

Whiting Tower

Seventy-three Years of Aviation Training News

Learn to conquer the sky

Discamus vincere in caelum

Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Milton, Fla.
Vol. 73 No. 01

Forging Wings for the Fleet
January 11, 2017



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CNATRA Shore Sailor of the Year Awarded to TRAWING FIVE, HT-8 Sailor

By: **Jamie Link, Public Affairs Office**

Throughout the course of a career, a Sailor will be asked to wear many hats and learn a wealth of skills along the way. Many will even hold two or three of those titles at any given time. One Sailor, who worked for both Helicopter Training Squadrons EIGHT and EIGHTEEN, has worn a host of them in 2016. Door gunner, F-18 mechanic, rescue swimmer, NATOPS instructor, search and rescue, coach, college student, mentor, Navy Sailor, triathlete, dad and now Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA) Shore Sailor of the Year.

Naval Air Crewman First Class Christopher “CJ” Anderson received the honor of CNATRA 2016 Shore Sailor of the Year while stationed onboard Naval Air Station Whiting Field.

Anderson entered the Navy in May, 1998 as an

Aviation Structural Mechanic and after training, went on to F/A-18 Fleet replacement aviation maintenance program training. Anderson completed aviation rescue swimmer school after several deployments and was named “honor man” of his class.

His deployments include the USS John F. Kennedy, he further deployed to the USS Theodore Roosevelt, USS Essex and several other ships. His assignments include; Guam, Norfolk VA, and NAS Whiting Field. His decorations include Navy Achievements (3) and Air Medals - Strike (6).

He spends time in the community and volunteered over 300 hours to the local youth sports programs

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Cover Photo:

Lt. j.g. Clyde Everett Lassen (upper left), Lt. j.g. Leroy Cook (upper right), AE2 Bruce Dallas (lower right), and ADJ3 Don West (lower left) together known as the “Clementine Two” crew pose in front of the Kamen UH-2A Seasprite. This same crew flew the famous first-ever night rescue mission in Vietnam. Official U.S. Navy Photo.

The Whiting Tower

Commanding Officer

Capt. Todd Bahlau

Executive Officer

Cmdr. Don Gaines

Command Master Chief

Command Master Chief (AW/SW) Lee Stephens

Public Affairs Officers

Jay Cope

Jamie Link

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Lt. j.g. Sarah O’Shea

Lt. j.g. Kyle Shields

Ensign Brittany Stephens

The Whiting Tower is an authorized publication for members of the Naval Air Station Whiting Field team, tenant commands, their family members and retirees in the surrounding area. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Navy, and do not imply endorsement thereof. The editorial content is prepared, edited and provided by the Public Affairs Office of Naval Air Station Whiting Field.

DEP Northwest District Presents Environmental Stewardship Awards

From: Florida Department of Environmental Protection

PENSACOLA, Fla. – Today, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Northwest District recognized the city of Tallahassee, Gulf Power and Naval Air Station Whiting Field for outstanding environmental stewardship.

“On behalf of DEP and the State of Florida, I am proud to recognize the city of Tallahassee, Gulf Power and NAS Whiting Field for their environmental stewardship,” said Shawn Hamilton, director of DEP’s Northwest District. “With such outstanding community partners working along side us, we can better accomplish our goal of safeguarding Florida’s natural resources.”

The awards were presented during the district’s annual open house aimed at growing the community’s awareness of the agency’s mission, increasing communication and developing collaborative relationships with the community. Guests were invited to meet the district’s staff and Director Shawn Hamilton. Permitting and compliance experts from each of the district’s regulatory programs –

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Navy Leaders Bring Back Rating Titles

From Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- On Dec. 21, the Navy announced that effective immediately, Sailors may continue to be addressed by their Rating Titles.

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral John Richardson, with the support of Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Ray Mabus and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Steve Giordano, made the announcement in NAVADMIN 283/16.

“Our Navy needs to be a fast-learning organization - that includes Navy leadership,” Richardson wrote in the NAVADMIN. “The Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority states that our most junior teammate may have the best idea and that we must be open to capturing that idea. We have learned from you, and so effective immediately, all rating names are restored.”

“The SECNAV, MCPON and I, along with other Navy leadership, have had the opportunity to speak with thousands of Sailors during our travels throughout the fleet. The feedback from current and former Sailors has been consistent that there is wide support for the flexibility that the plan offers, but the removal of rating titles was unnecessary and detracted from accomplishing our major goals.”

The rating modernization working group will continue its work on the substantive portion of the rating modernization effort.

