

SEPTEMBER
2023

THE VP-45 ASSOCIATION'S
PELICAN POST
NEWSLETTER



**US Navy in the Hunt
for The Bismarck**

**2024 REUNION SITE
VOTING RESULTS**

**Info about VA disability
and medical care**

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Via Website	Contact Us
Editor	hobgood.bill@gmail.com
President	Jack_keane@verizon.net

DEADLINE

From The Editor



Those of you that have attended a recent reunion have seen the VP-45 "era" videos I've produced over the past few years. I've long wanted to provide our members access to these videos and tried posting them on YouTube. That didn't work as the musical tracks that accompany the videos are copyrighted...and were deleted or changed automatically by YouTube.

But...I stumbled upon a way to make it work: Microsoft "One Drive" - which is a cloud based storage area that comes with Windows 10 and Microsoft Office 365. And I want to test this method right here, right now.

The "era" videos were preceded by what I call a

"teaser" titled "Aviators and Their Wonderful Flying Machines." That short video is now available to you by "cutting and pasting: the following link into your browser URL address window:

https://1drv.ms/v/s!AIYnrpZMKxxD7A0N_eEw6W47lccH?e=zTGnqW

Do not watch it in your browser as it will not display correctly. Go ahead and download it to your computer or mobile device (larger screen and good sound preferred).

If I get favorable feedback on this video via the Mailbag section (click on my email address below), I'll include the era videos next and work with our Web-Master, Scott Kelly, to make them available on our [website](#).

So...this is your Newsletter and all the Association officers participate in producing it for your entertainment, information and enjoyment. Let us know how we can improve it by dropping me an email by clicking [HERE](#).

EXPLORE OUR WEBSITE

Click on one of the buttons below and you will be taken to the area of the VP-45 Association Website you selected.

There is more information about you, your squadron and our Association than you could have possibly imagined.

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Click on pictures below for more biographical info



President

Jack Keane was elected President of the Association in 2022 after serving as Secretary for a decade. A VMI grad and retired LCDR, he completed his Navy career in 1995 and recently retired from Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory. He was a TACCO in VP-45 from 1982-1985. He currently resides in Waldorf, MD.

Newsletter Editor

Bill Hobgood built the new Association website in 2011 and was WebMaster until 2022; then he was elected Newsletter Editor. He was also a TACCO (Crew 13) and was in VP-45 from 1971 to 1974. A retired CAPT (sel), he resides in Lantana, Texas with his wife, Becky.



Vice President

Previously Treasurer, Spence Cunningham became Vice President in 2018. He served as an AW aircrew member in the Squadron from 1982-1987 and retired in 2013 as a Master Chief Petty Officer. He lives in Orange Park, FL.

WebMaster

Scott Kelly was elected WebMaster, in a landslide victory, at the 2022 Reunion in Jacksonville. He was a TACCO in the squadron in the early 1980s and retired from the reserves in 2000 as a CAPT (sel). He resides in Jacksonville Beach with his wife, Lois.



Secretary

Al LaBella, a retired career Army LTC, was a former aircrewman and Sensor 3 operator in VP-45, on CAC 12, from 1980 - 1984. Al was voted in as the Association Secretary in 2022. Employed by the US Army Combat Capabilities Command, he resides in Maryland.

Treasurer

Michael Riley assumed Treasurer duties in 2021. He was an Ordnanceman in VP-45 during the 80s and retired a Chief Petty Officer. He has recently moved from Florida to Michigan to make his wife happy.



“The results of the voting for the 2024 reunion site are in and, with 124 of our members casting their votes, San Antonio is the clear winner! The last time we had a reunion west of the Mississippi was in 2006....and it was in San Antonio.”

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Jack Keane

The results of the voting for the 2024 reunion site are in and, with 124 of our members casting their votes, San Antonio is the clear winner! The last time we had a reunion west of the Mississippi was in 2006....and it was San Antonio.

On behalf of all the Association Officers, thank you for taking the time to cast your votes and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in San Antonio. Spence, our Vice-President and Reunion Coordinator, is currently working with the Armed Forces Reunions folks to plan our events. More details to follow. Currently, we're considering the last half of October 2024 for our reunion dates. Stand by for further updates!

It appears that 101 of the respondents (82.1%) took the time to read Spence's article in the last Pelican Post detailing the pros and cons of each site. I know some of you were upset that he did this, so I'd like to address that and alleviate any concerns that our Membership might have.

First, we had a precedent for doing so. In the [March 2017 edition of the Pelican Post](#) (see page 7), then-Vice-President and Reunion Coordinator, Joe Bretton, provided the cons for selecting Las Vegas for our 2018 reunion. You will recall that we went to Pensacola and had a terrific time.

Second, please let me assure you that every article published in the Pelican Post is vetted for content and reviewed for spelling and grammatical errors by every Association Officer. An incredible amount of effort and volunteer time goes into each issue of the Pelican Post. Since March 2013, when as Secretary and Editor, I published my first edition of the Pelican Post (just before Bill Hobgood and I changed the format), the Officers have held quarterly meetings (at first via conference call and now via Zoom). During the March 2023 Officers Call, I suggested that Spence provide the pros and cons of each site so that you, our Membership, might have as much data as possible to make an informed decision prior to casting your votes. Additionally, you were all free to do your own research should you have concerns that you were being misled. The other Officers agreed, and we all approved of Spence's article. I made mention of this process in the previous edition of the Pelican Post.

As Officers of the Association, we all feel a responsibility to provide you with as much information as possible. Your safety is paramount, as is selecting a reunion site where we can all come together and enjoy each other's company. As President of the Association, I take full responsibility for the content of every issue of the Pelican Post. Rather than berating the individual author, should you disagree with the content of their article and feel the need to reach out, please contact me directly. You all have my contact

information and you all know that I will respond ASAP and that I will sincerely listen to your concerns.

You are probably aware that we were hacked when we sent out our March Pelican Post. We made some changes since then, but the Spam and Phishing emails continue to pour in. I was recently contacted by a member stating that he'd received a suspicious email from me. When I asked him to "double click" on "my" email address, he noticed that it was from one of the same email addresses I'd received suspicious emails from. My advice is that you update your anti-virus software, use Windows Defender (if you use a PC), and anything you get from myself or one of the other officers, double click the email address to verify it's from one of us. If your email provider has anti-Spam software, use it. Finally, **DO NOT CLICK ON ANY SUSPICIOUS LINK.**

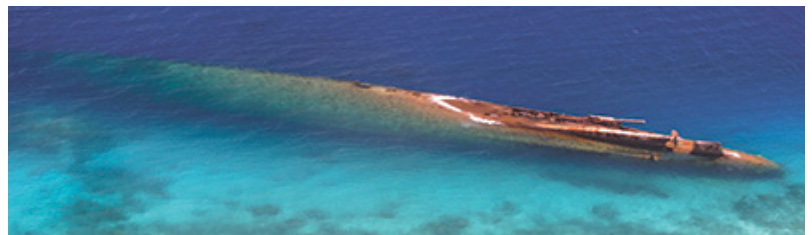


RADM Pete Garvin; former Pelican and new President of the Naval War College.

My third topic is to mention that Doug Mitchell attended RADM Pete Garvin, USN's change-of-command in Pensacola on 8 June. Pete relinquished command of the Naval Education and Training Command and assumed duties as President of the Naval War College on 23 June. You may recall that Pete, a fellow Pelican and lifetime member of the Association, was our guest speaker at our Pensacola Reunion in 2018.

While at the ceremony, Doug met up with my good friend, RADM Kyle Cozad, USN (Ret.). Kyle is the President and CEO of the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation. He and I text often and during our last exchange, he mentioned that the Museum is in the process of trying to raise \$500K for Project Orion, the restoration of P-3C BuNo 162776. The last time I chatted with Kyle (12 June) they had raised a little over 10% of their goal. Should you care to donate, see our article on page 21.

Just a quick note on this issue's "Back in the Day" story and why I chose it. In July 1988, while stationed at Barbers Point, I was sent to Midway Island as Officer-in-Charge of an operation that eventually bled over to Kwajalein Atoll. While I was at Kwaj, I was befriended by the station helicopter pilots ... all retired Vietnam veterans. Kwaj is a missile test and tracking site and these pilots would fly the scientists to the various tracking stations around the atoll. One day, I ran into some of them at the chow hall and was told to meet them on the flight line in civvies. They proceeded to give me a fantastic tour of the atoll and, while we were crossing the atoll itself, they hovered over a shipwreck ... *Prinz Eugen* ... German battleship *Bismarck's* consort during her break-out into the Atlantic in May 1941. *Prinz Eugen* survived the war as well as both the Able and Baker nuclear tests at Bikini only to sink at Kwaj in December 1946. That piqued my interest in *Bismarck* which led me to discover the USN's involvement in her sinking.



German Battleship, Prinz Eugen, in her final (and suitable) resting place.

Finally, we are attempting to hold several regional mini-reunions in attempts to bring our members together between reunions, and to raise membership. In August, Spence Cunningham and Scott "Beaker" Kelly hosted one such event at [Palm Valley Outdoors Bar and Grill](#) at Ponte Vedra Beach just outside of Jacksonville. None of us care to go through another pandemic where we must wait four years to get together and swap stories. The latest event was held on 5 August and was attended by 20 members and we managed to increase our member rolls by a couple members. Should you care to hold a mini-reunion in your area and assist in attracting new members, please let the Officers know and we'll do our best to support you however we can.

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Hello Fellow Pelicans!! Well, the votes are in, counted and SAN ANTONIO wins going away! Both in first and second choice!!



If you recall, the Officers asked the membership if they would be open to holding a reunion in the center of the country. You all said yes and we voted for what cities would make the list, set the vote up and here we are!! The planning begins in earnest now!! I will contact our reunion vendor to work out where we will be setting up Reunion Headquarters! I will do my best to find a hotel that is reasonable to the wallet versus a location to the things San Antonio has to offer!

Speaking of which, to recap, here are some of the highlights to San Antonio! First and foremost is The Alamo! The first of five missions established by the Spanish government and the site of the infamous battle of 1836 where 189 men sacrificed their lives for the freedom of Texas.



The Alamo in San Antonio

Next is The San Antonio River Walk, which winds along the gently flowing San Antonio River through the city – linking hotels, restaurants, shops, and museums! This section is referred to as the Downtown section. The other sections are the Museum Reach, north of Downtown, where you can find the Tobin Center for Performing Arts, the San Antonio Museum of Modern Art, and the Witte Museum.



The Beautiful River Walk.

The Mission Reach is south of downtown and has access to five UNESCO World Heritage-designated San Antonio Missions, Mission San Juan Capistrano, Mission Espada, Mission San Jose, and Mission Concepcion! Also there is The Buckhorn Saloon and Museum's Hall of Horns, Hall of Feathers and Hall of Fins house not only the largest, but also some of the most impressive collections of native and exotic wildlife around.

Next door you'll find the Texas Ranger Museum which contains priceless artifacts documenting the history and lore of the Texas Rangers. And be sure to visit El Mercado Historic Market Square, the largest Mexican marketplace outside of Mexico. With over 30 shops occupying three city blocks, the possibilities are endless at El Mercado. It is known as the authentic Mexican market in town, this place is a must-see for all of your souvenir, gift and accessory needs. You can find unique products here, such as



The Texas Ranger Museum

authentic Mexican vanilla or colorful woven sarape blankets that you won't find in typical tourist destinations. Indulge your taste buds at one of the many food stalls or authentic Tex-Mex restaurants that line the square, offering everything from fresh baked goods to handmade tortillas.



San Antonio has the largest Mexican Market in the world.

