



ATKRON 12 NEWSLETTER



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UBANGI?

UBETCHA!

The VA-12 Flying Ubangi Memorial Association

Publishing a Quarterly Newsletter
Conducting Bi-Annual Reunions
Fostering the search for all VA-12 Alumni

Editors: Joe Kyle & (John Larch this issue)

Reunion 2008

The ballots have been cast, and the results are now final. **Chattanooga, TN** will be the site of our 2008 VA12 Reunion.

Information regarding dates, accommodations, and activities will be published in the upcoming issues of the 2007 Newsletters.

The voting was pretty close. There were total of 31 Ballots received. Chattanooga's average priority vote was 1.84. Mystic, CT 's average priority vote was 2.0. Chicago's average priority vote was 2.73 and Portland's average priority vote was 3.05.

Thanks to all that voted, and especially Bob Fossum, Jon Sutherland, and John Larch for their efforts in planning for the reunion to be held in their city.

Bill (PigPen) Heck will act as our man on the ground for the reunion in Chattanooga and I am sure he will do a fine job.

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TREASURY REPORT

Previous Balance	\$499.48
Dues/Donation since last report	\$697.00
Sub Total	\$1196.48
Stamps	\$40.95
Envelopes	\$20.87
Printing (estimated)	\$163.82
Current Expenses	-\$225.64
New Balance	\$970.84

VA-12 Association Members

Here are our newest members since the last newsletter.

Jim Heiland	62-66
Ted Pugh	49-51

An interesting tidbit here is that Ted Pugh served in VA-12 when it was VF-12, making him the person serving before anyone else in our organization.

REMEMBERING AIRDALE BARS

Airdales always stuck together. They worked and played as a crew and they gravitated to places where they could be with fellow aircrewmembers, in locations where people who could tolerate the obnoxious conduct, impure verbiage and rollicking nonsense that was the standard by which the aircrew were measured. Their hallmark, so to speak. The airdale bar was unlike other naval watering holes and dens of iniquity inhabited by seagoing elements. It had to meet strict standards to be

in compliance with the acceptable requirement for an airborne sailor beer-swilling dump.

Loudmouth Barmaid

The first and foremost requirement was a crusty old gal serving suds. She had to be able to wrestle King Kong to parade rest. Be able to balance a tray with one hand, knock bluejackets out of the way with the other hand and skillfully navigate through a roomful of milling around drunks. On slow nights, she had to be the kind of gal who would give you a back scratch with a fly swatter handle or put her foot on the table so you could admire her new ankle bracelet some AE brought her back from a Hong Kong liberty.

A good barmaid had to be able to whisper sweet nothings in your ear like, "Sailor, your thirteen button flap is twelve buttons short of a green board." And, "Buy a pack of Clorets and chew up the whole thing before you get within heaving range of any gal you ever want to see again." And, "Hey animals, I know we have a crowd tonight, but if any of you guys find the head facilities fully occupied and start urinating down the floor drain, you're gonna find yourself scrubbing the deck with your white hats!"

They had to be able to admire great tattoos, look at pictures of ugly bucktooth kids and smile. Be able to help haul drunks to cabs and comfort 19 year-olds who had lost someone close to them. They could look at your ship's identification shoulder tab and tell you the names of the Skippers back to the time you were a Cub Scout.

If you came in after a late night maintenance problem and fell asleep with a half eaten Slim-Jim in your hand, they tucked your peacoat around you, put out the cigarette you left burning in the ashtray and replaced the warm draft you left sitting on the table with a cold one when you woke up. Why? Simply because they were one of the few people on the face of the earth that knew what you did, and appreciated what you were doing. And if you treated them like a decent human being and didn't drive 'em nuts by playing songs they hated on the juke box, they would lean over the back of the booth and park their soft warm boobs on your neck when they sat two Rolling Rocks in front of you.

Imported table wipe down guy and glass washer, trash dumper, deck swabber and paper towel replacement officer.

The guy had to have baggy tweed pants and a gold tooth and a grin like a 1950 Buick. And a name like "Ramon", "Juan", "Pedro" or "Tico". He had to smoke unfiltered Luckies, Camels or Raleighs. He wiped the tables down with a sour washrag that smelled like a skunk diaper and said, "How are choo navee mans tonight? He was the indispensable man. The guy with credentials that allowed him to borrow Slim-Jims, Beer

Nuts and pickled hard boiled eggs from other beer joints when they ran out where he worked.

