

MARCH  
2024

THE VP-45 ASSOCIATION'S  
**PELICAN POST**  
NEWSLETTER



San Antonio Reunion  
October 2 - 6!!

REUNION SCHEDULE  
AND DETAILS INSIDE!

*Hotel Accomodations  
on the World Famous  
"River Walk!"*

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# DEADLINE

## From The Editor



I was talking to my Pelican buddy Jim Clabby and he mentioned that he and Wally Brians (we were all JOs together in the early 70s) were members of the Dallas-Fort Worth Tailhookers Association. I said...."What??"

The short story is that they had invited Jim and Wally to join, I guess, because every organization needs a VP guy or three. I became the third because I promised to design a logo for them to use to represent their association (see to right).

Since then, Becky and I have attended a number of of their monthly Happy Hours and a couple of more formal parties. I've come to discover that the tailhook members are not much different from us...just old guys who still love what they did in the Navy and

really enjoy telling the same old sea stories over and over again. And, of course, that special nighttime, bad weather trap gets hairier and hairier every time.

So find a Navy organization near you and join up! You will not regret it!

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

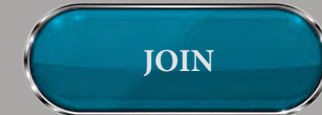
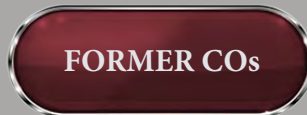
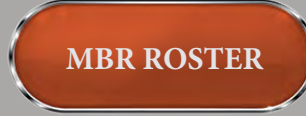
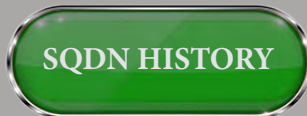


The Tailhookers new logo.

# EXPLORE OUR WEBSITE

Click on one of the buttons below and you will be taken to the area of the VP-45 Association Website you selected.

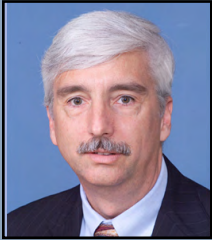
There is more information about you, your squadron and our Association than you could have possibly imagined.



**YOUR ASSOCIATION  
OFFICERS  
2022-2024**



Click on pictures below for more biographical info



**President**

Jack Keane was elected President of the Association in 2022 after serving as Secretary for a decade. A VMI grad and retired LCDR, he completed his Navy career in 1995 and recently retired from Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory. He was a TACCO in VP-45 from 1982-1985. He currently resides in Waldorf, MD.

**Newsletter Editor**



Bill Hobgood built the new Association website in 2011 and was WebMaster until 2022; then he was elected Newsletter Editor. He was also a TACCO (Crew 13) and was in VP-45 from 1971 to 1974. A retired CAPT (sel), he resides in Lantana, Texas with his wife, Becky.



**Vice President**

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

**WebMaster**



Scott Kelly was elected WebMaster, in a landslide victory, at the 2022 Reunion in Jacksonville. He was a TACCO in the squadron in the early 1980s and retired from the reserves in 2000 as a CAPT (sel). He resides in Jacksonville Beach with his wife, Lois.



**Secretary**

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

**Treasurer**



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

*"In the article following mine, Spence Cunningham, our VP and Reunion Coordinator, provides a great summary of events and includes instructions on registering for the reunion and the hotel. Start registering now to ensure you get a room at the headquarters hotel."*



*Jack Keane*

Well, we're just a tad over six months out from our reunion in San Antonio! My article will be short because I don't want to detract from the reunion information provided in this issue of the Pelican Post by the other officers.

Spence's article provides a great summary of events and includes instructions on registering for the reunion and the hotel. Start registering now to ensure you get a room at the headquarters hotel.

Start recruiting new members and encourage them to attend the reunion. We're especially short on members from the 90s and 2000s. And remember, you must be a member of the Association to attend the reunion, so when you recruit a new member, have them register to become a member first. They can do that by clicking or tapping [HERE](#). After that, they can register for the reunion [HERE](#).

Over the past several months, the officers have worked to come up with some new geedunk. We'll still have

ballcaps and polo shirts, but this time with a reunion-specific logo. This year, we will also be offering T-shirts. When you register, you can make your selection regarding shirt sizes on the registration form.

Our guest speaker will be my good friend RADM Kyle Cozad, USN (Ret.) accompanied by his wife Amy. Kyle is a 1985 graduate of the US Naval Academy after which he attended flight school earning his wings of gold and becoming a P-3 pilot. Kyle and I first met in 2015 while he was Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Group in Norfolk, VA. In 2017, he departed Norfolk for Pensacola where he assumed the duties of Commander, Naval Education and Training Command, retiring in the summer of 2020.

Upon retirement he took over as the President and CEO of the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation. Kyle is the author of "Relentless Positivity", a memoir (see photo below) detailing his career as a naval aviator and how he overcame a debilitating back injury in March 2018.

He has agreed to do a book signing on Friday evening, 4 October.



# FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Hello everyone! Another Reunion Year is upon us! Seems like only yesterday we decided upon what the 2024 reunion cities were going to be! The membership voted and overwhelmingly chose San Antonio!! Also, we have moved back to our normal month rotation: OCTOBER!! We have set up Pelican the HQ at the Holiday Inn – Riverwalk in downtown San Antonio. I think we will really enjoy the hotel location. It is steps from the San Antonio Riverwalk!



We sent an email blast that hotel reservations have been open since January, but I will include reservation details in this article.

## Accommodations

The accommodation rate is \$149.00/night for any room. Pictured below are a typical single and a double room.

## Reservations

Members can call the Holiday Inn Riverwalk at 210-224-2500 – Option #2 or 877-424-2449. The address is 217 N. St. Mary's Street San Antonio, TX 78205



*Holiday Inn Riverwalk*



To make your reservation please call the number above and reference the Patrol Squadron 45 Association. Give the group block number "P45" (no V) to the reservations desk along with the type of accommodation you desire. If you prefer working online, then you can visit the following booking link: [San Antonio Riverwalk Hotels](#).



You can also visit: [Armed Forces Reunions - Event Registration](#) and click on the [Hotel Information link](#) at the top of the page. If you wish to come early or stay longer, the hotel will offer these rates, based on availability, to attendees (3) days before and (3) days after the event. Our group receives a 10% discount in the hotel restaurant, but you must show your reunion badge. Discount does not apply to alcohol. If you need to depart early, just give 24 hours' notice and there is no early departure fee.

## Hotel Cut-off Date

The cut-off date for reserving rooms is 5:00 p.m., central time, 21 days prior to arrival (September 3, 2024). After the cut-off date, the hotel will accept additional reservations at the contracted rate subject to availability. Reservations received after September 3, 2024 will be provided on a space available basis. **So, reserve early!!**

## Cancellation Policy

If you must cancel, you may do so up to 24 hours prior to your arrival date. Please call the hotel directly at (210) 224-2500, Option 2, to cancel your hotel reservations. PLEASE NOTE, CANCELLING YOUR HOTEL RESERVATION DOES NOT CANCEL YOUR REUNION REGISTRATION OR ACTIVITIES. You will have to contact AFRI directly to cancel any reunion activities.

### Parking

There is \$20 discount for self-parking. These parking charges include in and out privileges for registered guests. There is valet service but those rates are subject to change. Please note the hotel garage may not be able to accommodate oversized vehicles.

### Hotel Concessions for the VP-45 Reunion

Some of the benefits the hotel is providing us:

- 10% discount for reunion attendees in the hotel's restaurant upon display of your reunion badge
- Free local calls
- High Speed Internet access at group's registration desk, in meeting rooms, and in all sleeping rooms
- Hotel will waive ancillary fees for fitness center use, sending/receiving faxes, resort fees, early departure fees, and automatic bellman and maid service fees

### The Reunion!

Here is a day-by-day outline of what is happening, including some excursions to do! NOTE: there is a 35-person participation minimum or that excursion will be cancelled.

**The Squadron** - Our reunion timing with VP-45's deployment schedule is at odds this year. Sadly, we are not expecting Sailors from the squadron to join us, nor will we have a P-8 to tour. We will certainly pause, raise a glass, salute them and acknowledge and appreciate their dedication and sacrifice, as they serve our country.



**The Hospitality Room** - Will be open daily at 8:00 a.m. and close at midnight except where noted in the formal Schedule of Events. We will have free adult and non-alcoholic beverages along with hors-d'oeuvres at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday and Friday for your enjoyment!

**Wednesday, October 2nd** - The Reunion Begins!! You can check into the Holiday Inn beginning at 12:00 p.m. Reunion Check-in/Geedunk/Hospitality areas will be set up in the Skyline Atrium! At 3:00PM, reunion check-in starts. Members can complete registration and pick-up their reunion materials. The geedunk and hospitality room will be open for the membership to enjoy (see geedunk available on page 24).



*Mission Concepcion*

**Thursday, October 3rd** - City Tour . (\$57/per person). 9:00 a.m. show in the Lobby and expect a 4:00 p.m. return to the hotel. From the earliest Spanish Missionaries in 1691 to today's traveler, San Antonio's appeal continues to draw attention. Relax and enjoy a fully narrated tour of San Antonio's unique blend of rich heritage, traditions, and natural beauty. Points of interest include stops at the Mission Concepcion, which is the oldest unrestored stone church in America; San Fernando Cathedral, the original church of the Canary

Island settlers; enjoy a short visit to the historically registered German neighborhood of King William. From there you'll enjoy some time at the San Antonio River Walk or River Center Mall. Enjoy lunch on your own,

perhaps at Casa Rio, the first Mexican Restaurant on the River Walk. Its beautiful location and colorful umbrellas have come to symbolize the serenity and romance of the San Antonio River Walk

**Reunion Kick-Off** - On Thursday evening starting at 6:00 p.m., we will officially begin the reunion with the “Meet and Greet” in the Skyline Atrium! Time to renew old friendships, meet new friends and swap sea stories!! To that end, Bill Hobgood will present “A Walk Down Memory Lane” video which I am sure will add to the lively atmosphere! Dinner is on your own, but the hospitality room will have free Hors-d’oeuvres in addition to the free alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages you all have come to expect!



