

# VC-12 VOICE

Volume 5 Issue 2

March 2003



## Special Points of Interest

- *The roster just keeps getting larger. Read the cover story for details and see WELCOME MAT on pages two and three!*
- *MAIL CALL has some great stories beginning on page three and continuing through page seven. Thanks to all of you who shared your stories.*
- *Two stories in MAIL CALL are about some daredevil pilots. One on page four and the other on pages six and seven.*
- *Several stories about mishaps that didn't have tragic endings are on pages three, four and five. Some lucky guys!*
- *A great story about Capt. Leonard Ewoldt, who has passed away, is on page and six.*
- *See what you can do in Baltimore on page eight.*

## GREAT NEWS FROM TREASURER

We have now several hundred names in the VC-12/VAW-12 reunion roster from the founding of the squadron to its division into 6 new squadrons. VC-12 was constituted at NAS Quonset flying TBM, AF, AD3W, AD3W in 1947. There had been a prior VC-12 during WWII. It became VAW 12 in 1956 flying AD5Ws. WF2 came in 1960. Later the same year the E1B Squadron transferred to NAS Norfolk in 1962. First Hawkeye 1966 came to VAW 126. Reorganized by Adm. T.E. Moore (CINCLANT) as CAEW Wing 12 in 1966. The E2B came in 1970; the E2C came 31 May 1973.

The men from the 50s have now interacted with the men from the 60s. Enthusiasm is building for the Annapolis convention. Nearly 100 guys have ponied up \$10.00 for "dues." That is what keeps this newsletter flowing to you quarterly. We had a letter from a member who had contributed \$100.00 a couple of years ago, and we credited him. I believe others have contributed as much earlier too and still contribute. It's organized on an as you are able basis, and we love our former shipmates

whether they are in or not.

You may send your check made out to VC-12/VAW-12 to me at:

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

I'll be happy to e-mail you a copy of the roster so you can see which friends of yours we know. Better yet, you may send me your friends' names. If you know a city, phone number or e-mail address we may be able to find him. I've learned to use the internet white pages. I particularly want to find Jack Leonard, a pilot from the 50s, who meets with some others from Quonset in April to have dinner in Rhode Island somewhere. Put me in touch with Jack if you know him. I welcome all communications from Squadron mates to the address above. I have squadron patches and *Guppy Pilot* books. Jack Sauter has copies of *Sailors in the Sky*. Jack is the author of the book, an account of squadron flying in VC-12.

*(Continued on page 2)*

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You can reach Jack at the following address:

Jack Sauter  
235 Robby Ln.  
Manhasset Hills, NY 11040

Roger Smith  
Treasurer, VC-12/VAW-12

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***Our Reunions Work So You Don't Have To***

## REUNION PLANS ANNOUNCED

The February issue of the VC-12 Voice has been delayed until a decision was made on the dates and hotel accommodations for the reunion. We are happy to announce that the plans for the 2003 reunion are complete and are as follows:

### VC-12/VAW-12 & SISTER SQUADRONS 2003 REUNION SEPTEMBER 11-14 HOLIDAY INN BWI BALTIMORE, MD

## REGISTRATION PACKETS

Registration packets for the 2003 reunion will be mailed out approximately 90 days prior to the reunion. It is extremely important that you read the **entire packet** thoroughly. Some changes have been made to the registration in an effort to make it more adaptable to your individual wishes. The packet will answer all your questions if you will read it in its **entirety**. To avoid being charged for something you do not want, be sure to **read carefully!**

## 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, 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 to the left.*

George Dow  
Max Presnal AT2 1953-56  
John Donnelly  
John Coffey  
Robert Simon  
Skip Richardson  
Ted Shanks 1958  
Larry Webster  
Capt. Douglas Lloyd  
Tim Keefe AT 1964  
David Woolrage AT 1958-60  
Clark Howell AK3 1962-63  
Kieran Collins LT 1965  
Richard Heston AT 1955  
Claude Rash AT 1960  
C.J. Mattison AM 1964  
Norman Wilcox AT 1956  
Harry Jackman AK 1957  
Steve Cheshier ATN3 1960  
James Lamey LT(jg) 1966-69  
J.J. McBride CDR 1964-66  
Ed Cercone AT 1956  
Raymond Mackey 1960-63  
Edward Connolley CDR  
Philip Teeling  
Thomas Tileston LT(jg) 1954-56  
Eugene Forsht LCDR 1953-55  
Jack Sotherland LT(jg) 1957  
John Blesch LT(jg) 1957  
Richard Oughton LT(jg) 1954  
Douglas Goss LT(jg) 1956  
C.C. Guy 1955  
Martin Nopola LT(jg) 1955-57  
Elias Abilheira  
Donald Daugherty CDR

