

ATKRON 12 NEWSLETTER

VA-12

PUBLISHED BY THE
VA-12 REUNION ASSOCIATION

WE INVITE YOU TO VISIT

THE WORLD FAMOUS FLYING UBANGIS

AT OUR WEBSITE WWW.VA12.COM



Volume XII, Issue 1 April 2013

SNJ Trainer

VBF-4 in 1945



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UBANGI? UBETCHA!

2015 REUNION

The Ballots have been cast and the winner by a large margin, for our 2015 Reunion, is Cocoa Beach, FL. Thanks to all that voted. We will be looking at dates in April to see what is available. Some of you may be wondering why we are waiting to 2015. Typically we have had these get-togethers every other year and since 2000 they have been on an even numbered year. As Florida was selected I think it makes the most sense to have the reunion in the Spring time with the weather being more pleasant and less likely to be interrupted by a hurricane. If we stayed with the even numbered years, that would mean next spring and that is kind of short for preparation time. So we will break tradition a little and go 2 1/2 years instead of 2 years between reunions. I apologize if this presents a problem for anyone.

Joe Kyle 66-68

UBANGI HISTORY

Occasionally I watch the "Military Channel" on T.V. A year or so ago I was watching a program on it when all of a sudden up pops an A-7 Corsair with the world renowned "Ubangi" on the side of the plane. I wasn't paying too much attention to the program but do remember that the escorting planes suddenly were under attack by MIGS & lack of firepower, the Corsairs returned to the carrier. Just a few weeks ago I was watching the channel again where Crusaders were escorting 2 A-4's on a missile run to Hanoi's thermal power plant. I don't know if these were from VA-12 but later in the program it showed the "Ubangi" on an A-4. Also there was a Crusader escorting an A-4 to lay mines in the Red River Delta and this plane was flown by a Lt. Chuck Nelson but again it wasn't clear if this was VA-12. Looking fwd, to the next Reunion.

George Hinds 56-59

SNORKELING IN IOWA



This comes to us from someone who wonders if the VA-12 Flying Ubangis have a connection that they want to acknowledge to anyone in Iowa. Can anyone identify the back-side shown here? Could this be Fat Tom Lannom?

IOWA POEM

It's wintertime in Iowa
And the gentle
breezes blow
Seventy miles an hour
At twenty-five below.
Oh, how I love Iowa
When the snow's up to
your butt.
You take a breath
of winter
And your nose gets
frozen shut.
Yes, the weather here
is wonderful
So I guess I'll hang
around
I could never leave Iowa
'Cause I'm frozen to
The ground

BOAT SAILORS AND PEACOATS

By Bob "Dex" Armstrong

You remember them... those ton and a half monsters that took the annual production of thirty-five sheep to make. Those thick black rascals with black plastic buttons the size of poker chips. The issue coats that drove shore duty chief petty officers stark raving nuts if they caught you with the collar turned up or your gahdam hands in your pockets.

"Hey, you rubber sock, get those gahdam hands outta them damn pockets! Didn't they issue you black leather gloves?"

So, you took your hands out of your pockets and risked digital frostbite rather than face whatever the Navy had in store for violators of the 'No Gahdam Hands In Peacoat Pockets' policy. There's probably a special barracks in Hell full of old E-3s caught hitchiking in sub-zero weather with hands in peacoat pockets.

As for those leather gloves, one glove always went missing. "Son, where in th' hell are the gloves we issued you?"

We??? I don't remember this nasty, ugly bastard being at Great Lakes when the 'jocks and socks' petty officers were throwing my initial issue seabag at me and yelling, "Move it!!"

As for the gloves, once you inadvertently leave one glove on a whorehouse night table or on the seat of a Greyhound bus, the remaining glove is only useful if a tank rolls over the hand that fit the lost glove.

In the days long ago, a navy spec. peacoat weighed about the same as a flat car load of cinder blocks. When it rained, it absorbed water until your spine warped, your shins cracked and your ankles split. Five minutes standing in the rain waiting on a bus and you felt like you were piggy-backing the statue of liberty.

