

THE PELICAN POST

OF THE

President Hank Gorman
Vice President Tom Golder
Treasurer Ken Cory
Secretary/Newsletter Editor Chuck Caldwell

Newsletter #21

April 1998

PLEASE READ THIS

ALL HANDS: Dues are \$10 per year 11/1 to 11/1 (\$40 for five years and \$100 for life). **Annual dues are therefore due and payable for those who have an asterisk after their name on the Newsletter envelope address label.** Roster and e-mail addendums are included for members personal use only. If you change your address please inform the Editor so we will be spared the charge the postal service makes for each correction notice. If this edition is forwarded to you by the postal service, we will automatically receive your new address and be charged for the service.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hank Sez . . .

Down here in south Florida we have survived El Nino, the Australian Flu, Global Warming and rising water in the Everglades. We are now looking forward to Spring and a return to normal, whatever that is.

In this issue of the Pelican Post is a survey questionnaire prepared by Chuck Caldwell concerning the Association reunion scheduled for the year 2000. By obtaining the thoughts of our members and analyzing them, your association officers can prepare several alternative plans for the next reunion to present to the membership at the business meeting in Pensacola. This procedure will save time and confusion at the business meeting. The results of the survey also will permit your association officers to research the proposed reunion locations and present the pros and cons of each site. Please give some time and thought to the survey questions and return the questionnaire to Chuck before the deadline date.

Mort Eckhouse is putting together a fine schedule for our reunion in Pensacola. I have already made my hotel reservations and urge you to do the same. I am looking forward to seeing you in October.

Hank Gorman

NOTES FROM ALL OVER



Memorial To Those Who Died

Under clear skies and a light breeze on 28 September 1997, the VPI Memorial was dedicated to the over 1,100 aviators who died flying Maritime Patrol aircraft since 1950. Representatives from Spain, UK, Italy, Australia, Netherlands, USA and Canada MP/VP communities laid wreaths in memory of their fallen comrades. Wreaths were also laid for Japan, Portugal, Germany, Norway and New Zealand. Also dedicated was the Book of Remembrance, listing every casualty the organization was able to research. The Book will be kept on display for the public in the 14 Wing Museum at Greenwood, NS Canada.



If you are in the area you are cordially invited to drop in and view the museum. Photos and a copy of the Book of Remembrance will be on the VPI web page in the near future.

Navy and Air Force Primary Flight Training Combined

WHITING FIELD. "Fly Air Force" is painted on one water tower. Another is emblazoned with "Fly Navy." Two other sea-related services, the Marine Corps and Coast Guard, also have similarly marked towers.

Training Squadron Three (VT-3) has as its Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Rick Von Berckefeldt, USAF, while a Navy officer is the Executive Officer.

VT-3 is trying to adopt more efficient AF management techniques while retaining Navy leadership style that gives lower ranking officers more autonomy and responsibility. Cost savings are expected from reductions in training time. It takes six more weeks, on average, for a student to complete primary training in VT-3 than it does in an AF squadron. Its goal is to match the Air Force's 22 week average by June.

VT-3 now receives 15 students every three weeks and they form a flight, or class, that trains together. The Navy way was to send five new students to the squadron every week and train them individually.

Other all-Navy squadrons are expected to follow the "pioneering" VT-3 path and become joint training squadrons in the near future.

Did you know: The Pledge of Allegiance was first published in *Youth's Companion* magazine in 1892.

There Is A Pony In The After Station!!!

Part one:

During 1952, I was on the staff of the FAIRWING at NAS Norfolk. This was just prior to my going to a seaplane squadron, VP-45, in Panama. One night, as I stood the Staff Duty Officer watch, a group of seaplanes - PBM's - arrived from a deployment to the Scandinavian countries.

I went over to watch the beaching and the crews departing their aircraft, very frustrated from their long flight home. I don't remember which squadron it was (*Ed. Note: VP-34*), but one of the crewmen from one aircraft was about ready to shoot a tiny Shetland pony that he had brought back in the after station of his plane.

The poor animal had been in the after station for more than a week, and the aircraft stunk like a busy horse barn. The crewman was doubly frustrated and angry because one of the Customs Officials that met the planes had told him that the pony would have to be quarantined for at least a month before it could be taken home.

The pony owner asked, "Is there anyone here who wants to have this pony as a present?" I said I would take it, but I wanted to pay him whatever he had paid for it, which was \$75. I paid him and he said, "It's yours!" And he went home.

My son, Douglas, named him BUTTERFINGERS because it was the squadron's voice call. We put the pony in the fenced area around the fuel storage area on the base for one

month. It was the area where there was plenty of green grass and had water.

The day before I was to take the pony home to my son, I received orders to VP-45 and we had to sell the pony to one of the officers on the staff. I did get my \$75 back.

Now that I think back on it, I don't believe the squadron ever was able to remove the smell from that aircraft.

Contributed by Gordon Barnett

Part two:

During the late summer/early fall of 1952 my seaplane squadron, VP-49 homeported in Bermuda, joined VP-34 from Norfolk in a massive NATO exercise along the Norwegian coast, in company with aircraft carriers and numerous combatant ships. The exercise involved the simulated invasion of the coast at Narvik, Norway, well above the Arctic Circle. Our PBM's and Royal Air Force Sunderland flying boats conducted antisubmarine patrols, operating from Norwegian fiords and seaplane bases in England and Scotland.

Our last stop was in the Firth of Forth where we anchored by the large seaplane tender USS Currituck (AV 7), near Leith and Edinburgh, Scotland. We went ashore on liberty once when a storm came in from the northeast and the North Sea, and it lasted for three days. The crews aboard the PBM's had to stay aboard the aircraft due to the monstrous waves.

Dawn broke the fourth day and I left Currituck on a launch to pick up crews from the PBM's. As we pulled alongside a VP-34 aircraft I almost vomited from the awful smell. We looked into

the plane's after station and *there was a pony!* "Say hello to BUTTERFLINGERS" said one of the crew.

The pony was standing there with pony dung and urine all over the deck and in the bilges. The crew smelled as bad as the pony and aircraft, and they took a ribbing for the rest of the cruise — and probably from their pals back in Norfolk.

One of our crews also had a pony in their aircraft but didn't have the smelly problem the VP-34 crew did because of the advanced planning done on how to keep it clean. They built wood stalls into the after station and put hay on the decks. We tied the pony out behind our quarters in Bermuda but couldn't get close to him. He was so feisty and would bite the heck out of you if he got the chance.

To think that my old buddy, Douglas Barnett, wound up with that VP-34 pony was terrific!! (*Ed. Note: John and Gordon were in PrepFlight at RPI together in Troy, NY and went to their first squadron together.*) I forget what our group named our pony, but I think it was also sold to someone in Norfolk. I'm sorry to say I didn't get assigned to the Shetland detachment where they bought the ponies, and there are many more side stories to that cruise — things that happened to the pilots and crews in every port, hilarious, many of them. I wonder what happened to that stinking PBM they hauled that pony to the states in?

Contributed by John Bradley

Part three:

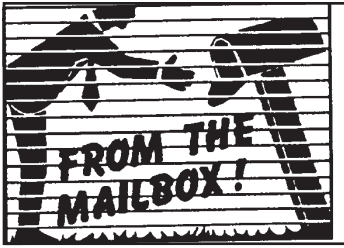
I was reading Newsletter #20 and noticed the highlighted "In The Next Issue". This brought back

some old memories. I was serving on the USS Tangier (AV 8) during that typhoon that hit Okinawa in 1945. (See the story later in this issue.) What a mess — ships everywhere! I don't remember the squadrons we were supporting but the aircraft were PBY's, PBM's and Sunderlands from the UK.

I was also aboard USS Currituck (AV 7) from August 1951 to May 1953 and I remember we had a PBM on deck for a major check during Operation MAIN BRACE in the Northern Atlantic area (Shetland Islands, Norway and Scotland). As usual all the check crews were bussing around — AD's on the engines, AT's and AE's up in the cockpit/flight deck area, AM's inside checking the hull, decking and cables.

An AM2 was assigned to check the cables in the after station and tunnel section to the elevators and rudder. I understand when our AM2 opened the bulkhead door, looked in the tunnel with his flashlight, he saw some BIG eyes. He left the aircraft without the aid of the ladder, down to the AM shop (3 decks down), yelling, "There's something in that aircraft with BIG eyes!" That AM2 was *really* scared. Well, it was a Shetland pony. I always wondered what squadron that plane belonged to and am waiting to hear who was involved in these incidents. Incidentally, our Air Officer aboard ship was CDR A. A. Cipolat, later XO of VP-45.

Contributed by Lon Gailey



Hope you and your family are OK.
We enjoy the Newsletter -- take care.

Sincerely,
John M. Delperuto



30 September 1997

Dear Ken,

Enclosed are my dues. Sorry to hear about Will Moore. I know he will be missed, as will Bill Dean.

I flew many hours with both those fine pilots, and will cherish the memories.

Thanks for all of you who do a fine job in the Association.

Sincerely,
John Lovrick (PC EE-11)



(via e-mail)

30 September 1997

Dear Chuck,

I received the VP-45 Newsletter in today's mail. I just walked in from work and my wife, Pat, greeted me with a big smile and handed the envelope to me, saying, "Let's start making plans; reading all this should make you happy." I'll sit down after dinner and enjoy reading all the fine work you have put together.

Once again, Chuck, THANKS!!! You do great work.

Fair skies
Brad (John Bradley)



1 October 1997

(via e-mail)

Dear Mr. Cory,

Enclosed you will find my dues for two years instead of the usual one. I think I'm going to be around for a long while so I can save time and postage

2 October 1997

Hi Chuck and Joan,

Received the VP 45 newsletter and you do such a wonderful job with it, Chuck! I find I do not know as many

8 September 1997

Hello From the Gilchrist family-

Greetings from Yuma, AZ, the nation's Hot Spot. Time is hectic for us and time flies. Our youngest daughter died and we have adopted her two youngest — ages 7 & 8. There were four altogether; two older boys who live with their dads.

We drove to Alaska this summer with the young ones. We had a wonderful trip. Our motorhome performed beautifully!

We are from Alabama and have just purchased a home in Clarke County. Our job now is getting moved. Since Gil retired in 1977 we're afraid Uncle Sam's help is out.

Since family is in Alabama we should have help with our children, so maybe we will see you next year at the reunion in Pensacola.

We are sending our life membership dues. Thank you for the reminder of dues due.

Robert, Ruth, Robert & Rayanna



30 September 1997

Dear Ken,

Enclosed is my check for \$100 for the life membership in the VP-45 Association. Hoping we can make Pensacola in '98'.

I saw in the new roster of new members another shipmate I remember from VP-45 in Brazil ('45), "Ellis" from Indiana.

names anymore but will continue to look forward to receiving it. Not sure about the '98 reunion. Will have to see what is going on by then.

I was interested in the article about the "Evolution of the Aviation Cadet Programs". Don came into the Navy under the Holloway Plan in August of '48. I was under the impression it was a new plan, at that time, to recruit pilots from the civilian sector as of then. Don was enlisted during the war and spent two years in the college plan (V12?) and finally got tired of them extending and extending the college portion so he signed out and went aboard the USS Yosemite. Never got out of New York harbor.

After he got out in 1946 he went back to U. of Dubuque (Iowa) and got his degree in chemistry and was working as a chemist for Swift and Company in Chicago, when I read about the Navy seeking pilot trainees with college degrees, in the Chicago Times. Boy, he was on the recruiting office doorstep first thing the next morning and within about a month he was sworn in and off to Pensacola.

As much as he would have liked to stay in for retirement, that was not to be and he was never bitter about being passed over and out the door in 1960. He was always grateful that he got to fly, which was the love of his life at that time.