**Friday, August 9th** - A Do Not Miss Tour - Fredericksburg/National Museum of the Pacific War (\$79/per person) A 9:00 a.m. show in the Lobby and we expect a 4:00 p.m. return to the hotel. We will enjoy a scenic ride to Fredericksburg, the boyhood home of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. Tour the National Museum of the Pacific War, which is dedicated to everyone who served in the Pacific under Admiral Nimitz. Nimitz served



*National Museum of the Pacific War*

as CinCPAC, United States Pacific Fleet, and was soon afterward named Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas, during World War II. The Museum, once a hotel owned by Nimitz’s grandfather, now includes over 34,000 square feet of indoor exhibit space including the George Bush Gallery, Admiral Nimitz Museum, Plaza of Presidents, Veterans’ Walk of Honor, Japanese Garden of Peace, Pacific Combat Zone, and the Nimitz Education and Research Center. A 43,000 square foot expansion was added in 2010, where you can explore the impressive display of Allied and Japanese aircraft, tanks, guns, and other artifacts made famous during the Pacific War campaigns. Enjoy lunch at one of several restaurants or delis located on Fredericksburg’s downtown Main Street along with shopping for those interested.

For Friday evening we have a couple of options for you.

**Jack’s Presentation** - In the Skyline Atrium, Jack Keane will lecture on Patrol Aviation’s role in the Vietnam War. A highly informative presentation for sure!!



*Jack Keane*

**Bill’s VP-45 Era Videos** - Jack will be followed by an encore presentation of Bill Hobgood’s videos that document each (aircraft) era in VP-45. Times for these presentations will be published on the Schedule of Events provided upon reunion check-in.



*Bill Hobgood*



**Saturday, August 10th:** - Business Meeting Early Saturday at 8:00 a.m., the Association Officers invite all members to the bi-annual business meeting in the Skyline Atrium. Association business such as: association funding, membership dues, possible changes to the Association By-laws, voting/acceptance of Association officers and most importantly location nominations for our next reunion are on the agenda! ALL MEMBERS are welcome and encouraged to attend! You all have a say...it is your Association, too!! We will have a coffee service available as well.

**Buckhorn/Texas Ranger/Alamo/El Mercado Tour** (\$64/per person) - A 10:00 a.m. show in the Lobby and expect a 4:00 p.m. return to the hotel. Enjoy a continuous shuttle to three locations. First stop, the Buckhorn Saloon and Museum. It all started in 1881 when trappers, hunters and cowboys traded deer antlers for beer or whiskey at Albert Friedrich's saloon. Enjoy the Hall of Horns, Hall of Feathers and Hall of Fins which house not only the largest, but also some of the most impressive collections of native and exotic wildlife around.

Next door you will find the Texas Ranger Museum which contains priceless artifacts documenting the history and lore of the Texas Rangers. Second stop, The Alamo. The jewel of Texas heritage and a historic destination. From historic buildings and artifacts to dramatic living history and peaceful gardens, there is something for everyone. Be sure to go online and get your timed ticket to visit the Church [HERE](#).

Third stop, El Mercado – a three block outdoor plaza lined with shops and restaurants in downtown San Antonio. El Mercado is the largest Mexican market in the United States featuring more than 30 specialty shops.

**The Banquet** - Come Saturday evening, at 6:00 pm, we will begin our Banquet with a cash bar Happy Hour to enjoy great conversation and each other's company! At 7:00 p.m. we will move into the Tango Ballroom for dinner! Your dinner options are:

Fire Grilled Sirloin@ \$69 per person  
 Chicken Piccata @ \$61  
 Seared Salmon @ \$61  
 Vegetarian Entrée @ \$61  
 Desert available with all entries is Cheesecake!

The banquet will begin at 7:00 p.m. starting with Parading of the Colors, singing of the National Anthem and opening remarks by our new Association President, Jack Keane. Once President Keane completes his remarks, he will introduce our guest speaker, Rear Adm. Kyle Cozad, USN (Ret.). Admiral Cozad is the President and CEO of the National Naval Aviation Museum. He is also the model of true grit and determination. After a freak accident that left him paralyzed from the waist down, Kyle overcame many challenges and became an example for those in similar situations that you can continue to have a full life of meaning. In that vein, he is the author of *Relentless Positivity: A Common Veteran Battling Uncommon Odds*. Insightful and honest, his account describes how he bounced back from a debilitating spinal cord injury with one overarching motivation: to "give back" and make a positive difference for others.

Finally, to round out the evening, we will move to Door Prizes! We have several great prizes to give away and



*The Famous Buckhorn/Texas  
 Ranger Museum*

a couple of items to auction off as well! Finally, the Banquet ends with our traditional group photos of the membership by decade!! The hospitality room will reopen after the banquet and will close at midnight.

**Sunday, August 11th:** We can have our final breakfast together in the hotel restaurant before we say our "See you next time" by 9:00 a.m. and close the reunion. Then preparations for Reunion 2026 will begin!

That is all I have for this Newsletter! I truly hope we will have an impressive turnout for this reunion!

Again, registration is open, and your selections and secure online payment are made [HERE](#). If you prefer to use the U.S. Mail, toward the back (page 32), this Pelican Post newsletter has a registration form that you can print/remove, fill out and mail in!!

Get your choices made and join us!! Also, we are all recruiters! Please look over your contacts and reach out to your fellow Pelicans and have them join! As Jack will speak at the business meeting, we really need to increase the membership rolls. It is essential for the vitality of this organization. To that end, I challenge the membership, especially from the 80's, 90's and 2000's to bring at least one new member on-board!

This will be my third reunion and I am really excited for this one! My expectations are high for a city I have never been to and in a location that is in the center of so many things to do! Get your reservations made and join us for what will be another memorable reunion! Better than the last! I look forward to hearing the sea stories, telling some and enjoying the bond we share as Pelicans of VP-45! The best Patrol Squadron in the USN! Remember, pitch this to any non-member Pelicans you know and encourage them to join! Ten bucks gets them in!  
SEE YOU IN SAN ANTONIO!!!

Spence

If you have any questions or concerns, let me hear from you by clicking [HERE](#).

## AT THE TOP!

Cmdr. Michael A. Zdunkiewicz is a native of Houston, Texas. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1994 qualifying as aircrew in the S-3B Viking and he later qualified as a P-3C Orion Acoustic/Non-Acoustic operator.



Commander Michael Zdunkiewicz

After graduating from Columbia College, Zdunkiewicz attended OCS and flight training. He reported to VP-45 in March of 2008, and earned designations as TACCO and mission commander. Later, in 2011, he was assigned to Wing 11 as an instructor, for the initial P-8A Poseidon fleet introduction, in weapons and tactics. He implemented the first ever P-8A advanced readiness program and operational readiness evaluation for VP-16 and VP-5.

His next assignment was to Carrier Strike Group -12 as flag lieutenant for VADM Andrew L. Lewis and RADM Roy J. Kelley, conducting an "around-the-world" deployment aboard the USS *Theodore Roosevelt*. Zdunkiewicz returned to Jacksonville as the fleet training officer for the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Weapons School and, while there, attained a Master of Science in Operations Management from the University of Arkansas. He reported to VUP-19 in April 2017, as a department head of the Navy's first unmanned operational squadron operating the MQ-4C Triton. Ultimately serving as the squadron's maintenance officer in preparation for the initial deployment of VUP-19 and the MQ-4C.

In December of 2019, he was assigned to Task Force 57, and assumed the duties of chief of operations in Manama, Bahrain, in next August 2020. In April of 2021, Zdunkiewicz was selected for XO and now CO of VP-45. CDR Zdunkiewicz has deployed to 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th fleet areas of responsibilities on multiple occasions throughout his career.

# NAVY TRIVIA

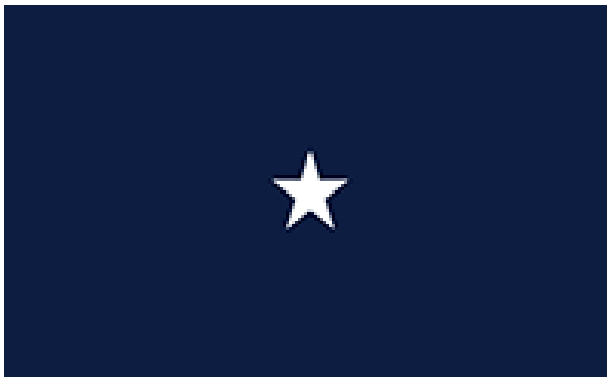
## Editor's Note:

I was laboring on what subject to expound upon for this issue's *NAVY TRIVIA* article. After a number of aborted takeoffs, I closed up Adobe InDesign (the app I use to build the Newsletter) and procrastinated. Something I did quite frequently in school. With publication deadline approaching, a lightbulb (LED, of course) went off in my brain...Dude! Just do a re-run!

And I knew exactly which one I would use. One of my favorites and one that I enjoyed most researching and writing. So, here we go, from exactly 10 years ago (and slightly updated)...prepare to chuckle:

## Brief History of the Naval Officer Rank: Commodore by: Bill Hobgood

1776: During Revolutionary times (and up until 1862), the Continental Congress was reluctant to have an Admiral rank in our Continental Navy because it smacked of royalty....and the our founding fathers hated royalty. So the Navy had only four officer ranks: Midshipman, Lieutenant, Master Commander and Captain. The "honorary" term Commodore was used by very senior Captains and was only a temporary assignment during the time when a Captain was actively in charge of more than one ship. However, once authorized to use the temporary title



*A Commodore's flag flown above his headquarters. When at sea a single star pennant would be flown from the ship's tall mast.*



*Only the second man in the history of the United States Navy to earn the rank of Admiral (the first was Porter's foster brother David G. Farragut), David Dixon Porter earned postwar distinction for his tenure as superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, between 1865 and 1869.*

"Commodore," many officers were reluctant to give it up (like Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry). Woe be to the lieutenant who addressed an officer once a Commodore as "Captain."

