



VP-68 Hawk's Nest



Volume No. 30

VP-68 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

March 2009

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), its parent and supporting Navy squadrons, and those interested in preserving the name and history of VP-68.



Office with a view!!

2009 Spring Fling

The annual VP-68 Alumni Association "Spring Fling" picnic is scheduled for Saturday, 06 JUN 2009 at the NAS Patuxent River Beach House. Activities start at 1100. Free food and sodas for current paid members and \$5.00 for all guests and non-members. Come early and enjoy the sun, fun, food and beverages.

SOMETHING FREE (see page 5)

A particular Blackhawk has boasted that "nobody...repeat nobody can beat me at shoes!!" Well...there are two sets of pits there and we accept that challenge!! So...we are going to have them set up and ready for the challenge. So guys and gals...practice up!!! We may even play "hillbilly horseshoes"!!

To get on base, current DOD ID cards are required. Anybody needing base access please contact Jacque LaValle NO LATER THAN 29MAY09 at 301-342-0829 or by email at:

jacque.lavalle@verizon.net

MARK 06JUN09 ON YOUR CALENDARS!!

2009 Dues

If your address label has an "M-08" after your name, your 2008 membership is now expired. This could be the last Hawk's Nest newsletter you receive. Don't miss out on the coming fun this year...send in your 2009 dues now.

See "Treasurer" on page 10 for more details.

Ole "Boats" & "Gunney"

(submitted by Bob Smith)

Ole Boats and Gunney were sitting at the VFW arguing about who'd had the tougher career: 'I did 30 years in the Corps,' Gunney declared proudly, and fought in three of my country's wars. Fresh out of boot camp I hit the beach at Okinawa, clawed my way up the blood-soaked sand, and eventually took out an entire enemy machine gun nest with a single grenade. As a sergeant, I fought in Korea alongside General MacArthur. We pushed the enemy inch by bloody inch all the way up to the Chinese border, always under a barrage of artillery and small arms fire. Finally, as a gunny sergeant, I did three consecutive combat tours in Vietnam. We humped through the mud and razor grass for 14 hours a day, plagued by rain and mosquitoes, ducking under sniper fire by day and mortar fire all night. In a firefight, we'd fire until our arms ached and our guns were empty, then we charge the enemy with bayonets'. 'Ah', said Ole Boats with a dismissive wave of his hand. 'all shore duty, huh?'

Navy Year 2008 Photo Review

(submitted by Dick Perkins)

http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/visualnews/yr-pix08/start_here.html

(be sure to select "Captions" when it starts)

Blackhawk People News

Taps

We are saddened to report the passing of yet another VP-68 Alumni Association member....Dave Borggren. Dave was an enthusiastic and active member in our Alumni Association. The photo below was from the Blackhawk July 08 Fly-In at Chesterfield County Airport near Richmond, VA. (see Hawk's Nest Vol. No. 28, July 2008). Dave was also a former VP-68 Sailor of the Year and before moving to Virginia, was the President of the Braddock Heights Optimist Club. We will miss his smiling face and warm personality.

Obituary from 02FEB09: David Carl Borggren, Sr., 68, passed away January 31, 2009. Born in Massachusetts, he was the son of the late Roland and Agnes Borggren. David was a member of the Fleet Reserve Branch #40, the Ward's Corner Optimist Club International, the American Legion in Maryland, and VP-68 Navy Reserves. He retired from the U.S. Navy.



David leaves behind to cherish his memory, wife of 46 years, Betty Borggren; his daughter, Pam Palmer (Bill) of Suffolk; two sons, David Borggren, Jr. and Todd Borggren (Nikki), both of MD; six grandchildren, Jessica, Ryan, Chris, Kate, Tiffany, and Sydney; two great-grandchildren, Justin and Stefan; his sister, Charlotte McCarthy (George) of MA; and several nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews. A Memorial Service will be held at a later date. Altmeyer Funeral Home, Southside Chapel, is handling the arrangements. Memorial donations may be made to the Ward's Corner Optimist Club International and/or the Bennett's Creek Volunteer Rescue Squad. Condolences may be offered to the family at www.altmeyer.com. We offer Dave's wife Betty and their family our most heartfelt condolences and keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

*Until we meet again shipmate....
Fair Winds and Following Seas!*

Jeff Lemmons

Rear Admiral Jeffrey A. Lemmons has been recently assigned as Director of the newly formed U.S. Navy Directorate for International Engagement (OPNAV N52).

Nick Cercone

Still lives in Pittsburgh, but spending lots of time flying troops in and out of the Middle East.

Ken Winters

One of the Maine "Bears" has come out of hibernation and promises to be at the 2009 Spring Fling at PAX. Sent an old photo to us from the 70's of raggedy sailors with beards.

Bob Tait

Says hello to the "Sky Pigs" from Baton Rouge, LA. Bob works as an analyst for TSA and as he did in the Navy..."trains 'em till they puke!!!". (some things just do not change!)

Ron Auth

Ron is recovering well from his December 08 by-pass surgery and would appreciate hearing from fellow Blackhawks. He can be called at 240-286-9416.

Waterboro Fly-In

At the end of '08, Vic Kraft and Sid Nichols flew into Waterboro, SC airport and hooked-up with "Doc" Durity for lunch. This has become a regular activity for the boys and they hope to get more Blackhawks there for the next one.

Marine Humor

(Submitted by Jim Rozycki)

Here is a portion of a National Public Radio (NPR) interview between a female broadcaster and US Marine Corps General Reinwald who was about to sponsor a Boy Scout Troop visiting his military installation.

