



# Fist of the Fleet Association

a non profit 501 (c) (19) military organization

## NEWSLETTER

December 2018

Preserving the Past Providing for Today

Promoting the Future

### HOLIDAY EDITION

By: Jerry "Ricochet" Fritze

Well, one thing for sure: no snow this year. It's a green and brown Christmas in south-central Wisconsin. But that's fine, winter has only just begun and there's plenty of time for inclement weather over the next three months. Temps will hover around 40 or so this week with some rain. I'm sure there are many of you who think that 40 degrees is thermals and parka stuff, but that's t-shirt weather up here. We did have a real cold snap in late October and early November that prevented me from getting up on the roof and getting the lights up, and there have been some flurries and snow squalls and the long-range forecast calls for cold with little snow overall. But again, there's nothing wrong with that as we were here for the top two record snow seasons so we'll take the break. Michelle and I have both noticed something a bit odd, however. We have been enjoying the Holidays this year, I mean *really* having fun whether it's been shopping or baking or decorating. It's been a blast. And the reason? We're no longer carrying all that stress from work and trying to get

everything accomplished on weekends. Time has had the appearance of slowing down so the days don't rush by in a whirlwind. We can take thought for others and act on those thoughts, and be charitable towards those who need it most. To quote Nephew Fred from Dickens "A Christmas Carol": "I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round, as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys."

Just this Saturday night, as I was contemplating how to approach this article the door bell rang. Now that's odd I thought, there's an SUV in the drive, it's not a delivery vehicle. I opened the door and there was my landscaper Oscar. Hola! Buenos Noches, Senor, que tienes? He handed me a large foil-clad package, still warm. Tamales! Homemade Tamales! Gracias, Senor, Feliz Navidad! (My Spanish is passable, but only just). Giving tamales at Christmas to family and friends is a tradition imported from Mexico and Central America. They take a bit of work and the pork was seasoned to perfection. It's been a long time since I have enjoyed anything like these, and Michelle has never had these before, so now she wants the recipe from Oscar. The point is that charity begins, and ends, at your doorstep, and that if you take the time for others, then others will take time for you, and surprise you in the very best of ways. And so, from our house to yours, from our families to yours wherever they may be in the wide world buon Natale and Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia.



~Ricochet~



[www.fistofthefleet.org](http://www.fistofthefleet.org)

#### Mission Statement

Perpetuate the history of Naval Aviation Squadrons VT-17, VA-6B, VA-65, VA-25 and VFA-25, Remember deceased veterans and comfort their survivors, Conduct charitable and educational programs, Foster and participate in activities of patriotic nature, Assist current active squadron members, and Provide assistance to family members in times of emergency.

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## ***PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE***

Let's cut right to the chase. After much discussion, working with an event planner, developing cost estimates and reviewing a survey sent to all FOFA members with a 29% response rate, I consulted with the Board Members and have made the decision to cancel Fist '19, originally scheduled for September 26-29, 2019 in San Diego, CA. Instead, we'll rally around the Tailhook Association gathering in Reno, NV in September, 2020 and be joined by current members of the squadron as well.

Here's the background on that decision. At the Annual Meeting in Charleston, SC we discussed these options and with fewer than 25 members present the straw poll indicated a preference for the next reunion to be in 2019 in San Diego, CA without the squadron's presence, to be followed by attendance at Tailhook, 2020 with current squadron personnel. As I began work on coordinating that event in September, 2018 with the help of an event planner it became clear that San Diego was a much more expensive choice than Charleston or Pensacola had been in the past. That result prompted some soul searching given the desire to keep costs low in an effort to raise attendance from the poor showing in Charleston of just 41 members and guests. Therefore, I asked Gary "Dome" Kerans to send out the survey that all of you received in December. The results clearly showed an overwhelming majority in favor of waiting until 2020 and attending Tailhook. Only 9 of 61 responses were in favor of San Diego.

There were some helpful yet critical comments received that deserved attention and I believe that we can take measures to act on some of those in a positive manner. Several folks commented that the enlisted personnel had to accept the added cost of joining the Tailhook Association in order to attend Hook 2020. If that's the case, then I will ask the board to subsidize that cost for the affected enlisted members who attend. Another group expressed concern that the Tailhook event was oriented towards the pilots, and that's true. But if you have an interest in Naval Aviation or learning about the latest advancements in that profession, then Tailhook is unsurpassed with the many military contractors who are present to discuss their products. Finally, many of us, not just pilots but enlisted, look forward to seeing shipmates from other squadrons that we knew during our time in the Naval Service, and there are plenty of opportunities to enjoy and renew that camaraderie over a cheap beer at Tailhook.

