



# VP-68 Hawk's Nest



Volume No. 42

VP-68 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

September 2012

The Hawk's Nest is the official newsletter of the VP-68 Alumni Association, chartered in 1998 in the state of Maryland for the sole purpose of uniting in a central organization all former "Blackhawks" of Navy Patrol Squadron 68 (VP-68), it's parent and supporting Navy squadrons, and those interested in preserving the name and history of VP-68.  
Published Quarterly: 15 MAR - 15 JUN - 15 SEP - 15 DEC



(U.S. Navy photo Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Salt Cebe/Released)

**A P-8A Poseidon sits on the flight line at Naval Air Station Jacksonville.** (photo submitted by Nancy Yohn)

## 2012 "Fall Muster"

The annual VP-68 Alumni Association "Fall Muster" event will be held on Saturday, 13OCT2012 at the Large Pavilion on Navy Recreation Center (NRC) Solomons Island, MD.

NRC Solomons is a beautiful facility located about 65 miles Southeast of Washington D.C. and about 16 miles North of NAS Pax River near the confluence of the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay. The Large Pavilion (next to Club 9) is on the waterfront overlooking the Patuxent River, and it is a fantastic setting for our event.

See "Fall Muster" on page 2

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## 2012 Election of Officers

In accordance with our Association Bi-laws: 1) every two years we must conduct elections for the offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer and 2) only Alumni Association members currently paid and in good standing are eligible to vote.

The ballot is now closed. Dick Fickling and Joe Odenthal will be conducting the election (for the years of 2013 & 2014) during our business meeting at the 13OCT12 Fall Muster.

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## Association Treasurer

**Temporarily, President Jacque LaValle will assume the duties of Association Treasurer until the elections at our business meeting at the Fall Muster. All payments and correspondence are to be done through Jacque.**

See details on page 22

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## NAF Washington "Blackhawk" P-3



Naval Air Facility Washington at Andrews AFB has taken delivery of a decommissioned P-3 Orion and is currently setting it up as a permanent static display at the Quarterdeck. The aircraft will be painted with VP-68 Blackhawk markings.

Originally the dedication was set for 01OCT2012 but now is tentatively set for Sunday, 14OCT2012. Possibly RADM Jeff Lemmons, our last C.O., will be the guest speaker.

As soon as we receive confirmed information & details about the dedication we will post it on our website at:

[www.vp68.org](http://www.vp68.org)

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## Corrections & Clarifications:

I have since replaced it, but on page 7 of the Volume 41 - July 2012 issue, I show the Cruise group photo where I listed Fred & Judy Harris (I have absolutely no idea who Fred and Judy Harris are!!) It should have been **Fred & Judy Haynes**. Sorry Fred and Judy! Spell-check didn't catch that...my computer should have a "dementia-check" button!!  
And, if Fred & Judy Harris DO EXIST...join our Association!!

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## Fall Muster (continued)

### Bi-Laws Ammendment

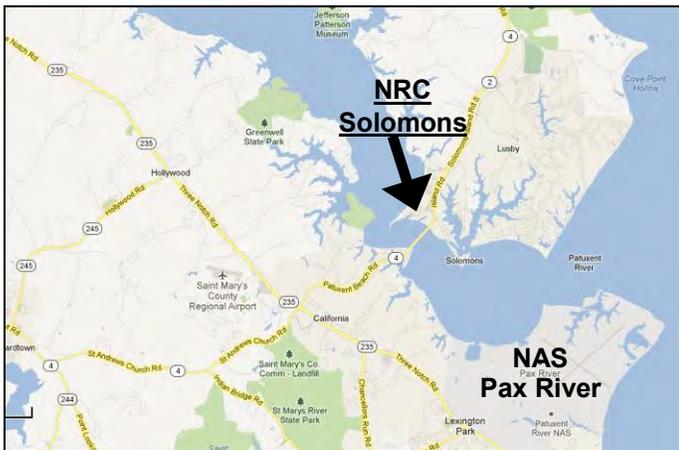
( submitted by Dick Fickling )

At our business meeting in October we will be voting on the below proposed amendment to Section 5-7 of our VP-68 Alumni Association Bi-Laws addressing temporary officer appointments. After this vote we will post the complete Alumni Association Bi-Laws on our website.

**CURRENT SECTION 5-7:** The President, with the concurrence of the Board of Directors, may elect to combine the duties of officers when dictated by the availability of personnel.

**PROPOSED SECTION 5-7:** The current officers, with the concurrence of the Board of Directors, may appoint someone that is qualified to fill the unexpired term of an officer vacancy for a period of six months or less, or until an election is held at the next scheduled Alumni Association event. The appointee or other qualified candidate shall be formally elected at that time.

## The Picnic



### **Navy Recreation Center (NRC) Solomons**

This is the facility where we held our 2008 Pig Roast Fall Muster and the 2009 Grilled Steak Fall Muster.

**Grilled Steaks again this year!!**

*( Thanks Tim Humphries )*

**COST: PICNIC LUNCH = \$0 FREE**  
**STEAK DINNER = \$10 per person**

**( Purchase Steak Dinner tickets at the sign-in table )**

## Planned Schedule

### **SATURDAY, 13OCT12: PAVILION ( next to Club "9" )**

1100-1200 Board of Directors & Officers Meeting  
1200-1300 Picnic Lunch served & Blackhawk Socializing  
(hot dogs, burgers, sodas & munchies provided)  
(\* BYOB, coolers & ice \*)  
1600-1700 Business meeting  
1700-1800 Grilled Steak Dinner & "fixins" served  
1800-2300 More Blackhawk Socializing  
(\* VP-68 Alumni Association does **NOT** serve or provide any alcoholic beverages at our functions. (\*))

## REMINDERS:

- 1) Bring your own alcoholic drinks, coolers and **ICE!**  
(\* VP-68 Alumni Association does **NOT** serve or provide any alcoholic beverages at our functions. (\*))
- 2) Bring those photo albums and some VP-68 memorabilia.
- 3) Remember to bring those Military ID cards for base access.

## Questions ???

contact Wyman Bailey at 1-410-960-2008 OR

[baileymod@msn.com](mailto:baileymod@msn.com)

## Lodging

For those of you who might desire to stay on base, NRC Solomons billeting accommodations include:

6 Classic Cottages	7 Contemporary Cottages
5 Log Cabin Duplexes	4 Cozy Cabins
21 Bungalows	15 Apartments
2 "Yurts"	14 group campsites
55 primitive campsites	146 complete hookup sites
158 electric & water only sites	

Photos and information are located on the NRC website. Billeting rates are based on rank and since the event is occurring "Off-Season", rates are even more attractive.

Make your lodging reservations to NRC at:

[www.cnic.navy.mil/solomons/index.htm](http://www.cnic.navy.mil/solomons/index.htm)

Lodging & Reservations – Bldg. 411  
13855 Solomons Island Road  
Solomons, MD 20688  
800-NAVY230  
410-286-7301  
410-326-4280 fax

We are encouraging folks to make lodging reservations at the Rec. Center to eliminate driving. There will be plenty of partying and fun the entire weekend...stay for it! Should you not be able to get lodging there, here are some local motels:

<b>Navy Lodge</b> NAS Patuxent River Patuxent River, MD 20670 301-737-2400	<b>Comfort Inn Beacon Marina</b> 255 Lore Road Solomons, MD 20688 410-326-6303
<b>Holiday Inn Select</b> 155 Holiday Drive Solomons, MD 20688 410-326-6311	<b>Sleep Inn &amp; Suites</b> 23428 Three Notch Road California, MD 20619 301-737-0000
<b>Super 8 Motel</b> 22801 Three Notch Road California, MD 20619 301-862-9822	<b>Hampton Inn</b> 22211 Three Notch Road Lexington Park, MD 20653 301-863-3200
<b>Days Inn (Old Belvedere)</b> 21847 Three Notch Road Lexington Park, MD 20653 301-863-6666	<b>Fairfield Inn by Marriott</b> 22119 Three Notch Road Lexington Park, MD 20653 301-863-0203

**SEE Y'ALL AT THE FALL MUSTER!!**

## **Blackhawk People News**

### **Taps**

#### **Donald C. Caldwell Sr.**

We are saddened to report the passing of another Blackhawk. Donald C. Caldwell Sr. (L-02) of Baltimore, MD. passed away on Friday, August 10, 2012 of a sudden heart attack.

Don loved working at NAVAIR and being a Blackhawk of VP-68. Don was also very active with the Jack Kosko's Aircraft Restoration Facility. One of the coworkers there noted that Don's legacy will continue to live on through the planes that he loved to work on and the thousands of people who will see the results of his work in the years to come.



Don was well known for his stories of his Navy career and in particular the PBM Flying Boats.

Our sincere condolences go out to Don's family who suggest contributions in Don's name to the Glen L Martin Maryland Aviation Museum, P.O. Box 5024, Middle River, MD 21220

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

### **Fair Winds & Following Seas Shipmate**

#### **President Jacque LaValle**

On 17SEP12, Association President Jacque LaValle had a right coronary artery stent inserted to relieve a blood flow blockage to his heart. He's back home but says he feels like a P-3 going through a SLEP!! On October 1<sup>st</sup> his wife Chris is scheduled for knee replacement surgery. Our prayers and well wishes for a speedy recovery go out to both Jacque and Chris.

#### **Nick Cercone**

On 05OCT12, Nick Cercone's son Brandon will be commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Air Force at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama.

Brandon has been a member and drilling with the Air Force Pennsylvania Air National Guard, 171<sup>st</sup> Air Refueling Wing at Greater Pittsburgh Airport. He has been on several overseas deployments and recently completed his requirements to transfer from enlisted to officer. After commissioning, Brandon leaves for Texas and pilot training for the Air Force KC-135 Tanker.

Nick has the honor of pinning Brandon's bars on and was requested to be in his Navy uniform. The commissioning ceremony has a formal dining the night before and Nick noted how much his CPO uniform has "shrunk" since the last time he wore it. We laughed about the thought of having to go to a maternity shop and get "stretch panels" sewn into the uniform!!

Nick and Lynn are extremely proud of Brandon's hard work and perseverance in achieving this accomplishment and also of his military career. Congratulations Brandon!!  
Champion, pa

#### **Kathy Wright**

On our Blackhawk Carnival Cruise in April, Kathy had the pleasure of dining with Mr. Chuck Hartman, a distinguished WWII veteran and his wife Joanne. Kathy noticed a very worn pair of pilot wings on his Retired Air Force ballcap. Chuck referred to himself as the "oldest retired 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant".

As they exchanged military stories he told her of his unique twist of fate of having to ditch his aircraft (one of four!) near a remote Philippine island and being rescued by the natives who hid him from the Japanese for months since the American Forces had not gotten to that area yet. He became very popular with them and actually became a bit of folklore.

Recently in casual conversation being treated by a doctor he mentioned his "visit" to the Philippines and here the doctor said that he was from that island and remembered hearing stories of Chuck as the celebrity airman that his village saved.



Here Kathy presents Chuck with her Senior Chief Anchor so, as she puts it..."he could have some "Navy" on his cover!"

She is in contact with Chuck who has promised to share more details of the story with us and we will publish it in a future Hawk's Nest. These amazing WWII vets are disappearing and their awesome stories are going with them.

Thank you Chuck, we look forward to your story.

#### **"Cruise" News**

( submitted by Wyman Bailey )

Thank y'all for the many compliments about the VP-68 Blackhawk Carnival Cruise. All of you who sailed with us this past spring wanted to know "when are we doing it again?"

Well....Kay and I go on cruises regularly and this fall we went on one that spent two days tied to the pier in Hamilton, Bermuda. I said to myself..."Self....great place for Blackhawks to revisit". and upon our return I contacted Tradewinds Travel again and got some information about Bermuda cruises.

At the Fall Muster I hope to have some details about some possibilities for another Blackhawk Cruise next year. If there is enough interest...maybe we can sail again next year.

