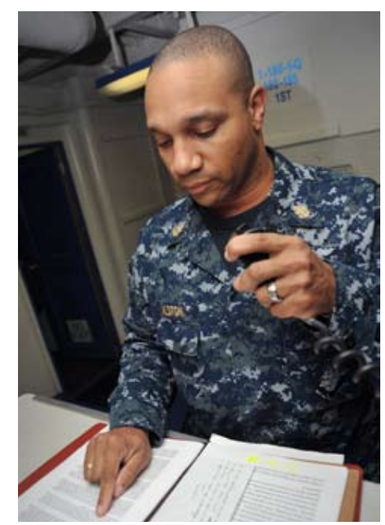
Throughout the month of January, Sailors will read the speeches and poems over the ship's all-hands announcement system (1MC).

"It's a way to commemorate a great leader," said Alston.

King, the central figure in the 1960's civil rights struggle in the United States, is remembered in part for leading a peaceful march on Washington, D.C., where he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech to 250,000 people assembled on the national mall in the nation's Capitol.

"He was an inspirational leader. Even in the face of danger, he never quit," Alston said.

Lincoln's 1MC tribute has ensured that Sailors have the continued opportunity to spend a few minutes each day listening, reflecting on King's words, and paying tribute to a champion not only of the civil rights movement, but of the American ideal of equality for all.



Though it has been over four decades since Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life ended, his words, actions and spirit continue to have a profound effect on many Sailors' lives.

Indy Centennial Tour Makes Lincoln Pit Stop

By Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Lauren Howes

World famous members of the Indy 500 Centennial Tour visited Sailors aboard the deployed aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) Jan. 15-16.

Mario Andretti, Al Unser, Jr., Johnny Rutherford, Jack Arute, Sarah Fisher, Larry Foyt, Davey Hamilton, Cameron Haven, and Martin Plowman were among the visitors to the ship.

Lincoln Strike Group Sailors received autographs, t-shirts and photos; participated in a video game racing challenge; and ate meals with the drivers during their time aboard. The Indy drivers also watched flight operations from the flight deck and were given a tour of Lincoln's jet shop for a demonstration of the power of an F/A-18 engine.

"My initial reaction when learning about the Indy tour was tremendous excitement," said Electronics Technician 1st Class Jeffery Scott. "I grew up watching Johnny Rutherford, Al Unser, Jr. and Mario Andretti, and I think it is great that they came out to show their support."

Andretti said he was very flattered to be invited and rearranged his schedule so that he would be able to be part of the tour.

"I think the military is the most noble profession on the planet and all of you should be very proud," he said.

Operations Specialist 1st Class Charles Atchison said seeing the racing heroes in person reminded him of being a kid.

"You see them on TV and on the track, and then they're here," said Atchison. "Just to be able to shake hands with these guys, that I think are legends, is a morale booster."

Plowman, one of the active drivers who took part in the visit to Lincoln, had his hair cut by a ship's barber, Ship's Serviceman 2nd Class Keyshawn Coats. The trimming was designed to raise money for the Wounded Warrior Project.

So far approximately $5,000 has been raised with an overall goal of $10,000 by the end of the tour, said Plowman.

The visit was the second stop on a 10-day tour, which is scheduled to visit several U.S. military bases in southwest Asia and Europe. The first stop on the tour was at Ramstein Airbase, Germany.

The tour was choreographed by the Moral Entertainment Foundation, Armed Forces Entertainment and Department of Defense Agencies, and included support from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the IZOD IndyCar Series.

The Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group is deployed in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility in support of maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Brian Morales

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Spencer Mickler

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Seth Clarke

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Brian Morales

U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Adam Randolph

U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Adam Randolph

U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Sarah Murphy

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Jerine Lee

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Jerine Lee

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Arif Patani

CNO & MCPON Visit Lincoln at Sea

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Seth Clarke

The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) visited the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), Jan. 18, during a multiday trip to the Middle East.

While aboard Lincoln, CNO Adm. Gary Roughead and MCPON (SS/SW) Rick D. West met with the ship's leadership, toured several of the ship's spaces, ate dinner with crew members on the enlisted mess decks and spoke to Lincoln's crew at an all-hands call in the hangar bay.

