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Navy transfers two 'coastal mine hunters' to Greece

by Ed Mickley, Naval Mine and ASW Command Public Affairs



A combination United States and Hellenic Navy colorguard parade their respective flags as the transfer of the USS Heron and the USS Pelican commences. (Photo by Richard Stewart)

Two Osprey-Class Coastal Mine Hunters, the USS Heron (MHC 52) and USS Pelican (MHC 53), were decommissioned March 16, and transferred to the Hellenic Navy in a formal ceremony at Naval Station Ingleside.

In less than an hour, speeches, flags, and paperwork were exchanged on the pier by US and HN Officers, the first official transfer of ships between nations held at the South Texas base.

Capt. Dave Tungett, of the Program Executive Office for Ships, and Rear Adm. Ioannis Karaikos, Deputy Chief of Staff, Hellenic Navy, signed the official transfer documents following the decommissioning.

"This is an occasion that is sad, but yet happy," Lt. Cmdr. Shanti Sethi, Commanding Officer USS Heron and Pelican said. "These ships will come back to life with crews I know are very capable."

More than one hundred attendees, including sailors, official guests and local Greek-American community members waving Greek and American flags, watched as US Sailors disembarked and Hellenic Navy crews took their place on board the newly christened HNS CALYPSO and EFNIKI.

Using olive branches bathed in holy water, Rev. Stelios N. Sitaras of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Corpus Christi blessed the vessels be-

fore Greek sailors raised their flags on each ship.

The Greek sailors know their ships. For the past eight months, they've attended the Mine Warfare Training Center on the base and since January, trained aboard mine hunters in port and at sea alongside US Sailors.

"The priority for each of these

crews was to ensure the Navy transferred the ships in the best possible condition," said Capt. Mark Rios, Commander, MCM CLASSRON. "They trained the HN crews to operate these ships safely and effectively."

"The ships will be placed in a

Greece continued on page 5



Capt. Dave Tungett, Program Executive Office for Ships and Rear Adm. Ioannis Karaikos, Deputy Chief of Staff, Hellenic Navy, sign the official transfer documents following the decommissioning ceremony. (Photo by Richard Stewart, Base Photographer)

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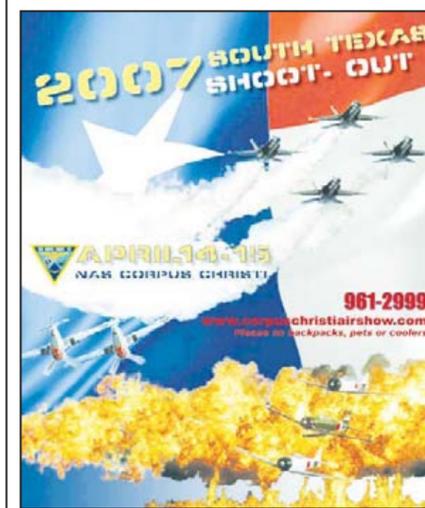


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The 2007 poster is based on the design submitted by Mario Flores, Jr. Mario's design featured an array of military aircraft against the Texas flag.

12-year-old wins Air Show poster design contest

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

An air show poster is not an easy thing to design. The poster has to advertise the exciting, dynamic qualities of the event in a two-dimensional, static medium. The Air Show coordinators this year held a design competition for the poster in Nov. 2006. Of the contestants who entered, 12-year-old Mario Flores, Jr. is this year's contest winner. His father Mario Flores, Sr. was just as excited as he was about winning.

"I work for the [E-Street] gym, and I saw the [Nov. 23 Wingspan] newspaper and I know he knows how to draw," said Mr. Flores. "So I thought, I wonder if I could get him interested." Father and son began looking at aircraft online to find ideas for the poster design. "Maybe you win, maybe you don't," he told his son. "But it's a shot you might want to take."

When asked what got him interested in the contest, Mario responded quickly, "I just like planes and I want to be in the military." He paused and smiled. "I want to fly jets," he said.

Mario, a 6th grade student at Caffie Middle School, was playing football with his friends when his dad got the call declaring him the winner of the design contest. Mr. Flores "It was exciting," said Mario. "I didn't think I would win."

As the winner, Mario will receive a VIP package for himself and a guest as well as the possibility of a flight with one of the Air Show performers. For a young boy who has never been in an airplane, this is quite a prize.

"He did pretty good," said Mr. Flores with a smile.



Mario Flores (left) stands with his son, Mario Flores, Jr., a 12-year-old student at Caffie Middle School who won the poster design contest. (Photo by Lt. j.g. Caleb Booher, Asst. PAO)

From The Skipper

Smell the roses...

