



# VP-68 Hawk's Nest



Volume No. 27

VP-68 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

March 2008

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.



## The Far Side

My favorite cartoonist is The Far Side by Gary Larson. I have saved most of my calendars, aviation cartoons in particular, and thought that over the next few newsletters I would share some of them with you.

For all of you airline pilots...your secret is now out!!

## Corrections & Clarifications

In the last issue I made some good mistakes, so here are the Corrections and Clarifications:

Long version:

### Page 4: Bob Paty

Bob Paty only moved a few miles away and is still living in Haymarket, VA not Angola-By-The Bay Delaware.

To Mrs. Paty...Bob didn't move without you!!

So "AP"...stop looking for Bob....he's not there!!

### Page 5: USO

submitted by Bob Smith, not Bob Paty!

Bob Paty didn't go to Yellowstone, Bob Smith did. Bob Smith lives in Naples, FL - not Bob Paty. Patty is Bob Smith's wife - not Bob Paty's (Jan is his wife). Bob Smith visited the USO - not Bob Paty. Patty has two "t"s in it...Paty has only one! Bob spelled backwards is still Bob! My apology to Bob Smith, Bob Paty and Mrs. Paty though it did make for some humorous phone calls and emails! Thanks to all of you for your understanding.

Page 8: Change of Command  
(even spell-check didn't catch this one...and the "L" is nowhere even near the "R" on the keyboard?????)  
The article mentions "Real" Admiral McGrath. Now this doesn't mean that Jeff Lemmons isn't a "Real" Admiral...of course he is...they both are!!! So make your pen & ink changes from Real to Rear.

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My apologies to RDML McGrath.....I'm "real" sorry!

Short version:

Page 4: Bob Paty didn't move to Delaware.

Page 5: Bob Smith visited USO, not Bob Paty.

Page 8: Patrick McGrath is a Rear Admiral.

Editor's Note: Run this poem through your own spell-check and no errors are shown! See why I make mistakes??? (no more Bacardi & Coke for me while doing the Hawk's Nest!)

## Spell-Check

I have a spelling checker,

It came with my PC.

It clearly marks for my review,

Mistakes four me to sea.

I've run this poem threw it,

I shore you please two no.

It's letter perfect in its weigh,

My checker tolled me sew.

## Help - Lost Members

You kids are not always notifying us of your change of address, hence we have a few "lost" members who are not receiving the Hawk's Nest. If any of you know the whereabouts of the following members please contact them and tell them to notify our Secretary, Kathy Wright at: [wright\\_kathleen@bah.com](mailto:wright_kathleen@bah.com)

Alfredo Arroyo, L-98

Chris Eason, M-07

Harold Rymer, L-02

Walt Siemon, L-98

## New Members

Welcome to the VP-68 Alumni Association!!

Ron Cimo, L-07

Gretchen Trujillo, L-08

## 2007 Memberships Expired !

If your address label has a "M-07" after your name, your membership is now expired and this will be the last newsletter you receive.

See "Treasurer" on last page for more details.

## **2008 SPRING FLING**

( by Jacque LaValle )

The annual VP-68 Alumni Association "Spring Fling" picnic is scheduled for Saturday, 26 APR 08 at the NAS Patuxent River Beach House. Come early and enjoy the sun, fun, food and beverages.

Activities start at 1100. Free food and sodas for current paid members, \$5.00 for all guests and others.

To get on base, current DOD ID cards and/or vehicle base stickers are required. If you do not have one of these you cannot get on base. Anybody needing base access please contact Jacque LaValle NO LATER THAN 21 APR 08 at phone 301-342-0829 or by email at

[jacque.lavalle@verizon.net](mailto:jacque.lavalle@verizon.net).

### Hotel Accommodations:

Navy Lodge NAS PAX: 800-628-9466 or 301-737-2400.  
Also the Days Inn (old Belvedere): 301-863-6666.

