



VP ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

AN ASSOCIATION OF VETERANS WHO SERVED WITH THE NAVAL AIR RESERVE PATROL SQUADRONS BASED AT NAS SQUANTUM MA, NAS SOUTH WEYMOUTH MA, AND NAS BRUNSWICK ME.

NOTE, CURRENT AND FORMER MEMBERS OF ANY U.S. NAVY PATROL SQUADRON ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US!

ISSUE 39

[HTTP://WWW.VPASSOCIATION.ORG](http://www.vpassociation.org)

MARCH 2010

Welcome to another edition of the VP Association newsletter. As always, please direct all general VP Association-related inquiries or correspondence to William Hanigan, 23 Parkview Terrace, Duxbury MA 02332, 781-585-4950, vpassociation@aol.com. Please send all newsletter-related correspondence to Marc J. Frattasio, P.O. Box 30, Pembroke MA 02359, marc_frattasio@yahoo.com.

RECCO:



Fran Creney provided this shot of an R5D and P2V-5 parked at the southern end of "The Big Hangar" at NAS South Weymouth in 1959. Got something similar to share? If so, contact Marc J. Frattasio.

ILL SHIPMATE IN NEED OF CHEERING UP:

Fran Creney (VP-92) is recovering from recent surgery. Fran lives at 11 Purchase St., Middleboro MA 02346 and his e-mail address is fcrenny@comcast.net. If you served with him drop him a note!

THE ANNUAL REUNION:

It's never too early to start planning to attend the VP Association's annual reunion. This year, the reunion will be held on Saturday September 25th at the Hanscom AFB club between noon and 5 PM. Further details will be provided in the next newsletter. If you've attended in the past you know that it's always a good time. If you haven't attended previously, well, we hope to see you this year!

ADMIN FUND DONATIONS:

This group has no dues and contributions are always welcome to help defray the cost of sending newsletters to shipmates without e-mail and to host our web site at <http://www.vpassociation.org>. Many thanks to Skip Burton, Andre Castellano, Ed Callahan, Les Connolly, Marc Frattasio (via Lulu Press), Paul Harriman, Bob Hickok, Robert Jones, Pete Labate, Paul Lapinski, Sean O'Neil, Ray Pike, Gene Rowe, and George Swallow for their recent generous contributions to the admin fund.

LOST CONTACT:

Please let Bill Hanigan know whenever your street or e-mail address changes. Also, If you have an e-mail address and are receiving this newsletter through the U.S. Postal Service then we do not have a valid e-mail address for you. If this is your situation, please contact Bill Hanigan via e-mail as soon as possible so we can start sending your newsletter to you by e-mail. We need current e-mail addresses for Robert Caron, Shanice Griffin, and Ben Sturm. We are also looking for the current mailing address for Robert Pichette, who was last known to be on Huey Drive in Corpus Christi, TX.

RECENT CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

Please note new e-mail addresses for Jim Angeley at angeleyjl@gmail.com, Rex Johnson at ync.johnson@gmail.com, Bill McCrillis at wmccrillis@gmail.com, Sean O'Neil at seanoneil76@gmail.com, and for Neil Rosenstrom at tucanphart@verizon.net. Earnest Wilson is now residing at 3074 4th Street, Boulder CO 80304. All but Jim Angeley served with VP-92. Jim was a stationkeeper at NAS Squantum and NAS South Weymouth.

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A SHORT NOTE FROM AWC RAY BEAUCHEMIN (USNR-R):

The picture of VP-92's CAC-1 posed on the ramp at NAS South Weymouth during the mid 90's that was printed in the last issue of the newsletter is most likely the after flight photo commemorating "O'B" O'Brien's last flight. That flight took place I believe in December 1994, marking O'B's last flight.

Commander Cunningham, who was VP-92's commanding officer at the time, invited several of O'B's former crewmembers for a special flight. It was also my last flight in a P-3. The event was simply terrific! After the flight Commander Cunningham invited the entire crew into the wardroom for cake.

A FEW COMMENTS FROM AD2 FRANCIS MACINTIRE (USNR-R):

Francis MacIntire, who served as a reservist and stationkeeper at NAS Squantum and NAS South Weymouth for many years, says that the PBY Catalina shown on page 10 of the last newsletter is aircraft side number #207. According to Francis, who logged many hours as a flight engineer on board this aircraft, #207 BUNO 46639, was the first PBY-6A built. It was transferred to Squantum in the late 1940s from the Severn River Command at Annapolis, MD. It was also the last PBY to depart South Weymouth for the boneyard at NAF Litchfield Park, AZ in the late spring/early summer of 1954.

