



Atkron 12 Newsletter



Volume V, Issue 1

March 2006

Ubangi

Ubetcha

2006 Reunion News

It appears that we are on target to have a great get-together in Pensacola. The response has been very good to this point. **A word to those that still need to make reservations.** The hotel is holding our block of rooms until March 15th. After that date we can not guarantee that you will be able to book a room at the Best Western Resort. Remember it is the week of spring break for many schools so if you have put off booking and plan on coming, you better call today.

As part of the planning I am wondering how many attendees are expecting to have a vehicle available while in Pensacola. I want to make sure that everyone has transportation to the Museum for our tour and banquet on Saturday.

If you could email or call me and let me know that you do not expect to have a car, then I can figure out how many people will need a ride.

The Newsletter

I believe the newsletter will survive another year. Many of you have donated extra funds and several have made encouraging comments on the continuation of this effort. To date 40 have responded with the \$12 annual dues, 10 others have a \$10 carry over from pervious donations and 3 more have a \$5 carry over. At this point 33 members receiving the newsletter last year have not renewed. I will send those folks the March issue with a reminder and if they choose not to renew that's ok, no pressure.

I am also trying to coax John Larch into becoming an assistant editor. Most of you know that John has a flare for words and I believe he would do a great job.

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IN MEMORIAL

AOCM James Milam, who served in VA-12 from 1985-86 passed away in Middleburg, Florida.

If anyone knows of anyone else from VA12 that has passed away since the 2004 Reunion, please let me know. Thanks.

Calendar of Events

REUNION BEGINS APRIL 20, 2006

PLACE : **Best Western Resort Hotel**
Pensacola Beach, FL

TIME: **4 P.M. Check in/Registration**

I expect to have a table set up in the lobby area for you to pick up name tags and materials.

ICE BREAKER

PLACE: **Hotel Hospitality Suite**

TIME: **6 p.m.**

A time to get together and catch-up. Bring your old photos, etc. Also B.Y.O.B.

DAY TWO APRIL 21, 2004

GOLF SCRAMBLE

PLACE: TBA.

TIME: A.M.

ALL SKILL LEVELS INVITED.

Non-golfers will have Free time for Local areas of interest.

EVENING BBQ

PLACE: HOTEL PATIO

TIME: 7 - 11 P.M.

DAY THREE APRIL 22, 2004

TOUR OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NAVAL AVIATION

TIME: 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

SQUADRON BANQUET

PLACE: NAVAL AIR MUSEUM, BLUE ANGEL ATRIUM

TIME: 7:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.

Cocktail Hour & Dinner

DAY FOUR APRIL 23, 2004

DEPARTURE DAY

NO SPECIFIC EVENTS SCHEDULED

Treasury Report

Carry over from 2005	\$ 226.26
2006 Dues & Reunion \$.	\$3446.00
Sub Total	\$3672.26
Printing (*estimated)	\$ 208.00
Postage	. 49.80
Envelopes	. 13.02
Current expenses	- 270.82
New Balance	\$3401.44

Reunion Reservations

Here is our list of those that have confirmed their attendance for this year's reunion.

I know that several others say they are coming but I have not received official word (i.e. a check) from them as of yet. If you happen to know of anyone that says they are attending please ask them to send me their registration form and payment for their meals.

George	Hinds	55-59
Robert	Parker	55-58
James	Renfroe	55-58
Joe	McFadden	56-58
Bill	Manly	62-64
Dallas	Willingham	62-65
Ron	Witt	65-67
Dennis	Arnold	66-69
Gary	Hall	66-69
Eric	Harvie	66-69
Bill	Heck	66-69
Robert	Kaplan	66-69
Joe	Kyle	66-68
Mike	Landers	66-67
J.D.	Rogers	66-68
Jerry	Schwartz	66-67
Jon	Sutherland	66-68
Ed	Thomas	66-69
Adrian	Roop	66-69
Jack	Yezzi	66-68
Ray	Clary	67-69
Rich	Kickline	67-71
Terry	Nies	67-69
Bob	Brooks	68-71
Bob	Fossum	68-70
Frank	Giaccone	68-71
Tom	Lannom	69-70
Chuck	Dickey	70-73
Bob	Ruddell	70-73
Norm	Cooper	72-76
Claude	Crocker	72-75
Stewart	Baker	73-76
Lonnie	Guyton	73-75
John	Larch	76-79

A couple of you did not send a check for the banquet. Attendance for this function is **not** required but it is more or less the finality of the whole event. You still have a little time to get your money to me if you change your mind.

