



MERIDIAN FALL 2007

Magazine of the National Naval Officers Association
"Gateway to Success!"



MAJ. GEN. Gaskin one of the highest ranking Blacks in the Military

Major General Walter E. Gaskin, commander of the Multi-National Force West in Iraq, was interviewed by NPR on what it means to be an African American serving in his current role. **Maj. Gen. Gaskin was asked how being an African American has helped him reach out to the different ethnicities in Iraq:** "I think when we said that we learn cultural experiences in order to better understand the Iraqis,

having had a cultural experience myself, having been in a minority, having had the chance to really realize that you are a leader of all regardless of color, background, and being able to talk to the Iraqis just with the proper respect and dignity based on who they are instead of where they are, where they live, and what their circumstances are, I think that experience has helped me well. And I *Story continued on page 7*

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ON THE COVER: RAMADI

RECONSTRUCTION: U.S. Army

Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, commander of Multi-National Corps - Iraq, points out a location to Army Col. John Charlton, commander of the 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, and Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Walter Gaskin, commander of Multi-National Division - West, in downtown Ramadi, Iraq, June 25, 2007. The commanders are touring the city to gauge reconstruction and security operations. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Curt Cashour



Leaders," targeted junior officers of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. I am pleased to announce that overall general attendance was more than 360 attendees including 112 junior officers. This record attendance represented a 150% increase over last year's conference.

I would like to especially acknowledge the superb work of Capt. Don Flowers, NNOA Western Region Vice President and the San Diego Chapter lead by Capt. Rod Walker Cmdr. Tyrone Gilmore and Lt. Cmdr. Jason Merriweather for their outstanding performance and efforts in making this conference a grand success. Additionally, congratulations to Lt. Cmdr. Merriweather for his recent selection to commander.

Conference lectures and professional development training were designed to address diversity issues that impact the Sea Services, and highlight tools to equip junior and senior officers for a successful career. Other lectures encompassed a broad range of topics including work life balance, financial planning, and successful transition planning.

Additionally, a "Youth Day" program was held for 141 children (ages 6-16) to expose our youth to the opportunities available in the Sea Services. The Youth Day program was highly successful and we plan to make this a standard feature of future conferences. A special thanks to Ms. Deloris Hall, and CWO4 Jerry King for their supporting in making the Youth Day program a success.

Conference topics and lectures included but were not limited to the following: Minority Recruiting Challenges, Surface Warfare Enterprise - Diversity Initiatives, Flag Officer Panel, Women's Forum - Awareness of Career Pitfalls, Senior Enlisted Panel - Expectations of Leadership, FITREPs/Promotion Boards/Career Management, U.S. Navy Diversity Concept of Operations, Mentoring and diversity from the senior officer perspective, Naval Academy admissions, NROTC scholarship, Financial Planning, Spouse Workshop - Entertaining - Basics & Beyond.

This workshop was especially meaningful and worthwhile for the spouses because of participation by the spouses of both the CNO and CMC (Mrs. Mullen and Mrs. Conway).

One-on-one and group mentoring sessions conducted by senior officers provided excellent opportunities for career advice and networking. Survey results of junior officers attending the conference documented that the mentoring sessions were an overwhelming success and we plan to incorporate additional mentoring sessions in the 2008 conference.

VIPs in attendance: the Honorable "BJ" Penn (ASN I&E), the Honorable Charles Tompkins (former ASN

Greetings from the President:

Thank you for your continued support of NNOA and most recently your support of the 35th annual conference. The conference theme "NNOA, Developing America's Future

M&RA), Adm. Mike Mullen, Adm. Thad Allen, Gen. James Conway, Vice Adm. Ann Rondeau, Vice Adm. John Harvey, Vice Adm. Terrance Etnyre, Lt. Gen. Ronald Coleman, Vice Adm. Mel Williams, Vice Adm. Sam Locklear, Vice Adm. Thomas Kilcline, Vice Adm. (S) Adam Robinson, Vice Adm. (S) Andy Winns, retired Vice Adm. Walt Davis, retired Vice Adm. David Brewer, retired Vice Adm. Ed Moore, Rear Adm. Derwood Curtis, Rear Adm. Len Hering, Rear Adm. Joe Kilkenny, Rear Adm. Arthur Johnson, Rear Adm. David Pekoske, retired Rear Adm. James Johnson, Rear Adm. Cecil Haney, Brig. Gen. Angela Salinas, Brig. Gen. Anthony Jackson, Rear Adm. Christine Hunter, Rear Adm. Bruce Grooms, Rear Adm. Joe Mulloy, Ms. Cynthia Miller (SES-NSA), Ms. Terri Dickerson (SES-CG), Dean Steve Latta (USNA), Mr. Curtis Odom (SES-CG) and Dr. Jill Stein (NETC).

Detailed conference highlights can be viewed at the NNOA web site www.nnoa.org.

Professional Development Common Themes:

Good leadership is the key to a successful career.

