

ATKRON 12 NEWSLETTER

VA-12

PUBLISHED BY THE
VA-12 REUNION ASSOCIATION

WE INVITE YOU TO VISIT [THE WORLD FAMOUS FLYING UBANGIS](http://www.va12.com) AT OUR WEBSITE [WWW.VA12.COM](http://www.va12.com)



Volume XI, Issue 1 April 2012

A-4E

VA-12 in 1955



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UBANGI? UBETCHA!

**THE 2012 REUNION:
OCTOBER 4-6, AT THE
SHERATON AIRPORT HOTEL,
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA**

2012 VA-12 REUNION NEWS

Reunion Plans

Things are on schedule for this year's October Reunion in Charleston. If you plan on attending please make your reservations with the hotel and send me your registration fee. I am including another copy with this newsletter for those that have not yet registered. We will have our traditional icebreaker get-together on Friday evening, followed by an informal dinner at the hotel restaurant, or a place near by. One Saturday we will tour **Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum**, and include some time for additional sightseeing. Saturday evening will be our Banquet at the Hotel. On Sunday for those that do not have to depart we will have a number of different excursions to choose from, including an afternoon at the Aquarium Wharf, where there are a number of interesting possibilities, such as The Maritime Center, Harbor Tours and Shopping for the ladies. Additionally small group or the whole may want to do a Plantation Tour, Outlet Shopping, Downtown Charleston Market Place (local shopping) or, a Historic Downtown Tour. It is likely that we will have lunch and or dinner away from the Hotel this day.

The following is the current list of Ubangis that have signed up for this years Reunion. I'd like to see this list double before the August Newsletter hits your mailbox.

Rod Dunlap and Sara Dunlap
Paul Englert and Jane Salz
Ed Fennell and Nancy Fennell
Rich Forristall and Rhonda Forristall
Frank Giaccone and Robbi Giaccone
Eric Harvie
George Hinds and Guest
Rich Kichline and Carol Kichline
Joe Kyle and Kathy Kyle
John Larch
Marty McCormick and Nancy McCormick
Joe McFadden
Terry Nies and Joan Nies
James Renfro
JD Rogers and Sandy Rogers
Jerry Schwartz
Bob Smith
Ed Thomas
Barry Wheeler and Sharon Wheeler
Harmon Winborn and Denease Winborn
*First time attendees in **Bold***
Joe Kyle 66-69

VA12 PROJECT PLANE



Last Memorial Day, while camping with our Gold Club Camping Club, my wife and I were sitting at a table having a couple of adult beverages when the individual sitting across from me said, "so you were a Ubangi?" I immediately started thinking now "how would he know that?" He pointed to my VA12 hat that I was wearing and said so was he. So through the naturally following exchange of information, I found out that he was retired AT Senior Chief Bud White and had actually done two tours with the squadron. He first arrived as an AT1 in September of 69, one month after I had departed active duty. The second tour was during the transition to the A7 A/C.

One thing led to another and it turned out that he was a volunteer tour guide at the Valiant Air Command War Bird Museum in Titusville, Fl. He informed me that there was an A7A sitting in the hanger at the museum. He thought that it would look much better dressed as a Ubangi of the era than as a beat up old display that spent many weathered years in front of the old Orlando RTC.

For the next several months we talked about it and discussed the feasibility with the VAC about taking it on as a project. We needed to get a good estimate of what the cost would be and how much effort was going to be needed. The cost estimate was \$3000 for limited painting and a commitment of the volunteer labor to complete the task. On February 21, Capt. Austin (Obie) O'Brien (who also lives in Titusville), Bud White and myself came to agreements on the commitments with the VAC and started working on the plane that day. Although we had just started on the plane, after three work days, the plane was placed on display at the Valiant Air Command's annual War Bird Air Show. The plane

drew lots of interest along with lots of questions about the plane. Bud and I were privilege to answer their questions and explain the various components on the plane. It was amazing the number of former and a few current aviators that recognized the “Kiss of Death” on the placard. I even spoke to a set of twins that were former Marine A4 pilots and had flown alongside VA12 A/C. In the short time that I have been working at the VAC, I have met several of the other volunteers that have had an association of some sort with the Ubangis. There is actual excitement on the other restore teams (C47, TBM, F11, F4, & F105) anticipating the day that we get the Flying Ubangi and VA12 on the tail. The plane is never intended to fly again but our goal is to have the project substantially completed by the air show next year. Our intent is that the Flying Ubangi will fly high on the tail for the generations to follow that come through the museum. They will read the history of the squadron and recognize the dedication to a band of brothers that can answer the question UBANGI? UBETCHA!

