

NRC Avoca Provides Air Force One Security

By JO1 Mike Miller



Sailors from Navy Reserve Center Avoca responded quickly to the official request for a security detail for Air Force One, which visited Northeastern Pennsylvania for a campaign stop on 22 Oct. The Air Force One advance team routinely uses the closest military Reserve or Guard facility to secure the aircraft and its fuel, the latter considered a Level One asset. (L to R) Author JO1 Mike Miller; SW2 Raymond Paquette; CE3 Peter Sanders; BU2 Brian Vennie; LCDR T. J. Bartley, Commanding Officer, Navy Reserve Center Avoca, PA; BUC(SCW) Gerard Pietrzyk; CMC(SCW) Thomas Schoenagel; HM2 Kenneth McCawley; and SKC(SW) John Bennett. FCC(SW) Richard Craig is missing from the photo. (Photo by MAJ Chris Reifel, USAF)

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Air Force MAJ Chris Reifel, Presidential Advance Agent for Air Force One, visited Navy Reserve Center Avoca and spoke with LCDR T. J. Bartley, Commanding Officer. Bartley said, "I knew exactly what he wanted when he introduced himself as 'MAJ Reifel with Air Force One Advance.'"

LCDR Bartley said, "Reservists with expert riflemen qualifications assigned to four different units at Avoca were contacted and the security team was formed. Just over 24 hours later the security team met at Navy Reserve Center Avoca to be assigned their rifles, magazines, and ammunition. BU2 Brian Vennie – a Pennsylvania State Police corporal in civilian life – gave a weapons safety brief, followed by a deadly force brief . . . Everyone on the team was highly qualified for this duty, and it's

rewarding to use the training we receive through the Navy Reserve."

"It's important to recognize," Bartley added, "the tremendous cooperation on the part of these Reservists' civilian employers. This was a very short-fused tasker, and we had these Sailors calling their employers and telling them they won't be in for two days; and they couldn't tell them why, but it was for the Navy. Of course, the employers were told immediately afterward, but their cooperation was an excellent example of employer support of the Guard and Reserve."

At the top of the Air Force One accommodation ladder, President Bush turned and waived at the crowd as he departed; the Avoca security detachment stood in formation and a salute was rendered. The Commander-in-Chief snapped a sharp return salute, waived at the rest of the crowd, and boarded Air Force One. Later, the Secret Service agent in charge informed the commanding officer that the agents were impressed with how well the Avoca security team had performed. Bartley said, "The Avoca Reservists were happy to oblige." 📌

Naval Air Force, Atlantic Fleet 0293 Change of Command

CAPT Jeff Blackburn, USNR, relieved CAPT Robert Ford, USNR, as the commanding officer of Commander, Naval Air Force, Atlantic Fleet 0293 during their change of command ceremony held 2 Oct. at Liberty Circle, NAS JRB Willow Grove, PA.

(L to R) CAPT Robert Ford and CAPT Jeff Blackburn. (Photo by PH1 Ray Robson)



VADM Cotton Kicks Off NAVELSF Leadership Symposium

By LT Mike Randazzo, USNR
NAVELSF Public Affairs

Chief of the Navy Reserve, VADM John Cotton, was the featured speaker at the FY 2005 Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Force (NAVELSF) Commanding Officers Leadership Symposium, Williamsburg, VA.

On 19 November 2004, he briefed over 200 of the command's staff, senior enlisted, and officer leadership on the operational status of the Navy Reserve Force. He also provided updates on other key issues that affect the force such as transformation, human capital strategy, and health care.

Despite the high operational tempo and the heavy demands of executing the mobilization of close to 1,500 Reservists in support of cargo handling and customs inspection missions for Operation Iraqi Freedom, VADM Cotton stressed the importance of taking the time to promote communication as a leadership and a force-shaping tool.



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"Information and idea exchange are vital to building organizations that are collaborative and knowledge-based," Cotton said. "Creating a culture of communication is not only one of the Navy's greatest challenges, but also is one of the greatest opportunities to foster a One Navy concept and better integrate our Active and Reserve Components."

In closing, he reminded the audience that those who proudly wear the cloth of the nation serve a greater mission that transcends service boundaries: "Hope and freedom are our military's most important products, and we are the protectors of those ideals. Think of operational support missions not as Navy missions but as missions for America."

This year's symposium was held from 19-21 November and also included breakout conferences for NAVELSF equipment and training officers and senior medical department representatives.

CAPT Kurt D. Sisson Retires in Washington, DC

By CDR Meg Reed, First Naval Construction Division Public Affairs

In a recent ceremony at Naval Facilities Engineering Command, CAPT Kurt D. Sisson, Civil Engineer Corps, retired from the U.S. Naval Reserve after 27 years of service. Distinguished guest speaker, retired RADM Robert Marlay, expressed high praise for CAPT Sisson's many contributions to the U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps and Seabee programs.

