



VP68 Hawk's Nest

Volume No. 4

VP68-Alumni Association

September 2000

R-MINUS 50 DAYS AND COUNTING!

DO YOU HAVE YOUR TICKET YET?

As of 22 August over 100 squadron mates have sent in their registration forms and checks. So mark the calendar 4 November 2000 and we'll see you at the Colony South Hotel & Conference Center 7401 Surratts Road, Clinton, MD 20735

WHO'S COMING?

Pete Richard is flying in from the "UK" for the BIG EVENT. **ADMIRAL Richard Fitzgerald, Gary Fahl (WO4), and Walt Siemon (ADC)** are flying in from California. Gary and Walt were in VP-661 during the Berlin call-up in 1961-1962. The following "Blackhawks", who date back to VP-661/2/3 (circa. 1950-1970), are coming and will be PARTYING at the BIG EVENT: - **Admiral Richard Fitzgerald - Ron Auth (AWCM) - Paul Auth (AFCM) - Becky Connick (YNCM) - John LeNard (AFCM) - Rex Lake (ADCS) - Don Gallagher (ADCS) - Bill Schott (AWC) - Vic Kraft (AWC) - Lew Johnson (AT1) - Ed Stanfield (AWCM) - Packy Jones (AT1) - Fred Ulle (AT1)**

Lew Johnson (AT1, Ret.) says, "Ron and Les Auth's dad was the Leading Chief (MCPOC) of the squadron (VP-661) when we got activated in 1961 for the Berlin Crisis. Back in those days he was an E-7 that was pre (E9) pre MCPOC. They were called Leading Chief then. I love his dad. He used to really ride mine and Ron Garman's butts. Can you imagine?? Two sweet guys like us. I'm glad he did; he probably kept us out of the brig."

GUEST SPEAKERS

The theme of "Reunion 2000" is "Then and Now". We asked two outstanding former Blackhawks to address the gathering; both distinguished gentlemen have accepted. **Rear Admiral Richard S. Fitzgerald (CO- 09 Aug 1975-12 Feb 1977)** will speak to the "Then" theme. Admiral Fitzgerald is presently retired from the Navy and lives in California. **Commodore Robert**

A. Sinibaldi, Jr. (CO- 25 Feb 1995-24 Feb 1996) will speak to the "Now" theme. The Commodore is presently Commander, Reserve Patrol Wing.

Get your money into Jim Rozycki. The tickets are going fast. \$50 per person for Alumni Association members and \$60 per person for non-members. Save money, join the association. *Fill out the form attached to this newsletter and send it in.*

MORE ON THE REUNION ON PAGE 4

FUN AT 2ND ANNUAL SPRING FLING

The Second Annual SPRING FLING was held at NAS Patuxent River, Maryland on May 6th. Family, Friends and Squadron Mates gathered at the Beach House. As always there was food, drink, 'catching up' and stories galore!

Congratulations to **Kelly Gofus (AKCS, VP64)** and **Lew Abbott (AVCM, Ret.)** for organizing another great effort!

OSHKOSH-BY-GOSH!!

AWC Jim Rozycki, USNR (Ret)

Well, I finally made it to "Oshkosh". For many many years I have been talking about it, but it never happened. If you, like I, have ever wanted to overdose on airplanes then you have to get to Oshkosh, Wisconsin.



About a year ago I started an Aviation Explorer Post. This is a career-oriented program

operated through the Boy Scouts of America. It is open to boys and girls ages 14 to 21 that are interested in pursuing a career in aviation. One of my youth members had flown up there last year with his dad and grandfather and this year invited me to go along (it took 1 second to make that decision!!).

Anyway, on Tuesday morning 25 July 00 we flew out of Butler, PA airport in a Piper Lance and arrived in Oshkosh about 1 PM (see plane and "crew" below). We spent a half a day on Tuesday and nearly 10-12 hours a day Wednesday through Friday seeing the sites and returned on Saturday afternoon 29 July 00!



The owner of the Piper Lance, the boy's grandfather M. John Cotchen, was an 'ole' Navy pilot who started with Corsairs and Skyraiders, switched to carrier-based F-9 Panthers in Korea (had 3-1/2 Mig kills), F-4 Phantoms and has 52 years of flying experience. He and I hit it off immediately and the sea (and air) stories began to fly!!

