

PUGET SOUND ON WATCH

Newlove stays united with lifelong memories

ADDISON Newlove sat enthralled before the television with a book in her lap. Her daddy, Petty Officer 2nd Class Jarod Newlove, was reading a story to her and her younger brother. Her mother, grandma, uncle, and great aunts stood nearby, watching in rapt attention. The room filled with hope with each passing word. The delivery of the USO United Through Reading package containing a DVD and two books on July 28, 2010, was a surprise.

Jarod finished the book *Ask Mr. Bear*. The story is about a child searching for the right gift for his mom. In the end, the best gift is a bear hug. Jarod told Addison how much he loves her and asks her to be a good girl and be nice to her brother. He puts his hands to his lips and blows a kiss saying “muah”. Addison mimics her daddy –it’s always been her favorite part of the videos he sends.

As Jarod reaches to turn off the camera, he gives it one more look and speaks to his wife, “Kim, I love you.”

Within seconds there is a knock at the door. Dressed in their khakis were a Naval Commander and Chaplain, telling them



Addison and Jordon Newlove view the United Through Reading recording their father, Jarod Newlove, completed at the USO center in Kuwait. The program allows service members to record themselves reading a book. The book and DVD are sent home.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Jarod Newlove is dead.

The Missing Days

Four days earlier, on July 24, 2010, the Newlove family was notified Jarod Newlove was missing in the Logar province of Afghanistan. He left in a vehicle heading back to Camp Julien in Kabul and never arrived. Not knowing details the situation was frustrating and terrifying for the entire family, Mary Humphries, Jarod Newlove’s mother-in-law said.

The United States military immediately began a search for him along the border of Pakistan and pushed inward. The biggest fear expressed was if Jarod was taken across the border they would never get him back, Kimberly Newlove, Jarod’s widow, said.

Then news broke the vehicle was ambushed. One service member was

dead, the other taken captive by the Taliban.

Days went by as the family hoped and prayed for more news. On July 27, the family went to church. While there they received news the surviving sailor was Jarod.

Well-wishes and prayers flooded the family during this emotional rollercoaster. Hope never let up. When the news of Jarod’s death reached the family everything became a blur.

“I actually didn’t know what happened to the kids until many days later,” Mary said. “We all just collapsed. We didn’t know what to do.”

It would be months before the family knew the exact details surrounding Jarod Newlove and Petty Officer 2nd Class Justin McNeley’s deaths. News agencies published anything and everything causing conflicting reports.

Finally a detailed 1,400 page report from Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the Army was given to the family for review, Mary said.

Newlove and McNeley were ambushed in the Logar province. Rocket-propelled grenades disabled the vehicle they were driving. Caught in a fire fight, McNeley was killed. The Taliban took Jarod

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From the cockpit of the Executive Director

THIS newsletter is dedicated to the very best volunteers and staff members an organization could ever ask for! As I make presentations to various organizations in the Puget Sound Area, I continually hear how wonderful the USO Puget Sound Area is and how courteous and helpful the USOPSA volunteers and staff are. Your exceptional customer service is exactly why we not only continue to exceed the number of guests entering our centers on a monthly basis, but hear how happy they are our centers exist for their comfort. Since 2007, we have increased the number of military and family members from 165,000 a year to almost 500,000 each of the last two years. For the new volunteers, I hope you have felt the pride in serving those military members and their families and will continue to be active participants for years to come. You all should be proud to serve the best trained military in the world!

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Gary Sinise and Lt. Dan band give back to Puget Sound service members, families

GIVING back to service members and their families. That is what it is all about—at least for the USO Puget Sound Area and the actor/musician Gary Sinise.

The organization and the musician partnered to celebrate the USOPSA’s 45 years of providing support and programs to service members living or visiting the Puget Sound. The Lt. Dan Band performed two free concerts during this last Fourth of July weekend.

An estimated total of 33,000 service members and their families from Joint Base Lewis-McChord and Naval Base Kitsap were able to enjoy a two hour performance by Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band.

“USOPSA was fortunate Gary and the Band stayed for two concerts,” USOPSA Executive Director Donald Leingang said. “That was unprecedented.”

Many service members said this was the first time they were able to share these events with their families and it meant a great deal to them, USOPSA Office Manager Shannon McManus said.

Before performing with his band, Gary Sinise met with service members. At Joint Base Lewis-McChord he visited with a Stryker Unit, Airmen of a C-17 and signed autographs. Gary even got a good laugh at the medical dummy on a stretcher holding a copy of the book *Forrest Gump*. The name tag on the camis read “Taylor” in

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From the cockpit

Sinise, Lt. Dan band perform two concerts for troops

This year has been one of the busiest on record. Ever since the tsunami in Japan, it seems like our organization has been busy at the tip of the spear providing great customer service. Shirley McGann and her SeaTac volunteers ensured we took care of over 4,000 displaced Americans from Japan and the 200 military and civilian personnel assigned each day to SeaTac to assist during this event. We completed our most successful Golf Tournament ever in May, featuring over 300 golfers and saw over 14,000 friends of the USO attend two “Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band” Concerts over the July 4 weekend. Additionally, the JBLM Volunteers supported Rodeo for three consecutive weeks as well as numerous deployments through their center. Not to be outdone, our Mobile Canteen served numerous military at events such as Seattle’s Seafair summer celebration. A special thanks to Mac McDaniel for his “volunteer” services as the Center Manager until newest Staff Member Andrew Oczkewicz was hired in August. Not to be overlooked, our Communication and IT Lead, Meaghan Cox, has increased our awareness by the general public and followers via numerous social media outreach events. The overall excellence of this organization is one reason why Governor Gregoire honored USO Puget Sound Area on our 45 Anniversary when she declared it to be USO Day in the State of Washington on July 11.

