



VP-68 Hawk's Nest

Volume No. 23

VP-68 Alumni Association

January 2007

HAPPY NEW YEAR

2006 Election of Officers

In accordance with our by-laws, election of officers was held at our Fall Muster meeting on Saturday, 14 Oct 06. The two year terms of office will be from 01 Jan 07 until 31 Dec 09. The new officers are:

- President:** Lew Abbott
Louabbott1@verizon.net
- Vice President:** Jacque LaValle
jacque.lavalle@verizon.net
- Secretary:** Kathy Wright
wright_kathleen@bah.com
- Treasurer:** John LeNard
johnlenard01@comcast.net

Please offer your congratulations and support to the newly elected VP-68 Alumni Association Officers. As with any volunteer organization, we need help on various committees so please help us to keep our Association alive and well.

NEW MAILING 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**

Membership:

It is now time to renew your membership if you are an annual member, *check the mailing label and if there is an "M-06" next to your name, your dues are due now!* We have enclosed an addressed envelope for the M-06 members convenience. 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 take a moment and mail your check to the association.

Make checks payable to **VP-68 Alumni Association** and send it to:

VP-68 Alumni Association
708 Schindler Drive
Silver Springs, MD 20903-1330

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.

2006 Fall Muster • 14 OCT 2006

On Saturday, 14 Oct 06, we held our annual Fall Muster at the Sports Page Club on Andrews AFB. We had about 40 Blackhawks and guests attend. The pizzas were served starting at 1600 and a general business meeting was called to order at 1730. Some old and new business items were addressed and we conducted an election of officers.



Here some of the gang assembled for a photo while the others stayed inside and ate the pizza!!! Only kidding..actually we had about 5 picture-takers at all times. Below our new VP



Jacquie LaValle conducts a "think-tank" (or was that drink-tank?) with Becky Connick, Tom Donnelly, Fran Kelley, Ron Jacobs & Joe Odenthal. All in favor said "ale"...I mean "aye"!

Here, outgoing Treasurer Jim Rozycki collects dues and up-grades Ray "Tom" Jones from Regular Member to Life Member (a really good idea!) under the watchful eyes of Brett Hayden and "Packy" Jones.



2007 Spring Fling:

On Saturday, 05 May 07, the Blackhawks will hold our annual "Spring Fling" picnic at the NAS Pax River beach house on base. A new and delicious idea has occurred in recent years... every year somebody surprises us with something extra for the troops to eat. Some awesome homemade dishes have appeared to the delight of the troops and we hope this continues...surprise us!!

The sea-stories get better each time they are told and the more new folks that attend the more new stories will surface (names & dates changed to protect the innocent!!!!)

Come early and enjoy the sun, fun and burgers, the activities start at 1100. Members eat and drink free, join the association and you too can eat free. For non-members there will be a \$5 charge. Please contact Jacque LaValle if you DO NOT have a base sticker and/or ID card for access, if you don't...you can't get on the base. SEE YOU THERE!!!!

Change of Address ????

Please get in touch with me if you move or change e-mail addresses, it is the only way we can keep track of you. Send your updated information to: wright_kathleen@bah.com or

VP-68 Alumni Association
4773 W. Braddock Road - apt 204
Alexandria, VA 22311

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

Membership applications may be downloaded from our Website www.vp68.org

Crew News / Alumni News

VP-68 Mini Fly-In

On Saturday, 04 Nov06, there was a VP-68 mini fly-in at the Walterboro Airport, SC. Vic Kraft and Sid Nichols flew in from Myrtle Beach and met Dale Schumann and George "Doc" Durity and his family. They had lunch and spent some



time at Doc's house before flying back home. Old photos and cruise books were gone over and plenty of memories and laughs were to be had. More Fly-In events will be planned for this spring and summer so keep in touch with your Blackhawk buddies...who knows...you may be the next stop!!

P.S. Doc...sign up Dale into the Alumni Association!!!
Download the application from www.vp68.org.

Santa's Helpers at Bethesda

On Saturday, 03 Dec 06, some of Santa's helpers went to the National Naval Medical Center-Bethesda to decorate two family lounges at the surgical ward for family members of wounded service members (mostly Marines) there. Shown are



Kathy Wright, Josh (see Smokin' in the Vol. 22 September 2006 Hawk's Nest), Maggie Wiles (ex AT2), Carrie Blazek and their friend Julianna Ramos (ex AE2) who organized the event and is a mother of an Air Force Sgt. returning from Iraq.

