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HT-18 marks 40 years of ‘Excellence’

By Lt. j.g. Tim Mosso, NAS Whiting Field Public Affairs

Helicopter Training Squadron EIGHTEEN celebrated the 40th anniversary of its commissioning at Naval Air Station Whiting Field on Thursday, March 1. Training Air Wing FIVE Commodore Col. James Grace led a group of honored squadron alumni, instructor pilots, students, and civilian staff in recognizing the milestone event.

The open-air occasion was held on the squadron’s north lawn under blue skies and spring-like weather that defied the calendar. The Pace High School Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps provided a color guard to honor the day and highlight the long-standing partnership between the naval service and the west Florida community.

HT-18 Commanding Officer Cmdr. Jeffrey DeBrine greeted his guests and introduced a succession of guest speakers, each of whom offered testimony to the personal fulfillment that HT-18 has brought to their lives and the contributions its personnel have made to naval aviation.

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HT-18 Commanding Officer Cmdr. Jeffrey DeBrine welcomes honored alumni, flight instructors, students, and civilian staff members during the HT-18 40th anniversary celebration on Thursday, March 1 at NAS Whiting Field. The HT-18 “Vigilant Eagles” have winged 13,216 naval aviators since the squadron’s 1972 commissioning. U.S. Navy photo by Lt. j.g. Tim Mosso.

NASWF to participate in Navy-wide security drill

NASNAS Whiting Field Public Affairs

NAS Whiting Field will participate in the Solid Curtain-Citadel Shield 2012 anti-terrorism/force protection exercises that will be conducted on all continental United States naval installations March 19 - 25.

These annual exercises, coordinated by Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces, and Commander, Navy Installations Command, are designed to enhance the training and readiness of Navy security forces to respond to threats to installations and units. The two exercises, each with a distinct focus, occur simultaneously and will stress different areas of the Navy's anti-terrorism program to enhance the training and readiness of Naval Security Force personnel to respond to real-world threats.



Measures have been taken to minimize disruptions to normal base and station operations, but there may be times when the exercises cause increased traffic around the base, delays in base access, and facility closures.

Military personnel, civilian employees, retirees, family members and visitors should factor in additional time for getting through gates to conduct business aboard the base. Vehicle drivers and passengers should

carry proper identification with them at all times.

To facilitate training and minimize vehicle activity, the following actions will be observed on Friday and Saturday March 23 and 24:

- All vehicles entering and leaving the base will be

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TRICARE switching dental contractors

By Ensign James Hedman, NAS Whiting Field Public Affairs

As of May 1, 2012, the TRICARE Dental Program, or TDP, is switching to Metropolitan Life Insurance from United Concordia Companies, Inc.

The TDP program deals with dental coverage for “over 2 million family members of uniformed service active duty personnel, members of the Selected Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve, their eligible family members, and Survivors,” according to a MetLife website. United Concordia is still the contractor for active duty personnel.

The program offers the following benefits: the annual maximum is increased from \$1,200 to \$1,300; lifetime orthodontic coverage from \$1,500 to \$1,750; an additional \$1,200 for accident coverage; coverage for “white” fillings; and a slightly reduced premium requirement will be required every month for the first year (by the nature of the outbidding process between MetLife and United Concordia). The change in contractor, however, may prove costly for some TRICARE families and reservists.

Under United Concordia, the period of coverage ran from Feb. 1, 2011 to Jan. 31, 2012. Under the new contract, however, MetLife set the period of coverage to

renew from Aug. 1, 2011 through April 30, 2012. Due to the time required for the contract to take effect, families will not be renewing annual coverage on Feb. 1, 2012, but it will keep rolling from Aug. 1, 2011.

The most recent cost-sharing limit period will continue from Aug. 1, 2011, until May 1, 2012; during that time, members exceeding \$1,200 in total dental expenses will be personally responsible for paying amounts in excess of the limit. Schedule dental appointments after April 30, 2012 if you are near the \$1,200 cost-sharing limit for 2011-2012 or are in no immediate need of dental work.