“As we looked at rating modernization effort over the past few months, we saw that we could still achieve the positive results we want without changing rating titles right now,” said the Navy’s Chief of Personnel Vice Adm. Robert Burke. “However, modernizing our industrial-age personnel system in order to provide Sailors choice and flexibility still remains a priority for us. Our personnel system has not fundamentally changed since the 1970s, and just like our ships, aircraft and weapons systems, it needs updates to keep pace with a rapidly changing world. We must not shy away from adapting to meet the needs of a 21st century Navy -- including the way we manage our people.”

“As we move forward into the execution stages of



Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Mike Stevens delivers remarks during his Change of Office & Retirement Ceremony held at Adm. Leutze Park on Washington Navy Yard. Stevens served as the 13th MCPON for four years, and turned over responsibility to Steven Giordano as the 14th MCPON. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Martin L. Carey.

the rating modernization, more and more Sailors will have multiple occupational skill sets or ratings,” Burke continued. “Before we get there, we will need to tackle the issue of managing rating names. We will involve Sailors throughout the Fleet and leverage the Rating Modernization working group to figure out how to best do that.”

Sailor 2025 is a set of initiatives collectively aimed at modernizing the personnel system, improving the training process and improving career readiness of the Navy’s Sailors. The program has been a major focus of effort for SECNAV and CNO as they seek to better prepare the workforce for the current and future operating environment.

Sailors have a direct line to provide input to the Rating Modernization working group to make sure their ideas are heard. Send them to NavyRatingMod.fct@navy.mil. 🇺🇸

This Day in Naval History

January 11
1820-The schooner Lynx, commanded by Lt. J. R. Madison, departs St. Marys, Ga., bound for Kingston, Jamaica, to continue her service suppressing pirates. She is never heard from again and no trace of her or her 50-man crew is ever found.

January 12
1953 - Aircraft landings begin operational tests, day and night, onboard USS Antietam (CVA-36), the first angled flight deck carrier.

January 13
1964-Destroyer Manley (DD-940) evacuates 54 Americans and 36 allied nationals after the Zanzibar government is overthrown.

January 14
1943 - USS Gudgeon (SS 211) lands six men, 2,000 pounds of equipment and supplies on Negros Island for first resupply mission for a submarine.

January 15
1916 - The submarine E-2 explodes at the New York Navy Yard because of escaping gases during an overhaul. The interior ship is severely damaged and four men are killed.



The USS Antietam tests the experimental canted deck in 1953. Photo courtesy of Art Morr, Gus Kriara, Bill Hiebert, Frank and Richard Burnham, Mickey Knecht, Timothy Todd, Bill Cowles, Tom Dunklee, and Ed O’Neil, and the USS Antietam Association.

NAS Whiting Field to Rename Auditorium in Honor of MOH Recipient

By: Jay Cope, NAS Whiting Field Public Affairs Office

A Naval Aviator who trained, taught, and commanded a squadron in Northwest Florida will have a building named after him at Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Jan. 17 at 10 a.m. in the base's auditorium.

The ceremony will rededicate the building as the CDR Clyde E. Lassen Auditorium to honor his courage and service to the nation. The ceremony will also serve as a commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. Lassen, a Florida native, was the only Navy helicopter pilot to earn the Medal of Honor during Vietnam.

Shortly after midnight June 19, 1968, Lassen and his crew were sent in their UH-2 Seasprite, called Clementine Two, to rescue two downed aviators who were shot down over North Vietnam. Despite taking heavy fire, flying in a damaged aircraft, and running extremely low on fuel, the team successfully pulled the pilots out on the fifth attempt. It was the first



Lieutenant Clyde E. Lassen sits for a photo after receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor. Official U.S. Navy photo.

night-time helicopter rescue attempt over Vietnam and earned Lassen the Medal of Honor, Lt. j.g. LeRoy Cook the Navy Cross, Aviation Electrician's Mate 2nd Class Bruce Dallas the Silver Star and Aviation Jet Mechanic 3rd Class Don West the Silver Star.

"This rescue was one of the most inspirational stories in helicopter aviation history," Capt. Todd Bahlau, NAS Whiting Field Commanding Officer said. "We are excited to honor a true hero, who also served at NAS Whiting Field."

Lassen received his enlisted training at NAS Pensacola before being commissioned. After his time in Vietnam he also served as an instructor pilot in the local area and ended his career as the Helicopter Training Squadron EIGHT Commanding Officer at NAS Whiting Field.

This will be the second time a building at the installation will be named for Lassen.

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Historic Helicopter Rescue Remembered

By: Jay Cope, NAS Whiting Field Public Affairs



(Then Lieutenant Junior grade) Clyde E. Lassen flies the UH- 2A Seasprite. Official U.S. Navy Photo.

