



ATKRON 12 NEWSLETTER



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UBANGI?

UBETCHA!

2008 REUNION

Probably most of you know by now that the 2008 Reunion will be held in Chattanooga, TN at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel, from May 22-May 25. Included in this issue is the 2008 VA12 Reunion Registration Form. Please fill it out and return it to me with your payment no later than 2/15/08. Also please make your hotel reservations as soon as you decide about attending. The 800 number is on the registration form.

A complete schedule will follow in the April 08 Newsletter, but it will go something like this.....

Thursday, May 22, 2008 is the first day of the reunion. We will have a room set up that evening for our traditional icebreaker.

Friday, daytime you will be on your own to enjoy Chattanooga. Friday evening we will have a night out on the town at one of the local restaurant/bars.

Saturday we will tour the world famous Chattanooga Aquarium. Saturday evening we will enjoy a Riverboat Dinner Cruise. There will be no planned events for Sunday as most of us will be traveling home.

The VA-12 Flying Ubangi Association

Editors: Joe Kyle
(John Larch)

THE CHALLENGE

I have tried to encourage you previous attendees to recruit some of your old pals that have not attended a reunion in the past. This year we will offer a prize to the person that is able to bring the most new attendees. If everyone brings one new person we will have a great turnout.

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TREASURY REPORT

Previous Balance	\$499.48
Dues/Donation since last report	\$697.00
Sub Total	\$1196.48
Stamps	\$63.00
Envelopes	\$15.98
Printing (estimated)	\$270.12
Current Expenses	-\$349.01
New Balance	\$847.47

ASSOCIATION DUES

Please submit your 2008 dues (\$12.00). Many of you have paid forward. If your name is listed below, you are paid up through 2008.

Dennis Arnold	Ray Clary
Barbara Creaturo	Claude Crocker
Charles Dickey	Bill Doody
Ed Fennell	Rich Forristall
Glen Goddard	Jackie Grant
Gary Hall	Bill Heck
Robert Kaplan	Rich Kichline
Mike Landers	Matt Landy
Tom Lannom	John Larch
Marion Lumby	Bill Manly
John McLane	Tom Micheli
Terry Nies	Frank Osborne
Steve Owings	Joel Parrish
Ted Pugh	J.D. Rogers
Darlene Russo	Frank Smith
Carl Stoffer	Jon Sutherland
Dallas Willingham	Ed Thomas
Harmon Winborn	Jack Yezzi

VA12 ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

These are the names of our newest members that joined our ranks since the last newsletter.

Matt Lindy	56-58
Edward Levitz	61-65

EVALUATION COMMENTS

Collected comments from Navy evaluations:

- His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity.
- This officer is really not so much of a has-been, but more of a definitely won't-be.
- Works well under constant supervision and when cornered like a rat in a trap.
- This young lady has delusions of adequacy.
- This officer should go far--and the sooner he starts, the better.
- This man is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.
- Since my last report, this officer has reached rock bottom and has started to dig.

POEM

My Heart's At Sea Forever

Long ago I was a Sailor,
I sailed the Ocean Blue.
I knew the bars in Singapore...
The coastline of Peru.
I knew well the sting of salt spray,
The taste of Spanish wine,
The beauty of the Orient.
Yes, all these things were mine.
But I wear a different hat now
No tie and jacket too.
My sailing days were long ago.
With that life I am through.
But somewhere deep inside of me.
The sailor lives there still...
He longs to go to sea again,
But knows he never will.
My love, my life is here at home.
And I will leave here never.
Though mind and body stay ashore..
My heart's at sea forever

Author unknown

(Submitted by Dallas Willingham 62-65)

SEA STORIES

A few months back I received an email from a Ben Russell. He was inquiring about his cousin that was one of our pilots back in 66. He wanted what information I might recall about Ltjg Jones's untimely death. I put him in touch with Skipper O'Brien, and below is the account:

Ben,

My recollections of your cousins last flight are from the mists of time, so there is not much to tell. I knew Bob Frosio very well. He came to the Replacement Training Squadron (VA-44 @ Cecil Field, FL) on his way to being the XO and then CO of VA-12 in about April 1965. I was the squadron Ops Officer at the time and supervised his training. I had known him earlier on and had high esteem for him. Jim Jones also came through VA-44 and I supervised his training and his assignment to VA-12. He was fresh from Pensacola and recently designated as an Naval Aviator. He was newly married and had a vivacious, lovely wife, whos name escapes me. I became better known with him as I knew he was a Villanova College grad and we enjoyed kidding each other. We had both been educated by the Augustinian Monks. Training required about 3-4 months in our squadron and he joined VA-12 shortly before deployment to Southeast Asia: probably not later than March 1966.