I am remaining flexible about the '98 reunion. Will have to see how things are going by then. Hope all is well with both of you.

Alice Gillham



6 October 1997

Dear Ken,

I'm still hanging in there!!! You and Chuck are doing a magnificent job as

Sec. and Treas.

Hope this finds you well —

Best regards,
Matt (Matherson)



21 October 1997

Dear Chuck,

I have sent Mr. Cory my check for my '98 membership and newsletter. I want to relive the experience of the '45 typhoon mentioned in the last Newsletter. I am also enclosing some documents regarding VP-205 that you may find useful.

What information do you have about VP-205 sinking a plane at Johnston Atoll enroute to the Philippines?

C. R. Steely, AOM3 was a father of a five year old girl and a eight or nine day old boy when he was reported missing in action on August 1. Mrs. Steely informed me early in the year that she did not receive a crew picture in his belongings when the Navy returned them.

If you have a picture of crew twelve listing Steely as a member, I will pay for 2 copies if you will send them to me to give to Mr. Steely, Jr., and his sisters. He still has my squadron picture that he is having enlarged to 16" X 20", the same one that I have.

Thanks,
Jarrell Yates



24 October 1997

Dear Chuck,

You do a great job on the *Pelican Post*. All information and memories are cherished.

I wonder if Andy Sinclair still plays the Bag Pipes out in Bermuda?

Chuck, I am enclosing some photographs to be included in the VP-45 records. Do whatever you think best with them. Two photos are of the squadron

basketball team that I coached. One is a snap of EE-9 JATO takeoff from NS Bermuda. The photo of a personnel inspection and a future squadron Commanding Officer, Al Jansen, as an Ensign in the front row.

Sincerely,
Frank Kolda



25 October 1997

Dear Chuck,

Thank you for answering so soon. Enclosed are both Panama newspapers. Copy whatever you need. They appear to be fragile and discolored after all these years.

As for pictures, those were taken with a K-20 camera, and after each flight we had to drop the film at the San Jose, Costa Rica, airport where LCDR Bob Bookhammer was our liaison officer. (The 1955 "war" between Costa Rica and Nicaragua when VP-45 was observing for the USA.)

Can you imagine a seaplane looking like it wants to land on a runway? I wondered at times what some sightseers thought — I mean to tell you, we were **LOW!**

In case I failed to mention, on one of the flights, we encountered one of the "bad guys" in an SNJ with machine guns! It may be a rumor, but I had heard that one of our flight was fired at; I can't be sure, though.

Anyhow, it was an interesting event. I vaguely recall the flight you spoke of

near the cliffs, but heard very little of it. (A P5M approaching the tall Nicaraguan cliffs from the ocean almost didn't make it over the top due to the unexpected downdrafts from the off-shore wind.)

Our PPC was LT Fleischli, with Sam Hembree and Jim Hoge on all three hops we made.

For now, Adios. Milly and I both send out best to you and Joan. Did anyone tell you that you're doing a helluva job? Well, I am!

Shipmate,
John Lovrick



Doug Murphy, shown above in 1949, next to the squadron logo, wants to know if anyone has an address for any of the below squadronmates:

- * Dan Pearson - Detroit MI
- * Richard Blecha - West Bend WI
- * Warren Mitchell - Chambersburg PA
- * Ed Rangus - Lorain OH
- * Robert Doppler - Piqua OH
- * Bob Garton - Stamford CT
- * John Bruggy - Elizabeth NJ
- * Joe Moore - Lebanon PA
- * Jim Bowker - Chicago IL
- * Vic Chernick - Butler PA



3 November 1997

Dear Chuck,

Here is the ten bucks for my dues to the VP-45 Association. I read the October Newsletter and found a couple of friends in there and had to write.

Also, the NAVCAD program was mentioned. I was one of those guys having been picked up for it while in enlisted boot camp in San Diego in October of 1961. I got my wings in September 1963 and was assigned to VP-45 along with Les Parker, Don Schmidt, Don Nichols, Cal Hoffman - all of us NAVCADs, and Buster Gregory.

Monte Clark brought back some memories when he mentioned Mort Eckhouse, the former "Poopybag" pilot. He was a character and talked often of a flight where he had 24 hours of pilot time and 36 hours of special crew time. I don't really remember too much about Monte, but I knew him and his crew well because I was the Schedules Officer during my time there in Adak, and before in JAX.

Tom Golder brought back the memories of the Walking P-3 and LN-6 because I was Dan Peckham's copilot. I remember those great times in Adak. One in particular comes to mind — We were returning from Shemya and got to Adak just behind Jake Tobin and his crew. The field was at minimums and there was a quartering tailwind from the left at 35 to 45 knots. The duty runway was 23. Oh, there was an inch or two of ice on the runway also. Jake landed and the wind weathervaned him on roll-out as he passed through 80 knots or so. The plane actually reversed direction on the runway! He kept it on the ground and cleared for us.

Dan Peckham was flying and I was in the right seat. When we broke out the first time I lined us up on the tar paper roof of a shed or something just to the right of the runway. Fortunately

we was the runway in time and made it over to it. After touchdown and passing through about 100 knots, the airplane began to weathervane and we started off the runway, and waved off. Some will remember the wave-off for that runway — left turn up over the hills and the BOQ and out to sea. We tried two more times and gave up because we could not keep it on the runway. I checked Dan and he had full right rudder, full reverse on props 3 and 4, with 1 and 2 up to about 1000 horsepower after touchdown, and still could not keep it on the runway. (*Ed. Note: He kids not! I have landed in that WX at Adak in a C-54 without reverse pitch!*)

On our third wave-off, a Reeve's Aleutian Airways plane called in VFR 5 miles out for landing and was told we couldn't make it. He rogered that and a few minutes later called for a short turn off. We went to Kodiak.

On our return, the Operations Duty guy told me that an Air Force C-141 pilot was in Ops filing a flight plan out of that wonderful garden spot and watches us do our thing. He asked the Ops guy what we were doing and the reply was, "They are practicing for when the weather gets bad." The AF pilot was duly impressed and cancelled his flight plan and went back to the bar.

Dan was an excellent pilot and friend. I don't know how he put up with us JO's on the crew, but he did and we had some wonderful times.

I remember the "scroll" for the flying since I was Schedules and made it. I also remember how Jerry Jones would go to the office at night and rearrange everything so that his crew was always the one available for that *necessary* trip to Moffett, or Japan, or wherever.

Best regards,
Marion J. Smith



9 November 1997

Hi Chuck,

Just sent the reunion survey to Mort and my dues to Ken. Wanted to let you again how I enjoy receiving the Newsletter. You do a great job!

My wife and I hope to attend the reunion next year, as we had a great time last year in Virginia Beach.

Haven't heard from Art Helma in some time. Last I heard he just got back from a tour of Alaska. (*Ed. Note: Ed and Art were in VP-45 PBY's in the Aleutians in 1943*) What a feeling to see him at the last reunion. Was over 50 years since I last saw him.

Chuck, keep up the good work. I'll close for now and look forward to seeing you and Joan at the reunion.

Best regards,
Tom (Red) Lister



Dec 7 - 97....Pearl Harbor Day
(via e-mail)
Chuck.

...Just returned from eye surgery in Boston and delighted to receive your welcome note....Yours is the 2nd...John Simmons was the 1st...who also asked about the bagpipes.

Please let Frank know that the pipes are still going strong. Carried throughout Navy career...shipboard and aviation assignments. Bermuda...Thule '46...Antarctic (with Byrd aboard Philippine Sea)...UK and Germany on Berlin Airlift (seconded to 201 Squadron RAF from Bermuda)...Pacific...6th Fleet...AEW Argentina...and finally Greece. Retired to Bermuda in '65 and joined Bermuda Police Pipe Band. Never made Corporal Piper but received Red Sash for Good Conduct. Hip replacement and angioplasty in '92 cut short further participation. Son, John, is also a keen piper. Most of our performances are for weddings and funerals.

Work as Trustee of Bermuda Maritime Museum located in the Keep at the former Royal Naval Dockyard is rewarding. Have sent out Appeal Letters to members of VP-45 and VP-49 along with other Navy contacts in connection with U.S. Navy Room in the Commissioner's House in the Keep. Am looking forward to meeting any and all visitors who can visit Bermuda and show them the results of our efforts. We have had excellent support from the Navy types resident in Bermuda.

Good to hear from your, Chuck. Keep in touch. Will keep you informed of our progress.

Yours aye...Andy (Sinclair)



15 January 1998

Dear Chuck,

What a marvelous surprise to receive your letter and all the information on the Association! I had no idea the organization even existed, let alone so much history and names from the past that conjure up great memories. Jean and I frequently berate our lack of foresight not to have tucked in the telephone directory when we departed Coco Solo.

We had gained many good friends in the squadron and I was surprised we did not keep up with them after discharge. I had returned to the small machinery manufacturer I had left for four years, and quickly resumed my career in engineering and, later, marketing. The company grew rapidly and I found myself on the road as much as in the Navy, selling our products and technology worldwide.

The one couple we did see regularly was Alice and Dick Hallengren who lived in the Chicago suburbs. I was there often on business and we had much in common. We were very

saddened when Dick died suddenly of cancer in 1988.

Thank you for the photo of NINER FINEART, circa P5M. I am enclosing a copy of two Mariners, EE-3 and EE-11. I got my feet wet in ELEVEN when I arrived at the squadron in '53. "Hitch" Hitchcock was the tough old PPC, and he taught me a great deal about flying seaplanes.

I was the pilot on one other air to air photo; the official picture of a P5M used in a variety of places including the wallet ID cards carried by PPC's. I circled Mayport in EE-3 for a half-hour waiting for the photographer in a twin Beech to join us.

The timing of my tour at the squadron couldn't have been better. I was in a very cohesive group of Ensigns, newly married and eager to party, when we arrived. There were quite a few "exhausted roosters" also; veteran pilots who became weekend warriors and were reluctantly recalled to active duty. The combination gave the younger group a lot of flight time and greater responsibility. Most of us were chosen to be in the initial training group for the new P5M's, including a short tour with VP-56 in Bermuda to get flight and weapons training.

I turned ferry pilot to get the old PBM's to Norfolk. The first flight was uneventful, but when I took the "hangar queen" north, I was number 3 to beach and we began leaking badly, threatening to sink us. I did not want to go down with the ship, so a few exchanges with the tower gave us priority to the ramp.

My log book indicates the update from PBM to P5M occurred from December '53 to April '54. I'll never forget the Sunday afternoon when Red Wilson brought in our first P5M. He did a beautiful low-level victory pass of Coco Solo which brought all kinds of folks out of quarters to see the unfamiliar but welcome airplane!

In two weeks Jean and I are headed

back to the Isthmus for only our second time since we left in '55. The occasion is our 45th. We'll be aboard the Carnival Tropicale which departs San Juan to make a 180 in Gatun Lake. It'll be fun (hopefully) to once again see our quarters at the end of "Gold Row" (the lower end) and to see the USNH where our first was born.

If you know Pensacola now, you probably know "Momma" Owsley, wife of Allen the hardware king, and mother of the "Jaws" sailor kids, who was a Navy brat and classmate of Jean's at Colby. The prospect of a reunion is something I don't want to miss!

See you then . . .

CAVU too,
Al Johnsrud

P.S. \$40 check for five years' dues.



