



# ATKRON 12

## NEWSLETTER

### PLAN OF THE DAY



Flying Ubangis in right echelon formation

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September 2006

**UBANGI?**

**UBETCHA!**

The VA-12 Flying Ubangi Memorial Association

Editors Joe Kyle  
& (John Larch)

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

## 2008 REUNION

So, anyone interested in another Ubangi reunion? I believe it may be time to start thinking about it, and flushing out some concrete ideas. I have heard from many of you and appreciate your thoughts about possible locations.

Most of you know that it takes a bit of planning and in the past I have tried to start that about a year ahead of time. The first step will be finding a good location, when that is decided we can move on to the smaller details. I have told you all, at one time or another, that I love doing the planning thing, for me it is almost as much fun as the actual event. So, I will continue to do this until the group decides that my services are no longer valuable or needed. I have enjoyed the past two reunions in Florida, but to be honest I do not want to go back there again in 2008, (maybe 2010 if you twist my arm). The state has a lot to offer, I will not argue with anyone about that fact, but it is the only vacation I get, and I'd like to see some other parts of the country.

In addition, having a "man on the ground" proved to be invaluable with our 2006 Event. Bob Brooks was my eyes and ears, and he did a hellava job for us. I am seeking someone to do the same for 2008. If you are willing to help out, please call, email, or write me as soon as you can. You should live within 50 miles of the location that you are suggesting. Hopefully more than one person will propose a site, so that the rest of us will have the opportunity to vote on the spot. If I have obtained a volunteer (or volunteers) by November, I will send out ballots with the December Newsletter. If not, I will send them out with the March Newsletter. I will wait as long as it takes to get at least one volunteer. At that point we move forward toward the next reunion, be it in 2008 or later. Keep in mind, our next reunion does not have to be in April, depending upon where we go, we

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could move it more toward summer or even fall. I'm just saying don't feel restricted by the spring months. I hope all of you will plan on attending, no matter where we end up going. If this works out, it will be the format that I would like to use for all future reunions.

Joe Kyle 66-68

### North Carolina Man Enlists in Navy

51 years ago, Mr. Herman James of North Carolina enlisted in the Navy.

On the **first day** of boot camp, the Navy issued him a comb. That afternoon the Navy barber shaved off all his hair.

On the **second day**, the Navy issued him a toothbrush and later in the day the Navy dentist pulled 7 teeth.

On the **third day**, the Navy issued Harold a jock strap.

Military authorities have been looking for Mr. James for 51 years.

## MEMORIES

It was in April 1968, when I was fresh out of A-4C Skyhawk training with VA-44, that I joined the Ubangis of VA-12 aboard USS FDR (CVA-42), during a port visit to Genoa, Italy.

My first ten flights, both section (2-plane) and division (4-plane), during the subsequent at-sea period in April all went well, as I learned how to fit in as one of the nineteen pilots in a real, no-shit fleet squadron.

Then came my hop on 1 May in BUNO 148591. Maybe I was thinking about that party we had in Bill Murray's room the night before. (Up until that cruise, I'd totally bought into the "dry Navy" thing.) Maybe I was thinking about my bride back in Florida. Maybe I was thinking about what I was going to have for supper that night. I don't know. Maybe I just had my head up my ass.

Anyway, the bottom line was this: Upon returning to the ship, I didn't get aboard on my first pass. Or my third. Or my seventh. I trapped on my ELEVENTH pass. Talk about ground hog day. It was like some kind of aviator's worst nightmare "perfect storm". But I couldn't believe I was the star of the show! It wasn't like it was a rainy day with rough seas. Blue sky, sunshine, and smooth as glass. How could this be happening to ME?

In a nutshell, I boltered 4 times, had two technique wave-offs (for being too high), two foul-deck wave-offs, one cut-out-of-the-pattern by a Phantom, and one cut-out-of-the-pattern by a Fudd (that's how late I was in the landing order.....only the SAR helo landed after I did.) During all of this, my attention was directed by the Air Boss to the KA-3D Whale overhead for some JP not

once, but at least twice, and possibly three times (not sure, early Alzheimers').

