

Spring 2005

THE ASSOCIATION OF AVIATION ORDNANCEMEN

The Red Shirt

[Http://welcome.to/aa0](http://welcome.to/aa0)

Newsletter #96

AAO Symposium 12-14 July 2005

AAO Convention 14-17 July 2005



Peace Through Power - We Are The "ARMS" Of The Fleet



The President's Message

Hello Fellow Members and all Ordnancemen,

First Pat and I extend to you a Happy New Years. Second the planning meeting for the 2005 Symposium and Convention went extremely well in Reno with the Silver Legacy the weekend of 14 January. We had 24 in attendance to help

plot the happenings for July's Symposium and Convention. The Hotel staff is more than ready for our Association's return and is eagerly looking to see as many of you as they can. The Thomas's once again have their hands around all the issues that pertain to putting on the biggest and best Convention ever! I also met with Mr. OJ Robinson (CNAL) and CDR Rick Garza (CNAF) to formalize the Navy and United States Marine Corps Joint Weapons Officer Symposium portion of our week in Reno. This year will bring big changes to the looks of our gathering for the first time. We will be kicking off our Symposium on 11 July with check in and registration and start on 12 July with professional presentations and will wrap that up on 14 July. We then roll right over into the Convention on 14 July. I need to add that active duty and retired are welcome to attend the symposium, so keep your eye on the REDSHIRT for more information on the symposium portion. (There will be a fee to cover coffee etc for the attendance of the symposium) Thursday 14 July will be the big day for starting the convention. We will be doing the traditional check-in and registration at that time. The below is the rough schedule for the Symposium and Convention (and is subject to change).

Monday 11 July 2005 Joint Weapons Officer Symposium check-in and registration
Tuesday 12 July 2005 Joint Weapons Officer Symposium
Wednesday 13 July 2005 Joint Weapons Officer Symposium
Thursday 14 July 2005 Joint Weapons Officer Symposium
Thursday 14 July 2005 Association Of Aviation Ordnancemen Convention Check-in
Friday 15 July 2005 Association Of Aviation Ordnancemen Convention
Saturday 16 July 2005 Association Of Aviation Ordnancemen Convention
Sunday 17 July 2005 Association Of Aviation Ordnancemen Convention Wrap-Up

As you can see from the above you need to start your planning now! All active duty Marines and Navy along

with Government employee's will be authorized to attend on official orders again this year, but please pay attention to the details in the messages that will soon be released by Commander Naval Air Forces. Once the messages hit the street I'll have our WEB Master post the date time groups (DTG) on the REDSHIRT Wed site www.welcome.to/aa0

I need to send thanks to the chapters that are sending me your monthly HOW-GOES-IT emails; I do appreciate your time and effort to keep the national staff up-to-date on your activities. If your Chapter has not submitted your monthly input you can do so by sending it to me at ldoord@cccomm.net, you can be assured I read them all and forward them on.

Speaking of Chapters, I hope that you're working attendance and recruiting new members, the more the better!! As our motto says' "We Are the Arms of the Fleet", and you know that there are strengths in numbers. You might try working on a fundraiser program to see if you can raise enough money to fund one or two folks to represent your chapter at the National Convention, just an idea from me, but action for you.

Now some words about the War, our senior leadership, both Marine Corps and Navy, starting with the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps are doing one heck of a job leading us. I have never in my career at least, seen the backing and determination to make sure we have the tools we need to fight the enemy right in it's face. Commander, Fleet Forces Command (formerly CINCLANTFLEET) recently announced the establishment of the Naval Ordnance Enterprise (NOE) which will review across the spectrum of ordnance management and practices. The simple fact is are we doing business the smartest possible way, world wide? If not hopefully the NOE will find out and set the course for us. Also VADM Zortman coupled with VADM Massenburger and other key stake holders established the Naval Aviation Enterprise effort to do the same for Naval Aviation, truth be known the Naval Aviation Enterprise has been in business for quite sometime and has made major head way on fixing what was broken. We used to do our business fundamentally wrong by having an attitude of Readiness at any cost, however we now conduct readiness in a cost wise mentality...smart move for us all and smart move for our tax payer dollars. We are seeing TACAIR Integration develop right now, we are seeing new WARFIGHTING tactics being developed to meet the current needs of this war, were seeing weapons procurement occurring like never before, were seeing new deployments schedules evolve, but most importantly were seeing safety static's like never before. So my hat's off to all you Marines and

Continued on page 3



Secretary's Article

Hi all,

Just a short note to thank each Chapter that has submitted their monthly articles, for those who have please get on the ball and send them in. Convention time is fast approaching; Jim Thomas and Chuck Onken have really done a great job to ensure we are going best last year's successful convention. Just a reminder, Chapter's that are unable to sent a rep please send a newsletter to let all at the convention know what you are up to. As Always I.Y.A.O.Y.A.S

Dennis Costa
Secretary
722 E Ave
Coronado Ca 92118
aocm@aol.com Home
dennis.costa@navy.mil Work
619-435-3757 Home
619-545-8492 Work



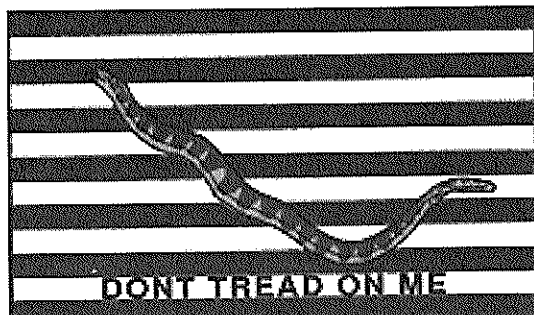
Continued from page 2

Sailors for doing your jobs by the book. Our Navy and Marine Corps is transforming to meet today's WAR-FIGHTING needs smarter, once again thanks to all the retirees for paving the way for us today. Our Ordnancemen deployed are once again doing an unbelievable job as well as our brothers in the Marine Corps. Looks like Third Marine Aircraft Wing is headed home after being relieved by the Second Marine Aircraft Wing, I send a smart salute to the Marines of 3RD MAW, your ordnance was on target, and on time in support of the war. You all can be justifiably proud of what you have done for our Nation!

I'll close by reminding you all to start your planning for attendance at this year Symposium and Convention. **Early registration** is a must, by doing so you will ensure that you can attend all the events. We are also introducing this year the ability to pay by credit card simply follow the instructions on the registration form. Also you can indicate if you would like your tickets mailed to you or just pick them up at will call at the registration booth in Reno. Also make sure you use the Group code indicated in the REDSHIRT when you make your reservations, this applies for both those that are on orders and those who are not. The group code is AA05. Check those airlines fares out; you can get to Reno real cheap if you consider buying your tickets now. The Hotel has excellent shuttle service from the airport to the hotel.... So plan now, buy now and save some money.

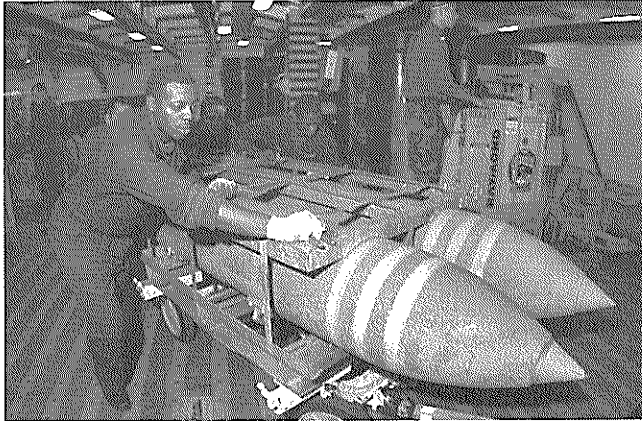
Finally business at Fallon has not slacked off one bit; in fact it's been even busier than ever. Chapter 21 is once again the host for the convention and have been busy doing lot's of planning in support for this years event. Once again Pat and I look forward to seeing you this summer, by the way Pat did here first cattle round-up the other day, ask her about it when you see here. As for Pat and I well right after the Convention we will be transferring to Naval Air Systems Command in PAX River. So Chapter 22 here we come. Ya'all take care and we hope to see you soon.

Respectfully,
CDR Dave Lepard
President, Association Of Aviation Ordnancemen



On The Cover

041128-N-5345W-016 Persian Gulf (Nov. 28, 2004) - Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class William Miller, assigned to the "Gunslingers" of Strike Fighter Squadron One Zero Five (VFA-105), arms a AGM-65 Maverick laser-guided missile loaded on an F/A-18 Hornet prior to launch from the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75). The AGM-65 Maverick is an air-to-surface tactical missile designed for close air support, interdiction and defense suppression. It is effective against a wide range of tactical targets, including armor, air defenses, ships, ground transportation and fuel storage facilities. Truman's Carrier Strike Group Ten (CSG-10) and her embarked Carrier Air Wing Three (CVW-3) are currently on a scheduled deployment in support of the Global War on Terrorism. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate Airman Kristopher Wilson (RELEASED)



050119-N-5464G-030 Pacific Ocean (Jan. 19 2005) - Sailors assigned to the Weapons Department aboard USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63), move a pallet of BLU-109 2000 pound general purpose bombs into a magazine. The Mk-84 is a multi-purpose bomb designed to provide blast and fragmentation effects and can be configured with several different guidance systems to customize the weapon to mission requirements. Currently under way in the 7th Fleet area of responsibility (AOR), Kitty Hawk demonstrates power projection and sea control as the U.S. Navy's only permanently forward-deployed aircraft carrier, operating from Yokosuka, Japan. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate Airman Theron J. Godbold (RELEASED)



041122-N-4757S-168 Persian Gulf (Nov. 22, 2004) - Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Terry Arndt, left, and Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Tabitha Ocasio, both assigned to the "Bulls" of Strike Fighter Squadron Three Seven (VFA-37), load 20mm ammunition into an F/A-18C Hornet aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75). Truman's Carrier Strike Group Ten (CSG-10) and her embarked Carrier Airwing Three (CVW-3) are currently on a scheduled deployment in support of the Global War on Terrorism. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Craig R. Spiering (RELEASED)

ASSOCIATION OF AVIATION ORDNANCEMEN MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

www.welcome.to/aao

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

FIRST TIME MEMBERS \$15.00 PER YEAR OR \$25.00 FOR TWO YEARS
PREVIOUS MEMBERS AND ANNUAL RENEWALS \$15.00 PER YEAR

NAME: _____ SPOUSE: _____
LAST FIRST MI

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____ -

PHONE: home () - work () -

RATE/RANK: _____ BRANCH OF SERVICE _____ Active () Retired ()

DATES SERVED: _____ TO _____

Type of membership: Regular () Associate ()

SPONSOR: _____

I ELECT TO RECEIVE MY NEWSLETTER BY DOWNLOADING IT FROM THE WEBSITE ONLY ()

Under the freedom of information act: I do / do not authorize release of my name, address and telephone number to other members or prospective members of the Association of Aviation Ordnancemen.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

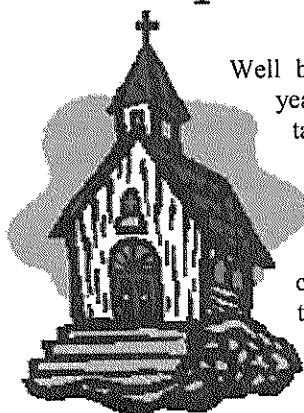
MAIL TO: AOCM J.J. La Maitre, USN Ret.
PO BOX 711167
Santee, CA 92072-0273

September 2004

GIVE THIS FORM TO A FELLOW ORDNANCEMAN



Chaplains Corner



Well by golly, we made it to another year. And as we look forward expectantly to the daily events of the future.....let us also pause and reflect back and be Thankful for the past and the many challenges, lessons of life and accomplishments. Taken in perspective, all of what happened in our professional, personal, family and religious life was and is based on personal and some "outside" decisions. There is little that most of us can do about decisions that are handed down.....being military people, we follow orders and get on with it. Most of the time we have had a chance to provide some input and it usually all "comes out well"

It's the personal decisions that affect us most, and therefore carries over, in a great extent, into our professional life. One of the "anchors" in decision making is to never let your decisions be made based on "the blowing of the winds" of opinions or popularity. If so done the results are often irreversible. The prime object in decision making, is to do what is right., whatever it is, wherever it is and based on past lessons and sage advice. Whatever the problems and dilemmas may bedo what is right. Be honest and truthful, and keep always in mind, that whatever you are doing, be sure God will approve.