West also met with Lincoln's chief petty officer and attended an ice cream social with junior enlisted Sailors from the ship's supply department.

As part of the all-hands call, Roughead re-enlisted 20 Sailors, recognized 50 others for their outstanding performance and spoke to the assembled crew about current issues impacting the lives of Navy Sailors. Roughead answered questions on a variety of topics, from advancement pay to Lincoln's upcoming homeport change from Everett, Wash. to Norfolk, Va.

The CNO told the crew it was important for him to make time to see them face-to-face to thank them for the work they do in service to their nation.

"In all things that I do, the highlight for me is to be able to come back out to sea, to come on a great carrier like Lincoln and spend some time with you," he said. "I see what you do every day, wherever I am in the world. What you're doing here is extraordinarily important.

Roughead said Lincoln's efforts in support of naval objectives continue to demonstrate that the U.S. Navy is the most capable fighting force in the world.

"Your being here sends a signal that no one else can send," Roughead said. "With Abraham Lincoln, with the air wing and the ships that are out here in the strike group with you—there's no other military on the planet that can move military power with the force that you can. There's no one else that can even come close. I thank you for what you do."

The Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group is deployed in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility, conducting maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts to establish conditions for regional stability.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Spencer Mickler

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Arif Patani

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Seth Clarke

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U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Brian Morales

Wherever You're Going, Lincoln's Air Transfer Office Can Help

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Luciano Marano

They're the first people a passenger sees when a COD lands, and last he'll see before leaving—they are the members of Lincoln's Air Transfer Office (ATO).

C-2A Greyhounds are more commonly known as CODs, which stands for carrier onboard delivery. CODs fly supplies, mail and personnel aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) whenever the ship is underway, and in order to pull it all off successfully, a unique group handles all the details to ensure a smooth operation.

Taking into account the hectic arrival schedule for CODs and confusion that inevitably follows new arrivals, the responsibility of being the initial face of the ship is only one small part of the larger mission that keeps the ATO staff on their toes, day after day.

BUSY, BUSY: LINCOLN'S ATO ON DEPLOYMENT

2,175 PASSENGERS

122,850 LBS. OF MAIL

301,695 LBS. OF CARGO

"We coordinate all the passenger, cargo and mail transfer to and from the ship," said Lt. Cmdr. Martin Griggs, Lincoln's air transfer officer. "There's a lot of coordination required between us, those who write the actual air plans, Carrier Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 30 and Lincoln's beach detachment."

CODs assigned to the "Providers" of VRC-30 aboard Lincoln are the life-blood of the carrier supply system. It is through this platform that the ship receives the highest-priority parts and supplies when waiting for the next replenishment-at-sea is not an option.

"The hardest part of our job is ensuring all the pieces fit together," said Griggs. "From the bag drop off to the safety brief, to keeping the flight deck handlers and the supply department informed about what's coming in and going out, we have to make sure everybody knows what's going on."

Comprised of a permanent staff of only three individuals, and six other Sailors who report for COD loading/unloading operations, the ATO is a subdivision of the operations department known as the air operations division.

"It's technically a collateral duty for me, but it takes up most of my time," said Griggs, who took over the position while Lincoln was still in Bremerton and is slated to transfer in the near future for a department head tour. "I'm the Assistant Air Operations Officer; I'm a helicopter pilot by trade, and the enlisted staff is actually assigned to supply."

The team comes together and choreographs a seamless operation for all the various missions they are responsible for.

"The job is only as stressful as you make it" said Logistics Specialist 3rd Class David Cronin, currently assigned to ATO. "I'd say the hardest part of the job is moving people out at the same time, you have to put aside your differences and get the job done. Maybe somebody forgot to say goodbye or they have to use the head at the last minute, stuff like that happens."

"We come in every morning by 7:30. However, there are often earlier flights. Then we check the schedule to get ready for the day," said Cronin. "I love it up here; I get to meet new people all the time."

The work is never the same two days in a row, but these Sailors know they are doing their part to keep Lincoln operational.

"We're a piece of the larger puzzle," said Griggs. "We couldn't accomplish anything without the help of flight deck control, the handlers, the elevator operators and the hangar bay staff who are always standing by to move the supplies as they come off the elevator."

