

PEOPLE PLANES PLACES

Edited by MC1 Johnnie Hickmon
and MC2 Brandy Fisher



Awards

ET1 Aaron T. Niedbalski from NAS JRB New Orleans, La., was announced as the **VAdm. William P. Lawrence Naval Air Traffic Control Technician of the Year** on 16 May. ET1 Niedbalski saved more than \$150,000 with overhauls of the AN/FPN-63 PAR antenna pedestal and ASOS site, directed the Ground Electronics staff through a successful TYCOM quality assurance visit, and was instrumental in keeping aircraft operations going during rescue and relief missions following Hurricane Katrina.

VS-24 earned the **Battle E**. The squadron executed more than 1,800 sorties and 5,000 mishap-free flight hours with a 99.9 percent sortie completion rate on deployment in 2005. The squadron also conducted more than 41,000 maintenance man-hours, one of the highest utilization rates within Sea Control Wing, U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), *Kearsarge* (LHD 3), the 26th MEU, and CVW-8 received the 2005 **Admiral Flatley Memorial Award**. *Nimitz* (CVN 68), *Tarawa* (LHA 1), the 13th MEU, and CVW-11 were named runners-up. The award recognizes carriers, air wings, and



Nimitz (CVN 68) earned the **Battle E**, her second award in three years. Above, Commander Naval Air Forces Pacific VAdm. James Zortman presents *Nimitz* (CVN 68) CO Capt. Ted Branch with the ship's **Battle E** plaque. Photo by MC2 Daniel P. Lapierre.

amphibious ships throughout the fleet for their exceptional operational performance and contributions to aviation safety.

VT-10 won two 2005 awards from the Chief of Naval Air Training: the **Training Excellence Award (Primary**



Above, three CH-53E Sea Stallions from HMM-365 land on *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) while evacuating U.S. citizens from Lebanon on 21 July. Photo by MCSN Joshua T. Rodriguez. Right, sailors on board *Trenton* (LPD 14) assist two young Americans after they arrive aboard the ship. Photo by Lt. Karen Eifert. *Trenton* and other ships from the *Iwo Jima* Expeditionary Strike Group were called upon to help evacuate Americans to safety.



MARINE RECEIVES DAEDALIANS HONOR

Story and Photo by LCpl. Robert W. Beaver

Flight 13 of the Order of Daedalians named Maj. Ricardo Martinez the 2006 **Outstanding Aviator of the Year** on 8 June. Martinez, a UH-1N Huey pilot with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369, MAG 39, 3rd MAW, is also 3rd MAW's nominee for the 2006 Marine Corps Aviation Alfred A. Cunningham Award for his actions in Iraq. In November 2005 Martinez was section leader for an air element that was escorting a logistics convoy to its destination. During the flight, Martinez's wingman, an AH-1W Cobra gunship, received enemy ground fire and was shot down resulting in the deaths of the two pilots. Maj. Martinez flew to the crash site to assess the situation despite the known threat. He knew the crash site had to be secured, as the neighborhood had a hostile reputation. He returned to the convoy several miles away and picked up five volunteer Marines to insert at the crash site to provide security. Upon his return to the site, several local residents were already there and fled the scene. Martinez landed his Huey in what is described as a small backyard surrounded by walls. His aircraft barely fit in the area, which included the downed aircraft. "Martinez distinguished himself during superior duties while in Iraq," said Richard Martindell, adjutant, Flight 13 Daedalians. "We are excited and proud to recognize his accomplishments and good efforts."



Squadron) and the VAdm. Robert Goldthwaite Award for Training Excellence.

VFA-192 received the **Boola Boola Award** for its ability to maintain and utilize air-to-air missile weapons systems. VFA-192's air-to-air missile shoots included the successful employment of three AIM-9M Sidewinders, one AIM-120 AMRAAM, and two AIM-7 Sparrows.

