

VP-2—THE NEPTUNE

Volume 1, Issue 20

December 2010

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It was great seeing so many of our members at the Association reunion in Pensacola last month. We're all getting a bit older, and some of us are having more difficulty traveling, so our reunions are gradually getting smaller in size. But, for those who are willing and able to make the extra effort to get together with old friends and squadron-mates from so long ago, each reunion is an especially rewarding event. Again, many thanks to Harry Herman, Jim and Eileen Summitt, Bob Casey, Russell and Peggy Walsh, and Dave Hartsaw for all they did in hosting the Pensacola reunion. We can't say it enough: reunions would be impossible without the volunteer hosts who are so vital in doing the planning and all the detailed work required at a reunion.

At our business meeting, the members present voted to hold the next reunion in 2012 in Fort Worth, TX. Jim and Pat Welch and Bob and Marilyn Satterwhite have volunteered to co-host that reunion, probably in the late September/early October timeframe. In the discussions leading up to the reunion vote, several other potential reunion locations were brought up, but Fort Worth won out, largely due to Jim Welch's convincing briefing on the merits of visiting Fort Worth, and on the fact that we have members willing to host it. We look forward to our Association visiting Fort Worth for the first time in 2012.

Since our last Newsletter, we have been joined by several new members. We welcome them to our Association and look forward to seeing them at future reunions:

- Member 578- Charles Sexton (53-54)
- Member 579- John Morgans (54-57)
- Member 580- Ralph & Brenda Griffiths (68-69)
- Member 581- Leigh & Happy Callaway (68-69)
- Member 582- Levi & Tamara Tarr (67-69)

The VP-2 Association has a new, extremely worthwhile project that is discussed further in an article in this newsletter. After a briefing by Bob Champoux at the reunion banquet, our Executive Board has voted to raise the funds necessary to sponsor the world-famous Truculent Turtle at the Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola. I have appointed Bob Champoux as chairman of the committee to undertake this project.

As we approach the Christmas holiday season, we need to remember all those who serve in our nation's military, many of whom will spend the season on duty, away from home and family. We remember from our days in the military what it was like to be thousands of miles from home during the holidays. We are especially thankful that our military is dedicated to keeping our country safe in these difficult times. We hope that all of our service men and women have a safe and happy holiday season.

Lois and I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Floyd Palmer
President, Patrol Squadron Two Association



Officers:

President – Floyd D. Palmer

1st VP – Dino Vlahakis

2nd VP – Jim Welch

Director – Vic Gulliver

Director – Milt DeBuhr

Director – Arley Hamilton

Secretary/Treasurer –

Doug Donohue



A Report on the Excellent Reunion in Pensacola, Florida

For those who were unable to attend the recent VP-2 reunion in Pensacola, let it be known that a good time was had by all. The rooms and facilities at the Hilton hotel on Pensacola Beach were fantastic. The hotel staff could not have been nicer or more accommodating to our needs. We must emphasize again what a great job our reunion hosts did in making it all come together. One additional note: The reunion committee plans to issue a CD to all of the reunion attendees to include the slide show that was presented at the banquet plus as many other photos as they can gather from the attendees. Send your reunion photos to Jim Summitt either on a CD by mail to Box 250, Niceville, FL 32588-0250 or attach your photos to an email to summittk@cox.net.

On Monday, we checked in to the hotel and gathered at an evening cocktail reception that allowed us to mingle and meet with our old friends from the past and to meet some new members of the Association.

We gathered at the Beach Bum Trolleys at 7:00am Tuesday morning for the ride to the Naval Air Station, where we saw the best of all Blue Angel performances followed by a day at the Naval Aviation Museum. For the Blue Angel show, we had our own grandstand and narrator and a close-up view right next to the runway. Wow!! For many, it was a first trip to the Naval Aviation Museum, which is now so large that it would take days to see it all. We did get to see The Truculent Turtle up close. There is much more on that elsewhere in this newsletter.