Sometimes the decisions may be difficult and hard to make...sometimes the majority might not seem to be "on your side". But let us look at some of the decisions of the past and just take several for example. If Moses had listened to the advice of many of his people he would have never led them out of Egypt. If David had listened to his brothers....he would never have fought Goliath and would have simply "stayed quiet" and taken care of the sheep. You may not have to make the decisions that Moses, David or most of all Jesus made, but unknowingly your decisions have the same effect. Follow the Lord and "listen to your heart".

The following is a Prayer written by St. Patrick. Read this, make a copy and put it in your wallet, Bible, refrigerator door, the bulletin board in the shop, or under the glass top of your desk....then reflect and pray this prayer. Use it in your decision making...it will make a difference.

CHRIST BE WITH ME

I arise today,
Through God's strength to pilot me;
God's might to uphold me.
God's wisdom to guide me.
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me.
God's hand to guard me.
God's way to lie before me.
God's shield to protect me.

Christ be with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

___ St. Patrick

May God continue to overshadow you with His Grace,
Mercy and Peace.

Christian J. Eck Jr.
AAO Chaplain



TAPS

AFCM Joe (Icle) Robuck USN Ret.
AOC Robert R. Donald
AO1 John C. Weiss
AOCM John R. Hughes USN Ret.
AO1 Lou (Deverne) Ash USN Ret.
AOCS Loyd A. Kaneaster
AOC Edwin R. Faraday USN Ret.
AOC Joseph Kowalski USN Ret.
MACS (AOC) James T. Speake USN Ret.



From The Vice President

Greetings to all,

Well we are busy here in Fallon getting ready for the July 12-17 2005 Symposium / Convention in Reno at the Silver Legacy Resort and Casino. Registration for the Symposium will begin 1700 11 July with the Symposium beginning the 12th and the Convention registration will begin 0700 14 July 2005. I have just returned from the pre-convention meeting in Reno planning the Friday and Saturday evening events and menus. We will be doing things a little different this year on the Friday and Saturday night events. There will be more on these events in the follow on Newsletters. To help our advance registration and make payment easier this year Treasurer J J LaMaitre has made arrangements to accept both Master and Vista Credit Cards. He has also set up a will call for you to receive your tickets at the convention vice mailing them back to you. **Avoid the late fee's and get your advance registration in before the 15 June Dead Line!!** It may seem like it is too early to be talking about this year's convention but it is just around the corner so make your plans to be there and get your advance registration in now.

We will be electing Officers again this year so if you have nomination for **Treasurer (J.J. LaMaitre), and two Board of Directors (Ronald Jerasa and Albert Castro)** write them up and send them to me before **1 MARCH 2005**. You can either e-mail or snail mails them to me at my address on the back of the Red Shirt. The nomination must be in written form so that they can be included in the March Newsletter. If you would like you can contact me to get a **SAMPLE** Format of a nomination.

Being I'm on the subject of the convention I would like to talk about the absentee ballot. I would like to see more use of the ballot so that the folks who cannot make the convention have a vote on what happens in the association. We have close to 2,000 active members and at last year's convention 40 absentee ballots and 150 members at the convention made all the decision last year. If you do decide to use the ballot **you must follow the instruction for filling out and mailing the ballot**. We were unable to use several of the ballots again last year due to improperly filled out or improper mailing. Look for this year's ballot in the next Newsletter.

I cannot miss an opportunity to talk about the Membership. We have seen an increase in Membership this past

year and there is only one reason for it and that is all the hard work of our Chapters out there recruiting new members. **Don't forget to use the first time enlistment free membership when one of our young sailors reenlists and take advantage of the two years for \$25.00 option.** If you see a shipmate that seems interested in the Association, get him/her to the local meeting and get him/her involved. Thanks again to all those members that are out there working to bring in our new members.

The Association of Aviation Ordnancemen History Book is moving along but advance orders have not gone well. You will be or have received a new flyer in the mail with the new Deadline for submitting a biography and ordering your book, so keep your eyes on your mailbox for the brochure from Turner Publishing Company. It is very important that we get more preorders or the numbers of pages of the book may be affected. For more information on the book or an order you have already submitted you can contact Turner Publishing Company at 1-800-788-3350, www.turnerpublishing.com, or P.O. Box 3101 Paducah, KY 42002-3101

IYAOYAS
PRESS ON

Joe Manley

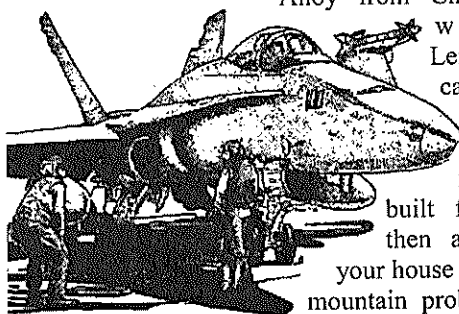


**... Support your
local chapter ...
Attend meetings
regularly ...**





Chapter 1 Lemoore, CA



Ahoy from Chapter One in waterlogged Lemoore, CA. In case some of you didn't know, California wasn't built for rain! But, then again, building your house on the side of a mountain probably isn't the smartest thing either! One good thing about all this rain is that the lakes should be pretty full this year in time for camping season.

Things here are swimming right along (get it, swimming ha-ha). Our warriors from CVW-2 are on deployment and are lending a much needed helping hand to the tsunami victims. Just goes to show you that we don't have to be putting warheads on foreheads in order to help the World. All of us back here on the beach salute you for the job you all are doing out there. As far as the rest of the bubbas, some are getting ready to deploy, some are getting ready for detachment, and some are on detachment to the arduous and miserable Key West, FL. (lucky S.O.B.s)

We all enjoyed our annual Christmas Party on the 11th of December. Lots of good food, friendship and fun. Our chapter secretary, AO2 Amber Roth, coordinated this year's event. I'd like to give her one more Sierra Hotel for the job she did. We had many, many door prizes to give away (thanks Jeff Coe), the place looked awesome, and everyone had a very good time. For her outstanding work, she was awarded with getting to do it again next year! (It's your fault Amber for setting up the best one yet).

I would like to announce that the Mighty Shrikes of VFA-94 are the winners of the 2004 Scott F. Kirby Award for Ordnance Excellence. Each year, Strike Fighter Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet, recognizes the best Ordnance work center throughout the West Coast Hornet commands. The award is named after AOC Scott Kirby, who's career dates back to the beginning days of the Aviation Ordnance rate and was marked by outstanding service during war and peace. The commands are scored on everything from Conventional Weapons Technical Proficiency Inspections to Ready Service Locker inspections. On the 7th of December, the Commodore, Captain Vincent Shorts, Commander, Strike Fighter Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet, had the honor of pre-

senting the Shrikes the award at their change of command ceremony. Since no one outside the Wing knew the results, he was able to give them an excellent and well-earned surprise. The Ordnance Shop will proudly be displaying a plaque and their name goes on the Kirby Award, which is kept at Strike Fighter Weapons School, Pacific. So, hearty congratulations to VFA-94. (Being a previous Mighty Shrike, I was very proud to be able to put together this year's award package) SHWFOTS forever!

Well, I guess that's all for this edition. If you're in the area on the third Wednesday of the month, make sure to stop by the Fleet Reserve at 1730 for our monthly meeting.

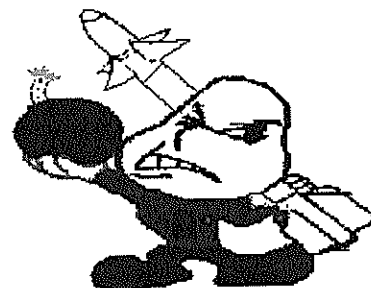
AOCS(AW) Tim Zimmer
President, Chapter One
IYAOYAS

Chapter 74

Greetings from Chapter 74,

There have been some big changes for Chapter 74. We just completed out Home Port Change from sunny San Diego to the great outdoors of the Pacific North West. We gave the former chapter President AO1 (AW/SW) Acala a big IYAOYAS farewell as he transferred to NAS El Centro and ushered in AO1 (AW) Rivera and AO1 (AW) Sweeting in as the new President and Vice President. Since were new in town and the USS John C Stennis (CVN-74) is getting some rework. Were currently searching for a new place to have the chapter meetings on the first Wednesday of each month.

V/r,
AO1 (AW) Sweeting, C
Chapter 74 Vice President





Treasurer's Report

Greetings,

Pre-convention meeting was held in Reno weekend of 14-17 Jan. The Convention kicks off on 14 July 05 at the Silver Legacy Resort and Casino. This will be the 1st year we will accept Visa and Master Credit Cards. Look for the Registration Form elsewhere in this Red Shirt. DEADLINE for tickets and registration is 15 Jun. Avoid the late fee's and plan on getting your registration in by the deadline.



Address changes are a ongoing problem for the Association. Sign up to get yours electronically!!! If you move or have a PCS coming up get those address changes to me prior to the move. You can make them via the web-site, via snail mail P.O. Box 711167; Santee, CA 92072-1167; phone 619-562-8492; or (preferred) you can e-mail them to me at aaotreas@cox.net. Until next time IYAO-YAS.

JJ LaMaitre

SCHOLARSHIP CONTRIBUTORS

AO1(AW/SW) Severrio R. Marshatelli John E. Drake Ed Clement CWO4 Joseph P. Zonkel USN Ret. AOC A.N. & Connie Knobloch USN Ret. Joe D. Krevanchi	AOC Billy & Timi Devine Irvin & Micki Koniak MSGT Dennis M. Colbert USMC Ret. Bob Anderson LT 'Buck' & Nadine Hafer AOCM Brian E. Albrecht USN Ret.
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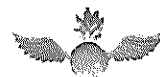
LOCATOR

Can you help?.....Know where any of these members can be located? If so please contact me at aaotreas@cox.net, snail mail or give me a call.