Fifty-five members of VP-5 received the **Humanitarian Service Award** for their participation in the relief efforts for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. From 3–6 September 2005, VP-5 flew five missions in New Orleans, La., and helped vector rescue helicopters to survivors stranded by flooded waters. Squadron crews also took pictures and video of the affected area.

Milestones

HSL-37 surpassed 70,000 Class A mishap-free flight hours on 1 February.

AFCM Rachelle Stiffler, of VR-58, logged 10,000 flight hours.

VFA-32 CO Cdr. Michael Wallace achieved his 1,000th carrier arrested landing, aboard *Theodore*

Roosevelt (CVN 71) on 23 April.

VR-51's C-20G Gulfstream IV BuNo 165152, below, reached 15,000 flight hours on 16 February.



On the Move

On 23 June *Bataan* (LHD 5) returned to NS Norfolk, Va., after spending more than five weeks underway in support of the Dutch-led exercise Joint Caribbean Lion 2006. The exercise focused on enhancing relationships with Dutch and French sailors and ships and improving operational readiness. HSC-28 provided helicopter flight support during the exercise.



The *ex-Oriskany*, which served the fleet for more than 25 years in places like Korea, Vietnam, and the Mediterranean Sea, was sunk on 17 May off the coast of Pensacola, Fla., to form an artificial reef. The 888-foot, 32,000-ton vessel took about 37 minutes to sink 212 feet below the surface after strategically placed explosives were detonated throughout the ship, above. As an artificial reef, the ship will now benefit marine life, sport fishing, and recreational diving off the Florida panhandle. Photo by MC2 Jeffrey P. Kraus.

On 4 April *George Washington* (CVN 73) left NS Norfolk, Va., to participate in exercise Partnership of the Americas in the Caribbean Sea. **HSL-46 Det 1**, embarked on *Monterey* (CG 61), also participated, and returned home to NS Mayport, Fla., on 22 May at the exercise's completion.

On 4 May **HSC-28 Det 6** returned to NS Norfolk, Va., after a six-month deployment as part of the *Nassau* (LHA 4) Expeditionary Strike Group.

Enterprise (CVN 65) departed NS Norfolk, Va., on 2 May for a six-month deployment to the 5th Fleet area of operations.

The forward deployed Amphibious Ready Group—flagship *Essex* (LHD 2), *Harpers Ferry* (LSD 49), and *Juneau* (LPD 10)—returned to Sasebo, Japan on 13 June, concluding a five-month training cycle that included four exercises and support of humanitarian relief efforts in the Philippines.

On 6 June five ships of the *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) **Expeditionary Strike Group**—*Iwo Jima*, *Nashville* (LPD 13), *Philippine Sea* (CG 58), *Whidbey Island* (LSD 41), and *Albuquerque* (SSN 706)—departed Norfolk, Va., for a six-month deployment. The ESG also includes the

24th MEU (SOC) and HSC-26. *Cole* (DDG 67) and *Bulkeley* (DDG 84) departed on 8 June.

Scan Pattern

On 5 May **VFA-32** achieved the final milestone in its transition from the F-14 Tomcat to the F/A-18F Super Hornet when it earned the “Safe for Flight” designation.

On 8 May the wreckage of an **F/A-18D** Hornet was brought to the surface off Key West, Fla., through the combined efforts of local divers and support personnel from Naval Air Systems Command Detachment's Atlantic Target and Marine Operations and Seaward Services, Inc. The Hornet went down on 6 February, when the pilot ejected after the plane failed to respond to controls.

On 21 June *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) and **CVW-9** began conducting cyclic flight operations off the coast of southern California as part of predeployment workups.

