

2021
SEPTEMBER

THE VP-45 ASSOCIATION'S
Pelican Post

Newsletter

www.vp45association.org

The 11 Largest
Submarines in the
World Today



Member in The Spotlight:
CAPT Randy Hotten, USN (Ret.)

In This Issue

Cover: "God of The Sea"

Cover Artwork and Design by Bill Hobgood;

Original artwork by renowned aviation artist, Don Feight.

See his website by clicking [HERE](#).

Association Officers.....3

President’s Report.....4

From the Vice President.....5

At The Top.....6

Navy Trivia.....7

WebMaster/Secretary.....10

A Sea Story.....11

Member In The Spotlight.....13

Special Report.....16

Alumni News.....17

Squadron & Community News.....19

Mailbag.....22

Treasurer’s Report.....25

Back in the Day.....26

In Memoriam.....29

Registration Form.....32

Newsletter Info

Editor-in-Chief.....Jack Keane

Asst Editor/Graphics/Design.....Bill Hobgood

Distribution.....Email/Website

Editing Software.....Adobe InDesign

Frequency.....Two Issues per Year

Contact Information

Via Website.....[Contact Us](#)

WebMaster.....hobgood.bill@gmail.com

Secretaryjack_keane@verizon.net

Visit Our Website!

Over 70 pages of VP-45 Information. Click on the Logo Below



From Jack Keane, the Editor:

In this issue of the Pelican Post, we highlight one of our own, Randy Hotton, in this issue’s “Member in the Spotlight”. Additionally, Bill Hobgood provides an interesting perspective on the 11 largest submarines currently in service in the world’s navies. Finally, John Covert provided a very interesting story covered in 1965 in *Approach Magazine* about an in-flight emergency experienced by him and Dick Gray.

Should you need to for any reason, you can contact us via the website or by sending an email to either of the email addresses listed in the “Contact Information” section just above.



YOUR ASSOCIATION OFFICERS (2020 - 2022)



Click on pictures below for more biographical info



President

Doug Mitchell was elected to this office in 2012. He was in VP-45 from 1972 to 1975 as an FE. He retired from the Navy in 1994, after 30 years service, as an LDO LCDR. He calls both Florida and Georgia home.

Vice President

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



Secretary

Jack Keane has been our Secretary since 2012. A VMI grad and retired LCDR, he completed his Navy career in 1995 and is recently retired from Johns Hopkins. He was a TACCO in VP-45 from 1982-1985.

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.



WebMaster

Bill Hobgood built the new Association website in 2011 and was elected WebMaster in 2012. He was also a TACCO (Crew 13) and was in VP-45 from 1971 to 1974. A retired CDR, he resides in Lantana, Texas.

“We are moving our reunion to August next year due to the Squadrons’ Deployment Schedule. A reunion in Jacksonville would not be complete without VP-45’s participation in our Lunch at NAS Jacksonville, a Tour of the P-8, and our Banquet Dinner Program. We hope everyone understands!”

From the Desk of...

Doug Mitchell

President’s Report

We hope all of you have had a great summer and that you’ve gotten back to somewhat of a normal life! Just as we thought things were getting better, COVID has raised it’s ugly head with what they are calling the Delta Variant and, as you probably know, the Pandemic has gotten worse!



Hopefully things will be better as time marches on as we are currently working with the squadron to pin down our reunion dates for August 2022! Watch our website home page for updates, and our VP/Reunion Coordinator Spence Cunningham will publish all of the reunion details in the March 2022 Newsletter.

We are moving our reunion to August next year due to the Squadron’s deployment schedule. A reunion in Jacksonville would not be complete without VP-45’s participation in our Lunch at NAS Jacksonville, a Tour of the P-8, and our Banquet Dinner Program. We hope ev-

everyone understands!

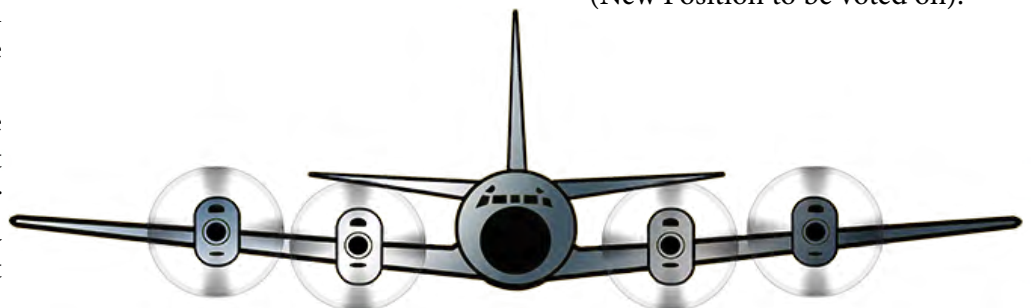
The National Flight Academy at NAS Pensacola canceled the 2021 program again this year due to COVID and all its related uncertainties. However, the National Naval Aviation Museum is open Monday – Sunday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm for folks with a current DoD ID Card or a VA Health ID Card (Service Connected Disability). Cardholders can escort 15 guests in up to two cars onto NAS Pensacola to the Museum.

The Museum has a Special Visitor Information Line at 850-452-8450 if you are interested.

As a reminder, since we have “all volunteer officer replacements,” I am not appointing a Nomination Chairman or Committee as noted in our Association By-Laws. And after we had to cancel the 2020 Reunion, we have been including them in our quarterly conference calls for training purposes and turnover.

You will have the opportunity to vote for the following new officer nominations at the next Reunion’s Business Meeting:

- Jack Keane – President
- Al LaBella – Secretary
- Michael Riley – Treasurer (Appointed by me in January 2021)
- Scott Kelly – Webmaster
- Bill Hobgood – Newsletter Editor (New Position to be voted on).



And I've mentioned this before.... we have the best VP Navy Association in existence, and it is because of our member's participation in reunions and our "all-volunteer officer contingent." I am very proud to be a Member of the Patron Four Five Association and to serve as your President for one more year!!

Once again, please take care of yourselves and please feel free to call or email me at any time

Sincerely,

Doug "Pooh Bear" Mitchell
678-650-7500 or
poohbearmit@aol.com

FROM THE VP

by: Spence Cunningham



Hello Fellow Pelicans!

I hope everyone is finally getting back to some semblance of normalcy this year! I really do not have much to pass on for this issue other than we are working hard to getting back into our reunion cycle!

We passed on having a reunion this year out of caution plus our desire to let the vaccination process work its way through the population. Add to that the fact that the VP-45 deployment cycle was out of sync for an October reunion. Speaking of deployment cycles, this is driving another change in 2022. We are set for Jacksonville, but the month will shift due to the squadron departing on deployment in October. I hope before this edition is published, we will have set reunion dates, but, right now, I can only share the month! We are looking at August in 2022.

This opens another "thing-to-do" (tour) option as well. A Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp AAA baseball game outing! Now, this is dependent on member feedback and whether they have a home game during reunion week. Email me and let me know if you are interested in going to a baseball game! **I need your feedback on this idea!**



Are you ready for some BASEBALL? Let me know if this idea as a feature excursion interests you. And, yes, the Jacksonville team is named Jumbo Shrimp!

I will begin planning in earnest for the 2022 reunion in January. My intention is to use the itinerary I had already developed for 2020. To recap:

- A Naval Station Mayport excursion to visit an LCS (assuming one is still in commission) or a "Gator Freighter" (depending on who is in port). For some nostalgia, this may include lunch in the NS Chow Hall, if it is available.
- Half day in the Squadron spaces for a P-8 tour followed by a lunch with the Squadron leadership (tentative) at the NAS Jacksonville "O" club.
- Dinner and a show at the Alhambra Dinner Theatre. Show is TBD.
- A day trip/shopping excursion to Amelia Island.

Now, I am always open to suggestions for other excursion options and ideas. **I would love to have your input!! Please, let me hear from you!!**



What a disappointment that the Mini-Reunion we had planned, organized and scheduled for September 11, 2021 had to be cancelled due to the pandemic spike in Florida. The god Poseidon and his son Orion are watching over us for August 2022!

Now, it is time for my recruiting pitch! Our survival absolutely hinges on a growing membership! We cannot sustain the Association without increasing membership numbers! We all know what we get personally from the Association. I was skeptical until I attended the Pensacola Reunion and had a really great time catching up with members from my era. Plus being able to meet fellow Pelicans on whose shoulders I was privileged to stand on was exciting.

It would be wildly successful if we all could make contact with at least one fellow Pelican who is not in the Association and “strongly convince” them to join us! Please, I am asking you to at least try! A positive result will benefit all of us!!



Look for the 2022 Spring issue *Pelican Post* for reunion details. If we nail it all down before then, we will pass the word via an email blast and the VP-45 Association website when Reunion Registration is open! Please, come join us in JAX!! Let us make it the best attended yet!! Stay safe and stay healthy!!

Warmest regards,

Spence Cunningham
VP/Reunion Coordinator
awcmspence@comcast.net

CDR Seth R. Eisenmenger, native to Clifton, New Jersey, took command of the squadron in June while deployed to 7th Fleet and operating out of Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan

He received his commission through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corp at the State University of New York, Maritime College in 2003, earning a bachelor of science degree in International Transportation and Trade. After completing flight training, he received his wings and was designated a naval flight officer (NFO) in December 2005.

His first operational tour was with the “Tigers” of Patrol Squadron EIGHT flying the P-3C at NAS Brunswick. His ground jobs there included being NFO Training Officer/Instructor NFO and he flew as a TACCO and later Mission Commander in the P-3C.

After VP-8, he was selected for instructor duty at the FRS (VP-30) in Jacksonville. There he mainly instructed in weapons and tactics and was a P-3C NFO, Fleet Naval Air Training and Operating Pro-



CDR Eisenmenger, USN; the new commander of the VP-45 Pelicans

cedures Standardization (NATOPS) evaluator. A sea tour with the Pelicans of VP-45 followed as Training Officer in Weapons and

Tactics.