AOC James A. Sanchez AOAN Bazal W. Bowen AO1 David R. Soto TMSN Tanisha N. Thomas AO3 Kevin M. Meltzer CWO4 Richard L. Green USN Ret. AO1 Stacy B. Ashley AOAN Allen L. Ortega	AO2 Jason A. Worek AO3 Kurt T. Licari AO2 Arthur D. Gray AO3 Jose A. Hernandez Kathryn A. Williams AO3 Christopher B. Hall AOC Thomas Holzer USN Ret.
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NEW LIFE MEMBERS

AOCS John R. Hook USN Ret. YN2(AW) Kerri L. Wendeborn Mark E. Buhl AOCS Kaye L. Mooney Alonzo B. Doggett CWO4 Laird E. Brinley USN Ret. AO2 Amber L. Roth	Joseph P. Ruggeri LTCOL Howard A. Franz USMC Ret. LCDR Charles A. Cole USN Ret. GYSGT Jon D. Fimea USMC Ret. Lamont E. Edwards LTJG Steve E. Kashuba LT T. E. Salsman USN Ret.
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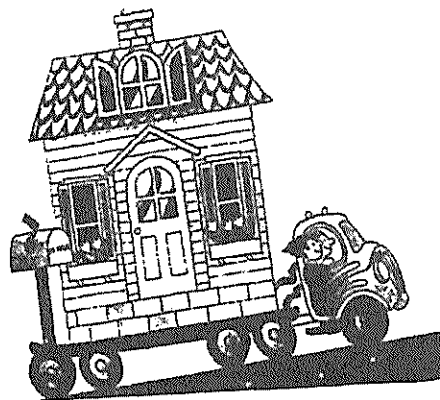
NEW MEMBERS

AOCS Earl D. DuShane
SSGT Gustavo Vela
AOCS Michael A. Haberman USN Ret.
YN3 Sheryl L. Pyles
AO1 Joseph K. McCreary
AO3(AW) James H. Schuh
AO3(AW) Landon T. Ward
AO2 Jerome Ruffins
LTJG Richard D. Wright
AO3(AW) Hector Santiagoreyes
AO2(AW) Simeon A. Santo, Jr.
Alonzo B. Doggett
AOC Wayne A. Slack
Glenn E. Israel
AO2 James R. Amendola
AO2 Jeremy J. Calhoun
AO1 Ronald C. McClain
AO3 Joshua P. Griffin
AO2 (AW) Robert P. Strohl
AO1(AW) Robert P. Gregory
A2C Moody A. Harp Jr. USAF Ret.
CDR Hart J. Schwarzenbach USN Ret.

AOAN Adrian Romero
AO1(AW/SW) Christopher M. Zagotti
AO1 Todd W. Fecht
AOC Shahan S. Shahoumian
AOAN Matthew R. Koch
AO3(AW) Henry J. Freimuth
AOAN Joseph E. Dick
AO1(AW) Ryan A. O'Rear
AO1(AW) Jeffery B. Mills
AO3 Danny W. Cave
MAJ Joseph R. Boehm
Mike Slavin
AO3 Javier Quinones
AO1 Presedencio B. Pike
AOCS Michael A. Varela
AO2 Julian M. Oliver
AO2 Donta' J. Brewington
Mike P. George
AO1(AW) Anthony G. Whetstone
AO3 (AW) Ronald G. Fawson
AOAN Jason A. Bare
AOAN Kassandra L. Lampton
AOCM (AW) Ennis E. Roper

MOVING?

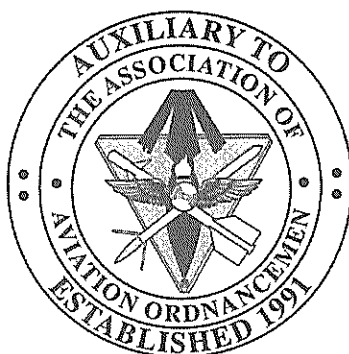
YOUR CHANGE OF
ADDRESS IS
IMPORTANT . . .
PLEASE SUBMIT ONE
TO THE
NATIONAL TREASURER





Auxiliary To The Association Of Aviation Ordnancemen

Wow, can you believe it is time to say Happy St. Valentine's Day 2005! By the time you read this there will



have been democratic elections held in Iraq, millions of dollars of relief supplies distributed to the survivors of the tsunami, UBL continues to be hunted in Afghanistan and US troops are deployed all over the world defending our freedoms. So, The Auxiliary would like to send our love and thanks to all Ord-

nancemen in the midst of the fray wherever they are deployed. We want all Ordies to know that The Auxiliary is here to help in any way we can...our motto is "We Support the Arms of the Fleet" and we are ready and willing to do what we can to make your job easier and your burden lighter.

This past Holiday season I sent Auxiliary members the addresses of all the deployed Navy and Marine AO departments I could find out about and (hopefully) they have received many cards and good wishes from our Auxiliary members. The Chapter 22 Auxiliary members are still baking brownies and sending care packages to our troops. It is a labor of love and we enjoy receiving the pictures of everyone taking part in a brief "Taste of Home". I'd like to ask the active duty AO's to encourage your spouses and loved ones to join the Auxiliary. We are a great support system as well as a friendly bunch of folks. Our only meeting is held during the Convention/Symposium and it is also a luncheon. We are a very social group! AND our dues are only \$10/year! Please send all inquiries to Bette Sharp (AAAO Sec/Treas)

16584 Nosoni Way
Apple Valley, CA 92307 or by e-mail to:
bettesharp@msn.com

Speaking of Bette I want to thank her and Carolyn Thomas as well as members representing the Auxiliary that recently participated in the Convention planning session in Reno. Carolyn has worked with the hotel staff to create our meeting luncheon menu. Because our luncheon is the afternoon of the banquet dinner we decided to keep the menu light: Fancy Chef Salad (topped

with meat), rolls and butter, choice of beverage and dessert. The charge to Auxiliary members is only \$12.00 (the Auxiliary pays for the remaining amount) and the cost to non-members is \$17.00. Due to hotel policies reservations must be made in advance to Bette Sharp. Please use this form:

I _____ will attend
the Auxiliary meeting and luncheon.

I am a member/ non member (circle one) and \$12.00/
\$17.00 (circle one) is enclosed.

My address and phone # is _____

Bette and other Auxiliary members will be at the door of the meeting/luncheon checking everyone in with a sign in sheet and issuing members their voting packets. There will be a gift for every member attending the luncheon and I anticipate having a guest speaker and will let you know more about that as Convention time gets closer.

Finally I would like to say thank you to Stu Carson (and Patsy Stokes) who is the adopt-a-unit chairman of his Virginia Beach VFW. Stu applauded the efforts of the Auxiliary to support our deployed AO's and sent us a check for \$125 for our "Taste of Home" project. Additionally thank you to Auxiliary member Lillian Lechwar sent us a check for \$70 to help defray the costs of the same project. Hugs to both of them and to all AAAO's who sent cards and gifts to our AO's. Your kindness and generosity will never be forgotten and we thank God for you.

Make your plans now to attend the Convention/Symposium in Reno this July and I look forward to seeing you all there. May God Bless you all, our Ordies and the USA.

Mary Ann Laun

AO Auxiliary Pres.





2005

BIGGER & BETTER

SYMPOSIUM - 12-14 JULY
CONVENTION - 14-17 JULY

SILVERLEGACY
RESORT CASINO RENO

800/687-8733

(ASK FOR GROUP CODE: AAO5)

<u>SUNDAY - THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY & SATURDAY</u>
STANDARD ROOM - \$59	STANDARD ROOM - \$82
SPA SUITE - \$105	SPA SUITE - \$125

MAKE RESERVATIONS BY 12 JUNE

FREE AIRPORT SHUTTLE

←—————→
FOR EXHIBITOR, VENDOR OR CONVENTION INFORMATION, CALL:

Jim Thomas
800/783-8646



Letters To The Editor

Dear Kevin,

We are familiar with John Finn's heroic actions on Dec 7, but I was not aware that on the same day at Kaneohe , AOM3 John Daniel Buckley was killed also in heroic action. In fact he had a DE named for him. DE 51 had a great career especially sinking a German cow submarine in a deck-to-deck fight including Hand to Hand fighting. The ship received a Presidential Unit Citation
An account of this action is contained in the SEA CLASSICS magazine this month
Doug Weaver Member 32

Thanks for the input Doug, I did some searches on the internet and found a lot of information. Destroyer Escort DE-51, USS Buckley, commissioned 30 April 1943. For those of you wanting more info just google USS Buckley.

It is my sad duty to report to the passing of a very old friend and shipmate MACS (formerly AOC) James Terry Speake on January 12, 2005. Jim was my teaching partner in the guns phase at AO "B" school in Jax (70 - 72), my sponsor when I made AOC (72) and received the silver dollar for my first salute upon being appointed to W1 (72). He converted to the Master at Arms rate and his last tour was as CMAA and Air Officer on the USS JULIUS A. FURER (FFG 6) in Charleston SC.

I do not think Jim was an AAO member, but I respectfully request to have this notice added to the TAPS portion of the next Redshirt please.

Regards

Mike Cain
LCDR (Ret)
AAO Life Member

Good job on the newsletter. Please remove me from the mail list and save the association some postage. I will keep abreast of the happenings here on the net. Once again good job shipmate.

Thank you,
Jerry Burrows

For all those who would like to receive their RedShirt via the website (in color!) please let J.J. know.

TO ALL,

Following are RENO AREA RV PARK's that some of are members have stayed at.

There are several others that are listed in the 2005 TRAILER LIFE DIRECTORY, BUT THESE ARE THE CLOSEST TO DOWNTOWN.

BOOMTOWN HOTEL/ CASINO/ RV PARK
ON I-80 about 2 plus miles West of downtown, EXIT 4

203 Sites, ALL paved, 130 PullThrus. All full hook-ups

30/50 AMPS

LOTS of Good features/ GREAT RV PARK

They have a Shuttle to downtown Reno, that goes close to the Silver Legacy

Phone; 877-626-6686

E-mail: www.boomtownreno.com

SHAMROCK RV PARK

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Located at Parr Blvd and N. Virginia Street (5 Minutes from downtown)

Use EXIT 13 off of I-80 West

75 PullThrus

121 full Hookups

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Reno, NV. 89503

Use EXIT 12 at Keystone on I-80 West

Walking distance to downtown, Underwood, said is about 1/2 mile to Silver Legacy

50 PullThrus and other Back-ins

30/50 AMPS

All Paved

Phone: 775-324-5000

Phone: 1-800-686-8559

E-mail: www.keystonervpark.com

NAVAIR FWST

DET. LEMOORE

PH. 559-998-3568

DSN 949-3568

charles.onken@navy.mil



Editor -- The following was sent to me by one of my former AO3's, who transferred from VAH-21 to VA(L)-4 when the Roadrunners decommissioned. He is Mike Slavin, currently retired in Topeka, KS, and spends his time gardening and as a counselor with the Department of Veteran's Affairs.

He was a dedicated and hardworking AO, who left the Navy at the end of his enlistment, and is a member (I think lifetime) of the AAO.

I think it will make an interesting article for the Red Shirt. Several photos will follow shortly. Feel free to use any or all of them as you wish.

Thanks again for the Combat Aircrew Roll of Honor article in the 'winter' edition. Happy New Year to you and to yours.

Bob Holdman

Bob, we appreciate the inputs! Very interesting articles. As always everyone is encouraged to send in their stories

Kevin,

I've sent you 2 attachments. One is a picture of a mass reenlistment we had in the magazine while we were in the Gulf during Operation Phantom Fury, which was the attack on Fallujah. We had 15 Ordies reenlist for nearly \$500,000 tax free. The second attachment is the ships newspaper in which the PAO did a small article on John Finn. The were unaware he was an Ordie and the history of his involvement with the AAO. Feel free to use this in a future Red Shirt! JFK is just a few days from being home! The boys done good Brother!.....Have a great Christmas!....Later....Woody

V/r LT W.R. "Woody" Woodfin
USS John F. Kennedy CV-67
Bomb Assembly Officer

Thanks Woody, did not have room for the JFK paper this time. Was a nice article. Will try to include in the next edition.



I noted that Ralph Hanlon, the AOCM I relieved in CVW-15 in July 75, who spent WWII flying as a gunner in the Pacific, including having made runs in SB2C's on the Japanese Battleship Yamato when she was sunk in 1945, is in the Taps listing. Ralph was a mighty colorful gent. When asked what he would do after having spent over 35 years in the Navy, he replied, "I'm going to take piano lessons." Oh yeah, his fingers looked like most people's big toe...

My personal thanks to the fine Red Shirt Editor, Kevin Meagher, and to our Association Chaplain, Christian Eck for getting this article published. Y'all done good -- reeeaaal good.

Enjoy. Y'all come.
Bob & Liza

EDITOR

AOC Kevin P. Meagher, USN/Ret.
21 Wedgewood Lane NE
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547
(H) 850.243.0237
(W) 850.883.0187
AAORedShirtEditor@aaoweb.org

Anybody know these folks?





