



# VP-68 Hawk's Nest

Volume No. 24

VP68 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

April 2007

## HAPPY SPRING

### 2007 SPRING FLING

The annual VP-68 Alumni Association "Spring Fling" picnic is scheduled for Saturday, 05May07 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 01MAY07 at phone 301-342-0829 or by email at [jacque.lavalle@verizon.net](mailto:jacque.lavalle@verizon.net).

We have received an anonymous challenge that "nobody can beat me at shoes"!! There are pits there and we will bring the shoes!! Practice up y'all.

Hotel Accommodations: Navy Lodge cost is \$55 per night, 800-628-9466 or 301-737-2400. Also the Days Inn (old Belvedere) 301-863-6666 military/gov rate is \$76 per night and includes hot breakfast buffet.

### From the Secretary's Corner

Please get in touch with me if you move or change email addresses, it is the only way we can keep track of you. Please send your information to me by email at [wright\\_kathleen@bah.com](mailto:wright_kathleen@bah.com) or snail mail - 4773 W. Braddock Road, Apt 204, Alexandria, VA 22311.

### Blackhawk April 2007 Fly-In

By Jacque LaValle

This is a reminder that the 2007 VP-68 Fly-In is fast approaching, scheduled for 28 April 2007. Please get those RSVPs into me as soon as you're able.

Pilots - now is the time to refresh those currencies, whether that be VFR or IFR. Reading Airport should prove to be an easy arrival for all.

Ground bounders - get those vehicle spring maintenance worries done now and meet us at the Reading Airport.

This year should prove to be one of the BEST FLY-INS yet. The museum on the field will have a tour guide ready for us at 1300 and rumor has it we will be honored with a full tour of the fully restored P-2V on location.

For further details, see our announcement at [www.vp68.org](http://www.vp68.org) and pass the word to any and every one. Hope to see many of you folks there on April 28th. Anyone needing space A, let me know as well. I have one seat available out of College Park and another one out of St. Mary's Airport.



When: Saturday, 28 April 2007

Where: Reading Regional Airport (RDG), PA

Please RSVP by 26 April 2007 so we can get a head count @ 301-342-0829 or [jacque.lavalle@verizon.net](mailto:jacque.lavalle@verizon.net)

Schedule of Events:

1100-1300 Eats and fellowship at the Malibooz Bar and Grill (on the field).

1330-1600 Tour of Mid-Atlantic Air Museum

<http://www.maam.org>

Featuring P2V-7 (SP-2H) BUNO 145915, flown by Reserve squadrons VP-67, VP-94 and VP-92.

Museum Admission cost \$6/person

Directions:

By Air: RDG is located N40-22.71 W075-57.92, North West of the city and of Pottstown VOR (NW of Willow Grove). Class D airspace, numerous IAPs available or just plan VFR fun.

By Car: RDG is located on Bernville Rd Rte 183 off State Rte. 222

By Boat: Get real, this is a Fly-In...but if you must, navigate the Schuylkill River!!!

### COMRESPATWINGLANT & VP-92

The Wing decommissioning is scheduled for the day of 23JUN07 and also a Reserve Patrol Wing Disestablishment "Celebration" will be held at NAS Willow Grove on the evening of 23JUN07.

For anyone wishing an "E-vite", please contact CDR Phillips directly at [samuel.phillips@navy.mil](mailto:samuel.phillips@navy.mil). It is thought that this will be the best "last chance" for those that have served in the Reserve Force Maritime Patrol Aviation community across the years to get together one last time and remember the long and proud heritage of which each of us is a part.

The VP-92 decommissioning is scheduled for 13OCT07 and the point of contact is Command Senior Chief Fernando Cantu at: [fernando.r.cantu@navy.mil](mailto:fernando.r.cantu@navy.mil)

### **Calling All Blackhawks:**

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)

### **Blackhawks Respond**

In our last issue Volume 23, January 2007 we posted several photos and asked for your input. For those who responded, many thanks!! Now pull out the last newsletter, check out the photos while reading the comments and stories we received.