You can follow the progress of the project as well as find information on contributing to the effort both financially and volunteering by going to the VA12

Web Site VA12.COM/project_plane.html

Terry (Stubby) Nies ATN2 VA12 67-69

TREASURY REPORT

Previous Balance	\$724.15
Dues/Reunion fees/interest	1697.26
SUB TOTAL	\$2319.41
Stamps	131.00
Cartridge	25.43
Printing *	167.41
Memorial Bell	199.00
Decals	129.39
Plane Project Decals	118.20
Post Cards	12.71
CURRENT EXPENSES	783.14
NEW BALANCE	1536.27

ON THE COVER

The A4E on the cover was assigned to VA12 during our 66/67 WestPac Cruise. I think the line crew missed a chance to wash it.

THE LAST LIQUOR RUN

In early March 1958, in an A4D Skyhawk, I lifted off runway 9 at Cecil Field destination Guantanamo

Bay, Cuba. I was accompanied by another VA 12 squadron mate Lt Stan Henderson, who took off just behind me. Rationale a high level overwater navigation flight – another reason to fill the Shape with excellent whisk

The VA 12 mission at the time was Low Level Atomic Attack – hence the Shape which was designed to carry the nuclear bomb. I have forgotten what the payload was in destructive power, but it also carried 12 cases of the good stuff.

A pleasant flight down the coast of Florida and across the Caribbean, dazzlingly bright as the sun glinted off the sea. Uneventful landing and then the arrangements to cross the inlet to the main base to arrange our purchase of great Scotch, and some Brandy and Cognac. I was due to get out of the Navy in a few months and wanted to stock up.

No trouble getting what we both wanted and hauling it back to the jet base. I had 12 cases – forget how much Stan had. After a quick breakfast we loaded our respective hauls carefully into the Shape, and buttoned it up.

We then filed our flight plan for Cecil Field with a stop at Obalocka, Florida a Marine Air Base. Rumor had it that customs were not too strict there. We were pre-flying the planes when an airman told us we had an urgent “Safety of Flight” message and to return to the flight shack. We were told that they had just heard from our squadron and that there was an A4D “Safety of Flight” notice, with an additional message “Do not change the weight of the Shape” and it was signed by our squadron exec LCDR John Sullivan.

We wired back “What should we do with the weight?” Answer – “Get rid of it”. My reaction was - the hell with it lets take off, however a cooler head prevailed and we then took our “nuclear load” out from the shape. And lined it up under the planes. Fortunately a P2V was loading up with their liquor haul, ironically heading back to NAS Jacksonville and we were able to sell it all to them. We refilled our flight plan direct to Cecil Field – it made no sense now to land at Obalocka. Uneventful flight back and as we landed at Cecil Field we were told from the Tower that we would have a customs inspector examine the aircraft.

As we taxied in to the squadron spaces on Sunday afternoon Ens. Solly with a customs inspector behind him gave us a hopeful look that said "Did you get rid of the stuff"?

The customs inspector asked if we had any thing to declare and since I carried a bottle of brandy back in the cockpit I declared that. He said "Son are you sure that is all you want to declare". I said yes, he then said "open that bomb". Sir, "Do you have a secret clearance?" nasty but I had just left 12 cases in Cuba. "If needed we can get one" Stan and I then opened the Shape's. The Customs agent couldn't believe it, there was nothing inside.

As I walked to the squadron hanger I looked back and the customs inspector had his hat off looking up the tail pipe, I got the feeling he was saying to himself "It's got to be in here someplace".

Post script: We found out later that a Navy Chief, stationed in Guantanamo, had informed Customs agents in Miami that we were bringing liquor into the US, even supplying our A4D bureau numbers. Customs had informed Navy intelligence in Jacksonville and just coincidentally the ComfairJax Duty Officer was our former skipper Cmdr Pete Deputy (holder of the Navy Cross); He recognized the bureau numbers as VA 12 numbers and initiated the call to warn us not bring the liquor back. I later talked to our former Skipper Cmdr Pete Deputy about the Chief who turned us in to get the reward from Customs. "We will take care of him" was the answer.

Lt Stan Henderson was killed several years later on takeoff. Less than a year later Lcdr John Sullivan VA 12 Exec was killed at night in during a Mediterranean cruise off the USS Forestall.