Nearly 47 years ago, a young aviator solemnly bowed his head to have a blue ribbon adorned with 13 stars draped around his neck by the President of the United States. President Lyndon Johnson leaned down to whisper a few words into the helicopter pilot's ear, words that Lt. Clyde Lassen would never remember later due to his nervousness at being in the spotlight.

Receiving the nation's highest military decoration, Lassen was understandably anxious in the White House on Jan 16, 1969 amidst all the pomp, circumstance and attention he never sought. His wife and shipmates all labeled him as a humble and dedicated man who had little love for the spotlight. But wartime often throws normal men into extraordinary circumstances, and so it was for Lt. j.g. Lassen, Lt. j.g. LeRoy Cook, Aviation Electrician's Mate 2nd Class Bruce Dallas, and Aviation Jet Mechanic 3rd Class Don West, the crew of "Clementine Two" on June 19, 1968. What was logged as a "routine rescue mission," was, in reality, one of the most harrowing rescues in Naval helicopter history.

Three aircraft from the carrier USS America (CV-43) were dispatched to the rescue. He emphasized that there were three criteria that had to be met before attempting a rescue. The on-scene commander (usually the rescuer's wingman) had to have visual contact, the survivors had to provide the answer to a predetermined question, and there had to be no enemy forces in the immediate area.

To their surprise, the "Harbormaster" called and said the mission was a "go." It was the first night rescue mission attempted in Vietnam.

Cook remembers commenting, "Okay, here we go. If we are going to go, let's do it right."

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Junior Enlisted Association Steps In to Help United Way of Milton

By: Jay Cope, NAS Whiting Field Public Affairs Office



A member of the Junior Enlisted Association gives a handwrapped gift to a family in need U.S. Navy Photo by Jay Cope, NAS Whiting Field Public Affairs.

Naval Air Station Whiting Field's Junior Enlisted Association was looking for a way to help people in the community during the holidays, but wasn't sure what they could do. The United Way of Milton had donations they could use to help provide a better Christmas to some local families, but didn't have the workforce needed to put it all together.

It was a perfect match.

The United Way works with the Early Learning Coalition to identify low-income families who have both parents working or one parent working and in school. They specifically try to identify families who are trying to help themselves.

The staff at the United Way had identified 25 families, but didn't have the manpower to gather the toys together, wrap them for the families, and then present them.

"There was no big organization doing things for Christmas, so this is important," Guy Thompson, the

United Way of Milton Director, said. "We are proud of our military and thank you for your service. I continue to be amazed at how the military rises to the occasion."

For the JEA members, it was exciting to be able to help during the holidays, and they especially enjoyed being there at the United Way to help present the gift boxes to the families.

"You get a sense of happiness and are kind of humbled by the fact that you can do something for people," Petty Officer Kyle Wyrock said about participating in the project. "We kind of take for granted, and don't realize how good we have it until you participate in something like this and realize the kind of impact you can have to others."

About 15 members of the JEA helped to wrap the presents before giving them to the families and about 10 Sailors came to the United Way to present them – as well as a special visit from Santa Claus.

It is one of just many opportunities throughout the year where the NAS Whiting Field team tries to be a good neighbor in the community, and for Captain Todd Bahlau, the project is another stepping stone in showing the community that the military here cares.

"As much as Santa Rosa County gives to Naval Air Station Whiting Field, we love to give back to them," NAS Whiting Field Commanding Officer Capt. Todd Bahlau stated. "Well done to the Junior Enlisted Association and thank you so much for helping the residents of our county." 🇺🇸



The Junior Enlisted Association prepares gifts for local families in need. Executive Officer Commander Don Gaines dresses up as Santa Clause to help spread some Christmas Cheer. U.S. Navy photo by Jay Cope, NAS Whiting Field.

A Year In Review

Jan 13: NAS Whiting Field earns Navy- wide Flagship Volunteerism Recognition as runner up for Project Good Neighbor. NAS Whiting Field worked with several local charities to donate more than 50,000 pounds of food, transport household goods for veterans who needed to move, and visited hospice homes.

Jan 29: Helicopter Training Squadron EIGHT Augment Unit observed a change in leadership as Cmdr. Justin S. Cross gave the helm to Cmdr. Isaiah J. Blake, USN. Cross served as the Commanding Officer since April 2014.



Feb 1-12: NAS Whiting Field participates in Solid Curtain Citadel Shield, and anti-terrorism/Force Protection exercise to enhance the training and readiness of Navy Security Forces to respond to threats against the installations and units. U.S. Navy photo by Jay Cope, NAS Whiting Field Public Affairs.

Feb 12: Naval leadership recognizes Naval Air Station Whiting Field outstanding support to the local community with an Honorable mention in the Health, Safety and Fitness Flagship Award program.

