



VP-68 Hawk's Nest



Volume No. 36

VP-68 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

March 2011

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.



Happy Spring



2011 "Spring Fling"

The annual VP-68 Alumni Association "Spring Fling" picnic is scheduled for Saturday, 30 APRIL 2011 at the NAS Patuxent River Beach House. Activities start at 1100. Food and sodas are FREE for current paid members and \$5.00 for all guests and non-members.

This is the longest tenured event for our Association and there is hardly a better place to have a picnic. We have a beautiful view of the Chesapeake Bay, a great facility with both indoor and outdoor areas on the base we spent some great years drilling with VP-68.

Every year after the picnic, a bunch of us head out to a great local restaurant for more laughs, fine food, laughs, drinks, laughs and fellowship. **BE THERE!!!**

For those of you who want to stay the weekend, here are some Lexington Park, MD accommodation numbers for you:

- 301-737-2400 = Navy Lodge – NAS PAX River
- 301-863-3200 = Hampton Inn (site of 40-yr reunion)
- 301-863-6666 = Days Inn (old Belvedere Inn)
- 301-863-0203 = Fairfield Inn by Marriott
- 301-862-9822 = Super 8 Motel, California, MD

Remember...to get on base, current DOD ID cards are required....men, check your wallets and ladies, check your purses. Editor's note: yes I know....AW's check both!! (I put that in there as I know some of you would!!).

If you do not have a DOD ID, contact Jacque Lavalle **BEFORE** Friday, 22 APR 2011 to get your name on a list at the base gate.

Contact Jacque at: jacque.lavalle@verizon.net

**Circle 30 APRIL 11
on your calendar!!!**

2010 dues have expired

In accordance with our By-Laws, 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. So, if any of your Blackhawk friends tell you they are not receiving the Hawk's Nest....please tell them why and ask them to send in their 2011 dues to us.

If their address label has an "M-10" after their name, their membership has expired and they are no longer members of the VP-68 Alumni Association.

See "Treasurer" on page 9 for more details.

Patron 68 Cruise 2012



You read that correctly, we're going on a cruise!! Pack your seabags (if you can find them) or use standard luggage as we have arrangements made through Carnival Cruise Lines to have agents attend our 2011 Spring Fling to give us all the details. The proposed 7-day cruise is on 29 APR

2012. Leaving Baltimore, making our way to the Bahamas and back.....now, THAT'S what we call a Spring Fling!!

Vice President Wyman Bailey has proposed to have a block of rooms reserved on the ship for the Blackhawks and more of the exciting details will be given at the 2011 Spring Fling. You don't want to miss out on this fun event.

See Cruise Flyer on page 10

2011 "Fall Muster"

Tentative plans are being made for the annual VP-68 Alumni Association "Fall Muster" social event. We are going to have this in the October/November time-frame in conjunction with the dedication of the VP-68 memorial plaque at the U.S. Naval Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Full details will be available in the next Hawk's Nest.

Hawk's Nest Newsletter Survey

Online newsletters vs. mailed newsletters...

See page 4 for more details.

Topica vs. Yahoo Contact List

TOPICA email server has now changed to YAHOO...

See page 4 for more details.

Corrections & Clarifications:

In the Volume 35, December 2010, issue of the Hawk's Nest the phone number of our new Treasurer Anna Gibson was incorrectly listed. Anna's correct phone number is:

Treasurer - Anna Gibson 240-317-5886

Blackhawk People News

Taps



We are saddened to report the passing of yet another Blackhawk, ATC Tom Servello. Tom, age 60, passed away on 21 JAN 2011 after a long and courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. He is survived by his wife of 38 years Elizabeth, their sons Christopher and Jeffrey, their wives and the apples of Tom's eyes his three grandchildren Zachary, Eva & Whitney.

Tom had 22 years of service to the U.S. Navy. Interment will be at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA.

Tommy paid us a brief visit during our 40-year Reunion on Saturday afternoon, 06NOV2010. Though not feeling up-to-speed to stay, he thought enough of us to visit briefly. He had his famous smile and humor as always.

We extend our most heartfelt condolences to Tom's wife and two sons who are officers in the U.S. Navy.

Until we meet again shipmate...

...fair winds and following seas!

Here are some received tributes to Tommy...

Submitted by Vic Kraft: Tom and I both flew together on several occasions on check-rides back in the early eighties. One event stands out in my mind that may bring a smile to many sad faces. We were taking some AW's and Tom was flying some aspiring communicators on a local training flight one day and as we were on our takeoff roll a cat (yes 4 legged furry feline) came out of nowhere and was making a beeline for flight station. Tom and I were in the deck (floor) ditching stations near the port over-wing hatch. As this furry little creature came by, Tom reached out and grabbed her. She sank her teeth into Tom's hand but Tommy never blinked. He probably saved our butts because if that cat would have gotten up to flight station who knows what could have happened. Anyway, we came around, landed and took Tom up to sick-bay to get tested and shots. Then we discovered this cat had a litter of little kitties hiding somewhere in the galley. Guess what the aircraft side number was?...you got it...LW-9!! God bless you Tom for some fine memories. We are all praying for your family my friend.

