

VC-12 VOICE

Volume 5 Issue 1

November 2002

Special Points of Interest

- *Reports on the 2002 reunion in Newport are in the cover story and on pages five and six.*
- *If you'd like to see who attended the reunion, page two has a list of attendees.*
- *New goals for the group are listed by your chairman on page two. Be sure to read them.*
- *WELCOME MAT on page three lists fifty-nine new names for the group. We're growing!*
- *MAIL CALL begins on page three. See some items for sale on page four.*
- *Read the autobiography of George Koppmann on pages four and five. Maybe you should write about your life for your children and grandchildren to treasure.*
- *Do you get all those "urban legend-type" stories over e-mail? Well, an article submitted by Bob Marvin may help put some of them to rest. See "Rumors" on page six.*
- *Please take a look at the Financial Report on page two. Remember to send in your \$10.00 annual dues and also subscribe to the newsletter by e-mail if you can. This saves money for the group.*

NEWPORT, RI, REUNION RECAP

The 2002 VC-12/VAW-12 Squadron reunion was a relaxing time, with an unhurried schedule and plenty of time to reminisce and get acquainted with the new friends and to reconnect with old ones. The September 19-22 reunion was held at the Royal Plaza Hotel in Newport, RI, with thirty-one members and twenty-one guests present. The welcome reception on Thursday at 5:00 pm officially began the reunion. Ed Seykowski welcomed the group to the reunion and made the necessary introductions. After that, the evening was free to begin re-igniting friendships and making new ones. The hospitality room quickly became a favorite place to congregate and share stories.

On Friday and Saturday many of the attendees went on their own to visit places of their choice. Some went to Quonset Point, Newport and the mansions on Mansion Row, and various other places.

Dinner on Friday night was in the hotel and featured traditional local cuisine billed as a New England style buffet. There was something for everyone's taste and was enjoyed by all.

The business meeting was held on Saturday afternoon and Annapolis, MD, was chosen as the site of next year's reunion. Edward Seykowski will remain as chairman and Dr. Roger Smith as treasurer. A discussion was held about the option of receiving the newsletter by e-mail as opposed to snail mail to help save on cost. It was suggested that having a "Sick Call" in which names could be submitted for calls of encouragement in times of illness would be of benefit. George Koffman agreed to build a web page for the group. More information on this will be given at a later

date.

During the pre-dinner cocktail hour on Saturday evening, photos were taken for the Sentimental Journal, which will be for sale later in the year. Following the photo session came the highlight of the reunion—the VC-12/VAW-12 banquet. Dressed in their finest attire, the group enjoyed the meal and the speaker, Larry Webster, who spoke on "The Aluminum Undertaker." Mr. Webster would like to have any stories you might have about crashed airplanes. The night ended with more conversation and story-telling.

Sunday morning's breakfast and memorial service brought an end to the 2002 reunion. As good-byes were said, everyone was already thinking ahead to next year in Annapolis and hoping that the 2003 reunion would be as good as the 2002 one. Annapolis, here we come!

OVERHEARD AT THE REUNION

- The bread in Guam had little black specks on it. We found out they were bugs. If you picked them out, you had very little bread left, so we just added more butter and jelly and ate it.
- Shultz found out about this reunion in the ANA Magazine in Portland, OR.
- The story was told of a pilot that had a lousy take-off and landing but did a great job of flying. The Captain told him to just keep the plane level and they'd line up the carrier beneath him.
- What happened to the Guppies? They are being used in Vietnam movies.

2002 REUNION ATTENDEES

William Akers
 Earle & Barbara Borman
 Claudius Bortner
 Richard & Joyce Bray
 James & Mary Clark
 Malcolm Craig
 John Eckberg
 James & Miel Ehret
 Charles Fondaw
 George & Sandra Goodman
 Edward Harmon
 Robert & Carol Howard
 Charles & Lois Koeth
 Frank & Wanda Ludasik
 Bernard & Mary Elizabeth Lynch
 Larry Martin
 Robert & Rose Marvin
 Jack & Imogene Millaway
 Frank & Barbara Moynihan
 Harold Osborne
 Edward & Katherine Regner
 James Rooney
 Ronald & Betty Schneider
 Edward & Karen Seykowski
 Robert & Helen Sherman
 Donald Shultz & Carolyn Wagner
 Roger & Joan Smith
 William & Georgeann Speaker
 Edward & Madeline Ann Tkacs
 Gregory Vickers & Susan Biske
 Charles Zink

