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# WINGSPAN



Vol. 14, No. 5

Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas

February 28, 2008

### What's Inside



T-2 "Thunder Guppy" set to retire in Aug. Page 3



Operation Iraqi Pen Pal Page 5



2007 Military of the Year Page 11

## AC1 Eric Anderson selected as NASCC Sailor of the Year

by Anne Booher, Editor



Photo by Richard Stewart, Base Photographer

NAS Corpus Christi Commanding Officer, Capt. Tim Coolidge, congratulates AC1 Eric Anderson who was selected as the command's and region's 2007 Sailor of the Year.

The best and brightest military from their respective commands were honored in a ceremony on Feb. 19. Commanding Officer, Capt. Tim Coolidge, the event's guest speaker, addressed the audience: "Those of you who are here today have gone above and beyond expectations... You have taken risks and are the example for everyone around you. You have inspired others to go beyond themselves, and I am impressed that such high caliber folks have been selected."

Without a doubt, Capt. Coolidge describes the characteristics seen in the command's Sailor of the Year, AC1 Eric Anderson.

Anderson joined the Navy in July 1989 and is serving his second tour aboard NASCC; the first being in 1990 when he was an AC3.

"I was just learning my way around," said Anderson. "Since then, I have been able to get fully qualified and rated throughout the facility. Before, I mostly worked at the OLF's, like Cabaniss and Waldron."

Anderson now serves as the Leading Petty Officer (LPO) for Air Traffic Control, handling facility-wide military matters and administrative needs. When he found out he was selected as Sailor of the Year, he was humbled.

"I really care about the process. Every day, I come in and try to help people, as best I can, while they grow in the military. I try to provide guidance and get them on track for their careers," said Anderson.

This is the second consecutive year an ATC has been selected as Sailor of the Year. It is apparent that this department has a deep pool of professionalism, leadership and talent. "I've met a lot of sharp people," said Anderson. "They are taught in A School that they're the leader of the fleet."

Anderson continued on page 17

## Victoria Regional Airport to become a controlled field

by Lt. j.g. Caleb Booher, Asst. Public Affairs Officer

Training Wing 4 sent a flight of three aircraft to Victoria Regional Airport on Feb. 15. The airfield, owned and manned by Victoria County, recently completed construction of a new air traffic control tower. Once the tower is opened, Victoria will become a controlled field and the rules governing the airfield and its air space will change, and traffic is expected to increase.

According to acting Training Wing 4 Safety Officer, Maj. Brian Campbell, the primary purpose of the visit was to "open the door to communication" and "give them an awareness of who [NAS Corpus Christi] is and what we fly." Three pilots from NASCC met with a group of local civilian aviators at the Sky Restaurant adjacent to the airfield. Capt. Josh Ritzman and Lt. Manny Tatavak of VT-35, and Capt. Jay Tranum of VT-31 fielded questions from the group and discussed some of the

ways the Navy training command will operate around Victoria.

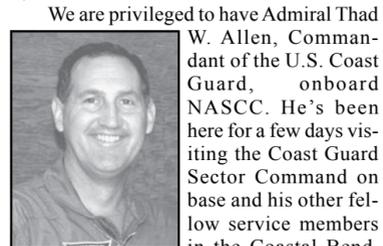
Gary Bay, a local civilian pilot and former US Sailor, was satisfied and upbeat about the meeting. "We're very pleased to have the Navy training here," he said. "As long as there is good communication, we want you guys here."

Victoria continued on page 13

## Skipper's Column

by Capt. Timothy Coolidge

The days are flying by! March is just a couple of days away and before you know it, summer will be here!



Coolidge

We are privileged to have Admiral Thad W. Allen, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, onboard NASCC. He's been here for a few days visiting the Coast Guard Sector Command on base and his other fellow service members in the Coastal Bend. I'm very pleased to have the Sector Command on our base. This is a natural joining of two maritime organizations that complement each other. It's just another way that NAS Corpus Christi stands out.

Next week, on March 6, Lt. Col Jon

## 'March madness' and spring-breakers

Ullman, USAF, will turn over command of the mighty VT-35 "Stingrays" to Cmdr. Mark Springer, USN. There are more great things to say about VT-35 than I have room in this column to write. I'll concentrate on just one thing – the "Pilot for a Day" program.

VT-35, in conjunction with Driscoll Children's Hospital, are responsible for the execution of this wonderful program. It started more than six years ago when George Ruiz proposed doing something special for the terminally ill children at Driscoll Hospital. VT-35 picked up the mantle, nurtured it and, over the years, watched it expand to include NAS Kingsville and NAS Jacksonville. Good things happen when caring adults take the time to share an adventure with children. The "Pilot for a Day" program exemplifies that as well as anything I can think of.

Jon, good luck as you head for newer

pastures! Mark, congratulations! I know the squadron won't miss a beat with you at the controls.

There are a couple other events on the horizon that I'd like to mention. The Executive Officer for the newly renamed Naval Medical Clinic, Capt. Don Albia, is due to leave on March 21. A Sailor to Naval Officer, Don is an inspiration to us all. Going from E-1 to O-6 is difficult to say the least, yet Don made it look easy! A consummate leader, he and his wife, Mary Jane (Navy Commander in the Reserves) will transition to California where Don will be the Commanding Officer of the Naval Hospital at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, 29 Palms. The Hospital will be in good, capable hands. Don, we'll miss you.