For those looking for some military-related things to do, about an hour away, in Admiral Chester Nimitz's hometown of Fredericksburg, Texas, you will find the National Museum of the Pacific War. Their exhibits include the George Bush Gallery, Admiral Nimitz Museum, Plaza of Presidents, Veterans' Walk of Honor, Japanese Garden of Peace and the Pacific Combat Zone ... to name a few. Lackland AFB has a good outdoor static display as well as the



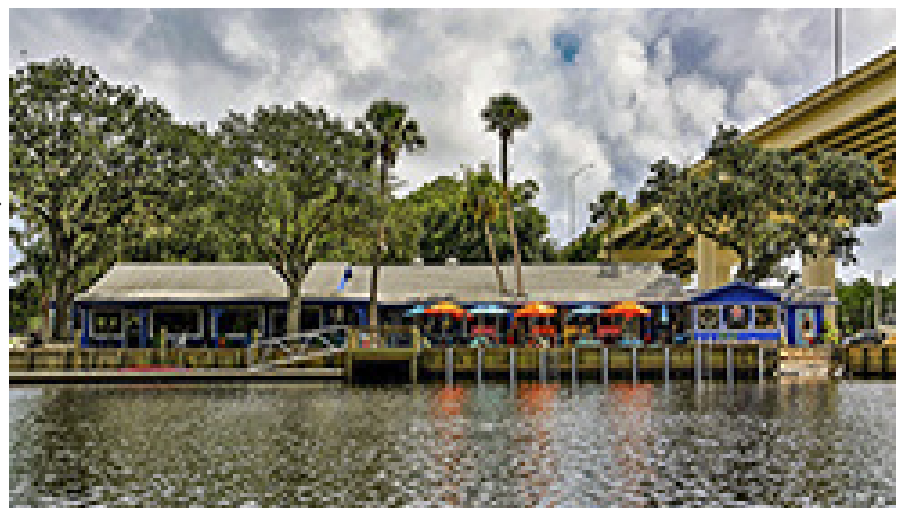
The National Museum of the Pacific is an expansion of the Nimitz Hotel in Fredricksburg - the boyhood home of ADM Chester Nimitz.

History and Traditions Museum. This is just a taste of things to do in SATX! I am certainly open to suggestions for any group excursions that the membership is interested in or have done there in San Antonio such as a river cruise! Please let me hear from you!!

By the time this newsletter is out, we will have done a "Mini-Reunion" for the South Georgia/

North Florida members (See story page 18). We gathered at the Palm Valley Outdoors Bar & Grill on July 29th! Many thanks to Scott Kelly for taking lead on setting this up! He did an awesome job!!

So...if there are any members who would like to set up a mini-reunion in their area, your Association will assist in funding for hors d'oeuvres and non-alcoholic beverages for the effort! All we ask is a small article and pictures of the event! This doubles as not only a "between reunion" vehicle to see each other, but also a membership drive opportunity!



The Palm Valley Outdoors establishment - site of the recent mini-reunion in Jacksonville.

We need a concerted effort from everyone to bring in a new member or members!! I know you all know someone!! Sign them up! Get them to come to a mini-reunion! Tell them

about the upcoming San Antonio reunion! Have them join the best Association out there.....BAR NONE!!! For us to stay viable we need more Pelicans to join...especially from the 80s and 90's and beyond.

That is all I have! Be safe and have a great Summer/Fall 2023!! Remember, I am open to suggestions for reunion things to do! If you have any, let me hear from you by clicking [HERE](#).

NAVY TRIVIA

More Navy Slang

by: Bill Hobgood

It has been a few years since our first review of some popular Navy slang...so it is time for more. Some of these were new to me but, obviously, time doesn't stand still and I retired from the NAV 32 years ago. I did not include really raunchy slang but some may be close. If you are offended, let me know by clicking [HERE](#).

So, here we go....

Another Fine Navy Day!: an expression voiced (in a very sarcastic, cheery manner) on occasions when, in fact, it's not that much of a Fine Navy Day at all.

Anymouse: Slang for anonymous. Safety system where sailors can drop an anonymous recommendation into a locked box to rat-out an unsafe condition.

Turkey: slang for the F-14 Tomcat. An airplane that never was quite as good as Maverick made it out to be.



A Navy F-14 Tomcat. Affectionately referred to as a "Turkey."

Suck Meter: Similar to, but the opposite of, a fun meter. This fictitious gauge displays how crappy a given situation is. "Deployment just got extended indefinitely the day we were supposed to out-chop and head home? Man, my suck meter just red-lined!"

Out Chop: Opposite of In Chop.

Snivel: To request time off or to not be scheduled, usually for personal reasons. Such a request may re-

quire submission of a chit to the Chief.

Bag: Flight suit. Also, if you fly a "go fast," you might refer to your flight suit as a Zoom Bag.



Full Bag: As much fuel as an aircraft can carry. Some PPCs ordered a full bag of fuel even if they didn't need it. This practice was hated by the Ops Officer and referred to as "Freighting Fuel."

Full Bag (2): Flying *The author looking cool in his Navy shades and Zoom Bag...circa 1986 in Masirah, Oman..*

occasionally interrupted by moments of shear terror. Following such moments of great, sudden fear, flight crew often describe the event as causing a metaphoric Full Bag situation.

Virtual Liberty: A 21st century term. The idea that a sailor could walk off the ship and, instead of going into town, step on his crank, throw his wallet into the water and hit himself over the head with a blunt object. The result would be waking up on the pier the next morning with an aching crotch, no money, a serious headache and the inability to remember anything from the previous night; just like actual

liberty.

Swap Paint: Euphemism for a minor mid-air collision that typically occurs during formation when regular pilots try to act like Blue Angels. If anyone in Maintenance notices and rats you out, a JAG Investigation will ensue.

Base Bunny: A woman of questionable morals who

hangs around the front gate to a base, hoping to pick up a Sailor. Sometimes Hot; often Not. Some Base Bunnies want to snag a husband and thereby reap the (Sailor's) benefits.

Basket Leave: Highly illegal free time off. When a sailor who takes leave has his leave chit destroyed after he's returned, thereby not charging the liberty against his leave balance - all without the command's knowledge. Personnelmen at a command who monitor leave are apt to use a favor such as basket leave in trade or favors from their shipmates.

SLJO: Sh**ty Little Jobs Officer. A junior JO who gets assigned tasks no one else wants to do. After retirement, you become one for your wife.

Battle Group: A group of warships and supply ships centered around a large deck aircraft carrier and its airwing. Usually consists of one cruiser, one supply ship, and two or more destroyers, frigates, and sometimes a submarine. Has been sanitized and emasculated lately and is now referred to as the **Carrier Strike Group**. Occasionally referred to as a "Battle-ship Group" by clueless media reporters.



A Navy Carrier Strike Group (CSG) - previously called a Battle Group.

Gripe: slang for a MAF (Maintenance Action Form), which is written when something is wrong with an aircraft. Often Maintenance will report that whatever it was "worked fine on the deck."

Bent Sh*tcan: Someone below Naval standards.

Bent Sh*tcan Lid: may refer to the ugly facial ap-

pearance of a Base Bunny.

Gerbil Gym: A new term. Exercise space on board a ship with treadmills, stationary bikes, and elliptical trainers - all pieces of equipment on which you perform motions that should move you to another place, but you remain in the same position like a gerbil on its wheel. (pictured below)



A Gerbil Gym aboard a Navy ship.

Hinge: slang for an O-4, or Lieutenant Commander. So called because of the lobotomy that is supposedly mandated as soon as a naval officer is promoted to this rank, in which half of his brain is removed. A

hinge is then inserted that allows for reattachment of the removed gray matter later. The hinge also limits the LCDR's head movement to the fore-aft axis. This is clearly demonstrated as the O-4 is constantly nodding in the affirmative and saying "Yes sir, yes sir..." when in the presence of the CO.

Big Chicken Dinner:

Slang for a Bad Conduct Discharge, which is usually handed out along with an administrative separation (ADSEP) after a sailor pops positive on a "Whiz Quiz."

Skosh: Perilously close to minimum acceptable levels. Example: "After three bolters and a waveoff, that F-14 landed really skosh on fuel." Originates from

the Japanese word sukoshi, meaning little.

BINGO: Excuse to return to base (RTB) due to minimum fuel.

Wave-off: In naval aviation, to be ordered to discontinue an approach to a landing because of unsafe flight conditions. In other situations, to discontinue what you were doing due to some unforeseen circumstance. (Ex: He started walking towards the hottie in the Filipino bar, but had to wave-off when he noticed her face looked like a bent sh**can lid.)

Boondoggle: Any unorganized, inefficient evolution, usually grand in scale and involving many confused participants. Similar to a "goat-rope." Alternatively: Used in reference to any TAD trip that is "official" on paper, but is basically just an excuse for sailors (usually senior enlisted and officers) to get away from the command for a brief vacation from home to a desirable location (e.g., Pearl Harbor).

Whidbey Whale: Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI) variant of a dependent spouse who married her now Navy high school sweetheart husband when they were both skinny, but later, she became

orca fat, ballooning to gigantic proportions, while he remained a skinny little guy. These unfortunately mismatched couples can usually be seen on weekends in and around the commissary and Navy Exchange (NEX).



Little known fact...Popeye was a "VP Bubba!"

Bubba: Affectionate term for someone who does what you do. In aviation, someone who flies the same type of aircraft as you (Ex: He's a VP bubba).

Puke: Derogatory term in the aviation community to refer to someone who DOESN'T do what you do. "Ahhh...he's just a fighter puke!"

Broke-dick: Highly technical term describing malfunctioning or inoperable equipment. "I ain't flying that broke-dick hangar queen!"

Brown Nose: Sailor trying a "little too hard" to make rate by sucking up to superiors. Can also refer to those who wear khakis (Chiefs, Officers) since it is assumed that most have "brown-nosed" to obtain their present position. A mythical rate: "Chief Brownnose" or "Brownose First Class."



Seriously Broke-dick P-3 Orion

New Navy: The subject of many posters in the Navy's alcohol de-glamourization campaign. In the "New" Navy, it's OKAY NOT to smoke, drink, or curse; and sexual harassment suits lie around every corner. We salty old bastards quietly mourn the death of the "Old" Navy, where men were men, women were women, and you could tell the difference.

FROM THE WEBMASTER

By: Scott Kelly



I am pleased to report that the bugs with the Contact Us and Membership links have been squashed. However, we've gotten a couple of reports that the payment processing for new members has had issues. I tested it myself and the test transaction did go through, so I'm keeping a close eye on it to see if we do

have a problem, and we've not had a problem reported since. If you have an issue paying for/renewing dues, please let me know immediately so I can get the issue handled.

This being the latest newsletter, you'll now find the link to the previous (March) newsletter is now live. As you know, members receive the newsletter immediately upon release via email (shameless membership plug), and it's publicly available one newsletter in arrears on the website.

If you've not had a chance to view the images from the 2022 reunion yet, you can find them on the website [HERE](#). It was an awesome event, and we got a lot of great pix.

Finally, as I'm typing this, we're in the final stages of setting up for a mini-reunion to be held at the Ponte Vedra Outdoors Bar and Grille, and by the time you read this, we hope to have had a very successful and well-attended event. We're going to see about having more of these scattered about the country contiguous with our membership over the course of the next year, so stay tuned.

Set 5 for landing!!

Have any questions for me? Please shoot me an email to: scott.kelly@mindspring.com.

SECRETARY'S PODIUM

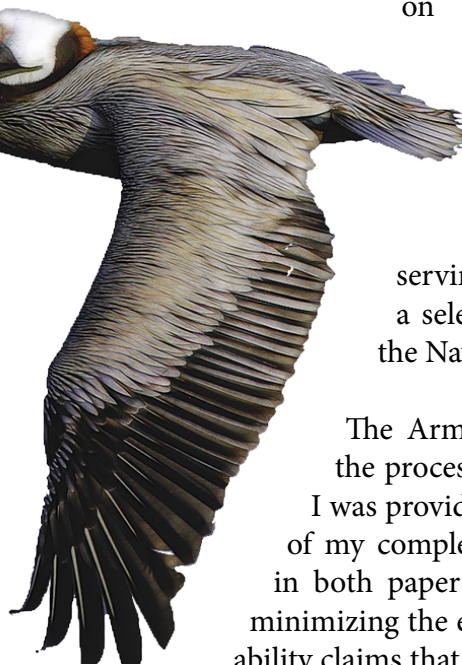
By: Al LaBella



Hello to my fellow Association members and I hope your blazing hot summer was enjoyable as we transition to the fall.