17 January 1998

Dear Mr. Caldwell,

Thank you for your prompt attention to my inquiry regarding the Patron FOUR-FIVE Association. As it happens, I have rich recollections of my too brief stint in VP-45. It seems I spent most of my enlistment either in school or waiting to attend school. I caught the last of the P5M's in Bermuda. I was the radio guy on what I believe was the last P5 operational patrol in the Atlantic on New Year's Eve, 1963, but I may have the facts muddled. We transitioned to P3's at Pax River where I was assigned to the crew of LCDR J. D. Jones. Crew 10 was a unique bunch of skilled and intelligent guys who soon formed an extended family. Under the tutelage of Flight Engineer Dick Gray and First Tech Ray Pugh, the enlisted guys developed special pride in our A/C and in our ability to carry out a mission.

Crew 10, later 3, also took pride in having a good time, wherein lies the genesis of my Sea Stories. If McHale's Navy PT boat had been a P3, the se-

ries could have been written around some of our adventures. Fortunately, Mr. Jones realized he had a specially talented group, and bailed us out of several scrapes. For various reasons, it probably wouldn't be appropriate to publish some of these escapades, at least not while we're alive, but I'll try to conjure up a few for *The Pelican Post*. (Ed. Note: *The first one can be found in the Pelican Tales column - "The Day the Blue Angels Joined VP-45".*)

John Covert



(via e-mail 15 January)

Charles,

Thanks for your e-mail and the information re Izzo and others. I have not received any other e-mails since my posting (to www.vpnavy.com).

Yes, I would like to receive a newsletter and info on "joining up".

I live in Tallahassee and have a retired Navy (VP-45) friend that lives in Quincy, FL, which is about 30 miles from Tallahassee. His name is Ross Hansell, and he retired about 4 years ago I think. He and I have enjoyed talking about VP-45. He is from another era (P3s), but we still have fun sharing.

I am going to seriously consider the reunion in Pensacola in October. Will the info you send contain additional information about it? (Yep.)

Thanks again,

Gerald (Gerry) Green



(via e-mail January)

Chuck,

Outside of the Navy I don't join things, but I would like to get in touch with a lot of the guys I knew long ago

in that galaxy far away. I'll give it a try. Dues?

I was in 45 from September, '70 to June '73 on Crew 33 and Crew 23 (from Sigonella, through Rota/Lajes, the refit to Charlies and Christmas in Lajes 'til they left for Sig again). Funny how we tell time, huh?

Harry E. Vermillion



January 1998

Dear Chuck,

Just a quick note to say Thanks for the Newsletter and information packet. "Great Newsletter."

I've sent my dues to K. J. Cory and waiting to receive the Association Roster. I would like to track down some of my shipmates, and the roster should help.

I started my tour with VP-45 in May of '57 and left in May of '59. I was an AD-3 and worked for Chief Ray Fussell on night check for about six months before being put on LN-6 flight crew as 2nd Mech. I was put on LN-10 as Plane Captain for the next fourteen months. The crew as I recall was LTJG Self, PPC; LTJG Joyce, Copilot; LTJG Lidke, NAV; AT-2 Suehr, 1st Radio; AO-1 Higareda — I can't recall the others. Must be getting old.

I'm looking forward to the 1998 reunion in Pensacola.

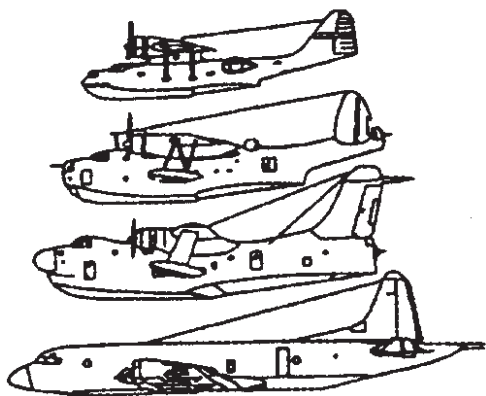
Thanks again.

Tom Butler

PS I have a 1956 "NARMID" summer cruise book. I guess you must be the LTJG Caldwell on page 8. (Yes -)



Pelican Tales



T'was a dark and stormy night . . . but I'm getting ahead of myself. It was the summer of 1957 and Bermuda was all aglow because the island was hosting a SUMMIT MEETING between the President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and the Prime Minister of England. The Governor was all decked out in his whites with plumed pith helmet to escort the visiting dignitaries to various social events. Life on the island was just great.

Out at the Naval Station things were all astir. There was an aircraft carrier group nearby, the Air Force was in increased alert status, and VP-45 and VP-49 were to do their thing to protect the integrity of this historic meeting.

For several days we were to fly a fifty mile radius circle around Bermuda to prevent any unannounced visitors' arrival. I was set up for a night patrol, and the weather was not good. As a qualified PPC on 7-boat (the XO's crew, he being Tommy Thomas), it was my flight. The XO must have had some social event to which he was required to attend. In any case, it was a late afternoon takeoff with a wee hours AM landing. It was also the end of the month.

When I got to the flying boat I found people everywhere. I had a full load of

people in my crew — some seventeen or eighteen souls, whatever the maximum crew was — because it was the end of the month and there were many ground pounders on flight skins who *just had* to get their flight time in for pay purposes, and this was the last available flight. Every seat and approved ditching station was filled.

VFR was the current status and I made the takeoff with about an hour of daylight left — heading out to our assigned 50-mile circle altitude. Typical mid-ocean summer time weather in the Bermuda High - scattered to broken cumulus all around; some of the towering type that had associated up-and-down drafts and other phenomena. So being the safety mind-set that I was, on the way out I called for a ditching drill first, to be followed by a bailout drill so there wouldn't be a mad scramble if the real thing came about.

The first drill went OK but the plane captain reported to me that one of the ground pounders had grabbed his chute by the "D" ring and the chute was in a pile in the after station. Since there was a full boat, there was no extra chute — and the culprit that had done the dirty deed was himself a CPO.

My ground job at that time was the Electronics Division Officer, so I controlled the AT, AE, ET and Radioman ratings — and that CPO who spilled his chute was the Division CPO, W. K. Haselden, a very conscientious person who could hardly look me in the eye when I went back to look the situation over. He was so embarrassed, but I told him that the chute on the deck was his and his alone, so he'd better gather it up very carefully in case he had to go over the side in the air he'd have it gathered lovingly in his arms.

We were on station by dark, and it *was* dark without any moon and the clouds kept cutting out any view of the stars, but we were cruising along with no problems. The 3350's were purring,

the boxed meals were pretty good for Bermuda rations; couldn't talk to Oceanic Control by UHF but there was great HF comm via our trailing wire antenna. Just another 1A1 flight going along smoothly when, suddenly, the P5M gave a lurch and there was light all around — not only was the outside lit up but the flight deck was as if all the bright white lights had blown up at the same time. There was smoke on the flight deck and it came up into the cockpit — not a black oily smoke, thank goodness, rather the rancid smell of burning insulation. All the lights went out and there was much cause for concern! But those 3350's didn't miss a beat, which had a calming factor for everyone



The AT Shop

If you haven't guessed by now, we had flown into one of those cumulonimbus and had suffered a lightning strike. The arc travelled up the trailing wire antenna and up into the radio control panel. The radioman wasn't injured, but all radios were out of commission. There were several other minor problems, but none that really affected flight and controllability. We were all pretty well "shook up" but there didn't seem to be cause for panic.

By this time the smoke fumes had gotten back to the after station and there was *considerable* concern generated, none more so than in the person of one Chief Haselden! I'm told that he took up station close by his chute bundle and his eyes were closed —

but his lips were moving rapidly. As a precaution I had called for the crew to prepare to bail out, but five minutes would not have passed before I determined that there wasn't too much over which to be concerned. The emergency was cancelled and the NAV gave us a heading for home. There wasn't much sense staying out there with no way to report any unusual happenings anyway.

We got home, on the water and up the ramp without any more troubles, and those ground pounders got enough excitement to last a long time.

I left the squadron shortly after that incident and didn't run into Wilson Haselden until the first VP-45 reunion in 1990. He and I had a great time standing in the Museum and reminiscing over that flight. He told me that the only reason we got back to Bermuda safely was a favorable answer to the prayers he said all the way back. He has gone on to the crew upstairs now, and I'd like to think that he will have the seadrome lights shining brightly for me when it's time to make that final landing.

W. L. "Bill" Smith submitted the sea story above and also the picture below. Thanks, Bill.



US Coast Guard Eagle P5M and a VP-45

The Day the Blue Angels Joined VP-45

One warm day in 1964 our PPC, LCDR J. P. Jones, had to attend a brief meeting at NAS Pensacola. We were scheduled to depart for a deployment to NS Argentia, Newfoundland, the following day, so some of the crew remained behind at NAS JAX to make preparations. We parked the aircraft on the transient ramp at PNS where the skeleton enlisted crew was instructed to dsremain until the officers returned. There wasn't much to do so, after playing catch with hydraulic fluid cans, we lay down to sun ourselves on the ramp. Parked across the way was beautifully waxed and painted R5D that served as the Blue Angels transport. To one side of the plane was a checkstand.

Boredom was a bad thing for crew 10; it usually led to mischief — and this day was no exception. We had begun customizing our aircraft, at least to the extent we could get away with it. Crew names were on the side and cute sayings were stenciled on the landing gear doors. ESSO gas stations were passing out tiger tail stickers that people affixed by their fuel tank fillers — “Put a Tiger in Your Tank.” Naturally we had put them by the oil access doors on each of our four engines. Someone remarked that the Blue Angel's transport would look even better with tiger tails. Fortunately, we didn't have any spares.

Dick Gray suddenly appeared from our plane with a four foot vinyl stick-on VP-45 Pelican insignia that he had squirreled away in the aft compartment. The stickers had been tried on the P3 vertical stabilizers but didn't hold up well and were abandoned. Speech wasn't necessary. The highly trained combat crew, that had successfully tracked running subs for hours, intuitively knew what had to be done. Stealthily the five orange flight suits

stalked across the Pensacola grass toward the R5. The stick-on was rolled up and awkwardly concealed inside Gray's flight suit. The checkstand was wheeled around to the side facing away from the hangar. We had no idea what we'd do if anyone approached (in another similar episode, a year later at Kodiak, the same crew fled to their A/C, pulled up the ladder and secured the hatch when confronted by a group of angry Marines). All of Pensacola seemed to be asleep, even the boys in the tower ignored the activity far across the ramp. The big vinyl bumper sticker went on straight and flat, adhering easily to the glossiest plane in the Navy!

Mission accomplished, gleeful warriors returned to the P3 hoping for a quick arrival of the officers. The pilots returned and never noticed, or at least acknowledged, the improvements to the R5. How could anyone *not* notice that magnificent Pelican basking in a field of high gloss Navy Blue? Surely it was the R5's proudest hour! Unfortunately, no one had a camera to document the beautiful sight.

Early the next morning we departed for Argentia, just ahead of an angry dispatch from Pensacola. In Argentia we learned that the world's greatest flight demonstration team didn't have the world's greatest sense of humor — and that a bunch of the guys at JAX had to restore the R5 to its former condition. Fortunately time, distance and LCDR Jones' diplomatic skills spared us from any real consequences.

☺

OKINAWA TYPHOON

In September 1945, VP-205 was flying PBM5's out of Buckner Bay while being based aboard the sea plane tender USS. ST. GEORGE (AV-16). On September 15th our crew was scheduled for the night patrol with the knowledge that a typhoon was due in the area the following noon. We took off at 1800 hours and at midnight we

others could not and the Captain halted further attempts. A relief crew came in a large rubber doughnut to take over from us as we had been aboard the plane close to 14 hours and our chow was gone and little water remained. We were taken back to St. George and climbed a cargo net to get aboard.

Shortly after coming aboard, I



received a message that the typhoon was arriving early and for us to return at first light to refuel for a flyaway to the Philippines.