By Capt. T.E. Coolidge

I got up a little earlier than usual one morning last week and it was quiet in the house. It was one of those days when I really didn't want to get up and knew that if I closed my eyes again, I'd be running late all day. Anyway, when I stepped outside, ready to face the day, I had to stop. The sun hadn't come up yet and the wind was blowing softly across the Laguna Madre. It was really nice outside! With the recent rains, the trees were turning green, wild flowers were popping up in several places, and other small plants were blooming. It suddenly hit me that spring had arrived.



Coolidge

I wasn't late to the office and I actually

accomplished a lot that day. The few moments I stopped to enjoy the quiet kept me smiling all day. It made the normal chaotic routine of keeping the base running one more day just a little easier.

Of course, I don't do all the work - not even close. There are a lot of phenomenal people working behind the scenes around the base that help make good things happen. There's an incredible sense of community and cooperation throughout the base. For instance, we couldn't put on an Air Show (Reminder: South Texas Shootout April 14-15) without everyone pitching in. Virtually every command on base is contributing to the effort. I'm very proud to be a part of this team!

Okay, as we have all experienced, we're enjoying some great weather right now. Of course, now that I've said this the humidity will go through the roof - right behind the temperature. This time of year is my favorite and one of the reasons that I'm glad my family and I are here. No, it wasn't just

the Mexican food that drew us back here, it truly is the South Texas charm that makes this a good place to live and raise a family.

Speaking of warm weather, I know that summer is right around the corner because both of my sons are talking about shedding their school work and playing every day. Where does the time go?

Right now, if you drive around Texas, there are plenty of beautiful wild flowers to see. I know the price of gas is up, but if you're driving, even to San Antonio, take the time to enjoy the beauty our state offers.

I'm not professing that people should leave. The weather's great and the beaches are clear now that Spring Break is past. It's time for picnics and barbecue, family get-togethers, and adventures to all of the museums that Corpus Christi has to offer. Our air show is next month, a Tall Ship will be

Skipper continued on page 12

Chaplain's Column

Our Easter Sunday living

By Chaplain Chin Van Dang

We identify ourselves with life; without life, we are nothing. We have an indestructible instinct telling us that we shall live forever. True, there are people bowed down by sickness and frustration who wish to be relieved of life. They are the exceptions; pitiable victims of misfortune. Not only do we want life without end, we want a flawless, happy life that is the fulfillment of our aspirations. And this is what Easter promises, for Easter comes in the spring, when nature awakens from the sleep of winter; when we delight in delectable greenery, the budding of leaves, the song of birds. On Easter Sunday, the Christians celebrate their belief in the central mystery of their faith: Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Faith assures them that their belief in Easter and everlasting life is no fairy tale. Their salvation is not from any group of people or combination of natural resources but solely from God; it was the Son of God who paid the debt of sin and reopened the gates

of heaven for eternal happiness and everlasting life. Let me share with you a touching story I recently read:

"I walked into the grocery store not particularly interested in buying groceries. I wasn't hungry. The pain of losing my husband of 37 years was still too raw. And this grocery store held so many sweet memories. Rudy often came with me and almost every time he'd pretend to go off and look for something special, I knew what he was up to. I'd always spot him walking down the aisle with the three yellow roses in his hands. Rudy knew I loved yellow roses.

"With a heart filled with grief, I only wanted to buy my few items and leave, but even grocery shopping was different since Rudy had passed on. Shopping for one took time, a little more thought than it had for two. Standing by the meat, I searched for the perfect small steak and remembered how Rudy had loved his steak. Suddenly, a woman came beside me. She was blond, slim and lovely in a soft green pantsuit. I watched as she picked up large pack of T-bones, dropped them in her basket, hesi-

tated, and then put them back. She turned to go and once again reached for the pack of steaks.

She saw me watching her and she smiled. 'My husband loves T-bones, but honestly, at these prices, I don't know.'

I swallowed the emotion down my throat and met her pale blue eyes. 'My husband passed away eight days ago,' I told her. Glancing at the package in her hands, I fought to control the tremble in my voice. 'Buy him the steaks. And cherish every moment you have together.'

She shook her head and I saw the emotion in her eyes as she placed the package

Chaplain continued on page 4



Dang

Wingspan

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Murphy

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The Retirement Savings Contributions Credit is in addition to other tax benefits, which may result from the retirement contributions. For example, most workers at these income levels may deduct all or part of their contributions to a traditional IRA. Contributions to a 401(k) plan are not subject to income tax until withdrawn from the plan.

