Awards

On 28 October 2006 the Marine Corps Aviation Association Robert Guy Robinson Award was presented to Capt. Jacob L. Purdon, left, of Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Rein), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) in Al Asad, Iraq. As a weapon systems officer, Capt. Purdon was recognized for his leadership and technical skills for the creation of his squadron’s efficient and combat ready mission planning procedures, and changing the way fighter attack squadrons operate in Iraq.

The Federal Aviation Administration presented its 2006 Excellence in Aviation Award to the Navy’s Terrain Awareness Warning System (TAWS) team during a ceremony at NAS Patuxent River, Md., on 21 December 2006.

Milestones

On 7 October 2006 VAW-125 commemorated 38 years of Class A mishap-free flying with a cake cutting ceremony on board Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69).
In November 2006 HSL-45 achieved 17 years and more than 108,000 flight hours without a major mishap.

In November 2006 HS-11 CO Cdr. J. R. Nettleton surpassed the 4,000 flight hour mark while deployed on board Enterprise (CVN 65).

Cdr. Jack Omohundro of VR-51, right, surpassed 3,000 flight hours piloting a C-20G Gulfstream IV.

**Scan Pattern**

On 6 November 2006 CVW-7—VAW-125, VFA-103, VFA-131, VFA-143, VFA-83, VAQ-140, and HS-5, embarked on Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69)—began conducting missions in support of ground troops in Afghanistan. (See “At Sea With Ike,” p. 16).

On 9 November 2006 the U.S. Navy and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force began ANNUALEX, a bilateral exercise designed to improve both forces’ capabilities in the defense of Japan. About 90 JMSDF ships and 130 aircraft, as well as 8,500 U.S. sailors from Kitty Hawk (CV 63), Cowpens (CG 63), Shiloh (CG 67), Curtis W. Wilbur (DDG 54), John S. McCain (DDG 56), Fitzgerald (DDG 62), Stethem (DDG 63), Lassen (DDG 82), Mustin (DDG 89), Halsey (DDG 97), Swift (HSV 2), Seawolf (SSN 21), and Asheville (SSN 758), participated in the exercise.

From 12–16 November 2006 the John C. Stennis (CVN 74) and Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) Carrier Strike
Groups conducted a Joint Task Force Exercise off southern California. The ships combined to form Carrier Task Force (CTF) 150, which conducted a variety of maritime security operations during the week-long exercise. Stennis’ CVW-9 and Reagan’s CVW-14 provided the task force’s strike warfare element.

VFA-213 was officially declared “Safe for Flight” on 27 October 2006, marking the transition from the F-14D Tomcat to the F/A-18F Super Hornet, right.

On 3 December 2006 a deactivation ceremony was held for HCS-5 on board NAS North Island, Calif.

On 5 November 2006 the Boxer (LHD 4) Expeditionary Strike Group and the Indian navy’s Western Fleet completed Exercise Malabar 2006 off Southwest India to strengthen ties between American, Canadian, and Indian forces. Thirteen ships participated in the exercise, which included the 15th MEU (SOC) and Indian soldiers assigned to the 9th Battalion of the Sikh Light Infantry.

NAVY MEDICINE TAKES FIRST STEP WITH LASIK FOR AVIATORS

By Naval Medical Center San Diego Public Affairs

On 8 November 2006 the vision correction surgery Laser In Situ Keratomileusis (LASIK) was performed on a Naval Aviator. Though LASIK has been around for many years, concerns about the harsh aviation environment have prevented its use. Aeromedical professionals have been cautious of employing the procedure on patients who frequently encounter environmental extremes such as high altitude, dry air, wind blast, and G forces. However, a new Bureau of Naval Medicine project is underway after years of intense clinical trials on nonaviation personnel. The first candidate was Marine Capt. Michael Oginsky, an F/A-18/D weapon systems officer with VMFAT-101, MCAS Miramar, Calif. Capt. Steve Schallhorn, Navy Program Manager for Refractive Surgery, completed the 20 minute procedure at the National Naval Medical Center, San Diego, Calif. “I was definitely seeing better right away, and within four hours my vision was 20/20,” said Oginsky. “At the 24-hour mark, my vision was better than 20/20.” He hopes to enter pilot training within the next few years.
On the Move

On 27 October 2006 HSL-49 Det 2 returned to NAS North Island, Calif., after a six month deployment on board Curts (FFG 38).