Naval Aviator or Air Force Pilot

ON WHETHER TO BECOME AN AIR FORCE PILOT..... OR A NAVAL AVIATOR.....

The piece is written by Bob Norris, a former Naval aviator who also did a 3 year exchange tour flying the F-15 Eagle. He is now an accomplished author of entertaining books about U.S. Naval Aviation including "Check Six" and "Fly-Off".

In response to a letter from an aspiring fighter pilot on which military academy to attend, Bob replied with the following: 12 February 2004

Young Man,

Congratulations on your selection to both the Naval and Air Force Academies. Your goal of becoming a fighter pilot is impressive and a fine way to serve your country. As you requested, I'd be happy to share some insight into which service would be the best choice. Each service has a distinctly different culture. You need to ask yourself "Which one am I more likely to thrive in?"

USAF Snapshot: The USAF is exceptionally well organized and well run. Their training programs are terrific. All pilots are groomed to meet high standards for knowledge and professionalism. Their aircraft are top-notch and extremely well maintained. Their facilities are excellent. Their enlisted personnel are the brightest and the best trained. The USAF is homo-genius and macro. No matter where you go, you'll know what to expect, what is expected of you, and you'll be given the training & tools you need to meet those expectations. You will never be put in a situation over your head. Over a 20-year career, you will be home for most important family events. Your Mom would want you to be an Air Force pilot...so would

Your wife. Your Dad would want your sister to marry one.

Navy Snapshot: Aviators are part of the Navy, but so are Black Shoes (surface warfare) and Bubble Heads (submariners). Furthermore, the Navy is split into two distinctly different Fleets (West and East Coast). The Navy is heterogeneous and micro. Your squadron is your home; it may be great, average, or awful. A squadron can go from one extreme to the other before you know it. You will spend months preparing for cruise and months on cruise. The quality of the aircraft varies directly with the availability of parts. Senior Navy enlisted are salt of the earth; you'll be proud if you earn their respect. Junior enlisted vary from terrific to the troubled kid the judge made join the service. You will be given the opportunity to lead these people during your career; you will be humbled and get your hands dirty. The quality of your training will vary and sometimes you will be over your head. You will miss many important family events. There will be long stretches of tedious duty aboard ship. You will fly in very bad weather and/or at night and you will be scared many times. You will fly with legends in the Navy and they will kick your ass until you become a lethal force. And some days - when the scheduling Gods have smiled upon you - your jet will catapult into a glorious morning over a far-away sea and you will be drop-jawed that someone would pay you to do it. The hottest girl in the bar wants to meet the Naval Aviator. That bar is in Singapore. Bottom line, son, if you gotta ask...pack warm & good luck in Colorado. Banzai

P.S.: Air Force pilots wear scarves and iron their flight suits.

Submitted by John Larch 76-79

GOOD-BYE PHANTOM

They're coming one after the other now. Each day seems to bring another heartache - articles in professional journals, invitations for "the last of" events, calls for yet another "Old Guy Reunion", order forms for coffee table books. I'm beginning to realize that there's no putting off the fact that one of the most revolutionary, capable, and elegant airplanes ever to dominate the skies has gone away. I refer, of course, to the F-4J Phantom II. Over the last several years the grand old boy has taken his leave. With the F-4J goes the notion of variable Intakes, radar intercept officers, and 2.0 indicated Mach number on the airspeed gauge. And with the F-4 also goes a big part of what made my life noteworthy, dare I say, the stuff of novels.

