

## VP-47 busy with multiple exercises

### SHAREM 2001

By Lt. j.g. Dave Belew  
VP-47

Combat Aircrew Five (CAC-5) from VP-47 flew from their deployment site of Diego Garcia to Kadena Air Base to participate in SHAREM 2001. The exercise involves the Republic of Korea and the United States. Ships and submarines are pitted against each other in mock battles to evaluate various equipment, such as sonar and torpedoes.

Patron One, which is deployed from Whidbey Island, Wash., hosted the "Golden Swordsmen." Crew Five flew several missions in support of the shipboard operations. The primary mission of the P-3 "Orion" is to detect and track submarines. VP-47's deployment to Diego Garcia does not provide many opportunities to fly over such targets. As the airplane cleared the operational area, valuable Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) training was conducted.

Plane Commander Lt. Gene Cran and Tactical Coordinator Lt. Nomer Oytas led the crew to successfully complete the required qualifications in order to maintain crew readiness. The acoustic sensor operators Aviation Warfare Operators Dax Panno and Justin Blaylock shook off the dust from their tracking skills and showed the Navy how to track a sub. With this training exercise, CAC-5 will continue to be a qualified combat aircrew.

## Arabian Gauntlet

By Lt. j.g. Dave Belew  
VP-47

Patrol Squadron 47's "Golden Swordsman" recently took part in the Arabian Gauntlet exercise in the Persian Gulf. Arabian Gauntlet is a joint multinational military exercise to maintain the vital sea lines in and out of the Persian Gulf.

VP-47 combat aircrews flew missions in support of the Arabian Gauntlet exercise, while operating out of Masirah, Oman and the Kingdom of Bahrain. The P-3 Orions of VP-47 participated with ships and aircraft from the British, German, French, Saudi Arabian, Omani, Kuwaiti, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Pakistan and U.S. military forces. The exercise lasted 21 days, with VP-47's P-3s flying both day and night missions for a majority of the exercise's duration.

The event ended on April 1 and VP-47 buckled back down to finish out the last two months of a six month deployment, with a Bravo Zulu from the commodore, DESRON 50, under their belt.



## Former USS Thresher Sailor tours USS Asheville

By J02 Cori Rhea,  
COMSUBPAC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The crew of the attack submarine USS Asheville (SSN 758) hosted a special guest recently.

Owen Johnson, a one-time crewmember of the USS Thresher toured through the passageways of the attack submarine USS Asheville, and met the Sailors onboard.

Only 38 years ago this month, the new state of the art USS Thresher was going through sea trials when the unthinkable happened. The ship suffered a major catastrophe, from which the crew was unable to recover. USS Thresher sank, killing all 129 men onboard.

"I knew roughly 115 of those men. They were like a second family," said Johnson.

Johnson served on the Thresher as an Engineman 3rd Class. After being honorably discharged from the Navy, Johnson considered re-enlisting. The recruiter told him that he would be sent back to the Thresher.

"At the time my wife was expecting and we already had one child, so I chose not to re-enlist.

Eighty-seven days later, Thresher had its accident. It was awful," remembered Johnson.

As Johnson toured the submarine he could not get over how different the layout of Asheville was to Thresher.

"I haven't been in a submarine for such a long time. Things have really changed," said Johnson. "But the people are the same. Submariners are different from other people. They are very courageous to volunteer for this kind of duty. It is not something everyone can do, only the best."

Electrician Technician 3rd Class (SS) Larry Swofford, was honored to meet Johnson.

"It is amazing to meet this man. We go through all kinds of safety instructions and lessons and he knows first-hand of the horrors that we safeguard against," said Johnson.

The disaster of USS Thresher led to the re-evaluation of the U.S. Navy's submarine program. Navy officials swore Thresher crewmembers would not die in vain.

The Navy embarked on an extensive review of practices and procedures in effect during the Thresher's overhaul.

They determined four issues that were of particular concern: design, construction, quality assurance and procurement. The lessons learned by the Navy from the Thresher tragedy ultimately serve to ensure a safer submarine force today.

Johnson recently retired from Climate Makers Inc. as a pipe fitter and he and his wife now reside on Oahu.

## CNP announces Roy Wilkins Service Award nomination process

By Lynette S. Williams  
CNP PUBLIC AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON (NWS) — Nominations are now being accepted for the prestigious Roy Wilkins Service Award to be presented at this year's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) 92nd annual convention.

This year's convention will be held July 7-13 in New Orleans.

A highlight of the convention is the recognition of Department of Defense personnel at the NAACP's Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs awards dinner on July 11. During this event, the Roy Wilkins Service Award will be presented to one military or civilian member of each service who has significantly enhanced opportunities for minorities in the workplace.

Capt. Robert Ford, special assistant to the Chief of

Naval Personnel for minority affairs, highly encourages participation in the nomination process for this prestigious award.

"Many individuals have made significant contributions in the areas of civil and human rights, race relations and equal opportunity, and this is the perfect opportunity to recognize noteworthy service on behalf of minorities in the Navy," Ford said.

Commands may nomi-

nate one person — officer, enlisted or civilian — of any race or ethnic group for this significant award.

Nominations should be sent no later than May 18 to:

Chief of Naval Personnel (PERS-00J) 2 Navy Annex Washington, DC 20370-0000.

Additional details regarding the nomination process can be found in NAVADMIN 087/01 at <http://www.bu-pers.navy.mil>.