

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

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CLINCHER 406, SMILE FOR THE CAMERA AND SAY "I LIKE IKE!"

A7-E Corsair II, mid-1980's

Volume VIII, Issue 1 April 2009

UBANGI?

THE REAL DEAL



UBETCHA!

MAKE PLANS TO JOIN
US AT THE 2010 REUNION

THE EDITOR'S DESK: REUNION 2010

First of all I'd like to thank everyone that voted in the balloting for the 2010 location. I received 27 ballots and Orlando seemed to be the consensus choice. However..... Most of you know that we have been trying to raise enough money to get a VA-12 Memorial Plaque at the Navy Museum in Washington. It looks like that is finally going to happen. Due to some generous donations from several of you, we were able to send in the \$500 deposit and secure a spot for our plaque. The Museum will hold a special ceremony for us in honor of the Plaque being placed on the Commemorative Wall in the Museum.

My belief is that we will have the remaining funds required, by the early summer of next year. Therefore I am proposing that we hold the 2010 Reunion in DC and look forward to Orlando in 2012. I hope that no one is too disappointed about this change in venue. DC is a great place to visit and I don't think we should pass up the honor of our Ceremony. You will be receiving an email or a letter with more information regarding the Plaque.

VA12 ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

These are the names of our newest members that joined our ranks since the last newsletter.

Nick DiVittorio	70-72
Charlie Zimmerman	71-75

SEA STORY

One of the jobs here at school that filtered down to me is taking care of the office high speed copier. Awhile ago I was helping a visiting professor un-jam a transparency from the fuser rollers and asked where she was from. She said Jacksonville, I say Oh old trick JEOPARDY question, "What is the largest city in the USA by size?" Answer in the 60's and 70's Jacksonville. She says how did I know that? I proudly say "I was stationed at Cecil Field on and off for two and a half years." She says "you poor thing" and I laughed. They say you forget the bad things that happen to you over time and remember the good. Thinking back to months on the FDR, lucky me I was never on the Shangri-La, Cecil was like a warm summer breeze, a trip to Disneyland. Yes I do remember some chewy mystery meat but on the whole they tried hard. I remember their Sunday brunch; sometimes there really was steak and eggs for breakfast. I also have found memories of holding down the bar at the enlisted mans club. When I hear people young and old complain about little things in life, I think to myself you would be much happier today if you only had spent some time at sea.

Foot Notes:

Fuser rollers are just as hot as huffer hoses.

I remember the Jacksonville deal as the city was looking forward and the county was still fighting the Civil War so the city just took over everything.

From what I see things are going well for Jax.

FM Smith "ABH3 and proud of it man" 1966-1968

FLY YOUR COLORS

These are Tom Lannom's vehicles, way to go Fat Tom.



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TREASURY REPORT

We presently have 44 dues paying Association members, which is down from a couple of years ago. I know there are a fair number of you that have probably forgotten to send in your 2009 dues. Please do so soon as you can.

Previous Balance	\$136.62
Dues/Donations	468.00
SUB TOTAL	604.62
Stamps	75.00
Envelopes	12.50
Printing *	238.36
CURRENT EXPENSES	325.86
NEW BALANCE	278.76

Navy Memorial Plaque	1260.00
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BAND OF BROTHERS

(My local newspaper in Salem, OR published a story in early November 2008 about a reunion of the unit of the 101st Airborne from WW2 that became known as the "Band of Brothers". The story focused on the effort of some members of that unit living locally to conduct the 2008 reunion. Some of Bill Wingett's observations apply to the VA-12 Flying Ubangis. I got permission to reprint this copyrighted story here in our VA-12 Newsletter, in it's entirety.)

Salem man reunites Band of Brothers By Capi Lynn of the Statesman Journal

Members of Easy Company of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne recently gathered in Salem for the group's annual reunion (October 2008).

Most people know the company as the Band of Brothers, who were made famous by the book ("**Band of Brothers**", by Stephen E. Ambrose) and subsequent movie with the same name.