The flight in question was on 12 November 1966, from the carrier FD Roosevelt (CVA-42), a night road recce in North Vietnam. During the flight Jim lost his radio and the remainder of the mission was aborted. Jim joined Frosio and followed procedures to return to the ship as a NORAD as wingman. Frosio was leader and to return Jim to the ship down to the acquiring of the visual sighting of the glide slope. This required a precise ability to stay in the wing position, right down to the final seconds of landing. Somewhere in the final stages of approaching the ship, the aircraft collided and both crashed aft of the ship, within 1 1/2 mile of landing: less than a minute from landing. I believe that there was an explosion by at least one of the aircraft. There was no ejection by either pilot, as there was no activated ejection beeper heard.

There was no recovery of debris, or personnel, that I know about.

About 10 days after this event I was ordered to VA-12 as replacement XO for the squadron. I arrived onboard about the 4th of Dec. 1966. This is when I learned most of the information.

You can go to The Skyhawk Association web site on the web and learn more. Follow the page info under "operational losses." You may also go to the "Aircraft Units" page and learn more of the squadron.

Both pilots are listed as operational losses. Both gave their lives in the Service of their Nation. They will be carried in Naval History till the end of time. The living make it so. If I can be any further service to you, contact me by email.

Defensor Patria

A.C. "OBie" O'Brien Capt., USN (ret)

Editor's Contact Info

Joe Kyle	10421 Barbara, Pinckney MI 48169 Home (734) 878-0556 Cell (810) 923-4426
John Larch	4689 Future DR NE, Salem OR 97305 Home (503) 362-3550

SHANKER'S 9 RULES

1. Speed is life.
2. Train like you plan to fight.
3. If it's stupid and it works, it ain't stupid.
4. When all else fails, select guns.
5. Know the opposition.
6. When things go wrong, get aggressive.
7. Always know when to get out of Dodge.
8. Always know how to get out of Dodge.
9. Honor the threat

THE MODERN NAVY

We hear so much these days, about young people who have questions about joining the military and serving their country. Some are even considering the Navy. We veterans should do our part to let them know what Navy life is like.

Here are a few things we can do to help.

- Buy a dumpster, chip the paint off down to bare metal, paint it gray, and have the recruit live in it for six months.
- Run all the piping and the wires inside the recruit house on the outside of the walls.
- Repaint the entire recruit house once a month.
- Place metal barriers on the lower 18" of every door in the recruit house and add eight handles to every door.
- Pump ten inches of nasty half sewage water into the recruit house basement. Pump it out, clean up the mess and paint everything in the basement gray. Repeat frequently for added realism.
- On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday turn the house water temperature up to 200 degrees, on Tuesday and Thursday set the temperature at 10 degrees. On Saturday and Sunday inform your recruit family that they used too much water during the week and as a result all showering is secured.
- Stack all beds on top of one another in the closet. Raise the recruit's bed to within six inches of the ceiling. Stow all recruit clothing and possessions in a 36" x 18" x 12" locker. If anyone is sick and throwing up, put them in the top bunk.
- Get the keys to the recruit house. Enter the bedroom every morning at 0530, and blow a whistle loud enough for Helen Keller to hear. Shout in an amplified megaphone six inches from the recruit's ear, "Reveille, reveille, all hands heave out and trice up. The smoking lamp is lit in all authorized spaces."
- Have the recruit's mother write down everything she is going to do the following day. Assemble the recruit family and stand in the back yard at 0600 (6 am) while the mother reads her "Plan of the Day" (POD) out loud. Stand around for 15-20 minutes and then have an uncle join the group and read the same thing again. Repeat this everyday expect Sunday, unless you are simulating "at sea" in which case you may opt to do it seven days a week.
- Ensure that the recruit eats the raunchiest Mexican food you can find for three days straight, then lock the bathroom door for 12 hours. Hang a sign on the door that reads, "Secured - Contact OA Div at X-3053."

Remember, we're still here, so that we can help.

VA-12 HISTORY

VF-12 EMBARKS ON THE NEXT NEW CARRIER

Here's a bit more of the early history of our VA-12 Flying Ubangis.

It's starting to seem pretty remarkable that the group that became VA-12 in later years, in the early years always seemed to be getting new aircraft, or a new carrier, or both. And I mean NEW carriers, as in freshly commissioned.