For his next shore tour, he was picked to be the aide and Flag Secretary to Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Group in Norfolk, Virginia. Sea duty followed after selection for a department head tour with VP-47 which, at the time, was based at Kaneohe, Hawaii and later Whidbey Island, Washington. During this tour, he was the Maintenance Officer.

Recently, he served as a Future Operations Planner while assigned to U.S. Southern Command J35. It was during this tour that he was selected for operational command and ordered to report to VP-45. He reported in June of last year as XO.

His personal awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (4), Navy Achievement Medal, various unit and campaign decorations.

NAVY TRIVIA

“The Worlds Largest Submarines”

By: Bill Hobgood

Those of us who were formerly flight crew, whether Mission Commander or Aft Observer, recall that we had to study our main adversary - the submarine. Most of us needed to be able to identify submarines either acoustically or visually or both. But things have changed and a lot of us have been away from the game for some time.

So we are going to review the top 11 largest submarines in the world today....all of which are nuclear powered. The list following is based strictly on length...not tonnage. Pay attention, there will be a quiz at the end.

11. **Akula Class SSN.** A Russian boat known for its quietness when it came out in 1983; 15 were built but only five are currently active.



Akula Class SSN

Longer than a football field at 372 feet, this is the shortest of our top 11.

10. **Virginia Class SSN.** Nineteen SSN-74 class

Virginia Class SSN



boats are active in the US fleets. Its cost is a relatively inexpensive \$1.8 billion and each sub is projected to make 14–15 deployments during its 33 year service life. Though labeled a “fast-attack” sub (or SSN), this class also carries anti-ship and land attack missiles. At 377 feet, it can travel in excess of 25kts and exceed depths of 800 feet.

9. **Jin Class SSBN.** In commission since 2007, this Chinese Navy ballistic missile submarine was first



Jin Class SSBN

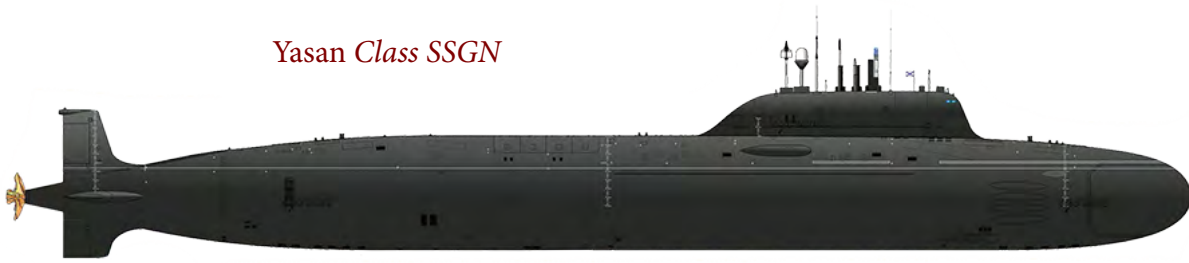
discovered with satellite imagery. The class currently numbers six with a couple more planned. It carries 12 SLBMs capable of hitting targets at 4600 miles. It is reported that these missiles carry one warhead only. Bow-to-stern it measures 442 feet.



Triomphant Class SSBN

8. **Triomphant Class SSBN.** The French built four of these (intermediate range) “boomers” from 1986-2010. They carry 16 ballistic missiles. This boat is 453 feet long and the fourth in this class is aptly named “*Le Terrible.*” On 4 February 2009, *Le Triomphant* collided with the Royal Navy submarine HMS *Vanguard* (see next page); the UK boat suffered minor damage. *Le Triomphant* was reported to have

Yasan Class SSGN



provides quieter propulsion and improved electronics. This boat is advertised to make 32kts while submerged. 20 were

proceeded to Brest under her own power, submerged, but with extensive damage to her sonar.

7. **Yasan Class SSGN.** Only two of this class are in commission since around 2015 with 8 more planned. Estimated to be the quietest of all Russian subs it is still not as quiet as the US's *Seawolf* and *Virginia* classes. According to *60 Minutes*, unnamed Pentagon officials claimed one of these subs, on her maiden deployment, "slipped into the Atlantic Ocean and for weeks evaded all of the attempts to find her" in the Summer 2018. For a cruise missile submarine it is huge at 458 feet in length.



Delta-IV Class SSBN

planned with 14 completed, six active, three being modernized, one lost and four retired. Nearly two football fields in length, at 547 feet, it carries anti-sub missiles, anti-ship missiles and torpedoes.

Vanguard Class SSBN



6. **Vanguard Class SSBN.** This is a ballistic missile submarine in service with the Royal Navy (UK). This class has been in service since 1993 and four have been built and each one carries up to 16 Trident missiles. This submarine is 491 feet long and makes greater than 25kts when submerged.

4. **Delta-IV Class SSBN.** A lot of us remember earlier versions of this strategic submarine from our time in the Navy. Seven were built for the Soviet/Russian Navy during 1981-1992...all are still active. This bad boy is nearly two football fields in

Oscar-II Class SSGN

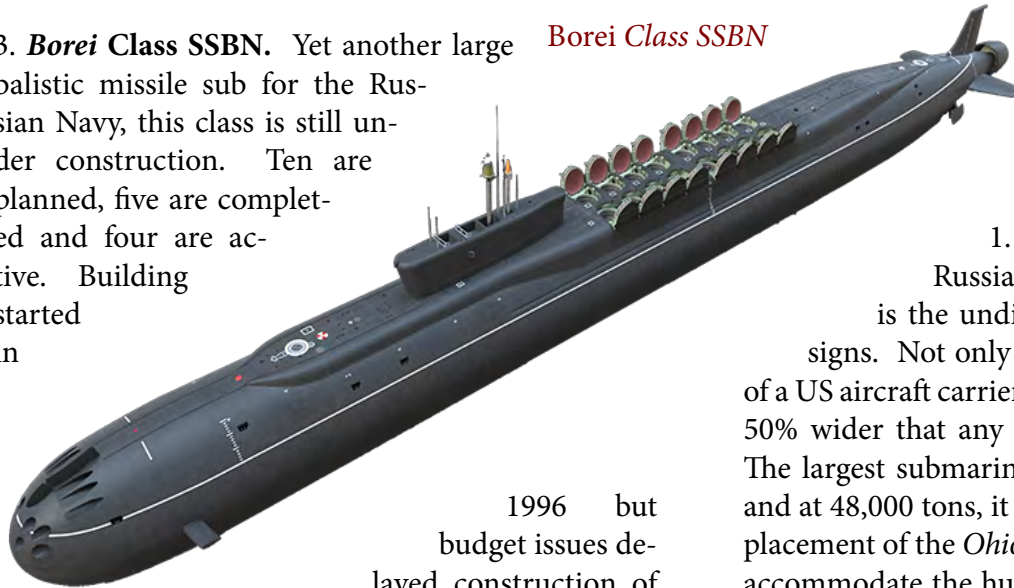


5. **Oscar-II Class SSGN.** This second generation class of Russian cruise missile boats were built during 1981-1992...six of eleven are still active. This version is 33 feet longer (at 508 feet) than its *Oscar-I* older brother. The extra length

length at 547 feet and carries 16 strategic missiles. This sub can go deep with an advertised operational diving depth of 1,050 feet.

3. **Borei Class SSBN.** Yet another large ballistic missile sub for the Russian Navy, this class is still under construction. Ten are planned, five are completed and four are active. Building started in

Borei Class SSBN



1996 but budget issues delayed construction of this class. Noise levels of this

strategic thermonuclear warheads and each carries up to 24 Trident missiles. The SSGNs carry 154 Tomahawks and a number of Harpoon missiles fired through the torpedo tubes. This class stretches the tape at 560 feet.

1. **Typhoon Class SSBN.** This Russian submarine is ginormous! It is the undisputed king of submarine designs. Not only is it more than half the length of a US aircraft carrier at 574 feet, it is also more than 50% wider than any other submarine on this list. The largest submarine ever built, it is a behemoth; and at 48,000 tons, it is two and a half times the displacement of the *Ohio* class. Some say it is this big to accommodate the huge SS-N-20 missile. In service since 1981, six were built but only one remains ac-

Typhoon Class SSBN



boat are advertised as five times quieter than the *Akula* and two times lower than the USS *Virginia* class. It is estimated that this much newer class of “boomers” was designed and built to replace the aging *Delta-III*, *Delta-IV* and *Typhoon*. This

tive. Two more are planned for 2026.

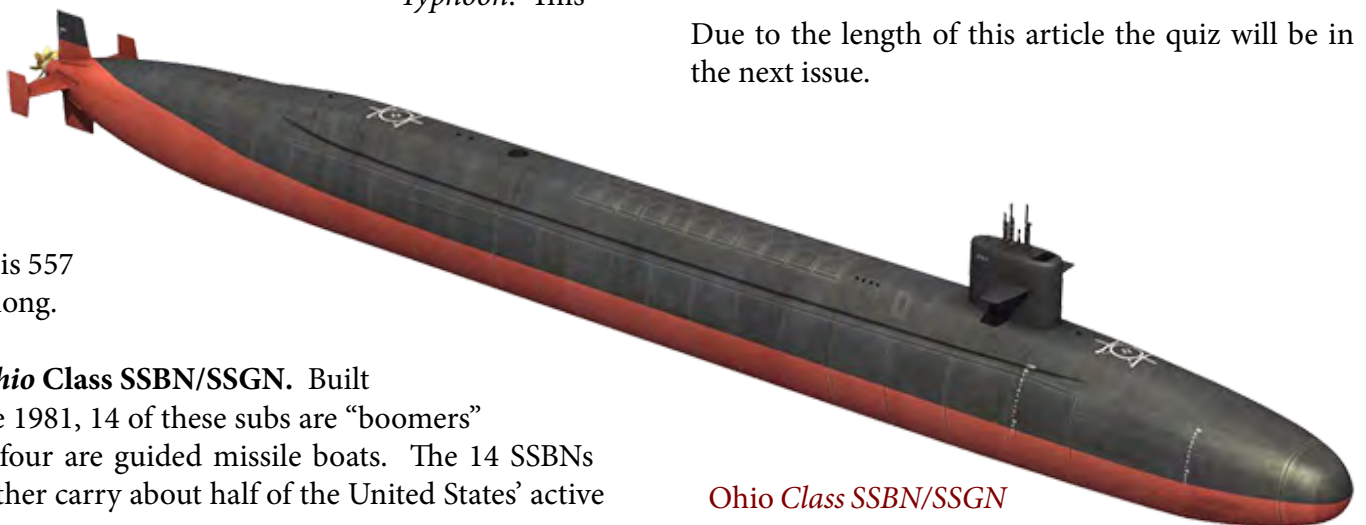
So there you have it. If you can now pass the quiz, you are ready to be recalled to active duty in a Patrol Squadron!

