

# AMERICA AT WAR

THE DAY, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2003

## Land trains surface sailors to win submarine awards

Top submarine sailor in Atlantic force is a woman this time around

By ROBERT A. HAMILTON  
Day Staff Writer

Aboard the USS Emory S. Land — The Atlantic submarine force Sailor of the Year is not qualified to deploy on a submarine.

It's not a question of professional capability, just that Signalman 1st Class Dorothy J. Averhart would stand out in an all-male crew.

"I'm sure it will raise a brow or two," said Averhart, the leading petty officer in the deck division on the USS Emory S. Land, the tender that is servicing submarines involved in the war on Iraq.

"It caught me totally by surprise," she continued. "Everybody is kind of in awe right now. They're all saying, 'wow, that's big stuff. I've never seen anything like that before.' And to tell you the truth, I'm in awe, too."

Averhart, the youngest of seven children born and raised in Gary, Ind., said she fell in love with the idea of a naval career as a child.

"I used to watch 'The Love Boat' every Saturday night at 8 o'clock, and wondered what it would be like to have a job, and an adventure, and be on a boat, all at the same time," she said. "The Navy gave me a chance to try it."

She said she was honored just to be picked as the Land Sailor of the Year, and then advanced to competition at the Squadron and Group levels. When she won both those contests she tried to keep her confidence in check as she advanced.

"I knew I was going to go up against some tough competition" when she reached the force competition, Averhart said. She said she thinks her positive and professional attitude helped her. Others noted that her flexibility also helped.

As a signalman, she was still pulled in to be a leader in the deck division, which is a different type of job. But Averhart just shrugged off suggestions that she was doing anything special; leadership attributes should be able to cross division lines, she said.

She said she has set her sights now on submitting an application for the limited duty officer program this summer because she thinks her chances are better.

"I feel that I have a lot more to give the Navy," Averhart said. "That door is open now, and I'm going to go through it, full speed ahead."



TIM COOK / The Day

■ SM1 (SW) Dorothy Averhart receives congratulations from Rear Adm. Kirk H. Donald after Averhart was named the 2002 Sailor of the Year during an award ceremony on board the USS Emory S. Land in the Eastern Mediterranean Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Land's Information Systems Officer, Ens. Jeff Peterson, has been selected as the Atlantic submarine force Surface Warfare Officer of the Year.

"It's an oxymoron — kind of like 'cold as hell,'" Peterson joked. "People tease me about it quite a bit."

Peterson joined the Navy 18 years ago from Merrill, Wis. His father, grandfather and uncles are all Navy veterans, and he joined as an enlisted electronic warfare technician, serving on the destroyer John Rogers during Desert Storm, and on the frigates Jesse L. Brown, Ford and Rentz.

He said working with so many submariners on the Land, he has noticed some key differences from the surface community.

"Surface sailors tend to do things by the seat of their

pants, while submariners tend to be a lot more disciplined; they want a formal written procedure for everything," Peterson said.

He was the Pacific Fleet Sailor of the Year in 2000, the same year he was accepted into the limited duty officer program. Aboard the Land, there were so many officers who are former submarine enlisted personnel, he had a leg up in the surface warfare officer of the year competition.

"I cheated," he joked. "I came here from the surface Navy, and that's all we do is drive ships. The submariners have to go through a lot of qualifications to learn how to drive a surface ship, and I already knew all that, so I had an advantage."

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## LIFE ON A 1,300-PERSON SHIP

By ROBERT A. HAMILTON  
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Aboard the USS Emory S. Land — The Navy's newest officer, its newest master chief petty officers and a renewed commitment by an established sailor were among the ceremonies Tuesday on this 1,300-person command in the Mediterranean.

Even in the midst of a war and the work that the Land has to do to prepare submarines to fight it, Capt. David M. Volonino makes time for formal observances of his sailors' accomplishments.

The day started with 8 a.m. recognition of two senior chief petty officers, Hospital Corpsman Robert D. Landry and Electronics Technician Sherman E. Boss, who have earned promotion to master chief.

Rear Adm. Kirkland H. Donald, commander of Submarine Group Eight, has made the trip from La Maddalena, Italy, to the Land's anchoring point in the eastern Mediterranean — the Navy asks that the location be withheld for security purposes — to share with Volonino the task of pinning on the double-starred anchors that denote their new rank.

Donald, in an address televised over the ship's closed-circuit television system, said the war against Iraq is going well, "due in no small part to the efforts of the sailors on the Emory S. Land."

### A New Ensign, New Master Chiefs And A Renewed Sailor

"You're all heroes for the work that you do, and you need to realize it's appreciated at the highest level," Donald said.

Landry and Boss both said they earned their promotion through the efforts of the people in their divisions.

"I have absolutely the best department I've had in 19 years," Landry said. "I'll stand side by side with them in war anytime."

