

SEPT  
2024

# THE VP-45 ASSOCIATION'S PELICAN POST NEWSLETTER



PATROL ASW  
PAST PRESENT & FUTURE

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# DEADLINE

## From The Editor



October is fast approaching so we decided to get this edition of the Pelican Post Newsletter out a little earlier than usual so we can include last minute reunion information. If you have not registered yet, go [HERE](#) to sign up.

Thinking ahead, I started working for the Association in 2011 when former Association President Gene Graham bullied me into designing a new website and taking over the new WebMaster position. That was 13 years ago.

I passed the WebMaster duties to a much younger Scott Kelly in 2022 and agreed to continue on in another new position as Newsletter Editor. I'm planning, if re-elected, to stay until 2026...at that time

I'll be 78; if still on the green side of the lawn. That means, one of you former Pelicans out there needs to step up and take over this really fun and rewarding position. The Association will provide you the best software out there, Adobe InDesign CC 2024 - the latest edition. If you prefer a different software application for publishing, you would be able to use that.

Jack Keane and I came up with this idea back in 2013 to make the Newsletter more of a full-color magazine format. This edition will be our 23rd full-color Pelican Post!

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



*The first full color Pelican Post was published 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.

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

## Treasurer



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



*"Fourteen years is a long time to give and I think it's time for a new generation of Pelicans to take the Association to the next level. Therefore, I've been in informal discussions with Wally Massenburg and Doug Mitchell to co-lead a committee to encourage other Pelicans to step up and be members of the Board."*

## The President's Report



*Jack Keane*

As I write this article, we are ten weeks out from our San Antonio reunion. I, for one, am excited to see the Pelicans I've missed since our Pensacola reunion in 2018. That's right ... 2018. We had to cancel in 2020 due to COVID and I missed 2022 in Jax due to a herniated lumbar disc. However, I've since noticed my absence didn't stop you from electing me as president!

The officers have been working tirelessly to set up one heck of a schedule for our reunion and I'm hoping to see as many of you there as possible.

So, I have two somewhat related topics that I need to bring up. First, my health. Since April, I've undergone two surgeries. The first occurred in early May when I had an ablation done to "cure" atrial flutter which was diagnosed on 16 April. The second surgery took place on 2 July when my orthopedic team repaired a broken lower left fibula just above my ankle. I took a fall on 18 June while preparing to travel to Massachusetts to visit with my sister during her last days. Unfortunately, she passed away on 22 June and I was unable to visit with her. I won't be able to put weight on my ankle until 13 August. But I'll be an "all-up round" come 2 October for the reunion!

Second, my term as Association president. My recent health issues have helped me realize that life is short and I need to start focusing

on myself a little more than I have since retiring from Hopkins in 2019. Therefore, I will be stepping down from the Association Board of Officers at the 2026 Reunion, wherever that may be. That will make fourteen years since Doug Mitchell, Bill Hobgood and I joined the Board in Mobile in 2012.

Fourteen years is a long time to give and I think it's time for a new generation of Pelicans to take the Association to the next level. Therefore, I've been in informal discussions with Wally Massenburg and Doug Mitchell to co-lead a committee to encourage other Pelicans to step up and be members of the Board. We'll have more discussion about that and about other officers who may be stepping down at our Business Meeting on 5 October. Please – don't think I'm only stepping away from our incredible Association. Since 15 January, I've stepped down as Chair of the Board of Advisors for the University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland and as president of the VMI Class of 1980 Foundation, which I helped establish two years ago. The decision to step down from leadership roles in all three organizations has been very difficult and I hope you'll all support me in this.

That's it from Waldorf, MD. Again, I am privileged to serve as your president and truly look forward to seeing as many of you in San Antonio as possible!!



# FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

## Hello Fellow Pelicans!



Reunion time is upon us and shortly after this newsletter is published, we will be gathering in what was first and second choice by a large majority: SAN ANTONIO!! While earlier in the year, we were having some serious concerns over participation this year, but it appears WE – ARE – ON!! Reunion schedule of events with times follows!

Wednesday, October 2, 2024

The Reunion Begins!! You can check into the Holiday Inn beginning at 12:00 p.m. The reunion check-in/Geedunk/Hospitality areas will be set up in the Skyline Atrium of the hotel!

At 3:00PM, reunion check-in starts. Members can complete registration and pick-up their reunion materials. The geedunk and hospitality room will be open for the membership to enjoy from 3PM until midnight! Otherwise, you are welcome to explore San Antonio on your own!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2024

The day begins with the City Tour excursion meeting at 9AM in the lobby with a return at approximately 4PM. Plus, we will be available to complete any reunion registrations for Thursday arriving members from 8AM to 10AM and another registration time at 4:30 to 6:30PM. At 6PM, join the Association Officers for the official start of the reunion in the Skyline Atrium. Time to renew friendships, make new ones and to catch up since our last reunion! Bill Hobgood will have the “Walk Down Memory Lane” videos for all to enjoy! Dinner is on your own, but remember you get 10% off in the hotel restaurant when you show your reunion credentials! We will also have hors-d’oeuvres and adult libations and soft drinks for the membership to enjoy until midnight!

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2024

Friday starts with a 9AM meetup in the Lobby for the Fredericksburg/National Museum of the Pacific War excursion with a return by 4PM! Lunch in Fredericksburg is on your own. I understand the museum is top notch. The hospitality area will have hors-d’oeuvres and adult libations and non-alcoholic drinks for the membership to enjoy until midnight! At 6PM Jack Keane will present Patrol Aviation’s roll in the Vietnam War followed by an encore presentation of Bill Hobgood’s “A Walk Down Memory Lane” videos.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2024

This big day begins with the Association Business Meeting at 8AM. All members are encouraged to attend as the State of the Association will be presented, By-Law changes will be proposed and voted on, funding challenges will be outlined, and discussion of location options for the 2026 Reunion for the membership to vote on. Plus, we will have coffee service for the meeting. 10AM is lobby showtime for the Buckhorn/Texas Ranger/El Mercado excursion! Expect a 4PM return to the hotel which should give enough time to relax a bit and get ready for Cocktail hour and Banquet Program starting at 6PM and running until 9PM. We have a outstanding





Guest Speaker lined up in RADM Kyle Cozad, USN Ret. You can read up about him in the Spring 2024 newsletter! We will also have door prizes to give away and an auction of a framed, signed and numbered print of "Orion's Game." The hospitality area will be closed until the conclusion of the Banquet. It will reopen until Midnight.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2024

Final day for breakfast in the hotel restaurant, then saying our goodbyes and to seeing you at the 2026 reunion! By 9AM, the reunion will officially conclude, and preparations will begin for 2026.

As I have said before, this will be my third reunion and I am so looking forward to it! I have come to enjoy everyone's company and making sure a great time is had by all! If you have any issues during this reunion, please find me or Jack and we will do our best to address the issue. I also want to hear any suggestions for improvements for these reunions. All suggestions are encouraged and appreciated! Looking forward to the gathering of the best Patrol Squadron in the USN! See you soon in SAN ANTONIO!!!

Warmest regards,  
Spence  
VP and Reunion Coordinator



*National Museum of the Pacific War (WW-II)*

## AT THE TOP



*Commander Clayton Hunt*

“Wings of Gold” upon completing primary flight training in February 2010.

His operational assignments include the “War Eagles” of Patrol and Reconnaissance Squadron (VP) 16, where he served as quality assurance officer and pilot training officer, the “Mad Foxes” of VP-5, where he served as the squadron maritime tactics instructor (SMTI), both at Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville, Florida, and a department head tour with the “Grey Knights” of VP-46 at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington, where he served as the operations and maintenance officer.

