

Pelican Poop Sheet

Volume 32

May 8,2015



New on the roster: Captain John "Sean" Coffey, USNR(ret) (LT 1980-1983); LCDR C. D. Knight, USN(ret) (PT2 1961-1962); Bruce Baldwin (AXAN 1964-1966); CWO4 Ron Collins, USN(ret) (AW1 1975-1981); Keith Sacht (ATN2 1970-1972)

Lost Contact: CDR Wayne Duffala, USNR(ret) (LT 1978-1981); Michael Heleba (AO2 1962-1964); Ben Fielder (AW1 1980-1984)

Regain Contact: CDR Joe Valenzuela, USN(ret) (1986-1990)

Taps: Craig Marson (ADJ2 1967-1970); AOC Harold Bishop, USN(ret)(AOC 1967-1969); Dave "Hog" Gannon (ADJ2 1967-1969); John Heald (PR3 1967-1969); Fred Bird (AO1 VPB-204. 1943-1945) AEC Joseph Pompeo, USN(ret) (AE2 1958-1960)

Looking For: CDR Chuck Zilch, USN(ret) (LTJG 1951-1953) is asking "Does anyone know whatever happened to my old PPC Angelo "Clem" Clemente? You can reach him at zlyn@aol.com

VP-44 WWII History

Below is from LTJG Richard Watson, USNR(ret) (AMM3c 1942-1944 VP-44)

This is first in the series. A little explanation. When we went south in early 1943 after we got our new PBV-5's. We were based at Esperito Santos on the USS Tangier AV-8, which was in the Second Channel. While there we also had an advanced base at Halavo Beach on Florida Island. We always kept 2 to 3 aircraft there all the time and we rotated all the Planes and their crews there. We were originally based on the USS Curtiss AV-4 but we were transferred to the Tangier at the time of this tale.

Dick

Tales From The Solomon Islands

Log book Entry March 24, 1943

The last flight of 44-P-8

On March 14, 1943, Lts. Clarence E. "Olie" Olson in plane 44-P-7 and Jarloth J. "Jiggs" Lyons in plane 44-P-8 landed at Halavo Beach, Tulagi, in the Florida Islands. Just across the straits or "The Slot" lay the island of Guadalcanal. Their home base was the USS Tangier which was anchored in Second channel in Espiritu Santo. The channel was base of operations for their squadron VP-44 while in the South Pacific.

While at Tulagi, they were detached from their squadron and would operate under a command that reported directly to Admiral Marc Mitscher who was Commander Aircraft Solomon's (ComAirSols).

With Olie were his navigator and copilots-Lt. j.g. Sorenson and aviation pilot Fry, machinist mates Crawford, Albers, Ford, radio mates-Olson and Bowman and ordnance mate Blatherwick. With Jiggs were navigator-copilots, Lt. j.g. Thorn, aviation pilot Robbie Robinson and machinists mates Zydak, Allen, Studdard and radio mates Brown and Shafer and ordnance mate Burns.

They brought with them a flight crew from VP-24 and a Patrol Aircraft Service Unit (PATSU). The VP-24 flight crew was made up of Lt. Norris, Lt. j.g. Pearck, aviation pilot Foster, machinists Kline, Foster and radio mates Anderson and Peck and ordnance mate Dorosz. In the PATSU were machinists Romine, Alexander and Scott and the radio and ordnance crew consisted of Riner and Coon respectively.

When these crews arrived they found they were relief for two flight crews from squadron VP-91 and one crew from VP-72. Patrol plane commanders from VP-91 were Lts. Weber and Scarborough, and from VP-72 Lt. Douglas.

For the next 11 days the new arrivals were busy at the tasks of air sea rescue (Dumbo) missions and coast watcher supply. With one exception flight orders were given every day for one of the crews and most of the time for two crews.

All flights were in airspace contested by Japanese forces. Many times the mission took them well into territory held by those forces. On every flight they were given a fighter escort of up to 18 fighters.

Orders to return to Espiritu came on the morning of March 24.

