



# THE STINGER



VAQ-138 Newsletter

JAN 2009 EDITION



## YELLOW JACKETS READY FOR DEPLOYMENT!



By  
Lt. Brett L. Jones

From mid-October to mid-November, the Yellow Jackets of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 138 successfully completed their last workup before their upcoming WestPac deployment. The Yellow Jackets, as part of Carrier Air Wing Nine (CVW 9) aboard *USS John C. Stennis* (CVN 74), completed five weeks of intense training. The *Stennis*, out of Bremerton, WA, was operating off the coast of Southern California along with the other surface and sub-surface units of Carrier Strike Group THREE.

During the first few days out at sea, the VAQ-138 Maintenance department went through a very extensive Aviation Maintenance Inspection (AMI). The Chief of Naval Air Forces inspection team conducted a thorough evaluation of every shop's paperwork, safety procedures, and overall management. At the conclusion of the three-day inspection, the Maintenance divisions scored well above average with zero safety violations. The Yellow Jacket maintainers experienced extra challenges repairing all four aircraft during the inspection, but they demonstrated exceptional professionalism and skill in overcoming the additional obstacles.

The following individuals were specifically recognized by the inspectors for their exceptional work: AD1 Abbott, PR1 Braulik, AZ1 Forrester, AE1 Gago, SK1 Johnson, AO1 Narewski, AD1 Mendoza, AD2 Corner, AM2 Niemeyer, AMAN Cmar, and AM3 Zapata.

The workup was divided into two separate events: Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX) and Joint Training Forces Exercise (JTFX). During COMPTUEX, the air wing was graded on multiple levels including sortie completion rate, boarding rate, and deck launch/recovery times. The air wing passed the qualification process and is now Blue Water Certified, meaning it can operate on deployment away from a divert airfield. The weather cooperated on most days, but the Southern California marine layer and some rough seas made for some challenging nights catching a wire. The second half of the workup was dedicated to joint strike group operations. During JTFX, the Yellow Jackets participated in combat scenarios that included assets from the rest of the Carrier Strike Group as well as the U.S. Air Force and Navy SEALs, among others. By the end of the workup, the Yellow Jackets flew 144 sorties and 255 hours with a 92% sortie completion rate.

The test and evaluation squadron, VX-9 Vampires also flew an EA-18G Growler aboard the *Stennis* during JTFX for their own operational testing. The Yellow Jackets shared their ready room and flew several coordinated sorties with the Navy's newest Electronic Attack asset. After completing this upcoming WestPac deployment, VAQ-138 will be one of the first Prowler squadrons to transition to the EA-18G.

Overall, the Yellow Jackets proved that they are ready for deployment in January '09. The Maintenance department once again proved that they can overcome any obstacle put in their way. The aircrew showed professionalism and sound tactics as they participated in the Blue Water Certification process and joint operations with the rest of the strike group.

## From JACKET ONE...

Yellow Jacket Family and Friends. Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season and that you all enjoyed the hard earned time off. The Holiday Party back in December was a tremendous success thanks to all of your participation. Dona and I had a great time and were thankful for the opportunity in meeting the other halves of the Yellow Jacket families.

I wanted to take this time to let everyone know that we are safe aboard USS JOHN C. STENNIS and ready to depart the waters off San Diego and head west on deployment. The squadron qualified all of our pilots on the first day of operations, outpacing our sister squadrons in the Air Wing yet again, thanks to the outstanding effort by all hands.

We will be participating in numerous exercises with our allies in the Pacific theater over the next few months as well as pulling in to several ports of call in the western Pacific. In case word has not spread, the Australia port call was removed from our list of destinations and was replaced with a visit to Thailand. Although I cannot pass along the dates of our ports in this newsletter, the Ombudsmen (Joyce Baatz and Bridgette Vandusseldorp) and the FRG President (Jacqueline Forrester) have the most current schedule and the dates we are going to be in port. These ports and the dates associated can change at any point during this deployment and I will make sure to get word back to each of you (through the Stinger, Ombudsmen and the FRG) as new information becomes available.

I also wanted to pass along another way to talk to your Yellow Jacket while deployed instead of just writing email or waiting for a phone call from the ship. It is through a message program that records a voice mail for your sailor that they can listen to from their email. The instructions on finding and using this program are as follows:

Go to <http://www.k7.net> It asks you for the email address of the recipient and it important to actually put in the exact email address from the ship. You then confirm the address and it will ask for a password. Then you make sure that the circle is marked so it will send the messages to the email address only and then choose GSM for a small file. Wait a few seconds and it will give you a phone number. When you dial the number you can either send a fax or leave a message. It actually records a message to your sailor and they hear your recorded voice via their email. Both home phones and cell phones work, but since there is a long distance charge, so be careful as to which one you choose to use. Also, record only short messages. If you talk too long the email will get kicked back.

I know you do not hear it enough, but thank you for everything you do! It is because of you that we are combat ready and able to do our jobs. As friends and family members of Yellow Jackets, your support is the foundation of our success. We could not do this without you! Take care and I will talk to you all again in the near future.

**CDR Kyle "Banjo" Higgins  
Commanding Officer**



## CMC CORNER

Greetings Yellow Jacket Family. Our Sailors preformed incredibly during our underway time on USS JOHN C STENNIS. The professional and personal behavior displayed was the example for the rest of the battle force to follow. We not only kept our jets flying but had no liberty incidents to speak of during our port visit to San Diego. The completion of our underway time has us ready to answer the nations call for duty. This is a time to count our blessings and enjoy our family time during the holidays. Please be mindful of the hazards of the season and always keep the festivities safe. As we close out another year and get ready for the challenges ahead we must give thanks in what ever manner you do and make the new year better than the last. Thank you and God bless you and your families for your sacrifice and dedication to our great nation.

