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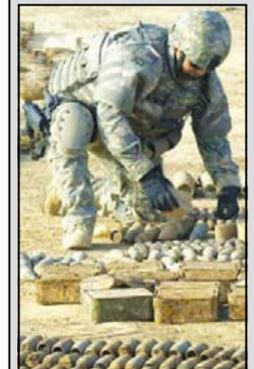



Vol. 14, No. 3

Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas

January 31, 2008

What's Inside



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Fallen HM-15 Sailors honored during Memorial Service

by Bob Torres, Public Affairs Officer

A memorial service was held on Jan. 25 for three crewmembers of Helicopter Mine Countermeasure Squadron-15 (HM-15) who were killed when their MH-53E helicopter crashed on Jan. 16 during a training mission.

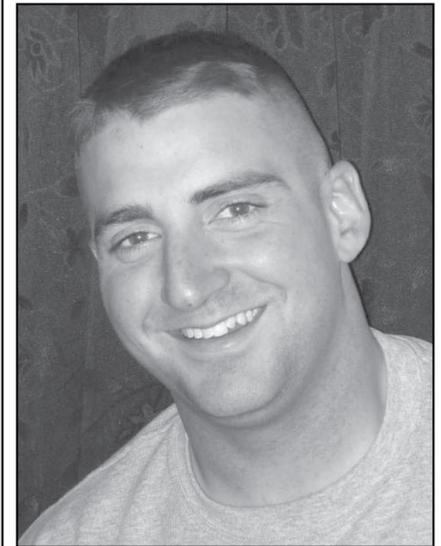
The crew members included Lieutenant Joshua Gross, 30, of Johnson City, N.Y.; Aviation Warfare Systems Operator Alexander LeMarr, 25, of Parker, Colo; and Aviation Warfare Systems Operator David Davison, of Guthrie, Okla. A fourth crewmember was injured during the crash and remains hospitalized.

The cause of the crash is under examination and officials will not release details of the crash until the investigations are complete. As of last week, roads to the site were still closed to the public as investigation processes continue.

Editor's Note: Our sincere condolences go to the families of our Sailors affected by this tragedy. We also know their squadron family has lost shipmates and best friends, and the Corpus Christi community has lost three of those who fought for their freedom. Our thoughts and prayers are with them during this time of grief.



Remains of the MH-53E Sea Dragon after the high intensity of a magnesium fire were found between County Road 61 and Farm-to-Market Road 2444.



Davison



Gross



LeMarr

Photo by Bob Torres, Public Affairs Officer

Contributed photos

Skipper's Column

The base is looking good!

by Capt. Timothy Coolidge

First of all, I want to pass on my condolences to the families and friends of HM-15 for their loss. Any death is regrettable, but one where three young lives were taken and another affected for the rest of his life is a horrible situation. My heart goes out to everyone: the families, the squadron and our local community as we share in the loss of three fine Sailors.



Coolidge

It's hard to believe that tomorrow is already February. The year is flying by but there are already some significant changes to see. One that I want to bring to your attention, if you haven't already noticed, is how much better the base is looking! I thank CMDM Pat Flavin, Lt. Cmdr. Mike Ser (our

Public Works Officer) and his team for hammering out a new grounds maintenance contract that ensures that our grass areas are cut when needed so we don't look like Serengeti grassland. The recent rains have helped add some color to the grass and that helps a lot, too. Finally, on the appearance front, I want to thank everyone for making an effort to pick up trash around your buildings, recreation sites and open areas.

Let me address the golf course. Not too long ago, I was invited to play a round of golf with the XO and Capt. Tim Watkins, CO of NS Ingleside, and Cmdr. Bryce Gibb, his XO. I'll be the first to admit—and Tim, Bryce and Omar will confirm—that I'm not a golfer. It was a humbling experience, to say the least. As I walked the course (and I got to see plenty of it...but that's another story) I noticed that, at the time, the course looked pretty horrific. It didn't look anything like the courses I've seen on TV!

Today the course looks much better! MWR invited CNIC and USGA teams to assess the course and the golf program, and provide help to draft a "get well" plan. The plan has been made and MWR is actively engaged in the execution. It's going to take a while, but some changes are already being seen.