When a peacoat got wet, it smelled a lot like sheep dip. It had that wet wool smell, times three. It weighed three and a half tons and smelled like 'Mary had a little lamb's' gym shorts.

You know how damn heavy a late '50s peacoat was? Well, they had little metal chains sewn in the back of the collar to hang them up by. Like diluted navy coffee, sexual sensitivity instruction, comfortable air-conditioned topside security

bungalows, patent leather plastic-looking shoes and wearing raghats configured to look like bidet bowls, the peacoat spec. has been watered down to the point you could hang them up with dental floss. In the old days, peacoat buttons and grocery cart wheels were interchangeable parts. The gear issued by the U.S. Navy was tough as hell, bluejacket-tested clothing with the durability of rhino hide and construction equipment tires.

Peacoats came with wide, heavy collars. In a cold, hard wind, you could turn that wide collar up to cover your neck and it was like poking your head in a tank turret.

The things were warm, but I never thought they were long enough. Standing out in the wind in those 'big-legged britches' (bell bottoms), the wind whistled up your cuffs and took away body warmth like a thief. But, they were perfect to pull over you for a blanket when sleeping on a bus or a bus terminal bench.

Every sailor remembers stretching out on one of those oak bus station pews with his raghat over his face, his head up against his AWOL bag and covered with his peacoat. There was always some 'SP' who had not fully evolved from apehood, who poked you with his billy bat and said, "Hey, YOU!! Get up! Waddya think yer doin? You wanna sleep, get a gahdam room!"

Peacoats were lined with quilted satin or rayon. I never realized it at the time, but sleeping on bus seats and station benches would be the closest I would ever get to sleeping on satin sheets.

Early in my naval career, a career-hardened (lifer) first class gunner's mate told me to put my ID and liberty card in the inside pocket of my peacoat. "Put the sonuvabitches in that gahdam inside pocket and pin the damn thing closed with a diaper pin. Then, take your heavy folding money and put it in your sock. If you do that, learn to never take your socks off in a cathouse. Them damn dockside pickpockets pat 'cha down for a lumpy wallet and they can relieve you of said wallet so fast you'll never know you've been snookered.

Only a dumbass idiot will clam-fold his wallet and tuck it in his thirteen button bellbottoms. Every kid above the age of six in Italy knows how to lift a wallet an idiot pokes in his pants. Those little bastards learned to pick sailor's pockets in

kindergarten. Rolling bluejackets is the national sport in Italy."

In Washington DC , they have a wonderful marble and granite plaza honoring the United States Navy. Every man or woman who served this nation in a naval uniform, owes it to himself or herself to visit this memorial and take their families. It honors all naval service and any red-blooded American bluejacket or officer will feel the gentle warmth of pride his or her service is honored within this truly magical place.

The focal point of this memorial is a bronze statue of a lone American sailor. No crow on his sleeve tells you that he is non-rated. And, there are further indications that suggest maybe, once upon a time, the sculpturer himself may have once been an E-3 raghat.

The lad has his collar turned up and his hands in his pockets.

I'm sure the Goddess of the Main Induction nearly wets her panties laughing at the old, crusty chief standing there with veins popping out on their old, wrinkled necks, muttering, "Look at that idiot sonuvabitch standing there with his collar up and his gahdam hands in his pockets. In my day, I would have ripped that jerk a new one!"

Ah, the satisfied glow of E-3 revenge.

Peacoats... One of God's better inventions.

For more of this good stuff from "Dex," check out his Web site "The After Battery" at

<http://www.olgoat.com/substuff/abr.htm>

<<http://www.olgoat.com/substuff/abr.htm>>

For you old salts, and even the newer ones, its worth the read. But the newer ones might have difficulty translating his old Navy encrusted lingo.

YNM(SS) Charlie "Tom" L. Tompkins, USN(ret) of NCPOA

CHIEF MANLY

I was going through your Departed Shipmates (the website page. Ed.) recently and was reminded of a incident with Chief Manly, who was indeed a "sailor's sailor". He was in charge of the "AD" shop of VA12, where I was assigned for approximately two years. I was a Third Class PO, ADJ3, at the

time.