AMRAAM Outstanding Performer Jan-Jun 2004

AO2(AW/SW) Yusuf A Garrett was selected as the Navy/Marine Corp AMRAAM Outstanding Performer for JAN-JUN 2004. Petty Officer Garrett is stationed on the USS Carl Vinson (CV-70) in Bremerton Washington. As an Ordnance Team Leader, he personally trained 21 assigned personnel in the proper inspection, issuing and tracking of the AIM-120 missile and configurations of the LAU-127 and LAU-115C/A missile launchers. His unique ability to train resulted in an increased knowledge and proficiency of the AMRAAM missile in the CV-70 Weapons Department. In addition Petty Officer Garrett's exceptional supervision and leadership was invaluable in the safe handling, inspection, issuing and tracking of over 1,200,000 pounds of non-combat expenditure allowance, including the AIM-120 for CVW-9 without incident, valued at over \$8,000,000. Dedicated Red Shirts like Petty Officer Garrett make AMRAAM the best air-to-air weapon system in the inventory.

To fully recognize AO2 Garrett for his achievement, the Air-to-Air Joint Systems Program Office coordinated and funded a trip for him to our AMRAAM contractors plant (Raytheon) in Tucson, Arizona for a tour of the production facility, dinner in his honor and received a congratulatory plaque from CDR Rick Garza, COM-NAVAIRPAC

For more info on the AMRAAM Outstanding Performer Award given twice a year please see the latest issue of the AMRAAM-O-GRAM AIM-120 INFORMATION LETTER. You can also E-mail joseph.odom2@eglin.af.mil or kevin.meagher@eglin.af.mil with any questions you may have.

IYAOYAS

AOC(AW) Kevin P. Meagher USN/Ret
Commercial: (850) 883-0187
DSN: 875-0187



Chapter 75

Greetings from Chapter 75, currently standing watch in the Mighty Gulf. After a brief absence, we are up and running, paving the way for Ordies to excel.

We would like to take this time to bid "farewell and following seas" to a couple of our brothers who have moved on to the next step in their excelling careers. AO1 Merrick has left us to continue bringing in the best that is out there in Recruiting. Thanks for all the number crunching; we know ROLMS is going to miss you. Freshly pinned CWO2 Legrand will be leaving us for school in Pensacola, and then back to the fleet. As the G-1 LCPO your Leadership and Guidance were always the TIP OF THE SPEAR. Good luck to you both. We would like to welcome the following to Chapter 75 and know they will continue to "Give Em Hell", AOC Barfield, AOC Hairston, AOC Herring, AOC McBride, and TMC Thomas. Congrats to LT. Lester Hood, now LCDR Hood.

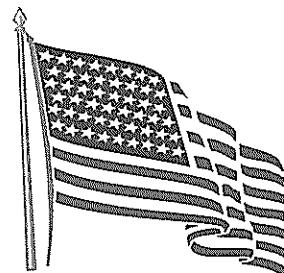
Our first order of business was to come together and help a brother in need. After reading the article in the Navy Times about AO1 Wetmore and his daughter who was born with Treacher Collins Syndrome, it was clear what we needed to do. After 2 days of collecting donations we were able to raise \$7,325 for AO1 Wetmore and his family. Thank you to all who supported our ordnance family in need.

Keep fighting the fight, as we are the ARMS of the fleet. IYAOYAS

AO1(AW)H R UPTON
Chapter 75 President
Harry S Truman CVN-75

To all who took the time to give a little, we would like to thank you all, for giving so much. In the last 2 days we have been able to raise over \$7,000, towards the care of Juliana Wetmore. Chapter 75 Aviation Ordnance Association would like to thank you all for your thoughts and donations. We will be sending the donations along with a Card and photo, from all of HST. We thank you again for all that you have done. Please pass this to all of your troops, there are so many who helped that were not addressed. IYAOYAS

R/
AO1(AW)UPTON
WEPS/G-1
J-6635





Greetings From Tidewater Chapter IV

Greetings from Tidewater Virginia

We hope everyone had a safe and joyous holiday season and that you have a prosperous new year.

Our Monthly meetings continue to draw new faces, we would like to thank the active duty Khaki as they have and continue to play a key role in our growth. We are looking forward to a successful year ahead. The "Red Shirt Musters" have been a huge success. We are planning to have several more Musters this year; which we will be rotated between Norfolk and Oceana, as well as more guest speakers. We are confident these efforts will increase our membership and chapter participation.

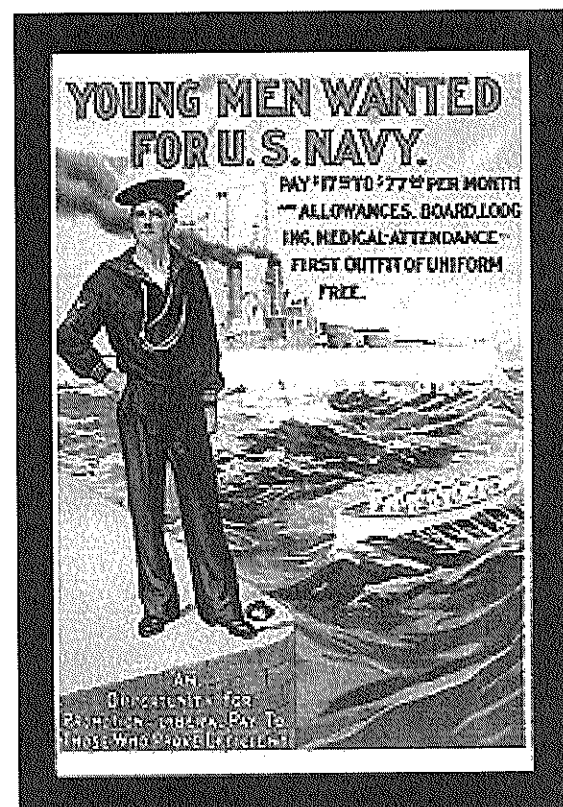
We would like to thank our October and November Guest Speakers; Captain Casey Collins, USN Mid Atlantic Command MWR and Captain Bob Birdwell, Fleet Forces Support for their very informative presentations. We look forward to their return visits and updates of their programs.

We would like to congratulate AO1 (AW) Jack R. Sigler on his selection as the Chapter IV Aviation Ordnanceman of the Year. AO1 (AW) Sigler is currently assigned to Ordnance Safety And Assistance Team (OHSAT). A true professional, he has been instrumental in the success of 25 technical assist visits and he has provided essential ordnance safety training to more than 300 sailors. As the Publications Petty Officer he was responsible for updating the antiquated Aviation Ordnance Safety Supervisors (AOSS) publication library, which directly increased the readiness of the AOSS team and the integration of the U.S. Army assets onboard U.S. Navy combatants. His dedicated efforts have made and continue to have a positive impact on the explosive safety posture of the fleet.

Please submit your nominations for the Chapter IV Aviation Ordnanceman of the Quarter. It is important for us to recognize our top performers.

With our roadside cleanup project still on hold due the road construction, we are seeking other avenues of community involvement to increase the visibility of our association in the Tidewater area.

We would like to encourage the Shipboard chapters members and anyone who may be visiting the area to come out to our meetings. Our meetings are held at 1900 hours the 3rd Wednesday of each month at VFW Post 392 on Bowland Parkway in Virginia Beach. If you need directions feel free to contact me at (757) 479-1176 or samuel6@cox.net.





CHAPTER MEETINGS - PLACES - TIMES - DATES

Chapter 1 - Lemoore, CA
President: AOCs Tim Zimmer
559-998-1613
Fleet Reserve, Lemoore
3rd Wednesday, 1730

Chapter 4 - Virginia Beach, VA
President: Ron Jerasa
757-479-1176
VFW Post 392, Bowland Parkway
3rd Wednesday, 1900

Chapter 7 - Naval Base Ventura County, CA
President: Glenn Van Noordt
805-385-7222
Weapons Dept. Conf Room Bldg. 68, NBVC
1st Wednesday, 1130

Chapter 9 - Jacksonville, FL
President: AO1 Michael Steckley
904-542-5568
Fleet Reserve, Collins Road
3rd Thursday, 1900

Chapter 21 - Fallon, NV
President: AO1 Mike Neely
775-423-8893
American Legion Post 16 Fallon, NV.
1st Wednesday, 1900

Chapter 63 - USS Kitty Hawk
CV 63 President: Tony Moore
Forward Deployed

Chapter 68 - USS Nimitz
CVN 68 President: AO1 Samuel Johnson
On Board

Chapter 72 - USS Lincoln
CVN 72 President: AO1 Mifsud
On Board

Chapter 75 - USS Truman
CVN 75 President: George W. Johnson
On Board

Chapter Desert/Southwest - El Centro, CA.
President: John G. Cleary Jr.
760-337-4986
Call for Meeting Time and Place

Chapter CVW 5 - Deployed
President: Anthony Moore
Forward Deployed

Chapter 3 - Whidbey Island, WA
President: Kaye Mooney
360-240-9921
VFW Post 7392 (Whidbey)
2nd Wednesday, 1830

Chapter 5 - China Lake, CA
President: AO1 Michael Bautista
760-939-0360
VFW 4080, 117 N. Alvord
3rd Thursday, 1830

Chapter 8 - San Diego, CA
President: Scott Lagerquist,
619-271-4216
Fleet Reserve, Chula Vista
1st Thursday, 1900

Chapter 11 - Kaneohe Bay, HI
President: AO1 Masters
808-839-2226
Call for Meeting Time and Place

Chapter 22 - Patuxent River
President: Michael Burns
Richard.Brasco@navy.mil
301-997-0036
VFW California, MD
3rd Wednesday, 1900

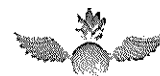
Chapter 65 - USS Enterprise
CVN 65 President: AO1 Michael Dasch
On Board

Chapter 70 - USS Vinson
CVN 70 President: Ryan P. Burton
On Board

Chapter 74 - USS Stennis
CVN 74 President: AO1 Jose Acala
On Board

Chapter Pensacola - Pensacola, FL
President: Boris Harris
850-456-0996
Lilian Rd, VFW
1st Thursday, 1830

Chapter Key West,
Southern Most President: AO2 Ortiz
305-294-2892
Navigator Bar and Grill NAS Key West, FL
2nd Friday, 1300



Association of Aviation Ordnancemen Chapter 22, Patuxent River

Ordies,

The Chapter Christmas Party was a great time. Some pics are attached for your enjoyment. Mary Ann Laun and her primary assistants of Gary and Leilani Kubik beautifully decorated, and put together some nice give-a-ways. I know Leilani made a number of trips from King George to help. The Chapter will need to look into reimbursement to Mary Ann. Thank everyone who helped pull off the event.

As the Chapter moves into a new year with three new lead officers, I hope everyone will help by keeping in touch, updating your information, and by catching up on the \$5.00 annual Chapter dues. Remember Chapter members must be current members of the National Association of Aviation Ordnancemen.

