

# ATKRON 12 NEWSLETTER

## VA-12

PUBLISHED BY THE  
VA-12 REUNION ASSOCIATION

WE INVITE YOU TO VISIT

[THE WORLD FAMOUS FLYING UBANGIS](#)

ON THE INTERNET AT [WWW.VA12.COM](http://WWW.VA12.COM)



F2H-2 Banshee over Wonsan  
North Korea, 1952  
Volume IX, Issue 3  
December 2010

**UBANGI?**  
**UBETCHA!**

**WHERE WILL THE 2012  
REUNION BE HELD?  
HAVE YOU CAST YOUR  
VOTE?**

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## 2012 REUNION NEWS

Ballots have been coming in but many still have not voted. With at least 36 more ballots out there, it is still to close to call between Charleston and San Diego. If you are a dues paying member, I am enclosing another ballot for you. Please vote.

### TREASURY REPORT

Previous Balance	270.08
Dues/Donations	295.13
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>565.21</b>
Stamps	88.20
Envelopes	21.19
Printing *	235.28
<b>CURRENT EXPENSES</b>	<b>344.67</b>
<b>NEW BALANCE</b>	<b>220.54</b>

### OUR NEXT PROJECT

I know that many of you have been anxiously awaiting our money spending project. So here it is. I think it would be great if we had our own VA12 Memorial Bell. It would travel to each reunion and be rung at each ceremony as we remember our fallen brothers. Some of you have mentioned to me that you missed out on donating to our Memorial Plaque in DC, so here is your chance. Send whatever you can. John Larch and Bob Fossum have begun the search.

### BANCHEE MODEL



Thanks to Marty McCormick for sending in this Photo of the Banchee Model that he made.

## ON THE COVER

### McDonnell F2H-2 Banshee

The Navy needed to enter the jet age, intending to use an aircraft that would better the performance of the then-current Fleet Defense Interceptor, the Grumman F8F-2 Bearcat.

This project started before the end of WW2 and continued on, as McDonnell developed the Banshee into the 3 major models; the F2D-1, the F2H-1, and the most widely used model, the F2H-2.

The Navy got what they wanted and needed.

	F8F-2 Bearcat	F2H-2 Banshee
Engine	P&W R2800-30W Double Wasp 2,250 H.P.	Two Westinghouse J34-WE-34 Turbojet 3,250 Lb/Ft Thrust Totaling 6,500 Lb/Ft
Max Speed	455 MPH	580 MPH
Max Altitude	40,800 Ft.	46,600 Ft.
Max Range	1,105 Miles	1,716 Miles
Rate of Climb	6,300 Ft/Min	6,000 Ft/Min

The Flying Ubangis of VF-12 flew the F2H-1 and -2 models during 4 deployments from September 1950 until December 1955:

1951	CVB 43	USS Coral Sea
1952	CV-18	USS Wasp
1953	CV-42	USS Franklin D. Roosevelt
1954/55	CV-41	USS Midway



### NEW VA12 ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Here are the names of our newest members joining our ranks since the last newsletter.

<b>Herman Bedenbaugh</b>	70-73
<b>Gerald Sunada</b>	84-85



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## ANOTHER NAVY STORY

After reading the life story of B.J. Smith, I decided it was time to tell another story of a form VA-12 sailor of the sixties.

As most of you are aware, I was a Floridian until I got out of the Navy. One thing that the Navy allowed me to do was attend college on the G.I. bill. I took advantage of that and attended Daytona Beach Junior college and Broward Community College. I received my A.A.S. and Nancy and I decided to move from Fla. To Tennessee to complete my degree. Nancy, being an Accountant, Picked TN. Because of no State income tax. We moved to Johnson City and I attended East Tn. State University on a baseball scholarship. At 26, I was the old man of the team. I graduated in 1974 and one of the athletes with the locker next to me was Mike Colvin, a tennis player. (More about this later).

Needless to say. The G.I. bill helped me get my education. After 30 years of working, I retired in the Spring of 2008 as a Human Resources Director of a private corporation and a public entity. Now I was ready to spend time with the four grandchildren of our son and daughter.

