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On-station - Vol. 4 – October 2014



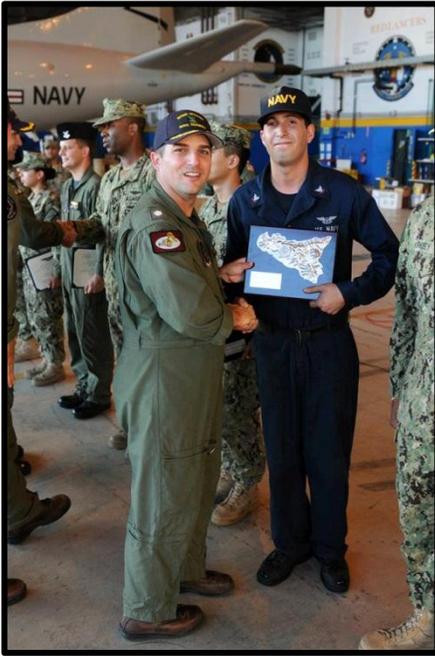
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CO'S CORNER



Skinny Dragon Ohana,

As we pass the half-way point for this deployment, the Skinny Dragon Team remains focused on finishing strong and returning home proud of our mission success. Being able to lead the finest Sailors in the Fleet, I know that the second half of this deployment will bring many challenges, but nothing that our Ohana can't handle. Much credit is deserved by the hard workers that, day in and day out, tackle with ease and determination the tasks at hand, all ready to assist when needed, and ready to deliver when called upon. This last month has brought many new challenges including the transfer of personnel and equipment from our detachment site in Souda Bay, Crete and opening and closing a new detachment in Rota, Spain. The efforts of our maintenance professionals turning the wrenches to get planes in the air, the logistical problem solving that our ground support personnel are constantly

working, and the combat aircrews operating day and night across the region have all contributed to the United States effort to maintain peace and stability in both the African and European Areas of Responsibility. Not one part of the team can operate without the other and the constant efforts of each group contribute to the mission effectiveness VP-4 has continually boasted. Congratulations to our Sailors of the Year: Senior Sailor of the Year- AM1 Webb, Sailor of the Year- AE2 Stemac, Junior Sailor of the Year- AD3 Lavin, and Blue Jacket of the Year- YNSN Farris! Enjoy this latest newsletter and remember if you have any questions or concerns, you can contact our two great Ombudsmen by email (skinnydragonombudsman@gmail.com) or by phone: Rebecca Mitchem (904-525-2313) and Ashley Flynn (618-365-0614). Each week we invite family and friends to check the Squadron's Facebook page for "Photo Fridays." The photos encompass daily life, and special occasions at each of the detachment sites.

Ciao,
Skipper Hanks

SIGONELLA DIRECT

The deployment hub continues to operate smoothly through the fourth month of deployment. While pushing for mission completion and continuing to exceed the expectations of the Theater Commanders in the air and in the hangar, the Skinny Dragons here recently took time to unwind from the daily challenges and enjoy some time off. The "Over the Hump" party provided an opportunity for the squadron to come together and celebrate how

much we have already achieved and to allow for a refocusing on safely accomplishing future tasks at hand. The party was a very deserving time for rest and relaxation for all the Skinny Dragons. A special thank you is in order to AZ2 Taylor, AM1 Barnes, AM1 Webb, AM2 Smiley, and YN1 Karbett for all your hard work as the MWR committee for the "Over the Hump" party. The daily work schedule continues to keep us busy, which



many agree makes the time remaining on deployment pass more quickly. Completing missions, maintenance, and training exercises is the name of the game and VP-4 is at the top of the Big Leagues. Some of our "heavy hitters" here in Sigonella are IS3 Young and IS2 Torrance who work long hours behind the scenes to prepare aircrew mission briefs. AT1 Vaillancourt and the AT team constantly troubleshoot aircraft mission systems, and PR1 Davis ensures the proper upkeep and repair of aircrew survival systems and equipment. These are only a few of the many outstanding achievers in the Skinny Dragon Sigonella Team.

