ISSUE 48 VW-1 TRACKER APRIL 2012

TUCSON, AZ - April 15 - 19, 2013

It is a done deal. We will be going to Tucson in mid-April next year. Beginning Monday, April 15 and checking out on Friday, April 19; a total of four nights needed in the hotel. I know many of you like to come early and/or stay late. We have a contract giving the rate and free buffet breakfast for three days both preceding and following our event. As usual, we encourage you to consider this because there is much more to see there than we have time to schedule during the actual reunion.

The host hotel will be the Viscount Suite Hotel at 4855 E. Broadway in Tucson. To visit their site online go to www.viscountsuite.com The rate is $ 79.00 per night (plus tax and hotel fees). For those of you who have pets, this can be arranged on an individual basis, depending on your pet's size and what you have for their living arrangements. When you call for your reservation, ask them about it and negotiate individually. I understand there is not an additional charge for it but they want to be assured that you have a facility to house your animal and that it will not disturb the other guests. Once the Viscount has a chance to set up a link for making reservations online, Pete will get it on the web site. Be sure to tell them you are with the VW-1 All Hands Alumni Group if you choose to call them direct. The number is 1-800-527-9666.

The breakfast buffet which is included in your hotel rate is very complete. As a corned beef hash lover I was pleased to see that as a staple each morning. Every day but Monday and Tuesday they have an on-site chef that will cook omelets to order or make you a waffle. There will be a lot more detail about the reunion in the July issue. The only goal here is to get you the exact dates you need to set aside to be able to attend the Tucson reunion. In July we will fill you in on all there is to see and do in the Tucson area. We did get to visit a few important places while there. The Pima Air Museum is a must, of course. We also went to the Missile Silo south of Tucson, the Gaslight Theater and the Pinnacle Peak attraction.

A huge THANK YOU goes to three people in making this site visit both successful and enjoyable. Judy Stotts, from Texas, did not want me to be there alone and – at her own expense – flew into Tucson to help me research this upcoming reunion. I'm sure without her superior navigational skills I would probably be wrapped around a saguaro cactus somewhere in Arizona instead of being safely back at home. I thank Mac, her husband, for lending her to me for the week. They are both ardent supporters of VW-1 and have attended all but one of the reunions. Steve and Marilyn Birdman, VW-1 members and residents of Tucson, went out of their way BIG TIME to make us feel welcome and to be of assistance with information about their town. We were there six nights and they fed us three of them! Since our tour of the Air Museum never happened due to the contact there having to go home ill with strep throat, Steve and Marilyn are going to get that done for us in the near future so they are continuing to be a huge help. It was a pleasure getting to know them better.

Since I was flying out of Phoenix, I also had the opportunity to get in touch with another member, John Castle who rescued me from a lonely motel room Saturday evening. He and his wife Judy took me out to dinner and I had a great visit. They also have offered to help in any way they can at the Tucson reunion.

In speaking with potential new members about our organization I always tell them that we have the greatest group of people that have ever comprised any organization and that fact has been brought home to me over and over again, especially throughout these past difficult months. The Tucson trip was just another example where their loving nature and innate graciousness has been substantiated. VW-1 folks, you're the GREATEST!

-- News from Cyberspace & Mail Call --

Email Removed VW-1 Web Page: http://vw1assoc.tripod.com/

Bill & Kathy Green (1/16) Email Removed "Is there anything I can do to help for the reunion in Tucson? My son lives there and my in-laws were there when they were living, so I do have some familiarity with the place. If you are not already aware there is one place that should be on our list of places to see and that is the Pima Air Museum. They have several Connie's (including Eisenhower's Columbine which you can tour) and one Air Force EC121. I don't know if they still do the tour of the "bone yard" where they store all the old aircraft at Davis-Mothan AFB. You could, at one time, buy the ticket at the Pima Air Museum and the Air Force bus would pick you right up in front of the museum. I think it lasts a couple of hours."

Chuck North (1/16) Email Removed "I'm not sure if this e-mail will make it to the correct folks who can help. I'm looking for help to prove I was in Vietnam during my time with VW-1, ie: 1968 – 1970 on Crew 7. I can't remember too many names. One was Chief Shorty Lagualt, who was one of the engineers and the Plane Commander was a LC who had been enlisted and made officer during the war. I was a metalsmith/hydraulics man, started flying as an E-3 in December of '68. I was one of the folks who went TAD to Oxnard, CA around Sept. of '69 thru Dec. of '69. I was transferred out of the squadron after the TAD tour in California and, unfortunately I was assigned to a squadron of Attack planes vs. staying with the 121's. Bummer! I need to prove to the VA that I was "boots on the ground" because of medical conditions I have. Any help would be appreciated. If this is the correct place, please e-mail me back at my home e-mail Email Removed and I will reply with more information. Thank you."