Leadership can be learned. Some tenets of leadership principles are easier to understand and apply than others but every one of them can be acquired.

Performance trumps everything! This was repeated throughout the conference. Master your profession. Take the hard jobs and do well. Do your homework.

Mentoring, mentoring, mentoring was a common theme. Participants need to have a diverse group of mentors to gain varying perspectives on reaching career goals. Organizations such as NNOA, ANSO etc. help junior officers find mentors. As stated earlier, officers were given the opportunity for one-on-one mentoring by Flag and General officers.

Sit on promotion and administrative boards as a junior officer as soon as possible. Sitting on a board will help you differentiate degrees of performance - good versus bad.

Check your service record. Be a fanatic about your service record; check it often and know what it means to have a good or bad record. Have others review your record. Ensure that there are no gaps.

Never stop learning. Seek residential Professional Military Education (PME), Joint Professional Military Education (JPME), and/or a graduate degree. Your education should never stop.

You can have a family AND a career with a significant support system. DOD is emphasizing cultural immersion programs

Seek command early and often. Expand your leadership skill set - take care of your people by listening to them and empowering them. Learn to take calculated risks and don't be afraid to fail.

Nearly 300 attendees participated in the annual awards banquet. The banquet honored the "visionaries" of NNOA. Retired Vice Adm. David Brewer delivered an inspirational tribute to the "visionaries", recounting how they influenced his career. Adm. Brewer acknowledged the courage and leadership of Adm. Mike Mullen to make diversity one of his priorities. Adm. Mullen delivered the keynote address and he stressed the importance of diversity as a strategic imperative and the role of NNOA in "Developing 21st Century Leaders." Adm. Mullen also emphasized the importance of engaging with our youth as soon as possible (K-8) to ensure access to diverse talent. Adm.

Diversity of Thought



By CAPT Sinclair M. Harris

Diversity is natural to the Navy when you consider the number and type of missions, skills, assets, and talents that exist in most of our units. Look at the typical operational group with its mix of rates, ship and aircraft types. Be it offensive strike or humanitarian assistance/ disaster relief operations, the Navy-Marine Corps Team comes ready to contribute across a very wide variety of missions because of our inherent diversity.

Navy diversity is not limited to our ability to the conduct of military missions, but is also evident in our warfighting concept development process. For the past 26 years, a group of senior officers-called the Strategic Studies Group (SSG)-have come together in Newport to research a broad topic of the CNO's choosing. Over that period, the group's mission, focus and composition has change, yet consistent throughout has been its

diversity.

For the past twelve years, at one level the group has been composed of nine Fellows (Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard O-6s); 12-14 Associate Fellows (O-1 to O-5 from all Services chosen from students at the Naval War College and Naval Postgraduate School); and 7-9 Scientists/Technologists/Analysts (GS-12 to GS-15 civilians or equivalent from DOD labs). The real diversity of the group can be measured from several perspectives including military service, warfare community, professional experience, rank, gender, age and race. The result is broader and deeper examination of the CNO's topic from a wide set of perspectives.

Diversity of military service, warfare community and professional experience. Members of the SSG come from all Services and the civilian world. While most of the SSG come from the Navy-Marine Corps team, there are also officers from the Coast Guard, Air Force and Army. They come from Aviation, Surface, Subsurface, Engineering Duty, Human Resource and other communities. They come from the Active and Reserve Components. Drawing from the many different communities (each with

their own culture) brings many different views on how to approach a challenge and provide a solution.

The mix of military and civilian expertise reduces the tendency toward 'group-think' that can stifle an organization's innovation.

Diversity of rank:

From concept research and formulation to proposal and development, the SSG works diligently to encourage open-mindedness. "Good ideas know no rank." When this is achieved, it brings out a plethora of ideas and discussion. The energy of the junior officers is combined with experience of more seasoned decision-makers to produce warfighting concepts that are not bound by the typical restraints that hinder most organizations.

Diversity of gender, age and race: The Group's membership is a

mix of men and women, young and old that spans the demographic spectrum of the nation and the Navy-Marine Corps team. This mixture provides yet another ingredient to add a wider perspective on any issue. This diversity adds to the variety of experiences that each individual member brings

to the group and increases the richness of the process.

There is clearly inherent operational

and warfighting value in diversity of all types. As a result, the Navy-Marine Corps team is a naturally diverse organization in terms of the composition of assets, talents and thinking. The SSG is an example of the Navy's commitment to and the value of diversity of thought.



NNOA 35th Annual Conference: CNO Urges NNOA to Look to Future

By Petty Officer Alexis R. Brown

SAN DIEGO (NNS) -- The National Naval Officer's Association (NNOA) ended its 35th annual professional development and training conference themed "NNOA: Developing America's Future Leaders" on July 20 during a formal dinner at Club Coronado aboard Naval Amphibious Base Coronado.

The event provided an opportunity for NNOA members and guests to continue to network with organization members as well as service members from the three sea services. It also provided an opportunity for attendees to learn more about the organization's original members and how it was founded.