The establishment itself

The place had to have walls covered with ships and squadron plaques. Many of the ships and the airplanes shown in the accompanying photographs had made the trip up the river to the scrap yard or to the Davis-Monthan bone yard ten years before you enlisted. The walls were adorned with enlarged airwing patches and the dates of previous deployments A dozen or more old, yellowed photographs of fellows named "Buster", "Chicago", "P-Boat Barney", "Flaming Hooker Harry", "Malone", "Honshu Harry", Jackson, and Capt. Slade Cutter decorated any unused space.

Signs

It had to have the obligatory Michelob, Pabst Blue Ribbon and "Beer Nuts sold here" neon signs. An eight-ball mystery beer tap handle and signs reading:

"Your mother does not work here so clean away your dam trash."
"Hands off the barmaid."
"Don't throw butts in urinal."
"Barmaid's word final in settling bets."
"Take your fights out in the alley."
"Owner reserves the right to waltz your worthless ass out to the sidewalk."
"Shipmates are responsible for riding herd on their squadron drunks." Typical signage found in classy establishments catering to sophisticated clientele.

Juke Box

You had to have a juke box built along the lines of a Sherman tank loaded with Hank Williams, Mother Maybelle Carter, Johnny Horton, Johnny Cash and twenty other crooning goobers nobody ever heard of. The damn thing has to have "La Bamba", Herb Alpert's "Lonely Bull" and Johnny Cash's "Don't take your guns to town" in memory of Alameda's barmaid goddess, Thelma. If Thelma is within a twelve-mile radius of where any of those three recordings can be found on a juke box, it is wise to have a stack of life insurance applications within reach of the coin slot.

Furniture

The furniture in a real good airdale bar had to be made from coal mine shoring lumber and was not fully acceptable until it had 600 cigarette burns and your carrier's ship numbers carved into it. The bar had to have a brass foot rail and at least six Slim-Jim containers, an oversized glass cookie jar full of Beer-Nuts, a jar of pickled hard boiled eggs that could produce rectal gas emissions that could shut down a sorority party, and big glass containers full of something called pickled pigs feet and Polish sausage. Only drunk Chiefs and starving Ethiopians ate pickled pigs feet and unless the last three feet of your colon had been

manufactured by Midas, you didn't want to get any where near the Polish napalm dogs.

Extras

No aircrew bar was complete without a couple of hundred faded airplane pictures and a "Shut the hell up!" sign taped on the mirror behind the bar along with several rather tasteless nekkit lady pictures. The pool table felt had to have at least three strategic rips as a result of drunken competitors and balls that looked as if a gorilla baby had teethed on the sonuvabitches.

Aircrew bars were home, but they were also establishments where 19 year-old kids received an education available nowhere else on earth. You learned how to "tell" and "listen" to sea stories. You learned about sex at \$25.00 a lesson from professional ladies who taught you things your high school biology teacher didn't know were anatomically possible. You learned how to make a two cushion shot and how to toss down a beer and shot known as a "depth charge."

We were young, a helluva long way from home. We were pulling down slave wages for twenty-four hours a

day, seven days a-week availability and loving the life we lived. We didn't know it at the time, but our association with the men we served with forged us into the men we became. And a lot of that association took place in Naval Aviation oriented bars where we shared the stories accumulated in our, up to then, short lives. We learned about women and that life could be tough on a gal.

While many of our classmates were attending college, we were getting an education slicing through the green rolling seas in WestPac, experiencing the orgasmic rush of a night cat shot, the heart pounding drama of the return to the ship with the gut wrenching arrestment to a pitching deck. The hours of tedium, boring holes in the sky late at night, experiencing the periodic discomfort of turbulence, marveling at the creation of St. Elmo's Fire, and sometimes having our reverie interrupted with stark terror.

But when we came ashore on liberty, we would rub shoulders with some of the finest men we would ever know, in bars our mothers would never have approved of. Saloons that would live in our memories forever.



Check out the A-4 Skyhawk. See anything familiar?

CVA-42 Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 1966.

CHOW LINE – IN THE DAY

Here is the official Navy recipe for Creamed Minced Beef on Toast. This ought to bring back a memory or two, hey?

