



Volume II, Issue 2

# Atkron 12 Newsletter



va12.com

May 2003

## Ubangi

### Newsletter

Please try to remember to let me know if your mailing address or email address changes. This issue's aircraft picture above is the F7U-3 Cutlass, flown by the squadron beginning December 1955. If you look closely you can see the Kiss of Death emblem on the tail fin. This was submitted by Joel Parrish.

### Do you Remember?

The Last Alpha.

This should take many of you back a few years. December, 1966. The squadron was embarked on FDR, on Yankee Station. It was the last Line Period. We had been at sea since 24 November 1966, conducting combat air operations for about 3 weeks. Remember those hectic days? The Bomb Farm? The ordnance all over the place. The Oriskany fire had occurred 27 October. Every one was a little goosey after that. On the evening of 13 December word came to strike the Van Dien Truck Park and Repair Facility. The next day, VA-12's CO, Jerry Barnett, led the last Alpha Strike of our Vietnam Deployment. How many of you can recall the hectic activity that led up to those Big Strikes? The deck spot was a work of art. Not to mention all the ordnance brought up on deck for load out. Think about what you did on the night of 13 December and all day of the 14<sup>th</sup>. The strike consisted of: F-4's from both VF-14 and VF-32. Four from each squadron, as I recall. They were

## Ubetcha

Fighter escorts and Flak suppressors, one Willy Fudd. Usually first off the deck to get out front and began the radar coverage. The three Attack Squadrons, VA-12, 72 and 172, put up 4-8 aircraft each, plus Tankers. They were the main Strike group. The Whales launched two planes. They were for ECM coverage and Tanking. Last was the RF-8, for photo coverage after the Strike. This gave us Bomb Damage Assessment (BDA). All told there must have been close to 30 aircraft. Then there was the Ready Alert birds, about 4-6 more aircraft. And the Spares, four or five more aircraft, at least. The results of that Strike made the Headlines the world over. We really didn't know about that for several days. The target was a trunk park and repair facility outside of Hanoi. The U-Haulers for the Ho Chi Min Trail. There's a nice write up on the Strike in the 23 December 1966 issue of TIME magazine. For you history buffs, go to your local library and ask the Reference Desk to dig it out for you. The truck park was about 5 miles south of downtown Hanoi, but outside the city limits. The upshot was that the bad guys accused the U.S. of escalating the bombing by hitting inside the Hanoi city limits. Seems like the Chinese Embassy took some hits and some other civilian buildings needed new windows. What really happened was the Strike group went right down the pipe and wrecked the Trunk Park. Because there was so much flak and SAM's one A-4 (VA-72) was lost. A Willy

Fudd was also lost, but that was due to an engine failure out over the Gulf. The heavy Flak and SAM were the cause of the civilian building damage. It took several days for us to sort out the claims by North Vietnam. But in the end Washington backed up the FDR data. The bad guys shot so much at the Strike Group they forgot to calculate where the debris would land. Today, half way around the world from that episode, other carriers sit in the Persian Gulf and are carrying out the same type of Strikes. As I read the daily papers I see that it's the same old story. We're doing collateral damage. Take it all with a grain of salt. As the PGA Tour Ads state; "These Guys are Good". They don't miss. It's all part of the Political Hype. The average Sailor is just like we were 37 years ago. He's humping it just like you all did. Everyone's doing their job...the very best they know how. Day and night, day in and day out. Some of you may have sons, or daughters, or relatives out there. Or a neighbor's kids. Trust me, not much has changed. Higher Technology, bigger Flight Decks, same colored shirts, sexier ordnance. But it's still the average U.S. kid serving his country. And doing it a hell of a lot better than his opponent. That's what has made us a Great Nation for 200+ years. And will keep us that way. Never Forget that.

Obie 66-68

## VA12 History (continued from Vol. II No. 1)

### Home Port Assignment

NAS Alameda	12 May 1945
NAAS Watsonville	21 May 1945
NAS Wildwood	09 Jul 1945
NAAS Groton	09 Sep 1945
NAS Norfolk	18 Jan 1946
NAS San Diego (North Island)	15 Jul 1946
NAS Norfolk	21 Feb 1949
NAS Cecil Field	25 Feb 1949
NAS Norfolk	24 Mar 1950
NAAS Cecil Field	25 Mar 1951
NAS Jacksonville	07 Oct 1951

NAAS Cecil Field	28 Feb
1952 NAS Jacksonville	16 May
1952 NAS Cecil Field	13 Oct
1952 more next issue.....	

