

# PATRON FOUR-FIVE

Pelican Post

A S S O C I A T I O N



March 2008 Newsletter #41

## *From the President.....*

Fellow Pelicans:

**A**s I write this, final plans are being made for our upcoming reunion in Jacksonville. I am very excited about the whole weekend. In addition to some interesting tours, we have made sure to leave enough time for you to visit with old friends and to make some new ones. We have had a number of new people join in the last six months. Now that the reunion is close at hand, I would ask each of you to get in touch with people you know who are not members and encourage them to join. Let's make this the best reunion ever!

This will be my last note as your President. I want to tell you how much I have enjoyed the last four years. I want to thank each of you for your help in expanding the membership and for those who I have called upon for some extra help, "thank you". The three people who deserve all the credit and who I owe the biggest thanks to are: Jim Means, your Vice President; Steve Riddle, your Secretary; and P J Imhof, your Treas-

urer. They did all the "heavy lifting" which made my job the easiest. Thanks, Guys! The Nominations Committee is hard at work coming up with a new slate of officers which will be presented and voted on during our business meeting at the reunion.

See you in JAX,

Gene

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## *From the VP.....*

**S**ince this will be my last input as Vice President, I would like to say that it has been an honor to hold this position. My days in VP 45 were some of the best days of my life, also some that were not very good. But you remember the good and forget about the bad. I was lucky to be in the Squadron at a unique time. This group of folks were the best! I feel very fortunate to have served with such an outstanding group of people. Thanks for the memories and the privilege.

Let's have a Great Reunion. There will be many things to do, but best of all is getting back with old friends and shipmates. To make this an out-

standing reunion, I ask that each one of you contact 3 of your buds and get them to come to the 'Best Reunion' ever. I will see you there.

Jim

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## *From the Secretary.....*

**I**n September, we will have a new Secretary. As such, I want to say "thank you" to Gene, Jim and Patrick. It has been a pleasure serving with the three of you. Gene, you have been a great leader and were instrumental in growing our membership to include the next era of Pelicans, something we identified as essential to keeping our organization alive. "Thank you" Chuck Caldwell, Dave Johnson, Mort Eckhouse and others for helping me so much when I first started this job.

Being secretary for the past six years has been an honor. As secretary, I have had the chance to catch up with my shipmates and to make many new friends. Thank you all for your help along the way.

See you in JAX.

Steve

# THE REUNION

By Rachel Firth

Provided by Patrick J. Imhof

Autumn leaves rustling, together to the appointed place, the old warriors come.

Pilgrims, drifting across the land they fought to preserve.

Where they meet is not important anymore. They meet and that's enough for now.

Greetings echo across a lobby.

Hands reach out and arms draw buddies close. Embraces, that as young men they were too uncomfortable to give, too shy to accept so lovingly.

But deep within these Indian Summer days, they have reached a greater understanding of life and love.

The shells holding their souls are weaker now, but hearts and minds grow vigorous, remembering.

On a table someone spreads old photographs, a test of recollection.

And friendly laughter echoes at shocks of hair gone gray or white, or merely gone. The rugged slender bodies lost forever.

Yet they no longer need to prove their strength.

Some are now sustained by one of "medicine's miracles," and even in this fact, they manage to find humor.

The women, all those that waited, all those who loved them, have watched the changes take place.

Now, they observe and listen, and smile at each other; as glad to be together as the men.

Talk turns to war and planes and foreign lands. Stories are told and told again, reweaving the threadbare fabricate of the past.

Mending one more time the banner of their youth. They hear the vibrations, feel the shudder of metal as engines whine and whirl, and planes come to life.

These birds with fractured wings can be seen beyond the mist of clouds, and they are in the air again, chasing the wind, feeling the exhilaration of flight close to the heavens.

Dead comrades, hearing their names spoken, wanting to share in this time, if only in spirit, move silently

among them.

Their presence is felt and smiles appear beneath misty eyes.

Each, in his own way may wonder who will be absent in another year.

The room grows quiet for a time.

Suddenly an ember flames to life. Another memory burns.

The talk may turn to other wars and other men, and of futility.

So, this is how it goes. The past is so much present. In their ceremonies, the allegiances, the speeches and the prayers, one cannot help but hear the deep eternal love of country they will forever share.

Finally, it is time to leave.

Much too soon to set aside this little piece of yesterday, but the past cannot be held too long, for it is fragile.

They say "Farewell" . . . "See you another year, God willing."

Each keeps a little of the others with him forever.

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From: Gene Graham

Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2008 12:38 PM

Subject: Reunion Speaker



Thanks to Wally Massenburg, we have our banquet speaker lined up. He is Rear Admiral Brian Prindle. Even better, he is a former "pelican".

