VW-1 All Hands Alumni Association

VW-1 TRACKER



May 2015

TE00 - TE1 - TE2 - TE3 - TE4 - TE5 - TE6 - TE7 - TE8 - TE9 - TE10 - TE11 - TE12

NAS BARBERS POINT, HAWAII NAS AGANA, GUAM, NS SANGLEY POINT, PHILIPPIANS NAS ATSUKI, JAPAN OKINAWA, JAPAN, CHU LAI, VIETNAM

IT'S BRANSON INSTEAD

REUNION 2016 SITE CHANGED SAN ANTONIO OUT

By Sally Metzger

The trip to San Antonio, TX was made the week of April 5th and, for the first time in the history of VW-1, the results were not favorable. I apologize for that since San Antonio was the first choice of the majority, but from day one there was a total lack of co-operation from the Visitor Bureau and I resorted to working with a military reunion planner. They simply did not listen to what I was telling them and the three hotels they set up for me to visit were not appropriate. The first was in the middle of a concrete jungle, the second did not have the necessary meeting room space and the third cancelled on us. San Antonio has grown to be a large city since our visit there in 2000 and the lengthy walking involved and the five lane highways were very unattractive.

I called Ralph Link, our President, and told him I could not, in good conscience, plan a reunion in that location. Ralph contacted the Board and the decision was made to go to the number #2 choice from the Williamsburg reunion, which was Branson, MO.

Since we had a very successful reunion at the Carion Hotel in 2011, I called and was pleased to find myself speaking with the same group sales person, Kathy Richardson. When I asked if Joe Cuna, the catering manager, was still there she said "yes." That was especially good news as Joe endeared himself to everyone at the last reunion and was the one responsible for creating the DVD tribute to the VW-1 group. So here is the deal:

The Clarion Hotel, 2820 W. Hwy. 76
800-725-2236 / 417-334-7666
May 9 – 13, 2016 (Monday to Friday)

Be sure to say you are with the VW-1 All Hands Group. The price will be $ 79.00 (single and/or double), $ 89 for triples and $ 99 for Quads – plus applicable taxes. The three days prior to and following the reunion dates will be honored at that price.

Some of you will be pleased at this news; some of you will probably be disappointed. Please understand and keep in mind that what is important is that we get together and have the opportunity to renew old friendships and enjoy our memories of VW-1.

There are 40 rooms reserved for our group so if at all possible get your reservation in early. Last Branson Reunion many reserved late and found that there wasn't any more rooms available on the Reunion dates and had to use a different hotel. I'm confident we will have a great time because I have always known that the VW-1 membership consists of the greatest people ever assembled in one organization……

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SCUTTLEBUTT from your PRESIDENT

Well shipmates, after a long winter spring has finally arrived here in central Illinois. Hope all is well with all of you. Jane and I finally got away for a couple of weeks with visits to Memphis to see Pete Wasmund and play a couple of rounds of golf with him. Pete was kind enough to invite us to stay with him and Happy his lively dog.
Then off to Florida to vist Gary and Gay Oulman for a few days and catching up on news of their trip to Duva. They were surprised how everything has changed in 50 years since our VW -1 days there. They have agreed to provide a presentation of their trip at our next reunion.
From Florida we were off to Pennsylvania to visit Jane's sister and family in the Amish country and then back to Illinois.

As you will be made aware, Sally Metzger called me when we were in Tennesee from San Antonio about difficulties putting together our next reunion. Long story short, with safety and logistical concerns, I along with a dicision of a majority of the board, we moved the 2016 reunion to Branson. Sally puts her heart and soul trying to provide the best experience for all members. She deserves our praise and gratitude for all she does.

We lost a very good friend, Don Ray passed away April 16, 2015 when we were on our trip. Don and I served together in VW-1 in the mid sixties. I was reunited with him and his wife Helen at the first reunion in Branson. Helen passed unexpectedly several years ago and Don never was the same since. A celebration of life was held April 23rd at the Beyers Funeral home. Gary and Gay Oulman was able to attend and represented the VW-1 family.

