

VC-12 VOICE

Volume 4 Issue 2

February 2002

Special Points of Interest

- *Read all about the attractions that you have to choose from at the Newport, RI reunion this year. Our cover story gives you a rundown of what you may see there.*
- *WELCOME MAT on page two has two newly located men from VC/VAW-12.*
- *A great article called "Humorous Happenings" is on pages three and four. You'll enjoy hearing these stories. Maybe it will inspire you to write your own for the newsletter.*
- *The Accident and Crash History begun last issue is continued on page four.*
- *A new story idea is introduced on page four. I hope to have lots of responses to it for the next newsletter due out in May.*
- *Please take time to fill out the survey on page five and return it to us at ML&RS so we can finalize the plans for your reunion in Newport, RI.*

NEWPORT, RI 2002 REUNION SITE

Newport is an excellent choice for a reunion site. The 2002 reunion for the VC-12/VAW-12 & Sister Squadrons will be at the **Royal Plaza Hotel** in Newport, RI on **September 19-22**. We'll try to very briefly describe some of the main attractions and per usual ask you to complete and return a survey telling us the activities and attractions you would most like to see on the reunion agenda. We will design a reunion package following your input. You will receive your registration packet telling you all the final plans approximately 90 days prior to the reunion. Be sure to keep the dates of September 19-22, 2002 free for the reunion.

If there is a negative aspect about Newport, it is the transportation. There is no nearby airport. You either must fly into Providence, RI (the preferred place) or Logan International in Boston. No hotel in Newport offers complimentary airport shuttle service. You can get a shuttle bus at either airport, but there is much less hassle in Providence. Most shuttles do not drop off passengers at a hotel, you go directly to the Newport Visitor's Center (bus station) and get another shuttle (or cab) to the hotel. Normally you can arrange for hotel pick-up for the return trip to the airport, but you should make pick-up arrangements before the shuttle drops you off; it's hard to do from the hotel. The good news is it's easy to get to if you drive.

Now, in the next couple of paragraphs, we'll try to describe (very briefly) the major attractions. Please read over them and tell us those things you are most likely to

participate in.

The **Naval War College** is on the base as well as a great museum giving a lot of naval history. As you probably know there are no ships in Newport now, just some schools (Chaplain and JAG come to mind).

There, of course, is a lot of history in Newport dating back hundreds of years. A **narrated tour of the city** would fill you in on the details.

The downtown and waterfront area are filled with chic little shops and good restaurants where you can grab a bite or a beer while the wife shops.

You can visit **Hammersmith**, Jackie Kennedy's old home place and the place where President Kennedy and his family spend a lot of time during his presidency. It is still well preserved with many mementos and much history

"Mansions Row" is probably Newport's most famous drive. Here you can see the summer homes of the rich and famous, the Du Ponts, the Vanderbilts, etc. Each one trying to out-do the other. Even today, there are true mansions being built along the drive. Normally one of the really famous homes is open for tours, and they are well worth taking the time to visit.

Just up the road (down South up the road is north) from Newport is Fall River, MA, and **Battle Ship Cove**. This Naval Park and Museum features the Battleship USS MAS-SACHUSETTS, the destroyer JOSEPH KENNEDY, a submarine who's name I forgot, and a tremendous display of PT Boats. You can

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

have your memorial service on the fantail of the battleship, or if the weather is bad, there is a chapel set aside for the service. Sometimes a Navy Chaplain is available, but not always. Lunch is also available in the old CPO Mess. This is a day all old sailors love. To compensate to the ladies, there is the **world's largest retail outlet** in old cotton mills. We're not suggesting a stop there, but if enough of you ladies put in the survey that you would like to stop there, perhaps some arrangements could be made. (Hint Hint)

The items briefly described above certainly do not represent everything of interest in Newport, and your suggestions are most welcome.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Balance after 11/01 issue

\$128.23

Funds received since 11/01 issue

\$12.00

Total available for 02/02 issue

\$140.23

Expended for 02/02 issue

\$190.48

Balance for 05/021 issue

Minus \$50.25

Funds will be needed for the next issue.

