



THE STINGER



VAQ-138 Newsletter

MAY 2009 EDITION



By
Lt. Brett L. Jones

The Yellow Jackets of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 138 finished flight operations off the coast of South Korea during participation in Exercise Foal Eagle 2009. The exercise involved various elements of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy and Carrier Strike Group Three (CSG 3), which includes USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) and Carrier Air Wing Nine (CVW 9).

The annual exercise demonstrates the committed alliance between the US and the ROK through various air defense, surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, and maritime interception operations. VAQ-138 played an integral role in electronic warfare training for the ROK Navy. While flying their Improved Capability (ICAP) III EA-6B Prowlers, the Yellow Jackets used their on-board jamming systems to better enhance the air detection capabilities of the ROK fleet.

“It was satisfying to be a part of such a large combined exercise and feel like we actually helped the Koreans,” remarked Lieutenant Dan White, an Electronic Countermeasures Officer (ECMO) for the Yellow Jackets. VAQ-138 flew five sorties in Exercise Foal Eagle 2009 during the four-day exercise ending on March 20, 2009.

Prior to the exercise, the Yellow Jackets got a chance to experience Korean culture first hand during their four-day port visit to Busan, South Korea. A huge hit among the sailors was the market in downtown Busan on Texas Street, where local vendors provided frosty beverages and various cultural artifacts. “It was cool to see how different cultures live, and I was surprised at some of the stuff they sell to make a living,” said Aviation Structural Mechanic Airman Apprentice Jeff Cmar when asked about his experience on Texas Street.

Another great tourist attraction available to the Yellow Jackets was a tour of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) along the 38th parallel separating North and South Korea. The tour involved walking one of the underground tunnels built by the North Koreans in the 1970s as well as a guided bus tour of the DMZ. The tension in the highly conflicted territory could be felt by watching the guards from both sides keeping an eye on each other. Ship’s Serviceman Seaman Jimmy Peralta, one of the Yellow Jackets who went on the DMZ tour, remarked, “I was a little scared when I saw the guards from both sides staring each other down.”

Overall, the Yellow Jacket trip to the Korean peninsula proved to be a huge success operationally with their participation in Exercise Foal Eagle 2009. Additionally, the port visit provided ample opportunity to experience Korean culture.

From JACKET ONE...

Yellow Jacket Family and Friends. Greetings from the Java Sea! The last time I wrote, we were on our way to the South China Sea to conduct operations before heading up into the Gulf of Thailand for our visit to Pattaya Beach. Pattaya was a well deserved port after spending a few weeks at sea, and everyone had a great time. After we left Thailand, we headed back to sea, flying for about a week, and then went on to our most recent port visit, Singapore. Once the port call to Singapore was complete, we headed south and crossed the equator to have our crossing the line ceremony. This is when those who have not previously crossed the equator voluntarily participate in a traditional Naval ceremony where they are "cleansed" by King Neptune and Davy Jones to become worthy of sailing into King Neptune's seas. It was a fun time for all on the ship, although a bit messy. All in all, over 1400 Sailors from the ship/Air Wing team participated in the event.

We have been to sea a little over three months and hopefully half way through deployment. I wanted to address the rumors that are flying around Whidbey (and elsewhere) about when our deployment is going to end. As of the day I write this, we honestly do not have a set end date. I know it seems hard to believe that the CO of a squadron would not know something so important, but I have to take orders from my superiors, and they have not decided when the end of deployment will be. There are two options on the table right now, and both have an equal chance of happening. I cannot get into specifics due to security concerns, but we will either be home on time, or we could be delayed due to real-world operations that require our presence. The Ombudsman and FRG President know both options and can talk about them as necessary. Please keep in mind that they only know what I know and am able to tell them, so be patient. I know how frustrating it can be, not knowing when your loved ones will be home. I will pass the word on the remainder of our schedule as soon as I can.

The men and women of the squadron are performing superbly day in and day out. They are making the flight schedule and keeping the jets well groomed. I thank you for all your support. They cannot work as hard as they do without the encouragement of everyone back home.

That's it for this installment of the Stinger. Happy Mother's Day to all! Your sacrifices and commitment to the squadron are greatly appreciated. Take care and I will talk to you again in the near future.

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



CMC CORNER

Greetings Yellow Jacket Family. I want to thank all of you for the wonderful Easter baskets, letters and packages. Please keep them coming. You are doing a great job of supporting our Sailors. I hope your Sailor has been in contact and if there is something you need help with please contact Joyce or Brittanie. We continue to be the model squadron for both personal and professional behavior on and off the ship. You can be proud of all our Sailors for setting the example for others to follow. Time sure flies when we are working so hard to get back home. I am sure you are all wondering about when that will be. As you know, that is classified information and as soon as we know, the Skipper will pass that word back to NASWI who will contact Mrs. Higgins and she will let the OMBUDSMEN know. Please be patient and don't spread any rumors. You will know as soon as we do. Thank you and 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...

Hi Yellow Jacket Spouses,

There was a great turn out at the bowling party and I hope that all of you had a chance to have fun and meet other families.

