



VP-68 Hawk's Nest



Volume No. 38

VP-68 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

October 2011

The Hawk's Nest is the official newsletter of the VP-68 Alumni Association, chartered in 1998 in the state of Maryland for the sole purpose of uniting in a central organization all former "Blackhawks" of Navy Patrol Squadron 68 (VP-68), it's parent and supporting Navy squadrons, and those interested in preserving the name and history of VP-68.

PATROL SQUADRON 68

1970 USNR 1997

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ALL DEDICATED BLACKHAWKS

VP-661 • VP-662 • VP-663 • VP-68A1 • VP-68A2 • VP-91 DET PAX • VP-4549 • RTU-68

Dedicated 2011 • VP-68 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

2011 FALL MUSTER

At 1200 hours (noon) on Saturday, 19 November 2011 (1130 muster) in conjunction with our annual Fall Muster, the VP-68 memorial plaque (see above) will be installed and dedicated at the U.S. Navy Memorial, 7th & Pennsylvania Ave. NW in Washington, DC. Be sure to sign the 3500!!

It is a beautiful plaque of a VP-68 P3-C LW-04 flying over Arlington National Cemetery with Washington, DC in the background. The plaque honors all Blackhawks of VP-68 along with all of those dedicated personnel of our parent and the supporting squadrons of VP-661, VP-662, VP-663, VP-68A1, VP-91 Det Pax, VP-4549 and RTU-68.

There will be a "No Host" reception following the ceremony at the Hill Country Barbecue Market, 410 7th St NW (7th & D St NW) around the corner from the Memorial.

<http://www.hillcountrywdc.com/locations.dc>

We shall order from the menu...if things are slow we can have a corner of the main area, if busy there is a banquet room downstairs.

Parking is expensive and not convenient (garage under the Memorial is closed on Saturday). We strongly suggest the Washington METRO...Archives - Navy Memorial Station (Green and Yellow lines). There is a station at the Memorial and METRO parking is free on Saturdays.

Info go to METRO website: www.wmata.com

A hearty "Well Done" to Joe Odenthal for spearheading the committee to raise the funds for the plaque, having the

plaque designed and produced along with making all of the arrangements with the U.S. Navy Memorial for the dedication.

While you are there, plan on spending some extra time to visit all of the exhibits.

Check out the website for the U.S. Navy Memorial at:

<http://navymemorial.org>

Take a virtual tour of the facility, see exhibits and plan on a fantastic visit. See the Commemorative Plaque Wall that the VP-68 plaque will be mounted on.

Patron 68 Cruise 2012



You read that correctly, we're going on a cruise!! Pack your seabags (if you can find them) or use standard luggage as we have reservations made through Carnival Cruise Lines to sail aboard the luxury liner Carnival Pride. The 7-day cruise departs from Baltimore on Sunday, 29 APR 2012

and returns to Baltimore on Sunday, 06 May 2012.

Our V.P. Wyman Bailey, chairman of this event, will provide us an additional update at the Fall Muster.

See VP-68 Cruise UPDATE on page 5

Blackhawk People News

Taps: Denny "Skar" Manskar

In the last issue of the Hawk's Nest we mentioned that Blackhawk Commander Denny Manskar passed away on 18 APR 2011. Burial services were held at Arlington National Cemetery on Monday, 19SEP2011 at 1300 hours. Along with family and friends, about 20 of the Blackhawks were also in attendance. We all met at the Administration Building and were assembled in a private room where we had some time to meet Denny's family.



We then were instructed to line up in our vehicles along the adjacent road and proceeded to fall in behind the ceremonial horse-drawn caisson which led us to the gravesite. In the distance were Washington, D.C. and the Pentagon.



There we were met by a very professional Navy Band, Honor Guard, Rifle Guard and a Lone Bugler in the distance.



A beautiful gravesite ceremony was conducted and the Honor Guard performed an impressive and precision folding of the flag that was presented to Sharon.



The Rifle Guard did a very sharp 21-gun salute that was followed by Taps and there was not a dry eye among us!!

Immediately following the ceremony we all drove to Fort Myer, adjacent to Arlington Cemetery, for a reception lunch where we had some more premium time with Denny's wife Sharon, daughter Kristen and son LT. Matthew Manskar.

Yes...the Navy still has a "Skar". What a beautiful family. Some of us told them some "Sea-Stories" about Denny and had some laughs and we advised young Lieutenant Matthew to enjoy his career in the Navy and to start creating his own Sea-Stories!!



Nick Cercone read a most fitting and touching poem entitled "*I Flew*" by Brad Baker (see page 3) and presented it to Sharon. Nick said that "Skar" was very instrumental in getting him his job as a pilot with North American Airlines and in fact, there were several folks there from North American, all with their own tributes and stories of the "Skar".