Olie and Jiggs with their crews and passengers boarded the seaplanes and taxied out for take off. Jiggs took off first. It was to be the last flight of 44-P-8.

The take off was smooth and the Blue Catalina pulled up at a normal rate of climb. Soon they had good altitude and Lyons put the ship in a banking turn. He then kept climbing for a run over the seaplane base.

At 1500 feet altitude he turned toward the base and put the ship in a steep dive on the base in a salute to the ships company there. They pulled out of the dive and into a steep climb at just above the level of the coconut trees.

Robbie Robinson believed that Jiggs was trying to blow down the miserable tent they had been living in.

Just after the peak of the rate of climb indicator, and before going into a normal rate of climb, both engines quite completely and simultaneously. Water in the fuel tanks.

Lyons positioned for an emergency landing immediately. The only comfort to be found in this situation was the landing space. The seaplane was at home in making open sea landings and the sea stretched for thousands of miles in front of the plane. For a few moments the landing looked good. Then, the port pontoon hit a wave and the plane cart wheeled and broke off the port wing. It cart wheeled again and the starboard wing broke off.

Robbie Robinson found himself underwater and still wearing the radio headset with the cable attached to the plane. He had climbed out the pilots hatch.

The plane sank in sixty feet of water at a point two miles from Halavo Beach. Miraculously, no one was injured.

The USS Butternut was nearby. The ship came to the scene immediately and rescued the crew.

Before nightfall, the butternut crew had located the plane, raised it and placed it on a sandbar near Halavo Beach.

Salvage operations started the following morning.

P3C Era ending at NAS JAX

By Lt. j.g. Elizabeth McNaught
VP26

Sailors of Patrol Squadron (VP) 26 will make history Jan. 22 as the last East Coast squadron to deploy in the P-3C Orion aircraft. For the squadron, this deployment will mark the sunset of an aircraft with a 50-year legacy of excellence and historic milestones which began with the acceptance of its first P-3B back in 1966. On Jan. 4 of that year, nearly 49 years to the month, VP-26 became the Navy's first operational P-3B squadron, when the squadron ferried the first P-3B from its production site in Burbank, Calif. to Naval Air Station, Brunswick, Maine.

P-3C Orion, named after a hunter in Greek mythology, is a maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft first built to counter the Soviet naval threat during the "Cold War." Aptly named, the Orion's mission, among many, was to hunt Soviet attack and ballistic missile submarines and Soviet surface action groups. While anti-submarine warfare (ASW) was and continues to be its primary mission, the plane has seen its mission expanded to include joint maritime and overland intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance flights, most recently during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. These types of missions continue today as P-3C squadrons from all around the world support our partners and allies in the fight against ISIS and other violent extremist groups.

The P-3A was first introduced to the Navy in July 1962 and immediately began flying operational missions in support of U.S. interests during the Cuban missile crisis. In addition to being the first operational squadron to acquire the follow-on P-3B models in 1966, The VP-26 Tridents/P-3C Orion team made history by serving in operations and locations too numerous to list here.

However, a short list includes combat roles during the Vietnam War, the Cold War (world wide), patrol missions in Yugoslavia, anti-drug operations in the Caribbean, and post 9/11 Global War on Terrorism in Iraq. In recognition of the accomplishments achieved during the squadron's last two deployments, VP-26 was recognized by Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic, with the 2012 and 2013 Battle Efficiency Award, and the Isbell Award for ASW excellence. This time the squadron will be deploying to the **Middle East and Central America**.

In the autumn of 2015, upon return from deployment, VP-26 will celebrate the end of an operational relationship with the P-3C Orion spanning five decades, and the end to more than 50 years of operational P-3C squadrons operating out of NAS Jacksonville and the East Coast of the United States.

This final P-3 deployment from Jacksonville gave the squadron pause to reflect upon its past years of experience.

For example, AVCM Mark Tapley said, "I can think of no other aircraft I would have wanted to work on. During the many deployments, the men and women I served with and the aircraft we maintained made a difference back then as it does today. We made a difference, as did the P-3C. I can't think of a finer and more impressive aircraft."