Last fall we decided to take the kids and grandkids to a great place called the Creeper Trail in Southwest Virginia. The creeper is a 20 mile railroad track that was abandoned and turned into a biking trail from the mountains in Mt. Rogers into Abingdon, Va. The 17 mile ride to Damascus, Va. Is down hill all the way. Well we went to Laughing Dog outfitters in Damascus to rent bikes and get a ride to the top of Green Mountain.

As we got in the van to go to the top, a gentleman introduced himself as the driver, Joe. As we drove up the mountain, I realized that I knew this Joe and as I looked at him and listened to his voice, I said, "Joe, I bet I know your last name". He said you do? I said you name is Joe Colvin and you were my 1st Class Petty Officer in VA-12. As he looked in the mirror, he almost ran off the road in surprise as he recognized me. As we drove to the top, Joe asked me if I remembered the conversation he had with me about making the Navy a career. I responded and said, "It was a short conversation wasn't it Joe. We both had a good laugh and hugged before I went on our bike ride.

Everytime we go on the creeper, I make it a point to

take a copy of the VA-12 newsletter to Joe so that he can keep up with VA-12.

We have been on the Creeper several times and we always say hello to Joe.

Remember my mention of a fella named Mike Colvin, well that was Joe's younger brother. We were both on scholarship and had lockers next to each other and I had no idea he was Joe's brother. Small world after all.

Joe retired from VA-12 and then worked another career at the Veteran's Hospital in Johnson City and retired a second time.

He enjoys his retirement working part-time in the town he grew up in and rode the actual railroad That is now the Creeper Trail.

On August 9, Nancy and I will be married 41 years. Some of you remember our apartment on San Juan Blvd. in Jacksonville where Nancy visited many times. She is a Gator from U. of Fla. She is pondering on retirement in the next 2 years. For me, I love being retired and restoring cars as a hobby.

I plan on attending the next reunion so hope to see all the VA-12 squids again.

Ed Fennell 66-69

## REFLECTING ON MILITARY SERVICE

### **You Can Leave The Military, But It Never Really Leaves You.**

Occasionally, I venture back out to the air base where I'm greeted by an imposing security guard who looks carefully at my identification card, hands it back and says, "Have a good day, tech sergeant." Every time I go back onto Charleston Air Force Base it feels good to be called by my previous rank, but odd to be in civilian clothes, walking among the servicemen and servicewomen going about their duties as I once did, years ago.

The military, for all its flaws, is a comfort zone for anyone who has ever worn the uniform. It's a place where you know the rules and know they are enforced; a place where everybody is busy but not too busy to take care of business. Because there exists behind the gates of every military facility an institutional understanding of respect, order, uniformity, accountability and dedication that becomes part of your marrow and never, ever leaves you.

Personally, I miss the fact that you always knew where you stood in the military, and who you were dealing with. That's because you could read

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somebody's uniform from 20 feet away and know the score. Service personnel wear their careers on their sleeves, so to speak. When you approach each other, you can read their name tag, examine their rank and, if they are in dress uniform, read their ribbons and know where they've served.

I miss all those little things you take for granted when you're in the ranks, like breaking starch on a set of fatigues fresh from the laundry and standing in a perfectly straight line that looks like a mirror as it stretches to the endless horizon. I miss the sight of troops marching in the early morning mist, the sound of boot heels thumping in unison on the sidewalks, the bark of sergeants and the sing-song answers from the squads as they pass by in review. To romanticize military service is to be far removed from its reality, because it's very serious business, especially in times of war. But I miss the salutes I'd throw at officers and the crisp returns as we crisscrossed on the flight line. I miss the smell of jet fuel hanging heavily on the night air and the sound of engines roaring down runways and disappearing into the clouds. I even miss the hurry-up-and-wait mentality that enlisted men gripe about constantly, a masterful invention that bonded people more than they'll ever know or admit.

I miss people taking off their hats when they enter a building, speaking directly and clearly to others and never showing disrespect for rank, race, religion or gender. Mostly I miss being a small cog in a machine so complex it constantly circumnavigates the Earth and so simple it feeds everyone on time, three times a day, on the ground, in the air or at sea. Mostly, I don't know anyone who has served who regrets it, and doesn't feel a sense of pride when they pass through those gates and re-enter the world they left behind with their youth.

