

MARCH  
2023

THE VP-45 ASSOCIATION'S  
**PELICAN POST**  
NEWSLETTER



**NEW ASSOCIATION  
OFFICERS ELECTED!!**

**JACKSONVILLE  
REUNION PHOTOS**

# CONTENTS

Deadline	3
President’s Report	5
From the Vice President	8
This Just In	11
Navy Trivia	12
WebMaster/Secretary	14
A Sea Story	15
Alumni News	18
Squadron & Community News	20
Mail Call	23
Treasurer’s Report	25
Back in the Day	26
In Memoriam	29
Registration Form	35

### Cover: “The Pelican”

Cover Design and Photo by Bill Hobgood;

## NEWSLETTER INFO

Editor-in-Chief	BillHobgood
Assistant Editor/President	Jack Keane
Distribution	Email/Website
Editing Software	Adobe InDesign
Frequency	Twice Yearly

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Via Website	<a href="#">Contact Us</a>
Editor	<a href="mailto:hobgood.bill@gmail.com">hobgood.bill@gmail.com</a>
President	<a href="mailto:Jack_keane@verizon.net">Jack_keane@verizon.net</a>



# DEADLINE



## From The Editor

Welcome to a slightly new graphic format for your Pelican Post Newsletter. This represents the first format change since we first introduced the (then) new, all-color, digital version of this twice-a-year Pelican Post in April of 2013...nine years ago.

**Bill Hobgood**

As most of you know, the Secretary of the Association (Jack Keane for the past 10 years) was dual-hatted as the newsletter editor. Being, at the time employed full time, Jack asked me to assist with the design and production of his digital newsletter idea and you know how it turned out. Almost unananimously, we received rave reviews.

At the same time, I was the WebMaster for the As-

sociation and for the past 10 years, I have enjoyed working at the position. But 10 years meant it was time to pass along those responsibilities; and I have, to the newly elected WebMaster, Scott Kelly.

But I have so enjoyed working with this Association, I asked for, and the other Association officers agreed to, the establishment a new officer position, Newsletter Editor (separate from the Secretary). And after a tough campaign, you voted and I won the election to that position.

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

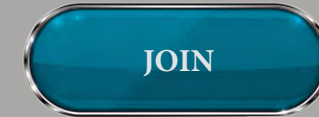


*The first digital edition of the Newsletter in September 2013.*

# EXPLORE OUR WEBSITE

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

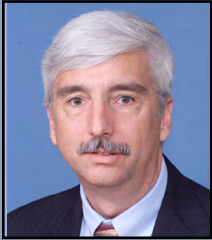
There is more information about you, your squadron and our Association than you could have possibly imagined.



**YOUR ASSOCIATION  
OFFICERS  
2022-2024**



Click on pictures below for more biographical info



**President**

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

**Newsletter Editor**



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



**Vice President**

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

**WebMaster**



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



**Secretary**

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

**Treasurer**



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

*“I’m honored to be selected as your president. I’m equally honored to be serving with a wonderful group of Association officers, four of whom I flew operational missions with in the Mediterranean and Atlantic in the early 1980s. When I left the squadron in December 1985, I never thought I’d be president of this wonderful organization.”*



Let’s build our membership!!

I want to thank all of you who attended our Association reunion in Jacksonville this past August. All accounts are that it was a huge success! I was unable to attend due to a herniated disc, however I was there in spirit and even managed to attend virtually (while flat on my back) to provide an analysis of our finances and membership at the Business Meeting; as well as a presentation on the Maritime Patrol Community during the Vietnam War via Zoom.

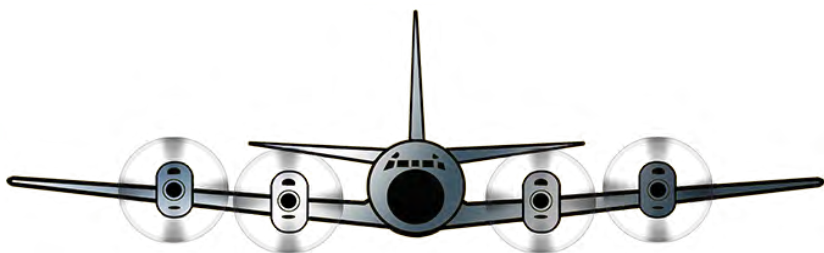
Before I get deep into my first article as president, on behalf of the officers of the Association, I’d like to take this opportunity to thank Victoria and Doug Mitchell for a decade of selfless, dedicated service to all Pelicans, past and present, as first lady and president of the Association. Over the past ten years, and even during COVID, I don’t think they missed an opportunity to send the squadron off on deployment or to welcome them home. They brought a personal touch to everything they did – whether traveling to Pensacola to donate Association funds to the Flight Academy; sending condolence cards or notes of encouragement and congratulations; attending mini-reunions; or just taking the time to call a Pelican to get caught up. Today



*Doug "Pooh Bear" Mitchell, after ten years as the Association President, will be sorely missed!*

is 30 January 2023 and, as I type this article, Doug is celebrating his birthday (I believe he said it’s his 30th!). Happy Birthday, Doug! I’m honored to be selected as your president. I’m equally honored to be serving with a wonderful group of Association officers, four of whom I flew operational missions with in the Mediterranean and Atlantic in the early 1980s.

When I left the squadron in December 1985, I never thought I’d be president of this wonderful organization. The squadrons we represent have an incredibly rich history. We have members of the Association who either served or had relatives/spouses who served with VP-45 (PBY) and VP-205/45 in World War II in the Aleutians, Caribbean, and Pacific; Vietnam; throughout the Cold War and the Global War on Terror; and who





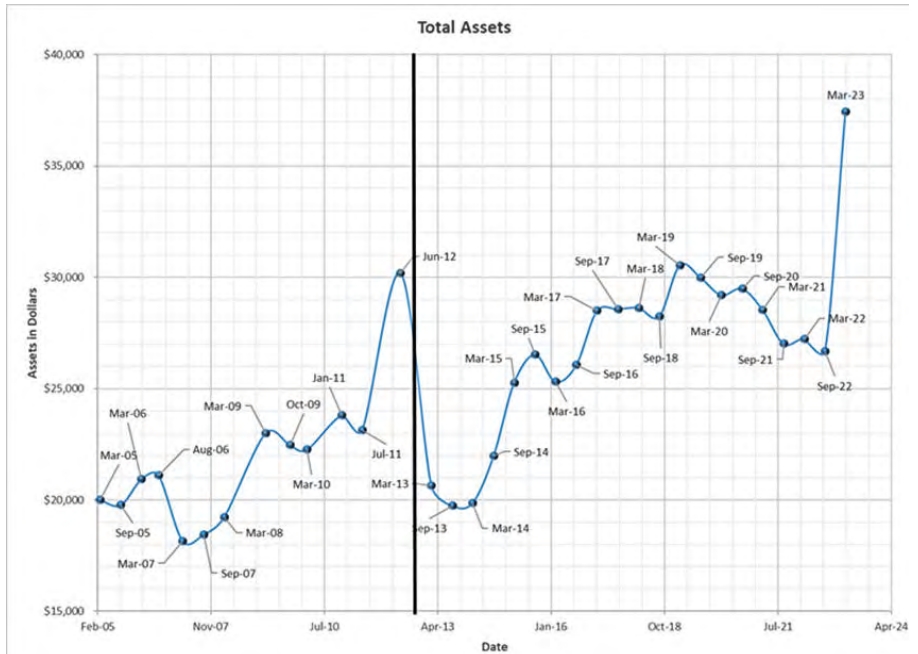
are conducting current operations in an increasingly dangerous and uncertain world. Members of our squadrons flew a host of aircraft to include three different flying boat types and two different land-based aircraft.

Our Association has two main purposes – to honor our heritage and provide opportunities for bi-annual reunions and fellowship. Our website is an outstanding venue for honoring those who served and the Pelican Post has evolved into THE finest Association newsletter of its kind. We have much to be proud of as an organization.

But there’s a good news/not-so-good news story to be shared, and it’s what I briefed at the Business Meeting in Jacksonville.

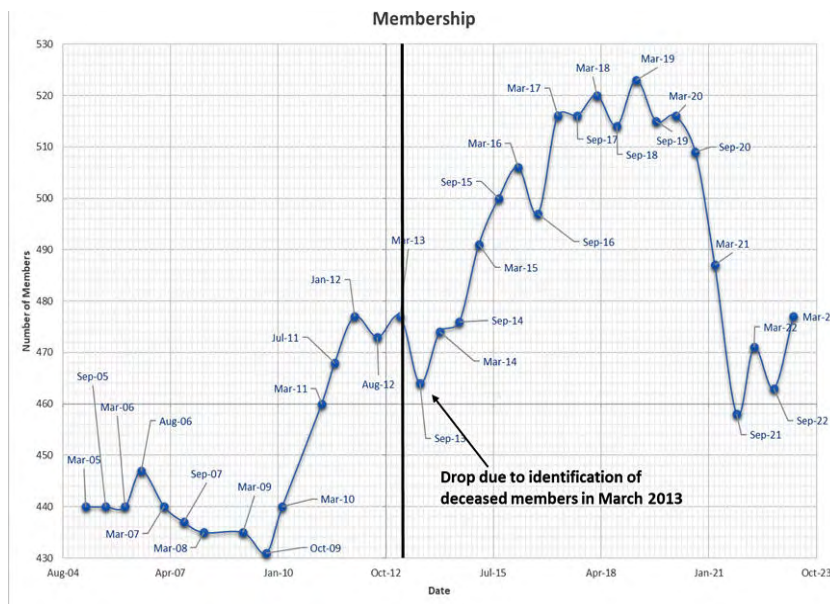
In 2016, while at the Charleston reunion, Ken App approached me and asked how the Association was doing from the perspectives of membership and finances. October 2012 was going to be my baseline year since that’s when Doug, Bill Hobgood and I came aboard as officers. However, in July I was able to pull more data together that go back as far as 2005 which I’ll share with you.

First, let’s look at finances. The Association has never been more financially healthy than it is today. As of this writing, we have over \$37K “in the bank”. Much of this has to do with our transition to electronic distribution of our newsletter in March 2013. That same month, we opened a corporate account with FedEx/Kinkos to reduce our printing costs. Together, those two measures alone have saved us in excess of \$1K/year.