His shore assignments include an instructor tour at the Maritime Patrol Reconnaissance Weapons School (MPRWS) at NAS Jacksonville, where he served as the weapons and tactics department head and weapons and tactics instructor (WTI) course coordinator. Most recently, he completed in-residence education at the United States Naval War College, where he served as a member of the Halsey Alfa advanced research program and was selected as the honor graduate of his class.

He has completed multiple deployments to the 6th and 7th Fleet areas of responsibility, accumulating over 2,300 flight hours in the P-3C Orion and P-8A Poseidon aircraft.

Hunt's military decorations include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (4) and various other personal, service, and unit awards.

# NAVY TRIVIA

## Early ASW Sensors

by: Bill Hobgood

My first set of orders after flight training took me to VP-45 in April of 1971...53 years ago. At the time we still had aging P-3As. I say aging but those aircraft were only eight years old; by today's standards, relatively new. So I'd like to look back on some of the older sensors we used in the P-3A.

### Sniffer

Autolycus, or Sniffer was a submarine detection system designed to detect diesel-engined submarines from aircraft. It was designed to "sniff the air" behind the submarine as it cruised on the surface or snorkeled to recharge its batteries. A zig-zag search pattern was flown, passing at right-angles over the likely direction of submarine movements. When an exhaust plume was detected, the aircraft would begin to fly a track-



*When snorkeling or on the surface, a diesel submarine leaves a detectable exhaust gas.*

ing pattern of progressively shorter zig-zags. Each crossing of the plume trail would be plotted, giving a map plot of the submarine's likely

track. Once in close the aircraft would shift to more precise sensors.

While I remember learning about Sniffer, I do not recall using it to actually find a submarine. And after a year in VP-45 we transitioned to P-3Cs.

### MAD

Everyone remembers the Magnetic Anomaly Detection system on all P-2s, and later P-3s, because of the aircraft feature that was impossible to miss - the MAD boom protruding aft of the tail. That boom, along



*VP-45 MAD booms protrude proudly on the NAS Jax ramp.*

with equipment inside the aircraft could detect even minute variations in the earth's magnetic field. Submarines, a mass of ferromagnetic material, creates a detectable disturbance in the magnetic field, which is presented to the Radar/MAD operator as quick needle swings in his equipment.

Typically, a "Mad Man, Mad Man" call by the operator would mean attack criteria had been met and the aircraft would come back around for a weapon drop.

### Julie

In the P-3A, the Julie/ESM operator would operate the explosive echo ranging method of localizing submerged submarines called "Julie." I have no idea who came up with that name.

Using Julie, the ordnanceman would freefall practice depth charges (PDCs) with, or in the vicinity of, sonobuoys. Echos reflected off the sub would be observed by the Julie operator and he would pass ranging information to the navigator. The navigator, using dividers and a string, would convert the ranging information to ellipses around the buoy's location. Two intersecting ellipses around two buoys would provide two possible sub locations (an ambiguous fix that needed to be resolved). Usually, if the crew was quick



*PDCs, also called SUS (sound underwater signal) charges were used in Julie prosecutions.*

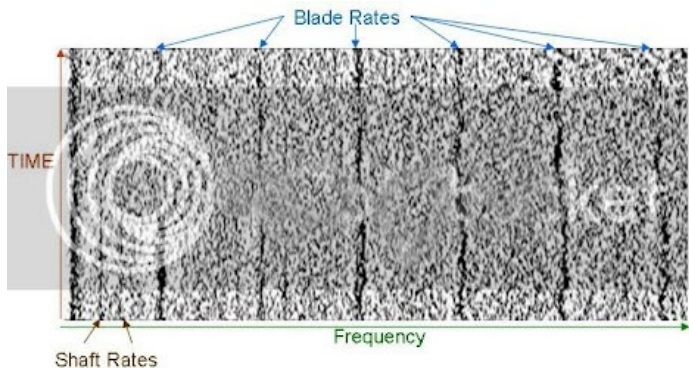


enough, A MAD run across the two fixes would resolve the uncertainty.

For the navigator, accurately and quickly plotting Julie fixes was his most difficult chore. Personally I hated doing Julie

### Jezebel

Our P-3As had a single, small passive sonobuoy detection system called the AQA-4. It was referred to as "Jez" and the operator was the Jez Operator. LOFAR



*LOFAR gram JEZ printout used to detect the presence and type identity of a submarine.*

Sonobuoys, deployed in an ASW search area, transmitted passive signals back to the aircraft and those signals were displayed on a very smelly moving paper printout. The operator would analyze the displays looking for frequencies and harmonics that matched the known frequencies (acoustic "signature") of submarines. The type sub had to be determined here because follow on localization methods provided position/fix information but not a sub's identity.

### Radar

Everybody knows what radar is for. The system in the P-3A was designated the AN/APS-80 and was operated by the Radar/MAD operator. Since the operation of radar is pretty straightforward, here is a typical example of what a Radar localization might sound like:

RADAR/MAD: TACCO, Radar, unknown surface radar contact 174 at 9 miles. Not sure why I didn't get him sooner; but only paint him now and then.

TACCO: Roger; Radar! Flight, come 180.....let me know when you have contact visual.

PPC: Roger.....stand by.....negative visual at this time. Must be pretty small. Steady 180.

RADAR/MAD: Still there, TC, now 170 at 4 miles, northerly heading, less than 10kts.

TACCO: Roger....Flight, descend to 200ft. Ordnance, get four 41s and PDCs ready. 3P and Observer, man observer stations port and starboard.

PPC: Holy Crap....Tally Ho! Visual!!! Port side abeam. Surfacing sub...not US...headed toward the Battle Group. Coming hard left, stand by to mark!

TACCO: Roger, Flight....RADAR check MAD operation at mark on top; JULIE prepare for him going sinker.

TACCO: RADIO, contact report to the Battle Group in the clear...NOW!

PPC: TC....It's a Juliet...Soviet cruise missile boat!

RADIO: Alpha Xray, Alpha Xray (ASW Commander aboard USS *Saratoga* to the north), this is Bravo Tango One Four, CERTSUB, Soviet Juliet SSG, my position on your 181 at 13 miles, target tracking northerly course, less than 10kts. I authenticate Tango Uniform.



*RADAR/MAD operator at his station.*

ASW Commander: Roger, Bravo Tango 14, authentication confirmed. Target designated Hostile Track 004...approximate position Blue 1 tac 13. Be ready to initiate tracking should target go sinker!



## FROM THE WEBMASTER

By: Scott Kelly



All – I am pleased to report that we once again have online payments working for membership renewal on the website. PayPal and ApplePay are both confirmed working, and Paypal will let you use pretty much any type of credit card you wish.

And as you've heard from the other officers, I very much look forward to seeing everyone in San Antonio. If you've not already done so, you can make your reservations [HERE](#).

I'll put in a call in advance to please send me your photos of the reunion so we can compile a great photo album. If you've not seen the pictures from the 2022 Jacksonville reunion, please check them out [HERE](#). This album was put together by Bill Hobgood and he took almost all the photographs. Summaries and photo albums for our other reunions can be found [HERE](#).



*This is Sensor Stations 2 and 3 and the equipment here likely looks way different than when you were in VP-45.*

I would also invite you to start thinking about options for the 2026 reunion – and in particular, to consider Hickory, NC. Why Hickory? Because it is the home of the Hickory Aviation Museum (Click [HERE](#) for that), which includes as its feature exhibit the former VP-30 P-3C Update IIIR BUNO 156515. The aircraft is open for tours.

I can tell you that having the chance to visit this grand old lady this past February was a very special experience for me. By the time of our next reunion, she will be freshly painted and exhibited in a beautiful new hangar.

See you in Texas, y'all!