## VA12 Reunion Members

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

Jim Hudson	56, 57
Jack Yezzi	66, 68
Stan Korzinski	75, 79
Charles Drescher	77, 78

If anyone would like to try and find old friends from you particular era, you might want to start by writing to the National Archives in Washington D.C. to get the Squadron roster for your years. Let me know if I can help.

## Bio

**VA-12 was my first squadron...'68 Roosy, '69 Shang-Med and '70 Shang-Westpac. Then went to Monterey, then Saratoga CATCC tour, then NROTC at UF, the A-7s with VA-15 out of Cecil and off of Indy ('79) then CNATRA Staff in Corpus then Lexington Safety Officer for three years then a lot of years in the flight training business at CNET Staff here in Pens. Retired in '92. Just finished up ten years teaching physics at the Univ. of West Florida.....**

**Time now to work on the golf game and see kids and grandkids more often.....**

Bob

Brooks 68-69

## Sea Stories

Here's Something that I remember: Med Cruise 1967 aboard the FDR, I don't remember the port but we had an ADJ2 Filipis in the squadron. One night while we were in port the word was passed around the ship that someone took a leak off the flight deck onto the aft area where the enlisted personnel boarded and returned from liberty. I don't remember what this area of the ship was called (the aft

quarterdeck/aft boat landing?). I figure at my age I'm lucky to remember what I had for lunch yesterday. Anyway, the Chief on Duty was really pissed. They sent all sorts of watch standers to the flight deck along with some of the Marines looking for a guy in Whites' on the flight deck. They couldn't find anyone in Whites' on the flight deck no matter how long they looked. About two hours later I strolled up to the flight deck and there was ADJ2 Filips in his Whites' that were full of soot with a shit eating grin on his face and drunk as a skunk. I think his first name was Tom, and I asked Tom how his Whites' were ruined. Tom told me he decided to take a leak over the side and then hid in a tail pipe of an A4. To this day I have his image burned into my mind with him in the sooty white and the shit eating grin.... It was a real Kodak moment. Thanks,

Jack Yezzi 66-68

I will never forget coming back from WestPac and the long anticipated liberty stop at Cape Town, South Africa. For one thing it was a long time at sea (we sailed from Subic Bay), and secondly we were going to be the first American Ship to dock there in years. The city seemed to be anticipating it as much as we were. We heard stories that there were enough interested families (hopefully with attractive daughters) that each of us would be taken as a visitor for dinner to someone's home. But alas, it was not to be. At the very last moment all liberty was cancelled due to Cape Town's then Apartheid Policy and our only view of an obviously beautiful city was from the flight deck. As far as I can recall, the only people who got to town were a bunch who volunteered to give blood and I remember them being marched there and back, almost at gun point. The people of Cape Town were as curious about us as we were about them. They showered us with gifts and hundreds of them came aboard during an open house. A newspaper clipping from the stop is titled: "To Carrier From the City - A Ton of Grapes as Gift". The article goes on to state; "A ton of choice Cape grapes will be taken on board the aircraft-carrier Franklin D. Roosevelt later this afternoon as a gift to the crew from Cape Town. The grapes are being bought by a group of people who are aiming to get together R100 (I don't know what that means) from women who were to have been hostesses to the crew members on Saturday, yesterday or today." I remember the grapes. I remember how beautiful the City looked. I remember that the grapes were delicious, but all in all, wasn't it a shame that we didn't get to meet those hostesses? I remember a lot of guys saying that somehow, someday, they were going to come back

