



CHINFO NEWS CLIPS

Navy Office of Information, Washington, DC

(703) 697-5342

Thursday, January 8, 2004

NORFOLK VIRGINIAN-PILOT 8 JAN 04

Admiral Says Birds Aren't A Flight Risk

By Jack Dorsey, The Virginian-Pilot

NORFOLK — Adm. William J. Fallon,

responding to concerns from Sen. Elizabeth Dole, R-N.C., over a proposed airfield in Washington County, said he rejects criticism that the Navy is not taking steps to protect its aviators from bird strikes.

Fallon, commander of Fleet Forces Command, headquartered here, said data presented to Dole claiming that the Navy could not manage potential bird strikes on aircraft flying in the area is incorrect.

The military has operated in other such areas safely despite severe Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard, or BASH, risks, Fallon wrote to Dole in a letter obtained by The Virginian-Pilot.

"I assure you that the safety of our aircrews is at the top of any list of considerations," wrote Fallon, an aviator for the past 36 years.

Meanwhile, the Marine Corps acknowledged that it intends to seek additional air space restrictions near Cherry Point, N.C., to help with its proposed expanded operations there.

The Marine Corps wants to establish two special-use zones, called military operating areas, around existing military air space in the southern part of Pamlico Sound to relieve congestion.

The restrictions involve airspace between 3,000 and 18,000 feet. Several airspace restrictions already exist in the region, pertaining mainly to other nonmilitary aircraft flying through the area.

A finding of "no significant impact" was determined on Dec. 10, said Maj. Sean Gibson, a spokesman for Cherry Point. The new zones are needed to allow aircraft to enter and leave the ranges more safely, he said.

The latest proposal adds additional fuel to a growing debate about Navy and Marine Corps needs for additional training areas in eastern North Carolina.

Fallon's letter to Dole, dated Dec. 23, was in response to information sent to her by Ronald Merritt, a retired Air Force officer with 20 years of experience studying bird strike risks.

Merritt provided Dole with a position paper summarizing his doubts about the proposed Washington County airfield site. It is adjacent to the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife refuge, home to thousands of migrating birds.

Merritt claims bird hazards to aircraft would be severe half the year and cannot be managed as the Navy claims.

Fallon disagrees and says Merritt, who worked for Geo-Marine Inc., the contractor hired by the Navy to prepare a report on bird strike risks, raised no substantive issues that were not previously detailed in the Navy's F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet Environmental Impact Statement.

"Air stations and ranges currently operate safely despite severe BASH hazards – a fact that Mr. Merritt overlooks in his point papers," Fallon wrote.

For example, Fallon said, a severe BASH hazard is managed successfully at Dover Air Force Base, Del., which is within 10 miles of the Bombay Hook National wildlife Refuge, where 150,000 waterfowl are present at peak periods. The same is true at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, near Oak Harbor, Wash., where about 100,000 snow geese are present, he said.

"Additionally, the Dare County Range in North Carolina is subject to a severe bird strike risk for more than 50 percent of the year, yet it continues to be a significant, heavily-used training facility for the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps aviators where flight operations are safely conducted on a routine basis," he said.

A final plan for managing the BASH risk will be developed using additional studies currently under contract with Geo-Marine, and in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Fallon said.

MORE

The final plan will be subject to public review and will require the concurrence of both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission.

One management tool being looked at, said Fallon, is the use of bird-detection radar. Some prototype systems are available now.

Aircraft expected to use the proposed field at Washington County include Super Hornets to be

based at Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach and at Cherry Point.

The Navy wants to press ahead with plans for the \$186.5 million air field and plans to begin acquiring the first 3,000 acres of the 30,000-acre project early this year.

Brian Nick, a spokesman for Dole, said the Navy's letter had not yet been received by the senator.

Judge Decides Pentagon Can Resume Anthrax Vaccinations

By Thom Shanker

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7 — A federal judge on Wednesday lifted his injunction halting the military's mandatory anthrax vaccination program, and the Pentagon swiftly ordered the resumption of shots for all its personnel except the six anonymous people who brought the suit.

The judge, Emmet G. Sullivan of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, ordered lawyers for the government and the plaintiffs to return in a week for a "status hearing" to discuss the next steps in what promises to be a protracted legal fight.

"We are disappointed, but not surprised that the injunction has been stayed for all but the six plaintiffs," said Mark S. Zaid, a lawyer for the six "John Doe" military or Pentagon personnel who brought the suit.

Mr. Zaid pledged further legal action to challenge the effectiveness of the vaccine, the way it is administered and the scientific basis cited by the Bush administration for its approval. "The government's victory today may only be fleeting," he said.

David S. C. Chu, the under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, signed a memorandum late Wednesday ordering the resumption of the vaccination program.

Bryan Whitman, the Pentagon's deputy spokesman, said after the court action that "the Department of Defense believes this is a safe and effective vaccine" and that "it is an important force-protection measure for our troops" who may be faced with such an unconventional threat.

"It would be irresponsible not to provide the maximum amount of protective measures available to keep our service members safe," Mr. Whitman added.

Though Judge Sullivan was swayed by arguments put forth by government lawyers in staying his injunction, he wrote that the timing of a new Food and Drug Administration rule declaring that the anthrax vaccine was effective against the greatest potential danger raised suspicions.

In issuing his preliminary injunction on Dec. 22, Judge Sullivan accepted the plaintiffs' arguments that the vaccine used in the Pentagon's mandatory program had been approved by the F.D.A. to protect against skin exposure to anthrax — but not against anthrax that is inhaled, the far greater battlefield threat. Thus, the judge said, the vaccine was an "investigational" drug being forced on the troops for an unapproved purpose.

The Pentagon halted the program the next day, pending clarification of the legal issues, and the day after that the Justice Department filed a motion asking the judge to withdraw the injunction — or at least limit his ruling solely to the six plaintiffs whose suit prompted it.

On Dec. 30, the F.D.A. announced a new "final rule and order," which officially declared the anthrax vaccine effective against the inhaled form of the bacteria.

The Justice Department immediately moved to capitalize on the new rule, filing an emergency motion later that day asking Judge Sullivan to vacate the injunction, writing, "There can be no doubt that the F.D.A. order removes the legal basis upon which relief was sought and granted."

In his two-page order issued on Wednesday, Judge Sullivan wrote, "Although the timing of the issuance of the rule is arguably highly suspicious, nevertheless, the rule has been issued and the principle reason for the issuance of the injunction has been addressed by the government."

Mr. Zaid, a plaintiffs' lawyer, said after the court action that the agency's rule should be interpreted as an admission that the vaccine "was being used illegally by the Department of Defense before that time." He said any military personnel or Pentagon civilians penalized for refusing the mandatory vaccine "were unjustly punished."

The plaintiffs' lawyers challenged the rule as "primarily based on animal studies that have no proven correlation to human efficacy." They also filed documents on Tuesday asking the court to consider the anthrax case as a class action, to include all military personnel and Pentagon civilians.

Terrorism And Fighter Plane Rules Of Engagement

DIANE SAWYER, ABC NEWS: We're gonna turn back to the issue of terrorism and air travel. In the last two weeks, as you know, 16 flights and counting, have been canceled, delayed or diverted. And fighter jets have been escorting passenger planes. And we asked ABC's Chris Cuomo to join us and take a look at what happens when a fighter plane shows up nearby.

CHRIS CUOMO, ABC NEWS: (Off Camera) Well, just yesterday, it happened again. US officials asked for fighter jets to shadow a plane coming from France, but stood down when it turned out to be a false alarm.

CUOMO: (Voice Over) But this, we're told, is a new way of life for air travelers.

CUOMO: (Off Camera) Which made us wonder just how far can fighter jets go and what are the new rules of engagement?

CUOMO: (Off Camera) Aviation insiders tell ABC News jets scramble these days at the slightest provocation. A plane slightly off course, a disruptive passenger. The fighter jets usually stay back five miles or more, but in extreme circumstances they can close in tight as they did in December of 2001 when British citizen Richard Reid tried to ignite explosives hidden in his shoe before fellow passengers restrained him. F-15 pilots from the 102nd Air Fighter Wing took Diane Sawyer on patrol just after 9/11. They explained the grim logic behind their missions.

PILOT: I mean, if, if somebody is telling you to shoot down a passenger airline with passengers on it, you just have to have faith that, that the commanders realize that there's far worse that, that could happen.

CUOMO: (Voice Over) To make sure hijackers aren't in control, the military pilot may direct the passenger plane to make a certain maneuver, such as a circle. If the fighter jet can't communicate by radio with the passenger plane, the military pilots can tip their wings or give

hand signals to get the other pilots to respond. Larry Johnson was responsible for airline counterterrorism during the Clinton administration. He says the rules of engagement prevent US jets from shooting down a passenger plane unless a catastrophe is imminent.

LARRY JOHNSON, AVIATION SAFETY EXPERT: It's not likely to happen and I wouldn't tell you to go out and buy the life insurance for it either.

CUOMO: (Voice Over) Johnson's bigger concern is the recent actions taken by the Department of Homeland Security. He and other aviation safety experts believe too much information is being released, possibly giving vital clues to terrorists searching for the path of least resistance.

JOHNSON: They should be doing it quietly and behind the scenes. If you have specific threat information about a particular flight, the last thing you want to do is let anybody in the public know that. Because once you let, make it public, you let the bad guy know that you're on to him.

SAWYER: (Off Camera) Still inconceivable that anybody would order the downing of a passenger plane. And what about this release of security information?

CUOMO: (Off Camera) The perception of safety. Yes, it's always about the government, what they want to disclose. But with terrorism, it's a unique question for us to ponder. You put your finger on it. What if this were going to happen, wouldn't we want to know? Wouldn't everybody want to be involved? That's what terrorism is about. How do we manage the fear? How do we manage the -expectations? There are going to be fighter jets along the civilian jets. What does it mean? I think we need to know.

SAWYER: (Voice Over) Okay. Chris Cuomo, our thanks to you

REUTERS 07 JAN 04

U.S. Navy Charges Sailors With Theft In Gulf Search

MANAMA (Reuters) - The U.S. Navy said Wednesday it had charged two U.S. sailors with stealing personal items from the crew of a Singapore-flagged vessel during a search in the Gulf.

A U.S. Naval Forces Central Command statement said the sailors were investigated after the vessel's master reported that three digital cameras, a wristwatch and more than \$200 cash were missing after the boarding by the U.S. Navy Tuesday.

"The boarding team members were questioned and searched upon their return. The

missing items were found in the possession of two of the boarding team members," it said.

The two could be dismissed from the Navy if found guilty, the statement added.

U.S.-led navies intercept ships in the Gulf region suspected of carrying illegal oil and arms in and out of Iraq.

Friday, U.S.-led naval forces said they seized about 1.3 tons of hashish on a boat near the mouth of the Gulf, the third interception of drugs in two weeks in what they said was a suspected al Qaeda smuggling operation.

U.S. To Shift 1,600 Marines From Okinawa Pref. To Iraq

By Toshiyuki Ito

WASHINGTON--The U.S. military has decided to transfer two battalions consisting of 1,600 marines from Okinawa Prefecture to Iraq in an effort to improve the security situation there, U.S. military sources said Wednesday.

