PEOPLE PLANES PLACES

Edited by JO1 Johnie Hickmon and JO2 Brandy Fisher

Awards

Helicopter Maritime Strike Wing, U.S. Atlantic Fleet named AD1 (AW) Crystal S. Cooper as the 2005 **Wing Sailor of the Year.** She is the leading petty officer for the Power Plants Work Center at Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Detachment Mayport, Fla. AD1 (AW) Cooper is currently pursing an aviation operations degree and volunteers her time to the NJROTC program, Habitat for Humanity, and the local Salvation Army.

NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., was the Navy winner of the 2006 **Presidential Commander in Chief's Installation Excellence Award** on 3 April. The award recognizes personnel in the operation and maintenance of U.S. military installations worldwide.

Bataan (LHD 5) was selected as the **U.S. Navy Motorsport Fleet Honoree Program** for the 5 May
NASCAR Busch Series race in Richmond, Va. Five
Bataan sailors attended the race and the ship's decal was



placed on the Navy #88 Chevrolet Monte Carlo, owned by Dale Earnhardt, Jr. and driven by Mark McFarland. The Navy Recruiting Command chooses honorees from packages sent by the commands vying for selection. The fleet program honors a different unit for each of the 35 races of the series.

Lt. Matthew Meyers, Ltjg. Joseph Maggi, AE2 (NAC/AW) Royce Burroughs, and AM3 (NAC) Nicholas Kontodiakos from HSC-28 received the Naval Helicopter Association Region Four 2005 **Air Crew of the Year (Embarked) Award** on 3 April. The award recognizes the most notable embarked helicopter mission during the preceding year, conducted by the crew demonstrating the most professional airmanship and overall performance during helicopter operations. The HSC-28 crew received the award as a result of their performance during Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

On 3 March Naval Air Reserve Willow Grove, Pa., XO Cdr. Joseph Donnelly received the **Air Medal**. Cdr.

Donnelly has deployed four times in support of operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. During his second deployment in 2003, Cdr. Donnelly was the copilot of an HH-60H Seahawk that was part of a four-plane special operations aerial assault against an urban target in Baghdad. He maneuvered the aircraft clear of enemy gunfire, power lines, antennas, and trees to provide close air support for the lead aircraft's fastrope insertion while ground elements breached the target. He then positioned his own aircraft directly over the target in order to fastrope another assault force to the roof.

CO, Strike Fighter Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet acknowledged VFA-195 with the **Scott F. Kirby Award**. The award recognizes comprehensive excellence in a strike fighter squadron ordnance program, including safe and proficient handling of ordnance as well as thorough maintenance and record keeping by the Avionics and Armament division.





Aviation winners of the 2006 **Captain Edward F. Nev Award** for food service excellence are:

Large Afloat Category—*Tarawa* (LHA 1), first place, and *Bataan* (LHD 5), runner-up. Aircraft Carrier Category—*Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75), first place, and *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72), runner-up.

Naval Air Depot, Jacksonville, Fla., received the Naval Air Systems Command 2005 **Aviation Safety Award** for the fifth time in seven years.

VAW-117 received the 2005 **NAVAIRPAC Battle E**. This award recognizes a squadron's training and

Assistant Supply Officer LCdr. Eric Oxendine with the food service department aboard *Tarawa* (LHA 1) accepts the Capt. Edward F. Ney Award given in recognition of overall excellence in food service.

operational achievements, looking for a balance of efficiency and cost-wise readiness.

Milestones

VP-65, NAS Point Mugu, Calif., was deactivated on 31 March.