Gene

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*We now have our hotel reserved, a great banquet speaker, and a variety of activities planned. All we need now is for you to show up in Jacksonville. Make your own reservation for the hotel. Let them know that you are with the Patron 45 reunion group to receive the special \$99 plus tax room rate. For reunion activities, either make reservations on-line with a credit card at [www.militaryreunionplanners.com/patron](http://www.militaryreunionplanners.com/patron) or mail a check and the Reservation Form included with this newsletter package to the address indicated on the form. Steve*

# JACKSONVILLE CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL



*Jacksonville - Riverfront  
1201 Riverplace Blvd.  
Jacksonville, FL 32207  
1-904-398-8800  
www.crowneplaza.com*



## Transportation to and from Hotel from Jacksonville International Airport (JAX)

- Distance: 15 MI / 24.14 KM South to Hotel
- Shuttle Charge (one way): \$35.00
- Taxi Charge (one way): \$35.00
- Time by taxi: 20 minutes
- Take I-95 South.

Go over the Fuller Warren Bridge. Take Exit 350B-San Marco. Make 2nd Left at San Marco Blvd. Continue to stop sign at roundabout. Take a right at the stop. End at 1201 Riverplace Blvd. on the left.

## Craig Airport (CRG)

- Distance: 17 MI / 27.36 KM West to Hotel
- Shuttle Charge (one way): \$40.00
- Taxi Charge (one way): \$40.00

## Orlando International Airport (MCO)

- Distance: 150 MI / 241.39 KM South to Hotel
- Take I-4 East to I-95 North. Take exit 350A- Prudential Drive. At the 3rd Exit, take a right on to Riverplace Blvd. End at 1201 Riverplace Blvd. on the left.

## Train

- Station Name: Amtrak
- Distance: 8 MI / 12.87 KM East to Hotel
- Subway Station Name: Riverplace Station

- Distance: 0.01. MI / 0.02 KM North to Hotel
- Within Walking Distance

## Driving Directions

### I-95N:

Prudential Dr. Exit, 350A. Stay in the far right lane. Go straight to 3rd light. Turn right on Riverplace Blvd. Hotel on left.

### I-95S:

Exit San Marcos Blvd., 350B. Turn left at 2nd light. Turn right on Museum Circle. Hotel 1/4 mile on left.



*Make your reservations now!  
September 24 - 28th, 2008*

## *A Sailor's Christmas*

Twas the night before Christmas, the ship was out steam-  
ing,  
Sailors stood watch while others were dreaming.

They lived in a crowd with racks tight and small,  
In a 80-man berthing, cramped one and all.

I had come down the stack with presents to give,  
And to see inside just who might perhaps live.

I looked all about, a strange sight did I see,  
No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.

No stockings were hung, shined boots close at hand,  
On the bulkhead hung pictures of a far distant land.

They had medals and badges and awards of all kind,  
And a sober thought came into my mind.

For this place was different, so dark and so dreary,  
I had found the house of a Sailor, once I saw clearly.

A Sailor lay sleeping, silent and alone,  
Curled up in a rack and dreaming of home.

The face was so gentle, the room squared away,  
This was the United States Sailor today.

This was the hero I saw on TV,  
Defending our country so we could be free.

I realized the families that I would visit this night,  
Owed their lives to these Sailors lay willing to fight.

Soon round the world, the children would play,  
And grownups would celebrate on Christmas Day.

They all enjoyed freedom each day of the year,  
Because of the Sailor, like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone,  
On a cold Christmas Eve on a sea, far from home.

The very thought brought a tear to my eye,  
I dropped to my knees and started to cry.

The Sailor awakened and I heard a calm voice,  
"Santa, don't cry, this life is my choice."

"Defending the seas all days of the year,  
So others may live and be free with no fear."

I thought for a moment, what a difficult road,  
To live a life guided by honor and code.



After all it's Christmas Eve and the ship's underway!  
But freedom isn't free and it's sailors who pay.

The Sailor says to our country "be free and sleep tight,  
No harm will come, not on my watch and not on this night."

The Sailor rolled over and drifted to sleep,  
I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours, so silent, so still,  
I watched as the Sailor shivered from the night's cold chill.

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*I know Christmas has come and gone  
but I liked this and it is our first news-  
letter after the holidays. My hope is that  
each of you and your families had a great  
holiday season and are having a blessed  
new year. ED*

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### *\*Out of Fuel\**

Cessna: "Newark tower, Cessna 12345, student pi-  
lot, I am out of fuel."

Tower: "Roger Cessna 12345, reduce airspeed to  
best glide!! Do you have the Newark airfield in  
sight?!?!?"

Cessna: "Uh, um...tower, I'm parked on the south  
ramp. I just wanted to know where the fuel truck  
is."

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## In Memoriam



*Robert Gregory Stiles* '52 - '55  
*Mrs. Jackie Pate* '53 - '57  
*(widow of Lester Pate)*  
*Philip W. Fluke* '53 - '57  
*Wendell S. Timmons* '58 - '61

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12/19/2007

Steve,

Here is some very saddening news about Wendell "Tim" Timmons. Sorry that I had to be the bearer of bad news. Tim was a great person, as I am sure you will attest. He will be sadly missed.

PJ (Patrick Imhof)

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Hi PJ,

My beloved husband passed away suddenly Nov 15. He had a brain aneurysm on Nov 11 and was on full life support until he passed on the 15. Our children and I are completely and utterly devastated. I am a wounded animal who can only cry. So I will not be attending the next reunion. Anyhow, I wish you and yours a Happy Holiday season.

