

RAMPAGER NEWS

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, EDITION #001, 7 JUNE TO 31 JULY 2004



Words from the Skipper

Greetings Rampager friends and family! This newsletter is coming to you from the Arabian Gulf where we have been operating for the past month. We would gladly trade our 120 degree temperatures on the flight deck for one of the many rain showers we hear you've been getting on the East Coast!

Hopefully everyone read about the squadron in the newspaper back on July 23. Our pilots were called on to drop ordnance on a mortar position outside Baghdad. The aircrew executed the mission flawlessly! Their outstanding performance was the result of a true team effort across the board. The aircraft weapons systems were maintained at the highest level of operating efficiency and worked perfectly. The ordnance shop provided the aircrew with GPS weapons that struck the target with pinpoint precision. Our administration department, food service personnel, and first lieutenant division have ensured that all our personnel are well cared for with accurate paychecks, good food, and comfortable living spaces. It is truly impressive when all our hard work over the past year comes together with superb results!

I would like to personally thank everyone back home for your continued support of our loved ones while we are fighting the war on terrorism on the front lines. It is important to remember that this war is a marathon, not a sprint. The work we are doing now is critical to the success of Operation Iraqi Freedom and we are definitely making a difference to our troops on the ground and the people of Iraq. Please continue to show your support with cards, letters, and packages.

The Rampagers miss you and look forward to hearing from you soon!

CDR Reggie P. Carpenter
Commanding Officer

“RAM ON”

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S CORNER



With nearly one-third of our deployment complete, I wonder how many Sailors, spouses, or family members have written a single good old fashion “snail” mail letter? Have you? It seems that over the last ten years, we have all become hooked on email for its ability to immediately gratify us, albeit in a very non-personal fashion. When email is NOT reliable, as we have all experienced, it can be very frustrating to not get that immediate reply. Perhaps there is something to be said for patience and the old fashion pen and paper.

There are many great ways for family and friends to communicate with their Sailors and for Sailors to communicate with their families. One of the easiest ways is through post cards, but other means include sending pictures, audiotapes and videotapes. My personal favorite is to audiotape bedtime stories for my children. Recording a personal message gives the recipient something that they can put their hands on, something to keep and treasure. No one ever treasures old emails.

I urge you all to take a few minutes and put a pen to paper. Take the time out of your busy day to sit down and reflect upon your relationships. Tell your spouse, son, daughter, or friend not only that you miss them, but more importantly why you miss them. Recall those memorable moments that you treasure and share them once again.

Sailors go on cruise, and that is just a fact of military life. Make the best of it and keep in touch. Don't let the distance keep you apart.

Please take care. We will see you all soon.

CDR Joseph H. Evans

COMMAND MASTER CHIEF'S CORNER



Good day to all of you from somewhere East of Virginia. It is a privilege for me to have this opportunity to relay to you some information about myself, your RAMPAGERS, and some resources while we are deployed. About myself, my name is Master Chief Jim Rockwood and I have had the pleasure to serve in our Navy for 26 years. This is my second tour as a CMC and I have been with VFA 83 for just over a year now. I could not be more proud of the caliber of Sailors that I serve with out here on JFK. We have been gone just about two months and are settling into the ship's routine, busy with qualifications, studying for advancement exams, and just plain working hard at what we do.

One thing we are working hard at is trying to ensure everyone at home is kept informed. Starting with this newsletter. Since your Sailors don't always have the opportunity or the time to contact you as often as you, or they, would like, we have decided to start a newsletter and send you a couple during the cruise. It will highlight some of the events that have gone on and show our team in action. You can also visit our website at: <http://www.navy.mil/homepages/vfa83/>

In this first newsletter I wanted to give you some good squadron points of contact. First, the command OMBUDSMAN is Mrs. Samantha Baker, she helps ensure our families get settled into the local area and is our eyes and ears back on the beach, someone you can contact to discuss any issues that may arise at home. She also has a direct line of communication with the CO's wife in cases of emergency. Mrs. Baker's e-mail address is: ombudsmanvfa83@aol.com. You also can contact our Admin/Legal Officer LT Rodney Norton, he may assist you in many different ways, his e-mail address is: nortonrj@vfa83.navy.mil. Feel free to contact me if you have a questions or concerns, my e-mail address is: CMC@vfa83.navy.mil. Other valuable resources, the Air Wing Chaplain, LCDR Kevin Anderson, he can be reached at andersonkl@cvw17.navy.mil., and lastly the American Red Cross.

My closing note will always recognize some hard working RAMPAGERS. For this newsletter I'd like to recognize the First Lieutenant Division. These are the Sailors that keep the squadron living spaces clean. Led by AM2 John Allen, who is ably assisted by Sailors from various work centers. This newsletter's "RAMS Best" are AZAN Ellis, AMAN Jared Huffman, YNSN Airrion Lemmons, AN Chester Yamat, and AMEAN Michael Rugh. They have been doing an outstanding job. RAM ON!!