Happiness and health to all,

Ralph Link

VW-1 2014 Financial Report

Beginning Balance 1/1/14		$3,604.14
Income:		
Dues		$3,090.00
Hats/Pins/Patches/etc,	125.00	
Donations		39.00
Reunion		16,197.00
(Inc. $1,009 Ship's Store & $ 165.00 donation)		19,451.00
		$ 23,055.14
Expenses:		
Postage (General)		$201.86
Office Supplies		396.16
Hats, Pins, Patches, etc.		216.98
Tracker Printing		1,015.22
Tracker Postage		474.86
Reunion		17,344.95
		$19,650.03
Ending Balance 12/31/14		$3,405.11

In The Beginning.... Kamikze and Typhoon

Two events of WW2 were the motivation for the inception of AEW/Weather Squadrons. The Japanese Kamikaze suicide aircraft and Typhoon Cobra of 1944 lead directly to forming Airborne Early Warning Squadrons of the 40's and 50's. During the Battle of Leyte Gulf and the Battle of Okinawa close to 452 Allied ships were damaged while another 120 were sunk during the two campaigns. The U.S. Navy's dead exceeded its wounded with 7,809 killed and 6,874 wounded, primarily from kamikaze attacks. The need to detect kamikazes as far away as possible, giving the fleet time to set the defense against the kamikaze became the highest priority. Using destroyers as radar pickets at least 50 miles from the fleet to provided earlier radar interception proved to be a poor solution because the Japanese flew under the radar until they were perilously close to the destroyers then the radar pickets became first line targets with little protection.



U.S. Navy Destroyer taking on water after Typhoon Cobra



Battle of Okinawa kamikaze hits USS Franklin

Another deadly force became a major concern in the Pacific - typhoon. In December of 1944 Task Force 38 had been operating about 300 mi east of Luzon in the Philippine Sea conducting air raids against Japanese airfields in the Philippines. The fleet was refueling its ships when a storm was coming upon them. As the weather worsened it became increasingly difficult to refuel, and the attempts had to be discontinued. Despite worsening conditions, the ships of the fleet remained in their stations. Worse, the information given to Halsey about the location and direction of the typhoon was inaccurate. On December 17, Admiral Halsey unwittingly sailed Third Fleet into the heart of Typhoon Cobra. The typhoon had of winds of 145 mph, very high seas, and torrential rain causing three destroyers capsized and sank, and a total of 790 lives were lost. Nine other warships were damaged, and over 100 aircraft were wrecked or washed overboard. The knowledge of weather became a priority for every naval commander especially the need to know exact locations and track of all tropical depressions and typhoons. Radar was the solution.

Radar was known in 1939 and was fairly refined by 1945 but because of the physical size and weight few aircraft had radar and what they had was short ranged. The longer ranged radar was aboard ships but was limited by the curvature of the earth. What was need was a larger aircraft and/or smaller radar systems. During the war a program call Project Cadillac was formed to develop a light weight long range airborne radar - the AN/APS-20 airborne radar was created, the solution, had been found! After the Second World War and during the Korean War the Navy decided that a very long range aircraft with long range radar and complete fleet communication system in real time was needed. The Navy selected the B-17G, took off all the guns and armor, sealed up the bomb bay, and installed the APS-20, advanced voice communication and navigation and designated it the "PB1W." The PB1W cruised at 150 Kts and had a range of 3700 miles, two radar operators, two radiomen, a electronic tech, crew chief, mechanic, metalsmith, pilots, and a navigator. They flew weather missions out of Japan, Philippines, Okinawa, Taiwan, and many small pacific Islands. They flew combat mission out of Japan and Korea. It soon became obvious that a larger crewed aircraft that had more eyes on the radar, greater capacity in communications providing more information to the Command and Control to the fleet was needed. PB1W's did a good stop gap job but the need was an aircraft large enough to meet the AEW needs

The Navy had completed the ground work for the modern concept of the Airborne Early Warning and had the sole interest in Lockheed's developing the "Warning Star," EC-121K , the Willy Victor was the perfect replacement.



In 1952 VW-1 was commisioned and stationed at Barbarbers Point, tasked with the missions of Fleet AEW and Weather Reconnaissance. When the Russians tested their own nuclear bomb on August 29, 1949, and the "boosted" nuclear bombs (H-Bombs) on September and October of 1951 Washington D.C. took notice, the national defense was in question and the Pentagon was scrambling. The Air Force and Navy created the "DEW Line" and implemented the long range AEW squadrons to cover the nothern Pacific and Atlantic became top priority. In the Pacific VW-12, VW-14, and VW16 were established out of Barbers Point and eventurally became BARRON Pacific in January 1956. On the Atlantic side VW-11, VW-13, and VW-15 were establish at Patuxent River, MD and Argentia, Newfoundland, Canada. VW-1's mission remained the same and moved to Agana Guam.