Last year's "horseshoe challenge" was rained out so we will try again this spring. There are 2 sets of pits and we will bring the shoes!! Practice up y'all.

We will hold the drawing for the Captain Estes Fund P-3 painting during the business meeting. Funds raised will be donated to the U.S. Navy Memorial in honor of Capt. Estes, a tribute from his crew. The painting will be on hand so the lucky winner might even take it home with them. Tickets are \$5 / each or 5 for \$20.

Winner need not be present...we will mail it to you.

## **Navy Humor**

Three sailors were sitting together in a bar bragging about how they had given their new wives duties. The first sailor had married an Army woman and bragged that he had told his wife she was going to do all the dishes and house cleaning. He said it took a couple days but on the third day he came home to a clean house and the dishes were done.

The second sailor had married an Air Force woman. He bragged that he had given his wife orders that she was to do all the cleaning, dishes and the cooking. On that the first day he didn't see any results, but the next day it was better. By the third day, his house was clean, the dishes were done and he had a huge dinner on the table.

The third sailor had married a Navy woman. He told her that her duties were to keep the house clean, dishes washed, lawn mowed, laundry washed and hot meals on the table for every meal. He said the first day he didn't see anything, the second day he didn't see anything, but by the third day most of the swelling had gone down and he could see a little out of his left eye; enough to fix himself a bite to eat, load the dishwasher and telephone a landscaper!

## **VP-68 FALL DEPLOYMENT**

( by Joe Odenthal )

To all of us, the term "Deployment" meant loading the Cruise Boxes, luggage drills, customs inspections, all-night flights, etc.....NOT THIS TIME!!!

The VP-68 Alumni Association will host a fun-filled "Fall Deployment" in October 2008. Under the lead of Joe Odenthal and Cornelius "Strip" Stripling, reservations have been made at the "Club 9" on Navy Recreation Center (NRC) Solomons for a catered dinner on Saturday evening, 04 OCT 08.

NRC Solomons is a beautiful facility located about 65 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. Billeting is walking distance from the party zone....hence, no driving after partying!! "Club 9" is on the waterfront, has a large deck overlooking the Patuxent River, and the available billeting accommodations include:

- Six 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

Please contact Joe Odenthal to make your advance dinner seating reservations at "Club 9".

[odenthal@cox.net](mailto:odenthal@cox.net)

Along with the dinner, planning is in progress for other entertainment and events. Menu selections and other details will be announced in future "Hawk's Nests" and on our website: [www.vp68.org](http://www.vp68.org). Don't miss out on this great, fun-filled Blackhawk party...

***BE THERE!!!***

## Taps

We are saddened to report the loss of another VP-68 Alumni Association member.

Former Blackhawk and Crew 4 member AO1 Don White passed away on 10JAN07. Funeral services with full military honors were conducted on Sunday, 13JAN08 at the American Legion Little Arlington Cemetery at Cravensdale, WV.



Don had initially joined the Marines but after being Honorably Discharged he affiliated with the Naval Air Reserves and VP-68. Don served with VP-68 for 20 years, first in Admin as a YN and then he became an aircrewman as an Ordinance man.

He taught high school for a few years, worked for the State of West Virginia as a Social Worker and Parole Officer and finally an Engineer for CSX Transportation from which he retired in 2002. Along with his golfing, boating, fishing and biking hobbies, Don also was a pilot and a Bagpiper for the West Virginia Highlanders.

Don was diagnosed with terminal cancer last year and promised his wife Arlene he would hold on until after Christmas. Many of his Blackhawk buddies communicated with Don and recanted some of the good times together. Ed Stanfield remembers one reserve weekend he asked Don how things were going. In his dry sense of humor Don replied things were going pretty darn good if you delete the fact that he just wrecked a train that week!!!

Our sincere thoughts, prayers and condolences go out to Don's wife and family.

