



# NAVY MED NAVIGATOR

## Journey to success

### Headlining in world news...

Bottles of the popular herb ephedra should bear warning labels that the pills can cause heart attacks, strokes or even kill, announces the Food and Drug Administration. The FDA proposal for the warning labels came less than two weeks after a medical examiner announced that the heatstroke death of a Baltimore Orioles pitcher was probably linked to his use of ephedra. To date, the FDA, has linked at least 100 deaths linked to ephedra supplements.

Television networks aimed at and directed by African Americans are on the rise. Two ventures are set to launch this year, and a regional network primed for expansion soon will challenge the supremacy of Black Entertainment Television (BET), the 23-year-old network that has made controversial music videos a cornerstone of its programming. The Major Broadcasting Company network (MBC), considered by some as the most aggressive of the new webs, announced programming changes that would, if implemented, present a serious challenge to BET's ratings, certainly as a newsgathering operation.

### In Navy news...

Rhode Island authorities investigating the West Warwick, R.I., nightclub fire of Feb. 20 have confirmed the death of Chief Machinist's Mate Dan Frederickson of the Naval Submarine Support Facility (NSSF). Frederickson, 37, was one of 97 people who died in the blaze, which began when a rock concert's pyrotechnics ignited flames along the club's back wall. He had been assigned to the Naval Submarine Base New London (SUBASE) tenant command in Groton, Conn., since May 2000. Frederickson aided in the overseeing of intermediate level maintenance on all submarines homeported at SUBASE. A Navy veteran of more than 19 years, Frederickson enlisted in the Navy in September 1983 in his hometown of Elma, Wash.

### In sports news...

The leader of a Ku Klux Klan splinter group plans to demonstrate in support of Augusta National Golf Club's all-male membership during the Masters, whether the club likes it or not. Joseph J. Harper, imperial wizard of the American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, said Friday that he feels equal rights have "gotten out of hand." Harper wrote the Richmond County Sheriff's Department on Thursday, requesting a permit to protest during the Masters in April. Augusta National, a private club that hosts the Masters each year, issued a statement disavowing any group that seeks to use the tournament as a political soapbox.

### Comfort crewmember named MSC Atlantic Sea Sailor of the Year

By JO2 Ellen Maurer  
Comfort Public Affairs

Sixteen years ago, Lambrin Meadows couldn't have even imagined where his life would take him. Growing up in Miami, Fl., Meadows managed to stay out of trouble, but couldn't avoid the law – his love of it. In fact, what he really wanted to be was a lawyer, and when he joined the Navy in 1988, he'd hoped to pursue his dream as a legalman.

However, at the time, the Navy wasn't accepting direct enlistments into the legalman rating. Meadows was told he must become a yeoman first and then put in a package to cross rate. As fate would have it, though, he never requested the rate change.

It seemed that the Navy had put him right where he belonged. He liked being a yeoman and decided to stay with it. He also liked being a Sailor, and 15 years later, Meadows, now a Yeoman 1<sup>st</sup> class petty officer, finds he is having fun sticking with that, as well.

In fact, he hasn't only stuck with the military, he has excelled. Being named Sailor of the Quarter three times during his Navy career -- twice while currently assigned to hospital ship USNS Comfort's administration department-- Meadows was recently named Sea Sailor of the Year for the Military Sealift Command's Atlantic region.

He says he's surprised but taking it all in stride. "I just really love being in the military and having an opportunity to have an impact on others, as a leader and a member of the Navy team," Meadows explains. "I really see the chain of command as a chain; it is only as strong as its weakest link. Being a part of that chain, I strive to be strong and help others to be strong, as well."

Meadows says it's a philosophy he learned from his very first



Photo by JO2 Ellen Maurer

### YN1 (SW) Lambrin Meadows, aboard USNS Comfort underway.

supervisor in the Navy. "Her name was YNCS Melody J. Casale and she always said, 'Whatever it is that you do, do it to the best of your ability.' That really stuck with me."