Soon, we were all on our way back home to various states after giving Denny a fitting "Farewell". The great VP-68 Blackhawk "family" attendance again testifies to the strong bonds and friendships we have developed over the years.

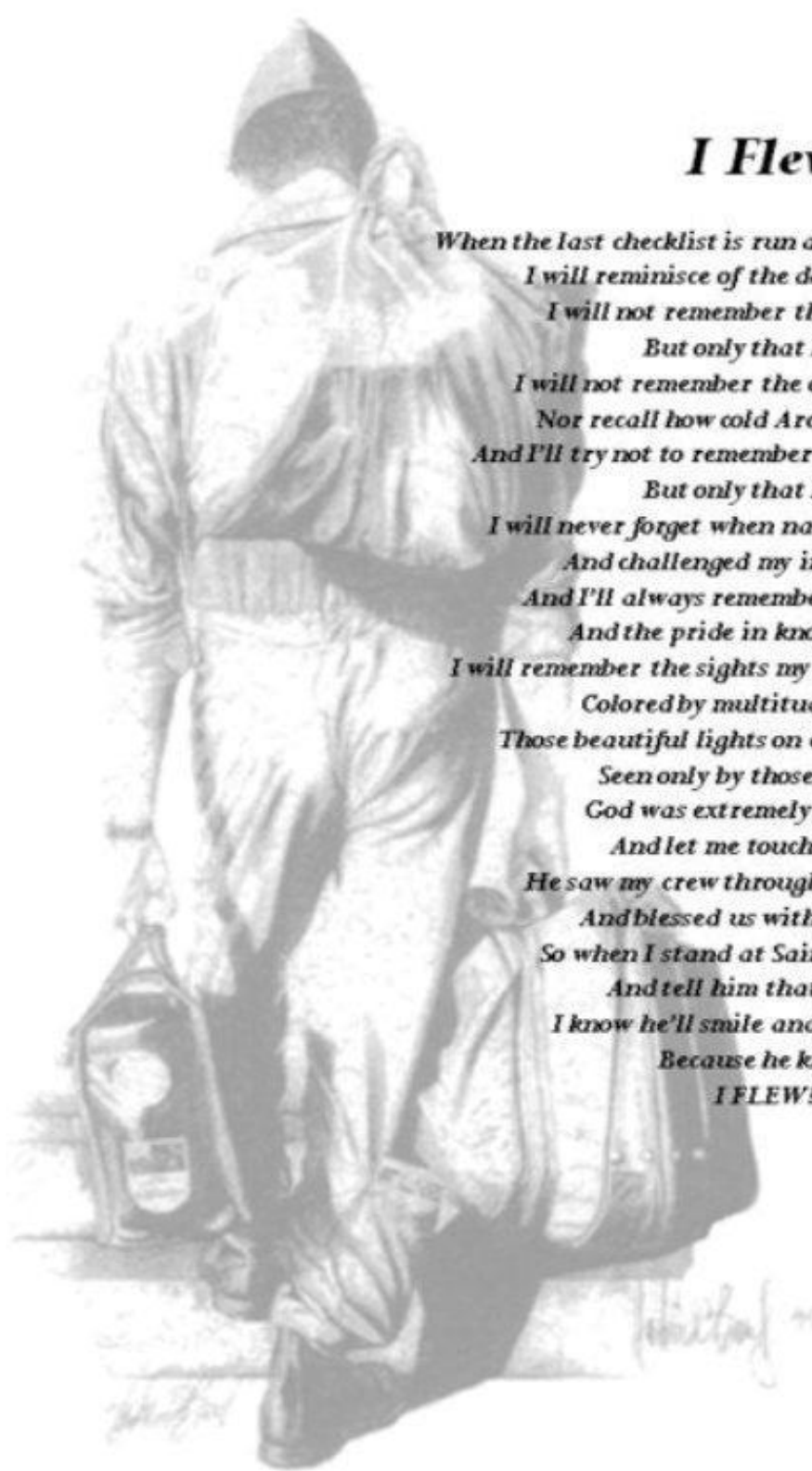


Kristen, Matthew and Sharon Manskar

LT. Matthew Manskar

Earlier this year, WAVY-TV10, a Norfolk TV station, did a feature on the SEABEES and a portable pier they use and in the program, they interviewed LT. Matthew Manskar.

See "Manskar" on Page 7 for more.



I Flew

*When the last checklist is run and the bag drag is over
I will reminisce of the days I once knew,
I will not remember the 3 AM alerts
But only that I flew!
I will not remember the crew rest in tents
Nor recall how cold Arctic winds blew,
And I'll try not to remember the times I got sick.
But only that I flew!
I will never forget when nature became angry
And challenged my intrepid crew,
And I'll always remember the fear I felt
And the pride in knowing I flew!
I will remember the sights my mortal eyes have seen
Colored by multitudes of hues,
Those beautiful lights on cold winter nights
Seen only by those who flew.
God was extremely good to me
And let me touch his face,
He saw my crew through war and peace
And blessed us with His grace.
So when I stand at Saint Peter's Gate
And tell him that I'm new
I know he'll smile and welcome me,
Because he knows
I FLEW!*

Brad Baker

On the Mend....