About the time Don and Mary Jane are

*Captain continued on page 14*

## Chaplain's Message

### Exercise daily in God

by Lt. Tim Gault, NASCC Chaplain

Saint Paul wrote a letter to a young pastor in Ephesus (now part of Turkey) saying, "Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important, for it promises a reward in both this life and the next. This is true, and everyone should accept it." (1 Timothy 4:8-9 NLT)

In the United States military, we have had an increasing attention to physical readiness. We have command physical training, personal physical training regimens and periodic readiness tests of our bodies where we are weighed and observed to see if our bodies are fit and ready.

Those who rely upon the command physical training program for their physical readiness will probably not meet their goals and they will miss out on the excellence they could achieve. In order to reach

top personal physical readiness, there must also be a personal approach that addresses the individual's needs.

According to Campus Life magazine, Richard Knecht of Prospect, Ore., set out to shatter the existing world sit-up record. For the previous six months, a U.S. Marine Corps Captain held the record, with an amazing 17,007 sit-ups. Knecht was determined to capture the title for his family team, which toured the nation demonstrating the amazing feats of physical fitness. He began the grueling attempt in Idaho Falls, Idaho, and 11 hours and 14 minutes later he had shattered the record with 25,222 sit-ups. How many years of training had gone into preparing for this Herculean feat? Not as many as you might think. When he set the record, Richard Knecht was eight years old.

But what about the part of us that controls the body? Is the spirit ready? Sometimes, I talk with folks who want to develop their spirituality but do not know how to start. Thankfully, this does not involve putting your hand on a screen or sending in your "pledge" to a slick televangelist! We do not need to be some kind of extraordinary individual to develop spiritually. The eight year old set the world record for sit-ups one sit-up at a time.

*Chaplain continued on page 16*



Gault

## Security Corner

by MACS Bradley Volkmer, Security Officer, MA1 Navarro and MA1 Barnes, Anti-terrorism/Crime Prevention Office

Recent reports indicate an increase of crimes of opportunity, not only in this area, but nationwide. One such crime that has been reported all too often in this area is purse snatching.



Volkmer

Purse snatching brings to mind visions of someone simply snatching a purse from a woman's hand or shoulder and making a run for it. However, it has evolved in recent years with one of its most common forms now occurring at gas stations. Criminals are not just after the money and valuables in your purse or wallet, many of them are after what in today's day and age is most valuable to us: our identity.

It all starts when you pull up to the gas

### Gas station theft on a national rise

station to fill up your tank; the thieves are already in the area just waiting for a victim. SUV's and vans are more prone to be targets since they provide cover from the driver due to the height of the vehicle and/or tinted windows. You reach for your purse or wallet to get out a credit card, next you place your purse or wallet on the passenger's seat and step out of the vehicle to the fuel pump to enter the card and commence your fill up. While you are making your selections on the pump's automated system, the thief takes advantage of this distraction to snatch your purse or wallet. A seasoned thief may be able to accomplish this in as little as three seconds.

From this point, there are several different directions a case can take. If you're lucky, all you will lose is the purse or wallet and its contents, in some other cases it may take a more complicated and painful twist: identity theft.

There are few simple actions we can take

to help ensure we don't fall victim to such crime. Since most gas stations are equipped with video surveillance of some sort, many perpetrators are smart enough to conceal their identity as much as possible. It only takes a few seconds to scan the area prior to getting out of your vehicle and filling up. Be especially wary of any characters who are dressed in something out of place that could be intended to conceal their identity: sunglasses at night, hooded sweat shirt or jacket on a typical South Texas warm day. As impractical as it may seem, rolling up your windows and/or locking your doors serves as a great deterrent as well.

Taking the time to exercise simple situational awareness and preventive measures can greatly reduce your chances of falling victim to such a crime. It won't do much for the sense of being robbed that you feel with today's gas prices, but at least your identity will still be safe.

## Wingspan

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Pride In Performance"

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Capt. T.E. Coolidge

Public Affairs Officer  
Robert D. Torres

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Anne Booher

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**50-Year milestone for the T-2 Buckeye, set to retire in August**

by Maj. Chuck Gant, USMCR and Lt. Col. Paul Hart, USMCR

Another chapter in naval aviation history will close as two significant milestones for the T-2 Buckeye jet trainer are written into the books. The first is the 50th anniversary of the T-2's first flight, followed later this year by the retirement of this long serving aircraft.

On Jan 31, 1958, with little fanfare, the North American Aviation built YT2J-1 (pre-production predecessor to the T-2C) launched on its maiden flight at Columbus, Ohio. At that time, no one could have predicted the longevity, versatility, and reliability of the trainer aircraft, affectionately named the "Buckeye" after the state in which it was built.

January 31 marked the 50th anniversary of that first sortie; an impressive half-century run that is rarely seen in military aviation. To honor the many years of service of this remarkable aircraft, the pilots and naval flight officers of Training Squadron 86 (VT-86) conducted a seven-plane, commemorative flyby of Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla. As the last Navy squadron to operate the aircraft, VT-86 will also escort the Buckeye into retirement later this year.

In the late 1950s, North American Aviation was awarded the Navy contract to build an all-purpose, two-seat jet that would be used for naval aviation training. Wing design elements of the FJ-1 Fury, North

American's first jet, as well as the control system and cockpit layout of the T-28 Trojan were chosen for the production model. A retractable arrestor hook and strong, wide, tricycle landing gear were used to allow the aircraft to be slammed down during aircraft carrier landings. A robust airframe built to withstand the heavy stresses that inevitably occur when training new students was integral to the design. Excellent visibility, slow approach speeds and forgiving flight characteristics were all additional features that made the T-2 the perfect training platform for student aviators.

Although officially known as the Buckeye, it is also affectionately called by the less flattering nickname, "The Guppy," because of its bright orange paint job atop a bulbous shape. A old verse from a Training Squadron 4 pilot hymnal is further testament to the less than glamorous appearance: "Don't give me a T-2 Buckeye, so ugly it makes aviators cry."