For those who are not familiar with "Oshkosh", it is actually Wittman Regional Airport, an airport located in the small Wisconsin town of Oshkosh that borders Lake Winnebago. The Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) is headquartered in Oshkosh and holds its yearly week-long convention here every July/August. This year it was estimated that attendance would be more than 750,000 people and in excess of 12,000 airplanes!! You just have to go there to appreciate it. Check out their website at: www.airventure.org

We had arrangements made with this beautiful retired couple to stay at their home and for a modest "room & board" fee we had breakfast and they drove us to & from the airport. The best way to fly in is IFR and we had no problems getting in. Leaving was another story as there were about 150

planes ahead of us waiting to leave IFR so we bolted out of there VFR with a lot of others and picked up our IFR enroute home. Maybe someday we can arrange for a bunch of us to meet there...you'll love it.

Having participated in and attended lots of airshows in my 26 years in the Navy, I thought I would get tired of it all but that was not the case. Seeing those beautifully restored warbirds fly and do stunts recharged my batteries!!!

Visit our Aviation Explorer Post 547 website: www.chesapeakeair.com/post547 and drop us a line or two. The kids would appreciate it. We meet at the Rock (West Penn 9G1) airport just North of Pittsburgh. The airport is currently undergoing a major expansion (new 5,000 ft runway) and we will be holding fly-ins next year so plan on visiting us too!

I'll have all of my Oshkosh pics & info at the VP-68 Alumni Association Reunion on 04 November 00 and I can tell you all about it then.....BE THERE!!!

President's Corner

With all the planning almost complete, the place, DJ, guest speakers and "Ready Room" (Hospitality Suite) booked, we are sitting at the end of the runway ready for take-off. Lew, Harry Lee and their many helpers have done a super job in getting all the plans cemented in place. Now it is up to us; sign-up, send in your reservations and pay the fees. The 30th Reunion is only a few months away; don't wait any longer if you plan to attend. We need to firm up the count, make sure we can get everybody in and start the final countdown. Don't assume your squadron mates know about this just because you do; if you see someone, ask them, 'hey, you going to the reunion?'

Please check the various web sites for more information. Contact one of the officers if you need a reservation form, or get the one provided in the mail. Thirty years of Blackhawk Success will be remembered at this reunion! You don't want to miss the chance to hang out with the 'old timers' and hear about what it was like in the 'good old days'. Just hearing our past CO, RADM Fitzgerald tell tall tales from the past is reason enough to be there. The program promises to be everything a

reunion should be, 'no long speeches', plenty of time to visit with friends, and music to dance to with tunes we all can remember.

If all this is not enough, come to the hospitality suite and we can continue til dawn or until they open up for brunch. The Reunion Committee and Alumni Officers are looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible for the 30th Reunion. Please sign-up now! The success of any alumni association is participation; without your memories, VP-68 will begin to fade. Come share the past, vote in the election of officers and make your voice heard.

THE ARMED FORCES VACATION CLUB

The Armed Forces Vacation Club (AFVC) is a "Space Available" program that offers Department of Defense affiliated personnel the opportunity to take affordable condominium vacations at resorts around the world for only \$209 per unit per week. The AFVC makes this possible by utilizing "excess" inventory at condominium timeshare resorts. "Excess" inventory consists of condominium units that resort owners do not use, which generally means off-season or short-notice travel. If you enjoy off-season activities in popular locations without the hassle of high-season prices, crowd, and lines or if you can travel on 10 days notice or less, the AFVC offers an incredible vacation value.

On 1 January 2000, the AFVC went global and extended eligibility to anyone (over the age of 21) affiliated with DoD; all seven Uniformed Services, active duty or retired (medical or regular), reserves, and National Guard. This looks like a good deal, but remember to check it out and read the fine print. <http://www.afvclub.com/>

Retirements, Advancements Commissionings, etc.

CAPT (Sel) Lowen, CAPT (sel) Oard, CAPT (sel) Sinnett, CDR (sel) Speed, CWO (Sel) C.W. Furlow, ATC (Sel) Mike McSweeney. BZ on their promotions.

CDR 'Sig' Johnson stepped down from the helm of VP66, Willow Groove, Pa. in July. He will be drilling at NAF Washington starting in October 2000. He was relieved by **CDR Bob Shea**.

AE1 Mike Kilpatrick retired in June, from VP-66 where he served as a Flight Engineer. Mike was a long time VP-68 Fight Engineer also. He chose not to have ceremony, instead he addressed the troops at quarters, encouraging them to enjoy what they do and the people they work with.

