

SWEEPING FOR MINES

Calabash Man Serving With Navy In Middle East

BY JOHN F. BRINDLEY
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES—
There's a cynical saying among the Navy's mine warfare force that "any ship can be a minesweeper—once."

David C. Kilgore of Calabash is a member of the Navy's U.S. Mine Countermeasures (MCM) Group in the Middle East. It's his job, working with MCM units from other countries, to ensure that none of the multi-national force ships involved in Operation Desert Storm have to face the possibility of being a one-time minesweeper.

"Our unit's mission here is to hunt and sweep for mines," said Kilgore, the 28-year-old son of Robert and Janice Kilgore of Calabash. "My role is to work on the fantail when the sweeping gear goes in the water."

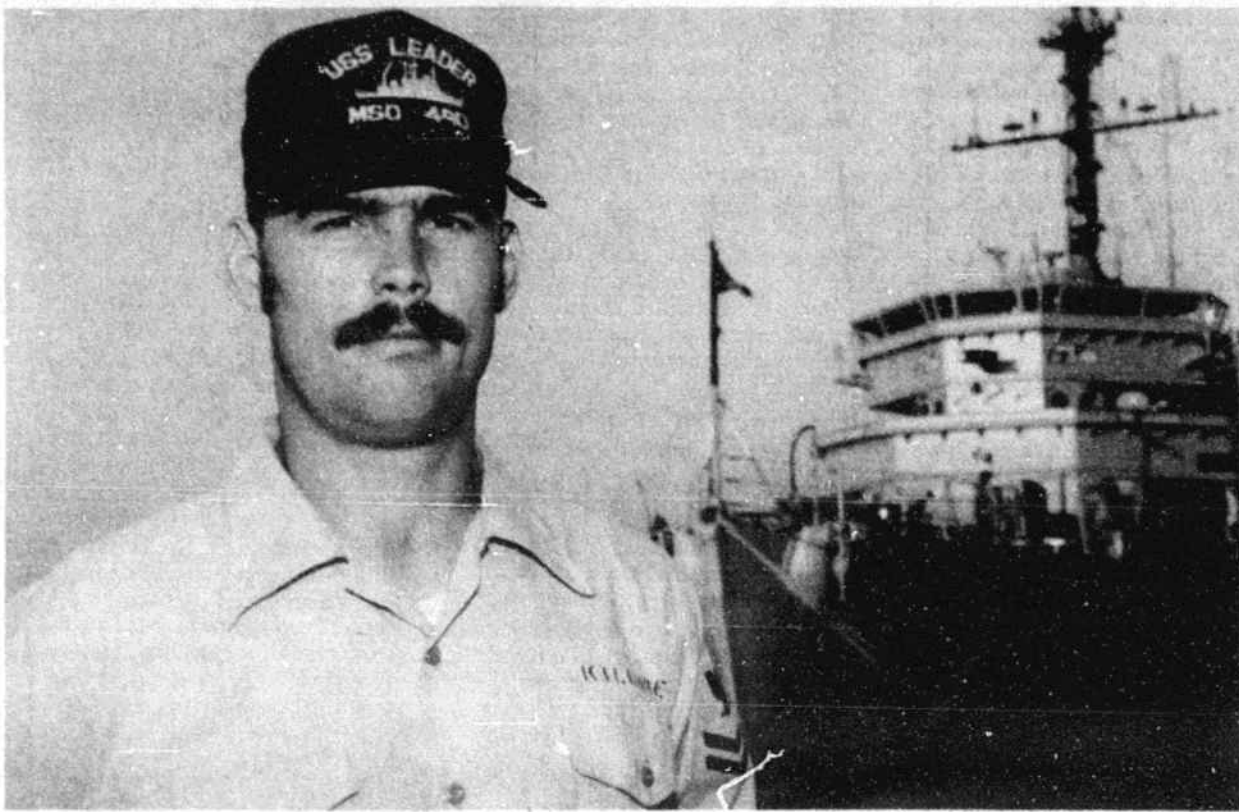
Kilgore is a boatswain's mate aboard the *USS Leader*, a 173-foot aggressive class oceangoing minesweeper.

The vessel is built of wood and has very little iron-based metal on board. The method of construction results in a very small "magnetic signature," a feature which makes sweeping for magnetic influence mines a bit safer.