No matter how you feel about gun laws you gotta love this!!!!

FEMALE INTERVIEWER: So, General Reinwald, what things are you going to teach these young boys when they visit your base?

GENERAL REINWALD: We're going to teach them climbing, canoeing, archery and shooting.

FEMALE INTERVIEWER: Shooting! That's a bit irresponsible, isn't it?

GENERAL REINWALD: I don't see why, they will be properly supervised on the rifle range.

FEMALE INTERVIEWER: Don't you admit that this is a terribly dangerous activity to be teaching children?

GENERAL REINWALD: I don't see how. We will be teaching them proper rifle discipline before they even touch a firearm.

FEMALE INTERVIEWER: But you're equipping them to become violent killers.

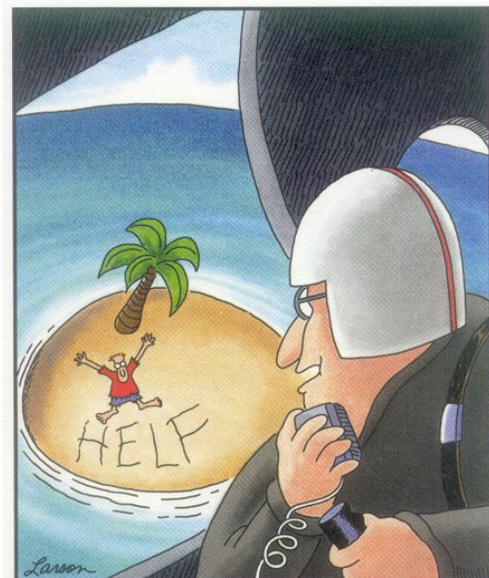
GENERAL REINWALD: Well, ma'am, you're equipped to be a prostitute, but you're not one, are you?

The radio went silent...the interview ended. You gotta love the Marines!

Aviation Far Side

(by Jim Rozycki)

Here is another aviation-related The Far Side by Gary Larsen.....my "favorite" cartoonist.....enjoy!!



"Wait! Wait! Cancel that. ... I guess it says 'help.'"

Farewell to Rose

(Submitted by Mark Benke)

Rose Turner, owner of Rose's Place II, outlasted most of the old founding fathers of Lexington Park

By Kenneth C. Rossignol

ST. MARY'S TODAY LEXINGTON PARK UPDATE

(Feb. 24, 2009)

In every community there are many different people and many different ways of earning a living for all those who take a different walk through life.

For Rose Turner, her choice of a path to take put a lot of excitement into the old Lexington Park, a time of Dodge City type action with slot machines, wild bars and poker games, a time which is virtually gone now that the town is nearly overcome with fast food joints and chain restaurants...and towering buildings of plastic and glass filled with people pursuing mundane occupations. These modern day folks sure didn't live like Rose.



Rose owned Rose Place I and Roses Place II for more years than most people can count for living in Lexington Park.

For the many local men who found their way to Pax River NAS and jobs with the Navy or defense contractors, outside of going to church or one of the two movie theaters, Rose's Place was one of the star attractions.

There was The Dock, the Spinning Wheel, Jack Rue's Roost, Mama Jean Miller at the Belvedere Cocktail Lounge, The Piccolo, Danny's Three Thieves, the old Town Creek Marina run by Joe Long with taco nights on Thursdays, even Jack's Shack at the bottom of the hill on Rt. 5 at the end of Willows Road, where occasionally a car would run into the original Mexican joint.

In fact, just a couple of years ago, a truck ran into Roses Place and left a gaping hole but failed to shut down the old speakeasy and strip club.

There was Honey Lane, the Office and Millie's club, the Tropics. Abell's Wharf, Leonardtown Wharf, and Swanns Pier; and the now respectable banker Tom Watts once owned and ran a respectable joint called Captain Tom's Oar House in Park Hall. We can't forget the Brass Ass, Bill Bose's The Pub, Cedar Point Tavern, the Phone Booth, Pat's Bar or the Hickory House run by Betty Millison when she first came to town.

While people went out to firehouse dances and to Tall Timbers Tavern, where they wound up at the end of the night was at Pete's Galley or Mike's Restaurant. Most went to Pete's Galley as it was the only all night eatery to go to for 30 miles and it was located right next door to Rose's Place on Great Mills Road. Part of the fun was to watch the occasional fights as the drunks came in to get a big breakfast and part of the fun was to watch the girls from Rosie's Place come in, those who didn't have dates lined up.

Those days in LP City were long before the days of sports bars and hip hop bottle clubs. Charlie's Villa was still big for ball-games and dances while the redneck bars at Sandy Bottom were really just about the same way they are now...redneck bars. But for single men looking to buy champagne for strippers, there was nothing like Rose's Place.

Rose Turner ran a tight ship and kept the girls from the strip club circuit in line, for the most part. The dancers would roll into town on the old Gold Line bus and, in costume, parade through the town, much like the arrival of the Ringling Brothers Circus. Rose's was the place that nobody ever went to but everyone had an opinion about the quality of the dancers, that they never saw.

Retired St. Mary's Sheriff's Deputy Tom Haynie often tells the story of when he was first assigned to Lexington Park and had a call for a fight at Roses. He radioed to headquarters that they could cancel any other police units that he had just driven by there and there wasn't anyone in the joint.

When Deputy Haynie walked in the front door he was greeted by a crowd throwing punches and chairs with wild abandon, and he quickly called for the cavalry.