### **Photo Caption Contest**

From Ron Auth:

Master Chief LeNard: "Man, what a great box lunch."  
Master Chief Peeling: "I never eat box lunches."

From George "Doc" Durity

"I'm eating...you can sit there and stare at nothing if you want to!"

### **Memory Lane**

We showed two photos of P2V aircraft. Blackhawks checked their old log books and responded:

**From Garrett A. Fahl, CWO4, USN Ret – VP-661**

**Plane Captain Crew 5:** The lower picture with the blue and white paint job on them was the color of the planes at the time of the 1961 Berlin crisis recall from 01OCT61 to 01AUG62. They activated VP-661 and VP-663. Plane is parked on the ramp at NAS Anacostia, 1961. The colors changed to the gray and white scheme after we returned from Gitmo, Cuba, AUG62 and the planes are parked at NAF Andrews.

**From Ron Auth:**

The P2 with buno 127781 served on ACDUTRA with VP-661. It was the first aircraft with the new flight deck configuration. I think it was the skipper's aircraft (CO Ralph Kauffman) and Don Gallagher was the plane captain. The aircraft buno 128390 photo probably was taken at Andrews. Notice the R-5 at the end of the row as back in those days we shared those spaces with the VR.

**From Paul Monaghan:**

SP-2E 6A 205, buno 128390 is shown at Andrews. Look at the nose and note the hat and shamrock. This plane took us to RAF Bally Kelly where we attended a NATO training course with the RAF and Royal Navy at HMS Sea Eagle, Londonderry, Northern Ireland. While a tadpole with few flying hours I tracked flight time religiously...35.2 hours in 128390 from 1963 thru 1965 and quit counting hours after 1965. Flew 84.6 hours in SP-2E 6A 201 buno 127781 during the same time frame.

**From John LeNard:**

The pictures of the SP-2E's [obviously E's (or -5's for us old timers) from the large elliptical wing tip tanks] made me go down to the basement and dig out my training record: It shows that I first flew 128390 on April 21, 1967, eleven years to the day after I joined the Navy. I made four flights in 128390 in '67 and three in '68. In September '69 we switched to SP2H. Based on the hangers in the background and the line up of the planes, both pictures were probably taken at NAF ADW, the same hangers from which VP68 flew from 1985 on. The black and white picture of 127781 was obviously made earlier, probably in the 1962-65 time frame. VP661,2 and 3 moved to NAF in 1961, just about the time of the Cuban missile crisis when VP661 and 663 were called up and moved the planes to Pax. VP662 received some P2V-6's (with a nose turret, maybe even a tail turret but my memory fails me here). When VP661/3 was released from active duty, the SP2H's returned to NAF ADW. Some others like Ed Stanfield, Vic Kraft, Dale Grimes, etc., can talk about the electronics. Possibly 127781 was pre Julie/Jezebel.

### **Kissed a Mountain!!**

As told by the crew and as a tribute to their pilot, Captain Harry A. Estes.

The following story also comes from the photos of the P2Vs and will raise the hair on the back of your neck. It is a story of a near brush with death and a crew's dedication to and respect for their pilot...their hero...Captain Harry "Big Red" Estes. On the photo of the aircraft Buno 128390, look closely at the nose just behind the side number 205. There you will see a small painted green "Irish Hat". The following is the story of that airplane, the crew and the mountain they kissed!!

Let us introduce you to the crew and their story...



**VP-662 Crew 01, Bally Kelly, Ireland - 1966**

**Back:** AT1 Dale Grimes, LT Gary Lloyd, AT1 Bill Schott, LT Bill Anderson, AO3 Sam Cridder, ATC John Peake, LT Buzz Jones.

**Front:** CDR Harry Estes, \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Dodd, ADR2 Jim Hall, AT2 Paul Monaghan, and 3 station keepers.