Total Members: 31
Guests: 21
GRAND TOTAL: 52

FINANCIAL REPORT

Balance after 08/02 issue
\$150.08
 Funds received since 08/02 issue
\$111.00
 Total available for 11/02 issue
\$261.08
 Expended for 11/02 issue
\$256.50
 Balance for 02/03 issue
\$4.58

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The VC-12 VOICE is the official publication of the VC-12/VAW-12 Association. From now on it will be published quarterly in February, May, August and November, *subject to receiving sufficient funding*. The Newsletter is funded by voluntary contributions from the membership. All members are encouraged to support the voice of the VC-12/VAW-12. A financial statement appears in each issue of the newsletter.

The newsletter is intended to be a vehicle for the members to express opinions, make suggestions and especially share experiences.

Unless otherwise stated, the views and opinions printed in the newsletter are those of the article's writer, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Association leadership or the Editor of the Newsletter.

All letters and stories submitted will be considered for publication, except unsigned letters will not be published. Letters requesting the writer's name be withheld will be honored, but published on a space available basis. Signed letters with no restrictions will be given priority.

Letters demeaning to another shipmate will not be printed; letters espousing a political position will not be printed.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space limitations and grammar.

You are encouraged to actively participate in the newsletter family, by submitting your stories and suggestions.

Published By:

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Our Reunions Work So You Don't Have To

SAME CHAIRMAN NEW GOALS

Ed Seykowski is your newly re-elected Chairman for 2002-2003. You might remember that Ed is a GOALS directed leader. At our 2002 Reunion in Newport, several things were discussed. These are not listed in any order of priority. I have adopted these action items to become our goals for the next years. All Hands - Please join me to help reach these objectives:

- Join-up with VAW-11 for a joint 2004 Reunion to be possibly held Pensacola (Ed Seykowski & Bob Allwine with VC/VAW-11 Reunion)
- Compile a VC-12/ VAW-12 history, including a time line (Bob Marvin)
- Continue with a Steering Committee: Bob Marvin, Larry Martin, & Roger Smith, add others as needed: Craig, Sherman, & Eckberg (Ed Seykowski, Chairman)
- Plan the 2003 Reunion in the Fall in Annapolis, Maryland (MLRS, John Sherman, Ed Seykowski & Steering Committee)
- Continue our relationship with (MLRS) Military Locator Reunion Service
- Continue with our quarterly newsletter VC Voice and continue encouraging input and stories from our shipmates (All Hands)
- Explore e-mailing VC Voice with MLRS to reduce the cost of postage
- Adopt annual dues of \$10 to pay for our quarterly newsletter & postage
- Create the position of Treasurer to collect dues and pay for the newsletter – Roger Smith was appointed VC-12/VAW-12 Treasurer

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- Collect "war stories", photos, & memorabilia for a display at Quonset Point Museum (Malcolm Craig)
- Consider a possible 2005 reunion at a west coast USA city (John Eckberg)
- Continue establishing relations with the Quonset Point VAW-12 group & the Quonset Point Air Museum (Larry Martin & Malcom Craig)
- Continue building our roster beyond 500 names. We can register our shipmates via the (www.mlrsinc.com) with names, addresses, phone numbers, and years served in VC-12/VAW-12
- Partner with George Koppmann's (www.caew.info) Website and submit photos, stories, etc. (Check it out)
- Support relocating the USS Saratoga to Quonset Point as a floating museum and plan for an expanded VC-12/VAW-12 display on-board (Malcom Craig)

Ed Seykowski, CWO4
USNR (Ret.)
VC-12/VAW-12 Chairman

WELCOME MAT



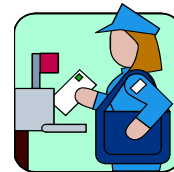
The following shipmates were just located. Welcome aboard. If we missed anyone, please accept our apology. Let us know and you'll be listed in the next issue. We want to urge you to become a contributing member of the group and hope to see you at the next reunion.

