

Whiting Tower

Seventy-three Years of Aviation Training News

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Discamus vincere in caelum

Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Milton, Fla.
Vol. 73 No. 24

Forging Wings for the Fleet
November 30, 2017

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Navy Captain Honored for his Service to Country and Community

By Jamie Link, NAS Whiting Field Public Affairs Office

You won't meet another Navy Aviator who served with such an extensive commitment to the Navy and to his community, serving in three wars; WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

Capt. Retired Walt Reese, USN was honored last week with a banquet in Pace Fla. for his service to country and community. Friends, family and fellow aviators came together from across the Nation to be present to honor the Captain for that dedication.

His ties to Naval Air Station Whiting Field, the Navy League and Santa Rosa county run deep and strong.

"Putting into words Walt Reese's impact is unbelievably hard, what a great person, Mary Salinas of Keep Santa Rosa Beautiful, Inc. said.

Reese was active in the Navy League and went on to lead the Navy league for many years that lesioned with NAS Whiting Field. He could be found at the Military Appreciation Picnic on the base at the popcorn machine volunteering his time where he would talk with base personnel or Sailors about anything from Navy service to air-



Commanding Officer, Capt. Todd Bahlau spoke at a local event to honor Capt. retired Walt Reese at the Presbyterian Church in Pace Fla. on November 13. Reese was honored that evening for the leadership, influence and legacy he has come to provide for the local area in Santa Rosa County and Naval Air Station Whiting Field. Photo by Jamie Link craft.

His support reached to many entities that were a part of the base, Reese was a strong supporter and advocate to the Sea Cadets, organized Navy ombudsman luncheons with the Fleet and Family Support Center and became the primary organizer for Instructor of the year and Sailor of the year recognition banquets as well as Sailor of the quarter recognition breakfasts.

Reese joined the Navy in 1943 and entered a Navy college training program and spent two years in college at Western Michigan University and Notre Dame. Following flight raining, Reese was designated a Naval Aviator in June of 1946. The aviator first served in Huchinson, Kansas for PB4Y-2 Privateer training, and during his time he served in Pensacola, Fla. for training. While at NAS Pensacola, he conducted flight training at NAS Whiting Field from 1946 to 1947.

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Cover Photo: Arial picture of NAS Whiting Field durring construction, May 30, 1944. US Navy Official Photo.

The Whiting Tower

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The Whiting Tower is an authorized publication for members of the Naval Air Station Whiting Field team, tenant commands, their family members and retirees in the surrounding area. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Navy, and do not imply endorsement thereof. The editorial content is prepared, edited and provided by the Public Affairs Office of Naval Air Station Whiting Field.

SECNAV Celebrates Thanksgiving with America and 15th MEU

By USS America (LHA 6) and 15th MEU Public Affairs
ARABIAN GULF (NNS) -- The Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Richard V. Spencer conducted his first holiday visit to the deployed Marines and Sailors of the amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) and embarked 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 23.

While aboard the ship, Spencer conducted an all-hands call where he addressed his priorities while speaking to the Marines and Sailors. He reminded everyone aboard that people, capabilities and processes are what enable the Department of the Navy to provide maritime dominance and power projection in an uncertain age, and that it is the individual Marine or Sailor who will improve the processes to meet future challenges.

"You are what makes (this ship) an effective weapon," he said. "You are what sharpens the pointy end of the spear and it's because of you that this works ... we become a quick thinking organization and punch way above our weight to increase our capabilities." He also expressed his deepest gratitude for everyone's service



Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer, serves turkey to Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Anna Kalinin, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), in the mess line during their visit on Thanksgiving Day. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Alexander Ventura II

especially over the holidays.

