



# 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 53**

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

**SEPTEMBER 2013**

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, vp92association@gmail.com. Please send all newsletter-related correspondence to Marc J. Frattasio, P.O. Box 30, Pembroke MA 02359, marc\_frattasio@yahoo.com.

## **RECCO:**



**ABOVE:** For the old VS guys. TBM-3W2 Avengers and Grumman AF-2S Guardians at SoWey during 1955. Lionel Paul collection. Got something similar to share? If so, contact Marc J. Frattasio.

## **FINAL FLIGHTS:**

Though mentioned here before, I have been asked to remind you all that Charles Musgrave, Tom Notis, David O'Connor, Manuel Rocha, Paul Rood, Arthur Seaton, Don Sherwood, and Lee Sleger all passed away within the past year or two.

## **ILL SHIPMATES IN NEED OF CHEERING UP:**

Former VP-92 AK Gerald "Jay" Brown has been in the hospital recently. Send cards to 402 West Union St., East Bridgewater, MA 02379 or call 508-378-7590. Jack Leonard of VP-911 and VP-92 recently moved to an assisted living center. You can write to him at Poplin Way, Apt.12, 442 Main St., Building B, Fremont NH 03044 or call 603-244-5248. Both would appreciate hearing from friends.

## **THE VP ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REUNION:**

This is your last reminder to make reservations for the annual reunion that will be held on Saturday September 21st from 12:00 to 17:00 at the Weymouth Elks Hall at 1197 Washington Street in Weymouth, MA. The buffet style banquet is \$40 per person. Attendance is limited, reservations are required in advance, and will be taken first-come first served. Tickets will not be sold at the door. Please complete and mail the reservation form on the last page to Bill Hanigan ASAP. All banquet reservations must be received before September 15<sup>th</sup>. Directions to the Weymouth Elks Hall follow:

### From the North (i.e., from Boston)

1. Take Route 3 south from the Boston area to Route 18 (Exit 16 South).
2. Go south on Route 18 about 1/2 mile to top of hill. At traffic light, turn left on Middle Street.
3. Continue on Middle Street, under Route 3, for about 1 1/2 miles.
4. At traffic light, turn right on Washington Street. Proceed through one traffic light and the Elk's Hall is about 200 yards on the right.

### From the South (i.e., from Cape Cod)

1. Take Route 3 North from the Plymouth/ Cape Cod area. Get off Route 3 at Exit 15 (Derby Street).
2. At end of exit, turn left on Derby Street.
3. Drive on Derby Street about 1/2 mile to second traffic light.
4. Turn left at light on Cushing Street.
5. On Cushing Street go about 1/2 mile to next traffic light and turn left on Route 53 (Whiting Street)
6. Stay north on Whiting Street (it becomes Washington Street in Weymouth). At first traffic light be in the left lane. Go through the traffic light and the Elk's Hall is about 200 yards on the left.

The Holiday Inn at 929 Hingham St. (781-871-0545), the Best Western at 909 Hingham St. (781-871-5660), and the Comfort Inn at 850 Hingham St. (781-982-1000) are all located a few miles away off Exit 14 on Route 3 in Rockland, MA.

Our guest speaker will be retired USN Captain Robert C. "Barney" Rubel. Captain Rubel is a jet pilot, combat veteran, squadron commander, and author who is presently the Dean of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies at the Naval War College. He's going to give a fascinating presentation on the challenges the Navy faced when it transitioned from propeller driven aircraft to jets after the Second World War. All VP Association members who attend the reunion will also be presented with a special souvenir gift. You'll have to go to find out what it will be.

The Weymouth Elks Hall is a few miles from old NAS South Weymouth, which is being redeveloped into a mixed commercial and residential community called SouthField. Plan on driving to Weymouth a few hours earlier, visit the base, and take a look at the remaining USN structures as well as the new SouthField apartments and townhouses. As was the case last year, we have made special arrangements with the Association of Naval Aviation Patriot Squadron to have the Shea Naval Aviation Museum open between 9 and 11 AM on the day of the reunion. The museum is located in temporary spaces inside the Shea Fitness Center at 495 Shea Memorial Drive and is normally only open on the second and last Saturday of the month. Admission is free. If you have any naval aviation memorabilia gathering dust at home, especially items pertaining to South Weymouth or Squantum, please consider donating it to the museum! See [www.anapatriotsquadron.org](http://www.anapatriotsquadron.org) for details.

Although dress is officially CASUAL for the reunion, we encourage you to wear your old uniform (whatever you have) or a flight suit if you've got one.