Published By:

*Military Locator & Reunion Service, Inc
PO Drawer 11399
Hickory, NC 28603-6402*

828-256-6008 (voice)
828-256-6559 (fax)

DINAMLR@AOL.COM (e-mail)
MLRSNEWSLETTERS@AOL.COM
(newsletter e-mail)
WWW.MLRSINC.COM (web site)

Our Reunions Work So You Don't Have To

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.

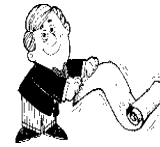
The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space limitations and grammar.

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

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The full and complete name of the famous groundhog is Punxsutawney Phil, Seer of Seers, Sage of Sages, Prognosticator of Prognosticators, and Weather Prophet Extraordinary.

WELCOME MAT



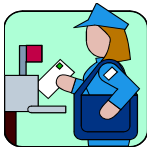
The following shipmates were just located. Welcome aboard. If we missed anyone, please accept our apology. Let us know and you'll be listed in the next issue. We want to urge all of you listed to become contributing members of the group and hope to see you at the 2002 Reunion in Newport.

*Joseph Kearney
8 Ashlawn Rd
Malvern, PA 19355
610-644-3932*

*Robert Capitanio (1953-55)
50 Kimball Ln
Torrington, CT 06790
860-489-7889*

FACTS ABOUT NEWPORT

- Redwood Library, the oldest library in America, was built in Newport.
- The first gas street light in America was installed on Newport's Pelham Street.
- Polo was first played in America in Newport.
- On September 12, 1952, John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Bouvier were married at St. Mary's Church in Newport.
- The Stephen Spielberg film, *Amistad*, was filmed in Newport.
- The first jail sentence for speeding in an automobile was issued in 1904 in Newport.



MAIL CALL

Gentlemen:

I was saddened to hear of the death of Lt. Kosanovich, as I had served with him on the Randolph CVA-15 from 11/54 to 5/55. At the same time I was happy to hear that you had found Lt. Fransden (same cruise). I think the 2002 Reunion will be most successful due to the fact that the squadron was based in the area and manned by a great deal of the area people. I plan to attend and am looking forward to being with some of the men I served with (1953-1956). Now if you only could find at least 50% of the people out of all the names I gave you, that would be GREAT!!!

Regards,
Charles A Zink Msgt., Ret'd
PO Box 1216
Easthampton, MA 01027-5216
413-527-6132
zink@javanet.com

HUMOROUS HAPPENINGS

When I was a part of VC-12's Detachment 17, my two closest friends were Lt(jg) Frank Sequiera and Lt. Johnnie Janis, one of the two dentists on the Ticonderoga. Around either of these guys, there was no boredom. Frank and I were standing down on the hanger deck one time, watching vehicles being offloaded to "P boats" to be put ashore in Naples. There were two identical brand new 1956 Chevrolet sedans on board. One of these was assigned to the skipper of the ship and the other was assigned to the Admiral we had on board.

The rig used by the Boatswains to hoist a vehicle on and off the ship consisted of a sort of trapeze like thing with a rectangular top frame, from each corner of which a

line was suspended. On the lower end of each of these four lines was a rather flimsy looking split stirrup which gripped the tires of the vehicle. As the Admiral's sedan swung out over the P boat (the same square nosed wooden landing craft that were used to land troops), the stirrup on the right front wheel let go and the sedan teetered through a couple of swings, then fell out of the other three stirrups, did a half roll and landed inverted on the gunnel of the P boat just about precisely at the sedan's center of gravity. There was a heavy swell running that day and the P boat did three heaving rolls with the sedan teeter-tottering on the gunnel before it happened to flop nose first into the boat. It would have been better if the car had gone overboard. The Admiral had a few choice observations to make about the incident and wound up with the Skipper's sedan. Some of the metalsmiths worked for months trying to take the deep crease out of the sedan's roof. They'd have been well ahead to have just cut out the damaged section and patched it with sheet metal out of oil drums, but we had nobody aboard that knew anything about auto body repair. When I left the ship to go off active duty in July 1956, that sedan was still out of service.