there. I wonder if any did. John Livingood 66-68

A couple years ago I came across the sheath that Rick Fontaine had made for my TL-29, but the knife was nowhere to be found. I searched high and low for that thing but to no avail. It was nowhere to be found. I asked my brother-in-law if he still had his. He told me that he had thrown it overboard after about the third time it closed up on his hand as he was trying to undo a Dzuess screw. It was only then that I began remembering the gashes I had received using that tool. A while later I posted a note in the Ubangi discussion group asking if anyone still had his TL-29. Many responded that they remembered having one and the injuries they received from it, but only one still had his. Later I asked my brother if he still had his. He told me that it was long gone. He had probably thrown it away because he could never use it without cutting himself. Just a couple of weeks ago, on the shipyard, I just happened to mention TL-29 to one of my co-workers, a Navy Submarine Vet, who just flinched when he heard TL-29. I looked at him and started to smile when he opened his right hand and showed me the scar across the palm. We had a good laugh together then swapped some sea stories and about our Navy years. I honestly believe that the TL-29 pocketknife was indeed a secret weapon introduced to the U.S. Navy by a subversive organization that was active during the cold war and particularly during the Vietnam era. It is clear to me that the intent was to maim the entire enlisted ranks of the Navy so that the vessels and aircraft could not be properly maintained resulting in a weakening of our national defense. I have not met a Navy Veteran of my generation who was not injured by his TL.

John Gynan 66-68

What are the odds in Las Vegas? Many of you that were at the Norfolk reunion heard the story about Bunky and I running into each other. This happened about 8 years ago. I was walking through the Golden Nugget Casino on a very crowded night. All of a sudden I heard "Hey Geno" from the bar area, there was Bunky. After 25 years of not seeing each other, Bunky

still recognized me. What a surprise! We spent some time drinking and catching up on the good old days. Fast forward to March 2003. I'm at the Las Vegas airport going through the cattle line to get through security. All of a sudden I yell out "can you believe this". You guessed it we ran into each other again. We were both early for our flights so we spend time drinking (coffee) and catching up on the good old days. See ya'll at the next reunion.

Geno 68-71

## Reunion Planning

**T**he first step of the 2004 Reunion has begun. I have reserved a block of room at **The Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort in Jacksonville Beach, FL.**

Web Site [www.jacksonvillebeach-holidayinnsunspree.com](http://www.jacksonvillebeach-holidayinnsunspree.com).

They are requiring a \$250 deposit. I am therefore asking anyone that is expecting to attend to send me what you can toward the deposit. When I get enough deposit money I will book the rooms and notify all that you may begin making your reseverations. Your deposit will go toward the cost of your room. We will be receiving a reduced rate if we secure 50 rooms, the Off Ocean rooms are \$99 per night and the Oceanfront rooms are \$139 per night. Again the dates are, the weekend of 4/23-4/25 2004. I am looking for some of you Flordia guys to help out if you have the time and interest email me.

## Treasury Report

**O**ur current balance is \$140.69. Total Dues collected to date are \$616.14

Expenses were:

Stamps	213.70	Cartridges	190.82
Paper	31.23	Seals	6.35
Envelopes	12.17	Decal paper	21.18

## Our Connection

**T**he following item was sent to me by AOCM Chester Langonois Ret. It is a recent story from a pilot flying an F18 from the USS Theodore Roosevelt.

"Have a pretty good war story from last night. I was fragged as the strike lead for the insertion of 1000 paratroopers into Northern Iraq. Our mission was to provide close air support for the guys as they were hitting the ground. Like any military operation, it didn't exactly go as planned. The strike package consisted of a dozen F18s loaded to the gills. The catapult shot was the heaviest I had ever been shot off the boat. We held in eastern Turkey, waited for the C-17s (which were carrying the paratroops) and then took the strike group in country. The overall resistance was actually pretty spectacular to see with the night vision goggles and I can honestly say that I gained a hell of a lot of respect for the Army guys who were jumping at low altitude out of those perfectly good airplanes, and going into harm's way. There was about as much "AAA" as I've seen since being out here going in their direction. That's where the "Hunters" come in. We were operating in the vicinity of the drop when we got the call from "higher authority" that our mission had changed and to contact the AWACS who was controlling the entire north of Iraq. He said we were retasked to take our strike group "a bit further south and prosecute two targets of interest". He passed the coordinates and target descriptions and asked us to meet a certain "time on target" (TOT). Things happened extremely fast from that point. I gathered up an EA6B Prowler (electronic jammer/radar killer) and three other "Hunters" to go "down South". I then quickly passed targets to each member of the flight and then pushed out to meet our TOT. The trek south took some 15 mins and it was clear that where we were going was more heavily defended than anywhere else (outside of Baghdad) that we had been before. Heavy flak and AAA was coming up from all directions and we were continually jinking to offset the threat. Fortunately, no one was tagged prior to the release of their ordnance and the

section of aircraft to my east reported that they were flowing back north. That's when the "fun" started. My section had just released our ordnance on an SA-3 SAM site in western Tikrit and was starting our turn back to the north when the "voice of God" as I like to call it, came up and said, "SAM Launch, vicinity of XXXX". Hello! I looked down at my moving map and guess who was EXACTLY where that voice called the launch at? It only took about 3 nanoseconds for me to start defending and to roll inverted to pick up the incoming threat. Sure as hell the missile was right below me and left of my wingline.