Throughout its tenure, the T-2 series aircraft has been only slightly modified. The original design, later designated the T-2A, was built with a single Westinghouse J-34



Photo by Lt. Cmdr Brendan O'Brien

VT-86 pilots fly T-2 Buckeyes, affectionately known as the "Thunder Guppies," over NAS Pensacola, Fla. The plane, which recently reached its 50-year mark, made its first carrier landing on the USS Lexington on Sept. 2, 1966.

engine - the only available power plant in 1956 capable of doing the job. By 1960, modern lightweight and efficient turbojets became available, allowing for a redesign

to a much more powerful twin-engine aircraft designated the T-2B. In 1967, the engines T-2 retirement continued on page 17

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See Dining & Entertainment Guide on page 18 & 19

### Ask Dr. Garcia

**Q:** My wife and I are going to have our first child in July. How can new parents, such as ourselves, cope with becoming a family?



Garcia

**A:** Dr.'s Philip and Carolyn Cowan conducted a longitudinal study in 2002, entitled *Becoming a Family Project*, which examined partners becoming parents for the first time. Although the project didn't succeed in immunizing young families forever from adversity and marital problems, this intervention effort did get 24 expectant couples and their new babies through at least five years of healthy growth and development. Reviewing their research, Dr.'s Cowan and Cowan concluded that to sustain good family functioning, it might be necessary to give "booster shots" from time to time over the family life cycle.

From a group of 72 couples who were expecting their first babies, and 24 other couples who had not yet decided whether to become parents, a third of the expectant couples participated in a six-month group intervention that concluded three months after the babies' birth. In weekly sessions, a clinically trained married couple encouraged the participants to raise any issues they were grappling with. Both wives and husbands described their dreams of creating an ideal family and talked about the families they grew up in and about the impending birth.

As each couple's baby was born, the couples brought their infants to the group. It was only then that partners began to find their way through the common changes, problems, and conflicts people encounter. Who could give up what? Who could take responsibility for what? How could they keep the marital relationship fulfilling while dealing with the incessant demands of the child? The researchers assessed family

functioning, the quality of the marital relationship, parenting effectiveness, parents' and children's adjustment in late pregnancy and when the baby was 6 months, 18 months, 3 years, and 5 years old.

At the 18-month follow-up, the effects of the intervention were encouraging. Fathers in the intervention group were more involved and satisfied in parenting and reported less negative change in marital satisfaction, sexual relations, and social supports. In comparison to mothers in the non-intervention group, mothers in the intervention group saw their non-family roles, for example, as worker or student, as more important. Intervention mothers were more satisfied with the division of labor between themselves and their husbands and with their marriages overall; they were happier with their sexual relations, and they seemed better able to balance life stresses and social supports. In addition, at the 18-month and 3-year follow-ups, significantly fewer of the intervention couples were separated or divorced.

By the time couples' children were in kindergarten, however, the positive effects of the early intervention had waned. Marital satisfaction was beginning to decline and there were few differences between the intervention and nonintervention groups in either either parenting style or children's

Dr. Garcia continued on page 14

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### Anderson continued from page 1

It's the mindset; you've got to be able to think on your feet. It just comes with the job. You have to have a certain cockiness to do the best. There are lives at stake daily and you've got to be ready to perform."

The dedication within the ATC department is apparent in Anderson's continued leadership and example. When he took over as LPO, he gave everyone an assignment: look up the definition of "discipline."

"My favorite part of this career is having seen people grow professionally and become independent," he explained.

One bit of advice Anderson offers to rising Sailors and his shipmates would be to pursue off-duty education. "This makes you more marketable whether you stay in the Navy or not. Stay in tune with the mission of the command, and always mentor younger Sailors. The rest of it will work out," he said.

With his personal philosophy of always taking ownership of his actions and having goals set for himself, Anderson has proven to be an excellent example of a top-notch Sailor.

"Being nominated for Sailor of the year has been the highlight of my time here at NAS Corpus Christi. I didn't do it for recognition. I really care about my work."

Anderson has also won Sailor of the Year for the region, Navy Region Southeast, and is currently in competition as one of the top three in the Navy worldwide.

### T-2 retirement continued from page 3

were upgraded to more cost effective turbojets and the T-2C was born. This final variant is a 40-year-old world-class trainer capable of a wide variety of training missions that include: Air-to-Air Gunnery, Air-to-Air Combat, Instrument, Formation, Spin, and Carrier Qualification.

Navy flight students of BTG-9 (later redesignated VT-4) first flew the T-2 in November 1959 at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla., "The Cradle of Naval Aviation." Appropriately enough, Pensacola will also be the sight of the last student flight for the Buckeye as Navy and Marine Reservists from VT-86 retire the beloved aircraft in August. The mighty Buckeye will be replaced by the more modern T-45C Goshawk, already being flown by other units around the Naval Air Training Command.

Testament to the success of the Buckeye is the thousands of Navy and Marine Corps Pilots and Naval Flight Officers who have earned their wings flying the T-2. While not the most glamorous of jet-age designs, there will always be a soft spot in the hearts of those aviators who have had the privilege of slipping the bonds of earth in the "Thunder Guppy." Beauty truly is in the eye of the beholder.

