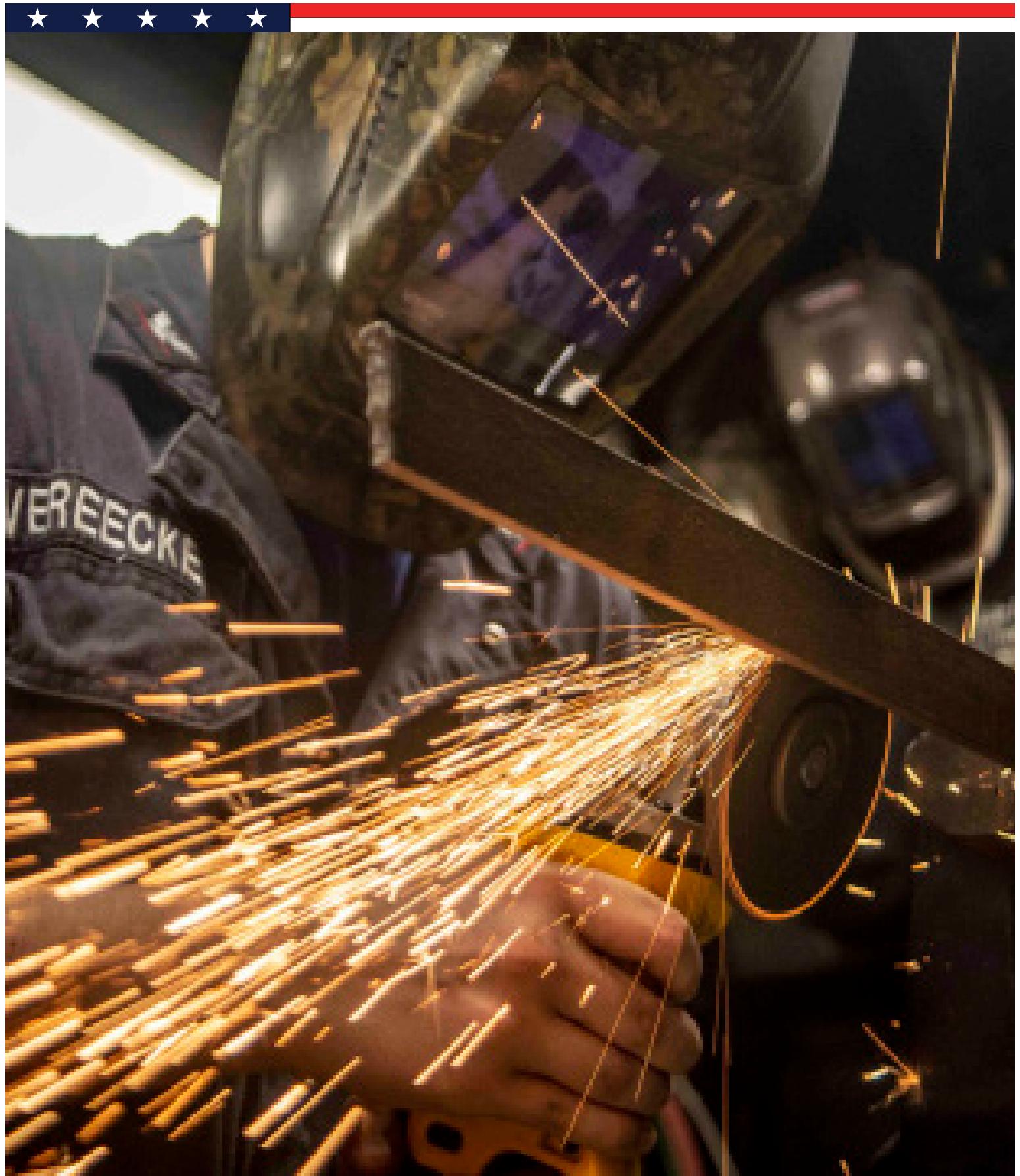


# TAKE NOTICE



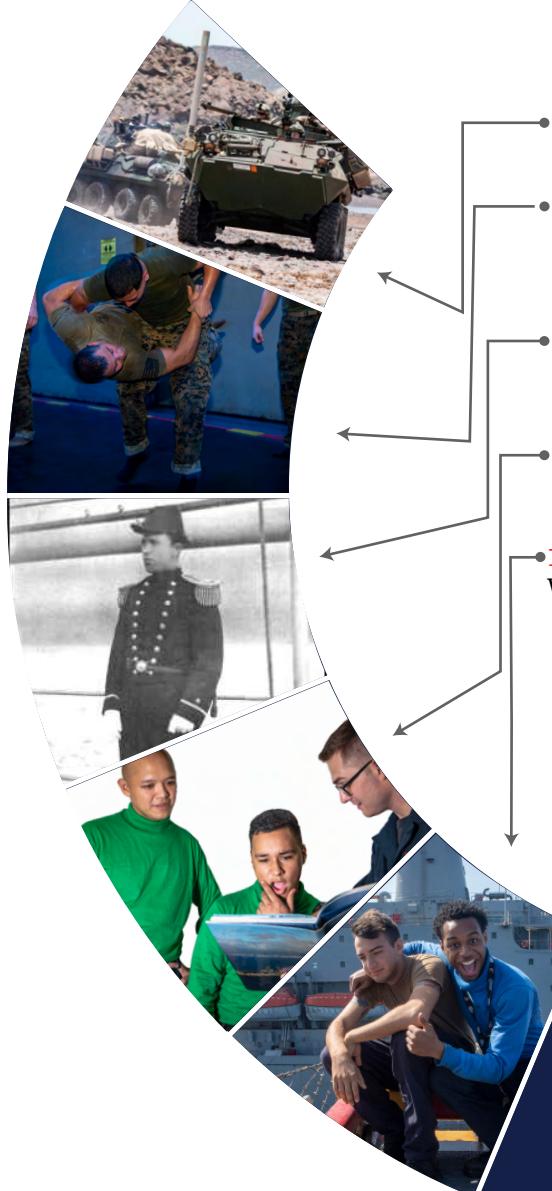
The Voice of the Iron Gator

28 February, 2019



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*in this edition*



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**Executive Officer**  
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# Essex ARG Completes TACR

**By MC2 Chandler Harrell**

The Essex Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) completed Theater Amphibious Campaign Rehearsal (TACR) 2018 Sept. 25 in the Gulf of Aden.

TACR is a joint amphibious exercise consisting of more than 150 ship-to-shore operations involving the ARG, which includes Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 1 as well as 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3), and Task Force 51/5. Troops were brought to the coast of Djibouti where they performed water- and land-based exercises ranging from live-fire events to visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) drills. These operations were designed to support the professional development of U.S. forces and qualify them for potential real-world operations in the 5th fleet area of responsibility (AOR).

"It was humbling to see the combat power that comes with a MEU," said Marine Corps Sgt. Tyvon Thomas, 3/1 Battalion Headquarters platoon sergeant. "Training in a foreign country left me with a feeling that we are prepared for anything we face."

The 13th MEU is the first combat-deployed MEU to replace the AV-8B Harrier with

the F-35B Lightning II in the AOR. This was the first time the F-35Bs participated in TACR. Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 211 performed air