What Haynie learned that day was that no one parks their cars or trucks out front where their wives, girlfriends or neighbors might spot them. They either parked out back or over at Millison Plaza, thus Roses was hopping every night while it looked empty from the street.

A couple of State Troopers attempted to shut Roses Place for good and they ran into a tenacious businesswoman who hired a lawyer to fight them and she won all the way to Maryland's highest court, even pocketing some bucks from the state.

For years the location of Roses has been eyed by various politicians who want to run the elusive FDR Blvd. through her building. Now that she is gone, perhaps that may come to pass. But no one should count out Rose's husband Tex, who is a soft-spoken but sharp businessman himself.

Rose was a generous and kind lady who found her niche in the world and worked hard to earn a living supplying a commodity sought by a large portion of the population, even if they don't want to admit it.

While most towns have libraries, Lexington Park had a library. Most towns have a nursery, churches, retail stores, motels and donut shop. So did Lexington Park. But LP City had Roses Place which was quite unlike any other place you've been.

Goodbye Rose, farewell and you made Lexington Park a heck of a lot more fun for a lot of folks, one night at a time.

Editor's Note: I've never been there many times!!!

Wow...what a trip down memory lane...all the names of the people and the places.....thanks Mark...(himself a legend at the Belvedere...flight helmet with sun visor down)!!!

while we're on the subject....

Guess the Nationality??



(answer on Page 9)

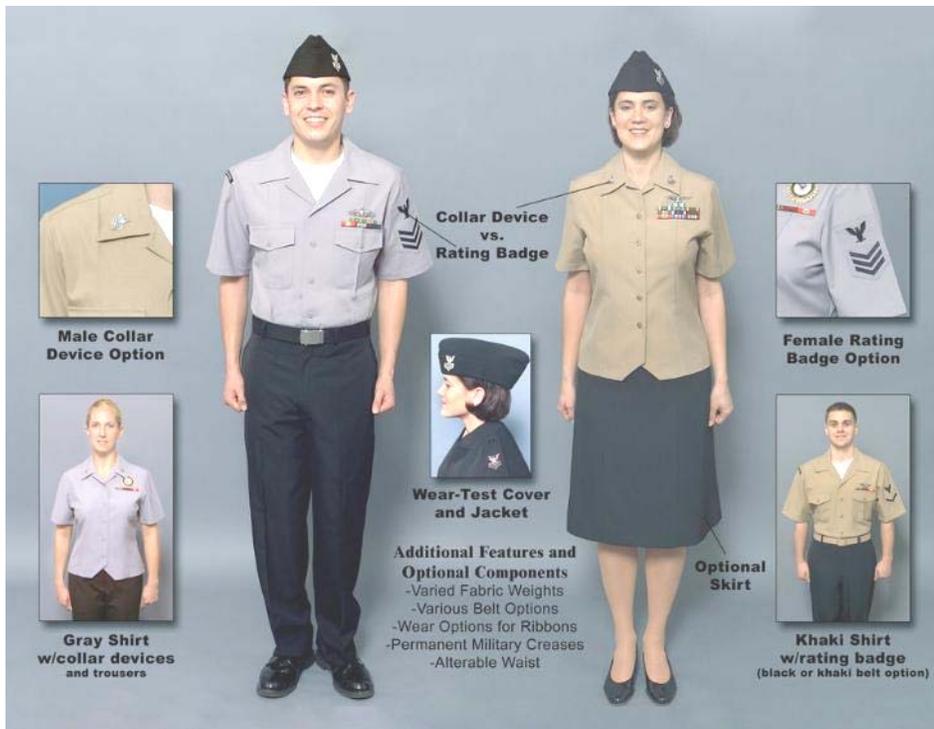
New Navy Uniform Update

January 27, 2009 Navy News

WASHINGTON - Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON)(SS/SW) Rick West released his first podcast to the fleet this week and focused on the Navy Working Uniform.

West pointed out that Sailors in the Tidewater area will be the first to wear it and that soon the American public will have a chance to see it as well. "When they think of Sailors, they think of crackerjacks, white hats and neckerchiefs," said West. "Seeing Sailors in a camouflage uniform is going to take some getting used to. It's up to us to make sure that when they do see us, we're wearing the NWU the way it was intended to be worn." West emphasized the important role Chief Petty Officers will play in training the rest of the Navy on the proper wear of the NWU. He underscored the current regulations that prohibit Sailors from wearing the NWU off-base but said that once the CPO Mess feels every Sailor has been trained to wear it correctly, that regulation may relax. "Show the Chiefs that you know how to wear the NWU and that's when we'll look at different situations that let you wear it off base."

Sailors also enjoy the Navy Service Uniform's comfort and ease of care it offers. They enjoy only having to take care of one uniform all year instead of two seasonal uniforms, as well as the amount of money saved to maintain them. With the old uniforms, you had to buy patches and get them sewn on. With the new uniforms, if you are in need of a shirt, you just buy the shirt and the collar devices, add your ribbons, and you are ready to go in about 15 minutes.



Editor's Note: I gave you these photos in case you happen to see somebody in these uniforms and didn't know what branch of the service they were in!!! The online blogs range from us oldtimers hatin' them to the new sailors lovin' 'em!! Check out more yourselves by going to **Google** and enter "**new+navy+uniforms**" and look at the many different sites on this issue.

Checking in

(submitted by Brad Kirley)

It was late at night as the Pope, who had departed this world, was approaching the gates of heaven. There was no one around, but there was a small shack just prior to the gates with a light on. The Pope stepped into the shack and startled a young man half asleep sitting at a small gray desk. "Excuse me" said the Pope, "but I'm supposed to check in here with St. Peter but there is no one at the gate."

