



The following pages concern CAPT Lamar Binion, USN (ret). He was the last commanding officer of VP/VPB-45, the PBY squadron during WW-II that is included as part of the Patrol Squadron 45 Association. Of note, the current VP-45 is directly descended from VP-205, a PBM squadron that was also established after the start of WW-II.

Below is an article that was contained in the September 2019 edition of the Pelican Post Newsletter. Following that is a biography of CAPT Binion which was provided to us by his son, Steve...a member of our Association.

Last are some additional photographs provided by Steve Binion.

Historical Moment

LCDR Lamar Binion, VP-45(PBY)'s Final CO

VP-45(PBY), a sister squadron, of sorts, to VP-205 (which later became the current VP-45) had four commanding officers during its short life during WW-II. Although this PBY squadron was established as VP-45 in March of '43, it was redesignated VPB-45 (Patrol Bombing Squadron) about 18 months later.



Lamar Binion as a LTJG in 1941 and as a CDR circa 1959

The second CO, LCDR Atkinson, was killed in a plane that never returned from a wartime patrol. His XO was "acting" until LCDR H. Scott reported aboard in June of 1944. Seven months later LCDR Lamar E. Binion reported aboard as XO to Scott. From Georgia, and a Georgia Tech and Army ROTC grad, Lamar switched to Navy in 1939 and received his wings and commission via the NAVCAD program.



VP-45(PBY) in squadron formation, May 1945 in Brazil



Out going CO of VP-45, LCDR Scott, congratulates LCDR Binion upon taking command. 7May1945

On 7 May '45, LCDR Scott received outgoing orders and LCDR Binion, age 28, took over as CO. Prior to the change of command, VPB-45 had six aircraft in Ascension Island for ASW patrols but the entire squadron was relocated in March '45 to NAF Ipitanga, Brazil for routine patrols and training of Brazilian aircrews.

Unexpectedly, on 22 May '45, the squadron received orders to redeploy back the US and five days later they arrived at NAS Norfolk and reported to Fleet Air Wing FIVE. A week and a half later, on 7 June 1945, Patrol Bombing Squadron FORTY-FIVE was disestablished. The squadron had been active for 27



Squadron officers in front of a PBY. Lamar is front row far left. months and LCDR Binion had been CO for exactly one month.

Lamar remained in the Reserves attaining the rank of Captain. As a civilian, he worked for the FAA and Lockheed.

LCDR Binion's son, Steve Binion, found us via our website and provided us the idea for, and all the photos in, this article.



Lamar "Bud" Binion was born in Stone Mountain, GA on Nov. 20, 1917.

He graduated from Georgia School of Technology (now Georgia Institute of Technology) in Atlanta, GA on June 5, 1939 as a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering.

In addition to his college degree, and after having served as a Battalion Commander in the Army ROTC Regiment at Georgia Tech, Bud received a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army Infantry. However, sometime during his senior year, he submitted an application to the United States Naval Reserve Flight Selection Board for admission as an aviation cadet at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, FL.



Resigning his Army commission in July, 1939, he successfully completed a two-week aviation cadet candidate elimination class at NAS Miami, FL., and was accepted to officer candidate school, entering class 130-C at NAS Pensacola on September 30.

Many years later, Bud said that he changed his mind about going into the Army, deciding instead to become a Navy pilot, after seeing a movie called *"Wings of the Navy"*, starring George Brent and Olivia de Havilland. The movie, released in early 1939, follows an aviation cadet, played by John Payne, as he goes through flight training at Pensacola and pilots a PBY Catalina amphibious aircraft. Watching the movie, it's easy to understand how the heroic, romanticized 1930s Hollywood story might have influenced a young man, not yet twenty-two years old, to turn down the sure bet of an instant commission in the Army in favor of taking a chance on the Navy program, and possibly washing out.

Nevertheless, Bud completed flight training, was appointed a Naval Aviator and was commissioned as an Ensign, United States Naval Reserve, graduating from NAS Pensacola, FL on June 10, 1940.



After graduation, and prior to the United States' entry into World War 2, Bud was stationed for 8 months at NAS Key West, FL flying neutrality patrols with Patrol Squadron 53 (VP-53), and guarding against the German submarine activity that was beginning to pose a threat to shipping along the U.S. east coast, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea. For this, he received the pre-war American Defense Medal.

In early March, 1941, Ensign Binion traveled from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to East Hartford, CT to learn about the Pratt & Whitney engines that had been installed on the newer model Consolidated Aircraft PBY-5 Catalinas that would be replacing the older aircraft in VP-53. From Connecticut, he went to San Diego, CA to help pick up the new planes for his squadron and fly them to the east coast.



