

ATKRON 12 NEWSLETTER

SQUADRON LINEAGE

1946 VBF-4
1946 VF-2A
1948 VF-12
1955 VA-12

VA-12

PUBLISHED BY THE
VA-12 REUNION ASSOCIATION
See CONTACT INFO Page 8

ALL ARE WELCOME TO VISIT

THE FLYING UBANGIS

AT OUR WEBSITE WWW.VA12.COM



Mt. Hood, Oregon from the Red Lion river dock



Red Lion On the River, Jantzen Beach – Main Entrance



Red Lion On the River, Jantzen Beach – View from the Columbia River

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2017 REUNION

As you can see from the cover (Thanks John) we have an excellent location selected for our Reunion next July. We realize that it may be a longer travel destination for many, but believe it will be worth the trip, especially if you've never been to this part of the country and have always wanted to visit. John is busy coming up with an outstanding venue while we are in Portland. There will be more information and details posted on our webpage in the coming months. The registration form will be mailed/emailed separately as soon as we can nail down a few things. Registration is mandatory for anyone attending. You may make your reservations at the Hotel beginning now, the sooner you do this the better it will be for planning purposes.

Hoping to have a big turnout, so please consider joining us in the Great Northwest.

Joe Kyle 66-68

TREASURY REPORT

Previous Balance	\$596.66
Dues & Reunion Sales	412.00
Acct Interest	26.84
SUB TOTAL	\$1135.50
Stamps *	48.00
Printing *	235.01
Hotel Deposit	300.00
Admin Fees	3.00
CURRENT EXPENSES	\$586.01
NEW BALANCE	\$549.49

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Most of you know that for the last 15 years or so, my profession has been Human Resources or

Personnel for you old-schoolers. I mention this only to say that part of my job has been succession planning or how to replace people when they move on. With that in mind, I would like to find out if we have members that would be willing to step into one of 3 major roles of this organization if the need arises. At some point, John Larch, Terry Nies and myself may decide to give up our responsibilities, or nature may decide for us. It only makes sense to me that if we'd like our association to continue that we have people lined up to take over these functions.

John as most of us know as acted as an assistant to me in a number of ways for a long time now. But beyond that, he is more or less the Newsletter guru. We would hopefully find a person, or more than one, with some skills/experience in creating Newsletters to keep that going.

As for Terry, replacing him will be a little more technical. Terry has an engineering background with the kind of internet experience to be able to create and maintain our website.

As for my function, any monkey can do it. You just need to be able to deal with Hotel Sales people and write RFP's, read and sign contracts and herd cats.

I'd like to say there is no rush for finding these backups but somehow I'm really not in charge of those eventualities.

Please, please consider volunteering (I know, not a good word) for any of these positions and let me know because, all of us would certainly provide a crash course if time permits. As I said, none of us are planning on giving it up anytime soon, but it would be great if we could all have an XO ready to step up. Think about it.

Joe Kyle 66-68

2017 REUNION INFO & TIPS

Here are a few travel-related comments and bits for those of you who plan to travel to Portland in July 2017. I am aware that some may decide to arrive early – before Thursday, or to stay after Sunday – and my info applies to you as well.

CREDIT CARDS

My wife and I have travelled outside of our normal home region and a couple different times, before we learned our lesson well, we promptly got the credit cards we were attempting to use suspended. Hammered! And not days into a trip, either, but upon the very first use far away from home, while trying to purchase gasoline or other typical things. A sudden purchase hundreds or thousands of miles from home can look like an identity-theft fraud to the card company. Well, forget "CAN" look like fraud... to them it IS fraud until they know different.

A call to the credit card company got us "unlocked". This was not a quick process, we sent many long and inconvenient minutes on the cell phone. Most of this time was spent in the beep-beep-boop-boop digital menu trying to find a person to talk to. Once there, we had to identify ourselves in great detail before they would reset the lock-out.

You can easily avoid the whole fiasco if you spend the time and effort in advance of travel to identify the credit cards you anticipate using, call the number on the back of every credit card, and have them add on a travel note to the card to prevent a suspension of the card. The representatives typically ask what area(s) of the country you will be traveling to and in. We have repeatedly been told, do not call for this travel advisory too early, wait until a week or 10 days before the travel date.

AIR TRAVEL

I have flown cross-country to all our reunions, and several other times to visit friends and relatives who live far away. I have learned a few things over the years.

- Non-stop flights from Coast to Coast across the country are sort of a rarity, including to Portland, and most long flights are a 1-stop affair. There are plenty of 1-stop flights to Portland from anywhere. Please avoid those 2 or more stop flight plans. That represents trouble no one needs.
- When booking a 1-stop flight, it is wise to ensure that the layover is at least 1½ to 2 hours - **ATA MINIMUM!!!!**.
What does this do for you? It gives you...

- A. Time to absorb the most common flight delays, and
- B. Time enough to walk the 4 miles from your arrival gate A4 to the new departure gate you see is now Z36. Arghhhh!!!!

- There is a point when the price is the lowest it will be, and from that point the closer one gets to departure date, the price starts to go up. The same flight package you looked at 2 months ago, but now booked at the last minute will cost a GREAT DEAL MORE. Plus, at a late date there may not be any seat(s) on any flights you would like. Often, the last-minute flight plan has a ridiculously short layover that will never work out. I'm no expert, and would welcome the opinion of one, but I would presume the lowest price (and best seat availability!!!) is going to be 2-3 months prior to departure day.

