The December 1996 In a De

Season's creatings

As I see it



Admiral Dantone

t's Sunday morning, a nice time of the week to think. We held our first NIMA customer conference in late Novem ber. It was well attended and very valuable. A lot of goods with a few others. Summed up—you all are doing a great job, especially during crises. We need to keep some focus on the quality and accuracy of our routine products.

Bravo Zulu (nice job) to Ms. Anita
Cohen and her Systems and Technology
crowd for their superb work in creating the
centerpiece of the NIMA architecture on
the U.S. Imagery and Geospatial Information System (USIGS). They have given us
something to build on.

We've a lot going on. Between fast-paced operations driven by Bosnia, Zaire and Southwest Asia; Systems and Technology working architecture, communications, DPS migration and more; and the Human Resources, Financial and studies activity in corporate affairs we are all very busy. Let me say that each of you are important to our success. Take a minute today to assess your priorities. If you're working too hard and feel "stressed out," slow down. Nothing we are doing is more important than your well-being and that of your family. This is a long race that we're in. We need to support each other.

Thanks to all of you, NIMA is working!

Old Fighter Pilot saying: Happy Holidays!





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December 1996

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tified him as deputy director for Imagery Analysis ("NPIC Receives Meritorious Unit Citation," p. 10). He is actually the Director of the Office of Imagery Analysis. We regret the error.

Corrections

investment choices

Last month's cover and inside NIMA establishment ceremony photographs were shot by Richard Smith, NIMA photographer.

Last issue, we mispelled Rick Stakem's name and incorrectly iden-

Checking decorations, ornaments

prevents holiday accidents

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Krygiel Departs NIMA for NDU Position

by Lynn Havach

r. Annette J. Krygiel, deputy director for Systems and Technology (S&T), departed NIMA Nov. 24 to assume new duties as special assistant for Strategic Scientific Studies at the National Defense University (NDU), Fort. McNair, Washington, D.C.

In her new position, Krygiel will serve as visiting scholar at NDU's Institute for National Strategic Studies. William Allder Jr., associate deputy director for S&T, was appointed acting deputy director following Krygiel's reassignment. He assumed his new duties Nov. 24.

"I'm wildly enthusiastic about this opportunity, and am looking forward to getting started," Krygiel said. "NDU has one of the premier technical libraries in the country and a muchlauded faculty. This fits very nicely into my overall career strategy."

She acknowledged the timing was perfect.

"After many months of effort, NIMA has now spring-boarded forward and there are exceptional people in place to carry on the agency's important mission," she said.

Her leaving is not without a certain sadness, however. "The most difficult part of moving on," she admitted, is leaving the people with whom she worked

during more than 31 years at the former Defense Mapping Agency and most recently during a 27month assignment as director of the former Central Imagery Office.

"Above all else," she added, "the most satisfying aspect of my career has been working with such outstanding people; I have the greatest respect for all of them."

Coincident with her departure, Krygiel was honored by the Director of Central Intelligence, Dr. John M. Deutch, at a special Intelligence Community awards ceremony Nov. 22 at CIA headquarters, Langley, Va. Deutch presented Krygiel with the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal, citing her "outstanding leadership, contemporary management style, forceful direction and technical expertise." These factors, he said, combined to facilitate "fundamental, necessary changes to functional imagery management" and resulted in "greater access and use of imagery intelligence by national,



Dr. Krygiel

Former Deputy Director, Systems and

Her Career Has Been the Outstanding

People With Whom She's Worked.

Technology, Says Most Significant Aspect of

defense and civil consumers and the broadening of imagery-sharing relationships with coalition and foreign national and defense organizations."

Also honored at the ceremony were 21 members of the former CIO Policy Staff. Most were integrated into the NIMA's National Imagery and Geospatial Policy Office (see related article page 7).

In discussing her new position at NDU, Krygiel said she was "excited at having an opportunity to research the challenges presented

by large-scale systems integration, especially those involving the government's use of commercial technology."

She said she'll "be able to contrib-

ute to examining educational opportunities in systems engineering techniques for the future leaders of the Defense and Intelligence communities."

Krygiel was appointed deputy director for S&T Oct. 1. She served as director of ClO, a designated DoD combat support agency from July 1994 through September 1996. Upon the NIMA's establishment, all ClO personnel and resources were consolidated under the new organization.

She began her government career in 1963, serving in DMA until her appointment as director, CIO. Her work at DMA included software development, software engineering, the management of research and development and engineering initiatives in computer science and telecommunications. She managed the systems integration and deployment of the Digital Production System from 1989 to 1992 and was appointed DMA's chief scientist in April 1993. •

When Customers Speak, NIMA Listens

by Sharon Alexander

n late November, less than 60 days after NIMA was officially established, NIMA's Customer Support Office (CO) in the Directorate of Operations (DO) sponsored NIMA's first customer conference.

According to the conference coordinator, John Greene, approximately 250 people attended the two-day event at the National Reconnaissance Office's Westfields facility. Attendees included senior-level NIMA officials and representatives from offices throughout the defense and national imagery and geospatial information communities.

The conference allowed NIMA's senior staff and customers to discuss high-level goals and objectives for both parties. On day one, the office directors within DO, the Director of Systems and Technology, and the directors of National Imagery and Geospatial Policy and functional management in the Directorate of Corporate Affairs gave overviews of their business units, followed by a question-and-answer period. On day two, customers took to the podium to let NIMA officials know how well NIMA has been performing and to relate customer imagery and geospatial information needs. A common thread

throughout the customers' presentations was the need for accurate, timely and tailored products.

According to Greene, the conference was an overwhelming success.

"Customers were pleased to be able to ask senior management questions and get immediate, straight-forward answers," he said. In fact, several times during the conference, Acting NIMA Director Rear Adm. Jack Dantone Jr. stood to answer customers' questions and concerns directly.

NIMA officials were pleased with the outcome of the conference and the opportunity to interact with customers face-to-face. Dantone stated that more conferences are forthcoming and the feedback from this first conference would be used to determine the focus of future ones.

Information from the conference will be made available on Intelink and the Open Source Information Server. Requests for hard copies and more information may be addressed to the Assessments Division in CO by calling (703) 275-3015. ◆

NIMA Personnel Honored With Two Prestigious Intelligence Awards

IMA personnel were honored with two prestigious awards at the Intelligence Community awards ceremony at CIA headquarters Nov. 22.

Receiving recognition as part of a group of 48 IC award recipients from across the U.S. and several foreign countries were the 21 members of the former Central Imagery Office's (CIO's) Policy Staff and former National Photographic Interpretation Center employee, Theodore L. Holt. Also, the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal was presented to the NIMA's departing Deputy Director for Systems and Technology, Dr. Annette J. Krygiel.

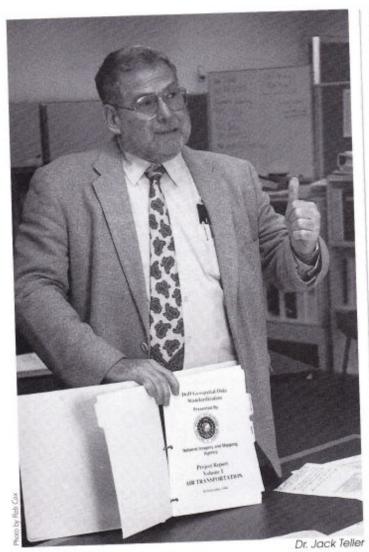
The CIO Policy Staff personnel, most of whom are now working in NIMA's National Imagery and Geospatial Policy Office, received a National Intelligence Meritorious Unit Citation for exceptional performance from June 1, 1994 to June 30, 1996.

