



Coast Guard Retiree Council — Northwest



RETIREE NEWSLETTER

“They Also Serve”

VOLUME IX ISSUE 3

THREE COASTGUARDSMEN LEFT IN SEAL QUEST

Military.com | by Christian Lowe

First there were 19 who were whittled down to 12. Then only five were left standing.

Now, after one of the world’s most crushing selection programs, only two remain - well, three, if you count the one who was rolled back into the initial phase of the school.

For the first time in its storied history, the Coast Guard is on track to have two of its own earn the coveted trident badge of a Navy SEAL. The two officers have reached the third phase of initial SEAL selection after joining Basic Underwater Demolition School class 276 in March, enduring the grueling mental and physical travails that weed out all but the hardest warriors.

“I’m very proud of these guys,” said Master Chief Petty Officer Darrick DeWitt, the senior enlisted advisor for the Coast Guard’s Deployable Operations Group, which ran the selection process for the service.

“We wanted to make sure we sent people with good character and good values. I think we did that,” he added in a telephone interview with Military.com. “These guys not only represented the Coast Guard well, but represented their country well.”

After a two-year effort to leverage

the expertise of Naval Special Warfare and the Coast Guard’s new role in homeland security and maritime special operations, the service selected its first group of Coastguardsmen to become commandos late last summer.

Coast Guard officials say they hope the SEAL-trained Coasties will seed the rest of the force with valuable skills learned in special operations training and operations and bring back to their sea service a bit of the esprit de corps found in the commando ranks.

For Naval Special Warfare, the pressure to grow its force makes an injection of well-vetted candidates to their ranks a boon, cutting out the hassle of dealing with recruits who don’t have what it takes to become a SEAL.

“We’re just glad to get good candidates,” said Lt. Commander Shane Reilly, the executive officer at the Naval Special Warfare Basic Training Command in Coronado, Calif. “With the war going on, we’re under a lot of pressure to increase [special operations forces] and we walk a fine line ... without bending standards.”

After reviewing 19 applications back in August 2008, evaluators tapped 12 Coastguardsmen to run through a week-long selection process in Panama City, Fla., that included physical tests, mental evaluations and exercises that gave the wannabe



Seal Training.

frogmen a taste of what the legendary Basic Underwater Demolition School, or BUDS, is all about.

The Coast Guard declined to provide any further details on the SEAL candidates’ identities for security reasons.

In the end, five made the cut, including four officers - a civil engineer, two cutter officers and one assigned to the district staff - and an enlisted man who serves as a boarding officer at a station in California.

The enlisted Coastie washed out during the early part of the Navy’s selection process when he came up just short on a physical qualification.

“It surprised me,” DeWitt said of the Coastie, and Reilly added that the man missed the standard by a “very small margin.”

“But, you know, they have tough standards,” DeWitt said. “We’ll see if he wants to come back for a second round.”

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That left four officers who made it into what many believe is the most physically and mentally difficult assessment program in the world. Early morning beach runs, cold water sit ups, sand in every crevice for days, no food, no sleep ... you get the picture. And all the while SEAL instructors are goading you to quit.

And one did.

During the toughest phase of BUDS, one of the four remaining Coasties rang the infamous bell that signaled his voluntary exit from the program, leaving three to complete the course.

Later, another of the officers was injured during the assessment - a frequent cause of SEAL candidate drop outs - and was rolled back into a new class to start from the beginning of BUDS.

Though having only three Coasties left in a program that originally sported nearly 20 qualified applicants represents an 85 percent attrition rate, neither Reilly nor DeWitt are concerned.

“Our goal is not to just help out the Coast Guard, it’s to help out the nation,” DeWitt said. “If we can end up with three or two or one, and we can contribute in that way, then that’s our goal.”

According to Coast Guard officials, only five Coastguardsmen have forwarded paperwork to try out for this year’s class of wannabe SEALs. But the officials also point out that last year’s applications came in late on the August deadline.

DeWitt also said the service has relaxed a few of the application requirements, including dropping the mandate that prospective SEALs be qualified weapons experts since BUDS creates expert marksmen through its own training.

By all accounts, the Navy and Coast Guard see this program as a worthwhile one that will continue for several more years.