On 3 February **VMFA-232** celebrated its 80th anniversary, which was officially on 1 September

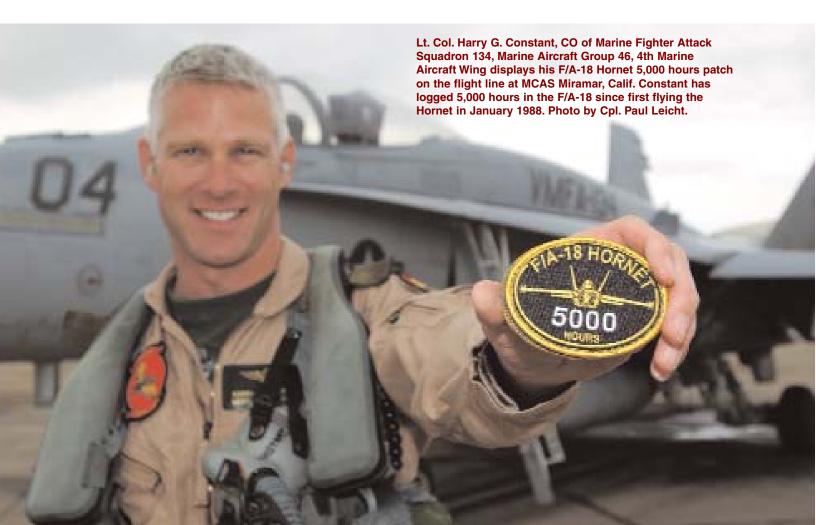
VFA-195 surpassed 100,000 Class A mishap-free flight hours on 6 March.

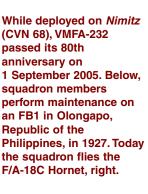
HMM(T)-164 surpassed 40,000 Class A mishap-free hours on 1 February.

On the Move

2005.

Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 8 transited the Suez Canal on 7 April, marking the end of more than four months of maritime security operations in the U.S.







5th Fleet area of operations. ESG-8, comprising five ships and one submarine in the *Nassau* (**LHA 4**) strike group and the **22nd MEU** (**SOC**), deployed on 4 November 2005 from NS Norfolk, Va.

Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) returned to NS Norfolk, Va., on 11 March, following a six-month deployment to the Arabian Gulf in support of the global war on terrorism. HSC-26 Det 4 returned to NS Norfolk, Va., on 8 March, VF-31 and VF-213 arrived at NAS Oceana, Va., on 10 March, while HS-3 and VS-24 returned to NAS Jacksonville, Fla., on 11 March.

Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 9 led by *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) departed NAS North Island, Calif., on 3 March, with Carrier Air Wing 2 embarked, comprising **HSL-47**, **VFA-2**, **VFA-151**, **VFA-34**, **VFA-137**, **VAQ-131**, **VAW-116**, and **HS-2**.**VRC-30** joined the carrier on 5 March. The group arrived in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility in late March.

In early November 2005 **HSL-44 Det 4** aboard *Cape St. George* (CG 71) and **Det 10** aboard *Winston S. Churchhill* (DDG 81) departed on a six-month deployment to the Arabian Gulf and Horn of Africa, including support of Operation Enduring Freedom and

Operation Iraqi Freedom. Both dets returned to NS Mayport, Fla., on 2 May.

A detachment of 31 sailors and two HH-60H Seahawks of **HS-10** departed NAS North Island, Calif., on 24 March for a deployment to the Pacific in support of the global war on terrorism.



HS-10 sailors oversee the loading of squadron helicopters on a C-5 Galaxy prior to deployment.

Scan Pattern

Flight crews from **HSL-44** and **HSL-46** performed deck and RAST landing qualifications on *Forrest Sherman* (DDG 98) as the ship steamed off Jacksonville, Fla. Upon touchdown of Magnum 451, Skipper Cdr. Van Durick informed the crew from HSL-44—Lt. Bielen, LCdr. Kidd, and AW2 Long—that they were the first helicopter and crew to land aboard *Forrest Sherman*. The ship was commissioned on 28 January at NAS Pensacola, Fla.

HS-5 sent a detachment of pilots, aircrew, and maintainers to Camp Frank D. Merrill, an Army base in the mountains of northern Georgia, to train for combat search and rescue (CSAR). Mountainous CSAR involves a delicate balance of high altitude, power-limited flying with the necessary tactical aircraft profiles to avoid detection. While at Camp Merrill, squadron members flew various sorties, emphasizing different mountainous scenarios. The ability to shift from one geographic region to another allows HS-5 to perform its crucial CSAR role wherever necessary.

