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**Hurricane Katrina Remembered**  
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# THE Currents™

Vol. 26 No. 8

Serving the New Orleans Regional Military/DoD Communities

August 2015

## VFA-204 River Rattlers Under New Command

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Hulle  
**The Currents' Staff**

Sailors assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 204 held a change of command ceremony aboard Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans July 11.

Cmdr. Rigel Pirrone, the former executive officer of the squadron, relieved Cmdr. Mark Crowe as commanding officer of the squadron, also known as the River Rattlers.

Crowe, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, commanded the squadron since April 2014. While he served with VFA-204, the River Rattlers earned the Golden Wrench and Battle "E" for 2013 and 2014, and the 2014

Safety "S", all while dealing with significant operational and resource challenges.

During the ceremony, Crowe thanked the squadron's Sailors and praised their hard work and dedication. "You all made it look easy, I was so amazed. You all made it happen again and again," said Crowe. "Thank you to every single one of you, it's been an honor."

Crowe also recognized Pirrone's work as executive officer. "I can't wait to see how good the squadron does with you at the helm," he said.

Pirrone, a native of Buffalo, N.Y., graduated from Tulane University in 1999, earning a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. Following flight training in the T-34C Turbo Mentor, T-2C Buckeye and T-45C



**Cmdr. Rigel Pirrone renders a salute after walking through the sideboys for the first time as commanding officer of VFA-204. Pirrone replaced Cmdr. Mark Crowe as commanding officer of the River Rattlers during a change of command ceremony at NAS JRB New Orleans.**  
 Photo by MCI John Hulle

Goshawk in Pensacola, Fla., and Meridian, Miss., he earned his Wings of Gold, and a Distinguished Naval Graduate honors in October 2001.

Pirrone remained on staff with Training Squadron (VT) 7 in Meridian, as a selectively retained graduate instructor

VFA-204 Page 16

## Blue Angels Announce FY16 Team Members

By U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron  
**Public Affairs**

PENSACOLA, Fla. (NNS) — The U.S. Navy flight demonstration squadron, the Blue Angels, announced the officers selected for the 2016 team.

The squadron selected two F/A-18 demonstration pilots, one C-130 demonstration pilot, a maintenance officer, and a public affairs officer to join a pre-selected commanding officer on the 2016 team.

Many highly-qualified Navy and Marine Corps officers submit applications to join the Blue Angels each year.

"Selecting team members is always a difficult process, but once again I am confident we have picked the best, most qualified individuals for our

team," said Capt. Tom Frosch, the current flight leader and commanding officer for the 2015 team. "The 2016 team members were chosen from an exceptionally competitive talent pool, and we are excited to have them join our team."

The Blue Angels select finalists to interview at the Blue Angels' home base at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Fla., during the week of the Pensacola Beach Air Show. The team makes selections at the conclusion of the interview week.

"All of our extremely qualified applicants went through a rigorous screening and interview process," said Lt. Ryan Chamberlain, opposing solo pilot and the applications officer for the 2016 team selection. "The individuals selected are some of the finest Navy and Marine Corps officers in the fleet today, and we



**Pilots assigned to the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, render a salute Marcy 13, after the team's first official air show practice demonstration of 2015 at the Naval Air Facility El Centro Air Show. The Blue Angels are scheduled to perform 68 demonstrations at 35 locations across the U.S. in 2015.**  
 Navy photo by MC2 Andrea Perez

look forward to serving with them."

The newly-selected 2016 team members include:

Navy Lts. Lance Benson and Tyler Davies, F/A-18 demonstration pilots;

Marine Maj. Mark Montgomery, C-130 demonstration pilot;

Navy Lt. Samuel Rose, maintenance officer;

Navy Lt. Joe Hontz, public affairs officer;

Pre-selected to join the 2016 team was Commanding Officer, Flight Leader, Navy Cmdr. Ryan Bernacchi.

Blue Angels Page 16

**This month in Navy & Marine History**

	August 1, 1946 Office of Naval Research established	August 7, 1782 Purple Heart Badge of Military Merit (Purple Heart) established
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## From the Flightline

By Capt. Scott Gootee  
NAS JRB Commanding Officer

Happy summer swelter! This is not my first New Orleans summer, but it sure feels as if the heat arrived sooner, and the temperatures have been higher. Many people do not think of extreme heat as deadly, but hundreds of people die each year due to excessive heat exposure.

If you must be outdoors, try to limit your activity to morning and evening hours. If you are not accustomed to working or exercising in a hot environment, start slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Drink plenty of fluids and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. When exercising or working in the heat, monitor the condition of your Shipmates and have someone do the same for you. Heat-induced illness can cause a person to become confused or lose consciousness. Be a good neighbor – look out for each other!

If weather-related history is any indicator of what we can expect during the coming 30 to 60 days, we are now approaching that portion of hurricane season when the threat is at its peak. And history shows some of the most powerful hurricanes on record are born in August. Camille, Andrew, and Katrina are only a few of the iconic names many would like to forget, but never will – all catastrophically damaging hurricanes.