For more information on Training Wing 6 and Training Squadron 86, please visit: <https://www.cnatra.navy.mil/tw6>



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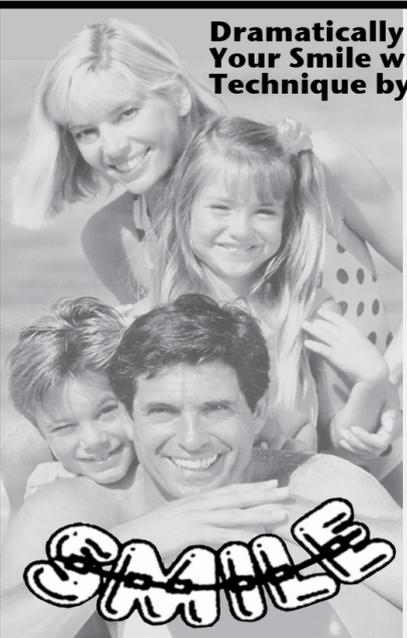


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*ITT tickets for Concrete Street concerts*  
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*Captain's Cup Golf League*  
 Teams can sign up at the E Street Gym or the Golf Course. Registration will begin on Feb. 22 through March 21. A mandatory organizational meeting will be held on March 27 at 2:30 p.m. Matches will be held on Thursday afternoons; tee time is at 3:15 p.m. Twilight green fees apply; all other fees will be at the current rate. All golfers must have a recognizable handicap.



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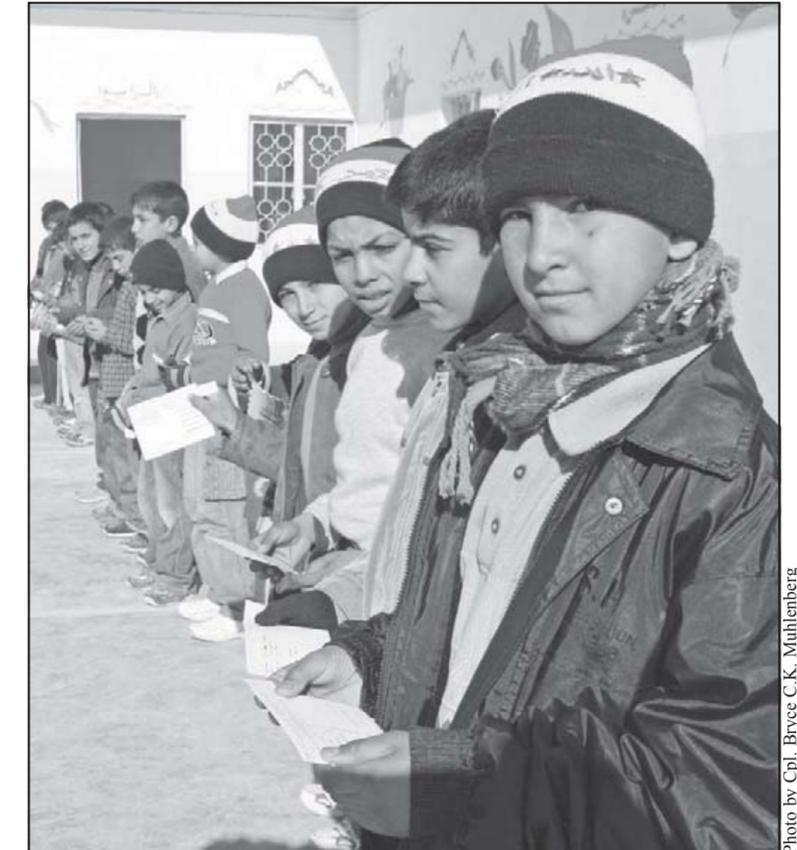
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**U.S. and Iraqi children get to know each other through Operation Iraqi Pen Pal**  
 by Cpl. Bryce C.K. Muhlenberg, 1st Marine Division

Just four years ago, Capt. Brian Von Kraus, now commander of Headquarters and Support Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6, was a platoon commander, fighting a kinetic war against insurgent forces in Anbar. Serving in 2004 at the forefront of clandestine military operations, Von Kraus witnessed the worst of what the enemy could throw at a Marine unit. During one complex attack, initiated by insurgents, he led his Marines in three separate successful assaults on an enemy position. For his actions that day, he was awarded the Silver Star Medal, one of the Marine Corps' highest awards for conspicuous gallantry, third only to the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross.

Four years later, Von Kraus finds himself back in Anbar province, but this time he's winning the war without firing a shot. He has once again come to the forefront of operations as the creator of Operation Iraqi Pen Pal, a letter exchange program bridging the gap between the young students of the local Iraqi schools here, and students



Iraqi students hold letters and postcards sent from American children in Boston and Maine, which include post cards and photos showing America and its way of life.

Pen Pals continued on page 15

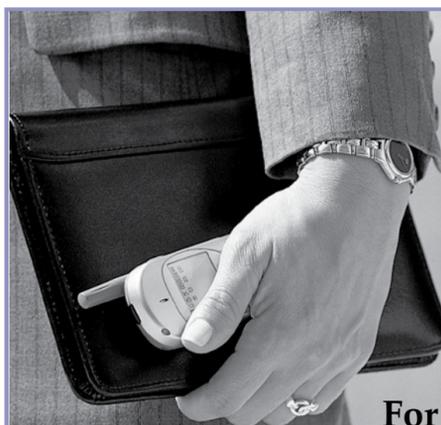
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## U.S. Naval Institute offers free membership to all military personnel

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by Jessica Andrews, USNI Communications Manager

The U.S. Naval Institute (USNI), America's premier independent, non-profit, non-partisan forum on national defense and homeland security, has announced a unique online initiative. This will provide all active duty and Reserve service members, as well as civilians with a ".mil" email address, an opportunity for free unlimited membership to the Naval Institute, including online access to publications and other Institute benefits.

