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## COD on a Cat



PH3 Mike Larson

### Awards

LCdr. Thomas C. Popp, Naval Force Aircraft Test Squadron, NAS Patuxent River, Md., was named the **1999 Adm. Merlin O'Neill Officer of the Year** by the Southern Maryland Chapter of The Retired Officers' Association, which established the O'Neill

A C-2A *Greyhound* carrier-onboard delivery plane launches from *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) in the Pacific Ocean on 19 October 1999.

Award to honor Pax River junior officers in any branch of the service. Popp was recognized for his contributions to the E-2C/C-2A Integrated Project Team, including detection of over 200 deficiencies

prior to the technical evaluation of an E-2C mission computer upgrade.

### Scan Pattern

**HSL-46 Det 10** recovered a total of 104 kilograms of cocaine in the central Caribbean after a 21 September call from the U.S. Coast Guard.

**AMS3 (AW) Thomas Beverage** of VAQ-131 received the Navy Achievement Medal on 7 November for alerting crews of a launch bar down on an E-2 *Hawkeye*. Beverage's attention to detail prevented a potentially serious incident for the crew from Carrier Air



SN Patrick Horgan

**PR3 Chris Abubo** tests communication equipment for Strike Fighter Squadron 195 aboard *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) in November 1999.



Wing 2 aboard *Constellation* (CV 64) during a Fifth Fleet commitment to Operation Southern Watch.

## Special Records

Two units marked safe flying time:

Unit	Hours	Years
HSL-51	50,000	7
HS-11	25,000	8

*George Washington* (CVN 73) exceeded 60,000 safe landings on 21 August.

Cdr. Ken Thompson and LCdr. J. D. Thompson of VFA-15 each made their 1,000th carrier arrested landings aboard *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71).

Naval Aviation reported a rate of 0.77 flight mishaps per

100,000 flight hours during FY1999, outpacing the previous best of 1.29 set in 1997. Fatalities for 1999 were down almost 70 percent from 1998 and more than 90 percent since 1991. Last year also recorded the lowest mishap rates ever for overall operational mishaps (8.63); shore operational mishaps excluding motor vehicles (1.31); and military operational facilities (3.92).

# Royal Catch



Above, the submarine *Scranton* (SSN 756) demonstrates an “emergency blow” as King Abdullah II of Jordan watches from an SH-60 *Seahawk* helicopter. Right, the king observes operations from flight deck control aboard *John F. Kennedy* (CV 67).



PH1 Lance Kirk

PH3 Chantel Chapman

## Rescues

**George Washington (CVN 73)** saved a tugboat from sinking in the Atlantic Ocean off the Florida coast on 2 October 1999. The crew made a distress call after the tug took on an excessive amount of water while towing a barge to Jacksonville, Fla. *George Washington* steamed at top speed to the tug 25 miles away. An SH-60 *Seahawk* of HS-15 flew two damage control specialists, DCSC Joseph Curtin and DCFN Viron Smith, to the tug with a pump and submersible lines. The two Sailors were lowered by hoist onto the

tug's rolling deck, and worked with the tug's four-man crew through the night to pump water overboard and stabilize the boat's 10 to 15-degree lists. *GW* then escorted the ship back to Jacksonville for repairs.

A crew of **HSL-46**, NAS Mayport, Fla., employed their search and rescue (SAR) skills in response to a sinking boat in the St. Marys River inlet. While on a

routine night training flight, the crew was called by Mayport to respond to a possible SAR scenario. A 65-foot sailboat was sinking with one male adult and four children on board and the survivors had entered the water. As the helo approached multiple red flares could be seen in the water and the victims were quickly located in their lifeboat. The helo crew remained on station until a Cumberland Island pilot boat retrieved the five survivors.

### Hurricane Floyd

Hurricane Floyd ravaged the East Coast in September 1999, hitting North Carolina the hardest, and the Navy and Marine Corps were there to assist in the flood-stricken aftermath.