Capt. Anthony Cooper, a lifetime NNOA member, said he was impressed with the turnout of the entire conference and dinner.

"It was definitely one of the most [well] attended conferences that we've had in our 35-year history," Cooper said. "We had more than 300 registered participants. A great majority of them were junior officers, which is definitely keeping in stride with what we're trying to accomplish in NNOA -- reaching out to junior officers to bring them into the organization, mentor them and retain them in the sea services."

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Mullen made a special dinner address.. In his address, Mullen used the opportunity to cover a variety of topics that he wanted the audience to carry with them: what NNOA's role is in

the "Big" Navy picture, trailblazers of tomorrow, and the need for diversity in the military.

"We are celebrating tonight rightfully so, and we have achieved many successes because of people that worked hard, but it doesn't stop here," said Mullen. "In addition to enjoying this kind of week, and evening and each other and reflecting on the heroes that made this possible more

anybody else is in this room. And if they don't blaze those trails, then we will fall short of where we need to be," Mullen said.

"We need to inspire them, mentor them, lead them, coach them, befriend them; make sure their career paths are developed. That is the key of this conference -- the development of our young people. That must continue," said Mullen.



than anything else, it needs to inspire us to renew our dedication to make sure that their efforts are not lost and that what has happened continues to multiply."

"And you have to have that leadership and example or people will look and say I don't have a path for myself," said Mullen.

He added that it would be the junior officers and enlisted service members who are mentored into an officer program that would be the leaders for the future.

"We should not think that we don't need to continue to improve. These young [Lt.] j.g.s and ensigns, second lieutenants, and lieutenants are, ... every bit the trailblazer that

those kids that I was with in the galley, we are going to miss the boat on this issue," he said. "It is no longer acceptable to just reach into the high schools or even the middle schools. We have to go deep. We have to get them when they start in school.

"There are in this audience, numerous young people that we should continue to focus on and make sure that they have every opportunity that we have had," said Mullen.

Mullen noted that as the military continues to work toward diversifying the workforce, he would hope that it gets to a point that diversity is a way of life rather than a goal to work toward.

"The important point that I took away from that story was how organizations like NNOA and ANSO raise other people's awareness of diversity issues," said Cooper. "It raises their awareness of how important it is to have a diversified workforce -- again bringing all of those talents together for the good of the organization -- in this case, it being Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard."

Cooper added that as an NNOA member, he would continue to reach out to junior officers and the enlisted ranks to recruit and mentor service members on professional development and becoming an officer in the Navy.

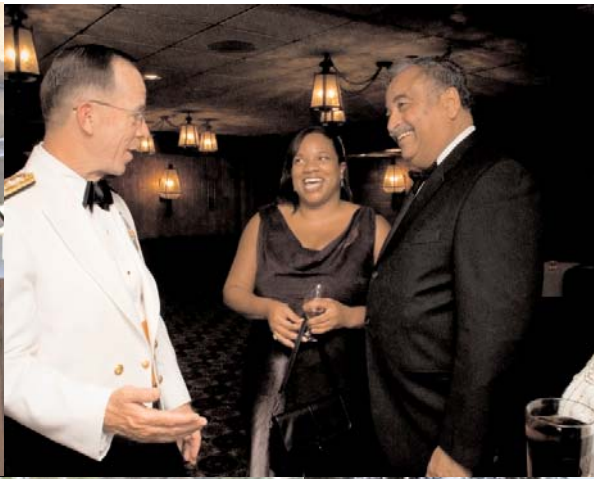
Formed in 1972, the NNOA continues to hold up its mission and purpose to recruit, mentor and retain minority officers. The 2008 July National NNOA Conference is tentatively scheduled to be held in Norfolk, Va.

Taking into point the efforts of NNOA and other organizations like it such as the Association for Naval Services Officers (ANSO), the CNO said that diversity in the workforce is a vital need.

"This is internal to us as a military and in the Navy's case. I believe that if we don't get this right, we jeopardize our future," said Mullen.

He added that he had the opportunity to speak briefly to more than 100 teenagers during a youth-day event at the Naval Base San Diego galley and increasing diversity was even more apparent to him as he addressed the students.

"One of the things that I have learned is that if we don't get this (diversity) right for



USMC Commandant Visits

U.S. Naval Academy Alumni



VADM Rondeau Lifetime NNOA member

Honorary NNOA Lifetime Member



NNOA 2007 National Conference held in San Diego



Navy Outreach Teams With Bud Billiken Parade

CHICAGO - The Navy's community outreach efforts were met with much pride and fanfare on the Southside of Chicago at the 78th Annual Chicago Defender Charities Bud Billiken Back to School Parade on August 11.

Navy support for the parade consisted of a contingent led by Rear Adm. D.C. Curtis, commander, Naval Surface Force, Atlantic, who grew up on Chicago's Southside. Curtis, a proud graduate of Chicago Vocational School, was honored and recognized as the honorary grand marshal for the parade.