TACR. "The Marines of VMFA-211 gained proficiency in loading ordnance, including their weapons as well as launching aircraft from the Essex day and

night. The F-35 pilots were able to practice close air support procedures bringing the full capability of the 5th generation platform."

TACR ensures U.S. forces are prepared to protect the stability and security of the region against non-state actors and terrorist activity. The exercise strengthens partnerships with local militaries and projects power to U.S. adversaries.

"We did an outstanding job across the board," said Navy Capt. Gerald Olin, commander PHIBRON 1. "The continued hard work and professionalism of our Sailors and Marines shows our commitment to our allies and sends a clear message to our adversaries that we are always ready."

The Essex ARG is a lethal, flexible and persistent Navy-Marine Corps team deployed in support of naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the Central Region, connecting the Mediterranean and the Pacific through the western Indian Ocean and three strategic choke points.



defense rehearsals, simulated close air support, deck-landing qualifications and combined-arms demonstrations.

"TACR was a great opportunity for the Marines of VMFA-211 to train for combat



operations," said Maj. Mark Dion, VMFA-211's safety officer and one of the pilots during

# WARRIORS OF THE DAY



*SGT Adams  
Clearwater, KS*



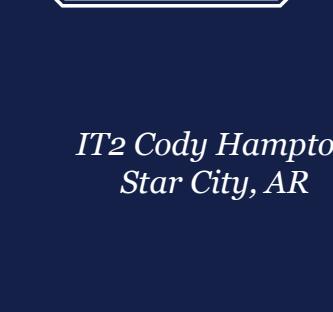
*CPL Rebeccah Brown  
Council Bluffs, IA*



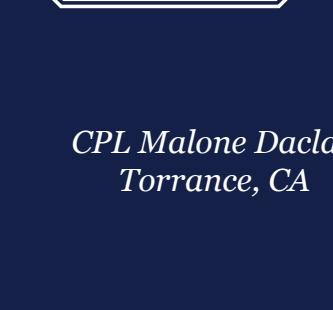
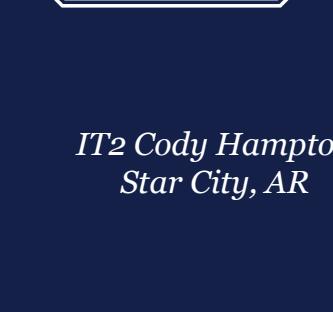
*LCPL Jeshua Nimmo  
Detroit, MI*