After spending April becoming familiar with the new equipment, Bud went with VP-53 In May from NAS Norfolk, VA to NAS Quonset Point, RI, for training in anti-submarine warfare tactics. During this time, VP-53 was re-designated VP-73 and, by the end of 1941, found itself at war with German submarines in the North Atlantic.



From January through October, 1942, Bud was stationed with VP-73 at Keflavik, Iceland flying PBY Catalinas. He flew over 50 missions providing convoy escorts and anti-submarine patrols over the North Atlantic shipping lanes and the Denmark Straits between Greenland and Iceland, for which he was awarded the Navy Air Medal.

As the Battle of the Atlantic wound down in the fall of 1942, Bud, now a Lieutenant (j.g.), relocated with VP-73 to Port Lyautey, known today as Kenitra, in Morocco. He was in Morocco for 9 months. While there, his squadron flew PBY anti-submarine patrols and convoy escorts over the Canary Islands and Gibraltar, and provided logistical support for Allied forces that were fighting the Axis powers in North Africa. For his service in Morocco, Bud received the European-African-Middle East Campaign Medal.



In September, 1943, after his promotion to the rank of Lieutenant, Bud returned from Morocco to the U.S. In October, and stationed again at NAS Quonset Point, RI, he served for 16 months as Executive Officer of Headquarters Squadron 91. He married Pearl DesGranges of Providence, RI in November, and they welcomed their first child there in the fall of 1944.

In February, 1945, and now a Lieutenant Commander, Bud was sent to South America to join Patrol Bombing Squadron 45 (VPB-45) at Ipitanga, Brazil, flying PBY convoy escorts and anti-submarine patrols over the central Atlantic. In April he was tasked with establishing, in Rio de Janeiro, the first Brazilian Air Training Unit which trained members of the Brazilian Air Force to fly and maintain the PBY Catalinas that the U.S. had transferred to them.



He was appointed Commanding Officer of VPB-45 on May 7. On June 2, Germany having surrendered, Bud flew with his squadron back to the U.S. to NAS Norfolk, VA, and was detached from VPB-45 on June 9, 1945.

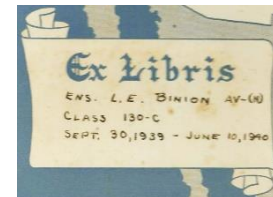
After spending the summer with his wife and child at NAS Banana River, FL, and with the war in the Pacific having ended in August, Bud turned in his flight gear at the Naval Separation Center at NAS Jacksonville, FL and returned with his young family to Atlanta, arriving there on October 1. Bud was released from duty on December 27, 1945, and received the Victory Medal, after almost six years on active duty.



Following the war, Bud worked as a Flight Engineering Inspector with the Civil Aeronautics Administration (now the FAA) for several years before being hired in 1953 by the Lockheed Corporation (now Lockheed Martin) in Marietta, GA as a Flight Test Engineer.

At Lockheed, he was closely involved with flight test engineering on the first production models of the Lockheed C-130 Hercules, the C-141 Starlifter, and the C-5A Galaxy military transport aircraft, eventually rising to the position of Chief Flight Test Engineer during the development of the C-130, which has turned out to be the longest continuously produced military aircraft in history, at over 64 years and counting.

As a side note, it seems an interesting coincidence that the Hercules designation as model C-130 is surprisingly similar to the designation of Bud's 1939 aviation cadet training class at Pensacola: Class 130-C.



Bud remained active in the reserves during the post-war years, earning the Naval Reserve Medal, with over 25 years of service. In October, 1953, he was appointed Commanding Officer of Patrol Bomber Squadron 672, headquartered at Naval Air Station Atlanta, Georgia (now DeKalb-Peachtree Airport). In the 1960s, he led his squadron on a goodwill mission to Kenitra, Morocco, where he had been stationed in 1942, adding an appropriate coda to his long career with the U.S. Naval Reserve.

Lamar "Bud" Binion retired from the Naval Reserve on September 1, 1965, having attained the rank of Captain, USNR.



Text of the Citation for the US Navy Air Medal

“For meritorious achievement in aerial flight as Pilot of a Bomber Plane engaged in anti-submarine patrols and coverage flights in the North Atlantic Area during the winter of 1941 – 1942. Operating from newly established bases despite icing, low visibility, blizzards and high winds, Lieutenant Commander (then Lieutenant, Junior Grade) Binion participated in numerous missions to counteract enemy submarine activity and contributed materially to the safe passage and protection of our valuable convoys. His skill and devotion to duty were at all times in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.”





Air Medal

Navy Reserve



Victory Medal



American Theater



**American Defense
Service**



**European-African
Middle Eastern Theater**



AIR MEDAL

Awarded for heroic actions or meritorious service while participating in aerial flight.