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



*If you were a front seater or Flight Engineer, these panels should bring back some memories,*





# SECRETARY'S PODIUM

By: Al LaBella

Fellow Association Members,

As we close out the dog days of summer, hopefully it has been a pleasant and restful summer



I also want to talk a little bit about the membership dues you guys pay. Section 2 of the Bylaws states "The annual dues for Members and Associate Members shall be \$10.00, payable annually by 1 January of each year (five year dues \$40.00, and Life membership for \$200.00)". Yes, you can get an entire year of membership for the cost of a couple of cups of Starbucks coffee.

I will send out an email reminder on the first of December to the members that have dues scheduled to expire on 1 January. However, should a Member join the Association after 1 July, their Membership shall expire the following year vice at the end of the year they joined. See? This Association looks after you!

Two other significant benefits are that all Members 80 years of age (including surviving spouses of members) shall be deemed "Life Members" and shall be exempt from payment of dues. And, you get this fine Newsletter six months before anyone else!

Additionally, if you recently paid your dues, that payment covered 2024 and beyond. If you receive a notification, it will be for 2025. Please do not hesitate to contact me for clarification.

Lastly, please, if anything in the roster about you is not up to date, like email address, phone or home address, please shoot me an email with the updated information. To do that, Click [HERE](#). This assistance will make my job of keeping the roster accurate much easier, and ensure that you receive your copy of the Pelican Post and other updates.

A little more background on the importance of the dues you pay us:

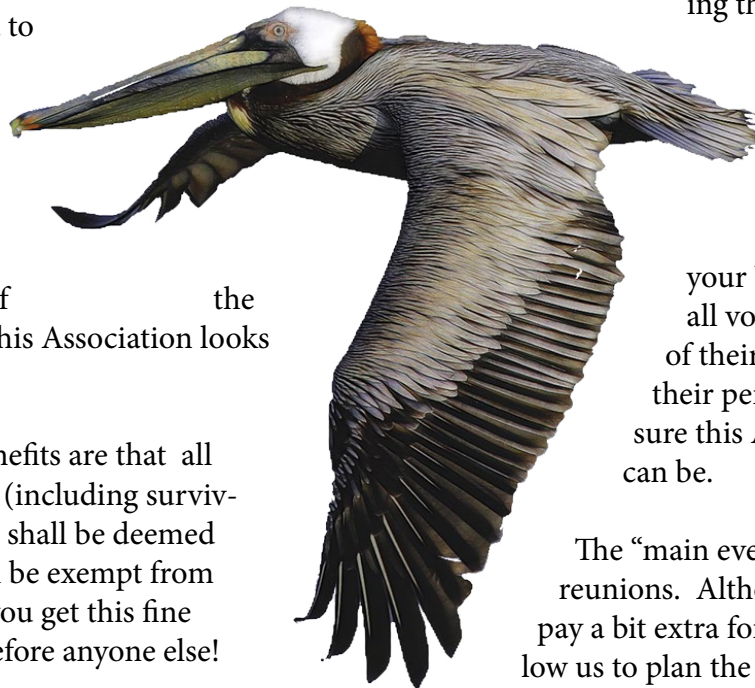
Dues are our only source of regular income and we depend on that income to keep the Association up and running. This money allowed us to create and now maintain the best US military association website in existence. Click the Pelican image just below to go check out our website! (<http://www.vp45association.org/>).

Your dues also allow us to maintain, as accurately as possible, as mentioned above, a very detailed roster of members...not an easy task in our highly mobile society. Additionally, this income allowed us to purchase the expensive software and training that allows us to create a visually appealing and informative newsletter.

The six officers you have elected to run your VP-45 Association are all volunteers who spend a lot of their free time (and some of their personal funds) to make sure this Association is the best it can be.

The "main events" are, of course, our reunions. Although current members pay a bit extra for attending, dues allow us to plan the event and provide the "freebies" attendees enjoy. Our upcoming reunion will be in San Antonio 2-6 Oct, 2024. If you have NOT registered, Please do so right NOW....right [HERE](#).

Thank you, Al LaBella



# SEA STORIES

## A Selection From Our Website "Sea Story" Page

### The MRCI From Hell - 1984 (Part TWO)

by: Scott Kelly

Shipmates –

First, I'd like to give a huge shout out to Ed Dumas and Jim Dolle for their recap of that harrowing MRCI practice flight in the early 80s; I remember seeing that aircraft in the hangar afterward, wondering how the hell a) they made it home, and, more importantly, b) how nobody was killed. The plane was a mess – bird strikes all over the wing leading edges and nose, along with the smashed and bloody copilot windscreen. It was a genuinely terrifying thing to behold. It was a testament to the skill of the pilots and crew that the aircraft did indeed make it home safely.

That particular MRCI was not without further drama, though my crew's experience was quite a bit less harrowing; this is the story of Crew 2's adventure.

To preface the story, the old-timers may remember that when the squadron was preparing for an MRCI, the crews selected to train for and fly it would be assigned a specific aircraft, so that they could become familiar with the behavior and nuances of their particular aircraft – in our case, LN-42/158570. And LN-42's nuance was a proclivity for its computer to crash as we were descending to onstation for the

mining drops.

We first observed this behavior on the first of two or three practice flights. We had passed the IP on heading and on course inbound for the drop. The weapon fly-to points were all set up and configured, and then, all of a sudden....my TACCO multi-purpose display went blank. Jack Keane was across from me as NAV/COMM at the time, and Ken App was the PPC. Ken had likewise seen the pilot's multi-purpose display blink out at the same time my own screen died. Since Jack was keeping a stopwatch as backup, we managed to complete the pass – but let's just say I'm glad that wasn't a scored pass; we would have been laughed off the range.

So, the first thing we did, once back on deck, was to begin preparing a back-up plan should we lose the computer on the actual run. Meanwhile, the Avionics shop went over the aircraft with a fine-toothed comb looking for the source of the failure; but the fault would prove to be buried too deeply to isolate and correct before the actual MRCI.

We laid out the mining track on DRT sheets, with timings down to the second for when each dummy mine store would be released; and I instructed Jack to stand by the TACCO console and give me a "now-now-now" count when stores were to be punched off. Jack was to punctuate this by slapping the console side panel on each third NOW to make sure I heard it.

On our subsequent training flights, the computer did, again, drop offline as our run to the IP commenced, so I told Ken up front that "this will be an offline pass; looks like we'll need the practice."

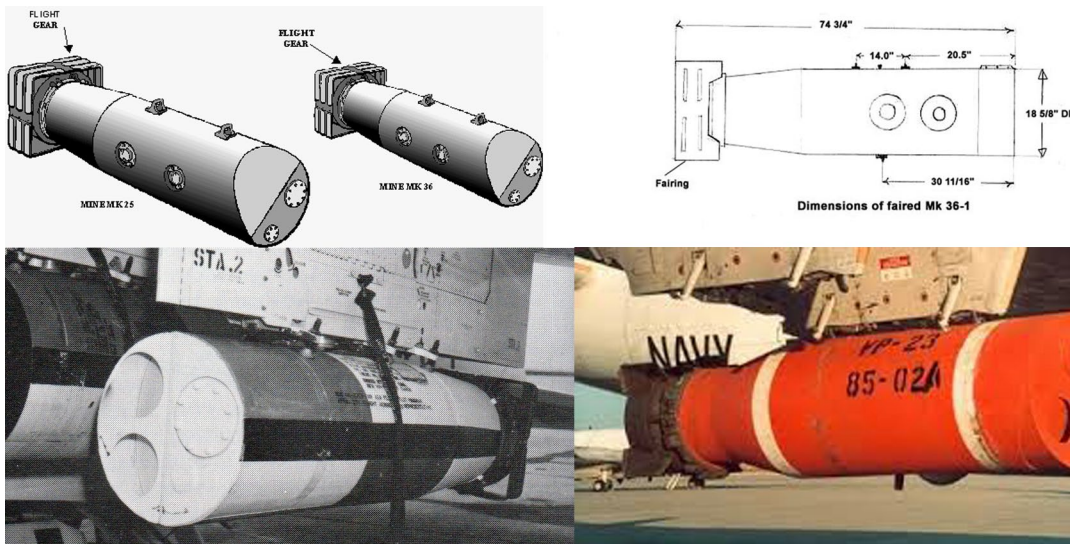
Come the day of the graded MRCI, then-XO Dick

Phelan was aboard to observe. We were loaded up with dummy mines and headed off to the range. The computer had been a bit finicky on the way out, but looked like it might hold together – until we turned inbound to the IP, at which point the computer said "have fun



LN-42 - the aircraft this story is about. This BUNO was one of nine brand new P-3C aircraft assigned to the squadron in 1972.