Face it guys [and gals], we all miss it. Whether you had one tour or a career, it shaped your life.

One Nation Under GOD.

By Ken Burger, The Charleston Post and Courier

### **You may have been in Naval Aviation if:**

Slept on the concrete (or flight deck) under a wing. Wished your jet would drop a Mk 84 on Ho Chi Min's / Saddam Hussein's house. Ever said, "Oh yes sir, it's supposed to look like that." Drank water from a scuttle-butt that had more JP than H2O. Have sucked LOX to cure a hangover. You know what JP tastes like. Used a piece of safety wire as a toothpick. Someone has tackled you right before

you cuss out the squadron Ops Boss over the radio. You refer to a pilot as a "control stick actuator." You've ever been told to go get "some prop wash and a yard of flight line from supply." Worked a 14 hour shift on a jet that isn't flying the next day. You've ever said "as long as it starts every other try you'll be fine sir." You've ever considered a traditional Thanksgiving dinner to be a turkey sandwich in one hand and a wrench in the other. You've ever jumped into an intake to get out of the cold. You've ever been told to tow the jets around so they match the board in Maintenance Control. You've ever preflighted in really bad weather only to have Ops cancel after engine start. You've ever been hassled in the Chow Hall for shave/boots/uniform/smell after a 16 hour shift. You believe your bird has a soul. You talk to your bird. (In your head still counts) Your spouse refuses to watch any aviation shows with you. You've ever said, "That nav light must have burned out after launch." You've ever used a wheel chock as a hammer. The only thing you know about any city is where the good bars are. You know more about your co-workers than your own family. You don't know what the inside of the good BOQ / barracks look like (anywhere). The refrigerators in your barracks only have beer in them. When you finish a DET there are enough empty beer cans to build an airplane to fly home on. You've ever looked for pictures of "your" jet in aviation books. You can't figure out why maintenance officers exist. You've ever wished the pilot would just say, "Great bird, thanks!" You are proud that no one on base understands you. You relieve yourself more often outdoors than indoors. AND a lot of people other than your mother have seen you do it. You've even worked 7 day 12 hour shifts on DET while admin goes sightseeing for two weeks. After getting back from the above trip, the admin pukers are getting an award while you are doin' a seven day on your bird. Played a lot of Acey Deucey. You can't comprehend why everyone doesn't want to be an airdale. You think everyone who isn't an airdale is a wimp. You can't figure out why your 2 weeks advance per-diem is gone after 3 days. You can't get through a trip without finding an ATM. On a trip the first place you go is to the Exchange on a beer run. Most of your advance is spent in \$1 increments in a "club." Evaded the "old lady" at the Hide-a-Way. You can sleep anywhere, anytime, but as soon as the engines shut down you are wide awake. You've ever said bad things about the IDIOT who said, "No

more nose art." The SRB is not the main reason you re-enlist. Your wife understands that you have a "mistress." Most everyone thinks your job mostly consists of waving your arms. You have scars on you that aren't from your spouse or significant / insignificant other. You've ever used a helmet as a pillow. Gone looking for a snipe. Love Bar-B-Q on a stick. Been gouged by the tag end of a safety-wired canon plug. You know what a one wire is. Tightened a canon plug with channel locks, cause the one-wire didn't clip and bend the tag end. You know what a short arm is. You've ever stood on wheel chocks to keep your feet dry. You've ever done the 100 yard dash to the line shack when lightning was called. You've eaten more box lunches / MRE's than hot meals. You change underwear and T-shirts more often than coveralls. You've ever done any of the following:

- A. Used dykes to trim a fingernail.
- B. Used RTV to fix a stripped screw.
- C. Pulled the gun switch while riding brakes.
- D. Wiped your hands on your pants.
- E. Made tampons out of paper towels for drain hole leaks.
- F. Knocked back a rivet stem that was hanging out a drain hole.
- G. Wiped leaks immediately prior to crew show.
- H. Picked your nose.
- I. Thrown up more than two days in a row.
- J. Gotten the new guys drunk just so you could make fun of them the next day.
- K. Worn someone else's hat to go to chow.
- L. Taken pride in grossing someone out.
- M. Made sure the coffee pot is the first thing in the Cruise Box.
- N. The first thing briefed on DET is the coffee fund.
- O. All you care about is the flight schedule and your days off.
- P. Been to the club / bar before you even unpack.
- Q. Hated the crew for going to club in flight suits.
- R. Hated the crew for not recognizing you in the commissary.
- S. Hated airdales that couldn't hack the line, got admin jobs and promoted. T. Pencil whipped your training records.
- U. Hate the fact that admin types get rides on your bird and you don't.
- V. Thrown something living into vented LOX.
- W. Wondered where they keep finding the idiots that keep making up the stupid rules.
- X. You know what a nose picker is.

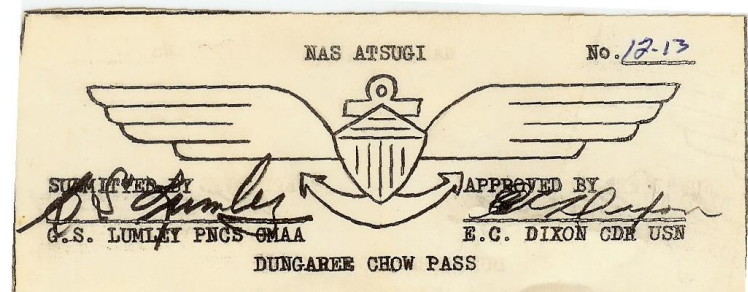
- Y. You know what a tin bender is.
  - Z. You know what a BB stacker is.
  - a. You've ever been woken up by the returning drunks turning on all the lights.
  - b. You've ever returned to the barracks drunk and turned on all the lights
  - c. You've ever had to defuel your jet an hour after refueling it.
  - d. You know what a stew burner is.
  - e. Know what a skivvie stacker is.
  - f. You've ever driven home and don't remember doing it.
  - g. You tell your peers you are getting divorced and the first thing they ask is, "selling anything?"
  - h. You've ever gone straight to work from the bar.
  - i. Because of the above you've done your preflight on "autopilot."
  - j. Everyone you know has some kind of nickname.
- From John Larch 76-79

## THE NEWSLETTER

First of all I want to thank all of those that submitted items for this issue. I was a good effort by you all. I know you get tired of me ragging about this so it was nice to see some worthwhile results. That being said, we need more. Some of the newer members need to chip in with stories, bios, photos, or whatever. Some of you long time members have yet to put pen to paper on behalf of keeping this thing going. John and I are about out of ideas. We may have to resort to doing a 4 pager, or only publishing two newsletters a year. I guess we will know by what you do or don't send in, keep it going or let it die a slow death.

## FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA BAG

Gary "GD" Hall sent me this old Dungaree Chow Pass, I tried to use it on my wife for dinner last week, she said "no way sailor, get into to those dress blues" Like that's gonna happen. Gary also sent along the







The paths of glory lead but to the scrapheap: The aircraft carrier Franklin D. Roosevelt undergoes dismantling in Kearny, N.J. Inset shows the great ship as she once sailed the Mediterranean.

# The Junkyard for Proud Old Ladies

by Robert G. Deindorfer

**H**ow do you get rid of an aircraft carrier? Not just any old carrier, but something the size of the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt—979 feet long, 238 feet wide at the flight deck, total weight 51,000 tons—when it finally comes time to retire the famous ship.

You don't leave it out with the garbage for the sanitation crew; you don't shove it in the backyard for the kids to play with; you emphatically do not ask the odd-job man to come around with his pickup truck.

What you do if you're the United States government is to put it up for competitive bidding in hopes that someone like the River Terminal Development Company, whose corporate headquarters are in New York, will pay just over \$2.1 million for the property, as happened earlier this year.

And if you're River Terminal you will systematically burn, slice and shear the ship into enough marketable scrap steel to recover that walloping initial investment—and then some. Chances are this is exactly what will happen. After all, while officials are understandably discreet about estimating future bottom-line profits, River Terminal has obviously done

well with its shipwreck venture, else more than 700 ships ranging from small tugs to giant carriers wouldn't have been bought strictly for scrap since 1958.