So, I am certain that there are some disappointed members out there and my apologies for not being able to satisfy everyone. But if you want a stronger voice in these decisions then I ask you to step forward and serve in a leadership position. By the way, there was not a single response to my offer of a free registration to Fist 2019 that was contained in my last President's Message, which I guess illustrated the lack of interest in going to San Diego.

Time for me to shove off guys, as the family is gathering around the Christmas tree and looking for more eggnog. Take care and enjoy a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year with your family and friends.

Chalks

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### ***Blue Notes***

The only thing of note for the 2019 schedule : Sept 21/22 NAS Lemoore Central Valley Air Show

## SKIPPER'S CORNER

Greetings Fist of the Fleet Association,

This is my last letter to you as Skipper. It has been an honor to serve these past seventeen months as the 70<sup>th</sup> Commanding Officer of the finest squadron in the Navy and it will be tough to hang it up this January. But I cannot think of a better officer or leader to take the squadron on deployment in a couple of months then CDR Dave Dartez. Pork and I have served together in several stops in our career and the Fist of the Fleet is getting the very best our community has to offer.

As I look back on my tenure, I am proud of what our Sailors accomplished. It has been a challenging year. Undermanned and facing an aggressive planned maintenance interval (PMI), we were left with zero room for error as we started workups in April. But the Fists came through at every level and made us all proud. There is still work to be done before the strike group is ready to depart Norfolk and steam east for our around the world deployment. With our Sailors leading the way, I have no doubt they will do us all proud.

Proud to serve, proud to be part of the greater Fist legacy you all left behind, and as always...

Damn proud to be a Fist!

Skipper Meat Dentzer



## FROM THE COCKPIT

By: LT Gerald "Soul Patch" Anderson

As the year winds down, it is important to reflect on how far VFA-25 has come. Last year around this time, the command began to prepare for a difficult work-up cycle. Since December of 2017 the command has completed Navy Weapons System Evaluation Program (NWSEP), Air to Air and Air to Surface lectures and detachments, TSTA, and AWF. VFA-25 has been challenged in the past 11 months of 2018 however, our squadron has risen to the occasion by excelling through workups. The next few months will pose the typical unique challenges dealing with the weather and limited flying opportunities due to the holidays. Right after the command gets back from the holidays however, we must ramp the intensity back up in order to get ready for Composite Training Unit Exercises (COMPTUEX).

### OPS Tempo

During this time last year VFA-25 only had one jet to conduct flight operations. Due to limited manning and parts available to our squadron, we were unable to produce multiple FMC jets. As we now inch closer to deployment we currently have 6 FMC ready jets and are about to take 9 FMC jets with us to the boat for COMPTUEX. In order for the pilots to be fully ready for deployment it is important for us to increase our ops tempo and ensure that we are proficient and as lethal as possible. As deployment gets closer, it is crucial for our squadron to emphasize flight ops and focus on getting as much training as possible in every single flight in order to ensure we are prepared for all facets of the deployment. COMPTUEX will challenge our squadron and will be the last test before our squadron is capable of deploying in 2019.

### Hail & Farewell

Every Fist officer progresses through their operational tour and must then move on to their next assignment. Prior to Thanksgiving LCDR Chad "MACHO" Bartkus and LT Chad "IRIS" Duncan both left for their new assignments. The impact that both of those pilots made in this command was major and they will be missed. Also in November, the command was assigned a new pilot LT Nicholas "Gherkin" Lens. Gherkin was assigned from the RAF flying the Tornado GR4 and is our newest Super JO. We look forward to having him add his knowledge and experience to the ready room.