*CPL Malone Daclan  
Torrance, CA*



*HM3 Scott Geiger  
Cincinnati, OH*



*History and Heritage*

**1. When did the Navy first issue uniform regulations?**

**2. Who was the first Jewish officer?**

**3. When was the Medal of Honor authorized?**

**4. Who was the first Surgeon General of the Navy?**

**5. Who was the first African American to attend the Naval Academy?**

**5. James Henry Conyers in 1872**

**4. William M. Wood**

**3. 1861**

**2. Commodore Uriah Levy**

**1. February 1841**

**“Nothing  
matches a  
Sailor’s  
kiss  
coming  
back home  
where he  
belongs.”**

— Sameh Elsayed

*CPL Josiah Rodriguez  
Defiance, OH*



*HT3 Cassidy Flatt  
Des Moines, IA*



*SGT Travis Hurley  
Lexington, SC*



*AE3 Jacob Bell  
Baltimore, MD*

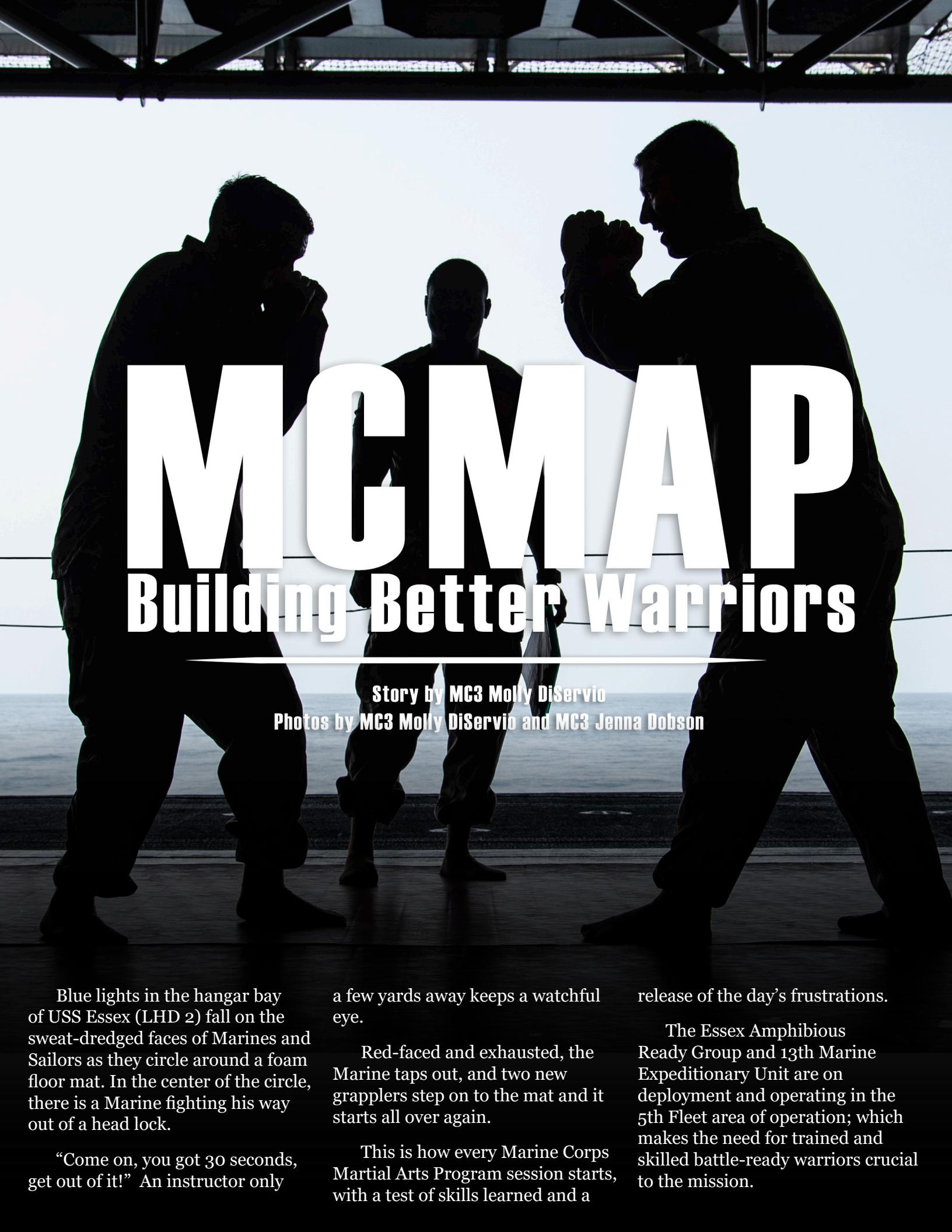


*CPL John Russ  
Port Huron, MI*



*ABHAN Julian Rodriguez  
Leesville, LA*





# MCMAP

## Building Better Warriors

Story by MC3 Molly DiServio

Photos by MC3 Molly DiServio and MC3 Jenna Dobson

Blue lights in the hangar bay of USS Essex (LHD 2) fall on the sweat-dredged faces of Marines and Sailors as they circle around a foam floor mat. In the center of the circle, there is a Marine fighting his way out of a head lock.

"Come on, you got 30 seconds, get out of it!" An instructor only

a few yards away keeps a watchful eye.

Red-faced and exhausted, the Marine taps out, and two new grapplers step on to the mat and it starts all over again.

This is how every Marine Corps Martial Arts Program session starts, with a test of skills learned and a

release of the day's frustrations.

The Essex Amphibious Ready Group and 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit are on deployment and operating in the 5th Fleet area of operation; which makes the need for trained and skilled battle-ready warriors crucial to the mission.

"The training helps teach control and discipline," said Sgt. Arianna Figueroa, a MCMAP instructor, assigned to Combat Landing Battalion 13. "Not everything needs to be full force when you get into a grapple or a fight. MCMAP teaches techniques to control anger and aggression."

According to the U.S Marine Corps Martial Arts Training Log, the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program consists of a belt ranking system that begins at Tan Belt and progresses up to 6th Degree Black Belt. Each belt level consists of specific techniques of the four components of the physical discipline; rifle & bayonet, edged weapons, weapons of opportunity and unarmed combat. Techniques begin with fundamentals and become more difficult as each level is reached.

