



Blackjack Banner



From the Captain's Desk

APRIL/MAY 2013

Greetings Blackjack family and friends! I hope everyone enjoyed spring as we prepare for summer!

Since our last edition of the "Blackjack Banner", we have been very busy. We closed out March and opened April with a children's Easter Egg Hunt. The men and women of the Second Class Petty Officers Association did an outstanding job putting this event together. More than 20 families were able to participate and enjoyed additional events, such as an egg race, balloon pop, sling shot topple, and an Xbox tournament.

Our next level of effort consisted with our participation in BOLD ALLIGATOR 13. The exercised kicked off April 22, and our planning efforts with TACRON 22 paid off as we successfully concluded the exercise on May 3. The primary objective of BA13 was to build upon the single naval battle concept; focusing on USN, USMC, and Coalition integration; contemporary amphibious capabilities; and power projection from the sea.

The month of May continued with many other significant events for our Sailors. Shortly after BA13, we participated in the TACRON Operational Advisory Group (OAG) in San Diego, CA. This event allowed all the leadership from both the East and West coast TACRON Squadrons to come together and align on several operational issues, ensuring standardization among all the squadrons.

Several of our Sailors have gotten underway on multiple occasions with USS Bataan. This consistent participation with Bataan has allowed our Sailors to develop a solid relationship with the ship and crew as well as allowed them to work on their warfare qualifications. This in turn will have a positive impact when we deploy with Bataan in 2014.

To maximize our preparations for the 2014 deployment, we continue to conduct weapons training, land navigation courses, and field exercises to supplement our air control capabilities.

Bataan is not the only relationship that our Sailors are developing. We began providing support to the Norfolk Tides baseball games by working concessions. The money earned through this endeavor is providing a positive alternative for raising funds to support our MWR functions.

During the month of May, we were also blessed to have 20 of our Sailors promote to the next highest pay grade and one of our Naval Spouses, Mrs Christina Gordon, was recognized at the 2013 Heroes at Home Military Spouse Awards. You can read her write up later in the newsletter. As you can see, the

Blackjacks continue to stay active and involved.

We also look forward to the return of two of our Sailors who are still forward deployed: AC1 V. Anderson, who is in Djibouti and AC2 Cunningham who is in Bahrain. We are expecting to get them back in July. Until then, I ask that you keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

There are a couple of ways to get the newsletter, either by email or going to our web-site, <http://www.tacron21.navy.mil>, and selecting "newsletter." If you know of anyone that you would like to receive the newsletter, please send their email address to:

Deborah.Dennler@navy.mil or

Victoria.Laginess@navy.mil

I continue to be proud of what we do and I look forward to many of our future accomplishments!

Sincerely,

CDR Lloyd B. "Chilly" Mack



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Senior Enlisted Corner

Greetings Blackjacks, family and friends! This is my final article for the Black Jack Banner. My family and I have orders to NAS Whiting Field in Milton, FL and will PCS mid July 2013. It has been a pleasure serving with the Black Jacks – some of the finest Sailors that I've served with during my career. Support provided by Family and Friends help these Sailors be at their best - Thank you!

Summer is quickly approaching and that means we'll all gather soon to enjoy a summer picnic. AC1 Fryar and the MWR Committee are organizing this event and will distribute the details soonest; enjoy!

Sincerely,
Kelly E. Smith
ACCM(AW/SW)



Congrats goes out to the Sailors that were recently promoted to their present rank:

-AC1 Toro, AC3 Tiemstra, AC2 Simpson, OS2 Rosenbaum, YN2 Price, AC2 Peder, OS2 Grippi, IT3 Pera, OS3 Myers, AC3 Mills, AC3 Jones, AC3 Houck, OS3 Heuring, AC3 Cole, OS2 Bustamante, AC3 Burleson, AC3 Beltran, AC3 Adams and AC3 Lacorte.

-AC2 Hutcherson earned the Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist qualification aboard USS BATAAN.