1857: Congress established the grade of "Flag Officer" for Captains in charge of a squadron of ships. Thus the "flag ship" flew the "flag" of the "Flag Officer." But, again, there was a requirement that once the assignment was over, the Flag Officer reverted to the rank of Captain.

1862: The larger Navy in the Civil War ignored tradition and officially promoted 18 senior Captains to the rank of Commodore. They wore one star and a broad 2 inch gold stripe on their sleeves. As opposed to the mess that was to come, this is the way it should have stayed. With a few rare exceptions starting in 1866 (Farragut, Porter and Rowan - who held admiral ranks), this rank of Commodore continued as the highest in the navy for 37 years.



Commodore  
of the Union Navy (1864-1866)

1891: Following the deaths of Admirals Porter and Rowan, Commodores reigned as the Navy's highest rank.

1899: US Navy Commodores complained up the chain that they got no respect from high ranking foreign military officers because they were not "Admirals." So Congress, in

its civilian wisdom, made all Commodores into Rear Admirals. They still paid them as "one star" Commodores but authorized them to wear two stars. Well... this really ticked off Army Brigadier Generals (one-stars) who now found themselves junior to newly promoted Navy Rear Admirals. This squabble lasted decades; even after the Navy came up with the Rear Admiral "upper half" and "lower half" ranks. Both Upper Half and Lower Half Rear Admirals wore two stars but the Upper Half officers were senior and were paid more...however there was no way to look at the uniform of Rear Admirals and tell which they were.

1943: During World War II, the Navy brought back the rank of Commodore when they realized that they (again) had no special rank for the commander of a squadron of ships. By the end of that war, about 100 naval officers were Commodores. Since few of these officers were promoted to flag officer, most were retired by 1950 and the rank was (again) no longer used.

1982: Continued bickering by Air Force, Army and Marine one-stars regarding Navy O-7's (Rear Admiral "lower half") who got to wear two stars finally got loud enough to require action. The Navy brought back the one star rank but decided to call it "Commodore Admiral." With the ex-

ception of Commodores, who liked being referred to (now) as an Admiral, everybody else thought "Commodore Admiral" sounded stupid. So, the very next year (1983), it was changed back to simply "Commodore." Everybody thought that made sense and sounded way better... except the Commodores, who were, now, no longer Admirals. They felt like they had been demoted. Additionally, real Commodores didn't like it that lots of senior Navy Captains (wing, submarine and destroyer squadron commanders) were sporting the honorary title "Commodore."

1984: After numerous food fights in the Pentagon's flag & general officer dining room, the Navy (again) changed the one star O-7 rank title back to Rear Admiral (lower half), hoping that the services' senior leadership would just try to get along. That didn't happen because the other services were still unhappy that all Navy rear admirals were (again) wearing two stars. Food fights continued.

1985: Someone finally saw the light and the Navy officially reduced the rank insignia for Rear Admiral (lower half) to one star and one broad gold stripe. The rank "Commodore" again reverted only to an honorary title for appropriately assigned Navy Captains.



As of 1985 - The correct and sensible transition from Captain to RADM Upper Half.

1989: Food fights had abated but two-star rear admirals "upper half" now figured out something else to complain about. They didn't like it that lowly "lower-half" Rear Admirals got to use RADM as an abbreviation for their rank. Since they had two-stars and were close to god-like, they felt these junior guys should not be entitled to that rank abbreviation. So, as the last chapter in this saga, the rank abbreviation for lower-half rear admirals was changed from RADM to RDML. Hardly anybody below flag rank took notice, or even cared about this change and most, when they saw RDML next to an admiral's name, thought it was a typo!

## FROM THE WEBMASTER

By: Scott Kelly



Greetings all from Jacksonville. The main news from the web-site is that we are changing our online payments system away from Paypal into a new system called CheddarUp. We have had considerable trouble with PayPal and Captcha and those of you who have tried to renew (or even activate) your member-

ships recently have seen that you've been rerouted to conventional manual forms and paper checks. We apologize for this inconvenience, and we hope to get this sorted before long.

On the upside, registration for the San Antonio reunion is handled by a third-party provider and is outside our system, so you'll be able to do online registration and payment with no issue. You can get to the registration site from the Association's website, and you can also access it directly [HERE](#)

On a personal note, I recently had the opportunity to visit the [Hickory Aviation Museum](#) in Hickory, NC. If you've not been there, it's an absolute delight to visit – the field is set between the Appalachian foothills to the west and the rolling hills of central North Carolina to the east. Though they do not have a lot of aircraft, they do have VP-30's former LL-515, which is a P-3C Update III retrofit (with a bit of Block Modernization Upgrade/BMUP equipment tossed in for good measure). Her BUNO is 156515. The P-3 is available for tours, if accompanied by one of the Museum's docents. And the chance to sit in my old "office" again – the TACCO station – is something I will savor for a very, very long time. What I would give to be able to do that one last time, with everything powered up, four Allison engines singing, and my old crew – especially those who have Flown West -- at their stations.

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

## SECRETARY'S PODIUM

By: Al LaBella



I thought I would use my space here to expound on my VA benefits article from the last issue of the Pelican Post...this time focusing on how to determine if you are qualified for VA compensation.

Please see the below checklist that provides guidance on filing a claim. The below link takes you to the VA website for additional links that provides further information on qualifications for filing a claim.

We are working with the San Antonio VA to have a representative at the Saturday morning business meeting to answer questions. Remember, as veterans we have earned the right for VA assistance for many services and potential compensation. Filing for assistance does not take away from another veteran or their family.



Click [HERE](#) to go to the VA Web-

site: **How to file a VA disability claim.**

### How do I prepare before starting my application?

1. Find out if you're eligible for VA disability compensation. Learn about eligibility [HERE](#).
2. Be sure to fill out your claim completely.
3. Gather any evidence (supporting documents) you'll submit yourself when you file your VA disability claim. I encourage you to send in all your supporting documents along with your claim. This will help the VA process your claim quickly. Learn about fully developed claims [HERE](#).

4. Find out [HERE](#) if you'll need to turn in any additional forms with your claim.

To learn more about filing a disability claim, you can play this YouTube video concerning disability claims : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ORYYo-Q2Jc>

### What evidence do I need to support my claim?

You can support your VA disability claim by providing these documents:

1. VA medical records and hospital records. These could relate to your claimed illnesses or injuries or they could show that your rated disability has gotten worse.
2. Private medical records and hospital reports. These could relate to your claimed illnesses or injuries or they could show that your disability has gotten worse.
3. Supporting statements. These could be from family members, friends, clergy members, law enforcement personnel, or people you served with. These statements could tell the VA more about your claimed condition and how and when it happened or how it got worse.

Depending on the type of claim you file, you may gather supporting documents yourself, or you can ask for VA help to gather evidence. [THIS](#) is what you may need.

The VA will also review your discharge papers (DD214 or other separation documents) and service treatment records.

### Do I have to submit evidence with my claim?

No. You don't have to submit any evidence to support your claim. But the VA may need to schedule a claim exam so they can learn more about your condition. Learn more about [VA claim exams](#).

You should also know that you have up to a year from the date the VA receives your claim to turn in any evidence. If you start your application and need time to gather more supporting documents, you can save your application and come back later to finish it. The VA will recognize the date you started your application as your date of claim as long as you com-

plete it within 365 days.

### How do I file a claim for compensation?

Online - File a claim [HERE](#) right now.

You can also file for disability compensation in any of these additional four ways.

By Mail - File your claim by mail using an Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits Form Click [VA Form 21-526EZ](#) to download. Print the form, fill it out, and send it to this address:



Department of Veterans Affairs  
Claims Intake Center  
PO Box 4444  
Janesville, WI 53547-4444

In person - Bring your application to a VA regional office near you. Find an office [HERE](#).

By FAX - (yes FAXs are still a thing) If you're in the U.S., fax your application to 844-531-7818. If you're outside the U.S., fax your application to 248-524-4260.

With the help of a trained professional - You can work with a trained professional called an accredited representative to get help filing a claim for disability compensation. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

# SEA STORIES

A Selection From Our Website "Sea Story"  
Page

## The MRCI From Hell - 1984

by: Ed Dumas

In the Spring of 1984, VP-45 was conducting the wide range of training workup exercises routinely required of squadrons prior to deployment. Soon to deploy to Rota/Lajes, one particular evolution that needed to be successfully completed was a mining exercise. Officially called a Mine Warfare Readiness Certification Inspection (or MRCI for short), it required that squadron leadership and aircrews demonstrate the ability to plan, execute and accurately deploy a mine field.



Skipper Joe Phelan  
1944 - 2014

CDR Joe Phelan was the CO at the time and CDR Stoney Stoutamire was the XO. An MRCI is a high adrenaline, graded exercise involving five aircraft and five crews. It is also a major test for the maintenance department and the ordnance shop. This pre-deployment MRCI turned out to be quite unusual and that is what this "sea story" is about.

It is a beautiful sight to see five P-3's, all engines turning, loaded with thousands of pounds of ordnance on wing racks, all taxiing in line for take-off. Four of the aircraft fly the three-and-a-half-hour profile, dropping their ordnance at predetermined locations off the coast of Charleston, SC. The fifth aircraft functions as range safety. The range safety aircraft is the first aircraft on the range, the last one off and, in addition to its safety roll, acts as a back up mining aircraft should any of the primary aircraft abort for any reason.