Also, in August, within our fence



line and beyond, vehicular and pedestrian traffic will significantly increase as schools open. Plaquemines Parish schools open Aug. 12 and Belle Chasse Academy welcomes children back from summer vacation Aug. 19. This guarantees that there will be an uptick in vehicular and pedestrian traffic on base and on Belle Chasse Highway. I ask that you be extra observant of our school crossings and all pedestrian crossings on base and off. Be aware of the designated school zones near Belle Chasse High School and Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, where crossing guards and parish officials enforce lowered speed limits.

And finally, your cooperation and patience has been appreciated as we have worked to resurface and improve Russell Avenue and Magazine Road. Every effort has been made to minimize the impact to those who visit, work and live aboard the base. These projects will better ensure a smooth driving surface for years to come.

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## THE Currents

Vol. 26 No. 8 August 2015

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The next issue of The Currents will be published on Monday, August 3, 2015. Questions concerning content for publication are heartily encouraged and must be received at the Public Affairs Office, Naval Air Station, Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB), 400 Russell Ave., New Orleans, LA, 70143-5012, phone (504) 678-3260, by close of business on Friday, July 24, 2015.

The appearance of advertising in this newspaper, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsements by the Department of Defense, the Navy, NAS JRB, or The Polo Company of the products and services advertised. Everything advertised in this newspaper shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. If a violation or rejection of this equal opportunity policy by an advertiser is confirmed, the publisher shall refuse to print advertising from that source until the violation is corrected.



**Naval Air Station JRB New Orleans**  
**Capt. Scott Gootee**  
Commanding Officer







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## Improved Personal Wi-Fi Service Coming to Navy Lodging, MWR Facilities Worldwide

By Navy Exchange Command  
**Public Affairs**

Keeping in touch with loved ones is about to get much easier. The Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) and its vendor partner, ViaSat, are upgrading personal telecommunications services for Wi-Fi in Navy Lodges, unaccompanied housing, Navy Gateway

Inns & Suites (NGIS) and Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) facilities worldwide.

“By expanding our existing pay-as-you-go Wi-Fi service, we are able to offer a true enterprise solution for our military members and their families,” said Mary Morse, Vice President, NEXCOM’s Telecommunications Program Office. “Once a person signs up for basic Wi-

Fi service, it can be used on Navy bases where Wi-Fi access is made available, such as lodging and MWR facilities, anywhere around the world.”

In lodging facilities, including Navy Lodges and NGIS, bandwidth speeds on the basic service plan will increase from 2 MB to 5 MBs, with a 3 MBs guaranteed minimum speed. Users will be able to stream videos and

Skype to loved ones back home, quicker and easier. The basic service plan in lodging facilities will be complimentary. However, users can pay to upgrade their service to include additional bandwidth up to 30 MBs.

“Previously, users couldn’t purchase additional bandwidth, which is needed if they want to watch movies or play games while staying in a Navy lodging facility,” said

Morse. “This is especially important for those military and family members who may be staying for extended periods of time.”

A new feature, Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP), will allow guests free in-room phone calls to and from the United States while staying at NGIS or Navy Lodges. Previously, guests paid for all in-room calls. Guests will also be able to roam seamlessly between rooms within the same building without being disconnected.

For military members residing in unaccompanied housing, the cost for Wi-Fi service remains the same, but the bandwidth has been greatly expanded. Now, users will get 30 Mb/s per month for the same price they are currently paying for 6 MBs.

Most Navy locations will receive these new services by the end of 2015, except for Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, which will receive the new services in early 2016.

The NEXCOM oversees 100 Navy Exchange (NEX) facilities and nearly 300 stores worldwide, 39 Navy Lodges, the Ships Stores Program, the Uniform Program Management Office, the Navy Clothing Textile and Research Facility and the Telecommunications Program Office. NEXCOM’s parent command is the Naval Supply Systems Command.

NEXCOM’s mission is to provide authorized customers quality goods and services at a savings and to support quality of life programs for active duty military, retirees, reservists and their families. NEXs and Navy Lodges operate primarily as a non-appropriated fund (NAF) business instrumentality. NEX revenues generated are used to support Navy Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) programs. In FY14, \$2.7 billion in sales were generated with \$46.6 million in dividends provided to Navy MWR programs.

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## Navy Lodges Now on Defense Travel System

Navy Lodge accommodations can be booked directly through the Defense Travel System (DTS) as part of generating travel orders. Now travelers have more ways than ever to make reservations at a Navy Lodge.

The website, <https://navylodge.com> and the DoD Reservation Center (800-628-9466) remain available for reservations and to answer any lodging ques-

tions.

This new process of booking official government travel lodging within DTS is part of the Integrated Lodging Program Pilot, which was launched in June to provide quality government (DoD) and commercial lodging, with greater safety and security and better services at reduced rates.

Navy Lodges provide free Wi-Fi and complimentary breakfast

and are pet friendly. Navy Lodge guests enjoy spacious oversized business class and standard rooms, as well as family suites that offer a living, dining area and fully equipped kitchens.

Navy Lodges are conveniently located near other on base amenities, such as the gym, pool, restaurants and Navy Exchanges.

For complete details visit <https://navylodge.com>.

## NPA Website Has Moved to Cloud

By Navy Personnel Command  
Public Affairs

MILLINGTON, Tenn. (NNS) — Navy Personnel Command's (NPC) website has a new home - on the cloud.