Louis Wardlow  
C.W. Morris  
Joseph Schneider Lt 1962-65  
Arthur Broll ENS 1957  
John Hohman  
Benjamin Caldwell CDR 1956  
John Chapman 1961-63  
William Mellette LT(jg) 1958-61  
Arthur Motley, Jr. Capt  
Lansing Felker, Jr. LT(jg) 1958-60  
Robert Stanat LT(jg) 1956-57  
Jack Leonard LT(jg) 1958-60  
Darwin Miner 1962-65  
John Meagher 1951-53  
Elbridge Powell, Jr. LT 1954-58  
Joseph Gregonis LCDR 1958-61  
Albert Kuntz ENS 1958-60  
Ira Hozey, Jr. LT 1958-61  
Lawrence Gilkey ENS 1958-61  
Stephen Cash ATR2 1960-63  
Burriss Jenkins  
Frank Zinn AD3 1962  
Boyd Nickell  
Paul Watkins 1961-64  
Thomas Allen  
Richard Collins CDR  
Norman Craig  
Robert Pawlas  
Benny Mardis CDR  
Donald Manheimer  
James Donovan  
Albert Kientz  
Ed Dubravsky ATC  
George Entin  
Jack Lazera LCDR 1958-90  
Francis Hiles 1952  
George Pearson LCDR 1958  
Tad Riley LT 1956  
Walter Miete 1959-61  
Dick Ravetta 1961-64  
Ashley Shuler LCDR  
Philip Wild LT(jg) 1953-55  
Raymond Coller LT(jg) 1954-55  
Theodore Brodie LT(jg) 1953-55  
Carl Clapp LT(jg) 1954-55  
Francis McCluskey LT(jg) 1954-56  
John Uncles CDR 1953-55  
Joseph Merten, Jr. LT(jg) 1953-55  
William Litwin 1953-55  
John Whittemore  
Edward Feeley LT(jg) 1960-63  
John Davison, Jr. LT 1956-58  
Robert Craven LT 1958  
Robert Prentice LT(jg) 1956-58  
Walter Sagan LT(jg) 1957-59  
George Plude LT(jg) 1956-58  
Robert Irwin LT(jg) 1957

*(Continued on page 3)*

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Joseph Cullen LT(jg) 1958  
 Howard Curran LT(jg) 1958  
 Robert Coffey LT(jg) 1958  
 Robert Newbegin IV LT(jg) 1958-60  
 Peter Weiland LT 1958-60  
 Norman Sassi LT(jg) 1958  
 Kenneth High LT(jg) 1956-58  
 Lowell Busch ENS 1958  
 Rev. Lela Johnson LT(jg) 1953-55  
 Casimir Lawler  
 Robert Harp LCDR  
 David Kletter Capt  
 Charles Berthe CDR  
 John Colton  
 Leo Harris  
 Peter Crooks LT Dets 9 (Esses) '62-'65  
 Charles Joseph ATC 1961  
 Robert Allen Capt  
 William Knepper 1985-90  
 Joe Shaw  
 D Ashton LT(jg) 1951-55  
 Alfred Victor  
 Peter Williams  
 John Adkins 1961-64  
 George Zupko  
 Robert Cooper  
 Roy Evrad  
 Charles Folcik 1962-64  
 Sam Giorgianni  
 William Vincent Lt VAW-12 1961-64  
 Charles Murray  
 George Washburn  
 James Hruska  
 Cleland McBurney LCDR 1962-64  
 David Murphy, Jr AMCA 1960-63  
 Richard Cooper 1962-65  
 Stanislaw Mackey  
 Wayne Lamura 1961-64  
 Richard Barker EMS-ST(jg) 1958-60  
 Roy Belcher Capt 1956  
 George Klett Capt 1950  
 Richard Greenwood LT 1951-55  
 Ralph Magnus CDR 1957-59  
 Robert Campbell CDR 1967  
 Mel Bassett  
 Thomas Koehler 1961-64  
 Bernard Lowry  
 Delman Moll  
 James Harvey, Jr.  
 Robert Yates LT(jg) 1958-60  
 George Weaver 1962-64  
 John Libey LT(jg) 1955-56  
 Robert Klenke 1958-60  
 Ron Little LT  
 Kenneth Lake Capt 1964  
 Raymond Reedy  
 Thomas Conboy LT 1957-60