It may be frustrating to some who have heard all kinds of rumors regarding their return, but please be patient. Brittanie and I are hoping to find out a more definite date some time this month and will be happy to disclose that information as soon as we get it. Of course, for the safety of our sailors we are unable to disclose it via email or text so that is why it is important that you make it out to the FRG meetings.

Also, effective Friday, April 10th, the procedures for requesting support from the Sexual Victim Intervention (SAVI) program changed. Please be sure to save the following phone numbers on your cell phone:

Primary: (360) 914-7867

Secondary: (360) 914-7855

Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC): (360) 914-7834

SARC office: (360) 257-8893

Services are available 24/7 and if you leave a message, just leave your first name and a phone number where they can reach you.

Please call Brittanie or I if you have any questions or need help and would like us to refer you to the appropriate place of business to have your concerns addressed. My phone number is (360) 929-5383. Go out and enjoy the sun!

Sincerely,

Joyce Baatz

VAQ 138 Ombudsman

What's up with the FRG?

I am pleased to announce that the FRG is up and running full steam! We just recently had a very successful halfway there party. The pictures from the party will be posted on snapfish.com. An email will be sent with the information to access them once the upload is finished. If you are not receiving emails from myself or the ombudsmen, please make sure to contact us via email (jacquelineforrester@yahoo.com or Ombudsmanvaq138@gmail.com) or by phone (Jacqueline Forrester 360-682-6201, Brittanie VanDusseldrop 360-720-3580 or Joyce Baatz) any of us will be able to get you added to the mailing list.

At our most recent meeting on May 2nd, we discussed the details for the upcoming raffle, trip to Seattle, and a possible children's art day where the kids can make countdown chalkboards.

The final plans are in works for a day to Seattle for those that would like to participate. The bus will take members into Seattle for the day with three drop off points: the Woodland Zoo, Pikes Place Market/the Aquarium, and the Space Needle. This is a free trip into Seattle on a charter bus. The dates are tentatively either May 16th or May 30th; more details will be announced once all the plans are finalized.

Our fundraising efforts are going great as well. We only have 18 bracelets and 52 key chains to sell to meet our goal. If you would like to purchase them please contact Jacqueline Forrester either via email or phone (jacquelineforrester@yahoo.com or 360-682-6201).

To reward our fundraising efforts we will be having a welcome home raffle. So far, the prizes that will be up for raffle are: 2 nights at the Great Wolf Lodge in a family suite, a night at The Majestic in Anacortes, dinner for 2 at Red Sky Steak House, and a beauty day. Negotiations are in progress to get some other raffle prizes as well. We will have the raffle sometime in June. Watch out for an email with more details.

~Jackie Forrester, FRG President

Recent Awards & Re-enlistments

Second Quarter 2009:

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
Plane Captain of the Quarter	AMEAN Moreales
Work Center of the Quarter	AE Shop

Aviation Warfare Specialist Pin Awardees:

AD2(AW) Grimaldo
AM2(AW) J. Zapata
AMEAN(AW) Morales

Good Conduct Award:

YN3 Shroyer
SKSN Pratt
AZ3 Davis

Re-enlistments:

IS2(AW) Malta-Sanchez
AT2(AW) Laliberte
AT2 Cloinger

Letter of Commendation:

IS3 Bondurant
AT2 Jaeger
Frocked to Thrid Class Petty Officer
AE3 Yoder

Yellow Jackets Raise Over \$13,000 for the Navy & Marine Corps Relief Society!!!

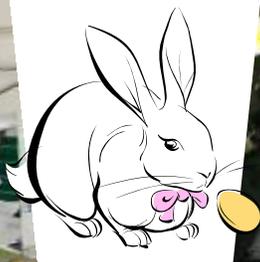
The Navy & Marine Corps Relief Society is a private non-profit charitable organization with a mission to provide, in partnership with the Navy and Marine Corps, financial, educational, and other assistance to members of the Naval Services of the United States, eligible family members, and survivors when in need. "Well done" to LTJG Windom, AME1 Bradley, and PRAR Lewis for their efforts organizing the Yellow Jacket fundraiser!



LTJG Windom, AME1 Bradley, and PRAR Lewis are recognized at Squadron Quarters for their efforts.



Easter on the Boat!! Thanks for the candy Spouse's Club!!



Banjo Bucks in Thailand!!

(Skipper gave everyone a Banjo buck before the Thailand port visit...





Yellow Jackets on Cruise...



USS JOHN C. STENNIS (CVN 74)
ELECTRONIC ATTACK SQUADRON 138
WESTPAC 2009



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?

Stop by the Nor'wester ITT office and see the great discounts they offer on:

- 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)

Family Readiness Group (FRG) President

Ms. Jacqueline Forrester

360-682-6201

jacquelineforrester@yahoo.com

UPCOMING SQUADRON AND FAMILY EVENTS AROUND THE AREA

- May 10th – HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

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

A mother is a person who seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie.

-Tenneva Jordan



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



Websites for Heroes
 keeping our military families connected

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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