

Perquimans People

Hertford Navyman Kevin Morrow serves on ship that flies

By GLENN HOUSTON
Special to the Perquimans Weekly
Kevin G. Morrow of Hertford compares sitting at the engineering operations control station aboard his ship to being in the cockpit of a 747.

In fact, Morrow uses a lot of aircraft terms to describe his ship. That's because it's a Navy ship that flies.

Petty Officer 1st Class Morrow is a crewman on the hydrofoil USS Gemini, based in Key West, Fla.

"It rides like an aircraft — there's no sensation of motion — and it makes banked turns," said the 25-year-old son of retired Marine Corps Capt. and Mrs. Edward Morrow, 69H Willow St., Hertford.

"It's fast when it flies, capable of going more than 40 mph, and you don't even notice when it flies over high waves."

The Gemini actually flies in water using its wing-like foils. The foils are smaller than aircraft wings because water is about 800 times more dense than air; a relatively small lifting surface can move the 132-foot, 256-ton ship's hull completely out of the water.

The Gemini uses a gas turbine engine — similar to the engines on a DC-10 aircraft — when it flies and is propelled by diesel engines while hull-borne.

When the Gemini is under way, Morrow, an interior communications electrician, stands duty as the engineering officer of the watch.

"The ship has unmanned engine rooms, and everything is controlled from the engineering operations control station," he said.

"The EOS is actually an L-shaped panel that controls the ship's fuel and hydraulics systems, the electrical plant and the engines. It indicates how every system is functioning. Everything is at your fingertips."

Morrow is also responsible for maintenance and repair of the ship's electrical switchboard and the distribution system from its generators.

He repairs the Gemini's aircraft-like gyrocompass; dead reckoning tracer, which records the ship's changes in direction; and interior communications system.

"My collateral duties include repairing electric equipment and training my shipmates in electrical safety as safety officer," Morrow said.

"The ship has a small crew — four officers and 18 enlisted men. We have to learn jobs outside our normal Navy fields just to keep it operating. This is probably the hardest-working command I'll ever see.

"The crew sticks together as a

team. We know each other's capabilities and trust each other."

Morrow enlisted in the Navy in 1975 and served on the submarine tender USS Hunley, homeported in Charleston, S. C., and at the Shore Intermediate Maintenance Activity in Norfolk, Va., where he earned the Navy Achievement Medal for his professional performance.

He joined the Gemini's pre-commissioning unit in December 1981.

He became a "plank owner," a member of the commissioning crew, when the Gemini joined the active Navy fleet in November 1982.

"I went to school for about a year before I actually joined the ship's pre-commissioning unit in Bremerton, Washington," Morrow said.

"I requested a commissioning unit. I knew I'd work some extremely long hours to prepare the ship for commissioning, but it's very rewarding to be part of the first crew."

After its commissioning, the Gemini headed down the West Coast on a 5,500-mile journey to its new home port in Key West, transiting the Panama Canal and making port calls in San Francisco; San Diego; Acapulco, Mexico; and Rodman, Panama.

"We hit some rough weather off the Oregon and California coasts," Morrow recalled. "That proved to me just how seaworthy this ship is."

"I enjoyed Acapulco. It cost me about a dollar for a car and driver all day to go shopping and sightseeing."

"I've been lucky since I've been in the Navy, I only spent 190 days at sea during the four years I was aboard the Hunley and the hydrofoils make deployments only a few days long. I don't know how the people who have to spend months away from their families handle it."

Morrow's wife is the former Barbara Bruner, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Bruner, 49G Dogwood Drive, Hertford. The Morrrows have two children: Emily, 5, and Heather, 2.

The Navy's six hydrofoils, all based in Key West, are designed to patrol restricted waters, support task force operations and shadow potentially hostile forces.

They also have been assisting the

Coast Guard with drug interdiction patrol.

"My family and I enjoy Key West," Morrow said. "The year-round warm weather is what makes this place. We love to swim and camp, and there's a bicycle path that goes almost around the island."

