



VP-68 Hawk's Nest

Spring Fling

Our annual gathering at NAS Patuxent River was once again a great event. The weather was incredible, the food and goodies brought by Dick Perkins and his wife were great, and the event was well attended. We had 'old timers' show up from times gone by, fresh sea stories, and got the usual fun stuff done.



It was a good time for old friends to get back together, faces we haven't seen in a long while joined us for the annual Spring Fling. The 50/50 fund raiser

was a great success, as you can see by the number



of tickets trailing out, Wally solicited donations from the gang. Since the 'winner's' elected to donate their proceeds back, we broke even on the event. Our thanks to the winners, and especially Jim Rozycki and Kevin Dillon for their kind donations.

As required by our bylaws, Mr. President (Joe Odenthal) conducted the semiannual business meeting.



Business was conducted and everyone was reminded that during the Fall Muster we will require an election of officers. Plan on being at Andrews for Pizza and business! If you are interested in supporting the association and

would like to run for office, please contact the secretary. Her contact information is later in the newsletter. There is also a mail-in nomination form later in the newsletter.



Since the food was plentiful, so were the sea stories, what people have been up to, where they are hanging out, and what

was new. Bill Eaton, Vic Kraft, and Bob Powell swap stories. Everyone had time to talk and tell those tall tales.

President's Corner

The Next Generation Maritime Patrol contract has been awarded... but not to Lockheed. Can the son of a 737 replace the son of an Electra? We all say no way can two jets replace four turbo-props but stranger things could happen. The old P-2 sailors were appalled at the thoughts of a pressurized cabin and no forward observer but we survived.

My first thoughts regarding the Electra to 737 transition was how unfortunate. The end of an era. We were good at what we did and we did it in a good aircraft that, by the way, is still performing admirably in the Gulf.

But then I had second thoughts. If we are going to be honest to goodness old guys and tell real sea stories, isn't it better if our aircraft like us are retired? So the new Boeing thing is good for our cause. Our memories will be enhanced and our tales embellished by the retirement of the P-3.

Now reality is setting in. It's a moot point. By the time the new platform is transitioned into service and the rugged old P-3 is retired even the youngest and strongest of us will have loved ones who have first hand experience with survivor benefits. It is truly a moot point.

Long live the Orion...

Reminders

Fall Muster

Check the website for dates, places, and times. www.vp68.org for the latest news and contact information. The Fall Muster is planned for October 16th, 2004. Please mark your calendar, this will be an important meeting since our bylaws require election of officers. The planed starting time is around 4p.m. or 1600 for you Navy types. Note, this is a bit later than normal time. Come earlier and have the beverage of your choice.

There are still prints, rubber stamps and other squadron items available from your alumni association. I am sure we will have a good stock at the Fall Muster, but if you can't wait or need something just in time for Labor Day, get in touch with Jim Rozycki for current prices. Jim can be found at rozycki-jjim@aol.com or the below address. We have the VP-68 Numbered and Signed Lithograph, "The Planes We Flew", rubber stamps and copies of "The Sky is Reserved" video. Order early and allow two weeks for delivery. Make checks payable to **VP-68 Alumni Association** and send them to:

VP-68 Alumni Association
2414 Rolling Farms Road
Glenshaw, PA 15116

Were working on a ship's store for VP-68 stuff, be watching for the 'official' announcement.

From the Secretary's Corner

On Memorial Day Weekend I went to the Mall in Washington DC to celebrate the dedication of the WWII Memorial to the "Greatest Generation". It was undoubtedly one of the most touching ceremonies I have witnessed on the Mall in my 28 years in DC. It was so stirring to see the veterans have "their special day" in the sun. The sight of parents asking the veterans if they could take a photo of their children standing with them was very touching. This was a common sight, over and over, all through the day. It was truly an outstanding day.

There were two centers of activities in DC that day, one at the WWII Memorial itself where the speeches and the formal ceremonies were held and the other on the Mall between the Smithsonian buildings. On the Mall the organizers had set up various tents with displays with various themes. One tent, "Preserving Memories", had various military historical centers (my Navy Historical Center) and organizations giving presentations and providing hand-outs. There were tents to help service members try to connect with veterans of their time and era, another tent with presentations of oral histories, displays of WWII equipment, and lastly a tent with information from various service organizations.

At the tent with the various service organizations displays I picked up a booklet that might be of interest to you. It is the "Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents 2004". It is an excellent, easy to read, booklet with information about health care benefits, pensions, home loan guaranties, life insurance, burial benefits, survivor benefits to name only a few. The booklet also contains the listing of VA medical facilities/clinics, VA regional offices, vet centers and national cemeteries. Here is how you can get a copy of the booklet:

Web site: bookstore.gpo.gov - Phone toll free: 866-512-1800

Also, if you wish to register a family member who served in WWII or someone who worked in the war industries there is a WWII registry. The web site for the registry is: <http://www.wwiimemorial.com>

Click on the WWII Registry" button at the left. Follow the online instructions to enter the name you wish to honor.