The marines were dispatched to the U.S. bases in the prefecture in December, but likely will depart for Iraq as early as next month, the sources said, adding that they would remain in the strife-torn Middle Eastern nation for a seven-month period.

According to the sources, the U.S. military has no plans during this period to replace the vacancies in the marines in Okinawa Prefecture. The number of U.S. Marine Corps battalions, therefore, are expected to be reduced to two for the time being, although four battalions are usually stationed in the prefecture ready to respond to emergencies in the region.

The number of U.S. marines stationed in the prefecture is currently between 17,000 and 20,000. Of those, the four battalions consist of about 5,000 infantry troops.

The U.S. Defense Department plans to dispatch about 25,000 marines to Iraq from the United States and other foreign bases to replace

its army troops currently stationed in Iraq, the sources said.

In response to the plan, the marine corps examined transferring to Iraq some of its troops, who are sent on six-month terms of duty to the Okinawa bases, while giving consideration to the regional situation surrounding Japan, the sources added.

The Defense Department then decided that pulling some marines out of the prefecture was unavoidable in view of the overall deployment of U.S. forces.

In addition to the 1,600 marines who have been stationed in Okinawa Prefecture since December, the Defense Department also is considering transferring another battalion to Iraq that was scheduled to be dispatched to the prefecture, according to the sources.

The U.S. government reportedly has unofficially informed Japan about the transfer decision.

If U.S. military units supporting the battalions also are pulled out of bases in the prefecture, the U.S. marine force may be reduced by more than 4,000 troops, observers said.

Detailers Ease Transition For Roosevelt Roads Sailors

From Naval Station Roosevelt Roads Public Affairs

NAVAL STATION ROOSEVELT ROADS, Puerto Rico (NNS) -- Approximately 300 Sailors from Naval Station Roosevelt Roads (NSRR) received orders for their new duty stations after meeting with an eight-person detailing team from the Navy Personnel Command (NPC), Millington, Tenn., Dec. 8-12.

The team made a special trip to Roosevelt Roads to assist Sailors with negotiation for orders due to the upcoming base closure.

Master-At-Arms 3rd Class Neil McLean was happy with his orders to Portsmouth, Va. He will be working with the Mobile Security Force Detachment there.

"Those guys did a great job of helping me out," he said. McLean, who has been in the Navy for a little more than a year, chose Virginia for personal and professional reasons.

"I liked the detachment because you get a lot of schools, and it's good for my career. Also, I've never been to the East Coast."

The vast majority of Sailors are very pleased, according to Capt. Mark Dobbs, NPC medical/dental detailer branch head.

"We've been successful in getting them what they want."

Spouses were encouraged to come with active-duty members, and many did.

"We are trying to be considerate of their families," Dobbs said.

Chief Machinist's Mate Gerald Serrano received orders that prove to be a good deal for his family and the Navy.

"I am really happy with my orders," said Serrano.

"I am going to USS John F. Kennedy out of Mayport, Fla. I'm happy with my orders because we have family there. My daughter will be graduating from high school early and will be

going to college in Florida."

Serrano, who could have retired as early as March, will serve another three years as a result of getting orders to Florida.

"We plan on buying a house, and it gives me a chance to settle because that's where I want to retire."

Dobbs explained why NPC prefers on making detailing visits out to the fleet.

"Whenever a ship decommissions or a base closes, it adds trauma or anxiety, so we've found that it's easier to talk with the Sailor eye-to-eye rather than over the phone," Dobbs said. "By speaking with them in person, we can better deal with their issues and answer any questions that they may have."

Dobbs said meetings were conducted slightly different than the normal way of selecting orders on the Job Assignment Selection System (JASS).

"Normally, when Sailors are in their six-to-nine-month window, they look at JASS. But, we have opened all billets that are valid, but not displayed on JASS. We are trying to be more flexible in allowing them to look at billets that not everyone gets to see," Dobbs said.

"We really try to work with the Sailors to match their personal needs with the Navy's needs."

Also accompanying the detailers was Exceptional Family Member Program Specialist Charles Matthews. The specialist is used for families with special medical or educational needs. Whether or not a Sailor can select orders to a specific location is based on a category designated to them by the specialist.

"This is the first time we've done this, and it's been a blessing for us. It's worked to our advantage," Dobbs said.

"Overall, they (the detailers) did a really good job," Serrano said.

Navy Surgeon General Visits Naval Hospital Roosevelt Roads

From Naval Station Roosevelt Roads Public Affairs

NAVAL STATION ROOSEVELT ROADS, Puerto Rico (NNS) -- Vice Adm. Michael Cowan, surgeon general of the Navy, spent three days visiting Naval Hospital Roosevelt Roads (NHRR) Dec. 8-10. The Surgeon General's visit was a whirlwind of conferences and meetings with base officials.

"I am here to support the closure of the base," Cowan said. "I am here to be certain that we do not falter in our care for retired patients. I want to spend time with the staff to thank them for their hard work over the years, and I want to communicate this message to community representatives."

Cowan met with NHRR's Retiree Focus Group and addressed major concerns of the retiree population. He outlined two pharmacy plans already implemented - the Pharmacy Network and the Mail-Order Pharmacy.

The Pharmacy Network is a system of pharmacies in Puerto Rico involving co-pay and 30 days worth of medications.

The Mail-Order Pharmacy offers 90-day supplies of medications, also for low co-pay.

TRICARE region representatives and NHRR are working very hard to establish a network of TRICARE providers on the island that will ensure quality medical care and care that meets retiree needs.

He also met with local military and federal media, including journalists from Fort Buchanan, the Coast Guard, the San Juan Veterans Administration Medical Center, Naval Station Roosevelt Roads' Public Affairs Office, and the Puerto Rico Army and Air National Guard.

Cowan repeated his message that Puerto Rico retiree care was among his top priorities, but of equal importance was the assurance that all TRICARE enrollees are cared for.

"If you know a good provider, recommend him or her," urged Capt. Patricia Netzer, NHRR commanding officer. She added, "We will send that provider a TRICARE package and encourage them to become a part of the TRICARE network."

Despite his busy schedule and the volley of questions asked of him wherever he went, the surgeon general still found time to take part in promotion and reenlistment ceremonies.

On day two of his visit, he kicked off his day with a promotion ceremony and three reenlistments. Lt. j.g. Susan Deike was promoted to lieutenant, while Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Anita Bouges, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Noel Martinez and Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Fernando Rodriguez all re-enlisted.

Lastly, Cowan held Admiral's Call for NHRR staff and civilians. The surgeon general used this time to address specific concerns of each group. He outlined the Navy's long-term goal of a dynamic, well-educated body of Sailors.

"I believe Naval Medicine is going to become smaller, but it will still be Naval Medicine," he said, emphasizing the increased role education will play in advancement.

He also discussed the Navy's plan to provide more upward mobility for ambitious Sailors. Also, how motivation, teamwork and leadership abilities would come into play in the future, while the importance of the advancement exam will become de-emphasized. With the Navy's high retention rate, especially in medicine, the need for more promotable Sailors becomes paramount, the vice admiral said.

"The Chief of Naval Operations has a very ambitious plan to change not only the way we're promoted, but the way we learn. Each of us is going to have to commit to becoming a life-long learner," he said.

He offered his heartfelt thanks to the civilians for their years of dedicated service and promised they will not be forgotten.

The Surgeon General left the hospital's commanding officer with glowing comments about her staff, including the high morale, and cohesiveness and dedication of the employees despite trying times.

"The Surgeon General was very impressed," said Netzer.

Navy Force Cuts To Continue

By David Brown

The coming year will see more cuts in manpower, as the Navy's top officer continues to forge what he calls a "smaller and smarter" sea service. The specific numbers of cuts, however, will have to wait for the Navy's fiscal 2005 budget submission, which should be unveiled later this month.

"There's more movement in this area than in any place else, and I tend to accelerate it this year," said Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark during a Jan. 5 interview. "If you look at our [budget] submissions you're going to see more major moves. I still think we're just scratching the surface here."

Clark's comments came the day he released his "Guidance for 2004," a 20-page rundown of his priorities for the year and goals to be met for Navy commanders.

"As our Navy becomes more high tech, our work force will get smaller and smarter," Clark wrote in his guidance, which was subtitled "Accelerating Our Advantages." "We will spend whatever it takes to equip and enable our

sailors, but we do not want to spend one extra penny for manpower we do not need."

In 2003, Navy personnel officials began several "force-shaping" initiatives, such as Perform to Serve, which prompts re-enlisting sailors to switch from overmanned to undermanned ratings. The service is also cutting from active duty 433 junior officers by May.

As a result, end strength for 2004 is dipping by 1,900 billets to 373,800. The reductions, service officials have said, are being driven by ship and squadron decommissionings. At the same time, Clark is directing the fleets to use the results of the Optimal Manning experiment, an effort to reduce the crew size of destroyers and cruisers, and expand them to the rest of the surface fleet. In addition, officials are reviewing manning levels on submarines and in aviation squadrons "to apply similar best practices."

Clark added he agrees with those who say the Navy, to stay on the safe side, should retain some people it might need in the future, but doesn't need now.

"Let's calculate it and figure out what it takes to serve," he said.

PASCAGOULA MISSISSIPPI PRESS 07 JAN 04
Lott, Taylor To Fight BRAC

By JOHN SURRETT

PASCAGOULA -- U.S. Sen. Trent Lott and U.S. Rep. Gene Taylor said they plan to do everything they can to either block, delay or reshape the new Base Realignment and Closure round set for 2005.

"We have one more opportunity legislatively to delay or stop the BRAC process," Taylor said. "I think the fact that we're now only a year from appointing the BRAC commission will hopefully give colleagues the sense of urgency that they need to kill it or delay it."

The Department of Defense last week released the new BRAC guidelines that will be used to determine which bases will be closed during the next round of closures and Defense Department officials announced Tuesday that commanders at U.S. bases worldwide have been asked to gather data on their facilities in preparation for BRAC 2005.

Lott believes the criteria set by Pentagon officials is not a good procedure to evaluate America's military base needs, adding, "I think we should focus on reducing our commitments in Europe in particular before we begin doing that in the United States.

"I've talked to three different secretaries of defense and said you need to focus on where you know you have excess capacity," Lott said. "By just saying we're going to look at every base, then every city, every county, every state in America that has a base is going to hire somebody to help them through the maze, when in fact it may never be picked."

Naval Air Station Meridian, he said, is not going to be threatened with closure.

"But we are still probably going to have two or three of our bases that will at least be on the list to be considered, and we'll do everything we can to make sure their case is made," he said.

"I'm concerned about it. We're going to do what we have been doing, everything we can going back to (former U.S. Rep.) Sonny Montgomery and (former) Sen. (John) Stennis and Thad Cochran, Roger Wicker, Chip Pickering, Gene Taylor; we all work to make sure our bases are as modern as they can be."

Keesler Air Force Base, the Seabee base in Gulfport and Naval Station Pascagoula have some of the newest, finest facilities of any base in America, Lott said.