On 14 February *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) began her underway tailored ship's training availability.

On 10 April *George Washington*'s (CVN 73) embarked squadrons of **Carrier Air Wing 17—VFA-11**, **VFA-81**, **VAW-121**, **VS-22**, and **HS-7**—completed three days of training and exercises at the Navy's Pinecastle Bombing Range in Florida. The air wings used the Pinecastle Range to conduct unit-level training, air wing strikes, and combat search and rescue training.

Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA), Corpus Christi, Texas, began to align under the San Diego-based Commander, Naval Air Forces (CNAF) in March. The administrative shift places all of CNATRA's aviation hardware, budget, and cockpit-related training under the overarching leadership of CNAF to better synchronize Naval Aviator and naval aircrew production with fleet requirements.

Three MH-60S Seahawks from HSC-25 in Guam, three HH-60H Seahawks from HS-15 in Jacksonville, Fla., more than 112 personnel from the two squadrons, and eight corpsmen from various commands across the U.S. combined to form the **2515th Naval Air Ambulance Detachment**. The Det completed 65 aeromedical evacuation missions in its first five months of deployment to Iraq in support of Army and Marine Corps forces in the region.

On 11 March the **Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron** performed its first performance of the year for more 200 spectators at NAF El Centro, Calif., below, marking the beginning of its 60th anniversary season. The Blue Angels performed their first demonstration in June 1946.

On 12 April, Carrier Air Wing 7 and CCSG-8, embarked on *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69), departed NS Norfolk, Va., to begin their **Composite Training Unit Exercise** (COMPTUEX).

Essex (LHD 2) and the embarked 31st MEU returned to Sasebo, Japan, on 14 March after participating in **Exercise Balikatan 2006** in the Philippines and **MEU**

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VMFA(AW)-533 HAWKS RETURN TO IRAQ

n 10 February
VMFA(AW)-533
completed a trans-Atlantic
flight, moving their 12 F/A-18Ds
from MCAS Beaufort, S.C.,
more than 4,000 miles to Al
Asad Air Base, Iraq. Deployed to
the Al-Anbar Province, the
Hawks are supporting I MEF
forces in western Iraq in their
continued effort to stabilize the
Iraqi government.

This is the squadron's second deployment supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, the first being the

deployment with squadrons of Marine Aircraft Group 11 for the very beginning of the campaign. During that time the Hawks were based at Al Jaber Air Base, Kuwait, where they were poised with ground forces to launch the offensive into Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Once they began, the squadron saw success executing the various missions that the Marine Corps F/A-18D is best suited for: airborne tactical air coordination, airborne forward air control, close air support, and armed reconnaissance. In this execution, they dropped over 803,000 pounds of ordnance and flew over 1,500 flight hours, ultimately earning the squadron a second Presidential Unit Citation.

The Hawks are now faced with distinct challenges from their previous deployment in theater. The counterinsurgency fight the squadron is now



An F/A-18D with VMFA(AW)-533, top, taxies out of its hangar at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, in support of coalition forces in the Al-Anbar Province. The squadron flies day and night missions, above, while taking the fight to anticoalition forces.

supporting provides unique challenges to aircraft operating at well above 10,000 feet and 300 miles per hour. The real challenge now is to know how to employ ordnance in the tight confines of the various urban centers where anticoalition forces prefer to fight.

The best course of action is often letting the insurgent fighters know that there are aircraft overhead. There is a great concern to not inflict collateral damage when there are hostile

forces fighting in close proximity not only to friendly troops, but also to regular Iraqi citizens. With this concern comes a greater focus on the employment of precision ordnance, such as the GPS-guided Joint Direct Attack Munition; the laser-guided Maverick air to ground missile; and even that most basic of aircraft weapons, the 20mm gun.

Regardless of the type of fight, all of the Hawks, from maintainers to aircrew, are willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done safely and effectively. While they are well aware of the challenges of being far from the comforts of home and their loved ones, the sole focus for these Marines is mission accomplishment, safety, and effectively doing their part to support those Marines who daily find themselves directly in the line of fire.



