

Greetings from Bahrain

NMCB 21 Det Bahrain is a small det. We hit the ground running taking over from NMCB 22 and worked diligently to meet our first set of deadlines.

The soil here in the Kingdom of Bahrain is composed of limestone. We were tasked with setting up tents with floors. Public Works provided us a large hammer drill which is required for installing tent stakes. The process for installing a tent stake; first drill the hole then drive in the stake. The stakes will bend if a hole is not pre-drilled or it just won't go in.

The big tease here is that we can see the Persian Gulf beach; we are not allowed to go to it. When the wind is off of the gulf it's a relief!

We have some good projects here and anxious to get started on the big one. We have been very creative in acquiring items. In the true Sea Bee spirit one day we acquired an air compressor. Where it came from was unknown, until the contractor came and reclaimed his compressor. Until NMCB 21 tools arrived we depended on the US Army for tools. The Army said, "The Seabees accomplished more with nothing than those who had their own tools". We took that as a complement!

We have Wi-Fi internet available at MWR. There is no Baskin Robins Ice Cream here on the base. There was just 1 galley until a second galley came online (it just serves the same food but different). We have representation from all branches of the US Armed Forces here (US Navy, US Air force, Army and US Marine Corp).

The Seabees live in an Alaska tent (the furthest from the heads as you can get). Our big relief is going to the Navy Support Activity (NSA); it has been described as a college campus. However, without the students. The NSA is made up of other coalition forces from other countries.

We receive VIP visitors all of the time. BUCN FerminCastillo received an Admirals coin from a recent visit.



Ramp Ceremonies Deliver a Powerful Message

By CS2 Lee

Kandahar Airfield

Since I have been in Kandahar, I have received many emails inviting all to the Ramp Ceremonies, but it never occurred to me to attend one. I must admit, I did not



know what a Ramp Ceremony was. This past month, it was my honor to

finally attend one. As I walked toward the ramp, I saw many troops from different countries coming to pay respect for the two fallen warriors. I would estimate that about 600 or more troops were there waiting for the ceremony to begin. I could not believe it.

As the ceremony began, the fallen warriors' units marched first and the other services followed. We all stood in formation and marched near the plane and formed two columns. We stood at attention until two military vehicles pulled up slowly towards the end of the formation. As the bag pipes played "Amazing Grace," the color guard entered. Each transfer case was carried by paul bearers from their respective branches.

The fallen Marine was a 19-year-old male and the Army soldier was a 20-year-old male. At such a young age, these men gave their lives for our country. Almost every day fallen warriors arrive at the Kandahar Airfield, and it makes me stop and think about the men and women of NMCB-21.

This is my second time deploying in the Middle East and this experience made me look at this deployment in a whole new way. When you see the flag flying at half mast here on KAF, I would encourage you to take a moment to think about who that flag is flying for. I wish everyone could attend a Ramp Ceremony and have the opportunity to pay respect to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice and reflect on themselves and our situation. It is my hope that when you attend one of these ceremonies, you will be able to share in the new perspective that has impacted me so deeply.

The Hidden Side of “Can Do”

By CECS (SCW) Shute

The Navy Seabee's are world renowned for their heroic construction efforts. From their conception in 1942 to current day the Navy Construction Force leads the way.

There is another Hidden Group of Seabee's that are little known, the behind-the-scenes Seabee they also work very hard fulfilling their mission. These are the support guys, the “In the rear with the gear” Seabees. They are doing a job as important as any of the OF-13 hammer swingers, wrench turners and operators. This team is the Battalions Communications Department (S6), and they are certainly making a name for themselves. This story is about them.

With just under two months in country the Communications Team has set the pace second to none. This team of hard charging IT's, ET's, a BM, and a few OF-13's has been tasked with managing the Battalions communications networking assets in an environment that would make Bill Gates scream. The team of nine working in Kandahar is managing two separate complex communications networks; one through the Army's 86th Signal Battalion and the other through NMCB 21's Navy RDSAT (Rugged

Deployable SATCOM) system. Between the two different networks the team is supporting over 250 users, 120 computers, plus other various networking equipment to maintain communications within country and abroad.