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CNRSE implements family Individual Augmentee support program

by MC2(SW/AW) Rebecca Kruck, Staff Writer



NHCC has various support programs available to servicemembers returning from deployment and their families. Hospital staff will provide personalized counseling sessions based upon each individual's needs, including financial, marital, and dealing with post-traumatic stress. (Photo by Anne Booher, Editor)

Many Sailors returning from an Individual Augmentee (IA) assignment, such as the Middle East and Afghanistan, have a hard time readjusting to a normal life style. Some even suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to physiological and psychological stressors experienced while deployed. Military members go through a series of health screenings before and after deployment to identify any mental or physical problems that may have been caused by their deployment, and treatment is issued accordingly. However, until recently, the families of those deployed have had little in the way of education on what to expect from their spouse or parent after they return from the war zone.

Commander, Navy Region Southeast's (CNRSE) family support program, in conjunction with a directive from the Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Mike Mullen, is ensuring that all bases implement an IA support group to help families after loved ones deploy.

Olivia O'Neal, the Regional Fleet and Family Support Program Coordinator for CNRSE as well as

the Working Family Life Coordinator described how these programs will develop.

"One of my responsibilities is being the Individual Augmentee point of contact," she said. "Here at CNRSE, we've been working on the subject of IAs and reaching out to IA families for more than a year now. Many months ago, our installations began outreach programs to the families of IAs and we realized that we had a major obstacle, which was identifying who the IA member and their families were."

According to O'Neal, they have started to receive that information from the Expeditionary Combat Readiness Command (ECRC) based in Norfolk, Va. The ECRC has established a hotline at (877) 364-4302 for families of active duty and reserve Sailors who are deploying as IAs. They will provide information that will allow the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) to contact family members and offer services such as the IA support group, counseling, financial planning, and more.

Lt. Cmdr. Shawn Oxendine, from CNRSE, who was deployed as an IA to Afghanistan for six months and returned last August, elaborated on some of the challenges she and her family faced while she was gone and after she got back.

"Some of the problems we faced were based on my husband having to take over the role of mother as well as a father. I know he took good care of our daughter, but there were some things he didn't know how to handle," she said. "I also had to worry about them wor-

rying about me because I wasn't always able to tell them what I was doing and wasn't always able to call."

Oxendine continued on to talk about readjusting to normal life. "It was very difficult because when I got home, I wanted to just take over everything. But before we got back, they briefed us that we would have to let our families carry on in their routines and gradually readjust. I think it would be helpful if they had something on the family end about how to readjust when their spouse or parent get home."

O'Neal and the FFSC are working hard to do just that. "We're now in the midst of incorporating as many spouses as we can into the IA support program. By March 23, all of our installations will be mandated by CNRSE to start a program targeted towards the families of IAs. We felt it necessary to designate a program for IA families because they are under different stressors than those who go on routine deployments on ships," she continued.

Some of the installations under CNRSE, which covers a radius spanning from mid-Eastern Texas to South Carolina, also including Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have already begun IA support programs. These programs, as well as those that will begin shortly, will introduce families to the services that the fleet and family support programs offer and educate families on PTSD, other stressors their spouse will

IA Support continued on page 12

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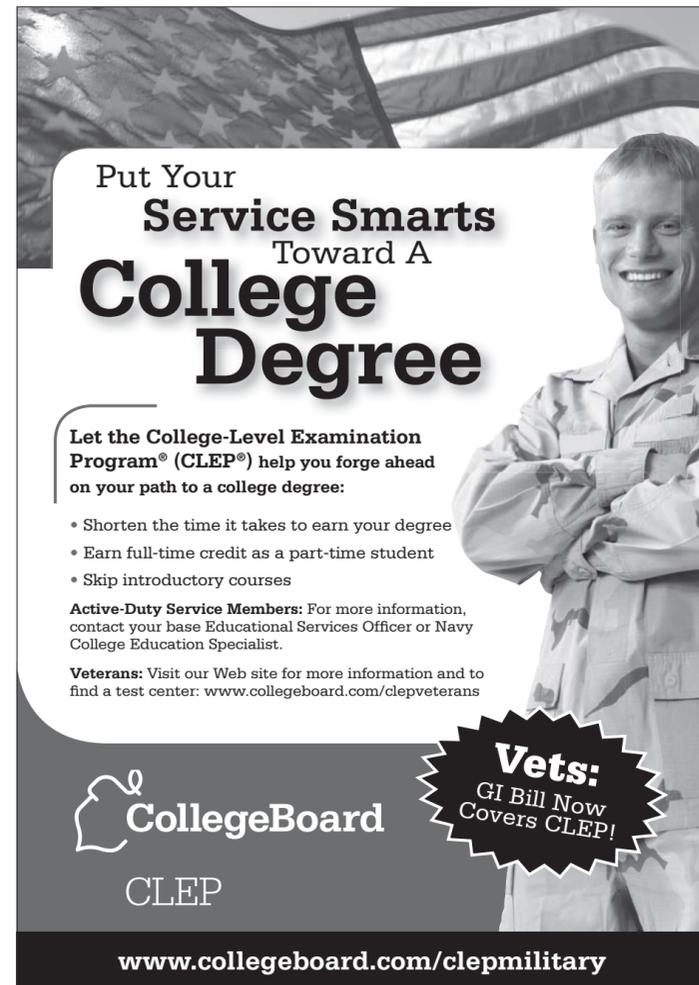
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NAS Fire and Emergency Services overhaul mission statement

by Fire Chief John Morris, NASCC Fire Department

We've all been involved with Mission Statements; usually they have been in place long before our arrival and may or may not have described what was actually needed to accomplish the given mission. A definition readily available from Webster's- n: a summary describing the aims, values, and overall plan of an organization or individual. Okay, then. That looks easy enough.