Due to the length of this article the quiz will be in the next issue.

guy is 557 feet long.

2. **Ohio Class SSBN/SSGN.** Built since 1981, 14 of these subs are “boomers” and four are guided missile boats. The 14 SSBNs together carry about half of the United States’ active

Ohio Class SSBN/SSGN



FROM THE WEBMASTER

By: Bill Hobgood



idien into the fold.

The cover of this edition of the Pelican Post Newsletter is stunning. It is the latest painting by renowned aviation artist, Don Feight. It is also the most recent work in his award-winning Aviation ASW series of paintings. Welcome the P-8A Poseidon into the fold.

When I first saw this work “God of the Sea” by Don on his website (click [HERE](#)), I immediately got hold of him to ask permission to use it on our next newsletter cover. He said yes...as he has before. In the “Squadron History” section of our website, he has granted permission to use a number of his art works. You have likely noticed them already. If not go [HERE](#) and look at each era of the squadron for some of his previous works.

You should also note that the tail markings on the P-8 on the cover are those of VP-45. I asked Don to do that never thinking he actually could or would. He DID!

Don has been very good to me (especially as it relates to the website) so I do not mind putting in a plug for him. If you would like to own one of his splendid works, go to his website [HERE](#) and browse. His prices are very reasonable.

Have any questions for me? Please shoot me an email to: hobgood.bill@gmail.com.



SECRETARY'S PODIUM

By: Jack Keane



Greetings fellow Pelicans! As you are all aware, from reading Spence's article, we are working with the squadron to finalize the reunion dates – most likely in late August so as not to interfere with the squadron's pre-deployment activities.

Now that travel restrictions are relaxed, many of us are getting back on the road. By the time you read this, I'll have returned from a week in my hometown in MA and will be getting ready for a nine-week sojourn on the CT shoreline. These will be the first real road trips I will have had since last October.

As I mentioned in my Secretary's Podium in March, many veterans' organizations have taken a significant hit in membership over the past several years. Many have attributed it to COVID and the fact that they were forced to cancel symposia and reunions due to national and state restrictions on travel and gatherings. I belong to one such organization that has seen a significant decline in membership (24%) in the past two years.

Our membership has remained relatively stable, but we need to boost our numbers. Therefore, I still would like to strongly encourage you all to reach out to former Pelicans who are not members and strongly urge them to join – especially squadron members from the 1990s to the present. Let's all try to bring in at least one new member in time for them to join us in Jacksonville in August 2022. And for those of you who are members, don't forget to keep your dues current and provide us with your birthdates so that we can verify lifetime membership when the time comes.

Comment for the “Mail Bag” section? Click [HERE](#)

SEA STORIES

A Selection From Our Website "Sea Story" Page

A P-3 Pilot Remembers

"Going to The Boat!"

By: CAPT Randy Hotton

Back in the 60s, when I went through flight training, all student naval aviators had to "Carrier Qualify" (CARQUAL or CQ). When I "went to the boat" solo, in August 1967, in the big, loud, dirty T-28C, I had 142.2 hours total time and 116.8 in the T-28. The carrier work up was about three weeks of doing daily FCLP's (Field Carrier Landing Practice) until we had 75 passes.

Then we stood by in the squadron ready room waiting for our launch. My flight waited three days for the call to go; however we did one FCLP flight on the second day of waiting to maintain currency. The T-28 could deck launch without the catapult so they were on a

loose schedule around the jet CQ schedule.

Then it was launch a four plane formation flight, transit to the boat and wait for your call to go into the break. After that you just follow the instructions you were taught like fly 325 feet 82 Kts, put the tip of the star on the left wing down the center of the aircraft carrier deck, when the boat disappears,



USS Randolph in CVS (anti-submarine) configuration in the early 60s. A true "small deck" carrier.

make 20 degree left bank until the boat is in front of you. Then you should see the ball on the mirror, make ball call and start playing the meatball, line up, airspeed game.

You just looked out the window, kept the meatball in the center with power, worked hard to stay on centerline and worked airspeed with nose attitude. You never looked at the ship or the landing area because it was moving away from you and would create an optical illusion. The visual glideslope varied with the speed of the ship through the water to make 25 knots across the deck. You did not flare; when the cut lights came on, you just cut the power and flew into the ship and, hopefully, caught a wire. Our approach speed was 82Kts, so with 25Kts of wind across the deck the closure rate was not all that great...say, about 60Kts



ENS Randy Hotton posing in front of his T-28 after successfully completing carrier qualifications aboard the USS Randolph (CV-15).

The training protocol called for two touch-and-goes followed by six arrested landing and deck launches. All done that day on an old WWII aircraft carrier named USS *Randolph*...with a very small deck.

For each launch off the boat, we were pointed toward the starboard bow, and told when the end of the ship disappeared in front of you, you pulled the stick back as far as you could, it will fly! Do not look at the airspeed indicator, it will not be reading anything that made sense. They were right I looked at it, it was below 50 Kts Indicated.

We were briefed that if you crossed the center line of the ship on take off it was an automatic down (failure), because of possible interference with the

bolter pattern. So, not wanting to get a down, I unlocked my shoulder harness and looked over my left shoulder to make sure I was still on the starboard side of the center line...I was. Then, coming back around in the pattern, it was my turn to break; and I had forgot to reset my shoulder harness. So, on my second trapped landing, my shoulder harness was still unlocked. BAMMM!! My right shoulder and my head slammed into the glare shield, thank goodness for helmets. My left hand went full forward on the power, somewhat in a WTF moment. Bringing myself back to my senses, I saw the launch officer shaking his fist at me and pointing toward the starboard bow, wanting to keep things moving. No one knew about my screw-up except me. Locking the harness, off I go again.

It was one of the high points of my life; I knew that by completing this, I would now make it through training and be designated a Naval Aviator. What a fantastic adventure.

In advanced training, I had to CARQUAL again - however, this time, in the TS-2A on the USS *Lexing-*



The big, bad T-28 radial engine opened up.

ton. But this CQ wasn't near as big a deal since I already had orders to a P-3 squadron (VP-45). However the training did come in handy when later, as ship's company, I got to fly the C-1A (COD) off of the USS *Enterprise*. Now that was a big boat compared

to the ones we landed on in training. Heck, a "Taxi One Wire" grade was very easy to get.

Younger guys all flew those modern Jet A burning T-34's; we old timers flew the 100 octane AvGas powered B models. Even then, at VT-1, you knew why it was nick-named the "Teeny Weenie".



The North American T-28 Trojan is not a small aircraft. Used by both the USAF and the USN for pilot training beginning in the 1950s. Almost 2000 were built.

At Saufley Field in VT-1, we were hangared next to VT-5 and their T-28Cs, the carrier qualification birds. We flew the T-34 with no radio communication, but the T-28's got to talk to the tower. When the T-28's were taxiing, all T-34s had to stop, yield and let them pass. They ruled the field.

An idling T-28 R-1820 radial engine sounds mean, powerful, and macho. They would rumble by you in your idling T-34's IO-470 engine that sounded like a kitten purring. You had to look up to these birds when they passed and you saw the older oil and grease stained flight suits on these T-28 student pilots...who even looked older. Then you looked at your fresh off-the-rack spotless flight suit and truly knew you were a rookie in this flying business. But six months later, you would be back to Saufley in your now dirty flight suit taxiing those same VT-5 T-28's with the tail hooks feeling quite salty and superior; and you knew exactly what the T-34 pilots were thinking.





ASSOCIATION MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT



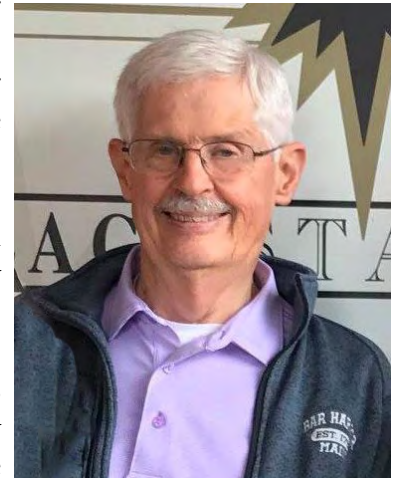
CAPT Ralph “Randy” Hotton, USN (Ret.)

In today’s world, where airplanes and helicopters are woven so intrinsically into the fabric of our culture, we take aviation for granted. But this wasn’t the case for the world in which Randy Hotton grew up. Born in Detroit during World War II, Randy witnessed the aviation boom take off during his childhood and with it, his dreams of being in the sky among the aircraft. While his friends collected sports trading cards, Randy collected airplane cards and built models. Living near the Light Guard Armory on Eight Mile Road in Detroit, World War II Army airplanes flew directly over Randy’s house, furthering his fascination with these flying machines.



ENS Randy Hotton right after his first solo flight at Saufly Field (circa 1966).

