



VP-68 Hawk's Nest



Volume No. 37

VP-68 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

July 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), its parent and supporting Navy squadrons, and those interested in preserving the name and history of VP-68.



2011 "Spring Fling"

The annual VP-68 Alumni Association "Spring Fling" picnic was held on Saturday, 30 APRIL 2011 at the NAS Patuxent River Beach House. Activities started at 1100. The weather was Pax-Picture-Perfect and a great crowd showed up.

A business meeting was conducted, officer reports were given and plans for the future were discussed. After the meeting, representatives of the Tradewinds Travel Agency were there and conducted a presentation about the ship Carnival Pride, where we will sail to and accepted reservations. We had 22 folks sign up right there. More on the "Cruise" elsewhere in this issue.

As in every year after the picnic, a bunch of us headed out to a great local restaurant, The Ruddy Duck in Solomons, for more laughs, fine food, laughs, drinks, laughs and fellowship.

A great time was had by all and the only complaint heard was that the time spent together was just too short.

See photos on page 2

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.

Leaving Baltimore, we will sail to the ports of Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos.....Half Moon Cay, The Bahamas.....Freeport, The Bahamas.....and back to Baltimore.

Now, **THAT'S** what we call a Spring Fling!!

We have a block of rooms reserved on the ship for the Blackhawks at a very special rate held for us for just a little while longer. ...**BOOK YOUR ROOMS NOW!!** You don't want to miss out on this fun event.

More of the exciting details are listed in this issue.

See Cruise Info on pages 5 and 12, 13, 14

2011 "Fall Muster"

Preliminary plans are in place for the annual VP-68 Alumni Association "Fall Muster" social event. We are going to have this on 19 NOV 2011 in conjunction with the dedication of the VP-68 memorial plaque at the U.S. Naval Memorial in Washington, D.C.

See "Fall Muster on page 6

**Circle 19 NOV 2011
on your calendar!!!**

Hawk's Nest Newsletter:

Starting with this issue, the VP-68 Hawk's Nest newsletter will no longer be mailed to members. A post card will notify you that the current issue is on our website at:

www.vp68.org



Pictures courtesy of Dick & Joanne Fickling and "Doc" Durity and Jim Rozycki



Pictures courtesy of Dick & Joanne Fickling and "Doc" Durity and Jim Rozycki

Blackhawk People News

Taps

Denny "Skar" Manskar



We are saddened to report the passing of another Blackhawk. CDR Dennis "Skar" Manskar, at age 67, passed away on Monday, 18 APR 2011. Denny flew with VP-68 in the 70's and 80's

He was born in Burbank, California and after growing up in Southern California, he attended the U.S. Naval Academy. He graduated in 1966 with a commission as an Ensign, and starting a lifetime doing what he loved...flying.

During his Naval career he was a P-3 Orion pilot, serving in Vietnam and at the Pentagon during the first Gulf War.

After 28 years of active and reserve service, Denny retired from the Navy with the rank of Commander.



As a civilian, Denny was a commercial airline pilot and instructor with Eastern Airlines flying the Lockheed Electra (the "original" P-3) and retired from North American Airlines.

Denny is survived by his loving wife of 31 years, Sharon, his daughter Kristen, and son Matthew. Burial services will take place at Arlington National Cemetery on Monday, 19SEP2011 at 1300 hours. Several Blackhawks plan to attend.

View and sign the family Guestbook at:

<http://www.legacy.com/link.asp?i=ls000150412856>

VP-68 Alumni Association sent a condolences card to Denny's family. Below is their thank you card note:

*Dear Former Blackhawk Shipmates,
Thank you so much for your kind card and words. Denny loved being part of VP-68. He made many lifelong friends and had many fond memories of being part of such a great group. Denny loved attending the reunions and was looking forward to the April 30th weekend. Once again, thank you for the card and kind thoughts. They were a comfort.
Sincerely.....Sharon, Kristen, and Matthew Manskar*

Those of us who knew, flew with and were friends with Denny knew that there was, and always will be, only one "Skar"!! Email and phone stories have poured in and we thought we would share a few with you.

- His deep voice and unique smile....
- Always thought of and looked out after his crew first...
- Running the Navy 1-1/2 mile PT test, backwards...

Rex Lake: I flew and ran with Denny many years and once while running he got an urgent call from "Mother Nature" that need immediate attention. Denny told me to keep running, don't slow down and he would catch up with me as he disappeared into the bushes. Darn if he didn't do both!!

Jack Cann: I believe that each of us has a great Skar story. Once on a cross-country flight to the west coast, Spots Williams slept in the day we were returning. He woke up at departure time and panicky hastened to the terminal and convinced them to call Denny who immediately turned around and returned to pick him up though Spots has forever been reminded of it in fun ways. I roomed with Skar on a Rota deployment, but that involves so many stories that I should stop there.

Jim Rozycki: I flew with Denny in the late 70's and once a few of us drove down to Pax from Pittsburgh to catch a flight to Moffet. We had a full plane and just prior to launch, a Navy Captain in whites came aboard and insisted he get to the West Coast. He commenced to state how important he was and that he should go instead of one of us. Denny stated that we were all crew and if we didn't go, then as PPC neither did he!! I never forgot that! Denny always looked out for his crew. Hopefully the Captain found another flight that day!!! (I took the photo on the left of Denny having lunch in the flight station that day on the flight out West.)