Try to pass the word about the reunion to as many of your old Squantum/South Weymouth/Brunswick reserve VP squadron friends as possible. Don't assume that every former shipmate you're in contact with is affiliated with or aware of this group. Military or civilian guests are welcome to come with you.

Tables will be available in the banquet hall to display any memorabilia that you may wish to bring. If you have photos, cruise books, patches, caps, NATOPS manuals, or any other interesting Navy things that you'd like to show off to your friends please plan to bring them with you. Your newsletter editor is bringing a portable scanner. If you have any NAS Squantum, NAS South Weymouth, or NAS Brunswick-related photos or slides please bring them so they can be scanned for the newsletter.

### **ADMIN FUND DONATIONS:**

The VP Association has no dues. Voluntary contributions are always welcome to help defray the cost of printing and mailing newsletters to shipmates who do not have e-mail. We'd like to thank Tom Carroll, Andre "Casey" Castellanos, Dave Childers, Les Connolly, Jerry Eisenhaur, Paul Harriman, Paul Lapinski, Joe McCann, Ed McDonough, Arther Ricca, Harvey Shore, and Fred Squires for their recent contributions to the administration fund.

### **SPEAKING OF THE COST OF PRINTING AND MAILING NEWSLETTERS...**

If you have an e-mail address and have been 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 begin sending your newsletter to you by e-mail.

### **LOST CONTACT:**

Please let Bill Hanigan know whenever your street or e-mail address changes. Please note that Kasin Yarn has a new e-mail address at [kasim.yarn@usnwc.edu](mailto:kasim.yarn@usnwc.edu).

### **NEW MEMBERS:**

Barry Crawford bcrawd32@gmail.com VP-92	Millie Carpenter PO Box 384 Weymouth, MA 02190	Bruce Donahue 82 Spring Meadow Ln Hanover, MA 02339 781-681-9929 soxnut4@verizon.net VP-914	Pauline McDonough 90 Heritage Ln Weymouth, MA 02189 paulinedds@yahoo.com NAS SoWey Medical VP-914	Gary (Smokey) Moore 1857 Tierra Verde Atlantic Beach, FL 32233 904-377-2022 garydewmoore@gmail.com VP-92
James F. Oikle 322 Prince's Point Rd Brunswick, ME 04011 207-751-9547 joikle@gwi.net VP-10	Mark S. Patrick 79 Hennessey Ave Brunswick, ME 04011 207-837-4425 mpatricks@comcast.net	Steve Stith 2309 - 128 <sup>th</sup> Ave NW Coon Rapids, MN 55448 612-670-9250 steve.stith@unisoncomfort.com VP-40	Cindy Tolle 4962 S. Santa Lucia Ave Sierra Vista, AZ 85650 520-227-5441 catolle@yahoo.com VP-10	Charley Ulmschneider 10 Airmail Ln Belfast, ME 04915 207-930-3536 ulmy@roadrunner.com VP-MAU Brunswick

### **KASIM YARN TEACHING AT THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE:**

LCDR Kasim Yarn, who was an AZ in VP-92 before he was commissioned, was recently re-assigned to teach classes at the Naval War College in Newport, RI. This is apparently going to be his last assignment prior to retiring from the Navy. Kasim's new e-mail address is [kasim.yarn@usnwc.edu](mailto:kasim.yarn@usnwc.edu).

### **PETE COSTELLO RETIREMENT CEREMONY:**

As indicated in the previous issue of the newsletter, former VP-92 commanding officer Pete Costello retired from the USNR as a captain on board the USS Constitution at Boston on Saturday June 29<sup>th</sup>. A number of former VP-92 personnel showed up to see Pete off. A few photos taken at this event are presented on the following page.



**LEFT:** CAPT Pete Cosello saying a few final words about his naval career on the deck of the USS Constitution. **BELOW:** Group photo of all the former VP-92 people who attended the retirement ceremony except for Sean O'Neill, who could not be found at that time. From left to right are Rob McQuillan, Scott Walton, Mike Lynch, Kurt Podlogar, Sean Reid, Pete Costello, Marc Frattasio, Richard Volk, Faith Frattasio, Barry Crawford, Rick Caesar, John Mcfadden, and Tom Drapeau.



**HISTORY OF VP-92 PUBLISHED IN MPA PLANESIDE NEWSLETTER:**

Your newsletter editor had an illustrated article on the history of VP-92 published in the second issue of the Maritime Patrol Association's "Planeside" newsletter for 2013. For more information about the

MPA go to [www.maritimepatrolassociation.org](http://www.maritimepatrolassociation.org). If you aren't already aware of it, your newsletter editor published a comprehensive illustrated history book about VP-92 and its predecessors when the squadron was disestablished in 2007. Copies can be obtained through a link on the "geedunk" page of the VP Association's web site at [www.vpassociation.org](http://www.vpassociation.org).