The Mk 36 was an air-laid 500 or 1000lb bottom mine with a flat slanted nose for optimum underwater trajectory. Mods 0 and 1 were magnetic (induction) mines, - Mod 2 was LF acoustic, and Mod 3 was pressure/magnetic.

The mines carried by the aircraft in this MRCI were "shapes" or "dummy" mines without a warhead.

boys, I'm out." I called over the ICS "crew from TACCO, we've lost the computer, this will be an offline pass." XO Phelan looked at me with eyes as big as quarters and said "are you sure about this?" "We're good, XO - we've practiced this multiple times." He looked dubious, but nodded. I then began setting up the man-

ual stores release panel for the drops, and Jack readied his stopwatch and DRT plots.

Up in the flight station, Ken set up for the IP and nailed it perfectly; on altitude, on airspeed, on course. The bomb bay doors opened. Jack immediately started his stop watch and began counting the seconds down to first release. He then called "now now NOW!" and slapped the side panel, and I punched off the first store. The sequence continued - "now, now, NOW (slap)" "weapon away!" (select next store)... "now, now, NOW (slap)" "weapon away!" (select next store) until all the stores were off.

It felt pretty good, though we of course had no way of knowing how we actually did until the MRCI inspection team located and retrieved all the stores. But when the results came in, our offline drop turned out to have achieved the highest score in the squadron, and, if memory serves, one of the highest in the Wing.

That was a good day. And the gulls cooperated.

Did you enjoy the above sea story?

If you did, there are plenty more in the Sea Story section of our website...going all the way back to the 1940s and WWII!

Speaking of sea stories, how come YOU have never written one for us? Think back to that heady time of yesteryear. Something happened to you in VP-45 that you will never forget. Maybe funny, maybe scary, maybe life changing. Share it with us. Please!

Click anywhere in this box to send your memory/sea story to our WebMaster, Scott Kelly.

## 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.*

### "PJ" IS IN THE AIR AGAIN!

by: Bill Hobgood

Anyone who has been a member of our Association for any length of time and attended a couple reunions knows the name P.J. Imhof. He was an Association officer, as treasurer for over a decade.

"PJ" was aircrew in VP-45 way back when the squadron flew seaplanes. His time was in the P-5M during the very early 60s. Some of you may recall that "PJ" was aboard the squadron P-5M (LN-3) that crashed at sea in September of 1961. You can read the whole story [HERE](#).

Recently, "PJ" had an opportunity to get back in the air in a Stearman bi-plane...and another in a T-34. These were "Veteran's Honor Flights" following a Blue Angels show in Pensacola. Not bad for a fellow in his mid-80s.



"PJ" is one of our oldest members. Jay Thomas and Charley Caldwell are also seaplane alumni, current members and former officers of the Association. Hopefully, they will all three be at the upcoming October Reunion so maybe we can find out who is the oldest!



*Initially designed by Stearman (later Boeing) for mail delivery, this rugged bi-plane became a pilot training aircraft shortly before WWII and over 10,000 were delivered to the Navy and Army.*



*Hey, Doc!!*

*Your Pelican Buddies want to know what the heck you've been up to!*

*Tell 'em by shooting an email to the Newsletter editor. All ya gotta do is...*

**Click Here**



*After deplaning from the Stearman, and losing his flight gear, Pj is joined by a number of family members.*



# A LOOK BACK

## The Soviet Krivak Class Frigate

by: Bill Hobgood

Anyone who deployed to the Med in the 70s, 80 or 90s is familiar with the Soviet guided missile frigate that NATO named the Krivak-class. Like other Soviet ships of that era, they were beautiful and armed to the teeth. 42 ships were planned and 40 were built. As new systems and armaments were produced the ships changed a bit and ended up as



Krivaks were the SS-N-14 "Silex" anti-surface and anti-submarine missiles, the SAN-4 "Gecko" surface-to-air missile, RBU 6000 ASW rockets, eight torpedo tubes and various guns.



four sub-classes; The Krivak I, II, III and IV.

A unique recognition feature distinguished Krivaks from all past designs. That was their large bow missile box, exhaust stack and angled mast. VP flight crews seeing their well known silhouette used to sing "Hot dog pack, Smoke-stack, Knife in the Back, Two Guns in the Back — Krivak."

Only the Krivak II carried a helicopter. Other armament on



# SQUADRON & COMMUNITY NEWS

## Maritime Patrol Association Symposium Jacksonville, Florida 24 April 2024

by: Doug Mitchell

On Wednesday 24 April 2024, I attended the MPA Symposium kickoff presentation at VP-30's Auditorium and the Heritage Dinner Wednesday evening. MPA President, Mark Burns and National Director, Richard Heimerle welcomed everyone to the Jacksonville Symposium followed by a "Thank You" video to the VP Community by CNO Admiral Lisa Marie Franchetti.



*RADM Brian Prindle (Ret), a JO in VP-45 and later Commodore at Wing 11, was in attendance.*

RADM (Ret) Richard Brooks and LCDR (Ret) Jim Schreivner gave an outstanding Maritime Patrol History Brief covering the P-3 Aircraft Operations from 1963 - 2023. This presentation included the number of aircraft and squadrons, our main bases, our deployment and detachment sites, our Reserve Forces, and the number of personnel and aircraft losses. They also discussed ASW Operations and ships of interest during this period.

The Royal Australian Air Force, the Royal Air Force, the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Royal New Zealand Air Force each gave a presentation on the status of their transitions to the P-8 Aircraft.

Former Pelicans in attendance were VADM (Ret) Mike Haskins, RADM (Ret) Brian Prindle, CAPT's

(Ret) Jeff McKenzie and Mike Napolitano. I also saw RADM (Ret) Matt Carter from my time with him when we were LT's in VP-30!

The 2024 Hall of Honor Inductee at the Heritage Dinner was Vice Admiral Michael Haskins United States Navy (Ret)...very few of us do not know him .

VADM Haskins was born in Angels Camp, CA and attended the U.S. Naval Academy, graduating first in his class, earning him a Fulbright Scholarship. He then reported to flight training and was designated a Naval Aviator in September 1968. Reporting to VP-49, he deployed twice to Keflavik, Iceland. During an instructor tour at the Naval Academy, he was selected as a CNO Scholar and completed studies at the University of Oxford.

After completing a tour as Air ASW Officer for Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Group TWELVE, he reported to VP-45, where he deployed to Sigonella, Sicily and Bermuda as Operations Officer. Then, following a tour at Patrol Wing TWO as Training Officer, he reported to VP-22 for his XO/CO tour, deploying to NAS Cubi Point.

In June 1983, as he turned over command of VP-22, a sister squadron, VP-1 suffered the loss of an aircraft and crew, which resulted in the relief of a number of officers. CDR Haskins was hand selected to assume command the squadron and under his leadership over the next year, the com-



*Doug Mitchell, taking a selfie of himself, gets "photo bombed" by VADM Mike Haskins (Ret).*



mand deployed on time and was awarded the Arnold Jay Isbell trophy for ASW excellence.