CMDCM(AW/SW) Jim Rockwood

COMMAND OMBUDSMAN CORNER

Hello Rampager Families,

Everything is going smoothly and is pretty quiet here in Virginia Beach. We had our first support group meeting on June 21st and we had a good turnout. Carmen Valencia is the Rampager support group leader. If you would like to contact Carmen, her e-mail address is: mom2beachbums@hotmail.com.

By the way, for those who don't know me, I am Samantha Baker, your ombudsman, and you can reach me either by e-mail: ombudsmanvfa83@aol.com or my cell number is 757-636-9487 and my home number is 757-963-5273. I am a domestic engineer so I am available anytime. Be safe and enjoy your summer.

Your Rampager Ombudsman,
Samantha Baker

NAVAL AIR STATION OCEANA



Find out what's happening at Naval Air Station, Oceana, by visiting their website at: www.nasoceana.navy.mil. A big upcoming event is the 46th annual NAS Oceana Air Show featuring the "Blue Angels". The 24-26 September Air Show promises to be an action-packed event. The theme this year is "In Pursuit of Liberty" and the base will open its gates and provide the public with an up-close look at the men, women and equipment that have been instrumental in America's War on Terrorism. Be sure to visit the "Performers" and "Static Display" sections of NAS Oceana's Air Show website as they frequently update the powerhouse lineup of military and civilian aircraft equipment.

WORKCENTER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

“CORROSION”



The Corrosion shop and a few volunteers worked long hours getting Aircraft “300” ready for the transition to a new paint scheme. PR2 Silver and PR3 McCoy conceived the idea for the unique paint scheme and with the help of AM2 Bowser, AD3 Batten, AT3 Castillo, AO3 Olen, AM3 Renfro, and AM3 Royal, they brought all of the detail, including the paint scheme and tail design, together. Countless hours were spent utilizing each member’s expertise to cut stencils, paint and detail the aircraft. They knew when it was finished it looked just right. The final touches were applied by stenciling of the names of Capt M. D. Guadagnini, Commander Carrier Air Wing 17, and Capt S. G. Squires, Commanding Officer, USS John F. Kennedy on both sides of the canopy. The Rampagers can look upon their flagship as a direct reflection of the professionalism and dedication that every member of our squadron exhibits on a daily basis. Outstanding Job! RAM ON!!!

- Article written by LTJG Shaun Bellemare, Aircraft Division Officer.

Note: A picture of Corrosion shop crew is located in the “Rampagers in Action” pictorial at the end of the newsletter.

MEMORIES OF MALTA



- USS John F. Kennedy pulls pierside in Malta.



- ENS Ricardo Torres standing in front of a fountain at the entrance to the city of Valletta.

TRANSIT THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL



FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION

"RAMPAGERS REENLIST ON FLIGHT DECK"



- Shown in the flight deck photo (from left to right) are AT3 Michael Castillo, AT2 Daniel Iadonisi, LCDR Bush, PNC(AW/SW) Nelson Uy, CWO2 Donald Ellis, CMDCM(AW/SW) Jim Rockwood, AO2(AW/SW) Pringle, CDR Joseph Evans, and LTJG Shaun Bellemare.

STEEL BEACH PICNIC



- “Cold Cat and the Rampstrikes” play for the crew during the 4th of July steel beach picnic. Yes, that’s the RAMS Skipper, CDR Carpenter center stage as the lead guitar and vocalist.



- Hundreds of JFK and CVW-17 crewmembers gathered on the fantail to enjoy some burgers, hotdogs and cold sodas while listening to the Air Wing bands play some good ole “rock and roll”.

LIFE ABOARD THE **USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV 67)**



John F. Kennedy (CV 67) is named for the 35th President of the United States. The ship's keel was laid October 22, 1964, at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company in Virginia. President Kennedy's 9-year-old daughter, Caroline, christened the ship May 27, 1967 in ceremonies held at Newport News. The ship subsequently entered naval service Sept. 7, 1968.

Kennedy was originally designated as CVA 67, attack aircraft carrier. In the early 1970s, the classification was changed to CV 67, indicating the ship was capable of supporting antisubmarine warfare aircraft, making it an all-purpose, multi-mission aircraft carrier.

A few famous quotes attributed to President John F. Kennedy;

- *"We stand for freedom. That is our conviction for ourselves; that is our only commitment to others."*
- *"There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction."*
- *"And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man."*
- *"I can imagine a no more rewarding career. And any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile, I think can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction: 'I served in the United States Navy.'"*

“RAMPAGERS IN ACTION”



“RAMPAGERS IN ACTION”



“RAMPAGERS IN ACTION”



- Corrosion shop above and their masterpiece Aircraft 300 below.

