

# Tender provides welcome change for sub crew

From A1

er supplies, make needed repairs, and give the warship crews some degree of rest and relaxation.

It would take more than a month for the Groton-based ships that have been waging war on Iraq to return to their homeport just to reload missiles and return, and even longer for those based in other submarine ports. The Land gives them an opportunity to do that within a couple of days of their operating area.

"I would make the argument that our mission is more important than any individual warship because we make the whole fleet look bigger," said Capt. David M. Volonino, the captain of the Land.

"Basically, we can give them anything they need to sustain combat operations," Volonino said. "We're a true force multiplier."

Perhaps the most important function of the Land for submarine sailors is the opportunity to get out of the tight confines of their ship and into the more spacious accommodations of a tender.

The Land is 644 feet long and 85 feet wide, displacing just over 23,000 tons, with more than an acre of main deck.

On the Providence, about 125 men share a dining area that seats 24 comfortably, so there is no loitering over coffee and dessert because so many others are waiting for your seat. Even the officers must eat in at least two shifts.

On Land, there are often empty seats in the dining areas, and the chief petty officers have their own mess. All the dining areas were opened to Providence crew during its visit last week.

On the submarine, food is good, but the choices are limited. Land diners get a choice of two entrees, the "fast food" line or the salad bar. And every option was as good as any they would get at a fine restaurant.

Land recently was named a winner of the Capt. Edward Ney Food Services Award, presented only after a rigorous review of food quality, cleanliness of the galley, and customer service. It won first place in 1997 and has been named a runner up the last two years.

"This ship has a reputation for good food service," said Senior Chief Mess Specialist Jeff Bartelt. "Of course, now the pressure is on to win two years in a row."

Providence sailors can plug into the Internet café near the crew's mess, drop off mail at the ship's post office, and get a haircut in the Land's barber-shop.

Because of international protests over the war against Iraq, warships have also had extremely limited liberty this year. For submarines that can be a particular problem, since there is no ship's store stocked with razors, deodorant, cigarettes and other consumables.

A stop at the Land means a chance to replenish. Providence sailors poured into the Land's stores — there are three of them — to stock up for the last few months of their deployment.

Lt. j.g. Jimmy Karam, who runs the Land stores, carries more than 1,500 items, soda to sound systems — even as many as 300 of the latest movie releases on DVD.



Crew members of the sub tender USS Emory S. Land can make parts in the on-board machine shop if replacement parts can't be found.

"We don't have a mall we can run to out here, so we try to keep some luxury items on board to keep the crews happy," Karam said.

Submarine crews can also check into the ship's medical division to have a mole removed, a cavity filled, or be checked out for other problems.

"It takes some adjusting when you first get here," said Lt. Michele P. Morrison, one of the ship's doctors, who have to learn to operate without the backup of a general hospital and a network of specialists that would be taken for granted at home.

We have limited access to specialists, so you definitely have to have a broad range of experience," said Lt. Nick D. Shumaker, one of three dentists on board. "And you really have to think ahead, to make sure you stay ahead of the inventory."

Normally the Land operates out of La Maddalena, Italy, but one of its important capabilities resides in its twin boilers, which can push the ship through the water at almost 20 knots.

That allows it to pick up and move to wherever the Navy needs to resupply its submarines, which helps shorten their turnaround time, an important consideration in a combat situation.

The Land might not be the best-riding ship in the Navy — the captain jokes that it handles "like a brick" at slow speeds — but it sustained 60-knot winds and vicious waves during a recent underway.

And while the ship took some 25-degree rolls that caused more than a few stomachs to shudder, none of the nine small boats that Land takes to sea, or the towed sonar arrays and periscopes stored on its decks, were lost.

"Not one thing budged," Volonino said. "That is a reflection of how well our deck department personnel do their jobs."

The boilers can also, in port, generate up to 10,000 kilowatts of power in its four turbine generators, enough to supply itself and several submarines with power. In addition, its condensers can pump out 100,000 gallons of fresh water a day, said Lt. Cmdr. Tim Ledbetter, the engineering officer, who compares his post to a municipal director of public utilities.

But one of the most important functions of the Land is to provide the re-

pairs and parts a submarine needs to quickly return to sea and fight.

"There's never enough time to do as much as you want to do, but you want to do as much as you can while the customer is alongside," Volonino said.

The reloading process on Providence began even before the ship was secured, as some staging for around its missile hatches was craned up and over the side of the Land to be put in place as soon as it was safe.

The work continued until well into the night as the Providence crew, augmented the Land personnel, pulled out the stainless steel canisters that are left in the missile tubes, and replaced them with Tomahawk land attack missiles.

Lt. Andre T. Sadowski, the Land's supply officer, was running down a list of items on the Providence shopping list.

Normally it can take three weeks or more to get something as simple as a Radio Shack tape recorder requested by one Providence department head, because of the procurement process and shipping.