Memorial Day

(by Jim Rozycki)

Attending this years Memorial Day parades and cemetery ceremonies, along with the recent loss of Denny Manskar, my mind drifted back to our other friends and fellow Blackhawks who are no longer with us. Below is a list of deceased VP-68 Alumni Association members that I have record of. Please take a moment to reflect back on our times together with them. Smile, and remember the good times.

Paul Auth	Walter Barbee
David Borggren	Charlie Brown
Leo Brune	Ivan Cole
Paul Costello	Mike Daugherty
Lloyd Davis	Harry Estes
George Frey	Bob Gath
Andrew Gerhart	George Kurtz
Hugh Lee, Jr.	Pete Logan
Denny Manskar	Sid Matthews
Joe Maloney	Sam Paris
Paul Randolph	Tommy Servello
Walt Siemon	Bennett Sparks
Don White	Vernon Winfield

*Rest in Peace shipmates,
and until we meet again...
fair winds and following seas!*

Topica vs Yahoo Contact List

(by Dick Fickling)

TOPICA email server has now changed to YAHOO

In the last issue of the Hawk's Nest I did an article about the switch from Topica to Yahoo. Check out the article for the full details.

REMINDER: **TOPICA IS GONE**, no more e-mails will be sent or forwarded via that old address! If you haven't done so already, you need to go to the below link and sign up.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vp68alumni/>

If you have any questions about this new Yahoo email procedure you can contact me at:

p3css1@aol.com

P-2V Buno 127780

(by Ron Auth)

On page 5 of the March 2011 Hawk's Nest you showed a P-2 photo entitled "Trip down memory lane". Talk about a trip down memory lane. Buno. 127780 was the last P2V-5F with the flight deck in the "old flight deck" configuration with the big Nav table on the starboard side of the A/C just in front of the wing spar.

That plane crashed in the Pacific on Feb.11, 1964 with Blackhawk Ron Garman and seven others on board. VP-661 was on cruise at Los Alamitos NAS in southern California.

As ironic as it might be, the first rescue helicopter also crashed at the crash sight and a second one had to come out and rescue everyone. There were no fatalities and I think Ron was the most seriously injured.

(Editor's Note) We hope Ron will do an article on this and share it with us all in a future Hawk's Nest.

AW1 Morgan Wilbur

(by Tom Donnelly)

Many of you know of Morgan Wilbur's artistic talent and have seen, or have received, his fantastic oil paintings of P-2 & P-3 aircraft. He is a contributing and featured artist for the U.S. Navy Memorial and here is the article from their website:

For the past nine years, Morgan Ian Wilbur has been on the staff of the Naval Historical Center working as the Art Director for Naval Aviation News magazine. In his tenure, the magazine has won numerous awards from the Chief of Information for all-around excellence. Several of his cover art paintings are now part of the Navy Art Collection. He is also represented in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. His works have been exhibited at the National Museum of Naval Aviation and the Navy Art Gallery, Washington, DC. His art has been reproduced in books and magazines including Naval Institute's Proceedings, Naval Institute Press, Naval Aviation News, and Aviation Week and Space Technology. In 2002, he completed his first assignment as an official Navy artist to a combat zone traveling to USS John C. Stennis, an aircraft carrier then engaged in offensive operations as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. In April 2003, he traveled to Iraq to document Navy Medicine's support in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, which included spending eight days with Fleet Hospital 3 in southern Iraq. He returned to Iraq in 2005 to document the work of Hospital Corpsmen assigned to the U.S. Marines.

VP-68: "The Early Years"!!

Syd Nichols, a plank owner, donated to the Alumni Association a CD with information regarding the early years of VP-68. We hope to digest this information and share it with all of you. If anybody out there has any photographs, news articles, videos, magazines etc. about VP-68, please let us copy it and create a really nice history of our squadron for our members.

Patron 68 Cruise 2012

On pages 12, 13 and 14 we have various flyers, notices and the registration form for you to complete and then mail to Tradewinds Travel to help you book your cruise with us.

There have been a lot of interested folks who have never taken a cruise before emailing us for details so we contacted Tradewinds Travel with some of your questions.

Most of the questions were about "budget" and some of the activities and extras.

First off, please visit the following Carnival websites:

www.carnival.com

www.carnival.com/onboardexperience

www.carnival.com/dining

www.carnival.com/activities

Many of the questions are answered there.

As far as "budget"...everybody is different in their interests but some common areas are:

- **Parking:** There is a secure parking area (like an airport) near the pier with a shuttle to/from the ship. The cost is \$15/day.
- **Luggage:** There are no luggage restrictions within a reasonable amount. They must fit in staterooms.
- **Smoking:** Currently, there is smoking permitted on your stateroom balcony but not in the stateroom. There are limited smoking areas in the clubs.
- **Gratuities:** There is a shipboard gratuity of \$70/person that is pre-payable.
- **Passport:** Highly recommended but you may cruise with an original certified (raised seal) birth certificate & photo ID.
- **Drinks:** Comparable to a nice restaurant. There is a Soda Card Package at \$6.00 +15% gratuity / per person / per day for glasses of soda.
- **Steak House:** \$30 + 15% gratuity / per person / per visit (comparable to Ruth Chris Steakhouse) – alcoholic beverages separate.
- **Adult Area:** There is an adult only area, the LIDO POOL also referred to as the Serenity Area.
- **On-Shore Excursions:** These are extra and not included in your fee.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Libby Croston – Tradewinds Travel
301-317-4548 or 866-781-4548 toll-free
trwindstvl@aol.com

Reminder:

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

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

VP-68 memorial plaque for the U.S. Navy Memorial

2011 "Fall Muster"

On Saturday, 19 November 2011, 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. A reception will be held at 12:00 noon followed by the plaque dedication.