Don Nelson, Naval Air Station Whiting Field’s TriCare Health Benefits Advisor, says, “the three month window [Aug. 1 through April 30] is where people are going to be a little confused because normally it resets in February to zero, so they can start their new year.”

And TRICARE has no alternative if a member exceeds the expense limit. NAS Whiting Field, according to Nelson, has around 3,500 TRICARE families not including reservists.

“...some of them are going to get caught... there is no recourse. They’re going to have to pay out-of-pocket if they incur over \$1,200 in dental expenses between Aug. 1 and April 30.”

This Week in Naval History

March. 7

1966 - Department of Navy is reorganized into present structure under Chief of Naval Operations.

1994 - Navy issues first orders to women assigned aboard combat ship, USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69).

March. 8

1854 - Commodore Matthew Perry opens treaty negotiations with Japan.

1862 - Ironclad ram CSS Virginia destroys USS Cumberland and USS Congress.

1958 - Battleship USS Wisconsin (BB-64) is decommissioned, leaving the Navy without an active battleship for the first time since 1895.

March. 9

1847 - Commodore David Connor leads successful amphibious assault near Vera Cruz, Mexico.

1862 - First battle between ironclads, USS Monitor and CSS Virginia.

For more news, visit www.history.navy.mil.

Security

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required to use the West Gate (Highway 87A) as East Gate (off Munson Highway) will be closed Friday and will not reopen until noon Saturday.

- The Navy Exchange main complex (including the barbershop, Navy Gateway Inns and Suites mini-mart and auto service station); Subway, and all Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities will be closed on Friday.

- The Navy Exchange main complex (including the barbershop and auto service station will remain closed Saturday, however the Navy Gateway Inns and suites and the mini-mart will open at their normally scheduled time. All MWR facilities, except the boat docks, will open at noon Saturday March 24. The boat docks will retain their normal operating hours.

- The Navy Exchange mini-mart located in the Whiting Pines Housing complex will be open their normal scheduled hours of operation both days.

- The commissary will open Monday March 19 and Monday March 26 to adjust for being closed Friday and Saturday March 23 and 24.

- The Naval Branch Health Clinic and pharmacy will remain open Friday March 23.

Solid Curtain-Citadel Shield is a regularly scheduled exercise and is not being held in response to any specific threat.

News and Notes

ITT Ice Flyer Tickets - The Information Tickets and Travel office has discounted tickets to all remaining home games. Tickets are only \$8.50 instead of the normal \$16 price at the gate. Tickets are limited for each game, so call ITT at 850-623-7032 to reserve your seat. Here is the schedule for the Flyers March home games:

Friday March 9 - 7:05pm, vs Fayetteville
Saturday March 10 - 3:05 pm vs Fayetteville
Tuesday March 13 - 7:05 pm vs Columbus
Tuesday March 20 - 7:05 pm vs Mississippi
Friday March 23 - 7:05 pm vs Louisiana
Saturday March 24 - 7:05 pm vs Mississippi

Marine Aviation Centennial - The Marine Corps Aviation Association (MCAA) McCutcheon Squadron will salute Marine Aviation's Centennial May 10 with a four day and three night event in Gulf Shores/Orange Beach, Ala. The event is designed to celebrate Marine Aviation comaraderie throughout the years. The highlight of the celebration will be the Warrior Night Memorial Dinner May 12 from 4 to 10 p.m. Organized as a traditional Marine Corps Mess Night, the evening will entail a dinner, unlimited beverages traditional toasts and more. For information, tickets and reservations check out www.warriornight.com or www.honorourmarines.org.