Marines from the 31st Expeditionary Unit board a CH-46E Sea Knight of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262 on the flight deck of *Essex* (LHD 2). The Marines were airlifted to Saint Bernard, Republic of the Philippines, to assist with humanitarian aid and recovery efforts after a landslide devastated parts of Leyte on 17 February. Photo by PH3 Marvin Thompson.

Exercises and Training in an Urban Environment in Guam. During the training evolution, assets also delivered relief supplies to mudslide victims on Leyte Island.

Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) with Carrier Air Wing 2 embarked, and ships of the Essex (LHD 2) amphibious ready group with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit embarked, participated in Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration and Foal Eagle 2006 (RSOI/FE06) in the Republic of Korea (ROK) from 26 to 31 March. ROSI/FE06 included all four services of both the U.S. and the ROK with more than 70 ships and approximately 80 aircraft involved.

Sailors and aircraft from Carrier Air Wing 17 joined the crew of *George Washington* (CVN 73) while the ship was underway for the U.S. Southern Command's **Partnership of the Americas** deployment. Aircraft from VFA-11, VFA-81, and VAW-121 began carrier qualifications on 5 April, and VS-22 joined the carrier the next day. The two-month deployment to the Caribbean Sea enhances regional maritime security and

strengthens ties through exercises with participating countries in the region.

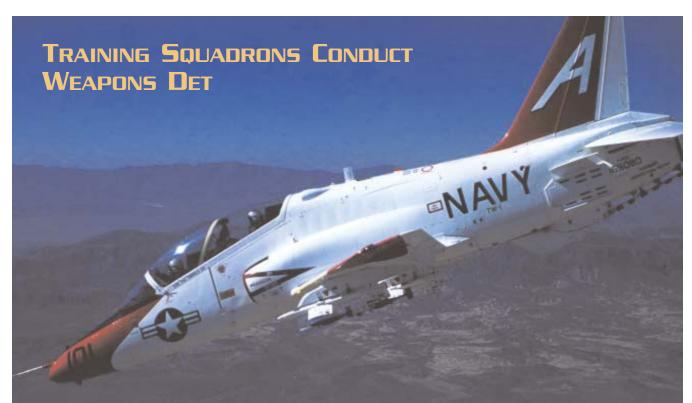
VFA-27 and VFA-102, NAF Atsugi, Japan, participated in **Asian Aerospace 2006**, held in Singapore from 21 to 26 February. The two squadrons presented the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet as part of a static display.

On 22 March, all Naval Reserve Centers, Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Centers, and **Naval Air Reserve** commands were officially renamed Navy Operational Support Centers.

Rescues

Personnel from Coast Guard Station Wachapreague, CGAS Elizabeth City, N.C., and patrol officers from the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) located a lost boater in the vicinity of Great Machipongo Channel, Virginia. On the evening of 16 February, the Coast Guard was notified of a boat that failed to return, and launched an **HH-60J** helicopter,

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quadrons from Training Air Wing 1 completed a two-week training detachment to NAF El Centro, Calif., in February. The detachment's focus was on training student Naval Aviators in the weapons and multiplane operational navigation stages. Training Air Wing 1 escaped the typical winter weather at NAS Meridian, Miss., and traveled to El Centro for clearer skies and excellent range space. This year's detachment paid big dividends for the production of Naval Aviators for the fleet. Capt. Trey Lundy from Training Squadron (VT) 7 served as the detachment OIC, and was assisted by Maj. William MacNaughton from VT-9.

NAF El Centro typically provides excellent weather during the winter months, making it an ideal location for weapons training. "With the great weather, challenging terrain, and plethora of operating areas and bombing ranges, there is no better quality of training available to Naval Aviation than El Centro," said Capt. Lundy. Its popularity does come at a price, however, as more business means more air traffic. NAF El Centro has a limited air traffic control capability and the airfield's tower lacks radar or approach control facilities. Tower personnel can only control what they can see visually.