"One of the jobs [my wife] and I have back home is to make sure the civilian world knows what their Navy-Marine Corps team is doing," said Spencer. "Today, as we celebrate Thanksgiving, I think this just epitomizes [your efforts]." - *Cont. on Page 4*

USNS Comfort Completes Hurricane Relief Mission in Puerto Rico

By Military Sealift Command Public Affairs
NORFOLK (NNS) -- Military Sealift Command's hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) returned to Naval Station Norfolk after providing life-saving medical care to the people of Puerto Rico.

Comfort departed Virginia Sept. 29, and had been in Puerto Rico for almost two months providing disaster relief support after Hurricane Maria devastated the island.

"The ship's namesake Comfort was absolutely appropriate for what the crew was able to do, because we weren't just there to provide medical treatment, we were there for the comfort to the patient's families," said Capt. Kevin Robinson, the Comfort's mission commander. "We made every effort to bring family member escorts aboard to provide comfort to the patients as well as the family." - *Cont. on Page 5*



The hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) returns to Naval Station Norfolk after being deployed in support of humanitarian relief efforts. Comfort returned from supporting the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the lead federal organization, as well as other federal and local authorities helping those in Puerto Rico affected by Hurricane Maria. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Patrick T. Bauer

SECNAV Celebrates Thanksgiving -Cont. from page 3

Before wrapping up the all-hands call, the secretary's wife spoke with the Marines and Sailors.

"As a mom, I wish I could hug you all and say happy Thanksgiving," said Polly Spencer as she thanked the service members for their sacrifices being away from family.

Spencer conducted a mass reenlistment and fielded questions from the crowd ranging from his thoughts on the future of information and cyber warfare to expressing his excitement about being back with his old helicopter squadron.

During his service in the Marine Corps, the secretary served as an H-46 pilot with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161, the Marine Corps' first tactical helicopter squadron, which was converted to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 161 when the MV-22B Osprey became operational in 2009. VMM-161 is currently the Aviation Combat Element for the 15th MEU and is reinforced with additional AV-8B Harriers, CH-53E Super Stallions, UH-1Y Hueys and AH-1Z Cobras.

"It's a big honor to have the SECNAV come visit us on Thanksgiving," said Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Louis Espinoza, one of the Sailors that reenlisted. "But it's an even greater honor to be reenlisted by him."

Immediately following the all hands call, Spencer and his wife met with the food service division on the junior enlisted mess deck and began serving the Thanksgiving meal to Sailors and Marines.

The meal was served with all the usual Thanksgiving trimmings on one of the largest scales imaginable. The entree consisted of 540 pounds of turkey, 520 pounds of baked spiral ham and 500 pounds of prime rib, while accompanied with a variety of side dishes and eggnog to drink.

"We've been preparing and planning all week for this event," said Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Rose Fennel, a member of the ship's food service division. "We started with thawing out frozen items a few days ago, and we started cooking at 5:30 a.m. to make this big beautiful Thanksgiving feast for the crew."

After the SECNAV and his wife served turkey onto each passing plate, he sat down with the crew and

shared the special meal with them.

Following the meal Capt. Joseph Olson, America's commanding officer accompanied by the MEU commander and the America Amphibious Ready Group commodore, gave a tour of the ship to SECNAV and his wife. The SECNAV saw the ship's bridge, medical bay and several tactical spaces to include the landing force and the joint operations centers.

"We're honored to have our secretary on board today, and although we will not be with our families this holiday season, we're celebrating Thanksgiving together as the America family," said Olson. "Today we have the watch."

America is the flagship for the America Amphibious Ready Group and, with the embarked 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, is deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations in support of maritime security operations to reassure allies and partners and preserve the freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce in the region. 🐼

NAS Whiting Field & Training Wing 5

Children's Christmas Party

**Saturday, 9 December
9am to 12pm**

NAS Whiting Field Atrium

***Santa "Flying-In" &
"Tree Lighting" at 10am***

- **FREE TOYS**
- *Crafts & Games*
- *Snacks & Refreshments*
- *Take Your Pictures with Santa!*



USNS Comfort Completes Mission -Cont. from page 3

Comfort worked with the Puerto Rico Department of Health and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to treat patients since the first day it arrived in Puerto Rico Oct 3.