In 1953, Randy experienced his first commercial flight in an Eastern Airlines “Connie” from Willow Run to Florida. During the climb, the Captain announced that he would be shifting the engine superchargers from Low to High and told the passengers it might cause some noise. Randy was fascinated by the noise and the changing flame patterns from the engine’s exhaust. Noticing his interest, a flight attendant invited him to visit the flight deck. The Captain and the Flight Engineer briefed the eager nine-year-old on the power instruments. Randy’s 20 minutes in the cockpit further sparked his interest in aviation and helped to solidify his plans for his future.



CAPT Randy Hotton, USN (Ret.)

When his family moved to Troy Township, they relocated near the Berz Airport. Like most kids with an interest in flying in those days, Randy rode his bike to the airport almost daily to watch planes take off and land. Whenever possible, he would fly in the right seat in his father’s company plane, a Lockheed 12A. Here Randy learned how to communicate with air traffic controllers on the aircraft radios.



1965 Solo Flight at Willow Run

After graduating from Troy High School in 1961, Randy began studies at Michigan State University, majoring in Mechanical Engineering. However, throughout his four years at MSU, his heart was never really in engineering. Randy wanted to be a pilot.

In 1965, as the war in Vietnam became more intense, Randy knew he would soon be eligible for the draft. Taking his destiny into his own hands, in March 1965, Randy responded to a Navy Pilot Recruiting advertisement in the MSU student

newspaper. Easily passing all of the preliminary screening tests, he began taking private flight lessons at the Willow Run Airport in his spare time. He soloed for the first time on May 8, 1965.

In his last year at MSU, Randy met Lu-esta “Lou” Strader, a swimmer from MSU. She was dating one of his friends...but six months later Lou and Randy became a thing and got married relatively quickly as they knew Randy (and just about everybody else in flight school) would be heading for Vietnam. Accordingly, Lou quit school, moved to Pensacola and they were married December 31, 1966. Randy was in VT-1, Lou was 20 and they have been married for 55 years!!



Randy and Lou...then and now.

After graduating from MSU, Randy passed his Aviation Candidate Flight Physical and was notified he would begin active duty in mid-1966 at the Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Florida. In June 1966, Randy reported to NAS Pensacola and began the eleven-week strenuous ordeal known as Aviation Officer Candidate School. The school was designed to test a potential candidate’s motivation to be a pilot and a leader in the US Navy. The drop-out rate was high and many potential candidates failed to endure the “boot camp” atmosphere and constant pressures...but not Randy.

Randy graduated pilot training with top honors as “Best in his Class” in spring, 1968. Following this, he was selected to fly the still new P-3A Orion and received orders to VP-45 at NAS Jacksonville, Fl. In 1969 the squadron deployed to Southeast Asia where he was awarded the Air Medal for “Extraordinary Achievement in Direct Support of Combat Operations in North and South Vietnam.”



CVN-65's COD aircraft.

Later, Randy progressed to Patrol Plane Commander and flew patrols in Sicily, the Azores, Bermuda, and Iceland.; all the while performing ground duties as Navigation Officer and Maintenance Admin Officer among others. In addition, he was selected as a P-3 Instructor Pilot where his knowledge and skills were used to train other pilots in aircraft operations and mission accomplishment. Because of his enthusiasm, operational

knowledge, and ability to communicate, Randy was selected for his next tour to recruit and evaluate



LT Randy Hotton (center), PPC VP-45 Crew 12 circa 1971.

candidates for training as naval aviators.

Randy reported to the Naval Recruiting District Detroit in the fall of 1971. Randy’s success at recruiting Navy Pilots and Flight Officers earned him the highest honors from the Navy Recruiting Command. This was an accomplishment of major significance given the widespread anti-war activity on college campuses occurring at the time.

After three years as a Navy Recruiter, he received orders to report to the (then)



Four Generations of Hotton military service. CAPT Randy holds his now grown grandson Ralph (USMC Afganistan) and is flanked by his Dad (R - WW-II Army) and his son (far L - Army pilot Gulf war).

only nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in the fleet, the USS *Enterprise* (CVN-65). There he flew the Carrier On-Board Delivery (or COD) and qualified as Officer of the Deck, one of only five officers on the *Enterprise* so qualified.

As was typical during this time, the draw-down from the war in Vietnam found the services overstuffed with pilots and few precious flying positions available. At this time, Randy elected to leave the active Navy and join the Navy Reserve. He was assigned to Selfridge ANGB to fly the P-3 as an Instructor Pilot. Promotions to both Lieutenant Commander and Commander enabled him to assume command of the P-3 unit.

Key follow-on assignments included the Armed Forces Staff College, a billet on the Commander Naval Forces Europe Reserve Staff in Southfield, MI and at CINCUSNAVEUR Headquarters in London, England. He was selected as the First Commanding Officer of CVN-6903, the USS *Eisenhower's* augmentation unit. His performance in these assignments earned him the well-deserved promotion to Captain.

“... Randy has pursued his passion and dedication to flying and aviation throughout his entire life. His love for flying, airplanes, and aviation started at an early age and continues to this day. Not only has he made his passion of flying into a career, he has actively worked throughout his life to promote the love of flying to new generations of flyers”

Randy retired from naval duty after 26 years of sustained, active and reserve service. To this day, Randy continues his aviation career as the Falcon Fleet Captain at USA Jet Airlines at the Willow Run Airport,

Randy has continuously pursued his passion and dedication to flying and aviation throughout his entire life. His love for flying, airplanes, and aviation started at an early age and continues to this day. Not only has he made his passion of flying into a career, he has actively worked throughout his life to promote the love of flying to new generations of flyers; reflected in his role as a Certified Flight Instructor and mentor to many new pilots.

Randy also plays vital roles with the Yankee Air Mu-



Of over 12,000 built for WW-II, only 10 B-17s remain airworthy. The Yankee Lady is one of those ten and Randy has flown 330 hours in this aircraft.

seum being a very active long-term Museum Member, Treasurer, Interim-Executive Director, and currently a member of the Board of Directors. He also flies the B-17 *Yankee Lady*, in which he has 330 flight hours, and the C-47 *Hairless Joe*, in which he has 600 hours flying!

Captain Hotton was inducted into the Michigan Aviation Hall of Fame. He joins the ranks of many famous

and well-deserving individuals who will forever be remembered for making their mark on Michigan Aviation History. Just recently, Randy was given the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award by the FAA for 50 years of aviation achievement.



In this 2020 photo, Randy displays his Wright Brothers Master Pilot certificates.

This award is named after the Wright Brothers, the first US pilots, to recognize individuals who have exhibited professionalism, skill, and aviation expertise for at least 50 years while piloting aircraft as “Master Pilots”.

The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award recognizes pilots who have demonstrated professionalism, skill and aviation expertise by maintaining safe operations for 50 or more years. Recipients are awarded a certificate and a lapel pin and are recognized in the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award - Roll of Honor [HERE](#).



In this June 2021 photo at Willow Run, Randy proudly displays his 1966 Mustang convertible in front of a C-1A Trader COD aircraft which is the same model as the one he flew on and off the USS Enterprise.

Randy is the co-author of the book [Images of Aviation: Willow Run](#).

A Special Mini-Report This Just In

A New MPA Aircraft

There is a new kid on the block and it is the P-72 Maritime Patrol Aircraft by Leonardo S.p.A.. Who?

These guys are an Italy-based, but multinational, company specializing in aerospace, defence and security. The first four P-72s went to the Italian Air Force (IAF) and are based in Sigonella. Originally the IAF was going to replace their aging Atlantique aircraft with the P-8A, but that turned out to be too expensive a project for them; plus they believe the submarine threat in the Med is minimal. So they



A new IAF P-72 flying formation with the older Atlantique.

chose the P-72 which is a militarized version of the ATR-72 commercial aircraft, modified by Leonardo. Patrol missions flown by the P-72 are different from those that were performed by the Atlantique, as the aircraft has a shorter endurance, almost half that of its predecessor, and a cruising speed of around 200kts; slightly slower than the Atlantique.



The Turkish Navy is now receiving the first few of about 10 P-72s (see above). Four of them, unlike the IAF's, will have ASW electronic packages (including MAD).

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" Imhof



PJ Imhof provided the picture of himself in full 1950s era survival gear. Photo taken at the 2018 Pensacola Reunion.

Jack Keane

On 15 May, Jack Keane, Our Secretary, was inducted into the Kappa Alpha Order and Military Division of the Kappa Alpha Order. [Google it](#), you will be impressed. Jack's certificate, presented at a ceremony is below.



Mini-Reunion and Memorial Service for Gene Graham

On April 1st, Don and Carol Ahlstrand, Pooh Bear and Victoria Mitchell, Gary and Emily Rogers and Jay and Debbie Seward met at the home of John and Debby "Coalson" Gatewood in Pensacola, Florida. A great time was had by all, and not a lie (well not many) was told. They reminisced about their time in VP-45 from 1971-1976 collectively and how Gene Graham influenced their lives.



In the image at the top, mini-reunion attendees relax at the Gatewood home. The below image was taken outside the Graham home following the Celebration of Life service for Gene. Left to right: Debby and John Gatewood, Doug and Victoria Mitchell, Jerry Graham, Rosalyn Waldron, Jay Seward, Gary and Emily Rogers, Carol and Don Ahlstrand and Deb Seward

On April 2nd, they all attended Gene's Memorial Service where Doug spoke about Gene's leadership and larger than life personality at the Fairhope United Methodist Church in Fairhope, Alabama. Following the Ceremony, Jerry and the Family hosted them at Jerry and Gene's home for a Celebration of Life and refreshments. Genie K would have been proud!

Gerry Grieser

Gerald "Gerry" Grieser had a birthday recently, turning the great age of 80, on 28 March. Why is 80 a "great age?" Because, of course, he is now a lifetime member of the VP-45 Association. So...CONGRATULATIONS to our newest lifetime member!! Sorry...no pictures of the party were provided; although, rumor has it that it went on til the wee hours of the morning that we used to refer to as zero-dark-thirty. Gerry was a pilot in the squadron from 1968 - 1970.