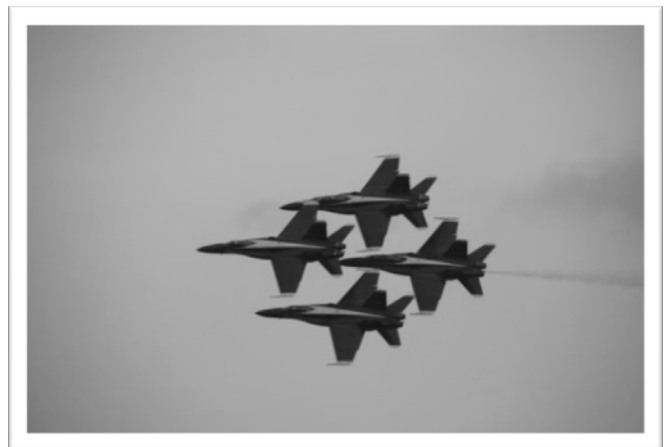
On Wednesday, we held our business meeting in the morning and then had a sit-down lunch in an adjacent meeting room. During the business meeting, elections were held for five of the seven positions on our Association's executive board. Floyd Palmer was reelected as President, Jim Welch was elected as 2nd Vice President, Doug Donohue was reelected as Secretary/ Treasurer, Vic Gulliver was reelected as a Director, and Arley Hamilton was elected to his first term as a Director. Dino Vlahakis continues in his first term as 1st Vice President, and Milt DeBuhr continues in his first term as a Director. After some discussion at the meeting, it was decided that we should hold our 2012 VP-2 reunion in Fort Worth, TX with Jim and Pat Welch and Bob and Marilyn Satterwhite co-hosting the reunion.

The last event of our reunion was a banquet on Thursday evening in the hotel's largest ballroom. With terrific entertainment and a slide show of VP-2 photos from the many eras of the squadron's history, the reunion ended on an upbeat note. Those of us who were able to attend the Pensacola reunion look forward to the next one and hope that as many of our friends as possible can join us in Fort Worth in 2012.



*Former VP-2 CO's Bert Howard,
Bill Foster and Bruce Campbell*

Our own personal Blue Angels Show



The Truculent Turtle: A New Birth

(If you don't read anything else in this Newsletter, be sure to read this.)

The following statement is from the timeline of Patrol Squadron Two that appears in the "Dictionary of American Naval Aviation" which is the most authoritative document on the history of U.S. naval aviation:

"29 Sep 1946: The "Truculent Turtle," the squadron's first P2V-1 Neptune land-based patrol bomber, flew from Perth, Australia to Columbus, Ohio, a distance of 11,236 miles in 55 hours and 18 minutes. The aircraft (bureau number 89082) was manned by Commanders Thomas D. Davies, Eugene P. Rankin, Walter S. Reid and Lieutenant Commander Roy H. Tabelaing. The flight was nonstop, without refueling, establishing a world record for nonstop flight. When the aircraft was taken out of service years later, it was placed on display at NAS Norfolk, VA. This historic aircraft is now on display at the National Museum of Naval Aviation, Pensacola, Fla."

Imagine a low-altitude, mainly over-water flight of 55+ hours with no GPS, no inertial navigation system, no computers, no satellite navigation, barely above stall speed in the first hours, and sucking the tanks dry in the final hours. The enormity of this achievement in flight is best recognized by the fact that the Truculent Turtle's distance record for propeller driven planes went unbroken until Burt Rutan's composite aircraft surpassed the record with an around-the-world flight in 1986... 40 years later.

Those at the Pensacola reunion had the opportunity to see The Turtle up close, parked at the Museum of Naval Aviation and in need of some repair and restoration owing to damage from a recent hurricane. For the record, the airplane was originally named The Turtle, and somewhere along the line became The Truculent Turtle. All the record books call it The Truculent Turtle, so we'll go with that famous title. We were advised during our stay in Pensacola that the museum is seeking a sponsor for The Truculent Turtle to help defray the costs of restoration and future upkeep.