Since departing Norfolk to provide humanitarian relief, Sailors aboard Comfort have treated 1,899 patients, performed 191 surgeries, provided 76-thousand liters of oxygen and 10 tons of food and water.

"When we first got there, there was no electricity and everything was dark. We were a bright beacon that had power," said Capt. Roger Gwinn, USNS Comfort's master. "We met people that hadn't showered in 8-9 days, hadn't had a hot meal in the same amount of time, and that made the crew realize what we were dealing with."

The ship conducted nearly 200 total surgeries to include 44 general surgical procedures such as hernia repair, gallbladder removal and appendix removal; 25 major orthopedic surgical cases; 17 amputations and 15 urologic procedures.

"What we saw were people with chronic conditions that had lost follow-up because either their clinics were gone or they hadn't gotten their medications refilled," said Capt. Kevin Buckley, USNS Comfort's medical treatment facility commanding officer.

Several notable surgeries included a modified radical mastectomy for an advanced case of breast cancer, a complex multi-organ abdominal cancer resection, an urgent drainage and exploration of a complicated neck infection, and an emergent open repair of a ruptured aortic aneurysm which comprised the largest, most complex

surgery ever performed on a hospital ship.

There were two children born onboard Comfort during the hurricane relief mission. The first was a baby girl, Sara Victoria Lull Rodriguiz, Oct. 14, and the second was a baby boy, Isaias Valerio-Fonseca Nov. 3.

The father of the boy was a U.S. Navy veteran.

The recovery mission in Puerto Rico continues under the long-term leadership of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and U.S. military reservists and National Guard. 🇺🇸

Don't Be a **GRINCH** 10K... and 1 mile for the kids too!
SATURDAY, 9 December
~ 8am ~
Start / Finish at Mulligan's
Sign-up at the Fitness Center
Get a Medallion

MWR FITNESS FITNESS CENTER 850-623-7412
www.navymwrwhitingfield.com

FREE EVENT
FREE EVENT
FREE EVENT

MWR COMMUNITY RECREATION

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT
AUDITORIUM
FRIDAY, 1 DEC AT 7PM

THE POLAR EXPRESS
BELIEVE

All Aboard!
THE POLAR EXPRESS

Join us for our FREE movie in the Clyde E. Lassen Auditorium. Bring some snacks and enjoy! Seating is available ... and, bring your favorite blankets and pillows if you want too.

Family Fun!

Navy Captain Honored -Cont. from page 2

He served many locations to include; Miramar, California, Kaneohe, Hawaii, NAS Corpus Christi, Monterey, California, Great Lakes, Illinois, and University of Michigan, Barber's Point, Hawaii, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, Warminster, PA, NAS Jacksonville, Fla. Norfolk, Washington DC and the Pentagon.

Reese served as an aviator, instructor pilot, navigator, Naval Air Development Center test pilot, Executive Officer for the VW-4 Hurricane Hunters, commander of VW-4 in Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla. and team leader at the National Military Command Center at the Pentagon.

His deployments were numerous throughout his career.

His volunteerism and service to the local community has had a tremendous impact, including Keep Santa Rosa Beautiful, Milton High School JROTC unit and the Navy League.

"Capt Reese, as I move to my final tour I can only hope to have somewhat of the same impact that you have had. I don't think you could replace the impact and legacy you have here. I am very honored to be here to talk about your career and influence." Commanding Officer, Capt. Todd Bahlau said

The night of the banquet, Reese was honored with a "Masters Gardner Certificate", and the Milton High School JROTC unit announced the renaming of the JROTC unit scholarship program to the "Walt Reese Scholarship award."

The same night he was honored, his wife Mary was celebrating her birthday. The event included a birthday cake for her and Reese made sure to announce her celebration day at the end of the event which showed the audience that even though the Captain his starting to season in his age of the 90's realm, he does not forget her support and active assistance in his career, their life goals and their life together.