Carrying those words with him today, Meadows hopes he can pass along his learning experiences to newer Sailors, and also to his son, Taurus, who is now 16 years old. Although he says Taurus probably won't join the Navy – the 6-foot 2-inch and 230 pound teenager's dreams currently linger towards professional football – Meadows says he hopes his son will approach all goals in life with passion and

tenacity.

Meadows own future goals, which now include going up in the Sailor of the Year competitions to the Commander in Chief U.S. Atlantic level, are to transfer to Germany in September to serve with Special Operations Command Europe. Also, since he currently has less than five years left until retirement, Meadows says he's also thinking about what he'll do after he leaves his Navy career. He simply says he's keeping his options open for now.

"I know there is life after the Navy, but I have a job to complete first."

# Comfort departs Diego Garcia, heads north

By JO2 Ellen Maurer  
Comfort Public Affairs

**A**fter a nearly four week stay at the British territory of Diego Garcia, located just south of the equator in the Indian Ocean, US Naval hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) and crew departed the island Feb. 27. Heading north to an undisclosed location, *Comfort* will reposition in support of possible future military contingencies in the Arabian Gulf region.

In a press release generated at the National Naval Medical Center, where *Comfort* when activated draws its largest portion of crewmembers, Navy Medicine officials stated that the ship's augment crew, which could include up to 800 more medical and support personnel, have been given orders to join the ship once it gets into position in its new location.

This is the largest deployment for *Comfort* since the Persian Gulf War 12 years ago.



Photo by JO2 Ellen Maurer

Navy hospital ship USNS *Comfort* left Diego Garcia Feb. 27, heading north to pick up a possible 800 more medical and support personnel, which will bring the medical treatment facility up to full operating status and make the ship capable of caring for up to 1,000 patients.

## Leaving Liberty Behind

## Crewmember named “Number One” in nine-ball billiards tourney

By JO2 Ellen Maurer  
Comfort Public Affairs

**F**or HN Nathan Charboneau, Diego Garcia will be remembered not only for its emerald lagoon and lush tropical foliage, but also for the glorious green of the billiards tables in the hall where he and his Shipmates spent much their liberty time playing the type of “pool” that doesn't require bathing suits and sunscreen.



Photo by JO2 Ellen Maurer

HN Nathan Charboneau shows off his first place trophy from Diego Garcia's double elimination nine-ball pool tourney Feb. 12.

During the nearly four weeks that *Comfort* and crew stayed at Diego Garcia, bonding over billiards was where Charboneau, a food service attendant aboard the ship, wanted to be. Now that the ship has set sail Feb. 27, he and his buddies have to leave the pool sticks behind, though Charboneau isn't exactly walking away empty-handed.

His passion for pool has paid off, earning him the position of “Number 1” among his peers and overall champion at Diego Garcia's double elimination nine-ball pool tournament Feb. 12. Not only did he beat out over 16 other competitors, he bested his biggest competition – fellow *Comfort* crewmember and galley team member, MS2 Luis Vargas.

“Now, I like to call him Number 2 whenever I see him,” says Charboneau, with a laugh. “But I told him during the tournament that because he's a second class (petty officer), that he was doomed to be Number 2...I am still ribbing him to this day.”

Actually, for Charboneau, winning the pool tournament came as quite a surprise. He's never competed in billiards before, though he's played

since he was a kid growing up in the small town of Lebo, Kansas – population 800 people. He says what brought him to the Navy, and ultimately halfway around the world aboard the hospital ship, was his commitment to caring for others. He'd been an EMT in his hometown before deciding to join the military after Sept. 11.

When not deployed aboard *Comfort*, Charboneau is permanently assigned to the Immunizations Clinic at National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) in Bethesda, Md. Also assigned at NNMC is his wife, Melanie, whom he married just four days before *Comfort* deployed Jan. 6 to the Indian Ocean region in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Besides wishing that he could have spent his “honeymoon on Diego Garcia” actually with his wife, who did not deploy aboard *Comfort*, Charboneau also says he wishes the ship had a pool table.