"Yea, Yea" said the young man, "Where are your orders?" "I don't have any orders," said the Pope. "Well it's too late to check in tonight anyhow." said the young man, "Just go around to the back of the building, find a rack and dump your gear in a locker. St. Peter will be here in the morning and you can check in then."

The Pope grabs his stuff and walks around the building only to find a WWII style open bay barracks. The racks are stacked three high and the only open one is all the way at the end of the building, and it's on top. He drags his stuff to the end of the building, but there is no locker for him. He takes a deep breath, thinks about it for a minute and decides this is just one final test. He crawls up into the rack and falls asleep. Suddenly he is awakened by a loud commotion outside the barracks. As he walks outside he sees a huge crowd of angels cheering and clapping as a gold convertible limousine approaches. As it draws nearer, the Pope sees a guy in a flight suit and Navy leather flight jacket in the back seat with a beautiful angel on each arm, a beer in his hand and he is smoking one of the biggest cigars the Pope has ever seen. The Pope turns to the young man who checked him in and asks, "Who is that guy?" "A Naval Aviator," the young man replies. The Pope says, "I don't get it. I worked hard all of my life to do God's work on earth. As a young man I studied hard at the seminary, as a priest I labored hard to tend my flock and provide guidance when they strayed. I struggled as a bishop to serve the church and as Pope, I was able to attract more followers of the faith. Yet, when I reach heaven, St. Peter isn't here to greet me. I have to carry my own bags. I'm stuck in the top rack of an open bay barracks and I don't even have a locker for my bags!" The young man looks at the Pope and says, "Look, we get a Pope every 20 to 30 years, but he is the only Naval Aviator who has ever made it!!"

Marine Humor

(Submitted by Nancy Frey)

Two Retired Marines in San Diego were sitting down for a break in their soon-to-be, new store. As yet, the store wasn't ready yet, with only a few shelves set up. One said to the other, 'I bet any minute now some idiot sailor is going to walk by, put his face to the window, and ask what we're selling.' No sooner were the words out of his mouth when, sure enough, a crusty old Retired Navy Chief walked to the window, had a peek, and in a thick salty accent asked, "What the #*/@ are you selling in here?" One of the Marines replied sarcastically, "we're selling a--holes" Without skipping a beat, the Old Chief said, "You're doin' well then...only two left!"
Marines, God bless them, should not mess with a Navy Chief.

Nothing is FREE???

Not so fast there sailor.....the VP-68 Alumni Association is offering something FREE to the Wardroom!!!

(see President's Corner on page 9)



Ship's Log: Old Ironsides

(Submitted by Brian "Packy" Jones)

The U.S.S. Constitution (Old Ironsides), as a combat vessel, carried 48,600 gallons of fresh water for her crew of 475 officers and men. This was sufficient to last six months of sustained operations at sea. She carried no evaporators (i.e. fresh water distillers!).

However, let it be noted that according to her ship's log, "On 27 July 1798, the U.S.S. Constitution sailed from Boston with a full complement of 475 officers and men, 48,600 gallons of fresh water, 7,400 cannon shot, 11,600 pounds of black powder and 79,400 gallons of rum."

Her mission: "To destroy and harass English shipping."

Making Jamaica on 6 October, she took on 826 pounds of flour and 68,300 gallons of rum.

Then she headed for the Azores, arriving there 12 November. She provisioned with 550 pounds of beef and 64,300 gallons of Portuguese wine.

On 18 November, she set sail for England. In the ensuing days she defeated five British men-of-war and captured and scuttled 12 English merchant ships, salvaging only the rum aboard each.

By 26 January, her powder and shot were exhausted. Nevertheless, although unarmed, she made a night raid up the Firth of Clyde in Scotland. Her landing party captured a whisky distillery and transferred 40,000 gallons of single malt Scotch aboard by dawn.

Then she headed home.

The U.S.S. Constitution arrived in Boston on 20 February 1799, with no cannon shot, no food, no powder, no rum, no wine, no whisky, and 38,600 gallons of water!

And they wonder why we turned out the way we did...!!

Ole "Boats" & "Gunney"

Old Boats was invited to his old friend Gunney's home for dinner one evening. He was impressed by the way Gunney preceded every request to his wife with endearing terms such as: Honey, My Love, Darling, Sweetheart, Pumpkin, Sugar, etc. The couple had been married nearly 70 years and, clearly, they were still very much in love. While the wife was in the kitchen, Ole Boats leaned over to Gunney, 'I think it's wonderful that, after all these years, you still call your wife those loving pet names. Gunney hung his head. 'I have to tell you the truth Boats,' he said, 'Her name slipped my mind about 10 years ago and I'm scared to death to ask the old girl what it is!!'

“The Word” Revisited

As promised, here are some lost and recently found treasures from “The Word”, published by our Association Historian AWC Ed Stanfield from MAR1974 until he retired in JUL1990. Ed kept us all abreast of Navy happenings in both the Active and Reserve Navy and especially the world of our squadron, VP-68. He introduced us to new folks and said farewell to those leaving the squadron.

The first official “The Word” was published in 1974 as a newsletter to the Aircrew Division only covering NATOPS, Crew Standings, NATOPS, ACDUTRA, NATOPS, Safety, and Haircuts!!! Then in JAN1976, due to popular demand, it was addressed to all of “The Blackhawks” addressing Admin, Maintenance, Benefits, and much more, all the time being written with the unique humor that only Ed Stanfield could produce. Ed shared with us all of the “scuttlebutt” and rumors. How many of the “upcoming” changes mentioned affected us and when?