The *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76), *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63), and *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) Carrier Strike Groups participated in **Valiant Shield 2006** off the coast of Guam, 19–23 June. The exercise—involving more than 20,000 sailors, airmen, soldiers, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen,



Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force aircraft fly above the *Kitty Hawk* (CV 67), *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76), and *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) carrier strike groups during exercise Valiant Shield '06, a training exercise that combines U.S. air, sea and ground forces. Photo by MCC Todd P. Cichonowicz.

as well as 300 aircraft and 28 ships from the carrier groups—offers U.S. forces a chance to use a wide range of skills including maritime interdiction, defense counter-air and antisubmarine warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and command and control.

The *Eisenhower* (CVN 69) Carrier Strike Group completed its Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX) on 8 May.

Saipan (LHA 2), homeported in Norfolk, Va., participated in exercise Phoenix Express, 30 May–13 June. More than 1,300 Navy and Marine Corps personnel participated in a series of scenario-related exercises with Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, France, and Spain in the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean to enhance regional maritime and air capabilities.

On 16 June *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6) departed her homeport of San Diego, Calif., to participate in Rim

of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2006. The multinational exercise, held in the Hawaii operating area, included units from Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. While en route to RIMPAC, *Bonhomme Richard* was the experimental test bed for Trident Warrior '06, an annual communications sea trial.

On 13 June the Singapore phase of **Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT)** concluded. The CARAT task group included P-3C Orions assigned to Commander, Task Group 72, and SH-60 Seahawks from HSL-37 Det 5 embarked on *Crommelin* (FFG 37).

VAQ-135, operating from NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., and VAW-117, operating from Victoria International Airport in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, completed **Exercise Trident Fury**, an international exercise hosted by the Canadian Armed Forces, 9–17 May, in and around Vancouver Island,

British Columbia. The exercise, which included aircraft, ships, and personnel from the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, and NATO nations, featured live firing of air-to-air and surface-to-air missiles from aircraft and ships.

On 29 May the *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) Carrier Strike Group concluded operations in the 5th Fleet area of responsibility in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. CVW-14, embarked on *Ronald Reagan*, launched more than 6,100 sorties, logging more than 19,600 flight hours since the carrier entered the area in February. The carrier strike group comprised *Ronald Reagan*, Destroyer Squadron 7, *Lake Champlain* (CG 57), *McCampbell* (DDG 85), *Rainier* (T-AOE 7), *Decatur* (DDG 73), and Explosive Ordnance Unit 11 Det 15. CVW-14 included VFA-22, VFA-25, VFA-113, VFA-115, VAQ-139, VRC-30, and HS-4. *Ronald Reagan* departed San Diego, Calif., on 4 January and returned to NAS North Island, Calif., on 6 July.

Rescues

On 23 May the Navy assisted the Coast Guard in rescuing mariners from *Legend*, a 75-foot sport fishing boat 100 miles southwest of San Diego, Calif. The boat sustained a broken support beam on the hull and began taking in 30–50 gallons of water per minute. The Coast Guard received a distress call from *Legend* and dispatched two MH-60 rescue helicopters. The Navy also responded by launching a UH-3H Sea King from **HSC-85**, NAS North Island, Calif., and an SH-60B Seahawk from **HSL-45**, embarked on board *Preble* (DDG 88). The Coast Guard's helicopters arrived to assist with dewatering and hoisted two people from *Legend*, while the Navy's helicopters arrived soon thereafter and pulled three more crewmen to safety. *Preble* sailors launched two inflatable boats with the ship's damage control team to help secure the damaged vessel. A total of 28 passengers were picked up by the small boats and transported to *Preble*, while five *Legend* crew members stayed aboard to try to save the



AW2 Gregg Williams, with VP-9, fires his M4 carbine assault rifle during a weapons familiarization exercise in Dhi Qar Province, Iraq, on 28 June. Photo by MC1 Eric J. Benson.



Members of Navy Special Warfare units and an aircrew member depart the landing area as an HS-2 HH-60H Seahawk takes off from Guam on 20 June. Part of CVW-2 embarked on *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72), HS-2 operated ashore on Guam during exercise Valiant Shield '06. Photo by MC3 Jeremie Yoder.

ship. *Preble* and the Coast Guard escorted *Legend* into port to ensure the remaining crew members' safety.