The Communications Team is responsible for such things as Operations and Maintenance of the RDSAT system a 24/7 operation and critical component of communication allowing the Battalion to communicate not only here at KAF but worldwide via satellite. The team is lead by IT1 Jenny Bahamonde along with IT2(SCW) Barnhart, CE2 Irwin and BU2 Bedkowski. They have logged over 100 trouble calls, reimaged 55 laptops, established 8 new DSN lines which also serve the 325 Seabee's with morale calls home. They are currently establishing SIPR access that was never before operating on this system. They have accomplished all this in addition to a 12 on 12 off, 7 day a week watch rotation.

The other half of the Communications Team working and maintaining the main side Army computer network is spearheaded by IT2(SW) Douglas McPeek with his team of ET1(SCW) Hannold, ET2 Clark,



Pictured from left to right - CE2 Christopher Irwin, IT2(SW) Douglas McPeek, BM2 Kevin Tucker, ET2 Thomas Clark, CECS(SCW) David Shute AOIC, BU2 Thomas Bedkowski, ET1(SCW) Brian Hannold, IT1 Jenny Bahamonde, IT2(SCW) Michael Barnhart. Not Pictured - LTJG Lurdes Gil OIC

and BM2 Tucker. Within almost 2 months of being in country, the team has answered over 250 trouble calls, stood up the Navy's INMARSAT (a small deployable satellite system), established 250+ NIPR/SIPR accounts, repaired a Plotter that was listed as un-repairable saving the Battalion \$10,000, reimaged numerous laptops while also managing the Battalions EKMS system.

These professional teams of communicators come from areas located up and down the Eastern Coast of the United States; some have never met prior to deployment. The diversity of the team brings a different type of experience to the team including individual life experiences. Within the group there are Construction Electricians (CE), Information Systems Technologists (IT), Electronic Technicians (ET), a Builder (BU), and a Boatswains Mate (BM). This Team's professional, military, and life experiences go unmatched. They are ready for the next challenge that lies ahead of them. They truly display the Navy Seabees "CAN DO" spirit. Oh Rah!

Not Pictured in the Teams photo is Officer In Charge (OIC) **LTJG Lourdes Gil**. LTJG is a Chemical Engineer at NAVFAC, and resides in Perth Amboy NJ. She has an 11 year old son.

CECS(SCW) David Shute is the Teams Assistant Officer In Charge (AOIC). He is a Safety Advisor with the state of Connecticut's Department Of Transportation. Senior Chief Shute lives in Suffield, CT. His wife (married 23 years) is a Homemaker and they have 4 children.



LTJG Lourdes Gil is the OIC of the Communication Team at Kandahar Airfield (KAF). She is currently on Temporary Assigned Duty (TAD), assigned to the 22nd Naval Construction Regiment (NCR) as the R35, working on future operations for KAF.

ET1(SCW) Brian Hannold is from Rochester, NY. He is a CNC Machinist for XLI Manufacturing. His wife works for Monroe Community College.

IT1 Jenny Bahamonde is from Montclair, NJ. She earned her Business Administration Degree from Upsalla College. She works as an EMT for EVMTS in East Orange, NJ.

IT2(SCW) Michael Barnhart is from Hagerstown, MD and is the Senior Systems Engineer for Promontory Financial Group in Washington, D.C. He has two children at home.

IT2(SW) Douglas McPeck is from Breinigsville, PA. His wife is a Pre-School Teacher at Goddard School in Quakertown, PA. They have 3 boys.

ET2 Thomas Clark is an Electronics Technician for the United States Postal Service. He and his wife have been married 10 years and have two sons. His wife is a First Grade Teacher at Northwest Elementary School. They work and reside in Kinston, NC.

BM2 Kevin Tucker is from Queensbury, NY and has 2 children. BM2 Tucker works as a Computer Network Analyst for the Hudson Falls Central School district located in Hudson Falls, NY.

CE2 Christopher Irwin is a Master Electrician for Monroe County, Rochester NY, where he lives with his wife and son. His wife works as a Law Librarian for the State of New York.

