

# PEOPLE PLANES PLACES

*Edited by J01 Johnnie Hickmon  
and J02 Brandy Fisher*



## Awards

Sgt. Maj. William Skiles from HMLA-267 received the **Bronze Star Medal with combat distinguishing device** for his actions on 26 April 2004 while on the outskirts of Fallujah, Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. When Sgt. Skiles realized the critical requirement to relieve the platoon of their wounded Marines, he drove the evacuation vehicles and personnel directly to the embattled platoon's position under enemy small-arms fire. After reaching the platoon, he coordinated the evacuation of the wounded Marines, personally laying down suppressive fire and handing out magazines and fragmentation grenades to riflemen low

on ammunition. He then drove through enemy fire to his battalion's forward operating base to console his wounded Marines at the field hospital.

Commander, Naval Air Force Reserve received the **Naval Aviation Readiness Through Safety Award** and the Order of the Daedalians' **Adm. James S. Russell Aviation Flight Safety Award** for 2005. The command, which is responsible for 31 fixed- and rotary-wing squadrons, conducted more than 99,000 flight hours with no Class A mishaps.

HC-85 received the 2005 **DON Safety Excellence Award**.

An F/A-18F Super Hornet assigned to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 9 returns to its home at NAWS China Lake, Calif. This aircraft is one of the first Super Hornets equipped with the APG-79 Active Electronically Scanned Array radar. Photo by Cdr. Ian C. Anderson.

Commander, Fleet Air Western Pacific received the **Meritorious Unit Commendation** for superior logistics and repair operations from 11 September 2001 to 31 December 2003.

Naval Aviation winners of the 2005 aviation **CNO Shore Safety Award** were:

CONUS Medium Industrial–NAES, Lakehurst, N.J.  
CONUS Large Non-Industrial–NAS Jacksonville, Fla.  
CONUS Medium Non-Industrial–NAS Atlanta, Ga.  
Individual Award–Cdr. Todd D. Barclay, XO, NAS Keflavik, Iceland

AO2 (AW/SW) Michael Heath from VFA-37 received the Navy Air-to-Air Missile Systems Office's **Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile Outstanding Performer Award**. While on deployment from January to June 2005, he oversaw the loading and downloading of 900 tons of live ordnance in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

AC1 (AW) Steven Johns was selected as the **Commander, Naval**

**Air Force U.S. Atlantic Fleet Sea Side Air Traffic Controller of the Year** for 2005. AC1 (AW/SW) Michael Murphy was selected as the **Commander, Naval Surface Forces U.S. Pacific Fleet's 2005 Naval Air Traffic Controller of the Year**.

## Milestones

VS-30's deactivation ceremony was held on 9 December 2005.

VFA-27 surpassed 80,000 Class A mishap-free flight hours on 9 November 2005.

Naval Aviation winners of the 2005 **CNO Environmental Award** were:

**Natural Resources Conservation Small Installation:** NAS Whiting Field, Fla.

**Natural Resources Conservation:** NAS Jacksonville, Fla., Natural Resources Team; Jim Swift, NAS Patuxent River, Md.

**Cultural Resources Management Installation:** NAS Patuxent River, Md.

**Environmental Quality:** Naval Air Depot Cherry Point, N.C., Environmental Management System Team

**Environmental Quality Large Ship:** *George Washington* (CVN 73); *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75); *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74)

**Pollution Prevention Industrial Installation:** Naval Air Depot North Island, Calif.

**Environmental Restoration Installation:** NAS Lemoore, Calif.; NAS Whiting Field, Fla.

**Environmental Restoration Team:** NAS Pensacola, Fla., Environmental Restoration Team

**Environmental Excellence in Weapon System Acquisition:** F/A-18E/F and EA-18G Acquisition Program Team; MH-60R Multimission Helicopter Program Environmental, Safety, and Occupational Health Team; P-8A Multimission Maritime Aircraft Environment, Safety, and Occupational Health Team



An AV-8B Harrier from VMA-223 shuts down after completing another combat mission. The squadron has been forward deployed to Iraq since August 2005.

VMA-223 surpassed 60,000 Class A mishap-free flight hours on 10 February.