Yield: 100 Servings

Ingredients:

- 30 lb Ground beef
- 3 lb Onions chopped med.
- 2 lb Flour hard
- 1 lb Shortening (optional)
- 19 lb Tomatoes canned chopped
- 1 oz Nutmeg (or Mace)
- 1/2 ga Water

Instructions:

Brown off the beef and onions in a medium copper.

Salt and pepper to taste

Incorporate flour to make a roux.

Cook stirring with paddle for 7 minutes to lose starch taste.

Add shortening only if needed.

Add remaining ingredients.

Adjust consistency and taste as necessary.

Ladle over toast.

Source: USN Recipe Card M-131.

THE 5 MOST DANGEROUS THINGS YOU EVER HEARD IN THE NAVY

A Seaman saying **I LEARNED THIS IN BOOT CAMP**
A Petty Officer saying **TRUST ME SIR**
A Lieutenant JG saying **BASED ON MY EXPERIENCE**
A Lieutenant saying **I WAS JUST THINKING**
A Chief Chucking **WATCH THIS SHIT**

Editor's Contact Info

Joe Kyle 10421 Barbara, Pinckney MI 48169
Home (734) 878-0556
Work (517) 546-8791
Cell (810) 923-4426
John Larch 4689 Future DR NE, Salem OR 97305
Home (503) 362-3550

CHOW LINE 2007

The other recipe feeds 100, and is offered as a history lesson. But if anyone is actually carrying a fond memory of that ... chow line repast ... then here is a more reasonable version that feeds 6.

U.S. NAVY STYLE - S.O.S. (MINCED BEEF)

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 med. onion, chopped
- 1/4 c. celery, minced
- 2 tbsp. flour
- 1 (20 oz.) can tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1 c. water
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1/8 tsp. nutmeg

Brown beef, onion, celery; add flour. Mix thoroughly. Add tomatoes, salt, pepper and water, sauce and nutmeg. Simmer 1/2 hour. Serve over crisp toast. Serves 6.

AT THE VETERANS' BAR

Four retired veterans are walking down the street. When they see a sign says "Veterans' Bar," they go in. The bartender asks for their order and they all ask for a martini. He delivers the drinks and says, "That will be 40 cents."

They can't believe their good luck. They finish the drinks and order another round, and the bartender again says, "That will be 40 cents." This is when their curiosity gets the better of them, so one asks the bartender, "How can you afford to serve martinis for a dime apiece?"

The bartender replies, "I guess you've seen the decor here. Well, I am a retired Navy Chief and I always wanted to own a bar. Last year I hit the lottery for \$45 million and decided to open this place for real veterans. Every drink costs a dime -- wine, liquor, beer all the same."

They notice four guys at the end of the bar who haven't ordered anything.

They ask, "What's with them?" The bartender says, "Oh, those are retired Marine Gunnys ... They're waiting for happy hour."

NEW SQUADRON NEW CARRIER

It's interesting to dig into the early history of the unit that later became VA-12.

The **NEW SQUADRON** "Fighter Bomber Squadron VBF-4" was established in May, 1945. Records show that the squadron was given a motley assortment of four different types of aircraft.



F6F-3 Hellcat



FG-1D Corsair
(An early 3-blade Corsair made by Goodyear.)



F4U-1D Corsair
(An early 30-blade Corsair made by Vought)



F4U-4 Corsair

The squadron was "stood up" at NAS Alameda and then unceremoniously bounced around to:

- NAAS Watsonville (about 100 miles south of NAS Alameda) on May 21
- NAS Wildwood (near Cape May, New Jersey) on July 9
- NAAS Groton (Groton, Connecticut) on September 9.

By the time they had arrived at NAS Groton, they had been granted the luxury of carrying only one aircraft in their inventory, the F4U-4 Corsair.

The **NEW CARRIER** part of the story is that CV-40 Tarawa was commissioned on 8 December 1945.

CLASS	Ticonderoga (Long-Hull Essex)
DISPLACEMENT	27,100 Tons
LENGTH	888 Feet
SHAFT HORSEPOWER	150,000
SPEED	33 Knots
CREW	3,448
BUILDERS	Norfolk Navy Yard



U. S. S. TARAWA CV-40

Tarawa remained in the Norfolk area until mid-February 1946, when she sailed for shakedown training in the vicinity of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and returned briefly to Norfolk in April, before visiting New York in the latter part of the month. She arrived at Norfolk once again on the 30th. From then until late June, the warship completed her post-shakedown overhaul.