CAPT Sisson earned his Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Tennessee in 1976, and, upon graduation, received a direct commission as an ensign in the Civil Engineer Corps. Following his release from active duty in October 1980, CAPT Sisson affiliated with the Reserve and completed his first tour with a Seabee battalion (Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 23 (NMCB 23)). Other assignments were at the Reserve Naval Construction Force, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, and the Second Naval Construction Brigade. In between these assignments, CAPT Sisson returned to NMCB 23 to serve as the executive officer and then the commanding officer in 1993, when the battalion achieved the Battle Efficiency "E" for the ninth time in its history.



CAPT Kurt Sisson (left) receives the Defense Superior Service Medal from RADM James McGarrah (right) while RADM Robert Marlay looks on.

After completing his CO's tour with NMCB 23, CAPT Sisson accepted assignments at the U.S. Atlantic Command, the Second Naval Construction Brigade; Naval Facilities Engineering Command; and, then, assumed command of the Seventh Naval Construction Regiment in October 1999. His last assignment was at Theater Contingency Engineering Management, U.S. Pacific Command, Honolulu, HI, in November 2001.

In his civilian position, CAPT Sisson is the Chief of Facilities at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. He is a Registered Architect in Virginia.

During the ceremony, CAPT Sisson thanked his wife, CAPT Barbara Sisson, and their children for their unparalleled family support, RADM Robert Marlay, as well as former and current Navy and civilian bosses and mentors. RADM James McGarrah presented CAPT Sisson with the Defense Superior Service Medal awarded by Admiral Tom Fargo, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command for his leadership of a Reserve Joint Engineer Augment Unit supporting Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, contingency exercises, and high profile Engineering Division tasking.



6th Fleet Reserve Unit Gets New CO

*By Journalist First Class (SW) Mike Kramer
Naval Air Reserve Willow Grove Public Affairs Office*

Naval Reserve Commander Maritime Surveillance and Reconnaissance Forces Sixth Fleet 0193 welcomed a new commanding officer when CDR Mark A. Patterson relieved CDR Samuel R. Young during a change of command ceremony at the Orion's Training and Conference Center here on 2 October.

"Over the past couple of years, I've seen and heard about the contributions made by Sixth Fleet 0193," said Patterson, the former executive officer of Naval Reserve Naval Air Station Keflavik 0293 that drills here. "Your reputation as one of the best units at Willow Grove is well-deserved, and I'm privileged to serve with you. I'm looking forward to challenging opportunities and rewarding experiences during this tour."

RADM Daniel S. Mastagni, Deputy Commander, Fleet Air Force Mediterranean, was the guest speaker at the ceremony and talked about the future of the Navy and the Reserve force's impact on national defense.

"It is, indeed, an honor to be here today," said RADM Mastagni. "It's an honor because I get the opportunity to pay my respects to the men and women – officers, chief petty officers, and enlisted (personnel) – of our Naval Reserve. It's an honor for me because I get a chance to tell them how much they mean to our country, how much they mean to me, and how much we depend on them. It's an honor because I get to tell them how proud I am of them."

"We've been hearing a lot about transformation in the past," he added. "In my opinion, we've come so far that I consider the transformation to be just about complete. We're going to do a little bit of tweaking here and there and a little more modeling, but we're in pretty good shape."

The Admiral specifically addressed major changes to the Navy's operational employment, noting the increased efficiency in the fleet that has resulted in reduced training cycles

between deployments since the start of the second phase of the service's transformation.

"Now, you've seen the second part of the transformation happen," said RADM Mastagni. "We cut down the forces we had in Europe, and we're going to reduce the forces we have in Korea. Where are we going to put those people? We're not leaving them overseas. It's very expensive to keep people based overseas. We're bringing them home because we're agile, we're light, we're responsive, and we're mobile. The Air Force can get where they need to go with precision bombing within 25 hours and a carrier strike group can get there within ten days. That's what the future of our military is right now."

RADM Mastagni closed by congratulating Young on an outstanding tour highlighted by a five-month recall to Commander Task Force 67, where he supported Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Following RADM Mastagni's remarks, the base's commanding officer, CAPT Harry L. Myers, presented Young with a Meritorious Service Medal. Then, Patterson accepted command of NR CMSRF 6th Fleet from Young, who is transferring to Washington, DC, to report to Naval Reserve, Chief of Naval Operations for Operations and Plans.

"None of us here, in uniform, could fulfill our Reserve responsibilities without the support of families and friends," said Patterson as he addressed the crowd. "While we certainly regret the many missed birthdays, christenings, ball games, and other family activities, as Reservists, we provide essential support to active duty forces and contribute significantly to our national defense. The support of our families and friends is critical. With your support, you also contribute to our nation's defense by helping provide a credible Reserve force that can be called upon immediately. Today's ceremony is also a great opportunity to thank all of you (for these contributions)." 📌