But Naval Station Pascagoula faces a problem none of the Mississippi's other bases have -- during the next three years, it will lose the three cruisers currently based there.

The guided missile cruisers USS Ticonderoga, Yorktown and Thomas S. Gates are among five Ticonderoga class cruisers that are slated for decommissioning from fiscal year 2004-2006. The Ticonderoga, which was commissioned on Jan. 22, 1983, is the oldest of the class and is expected to be decommissioned near the end of fiscal 2004.

"It certainly troubles me," Taylor said of the decommissionings. "It's a factor (affecting the base). It's troublesome."

He said he and Cochran discussed the situation with Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark.

"We had the chief of naval operations' undivided attention after the Salute to the Military (in Biloxi) when we flew back with him," Taylor said. "We let him know that we expect him to find some other vessels to replace them."

He called the move to take the first five ships of the Ticonderoga class out of service a bad decision.

"Those ships are not old," he said. "Those ships are 18-19-years old, which for a ship means it's got at least another 10 good years. "But it's a decision that the administration made, and the challenge now is to find something to replace them."

"That's one of things we need to do," Lott said. "We need to get more modern ships and more missions at Naval Station Pascagoula. We have worked on that for years have not been able to get the type of multimissions we'd like to have, although we have the Coast Guard cutter (Decisive) there.

"The problem is we're not building enough ships for the Navy's needs in the future right now anyway," he said. "So there's a lot of work to be done, but we're going to certainly do all we can."

Area Bracing For BRAC

Georgia Is Going To Battle Stations As The Next Round Of Base Realignment And Closures Nears. There Are 13 Military Installations In The State, Ranging From The Obscure, Such As The Navy Supply Corps School In Athens, To The Prominent, Such As Robins Air Force Base And Fort Stewart. The Department Of Defense Released Eight Draft Criteria Two Weeks Ago, And Citizens Have Until Jan. 21 To Review And Comment On The Standards.

By:Patrick Donahue

After a quick look at the criteria, Hinesville Mayor Tom Ratcliffe is optimistic, but cautiously so, about Fort Stewart's future.

"This is a tough battle," Ratcliffe said. "It is not just hawking your positives. How do we stack up? It's a very broad question?"

Some reports have already mentioned Fort McPherson and Fort Gillem, in suburban Atlanta, and the Navy Supply Corps School as the most vulnerable, as are Dobbins Air Reserve Base and Naval Air Station-Atlanta.

Fort McPherson is home to Forces Command and the 3rd Army headquarters. Fort Gillem is home to the 1st Army headquarters.

Both Robins and Moody Air Force bases were scheduled for realignment in earlier BRAC rounds, but eventually were unharmed.

Ratcliffe was quick to point out that the criteria deal with the installations themselves, and not who mans them. Just because the 3rd Infantry Division has performed splendidly over recent years doesn't insulate Fort Stewart from any BRAC.

"There is an inability to separate the infrastructure from the units there," he said. "They could be a wonderful fighting force anywhere."

Yet Fort Stewart has shown its capability through Balkans rotations and Operation Iraqi Freedom, Ratcliffe added, by deploying not only the 3rd ID but also thousands of Reserve and National Guard soldiers.

"It is one of, if not the, the premier power projection platforms on the east coast," he said. "It is not theoretical. They have demonstrated the ability to perform that mission to a high level."

The rail lines that can handle the post's heavy equipment, Hunter Army Airfield's 11,000-foot runway and the nearby ports with roll on/roll off capability enhance the deployment process, according to Ratcliffe.

Also, as the Pentagon looks to make bases and training go across the services, Fort Stewart is well positioned for joint exercises, Ratcliffe said, noting how close the Townsend Bombing Range is.

Ratcliffe also mentioned the work being done to rid Stewart of its World War II era structures, now more than 60 years old, and the civilian-military partnership manifested by the education center under construction and the possible joint library. A new headquarters building, to replace the current structure, could be on the way in the next few years.

"We have seen some significant improvements at Fort Stewart," he said. "Those are perfect win-wins in the public partnership."

There is also a joint use land study under way, to see how Stewart and the surrounding communities can utilize the land available to them.

"It will give us a good look at the encroachment issue," Ratcliffe said.

The most important figures, though, could come from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld as early as next month, when he delivers to Congress the force structure he believes the nation will need in the future. Part of that will be deciding not just what the Pentagon in terms of men and material, but where to best put it. Already, more than 1,000 bases worldwide have been closed or scaled down since the first BRAC. As much as 25 percent of the U.S. defense installations could

MORE

face closing when the final list is submitted in 16 months.

"Secretary Rumsfeld and the Department of the Army have an awesome responsibility to defend this country and meet these global threats against our security," Ratcliffe said. "What is the value of ours or anyone's infrastructure? Those decisions are not going to be easy."

As the Fort Stewart community plots its pre-BRAC strategy, so too are other civilian communities adjacent to major Army installations.

According to the Killeen Daily Herald, some organizers are trying to get another brigade moved to Fort Hood, the sprawling central Texas post that is home to the 1st Cavalry Division and the 4th Infantry Division. Lt. Gen. (ret.) H.G. "Pete" Taylor, a former III Corps commander at Hood and former commander of Fort Stewart and the 24th Infantry Division, said his group, the Heart of Texas Defense Alliance, is trying to get the 3rd Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division currently stationed at Fort Carson, CO, and an Apache helicopter brigade currently based in Germany. The attack helicopter once had been assigned to Hood.

Such an addition would boost Hood's soldier population from 42,000 to 50,000.

Also, last month Fort Hood cut the ribbon on the military side of its joint use of Gray Army Airfield. According to the Killeen Daily Herald, III Corps commander Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz said such a move put Hood in position to gain an Air Force fighter wing.

Georgia's lucky 13?

Though the first four rounds of base closing and realignments, Georgia's 13 bases have been virtually untouched, though Moody Air Force Base was on a BRAC list but eventually removed. Here are Georgia's 13 military bases and the communities nearest to them:

- Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany
- Navy Supply Corps School Athens
- Fort Gillem Atlanta
- Fort McPherson Atlanta
- Fort Gordon Augusta
- Fort Benning Columbus
- Fort Stewart Hinesville
- Dobbins Air Reserve Base Marietta
- Naval Air Station -Atlanta Marietta
- Hunter Army Airfield Savannah
- Kings Bay Submarine Base St. Marys
- Moody Air Force Base Valdosta
- Robins Air Force Base Warner Robins

Gibbons Seeks Base Support

Nellis, Fallon Access To Airspace Could Help Keep Them Open

By Samantha Young, Stephens Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON -- Rep. Jim Gibbons said Tuesday he plans to form a statewide committee to promote Nevada's military bases as the Pentagon begins to review which installations across the country could be shuttered or realigned in the next round of base closings.

The panel will consist of military support groups and local government and business leaders, the Nevada Republican said in a statement.

An aide said Gibbons was out of the country on an Intelligence Committee mission but planned to promote the idea and assemble the committee when he returns next week.

"As the Department of Defense begins its process of reviewing the nation's military needs and capabilities, I want to make sure that the unique abilities, state-of-the-art technology, and critical importance of Nevada's military facilities are well represented," Gibbons said.

Gibbons, who sits on the House Armed Services Committee, said he does not believe any Nevada bases will be in jeopardy during the 2005 round of consolidations, but promoting them "only makes sense."

Defense Department leaders have indicated they would like to cut the military's infrastructure by as much as 25 percent nationwide, which military analysts said could add up to 100 bases.

On Tuesday, the Pentagon requested all base commanders gather information about their installations and forward them up the ladder for the 2005 base closing round, the fifth round of closings and realignments since 1988.

While Nevada leaders express confidence the state's bases will survive intact, some analysts say Nellis Air Force Base may come under increased scrutiny because some features

of its training mission have been adjusted to accommodate Las Vegas sprawl.

Maj. Gen. Giles Vanderhoof, Nevada's adjutant general, said he has agreed to serve on the committee Gibbons is forming.

"We'd rather err on the side of paying attention and caution rather than letting things go and finding out something later," said Vanderhoof, who advises Gov. Kenny Guinn and commands the state's reserve forces.

"If we closed either Fallon (Naval Air Station) or Nellis down, I'm not sure where they'd get training for the pilots, so I'd be amazed if they closed either one of them down," Vanderhoof said.

The committee, to be called Nevada's Military Advocacy Commission, will promote Nellis, NAS Fallon and the Hawthorne Army Depot.

Defense Department criteria released last month indicates the Pentagon will measure the military value of each base, including whether there is enough land available for a base to perform its mission.

Situated eight miles northeast of Las Vegas, Nellis has restricted live ordnance flights taking off from its southern runway as sprawl has crept along the base's southern border.

Pentagon officials also will review a base's role in promoting national security and its level of community support, two factors Nevada leaders say boost the state. Nellis pilots have training access to more than 5,000 acres of mountain and desert ranges and 7,000 acres of restricted airspace.

"The ranges are the big key to the operation of the military in Nevada," said Randy Black, head of the Nellis Support Team, a Las Vegas community group.

"The more you make people aware of how important that is as a whole to our military the better," Black said.

Close Bases And Towns Can Profit

By Jim McMeans, For the Journal-Constitution

Georgia is blessed with 13 military bases, and while all are important to the community in which they are located, not all are crucial to the military readiness of the armed forces, or even to the economic health of their communities.

In several instances, the economic loss if the bases closed would hardly be noticed. In fact, some closed bases around the country have generated additional economic activity for their communities with private or public redevelopment.

With a new round of military base closings coming up, Georgia's political and civic leaders should adopt a program to consolidate within the state by volunteering to move Dobbins Air Reserve Base to Robins Air Force Base in Warner Robins, the Navy Supply Corps School in Athens to King's Bay Submarine Base in St. Mary's, and Fort McPherson and Fort Gillem in Atlanta to Fort Gordon near Augusta or Fort Benning near Columbus.

In each instance, the land where the base is located could be utilized more profitably as some form of private development. For

example, Fort McPherson and Fort Gillem would be valuable additions to the Atlanta tax base as mixed-use residential/commercial developments.

The Navy Supply Corps School in Athens has a beautiful campus that could be utilized for public or private educational purposes or as a residential community. Dobbins would be perfect as Atlanta's second commercial airport, as suggested in an Atlanta Journal-Constitution opinion column last week. ("Dobbins could climb as 'Carter National,' " @issue Dec. 31.)

By following a proactive policy of consolidating within the state, Georgia would do its part to shrink the number of military bases while not losing any material or economic benefits and protecting the economic interests of the less-developed sections of the state.

The federal government compensates communities that lose military bases, and the state should do likewise. Combined with a more profitable use of the land, the affected communities should not suffer any long-term economic loss.

Jim McMeans lives in Watkinsville.

Cutting Military Bases Should Begin In Europe

By Michael J. Martin

The battle of the base closures should be happening in Europe, not America. While visiting my daughter in Germany, a lieutenant in the Army, I had the opportunity to visit several Army "concerns." They do not call them bases or forts, for whatever reason, and they sure were a concern to me.