One of the changes has been in the golf course leadership. A couple of months ago, former Chief James Day, was hired to run the course and the operation. James began as the maintenance guy where he took care of fixing the broken water lines and such. His strong work ethic and desire to see the course improve didn't go unnoticed. When the Golf Manager position came open, he was asked to step up. He did and is now running the daily operations.

With a couple of hard-working maintenance crews that he hired, and putting into

Captain continued on page 13

Chaplain's Message

Why sufferings?

by Cmdr. Chin Van Dang, NASCC Chaplain

Rabbi Freiberger sat alone in the sanctuary of his synagogue, clutching a prayer book in his hands and sobbing. "Why, Lord?" he cries out. "Why did this have to happen? How could my son, my only son, destroy me like this? My only son—he converted to Christianity!"

And a great voice booms down from the heavens: "Yours, too?"

Why does the God of love allow me to suffer, even on a massive scale? He is supposed to be a Father. How can a Father not respond to his hurting child? Such questions can knock even the strongest believers down and reduce their faith to rubble. There are no easy answers to suffering, but some searching questions can usefully be asked while we suffer.

Why do I suddenly demand relief from God for what I have brought upon myself by my sins? Am I not screaming, only because now I am faring poorly, while I remain placid when others suffer? Am I not quite satisfied with the course of the world, as long as it favours me? Why am I so enamoured of this world with its

meagre luxuries? Am I not full of childish impatience when I can't wait for the day when the eternal patient God will reckon with all of world's history? Is it possible for me as a creature to comprehend God's ways and judgements? Why do I think myself so important, when I hold God's glory and will to be so unimportant? Am I sure that the evils I cry against are really evils when measured by the ultimate stands of God? The answers to such questions might lessen the bitterness we feel against God. For one thing, God has acted in our world to reverse the effects of human's original fall, but of course he has not done it in the way we could expect. He has a right to choose His way, for He is our maker and came down to live with us as a man. He experienced the whole range of human suffering from the womb to the tomb. God is not a distant and disinterested God who views our pains with indifference. He knows what it feels like to live a lifetime in a fallen world.

In his Apostolic Letter, *On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering*, Pope John Paul

II said, "Suffering is present in the world in order to release love, in order to give birth to works of love toward neighbor, in order to transform the whole of human civilization into a 'civilization of love' (n.30)." Thus, suffering can be beneficial if it stirs in us a spirit of compassion, love, and sacrifice toward others.

It is difficult to accept suffering as a vital part of our lives in whatever form God permits it to come, be it sickness, emotional problems, family difficulties, death of a loved one, loss of employment, setbacks in business, criticism, hardships, or even the treason of friends.



Dang

Chaplain continued on page 10

Legal Corner

Basic debt collection: the process and protections

by Lt. J-g. Candice Albright, JAGC, USN

A recurring issue we see in our office is debt collection. You are legally obligated to pay a just debt when you take out a loan, use a



Albright

credit card, co-sign on a loan, enter into a private agreement with another party. You can obligate yourself to credit card debt when you use any major credit card such as VISA or MasterCard, but also when you take out a credit card with a store, such as Sears. As everyone knows, if you do not pay the balance, you are asking for financial trouble.

First: the collection calls. If you receive a

collection call, you have the right to be told the name of the creditor and the exact amount you owe. Further, the caller is not allowed to use obscene or threatening language with you. It is also considered harassment to contact you at unusual hours, usually defined as before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m. Also remember that under federal law, a debt collector cannot communicate with you at work once he knows your employer prohibits such communication. Therefore, be sure to inform the collector of this fact when they call. Unfortunately, this law does not apply to the creditor itself.

If you do not pay the debt within a short period of time (sometimes as short as 30 days), then the original creditor will use the services of a debt collection agency to obtain payment. Once this occurs, your credit report reads that this particular account has been charged off; meaning, you are now on the collection agency's list. This act is important because you

are protected under certain laws depending on who is doing the collecting. The Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA) is a federal law which protects consumers against debt collectors; it does not apply to the original creditor. However, some states do have consumer protection laws which apply to the original creditor and most courts apply the FDCPA to credit buyers.