The training log also states that each belt level has a corresponding number of mental and character discipline requirements that help develop the "Warrior Ethos" in conjunction with the increased levels of lethality. The ultimate goal for each of us should be to become a "Master-at-Arms," the epitome of the professional warrior.'

"The course provides Marines with a basic knowledge to use to defend themselves anytime in any place; especially from enemies and in combat zones," said Figueroa. "For example if we run out of ammunition all we have is our empty rifle and our two hands."

The program requires time investment and dedication. Each belt level has its own prerequisites and requirement to earn and move on to the next. Within two years of

each new belt, Marines are expected to move onto the next higher belt. Each stage focuses on more difficult skills and moves in the martial arts incorporated into the program: Brazilian jiu-jitsu, boxing, wrestling, karate, Muay Thai, Krav Maga, Taekwondo, kung fu and kick-boxing.



"The Marine Corps Martial Arts Program allows us to work and get to know our Marine brethren," said Navy Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Matthew Flint, a MCMAP participant. "We get to grapple and learn from each other creating a stronger unit, and the skills we learn make us a more effective fighting force."



The course puts emphasis on strengthening the mind as well as the body. This combination helps directly contribute to the overall

mission readiness of the individual and ultimately increasing the effectiveness of the entire fighting unit.

"The course provides training on a personal and mental level, as well as a physical one," said Flint. "It helps you build personal health and ethics to instill a more personal attitude on how to go about dealing with the enemy and the battlefield as a whole."

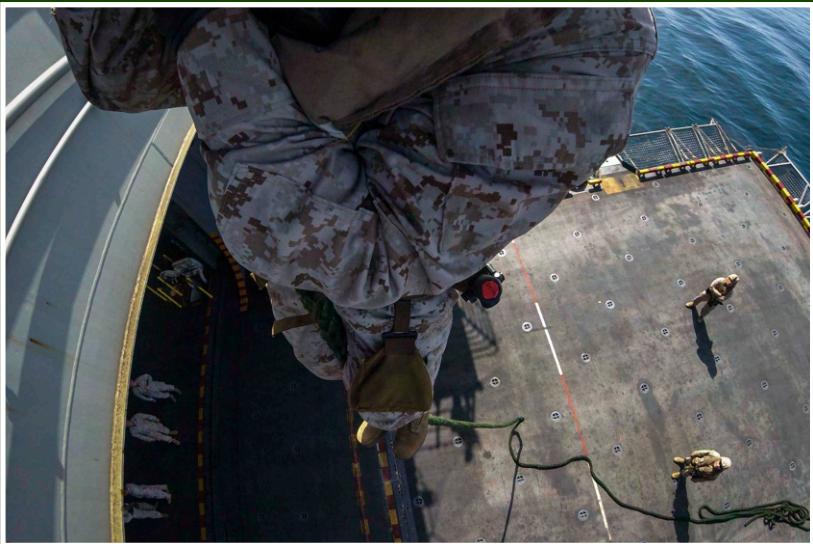
MCMAP incorporates training with focuses on warrior cultures of the past such as the Spartans, Zulu, Apache and the Marine Raiders from World War II. By studying these past cultures, service members participating in the program are able to connect past fundamentals to the present.