On 8 November 2006 the Boxer (LHD 4) Expeditionary Strike Group—Boxer, Dubuque (LPD 8), Comstock (LSD 45), Benfold (DDG 65), Howard (DDG 83), and Bunker Hill (CG 52), as well as PHIBRON-5, the 15th MEU (SOC), Midgett (WHEC 726), and HMCS Ottawa (FFH 341)—entered the U.S. 5th Fleet’s AOR during a deployment in support of maritime security operations.

On 8 November 2006 the Iwo Jima (LHD 7) Expeditionary Strike Group—Iwo Jima, Whidbey Island (LSD 41), Bulkeley (DDG 84), Nashville (LPD 13), Philippine Sea (CG 58), Cole (DDG 67), and Albuquerque (SSN 706), along with the 24th MEU (SOC), elements from Assault Craft Unit 4, Beachmaster Unit 2, and HSC-26—concluded maritime operations in the U.S. 5th Fleet’s AOR. Iwo Jima returned to NS Norfolk, Va., on 6 December 2006.

Enterprise (CVN 65) and elements of CVW-1 returned to their homeports after completing a six month deployment to the U.S. 5th, 6th, and 7th Fleets’ AORs. Enterprise and HSC-28 returned to NS Norfolk, Va., on 18 November 2006 and 3 November 2006, respectively, while VFA-211 and VFA-136 returned to NAS Oceana, Va., and VAW-123 and VRC-40 Det 2 returned to NS Norfolk, Va., between 16–17 November 2006, and VAQ-137 returned to NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., on 17 November 2006.
On 1 December 2006 *Essex* (LHD 2) returned to Sasebo, Japan, after more than two months of an annual fall patrol.

On 4 December 2006 VP-46 returned to NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., after a six month deployment to the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet AORs.

On 10 December 2006 the *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) Carrier Strike Group—*Kitty Hawk*, CVW-5, Shiloh (CG 67), Cowpens (CG 63), and DESRON 15—returned to Yokosuka, Japan, after a two month deployment.

On 11 December 2006 the *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) Carrier Strike Group—*Dwight D. Eisenhower, Anzio* (CG 68), Ramage (DDG 61), Mason (DDG 87), and Newport News (SSN 750), with CVW-7 and embarked DESRON-28—entered the Arabian Gulf in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and maritime security operations.

On 15 December 2006 HSL-43 Det 4 returned to San Diego, Calif., after six months of counternarcotics operations in the eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea while deployed on board *Thach* (FFG 43).

On 16 January *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) departed NB Kitsap Bremerton, Wash., for San
Diego, Calif., to onload CVW-9. The carrier, along with Antietam (CG 54) and Preble (DDG 88), deployed from San Diego on 20 January. O’Kane (DDG 77) and Paul Hamilton (DDG 60) departed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to join the other ships and complete the John C. Stennis Carrier Strike Group.

**Rescues**

On 13 November 2006 Coast Guard crews from CGAS Elizabeth City, N.C., and Station Cape Charles rescued an injured boater from a disabled and drifting boat in the area of the Cherrystone Inlet. Station Cape Charles personnel launched a lifeboat and located the vessel. Rough seas and heavy winds prevented the lifeboat from transferring the boater, so an HH-60 Jayhawk rescue helicopter hoisted the injured boater to safety.