The Phantom had an amazing run: thirty-plus years, the Vietnam War, dozens of brushfires and contingencies. Few airplanes in the history of aviation have adapted as well to the tactical landscape over their years in the inventory. The F-4 was designed by McDonnell Aircraft Company as an interceptor aircraft around the radar missile system, a long-range air superiority fighter that pushed out the boundaries of fleet defense. The early portion of my flying career was about launching on the Alert 5 and escorting Soviet bombers and transports. Those were the days of the 1+45 cycle, the days when the Phantom was the fuel critical jet in the air wing. The thought of dropping bombs was anathema to us then. But the threat changed as the Viet Nam War dragged on and other mission requirements meant the Steely eyed fighter pilots had to load Mk-82's on the wings and prove they were capable of beating up the dirt almost as good as any fully trained attack puke. But now the F-4's time is over. Emotions stir in the face of this reality. Thousands of hours of my adult life were spent strapped into the front seat of the "Big Ugly Fighter." It was there that challenges were met, friendships were forged, and the nation's will was carried out. From that lofty perch I looked up at the

heavens and down on hostile lands. I didn't always realize it then - youth, of course, is lost on the young - but each sortie was a gift. So, too, was the time spent in the company of greats. I think back on chain-laden plane captains who loved the airplanes as much as we did, those like Sam Summa who kept the aviators going with their enthusiasm in the face of long days that promised nothing but more hard work. I remember the maintenance master chiefs who taught me not just how the Phantom works but how to be an officer and a man. And for their caring they asked for nothing in return. In their countenances I saw my responsibilities. Anyone familiar with Naval Aviation has a de facto doctorate in pilot personality types. Any RIO with 1,000 hours or more in the airplane possesses a similar degree. And as I flip through the pages of my weathered logbooks and read the names - Smith, Crenshaw, Southgate, Driscoll, Enschede, Roy, Bouck and hundreds more - I think of their skill, skill that boggles the mind even now, and the teamwork between cockpits that made flying the F-4 so rewarding. I know few things as surely as I know that U.S. Navy carrier-based pilots are the best in the world. And what of the down times between sorties? In my mind's eye I conjure up a gathering in the eight-man stateroom where problems are broached, dissected, and solved. This is where I learned about trust. This is where I realized I could survive the trial that was life at sea - hell, life period. Now I close my eyes and hear the clack, clack, clack of the shuttle as it moves aft for the next launch. The exhaust from the powerful and reliable J-79 engines fills my nostrils until we drop the canopies and bring our jet to life. Air roars through the ECS. Systems power up. Soon we're parked behind the cat, waiting our turn. I roger the weight board - 56,000 pounds, buddy, 56,000 pounds. Grasp that, if you can. The jet blast deflector comes down and we taxi into place, deftly splitting the cat track with the twin nose tires. And then - even after decades of doing the same thing - the adrenaline starts to flow

as we go through the deck dance unique to the Phantom: The nose strut extends, giving the fighter the look of a beast ready to leap into the air by itself; the director moves you into the holdback. Wings spread. Flaps lower. Our hands go up as the ordies arm the missiles, bombs. There's the signal from the catapult officer. I put the throttles to military power and wipe out the controls - stick forward, aft, left, and right; rudder left and right. "You ready, C-ball?" I ask. I run the fingers of my right hand across the top of the lower ejection handle (for orientation purposes) and hear from the back, "Ready Queenie, I'm right behind you." I salute. We both put our heads back slightly. (Forget once and you get your bell rung by the head rest). A couple of potatoes later we're off. Airborne. And for the next hours we stand ready to bring this machine, this manifestation of American know-how, to bear however it might be required. Or maybe today isn't our day to save the world, so we accommodate one of the small boy's requests for a fly-by or break the sound barrier -- just because we can (and we're far enough above our fuel ladder to get away with it). We're flying a Phantom. And we're getting paid to do it. Alas, I speak of days gone by. What remains of what once gave my working life purpose is now only found in front of main gates, aviation museums, and VFW halls around the country. In the blink of an eye I have become the white haired guy with the ill-fitting ball cap and the weathered flight jacket who bores young ensigns (and anyone else who happens to make eye contact) with his tales of derring-do. "VF, dang it!" I rail. "Those were real fighter squadrons." And they were. Fighting Falcons, Jolly Rogers, Swordsmen, Pukin' Dogs, Grim Reapers, and Diamondbacks - mascots of an adventure. At the center of it all was the airplane itself, and when an airplane has so much heart, personality, and character it ceases to be inanimate to those who climb into it on a regular basis. So it's goodbye, dear friend. Forgive my depression. I've heard the

promises of a brighter future, but my time in the arena was with you. I watch you launch into the sunset and wonder how it all could have passed so quickly. It doesn't seem like that long ago when we were together, inextricably linked, one defining the other. Ours was a world of unlimited possibilities and missions accomplished. Ours was a world of victory.