“I was just joking with the guys the last night, asking them if they wanted to shoot a game tonight, even though we obviously can't because we're underway,” says Charboneau.

“But if we get to another port anytime soon, you know where we'll be.”

# CNO thanks *America*

By JOC Walter T. Ham IV  
CNO Public Affairs

**WASHINGTON (NNS)** -- Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark said the unwavering support of Congress and the American people, along with the extraordinary service of Sailors, have enabled the Navy to deploy more ships today than at any other time in the last dozen years.

"We are facing a period of great challenge, (and) also a period of great accomplishment. I couldn't be prouder of what our Sailors our doing today in the world, involved in the global war on terrorism," Clark testified at the Senate Armed Services Committee FY04 budget hearing.

"This morning, 51 percent of our ships are deployed overseas," Clark continued. "Of my 306 ships, 195 of them are underway this morning, six of our 12 aircraft carriers and two-thirds of the amphibious force are carrying the Marines. They're underway in support of the nation's interests, leading the defense of the United States of America away from our shores."

Clark added the continued investment in manpower and current readiness has enabled the Navy to be more focused on future readiness and wars.

"We invest today to support the global war on terrorism and win today's fight -- and we must invest in the capabilities to win tomorrow's fight as well."

The CNO also told the committee investments in manpower have paid dividends in the Navy's fight to win in the war on terrorism.

"We are enjoying, now, the best retention that we have ever experienced in my entire career -- frankly, in our Navy's history," Clark said.

The CNO said the Navy is enjoying record retention today because young people want to make a difference, and the American people and Congress are giving them the support they need.

To read the CNO's testimony, go to [www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/cno/testimony/clark-sasc03225.pdf](http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/cno/testimony/clark-sasc03225.pdf) or for more on the CNO, go to [www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/cno](http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/cno).

## Comfort performs life-saving surgery on civilian crewmember aboard ship

By JO2 Ellen Maurer  
Comfort Public Affairs

Operating room staff members aboard Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) performed surgery Feb. 23 on a fellow civilian mariner crewmember to correct a small bowel obstruction, a condition that could have eventually led to serious complications or even death.

The patient, Joe Shepherd, 66, is a cook who has worked for the Military Sealift Command for nearly 30 years.

According to his doctor, Cmdr. Donald Bennett, MC, Shepherd is doing very well

after the two and a half hour surgery. He is expected to be released from the Medical Treatment Facility aboard Comfort as early as tomorrow and will be fully recovered in about four to six weeks.

Shepherd said he feels great, as well as grateful for the care he's received aboard Comfort.

"I am pretty sure that if I'd been on another ship that wasn't actually a hospital, like this, I might have been in trouble," Shepherd added. "As it is, though, they did a great job and have really taken care of me."

"From the corpsmen to the nurses and the doctors, I think they're all just great."



Photo by LCDR Roy Rice

In one Comfort's 12 operating rooms, Navy doctors, Cmdr. Donald Bennett, MC, (Left) and Cmdr. Ralph Jones, MC, performed surgery Feb. 23 to correct a small bowel obstruction in a civilian mariner who also serves aboard the hospital ship. Comfort is currently deployed to the Indian Ocean in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

## Navy diving teams assist in shuttle recovery

By Lt. John Daniels  
Navy Office of Information Southwest

**LUFKIN, Texas (NNS)** -- As the search for remnants of the Space Shuttle Columbia continue, Navy salvage and dive teams are now on scene to provide assistance searching several lakes in this region of Texas that is normally known only to avid fishermen. The Navy's presence in this extensive effort could aide in finding clues that could bring closure to this national tragedy when Space Shuttle Columbia came apart over the skies of Texas Feb. 1.

Significant and very thorough methods are being used to search an approximately 240-mile by 10-mile path believed to contain shuttle material. Since much of the search area contains lakes, rivers and reservoirs, the Navy was requested by the Federal

Emergency Management Agency to assist in salvage and diving operations.