It turns out we have hundreds of concerns for the Army, Air Force and Navy in Germany alone. Some are the size of the Navy School here in Athens, and some are the size of Ft. Stewart. Each is complete with PXs, movie theaters, dorms, gas stations, gyms, grocery stores and more. They are little American islands that take only U.S. currency and create jobs for the local Germans who have grown weary of our presence. Our pilots are now restricted to narrow flight corridors at certain times, guidelines which hamper training. Land convoys are broken up and plaited around local

traffic, which is very congested almost all the time in Germany. So why are we there?

After World War II, Germany wanted us there, fearing the Soviet Union's intentions. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, Germans view our soldiers as more an occupying force that should go away. I personally believe America needs bases in Europe, but someplace friendlier to our mission. One country - Poland - stands out from all the others.

To my knowledge, we have no bases located in Poland, and they have expressed interest in providing us with that service. They have a lot of open land and the jobs provided would be most welcome.

Closing American bases should be the last resort for the military complex. European concerns that have outlived their intended purpose should be the first on the chopping block.

Overall JSF Buy Unaffected By Near-Term Cut, DOD Says

By Amy Butler

The Defense Department said that plans to realign \$5.1 billion from Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) procurement to development will curb near-term purchases, while the projected bottom-line buy remains in tact.

The Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and United Kingdom's Royal Air Force are planning to buy more than 2,500 of the Lockheed Martin [LMT] F-35 fighter jets to replace numerous aging airframes in their existing fleets. Some analysts predict international sales will eventually reach 5,000. JSF is the largest procurement program in Pentagon history, and it has enlisted the participation of eight allied nations, so changes in the program are closely monitored by allies.

Officials at the F-35 Joint Program Office maintain that overall production quantities are left intact notwithstanding the recent decision. "It might appear that we have reduced the number to be built, but this production has been deferred beyond the current FYDP," according to talking points released by the program office.

Acting Pentagon acquisition chief Michael Wynne issued a statement that the budget decision reflects "our current best budgetary estimate." He added that the Pentagon finds this "problem to be very solvable within our normal parameters of design fluctuation, and we have taken steps necessary to manage these issues."

Pentagon Comptroller Dov Zakheim Dec. 22 redirected funds in the JSF program from the procurement account into the research and development line. Problems containing weight on the platform prompted cost growth in the system development and demonstration phase (SDD) of the program. SDD cost has increased from \$33 billion to \$40.5 billion, a boost of about 22 percent.

Additionally, the complications have cost the SDD phase a one-year "extension," according to program budget decision No. 737. The additional time will allow engineers to continue "design work" and to mitigate "known

risks." Consequently, the first low-rate initial production contract for the conventional-takeoff-and-landing Air Force variant and the short-takeoff-and-landing Navy version will slip from FY '06 to FY '07. Nonetheless, officials feel they have reached a "higher-confidence risk adjusted cost estimate," according to the document.

Zakheim reduced short-term aircraft buys (through FY '09) by 70 airframes, including 35 each of the short-takeoff-and-landing variants for the Marine Corps and the conventional-takeoff-and-landing version for the Air Force. This change lowers production from 160 through FY '09, the PBD said. A total of 164 aircraft is cut from SDD through FY '13, however.

Incidentally, the budget decision also freed from JSF accounts more than a half-billion dollars--\$235 million for the Navy and \$314 million for the Air Force--for use in other programs in FY '06.

Although JSF is a massive program for Lockheed Martin, analysts are predicting the delay and cost overrun will not have a dramatic effect on the company's bottom line. The Pentagon is sticking to its procurement numbers, so a big hit to Lockheed Martin is not expected as a result of this decision.

The news drew little reaction from Wall Street. The company's stock has fallen slightly during the week, well less than 1 percent. In a research note on Tuesday, Soundview Technology Group defense and aerospace analyst Howard Rubel said delaying the purchase of fighters is unlikely to materially impact earnings or revenues and maintained his outperform rating on the stock.

Any potential impact on foreign participants in the program is also unclear.

As a "level 1" member of the JSF program, the United Kingdom is fully integrated into the program's management. It is unclear what effect the delay will have on the U.K.'s buy profile. The profile is expected to be resolved in 2006 with a production and sustainment memorandum of understanding.

Congressional Panel To Explore JSF Software Issues

By Sharon Weinberger

The House Government Reform Committee expects to hold hearings this year to determine whether the Lockheed Martin [LMT] F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is too reliant on foreign software, according to a congressional source.

The concern, according to the source, is that the JSF--which has been hailed as a model for international cooperation--could be dependent on foreign software for integral parts of the aircraft's computer system. The General Accounting Office is preparing a report on the issue and expects to brief committee members in about three to four weeks, the source added.

The panel's subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations, chaired by Rep. Chris Shays (R-Conn.), frequently holds hearings looking into the status of weapons acquisition programs. Over the years they held hearings on Lockheed Martin's F/A-22 aircraft. Although its members cannot directly influence the congressional defense budget process, which is handled by the congressional defense authorizers and appropriators, its reports and recommendations often find their way into the defense bills.

The subcommittee has been particularly active on the JSF issue. Last year, subcommittee members raised concerns about the management of the JSF program when the GAO reported the program lacks incentives for foreign participants to share the burden of future cost growth and requires stronger management and oversight (Defense Daily, July 22). Another GAO report

to the committee last year highlighted possible problems with the JSF acquisition management.

The subcommittee's decision to look at the foreign software issue is part of a broader concern about foreign software development, according to the source. The panel wants to know if the JSF is "overly reliant on foreign software" and what effect that could have on the availability or security of the software.

Britain, Canada, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Turkey and Australia are all formal partners on the JSF program. Israel is also involved as "security cooperation participant." While the countries each provide funding for the JSF, it is up to Lockheed Martin to choose subcontractors, including those in foreign countries, to perform work on the aircraft.

The GAO expects to finish its report in March or April, at which point the subcommittee will hold a hearing on the issue. "If we find something that we feel is detrimental to the program, we may write a report to Armed Services Committee, which has direct oversight," the source added.

News of the hearing comes amid lingering concerns over the program's weight and cost.

As part of the hearing, the panel may also incorporate recent news of the cost overruns associated with the JSF.

"This program was supposed to the model that would prevent all of these cost overruns," the source said.

Sikorsky To Rely On U.S. Firms In Bid For Marine One Project

By J. Lynn Lunsford

In a bid to keep a European-designed helicopter from becoming the next Marine One transport for the U.S. president, United Technologies Corp.'s Sikorsky Aircraft Co. said it will rely on U.S. companies to build its latest version of the chopper, removing work from several international suppliers.

Sikorsky, whose helicopters have carried all U.S. presidents since Dwight Eisenhower, will replace partners in China, Taiwan, Spain, Japan and Brazil on this particular version of its new S-92 helicopter. The international partners will continue to build large portions of the civilian version of the helicopter, Sikorsky said.

Since May, Sikorsky has lobbied for its twin-engine helicopter against a three-engine one designed by Agusta-Westland, a joint British and Italian helicopter company. Seeking to position itself as a U.S. company selling a U.S.-made aircraft, Agusta-Westland teamed up with Lockheed Martin Corp. and Textron Inc.'s Bell Helicopter on the project and named Lockheed as the prime contractor. For this competition, the company changed the name of its helicopter to US101 from EH101 and said the helicopter's U.S. content will be at least 65%.

Besides giving Sikorsky the ability to tout 100% American content, an all-U.S. team reduces the risks associated with relying on foreign suppliers for long-term support of the presidential fleet, a Sikorsky spokesman said. The new team includes Vought Aircraft Industries Inc., Flight Safety International Inc., Rockwell Collins Inc., L-3 Communications Holdings Inc. and Northrop Grumman Corp. General Electric Co. will supply the engines for both competitors.

During a news conference, Sikorsky President Steve Finger said he believes the

Sikorsky team should win on its merits. "When you look at the entire package -- technology, safety, performance and experience -- there is no other choice for America's leader," he said.

Steve Ramsey, the Lockheed vice president in charge of the US101 proposal, said Lockheed isn't concerned about Sikorsky's strategy. "We believe the question is not what is the right domestic content, but what will provide the best capability for the president."

People familiar with the Marine One competition say that until recently, it would have been unthinkable that a foreign-designed helicopter would be a permanent part of the fleet that carries an American president. But that tradition could fall by the wayside because of British Prime Minister Tony Blair's staunch support of the president's Iraq agenda.

By Pentagon standards, the Marine One contract is small potatoes -- about \$1.6 billion to supply as many as 23 helicopters -- but the prestige could translate into gains in a depressed civilian market. Both competitors hope to sell versions of their helicopters for executive transportation.

The president's distinctive green-and-white helicopter fleet is part of an elite Marine Corps helicopter squadron known as HMX-1. The primary aircraft for presidential use is the aging, 73-foot-long Sikorsky VH-3, which first entered service in the early 1960s. The choppers ferry the president between the White House and Andrews Air Force Base, where Air Force One is kept, as well as other places.

The Navy's Naval Air Systems Command, which is supervising the competition, said the competing proposals are due by Feb. 2. A winner is expected to be named in May. The first operational helicopters are expected to be in service by the end of 2008.

U.S., U.K. Launch Effort To Provide 'Seamless' Naval Fire Support

By John T. Bennett

The Pentagon and U.K. Ministry of Defence plan to spend a combined \$7.5 million over three years to bolster the two countries' ability to "seamlessly" provide naval fires in support of coalition ground forces, U.S. and U.K. defense officials tell Inside the Pentagon.

During the Coalition Naval Fires program, officials will attempt to develop a digital interface between U.S. and U.K. fire control systems and iron out wrinkles that hamper coordination among American and Royal Navy surface vessels, officials leading the effort said.

Under the scope during the multiyear initiative will be several U.S. systems, including the Naval Fires Control System and the Army's Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System. Program officials also will test the United Kingdom's sea-based Land Attack Naval Command and Control Environment and its ground-based Joint Effects Tactical Targeting System.

NCF program coordinators would like to pattern the interface after a U.S. component that links the NFCS and AFATDS platforms, according to NCF program documents obtained by ITP.

"We have a plan-based approach that looks at . . . U.S. systems and some U.K. systems [to] see how that might affect things like Sea Power 21 and joint and coalition forces," said Wayne Perras, sea trials director at the Navy's Warfare Development Command, during an expeditionary warfare conference last October. The Navy's Sea Power 21 initiative is Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark's three-tiered future vision for the service.

The ability to shift time-sensitive target information from ship to ship -- no matter what flag they are sailing under -- would allow U.S. and U.K. warships to provide fire support for ground units from either nation "because one country's ship may be in a better position than the other country's," said Joe Francis, land attack program manager at the Naval Surface Warfare Command's Dahlgren, VA, division. Increased interoperability will bring "more

resources" to coalition forces and allow U.S. and U.K. warfighters to "mass joint fires," he added.

The NCF program was established after Navy acquisition executive John Young and U.K. Ministry of Defence officials signed a memorandum of understanding last June, Francis said. Under the tenets of the agreement, the Pentagon will devote \$3.5 million to the effort, with the U.K. pitching in the remaining \$4 million, he added.

