

MERLION STAR

Serving the Sembawang Community

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Issue 1

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ANDAMAN SEA (Jan. 7, 2011) U.S. Navy divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One, Company 1-6 and Indian Navy divers (in gray shirts) practice "hot tap" salvage procedures aboard USNS Safeguard (T-ARS 50), during Salvage Exercise 2011 (SALVEX 2011). Hot tapping is the salvage term for cutting into the side of a submerged vessel to remove fuel or oil. U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Cmdr. Derek Peterson.

Indian, U.S. Divers Exchange Techniques at SALVEX 11

PORT BLAIR, India -- USNS

BY: LT. CMDR. MIKE MORLEY,
COMMANDER, TASK FORCE 73
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Safeguard (T-ARS 50), with U.S. Navy divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 1, Company 1-6, conducted Salvage Exchange 2011 (SALVEX 11) with the Indian navy Jan. 4-11.

SALVEX 11, as part of the latest in a series of longstanding diving and salvage exchanges between the two countries, focused on strengthening relationships with the

Indian navy.

The nine-day evolution gave 17 U.S. Navy and 17 Indian navy divers the opportunity to improve interoperability by learning each other's equipment, discussing safety procedures, and conduct various diving operations during six days of in port training, followed by a three-day underway phase.

"There is a lot of commonality between the U.S. Navy and Indian navy diving programs," said Lt. Cmdr. Derek Peterson, U.S. 7th

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Quote of the Week

The opposite for courage is not cowardice, it is conformity. Even a dead fish can go with the flow.

-- Jim Hightower

Merlion Star

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Navy Personnel Command Search Engine Gives Sailors Resources

MILLINGTON Tenn. (NNS) -- In 2011, Navy Personnel Command (NPC) recommends that Sailors take advantage of the search engine available at www.npc.navy.mil.

This search engine, called "Knowledge Base," is available to answer Sailors' personnel questions.

"The Knowledge Base is really easy to use and it was created to supplement our customer service efforts," said Vincent Vuketich, of the NPC Customer Service Center (CSC). "A Sailor can call the CSC or email us for information, but they don't have to. The Sailor can go to www.npc.navy.mil research and answer his or her own questions online 24/7."

NPC has a Knowledge Base team that works daily to keep the database current with continuous updates of Navy regulations and instructions.

"KB (Knowledge Base) is an online tool, public facing, and can be accessed from anywhere in the world," said Vuketich. "Sailors, retirees and their families can ask essentially any question they want about the Navy. The system uses keywords to generate a solution to their question."

Sailors can access the Knowledge Base by visiting the NPC website and by clicking on the 'Ask NPC a Question' icon in the upper right corner of the page. In fiscal year 2010 the self-help page received more than 14,000 visits.

"This system has been up and running for approximately eight years now," said Vuketich. "We currently have nearly 1,000 solutions, but we are always interested in hearing from the fleet about additional solutions that are needed."

Solution categories range from advancement and promotions to education or career information. Sailors can also search for Navy programs, pay and benefits or NAVADMINS.

"Our goal is to meet Sailors' needs by providing them instant access to relevant Navy information any time they need it from anywhere in the world," Vuketich said.

For more information, contact the CSC at 1-866-U-ASK-NPC, via email at CSCMailbox@navy.mil or online at the NPC website.

For more news from Navy Personnel Command, visit www.navy.mil/local/npc/.

Navy Inspector General (IG) Area Visit

The scheduled IG Area Visit is 31 January - 4 February 2011. Area visits give the Chief of Naval Operations an opportunity to review a wide range of issues affecting the Fleet and the Navy installations, including mission readiness, active-reserve integration, Fleet support, Work environments, medical/dental care, facilities management, housing, safety, environmental, command climates, and Quality of Life programs. One of the most important things during an IG visit is communication. Please note that the IG team is not restricted to looking at NRCS programs, but is coming to look at all facets of operations in Singapore and that may include tenant commands and family life.

SECDEF Gates Seeks Dialogue Cooperation During Visit to China

BEIJING - The United States and China are world powers that need to cooperate, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said Jan. 10, in Beijing.

By: JIM GARAMONE,
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS

At a news conference after their meeting at the Bayi Building, Gates and Gen. Liang Guanglie, China's minister of national defense, spoke of the importance of strong, reliable military-to-military contacts between the nations.

"Our two nations now have an extraordinary opportunity to define our relationship not by the obstacles that at times divide us, but by the opportunities that exist to foster greater cooperation and bring us closer together," Gates said.

Both men noted that Chinese President Hu Jintao and President Barack Obama want good military-to-military ties between the nations.

Later, Gates met with Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People. "We've seen the United States and China cooperate to address several issues on the international front that pose dangers both regionally and across the world," Gates said to Xi. "These are examples of what we can accomplish when we work together."

The Chinese cut off military-to-military ties after the U.S. government sold defensive weapons to Taiwan last year. Gates has stressed that the military-to-military relationship must continue in good times and bad.

"We are in strong agreement that in order to reduce the chances of miscommunication, misunderstanding or miscalculation, it is important that our military-to-military ties are solid, consistent and not subject to shifting political winds," Gates said.

Liang seemed to agree. Through

a translator, the Chinese defense minister said both countries desire a healthy military-to-military relationship.

"We both recognize that enhancing and maintaining dialogue and communication at all levels is of great significance in the development of military-to-military relations," Liang said.

Both sides share a responsibility to build mutual trust, he added.

The United States and China have more uniting them than dividing them, both men said. The United States and China agreed to cooperate on counterterrorism, counterpiracy, humanitarian operations and disaster assistance. The United States proposed, and the Chinese agreed, to study beginning a strategic security dialogue "as part of a broader strategic and economic dialogue that covers, nuclear, missile defense, space and cyber issues," Gates said.