Then there was the time we tied up in Gibraltar. Frank Sequiera and I were on the hanger deck near the back of the open starboard hanger bay. We were just lounging around back there minding our own business and observing the goings on ashore, when I noticed three very unusual buoys on the dock next to us. These things must have been at least 30 or 35 feet in diameter. They had railings around the perimeters and large round hatches near the centers. Not only were they unusual in size and configuration, but they were painted some odd yellow green color. I observed to Frank that these were very unusual buoys. "Yes," mused Frank, "they look almost like mail buoys, don't they?" I agreed that they did indeed look like "mail buoys" and commented that I had never seen one that close before. Neither had

Frank. We had been totally unaware of a new sailor, fresh out of boot camp, who was standing near us. "Sir, what's a mail buoy?" Frank and I exchanged glances; the stage was set and this was just too good to pass, so we smeared it on with a trowel. I've often wondered what that poor dumb kid must have thought about those two young officers that had given him such a snow job.

Cdr Charlie Melhorn, who was in charge of our detachment, frequently didn't sleep well at night, so he'd get up and wander around the ship a lot. While we were tied up in Gibraltar, Charlie saw the spring line at the stern break, then the next spring line and then a breast line in quick succession. He ran up to the bridge, sounded general quarters and ordered all pilots to man their aircraft. Next he ripped through our quarters and roused us out in person. Our AD5Ws were tied down facing inboard. He ordered us to start our engines and do a full power turn up! By now, the only line that had not parted was the Ticonderoga's bow line and our stern was swinging out faster and faster; right toward a British destroyer that was tied up right across the slip from us. With all those big fans turning on the flight deck, the stern gradually began to slow its swing and eventually stopped just as the Ticonderoga barely contacted the British destroyer. The only damage to the destroyer was a slightly bent railing. If Charlie Melhorn had not reacted as he did, we'd have smashed that British destroyer like a beer can. I've often wondered how many lives Charlie saved that night. He deserved a medal, but I doubt that he even got a letter of commendation for his quick thinking.

Lt. Johnnie Janis and I used to go on liberty together on a regular basis. Johnnie was a lot of fun; he'd see humor where most people did not and he was one of the kindest men I ever met—BUT—he did have this one little mischievous streak. His quarters were right up in the

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

eyes of his ship, just behind the hawse pipe. There was a port hole in his room that was just over the starboard side of the cutwater. I'd usually drop by his stateroom to pick him up when we'd go on liberty together. One day I went up there to pick him up and he said, "Wait, wait! I'll be ready in just a minute." He then explained that there were two sailors aboard who were such scrounges that they did not stand inspection with the rest of the crew. They just were not military types. Down in the carpentry shop, the carpenters had built a Mississippi River "punt" for them. This is a square ended thing that resembles a concrete mixing trough; they are used extensively up and down the Mississippi River, hard to match for running trot lines. Every day, when we were at anchor, the Ticonderoga set this punt in the water, crewed by this pair of scrounges. Each had a big paint brush, a 5 gallon can of black paint and a canoe paddle. When they painted their way around the water line each day, their day's work was finished. "You ought to hear these guys cuss!" exclaimed Johnnie. "They've got cussing down to an art form! Listen, you can hear 'em talking down there now! They'll be paddling around that cutwater any second now, and I'll show you what I mean." Sure enough, within a few seconds, the punt rounded the cutwater. Johnnie hunched over the porthole, concentrating. "NOW!" he exclaimed under his breath and ran past me to flush his toilet, then back to the porthole. The flushing water dumped squarely into the punt. "Now listen to this," Johnnie chuckled. "They don't cuss the Navy, they don't cuss the guy that flushed the toilet—they cuss each other!" I've never heard such colorful, straight from the heart cursing before or since! They called each other names I'd never dreamed of. Johnnie sent that flushing water down on them like that every day just after they rounded the cutwater, just to hear them cuss each other. It was harmless enough; there were no waste products in the flushing water. Just saltwater.

Johnnie was from Biloxi, MS. I went by to see him on my way home from the VC-12 reunion in Charleston, telephoned his wife and was shocked to learn that Johnnie had died of bladder cancer 17 years before. People just don't come any better than Johnnie Janis. I've never thought more of any man than I did him.