Life was so good,

Coleen Timmons  
(H) 772-286-2936  
(C) 772-708-0807

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Please remember the spouses and families that have lost their loved ones. Pray that God will bring them comfort and peace of mind as they pass through their periods of grief and mourning.



Pray for the men and women serving in the United States & Allied armed forces.

## EMAIL, MESSAGES AND NOTES

From: minoru308@hotmail.com

To: steveriddle@vp45association.org

Subject: Update on Tony Navarre

Date: Sat, 16 Feb 2008 19:54:20 -0800

Mr. Riddle,

My name is Naomi (Navarre) Fenton. My daddy is Tony (Anthony) Navarre and he lives in Ramona, CA with my family & I. He asked me to get in touch with you to let you know how he is doing.

I'm not sure what all you know or do not....so here is a quick snap shot.



In February of 2007 while living on his home-stead in Mississippi daddy had a stroke. Although he recovered to 90%, we were all concerned with him being so far away from any immediate family; It was decided the best for all was that he move to California where my older sister and I live. He moved here to Ramona in May of 2007.

Not long after he was here (3 weeks) daddy suffered a heart attack. He spent 4-1/2 months in the hospital, with a variety of illnesses, (he almost died twice) coming home 2 days before the start of the last big wild-fire we had here (we were the first group to be evacuated).

Currently, he is doing as well as can be. He is unable to eat as his throat was damaged during one of the many illnesses and so is fed by a tube in his stomach. He has very limited lung capacity which causes him to be very sedentary. He does not walk far (uses a walker or wheel chair), nor does he travel well, but he is never without a good story to tell. He misses visiting all his friends and can be reached at the following:

Anthony Navarre  
24233 Compadre Way  
Ramona, CA 92065

He would love to hear from any and all.  
Feel free to contact me by either email or phone  
(760) 788-5441  
Naomi (Navarre) Fenton

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From: N Fenton [minoru308@hotmail.com]  
Sent: Monday, February 18, 2008 9:48 PM  
To: s\_riddle@charter.net  
Subject: RE: Tony Navarre  
Mr. Riddle,

Please call me Naomi. Yes I think that daddy would be glad to read about himself. I know that he would love to hear from friends. It is too soon to tell if he will travel to the next reunion.

Each time the newsletter comes he looks at it cover to cover. He is a wonderful man and so full of stories. He has beaten many odds in the past and I would not be surprised if he out lives me.

Naomi

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From: charliebaron@bellsouth.net  
Sent: Saturday, October 27, 2007 12:14 PM  
To: s.riddle@ieee.org  
Cc: daddypaddy@cox.net  
Subject: Address Change  
Steve,

It has been some time since I communicated with anyone in the squadron. I had a kidney transplant (donor my wife Kathy). My brother passed away and we

built a new house. Will catch up on things later.

Please note my new address is - 2845 Old Drake Court, Seabrook Island, SC 29455; my phone and email the same. I think I need to get updated on my dues \$???. Will you also mail me latest issue of ROSTER.

Thanks for your help. Charlie Baron  
Coco Solo '52 to '54

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From: ecm@fastq.com  
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2008 10:29 PM  
Subject: Gene's Surgery  
Hi Mates,

I want to share with you all what has been going on with me. Two years ago last December, my stomach felt a little funny woozy. My doctor poked my stomach but didn't feel a thing. I insisted and went to an internal doctor I know and he performed an upper GI with a scope. He found some polyps and removed them. He asked to come back in a year. I did last December and he found another, but larger, polyp. He tried to remove it with a laproscope last February but it was too large for his scope.

He lined me up with a surgeon who will remove it by doing some actual stomach surgery. The surgery is scheduled for this Monday, March 31 at 6:00 AM at a near by hospital. I figure the actual surgery will take place between 7:00 and 8:00 AM. I may spend one to three nights in the hospital depending on how well I respond and if there are no complications or infections. Please keep me and my wife Doris in your prayers.

Gene Martinez

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From: JohnandTeriBoggs [johnandteri@cox.net]  
Sent: Sunday, December 23, 2007 12:57 PM  
To: vp45asso@vp45association.org  
Subject: Shipmate

I personally pushed the Sar Kit out the cabin door to the sinking Israeli freighter MEEZDA off the coast of Bermuda. We were credited with saving 12 lives. One of the most rewarding events in my 20 years of service.

I have the citation we received and a picture somewhere of it sinking ... Plus lots of other photos from those years. I would love to share some ...

John A. Boggs, USN retired  
1976-1981 (AO2 -AO1)

From: anonymous@host257.ipowerweb.com  
Sent: Saturday, October 27, 2007 11:17 PM  
To: steveriddle@vp45association.org  
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Category: Web site  
Name: Jose M. Navarro  
Address1: 701 Great Marsh CIR  
Cityandstate: Chesapeake, VA, 23320  
Telephone: 757-410-8866  
Email: jose.m.navarro@cox.net  
Remote Name: 70.186.215.37

I am a former Pelican (1981-1986), retired from the Navy in 2002. Best years in my Navy career were during my first tour in the Navy; Patrol Squadron Forty-Five. I'll be joining VP-45 association soon. Additionally I must pass the word around about this Website.