### My "Dash"

( by poet Linda Ellis )

I read of a man who stood to speak,  
At the funeral of a friend.  
He referred to the dates on her tombstone,  
From the beginning...to the end.

He noted that first came her date of birth,  
And spoke the following date with tears.  
But he said what mattered most of all,  
Was the dash between those years.  
( 1934 – 1998 )

For that dash represents all of the time,  
That she spent alive on earth...  
And now only those who loved her,  
Know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own;  
The cars...the house...the cash.  
What matters is how we live and love,  
And how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard...  
Are there things you'd like to change?  
For you never know how much time is left,  
That can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough,  
To consider what's true and real.  
And always try to understand,  
The way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger,  
And show appreciation more.  
And love the people in our lives,  
Like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect,  
And more often wear a smile..  
Remembering that this special dash,  
Might only last a little while.

So, when your eulogy's being read,  
With your life's actions to rehash...  
Would you be proud of the things they say,  
About how you spent your dash?

## Great Picture



In previous issues of the Hawk's Nest we featured articles about our beloved P2-V Neptune. I came across a photo I took of this fantastic painting that was on display at our 2005 Reunion in the Ready Room and thought I would share it with you. I don't know the artist to give credit to so whoever brought this, please let me know the specifics of this painting and how copies may be acquired. Thank you!!.....Jim Rozycki, Editor

## Rules of the Air

Rule #1: Every takeoff is optional. Every landing is mandatory.

Rule #2: If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger. If you pull the stick back, they get smaller. That is, unless you keep pulling the stick all the way back, then they get bigger again.

Rule #3: Flying isn't dangerous. Crashing is what's dangerous.

Rule #4: It's always better to be down here wishing you were up there than up there wishing you were down here.

Rule #5: The ONLY time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.

Rule #6: The propeller is just a big fan in front of the plane used to keep the pilot cool. When it stops, you can actually watch the pilot start sweating.

Rule #7: When in doubt, hold on to your altitude. No one has ever collided with the sky.

Rule #8: A 'good' landing is one from which you can walk away. A 'great' landing is one after which they can use the plane again.

Rule #9: Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself.

Rule #10: You know you've landed with the wheels up if it takes full power to taxi to the ramp.

Rule #11: The probability of survival is inversely proportional to the angle of arrival. Large angle of arrival, small probability of survival and vice versa.

Rule #12: Never let an aircraft take you somewhere your brain didn't get to five minutes earlier.

Rule #13: Stay out of clouds. The silver lining everyone keeps talking about might be another airplane going in the opposite direction. Reliable sources also report that mountains have been known to hide out in clouds.

Rule #14: Always try to keep the number of landings you make equal to the number of take-offs you've made.

Rule #15: There are three simple rules for making a smooth landing. Unfortunately no one knows what they are.

Rule #16: You start with a bag full of luck and an empty bag of experience. The trick is to fill the bag of experience before you empty the bag of luck.

Rule #17: Helicopters can't fly; they're just so darn ugly the earth repels them.

Rule #18: If all you can see out of the window is ground that's going round and round and all you can hear is commotion coming from the passenger compartment, things are not at all as they should be.

Rule #19: In the ongoing battle between objects made of aluminum going hundreds of miles per hour and the ground going zero miles per hour, the ground has yet to lose.

Rule #20: Good judgment comes from experience. Unfortunately, the experience usually comes from bad judgment.

Rule #21: It's always a good idea to keep the pointy end going forward as much as possible.

Rule #22: Keep looking around. There's always something you've missed.

Rule #23: Remember, gravity is not just a good idea. It's the law. And it's not subject to appeal.

Rule #24: The three most useless things to a pilot are the altitude above you, runway behind you, and a tenth of a second ago.