Victoria and Doug Mitchell joined Anne and RADM Bill Pendley for lunch back in May. As you remember from a previous Member in The Spotlight article, Bill Pendley did all three of his VP tours as a Pelican in VP-45. He was Skipper '75 - '76.



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

A lot of you likely saw the above "Flyer" that Al LaBella sent out regarding a mini-reunion in Jax for September 11th. Unfortunately, we had to cancel what was looking to be a well attended get together, due to the serious COVID Delta variant spike in the Southeast...especially Florida. Everybody stay safe and keep those fingers crossed for 2022!!

Master Chiefs Bolin and Bollinger

On Wednesday 28 April, Doug Mitchell visited two great retired Master Chief P-3 Flight Engineers in two separate Assisted Living Facilities. First he spend approximately thirty minutes with 96 year old John Bollinger at the Remington House in West Jacksonville. His dementia is worse but they had a great conversation about their time in VP-45 in Sigonella in 1973!



Then he visited Jim Bolin, also a Pelican from 1982-1985, at Allegro in Fleming Island for an hour; he needs our prayers. Jim and I served as Flight Engineers as Chief's in VP-5 1978-1981.

Master Chief Bollinger, our oldest Pelican is in the picture above right. Doug and Master Chief Bolin are in the picture just to the left.

SQUADRON & COMMUNITY NEWS

Patrol Squadron 45 Hosted III Marine Expeditionary Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team

by: SN Thomas Higgins, Patrol Squadron 45 Public Affairs

KADENA AIR BASE. VP-45 hosted members of the III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team, conducting training to familiarize themselves with the P-8A Poseidon's weapons systems and aircraft hazards, June 4. The training consisted of aircraft safety and egress familiarization training and ordnance familiarization led by the Pelican's Aviation Ordnance team.

The purpose of this joint training was to expose Marine EOD personnel with the P-8A weapons system and capabilities, to include safe handling of munitions should joint operations between units occur in the future. Secondarily, this exercise was to increase and promote interoperability between forces.



III MEF EOD Team

CDR Seth R. Eisenmenger, Executive Officer VP-45, spoke to the III MEF EOD personnel, stressing the importance of "Interoperability between units as well as establishing strong relationships between people in order to accomplish the mission."

Patrol Squadron FOUR FIVE Holds 79th Change of Command

by: SN Thomas Higgins, Patrol Squadron 45 Public Affairs

KADENA AIR BASE, Japan - Patrol Squadron (VP)

45 held a Change of Command ceremony on Kadena Air Base, Japan, June 7.



CDR Larwood is passing the torch as Commanding Officer of VP-45 to CDR Seth R. Eisenmenger

As part of naval tradition, CDR Seth R. Eisenmenger relieved CDR Charles A. Larwood III as Commanding Officer, Patrol Squadron 45 while forward deployed to the U.S. 7th Fleet Area of Operations.

Larwood, a native of Roswell, GA, is a 2004 graduate of the United States Naval Academy. He earned his Naval Aviator wings in December 2006, where he went on to serve tours with VP-45, VP-8, and VX-20 before being assigned command of the Pelicans. Larwood assumed command upon returning home from a deployment to U.S. 7th Fleet in June 2020.

Eisenmenger is a native to Clifton, New Jersey. He received his commission through NROTC at the State University of New York, Maritime College in 2003, and was designated as a Naval Flight Officer in December 2005. His operational tours include time with VP-8, VP-45, VP-47 and VP-30. Most recently, he served with the U.S. Southern Command.

CDR Larwood will be assuming the position of Commanding Officer, Air Test and Evaluation Squadron TWENTY (VX-20), based out of Naval Air Station Patuxent River, MD.

VP-45 Finds Missing Mariner Near Micronesia

by: SN Thomas Higgins

While deployed to Kadena, VP-45 located a missing mariner during a successful search and rescue (SAR) mission from Andersen Air Force Base (AFB), Guam, June 7. A mariner on board a 19-foot long skiff was reported missing on June 5 off the coast of the Federated States of Micronesia. VP-45 received tasking from the Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) Guam and executed a search of an assigned search box 900 nautical miles southeast in the waters off the coast of Guam.

After searching for nearly one hour, CAC-7 reported sighting a vessel fitting the description given of the missing mariner. According to Lt. Michael Clark, CAC-7's Tactical Coordinator, "An open white 19-foot-long skiff with a single outboard motor and a chainsaw on board."



Adrift mariner found by CAC-7

The crew then proceeded to tactically deploy a SAR kit containing a raft with food, water and first aid accessories, in the vicinity of the isolated skiff. CAC-7 then contacted FSS *Micronesia*, the surface vessel participating in the search, roughly 25 nautical miles from their location. The *Micronesia* arrived at approximately 3:15 p.m. local time to rescue the stranded mariner.

CAC-7 remained on scene throughout the rescue by the Federated States of Micronesia National Police and were "thrilled to hear that the mariner is doing well after receiving medical attention," added Clark.

Navy Considering Reopening Adak

Anchorage, Alaska (KTUU) - It has been nearly 24

years since the Navy closed its airbase at Adak. Yet, it continues to show signs of life. The Marines arrived in Adak in September 2019 as part of a joint exercise with the Navy and Coast Guard to show how troops respond to emergencies in the Arctic. But the exercise may have shown something else--the importance of a military presence in the Aleutian Islands.

"It is enormously strategic in terms of really being the Gateway to the Asia-Pacific and the Gateway to the Arctic," said Senator Dan Sullivan, a member of the Armed Services Committee. The Navy is considering reopening the base. "The Secretary of the Navy, (Kenneth Braithwaite) when he was out in Alaska this past fall, and I hosted him," Sullivan said. "He was looking for places for positioning Naval assets and of course ice breakers."

That view has apparently not changed even with new Navy and Defense Secretaries. The Army has not yet released its new Arctic strategy. The other branches of the military have already done so. What they have in common is increasing their presence in the region. Air Force fighters intercepted a Russian bomber near Alaska last June. It's the most recent encounter that has taken place over the last few years. Sullivan is not surprised tensions have increased in the Asia-Pacific.

"The Pentagon lost sight of this," Sullivan said. "They didn't recognize what I'm calling, and what everybody is now starting to see, as the return of great power competition with regard to Russia and their very aggressive activities in the Arctic, and now China." A former naval base in the Aleutian Islands may be part of the solution to defending the Arctic and the nation. Senator Sullivan also said plans continue moving forward for a deep-water port at Nome that could handle Navy ships, and ice breakers. Plus, the Air Force is considering placing more air refueling tankers in Alaska.

Boeing Nets \$1.6B for P-8A Poseidon Submarine Hunters

Arlington, Virginia, March 31, 2021 — The U.S. Navy today awarded Boeing a \$1.6 billion production contract for the next 11 P-8A Poseidon aircraft. Nine aircraft will join the U.S. Navy fleet and two will go to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), a cooperative partner in the P-8A joint program since 2009. The contract brings the total number of

U.S. Navy P-8A aircraft under contract to 128 and the RAAF total to 14.

USN Completes Airworthiness Test of Pod-Mounted Towed Decoy for the P-8A

An Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 20 P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) successfully completed an airworthiness test of a pod-mounted radio frequency countermeasure (RFCM) prototype March 12. The first-of-its-kind radio frequency defense decoy could allow the P-8A to thwart enemy radio frequency missile attacks.

Getting the pod into testing, in just over a year, took a complete team effort. The team developed the shell design based on the certified AGM-84 Harpoon missile, and then incorporated unique tracks and housing to fit and deploy the decoy.



A P-8 Poseidon from VP-40 conducts the first successful coordinated P-8 Harpoon launch in Sixth Fleet history, May 31, 2021.

As an anti-ship missile, the Harpoon gives the P-8 “the ability to challenge enemy naval movements, either in support of offensive operations or in order to defend friendly forces,” the US Navy’s Sixth Fleet said in a release.



The RFCM system consists of a small form factor electronic warfare jammer, a high-powered amplifier and the AN/ALE-55 Fiber-Optic Towed Decoy.

Navy CAPT Jonathan Lipps, who directed the exercise, said it wasn’t “targeted against a specific country or threat” but had evolved in response to state and non-state actors’ use of drones, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles. “It’s about protecting both maritime units and the land environment from the missile threat, not about, if you like, offensive missile capabilities. It’s about defensive missile capability,” said British Royal Navy Rear Adm. James Morley, deputy commander of Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO,

which conducted the exercise.

P-8A Conducted a First-Of-Its-Kind Missile Launch in Europe’s High North

US Navy P-8A Poseidons launched AGM-84D Harpoon missiles in Europe for the first time last month during an exercise off of northern Norway, another sign of the increasing military focus on the strategically important region. The P-8s, widely considered the best maritime patrol planes in operation, launched the missiles at a target barge near the Andøya Space Defense facility in northern Norway during exercise At-Sea Demonstration/Formidable Shield.

Germany Signs on for Five P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft

The German Ministry of Defense signed a letter of offer and acceptance for five Boeing P-8A Poseidon aircraft under the U.S. Government’s Foreign Military Sales (FMS) process. With this order, Germany becomes the eighth customer of the multi-mission maritime surveillance aircraft, joining the United States, Australia, India, the United Kingdom, Norway, Korea and New Zealand.

MAILBAG

Hey Jack!

Great edition of the *Pelican Post*. Hats off to Jack and Bill for a quality publication. The sea stories of VP-45 personnel are what make it so special. Some I recognize, and some I don't, but all are interesting and great reading. Thanks for all you do to put this publication together.

Fred Haynes

Hey Jack!

Another great issue of "The Newsletter" - enjoyed reading it! What an extraordinary year and I hope that wherever the future takes us, that it's to a better world and we are all better because of it!!

Jim Britts

Hey Jack!

Another enjoyable read last night, thank you.

I thought I would follow up on the two RAF stories in the Squadron and Community News pages to explain a couple of points that might not be known to the members and add some extra information. Please feel free to publish it in the Newsletter if you think the members would like to read it.