As I look ahead to the rest of the year, I see exciting times for this organization. With the ten year anniversary of 9/11, I am happy to report we have received orders for over 5,000 of the Tenth Anniversary 9/11 Commemorative Coins. A special thanks to our Center volunteers for making this coin available, but also to our Office Manager, Shannon McManus, who has prepared and mailed over 200 requests for coins over the last two months. Additionally, on November 17, we will celebrate our annual USOPSA Red, White and Blue Gala and Auction. This year’s gala will take place at the Museum of Flight and promises to be just as memorable as year’s past. Those interested in attending can go to www.usopsa.org/gala. If you have ideas for donations or auction items, please contact our capable Development Coordinator, Chris Coté at coordinator@usopsa.org. Also, many of you volunteered your time last year and if you would like to help again, please contact Chris. This is our last major fundraiser for the year and will go a long way to raise the capital necessary for every USOPSA program.

It has been my honor to serve as your Executive Director over the last three years. I can honestly say that I am proud to serve with each and every one of our 24 dedicated Board Members, 300 caring Volunteers and five exceptional staff members. USOPSA would not exist without the collective efforts of each one of you. I am blessed to work with you all.

Cheers,
Your Executive Director,
Don



reference to Lt. Dan Taylor, the character Gary Sinise played in the movie Forrest Gump. Over at Naval Base Kitsap Gary Sinise toured the USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN-74) and USS CONNECTICUT (SSN-22) also signing autographs and taking pictures with sailors.

Gary Sinise set aside time to meet with Wounded Warriors and their families.

“His interest in what each of [the service members and families] were doing was genuine,” Leingang said. “I liked that about Gary and his family.”

Joan Shalikashvili, a USOPSA Board Member, also said it was very obvious Gary Sinise cared about the service members. Because Gary is such a huge supporter of the USO and military he was a natural choice for the USOPSA Staff, Chris Coté USOPSA Programs and Events Coordinator said.

This was the first major concert the USOPSA attempted to promote in the region.

“USOPSA brining a concert to the area was a new concept and one that had to be explained at every level,” Leingang said.

The USOPSA Staff did a majority of the ground work themselves with military leadership from both bases, but all final productions were handled by USO Headquarters in Virginia.

“Initially Naval Base Kitsap thought the concert would not be well received and they expected a low turnout of about 500,” Coté said. “But it was so well received that base officials asked what we are going to do next summer.”

Songs like “Sweet Home Alabama”, “God Bless the USA” and were Staff favorites and crowd pleasers. During the song “Life is a Highway” children were invited on to the stage. Women were brought out of the audience for the song “Lady Marmalade” and service men were serenaded.

Often Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan band are referred to as the new face of the USO. Entertainer Bob Hope held the title for decades before passing away in 2003.

“Gary has a long history of performing for and supporting the troops and with his new foundation I see him as a mentor for other performers and celebrities,” Leingang said.

The USO Puget Sound Area is looking into hosting another concert for 2012. Names on the short list is Eddie Vedder from Pearl Jam who has local ties to the Puget Sound and a new solo album.

“The military members and their families really appreciated Gary’s support and loved the music,” Coté said. “Why not try to bring that level of entertainment to them every year?”



Gary Sinise and Lt. Dan Band rock out at the July 4, 2011 concert at JBLM

Microsoft Community Affairs with

InterConnection.org donate technology

ONE computer might meet the demand on a quiet day at the USO Joint Base Lewis-McChord Center when service members and retirees come in twos or threes. However when the center is slammed with hundreds of service members deploying, one is not enough.

USOPSA received eight desktop computers on September 9, from InterConnection.Org. Then on September 10, Microsoft donated over \$4,350 in software and accessories.

“The computers and software will help service members view e-mails, access their orders, create documents and presentations,” Meaghan Cox, USOPSA Communications and Information Technology Lead, said. “The new hardware operating with up to date software is a huge improvement from the 1990s machine running XP 2002.”

This modernization helps in two respects, more machines working faster means greater access with shorter waits. No one should be frustrated waiting in line to use a computer taking too long loading an application.

Microsoft Community Affairs took point with helping the USOPSA acquire more computers. Because Microsoft does not manufacture computers they sought the help of another organization. InterConnection.Org is a non-profit who refurbishes computers for schools, small businesses and nongovernmental organizations.

Items and Tasks Needed for Centers

USO Puget Sound Area Staff

We are gathering items for our 5-Star Gala, November 17, 2011. If you have items you would like to donate for our silent and live auctions, please contact Chris Coté at coordinator@usopsa.org

SeaTac Center

Items: Mop heads, Swifer cloths for dusting, calling cards, all beef hot dogs, individually packaged chips, computer cleaner/disinfectant.

Joint Base Lewis-McChord

Items: All beef hot dogs, cases of bottled water, individually packaged chips, paper plates, paper cups, paper towels, sandwich meat, sandwich bags, individual soda, and individual yogurts.

captive and later killed him when the search parties began to get close.

“We tell the kids that daddy was a hero,” Mary said. “Not that he specifically did something heroic, but he died for his country and their daddy is a hero. No matter what.”

Saying Goodbye

Standing on the tarmac at Dover Air Force base in Delaware, on July 29, 2011, Jarod Newlove’s family waited for him to arrive. A 747 landed, carrying the bodies of a Marine, a civilian and Jarod.

“Seeing the flag draped box nearly brought me to my knees,” Mary said. “The military takes such pride in their fallen men that it would give chills to anyone who sees these ceremonies.”

Jarod remained at Dover while the family flew back to Seattle. It would be days before he joined them due to the autopsy and processing.

Jarod and Justin were placed on the same flight going to the west coast. It landed in Colorado first to bring Justin to his family. The McNeley family sent a small bouquet of flowers with the plane which was given to the Newlove family when he arrived in Seattle.

“We went to Boeing field, the Patriot Guard was there and so many Navy personnel, it was amazing,” Mary said. “That was almost harder than the first time at Dover. They were different. They were both extreme in feelings.”

The Blue Angels did a fly-by when Jarod arrived, Kimberly said. Mary said it is indescribable how much support was expressed from individuals all around the United States.

“Everywhere, every time we turned around there was something happening, some card in the mail,” she said.

