

FLEET FOCUS

Patrol Squadron 9 Deploys to WESTPAC

By Lt. Randy Studt
VP-9

After having performed superbly during an extremely task intensive homecycle, Patrol Squadron 9 departed for deployment to the western Pacific. After sending an advance maintenance and operations detachment via NALO, the first P-3C Orion aircraft took off the beginning of December.

The other seven aircraft in VP-9's fleet hit the skies throughout the next several days. The airlift, carrying a majority of the squadron's maintenance, operations and administration personnel, left a few days later.

All 360 squadron members headed towards one of two deployment sites, either Misawa, Japan or Kadena, Okinawa. During the next six months, these two locations will be the headquarters for support operations to a multitude of countries in the region.

VP-9's 12-month homecycle was a successful time period in many aspects. The squadron completed a flawless move from Naval Air Station, Barbers Point, to Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

The squadron excelled in many training operations to include: four missions conducted against U.S. submarines; missions in support of the John C. Stennis Battle Group; multi-national coordinated operations with Japanese, Australian, British and Canadian forces; Operational Readiness Evaluation, while maintaining the western Pacific Readyalert responsibilities for nine months.

During a pre-deployment stand down, VP-9's Commanding Officer, Cmdr. E. K. Hampton Jr., emphasized to the entire squadron that, "We have been trained as war-fighters and if the need arises we will be



file photo

Patrol Squadron Nine departed Pearl Harbor in December for a six month deployment to the western Pacific. All 360 squadron members headed towards one of two deployment sites, either Misawa, Japan or Kadena, Okinawa.

ready, willing and able to defend our Nation and its interests!"

A variety of missions will be flown out of these diverse locations. Several of the missions will be multi-national operations conducted

with the host country. The mission capabilities of the P-3C Orion arsenal include undersea warfare (USW), anti-drug contingencies, surveillance, reconnaissance, senior officer transport, and battle group

support.

No matter what situation may arise, the nation and the western Pacific can rest easy knowing that VP-9 has assumed the watch and is guarding the country's interests.

Henry M. Jackson does historic 50th patrol

By JO3 Anthony Silas
CSG-9 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In the chilly waters of Hood Canal, USS Henry M. Jackson (SSBN 730), named for the late Washington State senator, sailed back to Submarine Base Bangor after completing a historic 50th patrol recently.

The sub, the fifth of 18 Trident submarines, was named after Senator Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson. Jackson was a senior United States Senator who represented Washington State for nearly 43 years and was also a member of the Armed Services Committee. He served until his death in 1983 at the age of 71.

Helen Jackson, the senator's wife, rode aboard the submarine as it returned to Bangor from its 50th patrol. She came aboard with her daughter, Anna Marie Laurence, grandson, Jack, 9, and son-in-law, Daniel.

"I'm proud to have this opportunity to ride the submarine with such a fine crew," said Jackson, who resides in Everett, Wash. "The Trident submarines are a great asset to our country. The Henry M. Jackson shows that the United States has the highest quality submarines and so are the people who serve on them."

Laurence remembered the day she christened the boat named after her father on Oct. 20, 1983.

"It was amazing. I never imagined anything could be so large. Guests were telling me stories about how people swung the champagne bottle and missed the ship," she said. "They also told me that if the bottle cracked on the first swing, it brings the ship good luck."

"Well, not only did the bottle break, but the metal on the bottle also broke. It was an exciting moment. If my dad were alive today, I think he would be proud," she continued. "It's a great honor for me and my family to be here. The Sailors have been so kind to welcome us into their community, which gives me the opportunity to meet so many interesting people."

Henry M. Jackson's Blue Crew, under the charge of Cmdr. Paul Ims, manned the rails.

"We're celebrating two of the ship's high points, the 50th patrol and the Jackson's 15th birthday," said Ims. "It's a pleasure to have Mrs. Jackson and her guests here with us."

"The ship ran well. It's no surprise to me that the Henry M. Jackson still runs as good as the day she went on her first patrol," Ims continued. "This 50th patrol says great things about the importance of our strategic mission and the commitment of sailors who drive the ship. I'm happy we could be part of it."

Ims also commended the Jackson's Blue Crew. "The crew and the ship

performed very well. We enjoyed liberty in Hawaii," he said. "Everyone did a fantastic job. I just pointed the crew in the right direction, and they did the rest."

The guests were treated to a tour of the ship, where they had the chance to peer through the telescope and venture up the sail to see Dabob Bay. They also saw one of the berthing areas, the crew's lounge, torpedo room, galley and other spaces.

"It's fun to bring the public aboard and show them what we do," said Chief Electronic Technician (SS) Frank Fleming. "We get to explain what the ship does and let them see the systems."

After the tour, the guests retreated to the galley where Jackson, Laurence, Ims and Cmdr. Stephen Szyska, Gold Crew commanding officer, cut a cake using Ims's sword. Ims also reenlisted ET1(SS) Dave Bryan.

Members of University of Washington's Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) said the submarine and crew impressed them. For Officer Candidate Bruce Golden, coming to Henry M. Jackson was a homecoming. Golden is attending the university under the enlisted commissioning program, where he is a senior majoring in technical communications. Golden is a former crewmember.