The address for the NPC site is <http://www.npc.navy.mil>, and once on the page visitors can navigate to their desired pages and save new bookmarks.

"NPC's website moved to a commercial cloud site the week of June 12," said Lt. Cmdr. Jodie Cornell, NPC public affairs officer. "Updating your bookmarks will avoid the 404 errors common when sites change their home locations."

Previously the address <http://www.npc.navy.mil> redirected visitors to another address. If users haven't updated their bookmarks by August 1, they will encounter the 404

Page Not Found web error.

The NPC website is visited more than 1.3 million times monthly by more than 500,000 Sailors, retirees and family members. From selection board information and results, career counseling, links to the Navy's most used personnel programs and being the official home for NAVADMIN and ALNAV messages, instructions and forms, [www.npc.navy.mil](http://www.npc.navy.mil) is the home for all Navy personnel information.

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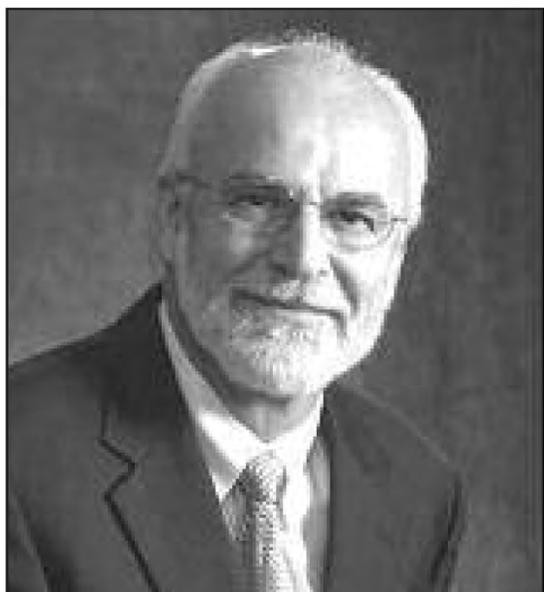
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Willis Glass and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Tracy Garder from the 377<sup>th</sup> Theater Sustainment Command (TSC) at NAS JRB New Orleans cut a cake to celebrate 97 years of the warrant officer corps. Glass, a civilian logistics management specialist for the 377<sup>th</sup> is also a Chief Warrant Officer 2 as a culinary technician. The 377<sup>th</sup> joined its warrant officers in celebrating 97 years of the warrant officer corps. The event included a history presentation and a cake cutting by the command's most junior and senior warrant officer. Established July 9, 1918, the Army Warrant Officer Corps is comprised of Soldiers who specialize in specific technical areas of expertise. Warrant officers make up less than three percent of the total Army. More than 350 of these highly skilled Soldiers serve in various capacities across the 377<sup>th</sup> TSC.

Army photo by SFC Angele Ringo, 377<sup>th</sup> TSC



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## Department of Defense Issues Final Military Lending Act Rule

After nearly three years of study, the Department of Defense today issued the final Military Lending Act (MLA) rule July 21.

The MLA better protects service men and women from predatory credit practices by expanding financial protections provided to service members, and helping ensure military families receive the consumer protections they deserve. These actions build on the president's announcement of a voluntary partnership with financial lenders across the country to help deliver important financial and home loan-related protections to our military community.

"With this action, the department takes an important stand against companies that can prey on our men and women in uniform. This new rule addresses a range of credit products that previously escaped the scope of the regulation, compromising the financial readiness of our troops. Today, with our regulatory and enforcement partners, we stand united in support of our service members and their families," said Deputy Secretary of De-

fense Bob Work.

This rule applies the protections of the MLA to all forms of payday loans, vehicle title loans, refund anticipation loans, deposit advance loans, installment loans, unsecured open-end lines of credit, and credit cards. The implementing regulation provides several significant protections extended to active-duty service members and their families, including a 36 percent annual percentage rate limit, and prohibiting creditors from requiring service members to: submit to mandatory arbitration and onerous legal notice requirements; waive their rights under the Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act; provide a payroll allotment as a condition of obtaining credit; be able to refinance a payday loan; or be able to secure credit using a post-dated check, access to a bank account or a car.

To assist industry in complying with the MLA, the new rule will go into effect Oct. 1, and will have a staggered compliance dates.

This rule will help protect all active-duty service members and their families from commit-

ting to loans with excessive fees and charges. Additionally, service members will still have access to no-interest loans, grants, and scholarships from the four military relief societies, and not all credit products will be affected by the regulation; notably residential mortgages and purchase-money loans (to buy items like cars) are excluded from the MLA's definition of "consumer credit."

Congress passed the MLA in 2006 with to provide specific protections for active-duty service members and their dependents in consumer credit transactions. The MLA prohibits creditors from requiring a service member to submit to arbitration in the event of a dispute, among many other protections. Congress took these steps to protect service members and their families from predatory lending which negatively impacts military readiness and can make transitioning from the military service significantly more challenging. (DOD News Release)

For the complete release and more defense news visit: <http://www.defense.gov>.