Please get in touch with me if you move or change email addresses, it is the only way we can keep track of you. Send your information to me by email - wright_kathleen@bah.com or snail mail - 4773 W. Braddock Road, Apt 204, Alexandria, VA 22311.

Alumni News.

Consider converting to a Life Membership and never have to write another check, annual dues are \$10, Life Memberships are \$100 unless you are over 75 and then it is only \$25. Life members receive a distinctive pin showing you are a Life Member. Make checks payable to **VP-68 Alumni Association** and send it to:
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Bob Gath is in Heritage Harbor Rehab Center (410) 897-1541 recouping from a severe compression fracture and would enjoy a visit / call from any of the Alumni.

Official News:

The following was the 'official' announcement from the Defense Department.

BOEING TO DEVELOP NAVY'S MULTI-MISSION MARITIME AIRCRAFT

The Department of Defense announced today that McDonnell Douglas Corp., a wholly owned subsidiary of the Boeing Co., has been awarded a \$3,889,979,744 cost-plus-award-fee con-

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tract to develop the U.S. Navy's Multi-mission Maritime Aircraft (MMA).



This milestone will launch the MMA program into the system development and demonstration (SDD) phase of the acquisition program. During the SDD phase, the program will focus on developing a system that will significantly transform how

the Navy's maritime patrol and reconnaissance force will man, train, operate and deploy. Ultimately, the MMA will replace the U.S. Navy's aging fleet of P-3C Orion aircraft, thereby securing the Navy's future in long-range maritime patrol.

"Today's MMA decision represents an important milestone for the warfighter and the acquisition team," said John Young, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition. "Our P-3 fleet has made major contributions to operations in Afghanistan and Iraq while also performing their core maritime mission. It is becoming urgent to replace the P-3 with a new airframe and the enhanced capability offered by MMA. Both industry teams produced high quality proposals, and the acquisition team has worked with industry to make a good decision, on schedule."

"MMA offers a modern, highly reliable airframe which will be equipped with improved maritime surveillance and attack capability, allowing a smaller force to provide world-wide responsiveness while potentially on a smaller support infrastructure," said Young.

MMA will be a key component in the Navy's Sea Power 21 Sea Shield concept by providing persistent anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare capabilities, supporting Sea Power 21's Sea Strike doctrine through provisions of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities. The platform will also play a key role in the Navy's FORCEnet architecture via development of the common undersea picture. These operational capabilities will be key factors in providing a sustained for-

ward presence, sea domination, and distributed and networked intelligence.

For more information, please contact Navy Public Affairs at (703) 697-5342.

Final Thoughts

Start thinking about elections, our by-laws require we hold elections every two years, the Fall Muster in October will require a vote, we are looking for volunteers that would like to run for office, send your nominations to Joe Odenthal, Association President or Kathy Wright, Association Secretary.

By the time this newsletter hits the mailboxes of members we hope to have a cost/person for the reunion on the VP-68 website. Jim has negotiated the contracts, signed and mailed them to Colony. The date is set in stone, now we need to start getting folks to sign up. The same DJ is under contract - specifics to follow in later issues.

30th Anniversary Reunion - 04-05-06 NOV 2005

Colony South Hotel & Conference Center, 7401 Surratts Road, Clinton, MD 20735 Room Reservations: 1-800-537-1147 or 1-301-856-4500 VP-68 Group Discount Rate: \$119.00 / Double Mention VP-68 Discount Code: **VP68110405** Room reservations must be made by 07OCT05, after that our block of rooms goes up for general reservations. Website: www.colonysouth.com

Welcome the following new members:

WILLIAM ARNOLD, DAVID BORGGREN, GENE DIGENARO, GEORGE "DOC" DURITY, PRESTON EPHRAIM, ROBIN ERSKINE, ROBERT FLETCHER, DAN HAYES, SCOTT MORRIS, JACK MUMAW, HAROLD "HAP" PETTERSON, RONALD TAYLOR, AND BARRY THOMAS.

And the following Life Members: BOB DAVIS, KEVIN FOSKETT, PAUL "WINK" GARDNER, and NANCY YOHN.

Please submit this form if you are interested in running for office:

In accordance with the by-laws of the VP 68 Alumni Association, as incorporated in the State of Maryland, we must hold an election of officers at the business meeting to be conducted on Saturday at the Fall Muster. We are requesting those members of the association that would serve as an officer of the association to please submit their name and the office they would like to seek. The term of service will be from 1 January 2005 – 31 December 2007. Please support your association. We need nominations for President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasure. If you are interested, provide the below information to any association officer by 15 September, 2004. Support the democratic process, seek office and serve your Alumni Association. Put October 16th on your calendar NOW!

NAME: _____

Office: _____

(Select from: President, Vice President, Treasure, Secretary, Historian)

Signature: _____



Group Photo Spring Fling '04 NAS Patuxent River

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