After commanding VP-31 (the West Coast P-3 FRS) and serving as the Deputy Director of the CNO Executive Panel, he served as Patrol and Reconnaissance Force SEVENTH Fleet/Commander Patrol Wing ONE, at Kami Seya, Japan.

While serving as the 74th Commandant of Midshipmen at the Naval Academy, he was selected for flag rank. Later, following command of the Iceland Defense Force, he was selected to reestablish and command Patrol Wings Atlantic and Task Force EIGHT FOUR. Following a tour as Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan, he served as Deputy Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe during the Kosovo conflict. He then was selected for his fifth command tour in the community serving as COMFAIRMED/CTF SIX SEVEN. In July 2000, he was promoted to Vice Admiral and assigned as Naval Inspector General.

After retirement, he served as the Distinguished Chair of Leadership at the U. S. Naval Academy and the Director of the VADM Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership. VADM Haskins is married to the former Joanne Nesline of Silver Spring, MD and they have two daughters, Eileen and Julie.

## VP-45 Change of Command

VP-45 had it's change of command back in May (a year goes by so fast!) This time, the squadron said goodbye and goodluck to CDR Michael Zdunkiewicz,



*CDR Zdunkiewicz, right, is relieved of command by the*

wicz, the outgoing CO, and congratulations to the new Skipper, CDR Clayton Hunt. As the new skipper takes command, the squadron welcomed aboard the new XO, CDR James Brigden. The new XO reports to VP-45 after being an Executive Assistant on the Joint Staff in DC.

More informal changes of command have become more popular these days. The uniform for the event was flight suits.



*CDR Clayton Hunt, the new CO, takes the helm in front of his squadron in a great photograph!*

## VP-45 Pelicans Visit France and Germany.

by: VP-45 PAO

On July 9th, 2024, Patrol Squadron (VP) 45 held a static display of our P-8A Poseidon aircraft for Col. Emanuele Di Francesco, Commander 41st Antisubmarine Wing, and Dr. Filippo Pennisi, President of the Court of Appeal.



*The VP-45 mission commander greets COL Emanuele Di Francesco and Dr. Filippo Pennisi.*

We are proud to host our distinguished visitors and display the maritime patrol and reconnaissance capabilities of our aircraft.



*Skipper Hunt greets the many German visitors wanting a guided tour of the P-8A.*

## Navy Gets New Multi-engine Trainer!

The TS-2 is long gone and the T-44 is on the way out. The U.S. Navy received the first two operational T-54A multi-engine training system aircraft last week at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas.

The T-54A will replace the aging T-44C Pegasus aircraft, which will begin sundown within six months. The T-54A features a pressurized aircraft cockpit with side-by-side seating and a jump seat. It will provide advanced instrument and asymmetric engine handling training to student naval aviators selected for multi-engine fleet communities.

Additionally, the aircraft's technology will capture data that allows for Conditioned-Based Maintenance Plus, a capability that enables the Navy to trend aircraft health over time to facilitate improved maintenance planning and efficiency. The T-54 incorporates the latest avionics and navigational updates, including a state-of-the-art cockpit with technology advances in the flight management system.

To read the whole story, click [HERE](#).

## Project Orion

Mentioned in a previous issue, Project Orion still needs your help. For more information on this worthy project, please click [HERE](#).





# MAIL CALL

Hey, Bill!

The reunions are so enjoyable. They are special, in that time is erased and we all get to be in our 20s and 30s once again, even if it is only for a few days. For me, it has been 50 years since I checked out of the squadron to serve in many other commands. Frankly, none of them never seemed as good as my VP-45 tour.

As we all age forward, we have lost many squadron alumni. As time passes on, how many more opportunities will be available to us to reconnect with the squadron mates on our youth and celebrate together as VP-45 Pelicans? Hoping for a great turnout.

Fred Haynes  
71-74.

Hey, Bill!

Sorta, out of chance, stumbled upon the VP-45 Association website. I was just putzing around the internet and looking up my old assignments while I was in the Navy. You guys really have all your stuff in the right bag. The website is very professional and I spent about two to three hours rooting around there.



If you missed out last newsletter, click [HERE](#) to read it.

I also discovered the sections where the cruise books and Newsletters are kept and spent some time there just looking around.

Who do you have publish the newsletters...they are also quite professional looking.

I was a pilot in the mid to late 60s when we had the now ancient P-3A. I was in VP-4, VP-31, FairWing 11, VP-49 and commanded a training squadron in Texas. None of the units I was in has anything close to what you guys have done!!

Saw pics of guys that I knew during my career who served in VP-45.

A n y w a y ,  
B Z on a  
great outfit!

Kenny Trift



## Note from The Editor:

Don't know about you guys but whether it is the Dallas Morning News or Sound and Vision Magazine I'm reading, I always particularly enjoy, and look forward to, the Letters to The Editor section. This section, regardless of the publication, serves two main purposes; post-publication peer review and sharing experiences with fellow readers. Both are equally important in maintaining any journals' high standards of information dissemination and entertainment.

Our Association has six officers. We six share our thoughts and experiences frequently via the Pelican Post. But we are only six out of nearly five hundred members and we are all missing out on YOUR thoughts, memories, opinions and experiences!

It only takes one click in the below green box to let us how you are doing and what you are thinking. And if this issue of the Pelican Post stirs up a memory, please stop and tell us about it!

Click Anywhere in this Green  
Box to Send a Letter to the  
"Mail Bag" via the  
Pelican Post Editor

TREASURER'S  
TWO CENTS



Fellow Pelicans: The Association has purchased a "Square Terminal" that is an all in one device that will allow us to take credit card payments for all the "geedunk" we will be offering for sale at our upcoming October reunion in San Antonio.

We are also looking in to it to see if it would work for taking payments (dues) via our website. Our credit



card payments on our website have been a challenge. We hope to correct this issue very soon. With that I'm looking forward to the reunion and connecting with everybody at the reunion to get the word out for past shipmates.

PATRON FOUR FIVE ASSOCIATION  
TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT

All Funds	1 Jan 2024	\$35,457.60
Income:		
Dues	\$277.91	
Interest/Dividends	95.28	
Contributions	0.00	
Total Income	\$373.19	
Expenses:		
Printing/Postage	\$289.69	
Incorporation Fee	175.00	
Square Terminal	291.69	
Misc Supplies	0.00	
Total Expenses	\$756.38	
Net Income		-\$383.19
Total Cash Assets	11 Apr 2024	\$35,114.41

MEMORY TEST

Want to see if your old noggin is operating as well as it used to? Play this easy game and find out.

Doesn't take long and there were no pop-up ads when I played.

Goal: Turn over matching cards

Remain 99s



You are allowed 2 minutes. My best game, I had 54 seconds left. Click anywhere in this section to start a game. Can you beat me?



## BACK IN THE DAY

### Nuclear Weapons Incidents

by: Jack Keane

Between February 1986 and February 1989, I was assigned to the staff of Commander, Patrol Wing Two (CPW-2) at NAS Barbers Point, HI. When I first arrived, CAPT Ron Testa was the Commodore. One of my collateral duties was as Special Projects Officer where I coordinated Project Beartrap activities for several squadrons at both Barbers Point and Moffett Field. In May 1987, while at a Beartrap exchange meeting at NAS Jacksonville, I was handed a note telling me to call the Wing and talk with both the Wing Operations Officer and Training Officer, CDR Pete Bolton and LCDR Dave Nelson, respectively. It couldn't be good – and it wasn't!