Outreach

More than 350 sailors from *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) and embarked CVW-14 took part in community service projects involving Angel House for Children, Praise Emanuel Children's Home, Shelter for Children,



Forty-one sailors from *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) helped more than 900 Hampton Roads, Va., special needs elementary school students on 23 May during an annual track and field day.

and Shelter Home for Girls during a port visit to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 3–5 June. Sailors from the *Reagan* Carrier Strike Group also participated in nine projects during a port visit to Hong Kong, 10–13 June. The community service projects benefited the Bayanihan Trust, the Joyful Foundation, Companion Animal Federation, Po Leung Kuk, Hong Chi Pinehill Village, Kely Support Group, St. Barnabas Society and Home, Ronald McDonald House, and the Hong Kong Society for the Blind. Each required a number of odd jobs, including painting, landscaping, building repairs, and mechanical repairs.

Sailors from **HSC-21** volunteered on 3 June to support the competitors in the annual swimming event at the 2006 San Diego Special Olympics.

On 1 June sailors from *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) escorted students from Lindenwood Elementary School from booth to booth on Career Day as they learned about different career opportunities offered in and around Hampton Roads, Va.

Sailors from *Essex* (LHD 2) visited the Phirat Wittika 14 School on 26 May during a port visit to Pattaya Beach, Thailand, to deliver boxes of donated clothing from the ship's sailors, Marines, and their families. They also helped paint the brick wall outside the school.

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Above, VF-31's Tomcat number 112 completes the final catapult launch of an F-14 aboard *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) on 28 July. The aircrew was pilot Lt. Blake Coleman and Radar Intercept Officer LCdr. Dave Lauderbaugh. VF-31's Lt. Chris Rattigan, left, talks with squadron personnel aboard *Theodore Roosevelt* after completing the Tomcat's last carrier landing. The Navy retired the Tomcat after 32 years of service. Photos by MC3 Nathan Laird.

At the conclusion of exercise Cobra Gold, sailors from *Essex* (LHD 2) and embarked Marines from the 31st MEU donated clothes and painted four classrooms and the cafeteria area at the Nikom 3 Rayong School during a port visit to Thailand on 25 May. *Essex* sailors also donated computers to the school.

Sailors from several ships donated their time to Habitat for Humanity. On 12 May sailors from *Nimitz* (CVN 68) helped reconstruct a family home in Lakeside, Calif., that had been burned by wildfires in October 2003. *Tarawa* (LHA 1) crew members built homes in the San Diego, Calif., area from 15 May to 2 June. Sailors from *John F. Kennedy* (CV 67) helped continue construction on a duplex located in Atlantic Beach, Fla., on 26 May. And more than 40 sailors from *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) helped build homes for families in Portsmouth, Va., during a five-day event that began on 5 June.

George Washington (CVN 73) and embarked CVW-17 crew members completed 1,246 hours of community service at local schools, a home for the elderly, an orphanage, and other locations in St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles, on 15 April.



Sailors from *Tarawa* (LHA 1) visit with patients receiving care at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in San Diego, Calif., on 11 May.

Sailors from *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) and the 24th MEU (Special Operations Capable) personnel performed landscaping work for the Villa Gabrielle Orphanage on 21 June during a port visit to Marseille, France.

During a port visit to Souda Bay, Greece, sailors from *Enterprise* (CVN 65) helped residents of Xania, Crete.



A VP-47 P-3C Orion receives a warm Hawaiian welcome as the squadron returns home to MCAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, on 2 June following a six-month deployment to Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf. Photo by MC2 Jennifer L. Bailey.

They repainted three rooms in a local retirement home on 24 May, and cleared the playground at the city's Daily Care Center for Children with Special Needs and sang songs for patients at the Therapeutic Center for People with Chronic Illness on 25 May.