Parking near the Navy Memorial is at a premium. We strongly suggest the Washington METRO. There is a station at the Memorial and METRO parking is free on Saturdays.

METRO website: www.wmata.com

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.

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.

If you have not visited the Navy Memorial yet you are in for an inspiring event. The Memorial is dedicated to all Navy men and woman who have served and made the U.S. Navy the best navy in the world.

While you are there, plan on spending some extra time to visit all of the exhibits. After the dedication ceremony, we will retire to a local restaurant for some fine food and quality time together with our fellow Blackhawks....details later.

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.

The Pilot and the Priest

(by Nick Schaus)

A priest dies and is waiting in line at the Pearly Gates. Ahead of him is a guy who's dressed in sunglasses, a loud shirt, leather jacket, and jeans. Saint Peter addresses this cool guy, 'Who are you, so that I may know whether or not to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven?' The guy replies, 'I'm Kevin, retired United Airlines pilot from northern Virginia.' Saint Peter consults his list. He smiles and says to the pilot Kevin, 'Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom.' The pilot goes into Heaven with his robe and staff. Next, it's the priest's turn. He stands erect and booms out, 'I am Father Bob, pastor of Saint Mary's in Annapolis for the last 43 years.' Saint Peter consults his list. He says to the priest, 'Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom. 'Just a minute,' says the good father. 'That man was a pilot and he gets a silken robe and golden staff and I get only cotton and wood. How can this be?' 'Up here - we go by results,' says Saint Peter. 'When you preached, people slept. When he flew, people prayed.'

The Navy Chief



"The Word" Revisited

Here are more Blackhawk memories from the unofficial publication "The Word", most sought after and read by most Blackhawks (next to Playboy) on their monthly drill weekends from MAR 74 until JUL 90, published by our VP-68 Association Historian AWCM Ed Stanfield.

This issue we feature the year 1979

JAN-1979

1) Rosie's place burned down last month. There is considerable dismay among the troops who visited the establishment frequently. I understand there was a wake at the Chief's Club. One of the few places with "class" in Lexington Park and now it is gone.

2) We now have our own barracks!! The BEQ manager has asked that we keep it in good shape. Last month we needed to round up a working party on Sunday afternoon to clean up the soft drink and beer cans. Please take care and do some self-policing. It'll help, keep the place in habitable condition.

3) Our congratulations to Chief Mercure in making the Navy Times. He's pictured with one of the cakes he created for VP-68 while on our last cruise in Spain. It is decorated with the infamous Blackhawk emblem. Chief (Chef) Mecure says, "I don't think I could produce the one Lisa, but maybe I could squeeze out a Chagall." He does his art with a pastry bag and colored icing and says he is not interested in switching to some other medium such as ice-carving. "We artists are temperamental you know!!"

4) You won't have BUPERS to kick around any more. The Bureau of Naval Personnel disappeared at the stroke of midnight on 31OCT. The Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel and Training, and the Naval Military Personnel Command will take its place. Why????...because Congress wants it that way....that's why!!

5) A U.S. Navy accident investigation board has convened at Moffett Field, CA to probe the loss of a Navy/Lockheed P-3C aircraft that ditched in the stormy Bering Sea with the deaths of 5 crewmen on 27OCT78. Survivors said the ditching came as a result of "massive propeller failure followed by an engine fire." After spending nearly 14 hours in life rafts in the frigid waters, they were rescued by a Soviet trawler and taken to Petropavlosk. The survivors of Crew 6 eventually accompanied the remains of three of the five crewman who died back to the U.S..

6) Sad to report the loss of Chief Dan Stewart. Dan was part of the Willow Grove CNAVRES NATOPS Evaluation Team and knew many Blackhawks. Dan was killed 23SEP78 when his home-built Sonerai aircraft crashed near Piperville, PA. Dan was practicing "High-G" maneuvers when the plane broke apart and crashed. Very sad.

7) George The Crook is back home from Canada and in his usual rare form. When LCDR Keeley returned from the Azores last month he reported..."watch out when you order Dr. Pepper"!!!!

8) Only in Aviation...A baby elephant is the prize for the hot-air ace who wins the Sharjah, Arabia Air Race and you don't even have to bring your own balloon: Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi is providing 20 of them for the December contest. A camel will follow each balloon and when it lands, the pilot will board the camel and sprint back to the start line. Second place winner gets two camels...3 crocodiles for third place.

9) Congratulations to the following personnel who were advanced on 16JAN: AMH2 Cunningham, AT1 Rousculp, AX3 Washington, HM2 Gerred, YN2 Taylor, AW2 Wilbur, AO1 Harding, and AE1 Walker.

10) Congratulations to the following Chiefs who are Selection Board eligible: AWC Aubertine, ADC Henderson, AMSC Mullins, AEC Diamond, ADC Hutt, AMSC Trudell, AEC Drogin, ADC LeNard.

11) In a class being conducted by AWC Ken Winter, the discussion was centered on the means for treating hypothermia. It was pointed out that a fire isn't a good idea because the victim would freeze on one side and roast on the other. But a solution is always at hand when a group of AW's are gathered...they suggested to put the victim on a spit and rotate him!!!