In The Beginning..... Willy History

It Was The PB1W



Althought the U.S. Navy had received 48 B-17's during WW2 (designated PB-1) for maritime patrols, it is the B-17G's the Navy acquired after the war that set about the new concept of large Naval AEW aircraft. Thirty-one B-17G's were acquired by the Navy and modified for AEW missions, designated PB-1W and the Airborne Early Warning squadrons were born. The Naval Air Material Center's Naval Aircraft Modification Unit (NAMU) at Johnsville, Pennsylvania modified the B-17s to PB-1W specification by sealing up the bomb bay doors and installing 300 gallon drop tanks on each wing, in addition to the "Tokyo Tanks" mounted in the outer wings, holding a total of 3,400 gallons of fuel, giving the PB-1W an endurance of 22+ hours at a cruise speed of 170 knots giving the aircraft a range of 3,400 miles. Initially PB-1W's retained the natural metal finish with a protective wax coat, but later the PB-1Ws were painted gloss Navy Blue overall.

The radar antenna for the APS-20 Search Radar, manufactured by Hazeltine Corporation/General Electric, was mounted in a radome below bomb bay, with the RADAR relay transmitter, Identification friend or foe (IFF), Radio Direction Finder (RDF), Instrument Landing System (ILS), and LOng RAnge Navigation (LORAN) also being installed during conversion.

The conversion introduced the following changes:-The chin, top, belly, and tail turrets were removed. The Norden bombsight, cockpit and all armor was removed. Three hundred gallon drop tanks fitted under the outer wings and extra fuel tanks in the outer wings ("Tokyo Tanks") were installed.

AN/APS-20 S-band search radar, navigation electronic for long range oceanic missions such as LOng RAnge Navigation (LORAN) and an instrument landing system, and additinal radio for long range communication were installed. There were two RADAR consoles facing aft in the former bomb-bay Radio Operators station and bench seats fitted for observers at the waist positions. A latrine and a galley were fitted amidships (now doesn't that make sense). The crew consisted of 6 officers, (Pilot in Command, Second in Command, Navigator, CIC Officer, and 2 RADAR Operators/Controllers) and 5 enlisted men Crew Chief, 2nd Mechanic, Electronics Technician, and 2 Radio Operators).



First delivered in the spring of 1946, the Navy was eventually to have twenty two, out of thirty one post-war B-17s, fully upgraded to PB1W standard. Late in 1946, VPB-101 would move to NAS Quonset Point, Rhode Island, and be redesignated Airborne Early Warning Development Squadron Four (VX-4).

In The Beginning.....

It Was The PB1W













NEW FROM CYBERSPACE AND MAIL CALL

News From G. Dave Keeton

Hi Shipmates,
Just checking in. Everything here in the Philippine Islands is still good. The rainy season and Typhoons are over for awhile. Weather at night is a little cool. Medium weight short sleeve shirt works well at night. Soon the summer and hot season will be here. Lea and I are still in good health and still try to get our daily walk in. Attached a recent picture. We try to get a yearly portrait set made since the price here is still inexpensive. Package cost 495 Peso's = Approx $11.20 for 1-8x10 and 14 wallet. Retirement pay goes a long way here. Prices are starting to increase as more foreigners arrive. I have been in contact with Doc Frye another crew5 CIC. He lives in Washington. I really enjoy George's daily post (kept a few for review) and I have bookmarked Petes VW-1 movie clip (Any idea when it was taken). Hope all is well with you-all. Belong to the Local: VFW, American Legion and the Vietnam Veterans. It steem's each month we are playing taps for one or more members. Pray all of you are doing well.
G Dave Keeton, ATW2 Crew 5(CIC) 1965-1966



Kerry McGraw

Kerry McGraw arrived in Guan 7/12/1967 to 1/31/1969 , AT?? need buddy letters and he has serious health problems. His Son Justin called me and we talked for a while.
I suggested he email you and that you might contact some of the folks he knew in VW! that might get him Buddy letter...
His (Justins) phone number is Phone Removed He got my info form the web site. Help him if you can
Thanks, Have a Blessed Day!!
Stephen