Sailors from *Nimitz* (CVN 68) donated 112 units of blood to help injured troops on 25 May at NAS North Island, Calif.

Correction

In the photo caption on the inside back cover of the May-June issue, we mistyped the Moonlighters' designation. The correct designation is VMFA(AW)-332. We apologize for not catching the typo.



New York City blood center worker Nitisha Moore takes blood from EM3 Jason McDonald aboard *Kearsarge* (LHD 3) on 26 May as part of the ship's donor drive during Fleet Week 2006. The blood drive collected nearly 150 pints of blood from Sailors and Marines. Photo by MC3 Christen Nicholas.

CHANGE OF COMMAND

CNATTU Oceana, Va.: Cdr. Timothy Hooyer relieved Cdr. Scott Abel, 9 Jun.

COMSTRIKFORTRAPAC: RAdm. Gerald R. Beaman relieved RAdm. Mark T. Emerson, 9 Jun.

CPRW-11: Capt. Sean Buck relieved Capt. Dennis Sinnett, 18 May.

CSG-2: RAdm. Michael Vitale relieved RAdm. James Winnefeld, Jr., 6 Jun.

CVW-17: Capt. Troy Shoemaker relieved Capt. William Massey, 1 May.

Director, Air Warfare (N88): RAdm. Bruce W. Clingan relieved RAdm. Thomas J. Kilcline, Jr., 7 Jul.

HS-5: Cdr. Paul Esposito relieved Cdr. Brett Calkins, 16 May.

HS-11: Cdr. John Nettleton relieved Cdr. Steven Yoder, 1 May.

HSL-44: Cdr. Gary Mayes relieved Cdr. Douglas Cochrane, 1 Jun.

HSL-51: Cdr. Christopher J. Fletcher relieved Cdr. Kevin M.

Coyne, 5 Jul.

NAS JRB New Orleans, La.: Capt. Jay Adelman relieved Capt. A. J. Rizzo, 21 Jun.

VAQ-136: Cdr. Rob D. Gamberg relieved Cdr. John F. Meier, 17 May.

VAW-115: Cdr. Jim Byerly relieved Cdr. Christopher E. Bolt, 7 Apr.

VAW-124: Cdr. Kenneth W. Caraveo relieved Cdr. Robert L. Mason, 28 Apr.

VAW-125: Cdr. Kyle Ketchum relieved Cdr. Kevin Johnson, 18 May.

VFA-11: Cdr. John R. Rodriguez relieved Cdr. Mark E. Black, 1 Jun.

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

VFA-27: Cdr. Dan Dwyer relieved Cdr. Kevin Mannix, 25 May.

VFA-87: Cdr. Frank Morley relieved Cdr. David Silkey, 14 Jul.

VFA-103: Cdr. Thomas O'Dowd relieved Cdr. Brian Koehr, 19 May.

VFA-204: Cdr. Lowen Loftin relieved Cdr. Andrew Mueller, 24 Jun.

VP-5: Cdr. Brent Klavon relieved Cdr. William Johns, 26 May.

VP-45: Cdr. Mark Turner relieved Cdr. William Zirzow IV, 5 May.

VQ-4: Cdr. Scott C. Kraverath relieved Cdr. Charles E. Baker, 28 Apr.

VR-58: Cdr. Bill Hiscock relieved Cdr. Nigel MacWilkinson, 17 Jun.

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

VS-31: Cdr. Tim Langdon relieved Cdr. Jeff Davila, 11 May.

VT-4: Cdr. Michael A. Carambas relieved Cdr. Carl R. Conti, 13 Jun.

VT-21: Cdr. John P. Gasperino relieved Cdr. Patrick E. Lyons, 5 May.

VT-86: Cdr. Jeffrey G. Austin relieved Lt. Col. Richard W. Baxter, 2 Jun.