Of course, all the while the Captain is steaming into the wind wondering when in God's name this nugget is going to get aboard so he can turn back downwind. When I finally trapped, the Boss said, "Clincher 404, Riptide tower. Welcome aboard." I could just see all those guys in the ready room watching me on the PLAT throughout this ordeal, laughing their asses off.

Thankfully, none of the guys in the line crew said a peep to me as I climbed down the ladder. (I think they knew Lt(jg) Brooks was going to be relieving Ray Clary as line division officer when we got back to Cecil.)

In my infinite wisdom I decided that I couldn't go back to the ready room, so I went to my stateroom, helmet, g-suit, torso harness, navbag & all and just sat there on my bunk thinking about my situation. For about six minutes. Then the 3-digit phone rang. It was the skipper (who I nowadays know as Obie). He said, "Bobby, you know you're gonna' have to come on down here and face the music sooner or later, so why don't you just come on down and get it over with?" Yes, Sir, Skipper. (See, I desperately needed that direction in my life at that particular point.) The raggin' from all those guys, Dan Gholson, Lou Pullen, Lenny Meyer, Doug Haines, Chico Escobar, Larry Elberfeld, Dave Swanson, and on and on, was not pleasant, but tolerable, and I just came to assume that I had set some kind of record for being the klutsiest nugget in the history of light attack. Later I would learn most of them had their own "bad day" stories. But after that day, I was never Bob anymore. I was Bolter.

Bob Brooks

## VA-12 ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Here are names of those who have joined our ranks since the last newsletter.

Ray Clary	68-69
Steve Booher	77-80

## THE MUSTANG PILOT

Old aviators and old airplanes never die... they just fly off into eternity.

This is a good little story about a vivid memory of a P-51 and its pilot by a fellow when he was 12 years old in Canada in 1967. Some of you may know a few others who would appreciate it.

It was noon on a Sunday as I recall, the day a Mustang P-51 was to take to the air. They said it had flown in

during the night from some US airport, the pilot had been tired.

I marveled at the size of the plane dwarfing the Pipers and Canucks tied down by her. It was much larger than in the movies. She glistened in the sun like a bulwark of security from days gone by.

The pilot arrived by cab, paid the driver, then stepped into the flight lounge. He was an older man, his wavy hair was gray and tossed, and looked like it might have been combed, say, around the turn of the century. His flight jacket was checked, creased, and worn - it smelled old and genuine. Old Glory was prominently sewn to its shoulders. He

projected a quiet air of proficiency and pride devoid of arrogance. He filed a quick flight plan to Montreal (Expo-67, Air Show) then walked across the tarmac.

After taking several minutes to perform his walk-around check the pilot returned to the flight lounge to ask if anyone would be available to stand by with fire extinguishers while he "flashed the old bird up . . . just to be safe." Though only 12 at the time I was allowed to stand by with an extinguisher after brief instruction on its use -- "If you see a fire, point, then pull this lever!" I later became a firefighter, but that's another story.

The air around the exhaust manifolds shimmered like a mirror from fuel fumes as the huge prop started to rotate. One manifold, then another, and yet another barked -- I stepped back with the others. In moments the Packard-built Merlin engine came to life with a thunderous roar, blue flames knifed from her manifolds. I looked at the others' faces, there was no concern. I lowered the bell of my extinguisher. One of the guys signaled to walk back to the lounge. We did.

Several minutes later we could hear the pilot doing his pre flight run-up. He'd taxied to the end of runway 19, out of sight. All went quiet for several seconds, we raced from the lounge to the second story deck to see if we could catch a glimpse of the P-51 as she started down the runway. We could not. There we stood, eyes fixed to a spot half way down 19. Then a roar ripped across the field, much louder than before, like a furious hell spawn set loose---something mighty this way was coming.

"Listen to that thing!" Said the controller. In seconds the Mustang burst into our line of sight. It's tail was already off and it was moving faster than anything I'd ever seen by that point on 19. Two thirds the way down 19 the Mustang was airborne with her gear going up. The prop tips were supersonic; we clasped our ears as the Mustang climbed hellish fast into the circuit to be eaten up by the dog-day haze.