Another part of their job requires proper handling of hazardous materials (HAZMAT), including the occasional batch of medical biohazard waste (something that has to be taken to a proper facility).

"You have to know your HAZMAT to work here," said Cronin. "That's a separate school I went to before this job. I still work as a logistics specialist, but I'm in area where I'm not running a store room. Instead I track all the parts and supplies that come through the CODs."

Logistics Specialist 3rd Class Tyler Burke, the third ATO team member, said he has adapted to his assignment.

"This is new and different from what I have done before, but it has been a learning experience," Burke said.

Despite the myriad of technical concerns, logistical equations to solve and personnel movements, the members of Lincoln's ATO team are out there for every single COD arrival, waiting to get whoever or whatever, where it needs to be as quickly and safely as possible.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Alan Gragg

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Luciano Marano

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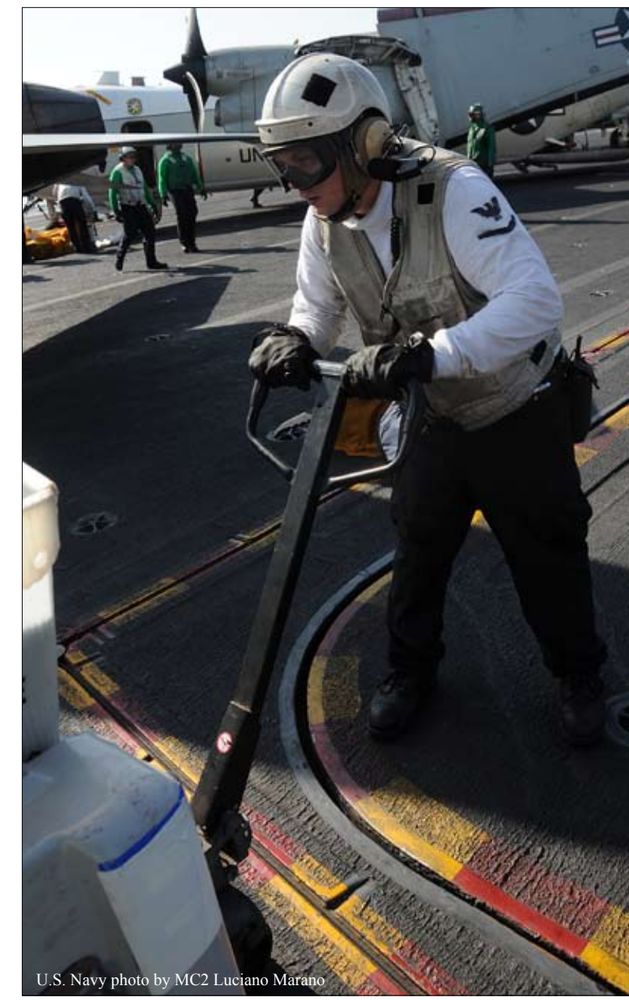


U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Luciano Marano

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Alan Gragg

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Luciano Marano

Long Deployment? Don't Sweat it.

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jerine Lee

With a fresh start to begin the New Year, USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) continues to hold fitness events throughout the month of January to promote a healthy lifestyle, boost morale through friendly competition and perhaps even shed a couple of extra pounds.

In one day, engineering department's electrical, or "E" division, held a divisional captain's cup, the navigation department held their weekly 5K run on the flight deck and Lincoln's Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) division held a three-on-three basketball tournament in the ship's hangar bay.

Senior Chief Electrician's Mate Edgar Manangan of Lincoln's E division says the captain's cup was primarily held as a farewell celebration for Senior Chief Interior Communications Electrician Marc Oden and to congratulate the division for their hard work.

"The division has been doing such a great job in preparing for the ship's Maintenance, Material and Management (3M) Inspection, we decided to give them a day of fun and get a little exercise," said Manangan. "Also, it's a great way to thank Senior Chief Oden for his amazing attitude and for training the electrical team before leaving the ship."

Captain's Cup participants competed in several events including a tug-of-war, crunches, pull-ups and a variety of foot races.

The last race of the captain's cup was Lincoln's Navigation Run-Around-the-World 5K Run. The run is held weekly on the ship's flight deck to motivate Sailors to run longer distances and a chance to enjoy a little time in the sun.