This allows for enhanced unit cohesion and increased self-worth.

"As a Corpsman and the only medical professionals in the field, the techniques we learn through MCMAP provide us another level of training to assist in the fight when needed," said Flint. "We need to know how to defend ourselves, so we aren't a liability to the Marines in our unit. The course enhances our confidence and ability to navigate the battlefield and defeat the enemies we encounter."

During the extent of the seven-month deployment, both Sailors and Marine will invest time into developing and mastering their skills in becoming better warriors. Service members gain increased self-esteem, mental discipline and personal pride, along with the martial arts skill and strength. The abilities learned during MCMAP go towards creating more battle ready, discipline, well-rounded Marines and Sailors.

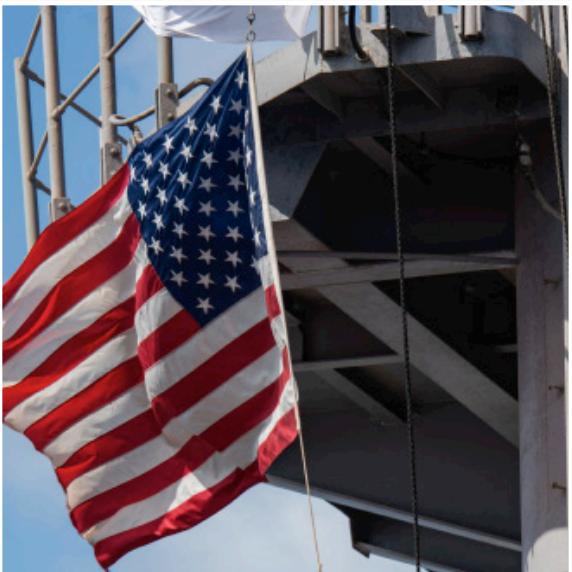
# THIS WEEK



# IN PHOTOS

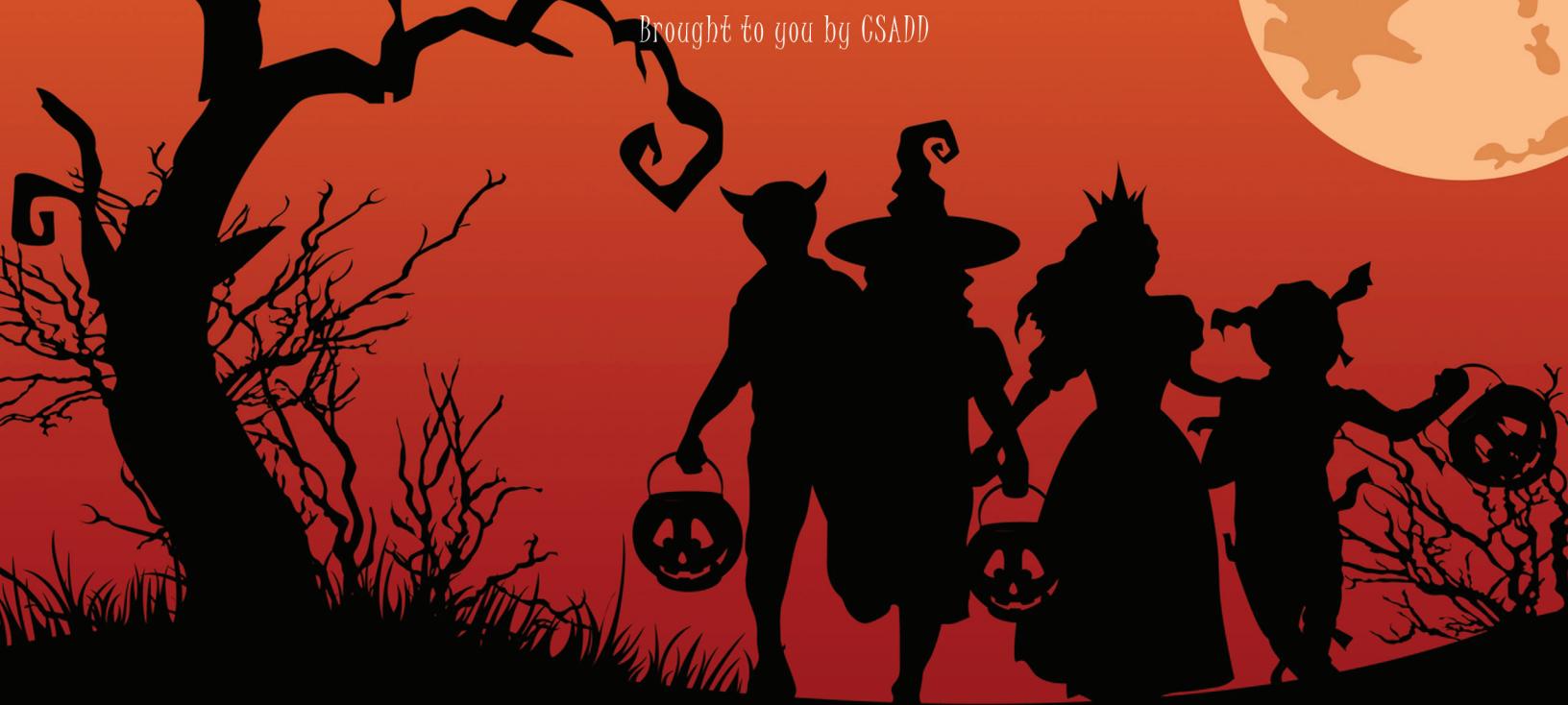


# THIS WEEK



# IN PHOTOS





Get Ready for the  
**Halloween Costume Contest**

Judging will be held before Trick or Treating

**Join the Bahrain Fun!**

Softball Game Nov. 6th @1800: Essex vs. NSA Bahrain

Basketball Game Nov. 7th @1800: Essex vs. NSA Bahrain

Soccer Game Nov. 8th @1800: Essex vs. NSA Bahrain

Essex Internal Softball Game Nov. 9th: Field reserved from 1400 - 2200

Basketball Single Elimination Tournament Nov. 10th @1300

*Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist*

# The Navy Jack

Hailing from Winona, Mississippi, William Devotie Billingsley ventured far away from home to attend the United States Naval Academy, graduating in the Class of 1909. An expert rifleman with a fondness for classic poetry, he made an impression on his classmates. "He has won his many friends by his constant good nature and ready sympathy," one of them wrote in the Lucky Bag, the Naval Academy yearbook. "When it comes to nerve and determination, Bill is right there—he doesn't know what the word 'can't' means."