William Reilly LT(jg) 1958-61  
 Sheldon Corner Capt 1967-68  
 John Flinchum 1960  
 Vern Fox 1960  
 David Quinn Lt(jg) 1958-61  
 James Ogletree AT1 1958-60  
 Joseph Paskoski CDR 1958-59  
 Angus Shirah  
 Tom Gibbons 1958  
 Jack Dittrick  
 William Whitney Lt 1957  
 Mike Frawley 1958  
 Bill Solms 1960-63  
 Thurber Outlaw, Jr. 1958  
 Keith Blalock  
 John Shay, Jr. Lt(jg) 1957-59  
 Heinz Brandt LT(jg) 1958-60  
 Bradford Barton ENS 1958-60  
 Richard Nevins Lt(jg) 1956  
 William Litwin Lt(jg) 1953-55  
 Willard Schultz LCDR 1960-64  
 Moran Skinner 1956-69  
 Ralph Mahar  
 Robert Kennedy CDR  
 James Boyle CDR  
 Thomas Brown EMS-Lt(jg) 1958-61  
 Jerry Amos  
 Joseph Egan 1963-65  
 Jeremiah Luxemburger 1957-59  
 Kevin Ryan 1956-58  
 John Ward CDR 1957-60, 1971  
 Larry Sharpe LCDR 1962-64  
 Cliff Robinson 1965-67  
 Jack Wagner  
 Ralph Tucker 1962  
 George Niemela  
 Roger Newman

#### CORRECTION

Jim **Bockler** (1960-63) CDR was spelled incorrectly in the last issue. Please note the correct spelling of his last name.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT

The cost of this issue is \$443.52.

Dues of \$10.00 used for funding the newsletter should now be sent to your treasurer at:

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



## TAPS

The Voice has learned of the following shipmates' deaths since the last newsletter. Not all deaths are recent, but they were just learned of. Our deepest sympathy goes to the families and friends of the deceased. Anyone who knows or learns of a shipmate's death, you are requested to notify the newsletter so that person can be listed in TAPS.

Gary Anselmi AN 1948-52  
 Date of death not known

Capt. Frank Lucken 1955  
 Died December 20, 2002

Robert Johnson AD2 1951-55  
 Date of death not known

Tom Tracy  
 Date of death not known

Thomas Smith AA/AK2 1950-54  
 Died September 5, 2002

Kenneth Kier CDR  
 Died 2002  
 Russell Burnham LCDR  
 Died 2002

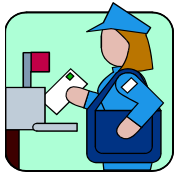
Warren Prosser LT  
 Date of death not known

Robert Borden, Jr. ENS 1957-59  
 Date of death not known

Edwin Barclay Coggan LT(jg)  
 1960-62  
 Died December 12, 2002

Capt Leonard Ewoldt 1957-58  
 Date of death not known

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



## MAIL CALL

Shipmates,

A note from Bob Hokkanen inquires if anybody can put him in contact with these men who were on his VC-12 1950 Korean Cruise Detachment:

LT(jg) Kelly, Ensign McGluckie, ALC Jacobs, AE1 Johnson, and AT1 (or AL1) "Ike" Isaacson. AT3 E.V. (Ed) Eney died in an aircraft accident in '52 (I believe) after being reassigned to VC-11 in San Diego (we all were) when returning in 1952.

Submitted by Roger Smith

Dear Dr. Roger Smith,

I remember Capt. Rigg's standing order that no one would survive his wrath if any pilot even had thoughts of flying under the bridge. I have some pictures of the bridge and anyone flying under it would have gathered up copious amounts of water. The effect of a direct order filters down to the lowest enlisted no matter what "firewalls" are in force.

Shortly before my discharge, I needed some hours for my "flight skins" and rode along with one of our pilots who was being checked out in the AD5. He needed 3 more hours and so did I. He said, "Come along, but I'll be doing some aerobatics." He also asked me how easily I got sick.