FEB-1979

1) You Sexist You: The Defense Department wants a Navy ship to be "crewed"...not "manned and the be called "it"...not "her". This all stems from guidelines put out by DoD's Office of Equal Opportunity. They also decree that "seamam" become "sailor" and that "midshipman" become "midshipperson". Still no word about what to do about fireman, airman, constructionman, yeoman, personnelman and dozens of others.

2) Doc Durity Sez: Shots will not...repeat NOT...be given at the squadron at any time. You must report to the hospital, even at check-in time for cruise.

3) Naval Reserve received \$1.5 million dollars from Congress for reenlistment bonuses in an effort to retain certain critical ratings beginning in JAN79.

4) Farewell: AOC C.O. Smith checked out of the squadron in January. "Smitty's" career goes back to WWII. He checked into VP-662 in the mid-sixties and had been a valuable asset to the squadron ever since. He probably holds the squadron record for commuting distance by car. He commuted from Beckley, WV which is an eight-hour drive not only for his regular drills but for many extra drills. Driving through the West Virginia mountains on snowy winter nights isn't a lot of fun either!. Smitty was known in some Air Force "O" Clubs as "Admiral" Smith and known world wide for his West-By-God-Virginia jokes. Thanks Smitty and good luck.

5) The Carter administration ill try again this year to stop so-called "double-dipping" by federal civilian workers who, during their annual Reserve training, draw military pay in addition to their regular salaries. Stay tuned to this one.

6) CNO & Uniforms: ADM Hayward wants to put CPO's back into whites...not sure if the old white coats or the officers' summer dress. He is not sure about CPO's in Khakis as service or liberty uniforms. We did away with it for good reason...there was such abuse of that uniform, wearing unkept khakis on liberty. He also said abuse contributed to the phasing out of leather flight jackets.

MAR-1979

1) Congratulations to former VP-68 CO CDR Walter Barbee who has been selected to become Captain. VP-68 has been a good training unit for potential Captains.

2) The final P-2J maritime patrol aircraft, the 83rd, produced by Kawasaki Heavy Industries under license to Lockheed Corp. will roll off the assembly line in March. It has been the mainstay of the Japanese Self-Defense Force's air patrol fleet. I also noticed that the four P-2's at Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico are still there. They're used for towing targets. Either a parts shortage or an errant gunner is bound to get them eventually!!

3) Word has it that YN1 (in training for AD1) Karin Alexander Baker ranked second from the top in school for Second Mech. Congratulations Karin!

4) NATOPS Question of the Month: How does a fly land on the ceiling - from a half roll or a half loop??

MAR-1979 (continued)

5) The flight galley menu was extended and updated about four months ago. The most popular of the many improvements is the "Flight Delight Sandwich Line". Patrons can now request their favorite sandwiches by their new names: Chopper, Har-T, Super-Pax, Fly-A-Sub, Booster and Grinder. The two items authorized for in-flight consumption are the flight rations: either TV dinner-type or unprepared - and the regular box lunch, which contains the same food as the regular bag lunch but also includes two pieces of southern fried chicken.... so I wrote a poem:

*Here beneath lies old Ed Stanfield
An autopsy was requested and revealed
That more than thirty years of Box Lunches
Had fossilized and caused the fatal crunches.*

6) On a messy night in February I couldn't get my car started. I diddled around with it for 2 hours and finally gave up. I gave "El Matador" Doug Welshans a call and he had it running in 10 minutes after he got there. VP-68 is full of folks who are ready to help when you are in a bind. Thanks Doug, I appreciate it and show those bulls who's boss this summer in the Azores.

7) Long Weekend or Short Cruise: In February the squadron had 5 planes on cross-country weekends. Most departed on Friday night and the GREAT SNOW came on Sunday and Monday...PAX didn't re-open until Thursday! I went with Crew 15 (always an experience) to Brunswick for a WST. We had minus 35 degree wind chills, a plane with no APU, host squadron didn't have a working power unit, pipes froze in the hanger covering everything in ice, huffer kept breaking down...so we finally got airborne and slowly thawed over the next four hours. Roosty Roads: oh so warm there, four hotel rooms reserved in San Juan were shared by 14 crewmen and passengers. Monday headed back to PAX with C.O. of Roosty Roads aboard and dropped him off at NAS Oceana and spent the night. Tuesday we headed south to McDill AFB in Tampa to await the reopening of PAX on Thursday. What I remember:

- AO1 Wally Chance: chased "Take it off base" paper that flew out of window behind snow drifts...saw Wally again but not the paper.

- AW2 Wood: called his boss to tell him how sorry he was that he was stranded in Florida because of snow in Maryland.

- CDR Perkins: who is a baseball nut, lamented the fact that spring training is allowed to go on in Florida when there is two feet of snow in Maryland.

- LT Kirley: looked at the Cypress Gardens water show brochure and said it is not physically possible to water ski on one foot backwards and barefooted. We didn't argue that one!

- LCDR Guilfoyle: talked the crew into a ride on Disney World Space Mountain roller coaster. "Really, it's not that bad" and everybody got off with bruises on their knees!

- LCDR Pirog: figured out the Jai Alai betting combinations and lost his shirt....but not his pants!

- AW2 Gene DiGennaro: his pool stick flew completely across the room on a shot...beer gives a man great powers.

- PN2 Luscious Lynda Clark: lifted the end of the pool table during the game. "When you have muscles to display, flaunt them" she says.