Salem is home to two of the men, including **Bill Wingett**, who coordinated the event that was held the weekend of Oct. 24.

Question: So how was the reunion?

Answer: First of all, I want to publicly thank all the people that worked on this thing. I got a whole bunch of names here. There's Theresa Greco, Scott Snyder, and then of course Jerry Thompson. Without Jerry, I never would have got it done.

Q: So has this event ever been held in Salem before?

A: We've had reunions all over, mostly in the East and South. Last year, we had it in Minneapolis, and I stuck my nose out there and said it was about time we had one on the West Coast.

Q: So how many of the brothers attended?

A: We had nine here.

Q: Do you know how many from the company are still living?

A: I inquired at this convention, and apparently there are 30 men who can claim to have been part of Easy Company. There are some that we just never see, and they don't really

participate. Then there are several that are just not physically able to do all the trips.

Q: Is it hard to watch the group get smaller and smaller?

A: If they all lived right here in town, it would be harder. But it digs a little when you hear the word. I may not have as deep a feeling as some people do because I didn't go on living the war after the war. I sort of set it aside and lived a life. Then, of course, when the book came out, it all came sweeping back.

Q: We're pretty lucky to have two of you guys here (the other is Don Malarkey), aren't we?

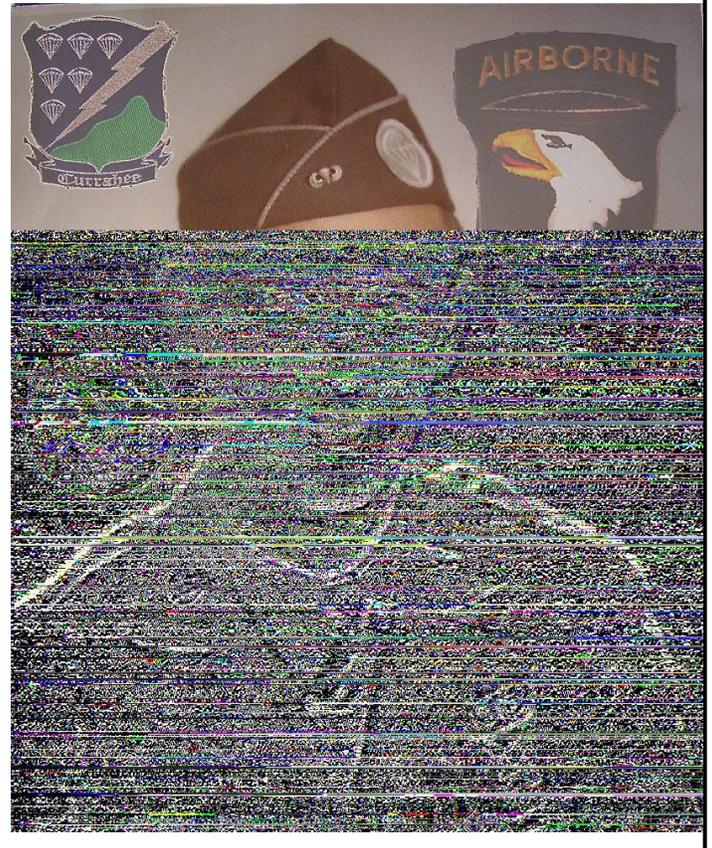
A: We used to have three. Leo Boyle was here for a long

BILL WINGETT

AGE: 86 **RESIDENCE:** Salem, OR

FAMILY: Wife, Peggy; four children; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild

HOBBIES: Working in his woodshop and does odd jobs for Keith Brown Building Materials. He recently made 48 maple rosettes for the interior of a new bank in Sisters.



time. He passed away about eight years ago. There's a man that lives in Albany (Don Bond), and he didn't show up at all. That's odd, too.

Q: Do you and Malarkey get together outside events like this?

A: Well, we're not on the same channel. Don is on the lecture tour and stuff.

Q: I guess Malarkey is sort of famous because he's put out a book ("**Easy Company Soldier**") but you're more of an unknown?