Although the focus of the Pelican Post is to share information regarding future events, obituaries, and sea stories, I am going in a different direction this issue. Specifically, I'm going to address veteran's benefits.

As some of you know, I served 22 years in the Army after my time in the VP Navy. As I prepared for retirement from the Army, I was educated on veteran's benefits through Veteran's Affairs. Based



on my experience, the Army has it down to a science for a soldiers transitioning into retirement or serving honorably for a select period of time; the Navy, not so much.

The Army has streamlined the process to a point where I was provided multiple copies of my complete medical record in both paper and digital form, minimizing the effort for filing disability claims that included physicals and application such that I started receiving my disability benefits within three months of retirement.

Why do I share this? I provided my background to validate that the VA disability claims process works and to spread awareness of something that we all have earned. Though I have some experience with

VA benefits, I am far from an expert. I highly recommend contacting a VA representative for assistance.

During the last reunion, a majority of the Association members I talked to about VA benefits are either not aware of available benefits, how to initiate the claims process, feel it is too hard, have been previously denied, or can't find the time. Another perspective I heard is that "I don't want to take away from others because I have not earned it" or "I feel good today, no problem". Receiving VA benefits doesn't take away from others and if you feel good today, how are you going to feel in 10 years?

Think of how many hours we have spent between large noisy engines, 140 dB APUs, flight lines, some on carrier flight decks, carrying heavy objects...that have taken a physical toll on our bodies and although we may not have felt it when we were much younger, I am confident that most us are feeling the impacts today.

A recent example is when a former Pelican filed for a disability after retiring 20 years ago and received a significant disability percentage, confirming that it's not too late to pursue benefits that have been earned.

In addition to potential disability benefits, glasses, hearing aids, physicals, and medical treatment are available at VA clinics and hospitals. I have my eyes checked every two years with glasses at no cost. Furthermore, I recently injured my back (service related) and elected to be seen at the local VA instead of Tricare. It has been a great experience thus far with follow-up appointments to the VA hospital in Baltimore.

As a large portion of the Association's members live in Florida, the following excerpt is quoted from the Florida Department of Veteran's Affairs [website](#): "Eligible resident veterans with a VA certified service-connected disability of 10 percent or greater shall be entitled to a \$5,000 property tax exemption. The veteran must establish this exemption with the county tax official in the county in which he or she resides by providing documentation of this disability."

Not all states offer the same exemptions but Florida

has the best benefit in respect to property taxes. The Florida website also provides information to contact a Veterans' Claims Examiner, call (727) 319-7440 and they'll return your call within 24 hours. You may also contact them via e-mail at FDVA.VSO@FDVA.FL.GOV

Recommendations:

* Visit the VA website [VA.gov Home | Veterans Affairs](#) as it has the link on how to file for a disability claims.

* Get a VA card from the local VA hospital or clinic which gets you in the system. I recommend calling first to confirm what paperwork is required.

* Visit the local [Veteran's of Foreign Wars](#) (VFW) or [American Legion](#) as there may be someone available to assist with the claims process. Additionally, the VFW or American Legion may be an opportunity to donate some of the memorabilia that we received while in service and now look at and think, "what am I going to do with all this stuff?"

If any members are familiar with the claims process, please offer your services to assist as required as it will be much appreciated.

Editor's Note: My wife has been bugging me for months to do something about my hearing while I procrastinated. I finally got a "round-to-it" and contacted the VA. I met with a local VA rep and provided him with my DD-214 and described my tours where I was around P-3s and jet aircraft.

A couple months later I received a date for a hearing test. Then, a few weeks later I received my VA disability approval notice...rated at 10%, enough to be eligible for hearing aids (and top-notch ones) at no cost to me.

I have an appointment next month to be fitted for my new equipment. For a great video on how to get started, copy and paste the below URL address into your browser window:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIaR-4xSeTU>

SEA STORIES

A Selection From Our Website “Sea Story” Page

Editor’s Note: the below “sea story” is an excerpt from a much longer article written by Al Perkins, a local Bermuda magazine contributor. Al asked to go on a ride in a P-5M to determine why these giant airplanes were even at Bermuda and making so much noise. The excerpt below picks up as the demonstration flight is returning to NOB Bermuda.

Bermuda Sea Plane Ops - 1958

By: Al Perkins (Bermudian Magazine)

We hit bumpy weather as we descended, and the plane bucketed wildly. “Don’t give it a thought,” electrician Keith Dvorak, 20, from North Bend, Nebraska, told me. “Commander Anderson’s been flying for 25 years; there’s nothing to worry about with him up there.” For our landing, Radarman Jim Novick, 23, from Chicago let me have his seat facing the radar



The VP area of NOB Bermuda circa 1958.

screen on which I watched a perfect map of Bermuda, black against an orange background, grow larger and larger as we approached the Islands. Kindley Field (which supervises all incoming aircraft, including those from the Naval Station) picked us up as we came down to 2000 feet. “This is Five Five Zero Eight requesting permission to land,” our pilot radioed, and was told: “Make a right turn and proceed for fur-

ther identification.” With war news from the Middle East already in the headlines, Kindley was taking no chances. We flew north, high over Ely’s Harbour, until the Kindley radar picked us up and made sure we were the plane we said we were. Then they “talked us in”— Base leg to sealane Two Three; your height should be 300 feet at the present time.’

“Suddenly the pilot’s voice cut in: “My starboard engine is bad!” I glanced out the porthole: it did indeed look bad; the propeller, not feathered, was turning, but slowly. Instructions poured in from Kindley, from the Navy Tower, and from the copilot, Anderson”

Suddenly the pilot’s voice cut in: “My starboard engine is bad!” I glanced out the porthole: it did indeed look bad; the propeller, not feathered, was turning, but slowly. Instructions poured in from Kindley, from the Navy Tower, and from copilot Anderson: “Your air speed is one two zero ...” “Go to rated power on your good engine...” “That’s a pretty hairy turn for a single engine...” And then, as smoothly as if we were flying under full power, we settled on the water. There were far fewer bumps than at the take-off, and the big ship, unlike incoming land-planes which roll for miles along their runways after touch-down, was braked to an almost immediate halt by the friction of the water. “Not bad,” said Ed Walters, 36, from Roswell, New Mexico, our flight crew chief. “Now we get a cruise around the bay, at 40 knots.”

And we did: with the Wright turbo compound engines idling, we opened portholes, drank in the refreshing breeze, and became almost a sightseeing craft moving toward the Station. Then, I learned, I’d been “simulated” again: there was nothing actually wrong with the starboard engine, which had been deliberately cut back by Commander Anderson to test Ski’s ability to land under reduced power.

Pilot-training plays a big part in the operations of the Station, and accounts for the almost-continual round-the-clock flights and such maneuvers as the “touch-and-go,” where a ship comes in apparently for a landing, sits down briefly on the water, and at once goes aloft again.

Young airmen coming to Bermuda for further train-

ing are known as “nuggets”— fresh out of Pensacola, Florida, or Corpus Christi, Texas, with perhaps 200



A VP-45 flight crew with the Skipper CDR Sylvester A. Thomas in 1958.

flying hours to their credit. They're assigned to the big Navy planes first as navigators, like Alec Stromski; then become PP-3's (co-pilots) and finally PPC's - plane commanders. After a hitch in Bermuda which usually runs two years, they are dispatched to duty elsewhere—which may mean flying with similar squadrons on the Atlantic or Pacific coasts, or desk jobs anywhere from Washington, D.C., to Brunswick, Maine.

The continued vigilance of the Naval Station is reassuring in a troubled world—a world which, in the event of war, would find Bermuda as strategically important as it was in the last conflict, when the N.O.B. worked a seven-day week, surfaced the Island's roads in co-operation with the U. S. Air Force, assembled convoys for the perilous Atlantic run, and prepared ships for the African landings.

It is every bit as vigilant today. Around the clock, a full crew and a ready plane stand on the ramp alert for any emergency from mine laying to repelling enemy submarines. How many Soviet undersea craft they have actually spotted and photographed within 500 miles of Bermuda they will not, of course, tell an outsider. But since photos of trespassing Red subs have been released and published in the U. S. press, it can be assumed that they are sighted, followed, and position reported with considerable frequency in these waters.

After seeing at first hand how the patrols operate, and how keenly the young eyes of the pilots and lookouts sweep the seas, I must confess to a changed feeling about the occasional racket the motors make

as the planes skim past my house. Instead of feeling annoyed, I look skyward in admiration, knowing that in those big, dark planes a dozen youngsters, highly skilled and expensively trained, are at their posts, sweating out arduous missions that at any time might end in death or injury.

I think of the time, during the Suez crisis, when the planes flew constantly by night sweeping down with powerful searchlights to make positive identification of all shipping near Bermuda. One of the planes never returned; it disappeared with no trace of its dedicated crew, who were destroyed, the Navy guesses, when a wingtip brushed the water and the plane exploded in a somersaulting crash.

I think of the pilot who rents a house near mine, and who came home sad-faced one evening to report that he'd just flown his radarman to a hospital in Norfolk, Virginia: the radar screen had exploded in his face, and the surgeons had been able to save his life but not his eyesight.

I think of young Bill Lange, squinting through his bomb-sight; and Harry Welch, 22, from Cookeville, Tennessee, stern-lookout who would become tail-gunner in the event of war, and Dick Johnson, 19, another lookout who also serves as metalsmith, and Paul Hess, 22, in charge of mines, torpedoes, rockets—and of Lieutenant Stromski, bringing us in safely on a simulated single engine emergency.



A VP-45 P5M aircraft in flight.

I think of them all—and I for one am more than happy to have them up there, holding a perpetual protective screen around these lovely, peaceful Islands of Bermuda.

Note: The entire article can be read [HERE](#).

ALUMNI NEWS

This section can contain just about anything that deals with our members and their activities by themselves or with other members. The Editor might choose to publish your input in the "Mailbag" instead of here. Regardless, don't be shy...tell us what you are doing and include pictures!! Ed.

Bermuda Cruise 2023

At 1600 on July 2nd of this year, the SS *Summit* of the Celebrity Cruise Lines got underway from a pier in Newark, New Jersey. The eight day cruise had a single destination - Bermuda; for a three day, two night stay. Aboard was a special group!



Mini-reunion cruise logo.

Six former Pelicans, all junior officers together in VP-45 during the early 70s, decided last year to have a mini-reunion in 2023. Bill Hobgood's wife, Becky was the planning force in this group and booked a July 4th holiday cruise with Celebrity. Meanwhile, Bill designed a logo for the deployment (cruise) that he had printed on polo and tee-shirts as cruise uniform items.

The mini-reunion cruise was, without a doubt, a huge success. A video is being produced that will demonstrate the fun they had but it was not available at press time.



Bermuda Cruise 2023 Contingent: (L to R) - Spike and Barbi Christensen, Shelly Wilmot, Jim Clabby, Judy and Fred Haynes, Cheryl and Ted Samples and Becky and Bill Hobgood.

Our Association President Appointed Chair of College Board

On 18 July, Jack Keane accepted the reins as chair of the Board of Advisors for the University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM). In this position, Jack and the Board advise the Executive Director of USMSM on community affairs/communications, scholarship/philanthropic endeavors, the educational needs of the tri-county area of Southern Maryland, and interactions with the local Boards of Education and area colleges/universities.



Jack Keane

The mission and work of the University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM) is guided by a Board of Advisors, which includes representatives



from USM institutions, higher education and business partners, and government agencies.

This is a two-year term for Jack. The online announcement of his appointment can be viewed [HERE](#).

Don Ahlstrand's Celebration of Life

CAPT Don Ahlstrand, USN (Ret), call sign "Dancing Bear" was a young Lieutenant when he arrived in VP-45 fifty-one years ago in 1972. If you were in the squadron, you knew Don. He was tall in stature, had an unmistakable deep voice and a huge smile. A Naval Aviator, he flew the P-3 aircraft like it was part of his body. He was daring but safe, tactically proficient and schooled others in aircraft systems. And Don was just a cool dude!