**YN3 Taylor Wachtel, assigned to NAS JRB New Orleans holds a Feds Feed Families donation box July 22. Launched in 2009 as part of President Obama's United We Serve campaign, Feds Feed Families was designed to help food banks and pantries stay stocked during summer months when they traditionally see a decrease in donations and an increase in need. This year, the campaign runs from July 7 until October 31. Non-perishable food can be donated in one of the many Feds Feeds Families donation boxes around NAS JRB New Orleans. For more information call the NAS JRB chapel at 504-678-3525. Photo by MCI John Hulle**

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# Hurricane Katrina – 10 Years After

## *History Shows NAS JRB New Orleans Pivotal to Area Recovery*

By The Currents' Staff

Hurricane Katrina came ashore in lower Plaquemines Parish, La., ten years ago on Aug. 29 and changed the lives of millions of residents in the Gulf Coast region. With minor damage to Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans, the base became the center of the Department of Defense rescue and recovery efforts.

During the first ten days following the storm, more than 10,000 military personnel and relief workers were airlifted into NAS JRB with more than 18 million pounds of relief supplies. NAS JRB, with the only operating runways in New Orleans, became the primary search and rescue airfield for flights that saved thousands of lives in the New Orleans area.

At the time, the base hosted approximately 34 tenant commands, including 85 aircraft from all branches of service and had about 3,000 service members and their families living in base housing.

"The base was closed prior to the storm and families evacuated the area. Only mission essential personnel remained," said Charlotte Blakeman, NAS JRB New Orleans executive coordinator.

"I left the Saturday morning before Katrina hit and went to Houston in case I had to report to NAS JRB Ft Worth to work. I stayed in constant contact with the commanding officer and executive officer during my two and a half weeks in Texas and another 12-day stay in Mobile, Ala. I was allowed to return only if I had electricity and phone at home.

According to now retired Navy Capt. A.J. Rizzo, the base's commanding officer in 2005, the worst of the hurricane had passed by 2 p.m. on Aug. 29. He said that he was surprised at how well the airfield fared.

"Some of the hangars were damaged, but the runway was able to receive Coast Guard HH-

65 helicopters by 6 p.m. the same day," he said. Rizzo said his number one focus was to get the airfield and control tower safe to receive helicopters.

Because the base evacuated everyone except an emergency management team of 22 personnel, they were faced with logistical challenges of providing manpower and other essential logistical support to sustain the incoming relief supplies, not only for the citizens of New Orleans and the surrounding areas hit hard by the hurricane, but also the thousands of service members incoming to the base to help with relief efforts.

Thousands of pounds of meals-ready-to-eat and bottles of water were received to sustain the troops.

The hurricane had knocked out power to the entire base, and generators powered the two buildings that housed the initial emergency management team. Electricity was returned to the base within a week, and limited galley services were brought online.

Tom Craine, automated information technology director, was the base operations manager for the Navy and Marine Corps Intranet system in August of 2005.

"We had no idea things would be as bad as they were, so buildings were prepped but not for the long periods of time that would follow before actually returning," he said.

Craine, a contractor then, had evacuated the area. "I went to Montgomery, Ala., for my first stop but had 16 family members, three dogs and two cats in a three-bedroom house with one bathroom. This just didn't work out, so we continued north to Minnesota and stayed with my sister until I was told I could come back to the base.

He said he constantly watched the news to gather information about conditions in New Orleans and passed it along to friends who had no internet services or other constant sources of news.



**(Oct. 10, 2005) Capt. A.J. Rizzo, NAS JRB New Orleans commanding officer, greets President George W. Bush as he arrives on the base following Hurricane Katrina. The president and first lady met with top ranking military officials at NAS JRB New Orleans to receive briefs on Joint Task Force Katrina relief efforts.**

*Navy file photo*



**An overhead shot of NAS JRB New Orleans shows the massive tent city constructed post-Katrina to house the more than 10,000 military and relief workers airlifted to the base to support the community.**

*Courtesy photo*



**Tents housing temporary offices and staff populate the grassy area behind the base administration building at NAS JRB New Orleans.**

*Courtesy photo*



**A common sight during the Hurricane Katrina rescue response, a Coast Guard helicopter pilot and National Guard helicopter pilot share run-way space as they taxi the airfield at Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans, Aug. 30, 2005. Both services tirelessly employed helicopter crews to rescue people from rooftops and deliver water to stranded victims after the hurricane ravaged the Gulf Coast.**

*USCG photo*



**Sailors clean up debris next to a hangar at NAS JRB New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.**

*Navy file photo*



**(Aug. 31, 2005) Aerial view from a U.S. Navy helicopter assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron Two Eight (HSC-28), showing the rising flood waters threatening the entire downtown New Orleans city center, including the famed New Orleans Saints Super Dome. Tens of thousands of displaced citizens sought shelter at the dome, before, during and after Hurricane Katrina, but were forced to evacuate as flood waters continue to rise throughout the area. HSC-28 flies the MH-60S Seahawk variant, based out of Norfolk, Va.**

*Navy file photo*



**(Sept. 11, 2005) Aircraft from Navy, Marine, Army and Air Force squadrons come together at NAS JRB New Orleans to help aid in the Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts.**

*Navy file photo*



**(September 27, 2005) EM2 (SW) Johnnie Meyer, from Albuquerque, N.M., loads merchandise to provide goods for service members deployed to NAS JRB New Orleans for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.**

*Navy file photo*

**Hurricane Katrina was the most destructive natural disaster in U.S. history. Records indicate the overall destruction wrought by the storm, a large and powerful hurricane as well as a catastrophic flood, vastly exceeded that of any other major disaster, such as the Chicago Fire of 1871, the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906, and Hurricane Andrew in 1992.**

"The biggest frustration for me was that the news reports focused on the east bank. I know it was devastated but even a mention of the west bank would have boosted the morale of those who evacuated their homes and work in that area," Craine said.