We wish VP-68 Alumni Association Secretary Kathy Wright a speedy recovery from hip-replacement surgery that she had on 18OCT...8" scar + 21 staples....OUCH!!

GET WELL SOON KATHY!!!

Tri-Care • Medicare • Social Security

(submitted by Kevin Dillon and from the below sources)
Navy Times; Aviation Week; Military Times; AUSN Navy Magazine,
Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) Today and Military Officer

Tri-Care Pharmacy Copay

With the start of the new FY2012 on 01OCT11, new prescription copayments below will take effect for all non-active duty TRICARE beneficiaries.

30-day supply via Retail Pharmacy

\$ 5	Formulary Generic
\$ 12	Formulary Brand
\$ 25	Non-Formulary

90-day supply via Home Delivery

\$ 0
\$ 9
-

Tri-Care / Express Scripts

Tri-Care recently mailed out prescription home-delivery education "alert" letters to promote pharmacy home delivery. It focuses on the convenience and lower cost of home delivery versus retail pharmacies and includes information how to switch prescriptions over. Switching from retail pharmacies to home delivery spares the beneficiaries inconvenience of picking up their prescriptions and saves them 66% per prescription. Home delivery also saved the Department of Defense \$30 million in 2010.

For more info about home delivery go to:

www.tricare.mil/homedelivery

or call TRICARE Member Choice Center at:

1-877-363-1433

To sign up for home delivery go to:

www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE

1-877-363-1303

Walgreens Drug Store to Leave TRICARE Pharmacy Network

Walgreens drug stores have announced that, as of **January 1, 2012**, the chain will no longer be part of the network used by the TRICARE Pharmacy plan known as Express Scripts, Inc. (ESI). ESI is a Pharmacy Benefit Management (PBM) company that processes TRICARE pharmacy claims and manages TRICARE's Mail Order Pharmacy Program (TMOP).

Walgreens and TRICARE had a similar contractual disagreement in 2008, but the impasse was resolved before the expiration date of the contract. FRA is closely monitoring negotiations and will report any further developments. If the dispute is not resolved TRICARE beneficiaries filling a prescription at Walgreens after December 31, 2011, will pay 100 percent of the cost up front and then file a paper claim for non-network benefit reimbursement.

VA expands outreach to women veterans

The VA is expanding outreach to women veterans and increasing awareness of the enhanced VA benefits and the services available to them. Today there are more than 1.8

million women veterans of all eras and one of the VA's highest priorities is to continue to expand our services and outreach to ensure they receive the care and benefits they have earned.

Today, more than 200,000 women are serving in the armed forces. About 11% of the U.S. forces currently serving in Afghanistan and Iraq are women.

For more info about the VA visit:

www.va.gov

or...VA Center for Women Veterans at:

www.va.gov/womenvet

ID cards

Under a new initiative, ID card customers can schedule an individual appointment and circumvent the waiting line. With a little bit of planning and preparedness, customers are seen within minutes of their appointment time. Having all of the necessary documents is key to a successful visit to the ID card office. A listing of required documents may be found on the below site.

To schedule an ID card appointment...go to:

<http://appointments.cac.navy.mil>

To locate nearest ID card facility and more...go to:

<http://www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/PayPersSupport/IDCards/>

CAUTION:

2011 Retiree Pay Date Changes

Because of a provision in the 2011 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), paydays for military retirees are changing for SEP and DEC 2011. The 2011 NDAA requires military retiree pay to be processed on the first day of the month and when that day falls on a weekend or national holiday, the pay date is moved to the previous business day. This years payments of 03OCT11 will be issued on 30SEP11 and payment for 03JAN12 will be issued on 30DEC11.

For the calendar and tax year of 2011, this means military retirees will then receive **13 rather than the normal 12 payments**. Since the 13th payday on 30DEC11 falls within the 2011 tax year this could possibly affect the tax liability of some retirees and those who receive portions of their retired pay.

Retirees are urged to speak with a tax advisor, the IRS or their state tax authority to determine if their tax withholding will satisfy federal and state income taxes when they file returns next year. For tax year 2012 and beyond, retirees will receive their normal 12 payments.

"Shift Colors" Newsletter

Due to funding and budget cuts, the newsletter for Navy Retirees, "Shift Colors" abruptly quite publishing in 2008 and recently sent a final one-time issue reminding retirees to view future issues online at:

www.shiftcolors.navy.mil

There, you will get the same newsletter you used to get in the mail but available to download....both current and former issues. You will also find the content available on easy-to-access web pages and there is even a section where "hot news" that is important to the Navy retiree community is posted. You can also find instructions how to sign up for e-mail delivery of "Shift Colors".