From the mid 1950's until the mid 1960's we crew members flew various and diverse missions with Captain Estes. He was a calm, collected, respected veteran pilot and squadron commander. Such a fine professional that could be a rock, yet be a gentile man. Anybody that knew him and especially flew with him respected him. In P2V's there seemed to always be an emergency but "Big Red" made it seem routine. We flew the Cuban Missile Crisis, even located and directed rescue of a fisherman from a sunken shrimp boat. But the most memorable and unforgettable flight was in 1966 in Ireland.

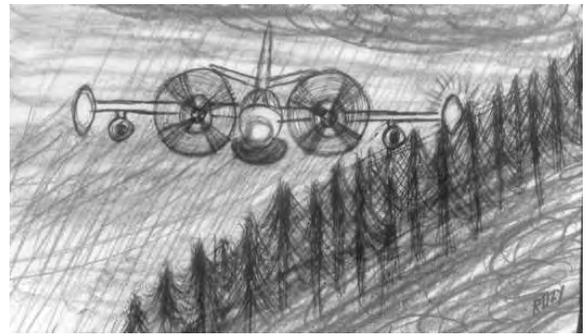
The Ireland trip was for three weeks for two reserve crews that were asked to volunteer. Our crew from Andrews and a crew from Atlanta were chosen. Even the flight over had problems. On the flight from Iceland to Ireland we iced up before we realized it and with electric deicing you had to be careful as you could melt into the controls. Basically you would let the ice build up, turn on the deicing and let the ice break off. The skipper never showed any emotion as if it was just routine but we all were a bit concerned.

We were based at Londonderry but flew out of Bally Kelly, North Ireland about 15 miles away.

The first week we all went to a NATO training class with the RAF and Royal Navy, then we started flight operations. The old WWII airstrip was built in a small valley surrounded by 2,000 foot mountains with a railroad track cutting across the end of the one and only runway. Once we actually had to take a wave-off because a freight train was on the runway!

Our fourth flight was early in the morning and we were briefed to expect rougher weather than the previous flights. The weather was awful as always there...fog, light rain mixed with snow showers, low clouds and low visibility. We couldn't fire up the radar on the ground so we asked the tower to give us a vector out through the gorge to open water.

On P-2s most of the enlisted crew sat Indian-style on the floor for take-offs and landings. We lifted off and after fumes check, the crew went to our assigned duty stations. Dale Grimes flew "MAD-Sniffer Observer" in the front plastic nose bubble. To get there he had to go down through a hatch in the floor aft of the flight station on the port side, drop down to another level then crawl on his hands and knees through a tunnel past the nose wheel. On this particular morning, crawling through the tunnel, Dale had to stop and put the parachute that was stored in the tunnel back into its storage rack as it had fallen out on take-off. By the time Dale got to his seat, we had been flying a few minutes and were still in IFR conditions due to the rain and fog and flying the vector the British gave us to stay out of trouble. After getting to his seat in the nose bubble, Dale was looking down between his feet to locate his seat belt when the aircraft went into a very hard, sharp, climbing right-hand turn. For just an instant through the fog, Dale saw a 30 foot pine tree pass just under the nose of the aircraft. Flying the vector the British gave us, which was way too close to the mountain, we made contact with the mountain.



Jim Hall, sitting on the jumpseat between the pilots, saw that we were just a couple feet off the ground and just had time to brace his feet against the center control stand and pray. After the "bump" we all got on the ICS and checked in with flight. A few seconds of silence was followed with Captain Estes saying "I never want to do THAT again". The skipper made a quick adjustment and we climbed on out. He never showed too much emotion, just as cool as ever, but the rest of us sure had a tight pucker string!! Post flight inspection revealed: a large dent on the inside of the port tip tank, we had torn off the tip tank horizontal stabilizer, there were scrape marks on the bottom side of the jet pod, dents in the leading edge of the port wing, pine tree branches in the flaps, and sand and gravel in the tip tank inspection plate. Later it was estimated that we just missed the port engine props by about 6 inches. Standing on the ground, looking at the plane, shaking our heads in disbelief as to what had just taken place, we shuddered as to how we could have come so close and yet survive. Was it fate being given a second chance or an answered prayer? In the October 1967 Approach Magazine article about the event they quoted: "Nature often extracts the extreme penalty for unplanned earth/aircraft contact."