Finances since 2005

But, like I said, it’s a good news/not-so-good news story. As of this writing, we are sitting at 477 members



Membership trends since 2005

– exactly where we were a decade ago. The drop in membership after March 2013 (when we went to electronic distribution of the Pelican Post) is due to the identification of 24 deceased members who were being carried on the roster due to the previous USPS distribution system. When we were using the “bulk mail” system, the USPS did not notify us when a member passed. Because we currently mail so few hard copies of the Pelican Post (23 to be exact), we do so via first class mail and are notified by a return of the newsletter when it’s undeliverable. The drop in membership after September 2020 is due to the large number of obituaries that we discovered. So, 477 members isn’t bad in and of itself. What isn’t great is when one reviews the

membership data by decade of service. As of the August 2022 roster, the bulk of our membership is aged 60 years and older (served pre-1984). And, to add to that, 89% of our members served prior to 1990. As an Association, we are “aging out”.

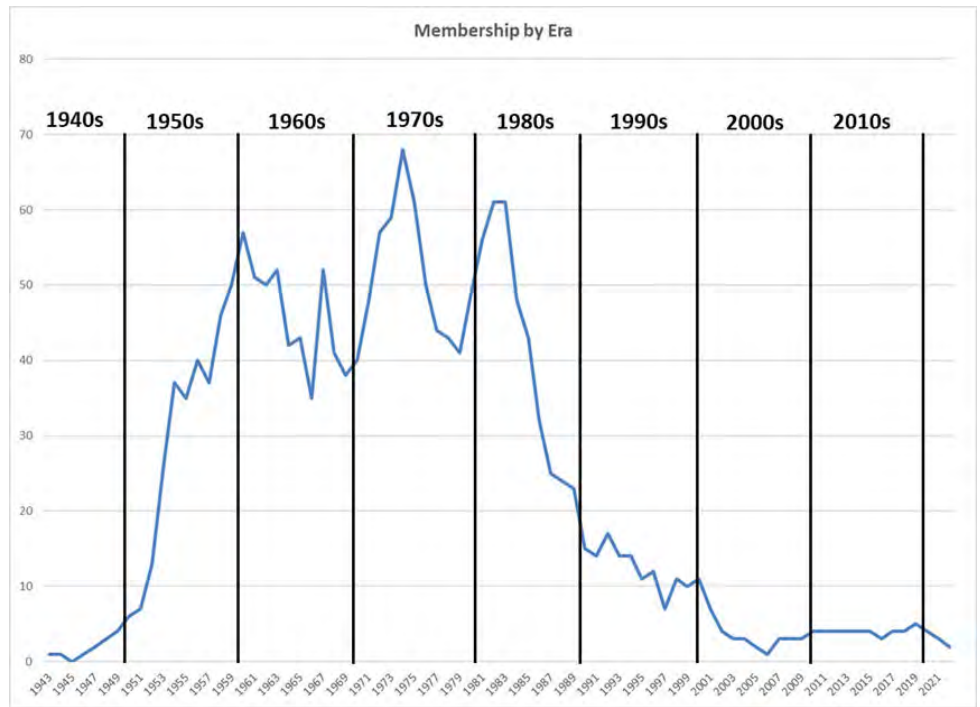
What can we do as an Association? First of all, we need our members who served with the squadron after 1989 to reach out to former squadron mates and encourage them to join the Association.

During the April timeframe, I’ll be reaching out to members to form a small Membership “Tiger Team” of no more than five members, to assist with determining options for increasing our membership to better represent those who served with the squadron during the past twenty years. Our P-8A aircrew and maintainers are woefully underrepresented.

As a prime example of the problem, see the picture below of CAPT TJ Grady, USN (Ret). TJ “Catfish” Grady (pictured to the right) is the sole member of the 2000’s Era. The only one!

Now is the time to act. We have a sister organization that has yet to realize they are in dire straits. While we have lost just under 8% of our membership since the pandemic, they have lost 25% (40% since their membership peak in 2016). Having \$37K in the bank is meaningless if we don’t have the membership to spend it on.

One final note. During the Business Meeting, Spence Cunningham solicited inputs for the site for the next reunion. As our reunion coordinator, he has researched each site and has provided the pros and cons of each in his article so that you might be better informed when casting your vote for the 2024 reunion site. As officers of the Association, we have a responsibility to provide you with enough infor-



Membership trends by decade of service.

mation to ensure we select an affordable and safe reunion site.





# FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

**Spence Cunningham, VP and Reunion Coordinator**



Well, folks! It's that time again! Time to decide where we are going for the upcoming 2024 Reunion!! At the 2022 Association business meeting, the Officer's asked the membership to consider staging the 2024 Reunion somewhere in the Mid-West. We realize that most of our members reside in the Southeast, but to be fair we wanted to hold the reunion in a location for the membership that lives west of the Mississippi! The locations proposed are:

<b>Kansas City</b>	<b>Oklahoma City</b>	<b>Dallas/Fort Worth</b>
<b>San Antonio</b>	<b>New Orleans</b>	<b>San Diego</b>

I m going to do something different with the locations. I am going to do a PROs and CONs type of description. Please take the time to review them so you can vote your first and second choice for the 2024 reunion site! They are in no order. Much of the data used for this article are a result of discussions with the reunion planners.

## ***Kansas City – Room rates around \$129***



PRO's: Kansas City is known as the City of Fountains. Steeped in history, the National World War I Museum and Memorial is America's only museum dedicated to sharing the stories of the Great War. Other places include the Kauffman Performing Arts Center, The Country Club Plaza premier retail, restaurant, and entertainment district, plus the American Jazz Museum, the

KC Royals, and finally the Steamboat *Arabia*, which sank in the Missouri River and was recovered intact. Did I not mention KC being one of the BBQ centers of the country? Yum!! Additionally, crime is low, the weather should be good and area hotels are likely to be very accommodating to our Bring Your Own (BYO) hospitality room needs. Oh, and you cannot be any more in the center of the country than KC!!!

CON's: There is no military airfield close, that I can see, that could facilitate the Squadron bringing in a P-8.

## ***Oklahoma City – Room rates around \$130 to 150***

PRO's: First, there is the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum - a sobering memorial and tribute to those who died at the hands of some domestic terrorists. Scissortail Park is a 70-acre outdoor recreation space just steps away from the core of down-



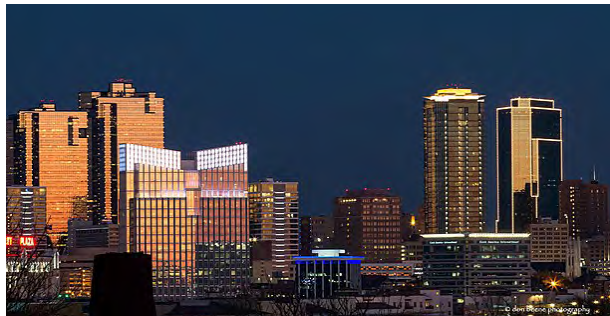


town Oklahoma City. Other attractions include the First Americans Museum which provides an experience of collective histories of the 39 distinctive First American Nations and the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. Here you can experience the history and artistic beauty with its large collection of classic and contemporary western themed art and sculpture. Lastly there is Stockyards City which is home to several shops specializing in all things western. Plus the Oklahoma National Stockyards, the world's largest feeder and stocker cattle market. The Navy contingent at Tinker AFB can host the Squadron in bringing a P-8!

CON's: Weather can be interesting during that time of year. I can virtually guarantee it will be windy!! Sadly, it appears that the area hotels are not accommodating to our need for a BYO hospitality room.

### ***Dallas/Ft. Worth – Room rates around \$140 to \$150.***

PROs: The Dallas/Fort Worth metro area offers an interesting mix of Texas pride and cosmopolitan offerings. The cowboy life still exists in Fort Worth (pictured right), while “Dallasites” love the trendy local bars and numerous retail shops. Other places include The Fort Worth Stockyards National Historic



District, The Cowtown Coliseum that features Wild West Shows, rodeos, and concerts year-round. Plus the Cavanaugh Flight Museum and finally there is Dealy Plaza and the Sixth Floor Museum, located in the former Texas School Depository, that examines the life, death, and legacy of President John F. Kennedy. Air transportation is plentiful and relatively inexpensive. Plus Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth can host the Squadron in bringing a P-8!

CONs: Not many that I can really see. However, there is no guarantee that hotels will be accommodating for our need for a hospitality room that we can “BYO” accouterments.

### ***San Antonio – Room rates \$120 to \$140.***

Rates at the scenic Riverwalk are around \$140 and parking for \$20/day. Room rates at an airport hotel location are \$119 to 129 with free parking.

PRO's: From the earliest Spanish Missionaries in 1691 to today, San Antonio continues to offer a unique blend of rich heritage, traditions, and natural beauty. The “sites” include The San Antonio River Walk which winds along the gently flowing San Antonio River through the city. The Alamo, the first of five missions established by the Spanish government and the site of the infamous battle of 1836. Other sites include the Texas Ranger Museum, visiting El Mercado - the largest Mexican marketplace, and the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg.



Added pluses Lackland or Kelly AFB should be able to host the Squadron in bringing a P-8A. and hotels will be accommodating for our need for a hospitality room with our desire to “BYO”.

CON's: Nothing major that I can outline here.

### ***New Orleans – Room rates around \$129***

PRO's: Nicknamed the "Big Easy," New Orleans is known for its round-the-clock nightlife, vibrant live-music scene and spicy, singular cuisine reflecting its history as a melting pot of French, African and American cultures. Other sites include: The French Quarter, Jackson Square, and historic St. Charles Avenue. Also, a visit the National WWII Museum is a must as well as taking an authentic paddle-wheeler cruise on the Mighty Mississippi River and tour Chalmette Battlefield, site of the last battle of the War of 1812.



CON's: Since the pandemic, crime and violent crime is elevated in New Orleans. While you can build a case that these crimes are generally off the normal tourist beat and typically between people that know each other, it would seem prudent not to hold the reunion here and reconsider New Orleans again in 2026.

### ***San Diego – Room rates around \$170 plus***

PROs: San Diego is known for its beaches, parks, warm climate, and a Navy town! Primary home to the Pacific Fleet and permanent home to the USS *Midway* an aircraft-carrier-museum. Other places to see include the Marine Corps Recruit Depot. Old Town is considered the birthplace of California. Balboa Park where the San Diego Zoo is located and the San Diego Air & Space Museum. Finally, the historic Gaslamp Quarter, where modern architecture and Victorian-Age buildings stand side-by-side with an overabundance of entertainment options.



Zoo is located and the San Diego Air & Space Museum. Finally, the historic Gaslamp Quarter, where modern architecture and Victorian-Age buildings stand side-by-side with an overabundance of entertainment options.