It appeared that CAPT Testa, while I was on travel and just months before he relinquished command to CAPT Dan Oliver, had decided that I was to be the next Wing Weapons Officer, the first time in nearly a decade that a Lieutenant held that billet. My heart sank! What had I done to upset the Commodore just months before his change of command? What weapons inspections was I going to be up against and how many? It certainly didn't help matters that I'd just finished reading Flora Lewis's book *One of Our H-bombs is Missing!* All I could think of at the time were the various codewords for nuclear weapons incidents: Dull Sword, Bent Spear, and the worst, Broken Arrow, just to name a few. And Keane's Law states that if anything bad is going to happen, it is going to happen to Jack Keane!

This "Back in the Day" article isn't about my time as Weapons Officer at CPW-2. Rather, its focus is on nuclear weapons incidents involving the U.S. military and government agencies. I was particularly interested in how many had involved the U.S. Navy and if any involved the maritime patrol community. It may prove particularly relevant as the U.S. and NATO consider their current stance on nuclear weapons, including sea-based nukes.

Even though we don't acknowledge their existence,

during the Cold War, the U.S. deployed nuclear weapons worldwide and many of our incidents oc-



*USS Thresher in profile.*

curred overseas (of the 16 that occurred overseas, nine occurred in the Atlantic Area of Responsibility). Fortunately, none of these incidents resulted in a nuclear detonation, but there are several weapons that have gone missing and several areas of the world have been contaminated by nuclear material. Though not considered a weapon, if one includes the loss of the nuclear reactor aboard USS *Thresher* (SSN-593) on 10 April 1963, the number of nuclear incidents/losses incurred by the United States sits at 38 from 1950 – 1980.

Of the 38, 27 involved aircraft, mostly involving Strategic Air Command (SAC) assets. Of the platforms involved, only the B-52 remains in active service. The Navy was involved in four incidents – two involving aircraft and, in addition to the USS *Thresher*, the loss of USS *Scorpion* (SSN-589) resulted in the loss of nuclear-armed MK-45 ASTOR torpedoes, in addition to its reactor. The U.S. Army has never experienced an event serious enough to warrant inclusion in this list, and the U.S. Marine Corps maintains no nuclear weapons in peacetime.

Despite the severe operational environment that the early platforms operated under, there has never been even a partial, inadvertent nuclear detonation within the U.S. military or the Atomic Energy



*MK-45 "Astor" nuclear torpedo on display.*

Commission (AEC). Any 'detonations' reported by the military authorities involved conventional high explosives (HE) only – the catalyst for the nuclear reaction in the bomb. Of the 38 incidents, only two resulted in widespread dispersal of nuclear material: Palomares, Spain and Thule, Greenland.

Of the two incidents involving Naval Aviation, the most famous involved an A-4E Skyhawk of the VA-56 Champions, one of two A-4 squadrons em-

barked in USS *Ticonderoga* (CV-14) with Carrier Air Wing Five during her 1965 deployment to Vietnam. On 5 December, while transiting from Vietnam to Yokosuka and 80 miles off the coast of Japan, a practice loading exercise was conducted using a live MK-43. At the time, practice loads were conducted with live weapons rather than practice shapes. During the exercise, the pilot in the A-4E slipped on the brakes as the aircraft was being moved from the hangar deck to elevator number two. The aircraft, special weapon, and pilot all went over the side and were lost. The Japanese government was not notified of the incident until 1981.

assigned to VP-50 departed NAS Whidbey Island on a routine surveillance mission off the Oregon coast with a crew of ten (three officers and seven enlist-ed). In her bomb bay she carried a MK-90 “Betty” nuclear depth charge. While on station in inclement weather, the Number One engine burst into flames and all electrical power lost while flying at low alti-tude at over single-engine weight. After discharg-ing both fire bottles, the decision was made to ditch roughly 110nm off the mouth of the Columbia River. A textbook landing was made “into the wind, paral-lel to the swell” in 8-10 foot seas. Survival gear was discharged and all crew members exited the burning aircraft from the right rear exit.

After swimming for roughly thirty minutes, both life rafts were in-flated and all ten uninjured crew-men were safely out of the water. A Coast Guard HU-16 Albatross was launched and, after spotting the crew, dropped survival gear. Several other Navy and Coast Guard aircraft remained in the area throughout the rescue opera-tion. Due to the sea state, the crew spent the next twelve hours bailing furiously to keep their rafts afloat.

At approximately 0050 the next morning the freighter *Olympic Pi-oneer* arrived on scene shortly be-fore the USCGC *Yocona* (WMEC-168) out of Astoria, Oregon. Neither the aircraft nor the special weapon was ever recovered. There remains uncertainty as to whether the weapon included a nuclear warhead or just the casing. Still, one wonders why an aircraft on a routine surface surveillance mis-sion would be carrying any type of nuclear weapon, especially since the Navy did not maintain an air-borne nuclear alert.

During my year-long tenure as Weapons Officer, all five CPW-2 squadrons underwent a Mine Readiness Certification Inspection (MRCI), a Conventional Weapons Technical Proficiency Inspection (CWTPI), and a Navy Technical Proficiency Inspection (NTPI), in addition to many other live and

exercise weapons evolutions. Every squadron came through all fifteen inspections with zero discrepan-cies as did NAS Barbers Point for their NTPI. We

Date	Service	Platform Type	CONUS	OCONUS	Weapon Type	Mission Type
13-Feb-50	USAF	B-36		PAC	MK-4	Training
11-Apr-50	USAF	B-29	NM		MK-4	Ferry
13-Jul-50	USAF	B-50	OH		MK-4	Operational
5-Aug-50	USAF	B-29	CA		MK-4	Ferry
10-Nov-50	USAF	B-50		LANT	MK-4	Operational
10-Mar-56	USAF	B-47		LANT	Nuclear Material	Operational
27-Jul-56	USAF	B-47		LANT	MK-6	Training
27-May-57	USAF	B-36	NM		MK-17	Operational
28-Jul-57	USAF	C-124		LANT	MK-5	Ferry
11-Oct-57	USAF	B-47	FL		MK-6	Operational
31-Jan-58	USAF	B-47		LANT	MK-36	Training
5-Feb-58	USAF	B-47	GA		MK-15	Training
11-Mar-58	USAF	B-47	SC		MK-36	Operational
4-Nov-58	USAF	B-47	TX		MK-15 or MK-39	Training
26-Nov-58	USAF	B-47	LA		MK-15 or MK-39	Training
18-Jan-59	USAF	F-100		PAC	MK-7	Operational
6-Jul-59	USAF	C-124	LA		Unknown	Ferry
25-Sep-59	USN	P5M	WA		MK-90	Operational
15-Oct-59	USAF	B-52/KC-135	KY		Unknown	Operational
7-Jun-60	USAF	Storage Facility	NJ		BOMARC Air Defense	Fire
24-Jan-61	USAF	B-52	NC		MK-39	Operational
14-Mar-61	USAF	B-52	CA		MK-39	Operational
22-May-62	USAF	ICBM	CA		Titan I	Maintenance
3-Jun-62	USAF	IRBM		PAC	Thor	Test
20-Jun-62	USAF	IRBM		PAC	Thor	Test
25-Jul-62	USAF	IRBM		PAC	Thor	Test
15-Oct-62	USAF	IRBM		PAC	Thor	Test
10-Apr-63	USN	SSN		LANT	Reactor	Test
13-Nov-63	AEC	Storage Facility	TX		HE	Maintenance
13-Jan-64	USAF	B-52	MD		MK-53	Ferry
5-Dec-64	USAF	ICBM	SD		Minuteman	Alert
8-Dec-64	USAF	B-58	IN		MK-43	Training
11-Oct-65	USAF	C-124	OH		MK-53	Ferry
5-Dec-65	USN	A-4		PAC	MK-43	Operational
17-Jan-66	USAF	B-52/KC-135		LANT	MK-28	Operational
21-Jan-68	USAF	B-52		LANT	MK-28	Operational
22-May-68	USN	SSN		LANT	MK-45 ASTOR Torpedoes	Operational
19-Sep-80	USAF	ICBM	AR		Titan II	Maintenance

Listing of Nuclear Incidents Involving the U.S. Military and Atomic Energy Commission.