On our last flight of operations we were returning to Bally Kelly after a successful ASW mission in which we found the British sub and "sank" it. The British tower used millibars and we used inches of mercury for altimeter settings. You guessed it...they did it again and had us too low in the soup. They figured out what they had done wrong and screamed over the radio...

CLIMB..CLIMB..CLIMB..TURN..TURN..TURN. It was close again but "Big Red" was as calm as ever. When we landed, the CO of the base was waiting for us along with two MP's with guns. He said he was very sorry that they almost killed us twice. We asked for a few minutes with his control tower. He politely said no and that was why the MP's were there to escort us to our bus to Londonderry as he could not afford to lose his control tower!! After debriefing off operational with the RAF and the Royal Navy we left Ireland for Spain, the Azores and then home. We arrived at Andrews on 17 DEC 1966

Two of our regular crew members did not make the trip to Ireland, Lou Kress and Jim Vitak. On 08JAN67 while flying with VP-661 Jim Vitak and the rest of that crew were killed on a routine flight out of Andrews. Four of us from Baltimore went to Andrews and who was

waiting for us..."Big Red." He wanted one of us to go back to Baltimore with him and tell Jim's wife. Jim Hall was elected to go. Jim doesn't know how Captain Estes kept his composure telling Sarah Vitak as they had three young children. He was so composed yet compassionate. Toughest duty we ever had in the Navy was being a pall bearer at Jim's memorial service.

Over the years that we all flew with "Big Red" we feel that he saved us many times, from Ireland, to a near mishap on a rocket run, to landing in a nasty ice storm in Willow Grove, PA because Andrews was closed.

His calm, cool demeanor reassured us time and time again we were all in good hands. Under his guidance and others VP-662 won the Noel Davis Trophy for the 5<sup>th</sup> time in 1968. On 22JUL69, in an endorsement from the Chief of Naval Air Reserve Training it stated "This is truly an outstanding accomplishment that reflects strong leadership and motivation by all hands. Being selected as #1 is not unusual for this unit. VP-662 has won every award available to Patrol Units."

It was truly an honor to serve with and fly with this gentleman and to call him our friend...our hero. Another photo of Capt. Estes and some of his crew.



**Back:** AT2 Paul Monaghan, ADR2 Jim Hall, ADR2 Lou Kress, LT Buzz Jones, AT1 Dale Grimes.

**Front:** AT1 Bill Schott, LT Bill Anderson, Commander Harry Estes, AO3 Sam Cridder.

## **P-2 history, photos and links**

### **Submitted by John Benton**

Web site with the history and details of every model made. Great site!

<http://p2vneptune.com/v05.shtml>

The next two sites have photos.

SP-2E Neptune BuNo: 128390: Photo taken 1 Jan. 67.

<http://www.verslo.is/baldur/p2/anacostia.htm#128390>

P2V-5F BuNo: 127781 Photographed at NAF Andrews on July 4, 1963 by Stephen H. Miller.

<http://www.verslo.is/baldur/p2/anacostia.htm#127781>

## **To honor Captain Harry Estes:**

At the VP-68 Alumni Association Reunion on 05Nov05, we raffled off an original painting by Morgan Wilbur and it was won by Paul Monaghan (see Kissed A Mountain).



To honor Captain Harry Estes, Paul Monaghan is donating the painting to be raffled off and the proceeds to be donated to the U.S. Navy Memorial in honor of Captain Harry A. Estes.

Paul and the rest of the crew that flew with Capt. Estes are so dedicated and loyal that they feel they want a lasting tribute to the gentleman that they owe their lives to. This is such a fitting example of the camaraderie and friendship that aircrews develop over the years together. Neither time nor distance can eradicate the bonds that form and actually reinforce them.