"It was exciting to be back home and a double honor to be recognized by the Chicago Defender Charities as an honorary grand marshal for such a prestigious parade," said Curtis. "I remember growing up in Chicago and all the excitement surrounding the Bud Billiken Parade. Participating in the parade this year, I see that it still hasn't lost its influence."

Along with Curtis, recruiters from Navy Recruiting District, Chicago, a color guard,

drill team, and scores of students from the Training Support Center, Great Lakes, also supported the event. The Great Lakes contingent marched in the parade down Chicago's Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, from 39th Street to 51st Street, to the cheers and applause of well wishers and former veterans.

"The Navy's participation in the parade demonstrated a connection between the Navy and the community," said Col. Eugene F. Scott, president of the Chicago Defender Charities, the organization responsible for planning and promoting the Bud Billiken Parade and Picnic. "What really brought home the connection was Admiral Curtis' participation. A hometown product of the Southside (of Chicago), Curtis brought a real Navy presence to the parade."

Promoted as a back-to-school event, the Bud Billiken Parade stresses the importance of education to children and youth in the African American community, not just for those in Chicago but around the country. As part of its education message, the

Chicago Defender Charities hosts a scholarship gala where corporate sponsors such as Coca Cola, Wal-Mart, State Farm Insurance and other businesses award scholarship funds to deserving college-bound students.

At the gala, corporate sponsors, parents, and civic leaders get together to honor and recognize the scholastic achievement of scholarship recipients. This year, the Navy was able to recognize one its local Navy ROTC scholarship recipients at the gala. Ashton Evans, a graduate of Yorkville High School, IL, was recognized as a Navy ROTC recipient and will attend Southern University and A&M College-Baton Rouge, Louisiana this fall.

In presenting the award, Capt. Kent Flowers, professor of naval science at Southern University, handed Evans a giant check worth up to \$180,000. The announcement of the value of the scholarship astonished the audience of 400 people.

Scott talked about one person who was impressed with the value of the Navy scholarship. He said the mother of a \$5,000



scholarship award winner was overheard saying, "If the Navy scholarship is worth that much money, my child needs to get in line."

Getting the word out about its educational resources and job opportunities in communities like Chicago is crucial to Navy recruiting efforts.

"Support for the message of education is an important initiative for the Navy to promote wherever and whenever we can," said Curtis. "We have educational resources for students to attend institutions like the U.S. Naval Academy, funding for college through NROTC, and other educational programs that the general public, more specifically in the African American community, are just not aware of."

Curtis continued, "Having young people and their families see us in their community and being active participants in community activities are essential elements to successful Navy outreach. We also want to show young people, their parents, and the community that the Navy is a viable career option for those willing to serve."

Continued Navy support for the Bud Billiken Parade is almost assured.

Asked what other support the Navy could supply going forward, Scott said, "This was a great start to a partnership between the Navy and the Chicago Defender Charities. I noticed the warm reception the diverse drill team and marching unit received from the crowd and Adm. Curtis brought a real presence. However,

the one thing missing, that I know the spectators would really appreciate is the Navy Band. If we could schedule the Navy Band to play that would put Navy participation over the top."

The Bud Billiken Parade is recognized as the largest event of its kind in the African American community. This year's parade witnessed over 1 million spectators along the parade route, as well as approximately 302 groups and organizations marching in the parade. The parade draws enormous local and national media attention. The parade is broadcast by several local television stations and broadcast nationally by WGN.

Story by Lt. Jeffrey S. Gray

General Walt Gaskin Continued from Cover fully understand it."

You are one of the highest ranking African Americans in the whole military, certainly in the Marines. And among soldiers, there has been a hemorrhaging of African American enlistment in the Army; numbers falling by 40 percent for enlistments and reenlistments. How are things going in the Marines, and what do you think the military needs to do to reach out to African American soldiers, Marines, families? Well, I think it's a two-way street as far as African Americans joining the military. For the Marine Corps, we are still holding at approximately the same level as society. That to me is problematic in that we must continue to offer and get young African Americans to understand that the military is opportunity. At one point, especially when I was a young man fresh out of high school and college, the military offered opportunities beyond what we could receive in society by joining the military, where there was instant recognition

and it was a meritocracy for your merit. What you did, you earned regardless of color, ethnic, or national origin. Somehow, over the years, as opportunities have gotten better in society, there is a somewhat loss. And this is across all ethnic groups. But because of the numbers of minorities - African Americans in particular - it spans out.

Is it ever a help to you to have lived part of the African-American experience? What I mean by that is, you have gone to school in the South, become a high-ranking officer dealing with a very diverse group of people. Has it helped you to have lived part of the African-American experience in a diverse context when you reach out to these people who may be of different ethnicities within Iraq, different sects of the Muslim experience? Oh, absolutely. I think when we said that we learn cultural experiences in order to better understand the Iraqis, having been in a minority, having had the chance to really realize that you are a leader of all, I think that experience has helped me well. And I fully understand it.