CON's: First, San Diego is on the West Coast. Our intent for the 2024 Reunion was to bring fairness and have our reunion in the Midwest. Second and perhaps the most persuasive: It is EXPENSIVE!! Our reunion agent has stated that everything from the hotel to excursions and transportation will be much more expensive. The city is dealing with the same issues as San Francisco and L.A. concerning the unsheltered. Hotels are not accommodating nor flexible in their offerings to reunion groups. One of our tasks as Officers is to make every effort to give good value for your Association money. In the current economic climate, now is just not a good time for a San Diego /West Coast Reunion.

Well, there you have it! A quick description of the sites selected at the business meeting and an executive summary of things to see and do in each location! Now, all that is left to do is for YOU vote for your favorite site AND a second alternate when voting begins! Please remember, 30 June 2023 is the deadline for your vote to count!

Hope all is well and before I go, let me pitch "be a recruiter" and help us boost our membership!!

Warmest regards,  
Spence



## THIS JUST IN

by: Bill Hobgood

### Spruce Goose II

The Department of Defense announced recently that General Atomics, working with Maritime Applied Physics Corporation, and Aurora Flight Sciences, working with Gibbs & Cox and Recon-Craft, each won contracts to start design and development work for ...wait for it...a new sea plane!!

The planned “Liberty Lifter” demonstrator will be a large flying boat similar in size and capacity to the C-17 Globemaster III transport aircraft. “Goals include takeoff and land in Sea State 4, sustained on-water operation up to Sea State 5, and extended flight close to the water in ground effect with the capability to fly out of ground effect at altitudes up to 10,000 feet above sea level,” reads a statement from DARPA.

Initially the two teams will develop an aircraft that will carry two USMC Amphibious Combat Vehicles or six 20-foot-long cargo containers at just above the wave tops using the physics of the ground effect.

Fixed-wing aircraft flying close to the water behave like they’re riding on a cushion of air between the

ground. Airplanes experiencing ground effect use less energy to move through the air at high speeds and in turn take less energy to fly.

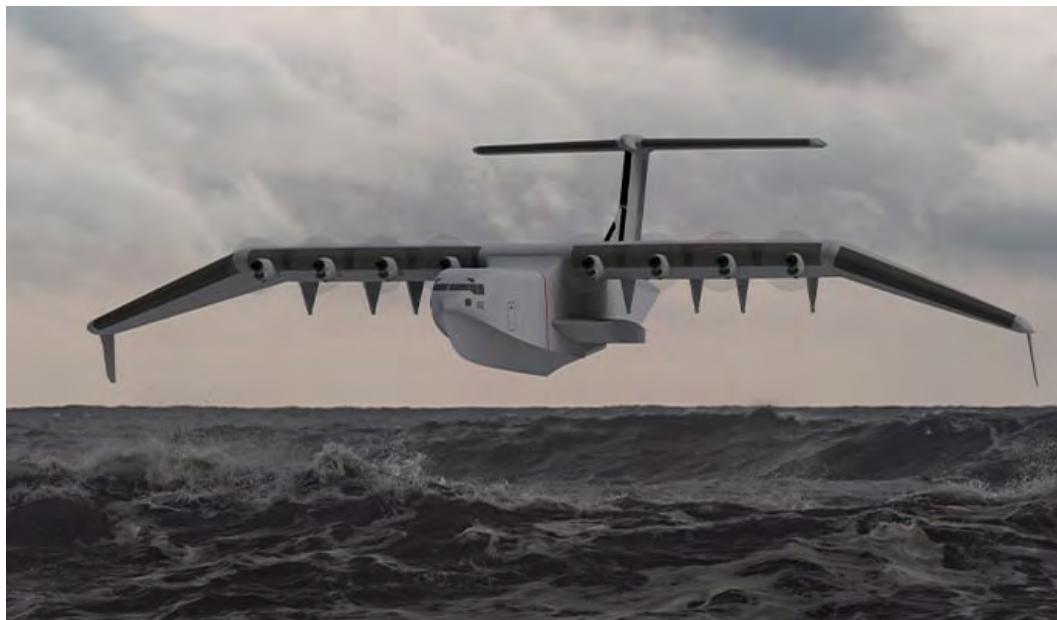
Both companies have taken different approaches to their designs. The General Atomics team has selected a twin-hull, mid-wing design to optimize on-wa-



*Artist's concept of General Atomics bid for DARPA's Liberty Lifter Program.*

ter stability and seakeeping. “It employs distributed propulsion using twelve turboshaft engines,” reads the DARPA release. Aurora Flight Science’s point-of-departure design more closely resembles a traditional flying boat, with a single hull, high wing and eight turboprops for primary propulsion.

Now, the two teams will set out on an 18-month period to refine the operational concepts and design for each proposed Liberty Lifter.



*Artist's concept of Aurora Flight Sciences bid for DARPA's Liberty Lifter Program*

Perhaps the most famous ground-effect craft was the massive 400,000-pound Hughes H-4 Hercules cargo plane that flew 70 feet above the ground for about a mile in 1947.

Hughes’ so-called “Spruce Goose” was developed in conjunction with the Pentagon for a similar mission as the Liberty Lifter – transporting cargo across vast distances faster and at less risk from attack than a ship.

# NAVY TRIVIA

## “Tribute To Aviators”

**Ed’s Note:** While the author of this piece is unknown, it was likely penned by a Navy “Jet Jock” from an era long past. Nevertheless, much of it’s contents apply to VP Aircrews.

As we get older and we experience the loss of old friends, we begin to realize that maybe we ‘bullet proof’ Pilots won’t live forever, not so bullet proof



*Most of the civilian world thinks of Navy Aviation lore in terms of the two TopGun movies.*

anymore. We ponder...if I were gone tomorrow did I say what I wanted to my Brothers. The answer was no! Hence, the following few random thoughts.

When people ask me if I miss flying, I always say something like, “Yes! I miss the flying because when you are flying, you are totally focused on the task at hand. It’s like nothing else you will ever do (almost).” But then I always say, “However, I miss the Squadron and the guys even more than I miss the flying.”

Why you might ask? They were a bunch of aggressive, wise ass, cocky, insulting, sarcastic bastards in smelly flight suits who thought a funny thing to do was to fart and see if they could clear a room. They drank too much, they chased women, they flew when they shouldn’t, they laughed too loud and thought they owned the sky, the bar, and generally thought they

could do everything better than the next guy. Nothing was funnier than trying to screw with a buddy just to see how pissed off they would get. They flew planes and helos that leaked, that smoked, that broke, that couldn’t turn, that burned fuel too fast, that never had auto-pilots or radars, and with systems that were archaic next to today’s new generation aircraft.



But a little closer look might show that every guy in the room was sneaky smart and damn competent and brutally handsome! They hated to lose or fail to accomplish the mission and seldom did. They were the laziest guys on the planet until challenged and then they would do anything to win. They would fly with wing tips overlapped at night through the worst weather with only a little red form light to hold on to, knowing that their Flight Lead would get them on the ground safely. They would fight in the air knowing the greatest risk and fear was that another fighter would arrive at the same six o’clock at the same time they did. They would fly in harm’s way and act nonchalant as if to challenge the grim reaper.

When we went to another base we were the best Squadron on the base as soon as we landed. Often we were not welcomed back. When we went into an



*One of the most famous and popular aviation bars was at the O’ Club at NAS Cubi Point in the Phillipines. Most of the memorabilia from there has been moved to the Cubi Bar at the Naval Aviation Museum (shown above).*





*A Naval Aviator at his work station.*

O'Club we owned the bar. We were lucky to have the Best of the Best in the military. We knew it and so did others. We found jobs, lost jobs, got married, got divorced, moved, went broke, got rich, broke something and the only thing you could really count on was if you really needed help, a fellow Pilot would have your back.

I miss the call signs, nicknames, and the stories behind them. I miss getting lit up in an O'Club full of my buddies and watching the incredible, unbelievable things that were happening. I miss the Crew Chiefs saluting as you taxied out of parking. I miss the lighting of the afterburners, if you had them, especially at night. I miss the going straight up and straight down. I miss the cross countries. I miss the dice games at the bar for drinks. I miss listening to BS stories while drinking and laughing till my eyes watered.

I miss three man lifts. I miss naps in the Squadron with a room full of pilots working up new tricks to torment the sleeper. I miss flying upside down in the Grand Canyon and hearing about flying so low boats were blown over. I miss coming into the break hot and looking over and seeing three wingmen tucked in tight ready to make the troops on the

ground proud. I miss belches that could be heard in neighboring states. I miss putting on ad hoc Air Shows that might be over someone's home or farm in far away towns.

Finally I miss hearing DEAD BUG being called out at the bar and seeing and hearing a room of men hit the deck with drinks spilling and chairs being knocked over as they rolled in the beer and kicked their legs in the air, followed closely by a Not Politically Correct Tap Dancing and Singing spectacle that couldn't help but make you grin and order another round!

I am a lucky guy and have lived a great life! One thing I know is that I was part of a special, really talented bunch of guys doing something dangerous and doing it better than most. Flying the most beautiful, ugly, noisy, solid aircraft ever built. Supported by ground troops committed to making sure we came home again!

Being prepared to fly and fight and die for America. Having a clear mission. Having fun. We box out the bad memories from various operations most of the time but never the hallowed memories of our fallen comrades. We are often amazed at how good war stories never let the truth interfere and they get better with age. We are lucky bastards to be able to walk into a Squadron or a Bar and have men we respect and love shout out our names, our call signs, and know that this is truly where we belong. We are Pilots. We are Few and we are Proud. I am Privileged and Proud to call you Brothers.



*Dean "Diz" Laird, Ace fighter pilot, flew F-4Fs and F-6Fs during WW-II. He also flew in Korea and Vietnam. Here he is at ages 21 and 101. You know he has some sea stories!!*

## FROM THE WEBMASTER

By: Scott Kelly



This is my first report as Web-Master for this fabulous group of former Pelicans and I'm proud to take over our wonderful website.

As some of you may have noticed, communication sections of our site have not been working. To fix this, our website is undergoing some badly-needed maintenance to repair some server-side bugs, as well as fix a CAPTCHA issue. CAPTCHA are those inconvenient little, hard to read security codes, you have to enter to access web pages or submit forms.

Our website code is working correctly, but the server code under it has a few "undocumented features" which we're stamping out.

We expect to have the issues corrected very soon, and once they are, the areas currently requiring a CAPTCHA login (Contact Us, Membership and Sea Stories) will be back fully operational. Stay tuned!

Have any questions for me? Please shoot me an email to: [scott.kelly@mind-spring.com](mailto:scott.kelly@mind-spring.com).