We returned to base at dawn and saw the rough waters that were whipped into a series of white caps. We made the fall stall landing, but, because of violent turbulence, we became airborne two more times, so we hit the water three times instead of once. While taxiing on the more than choppy waters, I soon learned that you did not or could not make an 180 degree turn in order to reverse your direction. All you had to do was let the gale force winds (it was not yet a full-blown typhoon) blow you backward. I found trying to turn only resulted in the wing float becoming completely submerged up to the wing tip.

While being refueled, our plexiglas bow was smashed by the stern of the refueling ship because they had drawn us too close. Some of our planes did manage to become airborne, but then,

climbed into my bunk looking for sleep. However, within a short time, maybe two hours, I was awakened because my head was hitting the bulkhead on virtually every pitch and roll of the ship.

We went out to sea and rode the storm out, but not before going through the eye of the typhoon. The anemometer broke at 125 knots and the mountainous waves were unbelievable. As our 500-foot ship reached the top of each huge wave, the screws came out of the water, causing the ship to shudder before it's next downward descent. The next morning I found out that the ship had no steering control during the height of the storm.

While playing cards in the Officer's Wardroom, Warrant Officer Tony Tekins was dealing and he dealt the cards up into the air as his chair went over backward until it hit the deck, landing him flat on his back. Meanwhile, dishes in the galley continued to fall out of their racks and smash to the deck with each roll of the ship.

One PBM was lashed to the fantail and after the storm subsided, the fuselage remained in place but it's wings had been torn off. It was then pushed off the stern and the ship's guns helped sink it.

Our ship spotted a shipwreck survivor astride a mast segment. He had survived the ordeal holding on to a piece of wreckage! We stood by so a smaller ship could effect his rescue. It was very rewarding to see the blinker from the rescue ship flashing his gratitude to our ship for saving his life.

The St. George was built by the Todd-Bremerton Shipyards in Washington with the capacity to endure a 35-degree roll. Since we had been rolling at a 37-degree angle during the storm, my eternal gratitude goes to that firm for building a little extra into it.

Contributed by Brad Leeks

And This Also From Jarell Yates

We had flown the night before and part of the crew was still on the plane as the wind intensified and the waves increased. When the plane started to drag its anchor, we asked that we be removed to the tender. A landing type craft was sent out to pick us up and I was the last one off the plane. I secured the waist hatch and we returned to USS ST. GEORGE. We went to the bow of the ship and watched plane after plane crash on the rocky cliffs, break up and sink.

Then the roller coaster ride began. When we left Buckner Bay we had 3 planes on the fantail and when we got in the eye of the storm the chief asked if I would look out and check on the planes. I did and there was nothing there, not even a piece of line or a knot.

With the Tender Sixteen in the eye of the storm, a sailor, on a piece of lumber 8-10 feet long and 8 to 10 inches square, drifted next to the bow and sev-

eral crewmembers from the ship went over the side on a rope or landing type net ladder to try to get him to release his hold on the piece of lumber so he could be rescued. He had his arms and hands locked together and his legs & feet also — they could not get him to let go!

The ship's crew on deck used a crane to pick up both the sailor and lumber and placed them both on the bow deck. A doctor had to give him a shot to relax him before he would/could release his grip. This is the way I remember it happening, but that was 50+ years ago!

When we returned to the bay after the storm, I don't remember any planes anywhere. If any came before I left for home, I don't remember them.

I had the points for discharge and while I was packing to leave, LT Erskine and Chief Anglin came and asked if they could talk with me. LT Erskine stated that, since I was the senior AOM1c, I would be made CPO if I would sign the document that he had, extending my enlistment for six months. I refused — end of my Navy career.

During my tour with VP-45 in Bermuda from 1960-62, VP-45 and the Marines were in a dead tie for first place in the race for the basketball title of NOB Bermuda.

The Marines had the audacity to have pre-planned a victory dance and party before play began for the title game. Play began and the Marines began to pull away. Two of our best players were away on a flight, so we were hurting. After starting the second half, our two players showed up and the tide turned in our favor.

Sensing defeat, the Marines punched one of our players and the gym broke

out into a big fight. CDR Lee (our CO) was trying to restore order, and took a punch from someone. One small kid was kicking the other side in the ankles and was picked up by a huge Marine. The kid hit the Marine in the mouth and he was dropped like a hot potato.

CDR Lee said if order was not restored the game would be forfeited. Order was restored and VP-45 won the game and trophy. There was no joy at the dance and party for the vanquished Marines.

Contributed by Frank Kennedy who also submitted the below article from the Bermuda newspaper

Flying-Boat Limp In on Single Engine

It was touch and go for the crew of a U.S. Navy flying-boat when the starboard engine backfired and stopped working.

The plane dropped from 200 feet to about five or ten feet above the sea so quickly that the crew had to scramble to their ditching stations to prepare for a hazardous open sea landing.

Fortunately, this was averted when the remaining working engine gained enough power to start the plane climbing. The Patrol Squadron Forty-Five P5M was then able to limp 40 miles home to a safe landing.

The aircraft, LN-10, piloted by Lt. Commander Jack Pickens and Lt. Phil Collins, had just completed training exercises with the submarine U.S.S. Requin when the engine trouble developed.

After regaining altitude, the starboard bomb bay fuel tank, containing 2000 pounds of gasoline was jettisoned. Shortly afterwards, the inoperative engine was "feathered."

The submarine, which had surfaced, followed the plane to assist in rescue

operations if needed. Another Navy plane, piloted by Commander George O'Bryan, executive officer of VP-45, was circling the exercise area at the time of the incident and escorted the crippled craft back to Bermuda. Also making sure nothing would go wrong was a Coast Guard Albatross, which was airborne in ten minutes after the emergency had been declared.

In addition to the two pilots there were eight crew aboard LN-10. *(Ed. Note: The crew consisted of, in addition to the two pilots, LTJG Red Redmond, Ricahrd Lappi AM2, Frank Kennedy AO3, Doug Carlton AE3, Joe Vermette AO3, Andrew Kormos AT3, and Dave Carsten AT2. Somebody is missing or the number of crew is incorrect, but that was a long time ago.)*

TREASURER'S REPORT



Beginning Balance	
Sept 1, 1997	\$15,823.12
Income	
Dues/Donations	\$ 5,262.00
Interest	321.47
Total Income	\$ 5,583.47
Total Capital	\$21,406.59
Expenses	
Printing/Postage	\$ 1,347.28
Franchise Tax	20.00
Reunion '98	850.00
Total Expenses	\$ 2,217.28
Ending Balance	
March 4, 1998	\$ 19,189.31

K. J. Cory
1845 Hallmark Drive
Pensacola FL 32503-3368

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



On 7 December, Gordon Jones ('53 - '55) (AEC, Ret.) and a Pearl Harbor Survivor, was shown in a San Diego Union-Tribune story talking to a class from Chula Vista High School about various ordnance used on that day, and his experiences as the even took place.

(Ed. Note: No picture - The newspaper wanted \$35 for a copy and said it was not their policy to provide pictures.)



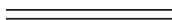
The Bermuda Maritime Museum

An Association member, CAPT Andrew M. Sinclair, USN (Ret.) lives in Bermuda and is Chairman, US Navy Room Committee for the museum. He has asked the Association to announce that a US Navy room is being established there and all US Navy personnel who were stationed in Bermuda or served in squadrons, etc., during the period 1940 - 1995, when colors were hauled down at NAS Bermuda, are asked to become members or "PLANK OWNERS". To become a plank owner, a suggested tax deductible contribution of \$25 per plank - minimum - is required.

If you are interested, send your check made payable to The Friends of the Bermuda Maritime Museum, Inc. (Although I don't see how you'll get all that on one line!) and mail it to Andy at PO BOX MA 133, Mangrove Bay MA BX, Bermuda. You will receive a certificate and a tax deductible receipt.



The Association was notified in October that two squadron members had been selected for scholarship awards but no follow-up data was received in spite of two written requests to the CO. Apparently no awards were made and the reason(s) unknown.



PBY CATALINA INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



Will hold its reunion in Albuquerque NM from 30 September to 4 October, 1998. For details contact James Thompson, 1510 Kabel Drive, New Orleans LA 70131-3632 (and tell him you're sorry you can't attend because you'll be at the VP-45 reunion in Pensacola at that time!) His telephone number is 504/392-1227.



And the AVCAD/NAVCAD reunion will be in Pensacola November 12 - 15, 1998. Contact the committee at PO Box 18546, Pensacola FL 32523-8546 or call 1-850-433-3132. There will be no Blue Angels show this year. A roster of members is available for \$8.



Al LaBella sent word that there is a

web page on the internet devoted to the AW rating. It looks great, and you can view it at <www.users.cts.com/sd/b/bwicks> Check it out. (I did and I agree with Al. ED.)



Do you know who these players are and who their coach is?

(See "Basketball" at the end of the NL)



Help Wanted:

Don Sweet, Editor of the VPB-21 Newsletter, *Scuttlebutt*, is seeking photos from any and all personnel who served in the nineteen VP squadrons that flew the PBM in the Pacific during WWII. His intention is to publish a pictorial history of the events of the period and location. If you have any material he could use and you want to contribute, contact him at 135 Woodland Avenue, Ridgewood NJ 07450-3023, tel. (201) 444-5531 or e-mail <sweetusn@aol.com>. Don also published a history of VPB-21 titled *The Sailor Aviators*.



Pensacola on the internet. For those who would like up-to-date data, contact the Pensacola Visitor Information Center — go to . . . <www.visitpensacola.com> and enjoy!



IN MEMORIAM

An anonymous donation to the Association has been made in the amount of \$100 to the memory of John McCandless.



Cynthia W. (Mrs. Ralph) Leach

Basketball — The names of the team aren't known, but the

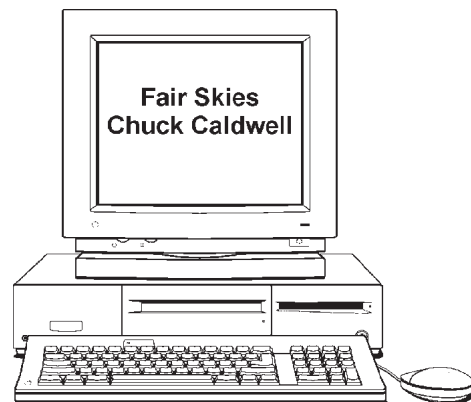
coach was Frank Kolda and the year was 1947.

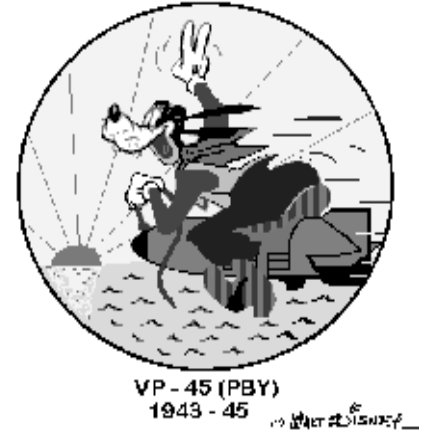
A Reminder

Please remember to respond to the survey included with this newsletter. Your cooperation will go a long way toward helping the Association better serve you, its members. Your opinion and comments are valued, and give you a voice in the management of the Association. It is hard to believe, but this newsletter and its enclosures consist of more than 18,000 words or, to make it more impressive, over 90,000 characters. The packet was mailed to more than 365 addresses, and consists of 30 pages of text and one envelope. WHEW!!! Your inputs help make it possible to provide such an impressive packet. ☺

Sea stories and photographs of squadron events or your experiences are always very welcome for the newsletter and archives. Our notebooks displayed at the reunions are really treasures not many other organizations can match. We have histories of the PBY VP-45, War Diary and History of VP-205 through all its redesignations up to the present day VP-45. There are biographies of every past commanding officer we can find; newsletters of years gone by, including the very first year of VP-205 in Trinidad. We have several cruise books and articles from various magazines that portray squadron events, and copies of all past *Pelican Post* issues. We even have color pictures of each past reunion, in notebooks, thanks to Lon Gailey who donates the photographs to the Association.