Fightin' Jack' takes on the 21st Century

By Ens. Malia Spofford
USS FLETCHER

On board the USS Fletcher (DD 992) the crew is getting ready to get underway for COMPTUEX, but things on the quarterdeck aren't quite like they used to be. The messenger of the watch on the 8 a.m. - noon has just heard the news: 12 o'clock reports will be electronically collected and submitted to the commanding officer.

Electronic Technician Seaman Braem stands with his usual stack of papers, arms loose at his sides, eyes downcast. "So does that mean I'm out of a job?" the messenger smiles.

Perhaps the once-dreaded Y2K technology has more to offer than the threat of collapse. A smart ship nowadays no longer merely signifies sparkling passageways and a freshly painted deck-although Fletcher's got that too. Submitting 12 o'clock reports using a Palm Pilot is only one of the many ways Fletcher plans to take advantage of smarter 21st century technology. The 3Com Palm IIIX is already a standard on the ship and has been since April 1999, ahead of the rest of the Navy: all officers and CPOs receive the sleek digital assistants, which help them keep appointments, write emails and memos on the go, and "beam" information to shipmates-and, as with the 12 o'clocks, the captain. No more messy stacks of Xeroxed paper or sloppy notepads.

"On board Fletcher, we're interested in what's going to be happening not just now, but five and ten years from now, and we're installing systems and equipment with the future in mind," emphasizes Executive Officer Lt. Cmdr. Ronald Schall.

Fletcher's foresight in going electronic extends past these neat reports, into a realm of ever more effective combat ability. Since information management will play a key role in determining the winners of future wars, Fletcher is focused on achieving the highest standards of information control and dissemination.

The newly installed IT-21 Local Area Network (LAN) operated by the Information Technology Department anticipates the March 2000 connection of more than 60 new Dell Pentium III OptiPlex computers on both secret and unclassified networks. This C4I technology affects matters concerning computers, command, control, communications, and information, and is designed to streamline and improve the current on board system. The IT-21 network will transmit and receive data while underway using the Automatic Data Networking System (ADNS) and the IN-MARSAT B antenna.

For Fletcher, this is only the beginning. Constant improvement and modernization is the mission and goal for Information Technology Department as well as for all of Fletcher, which functions in itself as a highly complex network.

IT will only increase the efficiency of an already well-laid groundwork, long in the making. The Fletcher sees Information Technology as the only way to go-although approaching her 20th birthday this July, the ship may be around for another 13 years.

Fletcher's past success in testing out innovative systems and her continued ability to excel make her the most sensible platform for new and experimental technology. The Palm Pilots have enjoyed incredible success and promise to be of ever increasing use. Although the keel was laid past century, the Fighting' Jack is sailing into this new era in the most modern style, seeking the best ways to do the nation's business and protect her families back home.

SPOT CHECK

The Pacific Fleet today

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| Personnel: | 247,421 |
| | • 133,897 USN |
| | • 70,006 USMC |
| | • 12,848 USNR |
| | • 30,670 civilians |
| Ships: | 187 (*) |
| Underway: | 78 (42%) (*) |
| Aircraft: | 1,420 (**) |
| Exercises: | 4 |
| Port Visits: | 8 countries |
| Aircraft Carriers Underway/Deployed: | |
| | • USS John C. Stennis |
| | • USS Constellation |
| | • USS Abraham Lincoln |
| | • USS Kitty Hawk |
| LHA/LHD Underway/Deployed: | |
| | • USS Peleliu |
| | • USS Belleau Wood |

* — includes Military Sealift Command ships
** — includes USMC aircraft

Around the Fleet

Navy, Marine Corps Team to assist in Venezuela

Two Norfolk-based ships will depart this week to provide humanitarian assistance in the flood-ravaged country of Venezuela.

USS Nashville (LPD 13) and USS Tortuga (LSD 46) will provide a maritime platform for Navy Construction Battalion and Marine Corps engineering personnel who will help the Venezuelans clear roads along the Venezuelan coastline.

It is anticipated that Nashville will remain off the Venezuelan coastline to support sea-based engineer operations for approximately two months. Tortuga will return to Norfolk after the equipment and personnel have been off loaded in Venezuela.

Nashville and Tortuga are both amphibious landing

platforms and will be loaded with bulldozers, tractors, helicopters, engineering equipment and landing craft. Both ships will be accompanied by Navy Beachmaster Units homeported in Norfolk to assist in off-loading personnel and equipment ashore in Venezuela.

The ships will on-load a Marine Corps Engineer Task Force in Morehead City, N.C., and a Navy Engineer Detachment stationed at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, P.R.

Innovative recycling saves \$1 million

Naval Security Group Activity (NSGA) Sugar Grove saved the government nearly \$1 million in demolition costs recently by recycling rubble in innovative ways. The concrete, wood, aluminum poles, gravel, and copper ground-

ings from a non-functioning radio antenna were put to a variety of uses. More than 1,600 tons of concrete pillars were crushed to use as rip-rap to help stop water erosion in gullies and protect against flood damage. This avoided \$80,000 in disposal costs. As an added bonus, the concrete rip-rap created new drainage patterns, generating storm water retention ponds and wetlands that attract migratory birds and other wildlife. The West Virginia Department of Transportation agreed to remove 17,500 linear feet of creosote-coated poles for their reuse, saving the Navy more than \$650,000 in disposal fees. Aluminum poles and copper scrap were sold. About 350 tons of gravel were salvaged from the site, and will be used for projects around the base.