"Upon our return to the area there was an eerie, very quiet kind of feeling anywhere in New Orleans. The base was packed with every branch of service and a huge tent city was put up on the old golf course (where the NEX and Commissary are now located) and anywhere there was a spot of grass with the exception of the airfield," he said.

"All in all it was one the craziest times in my life, both on base and in town for many months following," Craine concluded.

A week following the hurricane, the galley was able to serve about 100 meals a day. Before the military operation concluded the galley was serving close to 4,000 meals a day and was augmented by three other temporary galleys and a contract mobile kitchen producing enough meals to feed another 800 people each. Berthing for the incoming military sent to assist recovery efforts proved a tremendous challenge. Initially service members and other volunteers were given cots and slept wherever there was space - hangars, on the airfield, in the fitness center, hallways and in office spaces in almost every building.

To alleviate the berthing influx, the base contracted to set up a tent city that eventually housed 5,000 people, provided shower and toilet facilities and included three galleys.

Emanuel Stevenson was the installation security officer when Hurricane Katrina made landfall in 2005. He said he remembers well the evacuation of base personnel, as Army National Guard troops were sent back onto the base to be on hand for the recovery efforts.

"There were massive power outages during the brunt of the

storm and wind gusts that exceeded 150 mph," Stevenson said.

He described the base, following Katrina, as a small village of more than 700 tents full of military members from five states.

"DoD contract construction workers from an assignment overseas were brought to New Orleans to support the site on base. National Guard helicopters units along with the U.S. Coast Guard provided air rescue missions throughout the area post-storm. The greater New Orleans area, for weeks, was in a blackout every night. The Naval Support Activity (NSA) East Bank on Poland Avenue was almost over run by hostiles and requested additional security forces from the air station at one point. We airlifted a security team to the site at NSA to assist," he said.

Mance Tutt was the NAS JRB New Orleans MWR marketing director in August 2005.

"I evacuated to Atlanta on Sunday, Aug. 28, where I worked by phone with the MWR director to locate and keep in touch with our staff. I remained there until Sept. 9 when I returned to NAS JRB," he said.

Tutt said the base was an enormous command center with tents on every place there was grass. "It was operating 24 hours a day with the military in 12 hour shifts."

During the recovery period that followed, MWR operated all of its facilities from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. at night to do their best to accommodate the 10,000 additional services members in the area while also serving those service members and their families stationed here.

Hurricane Katrina forever changed NAS JRB New Orleans. Every person who experienced this storm has a story to tell. While nature and circumstance placed NAS JRB New Orleans in a unique position, history shows the challenges were overcome, lives were saved and the base continues to prosper.

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# Operation Green Light Geaux Packed Full of Training

## The Currents' Staff

During the last two weeks in June the 421<sup>st</sup> Quartermaster Company (QM) from Fort Valley, Ga., spent time at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans and Stennis Space Center, Miss., in support of Operation Green Light Geaux (OGLG). The exercise is a joint operation and annual training event for the 421st QM Company Aerial Delivery System (ADS). During the operation, the group trains on the Mission Essential Task List (METL) focusing on airborne operations of both personnel and equipment.

Military personnel around the world depend on the specialized work performed by the Soldiers of the 421st QM. Established in 1959, today the 421st consists of about 60 riggers who live and train together, with safety being the



**U.S. Army Soldiers of the 421st Quartermaster (Aerial Delivery Systems) Company (Riggers) receive training on how to properly pack a personnel parachute system and how to set up a Low Cost, Low Altitude kit for a container delivery system while on Operation Green Light Geaux (OGLG) at NAS JRB New Orleans, June 19.**

*Army photo by Spc. Joshua E. Powell*



**U.S. Army Soldiers of the 421st Quartermaster (Aerial Delivery Systems) Company (Riggers), U.S. Army Reserve perform an airborne operation, along with air-dropping cargo from a C-130 aircraft for Operation Green Light Geaux (OGLG) at Stennis Space Center, Miss., June 25.**

*Army photo by Sgt. Prosper Ndow*

number one priority.

Whether dropping needed supplies, such as MREs, water, gas, ammunition, or heavier cargo, such as tanks or trucks, or preparing parachutes for military personnel, the process of

packing a parachute requires attention to detail, patience and skill.

Packing is monotonous, and accountability is stressed every step of the way. Riggers and inspectors must certify and sign a

sheet at the end of every packing station once the chute is completely packed. Additionally a small booklet is signed and attached to one of the risers of every parachute system.