## Navy Humor Ole "Boats" & "Gunny"

Boats and Gunny, two elderly ex-servicemen, met in the park every day to feed the pigeons, watch the squirrels and discuss world problems. One day, Boats didn't show up. Gunny didn't think much about it and figured maybe he had a cold or something. But after Boats hadn't shown up for a week or so, Gunny really got worried. However, since the only time they ever got together was at the park, Gunny didn't know where Boats lived, so he was unable to find out what had happened to him. A month had passed, and Gunny figured he had seen the last of Boats. But one day, Gunny approached the park and lo and behold....there sat Boats! Gunny was very excited and happy to see him and told him so. Then he said, 'For crying out loud Boats, what in the world happened to you?' Boats replied, 'I have been in jail.' 'Jail?' cried Gunny. 'What in the world for?' 'Well,' Boats said, 'you know that cute little blonde waitress at the coffee shop where I sometimes go?' 'Yeah,' said Gunny, 'I remember her. What about her?' Boats replied.. 'Well, one day she filed sexual charges against me; and, at 89 years old, I was so proud, that when I got into court, I pled 'guilty' and the judge gave me 30 days for perjury.'

## **VP-92 DeComm**

( submitted by Jacque LaValle )

Well, I was part of another one bites the dust!! I spent 7 years with VP-92 as their SELRES CMC. Here are some of my photos including VP-68 Alumni Rear Admiral Lemmons, Kevin Cahill, Ray Hanson, and Kevin Sinnett.. I also included a photo of the P-3 GLASS cockpit. Amid mixed emotions, an era ended at Brunswick Naval Air Station as the Navy's "Minutemen" Patrol Squadron Nine-Two, VP-92, was deactivated.

Commissioned in 1970, VP-92 originally flew the Lockheed P-2V Neptune but transitioned to the P-3 Orion in 1974 and has been flying them since. "The transition from the P-2 to the P-3 was like going from a stagecoach to a train," explained Minuteman and Plank Owner Ed Sabatini. "The P-2 wasn't pressurized, when it rained you got wet, you froze your butt off because the heaters didn't work." The decision to deactivate the squadron was ultimately made by Rear Adm. Lemmons



who reassured the over 600 in attendance that the deactivation was in no way related to the upcoming base closure in 2011 nor on performance. "This is a great squadron and VP-92 has always been full of top performers." But as Rear Adm. Lemmons outlined, the P-3 is old and needs replaced and the needs are many and the resources are few. As the Navy finds itself engaged in a new type of war, its leaders see a need to rearrange the reserve and active duty to provide the best fleet readiness and operational capability for modern warfare.

The plan is to transition the 300 or so remaining members of VP-92 into active duty positions, an arrangement that will better suit U.S. military needs in a post-Cold War environment that pits an all-volunteer U.S. military against enemies whose links are defined by ideological ties rather than national boundaries.

"Most of the guys here flew together for 30 years," said recently retired Senior Chief Martin McCormack through wet eyes. "It's sad. Everyone has emotions about what happened, but we all understand. A lot of wet eyes here today."



Above, Kevin Cahill and Ray Hanson share a laugh at the dinner after the ceremony. Seeing the way the hangar was set up reminds us so much of our own VP-68 demise. They lasted 12 more years than we did!!

Here, Kevin Sinnett enjoys a lighter moment at the ceremony. It is nice to know that VP-68 alumni contributed to the success of the Navy long after our squadron was decommissioned. We share and feel the pain of the "Minutemen" of VP-92. Again, why we have and must keep strong our VP-68 Alumni Association.



Below is a photo of the P-3 GLASS cockpit that was on the display aircraft at the ceremony.



There are still a lot of the familiar buttons, switches and gauges we remember but progress dictates to make room for the new and improved all of the time.

## **9-11 Story**

All of us will never forget the horror of that day watching events unfold. On of our own Blackhawks, Steve Kimberling, a pilot with American Airlines, was very much involved in those events and here is some of his story as told in an interview for Pathfinder Magazine.

Steve is a Plankowner with VP-68 and flew both the P-2 and the P-3 from 1970 to 1979 with VP-68.