Because of the number of new names (59), we will not be able to print all the addresses; however, if you see a familiar name and would

like the address, please let us know here at ML&RS and we will send it to you. Our address is on page two.

Olin Gray (1957-61) CDR
Henry Gawron
Herb Brende
John Doyle (1941-52) YN3
George Koppman (1960-63)
Bernard Lynch (1954-56) LTJG
Larry McKenny PO 3/c
Edward Marecki
James Wetz
David Scantland (1953-56) AT2
James Wenning
Dick Shaw, Jr.
Glen Aulenbach
Don Cherry
Jim Grueb
Chantee Lewis
Irving Zeman, Captain
Leon Mularski
Louis Rell
Robert Zemaitis, VADM
Glen Giles
Marty Achilles
Don Betterton
Don Stickler
William Martin
Bud Noe
Hal Bernsen, RADM
Emerson Conrad, LCDR
Ralph Dewalt, Captain
John Dmoch
Chuck Sammons
Richard Sargeant
Robert Conway, LT
Charles Fantauzza
Hugh Gurley
Joel Strawn
Raymond Chamberlain, Captain
Sam Georgianni
Kenneth Kier, CDR
William Michael
Ed Perez
Fred Stumpf
Charlie Ward, Captain
Eugene Albrecht, Captain
Oren Peterson, LCDR
John Sorenson, Jr., LT
David Larkin
Don Roberts
Chuck Pospisil, LT
Dave Stubbs
Jim Blocker (1960-63) CDR
Donald Debaets, CDR
Ken Denbow (1964-69, Captain

William Hale (1957-61)
Al Hopcus
Richard Martin (1966-68), CDR
Thomas Woolcock (1956-59) Capt.
John Pedisich, Jr. (1963-66), LCDR



MAIL CALL

ML&RS, Inc.,

Well, we finally made it to the VC-12 Reunion after three false starts to other reunions.

It was really great to see some of my old shipmates from the 1951 Midway Med cruise and to meet others I had not really known personally before.

With detachments going out every six months, we could pass others in transit who we rarely knew even though we work in the same squadron together for years.

Our hats off to Bob Marvin for all his efforts over the years to drag all us stubborn old swabbies to the trough together. That was not an easy job for anyone, anytime.

Everyone says that the Good Lord plans and takes care of everything, but I feel that He only lays the course and distributes the maps. He gave each of us a brain to make the choices along the way—good or bad, right or wrong; and blew a spirit into our nostrils when we were born that lasts with us until we draw our last breath. That spirit is with others after we're gone to be used again for some other new born. Through our spirit we are reincarnated. Did you ever have the feeling that you saw something or been somewhere before when you know you hadn't?

Two weeks before I graduated boot camp at Great Lakes, I came down with the 3-day German measles. Most of my class went to school at Newman, OK. I ended up

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at Millington, TN, outside of Memphis.

The NATTC had no room, so we were billeted across the street at the NAS where I worked in the control tower and the gun/rifle range.

When I got across the street in NATTC, I was billeted in the NEGDF (Naval Emergency Ground Defense Force) barracks, next to the chiefs' barracks to the right of the main gate directly in front of the Waves barracks.

We had special riot control training and 16-day liberty between duty guarding the chiefs and Waves barracks.

NEGDF was stamped in my records and I was called to assist the Marines in Famagusta, Cyprus to separate our sailors from the Communist agitators while on the Coral Sea Med cruise in 1952.

When I graduated "A" school, the open billets were posted and the first two Waves at the top of the class picked Argentinia (thinking it was Argentina). I picked Quonset Pt., RI, based on the fact that on the wall of my bedroom at home amidst a Montaque of WWII news clippings and pictures of aircraft carriers in battles in the Pacific, there was a Norman Rockwell calendar of New England.

It was a matter of connecting the dots, that led me to the right time, the right place and the right group of people in VC-12.

Sincerely,
Ed Tkacs

Dear Shipmates,

I am treasurer for the VC12/VAW12 group.

Dues are **\$10.00** per member per year to fund the newsletter. Make checks out to **VC12/VAW12**. Address:

Roger G. Smith
256 SE 2nd Ave
Hillsboro, OR 97123

Any member who wants a copy of the roster list can reply to me.