Any and all recollections and/or pictures and documents you may have are just as valuable, so please consider sending them to the Secretary/Editor for inclusion in our files. Any you want returned will be copied and retained, and the original(s) returned right away.





THE PELICAN POST OF THE

President	Hank Gorman
Vice President	Tom Golder
Treasurer	Ken Cory
Secretary/Newsletter Editor	Chuck Caldwell

Newsletter #22

October 1998

PLEASE READ THIS

ALL HANDS: Dues are \$10 per year 11/1 to 11/1 (\$40 for five years and \$100 for life). *Annual dues are therefore due and payable for those who have an asterisk and/or colored dot after their name on the Newsletter envelope address label.* All Rosters are included for members personal use only. If you change your address please inform the Editor so we will be spared the charge the postal service makes for each correction notice. If this edition has been forwarded to you by the postal service, we will automatically receive your new address and be charged for the service.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hank Sez . . .

Our loyal and very industrious Treasurer, Ken Cory, has decided to turn over the checkbook to someone else after the reunion. Dave Johnson, who was our first Treasurer, has graciously agreed to assume the task once again. We are indeed fortunate to have enjoyed the services of Ken as our Treasurer for the past six years, and he turns over the job to an equally qualified and capable person, Dave Johnson. Thank you both! As you know, I will also be relinquishing the job of President to another.

I cannot more highly recommend our Vice President, Tom Golder, for your favorable consideration as the next President. Our conscientious Nominating Committee will recommend Tom for President and Chuck Comeau for Vice President, and Chuck Caldwell has agreed to continue to serve as Secretary and Newsletter Editor. As always, nominations will be accepted from the floor for all officer positions .

NOTES FROM ALL OVER



Bermuda Flying Boat & Seaplane History

In March 1998, Colin Pomeroy contacted the Association by e-mail and stated that he is a former RAF (landplane) maritime pilot and is researching the above topic from 1919 until at least 1981 for his new book. He asked for any applicable information we may have that we can pass on to him, no matter how small, to make his book more accurate and thorough.

Quite a bit of our archival data was made available to him, but some of our members may have other stories, pictures, articles or other data that may be of use to him. Since his address is in England and we have been in communication with him, any such contributions to his work may be sent to the Association Secretary for forwarding to him (with appropriate credit to the donor) and so we may make copies for our archive files. If you would like to communicate directly with him, contact the Secretary for his e-mail or snail mail address.

Colin has written one other book about Bermuda, has been in contact with some of our members and those of VP-49, and the Bermuda Maritime Museum, so his credentials appear to be legitimate and honorable. He has promised to forward a copy of his book to us for display at reunions.

Will hold its reunion in Albuquerque from 30 September to 4 October 1998. Contact Jim Thompson at (504) 392-1227 for registration and membership.

USS Currituck (AV-7)

Is looking for former officer and enlisted crewmen who served in the ship from its commissioning in 1944 through her decommissioning in 1967. All personnel assigned to any squadron which Currituck serviced during her long career are also invited to join the Association.

Contact Ron Curtis TM1 '65 - '66, Secretary, at 207 West Marvin Avenue, Owensville MO 65066-1038. (573) 437-3899.

Pelicans of VP-45 Returned From Deployment in February

The Pelicans of VP-45 returned home after a six-month deployment to the Mediterranean on 9 February 1998. The squadron was deployed out of Sigonella, Sicily, and completed over 5,000 hours of sorties and embarked on more than 18 detachments to 10 countries.

Firing a live Maverick missile in the Med; bringing the first ever Standoff Land Attack Missile (SLAM) capability to the European theater for P-3C's; and engaging in actual SAR operations in Namibia, Africa are just a few of the various missions completed by the *Pelicans*.

VP-45 also flew daily missions in support of Operation Deliberate Guard over Bosnia, providing critical force protection for the SFOR ground

commanders. CDR Hyde stated, "The most significant accomplishment of this deployment was that we completed our missions successfully and brought everyone home safely. It's a great feeling of accomplishment that was only achieved through the outstanding efforts of every member of this command."

The squadron enjoyed a post-deployment stand-down period and then began its year-long inter-deployment training cycle, beginning with the Tactical Proficiency Course.

CDR Gregory A. Miller relieved CDR Hyde on 27 March, 1998.

1997 Sea Sailor

RADM Paul "Scott" Semko, COM-PATWINGSLANT, recognized VP-45's **Heath Avera**, AW1(AW), as the command's **Sea Sailor of the year for 1997**.

Avera, of Edison, Georgia, enlisted in July 1987 and served with VP-24 and VP-30 before being assigned to VP-45 in May 1996. He was selected both VP-45 and PATWING 11 Sailor of the Year enroute to PATWINGSLANT's highest recognition. BRAVO ZULU

Butterfingers

In our last issue of the newsletter, we had a story about a pony in the afterstation. One of the squadrons was mentioned as having the voice call "Butterfingers". Here is what Hank Gorman has to say about which squadron was assigned that call sign.

“Everyone keeps on saying that VP-34 used the Butterfinger voice call. Not so. Back in summer of 1950 I finished Communications PG school and went to COMFAIRWINGSLANT/COMFAIRWING 5 as staff communications officer. The Korean war had just started and reserve squadrons were being called to active duty. One of the squadrons called up was VP-661, flying PBY-5A's out of Anacostia. The squadron moved to Breezy Point at NAS Norfolk where they transitioned to PBM's. The squadron voice call was Buttterfingers. VP-661 later was redesignated VP-56.”

“I vividly remember the voice call because the squadron was constantly pulling a lot of bonehead mistakes. Some good guys, including Hap Hill, were in the squadron. One of the memories of the squadron was the WhiteHat Committee, which supposedly met periodically to pass judgement on directives and orders coming from the Skipper. (Whoever said the Navy was democratic?) End of history lesson.”

1955 Over Costa Rica

Imagine two of the greatest US fighters of WWII, the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt and North American P-51 Mustang, facing off in an aerial duel to the death. History shows that such an encounter took place in **1955 over Costa Rica**. A simple skirmish between warring Banana Republics? No way.

In 1954, six F-47's (in 1947 the prefix "P" for Pursuit was changed to "F" for Fighter) of the Puerto Rican Air National Guard (PRANG) were sold to the Nicaraguan Air Force. However, they came under CIA control and were used in a number of covert Central

American operations Americans piloted the F-47s. They were a colorful band of hired guns ... highly paid mercenaries. The star performer was Jerry Fred DeLarm, whose checkered past is difficult to document, but it's believed he flew P-40s for the USAAF in WWII. He had some Latin blood, spoke fluent Spanish, and held both Nicaraguan and US citizenship. He was a daredevil and the most deadly of the group. He flew his Thunderbolt as if it were an extension of himself, and blasted everything in his way.

Those who knew DeLarm formed strong opinions of him “He's a killer, a very dangerous man, not to be trusted” (Señor Archie A. Baldocchi); “He was crazy and a thief, but the bastard could really fly” (Will Martin); “I never saw that dark side of him ... a real nice, helpful guy who played the guitar.” (C.W. Butler); “He was a son-of-a-bitch!” (Doyal Nolen).

Always dressed in black, DeLarm fancied himself a flying Zorro, who would rob both the rich and poor and keep it all. He serenaded the señoritas of the evening with his guitar, sang tear-jerking Latin laments, and was a mystery of saint, sinner, hero and psychopath. He was a Hardened soldier of fortune, always armed with a .45 caliber pistol, and would fly for anyone who would



pay him. He became any dictator's fair-haired boy, at least for a while ... and then he shot down a Mustang. In 1955, President Tachito Somoza

of Nicaragua decided to muscle in on neighboring Costa Rica. On 11 January, he sent several hundred troops, supported by at least two AT-6s and an unmarked F-47, to take over the country. It's certain that the Jug (completely devoid of markings) was flown by DeLarm.

On 15 January, Costa Rican Ambassador Faci requested help from the US. The next day four fully armed F-51 Mustangs (flown by regular Air Force Personnel) from the 182nd Squadron of the Texas Air National Guard based at Kelly AFB, left for Costa Rica. How strange that American warplanes were “sold” to a country that did not have a military air arm!

As the F-51s were about to land at El Coco Air Base near San Jose, word came that an enemy aircraft was nearby. One of the Mustang pilots, Lt. Dell C. Toedt, flew top cover and looked for the bogey while the other three landed. Toedt, a 100-mission F-51 veteran in the Korean War, was sure that the enemy was Jerry DeLarm in the Thunderbolt and was eager to take him on. They had known each other earlier in Guatemala when they both worked for the CIA, but a fighter pilot loves to fly

and fight and Toedt wanted to mix it up with DeLarm. DeLarm didn't show.

As soon as Toedt landed and cut his

Mustang engine, a Costa Rican pilot climbed onto the wing and asked “How do you start it?” and “How do you turn on the guns? ... We’re going to get him!” (meaning Jerry DeLarm). The Costa Rican was Señor F. E. Cobar, who trained in the US, got his AAF wings in 1942, and had some P-38 time. He and the other Costa Ricans who were to man the ‘51s were airline pilots and knew DeLarm very well. DeLarm had flown for the same airline some years before and had his DC-3 rigged with .50 caliber machine guns (the first C-47 gunship!)

In the early days of the invasion, DeLarm and his Jug raked over civilian areas in Costa Rica and took pot shots at the transports. The Costa Rican pilots wanted to even the score.

The USAF markings on the four F-51s were modified into a semblance of Costa Rican national colors, and had single, large, black numbers on their tails: 1,2,3,4 respectively. (It’s curious that all F-51s still in USAF service after 19 Jan 1953 were ordered to have their tail wheels down and locked, and the retraction mechanism disconnected because of a maintenance anomaly that manifested itself after WWII and Korea).

On 19 January, Costa Rican Mustang #2 was lost to enemy action. The wreckage was found riddled with heavy caliber machine gun bullets, the pilot dead. Only one aircraft in the area had that kind of firepower — Jerry DeLarm’s Thunderbolt. Although no one witnessed the action, there is a strong consensus that DeLarm did indeed blast away the Mustang. Was it a bushwhack job or a balls-out dogfight because of the Costa Rican’s vendetta against DeLarm? Only the elusive Jerry DeLarm knows for sure. Both aircraft were the ultimate production models

of their type: the F-51D-25 and the F-47N-20 (with its distinctive squared-off wing tips).

The F-47N flies today with the Confederate Air Force. Col. Hall S. Bond, who was a flying sponsor of the Jug from 1976 to 1982, said in 1978 that this Jug shot down a Mustang over Costa Rica. He heard this from the CAF Col who purchased the Jug in Nicaragua in 1963, and who had met Jerry DeLarm at that time. He recalled that only the two inboard guns were firing and the plane had no working radios. Thus the Mighty P-47 Thunderbolt had the last word over the P-51 “Spam Can” Mustang. Viva La Jug!!

This article was submitted by Tony Testa and was written by Robert St. Vincent for Aviation Illustrated, February 1997. St. Vincent’s paintings are on display at Edwards AFB, the USAF Museum and other collections.



3 April 1998

Dear Sir,

Received Newsletter #21 today and wanted to mention I had the article on the Okinawa typhoon reread to me at least 2 times! It has been 50+ years since I had lived that time on the USS St. George (AV-16).