The award recognized "the development and implementation of Intelligence Community policy concerning the use of U.S. classified reconnaissance satellite imagery to support the needs of U.S. and allied imagery users, national policy and decision makers, and civil community users."

Those honored as part of the unit included: Stephen G. Roberts, chief; Carolyn Batton; James M. Dunn; Andrew Hayden; Jon F. Holmes; William Hopkins; Air Force Maj. Sammie Jackson; Air Force Maj. David Lehner; Karen Lewis; Dominic Manocchio; Jean M. Pritchett; Lianna Raddatz; Laura Robinson; R. M. Scott; Laura Senty; Linda Skelly; E. Lynn Smith; Kevin Spitler; Kathleen Vennitti; John F. Yeany and Nancy Zedar.

Holt, who works for NIMA's Imagery Analysis business unit, received a National Intelligence Medal of Achievement for "especially meritorious service" in support of United States policy in the Balkans from July 1995 to July 1996. ◆

NIMA Recognized for Standardizing Data



"Ultimately different systems will be able to talk to each other freely, without translators and errors; this will save lives and money."

by Howard Cohen

IMA has received the 1996 Federal Technology Leadership Award for distinguished achievement in putting technology to work for government and the citizen.

Dr. Jack Teller, project leader of NIMA's Geospatial Data Standardization Project Team, accepted the award Nov. 6 in Washington, D.C., before an audience of some 500 peers from across the country.

"It's been a real mental challenge learning new things. Receiving recognition after working so hard is a good feeling," Teller said.

"Over hill over dale we will hit the dusty trail...," are famous words of the Army battle hymn. Once, simple terms as hill and trail could be easily understood. Today, with increasing use of modern automated information systems (AIS) and the increase in joint efforts requiring close work with international forces, such terms could have different meanings in different circumstances, sometimes with disastrous consequences.

Teller used a road as an example. The data required for a useful portrayal of a road depends on the perspective of the user. An engineer is concerned with the maintenance or construction of the road.

A transporter may also want to know about a road. In a military emergency, planners might need to move large equipment down the center of a road. As part of this planning, they need to know the minimum unobstructed width on both sides, regardless of terrain.

Pilots may need fairly accurate coordinates to help them judge their position from observing key road characteristics. The ROAD Logical Data Model captures these different viewpoints and others. While an AIS supporting a specific function may not need all of these viewpoints, multiple database systems designed from this model can share road data based on those elements within the data model present within each system.

The significance of everyone being on the "same sheet of music" arose during Desert Shield/Storm. Exchanging quality geospatial data with our allies became necessary when it became increasingly important to rely on each other's data. Sharing information successfully depends on a standard that describes in an unambiguous manner, what the structure and definition of essential data is, Teller said.

NIMA is leading the way in producing the first blueprint to ensure uniformity to warriors using and interpreting air, land and sea products thanks to Teller's team. NIMA's Geospatial Data Standards will ultimately help to remove differences among our allies and service branches, the NIMA scientist said.

NIMA's geospatial data and imagery help to define the "battlespace" or geographic volume of concentration, much like the stage sets designed for a play define the backdrop for all the activities carried on by the cast. A common geospatial stage is being designed to pursue joint and multiple operations that will support our nation's interest, he said.

NIMA's Geospatial Data Standardization
Project is developing the blueprint for the structure, content and meaning of NIMA's descriptive
data. The data's terms are clear and reduced to
an absolute minimum any misunderstanding in
information exchanges based in the data. The
project scope is expanding to include the data
model structure for imagery data and metadata.

Teller said the project began in May 1994 and has nearly completed the blueprint designs of stage settings for five of the eight key military themes for review. They are: air transportation.

ground transportation, culture and industrial features, nautical, and Geospatial Metadata.

Each activity has specific focus sessions attended by as many as five to 15 individuals from defense and civilian agencies. In these sessions, the standards for geospatial features are identified, defined and modeled.

"The project has given me the opportunity to meet and interact with people from all over the world," Teller said.

Items for standardization within the air transportation theme include air routes, air navigation aids, airports and terminal procedures.

Ground transportation involves the discussion of railroads, roads, tunnels, bridges and parking areas.

The theme concerning cultural and industrial features currently contains only power generation.

Nautical standardization encompasses nautical aids to navigation, inland waterways, ocean-shipping routes and hazards, port and harbor definitions and understanding shoreline differences. Finally, Geospatial Metadata entails Geospatial Feature Metadata and Geospatial Dataset Metadata, Teller said.

"Ultimately different systems will be able to talk to each other freely, without translators and errors; this will save lives and money," he said.

"Standardization of data is among key challenges government agencies confront," said Timothy B. Clark, editor of Government Executive and one of the judges in the awards program. "NIMA has achieved a complex standardization project, producing immediate benefits for American and allied forces as they plan difficult and dangerous missions in far-away lands."

Exercise tests agency's disaster response

by Don Kusturin

IMA in St. Louis has suffered exten sive damage to all of its buildings at 3200 South Second Street, the result of a major earthquake. There are numerous injuries. Some employees are unaccounted for and believed trapped in the rubble."

The preceding was a scenario for a mass casualty exercise, Nov. 20, testing the ability of



Treatment of the injured is being simulated by emergency workers.

emergency personnel to respond to a major disaster.

Dubbed SLEX-96, exercise participants included not only NIMA, but the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, St. Louis Fire Department, City Emergency Management Agency, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the American Red Cross.

The exercise began with a simulated earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale striking southern Missouri, along the New Madrid fault, one of the most dangerous faults in the country.

At the start of the exercise, a command post staffed by the NIMA Disaster Response Team was established on the parade ground at NIMA's Second Street location. It immediately began coordinating accountability for all personnel and performing damage assessments.

The city set up its mobile incident command post in Lyon Park across from the NIMA compound. The ranking fire department captain took charge and set up an operation center. NIMA's regional commander and Mission Support personnel assisted and coordinated relief efforts from there. This allowed the NIMA-manned command center to assist emergency responders on the compound.

Throughout the exercise, city responders entered building 36 to search for the injured, who had been preselected and placed in designated areas. Each victim was given a card stating the nature of his or her problem. The card was handed to emergency responders or medical personnel.

The injured came in three waves, testing EMS workers' abilities to handle multiple patients. Some "victims" experienced symptoms after going to their assigned meeting areas while others went directly to the triage area for evaluation. Medical personnel then either treated and released them or prepared the more seriously injured for transport to area hospitals.

"Shortly before 12:55 p.m., a team of three firefighters came into the room to rescue me," said Steve Maneikis. "I presented them with my injury card and they informed me that in an actual situation they would carry me outside to medical personnel. Meanwhile, the command center was informed that the missing person had been found and was being moved outside through the main entrance."