Flying over the Sierra Nevada covered in snow



Hanford and Lemoore air quality during the severe fires for the entire month of November



Left: LT Chad "IRIS" Duncan last flight in VFA-25



Right: LCDR Chad "MACHO" Bartkus' last flight in VFA-25

Below: Overcast day prior to executing an Air to Surface flight in 403



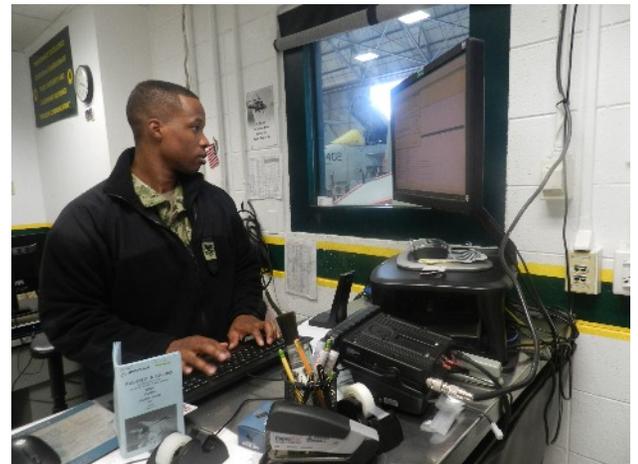
## FROM THE HANGER DECK

Greeting Past and Current Fist,

It is my pleasure to present to you the local update from the Fist maintenance deck plate as VFA-25 Sailor of the Year for 2018! I am AE1 Daymon, the Leading Petty Officer of the finest Aviation Electricians Mates I have seen in my 11 years in the Navy. As any leader knows, each Sailor comes with their own individual skills and abilities, and it is my job to make sure they apply their skills to not only bring credit upon themselves, but the squadron and the Navy as a whole. It has always been my job to train, mentor develop them and its been a wonderful sight to see them all grow throughout the ranks.

Currently the command is moving full speed ahead in its work up phase for our upcoming deployment. As we all know, working in the aviation community has it challenges and we are seeing those come to a head as I write this. Parts go bad, jets break, however the FIST team has met and will meet all of these with great fortitude. From the most senior pilot to the most junior airmen/seaman the excitement is growing for this potentially unprecedented cruise we are expecting to be on.

I was born in New York City but raised in sunny central Florida. I joined the Navy at the age of 20 in 2007 as an E-1 and forged forward throughout the ranks to make E-6 seven years later. I checked into The Fist of the Fleet in 2015 where I worked in quality assurance before I moved to my current position. In my time here I have done one deployment and numerous detachments. One time from the deck plate....WHO YOU WIT? 25!!



### Have you paid your 2019 Dues?

Annual Dues: \$25/YR

Life Time Dues \$200

Mail dues to Financial Officer:

Chuck Webster 2441 Lock B Road North Clarksville TN 37043

### Only Voting Members receive a copy of the Directory

Become a Voting Member!

Visit the Base Exchange at

[www.fistofthefleet.org](http://www.fistofthefleet.org)

## **FIST OF THE FLEET 2018 RECOGNITION AWARDS**



From left to right: XO, CMC, AME3 Ortizmunoz (Plane Captain of the Year), AO2 McIntyre (Fist of the Year), AT3 Musgrave (Blue Jacket of the Year), AE1 Daymon (Sailor of the Year), CO