## **Russian Subs**

( submitted by Brad Kirley )

( *Wally Chance says: Russian subs are much easier to find now than when we were looking for them...ha-ha! See below article...we never looked there for them!!* )



Typhoon Sub at Severodvinsk Beach

## **Russian Sub in Gulf of Mexico undetected for weeks!**

( submitted by Nick Schaus & Brad Kirley )

**Russian attack submarine sailed in Gulf of Mexico undetected for weeks, U.S. officials say**



Russian Akula Submarine

14 AUG 2012: A Russian nuclear-powered attack submarine armed with long-range cruise missiles operated undetected in the Gulf of Mexico for several weeks and its travel in strategic U.S. waters was only confirmed after it left the region, the *Washington Free Beacon* has learned. It is only the second time since 2009 that a Russian attack submarine has patrolled so close to U.S. shores.

The stealth underwater incursion in the Gulf took place at the same time Russian strategic bombers made incursions into restricted U.S. airspace near Alaska and California in June and July, and highlights a growing military assertiveness by Moscow. The submarine patrol also exposed what U.S. officials said were deficiencies in U.S. anti-submarine warfare capabilities—forces that are facing cuts under the Obama administration's plan to reduce defense spending by \$487 billion over the next 10 years.

The Navy is in charge of detecting submarines, especially those that sail near U.S. nuclear missile submarines, and uses undersea sensors and satellites to locate and track them. The fact that the Akula was not detected in the Gulf is cause for concern, U.S. officials said. The officials who are familiar with reports of the submarine patrol in the Gulf of Mexico said the vessel was a nuclear-powered Akula-class attack submarine, one of Russia's quietest submarines. A Navy spokeswoman declined to comment. One official said the Akula operated without being detected for a month.

—The Akula was built for one reason and one reason only: To kill U.S. Navy ballistic missile submarines and their crews," said a second U.S. official. —It's a very stealthy boat so it can sneak around and avoid detection and hope to get past any protective screen a boomer might have in place," the official said, referring to the Navy nickname for strategic missile submarines.

The U.S. Navy operates a strategic nuclear submarine base at Kings Bay, Georgia. The base is homeport to eight missile-firing submarines, six of them equipped with nuclear-tipped missiles, and two armed with conventional warhead missiles.

—Sending a nuclear-propelled submarine into the Gulf of Mexico-Caribbean region is another manifestation of President Putin demonstrating that Russia is still a player on the world's political-military stage," said naval analyst and submarine warfare specialist Norman Polmar. —Like the recent deployment of a task force led by a nuclear cruiser into the Caribbean, the Russian Navy provides him with a means of 'showing the flag' that is not possible with Russian air and ground forces," Polmar said in an email.

The last time an Akula submarine was known to be close to U.S. shores was 2009, when two Akulas were spotted patrolling off the east coast of the United States. Those submarine patrols raised concerns at the time about a new Russian military assertiveness toward the United States, according to the *New York Times*, which first reported the 2009 Akula submarine activity.

The latest submarine incursion in the Gulf further highlights the failure of the Obama administration's "reset" policy of conciliatory actions designed to develop closer ties with Moscow. Instead of closer ties, Russia under President Vladimir Putin, an ex-KGB intelligence officer who has said he wants to restore elements of Russia's Soviet communist past, has adopted growing hardline policies against the United States.

Of the submarine activity, Sen. John Cornyn (R., Texas), member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said, —It's a confounding situation arising from a lack of leadership in our dealings with Moscow. While the president is touting our supposed 'reset' in relations with Russia, Vladimir Putin is actively working against American interests, whether it's in Syria or here in our own backyard."

The Navy is facing sharp cuts in forces needed to detect and counter such submarine activity. The Obama administration's defense budget proposal in February cut \$1.3 billion from Navy shipbuilding projects, which will result in scrapping plans to build 16 new warships through 2017. The budget also called for cutting plans to buy 10 advanced P-8 anti-submarine warfare jets needed for submarine detection.

In June, Russian strategic nuclear bombers and support aircraft conducted a large-scale nuclear bomber exercise in the arctic. The exercise included simulated strikes on "enemy" strategic sites that defense officials say likely included notional attacks on U.S. missile defenses in Alaska. Under the terms of the 2010 New START arms accord, such exercises require 14-day advanced notice of strategic bomber drills, and notification after the drills end. No such notification was given.

A second, alarming air incursion took place July 4 on the West Coast when a Bear H strategic bomber flew into U.S. airspace near California and was met by U.S. interceptor jets. That incursion was said to have been a bomber incursion that has not been seen since before the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

(continued on page 5)

**Russian Subs (continued)**

It could not be learned whether the submarine in the Gulf of Mexico was an Akula 1 type submarine or a more advanced Akula 2. It is also not known why the submarine conducted the operation. Theories among U.S. analysts include the notion that submarine incursion was designed to further signal Russian displeasure at U.S. and NATO plans to deploy missile defenses in Europe.

Russia's chief of the general staff, Gen. Nikolai Makarov, said in May that Russian forces would consider preemptive attacks on U.S. and allied missile defenses in Europe, and claimed the defenses are destabilizing in a crisis. Makarov met with Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in July. Dempsey questioned him about the Russian strategic bomber flights near U.S. territory.

The voyage of the submarine also could be part of Russian efforts to export the Akula. Russia delivered one of its Akula-2 submarines to India in 2009. The submarine is distinctive for its large tail fin. Brazil's O Estado de Sao Paulo reported Aug. 2 that Russia plans to sell Venezuela up to 11 new submarines, including one Akula.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Moscow's military is working to set up naval replenishment facilities in Vietnam and Cuba, but denied there were plans to base naval forces in those states. Asked if Russia planned a naval base in Cuba, Lavrov said July 28: "We are not speaking of any bases. The Russian navy ships serve exercise cruises and training in the same regions. To harbor, resupply, and enable the crew to rest are absolutely natural needs. We have spoken of such opportunities with our Cuban friends." The comment was posted in the Russian Foreign Ministry website.

Russian warships and support vessels were sent to Venezuela in 2008 to take part in naval exercises in a show of Russian support for the leftist regime of Hugo Chavez. The ships also stopped in Cuba.

Russian Deputy Premier Dmitri Rogozin announced in February that Russia was working on a plan to build 10 new attack submarines and 10 new missile submarines through 2030, along with new aircraft carriers. Submarine warfare specialists say the Akula remains the core of the Russian attack submarine force. The submarines can fire both cruise missiles and torpedoes, and are equipped with the SSN-21 and SSN-27 submarine-launched cruise missiles, as well as SSN-15 anti-submarine-warfare missiles. The submarines also can lay mines. The SSN-21 has a range of up to 1,860 miles.

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**Hawk's Nest Feature**  
**Here's Why...# 5**

( submitted by Ed Stanfield - source: *Navy Times* )

Have you ever wondered why sailors shout "mayday, mayday" over airwaves during dire moments? Why do they say this word in times of crisis?

The term originates from the French "m'aidez" which translates to "help me."

Early on, troubled sea vessels just radioed in the distress call. The word became an officially recognized transmission in 1948 at an international telecommunications conference, according to the Naval History and Heritage Command.

**Ole Master Chief's Wedding**

( submitted by Vince Apostolico )

Ole retired Master Chief, age 92, and Rebecca, age 89, living in Miami, are all excited about their decision to get married. They go for a stroll to discuss the wedding, and on the way they pass a drugstore. Master Chief suggests they go in. Master Chief addresses the man behind the counter: "Are you the owner?" The pharmacist answers, "Yes."

Master Chief: "We're about to get married. Do you sell heart medication?"

Pharmacist: "Of course, we do."

Master Chief: "How about medicine for circulation?"

Pharmacist: "All kinds."

Master Chief: "Medicine for rheumatism?"

Pharmacist: "Definitely."

Master Chief: "How about suppositories?"

Pharmacist: "You bet!"

Master Chief: "Medicine for memory problems, arthritis and Alzheimer's?"

Pharmacist: "Yes, a large variety...The Works."

Master Chief: "What about vitamins, sleeping pills, Geritol, antidotes for Parkinson's disease?"

Pharmacist: "Absolutely."

Master Chief: "Everything for heartburn and indigestion?"

Pharmacist: "We sure do."

Master Chief: "You sell wheelchairs and walkers and canes?"

Pharmacist: "All speeds and sizes."

Master Chief: "Adult diapers?"

Pharmacist: "Sure."

Master Chief: "Great...we'd like to use this store as our Bridal Registry."

**Seniors Cell Phone**



**Aviation Words of Wisdom:**

The three best things in life are....a good landing, a good orgasm, and a good bowel movement.

A night carrier landing is one of the few opportunities to experience all three at the same time.

**Tri-Care • Medicare • Social Security**

( submitted by Kevin Dillon and from the below sources )  
Fleet Reserve Association - FRA Today Magazine; AUSN Association  
of the United States Navy - Navy Magazine; MOAA Military Officer  
Association of America Magazine; Military Times; Navy Times  
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**TRICARE enrollment fees  
set to increase!**

( source: Shift Colors – Summer 2012 )

All TRICARE Prime enrollees – are required to pay annual enrollment fees, except:

- Active duty service members
- Active duty family members
- Transitional survivors
- Beneficiaries under age 65 with Medicare Parts A and B

New TRICARE Prime enrollment fees for uniformed service retirees and their families will begin on Oct. 1. Retirees who were enrolled before Oct. 1, 2011, will see a more significant increase since their enrollment fee remained at the 2011-levels of \$230 and \$460 per year when the fees increased last year. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year (FY) 2012 allows for the annual increase of TRICARE Prime enrollment fees for most retired beneficiaries based on the annual cost of living adjustment. Exceptions to annual increases are for survivors of active duty deceased sponsors and medically-retired service members and their dependents (see "Annual Increases" below for more information).

**Here's how the increase will affect you**

If enrolled **before** Oct. 1, 2011:

What you pay now:	Individual: \$230 per year
	Family: \$460 per year
Beginning 01OCT12:	Individual: \$269.28 per year
	Family: \$538.56 per year

If enrolled on or **after** Oct. 1, 2011 (including all new enrollments):

What you Pay Now:	Individual: \$260 per year
	Family: \$520 per year
Beginning 01OCT12:	Individual: \$269.28 per year
	Family: \$538.56 per year

**Annual increases**

TRICARE Prime enrollment fees are subject to increase each fiscal year based on the annual cost of living adjustment that occurs each calendar year to determine retired military pay. The only beneficiaries who are exempt from the enrollment fee increases each year are those classified as either survivors of active duty deceased sponsors, or medically-retired uniformed service members and their dependents. The fee remains frozen at the rate in effect when the active duty survivor or medically retired member is classified in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) in either category and enrolled in Prime, as long as there is a continuous Prime enrollment.

**Could the enrollment fees increase again?**

There is a possibility that you may have another enrollment fee increase later in the year if new fees are included when Congress passes the final FY 2013 budget. If the fees are changed, they will be reported. If that doesn't happen, enrollment fees are subject to increase each October.

For the most up-to-date information about your health care costs.....visit:

[www.tricare.mil/costs](http://www.tricare.mil/costs)

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**Differences between powers of attorney, guardianships for DFAS**

( From the Defense Finance and Accounting Service )

As they become older, many retirees and annuitants choose to have a loved one handle their account. The two ways to do this are to appoint a Power of Attorney (POA), or in severe cases, have a court appoint a guardian or trustee.

**Power of Attorney (POA)**

A POA can be useful for retirees and annuitants who are having trouble managing their accounts. However, it's important to know what a POA can and can't do.

Many states allow a POA to handle another person's finances regardless of that person's competency. These state laws often conflict with federal laws. Military retirement and annuities fall under federal law, which takes priority over state law.

A POA cannot make pay-related changes for a retiree or annuitant. They can help with non-pay related issues.

These include:

- Mailing address changes
- Requesting account statements
- Requesting 1099R forms
- Completing reports of existence
- Completing and signing annuity applications
- Requesting copies of documents
- Requesting information protected by the Privacy Act of 1974

DFAS can't legally help POA with any of the above requests without a copy of the POA document.

**Guardian or Trustee**

If you need a loved one to make all of the above changes as well as pay-related changes to your account, you will need to have a court-appointed guardian or trustee established. The courts will appoint a guardian or trustee if you are deemed incompetent and unable to manage your own finances.