NAS Fire and Emergency Services (NAS F&ES) is in the process of remaking itself in the eyes of both leadership and its membership. Throughout the turmoil leading into the establishment of Navy Region South in 2004, and then the equally tumultuous disestablishment of the same Command following BRAC 2005, the "deckplate" firefighter riding the rigs did what they always have done: responded when the bells went off, signaling that a member of the community was having a bad day. Hopefully we changed the outcome in a positive way each time. On the operational side of the house, away from budget drills, data calls, common output levels and the other trappings of management in a CNIC world, their world did not change drastically.

So here we are with a new Region and a new Fire Chief. What we didn't have was a new Mission Statement. To guide the way, we have established two very important committees comprised of a diverse cross-section of the department that will work in parallel over the coming months. The common goal that ties them all together is institutionalizing our mission statement into all that we do and strive to become. We have scrapped the old in favor of a simpler one that clearly guides our envisioned changes. Alan Brunacini, retired Fire Chief of the City of Phoenix, Arizona, coined what is arguably the most memorable Mission Statement of any organization. It simply reads "Prevent Harm, Survive, Be Nice." I wish I was as visionary as Chief Brunacini, but I am not, and I wasn't simply going to copy that statement, regardless of how perfect it is! I am not sure who said it first, but I heard another memorable three-word statement while serving as Regional Fire Chief un-



Fire Chief John Morris, along with other Fire Department members, have developed a revised Mission Statement. The Department will hold regular meetings to ensure that the new statement, "Ready, Responsive, Relevant," is implemented into their daily routines. (Photo by Richard Stewart, Base Photographer)

der Commander, Navy Region Europe. Now CNO, Admiral Mullen's was serving as Commander, Joint Force Command Naples/Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe at the time when I first heard "Ready, Responsive, and Relevant." It struck a chord in me then, and I have chased the meaning for our organization, and I believe I have found it. Ready- Through advanced planning. Responsive- To new ideas and changing technology. Relevant- With services and capabilities matched to continually evolving mission requirements.

These three simple words offer a deeper meaning that will guide us in good times as well as bad to ensure that we live up to the motto of the Department of Defense Fire and Emergency Services, and that is "Protecting Those Who Defend America". The uniformed members of the military are our reason for being, and we take this commitment extremely seriously. Thank you for the privilege.

Chaplain continued from page 2

in her basket and wheeled away. I turned and pushed my cart across the length of the store to the dairy products. There I stood; trying to decide which size milk I should buy. A quart, I finally decided and moved on to the ice cream section near the front of the store. If nothing else, I could always fix myself an ice cream cone. I placed the ice cream in my cart and looked down the aisle toward the front.

I saw first the green suit, and then recognized the pretty lady coming towards me. In her arms she carried a package. On her face was the brightest smile I had ever seen. I would swear a soft halo encircled her blond hair as she kept walking toward me, her eyes holding mine. As she came closer, I saw what she held and tears began misting in my eyes. "These are for you," she said and placed three beautiful long stemmed yellow roses in my arms. "When

you go through the line, they will know these are paid for." She leaned over and placed a gentle kiss on my cheek, then smiled again. I wanted to tell her what she'd done, what the roses meant, but still unable to speak, I watched as she walked away as tears clouded my vision. I looked down at the beautiful roses nestled in the green tissue wrapping and found it almost unreal. How did she know? Suddenly the answer seemed so clear. I wasn't alone. "Oh, Rudy, you haven't forgotten me, have you?" I whispered, with tears in my eyes. He was still with me, and she was his angel!"

Everywhere we experience death of hopes, or physical death, or death of relationships, or death of freedom, we are called to bear witness to the presence of the living God in the middle of those valleys bringing about life in our Easter Sunday living.

Legal continued from page 2

physical injury or physical sickness; Welfare Benefits; Cash Rebates from a dealer or manufacturer; Tax Exempt Interest from municipal bonds and tax exempt bond mutual

funds. Although this interest is not taxable it must be reported on line 8b of Form 1040 or 1040A.