Three HH-46D *Sea Knight* helicopters of VMR-1, MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., flew 50 sorties, logged 62.8 flight hours, transported more than 14,000 pounds of cargo, and rescued 399 people in a four-day period. Marine Aircraft Groups 29 and 26, MCAS New River, S.C., ferried supplies, logging 91 sorties and 128 flight hours with 18 CH-46E *Sea Knights*, 2 CH-53 *Sea Stallions* and a UH-1N *Iroquois*. MWSG-27 delivered two shower units and shelters as well as food and volunteer Marines.

Two CH-46E *Sea Knight* helicopters from HC-6 and two H-3 *Sea Kings* from the search and rescue detachment aboard NAS Oceana, Va., evacuated 780 stranded residents from flooded areas. The helos also carried medical supplies, food and drinking water to the stricken areas. An E-2C *Hawkeye* from VAW-121 was used to provide command and control operations for the rescue effort.

On 15 September *John F. Kennedy* (CV 67), at sea to avoid the hurricane, was notified by the Coast Guard that a 150-foot ocean tug was sinking in 30-foot seas and 50-knot winds. The eight-man crew reported they could not save the boat and abandoned ship in a life raft. Two SH-60 *Seahawks* from HS-11, NAS Jacksonville, Fla., were launched with search and rescue swimmers. One of the

helicopters located three crewmen together in the water, clutching a distress beacon. With the aid of a Coast Guard HC-130 *Hercules* from Clearwater, Fla., HS-11 was able to locate and rescue there-maining crew.

## Chain Chain Chain . . .

**Airman Chris O'Brien reaches for a set of aircraft tie-down chains to secure an aircraft to the flight deck of *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) while operating in the Pacific Ocean in October 1999.**



PH3 Mike Larson



## Last of a Breed

**T**he last active duty Sikorsky UH-3H *Sea King* helicopter stationed at NAS North Island, Calif., is assigned to **HC-11**, Detachment 15. Sideflare 700—accepted by the U.S. Navy in September 1964 as an SH and converted to a UH in 1994—has flown approximately 14,000 hours. The team of people supporting the helo consists of 4 pilots and 18 enlisted personnel, who keep her prepared to fly an average of 60 hours a month. She flew more hours than any H-3 in the U.S. Navy during a recent 18-month period. Sideflare 700 has participated in various fleet and RIMPAC exercises, traveling from Alaska to Mexico and as far west as Hawaii, carrying out her VIP support mission for the fleet commanders on board *Coronado* (AGF 11), the Third Fleet flagship.



## Change of Command

**CINCLANTFLT:** Adm. Vernon E. Clark relieved Adm. J. Paul Reason, 17 Sep.

**CINCPACFLT:** Adm. Thomas Fargo relieved Adm. Archie Clemins, 8 Oct.

**COMNAVAIRESFOR:** RAdm. John P. McLaughlin relieved RAdm. Stephen T. Keith, 23 Oct.

**Carl Vinson (CVN 70):** Capt. Bruce W. Clingan relieved RAdm. David M. Crocker, 8 Nov.

**Constellation (CV 64):** Capt. James Kelly relieved Capt. Don Bullard, Sep.

**CVW-5:** Capt. Douglas L. McClain relieved Capt. Richard O. McHarg, 7 Oct.

**HC-11:** Cdr. John F. Hardison relieved Cdr. Peter J. Sciabarra, 9 Dec.

**HMM-266:** Lt. Col. E. M. Walsh relieved Lt. Col. J. L. Marshall, 4 Nov.

**Kearsarge (LHD 3):** Capt. Reubin B. Bookert relieved Capt. Peter A. Masciangelo, 16 Jul.

**NAF El Centro, Calif.:** Capt. Larry W. Crane relieved Capt. Carlos S. Badger, 6 Sep.

**Peleliu (LHA 5):** Capt. Larry J. Watson relieved Capt. Gary Jones, 13 Oct.

**VAW-116:** Cdr. Jay Stocks relieved Cdr. Mark Chicoine, 26 Sep.

**VC-8:** Cdr. Brad A. Steele relieved Cdr. Steven D. Kornatz, 15 Oct.

**VF-102:** Cdr. Mark Molidor relieved Cdr. Dana Dervay, 28 Jun.

**VF-211:** Cdr. Michael Ullrich relieved Cdr. Mark Kohart, 22 Oct.

**VFA-105:** Cdr. Troy M. Shoemaker relieved Cdr. Kevin P. Miller, 4 Nov.

**VFA-106:** Cdr. Gregory M. Nosal relieved Cdr. Jeffrey M.

Cathey, 23 Sep.