**CAPT. Harry A. Estes**

Here is your chance to own a beautiful acrylic painting of a VP-68 P-3 at altitude with contrails and also be a part of a tribute to one of our great professionals.

Tickets will sell for \$5/each and 5 for \$20. Please make out your checks to: VP-68 Alumni Association with the memo noted: "Capt. Estes Fund".

We have included an addressed envelope for your convenience. Upon receipt of your donation we will mail your ticket stubs to you. We will run the sales for a few months to allow all of you to have a chance. Please spread the word to all of the Blackhawks you know.

We will announce the winner of the painting and the details of the Memorial Fund in a future Hawk's Nest newsletter. Thank you all in advance for contributing.

Paul, thank you for your generous donation.

***Thank You Captain Estes !***

**Peacoats!!** (Caution: contains adult language)**Author Unknown.....submitted by Rex Lake**

You remember them...those ton and a half monsters that took the annual production of thirty-five sheep to make. Those thick black rascals with black plastic buttons the size of poker chips. The issue coats that drove shore duty chief petty officers stark raving nuts if they caught you with the collar turned up or your gahdam hands in your pockets. "Hey, you rubber sock, get those gahdam hands outta them damn pockets! Didn't they issue you black leather gloves?"

So, you took your hands out of your pockets and risked digital frostbite rather than face whatever the Navy had in store for violators of the 'No Gahdam Hands In Peacoat Pockets' policy. There's probably a special barracks in Hell full of old E-3s caught hitchhiking in sub-zero weather with hands in peacoat pockets.

As for those leather gloves, one glove always went missing. "Son, where in the hell are the gloves we issued you?" We??? I don't remember this nasty, ugly bas#%#d being at Great Lakes when the 'jocks and socks' petty officers were throwing my initial issue seabag at me and yelling, "Move it!!"

As for the gloves, once you inadvertently leave one glove on a wh\*%#house night table or on the seat of a Greyhound bus, the remaining glove is only useful if a tank rolls over the hand that fit the lost glove.

In the days long ago, a navy spec. peacoat weighed about the same as a flat car load of cinder blocks. When it rained, it absorbed water until your spine warped, your shins cracked and your ankles split. Five minutes standing in the rain waiting on a bus and you felt like you were piggy-backing the statue of liberty. When a peacoat got wet, it smelled a lot like sheep dip. It had that wet wool smell, times three. It weighed three and a half tons and smelled like 'Mary had a little lamb's' gym shorts.

You know how damn heavy a late '50s peacoat was? Well, they had little metal chains sewn in the back of the collar to hang them up by. Like diluted navy coffee, sexual sensitivity instruction, comfortable air-conditioned topside security bungalows, patent leather plastic-looking shoes and wearing raghats configured to look like bidet bowls, the peacoat spec. has been watered down to the point you could hang them up with dental floss. In the old days, peacoat buttons and grocery cart wheels were interchangeable parts. The gear issued by the U.S. Navy was tough as hell, bluejacket-tested clothing with the durability of rhino hide and construction equipment tires.

Peacoats came with wide, heavy collars. In a cold, hard wind, you could turn that wide collar up to cover your neck and it was like poking your head in a tank turret.

The things were warm, but I never thought they were long enough. Standing out in the wind in those 'big-legged britches' (bell bottoms), the wind whistled up your cuffs and took away body warmth like a thief. But, they were perfect to pull over you for a blanket when sleeping on a bus or a bus terminal bench.

Every sailor remembers stretching out on one of those oak bus station pews with his raghat over his face, his head up against his AWOL bag and covered with his peacoat. There was always some 'SP' who had not fully evolved from apehood, who poked you with his billy bat and said,

"Hey, YOU!! Get up! Waddy think yer doin? You wanna sleep, get a gahdam room!"

Peacoats were lined with quilted satin or rayon. I never realized it at the time, but sleeping on bus seats and station benches would be the closest I would ever get to sleeping on satin sheets.

Early in my naval career, a career-hardened (lifer) first class gunner's mate told me to put my ID and liberty card in the inside pocket of my peacoat.