Examples of items that may or may not be included in your income are: Life Insurance - If you surrender a life insurance policy for cash, you must include in income any proceeds that are more than the cost of the

life insurance policy. Life insurance proceeds paid to you because of the death of the insured person are not taxable unless the policy was turned over to you for a price; Scholarship or Fellowship Grant. If you are a candidate for a degree, you can exclude amounts you receive as a qualified scholarship or fellowship. Amounts used for room and board do not qualify.

These examples are not all-inclusive.

How much, if any, of your social security benefits are taxable depends on your total income and marital status. Generally, if social security benefits were your only income, your benefits are not taxable and you probably do not need to file a federal income tax return.

If you received income from other sources, your benefits will not be taxed unless your modified adjusted gross income is more than the base amount for your filing sta-

tus. Your taxable benefits and modified adjusted gross income are figured in a worksheet in the Form 1040A or Form 1040 Instruction booklet.

Before you go to the instruction book, do the following quick computation to determine whether some of your benefits may be taxable: First, add one-half of the total social security you received to all

your other income, including any tax exempt interest and other exclusions

from income. Then, compare this total to the base amount for your filing status. The 2006 base amounts are: \$32,000 for married couples filing jointly; \$25,000 for single, head of household, qualifying widow/widower with a dependent child, or married individuals filing separately who did not live with their spouses at any time during the year; \$0 for married persons filing separately who lived together during the year. For additional information on the taxability of social security benefits, see IRS Publication 915, Social Security and Equivalent Railroad Retirement Benefits.

Publications mentioned in this article can be found on the IRS Web site at IRS.gov or by calling 800-TAX-FORM (800-829-3676). For free tax service, please contact the Navy Legal Service Office at 961-3571. Appointments are required.

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Skipper continued from page 2

visiting downtown shortly after, and the Buccaneer Days celebration and Beach to Bay Run are close at hand.

With all that's coming up over the next few months, take some well-deserved time for you and your family. Perhaps something

fun for Easter is the time to get started. I know that the Chaplains have an Easter Egg Hunt on base for the little ones.

Please take a little time for yourself and your family. Perhaps I'll see ya on the beach!

IA Support continued from page 3

experience overseas and help them prepare for the transition that will occur when they return home.

"We provide the bases with guidance and suggestions and we'll be getting information back from them on how successful their groups have been," she said. "It will also be the responsibility of FFSC IA coordinator to make referrals for those who are having a particularly hard time and need more individual assistance. Some may need help with things such as parenting skills or just help going on with their lives. Many of these families have spouses who haven't been married very long, have very young children and are at their first station away from home, so they need some-

one to rely on. If they don't have that then people can quickly start falling apart."

O'Neal also stated that the FFSC's will be working with MWR to assist with childcare to influence maximum participation. The concept of an IA children's support group has also been undertaken by FFSC and is already in place on some installations.

O'Neal added one last statement regarding the importance of these support programs. "The emphasis on these support groups is coming straight from the Chief of Naval Operations. He is adamant in seeing that these families are taken care of, and it falls upon our leadership to make it happen."

Happy Easter from the Public Affairs Office!



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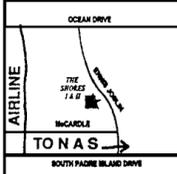
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All calls on hold: NASCC implements cell phone ban across base

by MAC Bradley Volkmer, Security Department Leading Chief Petty Officer

In recent months, Base Security has begun ramping up enforcement of the new Department of Defense (DoD) restriction on the use of cell phones while driving on base. The new regulation was actually published in April of 2005 and states the following: "Anyone driving a motor vehicle on a DoD installation cannot use a cell phone unless the vehicle is safely parked or the driver is using a hands-free device."

There was no deadline for implementation of the policy and enforcement was left to individual installations to begin on their own schedules. In September of 2006, signs were erected at both gates entering NAS Corpus Christi informing entering motorists of the new restrictions.

This restriction is a DoD-wide policy and is not restricted to NAS Corpus Christi or Department of Navy assets. It is also in effect on any DoD installation totally independent of whether or not the host city and or state has a restriction of their own.

This policy was implemented based on information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which studied driving distractions as of the major causes of motor vehicle accidents. Their study shows that cell phones clearly represented the most visible and fast-growing distraction attributing to motor vehicle accidents.

One study conducted by a major university found that using a cell phone actually reduced a driver's reaction time in brak-

ing by as much as 18 percent, thus making their reaction time similar to that of someone with a .08 percent blood-alcohol level, the legal limit in the state of Texas.

At the time the DoD implemented this policy, there were only three states and the District of Columbia that had official state or district-wide bans on cell phone use. However, many cities were beginning to impose and enforce their own rules. Since this policy was announced by the DoD, there have been several more states to join the list with state-wide bans and the trend is expected to continue as more and more information becomes available suggesting the dangers associated with their use.