Embry Riddle Registration - Embry Riddle Aeronautical University is now registering for the Spring 2 term through March 19, 2012. Hours on board NAS Pensacola are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays in Bldg. 634, Suite 033, 250 Chambers Avenue. Hours on board NAS Whiting Field are Wednesdays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Bldg, 1417, Room 163. Late registration and add/drop a course for a full refund will be held March 19-23. Everyone is encouraged to register early. Classes begin March 19. New Student Orientation will be held Wednesday, March 14, 2012 5 to 6 p.m. on board NAS Pensacola in Bldg. 634, Suite 033. Embry Riddle Aeronautical University's Pensacola campus offers certificate programs, associate and bachelors degree programs with various specializations in Professional Aeronautics and Technical Management and the Master of Aeronautical Science degree. Email pensacola@erau.edu, visit www.embryriddle.edu/pensacola or call 458-1098 for more information.

Bagdad Park St. Patrick's Day Celebration - The Bagdad Waterfronts Florida Partnership will host the St. Patrick's Day Antiques and Arts Faire in Bagdad on March 17, 2012. The Faire will feature art and antique vendors, especially heritage arts, such as crafts, woodworking, pottery, jewelry making, and paintings, as well as antique dealers from around much of the region. Games, music, bagpipers, face painting, and storytelling, especially for children but fun for young and old, as well as food vendors and drinks. An especially exciting feature will be the St. Patrick's Day Dog Parade, for which owners are invited to outfit their dogs (and even themselves) in St. Patrick's Day attire. However, all dogs are welcome. It will also feature classic cars, and motorcycles show. There will be music all day on the Shamrock Stage. All proceeds will be devoted to the opening of the new Bagdad Mill Site Park. The Faire will begin at 9:00 A. M. and run until 4:00 P.M. The location is at the intersection of Forsyth Street and Old Bagdad Highway (Main St.). Ample parking is available. Free Admission.

Experienced Riders Course - Naval Air Station Whiting Field Safety Officer Rick Ballanger announced that there are additional seats available for the March 29 Experienced Riders Course. The



Retaining Our Best and Brightest

Master-at-Arms 1st Class Scott Grettum repeats the oath of enlistment as recited by Lt. David Vandyke. Grettum reenlisted in the NASWF command conference room Friday, March 2 for six more years. U.S. Navy photo by Ensign James Hedman.

class was extended to 12 participants so anyone wishing to register for one of the extra seats should call Ballanger at 850-623-7180 or go to navymotorcyclerider.com and register online.

Run for Their Lives - Lakeview Center is sponsoring their 5th annual 5K Run/Walk to raise awareness of issues pertaining to sexual assault. The 5K is scheduled for Saturday, April 21 beginning at 8 a.m. on Pensacola Beach. Pre-registration is \$18 for all ages with a \$3 discount for active duty military. The cost to participate is \$23 on the day of the race. For more information view the race website at www.runfortheirlives.kintera.org.

Official Notices

At a Special Court Martial convened on board NAS Jacksonville, a Seaman (SN) pled guilty to desertion, and false official statement. The Military Judge sentenced the SN to 90 days confinement, reduction in rank to E-1, and forfeiture of \$700.00 pay per month for three months. A pretrial agreement limits confinement to 68 days.

At a Special Court Martial convened on board NAS Jacksonville, a Petty Officer Second Class (PO2) pled guilty to three specifications of false official statement, two specifications of BAH fraud totaling \$18,553.53, and forgery. The Military Judge sentenced the PO2 to three months confinement, reduction in rank to E-1, forfeiture of \$978.00 pay per month for three months, a fine of \$8,000.00 (additional confinement of 3 months will be served if the fine is not paid), and a Bad Conduct Discharge.

At a Special Court Martial convened on board NAS Jacksonville, a Second Class Petty Officer (PO2) pled guilty to using anabolic steroids and two specifications of assault. The Military Judge sentenced the PO2 to one year confinement, reduction in rank to E-1, and a Bad Conduct Discharge.