Shortly after graduating from the Naval Academy, Devotie entered the new Navy flying program and reported to the Aviation Camp in Annapolis, Md. to train on the Navy-Wright B-2 aircraft on Dec. 2, 1912. He was designated "Aviator No. 9." On January 6, 1913, the aviation group went to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to train with fleet ships in scouting missions, searching for submarines, bombing runs, aerial photography and to accustom fleet personnel with working with aircraft. It was the first aviation base for Naval operations with the fleet. Earlier experiments with modifying aircraft into "hydroaeroplanes" had been going on since early 1911; that project was now extended to the B-2 biplane. In early spring of 1913, the aviation group returned to Annapolis.

On June 20, 1913, Devotie was piloting a Wright B-2 biplane with the pusher prop, rigged with pontoons which would allow water landings. Lt. John Towers, who had already proven himself an innovative pioneer in early Naval aviation, was Billingsley's passenger. The two sat at the leading edge of the wing; at that time, there were no seatbelts in use. It would prove ironic that the B-2 had been designed without the front canard, but was built with a rear elevator, unlike earlier Wright biplanes. The design was intended to give the aircraft "better longitudinal stability." It was in a trial run, bracketed by an aircraft in front, and one

to the rear for observation purposes. I don't know if either of the other aircraft were amphibs, or not. The following paragraph is taken from the Army Navy Journal dated June 28, 1913. It agrees with the family account:



"Ensign Billingsley, in a Wright biplane, B-2, that had been converted into a hydroplane by the addition of pontoons, with Lt. Towers as a passenger, started from the aviation camp in the morning at about ten for Claiborne, on the eastern side of the bay, eighteen miles from Annapolis. According to Lt. Towers and the observers on the other airplanes, the Billingsley craft hit an air

pocket and dropped abruptly, lurching forward and down, throwing Billingsley from the wing and through the forward supports, his body damaging the rigging to the point that the upper wing folded down, dooming the aircraft. Lt. Towers, also thrown from the airplane, luckily caught a strut or cable with his arm, and clung to the now-collapsed airplane as it plummeted toward the water, 1,600 feet below.