NAVY RESERVE MEDAL

Awarded for 10 years of honorable service in the U.S. Naval Reserves served from 1938 to 1958.

WORLD WAR 2 VICTORY MEDAL

Awarded for service in the U.S. Armed Forces from December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946

AMERICAN CAMPAIGN MEDAL

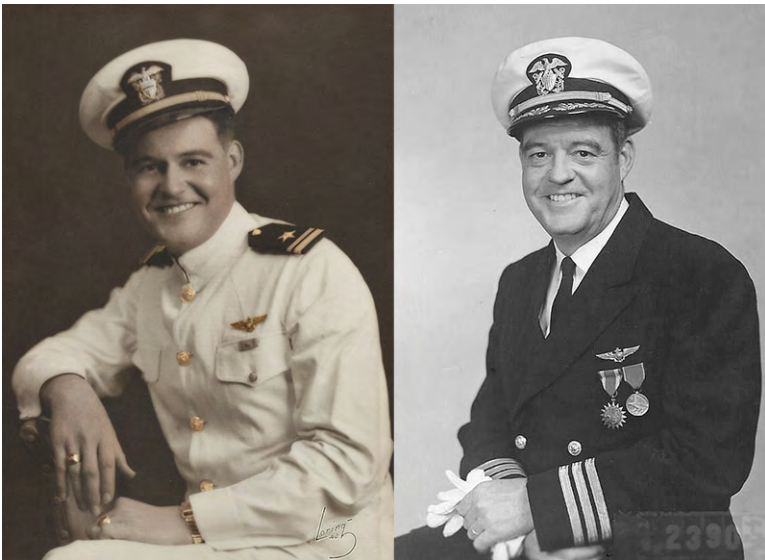
Awarded for service in the American Theater of Operations during the period from December 7, 1941 to March 2, 1946

AMERICAN DEFENSE MEDAL

Awarded for 12 months of service or longer outside the continental United States during the limited emergency proclaimed by President Roosevelt on Sept. 8, 1939 or during the unlimited emergency proclaimed on May 27, 1941 until December 7, 1941

EUROPE-AFRICA-MIDDLE EAST CAMPAIGN MEDAL

Awarded for service in the European-African-Middle Eastern theater of operations between December 7, 1941 and November 8, 1945



LTJG Binion in 1940 and CDR Binion circa 1958



1940 NAS Pensacola Training Class 130-C cadet and student pilot Lamar E. Binion



Training Flight Line - Pensacola circa 1940



Above: student pilots check the flight schedule blackboard circa 1939 in Pensacola.



Squadron Officers in front of PBY aircraft

To Right: 1943 Atlanta Constitution article about LT Lamar and (later) wife, Pearl.



LCDR Binion (front row left) with VP-45 in squadron formation

Monday, September 27, 1943—The Atlanta Constitution—13

No Bombs Left, Tech Graduate Scared Subs Down by Diving

Lieutenant L. E. Binion, Navy pilot of an amphibious Catalina, who has spent 2,500 hours on the anti-submarine patrol from Newfoundland to North Africa, got his biggest kick out of breaking up a "wolf pack" of 20 German subs near Iceland.

Lieutenant Binion, who, with his fiancée, Miss Pearl Des Granges, of Providence, R. I., is visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Binion, at 532 Hardendort avenue, N. E., made two subs head for the bottom without using a single bomb during the attack.

"We were going out to pick up a convoy," Lieutenant Binion said. "But we found the sub pack first. I sighted one on the surface and made a bombing run. He dived before we reached him, so we let the bombs go in his path."

"We don't know whether we got him or not. Later, when we didn't have any bombs, we sighted two more subs with their periscopes up. They were working their way into the convoy. We saw the subs at different times during the same battle to get the convoy through."

"We couldn't do anything except dive on the subs and hope they would think our bombracks were loaded. Both of them did. The scare sent them down, so they couldn't keep up with the convoy."

The lieutenant, a graduate of Georgia Tech, class of 1938, hadn't been home in two and a half years. During that time the 25-year-old pilot has been on patrol duty in the Caribbean and off Newfoundland, Greenland, Iceland and North Africa.

"It's not very exciting on patrol duty," he pointed out. "Scaria monotonous, until you sight a sub. We didn't get credit for any, but attacked four. You practically have to have the sub skipper's pants to claim one."

"The diving through all types of weather, though, is tough. Sometimes I'd rather be shooting at some one and being shot at than be flying 500 feet from the water with sheets of ice falling off the wings."

Constitution Staff Photo—Bill Mason
SUB HUNTER—Lieutenant L. E. Binion is back home after a 2½-year sub hunt over half the seas of the world. He and his fiancée, Miss Pearl Des Granges, of Providence, R. I., are visiting his parents here during his furlough.

Big War Bond Rally Is Set