My e-mail address is <r.smith@ix.netcom.com>

Please send in dues or there will be no more newsletters. We must have your support.

Roger Smith, Treasurer

Veterans,

Won't you please help us? To benefit Korean War veterans hospitalized in VA hospitals with little "R&R" the non-profit Kitchen Table Gang Trust has just published the 12th Annual Veteran's Celebrity Cookbook. This is their annual fund raiser. It's really quite a unique and useful book. Please see for yourself, details are at <http://www.kitchentablegang.org/cookbook>.

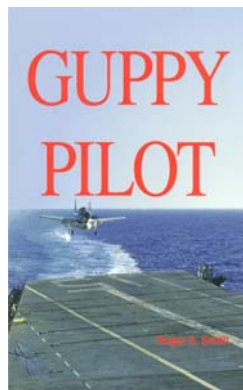
We hope you deem them worthy of your support! Thanks for caring!

Charlie Taliaferro

Shipmates,

Roger Smith, MD (1955-1958), your association treasurer, has written a book entitled *Guppy Pilot*. It is an account of squadron flying in the 1950s and is available at \$27.50 per copy. Also available for sale are VC12/VAW12 patches at \$25.00 per patch. If you wish to purchase either of these items, please contact Dr. Smith at:

Roger Smith, MD
256 SE 2nd Ave
Hillsboro, OR 97123



Front cover of Dr. Smith's book.



Patch available for sale

Mr. Bob Marvin,

My name is George C. Koppmann; Naval Aviator #V-18639; Born & raised in Buffalo, NY.

My 'bride' of 39+ years, (the former Margaret E. (Peggy) Hyatt from Evansville, IN) and I live in Santa Fe, NM. We grew up together in United States Naval Aviation after having met on a 'forced' blind date for the Preflight Ball on 22 October 1960 at the ripe old age of 17 & 19 respectively. I had just completed my 8th week as a member of NavCad Class 33-60 in Navy Preflight Pilot Training at NAS Pensacola, FL, and had experienced only ONE flight in an airplane; an airliner from New York City with a stop in Atlanta, GA, after having been sworn in at NAS Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn, NY—two takeoffs and two landings—I was HOOKED!

Seventeen months later on 5 March 1962 I earned my wings after completing Advanced Flight Training when I Carrier Qualified aboard the USS Antietam, CVA-36, flying an S-2F (Stoof) based at NAS New Iberia, LA—90 miles north of New Orleans. My first Sea Duty station orders were to Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron Eleven, VAW-11, at NAS North Island, San Diego, CA.

My 'accelerated' check out in the Grumman Iron Works' WF-2, "Willie Fudd" or "Stoof with a Roof", (later redesignated the E-1B), commenced in April '62. After three months that were a blur I had completed fleet qualifications in the "Fudd" and was off to WesPac as a new carrier qualified copilot with

(Continued from page 4)

VAW-11 Det. (detachment) "E". We left the 'quay wall' pier aboard the attack carrier "Bonnie Dick" (USS Bon Homme Richard), CVA-31, in early July 1962.

The middle of Feb. '63 saw my return to CONUS with Det. "E" and a month later, Peg and I were married at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Coronado, California with family and every member of VAW-11 who was not at sea in attendance. It was one hell-of-a wedding reception at the NAS North Island Officers Club—someone told me it was entered in the "O" Club's history book. After our honeymoon/post deployment leave, I was assigned to VAW-11 Det. "A" and trained with them as a brand spanking new Aircraft Commander flying "Fudds" off the USS Midway (CVA-41).

Toward the end of June '63 a pilot on Det. "G" became medically incapacitated and wasn't able to ship out in early July aboard the USS Oriskany with the team. I volunteered to take his place for the full 7.5 month WesPac cruise because I had learned that VAW-11 was just designated to introduce the new Grumman W2F turboprop, the "Super Fudd"—(later redesignated the E-2A), into the fleet beginning in early 1964.