I said that I could take anything he and the airplane could hand out. We were over Cape Cod and I thought he was going to drive that "BOM" straight into the ground. He did everything—rolls, stalls, power dives, etc. and even tried to chase an F-80. We were past the "Red-Line" constantly. In one dive he

said, "Look at this ssssssoooooobbb unwind," pulled on the stick and said, "Look at this ssssssoooooobbbb windup." He laughed and said, "Man, you don't look so good and I'm taking you back."

"Thanks," I said.

When we landed we had been in the air one hour and fifteen minutes. I was sure we had taken off the week before. He gave me 3 hours of credit (for your misery he said). A week later I saw him in the hangar and he said, "You certainly look better, so you must feel better."

He offered to take me along again. I said, "Thanks, but I'm going back to Texas."

I had a log book that covered every flight I made while on active duty filled with names of pilots and crew. When I was discharged the Navy took it away from me along with my ID card and liberty card. My brother was a Navy Officer and flew 22 hour patrols from Hawaii to Japan during WWII and he still has his log book.

Do we know the pilot who needed 3 more hours to be checked out in AD5 in March 1955?

Sincerely,  
Bernard J. Luke

Roger,

My name is Al Cooper. I know of another AD5W crash in 1957, one day before my birthday. I was the pilot of the plane. While conducting FCLPs at Charlietown, at about the 45 degree position, my engine quit and the plane and I ended up in the water short of the runway, heading 180 degrees. For further info, no one believed that the engine had quit, including Jerry Bullard. He and I cruised together in 1958 on Essex, with him as Det Maintenance Officer. I went to Port Lyautey to pick a replacement plane for one that had crashed on the flight deck (not by me) and the engine on that plane quit on me at the 180 degree position each landing I made getting it back to the ship, including landing it on the ship. To make a long story

short, Jerry told me sometime in 1959 that engine overhaul, which was there on the base, had discovered that some valve clearances on some engines had been set improperly, which would cause the engine problem I experienced in both situations.

Al Cooper  
estillcooper@cox.net

Dear Roger,

I keep in touch with my old friend, Frank Sequiera, although Frank has never been famous for writing letters. Frank and I were in the last guppy in the landing pattern one dark night, when a big Banshee missed all seven cables and flew through three Davis barriers to wipe out two or three aircraft and kill 19 people up forward on the flight deck. We were sent up to orbit and subsequently forgotten by "Postdate." After 3 1/2 hours we called in with a low fuel state and were vectored over to the Lake Champlain. Our steer was 10 miles at 270 degrees. Frank said, "Stephanie, do you concur with that steer?" and I said, "Negative, I hold her at 35 miles and 220 degrees."

Frank and I flew together all the time and we trusted each other implicitly, so we just gave Postdate a "Roger" and took a heading of 220 degrees. Frank was one of the most unflappable pilots I ever knew. The Lake Champlain, after hearing our "state," did something unheard of and cleared us for a straight in approach just as she straightened out of her turn into the wind. About 30 seconds later, we arrived on board with 20 gallons of fuel in the tank and shut off the engine immediately, according to the air boss's instructions. Do you think we were shaky? Of course not! Why we might have stayed up another minute or so before the engine quit! That big Wright engine burned 850 gallons an hour leaned out at altitude, but I never knew how much fuel it gobbled at full ride during a carrier landing. We

*(Continued on page 5)*

*(Continued from page 4)*

had been airborne 12 1/2 hours. The people on the Lake Champlain knew how long we'd been up, so before the prop quit turning there were two or three big sailors up on each wing, next to the cockpit. One of them addressed me with, "Pardon me, Sir, but I'm going to have to come in there with you for a minute," and he popped my safety harness and vaulted in over me. The next thing I knew, he and a sailor who was still on the wing, were hoisting me over the cockpit coaming and handing me down to waiting hands on the flight deck and I was passed along like a bucket of water in a bucket line at a fire, to the island. It must have taken 2 or 3 minutes for me to get my legs straightened out enough to walk. Frank got hoisted out and passed along as I did, and so did Pemberton from the back seat. I shared the Executive Officer's quarters that night, but I never knew where Frank Pemberton slept. We were concerned, but I don't think any of the three of us was even scared by the experience. We just laughed about only having 20 gallons in the tank. That's only one of several adventures with Frank Sequiera. I wouldn't have missed knowing that guy for any amount of money.

