

# FLEET FOCUS

## Skinny Dragons take home Battle 'E' for 2000



AMH3 Blake Metcalf photo

"Top Patrol Aviation Sailor" of the Pacific Fleet, AW1 Dane Hill, accepts the Battle "E" award from Rear Adm. Michael Holmes on behalf of VP-4 while former "Skinny Dragon" commanding officer, Cmdr. Craig Whitaker looks on.

By Lt. Mark Brummett  
VP-4 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

The "Skinny Dragons" of Patrol Squadron Four (VP-4) were presented the Battle Efficiency (Battle 'E') Award for Patrol and Reconnaissance, Pacific Fleet for the year 2000. VP-4 was selected over eight squadrons located at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, and Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington.

The Battle "E" award goes to

ships and squadrons who demonstrate sustained superior performance with the emphasis on operational proficiency.

The selection process includes a number of required assessments including crew and overall squadron qualifications, as well as a review of the command's programs and procedures that have produced an integrated team effort to achieve command goals.

During a special awards ceremony, Rear Adm. Michael Holmes, Commander, Patrol and

Reconnaissance Forces U.S. Pacific Fleet, presented the Battle "E" plaque to the COMPATRECONFORPAC and VP-4 Sailor of the Year, Aviation Anti-Submarine Warfare Operator 1st Class Dane Hill.

"I am pleased to see the award back on the island and once again with the Skinny Dragons," Rear Adm. Holmes said.

During a recent six-month deployment, the Skinny Dragons showed their colors while supporting Seventh Fleet operations.

Maintaining deployment sites in Misawa and Okinawa, Japan, VP-4 flew more than 4,800 hours and conducted 27 multi-national exercises.

One of the most impressive aspects of the deployment was the squadron's role in the Combined Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) exercises, which promotes team spirit and interoperability with allies in the Pacific. Among the countries involved were Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines.

Aviation Machinist's Mate Senior Chief Philip Decker, with the Operations department detachment in Okinawa, Japan, coordinated many of the multi-national exercises.

"The logistics associated with organizing each exercise was immense," said Decker. "It took a lot of coordination between the host nation, our own embassies, and the aircrews participating in the exercises."

Commitments were held, even when Mother Nature didn't cooperate. Six hurricane evacuations were accomplished throughout the season sending aircrews, often on short notice, to safer locations.

Throughout the deployment, six submarine prosecutions were conducted, highlighting the role of the P-3 Orion as the Navy's leading undersea warfare (USW) platform.

Safety is another aspect of the Battle "E", as the Skinny Dragons flew without incident. Flight hours without incident or mishap is a major factor for the competing squadrons.

VP-4 continues its outstanding

safety record, entering its 29th year of mishap-free flight.

The maintenance department kept up with the grueling operating tempo of deployment and still managed to put nine aircraft through major scheduled maintenance overhauls. VP-4 had the highest mission capable aircraft rate of any recent patrol squadron deployed to Misawa, Japan.

Even with all the tactical mission successes the Skinny Dragons had during the six-month Western Pacific deployment, one of the most rewarding highlights were the 22 saved lives credited to the Skinny Dragons during 20 search and rescue (SAR) missions.

"If this was the only thing you accomplished during the year, you could be extremely proud of yourselves," Rear Adm. Holmes stated.

The admiral closed out his speech with a challenge to the squadron to once again retain the Battle "E" award for the P-3 Pacific Fleet. In fact, the Skinny Dragons accomplished this feat recently in 1996-1997 and have won the award three of the last five years. During the inter-deployment training cycle, the Skinny Dragons will be able to prove themselves worthy of yet another Battle "E" award with a full schedule of detachments throughout the world.

Most recently, a crew from VP-4 returned from NAS North Island after working with the USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) Carrier Battle Group. Here in Hawaii, crews from VP-4 and VP-9 participated in round-the-clock coordinated operations in support of USW exercise Silent Fury.

## Bravo Zulu

### Defense Information Systems Agency, Pacific

#### Joint Service Commendation Medal

Cmdr. James F. Kolasinski  
IT1(SW) Robert M. Riccitelli, Jr.

#### Meritorious Service Medal

Cmdr. Edward J. Lester

#### Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal

Lt. Daniel Geiger, USN

#### Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal

IT1(SW) Robert M. Riccitelli, Jr.

#### Certificate of Appreciation

HM3 David Petersen  
HM3 Alane Dade

### Naval Medical Clinic, Pearl Harbor

#### Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal

HM3 Juan M. Alcantar  
HM1 Ted Magpantay  
HM2 Scott R. Hantsch

### VR-51

#### Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal

Lt. Cmdr. Timothy D. Bienlien  
AE1 (NAC/AW) Eric J. Dixon  
YN1 Kimberly K. Rutigliano  
AO2 (NAC) John H. Embree

#### Sailor of the Quarter

YN2 Tamara J. Porcino  
AMH3 (SW) Brian A. Leamy

#### Flying milestone: 3500 Hours

AE1 (NAC/AW) Michael S. O'Malley

#### Flying milestone: 1000 Hours

AEC (NAC/AW) Donald C. Hernden  
AMSC (NAC) George H. Bowyer  
AO1 (NAC/AW) Clayton M. Lihilihi  
AE1 (NAC/AW) Eric J. Dixon  
AD1 (NAC/AW) Floyd D. Atwell  
AT2 (NAC/AW) Scott O. Dasch  
AT2 (NAC) Sylvia S. Randalph  
AO2 (NAC/AW) Carl N. Burkhalter  
AE2 (NAC/AW) Mark J. Hoekstra