DJIBOUTI DIRECT

Greetings from the Skinny Dragons in Djibouti! Deployment has already hit the halfway mark and the Skinny Dragons are starting to get a break in the weather down in Djibouti. Combat Air Crews THREE, NINE, and TEN were able to keep the mission completion rate at 100 percent with the help of our maintenance professionals, providing a mission capable plane for every flight! We held an "Over the Hump" party in the third week of October, where everyone had the opportunity to throw a few softballs and watch the Officer in Charge, LCDR Matt Tigrett, test his swimming skills in the dunk tank! There was a BBQ, dunk tank, bean bags and flag football for a little friendly competition.

"We have been working hard lately and it was nice to take a break and give the maintenance professionals a day to relax and recover. They have been working all hours of the night. It was great to see them out on the football field having a good time," commented LT Anthony Scalabrino.

The month of October was filled with work, but there were a few opportunities for some fun as well. The Morale, Welfare and Recreation committee had a few events to get the Fall spirit going in Djibouti. A few of the events included an Oktoberfest dinner one evening with brats and sauerkraut, a pumpkin carving contest and a comedy show. Now that October is under our belt, Thanksgiving and Christmas will be here before we know it. The Skinny Dragon Family can't wait to get back to Hawaii!

ROTA

The Hunt for Red October has come to a close in Rota Spain! The glorious submarine hunter, the mighty P-3 Orion flown by Combat Aircrews FOUR, FIVE, SEVEN and TWELVE, has completed Exercise Noble Justification near the strategic Straits of Gibraltar. Focusing on training for Anti-Submarine Warfare, VP-4 flew missions as part of a greater NATO led multi-national exercises set to enhance interoperability between our allies and promote a strengthened presence in the region for safety and freedom of the seas. Now, what that means for the maintenance professionals and combat aircrews is a mission set requiring long hours in preparation, upkeep of aircraft and equipment, and flight time. In order to successfully show off the Skinny Dragon dominance in Anti- Submarine Warfare, the best P-3 squadron in the Navy has given the utmost effort in accomplishing the mission in Rota and excelling in the exercise. AM1 Richmond, AM2 Lovejoy, and AM2 Octaviano put their expertise to practice replacing a cracked front windscreen, and LT Mitchell and AWO1 Esposito spent hours preparing detailed crew mission briefs showcasing the adaptability and resilience present in every Skinny Dragon eager to excel!

SOUDA DIRECT

This past month, VP-4 has moved from this detachment site back to Sigonella due to scheduled runway maintenance. With this transfer, the hard work in packing up the required maintenance equipment, while also keeping aircraft airworthy until the last minute, proved to be a task well worthy of recognition. With the mechanical expertise of AD2 Miller, AD1 Espinoza, AD2 Tabligan, AD3 Ott, and ADAN Herrera, the repair and replacement of an aircraft's propeller requiring hours of work allowed for the safe relocation of aircrew and aircraft back to Sigonella prior to the closure of the runway. AE2 Looney with the support of AE2 Winchester, AE3 Juarez, and AT3 Hahn troubleshooted a malfunctioning generator on another aircraft allowing for missions to continue until the repositioning of the aircraft back to Sigonella. It is this spirit of determination coupled with the best maintenance professionals in the Fleet that allowed VP-4 to complete missions and execute a successful shift in detachment sites. Each day these fine Sailors provide VP-4 the assets necessary to complete our mission.

VP-4 IN ACTION











SKINNY DRAGONS IN THE SPOTLIGHT!!



Air Medal

AWF1 Kerns
AWO1 Ty
AWO2 Aarons
AWO2 Dorpinghaus
AWF2 Gomez
AWF2 Mill
AWF2 Nguyen



Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal

AOC Gibree
AM1 Richmond
AT1 Vaillancourt
AWF2 Nguyen
YN2 Riddle
AME2 Smith



Newly Qualified Level 300/400

AWO2 Umhoefer



Newly Qualified Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialists

AWF2 Gomez
AO3 Myers



Flag Letter of Commendation

LS1 Kushiyama
AT2 Snider
AT3 Myra
YNSA Ferris

Newly Qualified CDI's

AD2 Bicanovsky
PR2 Harper
AWV2 Stones

Sailor of Year

Senior Sailor AM1 Webb
Sailor AE2 Stemac
Junior Sailor AD3 Lavin
Bluejacket Sailor YNSN Ferris

Honolulu Sea Service Award

AD1 Stewart
AE2 Stemac