## SECRETARY'S PODIUM

By: Al Labella



Greetings fellow Pelicans! I was elected as the Secretary during the 2022 Reunion and assumed the duties from Jack Keane. It was great to see old friends and make new ones during the reunion...reliving old sea stories that become more glamorous over the years, whereby questionable tales are confirmed by others whether they were there or not.

Jack and I will conduct a BHO (Battle Hand Over) in the near future and I will maintain the membership roster. Speaking of membership, an emphasis

was placed on recruiting former and current Pelicans during the reunion business meeting, ensuring our legacy is enduring and our "stories" do not fade into the annals of history.

We need to apply "pressure" at every opportunity to get Pelicans to join us not only to increase membership but also to keep our stories alive.

I would like to extend a personal thank you to Doug Mitchell for his 10 years of dedication to us as well as other VP organizations, keeping our heritage preserved.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as our Association's Secretary and I will certainly do my best to carry on the exceptional efforts of my predecessor. If, for any reason, you need to get hold of me via email, just click [HERE](#).





# SEA STORIES

## Early VP Operations in Vietnam 1964-1965

by: CDR Charley Caldwell, USN (Ret)

In October, 1964, VP-1 deployed from Whidbey Island to Iwakuni, Japan, with twelve SP2H (P2V-7). In January, 1965, the squadron moved to Sangley Point in the Philippines. The day before moving, the en-



listed barracks at Iwakuni burned to the ground and all the squadron enlisted personnel lost everything except what they were wearing - some had only towels since they were showering at the time. Emergency issue of minimum clothing was performed but no funds distributed.

My crew, YB 3, arrived at Sangley after a RON at Okinawa on 14 January and was deployed with one other crew the next day to DaNang, Vietnam. We reported to the Navy Advisory Group Commander there and were told our mission was to escort the River Patrol Force units that were traveling day and night to North Vietnam, and to train with the Destroyers in the task force when time was available. All our flights were scheduled by the National Security team in the Pentagon - we received our schedule directly from there to the senior member of our detachment daily.

Since the NAG had no

advance notice of our detachment, we were billeted in a fenced mansion in the center of DaNang and issued a surveyed jeep for transportation. The mansion was guarded by a three Vietnam military group - with their families - billeted in the servant quarters behind the mansion. The officers took residence in the small visitor building and the crew members took the mansion.

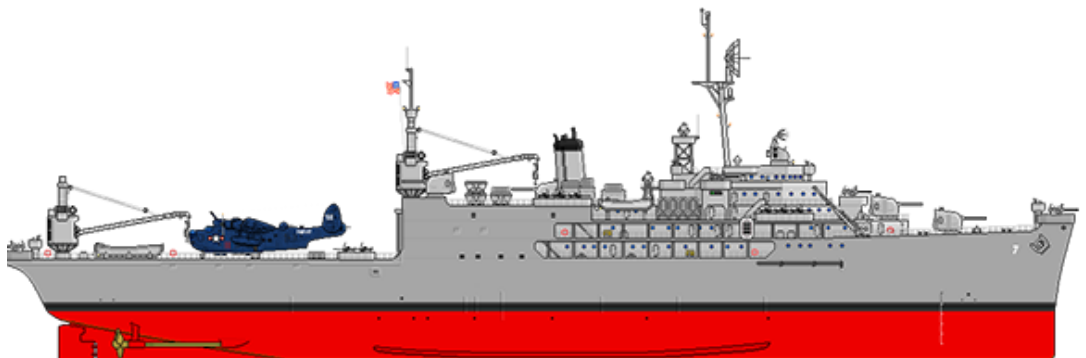
There was no provision for meals for any of us nor funds for the purchase of food so the NAG funded meals for the crew at the civilian commissary/dining hall and the officers paid for their meals there. Unfortunately we weren't privileged to eat many meals there due to our daily flight schedule. There was no flight kitchen there so we had to scramble for flight rations wherever we could.

The Air Force command at the airport provided the enlisted crew some meals but the officers were not members of the DOOM (DaNang Officers Open Mess) so were not afforded admittance there. On 24 January I took my crew back to Sangley and we loaded up with cases of tomato soup and flew back to DaNang on 1 February after conducting an

escort flight from Sangley.

We received some bad news then - we were ordered to vacate the mansion, since it was to be occupied by the Bob Hope troupe which was to entertain the task force and Air Force base.

Enter the USS *Currituck* (AV-7) with some P5Ms to the DaNang harbor and we were ordered to billet there. That was nice to be in an air-conditioned covered place and receive hot meals but, again, we had not much time for meals due to the flight schedule. An HU-16 also came with *Currituck* and it's mission



*USS Currituck offered some respite from the brutal heat ashore...and hot meals.*

was to ferry us from the ship to the airport - about a mile from the ship's anchorage. This evolution that took about an hour each way only added to our missing sleep and deals but did get us flight rations. Our crewmembers, not being shipboard trained sailors then, opted to move to the hangars and set up cots. With no money, they were pretty much confined to the hangar or the airplanes.

An amusing event happened when the Admiral on *Currituck* requested an intelligence briefing from the NAG, since the ship was at continuous General Quarters. A LTJG from the NAG came aboard and I was present at the briefing. It was a thorough explanation of what was happening in the area. The Admiral then asked the briefing officer how much warning would he receive of any enemy action directed at the seaplanes and ship. He was told, "When they start shooting at you, Admiral." We were put ashore again and the ship went back to Sangley the next day.

Since the mansion was no longer available and the NAG had no extra space, we were told to contact the Marine Corps unit that occupied some old Vietnam spaces adjacent to the airport. The Marines had no infantry troops except for perimeter defense and one mortar unit, and two helicopter squadrons of H-34 unmanned helicopters - and zero extra space. We reported to the Marine Colonel in charge and asked for a bed



*The runway at Sangley Point.*



*VP-1's P-2Vs worked with River Patrol Boats like this one.*

and food for all of us. The Colonel told us he had instructions from the Security Council to take us in. He was going to move some of his enlisted troops to pup tents because there was no extra room for our crew members - and there was no flight ration kitchen, so no flight rations. Fortunately we still had the tomato soup supply.

Again the crew members moved to the hangar but the officers stayed with the Marines.

We had gone to Vietnam wearing the standard orange flight suits. We had been VERY worried traveling back and forth from the mansion to the airport in our open black jeep wearing those orange suits since only the monks wore orange. So the Colonel



*A portion of the flight line at Da Nang. Left to right: an F-100 (the "Hun"), the author's P-2V, another F-100 and four F-105 Thunderchiefs (the "Thud").*

declared he couldn't have us be shot down with those orange flight suits being so visible - so - he issued each crew member a specially ordered camouflage flight suit the unit had paid for from their tiny O/Enlisted Club profits. BUT only on the condition that each PPC would be responsible for returning every one of those flight suits when/if we departed his area. Agreed!!

The Vietnam area is not kind to unpressurized aircraft - the humidity and heat do not agree with aircraft electronics, so nothing electronic operated well until we climbed to 8 to 10 thousand feet and the electronic gear cooled and dried out. It was always a worry until the gear began to perform as it should - but it always did with tender care from the crew. I might add that there were no maintenance personnel at DaNang to assist the crews, and the supply of parts was non-existent. We had an APU, two main



and one nose wheel spares and no help from the Air Force. Thankfully, we needed no spare parts except what the crews brought from Sangley and “borrowed” from *Currituck*.

We were bothered on our flights by several concerns. If we were attacked up north, what help could we expect from the Navy Carriers on Yankee Station? We were told to call for help from the CAP. We asked for an estimate of the time delay before help arrived and were told it would be about twenty minutes or a bit more. There was no doubt in our minds that the CAP would find no P2V in the air by the time they arrived.

We asked for permission to draw some sort of weapons from the Air Force because we could see our military units engaging Viet Cong troops as we flew north and thought we might help out with a 5” rocket or a bomb as we passed by. We were told in no uncertain language to not even think about such things - that we were anti-submarine mission aircraft and to stay off shore. We were also directed to train with one of the destroyers at night with flare drops, those flash pod drops and the searchlight, ostensibly in case one of the ships observed closing seaborne units at night and identification was imperative. We were on call at any time at night in case such identification was needed.

After two months, we were directed to return to Sangley and the squadron redeployed to Iwakuni at the end of February. A couple of amusing events happened: We two PPCs returned every one of those flight suits to the Colonel. He said he never expected to see them again but, in appreciation, he gave each PPC one to keep. When we returned to Sangley and the CO saw those suits, he asked how we got them. When told the Colonel gave them to us, he said, “Caldwell, I want you to take me to DaNang so I can personally thank the Colonel.” We went there and I introduced him to the Colonel. After some chit-chat, the CO asked the Colonel for one of those flight suits. I quote the Colonel. “Hell no, you didn’t earn one.”

During that time at DaNang, the CO decided he wanted to smoose with the Task Force Commander on USS *Ranger* so we two caught the COD out to the

carrier and he went to call on the Admiral while I went looking for the gedunk for a milkshake - something I had not had for a long time but, since I had served in USS *Hornet*, I knew such was available. The shop was closed so I found the Supply Officer and told him my plight whereupon he opened up and made the milkshake personally. When we were about to board the COD for return to DaNang, as is usual the safety crew inspected our MaeWests for equipment. Turns out the CO had not inspected his own and there were no CO2 charges in it.

The squadron returned to Whidbey in late March. I didn’t count the number of flights or total flight time for the two crew’s detachment but my crew topped



Then LCDR Charley Caldwell, the author, poses in front of his P-2V in one of Marine Camo flight suits addressed in this article. Color image provided to the right.

one of the month’s crew flight time at 150 hours. When we got back to Whidbey, I initiated paperwork for crew Air Medal awards they had earned but the CO tossed them into the circular file as I watched.

# ALUMNI NEWS

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

## George Dragos Turns 89

After enlisting in the Navy at age 17 in 1951, then AOAN Dragos received orders to VP-45 which, at the time, was based in Coco Solo, Panama flying PBM flying boats. After four years with VP-45, he left active duty, just shy of his 21st birthday, for another 10 years in the reserves.