First, the meaning of MRA after the name Poseidon



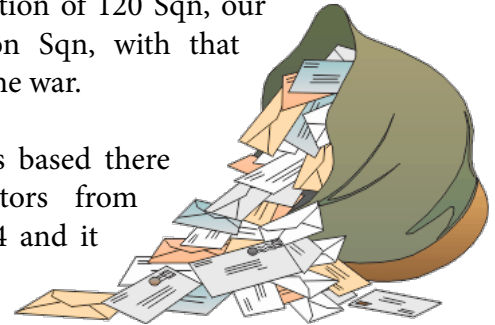
Cover of our last Newsletter.
(Click it to read it).

- Maritime Reconnaissance and Attack - and the number 1 - because it is our first version, or Mark, of the Poseidon. Should there ever be a P-8B and we bought it, it would be a Mark 2 and, therefore, become MRA2. If the P-8A gets upgrades as the P-3C did with Update I, II, III & IV, we would add a letter A, B, C etc. to MRA1, as

we did with the Nimrod MR2 that became MR2P when the refueling probe was added in 1982.

In addition to honouring the 'Icelandic capital and its people', the name of our 4th Poseidon, 'Spirit of Reykjavik', is also to mark the very close association of 120 Sqn, our first Poseidon Sqn, with that city during the war.

The Sqn was based there with Liberators from 1942 to 1944 and it was from there that the Sqn



became the top scoring ASW Sqn in the RAF with 14 submarines sunk and a share of three more; all while flying from Iceland.

Our third aircraft is named after Squadron Leader Terence Bulloch DSO and Bar, DFC and Bar - the 'Bar' symbolizing the award of a second DSO and DFC. He flew with 120 Sqn from August to December '42 during which he sank two submarines and attacked and damaged many more. On one sortie towards the end of his time with 120 Sqn he was supporting a convoy when he sank *U-611*, attacked 5 more of the wolf pack with depth charges and machine gun fire, damaging one that subsequently crashed into another U-boat and sank. He later sank a third submarine with another sqn and ended the war with the most submarine sightings, most attacks and the most submarines sunk of any Coastal Command crew captain (Mission Commander).

Earlier in the war, before joining 120, he was flying Hudsons on shipping protection sorties in the English Channel during the evacuation of the British, French and Belgian armies from Dunkirk. During these he shot down two German aircraft with the Hudson's forward firing guns for which he was awarded his first Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). His two Distinguished Service Order (DSO) awards and his second DFC were awarded for bravery during his 6 months with 120 Sqn. The DSO is one award level higher than the DFC and, at the time, one below the Victoria Cross, which is our equiva-

lent to the Medal of Honor.

Perhaps I should add that the first two aircraft are named in honour of the County (Morayshire) in which the Poseidon is and the Nimrods were based and the nearest city (Elgin) to the Poseidon base at RAF Lossiemouth.

Our fifth aircraft has been delivered and it is named 'Fulmar' to commemorate an earlier existence of RAF Lossiemouth as a Royal Naval Air Station when it was known as HMS *Fulmar*. All RNAS bases were named after sea birds and were commissioned as if they were a ship, hence the HMS.



RAF Poseidon MRA1 ZP805 taxis from the runway after a training mission. The RAF's fifth P-8A, this aircraft has been named "Fulmar" after the Royal Naval Station Fulmar which took over the base from the RAF in 1946 and operated as a deck landing school until 1972 when it returned back to the Royal Air Force as RAF Lossiemouth.

Our 6th Poseidon is expected in August and we should have all 9 by Christmas this year. The names of these four aircraft have still to be announced. Our second Sqn, 201, should stand up in the Autumn, but no actual date yet.

Rosie and I remain well and have had our first Corona Virus jabs. We have blocked off August 2022 for a trip to the States for the reunion.

Rosie joins me in wishing all in the Association well. Stay safe and avoid the virus.

Bob and Rosie Hall

Hey Jack!

Gad zooks!! Another superb production! Absolutely a gift for all VP-45'ers to enjoy and reminisce with pleasure (and a little wishing from this oldster.)

Mort Eckhouse

Hey Jack!

Thanks guys! Very well done! On behalf of everyone, ... another great one!

Paul Nadeau

Hey Jack!

After about 50 years and 16,000 hours of flying the P-3 and C-130, both active duty and as a contractor pilot, I finally retired from NAVAIR in 2018. The last few years, 2006 onward, I was involved in Airworthiness engineering at NAVAIR and have now retired to warmer climes, Charleston SC. I sure miss the sound of those T-56s, but enjoy keeping in touch with the Association. Looking forward to the next reunion.

Tom Clarke

Hey Jack!

I thought this piece of trivia might be of interest to the membership at-large - Why the Navy's Iconic 'Crackerjack' Uniform Has a Square Collar. You can access the video [HERE](#).

Thanks to all the Bermuda gang that founded and supported the Association and a special thanks to you, Bill and Jack, for all your work over the years. You made a difference. All the best,

Bill Pendley

Hey Jack!

I am not sure that many alumni are aware of a very close call my crew (3) had late in '64 or early '65. Our crew was on a GCA after a 28-hour wake cycle, we were transiting a thin layer of fog about 60' above the deck coming over the St. John's, we strayed and the #1 prop struck a vertical I-beam on a barge anchored along the shore; part of one blade, the bottom of the nacelle and a chunk of the flap were all involved. The event was written up in *Approach* magazine, I can send you a copy of the article if you would like to employ it for some purpose. Dick Gray was in the middle seat; it was a memorable day.

Ed's Note. John added the following detail:

The experience was chilling. I was seated in the radio compartment looking out with one eye. Everything happened in a flash. I felt the power surge and saw the I-beam and barge ... there may have been men standing on it. The plane banked hard to starboard - #1 undulating violently and I heard loud voices in the cockpit. We quickly ascended through the fog and leveled off VFR while everyone regained composure.

PPC LCDR Jerry Jones advised Center that we weren't landing anywhere that wasn't VFR. We climbed to about 5K feet and put on our parachute harnesses and hardhats while determining where to land. We eventually settled on Warner-Robins in GA. The rest of the flight was uneventful. Chief Gray, our FE (then AD1) says that LT Fussell's (2P) quick reflex to banked starboard saved us.

Bill Fussell was the most skilled Naval Aviator I ever flew with. He was somewhat unorthodox and sometimes pushed the officer conduct envelope. Gray and I could tell some great tales about him, but most wouldn't serve well in the *Pelican Post*! Sadly he was killed a few months later in the crash of a civilian PT-22 owned by the Jax Navy Flying Club where he and I were both members. He was being checked out in the PT by one of the instructors. Their engine died at a couple hundred feet on climb out. They had no

options but to go down in dense palmettos. Both five-point harnesses tore loose from the airframe and neither pilot survived. Bill left a wife and four little kids. I've often wished that I could meet those kids and tell them some stories about their dad.

Navy 151367 also took a piece of prop shrapnel through the fuselage and into the HF radio about 24" in front of my face. A small square patch was riveted over the hole. 151367 ended its service about 25 years later at one of the Icelandic Air Stations where it served as a station transport. Chief Gray obtained some pictures of the demolition and sent them my way - you could still see the small patch on the mangled fuselage!

John Covert

Hey Jack!

When I was graduating from AOCS I almost picked the A-6 over the P-3. A friend, who has been like a brother to me since AOCS (Charlie Levinge), he and I had to decide which aircraft we wanted to fly in before going off to Nav school. He and I were in the top of our class (I think the top 5 or 8) and there were only a small number of birds with slots available. But being in the top of our class we had a good chance of getting the aircraft we wanted if the number of slots were still available when it was our turn to select. However, I was really wrestling with which bird I wanted since I really liked the A-6 but my first wife wanted to be close to her elderly mom and the P-3, which I also liked, gave us that opportunity to also pick a squadron in Jacksonville which was only 6 hours away from my wife's mom (and my family) who lived in Atlanta.

Charlie was pushing me to go P-3s and so when it was my turn to pick an aircraft there was one slot each left for the A-6 and P-3 and I decided to pick the P-3. After flying in that bird for over 8 years and working on support programs for the P-3 at NAVAIR/PMA for about 7 years, I don't regret my decision, but I do wonder every once in a blue moon how my Navy

[Click Here to Send a "Mail Bag" Letter to:](#)

"Hey Jack!"

career would have fared if I had picked the A-6.

Ed Dumas

Hey, Jack!

While looking for the “long flight in a P5M” picture (I found it but not the names), I came across this picture of VP-45 officers that LT Matt Matherson (my



PPC) created back in 1956 when we were at NS Coco Solo, Panama. This is only half of the ones he did but I can't find the picture of the other half. This one (below) might be something to add to the web site. Matt is deceased now but he was the big gun for our cruise book, NARMID, when we went to Corpus Christi to introduce midshipmen to our bit of NAVAIR in 1956 and '57 and he was a great cartoonist/caricaturist.

Charley Caldwell



TREASURER'S TWO CENTS



Note the 2022 Reunion Expenses listed in the statement below. These funds were expended to cover the production costs of challenge coins and lapel pins we have designed for the next reunion. Some will be gratis and

some will be for sale .

Please...those in contact with past VP-45 squadron mates, find out if they are part of Association and, if not, ask them to join. You can guarantee them that someone is looking for them to catch up and just know they are still in their thoughts! God Bless.

AOC Michael Riley (Ret.)

PATRON FOUR FIVE ASSOCIATION TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT

All Funds	01 April 2021	\$28,231.99
Income:		
Dues	\$288.89	
Interest	7.04	
Misc/Refunds	52.00	
Total Income	\$347.93	
Expenses:		
Printing/Postage	\$0.00	
2022 Reunion Exp	1,524.00	
Misc	52.00	
Website Fees	0.00	
Total Expenses	\$1,576.00	
Net Income		-\$1,228.07
Total Cash Assets	30 June 2021	\$27,003.92

BACK IN THE DAY

Missed Approach

by: Approach Magazine

Patrol flight crews are among many units in today's Navy that are frequently called upon to put in exceptionally long working days. An eight-to-ten hour patrol usually requires one-to-two hours of briefing and preflight before takeoff and the same amount of time for postflight and debriefing after landing. Any way you cut it, a very long working day, approaching 15 hours, is the result. Strange as it may seem, patrol crews occasionally become involved in marathons of 24 hours or more, usually spending the last 10 or 12 hours of this period in flight!

