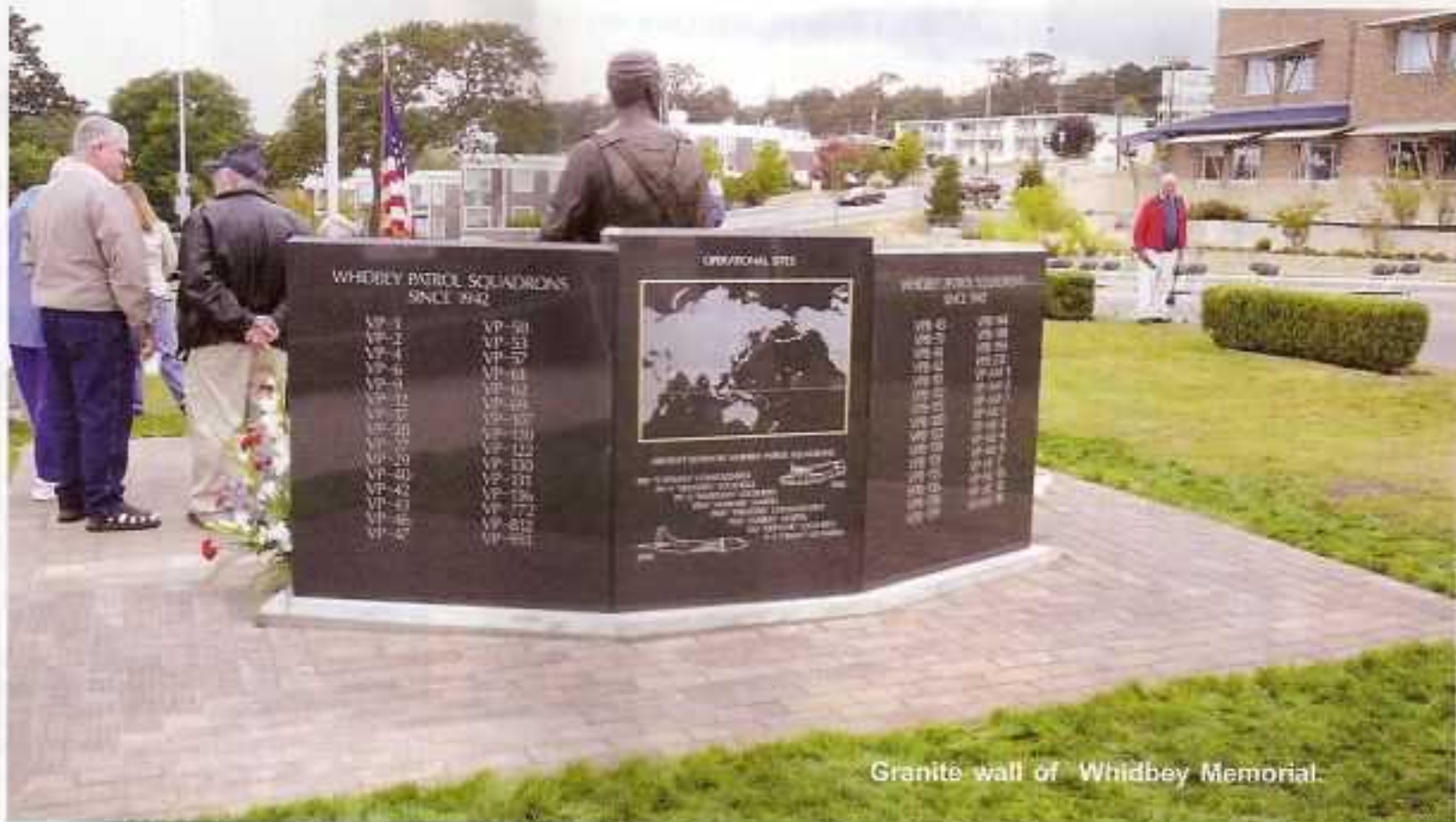


# Whidbey Patrol Squadron Memorial Dedicated

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NOVEMBER



Granite wall of Whidbey Memorial.

The dream of a group of NAS Whidbey Island patrol squadron veterans to build a Memorial to those who served and to those who perished in patrol squadron operations became a reality on September 14, 2006 in Oak Harbor, Washington. In a ceremony in Oak Harbor's Veterans Memorial Park before an audience of nearly 700 people, Floyd Palmer, president of the VP-2 Association, presented the Memorial to Oak Harbor's Mayor, Patty Cohen.

In her speech following the Memorial's transfer to the city, Mayor Cohen remarked that the Navy's patrol squadrons were long overdue for recognition because their missions were always classified and very few outside of the patrol squadron community knew the importance of what they did. Mayor Cohen is a long-time resident of Oak Harbor and two-term Mayor, whose late father served in the Navy in the 1940's.

CAPT David M. Taylor, Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing TEN, the principal speaker at the dedication ceremony, emphasized the contributions of patrol squadrons at NAS Whidbey Island from WWII through the Cold War and enduring to the present. He mentioned the "cat and mouse" game that was played between

VP crews and Soviet submarines, eventually wearing the Soviets down. Those patrol squadron veterans in the audience nodded their acknowledgment that, for years, VP crews had tracked Soviet submarines relentlessly whenever they were detected outside their home waters.

There was hardly a dry eye in the crowd as the ceremony concluded with the Navy Hymn performed by the Northwest Navy Ceremonial band, a gun salute and the playing of Taps.

The names of eighty-seven airmen who perished in P2V squadron operations while home-based at NAS Whidbey Island are etched in the granite walls of the Memorial. The families of many of those airmen attended the Memorial dedication ceremony to witness what, for them, was

a closure of sorts after the many years since the deaths of their loved ones. Some family members were seen tracing the names from the granite walls after the ceremony.

The Whidbey Patrol Squadron Memorial was a project initiated and created by the Patrol Squadron Two Association and funded largely by contributions from Whidbey Island VP squadron veterans, local businesses and civic organizations. The Memorial consists of a larger-than-life sized statue of an airman in vintage 1960's flight gear standing before a three-panel granite wall which, in addition to the names of lost airmen, contains a complete listing of the sixty patrol squadrons that have operated from NAS Whidbey Island since 1942. The bronze statue is the artwork of the noted sculptor, Michael Maiden, who also created the statues for the Monument to Naval Aviation in Virginia Beach and the EA-6B Memorial on the base at NAS Whidbey Island. The Whidbey Patrol Squadron Memorial is believed to be the first and only Memorial dedicated to the memory and service of patrol squadron veterans. The center panel of the granite wall contains the Memorial's dedication which appears on the opposite page. ■



Front view of Memorial.



Clockwise from top left, Floyd Palmer, President of the VP-2 Association; CAPT David Taylor, Commander Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing TEN; Patty Cohen, Mayor of Oak Harbor; lady traces name on the Memorial; and patrol veterans examine map etched on granite wall.

THIS MEMORIAL IS DEDICATED TO ALL  
UNITED STATES NAVY PERSONNEL WHO  
SERVED IN NAVY PATROL SQUADRONS  
BASED AT NAS WHIDBEY ISLAND, AND  
TO THE MANY WHIDBEY AIRMEN WHO  
LOST THEIR LIVES IN VP OPERATIONS.  
  
WE HONOR THEM ALL