On the occasion of his 89th birthday, his daughter, Cathy Martin and other family members surprised George by presenting him with a framed limited

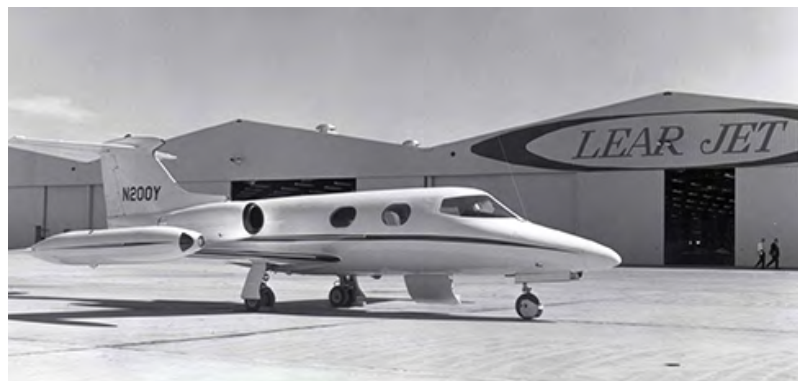
edition print of "The Magnificent Aircraft of Patrol Squadron Forty-Five."

## Jay Thomas' Project

Almost 60 years ago the first purpose-built jet was delivered to a customer. This risky venture was the result of one man's vision, and it changed Business Aviation forever, created an industry and created an aviation icon in the process. Jay Thomas is a member of the Classic Lear Jet Foundation, a not-for-profit corporation founded and operated by past, retired and current Learjet employees and he shares that vision.

The Foundation intends to acquire the first Lear Jet ever delivered, 23-003, return her to Wichita, KS where she was built, restore her, and fly her as a living flight history program. Together, members of the Foundation have over 240 years of Lear Jet experience including engineering, maintenance, quality, certification, and flight operations.

Lear Jet 23-003 was the first of over 3000 Lear Jet (later Learjet) aircraft of many models built before



production ceased a year ago. You can learn more about what Jay and fellow Foundation members are doing at [www.classiclear.org](http://www.classiclear.org).

## Al Labella Gathers AWs at the JAX Reunion

Get a group of old 80s AWs together, one can only





Front Row: Ken Tuten, Mikeo Davis, Al LaBella, and Spence Cunningham  
 Second Row: Mark Hampson, Mike Ford, John Sorrells, Chuck "Bumble" Bowling, Neil Polley, and Dave Mead

imagine the stories, or perhaps it's best not to try to imagine the stories. Undoubtedly, a great group that they all are undoubtedly proud to be a member.

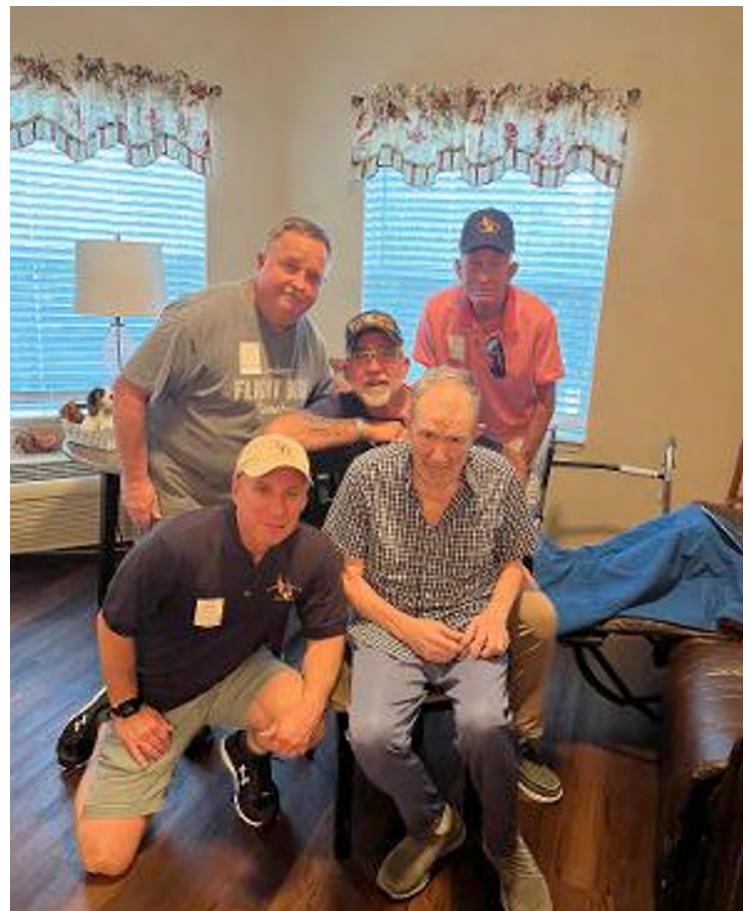
### Visit with AVCM Jim Bolin

During the reunion, several CAC-12 members who remain friends from the 84-85 Rota/Lajes deployment, made it a point to make a visit to spend some time with AVCM Jim Bolin.

Jim was not only a flight engineer, he was also a great leader and an example to emulate...thank you, Sir!

*Hey! Your Pelican Buds want to know what you've been up to!  
 All ya gotta do is...*

**CLICK HERE**



Front Row: Al LaBella and Jim Bolin  
 Second Row: Jim Martens, JW Allgood and Frank Morris



# SQUADRON & COMMUNITY NEWS

## Patrol Squadron 45 On Deployment in Cold Weather!

by: Patrol Squadron 45 Public Affairs

Below is an update directly from the VP-45 PAO - LT Christian Brumfield

“Pelicans!

It’s time for another big update from the Roost... The last time we talked, our friend Petey the Pelican had just narrowly avoided becoming Thanksgiving dinner. How time flies!

The months of December and January have been packed full of adventures, and we have spread our feathers far and wide across the Pacific. In addition to operating consistently out of Misawa, Atsugi, and Kadena, we have been to Malaysia, Indonesia, South Korea, the Philippines, Brunei, India, and Guam working with other nations to promote a free and



Members from Combat Aircrew 5 conduct air-to-air refueling with a KC-135 from the 909th Air Refueling Squadron, January 2023.



Aircrew conduct De-icing on a P-8 shortly before departure, in the early morning after a snow storm in Misawa



AM3 Ballesteros guides a P-8 into its parking spot after a snowy night landing in Misawa, Japan



In December, aircrew from VP45 participated in a SMEE (Subject Matter Expert Exchange) in Goa, India, working with P-8I crews to improve multi-national coordination and expertise in Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), with the goal of training in anti-narcotics and anti-piracy as well as general proficiency in anti-submarine warfare. VP-45's LT Sathre, LT Stevens and LT Sathre are pictured front left.





Combat aircrew 11 conducted a photo formation flyover with 2 US F-35s and an Indonesian F-16 during CARAT Indonesia, 2022

open Indo-Pacific. We would like to share some of the highlights of our recent adventures with you below, as well as give you a small update for what's to come.

As we head into the final few months of our scheduled 7th fleet deployment, we want to sincerely thank all of you for your continued support and dedication in making these past several months better for everyone representing VP-45 in uniform both at home and abroad.

Please continue to be on the lookout for updates from our Facebook page for all things Pelican, as well as our ensuing homecoming!"

### MPA Association Hall of Honor

The Maritime Patrol Association is excited and honored to announce the 2023 Hall of Honor Inductees:

Admiral Bill Moran, USN (Ret.)



ADM Bill Moran

Captain Frank Bryant, USN (Ret.)

Join us at the 2023 Heritage Dinner to help us celebrate this event. The Heritage Dinner will take place on Wednesday, April 26th on board NAS Jacksonville. Tickets are selling fast - to register for the heritage din-

ner, and for more information about all of our symposium events, please click [HERE](#).

To submit a Hall of Honor candidate for consideration in 2024, and to view photos of the past Hall of Honor recipients, please Click [HERE](#).

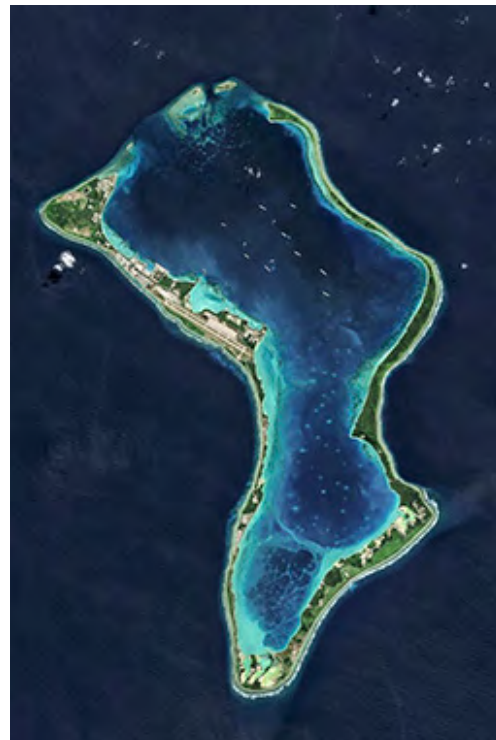
This year's two inductees are both former VP-45 Pelicans!

### Update on Diego Garcia

WASHINGTON — The United Kingdom is on the cusp of returning one of its last colonies to its native inhabitants, but national security experts say the move could have dire consequences for the US, which leases a Navy base from the Brits on one of the many islands.

The Chagos Archipelago is made up of about 60 islands located about 1,500 miles south of India, a position that offers the base on the island of Diego Garcia a strategic advantage due to its proximity to the Middle East and South Asia.

"This is an important story with strategic implications," RAND Corporation senior international defense analyst Timothy Heath told The Post. "Diego



Diego Garcia - Overhead satellite photo. Note the airfield on the upper west side. During the 80s and 90s, VP squadrons deployed to WEST-PAC maintained a detachment of multiple aircraft and crews on Diego.

Garcia ... is a very valuable basing facility due to its location in the Indian Ocean. The US does not have great access outside of Diego Garcia in that part of the world."

The UK last month began negotiations with the island nation of Mauritius over the sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago, which has been a British possession since 1814.

**Boeing successfully demos MQ-25 control through P-8 and autonomy software**

WASHINGTON — Boeing has successfully demonstrated for the first time the ability for the P-8A maritime patrol aircraft to take control of an MQ-25 Stingray drone mid-flight, as part of a virtual demonstration hosted earlier this year for dozens of Navy, Air Force, Pentagon and foreign military officials.

The event was a follow-up to a demonstration to one the company held last year which showed how the Stingray, the Navy’s new carrier-based, unmanned aerial tanker, could be controlled by an F/A-18 Super Hornet or E-2D Advanced Hawkeye pilot mid-flight while performing its core tanking mission.



*The MQ-25 Stingray Drone.*

This year’s simulation, which took place in the spring but was only revealed this week, added the P-8 Poseidon to a mix that also featured four MQ-25s, an F/A-18 and an E2D. Unlike the previous demonstration, this one concentrated on the Stingray’s secondary mission of intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance, as opposed to refueling.