Submitted by Anna Gibson: I love that story, it did make me laugh, and we do miss him terribly here at Eagle Systems Inc. Tom was a great Chief to work for in VP-68. He was also a caring and compassionate leader and role model. I am glad I had the chance to tell him that when I came aboard Eagle in Feb 2010. Tom was a familiar and smiling face from our tour together in VP-68 and he greeted me with open arms and a warm hug. I will miss our conversations on many levels. Being Italian and talking about Italy, the food and wine, was an especially high level topic! Shipmates, it really is the little things in life, covet them! Thank you for sharing LW-9's cat story, although, I am sorry Tom got bitten! Tom has two sons who are currently serving in the Navy as Naval Officers and Tom was so proud of them! Please reach out to his family.

Bob Barnes finally retires!

(by Jim Rozycki)



Ellen & Bob Barnes

While visiting my son in Alabama for Christmas, I met with Ellen & Bob Barnes at the All Steak Restaurant in Cullman, AL (home of the world famous "Orange Rolls"...mmmm yummy!!) for breakfast and talked about Bob's unique military career. We have been following Bob's Navy-Army career adventures in the Hawk's Nest for several years and he finally turned in his papers and retired as Master Sergeant (E-8) with a combined Navy-Army 16 years of active and 25 years of reserve duty for a total of 41 years service between them.

Bob became an Ordinance man after enlisting in the Navy in 1970. He served tours in Norfolk, USS John F. Kennedy (CVA-67) and BUPERS before coming to VP-68 in PAX River as a TAR from 1978-1979. He worked out of the "Blue Whale" training building and after leaving VP-68 in 1979, Bob went to AIMD in New Orleans. His military career then mixed with his civilian career and he switched to the National Guard and ultimately to the Army Reserves in the Anniston and Gadsden Alabama area. He spent 13 years working as a contractor for an Army Colonel which led to some of his more unique assignments. While working at the Redstone Army Missile Range in Huntsville, AL Bob continued his Army Reserve affiliation. He took tours in Aviano, Italy and in 2003 he was promoted to Master Sergeant (E-8).

Bob's specialty was ordinance and that led to his following active duty assignments. Bob was sent to his first tour of duty in Afghanistan from March 2007 thru May 2008. He returned from Afghanistan and was then assigned duty in Soto Cann, Honduras until March of 2009. Bob drilled out of Alabama from March 2009 to March 2010 when he was then re-assigned to his second tour of duty in Afghanistan with the Joint Special Forces until December of 2010. During his two tours in Afghanistan, Bob was stationed at Camp Moorehead near the Baghram Air Base, Camp Vance near Baghram, Kandahar, and Camp Brown. As he put it, conditions "sucked"...extremely hot in summer and extremely cold in winter, and very sparse human comforts anywhere he was.

Bob now begins his retirement "career" and hopes to make it to some of our VP-68 Alumni Association events. He has lots of stories to share with us. We are glad you are back safe and sound Bob and look forward to seeing you soon.

Editor's Note: Bob....who do you root for in the Army-Navy game??

Blackhawk People News (continued)

Another Blackhawk Found

(by Jim Rozycki)

One of my long-lost buddies and fellow crewmembers from Pittsburgh, Frank Notarnicola, suddenly contacted me. Frank was browsing the web on Google and tried VP-68, found our website and emailed me. I have been trying to find him for years!! I called him and we spent a few hours of renewing memories, sea-stories and laughs. Frank has joined the VP-68 Alumni Association and is planning to attend the Spring Fling on 30APR2011 at PAX River. Frank and I shared many an airlift between Pittsburgh and PAX along with flying in the same crew in VP-68 in the early to mid 1970's. One of Frank's favorite ploys was...in the mid 1970's, VP-68 deployed as a squadron a couple of years in a row to Rota, Spain. At the end of the cruise, the squadron would have a party at a place called "Benny's" which had a bar with a picnic area and swimming pool. Frank would do his famous "Shamu the Killer Whale" from the diving board sending up a large wall of water onto an unsuspecting squadron victim sitting poolside that we, the crew, had positioned for him and I have some good photos of this.

Again...this proves that our Blackhawk friends are out there and we need to re-establish contact with them. Between using Facebook, Google, whitepages.com, we all could locate a few shipmates and get them to join the VP-68 Alumni Association.

USAS American Mariner

(submitted by "Packy" Jones)

(taken from the Fall 2010 Liberty Fog Magazine)

The name of the ship might not ring a bell with you, but if you were flying out of NAS Patuxent River in the late 1960's and early 1970's you probably know the ship well.

It is permanently located scuttled in 20 feet of water in the Chesapeake Bay just north of Smith Island and west of Holland Bar Light about 2.5 miles east of the main shipping channels.

If that still doesn't ring a bell with you...maybe you can remember daytime rocket runs and nighttime "Light-Ex" run-ins on it...now you remember her don't you!!!