I made calls to my wingman who still hadn't gained sight of the incoming missile and talked his eyes onto the threat. As a side note, I have to admit that my voice sounds like a girl on the tape. Just when I made a counter defensive maneuver I picked up another launch about 1000 meters from the first shooter. Great, two missiles coming my way, our two aircraft maneuvering like crazy within a mile of each other, and every Republican Guard in Tikrit getting an air show above them of two guys shucking and jiving their way out. The two SAMs fired went stupid at about the same time that I was really getting into it. I called out that they weren't guiding (obvious when they went pure vertical) and gave my wingman a heading to turn to so that we could leave this "hornet's nest". I was actually considering not looking out the cockpit anymore and just pressing straight ahead. But, on looking around (I couldn't help it), it was clear that we created quite a stir down there as every gun in the city was pointed up and firing. We managed to climb back up into the "moronosphere" and left the fireworks show behind! In hindsight, it's amazing to me how quickly things went from the proverbial "milk run" to "hell in a handbasket"! I suppose I won't ever let my guard down again when flying above people who want to kill you. A lesson for all us. After tanking for the third time of the night (one of 6 tanking evolutions over the 7 hour flight), I re-joined the forces and looked for more tasking. Each of us still had enough firepower on board to take out most small towns in America. We then were tasked to help out the

guys we had really gone out there in the first place for those 1000 "Armies of One". All of us were assigned to take out artillery pieces the rest of the night in direct support of the troops on the ground. Was a sight to behold, seeing so much metal flying around the Iraqi countryside and knowing that it wasn't going to be used against our troops. I could ramble on for days, but will save it for later. Hope everything's great at home. Miss all of you and hope to see you all before the year's out! Mouse..! ..out

## And

Another item from Chief Langonois. Seaman McCarty delivered this speech at the graduation ceremonies of IS (Information Specialist) "A" school on 31 May 2002. With young men like this onboard, the fleet is in good hands. Seaman Anthony McCarty says...

"Today I was asked to speak to you all, as a representative of class 90. I was asked to speak on our reasons for joining, our inspiration, our spirit, and any wisdom we've picked up along the way. These are all heart-felt subjects, full of emotion for all of us. Bear with me if I get a little corny. I believe we all joined for our own reasons. After all, we came into the Navy as individuals. Whether it be because of money for college, patriotism, family tradition, need to prove oneself, or that Wendy's wasn't hiring, we all came into the service with our own hopes and dreams and desires. For whatever reasons we had, we all made the same decision, heard the same promises from our recruiter, signed on the same dotted line, and took the same oath. From that moment on, we were united by that choice, the choice to leave our friends, family and lives, and literally sail off to distant shores.

Joining when I did, I'd always asked if September 11th was the reason I joined the Navy. For more than a few of the sailors in the audience, I'm sure it was the reason. It was hard not to look at the scenes on TV and not want to do something, anything, to stop the things we all saw from ever happening again. I had already joined by then, I was in DEP (Delayed Entry Program) at the time.

I was staring at the TV, and it slowly dawned on me that what I was seeing was what I would be up against for the next four years of my life. I realized that I would, more than likely, be going up against the people who did this. Staring at the scene of the airliners ramming into the World Trade Center again and again, I felt like a kid who had been called out on a dare. I realized I would be responsible to stop things like this from happening again. More than anything else here today, I hope that you grasp the fact that you matter. One day, or even everyday, you will be asked to make decisions that will change the world in some way. You will be asked to make a difference in someone's life, or the world in general. If you do a good job, then good things will happen. Do a bad job, and someone, somewhere, will pay for it. Here at IS "A" School, we've heard time and again that we are at war. But it's a war unlike anything the Navy has fought before. It's not a war at sea, they have no Navy, and we have the greatest fleet that's ever been afloat. It's not a war in the air, they have no air force, and we would fly circles around them even if they did. It's not a war on the land, they have no standing army as such, and when we do meet them on the ground, it's a matter of how few casualties we might take, not a matter of if we will win. This is a war fought in the caves of third world countries, in the streets of our major cities, in the communications in the airwaves, in the depths of the internet, in quiet nighttime covert operations, and on the screens of CNN. The only way they can beat us is by being smarter than us, trickier than us, by coming up with something we hadn't thought of, or hadn't prepared for. The only way they can beat us is by having better intelligence than us. In short, as the newest members of the Intelligence Community, the war is ours to win or lose. Instead of running from this responsibility, I hope you embrace it. In the civilian world people do astounding things to prove to themselves that they matter, that the choices they make affect the world. They do almost anything to feel excitement and be challenged. They go to movies, they ride roller coasters, they abuse alcohol, they marry someone they shouldn't, they climb mountains, they join