**Did you circle 19 NOV 2011
on your calendar yet???**

VP-68 Cruise UPDATE

(by Wyman Bailey)

We now have for the **29 April 2012** cruise 32 confirmed reservations. The excitement for the cruise generated is greater than anticipated!

There are only 10 Balconies and 12 Inside cabins left. We are still getting the reduced rate but at some point it is expected that Carnival will take back the guaranteed rate and the block of cabins that are not booked by the alumni. Cabins will still be available but not at our special rates.

I'd like to point out that this cruise date was selected because the weather in the Caribbean at this time of the year is fantastic. We are just coming out of winter and the heat down south is not oppressive and you can get a head start on your bronzing. Thirty two people will be coming back to our Spring Fling with some great stories causing those who didn't make it to wish they had signed up.

I am working with the travel agents and Carnival Cruise lines to insure a memorable experience for everyone. If you haven't been on a cruise before you'll wonder why after this trip. For sure the more alumni on board the more fun will be had by all.

I will be contacting as many people as possible in order to make sure everyone gets the word.

See everyone in November with an update on the cruise.

You can contact me at:

baileymod@msn.com

P-3 Orion Makes History

(submitted by Ed Stanfield)

We know now the outcome of the Libyan revolution, but many do not know that the P-3 Orion had a historical role in the beginning of the conflict. On 28MAR11, a P-3 flown by VP-5 "Mad Foxes" attached to Task Force 67, fired two AGM-65F Maverick guided missiles at a Libyan coast guard vessel who had been firing at civilian merchant ships off of the coastal town of Miarata. There are variants of the missile, but the one the Orion uses carries a 300 pound penetrating warhead and a infrared targeting system.

In operation with an Air Force A-10 and the Navy destroyer U.S.S. Barry, they sunk several vessels to protect civilians. This engagement wasn't the first time a P-3 fired a shot in combat but it definitely demonstrated its versatility along with the importance of early air dominance. While the Orion's days are limited, it shows that it is still a remarkable airframe after all these years.

Ole Boats' Hearing

A preacher said, "Anyone with 'special needs' who wants to be prayed over, please come up forward to the front by the altar."

Ole Boats got in line and when it was his turn, the Preacher asked, "Boats, what do you want me to pray about for you?"

Ole Boats replied, "Preacher, I need you to pray for help with my hearing.

The preacher put one finger of one hand in Ole Boats ear, placed his other hand on top of Ole Boats head, and then prayed and prayed and prayed for Ole Boats, and the whole congregation joined in with great enthusiasm.

After a few minutes, the preacher removed his hands, stood back and asked, "Boats, how is your hearing now?"

Ole Boats answered, "I don't know?" "My hearing ain't 'til next week."

New to myPay – Monthly Electronic Retiree Account Statement (eRAS)

(submitted by George "Doc" Durity)

Source: **SmartDocs@dfas.mil**

We're pleased to announce a new monthly **electronic Retiree Account Statement (eRAS)** is now available on **myPay**.

With your **eRAS**, you now have the convenience of viewing your account statement every month and managing your account all in one place - **myPay**.

Your eRAS provides a complete summary of your pay, deductions and benefits. It includes information about your allotments, income tax withholdings, direct deposit and a **Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)** counter that shows plan members how much longer they have to pay premiums. It will be available by the first of every month.

Type in the link below to log in and access your first monthly eRAS.

<https://mypay.dfas.mil>

NEED HELP PICKING UP YOUR ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT?

If the above Web address is highlighted:

click on it to open a browser window. After you log in to myPay, you will be taken to a menu from which you can reach your eRAS.

If the above Web address is not highlighted:

follow these steps:

- Open a Web browser window.
- Copy and paste the entire Web address into the location or address bar of the browser.
- Press enter.

TROUBLE LOGGING IN TO MYPAY?

For instructions on starting a **myPay account**, requesting a login ID or requesting a temporary password go to:

www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary

The eRAS is only available on myPay.

Please share this news with your fellow military retirees who may not have myPay accounts.

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD.

Retired and Annuitant Pay

<http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary.html>

Editor's Note: Thanks Doc!! Here is an email received from Blackhawk Daryl Phillippi about above:

Doc, Thanks for the heads-up. I went to the page just to check it out and found they had my SBP beneficiary's name spelled wrong. This could have been a problem. A phone call got it corrected. Thanks so much,
Daryl Phillippi vp68alumni@yahooogroups.com

Defense Finance & Accounting Service (DFAS)

<http://www.dfas.mil/>

1-888-332-7411

Folded Flag

(Source: U.S. Air Force Academy ceremony)

Understand what the flag draped coffin really means. Here is how to understand the flag that is laid upon it and is surrendered to so many survivors.