A RECENT PHOTO FROM CAPT JIM CUNNINGHAM (USNR-R):

Here's a recent photo of retired CAPT Jim Cunningham, a former commanding officer of VP-92 (February 1994 to June 1995), along with his son-in-law and grandson, on the occasion of a talk that he gave at his grandson's school this past Veterans' Day. Jim reports that his old Navy uniform still fits him. Your newsletter editor can make the same claim, which was verified within the past twelve months, but admittedly there is some measure of physical discomfort involved concerning his waistline!



FORMER VP-92 COMMANDING OFFICER RUNNING FOR NEW YORK ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Former VP-92 commanding officer (October 1996 to February 1998) and VP Association member Sean Coffey, CAPT USNR-R, recently resigned from his law firm and is running to be the next Attorney General for New York State. For more information and to learn how you can help Sean contact him directly via e-mail at kelly@coffee2010.com or call 212-218-1304. Check out Sean's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com> and web site at <http://www.coffey2010.com> for the latest news and information about his run for office.

HELP WANTED:

Charlie Musgrave, who was in VP-915 and VP-916 at NAS South Weymouth during the 1960s, is looking for any old photographs with him in them. If you remember Charlie and have any old crew photos, cruise photos, or any other Navy photos with him in them write to him at Charles Musgrave, Covered Bridge Apt 4-C, 850 Vine Street, Liverpool NY 13088. Alternatively, you can write to Charlie's daughter Paula Zinck at 4 Jonathan Circle, Plymouth MA 02360, call her at 508-224-6995, or send an e-mail message to her e-mail address at ezpz1@comcast.net. Old photographic prints can be copied at any Walmart or CVS store for short money. If you can help Charlie out, please do.

NAVY BUILDINGS CONDEMNED AT SOUTHFIELD

Many of the old Navy buildings at the SouthField development on former NAS South Weymouth were recently marked with large signs, yellow squares with a red "x" or "\", indicating that they have been condemned. According to the civilian security guards on the base, the condemned buildings will be demolished sometime in the spring. Among the buildings that have been so marked are the BOQ, dispensary, Friendship Chapel, Navy Exchange, galley, and the older concrete barracks. If you'd like to get a few photographs before these buildings are torn down, do it now to avoid disappointment.

PLANES READY TO DEPART BRUNSWICK BASE (The Boston Globe):

The following article from the 11/22 Boston Globe was brought to our attention too late to be included in the last newsletter. Despite being dated (the squadrons and aircraft are gone now), there's a lot of good information presented that provides valuable insight into the current situation at NAS Brunswick.

BRUNSWICK, Maine - The rumble of Navy patrol aircraft flying overhead will soon be a thing of the past as the remaining P-3 Orions depart from Brunswick Naval Air Station.

While much of the nation prepares for Thanksgiving, air crews from VP-26 are prepping to ship out for a six-month deployment to El Salvador, Italy, and the Horn of Africa. After that, they'll rejoin the rest of Brunswick aircraft that have relocated to Florida's Jacksonville Naval Air Station.

Mike Parker, commanding officer of VP-26, begins the final wave of departures today, marking a milestone in the closing of the last active-duty military air base in New England.

"It's a heartbreakin situation to leave the base knowing that no P-3 is going to return to this base," said Parker. His massive three-bay hangar was filled with equipment being loaded on pallets and sailors getting heavy gear ready to be shipped out starting next week.

Come January, with the aircraft long gone, the twin, 8,000-foot runways will be closed. The fuel tank farm will be drained. Through the year, there'll be a gradual drawdown of personnel until the base closes for good by May 2011.

Activity on the sprawling coastal base has been winding down over the past year since the first P-3 Orion squadron departed. Once there were 4,000 sailors, but the number has dwindled to roughly 500. After VP-26 and its 350 personnel leave, only a skeleton crew will remain.

"It's definitely a ghost town," Commander John Coray, chief staff officer for Patrol Wing 5, said after finding himself alone in the gym during a workout.

Situated on 3,200 acres, Brunswick Naval Air Station opened during World War II to train British and Canadian pilots. After the war, the base was deactivated for a time before the US Navy moved in. Since then, maritime patrol aircraft including the P-3 Orions, which first flew in the early 1960s, have operated from the base.

They use four turboprop engines that sip fuel, allowing them to fly for 12-hour stretches either over the deep blue ocean hunting enemy submarines, or over land including missions over Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

The base saw its heyday during the Cold War, when the Navy had patrol aircraft stationed at the four corners of the continental United States to interdict Soviet subs.