U.S. and U.K. defense officials finalized a draft concept of operations for the program during a joint conference last month, Francis said. Those CONOPS will serve as the guideline for a series of experiments aimed at producing the desired interface, he said, adding the document is "too sensitive for release."

A final version of the CONOPS likely will be completed by "the end of March," U.S. and U.K. sources said this week.

The program will be split into three one-year segments, Francis noted.

During the first phase, which kicked off last September, the two nations will attempt to put in place an interface "that is sufficient for interoperability requirements definition for the U.K. [JETTS] acquisition, and to establish and de-risk" the effect the U.S. Navy-employed NFCS platform will have "on U.K. ships' combat systems," according to a NCF document detailing the program's objectives.

"This interface is to include the provisions for multilevel security to ensure that releasable data at the appropriate classification are available for timely coalition operations," it states.

Those interfaces -- digital tunnels through which information would pass -- are needed to fill current "gaps" between U.S. and U.K. systems, George Vongas, NCF program manager at the U.K. Ministry of Defence Science and Technology Lab, said during a Jan. 6 interview. Under current frameworks, American and British forces lack "an effective way to work together" on the coordination of ship-based fire support, Vongas said.

MORE

To prove any developed interfaces are effective, program coordinators will hold a series of experiments during the initial phase of the effort, according to documents and sources.

Those experiments will call on a U.S. Navy expeditionary strike group, or a Royal Navy battle group of similar size and construct, to absorb an allied vessel into the group and provide “time-sensitive” fires to halt or delay the progress of “an enemy brigade moving to attack marine forces -- U.S. or Royal Marine -- ashore,” Francis said. For example, a U.S. strike group composed of one Wasp-class amphibious assault ships, a future CG(X) cruiser and two Arleigh Burke-class destroyers would link up with a U.K. surface combatant, exchange target data and send fires ashore.

The scenarios assume Marine Corps troops would be communicating with the strike group via the AFATDS system, with their Royal Marine counterparts requesting fire support via their country’s JETTS platform, according to a CNF experiment concept outline document.

The second phase of the program is slated to get under way around the beginning of fiscal

year 2005, with program officials aiming to add systems, broaden the scope of the developed interfaces and begin work on a “collaborative mission plan,” Francis said. Early plans also call for program officials personnel to focus on a number of security requirements during phase two, including the exchange of sensitive information.

The final phase is scheduled for a FY-06 start, a yearlong effort that will feature the incorporation of “larger effects” than fires from ship-based guns that will be the focus of the earlier two stages, U.S. and U.K. officials said.

In addition to bolstering joint fires, the results of the program likely will be used by U.S. officials to help define joint requirements for future vessels and programs, including the Navy’s FORCEnet initiative.

While the program’s charter is for three years, NCF officials intend to transition the effort to U.S. Joint Forces Command’s joint experimentation directorate, Francis said. JFCOM personnel have participated in the early stages of the effort, Francis noted, calling directorate officials “working partners.”

U.S. Picks Lockheed To Develop Multiple-Warhead Interceptor

By Jonathan Karp

The U.S. government, pushing to begin deploying a national missile-defense system this year, chose Lockheed Martin Corp. to develop a multiple-warhead interceptor designed to complement, if not eventually replace, the program's current single-missile interceptor made by Raytheon Co.

The Missile Defense Agency contract awarded to Lockheed Martin Space Systems Co. has a maximum value of \$768 million over eight years; the initial payment is \$27 million. Lockheed Martin's task is to develop a system capable of destroying multiple ballistic missile warheads with a single launch. So-called "miniature kill vehicles" are carried by a single booster vehicle and deployed to collide in space with incoming warheads and decoys.

Raytheon's interceptor has just one kill vehicle per booster. Critics of the Bush administration's Ballistic Missile Defense System program have said that the shield is penetrable by missiles with multiple warheads and decoys. Similarly equipped antimissile missiles, provided the concept works, could allay such concerns.

"This is the next-generation model of missile defense," said Doug Graham, vice president of Lockheed Martin Space Systems, in Sunnyvale, Calif. He described the technology as a "potential game-changing capability for missile defense." Lockheed Martin said its system could prove more efficient and cost-effective.

The contract effectively returns Lockheed Martin to a segment of the defense industry -- missile interceptors -- that it helped pioneer but more recently has been dominated by Raytheon. Raytheon, of Lexington, Mass., and Boeing Co., of Chicago, were members of separate losing teams bidding for the latest missile-defense contract.

Raytheon's interceptor will be used initially for the ground-based antimissile defense system. "Raytheon's kill vehicle will be used for a long time," said Rick Lehner, a spokesman for the Missile Defense Agency. Lockheed Martin's project is a "new concept" that "may be an upgrade to the existing kill vehicle."

Both Raytheon and Lockheed Martin have contracts for the sea-based arm of the missile-defense system.

Missile Defense Booster Test Set For Tomorrow

By Sharon Weinberger

After several delays, the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) is set to test Lockheed Martin's [LMT] three-stage booster for the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) element of the Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) tomorrow.

The test--designated Booster Verification-5 (BV-5)--was delayed from a scheduled launch in December after a number of problems were identified, including a fault reading in the ground support equipment (Defense Daily, Dec. 16, 18). Additionally, two manufacturing process-related accidents in August and September at United Technologies' [UTX] Pratt & Whitney missile propellant-mixing site in San Jose, Calif., also delayed testing of the Lockheed Martin booster (Defense Daily, Nov. 19).

Friday's test will involve launching the Lockheed Martin booster from Vandenberg AFB, Calif. Similar to other verification tests, the booster will have a "mass simulator" that mimics the weight and dynamics of the Raytheon [RTN] Exo-Atmospheric Kill Vehicle (EKV). The Lockheed Martin booster will not be tested with the real EKV until Integrated Flight Test-13A, which will probably not take place until early 2005, according to MDA spokesman Rick Lehner. IFT-13A will be a non-intercept test and there is no definite schedule for when the Lockheed Martin booster will be used in a full intercept, he added.

The Lockheed Martin booster was at one point scheduled to be part of 2004 deployment of 10 GMD interceptors in Alaska and California, although MDA has now decided to use a booster supplied by Orbital Sciences [ORB]. BV-6, which used the Orbital booster, flew over the summer.

The two companies' boosters are roughly similar in capability, according to MDA, although the Orbital booster is slightly faster. MDA argues that despite the delays in the Lockheed Martin booster, the Pentagon's strategy of using dual suppliers for key missile defense systems is proving useful.

Phil Coyle, the Pentagon former chief tester, has a more critical view of the current situation. "When I was in the Pentagon, they were supposed to be finished in the year 2000, then 2001, and now it's going to be 2004," he said. "Depending on how you count it, they are at least three years behind now."

The problems with the Lockheed Martin booster are troubling because of the head start the company originally had over Orbital. "Not only has Lockheed fallen way behind--depending on how you want to count--almost a year behind, but Orbital hasn't been working on this for so long," he said.

The Pentagon is preparing to deploy a limited missile defense capability later this year. Under the current plan, MDA will have six Ground-based Interceptors (GBI) at Ft. Greely and four more at Vandenberg.

NAVRIIP Leaders Revisit The E-2C T/M/S To Find Successes

By Adolph A. Mitchell, Naval Air Systems Command Weapons Division Public Affairs

POINT MUGU, Calif. (NNS) -- Leaders of the Naval Aviation Readiness Integrated Improvement Program (NAVRIIP) returned to Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC), Point Mugu, Calif., in early December to observe improvements for the E-2C type-model-series (T/M/S) since their last visit in October.

During the last visit, 102 barriers to E-2C readiness were identified across four systems – radar; identification, friend or foe; joint tactical information distribution system and nose landing gear door assembly. Immediately, 20 barriers were resolved by the local Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD) and subsequently, 50 others were resolved. The remaining barriers were either solved by the type commander, program managers and support staffs, or the return on investment was determined miniscule.

Since then, the support for each squadron has also increased due to the implementation of the “Relevant Information For Leadership” (RIFLe) philosophy. RIFLe incorporates the Theory of Constraints, and works to alleviate the impact of bottlenecks within the operations process. By horizontally integrating stovepipe logistics, RIFLe evaluates procedures at the operational level for improvements that will employ less effort, fewer resources and increased effectiveness.

“The results have been outstanding,” said Cmdr.Carolynn Snyder, Point Mugu AIMD officer-in-charge. “We have a 50 percent decrease in items waiting for repair, a 75 percent decrease in due in from maintenance items, and our average customer wait time has decreased from eight days to one and a half days.”

“One of our major success stories is radar communication (RADCOM) availability,” said Snyder. “RADCOM was one of the first barrier removal teams (BRT) launched, because it affected two other systems and only had an average of 30 percent availability. The BRT identified over 45 barriers and removed each

one resulting in an increase to 95 percent availability. This increase allowed for overall radar ACWT (average customer wait time) to decrease by 15 days.”

Hosted by NBVC and Capt. Roger Jaskot, Commander, Airborne Early Warning Wing, Pacific Fleet, the NAVRIIP leadership group, lead by Vice Adm. Wally Massenburg, Commander, Naval Air Systems Command, toured the Point Mugu AIMD and Aircraft Supply Department to meet with Navy and civilian personnel in the shop spaces. The leaders spoke with maintainers throughout the work spaces to collect feedback on readiness solutions implemented over the past year, and to learn of unique readiness improvements initiated.

Since the last visit, no new barriers to readiness were identified. The fleet maintainers have been using the process improvement tools to continually increase AIMD readiness rates by analyzing the current procedures to make necessary adjustments.

“One of these best things that NAVRIIP has done is get all of the players in the Naval Aviation Enterprise talking to each other and focused on the same issues,” said Snyder. “Rather than a number of disjointed and fragmented initiatives, there are now a smaller number of focused, resourced and researched efforts to tackle the T/M/S readiness issues.”

“Since the NAVRIIP visit a year ago, we gained insight on how to determine the appropriate number of trained manpower, and we learned how to locate the primary cost drivers that were preventing us from achieving our goal of getting the right quantity and quality of fleet members we need at the operational level,” said Jaskot.

“The sea/shore rotation at Point Mugu is limited, and it is sometimes difficult to get the people we need,” said Jaskot. “The squadron is trying to enhance opportunities for maintainers to rotate to Point Mugu, as well as to ensure that they receive the proper training before their assignment begins. Ultimately, we’re trying to achieve the optimum number of aircraft ready

MORE

for training and operations (A-RFTO). The NAVRIIP process has helped us to get closer to achieving the proper entitlement,” Jaskot continued.

A specific example of the NAVRIIP process is the recent resolution of the E-2C shipping barrier that was identified during the previous visit to Point Mugu.

“In the past, the shipping process caused damage to the engines. We suffered financially as well as lost maintenance time,” said Jaskot. “We built a container which will be incorporated into the delivery system this year to prevent the engines from being damaged.

“Engines have a direct effect on A-RFTO availability. By eliminating unnecessary workloads caused by damaged engines, we improved overall aircraft cost-wise readiness,” continued Jaskot.

Jaskot and other wing officers have shared cost-wise readiness initiatives and goals with their staffs.

“We are aligning to the CNO’s construct to have the right amount of aircraft and the right amount of manpower for each specific task. We are utilizing the appropriate supplies and training for the mission,” concluded Jaskot.