After the events at Dover and Boeing field the family needed to prepare for the funeral.

“I think the worst thing that I was afraid of when he came home, was not knowing if he had his wedding ring on,” Kimberly said.

Jarod’s wedding ring was too big for him so he often kept it in a box with his watch while serving. Kimberly had no way of knowing if he’d been wearing it the day he’d been captured. When Jarod’s things came home, his wedding ring was in the box, she said. She now keeps his dog tags, wedding ring and her own ring on a necklace she often wears.

The day before the funeral the news of Jarod’s death was going to be told to his three year old daughter Addison.

“How do you explain death to somebody that small? You don’t,” Mary said.

Addison was sitting with Jarod’s mother on the back deck of the house having a conversa-

tion about her bike she’d received from her daddy for her birthday.

“She was telling her Nana ‘Daddy was riding my bike. And then the wind took him far, far away’” Mary said.

The Newlove family told Jarod’s children, Addison who is now four and Jordon who is two years old, he went to Heaven and if they

ning out and said ‘Mommy, I let go of my balloon. I shared it with Daddy,’” Kimberly said.

Sharing memories and habits Jarod was part of keeps him fresh in the children’s minds.

“When [the children] do an action similar to what Jarod did I tell them that’s what their daddy used to do,” Kimberly said. “He and Addison would stop at 7-Eleven and get beef sticks.

In order to keep that, so she still remembers, I get them.”

Addison has her own memories of her daddy. She pops up with interesting memories from time to time such as what movie she and her daddy watched, Mary said.

“He let her pick out her own shoes [when they went shopping together] and they were quite crazy shoes,” Kimberly said. “Addison remembers that.”

The United Through Reading videos were completed by Jarod when he visited the USO center in Kuwait. His children watch them often.

“It’s a lifelong memory that they will always, always be able to have and cherish,” Kimberly said. “This is the only thing my kids have of their daddy talking to them... We don’t have anything else.”

In April 2011, Kimberly’s suburban was broken into and cleaned out. In the vehicle, among the children’s Easter baskets and new emergency kit were Jarod’s hard drives containing 100 GB of music, photos he took and short films he made. These items have not been returned. The Newlove family has made multiple copies of the United Through Reading DVDs incase the original is scratched or lost.

“It’s something about hearing your parent’s voice when they are very far away that is reassuring to everybody,” Mary said. “The United Through Reading makes it so personal.”

Mary and Kimberly are strong proponents of the United Through Reading program the USO’s offer at their centers. Even if an uncle were to record himself reading a book, it is a lifelong memory that will be cherished, Kimberly said.

“I think everybody should do this,” Mary said. “It should just be part of their deployment –anybody with kids should do this.”

The United Through Reading DVDs are not only watched and cherished by the children who receive them. On her own Kimberly has watched, more than once, three of the four videos Jarod sent.

“I was having a hard time. I just wanted to see him and hear his voice,” Kimberly said as tears formed.

If a service member would like to participate in the United Through Reading program please contact the nearest USO Center. The USO Puget Sound Area offers this program at all centers and has a Mobile Canteen ready to deploy for service members not at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. The USO Puget Sound Area can be reached at 206.246.1908 or 253.589.8772.



Kimberly, Jordon, Jarod and Addison Newlove pose for family photos in 2009. Kimberly and Jarod on their anniversary, July 2, 2010. Photo of Jarod used for funeral service and memorials.

close their eyes and say “Daddy, I love you” he will be right there, Mary said.

Remembering

This year for Jarod’s birthday in February, Kimberly and her children sent balloons to Jarod in Heaven, Mary said. Now when there are balloons in the house the children go outside and release them without Kimberly’s knowledge. Jordon’s birthday party this year was pirate themed and Kimberly purchased two Mylar balloons with pirates.

“I was in the front yard when they came run-

Newlove’s food for the soul

NO ONE knows what lays behind the door controlled by a number code. Except for Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Jarod Newlove. He would say cookies.

“[Jarod] was the night baker on the ship,” Kimberly Newlove, Jarod’s widow, said. “There was a place in the ship, a controlled room that no one was supposed to go into but Jarod knew the code, so at night when he baked he would bring those guys cookies.”

Jarod liked being the cook because he met everybody, Mary Humphries, Jarod’s mother-in-law said. He knew people’s preferences and would have the meals ready for each individual. Being a personable kind of guy he made many friends, Mary said. When at home, Jarod’s desire to bring family and friends together placed him behind the oven or barbeque.

“He liked having the big deals –having everybody over,” Mary said. After serving five years in the Navy, Jarod deployed to Afghanistan as a Navy reservist in 2010. When Jarod came home for R&R the family celebrated both children’s birthdays. Jarod baked a cake for his daughter Addison and son Jordon.

“He made it all from scratch, never the box,” Kimberly said. “He made the frosting from scratch, made the cake from scratch.”

Jordon may aspire to be a cook like his father. He loves to play with the toy kitchen in his room, Mary said.

On the USS NEW ORLEANS (LPD 18), where Jarod previously served, the galley is named after him, Mass Communications Specialist 1st Class Gabriel R. Owens said. The ship decided to honor Jarod after several friends and family members brought up the idea on the NEW ORLEANS’ Facebook page.

In July 2010, Petty Officer 2nd Class Jarod Newlove was captured and killed in the Logar province of Afghanistan.

Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Davarius Howard designed and painted the door of the galley. A picture of Jarod was placed on the door and presented to Kimberly when she came to visit, Owens said.

After Jarod’s death everyone came together, it was amazing how much love there was, Mary said.

“I always threatened that when I got old I was going to move in with them so [Jarod] could continue to cook for me,” Mary said. “And then he would threaten to put me in a nursing home with my ex husband.”

Kimberly laughed with her mom then added, “And make them share a room.”

Jarod and Kimberly met in high school during their friends’ date to the movies. As he grew comfortable with Kimberly’s family he would always give her parents a hard time, Kimberly said.

“He had a very good sense of humor,” Mary said. “He liked to rib us about everything and anything.”