Training in areas with a higher volume of air traffic brings both challenges and benefits. "You have civilian air traffic and tactical military aircraft fighting over the same piece of sky, without the positive control military pilots are accustomed to having," said Maj. MacNaughton. "Everyone on this detachment becomes a better pilot by increasing their own situational awareness for safety and mission accomplishment."

The students of Training Air Wing One benefited greatly from the El Centro Det environment. "Flying twice a day, every day, really helped us learn faster,' said Ltjg. Phillip Hinton of VT-7. "We walked to the ready room, ate together, and talked about flying for two weeks straight." Flying in an unfamiliar area also bolstered the confidence and abilities of NAS Meridian's students. "Talking to different controllers and flying new course rules added another dimension to our weapons training," according to 1st Lt. Robert Reinoehl of VT-7. "We had to work with fleet aircraft in the target and airfield environment which created a more realistic example of operating in a multiplane airspace." NAS Meridian does not offer this variety of aircraft and the challenges of deconflicting airplanes based on capabilities rarely confront aviators attached experience, saying, "Intense flight training and a good deal of ready room camaraderie have given us a glimpse of the profession we are about to enter."

The weapons detachment met all mission objectives a full week earlier than projected, despite losing nearly a full day of flying due to relentless Santa Ana winds. A total of 39 students completed their syllabus requirements utilizing 20 T-45C Goshawks. An average of 24 instructor pilots were present throughout the detachment. Altogether, TRAWING-1 aircrew members flew over 685 sorties and delivered 2,631 bombs on target. VT-7 and VT-9 returned home safely to NAS Meridian after making the most of the wide-open, "wild west" deserts of California.

while VMRC assisted with three boats and one aircraft. The HH-60J crew located the missing man early the next morning and the Wachapreague crew escorted him back to shore.

Sailors from *Nassau* (LHA 4) and embarked units provided assistance to a distressed vessel off the coast of Kenya on 31 January. The motor vessel *Al Manara* reported a need for provisions, engineering assistance, and medical attention. *Nassau* sailors worked with sailors from Naval Beach Group, Assault Craft Unit 2 Det Delta, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 2 Det 22, Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 28, and Beach Master Unit 2 to provide the 21-man crew with water and food, and took four members of *Al Manara*'s crew back to *Nassau* for medical treatment.

On 14 February the crew of an **HSL-44 Det 7** SH-60B Seahawk, embarked on *Oscar Austin* (DDG 79), discovered the stranded Italian fishing vessel *ZAIRA SR* 2437 about 150 nautical miles from land. The helo's crew—LCdr. Pamela Thien, Lt. Kevin Brain, AW1 Ryan Utter, and AW2 Patrick Jones—determined that the vessel had no communications, barely any electricity, and was out of fuel and drifting further out to sea. After refueling the helicopter, rescue swimmer AW1 Utter was lowered to swim to *ZAIRA*. It was determined that the vessel was seaworthy, but needed fuel to transit back to port. *Oscar Austin* deployed one of her rigid hulled inflatable boats to transport fuel to the vessel, which successfully started and maneuvered alongside *Oscar Austin* to complete the underway replenishment.

On 16 March two *Essex* (**LHD 2**) sailors assisted in evacuating five Japanese citizens during a fire at a residence in a neighborhood near Sasebo. AE2 Timothy Edwards, Jr. and ADAN Timothy Vigil evacuated residents from the house when they heard alarms in the area and smelled smoke.

On 15 April the crew of a SH-60B helicopter from HSL-47 assisted a vessel in distress in the South China Sea. The crew—comprising of Cdr. Shawn P. Malone, Ltjg. James Bowen, and AW2 Zachary J. Dotson, as well as AW2 Zack D. Webb from HS-2—spotted what they thought was an old fishing vessel dead in the water. The fishermen on the deck signaled them and the crew determined that the stranded mariners needed food and water. They called Abraham Lincoln to coordinate support, and flew to Russell (DDG 59) to onload supplies, which they delivered to the vessel.

