

PEOPLE • PLANES • PLACES

Edited by JO2 Joshua M. Hudson



Awards

The 1997 Battenburg Cup, which goes to the Atlantic Fleet Battle Efficiency winner, was awarded to *George Washington* (CVN 73) as the ship with the best operational readiness and productivity.

The Association of Old Crows, an international organization of professionals in electronic defense, selected Capt. Jeffery H. Fischer, USAF, as Joint Officer of the Year. Capt. Fischer is currently serving in an exchange billet with VAQ-131 as an electronic warfare officer.

Marine Maj. Andrew Dingee was presented the Navy League's David S. Ingalls Award designating him the Naval Air Training Command's flight instructor of the year. Chosen from a field of more than 1,000 flight instructors, Maj. Dingee completed an impressive 508 flights during the year. Flight instructors normally log between 300 and 400.

Naval Aviation News won second place in the 1997 CHINFO Merit Awards in the category Publications for a Specific Audience. Contributing Artist Ted Wilbur won first place and Art Director Morgan Wilbur won second place in the Illustrative Art category. In addition, Ted Wilbur won second place for Illustrative Art in the Department of Defense 1997 Thomas Jefferson Awards competition.

Left, F/A-18 *Hornet* aviators 1st Lts. Christine Westrich and Ted Shackleton, USMC, of the VMFAT-101 *Sharpshooters* head back to the ready room after a sortie over MCAS El Toro, Calif. Photo by Ted Carlson.

Scan Pattern

Naval Aviation mourned the passing of two Marine aviators: Lt. Col. Kenneth Ambrose Walsh and Col. Donald Conroy. Walsh, who suffered a fatal heart attack, was the first F4U *Corsair* pilot to achieve "ace" status. Of his 21 confirmed air-to-air victories, 20 were during

the Battle of Guadalcanal. By the end of WW II, Kenneth Walsh was the fourth-ranking Marine Corps ace. He was a recipient of the Medal of Honor.

Col. Conroy died of colon cancer at the age of 77. Conroy, who was made famous by son Pat's book *The Great Santini*, and the movie of

R e s c u e s

The crews of HC-4 *Super Stallions* sweltered in 140-degree temperatures from the out-of-control Sicilian brush fires below them in early July. The fires had already claimed two lives and left thousands of acres razed before the Italian government asked the U.S. Navy for assistance. The fires, fed by strong winds and record highs of 118 degrees, threatened the local population and the nearby military base, NAS Sigonella. Once on the scene, HC-4 provided relief with their "bambi bucket," a device that dispenses more than 1,300 gallons of water. The *Super Stallion* crews fought the fire for four hours over the city of Catania, where flames 30 feet high burned the downtown district. HC-4 extinguished a total of seven fires in the city and worked into the next morning assisting other firefighters in the countryside.

The NAS Fallon *Longhorn* Search and Rescue (SAR) crews were busy this summer with four successful rescues. Nearby Mono County, Nev., sheriff's department requested aid in the search for two lost hikers who disappeared after a day-hike near Mammoth Mountain Ski Resort, and in the rescue of a 44-year-old victim who had fallen more than 300 feet down a steep snow-faced



HC-4 crews worked against time to stem the outcrop of flash fires across Sicily.

slope in the Sierra Mountains, Calif. The sheriff's department of Eldorado County, Calif., requested the *Longhorns'* assistance with a seriously ill 12-year-old who was stranded at a remote campsite 25 miles west of Lake Tahoe. The *Longhorns* also made a one-skid landing just southwest of Bridgeport, Calif., for the rescue of a 52-year-old female suffering from severe abdominal pains. NAS Fallon's SAR crews have tallied a total of 17 successful missions this year.

the same name, spent 33 years in the Marine Corps. He flew dive-bombers during WW II; was in the “Black Sheep” squadron during the Korean War; with VMA-331 during the Cuban Missile Crisis; and served two tours in Vietnam.

“Mickee,” “Fuzzy” and “Smokey” Matheson are brothers. They are also lieutenant commanders, and have made their father proud by following in his footsteps to become Naval Aviators. Jon (Mickee), 37, is a Selected Reservist F/A-18 *Hornet* pilot; Paul (Smokey), 36, is a regular Navy helicopter pilot on active duty and Jim (Fuzzy), 33, flies F-5 *Tiger IIs* as a TAR (training and administration of reserves). Jon commented, “Because there are three of us out there, it seems that everybody knows at least one of us. Together we are helping provide the support the fleet needs.”