Further ensuring accountabil-

ity, packers must get recertified every 90 days; inspectors every 180 days. The recertification process consists of correctly packing four parachutes consistently and jumping with the fifth chute.

# Automotive Fires: Common and Deadly

By Wendy Shimmin  
**NAS JRB Fire and Emergency Services Fire Prevention**

Vehicle fires are a common and deadly occurrence with 25 percent of all reported fires taking place in motor vehicle. However preventive steps can be taken.

Seventy five percent of all vehicle fires start in the engine compartment and that is where prevention activities will start.

Check the engine for leaks and cracks in hoses, gaskets and fittings. Do not ignore strange smells coming from the car. If you smell something burning, investigate it at once. Keep the inside of the car clean and free of trash and if your car has one, empty out any ashtrays. Inspect the exhaust system and clear any debris or blockages that might catch on fire. When refueling the vehicle look around for posted safety notices, do not smoke or discharge static

buildup before touching the pump or nozzle.

What should you do in case of a vehicle fire?

If you are the driver, stop the car as soon and safely as possible and shut off the engine. Leave the car and remain at a safe distance. One hundred feet is a recommended distance.

Call 911 to report the fire and location of the car. Make sure to say whether the car is inside a garage, on the street, parking lot, etc.

If you witness a car fire, look for signs that the fire size may suddenly increase, such as excessive smoke, expanding fire size, or a leaking gas tank. If approaching the vehicle will not put you in grave danger, you can help victims move away from the burning car. Do not remove car accident victims that have been impaled by objects or that could have serious neck or back injuries unless it is absolutely necessary. When emergency workers arrive, get out of

their way!

If you have an ABC extinguisher available, insert the nozzle through the grill and spray the engine area thoroughly and then retreat back to the safe distance. Do not open the hood to extinguish the fire as this can provide a rush of "fresh" air to the fire, increasing its size.

First and foremost is your safety and the safety of others. Do your best to get the fire under control, but do not take any unnecessary risks.

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## Belle Chasse Academy Meetings Notices

Board of Directors

**August Meeting -**  
**3 August 2015 • 7 p.m. at BCA**

**September Meeting -**  
**7 September 2015 • 7 p.m. at BCA**

Please check the BCA web site for Board of Directors Committees Meetings and PTO Meeting

For information & updates: [www.bellechasseacademy.com](http://www.bellechasseacademy.com)

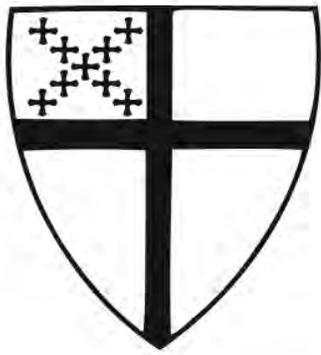
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# Lego Challenge Builds Family Fun and Togetherness

By Tammy Prine  
The Currents' Staff

Master Gunnery Sgt. Richard Folkedahl, Marine Forces Reserve, and his family built their way to win the top prize in the Family Lego Challenge last month at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans.

The Family Lego Challenge, organized by the NAS JRB Morale, Welfare and Recreation's Information, Ticket and Tours (ITT) department, drew 18 families (72 people) to the competition.

"The families had 45 minutes to build whatever they wanted but had to use all 303 Lego pieces provided," said Monica Baumer, ITT manager. "We first sponsored a Lego Challenge in 2012 and people are still talking about it. Normally we won't repeat this type of event but it was such a big hit and people were asking us to do it again."

This year's winners aren't new to Lego construction.

"When I was young, my brother and I always had Legos around," said Folkedahl, a 16-year Marine assigned to Marine Forces Reserve G-6 at the Marine Corps Support Facility in New Orleans.

"We would sit for hours creating new Lego designs. My son Alexander has a ton of Legos. That is one of the main things he and his friends have played with for years."

Since families were allowed to create anything, they all had



**Judges at the Lego Challenge competition at NAS JRB New Orleans look at one of the 18 different designs made from 303 Lego pieces. During the 45-minute competition family members built Lego creations to win one of three Lego gift baskets.**

to come up with an idea and put together their design in the allotted time.

"Looking through the blocks, we originally were going to go with a simple house, but as we progressed, my wife Nicole suggested a space ship," Folkedahl said. "Because our blocks varied in colors (pink purple red blue green), I informed the judges that our spaceship got hit by a rainbow. My son Alexander created all the personnel for the spaceship plus the gun and my wife and daughter created the wings. I just tried to get all the pieces on the ship. Once we were down to the last handful of blocks we all hustled to get all the pieces on. Without really trying, we actu-

ally finished about 15 minutes early."

The first place winners received a Lego gift basket that included an extra-large Lego set and other Lego goodies and small toys, four tickets to Lego Land Florida resort, sponsored by Lego Land, a \$250 Visa gift card sponsored by NAS JRB Credit Union and a \$300 ITT Coupon redeemable for a hotel stay in the Orlando, Fla., area.

"Our neighbors told us about the event and that every family would receive a gift bag with a box of Legos," he said. "That was all we were expecting. And as I looked around at all the other masterpieces I didn't think we would win. We were so excited."