"I am tremendously pleased, it comes from all of you" Walt Reese said as he thanked everyone for attending. 🐦



Naval Air Station Whiting Field Chief's Mess and NAS Whiting Field Morale, Welfare and Recreation hosted a Thanksgiving meal on the base at the Liberty Center for Sailors that live or stay on the installation. The meal was complete with two main courses of turkey and ham, side dishes, and desserts. Sailors came to eat and watch football on Thanksgiving Day. Photo by Jamie Link

This Day in Naval History

November 30

1912 - Lt. Theodore G. Ellyson, the first U.S. Navy officer to qualify as an airplane pilot, tests the Navys first C-1 flying boat at Hammondsport, N.Y.

December 1

1842 - Midshipman Philip Spence, Boatswains Mate Samuel Cromwell, and Seaman Elisha Small of the Bainbridge-class brig Somers are executed for mutiny. Spencer was the son of then-Secretary of War, John Canfield Spencer.

December 2

1965 - USS Enterprise (CVAN 65) and USS Bainbridge (DLGN 25) become the first nuclear-powered task unit used in combat operations with launch of air strikes near Bien Hoa, Vietnam.



The first building constructed at NAS Whiting Field in 1943, later became the C.P.O. Club. U.S. Navy Official Photo.

THE LANDING STRIP

#58 - Welcome to the Brotrary Club



West (Main) Gate Improvement West Gate ECP Improvements December 2017 through Spring 2019 Construction to modify the West Gate Entry Control Point (ECP) is targeted to start mid December 2017. This project includes several site improvements to the main gate's ECP. A few highlights include additional travel lanes, increased security measures (jersey barriers and removable bollards) and re-routing of commercial traffic to the Commercial Vehicle Inspection (CVI) station. In order to achieve these improvements, construction will take place that will impact the traffic patterns people have become accustomed to. Activities will ramp up after the New Year and will continue through 2018. Be aware that delays entering/exiting the installation are likely. Plan accordingly. Updates will continue to be provided as the project progresses. **MWR "Don't be a Grinch 10K" and kids 1 mile** December 9th MWR is hosting a free 10K and kids 1 mile run at Muligans starting at 8am. All participants will get a medallion. **MWR Kids Christmas Party** December 9th from 9 to 12am, MWR is hosting the Kids Christmas Party in the Atrium. Santa arrives at 10am and will light the Christmas tree! There will be games, crafts, pictures with Santa and free toys!

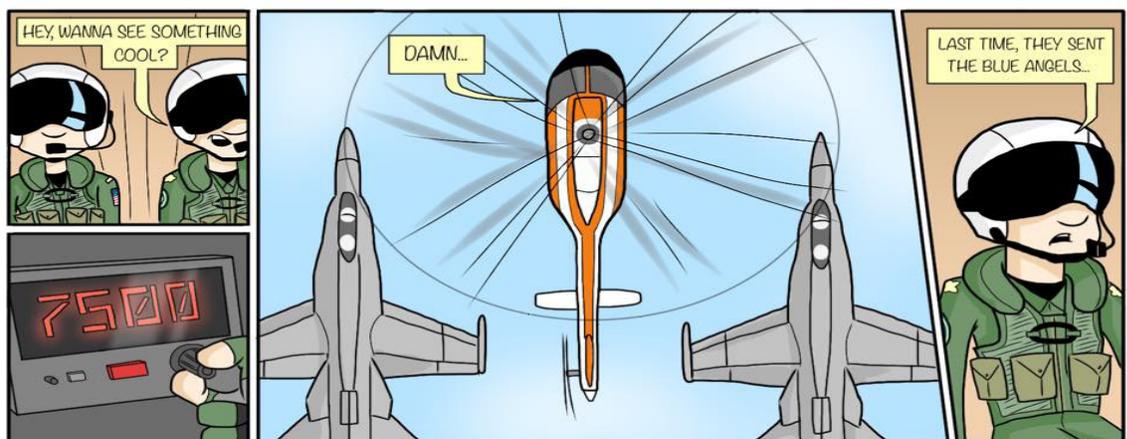
Fleet and Family-Stress Management: 4 & 11 December 1300-1400. Participants will learn to identify their individual stressors,