I wanted to fly that airplane—BADLY!!! So, by 'volunteering' to fill the opened pilot slot on Det. "G", I hoped to do so by placing myself in a position to return to the States from my second WesPac cruise just as the new E2As were being delivered to NAS North Island. Having two full WesPac cruises, (one in combat), 1200 flight hours, and over 150 carrier landings under my belt wouldn't hurt my chances at a slot on the new turbo prop introduction team; BUT, there were no guarantees—SO, I took the chance (with my new bride's concurrence, of course).

Early in August '63 I was headed back to WesPac for a 2nd 7.5 month 'cruise' this time aboard the USS Oriskany (CVZA-34), the "O Boat", driving "Fudds" as an Aircraft Com-

mander this time.

The timing worked in my favor for when we returned to CONUS in March '64, a few of the E-2As had 'just' been delivered and in April '64, after having been 'blackmailed' by Capt. Vida into agreeing to extend a year on sea duty AND to make a 3rd cruise to WesPac, I was assigned to the 'intro team' and I got my first in-doc. flight in the new E2A with LCDR Bunganich.

For the next 2 1/2 years, 1100+ pilot hours, and over 100 carrier landing, I strapped the E2A to my rear and felt very privileged to be a founding member of that first team, (VAW-11 Det. "C"), to take the Admiral's "Ten-million dollar Gold Cadillac" to sea with the fleet and into combat in Vietnam aboard the USS Kitty Hawk (CVA-63)—(June '65—June '66).

Once upon a time I ate, slept and drank the United States Navy and especially those airplanes that flew off Aircraft Carriers. THEN, I got old. Now Peg HAS begun to think that I've reverted completely to those days, 'cause all she sees lying around the house is info and pictures of Aircraft Carriers and Airplanes with HOOKS hanging out of their tails.

Now that I AM old(er), and aren't 'permitted' to fly off Aircraft Carriers anymore, I ride a large, 1500 cc 'Cruiser' motorcycle on which to cheat death. Believe it or not, riding a motorcycle to and from work every day DEMANDS the application of the same skills and attention to detail as flying, (IF you favor survival)—it's a real jungle out there.

Upon reaching middle age, my priorities have changed from: My gun, my dog, my pickup, my chain saw, my wife, my children, and my job—in that order— to—(insert motorcycle ahead of pickup), (eliminate manual labor-chain saw), and (add GRANDCHILDREN to the Wife and Children category).

George C. Koppmann
Santa Fe, NM
geokoppmann@earthlink.net

**TRY GEORGE KOPPMANN'S
WEB SITE AT:
[HTTP://WWW.CAWW.INFO/](http://www.caww.info/)**

ML&RS,

Jim Ehret sent the words to the Aviation Stanza of the Navy Hymn (Eternal Father, Strong to Save) because your Chairman did such a terrible job singing the Navy Hymn at our past Newport Reunion.

4. "Lord, guard and guide the men who fly through the great spaces in the sky. Be with them always in the air, in darkening storms or sunlight fair. O hear us when we lift our prayer for those in peril in the air."

Ed Seykowski, CWO4, Ret.
219/462-3636
607 N. 70 E.
Valparaiso, IN 46383-1691

REPORT ON 2002 REUNION

By Roger Smith

VC12/VAW12 Reunion
Newport, RI
September 2002

There gathered in Newport on the third weekend in September, 32 former VC12 veterans for their 5th reunion. (1998 Newport, 1999 Pensacola, 2000 Norfolk, 2001 Charleston.) Organized originally by Bob Marvin and a dozen of his aircrewmen friends, the Chairman this year was Ed Seykowski with a steering committee of Bob Marvin, Larry Martin and your scribe. We have a great mix so far. Captains to airman apprentice, president of large corporation, owners of businesses, professional guys, lots of airline workers—pilots and mechanical wizards, private pilots with a Mooney or a Comanche, guys from the 40s as well as early 60s.

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(Continued from page 5)

Chief Donald Shultz came the farthest from Otis, near the Tillamook Air Museum on the Oregon Coast where they have an AD4W. Fourteen states were represented. Let us find some more shipmates.

We plan to meet again next year in September in Annapolis, MD. The following year, 2004, we expect to join the VC11/VAW11 reunion in Pensacola. (If they will have us. I joined them in 1997 in San Diego and it was great—and I met a lot of VC12 men too. They are more a pilot oriented group than a whole AEW mission oriented group by the nature of their membership and origin.)