Rubbing shoulders with others doing good for service members

DIANE and Blaine Anderson never thought hosting a garage sale would lead to sending care packages to over 10,697 service members.

“What we do seems so small and insignificant,” Diane said. “I just wish we could meet every single one of our military and tell them personally how we feel.”

In early 2009, Diane and Blaine invited a woman, Nadine Gulit, to host a garage sale as a fund raiser from their barn. The fund raiser proved to be a success and Nadine was in need of the barn again. Her group intended to send care packages to several hundred service members. The Andersons, mindful of the importance of the project, offered to help and let them use the barn.

When a request came in from Major Chroman for 1,200 additional service members the care package group didn’t think twice, Diane said. Calls were made throughout their community looking for additional donations.

In August 2009, Nadine’s group decided it was time to stop the care package effort but not Diane and Blaine.

“We felt that the need was there and people were still willing to give their time, talents and donations,” Diane said. “I felt from the very beginning that I needed to be involved in giving something back to our troops.”

In March 2010, the Andersons formed the organization *I Support Our Troops Northwest* (ISOTNW). Committees and teams were formed. Some volunteers sew draw string bags for the donated items. Other volunteers make donation inquiries into the community or show up the day of to pack the boxes. The number of service members ISOTNW aims to create care packages for at each event is two thousand five hundred.

“When the names come in, we just keep adding them until either no more come in or we realize we can’t pay the postage and have to put a lid on it,” Diane said.

Package content is determined by friends who are in the know or directly from those who are serving in the military, she said. The ISOTNW Web site lists items needed such as beef jerky, microwave popcorn, blank greeting cards, soaps and shampoos. Items the service members can’t use or can’t be shipped include bug spray, sunscreen and canned fruit.

“The freedom and safety [service members] provide us is everything to us –I think everyone should open their pocket books and give, be it money, in-kind donations or talent and time,” Diane said. “Those things seem very minor to me compared to our hero’s giving their life.”

To donate to *I Support Our Troops Northwest* or sign up as a volunteer go to www.isotnw.org.

“There is nothing quite like the feeling one gets as they rub shoulders with others who want to do good for someone else,” Diane said.

Support is key for a deployed sailor and mother

EVERYTHING comes down to the right support system -whether you’re a parent, a ship or a military base. The Phalanx Weapons System, a radar-guided 20mm Gatling gun, was designed to be the last line of automated weapons defense for ships.

The Land based Phalanx Weapons System (LPWS) provides bases defense against incoming rockets and mortars. The accuracy and speed of this weapon make it a valuable asset.

For Aviation Electrician Second Class Air Warfare Valerie Mascho, a LPWS operator, support is essential when being a deployed service member and mother.

“The biggest factor [in deciding to be parent and active military] was knowing if I had to go to work for one day or for 15 months, my husband would be there to help raise our son,” Valerie said. “Knowing how much David loves Matthew, there’s not a doubt in my mind about his safety or well-being and that makes it so much easier to do my job.”

Valerie volunteered for her recent deployment as an Individual Augmentee through Global Support Assignment (IA/GSA). Before marrying her husband and having her son, she completed two short deployments to Afghanistan through this program and knew what to expect.

She knew it would be good for her military

career. Service members in IA/GSA have a higher overall average advancement rate. However, this was not the deciding factor. David’s family lives close to Bremerton, Wash., so knowing there is a reliable support network nearby helped her make the decision, Valerie said.

“It makes it so much easier on the both of us having them there to help out,” Valerie said. “The love and support they have shown us is just unmentionable. They are just a phone call and short drive away.”

“Knowing how much David loves Matthew, there’s not a doubt in my mind about his safety or well-being and that makes it so much easier to do my job.”

David Mascho, the quality control assistant for a private contractor on the Pier B replacement project for Naval Base Kitsap in Bremerton, said being a single parent and trying to remodel a house alone is the most difficult aspect of his wife’s deployment.

“Matthew knows she is gone and asks for her sometimes,” David said. “Thanks to the internet, I hear from her at least once a day on the phone with the help of Magic Jack.”

Skyping once a month and sending USO United Through Reading DVDs and books helps Valerie stay connected to her husband and son, she said.

“I love to read books to my son and he really enjoys seeing me at any opportunity,” Valerie said.

The United Through Reading program allows a deployed parent to record themselves with a video camera reading a book. The book and DVD is then sent to their families. The simple things are taken for granted, Valerie said, like getting into a car to go grocery shopping or going on a date with her husband –even the drive-thru at Wendy’s for chili and chicken nuggets.

With the right support system, such as a Phalanx Weapons System, a naval ship and military base can provide protection for those they house –parents. For deployed parents the right support system is found in the internet, USO programs, and most importantly -family.

Valerie does not have one job, but two. She is an operator of LPWS and a Mom. The two go hand-in-hand.

“I know the decisions I make today will not only affect me but my son,” Valerie said. “He is my extra motivation. I tend to look at challenges from a new perspective and he taught me *a lot* of patience goes a long way.”

A big cheer for being there for deploying service members

SHOWING support for service members comes in many forms: yellow ribbons tied around trees, patriotic bumper stickers or magnets, applauding a unit walking through the airport. Smiling.

“Be there and be of good cheer,” Wayne Jackson, USO Puget Sound Area volunteer said. “Show them you appreciate their service and try to help them out as much as possible.”

The USOPSA center at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, where Wayne volunteers, provides service members with hot dogs, sandwiches, drinks and a place where they can relax before they have to catch an airplane for deployment.

Wayne knows a cheerful face and a big smile helps. He’s sincere when he says “see you in nine months” or “be careful, and come back”. After serving in the Army for 20 years, Wayne retired as a Staff Sergeant.

“I give the soldiers an ‘at-a-boy’ for coming in,” Wayne said. “Most of them know they’re going to Iraq or Afghanistan. Some of them know they are in some dangerous jobs.” This is all part of what Wayne calls giving back to the troops who he says protect his freedom.