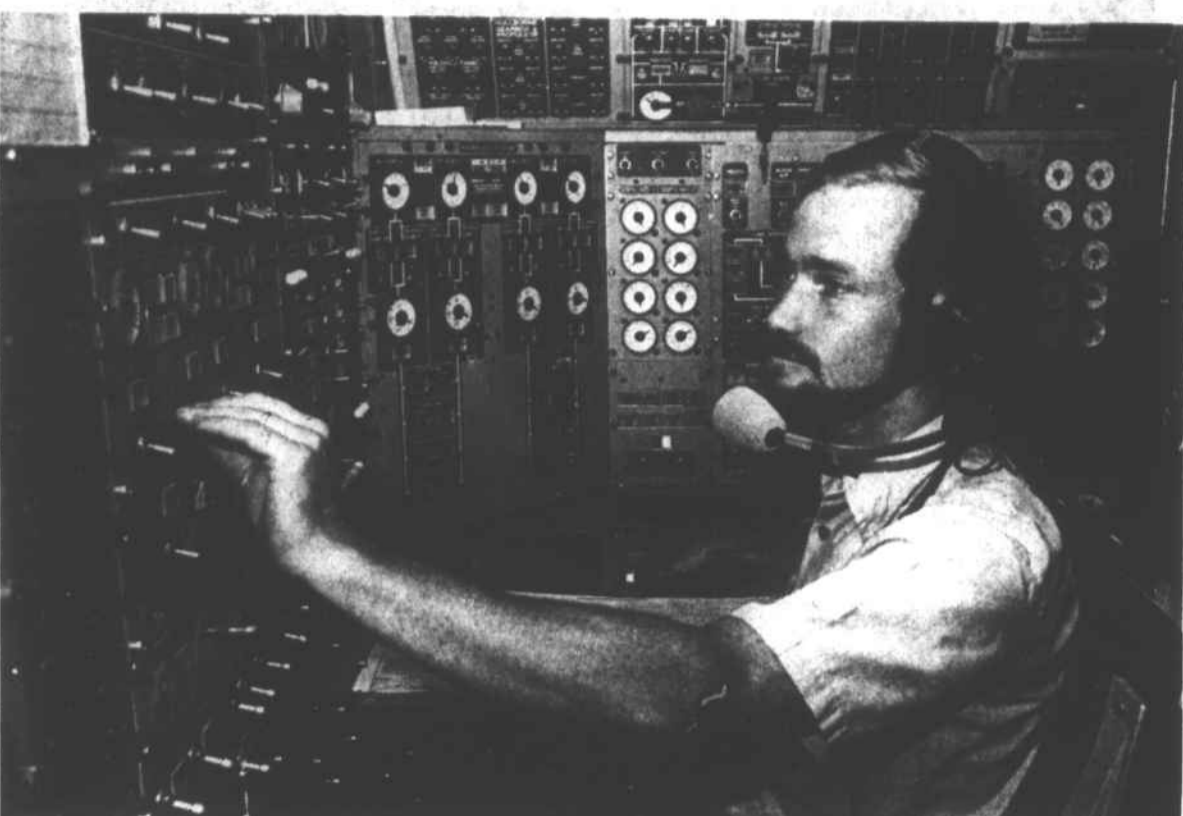
Morrow said he plans to make the Navy his career.

"I quit school and came in the Navy because I needed something to straighten me out," Morrow said. "Leaving school isn't a good choice, but I got my general educational

development certificate in 1978."

"Now I'm taking courses in digital electronics."

"The rewards of the service are great. I've had a wider variety of experiences in the Navy than I ever could have had in a civilian job."



Navyman Kevin Morrow of Hertford stands watch as the engineering officer in the engineering operations control station aboard the USS Gemini. (Photo by Carolyn Harris)



Navy interior communications electrician Kevin Morrow of Hertford described riding a Navy hydrofoil as almost like flying in an aircraft. (Photo by Carolyn Harris)

Local teachers attend ACC program

Elsie W. Thomas of Hertford, and Cheryl A. Newby of Belvidere, are among more than 20 high school classroom teachers from Eastern North Carolina to be selected as N. C. Writing Fellows to participate in a three-week writing project to be held on the Atlantic Christian College campus, July 10-28.

The summer institute will deal with techniques of the teaching of writing in the classroom for teachers in grades K-12. Fellows will participate in intensive personal writing activities and acquire many new writing techniques.

They will be provided with an

opportunity to observe what are considered to be many of the best writing lessons and will be exposed to current theories and research concerning the composition process.

Fellows will after present writing workshops within their own school districts and use material which was prepared at the ACC institute. They are to receive six graduate credits in the teaching of writing for participating in the event.

The Atlantic Christian College workshop is part of the second N. C. Writing Project to be held on the campuses of eight colleges and universities in the state.