A bunch of our ‘Airdales’ had helped some of ship’s company mess cooks pick up broken dishes/cups/loose trays, and secure tables during that heavy pitch and roll! We also stuffed mattresses in broken portholes. I was ARM2/c at the time.

Saw a red dot on my address. Sending \$20 for continuing membership.

Rudy Kaestner



4 April 1998

Dear Ken,

Enclosed is a check for the next five years’ dues. I was so sorry to hear about Will Moore and Bill Dean — both will be sorely missed at the Pensacola reunion. I’m sure we all were looking forward to the next prank Bill could be expected to pull on you.

Thank you and Chuck for all your time and dedication.

Sincerely
Ernie Westvig



Roberta Burger sent this picture from her visit to Lisbon, Portugal in September 1997. Her husband, Marshall, was a VP-205 pilot and plankowner (‘42-‘46).



7 April 1998

Dear Mr. Cory,

Enclosed is \$100 check for life-time membership in the PATRON Four-Five Association. I have really enjoyed the newsletter and memories

it brings back! VP-45 was my first duty station after Navy schools, and the start of a 30 year career.

I'm sorry we won't be at the reunion. Perhaps one of these years I'll be able to participate. At any rate, my regards to you and the other Association members.

I think the e-mail address addendum is really great. Who know when some "lost shipmate" will turn up?

Best regards,
Howard Ross (CAPT, SC, Ret.)



April 1998

Bill Myers has asked for any information anyone may have regarding the squadron's transition to the P-3 at Pax River. He is interested in names, dates, time at PAX before the move to JAX. His address is in the roster -- Please respond.



14 April 1998

Dear Hank,

We just received our copy of your Association newsletter of April 1998 and wish to thank you for the write-up on our VPI Memorial Dedication ceremony.

Our OPI Norm Donovan has just returned from his annual (6 month) sojourn in New Zealand and will be bringing our Book of Remembrance up to date over the next few weeks. We plan to publish a sitrep in our September 98 edition of *Maritime Patrol Aviation*.

Hank, thanks again for your continuing personal cooperation and support.

Yours sincerely,
Herb Smale
Associate Ed. VP International



17 April 1998

Richard Phelan became a new member. He was Commanding Officer of VP-45 from June '82 to July '83, and was succeeded by Joseph Phelan, who was no relation. That set of circumstances was cause for many humorous situations, one of which, Richard says, is that if "Phelan" screwed up, of course it was always the XO! ☺

Richard Phelan



11 May 1998

Dear Chuck,

Enclosed you will find a paper I received from the Naval Air Museum in Pensacola, reporting they have one of our PBV's there which was in our squadron in Brazil. I wish I could remember the BuNo of it — it could be the plane I flew in. But anyway, put it in your history book.

I still don't know if I am going to make the reunion; I'll have to see later, but if I can I'll be there even if I have to go without any planning. The fellow, "Ellis," I told you about, called me and we talked about some old times. We are going to let each other know if we are going to the reunion. Take care.

Sincerely
John Delperuto

(Ed.Note. See more about the PBV

BuNo 46602 later in this issue. Oddly, the museum did not notify this Association of the restoration even though we supplied most of the historical data on that PBV. The notice John received was sent to the PBV CI group, which had been invited, but refused, to participate in any of the communications between the museum and VP-45 Assn.)



19 May 1998

Dear Chuck,

I, too, have a copy of the photo reproduced on page 5 of *The Pelican Post* of April 1998, Newsletter #21, sent in by Frank Kolda.

I am the Midshipman, 3rd from the left. The photo was taken in Pensacola during the summer of 1950 while the squadron was deployed there to participate in the introduction of NROTC Midshipmen to Naval Aviation.

Thank you for your time and efforts contributed to *The Pelican Post*.

Best regards,
Gabe Wilson

(Ed.Note: Gabe is now Doctor Wilson, M.D.)



26 May 1998

Greetings, Chuck,

And thank you for your letter, the pictures and the War Diary of VP-45 (PBV) during February 1945. We have visited the NAS at Pensacola and the museum several times and the last time we were there they had

Bureau # 46602 in storage and awaiting restoration. The area was off-limits so we did not get to see the plane.

Not many of the original members of that VP-45 are still here; however, if all goes according to plans we will be at the Holiday Inn in Pensacola for the reunion this October. This spring we took a lengthy vacation (March-April) and are just now catching up.

The War Diary is of interest. Shortly after that we were transferred to NAF at Bahia, Brazil, and that was where we were stationed when President Roosevelt passed away. We returned to NAS Norfolk 30 May 1945. We went our separate ways after 30 days' leave. I went to NAS New Orleans and then to NAS Glenview as an instructor.

Thanks again for thinking of me, sending the pictures and diary. It is appreciated. Hoping to see you this October in Pensacola. We have stayed at that Holiday Inn and it is very nice and convenient.

Best regards, fair skies and favorable tail winds!

Erwin Johnson



June 1998

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed my check for \$10 for one year dues in the VP-45 Association. I am requesting that you send me the Newsletter and roster as mentioned in the Internet web page.

I was a member of VP-45 from '62 - '65. I flew the P5M-2 and then the P-3A (Flight Engineer). My former rate was ADR2.

Cordially,
Rev. Wayne W. Chase



29 April 1998

Treas. VP-45 Assn,

Sorry that I haven't kept up-to-date on my annual dues. I have enclosed a little more than the annual amount so that the excess will cover any mail charges for mailing the Spring newsletter.

Had hoped to make the last reunion but my wife and I were unable to make it. We had looked forward to being with some very old friends.

Warmest regards,
John Coonan



30 May 1998

Dear Chuck,

I have mailed Mr. Cory my check for \$20 for my 2 years' dues, which will pay until I reach my 80th birthday. If I am still around then, I will send another \$20.

Last week Mr. Steely sent me the negative that he had used to make the picture of our VP-205 group in 1943. I will have a picture made and, if it turns out like his, I will send it to you. (*He did and it will be displayed in the Ready Room at the reunion.*)

I will tell you a little about myself. Almost 20 years ago I had throat cancer. Now I am a neck breather — no vocal cord, no larynx — but I can talk somewhat.

I am a volunteer for the American Cancer Society. I visit patients in the hospitals that have had, or will have, their larynx removed. I let them know that there is life after cancer, sometimes.

I still deer hunt and fish, and friends will tell you that I am either crazy or nuts to use a canoe, but it

is much better than a boat on small lakes. I have 2 small lakes; one is 25 acres and the other about 50. The pictures enclosed are of me on my 3-wheel horse and a deer I shot in '97.



Jarrell Yates on his 3-wheel horse



And this also from Jarrell on 10 July 1998:

First, let me say thanks for the roster. I have checked it very carefully and the best that I can determine it contains the names of less than 12 members that are shown in the photo made in early 1943 in San Juan. The members listed that joined the squadron in '43 was mostly replacements for the 3 crews that we lost (*against submarines off Trinidad*) and they would not be in the picture.

I just don't believe that most of the old friends have died. They could have just dropped out. I would like to try to locate some of them if possible.

The squadron picture enlargement turned out great and it will follow. Maybe it will be of some interest to some of the members. The picture roster has Chief Roy Anglin as being a member from '43 to '46 and '48 + 49. He should be shown as a plankowner since he was a member when the squadron was commissioned on November 1, 1942. He is the chief on the end on the right in the second row, standing behind the officer seated on the end of the first or front row. The chief on the end is or was our leading chief, better known as

“Soup” Grant from Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Did anyone turn in to you a printed Memorial Service copy listing the entire crew that was lost on October 2, 1945, from Japan? Could I get a copy of LT Lizer and his crew? Maybe some of the crew could have been members of the flight. I am enclosing a copy of the last page of the roster furnishing the missing information on me.

Take care,
Jarrell Yates



28 July 1998

Chuck!

Good to receive your e-mail of 25th. I am in touch with Patrick J. Imhoff, who was a survivor of VP-45 (P5M) lost on 22 September 1961. Patrick was kind enough to send me the an original program given out at the Memorial Service. This will be retained with the memorabilia at the Bermuda Maritime Museum.

I must apologize for the delay in locating the plaque dedicated at the NOB Chapel. I have visited the Chapel, which is in a state of disrepair . . . but plans are on the Bermuda Government drawing board to bring the Chapel back to first-class condition. I am continuing to pursue the matter and will revert with findings.

US Navy Room — We have reached 30% of \$250,000 goal (pledged) and have issued plankowner certificates and ID cards.

Noni Brady, widow of my VP-45 CO (1946), and her daughter visited Bermuda recently. She remembers the bagpipes the night our crew arrived in Bermuda!) We visited the site of the USN Room at the Commissioner’s House. Throughout the ferry trip and tour of the Museum,

Mrs. Brady retained my interest with her stories. She had been at Pearl Harbor during the attack in 1941. Norman Brady was attached to a PBY squadron. I was indeed fortunate to have the opportunity to reminisce with her.

Squadron Leader Colin Pomeroy, in his letter of 9 July 98 received by the Museum, has requested the dates on which VP-45 and VP-49 swapped their Mariners for Marlins??? Can any of our members provide some leads? Colin and I had served in 201 Squadron, RAF, though at different times.

Yours aye,
Andy Sinclair

(Ed.Note: VP-45 data sent to Colin. Andy Sinclair is Ret. CAPT, USN, and director of the USN Room at the Bermuda Museum.)



29 July 1998

Dear Mr. Caldwell,

I just recently read in *Shift Colors* the announcement of the scheduled October reunion of VP-45. I would like to know more about the reunion and Association.

I was with VP-45 in Bermuda with the P5M’s and made the transition to P-3 in Jacksonville. I returned to the squadron again in 1971 for another tour.

In 1980 I retired from the Navy as an ATC. Any information you can send to me would be appreciated. Enclosed in my business card should you have Internet access. Thank you for any help.

Tours truly,
Hugh E. Gingras



2 August 1998

Dear Chuck,

Thank you very much for your Newsletter #21, April 1998. We look forward to exchanging newsletters and other forms of communication in the interest of continuing camaraderie throughout the patrol plane community.

I am introducing your organization to our readers and suggesting that those who may also be interested in joining the VP-45 Association contact you.

As with your organization, we too network with VP International and enjoy their excellent news magazine.

I notice that your reunion is to be held close to the same time as the “PBY CIA” event, 30 September - 4 October. We will meet in Albuquerque, New Mexico, but met in Pensacola in 1995. We do try to hold the annual conferences/reunions at some site associated at one time or another with PBYs or other flying boat affiliated community. Albuquerque is the home of the “Air-Sea Rescue Museum” at Kirkland AFB. You will enjoy the National Naval Aviation Museum! By the way, many NNAM staff and volunteers are members on PBY CIA, so you should be well looked after (IF they are not all at Albuquerque!)

Keep your Gear UP and the Power On.

Jim Morrison
Newsletter Editor/Historian
PBY Catalina International Assn.
(84 Branch Turnpike #37, Concord
NH 03301-5715)

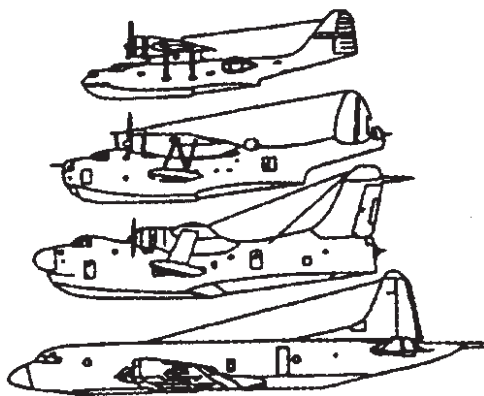
IN MEMORIAM

Jean (Mrs. Gene) Welch (1996)
Phyllis (Mrs. James) Norman (1997)
Marcie (Mrs. David) Johnson (April 1998)
Thomas R. Mee, Jr. (January 1998)

Gerald McComb (March 1998)
Carl O. Hausler (March 1998)



Pelican Tales



This is BuNo 46602, the PBY-5A that belonged to VP-45 in Belem, Brazil. It has been restored by the National Naval Aviation Museum and will be on display at the museum during the reunion.