Wasmund Wonders

Guy's, I have received a 14 min. home video from Al Madsen about VW-1. Both Al and Joanne have no idea how they got it much less who took the 8mm movies.

https://www.dropbox.com/s/3r1yjuif66rebk1/VW-1%20movies.mp4?dl=0
(also on the VW-1 Association WEB site)

I have I'd' a few people in it, ie. Bill Green, Vaughn Callison, Clyde Edwards, Jim Wade, Sanders & me. I recognize a few of the officers but can't recall their names. There are scenes from Vietnam, Cubi Pt. Sangley Pt., Atsugi & Navy housing on Guam, also there is a short section of VQ-1's PR-23 on the ramp... DaNang or ChuLai???. There are a couple scenes that are unknown to me. I don't think the scenes are in chronological order.

Cavite Miss Built on Guam



"Cavite Miss" George is driving and Winfield is on the bow.

At some point during their first few days at VW-1 and in front of George, Winfield said that he is going to build a boat and take it to Rota, the island north of Guam. George said that he would do that with him. It took 1.5 years to build the boat. George came up with the name Cavite Miss. They took the boat to Rota on a very rough day and came back on a fairly calm day. George and Winfield used the boat for scuba diving and spear fishing for their remaining 6 months on Guam. George Beegle became a Civil Engineer and build two more smaller wooden boats. Winfield Nagle became a carpenter, took a sailboat out in the south pacific for about seven years, and currently lives on a 45' wooden boat that he built and does boat repair work. George Beegle was in VW-1 from fall of 1969 to fall of 1971

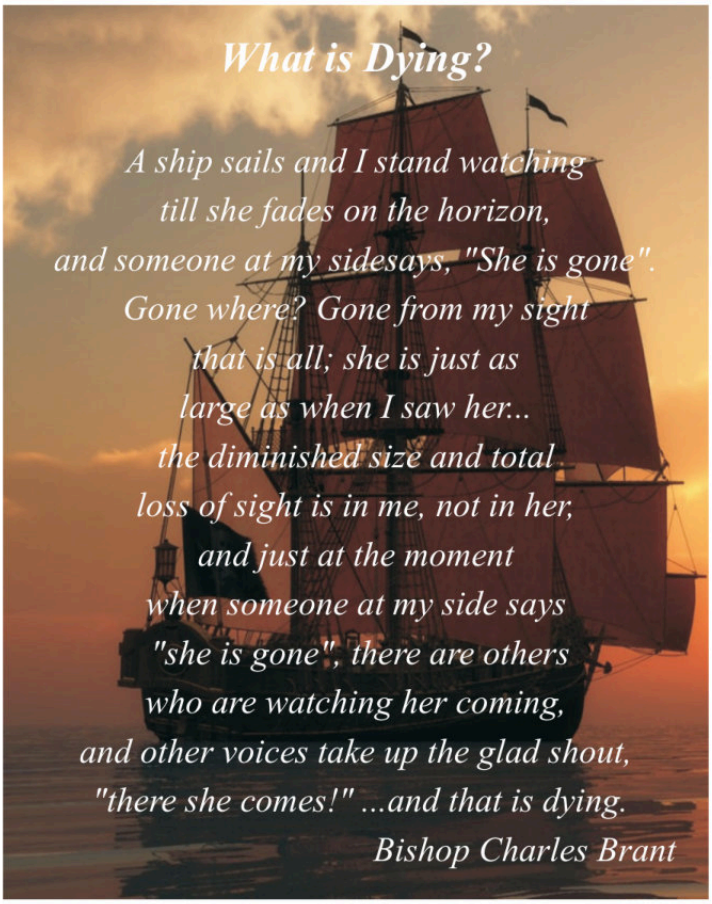


OUR DEPARTED SHIPMATES

Jim Wilson

It is with sadness that I report that Jim Wilson died on Sunday March 8th. He passed peacefully in his sleep at a hospital where he had surgery for a broken hip suffered while Xcountry skiing.
Per Jim's wishes there was no muss or fuss, nor service nor flowers. His daughters joined his wife Lynne the following week for Jim's previously scheduled birthday.
Cards can be sent to his wife Lynn Wilson, Address Removed Address Removed Manitou Springs, Address Removed