Feb 26: NAS Whiting Field and NAS Pensacola were recognized for their emergency response performances and firefighter training and education with the Fire department of the Year in the large base category.

March 14: NOLF Summerdale officially reopens in Baldwin County, Alabama. The field had been inactive for ten years, but military construction lengthened runways to accommo-

date for the T-6B Texan II aircraft.

March 15: NAS Whiting Field earns Personal Excellence Flagship Award from Command Navy Installations Command and USS Bainbridge award for outstanding community service activities that promote academics, life skills, and civic education for local youth.

March 19: Col. Gary Kling, USMC turns over the helm of Training Wing FIVE to Capt. Mark Murray, USN, previously the Deputy Commodore. Kling served as the wings commodore since Sep. 2014.

March 24: Helicopter Training Squadron TWENTY-EIGHT observed a change of leadership when Lt. Col. Cory E. Dekaraai formally relieved Cmdr. Jeffrey D. Ketcham, USN, as commanding officer.

April- May: NAS Whiting Field participates in the “America’s Prepare-A-Thon,” a grassroots program run by FEMA that aims to ensure Americans are prepared to handle emergencies in their communities. The program involved planning for natural disasters such as hurricanes, as well as aviation-related incidents.

April 14: Lt. Col. Rafford Coleman, USMC, formally turned over command of Helicopter Training Squadron EIGHTEEN to Cmdr. Brian Sanderson, USN. April 29: Cmdr. Wade Iverson, USN officially transferred command of Training Squadron SIX to Lt. Col. Richard Roberts, USMC.



July 28: NAS Whiting Field opens the Northfield Snack Bar. Ensign Michael Massey and Ensign Jordan Radford are excited to try on of the Snacks Bar’s unique menu items, the Mexican Pizza. U.S. Navy Photo by Ensign Kyle Shields.

May 13: Training Squadron THREE’s unparalleled dedication and superior performance were recognized with two Chief of Naval Air Training awards: the Excellence Award for Primary Flight training and the Vice Admiral Robert Goldthwaite award for overall training excellence.

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CNATRA Sailor of the Year

- (Cont. from Page 2)

coaching. He coordinated with NAS Whiting Field MWR to facilitate an archery tournament for service members and families onboard NAS Whiting Field. Despite his busy schedule, he is currently working on a Master's degree of Science in Management.

"Petty Officer Anderson is an exceptional Sailor who represents the very best from Training Air wing FIVE. His extraordinary leadership in one of my premier Advanced Helicopter Training Squadron has positively influenced hundreds of United States Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Allied Rotary wing pilots who see a role model for the enlisted personnel they will encounter in the fleet.

He demonstrates leadership and managerial ability usually seen only at the Chief Petty Officer level," Commodore Training Air Wing FIVE Capt Mark Murray said.

Hard work and dedication do not come close to the description of what is required to hold the title of Sailor of the Year. Selection process for the best of the best includes personal and professional development. Anderson gives thanks and reasons for his success, both his personal and professional entities, to his team mates.

"I give the credit to the team I am part of, and the Sailors that work for me and with me every day." Anderson said.

This program has over 50 years of operation in service to recognize individual Sailors who best represent the ever-growing group of dedicated professional Sailors at each command and ultimately the entire Navy. When initiated, only the Atlantic and Pacific Fleet Sailors were recognized but within 10 years, it stretched to include the shore establishments and the Navy Reserve Sailors.

"Finally, I can state without reservation, PO1 (NAC/AW) Anderson is a noteworthy leader who will inspire all those around to achieve beyond their expectations." Rear Adm. Dell Bull said. 🇺🇸



Executive Officer Cmdr. Don Gaines gives Sailors from TRAINING WING FIVE and NAS Whiting Field a "Back in the Saddle" brief, followed by instruction on the recent Navy Transgender Service Members policy to Command Personnel. The instruction took place at the NAS Whiting Field auditorium on January 3. U.S. Navy photo by Jamie Link, NAS Whiting Field Public Affairs.

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Follow us on Twitter: @naswf

Follow us on Instagram: @naswhitingfield

Ec-nomics

Water Conservation Tips

Don't leave the water running when brushing your teeth. You could save as much as nine gallons each time you brush.

Hours of Operation for MWR Food Service Locations:

Tower Café (Starbucks)	Mon-Fri	0600-1300
South Field Snack Bar	Mon-Fri	0600-1900
Mulligans Grill	Mon-Fri	0630-1400
Bowling Center	Mon-Fri	0700-1900
North Field Snack Bar	Mon-Fri	1030-1700

Solar Panels

- (Cont. from Page 2)
Waste, Air, Water and Environmental Resources – were on hand to answer questions and provide information about their respective programs.