Upcoming Events

Mar. 9, 1300 - Winging Ceremony - Base Auditorium
March 19-25 - Solid Curtain / Citadel Shield Exercise
Mar. 22, 1300 - Winging Ceremony - Base Auditorium
April 3 - RDML Scorby Visit to NASWF

April 8 - Easter
April 13, 1300 - Winging Ceremony - Base Auditorium
April 27 - VADM William D. French Visit to NASWF
May 11, 1300 - Winging Ceremony - Base Auditorium

Fleet and Family Support Classes

Challenges of Flight School and Marriage - Thursday, March 8 and 29, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Being in Flight School is hard! Being married in Flight School is even harder! This class will help you and your spouse avoid the common pitfalls of the unique challenges Flight School has to offer. Class will be held at the FFSC conference room. For more information, contact a work and family life specialist at 850-623-7177.

VA Representative - Friday, March 9 and 23, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Call (850) 623-7177 for appointment.

Guide to Federal Job Applications - Monday, March 12, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Is it worth your while to invest your time and effort in searching and applying for a federal job? If your answer is yes, then you need to attend this class in order to learn how to prepare the best application possible. You will learn how to read an announcement, analyze core competencies for language, analyze vacancy listings for keywords, and how to apply for jobs. Class will be held at the FFSC conference room. For more information, contact a work and family life specialist at 850-623-7177.

Lunch and Learn - Tuesday, March 13, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Grief and Loss - Grief is a natural response to loss. You may associate grief with the death of a loved one - and this type of loss does often cause the most intense grief. But, any loss can cause grief, including: relationship break up, loss of health, losing a job, loss of financial stability, a miscarriage, death of a pet, and more. It takes time to work through a loss. Come learn from others who have worked through loss and have adjusted to a new life. Share your unique experience for others who are new to the process. Gain understanding as you find a way forward to once again anticipate good times and find joy again in the experience of living.



109 YEARS OF SERVICE

NAS Whiting Field Chief Petty Officer's Association



**Invites you to our 2nd Annual Chief Petty Officer
Birthday Golf Tournament**

at the NAS Whiting Field Golf Course March 30.

Check in begins at 7:30 with a 9 a.m. Tee Time

Four Man Scramble / Shotgun Start

Cost is \$40 per person (includes lunch)

Call 850.665-6121 to reserve a slot.



HT-18 at 40

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Grace, himself a graduate of the HT-18 “Vigilant Eagles,” chose to highlight the squadron’s accomplishments by emphasizing the central role that rotary flight has assumed in modern naval aviation.

“In 1972, we were fighting a war... the first war in which helicopter aviation played a central role... HT-18 was created to ‘generate efficiency in the growth and advancement of rotary aviation,’” Grace noted.

“HT-18 is a squadron born out of the needs of modern helicopter aviation. Flying helicopters remains a growth industry in our services and those of our allies,” he added.

Against the backdrop of a TRAWING-5 TH-57 Sea Ranger helicopter – and his personal 1972 Oldsmobile Series Ninety – Grace added a light-hearted historical perspective.

The wing commander used the two machines to juxtapose his current mission as a flight instructor with the revelation that in the year of HT-18’s commissioning, he drove that very car to his high school prom. During the intervening period, military aviation changed.

Grace emphasized that the naval rotorcraft skills taught at HT-18 have contributed to the transformation of helicopter resources into a focal point of the Navy’s present



The Pace High School Junior Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps provided color guard services at the HT-18 40th anniversary celebration on March 1. The squadron was the first of three helicopter training squadrons commissioned under Training Air Wing FIVE. Between 1972 and 1985, HT-18 was the exclusive winging squadron for naval aviators. U.S. Navy photo by Lt. j.g. Tim Mosso.



Retired Navy commander Eugene Wall cuts the HT-18 “birthday” cake. Wall occupied a place of honor as one of two original 1972 HT-18 “plank owners” in attendance. He remains in service to naval aviation as a helicopter simulator instructor at the TRAWING-5 academics complex. U.S. Navy photo by Lt. j.g. Tim Mosso.

and future plans.