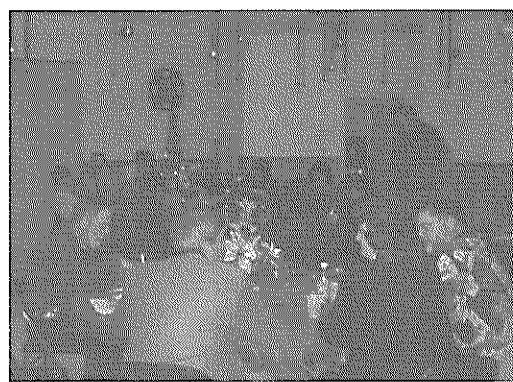
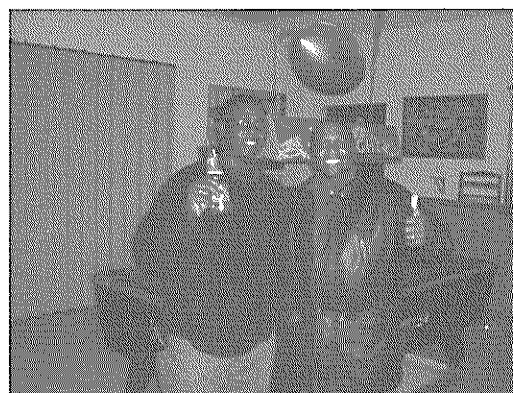
Congratulations again to the newly elected Officers of Chapter 22 Patuxent River:

President: **AOC WAYNE SLACK**

Vice President: **LT MERCER MORGAN**

Secretary/Treasurer:
AOAA KASSANDRA LAMPTON

V/R
AL Castro
IYAOYAS





Enlisted Combat Aircrew Roll of Honor Induction

The annual ceremonies to induct new members into the 'CAC-ROH' were conducted 4 and 5 November 2004 on board the USS Yorktown (CV-10) in Charleston Harbor at Patriots' Point, Mount Pleasant, SC. The CAC-ROH recognizes Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard crewmen from all wars, who distinguished themselves for actions while under fire.

Members must have been enlisted at the time of their service, however many later received commissions. Nomination packages are considered and approved or deferred by a five-member selection board made up of existing ROH members. Captain Ray Schultz serves as chairman. He served in World War II as an enlisted combat air crewman, and is now retired as a Navy Chaplain.

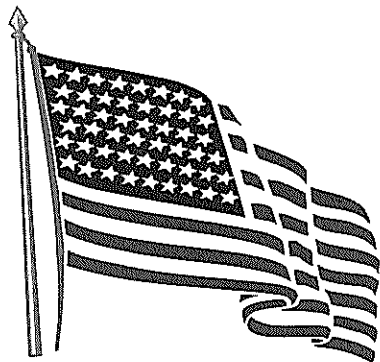
The 41 inductees included 12 Aviation Ordnancemen, joining the nearly 1200 Navy members, from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

The Sailors inducted for their actions during the Korean War, served in Composite Squadron Thirty-Five (VC-35). Each deployed aircraft carrier and air group had a 'Blue Owl' detachment of VC-35 aircraft assigned, which flew day and night attack and reconnaissance missions in the propeller driven 'AD' (later called the 'A-1') aircraft.

The AO's honored for Vietnam service were door gunners in "The Sea Wolves" Helicopter Attack Squadron Three (HAL-3) and tail gunners from "The Roadrunners" Heavy Attack Squadron Twenty-One (VAH-21).

The four Marines inducted served in the Pacific as aerial gunners in World War II era Marine Corps Scout-Bomber Squadrons; VMSB-133 (two) and one each from VMSB-236 and VMSB-341. 127 Marines are now in the ROH.

Submitted by
Bob Holdman



ADR1 Sam Gore USN Ret, AOCS Al Doggett USN Ret, Former AO2's Perry Young and Allan Smith



Perry and Sally Young



Allan and Dolly Smith,
RADM Kevin Delaney
USN Ret



041201-N-5345W-056 Persian Gulf (Dec. 1, 2004) - U.S. Marines Corps Ordnancemen, (VMFA-115), hoist an AGM-65 Maverick laser-guided missile to a weapons pylon under the wing of one of their squadron's F/A-18A Hornets aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75). Truman's Carrier Strike Group Ten (CSG-10) and her embarked Carrier Air Wing Three (CVW-3) are currently on a scheduled deployment in support of the Global War on Terrorism. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate Airman Kristopher Wilson (RELEASED)



Bridge Dedication

On the cool, crisp, sun drenched Saturday morning of December 4th, a group of local dignitaries, neighbors, and a surprisingly large contingent of Forestall Association folks, gathered to dedicate a small bridge just south of the town of Willacooche, Ga. This dedication was for Aviation Ordnanceman Third Class Johnny Wayne Spivey, one of their local young men who had given the ultimate sacrifice for his country. I had the privilege of representing our Association and local Chapter 9 at the ceremony.

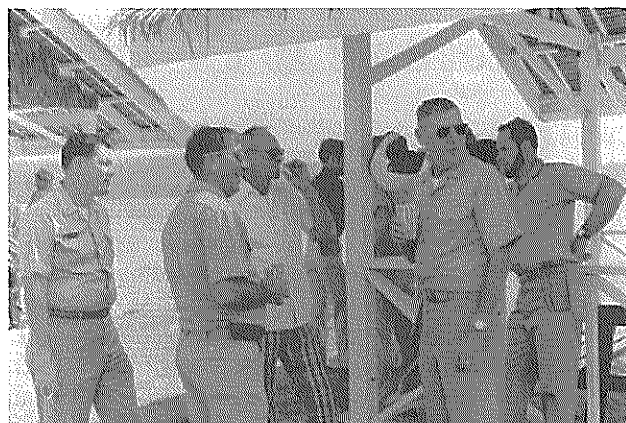
Petty Officer Spivey was an Ordnanceman assigned to VF-74, the BE-DEVILERS, aboard USS Forestall (CVA-59). On July 29, 1967, the Forestall was engulfed in fire that took the lives of 134 sailors. Petty Officer Spivey was one of those fatalities. The Forestall Fire, as we all know, led to many changes in the way we conduct business onboard carriers. Ordnance, fire fighting, and damage control procedures were all impacted. Many of the procedures that we use today were brought about by the lessons learned from Forestall.

The ceremony was conducted at a bridge on State Road 135 just south of the town of Willacoochee, Ga. The Master of Ceremonies was State Representative Chuck Sims from that district of Georgia. After the Presentation of Colors, Representative Sims introduced a group of guests, and speakers for the occasion. One of the speakers was Thomas C. Wimberly, Captain USN Retired. He was a member of VF-74 and Forestall and knew a great deal of what went on during that fateful day in 1967. He spoke about Ordnancemen, our spirit of togetherness and the tremendous pride we take in our rate. He read a Letter of Condolence from Lieutenant John Finn and presented copies to the family members in attendance. At the close of the ceremonies, the family members unveiled the placards at each end of the bridge dedicating it in memory of Aviation Ordnance Third Class Johnny Wayne Spivey.

So, if you find yourself in the neighborhood of Willacoochee, Georgia, take a ride south on State Road 135 and pay your respects by raising your hand in salute or tipping your hat to one of our own. He was one of us.....he served.....he counted.

Larry Hardin
Office Operations Manager
Florida Highway Patrol – Troop G

Larry, if you have any pictures please submit them and I will include in the next RedShirt. Outstanding article. Show Danny the pictures on pg 13!
Editor



Aviation Ordnance 50th Birthday (1976) get together at NAS Cubi Pt.

From Left to Right: CWO2 Doug Poutree "Gunner", NAS Cubi Pt. Weapons Department; LCDR Ken Alstrom NAS Cubi Pt. Weapons Officer; LCDR Bob Crowe (civies) COM-NAVAIRPAC Staff; CDR Harmon NAS Cubi Pt. XO; CWO2 Curt Crowe (with beard) "Gunner", VA-145 aboard USS Ranger CVA-61



Aviation Ordnance 50th Birthday (1976) get together at NAS Cubi Pt..

From Left to Right: LCDR Ken Alstrom NAS Cubi Pt. Weapons Officer; CWO2 Doug Poutree "Gunner", NAS Cubi Pt. Weapons Department; CWO2 Curt Crowe "Gunner", VA-145 aboard USS Ranger CVA-61.



Chapter IV AO Of The Year

CWO4 Ron Jerasa (USN Ret)
President, Association of Aviation Ordnanceman
Tidewater Virginia Chapter IV
Virginia Beach, VA 23454

AO1 (AW) Jack R. Sigler, USN
Ordnance Handling Safety and Assistance Team
8952 First Street STE 150
Norfolk, VA 23511-3786

January 19, 2005

Dear Petty Officer Sigler:

Few of my duties as President of the Association of Aviation Ordnanceman Chapter IV, gives me greater pleasure than recognizing personal excellence and rewarding sustained superior performance of our active duty "Red Shirts".

Having met the highest standards of leadership, military excellence and professional performance, you have been selected as the Tidewater Virginia Chapter IV, Aviation Ordnanceman of the Year for 2004. Your assignment as a member of the United States Atlantic Fleet, Ordnance Handling Safety and Assistance Team (OHSAT) has been instrumental in the successful completion of over 25 technical assist visits and providing essential ordnance safety training to more than 300 sailors. The dedicated efforts you have made and continue to display have had a positive impact on the explosive safety posture of the fleet.

Chapter IV is proud to salute you for your accomplishments to the Aviation Ordnance community, your career and the U.S. Navy. We wish you the best of luck in the future.

Sincerely,

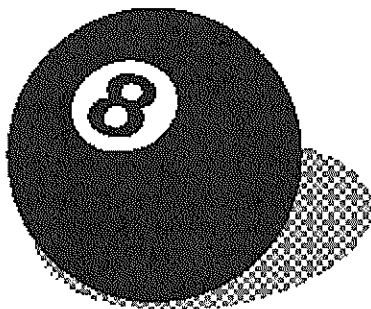
Ronald Jerasa
President

cc. CO ATG Norfolk VA
COMNAVAIRLANT Force Weapons Officer
Director of OHSAT





Chapter 8



Greetings from San Diego!

Chapter 8 just completed it's Quarterly Highway Walk on December 4, 2004 on Interstate 8 in San Diego county followed by a burger

burn at John Finn's ranch. Unfortunately John wasn't home but the Marines from MAS Miramar joined us for the first time. We appreciate their involvement and look forward to seeing them at future endeavors. We split quite a bit of wood for John and he is being well taken care of.

Our annual picnic is scheduled for Saturday, May 4, 2005 at Admiral Baker's Field at 1000. Raffle tickets are currently on sale for \$ 1.00 or (12) for \$ 10.00. We at Chapter 8 look forward to seeing all of you who make the trip each year. If anyone is in San Diego, please come and join us for a great time. Food, soda's and beer are always free at the picnic for all ordies and their families. Ordies are "anyone who is or has been associated with Aviation Ordnancemen at any time."

We say our "Goodbye" to our departing Vice President, AO1 Casey Sweeting. He has transferred to the USS John C. Stennis CVN-74, which is on its way to Washington state for it's home port change. Casey, thank you for doing such an outstanding job! We will miss you!

If any of you are ever in San Diego please attend our monthly meeting on the first Thursday of every month at 1900 at the Chula Vista Fleet Reserve Center at 3rd AVE and F Street in San Diego.

Respectfully,

AOC (AW/SW) Scott Lagerquist
Chapter 8 President



Chapter 8 Holiday Hand-Up

Chapter 8 raised over \$600.00 and collected food-drive-baskets for our annual Thanksgiving and Christmas hand-ups to local ordies and their families. Four families received Thanksgiving baskets, which included a Turkey, Ham and three boxes of dry goods. Three families received \$150.00 in gift certificates for Christmas.

A "special thanks" to Ray Ramirez and Jim Saxton for coordinating the Hand-up, collecting the food baskets and making deliveries. This is the third straight year they have coordinated the event.

Submitted by Scott Lagerquist, Chapter 8 President.



Red Shirt Articles *are due*

15 JAN 06

15 MAR 05

30 JUL 05

15 OCT 05

*Please submit via e-mail
when possible*



The BLACK PONIES

Of Light Attack

Squadron Four VA(L)-4

Three Navy attack squadrons flew missions from bases in Vietnam. None resembled the A-1's, A-4's, A-6's and A-7's flying from aircraft carriers on Yankee and Dixie Stations in the Gulf of Tonkin.