"Put the sonuvabitches in that gahdam inside pocket and pin the damn thing closed with a diaper pin. Then, take your heavy folding money and put it in your sock. If you do that, learn to never take your socks off in a cathouse. Them damn dockside pickpockets pat 'cha down for a lumpy wallet and they can relieve you of said wallet so fast you'll never know you've been snookered.

Only a dumbass idiot will clam-fold his wallet and tuck it in his thirteen button bellbottoms. Every kid above the age of six in Italy knows how to lift a wallet an idiot pokes in his pants. Those little bas#%#s learned to pick sailor's pockets in kindergarten.

Rolling bluejackets is the national sport in Italy."

In Washington DC, they have a wonderful marble and granite plaza honoring the United States Navy. Every man or woman who served this nation in a naval uniform, owes it to himself or herself to visit this memorial and take their families.

It honors all naval service and any red-blooded American bluejacket or officer will feel the gentle warmth of pride his or her service is honored within this truly magical place.

The focal point of this memorial is a bronze statue of a lone American sailor. No crow on his sleeve tells you that he is non-rated. And, there are further indications that suggest maybe, once upon a time, the sculptor himself may have once been an E-3 raghat. The lad has his collar turned up and his hands in his pockets.



I'm sure the Goddess of the Main Induction nearly wets her panties laughing at the old, crusty chiefs standing there with veins popping out on their old, wrinkled necks, muttering, "Look at that idiot sonuvabitch standing there with his collar up and his gahdam hands in his pockets. In my day, I would have ripped that jerk a new one!"

Ah, the satisfied glow of E-3 revenge.

Peacoats...one of God's better inventions!

## **Congratulations Becky Connick!**

(better late than never, right?)

Submitted by Bruce Blackwelder, Crew 4 Skypigs  
Ref: DEC 1960 issue of Naval Aviation News, page 27

<http://www.history.navy.mil/nan/backissues/1960s/1960/dec60.pdf>

### **NARTU Anacostia**

Winner of Patrol Squadron 23's Man-of-the-Year Award at NARTU ANACOSTIA for the third consecutive time, Joseph W. Vickers, Jr., AD1, this year must share the honor with a lady in the squadron.

His competitor was Wave Rebecca Connick, YN2, who stacked up points by faithful participation in squadron training functions.

A lineman with the Eastern Maryland Shore Service Company, Vickers lives 91 miles from NARTU. He has a four-year perfect attendance record.



DUPLICATE AWARDS TO NARTU WINNERS

Becky has made perfect attendance at all of the VP-68 Alumni Association functions too!!!

## **More history, photos and links**

**Originated and maintained by Nevins Frankel**

Visit the VP Navy site by Nevins Frankel at:

<http://www.vpnavy.org>

**Submitted by Rex Lake**

Royal Netherlands Navy last Valkenburg P-3 flight

<http://home.planet.nl/~p3orion>

## **Cool P-3 videos**

Ultimate Dutch 5 foot low pass and others:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0d1XCQBxhY>

## **Social Security Follow-Up**

### **CORRECTION**

Tom "Bunky" Maurer noted that the web site that we provided in our last Hawk's Nest was incorrect. We went back and checked the source, and of course, it came from an email distributed by the Navy.....Oh, well. Anyway, thanks to "Bunky" for his eagle eyes. See the following article for follow-up regarding the Social Security benefits.

### **Social Security Benefits Part II –**

The following is from CAPT Kevin Dillon

In the Fall issue of the Hawk's Nest, information was provided regarding Military Service and Social Security benefits. CAPT Dillon contacted the Social Security office and they provided him the pertinent SSA Publication. He has provided excerpted from SSA *Publication No. 05-10017, January 2007*:

"Your Social security benefit depends on your earnings averaged over your working lifetime. Generally, the higher your earnings, the higher your benefit. Under certain circumstances, special earnings can be credited to your military pay record for Social Security purposes. The extra earnings are for periods of active duty or *active duty for training*. These extra earnings may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit. Social Security will add these extra earnings to your earning when you file for benefits.