Before DFAS can legally make changes requested by a guardian or trustee, they need a certified copy of your court order that must include the seal of the court and the name of the appointed trustee.

If you are an annuitant receiving Survivor Benefit Plan payments, and you don't want to go through the courts, you can complete a Representative Payee Application. In addition to the application, you must include a signed physician statement.

As with a POA, you or your guardian should send DFAS a copy of the court order or your Representative Payee Application as soon as possible. This will ensure that DFAS is able to help your guardian or trustee without any delay.

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**Retiree checklist:**

**What survivors should know.**

( source: Shift Colors – Summer 2012 )

Shift Colors periodically provides a checklist for retirees and their family members. This checklist is designed to provide retirees and their loved ones with some help in preparing for the future.

- Create a military file that includes a copy of retirement orders, separation papers, DD Form 214, medical records, and any other pertinent military paperwork. Make sure your spouse knows the location and telephone number of the nearest military installation.

(continued on page 7)

**Retiree checklist: (continued)**

- Create a military retired pay file that includes the following contact information for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and Navy Personnel Command:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service  
 U S Military Retirement Pay  
 Post Office Box 7130  
 London, KY 40742-7130  
 1-800-321-1080 press or say “4” (for deceased members)

Department of the Navy  
 OPNAV N135C  
 Retired Activities Branch  
 5720 Integrity Drive  
 Millington, TN 38055-6220  
 1-866-827-5672

( This file should also include the number of any pending VA claim as well as the address of the local VA office; a list of deductions currently being made from retired pay or VA benefits. Also include the name, relationship and address of the person you have designated to receive any unpaid retired pay at the time of death. This designation is located on the back of your Retiree Account Statement )

- Create an annuities file. This file should contain information about the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan (RCSBP) or the Retired Serviceman’s Family Protection Plan (RSFPP), or any applicable Civil Service annuity elected by the member, etc. Additional information regarding SBP, RCSBP and RSFPP annuity claims can be obtained from DFAS office at 1-800-321-1080.
- Create a personal document file that has copies of your marriage certificates, divorce decrees, adoptions and naturalization papers.
- Create an income tax file. Include copies of both of your state and federal income tax returns.
- Create a property tax file. Include copies of tax bills, deeds and any other related documents/information.
- Create an insurance policy file. Include life, property, accident, liability and hospitalization policies.
- In a secure location, maintain a list of all bank accounts (joint or individual). Include the location of all deposit boxes, savings bonds, stocks, bonds and any securities owned.
- In a secure location, maintain a list of all charge accounts and credit cards. Include account numbers and mailing addresses.
- Maintain a list of all associations and organizations of which you are a member. Some of them could be helpful to your spouse.
- Maintain a list of all friends and business associates who may be helpful. Include name, address and telephone number.
- Discuss your plans/desires with respect to the type and location of your funeral service. You should decide about cremation, which cemetery, ground burial, etc. If your spouse knows your desires, it will resolve some of the questions that might arise at a later date.
- Visit a local funeral home and pre-arrange your services. Many states will allow you to pre-pay for services.

- Investigate the decisions that you and your family have agreed upon. Many states have specific laws and guidelines regulating cremation and burials at sea. Some states require a letter of authority signed by the deceased in order to authorize a cremation. Know the laws in your specific area and how they may affect your decisions. Information regarding Burials at Sea can be obtained by phoning the Mortuary Affairs Division at 1-866-787-0081.

- Once your decisions have been made and you’re comfortable with them, have a will drawn up outlining all your wishes and store it in a secure location with your other paperwork.

When all of the decision-making and documenting is completed, sit back and continue to enjoy life.

**Who should be notified in the event of my death?**

1. Defense Finance and Accounting Service  
1-800-321-1080
2. Social Security Administration (for death benefits)  
1-800-772-1213
3. Department of Veterans Affairs (if applicable)  
1-800-827-1000
4. Office of Personnel and Management (if applicable)  
1-724-794-8690
5. Any fraternal group that you have membership with.
6. Any previous employer that provides pension or benefits.

The above information is not all-inclusive and should be used with other estate planning tools to lessen trauma to your loved ones.

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**How to report a retiree’s death**

( source: Shift Colors – Fall 2011 )

Eligibility for Navy retired pay ends with the death of the member. Prompt reporting of a retiree’s death can help avoid delay and possible financial hardship to surviving annuitant beneficiaries, family members or executors who will be required to return any unearned payments of the decedent’s military retired pay.

Please follow the steps below to report the death of a military retiree:

**Step 1** - Notify the Defense Finance and Accounting System (DFAS) Casualty Care Team at 1-800-321-1080. Please have the decedent’s Social Security Number and the date of death when you call. For customers located overseas, the commercial number is 1-216-522-5955. When calling this number, select option 3 to be directed to the appropriate representative. Upon notification, DFAS will begin to close out the pay account to prevent any overpayments.

**Step 2** - Contact your financial institution and inform them of the death of the retiree.

**Step 3** - Within 7-10 business days after reporting the death to DFAS, you should receive a condolence letter. If the member is due arrears of pay you will also receive a SF1174 Claim for Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Member of the Uniformed Service. If the decedent was enrolled in the Survivor Benefit Plan or the Retired Serviceman’s Family Protection Plan, you should also receive an Annuity Care Package for completion and return.

(continued on page 8)

**Retiree's Death (continued)**

**Step 4** - Complete the SF 1174 you received with your condolence letter and return with a copy of the retiree's Death Certificate that reflects cause of death to:

DFAS U.S. Military Retired Pay  
 P.O. Box 7130  
 London, KY40742-7130  
 Fax: 1-800-469-6559

If you need assistance completing your claim form please contact our call center at 1-800-321-1080 or OPNAV N135C 1-866-827-5672 and ask for ext 4308.

**Contact List:** In addition to notifying DFAS, you should also notify the following agencies/departments as soon as possible:

- Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213.
- Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) at 1-800-538-9552.
- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at 1-800-827-1000 for military retirees receiving disability compensation.
- Office of Personnel Management at 1-888-767-6738 if the member was a current or retired federal civilian employee.
- Veterans Administration at 1-800-669-8477 for retirees enrolled in a VA-sponsored life insurance policy, such as National Service Life Insurance.
- Office of Servicemember's Group Life Insurance at 1-800-419-1473 for retirees enrolled in Veteran's Group Life Insurance.

Families and executors may also receive assistance with administrative requirements from a Casualty Assistance Officer or Retired Activities/Affairs Office if available from a military installation nearby.

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**Truculent Turtle – Sep 1946**

( submitted by Ron Stevens )

The oxidized Lockheed 'Truculent Turtle' had been squatting next to a Navy Air Station's main gate, completely exposed to the elements and getting ragged around the edges. Finally recognizing the Turtle's singular historic value to aviation, it was moved to Pensacola to receive a badly required and pristine restoration.



It is now gleamingly hanging from the National Naval Aviation Museum's ceiling where it earned its distinction.

**The Turtle's Story....**

Taxiing tests demonstrated that its Lockheed P2V-1's landing gear might fold while bearing the Turtle's extreme weight before carrying it airborne. And during taxi turns its landing gear struts could fail carrying such a load. For that reason, the Turtle was only partially filled with fuel before it was positioned at the head of Australia 's Pearce Aerodrome runway 27 at 7 A.M. on September 29th, 1946.

Lined up for take-off, all fueling was completed by 4:00 p.m. At the same time JATO packs were carefully attached to its fuselage for the jet-assistance required to shove the Truculent Turtle fast enough to take-off before going off the end of the runway

The Turtle would attempt its take-off with CDR Thomas D. Davies, as pilot in command, in the left seat and CDR Eugene P. (Gene) Rankin, the copilot, in the right seat.

In CDR Rankin's own words : " Late afternoon on the 29th, the weather in southwestern Australia was beautiful. And at 1800, the two 2,300 hp Wright R-3350 engines were warming up. We were about to takeoff from 6,000 feet of runway with a gross weight of 85,561 pounds ( the standard P2V was gross weight limited at . . 65,000 pounds. )

Sitting in the copilot's seat, I remember thinking about my wife, Virginia, and my three daughters and asking myself, ' What am I doing here in this situation? ' I took a deep breath and wished for the best.

At 6:11 p.m., CDR Tom Davies stood hard on the brakes as both throttles were pushed forward to max power. At the far end of the mile-long runway, he could make out the throng of news reporters and photographers.



P2V-1 Neptune (BuNo. 89082) taxiing

Scattered across the air base were hundreds of picnickers who came to witness the spectacle of a JATO takeoff. They all stood up when they heard the sound of the engines being advanced to full military power. Davies and Rankin scanned the engine instruments. Normal. Davies raised his feet from the brakes. On this day, September 29, 1946, the reciprocating engine Turtle was a veritable winged gas tank . . THIRTEEN TONS BEYOND the two-engine Lockheed's Max Gross Weight Limitations.

The Truculent Turtle rumbled and bounced on tires that had been over-inflated to handle the heavy load. Slowly it began to pick up speed. As each 1,000-foot sign went by, Rankin called out the speed and compared it to predicted figures on a clipboard in his lap. With the second 1,000-foot sign astern, the Turtle was committed. Davies could no longer stop on the remaining runway. It was now...fly or burn. (Secretly, some of the excited end of runway watchers may have wanted to see the airplane crash and burn.)

When the quivering airspeed needle touched 87 knots, Davies punched a button wired to his yoke, and the four JATO bottles fired from attachment points on the aft fuselage.

(continued on page 9)

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***Are You Coming To The Fall Muster?***

\*\*\*\*\*



The crew's ears filled with JATO bottles' ROAR, their bodies FEELING the JATO's thrust. For a critical twelve seconds, the JATO provided the thrust of a third engine.

At about 4,500 feet down the runway, 115 knots was reached on the airspeed indicator, and Davies pulled the nose wheel off. There were some long seconds while the main landing gear continued to rumble over the last of the runway. Then the rumbling stopped as the main landing gear staggered off the runway and the full load of the aircraft shifted to the wings.

As soon as they were certain that they were airborne, but still only an estimated five feet above the ground, Davies called 'gear up.' Rankin moved the wheel-shaped actuator on the pedestal between the pilots to the up position, and the wheels came up. Davies likely tapped the brakes to stop the wheels from spinning, and the wheel-well doors closed just as the JATO bottles burned out. Behind the pilots in the aft fuselage, CDR Walt Reid kept his hand on the dump valve that could quickly lighten their load in an emergency. Roy Tabeling, at the radio position, kept all his switches off for now to prevent the slightest spark.

The Turtle had an estimated 20 feet of altitude and 130 knots of airspeed when the JATO bottles burned out. The JATO bottles were not just to give the Turtle additional speed on take-off, but were intended to improve the rate of climb immediately after lift-off. The Turtle barely cleared the trees a quarter of a mile from the end of the runway.

The field elevation of Pearce Aerodrome was about 500 feet, and the terrain to the west sloped gradually down to the Indian Ocean about six miles from the field. So, even without climbing, the Turtle was able to gain height above the trees in the critical minutes after take-off.

Fortunately, the emergency procedures for a failed engine had been well thought out, but were never needed. At their take-off weight, they estimated that they would be able to climb at a maximum of 400 feet per minute. If an engine failed and they put maximum power on the remaining engine, they estimated that they would be forced to descend at 200 feet per minute. Their planning indicated that if they could achieve 1,000 feet before an engine failure they would have about four minutes in which to dump fuel to lighten the load and still be 200 feet in the air to attempt a landing. With their built-in fuel dump system, they were confident that they were in good shape at any altitude above 1,000 feet because they could dump fuel fast enough to get down to a comfortable single-engine operating weight before losing too much altitude.

Departing the Aerodrome boundary, the Turtle was over the waters of the Indian Ocean. With agonizing slowness, the altimeter and airspeed readings crept upward. Walt Reid jettisoned the empty JATO bottles. The Turtle was thought to have a 125 KT stall speed with the flaps up at that weight. When they established a sluggish climb rate, Gene Rankin started bringing the flaps up in careful small increments. At 165 KT, with the flaps fully retracted, Tom Davies made his first power reduction to the maximum continuous setting.

