

## Teamwork

By Darrel Lockard, OAWU Circuit Rider

As some of you may know I have not one great job but two. Not only do I get to work for OAWU but also in the Navy Reserves. Recently an article in a local news paper in Virginia wrote about The Navy Cargo Handling Force. Now the article below is one version but not with quit all the details. Most of the upper chain of command did not believe this job could be done in the short amount of time and add the fifteen Army lifts on the ship. These fifteen lifts were fifty ton floating causeway sections that link together to form a portable pier or a temporary bridge to cross waterways such as rivers.

The command and control team of the Reserve Cargo Force Five thought otherwise. With proper planning and teamwork we knew that this operation could be accomplished on time or even less. The trick was to pack the ship as close as possible to accommodate the extra causeway sections. The leading command and control brought all of the leadership together and made plans with their input, and then put the plan in play making changes as the sailors seen better ways to accomplish the mission. Bottom line is this job would not have happened as well as it did with out TEAM WORK.

Naval Expeditionary Support Force Answers the call...again

By Abigal Krueger

When Mark Meeter needed someone to on-and-offload more than 1200 containers and almost 200 pieces of equipment from three Fleet Hospitals aboard two Military Sealift Command (MSC) ships, he knew exactly who to call. NAVELSF (Naval Expeditionary Support Force) is the overall coordinator for 95% of the Navy's cargo handling needs. With 12 highly-trained Cargo Handling Battalions (CHB) and two Supply Support Battalions (SSB) hailing from all over the country, NAVELSF has activated and deployed its Naval Reserve personnel more in the last year than most reserve units do in ten. In January, NAVELSF was called to provide cargo handlers in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in Kuwait, a request which came in addition to their normal work of supporting Antarctic missions and moving Fleet Hospitals all

over the world. All of these missions continue today.

This group has been put to the test, but they are always up to the challenge," said Command Master Chief, CMDCM(SW/SS) Tom Cramer. "This is the most dedicated group of reservist I've ever worked with. Since most of the people have already used up their active time for the year, we had to solicit for volunteers for this mission." And plenty stepped up to the plate for what was to be known as Operation Joint Freedom Arch 2003. In fact, 100 reservist from six CHB's and one SSB combined to form one integrated team running under one commanding officer; affectionately referred to its members as the "Freedom Detachment."

"NAVELSF wanted to try something unique to see how well it would succeed in bringing all these different people from battalions together," explained Lt Cmdr. Jeff Murr, evolution operation officer. "It's been a big challenge, but the camaraderie and spirit was fabulous from beginning to end."

Under the direction of Cdr. James McNeal, commanding officer of NCHB-5, the Freedom Det. Began offloading the MSC ship Lt. Col. Calvin P. Titus on Aug. 15, removing 839 containers and 73 pieces of equipment from Fleet Hospitals Three and Fifteen, returns from Operation Iraqi Freedom. Just days later, they were working under Cdr. Bob Frey, NCHB-4 commanding officer, who split the task with Cdr. McNeal due to operational commitments. At this point, Freedom Det. Onloaded 368 containers and 119 pieces of equipment from Fleet Hospital Twenty-Three to the MSC ship American Tern, headed for Okinawa, Japan.

Handling so much cargo in such a short amount of time was demanding enough, but Mother Nature had no mercy on the Freedom Det. For the first few days they operated in brutal downpours and by the end of the week, the sun was relentless, beating down in temperatures reaching 100 degrees.

"When you don't have people who work and play together all the time, it can be a challenge to get them on the same page," said Boatswain's Mate Master Chief(SW) Darrel Lockard, technical coordinator for the operation. "But it was easy with this group. You'd never know they were from

different commands. I threw them all in together and it's gone extremely well."

Yet another obstacle the team faced was the short fused nature of the operation. "Usually we have two or three months notice for operations of this magnitude," explained Murr. "We have our people staying at four different locations because we couldn't find enough room to get them all in one place on such notice."

According to Mark Meeter, logistics management specialist at Fleet Hospital Support Office, one of the greatest accomplishments of Operation Joint Freedom Arch 2003 was the fact that the US Army threw in some of their own equipment to be shipped out at the last minute, a cost-sharing effort that in the long run saved taxpayers nearly \$1.3 million.

It came as no shock to anyone involved that the operation was a success. After all, these reservists have been going above and beyond the call of duty for years.

"We tested the joint ness of our capabilities, which helps validated our training," explained NAVELSF Deputy Commander Capt. Mark Sakowski. "This was totally a reserve team effort, and it's great to see just how much support the reservists offer to the active duty element. The overall success of this mission is a great role model of how the total force works."