Anyone who might wonder why these specialists are especially fond of buying old aircraft carriers—they previously scrapped the Wasp and the Essex, the Boxer, the Antietam and the Enterprise—overlooks an elementary fact. Because they're generally bigger, carriers generally yield more steel and other nonferrous metals.

## Cost \$90 million

For a while it looked as if the Roosevelt, launched in 1945 at a cost of \$90 million, might not go the way of so many obsolete carriers. A New York group made loud noises about acquiring it as a memorial museum without ever rolling up the necessary capital. In their view, a colorful ship that had rounded Cape Horn, sailed the Mediterranean during the Greek civil war and the Suez crisis of 1956, participated in major NATO fleet exercises with its 75 aircraft and crew of more than 4000 deserved something better than being melted down for another incarnation as tire irons, stove lids and

lawn mowers. Although it never fired a gun in battle, the Roosevelt was a pivotal ship in the Cold War.

Despite its history, however, the people at River Terminal tend to take a more prosaic approach to the ship. They see it as a mountain of scrap steel, approximately 42,000 tons at anywhere from \$60 to \$85 the ton. However, the mountain had to be moved a distance first.

Workers could hardly get started feeding the Roosevelt into the giant shearing machine while it was moored at the Navy yard in Norfolk, Va. It took two days and cost an estimated \$50,000 for four seagoing tugs to bring it up the coast.

Up the grimy Hackensack River she came, eased along by other tugs, nearly a fifth of a mile long—her gray bulk lighted in sunshine, the guns, radar and other classified gear already stripped off, a valiant old U.S. warship bound for oblivion.

At the River Terminal sprawl in Kearny, N.J., employees went into a familiar routine when the Roosevelt arrived. They lashed her up against the southwest basin pier, ran buoyancy tests to make sure she would stay in equilibrium during the scrapping,

humped two enormous heavy-duty cranes alongside. But a bittersweet ritual still remained before the crew of "burners" could scramble up into the superstructure with their acetylene torches.

Predictably, Americans who had pulled a tour on the Roosevelt at one time or another set up a barrage of phone calls and correspondence. Their inquiries ran to an echoing pattern. They wondered whether they could come have a last lingering look.

For the first time ever River Terminal officials, who had experienced similar requests in the cases of other major ships, scheduled a special Visitors' Night to accommodate the heavy inbound traffic. Veterans converged on the pier from as far away as Indiana, Ohio and West Virginia.

"It was sad, some of it," recalls Bill McNellis, a big, hearty ex-infantryman who functions as assistant general manager. "I remember one man, tall and thin, in his middle years, all by himself, just staring, staring at the ship. For a moment it looked like he might have been crying."

Almost as predictably, a number of those visitors wanted something more tangible than their own personal recollections. Many asked for a length of hose, a coffee mug, a chair, a piece of locker, portholes and even the ship's bell, almost anything provided it was part of the doomed carrier.

After the hullabaloo of the special Visitors' Night, after a series of newspaper and television visits, after a last round of meetings with work crews, the trick of making the Roosevelt vanish commenced. Burners wearing protective hoods climbed up into the ship, turned on their torches, cut long fissures through the steel plate.

By the time the job is finished, more than the 42,000 tons of scrap steel will have been peddled. Brass, copper and other nonferrous metals, stoves, refrigerators, baking ovens, generators and boilers will all be marketed for whatever they can fetch. Prudent, profit-oriented River Terminal executives are like the old Chicago meat packer who boasted of selling every part of the pig except its squeal.

Sometime next year, when only the hull remains, what's left of the old carrier will be towed to a trashy beaching area on the east end of the yard. Six-inch cables will be strung round the cadaver, powerful engines ashore will tighten the cables as the tide in the Hackensack River rises.

Eventually the last of the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt will disappear, winched onto the beaching area with the tide, burned off in sections, winched and burned again and again, until nothing more remains, a ship henceforth enshrined only in the high seas of the memory.

u/a/78



## OLD NEWS

The following article was sent to me by Bob Parker, I hope you can read the small type.