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From: dbudrejko@earthlink.net  
Sent: Sunday, November 25, 2007 11:17 AM  
To: Steve R.  
Subject: VP45 Association Website

Thank you, Steve!

Yes, I have already informed my dad about the reunion. I had printed out some of the VP-45 stories for him....one with his name in it! He was so pleased and it got him talking about the good old days!!

I will keep your email for future reference for my dad!

Thanks again!

Mary Budrejko  
VP45 Navy Brat....

•••••

MarketimeFrom: William White  
[william.white@ericsson.com]  
Sent: Friday, February 08, 2008 2:35 AM  
To: info@vp45association.org  
Subject: Marketime

Got room for a 1967-71 sailor? I was with VP-45 1969 I think, when we flew Marketime mission off Vietnam. We had a deployment at the B-52 base in Thailand. Now that was a place to remember. I will be

joining shortly and will drop by this summer.

William White, Avionics E-5  
william.white@comhem.se

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Steve,

This a message I sent to the curator at the Smithsonian NASM. As I recall VP-45 donated \$5000 to this effort. I have closed the MMA account at PASM and am no longer doing any work there. I had quadruple bypass surgery in August and although my recovery is going well, I have found it necessary to reduce my involvement with these projects. To the best of my knowledge, since I have left the museum, the plane is not open for interior touring. As you can see from this picture it is now located inside the new display hanger.

Regards,

Dan



**Mariner PBM-5A at PASM**

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Dik,

I don't know how much information PASM has sent you. The Mariner/Marlin Association is VERY pleased the plane is now in the new display hanger. This picture was taken on June 6, 2007. We've worked for over 7 years, spent nearly \$45,000 of MMA money and over 8,000 volunteer man-hours.

We still have some work to do, but everything is a plus now.

Regards,

Dan Cain, Project Manager,  
Mariner/Marlin Association

From: Michael Crow [mcrow@informs.com]  
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2008 4:42 PM  
To: vp45asso@vp45association.org  
Subject: Pelican Stories

I am HMC Michael Crow retired and I served with VP45 from July 1968 until April 1969 (my release date from active duty). I just read one of your Pelican stories at the association's site. It was "Where were you on 2 June 1969". I was also on that Westpac deployment and it reminded me of a couple of stories. I don't know if you want them since I am not an association member but if you want to use them, here they are.

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I was the senior corpsman attached to VP45 when we deployed to Southeast Asia in December 1968, under Flight Surgeon Lt. Cox. When we arrived at Sangley Point, Philippine Islands, half of the squadron went on to Utapo, Thailand and I choose that course. Thailand was a beautiful country but not much to do after work. There was an outdoor theater at the beach at the end of the airstrip but with the B-52 taking off you kind of lost the sound every thirty minutes or so. Of course there was the EM club where the beer was ten cents a can and mixed drinks were twenty five cents. Happy hour was 2-for-1 so the mixed drinks became 12.5 cents and several good shows and performances were put on each month. Bob Hope was there with the "Gold Diggers" for a Christmas show and the "Red Dart" 45 Banner was hanging on the stage for all to see.

As the squad Corpsman, I did not have to fly. The CO allowed anyone that wanted to make a flight as an observer, to catch a hop. This entitled us to combat pay for the month since we were flying recon off the coast of Vietnam. It also allowed us tax free pay for that month, so I tried to make a flight each month. In fact I had 18 flights while there for my four month tour. My EOS came up while there and I was sent to Treasure Island for separation from active duty on April 2, 1969. But I digress, let me get back to the flights. I worked my sick call and aid station on day shift and would fly the night missions. Three short stories come to mind and stand out to me.

1.) We would fly darken ship over the country of Vietnam, going from Thailand to the coast of Vietnam. Of course, that means that there were no lights on the outside of the ship and all curtains pulled tight over the windows. I was sitting in the flight engineers seat behind the pilot/copilot while the engineer was in the head.

We were half way across the country when the pilot said, "What is that ahead of us in the distance?" By the time he finished saying that, a Tom Cat roared past our left wing tip at full throttle, almost taking us out of the sky. We watched as he circled and came right for us again. The conversation in the cockpit went wild and the consensus was that he had his radar on gun control looking for a target that we must have been over and he was not even aware that we were around. Our pilot immediately ordered that all curtains be pulled back and he lit every light on the ship that we had. This included the right wing search light (that lit up the world). There was no way that Tom Cat was not going to see us from that moment on. We proceeded to our station without incident and fully lit until we got to the coast. That Tom Cat was moving. By the time he said, "What is that?", the F114 was passing us! How lucky we were that night.