With a crew of more than 80, the *Leader* is capable of sweeping surface-moored mines with a mechanical sweep and neutralizing bottom-moored mines with one of several varieties of acoustic, magnetic or combination influence sweeps.

Working in conjunction with Navy MH-53E "Sea Dragon" helicopters which provide speed and mobility to the effort, the *Leader* utilizes an SQQ-14 mine hunting sonar to locate and classify mines.

Kilgore says mines can be dropped surreptitiously from almost any platform, including helicopters and small harbor craft. Iraq



DAVID KILGORE, the 28-year-old son of Robert and Janice Kilgore of Calabash, is serving aboard the minesweeper *USS Leader* in the Middle East.

U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY JOE GAWLOWICZ

is known to have bottom-moored influence mines and World War I type, moored contact mines that float in the water.

Lt. Cmdr. Steven E. Lehr, the *Leader's* skipper, said mines could be a very real threat in the Middle East if they are used.

"Iraq has been known to have used mines both offensively and defensively," Lehr said. "Should they do that again, shipping lanes could be tied up and amphibious operations could be jeopardized. Our importance is ensuring that shipping lanes are open so that supplies, ships and aircraft can travel freely to support the troops

in the desert and on the water."

U.S. Mine Countermeasures Group is unique. Made up of several different mine warfare units from throughout the United States, it was virtually put together from scratch and rapidly deployed to the Middle East.

The group includes one helicopter detachment and four minesweepers as well as an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) unit.

With all the MCM units located at the same facility, they've been able to accelerate their tactical training and operations using choppers, ships and EOD personnel in unison.

For Kilgore, the biggest challenge he finds operating in this part of the world is "isolation, not knowing what the next day may bring" and being away from family and friends.

The message he would like to leave with the people back home in the Calabash area is thanks for all the support.

"I would like to say 'hello' to my family and friends," Kilgore said. "I want to know how they are."

(John F. Brindley is the director of the Navy Public Affairs Center in San Diego, on special assignment in the Middle East.)

Long Beach Fisherman Honored For Sailfish

Boyce Broadwell of Long Beach is one of 38 fishermen who received plaques as category winners in the 1990 N.C. Saltwater Fishing Tournament.

Broadwell, who was the only winner from Brunswick County, entered the largest sailfish of the year. It weighed 82 pounds, 6 ounces.

The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries sponsors the annual event, which ended Dec. 31, 1990, according to a news release.

The tournament recognizes anglers who catch the largest fish in each of 33 categories and people who release the most fish in six release categories.

In addition to awarding trophies for the category winners, the Division of Marine Fisheries gives certificates to all anglers who catch fish that meet a minimum weight limit.

The minimum weight for king mackerel, for instance, is 30 pounds. The state will award 4,206 certificates for the 1990 tournament.

The largest fish entered in this year's tournament was a 738-pound blue marlin. The smallest winning fish was a sea mullet that weighed 2 pounds, 11 ounces.

Species that showed an increase in applications over the previous year included bluefish, flounder and Spanish mackerel.

However, fishermen turned in fewer applications for other species. There were no entries of spot or croaker last year, and king mackerel entries were down 40 percent from 1989.

Statistics show that catch-and-release fishing is becoming increasingly popular in the annual tournament, according to the news release.

While release certificates are awarded only for amberjack, red drum, white marlin, blue marlin, sailfish and tarpon, releases comprised 37 percent of all applications received in 1990.

The three predominant species entered in the tournament all were eligible for release. White marlin was the most popular catch, and all but seven of the 476 entries last year were released.

There were 419 entries for red drum during the year, with 374 released. Fishermen submitted 377 applications for blue marlin in 1990, and 352 of those fish were released.

Four state records were broken in 1990, and the International Game Fish Association accepted two new state shark records as world records, according to the news release.

The 1991 fishing tournament began Jan. 1. Rule changes include increasing the minimum weights for black sea bass from 3 to 4 pounds, blue marlin from 300 to 400 pounds, and shark from 100 to 150 pounds.

Also, cobia is now eligible for a catch-and-release award. The news release says the minimum length requirement is 33 inches.

Official weigh stations in Brunswick County are Tripp's Fishing Center, Shallotte Point; Sheffield's, Ocean Isle Beach; Holden Beach Fishing Pier; Long Beach Pier; Oak Island Bait and Tackle Shop, Long Beach; and Captain Jerry's Tackle Shack, Southport.