Here's Steve's story.....

The Pathfinder, Volume VII, Issue IX, November 2007  
Spotlight on Steve Kimberling By Marie Newman

The worst day of my flying career was September 11, 2001. I was a B-777 check airman in the process of checking out a copilot on a flight from London to New York's Kennedy airport. The day started out very normally. Some of the flight attendants were people that I had flown with before. Everyone was looking forward to returning home.

We taxied to the end of the runway and departed around 11:30 am, or 5:30 Eastern Standard Time. All aircraft flying in the North Atlantic turn to an air-to-air frequency to listen for bumpy rides ahead, or weather that may require aircraft to deviate. At 700 miles directly south of Iceland, we were doing our normal checks and cross checks in a very quiet cockpit when I heard two United Airlines pilots saying that something terrible had just happened. I asked for details but they said that it was too terrible to talk about over the airways. I was given a BBC HF frequency to which I turned and listened to the events unfold. When it became obvious that US airspace would be shut down, I contacted my dispatcher and suggested that I turn around and go back to London. He wanted me to continue and divert to Gander, Newfoundland. If we had taken off an hour later, I would have been diverted back to London and would have returned to the US at least two days earlier.

I called the flight attendants to the cockpit one at a time to explain what was happening. By this time, the towers had collapsed and all I could think of was that between 50,000 and 60,000 people may have lost their lives. As we got closer to Newfoundland, we switches to a normal communications channel where we had direct contact with air traffic control. We were informed that Gander was full and they wanted us to divert to St. John's, Newfoundland. This was very fortunate for us because Gander already had 39 aircraft with over 6,600 passengers in a city of 9,600. St. Johns, where we diverted, is a city of about 173,000 and they accommodated 27 aircraft and 4,000 passengers.

The flight from London to St. John's was about 5 ½ hours. The last 3 hours the crewmembers were aware of what was happening. I had to decide what I was going to tell the passengers about our landing in St. John's. I did not want to cause any panic and I was not sure that we did not have any terrorist on board. I decided that if I told the passengers that the air-traffic system on the East Coast was shut down, that would cause the least amount of concern. I just didn't mention that the air traffic control system for the entire country was closed.

My aircraft was the last to land at St. John's. As I taxied to our parking place, I got as close as possible to the aircraft in front of me so that there was no way my aircraft could be moved without striking a wing tip. After I shut down the aircraft, I began by saying, "This is the most difficult announcement I have ever had to make." I then told the passengers what had happened.

I got out of my seat and went back to talk to the passengers. Four people had cell phones that worked and they allowed anyone who wanted to use their phones to call home. I reached my son and let him know that I was all right. He wanted more information but I cut him short because I was responsible for 150 passengers. One woman who was in her 80's was sitting very quietly staring straight ahead. Another passenger told me that she was on her way to New York to visit her daughter and her son-in-law, who worked in the World Trade Center. I helped her call her daughter and found out that her son-in-law was in California on business. Several passengers were Muslims and asked me where Mecca was so they could pray. One of the flight attendants was a smoker as were several passengers so I let them smoke one at a time at the left back door. We had some food and liquor left from the flight. I instructed that flight attendants to serve the food, but not the liquor. I spent the next three hours walking around the cabin answering questions.

During this time, a United Airlines B767 had received a bomb threat so the aircraft was evacuated and searched. However, no bomb was found and the passengers were allowed to wait on the ramp. No aircraft were deplaned during this time but all of the captains and lead flight attendants were taken off their aircraft for a meeting. We were informed that two possible terrorists were on the island and the Canadian Prime Minister would not let anyone leave their aircraft until these people were apprehended. At the end of the meeting, all captains and flight attendants were told that they did not have to go back on their aircraft. No one accepted that invitation. Two hours later the two missing individuals were located in a motel where they had checked in. One woman was terminally ill and did not want to stay on her airplane. An ambulance was called to take her and her companion to the hospital. She went to the hospital in the ambulance but did not admit herself, so it was assumed that they were terrorists.