A: There are a whole lot of people that know me, but they don't know me for the same reasons they know Don. I worked in this town for 30 years. I spent 20 years doing maintenance work for Grabenhorst Brothers. For 20 years, I was the guy that took care of their buildings. You don't go entirely unnoticed doing that sort of thing

Aside from that, I helped start and build the Ford Model A Club. I spent several years kind of holding Mission Mill together until they started to restore it, not by myself, but I was in the Navy Reserves at the time and we used that as project material.

Q: What was the highlight of the reunion for you?

A: The highlight for me was the fact that it turned out a success. It all just went so well. Having said that, I'm getting phone calls now, complaining because I kept it so quiet.

Q: So why was that?

A: The last several conventions we have been inundated by people with armloads of books they wanted signed and so forth. Last year in Minneapolis, they asked me to "let's have a quiet one".

Q: Would people be surprised to know there are all these autograph seekers out there?

A: I don't know that anybody thinks that much about it. At one of our conventions, we actually set up a line of tables, and we signed books for five hours. Writer's cramp aside, that's not really a neat way to spend a day, you know what I mean? We're not getting royalties from the "Band of Brothers" and none of us feel comfortable with the thought that we ought to sell autographs. Our feelings, at least my feelings are, if anybody comes down the pike, I'll sign something. But I'm going to back off a little bit if they've got a whole bunch of them because I know I get mail from all over the country. People send 3-by-5 cards and want signatures. I've had people send 30 cards, which means to me that they're selling them on eBay or something.

Q: Are people really making money off of you guys?

A: I've been told that my signature sells for \$17.50. I don't know that. I don't feel an obligation to furnish somebody merchandise to sell. That's my feeling about it, and I'm pretty sure most of the other guys feel pretty much the same way.

Q: Are there more books about E Company on the way?

A: I don't think any individuals are going to write any more books. There is a book that will come out next year, and 20 men contributed to it. (Wingett is included. A review copy of "**We Who Are Alive and Remain: Untold Stories from the Band of Brothers**" by Marcus Brotherton sits next to his chair in the living room.)

Q: Did you ever think about writing a book?

A: Oh no, not really. If you ever read this one and read my contribution, you'd know why. If I was ever to write a book, I would have to sit down and start out with my earliest recollections and just go right on through it because World War II wasn't my whole life. My life, per se, began after the war.

Q: Do you already know where next year's reunion/convention will be held?

A: We don't know. We talked about not even having one. When you can't muster more than six at your business

meeting... (which was scheduled for early Friday, before the other three members who attended had arrived.)

Q: So this could have been the last one, right here in Salem? That seems kind of sad.

A: Well, yes, but if we had one next week on the East Coast, I probably wouldn't go. You know, it gets harder and harder to travel. There are so cotton-pickin' many things that can be uncomfortable about travelling for old people.

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BAND OF BROTHERS – EPILOG

BAND OF BROTHERS is a ten-part television World War II miniseries - based on the book of the same title written by historian and biographer Stephen Ambrose.

The book - and television miniseries narrative - centers on the experiences of E Company of the 2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment assigned to the 101st Airborne Division, from Easy's basic training at Toccoa, Georgia, through the American airborne landings in Normandy, Operation Market Garden, the Battle of Bastogne and on to the end of the war.

The events portrayed are based on Ambrose's research and recorded interviews with Easy Company veterans. A lot of literary license has been taken with the television episodes, and other reference books will highlight the differences between recorded history and the film version. All of the characters portrayed are based on actual members of Easy Company; some of them can be seen in prerecorded interviews as a prelude to each episode (their identities, however, are not revealed until the close of the finale).

Anyone wishing to learn more about this highly-decorated unit, or any of the soldiers who served with it, can do no better than to visit their local library, a favorite books store, or to search the Internet via Google for links.

John Larch 76-79

SQUADRON ROSTERS

An exciting recent trend within the unit is to consider whether we could develop squadron rosters/muster lists/deck logs for any desired year, and how to do so. There appear to be several major sources of information for the rosters and there is some weird baggage associated with each one. God, what a tangled web! This is turning into a true fishing-line snarl of a story, a real Navy SNAFU from back in the day... But allow me to elaborate.