So goodbye, Big Fighter, blessed protector of the American way and our hides. We who knew you well will miss your class, your swagger, your raw power. Even in the face of technological advances you bowed to no other. Thanks for the memories. They are indeed the stuff of novels.

Submitted by Charles E. Drescher 78-79

Navy Log Offered Free to Sea Service Members, Veterans

Special from the U.S. Navy Memorial

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Now through the end of July 2006, all members and veterans of the Sea Services – active duty and reservists – are able to enroll in the U.S. Navy Memorial's Navy Log without charge and without any obligation.

The U.S. Navy Memorial, located on Pennsylvania Avenue, in Washington, D.C., is a national memorial that honors those who served, and are serving, in America's Sea Services – Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine, but the heart of the U.S. Navy Memorial is the Navy Log.

"The Navy Log is the heart and soul of the Navy Memorial because it represents people not hardware." said Retired Master Chief Navy Counselor (SW) David Michael, the director of the Navy Log. "Their the backbone of the Navy. The Navy is people, not ships and aircraft."

The Navy Log is the permanent public registry where Sea Service members and veterans can record their service information – name, duty stations, awards, photos and memories. Family members and friends can record service information for veterans who are deceased or those who are unable to

record their own information.

The Navy Log may be viewed at the U.S. Navy Memorial, or via the Internet at www.lonesailor.org. The goal of the Memorial is to record the service history of all eligible uniformed individuals and veterans.

"The real reason to enroll in the Navy Log is to show Navy pride and to record your service for history," said Michael.

To enroll your information or to enroll family members simply enter the appropriate information at www.lonesailor.org. If you have any questions, please contact the Navy Log Department of the U.S. Navy Memorial, at 1-800-NAVY LOG (1-800-628-9564).

Submitted by Charles E. Drescher 78-79

The Navy We Once Knew

*** I liked standing on the bridge wing at sunrise with salt spray in my face and clean ocean winds whipping in from the four quarters of the globe - - the destroyer beneath me feeling like a living thing as her engines drove her swiftly through the sea.

*** I liked the sounds of the Navy - the piercing trill of the boatswains' pipe, the syncopated clangor of the ship's bell on the quarterdeck, the harsh squawk of the 1MC, and the strong language and laughter of sailors at work.

*** I liked Navy vessels -- nervous darting destroyers, plodding fleet auxiliaries and amphib, sleek submarines and steady solid aircraft carriers.

*** I liked the proud names of Navy ships: Midway, Lexington, Saratoga, Shangri-La, Coral Sea, Antietam, Valley Forge - - memorials of great battles won and tribulations overcome.

*** I liked the lean angular names of Navy "tin-cans" and escorts - - Barney, Dahlgren, Mullinix, McCloy, Damato, Leftwich, and Mills - - mementos of heroes who went before us. And the others - - San Jose, San Diego, Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Chicago - - named for our cities.

*** I liked the tempo of a Navy band blaring through the topside speakers as we pulled

away from the oiler after refueling at sea.

*** I liked liberty call and the spicy scent of a foreign port.

*** I even liked the never ending paperwork and all hands working parties as my ship filled herself with the multitude of supplies, both mundane and to cut ties to the land and carry out her mission anywhere on the globe where there was water to float her.

*** I liked sailors, officers and enlisted men from all parts of the land, farms of the Midwest, small towns of New England, from the cities, the mountains and the prairies, from all walks of life. I trusted and depended on them as they trusted and depended on me - for professional competence, for comradeship, for strength and courage. In a word, they were "shipmates"; then and forever.

*** I liked the surge of adventure in my heart, when the word was passed: "Now set the special sea and anchor detail - all hands to quarters for leaving port," and I liked the infectious thrill of sighting home again, with the waving hands of welcome from family and friends waiting pier side.

*** The work was hard and dangerous; the going rough at times; the parting from loved ones painful, but the companionship of robust Navy laughter, the "all for one and one for all" philosophy of the sea was ever present.

*** I liked the serenity of the sea after a day of hard ship's work, as flying fish flitted across the wave tops and sunset gave way to night.