The city of Tallahassee, Gulf Power and NAS Whiting Field are the first to be awarded under the Northwest District's new Environmental Stewardship Awards Program. The program was developed to recognize those who are working alongside DEP to safeguard Florida's natural resources. 🌿



Pictured left to right: DEP Northwest District Director Shawn Hamilton; Sri Tammiseti, City of Tallahassee; Captain Todd Bahlau, NAS Whiting Field; Jeff Cole, Gulf Power.



MA2 Sebastian Rivera receives a 96 hour base liberty award from NAS Whiting Field Capt. Todd Bahlau for earning a perfect Physical Readiness Test (PRT) score. U.S. Navy Photo by Jamie Link, NAS Whiting Field Public Affairs.

SECURITY CORNER



The following applies to all DoD installations regardless what state it located in.

Florida's Move Over Law: Protects law enforcement officers, emergency workers and tow truck drivers stopped along roadways while performing their jobs. It requires motorists to move over when a patrol car, emergency vehicle or tow truck/wrecker that is stopped on the side of the road with its lights flashing. If such movement cannot be safely accomplished, motorists shall slow down to a speed of 20 mph below the posted speed limit.

Motorists are required to: Drivers should approach the emergency vehicle with caution; change lanes away from the emergency vehicle if on a multi-lane roadway. If the driver cannot change lanes safely, slow down to a safe speed of 20 mph below posted speed limit and be careful not to impede or block the flow of traffic unless otherwise directed by an Law

Enforcement Officer. Violators of the Move Over Law will be issued a citation! You also can receive points on your license for this violation, as well as pay a fine.

Pull Over for Emergency Vehicles: We've all experienced an ambulance, police car, or fire truck quickly approaching behind us with their lights and sirens on. When an emergency vehicle (including law enforcement, fire trucks, ambulances, and tow trucks) approach, you are expected to pull over to the closest edge of the roadway and stop until the emergency vehicle has passed. The intent is for you to make way for the emergency vehicle so it can quickly move through traffic. Never block an intersection. This applies to pedestrians as well as drivers. This also includes funeral processions that have a police escort.

Auditorium Renaming

- (Cont. from Page 4)



The crew of Clementine Two and the rescued pilots from the night time mission in Vietnam come aboard the U.S.S. Juett. Official U.S. Navy Photo.

Previously, an Academic Training Building was named for him, however, the building was damaged during Hurricane Dennis and had to be demolished. A display case of Lassen memorabilia from that building forms the core of the auditorium lobby.

Naval Aviation Museum Historian Hill Goodspeed will be the featured speaker for the occasion and retired Navy Capt. Dick Catone, a former Training Air Wing FIVE Commodore, will also speak during the ceremony. The two officers, Catone and Lassen, knew each other when they were in theater together.

The auditorium serves as the location where 100 percent of the Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps Helicopter aviators receive their Wings of Gold designating them as Naval Aviators. Training Air Wing FIVE holds winging ceremonies roughly every two weeks and produces more than 600 winged aviators annually.

The rededication ceremony is open to persons with authorized base access to include: active duty and reserve personnel, family members, base civilian personnel and retirees. 🛩️

January

2017

<http://twitter.com/1rhN400775C>

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News & Notes

Access Changes

Effective immediately, NAS Whiting Field will start issuing one day Defense Biometric Identification system (DBIDS) passes to commercial contractors and vendors who are not applying and receiving the Rapids Gate/Navy commercial Access control System (NCACS) credential as per CNIC 5530.14a and CNRSEINST 5530.1b. If a vendor/contractor voluntarily applies for Rapids Gate/NCACS credential and is verified by our Pass & ID staff, the policy in place is that they may be provided interim access approval until they are authorized participation or denied participation in the system -- not to exceed 28 days. The DBIDS credential will only be issued to those individuals that do not fit into the categories of commercial contractors, vendors, CAC, Teslin, or other PIV-I federal credential holders such as TWIC, DOE etc.. or as per the guidance provided.

MWR Tickets

- Reserve a couple pallets for the next Paint & Sip event on Thursday, 26 Jan in the Atrium. Seating is limited --- this is a fun event.
- Ridge Cinema Tickets are available in books of ten or singles too. Single tickets are \$8 for active duty and \$8.50 for all others.
- Blue Man Group at Universal Orlando ...\$49 each.
- “Center Ice” tickets for the Pensacola Ice Flyers are \$18 a seat.
- Cruises and other get-aways are available at MWR. Make a comfortable down payment and use easy plan to regularly take care of the balance.

