

FLEET FOCUS

VP-9 awarded for ASW excellence

By Lt.j.g. George Borovina
VP-9

Patrol Squadron Nine (VP-9) was recently awarded the Coastal Command Trophy for anti-submarine warfare excellence. This is the fifth time VP-9 has received this honor more than any other squadron in the Pacific Fleet.

Every year, Commander, Patrol Wings, U. S. Pacific Fleet awards the trophy to the Pacific Fleet patrol squadron which displayed the highest airborne ASW proficiency during each competitive cycle for the Battle Readiness Excellence Award, Performance in the Operational Readiness Evaluation, Fleet exercises, and operational missions are taken into account.

The idea for the award was originally conceived in 1968 by then Wing Commander R. S. Lloyd, when he served as the British Royal Air Force (RAF) exchange officer on the staff of Commander, Naval Air Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet. The trophy emphasizes the close ties that exist between Maritime Patrol Aviation crews of the U. S. Navy and those of the RAF.

Patrol squadrons fly the four-engine turboprop P-3C Orion, a land-based, long range anti-submarine warfare (ASW) patrol aircraft. The P-3C is capable of completing a wide variety of missions, ranging from undersea warfare to reconnaissance and surveillance. The aircraft has advanced submarine detection sensor capabilities such as directional frequency and ranging sonobuoys and magnetic anomaly detection equipment. The avionics system is integrated by a general-purpose digital computer that supports all of the tactical displays, monitors and automatically launches ordnance, and provides flight information to the pilots. In addition, the system coordinates navigation information and accepts sensor data inputs for tactical display and storage. The P-3C can carry a mixed pay-



file photo

load of weapons internally and on wing pylons, including Harpoon, Maverick, Standoff Land Attack Missiles, torpedoes, depth charges, and mines. The typical P-3C aircrew includes three pilots, two flight engineers, a tactical coordinator, a navigator/communicator, three aviation warfare systems operators, and an in-flight technician.

During the June to December 1998 deployment to Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territory, VP-9 operated from detachment sites in Manama Bahrain; Masirah, Oman; Kadena, Okinawa; and Misawa, Japan. This deployment also marked the first time a Patrol Squadron deployed with the new anti-surface warfare improvement program (AIP) aircraft. This upgraded P-3C includes a number of new surveillance and reconnaissance systems. For proper tactical employment of the advanced capabilities of AIP, additional aircrew training and flights were added into the inter-deployment training cycle (IDTC) and continued throughout the

deployment.

VP-9 more than met the challenge by flying more than 950 sorties totaling 5,500 mishap-free flight hours and achieving an unparalleled 98 percent mission completion rate while deployed. VP-9 transitioned to AIP while still meeting, and in some cases exceeding, all of the IDTC and operational requirements. VP-9 also achieved more advanced qualifications per flight hour and conducted more simulated attacks per submarine contact hour than any other squadron during the year.

In his congratulatory message to the squadron, Rear Admiral Michael Holmes, Commander, Patrol Wings, U.S. Pacific Fleet said "The competition has always been close, and this year was no exception. This award is a testimony to the superb effort of each member of the Golden Eagles team. Congratulations, and keep up the good work!"



Bravo Zulu

Naval Legal Service Office/
Trial Service Office Pacific
Detachment Pearl Harbor

Naval Legal Service Command
Legalman of the Year
LN1 LaTonya Turner

NLSO Det Pearl Harbor
Sailor of the Year
LN1(SW) Sheila Chaney

Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal
Lt. Todd Huntley
LN2 Jason McMillen

USS Honolulu (SSN 718)

Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal
Lt.j.g. Carlos Galan
FT1(SS) David Bryant, Jr.
YN1(SS) Rodney Ross
ET3(SS) William White

Letter of Commendation
MM3(SS) Lamar Lewis
MM3(SS) Adrian Sizer
MMFN(SS) Joshua Inlow
MMFN(SS) Joel Immel

Submarine Warfare Qualified
FT3(SS) Saverio Gorniak, Jr.
MM3(SS) Justin Ritter
ET3(SS) Derek Kamei
YN3(SS) Mark McMurray
EM3(SS) Christopher Strong
FT3(SS) Gerald Serrano
FT3(SS) James Connors
ET3(SS) Adam Yeager
MSSA(SS) David Balint

AROUND THE FLEET

Addresses released to get Cold War service certificates

Between 18 million and 22 million former and current service members and DoD civilians can start applying April 5 for certificates honoring them for their parts in winning the Cold War.