The value in pilots being able to task MQ-25s mid-flight lies within a core assumption the Navy — and more broadly the Pentagon — has about the future battlefield: all communications will be subject to attack. The shipboard controllers may not always have contact or permission to communicate with the MQ-25 depending on the situation. If that’s the case, then a pilot of a nearby manned aircraft may need to redirect the unmanned tanker without assistance from the ship.

**A Flying ASW Torpedo!**

The U.S. Navy’s P-8A Poseidon aircraft now have



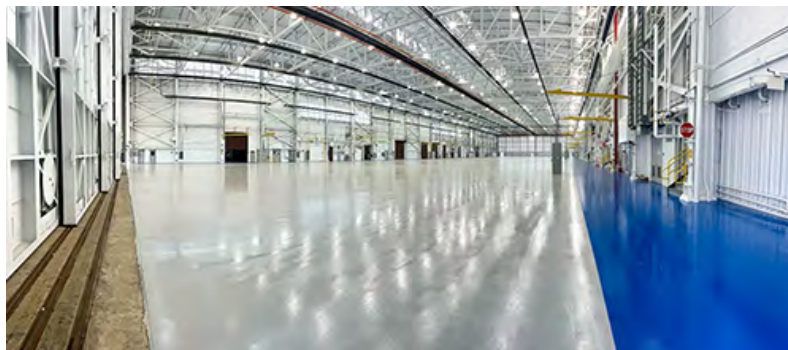
*“Airborne Mark 54 Away!!”*

another weapon in their arsenal, the High Altitude Anti-Submarine Warfare Weapon Capability, or HAAWC. This capability transforms air-dropped Mk 54 light-weight anti-submarine torpedoes into long-range, quickly-delivered standoff weapons. “The initial operational capability milestone marks the readiness of HAAWC for fleet

introduction for the Navy and its international partners,” Dewayne Donley, the HAAWC program manager at Boeing, said in a statement. “We’re excited to deliver greater flexibility and capability by way of higher-altitude launches from longer distances than previously possible.”

HAAWC consists of a wing kit (ALA) for the Mk 54 torpedo. After launch, the two pop-out wings deploy and the weapon glides to a designated target area using GPS-assisted guidance system. After reaching the target area, the ALA releases the torpedo, which then drops into the water as it otherwise would, using a parachute in the tail to slow its descent and prevent it from being damaged when hitting the water. For more info and detail, click [HERE](#).

**Hangar 101 Rehab at NAS Jax.**



*Hangar 101 at NAS Jax. Referred to as “the Large Hangar.”*

Jacksonville-based Haskell is the contractor for the almost \$51.51 million Fleet Readiness Center Hangar 101 Repairs at Naval Air Station Jacksonville.

Haskell says the project is repairing and renovating Hangar 101, also known as the Large Hangar. It was built in 1940 and has had several additions and internal modifications over the years reflecting changes in mission and equipment.

Haskell estimates completion March 17, 2023.



# MAIL CALL

Hey, Bill!

Please pass the below message to Pooh Bear:

I would like to say to you and your team a big ‘THANK YOU’ for the coordination and execution of subject reunion in Jacksonville, Florida from 17 August 2022 until 21 August 2022. You-all deserve a ‘Bravo Zulu’ for helping us all have a fantastic reunion, even with the few glitches you had to work around due to last minute COVID-19 restrictions put in place that caused you to have to cancel scheduled events at NAS Jacksonville and NS Mayport.

Even with those scheduled events mentioned above being cancelled, I think I speak for all attendees when I say that we still thoroughly enjoyed the reunion. It was great seeing those VP-45 shipmates that I had not seen for some time, finding out what has been going on in their lives, and reminiscing squadron escapades with them – although – I have to say that for some of you it seems the sea-stories are getting a little more embellished each time I hear them.

Fair winds and following seas to you all, and especially to you – Doug “Pooh Bear” Mitchell – as you turn your position as president of the VP-45 Association over to Jack Keane.

Very Respectfully,

Ed Dumas

BTW, for those of you that were unable to make this reunion, I hope to see you at the next one! Oh, and invite a fellow VP-45 Pelican to join you.

Hey Bill!

What an absolutely wonderful time at the reunion

and especially the dinner. It was perfect!

Regarding the Orion Print that I won, please send to:

Stephen Schwarz  
2925 Holly Pointe Ct  
Marietta, Ga. 30062

If you guys need anything, please don’t hesitate to call my cell (770.335.6942) or email me.

Thank you again for all the dedication and hard work expended in putting a wonderful reunion together!

Best Regards,  
Stephen

Hey Bill!

Doug and Jack sure put a whole lot into planning the reunion and I think it was one of the best. Do I look happy in the photo?



L to R: Scott Boseker, Don Stanton and Dave Bennett.

Don Stanton

Hey, Bill!

Please pass to Jack Keane my thanks for all his professional efforts, I find it hard to believe that any other squadron has the depth and quality alumni newsletter that you guys produce...Bravo Zulu!

Be well, Leon Temple



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

Hey Bill!

We celebrated my Dad's (George Dragos) 89th birthday this past Saturday. He is thrilled with the VP-45 Aircraft print!

Thanks again for your help!

Cathy Martin

Hey Bill!

Doug, Spence, Jack, Michael and Bill: You guys were good back in the day; you're even better now! Thanks for all your hard work preparing for and executing the 2022 Reunion. You did all the hard work. The rest of us simply showed up, enjoyed the comradery, told lies, renewed old friendships and had a great time. It was an enjoyable event to be sure.

Extra kudos to you Doug. Ten years at the helm is a significant accomplishment. Take a well-deserved break, Jack has the watch, and he is going to do great.

V/R,  
Jim Dolle

Hey Bill!

Congrats on a very interesting edition of the Patron Four Five newsletter. I particularly enjoyed reading about the CP-901 computer and highlighting terminology that has been hidden in the memory of my mind for decades. Good report!!

You guys just do damn fine work and deserve every single pat on the back you receive.

Bravo Zulu!!  
Fred Haynes

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

**"HEY BILL!"**

**IN CASE YOU  
MISSED IT**

**Editor's Note:** As most of you, who attended the reunion last August, know, Jack Keane, our new President was unable to attend. He suffered a medical emergency just days before the reunion. He did attend "virtually" for the business meeting and a presentation he provided. He is better now and working hard on Association projects.

I told you that because, normally, in the newsletter following a reunion, the President talks about the reunion and includes a number of photographs taken then. But he wasn't there!

I built a Power Point (slide show) presentation following the reunion and I decided the best way to allow you, who did not attend, a chance to appreciate the experience, was to let you to see that presentation. Those who did attend might also like to enjoy these photos and the accompanying comments.

All you have to do is click the big green box (it's a LINK) just below and you will immediately be taken back in time to the 2022 Patrol Squadron FORTY-FIVE Association Reunion in Jacksonville, Florida.

The 2022 VP-45 Association  
Reunion

Jacksonville, Florida 17 – 21 August, 2022

The Reunion Story in  
Photographs





## TREASURER'S TWO CENTS



Fellow Pelicans:

Wow!! I want to say how much I enjoyed the 2022 Reunion.

I know I saw some Pelicans past that said it was their 1st Reunion and how sorry they were that they had not done it sooner. Great memories!

The total in our accounts is \$37,210.50...which is our current balance from the end December until now. The reunion was a surprise success in terms of money raised. To all those that donated money from cancelled tours: Thank You!! This will help the continued long term success for our Association for years to come. Once again, please keep in touch with our shipmates that are still not members and encourage them to join.

Michael Riley  
AOC, USN (Ret.)  
Association Treasurer

### PATRON FOUR FIVE ASSOCIATION TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT

All Funds	<b>01 Oct 2022</b>	\$39,051.94
Income:		
Dues	\$18.81	
Interest	9.57	
Reunion Income	289.00	
<b>Total Income</b>	\$317.38	
Expenses:		
Printing/Postage	\$37.95	
2022 Reunion Exp	1,559.03	
Refunds Outstanding	89.00	
Misc Supplies	77.52	
Corporate Fees	260.00	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$2,023.50	
<b>Net Income</b>		<b>-\$1,706.12</b>
<b>Total Cash Assets</b>	<b>31 Dec 2022</b>	<b>\$37,345.82</b>

*YOU'LL NEED THE REACTION TIME OF A 25 YEAR OLD TO DRIVE THIS 300MPH TUATARA.*

*TO SEE IF YOU QUALIFY, TAKE THIS REACTION TIME TEST.*

*CLICK HERE!*



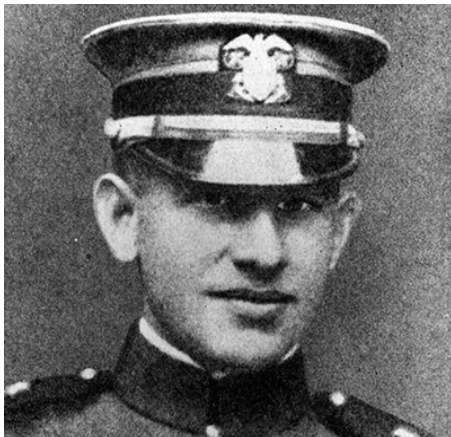
## BACK IN THE DAY

### Aviation's First Medal of Honor

by: Jack Keane

Just a week before the United States declared war on the Triple Alliance, on Saturday, 31 March 1917, *The Baltimore Sun* published an article under the headline of "800 Marylanders Wanted for Navy" describing Maryland's goal to provide those 800 men to the Navy by midnight on 20 April. On 21 April, *The Baltimore Sun* announced that Maryland had met its goal with just 62 minutes to spare!

One of those 800 was Baltimore's own Charles Hazeltine Hammann. Born the youngest of three on 16 March 1892 to Jacob and Elizabeth Hammann, he attended the local school system graduating from Baltimore Poly Tech in 1910. Upon graduation, he became involved with a local automobile repair business, and ultimately drove for the Baltimore Fire Department.



Charles Hazeltine Hammann

Given his background, he was the perfect candidate for naval aviation and became a member of the First Aeronautic Detachment (FAD). Enlisted candidates for the FAD included auto mechanics, newspaper reporters, tool makers and draftsmen. As an enlistee, Hammann was designated as Landsman for Machinist Mate and on 9 May 1917 as Landsman for Quartermaster. The rating Landsman differentiated enlistees with no sea experience from Seaman who had maritime experience. Landsman for quartermaster was the common designation for student aviators in the reserves. Ordered to Pensacola, these men received rudimentary flight instruction before sailing for France.