If you recognize the debt and acknowledge that you owe it, then it may be in your best interest to make a settlement offer. A settlement offer can be made that is lower than the stated "owed" amount. Many times, late fees and other administrative costs are added to the original amount and can be avoided if a settlement offer is made. If a settlement offer does not work or you do not know if it is really your debt, and you want to dispute the debt, then you must do

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Wingspan

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Al Qaeda can run, but can't hide in northern Iraq, says General

by Fred W. Baker III, American Forces Press Service

The tables have turned for al Qaeda in northern Iraq as a surge of operations in the new year has put terrorists on the run looking for new places to hide, a commander in the region said on Jan. 22. Army Maj. Gen. Mark Hertling, commander of Multinational Division North, briefed Pentagon reporters from Iraq.

Operation Iron Harvest, part of the larger countrywide *Operation Phantom Phoenix* launched just before Christmas, has pounded parts of four northern provinces that have afforded the group safe haven, Hertling said. The operation's main effort has been in Diyala, specifically the area called the "breadbasket," near Muqadiyah, in eastern Diyala province, although it includes Multinational Division North's other provinces of Salahuddin, Ninevah, and Tamim.

Early intelligence reports say al Qaeda operatives are still looking for a place to hide, the general said.

"A year ago, we were often reacting to al Qaeda and what they were going to do," Hertling said. "Now, I think the tables have turned a little bit, and they are attempting to react to where we're going to go next. And that's a critical difference."

Tired of al Qaeda's torturous reign of terror in the region, local citizens have turned over weapons caches, hideouts, names and even drawing maps to where terrorists still hiding in the area could be found.

"They are trying to get away or find new safe havens. And every time they think they have them, we attack there," Hertling said.

In 40 operations, many alongside the Iraqi security forces in the region, coalition forces have captured or killed 40 terrorists marked as "high-value individuals" by military officials. Forces killed another 130 enemy fighters and nearly 374 have been detained.

Forces have cleared 386 roadside bombs, 28 car bombs and 38 house bombs. They have uncovered 127 weapons cache sites storing 2,100 rockets and mortars, 6,900 pounds of military-grade explosives and 30,000 pounds of homemade explosives, and they've destroyed a couple of bomb-making factories. Fifteen coalition force soldiers have died in the operations.

During the operations, coalition forces found a torture chamber and rescued two civilians still alive there. The two said 11 were being held there the day before. They had been held and tortured for nearly two weeks for working as contractors and running new electric power lines to the area. The commander said that the insurgents would use torture to terrorize local citizens into allowing them free rein.

Terrorists would behead local citizens and carry the heads down the streets of town as part of what Hertling called their "very brutal and violent tactics."

That is people who were afraid to either go to the police or stand up against these

Al Qaeda continued on page 13



Photo by Maj. Sean Wilson, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs

A Soldier inventories a portion of more than seven tons of ordinance discovered by Iraqi Police on Dec. 18. Local citizens have been instrumental in helping Coalition Forces find weapons caches and suspected terrorists.

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CCAD/Boeing partnership continues to streamline production

By Mike Shepperd, CCAD/Boeing Partnership Product Integration Engineering Manager

The Boeing Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD) partnership has developed a new process for delivering hardware to the manufacturing areas. CCAD Boeing Distribution Center (BDC) now delivers and maintains hardware in carousels located throughout the Apache transmission line for convenient access by the mechanics. CCAD has seen an improvement in delivery, better management of resources and improved employee morale.

In the beginning, employees from CCAD and BDC worked together building hardware kits for the Apache transmission. These kits contained all of the hardware (nuts, bolts, screws and seals) required during the overhaul process. They were packaged in boxes, stored on shelves, and delivered once a month when the shop production controller requested the material.

The mechanics then sort through the contents of each box to identify the hardware needed at their transmission work station. Think of this as a grocery cart full of items; each time you needed an item, you would have to sort through the cart until you found it or found that it was missing.

This sorting process consumed the mechanics assembly time. Frequently, some of the required hardware was misplaced or lost. The lost hardware could only be replaced by opening the next transmission's kit. This would cause a shortage condition that was perpetuated through each succeeding kit.

Al Gonzales, CCAD Director of Production Control, and Cynthia Thompson, manager of the BDC, jointly chartered an effort to seek a better system of delivering Apache transmission hardware. A team led by Angela Corbishley from Boeing and Joe Medina from CCAD was formed.