Massenburg reiterated the importance of identifying cost drivers to increase current and future readiness.

“NAVRIIP is a program designed to make fundamental process changes to the way the Navy provides manpower, equipment, maintenance, supply and training to stateside naval aviation commands between deployments,” said Massenburg. “NAVRIIP’s focus is expanded to expedite the development and implementation of cost-wise solutions to readiness barriers as Naval Aviation changes its processes.”

Missiles From Microbes

The US Office of Naval Research (ONR) is hoping that microbes will reduce the costs of producing a missile propellant, and in the process, lead to a new age of 'bioproduction.'

With funding from ONR's Green Synthesis of Energetic Materials program, microbiologist John Frost and his team at Michigan State University created strains of microbes that convert certain types of sugars into a non-natural synthetic material, called butanetriol. The Navy depends on the slightly yellow liquid to produce the propellant BTTN (butanetriol trinitrate), which is used in some missiles, including the Hellfire.

Biologist and ONR program officer Harold Bright initiated the green project three years ago when he learned that chemists at the Navy Surface Warfare Centre in Indian Head, Md, couldn't afford adequate supplies of chemically-produced butanetriol. To fill the gap they use nitroglycerin, which is less expensive but more sensitive to physical shocks and temperature changes.

Currently, butanetriol costs \$30 to \$40 per pound, and together the Navy and Army purchase about 15,000 pounds per year. If the costs could be reduced to \$10 or \$15 per pound, Indian Head estimates the services' demand could rise to 180,000 pounds per year, replacing

nitroglycerin in a number of current and new applications.

Bright added: 'This is a biology-unique process that in terms of environmental cleanliness and costs, chemists cannot match. Eventually, this 'green' production method will be applied to other materials, as we move away from petroleum-based processes that are environmentally 'dirty' and therefore expensive.'

The researchers at Michigan State manipulated the DNA of Escherichia coli and Pseudomonas fragi so that the bacteria would act like mini-factories, producing butanetriol as they go about their normal life functions. This process is 'at the cutting edge of both civilian and military science,' explained Bright.

In contrast to the high-pressure, high-temperature chemical process to produce butanetriol, the microbes require only air, sugar, and salts in a warm-water environment. Once they've produced the butanetriol and lived out their lives, they are killed and then disposed of in a standard municipal sewage treatment facility.

As an added bonus, butanetriol is also a precursor to two cholesterol-lowering drugs.

'This is a classic example of dual use for molecules between pharmaceutical and defence applications,' concluded Frost.

Implant Sciences Gets \$1.7M Navy Contract For Bomb Detectors

The U.S. Navy has awarded Wakefield-based Implant Sciences Corp., a developer of products for national security, industry and medicine, a \$1.7 million contract for the delivery of three production-ready Quantum Sniffers, the company's handheld, portable trace explosives detection device.

Upon completion of the contract and the successful testing of the three devices, the company says, it expects to be ready to accept orders for the production and sale of commercial units. The equipment was designed to detect six specific explosives from their vapor alone, with sensitivities equal to or greater than the prototype the Implant Sciences developed under a previous U.S. Navy contract.

Once deployed, the equipment is intended to provide protection of U.S. forces against terrorist homemade explosives by providing the AntiTerrorism/Force Protection and Physical Security personnel the ability to quickly

determine the presence of or confirm the absence of trace amounts of explosives in personal articles, personal equipment, packages, postal mail, and cargo that may be conveyed by persons, vehicles, watercraft, and aircraft entering U.S. controlled areas or routes.

“This new contract, which represents a follow-on award to our successful U.S. Navy R&D program, will accelerate the building of a production line to deliver a large number of handheld units for deployment by our U.S. Forces,” said Anthony J. Armini, president and chief executive officer of Implant Sciences, in a statement. “This \$1.7 million, plus the nearly \$3 million in cash currently on hand, should be more than adequate to accomplish this goal, as well as maintain working capital for normal operations.”

Implant Sciences stock opened at \$14.49, down 8 cents from yesterday's close.

Financial Predators Target Armed-Forces Families

U.S. troops are not only under attack in Iraq and Afghanistan; they're being ambushed at home by predatory lenders in communities near army, air force, and naval bases, according to a recent study.

"There's an interesting divergence between the glowing pro-military rhetoric we hear about service to our country and the way our military men and women are being treated at home by these abusing businesses," says Steve Tripoli, co-author of the National Consumer Law Center report on businesses that victimize members of the armed forces and veterans.

Military men and women are plagued by fast-cash lenders who advance small sums until payday and levy exorbitant fees and interest rates as high as 900 percent per year; used-car dealers who sell and finance overpriced junkers; and "title pawn" lenders who use a borrower's car title as collateral for high-priced short-term loans. Some lenders require borrowers to postdate their checks, and if a check bounces, a lender may keep redepositing it electronically, piling on insufficient-funds fees, which could boost the cost of a loan by hundreds of dollars, says Capt. Dave Faraldo, director of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society serving the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Fla.

Yet another scam lures former military people into selling their veteran's benefits. One vet received \$80,000 in exchange for 10 years of his benefits, worth \$300,000, according to the law center study. An NCLC analysis requested by Congress concluded that such deals are illegal under federal law.

Shady lenders prey on low-income consumers in general, but military personnel are prized targets: They're generally young, are often unsophisticated about money matters, and are paid without fail by U.S. government check, Tripoli says. Faraldo notes that they're also often strapped for cash: New recruits earn a base pay of only \$12,700 per year. It's easy for a borrower to fall behind. When that happens, the lender approves a new loan to pay off the old one--adding still more fees and interest.

Because commanders routinely warn of such rip-offs, victims tend to remain quiet, so their exact numbers are unknown. But the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society headquarters says it bailed out some 300 people last year to the tune of \$275,000. "That's just the tip of the iceberg," says retired Adm. Jerry Johnson, former president of the society.

Low-income consumers who need a loan should apply at legitimate banks and credit unions. Small, short-term signature loans (available in many states) and even pawnshops have much lower rates than payday loans, according to surveys by Consumers Union. For military personnel and retirees, relief societies will provide interest-free loans and grants in emergencies.

Banks and states have had limited success in controlling payday lenders; Congress seems unwilling to address the problem. For more information, visit www.consumersunion.org/i/Financial_Services/Pay_Day_Loans/index.html.



When Staff Sgt. Kevin White and his wife, Linda, of Murrieta, Calif., bought a used Ford Taurus in 1999, a dealer near Camp Pendleton told them that the best loan he could offer had a 23 percent annual percentage rate. "I said, 'You're joking, right?'" Linda recalled. The Whites had already arranged financing from their military credit union--with a 6.9 percent APR.

Still No Pay For Military Contract Workers

By Allison Connolly

With the national terror threat level at orange, security around military complexes is tight. But the contracted security guards at the Lafayette River Annex in Norfolk, a military headquarters building housing two admirals and a captain, have more on their minds than terrorists.

“When you come through the gate, you see someone who hasn’t been paid in a month,” said Larry Heath, a Virginia Beach resident and security guard with Excellent Commercial Cleaning Inc., which helps the military police guard the gates of the complex.

ECC, which supplies custodians and groundskeepers to military installations, has not paid its approximately 300 workers since Dec. 1.

ECC’s chief executive officer, Kevin L. Watson, said he has not been able to make payroll because he and the Navy are in a dispute over a \$760,000 contract from two years ago, which has caused him to fall behind in paying his bills.

The situation remains unchanged this week, as Watson works with the Navy on an agreement.

Also, the U.S. Department of Labor has stepped in to try to see that the workers are paid as soon as possible.

And so the employees, who have been told they will get paid once an agreement is reached, continue to show up for work – some logging 12-hour days – in hopes that they will get paid soon.

In the meantime, Christmas and New Year’s have passed without pay.

“Not receiving a check for a month, do you know how stressful that is?” said Heath, who has worked for ECC for 14 years. “It’s time to make the mortgage and make the payment on the truck.”

He and another co-worker, who has worked there as long as Heath, are trying to keep up the morale of the other workers so they don’t walk off the job.

They hope that if they keep working, the company will use the money from the contract to pay the workers. They also fear that if they walk away now, they will never get paid what they’re owed.

But it’s not easy to convince people to keep coming back, especially for the two single mothers Heath works with.

One of them, Julia Plummer of Portsmouth, has her car payment, insurance, rent and electricity and water bills due.

She couldn’t buy Christmas presents for the three children in her home or for friends and relatives, and she is having trouble buying basic groceries.

“If I borrow money from people, I can’t tell them when I can pay them back,” she said.

Heath has had to borrow money from friends, but he said he doesn’t want to.

He is trying to get a second job to make up for the loss of his first paycheck. “I don’t know how long I can last like that,” he said.

Employees say they haven’t been told what’s going on. Watson said he is keeping them informed as much as he can but is reluctant to make statements about when they will get paid because he doesn’t know.

He said that he is not being paid either, nor are his family members who also work there.

“My personal opinion is that it will be resolved by Jan. 15,” he said, referring to the next scheduled pay date. Watson said it’s all in the government’s hands.

“We’re working with the Department of Labor and the Navy on this, and it should be resolved any day,” he said.

A spokeswoman for the labor department said labor consultants are working with the company to find money to pay the workers. “We are working diligently to try and resolve this and get the company to pay their employees,” said spokeswoman Kate Dugan.

The company has not filed for Chapter 11 protection from bankruptcy, Watson said, and he continues to consult with his attorney, whom he declined to name.

Blue Angels Drop In To Plan Show

Cherry Festival To Pay \$90,000

BY Vanessa McCray

TRAVERSE CITY - Glance around - it doesn't look like the National Cherry Festival.

There was no sun Tuesday and not a fresh cherry to be found. Snow, not tourists, piled up on the downtown sidewalks.

Just the same, a Blue Angel jet thundered into Traverse City.

That's right. They're back.

The roar of jets, a festival show stopper, will return to town July 3 and 4 for the popular air show.

"What better way to celebrate the Fourth of July?" said Susan Wilcox Olson, festival spokeswoman.

The festival has budgeted nearly \$90,000 to bring in the U.S. Navy Blue Angels, which includes the costs for hotel stays and jet fuel, Wilcox Olson said. She predicts attendance at this year's festival will increase significantly. Last year, despite several rainy days and no Blue Angel shows, about 500,000 people showed up.

Tuesday, two pilots touched down at the U.S. Coast Guard station in Traverse City to plan the show.

The Blue Angels will open the 78th annual National Cherry Festival, which they've done every two years since the mid-1980s. The last time the stunt pilots were in town, vibrations from one of the jets shattered several glass windows downtown.

Wilcox Olson said in 2002 the right set of "atmospheric conditions" were at work when the window of Watermelon Sugar, a downtown shop, broke. She said the festival has no plans to change anything about the air show.

"It certainly has not been a long-running issue," she said.

Watermelon Sugar shopkeepers said more people are downtown when the stunt pilots perform, and that it doesn't bother them at all that the Blue Angels will return.

Camille Parker of Traverse City loves the excitement of the festival, especially the Blue Angels. She has worked at a Front Street store for three years, and clearly remembers seeing the pilots perform for the first time.

