

2007 Reunion information Winter 2nd Edition

Fellow Shipmates,

It seems hard to believe that its been one and a half years since the 2005 reunion in



Pelican No. 1 & Friends- Gene Toffolo, VP-44 2007 Reunion Chairman

Fredricksburg, TX. We are only about six months out from the 2007 reunion here in Indianapolis, IN on Labor Day weekend. The wife and I are busy planning and preparing for the event with guidance from the reunion committee. We all hope you have the chance to attend at least one day and explore our city along

with seeing old friends and meeting new ones. Our Association President Ralph Cook says it best *"it was about finding old friends and reminding each other of former times. Then the lies and Irish blarney takes over."*

This sale pitch is not about money, the reunion committee and myself are not here to turn a profit. We try every time to have a successful reunion and have enough to cover expenses. Any profits are put back into the reunion fund or make new purchases for the Pelican shop. Check out what we have to offer in the Pelican Shop, www.vp44goldenpelicans.com

I'm asking a favor from all of you if you are planning to attend the 2007 reunion if I have some idea on the numbers attending, it will help me plan a better reunion. You can also save by getting your registration in before June 1, 2007. If you don't want to commit just yet but are pretty sure you will attend, please email me stating that fact so I can make plans.

I also want to remind everyone again to update any new email addresses you have when you change providers. I loose 10-12 addresses every time I send out a newsletter. At the present time I have almost 400 email addresses in the database. I will delete you from the database if you would rather not receive these updates, and I can mail the letter out if you so desire.

One of the things we do at our reunions is hold a business meeting for all hands. The meeting in September will decide the officers in the association for the next two years, the 2009 reunion site and its chairman. Any new business that is brought up will also be voted on. If you cannot attend but have a good idea on how we can do things better, please email or call me and I will bring it before the committee.



Pelican No. 1 & Friends- Gene Toffolo, VP-44 2007 Reunion Chairman

As you will see in this newsletter some old shipmates are finding each other. If you always wondered what happened to somebody, send me as much information as you can on them and I will include it in my next newsletter.

Gene R. Toffolo VP-44 December 18, 1965-April 22, 1969, Crew Five & Six
2007 Sales Director
2007 Reunion Chairman, Indianapolis, IN
4334 Downes Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46235-1144
(cell) 317 201-4261
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(URL) www.vp44goldenpelicans.com

Advertisement

This is a email I received about having a reunion in Washington State that one of you may want to look into for the next full reunion. I get these type of emails all the time so if you're thinking about hosting the 2009 reunion let me know and I will forward on the area of interest.

Dear Gene,

My name is Tammy Dunn and I am the Group Sales Executive for the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau in Washington State. I understand that you are involved in the reunion planning for the VP-44/VPB-204/VP-204/VPMS-4 Reunion. I know that you will be meeting in September in Indianapolis, Indiana, but I would be delighted if your reunion group would consider coming to Washington State in 2008 or 2009.

Home to Naval Station Everett, Snohomish County is located between Puget Sound and the Cascade Mountains and is only 12 miles north of downtown Seattle. Day tours to Seattle attractions, as well as tours of Naval Station Everett, Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, and Bremerton are all options for your group tours.

I would be delighted to send you a group tour and meeting facility guide if you are interested in holding your reunion in Washington State. Please reply to my email at tammy@snohomish.org or call me toll-free at (888) 338-0976, extension 16 to request your free group tour and meeting guide.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Tammy Dunn
Group Sales Manager
Snohomish County Tourism Bureau
(888) 338-0976, ext. 16
tammy@snohomish.org
www.snohomish.org

Commander Ellis Skidmore, USN(ret)

April 9, 1940 – October 31, 1962

Below are a few of pages submitted by Commander Ellis on his distinguish Naval Career. He was a World War Two veteran and the Battle of Midway. I will have the rest of his package in a folder in the Chief Val Ready Room at the Labor Day Weekend Reunion in

Indianapolis. I talked with Commander last month and if their health holds up he and his wife plan on attending the reunion, then you can here his military stories first hand. Thank you Commander Skidmore.