The sun was setting and the lights of the city were blinking on as the Turtle circled back over Perth at 3,500 feet and headed out across the 1,800 miles of the central desert of Australia. On this record-breaking night, one record had already been broken. Never before had two engines carried so much weight into the air . . . after the JATOS quit.



Their plan was to keep a fairly low 3,500 feet for the first few hundred miles, burning off some fuel, giving them a faster climb to cruise altitude . . . and (hopefully) costing them less fuel for the total trip. But the southwest wind, burbling and eddying across the hills northeast of Perth, brought turbulence that shook and rattled the overloaded Turtle, threatening the integrity of the wings themselves.

Tom Davies applied full power and took her up to 6,500 feet where the air was smoother, reluctantly accepting the sacrifice of enough fuel to fly an extra couple of hundred miles if lost, bad WX or other unexpected problems at flight's end. Alice Springs at Australia's center, slid under the Turtle's long wings at midnight and Cooktown on the northeast coast at dawn. Then it was out over the Coral Sea where, only a few years before, the LEXINGTON and YORKTOWN had sunk the Japanese ship SHOHO to win the first carrier battle in history, and prevented Australia and New Zealand from being cutoff and then isolated.

At noon on the second day, the Turtle skirted the 10,000 foot peaks of southern New Guinea, and in mid-afternoon de-toured around a mass of boiling thunderheads over Bougainville in the Solomons.

As the sun set for the second time since takeoff, the Turtle's crew headed out across the vast and empty Pacific Ocean and began to establish a flight routine. They stood two-man four-hour watches, washing, shaving, and changing to clean clothes each morning. And eating regular meals cooked on a hot plate. Every two hours, a fresh pilot would enter the cockpit to relieve whoever had been sitting watch the longest.

The two Wright 3350 engines ran smoothly; all the gauges and needles showed normal. And every hour another 200 or so miles of the Pacific passed astern. The crew's only worry was Joey the kangaroo, who hunched unhappily in her crate, refusing to eat or drink.

Dawn of the second morning found the Turtle over Maro Reef, halfway between Midway Island and Oahu in the long chain of Hawaiian Islands. The Turtle only had one low-frequency radio, because most of the modern radio equipment had been removed to reduce weight. Radio calls to Midway and Hawaii for weather updates were unsuccessful due to the long distance.

(continued on page 10)

Celestial navigation was showing that the Turtle was drifting southward from their intended great circle route due to increased northerly winds that were adding a headwind factor to their track. Instead of correcting their course by turning more northward, thereby increasing the aircraft's relative wind, CDR Davies stayed on their current heading accepting the fact that they would reach the west coast of the U.S. (somewhere) in northern California rather than near Seattle as they had originally planned.

When Turtle's wing tip gas tanks empty, they were jettisoned over the ocean. Then the Turtle eased up to 10,000 feet; later to 12,000 feet. At noon, CDR Reid came up to the cockpit smiling. "Well," he reported, "the damned kangaroo has started to eat and drink again. I guess she thinks we're going to make it."

The purpose of our mission (except in Joey's brain) was not some foolish stunt, despite her unusual presence aboard. In the fall of 1946, the increasingly hostile Soviet Union was pushing construction of a submarine force nearly ten times larger than Hitler's. Anti-alternative-submarine warfare was the Navy's responsibility, regardless of the U.S. Army Air Force's alternative views.

The Turtle was among the first of the P2V Neptune patrol planes designed to counter the sub threat. Tom Davies' orders derived straight from the offices of Secretary of the Navy, James V. Forrestal, and the Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. A dramatic demonstration was needed to prove beyond question that the new P2V patrol plane, its production at Lockheed representing a sizeable chunk of the Navy's skimpy peacetime budget, could do the job. With its efficient design that gave it 4-engine capability on just two engines, the mission would show the Neptune's ability to cover the transoceanic distances necessary to perform its ASW mission and sea-surveillance functions. At a time when new roles and missions were being developed to deliver nuclear weapons, it would not hurt a bit to show that the Navy, too, had that significant capability.

So far, the flight had gone pretty much according to plan. But now as the second full day in the air began to darken, the Pacific sky, gently clear and blue for so long, turned rough and hostile. An hour before landfall, great rolling knuckles of cloud punched out from the coastal mountains.

The Turtle bounced and vibrated. Ice crusted on the wings. Static blanked out its radio transmissions and radio reception. The crew strapped down hard, turned up the red instrument lights and took turns trying to tune the radio direction finder to a recognizable station.

It was midnight before Roy Tabeling succeeded in making contact with the ground and requested an instrument clearance eastward from California. They were 150 miles off the coast when a delightful female voice reached up through the murk from Williams Radio, 70 miles south of Red Bluff, California.

"I'm sorry" the voice said. "I don't seem to have a flight plan on you. What was your departure point?"

"Perth, Western Australia." "No...I mean where did you take-off from?" "Perth, Western Australia."

"Navy Zero Eight Two, you are not understanding me. I mean what was your departure airport for this leg of the flight?"

"Perth, Western Australia."

-BUT...that's halfway around the world! "

"No, only about a third. May we have that clearance, please?"

The Turtle had departed Perth some thirty-nine hours earlier and had been out of radio contact with anyone for the past twenty hours. That contact with Williams Radio called off a world-wide alert for ships and stations between Mid-way and the west coast to attempt contact with the Turtle on all fre-

quencies. With some difficulty due to reception, the Turtle received an instrument clearance to proceed on airways from Oakland to Sacramento and on to Salt Lake City at 13,000 feet. The weather report was discouraging. It indicated heavy turbulence, thunderstorms, rain and icing conditions.

As Gene Rankin wrote in a magazine article after the flight: "Had the Turtle been on the ground at an airport at that threatening point, the question might have arisen: 'Is this trip important enough to continue right through this 'stuff'?"

The Turtle reached the west coast at 9:16 p.m. about thirty miles north of San Francisco. Their estimated time of arrival, further north up the coast, had been 9:00 p.m. They had taken off about forty hours earlier and had covered 9,000 statute miles thus far.

They had broken the distance record by more than a thousand miles, and all of their remaining fuel was in their wing tanks which showed about eight-tenths full. Speculation among the pilots began as to how much further the Turtle could fly before fuel exhaustion.

The static and atmospheric began demonstrating the weird and wonderful phenomenon of St. Elmo's fire, adding more distractions to the crew's problems. The two propellers whirled in rings of blue-white light. And violet tongues licked up between the windshields' laminations. While eerie purple spokes protruded from the Neptune's nose cone.

All those distracting effects now increased in brilliance with an accompanying rise in static on all radio frequencies before suddenly discharging with a blinding flash and audible thump. Then once again...slowly re-create itself.

The Turtle's oxygen system had been removed for the flight, so the pilots were using portable walk-around oxygen bottles to avoid hypoxia at higher altitudes. The St. Elmo's fire had been annoying but not dangerous. But it can be a heart-thumping experience for those witnessing it for the first time.

The tachometer for the starboard engine had been acting up, but there were no other engine problems. The pilots kept the fuel cross-feed levers, which connected both main tanks to both engines, in the 'off' position so each was feeding from the tank in its own wing. Somewhere over Nevada, the starboard engine began running rough and losing power.

After scanning the gauges, the pilots surmised that the carburetor intake was icing up and choking itself. To correct that, the carburetor air preheating systems on both engines were increased to full heat to clear out any carburetor ice. Very quickly, the warm air solved the problem and the starboard engine ran smoothly again.

With an engine running rough, CDR Davies had to be thinking about their mission. The Turtle had broken the existing record, but was that good enough? It was just a matter of time before the AAF would launch another B-29 to take the record up another notch. The Neptune was now light enough for single engine flight, but how much farther could it go on one engine? And was it worth risking this expensive aircraft for the sake of improving a long-distance record?

Over Nevada and Utah, the weather was a serious factor. Freezing rain, snow and ice froze on the wings and fuselage, forcing the crew to increase power to stay airborne. The aircraft picked up a headwind and an estimated 1,000 pounds of ice. It was problematic because the plane's deicing and anti-icing equipment had been removed as a weight-saving measure. The next three [3] hours of high power settings and increased fuel usage were at a lower altitude of 13,000 feet. And it probably slashed 500 miles from our flight's record-breaking distance.

(continued on page 11)

After passing Salt Lake City, the weather finally broke with the dawn of the Turtle's third day in the air. The Turtle was cleared to descend to 9,000 feet. All morning, CDR Davies tracked their progress eastward over Nebraska, Iowa, and the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. To the north, Chicago's haze was in sight.

But not surprisingly, our remaining fuel levels were gaining more attention from each and every member of the crew. The wingtip tanks had long ago been emptied and jettisoned over the Pacific. The bomb bay tank, the nose tank and the huge aft-fuselage tank were empty, entirely empty. The fuel gauges for both wing tanks were moving inexorably toward zero.

CDR Davies and his crew consulted, tapped each fuel gauge, calculated and recalculated their remaining fuel, and cursed the gauges on which one-eighth of an inch represented 200 gallons. At noon, they concluded they could not safely stretch the flight all the way to Washington, D.C., and certainly not to the island of Bermuda. CDR Davies chose the Naval Air Station at Columbus, Ohio to be their final destination.

At quarter past one that afternoon the runways and hangars of the Columbus airport were in sight. The Turtle's crew were cleaned-up and shaven and in uniform. And the fuel gauges all read empty. With the landing checklist completed and wheels and flaps down, CDR Davies cranked the Turtle around in a 45 degree left turn towards final.

As the airplane leveled out of its final turn, the starboard engine popped, sputtered and quit. The port engine continued smoothly. Down to 400 feet, as they completed their final turn, both pilots simultaneously recognized the problem. Their hands collided, as both reached for the fuel cross feed fuel lever between their seats.

During the landing pattern's descending final turn in the landing pattern, the near-empty starboard tank quit feeding fuel into the starboard engine. Within seconds, the starboard engine began running smoothly again from fuel rushing in from the open cross feed. The Turtle had been in no danger, since they were light enough to operate on one engine. On the other hand, it would have been embarrassing to have an engine quit, in view of the growing crowd watching below.

At 1:28 p.m. on October 1st, the Neptune's wheels once more touched the earth (HARD) with tires intentionally over-inflated for our take-off at Perth....

#### **11,236 miles and 55 hours and 17 minutes after take-off.**

After a hastily called press conference in Columbus, the crew was flown to NAS air station in Washington, D.C. by a Marine Corps Reserve aircraft, where they were met by their wives and the Secretary of the Navy. The crew were grounded by a flight surgeon upon landing in Columbus ..



CDRS. DAVIES, RANKIN, REID, TABELING

But before the day was over, the Turtle's crew had been awarded Distinguished Flying Crosses by Navy Secretary Forrestal. Next day, they were scheduled to meet with an exuberant President Harry S.

Truman. And Joey, observably relieved to be back on solid earth, was installed in luxurious quarters at the zoo.

The record established by CDR Tom Davies and the crew of the Truculent Turtle's crew did not stand for a fluke year or two....but for decades!! The long-distance record for all aircraft was only broken by a jet-powered B-52 in 1962.

The Truculent Turtle's record for piston/propeller driven aircraft was broken by Burt Rutan's Voyager, a carbon-fiber aircraft, which made its historic around the world non-stop flight in 1986...more than four decades after the Turtle landed in Ohio.

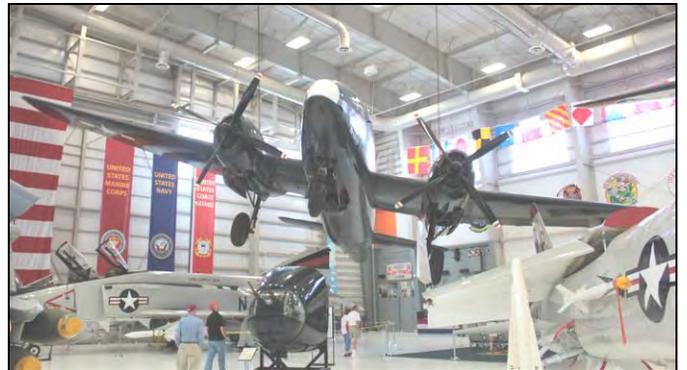


After a well-earned publicity tour, the Truculent Turtle was used by the Naval Air Test Center, at Patuxent River, as a flying test bed for advanced avionics systems.