Bill Doody 58-60

BOOT CAMP 1975

This is the story of an incident that happened to my boot camp company over the course of two days, in 1975. I thought at the end of the first day, well I'm not dead yet but there's always tomorrow! When the next day came and went, and I was still alive, I was shocked beyond belief. But there was sure some weird shit going on in the Navy!

I signed all the paperwork to enlist in the Navy in late 1974. Everything was set and ready, and I was prepared to go - but they were hesitant and non-committal about scheduling me a day to take off for Boot Camp. The delay in giving me the GO-DAY

didn't go on for very long, I found out one day at the Recruiters Office in Medford that the Navy was not letting ANYONE go to Boot Camp in San Diego, until further notice. And they told me why: there was an outbreak of infectious hepatitis there throughout the base and until the medical authorities decided that it was under control, no new recruits were going to go. The whole base was under medical restrictions. I'm not sure if it rose to the level of quarantine. But this was all nasty business! Well, I waited around and held onto my stupid little civilian job. 1974 rolled over into 1975. I stopped by the Recruiter, or at least called in, every few days to see what the latest word was about the opening of Boot Camp. Pretty soon a potential schedule got passed along from high above and so on one visit I was told several of us from the local area were scheduled to swear in on April 4 1975.

What a whirlwind 24 hours came upon us all then! They treated us to a bus ride to Portland and they put us up at the Hilton Hotel, which was actually the hotel nearest the AFEES Station. I got poked, prodded, searched, measured, examined and surveyed. We swore in (my parents were there to see that ceremony). We got on a bus to the airport, flew to San Diego, arrived about 2 AM and commenced our first day in the Navy, in San Diego, at about 5 AM.



Boot Camp went on in its normal manner for us recruits. No one mentioned the hepatitis troubles and we didn't have time to think about it much either. But it was

brought up one evening. We had been there for maybe 10 days by then, if I recall correctly. The Company Commander went over our schedule for the next day and one of the highlights was a visit to the medical offices for "inoculations". I'll always remember the two days that followed: "INNOCULATION DAY", and "THE DAY AFTER".

INNOCULATION DAY

The next day came upon us and we started out our regular boot camp routine once again. We had some PT, we went to chow, we attended a class or two, and then we marched over to a new part of the base we hadn't been to yet. The CC told us we were going to get a whole series of inoculations another day, but today for a special treat we were going to get a shot of a medicine called "gamma globulin" as a counter to and booster against the hepatitis outbreak that had befallen the base. Oh, yeah, that hepatitis shit! I'd forgotten about it by then, or maybe I just didn't have the time to think about it.

So we lined up in single file and in turn we each went into a small treatment room. I was in a room with an oversized ape who was standing there with a grin on his face. In the corner of the room was a 55 gallon drum. The ape was holding a gasoline-filler pump handle, the hose on this handle went back a valve-gizmo on the top of the drum. Maybe an electric pump, I didn't know. There was a needle on the gas nozzle that looked about the size of a drinking straw and nearly as long.

He told me to drop my pants and shorts. I must have looked stupid (I don't know how he could have thought that) and so he said we have to give you this shot in the butt-cheek.

I said, well OK, just do it, I don't want to watch. And he did. I was shocked to feel that long needle go so far in and I will swear to this day I heard the pump deal going "guk-guk-guk-guk-guk" for what seemed like maybe 2 years but in actual fact was probably a mere 20 minutes. Just like putting \$5.00 of regular into the car. But finally it was over, shorts up, dungarees up, and out the door I went to reassemble with the company again, outside.

Within a short time we had all been "inoculated" and we took off marching again, this time a long march across the base to a spot near a fence. We were at the Obstacle Course, where the CC told us that it is not enough to get a butt-full of that gamma-globbo-goop over at Medical (Geez I remember that whack-job! I thought that freakin' ape was never going to stop with that guk-guk-guk into my virgin cheekie!), we have to get that wad of juice out of that hard little **golf ball** inside the butt there, and into circulation around the Navy Recruit Body. And the best way to do this is to run the Obstacle Course!

This is what we commenced to do, with varying success. I made it around (barely!) some breezed through it, others had a terrible time of it. But we all ran, and stretched and strained, and sweated like pigs, which was the point.



Our run through the course over, we caught our breath and let the sweat stop running off of us, and marched off to continue the rest of the Recruit Day. Noon-time chow, classes, Navy training, classes, chow, PT, the whole 9 yards.