Community Recreation Tickets & Travel office: 850-665-6250

Leave Donations

Mitchell Clay McDonald Jr. is a Police Officer at NAS Pensacola, Mr. Robert Viafranco, a Fire Fighter at NAS Corpus Christi, and Mr. Robert W. Perez, a Security Guard at NAS Pensacola, are under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program and need annual leave

donations. For anyone wishing to donate annual leave please use:
OPM 630-A Inside Agency (DON)
OPM 630-B Outside Agency (Other than DON)

You may fax completed forms along with your most recent LES to CNIC SLDCADA at 1-855-615-2310. If anyone would like additional information concerning the Leave Transfer Program, they may contact 902- 542-2283 or email at Rodney.pfalzer@navy.mil. Your concern for another federal employee is greatly appreciated.

Commissary Scholarship Program Receiving Applications

This holiday season is full of the usual landmark dates, including Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. However, there's one other date in December which could prove to be almost as important as the traditional celebrations for some military families: Dec. 13 marked the opening of the Scholarships for Military Children Program for the 2017-2018 school year. At least one scholarship worth \$2,000 will be awarded at every commissary location where qualified applications are received. Additional recipients will be selected

based on a prorated basis, so more scholarships will be awarded at those stores with larger numbers of applicants. A total of 700 scholarship grants will be awarded this year. To qualify for consideration, applicants must be a dependent, unmarried child, younger than 21 — or 23, if enrolled as a full-time student at a college or university — of a service member on active duty, a Reserve or Guard member, retiree or survivor of a military member who died while on active duty, or survivor of a retiree. Applications must be hand-delivered or shipped via the U.S. Postal Service or other delivery methods to the commissary where the applicant's family normally shops by close of business Friday, Feb. 12, 2017. Applications cannot be emailed or faxed. In the past 16 years of its existence, the program has awarded more than \$15 million in scholarships to over 9,000 students. For more information, students or sponsors should visit www.militaryscholar.org. You can also call Scholarship Managers at (856) 616-9311 or email them at militaryscholar@scholarshipmanagers.com.

THE LANDING STRIP



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Editor's Note: Special thanks to Ensign Zach Morris who granted permission to use the comics in The Whiting Tower. The paper will run two of his comic strips each week for as long as he has material for us to run. Look for a special feature on Morris in the next edition of the Tower. If you have an idea for a strip, please email zmorris1011@gmail.com for a chance to see your idea put into print.

Rescue Mission

(- Cont. from Page 4)



Lieutenant Clyde E. Lassen sits in the cockpit of the Kamen UH- 2A Seasprite. Official U.S. Navy photo.

The team crossed over onto land south of a known anti-aircraft artillery site, and headed north toward the last known location of the aircraft. The glow from the downed aircraft could be seen about 30 miles away. They were fired at once on the way in, but couldn't tell from what or where. The downed pilots were able to get a magnesium tracer through the jungle canopy to alert the Clementine Two team of their location about ten miles from the crash. Lassen and Cook arrived at about 20 minutes before 2 a.m.

Dallas and West reported another missile passing beneath the helicopter as they spiraled toward the treetops. The helicopter was too heavy for the first hover attempt as they located the pilots. Lassen waved off and ordered Cook to dump fuel to reduce the weight. During the second hover attempt, Lassen was able to maneuver the helo next to a tall tree and below the treetops. With the rotors only a few feet away from the branches, the crew tried to lower a cable. It passed within inches of Holtzclaw's hand, but got tangled in the brush where the downed pilot couldn't get to it. Then the parachute flare went out and Lassen had to break hover and pull out of the trees. On the way out, he collided with one of the trees damaging the stabilizer and the right side cabin door.

Pulling up and circling around to wait for more flares and another attempt, the crew told Holtzclaw and

Burns that they needed to get out of the jungle. As the helicopter hovered near the rice paddy where they hoped to meet the aviators, people from the nearby village began running up the hill firing toward the aircraft. With the stabilizer damaged, the crew felt like they were getting hit by the small arms and automatic weapons fire and returned fire with the two M-60s manned by West and Dallas and an M-16 fired by Cook from the cockpit.

During this exchange, as Cook shot fired his rifle, the expended shell casings were ricocheting inside the helicopter canopy, and at least one struck Lassen in the face while hovering. According to Cook, he said, "I'm hit!" when he felt the liquid on his face. Lassen licked his fingers and told his co-pilot, "it's just sweat, I'm okay."

Lassen pulled the helicopter back around and hovered down near the ground about 100 yards from the jungle. He couldn't set Clementine Two down as the aircraft would sink in the mud, so he kept it at a modified hover. The team received a call from Burns that they weren't at the jungle's edge yet, so he lifted the helicopter around to circle again. By this time, Holtzclaw and Burns reported hearing soldiers around them. As the helicopter dropped low for a fourth time, about 80-100 people were near the site in the rice paddies, and again the team had to break hover and circle around as the downed pilots were still entangled by the jungle undergrowth.