Devotie's father, William Devotie Billingsley, would for years sit in his Mississippi home and relate the details of his son's demise, telling how Devotie's body spiraled around and around as he fell toward the river. He would indicate the spiraling death fall with his hand before holding his face in his hands and mourning his great loss.

Lt. Towers rode the damaged plane almost to the water. The plane, at first taking a steep nose-dive, swooped to a level attitude a couple of times as it descended, then resumed its precipitous decline. Just before it impacted the river, the wreckage leveled out enough for Towers to push himself clear, and fall to the water.

The early aviators were brave and daring men, and no doubt knew there were high risks involved. The Navy, in appreciation of Devotie Billingsley's sacrifice, named a destroyer after him. In March, 1920, the USS Billingsley, DD-293, was commissioned.



USS Billingsley, named for William Billingsley, one of the first Navy pilots, Naval Aviator No. 9, was launched 10 December 1919 by Bethlehem Steel Corporation, Squantum, Massachusetts; sponsored by Miss Irene Billingsley, sister

of Ensign Billingsley; and commissioned 1 March 1920, Commander H. D. Cooke in command. Billingsley joined Destroyer Force, Atlantic Fleet, in operations along the east coast and in the Caribbean until the summer of 1920 when she made Naval Reserve training cruises. In reserve until June 1922, she then joined Division 26, Squadron 9, Destroyer Force, at Philadelphia. She cruised along the Atlantic coast until June 1924, when Division 26 joined United States Naval Forces Europe. Billingsley cruised in European and Mediterranean waters for the next year and assisted

refugees in the Near East. In summer 1924 she acted as plane guard for the North Atlantic crossing of the Army "Around-the-World Flight." Later in the year she returned home and resumed her routine activities along the east coast until the summer of 1929 when she again made Naval Reserve cruises. Billingsley reported to Philadelphia Navy Yard in September 1929; was decommissioned 1 May 1930; and sold 17 January 1931. The Clemson class was a repeat of the preceding Wickes class although more fuel capacity was added. They had a crew of 6 officers and 108 enlisted men.

Performance differed radically between the ships of the class, often due to poor workmanship. The Clemson class was powered by two steam turbines, each driving one propeller shaft, using steam provided by four water-tube boilers. The turbines were designed to produce a total of 27,000 shaft horsepower (20,000 kW) intended to reach a speed of 35 knots (65 km/h; 40 mph). The ships carried a maximum of 371 long tons (377 t) of fuel oil which was intended gave them a range of 2,500 nautical miles (4,600 km; 2,900 mi) at 20 knots (37 km/h; 23 mph).

# Marine F-35Bs Fly First-Ever Strike Missions Against ‘Fixed Targets’ in Afghanistan

*By Joseph Trevithick  
September 27, 2018*



U.S. Marine Corps F-35Bs, attached to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 211, have claimed the title of being the first American Joint Strike Fighters to fly actual combat missions with strikes against unspecified “fixed targets” in Afghanistan. These sorties came after the same jets flew surveillance and reconnaissance missions off the coast of Somalia with full combat loads, poised to strike in that country, if necessary.

CNN was first to report the strikes in Afghanistan, which came on Sept. 27, 2018. The U.S. military has declined to say how many aircraft in total took part in the mission, exactly what munitions they employed, or any specifics about the targets themselves. CNN’s sources described the mission’s objective as “a fixed Taliban target.”

The Marines declared they had reached initial operational capability with the F-35B in 2015 and forward deployed the aircraft to Japan for the first time in 2017. In March 2018, a detachment of the stealth fighters joined the first-in-class amphibious assault ship USS Wasp and her Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) for their first-ever deployment as part of a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). Then, in July 2018, another six jets, from VMFA-211, joined the Wasp-class USS Essex and her ARG as part of the 13th MEU, ahead of a routine cruise that would take them to the Horn of Africa and the Middle East.

On Sept. 25, 2018, CNN reported that the Essex’s ARG had moved or was moving into the Persian Gulf. That same story said that strikes in Afghanistan could be imminent.

The most logical course of action would have been for some of the U.S. Air Force’s substantial aerial

refueling assets based in the Middle East to have supported the operation, helping the F-35Bs fly from the Persian Gulf into the Gulf of Oman, before proceeding into the Indian Ocean and then sending the jets zipping across Pakistan on their way to Afghanistan. In 2017, the Air Force sent a detachment of KC-135 tankers back into Afghanistan proper for the first time in nearly five years to support a surge in aerial operations against the Taliban and other militant groups.

Those aircraft could have then supported the Joint Strike Fighters before and after the strikes and sent them on their way back to the Persian Gulf. It is also possible that the F-35Bs landed at a base in Afghanistan to refuel.