“When you work [at the USOPSA], or volun-

teer here, you talk to [service members] and find out some of them are going on four or five tours,” Wayne said. He points to this as evidence of the service member’s patriotism.

With the Army Wayne spent a fair amount of time being flown in and out of countries before he retired. All in all, he estimates he’s worked in 40 to 50 countries as a combat engineer heavy equipment operator or a chemical non-commissioned officer. Whether he was building airfields in Honduras with gunfire raging just out of sight or helping train troops to survive in a chemical warfare environment Wayne stayed busy.

Busy is a good way to describe Wayne’s volunteer efforts with the USOPSA. For the last five years Wayne drove the USOPSA Mobile Canteen to Military Appreciation Day, homecomings, deployments, Operation Backpack at Walgreens locations, Roll of Thunder and Top Foods locations for Service to the Armed Forces (SAF). While not as hazardous a duty as Honduras, the Mobile Canteen still needs to navigate through all types of weather, snow storms included.

About three winters ago Wayne and two other

USOPSA volunteers drove the Mobile Canteen to Bremerton for the first time to welcome home an aircraft carrier.

“We couldn’t see the front end of the RV,” Wayne said. “We couldn’t see the signs on the road. It took us a couple hours –we were going 30, if lucky 35.”

The transition from heavy equipment operator to Mobile Canteen driver is a good fit Wayne believes.

“Sometimes I have to change things,” he said. “Once we get to a site, I get out and I walk it to make sure I can get in and I can get out –that’s the biggest hassle sometimes. They’ll try to put you in a 26 foot spot, you’ve got 32 feet or whatever, but I need about five feet in front and five feet behind me.”

But it’s worth all the effort. “Welcoming the Navy ships, you can really see how the wives and children react,” Wayne said. “They’re waiting hours, I mean hours, for their husband or boyfriend to come off that ship. You can just see the little kids’ faces, the wives’, and girlfriends’ light up. I think that is the most touching, seeing them coming back.”

From the Field: A Medic in the Dirt



DIRT, rocks, maybe even some metal, heaven forbid flesh, go sky rocketing from explosions all around. It is moments like these Army medic, Specialist Seth Rodriguez thinks about the things he’s missed out on in life.

Seth is the Senior Medic within the Forward Aid Station. He handles medical supplies for two aid stations, line medics and also serves as a line medic when the time calls for it.

“I get to play in the dirt and do the challenging missions, events just like the scouts and infantry do,” Seth said, “but I also get a different kind of respect for it.”

For nine months Seth has been stationed at Command Out Post Wilderness, Afghanistan. This is his first deployment. He was nervous rolling out for the first time, he said.

Since his first day of service to now, Seth said he has probably gotten a bit colder when it comes to aspects of life, but there is nothing like things blowing up around him to make him think on the important things in life. A fellow high school graduate, Army Specialist Braden Long, is the person who influenced him the most when it came to joining the military.

“[Specialist Braden Long] came home to his wife and family in a box,” Seth said. “From what I heard, all because the senior scout decided to roll out without a medic. I will do everything within my power to make sure my medics

do their job and that the guys I roll with know that we will bring them home.”

Seth has always been interested in the health care field and being a medic seemed to fit his personality and goals best, he said.

“I have earned the privilege of being called Doc Rod,” Seth said. “As a medic you can be an E1 or E6, but 99 percent of the time on mission you are the only medical expert. You have to be able to instill trust and comfort into the men you work with daily so they know while

“I get the best of both worlds, a noncombat Military Occupation Specialty that gets to be side by side with the grunts on the line.”

they’re out risking their lives “Doc” is right there beside them and will do everything in his powers to make sure he comes home.”

From his education, training and experiences, Seth said he is a more competent and capable medic who has full faith in his abilities to act and react as needed in any situation and not second guessed by himself or others.

“I get the best of both worlds,” Seth said, “a noncombat Military Occupation Specialty that gets to be side by side with the grunts on

the line.”

Deployment can be challenging. When Seth left the United States he was in a fledgling relationship but the stresses of deployment cut it short quick, he said. Time and distance tend to be the biggest challenge.

“Civilians can never fully know how military life style is, so it makes communication a bit tougher,” Seth said. “You end up deploying for a year and a lot can change without you having any real say in it. You have to be firm in your resolve to stay together yet flexible enough to allow changes to happen without you.”

Even with an upper respiratory infection and his leave days away, Seth desired to stay in the field. Service members going out on missions need medics. The more going, the better the chance of injuries being taken care of right away preventing worse damage and even death. Being a medic, he felt this was exactly why he should be going along.

“Thankfully, we haven’t had to [treat Americans] too often out here,” he said. “A bored medic is a good medic.”

Even with the challenges of deployment and being a medic, Seth has decided to reenlist. “I don’t do this because I want congratulations,” he said. He hopes to earn an Additional Skill Identifier and eventually become a Physician’s Assistant.

Passion for Tap Dance led to entertaining troops

By Marcus Cox

SHUFFLIN', shufflin', everyday I'm shufflin' are the lyrics to a song referring to a modern dance style. Shuffling goes back, back farther than most people realize. Helen Sigmund didn't invent the dance step, but as a USO volunteer entertainer she shuffled for the troops. During World War II.

Impossible to imagine, but there was a time in the United States when the only music, or dancing was live entertainment. Before television, film, radio, or the RCA Victrola, musicians and dancers were on stage performing before live audiences.

Helen was a young girl during the transition from live to recorded music. Tap Dance was enormously popular, not only because of the Vaudeville performances but also as a percussion element in Jazz. Tap Dancers could be musical accompaniment or make their own music as well.

"Helen's mother wouldn't let her take tap dance lessons until she practiced a few years of ballet," Halene Sigmund, Helen's daughter, said. Helen went on to become an award winning Tap



Photo courtesy of Halene Sigmund

Dancer. At the age of 17 she was Tap Dancing at USO shows.

The USO became nationally recognized for bringing live entertainment to soldiers far from home. Helen believed her Tap Dancing

was a way she could support the troops and the war effort as a whole. While volunteers and fashionable music change over time, the commitment remains.