Those qualifying for the certificates can apply via the Internet at coldwar.army.mil, e-mail at cwrs@Fairfax-emh1.army.mil, or fax at (703) 275-6749.

Applicants can also mail requests to: Cold War Recognition, 4035 Ridge Top Road, Suite 400, Fairfax, VA 22030.

Applicants must present proof of service. Persons are eligible for the recognition certificate if they have military or civilian service with the War, Navy or Defense departments between Sept. 2, 1945, and Dec. 26, 1991.

Navy christens oceanographic survey ship Bruce C. Heezen

The U.S. Navy's newest oceanographic survey ship, USNS Bruce C. Heezen (T-AGS 64), was christened March 25 during a ceremony at Halter Marine Shipyard, Moss Point, Miss.

Unique in naval history, the ship was not named in the time-honored, traditional Navy manner, but by a group of nine fifth-grade students from Oak Lawn Elementary School in Cranston, R.I., who attended the christening.

Responding to a call from the Navy for suggestions for the new oceanographic survey ship's name, students nationwide competed in a contest that began last September. The contest was tailored to encourage stu-

dents to learn about the maritime sciences, naval oceanography and use of the Internet.

The new ship is named for oceanographer Bruce C. Heezen (1924-1977), a marine scientist who did pioneering work in plate tectonics and ocean floor exploration.

Bruce C. Heezen is the last of five ships in the Pathfinder-class. Crewed by civilian mariners, the ship will be operated for the oceanographer of the Navy by the Military Sealift Command.

Navy revives LDO/CWO program

A NAVADMIN message released March 25 announced the return of the Aviation Operations Limited Duty Officer/Chief Warrant Officer Naval Flight Officer program for currently serving 632x/732x officers.

Aviation Operations LDO/CWO's, aeronautically designated officers who are technical managers and specialists, assist in the organization, direction, and supervision of flight crew operations and training. The source rating for aviation operations LDO/CWO's is the aviation warfare systems operator (AW) rating. These experienced aviators will fill readiness flying positions as NAV/Commo's and tactical coordinators.

The aviation operations LDO/CWO NFO selection board will meet in June to select FY00 candidates. Aviation operations LDO/CWO's (632x/732x) interested in the program should submit an application to COMNAVPERSCOM (NPC-432M) by May 15. More information is available in NAVADMIN 086-99.

VP-4 demonstrates AIP capabilities

By Lt. Jeff Chandler
VP-4

Capt. Frank D. Bryant, Chief of Staff for Commander, Patrol Wings, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CPWF), recently traveled to Diego Garcia to get a personal perspective on Patrol Squadron Four's (VP-4) operations in its different areas of responsibility. Diego Garcia is the stepping stone to the Arabian Gulf theater sites, Bahrain and Masirah. Bryant visited all sites to observe the

daily routines of the crews and support personnel.

Close interaction such as this provides deployed Sailors an opportunity to provide CPWP with valuable feedback regarding their specific location and quality of life. This direct link also gives Sailors the peace of mind needed to remain focused on the difficult and demanding deployment challenges.

In addition to speaking with Sailors, Bryant participated in a mission in the Arabian Gulf region. This mission en-

abled flight crews to demonstrate the advancements VP-4 has made in using the new Anti-Surface Improvement Program (AIP) aircraft as a forward-deployed battle force multiplier. Bryant's participation prepared him to champion the capabilities of AIP to the chain of command, providing him with insight into what can be expected or requested of this platform in the future and ensuring future refinements of this relatively new system.

Reuben James SAR swimmers get involved at local school

USS Reuben James Public Affairs

Two search and rescue (SAR) swimmers from USS Reuben James (FFG 57) recently helped chaperone 40 fourth grade students from Aiea Elementary School on a whale-watching trip.