" *If you served in the military from 1957 through 1977*, you are credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay."

" *If you served in the military from 1978 through 2001*, you are credited with an additional \$100 in earnings, up to a maximum of \$1200 a year, for every \$300 in active duty basic pay."

*After 2001, additional earnings are no longer credited.*"

**NOTE:** In all cases, the additional earnings are credited to the earnings averaged over working lifetime, not directly to your monthly benefit amount.

If you have questions regarding your eligibility go to [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) and research the website or contact the SSA at 1-800 772-1213.

## **Blackhawk People News**

### **VP-68 Alumni in Afghanistan**

We received an email from a VP-68 Alumni who was recently mobilized with the Army Reserves, packed his 3 seabags and headed off to Bagram, Afghanistan for a 1-year hitch with the Army. Our own Bob Barnes, VP-68 1979-1980 TAR AO3 worked out of the "Blue Whale" building at PAX. After he left PAX, Bob switched to the Army Reserves and recently re-enlisted for the last time with retirement in June 2011 with over 40 years service. Bob currently lives in Alabama and works at the Redstone Missile Range in Huntsville.



Here is a photo Bob (MSG, E8) sent to me a few years ago. Scared me to death when I saw the 11 hash marks, but the Army uses one for every 3 years of service not 4 like the Navy. He either has to retire or they have to stretch his arms!!

Anybody that has ever taken a MAC flight half around the world will appreciate Bob's story. "Left Ft. Benning 0400 Sunday 25Mar then Baltimore to Reinheim, Germany to Ankara, Turkey to Manas, Tebeckestan...rainy, cold, muddy (on plane 24 hours) then changed planes to Bagram, Afghanistan. I am assigned to Special Operations Command Central out of MacDill supporting airfield and convoy security. Just got here so still adapting from jet-lag, time-zones and MAC flight non-rest. Cold at night, hot & dusty at day, country poor, sheep-hearding big time, one-room schoolhouse, nice people, poor, no shoes on children. The Russians left airfield a mess, built lots of buildings none on the level, windows and doors not square, no running water, no heads and a country mile to get to one!! We live in Army's B&B (bed & bench), 8x8 houches, no furniture, chow not bad, 2 PX's, have lots of Seabees repairing things to make it more tolerable. We got mortared several nights ago couple clicks away, and yesterday we had a 6.2 earthquake so nothing dull here, long 12 hour days but they keep it interesting here!

Going to spend the next 365 days here with promise of two 4-day weekends every 90 days either Qatar or Germany. Then mid-tour I get 2-week basket leave state-side. Pass my best on to the Blackhawks, would appreciate hearing from you folks.....Bob".

[robert.barnes2@us.army.mil](mailto:robert.barnes2@us.army.mil)

### **A quick update on Capt. Paty**

They spent 7 1/2 months in Vero Beach, FL last year getting their condo repaired after the damage done from the two Sept. '04 hurricanes that hit their place. They got back to the DC area in mid August and began to look for a new place to live. They moved just 3 miles away in a Toll Brothers 55 and older community. Just recently they fled back to their Florida condo and will be there until Mid May. Which means, unfortunately, they will miss the Spring Fling. A note from Capt. Paty about Capt. Hap Peterson – My friend Hap Peterson has melanoma cancer. About 6 weeks ago he had just had his 3rd chemo treatment and still felt good. He is determined to fight it and has a good attitude. He lives in Hot Springs Village, Arkansas. Please keep Hap in your thoughts and prayers.

### **Rex Lake's son**

Kevin Lake, son of Rex Lake, was diagnosed with lung cancer in late summer 2006.