We stood for a few moments in stunned silence trying to digest what we'd just seen. The radio controller rushed by me to the radio. "Kingston tower calling Mustang?" He looked back to us as he waited for an acknowledgment.

The radio crackled, "Go ahead Kingston." "Roger Mustang. Kingston tower would like to advise the circuit is clear for a low level pass." I stood in shock because the controller had, more or less, just asked the pilot to return for an impromptu air show!

The controller looked at us. "What?" He asked. "I can't let that guy go without asking . . . I couldn't forgive myself!" The radio crackled once again, "Kingston, do I have permission for a low level pass, east to west, across the field?" "Roger Mustang, the circuit is clear for an east to

west pass." "Roger, Kingston, I'm coming out of 3000 feet, stand by." We rushed back onto the second-story deck, eyes fixed toward the eastern haze.

The sound was subtle at first, a high-pitched whine, a muffled screech, a distant scream. Moments later the P-51 burst through the haze, her airframe straining against positive Gs and gravity, wing tips spilling contrails of condensed air, prop-tips again supersonic as the burnished bird blasted across the eastern margin of the field shredding and tearing the air.

At about 400 mph and 150 yards from where we stood she passed with an old American pilot saluting. Imagine, a salute. I felt like laughing, I felt like crying, she glistened, she screamed, the building shook, my heart pounded... then the old pilot pulled her up... and rolled, and rolled, and rolled out of sight into the broken clouds and indelibly into my memory.

I've never wanted to be an American more than on that day. It was a time when many nations in the world looked to America as their big brother, a steady and even-handed beacon of security who navigated difficult political water with grace and style; not unlike the pilot who'd just flown into my memory. He was proud, not arrogant, humble, not a braggart, old and honest, projecting an aura of America at its best. That America will return one day, I know it will.

Until that time, I'll just send off a story; call it a reciprocal salute, to the old American pilot who wove a memory for a young Canadian that's stayed a lifetime.

**Jerry Walden 77-79**

## PLAN OF THE DAY

### Monday

08:00 Empty all garbage cans, sweep garage.

Buy a steel dumpster.  
Paint it gray inside and out.

12:00 Empty all garbage cans, sweep driveway.

Move the bed to within 6 inches of the  
dumpster lid, so that you can't turn over without  
getting out and back in.  
Move in for 6 months.

16:00 Empty all garbage cans, sweep patio.

## I LIKE IKE!

I know that there is a small group within the VA-12 community who have found great enjoyment in the so-called "hobby" of model-building. Well just take a look at VA-12 Alumnus Steve Booher's efforts below and you will see that this has progressed from hobby to craft, and even art. (There is a huge additional story here about how he made his own decals for all the CVW-7 aircraft. Including, most importantly, the VA-12 Flying Ubangis!)

The ship is CV-69 Dwight D. Eisenhower, and the era is 1979/80. If you want to see more of this work, visit [www.modelwarships.com](http://www.modelwarships.com) and select **Model Gallery - Aircraft Carriers**. Slide down the list until you see **1/350 USS Eisenhower CVN-69 By Steve Booher**.

In the scale 1/350th, IKE is about 38 to 39 inches long and most of the aircraft are around 1.5 inches.







Check out the Ubangi 6-pack amid-ships! 5 in a row plus one turning aft, looks like he's headed for Cat 3 or 4. That's Booher in Modex 405. Can't you just hear the AIR BOSS now?

***What are you dip-sticks doin' over there?***

***Get that freakin' damn S-3 outta the way of that Tomcat on CAT 3!***

***Take those 2 lead Ubangis and move them straight ahead 20 feet!***

***Get that S-3 into the hole they just made!***

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## NAVY BLUE

It's time to call up the local radio station in your area that would play a pop song from 1964. You will remember this the moment you hear it, even if your memory fails you right now.