"There are all kinds of obstacles if we just used the normal shipping practices," he said. But Sadowski has shortened the time considerably by having Navy personnel back in the states put it on a plane headed for the nearest airport.

"My people grab it as it comes off the plane and get it directly to us," "This has done wonders for us in terms of supporting the submarines. We have a direct pipeline now."

The Land also maintains a logistical database, updated daily, which tells exactly where all high-priority submarine parts are stored around the world, so he can determine the quickest way to get a part aboard.

"Fixing a leaky valve on a submarine is not like fixing a leaky valve in your sink," Volonino said. "Everything that we do on a submarine is very technical, very controlled."

It's got to be precisely the right part, and the Land has to make sure it provides exactly the right amount of time to install it properly.

"All that stuff is ready when the submarine arrives and 'Zam,' we spring on board and get to work," Volonino said. "That's the way it's supposed to be done."

# War likely to shape Democratic presidential race

From A1

Lieberman, who remains the Democratic frontrunner in most national polls, held steady in the New Hampshire poll, a distant fourth.

"I don't think Lieberman's position in support of the war is a great position at the moment," said Dick Bennett, president of American Research Group, which has surveyed voters in New Hampshire since 1976. "He can say everything he wants to support the troops, but Democrats are mad right now. They're mad that we're at war."

Anti-war sentiment has simmered for months among liberal Democrats, but after Bush issued an ultimatum this month to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and war drew closer; those feelings "really kicked in" in New Hampshire, Bennett said. The momentum swung to Dean.

Nearly three-quarters of Lieberman's supporters said they also support the war in Iraq, while 86 percent of Dean's supporters oppose the war.

The same shift has bolstered Dean's campaign in Iowa, which will kick off the presidential election season with its nominating caucuses a week before the New Hampshire primary. Dean also could hurt pro-war Democrats in other states.

Long known as one of the most hawkish Democrats in Congress, Lieberman might suffer the most.

In a nationwide Gallup poll last week, Americans supported the war by a margin of 72 to 25 percent, but support among Democrats stood at only 53 to 44 percent. Self-described liberals, who make up the bulk of Democratic activists in presidential campaigns, opposed the war by a margin of 54 to 44 percent.

"I would guess that Lieberman is doing himself a lot of good among the population at large, but not so good

among Democratic activists," said Maurice Carroll, director of the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute, which showed Lieberman as the Democratic frontrunner in a recent nationwide poll.

"Support for the war is pretty strong across the board," he said, "but Democrats' support is a lot lower than among the population as a whole, and the Democratic electorate as the primary season gets going, in Iowa in particular, is pretty darn liberal. The end result for Lieberman may be a wash because this war won't be going on by the time we get to Iowa. Either it will go well and the people who supported it will do OK, or it will go badly and the people who supported it will do not OK."

If the war is quick and clean and Lieberman can win his party's nomination, he stands to enjoy broad appeal among a pro-war public and make a serious bid to defeat Bush in the general election.

But the longer the war drags on, the more damage it could do to Lieberman's chances to win the nomination in the first place. A CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll conducted on the second day of the war showed that 68 percent of Americans expect the war will last no more than three months. Roughly 40 percent expect fewer than 100 American casualties, and another 24 percent expect only "several hundred."

While the Bush administration and military officials have warned of potentially bloody combat, Bennett noted that some media and war critics already have started expressing dismay at the American casualties and seven prisoners of war taken in the first days of the conflict.

If the numbers get worse and worse, an anti-war governor like Dean could blame pro-war senators like Lieberman

and Kerry for voting to authorize the use of force, Bennett said. "That's the problem that all of these congressional Democrats who are running for president are facing right now," he said. "Dean can point to them and say, 'How could you let this happen?'"

Lieberman's campaign insists that it is not worrying about the war's effects on his presidential aspirations. "We will leave the analysis to the experts," campaign spokesman Jano Cabrera said Thursday from New Hampshire, where Lieberman spent the end of the week campaigning.

"Senator Lieberman believes strongly that Saddam Hussein is a threat and that he should be dealt with. That belief has nothing to do with politics. It's a position the senator has held for 12 years, and it's not subject to change with the political winds. We can only hope that at the end of the day, voters can at least respect him for standing for what he believes in."

Even as the war dominates headlines across the world, many other issues are sure to affect the 2004 presidential campaign, so pegging the political prospects of Lieberman or any other candidate to the progress that allied forces make in Iraq is unreliable at best, the polling experts warned.

The sluggish economy, for example, is there waiting, much as it was in 1992, when Bill Clinton won the White House from Bush's father despite an easy victory over Iraq a year earlier in the immensely popular Gulf War.

"The best way to put it," Bennett said, "is that the Democrats want someone who can beat George W. Bush in 2004. Democrats might not like the war with Iraq, but when the war ends, they may say Dean can't beat Bush and that will be the end of it."

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