We in the VP-2 Association have a historic relationship with this particular aircraft because we were not only the first squadron to fly P2V-1's, but the Truculent Turtle was actually assigned to VP-2 after the squadron transitioned to P2V's. Our Association president, Floyd Palmer, has set a goal of acquiring the sponsorship of The Truculent Turtle. The executive board of the VP-2 Association has approved that goal and the naming of Bob Champoux as the head of The Truculent Turtle Committee. The cost for such sponsorship is set at \$50,000, and Bob Champoux's main task will be to raise the money necessary to our goal. As sponsor of The Truculent Turtle, our Association's name will be prominently displayed on the signage at the museum that describes this historic aircraft, which will be housed indoors in the museum's new Hangar One complex. Our sponsorship will endure in perpetuity. There is no squadron or other organization with greater ties to the Truculent Turtle than the VP-2 Association.



Now that we have set the goal of raising \$50,000 for this one-of-a-kind opportunity to support our Patrol Squadron Two heritage, we now need to put words into action. We need the generous monetary support of all of our members since we will be raising all the money from within our Association as opposed to going outside to other VP squadrons and veterans as we did with the Whidbey Patrol Squadron Memorial. We are a 501(c)(19) charitable organization with tax-deductible status for all donations to the Association. Help us to "Buy" The Truculent Turtle and further cement our reputation as the most historic P-2 squadron. Call or email Bob Champoux with your questions or comments, and send donations to "The Truculent Turtle" fund (checks made out to the VP-2 Association) to Doug Donohue, who will post the names of all donors on our website at www.patron2.com. If any donor does not want to be listed on the website, let Doug know that with your submission.

A letter from our Association to the National Naval Aviation Museum

November 15, 2010

CAPT Kevin Miller, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
National Naval Aviation Museum
1750 Radford Blvd. Suite B
Pensacola, FL 32508

Dear Captain Miller,

I was one of about 185 members of the VP-2 Association who toured your fantastic museum on November 2, 2010. Speaking for the group, we were all absolutely blown away by the scope and quality of the aircraft and exhibits, and we greatly appreciated the courtesy and helpfulness of the museum personnel with whom we came into contact.

There were so many positive factors at play during our day at the museum that it is difficult to single one out. There was one negative factor, however. None of our members, searching all corners of the museum, were able to find a VP-2 patch on display anywhere... not even on the wall with all the other VP squadron patches.

Our Association represents more than 500 members, all veterans of the now-disestablished Patrol Squadron Two, whose collective service to the Navy and to the nation must total into the many thousands of man-years. Our tour group on November 2nd included three former Commanding Officers of VP-2, whose command tours date back as far as 1960. When solicited, years ago, our Association provided a squadron patch and a plaque for display in the museum. So, we were disappointed that our former squadron, home to the Truculent Turtle in its early years, does not seem to be represented in your displays. As an aside, our Association is actively seeking sponsorship of the Truculent Turtle.

In the event that the museum has misplaced its VP-2 squadron patch, I am enclosing a replacement patch that our members hope will soon become part of your permanent display.

Congratulations on the creation of the finest naval aviation museum anywhere. We hope to visit again soon.

Sincerely and best regards,

Victor S. Gulliver
Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

RANDOM VP-2 INFORMATION

Note: Association members can find a complete roster of the membership on our website at www.patron2.com. Those members who do not have Internet access can request a printed roster from our Secretary/Treasurer, Doug Donohue. Doug will also send Association membership cards to members on request. Note that members' dues due dates are shown on the newsletter mailing labels. Reminders about dues are not sent out to members. Everyone should check their own dues due-date and mail their dues to Doug when appropriate.

Some folks have asked where the Pensacola reunion committee got the model P2V-7 that was given out as a door prize at the banquet. Take a look at www.warplanes.com to see the models and prices available.