Photo by Mort Eckhouse



clair +2. Pilot time 8.8 Inst 1.1.
Purpose - Emergency Rescue (in red ink)."

We had ASR duty and were called out about 0200 on 13 April. Jack Cryan was in the right seat handling flaps and JATO. Zeke Darby was the Navigator. LCDR McCurdy was the Flight Surgeon. Combat armament aboard. Just before manning the aircraft we were given the USCG pamphlet *Landing & Taking Off in Open Seas*. After four hours of MOs, Zeke located the rust bucket. We studied our booklet and caught the crest of a wave, sliding down the backside just as if we knew what we were doing. The ship's crew tossed oars and delivered a patient. Take-off went quite well until the JATO was fired. The Navigator carried both throttles back to the Flight Engineer's station. Luck was on our side, and with one final bounce we were airborne.

Knees shook for four hours on the return leg. Since it was a duty crew, I can't recall the names — perhaps some of our members will remember.

PostNote: I'm certain that one of our squadron pilots, Sam Davis, a veteran of many Pacific rescues and who was awarded the Navy Cross, would have been a better choice for the job! In fact, I believe it was Sam who gave us the USCG pamphlet.

Submitted by Andrew Sinclair



REQUIEM

To kill a U-Boat during WW II, the airborne depth charges must explode within twenty feet of the pressure hull. That calls for a very

precise delivery, which means getting frighteningly close to those angry twenty and thirty-seven millimeter guns on the U-Boat. The overall impression is that the tracers are coming directly at you *and that is absolutely terrifying* — particularly as you get to the drop altitude of seventy-five feet.

In late July 1943 we were a pretty green crew hastily assembled to act as Ready Duty crew out of San Juan, Puerto Rico. When we got the alert we were sure it was a false alarm. U-Boats did not stay on the surface when they heard or saw an airplane, any airplane. What we did not know was that Admiral Doenitz had changed the rules of engagement and all U-Boats were ordered to remain on the surface to do battle with any attacking aircraft — a temporarily effective tactic which caused Patrol Squadron VP - 205 to lose three planes and crews off Trinidad within two weeks. It was hazy where the Pan Am pilot had reported seeing what looked like a U-Boat. I was sitting in the right hand seat when the U-Boat was spotted in the distance off Mona Island. The job of the right hand pilot was to direct the bow gunner's fire, leaving the Patrol Plane Commander free to concentrate on the attack. Supposedly the bow gunner in the PBM Mariner would spray the conning tower with his twin fifty caliber machine guns making the U-Boat's gunners job just as terrifying as ours. To get back to a green crew on its first exposure to combat, the traditional '*hold your fire till you see the whites of their eyes*' still holds in modern warfare. But when you first see tracer bullets coming directly at YOU, the reaction is to do something.

"Bow gunner open fire" A ridiculous order, for the U-Boat was still miles away and our ammunition was limited. Also, the most effective use of fifty caliber machine guns calls for them to be fired in short bursts to allow some cooling of the barrels. (Yeah, right!) Tell that to a sailor riding down a trail of tracer smoke while the adrenaline races through his blood stream. We still had a mile to target when the bow guns seized up and we sat helplessly watching the U-Boat's conning tower come closer. Close enough to see the gun crews, stripped to the waist, doing everything they could to keep those depth charges from tumbling from our bomb bays. The Plane Commander at least had something to do-concentrate on the attack — which he did brilliantly, dropping the string so that two charges landed either side of the U-Boat — a perfect bracket.



Miraculously we had not sustained a single hit from those lethal cannons.

But that soon changed. It was jokingly said in Anti Submarine Warfare circles that, to get credit for a U-Boat sinking, you had to bring back the **skipper's drawers**. The next best thing was pictures. Our PPC was determined to bring back pictures and so he set up a circle around the sub so the waist photographer could record the evidence. In so doing he had underestimated the courage of the U-Boat crew. Pictures taken at the time of the attack showed the charges perfectly placed, which meant the gun crews were not only badly shaken but also drenched by the spray. They quickly recovered and soon we were again seeing tracers headed in our direction as we circled at constant range. This time, however, their aim was more effective. I saw the strut of one of the wingtip floats disappear, leaving jagged edges of twisted metal. The radioman, in the midst of sending off his contact report, suddenly screamed, "I'm hit!" and came up to the cockpit with blood streaming from his leg. The shell that got to him actually hit the side of the hull just below the waterline and the shrapnel had come up through the flight deck from below. Once he realized he was not mortally wounded he cried out gleefully, "I'll get the Purple Heart!" Two weeks earlier self-sealing fuel tanks had been installed in our planes. Had that not been the case you would not be reading this little memoir.

As the submarine's twenty millimeter gunners apparently had 'got the range' we were finally able to convince our gung-ho Plane Commander that we had done the job we were sent out to do, and bear off and get the wounded back to base. Darkness had set in by the time we returned to San Juan harbor and we had no idea how bad the damage below the waterline was or if the damaged wingtip float would keep the wing out of the water after landing. Quick work on the part of the beaching crew got us on the 'dry' quickly and the ambulance dashed off with the wounded, none of whom

was seriously hurt. The aircraft was another story. We had taken three hits, one of which just missed severing the flight controls to the tall assembly. The Admiral, tired of my insisting that the U-Boat's guns were of heavy caliber, sent me off to recover pieces of shrapnel for examination. While in the plane, now on its beaching gear in the hangar, we felt a swaying and rocking motion. We quickly evacuated the aircraft to the hangar floor to discover that we had just experienced a rather heavy earthquake. Later it turned out that officers in the pool at the O Club noticed a wave action in the water of the pool. (In 1997 Mrs. Christa von Hillenbrant, Director, Puerto Rico Seismic Network advised me that this was indeed a large earthquake, 7.4 on the Richter scale; however, it did almost no reported damage)

The war went on and we all matured. It was many years later that confirmation was finally received that the U-Boat we had attacked was last heard from on the day of the attack, and never returned to base. By that time we all had our hands full raising families and trying to progress in our chosen profession.

In 1981, retired and carrying out a long dreamed of voyage in my sloop YTIEMPO II, I found myself back in a familiar area, just south of Mona Island. The voyage from the Panama Canal had been tedious. We experienced strong headwinds all the way, breakdown of rigging and trouble with the diesel engine. We were wet and tired as we neared the end of our two-month voyage from Los Angeles. Our three-man crew, new to each other at the start of the trip was looking forward to completing the trip and didn't particularly care if we never saw each other again. We were crossing between Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, just south of Mona Passage. As the light faded with the setting sun and we enjoyed our evening scotch, I thought again of that evening thirty-eight years before when two small groups of young men found themselves pitted against one another in an unfriendly theater. As I contemplated the darkening sea I tried to imagine what it would be like on the deck of a mortally wounded submarine thousands of miles from home. Our little sloop had life jackets and a life raft with all kinds of emergency supplies. We weren't expecting to have to use them, but they were there if needed. A U-Boat could not afford such luxuries. The water now, as then, was about seventy-nine degrees. Land was not visible anywhere. It would take a long time for hypothermia to set in.

That we would be passing over this exact spot had occurred to me early on. Thoughts of a little ceremony as we did so crossed my mind; I had not mentioned it to my crew. Now, here we were at the exact spot on the earth's surface I had been thirty eight years ago and, coincidentally, in the same twilight conditions. Somehow it seemed a private matter. I raised my glass to my lips and drank a silent toast to a band of courageous young men who rested forever many thousands of feet beneath our hull.

In 1994, fifty-one years after the event, Naval Institute Press published *THE U-BOAT WAR IN THE CARIBBEAN* by Gaylord T. M. Kelshall of Trinidad. From this detailed and well-researched record I learned that U-359 had been commanded by Kaptainleutenant Heinz Forster. I often wondered how it was possible that the U-Boat gunners had missed such a large target at such close range. Mr. Kelshall pointed out that U-359 had taken vigorous evasive action. In the calm reflection of later years it dawned on me that perhaps the very action of turning into the aircraft to save his boat may have been a fatal error for, in so doing, the outgoing rounds may have been deflected just enough to miss the PBM during the attack phase.

Emmett Evans
April, 1998

— — —

RADM William T. Pendley USN (Ret.) . . . Served 33 years of commissioned service prior to retirement in 1991. He was XO/CO of VP-45 from June 1974 to June 1976. He says it was the culmination of three great tours in the best VP squadron. Here is his 'Quick and Dirty' career history after his tour as CO of VP-45: Served tours as Commander of Patrol Wing Eleven and Commander Patrol Wings Atlantic, then as Executive Secretary to the CNO for JCS Matters, and as Director, Strategy and Plans (OP-60) on the CNO Staff. He was the Senior Member of the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission at Panmunjon in Korea and ended his career as the J-5 for United States Commander In Chief Pacific. After retirement from the Navy he spent a brief period at the National Defense University as the Director of Strategic Studies and then was asked to serve in the Bush Administration as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia and Pacific Affairs. He stayed on through the transition as Asst. Secty. of Defense for International Security Affairs. In July 1993 he accepted the position as Professor of International Relations and Asian Studies at the Air War College and retired again on 30 June 1998. He also says that it has been fun, but a highlight was those three tours in VP-45 with some great people.

RADM Michael D. Haskins

Is not a member of our Association but he was a member of VP-45 and, a couple of years ago, relieved Jake Tobin (who is an inactive member of our Association) as Commander United States Naval Forces, Japan. Notice has recently been received that Michael has completed his tour and is now Deputy Commander In Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe in London, England.

Thanks to Bill Rodriguez

*An unofficial count indicates there have been at least six **Pelicans who have reached Flag Rank**: Richard Miller (VADM), Stephen Loftus (VADM), L. A. Snead (RADM), Jake Tobin (RADM), William Pendley (RADM), and Michael Haskins (RADM). [VADM Frederick Trapnell was CO of a VP-45 at Pearl Harbor in 1938, but the squadron went from VP-21 to VP-45 and then VP-14 in six months, and no other data is available.] If you know of others, please let the Editor know.*

Reminiscing

Several things remain with me about my VP-45/FAW 11 days. The first is the sheer enjoyment I experienced learning and participating as an aircrewman in 4-Boat. Second, I remember how much I *disliked* training flights that included rocket runs. Also, MAD compensation flights were **not** a favorite with me, but I only had to experience one. I also recall the long and turbulent flights we made over Costa Rica and Nicaragua in (1954?) during some unrest in that area.

But the thing I will always remember most about VP-45 was Chief Scott, PC of 4-Boat. This chief taught me all

about work ethic and responsibility. He had a profound impact on my life that remains with me today.

Gerald R. Green ('53-'56)

A Couple of Remembered Flights

My most memorable flight in VP-45 was a night patrol from Key West during my tour from '59 to '62. We took off about 2330 for a long patrol off the Cuban coast. Our PPC was LCDR Hausler. We had a full fuel load, including drop tanks in the bomb bays. About twenty minutes after take-off the starboard engine began to backfire and not corrective action was successful in smoothing it out. LCDR Hausler feathered the failed engine and jettisoned the bomb bay tanks to get to single-engine weight. Things got *really interesting* when the afterstation reported a fire in the port bomb bay. Opening and closing the doors didn't do any good, and the fire was located immediately below the service tank for the engine that was running.

