VW-1 TRACKER

ISSUE 7 OCTOBER 2001

TO ONE AND ALL WHO SERVED IN VW-1 .....

LEST WE FORGET

("Lest We Forget" was written by Lieutenant. Commander Rick Burgess and is a brief history of VW-1 that merits reprinting here.}

Airborne Early Warning Squadron One (VW-1) was established on 18 June 1952 at NAS Barbers Point, Hawaii, where it flew the PB-1W. The PB-1W led the way for the WV-1 and the WV-2 (later EC-121K) Warning Star, a modification of the Lockheed Super Constellation airliner. In 1954, it became the first operational squadron to be equipped with the WV-2.

VW-1's primary mission was to provide airborne early warning to the U.S. Seventh Fleet. VW-1's extensive commitments to the Western Pacific during the 1950's led to a home base change in 1957 to NAS Agana, Guam, after a brief assignment to NAS Moffett Field, CA. These detachments to the Far East supported the air defense of the Nationalist Chinese government during the Taiwan Strait Crisis.

In July 1961, VW-1 absorbed sister squadron VW-3 and assumed the secondary mission of weather reconnaissance, particularly typhoon tracking, with which the squadron came to be most identified. The squadron adopted the name "Typhoon Trackers" and performed in that role until 1971, using WV-3 (WC-121N) aircraft.

In 1965, VW-1 assumed the training role for all Pacific Fleet C-121 crews. That year the squadron also took on the TACAMO mission (strategic communications relay for fleet ballistic-missile submarines) from Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 21 (VR-21). Two C-130G (later EC-130G) Hercules communications aircraft were taken on charge until July 1968, when the TACAMO detachment was established as Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron Three (VQ-3).

The Tonkin Gulf Crisis in August 1964 led to the establishment of a VW-1 detachment at NAS Sangley Point in the Philippines to provide early warning coverage to units of the Seventh Fleet in the Tonkin Gulf during the Vietnam War. This detachment later moved to Chu Lai, South Vietnam, and then in 1969 to nearby Da Nang. The need for the detachment's EC-121K, WC-121N, and EC-121P aircraft declined as the numbers of E-2 Hawkeyes increased on carriers deployed to Yankee Station.

VW-1 was disestablished on 1 July 1971, when its typhoon-tracking mission, some of its aircraft, and many of its personnel were absorbed by VQ-1.

News from Cyberspace .....

"Moon" Mullen (7/12): "Can't believe you're allowed to send obscene pictures (pg. 7)* through the mail! I'm off to Italy to play Sr. Softball the end of September. Played in Holland, Belgium and France last July – also in Japan in November. Got 40+ of us aboard the USS Kittyhawk for Thanksgiving dinner – beats turkey and sushi on chopsticks. Hello to all." (*Referring to his picture in the August Tracker)

Bob Webber (7/23): "Hello everyone! Because of failing eyesight and difficulty in seeing the computer monitor, I will be canceling my subscription with AOL, and signing off the internet. I can, however, still answer the telephone and wade through mail. I can also still be reached via e-mail through my daughter, Pam. Her e-mail address is Email Removed I have enjoyed all the yucks and internet communiqués. I look forward to keeping in touch throughout the year, one way or another."

Frank Doty (7/22): "On Saturday, July 14, 2001 in Pigeon Forge, TN, I married a lovely lady named Linda Patterson. Having mellowed in my old age, we had a relatively long courtship of three weeks. (I married Flo on our first date). I am the happiest I have been in years, and we are planning a long and exciting life together. I just wanted to share this wonderful news with all of you. Hope to see everyone of you in the near future during out travels."

Dave & Carolyn Gerdeman (6/18): "Hello from San Antonio! We are getting used to the heat here. My new job is interesting but I long for the good old days of the last job. I remember the good stuff but those days are over. We bought a house on the west side of SA. Carolyn has acquired a real estate license and is selling houses. We have been traveling this year. New Orleans, San Francisco, Mexico and the top of the list is seven days on a 44 foot sailboat in the British Virgin Islands. Our new address is: Address Removed Address Removed San Antonio, Address Removed Phone Phone Removed Pensacola sounds fun. I was stationed there for a year at NAS weather office before going to Guam."