Upon the United States' entry into the war, the USS

*Neptune* (AC-8) was at Baltimore loading general cargo. She put into Norfolk where she embarked a division of the FAD which included Hammann. Accompanied by the destroyers USS *Jarvis* (DD-38) and USS *Perkins* (DD-26), she sailed for St. Nazaire, France arriving on 8 June, three days after the USS *Jupiter* (AC-3) arrived in Brest with the first FAD contingent. These were the first US servicemen to arrive in Europe.

Once ashore, they underwent training as pilots or observers, first with the French and later at RCAF/RAF or American facilities. Based on a November 1917 agreement with the Italian government, on 15 February 1918, many FAD members transferred to flight school at Lake Bolsena, IT. Ensign Mark Walton and aviation cadets Charles Hammann and James Coggins served as the first American instructors. Only the best students were selected to fly the Macchi M.5 fighter. Apparently, Hammann was one of the best.

The Macchi M.5 fighter was described as "nimble and speedy" and was said to be able to stack up well against any Austrian fighter in theater. It was a single-seat, flying boat fighter manufactured by the Nieuport-Macchi company of Varese, Italy. Introduced in the autumn of 1917, it was employed at Lake Bolsena and Porto Corsini, IT. It was powered by a single "pusher" propeller and armed with twin Vickers machine guns fitted in the nose, one on each side. The pilot sat low, almost on the floor of the hull, with only his head protruding above the fuselage behind the windscreen. The insignia adopted by the Porto Corsini aviators was that of a goat with its head down in a butting posture, wearing a blue blanket with the gold letters "NAVY" on it. It was painted on the sides of their aircraft.

On 24 July 1918, the U.S. Navy entered the air base at Porto Corsini, near the city of Ravenna and about 65 miles west of the heavily defended, primary Austrian naval base at Pola (now Pula, Croatia), the source of most of the German and Austrian submarine and aviation activity against Italy. The first detachment from Pauillac, France pulled into Porto Corsini that morning aboard a special train carrying 240 tons of supplies. The Americans



were given a “warm” welcome that night when they were hit with the first of many air strikes by the Austrians. LT Willis Haviland assumed command of the base on 1 August.

A veteran of the Lafayette Escadrille, Haviland found the situation at Porto Corsini to be less than favorable. The enlisted quarters were overcrowded and the latrines were unusable. Because it was surrounded by extensive marshes and swamps, the men faced a continual threat from malaria, which required quinine doses twice a day. The drinking water had to be purified with chloride of lime. Half the men bivouacked temporarily four miles away at an abandoned seaplane base on the north bank of the canal. In some cases, they improvised and used aircraft packing crates as buildings. Hammann and the pilots from Bolsena as well as mechanics trained at Italian seaplane and motor factories soon joined them. As of 1 August 1918, when the USN assumed command, the station counted thirty aircraft in its inventory (a mix of Franco-British Aviation reconnaissance flying boats, M.5s, and M.8s (a Macchi reconnaissance/bomber)), but only eight were in commission.

The airbase at Porto Corsini was located on a triangular piece of land at the intersection of two narrow canals, one of which led to the Adriatic Sea. The landing area at Porto Corsini was the north-south-oriented canal which was only about one hundred feet in width and perpendicular to the prevailing west wind, making all takeoffs and landings quite hazardous for a flying boat. At low tide, there was only ten feet of space between the wing and the beach. This canal system led Porto Corsini to be nicknamed “Station of Worried Landings.” Despite these difficulties, the Navy quickly initiated offensive operations. Weather permitting, pilots patrolled north to the mouth of the Po River, then east across the Adriatic Sea, followed by an overwater return leg to

Porto Corsini. (See map below)



On the morning of 21 August 1918, a flight of five M.5 fighters and two M.8 bombers under the command of Ensign George Ludlow, set out from Porto Corsini for Pola on the squadron's first combat mission. Their tasking was to drop propaganda leaflets over Pola – a dangerous undertaking not just because Pola was so heavily defended, but the Austrian government had declared that anyone participating in such missions would be executed as a spy should they be captured.

Shortly after takeoff, one M.5 and one M.8 aborted due to engine malfunctions. Arriving over Pola at 1120, the remaining M.8 dropped its leaflets and all five aircraft started their return flight to Porto Corsini. The Austrians responded to the attack with anti-aircraft fire and launched five Albatros D.III land based fighters and two seaplanes. The Austrian seaplanes were quickly left behind but the Albatros fighters closed on the Americans. All four M.5s turned back to engage the Austrians, but two dropped out when

their machine guns jammed. Able to rejoin the M.8, all three returned safely to Porto Corsini.



*A Macchi M.5 in Porto Corsini markings*

This left Ludlow and his wingman, Hammann, to engage the five Austrian fighters. Hammann took on two while Ludlow engaged the other three. Ludlow's aircraft sustained damage and he was forced to make a water landing five miles from the harbor entrance. Under

the threat of execution should they both be captured, Hamman landed to recover his wingman – all while the Austrian fighters were in the vicinity. The heavy winds and choppy seas caused damage to the nose of his aircraft in the process.

Since the M.5 was a single-seater and not built to carry the weight of two men, there was no place for Ludlow to sit, so he climbed behind Hammann and sat under the motor holding the struts. Remember, the M.5 was powered by a pusher propeller. Had Ludlow lost his grip, he would have been instantly killed. Somehow, Hammann got the plane back into the air. Upon landing at Porto Corsini, the plane was swamped by the additional weight and damaged nose and flipped over. Neither pilot was badly injured and both returned to flight duty within a few days. The Austrians mounted a reprisal strike that same evening, causing limited damage and no casualties.

On 14 October, Hamman was promoted to Ensign. Both he and Ludlow were cited by Haviland for the Distinguished Service Cross. Hamman would eventually be awarded the Medal of Honor (one of six awarded to aviators during WWI – four of which were awarded posthumously) as well as the Italian Military Valor Medal (Silver) and the Italian War Cross. Not only was he the first aviator to receive the Medal of Honor (Rickenbacker would be awarded his for actions performed four weeks later), he is credited by some historians with performing the first combat search and rescue in U.S. aviation history.

The Italian-Austrian armistice was signed on 4 November 1918 and Porto Corsini operations ceased that same day. At any given time during its operation, the greatest number of planes used at Porto Corsini air station was 21. The actual number of reconnaissance, patrol, and offensive flights that originated from there was 745. Porto Corsini pilots amassed a total airtime of more than 807 hours.

Upon the cessation of hostilities on 11 November, Admiral William S. Sims, Commander, United States Naval Forces Operating in European Waters, determined that 50% of aviation personnel would return to the U.S. with the remaining returning later. This didn't sit well with the enlisted personnel at Porto

Corsini who decided to petition the order – having fought and suffered the tribulations of Porto Corsini as a unit, they wished to return as one. Haviland submitted their petition through naval aviation headquarters in Paris and on 4 January 1919 the entire contingent departed Genoa in the Italian steamship *SS Giuseppe Verdi*, arriving in New York seventeen days later. Upon arrival, and after a brief leave of absence to visit family in Baltimore, Hammann was assigned to NAS Hampton Roads, VA.

On 14 June 1919, while flying his M.5 at the Flag Day airshow at Langley Field, Hammann went into a tailspin at 1500 feet from which he couldn't recover. He died instantly upon crashing. According to his obituary which appeared the next day in the *Newport News Daily Press*, more than a dozen aircraft were airborne at the time and for more than an hour they circled the crash site in tribute to a man who was stated in the same article to be “one of the most popular officers in the naval flying corps.”



*Hammann and His M.5*

On 11 August 1939, USS *Hammann* (DD-412) was commissioned. She saw duty in the North Atlantic during the Neutrality Patrols and at the Battle of the Coral Sea, before being sunk by torpedoes from the Japanese submarine *I-168* while assisting the damaged USS *Yorktown* (CV-5) on 6 June 1942 after the Battle of Midway. A second USS *Hammann* (DE-131) was commissioned on 17 May 1943. She saw extensive convoy duty in the North Atlantic before being decommissioned on 24 October 1945. Stricken from the register on 1 October 1972, she was sold for scrap on 18 January 1974.





**Tamza Elaine Aultman Black** commenced her Journey to Heaven on May 29, 1953, as the ninth child of Frank and Vinita Perrin Aultman. She was blessed with six additional siblings as she was raised in a close and loving family in Tifton, Georgia.

Tamza was raised in Tifton attending school there, graduating from Tifton High School alongside her brother in 1971. During her teen years she also learned the importance of work as she was employed as a hostess at the local Shoney's, where sister Carolyn also worked.



*Tamza Elaine Black*

Tamza relocated to Jacksonville, Florida. While in Jacksonville, she attended Beauty School where she developed the skills to provide her needs

and resources to become self-sufficient. While there, she met and fell in love with her future husband, "Iron Gene" Black, who was a TACCO in VP-45. The couple was married on May 10, 1976. She and Gene were blessed with the birth of her son, Travis Gene Black on May 12, 1977, at the Bethesda Naval Hospital.

The couple moved to Barbados in 1978 where Gene was assigned as XO of the NAVFAC and where Tamza made many new lifelong friends. As the Commanding Officer was single, Tamza became the First Lady of NAVFAC Barbados.

Upon the decommissioning of the Naval Facility, Tamza, Gene and Travis moved to Pensacola, Florida. After a short time there, Tamza and Travis returned to Tifton as Gene was assigned to USS Lexington in the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard.

In 1980, they moved to Cleveland, Oklahoma to assist in the operation of the Chapman-Black Funeral Home. Tamza obtained her Oklahoma cosmetology license and opened her own salon, Styles by Tamza which she operated for nearly 15 years before helping to establish Chapman-Black Floral Designs as a florist and purchasing agent for the gift shop.

Tamza passed from this life and entered into heaven on October 22, 2022, at the age of sixty-nine years, four months and twenty-three days. She is survived by her husband of forty-six years, Gene and her son and his wife, Travis Gene and Kari Groves Black of Bixby, Oklahoma.

Tamza leaves us with beautiful memories and a legacy of love. A funeral service was held at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, October 26, 2022, in the Chapel of Bowen-Donaldson Home for Funerals.

**Buck Jones**, 82, passed away Thursday, September 22, 2022, in the McLeod Regional Medical Center in Florence, SC.



*Buck Jones*

Buck was born in Johnsonville, SC, a son of the late Wilbur Samuel and Flossie Perry Jones. He was retired from the US Navy as a Lieutenant and from Lockheed Martin as a Mechanical Engineer. Buck loved the Navy, and he touched the lives of so many people during his career as Flight Engineer and Aviation Maintenance Officer on P-3 Aircraft.