Community Service Profile: Quantico NNOA James Farmer Scholars



By Maj. Mike Williams

Naval Officers have often debated the question of whether leaders are born or made. Time and experience have failed to answer that question for me, but what is absolutely clear is that in times of great need, leaders find their way to the front. James Farmer, a man who helped shape the civil rights struggle in the mid-1950's and 60's, was one such leader.

Farmer, a student of Gandhian tactics, was a principal founder, and later the National Director of the Congress of Racial Equality. He has been widely recognized for forcing the issue of desegregation in interstate transportation with the Freedom Rides of 1961.

The Freedom Riders, who challenged the federal government to enforce anti-segregation legislation, by taking integrated bus rides into the most turbulent areas of the Deep South, were attacked by mobs on several occasions. Their response was one of discipline, love, and patience. At one point Farmer was asked "When are you going to fight back?" To which Farmer replied, "We are fighting back, we're only using new weapons."

Farmer refused to concede to an "us versus them" mentality and believed that all

of America's citizens should take part in the government. In 1969, he accepted an invitation from President Richard M. Nixon to become an Assistant Secretary in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Farmer used this platform as a springboard for service in the field of education. His contributions were so salient that he would be awarded 23 honorary doctoral degrees from prestigious universities throughout the country. Farmer was also awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Clinton in 1998.

Although Dr. Farmer passed away in 1999 his legacy continues today. The University of Mary Washington, from which Farmer retired in 1998, sponsors a mentoring program in his honor called the James Farmer Scholars. Designed to provide encouragement and access to students who may not have otherwise considered college as a part of their future, the Program has provided a pathway for numerous Scholars to enroll, attend and graduate from major Universities throughout the country.

The Program assists students, beginning in the seventh grade, to prepare, to enroll in and to attend college through academic enrichment, tutoring, extra-curricular activities and counseling. Students are encour-

aged and challenged to fulfill their academic and leadership potential.

The Quantico Chapter of the National Naval Officers Association has been in partnership with the James Farmer Scholars Program since the Fall of 2006. NNOA members have participated in special lectures, forums, and discussions on numerous topics.

For the Summer session of 2007, the Quantico Chapter of the NNOA seized upon the opportunity to lead the physical training portion of the scholar's schedule and introduced students to a fun but challenging exercise regimen. Marine Corps Recruiting Command also offered their assistance in this endeavor by providing attire for the students to wear during the training evolutions.

During this same session, Quantico NNOA members had the opportunity to lead group discussions centered on Sean Covey's best selling book "The 6 Most Important Decisions You'll Ever Make." The six most important decisions deal with choices made about School, Friends, Parents, Dating & Sex, Addictions, and Self-Worth. The students were extremely open and receptive, and expressed with great candor the problems that they've encountered or witnessed in these six challenging areas.

The Fall session of the Scholars Program commences on September 22nd, 2007 and will continue one Saturday a month during the academic calendar year. The NNOA Quantico Chapter has assumed the responsibility of teaching Leadership to 50+ students who are commencing their Sophomore, Junior, and Senior years of High School. The aggressive syllabus that the chapter has prepared takes a direct approach to introducing students to the prerequisites of leadership. NNOA members will discuss personal responsibility, goal setting, prioritization, attitude, sincerity, and synergy. The NNOA chapter will also focus the students on the 2008 Presidential Debate and challenge students to understand the major issues surrounding this important campaign.

For more information on the James Farmer Program, please contact Major Mike Williams at (703) 784-2459.

BRIG. GEN. Ron Johnson talks with NNOA National PAO LT Karen



From everything I know and have heard about you, I thought you would prefer being on the ground with your Marines. "I believe we have to have an option between being on the ground working with Marines and being back here with the staff. At the Pentagon it's very challenging, a different perspective. Here you're more if a manager than a leader. But I think the importance of being here today, and the issues we're talking about today, provide a challenge that's not normally expected of us in the field."

And what is it you do at the Pentagon? "I am the director of the Operations Division. I handle the day-to-day operations of Marines and tracking and how we see ourselves in the future."

Tell me a little about some of the mentors you've had in your career. "Some people take the perspective that they only learn from those superb leaders, but there are also those who maybe didn't seem quite right to you. They got off the fight track somehow. You've got to be able to learn from those too."

And what does it take to be a good Marine? We always see them as being fearless... "I think it takes a lot of fortitude to be a Marine. I think you have to be able to do the right thing and stand up for what's right. That's pretty much the ethos of what we think of

our Marines today."

- Is it that ethos that keeps, say, an O-3 motivated to stay in the Marines? 'I think it goes back to challenges. A young man who's 26-30 has the opportunity to lead 100-200 men and women in combat operations, or even day-to-day challenges. The responsibility is very significant, more so than anything you'd find in the public sector."