- AE1 Paul Elia: wondered where the wheels disappeared to? When you have 7 people in the cab of a pick-up truck, it's hard to tell who's there and who's not.

- AT1 Pete Logan: got out of the rental car we had with eight people in there. He was on the bottom and his legs fell asleep. As he limped towards the barracks at 0300 the entire crew limped with him calling it the "Logan Shuffle".

- AW1 Dale Grimes: still trying to arrange a trip to Alaska, even after this trip!

APR-1979

1) Naval Selected Reservists are now eligible to collect \$1,800 for a 6-year reenlistment or \$900 for a 3-year reenlistment or extension providing you are in one of these ratings: AO, ASE, ASH, ASM, AT, AX, EW, FTM, GMM, GMT, MN, OT or PR. To qualify you must not have more than 9 years of total military service.

2) The Soviet Union has delivered a diesel-powered submarine and two hydrofoil torpedo boats to Cuba. The sub is a 2100-ton, 20-year old craft that has only conventional torpedoes.

3) That Airman Apprentice that sits at the Naval Observatory in Washington is still going TIC-TOC-TIC-TOC. You can hear him by dialing 202-254-4950 or AUTOVON 294-4950. Note there is a 25 millisecond error due to delay of phone lines.

4) Starting 01April, Navy enlisted personnel will have to sign a statement printed on their performance evaluation forms that says they either do or do not want to make a statement concerning any adverse comments that may appear on the forms.

5) Last month I reported that a Marine Sgt. In Arizona set a tough-to-beat record of collecting more than 1,000 beer can labels. Well...VP-68 was not to be outdone and AT1 Joe Odenthal has a collection of over 1,200 labels? Anyone else?

6) Congratulations to AM1 Joe Cusick for being selected VP-68 SAR Sailor of the Quarter. Now here is a sailor with some sea-stories. Joe was a Coxswain on a landing craft during the Allied invasion of Sicily during World War II.

7) Doc Durity notes that he is saving his famous corkscrew needle for those who are delinquent on their shots and for those he has to track down he has reserved that most feared post-hole digger needle! OUCH!!

MAY-1979

1) To make our planes harder to see in a dogfight, the Naval Air Systems Command plans on painting all Navy aircraft dull combinations of tones of gray starting with fighter planes.

2) Carrying the Master Chief of the Command responsibilities in coordination with the TAR Master Chief, Master Chief Brown is now on the Starboard weekend and Master Chief Reynolds is on the Port Weekend.

3) Congratulations to the following enlisted personnel on their rank advancement: ADAA Race, AWAN Karnes, ATAN Goff, and AO2 Rosendahl.

4) Congratulations: LT Selby and LT Black were selected for LCDR. The selection for CDR takes its toll as LCDRs Kevin Dillon and Steve Kimberling will soon be hunting for jobs in that great no-man's land where all good CDRs go.....Up and Out!!

JUN-1979

1) Ageless Wonders: Last month while flying and in the course of a conversation with the PPC, ADC Ron GarmAn discovered that he had flown with the PPC's dad when he was a LCDR in the mid 1950's. He thought "Oh My God, how time flies," but then realized that he was not alone. ADCS Don Gallagher, AT1 Lew Johnson and AW2 Jeb Stewart had also flown with the PPC's dad! Always knew the "E's" had staying power.

2) Rumor has it that AVCM Towndrill will be the new VP-68 Command Master Chief reporting from COMNAVRESPATPAC staff. Current CMC, AFM Dellapenna will be retiring this month. Thank you and good luck in your post-Navy endeavors.

3) New flight info sheets for P-3 passengers are really handy. It describes Condition 5 and indicates that it really isn't a terminal illness. It also explains the fact that the ditching stations are used for normal landings too. It says you should bail out only when notified to do so.

4) E-8 & E-9 selection board candidates no longer have to pass written exam every year and now have 3 years to remain board eligible.

AUG-1979

- 1) OinC CDR Enzmann will transfer out of VP-68 this month to a billet in Pensacola, FL. Thanks for the long hours.
- 2) VP-68 had a great cruise in the Azores. Some notable non-classified events were: you can tell Master Chief is senior to me – he got three salutes from Air Force personnel as I only got one. Crew Four (always in the WORD!!) took up tobacco chewing – don't spit it out if it still has some flavor. On the ocean fishing trip Carolyn Buckner, John Coltrain, Chief Lee and Chief Fulks spent whole cruise hanging over the rail calling Ralf. The bulls didn't do as well this year as they did in '72. The score was Bulls-6 and VP-68-0. Goats are milked from behind and between the two rear legs rather than from the side like cows. The golf course was beautiful and thank heavens for the Azorian caddies for finding the balls in surrounding rough terrain. LCDR Jim Taylor has been jogging for many years but the incline of Portuguese Air Base Number Four got him but the hobble went away after four days. A Portuguese driver clobbered a VP-68 bus broadside – no injuries. The van with the bad gas gauge ran out of gas twice – heavy vehicle to push.
- 3) The Army is going to take over management of mail deliveries for all of the armed services.
- 4) Only in Aviation: The U.S. Coast Guard has placed 3 pigeons on active duty and 1 in reserve status as lookouts. They found the pigeons can spot international orange color 96% of the time compared to humans at 35%. The hungry pigeons are placed in a plastic bubble below the cockpit of a helicopter and when they spot the color, they peck at a switch that releases food and notifies the cockpit. The Coast Guard says that the pigeons are easy to train and too stupid to get bored.