### **A MESSAGE FROM JERRY LACH:**

My brother and I attended the July 15, 2013 Hamilton, Ontario Air Show. It was a great air show with the only problem being the gray over cast that hindered photography. In attendance was a Canadian Forces 405 Squadron (from CFB Greenwood, Nova Scotia) Lockheed built CP-140 Aurora. All of the Canadian CP-140's will be upgraded equivalent to the US Navy's P-3C AIP birds. In touring the Aircraft some interesting points were;

- The Tactical Stations are arranged in a U shape. The equipment is from the Lockheed design for the S-3 Viking.
- The 'Wet' acoustic operators were originally officers, along with the TACCO and NAV/COM. The 'Dry' non-acoustic operators were enlisted. As a result the 'Wet' operators moved from their positions into the TACCO or NAV/COM positions resulting in the 'Wet' operators not having the long term learning expertise. This is now changing as the 'Wet' operators will now be enlisted. The crew said there were only 2 'Wet' officers still flying. This could be a cost consideration as well.
- As in the US Navy there were a number of British RAF exchange crewmen assigned to the Canadian Maritime Patrol Squadrons. Obviously this is the result of the Brits decommissioning their Nimrod Fleet.
- I mentioned to the Pilot, that was giving the flight station tour, that the CP-140 still had the old 'mechanical' HP and TIT gauges. The Navy's P-3c's have all been upgraded to the 'look alike' glass HP and TIT gauges. The pilot said this was causing them problems as they are having trouble getting replacements.

It was fun talking to the Canadians as they, like all of us, enjoyed their shipmates and the Maritime Patrol mission. Plus the T-56 Turbo Props sure sounded great during their air show demo.

### **A MESSAGE FROM TOM O'CONNOR REGARDING THE MONTHLY MEETING:**

I hate meetings at most organizations. The VP Association's monthly meetings are the only ones I look forward to. When I showed up at a couple of American Legion meetings they wanted me to run for post commander! I told them I had only been to a couple of meetings and had no idea what a post commander does. After I told them I did not want to run for office twice they gave up the idea of me being the commander and instead they drafted me to be the vice-commander! WTF? Most organization's meetings are like that. If you want to just go and relax, forget about it. Most places are so intent on keeping the place running that they forget what the place is all about.

At the VP Association's monthly meetings we are not interested in old business, and we are not interested in new business, we are only interested in monkey business and we prefer it with pictures. People can come and relax and enjoy talking with like-minded people and have some lunch. The most important thing at our meetings is what's for lunch. No one is going to get drafted to work on some fundraiser or to be an officer. We don't have officers. We just have lunch and some fun talking with old Navy guys. We meet for lunch on the last Thursday of every month at Waxy O'Connor's Irish Pub at 94 Hartwell St. in Lexington, MA from 11:30 to 13:30. Its just outside Hanscom AFB's Hartwell Avenue gate. Come on over and join us if you are in the area.

### **JOE MORTLAND TAKES BERNADETTE O'BRIEN FOR AN AIRPLANE RIDE:**



On Sunday July 21<sup>st</sup> Joe Mortland took Bernadette O'Brien (both shown here) for a ride in his vintage Cessna 140 at the EAA pancake breakfast and fly-in at Cranland Airport in Halifax, MA. Bernadette is Bob O'Brien's wife. Both Bob (FE) and Joe (AW) were in VP-92. As mentioned in previous newsletters, several former VP-92 people meet for breakfast at Cranland Airport on the third Sunday of the month between April and October. This is the kind of thing that we do at these gatherings. Come join us at Cranland Airport if you live in the Boston area.

### **THE 2013 MINUTEMANCIPATION WEEKEND:**



Over the first weekend in August former VP-92 AWs (L to R) Rick Caesar, Scott Andrews, Marty McCormack, Steve O'Donohue, Scott Savelle, Matt Sharpe, Mark Hausler, A.J. Bucchi, and Marc Frattasio (behind the camera) met at Marty's wife's palatial seaside villa in Marshfield, MA to participate in the 2013 Minutemancipation Weekend. The three days were filled with sea stories, drinking, cigar smoking, lobster and clam feasting, and a deep-sea fishing trip staged from Plymouth.

### **HELP WANTED:**

The ANA Patriot Squadron's Shea Naval Aviation Museum located on old NAS South Weymouth can use any photos or military memorabilia associated with NAS South Weymouth or NAS Squantum. The museum is open from 9 AM to noon on the second and last Saturday of the month and is located in the old Shea Fitness Center (base gym) at 495 Shea Memorial Drive, South Weymouth MA 02190.