Austin (LPD 4) was tasked with

During an awards ceremony at the **Marine Corps Aviation Association** symposium in Fort Worth, Texas, 24–27 September, the following individuals and units were recognized:

Award	Winner
Alfred A. Cunningham (Aviator)	Capt. K. J. Wolfe
Robert Guy Robinson (NFO)	Capt. J. P. Farnam
Earl Hattaway (Aviation Ground Officer)	Maj. P. F. Callan
Robert F. Gibson (Aviation C&C Officer)	Maj. J. S. Carusone
Silver Hawk (Earliest Designated NA/NFO)	Lt. Gen. T. R. Dake
Danny Radish (Enlisted Aircrew)	Sgt. D. L. Pennington
Willie D. Sproule (Aviation Maintenance)	SSgt. F. W. Masterson III
Ken Southcomb (Aviation Supply)	SSgt. D. W. Benton
Gaines Gilbert (Aviation Ordnance)	GSgt. A. J. Ramos
Kenneth A. Innis (Aviation C&C Enlisted)	SSgt. K. C. Reynolds
Jack Demmond (Aviation Ground Enlisted)	GSgt. P. F. Smith
James E. Nicholson (NCO Leadership)	SSgt. R. A. Clarke
Robert Hanson (Fighter-Attack Squadron)	VMFA-122
Lawson H. M. Sanderson (Attack Squadron)	VMA-211
Royal N. Moore (TAC/Electronic Warfare Sqdn.)	VMAQ-1
Henry Wildfang (Aerial Refueler Transport Sqdn.)	VMGR-234
Keith McCutcheon (Heavy Helo Squadron)	HMH-462
Edward C. Dyer (Medium Helo Squadron)	HMM-264
John P. Giguere (Light Attack Helo Squadron)	HMLA-369
Don Davis (Aviation Logistics Squadron)	MALS-36
James Hatch (Wing Support Squadron)	MWSS-271
Edward F. Fris (Air C&C Squadron)	MASS-1
Commandant's Aviation Trophy	AGSE MCAGCC
Pete Ross (Reserve Flight Safety Trophy)	HMH-769
James Maguire (Exceptional Achievement)	1st Lt. B. J. Shortsleeve

Holy Hornets, Batman!



Ted Carlson

The *Batmen* of VMFA(AW)-242, MCAS Miramar, Calif., fly over the Sierra mountains with one of their F/A-18D *Hornets*.

Special Records

Several units marked safe flying milestones:

Unit	Hours	Aircraft
HMT-204	91,920	CH-46E <i>Sea Knight</i>
HSL-44	90,000	SH-60B <i>Seahawk</i>
VMFA(AW)-242	50,000	F/A-18D <i>Hornet</i>
HMLA-169	30,000	AH-1 <i>Super Cobra</i>
Integrated Test Team	3,000	F/A-18E/F <i>Super Hornet</i>

Bonhomme Richard Commissioned

The Navy's newest multipurpose amphibious assault ship, *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6), was commissioned on 15 August. LHDs are equipped to respond to a variety of amphibious assault, advance force and special-purpose operations, as well as noncombatant humanitarian missions. Once she joins the fleet, LHD 6 will have a mix of assault helicopters and *Harrier* jets for assault operations and close air support. *Bonhomme Richard* will be home-ported in San Diego, Calif.



Clockwise from top, *Bonhomme Richard* taxis into Pensacola Bay for her commissioning ceremony. There was an impressive turnout of Sailors and local supporters. A Sailor stands ready to ring aboard VIPs.



testing a prototype recovery system for the *Pioneer* unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), which was used successfully during the Gulf War for surveillance and reconnaissance missions in which manned aircraft were

not practical. When *Austin*'s crew attempted to rig the UAV arresting system on board, the 26-foot structure buckled. The crew then called upon engineers at **Navy Lakehurst, N.J.**, for short-fuse assistance in

order to continue training exercises scheduled for the next day. A replacement structure would normally take 35 hours to build, but manufacturing department personnel completed the job in a record 7 hours. It was trucked to Morehead City, N.C., and loaded aboard *Austin*, which later completed successful UAV arrestments using the new support structure. After receiving kudos from the ship's CO, the department head noted, "Solving fleet problems is our business."