First attempt at mine deployment...in the Range

Safety aircraft, LCDR Ed Dumas was the TAC-CO, LCDR Jim Dolle was the PPC, LT Chris Conroy was the copilot, and LT Mike Price was the NAVCOM. They flew the mining profile as planned and briefed, the final phase of which involves flying at 300 feet and 300 knots inbound to the designated coastline "Initial Point" (IP) which is the last visual geographic fix before the mines go in the water.

*"Despite the importance and eagerness to visually acquire the IP, it could not be found! Tension mounted! Adrenaline flowed. Blood pressure sky-rocketed. Without the IP to mark on top for an accurate outbound heading and distance, the MRCI would be failed."*

For this exercise, the IP was a stationary Coast Guard navigation buoy floating at the mouth of the inlet. Needless to say, there were extra sets of eyes in the cockpit searching feverishly for the IP as the aircraft barreled across the waters not too far from the beach. Despite the importance and eagerness to visually acquire the IP, it could not be found! Tension mounted! Adrenaline flowed. Blood pressure sky rocketed. Without the IP to mark on top for an accurate outbound heading and distance, the MRCI would be failed.

With the four primary aircraft swiftly heading inbound to the IP at a high rate of speed, Ed and Jim, in the Range Safety P-3, were following close behind at the same airspeed. As the four lead aircraft fruitlessly searched for the IP, Ed and Jim likewise scanned the area for the navigation buoy. HOLY CRAP! Ed screamed as he spotted it...on the deck of a Coast Guard cutter that, revealed later, the buoy was being tak-



LCDR Jim Dolle - PPC of the  
Range Safety Aircraft.

en to Charleston for maintenance. Over the assigned UHF frequency "Abort, Abort - full stop, exercise cancelled!!" was transmitted and all aircraft immediately returned to Fineart base at NAS Jax.

Second attempt at mine deployment... the following day, the squadron Tactics Office replotted the minefield based on a new Initial Point. Once again, five mission-ready aircraft were loaded for bear and climbed out of Jax on a beautiful CAVU day—meaning it was a helluva beautiful day that allowed the P-3 crews to see for miles. Ed and Jim's crew was first up, again headed inbound to the coast at 300 feet and 300 knots.

About five miles from the beach and IP, with virtually no warning, they encountered a large flock of birds. The birds impacted all over the aircraft; that no engines were FODed was a miracle. The outer and inner layers of the copilot's windscreen were violently shattered. However, the three middle layers of the windshield mostly held. Glass was all over the cockpit and down the tube past the NAVCOM station. Feathers, bird guts, and blood were splattered in the cockpit; and Chris had some bird blood on his face. The aircraft was slowed, the copilot seat vacated, an emergency declared, and condition five was set, while Ed and the rest of the crew checked the condition of the aircraft. All inbound squadron aircraft were notified that there was extensive bird activity in the area and, therefore, again, the exercise was cancelled.

Ed and Jim returned their aircraft very slowly to Jax where Jim logged a rare, single pilot P-3 landing.



*LCDR Ed Dumas at the TACCO station.*

Upon landing, Ed commented that it was the smoothest P-3 landing he had experienced since being in the VP community. Obviously, Ed was trying to earn some brownie points for some future encounter with Jim -- perhaps earning a couple of free drinks at the bar.

As Jim taxied to the designated parking spot, the crew noticed how intently the emergency responders and others on the ground were all looking at the aircraft; only later to find out as the crew disembarked from the aircraft that that intense interest

was because the aircraft had sustained way more damage than was thought. Numerous dings, dents, and holes were discovered in the radar dome, leading edge of the wing, and empennage. All three front windscreens, from the pilot's to copilot's were completely obscured with bird blood and guts.

In summation, it was a case of a few seconds of very bad luck, followed by good fortune that all engines kept running, and that the professional



*This crew pictured is believed to be the crew this sea story is about. LCDR Ed Dumas is standing far left and LCDR Jim Dolle is standing third from the left.*





*What a good sized bird will do to a perfectly good P-3 windscreen.*

performance of the crew in this emergency was nothing less than superb. Also, let's not forget the two most important factors in this story: One - all 4 engines kept running and Two - a smooth landing was conducted by Jim Dolle with hardly any unusual vibration during dropping the gear and the use of flaps, a testament to the strength and secure build of the 24 year old airframe. Ed said it best when he noted after landing, "The old

girl [the P-3 Orion] came through again, handling like a champ, bringing us all home safe and flying as though nothing was wrong with her."

Third attempt at mine deployment...flawless aircrew and aircraft performance. All ordnance functioned as intended and all mines were dropped exactly as planned.

Skipper Phelan and the entire squadron were thoroughly tested by what became known as the "MRCI from Hell" and all areas of the squadron passed with flying colors.

Also note; neither Ed or Jim recall names of the remaining crewmembers aboard the aircraft that difficult day. However; the success and safety of the aircraft was an all-hands effort. BZ, well done!

Ed's Note: If you were on this, or one of the other aircraft, let us know by clicking [HERE](#).



# A TRIBUTE

by: Jay Thomas

I was a flight crew member in the squadron during the late 50s when we still flew the P-5M seaplane. Though



*Mort manning up for his first solo during flight training.*

I left the Navy shortly after that tour, I have always loved the time I spent as a Pelican and the friends I made. So in 1988, I decided I would try to organize a reunion of former Pelicans. That effort began as handwritten letters to 25 former squadron friends. By 1990, we had the fledgling VP-45 Association and our first reunion.

But I did not do this alone. Shortly after that first letter, I was introduced, by a mutual friend, to Mort Eckthouse, who had been a pilot in VP-45 about two years after I had left. This article is a tribute to this great man who, while working with me to create this wonderful association, became a close, life-long friend.

Mort was a NAVCAD, who after earning his wings, was a seaplane instructor pilot, a blimp pilot, GCA O-in-C at NAS Willow Grove and a logistics pilot before arriving at VP-45 in 1962 to fly the P-5M and, later, the P-3A. After the squadron, Mort held numerous positions of increased responsibility retiring in 1977 after 27 years of dedicated service.

In 1984, not yet having been introduced to me, Mort also started thinking about a VP-45 reunion and started collecting names from multiple sources. Together, with an old squadron friend, his list grew to about 100 names. Shortly after sending out my first letter, I met Mort, liked him immediately and we began to work closely together on the reunion project. Progress quickly accelerated and by late 1989, we had over 200 interested potential members. The first reunion was a resounding success as 164 former Pelicans attended at



*Mort as a NAVCAD, a Commander and as a Naval Aviation Museum volunteer.*

NAS Jacksonville in October of 1990.

Mort is no longer with us but what he did for us is a beautiful example of true selflessness; similar to that of all our subsequent leaders over the past three and a half decades. But, I will never forget Mort's willingness and aggressiveness in personally offering to put together the "admin" of our fledgling reunion group. In all my years of knowing and working with Mort, he was so very respectful of me in all of our many interactions and planning sessions. There were times that we entered discussions, frustrated with the amount of work and with differing ideas; but there was never an occasion that we disagreed on a general path forward. A perfect example of his selflessness was the occasion when we agreed it was time to form leadership positions so we could work towards "Reunion One." We were talking over the phone one evening when Mort said he thought it was time for us to establish leadership positions in our fledgling organization, which would soon become the Patron Four Five Association. Mort further said, if I would like to be our president, he would gladly support me as my vice president. I said to Mort, no, he needed to be the one to head our new organization and I would gladly support him as his vice president. I held firm and that is what we did!

The rest is history.

This October, we will hold our 17th consecutive reunion (except during COVID). Mort was our first President and the man most responsible for the grand organization and Association it has become. Most of you reading this have been to one or more of our reunions and

have personally met Mort...he had attended every one through 2022. Like me, I know you will sorely miss him.

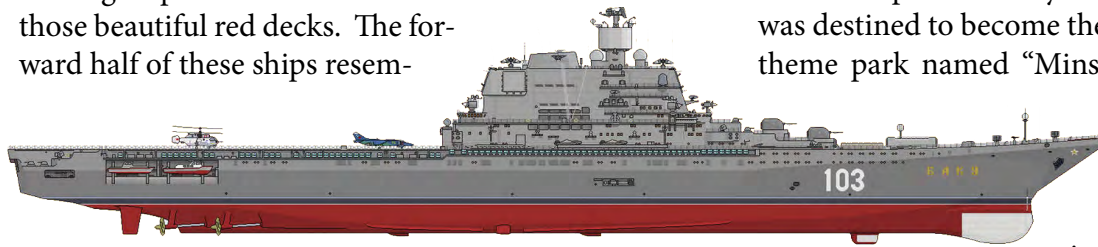
Fair winds, my dear friend!

*Jay Thomas*

## The Soviet Kiev Class Aircraft Carrier

by: Bill Hobgood

Many of us, who were flight crew in the 1970s and 1980s, found ourselves rigging a Soviet *Kiev* class capital ship. They were class looking ships from the air...new and with those beautiful red decks. The forward half of these ships resem-



bled a heavily armed cruiser while the rest of the ship looked like an aircraft carrier. The Soviets called them “heavy aviation cruisers...and they were armed to the teeth.



The *Kiev* class’s intended mission was support for ballistic missile submarines, other surface ships, and naval aviation; it

was capable of engaging in anti-aircraft, anti-submarine, and surface warfare. At 900ft in length, she was just a couple hundred feet short of the length of a modern US carrier. Four were built though the two most familiar to us were the *Kiev* and the *Minsk*.

So what happened to them?

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the *Kiev* class ships were just too costly to maintain. One of the four was sold for scrap in 1995 and another, first opera-

# A LOOK BACK

tional in 1987, was sold to India in 2004 and converted to a more conventional aircraft carrier with a “ski-jump” bow.

But *Kiev* and *Minsk* had a way different future.