The Brunswick Naval Museum and Memorial Gardens, a group which is working to establish a naval museum in the former base chapel on old NAS Brunswick, is seeking new members. The group is also looking for advice and assistance to move the P-2 Neptune that is presently located near the main gate to where the P-3 Orion is located. For more details see [www.brunswicknavalmuseum.org](http://www.brunswicknavalmuseum.org) or contact Jeff Smat at [jeff.smatt@smatman.com](mailto:jeff.smatt@smatman.com).

Your newsletter editor is trying to collect an example of all the various reserve patrol squadron patches from New England units to display at the VP Association reunion, public lectures, and other such events. Specific needs include the VP-92 "twilight tour" (or whatever it was) patch that featured the original guillotine insignia and "1970-2007" that was available at NAS Brunswick just before the squadron was decommissioned and the squadron patches for VP-912, VP-913, VP-914, VP-916, VP-917, VP-63Z1, VP-63Z2, VP-63Z3, and VP-11Z4. Any donations of patches to this cause would be much appreciated. Contact Marc Frattasio at [marc\\_frattasio@yahoo.com](mailto:marc_frattasio@yahoo.com).

### **SOUTHFIELD NEWS:**

The landmark red and white checkerboard painted water tower at NAS South Weymouth that stood next to Hangar One from 1942 on was knocked down on Wednesday August 14<sup>th</sup>. You can view a video of this sad event on the NAS South Weymouth Alumni Facebook page at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).

On Monday August 19<sup>th</sup> the new Bill Delahunt Parkway was opened to traffic on the SouthField development on old NAS South Weymouth. The new road, which was known as the East-West Parkway while it was under construction, goes through the area where Hangar One used to be.

### **P-8 NEWS:**



NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. — After an extensive testing period, the U.S. Navy announced July 1 in an Initial Operational Test and Evaluation report that its new patrol and reconnaissance aircraft, P-8A Poseidon, was found "operationally effective, operationally suitable, and ready for fleet introduction."

"This milestone and accomplishment is possible due to the great team of individuals who worked diligently and meticulously in making this aircraft the best choice to replace the Navy's current workhorse, the P-3C Orion," said Capt. Scott Dillon, Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft Program Office (PMA-290) program manager. "It is a great day for the Navy and the fleet. We are proud to add the P-8 to the Navy's weapons inventory and the deployment cycle later this year."

This announcement of completing IOT&E follows another major program milestone last month, the successful firing of the Harpoon from the P-8A, which resulted in a successful target strike. "On June

24, completing just one practice run at the Point Mugu Sea Test Range, a P-8A Poseidon from Pax River achieved a program milestone after six minutes of flight time,” Dillon said. “The P-8A successfully launched a Harpoon AGM-84D Block IC missile on the first hot run scoring a direct hit run on a Low Cost Modular Target. This flight test, along with past tests, demonstrates the P-8’s operational effectiveness and overall mission capabilities.”

The successful completion of the initial operational testing period was a key milestone that will inform the full-rate production decision. With the program passing IOT&E, the P-8A program continues to be on track for an initial operational deployment this winter when the first P-8A squadron will deploy with P-3 and EP-3 squadrons. To date, nine low rate initial production aircraft have been delivered to the fleet and six test aircraft have been delivered to NAVAIR. According to the program of record, the Navy plans on purchasing 117 P-8As aircraft.

The P-8A Poseidon will replace the P-3C Orion as a long-range anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft, capable of broad-area, maritime and littoral operations. This valuable addition to naval air forces will protect the sea base and to enhance the Navy's forward presence.

*PMA-290 Public Affairs*

### **THE JAPANESE ZERO AND HOW WE LEARNED TO FIGHT IT (VIA BOB MANDEVILLE):**

In April 1942 thirty-six Zeros attacking a British naval base at Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka ), were met by about sixty Royal Air Force aircraft of mixed types, many of them obsolete. Twenty-seven of the RAF planes went down: fifteen Hawker Hurricanes (of Battle of Britain fame), eight Fairey Swordfish, and four Fairey Fulmars. The Japanese lost one Zero.

Five months after America's entry into the war, the Zero was still a mystery to U.S. Navy pilots. On May 7, 1942, in the Battle of the Coral Sea, fighter pilots from our aircraft carriers Lexington and Yorktown fought the Zero and didn't know what to call it. Some misidentified it as the German Messerschmitt 109.