Similar workshops are to take place at Pembroke State University, Wake Forest University/Winston-Salem State, UNC-Charlotte, Western Carolina University/UNC-Asheville, UNC-Wilmington, Appalachian State University, and N. C. State University/Peace College.

Serving as members of the steering committee for the ACC institute are Dr. Thomas G. MacLennan and Agnes McDonald of Atlantic Christian College, project co-directors; and Emily McCleary, Velam Smith, and Linda Perry of the Northeast Regional Educational Center.

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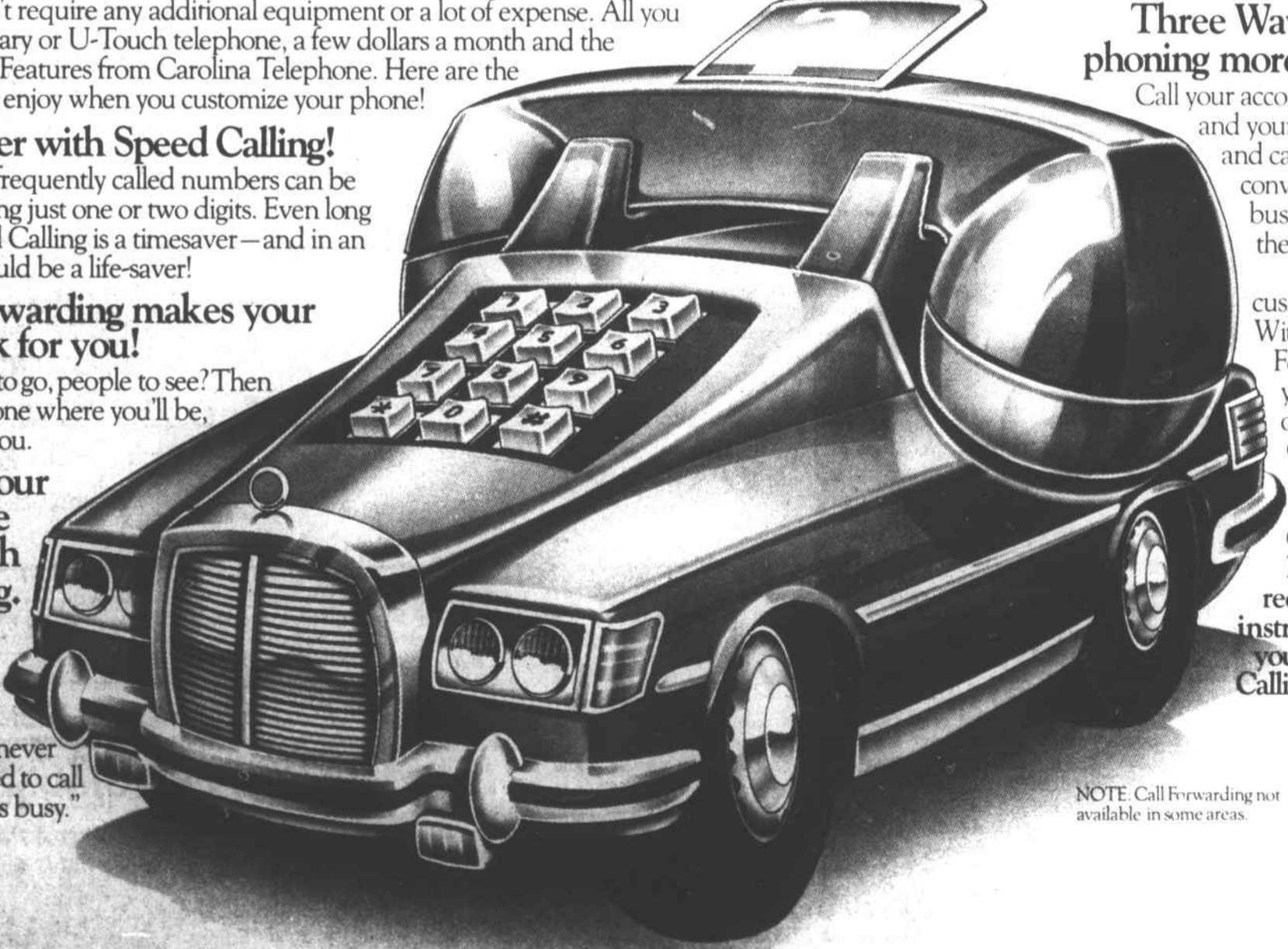
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