LT Don Ahlstrand in 1975

As noted in the obituary section of this news letter, Don suddenly and unexpectedly passed away in June of this year. According to his wishes, there was no funeral...just a semi-private

Celebration of Life held in Virginia on June 21st. Representing the Association and VP-45 were Fred and Judy Haynes, Bob Ziegler and Jay Seward...all VP-45 flight crew with Don.

As a tribute to Don's long and distinguished, Bill Hobgood suggested he create one of his "Career Certificates" for Don's family. While Bill did the graphic creation, 18 other former squadronmates of Don, including Jerry Lynn Graham (wife of "Genie K" Graham) contributed to cover the expenses related to framing and shipping. The certificate and accompanying tribute card were shipped to Don's family in early August.



This "Career Certificate" presented to Don's family.



VP-45 reps at Don's Celebration of Life: L to R - Jay Seward and Bob Ziegler standing behind Fred and Judy Haynes.

Hey! Your Pelican Buds want to know what you've been up to!

All ya gotta do is...

CLICK HERE

IN FOND MEMORY OF
CAPTAIN DON "DANCING BEAR" AHLSTRAND, USN (RET)
AS FINE A NAVAL OFFICER AS EVER THERE WAS, A DARING NAVAL AVIATOR AND WONDERFUL, LOYAL FRIEND!

*Lord, guard and guide the ones who fly
Through the great spaces in the sky.
Be with them always in the air,
In darkening storms or sunlight fair.*

*Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep.*

THE ACCOMPANYING GRAPHIC ARTWORK WAS CREATED BY BILL "SEA SCOUT" HOBGOOD AND IS PRESENTED BY HIM AND THE FOLLOWING FORMER NAVAL OFFICERS WHO SERVED IN PATROL SQUADRON FORTY-FIVE WITH YOUR HUSBAND AND FATHER.

THOMAS SNYDER	JOHN "GUNNY" GATEWOOD	"IRON GENE" BLACK
FRED HAYNES	DOUG "POOH BEAR" MITCHELL	JAY "JAYBIRD" SEWARD
MARTY SPOLARICH	MERLE "SPIKE" CHRISTANSON	JIM DOLLE
PETE SCOTT	WALLY MASSENBURG	GARY "BUCCO" ROGERS
RALPH MCCRORY	WALLY "BRAINS" BRIANS	JIM CLABBY
RICK COX		TERRY CRESCIMANNO

AND
JERRY LYNN GRAHAM - WIFE OF GENE "GENIE K" GRAHAM

**FAIR WINDS AND FOLLOWING SEAS, SHIPMATE!
WE HAVE THE WATCH!**

The Tribute Card that accompanied the Career Certificate.

Mini-Reunion in Jacksonville

On Saturday, 5 August, we had a small but most enjoyable gathering of Pelicans past and present at Ponte Veda Outdoor Bar and Grille. A total of 20 people attended, including Skipper Zdunkiewicz and Command Master Chief King, as well as two representatives from the AW shop. Many sea stories were told, some of which might even have been true – and Skipper Z made a particular point of how important it was for the current Pelicans to hear these stories and learn the rich history of the squadron they belong to.

To this end, we'll be reaching out to him to explore how we might bring our people and experiences into the squadron, whether in person or virtually. This is a hugely exciting opportunity for the Association to pay it forward to the active fleet, and if you're interested in participating, please reach out to one of the officers.



Also, we know of other regional gatherings of Pelicans, particularly in the Tidewater/DC area. We'd love to hear about these events and share them with our shipmates, so please reach out to Scott Kelly



A panoramic view of the mini-reunion venue - Ponte Veda Outdoor Bar and Grill.

(webmaster) or Bill Hobgood (newsletter editor) to pass along your stories and images.



Copius amounts of food was available to attendees; paid for by your Association.

**HAVE A VP-45
MINI-REUNION IN
YOUR AREA!**

**YOUR ASSOCIATION
WILL HELP WITH THE COST!**

SQUADRON & COMMUNITY NEWS

A Note from VP-45's PAO, LT Brumfield

We've got another short update from the Roost! As our scheduled deployment reaches its final stretch, we decided we would (in Pelican fashion) spread our wings and fly all the way to Australia, as well as a few more places that will be featured on this page soon.

In support of exercise Lungfish and SCC (Sea Combat Commander's course) out of Western Australia, VP45 was able to work with Australian P-8s from RAAF Squadron 11, as well as submarines from both the United States and Australia in order to improve and expand upon both countries' interoperability and tactical readiness in the Pacific region.

Below are a few images from that trip!



A P-8 from VP45 returning from a mission flight out of RAAF Learmonth. Pictured below is the famous Ningaloo Reef, stretching over 160 miles off the coast of Western Australia.



Aircrew conducting internal preflight on a P-8 from Patrol Squadron Four Five during night operations out of RAAF Learmonth, WA.



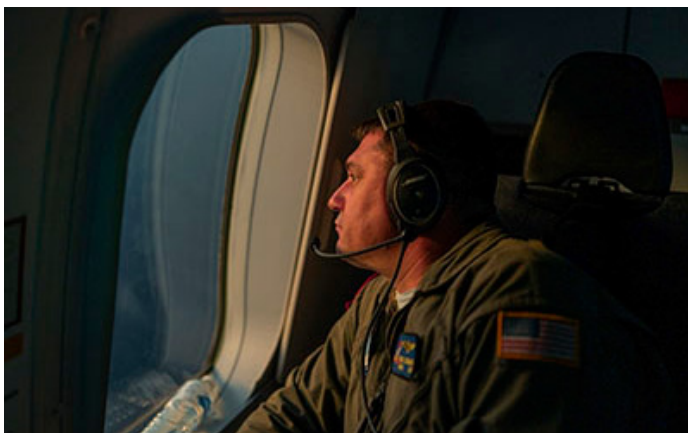
Aircrew from VP45 pose for a picture with the RAAF Chief of Air Force Robert Chipman (center) before departing Western Australia to head back to Japan.

formation regarding our homecoming to NAS Jacksonville. We are excited to see all of you very soon!

Ed's Note: The squadron has since returned to NAS Jax.

Doug Mitchell Attends CNET Change of Command

RADM Pete Garvin, a former Pelican and VP-45 Association Life Member, was recently relieved of command as Commander Naval Education and Training in a ceremony at NAS Pensacola. RADM Garvin's next assignment is as President of the Naval War College in Newport RI; a position held by the likes of



Aircrewman AWO1 Leonard looks out of the observer window while conducting on-station operations just before sunrise over the Indian Ocean

As we enter the final stretch of our scheduled deployment here in Japan, make sure to stay tuned for in-



Former Association president, Doug Mitchell with former Pelican RADM Pete Garvin

VADM Jim Stockdale.

During the ceremony Doug was seated next to retired LCDR Cassius "Cash" Barber, age 99.

P-3 Orion Aircraft "Sundown" Ceremony

Patrol Squadron 30, the "Pro's Nest," honored the end of service, or "sundown," of the venerable Lockheed P-3C Orion aircraft recently before it departed for "The Boneyard" at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The ceremony at Hangar 30 at NAS Jacksonville marked the last time the United States Navy will fly the P-3C Orion aircraft.



The very last VP P-3 Orion taxis for takeoff on its final flight.

For more detail on this story, click [HERE](#).

P-8 Update: A Deep-Dive Into Boeing's Militarized 737

The Poseidon P-8 has been making the news in recent times as Boeing works to secure a deal with the Canadian military. The Canadian forces are looking to replace their aging maritime patrol and surveillance aircraft, and the government had decided

earlier in 2023 that the P-8 was the only suitable aircraft. With this deal ongoing, it's worth looking at this militarized 737 variant, its history, and its capabilities.

See a the full story [HERE](#).

The P-8 Eyed for Multiple Long-Range Combat Weapons

"He's too close for missiles, Goose. I'm switching to guns." It's an iconic quote. It is also outdated. Many now believe that the era of short-ranged ordnance expended in near-peer conflict above the waterline is all but over. The P-8A Poseidon is a multi-mission maritime patrol aircraft that offers the Navy a platform capable of creating kill chains for direct attack, or of assisting the carrier air wing by passing data for different aircraft to attack. [STORY](#) here.

U.S. Navy P-8 Flies Over Taiwan Strait, China Scrambles Fighters

China's People's Liberation Army scrambled fighters to monitor a U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon that flew over the Taiwan Strait in April, according to U.S. and Chinese statements. The P-8A flew over the Taiwan Strait in international airspace early Friday local time, according to a U.S. Navy news release.

"The aircraft's transit of the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific," the Navy statement reads. "The United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate anywhere international law allows including within the Taiwan Strait."

Chinese Col. Shi Yi, a spokesperson for the PLA's Eastern Theater Command, called the aircraft's transit "provocative. In the recent period, U.S. warships and planes have frequently carried out provocative



P-8 aircraft are being intercepted by Chinese fighters similar to the J-16 pictured above.

actions, fully proving that the U.S. is a disruptor of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and a creator of security risks in the Taiwan Strait,” Shi said in a statement.

Despite the Chinese bluster, such flights have become routine for deployed VP squadrons.

Boeing’s P-8A Dominates MPA Market Worldwide

Today, the Boeing P-8 ‘Poseidon’ dominates the market of next-generation maritime patrol aircraft (MPA). Based on the Boeing 737-800 ERX airliner, the P-8 is in service with the United States Navy (USN) as well as five additional operators, with two more awaiting orders and one potentially signing a contract soon.

To date, Boeing has manufactured 156 P-8A and P-8Is. However, in 2025, Boeing may close the Poseidon’s production line as it nears delivering the final batch of P-8s for the USN. Of course, additional orders from overseas customers could extend the P-8’s run into the 2030s.

Boeing projects a potential market for around 75 additional P-8As. The majority of these prospective users would likely be existing P-8 operators as well as current P-3C users, such as Canada, among others. For further info on this subject, see [HERE](#).

Navy Studying Arming P-8A Aircraft with an “Anti-Radar” Missile

The Navy is conducting an integration study for arming its P-8A maritime patrol aircraft with the AGM-88G Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile – Extended Range (AARGM-ER). The AARGM-ER, the



An AGM-88G millile enroute to its target.

latest version of the anti-radar missile designed to neutralize or destroy enemy air-defense radar stations, is an upgrade of the AGM-88E AARGM and is designed for internal or external carriage.

Operational Test of the AARGM-ER is scheduled for completion during fiscal 2024, with Initial Operational Capability slated for the first quarter of that year. Full-Rate Production is expected to begin in fiscal 2025.

A New Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) for The P-8A

The LRASM is designed to detect and destroy specific targets within groups of ships by employing advanced technologies that reduce dependence on intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms, network links and GPS navigation in electronic warfare environments. LRASM will play a significant role in ensuring military access to operate in open ocean/blue waters, owing to its enhanced abil-



LRASM-anti-ship missile in terminal flight.

ity to discriminate and conduct tactical engagements from extended ranges.

It is planned for employment by multiple USN and USAF aircraft, including the P-8A. Click [HERE](#) for more detail.

Navy’s MQ-4C Triton wraps up deployment to U.S. 7th Fleet

The high-altitude, long endurance UAV (drone), assigned to Unmanned Patrol Squadron 19, completed a rotational deployment to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, in U.S. 7th Fleet, where the unit worked to develop the aircraft’s tactics, techniques and procedures.

Two MQ-4C's first arrived in Guam at Andersen Air Force Base in 2020 to operate under Commander ,Task Force 72 in 7th Fleet during an early operational capability period. The drone also deployed to MCAS Iwakuni and Misawa Air Base in Japan to "refine the concept of operations for expeditionary basing" during the deployment, the Navy said. Unmanned Patrol Squadron 19 ("Big Red") is based out of Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida.

Just to be clear, this "Unmanned Patrol Squadron" IS actually manned by people. It is the MQ-4C assigned aircraft that are unmanned.