Left, *Austin* tests an arrested landing system for a *Pioneer* UAV.

Keflavik Tactical Exchange (KEFTACEX) 98-1, an undersea warfare exercise conducted by Commander Fleet Air, Keflavik took place in August. Units from VP-66, Willow Grove, Pa.; VP-45, Jacksonville, Fla.; and VP-8, Brunswick, Maine, participated with

squadrons from Canada, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom in simulated hunts for the Canadian diesel submarine HMCS *Okanagan*. The exercise provided crews of different nations with first-hand experience in variations of sub-hunting techniques.

Right, Marines of the VMFA-321 *Hell's Angels* load a Sidewinder missile for a training mission. Below, the VFMA-321 insignia.



Mike Wilson

Journalist Goes for Joystick

In September, *Naval Aviation News* (NANews) and the Navy bid farewell to **JO2 E. Blake Towler**. He has been selected for the Army's Chief Warrant Officer Program through which he will be trained as a helicopter pilot.

Petty Officer Towler's presence will be greatly missed on the magazine staff, where his expertise as "computer guru" made our lives easier—and his quirky sense of humor made our jobs a whole lot more fun.

NANews staffers will remember his endearing personal characteristics. Art Director Morgan Wilbur recalled, "Shortly after I arrived at the magazine, Petty Officer Towler, known for his unique style of pronunciation, noticed the way I pronounced the word 'hover.' After months of Blake's

skillful tutoring in the art of enunciating the word, according to him, I can now *properly* pronounce it: hoe-ver!"

Assistant Editor Wendy Karppi added, "When we began working together, Blake recognized my susceptibility to musical suggestion. He quickly became skilled at humming or singing part of a song in an effort to plant the seed in our own version of *Name That Tune*. Thanks to him, many days I ended up with some annoying song rattling around in my head. Fortunately, he was also easy prey in this regard, so I could avenge myself."

Commenting on his professional contributions, Managing Editor Sandy Russell said, "Blake's excellent writing and editing skills helped keep the magazine top notch, but his



As a journalist for *Naval Aviation News*, JO2 Towler had the opportunity to meet former President George Bush in 1996.

talent for coming up with just the right title for an article—when the rest of the staff was stumped—remains unsurpassed."

Summing up, Editor Cdr. Jim Carlton hit the mark, "The Navy's loss is the Army's gain. We're sad to see him go, but glad that he has chosen to remain in military aviation."

Happy landings, Blake!

Seabirds Exhibit

Hank Caruso provided a “hands-on” introduction to his aviation art exhibit at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C. Visitors flocked to the memorial this summer for a bird’s-eye view of his well-known Aerocatures™ while his work was on display. The artist was also available one evening to autograph his book, *Seabirds: An Unofficial Illustrated Encyclopedia of Naval Aviation*.

Inset, Hank’s drawing of “Paddles” depicts the landing signal officer at work.



JOE E. Blake Towler

Izetta Winter Robb Dies

By Capt. Zip Rausa, USNR (Ret.)

Izetta Winter Robb is a legendary figure among several generations of the *Naval Aviation News* staff. She passed away in July at the age of 93 but the legacy of this remarkable woman is intact and solidly imbedded in every issue of the magazine, which she served for 26 years as its managing editor. More than any single individual, Izetta was instrumental in establishing the periodical’s journalistic integrity and superlative readability.

The managing editor of the magazine is the anchor, the corporate memory, the guiding force. Many naval officers were assigned to the staff as editors over the years and some had limited journalistic credentials. Professionally trained enlisted journalists enhanced the magazine’s quality. But in her time, it was Izetta who taught the editors—fleet-experienced Naval Aviators—how to be editors.

For this writer, on the magazine’s staff in the early 1960s, Izetta was a woman of towering stature, although she was only a little over five feet tall. Self-confident, strong-willed, good-humored and warm-hearted beyond measure,



Izetta Winter Robb retired in 1969.

she was fortified for the *Naval Aviation News* job by her former experience as a newspaper reporter, school teacher and WAVE officer during WW II. She was a leader and projected the commanding presence of one.

“Read and study *The Elements of Style*,” she often advised, giving me a copy (which I treasure to this day). “Use declarative sentences, keep it simple. Fancy words are unnecessary, and don’t beat around the bush. Get right to the point.” She

rendered criticism with a smile and benign force. She was a people person in heart, mind and soul, possessing a bottomless reservoir of compassion for others.