SEP-1979

- 1) CNAVRES NATOPS: The squadron got a "QUAL" for the first time in three years.
- 2) According to a U.S. Navy study appearing in Approach magazine, the typical accident-prone pilot is usually an ego-centric perfectionist who is most likely to portray himself as a social extrovert. He typically has a low tolerance for tension, is resentful of authority and is an excessive drinker. He feels he is above ordinary mortals and lives by his own rules. He is the archetypal "hot pilot" and adopts an image fostered by movies, novels and television. These conclusions were derived from a behavioral analysis of Navy pilots involved in air crashes caused by pilot error.
- 3) The final score is in and the squadron did a great job on cruise folks...Aircrew readiness jumped 10 points and Maintenance deserves a big tribute for providing 100% aircraft availability for fleet commitments and 95% availability overall.

OCT-1979

- 1) Boot Chief: Candidate Chief Eason somehow allowed his charge book to be nailed to the coffee shack ceiling. That propeller on his hard hat made him look a bit strange besides.
- 2) Have you ever tried to get out of your seat without unfastening your seat belt? Have you ever heard of anyone trying it on a P-3? Somehow LCDR Sky Suydam slipped out of his seat belt – even with six anchoring bolts...he wasn't even landing!
- 3) President Carter heard what a great job VP-68 has been doing and ordered that all members of the squadron have a 7% pay increase as of 01Oct.

NOV & DEC-1979

- 1) On 01NOV, the squadron completed 45,000 hours and nine accident-free years. It takes a lot of work and a safety-oriented attitude to accomplish a record like this.
- 2) The Secretary of the Navy has authorized access to Navy Recreational Facilities by inactive duty drilling reservists on other-than-drill days but does not include attendance at motion picture facilities.

- 3) Loch Ness Monster Watch: Crew 2, flying ASW out of Kinloss, Scotland had some notable events: AWC Ken Winter's homemade chili was great. No need to pest-fumigate the plane after that chili was eaten. More you drink, more you swear you saw "Nessie". LCDR Max Magee looked like a great white hunter on safari after his Christmas shopping. AT1 "Packrat" Jones tried some real Scottish fare...chop suey from a Chinese carry-out. Scottish women went wild when LCDR Hunter Gilpatrick put on his display the of country clogging Scottish Highland kick boogie. ADC Eason went to an auction and won all of his bids – Scottish were hanging onto their money. Chili-man Winters ended up tending bar for the hotel when they were short of help.
- 4) AW2 Reno Motes was selected VP-68 TAR Sailor of the Quarter and AT1 Ed Hansen the SAR Sailor of the Quarter.
- 5) AWC Ron Auth, AMC Dan Glessner, ATC Charles Macgill and ADC Chris Eason are now "Real" Chiefs. They ordered their eggs "over easy" and that's what they got. When asked what goes on at those ceremonies they just said that they were proud to be Navy Chiefs!!
- 6) Winning a flip of a coin, the Starboard Wing will be going on the first 2-weeks of cruise in March. Port Wing will go on the second 2-week period ending 06Apr.
- 7) Best of luck to ADC Harry McComsey who retired. Look for his advertisement in The Navy Times for his hand-crafted jewelry and is setting up shop in Georgia – Thanks Harry.
- 8) Change of Command is scheduled for 26JAN80 so check out those blues and make sure they are ship-shape.

Tri-Care • Medicare • Social Security

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

Spouse ID card

Check your spouse's ID card to ensure that it is still valid. Normally, a spouse's ID card will expire at age 65 and every four years thereafter. TRICARE services will be denied without a valid ID card. Permanent issuance of a spouse ID card occurs after age 75 and will have no expiration date.

Possible FY 2012 retiree COLA

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Consumer Price Index for April was up 0.8% over the March CPI. This is important for military retirees and those drawing VA benefits because the CPI is used to determine the annual cost-of-living adjustment and other VA rates for the following year. Reports indicate that the APR2011 CPI was up 2.9% from the 2008 CPI which means retirees may see a COLA increase in 2012, the first since 2008.

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.

Maintaining SBP Beneficiary Designation

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) reminds retirees to notify DFAS as soon as possible when a beneficiary change occurs. Events like divorce or remarriage change the beneficiary status of an account, and failure to notify DFAS of changes may result in an invalid beneficiary designation. This would make it difficult or even impossible to process the benefit claim quickly, and might create a financial hardship for the loved ones of a deceased retiree.

If a retiree does not inform DFAS of a divorce, the beneficiary could forfeit a refund of overpaid premiums. DFAS is barred by law from refunding payments retroactively beyond a six-year period, i.e. if a retiree divorces a spouse and doesn't notify DFAS until 10 years after the fact, the agency will only be able to refund six years of those payments.