When Landry earned his single-star senior chief's anchors, he presented the chief's anchors he no longer needed to then-1st class electronics technician Michael Simmons, who was his shipmate on the USS Boise at the time. Passing on the anchors is a Navy tradition that is designed to encourage a sailor to strive for promotion.

Simmons made chief a short time later, and was re-assigned to the Norfolk, Va.-based USS Scranton, while Landry went to the Land.

By coincidence, however, Simmons is temporarily assigned to the Groton-based USS Providence, which this week is pulled up alongside the Land for resupply. After his promotion ceremony, Landry walked his senior chief emblems down to Sim-

mons in the hope they will bring him as much luck as the first time.

Scott Thomas Hodgkinson qualified in submarines and service ships as an enlisted man, and now starts a new phase of what he hopes will be a 30-year Navy career with a commission under the Limited Duty Officer or LDO program.

Hodgkinson became the Navy's newest ensign in a ceremony in Volonino's office an hour after the master chiefs' promotion.

"Chief Hodgkinson has been an absolute firebrand aboard this ship," Volonino said. "I can't think of any one person who has been more important to the operational mission of the Emory S. Land."

Hodgkinson manages a system that receives 700 official messages to the ship each day, and maintains the communications security devices for the submarines that pull alongside that allow them to receive coded messages. He also manages the ship's e-mail system.

"A year ago, when we didn't have e-mail, it didn't matter to anyone," Hodgkinson said. "Now, if it goes down, I hear about it

pretty quick."

To recognize his last tour as an enlisted man, during which the Land received the Green "C" for communications excellence in 2001 and 2002, Volonino presented him with his sixth Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

The new ensign joined the Navy in 1987, attended Basic Enlisted Submarine School in Groton following boot camp, and served on the submarines USS Georgia and USS Michigan before reporting to Land.

He was just preparing to go on leave Sept. 11, 2001, when the word came of the terrorist attacks back home and the ship was ordered to get underway. Hodgkinson cancelled his plans and stayed aboard for the next 20 days.

Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Kenneth L. Scales reported to the Land two years ago after a three-year tour on the waterfront at the Naval Submarine Base in Groton.

His adept skill at docking submarines earned him an admiral's "command coin" during Donald's visit this week, and as he stood before his division to swear an oath of re-enlistment, Volonino urged him to dig it out of his pocket to show it off.

"He's having a big day today," Volonino said as the memento was displayed during the 9:30 a.m. ceremony on the forecastle deck. "That's pretty special."

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## Deck crew on tender ship USS Emory S. Land mostly female

From A1

thing different," she said. Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Dale Marshall, 20, hails from Miami. She has been hand-selected as a master helmsman, one of just two enlisted people qualified to drive the ship into port or at battle stations.

"I wanted a different perspective in my life, as well as the benefits that the military gives," such as education and travel, she said. Of 92 junior enlisted people in the division, all but three are women.

"They're the ones who drive the ship, they're the ones who anchor it, they're the ones who tie us up at the pier, and the ones who bring the submarines alongside," Getman said. "The core of all our work is in the hands of these young people, most of them 20 or younger."

"Our average sailor here is about 19 years old and under 100 pounds," Burnham said. "The work is tough, but they throw themselves into it, no matter what the weather, and work hard."

With such a young crew, homesickness can be a problem, he said, "but in the interim they throw all their heart and muscle into their work, so it doesn't affect them that much."

Seaman Apprentice Tina Williams, 19, of Hempstead, N.Y., said some of her high school classmates are working at Old Navy, while she works in the new Navy.

"I'd rather be doing this," Williams said. "It's something different. I joined the Navy to get some discipline that I wasn't getting at home, and I've learned a lot from the Emory S. Land. The main thing is pa-



TIM COOK / The Day

■ USS Emory S. Land deck crew members SA Tina Williams, BM3Dale Marshall and SN Elizabeth Leavitt are members of the Land's mostly female deck force in the Eastern Mediterranean.

ience. We've got a lot of people on the ship, different people from different places, and you've got to be able to deal with all of them."

She plans on becoming a boatswain's mate, then transferring to a hospital corpsman rating, and then training as a nurse and transferring to the officer corps.

"It's going to take longer than I thought,

but I have the patience," Williams said. For Seaman Kimberly Dueboay, 21, of Allen, Texas, joining the Navy meant maintaining a family tradition — her father spent 23 years in the service, ending as an aviation storekeeper 1st class.

"He would tell me all about it when I was a kid, so I've been wanting to join the Navy since I was 12 or 13 years old," Dueboay

said. "He said it was a lot different when he was in, a lot harder."

Others saw it as a way to make a break from home.

"I wanted a little more after high school than anybody else, and I knew if I stayed home I'd never realize my dreams," said Seaman Jennifer Gonzalez, 20, San Antonio, Texas. "I thought the Navy was my only choice to do all the things I wanted to do."

Among those goals are to live on her own and go to school paying her own way, which the Navy will make possible.

"I wanted to show my parents that I would do it on my own, be a little more independent," Gonzalez said. "I have lots of plans, but they don't involve the Navy."