VFA-15 marked their 1,000th mission flown while deployed on *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) on 14 December 2005.

Cdr. Rick Labranche, CO of VF-31, made his 1,000th arrested landing 16 January, on board *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71).

The aviation winners of the **2005 Retention Excellence Award** (Golden Anchor) were:

COMHELMARSTRKWINGLANT (staff)	NAVAIRESCEN Brunswick, Maine
COMHELTACWINGLANT (staff)	NAVAIRESCEN Lemoore, Calif.
COMNAVAIRLANT (staff)	NS Mayport, Fla., AIMD
COMPATRECONGRU (staff)	P-3 Operational Det Jacksonville, Fla.
CVWR-20	VF-11
<i>Dwight D. Eisenhower</i> (CVN 69)	VF-32
FACSFAC Jacksonville, Fla.	VF-211
<i>George Washington</i> (CVN 73)	VFA-105
<i>Harry S. Truman</i> (CVN 75)	VFA-136
HM-14	VFA-81
HS-5	VFA-83
HS-11	VFA-86
HS-15	VFA-87
HSC-26	VP-5
HSC-28	VP-8
HSL-42	VP-10
HSL-44	VP-16
HSL-46	VP-26
HSL-48	VP-30
<i>John F. Kennedy</i> (CV 67)	VP-65
NAS Willow Grove, Penn.	VP-92
NAVAIRES Jacksonville, Fla.	VPU-1
	VQ-2
	VR-46
	VS-24

**HC-4** relocated from NAS Sigonella, Italy to their new homeport of Norfolk, Va., on 7 January.

**ESG-3** departed San Diego, Calif., on 15 February for a six-month deployment.

## Scan Pattern

On 7 February the **3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) (Forward)**, right, assumed aviation authority over Western Iraq from the 2nd MAW (Forward).



SSgt. Chad McMeen

Three sailors from **VS-32** were essential in the arrest of a man suspected of robbing an 81-year-old woman on 17 January in Fallon, Nev. The sailors had just finished lunch when they heard someone yelling for help. They saw the suspect run past them and immediately took chase and called 911. Officers arrived and arrested the suspect. **VS-32**, based out of NAS Jacksonville, Fla., was in Nevada as part of its predeployment workups, preparing for a deployment on board *Enterprise* (CVN 65).

**HMH-466** surpassed 60,000 Class A mishap-free flight hours on 18 February.

The H-3 Sea Kings of **HSC-2** made their final operational flight on 27 January. HSC-2 will become the East Coast Fleet Replacement Squadron for the MH-60 Seahawk.

## On the Move

**Ronald Reagan** (CVN 76) and **CVW-14** arrived in the 5th Fleet Area of Operations on 18 February.

**Theodore Roosevelt** (CVN 71) returned to her homeport at NS Norfolk, Va., on 11 March after a six-month deployment to the Arabian Gulf in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Dets from VAQ-141, VFA-87, and VFA-15 remained in the 5th Fleet area of responsibility, and rejoined the carrier and its air wing later that month.

## SAILOR RECOGNIZED FOR SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE

By LCdr. John Bernard

AZAN Kurtis D. Gaunce assigned to **HS-14** was awarded a Navy Achievement Medal and also received a *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) commemorative coin for superior performance while servicing a SH-60F helicopter aboard *Kitty Hawk*.

AZAN Gaunce noticed the aircraft oil he intended to put into the helicopter was discolored and he informed his supervisor. Testing later revealed that the oil was incompatible with the helicopter and would have damaged the aircraft's systems. His efforts prevented countless maintenance hours and funding that would have been needed to repair the helicopter had the faulty oil been used.



PHAA Adam York



An F-14D Tomcat assigned to the Blacklions of VF-213 is directed into position for launch. A chapter in Naval Aviation history came to a close when the F-14 Tomcat made its last combat flight on 8 February from *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71). Piloted by Capt. William G. Sizemore II, Commander, CVW-8, VF-213's aircraft was trapped at 0035. Lt. Bill Frank, a VF-31 pilot, also took part in the final mission, and is credited with being the last pilot to ever drop a bomb from the Tomcat. Photo by PH3 Eben Boothby.

Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, recognized ***Kearsarge* (LHD 3)** as the number one amphibious warship in the Atlantic Fleet for microminiature (2M) repair cost avoidance. The 2M shop, which repairs high priced subcomponents with less expensive replacement parts, realized \$403,177 in repair cost avoidance for FY05.

**HS-3** relieved HS-7, supporting British coalition troops in southeastern Iraq as part of Blue Shark mission, on 28 January. HS-3, embarked aboard *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71), arrived in the region to support maritime security operations and Operation Iraqi Freedom. VS-24, also embarked on *Theodore Roosevelt*, also conducted intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions in support of the operation, flying the S-3B Viking. Blue Shark began approximately two years ago with HS-5 patrolling waterways and oil pipelines. When HS-3 assumed the mission, it was expanded to patrolling and assisting the British soldiers with their peacekeeping missions in the area of Iraq known as Multinational Division Southeast, which covers southeastern Iraq and the inland waterways. This area includes oil pipelines, two oil platforms, Al Basra

Oil Terminal, and Khawr Al Oil Terminal. HS-3 augments Joint Helicopter Force, which is comprised of the British army, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, Royal Marines, and the Danish army.

On 22 February F/A-18E Super Hornets of **VFA-115** became the first aircraft from *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) to drop ordnance on enemy targets in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. *Ronald Reagan* is on her maiden deployment, supporting Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, performing maritime security operations in the Arabian Gulf, and participating in the global war on terrorism.

## Rescues

On 4 February crewmembers from **VP-47** assisted in search and rescue operations for survivors of the sunken Egyptian ferry *Al Salam Boccaccio 98* in the Red Sea. The ferry, carrying an estimated 1,400 passengers, sank about 50 miles off the coast of Egypt on 3 February at approximately 0200. The VP-47 crew flew 1,000 miles to assist Egyptian authorities in the search efforts,



An F/A-18E Super Hornet assigned to the Eagles of VFA-115 prepares to launch from *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) in the Arabian Gulf on 28 February during the carrier's maiden deployment.

providing seven and a half hours of time on station, looking for survivors using the P-3 Orion's infrared capabilities, and guiding ships to survivors throughout the night and into the morning.

On 18 December 2005 the crew of an **HS-3** Seahawk, assigned to CVW-8 on board *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71), rescued one of the carrier's sailors who had fallen overboard during operations in the Arabian Gulf. The helicopter crew returned the sailor to the carrier, where medical personnel determined he was in good condition.

On 2 December 2005 the crew of a Coast Guard **HH-60 Jayhawk** from CGAS Elizabeth City, N.C., rescued three people after their boat capsized in the mouth of the Little River in Albemarle Sound, N.C.

On 19 January the crew of an SH-60B Seahawk from **HSL-49**, operating from *Ford* (FFG 54), rescued two civilian sailors at sea in the early morning hours in the Gulf of Tehuantepec, off the west coast of Mexico. The



A Seahawk from HS-3, like the one pictured above, was used to rescue a *Theodore Roosevelt* sailor who had fallen overboard on 18 December 2005.

Coast Guard notified *Ford*, which was on routine patrol. Once in the vicinity of the distressed ship, a rescue swimmer retrieved the victims, who were returned to *Ford* for evaluation.

On 9 January pilots and aircrew from **HS-4**, embarked on *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76), helped rescue a civilian mariner suffering from a medical emergency. The 85-foot fishing vessel *Princess Jasmine*, approximately 815 nautical miles northeast of Oahu, Hawaii, issued a distress call for a crewmember who was suffering chest

pains. *Rainier* (T-AOE 7) responded to the vicinity and used a small boat to transport the victim to her onboard medical facility. *Ronald Reagan* dispatched two HH-60H helicopters from HS-4 to transport the patient from *Rainier* to the carrier for treatment.

## Outreach

While making a port visit in Singapore 7–11 February, more than 150 sailors from *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) participated in community projects to benefit local residents. The sailors helped clean a horse stable that provides riding lessons for disabled children, assisted with gardening and maintenance at a residential care center for AIDS patients, and collected money to donate to a local children's charity.