She was originally the 7th of 384 Liberty ships built by Baltimore's Bethlehem-Fairfield shipyard in December 1941 launched the George Calvert and completed in 1942 and re-named the American Mariner as a modified maritime training ship. She carried 400 merchant marine trainees on week-long cruises in protected waters off Long Island Sound.

She was again modified and used by the U.S. Army as a missile-tracking and research vessel from 1958 to 1963 in the Downrange Anti-missile Measurement Program (DAMP). In 1962 she supported NASA's Project Mercury tracking manned



space vehicles. She was used by the U.S. Air Force in a similar role from 1963 to 1964 then transferred to

the U.S. Navy who officially struck her from active service in 1966 and scuttled her in an upright position in the Chesapeake Bay. Editor Note: Brian "Packy" Jones is a volunteer crew-member on the restored Liberty ship John W. Brown out of Baltimore harbor. Some of you have sailed aboard the Brown and we hope to do a feature in the John W. Brown soon.

Recoverin' Rex

As some of you know, Blackhawk Rex Lake spent some very serious hospital time lately and we are happy to report that he is now home and on the slow mend. Our thoughts and prayers go out to both you and Elsie. Rex, we all wish you a very speedy recovery and hope you will be at the Spring Fling.

Navy Makes Bill Cosby an Honorary Chief Petty Officer

Source: Stars and Stripes Magazine – February 18, 2011

WASHINGTON -- Bill Cosby went from a boy to a man during his four years in the Navy. For Cosby, getting up at 4:30 a.m. for boot camp was a "wakeup call," both literally and figuratively. "At that time, you have to be up, you have to be awake with this call, and that's the beginning of the obedience, and I think that's the thing that also pushed me to realize the mistakes I had made guiding my life and what I could do with myself," said Cosby. It has been more than 50 years since Cosby left the Navy and went on to a distinguished career. He has won a litany of accolades, the latest of which came when the Navy made Cosby an honorary Chief Petty Officer at age 73.



Navy Secretary Ray Mabus and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick West pinned on Cosby's golden anchors at a ceremony in the Naval Heritage Center before a room packed full of Chief Petty Officers. Mabus joked that he knows it's getting harder for Sailors to make Chief because retention rates are so high. "Fifty-five years it took this guy," he said, getting laughs from the Chiefs. Cosby recalled that one of the proudest moments of his mother's life was seeing him graduate from boot camp. Several weeks earlier, he had written her that he didn't like the yelling and threats of boot camp and asked what she could do about it. In short order, Cosby was called before his company commander, who had received a letter from Cosby's mother. "My mother had written and told him what I said and my mother asked the company commander to continue to do these things," he said.

and then the fight started...

Master Chief was just waking up from anesthesia after surgery, and his wife was sitting by his side. His eyes fluttered open and he said, 'You're beautiful.' Then he fell asleep again. His wife had never heard him say that before, so she stayed by his side. A few minutes later his eyes fluttered open and he said, 'You're cute.' The wife was disappointed because instead of 'beautiful,' it was now 'cute.' She asked, 'What happened to beautiful?' Master Chief replied....'The drugs are wearing off.'

...and then the fight started!!

Hawk's Nest Newsletter

(by Jim Rozycki)

In the Volume 35, December 2010, issue of Hawk's Nest we proposed to you that for printing and postage cost-savings measures, we would like to discontinue the mailing of the Hawk's Nest newsletter and post them online. We would then just send you a quarterly post card advising you that the latest Hawk's Nest is online. Folks are currently using the online copy to download and print color copies for themselves.

We are currently spending over \$200 on each issue at 3 to 4 per year that becomes \$800 per year we spend to print and mail these out. Post card notices would drastically reduce our overhead costs. Our main concern is that we do not receive enough income yearly to even cover these costs.

What I would like you to do is send me an email before the 30APR11 Spring Fling business meeting and let me know your feelings on this issue. We will vote on it then.

rozyckijim@aol.com

Topica vs Yahoo Contact List

(by Dick Fickling)

Alumni, it is time. **TOPICA IS GONE**, no more e-mails will be sent or forwarded via that old address! If you haven't done so already, you need to go to the below link and sign up.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vp68alumni/>

In the top right-hand corner of the page is a link to **"Join This Group!"** Click that link and follow the directions.

It is simple, on the next page, near the bottom right-hand side is a block **"Create New Account"**. Follow the on screen directions; fill in the blanks, once complete, click the **"Create My Account"** block. It will take a few days for the review and acceptance, you may receive e-mail notification, but either way, in a few days you can log back in using your Yahoo ID and password.

Once in, there are security settings, profiles, etc. You can even change the account so e-mails sent to the broadcast address of vp68alumni@yahoogroups.com will be sent to your regular e-mail and you won't have to sign-on to Yahoo unless you want to catch up on messages, notes, photographs and new members, and so forth.