Best regards,  
Don Stephens  
1615 Westridge Dr  
Raton, NM 87740

Hi Dina,

In the hustle and bustle of doing our jobs on detachments, most of us lived in our own little world and we were not aware of things in other people's worlds. This was especially true of flight officers in relation to ships' company enlisted men. I was frequently (if not always) selected to act as "Observer" during the ship's 5 inch 38 gunnery practice aboard the Ticonderoga during our Med cruise. I suspect that was because I had once told Cdr. Charlie Melhorn, who was in charge of our detachment,

that I was completely useless at observing anything while standing between two dual mounts of 5 inch 38s., because when the shooting began all I could do was stand there and blink like a toad in a hail storm. Two dual mounts could fire four or five rounds a second, and blinking from the concussion was totally involuntary and uncontrollable. Cdr. Melhorn knew exactly what I was talking about and he just doubled up laughing when I told him about my blinking problem, so I suspect he always put me up there to observe to see what funny observation I might make next about it. I had been assigned the job as "Observer" as usual, one time and went up to the "watch shop" to get the stop watch, with which I was supposed to time the firing while observing the hits. There was only one stop watch left in operating condition and it, as it turned out, had been dropped and broken 5 times during the past two weeks. It took perhaps an half hour to chase down the seaman to whom that watch had been assigned and get him up to the watch shop. He was most reluctant to let me have the watch, but he finally handed it to me very carefully and pleaded, "Please don't drop it, Sir, or the chief will have my a\_\_!"

On that cruise we shared quarters with personnel from a sister squadron detachment that was based in Atlantic City. I don't remember their squadron number, but we all became very close friends. They flew identical aircraft to ours, except that they were outfitted to find submarines. Among their pilots was a stubby little character named Don Sutton, who was certainly worth knowing, if only for entertainment. He had been assigned the job of towing a sleeve target for the Ticonderoga's 5 inch 38 aerial gunnery practice with his detachment's only AD5Q. Don got his sleeve strung out on a half mile of cable behind his aircraft as advertised and came up from astern of the carrier, just off the starboard side, making it easy for the gunners. BAM BAM BAM went the ship's 5 inch 38s! POOF POOF POOF went the flack puffs around Sutton's airplane, so he immediately dumped over and quickly lost 5000 feet of altitude as he ad-

vised CIC that their flack was bursting around him. CIC rogered his message and calmly advised him to swing around to starboard, regain his altitude, and repeat his towing run, which he did. Again, POOF POOF POOF, right in front and slightly off to the side of Don's airplane. That time Don immediately cut the sleeve loose and again dumped over to loose 5000 feet of altitude, while transmitting the following terse message to the Ticonderoga's CIC officer. "Dammit! You people get hold of that half wit you've got down there for a gunnery officer and tell him I'm supposed to be towing this target; NOT PUSHING IT!" That gunnery officer did not apologize to Don, but he certainly made himself mighty scarce for the next three weeks when Sutton was in the area with him.

Another of that squadron's more stellar characters was Don Connel, who was one of my very good friends. We were trying out some new arresting cables aboard the Ticonderoga, which were absolutely huge things in diameter. As many will remember, the AD5W had a kind of scooter plate like thing ahead of the tail wheel to make sure the tail wheel went over the arresting cable and prevent the cable from hopping up over the tail wheel to snag on the tail post when taxing over the cable. We were all lined up with our tail feathers hanging out over the port cat walk one day, waiting to take off. Connel's airplane was just ahead of ours in take off order. As he swung around into the wind over the deck, his tail wheel "shoe" got tangled into that big experimental arresting cable and it jammed his tail wheel over about 45 degrees to port, so when he started to take off, the aircraft swung to the left and went over the catwalk right ahead of us. Don just held the stick back against his belly button and left his engine at full power. If he'd have had another ten feet of if he'd have had even 300 gallons less fuel, I honestly think