Here are some very early excerpts...look back, put yourself back there, reminisce and enjoy!!

MAR-1974:

- 1) Due to the new equipment, all SS1 & SS2 operators are requested to attend school at NAS Willow Grove instead of going on squadron cruise this summer.
- 2) We're now running a drill-weekend bus from Andrews to PAX but need minimum of 10 folks to keep the bus running.
- 3) Pax MAA has advised me that it would be inadvisable for any member of the squadron to do any streaking through the Navy Exchange. (why did he approach VP-68??....we know!!)

MAY-1974:

- 1) New rating structure: AX's given choice to become AW's or AT's; AME's will merge with PR's; New ADP rating for Plane Captains and the AO's are the same as they ever have been and always will be, being the unique individuals that they are!!

JUN-1974:

- 1) Barracks inspections revealed that the magazines in the Rec Room were very old....pre Watergate era!! So if we all could bring some recent magazines from home it would help to contribute to the literary enhancement of barracks folks.
- 2) Friday evening the Belvedere had a “streaker” before the port weekend. He entered the front door, grabbed a startled by-stander, danced a quick jig and departed via the back door wearing a watch cap pulled down over his face with eye slits cut into it. Just in case the streaker may have been from the squadron and may have been an Aircrewman, please pass his identity to me as some ladies present at the “streak” have expressed a desire in getting to know him a little better!!

SEP-1974:

- 1) VP-68 now has eleven ALPHA Crews: Crews 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18 (real test now is to remember which crew you were in then...unless you were in Crew 4 Skypigs!!!).
- 2) Reservists now allowed to shop in exchanges on a one-for-one basis...one-day shopping privileges for one-day drill time.
- 3) Spouses will not be allowed to shop alone in exchanges, but their Reserve partners will be able to purchase goods for them.
- 4) BEWARE, BEWARE, BEWARE...I saw several aircrewman walking through prop areas. I understand that walking through a turning prop may alter one's appearance and while most of you need it...you other good-looking studs can do without it!!

OCT-1974:

- 1) CDR Barbee attended a meeting at Andrews about the possible Squadron move there. Move looks positive but just not sure when. Leave PAX...NEVER!! We might need that drill-weekend Andrews to PAX bus....park it behind Rosie's!
- 2) Cruise book has been worked up...56 pages of pictures and everyone is in a picture somewhere in the book.

The book sells for \$3.75 each and we need to sell 300 before the printer will publish it and the money has to be collected before hand. Please buy one because I'd really like one!!

- 3) SAFETY - VP-68 has won the CNO Safety Award
- 4) DRILLS – we are allotted 16 regular drills in any successive 3 months; 9 extra drills max in any successive 3 months; missed drills must be made up within 30 days. Those of us who were in the reserves in the early sixties remember when a drill was missed that was it..no make-up, lost forever. And when we made cross-country flights, it was for the sheer glory of it. We were not paid extra drills and we thought we were still making out because we got free transportation around the countryside.

NOV-1974:

- 1) VP-68 now has twelve “ALPHA” crews.
- 2) GOOD NEWS: Effective 01OCT we got a 5.52% pay raise and BAD NEWS: Extra drills – to get paid for two drills per day we must fly..spend it on the ground then pay for only one drill.
- 3) Because of inflation, reservists can use extra drills as a means to earn more money to ease the pinch.
- 4) AUTOVON (Automatic Voice Network) has been called inefficient, uneconomical and needs improvement by the General Accounting Office reporting only 50% CONUS completion rate.
- 5) AWAN Morgan Wilber has joined us from NARDET.
- 6) AT3 Dlugokeski (pronounced Ski) got a haircut. I hear that he can now eat in the chowhall without his wig and without having to pose as Art Sullivan's cousin who is interested in joining the Navy.
- 7) ADJ2 Bill Studebaker, AWC Don Ebbitt and LT Bob Cooper have departed from the squadron to go to Iran as employees of Lockheed. They report this month to dromedary riding school!!

DEC-1974:

- 1) On 12-13-14DEC we will have visitors from the Wing and Rear Admiral Rholeder will present the CNO Safety Award to the squadron. (Editor's note: I flew with the Rear Admiral in the late 60's in Norfolk when he was a S-2F pilot).
- 2) HAIR: There's going to be a strong emphasis on grooming coming down from the CNO to the squadron. The big problem is hair. Now, according to my medical books, as hair grows longer the nerve endings in each hair get more sensitive. This explains why there is such great pain when a person with long hair gets it cut!! Wigs are legal to wear for drill weekends.
- 3) Due to unavoidable over-billiting problems we are losing some good and able men. We wish the best of luck to AOCM Bob Gath. Thanks for many years of dedicated service.
- 4) LADY LUCK: Last month we sold chances in the squadron to raise contributions to the Naval Air Museum in Pensacola and the Chaplin won a bottle of booze. After listening to some of the aircrew confessions, he'll probably need it!!!

To be continued in the next issue of the Hawk's Nest....

Anything VP (and more!)