A few weeks later, on June 3 and 4, warplanes flew from the Japanese carriers Ryujo and Junyo to attack the American military base at Dutch Harbor in Alaska 's Aleutian archipelago. Japan 's attack on Alaska was intended to draw remnants of the U.S. fleet north from Pearl Harbor, away from Midway Island, where the Japanese were setting a trap. (The scheme ultimately backfired when our Navy pilots sank four of Japan 's first-line aircraft carriers at Midway, giving the United States a major turning-point victory.)

In the raid of June 4, twenty bombers blasted oil storage tanks, a warehouse, a hospital, a hangar, and a beached freighter, while eleven Zeros strafed at will. Chief Petty Officer Makoto Endo led a three-plane Zero section from the Ryujo, whose other pilots were Flight Petty Officers Tsuguo Shikada and Tadayoshi Koga. Koga, a small nineteen-year old, was the son of a rural carpenter. His Zero, serial number 4593, was light gray, with the imperial rising-sun insignia on its wings and fuselage. It had left the Mitsubishi Nagoya aircraft factory on February 19, only three-and-a-half months earlier, so it was the latest design.

Shortly before the bombs fell on Dutch Harbor that day, soldiers at an adjacent Army outpost had seen three Zeros shoot down a lumbering Catalina amphibian. As the plane began to sink, most of the seven-member crew climbed into a rubber raft and began paddling toward shore. The soldiers watched in horror as the Zeros strafed the crew until all were killed. The Zeros are believed to have been those of Endo, Shikada, and Koga.



After massacring the Catalina crew, Endo led his section to Dutch Harbor, where it joined the other eight Zeros in strafing. It was then (according to Shikada, interviewed in 1984) that Koga's Zero was hit by ground fire. An Army intelligence team later reported, "Bullet holes entered the plane from both upper and lower sides." One of the bullets severed the return oil line between the oil cooler and the engine. As the engine continued to run, it pumped oil from the broken line. A Navy photo taken during the raid shows a Zero trailing what appears to be smoke. It is probably oil, and there is little doubt that this is Zero 4593.

After the raid, as the enemy planes flew back toward their carriers, eight American Curtiss Warhawk P-40's shot down four Val (Aichi D3A) dive bombers thirty miles west of Dutch Harbor. In the swirling, minutes-long dogfight, Lt. John J. Cape shot down a plane identified as a Zero. Another Zero was almost instantly on his tail. He climbed and rolled, trying to evade, but those were the wrong maneuvers to escape a Zero. The enemy fighter easily stayed with him, firing its two deadly 20-mm cannon and two 7.7-mm machine guns. Cape and his plane plunged into the sea. Another Zero shot up the P-40 of Lt. Winfield McIntyre, who survived a crash landing with a dead engine.

Endo and Shikada accompanied Koga as he flew his oil-spewing airplane to Akutan Island, twenty-five miles away, which had been designated for emergency landings. A Japanese submarine stood nearby to pick up downed pilots. The three Zeros circled low over the green, treeless island. At a level, grassy valley floor half a mile inland, Koga lowered his wheels and flaps and eased toward a three-point landing. As his main wheels touched, they dug in, and the Zero flipped onto its back, tossing water, grass, and gobs of mud. The valley floor was a bog, and the knee-high grass concealed water.

Endo and Shikada circled. There was no sign of life. If Koga was dead, their duty was to destroy the downed fighter. Incendiary bullets from their machine guns would have done the job. But Koga was a friend, and they couldn't bring themselves to shoot. Perhaps he would recover, destroy the plane himself, and walk to the waiting submarine. Endo and Shikada abandoned the downed fighter and returned to the Ryujo, two hundred miles to the south. (The Ryujo was sunk two months later in the eastern Solomons by planes from the aircraft carrier Saratoga. Endo was killed in action at Rabaul on October 12, 1943, while Shikada survived the war and eventually became a banker.)

The wrecked Zero lay in the bog for more than a month, unseen by U.S. patrol planes and offshore ships. Akutan is often foggy, and constant Aleutian winds create unpleasant turbulence over the rugged island. Most pilots preferred to remain over water, so planes rarely flew over Akutan. However, on July 10 a U.S. Navy Catalina (PBY) amphibian returning from overnight patrol crossed the island. A gunner named Wall called, "Hey, there's an airplane on the ground down there. It has meatballs on the wings." That meant the rising-sun insignia. The patrol plane's commander, Lt. William Thies, descended for a closer look. What he saw excited him.

Back at Dutch Harbor, Thies persuaded his squadron commander to let him take a party to the downed plane. No one then knew that it was a Zero.