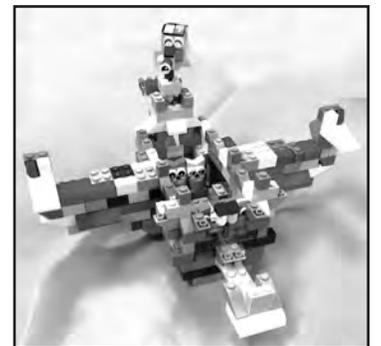
**Alexander and Kaitlyn Folkedahl show their winning Lego gift basket valued at more than \$1,000. The Folkedahl family built a colorful spaceship to win the Lego Challenge competition sponsored by the MWR ITT department NAS JRB New Orleans.**

Courtesy MWR photos

Second place winners received a Lego gift basket that included a large Lego set and other Lego items, four tickets to Lego Land sponsored by Lego Land and a \$150 Visa gift card sponsored by NAS JRB Credit Union.

Third place winners received a Lego gift basket that included a medium Lego set and other items and four tickets to Lego Land.

All participating families received a gift bag with a themed



**First place design by the Folkedahl family.**

medium-sized Lego set valued at \$19.99-29.99.

## VFA-204: continued from Page 1

pilot flying the T-45C for the next year and a half. He then reported to VFA-122 at Naval Air Station (NAS) Lemoore, Calif., in May 2003 for replacement training on the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet. After completing this training, he reported to VFA-2 as a fleet junior officer.

Following his selection for

full time support re-designation, in November 2009, Pirrone returned to New Orleans and reported to VFA-204.

"Having the opportunity to lead the safety, training, administrative, operations and maintenance departments and work with the finest group of Sailors in the Navy is a career highlight

and honor," Pirrone said.

Pirrone was gained as a selected reservist (SELRES) December 2012 and became assigned SELRES department head and executive assistant duties. Pirrone assumed duties as executive officer in April 2014.

"Never before have I worked with someone who cared about

the opinions of his subordinates and empowered everyone at every level. It's been an honor to work with you," said Pirrone regarding Crowe during the ceremony. "I can't wait to see what we accomplish here in the next few years.

The squadron was originally commissioned as Attack

Squadron 204 flying A-4C Skyhawks at NAS Memphis on July 1, 1970 and moved to NAS New Orleans in 1977 where they transitioned to the A-7B Corsair. In 1991 the squadron transitioned to the Navy's newest Strike Fighter, the F/A-18A Hornet and was redesignated to VFA-204.

## Blue Angels: continued from Page 1

Expected to return for the 2016 season are:

Navy Lts. Matt Suyderhoud, Andrew Talbott and Ryan Chamberlain and Marine Capt. Jeff Kuss, F/A-19 demonstration pilots;

Marine Capt. Corrie Mays, events coordination officer;

Navy Cmdr. Bob Flynn, executive officer.

Navy Lt. Gregory Bollinger, supply officer.

Marine Maj. Mark Hamilton

and Marine Capt. Katie Higgins, C-130 demonstration pilots.

The mission of the Blue Angels is to showcase the pride and professionalism of the United States Navy and Marine

Corps by inspiring a culture of excellence and service to country through flight demonstrations and community outreach.

In 2016, the Blue Angels will celebrate their 70th anniversary. Since 1946, the Blue Angels

have performed for more than 484 million fans.

For more news and the complete list of pilots and crew assigned to the Navy Blue Angels, visit <http://www.navy.mil/local/blueangels/>.



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# Two Types of Strength Help Keep People Going

By Lt. Solomon Lloyd  
NAS JRB Chaplain



## Chaplain's Corner

NAS JRB New Orleans  
Chaplain's Corner  
Sundays at 8:30 a.m. and  
Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m.  
Pastor's Service  
Sundays at 11:00 a.m.

As a pastor/chaplain, I have had the privileged to listen to many different life stories and witnessed all kind of bad news delivered to love ones, family members, parents and friends. I have walked away on some occasions and asked myself how could this person take it?

Sometimes nothing is harder in life than just to endure. The ability to take it, to endure, is an essential part of our equip-

ment when someone finds themselves in crisis or life situations. It appears there are two types of strength at work in crisis or life situations. The first one is active strength - the power to keep on going regardless. It is the strength by which one overcomes. And, the second is passive strength

- the power to keep still. It is strength by which one endures.

Juliane Kocpcke tells her story about how she overcame and endured a plane crash. She was 17 years old when the plane she was in with her mother came apart in mid-air over Peru and she plunged 10,000 feet into the jungle still strapped into her seat. With a broken collar-bone and maggot invested wounds, she walked and swam through the jungle without food for 10 days until she found help. Despite the terrifying situation

Juliane found herself in, she stayed calm, kept her cool and kept moving on. She endured the pain, refused to give in and survived the horrific ordeal.

The Apostle Paul encouraged young Timothy to endure hardships like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. The ability to endure is not only decided by the strength of our material equipment but also by the adequacy of our spiritual fortification.

God is able to equip our spirits so that you will have the ability to withstand and hold

up the stress and stuff that life will throw at you. It is essential to cultivate both active and passive strength so that you are able to take bad news without pessimism, reverses without losing your morale and make sacrifices without self-pity.