**VFA-115:** Cdr. Michael E. Cross relieved Cdr. Scott T. Craig, 8 Oct.

**VFA-204:** Cdr. Stephen C. Heid relieved Cdr. A. J. Rizzo, 6 Nov.

**VP-30:** Capt. Robert W. Andersen relieved Capt. Chalker W. Brown, 3 Sep.

**VP-64:** Cdr. Daniel W. Hudson relieved Cdr. Roger E. Bentlage, 11 Sep.

**VS-35:** Cdr. Joe McClain relieved Cdr. Gregory F. LaBuda, Sep.

**VS-41:** Cdr. Gregory F. LaBuda relieved Capt. James P. Kelly, 15 Sep.

**VT-4:** Cdr. Joseph C. Adan relieved Cdr. Ronald E. Ziembko, 22 Oct.

**VT-6:** Lt. Col. Thomas G. Boodry relieved Cdr. Dale Lumme, 2 Sep.

# Four Generations of Naval Aviation

When German immigrant Rasmus Christensen joined the Navy in 1904 and was made a Machinist's Mate First Class, he had no idea that he was creating a family legacy. After distinguishing himself with two Navy Crosses for separate acts of bravery rescuing shipmates during two shipboard fires,

Christensen was awarded an assignment to the Navy Flying School at NAS Pensacola, Fla., and was later designated Naval Aviator number 1885 in 1918. He trained to be a flight engineer and was a crew member of the NC-1, part of a four-seaplane division attempting the first transatlantic crossing. (Only the NC-4 completed the flight, eight years before the famous Lindbergh flight.) Christensen became a chief warrant officer in 1919 and served for 21 years before retiring.

Ernest Edward Christensen followed in his father's footsteps. After graduating from the Naval Academy, he was commissioned an ensign in 1934, and was designated Naval Aviator number 5237 three years later. During his naval career he fought in WW II, served during the Korean conflict, and was CO of *Hornet* (CVS 12) during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He became Commander Carrier Division 18 in 1962, attained the rank of rear admiral the same year and retired in 1972.

The tradition continued with Ernest E. Christensen, Jr., who graduated from the Naval Academy and was commissioned in 1964. In 1966 he earned his Wings of Gold and became a third-generation Naval Aviator. RAdm. Christensen, Jr., accumulated over 5,000 flight hours and more than 1,000 carrier arrested landings. Completing four combat cruises, he flew 360 combat missions in A-4 *Skyhawks* and F-4 *Phantoms* over North Vietnam.



His impressive career also included a tour with the *Blue Angels*, CO of the Navy Fighter Weapons School (Top Gun) and skipper of *Ranger* (CV 61) during Operation Desert Storm. He retired in 1997.

Eighty-one years after his great-grandfather Rasmus, Cory C. Christensen—commissioned in 1997 after graduating from the Naval Academy—earned his Wings of Gold on 15 October 1999 at NAS Kingsville, Texas. True to family tradition, his wings were pinned on by his father.



Commenting on his contribution to his family history, Ltjg. Christensen stated, "I didn't do anything more spectacular than any other student who made it. I just happen to come from a family that has a rich naval tradition."



**Top, Ltjg. Cory Christensen received his Wings of Gold in October 1999 from his father. The first Christensen family Naval Aviator, Rasmus, right, participated in the 1919 transatlantic flight attempted by four NC flying boats, above. His legacy continued with his son, Ernest; grandson Ernest Jr., center; and now, great-grandson Cory.**