Do you know that at military funerals, the 21-gun salute stands for the sum of the numbers in the year 1776?

Have you ever noticed the honor guard pays meticulous attention to correctly folding the United States of America Flag 13 times? You probably thought it was to symbolize the original 13 colonies, but we learn something new every day!

● **1st fold:** is a symbol of life.

● **2nd fold:** is a symbol of the belief in eternal life.

● **3rd fold:** is made in honor and remembrance of the veterans departing the ranks who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of the country to attain peace throughout the world.

● **4th fold:** represents the weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in time of war for His divine guidance.

● **5th fold:** is a tribute to the country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our Country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong.

● **6th fold:** is for where people's hearts lie. It is with their heart that they pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States Of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

● **7th fold:** is a tribute to its Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that they protect their country and their flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of their republic.

● **8th fold:** is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day.

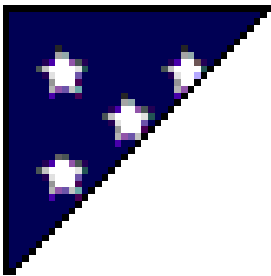
● **9th fold:** is a tribute to womanhood, and Mothers. For it has been through their faith, their love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded.

● **10th fold:** is a tribute to the father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of their country since they were first born.

● **11th fold:** represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies in the Hebrews eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

● **12th fold:** represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in the Christians eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.

● **13th fold:** or when the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding them of their nation's motto, "In God We Trust."



After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington, and the Sailors and Marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones, who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed

Forces of the United States, preserving for them the rights, privileges and freedoms they enjoy today.

Share this with the children you love and all others who love what is referred to, the symbol of "Liberty and Freedom"



P-8 Poseidon & flares

First Coordinated Tests With New P-8A Sub-Hunter Aircraft

(submitted by Nick Schaus from Aero News)

On 15 September, the bridge watch team aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Laboon (DDG 58) watched as a P-8A Poseidon executed low level surveillance rigs at 500 feet with a speed of more than 300 knots. This was the first coordinated test evaluation and training conducted between a surface ship and the new anti-submarine warfare (ASW) platform on the East Coast.

USS Laboon crewmembers had control of the Poseidon for four hours providing safety of flight and a point of reference as they conduct radar and combat systems testing. The testing was part of establishing a maximum target detection range of various radar modes against a surface combatant.

"It was a really great feeling to be in control of an aircraft that is going to be the next best thing in the ASW world. You don't get this kind of opportunity every day," said Operation Specialist 2nd Class Michelle White, the ASW tactical air controller monitoring the Poseidon and who kept in constant communication with the aircraft and helped it navigate through air traffic.

"This P-8A test team and fleet coordinated test event brings the Poseidon one step closer to Initial Operational Capability in 2013," said Neal Rothback deputy program manager for the P-8A program.

The Poseidon, developed by Boeing Defense, Space & Security in 2009, is modified from the Boeing 737 and has the capabilities to drop and monitor sonobuoys. Its main mission is ASW and carries an armament of torpedoes, depth charges, anti-ship missiles, and other weapons. The Poseidon is equipped with an APY-10 radar as well as an ALQ-218 ESM system along with a camera that takes high definition videos

Harry Lee & the Dentist

(by Nick Schaus)

The Piney Flats female dentist pulls out a numbing needle to give Harry Lee a shot. "No way! No needles. I hate needles," said our buoy. The dentist starts to hook up the nitrous oxide and the Creative Genius objects. "I can't do the gas thing. The thought of having the gas mask on suffocates me!"

The dentist then asks HL to taking a pill. "No objection," says Harry Lee. "I'm fine with pills." The dentist then returns and says, "Here's a Viagra." Harry Lee says, "Wow! I didn't know Viagra worked as a pain killer!" "It doesn't" said the dentist, "but it's going to give you something to hold on to when I pull your tooth."

LT Matthew Manskar

(submitted by Nick Schaus)



Piers provide entry to usable seaports

11AUG2011 - WAVY-TV10 (wavy.com)

NORFOLK, Va. In just 10 days, the Navy SEABEES have constructed an elevated causeway that is about 80-percent complete. The causeway or pier can enable a task force to receive and ship supplies anywhere, without a usable seaport.

Made from heavy steel the structure is built in sections or pontoons. "They're basically 20-foot long pontoon cans. They're eight feet wide, weigh a little over 20-thousand pounds each," said CPO William Haynes with the Navy SEABEES.

The sections are held in place with huge steel pylons that have to be driven into the seabed with a large crane. This combination of steel enables the causeway to support the weight of just about any piece of equipment or heavy containers the amphibious fleet is tasked with bringing ashore.

"Once it's fully constructed, we can transport up to 400-500 containers a day, about 20-foot containers from the ships to the shore," said **Lt Matt Manskar** also with the SEABEES.