Once outside, Maneikis and other victims were diagnosed and needed shipment to a local hospital. Some of the more unfortunate "victims" were sent to the morgue.

At one point during the disaster, some employees complained of feeling nauseous from fumes. Exercise players found that the nearby chemical plant sprang a leak and dangerous fumes were affecting NIMA employees.

This part of the simulation called for the evacuation of the premises. Employees went to their cars and proceeded towards the front gate. Once the site was empty the exercise ended.

According to those involved in the planning, the exercise proved beneficial to both the city's emergency departments as well as NIMA's.

"The city's emergency responders — police, fire and EMS — were grateful for the opportunity to run a field drill with us," said NIMA's exercise planner Russ Kappesser.

Ernie Peters, Safety chief, called the exercise "an overwhelming success. We learned from the city folks that our evacuation went well and that having a command post is the right thing to do.

"We also learned that having our commander collocated with the incident commander was a good idea. It was enlightening to see the city respond with the forces deployed. Everyone took it seriously."

Kappesser echoed the sentiment.

"We all have a better appreciation of the incident command system and our relationship with the city in this area," he said. ◆

GIS Employees Receive Team Award for New Production Planning Tool

by Steve Maneikis

our Geospatial Information Service employees received a Special Act Team Award recently for developing an automated production planning tool that will save both time and resources for NIMA.

John Geskermann, Tim Washechek, Scott Spaunhorst and Bill Hemple received the award from Earl Phillips, director of Geospatial Information Services, for developing the AutoPlanning Tool (APT). Geskermann said the tool will allow for greater efficiency in planning.

APT will reduce production planning time and will work toward making the transition away from the Digital Production System toward a client/server environment, according to Geskermann. Planning took far too much time and resources.

Many obstacles stood in the way of developing APT. Due to the lack of robust metadata (information about data) in some current corporate management databases, new data bases had to be created to store, analyze and process management information in a knowledge-based environment.

APT generates accurate decisions by incorporating information from these new data bases with information from existing data bases, such as the Source Acquisition Segment (SA/S), the Production Management Segment (PM/S) and the Data Services Segment (DS/S).





From left, Scott Spaunhorst, John Geskermann, Tim Washechek, and Bill Hemple.

"Another important feature," Geskermann noted, "is the tracking of customized extractions through a file named ATYPICAL. This gives users and the APT the ability to track and review changes to standardized extractions."

One aspect of the APT is its flexibility. APT can be run on any personal computer connected to the PM/S and use a variety of commercial off-the-shelf software to produce text reports and visual displays of the output. It also can migrate to any future processing platform with only minor changes and disruptions for the user. User training began in November and Geskermann hopes that full implementation of the APT will begin by the end of the year.

"Savings are already being realized and more will accumulate as the USIGS database becomes more populated," Geskermann said. The development team is proud of the work they accomplished on this project and the potential savings it will bring to NIMA.

Washechek said, simply, "We did what people said we couldn't do." ◆

Turn in Your Coworkers

o you know NIMA employees with unusual hobbies or
life-styles? If so, Turn them in...to
The Edge. Simply provide us
with the name of the employee,
what he or she does that might
be of interest to our readers and
leave the rest to us. Anonymity
is guaranteed. Or, if you're involved in an unusual hobby
yourself, turn yourself in.
Simply send us the details
via e-mail to The Edge, or call
(301) 227-3105.



HR's New Director Meets Change Positively

by Jennifer Lafley

fter 20 years, Regina Millard's whole way of doing business is changing. As NIMA's director for human resources, Millard faces not only a new position with a new agency, but also a whole new set of human resources programs still under development.

"All of the old rules have been thrown out. We are building a new human resources system based on best-practices that will be responsive to NIMA's vision to obtain the information edge," Millard said during an interview in her Fairfax office.

It is an exciting time for Millard, whose staff attends weekly meetings with their human resources counterparts from other DoD and Intelligence Community agencies.

The development of NIMA's human resources programs are guided by the DoD Civilian Intelligence Personnel Policy Act of 1996. Presently, NIMA is working under interim HR guidance.

"While we can develop new procedures, we are part of a bigger picture," observed Millard, who said she expects that NIMA's employees will gain, not lose, when the changes from the best-practices system are in place.

"The legislation establishing NIMA grandfathered many of the personnel policies of the old system while giving employees more flexibility in the new system."

But she fully understands the emotional impact of how changes in human resources affect people, and is concerned that they understand the new procedures.

Human Resources, like many directorates, has been a place of change during the past few months. Employees have been transferred to St. Louis and many HR services are being automated. These include processing personnel actions, estimating retirement benefits and filling jobs including employee self-nomination for vacancies. An HR Intranet Web Site is being developed as an information focal point for customers' use.

"It has been a lot to plan, but I have a very dedicated staff that I can rely on to help implement the programs," she said.

Getting the message heard

Millard receives e-mail by the hundreds and knows that employees have a lot of questions about human resources programs.

"I still recognize that there is uncertainty and I expect questions. It's important to get the message out with different approaches," Millard said.

Through town halls, EDGE articles, email updates and a new HR guidance notebook distributed to administrative personnel and managers, HR strives to communicate with employees.

"Above all, NIMA's employees are the agency's most valuable asset, and we must have their good will and confidence," Millard said.

Keys to success

Employees need to be responsible for their career development, Millard said. "We can provide the tools, but each individual must learn to use them."

Millard's own career journey started after graduate school, working for an alcohol and drug treatment facility and then in the federal corrections system. "I learned that treating people with respect, regardless of their situation, was the first step to helping them," she said.

When Millard began her government career in human resources, she worked in just about every position. "I got here today through hard work and trying to set an example of professionalism along the way."

For those who want to climb the career ladder, Millard advised that they be true to themselves. "Don't try to be someone you aren't."

She also advised learning from all sources available. While Millard has been unable to go to many human resource conferences lately because of her busy schedule, she said it is important to have outside stimulation and listen for new ideas.

Right now the demands of her new job leave little time for outside hobbies, but she makes it a point to plan activities with friends. She has temporarily given up some volunteer activities but hopes to get more involved in community work soon.

"Right now, I am putting the majority of my energy into my job as we go through the transition of working together as a new agency." •

Editor's note:

Spotlight is an ongoing series designed to help employees get to know NIMA's directors.



Above all, NIMA's employees are the agency's most valuable asset, and we must have their good will and confidence," Millard said.

The

Paul Durkin is the grateful recipient of many hours of

leave.

by Jennifer Lafley and Howard Cohen

hen Paul Durkin awoke and found himself in a hospital bed, two weeks had gone by.

The last thing the former head of NIMA's Wellness Program at Bethesda remembers is making a left-hand turn — a turn that almost cost him his life and resulted in his being med-evaced to the Washington Hospital Center. Doctors told him that he was lucky he still had his arm.

For Durkin, the car accident was one more challenge in a string of health problems that started two years before, first with a heart attack and then later, by-pass surgery.

"It was a tough couple of years " said Durkin, who recently retired.

On a visit to NIMA in Bethesda, Durkin spoke about how difficult it is for individuals to find themselves terribly ill and dependent on family members and friends.

"Everything changes. Besides what the ill person faces, there are serious strains on loved ones whose lives also change because of the illness," Durkin said.