-Team C4I, IS2 Sproul, IT3 Pera, IT2 Lee, IT2 Ritchie, IT3 Doerfler, IS3 Camp IS2 Lohkamp and ITC Hazen, LT Gibson and LCDR Meneses were declared champions of our first semi-annual Kick Ball tournament. BZ C4I!

Welcome! Our newest members include: ACC Byrd, OSC Williams, GM1 Thierry, AC1 Nolan, AC2 Guilford, AC1 Toro, and AC3 Lacorte.

Resource of the month

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society. The mission of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society is 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; and to receive and manage funds to administer these programs.

The Society provides need based financial assistance to eligible recipients in the form of:

- Interest-free loans and grants
- Scholarships and interest-free loans for education.

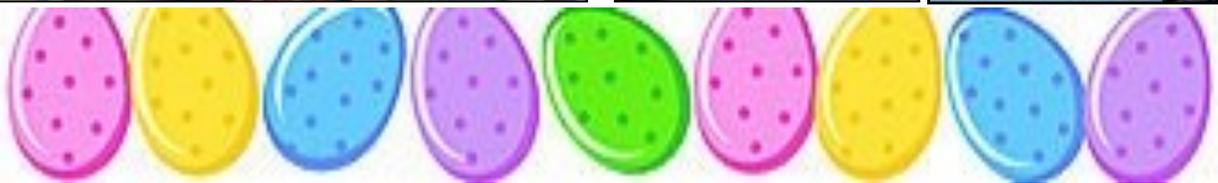
In addition, the Society offers the following services: Financial Counseling, Budget for Baby Workshops, Thrift Shops, and Visiting

Nurse Services.

The Little Creek NMCRS office can be contacted at (757) 462-1596 or check out the society's website at www.nmcrs.org.

Thank you for all that you do in support of TACRON 21 and our great Navy. Be safe!

Easter Egg Hunt



The E-5 Association sponsored TACRON 21's second annual Easter egg hunt. Friends and family were invited to building T-111 to enjoy an egg hunt and games that included a Halo tournament. The rain started to blow in but even that didn't keep everyone from having a great time. The games were moved indoors and children that won went home with bubbles, play dough, candy and toy jewelry. Thank you to everyone that was involved to make this a success.

BOLD ALLIGATOR 2013

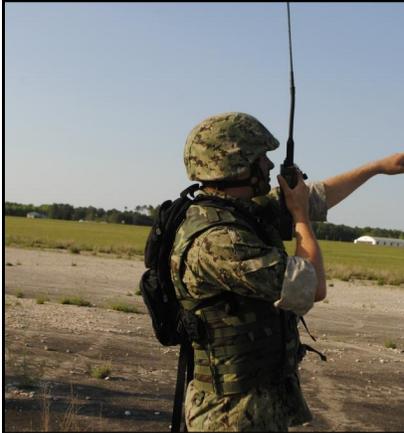


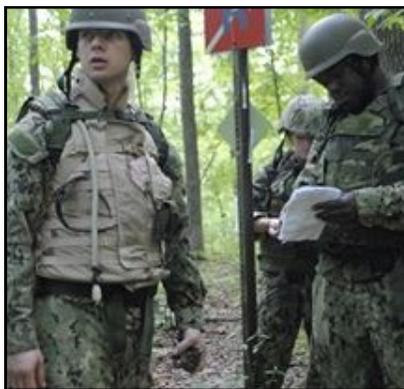
Bold Alligator is a multinational littoral warfare exercise hosted by the United States. It has been held annually since 2011.[1] In 2012, it involved 14,000 marines, sailors, airmen and soldiers, encompassing more than 25 ships and involving eleven countries,[2] with Canada, UK, France, Netherlands, Spain, Italy, New Zealand, Australia, and other allied nations participating at sea, on land, and in the air, at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina and in Virginia.