The causeway is also much faster than relying on a vessel to bring everything to a beach. In a large scale humanitarian effort the efficiency of a causeway could mean the difference between life and death.

All it takes is two weeks of crews working two, 12 hour shifts a day to complete the project. "That's what we're here for. We're SEABEES. We build, we fight," added CM1 Eric Riley. In 2003 the SEABEES constructed an elevated causeway in Kuwait for the 'surge' in Iraq. The causeways are taken apart and removed when the mission is over. The SEABEES said it takes even less time to take one apart than it does to build one.

View the complete video on the below link:

<http://www.wavy.com/dpp/military/navy/piers-provide-entry-to-usable-seaports>

Flag Officer Announcements

(submitted by Dick Fickling)

Source: U.S. Department of Defense News

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead announced the following assignment:

Rear Adm. Jeffrey A. Lemmons will be assigned as Director, Inter-American Defense College, Washington, D.C.

Lemmons is currently serving as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, D.C.

Maritime Patrol Association

(submitted by Jacque LaValle)

There's never been a professional membership organization so worth waiting for...We are proud to announce the official launch of membership in the Maritime Patrol Association to all interested Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force members, past and present!

To become one of our **Plank Owner Members**, sign up today at:

www.maritimepatrolassociation.org

The Maritime Patrol Association (MPA) has been developed to leverage the support of all of our community members, past and present, and our corporate partners to affect the U.S. MPRF community directly through events, programs, recognition and scholarships.

You'll see the first steps of our success at the 2012 MPRF Symposium in Jacksonville, FL, where our community and our members will be invited to enhanced programs, briefs and networking opportunities...all made possible by MPA's support. Please pass on the good news to your friends and colleagues!

Editor's Note: MPA is a new organization which has come about as a result of the 100th Anniversary celebration of Naval Patrol Aviation which took place earlier this year in Jacksonville Florida.

Corrections & Clarifications:

"Doc" Durity pointed out to us that in the Volume 37 Hawk's Nest in "1979 Word Revisited" that we didn't mention that he was Sailor of the Year in 1979. Sorry Doc, it wasn't on the copy that I had....but we are glad to mention it in this issue.

Hawk's Nest New Feature

Here's Why...1

(submitted by Ed Stanfield)

Ever wonder why the lowest-ranking officer in the U.S. Navy is called an Ensign, while other services use the rank of Second Lieutenant?

Well...the word "ensign" dates to medieval times when Lords honored their squires by allowing them to carry the ensign, or banner, into battle. Later, these squires became known by the name of the banner itself, according to Naval History and Heritage Command.

In the American Revolution, the Continental Army used "ensign" to refer to its lowest-ranking officers; they, the squires of old, would one day lead troops into battle.

The rank had disappeared by the Civil War, with the job of carrying the banner reverting to enlisted members, according to "The Story of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps", a publication of the Army's Center of Military History.

In the mid-19th century, the U.S. Navy adapted the rank of Ensign as the title for its junior commissioned officers.

Age 65 – Medicare / TRICARE

(source: FRA TODAY)

What does a military retiree need to do when he/she turns age 65? TRICARE and Medicare are separate programs.

Medicare is health insurance for people age 65 or older as well as people under age 65 who qualify for Social Security disability insurance.

TRICARE for Life (TFL) is TRICARE's Medicare-wraparound coverage and is available to all Medicare-eligible TRICARE beneficiaries, regardless of age or place of residence. In order to be covered by TFL, beneficiaries must have both Medicare Part A (hospitalization) and Part B (medically-necessary services like doctors' services, outpatient care, home health services, and other medical services) coverage.

For TFL beneficiaries, Medicare is the primary insurance and TFL acts as the secondary insurance, minimizing out-of-pocket expenses. TRICARE covers Medicare's coinsurance and deductible charges. After Medicare pays its part of the claim, TFL pays the remaining amount for any TFL-covered services and the beneficiary pays nothing. As the primary payer, Medicare approves health care services for payment.

While there is no enrollment fee or paperwork associated with TFL, beneficiaries must sign up with Medicare. Shipmates are encouraged to enroll in Medicare as soon as they become eligible to avoid late-enrollment penalties. There is a standard monthly premium for Medicare Part B coverage, but some beneficiaries may pay more depending on their income.

For more information regarding Medicare enrollment:

www.medicare.gov

or call

1-800-633-4227

Retirees Getting (Re-)Married??

Retirees who marry or re-marry must notify the Defense Finance & Accounting Service (DFAS) to properly establish Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage within one year of the marriage. Getting a military ID card and entering the new spouse in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) does not update pay records at DFAS or trigger SBP coverage.