After your account is established you can go in the **"Edit Membership"** section, update the e-mail account you want the messages sent to, your profile, and other security settings, e.g. how much about your profile shows when others look at it. In addition to being able to send e-mails to all of the Association at vp68alumni@yahoo.com you can log in and send specific notes or posts to the group. It is important that you take the time, if you haven't already done so, to establish this account. It is like moving, you have to notify the Post Office of your change of address, TOPICA was becoming unmanageable, and people change e-mail accounts almost as fast as they move to new mailing addresses. This allows you to manage your own account, update the e-mail address from anywhere in the world.

Take time to surf the site once logged in. Check out the hot buttons on the left hand side, especially the [Photos](#) and [Links](#), there are links to past issues of the Hawks Nest Newsletter and other valuable information about VP Navy items.

And when you are all done, click **"Sign-Out"** on the top right-hand side of the home page. Oh yes, the P.S. be careful, as with many e-mails, when you REPLY, or REPLY ALL, they both may be going to the whole address list, **LOOK AT YOUR "TO:"** address line!Think before you hit send.

If you have any questions about this new Yahoo email procedure you can contact me at:

p3css1@aol.com

P-3 Orion

(submitted by Dick Perkins)

Source: **Air & Space Magazine, FEBRUARY - MARCH 2011**
& **Inside The Navy - NOV 2010**



"Adored" would not be too strong a word to describe how most of us feel about a bird who did so much and always got us home," says Vince Mazzola about the Lockheed P-3 Orion. Mazzola, a retired U.S. Navy pilot, flew the long-range patrol aircraft on dozens of flights over the Pacific Ocean searching for Soviet submarines during the late 1960s and early '70s.

The P-3 has been flying maritime surveillance and anti-submarine warfare missions for more than 45 years. In the last decade, though, the aircraft has expanded its scope, flying general battlespace reconnaissance missions over land and sea, and providing real-time assessments of combat conditions to U.S. ground forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Pilots love the P-3's maneuverability. "You can haul it into a 60-degree angle of bank to get back to a sub contact at slow maneuver speeds," says Mazzola, "then turn around and accelerate like a sports car to quickly dash to another contact point." To aid in low level flying, P-3 pilots rely on a robust autopilot, which includes a radar altimeter to precisely measure altitude and lock the aircraft at a constant setting (200 feet above the water for sub-hunting missions).

(Source: **Air & Space Magazine, FEB-MAR 2011**)

Due to the cancellation of the EPX spy-plane program, the Navy will keep at least 40 P-3C's flying well past 2019. The Navy had planned to phase out all of the P-3's by 2019 to make way for the follow-on P-8 Poseidon scheduled to join the fleet by 2013. The Navy intends to fly about 40 "special missions" P-3C beyond that because there is no replacement for them since the EPX was cancelled. The Navy cannot replace "special mission" aircraft unless they've demonstrated a fully operational platform.

The news comes as the Navy is in the midst of a program to install new wing kits on the aging aircraft to deal with fatigue issues that have plagued the fleet. In December 2007, the Navy grounded a quarter of it's P-3C fleet. The aircraft was originally intended to last 7,500 hours, but the average aircraft is beyond 16,500 hours now. The new wings kits can better resist corrosion from over-the-sea flying and can add an extra 15,000 hours of life to the P-3C aircraft.

(Source: **Inside The Navy - NOV 2010**)

Watch out Bahamas...
...here come the Blackhawks!
(See **"Cruise"** on pages 1 & 10)



Photographic trip down memory lane!!!

Canadian Pilots

(Heard over Tower Radio at Bagotville, Quebec, Canada)

First voice: "Roger, I'm holding at 3,000 feet over Bagot Beacon."

Second voice: "You can't be doing that... **I'm** holding over Bagot Beacon at 3,000 feet."

(Long pause)

First voice: "You idiot...you're my copilot."

Piney Flats Gas Station Promo

(submitted by Nick Schaus)

A gas station owner in Piney Flats, Tennessee was trying to increase his sales. He contacted Ole Harry Lee, The Creative Genius, who (without help) recommended a "Free Sex With Fill-up" promotion. So the station owner put up a sign that read, "**Free Sex with Fill-Up.**"

Soon a local redneck pulled in, filled his tank and asked for his free sex. The owner told him to pick a number from 1 to 10. If he guessed correctly he would get his free sex. The redneck guessed 8, and the proprietor said, "You were close. The number was 7. Sorry. No sex this time."