About 4 PM (oops, sorry!) - *1600 hours!!!* – I had second thoughts about letting that sadist corpsman drop a **tennis ball** into the cheek of my ass. At lights out, we were all a bit more sore than normal and did anybody hear who the Hell gave that asshole corpsman permission to jam an **orange** into my butt anyway? This is when we all came to realize that every single one of us had gotten the juice in the right cheek. Like an assembly-line procedure. It took me a while to find a comfortable position in the rack but eventually I did find a way to sleep – a little, every now and again - with that freaking **grapefruit** stuck in there.

THE DAY AFTER

Rise And Shine! We all got up the next morning (very few actually slept much) with varying levels of agony, impairment, and paralysis associated with the **soccer ball** that those f#\$%&g Nazi sadist asshole God Damn maggot doctor/corpsmen low-life pinhead medical school reject motherf#\$%s had inserted into our rear ends. No one could really walk upright, the general gait was to shuffle along with the left leg and drag the right leg along like the hunchback of Notre Dame. Like Igor in

Frankenstein. Who's idea was it to run the Obstacle Course, anyway? It was the CC. We're on to this guy now, we all believed he must be a well-known sadist and asshole.

Jesus Lord God Almighty, it hurt. And here we have the start of another fine day at Recruit Training Command, San Diego! So a bit of morning PT (there was a lot of flopping, groaning, and miserable looking PT going on) was followed by a slow march to the chow hall (it hurt to get there, but it was nice they're letting us eat before we die. Shit-Oh-Deer it hurt to sit in a chair!). I'm pretty sure that we were off to at least one class, maybe two, before the true nature of our day-after-inoculation activities was known.

At one point, we commenced a long march across the base, which took a while because we were all still virtually paralyzed from muscle pain, because of the gamma globulin shot. We stumbled our way over the bridge back to the general area of the Obstacle Course. **Shiiiiitttt!** What happened the last time we came over here! You don't think we're going back over there for another run around that course, do you? The inhumanity! Whadda they do to you if you can't complete the Obstacle Course? You think maybe they throw you out of the Navy? That didn't sound like such a bad idea, as we all dragged ourselves around like Igor.

Finally we got to the area where we were all going to die (They'll send my wretched distorted body back home for a Christian burial, right?) and the CC marched us over to a spot very close to a short fence, with the Obstacle Course to our right. We were brought to Parade Rest, and the CC started looking at his watch, and staring at something on the other side of the fence. Some of us could see a track on the other side, like the running track around a sports field. Look at the watch. Look down the track. This went on for 6 or 8 minutes. What the hell is this?

We were all quiet at the time. (Would the CC let me have a last smoke before I die?) Finally he saw whatever it was he was looking for, and he turned to address the company. He spoke loudly so that all could hear without strain. I paraphrase his words: "This morning, most of you recruits have come to regret your decision to enlist in the United States Navy."

(Well, isn't THAT the truth!)

"It's a tough thing to do. It's a bitch. And what we ask of you requires great effort from you to see yourself through hard days and demanding trials and tribulations."

(Yeah, and here I am with this fucking *basketball* jammed into the cheek of my ass!)

"You probably wish that there was a way to get out of the Navy."

(What the... ?)

"Well, if you got the balls, it can be done. It's easy, too. You all remember how to get over here to the Obstacle Course, don't you?"

(How could I forget the 72-Man Gamma Globulin Death March?)

"Just wait until about 2 or 2:30 in the morning. Sneak out of the barracks and make your way quietly, over here to the Obstacle Course. Most everyone is asleep. Just be quiet. See the fence here behind me? It's only 6 feet high, you can easily climb it. Notice that the barb wire arms are slanted to the other side, you can jump over the barb wire and not get cut. And you are OUT of the Navy!" The CC waited a moment or two and then we all saw what he had been waiting to see. A company of the most pitiful creatures I had ever seen were running in formation to a cadence from a barking sadist dressed in Marine fatigues. They were all under great duress and maybe half of them looked like warmed-over road kill. They passed by as the CC was paused in his conversation. There was a Drill Sergeant harassing them mercilessly.

"You will no longer be in the United States Navy." He looked over his shoulder again and paused a second time. On the other side, some stragglers passed after about a minute and another assistant DI was berating them for being sluggish and malingering maggot-ridden trash. At just that moment, one of the stragglers tripped or fell, and landed face down on the track. This sent the extra DI into fits of anger and he started to spit piss and vinegar at the fallen creature. Covered in mud and sweat. Almost unconscious. This recruit finally got up to his hands and knees, and promptly vomited. Which sent the Marine into a purple rage of spitting anger, abuse, wild gesticulations, and ranting and raving about the recruit wasting United States Government food rations. And the CC then commented.