Wedding Bells !!!

We are pleased to announce the marriage of Cornelius "Strip" and Clarissa Stripling on Saturday, 16 Sep 06.

On 09 Sep 06, prior to the wedding, some of "Strip's" Blackhawk friends threw a small bachelor / bachelorette party for the lucky couple at Carrie Blazek's Bay House. In true Blackhawk spirit, lots of stories and laughs were to be had. Here the boys are taking pics of the girls. Strip...is that coffee in that cup??? Hope the flash didn't burn the finger in the top of the picture!!!



The girls laughed and tolerated the little boys' behavior as they have seen many, many times before!! Times do change though don't they...the boys have the cameras and the girls have the drinks!!! GO GIRLS!!!!



The gang had a great day and exemplified the spirit of friendship and camaraderie that Blackhawks have developed over many years of working and flying and sharing family events together. We are really a unique bunch.

Now, you have to appreciate the fact Clarissa and Strip have known each other for over 25 years since before Strip joined VP-68. Over the years we have had many parties and picnics and we always asked them the question...when ya gonna get hitched? Guess we don't have to ask anymore.

Finally the boys and girls got together and had a great picture taken...Maintenance Control all present sir!!!



Finally the big day, Saturday 16 Sep 06 arrived. The wedding ceremony was held at the NAS Patuxent River Beachhouse at 1300 hours. It was a beautiful setting overlooking the bay and the mood was so electric to the attendees.

About the only thing missing was a P-3 fly-over...not that it didn't enter the minds of the boys!! Guarantee it would have happened had the squadron still existed.

The Matron of Honor was Clarrisa's sister Angela Ashton-Caudie and the Best Man was Joe Odenthal. Clarissa was given away by her father Mr. Thomas Wallace Ashton and the minister was her cousin, the Rev. Juanita Butler.

Below, after 25 years "Strip" finally utters his "I DO"!!!



When you see the newlyweds, be sure to congratulate them. Clarissa...welcome officially to the Blackhawk family, and "Strip"...you are a very lucky man.

Best wishes to both of you.

Social Security Benefit

Here are some interesting facts about extra Social Security Benefits that former military personnel will be eligible for. If you aren't aware of this benefit, it could be worth checking out especially if you are already drawing Social Security. This is not just for retirees, but also for anyone who has served in the military. Please share this with anyone who has had active duty service prior to January 2002 and planning for retirement. This includes ARC (Guard and Reserve) who served on Active Duty for training (but not IADT/AFTP).

Basically, you may qualify for a higher social security payment because of your military service, for active duty anytime from 1940 through 2001 (the program was cancelled in January 2002). Up to \$1,200 per year of earnings credit (see website: www.ssa.gov/retir2/military.htm) credited at time of application. This could make a substantial difference in social security monthly payments upon your retirement.

You must bring your DD-214 (s) to the Social Security Office...and, you must ask for this benefit to receive it!!

In Remembrance

In Jan 2006 we lost George P. Kurtz, L-00. Please take a moment to remember him and all of our departed Blackhawks.

If you are aware of any Blackhawks passing, please notify the Association Secretary at:

wright_kathleen@bah.com

Memory Lane

Can anybody remember these planes? Did any of you fly in any of them? Where was this picture taken?



How about this one???



Send your answers to: wright_kathleen@bah.com

Never Again Volunteer Yourself !!!

Retiring after many years in the Navy Reserves can sometimes leave a void. Some folks forget the N-A-V-Y slogan above and DO volunteer again. That is exactly what Kathy Wright and Carrie Blazek did recently. They joined the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary at the suggestion of Dan Smith, former TAR with VP-68. The USCG Aux is a volunteer organization that directly supports the U.S. Coast Guard in many interesting positions such as: crewman on operational safety patrols; also inspection of Aids to Navigation on the rivers and bays; radio watch-standing at Coast Guard Stations; provide public education and training for boating safety courses; conduct recreational boat inspections at local marinas. There are a wide variety of opportunities in the USCG Auxiliary. If you are interested in getting involved and using your Navy training and experience in real world situations please check them out at their website: nws.cgaux.org/index.html

Wind in my hair!! (all 20 of 'em!)