VF-12 had already made 2 cruises during 1946-47 on-board CV-40 (commissioned December 1945) Tarawa flying the F4U-4 Corsair.

The squadron transitioned out of the F4U-4 Corsair in 1947 and into the F8F-1 Bearcats. But they also took on the -5P photo-reconnaissance version of the F6F Hellcat that they had flown back at the squadron incorporation in 1945.



F8F-1 Bearcat over San Francisco in June, 1947



F6F Hellcat

For the 1948-49 cruise, they stayed on-board CV-40 Tarawa and brought the F8F and F6F combination that they had transitioned to by then.

When this cruise ended, once again they transitioned aircraft types, into the new F2H-2 Banshee twin-jet.



F2H-2 Banshee

Once the transition was complete, the squadron (still carrying that VF-12 designation) embarked on-board CVB-43 Coral Sea in late 1950. They completed a Med Cruise in 1951.

The Coral Sea had been commissioned in October 1947.

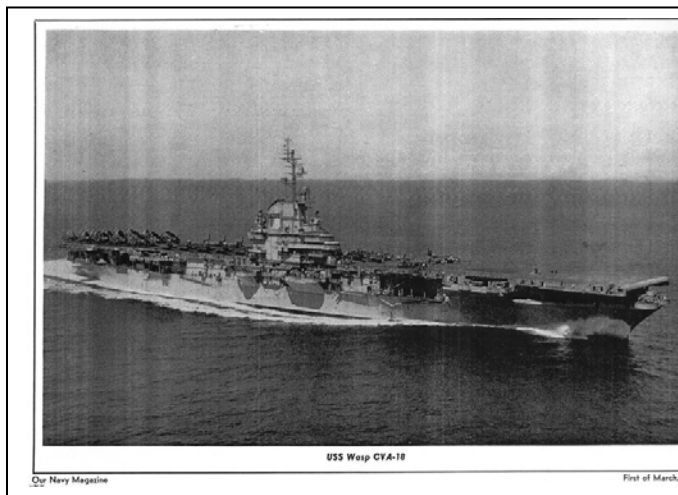
CLASS	Midway
DISPLACEMENT	45,000 Tons
LENGTH	968 Feet
SHAFT HORSEPOWER	212,000
SPEED	33 Knots
CREW	4,104
BUILDERS	Newport News Shipbuilders & Drydock



CVB-43 Coral Sea in 1951. The site providing this photo says the aircraft are from VF-12.

The following year, the squadron had been rewarded with the luxury of staying with the F2H-2 Banshee aircraft but they embarked on another cruise on a different carrier, CV-18 Wasp. The Wasp had been commissioned in March 1942.

CLASS	Essex
DISPLACEMENT	38,000 Tons
LENGTH	872 Feet
SHAFT HORSEPOWER	150,000
SPEED	33 Knots
CREW	2,600
BUILDERS	Bethlehem Steel, Boston

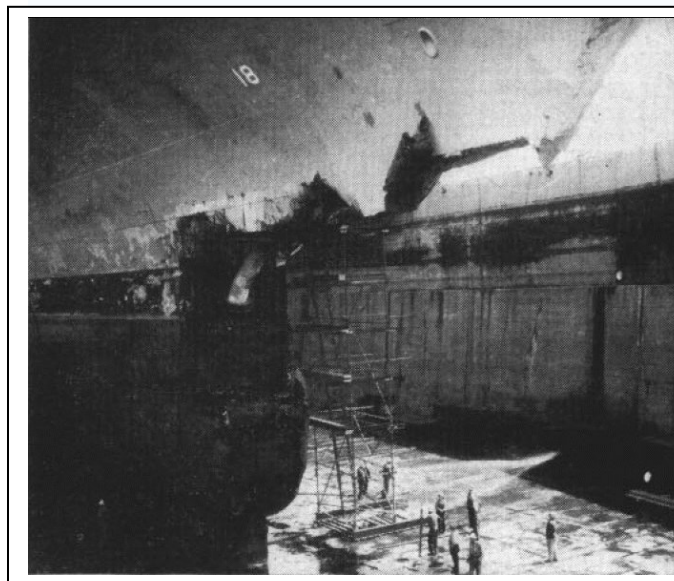


CV-18 Wasp

This 1952 Med Cruise and second cruise by VF-12 while flying the F2H-2 Banshee got off to a tragic start when CV-18 Wasp was involved in a tragic collision during the Atlantic transit. Here is an account of the incident:

On 26 April 1952, *Wasp* collided with destroyer minesweeper *Hobson* (DD-464) while conducting night flying operations en route to Gibraltar. *Hobson* lost 176 of the crew, including her skipper. Rapid rescue operations saved 52 men. *Wasp* sustained no personnel casualties, but her bow was torn by a 75-foot saw-tooth rip.