### NAVY BLUE

Diane Renay, 1964

Blue, navy blue, I'm as blue as I can be  
'cause my steady boy said "Ship ahoy"  
And joined the Nay-ee-ay-vee

He said he wanted to settle down  
And let me be his girl  
But first he had to do a little travelin' around  
And see the whole wide world

That's why I'm ..  
Blue, navy blue, I'm as blue as I can be  
'cause my steady boy said "Ship ahoy"  
And joined the Nay-ee-ay-vee

I got a letter yesterday from Tokyo  
And a souvenir  
A walky-talky wind-up little China doll  
That says "Wish you were here"

Blue, navy blue, I'm as blue as I can be  
'cause my steady boy said "Ship ahoy"  
And joined the Nay-ee-ay-vee

He's comin' home to see me on a weekend pass  
A forty-eight hour day-ate  
That boat he's sailin' on just better get here fast  
'cause I can hardly wait

Till then I'm ..  
Blue, navy blue, I'm as blue as I can be  
'cause my steady boy said "Ship ahoy"  
And joined the Nay-ee-ay-vee

Blue, navy blue, I'm as blue as I can be  
Blue, navy blue, I'm as blue as I can be  
Blue, navy blue, I'm as blue as I can be  
Blue, navy blue, I'm as blue as I can be"

## THE CHIEF

One day, a Navy Chief went to the Officer's Club with his Captain to eat lunch. When they entered the main dining room, they found the place was quite crowded. But they did notice three Lieutenants sitting at a table with two empty chairs, so the Captain asked them if they could join the group already seated.

They promptly invited the pair to join them. Everyone ordered lunch and joined in conversation as they ate. At one point, the Chief mentioned that he had observed characteristics about many officers from which he could

determine the source of their commissioning.

The Lieutenants were eager to hear about this and asked if he could tell how each of them had been commissioned.

The Chief turned to the Lieutenant on his left and said he went through ROTC. The Lieutenant confirmed that was correct and asked how he had noted this. The Chief replied that the Lieutenant, through his conversation, seemed to have a strong academic background but limited military experience.

The Chief then told the Lieutenant on his right that he had gone through OCS with previous enlisted service. The Lieutenant confirmed that this was correct and also asked how he had determined this. The Chief said, again through his conversation, that the Lieutenant seemed to have a firm military background and a lot of common sense.

The Lieutenant across the table from the Chief asked if he had determined his source of commission. The Chief replied that the Lieutenant had graduated from the United States Naval Academy. The Lieutenant stated that was correct and asked if he had noticed his high level of intelligence, precise military bearing, or other superior qualities acquired at the United States Naval Academy.

The Chief replied that it was none of these that led to his determination. He had simply observed the Lieutenant's class ring while he was picking his nose.

You just can't take them Navy Chiefs anywhere.

## PLAN OF THE DAY

### Tuesday

08:00 Empty all garbage cans, sweep garage.

Throw the cat into the pool and shout "**MAN OVERBOARD, PORT SIDE!**"

Rate the family on how fast they respond.

12:00 Empty all garbage cans, sweep driveway.

Put your stereo headphones on your head but don't plug them in.

Hang a paper cup around your neck on a string.

Stand in front of the stove and speak into the paper cup "**Stove manned and ready.**"

After an hour or so, speak into the cup again "**Stove secured.**"

Roll up the headphones and paper cup, stow them in a shoebox.

## MONKEY BUSINESS

A diesel boat pulled into a foreign port, and put down maximum liberty.

The skeleton crew didn't notice that a chimpanzee, escaped from a nearby civilian transport, had swung across the mooring lines onto the main deck. The After Engine Room hatch was open, so down the ladder it went.

It came across a power panel opened up for maintenance. It couldn't read the warning signs, and with a bright blue blast, shorted out the ship's electrical system, and plunged the boat into darkness.

A little bit later, the Below Decks Watch and a Torpedoman wandered through with their flashlights, looking for the problem.

They came upon the blackened body of the chimp.

They shined their flashlights on its long, burnt arms.

They looked at each other.

They highlighted its short legs and odd feet.

They looked at each other again.

Finally, one of them said, "Well, it's too hairy to be a yeoman, the legs are too short for a Ship's Cook, and there would be more tattoos on an Electrician. Call the Wardroom, and see if the Duty Officer is missing."