Ens. Robert Larson was Thies's copilot when the plane was discovered. He remembers reaching the Zero. "We approached cautiously, walking in about a foot of water covered with grass. Koga's body, thoroughly strapped in, was upside down in the plane, his head barely submerged in the water. "We were surprised at the details of the airplane," Larson continues. "It was well built, with simple, unique features. Inspection plates could be opened by pushing on a black dot with a finger. A latch would open, and one could pull the plate out. Wingtips folded by unlatching them and pushing them up by hand. The pilot had a parachute and a life raft." Koga's body was buried nearby. In 1947 it was

shifted to a cemetery on nearby Adak Island, and later, it is believed, his remains were returned to Japan.

Thies had determined that the wrecked plane was a nearly new Zero, which suddenly gave it special meaning, for it was repairable. However, unlike U.S. warplanes, which had detachable wings, the Zero's wings were integral with the fuselage. This complicated salvage and shipping. Navy crews fought the plane out of the bog. The tripod that was used to lift the engine, and later the fuselage, sank three to four feet into the mud. The Zero was too heavy to turn over with the equipment on hand, so it was left upside down while a tractor dragged it on a skid to the beach and a barge. At Dutch Harbor it was turned over with a crane, cleaned, and crated, wings and all. When the awkward crate containing Zero 4593 arrived at North Island Naval Air Station, San Diego, a twelve-foot-high stockade was erected around it inside a hangar. Marines guarded the priceless plane while Navy crews worked around the clock to make it airworthy. (There is no evidence the Japanese ever knew we had salvaged Koga's plane.)

In mid-September Lt. Cmdr. Eddie R. Sanders studied it for a week as repairs were completed. Forty-six years later he clearly remembered his flights in Koga's Zero. "My log shows that I made twenty-four flights in Zero 4593 from 20 September to 15 October 1942," Sanders told me. "These flights covered performance tests such as we do on planes undergoing Navy tests."

"The very first flight exposed weaknesses of the Zero that our pilots could exploit with proper tactics. The Zero had superior maneuverability only at the lower speeds used in dog fighting, with short turning radius and excellent aileron control at very low speeds. However, immediately apparent was the fact that the ailerons froze up at speeds above two hundred knots, so that rolling maneuvers at those speeds were slow and required much force on the control stick. It rolled to the left much easier than to the right. Also, its engine cut out under negative acceleration [as when nosing into a dive] due to its float-type carburetor. We now had an answer for our pilots who were unable to escape a pursuing Zero. We told them to go into a vertical power dive, using negative acceleration, if possible, to open the range quickly and gain advantageous speed while the Zero's engine was stopped. At about two hundred knots, we instructed them to roll hard right before the Zero pilot could get his sights lined up. This recommended tactic was radioed to the fleet after my first flight of Koga's plane, and soon the welcome answer came back: "It works!" Sanders said, satisfaction sounding in his voice even after nearly half a century.

Thus by late September 1942 Allied pilots in the Pacific theater knew how to escape a pursuing Zero.

"Was Zero 4593 a good representative of the Model 21 Zero?" I asked Sanders. In other words, was the repaired airplane 100 percent?

"About 98 percent," he replied.

The Zero was added to the U.S. Navy inventory and assigned its Mitsubishi serial number. The Japanese colors and insignia were replaced with those of the U.S. Navy and later the U.S. Army, which also test-flew it. The Navy pitted it against the best American fighters of the time—the P-38 Lockheed Lightning, the P-39 Bell Airacobra, the P-51 North American Mustang, the F4F-4 Grumman Wildcat, and the F4U Chance Vought Corsair—and for each type developed the most effective tactics and altitudes for engaging the Zero.

In February 1945 Cmdr. Richard G. Crommelin was taxiing Zero 4593 at San Diego Naval Air Station, where it was being used to train pilots bound for the Pacific war zone. An SB-2C Curtiss Helldiver overran it and chopped it up from tail to cockpit. Crommelin survived, but the Zero didn't. Only a few

pieces of Zero 4593 remain today. The manifold pressure gauge, the air-speed indicator, and the folding panel of the port wingtip were donated to the Navy Museum at the Washington , D.C., Navy Yard by Rear Adm. William N. Leonard, who salvaged them at San Diego in 1945. In addition, two of its manufacturer's plates are in the Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum in Anchorage, donated by Arthur Bauman, the photographer.

Leonard recently told me, "The captured Zero was a treasure. To my knowledge no other captured machine has ever unlocked so many secrets at a time when the need was so great." A somewhat comparable event took place off North Africa in 1944-coincidentally on the same date, June 4, that Koga crashed his Zero.

A squadron commanded by Capt. Daniel V. Gallery, aboard the escort carrier Guadalcanal , captured the German submarine U-505, boarding and securing the disabled vessel before the fleeing crew could scuttle it. Code books, charts, and operating instructions rescued from U-505 proved quite valuable to the Allies. Captain Gallery later wrote, "Reception committees which we were able to arrange as a result may have had something to do with the sinking of nearly three hundred U-boats in the next eleven months." By the time of U-505's capture, however, the German war effort was already starting to crumble (D-day came only two days later), while Japan still dominated the Pacific when Koga's plane was recovered.