The team included CCAD and Boeing

logistics teammates and team members from the CCAD transmission shop. They reviewed the hardware delivery process to see if there was a better way to deliver the hardware requirements. The team decided to institute a Just-In-Time (JIT) process that focused on Point-of-Use (POU) delivery.

Instead of having ASRS deliver the hardware kits, the CCAD Boeing Distribution Center would deliver the hardware to carousels located throughout the Apache transmission line. Minimum and maximum bin levels were established for each piece of hardware and the Boeing teammates are responsible for maintaining the hardware bin levels, ordering, and restocking the hardware.

Keeping a continual supply of hardware on hand at the carousels has increased efficiency for the Apache transmission line. Apache transmission mechanics and production controllers no longer concern themselves with Boeing provided Apache transmission hardware requirements. They now focus all their attention on repairing and ordering Apache transmission components, as the hardware problems have been eliminated.

Some benefits of the new Apache transmission JIT/POU hardware system include: more time on task for the transmission mechanics, elimination of the kit-building process in ASRS, improved hardware management and a shorter lead time for hardware delivery.

The Boeing CCAD Partnership is constantly searching for ways to improve the helicopter overhaul process. As one can see from this example, small things such as hardware can add up to much larger savings. Now the Apache transmission mechanics always have the necessary hardware on hand to perform their tasks.



Photo available by public domain

The CCAD/Boeing partnership has made many improvements in efficiency and waste reduction in the assembly of helicopters such as the Apache, seen here.

Captain continued from page 2

motion the recommendations of the assessment team, the golf course has taken on a new look. For you golfers, please look him up the next time you play and let him know that he's making a difference!

Since I'm talking recreation, I have to mention fishing. Anyone who's driven around the base at night has seen the lighted fishing pier by the Marina. Thanks to some hard-working Seabees, the reconstructed lighted pier is open for business.

The Seabees joined forces with MWR, got the equipment and material, and redid the pier that had been unsafe to stand on. With new pilings and further strengthening, the pier sidings it's not only now safe, but is located where there are plenty of fish. Rumor has it that one fisherman has used the pier, primarily early in the morning, and has always caught fish. He's

Al Qaeda continued from page 3

people," the general said. "If you don't have weapons or you don't have security forces to counter that kind of action, it's difficult to push back against these violent and barbarous criminals."

Hertling said al Qaeda's heavy activity in the area for the past several months has damaged not only the infrastructure, but also the people's psyche. Now, though, stores are reopening and people have started to venture out into the towns.

"We are all seeing hope on the faces of Iraqis as they see a more secure future in some

either a great fisherman, or has perfected the art of the "fish" tale!

I'm proud of what I see happening around the base. The new, less restrictive policy that allows anyone who is a permanent worker on base (military, GS, contractor) to use certain MWR facilities - of which the golf course and marina are only two - should help increase use and make the base more "user friendly" to everyone.

Please keep cleaning up after yourselves and picking up trash around you when you're outside. You have the greatest impact on the base when you do that. As the XO says when he's talking about cleaning up, "If not you, then who?"

Thanks for what you're all doing to make this a better place for all of us to work and live. See ya on the beach!

of these towns," Hertling said.

Operations north of Baghdad previously used an "economy of force" approach. Security in the region was difficult to maintain because of a limited number of coalition and Iraqi security forces operating. After coalition forces would clear an area and move on, al Qaeda would simply come back and reoccupy. But now, four divisions of Iraq forces operate there, and the country's forces are growing in numbers and capabilities. These additional forces will help hold recent gains in security.

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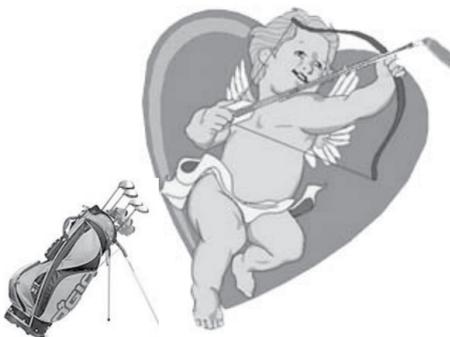
Upcoming events aboard NAS Corpus Christi

It's Super Bowl time! The New York Giants and New England Patriots will battle it out to determine the best of the best. On Feb. 3, the Gonzalez Liberty Center will set up for all the sports coverage, so come support your team, join your friends and enjoy plenty of free food, door prizes, and football. Kickoff is at 4:18 pm, and doors open at noon. For more information, please call the GLC at (361) 961-3768.