"As our military becomes more joint-force oriented, we felt it imperative to make these two publications in particular, readily available to every member of the military," said Naval Institute CEO, Major General Tom Wilkerson, USMC (Ret.) "These magazines, and other resources available through the Naval Institute, will provoke thought and discussions which are not only relevant to enhancing their military careers but also contribute significantly to our nation's security as a whole."

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[www.GetTheGouge.com](http://www.GetTheGouge.com), a new web-based community of active-duty service members sharing first person, cutting-edge perspectives on combat operations in the War; exclusive member discounts to more than 1,000 Naval Institute Press book titles; and special invitations to national security and military conferences. Members will also have access to episodes of the award winning *Americans at War* television series airing nationally on PBS.

The U.S. Naval Institute, founded in 1893, is a professional membership organization whose mission is to preserve and promote Naval Heritage and to provide an independent forum to address issues critical to national security. USNI hosts conferences, publishes *Proceedings* and *Naval History* magazines, and the Naval Institute Press publishes more than 75 professional and commercial books a year.

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*Pen Pals continued from page 5*

was starting a similar project," he said. "I also got an e-mail from my mother the same day. So, I started e-mailing some schools back home and my mother started working the network down there, getting in contact with schools."

Eventually the program proved to be a popular idea in the United States and it was put on a type of Boston public schools bulletin. People started calling Von Kraus, asking how they can get involved. Since then, the letters continued to flow in from the states.

According to Jasam Mouhame Idan, the Assistant Manager of the Arfwan girls' school here, he couldn't be happier.

"This is the first time I have heard of a program like this, and it is great," said the tall, Habbaniyah native. "And it is a very good idea because these students can make friends in the United States and other countries, and it lets them know that we are not bad people. We are good. We like this idea because we see that your people want to know what is going on in our country."

"One cool thing about when the Iraqi kids get these letters and post cards is they realized that they are noticed by American kids and they write back with their own letters and photos," said Von Kraus. "I think these kids have no idea what to make of it. There are photos of American girls playing soccer and having class and doing everything together with the guys. There are pictures of the kids sledding, skiing, going to the movies, swimming and some of this blows the Iraqi kids' minds. The stuff we take for granted, they don't get to do over here in Iraq. But I think Iraqi kids respond really well to the letters."

There has been a great resurgence of local security, safety and progress in this area once dubbed the "wild west" of Iraq. This security has allowed Iraqis to begin training as Iraqi security personnel, which allows other Iraqis to go about their lives and start rebuilding their country in a safe environment.

"It is amazing how many Iraqis you see out here taking charge now, which allows us to do great stuff like this."

The program is a great success, said Idan, and for more than one reason.

"I also think that when kids see the U.S. forces, some wave, but some are scared," he said. "It's going to also help them understand more about the Marines. Some of them have heard bad things from insurgents, who have said the American forces are bad guys. I think this program will let them know how Americans really are."

"I really think it is good for both countries and hopefully we can make this possible across every unit here in Anbar," said Von Kraus. "I hope to pass it up to the Regimental Combat Team level and push it out to other battalions and out to as many schools as possible. I would love to see them carry this one and I think it will be good if they do."

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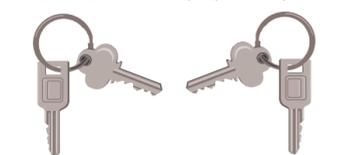
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## Active Duty Fund Drive will support Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society

by Tambi Parker, NAS Corpus Christi NMCRS

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society traces its roots to the 1903 football game between the U.S. Naval Academy Midshipmen and the Cadets from West Point. Although the score was one-sided (the Mids lost 40-5), the Navy and Marine Corps were also winners because President Theodore Roosevelt gave the Navy one-third of the gate receipts, totaling \$9,000 and providing initial funding for our organization.

Since its founding in 1904, Society volunteers and employees have provided more than \$1.1 billion in interest-free loans and grants to more than four million active duty and retired Sailors, Marines, and their families. A substantial amount of our financial assistance goes to service members with families because they often face more budgetary problems. However, the Society renders financial assistance to everyone, regardless of marital status.

The single, most prevalent category of need was Basic Living expenses. Our clients also sought assistance to pay for emergency transportation, medical and dental bills, funerals, and setting up households, including security and utility deposits, car repairs, and more. Based on need, assistance is provided

as an interest-free loan or grant. Our Combat Casualty Assistance Program offers both RN based educational support and assistance to our wounded, as well as unmet financial needs while awaiting entitlements.

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The Navy Department's Active Duty Fund Drive, conducted in March of each year, remains distinct from the Combined Federal Campaign for an important reason. The Combined Federal Campaign charges all organizations under its campaign umbrella an administrative fee of more than ten percent of their total collection.

The Society has a two-fold purpose of collecting funds for relief purposes, and also educating Sailors and Marines on the services and programs available for their benefit.

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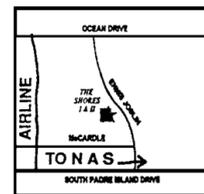


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Captain continued from page 2

packing up, we'll all be deep in the middle of Spring Break. Most of the schools in Corpus Christi will be out the same week but other schools in Texas may be a week earlier or later. The City beaches will attract large numbers of high school and college students. They'll be making the trek here for what will be (for Corpus Christi) two weeks of adventure and fun in the sun!

If you're traveling during Spring Break, please knock out your planning early. Be careful as you drive, keep your head on a swivel, and look out for the other guy! We want everyone back after the well-deserved holiday!

Watch after each other, have fun and make sure you leave me a parking spot at the beach! I'm going to try to get as much beach time as I can before we're invaded at Spring Break! See ya there!