They include high-level visits, institutionalized exchange programs and military education. The two men sought to institutionalize and normalize contacts between the two militaries, agreeing that the defense consultative talks, the defense policy coordination talks and the military maritime consultative agreement can serve as important channels of communication between the two nations.

Liang announced that the two nations agreed to hold the military maritime working group meeting and the defense policy coordination talks in the first half of this year.

The United States and China also will put together a joint working group that will discuss the



BEIJING, China (Jan 10, 2011) - U.S. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates pays his respects as members of the People's Liberation Army play each country's national anthem at the ministry of Defense in Beijing. (U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Jerry Morrison)

guiding principles and framework for military-to-military relations and produce working documents for approval.

Gates and Liang both stressed that the cooperation will expand mutual interests and avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation.

China and the United States share many common interests and concerns that can best be addressed cooperatively, Gates said, noting that the two nations can work together addressing the challenges posed by the spread of nuclear, space, cyber and missile technology.

They also can work to maintain peace and security on the Korean peninsula by facilitating engagement between the two Koreas and working toward the de-nuclearization of the Korean peninsula, he added.

China and the United States also can cooperate to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and to defuse global conflicts and tensions. U.S. service members can expect more joint exercises with the Chinese military.

"Not only will joint exercises improve key capabilities on both sides," Gates said, "they will also lead to safer practices for our sea and air forces and over time cultivate trust and lead to more opportunities for defense cooperation."

Indian and U.S. Divers Practice Specialized Techniques During SALVEX 11

-- Continued from page 1

Fleet's diving and salvage officer with Task Force 73. "Some of the equipment and techniques we use are similar, SALVEX 11 helps Indian navy and U.S. Navy divers build relationships and strengthen communication so we can work together efficiently in times of crises in the future if ever needed."

During the in port phase, MDSU-1 divers gave the Indian divers a tour of Safeguard, and, in return, were given a tour of the Indian navy's saturation diving vessel, INS Nireekshak (A15).

Both groups of divers became familiar with each other's diving equipment, current diving operations, and core capabilities, and practiced skills used to identify submerged objects including remotely operated vehicle operations and side-scan sonar searches.

Additionally, Master Diver Senior Chief Navy Diver (MDV/EXW) Robert Evans demonstrated "Hot Tap" procedures to divers from both countries on the fantail of Safeguard, followed by practical underwater training while the ship was pierside. He focused on procedures used to remove fuel and oil from sunken vessels while virtually eliminating any contamination of fuel to the surrounding environment.

For the underway phase, the U.S. Navy and Indian navy divers, diving from Safeguard, conducted six joint surface-supply dives at depths of up to 150 feet. In a



ANDAMAN SEA (Jan. 10, 2011) U.S. Navy divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One, Company 1-6 and Indian Navy divers approach a wrecked commercial vessel for a shallow-water Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus (SCUBA) dive, as part of Salvage Exercise 2011 (SALVEX 2011). U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Cmdr. Derek Peterson (Released)

demonstration of Nireekshak's dynamic positioning system, the ship approached Safeguard, and both navies conducted surface supplied diving operations utilizing KM-37 diving helmets. Two divers from both ships descended to the sea floor, united in hand shake, and took photos commemorating the occasion.

U.S. divers were later invited to witness saturation diving techniques on Nireekshak. The next day the Indian divers demonstrated surface-supplied saturation diving operations, diving from Nireekshak, at depths of 210 feet.

"Exercises are a crucial part of building working relationships with other nations for all kinds of peacetime operations and support," Peterson said, also noting that U.S. Navy

divers have worked alongside divers from numerous other navies around the world in locating and recovering lost civilian and military aircraft, ships, and have supported efforts following natural disasters.

"By training with other navies under a variety of different conditions before a request for support or tragedy, it enables the U.S. Navy to support with a quick and effective response when needed," Peterson said.

Sailors from both navies conducted a joint community service project, visiting with 70 children at the Sevaniketan Orphanage during their liberty period in Port Blair.

The SALVEX series with the Indian navy began in 2005 and is held periodically, each nation alternating as hosts.

Safeguard is one of four rescue and salvage ships in Military Sealift Command's (MSC) inventory and is crewed by 26 civil service mariners and four Navy Sailors who operate the communications suite. MSC, the ocean transportation provider for the Department of Defense, operates approximately 110 non-combatant, civilian-crewed ships around-the-globe.



PORT BLAIR, India (Jan. 4, 2011) USNS SAFEGUARD (T-ARS 50) approaches the pier at Port Blair, Andaman Islands, India during Salvage Exercise 2011 (SALVEX 2011). U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Cmdr. Derek Peterson

Expat Cold and Flu Research Study

**Fever... tired... runny nose...
sneezing... coughing...
Do you have a Cold or Flu?**

It could be the flu, or the common cold virus, or one of many different respiratory viruses or bacteria which makes us miserable throughout the year...

Scientists are interested in identifying acute respiratory infections in expatriates living in Singapore and are looking for volunteers to participate in this joint investigational study.

If you are an expatriate living in Singapore, over 5 years of age and would like to participate in this free study, please call **9657-6238** (Mon to Fri 9am-6pm) or send an email to help@myrunnynose.org.

You do not have to be sick to enrol.

Study participants will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire and consent form and be provided with a home kit with a digital thermometer, sample collection materials, and instructions for submitting your sample to the laboratory using our free delivery service.

International Medical Clinic will be participating in this study by making available the test kits through their three clinics.



International Medical Clinic

This Study is Supported by



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