Ever since we got involved in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan the deployments have gotten longer and more frequent. How do you tell a Marine who has just gotten back from a 12-month deployment to prepare for a 12-15 month deployment right on the horizon? "I think it's more of a mental challenge than a physical one. I think that if they know what to expect they can prepare themselves mentally. And I think that's where we have to do better at; we have to give our young men and women as much information as we possibly as soon as we can so they can prepare themselves for the challenges and difficulties they'll face while on deployment. Tell them what they're expected to do, with the expectation that they will flourish when they do go out there. Be straight up and honest with each and every one of them. If we can take away as many of their unknowns that will reduce the stress these men and women are looking at today."

You recently completed a tour as the 24th MEU commander. Can you tell me a little about that? "Yes, we've done a lot of different tours in the past five years. Among other places, we've been to Iraq on three deployments. I was able to complete those deployments due to my understanding of the mission and how best to prepare for it. I would talk with my Marines about the things we would encounter once we got into Iraq. I think that helped. Discussing the responses we expected

once we got on the ground."

Did you lose any of your Marines in Iraq? "Yes. Each time we lost some fine young men out on the battlefield. It was very regrettable. I knew a lot of them personally. The MEU is not a very large organization; we're able to get around and meet our men. When you find out you've lost someone it's sometimes a tough day to get through."

What about MRAP's (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles)? Have they had any impact on the loss of life? I think they have been successful for us initially, from the first few that we're seeing, in reducing the number of casualties we're seeing, so I think it's a very valuable asset brought to the battlefield.

Yes, the Marines do a lot of fighting. It's an elite fighting force, but these days it seems the Marines are doing more nation building than anything else. This really isn't a classic Marine Corps mission, is it? "The roles and missions for what we're facing seeing now are not typical for today. But I think you have to look back to what we did over time in Haiti, the Philippines and Vietnam. Those are not only the two-dimensional fights we traditionally see ourselves in on the Islands like in World War II. So, I think this is not a new type of warfare, but a warfare we've seen in many years past. I think if we reflect on some of our past battles, it may be a good prediction of what we can expect to see in the future."

I read somewhere that, at the start of the war, you said you'd have given the U.S. military war effort a "D." Does that sound about right? "When you start to look at our success rate, you have to look at what the expectations are. And I think that right now they're not as good as what America expects us to do. There are challenges we

Brig. Gen. Johnson Interview Continued from Page 9



did not anticipate. Most of our casualties are coming from IED's, roadside bombs, if you will. And the types of people we're fighting-- I don't think we kind of thought this through in the beginning of the war. But now we've tried to overcome or meet those challenges, and I think we've done very well-- But it's taken us a while. I also think it's taken us a while because of the natural rotation of forces. A lot of times, just as you're getting on step, it's time to re-deploy back. Bringing new people on all the time is very good for the cohesion of the unit, but if you talk about the expansion of the fighting that we're having, I think it lends itself that, if we stayed there longer we could probably get to know the enemy better and meet those challenges a little bit better."

With respect to the Marines facing the charges stemming from Haditha, you maybe know the Marines personally, can empathize with the way they were feeling--the fear, the fatigue--they may have felt. Is it your natural inclination to want to defend these young men? "I think that for all of us men and women serving, we have a Rule of Law that we have to follow. I think it's more important than anything else, that we hold ourselves accountable for our actions. We're responsible for everything we do or fail to do. I think that these trials have showed that we're going to be up front, and if we see things that are not right, we ourselves, even senior officers, will be held to those rules and

articles that we are supposed to follow. I think it takes a lot of fortitude to be a Marine. I think you have to be able to do the right thing and stand up for what's right. That's pretty much the ethos of what of our Marines today."

And it seems the war effort is really hurting the recruiting effort, particularly with respect to minority officers. Is true for the Marine Corps as well? "We're meeting our goals as an organization and I think we're pulling in a high caliber of personnel, but I'm concerned about the numbers of minority men and women that we're not recruiting. That is a challenge and I think that as an institution we need to put a re-focus on that because, if the service is going to be a reflection on our society then we should have a good cross-section of society in our institution."

So why is having the good cross-section so important? Especially since many don't think it's necessary and view taking numbers--not just talent and skill-- into consideration is a throw back to affirmative action" "I don't agree. I think the services have always, throughout time, been on the forefront of making things change for the better. And I think it allows our young men and to understand and be more open. We all have very like needs, but if we haven't grown up with one another, it makes it difficult to understand what's different about other people. For instance, if they go to an Iraqi culture, they'll understand the differences Iraqis have. I think that if, as an institution we can understand the differences in people, we'll be more effective when we deploy to places where that understanding becomes an imperative for success."

What do you say to those people who are in positions to influence minorities not to join the military and do so-- like parents, teachers and pastors? "I think it's unfair. I

think that as a parent I would be worried about my daughter joining the military; but that's not understanding the full advantages that the services have to offer: skill levels, trades crafts that can be learned, the ability to go to college. Risks have always been involved in the military, even in training, not just in combat. Training alone is difficult. But I think we need to allow ourselves the opportunity, especially if we're citizens, to defend it. And not just defend it, but also reap the rewards of what it offers after the war."