A classic example of the Koga plane's value occurred on April 1, 1943, when Ken Walsh, a Marine flying an F4U Chance-Vought Corsair over the Russell Islands southeast of Bougainville , encountered a lone Zero. "I turned toward him, planning a deflection shot, but before I could get on him, he rolled, putting his plane right under my tail and within range. I had been told the Zero was extremely maneuverable, but if I hadn't seen how swiftly his plane flipped onto my tail, I wouldn't have believed it," Walsh recently recalled. "I remembered briefings that resulted from test flights of Koga's Zero on how to escape from a following Zero. With that lone Zero on my tail I did a split S, and with its nose down and full throttle my Corsair picked up speed fast. I wanted at least 240 knots, preferably 260. Then, as prescribed, I rolled hard right. As I did this and continued my dive, tracers from the Zero zinged past my plane's belly. "From information that came from Koga's Zero, I knew the Zero rolled more slowly to the right than to the left. If I hadn't known which way to turn or roll, I'd have probably rolled to my left. If I had done that, the Zero would likely have turned with me, locked on, and had me. I used that maneuver a number of times to get away from Zeros." By war's end Capt. (later Lt. Col.) Kenneth Walsh had twenty-one aerial victories (seventeen Zeros, three Vals, one Pete), making him the war's fourth-ranking Marine Corps ace. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for two extremely courageous air battles he fought over the Solomon Islands in his Corsair during August 1943. He retired from the Marine Corps in 1962 after more than twenty-eight years of service. Walsh holds the Distinguished Flying Cross with six Gold Stars, the Air Medal with fourteen Gold Stars, and more than a dozen other medals and honors.

How important was our acquisition of Koga's Zero? Masatake Okumiya, who survived more air-sea battles than any other Japanese naval officer, was aboard the Ryujo when Koga made his last flight. He later co-authored two classic books, Zero and Midway. Okumiya has written that the Allies' acquisition of Koga's Zero was "no less serious" than the Japanese defeat at Midway and "did much to hasten our final defeat." If that doesn't convince you, ask Ken Walsh.

## INSIDE THE ZERO

The Zero was Japan 's main fighter plane throughout World War II. By war's end about 11,500 Zeros had been produced in five main variants. In March 1939, when the prototype Zero was rolled out, Japan was in some ways still so backward that the plane had to be hauled by oxcart from the

Mitsubishi factory twenty-nine miles to the airfield where it flew. It represented a great leap in technology. At the start of World War II, some countries' fighters were open cockpit, fabric-covered biplanes. A low-wing all-metal monoplane carrier fighter, predecessor to the Zero, had been adopted by the Japanese in the mid-1930's, while the U.S. Navy's standard fighter was still a biplane.

But the world took little notice of Japan's advanced military aircraft, so the Zero came as a great shock to Americans at Pearl Harbor and afterward. A combination of nimbleness and simplicity gave it fighting qualities that no Allied plane could match. Lightness, simplicity, ease of maintenance, sensitivity to controls, and extreme maneuverability were the main elements that the designer Jiro Horikoshi built into the Zero. The Model 21 flown by Koga weighed 5,500 pounds, including fuel, ammunition, and pilot, while U.S. fighters weighed 7,500 pounds and up. Early models had no protective armor or self-sealing fuel tanks, although these were standard features on U.S. fighters.

Despite its large-diameter 940-hp radial engine, the Zero had one of the slimmest silhouettes of any World War II fighter. The maximum speed of Koga's Zero was 326 mph at 16,000 feet, not especially fast for a 1942 fighter. But high speed wasn't the reason for the Zero's great combat record. Agility was. Its large ailerons gave it great maneuverability at low speeds. It could even outmaneuver the British Spitfire. Advanced U.S. fighters produced toward the war's end still couldn't turn with the Zero, but they were faster and could out climb and out dive it. Without self-sealing fuel tanks, the Zero was easily flamed when hit in any of its three wing and fuselage tanks or its droppable belly tank. And without protective armor, its pilot was vulnerable. In 1941 the Zero's range of 1,675 nautical miles (1,930 statute miles) was one of the wonders of the aviation world. No other fighter plane had ever routinely flown such a distance.

