



THE STINGER



VAQ-138 Newsletter

JUNE 2009 EDITION



By
Lt. Brett L. Jones

Slippery and soggy described the Yellow Jackets' transit across the equator. May 2, 2009 marked the transformation of all slimy pollywogs aboard USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) as she sailed across the equator for the first time on Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 138's Western Pacific deployment. In the time-honored Crossing the Line ceremony, Yellow Jackets who had already ventured across the equator on a previous deployment, also known as Shellbacks, were in charge of the event and ensured the "wogs" received a proper initiation.

The history of the Navy's crossing the line ceremony dates back to Roman mythology. Sailors feared that the god of the sea, King Neptune, would rise up a storm to destroy their wooden ships. As a result, these early Sailors developed superstitions that led to dozens of rules, such as not killing an albatross and specific ways to sacrifice a goat or ox to appease the sea gods. These rules were strictly enforced by Sailors who feared retribution from the gods or other Sailors. Today's ritual aboard Navy vessels is far less dangerous and demeaning compared to the days of old, but the history, tradition, and camaraderie are still very much a part of the ceremony. The Yellow Jacket wogs started the day off well before sunrise as the shellbacks, dressed in pirate-type garb, made them put on white shirts labeled "Wog" and trousers that were turned inside out and worn backwards. The slimy wog officers in the squadron put together a dance skit to entertain the other squadrons of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) Nine. The "wog shuffle" provided transportation between the various ready rooms on the ship, and their outrageous dance skit got many laughs.

Mid-morning the parade of Yellow Jacket wogs moved down to the hangar bay where they joined approximately 2000 other wogs from the ship. The trusty shellbacks from the various divisions of CVN-74 and squadrons of CVW-9 kept all the wogs busy up until they were turned over to King Neptune, Davy Jones, and Queen Amphitrite. King Neptune ensured all the slimy wogs had been properly cleansed before they could be transformed into shellbacks. Aviation Electrician's Mate Third Class Jeremiah Yoder was a slimy wog at the start of the day, but earned the title of Trusty Shellback by the end along with the rest of the Yellow Jacket wogs. He remarked, "The first hour was fun, but then it got tiring. My favorite part was the elevator ride up to the flight deck."

Aviation Ordnanceman First Class (AW/FMF) Jamie Doyle enjoyed being on the other side this time around as it was his first time crossing the line as a shellback. As the leading petty officer of the line shack, he made sure his troops learned how the ceremony was supposed to run. He remarked, "It was great to see everyone getting into it this year. My favorite part was watching my guys parade around."

At the end of the day, it was a fun and rewarding experience and gave everyone some colorful stories. Along with Wog Day, recent port visits to Thailand and Singapore gave the Yellow Jackets a much needed break from the grueling day-to-day flight operations.

From JACKET ONE...

Yellow Jacket Family and Friends. Happy late Memorial Day! I hope everyone back home enjoyed the long weekend. Though we did not have anything formal out here, we did celebrate Memorial Day with a steel beach picnic and ship's fun day. As a squadron, we also held a Halo tournament (Halo is an Xbox game that many of our folks play in their off time) in the Ready Room, to help raise funds for MWR and to give the winners bragging rights. Although many teams did well, none were a match for the experts from the Admin/Tactics department. Congratulations to CTT2 Dodd, IT2 Klesick, IT3 Martinez and YN3 Palacios for their decisive victory.

We are flying in the Hawaiian operations area for the next couple of days and will be completing our final night carrier operations for this deployment. As soon as we finish, we pull in to Pearl Harbor for much deserved liberty. Though we can see the light at the end of cruise, we still have about a month to go. When we leave Hawaii, we head north to participate in the exercise NORTHERN EDGE off the coast of Alaska. We will be flying for two weeks in this major Air Force exercise along with other services, improving the integration of combined military operations. As soon as the exercise ends, we turn south and head toward Everett where we will off-load the squadron and have our Homecoming Celebration!

Your Yellow Jackets have done magnificently this entire deployment. They have worked extremely hard and many times in less than desirable conditions. They have accomplished great things and met all of the challenges of cruise head on. But they could not have performed this magic without the support and encouragement of every one back home. Your solid foundation and continued dedication to the command is what makes it all possible.

That wraps up this edition of the Stinger. Happy Father's Day to all! Although we will be home, I also wish everyone a very happy and safe Fourth of July! We are fortunate to arrive home for this holiday and to be able to celebrate the birthday of this great nation with our loved ones. Thank you again for your sacrifices and commitment to the squadron. Your efforts and devotion are greatly appreciated.

This will most likely be my last installment for the Stinger as Skipper. I would like to thank each and every one of you for the opportunity to work with your Sailors this past year and three months. The Yellow Jackets are the premiere Electronic Attack squadron in the Navy and it has been my privilege to serve as their Commanding Officer.