The shuffle step changed over time too. In the 1800s Irish step dancing combined with African music and dancing to become a uniquely American art form. From the inclusion in jazz music to the appearance in Hollywood, musicals tap dance continued after the war. So did Helen's belief in the importance of giving back to the community.

Even in places as far afield as Laos, Thailand, Indonesia, and Borneo Helen continued to be involved in community activities. Brining her love of Tap Dance with her, Helen gave lessons to neighborhood children for free in addition to her volunteer activities.

"My mother was an inspirational woman and touched many lives through her true ability to accept people without pretense," Halene said.

Two of Helen's sons were to serve in the military, one in the Army, the other in the Navy. After 84 years of life, a life valuing the importance of her family and community, Helen passed away on July 10 this year.

Martha Raye gives laughs, comfort and American flag to Enlisted Club in Vietnam during USO Shows tour

IN THE Enlisted Club cues popped and balls careened across the felt table. Service members sat or stood listlessly about. It was hot. Even after two weeks of training in Saigon it seemed impossible anyone could ever be acclimated to the weather in Vietnam. Through the hazy smoke filled air the red, white and blue of an American flag could be seen framed above the bar.

Rodney B. Cobb was a Private First Class in Vietnam, working as a UH-1 helicopter mechanic. He recalls when USO Shows entertainers Martha Raye and George Jessel were visiting Soc Trang, and when the flag was something new for the Enlisted Club.

"Martha donated the small flag," Rodney said. "I like to think Martha wanted to help us. She wanted to give us something to hang on to, like a flag."

Martha Raye and George Jessel were famous comedians who volunteered to travel to the service members during World War II and Vietnam. Far from the conveniences of theatres, performers entertained on makeshift stages. A hangar housing the parts department underwent a transformation so the show could go on. Sheets of ply wood were set down on the flat roof to be used as a stage. Service members sat on the floor. Others used hydraulic ladders to sit on so they could see over the others.

"I felt grateful she was there," Rodney said. "A guy in WWII could have had the same feelings."



Photo courtesy of USO Photo/Vietnam

Here comedian Martha Raye performs "Hello Dolly!" in Vietnam, 1967, with the USO Shows. She toured with the USO during WWII, Vietnam and the Korean War.

Rodney didn't think much of the significance of the show at the time but now he realizes it was a special time.

"It would have been one of the last times for us to see someone from Vaudeville," he said. Vaudeville is a theatrical genre where musicians, comedians, dancers and actors all on the same bill would perform before a live audience. During the USO Shows tour a few USO female volunteers served doughnuts and coffee near the hangar. It was a small gesture that made a huge difference in a world of combat.

"The local towns folk were our friends by day and would cook our food, wash our clothes, cut our hair and by night they would fire mortars at us or try to run through the barbed wire fences," Rodney said.

Rodney tells a story of how a box of Zippo

lighters from a civilian truck was stolen. The cotton filling was replaced by an explosive. Lighters were left in the street or on table tops in bars or restaurants. Anyone who would pick up a Zippo and test it usually lost an eye or hand.

"The company commander had to submit paper work saying that the company had been shot at six times in order for us to get our \$35 combat pay at the end of the month," he said.

As main divisions began coming to Vietnam the combat pay was increased by \$10 and it became an automatic addition to the service members' pay.

When Rodney was stationed at Fort Lewis in January 1966 he'd been back less than a year when he was asked if he would volunteer again for Vietnam. He chose instead to stay home with his wife and family for as long as he could. Still, Rodney stayed with the Army for twenty years, from 1962 to 1982.

The flag Martha Raye gave the 121st Aviation Company of the 13th Aviation Battalion in the 4th Corp to hang over the bar at the Enlisted Club gave service members something to hold on to. Today, the American flag still means just as much and is display in a variety of ways. They represent freedom, liberty, justice. They are laid over caskets. They are folded and given to widows. They are flown from houses and car windows. They are raised and respected at sports games. They are present on uniforms. What does the American flag mean to you?

Stock, supply logistics fast paced to support aircraft

By Logistics Specialist Seaman
Cassandra Jorgensen

MY FIRST introduction to USS JOHN C. STENNIS (CVN-74) was a chilly day in October. Needless to say I was fascinated as I drove on the base where different aircraft carriers were staring me down. I met my sponsor and he walked me onto the ship formally introducing me to my new job, home, and transportation for the next three years. I was a little intimidated by the size, but I figured the bigger the better.

I joined the Navy three years ago at the age of twenty-four. Before, I was waiting tables and bartending for a living. I decided this was the opportune time to experience something different. I liked the idea of free schooling and travel opportunities. Nine weeks after my first visit with my recruiter I was on a plane to the Great Lakes.

Within one year the Navy collapsed my rate as the Store Keeper and collapsed the Postal Clerk rate too. Now I am a Logistics Specialist which sounds a little more professional on paper.

I personally chose to come to Bremerton, Washington. Originally from Alabama, I was convinced a change of scenery, environment and culture would be exciting and beneficial. When I asked

for the great Northwest my detailer did not hesitate at all and sent me to USS JOHN C. STENNIS.

Coming to the ship as a seaman I went to S-8 division, one of the core divisions within the Supply Department. All I was told was to expect a



good workout, considering S-8 handles most of the Stock and Direct Turn-Over material entering the ship. My Leading Chief Petty Officer sent me straight to Main 1. I really had no idea what to expect or what was going on so I went with the flow.

Main 1 is the fastest moving set of consumable storerooms on board.

I learned my job pretty quickly. I was given the opportunity to be assistant to the Main 1 supervisor which challenged me and expanded my leadership skills. With hard work it didn't take long to earn respect among my peers and my chain of command. After six months on board I was given my own storeroom with around fifteen thousand line items, costing \$8-10 million. The material in my storeroom supports the air wing, helping to repair the heart of the carrier -the aircraft.