**CMDCM (SW) Gregory Hixson**

## Your Command Ombudsman says...

Greeting to all the Yellow Jacket spouses and your family,

I hope that everyone had a very special time with your family and friends during the holiday season. It is with great sadness that we'll have to say goodbye to our significant other very soon, but I really wanted to reach out to you and let you know that you do not have to be alone during this deployment. Brittiane Vandusseldorp has recently signed on to be the other ombudsman so if there is anything that we can help you with please don't hesitate to call.

I wanted to few things that could possibly help before your spouse leaves . If you haven't already done so, have your spouse show you where the water heater is and how it works and the circuit breaker and how that works. You also might want to have an emergency evacuation plan. You also may want to make a copy of your car keys or house keys and give it to a friend or neighbor that you trust so just in case you lock yourself out of your car or house you have a way of getting back in. If you're alone with your children and you decide to drive off the island you may want to just simply call a friend or family member to let them know where you're at just so someone knows where you're at and you and your children are safe.

On a lighter note, there is an all hands meeting that will be taking place on Monday, January 26th at 2:00 p.m. in the Command Conference Room at the hospital. It's an opportunity to hear the "latest and greatest" about the Naval Hospital/ TRICARE and get a chance to participate in a 'question and answer' period. Also, for those of you wanting to play in the snow there are discounted lift tickets and rental vouchers which are available online at [navylife.pnw.com](http://navylife.pnw.com) for Mt. Baker, Summit and Snoqualmie, Crystal Mountain, Mission Ridge, Schweitzer, and 49 degrees North. Discounted tickets are available at ITT for Whistler/Blackcomb. Stevens Pass discounts are directly at the mountain this year so be sure to bring your military ID.

Again, Brittain and I will be happy to help anyone of you in anyway we can. Brittiane can be contacted at (360)720-2626 or I can be reached at (360) 929-5383. I hope to see you at the FRG meetings held by the FRG President, Jacqueline Forrester. It really is a great way to stay in touch with the squadron and a positive way to meet new friends and receive some support while your spouses are away. My thoughts and prayers go out to you and your family during this time and I can't stress enough on how I genuinely want to help in any way.

Sincerely,  
Joyce Baatz

# AROUND THE HIVE

## Command Christmas Party



**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW ADVANCEMENTS!!!**

- AD3 ALVAREZ
- AD2 BAILEY
- AE2 BARTH
- AE2 BUTLER
- ATO3 CAMPBELL
- AZ2 DAVIS
- AE3 DAYTON
- AD2 HAMBLET
- AE2 HORTON
- SK3 HOWARD
- ATO3 JACKSON
- ATO3 KIM
- PR2 MUNRO
- AM3 SIMMONS
- AM1 WHISENHUNT
- AO3 WHITE
- AM2 WHITEHEAD
- AM3 WROBLOS
- AM3 ZAPATA
- AD1 FITZWATER
- AT2 PARKE



**RADM Vance's visit**



# F.Y.I

## Command Ombudsman:

The VAQ 138 Ombudsman is:

**Ms. Joyce Baatz**

(360)929-5383 or (360)682-5602

[joycebaatz@comcast.net](mailto:joycebaatz@comcast.net)

## Going on vacation?

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- Disneyland/Disneyworld
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(360) 257-2432

## Command Address

Rank/Name

VAQ-138

Unit 25412

FPO AP 96601-6422

This address can be used when the command is underway aboard the USS JOHN C. STENNIS (CVN 74)

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Naval Hospital Oak Harbor

(360) 257-9500

American Eagle Housing

(360) 257-3331

Navy Marine Corps Relief Society

(360) 257-2728

Red Cross

(360) 257-2096

Chapel

(360) 257-2414

Child Development Center

(360) 257-3302

Navy Legal

(360) 257-2126

Poison Information Line

(800) 732-6985

Fleet & Family Support Center

(360) 257- 6289

Military One Source

(800) 540-4123

Tricare Service Hub

(800) 874-9378

Veterinary Services

(360) 257-5537

Tipsy Taxi

(360) 257-4847

Youth and Teen program

(360) 257-3150

Base information line

(360) 279-1080

## UPCOMING SQUADRON AND FAMILY EVENTS AROUND THE AREA

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

I don't care how poor a man is; if he has family, he's rich.

~Dan Wilcox and Thad Mumford, "Identity Crisis," *M\*A\*S\*H*

## **Family Readiness Group (FRG)**

***Mrs Jacqueline Forrester, FRG President***

(Email [jacquelineforrester@yahoo.com](mailto:jacquelineforrester@yahoo.com), Phone 360-682-6201)

FRG is getting ready to kick into full swing with our deployment just around the corner. If you would like to volunteer in any capacity, there are several board positions open, please contact Jackie Forrester. We will be sending out announcements with the help of our ombudsmen so watch your email for upcoming events. If you have any questions, concerns or ideas please feel free to contact Mrs Forrester.



**Websites for Heroes**  
 keeping our military families connected

Offers secure websites donated to military families with the capability of uploading unlimited photos, message board or blog postings, calendar updates and up to two hours of streaming video. A great and easy way to stay connected with your loved one while being away.

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**Notable Yellow Jackets**

**Senior Yellow Jacket of the Year**  
**Yellow Jacket of the Year**  
**Junior Yellow Jacket of the Year**  
**Blue Jacket of the Year**  
**Plane Captain of the Year**

**AO1(AW/FMF) Doyle**  
**AZ1(AW/SW) Tolbert**  
**YN3 Shroyer**  
**AM3 Zapata**  
**AO3 Covarrubias**