Outreach

Over 1,500 *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) sailors participated in the Department of Defense's Bone Marrow Registry



MM2 David Rivera uses a cotton swab to take a DNA sample from his mouth during a bone marrow drive aboard *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70).

Program, 13–17 March. Identified as a match during a previous command sponsored marrow drive, *Vinson*'s EM2 John Little has already performed a transplant procedure, and on 27 April LI2 Joseph R. Vincent donated marrow as part of a research study.

Sailors from *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) assisted the Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) of the Virginia Peninsula, Inc., with various activities such as organizing and moving pallets of equipment, stuffing envelopes, and conversing with the ARC members, 24–25 January.

On 3 April sailors from *Wasp* (**LHD 1**) donated \$750 to purchase ball caps for children, parents, and staff members from the Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Center at the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters in Norfolk, Va., as part of the Cap for Kids program.

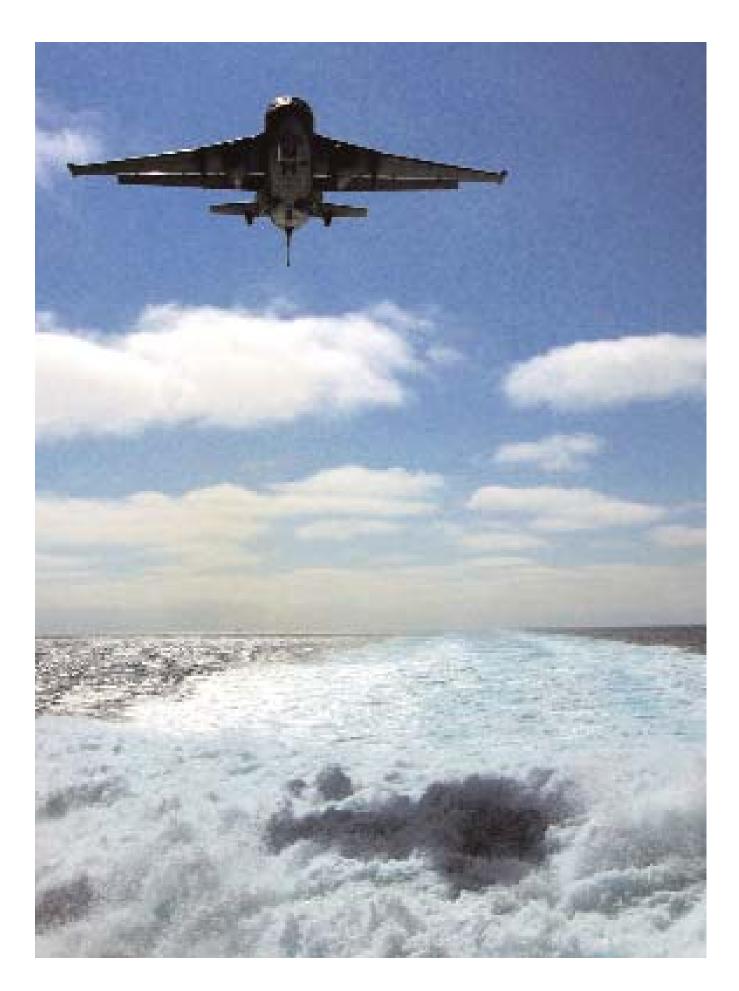
The members of **VP-16's Combat Aircrew 4** purchased 240 notebooks for students at Jose Roberto Wright School in El Salvador after hearing of the citizens' strong desire to improve literacy, but their lack of money to buy basic school supplies needed for the students to begin classes.

On 2 March eight sailors from *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) built a wheelchair door ramp to help a retired and disabled Air Force couple in Hampton Roads, Va.

VP-30 supports academic excellence in local area schools by supporting annual events and giving monthly recognition to deserving students. On 13 February personnel from VP-30 also volunteered to be judges for

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Facing page, an S-3B Viking from the VS-41 Shamrocks makes its landing approach over the wake of *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76). Photo by PH3 Kevin S. O'Brien.