Jim's brother Bob was Ltjg Bob Wilson and Jim had requested brother duty out of A School. Jim and five others went to Guam and VW-1. Sally had just talked to him a couple of weeks ago the old fashioned way, landline. He was only 72, barely retired. He flew mostly with Crew 2 from Dec. '64 to Sept. '66 and was one of the first ones to get a four month operation hold, courtesy of MacNamara then Sec. of Defense and the LBJ administration. After some schools with VP 31 at North Island, he went north to Seattle area and eventually was a ground pounder electronic shop and machine gun operator in his spare time in Nam for six months until discharge. Jim was an ATR "tweet" 2 when discharged. Too young."



Don Ray

Don Ray passed away on April 16, 2015, survived by his son Stephen Ray, AMEC, USN Ret. and daughter Margie. Ralph Link wrote an email to them and I have decided to share it as an eulogy. My personal condolence to the family of Don Ray.

Steve and Margie,
My sincere condolence to you and your family on your fathers passing. I personally served with Don at VW-1. He was a great fun loving shipmate and friend to all of us. I'll never forget him going over the desk and attacking Cdr. Braden and about throttling him when he made an unflattering remark towards Helen. The skipper would not prosecute him do to the circumstances. Cdr. Braden was such an asshole.
Steve, we will remember and recognize your Dad and Mom during our missing man ceremony at our reunion next May 2016. The reunion was originally scheduled for San Antonio but, was moved to Branson by the board. You and your family would be most welcome to join us, just let me know and I will send a registration form. All VW-1 children and immediate family members of former shipmates are eligible for membership. Please consider becoming a member.

Your family are in our thoughts and prayers,

Ralph Link

SITREP from THE EDITOR

The Last Paper Edition

The Tracker has in the past always been produced by hand and published on paper. Sally Metzger has for years completed this Herculean job on her own the old school way by literally cutting and pasting her typed stories and printed photos to a 11 X 17 board and having the printers scan the board then print the newsletter. She would then print the address lables and stick them with a stamp take it to the Post Office and mail them. This is old school and very difficult to accomplish Four months per year, year in and year out and Sally did it. No, Sally did an OUTSTANDING job and I am very grateful to have Sally on the team. **Thank you Sally for all you have done.**

At the last gathering of the World Famous Typhoon Trackers I was ask to be the editor of the Newsletter because I was a graphic designer in my previous life. Now, I must preface why I accepted with how I feel about VW-1, the Willy Victor, and the men that flew in her and maintained her. I retired from the Navy as a Senior Chief with 23 years. After I left VW-1 I went to 'B' School then I served in tail hook squadrons and Navy Recruiting (Navy Hell). I absolutely loved the Navy but I always considered myself a Willy Victor Sailor. VW-1 Was the most unique squadron I have ever seen. Only a handful of VW squadron existed at any one time and when I served my Willy Victor time there were even fewer. Both the PB-1W and Willy Victor were 'one of a kind' aircraft and the missions were also very exclusive, we achieved both Early Warning and flying head on into Typhoons. No other squadron did that! And we had a comradery that only could be compared to the flight crews of WW2. We are one of a kind and we should be very proud of our heritage.

I am still learning the ins and outs of a newsletter, but I first and foremost wanted it to be good, very good, worthy of how I feel about the squadron, the aircraft and the men. I wanted it to be produced in color, I wanted the membership to have a voice in the content and share their Willy Victor experiences. . I wanted to have a historical section of the nineteen years VW-1 was in existence. Now the 'but!' I learned how much a newsletter cost to publish for a membership of our size, about $400 to $500 per issue for black and white including postage, is $1,600 to $2,400 a year. Color and postage is too costly, $900 to $1200 per issue. **Producing a color paper newsletter is just too expensive but color copy sent over the internet is FREE** and we could place it on the web site (considering all privacy policies first). I know there are some who do not have email and I would send a paper newsletter to them. Reducing cost and still produce a quality newsletter.

So if everyone would ensure that their email address is up dated and if those individuals do not have a email would respond to me by sending me a letter I will makeup my mailing list - *ATCS Chris Seal USN, Ret*.

VW-1 ALL HAND ASSOCIATION

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