When the decision was finally reached to deplane the aircraft, there was only one set of stairs on the top of a pickup truck. It was determined that passengers could take nothing with them except for medicine and small purses. Everyone was questioned and searched once they reached the terminal. Crewmembers were allowed to take their carry-on luggage because it was assumed that the airspace would open the next morning and the crew should be rested for the flight home. Since we were the last aircraft to land, we were the last to be deplaned; we spent a total 13 ½ hours on the ground before we were deplaned. As the sun went down, the number one flight

attendant asked if she could turn down the lights so that the people could sleep. I said "no" because I had no idea whether or not we had terrorist on board and I wanted to be able to monitor all activity.

When we were finally off-loaded, all the hotels were full. The passengers were taken to the civic center or the sports arena. An Air Canada flight attendant offered to house five of our flight crew. The other nine were going to spend the night on the aircraft when a very kind Salvation Army officer heard about our plight and offered a dorm wing in the Salvation Army College. The facilities had ten single dorm rooms with one communal bathroom, one small kitchen, and one common room with a TV. The staff prepared some cold cuts for a snack and got us some sheets and towels. We had all been up for over 24 hours and were very tired but we were unable to relax after the day's events.

After the staff left, we turned on the TV and opened several bottle of wine that I was bringing back from London. We watched the second plane crash into the World Trade Center on TV for the next 3 hours until we were numb enough to go to sleep.

I later found out that all of the crewmembers who flew into the Pentagon were friends of mine and I have never been able to watch any of the movies or news footage of that disaster since then.

I retired the following, May and I was lucky enough to have eleven of my family and friends with me on my last trip. Even now I miss the flying and travel very much.

Editor Note: Steve, thank you for sharing this with us.

### **Match the Navy Slang**

- |                 |                         |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| A) Snipe        | 01) loose thread        |
| B) Tin Can      | 02) PO1 & PO2 Club      |
| C) Bug Juice    | 03) Ships far aft       |
| D) Bubblehead   | 04) A Marine            |
| E) Crow         | 05) Radioman            |
| F) Jarhead      | 06) Kool-Aid            |
| G) Goat Locker  | 07) Candy               |
| H) Sparky       | 08) Former Enlisted     |
| I) Dixie Cup    | 09) Petty Officer Badge |
| J) Irish Penant | 10) Sailor's White Hat  |
| K) Mustang      | 11) Engineer            |
| L) Acey-Deucy   | 12) CPO Mess            |
| M) Geedunk      | 13) Destroyer           |
| N) Fantail      | 14) A Submariner        |

### **P-3A Instrument Panel**

( submitted by Dan Smith )

I have recently purchased and taken delivery of an instrument panel from a recently scrapped P-3A. The Buno was 151351 as indicated on the radio call placard on the upper right hand of the pilot's panel. I have the pilot's, copilot's and engineer's front panels consisting of sheet metal, clamps and attaching hardware for instruments, associated wiring and hoses including most of the cannon plugs. A few lights are left such as both pilot's and copilot's RAWs signals, but most everything else is gone. Sorry, but I have no way of getting photographs of this prior to your anticipated publish date for the VP-68 newsletter.

It might be fun if we started a "scavenger hunt" to find instruments and other items to complete the panel. Each contributor would retain ownership of contributed material and it could all be put together at the Fall Deployment. What is neat is that the "hunt" could become an opportunity for various squadron members to talk to one another in order to find out who has access to what and duplication of efforts would be minimized.

You may contact me at [dan@sailrite.com](mailto:dan@sailrite.com) and [w1ndfall@msn.com](mailto:w1ndfall@msn.com) if you would like to use me as a central contact point for the exercise. As you remember, I already have enough TIT Gauges to fill that part of the panel.