2.) As I said earlier, I would fly as an observer so I really had no function on the flights. I would sleep through most of the flights since I had to work sick call the next day. One night, I was in a sound sleep by the exit door over the left wing when I was nudged but the flight engineer to wake up. Seems the radio antenna wire from the cockpit to the tail had broken off or come loose from the tail. It was banging against the side of the fuselage and there was a fear that the wind would whip it out into one of the propellers and do real damage. The solution? We slowed to 120/140 mph and dropped to 50 feet above the ocean. The engineer put on a May West jacket, tied a rope around his waist and grabbed a blanket to protect his arms and hands from the wire. We opened the door and he took a blanket with him as he got out on the wing. Leaning against the fuselage, he raised his arms as high as he could (with the blanket) and caught the antenna. Coming back inside, he pulled the wire in behind him and shut the door on it. What we do as young men and women in the service and never think about it!

3.) Finally and I mean finally because this was my last flight. We were flying over country one night when the lock-on alarm sounded. A SAM had locked on to our fuselage and the alarm is one that I will never forget. Of course panic shot through the ship and the pilot squawked over the headset, "Somebody find it and tell me where it is". I was sitting on the starboard aft window and like everyone else I searched the sky and ground. I saw it! It was a faint orange glow leaving the

ground. The light was so faint but without question it was a fire from the tail of a missile. We had already started evasive action by full throttle at what seemed to me as a 75 or 80 degree pitch straight up. As a 'ground pounder' I don't know the angle but it was steep. The ceiling for the SAM was 10,000 feet and we just had to out run it to that ceiling. I yelled out that it was off starboard and behind us. Of course, I was able to watch it make it's maximum arch and fall back to the earth. That was the last flight I made as a volunteer observer.

I have several other war stories about that short four months but since space is limited I'll stop at three. It was an exciting part of my life but one that I don't want to do again.

Michael Crow, Human Resources Manager,  
Informs, Inc., 334.277.0372 x 451,  
mcrow@informs.com

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*After my return from the 2006 San Antonio Reunion, I received the following two letters from Ken Gold. At the reunion the VP-45 Skipper was looking for Ken, but unfortunately, he had not been able to come. The Skipper was so impressed with the second letter that he read it at the banquet.*

*I had planned to include the letter in the March 2007 newsletter but had misplaced it. However, I recently found it and am including it and a letter to me in this newsletter. We are rapidly approaching another reunion and I believe we should consider donating a considerable amount to the squadron Coffee Mess or some other squadron activity while we are in Jacksonville. Steve R.*

10/16/06

Steve,

A couple of months ago, I ran into a minor problem after sending a check to the operating squadron up in JAX. I was ordering some VP-45 memorabilia for my grandkids. Somehow my order and check got misplaced; my several phone calls and conversations yielded no results. Then Command Master Chief Tom Weldon was made aware of my quandry and in one week he had a package of items (much more than I had ordered) shipped to me. That is what prompted the enclosed letter and my \$100 donation to the Coffee Mess.

If you wish, you may publish my letter and also could we start sending our newsletters to Chief Weldon? Enjoy San Antonio!

Ken Gold

10/14/06

Dear Chief Weldon,

The package of squadron materials arrived today and I am overwhelmed with gratitude at how you responded to my request. I remain, and always shall, a faithful old VP-45 P-Boat airman, but it is good to know that the P-3 generation and, I am sure, the P-8 generation will be every bit as capable and qualified and outstanding as we always believed the Coco Solo and Bermuda versions were.

I was in the squadron from mid-54 through August 1956 as an AT2 on the crew of EE-1, our Skipper's plane. On the morning in late August, 1956, at the close of NARMID-56 (taking Annapolis cadets on familiarization flights trying to convince them to opt into Naval Aviation; always took place at Corpus Christi NAS) I watched our 12 P5's leave for Coco Solo to prepare for relocation to Bermuda. It was the end of my tour and I remained to start processing out of active duty. My intent was to finish an undergraduate degree and return to the Navy and get to Pensacola for flight training. Instead, I met a pretty young lady, married her, and joined IBM right after graduation.

Watching those P5M's leave the Corpus Christi seadrome, I knew that I had been fortunate indeed to have been a part of a truly outstanding organization. Now, at this stage of my life, I can look back to membership in three such organizations: VP-45 of course; the IBM company of the 60's which had no equal: Cincom Systems, a database software company of the 70's and 80's, which beat all of its competition, including IBM.

As a small indication of my gratitude and my appreciation for all things VP-45 related, I am enclosing a check for the Coffee Mess. Please send me, if you can, a few sheets of the large and small VP-45 vinyl stickers.

Our biennial squadron reunion will take place in San Antonio on the 25th - 29th of October, 2006. You can be sure I will tell my shipmates how you and squadron treated an old Pelican. I'll ask our Secretary to mail you our newsletters. We have quite a few P-3 veterans with us.

Fair Skies,  
Ken Gold

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*"When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling. Live your life so at the end, you're the one who is smiling and everyone around you is crying."*

# P5M2

## Restoration Report

Jack Page

(from the Mariner/Marlin Association  
Newsletter Winter, 2007/2008)

**S**P-5B BuNo 135533 at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, FL was brought in for Hurricane Ivan repair about June 1, 2007. The work was done by Mariana Airmotive of Cantonment, FL under a government contract with the Navy Department. The contract was limited to storm damage repair, corrosion repair, and spot painting as necessary. The Mariner/Marlin Association wanted the aircraft fully painted in order to best protect the aircraft from farther damage from the elements sitting outside. The painting and work above the cost of the original contract amounted to \$54,000. There was about \$15,000 in the P5M account from the Martin Company donation. At the Mariner/Marlin Reunion in May, we committed \$20,000 to the project. At the reunion, Capt Rasmussen, the Director of the Museum committed to fully painting the aircraft with the museum picking up the balance of the cost.