The Gift of Leave

No act of kindness, no matter how small is ever wasted. — Aesop

But for him, one worry was alleviated because of the generosity of his fellow NIMA coworkers who contributed, over a two-year period, 700 hours of leave to him through the Leave Transfer Program.

"It is the ultimate of giving... During stressful times, like my accident, it was wonderful not to worry about the loss of pay," Durkin said.

The Voluntary Leave Transfer Program allows employees to transfer unused annual leave to other coworkers. The medical emergency can be for either the employee or a family member whose medical condition may require the employee to stay home.

For Pat and Ed Cejka of St. Louis, the program has a special place in their hearts. In 1993, when she had back surgery, her husband Ed donated his leave to help her during her recuperation period.

"I never dreamed I would need the program again, but I am so grateful to the many people that helped me with donations," Cejka said. Her son Tim, who was born with kidney damage, developed a severe kidney infection that left him with only 20 percent of one kidney functioning.

"We almost lost him. I tried to work but eventually I realized that nothing in the world mattered except Tim," Cejka said.

Employees rallied around the Cejka family and donated close to 300 hours to Pat, allowing her to be with Tim during a very difficult time. In September, she left the agency to care for her son. "I can't thank people enough for what they did for our family," Cejka said. Tim's condition eventually improved.

Before an employee is eligible to receive donations, all sick and annual leave must be used and the individual must anticipate absence from work for 24 hours or more.

For Carol Anne Schafer learning that she had to have the lower part of her leg amputated brought on additional worries of how to afford to be off her job for several months.

"Even though I had always been careful to let my leave accrue, no one is ever totally prepared for a long illness," she said.

For Schafer, whose surgery and rehabilitation was in Kansas near her family, the leave transfer program made a very difficult period in her life more bearable.

"The program helped me tremendously," said Schafer, who received 294 hours of donated leave.

"It's a good feeling to give," said Richard Banks, a program manager in Bethesda, who has donated leave on three occasions. Banks has given leave each time to coworkers who have had surgery. He saved a thank-you note he once received from one of the recipients that said "I needed you and you were there."

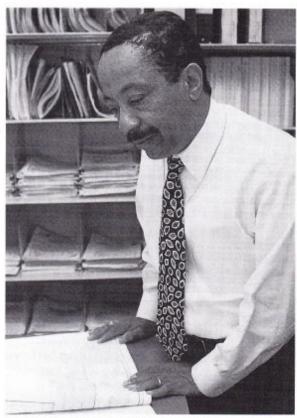
Surgery and maternity are the main reasons employees enter the program, said HR representative Tim Kolley.

To request leave, a Form 630 must be filled out with a supervisor's signature. A doctor's note verifying the emergency and anticipated duration of recovery is required.

Leave donations to and from other federal agencies are authorized, but an employee may not donate to their immediate supervisor. A medical emergency is deemed over when the employee leaves federal service, the disability retirement application is approved or the employee returns to work.

Any unused donated leave is returned to the donor.

"It is not something you hope people will have to use, but it is a real blessing to those of us that have needed it," Durkin said. •



Richard Banks has shared his leave on three occasions with coworkers in need.

Giving is a treasure which accompanies its owner everywhere.

- Anonymous

Couple Builds Family from Broken Dreams

by Wells Huff

s employees of the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, Kay and John Strebeck have seen more than their share of the world. Three years ago they were in England, helping get the British Digital Production System on its feet. Last spring Kay was in Hungary, part of a remote replication team supporting the peacekeeping effort in Bosnia.

Those were work assignments. On their own, and for very different reasons, the Strebecks have made two trips to St. Petersburg, Russia.

Their longing for a family of their own led them to St. Petersburg, recently, where they adopted a boy, 5, and a little girl, 18 months.

When they made the decision to adopt, they knew there was a long waiting list.

Then last year the two NIMA employees in St. Louis heard about the Small World Adoption

Foundation, an agency in contact with orphanages in Russia, Belarus and Hungary. They obtained information and started the lengthy task of applying and securing the necessary clearances.

The documents and forms required were legion.

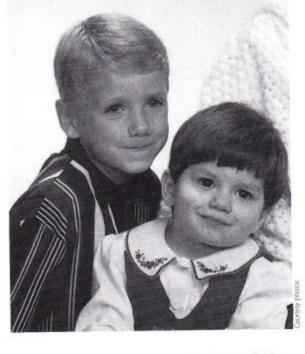
"Not only did they want to see birth certificates," John said, "but there is something called an apostille which verifies that the notary seal is genuine."

After they completed the paperwork,

both Strebecks were off to Russia. They returned to the United States days later with 5-year-old Paul (Russian name Pavel).

On the plane to St. Petersburg, they were stunned to meet their neighbors enroute to the same Russian orphanage to adopt two children.

That's not all. While waiting for news leading to the first adoption, the Strebecks discovered six other NIMA employees from St. Louis (Rick Deist, Bill Curtis, Jim Powley, Gary Kirwin, Jim Shaughnessy and Russ Causey) had also adopted foreign children.



"We have had a strong support group," Kay said. "It really helped on those days when we felt especially low, wondering if anything was ever going to happen."

John, too, found these contacts reassuring.
"It was like, we're not the only people doing this." he said.

While visiting the orphanage they met a little girl, Jennifer (Yelena), then about 18 months old, and learned she might need a home. Optimistically, they had their photo taken with Paul and Yelena on Paul's adoption day, hoping to go back soon and claim the little girl.

Then came the Russian elections.

"Kay and I were afraid the elections might produce a different feeling about foreign adoptions of Russian children," John recounts.

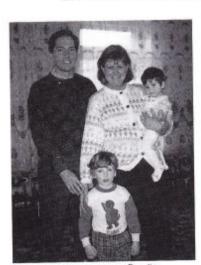
Fortunately it didn't affect the Strebeck's plans. In August, Kay made a second trip. She returned with Jennifer Yelena.

Since then, the four Strebecks have been living in Newport, R.I., where John is attending a 10-month training course at the Naval War College. Kay has taken a year's leave of absence to be with her husband, their children and Sarge, their 5-year-old golden retriever. Sarge loves Paul and Jennifer and has adjusted to being "unseated as our only child," Kay said.

Does it feel a bit odd, having Paul and Jennifer, to think back to the days of the Cold War, when Russians were "The Enemy?"

"Back in 1979 when I started working as a cartographer," says Kay, "the first thing I worked on was Russian maps. Of course I never dreamed we'd be adopting children from St. Petersburg." And who would have thought, last Christmas, they would be enjoying this one as a family of four?

"It was our dream," John said. "Christmas is a time for dreaming, you know." For the Strebecks, this one came true. •



At the orphanage on Paul's adoption day 15 April 1996.

Up Close and Personal: NIMA in the United Kingdom

by Eric Berryman

Part of the Combat Support Element, Office Europe, NIMA Detachment Molesworth is on a Royal Air Force base about 60 miles north of London. Both installation and detachment take their name from the 11th century village located just a few miles away.

In World War II, the Army Air Corps' 303rd Bomb Group (Hell's Angels) launched the U.S.'s first bombing mission against Hitler's Germany from there. Several of the raids almost leveled the town of Zweibruecken, the current home of Detachment Molesworth's parent mapping organization in Germany. A couple of feet of Molesworth church spire were knocked off by a returning, heavily damaged bomber. The broken piece was replaced with stone of a different shade to serve as a reminder of the sacrifices of those years.