Rich & Paula Kuebler (1/18) Email Removed "For MANY years I would not let anyone know I was in Vietnam. Since joining the Alum, I wear my Vietnam hat more often. I am proud of what we did over there. I would like to share with ya'll an experience Paula and I had at a local Kroger grocery store. A woman came up to me and asked "Vietnam vet?" I replied "Yes, Ma'm". She said she lost her Vietnam vet a couple of months ago. (This was just before Christmas). Her eyes teared up and so did mine as she hugged me. A few minutes later we were going down an aisle and another woman stopped me and thanked me for my service and apologized for the way I was treated when I returned home. I hope you have such experiences. It does the heart good."

Steve Birdman (1/18) Email Removed "Just a quick note to say hi. I am delighted that the VW-1 group has elected to have the next reunion here in Tucson. Please let me know how we can help you in getting things set up. Marilyn and I will be more than happy to be your eyes, ear and legs in obtaining information in regard to hotel and activity options for you to consider. We look forward to hearing from you."

(Note: Thanks, Steve for being so helpful in showing us around during the April Tucson trip)

Lee Kalsch (1/19) Email Removed "Thanks for spreading the word about my custom license plates. I have three probable takers so far. The e-mail address you posted is obsolete and I use Verizon for all my activity these days. Please use the Verizon address for contact. I misspoke earlier about the plates being on hand here in Sebastian. They are at my NJ home, but not a problem. Our lovely daughter is happy to pack and send the orders out for us. "

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ED METZGER ...with wife Sally on February 3, 2012. Jack and Sydnie Gergal stopped by on their way home to Pennsylvania and had a visit. This picture is treasured as it is the last picture taken of Ed before being diagnosed with cancer on February 15. He died on February 27th.

Tribute to our VW-1 President

All of you have lost loved ones and know the heartache that loss brings. Over the years Ed and I have seen many of you lose your lifetime mate and, considering we are all senior citizens, this cruel fact is going to increase rather than decrease. Forgive me giving so much time and space in this April Tracker to Ed because I know his loss for me is no greater than the losses that so many of you have suffered. But I claim the time and space for him because the truth is that without Ed there would be no VW-1 All Hands Alumni Association. Without Ed I would not be sitting here now doing the 48th issue of the Tracker. Without Ed you and I would not have so many VW-1 shipmates spread throughout the country that we count as friends. He served as President of the group since its inception in 1999 and it was always a labor of love for him.

Ed was born in Connecticut in 1938 and had a usual rural upbringing with his only brother. As a high school dropout he enlisted in the Navy just before his 17th birthday (1955) and was sent to boot camp as soon as he turned 17. I met him a couple of months before he left and thought of him as a "nice kid". My friends teased me that he had a "crush" on me. I was 18 and a freshman in college and never considered him in any romantic role. He asked if I would write to him and, since I wrote to a dozen servicemen friends, I agreed immediately. Well, you know the end of this story. Each time he came home the "kid" had matured and gradually become a man. He knew what he wanted and I have known for many, many years that I was very fortunate that he wanted me. He was tenacious as a bulldog and kept chipping away at my defenses. We married in 1958 and were blessed to have 53 years together.

We had three children, a son and then two girls. Like so many of you, we travelled with those three from Florida (where Dan was born); to Bath, ME (where the girls were born); to TN,

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Tribute (Continued from Page 3)

Hawaii, Guam, TN, Rhode Island, back to Florida, then Maryland and finally home to CT. Not an unusual story for VW-1 folks. Lots of memories along the way which I hold close to my heart. Those three children blessed us with six grandchildren and four great grandchildren. When we lost our daughter Kerri to scleraderma in 2001 we were privileged to bring up her daughter, Morgan, who is now a senior in high school. She has been a blessing to us over the past 11 years and we were excited when she made the decision to attend Auburn University in Alabama this fall. She will major in biochemistry and hopes to go on to the veterinarian school.