The Truculent Turtle was retired with honors in 1953 and in 1968, put on display in Norfolk, Virginia, and later repositioned at the main gate of Naval Air Station Norfolk, Virginia.



In 1977, the Truculent Turtle was transported to the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida where it now holds forth in a place of honor in Hangar Bay One.



Sources: The Naval Institute Proceedings magazine, Naval Aviation News magazine, the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation magazine, CDR Eugene P. Rankin, CDR Walter S. Reid and CDR Edward P. Stafford, whose articles about the "Truculent Turtle" were the basis for this article. (abridged)

**Editor's Note:** Whew...what a story eh? Well, if you liked that one, take a ~~pause-for-cause~~...go get yourself a fresh cup of coffee...fasten your seat belts for the next incredible aircraft story on page 12.

### **WWII B-17 Survival Story - 1943**

( submitted by Frank Notarnicola )

A mid-air collision on 01 FEB 1943, between a B-17 and a German fighter over the Tunis dock area, became the subject of one of the most famous photographs of World War II.



An enemy fighter attacking a 97th Bomb Group formation went out of control, probably with a wounded pilot then continued its crashing descent into the rear of the fuselage of a Fortress named "All American", piloted by Lt. Kendrick R. Bragg, of the 414th Bomb Squadron. When it struck, the fighter broke apart, but left some pieces in the B-17.

The left horizontal stabilizer of the Fortress and left elevator were completely torn away. The two right engines were out and one on the left had a serious oil pump leak. The vertical fin and the rudder had been damaged, the fuselage had been cut almost completely through connected only at two small parts of the frame and the radios, electrical and oxygen systems were damaged.

There was also a hole in the top that was over 16 feet long and 4 feet wide at its widest and the split in the fuselage went all the way to the top gunner's turret. Although the tail actually bounced and swayed in the wind and twisted when the plane turned and all the control cables were severed, except one single elevator cable still worked, and the aircraft still flew - miraculously!



The tail gunner was trapped because there was no floor connecting the tail to the rest of the plane. The waist and tail gunners used parts of the German fighter and their own parachute harnesses in an attempt to keep the tail from ripping off and the two sides of the fuselage from splitting apart.

While the crew was trying to keep the bomber from coming apart, the pilot continued on his bomb run and released his bombs over the target.

When the bomb bay doors were opened, the wind turbulence was so great that it blew one of the waist gunners into the broken tail section. It took several minutes and four crew members to pass him ropes from parachutes and haul him back into the forward part of the plane. When they tried to do

the same for the tail gunner, the tail began flapping so hard that it began to break off. The weight of the gunner was adding some stability to the tail section, so he went back to his position.

The turn back toward England had to be very slow to keep the tail from twisting off. They actually covered almost 70 miles to make the turn home. The bomber was so badly damaged that it was losing altitude and speed and was soon alone in the sky. For a brief time, two more Me-109 German fighters attacked the All American.

Despite the extensive damage, all of the machine gunners were able to respond to these attacks and soon drove off the fighters. The two waist gunners stood up with their heads sticking out through the hole in the top of the fuselage to aim and fire their machine guns. The tail gunner had to shoot in short bursts because the recoil was actually causing the plane to turn.

Allied P-51 fighters intercepted the All American as it crossed over the Channel and took one of the pictures shown. They also radioed to the base describing that the empennage was waving like a fish tail and that the plane would not make it and to send out boats to rescue the crew when they bailed out.

The fighters stayed with the Fortress taking hand signals from Lt. Bragg and relaying them to the base. Lt. Bragg signaled that 5 parachutes and the spare had been "used" so five of the crew could not bail out. He made the decision that if they could not bail out safely, then he would stay with the plane and land it.

Two and a half hours after being hit, the aircraft made its final turn to line up with the runway while it was still over 40 miles away. It descended into an emergency landing and a normal roll-out on its landing gear.



When the ambulance pulled alongside, it was waved off because not a single member of the crew had been injured. No one could believe that the aircraft could still fly in such a condition. The Fortress sat placidly until the crew all exited through the door in the fuselage and the tail gunner had climbed down a ladder, at which time the entire rear section of the aircraft collapsed onto the ground.

The rugged old bird had done its job.

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### **Aircraft crashes into 4 buildings**

( submitted by Bruce Blackwelder )

Brace yourself before looking at the photo on page 16. It is quite graphic. A pilot, flying at low level, has lost all control over his aircraft. It narrowly misses the crowd gathered for an airshow, then slams into four buildings. One can only imagine the horror experienced by the occupants of the buildings!

( See photo on page 16 )

## **“The Word” Revisited**

Here are more Blackhawk memories from the unofficial squadron publication “The Word”, most sought after and read by most Blackhawks (next to Playboy) on their monthly drill weekends published by our VP-68 Association Historian AWC Ed Stanfield from MAR 74 until JUL 90.

This issue we feature the year **1980**....enjoy!

### **JAN-1980**

**1) Earthquake:** A strong earthquake hit the Azores, crumbling buildings, killing 25 people and injuring 100 others. Flights at Lajes were halted because of fissures in the runways. There were limited injuries and damage on base, but in the town itself (Lajes) ton base had mounted a large relief and rescue operation in the area here was considerable damage and the military personnel

**2) Reinlistment Bonus:** CNAVRES has announced additional ratings eligible for the Selected Reserve Reinlistment Bonus Program. These include: AD/ADR, AME, AMH, AMS & AW.

**3) WST:** NARU, Whidbey Island has announced the arrival of a Singer-Link 14B44B P-3 acoustic training simulator. The *Naval Reservist News* says that it will be used to train “novices”. That shows the difference between the West coast and East coast Navy. We send our crews to Brunswick and Jax for “professional” brush-ups.

**4) Change of Command:** We extend many thanks and a wish of smooth sailing to our outgoing skipper, CDR Hartley. He’s spent many long days of hard work for VP-68 over the last 18 months. Our new skipper will be CDR Perkins and the XO will be CDR Smith. Congratulations!

**5) SELRES Spouses:** The following is the current Reg. for privileges for spouses of SELRES using base facilities: **Exchange:** may accompany member but may not make purchases during drill attendance – purchases authorized when member is on ACDUTRA. **Commissary:** authorized only when member is on ACDUTRA in excess of 72 hours. **Special Services:** authorized only when member is on ACDUTRA. **Medical:** authorized only when member is on ACDUTRA for over 30 days. At all times spouse is required to have a certified copy of the member’s orders plus appropriate identification such as a driver’s license or social security card.

### **FEB-1980**

**1) Packed Bags:** Senator Henry Jackson says the Reserves should be called up as a show of forces to the Russians. He says that it would be better than draft registration....really?

**2) Change of Command:** Congratulations to CDR Hartley for receiving the Navy Commendation Medal for his outstanding leadership while serving as skipper of VP-68.

**3) Commodore’s Word:** During VP-68’s Change of Command, CAPT Lanning passed the following info:

A) VP-68 performed best of any Reserve VP squadrons deployed to the Azores last year (other squadrons said it was just due to good water conditions in July but we know it was our VP-68 professionalism!)

B) Due to cuts in funding from Congress to travel money we will be sending three crews and three P-3’s plus some maintenance folks to the Azores...rest of squadron will remain at Pax for support.....probably!!

C) Three letters went to CNO last year comparing the Reserve VP performance in the Azores to the Regular Navy...we made a good impression that the “One Navy” concept can work.

D) Instead of Azores again the Commodore requested that the Wing be sent to Rota this time.

E) We requested March ACDUTRA this year and got it...vacations and ACDUTRA won’t overlap this year!

**4) Moving Up:** CDR Dick Fitzgerald was selected for Captain. VP-68 trains it’s CO’s well and they keep on truckin’ after their departure.

**5) Retirement Shindig:** The VP-68 Chiefs had a dinner for two of the squadron’s long-time stalwarts, ADCS Don Gallagher and AOC Marshall Pickett. Senior Chief Gallagher is retiring with 26 years in the Navy. He holds the distinction of being only one of two P-3 Flight Engineers in the Navy who qualified for the seat without going through FE School (The other one is our VP-68 ADC Rex Lake!). Chief Pickett is winding up 34 years in the Navy which began in 1941 at the onset of World War II. He was in the Pacific theater on a ship that was hit amidship by a Japanese bomb which killed 53 sailors. He joined the reserves after the war just in time to be recalled for the Korean Conflict. He has been drilling since 1953 and has never missed a drill or a cruise. He has accumulated 2,300 hours of flight time in P-3’s since 1970. The only reason “Pick” is leaving is because of Navy Reg. requiring at age 58 you have to go to a non-pay unit until age 60...then full retirement. We are really going to miss both of you guys. Good Luck and THANKS!!

**6) Tragedy:** Last month right after our Change of Command, a Navy A-3 crashed 3 miles outside of the base. The pilot and crewman were killed. Being a weekend, the base had a shortage of personnel and VP-68 was called to assist. Many thanks to the following: LCDR Taylor was the Duty Officer, AEC John Bortzfield was the ASDO and ADCS Clarence Burke coordinated the assignment of the security detail. Those standing watch at the accident site were: AD1 Baker, YN2 Berryhill, AD3 Blosser, AZ3 Boyce, ADAA Cucchi, AO1 Eaton, AMHAN Hood, AT1 Jones, AW1 Kraft, IS2 McAnarama, AD3 McPowell, PN2 Moretti, ABH1 Nickless, AD2 Orrell, AW1 Powell, ADAN Race, YN2 Sharp, AD3 Sharp, AM2Stewart, AT2 Watson. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to AT2 Lacy who lost a brother in the accident.

**7) 1980 Budget:** Congress wrapped up the 1980 budget funding two C-9B aircraft for Navy airlifts but dropped funding for modernizing P-3A/B aircraft with updated navigation equipment. Looks like we’ll continue to wander around the Atlantic hunting for stray Loran line or maybe a sunline or star shot if it’s not too cloudy!

**8) Only in Aviation:** A Japanese glider pilot, tired of tows to altitude, has built his personal version of a powered glider. The Onishi OS-G3 is equipped with six model airplane engines mounted on a boom just forward of the wing. In the cockpit are 6 throttles and 6 cut-out switches. Each engine produces 1.7 hp at a furious 14,000 rpm. Takeoff run is only 500 feet, with cruise at 24mph and stall is at 21 mph.

### **MAR-1980**

**1) Medicinal Alcohol:** Navy Surgeon General VADM Williard Arentzen has ordered all BUMED controlled activities to destroy their stocks of alcoholic beverages as it is not in keeping with the Navy’s position of alcohol use. Medicinal alcohol dates from the days of old when a shot of booze was the only sedative available to ease the pain of a wound, amputation of a limb or extraction of a tooth. Later, it became commonplace on some ships to “issue” a shot each time a pilot completed a night carrier landing or commanding officer thought it might be a good idea for some other reason.

**2) VP-68 Scholars:** Congratulations to AEC Jon Bortzfield and CWO2 Russ Plunkett in making the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University’s Dean’s List. To qualify, students have to complete 12 or more semester hours and have a grade point average of 3.5 or higher. Well done lads!!

( continued on page 14 )

## "The Word" (continued)

**3) First Rate People:** Congratulations to AMS1 Joe Cusick for being selected the VP-68 Sailor of the Year and to YN2 Lois Taylor for being selected VP-68 Sailor of the Quarter. (Editor's Note: article doesn't mention TAR or SAR)

**4) P-3 Budget:** The Navy is asking for eight Lockheed P-3C Orion aircraft at \$241.1 million. RDT&E is asking for twelve P-3C's in 1982 at \$440 million. The Navy has 15 active P-3C squadrons, 9 active P-3B squadrons (all with nine aircraft each), and 13 reserve squadrons flying P-3A's and P-3B's.