AWO1 Sammy Rowe responded similarly, "When thinking about the squadron and the P-3C, I think of the many good times, the many hardworking good people I served with and the aircraft that we worked hard to keep mission ready. Good times, good people, and a great mission."

Looking forward to the time when VP-26 transitions to the P-8A, Tridents XO Cmdr. Mark Burns remarked, "The P-3C is now at the very height of its combat effectiveness as a maritime patrol aircraft. Every VP-26 Sailor who ever worked on, supported or flew the P-3 throughout these five decades contributed to the very

pinnacle of this aircraft's mature lethality. The Orion's operational accomplishments, history, and warrior ethos are infused into the P-8A to make that aircraft the best in the world, much like its predecessor, the mighty P-3C Orion has been. The P-8A will be imprinted with VP-26 Tridents/P-3C Orion excellence."

It's fitting for VP-26, the first P-3 squadron on the east coast five decades ago, to be the last active operational East Coast squadron to deploy with the P-3.

For those many Maritime Patrol Sailors who may have mixed feelings, take heart, for the legacy of VP-26/P-3C excellence will continue. It will carry on through the many Trident/Orion Sailors who will pass it on to the future VP-26/P-8A team.

Although there will no longer be active operational P-3C squadrons operating out of NAS Jacksonville and the East Coast of the United States, **six P-3C squadrons still remain between Whidbey Island, Wash., and Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. All of which are slated to transition to the P-8A within the next six to eight years.**

For additional information regarding the impressive history summarizing VP-26 flying the P-3C, read more on the following sites: The squadron Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Patrol-Squadron-26-Tridents/174775809227350>, and at the Wikipedia site: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VP-26>.

For the most up to date information while VP-26 is on deployment, checkout the VP-26 Facebook page.

VP International

Members of VPI,

Before proceeding with a VPI Newsletter (to replace the magazine) we need to update our database. Since our records only show the info you provided when you became a member they are obviously out-of-date. We recognized that quite a few of them will never reach their destination; therefore we need to ascertain the extent of the problem. We therefore ask that you reply as having received this e-mail.

Do so at this address: vpihq2@eastlink.ca

Regards,

Bob D.
Membership coordinator

I got the above from Captain Jeffery Gorman, USNR(ret) (LT 1979-1982) and he explained it further below:

It's VP International out of Greenwood, Nova Scotia in Canada. You have to have 2500 hours in VP aircraft to join. For a one time, low subscription fee, you received a quarterly (?) magazine.

Good info from around the world. Good people. Got to meet staff back in late 90's or early 2000's when they dedicated a memorial up there to all VP crews that lost their lives which included several VP-44 crews.

They had kind of vanished in the last decade or so. Consider them the predecessor of MPA.

Let Freedom Reign!

Jeff Gorman jaggcmi@yahoo.com

VP-44 history.

Died in action.

The following crewmen died in P-3A crash into mountains of Morocco on the morning of June 03, 1972. Our crew (5) was launched SAR, and as ATN2 Inflight Electronics Tech, I was on radio as crew from Gibraltar British Helicopter, HMS Zulu located and confirmed serial numbers of installed equipment in BUNO 152182, LM - 5.

AE1 Comeau, Louis Bertrand, born 07/05/41

LCDR Mendenhall, Robert L., 02/17/38

LT Titcomb, Edmund B., Jr., 04/23/47

LT Whittig, Michael J., 04/25/46

These four identified and buried in Arlington Cemetery, section 34, 4302A. Photo posted 19 July 2006.

Also:

ASW2 Crocker, Jarrel, born 01/23/48

AN Standley, Robert, born 11/17/50

I have the others, just not available, and I want to send this much off to you.

This crew was paired with Crew 5 through most of this deployment in the Azores and Rota, Spain, up to the morning of June 03, 1972.

Respectfully,

Keith F. Sacht, ATN2

keithsacht@comcast.net

USS Indianapolis Memorial

USS Indianapolis CA-35 Second Watch Organization has begun a new program to honor the men Lost At Sea in the Sinking of the USS Indianapolis and their families!