February 2, 1998
25 S.W. Crestview Lane,
Madras. Oregon 97741
1-541-475-3217

From: CDR Ellis Dee Skidmore
To: PBY Catalina Foundation
Subject: PBY Limits

1. My congratulation on the purchase of a PBY-6A; it's absolutely great to have a flying model in-house for the future of the organization. A most timely purchase.
2. Individually I do not agree with leaving the radar off the aircraft. A definite plus for the plane - and according to your flight area, an excellent accessory.

Low; As Flight Officer for the Naval Air Station, Kodiak, Alaska, I used to relieve the tedium and humdrum of IFR by filing flight plans: COASTAL, RADAR, 50 FEET. Aleutian fog always has a limited surface visibility and with the 6A radar, you could pinpoint the land/water terrain ahead and skirt the headlands. Flight April 24, 1950 PBY-6A Bureau No. 46647 5.4 hours to AKUTAN Island Or flight of June 1, 1950 PBY-6A Bureau NO. 63994 5.2 hours to ST. PAUL Island. Of course my position reports at first were misunderstood. "Port Heiden Radio this is Navy 46647, crossed your south leg 55 miles out at 1025, course 227, speed 104, altitude 50 feet, over". Navy 46647 this is Port Heiden Radio, repeat your altitude, over.. Port Heiden Radio this is 647, altitude 50 feet, I say again, 50 feet. Three position reports, three requests for "repeat your altitude". On all subsequent position reports, "my altitude is zero zero five zero feet, over". Never a request for repeat.

HIGH: On July 18, 1941 PBY-5 Bureau No. 2359, Fleet Air Wing 4 Gunnery School, Sand Point, Seattle, had a high altitude bombing flight, all crew members had oxygen and we had a Norden (?) bombsight on board. Great flight, disaster for all bombing runs. Bombing altitude was 23,000 feet and we were dropping 100 pound water filled bombs. Temperature at Sand Point at take off, about 56 degrees; and, with a 3 degree decrease every 1000 feet, we were around -13 degrees at altitude. Of course climbing up, all the water settled aft leaving a void in the top of the bombs nose section. Bombs were out of balance and dropped in an ever increasing spiral. You could not see the target and the bombs splash in a milscope of 125 mils - this would be an error of more than 2875 feet. No more bombing, instead we had aerial gunnery off the Washington coast. Example: July 23 1941 PBY-52359 3.2 hours. One PBY had a tow reel and towed, others fired - all planes had different colors on the bullet nose cones. After firing, the tow plane dropped the target in Lake Ozette, a firing plane landed and picked it up, later spread it out on the hanger floor at Sand Point for everyone to count their bullet holes (you could see how good you were). After gunnery, torpedo drops in Puget Sound, many drops. Example: August 7, 1941 PBY-5 Bureau No. 2360 2.7 hours. Torpedoes are supposed to run HOT (engine ignites), STRAIGHT (direct line to the target) and NORMAL (dive to a preset depth and stay there until the engine runs out of fuel). Our plane drops tended to hit nose low, dive, then come back up, over correcting, and jump out of the water (one hit so nose low that the torpedo broke in two pieces, the nose section severed the bolts to the engine). Final solution: a tilted plywood boxkite looking assembly attached to the tail section that carried away when the torpedo entered the water - very successful runs with this attachment.

FAST: on the final phase of Naval Air Operational Training at Jacksonville, Florida, pilots were scheduled for navigation flights. Example: August 20, 1943 PBY-5 Bureau No. 08419, August 24, 1943 PBY-5 Bureau No. 08189. All my solo flights were; south coastal to Miami, fly the length of town at 100 feet, starboard wingtip even with the water touching the sand, climb to 1000 feet, east to the Bahamas, buzz a house on the island (always pull out when you can see individual tiles on a tile

roof), turn north and climb to 20,000 feet. Little effect on the crew except for a heavy set ordancemen - he had a shortage of breath (half the worlds oxygen is below you at 18,000 feet). Down was d o w n, one drop was 304 MPH, another was 307 MPH. Oh Yes, NAVIGATION. Set a course for Bermuda and figure out how far you could go before turning around so your arrival back at Jacksonville would not be over 15 minutes late (this area was later known as the Bermuda Triangle).

