

ATTACK SQUADRON TWELVE



NEWSLETTER

WEST PAC 'RAP-UP'

From the Skipper

Dear Families and Friends of VA-12,

We thought you might appreciate a final note from the squadron prior to our long voyage home. It will be 39 days from Subic Bay to Mayport beginning 9 November. We should be able to pick up and send mail at our enroute stops at Sydney, Australia on 18 November, Wellington, New Zealand on 22 November, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 06 December.

The officers and enlisted men of VA-12 can be justly proud of their performance over the past 8½ months. They have merited the praise received from higher authority as a squadron of Air Wing EIGHT. They certainly have my admiration and respect, not only for a job well done, but for their characteristic optimism, enthusiasm, and good humor maintained throughout the cruise even when conditions and workload were far from optimum. This is the mark of mature men and it has been my good fortune to serve with them.

At the completion of the cruise almost all will be transferred to new duty stations. A few will remain as the nucleus of the "new" VA-12. I refer to the squadron's transition from the A4C Skyhawk to the A7E Corsair II. Our departing shipmates can count on our carrying on in VA-12's fine tradition.

In the meantime our thoughts are directed toward home and homecoming on 17 December - a date that has taken on a magical quality which will prove difficult to dispel.

Sincerely,

D. H. L. Gholson
D. H. L. GHOLSON



Operations

Since our first day on the line way back in April, the Flying Ubangis of Attack Squadron TWELVE have distinguished themselves as the squadron who can get the job done, day or night, irregardless of weather or type of target. In establishing this distinguished record, the Clinchers flew approximately 2400 combat sorties, amassing nearly 4000 hours of flight time. Although these figures may not sound impressive, the hours alone are equal to flying around the world five times.

What those figures unfortunately fail to show are the thousands of tireless hours put in by maintenance personnel in getting our aircraft ready for flight and the many hours put in by the pilots prior to and after a flight. The ability to accomplish any task, large or small, exhibited by the Flying Ubangis has earned the squadron a distinguished record, which is a direct result of the outstanding teamwork exhibited by every member of the squadron.



The UBANGIS in Hong Kong

After months of anticipation and numerous delays, the USS Shangri-la put into Hong Kong on the 12th of October for a week of well earned liberty.

The officers and men of VA-12 took full advantage of this exciting city, considered the best liberty port in WestPac.

Because Hong Kong is a duty free port it is known as "the shopping center of the Orient". Most of us in VA-12 were well aware of the excellent buys and returned to the ship loaded down with bargains and with light wallets. Some of the most common purchases among members of the squadron were men's clothing, stereo equipment, watches, and cameras. Many of us were able to complete our Christmas shopping there.

Although most famous for its' shops, Hong Kong offers a variety of interesting sights, which many of the men in VA-12 took in through various tours offered by the ship. One of the best, and most popular was the New Territories/Kowloon Tour which offered a view of the Red Chinese Border and included an authentic Chinese lunch.

Because there is no curfew in Hong Kong, many Ubangis were allowed overnights. The officers maintained a sometimes overcrowded suite of rooms at the Hong Kong Hilton. The highlight of the stay for the officers took place on the night of the 15th when the squadron's newest Lieutenants held their "Wetting-Down" party aboard the Hilton's schooner, the Wan-Fu. It was a most interesting evening, with the party in full swing as the schooner sailed around Hong Kong Island, stopping in the famous fishing village of Aberdeen for a Cantonese meal aboard one of Hong Kong's most famous floating restaurants - Tai Pak.

You can be sure that we of VA-12 all enjoyed ourselves to the fullest in Hong Kong, even under the threat of an erratic typhoon named Kate, which at times was heading directly for us, causing one night when boating had to be canceled, but veered away, much to our relief.

THE BEARDED WONDERS

Throughout the cruise many Ubangis have been seen with a strange growth appearing on their chins and upper lips. Some of these 'Wonders' are shown below. Cash Prizes will be awarded to the best three at the end of this last line period. Good Luck Guys.



L to R Back Row: George MARTIN, Phillip ERFF, Jerome 'Woody' WOODRUFF
Front Row: Allan SEEYLE, Jeff BARKER



L to R Back Row: Tom POWELL, Bob COOK, Sid EMFINGER
Front Row: Ron HOLCROFT, Bob MACGREGOR, Jay MCKELVEY



L to R Back Row: Joe TAYLOR, John MCLANE, Charlie JOHNSON
Front Row: Bill THRASHER, Don HISSAM, Roy SHIPLEY



Chief Ellis BOWERS being congratulated by the Skipper on his Fourth Good Conduct Award.

Advancements

In order to stay up with technical advances in today's Navy, our men must constantly study to cope with new and improved ideas associated with their work. Twice yearly, those who have met the requirements, including time in the service, must really buckle down and prepare themselves for the Navy-wide tests for advancement in rate. Many "Clinchers" proved their ability and have been or soon will be advanced. These include the following: ARMSTRONG, J.R., AO3; DUNKUM, R.W., ATN3; GARLAND, W.J., AO3; HANDLEY, C.M., AMS3; HICKS, J.G., AN; JASMIN, L.C., YN3; NORERO, E.C., AK3; SEARCH, N.J., AN; SMITH, M.C., ADJ3; STEBBINS, D.A., YN3; WHEFLER, B.C., PR3; WIETZEMA, J.M., AMS3; and WOODRUFF, J.P., AMS3. The original exams for E-5s of all ratings were lost at sea, so our men had to re-take the tests and the results have not yet been published.

Through recent re-enlistment, AMS2 J. H. HUGHES and AO1 E. J. BUDWAY will be providing the Navy with more years of dedicated service. A hearty congratulations is extended to these men on their fine performance.



PAO

As the old saying goes, "All good things must end", so must a cruise come to an end. I have my doubts on the number of people who will consider an extended cruise a good thing. Nevertheless, all hands seemed to thoroughly enjoy all of our port calls; Hong Kong, Yokosuka and Cubi, however their thoughts continually stray to families and loved ones at home. With just a few days left on our final line period the air is full of anticipation and talk of home and Christmas leave. It has been my attempt, as Public Affairs Officer, to keep you folks at home abreast of Ubangi happenings with our Newsletters. This will be our final letter to you and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the contributors to previous Newsletters, and in particular, my appreciation to Bob FOSSUM for his typing and Trux SIMMONS for his 'Snoopy' cartoons.

From all the Ubangis, "See you all real soon".

Bill Avrett

Bill AVRETT
Public Affairs Officer

THOUGHTS OF HOME

The warm feel of that girl of mine.
The laughter of children.
Good, hot coffee.
Not having to wait in line for anything.
The feel of that wheel of that automobile.
Round-eyes in every female face.
The absence of hissing, banging, gurgling, crashing and splashing.
The beauty of clean, laundered clothes.
The smell of grass, trees and breeze.
The cold beer after work.
Old friends glad to see me back.
The tears and cheers from the dock.
The ohs and ahs on opening those gifts.
Watching a football game on T.V.
The morning newspaper.
Church on Sunday with the family.
The touch of a small daughter's hand in mine.
Knowing this cruise is a thing of the past.

ICDR J. J. MERRIDE, USN

Commanding Officer: CDR D. H. L. GHOLSON

Executive Officer: CDR V. G. DONNELLY

Public Affairs Officer: LT W. L. AVRETT

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