Throughout my enlistment I have learned many things including more about myself. Ship life isn't always easy. There are many things that take adjusting to: food, living conditions, not going home every day, little contact with family and friends and learning to work with many different personalities. This establishment definitely has driven me to become a better person. I appreciate the priceless opportunity to utilize free schooling while traveling to countries which would never have made my vacation list.

All in all the military is a good learning experience one way or another. There are many different opportunities and if utilized correctly will lead to very successful steps in future goals and decisions.



By Logistics Specialist Third Class
Jennifer Fasnacht

BEING from sunny Tampa, Fla. I decided it was time for a change. On June 22, 2010, I made a life changing decision to enlist in the United States Navy.

I was eager to join due to the endless list of great opportunities offered to me by my recruiter. Furthering my education using Tuition Assistance or the GI Bill, the Loan Repayment Program, traveling the world and medical benefits were just a couple of things that struck my interest at the time.

I chose the west coast when picking orders for my first command. When I arrived in Bremerton, Wash., I was escorted by the duty driver to check onboard USS JOHN C. STENNIS (CVN-74). The size of the ship and the amount of people onboard was overwhelming. However, it wasn't long before I adapted to life on an aircraft carrier.

Living in tight quarters with many others, waiting in long lines, not having a constant open com-

munication with the outside world and missing holidays are just a couple of the things we learn to live with as sailors.

Along with adjusting to the ship, I also had to



learn my job as a Logistics Specialist (LS) in the S-8 division of the Supply Department. The first couple of months I was moved around to learn the basics of storekeeping. At the time I had a super-

visor who took great interest in helping me to expand my knowledge as an LS and prepare me for advancement. Each day is a challenge and there is always something new to learn no matter how long you've been in or what rank you are. The Navy is constantly changing and upgrading. It takes a lot to keep up with each new thing.

Now that I have been in my rate for a while I have been given the opportunity to have more responsibility in my division. I am currently supervisor of Main 2 which consists mostly of parts belonging to anything from the reactor which powers our ship to the jets on the flight deck. Doing my job to the best of my ability is imperative; misplacing a part could mean downing a jet which would affect the mission of JOHN C. STENNIS. Knowing we place parts in the hands of customers who repair this national asset gives me a great feeling of accomplishment each day I work onboard STENNIS. I am proud of my decision to join the Navy and I look forward to facing the many challenges still ahead.

Mark, circle, scribble. The events are here USOPSA at Microsoft Campus (for Microsoft employees only)

October 10 - 12, Fundraiser at Microsoft Commons, item offered: Paintball with Marines

Race for a Soldier

October 16, Gig Harbor, 13.1 Mile Half-marathon, 2 Mile & Kids Fun Run

Veterans Day Parade

November 5, Main Street, Auburn, USOPSA Mobile Canteen will be in parade

5 Star Gala

November 17, Museum of Flight, Black Tie event

Trevor Romain Visits Puget Sound Area

November 28 - December 1, Children's Comedian Trevor Romain will visit bases

Food & Toy Drive

December 2 and 3, Various Wal-Mart locations throughout Puget Sound

Snowball Express

December 9 - 13 American Airlines takes military children to Six-Flags, TX

September 11 Anniversary Coins

These coins represent lives lost
and given for our country.



Visit www.usopsa.org

Under tab "Get Involved" to purchase a coin
for yourself or others for \$10.

Proceeds go toward the USO Puget Sound Area
Brought to you by Coinforce.com

Maiden year of Operation Backpack proves rocky, still earns star for effort

FOR the first time the USO Puget Sound Area hosted a back to school campaign, called Operation Backpack. Partnering with Walgreens stores south of Seattle the goal was to collect 2,000 backpacks with school supplies during the first three weeks in August.

Just over 450 backpacks were distributed, most purchased by the USO Puget Sound Area to meet the requirements for scheduled events such as a back to school fair held by the 62nd Medical Brigade. Other backpacks and school supplies were donated at Naval Base Kitsap to families with children who have special needs.

“It was a small event this year,” USOPSA SeaTac Center manager Shirley McGann said. “I feel it will bloom into a larger event now that the stores and the USO know what to expect.”

The USOPSA Mobile Canteen, volunteers, staff and Walgreens staff hosted barbeques on Saturdays during Operation Backpack. All the hotdogs, cases of soda and chips were provided by Walgreens. There was so much food a single barbeque could have gone on for an entire month, Shirley said. Next year the USOPSA hopes to involve media earlier in

the campaign to partner with the flyers and Web announcements put out. The barbeques saw a better turn out towards the end of the afternoon, so beginning at noon or one o’clock will be the plan for next time instead of starting at 11:30 AM.

“The USOPSA volunteers were eager and excited to help,” Shirley said. “In Bremerton, the Walgreens employees and USO volunteers stood on the street corner with the USO banner waving.”

USOPSA volunteers brought backpacks, binders, notebooks, markers and pens to the SeaTac Center during Operation Backpack. Shirley said volunteers are devoted to helping military families in any capacity.

The demand for school supplies and backpacks was numerous. When the Operation Backpack announcement was made on the USOPSA Facebook page military individuals e-mailed USOPSA Communications and IT Lead Meaghan Cox asking how they could become a recipient of the campaign.

A handful of backpacks and supplies were donated after the campaign. These items were sent to the USOPSA center at Joint Base Lewis-McChord where they were claimed quickly.



September 16, USOPSA Volunteers gathered at Joint Base Lewis-McChord for an appreciation lunch

Acknowledgments from Center Managers

Shirley McGann, manager of the Sea-Tac Center, says Thank You to the following:

- ◆ Hayward Family, who have taken on changing and rotating the mattresses in the bunk room. This is labor some and exhausting!
- ◆ Laurene Ako, Kathy Baker, Ann Schneider, Karen Ott, Kelly Parsons, Kristie King, Wayne Jackson who assisted with the Walgreens BBQs.
- ◆ Adrienne Sardelli, Larry Tisino, Wendy Flores, Jane Beringer, Vicki Lockwood, Amber Cooke, Chris Osman, Karen Brady, Frank and Solveig Steenerson for helping at the Homecoming Event for the Coast Guard 313th.
- ◆ To the steadfast group of volunteers who met the training requirements and have the strength of character to be a USO representative for the Families of the Fallen. I am grateful for Alice Caravias, Netha White and Tanya Neilsen’s help, many times with only a hour’s notice.