### **2018 HARRY JONES AWARD WINNER**

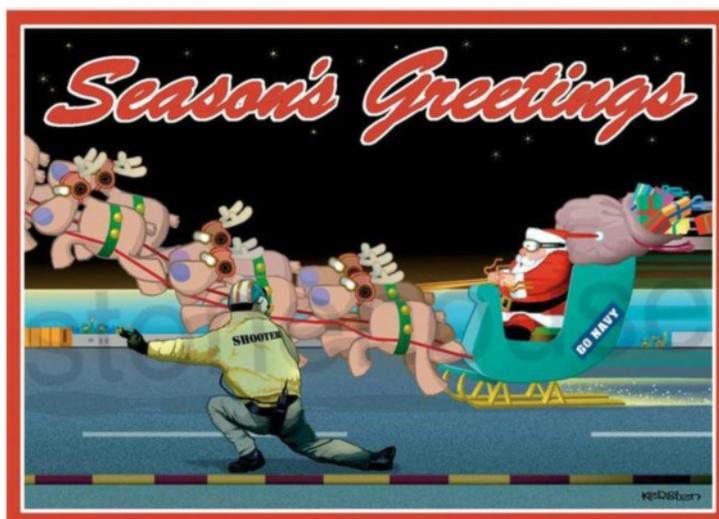


LT Alexander "P-duddy" Degelder with wife Rene

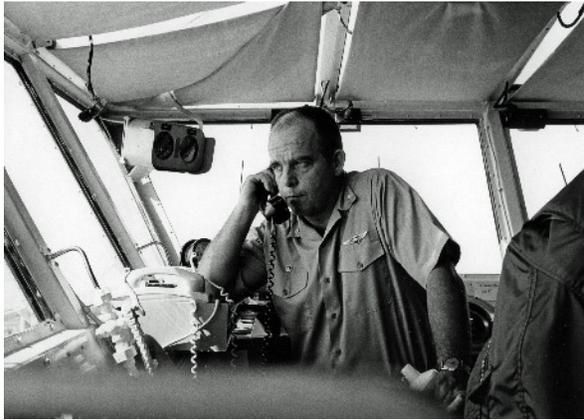
### **EDUCATIONAL GRANT AWARD**



AM3 Mazza



## FIST MEMORIES



Captain John L. Nicholson, Commanding Officer, USS Ranger (CVA/CV-61) circa 1976



Capt. Nick with Gary Kerans (Left) and Al Gorthy (Right) in Pismo Beach, CA this past November.

I do have a Capt Nick story. When I was the AE shop FNG I made my first boat det around May of '75. Fist berthing was on the mess deck, all the way aft. Beyond the after bulkhead was the ships' wake and open ocean. Anyway some GQ drill was sounded but one of the senior guys just said to "stand fast", and with Material Condition Z set we sat down to play Spades. Some time later, say an hour, the starboard hatch was opened and in walked some Khaki "O" types. One of them asked how we were doing and as we sat there some one said "just fine, Sir." Without a word they walked out. I asked one of the guys if he knew who they were and he said sure, one was the CO. No, wait, our CO? No, the boat. At that point I just decided to concentrate on playing cards. Apparently things were a bit different in the "real" Navy than I had been led to believe. But, later on I would use that "stand fast" in '78 on the cherries in the line shack during my final boat det during a barricade evolution. After all, we had just been "killed" in the previous drill.

## FISTS AT EMBRY-RIDDLE COLLEGE, PRESCOTT AZ



During 11/2-4. Embry-Riddle students were out in force for a show and tell with the Fist pilots.



Left to right: LT Chad "Iris" Duncan, LT Charles "Wingnut" Wickware and LT Wesley "Trash Blaster" Perkins.



## MORE HOLIDAY TRADITIONS: EGG NOG Source: wikipedia



The origins, etymology, and the ingredients used to make original eggnog drinks are debated. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *nog* was "a kind of strong beer brewed in East Anglia". The first known use of the word "nog" was in 1693. Alternatively, *nog* may stem from *noggin*, a Middle English term for a small, carved wooden mug used to serve alcohol. However, the British drink was also called an *Egg Flip*, from the practice of "flipping" (rapidly pouring) the mixture between two pitchers to mix it.

Babson College professor Frederick Douglass Opie "wrote that the term is a combination of two colonial slang words — rum was referred to as grog and bartenders served it in small wooden mugs called noggins. The drink first became known as egg-n-grog and later as eggnog." The *Online Etymology Dictionary* states that the term "egg nog" is an American term introduced in 1775, consisting of the words "egg" and "nog", with "nog" meaning "strong ale". The first example of the term "eggnog" was in 1775, when Maryland clergyman and philologist Jonathan Boucher wrote a poem about the drink which was not published until 30 years after his death: "Fog-drams i' th' morn, or (better still) egg-nogg, / At night hot-suppings, and at mid-day, grogg, / My palate can regale..." The first printed use of the term appeared in the *New-Jersey Journal* of March 26, 1788, which referred to a young man drinking a glass of eggnog. An 1869 dictionary entry for "egg nog" defines it as a mixture of wine, spirits, eggs and sugar;

there is no mention of dairy products.

Culinary historians mostly agree eggnog originated from the early medieval British drink called posset, which was made with hot milk that was curdled with wine or ale and flavoured with spices. In the Middle Ages, posset was used as a cold and flu remedy. Posset was popular from medieval times to the 19th century. Eggs were added to some posset recipes; according to *Time* magazine, by the "...13th century, monks were known to drink a posset with eggs and figs." A 17th century recipe for "My Lord of Carlisle's Sack-Posset" uses a heated mixture of cream, whole cinnamon, mace, nutmeg, eighteen egg yolks, eight egg whites, and one pint of Sack wine (a fortified white wine related to sherry). At the end, sugar, ambergris and animal musk are stirred in. Posset was traditionally served in two-handled pots.