Project Orion

P-3C BUNO 162776, last flown by VP-40 has been in the Pensacola Naval Aviation Museum for a number of years. It flew with the Navy for 35 years in 12 different squadrons including VP-45 from 1995 to 1999.



Artist rendition of the P-3C display.

The museum is looking for donations in order to fund a display of this aircraft similar to the F-14 currently mounted on a pedestal in front of the Museum. The goal is \$500,000.



Donations as of June 2023

For more information and/or to donate, click [HERE](#).

JUST RELEASED!

by: Bill Hobgood

Despite my best efforts, I was unable to find online a write up about the squadron's recent Change of Command. I know they had one and I know it occurred on June 6th. This is the first time I've been unable to successfully Google information about a change of command. Perhaps that is because this was a relatively informal "inflight" change of command that is growing in popularity in the various Navy aviation communities.



Outgoing CO Bruner getting ready to taxi on his last flight.

The skipper, CDR Stephen Bruner, was relieved by the XO, CDR Michael Zdunkiewicz, in an inflight program that was presided over by the Wing Commodore, CAPT Troy T. Tartaglia.

If I'm not mistaken, two P-8A aircraft were employed with the CO in one and the XO (incoming CO) in the other. The new CO returned to Finart Base and the outgoing CO flew off into the sunset. Well....not really.



Incoming CO Zdunkiewicz.



The Commodore greets the new CO

Since pictures are worth a thousand words, I've included several here. Makes it sorta like having been there in person, right?!

MAIL CALL

Hey Bill!

Regarding the Google Survey that you guys used to vote for the upcoming 2024 reunion location - Good Job! Thanks for taking the time and effort to prep and send this to all of us! Regarding the Newsletter in general - Another world class presentation! Great stuff!

Paul Nadeau

Hey Bill!

The March Newsletter in the new format is simply outstanding! Thanks for the kind words Jack! I'm actually starting to realize I have much more free time on my hands these days. And thanks to all of you for keeping the Pelican Spirit alive and well.

And I voted!

Pooh Bear

TO: The Officers (and other helpers) of our PATRON FOUR FIVE ASSOCIATION.

I am very thankful to be a recipient of the joy of re-connecting with men I served with in VP-45, that you and those before you have made possible. I was a



Cover of our last Newsletter.
(Click it to read it).

White Hat short timer that got out following duty in our VP-45 Pelican Squadron. My intention was to go to college, get a degree, and go back in as an officer and then retire. But, our Lord had other plans for which I will forever be grateful.

In October 1990, our organization held its first

Reunion and what a great time it was for all with lots and lots of hugs and kisses; but, there was one episode I especially remember. I was in the Ready Room talking with a Shipmate that I had never seen or met prior, just enjoying conversation with a new friend. Then, into the room walks another tall gent, he saw my new friend, their eyes met, and then there was a calm silence.

The two both just stood looking at each other for a long moment, then they slowly walked toward one another and not saying a word, they just hugged each other. They moved back from one another and then the smiles, greetings, hand shaking and another brief hugging session.

I don't remember the name of either gent; but, I do remember finding out from both of them as soon as conversation began, that they were both Flight Engineers on the VP-45 PBY crew of Capt. Carl Amme's Squadron in the Aleutian Islands during WWII...and that they had not seen each other following their service together when their Squadron was deployed to another location. That had to be a minimum of forty-five years separation!

That first reunion was loaded with special events similar to the one above. I had a similar experience when reunited with my PPC that was one of the primary reasons I attended the reunion.

Fast forwarding, my wife, Shirley, and I attended all the early reunions and we always enjoyed our friendships of the past plus all the new friends we met at every reunion. After many years of missing reunions due to long-term illness of my wife, I went to the 2016 reunion in Charleston, alone for the first time. I was saddened by the alarming decrease of shipmates from the 1950's and only a couple from WWII.

I got on a tour bus that was filled to standing room only and when we reached the pier at the edge of the Bay, everyone quickly departed the bus and



Click Here to Send a "Mail Bag" Letter to:

"HEY BILL!"

headed for the business section to shop, almost everyone! I don't ever remember feeling that lonely before, everyone was off and going and I was standing there alone wondering what I was going to do by myself.

Coming up behind me I heard a voice that cheerfully asked: "Would you like to go touring with us"? There stood three men from our Squadron Association that I had not met and the gent asked me a second time, "Would you like to go touring with us"? They did not know me and I did not know them, but they were really reaching out and inviting me to go tour with them. They introduced themselves and I likewise introduced myself. I joined them and the four of us proceeded to tour the military sites and I felt like I had a new life. From total loneliness to being taken in by their group and enjoying the afternoon. I found out their names: Brian Prindle, Bill Hobgood, and Jack Keane. I truly enjoyed touring with them; the camaraderie and the new friendships that started on that day will be with me till I'm called home. Shirley and I always returned home from every single reunion with multiple new friendships and my trip alone to Charleston turned out just the same.

I still love to attend our Squadron Reunions. They remain a big part of my life because of friends and new friendships that I've made at every reunion I've attended since Reunion ONE. I am very thankful for all our Association officers and all the efforts they put themselves thru attempting to make every reunion a pleasant and memorable experience for all attendees. And, I'm sure that same effort was and is being routinely applied regarding our upcoming reunion in a little over a year from now.

One item that was added in the last Newsletter, for each of the five cities, were comments regarding the potential safety concerns that were not reported by the professional organizers group. Please allow me to applaud our Reunion Coordinator, Spence Cunningham, for this added critical information. I've

felt this way ever since I read our Newsletter; but, what caused me to address this issue is because of the violent crime occurring all over this great nation. I'm still living in essentially the same part of our little "hick city" (we used to call Wichita). I still enjoy living there but would have to be crazy to make a general statement that it is still a safe city. This week alone, local news has just reported two separate shooting events that took the lives of five persons. I was thinking about nominating Wichita for our 2026 reunion location; but, there will have to be a radical downturn in safety concerns before I can do that. There is no question in my mind, I could not do that today with a good conscience. Hopefully our new Chief will be able to turn us around.

Again, thank you Patron Four Five Association Officers, all of you, for your honest evaluation of reunion site information.

Respectfully, Jay Thomas



L to R: Jay Thomas, Jack Keane and Brian Prindle during one of the tours mentioned in Jay's letter above. Bill Hobgood is taking the photo.

Editor's Note: Most of you know Jay Thomas. For those of you that don't, he is one of the two founding members of our Association. He is the guy, along with Mort Ecthouse, who did all the legwork to organize the first reunion and this group. Go [HERE](#) to see Jay's two letters that he penned in 1988 to start the ball rolling.



TREASURER'S TWO CENTS



Fellow Pelicans:

The VP-45 Association financially is very healthy today with \$ 656.62 in our checking account and \$37183.08 in our Money Market account. For a total of \$37839.70 in reserve!

On a sad note, we had some members who did not renew their membership. At just ten bucks a year, hopefully for each this was just an oversight. Life has a way of getting in the way and time slips quickly by.

For All our current members I encourage you to seek out past shipmates whether members or not to reconnect past friendships. Regardless, I hope this newsletter finds you and your family well. God Bless.

Michael Riley , AOC, USN (Ret.)
Association Treasurer

PATRON FOUR FIVE ASSOCIATION TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT

All Funds	01 Apr 2023	\$37,254.91
Income:		
Dues	\$632.20	
Interest/Dividends	95.59	
Total Income	\$727.79	
Expenses:		
Printing/Postage	\$454.82	
Taxes	0.00	
Reunion Expenses	0.00	
Misc Supplies	0.00	
Corporate Fees	0.00	
Total Expenses	\$454.82	
Net Income		\$272.97
Total Cash Assets	31 Jul 2023	<u>\$37527.88</u>

**I AM AN
ARTIST. ...BUT ARE YOU?**

**LET'S FIND OUT! USE YOUR MOUSE
(OR FINGER TIP) AND PROVE IT!**

CLICK [HERE!](#)

BACK IN THE DAY

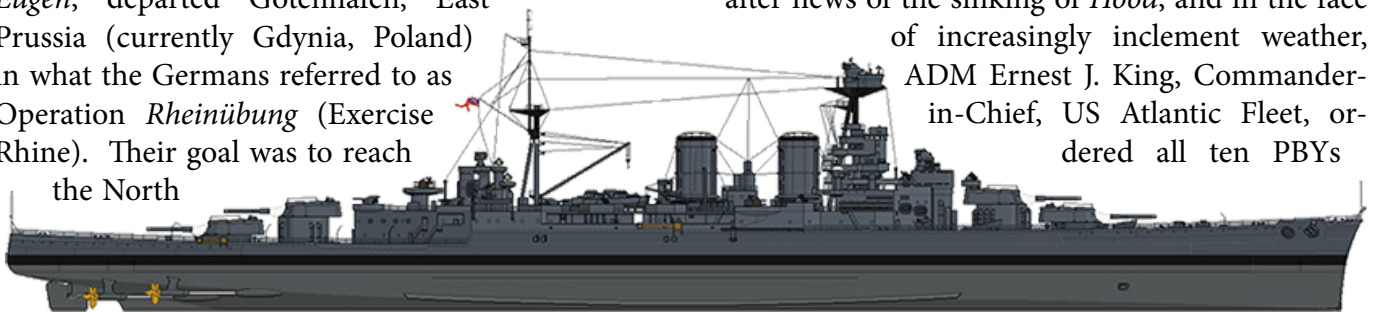
The US Navy and the Search for *Bismarck*



The Bismarck in a 2015 painting. Artist unknown.

by: Jack Keane

In the early morning hours of 19 May 1941, attempting to capitalize on the previous successes of the battleships *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* as well as those of the cruiser *Hipper*, *Bismarck*, and her consort *Prinz Eugen*, departed Gotenhafen, East Prussia (currently Gdynia, Poland) in what the Germans referred to as Operation *Rheinübung* (Exercise Rhine). Their goal was to reach the North



*HMS Hood, battleship (actually a battlecruiser) and pride of the British Fleet. Launched in 1909, she shows two pair of 15" guns, two masts and two funnels. She sunk in three minutes after a gun engagement with *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen*.*

Atlantic convoy routes where they hoped to wreak havoc on lightly defended troop and merchant convoys. Unfortunately for the two, while still in the Kattegat, they were sighted at 1300 on 20 May, by the Swedish cruiser *Gotland*, which, two hours later, broadcast a message to Stockholm. It was only a matter of hours before Henry Denham, the British naval attaché, heard the news and promptly relayed it to London.

The next day, 21 May, the two ships put into Bergen, Norway where they were spotted by a RAF Spitfire. That evening, they managed to leave Bergen undetected to make their way to the Denmark Straits where they would encounter *HMS Hood*, *Suffolk*, *Norfolk*, and *Prince of Wales*. On 24 May, *Hood* was sunk with only three survivors out of 1400. *Bismarck* sustained damage in the battle and, after setting *Prinz Eugen* loose to pursue convoys in the North Atlantic, Admiral Günther Lütjens decided to divert to France.

On the evening of 22 May, fearing that the Royal Navy and RAF would not find *Bismarck*, Churchill cabled Roosevelt, "We have reason to believe a formidable Atlantic raid is intended. ... Should we fail to catch them going out, your navy should surely be able to mark them down for us. Give us the news and we will finish the job." Roosevelt lost no time in helping Churchill. Since the US was still neutral, such aid would be strictly classified.

On 15 May 1941, VP-52 deployed to Argentina, Newfoundland with ten PB5Y-5s and another two on detachment to Norfolk, VA. Eleven days later, after news of the sinking of *Hood*, and in the face of increasingly inclement weather, ADM Ernest J. King, Commander-in-Chief, US Atlantic Fleet, ordered all ten PB5Ys

launched in a fruitless search for *Bismarck* which by then had turned south of the squadron's assigned patrol area.