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



CMC CORNER

Greetings Yellow Jacket Family. Congratulations go out to all the new Third Class Petty Officers and our Second Class Petty Officer. If your loved one did not get advanced this time around, have them get with their chain of command, Command Career Counselor or CMC for guidance on what to do better this September when the next advancement examination will take place. I assure you we will do all we can to get them better prepared for the next test. I believe we are all excited about the return to Naval Station Everett for the Homecoming. This is a very unique opportunity for you to see your Sailor come home from deployment on the ship he was living and working on during deployment. Please be sending information to our OMBUDSMAN if you intend on going to Everett for the Homecoming. It will be easy if you have a DOD sticker in your windshield and you can bring relatives or friends in your car. It is going to be a special event so please plan on coming. If you want to help out with the homecoming, I am sure our FRG President, Mrs. Jackie Forrester and our OMBUDSMAN would appreciate the help. Please remember, we are still on deployment and your Sailor needs to focus on the mission before us. Thank you for doing a great job of supporting our Sailors. We are looking forward to returning home. God bless you and your families for your sacrifice and dedication to our sailors and this great nation.

CMDCM (SW) Gregory Hixson

Your Command Ombudsman says...

Hello Yellow Jacket Spouses!

It sure has been beautiful these past few days. I hope all of you had a chance to enjoy the weather. I wanted to thank Jacqueline Forrester for getting a bus to take our families to Seattle this past Saturday. It was a lot of fun. The best Mother's Day present was to hear that we have a definite date of when our spouses will be coming home so be sure to go to the next FRG meeting to get more details regarding the time and place so we could all plan accordingly. Please call Brittanie or I if you have any questions. There are some pretty fun events coming up so please read the following:

Intro to Flying with Liberty – May 30; \$50 for a half-hour flight

Ladies Night start at Gallery Golf Course June 4, and run Thursdays throughout summer!

Seafood Buffet at Bakerview Restaurant June 5, 5 – 9 pm

NORPAC Golf Tournament at Gallery Golf Course June 5 – 7

Tickets are on sale now at ITT for Mariners' Navy Night July 24

Sincerely,

Joyce Baatz

VAQ 138 Ombudsman



What's up with the FRG?

FRG would like to remind everyone that homecoming doesn't mean the end of FRG functions and meetings we will still be meeting and working towards goals once everyone returns home. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me, Jacqueline Forrester email is jacquelineforrester@yahoo.com phone is 360-682-6201

Our family day in Seattle was a success. We had approximately 15 people show up and we had stops at the Zoo and Seattle Aquarium. The ride was relaxing and the kids LOVED the bus ride!

FRG is entering into homecoming preparations mode. We are very excited for our upcoming homecoming. At our next meeting (June 6th at 4:00 pm in building 13 on seaplane base) we will be announcing all information we have available for our homecoming and we will be announcing our raffle prizes and starting ticket sales (June 6th – June 20th prize drawings will be held on the 20th). Tickets will be \$1 per ticket or \$5 for 6 tickets or \$15 for an arm lengths of tickets. Right now the prizes are still under negotiations however we have tentative nods for ; The First Kiss, Salon Day, Tanning, A night at the Coachman Inn Suite, A night at the Majestic in Anacortes and a few more that we are still working on obtaining.

~Jackie Forrester, FRG President

Recent Awards

Congratulations to our new 2nd & 3rd Class Petty Officers!!!

AM3 Anderson

AM3 Blanchard

AM3 Cmar

AE3(AW) Gronski

AM3 Hodge

Aviation Warfare Specialist Pin Awardees:

PS1(AW/SW) Cabrera

AME2(AW) Redfearin

AT3(AW) Kim

NC1(AW/SW) Pinder

AE2(AW) Barth

AT3(AW) Campbell

AME3(AW) Loukota

AME3 (AW) Maggio

PR3(AW) Timm

AT3(AW) Vasquez

AOAN(AW) Sanchez

AT3 Hoyle

YN2 McGilvra

AT3 Mork

AT3 Smith

AME3 Wheeler

Good Conduct Medal:

AD3(AW) Lun

AZ3 Luquire

ADAN Melton

Letter of Commendation:

AD3 Pranzo



Yellow Jackets on cruise ...





Stennis Fun Day & HALO



F.Y.I

Command Ombudsman:

The VAQ 138 Ombudsmen are:

Ms. Joyce Baatz

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

joycebaatz@comcast.net

&

Ms. Brittanie VanDusseldorp

(360)720-2626

ombudsmanvaq138@gmail.com

Going on vacation?

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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)

Family Readiness Group (FRG) President

Ms. Jacqueline Forrester

360-682-6201

jacquelineforrester@yahoo.com

UPCOMING SQUADRON AND FAMILY EVENTS AROUND THE AREA

- Homecoming!!! Everett & NAS Whidbey Fly In

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

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

If you want the rainbow, you've gotta put up with the rain.

-Dolly Parton



United Through Reading®

The United Through Reading® Military Program helps ease the stress of separation for military families by having deployed parents read children's books aloud via DVD for their child to watch at home. This powerful program is available to all deploying military units and at select USO locations. It provides parents a chance to make powerful and lasting connections with their children and parent from afar.

Contact Chief Sellers for more info: jeffery.sellers@navy.mil



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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

Sr. Sailor of the Year: AO1(AW/FMF) Doyle
Sailor of the Year: AZ1(AW/SW) Tolbert
Jr. Sailor of the Year: YN3 Shroyer
Sailor of the Year: AM3 Zapata
Plane Captain of the Year: AO3 Covarrubias

Sr. Sailor of the Quarter: AE1(AW) Gago
Sailor of the Quarter: YN2(AW) Karr
Jr. Sailor of the Quarter: AD3 Lun
Blue Jacket of the Quarter: ATAN Gilbert
Work Center of the Quarter: AE Shop