The largest and best known squadron was Light Helicopter Attack Squadron Three (HA(L)-3), homeported in Vung Tau, flying UH-1's from advanced bases and LST's throughout the III and IV Corps areas. Several of the many AO's who flew as Door Gunners with the Seawolves have been inducted into the Combat Aircrew Roll Of Honor (CAC-ROH) on the USS Yorktown (CV-10), a floating museum in Charleston Harbor at Patriots' Point in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina -- and at least one into the Association of Aviation Ordnancemen Hall Of Fame.

Two smaller and lesser-known squadrons also flew from the south. The first of those, was the 'Roadrunners' of Heavy Attack Squadron Twenty One (VAH-21). The squadron flew night attack and reconnaissance missions in the AP-2H aircraft, from the Naval Air Facility, Cam Ranh Bay. Three VAH-21 AO Tail Gunners were recently cited in "The Red Shirt" for their induction into the CAC-ROH.

The third squadron was Light Attack Squadron Four (VA(L)-4). The 'Black Ponies' were commissioned early in 1969 and remained in service until the end of America's involvement in the war. It was the only Navy squadron ever to fly the OV-10 Bronco into combat. A permanent detachment was located at Bien Thuy, with the squadron homeported in Vung Tau. Kent LaVelle, one of the squadron's pilots, wrote "The Black Ponies", which described many of the squadron's missions and aviators, and the conditions in which squadron members lived and worked. The book often mentions the fact that AO's were the squadron's life and breath, but it tells little about how they lived.

Upon the Roadrunners decommissioning, six VAH-21 AO's transferred directly to VAL-4 (five went to Bien Thuy) and became Black Ponies. Without those volunteers, the squadron would have been hard put to function, much less accomplish its mission. Even with them, the AO's were extremely short handed. They maintained the aircraft guns (20 mm Mk-4 and 7.62 mm SUU-11 Gun Pods), assembled and loaded a variety of combat

weapons, including wing mounted LAU-10 (four 5 inch rockets), LAU-68 and 69 Launchers (seven and 19 2.75 inch folding fin aircraft rockets respectively), plus various flares and decoys.

With the detachment AO's tasked with assuring all ordnance breakout and assembly functions were completed, along with the care and maintenance of the guns and bomb racks, the few with any training or practical experience in their assignments were especially valuable, keeping the ball rolling while the others got up to speed. As usual the Ordnancemen's dedication and sweat kept the squadron operational.

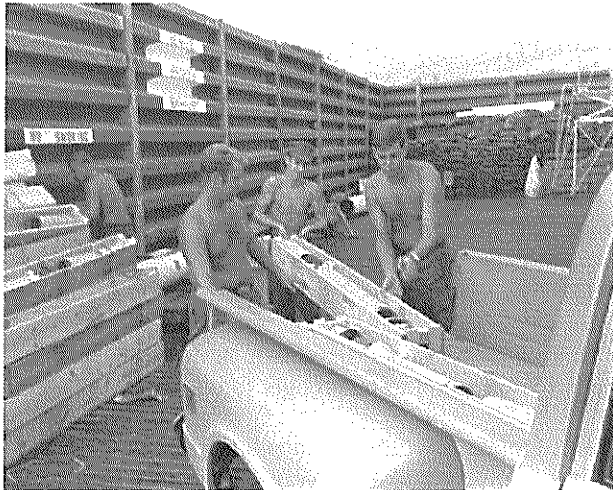
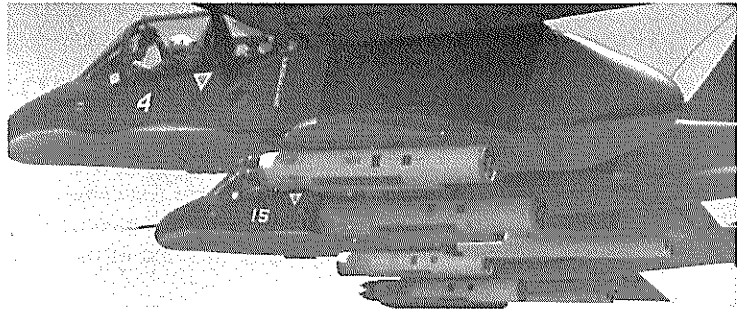
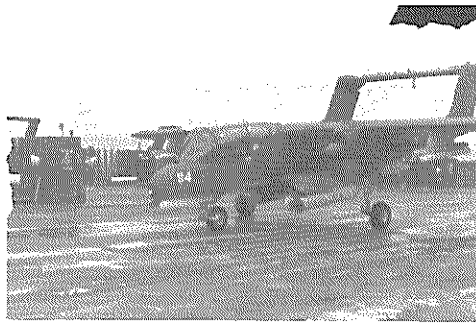
The same AO's who assembled and loaded the ordnance in the loading area, had to conduct final aircraft arming and dearming at the end of the runway. This often had them driving their topless four-cylinder truck at speeds approaching 90 mph just to get to the arming area before the aircrafts' arrival. As soon as the aircraft were airborne, it was hustle back to the loading area and do it all over again; and be in place at the arming area for the next launch and recovery. There was no time to waste as the aircraft were providing close air support for SEAL Teams, River Patrol Boats, all Navy and US ground forces and for the Vietnamese troops on the ground.

In the days when the Ordnance Qualification/Certification Program was in its planning stages, a newly assigned AO1 was the Binh Thuy detachment's Ordnance Leading Petty Officer. An AO2, who was more experienced on the aircraft and the rocket loads was his assistant. The team did what had to be done, short handed and working under some of the most difficult conditions imaginable. Maintaining guns and aircraft, and assembling and loading ordnance in monsoon rains -- all too often with cobras slithering across the working area, coming from their hiding and nesting spots in ordnance pallets and containers, or from the vehicles or aircraft themselves -- and with firefights occurring nearby. Similar conditions existed in Vung Tau, but there, the all too infrequent liberty was better.

This was a mighty tasking and was not for the faint of heart. VA(L)-4 AO's were up to the job.

Submitted by former AO3 Mike Slavin.





If you want to read more about the squadron, go to <http://www.blackpony.org>. Some of the Weapons Assemblers at work.

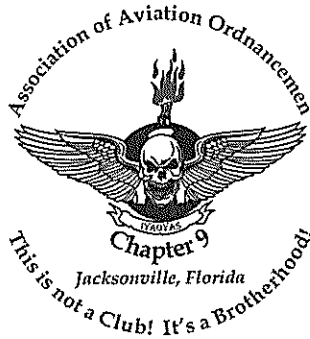
From left to right: ADJ2 Donnie Brown, AO3 Jon Lefferts, ADJ2 Blair Brown. AO2 Mike Shay is in the background.



Now, I say to you today my friends, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: - 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'

*Martin Luther King Jr.
March on Washington, 28
December 1963*





Chapter 9 Jacksonville, FL.

Hello from the home of Super bowl XXXIX. Many changes have come about in the last few months. First, want to welcome the USS Kennedy battle group back from deployment. We hope to see you in some of our future meetings, so that we can give you a proper welcome.

We just held elections at our January meeting, and the new Officers and Board of Directors are as follows:

President: AO1 Michael Steckley
Secretary: AOC Erik Timmons

Vice President: CWO4 Jim Bohac USN(Ret.)
Treasurer: AOC Joe Beliveau

Board of Directors:

Gary Wright
AO1 Ulanda Brooks
AO2 Daniel Pratt
AO1 Jim Malone USN(Ret.)
CWO4 Ed Scott USN(Ret.)

LCDR Larry Hardin USN(Ret.)
AOC Bill Taylor USN(Ret.)
LCDR Chuck Mach USN(Ret.)
AOC Tony Gonzales USN(Ret.)
CWO2 J.E. Printy USN(Ret.)

AO2 Smith provided some interesting training on the RIM-116 Rolling Airframe Missile which utilizes Sidewinder technology and the Stinger missile's seeker. We encourage newfound information to be brought to our meetings to educate others. Thank you AO2 Smith!

This year, LCDR Bill Keidel USN(Ret.) is holding his Third Annual Super bowl Bash, and will be extending the party from mid-Friday until Monday whenever you decide to go home. If it is anything like last years, it will be a humongous success and tons of fun.

Sadly, tragic and trying times have fallen upon some of our AO shipmates recently, but it has been great to see our fellow Ordnance members come together to help them out. We were saddened by the untimely death of the wife of AO1 Walker. The details of this tragedy recently aired on "America's Most Wanted". We were glad to see AO1 Walker at our meeting in January to personally give him our sincere condolences. We presented him with a donation on behalf of Chapter 9. We will always keep him and his family in our prayers.

Another fellow Ordnanceman has also been going thru some hard times. Tom from VP-30 has been seeking help for his daughter's medical condition. Many of you might have seen the story on T.V. about baby Juliana who was born with 30-40% of the bones in her face missing. The cause is from a birth defect called *Treacher Collins Syndrome*. Juliana is the sweetest thing; unfortunately, she will need many surgeries to help her grow. This will be a life long process that Tom and his wife Tammy will have to endure. Hopefully with the support of friends, family and the brotherhood, we can make it a little easier for them. We are currently collecting donations to help Tom and his wife. If you are interested in donating, please contact AO1(AW/SW) Michael Steckley from CNATTU JAX at the e-mail or phone numbers listed below.

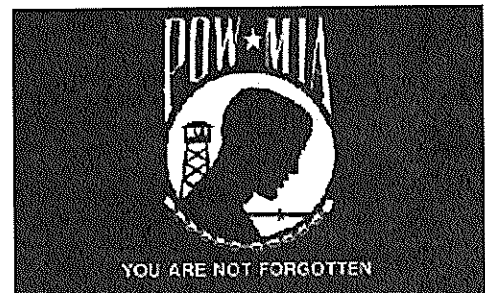
We now have Chapter 9 coins, and they are a huge success. We have also ordered more shirts and have future plans to sell our items on a NEW Chapter 9 website. It is currently under-construction and hope to have it up and running sometime in February. We will keep you posted!

That's it for now. Remember:

"It's not a club, It's a brotherhood!"

IYAOYAS

AOC(AW/SW)MTS Michael R. Steckley, President
AAO Chapter 9
Jacksonville, FL
Work: 904-542-2810
Cell: 904-505-8335
Home: 904-269-6289
Email: sailor_steck@yahoo.com
michael.r.steckley@navy.mil





ASSOCIATION OF AVIATION ORDNANCEMEN ORDER FORM (JAN. 2005)

NAME _____
HOME MAILING ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____
NAME OF ASSOCIATION: ASSOCIATION OF AVIATION ORDNANCEMEN

1. RING CHOICE: AAO RING MALE _____ FEMALE _____ FINGER SIZE _____

2. MEDAL CHOICE: 14K GOLD _____ W/Y 10K GOLD _____ W/Y LUSTRIUM _____
MEN: \$479.95 \$359.95 \$199.95
LADIES: \$399.95 \$324.95 \$189.95

3. STONE CHOICE: SHAPE: OVAL _____ SMOOTH OUT _____ FACET OUT _____

4. STONE COLOR: GARNET (JAN) _____ AMETHYST SPINEL (FEB) _____ AQUAMARINE (MAR) _____
WHITE SPINEL (APR) _____ SHAMROCK SPINEL (MAY) _____ ALEXANDRITE (JUN) _____
RUBY (JUL) _____ PERIDOT (AUG) _____ FREE BLUE SPINEL (SEP) _____ ROSS ZIRCON (OCT) _____
TOPAZ (NOV) _____ BLUE ZIRCON (DEC) _____

5. PERSONAL ENGRAVINGS: (ENGRAVED ON INSIDE OF BAND)

AUTOGRAPH SIGNATURE _____ (ADD \$10.00, SIGN BLOCK 5A)