An average of more than 250 Sailors participate each week, and more than 500 have run in at least one 5K over the course of the deployment. The runs are scheduled to continue until Lincoln returns home.

"We noticed within the department that we all had goals to run and the treadmill can get so boring, so we decided to start something fun that welcomes the entire crew," said Quartermaster 2nd Class Sarah Degraw, of Lincoln's navigation department. "It's nice to run outside in the sun and fresh air and it only motivates people to run more. It will also keep people prepared for the physical readiness test for when we return to port."

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Luciano Marano

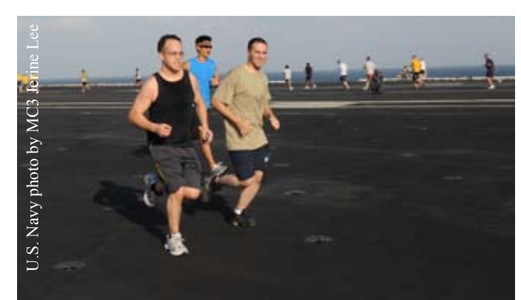
U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Alan Gragg

"Deployment is the BEST time to get FIT."

-- ABH3 Briana Tabotabo

While Sailors were running topside, many of Lincoln's athletes were in the ship's hangar bay for MWR's three-on-three basketball tournament. The event was a huge hit with more than 30 teams participating. MWR plans to hold another tournament Feb. 4 but will set up the courts in the hangar bay weekly.

"Basketball seems to be the most popular sport on the ship, and we've been getting requests to set up a court for months," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 3rd Class Briana Tabotabo, of Cameron Park, Calif., and a Lincoln MWR staff member.



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Jerine Lee

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Jerine Lee

"Setting it up was a success and it got a lot of people involved; not just playing basketball but cheering and motivating friends on the court which helps morale."

Other scheduled January MWR events include a Black Ops Strength and Conditioning Competition and a Lincoln Triathlon, on top of their weekly scheduled events.

"Deployment is the best time to get fit. You can make a dramatic change physically and mentally and when you return home, family and friends would be so proud. Being fit only betters people and their lifestyles, so we try our best to give those opportunities out there for everyone to enjoy," said Tabotabo.

Boeing Graphic

If Looks Could Kill ...

Story and photos by
Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Spencer Mickler

Have you ever wanted to get something done just by looking at it? Perhaps you wish you could strip the wax off a deck for your chief (who needed it done yesterday) or get that pile of laundry done (the one you haven't had time to sign a log for). How much easier would life be if you needed only to cast a glance at a task in order to accomplish it?

If your task happens to be destroying enemy forces, and you're in the business of flying jets for the Navy, then you need not rely on your imagination. You're probably already doing it for real using the Joint Helmet-Mounted Cueing System (JHMCS).

The new JHMCS technology, in use throughout the Navy, is seeing action locally with embarked Attack Fighter Squadron (VFA) 137, the Kestrels.

"It's a lot of wires and gizmos and gadgets; it's highly expensive and very fragile," said Parachute Rigger 2nd Class Daniel Heideman. "The helmet has a cable assembly that plugs into the aircraft. The aircraft feeds the Helmet Display Unit critical sensor information, which then is projected onto the visor."

"The JHMCS projects the HUD symbology inside the visor of the helmet," said Lt. Austin Ordway, a pilot for VFA-137. "Also, there are magnetic fields inside the cockpit that detect head movement, so the helmet knows where you are looking and uses that information. Where you look is where the radar looks."

Although the helmet, like any aircraft equipment, needs fine tuning to get it working just right, the applications are more than meets the eye.

"When you're flying the jet, you have the Heads-Up Display (HUD), the little box on top. Everyone's seen it in 'Top Gun' where he's flying around trying to get the target in that little box so he can lock onto him, and it makes it really hard to hit a target because you have to get him in that box in order to get a lock," said Heideman.

"The concept of the Joint Helmet is that box is now inside your visor. As long as you can put eyes on it, you can lock onto it and everything will slave over and track the target from your Forward-Looking Infrared (FLIR) to your missiles."