PHOTOS NEEDED: Several people need your photos of VP-2 squadron activities:

The Pensacola reunion committee is putting together a CD for all who attended the reunion, to include the slide show we saw at the banquet. They would also like to add any photos that our members took at the reunion. Send your digital photos to Jim Summitt at summittk@cox.net or put them on a CD and mail them to Jim at Box 250, Niceville, FL 32588.

Bob Satterwhite wants to create a slide show to be presented at the Fort Worth Reunion in 2012. Send any and all VP-2 squadron photos, including reunion photos to Bob at bstex@charter.net.

Doug Donohue is always looking for photos of squadron activities to post on our website. Send your photos, including photos of the Pensacola reunion, to Doug at nvsoar@charter.net.

Bruce Walker has asked about the procedures we used to make a "high performance obstacle takeoff." Would any of our former cockpit personnel like to explain those procedures in the next newsletter?

This letter from Kathryn Tubb, the Whidbey Patrol Squadron Memorial 2009 MOAA scholarship winner, was received too late to be included in the June Newsletter:

Hello Mr. Donohue,

Well, I've made it through a terrible bout of papers and projects due in these last two weeks of school and here I am again with a little more information (below) about myself. If you'd like something more/different please let me know. Life has calmed down here so I will be more reliable, especially as I know your deadline is very soon.

Katie

I am the oldest of three kids in my family. Because of my dad's job as a family practice physician we haven't moved a lot for a military family and I was blessed to spend most of my childhood and high school years in Virginia. However, home base has always been rural southwestern Wisconsin for me. Between Wisconsin and Virginia I've grown to love history, a good thing as that is what I am studying in college. Aside from enjoying the history of my tight knit family through countless scrapbooks and stories and the history that is made in my own backyard at Washington, D.C. I love to read everything from children's stories to nonfiction. I also love to play piano and I am the resident cookie baker at my house. My other hobbies include nearly anything outside, whether that is going for a walk, playing catch and basketball, gardening, or working on a home remodeling project. An expensive, and certainly not regular hobby of mine is to travel. I love seeing and experiencing how other people live, whether in other parts of the United States or across the oceans. As for my future plans, this summer I will be studying German and looking at options for after I graduate from Grove City next year. Someday I hope to teach middle school or high school history but until then the possibilities are wide open.

The picture I've included is of me and my brother Samuel this



past Easter break at Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs. We were visiting my aunt and the Air Force Academy of which my dad is a 1981 grad. My brother is a senior in high school and will be attending the Merchant Marine Academy next year. I am very proud!

The following update from Katie Tubb was received in October:

Dear Whidbey Patrol Squadron Memorial,

Hello again! Last I wrote you, I was looking forward to summer vacation in Wisconsin, taking German, and sending my brother to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY. Looking back on this side of summer I am amazed at all the change that happened. I spent some very valuable time with my family in rural, southwest Wisconsin while I taught myself enough German to pass the College Level Entrance Placement (CLEP) test. My family was very patient with me when I buckled down to study while they enjoyed vacationing in Wisconsin. Sending my brother off to school was also a summer challenge. We miss him a lot, but are very proud of him. It was fantastic to see him again on Parent's Weekend. I'm sure you understand when I say that he has grown up a lot!

Speaking of growing up, my studies at school – history and religion at Grove City College in Grove City, PA - have proved even more challenging than last year and have already tested my endurance. Nevertheless, I'm enjoying what I'm learning and I am very content here. I have been blessed with three (and counting) years here with wonderful teachers, mentors, friends and memories. As happy as I am here, a small part of me is looking forward to graduation and trying the next new challenge.

But until that point, I want to thank you for your financial help, because it is by you and MOAA that I have been able to stay at Grove City College. We discovered last semester that my family could not use the G.I. Bill benefits at Grove City because they do not accept federal funding. The MOAA loans and grants have therefore been very valuable to us as a family. Thank you for caring about young people and investing in them.