Your Religious Ministry Team is here for you, come and see us. God desires the best for you now and always.

Peace,  
Chaps

## Prepare for Tax Season Now

When you register in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), you provide information necessary for you and your family to receive the full spectrum of your military benefits. Not adding your family to DEERS can affect their access to health care, submitted claim forms and now, your income tax reporting.

For tax season 2014, tax payers self-reported on their federal tax form whether or not they and their family members had minimum essential coverage (MEC). This tax season, the Department of

Defense (DoD) will report health care coverage of its service member and their dependents to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This report allows the IRS to determine which families had minimum essential coverage as required by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA).

For tax purposes, individuals and family members are identified by their Social Security Numbers (SSN). All sponsors should confirm that all individual and family members' SSNs are correct in DEERS to ensure information is correctly reported to the

IRS. Those who have not met the MEC requirement will be required to pay a fee for the number of months each family member did not have coverage. If a family information is not reported accurately in DEERS, then the IRS information will be reported incorrectly.

Since June 2015, the DOD asked all uniformed service members, retirees and annuitants to opt-in to getting their IRS Form electronically through myPay. For more information on how TRICARE works with the ACA, go to the TRICARE website <http://www.tricare.mil/>.

## MOWC Membership Drive Underway

The Military Officers' Wives' Club (MOWC) of Greater New Orleans has begun this year's membership drive and will host its annual welcome brunch August 22. Anyone interested in joining the group is invited to attend the brunch. To RSVP and for the time and location of the welcome brunch send an e-mail to Charlene Wenrich at: [mowcrsvp@mowcnola.org](mailto:mowcrsvp@mowcnola.org).

Membership in the MOWC is open to all current or former military spouses or a widow/er of a commissioned officer or warrant officer of the Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Corps or Air Force, active, reserve or retired. In the case of a former spouse, the spouse must have been a member in good standing prior to the divorce/death.

Associate membership is open to current or former spouses or widow/er of a federal government service employee with the rating of GS-07 or above, a federal government employee with the rating of GS-07 or above, or a military veteran as a commissioned or warrant officer of the Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Corps or Air Force, active, reserve or retired. Also, the spouse must have been a member in good standing prior to the divorce/death.

The MOWC is a non-profit organization, whose purpose is to hold social functions for club members and their guests, which foster friendship and encourage the growth of existing ones; to raise funds to support community organiza-

tions adopted by the club; and to aid and assist in community work. Annually, the club hosts a full-scale Mardi Gras ball, CAMAN, with a club king, queen and maids representing each military service branch. CAMAN stands for Coast Guard, Air Force, Marine, Army and Navy.

The MOWC, as a non-profit service organization, has no paid positions. For more information visit: <http://www.mowcnola.org>.



From left, Courtney Mallard, Mackenzie Armstrong and Kayla Hearst, bartenders at Boondoggles, the all-hands club on NAS JRB New Orleans show off the birthday shirts celebrating the one year anniversary of the club July 16. Guest enjoyed lots of great food, drink specials and music by the band Jus-Fa-Na.

MWR Courtesy photo

### ANNUAL HURRICANE 5K RUN/WALK

**Saturday, Aug. 29, 2015 8:30 a.m.**  
**Place: NAS JRB NOLA Plaquemine Park**

**Registration deadline: Wednesday, Aug. 19th to receive T-shirt on race day**

**Entry Fee: (Cash Only)**  
**Adults: \$10 / Ages 10-15: \$5**  
**Under 10 : Free**

*Fee includes T-shirt and post-race refreshments*  
No shirts for those under 10 years old  
No money accepted on race day

**Race is open to all military, DoD/DoHS civilians, NAE civilians and their dependents.**  
**Everyone must register at the NAS JRB fitness center**

**Categories:**  
Men's Run & Walk  
(16-29, 30-39, 40-49 & 50-59)

Ladies' Run & Walk  
(16-29, 30-39, 40-49 & 50-59)

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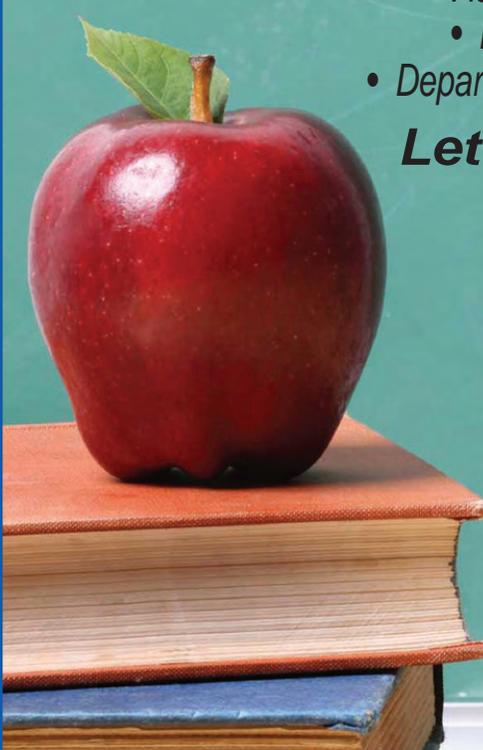
### HOUSING AMENITIES

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