### **One-Winged F-15**

( submitted by Brad Kirley )

Some of you may have seen the circulated email about the Israeli F-15 that collided with another aircraft in a training exercise and lost the right wing but didn't know it and landed safely. After the collision, the escaping fuel vapor prevented the crew from seeing that the wing was missing. After recovering from the spin they diverted and made an emergency landing. Only after the plane came to a stop did they see they were missing their wing. Here is a link to a video about the incident.

[www.sonnyradio.com:80/F15.wmv](http://www.sonnyradio.com:80/F15.wmv)

## **Navy Grounds Some P-3C Orions**

( Source: Navy Times & Associated Press )

WASHINGTON – 17DEC07 the U.S. Navy has grounded 39 of its surveillance / anti-submarine planes, nearly one in four, due to concerns that a structural defect could cause either of the aircraft's wings to break off in flight. The grounding was the result of engineering analysis and computer modeling and was not caused by any structural failures, Naval Air Systems Command spokesman John Milliman said.

Ten of the four-engine propeller planes are currently deployed overseas, and Navy spokesman Cmdr. Jeff Davis said they will return to the U.S. for repairs and it has not yet been determined how or if they will be replaced. "We are acting early, based upon engineering analysis and fleet inspections, to ground these aircraft before a problem arises," said Davis. The Navy has a total of 161 of the P-3C Orions, and their average age is 28 years old. The oldest aircraft is 44 and the youngest is 18 years old. It will take 18-24 months to repair each of the planes, for a total of about three years to complete the process. Those that cannot be repaired will be retired from service.

Navy officials have not yet determined how much the repairs will cost or whether retired aircraft will be replaced. The Orions are some of the oldest aircraft the Navy has, and they are set to be replaced in coming years by the new P-8A Poseidon jet plane. The Poseidon are expected to be operational in the Navy fleet in 2019. Davis said it is not clear yet whether the rest of the Orions will also have to eventually be taken out of service for repairs.

The 39 were chosen based on their age, number of hours flown and other computer analysis that showed they had exceeded the amount of fatigue on the wings that the Navy considered a concern. The Naval Air Systems Command issued a bulletin announcing the grounding on Monday, saying it was determined that the 39 aircraft were "beyond known structural limits on the lower section" of the wing.

Meanwhile, to lesson the impact of the grounding, Navy officials will rotate P-3s from other parts of the fleet to replace the 10 aircraft currently deployed, and commanders plan to ensure that each squadron can meet all of its operational requirements.

### **Editor's Note:**

Reading the above article it occurred to me that it was a good thing the Navy didn't do computer analysis on us aircrewmembers between the ages of 18 and 44!! Based on our use (and abuse!!) we probably had things ready to fall off of us too!! We drank all night - flew all day - lived on coffee, cigarettes and box lunches - dodged the bulls - spread the bull - slept on floors - partook in initiations - forced to retire or we'd still be doin' it!!!! And that was way more than 25% of us!!! They sent aircraft to re-vamp...sent us to re-hab!!!! Ah, the good ole days!

## **Yes, but can they drop sonobuoys?**

( by Rex Wyers )

On the evening of 18FEB08, my family and I stepped outside of our home in Pensacola, FL and as advertised by NASA, saw a spectacular display in the sky. At 1820 local, two objects came into view in the Northwest sky on a sweeping curve to the Southeast.

The two objects sparkled brilliantly in the evening sky as the swooped by in formation. Within three minutes, they were gone on their Southeasterly trajectory! These celestial objects were the Space Shuttle Atlantis followed by the International Space Station about 50 nautical miles astern of the shuttle.

The International Space Station can be visually tracked from the ground since it is a long-term project. But seeing both craft together was extremely rare and a spectacular sight to behold. If you want to at least see the Space Station, log onto the site below and then follow the prompts through the Space Station page. It will ask you where you are on earth, then list the scheduled passes over your geographical site. This will include where it begins to where it ends on what compass point and how many degrees of elevation above the horizon it will be.....happy looking!!