ROSTERS – FROM THE NAVY

This source – the Navy itself - might be thought of as the most promising resource in finding accurate, complete information. But it is certainly difficult to deal with.

Navy personnel records are available from two different sources.

**A. 1971 AND PRIOR: The National Archives,
College Park MD:**

1. This group claims to carry Navy deck logs for the years from 1939 to 1971.

1939-1956	Enlisted Only
1957-1971	Officer and Enlisted
2. They only supply a microfilm reel for a command for any year for \$65 per reel only, no paper records.

National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

B. 1972 TO 1975

Records from this period do not appear to be available from any Navy source.

The Navy groups that do have records for other eras, do not offer any help by specifying any other source to contact for the records from this time.

C. 1976 AND LATER: Navy Personnel Command (“NPC”), Millington TN

This group may hold some personnel records/squadron rosters.

1. Records were held in New Orleans, LA by another Navy command, presumably this was Naval Support Activity New Orleans.
2. A large portion of their muster roll records and microfilms was already in severely deteriorated condition and this was made worse by the damages from Hurricane Katrina.
3. The records and microfilms were moved to the NPC in Millington, TN.
4. The records from this era are predominately for enlisted personnel; officer records were not retained.
5. They search their records by reference to the Unit Identification Code, “UIC”, which for VA-12 was the number 09054.
6. They would ask the requestor for a month and year to search, and pass along whatever records they would find.
7. The NPC usually charges a fee for the service of around \$50.
8. A different month/year combination constitutes a new search.
9. There is no claim that the records of any month constitute the unit roster for the entire year.
10. The NPC doesn’t seem to have a catalog or index of records and often only knows what is available once they start searching.

Navy Personnel Command (PERS-00J6)
5720 Integrity Drive
Millington, TN 38055

ROSTERS – FROM CRUISE BOOKS

How many ways are there to design and format a Cruise Book?

Well, so far we have seen two. The first is mostly ACTION SHOTS, snapping personnel pictures inside of or in front of the shop, or one of the birds, by shop or assignment, and put an index of names under the photo. As in, Powerplants Division, or The Line Shack, or Airframes Shop, Front row left to right, Middle row, Top row...

And another way is the MUG SHOT index, get everybody in Dress Blues and have a torso-up Mug Shot Day. You see 4 or 5 pages of mug shots listed in alphabetical order. There is a scheme to attach a name to each photo.

In both cases, sometimes there are some action shots of squadron personnel and aircraft scattered here and there.

The ACTION SHOTS and the MUG SHOTS are accurate, but not complete; they show everyone who was available on that day and was told to show up. But lots of personnel drop through the cracks, for a variety of reasons. Personnel TAD to another command, or on leave, or working night check to name just 3 reasons.

TAD is my excuse. I was attached to the squadron during a time when 4 Cruise Books were made. My duty station was VA-12 from March 1976 until February 1979 but I was TAD to AIMD almost the entire time and thus my mug only made it into one Cruise Book.

So we can make a nice squadron roster from a Cruise Book as long as we understand that it should not be considered complete and definitive, there are lots of names likely to be missing.

ROSTERS – FROM NEWSLETTERS & SQUADRON PUBS

We re-discovered recently that the Public Affairs Officer in 1970 and his staff made a concerted effort to generate squadron newsletters during the cruise. (Was this by personal initiative, or under orders?) This amounted to four different editions of a newsletter. Each one was filled with info about the various units within the squadron, and this included lots of names.

Picking through this information results in a list of additional roster names, often with rank and rate. It does not constitute a complete roster by any means but the names garnered from the search supplement the roster generated from the 1970 Cruise Book.

Right now we are unsure about how common a practice it was back in the day to generate a newsletter. Furthermore, I for one wonder if it was mailed back to the families. The four newsletters from 1970 contained no confidential information and in fact did include a lot of congratulations, kudos, and morale-boosting atta-boys.

CALLING ALL CRUISE BOOKS!