Submitted by Don Stephens

VC/VAW-12 ACCIDENT AND CRASH HISTORY

January, 1948 through March 1962
Flights from NAS Quonset Point and
NAAD Charlestown, RI

*From the archives of the Quonset Air
Museum*

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE

1-4-55

AD-3W
Mereski, P. ENS. No injuries
Aircraft crashed; no landing gear.

6-29-55

AD-5W BU#132786
Staendle, Joseph F. ENS USNR KIA
Leo, Carmine E Jr AT2 CM USN KIA
Engine failed, stalled, spun in;
crashed NO

8-1-55

AD-5W BU#133773
Johnston, LTJG. No injuries.
Ran off RW/23; Flat tire. Prop and
RH wing damaged.

4-1-56

AD-5W BU# 133773
Becker, J.I. LTJG, Swartz, S.P. LTJG
Crashed in snow bank.

VAW-12

7-8-56

AD-5W BU#133767
Dempsey, J.W. LTJG No injuries
Wheels up landing.

12-22-57

AD-5W Young, John Joseph, AET 1/
C Engine failure & fire during FCLP;
Ditched.

12-27-57

AD-5W BU#132788
McQueston, John LT Injured.
Young, John Joseph AET 1/C KIA
Engine failure & fire during FCLP;
Ditched.

4-15-58

AD-5W BU#135200
Unidentified Injured.
FCLP; Stalled, veered off runway;
Engine torn.

5-27-58

AD-5W Marback, Paul John FTJG
KIA FCLP; went into water. Aircraft
submerged.

8-11-59

AD-5W BU#132753
Lewis, LCDR No injuries
Over ran runway 23 and nosed up

9-24-59

AD-5N BU#132728
McRae LTJG No injuries
Ran off runway

12-2-59

AD-5W BU#132798
Waples Landing gear collapsed.

*Submitted by Stan Essex,
Vice president of Quonset Air Mu-
seum*

*Quonset Air Museum
Quonset State Airport
488 Eccleston Ave
PO Box 1571
North Kingstown, RI 02852*

STORY IDEA FOR NEXT ISSUE

*Do you remember your first days on board a ship when you first joined the Navy? Tell us about your first time at sea. Were you homesick, seasick, overwhelmed, awestruck? I'm sure there are hundreds of stories to tell. Won't you please consider telling yours. Send to ML&RS at our mailing address or **newsletter e-mail address, both on page two.***

VC/VAW-12 REUNION SURVEY NEWPORT, RI SEPTEMBER 19-22, 2002

The goal of Military Locator & Reunion Service, Inc is to provide you with the best possible reunion. We want to offer you the things you want to do; not what we *“think”* you would like to do. You can help insure that your reunion really is *your* reunion by completing and returning this survey to us. The entire agenda will be developed from your responses and the recommendations of the Reunion Chairman. If you don't vote, don't complain.

Would you like a light meal (like a cook-out, cold-cut spread, etc.) as part of the welcome reception? ___yes ___no

Would you like breakfast all three mornings? ___ or only on Sunday morning? ___

Would you like one day (Friday or Saturday) left free to do things on your own, or have an organized tour?
___free time ___organized tour

Do you want entertainment after the banquet? ___yes ___no

Please check the attractions you would like to see on the tours, keeping in mind the Battleship Cove visit is an all day event. This trip should be on Saturday. For a brief description of the attractions, re-read the lead story. Return completed form to:

**ML&RS, Inc.
PO Box 11399
Hickory, NC 28603-6402**

**Or fax it to:
828-256-6559**

I'd like to see:

Hammersmith (Jackie Kennedy's homeplace) ___

Visit one of the mansions along Mansion Row ___

Have a riding tour of Mansion Row (highly recommended) ___

Narrated riding tour of Newport ___

Tour the Naval Base and Navy War College (no ships in Newport) ___

Visit Battleship Cove ___

Stop for shopping at the Retail Outlet Stores in Fall River ___

Comments and suggestions: _____