At this point, Vietnamese soldiers were only about 20 yards behind Holtzclaw and Burns and were taking shots at them through the brush. The bullets striking the ground around them spurred them on for a last dash for the edge. They called the helo back for a fifth attempt to rescue them. Clementine Two was running low on fuel, and as

- (Cont. on Page 12)



MEDAL OF HONOR—Lt Clyde E. Lassen, USN, in cockpit of UH-2, poses with members of HC-7's Detachment 104. Lieutenant Lassen received the Medal of Honor after the hazardous rescue of two F-4 pilots whose aircraft was downed at night over North Vietnam. (USN photo)

Rescue Mission

- (Cont. from Page 11)

they made the last descent, the second set of flares went out dropping the team into a pitch-black darkness again. With no time to wait for a third set of flares, Lassen flicked on the external lights for the aircraft. Lit up for the aviators to see, Lassen held the hover. Unfortunately, Clementine Two also made a much easier target for the approaching soldiers. Finally, two figures burst out of the jungles edge.

West and Dallas resumed firing as Burns and Holtzclaw raced to the waiting helicopter. The crew was taking fire from three sides now. Despite his broken leg, Burns made it to the helicopter first as Dallas unceremoniously yanked him into the cabin onto his stomach. Holtzclaw similarly got thrown in the helicopter, but on his back just a few seconds later. West tapped Lassen to give him the signal to take off, reportedly saying "Lieutenant, let's get out of here." Although struggling with the heavy load, the helo was eventually able to climb to 4,000 feet.

With less than 30 minutes of fuel left, Lassen headed the most direct route back. Along the way, the cargo door, damaged when it hit the tree, gave way and dropped to the ground. The nearest friendly force was the USS Jouett (DLG-29), which approached to within three miles of the shore to help the aircraft make it to the ship. However, the helo was not out of the woods yet. As they approached the sea, the crew had to pass another AAA site and Cook spotted some bright lights approaching at their altitude. He dropped the collective losing about 1,000 feet of altitude quickly to avoid the oncoming ordnance.

As Clementine Two approached USS Jouett's position, the ship's skipper turned on the flight deck lights, even though they were within shore artillery range, to guide the crew in. Lassen made a straight in approach to the deck. With only 135 pounds of fuel left, there would not have been enough for a wave-off and second approach.

The ship's crew immediately gathered Burns to take him to sickbay. As the corpsman helped him off the helo, he said, "Clyde, I don't know how to thank you guys."

Lassen's response was simply, "We've been over here several months now. Nice to have something to do."

Despite the cool exterior, Lassen's widow Linda confirms that he was indeed very tense during the rescue.

"He talked to me about the mission, and about how scared he was, and about how he thought he was shot and bleeding at one point," she said.

However, Lassen never spoke much about the mission to their two children Daryl and Lynell. Linda emphasized that the kids grew up around his honors and mementos, but that they never heard the whole story until the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola held a 25th anniversary reunion for the crew and the two rescued pilots.

Using the MOH to aggrandize himself just wasn't in his nature, and Linda stressed that it upset him if others made a big deal of it.

"When he first came back to Whiting Field in 1979, they made a special parking spot for him with the Medal of Honor plaque," she stated. "He was actually mad that they

would take away an enlisted parking space to do that. He was humble and didn't want special treatment."

Linda said that Lassen was always very appreciative of the crew and deferred credit to them. Cook and Dallas likewise thought highly of Lassen and that despite the chaos of the rescue he kept things calm inside the cockpit.

"People were just doing the jobs they were trained to do," Cook said.

Crewman Bruce Dallas confirms that it was the dedication to the job at hand that kept the crew there long enough to rescue Burns and Holtzclaw.

"It wasn't about being a hero or anything like that. We were determined to see the mission get done."

Lassen stayed in the Navy for another 13 years after earning the MOH. His career followed a typical course that included a tour as a flight instructor, an assignment aboard the USS Austin (LPD-4), a transfer to Norfolk to train H-2 pilots in a fleet replacement squadron, a tour in Jacksonville with Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron ELEVEN before reporting to staff duty with HS Wing ONE and finally his time as the Executive Officer and Commanding Officer of Helicopter Training Squadron EIGHT at NAS Whiting Field. He retired in the Pensacola area with 21 years of service to work as a businessman and real estate broker in the area until he passed away in 1994 after a brief battle with cancer.

His legacy as the only Navy helicopter pilot to earn the MOH during the Vietnam War was probably the one thing he would change if he could.

"Clyde was always sad that more pilots were not honored the way he was," Linda said. "He always thought there were others in the squadron whose rescues were just



The Clementine Two crew sit in front of UH Seasprite. Official U.S. Navy photo.