One of Ed's proudest moments was making E-9. Over the years he got his GED, took advantage of every opportunity that came his way to make the next grade and dreamed of one day becoming a Chief. He never dared to imagine he could be E-9, but he did aspire to E-7. That achievement convinced him that he wasn't the dumb high school dropout or the student who struggled and he finally realized his potential and believed in himself 100%. He never again took the back seat but led in everything we tackled from that time on, whether it be a bowling league, a fishing club, a civic organization or our beloved VW-1 All Hands Association.

In 1999 when we started the VW-1 reunion group we really had no idea of what we were starting. It was just a germ of an idea that seemed to begin and end with the thought that it would be fun to have a few reunions and meet a few other VW-1'ers. After nine reunions we are in awe of how it has grown and developed. Ed was most proud of the fact that the group has been able to help some shipmates get their VA benefits by providing documentation of boots on the ground for shipmates. We now have about 260 active members and our last reunion included about 130 attendees.

Pete Wasmund, our webmaster, has done a great job of getting word out to those of you with computers regarding Ed's illness so I will be brief about it. Ed started having pain in his shoulder and back shortly after the Branson reunion and was diagnosed with neuropathy. As the pain increased, an MRI showed he needed a spinal fusion for a disc problem in the lower back. Over the next couple of months they tried shots, therapy, etc. and settled on surgery for Jan. 10th. In the meantime the pain had increased considerably and he was using a walker. Surgery was cancelled on the 10th due to the surgeon's unavailability, then on the 17th, it was postponed because Ed's blood pressure was 80 over 40 and they determined he had a bleed somewhere. Over the next week we built him up with iron, etc. and he finally had the surgery on the 24th of January. We knew we were in for about six months of a back brace and no fishing, but at least we had turned the corner and he was on his way to recovery. When the Gergal's visited on February 3rd Ed seemed to be recovering nicely and we had a great visit.

Over the next few days he began to decline. On Feb. 8th our doctor determined he had anoher bleed; an endoscopy on the 9th found nothing, then a transfusion on the 10th because his red blood count was so low. It was on the 10th when we first had a clue there was a major problem as we spoke with a cancer and blood specialist and arranged for tests on the 13th and 15th. As a result of those tests we were told on the 15th that he had a mass in his lung and they strongly suspected it was in his bones, liver, kidneys, lymph nodes, etc. There was no treatment recommended. He died 12 days later on the 27th of February.

I give you this detail because, like me, I suspect you look at the picture above and wonder how someone can go from that picture to passing in so short a time. I also tell you this because, for me, it is a catharsis. I am still trying to grasp all that has changed in my life.

There is one thing I know for sure. I have every intention of staying involved in the VW-1 All Hands Alumni Association. We have always encouraged the widows to stay involved and I will take full advantage of that policy. My trip to Tucson was successful and we now have a host hotel for the Tucson reunion and specific dates so you can make your plans to attend. A reunion without Ed by my side will seem very strange, but I know the support of our VW-1 family will prevail and it will be the joyous celebration that all our reunions have been.

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Dues Reminder

Not yet, but the month (May) of paying your dues is getting close and this will be the last Tracker until July. On May 31 we will send out notices to all unpaid members, but since we are always interested in saving a nickel ... or more precisely, 45 cents... we are reminding you a bit early.

If you wish to save us that stamp in May, just write a check prior to May 25 for $ 15.00, payable to:

Sally Metzger
Address Removed
Address Removed

and drop it in the mail.

Many of you have already paid. If your not sure of your status, just check the mailing label on this newsletter. If the date is 5/1/2012 then your dues are due. Any year after 2012 indicates you are currently paid up until the date shown. Thank you for your continuing support.



JOHN AND KAREN MARTIN ... were on the scene at the Metzger's house in Florida in 1999 when the first VW-1 reunion was being planned. They were among the very first members to join, but had not yet been at a reunion until Branson 2011. John was an Aviation Machinist Mate in VW-1 from November 1964 to November 1967. He flew as Crew Chief on Crew 5. The Martin's live in Keno, OR during most of the year but take off in their RV to travel to sunnier sites during the dead of winter.

New Members

Jim House — **LT**
Address Removed — 1/69 – 8/71
Lutz, Address Removed — Phone Removed
Wife: Linda — Email Removed

Night Navigator, Electronics Branch Officer. Flew with Crew 2.