In retirement he served as President of the Patron Four Five Association and he will be deeply missed by all who knew him and loved him.

Memorials may be made in honor of Mr. Buck Perry Jones to the Johnsonville Police Department, PO Box 428, Johnsonville, SC 29555, or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 or the charity of one's choice.

He is survived by his siblings, Sammy (Cheryl) Jones, Debra (Randy) Carter, Norman (Dixie) Jones, Johnnie Sue Arnone, Becky (Raymond) Kassis, Julie (Marc) Apperman, and Connie (Andy) Perkins; nieces and nephews, Shanda (Caleb) Boyd, Julie (Walt) Long, Angie (Kevin) Davis, Daphie Marsh, Billy Arnone, Bobby Arnone and numerous great nieces and great nephews.

He was predeceased by his wife, Judy and son, Chris.

**Kenneth R. Henneberger** beloved husband to Mary Henneberger, loving father of the late Mark Henneberger, grandfather to Magnus Henneberger, stepdaughter Lisa Ricca (Richard); step grandchildren Brittany Rebello (Ryan) and Christopher Ricca passed away in Bermuda in August 2021.



*Kenneth R. Henneberger*

**Stuart Allen Babins**, 82, of Titusville, FL passed away on September 28, 2022. He was born on October 14, 1939, in Miami, Florida. He was a proud retired



*Stuart Babins*

Senior Chief in the United States Navy. Stuart was in squadron flying P-5Ms in Bermuda as well as the P-3Cs in Jacksonville. Another Pelican gone too soon.

He is survived by his wife, Betty Babins of Titusville, FL. His son, Kevin Sample of Kansas City, Missouri, and his grandchildren, Kristyn Renee Sample-Velasquez of Huntsville, Alabama and Kyle Ryan Sample of Kansas City, Missouri. Along with family, he is survived by numerous military cohorts. He will be sorely missed."

**Chief Blair Roderick Laughlin, Jr., USN (Ret.), 84,**

of Gulf Breeze, FL passed away surrounded by family and friends on Tuesday, September 27, 2022.



*Blair R. Laughlin JR*

He was born on May 5, 1938, to the late Blair and Marion Laughlin, Sr. in Goshen, IN. Blair was a devoted husband and loving father and grandfather. He was an active member of Gulf Breeze Presbyterian Church and a longtime resident of Gulf Breeze. He proudly served his country in the US Navy, retiring after 22 years having served during the Vietnam conflict. He was a volunteer at the NAS Naval Air Museum for more than 20 years restoring aircraft. He also served his community as a Shriner and a Scout Leader.

Those left to cherish his memory include his loving wife of 62 years, Hope B. Laughlin; a son, Mark E. Laughlin (Christine M.) and their children, Lily, Cale, Grace, and Molly Laughlin; a daughter, Lauri A. Millward (John D.) and their children, Elizabeth and John "Jack" Millward; and his beloved Kitty.

A memorial visitation will be held 2:00pm until a memorial service to begin at 2:30pm Monday, October 3, 2022, at Gulf Breeze Presbyterian Church, with Pastor Bill Lamont officiating. A private graveside service will be held at a later date at Barrancas National Cemetery with full Navy honors.

**AWCS Danny Dobbins** passed away on Tuesday evening, 15 November. His wife Rebecca posted this on Facebook:

"As most already know, my beloved husband, Danny Dobbins passed peacefully on November, 15th.

We met when we were 13 and reunited at 56. I am truly heartbroken but have been so blessed to have had the past 8 years with him.

There is no formal service planned at this time, so our request is that you meet with mutual friends, have a meal, or find a peaceful place on your own.... raise a glass and send up a toast. He will love that.

He was a wonderful, loving, and fun man. He will always be my first kiss and my last kiss. My first love and my last love.

Forever in my heart, my sweet husband.

~ Rebecca Dobbins~



**Robert Edward Hummel**, Age 91, of Port Richey, Florida passed away October 24, 2022. Born in Jamaica, New York to the late George G. and Marjorie Edwards Hummel. Moved to Pennsylvania at the age of 17 near Gettysburg, where he and his folks operated a truck stop/restaurant until he entered the Navy, at age 20, and spent four years in the service. While in the service he spent time in Panama. After the Navy, he worked in the Aerospace Industry for 40 years. Later he worked for Honeywell for 25 years.



*Robert Hummel*

He has been a member of IOOF #1032 in State College, PA., since 1961. Also a member of West Pasco Model Railroad Club, Maritime Patrol Squadron VP-45, and American Legion Post 79 of New Port Richey. He enjoyed being on the computer keeping in touch with family and friends, and helping Violet deliver Avon.

Robert was also a good photographer, capturing family members and taking pictures of a few neighbors for their weddings. He is survived by his wife of 67 years Violet. Also, son, Eric (Pattie) Hummel of Hixson, TN.; and daughter, Janice (Mark) Shofner of New Port Richey, FL.; and granddaughter, Erica Riggs of GA.

**Steve Maxvill** passed away January 3rd, 2022, following a short illness. He was cremated and there will be a Celebration of Life at their Church at a later date. He joined the VP-45 Association at the 2022 Reunion.



*Steve Maxvill*

**Lee Roy Cantrell**, age 87 of Harriman, Tennessee, passed away at his home on Monday, January 17, 2023.

Lee Roy was born in Pound, Virginia on July 4, 1935. He enlisted in the United States Navy in 1954 and served until his retirement in 1977. After retirement, he went back to college and graduated in 1983 with a Bachelors degree from Lincoln Memorial University. Upon completing his degree, he worked and retired from TOSHA in January of 2000. He was a proud member of the DAV Chapter 26 (Oliver Springs, TN), VFW Post 9600 (Pound, Virginia), East Fork Masonic Lodge 460, F&AM (Dyllis community of Roane County, TN), and Dyllis Baptist Church. Lee

Roy devoted his life to helping others, neighbors, and doing everything he could for the DAV. In his spare time, he enjoyed gardening and farming.



*Lee Roy Cantrell*

He was preceded in death by his wife who he married in 1955, Jacqueline Cantrell; parents, Everett and Leota Cantrell; sisters, Brenda Gilliam, Francis Dotson, and Carolyn Meade.

Survivors include his children, Lee R. Cantrell Jr., Robert N. Cantrell, and Susan M. Ashley and husband Dwayne; brothers, David Cantrell and wife Billy Jean, New-



ell Cantrell and wife Crystal; sister, Joan Mullins; grandchildren, Amber N. Cantrell and Joseph B. Hendrickson; great-grandchildren, Brooklyn Hendrickson, Jayce Cantrell, and Jayden Hendrickson; brother-in-law, Jeff Meade; also by nieces, nephews, extended family members and special friends.

Visitation will be from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 21, 2023 at Premier Sharp Funeral Home in Oliver Springs. Funeral services will begin at 4:00 p.m. with Pastor Dean Wright officiating. He will be laid to rest at Eli Mullins Cemetery in Pound, Virginia on Sunday, January 22, 2023 at 2:30 p.m.

**Luis Gabriel Padilla** passed away on February 11, 2023 in Orange Park, Florida. He was born on August 31, 1959, in New York, New York to the late Luis Ruben Padilla and Magaly Lima.



Luis G. Padilla

Luis earned a bachelor's degree and served in the United States Navy as a Flight Engineer. He retired as Senior Chief. Luis enjoyed aviation, motorcycles, music and being a DJ.

Luis was preceded in death by his parents; step-father, Juan Fernandez and aunt, Teresa Jorge (Lima)

Left to cherish Luis's memory are his loving wife, Ingrid Padilla; son, Gabriel E. Padilla; step-daughter, Astrie K. Figueroa; grandchildren, Xzavier L. Padilla, Dominic Padilla and Zane E. Padilla; brothers, Juan D. Fernandez, Peter L. Padilla and Jose N. Figueroa; nephews, Juan Fernandez, Jose Figueroa, Johnathan Figueroa and Peter Padilla; nieces, Amberlynn Denison, Sierra Fernandez, Alanis Fernandez and Alysha Padilla; cousins, Angie Wilson, Terresa Navarro, Robert Jorge, Maritza Lima, Eric Lima and Patricia Lima and a host of other relatives and friends.

**John Mariano Federice, Jr.** entered into rest February 11, 2023. A resident of Jacksonville Florida at the time of his passing, John grew up in Buffalo



John M. Federice JR

graduating from Seneca Vocational High School before enlisting in the Navy. Technically gifted, he enrolled in flight-engineer school and became a crew member on the P-3 Orion. He was sent on many deployments to Iceland, Spain and Italy where his job was to oversee flight operations tracking submarines. He retired after thirty-one years as a Command Master Chief. After leaving the Navy, John worked toward his master's degree in aviation safety, ultimately teaching at Embry-Riddle Univer-

sity.

He was predeceased by his parents: John and Antonina Federice and 2 brothers: Ronald J. Federice Sr and Daniel F. Federice.

John is survived by his loving wife of 32 years, Sheri Federice; Children, John R. (Elizabeth) Federice and Katie A. (Chance) Rauscher; Grandchildren, John G. Federice and Stella A. Federice. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Military services with honors will be held at a later date.

**Michael "Moon" Mullen**, who was a flight engineer in VP-45 in the 1970s passed away recently. Doug Mitchell, a long time friend of Mike's alerted us to this sad news.



Mike "Moon" Mullen.

No obituary had been yet published at the time this newsletter went to publication.

Mike's daughter, Kim Mullen, left this message for her father on Facebook:

*Dad. Daddy. Grampy.*

*You never looked for praises, never one to boast. You just quietly kept working for those you love the most.*

*Your dreams were seldom spoken, your wants were so few. And most of the time your worries would go unspoken too.*

*You were a firm foundation through all our storms of life, A sturdy hand to hold onto in times of stress and strife.*

*I wish I hugged you a little bit longer and a lit bit tighter that day!*

*"The veterans of our military services have put their lives on the line to protect the freedoms that we enjoy. They have dedicated their lives to their country and deserve to be recognized for their commitment."*

*Judd Gregg*



# THE PATRON FOUR FIVE ASSOCIATION

## New Membership Registration Form

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

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

### ROSTER INFORMATION

Name: First \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's First Name; \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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

### FORMER SQUADRON SERVICE/DUTIES

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

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

Dates Served: From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_; From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

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

Ground Duties/Division \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about the Association \_\_\_\_\_

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