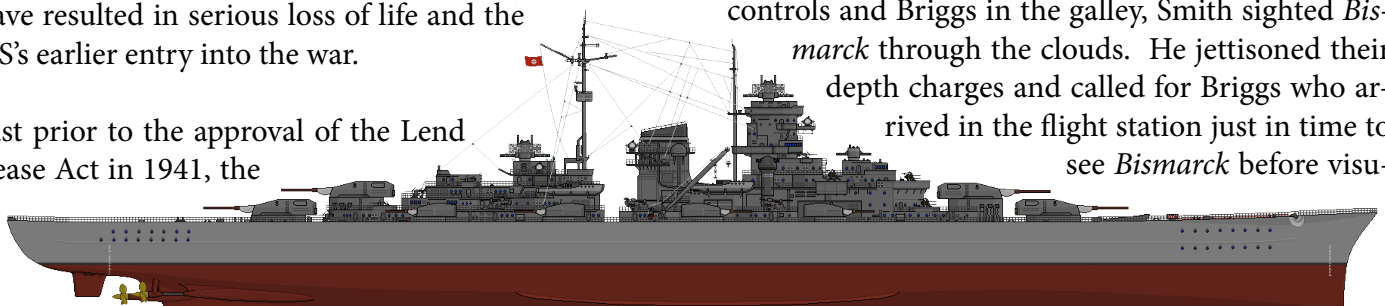
Meanwhile, USCGC *Modoc*, in company with the cutters *Northland* and *General Greene*, was in the North Atlantic rescuing survivors from torpedoed convoy ships. At nearly midnight 24 May, she found herself surrounded by RN Fleet Air Arm torpedo

bombers from HMS *Victorious*. *Norfolk* and *Prince of Wales* were also in the area. *Norfolk* was about to engage her when *Prince of Wales* identified her as a US Coast Guard cutter. The torpedo bombers circled over *Modoc* and then proceeded, unsuccessfully, to attack *Bismarck*. By this time, all USN and USCG ships had been ordered by the President himself, to aid the British in the Battle of the Atlantic, particularly by reporting German warships and U-boats to the RN. It is a good bet that *Modoc* guided those Swordfish towards *Bismarck*. While not damaged, *Modoc* was, at times, within 10nm of the action. As this was happening, two USN battleship task groups were at sea in the Atlantic. The USS *Texas*

"At midnight on 24 May, *Bismarck* was heading for that very spot. Fortunately, these two old battleships (USS *Texas* and USS *New York*) never met *Bismarck*, which would have resulted in serious loss of life and the US's entry into the war."

task group was then about 450nm southwest of Cape Race, inbound to her homeport of Newport, RI after a patrol that had taken her within 250nm of where Swordfish were circling *Modoc*. Simultaneously, her sister ship, *New York*, with her task group, was 250nm east of Montauk Point outbound from Norfolk, VA with orders to proceed to approximately 300nm south of the southern entrance to the Denmark Straits. At midnight on 24 May, *Bismarck* was heading for that very spot. Fortunately, these two old battleships never met *Bismarck*, which would likely have resulted in serious loss of life and the US's earlier entry into the war.

Just prior to the approval of the Lend Lease Act in 1941, the



The Bismarck! The third largest battle ship class ever built.

USN sent several naval officers to England to acquire lessons from the RN. Some were assigned to the US Embassy in London. Upon the approval of the Act, sixteen USN pilots ferried PBY5s across the North



US Coast Guard Cutter Modoc (WPG-46) was involved in locating Bismarck. Painting by James A. Wood.

Atlantic. Upon arrival, they were assigned to RAF squadrons, tasked with training their RAF Coastal Command counterparts. During this time, many were employed as copilots on operational missions. Two of these, Ensign Leonard B. "Tuck" Smith (No. 209 Squadron) and Lt (jg) J.E. Johnson (No. 240 Squadron) were instrumental in relocating *Bismarck*.

Smith, along with pilot Flying Officer Dennis Briggs and crew, departed RAF Castle Archdale on Lough Erne, County Donegal, Northern Ireland at 0345 on 26 May in PBY Z. Upon reaching the west coast of Ireland, they descended from 3,000 feet to 500 feet in truly inclement weather. The sky was almost completely overcast with clouds down to the deck. They arrived at their assigned search area at



Ensign "Tuck" Smith

0945 and, 25 minutes later, while Smith was at the controls and Briggs in the galley, Smith sighted *Bismarck* through the clouds. He jettisoned their depth charges and called for Briggs who arrived in the flight station just in time to see *Bismarck* before visu-

al contact was lost.

Attempting to approach unnoticed, Smith climbed into the clouds while Briggs went aft to draft and



One of the PB5s involved in the search for Bismarck. This one flown by ENS "Tuck" Smith.

send a contact report. They regained contact directly overhead *Bismarck* whose AA shells penetrated the fuselage...one shell punched the floor between both pilots' seats. Again, *Bismarck* was lost in the overcast.

After inspection for serious damage, they continued searching (they had miscalculated their position by 20nm). Johnson and his crew in the other PB5Y joined them with no luck. However, *Bismarck* was spotted an hour later by an *Ark Royal* Swordfish. Then Johnson spotted her again. Between the PB5s and Swordfish, she would remain under constant surveillance until her ultimate sinking by the combined effects of pummeling from the battleships HMS *King George V* and *Rodney*, as well as the cruiser *Renown*, and finally, torpedoes from HMS *Dorsetshire* and scuttling efforts by her crew the following day.

For his actions, Smith was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Credited with being the first American to engage the Germans, he would serve in the Pacific Theater as well as both Korea and the early stages of the Vietnam War. Smith retired in 1962 as a Captain.

On 24 May, LCDR Joseph W. Wellings, USN, found himself aboard the *Nelson*-class battleship HMS *Rodney* 500nm southeast of *Bismarck* accompanied by four destroyers, escorting the troopship RMS *Britannic* to Halifax, Nova Scotia after which, *Rodney* was to proceed to Boston for much needed refit. Wellings had been assigned as an Observer with the British Fleet, with additional

duties as Assistant Naval Attaché, American Embassy, London. For the past ten months he had been observing operations and tactics of the British Home Fleet to include a patrol in a destroyer in the North Atlantic. The information he acquired would prove of immense value to the USN when it entered the war.

The news of the sinking of *Hood*, the pride of the British Fleet, was a huge psychological blow to the British. Throughout the morning of 24 May, Wellings and *Rodney's* navigator read the incoming radio traffic, and plotted the movements of the Home Fleet. Captain F.H.G. Dalrymple-Hamilton, commanding officer of *Rodney*, requested that Wellings participate in the search for *Bismarck* upon *Rodney's* release from convoy duty.

Wellings was active throughout the final engagement of 27 May. Together with HMS *King George V* and *Renown*, *Rodney* pounded *Bismarck* at close range. During the final engagement, *Bismarck* failed to



And Ark Royal Fairey Swordfish aircraft shadowing Bismarck.

score any hits on the British. Upon sinking her losses were huge ... out of a crew of 2,206, only 115 were rescued, 110 by the British and 5 by German forces. The Germans never mounted any such operation again during the war. After *Bismarck* was sunk, *Rodney* returned to Scapa Flow. Wellings would return to the US the following month. He and his three



LCDR (later RADM) Wellings...a USN observer with the Royal Navy and acting Operations Officer aboard HMS Rodney during the battle with Bismarck.

brothers would all retire at the rank of Rear Admiral.

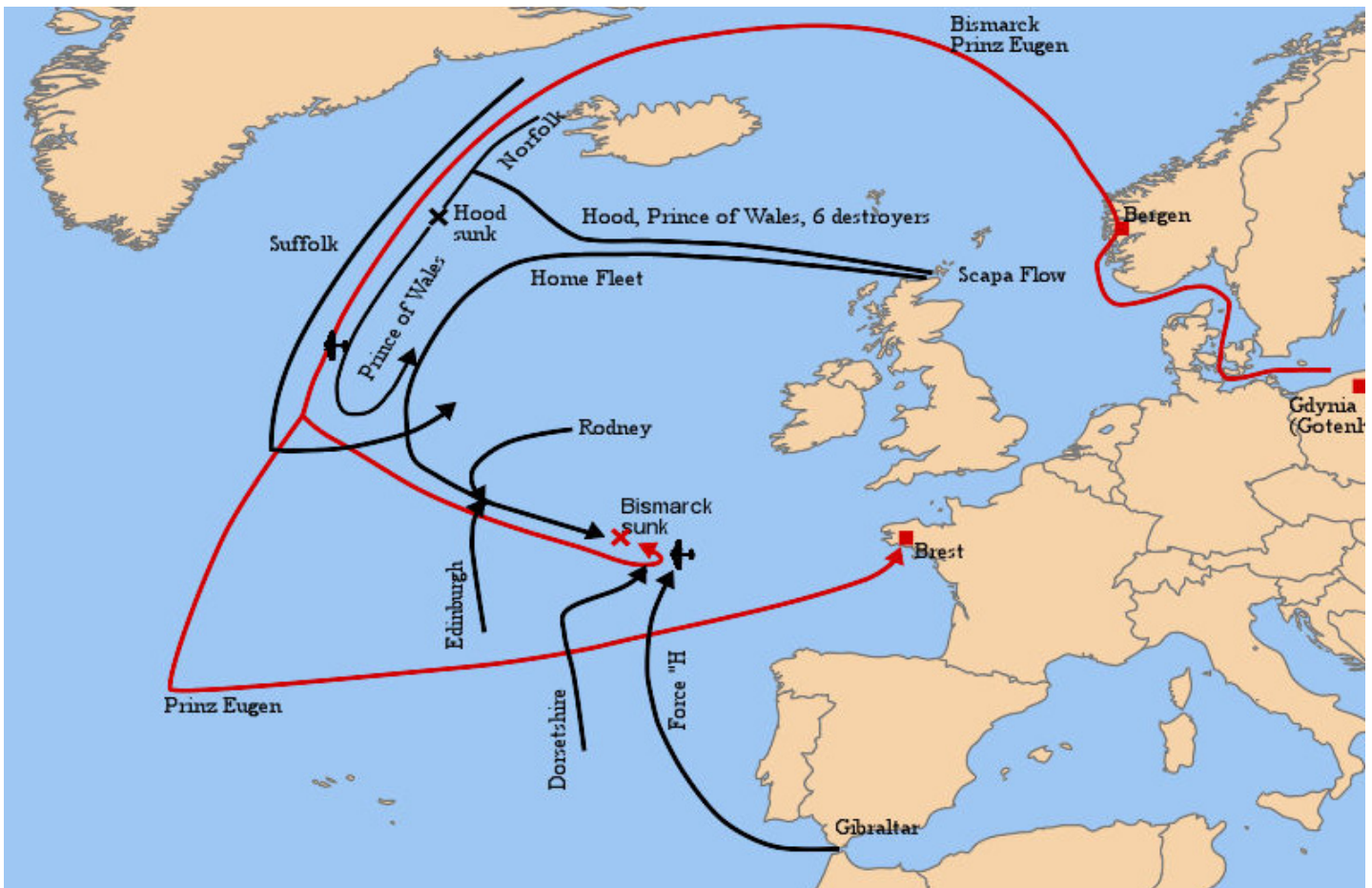
All in all, the operation was successful. However, what could have happened to Roosevelt and his Administration had things gone badly? Had *Modoc*, *Texas* or *New York* been engaged by *Bismarck*, they most likely would have sustained heavy losses. What would have happened had either PBY been shot down and the pilots killed, wounded or captured? Had *Rodney* been sunk, or

Wellings killed or wounded, how might the US have responded? More important, how might the US public have reacted?

There may have been two possible outcomes to the above scenarios. Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Propaganda Minister, would have had a field day as he had when Stalin's son surrendered at the Battle of Smolensk. It is easy to forget that the US population at this time was incredibly isolationist. Had things "turned south", it is quite possible that Roosevelt might have been impeached, a fear he expressed when he sent the order to assist the British in searching for *Bismarck*. As it was, things worked out for the Royal Navy that May. Pearl Harbor was attacked nearly 28 weeks later, which finally drew the US into the war on the side of the British.

If you'd like to view a video of the Bismarck battle: cut & paste this URL into browser:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QH-DELHHSY&t=1216s>



Ship movements during the search for, and engagement of, the Bismarck.