motorcycle clubs, and do anything at all to feel like their life has consequences and excitement in it. I think it would amaze most IS "A" students to find out how many people truly do envy you. You're young, you're intelligent, you're in a war with a horrible enemy that needs to be stopped, and you're in a position to truly affect that conflict. You have the love and thanks of a grateful country. You have a job that can lead you to anywhere on Earth, doing anything. You have all the elements of a great story in your life. Without taking away from the seriousness of what you do, or sounding like a recruiting commercial, you truly have the chance to live an adventure, if you choose to look for it. By far the greatest challenge in writing this speech was trying to define the spirit I've seen in both my class, IS "A" School, and the Navy as a whole. I've met so many people who give of themselves selflessly and seemingly on instinct. One person in particular I would like to thank is Chief Jordan, on behalf of all the BUD/S (Basic Underwater Demolition / School) candidates. This is a man who wakes up every morning at 0330, Monday through Friday, and leads us in two hours of intense PT (Physical Training). He does this for no other reason than he doesn't want a group of young men to give their all and fail. But he is by no means the only person I've seen give themselves in small acts of heroism everyday. I've seen the staff and instructors teach their trade with patience, humor, and devotion. I've seen it in my classmates and shipmates. It's humbling to look around you and see so many people who give of themselves. It makes you want to try harder to be a better person, just to fit in. I realize I don't have the words to grasp the spirit I've met in many of the people here at IS "A" School. There are some Eastern philosophies that teach that some ideas are too big for words, that we should never try to explain some truths, because one is doomed to never be able to do them justice. All you do is demean it, turn it into some little sound bite. I feel that applies here. I'm not that poetic, I don't have the words. So, like any good IS with nothing to say, I plagiarized. There's one quote I have

kept with me since I joined the Navy. Months before I left for Boot camp, I had the chance to go to Coronado, CA and tour the BUD/S facility. My recruiter was a SEAL and a BUD/S instructor, and he pulled some strings for me. There is a T-shirt shop in Coronado, one that sells shirts to all the graduating members of various BUD/S classes. Each class has their own T-shirt design, and there is a book filled with all the patterns of the T-shirts, some of them going back decades. Most of them were Hoo-yah macho stuff, or funny little witticisms, but there was one that stood out in my mind. I memorized it, and put up in my locker at BUD/S. It came the closest to capturing for me what it is to be in the Navy, and to do the job all of us in IS "A" School will start to do. On the back of the T-shirt was a silhouette of a lone man, holding a rifle, standing watch on a hill. Above him was a small quote, and these are the words I'll leave you with.

It was quote from the Bible, Isaiah 6:8: "And I heard the voice of the Lord say, "Whom shall I send, and whom will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am. Send Me"."

## Images

For those of you that might be interested in Naval Aircraft reproductions, this is the work of Stephan Mudgett, his father, Frank flew the A4 for VA12 in the mid sixties. Check out his website.

[www.stephanmudgett.com](http://www.stephanmudgett.com)



## Ubangi Flag

Just Wondering if anyone has any idea what happened to the the flag that hung in the Ready Room. I know that most of us had our pictures taken in front of it (as seen below) and I thought it would be great if we could find out who might have it, if it still exist. Or maybe we could have a new one made for these reunions. Let me know if anyone has any information regarding the flag.

## Decals

Inclosed with this issue you will find a decal that I was able to make on my computer. Obviously it is not professional quality but I figure it was worth the cost which turned out to be about a buck each, counting the ink. They look ok, on non- tinted glass. I made these so that they can on on the inside of a car window, if anyone wants a reverse copy to go on the outside of a glass, let me know.