If there is anything Navy VP you are looking for, please visit the website by Nevins Frankel....

vpnavy.org

you will not find a finer source of Navy VP information

Cockpits

(Submitted by Brad Kirley)

Click on the photo of the aircraft and see the cockpit

http://www.codeonemagazine.com/test/archives/2007/articles/jan_07/cockpits/cockpits.html

Project TRIM/VAH-21 (1967-69)

1) "Wings of Gold", Winter 2008 issue excerpts submitted by Kevin Dillon

2) VP Navy website by Nevins Frankel vpnavy.org

3) Google: Project TRIM, AP-2H, Lockheed P-2 Neptune

Many of us old timers have flown in the beloved P-2 and you felt like it was a warplane. Sliding over the wing-beam to get to the aft of the airplane, fumes, cold, open aft windows in flight and many more. Here is some interesting info about the P-2 and its duty in Vietnam.



VAH-21 Roadrunners

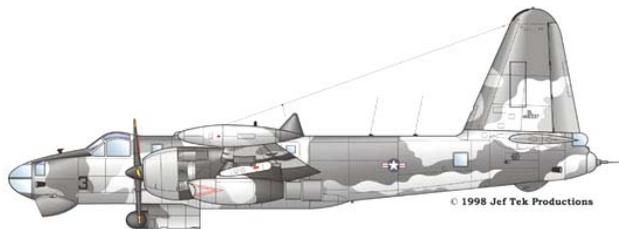


Photo Courtesy of Eric Shyer

The only attack squadron to fly the P-2 Neptune in combat during the Vietnam War was VAH-21, which started out as Project TRIM (Trails, Roads, Interdiction, Multisensor) in 1967, and was ultimately established as a squadron in SEP1968, then disestablished in JUN1969. Initially, the TRIM project was to establish a detachment at NATC PAX River, accepting for the Navy, four P-2Vs which were being modified with the newest night-oriented technology at Lockheed in Burbank, CA.

This was to be followed with an exhaustive and comprehensive test program on the heavily modified P-2s, and upon completion, deployment of the four, redesigned AP-2Hs, and their detachment to Vietnam for "Limited Combat Operational Evaluation". The term "limited" turned out to be "full" early on and resulted in the establishing of VAH-21 Roadrunners. Its mission was low-level, night attack. This Navy gunship program had the highest national priority and it was classified at the Secret level.

During the 1966-67 period, the US Navy was keenly interested in development of an aircraft for use in the interdiction role along South Vietnam's road and water networks. Supplies were flowing into South Vietnam via the Mekong River, which flowed through Cambodia before passing through South Vietnam. Navy armored patrol boats and Black Pony OV-10s were doing a creditable job but another solution was needed, especially at night. With the Air force becoming very successful with the gunship concept, Navy planners decided to adapt some of the technology for their own use. They had an aircraft available, the P-2 Neptune series, which was being phased out in favor of the P-3 Orion, and this made the Neptune the obvious choice for conversion to the gunship configuration.



© 1998 Jef Tek Productions

In 1967 four SP-2H aircraft were modified for the gunship role. These were field modified with multiple Miniguns mounted at various angles in the bomb bay which created a

spray effect when fired. Very little is known about these very early conversions except that they were painted in several colors, one in overall black, one green, and two in overall grey.

The four aircraft were highly modified SP-2H airframes carrying a big fuselage ASW radome with the MAD boom on the tail being removed entirely. In place of the MAD boom a twin 20MM cannon-armed tail turret and tail gunners compartment was installed. The tail gunner used a Night Observation Scope (NOS) in place of the standard reflector gunsight.

Where the ASW radome had been was a large radome housing an AN/APQ-92 search radar. A FLIR and LLLTV sensor was mounted in a large chin fairing under the nose. Side-Looking Airborne Radar, in a pod similar to that used on the OV-10B, was mounted aft of the wing trailing edge on both sides of the fuselage. Additional equipment included a Real Time IR sensor, an airborne Moving Target Indicator, DIANE (Digital Integrated Attack and Navigation Equipment), and a Black Crow truck ignition sensor. Much of this equipment would later be employed on the A-6C TRIM aircraft.



All four AP-2Hs carried exactly the same equipment. Armament was two forward-firing SUU-1 IA/IA Minigun pods, two Mk 82 500 lb GP Bombs, and two Mk 77 incendiary bombs; all being mounted under the wings just outboard of the reciprocating engines. In addition, later machines were fitted with an XM-149 40MM grenade launcher mounted in the former bomb bay. This was all in addition to the twin 20MM guns in the tail. Both the recip motors and the jets were extensively muffled after the aircraft were deployed to the war zone.

Deployment came in 1968 when the four AP-2Hs were assigned to Heavy Attack Squadron (VAH) 21 at Cam Rahn Bay. Between 1 September 1968 and 16 June 1969, the four aircraft flew over 200 missions, most being flown against road and river traffic in the 'Parrots Beak area of the Mekong Delta, but some missions were flown against targets inside both Cambodia and Laos, as well as the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Project TRIM/VAH-21 operations proved technology concepts under combat conditions. There were no combat casualties, while inflicting many on the enemy. The stage was set for future advancements in infrared and LLLTV technologies for the Navy, as well as installation on carrier based aircraft, including the A-6C forward looking infrared capability.



VAH-21 AP-2H Neptune at NAS Patuxent River, 1969

All four aircraft were returned to CONUS in 1969 at which time they were demodified and placed in storage at Davis-Monthan AFB. Only one example survived the cutting torch and now resides in the Pima County Air Museum in Tucson, Arizona.



VAH-21 Crew One, Vietnam

Editors Note: Blackhawk Ron Whittaker is mentioned on the VAH-21 page on the VP Navy website. I found this photo of young LT Ron "Earthman" Whittaker (front right kneeling with puppy) and his Crew 1. For more on this squadron go to vpnavy.org and scroll down to **VAH** on the left.