Situations like this may develop somewhat as follows:

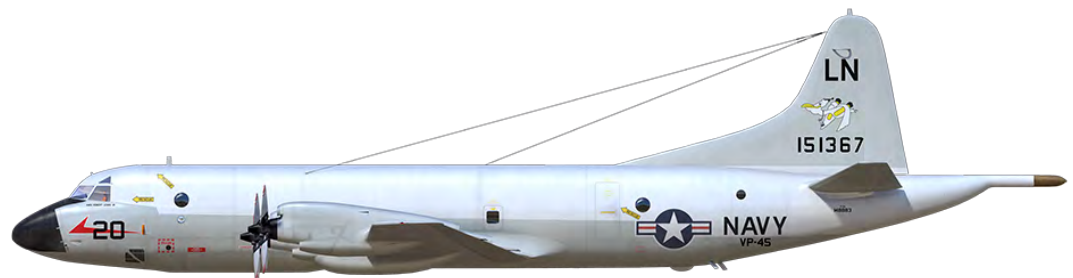
A crew reports to the squadron area at 0800 to begin preparations for assuming the Ready Alert at 1000. After checking out the aircraft and getting an OpCon briefing, everything is set. Now it's just a question of waiting out the 24-hour watch.

During normal working hours, the crew will probably remain in the squadron area, working at their regular ground jobs. However, they may secure to on-station quarters earlier than usual ... say around 1500. A few may be able to take naps at this time of day, but most of the crew, not being tired or sleepy, will probably sit around playing cards, reading or watching TV. The evening meal consumes an hour or so and then it's back to more of the same ... unless there is a good flick at the station theater. By 2100, it's time to start thinking about hitting the sack ... and then it happens.

The plane commander receives a call to launch the Ready Alert!

A short time later the P-3 is airborne, enroute to the contact area. Around midnight it arrives on station. Now the crew is starting its workday in earnest ... about 16 hours after coming on duty. Three hours later, a message arrives requesting the P-3 to remain on station as long as possible. Upon receiving this, the pilot sets up two-engine operation, computes his off-station time, and transmits it to OpCon.

After what seems like an eternity, the black horizon begins to lighten faintly in the east as dawn approaches. A short time later, the first rays of sunlight begin beaming into the cockpit, further irritating eyes that are already red and burning from the effects of fatigue and staring for hours on end at lighted instrument panels.



The arrival of dawn brings with it an almost irresistible longing for sleep ... regardless of the circumstances. Off-station time finally arrives, and the P-3 begins climbing out for the trip home. The weather forecast for ETA looks good ... "Improving rapidly, forecast high scattered by 0900, visibility 10 miles." At least they can look forward to a no-sweat approach and landing.

Shortly after arriving over home base, the plane commander receives a special weather observation. The station is still blanketed by fog with visibility at ½ mile. Precision approach minimums for the landing runway are 100 feet and ¼ mile.

Then GCA establishes radar contact and the approach begins. The pilot and copilot have been awake now for about 27 hours and in the air for almost half this period. The stage is set ... for most anything.

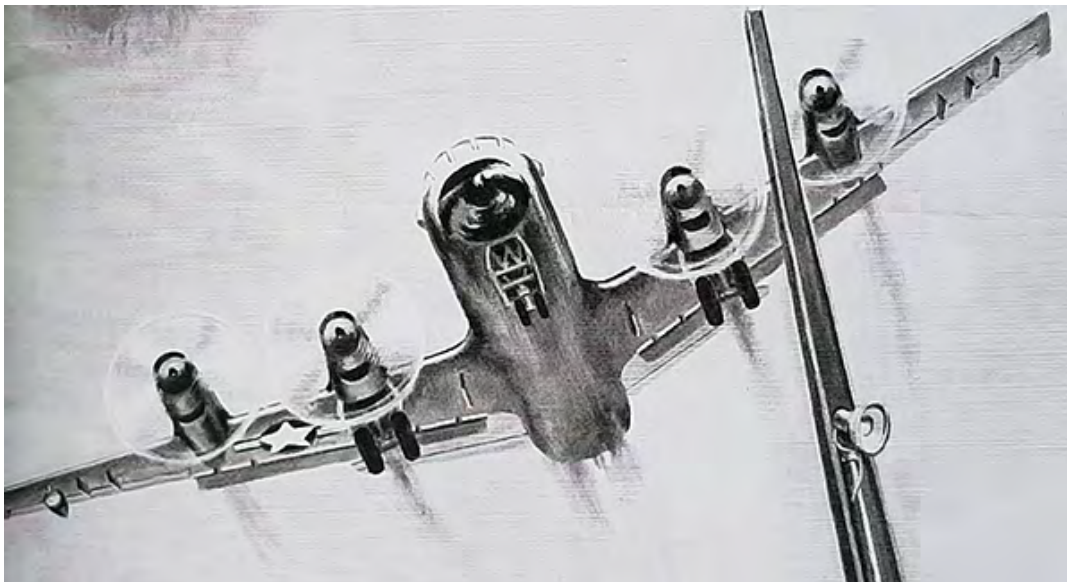
For a closer look at what transpired in the next few

minutes, let's examine the pilot's statement.

"The radar altimeter was set at 100 feet. After several vectors by GCA I commenced the final approach five miles out from the runway. During the approach everything was normal. My speed throughout was 130-140 knots. On final, GCA said 'Take a wave off.'

"At this time, I leveled the wings and added power, then called for Max Power. With Max Power on I felt the port side of the aircraft hit something and felt a port yaw and vibration. I looked out the window and noted the No. 1 engine vibrating and called, 'Feather No. 1!' The flight engineer quickly feathered this engine with the emergency shutdown handle. I observed the pressure altitude to be 200 feet at this time and the aircraft was climbing. During the entire approach I did not see the field or the obstruction I hit. I was on instruments throughout.

"I raised the gear just before we broke out on top of the 600-foot cloud layer. The No. 1 engine was fully feathered and the vibration had ceased. We left the flaps at the takeoff and approach position where they had been throughout the approach."



Upon seeing the column, the copilot grabbed the yoke and pulled up and to the right.

The copilot was looking outside, trying to spot the runway as the aircraft approached minimums. Here is his account of those few seconds just before and after the aircraft struck the fog-shrouded object.

"As we approached ceiling minimums, we were

"With Max Power on I felt the port side of the aircraft hit something and felt a port yaw and vibration. I looked out the window and noted the No. 1 engine vibrating and called, 'Feather No. 1!' The flight engineer quickly feathered this engine with the emergency shutdown handle."

slightly above glide path. We set up a fairly good sink rate ... in the neighborhood of 12-1500 feet per minute. As we approached minimums, I called, 'Minimums.' Noticing the red warning light on my radar altimeter come on at practically the same instant, I said 'Minimums' twice more. At this time, GCA called 'Take a wave off centerline too far right.'

"I was now looking into the fog, attempting to see the field. I saw two vertical columns in the fog at about this time. It was apparent that we were going to strike these columns and I grabbed the yoke with both hands and pulled up and to the right. The port side of the aircraft struck these columns and a violent vibration ensued. I saw that the aircraft, nevertheless, was climbing and airspeed was normal.

To the best of my recollection the pilot had initiated wave off power just before we hit the columns."

On the way to an alternate field, the pilot tested the aircraft at various speeds and configurations. The remainder of the flight was routine.

Examination of the GCA tape at home base revealed that the P-3 was on course and on glide path at one mile from touchdown.

About 10 seconds later, GCA reported "Going above, now slightly above, rising." The pilot responded by reducing power, but the resulting rate then became excessive ... about 12-1500 feet per minute. Four seconds later GCA waved off the aircraft because it was drifting too far left of the centerline.

Simultaneous with the instructions to wave off, the low level warning light (set for 100 feet) on the copilot's radar altimeter came ON. His pressure altimeter also indicated 100 feet at the time. Response to the wave off instruction was reasonably prompt. Power was applied to level off and then climb out in accordance with missed approach procedure.

Initial power was 1400 hp according to the flight engineer. Had the rate of descent been close to 500 feet per minute at the time, this power application would probably have been sufficient for level-off, but the P-3 was descending at at least twice this rate under instrument conditions with a fatigued pilot at the

ed 16.6 feet into the 50/1 approach slope.

The board felt that the pilot erred in not initially applying sufficient power to immediately establish a positive rate of climb when waving off. "An aircraft cannot descend on the glide slope to minimum altitude," it commented, "and then level off immediately, without going below due to the inertia of the mass." As a supplement to the normal GCA transmission "Approaching minimums," the board recommended a procedure for NATOPS whereby the copilot would call out "Approaching minimums" or "100 above minimums" during the approach.

The following strong contributing factors were present in this incident, according to the board:

- Fatigue and impaired judgment caused by lack of sleep.
- The location in the approach zone to the runway of an unauthorized obstruction.

A program of continuing review of instrument approach zones was recommended "to insure that ... objects do not conflict with the Criteria for a Standard Instrument Approach."

Perhaps the GCA outside observer's remark

provides the most fitting conclusion to this story. Upon seeing the P-3 sweep low over the floating dry dock and then merge back into the fog, he exclaimed excitedly to the men in the GCA trailer, "Holy mackerel, fellers, that was close!"

[Editor's note: This story was provided by John Covert as it appeared in the July 1965 issue of Approach magazine. See John's comments in the Mailbag section on page 24.]



The 43-foot I-beam extended 16.6 feet into the 50/1 approach slope.

controls.