The second incident involving Naval Aviation did indeed involve the maritime patrol community. On the morning of 25 September 1959, a Martin P5M-2



even managed to pull off a highly successful triple B-57 Quality Assurance Service Test (QAST) on the range at the Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF) at Barking Sands, Kauai using approved nuclear command and control and authentication procedures. As luck would have it, I came through all that unscathed, was designated a NTPI Chief Inspector by AIRPAC and promoted to simultaneously serve as ASW Operations Center (ASWOC) Director and Current Operations Officer – the first time a Lieutenant held either position.

During my next tour with Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Group Eight (CCDG-8) in Norfolk, I was fortunate to plan and execute a double Tomahawk Land Attack Missile Operational Test Launch, one of which was a QAST for a nuclear variant in June 1990 at the Eglin AFB Test Range as Officer in Tactical Command of a two-ship Surface Action Group composed of USS *Ticonderoga* (CG-47) and USS *Spruance* (DD-963), as well as a B-43 QAST deployed from an F/A-18 from our air wing during that same evolution.



Upon our return from the Persian Gulf War in USS *Saratoga* (CV-60), I was designated NTPI Chief Inspector for SURFLANT and oversaw the successful zero-discrepancy NTPI of a *Ticonderoga*-class AEGIS cruiser. The commanding officer was not particularly impressed when he saw my NFO wings and brown shoes, but he ended up seeing things my way!

By then, I thought my days working with weapons were over until I retired and joined the staff of the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab where, in 2001, I was asked to lead the requirements development team for what is now the P-8A Poseidon.

By then, nuclear weapons were no longer in our inventory, but my conventional weapons expertise proved critical to developing operational and tactical scenarios by which we compared platform and system performance.

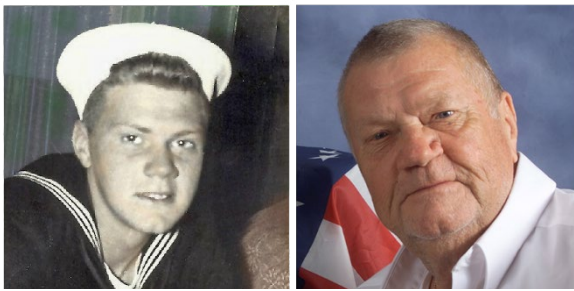
My final foray into the weapons world occurred in 2014 when several of us took it upon ourselves to develop a novel weapon to neutralize snipers in Iraq by arming micro-UAVs with a shotgun-like munition. For that effort, we were awarded a patent and, the last I heard, it's nearing operational fielding.

## CHUCKLES



**HOW WARRENT OFFICERS THINK**



*Ken Gold*

**Kenneth Ray Gold.** It is with broken hearts that we must convey the news of the passing of our beloved father, Kenneth Ray Gold, whose vibrant presence graced our lives with laughter, resilience, and boundless love. Born on August 9, 1934 Ken passed away on February 29, 2024 at the VA hospital in St. Petersburg, Florida, surrounded by family. He embarked on his heavenly journey, leaving behind cherished memories that will forever warm our souls.

In his own words, he said “Due to a diagnosis of cancer that was made on June 23, 2023, followed by congestive heart failure, and other complications; I am at the end of the runway on my final sub search. It's been a lot of fun, and knowing you brought many highlights to my journey. Here I am hoping and praying to see you again...but not too soon.”

Ken is survived by his three daughters, three son-in-law's, eight grandchildren, ex-wife and his sister. He was exceedingly generous, a fervent patriot, and a steadfast advocate for his beliefs, serving as an unwavering source of support and unconditional love for his family.

Ken, affectionately known as "Bud" by his mother, was born in Providence, Kentucky and raised in Detroit, Michigan, where he proudly cheered for the Tigers, Lions and Red Wings, was a street stickball champion, and a “rescuer” of every dog he could

drag home. He joined the US Navy and was stationed at Coco Solo, Panama Canal Zone where he was the radio operator on patrol squadron VP-45 seaplanes. After the Navy, he met and married Olga Szakacs, and began working as a computer software salesman for IBM. He was an ardent reader, English expert and could answer almost every question on Jeopardy. He raised a strong Christian family and although his physical presence may be no more, Ken's spirit lives on in the hearts of those who loved him. His strength, his humor, and his love will continue to echo in our hearts until our time comes to join him in heaven.

Some of his most cherished memories were from his time in the Navy. Here is an excerpt from his writings: “While I was with the squadron, we were flying the somewhat ungainly-looking—to a less discerning or inexperienced eye-- yet clearly beautiful P5M Martin ‘Marlin,’ the last of the Navy’s pure ‘flying boat’ seaplanes, featuring boat hull airframes for operating exclusively on water ‘runways.’

*Alva Ziegenbein*

Chief Warrant Officer Four **Alva Vern Ziegenbein**, USN (Ret) passed away on April 8, 2024.

Interment with Military Honors were held in May of 2024 at Jacksonville National Cemetery.







Robert Hume

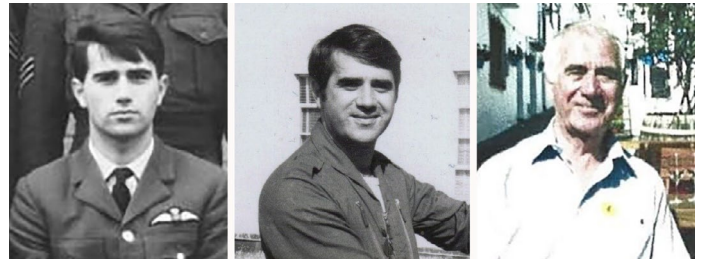
CAPT **Robert L. Hume** USN (Ret) VP-4 1972 - 1975  
Captain (Retired, USN) Robert Hume passed away at home on May 15, 2023, after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease.

Bob was born January 13, 1944, in Weston, WV. He was preceded in death by his parents, Leo and Virginia Hume. He graduated from Central High School in Memphis in 1962 where he was a gifted athlete. He then went on to play football and baseball on a scholarship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He played in the outfield on UNC's baseball team when they went to the College World Series in Omaha. After his graduation in 1966, he was drafted in the Naval Reserve. He served aboard the USS *Jennings County* in the Mekong Delta for 1 ½ years during the Vietnam War. Upon his return, he was commissioned as an officer and began flight school in Pensacola, Florida.

During his 27 ½ years as a P-3 pilot in the Navy, he enjoyed tours of duty in Hawaii, California, Nova Scotia, Rhode Island, and Florida. After screening for command in 1986, he took command of VP-45. While deployed to Sigonella, Sicily, his squadron tracked Soviet submarines all throughout the Mediterranean Sea and kept Muammar Gaddafi in check. His last tour was in Belgium where he worked as a Nuclear Policy Analyst for NATO. He and his family traveled extensively throughout Europe during this tour of duty.

He retired as a Captain in 1995 and returned to his hometown of Memphis, TN. In 1996 Bob was hired as a flight instructor at FedEx. He later went on to fly the 727 and Airbus until his retirement in 2013. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Betty; daughters Libby Hume and Amy (Ed) Arnold and his five

grandchildren. He was buried at the West Tennessee State Veterans Cemetery in Memphis, TN.