SLOW; As a preliminary move before the Battle of Midway, on May 23, 1942 flew in PBY-5A Bureau No. 04976 from Ford Island, Pearl Harbor to Midway, 10.0 hours. On arrival at Midway, one bank of spark plugs had in their 120 hours and needed changing; but, Midway had no plugs. On May 27, 1942, flew-patrol for 11.2 hours. On May 28, 1942 flew patrol for 11.9 hours. On May 29, 1942 flew patrol for 12.5 hours. On May 30, 1942 flew patrol for 11.9 hours. On May 31, 1942 flew patrol for 12.1 hours. These five flights essentially added another 60 hours so the other bank of spark plugs needed changing. (NO plugs in supply). I did not fly on June 1, 1942, but another crew flew the plane for 12.0 hours. On June 2, 1942 flew patrol for 11.8 hours. I did not fly on June 3, 1942 but another crew flew the plane for 11.8 hours. On June 4, 1942 (day of the attack) flew patrol for 13.4 hours (changed from a landplane on Eastern Island to a seaplane on Sand Island). On June 5, 1942 checking mags prior to getting in the water,- one mag dropped off 230 RPM (one bank of plugs had 228.7 hours of operation - not 120). Note about TACTIAL FLIGHT: You HAVE to GO, you don't have to come back. On take-off, we ran the five miles across the Midway lagoon and ENS Hank Noon chopped the throttles on LTJG Carl Bauer. Carl was mad, mad, mad, he almost had the plane in the air. Hank said nothing, just pointed to the boiling reef in front of the nose. Taxied back the five miles, second try, in the air (very late). Picked up the Japanese battle cruisers MOGAMI and MIKUMA 115 miles out (weather CAVU). One team encoded the contact report, decoded by another team to check accuracy. TIME, we were the only U.S. crew with the knowledge that Japan was retreating (my version - plain language: 2 BB HAULING ASS FOR HOME). I was on the radio circuit when the Marines bombed the two ships with their SB2Us. Was in the starboard blister with

10 power binoculars when the Air Force B-17s arrived. B-17s had taken off before the Marines but became "lost" on the way out. Planes were way upstairs from us, lead ship, the MIKUMA turned right 360 degrees, Mogami turned left 360 degrees - if neither ship had turned the bombs would have dropped south of the ships track. Our PBY was at maximum altitude, over 10,000 but under 11,000 feet, just observing, when the cruisers fired at us. On in range, on in elevation; but, they knew too much and used the cruising speed of PBYs, 100 to 102 knots, shell burst dead ahead, we were doing our best to hold altitude and 82 knots with four 500 pound bombs suspended under the wings. (This error on their part is the only reason I'm alive today). Did not fly the 700 mile sector, returned to Midway after only 7.0 hours in the air.

FUEL RESERVE: All my flights in PBYs were with a 400 gallon, five hour, flight time reserve. To the best of my knowledge, the only exception was on March 26, 1942 in PBY-5A Bureau No. 4976, when we flew from San Diego to Pearl Harbor, 18 hours and 42 minutes. Plane landed with 235 gallons of fuel (down to about a 3 hour reserve. (Flew out with 6 planes from our squadron, VP-44, and 4 planes being ferried by Consolidated to Australia. Other 9 planes were all together on arrival and claimed "WE"¹ were lost. That is questionable, as we were on the ramp at Ford Island when "THEY" arrived).

WEIGHT: Flying out of Attu, our PBYs carried a lot of cold weather gear, which was never used and 4 square nosed depth charges, takeoff was 2000 pounds over maximum gross overload. Example: May 5, 1944 PBY-5A Bureau No. 48382 10.2 hours. Planes lined up on the taxi-way, almost dawn, and the plane ahead of you would take the runway. At the far end they were over water, plane would settle down to where only the exhausts on top of the engines were visible. They would just be airborne due to the ground effect, runway would end and the plane would settle while the wheels came up and until the water caused a renewed ground effect; with this, the plane started to climb out. Next, our turn, full power, settle off the end of the runway, level off just above the water; and, with the wheels up you could establish and maintain a rate of climb of 75 feet per minute

to your cruising altitude, 200 feet. (You can't be very high in the sky when using Mk. 1, Mod. 1 eyeballs looking for submarine periscopes).