Both were purchased by Chinese companies. *Minsk* was destined to become the centerpiece of a military theme park named “Minsk World,” which opened in 2000 and was initially wildly successful. *Minsk* World’s direct competition was just 100 miles south of Beijing in Tianjin City; where

another military themed park used the *Kiev* as the centerpiece. Both parks did well as China’s navy had no aircraft carriers and the people found them curious, interesting and entertaining.

That curiosity faded quickly in Beijing and *Minsk* World went bankrupt and closed in 2006. Though purchased by another theme park venture, it quickly failed again. Following that it was sold to a third company with the same type venture in mind but the project languished and never came to fruition. Today the *Minsk* sits abandoned and rusting in a man-made lagoon. At some point, her final destination will be a scrapyard.

The *Kiev*, in Tianjin Binhai Aircraft Carrier Theme Park, is doing well and is one of the top ten attractions in Tianjin City. Scuttlebutt is that *Kiev* has been renovated into a 5-Star 148 room luxury hotel complete with presidential suites.



# SQUADRON & COMMUNITY NEWS

## VP-45 Makes History

The "Pelicans" of Patrol Squadron (VP) 45 made history when they landed a P-8A Poseidon aircraft on Pituffik Space Base, Greenland. This is the furthest north the P-8A aircraft has ever landed!



*Canadian RADM Patchell asks questions of VP-45 crew sensor operator.*

U.S. 2nd Fleet's Vice Commander, Canadian Rear Adm. David Patchell, joined our incredible crew of operators and pilots to observe our anti-submarine warfare capabilities first hand.

The historic flight was during Operation NANOOK, which is the Canadian Armed Forces' signature northern operation comprised of a series of comprehensive activities designed to exercise the defense of Canada and to secure their northern regions.

## Pelicans Man P-8 with All Women Flight Crew

This never happens! Until now. VP-45 recently manned a P-8 Poseidon with an full tactical crew (pictured to right) that was composed of all women. This is a interesting story and you can read it in full by clicking [HERE](#).



## VP-4 P-8 Crashes After Landing in Hawaii

A Navy P-8A Poseidon flown by the VP-4 "Skinny Dragons" overshot the runway at Marine Corps Base Hawaii (MCBH) back in November.

According to a spokesperson at MCBH, the jet was landing at the base when it ran off the runway and ended up partially submerged in Kaneohe Bay. All nine flight crew on board were unhurt and made it to shore.



*VP-4's P-8 rests in the shallow, coral bottom, water off the end of the runway. Since this picture was taken divers determined the aircraft was intact and salvageable and could be raised using air bags and a helpful high tide. Please click [HERE](#) for the whole story of this event including photos and an underwater video of the aircraft while sitting on the bottom.*

## Indian P-8 Aircraft Help Secure Hijacked Vessel

Indian Navy commandos secured the hijacked Liberian-flagged MV *Lila Norfolk* last January after a 24-hour confrontation off the Somali Coast in the Arabian Sea. This swift response comes as New Delhi reinforces its presence in the area, surging ships and aircraft to deter attacks on international shipping in the Western Indian Ocean Region.



Shown here are eight of the 12 P-8I aircraft that have been purchased by India for their Navy.

Five to six armed hijackers boarded *Lila Norfolk* on Thursday, which was sailing 450 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia. The crew of the *Lila Norfolk*, composed of 15 Indian and six Philippine nationals, sheltered from the hijackers in the bulk tanker's citadel and were unharmed during the entire ordeal. Indian naval forces deployed the destroyer INS *Chennai* (D65) as well as several helicopters and aircraft, including an American-built P-8 maritime patrol aircraft and a MQ-9B SeaGuardian drone, in response.

Eventually, a team from the Indian Navy's Marine Commandos (MARCOS) boarded the vessel. None of the hijackers were found onboard, and all of the crew were rescued from the citadel – the ship's armored safe room. The Indian Navy claimed that the perpetrators were likely compelled to flee after witnessing the mass response of Indian forces to the hijacking and subsequently fled during the night, according to a press release.

It was also reported by Indian Navy Lt Cdr Mudita Goyal, that the P-8I aircraft of the Indian Navy gave a warning to the pirates on board the hijacked Liberian-flagged vessel, MV *Lila Norfolk*, after which "they got scared and fled."

Additional info and videos are located [HERE](#).

## China Close to Launching Third Carrier

China commissioned her first carrier, *Liaoning*, in 2012. That was 92 years after the first U.S. Navy carrier, USS *Langley*, but they plan to catch up fast. *Liaoning* started her life during the Cold War as the second Soviet Navy's second carrier, *Varyag*. After the collapse of the Soviet Union she was left unfinished, and later sold to China. *Liaoning* took years to come close to operational capability but the second carrier, Shandong, has already put to sea. The third is close to commissioning, and a fourth is reportedly already under construction.

The Chinese carriers are getting bigger and more potent with each ship. The first two are smaller than U.S. carriers at around 67,500 tons, and feature a raised 'ski-jump' bow to launch their fighter jets.



China's third aircraft carrier close to being operational.

The third ship, Fujian, the first fully Chinese-designed carrier is much larger and has replaced the ski-jump with electromagnetic catapults like on the latest U.S. carriers. While the precise makeup of its airwing remains unclear at present, a catapult-variant of the J-15 fighter, the J-15T, is in existence, and will likely be a staple on this carrier.



A J-15 Fighter ready for launch.

# MAIL CALL

Hey, Bill!

Please pass the below message to Jack Keane:

Jack, that was an incredible article you and Mort put together. Mort was not only a wonderful person, he was also a very dear friend. Thank you for putting the “Member in the Spotlight” article in for all to see again.

Mort came by and stayed with Shirley and me on two separate occasions. Shirley and I loved Mort. On one of his stays, we toured around our ICT sites and then ended with a memory trip to Hutchinson KS where Mort and Gladys lived when he took his Flight Training at the Hutchinson Naval Air Station. We also toured what was left of the base. We then spent nearly half a day touring the Hutchinson Air and Space Museum. That is one beautiful place for any/all Aircraft and Space enthusiasts. Beautiful SR-71 on a permanent stand with the Pilots cockpit window at eye level when you step inside the entry door. The museum is filled with history and artifacts of the NASA program from start till ??



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

His second stay, we had an extensive tour at Learjet and ended with a very nice stay session of Mort with a young friend who had become one of our Production Test Pilots. The two of them had a great time in the cockpit of one of our production Flight Test A/C. We all enjoyed that trip. Mort dined with our family and just a few years later, our youngest daughter Dawn, with her husband Harold and their sons Jacob and Zachary, went to PNS and spent considerable time with Mort touring sites in his PNS area.

Mort was a very dear friend not only to me but also to my family.

Jay Thomas

Hey, Bill

VP-45 was my first duty station coming out of "A" school in Memphis in 1963. I was sent to Naval Base Bermuda where I first knew Mort Eckhouse. He was a great shipmate, a gentleman of integrity, and a man who could get the job done. I also made the transition from the P5M Martin Marlin to the P3A at Pax River Maryland and was then sent to NAS Jacksonville where most of my career was spent. It is with great sadness to learn of Mort's passing and names like Jay Thomas, John Bollinger, Jake Tobin, and so many more come to mind. We were blessed to serve with such men and to me I had great respect for ALL who served at that time. May God grant Mort eternal rest. Thanks for all he did for us.



AWC (Ret.) Delden E. Farrington

*Editor's Note: The below message was sent from Anne Agnew to Jay Thomas concerning attending a VP-45 reunion by himself (his wife, Shirley, had passed away).*

Hi, Jay!

I received your email. Whew! What an effort THIS has been!! I am going to re-write what I sent to you that didn't get to you. It's probably out there somewhere in the VP45 e-mails. I'm glad we finally connected.

Jay, today I read the Pelican Post all the way through—probably the only time I've read it ALL the way through. I read an interesting story about

Click Here to Send a "Mail Bag" Letter to:

**"HEY BILL!"**

someone going to a reunion by himself and how friendly everyone was. I got so excited "I nearly jumped out of my skin" when I read that it was you. I just want to let you know that your getting in touch with Frank meant so much to him and to me. I also want to tell you that we appreciate all the work you have put into the reunions. For all the men who loved the Navy and loved VP 45, thank you for getting them together—and the wives. We had just as good a time as you guys did.

The letters you sent Frank are among the things I saved after his death. They are in a folder marked important letters.

So sorry to hear about Shirley. I'm proud of you for going alone. Sometimes those things are easy, sometimes they aren't.

Hey, Bill (and Jack)!

Once again you and your team have produced another excellent Pelican Post and the newsletter always has some unique pieces to keep us up to date.

I appreciated the range of stories from Jack's *Bismarck* article to "Bermuda Seaplane Ops-1958" to hearing about what is in store for the P-8.

Seeing Ted Wilson's obit brought back a flood of memories. In 1977, on a short break back to JAX during our Keflavik deployment, I was very fortunate to have Ted as an instructor pilot who in a couple of days really showed me how to fly the P-3C. Ted was one of the best: a rock-solid leader, an outstanding pilot, and we all were fortunate to serve with him

I appreciate Bill's video link for Flying Machines and his "Silent Ramp" cover photo which brings back memories to all of us; and liked Bill's Navy slang and would offer three more: Sh#t list (which I have been on a few times), O-

dark-thirty and Mustang (enlisted to officer), I think the Pelican Post may be one of the best Newsletters out there and you may want to send it in to compete for an award among military associations.

All the best! Don Stanton

Hey, Bill!

Thanks to every one of you for another great newsletter! There is not another newsletter of any kind that comes close to measuring up as far as content, design and quality.

We look forward to San Antonio!

Respectfully, Doug "Pooh Bear" Mitchell

Hey, Bill

Wow what a wonderful video (*referring to Bill's reunion videos*). The video and audio quality was super. I worked for a television station for many years and what you produced is as good if not better than anything I saw at work.

Excellent!