PH3 Refugio Carrillo

**AOAN (AW/SW) Robert E. Peetoom from *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) mentors a student at A.W.E. Bassette Elementary School in Newport, News Va., during a community service project.**

*Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) sailors committed to contributing 80,000 hours of community service while the carrier undergoes her scheduled refueling and complex overhaul at Northrop Grumman Newport News shipyard.

Sailors from CCSG-9 aboard *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) collected food donations to assist local families in need and delivered them to the Marysville Community Food Bank in Marysville, Wash., on 13 December 2005.

Seven sailors from *HS-5* meet once a week with high school-aged children whom they mentor through the Take Stock in Children Program. The sailors provide a comprehensive

curriculum that helps low-income children succeed by providing college scholarships, volunteer mentors, and community support.

**VFA-37** formalized the Partnership in Education commitment with Seatack Elementary School, Virginia Beach, Va., in January. The squadron members will work with three fifth grade classes to tutor, serve as lunch buddies, and help at PTA meetings.



AN Daisy Abonza

**MA2 Brian Benway carefully pets a snake from an Australian zoo aboard the *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) during the carrier's port visit to Brisbane on 25 January.**

Sailors from *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76), CSG-7, VFA-22, VFA-25, VFA-25, VFA-113, VFA-115 and VAQ-139 participated in a community relations project 24 January, during a five-day port visit to Brisbane, Australia. The project focused on HMAS *Diamantina* (K 377), a WW II frigate that had been restored for display at the Queensland Maritime Museum. The sailors removed debris, hoisted fixtures from below decks, and cleaned most spaces aboard the ship.



On 9 December 2005 the **HSL-37** crew unloaded the cockpit of an SH-2 onto the middle of their skipper's front yard and, in light of the holiday season, the crew decorated the Seasprite accordingly.

## SAILORS, MARINES BRING HUMANITARIAN AID TO PHILIPPINES

In response to a devastating landslide that hit the island of Leyte, Philippines, on 17 February, three days before the official commencement of Exercise Balikatan '06, more than 2,000 service members of Joint Task Force Balikatan were diverted to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Sailors and Marines from *Essex* (LHD 2) and *Harpers Ferry* (LHD 49), with embarked Marines of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, along with *Curtis Wilbur* (DDG 54), were directed to provide immediate assistance to Southern Leyte, arriving on 19 February. *Juneau* (LPD 10), the secondary flagship of the forward deployed amphibious ready group, continued on with Exercise Balikatan's civil military



PH1 Michael D. Kennedy

**On 19 February, a CH-46E Sea Knight from HMM-262 makes an aerial assessment of the landslide-affected area of Leyte, above, while two CH-53E Super Stallions depart *Essex* (LHD 2) to survey the damage, left.**



PH3 Marvin E. Thompson

operations mission in Jolo as the primary sea-based platform.

Philippine and U.S. aircraft flew more than 400 hours, transporting personnel and tons of relief items, such as generators, light sets on tripods, shovels, kettles, blankets, MREs, a reverse-osmosis water purification system, pallets of rice and medication, diesel fuel drums, chain saws, and bottled water.