Tri-Care • Medicare • Social Security

(Sources: Navy Times; Aviation Week; Military Times and Fleet Reserve Association Today)

TRICARE to Require Electronic Payments

(Dated February 02, 2009)

Beginning in 2010, TRICARE Prime beneficiaries who pay enrollment fees will need to pay their premiums by electronic means. Electronic payments will be required of retired servicemembers, family members of retirees, survivors and eligible former spouses who are TRICARE Prime beneficiaries. These changes mean that enrollees must pay by allotment from the sponsor's military retired pay, electronic funds transfer from their financial institution, or recurring credit card payment. TRICARE beneficiaries can register for electronic payments on the TriWest Healthcare Alliance website:

www.triwest.com/beneficiary/epay.aspx

TRICARE Reserve Select Update 12

Congressman Bob Latta (R-OH-05) has introduced HR270, identical to HR6185 which he introduced late in the 110th congress. This bill would authorize our Gray Area Retirees to purchase Tricare Standard under the Tricare Reserve Select (TRS) program no later than 1 OCT 09 at a premium equal to the full cost of coverage to Department of Defense (DoD) to be determined by the Secretary of Defense on an actuarial basis. Effective 1 JAN 09, DoD corrected its monthly rates charged for TRS to \$47.51 for individuals and \$253.00 for family coverage. By statute, the premium DoD charges TRS beneficiaries is supposed to cover 28% of the actual cost of coverage incurred by DoD. Based on the current TRS rates at 28% of actual costs, the full cost to DoD for TRICARE Standard that would be charged to retirees under the Latta bill would be \$169.68 for individuals and \$901.57 for families.

Gray area retirees should compare these rates to comparable coverage under private insurance plans to determine how beneficial this would be to them. The National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) supports the Latta bill, which directly addresses one of their prioritized resolutions. At present they are searching for sponsors of a companion bill in the Senate. If you have not done so already, you are urged to support this legislative effort by contacting your Congressional representatives and request they sign-on to the bill. [Source: NGAUS Leg Up 23 Jan 09]

DD-214's are now Online

(submitted by Dick Fickling)

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214's online:

<http://vetrecs.archives.gov/>

This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes. NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files. Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site.

Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records centers mailroom and processing time.

Please pass this information on to former military personnel you may know and their dependents.

TRICARE For Life

Letter by Senator Joseph I. Lieberman
(submitted by Kevin Dillon)

Here is the straight scoop instead of the "bum dope" being distributed in an attempt to discredit President Obama. I think this may clear things up on the TRICARE scare.

Thank you for contacting me regarding rumored cuts in benefit programs for military retirees, including TRICARE For Life. Currently, a wealth of false and misleading information is being distributed on this matter, and I welcome the opportunity to explain the source of the confusion. I am aware of several chain emails, online discussion boards, blogs, and even articles in well-intentioned veterans' publications that imply that President Obama and Congress plan on eliminating TRICARE For Life. The insinuations put forth by these sources are false.

The source of these stories is a report issued by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), entitled Budget Volume 1: Health Care, released in December 2008. Before jumping to conclusions about the report itself, however, it is important to know exactly what the CBO is. CBO is a nonpartisan federal agency, tasked with providing Congress with cost estimates for the many legislative proposals considered each year. Its recommendations about the budget are completely non-binding; and its officers do not draft actual policy, legislation or law.

The Budget Options Report in question offers a total of 115 options for reducing (or, in some cases, increasing) federal spending on health care, only three of which relate to TRICARE.

These options are merely suggestions, not policy statements or actual legislation. Reports such as this one are routine, and very few options or recommendations made by CBO are typically acted upon. President Obama has not indicated support for the three recommendations in this report related to TRICARE, nor has any member of Congress, to the best of my knowledge. Any suggestion that the Administration is affiliated with this report ignores the fact that it was drafted by the CBO – which again, is an advisory body of the legislative branch, not the executive branch.

You may also be interested to know that both the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) and the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) have issued statements condemning the aforementioned rumors that are being perpetuated through these chain emails.

I hope that you have found this letter informative, and I encourage you to share this information with members of your community who are concerned about issues relating to military retirees. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, please be assured of my continued commitment to protecting the various interests of all those who have fought tirelessly to protect our cherished freedoms.

Thank you again for sharing your views and concerns with me. I hope you will continue to visit my website (shown below) for updated news about my work on behalf of Connecticut and the nation. Please contact me if you have any additional questions or comments about or work in Congress.

Sincerely,

Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator

<http://lieberman.senate.gov>

SSN Removal

(submitted by Nick Schaus)

In response to an increasing awareness of the growing need to protect the safety of Service members and their families identity information, DoD will begin to remove Social Security Numbers (SSNs) from DoD ID cards.

DoD announced that it plans to remove Social Security Account Numbers (SSAN) from all military identification cards by the end of 2010. Instead, the cards will display only the last four digits of the SSAN.

Defense officials said this change is an effort to thwart identity theft, an acknowledgement that a lost ID card puts the cardholder and the military sponsor at risk for such theft. Changes to cards will be made upon ID card renewal.

Phase One: Remove Dependent SSANs to begin by end of calendar year 2008.

Phase Two: Remove all printed SSANs to begin by end of calendar year 2009.

Phase Three: Remove SSANs embedded in barcodes to begin during calendar year 2012.

And then the fight started...

Ole Boat's wife was standing nude, looking in the bedroom mirror. She is not happy with what she sees and says to him:

"I feel horrible; I look old, I look fat and I look ugly and I really need you to pay me a compliment.