Retirees who originally elected SBP coverage for a previous spouse must send DFAS a copy of the marriage certificate together with a completed DD Form 2656-6 (SBP Election/Change) available online at:

<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2656-6.pdf>

or call

1-800-321-1080

Ensign Smith holds Muster

(submitted by Ron Stevens)

Ensign Smith was holding morning muster.....

"Jackson?"....."Here!"

"Kirby?"....."Yo."

"Robbins?"....."Yo."

"Stephens?"....."Present, sir."

"Seeback?".....(Nothing)

"Seeback?!".....(Still nothing)

"DAMMIT....SEEBACK!"

The Chief quietly tells the Ensign,

"Turn the paper over, sir."

New Beginning at Bethesda

(source: FRA TODAY)

The Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) and the National Naval Medical Center Bethesda merged into one medical center on 27 AUG 2011. The new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center is located in Bethesda, MD and is a joint medical command created as part of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program.

To learn more about the new facility go to:

<http://www.bethesda.med.navy.mil/>

Great Lakes 100

More than 3,400 Sailors and 50 veterans gathered on Ross Field at Naval Station Great Lakes to form a "Living 100" on Flag Day 2011. Ross Field is the original location where all new Sailors graduated from boot camp to enter the Navy.

Naval Station Great Lakes is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

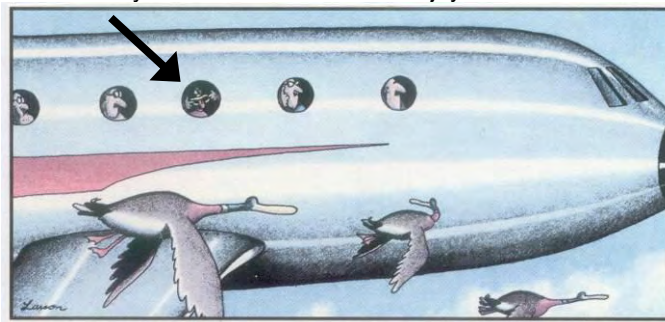


Editor's Note: Why...to a lot of us, seems like only yesterday the place opened!! Ah yes....hot summers...freezing winters!!!

Aviation Far Side

(submitted by Jim Rozycki)

Here is another aviation-related The Far Side by Gary Larsen.....my "favoritist" cartoonist.....enjoy!!



(see duck in the window!!)

Patron 68 Cruise 2012
29 APR – 06 MAY 2012

Some Misc. Contact Information

Arlington National Cemetery:
(703) 607-8000; www.arlingtoncemetery.org

Armed Forces Retirement Home:
(800) 422-9988; www.afrh.gov

Army & Air Force Exchange Service:
(214) 312-2011; www.aafes.com

Army Retired Services: (703) 325-9158;
www.armyg1.army.mil/retire

Burial at Sea Information:
(866) 787-0081; www.npc.navy.mil

DEERS: (800)-538-9552, Fax: (831) 655-8317;
www.tricare.osd.mil/deers

Defense Commissary Agency: www.commissaries.com

DFAS Casualty Assistance Branch:
(800) 321-1080 or (216) 522-5955;
(For Reporting a Retiree's death, option #3)

Fleet Reserve Association: (703) 683-1400; www.fra.org

I.D. Cards Benefits and Eligibility: (866) 827-5672;
www.npc.navy.mil/commandsupport/PayPersSupport/IDcards

Internal Revenue Service: (800) 829-1040; www.irs.gov

Medicare: (800) 633-4227. www.medicare.gov

Military Officers Assoc. of America:
(800) 234-6622; www.moaa.org

National Burial Services: (800) 697-6940

Navy Casualty Assistance: (800) 368-3202

Navy Gateway Inns & Suites: <http://dodlodging.net>

Navy Lodge:
1-800-NAVY INN (1-800-628-9466) www.navy-lodge.com

Navy Recreation: www.mwr.navy.mil

Navy Retired Activities Office:
(866) U-ASK-NPC (866-827-5672)
MILL_RetiredActivities@navy.mil;
www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/RetiredActivities

Navy Uniform Shop:
(800) 368-4088; www.navy-nex.com/uniform

Retiree Dental — Delta Dental:
(888) 838-8737; www.trdp.org

Social Security Administration:
(800) 772-1213; www.ssa.gov

TRICARE: www.tricare.mil

TRICARE North:
(877) TRICARE (874-2273); www.hnfs.net/

TRICARE South:
(800) 444-5445; www.humana-military.com

TRICARE West:
(888) TRIWEST (874-9378); www.triwest.com

TRICARE For Life: (866) 773-0404; www.tricare.mil/tfl

TRICARE mail order pharmacy: (877) 363-1303;
www.tricare.mil/pharmacy; www.express-scripts.com

VA: Regional Offices (800) 827-1000 www.va.gov

VA Burial information: (800) 827-1000; www.cem.va.gov

GI Bill: (888) 442-4551; www.gibill.va.gov

Records: For replacement DD 214, service records, medical records, award information:
Retired prior to 1995:
www.vetreccs.archives.gov

Retired after 1995:
Navy Personnel Command
PERS-312E
5720 Integrity Drive
Millington, TN 38055-3120
Fax requests to: (901) 874-2664
Gray-area reservists: (866) 827-5672

The President's Corner:

by Jacque LaValle

Fall has rapidly descended upon us as we pass another record-breaking summer for many. The entire nation had its share of extreme heat and flood waters while the south had its awful wild fires burning from weeks to months. At Pax River, we had three unusual weather events in a week's time; a 5.8 earth quake, an EF1 tornado and hurricane Irene.