Some two to four seconds after the initial power application, the pilot called for max power and began a pull-up. Impact with the I-beam an instant later provided an uncontestable indication that the aircraft was indeed well below the glide path. A second or two after impact, GCA called "Pull up, climb straight ahead to 1500 feet!"

During the investigation, it was determined that the 43-foot I-beam struck by the P-3 was attached to a floating dry dock that was temporarily moored at a pier on the perimeter of the air station. The exact position of the beam was 1070 feet from the approach end of the runway and 1570 feet from the normal touchdown point. This location put it within 40 feet of the ¼ mile visibility minimum and 380 feet to the left of the extended approach centerline. It penetrat-





September 2021 Obituaries

1950s



Marietta Fairchild

Marietta Lena Fairchild, 78, a long-time resident of Millbrook, died on February 13, 2021 at The Lutheran Care Center, Poughkeepsie, NY. Born in Manhattan, NY on May 19, 1942, Marietta was the daughter of the late Ralph and Gilda Russo.

Marietta is predeceased by her husband, Richard D. Fairchild, whom she married on September 23, 1962 at St. Joseph’s Church in Lake Ronkonkoma, NY. They were happily married for 52 years. Marietta was a devoted wife, mother, sister, aunt and grandmother.

She is survived by her daughters; Constance Fairchild of Mt. Kisco, NY, and Jacqueline Mastropietro and her husband John of Rosendale, NY; her grandchild, Mia Mastropietro of Rosendale, NY; her brother, Salvatore Russo and his wife JoAnn of Patchogue, NY and several nieces and nephews.

Kathleen Fraley Johnson “Kay” Kovach of Hoboken died at the age of 81 on Saturday, December 5, 2020 at Hospice of Golden Isles in Brunswick, Georgia after a long battle with Parkinson’s Disease. Mrs. Kovach was born in Virginia to Kathleen Fraley and Marvin Johnson.



Kay Kovach

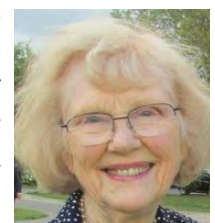
Miss Kay was a talented home cook, accomplished baker, and creative cake decorator. She loved living in Bermuda for three years with husband Rich; enjoyed being a homemaker, grade school room mother, girl

scout cookie chair, and disability advocate long before IDEA. Once the children were old enough, Miss Kay pursued her dream and became a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) working in a senior living center, for an allergist, and then for long time Waycross cardiologist Dr. Pomeroy. She also provided excellent care for her parents Katie and Marvin when they moved to Hoboken in 1987.

Miss Kay was active at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Waycross, in the CCW Quilting Group and assisting with the annual Magnolia Festival in the spring. In recent years Miss Kay participated in the Rock City Boxing program for people with Parkinson’s

Mrs. Kovach is survived by her husband of 64.5 years, Richard; children Rick, Kris, and Russell; ten grandchildren including Kristen, Andrew, and Kira; 15 great grandchildren; and last but not least her sister Ida. Miss Kay may have been small, but she was a mighty woman whose greatest joy was being surrounded by family and nourishing them with her love, caring spirit, and amazing food.

Margaret (“Megs”) Sorenson devoted her life to caring for family and friends and serving the Lord. Harry Sorenson was a Naval Aviator who swept Megs off her feet at a dance in Oakland. They married in February 1945. They celebrated 65 years of marriage Harry entered Glory in February 2010. Harry and Megs chose Calistoga, California after Harry had served 31 years in the Navy, which means Megs had served 31 years as a Navy wife. Megs’ Calistoga years numbered 46. Before Calistoga, Megs sup-



Megs Sorenson

ported Harry's 31 years as a pilot in the U.S. Navy. During their Navy years they lived in California, Guam, Bermuda, Hawaii, Virginia, Texas, Ohio, Florida and Nebraska, and they raised four children. Megs was preceded in death by her parents Will and Nellie, her sisters and brother, her husband Harry, and her grandson Noah.

1960s

Eileen Imhoff. It is with profound sadness and gratitude that we announce the passing of Eileen Marie Imhof, our loving and devoted wife, mother and friend, on July 7, 2021, following a lengthy battle with dementia. She left us peacefully at her residence in Pensacola, FL. She was 79 years young.



Eileen Imhoff

Born in Philadelphia, PA on November 18, 1941 to James and Marie McHale, Eileen relished being from the city of "Brotherly Love," and especially their sports teams of which she was an ardent "Phanatic" supporter. It was in Philly that she met her husband of 56 years, Patrick Imhof, Sr. The Navy would determine their places of residence for the next twenty years, landing them permanently in Pensacola, FL where they would raise their three children, with a brief change of location to Cleona, PA. Various places of employment brought her much pleasure and lifelong friends. That said, no job could compare to her favorite role of being a mom – and most especially a Gran to her six grandchildren.

Artistic, smart, and creative, Eileen was an A-1 cook, an avid reader, and an accomplished Tetris player, completing levels never before seen by modern youth. A favorite aunt, she was also a popular neighborhood mom on Atwood Drive; her devotion to kids was evident throughout all aspects of her life. A best friend amongst friends, she cherished any and all time spent with them.

Most of all, she loved her family and instilled in her children strong values that have served them well. If eternity is measured by memories treasured in the hearts of loved ones and friends, then Eileen will surely live on in us through all our lives.

Eileen is preceded in death by her parents, James and Marie McHale; sister, Marie Neil; brother, James

McHale; infant son, Stephen; and son-in-law, LCDR Mark Ehlers.

She is survived by her loving husband, Patrick Imhof, Sr.; her children, Sue Ehlers Burke (David), Pat Imhof, Jr. (Kristy), and Mike Imhof; her grandchildren, Katie Ortega (Logan), Ryan Ehlers, Betsy Summerlin (Andrew), Patrick, Kelly, and Sam Imhof; as well as Peggy, the perfect Pomeranian puppy from Pensacola who will profoundly mourn the loss of her puppy momma.

1970s

Gene Keith Graham of Fairhope, Alabama, passed away peacefully at his home on March 7, 2021, surrounded by his family. He was born to parents William Eugene and Norma Kate Graham on October 16, 1938, in Decatur, Mississippi. He graduated from Beulah Hubbard High and East Central Junior College, after which he joined the Naval Air Candidate Program, where he earned his Navy Pilot wings in Pensacola, Florida. Education was always a priority for Gene as he continued his studies during his career at the Naval Postgraduate School and earned his MBA from George Washington University.



Gene Graham



Gene as student circa 1959

While attending flight school in Pensacola, he met his life's love, Jerry Lynn Brown of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and they were married on February 22, 1960. For the next 25 years, Gene and Jerry lived throughout the US, as he flew varying patrol aircraft, culminating in command of a Maritime Patrol (P-3) squadron, VP 24 in Jacksonville, Florida. His time as a Pelican in VP-45 was during the mid-70s where he was assigned as the Operations Officer. His Navy career included tours in USS *Independence* (CV-62) and several senior staff roles at the Pentagon in Washington DC. He retired from the US Navy as a Captain (O-6) in 1983.

Following the Navy, Gene began his career as an Information Technology executive at Electronic Data Systems (EDS). Following a successful civilian career at EDS and several smaller firms, he and Jerry retired to Fairhope, Alabama in 2003. Never one to sit idle, he continued to support his community as a member of SCORE, a non-profit dedicated to educating and mentoring small businesses. He was also active in the Fairhope Rotary and involved at Fairhope United Methodist Church.

Family and the church were the foundation of his life, and he was the proud father of three children, five grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter. Time with his family and friends was a constant joy in his life, as was his service to the church. He was the “cornerstone” of his family and stayed connected to his mother and father, aunts, uncles, and his brothers and sister. Gene’s engagement with family, friends and community set an example of what it meant to live life and be present and available.

Gene is survived by his wife, Jerry Lynn, as well as his daughter Julia LaNé Kane and her husband Jeff and children Emily and Joe, his grandson Caleb Scout Graham, his son John Keith Graham and wife Margaret and their children Scott, and wife Megan, and Sarah Hesskamp and husband Dustin and his great-granddaughter Amelia Grace. Brothers John Graham, James Graham, and sister Charlotte Nabors. Gene was preceded in death by his oldest daughter Audrey Lynn Graham, his parents, and brothers Jerry Ray and Bennie Joe.



Gus Hager

Robert “Gus” A. Hager, 74, passed away on June 19, 2021 in Jacksonville, FL. He was born on June 14,

1947 in Great Bend, KS, to the late Lloyd Lee Hager and Doris F. Hager. Gus completed high school and went on to study for one year at Louisiana Tech University. Gus then joined the U.S. Navy, retiring after 28 years of service. He was a member of the Patrol Squadron 45 Association. Gus enjoyed his plastic model collection and being a proud member of the First Coast Chapter, International Plastic Modelers Society.

He was preceded in death by his parents. Gus is survived by his wife, Rosemary Hager; sister, Joy H. (Gary) Hendrix; numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

George W. Reed Jr., SCPO, USN (Ret.) heard the last order to weigh anchor on April 14, 2021 and is now in the presence of his savior. He passed away at Life Care Center at Wells Crossing under the care of Community Hospice and Palliative Care.



George Reed

Dad spent 30 years of his life doing what he enjoyed so much ... being a sailor. His first deployment was with VX-6 to the Antarctic where he had the pleasure of meeting Admiral Richard Byrd. He was part of the first group at McMurdo Sound where they built Quonset huts for future squadrons to be housed in. Until they were built, he and his squadron lived in tents on the ice. Later on, in his career he was part of VP squadrons VP-5, VP-16, VP-24 and VP-45 as an air crew member. In his 30 years of service, he earned his gold aircrew wings. His father, mother, and two brothers preceded him in death. He is survived by his wife of 66 years Shirley Reed, 4 sons, Mark, Glenn, Greg and Mitch Reed, his sister Dudley Ferguson, 9 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren.

"After the tears have dried and the goodbyes are said, all we have are happy memories that we've shared with our loved ones. Hoping that they comfort you in this difficult time."

Author Unknown

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) 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!