"When they would do their practice, I could see the blue of his eyes - well, I'm joking," she said. "But almost."

Pensacola Naval Hospital Is Site Of Emergency Response Training

From staff reports

The Navy Medicine Office of Homeland Security is at the Pensacola Naval Hospital this week to provide a disaster preparedness/vulnerability analysis training and exercise program.

The three-day visit, which began Wednesday, aims to strengthen the command's emergency preparedness status through the identification of vulnerabilities, targeted training and exercise of the command's emergency preparations, said Greg Rodrique, emergency preparedness officer.

The program is being conducted at every military treatment facility under the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

A team of homeland security experts is providing training and surveying the facility. In addition, the Navy medicine homeland security team is providing training for members of the Escambia and Santa Rosa County Health Departments, the Escambia County Sheriff's Office, the Gulf Coast Veterans Administration, the regional Federal Coordinating Center from Biloxi, Miss., and the FBI. Other response agencies also will attend a chemical, biological,

radiological, nuclear and explosives table-top presentation on Friday.

"In the event of a natural disaster or terrorist attack, many people will depend on the staff of the Pensacola Naval Hospital to respond effectively," said Capt. Richard L. Buck, commanding officer. "We have an obligation to make sure we are prepared to provide care under any circumstance. To do so, we have an emergency management plan in place and colleagues who work hard to make it the best plan possible.

"What we learn and practice may save a life," Buck said. "Readiness is our mission, and that includes our readiness for contingencies at home as well as in any theater of combat."

Pensacola Naval Hospital has a dual mission to provide health care for its military and extended families as well as to deploy in support of the Navy and Marine Corps.

The hospital's contingency arm, Fleet Hospital Pensacola, was deployed most recently in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and there are Naval Hospital personnel supporting Navy medicine interests throughout the world.

Navy Enlistee Denied Attacks, Court Is Told

The Suspect Is Accused Of Raping One Woman After Abducting Her From An Oxnard Beach And Of Assaulting Another In Port Hueneme.

By Tracy Wilson, Times Staff Writer

A Navy enlistee accused of raping an 18-year-old college student after kidnapping her at gunpoint from an Oxnard beach told detectives he engaged in consensual sex with the woman after they met at a nightclub a week earlier, according to court testimony.

Lealon Johnson, 27, who worked at a dental clinic at the base in Port Hueneme, denied forcing sex on the alleged victim and told detectives he fired, at her request, a round from his gun while she performed oral sex on him inside a public restroom. "He said it was consensual," Det. Robin Whitney testified Wednesday during a preliminary hearing on rape, kidnapping and sex assault charges in Ventura County Superior Court.

Whitney testified that during a police interview Johnson initially denied engaging in any sexual relations with the woman, but later characterized the Sept. 19 encounter as consensual.

The woman offered a starkly different account, however.

She told Det. Sharon Giles that she and a male companion were confronted by an armed man, whom she did not know, as they sat in the woman's truck at Kiddie Beach. The woman told Giles the stranger demanded money, then ordered her from the vehicle and into a nearby public restroom where he forced her to perform oral sex.

"She was afraid he was either going to harm her physically or shoot her," Giles said.

At one point, the assailant fired a round from the gun, leading the victim's 19-year-old male companion to fear she had been killed, the detective said.

As the friend drove to a police station, Johnson allegedly forced the victim into his car and drove to an unknown location where he raped her. The woman told Giles she fled after the assault and sought help at a pizza parlor.

Johnson, who has pleaded not guilty, was linked to the alleged rape on Oct. 25, the same day a woman stationed at the base reported a similar assault to Port Hueneme police.

The woman, 22, testified Wednesday that she and a male companion were confronted by an armed man while mixing drinks behind a liquor store at Ventura Road and Channel Islands Boulevard.

She said the assailant, whom she identified in court as Johnson, demanded money and then led the couple down an alley where he held a gun to her head and forced her to perform oral sex. She said Johnson threatened to shoot her companion, also an airman at the base, if she did not comply.

The assailant later fled on foot, leaving a car behind in the parking lot that authorities matched through motor vehicle records to Johnson.

Port Hueneme police contacted their counterparts in Oxnard the same day and advised detectives they had a suspect in custody who may be linked to the Kiddie Beach incident. It was at that point that Whitney and Giles interviewed Johnson, who denied that a rape had occurred.

According to Whitney, Johnson also denied sexually assaulting the woman in the alley.

During Wednesday's hearing, Johnson's attorney did not contest the criminal charges. But he challenged the credibility of the female airman by establishing that she and her companion intended to sneak alcohol back onto the base in violation of military rules. The woman also acknowledged that she was under investigation by the military for allegedly cheating on a test.

Johnson was held to answer 11 charges, including rape, forced oral copulation, robbery and kidnapping. A trial date is expected to be set this month.

ASSOCIATED PRESS 06 JAN 04

U.S. To Host Conference On USS Liberty

WASHINGTON - The State Department will cast a spotlight next week on the 1967 Israeli attack on the U.S. spy ship Liberty where 34 American servicemen were killed.

Israeli, Arab, British and Canadian diplomats have been invited to attend a conference Monday and Tuesday at the department's Henderson auditorium.

A. Jay Cristol, a former U.S. bankruptcy court judge who has written about the incident, will be a featured speaker.

The two-day conference involves the release of historical research on the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

David Saterfield, a deputy assistant secretary of state, will deliver the keynote address.

Critics of Israel have cited the attack on the Liberty in questioning strong U.S. support of Israel and Israel's allegiance to the United States.

Last October, a former U.S. Navy attorney who helped lead a military investigation into the incident said in a signed affidavit that then-President Lyndon Johnson and his defense secretary, Robert McNamara, ordered that the inquiry conclude the incident was an accident.

Retired Capt. Ward Boston said Johnson and McNamara told those heading the Navy's inquiry to "conclude that the attack was a case of 'mistaken identity' despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary."

Boston said he felt compelled to "share the truth" following the publication of Cristol's book, "The Liberty Incident," which said the attack was unintentional.

The USS Liberty was an electronic intelligence-gathering ship cruising international waters off the Egyptian coast on June 8, 1967. Israeli planes and torpedo boats opened fire on the Liberty in the midst of what became known as the Israeli-Arab Six-Day War.

In addition to the 34 Americans killed, more than 170 were wounded.

Israel has long maintained that the attack was a case of mistaken identity, an explanation that the Johnson administration did not formally challenge. Israel claimed its forces thought the ship was an Egyptian vessel and apologized to the United States.

After the attack, a Navy court of inquiry concluded there was insufficient information to make a judgment about why Israel attacked the ship, stopping short of assigning blame or determining whether it was an accident.

Serious Charges May Be In Store For Sailor Arrested In Fatal Crash

By Nancy Montgomery, Stars and Stripes
YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A USS Kitty Hawk petty officer second class involved in a fatal car crash Monday may be charged with a serious offense and could face trial and possible imprisonment in Japan, if an investigation into the crash determines he was negligent or reckless.

Joel Beza, a 23-year-old electronics technician, was in “pre-indictment custody” at the Yokosuka Pretrial Detention Facility following his arrest Monday night, according to Yokosuka police. Lt. Cmdr. Marc Boyd, a spokesman for the Seventh Fleet, said he could not confirm the sailor’s name but did say that he was in Japanese custody.

The sailor has been assigned to the USS Kitty Hawk since June 2000, Boyd said.

“We have no information as to when or if he’ll be turned over to U.S. authorities,” Boyd said Tuesday.

Japanese police said their preliminary investigation indicated the car driven by Beza apparently ran a red light and smashed into a car driven by Kenichi Kinoshita, a 64-year-old security worker from Yokosuka city. Kinoshita died of chest injuries at a local hospital about an hour later, according to Japanese police.

Kinoshita’s family, reached by telephone Tuesday, declined to comment.

“Our hearts go out to the families involved,” Boyd said.

The collision occurred at an intersection on Route 16 near the Mabori-Kaigan neighborhood, about six miles south of the base, police said.

A third car stopped at the light, containing a Japanese citizen who works at the base and his 8-year-old son, also was struck, apparently when the force of the collision pushed Kinoshita’s car into it. The boy, Akinari Okamoto, was treated for a chest injury at a local hospital but was expected to recover within two weeks, according to police. His father, Tetsuya Okamoto, 33, was not injured.

Additionally, one of Beza’s two passengers, Petty Officer 3rd Class Brendan McLaughlin,

23, of the USS Kitty Hawk, was treated at the base hospital for facial lacerations, according to police.

Boyd noted Wednesday the two passengers had returned to the Kitty Hawk.

Although indications were that alcohol did not play a factor in the crash, police said, Beza still may face serious consequences if investigators believe the crash was caused by negligence, such as speeding or ignoring traffic lights.

According to Japanese police, possible charges include “professional negligence resulting in death or injury” and reckless driving. The maximum penalty for negligence causing death is five years in prison. For reckless driving, the maximum penalty is 10 years in prison.

The investigation could take some time, however.

“The Japanese are very thorough. They don’t usually take something to trial unless they have a strong case,” said Jon Nylander, a spokesman for Naval Forces Japan.

Japanese authorities may take jurisdiction of any potential criminal case off base under the status of forces agreement, or SOFA.

Generally, in all but the most heinous crimes, such as rape or murder, the Japanese return pre-trial custody to U.S. military authorities, Nylander said.

In turn, the United States agrees to make suspects available for trial if an indictment is handed down and agrees to ensure U.S. servicemembers do not leave the country.

“A lot of times they’ll do their questioning, and the person is returned to us. We’ll have the person go about their military duties until they have to stand trial, if they stand trial,” said Cmdr. Ben Clancy, judge advocate for Naval Forces Japan.

In 2002, the last year for which data were available, 314 traffic offenses were reported involving U.S. servicemembers in Japan, according to statistics provided by United States Forces Japan. Those included speeding, DWI and professional negligence resulting in injury

MORE

or death. But just half of those reported, or 157, led to indictments. Conviction rates were not available.

In October, a 29-year-old petty officer from Sasebo Naval Base was sentenced to 34 months in prison after being convicted of “death or bodily injury through negligence” in a fatal crash in April. Petty Officer 2nd Class Berry John Gibson was found to have been going 75 mph when he hit a car carrying a 46-year-old Sasebo woman and her 18-year-old daughter, killing the woman and seriously injuring the teen. It also was determined that Gibson had drunk alcohol, although the role that alcohol played in his charge or sentence is unclear.

Japan has harsh penalties for causing a fatal crash while drunk: The maximum is 15 years in prison.

If Beza is indicted for a crime in connection with the crash, the United States will pay for a Japanese defense lawyer to represent him at trial, Clancy said.

Additionally, the United States may have to pay any civil claims filed in connection with the case. In an average year, the United States pays almost \$3 million to Japanese citizens who file on average 325 claims for damages, a USFJ spokeswoman said in 2001 following a fatal car crash near Misawa Air Base in northern Japan.

“The claims process is certainly out there,” Clancy said. “Civil litigation could go on for an extended period of time.”