"With the implementation of the cell phone ban, we expect to see the number of accidents decrease and drivers to be more aware of their speed, therefore making NASCC safer overall," says MAC Wayne Benning, Assistant Security Officer. Cell phone usage has been a major contributing factor to accidents on base. Security officers find that many of the on-base accidents or "near misses" are because of drivers who neglect to signal or unsafely maneuver due to the distraction of talking on a cell phone. While the cell phone ban is not implemented in the city of Corpus Christi, security personnel expect to see a drastic decrease in accidents on base over the next few months and hope that drivers will continue this pattern of safe driving throughout the city.

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Driving while talking on a cell phone is a major contributing factor to accidents on base. The base-wide cell phone ban has been in place since September 2006 and soon, drivers will face the legal consequences of violating the ban. (Photo by Lt. j.g. Caleb Booher, Asst. PAO)

Greece continued from front page

riod of availability to have upgrades installed and maintenance performed, then will head to Greece for service along the coastlines of Greece," added Rios. "By then crew training will have finished as well."

Osprey Class ships were designed to detect, locate, classify, identify and neutralize moored and bottom mines coastal environments worldwide.

"With the upgrades, the ships will help defend our many islands and miles

of coastline," stated Cdr. Nikolaos Tetradakos, chief of the Hellenic Navy detachment based in Houston. "These ships will help to reinforce our commitment to America."

USS Heron (MHC 52) and USS Pelican (MHC 53) are the fourth pair of coastal mine hunters to be decommissioned. In January, two were transferred to Egyptian Navy—the other four, decommissioned last year, are in storage. The entire class is slated to be decommissioned by Fiscal Year 2008.

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Transition Assistance Center answers servicemembers' questions regarding Ingleside's 2011 closure

by Fifi Kieschnick, Naval Station Ingleside Public Affairs Officer

With Naval Station Ingleside set to close officially on Sept. 15, 2011, many preparations must be made to ensure that personnel are transferred efficiently and are well-informed about their options.

Navy Station Ingleside hosted a Human Resources Conference last month to address the most emotional part of the base closure process: personnel concerns. Local, regional, Commander, Naval Installations Command, and human resource office representatives attended in an effort to solve the problem of relocating servicemembers and personnel in a smooth way. Capt. Tim Watkins, commanding officer of Naval Station Ingleside, stated to those in attendance that the main goal of the conference was to develop a workable plan to implement base closure that will ensure the best results possible for our personnel.

"We need to provide our employees with an expectation of what they will be faced with," added Doug Mercer, Commander, Navy Region Southeast BRAC coordinator, who attended the conference.

The assembled group took the 20 items listed on the locally developed Human Resources Preparations Plan of Action and Milestones (POA&M) and assigned action officers for each item, established a start date, and determined a target end date for all items.

According to Dan Korus, Ingleside's BRAC coordinator, the Human Resources Conference "laid the foundation for success that will ultimately benefit all our personnel."

Of utmost importance was establishing a Transition Assistance Center (TAC)

where personnel can drop in and have their questions answered. The TAC officially opened at the end of February. It is located in Building 100, in the "old Squadron Three spaces" behind the Post Office.

According to Mike Hoss, Director of the South Texas Human Resources Office, initially the TAC office will be staffed on Wednesdays, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. But, personnel can call the office anytime at 776-4015. Staff members will return calls with answers and information to questions and concerns that all employees have.

"The TAC will first be supported on a demand basis," Hoss added. "We will have an HR specialist available who can answer basic questions and help personnel follow their options." As we progress through the base closure process and demand increases, the TAC will be staffed full time.

However, anyone transitioning from Naval Station Ingleside or activities aboard Naval Air Station Corpus Christi can use the Center as a resource. Information provided to TAC customers will also be relayed to all personnel in a variety of methods, including articles in the base newspaper, via e-mails and postings on the base Intranet, <https://nsinet>.

TAC will be a one-stop for all transition assistance opportunities to ensure employees receive information and direction for future employment opportunities, according to Watkins. Representatives from the Small Business Development Center and Worksource One will also be located at the TAC to also serve as resources for Ingleside employees. Set up an appointment with a TAC counselor by calling 776-4015.



Naval Station Ingleside has opened the Transition Assistance Center in the East Wing of their Headquarters, Building 100. The TAC will be staffed on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. to answer employees' questions regarding the upcoming closure and their available options for relocation. (Photo by Fifi Kieschnick, Naval Station Ingleside Public Affairs Officer)

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Operation Purple offers free summer camp for military children

Courtesy of the National Military Family Association

The National Military Family Association (NMFA) has announced the 2007 list of Operation Purple camp locations on their website! Information on specific locations and registration (March 15-May 1) is available through www.operationpurple.org.