A blood drive will be held at CCAD at 108 Crecy Street on Feb. 13 from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, please visit www.coastalbendbloodcenter.org or call 855-4943

A Candlelight Dinner and Dance, held at the Bay Club from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., will make this Valentine's Day special for you and your loved one. A delicious buffet, served from 5 p.m. until 8:30 p.m., will feature Steamship Round of Beef, Shrimp Newberg, Vegetables, Potatoes, Rice, Bread Pudding, and Apple Cobbler. Gourmet Desserts, Wine Specials and Irish Coffee will be available at additional cost. \$19.95 per person. Club members receive \$1 off. A DJ will play from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. For more information, please call the Corpus Christi Bay Club at (361) 961-2541.



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Ask Dr. Garcia

Q: I am a divorced single mother of three children. I will be getting married this summer. How will my children react to this new scenario?

A: Divorce and remarriage are significant transitions in children's lives. Over time, most boys and girls exhibit remarkable resiliency to their parents' marital transitions. Some children actually become stronger through coping with divorce and remarriage. One study found that only 25 percent have long-term problems. This can be attributed to the type of parenting style of the single parent.

A warm, responsive parenting style that sets reasonable limits, yet is unintrusive, is associated with positive adjustment in children in divorced and remarried families. If divorce reduces stress and conflict, it will lead to better functioning on the parent's part. If the child loses an uninvolved or incompetent father, and this results in the acquisition of a more accessible, responsible father figure, the child will benefit in the long run. I am unaware of the ages or gender of your children, however, preadolescent boys in particular may benefit from a close, caring relationship with a reliable stepfather.

Regarding the behavioral and emotional issues experienced by children of divorced and remarried families, a number of concerns are raised. Studies point out that children resist the arrival of a stepparent, creating stress in the new relationship. Sons, who have often been involved in coercive relationships with their mothers may have little to lose and much to gain from a relationship with a caring stepfather.

Daughters, on the other hand, may feel the intrusion of stepfathers into their close relationships with their mothers as threatening and disruptive. One study found that among preadolescent children, divorce has more adverse consequences for boys, and remarriage is more difficult for girls; in adolescence, however, such gender differences are rarely found. Younger children can more easily develop relationships with stepparents than adolescents can, who are struggling with their own sense of identity and already growing away emotionally from their family or families.

Other behavioral disruptions and emotional upheavals are common in the early weeks and months of the parent's remarriage. Children often express anger, resentment, anxiety, depression, and some suffer sustained developmental delays or disruptions.



Garcia

Others appear to adapt well in the early stages of family reorganization, but show delayed effects that emerge later, especially in adolescence.

Several studies found that the most commonly reported problem behaviors found in children of divorced and remarried families are aggressive, noncompliant, antisocial behavior; a decline in prosocial behaviors; and disruptions in peer relations. Adolescence seems to trigger behavioral problems in both boys and girls, even in some who have previously been functioning well.

What can bring your children and your new marriage together is having realistic expectations about what to expect for your family as a whole. For instance, the expectation of instant love and adjustment, or that your stepfamily should be the same as your first marriage is not realistic. Studies note that successful stepfamilies are aware that love and caring take time and there are differences between remarriage families and first-marriage families. They do not attempt to force their family into a first-marriage mold.

In all families, parent-child relationships are different. To expect reciprocal caring from individuals who suddenly find themselves living together can lead to feelings of disappointment, insecurity, and anger. Having an understanding of what you and your family might be confronted with is the first step in ensuring a successful and enjoyable experience that can have a long and lasting positive outcome.

Ruben G. Garcia, Ph.D., is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and co-founder of The Healing Institute. Email your questions to Dr. Garcia at: troubadour55@hotmail.com or call (361) 814-4556.