We were on my second Med cruise in the summer of 1964, and were working the normal (for shipboard) twelve hours shifts. We had just finished a shift, where we had slammed a A4 back together, ran it up to the flight deck and trimmed the engine, so it would be ready for the morning launch.

Exhausted, two of the airmen (I don't recall their names) and I went below decks to sack out. As I was about to pass out, General Quarters was sounded. Now our compartment was just below the Master of Arms, shack, just forward of #2 elevator, so checking our compartment during "GQ" was easy. Down drops a "boats" 3rd class, and starts yelling at us. "No thanks", I tell him we've had enough for one day and we are going to sleep. The language then gets more colorful and he threatens to write us all up. I tell him that while he is at it, why not write home to mom. Up the ladder he goes and dogs the hatch to the compartment.

The next day, I ran into Chief Manly on the hangar deck, as he was coming down the ladder from the Ready Room. He was not a happy camper, but being the class act he was, he simply informed me the he saved my A-- from losing a stripe, and that if such an incident ever happened again he would personally rip the damn thing off my sleeve. All this was said without ever so much has raising his voice. He than thanked me and the airmen involved for breaking our tails and getting the aircraft ready in time. The Chief was all class.

Richard Hindy 61-64

VETERANS CRUISE?

Many of you may be aware that the Navy sponsors and encourages an event called a **TIGER CRUISE**. It is the chance for family and friends to experience all facets of the shipboard Navy life of their sponsor, up close, while embarked onboard the vessel.

Guests observe at-sea operations during the 2 to 5 day transit from a US port, to the home-port of the vessel. They are usually conducted as the vessel is ending a deployment.

The "Tiger" is any relative or friend (but not girlfriend/boyfriend, fiancée or spouse) of a crew member or embarked personnel.

The event is conducted with attention paid to security, medical restrictions, and under Navy authority and regulations.

Tigers are responsible for travel to the port of embarkation and from port of debarkation.

Can we propose to create a new class of cruisers? **VETERAN CRUISERS** would be defined as US Navy veterans of all ranks and rates, officer and enlisted. Veterans would join in with the Tigers during those end-of-deployment Tiger Cruises. This would constitute the chance for veterans to observe modern-day squadron and air operations and shipboard life. In the case of veterans of service with VA-12, we belong to the aircraft carrier Airwing environment and would likely seek sponsorship via an airwing or squadron association.

Here are some starter-questions. If we are going to go anywhere with this, we need some answers! Can you help us find them?

Q: What are current Tiger Cruise ports?

A: Typically, Tiger cruises on aircraft carriers originate at Pearl Harbor HI and transit to San Diego CA, or at Mayport FL and transit to Norfolk VA.

Q: How would we get this started?

A: ??????

Q: Who would we contact to ask for permission for a bunch of Veterans to join in a Tiger cruise?

A: ??????

Q: What rules would the Veterans have to adhere to?

A: Tigers have well-documented rules and restrictions governing their time on board the vessel. These would apply to veterans as well. Very likely no new standards/policies would need to be generated. Contact Newsletter co-editor JP Larch for documentation of current Tiger policy.

Q: What medical restrictions are in place?

A: Tigers have to have their family physician fill out a form, and also affirm their individual adherence to specific health guidelines. Veterans would probably follow the same procedures.

Contact Newsletter co-editor JP Larch for documentation of current Tiger policy.

Q: Would there be a fee or cost for a Veterans Cruise?

A: Research shows that past Tiger Cruises are charged a small fee by the ship. There is no typical amount. Recent examples range from \$45 to \$95 total for a multi-day transit.

Q: What accommodations are provided?

A: Tigers sleep in an empty rack, or on cots. Some bring sleeping bags. They eat in the same mess facilities as the crew. They take Navy Showers!