Many children are experiencing multiple deployments or have more than one parent or family member deployed. The stories from those who attended Operation Purple summer camps offer a glimpse of the heavy emotional and psychological burden that falls on the sons and daughters of service members. The goal of these free summer camps is to bring together youth who are experiencing some stage of a deployment and the stress that goes along with it. Operation Purple camps give kids the coping skills and support networks of peers to better handle life's ups and downs.

This year more than 40 weeks of camps will be held at 34 locations in 26 states. The camps' outreach programs provide the skills and positive outlets for their feelings, but it's the camaraderie campers are able to build with one another that's so important. Learning coping skills, making new friends, and experiencing life lessons at an early age are what make Operation Purple camps so unique.

Operation Purple Camp for Children of Wounded Service Members was started as a pilot program in 2007, which provides additional help for kids who are going through a potentially diffi-

cult adjustment—an injury to a parent. This specialized, dedicated camp will incorporate additional mental health support into the daily camp activities—without losing the focus on fun!

Be sure to register early - this is a popular program and camper slots fill up quickly. Don't miss this opportunity for a free week of fun and adventure at summer camp, as well as a chance to learn some skills to better handle the stresses brought on by a deployment.

The following states will host an Operation

Purple camp: Alaska; New York; Arizona; North Carolina; California; Ohio; Colorado; Oklahoma; Florida; Oregon; Georgia; Pennsylvania;

Hawaii; Rhode Island; Idaho; Texas; Maryland; Utah; Massachusetts; Vermont; Michigan; Virginia; Montana; Washington; Nevada; Wisconsin.

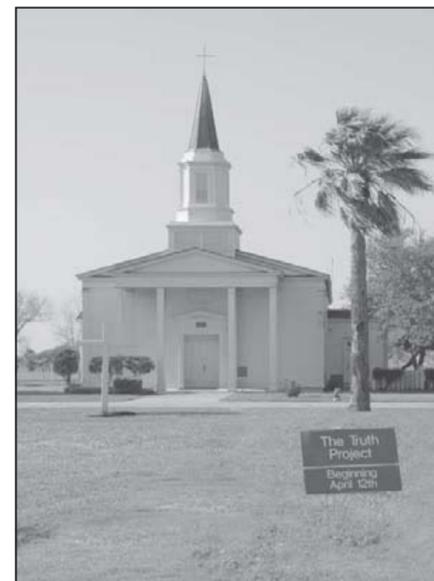
Each camp is open to children of any member of the uniformed services including National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration and United States Public Health Service plus the National Guard and Reserve. Families are encouraged to apply to the location closest to their home as transportation costs are not covered.

These camps are open to ALL military children, with first priority going to those who have deployed parents. Each location is run by an independent camp so dates, ages and activities vary by location. For more information on camp locations, choosing a camp, deciding whether your child is ready for overnight camp, or to register your child, visit www.operationpurple.org.



The Truth Project helps answer questions of truth from a variety of disciplines

Story and photo by Anne Booher, Editor



The Truth Project will hold weekly meetings at the Protestant Chapel at NAS Corpus Christi on Thursday evenings at 6 p.m.. Each meeting will address a different question regarding truth and will last about an hour.

If you've seen the series of signs in front of the chapel, you might have a few questions about the Truth Project. Created as a ministry of Focus on the Family, the Truth Project is a course that is designed to answer questions of truth and help people establish a biblical worldview by 12 fields of study, including history, science, philosophy, anthropology and more.

"The Truth Project is a Christian worldview project that draws from a variety of disciplines to give participants a unique perspective on life and the place each person has in it," says Chaplain Timothy Gault. "I think that this project will help those who participate to be better prepared to serve and to serve well."

The Truth Project will be led by retired Navy Commander Bert Howard along with Chaplain Gault and will meet every Thursday night at 6 p.m. at the Protestant Chapel beginning on April 12th. A light meal and beverages will be provided. For more information, visit www.thetruthproject.org or call Chaplain Gault at 961-3751. The Truth Project is a free event and is open to anyone.

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WELCOME HOME VETERANS!