The drink crossed the Atlantic to the British colonies during the 18th century. Since brandy and wine were heavily taxed, rum was a cost-effective substitute. The inexpensive liquor, coupled with plentiful farm and dairy products available to colonists, helped the drink become very popular in America. When the supply of rum to the newly founded United States was reduced as a consequence of the American Revolutionary War, Americans turned to domestic whiskey, and eventually bourbon in particular, as a substitute. In places in the American colonies where even bourbon was too expensive, homemade moonshine spirits were added to eggnog. Eggnog "became tied to the holidays" when it was adopted in the United States in the 1700s. Eggnog "...seems to have been popular on both sides of the Atlantic" in the 18th century.

Records show that the first US President, George Washington, "...served an eggnog-like drink to visitors" which included "...rye whiskey, rum, and sherry." The President's recipe called for a variety of alcoholic beverages along with the dairy and egg ingredients: "One quart cream, one quart milk, one dozen tablespoons sugar, one pint brandy, 1/2 pint rye whiskey, 1/2 pint Jamaica rum, 1/4 pint sherry." The recipe instructs cooks to "mix [the] liquor first, then separate yolks and whites of eggs, add sugar to beaten yolks, mix well. Add milk and cream, slowly beating. Beat whites of eggs until stiff and fold slowly into mixture. Let set in cool place for several days. Taste frequently."

Isaac Weld, Junior, in his book *Travels Through the States of North America and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada*, during the years 1795, 1796, and 1797 (published in 1800) wrote: "The American travellers, before they pursued their journey, took a hearty draught each, according to custom, of egg-nog, a mixture composed of new milk, eggs, rum, and sugar, beat up together;..." In a similar way to how posset was drunk as a cold remedy in the Medieval era, there is evidence that eggnog was also used as a medical treatment. An 1892 scientific journal article proposes the use of eggnog to treat "grippe", commonly known as the "flu", along with ammonium chloride to treat the cough and quinine to cure the illness.

In the American South, eggnog is made with bourbon. Eggnog is called "coquito" in Puerto Rico, where rum and fresh coconut juice or coconut milk are used in its preparation. Mexican eggnog, also known as "rompope", was developed in Santa Clara. It differs from regular eggnog in its use of Mexican cinnamon and rum or grain alcohol. In Peru, eggnog is called "biblia con pisco", and it is made with a Peruvian pomace brandy called pisco. "German eggnog, called "biersuppe", is made with beer. "Eierpunsch is a German version of eggnog made with white wine", eggs, sugar, cloves, tea, lemon or lime juice and cinnamon. Another recipe dating from 1904 calls for eggs, lemon juice, sugar, white wine, water and rum. In Iceland, eggnog "...is served hot as a dessert."

So much for a brief history of this classic Holiday Drink. Americans have a love-it-or-hate-it relationship with egg nog, as they do with fruit cake. There is no "middle of the road" option on either. For myself I drink egg nog beginning in November and carry right on with it through January, but I don't add alcohol to it. I've tried it with brandy, rum and whisky and it's just not to my taste but, to each his own.



Earlier this year I challenged the Squadron to come up with some original poetry for this years final page of the Holiday Edition. Below is the information of the the two sailors whose combined thoughts and feelings are so eloquently shared.

YN1 Jazsme Harrison: I am 25 and from Detroit, MI

I joined to create a better life for my family and I, to further my education, and to follow in my father's footsteps in serving our country. While in the Navy, I plan to become a LDO/CWO and make a difference. Once I get out, I plan to become an early education teacher and then open my own daycare.

CS2 Michael Allen: I am 35 and from Webster, TX

I joined because I wanted to change my life. While in the Navy my goals are to succeed, excel, and do great things. Once I get out, I plan to open my own business.



"Memories"

I see you when I close my eyes,  
With endless memories painted in my dreams.  
My tears never fall even though you hear my cries,  
But my ship still sails although it never rains.

These silent nights echo in my mind,  
As the holiday cheer around me seem to fade.  
I bide my time, yet with some to unwind,  
Taking the helm yet another day.

Drawn into one, days turn into nights  
As I lay awake thinking of my forward fight  
One day it will be over and I will see myself in your arms  
But until that day comes - I must keep my country out of harm.

"Sleep Tight"

Day in and day out  
Our Sailors lead this cold fight  
Sleep tight and don't worry



**NEXT TIME IN FISTORY: CARRIER AIR GROUP TWO**

VT-17

VA-6B

VA-65

VA-25

VFA-25

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