The former Defense Mapping Agency moved into the primary bomber maintenance facility, Hanger 84, in 1966. The former B-17 hanger comes with its own souvenir of the war: a bomb hole in the roof—patched, but still visible.

For two years in the late 1980s, DMA shared the installation with the former nuclear warhead ground launched cruise missile initiative and empty concrete launch bunkers dot the site. Since the early '90s, the base has also been the host of the European Command's (USEUCOM) Joint Analysis Center (JAC).

Last summer, the agency assigned Mary Kubik to serve as the agency's new support liaison officer to the JAC. Formerly assigned in St. Louis, Kubik's principal duties in England are to provide agency expertise to the JAC in support of any mission requirements that may be called for by the Stuttgart, Germany, headquartered EUCOM.

For nearly 30 years the Molesworth detachment performed a variety of missions and played a crucial role in every European, African and Middle East crisis involving the United States and NATO. Although Hanger 84 no longer stores the tens of millions of war reserve maps it once did, portions of a substantial war reserve account remain in its cavernous vaults.

Today, NIMA's Detachment Molesworth is the maintenance and distribution center for about 100,000 European maps in deployable packages. It is the acceptance and distribution point for all maps and charts produced under joint agreements by the United Kingdom, and it services crisis support whenever United Kingdom products are required for U.S. or NATO air,

sea, and land activities throughout Europe and the world.

Detachment Molesworth is staffed by a lean, talented crew. Martin "Marty" Herrala is a WG-05 material handler who runs the classified warehouse and is also the building manager overseeing all the work orders that keep Hanger 84 in tiptop shape. In his spare time he instructs gymnastics at the nearby RAF Alconbury American Youth Activities Center. He also is a volunteer coach at the world-renown Huntingdon Olympic Gymnastics Club and teaches a class in Seidokan karate. His youngest daughter is a National-level gymnast and his oldest daughter is an undergraduate at the University of Brighton, in southern England.



Jim Casey is a material handler who coordinates most of the automatic distribution of Britishproduced maps, and the transportation control officer. His off-duty time is centered on three grandchildren who live nearby. Another material handler is Kelly Stowers who keeps track of all the incoming maps produced by the British, manages the war reserve account and is the detachment's supply representative. He has three grown children and five grandchildren all living in England.

The uniformed personnel are all Air Force. Senior Master Sgt. Everton Chapman is the current Detachment Commander. His three-year tour began in July 1996. He enjoys racquetball and a friendly town cricket match. Staff Sgt. Greg Coulson is responsible for the operational side of the detachment and Senior Airman Pat Robins rounds out the team as its administration supervisor. A keen golfer, his major personal goal during the tour is to play the course at St. Andrews, Scotland. •

by John Iler

avy Lt. Drew Barnett has always looked to the heavens with fascination. Even as a teenager in rural Mississippi, he wondered what it would be like to fly like a bird and fall like a shot from the sky.

He's since found out. As a naval aviator in training, he flew A-4 fighters. Graduating from primary flight training in 1993 on the Commodore's List (with Distinction), he was the number one graduate Navy-wide.

Television shows about flying and skydiving excited him as a boy. At 19, he made his first jump as a tandem student, physically attached to his instructor. "From that moment I was hooked." he said.

Although Barnett continued to jump over the years, his career as a Navy pilot plummeted in 1994, the result of severe sinus problems. Even though those problems have since been surgically corrected, the road back to aviation has all but closed. For now, he is assigned to NIMA's Outreach Office, Fairfax, Va.

But whatever lies in his future, he plans to keep on skydiving.

"A lot of people think I have a death wish, but I really don't," he said. "If I thought I was going to die making a jump, of course I wouldn't do itand I wouldn't get in a car or an airplane if I thought I'd be killed. I jump because I want to live."

Routine jumps are usually made at 13,000 feet and high altitude jumps from 18,000 to 23,000 feet. Barnett's highest jump was made from 22,500 feet and provided two and a half minutes of freefall, a long jump for a skydiver. And because of the height, an oxygen mask was required.

Barnett has drawn many other people into the sport and for his mother's 50th birthday, he flew her from luka, Miss., to Washington, D.C., for her present—a tandem jump with her son.

She didn't have to be coaxed into making the jump," Barnett recounted. He paid for her trip and the jump, which included a photo and video. "For a long time, it was all she talked about. She

showed her friends the video and photo and you can imagine how people in a small Mississippi town reacted. They thought she'd lost her mind!"

One of the biggest drawbacks, Barnett conceded, is the time and money required to take up skydiving. Accredited skydivers must be trained in how to jump, how to land and how to pack their own parachutes

Safety is paramount. To get a license from the United States Parachuting Association, skydivers must be able to pack their own chutes by their 20th jump. Their reserve chutes are packed by a rigger certified by the Federal Aviation Administration. Qualification usually costs \$1,500-\$2,000, including instruction and the first 20 jumps. Beginner gear runs \$1,200-\$1,800 and each airplane trip up costs about

What about malfunctions?

"Statistics show that one out of every 333 jumps results in a malfunction," Barnett said. "But of the many incidents I have witnessed or heard of, I can't say that I've ever heard of a double

malfunction—where both chutes fail to open."

Most people have had between three and seven
malfunctions if they've been jumping for any
length of time, he added.

Barnett hopes to be an accelerate freefall instructor by next spring and would like to take his mother out for another jump. Only this time, he said, she will jump solo. "I think she'll be just fine," he said.

Besides jumping, Barnett also is certified to fly the larger, multi-engined aircraft used for more ambitious skydiving operations. Recently, he flew as part of the World Record Women's Attempt, where six of the large aircraft flew formation to allow more than 100 women to jump at one time

as they attempted to set a new world record. And though he was thrilled to be part of it, he said his real joy will come as an instructor—being around people who will be experiencing the sport for the first time.

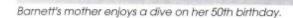
He's also enthusiastic about a new sport called fixed object jumping, or BASE, for building, antenna, span (bridges) and earth. In this type of jumping, he said, no airplanes are needed. Jumpers leap from stationary objects, either natural or manmade, using he plans on doing much of his BASE jumping overseas during the next several years—at least until it's legalized in the U.S. "There's no reason for it not to be legal," he said. "It's no more dangerous than rock or mountain climbing, or hang gliding."

Each year during the third Saturday of October, nearly 200,000 people come to Fayetteville, W. Va., to watch 200 BASE jumpers hurl themselves off the New River Gorge bridge on the one legal day they can do it, during a festival called Bridge Day. This year, Barnett was one of the jumpers. "The high-performance canopy [chute] is very small and allows the jumper to horizontally skim over the ground 40-



50 yards before landing. It increases the fun factor, but requires a much faster reaction time."

Barnett is disappointed to see his aviation career slip away, but he's grateful for being able to skydive. Reflecting again on his first jump, he said: "I said a little prayer and never looked back. I may not be able to fly small, fast Navy jet fighters for a living anymore, but I am able to do the things I like now and feel the rush of adrenaline." •



sophisticated and highly maneuverable chutes to achieve safe landings. And instead of falling for a minute or longer before pulling the ripcord, BASE jumpers must often react in seconds or risk becoming part of the landscape.