To all shifts who assisted an unannounced spouse of a fallen soldier on Saturday, July 30.

You comforted her when she was inconsolable, checked her bags, got her an airline escort and called the USO at her next destination so they could meet her at the gate –all without my assistance. All of you are passionate, proactive, caring people.

Andrew Oczkewicz, manager of the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Center, says Thank You to the following for helping during the Center Manager transition:

- ◆ Mac McDaniel, for taking on the Interim Manager role and everyone survived!
- ◆ Elizabeth Abbot, for being the “Call me anytime” volunteer
- ◆ Kristie King, for managing United Through Reading
- ◆ Herb Schmeling, for organizing the storage cage
- ◆ Wayne Jackson, who drives the mobile to USOPSA off-site events
- ◆ June Hershey, for being the point person for the dorm espresso stand
- ◆ Debbie Zeller, Kim Darrow and Josie Sappington for helping with deployment briefings and so much more!

I know all the volunteers do such a fabulous job serving in the center and the dorm. I look forward to meeting you all!

Visit USOPSA at www.usopsa.org and like our facebook page

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

On October 1 I was given the opportunity to make care packages for the 2/75 Ranger Battalion. I didn’t know what to expect. I’d never met the wives and the only care package event I’d been to was in Washington DC at the Pentagon. When I called to ask if I could bring chocolate bars for the packages, I was declined. The weather may still be too warm in Afghanistan. I felt useless bringing enough calling cards for every man to have three.

When I reached the Rangers’ dining hall at Fort Lewis I was greeted with a big smile from Dana Ganaden. Her husband has been with the Army for twenty years and she has been married to him for just as long. I was introduced to a small handful of wives. I suddenly relaxed as I realized how low key this event would be. We assembled boxes, made sure there were 70, then got to business. Each box would go down the line as the wives placed designated items in them. I was at the end of the row making sure everything was in the box and then added my calling cards. The USO Puget Sound Area was given a donation of 10,000 DVDs from Fox Studios and 5,000 cases of Red Bull. I was glad to see these were among the items for the care packages.

As we taped up the filled packages one wife saw her husband’s name written on the care package. She excitedly said “Oh, that’s my husband’s!”, picked up the box and placed a kiss on it. A maroon lipstick print stood out against the white cardboard. She grinned at me and told me the lips were a necessity.

As I spoke with Dana about the Rangers I was let further into the world these families and service members live. Most of the wives only speak to their husbands once every ten days if they are lucky. Times are tough right now for the Rangers and the need for calling cards has never been so high. The value of those three cards in each package suddenly dawned on me.

Each card may say 100 minutes, but in the fine print it’s only 20 minutes when calling from Iraq or Afghanistan. I can only imagine how fast those 20 minutes go when one is speaking to their spouse for the first time in 10 or more days.

It was an honor to spend an afternoon being surrounded by such strong women and an absolute privilege to put those care packages together for the 2/75 Ranger Battalion.

Please consider donating calling cards to the USOPSA or donating money so our organization may provide more opportunities for service members to call their families.



I hope you enjoy this newsletter.

Meaghan Cox
Commications & IT Lead
comm.it@usopsa.org

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New volunteers at Centers

SeaTac	Amber Cooke
Kristina Anderson	Lindsay Johnston
Roberta Alley	Steve Grissom
Jane Beringer	
Kathie Brown	Joint Base Lewis-McChord
Patti Brown	Shawn Henderson
Vicki Bourland	Donnie Hunt
Tisha Buelto	Jacque Soltan
Rick Chase	Larry Gwinn
Marge Chissus	Ana Strickler
Byron Coates	Julie Renton

USO Trivia

1. How many bunks does the SeaTac Center have?
2. What helicopter did Don Leingang fly during his fleet tour?
3. How much money was raised for the USOPSA during SeaFair 2011?
4. How many visitors did the Spokane Center serve over the course of WWII?
5. In 1944, the Tacoma Centers wrapped how many holiday gifts?

USOPSA Volunteers’ Birthdays

October	
1. Diana Livingston	15. Janet Haskin
2. Larry Smith	18. Ella Young
5. Dick Booth & Diana Davis	22. Frank Carruthers & Amber Cooke
6. Edie Maffeo	24. Tish Greenman
7. Brian Hayward	25. Diana Miller
12. Ingrid Dunton & Karen Madison	27. Kristina Anderson & Kathy Baker
13. Dave Lester	28. Mac McDaniel
14. Mike Pratum	29. Rodney Call

November	
1. Renate Higgeson	18. Nola Strecker
3. Cindy Norris	21. Judy Leyden
7. Doc Huff	23. Susan Stober
10. Danielle Spencer	24. Dennis Fehrenback & Jane Hughes
11. Misty Leingang	27. Jim Roper & Ann Schneider
12. Elizabeth Johnson, Kristie King & Fran Parker	28. Jessica Best
14. Trudi Loertscher	29. Arlene Bales, Tineke Gerecke & Carol Turley
15. Marian Herrin	30. Mike Larson
17. Eric Chow & Linda Rego	

December	
2. Laurene Ako & Beth-Ann Peterson	12. Linda Russell
3. Susanne Bradley & Joshua Coffland	13. Sarge Carter
4. Dean Quigley	16. Marina Baker & Andrew Oczkewicz
6. Elizabeth Tubbs	28. Janet Graham & Wayne Jackson
7. Jimmy Landerdahl	29. Belinda Hernandez
9. Carolyn Abrahams	31. Denny Hamilton & Chris Osman



Trivia Answers: 1. There are 12 bunks 2. Leingang flew a H-46D ‘Sea Knight’ 3. Over \$3,500 was donated 4. 1.4 million served 5. 20,693 gifts