1957?

# Tire Blast Kills 1, Injures 2 At NAS

Feb. 11

A young airman apprentice was killed and two other sailors were injured when an aircraft tire exploded at Cecil Field yesterday.

Floyd D. Dawe, 19, of 2581 Post St., was the victim of a tire blow-out while he was dismantling the wheel of an F7U "Cutlass" jet fighter, the Navy disclosed today. Dawe was pronounced dead at 1:30 p.m. yesterday, about 20 minutes after the tire, containing approximately 275 pounds pressure, exploded.

Sam Pratt, 19-year-old airman of Campiti, La., is in the Navy Hospital with a possible fractured pelvis as a result of the explosion. Sustaining minor injuries was Robert G. Parker, ADAN, of Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dawe was attached, along with Parker, to Fighter Squadron 12 at Cecil Field while Pratt is a member of FASRON 9, where the accident occurred.

Dawe, who was married on Jan. 6, is survived by his wife, Delva, in addition to members of his family in his home town of Logan, Kan.

and here is an old photo of young ADAN Parker.



## ARMED FORCES FOR SENIORS

I'm over 60 now and the Armed Forces say I'm too old to track down terrorists. You can't be older than 35 to join the military. They've got the whole thing backwards. Instead of sending 18-year-olds off to fight, they ought to take us old guys. You shouldn't be able to join until you're at least 35. For starters: **SEX:** Researchers say 18-year-olds think about sex every 10 seconds.

Old guys only think about sex a couple of times a day, leaving us more than 28,000 additional seconds per day to concentrate on the enemy.

**CRANKINESS:** Young guys haven't lived long enough to be cranky. A cranky soldier is a dangerous soldier. If we can't kill the enemy we'll complain them into submission. "My back hurts!" "I'm hungry!" "Where's the remote control?"

**DRINKING:** An 18-year-old hasn't had a legal beer yet and you shouldn't go to war until you're at least old enough to legally drink. An average old guy, on the other hand, has consumed 126,000 gallons of beer by the time he's 35 and a jaunt through the desert heat with a backpack and M-60 would do wonders for the old beer belly.

**EARLY RISERS:** An 18-year-old doesn't like to get up before 10 a.m. Old guys get up early every morning to pee.

**SECURITY:** If old guys are captured we couldn't spill the beans because we'd probably forget where we put them. In fact, name, rank, and serial number would be a real brainteaser.

**BOOT CAMP:** Boot camp would actually be easier for old guys. We're used to getting screamed and yelled at and we actually like soft food. We've also developed a deep appreciation for guns and rifles. We like them almost better than naps. They could lighten up on the obstacle course however. I've been in combat and I didn't see a single 20-foot wall with rope hanging over the side, nor did I ever do any pushups after completing basic training. I can hear the Drill Sergeant now, "Get down and give me...er...one." And the running part is kind of a waste of energy. I've never seen anyone outrun a bullet.

**FUTURE PROSPECTS:** An 18-year-old has the whole world ahead of him. He's still learning to shave, to actually carry on a conversation, and to wear pants without the top of his butt crack showing and his boxer shorts sticking out. He's still hasn't



figured out that a pierced tongue catches food particles, and that a 400-watt speaker in the back seat of a Honda Accord can rupture an eardrum. All great reasons to keep our sons at home to learn a little more about life before sending them off to possible death. Let us old guys track down those dirty rotten cowards who attacked our hearts on September 11. The last thing the enemy would want to see right now is a couple of million old farts with attitudes. From John Larch 76-79

your stand on dues, send me an email and I'll let you know. Thanks. Dues will remain at \$12.00 for the coming year.

## FLY YOUR COLORS

Jerry Schwartz from Philly PA has joined many of us with his vanity plates.



Also B.J. Smith from Phoenix, AZ shows off his new Auto License.



## NEW MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

Chief George Case served in VA12 in the mid 70's and has been sending me some interesting stuff. Here are a couple of photos from that time period.



VA-12 1976 Chiefs Initiation taken at the Chiefs Club in Norfolk



## 2011 DUES

For those of you that may owe dues, please submit for 2011 dues in January. If you don't know where

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