



# VPB-111/VP-21 VAGABOND NEWS

www.vp-21navy.org

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**John G. Esposito, Editor**

**SPRING 2015 Edition**

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE LEFT SEAT:

My report this time will concentrate on the 2015 reunion held in Pensacola, FL from 27-29 April. There are several words that I could use to describe it. Outstanding is one, fantastic is another. Our coordinators, Bob O'Connor, Gary Phillips and Gene Davis put together one for the record books. Starting out, they could not have selected a better hotel for the reunion. The facilities were wonderful, from the well-appointed suites, to the complementary breakfasts AND dinners, but mostly for the truly wonderful staff that helped to ensure our every need was met and every desire was satisfied. Some of the highlights of the three days were visits to Whiting Field, home of primary flight training and visits to the Naval Aviation Museum and National Flight Academy, and a very enjoyable tour of the City of Pensacola that included lunch at the famous McGuire's Restaurant. Another big thrill was a tour of the Navy's new P-8 Poseidon MMA aircraft. Carter Nute asked the CO of VP-30 to send one of his new P-8s to Pensacola so we could visit it, and he graciously complied. The plane is magnificent. Another highlight was the presentation given by Dan Snyder, Chief Operating Officer of Neptune Aviation Services, the premiere fire bomber outfit that flies out of Missoula, MT. The presentation covered conversion, maintenance, and operations of the former Navy aircraft now used in fighting forest fires. Fifty years ago I was the PPC of P2V-7, LH-8, BUNO 145906 in VP-21. Fifty years later it's still going strong as Neptune's T-43. I guess my landings weren't that bad after all. Dan, and another Neptune pilot, Marc Osman, who had been instrumental in researching the connection between LH-8 and T-43, were unanimously selected as honorary members of our Association. Our members also voted for a generous contribution to the Brunswick Naval Museum and Memorial Gardens. I'm pleased to report that we had three members of 111 at the reunion – Merrill Churchill, Ed LaFontaine, and Dick Webb. It was a wonderful reunion and all hands had a really great time. BZ to Bob, Gary, and Gene. By majority vote, our 2017 reunion will be held at Jacksonville, FL. Carter Nute has graciously volunteered to act as coordinator (certainly with the able assistance of Jim Mattson). See you all then.

I've been advised that a group is planning a reunion in 2016 on the 5th anniversary of the station's closure for anyone who served at NASB. Anyone interested should contact Jeffrey Simpson at 207-607-2210 or by email at [Jeffthebubby2@aol.com](mailto:Jeffthebubby2@aol.com). You can also go to the Brunswick Naval Air Station Facebook page. He's trying to get a handle on how many people might be interested.

I'm still looking for updated personal information and the Webmaster is still looking for bios.

Have a great summer and fly safely.

Bill

## **PENSACOLA REUNION OVERVIEW:**

Thanks from the Reunion Committee to all who helped with and attended this year's gathering in Pensacola. You made it a fun and relaxing get-together. Thanks to the staff at the Homewood Suites who gave us great service and incredible hospitality. Thanks also to: our military hosts at Whiting Field, the National Flight Academy, The Air Museum, and the flight crew that brought VP-30's P-8 Poseidon over from JAX, for their warm welcomes and the great deal of time they spent with us, and to Dan Snyder of Neptune Aviation Services who brought some great photos and videos and gave us fascinating insights into his company's use of P-2s in aerial fire-fighting. Thanks also to our van drivers: Ken Garvin, Bill Locke and Gene Davis for volunteering their skills, time and patience.

Candid and portrait photos taken during the reunion by the two photographers are posted online at: [www.jmphotography.smugmug.com](http://www.jmphotography.smugmug.com). You can view or obtain copies there. Mark and Jeanne said they really enjoyed meeting everyone and appreciated the cooperation they received. If anyone has additional photos that they'd like to share, Jim Mattson ([jmattson1@cox.net](mailto:jmattson1@cox.net)) is working up a memory book and would be happy to see your shots.

Hope to see you all in Jacksonville in 2017.

Bob, Gary, and Gene

## **DONATIONS RECEIVED:**

The following persons made donations to our association during this quarter:

- Mrs . Patricia Hancasky made a donation in honor of her late husband, Edward.
- Raymond H. Gaus
- Ronald D. Rocheleau
- Thomas E. Sayre
- Scott R. Kieper
- Gerald N. Panches
- Albert D. Acker
- Michael Henry
- Patricia A. Hancasky
- Carrie A. Hancasky
- C.L. McNamar
- Pete Ferriso
- James Huber
- John F. Gillooly
- William Harris

## **LOST SHEEP FOUND:**

The following person has since been found and is hereby reported as such:

### **Michael P Walsh (Elf)**

12 Avalon Drive, East Falmouth, MA 02536-5908

Telephone: Home (508) 540-9485

Cell: (774) 392-2537

Arrived:1967 Depart:1969 (Decommissioned)

Rank/Rate when departing: ADJ1

Rank/Rate when left the service: AFCM

Squadron Insignia when left Squadron: BLACKJACKS

## TAPS:

It is with deep regret that I inform you of the passing of our following shipmates:

- **Edward Hancasky:** Passed away on 8 March, 2014. He was an AO3 and served in VP 21 from '59 to '61.
- **Kazimierz (Ski) John Szczepanski, 93:** of The Highlands, passed away on March 21, 2015.
- **Joseph William Walsh Sr.:** Passed away Thursday, Jan. 30, 2014. He served as an armament mechanic until 1958. During his service, he received a Good Conduct Medal and the National Defense Service Medal for his service with Patrol Squadron 21 in a Lockheed 2V Neptune naval patrol plane during the Korean War.
- **Rolland W. Autote, Jr.:** Passed away on 26 November 2014. He was an AO3 in VP-21 from 1961-1965.
- **Eugene Balboni:** Passed away on 17 November.
- **Leonard (Len) Leger, 80:** Died Oct. 28, 2003. During World War II, Len flew out to the southern most island of the Philippines and received his Naval discharge in Dec 1945.
- **David L. Barclay:** Passed away on June 21, 2014. David was a veteran of the US Navy serving his country from 1948-1952 during the Korean War.
- **Dale Woods:** It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Dale Woods, our friend and fellow Board member. Dale died on Thursday 21 May from complications of COPD.
- **Michael Leonetti, 91:** Died on March 25, 2015. He was a 20 year Navy man (1940-1960) serving in a PB4Y Liberator in the European and Pacific Theatres during World War II.
- **James "Jim" G. Sperry, 78:** Died March 6, 2015.
- **Albin A. Herman:** YN3, '51-'53 passed away on 25 December 2014.
- **Donald Keith Johnson:** Died on April 14, 2010 at 91 years old.
- **John Whitcomb, 88:** Passed away on September 13, 2010. John was a retired veteran of the U. S. Navy and served during WWII.
- **Greta J. Banda:** Wife of AOC Lionel C. Banda who did two tours in VP21, passed away on 22 February 2015.
- **Walter Martell:** Passed away on May 30, 2015. He served in VPB 111 from 1943 to 1945.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE STOREKEEPER:

Thank you to all Association members for your support to Small Store sales during the 2015 Pensacola Reunion. Sales exceeded \$600 in purchases of Association memorabilia treasures.

**NEW ITEMS!** We recently added the special and separate 2015 Reunion Ball Caps that recognize the legacy VPB-111 membership as well as the VP-21 successors who saw the close of our beloved squadron. These commemorative ball caps can be yours for a modest \$20 fee that includes shipping and handling costs. Place your order now before we exhaust the limited supply of this 2015 Reunion keepsake. Finally, we have included VP-21 vinyl decals to our inventory for proud window display of your affiliation with our rich Maritime Patrol heritage. Visit our VPB-111/VP-21 Website at [www.vp-21navy.org](http://www.vp-21navy.org) and click into the Small Stores tool bar to bring up photos and a price list of Association memorabilia treasures. For further information or to place your Small Stores order, contact Storekeeper, Carter Nute, at (352) 335-1293 or by E-mail at [ccnute@cox.net](mailto:ccnute@cox.net).

Cheers, Carter

**PLEASE NOTE:** The VPB-111/VP-21 Veterans Association charges no dues. Our operations are totally supported by the generous contributions of our membership and by the sale of our squadron products. The association comes under section 501(C) 19, of the Internal Revenue Code as a "Not for Profit" organization. As such, contributions are legitimate tax deductions. Please make your contribution checks payable to the "VPB-111/VP-21 Veterans Association" and forward them to the Treasurer, Leland Ledford, at 127 Pete St., Waterloo, SC, 29384-4647.

**VPB-111/VP-21 VETERANS ASSOCIATION**  
255 Mere Point Rd.  
Brunswick, ME 04011

**Non-profit Org.**  
**U.S. Postage**  
**PAID**  
**Permit #61**  
**Southampton, PA**

**Return Service Requested**

### **SPRING 2015**

#### **VPB-111/VP-21 VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

*A non-profit, fraternal, and historical association devoted to the reestablishment of contact with shipmates of the past, to strengthen the camaraderie among its members, to record and preserve the memories and incidents of the Association, to preserve the memory of departed shipmates, and to promote the comfort and welfare of its members and survivors. No dues are assessed!*

*Directors:*

- *Dwyer, Dan, Online Coordinator, Director; #6 Sarah Liberty Lane, Scarborough, ME 04074*
- *Esposito John G., Editor/Director; 862 Central Ave., Southampton, PA 18966*
- *La Fontaine, Edward, Museum Director; 161 Jackson Dr., Frankfort, KY 40601*
- *Locke, William Chairman, 255 Mere Point Rd., Brunswick, ME 04011*
- *Nelson Robert, Special Projects, 17032 SE 96<sup>th</sup> Chapelwood Circle, The Villages, FL 32162*
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- *Nute, Carter; Storekeeper/Director; 7605 NW 50th ST., Gainesville, FL 32653-1137*
- *Ledford, Leland, Treasurer/Director; 127 Pete St., Waterloo, SC 29384-4647*
- *Schuster, Fred, Dir/Historian/Director; 2713Cabin Creek Rd., Edwardsville, IL,62025*
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*The 'Vagabond News' is the official publication of the Association, and is circulated quarterly in the Winter (January/March), Spring (April/June), Summer (July/September), and Fall (October/December), as a third class bulk-rate mail from Southampton, PA, Post Office (Permit #61). All costs of the publication are supported by voluntary contribution only. To ensure that materials of interest are promptly published, members should submit same prior to the publishing quarter to John G. Esposito, 862 Central Ave., Southampton, PA 18966. All inputs will be published in a timely manner.*