Hana Kusomoto contributed to this report.

Shrine Game Is It For Academy Players

SACRAMENTO -- For a number of players in Saturday's East-West Shrine Game, they see it as a stepping stone to unfathomed riches and heightened popularity in the NFL.

For Ryan Kent and John Skaggs, it's taps on their football careers.

Kent, an Army defensive back, and Skaggs, a Navy punter, will play their last game at SBC Park. In the summer, they begin defense of their country.

Academy life is unlike other collegiate gridiron settings because of rigid military discipline from sunrise to sunset. Football practice, in some ways, is a relief for cadets and midshipmen from their daily training.

While visiting the handicapped children at Shriners Hospital on Monday, Kent and Skaggs discussed the intense world of academy football, plus the Army-Navy game rivalry, patriotism, and a possible future life-or-death existence in a two-on-one conversation with staff writer Dave Newhouse.

Q. When you two left high school, Ryan in Woodbury, N.J., and John in Cantonment, Fla., did you have many Division I football offers?

Kent: My offers were Division I-AA pretty much. Army was my opportunity to play Division I football.

Skaggs: I had some looks from Middle Tennessee State and South Florida, but they never offered scholarships. When Navy came across, I jumped at the opportunity.

Q. How patriotic were you two before entering an academy?

Kent: As far as the Army-Navy game, I didn't even know it was college players who played. I just thought the academy was good for young people to give back for what our country stands for and what it fights for, and that it would give me a good opportunity later in life.

Skaggs: I pretty much laughed when I got my application to sign up for the school. I thought that I'm just not cut out for this thing. It took some talking from my family and friends to consider it, so here I am.

Q. How patriotic are you now?

Kent: Definitely I'm more patriotic. You have to be patriotic to lead soldiers into battle. But I still don't think that everyone should have

to serve in the military. It should be voluntary. That way, you get the best soldiers.

Skaggs: I'm a great deal more patriotic. Everyone around you is gung-ho, motivated about the USA. I want to be a part of this. Serving the country gives you an excitement. I'm the guy who's going to be fighting people, taking care of this country. That gives you pride.

Q. Your academy training coincided with 9/11. Did that change your mind-set, since you have a five-year military commitment ahead?

Kent: I'm not sure about my career decision. I'm pretty much going into the Army and see how it works for me. As far as the type of enemy we're fighting, I have no control over that. But leadership gets the soldiers motivated and focused on whatever mission may come whatever time of day it is.

Skaggs: Like Ryan, I'll have to see when that (career decision) comes. But every war has been different. You used to have front lines shooting at each other. This (terrorism) is really a new war for us. I do think it's going to be a lot tougher

because it's an invisible enemy. You don't know if the guy you pass on the street may be a radical who, the next day, may blow himself up on a bus. So it's not just training the military, but the American people.

Q. Do you two envy the other Shrine players who experienced college football in a less-intense environment?

Kent: The first two years of West Point are very difficult. My freshman year, there were questions about whether I was going to stay. But it was the best decision I made to stay. I'm not envious of these guys. I didn't have the opportunity coming out of high school to play at Florida or Notre Dame. To be honest, if Notre Dame came knocking at my doorstep with a full scholarship, I'd probably be at Notre Dame right now.

Skaggs: Some days, if you had a hard day at school and you have to go practice, you wonder why you're doing this. But looking back, you're just making excuses for yourself. Maybe these other guys have it a little easier, but I wouldn't have it any other way. Maybe I'm a little envious, but this is a school that offered

MORE

me a chance to play football. And I'm the kind of person that once you start something, you finish.

Q. Do West Point and Annapolis get along?

Kent: We have no reasons to dislike each other. On the football field, you don't hate the other person. It's nothing personal. I have so much more respect for these guys (at Annapolis) than other teams because they're doing exactly what I'm doing. Half these other guys, they've already graduated from school. They don't go to class. They don't do anything.

Skaggs: Truthfully, the Army-Navy game is one of the cleanest games you'll see in football. We have the same respect for them they have for us. We knock one guy down, we help him up. That's what's going to happen when we get in the real world. We'll have some operations where Navy guys will have to send some Army guys on shore. You can't have this hatred.

Q. So how special is the Army-Navy game as a rivalry?

Kent: The reason it's the biggest rivalry in sports is we have so much more than two academies interested the day of the game. The entire U.S. Army and U.S. Navy sit down and watch the game. Some are in the States, some are overseas fighting for the country. They have bragging rights for an entire year. To represent them is a tremendous honor.

Skaggs: All four years I've been at Annapolis, we've had freshmen running down the hall yelling "Beat Army." So every day, you hear "Beat Army" about a thousand times.

Q. How does this, your last game of football, feel?

Kent: To me, it's a good opportunity to come out here and meet guys from other schools, to have fun. The chances of me going to the NFL are slim to none. So this is one more opportunity for me to represent Army.

Skaggs: It's going to be sad. I'm going to be playing for all the seniors on my team (at Navy). I'm taking all of them on my back.

Q. Where you're going next, it could be a life-or-death situation. How do you look at that?

Kent: Obviously, it's an opportunity to make my parents and family proud. Being able to lead soldiers, it's something I've anticipated for the last four years. For me it's a reality I'm looking forward to. It is life and death, but in my opinion we have the best military in the world, the best training, the best enlisted soldiers. With those guys behind you, you're not concerned about life and death. You have the confidence you're going to survive. And, more importantly, to accomplish whatever mission is out there.

Skaggs: We're going into the real world. You might kill someone. And someone else is trying to kill you. You look at it as accomplishing a mission. Every day, you have a mission to carry on. As military officers, it will be our mission to finish it. Whether it's giving up an arm or a leg, or if you need to give up your life to accomplish the mission, that's just something we're going to have to do. That sounds kind of scary, but that's what we signed up for. It's part of the package.

Navy SEAL Back Behind The Wheel Of South City Fire Truck

By Justin Nyberg

SO. SAN FRANCISCO -- Gary Kibbee has interesting stories to tell, but most of them are classified.

He has fought in four wars. He is trained in explosives, parachuting, diving and hostage rescues. He can climb rock or ice at night with weapons and quietly cut his way into the side of a hostile ship or building. An expert in weaponry and field medicine, he knows how to take and save lives on the battlefield, and he's done both.

But don't ask him about covert operations in places like South America, or his work with sniper teams, or whether he's been involved with any strikes that made history. And don't expect him to brag.

"When you are young, you have excitement and tension, and at this age, most of the excitement is gone," said the 53-year-old. The thrill is replaced with a deep respect for the struggles of the many strife-torn countries he has been deployed to.

Kibbee, a South San Francisco firefighter, will leave the Navy reserves next month after 33 years as a Navy SEAL and military training guru. He has been back on the job in South City since November, on full payroll.

Kibbee, who drives the Fire Department's ladder truck, made local headlines in absentia last year when his family successfully fought the city to extend his salary while he was away on active duty in the war against terrorism. City policy was to pay the difference between reservists' city and military salaries, but the benefits expired after one year.

In November 2001, Kibbee was activated to serve a year in Afghanistan, and then was extended to serve another year in the Iraq war. Losing his city benefits would have cut his family income in half.

"It was a big deal," he said. "We would have survived, but we would have been selling stuff."

Kibbee said he is grateful for the city's understanding, and plans to stay with the Fire Department for at least another two years, to "pay back" the time the city saved his position for him during his stint overseas.

Kibbee has spent most of his professional life in the more glamorous wings of civil and military service.

He joined the Navy in 1970, attracted by the elite challenge of the Navy SEAL training program. He did reconnaissance and weapons demolition in Vietnam and Cambodia.

He got out of the Navy in 1974 and began training as a firefighter and paramedic, re-enlisting in the Navy reserves in 1978 and joining the South City Fire Department in 1983.

Most of his military career was spent visiting several dozen countries, teaching medical and survival skills to U.S. and friendly foreign troops, as well as doing humanitarian missions.

He served briefly in the 1991 Gulf War, and helped train special operations teams in Afghanistan in 2002. He was part of one of the first strikes of the second Gulf War -- securing two Iraqi oil rigs in the Persian Gulf during the first minutes of fighting.

Kibbee has survived several close scrapes with death, including a cave collapse in Guam where his confined-space rescue skills helped evacuate several fellow explorers. But he says he is not a thrill-seeker and his experience makes him more keenly aware of risk than younger soldiers.

"When you are 20 doing this stuff, you don't think you can get hurt. The older you get, the more you think about it," he said.

Kibbee said he has a traditional sense of patriotism, but also has reservations about the politics behind some of his assignments. However, he takes his duty to serve seriously.

"You spend your whole time hoping you are on the right side of these things," he said. "Taking someone's life you have to live with, and you remember every one."

Kibbee laments the treatment of veterans and wishes more people could witness the sacrifices of troops overseas. He says his exposure to many conflicts has made him question aspects of American life that some take for granted.

"I couldn't do the stuff I just did and come back and buy a Humvee," he said. "You see the death and destruction and all that's going on, and it should make changes in our lives."

Souda Bay's Efforts In War On Terror Earn Navy Honor

By Jason Chudy, Stars and Stripes

After Sept. 11, 2001, things got very busy at Naval Support Activity Souda Bay, Crete.

"My first three months here, I got to go nowhere except work," said Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Otto, who transferred to Souda Bay's port security unit in September 2001. "We were averaging 18- to 20-hour days, seven days a week."

The small Navy detachment of about 700 military and civilians provided security and support for military ships and aircraft heading to, or operating in, the Mediterranean, Middle East and Asia.

The Navy recently recognized the command's work by awarding it the secretary of the Navy's Meritorious Unit Commendation for Sept. 11, 2001, to Sept. 30, 2002.

This award is given to a Navy or Marine Corps unit that distinguishes itself among units performing similar missions. The unit gets a citation and sailors who were with the unit during that time get a ribbon for their uniforms.

According to the commendation, Souda Bay was recognized for providing security for, and supporting, both air and ship operations.

During that time, Navy and Air Force reconnaissance squadrons, five Air Force refueling squadrons, and hundreds of transiting ships were based there.



Courtesy of U.S. Navy

The USS Wasp pulls into Souda Bay, Crete, in March 2002 as members of the base's port security unit sail nearby. Souda Bay was recently awarded the Secretary of the Navy's Meritorious Unit Commendation for its role in operations between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2002.

About 750 Afghanistan-bound flights were refueled by Souda Bay-based aircraft and more than 200 tons of ammunition were moved by ships stopping at the port.

Base executive assistant Bruce Gale, who has worked on base since August 1991, said that Sept. 11 hit everyone hard, but the command had already ramped up both security and operations.

"After the Cole incident, we saw the writing on the wall," he said of the October 2000 terrorist attack on the guided-missile cruiser USS Cole in Yemen. "When 2001 came, we were already there. After 9/11, we went into super-speed."

Otto said that his port security detachment went from about 50 people to 300 and is now down to about 200.

Reservists augmented the active-duty staff, many of whom had previous experience at Souda.

"Some of our security forces had come here for three or four years, two weeks at a time," Gale said. After Sept. 11, he said, "all they did was come to the base, walk to their lockers, change clothes and go to work."