Ordway said the ability to aim the information-gathering and enemy-destroying equipment of an F/A-18 at anything you look at is a tremendous asset to war fighters.

Pilots using the JHMCS no longer have to maneuver their aircraft into a position facing their intended target. With the new technology, they need only have the target in their field of vision.

Kestrels pilot Lt. j.g. Joseph Burns said JHMCS technology also provides users an air-to-ground capability.

"If you see something on the ground, you can designation it as a target and then look at it in your FLIR," said Burns. "And it works both ways. If you're looking through your FLIR at something, but you don't know where it is on the ground, it will tell you roughly the right area. That's extremely helpful in a complex aerial environment."

Cutting-edge technology like the JHMCS is helping service members of all branches complete the mission, and for those not flying jets, we can only hope that one day JHMCS can be modified and adapted to the ongoing mission of cleaning stations.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Jake Berenguer

TRICARE to Extend Dependent Coverage to Age 26

By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service

TRICARE plans to roll out its new Young Adult Program by spring and to provide an option to make coverage retroactive to Jan. 1, to ensure military families don't get left out as the new national health care reform law extends parent's health insurance to their children up to age 26.

The new program will allow qualified, unmarried military children up to age 26 to buy health care coverage under their parents' TRICARE plans through age 26. That's up from the current maximum age of 21, or 23 for full-time college students whose parents provide more than half their financial support.

The fiscal 2011 National Defense Authorization Act President Obama signed, Jan. 7, gave the DOD the authority it needed to extend coverage to young adults, TRICARE spokesman Austin Camacho said.

This ensures benefits extended under TRICARE are in line with those all American families receive under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that took effect in March.

Qualified young adults who do not have access to employer-sponsored health care coverage will be eligible to purchase it through TRICARE on a month-to-month basis, Camacho said.

Details about how much those premiums will cost under the new program still are being finalized. But because the 2011 defense authorization specifies that the rates must cover all program costs, premiums will be based on commercial insurance costs.

Hunter estimated the program could extend TRICARE coverage to several hundred thousand additional beneficiaries.

Officials plan to roll out the new program in two phases, first offering a premium-based TRICARE Standard/Extra benefit. Later this year, they plan to introduce the TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Prime Remote plan, including overseas options, and the Uniformed Services Family Health Plan.

Once the program is in place, eligible young adults may submit an application and premium payment to the appropriate regional or overseas contractor for processing. Cost shares, deductibles and catastrophic caps will vary, based on the plan selected and the sponsor's status.

Young adult beneficiaries will receive an enrollment card after they buy coverage, and their payment is reflected in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System, Camacho said.

The new beneficiaries may choose to pay premiums back to Jan. 1, which will entitle them to file claims for any health care costs they have accrued since that date.

Briefly

Enterprise Carrier Strike Group Deploys

The Enterprise Carrier Strike Group (CSG) departed its homeport of Norfolk, Jan. 13, to embark upon its first deployment since 2007. Slated to deploy for operations in the U.S. Navy's 5th and 6th Fleets, this deployment is part of an ongoing rotation of U.S. forces supporting maritime security operations in international waters around the globe. The Enterprise CSG consists of Enterprise, the guided-missile cruiser USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55), the guided-missile destroyers USS Bulkeley (DDG 84), USS Barry (DDG 52) and USS Mason (DDG 87), USNS Arctic (T-AOE 8), Carrier Air Wing 1 and Destroyer Squadron 2.

Laser Program Milestone Achieved

Scientists have achieved a breakthrough with the Office of Naval Research's (ONR) Free Electron Laser (FEL) program. Researchers demonstrated an injector capable of producing the electrons needed to generate megawatt-class laser beams for the Navy's next-generation weapon system, Dec. 20, months ahead of schedule.

Higgins to Deploy to 5th Fleet AOR

The guided-missile destroyer USS Higgins (DDG 76) will depart San Diego Jan. 20 on a six-month independent deployment to the 5th Fleet area of responsibility. Higgins will be tasked with providing ballistic missile defense (BMD) to U.S. and allied forces. BMD is a core capability that enhances deterrence and provides an umbrella of protection to forward-deployed forces and allies.

LINCOLN PETTY OFFICERS

THIS COULD BE YOU