On 30 November 2006 Coast Guard crews from CGAS Houston, Texas, launched two rescue missions when a massive storm front slammed into the Texas and Gulf coasts, bringing temperatures down to 31 degrees and winds up to 57 mph. Passengers on board the 31-foot sailboat Paradise called the Coast Guard when their boat was damaged due to the severe weather and started drifting because of the strong winds. After the Coast Guard dispatched an HH-65C Dolphin helicopter, rescue swimmer AME2 Raul Aguilar was lowered into the water, swam to the disabled vessel, and instructed the men to jump into the water and into the rescue basket so they could be hoisted up to the helicopter. The next day, a helicopter crew was sent to rescue a man who was stuck in the cold weather for 26 hours after his boat ran aground near Tiki Island, Texas. When the helicopter crew located the 70-year-old man, AME2 Aguilar helped him into the helo and treated him for hypothermia. He was taken to a local hospital for treatment.
Outreach

Sailors from *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) cleaned the Limassol Tourist Beach and painted an area school during a port visit to Limassol, Cyprus, 25–28 October 2006.

During a port visit to Patan village in Lovavala, India, 1–2 November 2006, sailors from the *Boxer* (LHD 4) Expeditionary Strike Group teamed with 2,000 volunteers from around the world to participate in the Habitat for Humanity’s Jimmy Carter Work Project (JCWP). Working with the volunteers and the soon-to-be homeowners, sailors painted, laid bricks, and mixed cement. An annual event led by former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, JCWP’s goal was to build 100 homes in one week for low income families from the village.

Sailors from *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) and embarked CVW-5 participated in community service projects during a port visit to Sasebo, Japan, 6–9 November 2006. Sailors participated in three groundskeeping and cleaning projects at the Kibou no Ie and San Home Egami elderly homes and the Sakura no Ie home for the mentally disabled.

While in Hong Kong for a port visit, sailors from the *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) Carrier Strike Group participated
in five community service projects, 24–25 November 2006. Projects included cleaning, landscaping, picking up trash, and repairing buildings at the St. Barnabas’ Society and Home for the Homeless, the Fu Hong Society, and the Hong Kong Dog Rescue Shelter.

Reunions

_Ranger (CVA/CV 61)_ , 15–19 August, Clackamas, Ore. POC: George Meoli, 203-453-4279, gmeoli@erols.com.

_VP-44/VPB-204/VP-204/VPMS-4_, 1–3 September, Indianapolis, Ind. POC: Gene Toffolo, 317-897-4745, genejanjay@aol.com

Sailors stationed at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., built a sandbag wall along the Skagit River on 7 November 2006 to prevent flood waters from reaching a water treatment plant in Anacortes, Wash. Photo by MC1 Bruce McVicar.
## Blue Angels 2007 Show Schedule

### March
- **10** NAF El Centro, CA
- **17–18** Davis Monthan AFB, AZ
- **24** Tyndall AFB, FL
- **31** MacDill AFB, FL

### April
- **01** MacDill AFB, FL
- **14–15** NAS Corpus Christi, TX
- **21–22** MCAS Beaufort, SC
- **28–29** Vidalia, GA

### May
- **05–06** Offutt AFB, NE
- **12** Seymour Johnson AFB, NC
- **19–20** La Crosse, WI
- **23** U.S. Naval Academy, MD
- **26–27** Millville, NJ

### June
- **02–03** Rockford, IL
- **09–10** Tinker AFB, OK
- **16–17** Fargo, ND
- **23–24** North Kingstown, RI
- **30** Battle Creek, MI

### July
- **01** Battle Creek, MI
- **07–08** Ypsilanti, MI
- **14–15** McConnell AFB, KS
- **21** Pensacola Beach, FL
- **28–29** Bozeman, MT

### August
- **04–05** Seattle, WA
- **11–12** Hillsboro, OR
- **25–26** Indianapolis, IN

### September
- **01–03** St. Louis, MO
- **08–09** NAS Oceana, VA
- **15–16** NAS Brunswick, ME
- **22–23** Millington, TN
- **29–30** Salinas, CA

### October
- **06–07** San Francisco, CA
- **13–14** MCAS Kaneohe Bay, HI
- **20–21** Fort Worth, TX
- **27–28** Muskogee, OK

### November
- **03–04** Jacksonville Beach, FL
- **09–10** NAS Pensacola, FL