**5) Japanese ASW:** (source FEB Aviation Week) Operating out of Iwakuni, Japan are 17 PS-1 antisubmarine flying boats (look like a 4-engine P5M-2). Patrols last 9 hours around the Sea of Japan, mostly in the Tsushima Strait and are flown only during daylight hours. The aircraft, with a crew of 12, lands on the ocean and deploys its dipping sonar system when there is indication that a submarine is operating in the area. They have encountered Soviet Foxtrot submarines on the surface but have also detected Soviet Delta 2 and Echo 2 operating submerged. Problem is they have to break off contact as they near North Korean waters and are warned away.

**6) The Cruise:** It is not the ideal setup with the squadron doing ACUTRA in two locations, but what the heck...let's do our best and show everybody that VP-68 can do the job anywhere and is truly NUMBER ONE!!

**7) Only in Aviation:** Vibrations Weren't Favorable....The pilot was running the airplane's engine while it was parked in the hanger. Vibrations loosened the hanger door, which fell onto the airplane. The propeller was damaged and the hanger door had to be replaced but nobody was injured.

### APR-1980

**1) Yes My DEERS:** A system called DEERS (Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System) has been put into action at Portsmouth, VA. It is a computer system designed to correct medical care abuse. In trial runs it has already detected a sailor who is allegedly married to four women!!

**2) High-Heeled AW's:** The AW rating is the only aviation rate which doesn't have Navy women in their ranks. This is contrary to the opinion of some AD's and AM's that I know!

**3) Drive & Fly Defensively:** CNAVRES just complimented VP-68's Crew 3 by way of a general message for avoiding a disaster by using good lookout techniques and good crew coordination. LCDR Jim Taylor's flight was cleared to land at NAS JAX when a commercial C-130 taxied onto the duty runway without clearance. LCDR Taylor and LCDR Dean DeHotman saw the C-130, executed a missed approach and landed safely a few minutes later. This is a good example of the need to always "fly defensively". (Editor's Note: I was on that flight and remember the "WTF" moment back in the windowless tube with the sudden G's on us).

**4) Our Man Chief Pickett:** AOC Marshall Pickett has been nominated by VP-68 as the "Enlisted Reserve Naval Aviation Contributor of the Year" for the Association of Naval Aviation Award to be given on 04May1980.

**5) Last of a Species:** On 01JUL1980 the ADR rate goes out. From that time on there will be only AD's. This reflects the predominate use of jets and turboprops in today's Naval Aviation.

**6) Zapped:** A Canadian ASW contingent was departing Pax River as VP-68 was coming aboard for cruise. Take a look at the water tower next to the BOQ. Where did that maple leaf come from?

**7) HUH???:** There is an ample supply of those squashable, comfortable ear plugs available in Safety/Natops or in Maintenance Control.....USE EM!

**8) Congratulations:** Here's the list of those selected for Commander in VP-68: LCDR Oman, LCDR Dansker, LCDR Gilfooy, LCDR Gaffney, LCDR Harris, LCDR Magee, LCDR McGinty, LCDR Suydam, LCDR Tennes, LCDR Whittaker and LCDR Graham. There's a possibility that three of these gentlemen will stay in the squadron on waivers. In October there is going to be an awful lot of good talent missed when these fellows go to wherever that place is where Commanders seem to disappear.

**9) Tired Old Birds:** This is for all of you airlift people who ride those museum pieces to and from Pax on drill weekends. There has finally been agreement by OSD to phase out all of the C-118's over the next five years.

**10) Bell Bottoms:** Second Class Petty Officers can wear the "bells" now and three years from 01 MAY they will be compulsory.

**11) Senior Chief Line:** Master Chief Brown, Chief Brogan, and Master Chief Gath paid a visit to Oscar Line at his home and presented him with a VP-68 paque. Oscar fell off of a scaffold six months ago and was in very serious condition for a long while. His condition is improving and he was tickled to see old comrades from VP-68.

**12) The Cruise:** The crews in Lajes were getting an excellent workout and there has been nothing but praise for the TAR maintenance personnel in their efforts to keep things rolling when operations were hot and heavy. For those at PAX during the cruise, a lot of maintenance ground training was accomplished. The aircrew got a lot of pilot trainers flown at loiter airspeeds for fuel conservation.

**13) Only in Aviation:** Australian Clive Canning flew his Thorpe T-18 from Australia to England last summer – an accomplishment in itself. But the real feat was that he fought a dogfight with a MIG over Syria. The MIG squeezed off a missile at the Thorpe at 6,000 feet. The missile missed and Canning dived for a nearby town, over which he circled as low as he could until the MIG finally went away. His reasoning, which apparently was correct, was that the trigger-happy Syrian wouldn't risk sticking a missile into one of his own villages.

### MAY-1980

**Stanfield's Axiom of the Month:** No matter which way you spit...it's upwind!

**1) Yes Ma'am:** The Navy is opening up the TAR program to women Naval Reserve Officers.

**2) Bad News:** In Pago-Pago, American Samoa, six Navy men were killed when their P-3 Orion crashed outside a hotel after snagging an aerial tramway cable. The accident occurred during an Independence Day show in the capital city of this US territory in the South Pacific. The plane had just dropped parachute jumpers over Pago Pago's central square. Three of the jumpers were blown off their target and the plane turned to follow their decent when it snagged on a cable of the cross-bay tram. The plane and crew were from VP-50.

**3) Aviation Warfare Specialist:** The Chief of Naval Operations has approved a new Aviation Warfare Specialist designation and insignia for enlisteds assigned to aviation units who can meet some rather exacting qualifying standards. As stated in New OpNav Instruction 1412.5, the new device is primarily designed for those in the aviation community who do not qualify for aircrew wings.

( continued on page 15 )

## "The Word" (continued)

**4) Chiefs on the move:** Congratulations to Bob Barte in being selected for Master Chief and to John LeNard, Ed Basile and Charlie Morse in being selected for Senior Chief.

**5) Good Man:** Congratulations to AMH2 Jeff Rose on being selected TAR Sailor of the Quarter. Good work Jeff.

**6) Non-Operational Cruise Report:**

A) Crew 12 is asking –Do ear blocks really affect the playing of grounded racketball players?

B) How's the CO doing with his Lajes cross-wind landing practice?

C) St. Maughans: A British Bobby was trying to figure out why LCDR Steve Black and AW2 Jake Jacobs were switching trousers in a phone booth at midnight. Something about a disco not allowing blue jeans. And LT Grabulus made the Barter of the year in swapping a flight suit for a lassie's skirt...he did look a bit odd on the return flight!

D) Rota-Rootex: Crews 4 and 15 did a Rota first...they drank the Tokyo Bar dry! AO1 Wally Chance and AD1 Mike Heffren returned to the barracks that night on a bee-line route. With great effort they climbed over a fence that was a major obstacle. The next morning it was discovered that the fence was a softball backstop!! AW2 DiGennero (Gene, Gene the dancing machine) entered the try-outs for –Throw Yourself On The Bar"...a new Olympic sport to be introduced this summer.

E) No reports of Azorian bull fights...the score still stands at Bulls=8 and VP-68=0.

**JUN/ JUL / AUG -1980**

Stanfield's Axiom of the Month: Quoting Mark Twain's Postulate...Always do it right. It will gratify some people and astonish the rest.

**1) Rumor:** It's unofficial, but it has been heard that the Master Chief of the Navy will release a study recommending that Naval Reservists with 30 years service be transferred to a Volunteer Training Unit (VTU) so as to enhance advancement potential.

**2) New Ribbon:** You may be eligible for a new Sea Service Deployment Ribbon. The ribbon is retroactive to August 1974 when the National Defense Ribbon expired. To be eligible a man or woman must have been on sea duty for one year, but the 12 months doesn't have to be straight out.

**3) Recognitions:**

A) HM2 Mike Gerred was selected SAR Sailor of the Quarter.

B) HM1 George Durity selected as TAR Sailor of the Year.

(watch-out...these guys with the needles are taking over)

C) AD1 Cusick selected as the SAR Sailor of the Year.

D) Crew 14 selected as Crew of the Quarter.

E) AW1 Vic Kraft passed 1,000 hours of P-3 flight time.

**4) Feet Hurt???:** Fellow crewmembers tell me that LT –Boots" Bentley sometimes has trouble telling his left foot from his right...especially when he has two left boots on!!

**5) Only in Aviation:** A while back, a youthful, male CFI was instructing the basics of flight to an equally youthful woman in a Cherokee 140. While on a downwind leg of a Southern California airport, the left fuel tank ran dry and the engine quit. The instructor's left hand instinctively darted for the fuel-selector valve on the opposite side of the cockpit. This required that his left hand take the direct route, which unfortunately led between the young woman's legs. A distractive slugfest ensued, and before the instructor could explain his honorable intentions and regain control of the aircraft, considerable altitude was lost. According to the tower controller who witnessed the untimely descent, power was restored at approximately 150 feet agl. Among other things, the instructor learned that the left sidewall

of a trainer is one helluva place to install a fuel-selector valve. The morale of the story is...what you reach for is not always what you get!!

**SEP-1980**

Stanfield's Axiom of the Month: You can't win em all, but you sure can lose em all.

**1) Women Pilots:** The Navy will select 15 women for pilot and naval flight officer training in September. The Navy currently has 38 designated female pilots on active duty and another 17 in flight training.

**2) Congratulations:** A) Frocked as Chiefs were: ADC Heffron, ADC Hutmaker, ADC Hyndman, ATC Wutka, ADC Speaks, ATC Abbott and AMSC Hartwell.

B) AW2 Gene DiGenero and AW1 J.B. Stewart were presented with 1,000 hour P-3 flight time pins.

C) AW1 Reno Motes was awarded a Good Conduct Medal.

D) AK2 Hettie Schultheis received a Letter of Appreciation from the Naval Recruiting Command for her contributions.

E) Crew 14 selected as 1980 first quarter Crew of the Quarter and Crew 2 as 1980 second quarter Crew of the Quarter.

F) AD1 Howard Flemming selected Squadron SAR of the Quarter for the 1980 APR/JUN period.

**3) The Cruise:** Maybe Bermuda in March or April????

**4) Retirement:** AOCM Bob Gath retired on March 8<sup>th</sup> culminating 32-1/2 years of Navy service. He was presented a flag which had flown over the Capital Building. Bob was in Navy Explosives Investigation Unit assigned to both Army and Marines during World War II in the Pacific. He joined the reserves at Anacostia in 1949 and was recalled in 1950 with VP-661 during the Korean Conflict. He moved to Andrews in 1961 with VP-661, came to PAX in 1970 when VP-68 was commissioned and in 1975 became Master Chief of the Command at NRNS Keflavik at Andrews. Good Luck Bob.

**5) Old VP-68 Friend:** I recently visited with AOC C.O. Smith in Beckley, WV in July. Smitty sends greetings back to his friends in VP-68 and really misses the squadron.

**6) Only in Aviation:** Seaplane activity is so high near New Iberia, Louisiana that it's airport has a 5,000 foot sea lane paralleling it's 8,000 foot runway. One night recently a Grumman American Trainer (with wheels) turned final for landing. The sea lane's mike-activated lights, which are a different color than those along the runway were on. Airport personnel saw the plane do a perfect splashdown on the sea lane, bob to a halt, still floating. They rushed to the site as the pilot slid back the canopy and said –Darn, y'all caught a big rain." He then stepped off of the wing into 4 feet of water!

**OCT-1980**

Stanfield's Axiom of the Month: Never, never play leapfrog with a unicorn!

**1) Congratulations:** A) PN2 Rush was selected SAR Sailor of the Quarter for 1980 JUL-SEP.

B) AMS1 Yard received \$100 check & Letter of Appreciation for his P-3 HRD Bottle suggestion.

C) LT Bill Plyer receiving Unit Commendation Citation for his service in VT-6.