A week later, the same redneck, along with his brother, Bubba, pulled in for another fill-up. Again he asked for his free sex. The proprietor again gave him the same story, and asked him to guess the correct number. The redneck guessed 2 this time. The proprietor said, "Sorry, it was 3. You were close, but no free sex this time." As they were driving away, the redneck said to his brother, "I think that game is rigged, and he doesn't really give away free sex." Bubba replied, "No it ain't, Billy Ray. It ain't rigged. My wife won twice last week."

some aviation sayings

(submitted by Dick Fickling)

- "If the Wright brothers were alive today, Wilbur would have to fire Orville to reduce costs." - President, DELTA Airlines.
- Both optimists and pessimists contribute to society... optimists invent the airplane - pessimists invent the parachute.
- Airlines have really changed...now a flight attendant can get a pilot pregnant.
- Son, you're going to have to make up your mind about growing up and becoming a pilot. You can't do both.
- As a pilot only two bad things can happen to you and one of them will.....
- (a) One day you will walk out to the aircraft knowing that it is your last flight or (b) One day you will walk out to the aircraft **not** knowing that it is your last flight.
- If helicopters are so safe, how come there are no vintage helicopter fly-ins?
- There are certain aircraft sounds that can only be heard at night.
- The medical profession is the natural enemy of the aviation profession.
- Before each flight, make sure that your bladder is empty and your fuel tanks are full!
- Flying is a great way of life for men who want to feel like boys, but not for those who still are.

Why we became pilots!

(submitted by Brad Kirley)

Source: Chicken Wings by Michael & Stefan Strasser



Reminder:
 Did you circle 30 APRIL 2011
 on your calendar yet???

"The Word" Revisited

Here are more Blackhawk memories from the unofficial publication "The Word", most sought after and read by most Blackhawks (next to Playboy) on their monthly drill weekends from MAR 74 until JUL 90, published by our VP-68 Association Historian AWCM Ed Stanfield.

This issue we feature the year 1978

JAN-1978

1) AW1 Ron Auth was selected as the VP-68 SAR Sailor of the Quarter. Ron flies with Crew 14 normally but spends a lot of extra hours in the air with other crews as a SS3 NATOPS evaluator. Congratulations Ron and thanks for the long, hard hours of good work.

2) On 11December77 Crew 6 of VP-11 P-3 hit a mountain on Hierro in bad weather in the Canary Islands. Thirteen men were killed. It appears that the plane had just descended from altitude when the accident occurred. The weather was IFR, fog and heavy rain, and they struck a 4,300 foot mountain at about 1,975 feet in level flight. Ten acres of ground burned and there wasn't much left of the plane. Let's offer a prayer for the surviving families and resolve that we in VP-68 will operate as proficiently and professionally as possible to keep the odds for safe operations stacked highly in our favor.

3) Two Senate Committees have told Navy Secretary W. Graham Clayton, Jr. to go ahead with a plan to replace Training and Administration of Reserves (TAR) Officers with Regular Navy Officers over the next 15 years. It is designed to improve Naval Reserve Management by putting Regulars in Reserve management posts.

4) Aviation Training has a briefing prepared and informative manual available for all VP-68 Division Officers. So, Division Officers, when you get a couple of spare minutes this weekend, stop over to the Blue Whale..they have been anxiously awaiting your visit.

5) FREE – If you would like a free copy of your microform service record send a signed request to the attached address. The Navy is trying to determine a price so it won't be free for long! Some of those who have already checked their Bupers service records have had some surprises...parts of their records missing or somebody else's records mixed in. Particularly important is the presence of all evaluations for the past three years.

6) Chiefs have their problems too....A Chief wrote to the Navy Times complaining about having to kiss a chicken at his initiation. Gosh! Didn't know such things went on at those initiations!

FEB-1978

1) According to the McGuinness Book of World Records, AZ3 Wooddall is the only man in VP-68 with the distinction of being an Ace in MOPED mishaps for the two week cruise we had in Bermuda. Since our cruises will be in Rota in the future the record may never be broken.

2) Initiation!!! I didn't hear any complaints from ADC Rex Lake or ATC Pete Gettemy about having to kiss a chicken. I did hear a little mumbling about their defense counsels though.

3) Ever since AMCS Oscar Line left the squadron, there has been stiff battle going on to take the VP-68 Chow Hound title. Informed sources say that AT1 Fred Ulle is leading the competition by quite a ways. The McGuinness Book of World Records is watching closely to see if Fred is going to break the record for the number of box lunches eaten in one weekend.

4) ROTA: Crossing the pond to Rota, LCDR Beddingfield and LCDR Oman were the pathfinders, proving that it can be done with Loran C, a good inertial and good navigators. VP-11 was the host squadron in Rota and were very hospitable.

They told us more details of the fatal crash in DEC77 and that on the day of the crash, their skipper had hand written a note on the Plan of the Day congratulating the squadron on 12 years of accident-free flying.

5) ATC Jim Russell is hot with those 5 peseta soccer games out in Rota. And the girls in the California Bar and Benny's asked me to send you all a message that they were lonely and are anxiously awaiting VP-68's return in June.

6) AD3 Dan Smith, AM3 Jeff Rose and AM3 Fred Coleman made the 16JAN issue of Navy Times with their XFY-1 Sea Dart refurbishment project.

APR-1978

1) The CRUISE: Everybody will be traveling on charter aircraft either going or returning. Summer Blues (Salt & Pepper) uniforms will be required so be prepared. Anybody who would like to cruise for the full month please let ADMIN know now.