On 28 June, she exited Hampton Roads bound for the west coast. VBF-4 was embarked on the vessel by this time as part of Air Wing CVG-4. Tarawa transited the Panama Canal early in July and reached San Diego on 15 July 1946.

On August 1, Tarawa and VBF-4 embarked on a West Pac cruise that lasted until late April 1947.

I AM THE AMERICAN SAILOR

(Following below, the text of a letter found on the steps leading to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier)

I Am the American Sailor -

Hear my voice, America! Though I speak through the mist of 200 years, my shout for freedom will echo through liberty's halls for many centuries to come.

Hear me speak, for my words are of truth and justice, and the rights of man. For those ideals, I have spilled my blood upon the world's troubled waters.

Listen well, for my time is eternal - yours is but a moment.

I am the spirit of heroes past and future. I am the American Sailor. I was born upon the icy shores at Plymouth, rocked upon the waves of the Atlantic, and nursed in the wilderness of Virginia.

I cut my teeth on New England codfish, and I was clothed in southern cotton.

I built muscle at the halyards of New Bedford whalers, and I gained my sea legs high atop the mizzen of Yankee clipper ships.

Yes, I am the American Sailor, one of the greatest seamen the world has ever known.

The sea is my home and my words are tempered by the sound of paddle wheels on the Mississippi, and

the song of whales off Greenland's barren shore. My eyes have grown dim from the glare of sunshine on blue water, and my heart is full of star-strewn nights under the Southern Cross.

My hands are raw from winter storms while sailing-down around the Horn, and they are blistered from the heat of cannon broadsides while defending our nation.

I am the American Sailor, and I have seen the sunset of a thousand distant, lonely lands.

I am the American Sailor.

It was I who stood tall beside John Paul Jones as he shouted, "I have not yet begun to fight!"

I fought upon Lake Erie with Perry, and I rode with Stephen Decatur into Tripoli harbor to burn the Philadelphia.

I met Guerriere aboard Constitution, and I was lashed to the mast with Admiral Farragut at Mobile Bay.

I have heard the clang of Confederate shot against the sides of Monitor.

I have suffered the cold with Peary at the North Pole, and I responded when Dewy said, "You may fire when ready Gridley," at Manila Bay.

It was I who transported supplies through submarine infested waters when our soldier's were called "over there".

I was there as Admiral Byrd crossed the South Pole.

It was I who went-down with the Arizona at Pearl Harbor, who supported our troops at Inchon, and patrolled the dark deadly waters of the Mekong Delta.

I am the American Sailor, and I wear many faces. I am a pilot soaring across God's blue canopy, and I am a Seabee atop a dusty bulldozer in the South Pacific.

I am a corpsman nursing the wounded in the jungle, and I am a torpedoman in the Nautilus deep beneath the North Pole.

I am hard and I am strong.

But it was my eyes that filled with tears when my brother went-down with the Thresher, and it was my heart that rejoiced when Commander Shepherd rocketed into orbit above the earth.

It was I who languished in a Viet Cong prison camp,
and it was I who walked upon the moon.

It was I who saved the Stark, and the Samuel B.
Roberts in the mine infested waters of the Persian
Gulf.

It was I who pulled my brothers from the smoke
filled compartments of the Bonfish, and wept when
my shipmates died on the Iowa, and White Plains.

When called again, I was there, on the tip of the
spear for Operation Desert Shield, and Desert Storm.

I am the American Sailor.

I am woman, I am man, I am white and black, yellow,
red and brown. I am Jew, Muslim, Christian, and
Buddhist. I am Irish, Filipino, African, French,
Chinese, and Indian.

And my standard is the outstretched hand of Liberty.

Today, I serve around the world; on land, in air, on
and under the sea. I serve proudly, at peace once
again, but with the fervent prayer that I need not be
called again.

Tell your children of me.

Tell them of my sacrifice, and how my spirit soars
above their country.

I have spread the mantle of my nation over the
ocean, and I will guard her forever. I am her heritage,
and yours.

I am the American Sailor.

(Not Signed)

Photo # USN 1120428 USS Franklin D. Roosevelt underway in the Gulf of Tonkin, October 1966



SHOW YOUR COLORS

Terry Nies's Car