The decision to shutter Brunswick Naval Air Station was made in the final round of closings by the Base Closure and Realignment Commission in 2005.

The Navy initially wanted to mothball the base, keeping alive the possibility of future activation, but that would've meant an uncertain future in which the community would be unable to redevelop the property. So commissioners decided to shutter the base altogether.

Studies have put the economic impact on the local economy at \$187 million. But there's a social impact as well. Base personnel and spouses served as teachers, Sunday School volunteers, and Little League coaches. Their children used to fill 20 to 30 percent of the desks in local schools.

"The realization is starting to hit home that the base is closing," said Steve Levesque, executive director of the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority, which is tasked with finding tenants for the property.

Even though the base won't close until 2011, the redevelopment authority hopes to begin reusing the twin runways for general aviation this summer, Levesque said.

The first tenants are Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and Southern Maine Community College, which will open a branch at the base.

The recession hasn't created the best environment for redeveloping the base, but the authority is getting a base that's in shipshape condition.

Before deciding to close the base, the Navy resurfaced the runways, overhauled the control tower, and refurbished base housing. There are hangars, baseball fields, 700 homes, a bowling alley, and new townhouses.

For VP-26, it seems fitting that it's the last squadron to leave Brunswick, since it was the first squadron to call Brunswick home after World War II, Parker said.

Some personnel already have relocated their families to Florida. Others, like Parker, will let their children finish the school year in Maine and move later.

There's real sadness, particularly for those "homesteaders" who've spent multiple deployments in Brunswick.

LAST FLIGHTS TAKE OFF FROM NAS BRUNSWICK, SAT. NOV. 28, 2009 (Navy Times):

NAVAL AIR STATION BRUNSWICK, Maine — The last two planes at Maine's Brunswick Naval Air Station lifted off Saturday in blustery winds, ending nearly 60 years of maritime patrol operations at New England's last active-duty military air base.

The P-3 Orions of the VP-26 squadron lumbered down an 8,000-foot runway before heading off to a six-month deployment in Central America. After that, they fly to their new home at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla.

The planes took off without any speeches or fanfare about 50 minutes apart Saturday afternoon. A small group of visitors gathered at the base operations building to watch, including Albert Stehle of Bowdoinham, whose father, Leroy Stehle, commanded the VP-26 during the early 1970s.

"I just came to see the last plane take off," said Stehle, a building contractor who lives in the flight path of the base and will no longer be able to look up and see the planes bearing the squadron's trident insignia. "After being a Navy brat for all these years and having to miss your dad because he was off on deployment, you finally realize it was all for a great cause."

Brunswick, once home to 4,000 sailors and six patrol squadrons, now has a skeleton crew. Its two runways are scheduled to close in January, and personnel will continue to leave the base until it closes for good in May 2011.

The decision to shutter the base was made in the final round of closings by the Base Closure and Realignment Commission in 2005. The 3,200-acre base will be turned over to a redevelopment group.

The Brunswick Naval Air Station opened during World War II to train British and Canadian pilots. After the war, the base was deactivated for a time before the Navy moved in.

The P-3 Orions, which went into operation in the 1960s, tracked Soviet submarines in the Atlantic Ocean during the Cold War. More recently, the planes have been used on drug interdiction missions and in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Helping to oversee Saturday's departures was Cmdr. Jeff Draeger, executive officer of VP-26.

Draeger, who is scheduled to depart Brunswick on Tuesday aboard a military airlift, said he and his wife, a P-3 pilot whom he met at the Naval Academy, have enjoyed their two tours with Brunswick and plan to keep their home there.

"We love it, he said. "The local community has been very supportive and the Navy has felt very welcome."



A handful of spectators wave "goodbye" as one of the last two P-3s leaves NAS Brunswick on November 28, 2009. Brunswick's runways and tower were closed at 2200 on Saturday January 30, 2010. The base itself is supposed to be closed during May 2011. If you have any interest in seeing the heritage of the last naval air station in New England preserved, consider joining the Brunswick Naval Museum and Memorial Gardens organization presented below.

THE BRUNSWICK NAVAL MUSEUM AND MEMORIAL GARDENS:

The Brunswick Naval Museum and Memorial Gardens organization is actively seeking members, volunteers, and cash donations to help them establish a Navy museum on the site of NAS Brunswick.

After the base closes in 2011 they will take over the old base chapel, which will become their museum building, and the static-display P-2 Neptune and P-3 Orion that have been on the base for many years. For details, check their web site at <http://www.brunswicknavalmuseum.org> or contact John Briley directly at 207-729-7216. We've placed a link to this organization's web site on the VP Association's "links" page at <http://www.vpassociation.org>. Check them out the next time you are on the Internet. If you were ever stationed at Brunswick, please consider joining or donating to them.