E-MAIL NEWSLETTER

Electronic mail notification resumed with the November 2007 newsletter published by the CG Retiree Council—NW. If you have already signed up for this notification, it is not necessary to submit a change. To add your name, or change your prior e-mail address, use the Retiree Council—NW website: <http://www.cgretirenw.org>. To make the change “click” on **MAIL COORDINATOR**.

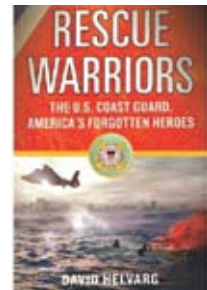
“It’s a long road for them,” Reilly said. “But when they do go out and join those teams, I’m sure they’ll fit in just fine.”

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RESCUE WARRIORS: THE U.S. COAST GUARD, AMERICA’S FORGOTTEN HEROES

www.hotindienews.com/

David Helvarg is the author of *The U.S. Coast Guard, America’s Forgotten Heroes*. “Rescue Warriors” is the first comprehensive source on the U.S. Coast Guard. It looks at their history, how and why they were able to save over 33,000 people after Hurricane Katrina when the rest of the federal government was immobilized, how they’ve changed since 9/11 a day on which they coordinated the evacuation of half a million people from lower Manhattan, and why they need to change again in the face of a melting Arctic and other global challenges including climate change, pirates and pandemics.



While writing this book, author Helvarg rode along with “Coasties” from the Aleutians to the Persian Gulf to Hurricane Ike in Texas and many places in between profiling their on the job mix of patriotism, altruism and adrenaline while maintaining a critical point of view and expertise that makes him the ‘go-to’ source on any stories involving this critical agency.

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TRIWEST LAUNCHES TELE-BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE TO SUPPORT MILITARY

TRICARE beneficiaries can click, chat and videoconference for support 24/7/365

Scott Celley

PHOENIX — In support of a Department of Defense initiative to provide U.S. Armed Forces and their families with easy, around-the-clock access to behavioral health support, TriWest Healthcare Alliance announces the launch of the TriWest Online Care program. TRICARE’s West Region beneficiaries can access online behavioral health support, day or night, from any Internet connection, anywhere in the world, through www.triwest.com/bh.

“We are pleased to have the ability to offer expanded access to behavioral health support for the military personnel and their families that we serve in the 21 states of the TRICARE West Region,” said David J. McIntyre, president and CEO of TriWest Healthcare Alliance. “Our new Online Care Program will provide those we are privileged to serve with access to care and much needed support services when and where it is most convenient for them. They deserve this enhanced level of support, without the added worry of external perceptions or judgment. We’re pleased to assist the military in standing up this new benefit, because it’s the right thing to do.”

TriWest’s Online Behavioral Health Care Program expands access to behavioral health services for West Region beneficiaries. In addition to TriWest’s network of 20,000 behavioral health care providers who serve the West Region, it is organized around a “stepped care” model of delivery that presents eligible beneficiaries with an array of service level options and access to resources and services most appropriate to meet their needs. The continuum of care includes:

TriWest Behavioral Health Portal

Self-service access 24/7/365 (www.triwest.com/bh) to behavioral health information and education through an extensive virtual resource library of articles and streaming videos on topics ranging from deployment-related stress and PTSD, to parenting, relationships, depression, substance abuse, suicide and coping with loss. In addition, an interactive resource directory provides links to hundreds of na-

tional and community-based resources available to provide an array of assistance services.

TriWest’s Behavioral Health Contact Center (BHCC).

Beneficiaries can contact the BHCC via phone (888-874-9378), secure Web-based e-mail, or instant messaging (IM)/live chat (www.triwest.com/bh) 24/7/365.

TRICARE Assistance Program (TRIAP)

Private, confidential, non-reportable, non-medical professional assistance services 24/7/365 via secure Web-based video conferencing, which permits two-way, real-time service and consultation by licensed, masters or PhD-level counselors. This option is available to eligible active duty service members and their families, TRICARE Reserve Select members and beneficiaries eligible for the TAMP program.

TriWest’s Tele-Behavioral Health Care Network

By contacting the BHCC, staff will assist eligible beneficiaries in locating a network provider and coordinating their appointment for either clinical counseling services by a qualified network provider via Web-based videoconferencing or face-to-face in the office as appropriate for the beneficiary.