Michael Svoboda — **LT**
Address Removed — 12/59-10/62
Downers Grove, IL 05 — Contact Details Removed
Wife: Alice

Air Intercept Controller; Air Intelligence. Accounted for flight hours, gas, etc.



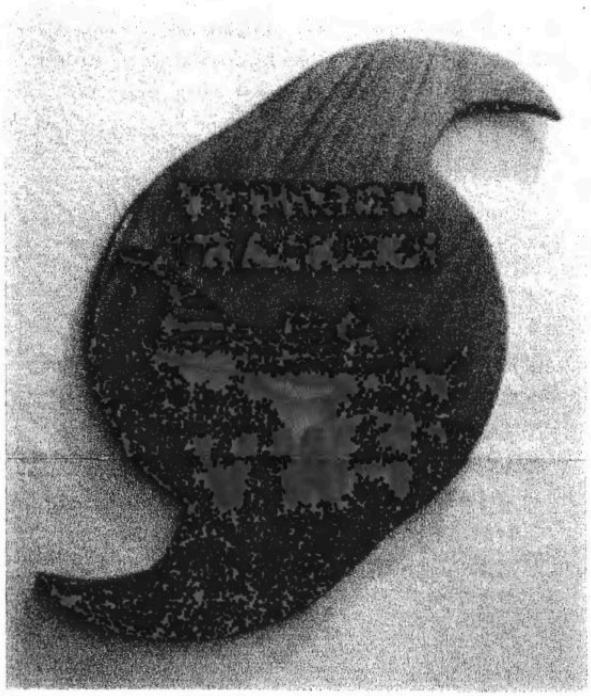
For reasons he never quite understood, the Ensign's first tour was a little "rocky."

News from Cyberspace (Continued from Page 2)

Jim House (1/19) Email Removed "I was running around the internet looking for patches and found you guys. Great to see some old names and see pics of faces, etc. Quite a site!! Look forward to further interaction."

(NOTE: Jim cc'ed me an email he sent to espador which read: "I have all my ORIGINAL flight orders. There are VW-1 orders to VW-1 Det "C", Chu Lai and Danang if that would help. I also remember you there. I'd like to talk w/you as I have made a couple of low passes on the Agent Orange thing, but really haven't pushed it. I live in Tampa, FL." Thank you, Jim)

John & Linda Moehlenkamp (1/19) "
Email Removed "I received the latest newsletter earlier this week. It was good to that the auction was so successful. Linda and I had a blast. After the reunion, we went about five miles west and spent the weekend with my brother and sister-in-law, who drove down from Kansas City. We hadn't seen them in about three years. The wall plaque that I purchased at the auction was made by Lenn Bailey. He was in the squadron when we were out there.



Dino Marchione (1/31) Email Removed
"I was going through an old edition (Jan.2011) of the Tracker and, believe it or not, I saw a name that was stationed on Guam the same time period as me (1962/1963). I called him up yesterday, said my name and asked if he might have remembered me. Now mind you, it has been 48 years since we last saw each other, FORTY EIGHT YEARS!!! Not only did he remember me, he was like a historian for the squadron. He was mentioning names that have long ago left my memory hard drive. I was astonished at his recall ability. We talked for over an hour and a half, just as though we were still in the barracks after work. What a great person. What a great Squadron that was. That was my best tour in my thirty year career. Oh, by the way, he is Marcus Benny Sheene. He goes by Ben. He is a wealth of information for happenings and events of VW-1. Email Removed Thank you both for your time, devotion and hard work in keeping such a wonderful Squadron ALIVE. Many memories, many good happenings, and most of all, many, many good friends."

Everett Speas (2/5) Email Removed "I haven't been on the computer much the last month. I had surgery the first of Dec.; then some very long and bad anxiety attacks and spent ten days in the hospital for that until they got the meds at the right to keep me from getting anymore. Then two days after I got home I got up from working on the computer trying to get caught up and my back went out. Hope bad things happening are done!"

Gary & Gay Oulman (2/10) Email Removed "We went to a funeral for a gal from our church. Her hubby was a flight engineer in VW-1, then made warrant officer, but still spent four tours in on Guam; also did time in BARSRON. Hawaii and Millington, ending up an instructor in

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News from Cyberspace (Continued from Page 7)

Millington. His name was Charlie Wossum and her name is Ruby. She was also a teacher on Guam. Just wondering if anyone may have known him and/or her. Gary did not know him, but says the name if familiar. Ruby was a great gal. Charlie finished his career as a WO-3. According to their daughter, they were in VW-1 in 64 – 66 when we were there. The one and only cruise book we have is from 64-65 and his name is not mentioned."