Recent Tiger Cruise organizers have provided FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) sheets. These provide a great deal of information for us when we propose starting Veteran Cruises. Contact Newsletter co-editor JP Larch for documentation of recent Tiger Cruise FAQs.
John Larch 76-79

ON THE COVER NORTH AMERICAN SNJ "TEXAN" TRAINER

At the time VBF-4 was established, new squadrons were typically training on the SNJ Trainer and the F6F Hellcat.

	SNJ TRAINER	F6F Hellcat	F4U-1 Corsair
Engine	(1) Pratt & Whitney R1340-AN1 Wasp	(1) Pratt & Whitney R2800-10W	(1) Pratt & Whitney R2800-8
Power	600HP	2,000 HP	2,000 HP
Max Weight	5,617 Lbs	15,415 Lbs	14,000 Lbs
Max Speed	208 MPH	380 MPH	417 MPH
Max Altitude	24,200Ft.	37,300 Ft.	36,900 Ft.
Combat Radius	721 Miles	945 Miles	1,015 Miles
Rate of Climb	1,200 Ft/Min	3,500 Ft/Min	2,890 Ft/Min



VBF-4 AND THE SNJ:

The squadron was established at NAS Alameda in May 1945 and equipped with SNJ trainers and F6F Hellcats. In the SNJ, the student sat in front and the instructor sat in the rear. After a short period, VBF-4 was moved up to the Chance-Vought F4U-1 and Goodyear FG-1 Corsair.



THE OFFICERS OF VA-12 DURING THE LAST MED CRUISE, 1984-85

Front Row: LT J.D. Wooldridge, CWO3 J.L. Feichtinger, LTJG R.B. May, LCDR L.G. Booth, CWO3 R.H. Wildemuth, CDR Michael W. Samuels (CO), CDR Harry M. Conner (XO+ last CO)

Standing: LT R. P. Davidson, LCDR P.J. Mellon (I thought it was "Mellin"), LTJG W.P. McCormack, LCDR Z.P. May, LCDR K.C. Albright, LT D.A. Tanner, LT S.R. Tallant, LT M.J. Schmank, LT M.J. Paulaitis, LTCMDR G. Kophamer