Michael E. DeWire

*Editor's Note: The below message came from Steve Binion, son of the last Commanding Officer of the VP-45 (PBY) squadron during WW-II.*

Hey, Bill!

I hope all is well with you and yours this Christmas Season. I'm still enjoying the continuing issues of the Pelican Post, and am still impressed by the professional quality you crank out.

At the risk of getting wrapped up in the minutiae of ancient history, I wanted to share with you a tidbit that's been nagging me for the past four years. It doesn't have to do with my dad, but rather his immediate predecessor: The next-to-last CO of VPB-45 (PBY).

The Dictionary of American Naval Aviation Squadrons – Volume 2, Page 468, Commanding Officers, shows the name of that person to be LCDR H. B. Scott, assuming command on 8 Jun 1944. However, I've attached a copy of a Fitness Report for my dad, Lamar Binion (the last CO of VPB-45 (PBY) dated 14 May 1945 that shows the name of the reporting officer as H. B. Stott, Commanding Officer (section 6, 1st line). The signature at the bottom of the form also clearly shows his last name was Stott (not Scott).

So, one could say "What difference does it make after all these years? The written record will remain as it is forever". It's just a small, very small, detail of a tiny corner of that part of history having to do with one man who has surely been dead for decades. Nevertheless, I just didn't want to be the only person on the face of the planet who knew the correct spelling of his last name. They say that a person is never really gone until no one is left who remembers him.

Anyway, now you know, too. So wherever H. B. Stott is, at least somebody besides me knows, not just where he was and what he did, but also how his last name should have been spelled in the Navy's historical records. I'll try not to let it bother me anymore, but no guarantees.

Steve Binion

*Editor Note: Steve provided us (with permission to publish) a copy of his father's fitness report, as XO, that was signed by his CO discussed above - LCDR H. B. Stott. to view it on our website, click [HERE](#).*



Shirts and Caps sold very well last reunion due to their quality and pricing. So, again this year, our Newsletter Editor, Bill Hobgood, has designed a special logo for the caps and shirts. Please order them when you register for the reunion by going [HERE](#)...then scroll down on that page to register for the reunion and order these caps and shirts.



COTTON CHINO BALL CAP WITH EMBROIDERED LOGO & NAVY BLUE WITH GOLD LOGO & KHAKI WITH BLUE LOGO  
ADJUSTABLE SIZE - \$18.00



POLO SHIRTS: 50/50 POLY/COTTON BLEND WITH EMBROIDERED LOGO IN NAVY BLUE AND GRAY AS SHOWN - \$20.00  
SIZES: S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL, 4XL, 5XL

TEE SHIRTS: 50/50 POLY/COTTON DRY BLEND WITH SCREENED LOGO IN NAVY BLUE AND GRAY AS SHOWN - \$15.00  
SIZES: S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL, 4XL, 5XL



## TREASURER'S TWO CENTS



Fellow Pelicans: Your Association remains in excellent financial condition with total assets totaling over \$35K.

On a personal note, I did not know CDR Mort Eckhouse personally, I admired him for his 27 years of service. I also appreciated his contribution as a volunteer at NAS Pensacola's Naval Aviation Museum. Our Association acknowledged his dedication to this museum, that represents not only him and his life work, but all Naval Aviation history, with a \$500 donation in his name to Project Orion, which is currently a P-3C under restoration at the Naval Aviation Museum.

Being a military history buff myself, what a fantastic legacy! I think of all our members and the history we've lived and created. Ladies and gentlemen of the Association I look forward to seeing each and every one of you at our reunion. God bless you all!

Michael Riley , AOC, USN (Ret.)

### PATRON FOUR FIVE ASSOCIATION TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT

All Funds	<b>31 Dec 2023</b>	\$35,725.59
Income:		
Dues	\$230.00	
Interest/Dividends	96.59	
Gift	500.00	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$829.59</b>	
Expenses:		
Printing/Postage	\$334.58	
Taxes	0.00	
Donation NAM	500.00	
Misc Supplies	0.00	
Corporate Fees	260.00	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,094.58</b>	
<b>Net Income</b>		<b>-\$267.99</b>
<b>Total Cash Assets</b>	<b>31 Dec 2023</b>	<b><u>\$35,457.60</u></b>

## REACTION TIME TEST

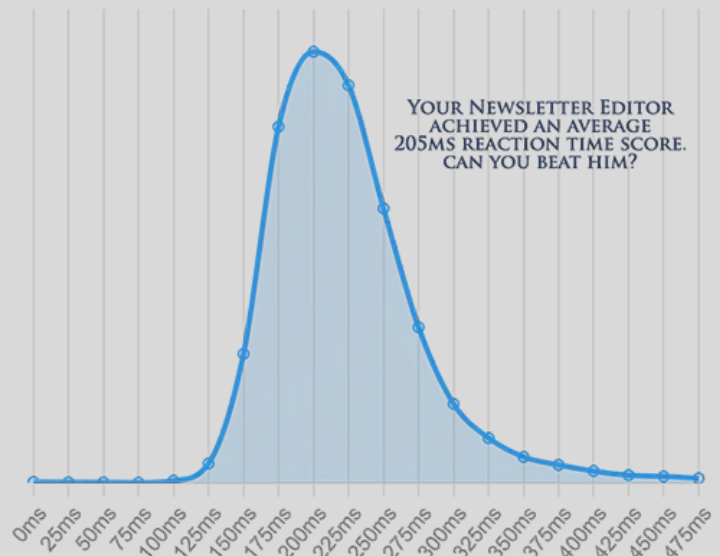
This is a simple tool to measure your reaction time.

The average (median) reaction time is 273 milliseconds, according to the data collected so far.

In addition to measuring your reaction time, this test is affected by the latency of your computer and monitor. Using a fast computer and low latency / high frame rate monitor will improve your score.

This is discussed in further detail on the the statistics page. While an average human reaction time may fall between 200-250ms, your computer could be adding 10-50ms on top. Some modern TVs add as much as 150ms!

For the test, go [HERE](#) and then click anywhere in the BLUE area, NOT the green START button.



## BACK IN THE DAY

### History's Deadliest Submarine Commander

by: Jack Keane

In 1997, I participated in the development of a missile defense wargame simulation at the Joint National Test Facility at what is now Schriever AFB in Colorado Springs. One evening over dinner, a friend of mine mentioned that her family believed that her mother's brother, a member of the German Army, may have perished during the sinking of MV *Wilhelm Gustloff*. After connecting her with a friend (since deceased) who specialized in WWII German military genealogy, we discovered that her uncle died in combat in 1944 fighting the Soviets.

Originally, I intended this article to be about a single event – the sinking of *Wilhelm Gustloff*. Instead, it is about a single man – Captain Alexander Ivanovich Marinesko, commanding officer of the Soviet *Stalinets*-class submarine *S-13* – a man who wreaked horrendous havoc in eleven days in the Baltic and whose actions resulted in the largest loss of life at sea in recorded history.

Born in Odessa in January 1913, to a Romanian sailor and a Ukrainian mother, Marinesko trained in the Soviet Merchant Navy as well as the Soviet Navy's Black Sea Fleet. By late 1938, he was a senior lieutenant (lieutenant junior grade) with the Baltic Fleet, and in the summer of 1939 was appointed com-



Captain Alexander Ivanovich

manding officer of the commissioning crew of the *Malyutka*-class submarine *M-96*. The next year, he was promoted to senior lieutenant (lieutenant commander).

Germany commenced Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union, on 22 June 1941. Six months later, in February 1942, *M-96* was hit by a



MV Wilhelm Gustloff

German artillery shell, confining her to the shipyard for repair. Between August and November 1942, Marinesko led two war patrols in the Gulf of Finland during which he conducted three unsuccessful attacks on German shipping. In March 1943, he was appointed commanding officer of the modernized submarine *S-13*.

### Operation Hannibal

Three years to the day that the Germans launched Operation Barbarossa, the Red Army launched Operation Bagration, the invasion of Eastern Europe. By January 1945, during the coldest winter in more than two decades, the Soviets, outnumbering the Germans three-to-one, attacked over a 400-mile front from the Baltic Sea to central Poland. Aware of the atrocities committed by the advancing Soviet troops, thousands of German civilians in East Prussia began streaming into the various Baltic ports still controlled by the German military, primarily Gotenhafen (Gdynia, Poland) and Pillau (Baltiysk, Russia).

The Kriegsmarine executed Operation Hannibal, a major evolution designed to evacuate wounded military personnel and war matériel, as well as refugees, from the onslaught of the Red Army. The mass exodus took place during intense Soviet bombing and submarine attacks. Between 23 January and the end of the war, more than 1,000 ships evacuated close to 2.4 million civilians and military personnel, the largest maritime evacuation in history.

### **MV *Wilhelm Gustloff* and SS *Steuben***

Of all the ships to participate in Operation Hannibal, *Wilhelm Gustloff* was the largest and most symbolic to the German Nazi Party.



*Wilhelm Gustloff*

In February 1936, a young Yugoslav Jew named David Frankfurter assassinated Wilhelm Gustloff, the 41-year-old head of the Swiss Nazi Party at his apartment in Davos, Switzerland. Within fifteen months, on 5 May 1937, Nazi Germany paid tribute the man Hitler called “an immortal for all time” at a launching ceremony in the city of Hamburg. Gustloff’s widow shattered a champagne bottle

across the ship’s bow as the 25,484-ton liner slid down the ways.