2) The squadron had three men in flight school at NAS JAX with VP-30. They are ADC John LeNard, AD2 Dick Norris and AD3 Freddy George.

3) Congratulations to the following officers on being selected for Commander: LCDR's Perkins, Maurer, Dabich, Coble, Patterson, Erskine, Ford and Cann. CDR Perkins will be the X.O. of VP-68 after July.

4) Congratulations to former VP-68 skipper, CDR "Blackie" Murdock who was selected for promotion to Captain.

5) More info on the VP-11 crash: apparently the crew had not behaved responsibly the preceding evening and was trying to fly a patrol while recovering. Their preparation for and conduct during the flight were far too casual. Flying aircraft requires sober, alert crewmembers who adhere to established procedures. Don't let us relax!

MAY-1978

1) Notoriety: Chiefs Harry and Bob McComsey have been making the big time in the newspapers. The fact that they are brothers and stationed at the same base (VP-68 & NARDET respectively) made the newsprint in Nartopix, The Tester and finally the Navy Times.

2) George the Crook: Crew 8 made a reconnaissance mission to the Azores on the last weekend in April. The Café Azores is still there but George the Crook is not. It's reported that he is in Canada for an indefinite stay and there's a variety of rumors speculating on why the stay is indefinite!!

3) The Crapper: On cross-country flights remember to remind the passengers of the rule about the crapper. "Those who use it, shall also empty it." In April on a return flight from Rota, AT1 Lou Johnson ended up holding the bag...literally! I watched him strolling around the ramp with it. I don't know if he didn't know where to dump it or just wanted to show his displeasure of having to empty it for whomever used it. I remember a flight where the PPC wouldn't allow anyone off of the plane until the mystery person who used the crapper agreed to empty it. We spent 20 minutes in a stalemate until a person stepped forward and agreed to take care of it. He was, at the time, the skipper of VP-68.

4) Only in Aviation: 1) The pilot of a biplane hit by a surfboard when the surfer dived off, had his license suspended 90 days for buzzing surfers. 2) The pilot who buzzed and crashed in Baltimore's Memorial Stadium got two years for, among other things, "malicious destruction of a stadium seat. and 3) The Navy is scrapping the tug USS CREE. The CREE was towing a target ship when it was accidentally attacked by a budding ace fighter pilot from the carrier USS Enterprise. Three 500 pound bombs were released on the CREE.

AUG & SEP-1978

1) 29 JUL Change of Command: Admiral Kinnear commented that the color guard was the best that he had ever seen. Well done to AWC Morton who directed the group an to AMS3 Rose, AMH3 Cabral, AMS3 Leeson and AT2 Vanshoubrouek. CDR Paty received the Navy Commendation Medal, a real honor for him and well deserved. It was a surprise presentation as nobody in the squadron knew about it, including the Commander.

2) Congratulations to the following men for being selected for advancement to Chief Petty Officer: AO1 M.Dominiak, AT1 J.Vodzak, AT1 K.Walrath, AT1 J.McKee, AT1 C.MacGill, AW1 K.Winter, AW1 R.Auth, AW1 C.White.

3) During the waning days of the cruise a bull outran AMS1 Welshans in the Azores. The running score since 1972 now comes to Bulls **8** and VP-68 **0**.

4) Bennies: Reservists are now entitled to dental care while on ACDUTRA. Problem is finding a dentist to work on those pearly whites during cruise.

5) According to Bureau of Naval Personnel, beginning in July 1978, eligible naval reservists will be able to wear the gold rating badges and service stripes formerly authorized only for active duty personnel. To wear the gold you must have 1) 12 years of active naval service as a member of the regular Navy or Reserves and 2) a minimum of 12 years in which the Navy Good Conduct Award or Naval Reserve Meritorious Service Medal has been earned.

5) During the recent CNAVRES NATOPS evaluations our flight portion turned out good but our ground portion with the written tests..not so good. Participation was good (51%) and the squadron was conditionally qualified. AWCS Pete Richard was commended for being the best SS1 operator that the NATOPS evaluator had ever flown with...great job Pete! Maintenance Department was commended for outstanding maintenance support. The NATOPS team said it was the first time they had visited a squadron where they didn't notice any safety infractions...great job Maintenance!!

6) During the retirement party for PN1 Lacy Thornton at the Tahitian East Club, CDR Hartley, the new skipper, found out the hard way about wearing the CO's hat indoors. It seemed that the skipper forgot to remove his cover and he was instantly "GONGED" aboard by the very swift bartender thereby initiating the skipper into the ancient society that heeds the call of "He who enters covered here buys the bar a round of cheer.

OCT-1978

1) Vigilance / mid-air: Eight Navy men were killed on 22SEP when a VP-8 P-3 from Brunswick after a possible mid-air collision with. We've got to keep our eyes peeled as anytime we are below 10,000 feet we are in Indian Country (Comanchees, Cherokees, Warriors, Tomahawks). The reason we have the SS2 operator do the Condition 4 check now is so the aft observers can be searching the surrounding air space clearing climb out. Keep your heads on the swivel!!