By Jim Rozycki

My daughter and wife collaborated on an absolutely awesome Christmas gift for me last year. I have always spoken about how I have flown in just about everything except an open-cockpit biplane. Well...they saw to that!!! They bought me a half hour, full acrobatic flight in a vintage 1942 Boeing N2S-5 Stearman in original Navy paint scheme.

We were originally scheduled to fly in May but the



weather was bad but they were in Pittsburgh again in September. We waited for the ceiling to rise a bit and up we went!!

The company is Warbird Sky Adventures out of Gallatin, TN. They advertise in most large city newspapers and their website is: www.warbirdskyventures.com

They fly VA, PA, OH, MD, MI, MN, MO, SD, KY, TN, TX, LA and CO. Their season goes from Jan thru Nov with the closed-cockpit North American AT-6 and the open-cockpit Boeing N2S-5. For a half hour we did loops, rolls, wing-overs and most anything we wanted to do over the airport with my wife and daughter watching from below. The pilot was an ole Navy man and he saw my leather flight jacket like he had on and we became best buds. He was an ex-Navy flight engineer and does this part-time during the season...fly around the country giving rides. Boy, some folks have it rough eh? For an additional \$50 I got an in-flight video with sound.

Cameras are mounted in the nose, wing and tail and continually alternate views from preflight, during the flight and post flight.

During the preflight the parachute brief goes like this...If we have engine failure, we are slow enough that we will find a grass field somewhere and put her down there. If we have fire (it is a fabric covered plane) then we get out of here!!! Small fire we undo our seatbelt, step out on the wing and let go. If we have a major catastrophic fire, we undo the seatbelt and we go inverted and fall out of the plane quickly. I took that flight 4 months ago and my feet still haven't touched ground!. He demonstrated to me how the old pilots could listen to the wind in the wires to determine if they were about to stall during dog-fights and maneuvers. You also are watching the fabric on the wings flutter, then they would just nose-over, pick up some airspeed and fly again. Sooooooo cool!!



So...now that you have the info, check it out, go take your flight and we'll compare notes at the Fall Muster.

Photo Caption Contest



The picture above needs a caption!!! Let us set the scene here for you.....On the left is Master Chief John LeNard - Flight Engineer and on the right is Master

Chief Don Peeling - Maintenance Control. Look at the faces and send your caption to.....wright_kathleen@bah.com

Examples: He did WHAT to my airplane???? or....How come he gets 2 beers and I get none?? Let's hear from you!

Classified Ads

Ship's Store Clerk

We are in need of a clerk for our ship's store. We have items such as: VP-68 ball caps, "The Sky Is Reserved" videos filmed in VP-68 in the 70's, P2-V & P-3C rubber stamps, "The Planes We Flew" lithographs, VP-68 decals and more.

Until we find somebody to man the store, if you have a desire to purchase any items contact the Secretary Kathy Wright at her email: wright_kathleen@bah.com

Send all applications to Kathy at the above email.

Newsletter Editor/Publisher

The Hawk's Nest is currently in search of an editor and publisher for our quarterly newsletter. The candidate must have Word / Excel computer skills and a sense of humor.

Salary is \$0 but any costs will be covered by the VP-68 Alumni Association. Basically the job consists of collecting stories, photos and writing articles. Publishing usually consists of going to Kinko's or the like and getting copies made (they even collate, fold, and staple them), printing labels and affixing postage to envelopes filled with the newsletters and mailing them in a timely fashion.

Again...send your application to Kathy at the above email.

NAVY HUMOR

A P-3 was flying on a mission when a cocky F-16 pilot flew up next to him. The fighter jock told the P-3 pilot, "watch this!" and promptly went into a barrel roll followed by a steep climb. He then finished with a sonic boom as he broke the sound barrier. The F-16 pilot asked the P-3 pilot what he thought of that. The P-3 pilot said, "That was impressive, but watch this!" The P-3 droned along for about 5 minutes, and then the P-3 pilot came back on and said "What did you think of that?" Puzzled, the F-16 pilot asked, "So what did you do?" The P-3 pilot chuckled, "I stood up, stretched my legs, went to the back, took a leak, then got a cup of coffee and a sweet roll. Any questions?"

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**HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL AT THE
SPRING FLING
05 MAY 07 • 1100 TO 1700
NAS PATUXENT BEACH HOUSE**
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