DOUBLE TIME FOR TRICARE AUTHS AND REFERRALS

by Bonnie Thomas

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Beginning August 4, TRICARE authorizations for care that include evaluation and treatment are good for 180 days. That’s twice the 90 days that were allowed previously, giving you more time to complete your care and any follow-up visits. Remember, if you do not receive care before the authorization expires, you will need to get a new authorization.

Please note that this change isn’t effective for all authorizations. Some, like maternity authorizations, will be longer than 180 days, and some, such as physical therapy authorizations, will be shorter.

If you are registered at www.triwest.com, you can receive QuickAlert notifications by e-mail or phone

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once your authorizations or referrals have been processed. That means you can schedule specialty care appointments 7-10 days sooner than if you wait for notification by mail.

To protect your privacy, no personal information will be included in the e-mail—just a notice of an authorization status change and a link to the secured login page on <http://www.triwest.com> for more information.

Not registered? It's easy. Just follow the prompts and start managing your health care online, anytime, from any Internet connection.

Visit the [Authorizations and Referral page](http://www.triwest.com/beneficiary/authRef.aspx) at www.triwest.com/beneficiary/authRef.aspx for additional information.

AUTOMATE YOUR TRICARE PRIME ENROLLMENT FEES

*By Tiffany Anderson
TriWest Healthcare Alliance*

Currently paying TRICARE Prime enrollment fees? Read on, because you'll soon be required to change the way you make those payments.

As early as 2010, TRICARE Prime beneficiaries who pay enrollment fees will be required to make their payments electronically. When these changes become effective, check payments will only be accepted to ensure the first payment is made while your electronic payments are established.

By making the change now, you can:

- Avoid disenrollment because of a late payment
- Track payment history online, anytime
- Start spending time where it matters most

Options to begin automating your electronic payments today:

Allotment from the sponsor's retired military pay; or
Electronic funds transfer (EFT) from your financial institution established directly to TriWest.

Already making your TRICARE Prime enrollment fee payments electronically? No action is required unless you are signed up for your bank's online bill pay. This may mean a physical check is cut from your bank and mailed to TriWest. To be compliant for TRICARE's electronic requirement, you would need to redirect the EFT directly to TriWest, following a few simple steps.

Luckily, it's easy to register and get started. To begin, simply log on to www.triwest.com/epay and choose either option:

Online

Registered users can log on to www.triwest.com. Non-registered users can create an account at www.triwest.com and receive a password within minutes. Click on "Make a Payment" and provide the information required for your payment option (allotment or EFT).

By mail

Go to www.triwest.com and select "Find A Form" from the Quick Links section to download and print an allotment or EFT form. Complete the form, sign and mail it with your initial fee payment to:

TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corp
P.O. Box 43590
Phoenix, AZ 85080-3590

If you relocate to another TRICARE region, you'll want to follow similar steps with the TRICARE contractor for that region, as all regional TRICARE contractors will be required to implement this change on behalf of the Department of Defense.

Learn more about making your electronic payments by logging on to www.triwest.com/epay or calling 1-888-TRIWEST (1-888-874-9378) between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. A representative will answer any questions and better inform you about online Web registration or help you to establish an electronic fee payment.



NATIONAL RETIREES HELP DESK

Background:

Under the auspices of the Commandant of the Coast Guard National Retiree Council (CCGRNC) program, the **National Retiree Help Desk** serves as the United States Coast Guard Headquarters single point of contact in CG-1 to keep open a positive line of communications between the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard military retiree community in an effort to ensure the resources and capabilities of each are used to help resolve the needs of the other.

Discussion:

The National Retiree Help Desk (NRHD) has been in operation since July 2006 and is currently staffed by five members of the Capital Area Coast Guard Retiree Council and three other remote retiree volunteers. No one actually sits at the space reserved in HQs for the function. The Help Desk organization and operational concepts were developed by CAPT Norm Lemley, Ret, CAPT Bob Warakomsky, Ret, and LCDR Dave DuPont, Ret. The NRHD serves as a Headquarters point of contact for retirees needing assistance to determine to whom or where they should direct their inquiries. This has already proven to be a valuable communication channel between the active duty Coast Guard and the retiree community. In times of significant organizational change along with ever-changing benefits and retiree support programs, a well functioning NRHD is essential. The NRHD is not meant to curtail direct contact between retirees and the Coast Guard if the contact information is already known. Office space has been allocated in Room 8-0234 at the Coast Guard Headquarters Jemal Building. It is equipped with a computer, e-mail, and telephone service. Retirees are able to call or email questions and concerns.