"I wouldn't like having that on my conscience," said Barnett, "so I would never encourage anyone to take it up. I have seen some real cool people I thought had it all together make near fatal decisions in very dynamic settings such as Navy Flight School and was absolutely surprised that they could be so stupid." Since BASE jumping is widely banned in United States, lot of people think I have a death wish, but I really don't," he said. "If I thought I was going to die making a jump, of course I wouldn't do it—and I wouldn't get in a car or an airplane if I thought I'd be killed. I jump because I want to live."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ski Council Readies for 1997 Season

The Hagerstown Town and Country
Farmer's Almanac , which predicted last
year's famous East Coast blizzard, predicts 60
plus inches of precipitation and a slightly colder
winter.

That's okay with NIMA's Ski Council, now preparing for its 1997 season.

"This year should be a super ski year," said Guy Gray, council coordinator. He urged employees in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area to get their skis waxed and ready. NIMA employees can bring friends and family members along, too.

Trips are scheduled for Jan. 10 to Blue Mountain, Pa., Jan. 24 to Timberline, W. Va., and Feb. 14 to Seven Springs, Pa.

Novice skiers are welcome. Equipment rental, lessons and a lift ticket costs \$45-\$55 (includes the bus ride to the resort). For more accomplished skiers, the trip will cost between \$30 to \$40.

For further information, contact Gray at 703-275-8550 or Bob Stewart for nightshift personnel at 301-227-2792.

The NIMA Ski Council seeks volunteers to help with the organization and sign-up for the planned ski trips. Anyone interested in working with the Ski Council, particularly in B213 and Westfields, please contact Guy Gray at 703-295-8550.



Federal Employees To Get Inauguration Day Off, But....

ederal employees in the Washington, D.C., area have traditionally gotten Inauguration Day off, but next year is different.

For the first time since the legal public holiday commemorating the birthday of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was established in 1986, Inauguration Day and King's holiday fall on the same day — Jan. 20, 1997.

Since Inauguration Day is not a legal public holiday, there is no entitlement to an additional holiday; the law does not provide for an in-lieu-ofholiday except for official public holidays.

For the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, procedures for time off and pay will follow those applicable to official public holidays.

Questions may be directed to your Office of Human Resources, Customer Service Unit.

NIMA Purchase Card Program Expands

Procurement and Contracting is expanding the purchase card program. The purchase card allows employees to order directly from a vendor most required items that cost less than \$2,500.

Previously, to acquire a purchase card, DoD required a four-week training class. Instead, PC offers a one-day class on essential "do's and don't's" of using a purchase card. PC has also developed a user friendly database to automate the purchase card function.

PC conducts training on a continuous basis. To register for the one-day class, contact one of the following individuals via e-mail or by phone: Washington, D.C. area:

Becky Gilmore, (301) 227-5175 or DSN 287-5175. St. Louis and other areas:

Diane Dickens, (314) 260-1212 or DSN 490-1212.

NIMA Electronic Gateways Open

The Office of Information Services and Training (IS) has established home pages on four information gateways under the NIMA banner—the Internet worldwide web (WWW), which the general public sees; the Open Source Information Server (OSIS), which contains unclassified administrative data and data intended for external customers; and the Intelink (S) and Intelink (SI/TK), which is primarily for external customers.

The new home page incorporates the home pages of the organizations forming NIMA. The URL (universal resource locator) for each gateway follows:

Internet www.nima.mil OSIS osis.nima.mil Intelink (S) nima.smil.mil Intelink (SI/TK) nima.ic.gov

The policy for adding information to the gateways is being developed.

Employees should forward their WWW, OSIS and unclassified Intelink requirements — along with a point of contact and phone number — to John Eller at SNNEA, MS A-24. All requests for posting classified information to the Intelink nets should be forwarded to John Rees at (314)263-4195.

Requirements will be reviewed as quickly as possible to estimate the time and resources required to accomplish the task(s) and to provide feedback to the requester. The Office of Congressional and Public Liaison in the Directorate of Corporate Affairs coordinates the clearance of general information to be released through the public gateway. CP is also responsible for the consistent corporate-level design of the gateways.

NIMA's Travel Team Receives Award

| IMA's reengineering travel team were presented the Secretary of Defense Award for Reengineering Excellence for successfully testing the new DoD travel reengineering initiative. The team was recognized for its efforts to improve service to customers. reduce overall costs to the government and to meet operational mission require-



ments. Pictured are, from left: Cynthia Wright; Susan Akard; Beatrice Streitfeld; Lesa Holman; Gwen Jones; Louis Velez; Karen Baer; Alvin Tucker, DoD Comptroller and one the award presenters; Jill Heininge; Jan Christensen; Cynthia K. Bogner, NIMA Comptroller; Sandy Standeford; Karen Cleary Alderman, Reengineering Travel Task Force Director and a presenter of the Award; Evelyn Morquecho; and Guy Gray.

Employees Hawk Newspapers for Charity

by Don Kusturin

IMA employees were left out in the cold and wet on the morning of Nov. 7, but happy to be there. They were "selling" newspapers in support of Old Newsboys Day, a 39-year-old tradition in the St. Louis area.

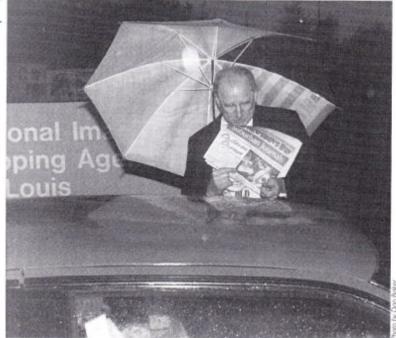
NIMA employees collected \$716.49, surpassing last year's contributions by \$35.78.

Proceeds from Old Newsboys Day help 250 area children's charities. Volunteers from the St. Louis area turn out by the thousands to collect donations in exchange for a special edition of a local newspaper.

The day is as much of an agency tradition as it is to St. Earl Phillip Louis. Employees from all levels take part; many by "purchasing" the papers, others by "hawking" them.

"I was a newsboy," said Earl Phillips, chief of Geospatial and Information Services. "It's good to help out where you can."

"It's not easy standing in the rain, hawking papers to people that are half asleep and in a hurry to get to a warm, dry place," said coordinator Sharon Smith. "But even the rain couldn't dampen the enthusiasm of our volunteers."



Earl Phillips sells newspapers at main gate.

It's hard to imagine that anyone could make standing in the rain seem like a fun place to be. However, Kathy Kleine didn't seem to mind it.

"It was a good time and well worth it," she said.

Smith offered thanks to all who contributed to the success of the drive through their contributions. She offered a special thanks to the sellers: Dottie Herchert; Priscillia Briggs; Rich Flauaus, Earl Phillips, Warren Bless, Carole Breckner, Jane Hackett, Frank Aufmuth, Beth Meyer and recent retiree Bill Moran.

See How They Run

by Jennifer Lafley

n Monday, the day after the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C., Todd Greenwood stayed home.