The decision was made to land immediately and try to put the fire out. After a successful open sea landing, we could see the fire blazing but could not get to it with the fire extinguishers. Fearing an explosion, Mr. Hausler ordered the crew into life rafts. We left the APU running and the lights on so we could see the aircraft and have illumination on the evacuation. The fire continued as we left the aircraft and pulled away in two life rafts.

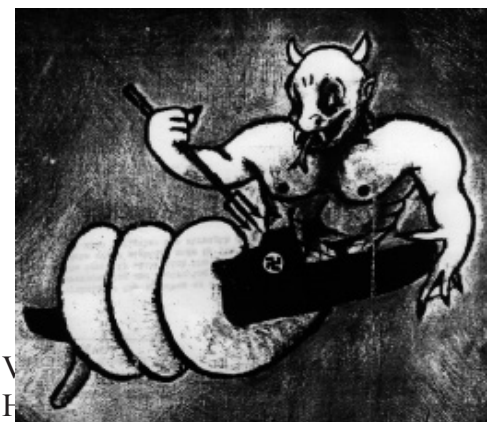
CDR O'Bryan came out in another aircraft, as did the Coast Guard, and circled us and the aircraft. The fire self-extinguished and we were blinked to return to the aircraft. We did so with great difficulty in six foot swells and

remanned the aircraft. We started the port engine and taxied behind a Coast Guard escort into Key West by morning. ☺☺☺

Another story I remember which may not be acceptable for printing, was of a flight during deployment to GTMO in June 1961. We were flying a night patrol to investigate shipping in the area between Cuba and Hispanola. Radar was to remain off. At some point during the flight either the pilot or copilot saw lights and began a descent to investigate. During the descent the Plane commander identified the source of the light as Cuban land-based. ☺. We began an immediate climb to avoid mountains in the area and the PPC ordered the radar on (I was at the radar console) and requested vectors for the closest shoreline. Without further incident, we reached the coast — about 15 miles away — and continued our patrol with radar assisted navigation.

Submitted by Steve Riddle (59-62)

(Steve stated that some of his fondest memories come from his 4 years in the Navy and VP-45. He is retired from Lockheed now.)



1960. Date on back is 1-12-44. There is no "official" logo, according to the Navy Historical Center and OPNAV.

**FROM THE EDITOR'S
DESK**

Survey Results



Earlier in this newsletter there were two letters from Jarrell Yates. He and I have had a good time corresponding about the early days of VP-205. He has provided a copy of an enlargement of a squadron personnel picture taken at San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1943 that will be displayed in the Ready Room at the reunions.

As part of our correspondence, he received a copy of a picture from the VP-205 Ready Log (that was presented to the Association by Bob Isaksen and George Jorgensen). That log book contains pictures of the crews in Trinidad during 1942 and of the squadron's anniversary party and Christmas party. The picture below was taken at the anniversary party.



Here is what Jarrell had to say about the “after” party: “The first anniversary party started at the beach and ended at the barracks with a free-for-all inside, spilling outside. If you stood up, someone would knock you down. The Marines arrived, roped off the area and would not let anyone in or out. What a night!!!”

The writing on the boxes is hard to see, but the one on the left says it is canned peaches. The other boxes in the foreground contain loaves of bread. That must have been a pretty good party, but gourmet food was not a part of it!

The April newsletter contained a survey form that those in the roster were asked to complete and return so the Association might learn more about how/what you, the members, wanted in reunions and what suggestions you might have for increasing membership. The tabulated responses showed similar opinions and were very valuable in indicating various trends, but the percentage of responses was lower than expected — about 40% completed and returned the form. Those tabulated results are included as a separate section at the end of this newsletter.

Thank you all for your participation and consideration in not only completing the form but also for the excellent quality of the comments and suggestions.

For those who commented that our bank balance seems high, please remember that we have many LIFE members who will not have to send dues again. Their dues will necessarily be spread over a long time (we hope!). Postage and print prices will inevitably go up, as will other overhead expenses. The Treasurer has opened savings accounts to draw interest so our operating account will stay at a low balance, and we believe the money management is prudent.

If, at any time, anyone has constructive criticism or considered suggestions, please send them to the Secretary for dissemination/action among the Association officers. You may expect feedback as soon as possible if you ask for a reply.

United States Navy Memorial Foundation

The Memorial Foundation in Washington, D.C., has several projects which offer reunion groups an opportunity to make a charitable donation to the Foundation for a permanent memorial in the Heritage Center of the Memorial. This Associa-

tion made a donation of \$2000 to the Foundation at the 1992 reunion, and a donation of \$1750 or more would provide a "Heritage Center Memorial Wall Plaque" (a silvaloy plate, 7" x 3¾" with black filled lettering accommodating an inscription of four to five lines of letters can be specified). *Those attending the reunion might favorably consider a donation for a plaque honoring our fallen squadron mates from all VP-45's from 1 November 1942 to 1 November 1998.*

Chuck Caldwell



Then

Now

Who might this be?

Clues:

- VP-45 pilot '57 - '59.
- USS New Jersey. USS Roberts.
- Lives in California.
- President, Chartered Financial Consulting firm.
- He's registered for the reunion.

Richard Shoup

This Just in from the Reunion Coordinator

Hear Ye, Hear Ye, Hear Ye from your Reunion '98 Committee. The end of October is fast approaching and we thank those of you who have returned your Reunion Registration Forms early. It sure has helped get "our ducks in

line". For those of us who, like your Reunion Coordinator, enjoy occasional bouts of "Senior Moments" it's not too late to send in your REGISTRATION form. **The deadline for my receiving your registration is 15 October BUT THE DEADLINE FOR A GUARANTEED HOTEL RESERVATION AT OUR REUNION SAVINGS RATE IS NOW THE 7th OF OCTOBER.** Remember to call the hotels directly, 850-474-0100 for the Holiday Inn and 850-477-3333 for the Hampton.

The Reunion 98 Supplement in the last issue of *The Pelican Post* called attention to the fact that no bus service is offered on the registration form from the motels to the banquet and that a sign up sheet will be available for those with wheels to offer a ride to those without. In addition I had noted that if enough let me know that a bus would be preferable, at \$10/person, I'd make arrangements. Well, only one couple has done so but many have let me know that they'd be happy to offer rides. That's the Forty-Five Spirit!

QUESTIONS: my phone number is 850-932-5613 and e-mail is 76371.726@compuserve.com. The answering machine answers on the 4th ring. I return calls.

The following list of attendees is accurate as of today's mail (1 September).

- Agnew, Frank & Anne
- Anderson, Charles & guest
- Ashley, Regie & Pat
- Barthel, William & Guest
- Batdorf, Andrew & Lee
- Bestul, Jim & Nancy
- Butler, Ray & Marie
- Butler, Thomas
- Cain, Dan & Mary
- Carlson, Bill

- Carroll, Jim
- Chappell, John & Billie
- Coates, Sam & Grace
- Collins, John & Dorothy
- Comeau, Chuck
- Cook, Richard & Pauline
- Cooke, Warren & Patricia
- Cooper, Jim & Pat
- Davis, Boats & Gloria
- Dinger, Harlan & Barbara
- Fisher, Ed & Barbara
- Gailey, Lon & Mary
- Golder, Tom & Susan
- Gorman, Hank & Peggy
- Green, Bud & Joan
- Helma, Art & Scott
- Hembree, Sam & guest
- Hilliard, Alex & Marion
- Hofer, Frank & guest
- Holveck, Art & Jackie
- Hume, Dave
- Imhof, P. J. & Eileen
- Johnsrud, Al & Jean
- Kebschull, Herb & guest
- Kennedy, Frank & Margie
- Keylon, Harold & Carolina
- Kostyk, Ben (Butch)
- Lee, Alan & Jane
- Mahoney, Jim & Jessie Lew
- McCombs, Jack & Carol (USAF)
- McConnell, Michael & Jean
- Miller, Ben & Jane
- Myers, Bill & Mildred
- Navarre, Tony
- Nelson, Hazel & daughter
- Nelson, Roger & Sue
- Newman, George & Susie
- Norman, James & guest
- Olson, Mort & Marilyn
- Parker, Dave & Elaine
- Pate, Jackie & daughter.
- Pavlick, John & Loretta
- Pippin, David & Carole
- Porter, Don & Ann
- Rascoe, Joe & Betty
- Riddle, Steve & Nicki
- Rodriquez, Bill & Carolyn
- Rollins, J.J. & Bobby
- Rotering, Al & Liz
- Rubeck, Fred & Guest

Sadler, Sandy & Lucy. 1 guest
 Sanderson, Dave & Jane
 Sheffield, Robert
 Shoup, Richard
 Stich, Jack
 Testa, Tony & Fran
 Thomas, Dorothy & guests (3)
 Thompson, Tom
 Timmons, Wendell & Coleen
 Wakeman, Velma
 Westvig, Ernie & Barbara
 Willen, Gloria & Jim
 Wood, Glenda
 Yosway, Phillip & Frances
 Young, Bob & Nancy
Happy 1st of September to all!

Mort

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Reunion Registration Form

In case you have misplaced your reunion registration form, another is included with this newsletter to all who are in the roster as of 1 September. Remember that you must mail it to Mort by 10 October, and make your reservations at the motels by 7 October.

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From the Vice President

Whenever I think about my 30 years in the Navy, one of the things I marvel about is how young kids lacking any direction in life came into the squadron(s) and after a year or so under the wing of a professional Chief Petty Officer “found” themselves (I know we lost a few but that’s the breaks). I know it was part of the maturing process but the Navy the Squadron environment and a good CPO sure helped things along. I got to thinking about why we members of the VP-45 Association

cough up our \$10 bucks a year for dues and travel to a reunion every other year. I came to the conclusion that we do so because the Squadron was a time period for all of us where we too matured or witnessed the magic of the process described above; and for that reason the squadron is still special to us. In a way, I bet, almost every Pelican who rotated through the squadron came out a better person for the experience. What a neat institution, *and it has done it’s magic over many years!*

See you at the reunion!

Tom Golder

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TREASURER’S REPORT



Beginning Balance	
March 4, 1998	\$19,189.31
Income	
Dues/Donations	\$ 2,569.00
Interest	160.86
Returned Reunion	
Deposits	200.00
Total Income	\$ 2,929.86
Total Capital	\$22,119.17
Expenses	
Printing/Postage	\$ 1,425.87
Total Expenses	\$ 1,425.87
Ending Balance	
Sept. 1, 1998	\$20,693.30

K. J. Cory
 1845 Hallmark Drive
 Pensacola FL 32503-3368

Who's On First?

Once Upon A Time VP-45 had back-to-back CO's whose last name is Phelan. Dick and Joe were not related

but, needless to say, it got confusing at times. One who was there at the time remembers that one day both wives went to the Navy Exchange and, while shopping, each tried to cash a check. The limit then was \$50. It so happened that one of the *other* Phelans had cashed a \$50 check earlier that day. Both ladies were denied the privilege of cashing their check — but wait, it gets better.

The confusion was compounded later that day when a CDR Phelan tried to cash his \$50 check at the Navy Exchange. He, too, was denied the privilege! As he tried to explain the reason for confusion to the cashier, this is the way it went (well, close anyway):

"Your name is Phelan?"
 "Yes."
 "And you say you're in VP-45?"
 "Yes."
 "And you are a Commander?"
 "Yes."
 "Sorry sir, you have already cashed your \$50 check for today."

And that's the end of that story.



If your name on the envelope has an asterisk and/or colored dot after it, you owe 1999 dues.