But even that decision not to stay in the Navy is not discouraging to the senior people on board. The executive officer, Cmdr. Jack Gustafson, started out as an enlisted sonar technician on submarines in 1969.

"We like to think we provide them with some direction, and we have programs that help them develop a focus," Gustafson said. "We help them map out their future and show them it is achievable."

"We need to give them a good, solid working environment where they can thrive, where they can have some confidence in their own leadership abilities," Gustafson said. And if they quit the service, after their first term or at any point, "I'm just glad that we've produced a citizen for this country who can go out and be a valuable member of society."

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

House, Senate panels approve nearly \$80 billion for war, terrorism fight

Washington — The House and Senate Appropriations committees approved similar bills Tuesday containing nearly \$80 billion for initial costs of the war with Iraq and other anti-terrorism efforts, including aid for the nation's struggling airlines. Both measures exceeded the \$74.7 billion that President Bush requested last week for the remaining six months of the government's budget year.

Al-Jazeera is most sought-after in Internet searches last week

In spite of being mostly knocked offline, the Web site of Arab satellite news network Al-Jazeera was among the most sought-after on the Internet last week. The Web portal Lycos reported that "Al-Jazeera" and variant spellings became its top search term last week, with three times more searches than "sex." Al-Jazeera drew intense interest from Web surfers after it broadcast pictures of dead and captive U.S. soldiers in Iraq. U.S. television networks had decided not to air footage of the corpses.

French climber makes anti-war statement by scaling skyscraper

Paris — A French climber who calls himself "Spiderman" scaled the 47-story headquarters of oil giant TotalFina Elf outside Paris on Tuesday to protest the war in Iraq. Wearing a shirt with the message "No war," Alain Robert reached the top of the office tower in less than an hour. At the top, he unfurled a flag with the same slogan. Police greeted Robert at the top of the building, located in the La Defense financial district west of Paris, and escorted him to the ground floor. "I wanted to protest against the war because I find the war completely illegal," Robert told reporters, as police led him away. It wasn't clear whether he would be charged criminally.

Arab League's chief calls for new regional security plan for Mideast

Cairo, Egypt — Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa sharply criticized Arab governments on Tuesday for their failure to halt the U.S.-led war on Iraq and said it was time for Arabs to build a new regional security order. "The Arab states have failed to meet their obligations and stand up to the challenges," Moussa told reporters at league headquarters in the Egyptian capital. "We have to look seriously and honestly at the way the Arab system is working in the future." Earlier, in an interview with the London-based Arabic newspaper Asharq al Awsat that appeared Tuesday, Moussa said some Arab countries "wanted the war and there were those who prepared for its eruption hoping for a desired objective. If Arabs were united, the war wouldn't have started," he told the Saudi-owned paper. "My assessment is that Arabs are too weak."

U.S. investigating shooting deaths of Iraqi women, kids at checkpoint

Doha, Qatar — The U.S. military said Tuesday it was investigating the shooting deaths of at least seven Iraqi women and children by U.S. troops at a checkpoint in southern Iraq a day earlier. Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks said U.S. forces have been in a state of heightened alert following a suicide attack Saturday that killed four Americans. "In all cases in checkpoints and otherwise we maintain the right to self-defense," Brooks told reporters at a briefing at Camp As Sayliyah. "We've increased vigilance because of the tactics of Iraqi death squads. "While we regret the loss of civilian lives, they remain unavoidable," he said.

Damage to holy sites may trigger condemnation from Shiite Iran

Tehran, Iran — With U.S. forces at the gates of Karbala and Najaf, there's growing fear that any damage to the gold-domed shrines of the two holiest Shiite Muslim cities could inflame Shiite feelings worldwide, particularly in Iran. Overwhelmingly Shiite Iran has expressed concern over any possible damage to the Iraqi shrines, but few analysts expect Tehran to be drawn into the conflict. Iran opposes the war against Iraq, its foe in an eight-year war in the 1980s, but has declared it is neutral in the conflict. Much as they dislike and distrust Saddam Hussein, Iranians also have troubled relations with the United States and worry U.S. influence would be cemented in the region if Washington topples the Iraqi leader and replaces him with a U.S.-friendly regime.

Two New Mexico teachers placed on leave over war posters

Albuquerque, N.M. — Two high school teachers said Tuesday they have been placed on leave for refusing to remove war-related student artwork posted in their classrooms. Highland High School teachers Allen Cooper and Geoffrey Barrett said they were told Monday night that they would be suspended if they did not remove the posters. Barrett, who teaches history and current events, said the student art carried both anti-war and pro-war messages, and was created as part of a class assignment. "I think this is mostly a violation of the students' rights to have a voice and express their opinions," Barrett said. "Asking me to take down the posters was taking away the voice of the students and I was not going to do that." Cooper said one of the signs in question in his classroom read "No War Mr. Cooper." It was written by an Afghani student