To change or update your SBP beneficiary designation, please complete a Survivor Benefit Plan Election Change Certificate (DD 2656-7), which is available at

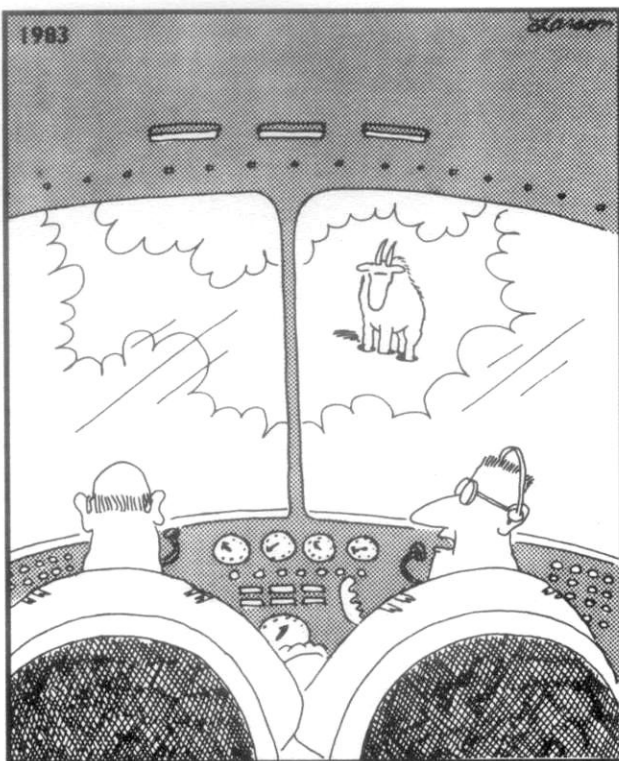
<http://www.dfas.mil/dfas/retiredmilitary/forms.html>.

Caution: If you are thinking about opting out of the SBP Program, you must submit your termination request (DD 2656-2) between the second and third anniversary of receiving retired pay. If you miss this window, you will NOT be able to opt-out for the rest of your life.

Aviation Far Side

(submitted by Jim Rozycki)

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



"Say ... what's a mountain goat doing way up here in a cloud bank?"

Ole Boats & Gunney

Ole Boats: Hey Gunney, remember when my Annie got her diabetes and lost her foot...you were right there.

Gunney: Yeh Boats...I sure was.

Ole Boats: You were there when she lost that leg too.

Gunney: Yeh, I was there then too!

Ole Boats: You were also with us when she lost the other leg.

Gunney: Yeh, I sure was there Boats.

Ole Boats: And you were with me when Annie passed.

Gunney: I was right there besides you Boats.

Ole Boats: Ya know what Gunney?

Gunney: What's that Boats?

Ole Boats: You're a f---ing jinx!!

The President's Corner:

by Jacque LaValle

One of the jobs as president is being an ambassador for both the alumni association and service veterans. I had the pleasure of attending the Memorial Day services held at Shea Field Memorial Grove.

The memorial was sponsored by the Naval Air Station South Weymouth Alumni, the Shea Field Naval Aviation Museum (located at the old gym), and the Association of Naval Aviation, Patriot Squadron. The Moving Memorial Wall sponsored by the Yarmouth Moose Lodge #2270 was on display and the "Rolling Thunder" motorcycle club with the Braintree Moose Lodge #413 gave us a spectacular parade. Many folks from our sister squadron of VP-92 were on hand including Mark Frattasio and George Driscoll. The grove is surrounded by 32 trees, one for each Medal of Honor recipient from the local area. An A-4 resides in the center of the grove and has an inscription of those who restored the static aircraft including Kevin Cahill.

The following weekend, I had the pleasure of attending the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's 22nd annual WWII weekend in Reading, Pa. Many of you may remember our fly-in visit there in 2007, where an SP-2H (VP-67) was on display. This was an impressive event. All the local residents were dressed in the period and there were plenty of aircraft on display giving rides, including the world's only flying B-29 Fifi, three B-17s and five B-25 aircraft. I was able to deliver two of our squadron patches for their museum. I've posted pictures on face book if interested. I even have a picture of a Chief and a motorized bicycle from NAS Willow Grove.

These are but a few of the events that go on year after year, where shipmates and veterans gather to remember, share and keep in touch. So is the mission of our VP-68 Alumni Association. In November we will dedicate the memorial plaque for VP-68 at the Naval Memorial in Washington, DC. I would love to see another record crowd for this event.

Thanks to Joe Odenthal and his committee as well as all of you and your generous donations for making this a reality. Next year, our spring fling will be in April. Shortly after that, we will be embarking on a once of a lifetime cruise to the Caribbean. Thanks to Wyman Bailey for his efforts in getting this coordinated. Keep checking the webpage at www.vp68.org for information and updates.

Have a safe and pleasant summer season and take the time to attend those events that support veterans and the celebration of 100 years of Naval Aviation.

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. As editor, space is always an issue and I do not always get to print what you send to me. This is the first issue that we are posting online only and are no longer mailing printed copies. Starting next issue, I will be able to make Hawk's Nest newsletter larger and hope to include a lot more of your submitted material....so keep 'em comin'!!

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:

VP-68 Alumni Association
44746 Maguire Way - Unit J
California, MD 20619

Make checks payable to:
VP-68 Alumni Association

contact Anna Gibson at: 240-317-5886
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 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!!



PATRON 68 CRUISE UPDATE: Wyman Bailey, Vice Pres, Cruise Chairman, VP-68

If you didn't make it to the Spring Fling this year you missed a wonderful time. The turnout was one of the best we've seen in quite awhile. It seemed as though it was a carryover from the 40th reunion last November. The number of officers making it to this year's Spring Fling was well noted by everyone. Comments such as "I had such a great time at the 40th reunion that I wanted to continue with the squadron reconnects". With each reunion the food gets better and better, thanks to everyone who brings the extras. It's starting to look like a pot luck affair. Hmmmm, that's not a bad idea... to be pursued later.