BU2 Thomas Bedkowski is from Elmwood Park, NJ. His wife (married last September), works in publishing at Pearson Education. They have two dogs.



ET1 Brian Hannold is from Rochester, NY. He specializes in radio communications gear and is currently preparing our new MATV's that have just arrived in Afghanistan. He works closely with the 22nd NCR to make sure tactical vehicle communications are ready for future operations.

NMCB 21 Role in HAMKARI

By ICSC (SS) Modzelewski



Hamkari means cooperation in the Dari language. The pronunciation I have heard used is "HAM-CAR-EE". Many of the NMCB 21 upcoming and current construction projects directly support Hamkari. The military

members who are part of President Obama's 30,000 troop surge will appreciate our completed projects and create efficiency in getting troops in/out of Kandahar Airfield (KAF) and help establish security within Kandahar Province.

What is Hamkari?

Hamkari is an Afghan Government-led initiative to better connect the Government with its people; to listen and respond to their needs; and to deliver improved security, governance, and economic opportunity to the people of Kandahar.

Hamkari is a combined Afghan and its civil-military effort to extend security and governance across Kandahar Province and to improve the lives of the people of Kandahar.

Overseen by Afghan President Karzai, the process of increasing security and improving the effectiveness of governance is key, as Kandahar represents a critical component in the ongoing



insurgency and its success will help underpin long term stability for all of Afghanistan.

Unlike the Central Helmand Province operation, the military portion of Hamkari did not start with a decisive "D-day." Kandahar City is not under Taliban control and does not need to be recaptured. The effort has already begun through multiple shuras (consultations), conferences and the level of activity will continue to expand throughout the coming months.

Security will incrementally expand in Kandahar City – bringing about a rising tide of security. Afghan forces will be partnered with International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) counterparts, greatly enabling their effectiveness and growth.

Hamkari is - and will continue to be, complex and challenging - and tough days lie ahead for both military and governance efforts.

At the end of each day, take pride in your job skills; labor; sweat; because the troops and people of Kandahar/ Afghanistan appreciate what NMCB 21 is doing!

A famous quote from President John F. Kennedy on 1 August 1963 at the US Naval Academy;

"I can imagine no more rewarding a career. And any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile, I can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction: 'I served in the United States Navy.'"

Sources: Various

Thank You!

MRC (SCW) Bruce Watson, 3M Maintenance Coordinator, from Iowa, received 1,000 Boxes of Girl Scout Cookies through the "Iowa's Bravest Program".

NMCB-21 Thanks America's Heartland for the GENEROUS donation of cookies thru the Girl Scout Project Cookie Share program.



News You Can Use

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FOB Spin Buldak

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FOB Ramrod

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Balad/Whiskey:

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Balad/Whiskey Det
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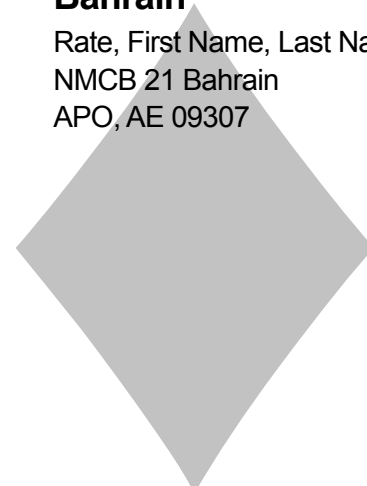
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Free Packaging Materials

The USPS has a program for military family members and friends to supply them with packaging materials to send packages to troops overseas, Sailors on ships, etc.

Call 1-800-610-8734 and select option #1, then #1 again. Ask them for the "Military pack." They will send you 8 boxes, tape, packaging materials and labels.

They will also give you an I.D. number so if your supply runs low, just call them up and they'll send you more supplies. The materials take about 4 to 10 days to receive.

For more information on mailing items to Service Members, visit the [USPS FAQ page](#).

Free Gym Memberships

Spouses and children of deployed service members may receive a free gym membership at the YMCA.

Visit your local YMCA for more information.

Announcing New Fathers and Grandfathers!