**2) New Dance:** This dance observed on the beach of Patrick AFB during Crew 3 RON. AW1 Paul Costello came charging out of the water with a jelly fish inside his bathing suit – dance tagged –The Jelly Fish Belly Swish". A treatment for the sting is meat tenderizer....fortunately his fellow crewman AW1 Jim Rozycki is an EMT...unfortunately he had none with them. Base PX did, but as Jim says regarding applying it to the sting...friendship only goes so far Paul!

( continued on page 16 )

## **“The Word” (continued)**

### **3) Only in Aviation:** Navy Pilot composition by a fifth grader:

- I want to be a Navy pilot when I grow up because it's fun and easy to do. Pilots don't need much school, they just have to learn numbers so they can read instruments. I guess they should be able to read maps too so they can find their way if they get lost.
- Pilots should be brave so they won't be scared if it's foggy and they can't see if a wing or motor falls off. They should stay calm so they'll know what to do. Pilots have to have good eyes too so they can see through clouds and they can't be afraid of lightning or thunder because they are closer to them than we are.
- The salary pilots make is another thing I like. They make more money than they can spend. This is because most people think airplane flying is dangerous, except pilots don't because they know how easy it is.
- There isn't much about it I don't like. Except girls like pilots and all the stewardesses want to marry them so they always have to chase them away so they won't bother them.
- I hope I don't get air sick because if I do I couldn't be a pilot and would have to go to work.

### **NOV / DEC-1980**

**Stanfield's Axiom of the Month:** If everything seems to be coming your way...you're probably in the wrong lane.

**1) Safety:** VP-68 is celebrating 10 years and 48,700 hours of accident-free flying...Congratulations!

**2) Medical:** This is the last month that George “Doc” Durity will be with us. He is being transferred to NARU Andrews. George, thanks to you from all of us for the personalized attention over the years. Before he goes he is waiting to give those on the shot list one last chance for his special “eorkscrew” needle. Good Luck George, we'll miss you.

**3) Master Chief Brown:** On 08NOV, AFCM Charlie Brown was honored by the squadron chiefs with a VP-68 plaque and going-away dinner. He and his wife are moving to Florida for health reasons. Thanks for your 36 years of dedication to the Navy and leadership in the squadron. We'll miss you.

**4) Congratulations:** A) PN2 Pat Moretti selected as VP-68 TAR Sailor of the Quarter.

B) YN2 Crystal Sharp selected as VP-68 SAR Sailor of the Quarter.

C) Advancement to next pay grade are: MS2 Copeland, AD3 Cucchi, AMH3 Dubrey, AD1 Greene, AE1 Holbrook, AE2 Ruthenberg, AE1 Stryko, AE1 Tayler, and AT1 O'Donnell.

D) LT Ron Stevens, AW1 Dale Grimes, AT1 Pete Logan and AO1 Wally Chance...1,000 hour P-3 flight-time pins.

E) YN3 Kathy Wright, Letter of Appreciation from the CO for using her Red Cross Life Saving Certificate conducting air-crewman swim quals (and saving Crew 4!)

F) LCDR Watts, LCDR Gray and AK2 Schultheis received Letters of Appreciation from the Naval Recruiting Command for their recruiting contributions.

**5) E-8 & E-9 Exams:** Folks going for E-8 & E-9 no longer have to take written exams to become eligible for those grades. The Navy says that by eliminating the written exams this brings the selection process for these two grades closer to that used for picking officers for promotion.

**6) Former Skipper:** CAPT Richrd Fitzgerald, former VP-68 CO, was voluntarily recalled to active duty to head AIRLANT Liason at NAS Norfolk, VA.

**7) Ace Air Crew:** Crew 2 has done it again! They've won the Liberty Bell Trophy. This is presented to the best ASW Crew in

the Reserve Patrol Squadrons. The trophy was presented to them by the Commodore following the ADMAT inspection.

**8) Physiological Training:** Aircrews...Hark! Pressure chamber and swim quals are now only required once every four years.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Aircraft crashes into 4 buildings!**



## **Manually produced IDs must be replaced**

On Oct. 29, 2010, the Department of Defense (DOD) Human Resources Activity (DHRA) issued a memorandum that cancelled all manually produced government identification (ID) cards. DOD cancelled these typewriter-generated ID cards because they are not post-Sept. 11, 2001, compliant.

Manually produced ID cards lack required advanced security features that enable DOD officials to instantly verify personal identity through a secure and authoritative data source and are no longer considered a valid form of government identification. These ID cards were issued through use of a typewriter and are characteristically recognized by their lack of bar codes and/or magnetic strips.

Military installations are confiscating manually produced ID cards at base entrances as they pose a high personal identity security threat. Eligible retirees and family members with these ID cards can get the new Uniformed Services ID Card at any ID card issuance facility.

To locate the nearest facility, go to:

<http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl>.

Retirees are advised to contact the facility beforehand to determine what documents are needed to obtain the new ID card and whether an appointment is necessary.

## Chief of the Navy Reserve

Vice Admiral Robin R. Braun assumed command of the Navy Reserve on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington, D.C. on 13 August 2012. She became the first female leader of the Navy Reserve and the first woman to lead any reserve component of any service.



Vice Admiral Robin R. Braun  
Chief of Navy Reserve  
Commander, Navy Reserve Force

Vice Admiral Braun, a graduate of Northern Arizona University, was commissioned in 1980. Designated a Naval Aviator in February 1981, her first assignment was to Training Squadron (VT) 31, Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas, where she served as an instructor pilot in the T-44 aircraft.

In 1983, Braun was assigned to Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron (VQ) 3, Naval Air Station Barbers Point, Hawaii, serving as a mission commander, aircraft commander, and instructor pilot in the EC-130Q aircraft. Subsequent squadron tours include Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VR) 61, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington, and VR-51, Naval Air Station Glenview, Illinois. Staff assignments include Naval Intern on the Joint Staff (J3), Aviation Detailer at Navy Personnel Command, and Chief of Staff, CNO Operations and Plans supporting OPNAV N3/N5.

Braun served as Commanding Officer of VR-48, NAF Washington, D.C. During her tour, the squadron was awarded the Battle Efficiency Award and Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Safety Award. Subsequent command tours include: Navy Air Logistics Office (NALO); Navy Reserve Carrier Strike Group 10 supporting the USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) and Joint Task Force Katrina; and Tactical Support Center 0793 supporting Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 5.

Flag assignments include Deputy Commander, Navy Recruiting Command; Director, Total Force Management for the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information Dominance (OPNAV N2/N6), and Deputy Director, European Plans and Operations Center (ECJ-3), Stuttgart, Germany.

Braun has accumulated more than 5,800 flight hours in Navy aircraft. Her awards include the Legion of Merit (three awards), Meritorious Service Medal (four awards), the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (two awards), and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (three awards).

## You know you're living in 2012 when..

1. You accidentally enter your PIN on the microwave.
2. You haven't played solitaire with real cards in years.
3. You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of three.
4. You e-mail the person who works at the desk next to you.
5. Your reason for not staying in touch with friends and family is that they don't have e-mail addresses.
6. You pull up in your own driveway and use your cell phone to see if anyone is home to help you carry in the groceries.
7. Every commercial on television has a web site at the bottom of the screen
8. Leaving the house without your cell phone, which you didn't even have the first 20 or 30 (or 60) years of your life, is now a cause for panic and you turn around to go and get it
10. You get up in the morning and go on line before getting your coffee
11. You start tilting your head sideways to smile. : )
12. You're reading this and nodding and laughing.
13. Even worse, you know exactly to whom you are going to send this to.
14. You are too busy to notice there was no #9 on this list.
15. You actually looked back up to check that there wasn't a #9 on this list .

## Words to Ponder about Aging!

( author unknown )

- As I've aged, I've become kinder to myself, and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend.
- I have seen too many dear friends leave this world, too soon; before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.
- Whose business is it, if I choose to read, or play, on the computer, until 4 AM, or sleep until noon? I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 50, 60 & 70's, and if I, at the same time, wish to weep over a lost love, I will.
- I will walk the beach, in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body, and will dive into the waves, with abandon, if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the jet set. They, too, will get old.
- I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And, I eventually remember the important things.
- Sure, over the years, my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break, when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when somebody's beloved pet gets hit by a car? But, broken hearts are what give us strength, and understanding, and compassion. A heart never broken, is pristine, and sterile, and will never know the joy of being imperfect.
- I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turning gray, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.
- As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong.
- So, to answer your question, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be. And I shall eat dessert every single day (if I feel like it).

**The U.S. Navy... THEN & NOW**

( submitted by Rex Lake )

**THEN:** If you smoked, you had an ashtray on your desk.  
**NOW:** If you smoke, you get sent outside and treated like a leper, if you're lucky.

**THEN:** Mail took weeks to come to the ship.  
**NOW:** If the ship is near land, there's a mob topside to see if their cell phones work.

**THEN:** If you left the ship it was in Blues or Whites, even in home port.  
**NOW:** The only time you wear Blues or Whites is for ceremonies.

**THEN:** You wore bell bottoms everywhere on the ship.  
**NOW:** Bell Bottoms are gone and 14 yr-old girls wear them everywhere.

**THEN:** You wore a Dixie cup all day, with every uniform.  
**NOW:** It's not required and you have a choice of different hats.

**THEN:** Say "DAMN," people knew you were annoyed and avoided you.  
**NOW:** Say "DAMN," you'd better be talking about a hydroelectric plant.

**THEN:** The Ships Office yeoman had a typewriter on his desk for doing daily reports.  
**NOW:** Everyone has a computer with Internet access and they wonder why no work is getting done.

**THEN:** We painted pictures of pretty girls on airplanes to remind us of home.  
**NOW:** We put the real thing in the cockpit.

**THEN:** Your girlfriend was at home, praying you would return alive.  
**NOW:** She is on the same ship, praying your condom worked.

**THEN:** If you got drunk off duty, your buddies would take you back to the ship so you could sleep it off.  
**NOW:** If you get drunk off duty, they slap you in rehab and ruin your career.

**THEN:** Canteens were made out of steel and you could heat coffee or hot Chocolate in them.  
**NOW:** Canteens are made of plastic, you can't heat them because they'll melt, & anything inside always tastes like plastic.

**THEN:** Our top officers were professional sailors first. They commanded respect.  
**NOW:** Our top officers are politicians first. They beg not to be given a wedgie.

**THEN:** They collected enemy intelligence and analyzed it.  
**NOW:** They collect our pee and analyze it.

**THEN:** If you didn't act right, they'd put you on extra duty until you straightened up.  
**NOW:** If you don't act right, they start a paper trail that follows you forever.

**THEN:** Medals were awarded to heroes who saved lives at the risk of their own  
**NOW:** Medals are awarded to people who show up for work most of the time.

**THEN:** You slept in a barracks, like a soldier.  
**NOW:** You sleep in a dormitory, like a college kid.

**THEN:** You ate in a Mess Hall or Galley. It was free and you could have all the food you wanted.  
**NOW:** You eat in a Dining Facility. Every slice of bread or pat of butter costs, and you can only have one.

**THEN:** If you wanted to relax, you went to the Rec Center, played pool, smoked and drank beer.  
**NOW:** You go to the Community Center and can still play pool, maybe

**THEN:** If you wanted a quarter beer and conversation, you could go to the Chief's or Officers' Club.  
**NOW:** The beer will cost you three dollars and someone is watching to see how much you drink.

**THEN:** The Exchange had bargains for sailors who didn't make much money.  
**NOW:** You can get better merchandise and much cheaper at Wal-Mart.

**THEN:** If an Admiral wanted to make a presentation, he scribbled down some notes and a YN spent an hour preparing a bunch of charts.  
**NOW:** The Admiral has his entire staff spending days preparing a Power Point Presentation.

**THEN:** We called the enemy things like "Commie Bastards" and "Reds" because we didn't like them.  
**THEN:** We call the enemy things like "Opposing Forces" and "Aggressors or Insurgents" so we won't offend them.

**THEN:** We declared victory when the enemy was dead and all his things were broken.  
**NOW:** We declare victory when the enemy says he is sorry and won't do it again.

**THEN:** A commander would put his butt on the line to protect his people.  
**NOW:** A commander will put his people on the line to protect his butt.