## CHANGE OF COMMAND

**CSG-3:** RAdm. Kevin M. Quinn relieved RAdm. Bruce Clingan, 16 Nov 05.

**HMH-772:** Lt. Col. James D. Barich relieved Col. Mark M. Mancini, 8 Jan.

**HSC-28:** Cdr. Christopher Rapp relieved Cdr. Peter Brennan, 17 Nov 05.

**NAF Atsugi, Japan:** Capt. Justin D. Cooper II relieved Capt. Reed A. Eckstrom, 26 Jan.

**NAVAIRES Jacksonville, FL:** Cdr. Jeffrey Eaton relieved Capt. Craig Love, 5 Jan.

**VAQ-132:** Cdr. Timothy Kuehhas relieved Cdr. Randolph Pierson, 23 Feb.

**VAQ-140:** Cdr. Gordon B. Smith relieved Cdr. Christopher L. Shay, 19 Jan.

**VAQ-142:** Cdr. Charles T. Chase relieved Cdr. James D. Haugen, 3 Mar.

**VFA-81:** Cdr. Michael E. Boyle relieved Cdr. Ryan B. Scholl, 16 Dec 05.

**VFA-86:** Cdr. Richard C. McCormack relieved Cdr. Geoff R. Oliver II, 10 Feb.

**VFA-105:** Cdr. Douglas Verissimo relieved Cdr. Norman Weakland, 2 Dec 05.

**VMAQ-4:** Lt. Col. Scott Arnold relieved Lt. Col. Philip J. Zimmerman, 9 Dec 05.

**VR-48:** Cdr. Larry A. Smith relieved Cdr. Michael T. O'Neill, 7 Jan.

**VR-52:** Cdr. Linda Wackerman relieved Cdr. Robert Paulson, 1 Oct 05.

**VR-64:** Cdr. Samuel T. Scaffo relieved Cdr. Mark R. Greenwood, 7 Jan.

**VT-10:** Lt. Col. Travis A. Willis relieved Cdr. Martin J. Cramer, 24 Feb.

**VT-22:** Lt. Col. Gregory P. Deeb relieved Cdr. Mark A. McLaughlin, 10 Nov 05.



Lt. Cols. Christopher J. Mullin, left, and David A. Wilbur walk across the tarmac of Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, after Mullin's arrival on 9 February. Mullin is the CO of Marine All Weather Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA(AW)) 533, Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. Wilbur is the CO of VMFA(AW)-322, MAG-31, 2nd MAW. The VMFA(AW)-533 Hawks assumed the mission of providing close air support to friendly forces in Iraq from the VMFA(AW)-322 Moonlighters. Photo by Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich.

## FLIGHTBAG

### Reunions

**Ranger (CVA/CV 61)**, 9–13 August, Minneapolis, MN. POC: Terry Palmer, 507-934-9467, twlmpalm@hickorytech.net.

**VR-21**, 16–20 August, Seattle, WA. POC: Bob Parten, 360-676-1339, bparten1@comcast.net.

**Old Antarctic Explorers Association (including VX/VXE-6)**, 17–19 August, Warwick, RI. POC: Marty Diller, 207-729-0197, mgdiller@blazenetme.net.

**Essex (CV/CVA/CVS 9)**, 11–17 September, Johnson City, TN. POC: Bruce Sims, 770-707-1812, essex9@bellsouth.net.

**Hornet (CV 8/CV/CVA/CVS 12)**, 13–17 September, San Mateo, CA. POC: Carl Burket, 814-224-5063, hornetcva@aol.com.

**VQ-1/2/5/6 (including support groups)**, 21–24 September, San Diego, CA. POC: Allan Prevette, 805-482-1204, pierreputt@earthlink.net.

**PBY Catalina International Association**, 4–7 October, St. Louis, MO. POC: Don Mortimer, 631-298-2685, pbydon@optonline.net.

**NAS/NOB Trinidad (including FASRON 105, VPB-213, VPB-208, VPMS-8, VP-48, VP-34, and**

**USMC Det)**, 8–12 October, Trinidad. POC: F.D. Barrett, 870-496-2285, barrett@ozarkisp.net.

**Rudyard Bay (CVE 81)/VC-77/VC-96**, 19–22 October, Indianapolis, IN. POC: Ozzie Amundson, 702-240-8084, ussrudyardbay@yahoo.com.

**Lake Champlain (CV/CVA/CVS 39)**, 26–29 October, Warwick, RI. POC: Eugene Carroll, 607-532-4735, gcarroll@rochester.rr.com.

**Intrepid (CV/CVA/CVS 11)**, several reunions are scheduled.

– Norfolk/Newport News, VA, 6–10 September, POC: Tom Bryant, 864-998-4764, intrepid\_tom@meta-net.net.

– Ohio/Michigan, 15–17 September, Coshocton, OH. POC: Robert Hall, 940-845-2515, bmspread1@yahoo.com.

– New England, 8–12 October, Mystic, CT. POC: Robert Mays, 802-933-5921, mustang714@peoplepc.com.

– Oklahoma/Kansas/Missouri/Arkansas, 18–21 October, Oklahoma City, OK. POC: Bill Diedrich, 580-935-6886, diedrich@pldi.net.