2) We've lost our two ever-popular Air Intelligence Officers, LCDR Nick Schaus and LT Harry Lee Smith. Somebody in Washington discovered that they'd been with VP-68 for longer than their normal two year stint and decreed that they return to the Air Intelligence fold in Washington. Bye guys! Thanks.

3) The good job that VP-68 is doing has been brought to the attention of President Jimmy Carter. As a result, he has decreed a 5.5% pay raise starting 01OCT.

4) Only in Aviation: In the things-are-getting-out-of-hand department, General Aviation News reports that a South African housewife testified in court that she was sunbathing nude on her garage roof when a hang-glider pilot flew low overhead and propositioned her. The said woman was in court on the

occasion of her husband's trial for attempted murder. It appears he had taken offense at the glider pilot's suggestion and squeezed off a few rifle rounds at the flier.

5) Safety...a few more from the NATOPS/Safety Newsletter:

1) A P-3 had a badly shimmying nose wheel on take-off and landing. Inspection revealed that the inside and outside nose wheel bearings had been installed reversed. Murphy at it's best and 2) A van backed into a plane. The driver stated that he didn't realize the van was in reverse gear when he released the clutch. Murphy again!!

NOV-1978

1) On 06OCT, a NAS Detroit C-118 attached to VR-52 hit a mountain in Chile. The crew was operating in conjunction with a UNITAS exercise and was attempting to land at a military base close to Santiago, Chile. One approach was made in bad weather and a missed approach was executed. In circling for another approach the C-118 hit a 3,000 foot mountain at 2,600 feet. Sixteen crewmen and passengers died.

2) We have all read about the P-3 that ditched in the northern Pacific last month. Ten of the twelve crewmen were picked up by a Soviet trawler. The other two crewmen were never found. We will print more details in the months coming as they become available.

3) Safety excerpts from messages received at the squadron: "Safety. Always paramount, never compromised, safety must be an all hands effort, on and off duty, in the air and on the ground. It requires an active, aggressive accident prevention program reaching and involving every man and woman... MAKE IT SO..."

4) A Venezuelan pit viper got a free lift from an unsuspecting crew aboard a VP-94 P-3. The plane had a 6-day good will visit to that country and was returning home to New Orleans. The crew was off-loading the maintenance boxes when the hitchhiker decided to come out for a stretch. The surprised crewmen took off in the opposite direction. By mutual agreement, the two crewmen decided that it should be someone else's responsibility to remove the snake. So, they called Security, who called the Fire Department, who called Medical (passing the snake instead of the buck). Nobody really wanted to go in after the snake until a HM2, who collects snakes as a hobby, went in armed with a CO2 bottle. A blast from the CO2 bottle subdued the stowaway, and the plane was de-snaked. A word on the potency of pit vipers..Their bite can kill a person inside of an hour if no medical attention is rendered.

5) Waiter...the check please: Recently, at a Gorge-Ex at Evans Seafood, LCDR Kevin Dillon was kindly offered the tab for the feast. He promptly ate the check. Explaining that to the cashier was a bit difficult.

Aviation Far Side

(submitted by Jim Rozycki)

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



Naval Aviation 100 years old 1911 - 2011

The Centennial of Naval Aviation (CoNA) is a historic milestone. From its humble beginning in 1911, the Navy's flight program has grown to become a guardian of freedom for America and its allies. It has succeeded because of the hard work and dedication of men and women who are willing to continually challenge themselves and, if necessary, sacrifice their lives for their country. Many have done so. We honor their memory by celebrating 2011, the Centennial year. The U.S. Naval Aviation program includes three branches of the military: the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard. All aviators receive the same rigorous training and meet the same high standards. Mankind's fascination with the possibilities of flight predates Leonardo da Vinci's whimsical drawings



U.S. Naval Aviation began with pioneer aviator Glenn Curtiss who contracted with the Navy to demonstrate that airplanes



could take off from and land aboard ships at sea. One of his pilots, Eugene Ely, took off from the USS Birmingham (CL-2) anchored off the Virginia coast on November 14, 1910 effectively becoming the first airplane to take off from an "aircraft carrier".

Two months later, on January 18, 1911, Ely landed his Curtiss pusher airplane on a platform on the armored cruiser USS Pennsylvania anchored in San Francisco Bay, the first successful shipboard landing of an aircraft. However, the platforms erected on those vessels were temporary measures. The U.S. Navy and Glenn Curtis experienced two firsts during January 1911. On January 27th, Curtiss flew the first seaplane from the water at San Diego bay and the next day U.S. Navy Lt Theodore G. "Spuds" Ellyson, a student at the nearby Curtiss School, took off in a Curtiss "grass cutter" plane to become the first Naval Aviator. Meanwhile, Captain Henry C. Mustin successfully designed the concept of the catapult launch, and in 1915 made the first catapult launching from a ship underway. Through most of World War I, the world's navies relied upon floatplanes and flying boats for heavier-than-air craft. Genuine aircraft carriers did not emerge beyond Britain until the early 1920s.