methods to help themselves handle stress, and preventative measures that can be taken to ward off future stress. **Thrift Savings Plan (TSP):** 14 & 28 December 1300-1400. The Thrift Savings class is for those who are interested in learning their options for investments, loans, and withdraws. The class will also discuss the benefits and money saving tips to start preparing NOW for retirement. **Developing A Spending Plan:** 5 December 1300-1400. Developing a Spending Plan class will help provide a practical and realistic way to easily understand how to balance your needs vs. wants

based on your current income and expenses. The class will focus on developing an easy to understand guideline to flexible and responsible spending. **Accessing Higher Education Workshop:** 11-12 December 0800-1600 each day. The Accessing Higher Education track is for those pursuing higher education. It assists Service members in identifying the education requirements that support their personal goals. This track focuses on topics such as how to achieve academic success, how to research and compare institutions, and how to finance higher education. *All FFSC class offerings are open to all military personnel, family members, and government employees.* **RSVP 623-7404, as seating is limited.** **PAO Things to Know Submissions** Things to Know is a weekly publication from the PAO. Please submit your entries to whtg_naswf_pao.fet@navy.mil by Tuesday at 1200 to make that week's issue. 📧

THE LANDING STRIP

#72 - Hi, Jack!



Congratulations to TRAWING-5 Wingers



Top Row: Cdr Robert Dulin, USN, CO HT-28; 1st Lt. Ryan Schaub, USMC, HT-18; Lt. j.g. Jarrett Walden, USN, HT-18; Lt. j.g. Antonio Bruno, ITNAV, HT-18; 1st Lt. Carl Gracely, USMC, HT-28; Lt Andrew Chevalier, USCG, HT-28; 1st Lt. Robert Fontenot, USMC, HT-8; Lt. j.g. Gary Smedley, USCG, HT-8; Lt. j.g. Tyler Heinemeyer, USN, HT-8; Lt. j.g. Sean Mohan, USN, HT-28; Col David Morris, USMC, Commodore TW5

Middle Row: LtCol Aaron Brunk, USMC, CO HT-18; Ensign Elliott Reed, USN, HT-28; Ensign Tyler Houston, USN, HT-28; 1stLt. Andrew Snell, USMC, HT-28; Lt. j.g. Jacob Long, USN, HT-28; 1st Lt. Andrew Stueve, USMC, HT-8; Lt. j.g. Joshua Holsey, USN, HT-8; 1st Lt. Patrick Finley, USMC, HT-28; Ensign Travis Bellows, USN, HT-18; Lt. j.g. Andrew Dedo, USN, HT-8; Guest Speaker: Capt. Dana Gordon, USN, N3 Operations Director, Navy Region Southeast

Bottom Row: Cdr Stephen Audelo, USN, CO HT-8; Lt. j.g. Abigail New, USN, HT-18; Lt. j.g. Melissa Ogden, USN, HT-8; Lt. j.g. Lauren Chavis, USN, HT-8; Lt. j.g. Faisal Ali Alamri, RSNF, HT-18; Lt.j.g. Sean Harding, USN, HT-28; Lt. j.g. Benjamin Unpingco, USN, HT-8; Lt. j.g. Kathryn Carpenter, USN, HT-28; Lt. j.g. Margaret Orr, USN, HT-28; Lt. j.g. Sorcha Hartman-Birge, USN, HT-8

Congratulations to TRAWING - 5 Academic Award Recipient



TW-5 Academic Award Recipient for Nov. 27 poses for a photo at NASWF Headquarters