Chaplain continued from page 2

In a similar way, a person who has had no spiritual development can become spiritually strong with a willingness to begin, a personal commitment and a realistic path to spiritual growth.

Some suggestions for getting the spirit ready: First, seek out spiritual knowledge. Read Scripture. Second, meditate (dedicated thinking) on them. At minimum, allow them to influence you at least as much as the commercials you hear every day. Third, make healthy choices based on what you read. This will bring you into a living understanding of the spiritual dimension of life. It will also help you begin to adjust your view of life from the errors of "flabby" thinking to a more balanced and thoughtful perspective. According to St. Paul, this will help prepare us for better living today and forever.

Dr. Garcia continued from page 4

adaptation. However, later findings from this research project indicated that another intervention (e.g., parent training to deal with problems unique to rearing toddlers) when the child was two could address some of the issues that led to later declines in marital satisfaction, to disruptions in family functioning, and to children's behavior problems.

The outcome of this study suggests that as new changes and challenges arise during your own family life cycle, continued intermittent intervention focusing on new issues may be necessary to sustain good family functioning. Because becoming parents does pose risks to a young family, intervention programs like that previously described have been designed to strengthen couple relationships and reduce the adverse consequences of the transition to parenthood. Some family therapists have even suggested that, just as we go for regular medical checkups, we should go for regular checkups of family well-being to identify family problems and prevent them from escalating.



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## Ingleside Port Ops Director inspects 'tomorrow's leaders' at King HS

by Mike Antoine, Naval Station Ingleside Public Affairs Specialist

A Naval officer from the Naval Station Ingleside waterfront served as the official inspecting officer for a Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) annual inspection, Feb. 7, in Corpus Christi, Texas. In effect, he was inspecting the Navy leaders of tomorrow.

Retired Cmdr. Bill Hughen, senior Naval Science Instructor at Richard King High School, called on the services of Cmdr. J.C. Smith, Port Operations Director at the Ingleside base, to inspect the NJROTC cadets. The inspection must be performed by an active duty O-5 or above.

Hughen retired as the officer in charge of Fleet Support Activity, Ingleside, before becoming the school's Senior Naval Science Instructor in 2000. He has 87 members in his cadet corps.

Smith not only agreed to Hughen's request, he even brought along some "reinforcements." Assistant Port Operations Officer, Lt. Eric Busig; and Master at Arms First Class (SW) Jeffrey Lee, Naval Station Ingleside Security Department investigator. "I was impressed by the cadets' enthusiasm, motivation, and dedication, which was brilliantly reflected in their uniform appearance," said Smith. He was also extremely impressed with the unit's drill performances that followed the inspection.

Once finished with presenting awards to the unit's most outstanding cadets and drill team, Smith and his colleagues were presented with a debrief by several of the unit's staff.

"I got the opportunity to get to know each cadet staff member through their classroom presentations and talking with them [individually] afterward about their personal and career goals," Smith continued.

One of these cadets was the unit's commanding officer, Cadet Lt. Cmdr. Drew Crocker, a senior who has been accepted to

the Naval Academy and plans to serve his country as a combat engineer or a field artillery officer with the U.S. Marine Corps.

Crocker has served as the unit's commanding officer since last year. The biggest challenge he faced in the unit has been getting his fellow cadets to realize that there's more to NJROTC than just getting a PE credit. "It's a great way to improve yourself mentally, physically, and morally," he added.

Another senior, executive officer, Cadet Lt. Nicole Resendez, said "attention to detail" has been the most demanding aspect of her NJROTC experience. "NJROTC has helped develop my leadership and 'followership' skills," she emphasized. Resendez added that she's "leaning toward" joining the Marine Corps as well. "I like to challenge myself," she smiled.

Indeed, the high school students who participate in the program are challenged on a daily basis: Mondays and Wednesdays include classroom instruction in Naval Science and military history; Tuesdays feature either drill or a sports activity; on Thursdays, uniform inspection; and Fridays, physical training. During the summer, cadets are encouraged to attend a week-long leadership training camps.

According to Hughen, the NJROTC program at Richard King is among the oldest in the United States - inaugurated in 1967, when the program was introduced by Congress.

"I couldn't have been more pleased with the professionals from Ingleside," Hughen said. "Cmdr. Smith, Lt. Busig, and Petty Officer Lee were fantastic with the cadets, which helped put them at ease. After the inspection, I was outside the classroom talking with Cmdr. Smith and observed several cadets walk up and thank him for conducting the inspection."

Cmdr. James Smith, Naval Station Ingleside Port Operations Director, inspects an NJROTC cadet from Richard King High School. Smith took time to speak with each cadet individually regarding their plans for the future after seeing their classroom presentations.



Photo by Mike Antoine

Victoria continued from page 1

Another purpose of the visit was to provide airframe specific emergency training to Victoria's airfield fire department. The flight consisted of a T-34 Turbo Mentor, T-44 Pegasus and a TC-12 Huron; one of each type of Training Wing 4 aircraft. Two NAS firefighters, Curtis Heffner and Darrel Opine, hopped a ride on the TC-12 to conduct the training event.

"We want [Victoria's firefighters] to be familiar with our aircraft," said Maj. Campbell. The training included general familiarization with the aircraft and rescue procedures for each different airframe. The Victoria firefighters were taught how to access the aircraft, shut down the engines, and rescue students and instructors. They were also instructed on the locations of "caution zones"

such as fuel caps and batteries.

Larry Blackwell, Victoria's Airfield Manager, said, "We were very pleased with the training and the professionalism. I think it will be extremely beneficial for both parties."

