

Following are two messages about the conditions on the USS Cole in the aftermath of the bombing incident that took place in the port of Aden in October 2000.

**Subject: A note about the USS Cole
Date: Wed, 18 Oct 2000 15:44 EDT**

TC is a guy I served with in Viet Nam, who late spent 20 years or so with NSA and other elements of the federal government. Recommend you pass this on to anyone and everyone, that's why I left all the addressee's on the top of this so you could see who I sent it to. God has blessed America with men and women willing to pay the ultimate price. May His comfort be with the families and the wounded and their shipmates.

**Semper fi,
Joe**

----- Original Message -----

**Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2000 10:31 AM
Subject: USS COLE**

**A pass along'
sf//tc**

-----Original Message-----

Subject: FW: Our Navy Brethren aboard the USS COLE

I got this from a buddy at SWOS. It is a first hand account of the post COLE bombing

v/r, JOE DELEON>

I just got an e-mail from a good friend of mine who flies SH-60B's off the USS Hawes. I thought you might like to read it.

"It wasn't until a few days ago though, that we started doing something that I feel may be the first thing I've seen in my short Naval career that has truly made a difference. Right now we're supporting the USS COLE and her crew in Aden. When the attack occurred we were a day away. Just by luck we happened to be on our way out of the Gulf and headed towards the Suez and could get here in a relatively

short amount of time. I know what you all have seen on CNN, because we have seen it too.

I just want you all to know that what you see doesn't even scratch the surface. I'm not going to get into it for obvious reasons. But I will tell you that right now there are 250+ sailors just a few miles away living in hell on Earth. I'm sitting in a nice air conditioned state room, they're sleeping out on the decks at night. You can't even imagine the conditions they're living in, and yet they are still fighting 24 hours a day to save their ship and free the bodies of those still trapped and send them home. As bad as it is, they're doing an incredible job. The very fact that these people are still functioning is beyond my comprehension. Whatever you imagine as the worst, multiply it by ten and you might get there.

Today I was tasked to photo rig the ship and surrounding area. It looked so much worse than I had imagined, unbelievable really, with debris and disarray everywhere, the ship listing, the hole in her side. I wish I had the power to relay to you all what I have seen, but words just won't do it. I do want to tell you the first thing that jumped out at me - the Stars and Stripes flying. I can't tell you how that made me feel...even in this God forsaken hell hole our flag was more beautiful than words can describe. Then I started to notice the mass of activity going on below, scores of people working non-stop in 90 plus degree weather to save this ship. They're doing it with almost no electrical power and they're sleeping (when they can sleep) outside on the decks because they can't stand the smell or the heat or the darkness inside. They only want to eat what we bring them because they're all scared of eating something brought by the local vendors. Even with all that, the USS COLE and her crew is sending a message guys, and it's that even acts of cowardice and hate can do nothing to the spirit and pride of the United States. I have never been so proud of what I do, or of the men and women that I serve with as I was today.

There are sixteen confirmed dead sailors who put it on the line for all of us, and some of them are still trapped here. Please take a minute to pray for their families and say a word of thanks for their sacrifice - one made so that we can live the lives that we do. All of you that serve with me, thank you. All of you that have loved ones that serve, thank you."

Please feel free to pass this on to those you think will appreciate it.

V/R
LT Landry

Subject: More News from the USS COLE

Another first hand account from someone over there. Thanks to CAPT Biehler for forwarding this.

>V/R, CAPT Kallman

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From: LT John D. Cassani

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2000 1:31 AM

To

John, Your friend said it all. We too are on station and I will be going over there in the morning to provide a lunch. I wanted to grill steak for them on their deck, but there is still too much oil and fuel, not to mention every square foot of deck is now their living space, to set up a grill. Their requests have been simple, hot food, cold drinks and dry coveralls and boots. The ships here are all taking turns doing their laundry and cooking their meal. The Cole's crew has been offered repeatedly to take R&R on another ship but most have refused. They refuse to leave their ship. The details of their shipmates having to be cut from the bulkheads and descriptions and photos of the description have filtered to our ship. It is amazing that more were not killed. It is equally amazing that it is still afloat. The keel is ripped apart and at present cannot even be towed to open water to be placed on a dry-dock vessel. The #1 engine room is flooded solid, as is AUX 1. The Messdecks deck is now pressed against the overhead. The entire galley was pushed to the starboard side and the equipment is unrecognizable. This is where many crew members died. The ship was very nearly lost. They are truly heroes. We all have a lot to do to save this vessel but the crew of the Cole has endured the brunt of it so far. I have vowed myself and my department to offer any comfort, large or small that we are capable of providing, to the Cole. None of my guys have once complained and all have volunteered to help in any way.

The Cole's Suppo was injured and flown home. The disbo is now running things. I will assess his needs when I go over. The Suppo on the Hawes has been controlling the efforts but now that the Tarawa is on station they seem to be taking the reins, but I think I can at least provide him some insight. Let there be no doubt that this is a hostile land. It took days before we were even allowed to enter territorial waters and still we are heavily restricted in flights and must maintain a constant vigil against additional hostile actions. The Yemen government is still not being very helpful and we are trying to place all personnel onboard the ships that are currently staying at the two hotels in town. The Cole's crew remains emotionally and physically drained I'm told. So, since you have experienced Navy life, try relay to those back home the sacrifices we make, hardships we endure, and

the dangers we face in an effort to keep those Stars and Stripes flying high over a ship 10,000 miles from home.

Take care and sleep well knowing the US Navy is on watch tonight, but say a prayer for the 250 members of the Cole who must wake tomorrow to another day of fighting for their ship.

**John Cassani
USS ANCHORAGE**