In addition to combat roles, Grace stressed that disaster relief, logistics, and personnel transport flexibility make rotary aviators an ideal fit for the dynamic needs of the modern military.

DeBrine, another HT-18 alumnus, took special satisfaction in noting the squadron’s unique historic standing and stellar safety record.

“From 1972 to 1985, every helicopter pilot designated naval aviator winged through HT-18,” DeBrine related.

The original commissioning documents from 1972 placed an emphasis on “excellence” in performance, and

DeBrine was quick to highlight perhaps the most important continuity between that mission statement and the unit’s ongoing accomplishments.

He offered the squadron’s military-wide record of one million flight hours - and counting - without a “Class A” mishap as a testament to the dedication and competence of the instructors, students, and supporting staff.

DeBrine noted that this record is made more impressive in light of the low altitudes, often turbulent Gulf coast weather, and instrument meteorological conditions in which the squadron’s training helicopters operate.

Furthermore, DeBrine added that competence in the cockpit starts with a whole-person approach to teaching judgment, leadership, and fostering a sense of community among all members of the HT-18 team. He added that nowhere is this philosophy more eloquently expressed than in the squadron motto, “warriors train here.”

Retired Navy commander Eugene Wall – “Gramps” to his fellow Vigilant Eagles - occupied a position of honor among the featured guests. As one of two original HT-18 “plank owners” in attendance, Wall had attended the commissioning of the squadron as a member of the original complement.

Wall’s contribution to the day’s reflection and revelry combined equal parts humor and pride. Cognizant of the strong winds and unseasonable warmth preying upon the open-air gathering, Wall conceded “inside is cold beer,” but he implored the group to appreciate the profound meaning that HT-18’s history holds in the hearts of those who have

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HT-18 40th

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served the unit.

“When I got my job at the simulators, I used to come down to HT-18, look at the pictures on the wall... and it got me charged-up,” he stated enthusiastically.

“Gramps” Wall stressed that camaraderie, high personal standards, and professional excellence have endured throughout his time as an HT-18 student, flight instructor, and his ongoing role as contract simulator instructor for the wing.

Recapitulating DeBrine’s pride in the squadron’s unrivalled sense of community and continuity, Wall assured the assembly that as long as HT-18’s traditions live in the hearts and minds of its personnel, “HT-18 will always earn the safe quality ‘S’.”

The formal ceremony was followed by an all-hands social hour in the squadron’s “Eagle’s Nest” ready room. DeBrine granted Wall the honor of cutting a commemorative cake, and a catered buffet lunch was served.

Flight students at the dawn of their careers used the occasion to speak informally with veteran aviators including three former HT-18 commanding officers, the two “plank owners,” Commodore Grace, and Deputy Commodore Capt. James Fisher.

The ruby anniversary of HT-18 embodied equal elements of pride, nostalgia, and appetite for future challenges. This spirit found succinct expression in Grace’s parting words to the guests.

“Happy 40th birthday, HT-18; continue to train the best in the world!”



Students, staff, and guests of HT-18 enjoy a post-ceremonial buffet lunch during the HT-18 40th anniversary celebration. Free food and a festive atmosphere enlivened the squadron’s “Eagle’s Nest” lounge during the all-hands social hour. U.S. Navy photo by Lt. j.g. Tim Mosso.

Weekly Spotlight - Lori Howell

Branch of service: Navy (Retired) and Civilian now

Hometown: Alton, Ill.

Job titles: Management Assistant

Command: Naval Air Station Whiting Field

Years you have worked with the Federal Government: 20 years active duty. 2 years Contractor and 3 years Civil Service

What is the best part of working for/with the Navy?

Still get to be around the Navy and the Sailors- without having to wear a uniform!

What do you see yourself doing in five years?

Hopefully, I will still be working at NASWF.