The carrier proceeded to Bayonne, New Jersey for repairs and, after she entered drydock there, the bow of aircraft carrier *Hornet* (CV-12)—then undergoing conversion—was removed and floated by barge from Brooklyn, New York and fitted into position on *Wasp*, replacing the badly shattered forward end of the ship. This remarkable task was completed in only 10 days, enabling the carrier to get underway to cross the Atlantic.



The bow of CV-18 Wasp after the collision with USS Hobson DD-464

The 1953 Med Cruise followed the trend involving changes. While they did retain the F2H-2 Banshees, they once again cross-decked to another carrier, this time one that they would see again, CV-42 Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

The FDR had been commissioned in October 1945.

CLASS	Midway
DISPLACEMENT	45,000 Tons
LENGTH	968 Feet
SHAFT HORSEPOWER	212,000
SPEED	33 Knots
CREW	4,104
BUILDERS	New York Naval Shipyard



CV-42 FDR underway in November 1952

PATCH COLLECTION

I have a couple embroidered patches from my days in the Navy, and never gave them much thought until last year. One of them was our Flying Ubangi, and what spurred the interest was the different versions we seem to have.

I started to wonder what was available and began looking in the "electronic marketplace" of the Internet, and actually found a vendor or two that carried the VA-12 patch.

While poking around, I noted that patches were available for ships, squadrons, and bases all over the world. This started to get a little personal for me because I know that some of the Navy installations I passed through no longer exist. For example, I discovered a few years ago that the Navy sold the base that included the San Diego Recruit Training Depot, to a consortium of city groups and developers. So would a patch for that base from "back in the day" still be available? And of course, our own VA-12 Flying Ubangis squadron was "dis-established" in 1986 as well.

So here's the job:

1. List the names of Navy every base, facility, ship, command, or squadron that I had ever visited, touched, set foot on, or been attached to.
2. Find out if that command had ever developed an embroidered patch, and find a way to get one.

Developing the list turned out to be a nice little bit of nostalgia-digging, and here is what I came up with. See how close this runs to your own Navy history!

THE PATCH	REMARKS
NTC Recruit Training Command, San Diego	Boot Camp in San Diego
NATTC Memphis	BE&E, A School for an "AQ" striker.
NAS Cecil Field	East-Coast A7 base
VA-174 Hellrazors	The A7 RAG outfit
Naval Station Rota, Spain	Orders to VA-12 which was 3 months into a Med cruise. First stop, Rota.
Naval Support Activity Naples, Italy	Second stop, NSA Naples
CV-62 USS Independence	Met the ship (CV-62 Independence) at liberty port Genoa, Italy
Attack Squadron 12	Reported to the Flying Ubangis
Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia	Return to Conus
NAS Norfolk, Virginia	C-9 flight back to Cecil Field
NAS Jacksonville, Florida	(See accompanying

	story MY NEPHEW)
Naval Station Mayport, Florida	(See accompanying story MY NEPHEW)
CV-59 USS Forrestal	(See accompanying story MY NEPHEW)
NAS Fallon, Nevada	Airwing competitions
CV-69 USS Dwight D Eisenhower	Airwing 7 cross-decked to the newest fleet carrier for a Med cruise
NAS Sigonella, Sicily	Enlistment almost up, returning to Conus via NSA Naples, NAS Sigonella
Naval Station Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	In-Transit barracks upon return to Conus
NAS Alameda, California	Navy Reserve Active Duty.
NAS Whidbey Island, Washington	Navy Reserve weekend drills

Locating the patches took me about 2 months but I was able to find and purchase them all. I found them scattered around the following sites on the Internet:

www.Planecrazyenterprises.com
www.usmilitarystuff.com
www.thebattlezone.com
www.military-patches.com
www.Flyingtigersurplus.com

Of course I'll wager there are lots of other sites that may carry a patch you might be looking for, these are the ones that did me the most good.

The toughest one was NS Philadelphia, which Ed Thomas stumbled across on E-Bay. I was able to win the E-Bay auction for this item with an aggressive but still reasonable bid.