*Thank God I was in the  
 "OLD NAVY."  
 And proud of it!*

\*\*\*\*\*

**US Navy Pilots Thoughts On Drones - Wisdom!**

( submitted by Rex Lake )

Drones will not be late to briefings, start fights at happy hour, destroy clubs, attempt to seduce others' dates, spill flaming hookers, purchase huge watches, insult other services, sing "O'Learys Balls", dance on tables, yell "Show us your boobs!!" or do all of the other things that we know win wars!

\*\*\*\*\*

**Aircraft Identification:**

- If it's ugly...it's British.
- If it's weird...it's French.
- If it's ugly and weird...it's Russian.

**Blast from the Past**

A very special thanks to Gene DiGennaro for sending me these photos of the -good old days".  
( photos even had the round edges....remember?)



**1976 – Spanish North Africa**

Pictured left to right: Ed Stanfield, Pete Logan, Wally Chance, Gene DiGennaro and Dale Grimes

**What's that noise??**

( submitted by Joe Odenthal )



(Note: we might have flown in that ole bird!)

**The Making of Florida One**

( submitted by Vince Apostolico )

The below link will take you inside the Boeing plant for the manufacture of Southwest Airlines -Florida One". It is a fast-speed video of the beginning to end process....enjoy!

[http://www.youtube.com/watch\\_popup?v=zKnsyYbfC60&feature=popular](http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=zKnsyYbfC60&feature=popular)



**1963 – VP662 Brunswick ACDUTRA**  
Harold Rimer and Gene DiGennaro



**1962 – VP662 Pax River ACDUTRA**  
P2V-5 aircraft on flightline

**Hawk's Nest Feature**

**Here's Why...# 6**

( submitted by Ed Stanfield - source: Navy Times )

Have you ever wondered why sailors often say words instead of letters, such as *Bravo* for B, *Charlie* for C, *Echo* for E on so-on?? The military calls this code the phonetic alphabet.

Why did they adopt this language? The system was developed in the early 1900's to reduce confusion during garbled radio and telephone communication by differentiating between similar sounding letters.

In World War II, the other services used different words for some letters, but by 1961, they all spoke the same alphabet, according to the U.S. Army Signal Corps Museum.

**Right-wrong place / right-wrong time!**

( submitted by Dick Stohr )

This incident caused the USAF to ground its fleet of F-15's. How about the guy who took these pictures? Just when it looks like it's going to be just another 'average day at the office'...! What caused the mid-air break up? The main "longeron" (stringer) behind the cockpit failed due to corrosion.



*There I was just flying along, enjoying the flight.*



*Hey, why am I looking up?*



*Whoa here. What the....?? Controls aren't working  
Time for a mirror check...Hey, where's the rest of my F-15?*



*Uh oh, it's over there...  
I think I've got a definite 'Aw, sh\*\* going on here.*



*OK, enough is enough! I'm outta' here!*



*But first...the canopy has to go.*



*OK, now it's my turn. I'm gonna be gone –  
soon as I find that frickin' lower handle.*



*I'm gone !!!!!*

Talk about being in the right place at the right time (the photographer)... or the wrong place at the wrong time (the pilot)!

## Editorial: The Veterans Administration

( by Jim Rozycki )

They say you should never write anything down when you are angry. Put it away for a day and then re-write it when you have calmed down. Well...this is about the 13th time I have edited this article! I am writing about my experience with the VA so that hopefully some of you may benefit from it.

My experience had me wondering whether my 26-year military service to my country was appreciated. My family does, my neighbors do, even strangers in restaurants seeing my Navy ballcap thank me. Does the Government?

The best way I can express my VA experience was like getting hit in the face with a glass of cold water...no...correct that...getting kicked in the crouch!!

For almost two years now I have been treated for a condition called Motor Neuron Disease by a neurologist who is both on the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine teaching staff and also on the staff of the local VA hospital. He noted that within the Motor Neuron Disease family there are several different conditions. The most serious is Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) or Lou Gehrig's Disease. He suspects that I have Primary Lateral Sclerosis (PLS) but a firm diagnosis usually takes 3 to 4 years after onset of symptoms.

Basically, my brain is not sending signals to my body muscles to function as they should. My condition is worsening and seriously affects my ability to walk and use my hands.

In a recent visit he suggested that he would prefer to treat me at the VA facility as it had better facilities and services available to me. Having never used any VA services I went online, downloaded and completed an application, gathered the needed documents and went to the VA to apply.

In the waiting room I talked with several vets who were much more educated with the process than I was. When my name was called, the woman behind the computer was what I would best describe as (I feel bad saying this) a robot! She only looked at the screen, asked me questions that I had already answered on the form (which she never looked at) and would not (or could not) answer my questions.

Finally...the "kick in the crouch". Upon the last entry she told me bluntly that I was disqualified and could not put me in the VA system!! I finally got a supervisor to explain to me that in 2003, under President George W. Bush, a law passed placing an economic "ceiling" on vets eligibility for treatment. I had never heard of that before. Using only my and my wife's Social Security, my Navy pension, and her part-time income I was told I was not eligible. I had a mix of emotions from anger to hurt to depression. The VA benefit that I had spent 26 years earning is not available to me when I need it the most.

Going to the parking lot I saw one of the fellows that I talked to earlier. After explaining what happened to me he said "Hey buddy, you should have just told them a lower income, they don't check." Along with my DD214 and discharge paperwork I had taken copies of my 2011 Tax Returns. But all he had was his DD214, nothing else. He knew of the "ceiling" and just verbally told them a lower number and he got in the system and issued an ID card....me, nothing!

One of my neighbors, who only did two years in the Army in Germany, told me he signed-up for the VA after he got out. He gets all kind of medical treatment there!

Talking to another neighbor, a retired attorney for the VA, I find out there is an appeal process but not to waist my time. I found out that if I had been in Vietnam...no other questions needed...I would automatically be in the VA system. He also

mentioned to me that recently, the VA recognized (ALS) Lou Gehrig Disease as a service-related illness and if I had it that I would be automatically eligible. Obviously, under that circumstance, I hope to never qualify for VA benefits!

Looking back, I am glad I was honest, because that is who I am. But, I am sadly disappointed that I do not "economically" qualify for VA benefits. I have explained the VA situation to my neurologist and will be doing treatments with him at a local hospital.

This all said, the VA is doing great things for a lot of veterans throughout the country. But...please check into what is available to you and keep watch constantly because benefits are being taken away from us vets all of the time.

Organizations are fighting for our benefits but we, the vets, must also keep close watch on our government. There are those in the government that would strip many benefits from us to use the funds elsewhere. Most of them are not veterans themselves so care less about us. Keep vigilant Blackhawks!

## The President's Corner:

by Jacques LaValle

Wow! Where did this summer season go? As I (and I'm sure you as well) get older, time seems to get away from me and pass faster and faster. I hope each of you was blessed with an excellent summer season and that you and your family took advantage of the excellent opportunities to have fun.

For me, it's been a mixed blessing of heavy workloads, sneaky health issues, small trips to visit family, and of course, plenty of air shows to attend. But I never leave home without my VP-68 memorabilia attached somewhere so I can talk about the good times, our proud history and terrific shipmates that we call family. Though I didn't run into any alumni of VP-68, I still run into people who remember VP-68 and the remarkable impact we made on the fleet.

As we prepare for the fall muster at Rec Center Solomon's Island, your Association has planned another feasting adventure with the help of Tim Humphreys through his steak supplier and Wyman Bailey for helping organize the details. I hope to see many folks on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October (mark the calendar again) as I sadly look forward to chairing our last business meeting under my tenure. We will be holding elections for the 2013/14 season of new officers.

And if all goes as planned, we will be heading up to Andrews on the 14<sup>th</sup> for the P-3 static display dedication with OUR tail feathers painted on the aircraft. According to Senior Chief Huels (he just finished disestablishing VR-48), this aircraft is in perfect display condition and will be an added asset and remembrance of our past at Andrews. The aircraft's final resting place will be within our white hat burial grounds!

As of this writing, the base CO is waiting on confirmation from RAdm. Jeff Lemons to be the guest speaker. The VP-68 Alumni Association is in no way part of the organization of this event but we will be making a significant impact by everyone's attendance. Please plan to attend. More details will be available later this month and we will post something on our website.

Until the fall muster, stay safe, stay healthy, and above all else, remain proud to be a Blackhawk!

*Have a fine Navy day!*

**REMINDER:  
ASSOCIATION OFFICER  
ELECTIONS ON 13OCT12**

**From the Editor:**

Jim Rozycki

As always, I would like to thank all of the VP-68 Blackhawks who called, mailed and emailed me contributions for this issue of the Hawk's Nest newsletter.

I am always in need of material so please don't be shy. What are you up to these days? Working? Retired? What is new with your family? Again, this is **YOUR** newsletter and we want to include everybody in it.

Photos....please send me photos, especially if you have ones from the "early" years of the squadron.

**Future Hawk's Nests will be published in:  
March – June – September – December**

Email me at: [rozyckijim@aol.com](mailto:rozyckijim@aol.com)

Call me at: 412-487-5854

Mail to me at: VP-68 Hawk's Nest  
2414 Rolling Farms Road  
Glenshaw, PA 15116-2564

**From the Secretary**

If you move and change your mailing address please let me know as that is the only way we can keep track of you. Send your address information to:

[wright\\_kathleen@bah.com](mailto:wright_kathleen@bah.com)

or mail to: VP-68 Alumni Association  
4924 25th Street S  
Arlington, VA 22206

**From the Treasurer**

Members who have not renewed their dues by March of each year will be dropped from our roster, lose their membership & voting rights and no longer receive any Association mailings..

Please consider converting to a Life Membership and never have to write us another check. Annual dues is \$10, Life Membership is \$100 unless you are over 75 and then it is only \$25.

All dues payments and financial matters are to be mailed to:

**VP-68 Alumni Association  
21496 Lynn Drive  
Lexington Park, MD 20653-4128**

Make checks payable to:  
VP-68 Alumni Association

contact Jacque LaValle at: **301-247-2321**  
or email at: [jacque.lavalle@verizon.net](mailto:jacque.lavalle@verizon.net)

**Color Copies of Hawk's Nest**

Color copies of current and past Hawk's Nest newsletters may be downloaded and printed in pdf format from our website: [www.vp68.org](http://www.vp68.org)

**Former Blackhawks**

When you are calling or sending emails to your Blackhawk friends, ask them if they are members in the VP-68 Alumni Association and received this Hawk's Nest. If not...please ask them to join!

There are many former Blackhawks out there who still do not know of our Association. Give them our website or bring them to the next function.

**Membership Committee**

The Membership Committee, headed up by Dick Perkins, is still searching for former Blackhawks who are not yet members of our Alumni Association. If you know of anybody please forward their names and contact info to Dick via e-mail at [vp68co@yahoo.com](mailto:vp68co@yahoo.com)

Membership applications may be downloaded from our website: [www.vp68.org](http://www.vp68.org)

**2011 & 2012 Association Officers**

- President **Jacque LaValle**  
[jacque.lavalle@verizon.net](mailto:jacque.lavalle@verizon.net)
- Vice-President **Wyman Bailey**  
[baileymod@msn.com](mailto:baileymod@msn.com)
- Secretary **Kathy Wright**  
[wright\\_kathleen@bah.com](mailto:wright_kathleen@bah.com)
- Treasurer (\*)** **Jacque LaValle**  
[jacque.lavalle@verizon.net](mailto:jacque.lavalle@verizon.net)
- Historian **Ed Stanfield**  
[edwin.stanfield@gmail.com](mailto:edwin.stanfield@gmail.com)

\*\*\*\*\*  
**(\*) Temporarily send all  
Treasurer correspondance  
& payments to Jacque LaValle  
at the address shown to the left**  
\*\*\*\*\*



**SEE YOU 1200 AT THE  
2012 FALL MUSTER  
13 OCTOBER 2012  
U.S. NAVY REC CENTER  
SOLOMONS, MD**

**REMINDER:**  
**2013 Spring Fling  
Saturday, 27APR2013  
NAS Pax River Beach House.**