Quartermaster 1st Class (SW) Jonathan Myers and Signalman 3rd Class (SW) Keith Messick joined the group on a field trip on-board the whale watching ship, American Dream. The trip offered the children an opportunity to get out of the classroom and have some fun.

Knowing that Myers and Messick were skilled open ocean rescue swimmers and trained to respond to medical emergencies provided the teachers and the students with an added sense of security...the same security shared by commanding officers and fellow shipmates.

In order to become a Navy SAR swimmer, Sailors must demonstrate to the Afloat Training Group Middle Pacific (ATG MIDPAC) that they are in good physical condition both in and out of the water. Once a candidate passes ATG MIDPAC's in-test, they are sent to San Diego for 30 days of instruction and extensive physical training. The candidates are trained on first aid, parachute disentanglement, multi victim rescues and open ocean survival. The course has a high attrition rate, but candidates who successfully complete it are qualified as



OM1(SW) Jonathan Myers photo

USS Reuben James Sailors recently chaperoned fourth graders from Aiea Elementary School.

Navy SAR swimmers. Both Myers and Messick routinely train and exercise to maintain their SAR qualification.

Myers and Messick also volunteer their time to tutor and supervise the students of Aiea Elementary School as part of Reuben James' Adopt-A-School program.

Fortunately, Myers and Messick did not have to use their SAR expertise on the whale watching field trip, but the trip was not completely uneventful. The students did site a whale and the Sailors got their fair share of exercise while sliding the students down a hill on cardboard squares once they returned to shore.

Frederick hosts SURFPAC commander

By Ens. Sharon Boyd
USS FREDERICK

USS Frederick (LST 1184) hosted Vice Adm. Edward Moore, Commander, Naval Surface Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet on March 22.

During a tour of the ship, Moore visited the combat information center, bridge, troop and crew berthing, engineering, number three auxiliary room, and the tank

deck.

Admiral Moore also addressed the crew at an Admiral's Call. He emphasized the greater opportunities Sailors have to spend time with their families, achieved by reducing the number of required annual inspections and assists, and expanding duty days to the maximum each ship can handle. The crew was highly interested in the changes to the Inter-deployment Training

Cycle and the opportunity for improved quality of life.

The visit provided Admiral Moore the opportunity to see the work of the men and women on Hawaii's only amphibious and reserve platform. Radioman 3rd Class Carrie Presley of Bogata, Texas said, "The admiral appeared very sincere in our well-being. It was a pleasure to have him aboard and answer all the crew's questions."

VP-4 det shares breakfast with Joint Chiefs Chairman

VP-4 Public Affairs

A group of Sailors from Patrol Squadron Four (VP-4), currently on deployment in the Arabian Gulf area recently met with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Chief Aviation Ordnanceman Lyle Eagle, Aviation Antisubmarine Warfare Operator 2nd Class Clay Garrett, Aviation Structural Mechanic (Airframes) Damon Andrew, Aviation Electrician's Mate 3rd Class Timothy Horst, and Aviation Electronics Technician 3rd Class Michael O'Neill attended a formal breakfast at the U.S. Embassy in Muscat, Oman with Army Gen. Hugh Shelton.

During breakfast, Andrew sat at the head table with General Shelton, and spoke about VP-4's small detachment in Masirah and Bahrain. The rest of the group sat with the Honorable John B. Craig, Ambassador to Oman and his wife, along with Mrs. Shelton.

The General addressed the group on such topics as the Iraq and Bosnian conflicts and about how much he depended on the deployed forces of the combined Armed Forces. He specifically mentioned the superb intelligence the Anti-Surface Warfare Improvement Program P-3C's were providing in the combat environments of Iraq and Bosnia.

The General closed his comments by reminding us that we are still the best military force in the world, and that we should be proud in defending not only the interests of the United States but also and more importantly the free people of the world. It was a short, but memorable visit for the Skinny Dragons. "This was a once in a life time experience that we will not forget," said Garrett.