- The airlines will never ever never never ever leave anything alone. They will always always change departure and arrival times for unfathomable reasons.

- It is thus unwise to purchase the ticket(s) and then just forget about the whole deal until the last minute. I have personally had 1-stop flight departures, arrivals, and layover times altered by the airline. ***in some cases, they never told me about the changes***, and I only knew because I was periodically checking at the place where I bought the ticket.

- Now this is no shit, Ubangis!: I have even ended up with a 1-stop flight package where the second leg departure (Denver to Orlando) ended up on a schedule to leave 12 minutes before I arrived from Portland. This was obviously not the original flight plan I had booked some ways in advance that had a 2 hr 15 minute layover.

Fortunately, I knew this was happening (because I was checking every so often!!!) and made enough other arrangements to deal with the aftermath.

CAR RENTAL

I am trying very hard to arrange for a fine time to be had by everyone.

- I have based my scheme on chartered



motor coach transport from the Hotel to venues on Friday and Saturday of our Reunion. Additionally, I have a nice jaunt to Downtown Portland for a couple capers, based on riding the Portland-Area Light Rail System, called the MAX Light Rail Line. We are going to use Hotel transport to get the troupe to the nearest Light Rail station that will then get us Downtown. (Bwa Ha Ha Ha! Senior All-Day Light Rail Pass, \$2.50.)

- My point is that between Hotel Transport, the Light Rail System, and chartered motor coach transport, you can very easily get by the whole time without renting a car at all.
- At Portland Airport "PDX", all the rental car company kiosks are available right close by the Baggage Pick Up area. It is thus supremely simple to get your car right there.
- Additionally, if you decide to rent a car later, the Hotel Transport will take you back to the Airport to pick up the car.
- PLEASE NOTE!!! Oregon does not allow self-serve gasoline sales, you have to have an attendant pump the juice and take payment. And the most typical gasoline brands out here are Union 76, Arco, Chevron/Texaco, Shell, Exxon/Mobil, and Costco.

John Larch 76-79



NAVAL AVIATION RATINGS

Aviation Structural Mechanic (AM)



Aviation Ordnanceman (AO)



Aviation Support Equipment Technician (AS)



Aviation Aircrewman (AW)



Aviation Maintenance Administrationman (AZ)



ON THE COVER Scenic View, Mt. Hood Oregon

A complex of three buildings at the Red Lion Hotel "On the River" at Jantzen Beach, forms a large open patio area that opens out to the Columbia River.

Standing in this area and looking East provides a view of a small marina associated with a condo complex next door. Looking past the marina, you can see the view eastward and Oregon's **MT. HOOD**, some 65 miles away in the distance. The Cascade Range mountain rises to 11,250 feet and is covered in perpetual snow which has formed into 12 named glaciers and snowfields.

The National Historic Landmark "Timberline Lodge" is sited at the 6,000 foot level.



The view of Mt. Hood from downtown Portland

(The 4,062 foot **LARCH MOUNTAIN** resides in the foothills generally west of the taller peak. Mostly though, it's really just a pimple on the cheek of the larger mountain.)

But of great interest to many is **MT. ST HELENS**, also in the Cascade Range, about 50 miles northeast of Portland. It's visible from many areas in Portland on a clear day. Portlanders see the South flank of the mountain. The massive blowout/debris avalanche occurred on the North face.



BEST HITS MEET 1972-73

There is some documentation on the Internet about a NATO-AIRSOUTH Weapons Meet competition that was held in 1972 and 1973.

The July 1972 event was held at Larissa AB in Greece. Various NATO, Italian, Turkish, Greek, and USAF-Europe units participated, along with the US Navy represented by the VA-15 Valions and the VA-87 Golden Warriors of Carrier Air Wing CVW-6, aboard CV-42 F.D. Roosevelt.

The July 1973 event was held at Istrana, Italy along with the same mix of NATO and Italian, Turkish, Greek, and USAF-Europe units. In this competition, the US Navy was represented by Carrier Air Wing CVW-7 units the VA-12 Flying Ubangis and the VA-66 Waldos. They were aboard CV-62 Independence at the time. The pics following are from the 1973 event.

The documentation of these events that I have been able to find so far consists more of photos than text or any list of competition results. I am sure there is more out there to be found.

However, Flying Ubangi alumnus Carl Ray informs us via Facebook:

"I was reading an article about my former CO, Cdr Tony Less. (*Cdr. Less was Squadron CO from June 1972 to October 1973. Ed.*) Through that, I learned something new about an event I was a part of. In 1973, a combined team of VA-12 and VA-66 took part in Best Hit '73 in Istrana, Italy. Cdr Less was the Captain of the American team against the Greeks, Turks and the Italians in this bombing completion. I was along as a plane captain. While our pilots won, we were actually a "guest" team so we could not be declared winners. What I did not know was that event was directly responsible for the sale of 50 A7s to the Greeks. Learn new stuff every day."

BEST HITS '73 PICS – VA-12 AIRCRAFT



More Red Lion Scenes





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