THE NAVY RETIRES THE H-3 SEA KING HELICOPTER:

On December 11, 2009 the Navy passed its very last operational Sikorski H-3 Sea King helicopter on to the Marines during a ceremony conducted in Hangar 109 at NAS Patuxent River, MD. Sea Kings had been employed in a variety of roles, perhaps most commonly ASW, for about fifty years. The type had been based at NAS South Weymouth from the late 1960s through the middle of the 1980s.

ROMANCING JULIE (Written By VP-92's CDR Ken Sherman):

When I started flight training in the U.S. Navy, if you wanted to see a U.S. Navy VP crew really start sweating, you needed to go aboard and watch a JULITREX (JULIE TRaining EXercise).

Before nuclear submarines became the norm and launched thirty years of blue-water, deep-ocean, passive submarine tracking, there were the diesel boats. Lots and lots of diesel boats, such as the Soviet Whiskey Class. Propulsion limitations meant that early diesel boats snorkeled often, presenting two detection opportunities to the MPA crew. Snorkeling was very noisy and very dirty. This permitted the luxury of dropping sonobuoys and then listening to what sounded like a freight train with a frozen wheel as the typical Kaloma 37D diesel engines pounded away. Another detection and tracking option was Sniffer, a neat device that literally tracked a submarine by noting when the airplane cut across the sub's diesel exhaust. However, whether located acoustically or aromatically, once the sub realized that you were overhead, snorkeling ended and things got much trickier.

Running only on battery now, the sub would beat feet and try to lose the airplane. A sub's electric motors are very quiet. Sniffer immediately was useless, as was any passive sonobuoy in the area, unless by blind luck the sub ran over it. This reduced the crew to active tracking, and this is where the story gets really interested, and where it loops up to the present day.

To track a fleeing submarine that is not producing much noise, you have to make your own noise. At the time, this required "Julie" -- active acoustic tracking. As soon as the crew realized that the sub had been alerted and was bugging-out, the PPTC (TACCO) would tell the PPC (PILOT) to wrap the plane around in a 2-G, 60-degree angle of bank turn, more buoys would be dropped, and a series of gut-wrenching racetracks at low altitude would begin. Coming back across the buoys as quickly and as frequently as possible, the TACCO would drop a SUS -- a Sound Underwater Source (a fancy name for a stick of dynamite with fins on it) -- NAV would mark the drop point on his Dead Reckoning Trace, and the acoustic operators would listen and watch for the results. If the sub was approaching the buoy, an up-doppler range circle would be generated; if opening the distance, the range circle would be down-doppler. If two buoys were being used, the detonation would be heard first at the master buoy, and subsequently at the slave buoy, generating an elliptical range. Where two ranges intersected, you had an ambiguous fix -- two locations, one of which was the location of the sub at the time of the last detonation. Another set of buoys and more fish-bombing might resolve the ambiguity. Of course, while you were busy doing this, the sub was running at top battery speed and zigging all over the ocean, trying to get away, so your unambiguous fix most often gave you some idea where the target was some minutes ago. If the crew could get a tentative course and speed on the sub, confirmation might be made with the magnetic anomaly detector ("MADMAN!" MADMAN!) so that a weapons drop could be accomplished. Not an ideal situation for weapon delivery, and few other

events could more quickly reduce a cocky, experienced crew to sweating, lock-jawed intensity than Julie.

Well, the joy is back. With the switch from the USSR's deep-water nuclear submarine force, requiring almost purely passive acoustic tracking, to today's gaggle of countries each with one or more modern diesel submarines, active tracking is again important. Just one enemy submarine can ruin your entire carrier task force's day. Littoral ASW against a diesel-electric sub is ASW at its most difficult.

Today's diesel subs are even quieter than their earlier counterparts. The older diesel subs commonly used a diesel-reduction drive when surfaced or snorkeling, which linked the diesels directly to the propellers through a transmission and generated a fair amount of noise. Today's diesel subs, even when running their diesels, use almost exclusively diesel-electric drive, whether snorkeling or deeply submerged, in which the shafts and propellers are driven by electric motors rather than by noisy mechanical transmissions hooked to the diesels themselves. Further aggravating the job of the MPA crew, ASW in shallow water adds additional challenges due to bottom-bounce, ducting, sound absorption, and other factors. The good news is that Julie is gone, replaced by "pingers," sonobuoys that generate their own sound source and can be reprogrammed from the air. This allows for quick deployment of multiple active sound sources, and where three or more range circles from pingers converge, the crew has an unambiguous fix on the sub. Of course, the sub is still beating feet, trying to escape, but pingers are so superior to the old Julie system that the MPA crew has a much better chance of converting to a MADMAN or other sensor track and subsequently killing the target. That's the good news. The bad news is that it is increasingly difficult for the modern MPA crew to stay ASW proficient with ASW having become just one of a dozen or so current missions for which the crew must train. Sniffer is gone and JULIE was a bear, but in the "old days," a bear well known.