*** I liked the feel of the Navy in darkness - the masthead and range lights, the red and green navigation lights and stern light, the pulsating phosphorescence of radar repeaters - they cut through the dusk and joined with the mirror of stars overhead. And I liked drifting off to sleep lulled by the myriad noises large and small that told me that my ship was alive and well, and that my shipmates on watch would keep me safe.

*** I liked quiet mid-watches with the aroma of strong coffee - the lifeblood of the Navy permeating everywhere.

*** And I liked hectic watches when the

exacting minuet of haze-gray shapes racing at flank speed kept all hands on a razor edge of alertness.

*** I liked the sudden electricity of "General quarters, general quarters, all hands man your battle stations," followed by the hurried clamor of running feet on ladders and the resounding thump of watertight doors as the ship transformed herself in a few brief seconds from a peaceful workplace to a weapon of war -- ready for anything.

*** And I liked the sight of space-age equipment manned by youngsters clad in dungarees and sound-powered phones that their grandfathers would still recognize.

*** I liked the traditions of the Navy and the men and women who made them. I liked the proud names of Navy heroes: Halsey, Nimitz, Perry, Farragut, John Paul Jones and Burke. A sailor could find much in the Navy: comrades-in-arms, pride in self and country, mastery of the seaman's trade. An adolescent could find adulthood.

*** In years to come, when sailors are home from the sea, they will still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods – the impossible shimmering mirror calm and the storm-tossed green water surging over the bow. And then there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter in the wardroom and chief's quarters and mess decks.

*** Gone ashore for good they will grow wistful about their Navy days, when the seas belonged to them and a new port of call was ever over the horizon.

*** Remembering this, they will stand taller and say, "I WAS A SAILOR ONCE."

Vice ADM Harold Koenig, US Navy Retired
Submitted by Charles E. Drescher 78-79

Bio

Looking back, my getting to VA12 was quite a rush for a young farm kid from Indiana. After AT "A" school I flew into Clark Air Force Base

in the Philippines. From Clark I boarded a bus bound for Subic Bay. Through the rice paddies and up over the mountains we went. Passed a Coke truck on a double yellow line on a blind curve no less. The driver slammed on the brakes once I believe for chickens. Anyway I was relieved to finally be in Subic Bay. I went aboard a tanker for a 3 day cruise to meet up with the U.S.S. F.D. Roosevelt and VA-12. Being high-lined aboard was also quite a ride. I'm not sure of the date but I wasn't aboard very long when the blade broke off the screw. I went to Atsugi Air base with the line crew and that's where I became acquainted with Bill Fouts and some of the AT's. The month of October 1966 was quite an experience for me. I stayed with the line crew until I made ATR3 then went into the electronics shop. I worked there until the test for 2nd class came up which I wasn't prepared for it. I didn't make it. So I was sent to work in the Ready Room as Flight Ops. Yeoman. Looking back, this was A stroke of good luck. I really appreciate the time I worked with VA-12's great pilots. I was released early in October 1969. I thought I had to go to college so I enrolled at Tri-State University, a small college in Angola, IN. I graduated 4 years later with a BA in Liberal Arts. I didn't want to teach so like F.M. Smith I took the first job that came along. I worked for a truck line then a factory. In 1980 General Motors built a plant in Three Rivers, MI. I applied for a managerial position and was turned down. But at the same time that I was shot down I was offered a job on the floor as an inspector. I jumped on it and here I am 25 years later still in the same building with retirement right around the corner. Where have the years gone? That's me in a nutshell. I'm divorced with one daughter who lives in California. Ron Witt was correct when he said that we forget the bad times and remember the good times, but I remember a lot of the really good times. To VA-12 and all of her personnel "Thanks for the ride"

Dennis Arnold 66-69

Photos

All shots compliments of Dennie Arnold.



“Ozzie”, Kaplan, “Pig”, can’t recall, “Tom”, “Snapper”



Ed, “Kap”, Bartels, Neal, Orbello, “Tom”



“Old Man”, Neal, Dennis, Ernie



“Pig”, Norman, Skidmore, CO Barnett, ?, Wendt, Hobbs

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Not sure, Best looking sailor in the Sixth Fleet,
Berglund, guessing Wakefield