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he'd have made it fly, but he didn't, so he very gently settled into the water at full power. Those 4 propeller blades must have flipped more than 300 feet into the air, the lord mounts sheered and the engine immediately fell off of the plane. Once the engine fell away, one of those would float like a cork for days. My friend calmly stepped out onto the port wing, looked up at us with a big grin and waved as they floated by. His two crewmen also walked calmly out to the nearest wing tip, sat down, inflated their one man rafts and stepped down into them. Not one of those guys even got his feet wet! That airplane floated almost a week and was finally sunk when our plane guard destroyers decided to use it for gunnery practice. I was a very good swimmer, and I had seen two other AD s float like that after they hit the water with their engines running, so I decided, then and there, that if I ever splashed down in an AD and the engine fell out, I'd just open the canopy, unbuckle my straps, so I could get out fast if I needed to and then I'd just sit there and wait until I felt water around my feet or someone came by to pick me up, before I got out of the plane. Those things were more sea-worthy than some boats I've been in. FANTASTIC AIRPLANES! Reflecting back on it, I suspect we were almost as good as we thought we were!

Don Stephens, LCDR. (Ret.)

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Dina,

Word reaches us from Jack Leonard, who was in VAW-12 in the 1957-60 era, that Captain Leonard E. Ewoldt has died.

Capt. Ewoldt was skipper of VAW-12 in 1957-58. My memories of his leadership are positive and I am grateful for his courtesy and integrity.

When he came to the squadron the story of his World War II exploits circulated. The story we were told—namely that he was shot down on

the Japanese held end of Guadalcanal, hidden by Solomon Islanders, and delivered back to the American lines in a dugout canoe hidden under a pile of coconuts which were probed three times by the Japanese with bayonets without discovering the pilot—is not true.

The true story, told by Lawrence P. Gunshol in the Spring edition of the Journal of the American Aviation Historical Society in 1998, is that as Lieutenant he was flying a Devastator off the Yorktown in Torpedo Squadron 5 on May 4, 1942. This was two days before the Battle of the Coral Sea and three months before the U.S. invasion of Guadalcanal nearby. The squadron attacked Tulagi where the Japanese fleet was assembling. Returning to the CV following the attack, the aircraft became separated.

T-10, Ewoldt's TBD, was unable to receive the YE signal to home in on the carrier on the airplane's ZB receiver. Dead reckoning came up a failure, and after a number of mishances during radio silence, he put it in the water near the south coast of Guadalcanal out of fuel. He and his crew spent some days in a raft, had a near miss with a shark and a Japanese Destroyer, and eventually came ashore. They were put in contact with the British District Officer on the island. Through him they acquired a near derelict schooner named Hing Lee on San Cristobal, which they rehabilitated enough to be able to sail it to Efate in the New Hebrides. There they reconnected with the U.S. Navy and were taken by U.S. Destroyer to Hawaii, where they rejoined their squadron after the Battle of Midway had occurred and their carrier was long gone.

He was a good captain, a brave officer, and a gentleman of great integrity. RIP.

Roger Smith, MD

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Roger,

In the mid-70s I was flying S2s out of a reserve squadron in Lakehurst, NJ. Living about 50 miles

away in Lawrenceville, my 3 kids were constantly asking Daddy to fly his plane over the house.

Flying under the old VFR rules that did not require a flight plan, my copilot and I made a parachute out of a red bandana and attached a bag full of Bazooka bubble gum to it.

My kids, plus about 10 of the neighbors' children, were told we would fly over about 4:00 in the afternoon and this small group had gathered in my backyard for the big event. (They were unaware of the bubble gum possibility.)

At the anticipated time, I came in at about 100 ft. while my copilot opened the hatch and threw out the bubble gum parachute. In the middle of all the noise and excitement, the kids noticed the parachute as it floated over the roof of my house heading for the lawn of the house across the street. Yelling with delight, they chased after it. It landed, the bag burst open, and there was bubble gum for everyone.

The interesting sidelight to the story is that one of the neighborhood kids, Michael Duffy, was the 8 year-old son of devout Roman Catholics, Jim and Diane Duffy. Up to this time, Jim and Diane had a hard time selling Michael on the notion of God and the importance of going to mass on Sunday. That afternoon, while chewing his bubble gum, Michael asked his mother where it had come from. She said, "Well, I guess from Heaven." Michael asked, "Is that where God lives?" Diane said yes. From that day on, Michael became a willing church goer. To this day, Diane Duffy still thanks me for my role in making Michael a good Catholic.

Don Betterton

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Roger Smith wrote;" I was telling this story to someone the other day, and I thought the other Ivy Navy pilot from VAW-12 would enjoy it too. It is a chapter from my book of stories about VAW12.