Don "Bear" Ahlstrand

Donald "Dancing Bear" Ahlstrand was born December 15, 1944 to Edward and Evelyn Ahlstrand of Brooklyn N.Y. After graduation from White Plains High School in White Plains NY, Don attended college at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA, and graduated with a BS.

Upon graduation in 1968, Don entered the U.S. Navy and attended Aviation Officer Candidate School at NAS Pensacola. Don would serve in the Navy over the next 25 years during the Cold War as a Naval Aviator flying the P-3 Orion and other aircraft while rising to the rank of Captain. His duty stations and squadrons included NAS Albany, GA, VP-45, VQ-3, VP-1, VP-4, Executive Officer of NAS Brunswick, ME, Chief of Staff for Commander Fleet Air Western Pacific, and Commanding Officer of Naval Air Facility Kadena, Japan. By far his favorite tour was as Commanding Officer, or "Skipper," of the VP-4 Skinny Dragons. During his military career, he accumulated over 5000 flying hours.

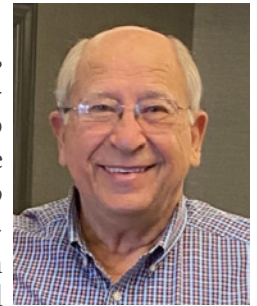
After retiring from the Navy, his love of flying led him to Comair Airline where he flew several types of aircraft in commercial aviation until his final retirement at age 60. In retirement, he focused on what he loved most: doting on his wife Carol of 53 years, playing golf and water volleyball, and spending time with close friends. One of his most favorite retirement pastimes was his active role as "Papa," or Grandfather to his four Grandchildren: William, Charlie, Bitsy, and Henry.

He is survived by his wife Carol, his sister Linda Gambino of Boiling Springs, NC, his sister in law Margret Sylvest of Montgomery, AL, his son Edward

(Sarah) Ahlstrand of Pensacola, FL, his daughter Ashley (Eric Giere) of Orlando, FL, and four fantastic grandchildren.

Lewis Quinton Nelson, 83, Denison, TX, passed away unexpectedly December 7th, 2022. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and faithful servant of the Lord.

Quinton was born November 17, 1939, in Sycamore, Georgia—the youngest of six children—to Walter Chesterfield and Eunie Mauldin Nelson. He grew up working on the family farm, attended elementary school in a one-room schoolhouse, and graduated from Sycamore High School in 1957.



Lewis Nelson

After leaving Sycamore, he proudly served in the Navy from 1957 to 1962 but could not wait until his commitment was over to marry the woman who had stolen his heart on a blind date, the love of his life, Vivian Coffey. They married in 1961 and made their home in Atlanta where they welcomed two daughters, Dawn and Holly. Atlanta is also where he began his career in the can business, a career spanning 40 years, taking the family from Georgia to Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Florida; and Quinton to Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and other locations for consulting. He was a well-respected manager because of his ability to step in and run any piece of equipment if needed, his desire to improve processes which earned him two US patents, but mostly for his fairness to all employees. Quinton ended his career in Denison as the plant manager for Sonoco Products in 2002, giving him and Vivian more time for travel in retire-

ment. Quinton rarely went anywhere without Vivian by his side, traveling over the years to all fifty states, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean. His favorite vacation was a 2018 trip to Ireland with Vivian and his daughter, Holly where they made priceless memories.

He will be sorely missed and always remembered by his devoted wife of 61 years, Vivian Coffey Nelson, daughters Dawn Alsvary and Holly Sand and many grandchildren.



Kurt Strauss

Kurt Steven Strauss, 57, of Reading, Michigan, formerly of Trenton, Michigan, died unexpectedly on Thursday, May 4th while in the hospital. Kurt was born as the second of three children on July 25, 1965 in Trenton to Donna J Strauss (Ennis) and William G Strauss.

As a child, he grew up in Rockwood and developed a love for the outdoors. During his childhood, he spent most of his time fishing, hunting, and playing with his many neighborhood friends. Kurt was raised Catholic and attended St. Mary's Catholic School through eighth grade, where he was introduced to organized sports.

From a young age, he excelled in sports and became a premier athlete at Gabriel Richard Catholic High School in Riverview. Known affectionately as "Baby Huey". He has received numerous awards at the local and state levels in both baseball and football. In spite of many offers to play college sports, he decided to attend Saginaw Valley State University and participate in football. As a freshman, he started at offensive guard and played in the D2 National Championship game. After suffering an injury, his football career was curtailed, but not before several NFL scouts showed interest in him. Ultimately, he enlisted in the United States Navy and became a jet engine mechanic. Over the course of his career, he has deployed to many countries around the world. He was extremely proud to be a Veteran and had a tattoo of the Aviation Squadron insignia on his arm.

In the course of his service, he married Tanina Schave and they had two children, Jessica Elizabeth and Kurt Richard. Upon returning to Trenton following military service, he entered municipal service with the City of Trenton Department of Public Service. He retired in 2001 after a water main explosion nearly claimed his life and necessitated numerous

surgeries. Prior to his injury, he was also an auxiliary police officer.

Kurt's greatest joy was spending time with his children, taking them camping, riding four-wheelers, and creating fond memories.

Kurt is survived by his fiancée Terri, his daughter Jessica (Todd) Tincher, his son Kurt (Rene) Strauss, his cherished grandchildren Clark, Archer, Rylee, siblings, Craig (Kristie) and Angela (Ronnie) Long, and many nieces and nephews.

Ivan Vinkovich, 92 of Dover, OH passed away Friday, April 28, 2023 surrounded by his loved ones at Community Hospice Truman House in New Philadelphia, OH. Ivan was born on June 10, 1930 in Bentleyville, PA. Ivan is survived by his wife of 70 years, the love of his life and high school sweetheart, Florence L. (Bertocci) Vinkovich whom he married on December, 27th 1952.



Ivan Vinkovich

Ivan was a Bentleyville High School class of 1948 graduate, studied engineering at Penn State, and later graduated in 1953 from California State University-Pennsylvania with a degree in Industrial Engineering. He later did post-graduate work, further studying industrial engineering at Pittsburgh University and the University of Tennessee. He rounded out his education by studying the quality systems of ISO 9000. Following his graduation from college Ivan served three and a half years in the Navy (Air) as a lieutenant during the Korean War, the last two years in the last of the Navy Seaplane Squadrons, in Panama and earned his Electronics Wings.

He graduated in 1953 from Naval Officers Candidate School. He was always extremely proud of his military service and following that, he worked in the steel industry in various engineering and managerial positions, including eight years as the general manager of the Empire Detroit (later AK Steel) steel plant in Dover, OH. Following retirement from AK Steel after 27 years of service, he became a consultant for the University of Akron, Kent State University and Stark State for over 15 years.

Ivan will be sadly missed by all whose lives he touched. Ivan is survived by his wife Florence L. (Bertocci) Vinkovich; sons Dr. Craig (Anne) Vinkovich of Brecksville, OH, Richard (Diane) Vinkovich

of Dearborn Heights, MI. Grandchildren Dr. Derek (Kristen) Vinkovich, Tommy (Holly) Vinkovich, Katherine (Tyler) Carlton, and Michael Vinkovich; great grandchildren, Harper Vinkovich and Theodore Carlton; sister-in-law Barb Vinkovich. Many nieces, nephews, and friends.

Patricia A. Bellay was born in Sharon, PA on October 24, 1938, and grew up in Cleveland and Warren, OH. She attended schools in Howland, OH and graduated from Penn Hall Preparatory School in Chambersburg, PA, in 1957. She earned a bachelor's degree in teaching from Bowling Green State University and graduated in 1961. She taught Home Economics for two years in Chardon, OH.



Patricia Bellay

On August 18, 1962 she married Lt Daniel J. Bellay USN in Warren, OH and moved to NAS Patuxent River, MD. She supported Dan's career in the US Navy, relocating to Monterey and Sunnyvale, CA, Jacksonville, FL and Virginia Beach, VA. In Virginia Beach, she returned to her teaching career, teaching in a Catholic School and earning a Master's Degree plus 30 hours in Education from Old Dominion University. Dan completed his department head tour in VP-45 and in 1979 Dan received orders to the Pentagon and the family moved to Northern Virginia where Pat continued her teaching in elementary schools. Pat taught in the Fairfax County Public Schools for a total of 27 years; retiring in 2007.

In the marriage to CDR Daniel J. Bellay, US Navy (Ret) she was the loving mother to CDR John Bellay US Navy (Ret), Amy Bellay Trevisan and Michael Bellay. She loved her children very much and supported them in music lessons, dancing lessons for Amy and swimming activities for all the children. She was the homemaker who looked forward to the holidays by decorating the home and cooking special treats that were her holiday specialties. Her hobbies and talents were shown in many home renovation projects she designed and built. She was an avid bridge player and participated in social bridge. She has five grandchildren, Zachary D. Bellay, Bethany G. Bellay, Xavier N. Bellay, Carlin G. Trevisan and Jack E. Trevisan.

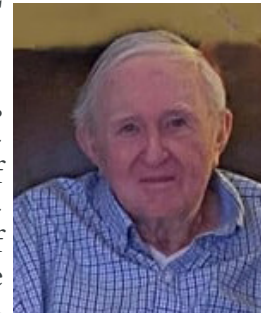
A Mass of Christina Burial will take place on Thursday, May 4th at 11 AM at St John the Beloved in

McLean, Virginia. A gathering will follow immediately from 12-3 PM in the Eagle Hall at St. John's. Interment will be at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. In lieu of flowers please make donations to the Salvation Army in Northern Virginia or to a charity of your choice.

Graveside services for **Mr. Donald Ray Veal** age 83 of Milledgeville were conducted Monday, March 22, 2021 at 2 P.M. in White Springs Baptist Church Cemetery with Rev. Larry Glover officiating.

Mr. Veal was a native of Wilkinson county and had made his home in Baldwin County for most of his life. He owned and operated Veal Truck Repair until his retirement. He was predeceased by his wife, Barbara Grimes Veal; his parents, William Robert Veal and Annie Lou Stapleton Veal, his sister Linda Hardy and brother, Andrew "BoBo" Veal.

Survivors include his children, Beth Langford (Wayne) of Irwinton, Marcia Beck (Mike) of Gordon and Randy Veal of Atlanta; a brother Jerry Veal of Gordon; grandchildren, Kyle Swicord (Emily) Jalen Beck, Peyton Beck and Michael Langford; great grandchildren, Austin Langford, Chance Langford and Tinsley Swicord, a number of other relatives also survive.



Donald Veal

Michael J. "Moon" Mullen, age 81, passed away unexpectedly on March 2, 2023. He is survived by his wife Dorothy, his children, Sean (Debra) Mullen, Michelle Murray (Kevin). Also his granddaughters he adored, Victoria, Marrassa, Brooke Mullen; Sarah and Hannah Mullen; Lydia and Cecilia Murray.



Mike "Moon" Mullen

Mike was born February 16, 1942 in Booth Bay Harbor, Maine to Burton and Mary (Smith) Mullen. He was raised and went to school in Providence, RI and enlisted in the US Navy right after high school. After 20 years active service he retired from the Navy in June 1979. He was an Inflight Technician in a number of Patrol Squadrons including VP-45; and he loved the flying duties especially.

According to his wishes, he was cremated without services.

Thomas (Tommy) Joseph Butler Jr., age 83, of Whispering Pines, passed away on Wednesday, April 29, 2020 at his home, surrounded by his family.



Thomas Butler, JR

Tommy was born in Connecticut on April 27, 1937 to the late Thomas Joseph Butler Sr. and Jean Ferrier Butler. In addition to his parents he was also predeceased by his brother, Charlie Butler.

In June 1955 he joined the Navy and enjoyed sharing his experiences with everyone over the years. In 1960

he married Carole Collani and together they had 2 daughters. After working for 30 years at Industronics Service Company they retired to Whispering Pines, NC. Tommy had many hobbies and interests he was a talented woodworker and artist, he loved boating and was a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, loved playing cards, followed NASCAR and was a Dallas Cowboys fan.