For more information on the N.C. Saltwater Fishing Tournament, call the Division of Marine Fisheries toll free at 1-800-682-2632.

Varnamtown Signs Fall Victim To Pranksters

BY DOUG RUTTER
Green metal signs marking the Varnamtown town limits have become frequent targets of pranksters who have pulled them out of the ground over and over again.

Signs on Sabbath Home Road and Varnamtown Road have been removed at least nine times since the community incorporated a little more than two years ago, according to the present and past mayor.

The Rev. Tracie Varnum, the town's first mayor, said the sign on Sabbath Home Road was pulled up four times during his 14 months in office. The sign on Varnamtown Road was removed at least twice.

Varnum said he found the signs in the woods most of the times they were taken and he put them back up himself. Whoever took the signs usually didn't drag them more than 50 feet away from the post hole.

The last time the sign on Sabbath Home Road was pulled up, Varnum said he dug an "X" about three feet deep in the ground and nailed treated boards to the bottom of the post to secure it.

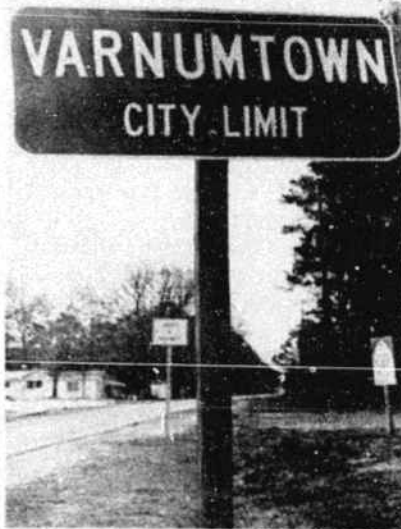
"I tried to fix it so it would be extremely hard for someone to dig up," Varnum said. As far as he knows, the sign hasn't been removed again.

Mayor Judy Galloway said the town limit sign on Varnamtown Road has been stolen three times since she took office in December 1989.

The N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) replaced the sign the first time it was stolen, and the town recovered the sign the second time. "Somebody found out who stole it and got it back," Mayor Galloway said.

When that sign was stolen a second time, the state replaced it with a new one. However, the name of the riverfront community was erroneously changed from Varnamtown to Varnumtown.

Leland Davis, division sign shop supervisor with the DOT, said Var-



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

TOWN LIMIT SIGNS in the small community of Varnamtown have a habit of disappearing frequently, the apparent victims of pranksters. The state recently put up this new sign on Varnamtown Road, but misspelled the name of the town.

namtown isn't the only local community that has problems keeping its signs up.

"It's not only Varnamtown," Davis said. "It's in the Belville-Leland area. It's all over the division. It's no set pattern to it."

Mrs. Galloway said she thinks teen-agers have been responsible for the vandalism in Varnamtown. "I really think it's just childish pranks," she said. "You know how young 'uns are these days."

Varnum also said he thinks kids have been behind the pranks. "Maybe whoever's doing it will get tired of pulling it up and hauling it away," he said. "I hope they will."

Davis said town limit signs cost about \$20 each, and posts and labor add to the expense. He said judges usually fine people \$50 to \$100 if they are caught stealing or damaging a sign.

Healing Past Pain Is Seminar Topic

Healing past pain stemming from substance abuse will be the topic of a free seminar Monday, Feb. 4, from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. in the teaching auditorium at Brunswick Community College in Supply.

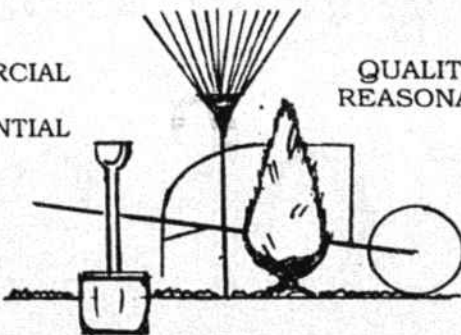
Nancy McCarter, a substance abuse counselor with the Southeastern Center for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse, will conduct the seminar, which is open to the public.

Reservations are not required, but they are appreciated. For more information, call Ms. McCarter at 253-4485.

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