Editor's Note: I spent many hours on the web researching the Centennial of Naval Aviation and encourage you all to do the same. The above column and photo is just a tiny bit to wet your appetites and I could have filled pages with the info found. Go to Google and type "Centennial+of+Naval+Aviation" to see the many sites that show the events and celebrations being held throughout the year all over the USA. Being that we were all part of Naval Aviation...this is our celebration too!!



Navy Patrol Squadron 68 (VP-68) **1970 - 1996** **"The Reserves Finest"**

The President's Corner:

by Jacque LaValle

Winter is finally over and spring is here, which means I'm off to Sun-N-fun to begin the air show season. Things have been progressing well with the Association as we plan for the next two years of events. The executive board met in January and the installation of officers was a success, complete with a hearty breakfast at Carrie Blazek's summer cottage.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank John LeNard for his services as Treasurer and also welcome Anna Gibson as our new Treasurer. Please come out to the Spring Fling and meet your current Association officers.

As of January 31st, the old Topica email server has been disestablished and we have transitioned over to the VP-68 Users group on Yahoo. If you haven't signed up yet, please do it now so you don't miss the emails and announcements for future events. Check out Dick Fickling's instructional article elsewhere in this news letter to learn how to use the new site.

We will continue to maintain our regular website at

www.vp68.org.

2011 is looking to be an exciting time for our Association. We will be meeting at our annual Spring Fling at Pax River on the 30th of April, where the weather should be fantastic...at least I placed the order for good weather.

Joe Odenthal has been doing a terrific job in getting the VP-68 memorial plaque coordinated with the Navy Memorial and we plan on having the Fall Muster combined with the inauguration of the plaque in Washington, D.C.

Mark your calendars for the 10th of December. The Army vs. Navy game will be played at FedEx Field and I understand that Joe Odenthal may have a good pathway for getting tickets to the game.

In 2012, Wyman Bailey has taken on the task of organizing a VP-68 Alumni Cruise.....as in a real ship. Check out his article elsewhere in this news letter and come out to the Spring Fling to learn even more.

As always, please continue to pound the pavement for Blackhawks. Membership is the key to sustaining our Association and your efforts are greatly appreciated. Thanks to Doc Durity for all he's done in finding more potential members. I look forward to seeing all of you at the Spring Fling at NAS Pax River.

From the Editor:

Jim Rozycki

As always, I would like to thank all of the VP-68 Blackhawks who called, mailed and emailed me contributions for this issue of the Hawk's Nest newsletter. Our members are spread all over the USA and this is one venue to keep in touch with fellow Blackhawks. This newsletter is YOUR newsletter, so please send me information about yourself and what you are doing these days. Photos....please send me photos, especially if you have ones from the "early" years of the squadron.

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

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
4924 25th Street S
Arlington, VA 22206

From the Treasurer

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
44746 Maguire Way - Unit J
California, MD 20619**

Make checks payable to:
VP-68 Alumni Association

contact Anna Gibson at: 240-317-5886
or email at: amchief@yahoo.com

Former Blackhawks

When you are calling or sending emails to your Blackhawk friends, ask them if they are members in the VP-68 Alumni Association and received this Hawk's Nest. If not...please ask them to join!

There are many former Blackhawks out there who still do not know of our Association. Give them our website or bring them to the next function.

Color Copies of Hawk's Nest

Color copies of current and past Hawk's Nest newsletters may be downloaded and printed in pdf format from our website: www.vp68.org

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

Membership applications may be downloaded from our website: www.vp68.org

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

2011 & 2012 Association Officers

- President **Jacque LaValle**
jacque.lavalle@verizon.net
- Vice-President **Wyman Bailey**
baileymod@msn.com
- Secretary **Kathy Wright**
wright_kathleen@bah.com
- Treasurer **Anna Gibson**
amchief@yahoo.com
- Historian **Ed Stanfield**
edwin.stanfield@gmail.com

**SEE YOU AT THE
2011 SPRING FLING
30 APRIL 2011
NAS PATUXENT RIVER
LEXINGTON PARK, MD**



anchors aweigh....

Patron 68 Cruise 2012

Editor's note: I spent 2 years on "cruise" aboard a Navy aircraft carrier and 3 months on "cruise" on a Navy LST, so I am really looking forward to this "cruise". I had lots of shipmates then, but nothing like our Blackhawk Cruise in 2012 will be!!! (bet you sang the song above huh?)

Mark 29APR2012 in your planning book!!



Pack Your Sea Bags Patron VP-68 Is planning a seven day cruise

April 29th 2012

Come to the Spring Fling April 30th at Pax River for a special presentation from a Carnival Cruise Line representative and the Travel Agents who will be available afterwards to assist you with all of your questions.

The cruise will allow us to spend some quality time together, relive past cruises, share sea stories and to generate new ones to share in the future.

Your alumni Officers and Board Members are looking forward to this exciting event.