It came to our attention that many Lost At Sea families never received a flag on behalf of their loved one.

Therefore, Second Watch is purchasing American Flags which will each then be flown over the USS Indianapolis Memorial in Indianapolis then sent to the Lost At Sea family.

Because we do not have an accurate database of all Lost At Sea families, we ask that you help us spread the word.

If you are a Lost At Sea family that would like a flag flown over the Memorial in your loved ones memory, please contact Maria Eck Bullard (daughter of USS Indianapolis Survivor Harold Eck) via email at BullardMBullard@aol.com (one per family please!)

The cost of the flags to our organization is \$13.10 each. If you would like to make a donation to sponsor a flag for a family, please feel free to contact me also! :-)

A special thank to Brigadier General Goodwin, Executive Director of the Indiana War Memorial for his assistance in having these flags flown and to Michael Hussey of Fed Ex in Indianapolis for helping us ship them to the families

P3 Orion Web Site

Here's the site that lists all of the P-3's. I've used the listings before, in fact, my last P-3 model which is now on display at the NAS Glenview Museum is 152152 which is the static display A/C at the Naval Aviation Museum in Florida. We had it for a year or so in VP-60. 152152 also flew in Nam.

<http://www.p3orion.nl/alhr.pdf>

Steve Harvey (AMS2 1973-1974)

MPA 2015 NAS Jacksonville

I attended my fourth MPA Symposium in April and it gets better every year. Once again the P8A walk through is the highlight for me and it's a long way from the P3A. You who flew in the P5M's and P2V's will not believe how times have changed. I will try and do a reunion next year during the 2016 symposium and the dates will be in the middle of April once again. It's a long ways off and hopefully things will work out better than they did this year. I only attended the daytime Wednesday's events and really look forward to attending the dinner and other events if we can get a reunion to coincide with them. They do have a parking problem at the hanger, unless you are a 06 and above or have a handicap plate. I will be bringing this up on the feedback form that all attendees get to fill out. The lectures were once again outstanding and there were plenty of open seats in the auditorium. Next year's symposium is scheduled for April 11-15, 2016. To see the latest issue of their newsletter go here:

http://www.maritimepatrolassociation.org/documents/newsletter/2015/MPA_Newsletter_2015_2.pdf

U. S. Naval Institute Web Site

If you go to the Naval Institute web site at: <http://photos.usni.org/> click on the "photo" link at the top of the page. Then click on the "aircraft" link to see over 2700 pictures of various planes, you can also get a copy through them.

Pelican Shop

The Pelican shop is still open for business, we have all kinds of items from hats to coins. Just a note we only have 11 coffee mugs left and chance are I will not be reordering another case. You can see what we have at: http://www.vp44goldenpelicans.com/PelicanShop_JD.htm or call me and I can walk you through what we have.

"Peace is that brief glorious moment in history, when everybody stands around reloading". . . . Thomas Jefferson. .

Another Web Site

Thanks to Gerry Zell (AX3 1964-1966) from Brookhaven, PA. He sent me a picture of his state license plate and a plate bracket he had made up by going to www.BetaDesigns.com



Gene R. Toffolo, AX2, December 1965-April 1969
Administrative Chief, Sales Coordinator
Reunion Coordinator
Reunion Chairman: 2007 Indianapolis, 2012 Pensacola
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Lake Park, GA 31636-2759
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Commander Patrol & Reconnaissance Wing Eleven

I had a chance to talk to the Commodore of PATRECONWING ELEVEN at the symposium, Captain Sean R. Liedman and he told me about the VP-44 decommissioning display board at his headquarters building. He said it was okay to go there and take pictures. It has the history of our squadron, list of Commanding Officers, NAS Brunswick base newspaper telling about the squadron being decommissioning, a picture and flight schedule of the final crew that made the last flight for VP-44. It also displays the squadron pennant and two of VP-44 patches. The display is in Bldg 850 off the main gate road "Yorktown" entrance.



The difference between stupidity and genius is that genius has its limits. -- Albert Einstein