In order to repair the T tail, the whole T tail was removed from the aircraft and placed on the hangar floor. All of the controls were completely reworked and the top of the tail had sheets of aluminum skin replaced because of corrosion all the way through the metal. Corrosion was repaired throughout the aircraft fuselage. On moving the aircraft the beaching gear wheel almost came off and the bearing had to be replaced. The beaching gear tanks were removed, repaired and painted. The search light and MAD boom were completely restored and reinstalled. The fuselage leaks were sealed. The aircraft was completely repainted with a high quality paint for the best protection from the elements. The finished product is beautiful. We can all be proud of having a large part in making it happen.

The Museum and the Foundation have now agreed not to wait until the money can be raised for the new Phase expansion of the Museum. They are going ahead now and building a new hangar type building on the property, which will be a large rectangular hangar large enough to house all of the large aircraft on the back ramp area. The P5M will then be in the hangar. Construction will start in early spring. I think that is the best news we can get to preserve the aircraft.



# VP-45 Returns Home

By Lt. Edward Fong, VP-45 PAO

12 December, 2007



*IS3 Charles Coddington hugs his wife, Shawna, after returning home from a six-month deployment. VP-45 deployed to Sigonella, Italy, Comalapa, El Salvador and Djibouti, Africa. Photos by MC2 (AW/NAC) Kaitlyn Patterson*

The final group of Sailors from VP-45 and Consolidated Maintenance Organization 11 (CMO-11), returned home to NAS Jacksonville last week, bringing to an end an exciting and historic deployment.

The VP-45 "Pelicans" began their tri-site deployment in May. Throughout the deployment, the squadron maintained six crews and approximately 100 personnel in Sigonella, Italy, four crews and 100 personnel in Comalapa, El Salvador and two crews and 50 personnel at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti. Operations from these sites supported counter-drug operations as well as the global war on terrorism. From hunting down and intercepting shipments of illegal narcotics to supporting coalition troops engaged in combat operations, the Pelicans carried out their tasks with extreme proficiency, accuracy, and professionalism.

During the deployment, VP-45 flew more than 4,900 mishap-free flight hours across four continents. In El Salvador, the Pelicans were directly involved in seizing over 55 metric tons of illegal narcotics with a street value of over \$2 billion. Highlights of these operations included the seizure of a self-propelled semi-submersible which was featured on several national media outlets.

In Africa, squadron personnel flew missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, providing valuable intelligence and direct support to coalition forces on the ground. They also performed a critical role in monitoring and deterring piracy along the African coast. In Sigonella, VP-45 operations focused on traditional maritime patrol and reconnaissance missions. VP-45

crews constantly monitored the shipping traffic in the Mediterranean Sea in support of NATO Operation Active Endeavor and numerous overland missions were flown in the Balkans.

While on deployment, the Pelicans had the opportunity to participate in detachments to 15 countries, providing humanitarian support, establishing foreign relations and refining their joint combat capabilities. Among the most notable of these detachments was Exercise Indunduma flown from Cape Town, South Africa. While in South Africa, squadron personnel flew in support of Task Group 60.5, which is tasked with



*A VP-45 sailor kisses his wife after returning home*

maintaining the maritime picture along the Indian Ocean coastline of Africa. These operations focused on general military training with the South African Air Force and Navy in order to improve interoperability while maintaining stability in the region and advancing multinational interests in South and East Africa.

The numerous missions, detachments and mishap-free hours would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of a truly exceptional maintenance team. VP-45 was the first squadron to fully deploy under the CMO structure. This concept, which was implemented in October 2006, was designed to improve maintenance services for the P-3 community. Working together, VP-45 and CMO-11 have implemented this concept flawlessly across three VP-45 deployment sites. While on deployment with VP-45, the CMO personnel have maintained the highest level of aircraft availability for mission completion in the harshest of conditions.

The last six months were truly an adventure for the men and women of VP-45 and CMO-11, providing them with unique opportunities to see the world and interact with different cultures. Many Sailors took advantage of the squadron's deployment to visit cities throughout Europe, while others were able to take a

jungle-canopy tour in the Kakum National Rainforest during a detachment to Accra, Ghana. "This deployment has shown me firsthand, the role we perform in the defense of our country and I am honored at having the privilege to serve," remarked IT3 Miguel Bonilla Roman, reflecting on his first deployment.

VP-45 was relieved in Sigonella by surge crews from NAS Brunswick and NAS Jacksonville, led by VP-5. In El Salvador, they were relieved by crews from MCAS Kanehoe Bay, Hawaii and NAS Whidbey Island, Wash. led by VP-9.

