

## **STRIKE FIGHTER SQUADRON FOURTEEN (VFA-14) RECEIVES SECRETARY OF THE NAVY 2010 SAFETY EXCELLENCE AWARD, NAVY ACTIVE DUTY AVIATION**

The Honorable Robert O. Work, Under Secretary of the Navy, presented the 2010 Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Safety Excellence Award, Navy Active Duty Aviation to Strike Fighter Squadron FOURTEEN (VFA-14), at the 4 October 2010 awards ceremony. The ceremony was held at the Navy Memorial and Naval Heritage Center Theater, Washington, DC. Receiving the award on behalf of VFA-14 was Commanding Officer CDR Mark Weisgerber, LCDR Mike Kampfe, CMDCM Brian Page, AT1 Alan Carmona, and AM1 Israel Concepcion.



From left to right are: BG Gary L. Thomas (Assistant Deputy Commandant for Aviation), The Honorable Jackalyne Pfannestiel (Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Energy, Installations & Environment)), AM1 Israel Concepcion, LCDR Mike Kampfe, AT1 Alan Carmona, The Honorable Robert O. Work (Under Secretary of the Navy), CDR Mark Weisgerber (Strike Fighter Squadron Fourteen Commanding Officer), CMDCM Brian Page, and VADM John Bird (Director, Navy Staff).

The Safety Excellence Awards were established in 2002, by The Honorable Gordon R. England, who twice served as Secretary of the Navy. The awards recognize Navy and Marine Corps commands that demonstrate “extraordinary excellence by sustained mission success with simultaneous exemplary safety performance.” In addition to a citation and plaque, SECNAV Excellence Award

winners receive the Secretary's distinctive safety flag. They are entitled to fly the flag for one year from the date of presentation.

Strike Fighter Squadron FOURTEEN was in competition with every active duty Navy squadron. CDR Weisgerber emphasizes the importance of a safe work environment in his mission statement: "Tophatters [nickname of squadron members] work together as a Team across all work centers to provide mission capable aircraft and fully trained aircrew. We do this in a flexible and adaptable manner that emphasizes risk management at all levels in order to meet the unforeseen challenges and operating environments characteristic of today's Naval service."



An F/A-18E Super Hornet assigned to the Tophatters of Strike Fighter Squadron 14 launches from the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68). Photo: Specialist Seaman Apprentice Andrew Jandik Released)

Some of the 2009 safety successes that led to the command's selection, include:

- An impressive record of aviation safety, flying 7,434 extremely high tempo, completely mishap-free hours, including 2,962 combat hours and nearly 2,700 carrier arrests.
- Proven dedication to aviation safety by submitting three safety articles for publication and seven aviation hazards reports despite the high tempo of this period.
- Raising safety situational awareness by publishing a weekly safety bulletin, sponsorship of a squadron-wide Safety Pro program, effective use of enlisted safety and human factors councils, and proactive safety stand-downs to ensure constant safety awareness by all hands.

This praise comes shortly after the Tophatters accepted the 2009 Chief of Naval Operations Aviation Safety Award. "I'm really proud of the Tophatter Team; we worked hard," said AT1 Carmona. "I think that the safety environment that is in our command is a by-product of our professionalism."

For more information on this success story, please contact the Squadron's Public Affairs Officer at:

VFA-14 PAO  
Unit 60119  
FPO-AP 96601-6103