Donald Stroud (7/11): I like your newsletter and find that two VW-1 people live close to me. One is just three miles and the other, Ray Keighley, just about twenty miles in Overland Park, KS. I see you now have B-17 pins. My first year in the squadron it was all B-17's. We sure welcomed that first "connie". With it we got seats, galley beds and a head! I remember the crew that flew it down from Denmark, Sweden were sure glad to get a duty station where it was warm. There is a nice book "B17 in Blue" that gives a nice history of how the squadron came to be and what happened to them. I have an order form – the price is $ 16.95. If you would like to have one, let me know. Phone Removed I will try to make your Florida reunion if my wife, Janet, is able to travel by then."

Roy & Linda Hermecz (7/12): "We have moved back to the Alabama Gulf Coast and built a new home in Marlow, AL. We are about 35 miles from Pensacola and do intend to attend the reunion in May 2002. New address: Address Removed Summerdale, Address Removed Ph. Phone Removed E-mail: Email Removed

Jay & Alice Hockenberry (9/8): After a 6-day stint in Vanderbilt for what is hopefully the LAST cancer surgery, I came home in the TLC of Dr. Mom and am recovering nicely. The surgery was more in-depth than planned because of a rather large tumor in the bladder, but survival appears to be imminent. Later I'll have some light radiation therapy, then this cancer thing will be behind us. Talk about friends! One day alone provided 53 e-mail messages, hundreds of wonderful and encouraging cards, and most importantly, the prayers of all of you. No wonder I'm recovering! Thank all of you for your love and support in our time of need. And a special thanks to my military friends who have been friends through it all for so many years! We look forward to seeing many of you at next year's reunion.

John Rice (8/3): "Since our last communication to the present, I have been to Salt Lake, Seattle, Denver, Wichita, Dallas, Washington DC and Ft. Worth. The Ft. Worth gathering had me in front of a small group of 60+. My presentation material has numerous aircraft photos on the slides with one being a photo of a EC121K model. After the presentation two of the attendee's stopped me in the hall and asked where I had served. When I told them VW-1 both knew the squadron and stated they were in VW-4 around the same time frame as my tours. They indicated an interest in your roster and as soon as I can sort through the business cards I came away with I will forward theirs to you. I enjoyed the article on John T. Houdak about what has transpired over the last 30-40 years. Hope to see some of you soon.

John & Karen Martin (7/2): Returned to Oregon from Keno April 1, got taxes and visiting done with family – then left May 9 for Nevada, Utah and Colorado – then a quick trip to Yuma. We are home again enjoying the 70 to 80 degree days – 50 degree nights here on the side of the mountain in the Cascade range. We admire your good work in putting together the VW-1 reunions – hope one day to come."

Dick & Gwen Lee (9/21): "Have a e-mail address now – Email Removed We are doing ok. Gwen's had some eye problems and can't drive anymore and has a hard time reading. Looking forward to the Pensacola reunion."

John & Joetta Linendoll (7/23): (Now on-line – email: Email Removed
"We want to thank you for the fine job you are doing keeping us posted and informed with the newsletters. Joetta & I plan to attend the next reunion – the Good Lord willing. Thanx for giving us LeRoy & June White's address. I plan to contact him today."

Ed & Sally Metzger: Exciting to see so many of our members having a good time traveling here and there. Appreciate you keeping in touch. Daughter Kerri and grand-daughter Morgan are still with us here in Inverness. Although diagnosed with scleroderma, which tends to cause her exhaustion, and suffering from kidney failure, Kerri is now relatively stable and enjoys volunteering at SCORE, a group of retired executives who donate their time assisting new businesses. She has gone on the waiting list for a kidney transplant recently. We have become used to having a 7-year-old again and are enjoying our reconstructed family.

(Continued to Page 7)



PENSACOLA BEACHES

What A Treat!!!

Just imagine yourself sunbathing on this beach next May. It seems it would be particularly tempting to those VW-1 members who have just had a long hard winter somewhere in the frozen north !! Be sure to bring your bathing suits.

Sydnie Gergal, if memory serves us correctly, you expressed a strong desire for a bit of beach, and said that would make you happy even if there was nothing else. Well, here it is. May you beach lovers find the time to enjoy it and not go home with too much of a sunburn.

LOOKING AHEAD TO #4

A couple of our members are already thinking about reunion #4 and where it should be held.

Richard (Carol) Bleakney (AX3 – '67-'67) writes: "**RENO** has low airfares from all over the country, great accommodations, lots of places to dine, close to Lake Tahoe and Virginia City. Lots of golf and gambling, shows and entertainment. One of the biggest attractions for us would be Fallon NAS, home of the Top Gun school. I would be willing to coordinate the whole thing and would bring some information; hopefully, a video, to the reunion in Pensacola."