### COMSUBRON 31

#### Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal

AE1 Eric J. Dixon  
YN1 Kimberly K. Rutigliano

### USS Russell (DDG 59)

#### Navy Commendation Medal

Lt. Cmdr. Leonard Santiago  
Lt. Brad Harris

#### Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal

FC2 Lance Minchew  
OS2(SW) Luis Torres  
OS3(SW) Justin Anderson  
FC2(SW) Shawn Walker

## PWC receives new computer system, improves Navy's electrical efficiency

By Maura Yee  
PWC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Turning lights on in Navy work spaces, drinking fresh water from fountains and sinks, and removing used water by flushing it down a drain, all depend on automated computer systems to provide control and monitoring.

These special systems, known as Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition, or SCADA, enable personnel from Navy Public Works Center, Pearl Harbor's (PWC) Utilities Department to provide electrical, drinking water, and wastewater utilities more efficiently and reliably to the Navy customer.

PWC's most recent upgrade to its utilities systems has been the installation of a new SCADA to monitor the Navy Electrical System (NES). It replaced a 19-year old system that had deteriorated and become obsolete.

"The new SCADA allows for much quicker retrieval of information, especially in emergency situations," said Randy Chun, PWC electrical engineer. "It integrates three functions formerly provided by separate

computer systems - the old SCADA, access to the PWC Local Area Network (LAN) and monitoring of Hawaiian Electric's Pearl Harbor total revenue meter - into one common system."

While the original system was considered state-of-the-art at the time it was installed, the new SCADA is much more sophisticated due to the tremendous technological advancements in computers over the past 20 years. Providing more than basic control and monitoring functions, the system also features:

• Historical data recording and retrieval to support electrical planning, design and operation decisions.

• Use of IBM-compatible personal computers for user workstations instead of UNIX-based workstations to simplify end user operation and maintenance.

• Sequence-of-events analysis to allow examination of seemingly simultaneous tripping of multiple circuit breakers during failures to determine actual cause-and-effect sequences.

The actual construction, installation and adjust-



Maura Yee photo

The New SCADA software and workstations enables users to operate the Navy Electrical System with greater accuracy and efficiency.

ment of the new SCADA, from contract award to final acceptance took over 2 and a half years. It involved much discussion with the contractor, Transdyn Controls, Inc. of Pleasanton, CA., and several government-witnessed factory tests.

"It's been a long and continual process but we believe we are headed in the right direction of providing a SCADA system which meets the present and future requirements of our

department, the center, and the Navy," said Chun.

Currently, the new SCADA controls and monitors NES equipment located on the Pearl Harbor Naval Complex and Ford Island. Future system expansion will include the Camp Smith and NAVMAG West Loch areas on Oahu.

The new SCADA software and workstations enables users to operate the Navy Electrical System more accurately and with greater efficiency.

## VR-51 'Windjammers' receive CNO Aviation Safety Award, Bill Young Award

By Lt. Bill Willkie and Lt. Cmdr. Robert Heath  
VR-51

The "Windjammers" of VR-51 are the 2000 recipients of both the Chief of Naval Operations Aviation Safety Award and the Congressman Bill Young Award as the Navy's top operational C-20 squadron. This is the second consecutive year the squadron has won the Aviation Safety Award.

According to VR-51 Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Tom Hinderleider, "It is a great accomplishment for a squadron to simultaneously win both of these awards. It's a direct reflection on the dedication and teamwork of all of our personnel who have pulled together to accomplish great things. I'm very proud of each and every one of them."

Highlighting VR-51's accomplishments was a quick response mission to transport an Air Force medical team from Yemen to Djibouti to Naples, Italy in the hours that followed the USS Cole bombing; while simultaneously flying to Wake Island to return the Secretary of the Navy to Washington to deal with the crisis.

The Windjammer crew in Yemen flew the only Navy aircraft that participated in the aeromedical evacuation of 38 sailors injured in the terrorist attack on the USS Cole.



Navy file photo

During 2000, VR-51 performed missions to more than 35 countries and circled the globe during four separate trips. The squadron completed a ground breaking trip to Mongolia with less than 72 hours notice, and was also responsible for completing short notice missions in support of the White House staff on a sight survey throughout India.

Additionally, the squadron flew over 300 flight hours in direct support of Commander, Marine Forces Pacific. Less visible worldwide missions occurred throughout the year including operations to Chile, China,

Bangladesh and Australia.

Since its establishment as a detachment in December 1994, VR-51's safety record has been second to none. The squadron has flown over 15,000 mishap free hours of worldwide logistics support. In addition, during 2000 no workdays were lost to ground accidents.

VR-51 consists of 30 active duty, and 30 reserve personnel supplemented by 14 civilian maintainers. The squadron operates two C-20G aircraft (the military variant of a Gulfstream IV) based at Kaneohe Bay Marine Corps Base, Hawaii.