TACRON 21 participated in Bold Alligator 2013 at EWTGLANT from 22 April to 1 May 2013. It was the third annual joint and multinational amphibious assault exercise sponsored by the U.S. Fleet Forces Command and the U.S. Marine Forces Command. The objective was the revitalization of U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps amphibious expeditionary tactics, techniques, and procedures, as well as the reinvigoration of combined Navy and Marine Corps operations. The synthetic, scenario-driven, simulation exercise focused on the six core capabilities set forth in the current U.S. maritime strategy - forward presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection, maritime security, and humanitarian assistance/disaster response.

FORT PICKETT

Field Exercise





TACRON21's 2013 Fort Pickett field ex was a great hands on training for every one of the participants and our expeditionary team grew more experienced with each evolution conducted. For each piece of our mission there were lessons learned and new light shined on procedures, from planning days, to gear pack out, to execution and debriefs every step of the way we were learning. Having an array of different rates, ranks, and knowledge backgrounds present assisted in our discovering of new tactics and training ideas for most of the operations conducted. Fort Pickett's expedition had a lot of great moments as well as a lot of bad ones but each situation regardless of its smooth transition or rocky start created a learning environment for everyone involved. All in all the mission was a success and will make for a more efficient Marine Augmentation Team once underway as well as more effective expeditionary training in the future.

Physical Readiness Test

TACRON 21 conducted their semi-annual PRT. All the hard work at 3-day a week PT sessions paid off. The Navy Physical Readiness Test consists of push-ups, curl-ups (sit-ups), and either running 1.5 miles, swimming, biking, or elliptical endurance.

Sailors can earn a score of satisfactory, good, excellent or outstanding. TACRON 21 came in with 25 officer and enlisted outstanding ratings, great job shipmates!



Expeditionary *Field Day*

Following the PRT, the Expeditionary department sponsored a picnic complete with a cookout. Food included grilled chicken, potato salad and baked beans. Sailors enjoyed themselves playing some friendly volleyball and kickball. It was all fun and games with the training department facing off against C4I until AC1 Fryar kicked a one-in-a-million shot to the telephone pole and popped the ball, leaving the kickball champions to a mystery.



CONGRATULATIONS!

To our most recent Frockees. . .



AC1 Toro



OS2 Rosenbaum



OS2 Grippi



AC2 Simpson



AC2 Peder



OS2 Bustamante



YN2 Price



OS3 Myers



AC3 Mills



AC3 Cole



OS3 Heuring



IT3 Pera



AC3 Houck



AC3 Jones



AC3 Beltran



AC3 Adams



MWR Golf Tournament



AC1 Fryar and AC1 Shaw organized a golf tournament to raise money for MWR. There was a lot of involvement from the Command with 11 teams and 41 participants; they raised \$563 dollars for MWR. AC1 Fryar said it was huge success, a lot of fun and look forward another outing in the fall!

Volunteer *Clean the Bay*

20 Volunteers from TACRON 21 came out to support "Clean the Bay Day." Clean the Bay Day is Chesapeake Bay Foundation's (CBF) annual stream & shoreline cleanup, where volunteers remove litter & debris from local waters & the Chesapeake Bay. According to www.wavy.com, and estimated 6000 volunteers statewide participated in the 25th annual event, with hundreds coming from JEB Little Creek. Organizers say that volunteers removed approximately 125,000 pounds of litter and debris along 500 miles of shoreline. The most common items encountered were plastic bottles, plastic bags and cigarette butts, but other larger items such as automobile parts, tires and household appliances were also found.

"The Bay and its waterways work for us every single day, boosting our economy and quality of life," commented Tanner Council, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Clean the Bay Day coordinator. "Protecting and restoring the Bay requires everyone doing their share to reduce pollution. Clean the Bay Day is a great, practical way for individuals to give a few hours back and make a big difference."

In commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the event, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation presented awards to honor partners who have dedicated the most years to the annual cleanup, including the U.S. Navy and the cities of Chesapeake, Newport News, Hampton, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach.

This year the Clean the Bay Foundation noted a decrease in the overall quantity of litter, indicating, they say, that the cleanup sites are seeing sustained improvement, (wavy.com, 2013).