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## Boeing-led Poseidon Team Begins Production of First P-8A Fuselage

ST. LOUIS, Dec. 12, 2007 — Boeing [NYSE: BA] and its Poseidon industry team yesterday celebrated the start of P-8A fuselage production at Spirit AeroSystems'



Wichita, Kan., facility. During a ceremony that also included U.S. Navy personnel, Spirit employees loaded the first P-8A fuselage components into a holding fixture on the factory floor.

The initial parts and other fuselage assemblies eventually will come together on Spirit's existing Next-Generation 737 production line. In early 2008, Spirit will ship the first P-8A fuselage to Boeing Commercial Airplanes in Renton, Wash., for aircraft assembly.

"We've transitioned from designing to building the

first P-8A Poseidon for the U.S. Navy, so this is an important day for the program," said Bob Feldmann, Boeing vice president and P-8A program manager. "Just as significant, this event demonstrates the tremendous leverage our program derives from the in-line production approach used on the P-8A and the outstanding working-together partnership between Boeing and Spirit."

"The P-8A fuselage sections will be built using our standard processes, which in the end means lower costs and shorter flow-times," said Buck Buchanan, Spirit AeroSystems vice president/general manager, Fuselage Structures and Systems. "Spirit employees know how important this program is to the Navy, and we are excited to be part of an outstanding team tasked with building the P-8A."

"Spirit's excellent, on-time performance preparing to build the fuselage combined with our 'one-team' approach supports commitments we made to Boeing Integrated Defense Systems and its U.S. Navy customer," said Mo Yahyavi, Boeing vice president and general manager of the Commercial Airplanes P-8A team.

Boeing's industry team is currently performing the program's System Development and Demonstration phase, which includes building five test vehicles: three flight-test and two ground-test aircraft. The first test aircraft will be delivered to the Navy and fly in 2009.

The Navy plans to purchase 108 P-8As to replace its fleet of P-3C aircraft. Initial operational capability is slated for 2013. The Boeing-led Poseidon industry team includes CFM International, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, Spirit AeroSystems and GE Aviation.

The P-8A is a long-range antisubmarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft capable of broad-area, maritime and littoral operations. A derivative of the Next-Generation 737-800, the P-8A combines superior performance and reliability with an advanced mission system designed for maximum interoperability in the future battle space.

Based in Wichita, Kan., Spirit AeroSystems is the world's largest independent supplier of large component parts and assemblies for commercial aircraft. Spirit designs and builds the all-composite forward fuselage for the Boeing 787 in addition to pylon and wing structures for the new airplane. Spirit produces the fuselage, engine pylons and nacelles, vertical fin and horizontal stabilizer, inboard and outboard flaps for Boeing's Next-Generation 737 family of airplanes. It also builds nose sections, nacelles and pylons for the 747, 767 and 777 aircraft, as well as slats and floor beams for the 777 and wing and fuselage components for the 747.

## *Breaking the Sound Barrier Without an Aircraft*

Joe Kittinger is not a household aviation name like Neil Armstrong or Chuck Yeager. But what he did for the U. S. Space program is comparable.

On Aug. 16, 1960, as research for the then fledgling U. S. Space program, Air Force Captain Joseph Kittinger rode a helium balloon to the edge of space, 102,800 feet above the earth, a feat in itself. Then, wearing just a thin pressure suit and breathing supplemental oxygen, he leaned over the cramped confines of his gondola and jumped—into the 110 degree below zero, near-vacuum of space. Within seconds his body accelerated to 714mph in the thin air, breaking the sound barrier. After free-falling for more than four and a half minutes, slowed finally by friction from the heavier air below, he felt his parachute open at 14,000 feet, and he coasted gently down to the New Mexico desert floor.

Kittinger's feat showed scientists that astronauts could survive the harshness of space with just a pressure suit and that man could eject from aircraft at extreme altitudes and survive. Upon Kittinger's return to base, a congratulatory telegram was waiting from the Mercury Seven astronauts—including Alan Shepard and John Glenn.

More than four decades later Kittinger's two world records—the highest parachute jump, and the only man to break the sound barrier without a craft and live—still stand. We decided to visit the retired colonel and Aviation Hall of Famer, now 75, at his home in Altamonte Springs, Florida, to recall his historic jump.

**FORBES GLOBAL: *Take us back to New Mexico and Aug 16, 1960.*** Joe Kittinger: We got up at 2 a. m. to start filling the helium balloon. At sea level, it was 35 to 40 feet wide and 200 feet high; at altitude, due to the low air pressure, it expanded to 25 stories in width, and still was 20 stories high! At 4 a. m. I began breathing pure oxygen for two hours. That's how long it takes to remove all the nitrogen from your blood so you don't get the bends going so high so fast. Then it was a lengthy dress procedure layering warm clothing under my pressure suit. They kept me in air-conditioning until it was time to launch because we were in the desert and I wasn't supposed to sweat. If I did, my clothes would freeze on the way up.