We will attempt to recreate the best squadron roster we can, for any year in question, if those interested can supply us with copies of Cruise Book pages which show the VA-12 section. And a supplement to the info from any Cruise Book would always be any additional squadron newsletter or news sheet developed by the Public Affairs Office.

We have developed rosters for the following years. They are available for viewing at the web site www.va12.com:

1957	1976
1966	1977
1967	1978
1970	1979

Remember that the squadron was established and active from 1945 until 1986. So if you have a Cruise Book or other material from any other year, take your Cruise Book to the nearest Kinkos or other copy shop and duplicate the book pages for VA-12. **Make sure that the names are all readable!**

Send your book page copies to me and make note of what year we are dealing with!

Send them to me, your Assistant Editor, at:

John Larch
4689 Future Drive NE
Salem, OR 97305

WEB SITE NEWS & NOTES

VA12.COM WEB Site Report for 2008
From the desktop of Webmaster Terry Nies

WEBSITES IN GENERAL

As we finished up 2008, a review of the website can provide some insight as to how it is benefiting us. As most of you have noticed we are using a full pay site so that there are no pop-ups or random advertising for those slimming drinks, dating services, or as-seen-on-TV products. Generally this provides us much better security of our information and less opportunity for being hacked. When you go to a web site no matter where it is hosted, there is a tremendous amount of information that is transmitted back to the host site. It is what the hosting site does with that information that makes the difference. As a business this information can help you reach out to selected customers. Some web pages will hijack you and send you off to another site that you have no idea how you got there so that they can get a "referral" fee from that site for sending you there.

I assure you that **VA12.COM** is dedicated to the VA12 Reunion Association and to the shipmates that browse its pages.

VA12.COM IN 2008

I will share a few of the interesting things that we have gathered.

There were over 5600 unique visitors to the VA12 site in 2008 averaging about 470 per month as measured by the visitors IP address. Obviously some of those are the same people just different addresses due to dynamic address allocations (DHCP).

And there are a few repeat visitors that appear in the top 10 list, my IP/Domain being up there each month near the top. There is one visitor that is consistently at the top ahead of me and that is John Gynan. I can pretty much guess the users based on where in the country their address traces back to. Something that we need to be aware of is that the TOP

VISITOR is a site in Russia, Steephost.com. They seem to be very interested in our website.

Windows is the primary Operating System used by 87% of the visitors. MAC OS is used by 2.6%. Hang in there John Larch. Internet Explorer is the main browser used by 72.6% of the visitors followed by Netscape with 10.3% and Firefox with 3%. By far Google is the most active Search engine Robot/crawler that searches our site daily for updates and new information followed by Yahoo. There are several others that crawl through our site collecting, cataloging and cross-referencing our data.

WEB SITE STATISTICS

2008 VISITORS	5,600
AVG. PER MONTH	470

MOST POPULAR PAGES?

- GUEST LOGS
- PHOTOGRAPHS

The most viewed pages are our "Guest Logs" and the most viewed file type are the jpg and gif files (pictures)

Most users tend to view the site between 6 PM and 11 PM with a few night owls

hitting it in the wee hours. Weeknights seem to be more popular than week ends.

As an indicator of our popularity, an average of 91% of the visits come from a direct link of some type and of that only 3.4% from search engines. Direct links are other sites like Bob Fossums, or the "Pentagon/Barracks" or some of our previous sites that some shipmate must still have in their "Favorites" list. Bigfinder.de (from Germany) is a very popular redirector to us. Recently Steephost.com in Russia has accessed us by a direct link to our site. For those of you that can read or speak Russian, you can go to znatok.mobi and let me know what it says about us. Znatok was 2nd only to Bob Fossum's site for the month of February 09.

Obviously the most used term to find us is VA12 and many variations of that.

The most searched for person in 2008 was Shawn Tallant. 57% of the visitors to our site added us to their favorites list. This will give you an idea of just some of the information that websites can gather when you visit them. Some unscrupulous operators will send you little presents back that will help to gather a lot more information to use against you. Always use discretion on where you visit. Maintain your anti-virus software and remember you don't get anything for "FREE". If they are offering it for free they are taking something in return.