Ray Birch

Royal Air Force Flight Lieutenant **Ray Birch** was assigned to VP-45 under the Personnel Exchange Program from 1973 to 1975. All considered him an outstanding P-3 pilot, officer, mentor and friend to everyone.

Ray was born 24 January, 1941 in Wolverhampton, UK and educated in the local school system. He entered Birmingham University in 1958 where he joined the University Air Squadron, a program similar to ours in the USA where upon completion you enter the Royal Air Force as an Officer. It was here Ray learned to fly the DHC1 Chipmunk.



*Somewhat similar in appearance to the US Navy's T-34, the Chipmunk was used in basic pilot training by the RAF.*

Upon completion of his studies at the university, he was Commissioned a Flight LT through the Graduate Direct Entry Scheme in 1963, and began his initial training as an officer at RAF South Cerney. Selected for Pilot Training in 1964, he completed intermediate and advanced training in the Jet Provost T3, T4 and T5 and was awarded his Pilot Wings.

He was selected for Heavy Aircraft vice Jets, and his Advance Training was on the Vickers Varsity Aircraft. In 1966 he was assigned to the 93 MOTU Course on the Shackleton T4 Aircraft.

His first assignment was to 205 Squadron in Changi, Singapore from 1967 to 1970 flying the Shackleton MR2 Patrol Aircraft. He then returned to 120 Squadron at RAF Kinloss, then to 204 Squadron at RAF Honington, where he deployed to Majunga, Madagascar in July 1971.

In 1972, Ray completed the 30 Squadron Nimrod Conversion Course at RAF St. Mawgan before joining the 42 Squadron flying the Nimrod.

Ray was selected for the Personnel Exchange Program in 1973 and began training on the P-3 Aircraft at VP-30, Patuxent River, Maryland before joining VP-45 in Jacksonville, Florida. He had an outstanding tour with the Pelicans as Pilot Training Officer and Pilot Natops Officer. He deployed to Keflavik, Iceland from June to December 1974. He also deployed to Sigonella, Sicily with the squadron from July to December 1975.

Upon returning to the UK, Ray was promoted to Squadron Leader on 1 January 1976 and assigned to the RAF St. Mawgan Simulator Squadron from 1976 - 1978.

He Retired from the Royal Air Force after 16 years, and began flying for Dan Air (later absorbed by British Airways) out of London Gatwick in 1979 until approximately 2000.

Ray passed away 15 May 2024 after a short illness. He leaves behind his wife Edna, and they were married 60 years!

CAPT **Frank C. Kolda**, U.S.N. Ret., 96, passed away November 17, 2022. He was born on February 2,



Frank C. Kolda

1926, in Tennant, California.

Frank married Martha Ann Scecina on August 23, 1952 at St. Patrick's Church in Corpus Christi, Texas. He is survived by his loving wife of 70 years; 5 children - Dr. Michael Kolda and wife Kim, Patrick Kolda, Jean Marie Kolda Fox and husband Gary, Bridget Kolda, and Dr. Timothy Kolda and wife Annette; 8 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his grandson, Marine Cpl. Zachary Kolda.

Frank served in the United States Navy from 1943 through 1971. He had a distinguished career as a naval aviator and meteorologist, and had several classified assignments during the Cold War era. He served in VP-45 as a junior officer pilot from 1947 - 1950 flying PBM seaplanes.

Frank will always be remembered for his love of God, the Catholic Church, and his devotion to his wife. He was an exemplary husband, father, grandfather and patriot.

**Patrick Devine** passed away recently. He served in VP-45 from 1969-1972 as a Radio Operator and Electronics Technician. He is survived by his wife Louise. No obituary is available.

*"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same."*

*Ronald Reagan*



## Editors Note:

If you are unable to go to the Armed Forces Reunion webpage to fill out the reunion registration form and/or submit your payment electronically, and you have received this newsletter in print copy via the US Post Office, tear out this page and the next one, fill them out and mail with payment to the Armed Forces Reunions Inc. address listed just below.

### VP-45 ASSOCIATION 2024 REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to **ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.** in the form of a check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$25 fee. You may also register online and pay by credit card at [www.events.afr-reg.com/e/vp-45](http://www.events.afr-reg.com/e/vp-45) (4% convenience fee will be added to credit card charges). All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before August 16, 2024. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form. Please do not staple your payment to this form.

<b>Armed Forces Reunions, Inc</b>		<b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b>			
<b>322 Madison Mews</b>		Check #		Date Received:	
<b>Norfolk, VA 23510</b>		Inputted:		Nametag Completed:	
<b>ATTN: VP-45</b>					

<b>REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATE IS 9/1/24</b>	<b>Price Each</b>	<b># of People</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Are you a current member of the VP-45 Association?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No. If no, then please proceed to <a href="http://www.vp45association.org">www.vp45association.org</a> and become a member. 1 year dues are \$10. Per our by-laws, only members in good standing can attend reunions.			
<b>MANDATORY REGISTRATION FEE (per attendee)</b>			
<b>REGISTRATION FEE</b> – includes hospitality room and administrative expenses	\$40	#	\$
<b>MEALS</b>			
<b>SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5 BANQUET</b> (please select entrée for each guest)			
Fire Grilled Sirloin	\$69	#	\$
Chicken Piccata	\$61	#	\$
Seared Salmon	\$61	#	\$
Vegetarian Entrée	\$61	#	\$
<b>EXCURSIONS</b>			
<b>THURSDAY, 10/3 -CITY TOUR</b>	\$57	#	\$
<b>FRIDAY, 10/4 – FREDERICKSBURG</b>	\$79	#	\$
<b>SATURDAY, 10/5 – BUCKHORN/TEXAS RANGER/ALAMO/EL MERCADO</b>	\$64	#	\$
<b>APPAREL</b>			
Cap - Khaki with Blue Logo	\$18	#	\$
Cap - Navy Blue with Gold Logo	\$18	#	\$
T-Shirts – Navy Blue with Gold Logo <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> 2X <input type="checkbox"/> 3X <input type="checkbox"/> 4X <input type="checkbox"/> 5X	\$15	#	\$
T-Shirts – Gray with Blue Logo <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> 2X <input type="checkbox"/> 3X <input type="checkbox"/> 4X <input type="checkbox"/> 5X	\$15	#	\$
Polo Shirt – Navy Blue with Gold Logo <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> 2X <input type="checkbox"/> 3X <input type="checkbox"/> 4X <input type="checkbox"/> 5X	\$20		
Polo Shirt – Gray with Blue Logo <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> 2X <input type="checkbox"/> 3X <input type="checkbox"/> 4X <input type="checkbox"/> 5X	\$20		
<b>Total # of Guests &amp; Total Amount Payable to <u>Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.</u></b>		#	\$

Continue to second page of form...

PLEASE PRINT:

First:	Last:
Spouse Name (If attending):	
First:	Last:
Spouse Name (If attending):	
Guest Name (if attending):	
City:	State/Zip:
Ph. Number: (____) _____ - _____	Email:
Years Served in VP-45 (ex. 1961-1963)	

Are you staying at the hotel? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Arrival Date: _____	Departure Date: _____

Disability/ Dietary Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Sleeping room requirements must be conveyed by attendee direct with hotel)

Must you be lifted hydraulically onto the bus while seated in your wheelchair to participate in bus trips? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
(Please note we cannot guarantee availability).

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

#### CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.

For attendees canceling reunion activities, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable registration fee (\$40 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable registration fee (\$40 per person). **Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.** Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds will be processed 4-6 weeks after reunion should you cancel after the cut-off date. Cancelling your hotel reservation **does not** cancel your reunion activities. You must call the hotel directly at 210-224-2500, option #2 to cancel your hotel reservations. Please note, cancelling your hotel reservations **does not** cancel your reunion registration!.



# 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!