### PLAN OF THE DAY

#### Wednesday

08:00 Empty all garbage cans, sweep garage.

#### APPLIANCE QUALIFICATION DAY

Make the family re-qualify to operate each appliance in the house; Dishwasher Operator, Blender Technician, Toaster Mate, etc.

12:00 Empty all garbage cans, sweep driveway.

Post a menu on the kitchen door informing the family that they are having steak for dinner.

16:00 Empty all garbage cans, sweep patio.

Make everyone in the family wait an hour for dinner. Then tell them you are out of steak, but they can have dried ham or hot dogs. Repeat daily until they ignore any menu and ask for hot dogs.

## VETERANS ADMIN LAPTOP CAPER

### PUBESCENT PERPS POPPED FOR PURLOINED PC

Here's the latest on the stolen laptop computer filled with Veterans information.

"Two 19 year old teenagers were arrested Saturday (August 5) in the burglary theft of a laptop and hard drive containing sensitive data on as many as 26.5 million veterans and military personnel.

The equipment was stolen May 3 during a burglary at the Maryland home of a Veterans Affairs employee. The laptop and hard drive were turned into the FBI on June 28 by an unidentified person in response to a \$50,000 reward offer.

The laptop contained the names, social security numbers and birthdays of veterans discharged since 1975."

Earlier reports from the FBI stated that they had evidence that the sensitive files on the laptop had not been accessed.

## PASSING THROUGH

A Navy officer was passing through the crew's quarters of his ship one day and happened upon a sailor reading a magazine with his feet propped up on the small table in front of him.

"Sailor! Do you put your feet up on the furniture at home?" the officer demanded.

"No sir, but we don't land planes on the roof either."

## TREASURY REPORT

<b>1. Previous Balance</b>		<b>\$1,135.84</b>
<b>2. Dues since last report</b>		<b>\$24.00</b>
<b>3. Sub Total</b>	<b>(1+2)</b>	<b>\$1,159.84</b>
<b>4. Printing</b>		<b>\$270.12</b>
<b>5. Postage</b>		<b>\$50.40</b>
<b>6. Envelopes</b>		<b>\$13.02</b>
<b>7. Current Expenses</b>	<b>(4+5+6)</b>	<b>\$333.52</b>
<b>8. New Balance</b>	<b>(3-7)</b>	<b>\$826.32</b>

been decommissioned since 1982 and now serves as a Naval Heritage and educational ship attraction.



The Ubangi Hilton Hotel, cleverly redecorated in 1977 to look like a Navy Barracks.



USS Turner Joy, DD-951



Two doors down from the Ubangi Hilton was the Enlisted Dining Facility. Shown in 1977. They actually served **Mystery Meat** once that I remember in 1978.

## FLOATING MUSEUM

My wife and I had a vacation coming but we didn't want to travel very far. So we stayed in the Northwest and on a mini-vacation to the Seattle area, we boarded a ferry that took an hour to get across the Sound, to Bremerton, which is the home of:

- Puget Sound Naval Shipyard
- Naval Station Bremerton
- The Port of Bremerton, in which we found the Floating Museum ship USS Turner Joy, DD-951.

USS Turner Joy was one of the two destroyers involved in the Gulf Of Tonkin Incident in 1964. The ship has

Boy Howdy, I want to tell you that the association operating the ship and keeping her up is performing a wonderful job. There are spaces today as clean as they ever were. We spent about 2 hours wandering around and my wife was duly impressed, she said that if she had been a boy (like that old Navy recruiting poster), she would have shipped out for destroyers and none of the bigger things like cruisers or carriers.

Well, this was a lot of nostalgia for a Navy vet, even though I served on carriers. But it was utterly fascinating for my wife, whom I married 6 years after I was discharged from active duty. She really got a kick out of it.

I think it would be worth it for almost every family to poke around and find a Navy Heritage museum ship in your neck of the woods.

I offer my encouragement for you to relive old times and expose the wife and kids - and grandkids - to the Navy and the life and duties of a sailor.

John Larch 76-79

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