It was decided to make our organizational dues \$10.00 per year. It is due now for the year 2003. Make checks to VC12/VAW12. The treasurer will reimburse the reunion planners for the quarterly newsletter. Mr. Robert Howard of East Aurora, NY is the heroic figure who has already sent in his dues. The rest of the members should mail their \$10 to the Treasurer who is Roger Smith at 256 SE 2nd Ave, Hillsboro, OR 97123.

I have compiled a roster, which is admittedly a work-in-progress. If you want a copy, send an e-mail to the treasurer at r.smith@ix.netcom.com. Please send me any corrections or additions. There is now a web site run by George Koppmann in New Mexico. Check it out. It, too, is a work-in-progress. www.caew.info or Carrier Airborne Early Warning. Mr. Koppmann is a WF pilot, but he loves the Guppies and the TBMs too. Our Military Locator and Reunion Service has a web site as well. Look up MLRSINC.com.

Several of our members had dinner at the Quonset O Club (now under private management and much altered since the 50s) with a group of VAW12 pilots and aircrew from the days of the WF2 in the 60s. They meet for dinner every 2 years. Some of them were interested in our party and visited us the following evening. We invite

them to continue, contribute and converse. We have added them to our roster as far as they be known.

Our speaker Saturday night was Lawrence Webster, “the aluminum undertaker.” He has made a life project of aviation safety, studying the crashes of over 300 military aircraft in New England, the remains of many of which are collected in piles among the trails in his back 40, some 8 miles from the old NAAS Charlietown. He relived some of these events which had involved VC12 airplanes and presented us with an (incomplete yet) collection of the squadron’s disasters. We had the Markovits/Olmsted event at Lawrence out for a trot, and relived the Midshipman Edmund Kazinski night take off at Charlietown wings unfolded as well. Capt Jim Ehret who was present enlightened us as to the true nature of the events leading to the death of his friend, Paul Marbach, at Charlietown in May 1958. The room was astounded.

Chief Malcolm Craig who lives in East Greenwich, RI, encouraged Bob Sherman and I who had served under Captain Rigg to pay him a visit. I was very pleased I did. Captain Rigg is now 87 and one of the outstanding carrier pilots of the WWII. Those of you who served under him will recall he insisted on some important things, one of which was not flying under that tempting bridge 3 miles south of runway 34. He asked me straight out, “Roger, did you ever fly under it?” I told him I had worked too hard for those wings to risk them with that.

Broad grin, he said, “God, how I wanted to, so I couldn’t let you jaygees do it.”

Roger Smith

RUMORS

Submitted by Bob Marvin

Fellow Shipmates,

It seems that when a rumor starts it snowballs all over the country. I belong to Tin Can Sailors and there was an article in their newspaper that I would like to share with you. We receive so many e-mails spreading false

stories that I thought it would be worthwhile to set the record straight. Here are some of the stories and the facts.

Story: The haunting melody we know as “Taps” was found in the pocket of a dying Confederate soldier by a Union officer who happened to be the dying soldier’s father.

Fact: About the only part of the story that is true is that “Taps” was written in 1862. It was actually composed by Union Brigadier General Daniel Butterfield, probably basing it on a French melody called “Tattoo.”

Story: During the testimony before a congressional committee in 1987, Oliver North said he needed a home security system because his family was threatened by a terrorist named Osama bin Laden.

Fact: Oliver North named Abu Nidal as the terrorist who made threats against him.

Story: When the Gold Star Mothers came to Washington, only one senator refused to meet with them: Hillary Clinton.

Fact: American Gold Star Mothers, Inc., deeply regret the misunderstanding about Senator Hillary Clinton. The two mothers who visited Washington did not have an appointment with the Senator and she was not in her office that day. We would appreciate it if the e-mails and the negative comments about Senator Clinton would cease.

Story: During Jane Fonda’s infamous visit to Hanoi in 1972, American POWs gave her slips of paper with their social security numbers on them. She gave those to the North Vietnamese guards who then beat several of the POWs to death.

Fact: “Hanoi Jane” did some very bad things, but this story is total fiction.

More stories and facts in a later issue.