"He had surgery on November 8, 2006. The doctor removed half his left lung and three ribs in his back, along with some back muscle and tissue. The doctor is optimistic that the surgery was successful in removing all the cancer. He finished five weeks of daily radiation treatments this week, the last of that. Chemo is still possible, but the experts have not found that any chemo has been effective against the type of rare cancer that he has. He is doing well, back to pretty much a normal lifestyle and is gaining weight. Three weeks after his surgery, as I sat in my house depressed over his condition, I looked out my door to see him drive by on his motorcycle. He just won't let anything stop him and I'm sure that is a wonderful thing." Please keep Kevin in your prayers!

### **In Rememberance: by CAPT. Kevin Dillon**

Captain Bruce Abel's wife Helene, passed away unexpectedly in January 2007 as a result of complications from heart surgery. Bruce is an alumnus of VP-68 and Crew 13 serving with the Squadron from 1971 thru 1979. Bruce and Helene were married for 42 years. Recently living in Georgia, they were both natives of Pittsburgh, PA. Jim and Irene Rozycki plus Bob and Kathy Seaver visited Bruce at the funeral home and passed along our condolences. Bruce said to say hello to his former squadronmates.

### **Who's the Ole Salt?**

**submitted by Nick Schaus**

Take this Navy quiz and see how you do.

<http://www.funtrivia.com/playquiz.cfm?qid=136994>

Editor note: I'm old, I'm depressed, I got all 20 correct!!!

### **New Treasurer's Address**

Please note that the mailing address for the Treasurer has changed and 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**  
Questions??? contact John LeNard at 301- 445-2261  
or email at [johnlenard01@comcast.net](mailto:johnlenard01@comcast.net)

### **Membership:**

Members who have not renewed their dues by March of each year will be dropped from our roster, lose 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.

### **Missing Blackhawks**

If anybody knows the address of Harold Rymer and Ford Cox could you please contact me at either of the above addresses. Thank You, John LeNard.

### **Locator:**

Privacy Statement: The VP-68 Alumni Association holds membership information confidential and does not sell, disburse or distribute this information and uses it solely for Association purposes.

In compliance with our Privacy Statement, if you are trying to locate a Blackhawk, please contact any of the officers below. If we know the Blackhawk's information, we will pass on your request to them and they can contact you directly. Thank You.

### **Association Officers**

President	<b>Lou Abbott</b> <a href="mailto:louabbott1@verizon.net">louabbott1@verizon.net</a>
Vice-President	<b>Jacque LaValle</b> <a href="mailto:jacque.lavalle@verizon.net">jacque.lavalle@verizon.net</a>
Secretary	<b>Kathy Wright</b> <a href="mailto:wright_kathleen@bah.com">wright_kathleen@bah.com</a>
Treasurer	<b>John LeNard</b> <a href="mailto:johnlenard01@comcast.net">johnlenard01@comcast.net</a>
Historian	<b>Ed Stanfield</b> <a href="mailto:edstanfield@mrisc.com">edstanfield@mrisc.com</a>

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

We have dug deep, and thanks to the great input from y'all we have presented lots about the good old P2 days. Hope you could smell the avgas and oil and it brought some found memories back. Please keep the articles, emails, jokes and people news coming in to us.

Thanks also for catching and correcting any errors that get by us (understaffed and underpaid) and we most certainly appreciate it...please continue to edit us.

Please email all submissions to Kathy Wright, Secretary at: [wright\\_kathleen@bah.com](mailto:wright_kathleen@bah.com)

or mail to:

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

### **NAVY HUMOR:**

#### **Submitted by Terry Gibson**

I AM OFFENDED!!! Republican Senator John McCain berated fellow lawmakers for "spending money like a drunken sailor."

As a past and present drunken sailor, I take offense at being compared to Congress!!

#### **Submitted by Wally Chance**

"Well," snarled the tough old Navy chief to the young bewildered seaman, "I suppose after you get discharged from the Navy, you'll just be waiting for me to die so you can come and pee on my grave."

"Not me, Chief!" the seaman replied. "Once I get out of the Navy, I'm never going to stand in line again!"

**HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL AT THE  
2007 SPRING FLING  
SATURDAY, 05 MAY 07  
NAS PAX RIVER**