THREE INITIALS _____ (NO CHARGE): INITIALS _____

5A. _____

SPECIAL STONE OPTIONS: (ADD \$10.00 EA OPTION): SUNBURST _____ FIREWAY _____

INDIA CUT _____ QUADRA CUT _____ TWO PERSONAL INITIALS ON STONE FACE _____
(WRITE IN)

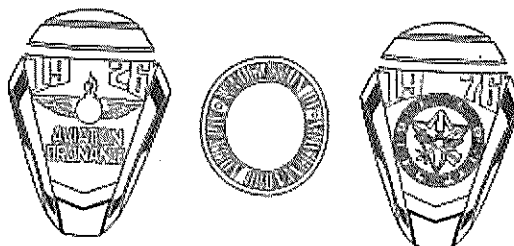
7. PAYMENT COST: METAL COST _____
OPTION COST _____
TAX (7.25%) _____
S & H _____
TOTAL _____

MAIL TO: ROB DEGEORGE
JOSTENS OF FRESNO
4644 WEST JENNIFER S106
FRESNO, CA. 93722
PHONE: 559-275-2800

8. CHECK _____ MONEY ORDER _____ CARD HOLDER'S SIGNATURE _____
VISA _____ MASTER CARD _____ DISCOVER _____ CARD ACCOUNT# _____
EXP. DATE _____

ORDER INSTRUCTIONS

1. PRINT CLEARLY TO ASSURE PROPER DELIVERY. ALL ORDERS WILL TAKE BETWEEN 4 TO 6 WEEKS. SORRY NO FPO/APO ADDRESSES.
2. THREE INITIALS INSIDE RING ARE FREE. ALL OTHER OPTIONS BLOCK 5/6 COST \$10.00 EACH
3. CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS ADD SALES TAX IN BLOCK 7. ALL RINGS ARE SUBJECT TO A S.O.D. CHARGE TO COVER SHIPPING AND HANDLING (APPROX. \$5.00) PAYMENT AMY BE PAID IN FULL OR BY SENDING A MINIMUM OF \$40.00 WITH REMAINING BALANCE DUE COD.





ADVANCE ORDER FORM

For Registration Fees, AAO Social and/or Awards Banquet ONLY send check or money order made payable to and mailed to:

ASSOCIATION OF AVIATION ORDNANCEMEN
J.J. LaMaitre
P.O. Box 711167
Santee, CA 92072-1167

Registration Fees (choose appropriate category):

1. Member only \$15.00 (\$25.00 after 15 Jun 05) \$ _____
Non-Member \$25.00 (\$35.00 after 15 Jun 05)

Name of (Non or) Member _____
(please print)

2. Additional Guests 18 and over \$5.00 \$ _____

Names of Guests _____
(please print)

Advance Social & Awards Banquet ticket prices:

AAO Social \$30.00 each (\$50.00 after 15 Jun 05) \$ _____

Awards Banquet \$40.00 each (\$60.00 after 15 June 05) \$ _____

Credit Card Fee \$10.00 (if applicable) Non-Refundable \$ _____

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

Name exactly as it appears on credit card _____

Signature _____

Master Card/ Visa # _____ Exp. _____

Circle One: Hold Tickets Or Mail My Tickets to:

Your name _____

Address _____

City _____, State _____ Zip _____

Area Code/Phone number _____



2005 CONVENTION RESERVATION APPLICATION

DEADLINE IS 15 JUNE 2005

I plan to attend the following activities (please check appropriate ones):

14 Jul (Thur) Board of Directors Meeting _____	15 Jul (Fri) Nominations Committee _____
15 Jul (Fri) AO of The Year Committee _____	15 Jul (Fri) AAO Social _____
15 Jul (Fri) Scholarship Committee _____	16 Jul (Sat) General Business Meeting _____
15 Jul (Fri) AAO Hall of Fame Committee _____	16 Jul (Sat) Awards Banquet _____
15 Jul (Fri) Membership Committee _____	17 Jul (Sun) Board of Directors Meeting _____
15 Jul (Fri) By-Laws Committee _____	

AUXILIARY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AVIATION ORDNANCEMEN

14 Jul (Thur) Board of Directors Meeting _____	17 Jul (Sun) Board of Directors Meeting _____
16 Jul (Sat) General Business Meeting _____	

NOTE

Committee Chairmen will require the assistance from the membership for the above listed committees. Please indicate committee or committees that you wish to participate in.

ADVANCED TICKET ORDERING INFORMATION

Payment of the Registration Fee is required to attend any meeting or convention function. Registration Fees must be paid prior to purchasing tickets for the Social and/or Awards Banquet. Registration Fees are not required for dependents 17 and under. However, they must purchase tickets to attend the Social and/or Awards Banquet.

For active duty E-4 and below:

1 year free membership in the Association is included in your registration fee. If you are already a member your membership will be extended one year. To qualify for this special registration package please include a completed application with your registration and or ticket order.

ORDERS & MONEY FOR ADVANCE REGISTRATION FEES, AAO SOCIAL AND AWARDS BANQUET TICKETS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE 2005. ORDERS & MONEY RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE WILL BE RETURNED OR MUST HAVE LATE FEE'S INCLUDED. (ORDER FORM MAY BE FOUND ON NEXT PAGE)

Visa/ MasterCard Credit Card Fee's are Non Refundable.



<http://www.navytimes.com/story.php?f=1-292236-573160.php>

January 03, 2005

Sometimes beauty has an uncommon face

How you can help

The story of one amazing little girl and her Navy family

By William H. McMichael
Times staff writer

Juliana Wetmore was born with a relatively rare facial disfigurement known as Treacher Collins syndrome. The youngest daughter of Navy Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class Thomas Wetmore and his wife, Tami, was missing 40 percent of her facial bones. Essentially, she was born without a face. Now 20 months old, Juliana has undergone 14 surgeries and must still breathe and eat through a tube. Her story — and the courage of one incredible Navy family — will amaze you.

ORANGE PARK, Fla. — Juliana wants a hug. The bouncy, playful 21-month-old girl seemingly wants to hug everyone she meets.

But she isn't starved for affection. Far from it. Nearly everyone these days, it seems, wants to hold and comfort the youngest daughter of Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class (AW) Thom Wetmore and his wife, Tami.

Juliana will need a lot of hugs as she grows up and

realizes that not everyone will show her the same kind of love and care that many in her community and around the world have shown since her story was reported on a Jacksonville, Fla., TV station, posted on its Web site and rocketed across the Internet.

Juliana, who is otherwise completely normal and healthy, was born with a relatively rare facial disfigurement known as Treacher Collins syndrome.

She was, in essence, born without a face.

Juliana has one of the worst cases experts say they have ever seen — she's already undergone 14 surgeries. At birth, her face was essentially caved in — extruding, drooping eyes; a pinhole of a nose; ill-defined ears; and an oral cavity that defied description. She was missing her upper cheekbones, eye sockets, nose, ear canals and most of her outer ears, upper lip and the roof of her mouth.

Her deformity, however, is but a mask that hides a child of incredible warmth, intelligence and energy. She's a fighter, having conquered a string of other maladies, any one of which could easily have ended her life. But she survives. This is Juliana's story — a testament not only to a tough little kid, but to one Navy family's hope, strength, love and determination.

The full extent revealed

Prenatal ultrasound tests warned of complications.

"We knew there was a problem," Thom said.

But the ultrasounds didn't show the extent of Juliana's condition. By March 2003, the Navy couple had prepared themselves for a healthy child but one born with, perhaps, a cleft lip or palate, milder deformities of the lips, jaw or gum that occur in one in 500 to 2,000 births, depending on the parents' race.

Although Thom is stationed at Jacksonville Naval Air Station — he's an instructor/flight engineer at Patrol Squadron 30, the Navy's P-3 fleet replacement squadron — the base hospital lacks a neonatal intensive care unit, or NICU. So the birth took place at Shands Jacksonville Medical Center, but was paid for by the Navy through the Tricare system.

Delivery day came March 5. It was anything but easy.

After an all-natural birth, Juliana was whisked into an infant operating room, after doctors saw the extent of her condition. At the same time, Tami began bleeding uncontrollably.

She didn't get a clear look at their daughter.

But Thom did.

"Oh, my God," Thom recalled thinking. "All there is is a big gaping mouth. I was wondering how she was going to breathe or live or see."

The staffers asked Thom if he wanted Tami to see Juliana. Thom didn't want

to further traumatize his wife but at this point, just 10 minutes after the birth, it was unclear if Tami would even survive Juliana's birth. Doctors worked furiously to stop her bleeding, eventually stabilizing her. As they did, Thom showed her a digital photo he'd taken of their new baby girl. He hoped the picture would help lessen the shock. "What is this?" Tami recalled thinking. "What happened to my baby? I know that sounds ... horrible for a mother to say. But knowing something was wrong, but not knowing what to expect ... it was just kind of ... confusion, maybe?"

Moments later, Juliana was wheeled by the delivery room en route to the NICU, and Tami caught her first real glimpse of her child.

"It was harder — not for me to deal with it — but to know what she was having to deal with," said Tami, who has since recovered.

The beginnings of normalness

One in every 33 babies is born with a birth defect — about 3 percent of all babies born in the United States, according to the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. One in 100 to 200 babies is born with a heart defect, the most common type; one in 800 is born with Down syndrome.

This article is granted for one time permission only and appropriate credit must be given to both Navy Times and reporter William McMichael.



Treacher Collins syndrome occurs in one of every 10,000 births.

Juliana's traumatic birth was only the beginning of her problems. Since then, she's overcome three bouts with pneumonia, two of respiratory syncytial virus or RSV, two bacterial infections stemming from intracranial surgeries, two surgeries for severe acid reflux disease, a seizure and episodes of influenza and meningitis. Several of these were life threatening.

For now, however, she's relatively healthy and happy — and thanks to initial reconstructive procedures, has the very rough beginnings of a normal face.

And she is precious.

She walks, though she still needs help. She can't speak, but expresses herself vocally by changing the pace of her breathing. She claps her hands with glee and climbs up on a lap with ease. She likes to draw and loves to watch "Baby Einstein" educational videos while seated in her fuzzy white rocking chair. She's learning her first words in sign language. And — while no one knows where she picked it up or what it means — Juliana occasionally pumps her right fist triumphantly, looking like an excited football fan exclaiming, "Yes!"

And she loves to look at herself in the mirror. She

points. "That's me!" she seems to say.

But the syndrome left Juliana unable to easily swallow or breathe. As a result, caregivers draw accumulated saliva and mucus out of her throat through a tracheotomy tube inserted in her windpipe and attached to a portable pump in an ever-present gray carrying bag. She must be fed an organic food mixture through a tube inserted through her abdomen and into her stomach. She's watched all night by in-home nurses, paid for by the Navy.

Lt. Cmdr. Scott Akins, Juliana's Navy pediatrician, said that moments after her birth it was clear the family had to find expert care for her.

"We wanted to find a national expert," he said. Their queries led them to Anthony Wolfe, a renowned plastic and craniofacial surgeon at Miami Children's Hospital in Miami. It turned out to be a wise choice. Within days, Juliana was transferred to Miami.

"Even for the very best people in the world, this is a daunting case," Wolfe told Navy Times. "It takes a very extensive craniofacial team ... it's headed by a geneticist, and we have neurosurgeons and orthodontists and [eye, ear, nose and throat specialists] and ophthalmologists, and they all enter into the care of somebody like Juliana."

Wolfe's first surgery involved opening Juliana's closed left eyelid; left alone for more than a few days, the brain would have permanently "shut down" the eye, he said.

In all, Juliana has had 14 surgeries ranging from that relatively minor procedure to intracranial work and the implantation of a device in her facial bone. The device literally forced what bone she had in her cheeks to grow outward so doctors could then build additional bone structure through grafting, for a more normal facial structure.