Contact Information:

Voicemail: 202-475-5381 or 1-866-664-6245

General E-Mail Address: NRHDesk@gmail.com

Watchstanders monitor the voicemail and e-mail account and respond in an appropriate and timely manner. CAPT Bob Warakomsky has set up the program and is the Capital Area Coast Guard Retiree Council's Coordinator. A watch standers list of Council members has been established, but additional people are needed to help. Watch standing procedures, frequently asked questions (FAQs), a list

of links with key programs and other resource material have been developed. Watch standers are given a briefing on

responsibilities; primarily they answer phone and e-mail inquiries. No one is expected to be an expert on Coast Guard programs and retiree-related information (benefits, healthcare, etc.), but rather as watch standers they assist in directing the inquirer to the right source. The FAQs file is a good information source for the watch stander. Care is being taken to minimize the duties of being a watch stander. The concept of a remote watch stander outside of the National Capital Region has worked well, proving that watch standers in any geographical location can perform their duties effectively. The Watch Standing Team maintains contact with the National Retiree Council Liaison, who temporarily is Mr. Clifford Samuel, as a direct point of contact to interface with HQ for administrative support that may be required. He is located in an office near the Retiree Program Coordinator's Office in the Jemal Building.

CG DAY COMMENTS WANTED

Good day everyone, now that another Coast Guard Day picnic is "in the can" (Hollywood jargon), if you attended this year's festivities at the Nile Golf Course and Country Club, PACNORWEST MWR would like to know what you thought of the event. We would like to get your opinions/comments/suggestions about this year's premier D13 morale event to facilitate making the picnic a better experience for TEAM Coast Guard next year. .

Thank you in advance.

Respectfully,

Art Graddy

U.S. Coast Guard PACNORWEST MWR Director
Tel. 206.217.6357 Email - james.a.graddy@uscg.mil



Response Boat at Commencement Bay by Marty Walsh. The response boat-medium (RB-M) is an all-aluminum, 45-foot boat with twin diesel engines and with water jet propulsion launched at Commencement Bay in Tacoma. Shown here with a HH-65 Dolphin helicopter, the RB-M, is the Coast Guard's newest boat to enter the fleet.

ORAL HISTORY OF PORT ORFORD SOUGHT

Do you have personal accounts about the Cape Blanco and Port Orford, Oregon area that you would be willing to share? If so, we are interested in speaking with you.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, in conjunction with the cooperative group, Point Orford Heritage Society, are asking for your help to accurately record history. Specifically, we are interested in information pertaining to the former US Coast Guard Station (now known as Port Orford Heads State Park).

We welcome any creditable accounts, depictions of former structures, clarification of purpose for existing structures and any other compelling stories or information about the lives of people who lived on the southern Oregon Coast. In addition, we welcome any documents or photographs you may want to share.

It is our intention to bring together these memories, experiences and accounts so that they may be documented and preserved. Ultimately, this information will be used in future interpretive exhibits, storyboards or other multimedia displays in order to help explain the historical importance of the area.

To participate or for additional information, please contact assistant ranger Maggie Busto at maggie.busto@state.or.us or call (541) 253-7532 or (541) 332-6774. Your contributions will be greatly appreciated.

NOAA OPERATIONS MOVING FROM LAKE UNION TO OREGON

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is moving its Pacific Marine Operations Center from Seattle to Newport, Oregon.

By Sandi Doughton, Seattle Times science reporter

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is moving its Pacific Marine Operations Center from Seattle to Newport, Ore.

The Seattle center, located on Lake Union, supports 10 research vessels that work along the Pacific Coast. About 175 people work at the center, mostly crew members on the four ships based in Seattle. The move will be made in 2011, the agency announced today.

NOAA has been considering a move for several years. In 2006, a fire swept through the Lake Union facility, destroying two piers and two storage facilities.

In addition to Seattle and Newport, Bellingham and Port Angeles had hoped to be chosen for the base.

The move will not affect NOAA's laboratories near Magnuson Park on Sand Point, and near Montlake.

NOAA's fleet of ships is used for a wide range of scientific and fisheries research.

In making the decision, NOAA officials said they considered many factors, including cost, logistics and quality of life for employees. However, they refused to make public their analysis of the pros and cons of the sites.

