

From: William Schopfel, OMCM FNC Demonstration Manager

To: CAPT Michael Graham USN, COMMANDER SEALOGLANT

Subj: Letter of Appreciation to Captain Nathan Reybold and the Crew of USNS APACHE

Frontier Sentinel 10 (FS 10), a Homeland Security Exercise, was conducted from Joint Expeditionary Base (JEB), Little Creek VA and Naval Operating Base (NOB) Norfolk VA. Captain Reybold and the crew of the APACHE supported the Office of Naval Research's participation in FS 10 by embarking and deploying two experimental Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUV) and conducting mine counters measures operations in the congested harbor waters.

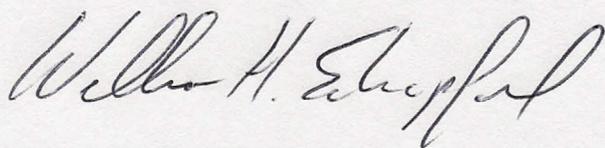
Captain Reybold acted as the ONR Point of Contact for logistical and security matters with the agencies at JEB Little Creek Prior to the arrival of the Navy Surface Warfare Center Panama City (NSWC-PC) Test Director. Captain Reybold's well developed organizational skills and experience dealing with the complex issues of mobilization to include foreign nations resulted in a smooth transition throughout the arrival to operations process.

The Norfolk ship channel was a hazardous environment to conduct AUV operations since it could not be closed during the exercise. Heavy ship traffic made navigation difficult and endangered the small underwater vehicles. This environment required the ONR and APACHE team to quickly develop innovative launch and recovery procedures to ensure the safety of the vehicles in this congested area. Operational procedures had to accommodate as many as eight interruptions over a short two hour period. Captain Reybold adeptly and efficiently maneuvered the APACHE in this difficult environment resulting in twenty eight safe launch and recoveries over the duration of FS 10.

A high degree of situational awareness was essential to successful operations in the channel not only for the APACHE and its embarked systems but also for the other ONR technologies being employed in other areas. Captain Reybold passed a daily Ship Pilot's Report that listed all the deep draft ships that were transiting the channel and used the ships radar to provide advanced notice of approaching vessels.

The USNS SIOUX, a sister ship of USNS APACHE, has been chosen by ONR for an operation off San Clemente Island CA next October. The selection was greatly influenced by the success of the deployment of ONR Sponsored Systems from USNS APACHE.

The performance of the APACHE under the leadership of Captain Reybold was noteworthy in all respects. His professionalism and that of his crew was integral to the success that ONR experienced during FS 10 and reflects great credit on the USNS APACHE and the Military Sealift Command.



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