Three beneficiaries of Izetta’s wisdom are still on the masthead of *Naval Aviation News*. Former editor and highly regarded artist Capt. Ted Wilbur, USNR (Ret.), currently illustrates the famed “Grampaw Pettibone” feature; Hal Andrews, Honorary Naval Aviator No. 22, aeronautical engineer and aviation writer-historian, is the magazine’s technical advisor; and I am a contributing editor.

Unknowingly, Izetta established a tradition. All of her successors at *Naval Aviation News* have been women: Dorthy Bennefeld, Helen Collins and the incumbent, Sandy Russell, who has held the post since 1985. These hard-working and dedicated ladies have carried on with professionalism that would make Izetta proud.

When she retired from *Naval Aviation News* in 1969, her long-time associate, Robert Osborn, artist and originator of “Grampaw Pettibone,” drew a chagrined Gramps with tears descending from saddened eyes. The caption read, “Izetta’s retiring! Heaven help us!”

Heaven is appropriate for this lovely and unforgettable woman.

From Toddler to Helicopter Pilot

On the July 1973 back cover of *Naval Aviation News*, right, three-year-old Christopher Rew appeared to know exactly what he wanted to do when he grew up. Twenty-five years later, Lieutenant Rew is flying SH-60B *Seahawks* as a member of Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron Light 48, NS Mayport Fla. Below, he strikes a pose similar to his “cover boy” image, which was taken while his dad was a lieutenant assigned to the search-and-rescue detachment at NAS Pensacola, Fla. His parents, Skip and Connie, of Leesburg, Ga., are understandably proud of their son who has graduated from sneakers to flight boots.



Change of Command

Eisenhower (CVN 69): Capt. H. Denby Starling II relieved Capt. Gregory C. Brown, 26 Aug.

HC-4: Cdr. Joan Zitterkopf relieved Cdr. Chris Real.

HSL-46: Cdr. Neil W. T. Hogg relieved Cdr. T. G. Alexander.

HSL-51: Cdr. Thomas H. Webber relieved Cdr. Martin J. Keaney, 3 Sep.

HT-8: Cdr. Randy Sickmier relieved Cdr. Bruce Watson, 24 Sep.

MWSS-273: Lt. Col. William H. Ritchie III relieved Lt. Col. Larry D. Huffman.

NAF Washington, D.C.: Capt. Craig C. Groom, USNR, relieved Capt. E. A. Perry, USNR.

NAS Fallon, Nev.: Capt. David A. Rogers relieved Capt. Scott C. Ronnie, 20 Aug.

NAS Whiting Field, Fla.: Capt. D. Wayne Nelms relieved Capt. Richard L. Dick, 12 Jun (correction).

NAR Barbers Point, Hawaii: Capt. Ralph M. Rhodenbaugh relieved Cdr. Robert Knutsen.

NAR Norfolk, Va.: Capt. R. Mark Heilenday relieved Capt. Thomas L. McAtee.

PATWING-11: Capt. Alex S. Hill relieved Capt. Keith T. Weaver.

VAQ-132: Cdr. David B. Woods relieved Cdr. Randall J. Laws.

VAQ-142: Cdr. Jon R. Boe relieved Cdr. Patrick D. Keller.

VAW-125: Cdr. J. Mark Cantrell relieved Cdr. Kevin D. McCarty, 2 Sep.

VFA-94: Cdr. Kevin E.

O'Flaherty relieved Cdr. Jeffrey B. Bates, 4 Sep.

VFA-105: Cdr. Kevin Miller relieved Cdr. Pat Driscoll, 3 Sep.

VF-211: Cdr. Mark Kohart relieved Cdr. David Baranek, 14 Aug.

VP-62: Cdr. John Flynn relieved Cdr. Norman D. Dupre, 18 Jul.

VR-54: Cdr. Robert B. Gulley II relieved Cdr. Arthur R. Randolph, 19 Sep.

VT-22: Cdr. Ronald J. Unterreiner relieved Cdr. David J. Spangler, 9 Oct.

VT-28: Cdr. Mitchell T. Swecker relieved Cdr. Joe Stuyvesant, 4 Sep.

VT-86: Lt. Col. Richard W. Britton relieved Cdr. Daniel L. Ouimette, 4 Sep.