Corpus Christi International Airport • March 21



ABOVE: Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Orlando Amador (left) flexes his "veteran" muscles for Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Korrin T. Webb and Capt. Laura P. Omer. Capt. Omer is the acting Commanding Officer for Naval Hospital Corpus Christi and was there to present each of the corpsmen with a 96-hour liberty pass, a command coin, and a personal note of thanks. (Photo by Bob Torres, Public Affairs Officer)

LEFT: Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Nyeche Anderson is interviewed by Channel 6 News reporter Michael Salizar. When asked the first thing he would do when he got home, Anderson answered, "Have a home-cooked meal and visit with my family." (Photo by Bob Torres, Public Affairs Officer)



Naval Hospital Corpus Christi (NHCC) corpsmen return home from the war in Iraq. From left: Thelma Michael, wife; Dona, daughter; Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Samuel H. Michael, and son, Sam; Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Nyeche Anderson; Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Jaime S. Cardenas; Capt. Laura P. Omer, NC, acting Commanding Officer at NHCC; Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Orlando Amador, and Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Korrin T. Webb. The corpsmen arrived at Corpus Christi International Airport along with Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Rogero Rodriguez (not pictured). They were among nine others who safely returned on different flights March 21 from seven months of duty in support of the global war on terror. Their homecoming brings the number of NHCC deployed staff down to 31 from 56 the previous month. (Caption by Bill Love, NHCC PAO; Photo by Bob Torres, PAO)

AROUND THE BASE IN 2007

Winging Ceremony • March 16



The official party includes (from left to right): Cmdr. Joe Shipley, VT-31; Cmdr. Tim McGuire, USCG Sector Corpus Christi; Lt. Col. Jon Ullmann, VT-35; Cmdr. Rusty Kasupski, TW-4; Cmdr. C.J. Cassidy, VT-31.

Wingees listed alphabetically: VT-35: Ens. Zack J. Dalbom; Ens. Aaron T. Dobson; 2nd Lt. Kyle P. Heinemann; Lt. j.g. Jason S. Hull; 2nd Lt. Erik M. Rautiola; Ens. Nikolas A. Rocchio; Lt. j.g. Jared M. Wilhelm; 2nd Lt. Ryan J. Woodman; 2nd Lt. Joshua C. Becker

VT-31: Ens. Richard A. Bowers; Ens. Quincy L. Bowles; Ens. Joshua C. Calhoun; Ens. Seth R. Carroll; 2nd Lt. Logan R. Draves; 2nd Lt. Justin G. Gripp; 2nd Lt. Nathan C. Hedden; Lt. j.g. Jesse E. Hyles; 2nd Lt. Michael G. Kissinger; Ens. Daniel J. Maccabe; Ens. John E. Pritchett; Lt. j.g. Alessandro Rispoli; 2nd Lt. Jonathan D. Shiflett; Ens. David T. Walrath (Photo by Hugh Lieck)

Ingleside Area Council of U.S. Navy League honors junior personnel

Story and photo by Mike Antoine, Naval Station Ingleside Public Affairs

It was a special day for several junior officer and enlisted personnel, as they were treated to a barbecue at the Ingleside USO on March 15. The free barbecue and awards ceremony is an annual event sponsored by the Ingleside Area Council of the U.S. Navy League. H-E-B corporate headquarters helped underwrite the cost of food for the event.

On hand for the award presentations was Naval Station Ingleside Commanding Officer, Capt. Tim Watkins; and Rear Adm. John Orzalli, Commander, MARMC.

The board which selects the winner looks at a variety of factors in making their decision including performance, educational pursuits, awards and community involvement.



Recognized as top junior officers and enlisted were: Junior Officer of the Year (Shore) Lt. Mitch Lott, assigned to Naval Station Ingleside; Junior Officer of the Year (Sea) Lt.j.g. Christian Ward, assigned to MHC Crew Gallant; Junior Sailor of the Year (Shore) OS2 (SW/AW) Kynasha Smith, assigned to MCM Class Squadron; Junior Sailor of the Year (Sea) ET3(SW) Eric Little, assigned to USS Champion; Blue Jacket of the Year (Shore) GMSN Cathy Huerta, assigned to Naval Station Ingleside; Blue Jacket of the Year (Sea) QMSN Justin Plank, assigned to MHC Crew Gallant; USCG Junior Officer of the Year Lt.j.g. Ann Sparks, assigned to USCG Sector Corpus Christi; USCG Junior Sailor of the Year (Shore) MST2 Michael Shannon, assigned to USCG Sector Corpus Christi; USCG Junior Sailor of the Year (Sea) BM2 James Gaus, assigned to USCG Station South Padre Island, and; USCG Blue Jacket of the Year SN Kevin Gay, assigned to USCG Sector Corpus Christi. Also recognized was the Sea Cadet of the Year, Petty Officer Second Class Brianna Gonzalez, representing the Texas Division.



NASC Commanding Officer Timothy Coolidge was featured on Channel 3 Morning News with Katia Uriarte on March 7. The Commanding Officer was previewing this year's South Texas Shootout featuring the Blue Angels on April 14-15. (Photo by Bob Torres, PAO)

St. Patrick's Day 5K Run • March 17



Fitness Express hosted the St. Patrick's Day 5K Run on Mar. 17. James Patterson came in with a time of 18:36, making him the men's winner of the event. The female winner, Anna Fasana (not pictured), came in with a time of 24:53. (Photo courtesy of Morale, Welfare, and Recreation.)