Photos of the patches can be found at www.va12.com, see the link for THE PATCH PATCH.
(Submitted by John Larch 76-78)

MY NEPHEW IN THE NAVY

I was 25 and had been in the Navy for about 2 years (OK so sometimes I'm a little slow on the pickup) and was able to come home on leave for the Christmas Holidays. One day over at my sister's house, I noticed that my nephew Steve was nowhere around. He was about 19 at the time.

She said, "You didn't know? I thought you knew."
"Know what?"

"He and his best friend Allan enlisted in the Navy this summer. We thought you knew".

"I didn't know."

I was absolutely floored. This was a sort of an angry young man and I didn't see him doing such a thing. Or being successful at it anyway. But my sis said that everybody was impressed that the Navy seemed to be

going pretty good for me, I was not lax in writing letters back home to my family and in general I was doing OK with it. (Remember that old saying, "some young men are drawn to the Navy by the lure of faraway places with strange sounding names"?) Sis said that between his buddy Allan, and the inspiration he gained from my letters, he was convinced it would be a way to move on with his life.

I was super-duper stunned then, shocked really, and remain so to this day. (Dazed and confused. That's my story, and I'm stickin' to it.) This was the first vivid lesson I ever learned that people take inspiration from those they know directly and what they learn about them. After all these years, I don't recall where he was stationed at the time but I think he was on a vessel based in San Diego.

So the Holidays ended, I'm back at Cecil Field, and I continued to stay in touch with Sis. I found out that he had gotten into disciplinary trouble, asked for and gotten a transfer (maybe more than one) and was going to end up assigned to ship's company on-board CV-59 Forrestal. The Forrestal was based at NS Mayport in those days, around 1976-77.

I still consider this to be an absolute fluke, how my nephew got orders to a carrier at Mayport, so close by me there at Cecil Field, but there he was. Obstinate and stupid as ever...

We got together a couple times and thus I added to the list of Navy bases I had set foot upon, I met him at the pier on-base and one time while the carrier was still in port I set foot on-board and met some of his buddies.

The first time I ever saw STAR WARS was with Steve. I remember almost missing out on this because I had a VW bug at the time and it suffered a mechanical problem on the way over from the Ubangi Hilton at Cecil to Mayport. I figured out a way to jury rig a busted oil line and get back underway. I got Steve and we ended up at la cinema with time to spare.

Shortly after the adventure at the movies, VA-12 started workups with the Independence and we made our fateful 1977 Med cruise which got off to such a tough start. So I lost touch with the nephew and heard some months later that he ended up with a General Discharge.

(Submitted by John Larch 76-78)

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

The Newsletter is entering its sixth year of publication. We've tried to provide things of interest and keep us all connected. We have received many complimentary comments and many contributions from the membership. Unfortunately, we are running out of things to print. Those of you out there with untold

stories, or should I say stories that have never been printed, will need to step up, if you are interesting in keeping the newsletter afloat. The editors (John and I) have decided to reduce the annual issues from four to three. The cost of mailing has more than doubled and with the lack of news, it only makes sense to cut back. We are committed to continuing to do our best to keep it going, so with your help, (and by that we mean writings) we will sail on until the mothball crew shows up to stow us aweigh.

(Submitted by Joe Kyle 66-68)

MORE EVALUATION COMMENTS

Collected comments from Navy evaluations:

- When he opens his mouth, it seems that it is only to change feet.
- Obviously, from the shallow end of the gene pool.
- He would be out of his depth in a parking lot puddle.
- A gross ignoramus - 144 times worse than an ordinary ignoramus.
- He certainly takes a long time to make his pointless.
- He doesn't have ulcers, but he's a carrier.
- I would like to go hunting with him sometime.
- He's been working with glue too much.
- Mind like a steel trap - rusted shut.
- She would argue with a signpost.
- He has a knack for making strangers immediately.
- He brings a lot of joy whenever he leaves the room.
- When his IQ reaches 50, he should sell.
- If you see two people talking and one looks bored, he's the other one.
- A photographic memory but with the lens cover glued on.
- A prime candidate for natural de-selection.
- Donated his brain to science before he was done using it.
- Gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn't coming.
- If he were any more stupid, he'd have to be watered twice a week.
- If you give him a penny for his thoughts, you'd get change.
- If you stand close enough to her, you can hear the ocean.
- Some drink from the fountain of knowledge; he only gargled.

SHOW YOUR COLORS



The state is Michigan and the owner is Joe Kyle.