The federal contracting process does not allow that information to be released until after a contract is signed, said Rear Admiral Jonathan W. Bailey.

He did say the Newport facility will offer new offices, warehouses and piers, and will allow all of NOAA's ships to be berthed in the same location. Since the Seattle facility was damaged by a fire, ships have been berthed in several locations around Puget Sound.

Newport is home to an Oregon State University marine research lab. Jane Lubchenco, NOAA's new chief, is a former OSU oceanographer, but Bailey said she played no role in the site selection.

U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell of Washington state, who chairs the Senate subcommittee that oversees NOAA, said she intends to fight the planned move.

"I seriously question whether relocating NOAA's ships outside of the Puget Sound is really the right move for NOAA," Cantwell said in a statement.

Cantwell said she will push NOAA and the Department of Commerce, which oversees the agency, "to

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NOAA ships are shown at Lake Union with the Davidson, center. The fleet is moving after nearly 50 years.

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make sure that every option has been given full consideration before a move actually occurs.”

Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels called the NOAA’s decision “deeply disappointing.”

“Ultimately, this was a real estate decision between NOAA and a private Lake Union landowner who could not compete with massive public subsidies,” Nickels said. “We will work with our congressional delegation to explore next steps.”

The NOAA fleet will boost the region’s economy by about \$350 million over the next 20 years, said Newport Mayor Bill Bain. “It makes my head swim when I think about what all the impacts are.”

Newport is an emerging center of ocean science, with OSU’s Hatfield Marine Science Center and field stations for NOAA’s Seattle labs. About 120 NOAA staff and contractors already work there.

The town is “centrally located” for NOAA’s missions, said Capt. Michele Bullock, the Pacific fleet’s commanding officer. The new facilities will “make our operations a lot more efficient,” she said.

Newport also will offer two extra berths for visiting ships, Bullock said. But some of the employees facing relocation are not pleased, she acknowledged. “A lot of folks have been here for a long time.”

The Port of Newport said it would issue \$24.76 million in revenue bonds to cover half the cost of the new facility in Oregon, and the state agreed to add \$19.5 million in bonding capacity for the project.

Sandi Doughton: 206-464-2491 or sdoughton@seattletimes.com. Reprinted by permission.



NOAA Ship Rainier is one of the most modern and productive hydrographic survey platforms of its type in the world. One of the Pacific fleet of NOAA that will relocate to Newport, Oregon.

COAST GUARD HOLIDAY STOCKINGS FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

We were delighted last year when nearly 500 Coast Guard families and volunteers from the community came to stuff a stocking with new toys for a homeless child. We delivered 2968 Holiday Stockings to 79 Shelters just in time for Christmas. The Coast Guard Holiday Stockings has been serving the homeless children for 14 years now. Our need is growing and as of this writing, we are anticipating a 25% increase in the number of stocking requests from our shelters and we hope to meet the need for nearly 3500 stockings this year. Each stocking costs our organization approximately \$19 to fill and represents one more child that we can help.

A donation now will help us to shop early for the best bargains on such stocking necessities as socks, hats, gloves and personal needs, allowing us to stretch your donation dollar to its fullest. Donations by a credit card can be made online through our website at www.holidaystockings.org or mail a check to:

Holiday Stockings
P.O. Box 6392
Bellevue, WA. 98008

Another way to help is to contact your employer’s Human Resource or Donation Office and ask if they will provide a dollar for dollar match for your personal donation of time or money to the Holiday Stocking program. Microsoft, Boeing, Qwest and Safeco are currently providing matching funds to our organization – chances are, your employer may, too. We are an approved 501c3 nonprofit charity and will supply any and all supporting documentation needed by your company. Marianne Parsons, Treasurer at Marianne@holidaystockings.org can help you arrange that. Otherwise contact us at holidaystockings.org or Bobette Scheid at 206-232-9854. Thank you!



Coast Guard Retiree Council Northwest Newsletter

c/o COMMANDING OFFICER
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Guardians of the Columbia by Ronald Wiel

An HH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew begins fast-roping members aboard a cargo ship on the Columbia River. Fast-roping allows rapid insertion of law enforcement personnel on potentially hostile vessels. A 47-foot motor life boat crew provides support, watching areas of the ship out of the helicopter's view. The boarding team will inspect the vessel and its documentation before allowing it to dock. The Coast Guard is the only military service with domestic law enforcement capability.