WEBSITE CONTRIBUTIONS

We have a very large amount of storage space on our site. If you have any photos, newsletters, or rosters that you would like to share, please send them to stubby@va12.com. Please be sure to add a description of who, what, when, and where if possible.

Keep checking the WEB Page www.va12.com. Accept NO Imitation, for news and information about old shipmates and information on the 2010 Reunion as the planning continues. Always remember those that have not returned from the sea, and pray for the safe return home of those that continue to serve and defend this great country.

Webmaster 'T'

SAFE BROWSING!

Terry (Stubby) Nies ATN2 VA12 67-69

BOOK REVIEW

SHANG LOG



**1970 WestPac (Vietnam) Cruise
USS Shangri-La (CVS-38)
CVW-8 VA-12**

**LCDR J. J. MCBRIDE, USN
35th Anniversary Edition**

At the start of the 1970 WestPac Cruise, VA-12's own J.J. McBride (then a LCdr) began a daily diary on the day SHANG left Mayport. He doggedly kept the diary going until the SHANG re-docked at Mayport, 9 months later. Through thick and thin, storms, constant ship-board break-downs, water shortages, flying older airframes with terrible maintenance problems, and operating with an erratic flying schedule, he documented the life and experiences of a naval aviator attached to the VA-12 Flying Ubangis.

This diary has been assembled into a book. Your assistant editor bought a copy, and quickly dropped other reading to stay up with this engrossing true story. Includes 14 chapters and an epilog. Each chapter is followed by a selection of photographs.

You too can have your own copy of the 2005 Fifth Edition. Send \$20 plus \$3 for shipping and handling, to:

**Cdr James J. McBride, USN (Ret.)
2815 Moline De Viento
Santa Fe, NM 87505**

GOING ASHORE

Avast ye swabs, lands in sight, so
make haste in sail for we land tonight
and in the morn' at the break of day
we'll man the rails and gangplanks way.

The bosn's pipe wil trill and shrill
and we'll send a shipmate to the shore
there to stay, forever more.

Tonight we'll crack a keg or two
gather round, drink a toast to you.
We'll lift our mugs away up high
for the many years that drifted by.

Remember, throughout the many years
you sailed away amidst the tears
of loved ones left behind
worried, and hoping they'd be fine.

Of your shipmates too, my man,
who followed you to many lands.

In time their names and faces
will be forgotten as all those places.

But like the morning fog and dew
we'll endeavor to remember you,
and when the morning sun lifts the haze
and we sail again for many days,
you'll remember us as we will you
until the years leave only a few
to recall the good ole days,
of sailing men, o'er the waves.

UBANGI SPORTS



Joe Kyle has some golf balls with the Ubangi logo on them and one person had some fun with it. This man may have too much time on his hands! **Fore!**



LCdr. John M. Breen

(Standing, middle)
 LCdr Breen, serving as
 Commanding Officer of VF-
 12, was killed in an F2H-2
 cockpit fire on August
 19, 1953 during a Med.
 Cruise deployment.

**Ltjg. Norbert H.
 Navarre**

(Lower Photo, and in the
 top photo standing 2nd from
 right)
 Ltjg Navarre was attached
 to VF-12 in 1953 when the
 squadron flew the F2H-2
 Banshee fighter. He won a
 Navy "E" award for high
 altitude gunnery in March,
 1953.

On April 22, 1953 Ltjg
 Navarre was attempting to
 assemble into a squadron
 formation over the St.
 John's River when his
 aircraft suffered a cockpit
 fire. An explosion followed
 and the aircraft was lost.
 His remains were never
 found.

Lt. Bill Manly

Passed away on Oct 20,
 2008 at the age of 84. Bill
 was a pilot in VA12 from
 1962-1964.

CWO4 James Elias

Passed away on Feb 23,
 2009 at the age of 64 Jim
 had struggled with illness
 for several years. He
 served in VA-12 twice,
 1974-1977 and again from
 1985-1986