The following Seabees have celebrated recent additions to their families. Congrats!

BU2 Bassett
BU1 Duffalo
HM3 Tamayo
LT McSweeny



BU3 Gibson
BU3 Kubieck
EA3 McKinley
EOC Van Boxel

Project Group Photo Contest

NMCB 21 is in search of the best project group photo. The winning photo will appear in the Cruisebook and the photographer will receive recognition in the Newsletter and Cruisebook.

If you are interested, please submit your photos to Ensign Gillman, debra.gillman@afghan.swa.army.mil, or EO3 Kelley, shannon.kelley@afghan.swa.army.mil ASAP.

Have News to Share?

Is there an announcement you would like to make in the Blackjack Buzz? Send information such as births, graduations, or other major milestones to EO3 Kelley at shannon.kelley@afghan.swa.army.mil and we will include it in the next Newsletter.

Photo Submissions

If you would like to submit any pictures for the Blackjack Buzz or Cruise book, please send photos to EO3 Kelley at: shannon.kelley@afghan.swa.army.mil.

Please send JPEG format only.

Suggestions for the Blackjack Buzz?

If you have any ideas or topics you would like to see covered, contact our Public Affairs Staff:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Ensign Gillman: debra.gillman@afghan.swa.army.mil | ● | EO3 Kelley: shannon.kelley@afghan.swa.army.mil |
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| HM3 Parr: mistyheaven.parr@live.com | ● | UT3 Daniel: leslieann.daniel@asab.afcent.af.mil |

DEPLOYMENT 2010



Pouring concrete at Mustang ramp



Thank you for the care packages!



Frankie says "Relax!"



"That scale was way off!"



At work in the Alpha yard



Do I look fat in this?



Toby Keith performed for troops at KAF.



A few Seabees became Groupies for a night



Constructing tension fabric structures



Flying over an Afghan village



BU1 Amato speaks with a BBC reporter at Mustang ramp



Builders unite!



A very trusting man...



**Bigger and better offices,
thanks to our Builders!**



You might be a redneck...



**CM1 Carter complaining
about not being in the
Newsletter**



**SWA hut construction at
KAF Mustang ramp**



**Memorial Day ceremony
in Kuwait**



CS2 Allen sounds the bell



**Seabees at attention
during the Memorial Day
speech**



Get back to work



**Seabees get a taste of life
at Sea**



May I help you??



**SW2 Eberly welding in
the OPLATS**

NMCB 21 Awards

Congratulations to the Seabees who received awards in May.



UT1 Gochel
April Sailor of the Month
Kandahar



EO2 Marziotto
April Junior Sailor of the Month
Kandahar



MASA Cook
April Bluejacket of the Month
Kandahar



CM1 White
Sailor of the Month
Kuwait



SW3 Jenks
Junior Sailor of the Month
Kuwait



BUCN Melioris
Bluejacket of the Month
Kuwait



UT1 Cabrera
Sailor of the Month
Det Whiskey Iraq



UT3 Punia
Junior Sailor of the Month
Det Whiskey Iraq



BUCN Hicks
Bluejacket of the Month
Det Whiskey Iraq



EO1 Yargeau
Sailor of the Month
Det Bravo Iraq



CE2 Null
Junior Sailor of the Month
Det Bravo Iraq



CMCN Pimm
Bluejacket of the Month
Det Bravo Iraq



BUCN Krawczyk
Seabee Combat Warfare pin



CMCN Magjuni
Seabee Combat Warfare pin



BU2 English
Seabee Combat Warfare pin



MR1 Robinson
Seabee Combat Warfare pin



HMC Fortier
Seabee Combat Warfare pin



CMDMC Cassidy
Letter of Appreciation
2010 Active Duty Fund Drive



HM2 Buxton
Navy and Marine Corps
Achievement Medal



IT2 McPeck
May Junior Sailor of the Month
Kandahar



CMCN Jones
May Bluejacket of the Month
Kandahar



CE2 Gannon
Seabee Combat Warfare pin



EO1 Williams
Navy and Marine Corps
Achievement Medal



CM1 Moats
Navy and Marine Corps
Achievement Medal