Now for the update on the 29 April 2012 Carnival Cruise booked for our squadron. First off we would like to thank our guest presenters who gave of their time to travel to Pax River to present to our members all the wonderful things that have been put together for our Cruise aboard the Carnival Pride which leaves from and returns to Baltimore, Maryland. (See the attached itinerary) Kathy Donnelly, Carnival Cruise Representative, Libby Croston, Principle Tradewinds Travel and Nancy Albright, Travel Agent Tradewinds Travel and I worked together on the final package presented at the Spring Fling. The perks available covered are predicated upon the total number of reservations.

Well... I'm happy to say that at the end of their presentation their services were immediately accessed. As a result we had 11 of the 50 staterooms blocked for the squadron translating into 22 people signing up for the cruise.

By blocking the 50 staterooms when we did we have saved money for our squadron as Carnival has since increased the cost of each stateroom category. At some point in time, the balance of the 50 staterooms not reserved will be pulled back from us and returned for availability to the general public at the higher price. This is not to say you can't go on cruise with the squadron after the prices go up only that "if you delay you have to pay".

Read the attached material and feel free to call the Tradewinds Travel agency and speak with Nancy or Libbey, who will gladly answer all your questions. You can also call me or e-mail at **410-960-2008** cell or baileymod@msn.com. You don't have to put the full amount down, which is refundable, but the final payment is due 1 February 2012. The deposit is \$250.00 per person. Also We are also allowing family members to take advantage of this offer should there be any interest there.

This is going to be the first chance for us to spend some fun and quality time together on a truly "REAL CRUISE".

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW !!!!!!!!!

Carnival®

FUN FOR ALL. ALL FOR FUN.™

JOIN PATROL SQUADRON VP-68 ABOARD THE CARNIVAL PRIDE SAILING APRIL 29, 2012 FROM BALTIMORE

Pack your Sea Bags and join your fellow Patrol Squadron VP68 members for the first "cruise" actually aboard a ship. Can you think of a better way to spend 7 days? You'll enjoy quality time to reminisce, dine together, enjoy a beverage or two, try your luck in the casino, take in spectacular Broadway style shows, comedy and karaoke, pamper yourself in Spa Carnival, explorer fun filled destinations, soak up a few rays or relax! Do it all or perhaps do nothing at all! Your choice; your vacation! You'll return home with wonderful stories that will generate many new memories.

Your alumni Officers and Board Members are looking forward to this exciting event.

Don't let the ship set sail without you!!!!

EXOTIC EASTERN CARRIBEAN ITINERARY			
DAY	PORT	ARRIVE	DEPART
Sun.	Baltimore		4:30 pm
Mon.	"Fun Day at Sea"		
Tue.	"Fun Day at Sea"		
Wed.	Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos	7:00 am	3:00 pm
Thu.	Half Moon Cay, The Bahamas	9:00 am	5:00 pm
Fri.	Freeport, The Bahamas	7:00 am	3:00 pm
Sat.	"Fun Day at Sea"		
Sun.	Baltimore	9:00 am	

DETAILS:

All rates are per person (based on double occupancy) and include:

Accommodations as selected, port charges, govt. tax and security fees, all meals and entertainment onboard.

Rates begin at: Interior Stateroom - \$731* Balcony Stateroom - \$879*

Each Stateroom will receive the following Group Amenties:

Bon Voyage Champagne & Chocolates	Bottle of Wine
8 x10 Group Photo	Carnival Tote Bags
Hosted Cocktail Party	Meet & Greet Coffee/Danish Breakfast Meeting

Options to Consider:

You may elect to pre pay your shipboard gratuities, \$70 per person

Travel Insurance: \$95 - \$109 per person based on accommodations selected

A \$250 per person deposit is required at the time of booking to secure your stateroom

Final payment will be due on or before February 1, 2012

Proof of citizenship will be required for travel. Currently you may cruise with your certified, state issued birth certificate and photo ID; However, a passport is highly recommended.

For additional information and to join the group call:

TRADEWINDS TRAVEL

Libby or Nancy

866-781-4548 or 301-317-4548

email: trwindstvl@aol.com www.tradewindstravelinc.com

*Carnival reserves the right to re-instate the fuel supplement for all guests at up to \$9 per person per day if the NYMEX oil price exceeds \$70 per barrel. Rates are capacity controlled and cruise only. Restrictions apply. All rights reserved. Ships' Registry: The Bahamas and Panama

VP68 GROUP BOOKING FORM**Sailing: 4/29/12****GROUP BOOKING #: 640BV9**

Booking Date: _____ CF # _____

Category: _____ Cabin: _____ Dining Preference: _____

Guest(s): _____ DOB: _____

Guest(s) or Sharing with: _____ DOB: _____

Guests(s) or Sharing with _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: w / h / c _____

Email: _____

Credit Card # _____ Exp: _____ Sec # _____

This section for agency use

Cost (per person/per cabin): Base \$ _____ Tax : \$ _____ Insurance: No ____ Yes \$ _____

Payments: _____ Total Booking (per person/per cabin) = \$ _____

Date Received/Date Deposited
(ck/mo/cash/cc)

FOP

Amount

Balance:

_____	_____	_____	_____
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COMPLETE & SEND WITH DEPOSIT TO TRADEWINDS TRAVEL:

Tradewinds Travel
 Attn: Libby Croston
 8041 Murphy Road
 Fulton, MD 20759