AFCM Ron Webb VP-68s' last TAR CMC retired after 30 years of service from the Naval Air Reserve Center Selfridge on 19 August 2000. Ron gave a very moving speech and dedicated the ceremony to three shipmates who have passed on, including **AT2 Jason Allen**. **Capt. Jeff Lemons** did a great job as his guest speaker. In addition to his troops at the NAR over 100 guests attended. **CDR Dave Foy** and **AVCM Carrie Blazek** represented the Blackhawks.

AWCS John McDermott retired from Naval Air Systems Command 066 in June. The Senior Chief tried to leave quietly, but his family and friends wouldn't let him go without a retirement party and informal ceremony. **AVCM Jacque LaValle** and his wife **Chris** 'flew' into Winchester, VA with **John LeNard (AFCM, Ret)** to attend the gathering. Other Blackhawks in attendance: **Joe Odenthal (CWO4, Ret)** and his wife **Jennie**; **Carrie Blazek (AVCM)** and **Judy LeNard**.



AWCS John McDermott receives wooden model of P3 aircraft '512' from **AVCM Jacque LaValle**, John's better half **Heddy** looks on. The model was acquired for John by **AT2 Steve Cawley**.

YNC Nancy Frey also retired in July off Active Duty. She had a nice ceremony on the USS Berry. (See Secretary's Report, Personnel Note).



SECRETARY'S REPORT

The 30th year reunion is just around the corner and we need your help contacting former shipmates! If you have recently moved or know former Blackhawks please e-mail me. We need to contact as many former members as possible. E-mail me at wright_kathleen@bah.com or mail me at 4773 W. Braddock Road, Apt. 204, Alexandria, Va 22311 or call 703 567-0261 (home).

On a Personal Note:

YNC Navy Frey retired in July and I was honored to be one of her sideboys at the ceremony on the Barry. Nancy and I first met in the recruiting office at NAF Washington (Andrews) in July 1976. We were sitting next to each other and I asked her, "What are you doing here?" Her reply was "I'm joining the reserves, what are you doing?" From the start of that brilliant conversation (like what do most people do in a recruiting office!) Nancy has been a great friend and shipmate over the many years. We both served in VP-68 and she was my "legal representation" at my initiation. I want to congratulate her on her retirement and wish her only the best and kindest years in the future.

MORE REUNION INFORMATION

The Reunion Committee is putting together an information packet that will contain the week-end events, time schedules and locations. Those Blackhawks who are staying at The Colony South will be given a packet at the Hotel Check-in Desk. All other attendees will receive their packets at the Reunion Registration Desk.

Early registration may be made on Friday night or Saturday morning at the hospitably room (hereafter known as 'The Ready Room'). Of course, refreshments will be available. Also, check out the memorabilia that will be on display.

Volunteers are needed to help throughout the weekend. If you're interested, please let us know.

Please No Walk-ins!

At the last reunion, we had 10 walk-ins and it created a logistics problem with the meals and seating. Let us know if you are coming. We also invite regrets. If you can't make it, let us know.

Additional Information

Check the following web sites of up to date information! <http://www.vp68.org>;
<http://vpnavy.com>; <http://www.colonysouth.com>.

Campground Reservations

Numerous Campgrounds are available. Please check the VP-68 web site for further information and phone numbers.

Other Activities

For the Spouse or Significant Other who is not into "sea stories", while their favorite Blackhawk is socializing in the 'Ready Room', All About Town, Inc. runs tours of Washington. There are two half-day morning tours available which meet our Saturday schedule. They begin at approximately 0730 and end at 1230. Arrangements can be made for pickup at the Colony South. Pickup time 0615 and return 1330.

All About Town, Inc. (301) 856-5556 e-mail: AATDC@aol.com. Detailed brochures will be available at check-in.

Car Rental

There is a Thrifty car rental at ADW Ops (Next to Space A counter). The hours of operation are 0800 to 1900. Their phone no. is (301)578-9001.

What's for Dinner?

- * Roast Prime Rib of Beef Au Jus
- * Chicken Cordon Bleu (Baked Breast of Chicken filled with Ham & Swiss Cheese)
- * Filet of Flounder Meuniere

Schedule Highlights

Friday 3 November 2000

1900 - Ready Room Open to Attendees
Registration and Attendee Handouts

Saturday 4 November 2000

1000 - Ready Room Open to Attendees
1600 - General Meeting of ALL membership of the Alumni Association for the Election of Officers and required Business Meeting.

1800 - Official Cocktail Hour begins
1900 - Official Reunion Dinner begins

Sunday 5 November 2000

1000 - 1200 Brunch - Optional - Pay as you go