Can you speak to the very noticeable promotion gap for minority officers in the Marine Corps? "Yes. I think that's a problem across the spectrum with respect to retaining quality officers. It doesn't matter what race you are. If you are a good, quality officer, the corporate world is going to want to take you a lot quicker. So now, they're paying a lot more than I can even begin to offer, even with bonuses. So, now we're faced with the stressors of going to Iraq and the other operations supporting the global War on Terror, and you're faced with just a 9 to 5 job, and getting paid a whole lot better. It's very hard to compete with that."

So, what do you think we need to do to make organizations like NNOA and ANSO (Association of Naval Services Officers) irrelevant? "I don't think either of those organizations should ever be irrelevant. I think they offer goals and objectives for young men and women to identify with, to be able to be exposed to other mentors and to see the way they've gone to be successful. I think those are the types of organizations where, if you have questions, you can go to seek out people who have the same types of issues you might be having. I think it would be very difficult if we didn't have these organizations because we wouldn't be able to nip certain issues in the bud early."

Petraeus Awards Bronze: Brown Served in Iraq under Extreme Conditions



Lieutenant Willie J. Brown recently returned from Baghdad, Iraq with a bronze star medal for his exceptional meritorious performance as the Deputy Chief of Medical Logistics, Multi-National Forces-Iraq and the Chief of Logistics within Health Affairs, Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, during OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. Lieutenant Brown completed more than 67 hazardous missions by ground convoy and air transportation traveling over 3000 miles in the "Red Zone" training and equipping Iraqi Armed Forces personnel while making 25 medical logistic assessments that was very crucial to executing facility medical plans for future health service sites. Lieutenant Brown was directly responsible for bringing the Iraqi Army's Class VIII initial fielding from 45 percent to 99 percent completion with 100 percent accountability. He was instrumentally responsible for the advancement and standing up of three critical national warehouses at Taji National Depot worth 69 million dollars. His oversight and leadership influenced the Taji National Depot warehouse shelving project that increased storage capacity of the three Class VIII warehouses from 5,300 square feet to 25,200 square feet, a 480 percent increase reducing the need for 10 additional warehouses. He successfully and consistently provided real time information to the Iraqi Surgeon General on critical

health care issues that impacted 200 thousand Iraqi Armed Forces military service members. Under hostile and combative conditions, he was able to safely and meticulously set up, monitor and execute 12 million dollars for 10 different contracts for the Minister of Defense Prosthetic Treatment Center that paved the way for Iraqi service members and Iraqi citizens to receive medical treatment for loss of limbs due to combating insurgency and sectarian violence in the war on terrorism. Lieutenant Brown's skillful actions and decisive coordination with other Iraqi officials in contract negotiations contributed to setting up from "cradle to grave", the very first Iraqi Armed Forces Prosthetic Treatment Facility. He was the lead person in the design and development of a Contract Status Tracking System that allowed for easy monitoring and 100 percent accuracy of all contracts written. He created the prosthetic clinic's first data base program for tracking patient input, allowing the Surgeon General Staff to know the exact amount of patient visits, since its inception, the Iraqi Prosthetic Physicians have seen more than 1000 of the 40 thousand existing amputees within the nation of Iraq. He identified and ordered more than 45 million dollars of initial push Modified Table of Organizational Equipment shortcomings not previously documented while ensuring all initial outfitting of two new Iraqi Divisions and Iraqi Special Forces. Keenly attuned to Multi-National Forces-Iraq and Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq transitional strategies and mission, Lieutenant Brown created and designed a National Inventory Database Program that allowed the Iraqi Armed Forces to accurately account for all medical supplies increasing medical logistics efficiency by 55 percent decreasing manual labor through automation. He was directly responsible for bringing the Iraqi Joint Forces Class VIII initial push to completion with full accountability and development of the first Iraqi Armed Forces Class VIII Authorized Stock List listed valued at more than 6.3 million dollars and the Sustainment plan. He implemented and coordinated the Iraqi Surgeon's Logistical staff training with the 226th Medical Logistics Battalion and the 32nd Multi-Medical Battalion in Balad while developing the medical logistics curriculum and training for the Iraqi Logistical Forces that's trained more that 300 Iraqi Logisticians to date.

Message from the President Continued

Mullen's work in diversity was recognized by NNOA membership, which designated him an Honorary Member. Due to an oversight on my part we did not recognize the Quantico Chapter as the winner of the Medium Chapter Award and co-winner of the News Letter Award, congratulations to the Quantico Chapter for their superior effort during 2007.

NNOA priorities for 2008: The priority for this year is to continue organizational discipline by focusing on the principles, procedures, and processes contained in our Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and the Chapter Operations Manual. I am confident if we adhere to the guidance outlined in the aforementioned articles, we will improve information flow and improve our ability to document and measure the outstanding achievements of NNOA chapters and individuals around the world. The ability to measure our effectiveness with clear metrics is critical in our efforts to enhance sea service diversity.