### *How was your ascent?*

It took an hour and a half to get to altitude. It was cold. At 40,000 feet, the glove on my right hand hadn't inflated. I knew that if I radioed my doctor, he would abort the flight. If that happened, I knew I might never get another chance because there were lots of people who didn't want this test to happen. I took a calculated risk that I might lose use of my right hand. It quickly swelled up, and I did lose use for the duration of the flight. But the rest of the pressure suit worked.

When I reached 102,800 feet, maximum altitude, I wasn't quite over the target. So I drifted for 11 minutes. The winds were out of the east.

### *What's it look like from so high up?*

You can see about 400 miles in every direction. The formula is  $1.25 \times \text{the sq. root of the altitude in thousands of feet}$ . (The square root of 102,000 ft is 319  $\times$  1.25 = 399 miles) The most fascinating thing is that it's just black overhead—the transition from normal blue to black is very stark. You can't see stars because there's a lot of glare from the sun, so your pupils are too small. I was struck with the beauty of it.

But I was also struck by how hostile it is: more than 100 degrees below zero, no air. If my protection suit failed, I would be dead in a few seconds. Blood actually boils above 62,000 feet.

I went through my 46-step checklist, disconnected from the balloon's power supply and lost all communication with the ground. I was totally under power from the kit on my back. When everything was done, I stood up, turned around to the door, took one final look out and said a silent prayer: "Lord, take care of me now." Then I just jumped over the side.

### *What were you thinking as you took that step?*

It's the beginning of a test. I had gone through simulations many times—more than 100. I rolled over and looked up, and there was the balloon just roaring into space. I realized that the balloon wasn't roaring into space; I was going down at a fantastic rate! At about 90,000 feet, I reached 714mph. The altimeter on my wrist was unwinding very rapidly. But there was no sense of speed.

Where you determine speed is visual—if you see something go flashing by. But nothing flashes by 20 miles up—there are no signposts there, and you are way above any clouds. When the chute opened, the rest of the jump was anticlimactic because everything had worked perfectly. I landed 12 or 13 minutes later, and

there was my crew waiting. We were elated.

*How about your right hand?*

It hurt—there was quite a bit of swelling and the blood pressure in my arm was high. But that went away in a few days, and I regained full use of my hand.

*What about attempts to break your record?*

We did it for air crews and astronauts—for the learning, not to set a record. They will be going up as skydivers. Somebody will beat it someday. Records are made to be busted. And I'll be elated. But I'll also be concerned that they're properly trained. If they're not, they're taking a heck of a risk.



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*Scenes From the Past*



**National Personnel Records Center Opens more than Six Million New Military Personnel Files**

St. Louis, MO... The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) will open for the first time all of the individual Official Military Personnel Files (OMPFs) of Army, Army Air Corps, Army Air Forces, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard military personnel who served and were discharged, retired or died while in the service, prior to 1946. Collectively, these files comprise more than six million records. This is the second step in the progressive opening of the entire paper and microfiche OMPF collection of over 57 million individual files. Additional military personnel records will be made available to the public each year through 2067 until the entire collection is opened.

These archived files are treasured by family members, historians, researchers, and genealogists. Contained in a typical OMPF are documents outlining all elements of military service, including assignments, evaluations, awards and decorations, education and training, demographic information, some medical information and documented disciplinary actions. Some records also contain photographs of the individual and official correspondence concerning military service.

- To view an original record, individuals may visit the NPRC Archival Research Room in St. Louis, MO.
- Telephone is 314-801-0850.
- Research room hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Central Time Tuesday through Friday.
- Visitors are strongly encouraged to call ahead to make reservations.

To obtain copies of records, customers may:

- Write to NPRC at 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132,
- Fax a request to 314-801-9195, or
- Submit a request through eVetRecs, or
- On a Standard Form 180.

Information about records available at NPRC is also posted on the National Personnel Records Center web page.

Archived, public records are subject to the National Archives and Records Administration's published fee schedule. **Copy fees for archived OMPFs are waived for veterans or primary next-of-kin (surviving spouse or children of the veteran) if the records are needed to validate a benefit or entitlement.**

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

**DECEMBER 31, 2007**

**BANK OF PENSACOLA**

Beginning Balance - July 1, 2007	\$1,270.44
Income	
Dues	1,300.00
Expenses	
Printing	648.69
Postage	186.44
Website	<u>95.40</u>
	(\$930.53)
Ending Balance - Dec 31, 2007	\$1,639.91



**SMITH BARNEY MONEY MARKET**

Beginning Balance - July 1, 2007	\$17,166.43
Interest Income	<u>413.34</u>
Ending Balance - Dec 31, 2007	<b><u>\$17,579.77</u></b>



**TOTAL CAPITAL** **\$19,219.68**

Patrick J. Imhof, Treasurer



***Mariner/Marlin Association 26th Reunion***



San Diego, CA  
 May 8 - 12th 2008  
 Town & Country Resort &  
 Convention Center

Contact John Woodcock  
 PO Box 271  
 Bellmawr, NJ 08099-0271  
 Phone: 856-931-7577  
 Email: johnjwmm@aol.com

# PATRON FOUR-FIVE ASSOCIATION

[www.vp45association.org](http://www.vp45association.org)



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