*(Continued on page 7)*

*(Continued from page 6)*

## SMITH COLLEGE

In June 1956 there was a considerable stir in the squadron because somebody had buzzed the Smith College commencement exercises in nearby Northampton, Massachusetts, and the culprit, we were told, was flying an AD4B. Our last Bravo model had been gone for over a year, but all of our guys were interrogated about their whereabouts at the time of the event, and some who could not prove they were where they claimed, were cast under a pall of suspicion. Some senior naval officer, present to see a granddaughter graduate, had made the report. I eventually married a girl from the Smith class of 1958, but at the time I didn't know her yet. (Though she knew me.) It was a year and a half later that the story came out to me, and there are many to whom it is still a deep secret. Those who were looking for an AD were looking for the wrong airplane, all up and down the east coast. That Admiral was asleep after lunch when aircraft recognition training was going on.

The pilot involved was named Bauer (or Bower?) and he flew with VS 32 at Quonset. He was leaving the service and had flown his last mission before he divulged the story up at the "O" club one night. He had been dating this girl who was a senior at Smith and who had thrown him over for a Harvard boy. It may be that his pride was more damaged than his heart over the event. Bauer spoke unkindly of Ivy League college boys and Harvard students in particular, and was mightily affronted that some girl could not perceive the inestimably greater worth of a man who wore the gold wings of a Naval Aviator. VS 32 was at that time being re-equipped with the Grumman S2F "Tracker," a twin engine sub hunter that became known affectionately as the "Stoof." I later flew the "Stoof" that became, with modifications, the basic carrier based ASW plane of the Navy for the next 20 years. VS 32 was phasing out the underpowered AF, Grumman "Guardian," an airplane that was flown as a hunter killer pair, with the

top plane finding the submarine and the lower plane going in for the attack. This arrangement was a stop-gap measure, and the pilots were all pleased to say goodbye to what they thought of as a piece of junk. The squadron had only two left when Bauer made up his mind to kiss off his ex-girlfriend with an aerial tour de force.

The graduating class and all their guests were out on the college green listening to the commencement address when Bauer arrived overhead in his Grumman Guardian. The Commencement speaker at Smith, a women's college, from time immemorial when the school was founded by Sophia Smith ("Twang your lyre for Sophiar.") has been an eminent woman. In 1956 the senior class had elected to break tradition and invite a man who was the father-in-law to be of their classmate, the same girl whose charm had attracted Bauer. He was a candidate for the Presidency of the United States for the second time, and he was the darling of the academic world. He was the former Governor of Illinois, Adlai E. Stevenson, and his son, graduating from Harvard that year, was not just any Harvard boy, but would go on to be Senator and Governor of Illinois as well.

Bauer came down from 10,000 feet in a dive bombing run without dive brakes, with full low pitch on the prop, and the throttle back in his lap, and initiated his pull up at the maximum speed he could attain, and started a Victory roll, as he added full power to climb. It can't be done in the AF, but he didn't know that. He had never thought of practicing it. The old dog of an AF wouldn't respond. It just slowed right down. Over on his back in the Victory Roll, he didn't have the airspeed to complete the maneuver, and had no choice but to pull back stick, and pull through over the crowd. He pulled with all his strength, because he was very close to crashing into the ground. He blacked out and when he came to, he was straight and level, right

on the housetops, headed south at a high speed, with all the rivets he could see out along the wings popped and standing straight up. He flew it straight in to Quonset an half hour or more away, and made no turns but landed straight in to Runway 16, and taxied the beast right to Overhaul and Repair and left it there. The plane never went back to the squadron to tell on him. He persuaded some enlisted Chief Petty Officer to lose it, and get the paperwork done for having it transferred as it was soon to be anyway.

Governor Stevenson had looked up from his prepared remarks (in which he said, "What you have learned here can fit you as nothing else can for the primary tasks of making homes and whole human beings.") when this near disaster passed over his head. He commented in his acid way, "Must be some Republican." and drew a chuckle from the crowd he had just mightily offended. Little did he know! The lady must be all right. She didn't squeal. How much did she know or suspect? Bauer said his skipper called him in and asked, "Bauer, who buzzed the Smith College commencement?"

"I did, Sir," he admitted.