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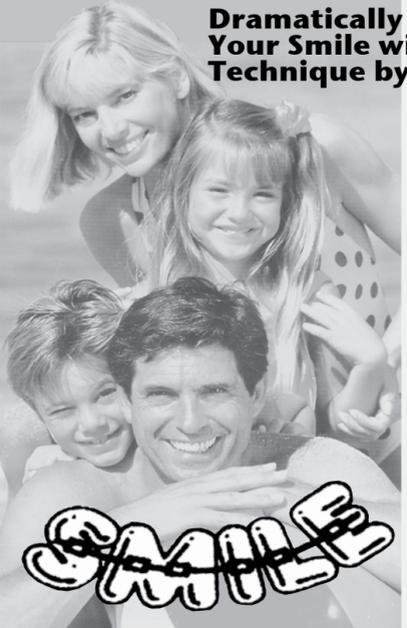


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Build wealth with Fleet and Family's help
by Lora Meza, Personal Financial Management Program Specialist, FFSC



As we look forward into a new year, many people start out with their resolutions firmly in hand. There is no better time to commit to becoming financially fit and "Build Wealth, Not Debt." To help our Navy families with that effort, the Fleet and Family Support Center is again sponsoring the ongoing financial fitness campaign, Military Saves.

The program is designed to change savings behavior by educating service members and their families on how they can build wealth, not debt. With the campaign's focus this year being on our children and youth, we are partnering with Navy Army Federal Credit Union and the Youth Activities Center to promote good savings habits within our next generations. Starting the week of February 24 thru March 2 and going on into the year, the Military Saves campaign will provide saving tips, strategies, awareness, and initiatives through a variety of mediums that will provide our families with savings tools to help them reach their goals.

For more information about the campaign, visit the Military Saves website (www.militarysaves.org) or contact your Personal Financial Management staff at the Fleet and Family Support Center at 961-1127 or 1673.

Not quite business as usual: Straiton gears up for new workload

by Jamey Giddens, CCAD Publicist



Straiton

"It's all about maintaining our ability to surge," said Bob Straiton, CCAD's new Business Development Office chief. The former executive officer for the Army ROTC program at Texas A&M Corpus Christi and lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserves spoke of what he feels should be the Depot's primary goals in preparation for a decrease in Department of Defense workload in conjunction with a slowing of the Global War on Terrorism.

"Historically, depot workloads from the DoD tends to slow down as wartime subsidies," said Straiton. "That's why it's so important to maintain the relevancy of the Depot within DoD and not just look to traditional means of gaining workload."

This does not suggest that traditional means of acquiring DoD workload should be considered an afterthought. According to Straiton, a significant role of the Business Development Office is its work with Force Modernization.

"We have three folks in our office working with the Program Executive Office (PEO) on Force Modernization," he began. "What that basically involves is when the Army procures a new weapon system, we make sure the Depot is in a position to support that system."

Some "nontraditional" ways Straiton men-

tioned of achieving workload are Public-Private Partnerships and Public-Public Partnerships.

"One of the major roles of the Business Development Office here at CCAD is to serve as a liaison between the Depot and our OEM's (Original Equipment Manufacturers)," he said. "Having our four OEM's - Boeing, Sikorsky, Honeywell and GE- on site has been a tremendous asset for the Depot. OEM's possess the expertise and knowledge about the aircraft we support because they created them. They have done all the necessary research and development, so they have a level of knowledge that although CCAD would be capable of achieving, it would take a great amount of time and resources."

Straiton also pointed to Public-Public Partnerships, like the wildly successful program with Tobyhanna Army Depot. Tobyhanna has partnered with CCAD to reduce turnaround-time and improve the quality of avionics support.

"Being able to help relieve other DoD branches of workload as needed is critical to our success," said Straiton.

Straiton, who assumed his new position this past November, went on to say how the onslaught of awards, CCAD's certifications and accolades (including the Shingo Public Sector Bronze Medallion, ISO 9001:2000 certification, AS9100 certification and AS9110 certification) have made it easier for the Business Development Office to do its job.

"When we go out and try to compete for a contract, our certifications and awards show the validity of what we do at CCAD," said Straiton. "They basically tell our potential business partners that we can do what we say we can do."