The month of April was Sexual Assault Awareness Month. In order to raise awareness and recognize the efforts of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response and Child Abuse Awareness the administrative department of TACRON 21 enrolled to participate in the inaugural Beach Adventure Challenge presented by MWR Fitness in collaboration with Fleet and Family Support Center. Numerous challenges were presented to participants ranging from physical endurance activities to challenges involving tests of mental acuity. Throughout all of the physical and mental encounters during the Beach Adventure Challenge the administrative department of TACRON 21 demonstrated an exemplary team performance by surviving and succeeding to place first above all other teams participating.





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Our Hero At Home!

Reprinted from the Heroes at Home – 9th Anniversary Edition



SPOUSE STATS

YEARS AS MILITARY SPOUSE: 5

NUMBER OF DEPLOYMENTS: 2

NUMBER OF PCS MOVES: 3

AREA OF FOCUS FOR 2013:

Continue my volunteer work in Colorado - Wounded Warriors, spouse clubs, charity events for scholarships for military children, church and Toys for Tots. My goal for 2013 is to begin volunteer work with local veterans and families.

Christina Gordon

Spouse of Maj. John Travis Gordon, TACRON 21, JEB Little Creek/Fort Story

When Christina Gordon gets involved in a project, she digs in and gives it all her energy. While her husband was stationed in Panama, Fla., she spearheaded a program to restore and preserve gravesites at St. Michael Catholic Church. Every Saturday, for three years, Christina, her husband and dozens of young Marines would spend their mornings pouring themselves into this arduous, but fulfilling work. They worked tirelessly to clean up around the historic gravesites and preserve them for years to come. At times, they even had to dig around and under stones that had sunk after decades of exposure to the elements.

While she found great joy in the preservation work, she was even more pleased to get to know the young Marines who worked alongside her every Saturday. "I learned to love the new Marines," she explained. "I have such a place in my heart for them. They are still growing." During those long Saturdays, Christina heard story after story about why the Marines joined and what they had experienced. "They are

still kids," she said, "but they have more responsibilities than most 30-year-olds. I've since geared my volunteering to those just starting out."

When she and her family moved to Quantico, she shifted her focus slightly, organizing the wives organization's Dollars for Scholars events, which raised money for scholarships for service members' kids. While in that role, she had the privilege of working with service members from all ranks, getting to know them personally and learning more about their needs. Her successful efforts in that role led to scholarships being available for everyone who applied. "Everyone that turned in a form," said Christina. "We were able to spread the money out to everyone."

Since getting to Little Creek, Christina has taken all that she learned from her former roles into her roles as vice president, president and treasurer of the Family Readiness Group (FRG). As the overwhelming majority of FRG members are young families, Christina headlines back to her Saturdays at the cemetery ... remembering those early

struggles and making every effort to ensure that everyone feels appreciated and supported.

Her dedication to and focus on everyone else spills into her personal life as well. When a peppy tumor returned after years in remission, Christina's husband was more worried about her than she was about herself. Although he had to leave in the middle of her treatment, she insisted he go. "I felt I was fine," she explained. Christina's treatments took place at Bethesda and Walter Reed, which gave her instant perspective, as she witnessed young, Wounded Warriors suffering around her. "Looking around, I didn't even know why I was complaining. It was nothing in comparison."

When she isn't busy with her own full family life and full-time job, Christina still finds time to volunteer with a number of organizations. She's always looking for opportunities to dig in and get involved. "There's fulfillment in helping others," she explained. "You just make your time. I enjoy it and enjoy being busy."

“There's fulfillment in helping others. You just make your time. I enjoy it and enjoy being busy.”

”
Christina Gordon,
about her volunteerism

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Welcome to the Blackjack Family:

AC3 Jones and ACAN LaCorte

Best Wishes to the following family members as they depart TACRON 21 and move on to future endeavors:

AC2 Smith, IS2 Camp and AC3 Rogers