Without batting an eye Ole Boats replies....

"Well...your eyesight's damn near perfect."

AND THEN THE FIGHT STARTED!!!

(TURNED RIGHT TO THE ANSWER DIDN'T YOU!!)

Guess the Nationality??

Polish of Course!!!



You dirty ole sailor...what were you thinking!!

President's Corner

(by Jacque LaValle)

Happy New Year to one and all. I would like to extend a special thanks to Lou Abbott for his leadership as President from 2004 through 2008. Many achievements and firsts were accomplished during his tenure and we shall learn from that as we continue to grow. I'd like to thank Jim Rozycki for his continued support and publication of the Hawk's Nest. I look forward every quarter to some new and exciting material. I also wish to honor Dave Borggren who helped to make our association a little bit better. Dave passed away the 31st of January. God bless Dave as he embarks on his eternal voyage.

I can tell you that the next two years will be busy and challenging as we plan ahead to the 2010 reunion. So what plans do we have for 2010? Well, it's up to you to share your ideas, hopes and desires. I ask everyone who is able to step up to the plate, help to organize a great reunion and take charge of our destiny. I'm looking for new ideas and new excitement that will bring our alumni association closer.

As of this writing, our membership is 174 strong. I challenge everyone to make a goal to sign up at least one new member in 2009. What's more important is getting a valid current address of new and past members. Remember that life memberships are only \$100. Please forward their information to Dick Perkins or John LeNard so they can be included in all alumni affairs. Our goal is not that hard either. Wear your jacket with the VP-68 patch on it, or the ball cap that says it all. In January I had the pleasure of meeting fellow Blackhawk flight engineer, Jim Ashby, just because I wore my Blackhawk patch. My goal is to grow our association to over 300 members but I need your help to achieve that.

And to help in our membership drive, the executive board has dedicated the 2009 Spring Fling at Pax River as Officer Appreciation Day. That's right, we are inviting the VP-68 wardrobe who are not current VP-68 Alumni Association members to the Spring Fling on the 6th of June at NO CHARGE. FREE! No strings, no pressure. Spread the word and let's see if we can have a record showing at this year's spring fling.

So as I continue to dig out from this 10 inches of March snow that Pax River received, may all of you have a great spring and I look forward to seeing you at the Spring Fling on the 6th of June.

From the Editor:

Jim Rozycki

As always, I would like to thank all of the Blackhawks who called, mailed and emailed me contributions for this issue of the Hawk's Nest newsletter. I didn't realize Rosie was still living!! Thanks to Mark Benke for sending me the article. What a great trip down LP City memory lane! Not that I was ever in there, but do you guys remember that time the dancin' pole collapsed during a "dance"? Or so I was told!! Ah memories!

We had some fun at the Marines' expense this issue but, nobody is safe!! Who will be next?? Keep those emails coming and stay tuned! Speaking of the Marines...about the new Navy uniforms...who'd ever think we'd look like 'em??? I loved my Seafarers, but undress blues aboard ship stank on dirty jobs so...maybe change was needed. But, on the other hand, I could fold 'em, smooth out the wrinkles and pack 'em in a seabag...get soaking wet in them and be warm because they were wool, not sure about the new pictured shirts?

I could have filled the entire Hawk's Nest on the info I came across on the AP-2H and Project TRIM. The more I read, the more I wanted to find. As I mentioned, I do recall some "sea-stories" about the P-2 in Vietnam and some Blackhawks were there then. I hope that Ron Whittaker can share more with us on this interesting subject in future Hawk's Nests. If anybody else out there can...please send me some info and we will continue this article in the future.

Email me at: 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

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

Download membership applications from our website at:

www.vp68.org

Welcome Back to the Nest

We would like to welcome the below former Blackhawks back to the VP-68 Alumni Association "Nest".

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| James Carrico, L-09 | Ed May, M-09 |
| J.R. "Byx" Bullick, M-10 | Jack Mumaw, M-09 |
| Gene DiGennaro, M-09 | Ron Richardson, M-09 |
| Howard Drogin, L-09 | Bob Tait, M-09 |
| Robert Fletcher, M-09 | Ken Winter, M-09 |
| JimGuilfoy, M-09 | |

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

or mail to: VP-68 Alumni Association
4773 W. Braddock Road, Apt 204,
Alexandria, VA 22311.

From the Treasurer
2008 MEMBERSHIPS (M-08)
ARE NOW EXPIRED !

Regular yearly members ("M-08") should note that your 2008 dues is now expired. Check the mailing label to see if there is a "M-08" after your name. If so, we have included an addressed envelope to send your dues to us with.

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 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
708 Schindler Drive
Silver Springs, MD 20903-1330

Make checks payable to:
VP-68 Alumni Association

call John LeNard at 301-445-2261

or email at johnlenard01@comcast.net

Missing Blackhawks

We have a few "lost" Life Members who haven't told us of their move! If you know them or where they are please help us get their newsletter to them....have them contact Kathy Wright.

Alfredo Arroyo, L-98
Nancy Yohn, L-04

2009-2010 Association Officers

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| President | Jacque LaValle
jacque.lavalle@verizon.net |
| Vice-President | Wyman Bailey
baileymod@msn.com |
| Secretary | Kathy Wright
wright_kathleen@bah.com |
| Treasurer | John LeNard
johnlenard01@comcast.net |
| Historian | Ed Stanfield
edstanfield@mrisc.com |

SEE YOU AT THE
2009 SPRING FLING
06 JUN 09 • 1100
NAS PATUXENT RIVER
BEACH HOUSE