Ken & Helen Cotton have been thinking about **Laughlin, NV**: "We always stay at the Riverside Hotel & Casino and like it very much." They just celebrated their 50th Class reunion there and have had the opportunity to get a first hand view.

If any of you would like a particular location, bring information on it to the Pensacola reunion next year and let your voice be heard. There is some merit to the idea of having it near the West Coast to accommodate our "western" members.

New Members

Ernest Amarino **11/68 – 11/70**

Address Removed

Port Orchard, Address Removed Phone Removed
Aviation Structural Mechanic. Flight Metalsmith on Crew 7.

William (Bill) Kemp **10/68 – 10/71**

Address Removed Portal, Address Removed
Wife: Anne Phone Removed
Flight Engineer on Crew 1

Ben Steers **57 / 59 & 62 / 64**

Address Removed Bath, Address Removed
Wife: Diane Phone Removed
ACW3, Crew 1. Line Crew Section Leader. 62/64 – Crew 6, AC2 – CIC Office. Best tour ever. Retired as ACC after 26 years. Currently owns a barbershop in Bath, ME dedicated to the Willy Victor.
Email Removed &
Email Removed



- PENSACOLA REUNION -

APRIL 30, MAY 1, 2 & 3, 2002

Here's the deal .... $ 390.00 per couple; $ 310 single



Included: **Four (4) nights in the hotel**
Registration Buffet on Tuesday
Lunch at Cubi Bar on Wednesday
Bar-B-Que Lunch on Thursday
Mystery Trip Thursday Evening
Dinner at Landry's Seafood House Friday

Plus: **Snacks, coffee, soda and beer all the time in the VW-1 Hospitality Room**

Mark your calendars, arrange for vacations, save your pennies and come join the VW-1 gang at the Pensacola 2002 Reunion!

Registration forms and payment instructions will be in the January VW-1 Tracker

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********** "ENCORE" WEEKEND **********

During a recent trip to Biloxi, we priced out some casino hotels and fishing trips. We are definitely going to go there for "R & R" once the VW-1 2002 Reunion ends May 4.

Anyone interested in joining us? This is not part of the reunion. It will be the total responsibility of those who choose to go. It is what we personally plan to do and it occurred to us that some others might enjoy it. Gambling will not be a part of the 2002 Pensacola Reunion.

We are going to Biloxi Saturday & Sunday (May 4 & 5). The President's Tower is offering a price of $ 64.90 for a single or double. This includes a "two-for-one" buffet coupon. That is a very good price for the weekend. The President's Tower is located directly across the street from the beach and shuttle buses are available to other places on the main drag. Ten rooms are needed to get this price. The President's has a "pet's allowed" policy with a $ 100.00 deposit, refundable once the room has been inspected upon departure.

Ed intends to do Gulf Fishing Trip. A small charter vessel holding six is about $ 100 per person. They provide all the fishing gear and ice, individuals provide their own food and drinks. No fishing license is required.

My activity of choice is gambling. Yours might be to sightsee, sun bathe on the beach, or visit "Beauvoir", the Jefferson Davis home.

The other activity we enjoy in Biloxi is a good show. We just saw Lee Greenwood there on our last trip and he was great.

Enclosed is an inquiry sheet. If this "Encore Weekend" is something you would like to do after the reunion, please fill it out and return it to us. This is not a commitment, merely an expression of interest which would enable us to know how to proceed in making reservations, researching shows, etc.

Ed & Sally Metzger

A Pilot's View ...

From the Cockpit

By John Quicksall

(John, one of our VW-1 Association members, is a Captain with Delta Airlines. In the following two e-mails, he shared his experiences of 9/11 to 9/21. John was in VW-1 from 1/69 to 4/70 and was an AMS-2 serving as the 2nd Flight Engineer on Crew 5.)

"I started a 4-day trip which included layovers in Salt Lake City, Anchorage, and Seattle Saturday the 8th. I was up at 4:50 a.m. in Seattle on Tuesday and was to be picked up for my Atlanta leg at 5:50. I turned on the TV a few minutes before leaving - about 9:30 in NYC. You all know how shocked I was. Obviously, our SEA departure was cancelled.

Communication with the company was temporarily impossible. I learned later that every flight in the US was being diverted to land at the nearest suitable airport. After some six hours, we learned from the company that they would not operate any flights for at least two days. As it turned out, I operated the first flight out of SeTac on Thursday the 13th. I felt honored to be chosen for that distinction.