Despite the weather, there were those who also enjoyed the joys that summer brings to us. Many had traveled on vacations, saw friends and family, beaches, airshows and been with shipmates during holiday celebrations. This year we honored the 10th anniversary of 911. We reflected on what we were doing when the news of 911 was learned and we prayed for all the victims and their families.

This fall, we will honor the service of all those who served in VP-68 with the Navy Memorial plaque dedication in November. I hope to see a huge turn out on the 19th. Thanks to Joe Odenthal for getting this entire project organized and brought to a reality. Thanks to all of those who helped Joe over the past couple of years. And thanks to all our veterans who served, not only in VP-68 but everywhere.

November 11, 2011 VETERANS DAY

*Thank all of you for your service
to our country and please pray
for the men & women currently
serving in the U.S. Armed Forces*

*The Officers and Staff of the VP-68
Alumni Association wish you and your
families a very Happy and Blessed
Thanksgiving*

REMINDER:
2011 IS ALMOST OVER,
SEND YOUR 2012 DUES NOW

(NOTE NEW TREASURER ADDRESS ON PAGE 10)

From the Editor:

Jim Rozycki

As always, I would like to thank all of the VP-68 Blackhawks who called, mailed and emailed me contributions for this issue of the Hawk's Nest newsletter.

Since last issue was the first "online only" issue, we sent post cards to notify Blackhawks to go to our website to read and download their Hawk's Nest.

Our intent, to save costs, was to send post cards for only two issues and then publish on a regular schedule.

**Future Hawk's Nests will be published in:
March – June – September – December**

Email me at: rozyckijim@aol.com

Call me at: 412-487-5854

Mail to me at: VP-68 Hawk's Nest
2414 Rolling Farms Road
Glenshaw, PA 15116-2564

From the Secretary

If you move and change your mailing address please let me know as that is the only way we can keep track of you. Send your address information to:

wright_kathleen@bah.com

or mail to: VP-68 Alumni Association
4924 25th Street S
Arlington, VA 22206

From the Treasurer

Members who have not renewed their dues by March of each year will be dropped from our roster, lose their membership rights and no longer receive this newsletter. Please consider converting to a Life Membership and never have to write us another check. Annual dues is \$10, Life Membership is \$100 unless you are over 75 and then it is only \$25.

All dues payments and financial matters are to be mailed to:

NOTE NEW ADDRESS
VP-68 Alumni Association
8095 Silver Fox Way
Chesapeake Beach, MD 20732

Make checks payable to: **NOTE NEW PHONE NUMBER**
VP-68 Alumni Association

contact Anna Gibson at: **410-257-2460**
or email at: amchief@yahoo.com

Former Blackhawks

When you are calling or sending emails to your Blackhawk friends, ask them if they are members in the VP-68 Alumni Association and received this Hawk's Nest. If not...please ask them to join!

There are many former Blackhawks out there who still do not know of our Association. Give them our website or bring them to the next function.

Color Copies of Hawk's Nest

Color copies of current and past Hawk's Nest newsletters may be downloaded and printed in pdf format from our website: www.vp68.org

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee, headed up by Dick Perkins, is still searching for former Blackhawks who are not yet members of our Alumni Association. If you know of anybody please forward their names and contact info to Dick via e-mail at vp68co@yahoo.com

Membership applications may be downloaded from our website: www.vp68.org

Missing Blackhawks

We have a few "lost" Life Members who haven't told us of their move! If you know them or where they are please help us get their newsletter to them....have them contact Kathy Wright.

Alfredo Arroyo, L-98

2011 & 2012 Association Officers

President	Jacque LaValle jacque.lavalle@verizon.net
Vice-President	Wyman Bailey baileymod@msn.com
Secretary	Kathy Wright wright_kathleen@bah.com
Treasurer	Anna Gibson amchief@yahoo.com
Historian	Ed Stanfield edwin.stanfield@gmail.com

**SEE YOU 1200 AT THE
2011 FALL MUSTER
19 NOVEMBER 2011
U.S. NAVY MEMORIAL
WASHINGTON, DC**



anchors aweigh....

**Patron 68 Cruise 2012
29 APR – 06 MAY 2012**

Mark it in your planning book!!