A letter from Alexander Gerges on September 8, 2010
on his selection for the Patrol Squadron Two MOAA 2010-2011 scholarship.

Dear Whidbey Patrol Squadron Memorial Foundation,

Thank you for selecting me as the *Patrol Squadron Two Association Sponsor of the Whidbey Patrol Squadron Memorial* Designated Scholar for the 2010-2011 school year. I want to thank you especially since this will be the second year that your Foundation has chosen to sponsor me specifically and that is extremely generous of you. Your gift greatly assists me as a non-scholarship ROTC cadet at Pittsburg State University.

I remain a history and international studies major at Pittsburg State, but am a senior here and I gained more responsibilities. For example, I am now living off campus as the senior roommate who is charge of ensuring the bills and rent gets paid. More importantly however, I am the cadet company commander of our ROTC battalion and as such, I must carry out these duties for this semester along with my normal course work.

Last summer I was unable to attend the Leadership Development and Assessment Course evaluation because I was placed on a profile and needed to fully recover before attending. I will get the chance, however, to attend LDAC next summer and still commission next May. Before I was placed on this profile I was able to complete most of a Cadet Troop Leadership Training program with a Field Artillery Battery with the 1st Infantry Division. I learned a great deal about how the actual army operates on a day to day basis and I hope that I can put this experience to good use here at my ROTC program and in my future career.

I still intend to commission as an officer in the United States Army and since last year I have taken more steps towards this goal. Last winter I contracted and upon my graduation and completion of LDAC I will become a second lieutenant and fulfill my goal of serving my country. I still intend to branch armor because of my interest in tanks and because I feel that to really do my duty I should serve in a combat arms branch.

Once again, thank you for your continued generosity. I am glad to see that you still believe me worthy this honor and privilege.

Respectfully,



Alexander T. Gerges



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

BY DOUG MILLAR

Many of us recently returned from the reunion in Pensacola and it was certainly a great event. I want to add my personal thanks to those of you who helped organize and orchestrate this as it was certainly well done. The day at NAS Pensacola was very inspiring, beginning with the performance by the Blue Angels, and continuing with time to browse and enjoy the displays at the air museum. There were many fine restaurants close to the hotel where we saw small groups of attendees enjoying each other's company throughout the week. Of course most of us had been stationed at "Main Side" sometime during our training, so it was fun to reflect back on how great we were back in those days! (If only we could have been half as good then as we now remember, we would probably have all become astronauts.) Things change, and it is a blessing that we tend to forget the hard things and remember and focus on the good things.

Speaking of change: someone wiser than myself once said, "The only constant in life is change." Do you find change to be frustrating and very time consuming? I certainly do. Every time I buy a new telephone, or alarm clock, or wristwatch, or even an automobile – I find that I must spend hours reading through a 70-plus-page manual just to find out how to do something that I thought I already knew how to do. For example, when my wife and I returned from Pensacola we received a letter telling us that, due to the new health care reform law, the medical insurance that we have used for years is pulling out of the rural areas of the country and must be replaced with something else (more expensive) on January 1, 2011. This certainly is not the end of the world but it is taking

much research and thought to decide what is the best way to go for next year. (So much for all of the political promises that, "If you like what you have at present, you can keep it!")

However there is something that has not, and will not change. That is God and His Son Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us in the book of Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 8 that, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever." The same is true of the reason for Christmas. We love to enjoy Christmas in many ways - whether with family or friends, in giving and receiving gifts, in listening to or perhaps being involved in making music, crafts, special meals, etc. But the reason for Christmas is much deeper than any of these things. The Bible makes it clear that Christ came to Earth for one basic reason – that being to die! He was chosen by God the Father (and willingly accepted the task) to be born as a human; spend 33 years here working, doing good things, displaying God's power; and ultimately to give up His own life on a Roman cross. Why? Because He was becoming the substitutionary payment (or redeemer) for all of the sins of mankind. According to Romans 6:23, "The wages for sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Thus, according to the justice of God, the death of a perfect sacrifice was required to pay for the sins of mankind – and Christ was that perfect sacrifice. Just like any gift, this free gift of eternal life must be accepted by us to be of any value to us. If you have never personally accepted the gift - then do so today. Accept God's forgiveness of your sin and receive His gift of eternal life. You will never regret it.