AMAN Cesar Schira helps a child from Kobo Cottage Orphanage in Yokosuka, Japan, draw a picture. Seventeen sailors from *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) recently spent time with children at the orphanage as part of a service project.

the 2006 Clay County Science and Engineering Fair in Green Cove Springs, Fla.

On 2 March 25 sailors from *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) began rebuilding homes in Gulfport, Miss., devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The sailors worked in Gulfport until 12 March.

In January several volunteers from **Naval Air Depot Jacksonville**, **Fla.**, **VP-62**, and **VP-5** helped the Clay County Habitat for Humanity program complete a three-bedroom house for a family in Green Cove Springs, Fla. This is one of about six houses they have built.

On 12 April sailors from *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) visited children at Kobo Cottage Orphanage in Yokosuka, Japan. The sailors joined the children in their morning routine of prayer, singing, and dancing, and organized an Easter egg hunt.

Members of **HSL-44**, deployed with *Carr* (FFG 52), visited the island nation of Cape Verde off the coast of West Africa, 8–10 March. The aircrew members helped refurbish an elementary school in the town of Salamansa, by chipping old paint, filling in holes, and painting the classroom walls and exterior. They also repaired the school's soccer field nets and picked up trash and broken glass on the field.

On 14 March *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) sailors visited Yokosuka, Japan's Kyorakusou Nursing Home to scrub the windows and floors as well as cleaning the home's courtyard grounds.

Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) sailors volunteered to teach students at Brighton Elementary School in Portsmouth, Va., on 23 March as part of the Brighton Junior Achievement Day.

On 25 March sailors from *Essex* (**LHD 2**) assisted Pohang's Sun Rin Ae Yuk Won Orphanage in Pohang, Republic of Korea. The sailors interacted with the children, performed maintenance, painted, and transplanted a tree.

Sailors from *Essex* (**LHD 2**) performed maintenance, cleaning, and groundskeeping at St. Bernard Elementary School in southern Leyte, Republic of Philippines, on 25 February. The school is currently providing shelter to 1,500 people from four townships as a result of the 17 February mudslide that devastated the area. The sailors also donated food, water, clothes, and candy to the families.

Tarawa (LHA 1) sailors volunteered to help a community service group restore the homes of low-income citizens in Imperial Beach, Calif., on 29 April.

CHANGE OF COMMAND

CVW-2: Capt. Matthew L. Klunder relieved Capt. Lawrence D. Burt, 24 Feb.

CNATTU Jacksonville, Fla.: Cdr. James Daniels relieved Cdr. Robert Newton, 31 Mar.

HCS-4: Cdr. Douglas P. Schoen relieved Cdr. Carl J. Grim, 11 Mar.

HM-14: Cdr. Timothy Faller relieved Cdr. Gerard Hall, 3 Feb.

HS-11: Cdr. John Nettleton relieved Cdr. Steven Yoder, 1 May. *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7): Capt.

Michael A. Walley relieved Capt. Richard S. Callas, 14 Apr.

John C. Stennis (CVN 74): Capt. Bradley E. Johanson relieved Capt. David H. Buss, 5 May.

MWSS-472: Lt. Col. John A. Franklin relieved Lt. Col. Robert J. Lain, 11 Feb.

Nassau (**LHA 4**): Capt. John E. Roberti relieved Capt. Michael W. Brannon, 1 Apr.

VFA-14: Cdr. Will Pennington relieved Cdr. Keith Taylor, 23 Mar.

VFA-15: Cdr. Peter W. Matisoo relieved Cdr. Joseph G. Jerauld, 26 Apr.

VFA-211: Cdr. Robert Geis relieved Cdr. Michael Whetstone, 9 Feb.

VP-1: Cdr. George J. Vassilakis relieved Cdr. Fredrick J. Nielsen III, 6 Apr.

VP-16: Cdr. James Hitt relieved Cdr. Tad Palmer, 31 Mar.

VS-24: Cdr. H. E. Mills relieved Cdr. Daniel C. Grieco, 25 May.