Nacho & Joyce Rodriguez (3/8) Email Removed "We recently went to lunch with Carol and Carl Vonasch. Like us, they were first timers at the Branson reunion. They live only 15 minutes from us. We had a nice visit at their lovely home afterwards and promised to stay in touch on a more frequent basis."

Nacho & Joyce Rodriguez (3/30) "Nacho was released Friday night after spending the week in the hospital after an aggressive medical cocktail. It was touch and go for 3 days getting that fever and infection under control. His broncoscopy went well and the pathology reports indicated an old viral infection that was already present in his system as well as a severe bacterial pneumonia in both his lungs. A lot of people in our area have been coming down with upper respiratory infections due to the unusual climate patterns. He may also have been exposed to some toxins while working on a bathroom project at the VFW. Despite the fact that he is good at regular physical checkups, gets his flu shot yearly and doesn't smoke does not mean any of us are immune to those super mutant bugs out there. I am on antibiotics now after my routine checkup. I was coming down with a respiratory infection that was affecting my lungs and bronchial airways. One minute you are feeling fine and the next you are flat on your back. This flu/pneumnia stuff is nothing to fool with. I met a girlfriend at a Christmas dance I had not seen in a year. That following May, at age 65, she passed away from pneumonia. So don't mess around with self-medicating more than two days. If in doubt, check it out. The VA where I attend a Veteran wives support group and learn a lot of information regarding health issues and benefits told us that a lot of the Nam era vets are in that age range of more health issues that are on the rise and to be prepared. While we have always been aware of our aging health issues, this latest hospitalization drove home the point to seize the moment. Our heartfelt gratitude goes out for all the prayer and support we received."

John & Karen Martin (3/31) Email Removed "We are camping across the Colorado River in California and some big winds come through here thanks to the Pacific storms. We will soon be pulling out to go home to Oregon. I have taken on the job of playing piano at the little church down the road from us and will be doing the music for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Then we leave on April 9, going to Idaho first; then on home to Bend. No great hurry since it has been snowing a lot in Oregon this week again. Avalanches recently blocked some travelers on a highway near Bend."

Richard Bleakney (4/2) Email Removed (NOTE: New e-mail address) "I believe my old e-mail address was hacked. Do not open any mail from the Email Removed address from now on. Sorry about that. Don't know how it happened!"

Sally Metzger (4/23) Help! I know you read it in the Tribute to Ed, but want to reiterate here. I really would appreciate someone taking over the ship's store job. That was always Ed's baby and one that I would like to pass on. I'd be happy to pack everything we have here up and ship it to you. It includes pins, patches, many hats and little or no shirts since they were being custom made. Call me – e-mail me – send smoke signals if you have any interest.

Tribute (Continued from Page 7)

With the help of other members, I am in the process of picking activities, getting contracts, and working to make the next reunion successful. It will be very hard to compete with the standard set in Branson last year, but it is all about getting together, sharing sea stories and feeling the love. I have contracted for 50 rooms and am confident that we will have them filled.

My goal now is to help keep the VW-1 family intact and prospering. There are a couple of voids that will need filling. First, and most important, is to fill the position of President. Pete Wasmund, who is now acting President, is not interested in serving in this position, but will do so until the elections next year. As webmaster he has his hands full and prefers to concentrate on this aspect of VW-1. At the Tucson meeting we will be asking for someone who is willing to serve as President. We need a member who will view it as a labor of love, as Ed did, and who will enjoy being the front man to this wonderful group. Think about this opportunity to serve our organization and let us know if you would like to be considered so we have your name put forth during our next elections. We also need someone to take over the ship's store. I would be happy to be relieved of this chore over the next year and would gladly pack up and send everything we have to someone else to handle. If you would like to assume this responsibility, give me a call Phone Removed

Thank you for your understanding in dedicating so much of this issue to Ed and our personal story. Ed was – and for me will always be – the heart and soul of the VW-1 All Hands Alumni Association. Without him it would never have been and it has made a significant difference in many of our lives. He will be greatly missed by his many, many friends.



Address Removed

VW-1 Association
c/o Ed & Sally Metzger
Address Removed





Mailing Code Removed