That's what Christmas is all about. The songs and lights and trappings of

Christmas may change - but the reason for, and the meaning of, Christmas will never change. May this be a happy and joyful Christmas for you and yours.

In Memoriam

We have learned of the loss of the following association members since the last newsletter:

Kent McKnight (squadron 56-59)
(Sep 09)

Charles R. Leonard (squadron 46-49)
(Oct 09)

Jack Chapman (squadron 50-53)
(Dec 09)

Leroy Betts (squadron 59-62)
(Apr 10)

Donald M. Swendsen (squadron 64-66)
(Jun 10)

Don Melton (squadron 55-56)
(July 10)

Joseph E. Chruma (squadron 58-62)
(July 10)

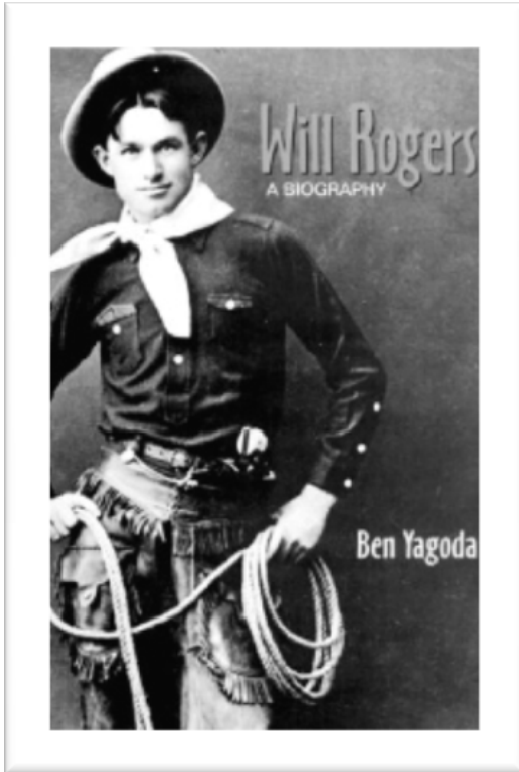
Donald C. Hanson (squadron 58-61)
(Oct 10)

Dorothy Morris (husband
Donald F Morris)(squadron 59-62)

If you know of the passing of any of our former VP-2 personnel, please advise Doug Donohue by email at nvsoar@charter.net



Will Rogers was quite the cowboy, with all the wisdom of simple, honest folk. His words still ring with common sense today...



Simple Truths

Will Rogers, who died in a 1935 plane crash with his best friend, Wylie Post, was probably the greatest political sage this country has ever known.

Enjoy the following:

1. Never slap a man who's chewing tobacco.
2. Never kick a cow chip on a hot day.
3. There are two theories to arguing with a woman . . . Neither works.
4. Never miss a good chance to shut up.
5. Always drink upstream from the herd.
6. If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.
7. The quickest way to double your money is to fold it and put it back into your pocket.
8. There are three kinds of men: The ones that learn by reading. The few who learn by observation. The rest of them have to pee on the electric fence and find out for themselves.
9. Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.
10. If you're riding' ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there.
11. Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier'n puttin' it back.



VP-2 Association Officers *and Appointments*



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Looking to Share Information
in the
VP 2 Neptune Newsletter?

If any of our members
would like to contribute
news, thoughts,
experiences, etc.,
please email:
Floyd D. Palmer at:

Floyddp@palmerbusservice.com

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