"I knew I could walk up the stairs, but getting back down them was another story," said Greenwood, a NIMA cartographer in Bethesda. Greenwood ran this year's Marine Corps marathon with a time of four hours and 18 seconds. It was his way of welcoming the next decade of his life—he turned 30.

Turning 30 and having a new baby also motivated cartographer Arny Weed to run the marathon this year.

For all sorts of reasons, 19,500 runners of all ages from 30 different countries signed on to run the 26-mile, 385-yard course Oct. 27.

Why do people do it? "I can't really explain it," said Sharon Alexander another NIMA runner. "It is total madness."

For spectators watching the sweat-drenched, grim-faced runners plod by, there was a combination of admiration, inspiration and wonderment at why people put themselves through a long-distance run.

No Pain, No Gain

Pain is a common word that creeps into conversations with marathoners. Tales of injuries, nausea, cramps, chills and visits to the first-aid tent are frequent.

"Pain started early for me," said Reston cartographer Rickey Norgaard. He planned to run the whole way with fellow NIMA employees Mike Fountain and Doug McCusker, but at mile 10, he limped into the first-aid station with blisters.

"My immediate thought was to drop out, but after all the training, I just couldn't," he said. He went on to finish with a time of 4:38:04. He kept himself going by picking out a site ahead to run to, but he did walk some of the way.

"Stomach cramps started at mile 12," said cartographer George Tabora, who ran with coworker Weed. "Amy was my motivation. Without her, I am not sure I would have finished."

Although most runners say that, once they start they usually are determined to finish, no matter what.

"I would have crawled across the line, if I had to," confessed Greenwood.

Ain't No Mountain High Enough

If you ask marathoners the day after a race if they plan to run another one, they almost unanimously say "No." But as days pass and the pain



MILES TO GO BEFORE THEY SLEEP: George Tabora and Army Weed get ready to begin the race.

recedes, the sense of accomplishment outweighs the painful memories.

"I'm not going to climb Mt. Everest, but a marathon is something I could do," said Tabora, who claims he has run his first and last.

Both Weed and Greenwood say they will welcome their 40th birthdays with another marathon, but both plan to participate in other sports in the interim. Alexander says she doesn't plan to run another marathon, but the experience was a plus for her. The sense of accomplishment she felt may influence her to don running shoes once again. "Running is mind over matter—you think you've gone as far as you can, but deep down you know you can push yourself farther the next day."

What about that famous runner's high?

Not many of NIMA's runners experienced it. Weed isn't sure, but the last two miles were exhilarating as crowds cheered her on and two friends stepped in and ran the last two miles with her. "I can see how people get hooked,"

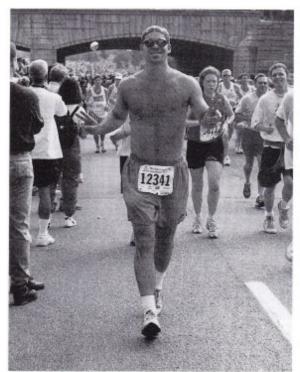
But Alexander, who ran with a time of 5:26:06, was disappointed she didn't experience one, but is settling for the accomplishment of finishing without walking—one hard step at a time.

The Road Less Traveled

Training for a marathon is like having a second job, said Weed, who has put in many hours and miles pushing her baby in jogger stroller to prepare for the run. Tabora says he couldn't have done it without his wife's cooperation because of the time spent training.

"Running the marathon is the easy part. It's the training day-after-day that's difficult," said Weed.

While their friends were sleeping late, participating in other sports or just relaxing around the pool, NIMA's long-distance runners spent their summer weekends doing training runs—up to 20 miles—to prepare them for the marathon.



MILESTONES: Todd Greenwood celebrates turning 30 by running a marathon.

John Oswald and Peter Lund have run several marathons and plan to run more. But it isn't the run itself that keeps them going. "It's the preparation, working toward a goal, that makes it worthwhile," said Oswald.

Alexander said she feels richer for the experience. "The same tactics and strategies used in training for a long run can be applied to achieving other goals in life," she said.

For Weed, the marathon was another milestone in a busy year of becoming a new mother. Although she is already planning to participate in a triathlon (swimming, biking and running), finishing the marathon was a real accomplishment for her. "If I never finish another athletic event," she said, "I can always say that I ran the 1996 Marine Corps marathon."

Victory is Ours

by Steve Maneikis

arathon runs, even by those who relentlessly train for them, are grueling. The tradition behind the run had its beginnings in ancient Greece, when combined Greek forces defeated an overwhelmingly superior invading force of Persians in 490 B.C. in the plain of Marathon.

The triumphant Greeks promptly dispatched a runner to Athens, some 23 miles away, to deliver the news of the victory. The runner—a Greek soldier named Phidippides—managed to reach Athens and blurt out his message. He then collapsed and died. The modern marathon commemorates Phidippides' famous run and has been included in all Olympic competitive events since 1924.

Marathon racing also is popular outside of the Olympics (see story on the Marine Corps Marathon, this page). And it was a popular activity among NIMA St. Louis personnel during October as 13 individuals ran in 15 marathons or competed in four different races throughout the Midwest.

Tom Dougherty began the month by running in the Twin Cities Marathon in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Oct. 6, in a personal record time of 2 hours, 58 minutes.

The St. Louis Marathon, Oct. 20, attracted Dave Talburtt with a time of 2:46, finishing 21st overall and 3rd in the Masters Division. Dougherty repeated his time from the Twin Cities Marathon at St. Louis and Mike Sheehy also set a personal record in a time of 3:38. Four other marathon veterans competed at St. Louis: Rene Gamon (3:51), Bill Barnes (4:28), Jim Bundy (4:43) and Stew Pagenstecher (5:12).

Ray Fyalka also made his marathon debut Oct. 20 at the Chicago Marathon with a time of 3:34.

The last competition was hosted in Kansas City Oct. 27. Rene Gamon returned a week after his St. Louis performance to complete his 21st marathon in a time of four hours even.

Badminton Benches This Runner

The London marathon was no problem for Paul Wert. It was participating in a favorite game of the English—badminton—that forced him to change his holiday ski plans and running schedule.

"Just as I was ready to begin training for another marathon, I blew out my Achilles tendon in a game of badminton," said Wert, who now sports a full leg cast.

But he had a great time running the mara-

While participants in the Marine Corps marathon were running past Washington's most famous sites, Wert, a NIMA regional liaison in England (see story, page 9), ran his first marathon there in April.

"For us cartographers, starting at the location of longitude makes perfect sense," said Wert, whose marathon time was exactly five hours. His run began in Greenwich, took him past the ship "Cutty Sark," the ship of Naval and rum fame, then over the Tower Bridge past the Tower of London, Big Ben, the Parliament, and Buckingham Palace.

Wert finished in exactly five hours. "I was the 20,263rd person to come in—and that was fine with me."

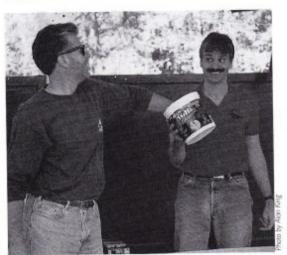
The Marine Navigation Department, in Bethesda, took advantage of the Indian summer this year when it held its annual picnic at the nearby Carderock Pavilion in October. It was the perfect setting to thank its dedicated men and women for another outstanding year.