He is survived by his loving wife of 60 years; Carole Butler; daughters, Lori Coviello and her husband Gary of Whispering Pines and Pamela Guenard and her husband David of Broad Brook Connecticut; sisters, Joan Wicker of Georgia and Judy Caldwell and her husband Ralph of Mexico; brother, Bobby Butler and his partner Patti of Florida; grandchildren, Sage Scott and her partner Jay, Christopher Scott and his wife Robin; great-grandchildren, Owen, Reilly, Delie and Daniel; grand-dog Joey.

Roy Theodore Mulcahy (90), of Vestal passed peacefully into the arms of God on May 19, 2022 with his family at his side. Roy was born in 1932 in Jersey City, NJ to William and Henrietta (Scott) Mulcahy and raised in the historic Mulcahy farmhouse (circa 1869) in the Greenville section of Jersey City.



Roy T. Mulcahy

As a young man, Roy enlisted in the Navy as a maritime radio operator during the Korean War, serving from 1952 to 1956. Following his service, he graduated from St. Bonaventure University in 1961 before beginning a long and distinguished career with IBM Endicott, where he was awarded a patent in 1996.

Roy is survived by the love of his life, Marlene Mulcahy (Buffum), sister, Joan Zanotti, and his children, Roy Mulcahy (Brooke Keil), Eileen Mulcahy-LaChance (Tim), Daniel Mulcahy (Staci), Colleen Eldred (Jamie), Maureen Warren (Jeff), Christine Strawsy (Michael), 17 grandchildren, and many special in-laws, family, and friends.

Roy was an active member and past president of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Knights of Columbus, and Our Lady of Sorrows Church. He found great joy in reading books about World War II, an event that cemented his life-long patriotism. He loved camping, traveling, golfing, reciting the rosary, and cheering on his beloved Red Sox. "...until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand."

A Funeral Mass was offered at Our Lady of Sorrows Church, 801 Main Street, Vestal. Burial will be in Calvary Cemetery, Johnson City.

Thomas "Tom" John Leshko, age 87, a retired Navy Captain and Aviator died January 29 at Fairfax Hospital, Fairfax, VA.



Tom Leshko

Captain Leshko was born in 1935 in Harleigh, PA, a small coal mining village in North-eastern PA. He attended a one-room schoolhouse through the seventh grade and later graduated from Hazle Township High School. He received his bachelor's degree from East Stroudsburg University in East Stroudsburg, PA, and a master's

degree in 1975 in financial management from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA.

Captain Leshko joined the Navy in 1958 and was on active duty until he retired in 1985. He served in three aviation squadrons, including a department head tour with VP-45 in the early 70s, and as an instructor at NAVAVSCOLSCOM. His final active-duty assignment was as Deputy Auditor General of the Navy on the staff of the Secretary of the Navy. Upon retirement from the Navy, he worked for a defense contractor and then transitioned into the mortgage loan business.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Jean of Burke, VA; two daughters, Jennifer (Dan) Kosko of Burke, VA, and Jacqueline (Julie Lerner) Leshko of San Diego, CA; three grandsons, Corey (Catherine Flaatten) Kosko of Alexandria, VA, Connor (Allison)

Kosko of Alexandria, VA, and Christian (Laura) Kosko of Washington, DC and brother, Robert "Bob" Leshko of Sugarloaf, PA along with several nephews and nieces.

Edna Moore Phelan of Auburn, AL, a devoted wife, mother and adoring grandmother, died July 29, 2023 in Atlanta, GA at the age of 80.

Born February 2, 1943 in Brooklyn, NY, the daughter of Ralph and Madeline Moore, Edna graduated from Clay County (FL) High School where she was



Edna Phelan

voted the most popular senior and Homecoming Queen before enrolling at Florida State University. While at FSU, Edna became a member of the Zeta Tau Alpha sorority and received her degree in Fashion Merchandising. During her days at FSU and as an active member of Zeta Tau Alpha sorority, she was in the original

“Zeta Picker Band”, a washboard band that started as a sorority rush skit and evolved into playing at various venues around Tallahassee. Playing the washboard with thimbles on her fingers, Edna and the band were invited to be on the TV program “The Ted Mac Amateur Hour” to open a new auditorium in St. Petersburg. In addition to the band, Edna had the distinct honor of being a member of the nationally famous Florida State Student Circus, specializing in the triple trapeze and swinging ladders.

It was at the end of her days at FSU when an invitation to a Naval Ball and an introduction to Naval Academy Midshipman Richard “Dick” Phelan would change her life. Around one year later, the two would marry, leading to a love affair that would last a lifetime. Following their marriage, they would live in numerous cities around the country as Dick was serving as a Navy Aviator, rising to the rank of Captain. One of her favorite tours was when Dick was commanding officer of VP-45 in Jacksonville, FL.

During those early years while Dick was in Vietnam, Edna led the wives’ support group, ensuring that all of the spouses were connected, comforted and taken care of, particularly wives of POW’s including John McCain’s first wife Carol.

The union of Edna and Dick brought about the next

loves of her life, their four children Kelly (Parkman), Lindsay (Dendy), Scott and Todd Phelan, all born in different parts of the country due to their early nomadic Naval stations. Eventually, they settled back in her hometown of Orange Park for an extended period before moving to Northern Virginia as Dick was appointed to a position in the Pentagon. With his Naval career coming to a close, their final posting was in Auburn, AL as he was appointed Commanding Officer of Naval ROTC unit at Auburn University. While they assumed it to be a temporary posting when they arrived in 1988, they have never left, both becoming pillars in the Auburn community.

In Auburn, Edna reconnected with Zeta, serving as its Housing Corporation President and Advisor for more than 24 years. Edna was especially proud of her role with Zeta and its chapter room as it would become a tourist attraction when she would entertain her 10 grandkids. Her commitment to ZTA’s values was unparalleled and she leaves behind a legacy that will continue to guide us as well as a true testament that “Zeta Is Forever.”

It was those 10 grandkids that would become the next loves of her life and where she would take on the affectionate name of “MoMo”. When all were born, those 10 grandkids ranged in ages from 8 years old to a new born, with three girls and seven boys, making for a perfectly fine chaotic adventure flawlessly led and coordinated by MoMo. Not only did she entertain and dote on the 10 grandkids, particularly though her Instagram birthday postings of each “Grand”, but she also instilled many life lessons that her grandkids called “MoMo-isms.” She was an incredible and active presence in each of their lives.

The last love of her life was her country. Her love and dedication of the USA was constant, inspired through her upbringing in a military family, to marrying a military man to then planning the family vacation for the week of July 4th where she would lead the celebrations decked in the red, white and blue of her beloved USA. She was actively involved in assisting Dick in coordinating the annual Memorial Day Remembrance event in Auburn each year, the last of which honored Dick as Veteran of the Year.

Her dedication and loyalty to her husband, her children and their spouses, her grandchildren, her community, her sorority and her country is the essence of Edna Moore Phelan.

She was preceded in death by her parents Ralph and Madeline Moore and her brother Jimmy.

Survivors include her husband Richard (Dick) Phelan; daughters Kelly Parkman (Mark) and Lindsay Dendy (David), sons Scott Phelan (Holly) Todd Phelan (Alice); grandchildren Hannah Grace Dendy, Alex Parkman, Lyla Phelan, Conner Phelan, Will Parkman, Davis Dendy, Riley Phelan, Charlie Parkman, Bennett Phelan and Ella Claire Dendy; and a brother, Ray Moore.

Torrence “Ted” Wilson, CAPT, USN (Ret) was born in Wichita Falls, Texas in September of 1939. At the age of about 5, his father bought an 1100-acre ranch in an even smaller town, Walnut Springs, Texas, where they raised cattle, goats, pigeons, cats and whatever wandered in.

From an early age he rode horseback on the ranch with his father. Ted attended high school at Meridian High School. After graduating from high school Ted attended Texas A & M College in College Station, Texas, where he graduated in 1962 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. A classmate told him the Navy was recruiting for flight school, so he walked across the street and signed up, he was in the Army for about 3 minutes and decided to join the Navy, he wanted



*CAPT Torrence Wilson,
USN (Ret)*

to fly, not walk behind a tank and besides, he said the Navy had sharper uniforms-which they do.

He went to flight school in Pensacola, Florida, where he earned his wings and met his wife, Brandy. Four months after their meeting they married and have spent 60 amazing years together. Many duty stations, to date maybe more than 26 moves in our 60 years.

In 1966 while stationed in VP-16 in Jacksonville, Florida, we welcomed our daughter, Leslie Anne. About an hour after she was born, he left for a deployment with VP-16 for almost a year-his first of 5 deployments to Viet Nam, Leslie was almost a year old when he returned. We were then transferred to Alameda, CA where he was assigned as CIC officer on board the USS Hancock out of Alameda. After the ship left, we found that I was pregnant with our son, ‘Tad’ called after his Great Grandfather. After 5 deployments to Viet Nam there were 7 years and one war between our children.

Ted was then assigned to the Army War College in



Carlisle, PA. He enjoyed being able to spend time with family and nurture our son, Tad, in Scouting and guide Leslie as she went on to college.

During his career in the Navy he served in squadrons, AEW 11 in Argentia, Nfld, VP 16, VP 45 and aboard three aircraft carriers, the USS Hancock, the USS Forrestal and the USS Eisenhower.

Ted’s last tour of duty sent us to Gainesville, Florida where he was CO of the Navy/Marine Corp ROTC at the University of Florida. After retirement from the military Ted took a position as a manager at the Deer Haven Generating Station and we stayed in Gainesville.

After his second retirement he became involved in tutoring 3rd graders in reading and math. They all loved calling out “Hellooo Mr. Wilson” when he came into the classroom. He soon became involved in the Alachua Food4Kids Backpack program and worked and shopped for sometimes 50 or more children and their siblings, sending backpacks home every Friday for more than 12 years; no one would get behind us in the grocery store when they saw three cartloads overflowing with items. He expanded that program to reach high school youth who needed food to get through the weekends. He was still active in that program at the time of his passing.

Ted was a member of the Alachua Methodist Church for twenty-five years and was actively involved on many committees and served on the Church Council for a number of years.

He leaves behind his wife of sixty years, Brandy, daughter, Leslie Anne Charlesworth (James), son, CAPT Tad Wilson, USCG (Patricia), Grandchildren James Bryan, Justin Alexander, Emma Claire, Finley Laure and Stella Lucienne.

THE PATRON FOUR FIVE ASSOCIATION

New Membership Registration Form

Please print off and complete this form and return it to the address below. The personal information you send will ONLY be used within the Association for inclusion in the Association Roster. Dues are \$10 per year, \$40 for 5 years or \$200 for life...payable to:

Mike Riley, Treasurer, Patron Four Five Association
6618 Blue Jay Way,
Charlotte, MI, 48813
517-980-6235; Email: mlriley@gmail.com

ROSTER INFORMATION

Name: First _____ MI _____ Last _____

Date of Birth: _____ Spouse's First Name; _____

Mailing Address: Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Tel (w/area code) _(_____) _____ Email Address _____

FORMER SQUADRON SERVICE/DUTIES

Squadron during your service (circle one): VP/VPB-205 (PBM) VP-45 (PBY) VP-45 (PBM)

VP-45 (P5M) VP-45(P-3A) VP-45 (P-3C) VP-45 (P-8)

Dates Served: From _____ To _____; From _____ To _____

If Aircrew, circle as appropriate: Pilot NFO Aircrew (Position): _____

Ground Duties/Division _____

How did you find out about the Association _____

If you have any "seas stories" or interesting recollections of your time in VP-45, consider sharing those with all the members. The easiest way to get your story or recollection listed and displayed on our website (www.vp45association.org) is to email it to the Association WebMaster or any Association officer. The email address for the current WebMaster and can be found at the website. If you have a photo that "accompanies" your story, please email it also and we'll include it with your story! Additionally, any other squadron photos, squadron rosters, papers, crew lists, etc. that you would like to share are invited. Welcome Aboard!