After speaking with the firefighters and the civilian aviators, Blackwell says both groups had overwhelmingly positive reactions to the visit. "I got very encouraging

comments from our pilots. They were very impressed with the Navy [and Air Force] aviators who came."

Blackwell was in high spirits after the visit. "We want to do whatever we can to make [Victoria] a good site for training." As of Feb. 15, the Victoria control tower is expected to open at the end of March 2008.



(L to R): Lt. Manny Tatavak, Capt. Josh Ritzman and Capt. Jay Tranum met with local civilian pilots at Sky Restaurant adjacent to Victoria Regional Airport. The forum opened communication between military and general aviators regarding operations around Victoria airfield.



Capt. Curtis Heffner (left) of NASCC Fire Department shows Victoria Regional Airport's Fire Chief David Phillips into the TC-12 Huron. Victoria's firefighters were instructed on emergency rescue procedures for the TC-12, T-44 and T-34.

Photos by Lt. J.g. Caleb Booher, Asst. PAO

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## NMCRS Combat Casualty program is lifesaver for Marine and family

by Lisa Askler, NMCRS Staff Writer

Marine Cpl. Ronny Porta can pinpoint the day he decided to enter the military: September 11, 2001.

That morning, Porta, who had emigrated from Peru to the United States just six months earlier, was sitting in his high school math class when the principal burst in and told the teacher to quickly turn on the television. Initially believing they were watching a movie, the class stared at the screen, horrified, while their teacher began sobbing. As the class saw the World Trade Center towers fall, one after another, 15-year-old Ronny Porta decided on a career in the military.

The JROTC program he joined through school shortly after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 was the ideal prelude to Porta's service selection. The young man already had a good idea of what military life involved, since several relatives, including his paternal grandfather, had served in the Peruvian army. Initially intending to sign on as a soldier, in his senior year Porta visited a Marine reserve unit and was impressed at the discipline and motivation of the men he belonged.

Following high school graduation in 2005, Porta entered Basic Training, followed by weapons training in California and Motor Transport School in Missouri. Back at Camp Lejeune, then Lance Cpl. Porta, honed his skills working with transport vehicles, including Humvees and heavy trucks. In mid-2006, he volunteered for a tour of duty to support the 1st Marines 2nd

Division ground unit in Iraq. But in early May 2007, his career as a Marine took an unexpected turn.

On a routine supply mission outside of Al Asad, Iraq, Porta and his two closest friends in the unit were assigned to the second vehicle in a five-vehicle transport caravan. Unknown to the Marines on the supply mission that day, the stretch of road they were traveling had been mined with a remotely controlled improvised explosive device (IED). The blast occurred just as Porta's vehicle passed the bomb.

The young Marine's two buddies died instantly. Porta himself suffered extensive injuries, including loss of his right arm and right ear, severe damage to his right eye, loss of his left thumb and tips of the index and pinkie fingers, and 3rd degree burns on 40 percent of his body.

Back at home in the U.S., the Porta family left immediately to meet their son at Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas, taking little more than an overnight bag. As the days dragged into weeks, his mother, Rene Porta, began losing customers from her cleaning business, while her husband, Felix, came to an arrangement with his employer that allowed him to work enough hours to keep health benefits. But with no source of income during the time they remained at their son's bedside, the family's bills soared.

At that point, Marine Staff Sgt. C. Marty Martinez a member of the Marine Patient Affairs Team at Brooke Army Medical Center, referred the Porta family to Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society's Combat Casualty Assistance

Program, a move the family credits with helping them stay afloat through the nightmare of not knowing if their only son would survive.

Visiting Nurse Theresa Goodwin met with the Porta family and quickly determined that they were ideal candidates for the Combat Casualty Program because the Society offers an entirely different type of support than otherwise available at military and Veterans Administration facilities.

"The focus of the Combat Casualty Program is two-fold: the well-being of the servicemember, plus that of the family. We serve as resources, advocates, and support personnel all rolled into one," Goodwin says. "That's part of what makes our program unique. We make sure the family stays on track by providing whatever type of assistance they need, including health education and a variety of support services, so they are better able to help their son, daughter, or spouse with the healing process."

Working in tandem with the Society's Case-work Division, Goodwin has been able to allay the family's fears of losing their home during the long period away from their jobs. As a result, Rene and Felix Porta have been able to take a more active role in helping their son during his recuperation; assistance that Goodwin says plays a crucial role in the servicemember's return to health.

"The Porta family is probably one of the strongest families I've ever met," says Goodwin, "but a traumatic injury such as the one suffered by their son can impose untold stress on even

the strongest of the strong. Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society's Combat Casualty Program has been able to help this family weather the financial and psychological storm they face."

In all, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society had the privilege of delivering \$1.5 million in Combat Casualty and Combat Related Assistance to 1,035 service members and their dependents in 2007, and every one of those individuals received a solemn promise that NMCRS services are available for as long as needed.

Now, when Porta on the life-altering events he faced in 2007, he counts his blessings.



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# AROUND THE BASE IN 2008



Photo by Bob Torres, Public Affairs Officer

NASCC Firefighters assisted Rich Riddle, NAS Corpus Christi Natural Resources Program Manager, and his burn crew in a series of controlled burns on the NASCC Corpus Christi airfield. This training opportunity focused on the effects of fire weather on wildland fire behavior, wildland fire suppression tactics and backfiring all in a controlled environment. The plan was extremely comprehensive, and was briefed to all participating firefighters over a two day period, as well as to senior leadership who approved the plan. The purpose of the burn was to reduce wildlife habitat that created a Bird Animal Strike Hazard (BASH) and to improve the clear zones on the ends of the runways.