Bob Straiton holds a B.A. in history from the former Texas A&I, now Texas A&M Kingsville, a post-Bachelor's certificate in Management Information Systems and an MBA from Texas A&M Corpus Christi. He has been married to his wife, Meg, former CPA-turned stay-at-home-mom, for 15 years. They share four children Julia, 13, Robert, 10, Michael, 9 and Samuel, 7.

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Chaplain continued from page 2

God did not will to take away all the consequences of original sin, as is evident in the experiences of our everyday lives. He did not intend to take away all our problems; rather, He showed us how to use them for our own spiritual growth. They help purify our souls, detach us from material things, and bring us closer to God. This is what our faith urges us to do. Many of these trials are blessings in disguise.

There is a legend about a bird that sings just once in its life, more sweetly than any other creature on the face of the earth. From the moment it leaves the nest, it searches for a thorn tree, and does not rest until it has found one. Then, singing among the savage branches, it impales itself upon the longest, sharpest spine. And dying, it rises above its own agony to outsing the lark and the nightingale. One superlative song, existence the price. But the whole world stills to listen and God in His heaven smiles. For the best is only bought at the cost of great pain...or so the legend says.

Legal continued from page 2

so in writing. The collector is required to inform you that you have a right to dispute the debt. To keep this right, you must dispute the debt within 30 days of first notification of the attempt at collection. Ask the caller to whom you address your dispute letter. Within the body of the letter, it should be sufficient to simply reference the account number, your name and to write the following: 1) If you dispute the entire debt, then write, "I dispute this debt in its entirety" or "This debt is in dispute" or some variation; or 2) If you owe part of the debt, but not all of it, then write "I dispute any debt over the amount of X."

Once a debt is disputed in writing, then you are given certain automatic protections under the FDCPA and the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). Among other things, the FDCPA requires that when a debt is disputed, the creditor must validate the debt and they cannot attempt to collect on the debt until it is validated to you in writing. The validation process requires that, at a minimum, the debt collector confirm with the creditor the amount being claimed is correct and the person from whom they are attempting to collect the debt is the person from whom it is owed. The FCRA requires that any dispute of the debt must also be reported by the creditor on the consumer's credit report.

Finally, while you should pay your debts and this article in no way encourages you not to do so, remember that there are statutes of limitations on debt collection. This means after so many years, the creditor or collector can no longer attempt to collect on the debt whether you legitimately owe it or not. In Texas, the statute of limitations is four years for an open account, i.e. an unsecured debt such as credit card debt. Do not place your bets on this, though! The best way to solve debt collection problems is to prevent them by having a sound financial plan and not over-extending your credit. For more information about debt collection issues or to make an appointment to speak to a legal assistance attorney, please call our office at (361) 961-3765.

Navy outdoorsman retires to the woods of Arkansas

by Bob Torres, Public Affairs Officer

Hull Technician First Class Bart Blazer retires from the Navy on March 31 after a distinguished, even though quiet, tour in the Navy.

"I'm an outdoorsman like you wouldn't believe," said the Little Rock, Arkansas native. "I ain't got no wife going to tell me when I can or can't go fishing or hunting. That's the reason I didn't get married after all these years."

Blazer turned 17 during recruit training at Great Lakes, Ill., during August of 1984. He got home in time for the beginning of deer season in November.

"It was the first two deer I killed," he remembered with a smile. Shortly after that, he reported to duty in Yokosuka, Japan aboard the USS Midway (CV-41).

"Being away from home for the first time, it was culture shock for me," said Blazer. "My job was to weld, pipe-fit and do the plumbing on the ship."

Blazer served there from 1984 to 1987 before returning home to finish out his active duty Reserve time.

"I had signed up for six years," said Blazer. "Three were for active duty and three years in the Reserves. But in 1991, I reenlisted to go to San Diego and USS (MCM3) Sentry, a mine-sweeper. I transferred to Naval Station Ingleside in August 1993."

Blazer returned to Japan in 1995 as part of a rotational crew aboard the USS (MCM-5) Guardian. The crew returned in 1996 aboard the USS Devastator.

He then attended a course at the Navy Nuclear Power Training Command in Orlando, FL. In 1998, he transferred to Charleston, N.C., for the newly commissioned Nuclear Power Command.

