

# 20 aviators earn 'Wings of Gold' in June 18 ceremony; Vice Admirals son among group

By Penny Randall  
Staff Writer

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A long family tradition continued on June 18 when a fourth generation naval aviator earned his "Wings of Gold."

Vice Adm. Thomas Kilcline Jr., Commander, Naval Air Forces and Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, along with his wife, Deb, placed the golden wing pin on their son, Lt. j.g. Thomas Kilcline III, during the ceremony in the chapel on board NAS Meridian.

Vice Adm. Kilcline was the guest speaker for the event which winged 19 other Navy and Marine Corps aviators, and one French pilot who were recognized for their achievements.

"The day you receive your wings of gold is truly one of the most significant milestones in the life of a naval aviator," Vice Adm. Kilcline said. "Today's ceremony marks the culmination of literally years of extensive preparation by these young men and women. Many years ago a young lieutenant junior grade named John McCain worked his way through flight training right here in Meridian and earned his wings of gold. As a legacy to that Navy pilot and POW -- which is simply inspiring -- one can only guess the potential of these newly winged pilots gathered here today."

The naval aviator designation ceremony is not prescribed specifically by U.S. Navy regulations, but has emerged as an honored product of the rich heritage of naval tradition. It marks the culmination of nearly two years of specialized training, which has prepared these officers for the rigorous demands of aerial combat and carrier operations -- earning each the title of "Naval Aviator" and the right to wear the coveted "Wings of Gold."

Aviators who graduated included:

**First Lt. Peter Abramovs Jr.**, USMC, who earned three Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training. He carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on March 9. Abramovs completed Total Strike Training with

Training Squadron Nine;

**Lt. j.g. Matthew Cox**, USN, who earned one Navy "E" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training. He carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on March 9. Cox completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Nine;

**Lt. j.g. Christopher Curd**, USN, who earned three Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training. He carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 26. Curd completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Seven;

**Lt. j.g. Tyler Davies**, USN, who was named to the Commodore's List with Distinction during Total Strike Training. He earned two Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy and the "Top Gun" award for his class. He carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on March 9. Davies completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Nine;

**Lt. j.g. Jennifer DeLuca**, USN, who was named to the Commodore's List during Primary Flight Training. She earned four Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training and earned the "Best Bomber" award for her class. She carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 26. DeLuca completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Nine;

**Lt. j.g. Jason Geddes**, USN, who earned three Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training. He carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 27. Geddes completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Seven;

**First Lt. Joseph Haas**, USMC, who carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on March 9. Haas completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Nine;

**First Lt. Lee Haight**, USMC, who earned four Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training and

carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on June 13. Haight completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Seven;

**Lt. j.g. Thomas Kilcline III**, USN, who earned four Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training and received the Chief of Naval Air Training "Top Gun" award for outstanding achievement in the Air Combat Maneuvering (ACM) syllabus. He carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 27. Kilcline completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Seven;

**First Lt. Bredon Kimel**, USMC, who earned one Navy "E" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on March 9. Kimel completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Nine;

**Ensign Thomas Lambert**, French navy, who was named to the Commodore's List and earned five Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Flight Training. Additionally, he received the Chief of Naval Air Training "Top Gun" award for outstanding achievement in the Air Combat Maneuvering (ACM) syllabus. He carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 27. Lambert completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Seven;

**Lt. j.g. Christopher Montague**, USN, who earned two Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 27. Montague completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Seven;

**Lt. j.g. Christopher Nisch**, USN, who earned two Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 27. Nisch completed Total Strike Training with Training

Squadron Seven;

**Lt. j.g. Carey Owens**, USN, who was named to the Commodore's List and earned two Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training. He carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 26. Owens completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Nine;

**Lt. j.g. Ryan Peterson**, USN, who was named to the Commodore's List with Distinction during Primary Flight Training and earned three Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training. He was selected as VT-9's Student of the Month for June 2009 and September 2009. He carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS John C. Stennis (CVN-74) on Feb. 5. Peterson completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Nine;

**Lt. j.g. Michael Spranger**, USN,

who was named to the Commodore's List during Primary Flight Training and the Commodore's List with Distinction during Total Strike Training. He earned four Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on March 9. Spranger completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Nine;

**Lt. j.g. Bradford Tesdall**, USN, who earned five Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training. He was selected as VT-9's Student of the Month for October 2009 and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 26. Tesdall completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Nine;

**First Lt. Jonathan Ulyatt**, USMC, who earned two Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike

Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 27. Ulyatt completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Seven;

**First Lt. Stephen White**, USMC, who earned one Navy "E" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 26, when he was named "Best at the Boat" for that carrier qualification evolution. White completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Nine, and

**Lt. j.g. Eric Wilckens**, USN, who earned five Navy "E's" for bombing accuracy during Total Strike Training and carrier qualified in the T-45C on board the USS George H. W. Bush (CVN-77) on April 27. Wilckens completed Total Strike Training with Training Squadron Seven.