<http://www.nasa.gov>

### **President's Corner**

( by Lou Abbott )

I was watching the National Geographic Channel a while back. There was a program called something like "The World After Man" (or Humans – I can't remember the exact title). Anyway, it started showing what the world would look like in 25 years, then 50, then 100 and so on. The theme was that man's creations such as buildings, bridges, roads and so on would deteriorate slowly at first and then very rapidly as time went on. Finally, after a thousand or so years nothing would be recognizable at all.

What's my point in all of this? I compare it on a much smaller scale and shorter time line to our Alumni Association. I feel we are at the early stages of decline losing a member here or there, but gaining one or two elsewhere. We are an aging group by nature and they are not making any more new VP-68 veterans. We as a collective group need to actively campaign for visibility of the Association and recruit new (old) members.

Many, many Alumni members are doing just that right now, but we must continue the efforts and gather more supporters. It won't be long before time suddenly accelerates and we suffer large numbers of membership losses. The "unrecognizable" state won't be far behind!

With some foresight we have written into our By-Laws what action to take for "The Last Alumni Standing" (or sitting) to take. It will happen one day. Meanwhile, re-double your efforts to keep our Association alive and well.

**From the Editor:**

Jim Rozycki

I was recently asked about color copies and past issues of the Hawk's Nest. In keeping within our yearly budget and to cut costs we are publishing the Hawk's Nest in black & white. Shortly after we mail out your newsletters I post a color .pdf version on the VP-68 Alumni Association website [www.vp68.org](http://www.vp68.org)

Go to the website and on the Home page, in the left hand column select Newsletters. There you may choose the issue and print it out on your own color printer.

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  
4773 W. Braddock Road, Apt 204,  
Alexandria, VA 22311.

**From the Treasurer**

**2007 MEMBERSHIPS (M-07)  
ARE NOW EXPIRED !**

Regular yearly members ("M-07") should note that your 2007 dues is now expired. Check the mailing label to see if there is a "M-07" after your name.

For 2007 Members we have included an addressed envelope to send us your 2008 dues in.

Members who have not renewed their dues by March of each year will be dropped from our roster, lose their membership rights and no longer receive this newsletter. Please consider converting to a Life Membership and never have to write us another check, annual dues are \$10, Life Memberships are \$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  
708 Schindler Drive  
Silver Springs, MD 20903-1330

Make checks payable to:  
VP-68 Alumni Association

contact John LeNard at 301- 445-2261  
or email at [johnlenard01@comcast.net](mailto:johnlenard01@comcast.net)

**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)

**Association Officers**

- President **Lou Abbott**  
[louabbott1@verizon.net](mailto:louabbott1@verizon.net)
- Vice-President **Jacque LaValle**  
[jacque.lavalle@verizon.net](mailto:jacque.lavalle@verizon.net)
- Secretary **Kathy Wright**  
[wright\\_kathleen@bah.com](mailto:wright_kathleen@bah.com)
- Treasurer **John LeNard**  
[johnlenard01@comcast.net](mailto:johnlenard01@comcast.net)
- Historian **Ed Stanfield**  
[edstanfield@mrisc.com](mailto:edstanfield@mrisc.com)

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**SEE YOU AT THE  
2008 SPRING FLING  
26 APR 08 • 1100  
NAS PATUXENT RIVER  
BEACH HOUSE**

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**MAKE YOUR PLANS NOW  
TO ATTEND THE  
VP-68 FALL DEPLOYMENT!!  
NRC SOLOMONS  
04 OCT 08**

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**FINAL REMINDER:  
MAIL YOUR 2008 DUES NOW**

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**Aging Words of Wisdom...**

As you get older, your secrets are safe with your friends, because they can't remember them either!!!

Navy Slang Answers: A-11, B-13, C-06, D-14, E-09, F-04, G-12, H-05, I-10, J-01, K-08, L-02, M-07, N-03