"Damn good thing you didn't try to lie to me. I've seen the airplane. You should have killed your fool self. They're looking for an AD pilot. You be sure they don't hang some innocent guy for it. And if they ask me if it was an AF pilot, you're dead meat. If they don't ask me, I'm not volunteering that any of my pilots is such an idiot."

Nobody who knew anything about the AF would ever have thought any pilot who flew it would think it could do a victory roll, so Bauer got off Scott-free after making an extraordinary display of flying impertinence before God and all His angels.

Roger Smith

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## 2003 REUNION IN BALTIMORE, MD

Your choice of Baltimore for the 2003 reunion is one that everyone should enjoy tremendously. The reunion will be held at the **Holiday Inn BWI** on **September 11-14**. Mark your calendar now and make plans to attend. The following are tours that are available in the area. A survey will be included for you to choose the activities you would like to see on your agenda.

**Baltimore City Tour:** A fully-narrated tour of Baltimore that showcases an array of interesting attractions, restaurants and shopping areas. Hear about Baltimore's history, legends, and lore. See why Baltimore's Inner Harbor has been nationally acclaimed for its extraordinary waterfront development which houses the World Trade Center, USS Constellation, Harborplace, National Aquarium, and Maryland Science Center. Visit Fort McHenry, birthplace of "The Star Spangled Banner." Take a tour of Baltimore's unique neighborhoods of colorfully decorated row houses. Ride by the Shot Tower,

Star Spangled Banner House, B&O Railroad Museum, Carroll Mansion, Babe Ruth Birthplace, and the gravesite of Edgar Allen Poe. Cruise through Fells Point, a cobble stoned seaport where you will see 18th century ship captain's homes, high-masted ships, tugboats, piers, specialty shops, pubs and eateries. Stop briefly at Oriole Park at Camden Yards, and visit Baltimore's Korean Memorial to pay homage to these war veterans and other veterans of American Wars. One option offered on this tour is to board the cargo ship, JOHN W. BROWN, one of only two World War II Liberty ships still in operation. It has been turned into a maritime museum. Be advised that everything described cannot be accomplished in a single day, so on the survey select the items you'd most like to see.

**U.S. Naval Academy & Annapolis Tour:** As you travel through Annapolis you will see impressively preserved mansions that once belonged to the signers of the Declaration of Independence and governors of the state. Also

see the Maryland State House, the Governor's Mansion and St. John's College where you'll see the famous Liberty Tree and a replica of the Liberty Bell.

At the United States Naval Academy you will ride along the "yard" past many of the Academy's landmarks. A brief stop will be made at the Naval Academy Visitor's Center where a kaleidoscope of Navy memorabilia is available for souvenir shopping. You may also choose a walking tour of the Academy grounds to visit the magnificent Chapel, the Tomb of John Paul Jones, and Bancroft Hall— the midshipmen's dormitory. While here, you may be able to see the Brigade of the Midshipmen perform Noon Formation.

We hope to make this a very special reunion for you in 2003. Hope to see you all in Baltimore.

### VC-12 2003 SURVEY BALTIMORE

In order to provide the kind of reunion you want, not what we "think" you'd like, please take a few minutes to look over, complete and return this survey to ML & RS, Inc right away. The reunion agenda will be created from the responses and the Chairman's input. Let your voice be heard, return the survey to:

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

#### Reunion format:

Do you want a **welcome reception** the first evening?  
 yes  no; If yes, would you prefer  
 only a hors d'oeuvre platter   
 or a hamburger/hot dog /soup/sandwich type dinner ?

Do you prefer **breakfast** all three mornings   
 just a farewell breakfast on Sunday ?

Do you prefer a dinner in the hotel on Friday night with  
 some light entertainment ,  
 or have the evening free ?

Do want entertainment after the Saturday night banquet? Yes  No

**Please indicate your choice of activities by checking the attractions you would like to visit.**

**Baltimore City Tour** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(check the things you'd like to see on the itinerary)*  
 Riding tour the city  
 Stop at Ft McHenry  
 Camden Yards  
 Grave of Edgar Allan Poe  
 Free time in the Inner Harbor area where you  
 can visit the USS Constellation and National Aquarium  
 and have lunch.  
 Liberty Ship John Brown

**U.S. Naval Academy and Annapolis Tour** \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration packets will be mailed out approximately 90 days prior to the reunion. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY.**