Year in Review

- (Cont. from Page 5)

May 9: The F-35C Joint Strike Fighter officially reopens Naval Outlying Field Chocktaw with its first landing in nine months. The field was closed due to runway construction.

May 5: Helicopter Training Squadron EIGHTEEN receives Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA) Training Excellence Award for Advanced Squadron from Rear Admiral Dell Bull at the National Museum of Naval Aviation.

May 20: Lt. Cmdr. Douglas Schweirkhart was relieved of charge of Naval Branch Health Clinic onboard NAS Whiting Field by Lt. Cmdr. Maria Edusada.

June 6: NAS Whiting Field marked the 74th anniversary of the Battle of Midway with a ceremony at the base auditorium.

June 21: NAS Whiting Field receives the 148th and final T6-B training aircraft. The final T6-b flew in a three-plane formation flight with low altitude passes with the centennial yellow T-6B and the first T-6B to ever arrive on base.

July 6: NAS Whiting Field hosts patriotic motorcycle ride known as the Patriot Tour. Two motorcycle groups rumbled across base escorting a single American Flag to pay tribute to all members and families of America's Armed Forces.

Jul 21: NAS Whiting Field Commissary is named Best Small Commissary Award for 2016. Ten other stores were nominated, but the NAS Whiting Field Commissary stood out for its safety, cleanliness, sales, customer communication, and on base presence and outreach.

Aug 11: Fleet and Family Support Center offers Life Skills Courses to promote optimal emotional and physical health, as well as aid service members and civilians to adjust to ever-changing military lifestyle and career.

Aug 19: Whiting Pines participates in Operation Homefront Back-to-School-Brigade by providing school supplies to military and DoD Families of NAS Whiting Field.

Sept 22: Fleet and Family Support Center hosts memorial service at chapel to honor fallen heroes for the second annual Bells across America campaign

Oct 7: Cmdr. John. D. McBryde turned over command of Helicopter Training Squadron EIGHT to Cmdr. Stephen Audelo at the National Naval Aviation Museum.



Oct 24- 28: Coast Guard, Marine, and Navy helicopters come to NAS Whiting Field for the annual Fleet Fly-In. The event consisted of student flight time, as well as tours of the visiting aircraft and a flight skills competition. U.S. Navy Photo by Ensign Kyle F. Shields

Nov 14: The Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Detachment Whiting Field observed a change of command. Cmdr Kevin Bittle turned the helm over to Lt. Cmdr. Steven Bryant.

Dec 7: Commanding officer Capt. Todd Bahlau reads the names of lives lost on Dec. 7, 1941 at Pearl Harbor commemoration ceremony.

Dec 16: NAS Whiting Field earns Florida Department of Environmental Protection Plant Operations Excellence Award for having clean and safe water.



Dec 6: Commanding Officer Captain Todd Bahlau and NAS Whiting Field command personnel plant a tree to commemorate NAS Whiting Field being named "Tree City, USA" for the 25th year. U.S. Navy Photo by Jay Cope, Public Affairs Naval Air Station Whiting Field.

Whiting Field News

Congratulations to the Training FIVE Wingers and Scholars



Top Row: Lt. Col. Cory E. DeKraai, USMC, CO HT-28; 1st Lt. Brendan O’Branski, USMC, HT-8; Ensign Steven M. Schlender, USN, HT-18; 1st Lt. Scott Willey, USMC, HT-28; Lt. j.g. Aaron P. Szymborski, USN, HT-28; 1st Lt. Kevin C. Degener, USMC, HT-8; Retired Capt. Timothy T. McGurie, USCG.. **Middle Row:** Cmdr. Brian D. Sanderson, USN, CO HT-18; 1st Lt. Benjamin J. Murphy, USMC, HT-18; Ensign Benjamin J. Mosebar, USN, HT-28; Ensign Eric J. Zecman, USN, HT-28; Lt. j.g. Jackson L. McGinnis, USCG, HT-28; Ensign Megan E. Delage, USN, HT-8; Capt. Mark Murray, USN, Commodore TW-5. **Bottom Row:** Cmdr. Stephen A. Audelo, USN, CO HT-8; Ensign Michelle C. Costanza, USN, HT-18; Ensign Michael R. Topp, USN, HT-28; Ensign Benjamin R. White, USN, HT-18; Lt. j.g. Jonathan A. Lopez-Mercado, USN, HT-8; Ensign Rebecca R. Atkinson, USN, HT-18; Ensign Sarah M. Black, USN, HT-28.



Congratulations to Training Air Wing FIVE’s Student Naval Aviators who earned the Acedemic Achievement Award.