Photo by VT-31 Public Affairs Office

Twenty fourth-grade students from Most Precious Blood Catholic School visited the Wise Owls of VT-31 on Feb. 7. The students and their teacher, Mrs. Cortez, were met by Major Doug McLean and briefed on the upcoming events of the day. The highlights included a visit to the NAS Fire Station, the Control Tower, and a tour of the T-44 aircraft. Students were presented with Honorary Wise Owl Certificates and received squadron memorabilia. The class concluded their day with lunch at the Bay Club.



Photo by PPV Housing

PPV Housing hosted a Valentine's Day Card decorating contest for children on base. Winners were (L to R) Kristen Smeltzer, 11; Amber Smeltzer, 10; William Beckman, 6; Robert Beckman, 4; and Nathan Beckman, 3 (not pictured).

## All Officers' Spouses' Club will hold St. Patrick's Day meeting

Join the AOSC on March 3 for its next meeting at Cassidy's Pub in downtown Corpus Christi and celebrate St. Patrick's Day a little early! Any spouse of an officer is welcome. Be sure to wear green! If you are interested in joining the AOSC or have any questions, please feel free to call Eugenia at 353-4604.

Also, remember that the AOSC will be collecting school supplies for St. Bernard Parish in Louisiana throughout the month. Receptacles for items are at the Navy Exchange. For alternate drop off sites or any questions, please call Teresa Christenson at 937-4041.

# AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

## Winging Ceremony • February 15



Photo by Hugh Lieck Event Photography

**Official Party** (back row, left to right): Bill Tinney, Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce Ambassador; Cmdr. Melvin Bouboulis, Coast Guard Sector Corpus Christi XO; Cmdr. Joe Shipley, VT-31 CO; Lt. Col. Jon Ullmann, VT-35 CO; Capt. David Maynard, Commodore Training Wing Four; Rear Adm. Stanley D. Bozin, Director, Office of Budget Office of the Assistant SECNAV for financial Management and Comptroller Director, Fiscal Management Division

**Wingees** listed alphabetically: 2nd Lt. Ryan Adams; Lt. j.g. Mary Arvidson; 2nd Lt. Nathan Boone; Ensign Nicholas Bullard; Ensign Elizabeth Buron; 2nd Lt. Nicolais Chighizola; 2nd Lt. Omari Downey; Ensign Andrew Eckenfels; 2nd Lt. Charles Francis; Ensign Jordan Gentry; 2nd Lt. Scott Hendrix; 1st Lt. Andrew Hunstock; Ensign Kevin Laughary; Lt. j.g. Jason Mostaccio; Lt. Benjamin Oliver; Ensign Phillip Ortega; Ensign Seth Squyres; Ensign Kyle Thompson; Capt. Alex Van Zant; 1st Lt. Raymond Venable, Jr.; Ensign Robert Wiggins; Ensign Thomas Zager

## Congratulations, 2007 Military of the Year



Photo by Richard Stewart, Base Photographer

(Listed by Command) **Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic Site:** Senior Sailor of the Year-AM1 Shaun Hura; Petty Officer-AZ2 Myron Baker. **HM-15:** Senior Sailor of the Year-CS1 Kenneth Boshier, Jr. Sailor-AM2 Carlos Lopez; Blue Jacket-AM3 Pedro Feliciano; Sr. Selective Reservist-AS1 John Gutierrez; Jr. Selective Reservist-AE2 Thomas Jones. **MATSG 22:** NCO of the Year-Sgt. Herber Perez. **NAS Corpus Christi:** Senior Sailor of the Year-AC1 Eric Anderson; Junior Sailor-ADAN Michael Leader. **Naval Health Clinic:** Sailor of the Year-HM1 Raquel Guimary; Petty Officer-HM2 Anderson Nyeche; Junior Sailor-HN Amber Hendrix. **Navy Operational Support Center:** Sailor of the Year-YN1 Joe Flores; Petty Officer-Reserve Petty Officer-IT1 Suzanne McEntire. **Command PSD:** Sailor of the Year-PS1 Kenneth Holifield. **TRAWING 4:** NCO of the Year-Staff Sgt. Tara Shaefer. **US Coast Guard Sector Corpus Christi:** Coastguardsman of the Year-SN Andrew Alvarez

## 2007 Military of the Quarter

**Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic Site:** Sr. Sailor-AT1 David Zuza; Petty Officer-AM2 Tanner Schoonover; Blue Jacket-AEAN Daniel Vinnege.

**HM-15:** Sailor of the Quarter-CS1 Kenneth Boshier, Jr. Sailor-AM2 Carlos Lopez; Blue Jacket-YN3 Derreck Farrel; Sr. Selective Reservist-BM1 Lawrence Ungar; Jr. Selective Reservist-HM2 Jon Beach.

**MATSG-22:** NCO of the Quarter-Sgt. Jennifer Payne

**NAS Corpus Christi:** Sailor of the Quarter-AC1 Eric Anderson; Jr. Sailor-AC2 Ann Birchall

**Naval Health Clinic:** Sailor of the Quarter-HM1 Juan Cisneros; Jr. Sailor-HN David Williams; Petty Officer-HM2 Anderson Nyeche.

**Navy Operational Support Center:** Sailor of the Quarter-HM2 Michael Phillips; Reserve Petty Officer-LN1 Kathryn Nichols.

**Command PSD:** Sailor of the Quarter-PS2 Mark Cason; Jr. Sailor-SN Iris Rosado.

**TRAWING 4:** Sailor of the Quarter-YN1 Tanya Wise

**US Coast Guard Sector Corpus Christi:** Sr. Coastguardsman of the Quarter-EM1 James Caraballo; Coastguardsman-MK2 Lizandra Hernandez.