Using divers from Navy Mobile Diving and Salvage Team 2 from Norfolk, Va., and Naval Reservists from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 2, Detachment 409, from Cleveland, the Navy is the lead agent in the underwater search and recovery efforts.

Also on scene are civilian contractors that operate and analyze data from sidescan sonar being used to map dive sites, and identify and locate potential shuttle material for the divers to recover.

"After the initial survey, it was apparent that the world's best divers would be required to accomplish the mission," said Wilkins, "and the mobile diving and salvage units, and other agencies responded -- in spite of current taskings and requirements in other parts of the world."

# Reflections of Faces

## Comfort celebrates African American History Month

By JO2 Ellen Maurer  
Comfort Public Affairs

USNS Comfort's Multicultural Awareness Committee presented "Faces," a performance Feb. 28 to honor and bring to a close African American History Month. In keeping with this year's theme of, "Walk with Us... a Centennial Reflection," crewmembers portrayed different American heroes, ranging political activist, Malcolm X to astronaut Guion Bluford. Participants also sang songs and recited poetry by Maya Angelou.

"I like to do this sort of thing because it teaches people about history," explains ABHC (AW) Rick Fisher, a crewmember who works in Operations aboard Comfort and is regularly assigned to Pax River. "It reminds us of where we came from and

our past struggles, for blacks as well as whites."

PN3 (SW) Conesa King, who works in Administration aboard Comfort and is regularly stationed in Annapolis, Md., also says that her reason for participating in this year's African American History Month celebration is about passing on pieces of the past.

"I am from Birmingham, Alabama... Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at my highschool; around the corner from my house is where those four children were burned in a church," explains King. "There is so much history in Alabama, and I grew up around that. I feel like I have to be involved in passing on those stories to others, so that we can all remember what our country had to go through to get where we are today."

## Chaplain's Corner Back at Sea

By LCDR Mark Koczak  
Comfort Command Chaplain

It is good to be back at sea. Most of us took advantage of liberty on Diego Garcia. Many of us met with other Navy folks and were able to give tours of the ship.

For most of us older "Salts," 24 days was a long time in port. I spoke to many of you during our time on the island. Almost all of you were ready to go and move on towards our mission.

Oh how it is good to be back at sea. What I missed the most was visiting the whole crew at work. The ship feels right even for those of you that are reacquainting themselves with the term "sea legs." Comfort now breathes again, and even sings. Have you noticed the noise is different in the spaces and on the decks? And the wind -- even in calm seas we generate our own wind. Take some time on the decks and feel it. The stars at night with no lights, so bright you could almost touch them.

There are so many things to observe and do when we go out to sea. The colors of the water, whales off the starboard beam this late morning, and the constantly changing picture of the clouds and sky that surrounds us. This is what moved the hearts and minds of Sailors for centuries.

It is very easy to get wrapped up again in the same old routine. Many devote themselves to their work. Many, after work, spend more time on the computer. We are all training and thinking about our mission. We are concerned about our future Shipmates and our preparation for them. Remember the most important preparation is to greet them with open arms when they arrive.

As we go north, this is the time for thought and reflection. This is the time to move out of the old routine. Take advantage of this time, each one of you. Walk the decks with each other. Watch the sunrise and the sunset; it is always different but always wonderful. Look for that deeper meaning in life.

Take a few minutes each and every day to look at this wonderful place where we live and work.

Yes, it is good to be back at sea.



Photos by JO2 Ellen Maurer



(Above) HMC (SW/FMF) Seconda Hollinger leads the group in the National Negro Anthem.

(Left) Everyone sings along.

(Right) HN Crystal Mitchell portrays the Madame CJ Walker. America's first female millionaire who made her money through hair care products, and spent her success giving back to her community.

(Below) Mitchell plays the face of Mahalia Jackson, "Queen of Gospel Song."



Photos by JO2 Ellen Maurer