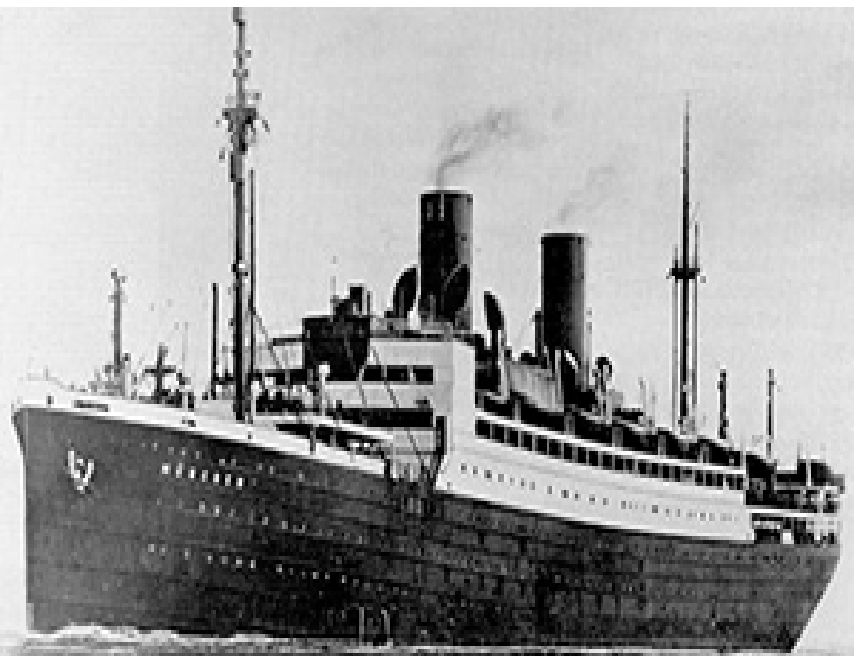
Designed to transport 1,500 passengers and a crew of five hundred, over the next two years *Wilhelm Gustloff* carried German working-class families on “indoctrination” cruises throughout Europe and the Mediterranean. In April 1938, acting as a floating polling station, she steamed up the Thames River to transport over 2,000 Germans and Austrians living in England 50 miles to sea to vote for the annexation of Austria. One year later, after the Spanish Civil War, she transported the Luftwaffe’s Condor Legion from Spain after they assisted Franco’s Nationalists in successfully defeating Republican forces. Her last peacetime cruise was to Scandinavia in the early summer of 1939.

In September 1939, after the invasion of Poland, she joined the Kriegsmarine as a hospital ship until 1940 when, after the successful British blockade of the German coastline, she was classified as a pierside training ship stationed in Gotenhafen for U-boat crew members. By January 1945, she was converted to an armed transport awaiting departure for Kiel as part of Operation Hannibal.

In 1923, Germany launched her first trans-Atlantic passenger liner since World War I in Stettin, Germany. Christened SS *München*, the 14,660-ton ship would be the first German passenger liner since 1917 to enter New York Harbor in July 1923 on her first trans-Atlantic voyage.

After several such trips, she docked in New York City on 11 February 1930. After discharging her 263 passengers and most of her crew, a fire broke out in a paint locker, quickly spreading throughout the ship and resulting in a massive explosion and uncontrollable fire. The ship sank at the pier and, after one of the largest salvage operations at the time, *München* was raised, towed to a dry dock and repaired. Upon returning to service, the North German Lloyd Line renamed her *General von Steuben*.

In 1938, she was renamed *Steuben* and the following year entered the Kriegsmarine as a barracks ship. In 1944, she was converted to an armed transport and,



*German passenger liner SS Munchen*

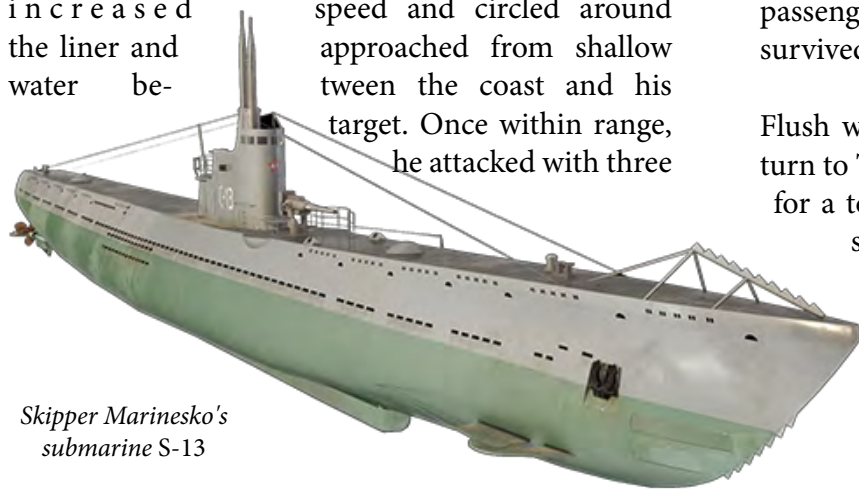
during the early winter of 1945, as part of Operation Hannibal, she would attempt to evacuate wounded soldiers and refugees from Pillau.

### Action in the Baltic – January-February 1945

In November 1944, Marinesko was ordered to transfer *S-13* to Turku, Finland. While his crew may have held him in high regard, his superiors found him to be insubordinate. Ashore he frequented brothels and drank heavily. On 25 January 1945, his commanding officer summoned him from one such excursion, but was ignored. His antics came to the attention of the Soviet NKVD, the internal secret police. As a naval officer, he was subject to arrest and incarceration in a slave-labor camp. He was being “observed.”

Experienced submarine commanders were in short supply, and that may have been his only salvation. Still, he realized he needed to do something extraordinary to redeem his career and hoped for a successful patrol. On the night of 29 January 1945, with his boat provisioned for a two-month patrol, he departed Turku.

On 30 January, and in inclement weather, *Wilhelm Gustloff* departed Gotenhafen with minimal naval escort. She was overcrowded with more than 10,600 passengers aboard, steaming a direct course to Kiel while totally illuminated. At 2000 local time, the *S-13*'s first officer spotted *Gustloff* and Marinesko gave chase from seaward. As he neared *Gustloff* he increased speed and circled around the liner and approached from shallow water between the coast and his target. Once within range, he attacked with three



Skipper Marinesko's submarine S-13

torpedoes impacting on the port side. Within 50 minutes, *Gustloff* rolled over on her port side and sank. Of the 10,600 passengers and crew on board, ap-

proximately 1,200 were rescued. The remainder succumbed as a result of the torpedo impact, the stampede caused by panicked passengers in overcrowded passageways and ladder wells and, as was mainly the case, to exposure in water temperatures of 39°F and an air temperature of 7°F. The sinking of *Wilhelm Gustloff* remains the largest loss of life in maritime history resulting from the sinking of a single vessel. Ten days later, on 9 February, *Steuben* departed Pil-



"Attack of The Century" - *S-13* sinks the *Wilhelm Gustloff* sending over 9000 Germans to their death.

lau. She, too, was overcrowded, carrying 4,000 more than her official capacity of 1,100 passengers, including 2,800 wounded soldiers and eight hundred civilians. That evening *S-13*, still in the southern Baltic, now off the coast of Germany, detected *Steuben* on sonar. Marinesko maneuvered *S-13* while submerged for the next four hours, evading the liner's escorts, before successfully firing two torpedoes. Both hit the bow, sinking *Steuben* within 20 minutes. Most passengers jumped into the frigid waters – only 659 survived.

Flush with success, Marinesko ordered *S-13* to return to Turku convinced that sinking two Nazi ships for a total of 40,144 tons in a single patrol would save his career. He had no idea that 14,000 souls had perished. Yet, he hoped to be awarded the coveted title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

### The Rest of the Story

Before setting sail from Turku on 30 January 1945, Captain Marinesko had been facing a court martial due to his alcohol problems and for being caught in a brothel while off duty. Because the Soviet

government deemed him "not suitable to be a hero," he was awarded the lesser Order of the Red Banner. In September, he was removed from command of *S-13* and demoted in rank to lieutenant. On 20 November he was dishonorably discharged from the Soviet Navy. Later, as a deputy manager at a blood transfusion institute, on one freezing winter night, he was accused of stealing state property for letting his employees take home briquettes of peat to heat their homes. Sentenced to three years in East Asia at Vanino Harbor near Vladivostok, he was released eighteen months later, returning to Leningrad (Saint Petersburg).



*For his historic performance at sea, Marinesko expected the Hero of the Soviet Union medal (left); instead, he received the lesser Order of the Red Banner (right).*

In 1960, he was reinstated to the rank of captain (commander) with pension. At the age of 50, he died of cancer. Thirty years after his death, Mikhail Gorbachev posthumously bestowed upon him the honor of Hero of the Soviet Union for sinking more than 42,000 tons (career total). However, the loss of 14,000 souls was never mentioned during the ceremony. He is credited with sinking the most tonnage of any Soviet submarine commander in the war.

Because these events happened in wartime and only affected refugees and naval personnel from Nazi Germany, they have remained largely unspoken. Most casualties of Operation Hannibal were civilians. In addition to *Wilhelm Gustloff* and *Steuben*, *MV Goya* was sunk in mid-April 1945 by the Soviet Leninets-class submarine *L-3* with the loss of 3,500 civilians and military personnel. In total, Soviet submarines accounted for an estimated 18,000 casualties in three engagements.





*Dick Pheelan*

**Richard “Dick” Harris Phelan** of Auburn, AL, a devoted husband, father and grandfather, died February 14, 2024 at the age of 81.

Born September 20, 1942 in Davenport, IA, the son of Martin and MaryKay Phelan, Dick graduated from Davenport High School in 1960. Awarded an appointment to the United States Naval Academy, he graduated in 1964 and went on to pursue naval flight training in Pensacola, FL and Corpus Christi, TX. One year later, he received his flight wings and naval aviator status while training to fly P-2s with Patrol Squadron 24 in Jacksonville, FL.

The posting in Jacksonville proved to be very fortuitous. A successful date to a Naval Ball brought Edna Moore into Dick's life. Following their marriage, Dick and Edna began their military family journey, first moving to Norfolk, VA prior to Dick being deployed to the Mediterranean. He transitioned to flying P-3s and had further deployments to Iceland and Lajes Air Force Base in the Atlantic in 1968.