NNOA Strategic Goals for this year follow: Increase junior officer members by 25% by July 2008, Generate NROTC Immediate Selection Determination (ISD) Scholarships. Regional goals for ISD scholarships have been established as follow: four from the Eastern region, two from the Central region, five from the Western region and one from the Far Eastern regional. Information regarding ISD scholarship can be obtained from your respective

Regional Vice President.

Establish new chapters in the New London and Seattle, Washington areas. Increase corporate sponsorship for local scholarships and national conference.

The Regional Vice Presidents will be reaching out to the chapter presidents as part of this effort. The National Board will also be reaching out to long-standing NNOA members to serve with the Executive Board Committees. Please contact us via our Website, www.nnoa.org if you are interested in serving. Additionally, please log on to the website and verify or update your contact information so we can reach out to you. The 2008 National Conference will be held in Norfolk, Va., 21 - 25 July 2008. Based on the survey result the National Board is reviewing the structure of the agenda to enhance greater participation. The conference theme is: "Developing America's Future Leaders to Enhance Mission Readiness and Cultural Awareness." I challenge each member who attended the conference this year to bring a junior officer with you next year. Additionally, the Board has agreed to hold the 2009 National Conference in Houston, Texas.

Regards,
Captain Bernard Jackson, USN
NNOA National Board President
President@nnoa.org

“Taking Note”



Vice Admiral Adam M. Robinson Assumes Duties as 36th Surgeon General of Navy

On August 27, 2007 Vice Admiral Adam M. Robinson, Jr, Medical Corps, became the 36th Surgeon General of the Navy and the Chief of the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery at a ceremony at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD

Golden Gate Chapter Holds Annual Fundraiser

On June 20th 2007, members of the Coast Guard's Chief Warrant Officer's Golden Gate Chapter (CWOA) held its annual fundraiser event - Coast Guard Day with the A's. The A's are one of the Bay areas two professional baseball teams. Over 300 Coast Guard (with Navy sprin-



kled in) active duty, dependents, Auxiliary and CG civilian employees participated in the tailgate festivities and watched the Athletics defeat the Cincinnati Reds.

RDML Manson Brown, Maintenance and Logistics Pacific commander and the past immediate NNOA president threw out the ceremonial first pitch of the game. Petty Officer Tracy Bingham sang the national anthem and Coast Guard aircrews from Air Station Sacramento dazzled the crowd during their fly over.

The annual CWOA Coast Guard Day with the A's event is used to raise funds that support local Coast Guard non profit organizations and special emphasis programs.

SFBA Chapter Visionaries

At this past National Conference, the visionaries of NNOA were honored. Unfortunately RADM Bob Toney, USN (Ret) was unable to be amongst the audience to receive his award. At the August 2007 meeting for the San Francisco Bay Area chapter, CAPT Don Flowers, USN (Ret), Western Region Vice President presented RADM Toney with his commemorative plaque for his great work as a visionary. RADM Toney was surprised and touched and shared with the chapter members his fond memories of the hard work and perseverance it took to build the organization to where it is now. One important thing he emphasized, is that we have to continue to work as a "team" to ensure the success of the organization.

Important words from a humble leader.



Anthony Winns Earns Third Star

On November 2, 2007 Rear Adm. Anthony Winns, USN, will be promoted to Vice Admiral. He will also begin serving as the Inspector General on November 2.

CAPT Anthony Swain, USN, has been slated to command the USS Hue City (CG 66). He will assume command in 2008.

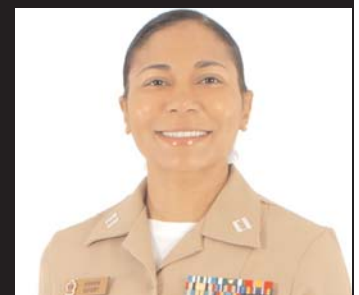


Coast Guard Promotes its Newest Commanders. NNOA Congratulates: (Above Jason A. Merriweather promotes to commander)

Cmdr. Michael E. Platt
Cmdr. Robert L. Smith
Cmdr. Bryan L. Durr
Cmdr. Cornell I. Perry
Cmdr. Edwin Diazrosario

NOTE FROM THE NATIONAL PAO

Hello, I am honored to begin my fourth year as the NNOA National PAO. In this role I seek to highlight the NNOA accomplishments of each of the sea services. However, I cannot do this alone. Please feel free to contact me with information you would like to have considered for publication in upcoming Meridian issues. Send inputs to karen.eifert@navy.mil.



QUARTERLY QUOTE:
Thad Allen when interviewed **Kyra Phillips** on CNN regarding the noose incident at the USCG Academy: "We're going to find out how this happened, and we have a very detailed investigation ongoing, but we need to figure out, moving forward, how to prevent this in the future and how to create the work environment for all of our people. Everybody needs to have the promise that when you enter the Coast guard you'll be treated equally, fairly..."

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

Ezekiel 36:25-26