THE "AID AND ATTENDANCE" VETERAN'S BENEFIT (From VP-92's Paul Ziton):

The "Aid and Attendance" veteran's benefit is an underutilized special pension offered by the Veterans Administration for veterans and surviving spouses who need in-home care or reside in nursing homes. To qualify, a veteran must have served at least 90 days of active military service, one day of which was during a period of war, and must have been discharged under other than dishonorable circumstances. The veteran's benefit is \$18,234 per year and increases to \$21,615 if a veteran has one dependent. A surviving spouse alone gets \$11,715 annually. For more information call 1-800-827-1000, visit <http://www.va.gov/> and search on "Aid and Attendance", or contact your local VA office. You can apply for this benefit on-line at <http://vabenfits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>.

RECOMMENDED READING:

VP ASSOCIATION SEA STORY LIBRARY VOLUME TWO



TALES FROM THE NAVAL AIR RESERVE
AT NAS SOUTH WEYMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS

EDITED BY MARC J. FRATTASIO, AW1 USNR-R

Your newsletter editor has compiled a second oral history volume, "VP Association Sea Story Library: Volume Two", as a fund-raiser for this group. All profits from the sale of this book go to the VP Association's admin fund. The book contains 115 pages of "sea stories" recounted to your newsletter editor involving their adventures, experiences, and recollections of the reserve program at NAS South Weymouth and with a few stories about NAS Squantum thrown in as well. This book is not available in stores and can only be purchased directly from the printer, Lulu Press, over the Internet. To order, go to the Lulu Press web site at <http://www.lulu.com> and do a search on keywords "VP Association Fundraiser" or "NAS South Weymouth" or go to the "geedunk" link that's presented on the VP Association web site at <http://www.vpassociation.org>. Copies of the first volume, "VP Association Sea Story Library: Volume One", are still available from the same sources. Pick up a copy of each!

ON THE INTERNET:

The VP-93 Association now has their own web site. It is located at <http://home.roadrunner.com/~vp-93>. It is worth noting that before VP-93 was commissioned at NAF Detroit in July 1976 there were plans to base the squadron at NAS South Weymouth. In fact, your newsletter editor knows somebody who once saw a floor plan for NAS South Weymouth's Hangar One showing how this structure could accommodate the aircraft and office spaces for two separate reserve P-3 squadrons. For your convenience a link to the VP-93 web site is presented on the "links" page of the VP Association's web site at <http://www.vpassociation.org>. Check it out! Note, new links are regularly added to the "links" page on the VP Association web site. Get in the habit of visiting it!

MONTHLY MEETING:

Don't forget that we meet for lunch on the last Thursday of every month at the Officer's Club at Hanscom AFB in Bedford, MA from 1130 to 1330. Please join us if you can. If you don't have a military ID (base stickers are no longer required) contact Okie O'Connell at 781-335-0553 or Bill Hanigan at 781-585-4950 so your name can be added to the base's security access list. Note, all persons without a military ID are required to enter the base at the civilian gate, not the Hartwell gate.

PARTING SHOTS:

Steve Maloney, formerly of VP-92, passed along the following photographs taken from the cockpit of the last VP-26 P-3 Orion to depart NAS Brunswick on November 28, 2009. Its sad to think that nobody will ever experience these views, which many of us did over and over again and probably never appreciated, ever again.



ABOVE: The view from the cockpit as the aircraft approaches Hangar 4 and Hangar 5 on the taxiway en-route to Runway 1R.



ABOVE: Approaching the end of Runway 1R. **B BELOW:** Lined up on the runway and ready to go.





ABOVE: Lifting off and passing Hangar 6 and Base Operations. **BELLOW:** Bye-bye NAS Brunswick!





ABOVE: As-of last summer (2009) there was still a VP-92 insignia in the galley at NAS Brunswick!



Until Next Time, Lose Not Thy Speed In Flight Lest The Earth Rise Up And Smite Thee – “Frat”.