In 1969, he began a master's program in operations analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA. Upon graduation in 1971, he was stationed in Coronado, CA, where he attended Vietnamese language school and survival training in preparation for deployment to Vietnam.

Dick served in the Vietnam War from January 1972

to January 1973. Following Vietnam, Dick served with several Navy patrol plane squadrons, including an operational test evaluation squadron in Key West, FL and Patuxent River, MD that tested anti-submarine warfare weapon systems.

From 1982-83, he was the Commanding Officer of Navy Squadron VP-45, consisting of 12 anti-submarine warfare planes, 75 officers and 300 enlisted men and women. The squadron was routinely deployed to the Mediterranean Sea. He then served as Chief of Staff for Patrol Wing 11, and continued his education at the Naval War College in Newport, RI, obtaining two additional master's degrees.

Following a three-year posting at the Pentagon serving on the Secretary of Defense's staff, he received orders to move to Auburn, AL to become a professor of naval science and the commanding officer of the Naval ROTC program at Auburn University. He oversaw the program for three years before retiring from the Navy in 1991. In addition to his Bronze Star, Capt. Phelan also received the Legion of Merit Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with a Gold Star and several other medals throughout his decorated 27-year military career.

A very gregarious man who never met a stranger, Dick leaves a legacy of countless friends. From fellow Midshipmen at the Naval Academy, the men he served with and commanded to the many constituents that he served and those he did business with.

Dick's unyielding commitment to his country through military service, his community through

his volunteering and leadership, his loyalty to his lifelong friends, his dedication to his beloved wife and his support and adoration of his children, their spouses and grandchildren defined Dick Phelan.

A Celebration of Life was held Sunday, February 25th at the Auburn United Methodist Church, Auburn, AL.

**Charlie R. McCrary, Jr.**, age 81, of Thomaston, died Wednesday, February 7, 2024, at Atrium Hospital Navicent, Macon, GA.

Charlie was born in Thomaston on October 9, 1942, to the late Charlie Rudolph McCrary, Sr. and the late Mozelle Rogers McCrary Wilks. He grew up in Silvertown. He was a 1960 graduate of R. E. Lee Institute and graduated with twelve years of perfect attendance.



*Charlie McCrary*

He enlisted in the US Navy and served as an Aviation Electrician-Aircrewman from November of 1961 until March of 1966. Upon being discharged, he returned to Thomaston and married Mary Ann Barron on July 9, 1967. He earned an associates degree from Upson Technical College and also graduated from Gordon Military College. He then worked for Martha Mills for seventeen years and was the founder and owner of McCrary Electric for nineteen years. He later worked as owner of Charlie "Mac" Pump and Electric and considered himself "selectively" retired.



*Vivian Cory*

**Vivian V. Cory**, born on April 16, 1924 in Norfolk, Virginia, and longtime resident of Pensacola, Florida passed away on September 9, 2023, at the age of 99 and a half.

Vivian was a child of the 1920s and lived through the Depression. She graduated from Granby High School in 1941 in Norfolk, VA. She completed her nurses training and received her nursing degree from Norfolk General Hospital in June 1945.

In 1949, she married CDR Kenneth J. Cory, and was a United States Navy wife for more than 21 years during war and peacetime, until her husband's retirement in 1970. Vivian, Ken, and their four children had many wonderful duty stations, such as Japan, Bermuda, England, and Pensacola, Florida.

Besides caring for her family, which was her highest priority, she was very involved in many community and social organizations wherever they were stationed. When they retired in Pensacola, she volunteered for nearly 25 years with the Red Cross, participated in several social organizations associated with the Navy, Fiesta, and Mardi Gras, and participated in monthly Bunko games with her closest friends.

She is preceded in death by her husband of 53 years, and one great-granddaughter.

**CDR Morton "Mort" Allen Eckhouse, USN (Ret.)**, 94, of Pensacola, FL, passed away after a brief illness on Monday, October 16, 2023.



*CDR "Mort" Eckhouse*

He was born on May 13, 1929, in Cleveland, OH and grew up in Albuquerque, NM. Mort entered the US Navy as a corpsman and was selected for cadet pilot training. During his time as a Naval aviator, he flew airships and later various multi-engine aircraft including the P3A-Orion. He retired after more than 27 years in the US Navy with the rank of Commander, as the highest-ranking person from his enlisted group.

After retiring from the Navy, Mort co-operated a woodworking shop and worked as a rental properties manager. He also did charitable work for the Council on Aging, delivering Meals on Wheels to senior citizens in the Pensacola area, volunteered on numerous occasions to transport local children to and from the Shriner's Hospital in Tampa, FL and accumulated 15,000+ hours of volunteer work between 1989 and 2009 as an expert machinist rebuilding aircraft of all types and sizes at the National Naval Air Museum.

Mort was a 33rd degree Mason, a member of the Hadji Shrine and an expert in clock building and

clock/watch repair.

He is preceded in death by his spouse, Gladys, to whom he was married for 37 years; two sons, Michael Joseph Eckhouse and David Edward Eckhouse; parents, Clara Cluster Tritt and Edward Walter Eckhouse; as well as a grandson, Shawn Eckhouse.

He is survived by his wife of 26 years, Eloise; daughter, TSgt. Ruth A. Faierstein, USAF (Ret.); son-in-law, Ch. Maj. Morris M. Faierstein, USAF (Ret.); son, PO1 Steven M. Eckhouse, USN (Ret.); stepson, John English (Lisa); sister, Dr. Sherrill Frank; brother-in-law, Irwin Frank; as well as grandsons, Bryan Eckhouse and Steven Eckhouse.

Private interment was held at Barrancas National Cemetery.



*Gordon Allan Feest*

**Gordon Feest** passed away Feb 20th, 2023, at 81 years old. He was born in Waterbury, Connecticut to Mirian and Harold Feest in Nov 1941. He had an idyllic childhood in rural Waterbury, Conn living with his grandparents, parents, and his sister Karen.

After graduating from Crosby High School in Waterbury, Conn, in 1961 he enlisted into the Air Navy during the Cuban missile crisis and was stationed in Bermuda.

He was the mechanic on a seaplane, a member of VP-45 (the Pelicans). While in flight his crew experienced a Soviet Union ship threatening to shoot their seaplane down. With no missiles on the seaplane, they resorted to bombing the Russians with their breakfast: raw eggs, orange juice cans, and loaves of bread. This act turned out to be an effective deterrent!



After his Navy discharge, he attended Northrop University where he graduated with his A&P license. He was hired by Flying Tigers Airlines and then by FedEx where he was promoted to management level.

As a lifelong sportsman, when he retired, in 2005 he moved from Huntington Beach, California to Lake Havasu City, Arizona. He married Laurie who was his best and third wife. Gordon enjoyed fishing and became active in the Lake Havasu Yacht Club. As a VP 45 alumni, he reunited with his Navy friends around the

country through reunions.

Gordon is survived by his wife Laurie, his sister Karen and brother Gary, his daughters Karen and Jennifer Kate, grandchildren Alyssa, Raechel, Bekah, and Matt and great grandchildren Grayson, Max, Ben , Levi, Judah, and Stella.

**Anna H. Haskell**, 92, passed away on September 2, 2023 surrounded by family.

Anna was the daughter of the late Wilbur and Lyra Harley. She was married to the late Robert O. Haskell for 51 years. She was retired from Denmark Technical College. She loved gardening, scrapbooking, spending time at the YMCA and spending time with her grandchildren. Burial will be held at Barnwell Memory Gardens.



*Anna Haskell*

Survivors include her son, John C. Haskell of Barnwell; one brother, Dr. Jimmie E. (Gayle) Harley of Greer; one sister, Linda (Rudy) Still of Barnwell; four grandchildren, Katrina (Brad) Burt of Barnwell, Kara (Ryan) Gunter of Reevesville, Kami (Glen) Rice of Aiken, and Kyler Haskell of Williston; nine great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.



**Editors Note:**

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

**VP-45 ASSOCIATION 2024 REUNION REGISTRATION FORM**

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

<b>Armed Forces Reunions, Inc</b>
<b>322 Madison Mews</b>
<b>Norfolk, VA 23510</b>
<b>ATTN: VP-45</b>

<b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b>			
Check #		Date Received:	
Inputted:		Nametag Completed:	

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

**Continue to second page of form...**

**PLEASE PRINT:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# THE PATRON FOUR FIVE ASSOCIATION

## New Membership Registration Form

Please print off and complete this form and return it to the address below. The personal information you send will ONLY be used within the Association for inclusion in the Association Roster. Dues are \$10 per year, \$40 for 5 years or \$200 for life...payable to:

**Mike Riley, Treasurer, Patron Four Five Association**  
**6618 Blue Jay Way,**  
**Charlotte, MI, 48813**  
**517-980-6235; Email: mlriley@gmail.com**

### ROSTER INFORMATION

Name: First \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's First Name; \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (w/area code) \_(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

### FORMER SQUADRON SERVICE/DUTIES

Squadron during your service (circle one): VP/VPB-205 (PBM)    VP-45 (PBY)    VP-45 (PBM)

VP-45 (P5M)    VP-45(P-3A)    VP-45 (P-3C)    VP-45 (P-8)

Dates Served: From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_; From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

If Aircrew, circle as appropriate: Pilot    NFO    Aircrew (Position): \_\_\_\_\_

Ground Duties/Division \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about the Association \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any "seas stories" or interesting recollections of your time in VP-45, consider sharing those with all the members. The easiest way to get your story or recollection listed and displayed on our website ([www.vp45association.org](http://www.vp45association.org)) is to email it to the Association WebMaster or any Association officer. The email address for the current WebMaster and can be found at the website. If you have a photo that "accompanies" your story, please email it also and we'll include it with your story! Additionally, any other squadron photos, squadron rosters, papers, crew lists, etc. that you would like to share are invited. Welcome Aboard!