His next assignment was in 1999 when he was transferred to the USS Emory S. Land in La Madelina, Italy where he served as supervisor for the carpenter shop, sheet metal shop and lagging shop.

Blazer received orders in Dec. 2001 to Bahrain aboard the USS (MCM-13) Dextrous. "Bahrain was rewarding. It was busy," said Blazer. "We were always busy. Fourteen months seemed like it was two weeks. I was



Photo by Bob Torres, Public Affairs Officer

Blazer

the LPO (Leading Petty Officer) for Damage Control Division. During one time on watch, there was a fuel leak and I blocked the fuel with my body to keep it from bursting. I received an on-the-spot, Navy Achievement Medal (NAM) from the Captain while I was still dripping fuel."

Blazer received a second NAM for an engineering inspection that received the highest score obtainable.

"Part of the examination was on how you handle your team, your language and if you're in control," he continued. "I had to work on not cursing. After I got past that, I started getting better scores. I got a great score; it was the best you can get."

What advice would he pass on to an incoming Sailor?

"Get an education, get a degree," he announced. "If you find out in four or six years that the Navy is not for you, then you already have a degree. You can get a bachelor's or even a master's degree in four years. It's been done. If you don't like the military, you're still young and you can pursue your own life. But make sure of one thing: Better your life."

"I plan on opening a lawn and care service in Little Rock," Blazer said, with a smile. "And I'm going hunting and fishing."

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AROUND THE BASE IN 2008

Welcome Home, Veterans!



On Jan. 21, the families of MA2 Trevor Clarke and MAC Eric Teal gathered at Corpus Christi International Airport to welcome home their veterans following a one-year deployment to Iraq. (left) Felicia, Rashawn and Kiliyah Clarke excitedly wait for MA2 Clarke to arrive. (right) Felicia Clarke, MA2 Trevor Clarke, Kiliyah, Rashawn, MAC Eric Teal and wife, Tracy, are happily reunited after a long separation.



Photo by Barbie Baker, Base Ombudsman



Photo by Lisa Waterston

An MV-22 Osprey from VMM-202 lands at NAS Corpus Christi on Jan. 18. Two aircraft and their crews were available for tours to flight students during the week. The MV-22 will replace Marine CH-46 helicopters in the near future.

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Winging Ceremony • Jan. 25



Photo by Hugh Lieck Event Photography

Official party listed from left to right: Bill Tinney, Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce Ambassador; Cmdr. Chin Van Dang, NASCC Chaplain; Cmdr. Melvin Bouboulis, CG Sector Corpus Christi XO; Cmdr. Joe Shipley, VT-31 CO; Lt. Col. Jon Ullmann, VT-35 CO; Capt. David Maynard, Commodore Training Wing Four; Col. Thomas Clark, MATSG-22 CO

Wingees listed alphabetically: Ensign Brad Berthelotte; Ensign Douglas Campbell; Ensign Justin Caudle; Ensign Andrew Gibbons; 2nd Lt. Robert Grundwald; Lt. j.g. Stephanie Kimmel; 1st Lt. David Masche; 1st Lt. Alec Messerall; Lt. j.g. Christopher Mottino; 1st Lt. Brandon Vetter; 1st Lt. Justin Walstad; Ensign Thomas Youngmans



NJROTC Drill Meet

More than 800 cadets from local NJROTC units competed in a drill meet hosted by Coast Guard Air Station Corpus Christi on Jan. 29. Flour Bluff High School earned first place in six of ten competition events, followed closely by Aransas Pass High School, which earned six second-places and two first-places. (top left) Flour Bluff High School's NJROTC unit performs in the rifle drill competition. The school holds eleven national championship titles over the past 13 years. (bottom left) NJROTC students from Beeville High School line up for inspection in the Coast Guard hangar.



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



Photo by Bill Love, NHCC Public Affairs Officer

Cryptologic Technician Technical 1st Class (SW) Dino Joe Gallegos was ceremoniously transferred to the Fleet Reserve of the United States Navy Jan. 11 by Captain R. B. Sorenson, Medical Corps, commanding officer at Naval Hospital Corpus Christi after 20 years of service. Gallegos received the Navy Commendation Medal during the ceremony for meritorious service as the command's senior counselor for the Substance Abuse Rehabilitation program.