"So that's how her cheeks have as much structure as they do now," Akins said. "There's been kind of a dramatic shift in the anatomy of her face, which is pretty amazing."

Problems for work life

While the surgical outcomes have been positive, Juliana's string of surgeries and serious complications were emotionally draining for the family. This was particularly critical for Thom, the breadwinner and a 16-year Navy veteran, who felt it was time to rotate to a deployable Jacksonville-based squadron so he could remain competitive before a chief petty officer promotion board.

"Balancing the career and the family — the two go hand in hand," he said. "I love what I do. And making chief is critical to staying in past 20 years and

getting the benefits, because a lot of the [active duty] benefits, as a retiree, go away."

But the situation at home was wearing on Thom — and his squadron.

"There were times we had to cut him some [permissive temporary duty] orders, 'cause there was no way he could take that much leave," said Chief Aviation Electronics Technician (AW/NAC) Jason Mooney, the outgoing flight engineer division chief for Patrol Squadron 30. "Other times, because his mind wasn't in the right place ... he wasn't really prepared to operate the aircraft."

As a result, Thom was taken off the flight schedule several times during Juliana's first year. His squadron mates repeatedly stepped up to help, Mooney said. Regardless, his hopes of transferring to a deployable squadron were put on hold.

"Hey, sometimes, your family has to come first," Mooney said he told Thom.

For now, Juliana appears to have stabilized. And depending on the outcome of a January visit to Wolfe, Thom — whom Mooney described as an "outstanding instructor" and "one of our best mentors for students" — is leaning toward transferring to a deployable local squadron in the summer, he said.



But when one problem is solved, there are more lying in wait.

While Juliana's care was, and remains, paid for by the Navy, Thom and Tami had to figure out how to get to and from Miami for frequent and sometimes lengthy visits, something the Navy does not cover. "You can imagine the logistics of that," Akins, the Navy pediatrician, said.

Initially, that challenge was taken up by Oklahoma-based Angel Flight Inc., a national group of pilots who provide or arrange for free air transport for "legitimate, charitable, medically related needs." While the Wetmores gratefully accepted the help, the length of Juliana's stays in Miami made coordination difficult.

In stepped Woody. And once again, the Navy.

Gil "Woody" Wood is a retired senior chief and civilian instructor at VP-30. He knew the family and eventually sent the e-mail to a local TV reporter that launched Juliana's story around the world. Wood heard Thom talking about the problems with the Angel Flights. So he and retired chief Rick Sorrell, who together own two-thirds of a Piper Cherokee 6 airplane, began to fly Juliana to and from Miami for free — including fuel costs.

"That's how Juliana's Air Force was born," Wood

said with a chuckle. Both men downplay their roles.

"Life's just difficult," said Wood, who remains grateful for the help he got when his daughter was diagnosed with leukemia at age 2½. "When all you're focused on is your own self, it becomes a miserable existence. If we get the chance to share with someone else, that's what makes life worthwhile."

"It's an easy thing to do for them," Sorrell said.

Lots of other folks have pitched in too, from members of Thom and Tami's church to their Orange Park neighbors. When Tami and Juliana first came home, they didn't have to prepare dinner for two weeks; neighbor Lisa Felegy had persuaded other residents to make the Wetmores a nightly meal.

Sisterly ways

More recently, life has settled down somewhat — that is, until Juliana's story hit the airwaves. The response has thrown the household into a tizzy. Watching it all is big sister Kendra. A bright, well-mannered and pretty little girl, she is openly affectionate toward Juliana — though she's also not above giving Juliana a soft, sisterly whack on the head with a couch pillow. Still, her parents know it's been tough on Kendra.

"She's getting stressed

out," Tami said. "The phone's ringing all the time, we're constantly opening the mail." Is she overwhelmed? A bit jealous? "I think it's both," Tami said.

Thom and Tami, on the other hand, seem to take the attention and the daily routine of caring for Juliana in stride. Other than drawing fluid out of her throat and feeding her through her stomach portal, Tami said, "It's not that different than dealing with any other child. And she's so intelligent. When she's healthy, she's just like dealing with any other 2-year-old." Tami says she sees it as an "opportunity," not a chore.

In addition, Thom and Tami say, they draw strength and solace from faith in God. "It's definitely a source of comfort and strength for me," Tami said. She finds abhorrent the concept of "mercy killings" of terminally ill children, saying it runs counter to her faith. "Who's to decide who's good enough, or who's perfect enough, for this world?" she asked. "That's not for you, or for me, or for anybody else to decide."

Despite Juliana's obvious problems, she is "right on track, developmentally, for the most part," Akins said. She likes being with people, and laughs and plays. "And she's dying for functional language," he said.

In the meantime, he said,

Thom, Tami, Kendra and others in her life also need to learn sign language, right along with Juliana.

Wolfe, the Miami surgeon, chooses his words carefully when asked for a prognosis on Juliana, "one of the more severe cases" he's seen. "If I'm around in 15 years, I'll still be working on Juliana, I'm sure," he said.

She could require as many as 30 more surgeries.

The best possible outlook, he said, "is that she would have a face with all the parts in the right places, and maybe some scars, but be presentable in public so people wouldn't stare. That's what we aim for." He also believes she'll eventually be able to speak after additional surgeries and the installation of hearing aids.

"The best thing she has going for her is them," Wolfe said, referring to Thom and Tami. "What fantastic parents they are."

Help from far and wide

Donors from around the country and overseas have cumulatively sent the family thousands of dollars, and the family is establishing a trust fund for Juliana with that money. But her future medical needs could be tremendously expensive.

While Thom is on active duty, the Navy pays all medical expenses, including the specialized surgeries and items such as the



medication to prevent RSV. It also pays for a home nurse to stay up all night and keep an eye on Juliana and to draw out fluid accumulated in her throat.

But the Wetmores fear the costs they might incur if Thom leaves the Navy in four years. Even with retirement benefits, they would face as much as \$4,000 a year in expenses, not including travel.

Despite the potential need, Thom said, sharing Juliana's story isn't about raising money. "I wanted people to see her in a positive light, to see how special she is, and to educate people," he said.

"She's not getting sensationalized," Thom added. "We don't want people feeling sorry for her or sorry for us."

At the same time, the family is grateful for the donations. "We're not looking any gift horse in the mouth," he said.

One outpouring of support took place Dec. 16 at Hendricks Day School in Jacksonville, where 350 students had raised \$3,507 for Juliana in three days. One family gave \$1,040, but most of the money came in donations of \$2 to \$5. A couple of children asked their parents to donate what would have been spent on their Christmas presents.

Thom, dressed in his winter blue Navy uniform, praised the leadership demonstrated by the student class officers who presented the check. He likened them to his Navy shipmates.

"There's a lot of honor in that," he said. A moment later, he told the students, "You all really demonstrate the teamwork that we use every day."

After Thom introduced Juliana to the kids, many crowded around for a chance to hold her.

"I was kind of surprised at how friendly she was," said Andrew Wit, the eighth grade treasurer, after spending a few minutes with Juliana. "She's really nice." He admitted her appearance was initially "surprising" but added, "You kind of grow on it."

Andrew also took note of her bubbly, hand-clapping personality. "She's really funny," he said.

The school used Juliana's visit to help teach its students.

"We ask them to think, 'How would you behave if you saw somebody like this on the street?'" said Sally Lott, head of school at Hendricks Day School, which is affiliated with the Methodist Church.

But people, particularly children, can be cruel, even unintentionally. One curious young boy with a separate group of students who entered the library after the presentation spotted Juliana and said loudly, "Eww, what's that?" A teacher gently but firmly guided him away, softly telling him that appearances aren't everything.

Attitudes, however, can be changed. As Tami and Juliana walked past the playground at Kendra's preschool a month ago, an older girl shouted, "That baby's disgusting." School officials talked about the incident to students and since then, Juliana's story has been all over the news. After a more recent visit to the school, Tami said that as she and Juliana were leaving, she heard somebody yell at them for attention. It was the same girl.

"She was waving at us," Tami said with a smile. "So we made a convert."

William H. McMichael is the Hampton Roads bureau chief for Navy Times.

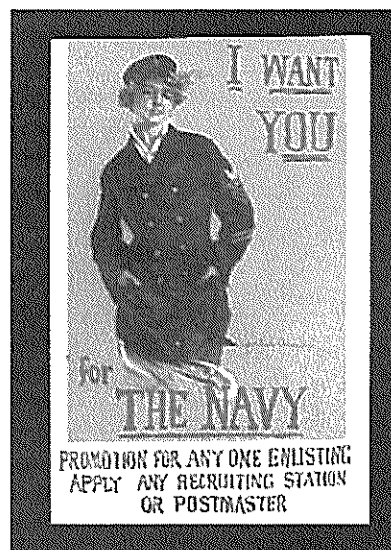
A savings account has been set up for donations:

Vystar Credit Union
P.O. Box 45085
Jacksonville, FL 32232

Donations can also be sent to:

Juliana Wetmore
P.O. Box 65852
Orange Park, FL 32065

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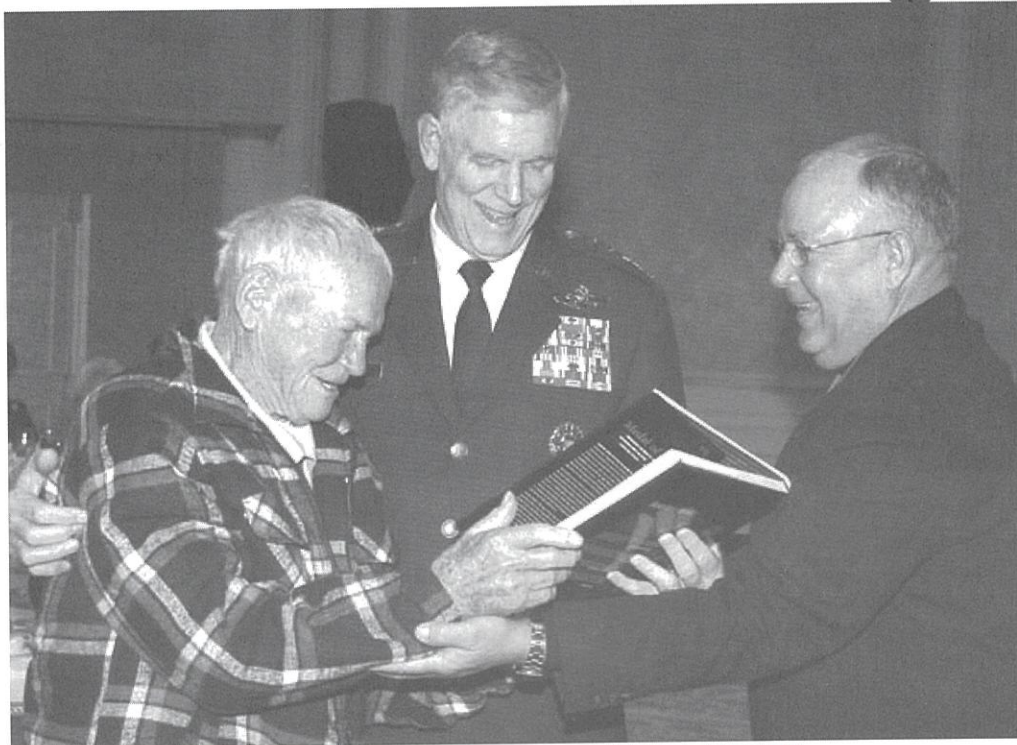
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From The Editor:



Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, center, looks through a book honoring Medal of Honor recipients at the 2005 Medal of Honor Society Luncheon in Washington, D.C., Jan. 19. With him are former Navy Lt. John Finn, 95, the oldest living recipient of the award, left, and Retired Army Command Sgt. Maj. Gary Littrell, president of the Medal of Honor Society. Photo by Mamie Mae Burke

The Red Shirt

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