When I got to the gate I was immediately besieged by company officials who were to brief me on the new and extraordinary security procedures that are being implemented. As for my own part, the hardest thing was briefing my crew, as we had no way of knowing if some new and unthought of terrorist tactic is yet to materialize. I fear that the inconveniences to the travelling public will return to the level that they were during the Gulf War. The precautions being taken by the company will exceed those of before.

Thanks to all those who called to check up on me ... I'm glad to be home."

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9/21/01: Yesterday I operated Delta 406 from Ft. Lauderdale to LaGuardia airport in NY City. I had known for several days I had this flight on my schedule and so I had plenty of time to anticipate my feelings as I approached this place that has been compared to some scene from the last World War.

This flight is operated with a stretched Boeing 767. It is always full ... 254 passengers. When I arrived at the gate the agent told me there were only 86 checked in and over 100 no-shows expected. As passenger boarding began, the mood was somber. No one remarked on the destination for which we were about to depart. As we climbed to cruise, I was at a loss for words when the time came to make the usual passenger P.A.

But in spite of all my anticipation and attempts to keep a professional bearing, nothing could have prepared me for what would unfold in front of us as we descended on Manhattan. Upon descending to 13,000 feet 40 miles south, NY approach control put us on a radar vector and cleared us to descend to 3500 feet. Previous notices-to-airman had given us the center of the prohibited area that light airplanes were restricted from, that is, the exact coordinates of the disaster area. As I typed the fix into the aircraft's flight management computer, I realized that the radar vector we were given would put us right over the top of that area. When we passed the point where we would have ordinarily

been turned to fly up the river, I queried the controller. He replied with a tacit "... don't ask, just fly the assigned hearing". It then dawned on my first-officer and myself ... by flying directly over the top of the devastated area, no passenger would see the overwhelming spectacle below ... and I must guess that they wanted it that way.

I was not prepared for what we saw clearly from the cockpit. No image seen on CNN or ABC that I am aware of has shown the completeness, the overwhelming devastation, the disaster .. the Hell that lay below. I had heard others describe it as a war zone, comparing it to London or Berlin after the bombings, or to Pearl Harbor on Dec. 9th. To me it appeared as four city blocks upon which the Hell from some Dante like image I had seen as a child had transposed itself ... black and dead, still smoking, smoldering, and in total devastation. Charred and ruined carcasses of two familiar buildings now only a few stories tall, amid bones of blackened rubble, with no life of any kind in sight. My first officer stared as if in shock, he was speechless; and when I began to remark, he could only turn away.

Now I can only reflect on what our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents must have felt in the days of Pearl Harbor, of Sarajevo, or Gettysburg. When I woke this morning I wanted it all to be a bad dream. But it won't be. I know for many of us there will be real changes that will affect our lives for years to come. And in a certain way, I wish all my passengers could have seen it from the vantage point I had. For those who have, there can be only one conclusion with respect to what we must now do."

News From Cyberspace ..... (Continued from Page 3)

LeRoy & June White (9/03): "June appears to be stabilized pretty well. She knows me and seems to expect me to come. She may not remember after I leave that I had been there, but is perky and cheerful most of the time. I'm kind of into Digital Cameras now. I will try to send a couple of pix your way soon. I am trying to plan for the Pensacola Reunion next year. I would like to go by car instead of fly, but may need to try to find me a driver for the trip. Bye for now."

Ray & Judi Rea (7/4): Judi & I are really looking forward to the reunion in Pensacola. We have been to the Air Museum many times. VW-4 has a reunion in Pensacola every fifth year. Last year was the 25h since decommissioning in 1975. Again – looking forward to seeing everybody again – been a long time. P.S. I really enjoy the newsletter. E-mail address: Email Removed

Rick Wooten (7/3): Saw your message on the VW-1 site. You may have known my Dad, Dick Wooten. He was an ADR-1 with VW-1 from '65 to '69 before making ADC. I think he would have really gotten a kick out of this site. He passed away in January of '93 from cancer. Email Removed (Ed responded to Rick that Dick had flown with him as his 2nd flight engineer .)

George & Christine Dean: New e-mail address: Email Removed
Walter & Virginia Their: New e-mail address: Email Removed
Lee & Martha Thompson: New e-mail address: Email Removed

VW-1 Ship's Store



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