On the Tail: LT D.T. Muzik, LT D. E. Gangwer, LT A. G. Harris

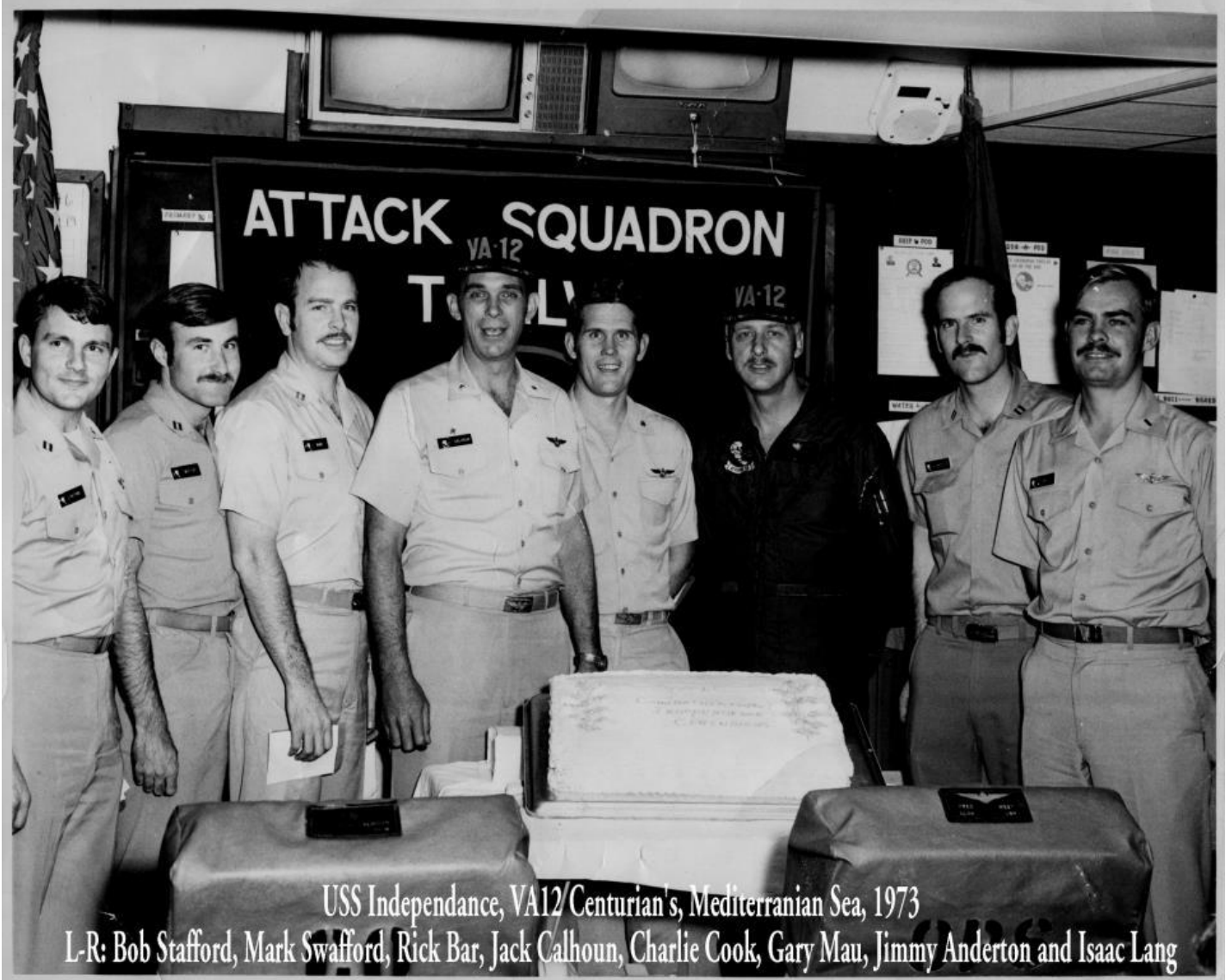
Missing: ENS K.R. Campitelli

TREASURY REPORT

Previous Balance	\$839.01
Dues/interest	518.85
SUB TOTAL	\$1357.86
Stamps	91.80
Envelopes	22.25
Printing *	155.27
CURRENT EXPENSES	269.22
NEW BALANCE	\$1088.64

NEW MEMBERS

Bill Phillips	63-64
Bob Sherman	65-67
Doug Popoloski	67-70
John Brakefield	77-81



USS Independence, VA12/Centurian's, Mediterranean Sea, 1973
L-R: Bob Stafford, Mark Swafford, Rick Bar, Jack Calhoun, Charlie Cook, Gary Mau, Jimmy Anderton and Isaac Lang



Bud White taking a break from media-blasting duty.



The assembled gang conducting a fuselage washdown prior to spot-priming and painting.

AT THE VALIANT AIR COMMAND, TITUSVILLE FL.



Photos on the previous page and here show the progress of the re-painting project on the museum's A-7A Corsair.

The VALIANT AIR COMMAND is a 501(c) non-profit tax-exempt organization, and donations made to them are tax-deductable. The VA-12 Detachment Restoration Team can always use more funding, so anyone wishing to contribute, send inquiries and checks payable to VALIANT AIR COMMAND, to:

Terry Nies, 2741 Michigan St. West Melbourne, FL 32904

Please write **VA12 A7 Project** on the reference line of any check.

The DET team was formed in February 2012. Currently consisting of Austin O'Brien, Terry Nies, Bud White, and probie Frank Giaccone, the DET generally works Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Complete details of the work done so far, including lots of pictures, can be had at:

http://www.va12.com/pasdown_log.html.

CONTACT	JOE KYLE 10421 Barbara Pinckney MI 48169	JOHN LARCH 7127 Janelle Ct SE Salem OR 97317
INFO	Home (734) 878-0556	(This Issue) Home (503) 362-3550
	Cell (810) 923-4426	