Nearly 100 department employees and family members enjoyed an afternoon of food, music, volleyball and softball, taking a much-needed break from deleting wrecks, changing depths and relocating buoys from navigation charts. Instead, they enjoyed food, beverages and "maritime camaraderie."

"Once again, we had a wonderfully successful picnic," said Peter Doherty, the team leader who organized the event. "I wasn't surprised at all. After all, everyone knows it takes sailors to have a great party!"

Unfortunately, not everyone could attend. Bryon Reynolds, Buddy Klepper and Keith Levin remained behind to stand watch, staffing the 24 hour-a-day watch service used to alert mariners worldwide of imminent dangers to shipping. ◆

Picnic Celebrates Successful Year



Joe Grzymkowski selects the next raffle winner from Keith Alexander.



The Thrift Saving Plan open season has started for employees under the Civil Service Retirement System or the Federal Employees Retirement System.

Enrolled employees may increase or decrease contributions, allocate contributions among three investment funds, or cease participation elected during a previous open season. FERS employees hired before June 30 may join the program or make changes if they are already enrolled.

Elections should be made by completing Form TSP-1, Thrift Savings Plan Election, February 1991. Since Form TSP-1 has been revised, employees making elections during this open season should not use any Form TSP-1 dated prior to February 1991. Form TSP-1 may be obtained from forms managers, administrative officers, Human Resources Customer Service Unit, or requested from the HR Central Operations Center (HRRB).

Election forms must be received by Jan. 31, 1997 for this open season. Forms received after Jan. 31 will be returned to the employee unprocessed.

For NIMA DoD employees, send forms to HRRB, Mail Stop L-11. Former Defense Intelligence Agency employees should send their election forms to DIA, Policy and Information Management Division, DAH1, Attn: Kathleen Giroux, 200 MacDill Blvd., Washington, D.C. 20340-5100. CIA affiliated employees must provide the form directly to the CIA Thirft Division, room L017, LF-7, or to the personnel services center.

Questions concerning the TSP should be directed to Tim Kolley, Cynthia Smith or Rose Scaturro at 314-263-4292 (DSN 693-4292), HRRB, Mail Stop L-11.

CIA affiliated employees may contact the Thrift Division at 57059 (secure) or 703-613-7059 (non-secure), or the personnel division in Building 213 at 61086 (secure) or (202) 863-3441 (non-secure). ◆

In Memoriam

George N. Shalhoob, a retired cartographer with 34 years at the Defense Mapping Agency in St. Louis, died Sunday, Oct. 20, at St. Louis University Hospital following a bout with liver disease.

An Army veteran and a graduate of Washington University, St. Louis, Shalhoob worked in the Logistics Office until his retirement in 1987.

He is survived by his wife, Rosalie; four daughters, Tina, Sharon, Marie and Loretta; his son, George; and six grandchildren.

Checking Decorations, Ornaments Prevents Holiday Accidents

by Army Master Sgt. Stephen Barrett, American Forces Press Service

ow many holiday decorations are too many? While some people may stick to decorating a tree and some windows, others like showing their Christmas spirit Las Vegas-style, with hundreds of lights flashing.

It doesn't matter how little or how much people decorate. What matters is that decorations are checked before using them. Nothing can ruin the holiday season faster than an accident or fire.

According to the National Fire Safety Association, Christmas trees cause almost 500 home fires every year and \$9 million in damage. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 5,000 people are hurt every year by Christmas ornaments.

A common misconception is last year's decorations will work this year. Not always true, said consumer officials. Light strings and electric cords fray and bulbs break, they said.

The condition of outdoor decorations demands special attention. Severe weather can break bulbs and sockets causing short circuits. Make sure all outdoor electrical decorations work properly. If there is any question about safety, don't use them.

Trees are another concern. Whether the choice is a freshly cut or artificial tree, take the proper steps to prevent fires.

For real trees, buy the freshest one possible. Find one with a strong scent of pine or spruce, deep green color and needles that don't fall off at the touch. Cut two inches off the bottom of the tree, at an angle if the tree stand will allow it. Fill the stand with water, check it daily, and keep it filled.

Before buying an artificial tree, check for flammability. Follow all safety instructions that come with the tree. Don't use electric lights or candles on an artificial metal tree; fire safety experts recommend using colored spotlights instead.

Always set a Christmas tree away from radiators, fireplaces and heaters. Place breakable ornaments and anything looking like food or candy on higher branches, out of reach of children and pets. Don't let unsupervised young children or pets play around the tree.

Fire prevention also includes checking smoke detectors and keeping a fire extinguisher readily available. It might be a good time to run through the family's fire evacuation plan, added fire association officials.

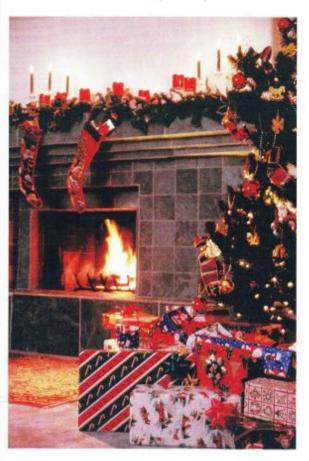
Holiday wrapping paper can ignite and cause a flash fire. After opening presents, quickly remove gift wrap from the tree area. Don't burn it or other wrapping materials in the fireplace.

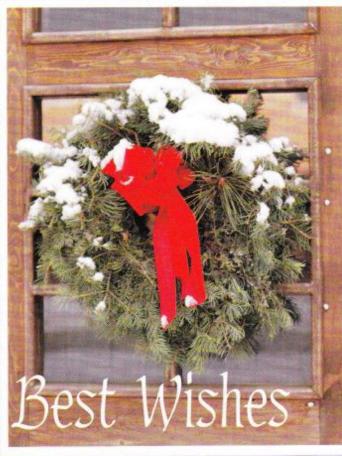
Wrapping materials may also be a health hazard, said consumer experts. For example, ribbons, strings and other items could choke or strangle children or pets. Some wrapping paper inks contain lead and other toxic materials.

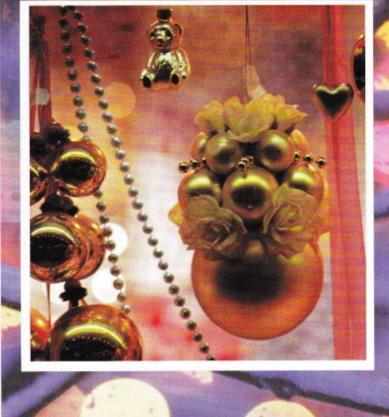
More holiday safety tips for the house:

- Don't use lighted candles as decorations.
- Don't place extension cords under rugs or carpets.
- Don't plug more than three sets of lights into an extension cord.
- Make sure all electric lights are certified by either the Underwriters Laboratory or Factory Mutual. Consumer labels are usually marked "UL" or "FM."
- Don't use indoor electrical decorations outdoors — they aren't weatherproofed.
- Don't leave a fire unattended.
- Turn off all tree lights and other electrical decorations when going to bed or leaving the house.

Have a safe and happy holiday season. ◆







for a safe and happy holiday season