“These people on the other side are going to spend about 10 days trying to turn you into UNITED STATES MARINES! And after they determine that you are *NOT* Marine Corps material (the fallen recruit dragged himself to his feet, swayed weakly and fell forward in a stumbling version of a trotting run) you will be *VERY EAGER* and *GLAD AS HELL*



to get back into the UNITED. STATES. NAVY!” The CC paused for emphasis on each of the Last. 3. Words. He waited again at that point, and let the scene sink into our consciousness, where it is stuck forever in my memory. Even to this day. 36+ years later.

After a moment, he called us to attention, and we were marched away from the fence, and we left the Obstacle Course. Of course, we were all still shuffling along like Igor, and it still hurt like a bitch, but it was just that damn **softball** jammed into my butt cheek, is all. And we didn't have to run the course again, so maybe the CC is not such an asshole after all. It's just those damn pinko Commie bastard corpsmen and their sadistic gamma-goo globbo torture scam...

The end of this story came as we got a few hundred feet away and the CC called a marching cadence. “Sound Off!”

G-I GRITS AND G-I GRAVY!

We all sang out, *G-I GRITS AND G-I GRAVY*

GEE I'M GLAD I JOINED THE NAVY!

We repeated, *GEE I'M GLAD I JOIN...*

WHUH?

John Larch 75-78

SENTINELS OF FREEDOM

For those of you shipmates that feel a need to show your support for your fellow service men and women here is an opportunity for you.

About 4 years ago we were approached by a local business man that new we had a son in the Marines to see if we would be interested in a scholarship program for injured and now discharged service men and women.

Upon investigation we discovered the following; The organization is the Sentinels of Freedom (sentinelsoffreedom.org). A national organization that gives a hand up, not a hand out, to severely injured service men and women in the form of a scholarship program for education and ultimately on to fulltime employment after graduation.

For the last four years we have been involved in this great group in terms of capital, resources, time volunteering, and contribution procurement. We have assisted Navy Seals, Army Soldiers, Marines, and Air Force demolition experts. All have experienced severe and debilitating injuries from war wounds in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The program includes providing them with private living quarters, vehicle and transportation, all expenses paid for tuition and books, and living expenses for the entire time that they are in college. We even have provided Seeing Eye dogs. All of this is provided at no cost to them. And as I mentioned at the end we assist them in permanent placement in the private sector.

You have to remember here that these are people that have lost multiple limbs, parts of their faces, blind and not, and have learning challenges that you and I can only guess what it would be like to overcome.

Anyway that's it. If you have interest it would be sincerely appreciate it. Go to sentinelsoffreedom.org and see what you can do to help. Remember this..... we get to do what we do because these guys have done what they do.

BJ Smith, ADJ2 66-68

FACEBOOK



VA12 is on Facebook, there are roughly 50 members. If you use Facebook, join the “U.S. Navy VA-12” Flying Ubangis” Squadron” group.



Visiting the CVA-41 USS Midway Museum in San Diego, in March of this year, former VA-12 Ubangi John Larch stumbled onto a display of squadron patches in one of the passageways of the museum vessel. The FLYING UBANGI in this display commemorates the presence of VF-12 (as the squadron was known then) on the Midway for a World Cruise that lasted from December 1954 to July 1955. VF-12 was flying the F2H-2 Banshee at the time.



In a park next to the CVA-41 USS Midway Museum, in San Diego, a statue stands that re-enacts the famous "LIFE Magazine Kiss" picture taken by Alfred Eisenstaedt in 1945, when nurse Edith Shain and an unknown sailor celebrated VJ Day in Times Square. The statue is 25 feet tall and weighs 6,000 pounds.



Our Bell Project sees completion. I'll be toting this Memorial Bell around as long as we have reunions. Thanks to all that contributed to make it possible



Inscription penned by Mr. Bob Fossum. Thanks for your words Bob.

CONTACT INFO

Joe Kyle	10421 Barbara, Pinckney MI 48169
(This issue)	Home (734) 878-0556
	Cell (810) 923-4426

John Larch	7127 Janelle Ct SE, Salem OR 97317
	Home (503) 362-3550