Saburo Sakai , Japan 's highest-scoring surviving World War II ace, with sixty- four kills, believes that if the Zero had not been developed, Japan "would not have decided to start the war." Other Japanese authorities echo this opinion, and the confidence it reflects was not, in the beginning at least, misplaced. Today the Zero is one of the rarest of all major fighter planes of World War II. Only sixteen complete and assembled examples are known to exist. Of these, only two are flyable: one owned by Planes of Fame, in Chino , California , and the other by the Commemorative Air Force, in Midland , Texas .

#### **VP-92 P-3B TACNAVMOD PATCHES NOW AVAILABLE:**



When VP-92 transitioned from the P-3A to the P-3B the members of aircrews that became "Alpha Qualified" were presented with the special patch shown here. The design duplicates the Minuteman with yellow lightning bolt that was painted on the tails of the squadron's P-3Bs. A limited number of exact duplicates of this patch have been reproduced by the ANA Patriot Squadron's Shea Naval Aviation Museum as a fund-raiser. They are sold in the museum for \$6 each or via the mail for \$7 each. The supply is limited and there's a good chance that once they are gone there won't be any more. If you are want to buy a patch through the mail contact the Shea Naval Aviation Museum at [inquiries@anapatriotsquadron.org](mailto:inquiries@anapatriotsquadron.org) for details.

**RECOMMENDED READING:**

The ANA Patriot Squadron's Shea Naval Aviation Museum will host a lecture and book signing by author Tommy H. Thomason. Mr. Tomason has written at least eight books on naval aviation related subjects including "U.S. Naval Air Superiority" shown here. See [tommythomason.com](http://tommythomason.com) for details regarding the books that he has written. Thomason will give a lecture on the history of the Douglas A-4 Skyhawk, an aircraft used for three decades at NAS South Weymouth, at the museum starting at noon on Saturday September 28<sup>th</sup>. Copies of his many naval aviation books will be available for sale before and after the lecture. The Shea Naval Aviation Museum is located at 495 Shea Memorial Drive on old NAS South Weymouth, MA. Admission to the museum and to the lecture is free. See [www.anapatriotsquadron.org](http://www.anapatriotsquadron.org) for more details.



**ON THE INTERNET:**

Don't forget, there are groups for VP-92, NAS South Weymouth, and NAS Brunswick on Facebook that you can join at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). Check them out.

**MONTHLY MEETING:**

Don't forget that we now meet for lunch on the last Thursday of every month at Waxy O'Connor's Irish Pub at 94 Hartwell St. in Lexington, MA from 11:30 to 13:30 until further notice. Please join us if you can. Waxy O'Connor's Irish Pub is just outside the Hanscom Field Hartwell gate.

**PARTING SHOT:**

Bill Scacia provided this shot of VP-92 people at the NAS SoWey CPO Club on Andy Anderson's retirement from the USNR in October 1980. There are a number of familiar faces here.



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



VP ASSOCIATION 2013 ANNUAL REUNION  
WEYMOUTH ELKS HALL, 1197 WASHINGTON ST., WEYMOUTH, MA  
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 21, 2013 FROM 1200 TO 1700

*Appetizers and Cash Bar between 1200 and 1300, Dinner at 1300, Music between 1200 and 1630*

BANQUET RESERVATION ORDER FORM

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Squadron Affiliation(s) and Years: \_\_\_\_\_

Number in Party: \_\_\_\_\_

Guest's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed (\$40 Per Person): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make Checks Payable to “**The VP Association**” and Mail to William Hanigan, 23 Parkview Terrace, Duxbury MA 02332.

***If you haven't been to a VP Association reunion before, how about joining us this year?***

***Don't assume that everybody you know from your Navy Reserve or regular Navy patrol squadron days is aware of the VP Association or the annual reunion banquet. Spread the word about us to your Navy friends and former shipmates.***

***Dress is CASUAL. However, if you would like to wear a uniform (any kind) or flight suit to the reunion that's fine.***

***Our guest speaker will be retired USN Captain Robert C. “Barney” Rubel of the Naval War College who will give a presentation on the Navy's transition from propeller driven aircraft to jets. Tables will be available for displays of any Navy memorabilia that you may wish to bring.***

***If you have photos, cruise books, squadron or crew patches, squadron ballcaps, NATOPS manuals, or any other interesting memorabilia that you'd like to show off to your friends and former shipmates at the reunion banquet please bring it with you and we'll find a table for you.***

***As was the case last year, the ANA Patriot Squadron's Shea Naval Aviation Museum in the Shea Fitness Center at 495 Shea Memorial Drive on old NAS South Weymouth will be open from 9 to 11 AM on the day of the reunion. Come see the old base and visit the museum. Admission is free! If you have any old photographs, films, or Navy memorabilia associated with NAS Squantum or NAS South Weymouth tucked away gathering dust consider donating it to the museum.***