One of the pictures the Marines subsequently released from the mission showed crews loading GPS-guided Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) bombs onto the aircraft, which would be well suited to strike “fixed” targets. Another image of VMFA-211’s jets on board Essex on Sept. 22, 2018, had shown crews loading live laser-guided 500-pound class GBU-12/B Paveway II bombs onto at least one aircraft around the time they were flying missions near Somalia.

There are bound to be questions about the utility of using the stealth fighters for this mission, especially given the permissive nature of the air combat environment in Afghanistan that in no way requires the expensive jet’s advanced defensive features. The employment of U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor stealth fighters for similar low-risk strikes in Afghanistan has drawn criticism, including from that service’s own top civilian official. “We should not be using an F-22 to destroy a narcotics factory,” Secretary

of the Air Force Heather Wilson said in June 2018.

At the same time, the Marines continue to push to further integrate the F-35B into their day-to-day operations as they move to replace all of their fixed-wing combat jets with the Joint Strike Fighters. As such, the service will increasingly have no alternative but to use the aircraft for typical combat missions, no matter how mundane.

These strikes in Afghanistan have given the Corps a valuable opportunity to go through the motions of an actual combat mission for the first time, but with minimal risk. This will help inform future development of tactics, techniques, and procedures for future operations. The Marines have probably been eager to put their Joint Strike Fighters into action since Israel announced it had become the first country to ever send an F-35 into combat in May 2018.

#### **Update: 3:20pm EST—**

U.S. Naval Forces Central Command has released an additional statement about the mission via U.S. Central Command, describing the strikes as “in support of ground clearance operations.” It does not offer any additional detail about the target or targets the F-35Bs engaged in Afghanistan.

However, U.S. Central Command public affairs officer told The War Zone in a phone call that the Marine jets flew “close air support” missions in support of personnel on the ground. American combat jets do strike fixed targets, such as emplaced heavy weapons or enemy forces situated inside a building, as part of close air support missions.



*"The gear in the hangar bay is used  
for the support of aircraft and not  
support for your rear end. Do not sit  
on the gear!" AS1 Boraby.*





# THE FACES OF IM04



"My crew makes this job all the more rewarding. They do a great job at training and helping the junior Sailors and Marines progress." **ASAN Alaniz.**

The Sailors and Marines assigned to Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department IM04 have a big mission. SUPPORT OUR WARFIGHTERS!

This is even more apparent as the embarked Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II aircraft made its combat debut with successful air strikes in Afghanistan.

***"Flight quarters cannot continue if certain pieces of gear are non-operational. What we provide is important and sets us apart from other divisions around the ship," said ASAN Alaniz.***

IM04 provides support equipment for aircraft and flight operations. Providing scheduled and unscheduled maintenance on 1,250 support equipment assets in direct support of the mission.

***"Aircraft cannot fly without support from IM04 division. NO AIR SUPPORT WITHOUT GROUND SUPPORT!" said AS1 Boraby.***



# AROUND THE DECKPLATES

## WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST OBSTACLE ON DEPLOYMENT?



"Getting to work on time. I set my clock 15 minutes fast.... But I'm still trying to overcome that one."



"Staying mentally stable. I go to the gym and music."



"Wranglers..."

-FN Cole George &  
FN Robert O'Brian  
Huntsville, AL &  
Dallas, TX



"Motivating Sailors to keep a positive attitude after the deployment extension."

-LT Lameron Williams  
Atlanta, GA



"Relying on our brothers and sisters during hard times. Being at sea for long periods we understand the foundations that were set before us, we understand what was done and appreciate the sacrifice that was done so we can live a better life, and we carry on that traditions."



"Other Sailor's Negative attitudes. I talked to them about how their poor attitudes affect everyone else's day. I helped them find something to help them distress and be more positive."

-ABFAN Londyn Soileau  
Lake Charles, LA

- OS3 Richard Dewayne  
Leesville, LA

-GySgt Michael Medina  
San Fernando, CA

-ET2 Catarina Terry  
Lebanon, IL

# Sampaga's Joke Corner

Why is the barn so noisy?

Because the cows have horns.

How is Christmas like your job?

In the suit gets all the credit.

You do all the work and the fat guy

Don't break anybody's heart; they only have 1.

Break their bones; they have 206.

When pregnant women swim, they become human submarines.



Submit your jokes to  
[jenna.dobson@lhd2.navy.mil](mailto:jenna.dobson@lhd2.navy.mil)



# DON'T FORGET TO REMOVE YOUR CAC!

*Think before you remove  
your CAC card!*



**PROTECT YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY, YOUR SHIPMATES!  
OPSEC ONLY TAKES A MINUTE!**