Sincerely,

Ellis Dee Skidmore CDR USN (Ret.)

Schools CDR Ellis Dee Skidmore, USN (Ret.)

1. 4/9/40 - 6/15/40 Boot Camp, USNTS, San Diego
2. 7/11/40 - 10/15/40 Aviation Radio School, NAS North Island, San Diego
3. 11/4/40 - 3/14/41 Fleet Air Wing 4 Radio School, NAS Sand Point, Seattle
4. 7/10/41 - 8/27/41 Fleet Air Wing 4 Gunnery School, NAS Sand Point, Seattle
5. 7/22/42 - 11/24/42 Pre-Flight School, Univ. of Georgia, Athens
6. 12/13/42 - 2/9/43 Basic Flight Training, Yellow Perils, NAS New Orleans
7. 2/10/43 - 7/10/43 Flight Training, NAS Pensacola Formation Flying, (SNV)
Saufley Field Instrument Flying, (SNJ) Chevalier Field Final Squadron, (Seaplanes)
Mainside
8. 7/15/43 - 8/23/43 Operational Training, Jacksonville
9. 10/13/43 - 1/5/44 Operational Training (OTU-A), NAS Whidbey Island
10. 8/4/45 - 8/11/45 Swimming, NAS Sand Point, Seattle
11. 1/20/50 - 2/4/50 Artic Survival School, Marks AFB, Nome (-39° & colder)
12. 3/6/51 - 4/17/51 Naval Gunnery School, Naval Station, San Diego
13. 8/4/53 - 2/19/43 U.S. Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey
14. 3/3/54 - 3/19/56 Oregon State University, Corvallis (B.S. Degree)
15. 4/9/56 - 5/2/56 COAO Anti-Sub Tactical Course,
Fleet Sonar School, San Diego
16. 5/3/56 - 5/3/56 Emergency Shiphandling School, Naval Station, San Diego
In School: 4 Years, 11 Months

Newsletter Update

I know I'm not a very good editor-in chief but these type of emails make my day, and why with your permission I will continue. Mr. Rogers and Ms. Darlene Williams Sweat are in contact with each other.

Hi Gene,

The world gets small at times. I read with interest the e-mail you received from Darlene Williams Sweat. I checked into VP-44 in March of 1960. Her Dad Earl G. Williams ,Willie, was my Plane Captain and I was the Second Mech on LM3 (P5M) and LM3 (P2V). We flew together for quit some time and after I made AD2 I had a plane and crew. At about this time people got switched around and I think Willie went to LM1. When my time was up in August of 1961 I left the Navy. These were good times for my Wife and I. We came back to my home town of Dubuque, IA. had a family and are still here today. If you have Darlene Sweat address I have a couple of pictures of those days I can send her or you can pass the information on to her.

Regards,
Lynn R. Rogers
10695 Watters Forest Dr
Dubuque, IA 52003

E-mail; pandaperu@msn.com

PS; We are very seriously considering coming to the Reunion. Time will tell.

Correction

In some of the group newsletters that went out last time, I had Captain Serrell email address wrong the correct address is:

Andy Serrell, Captain, USN(ret); VP-44 CO 1962-1963
baldeagle1@mchsi.com

Other Emails Received

Mr. Les Dennis contacted the American Legion HQ's here in Indianapolis and they could open for a tour over Labor Day weekend. I will get downtown and check more on it but we would need a head count as to how many would take the tour. I will shoot for Sunday morning timeframe, please email me back if you are interested.

Request for missing Shipmate

Mr. Horace L. (Slim) Riggs VP-44 (1959-1962) is looking for a Mr. William J. Delaney from the same time frame, he was a Aviation Machinist Mate from Queens N.Y. You can contact Mr. Riggs at hlrpolk@yahoo.com

Hi, Saw the notice in American Legion Magazine.

I was a PBM Pilot with the Squadron in Coco Solo,CZ from April 1947 to March 1949.My wife ,Dottie and I had many fond memories of the squadron people, and our son Jim was born in the Navy Hospital in the zone in 1947.Dottie passed away in 2000. Would appreciate contacting any folks who were there in the time frame.We had lost contact with all but a few and most of them have passed on.

James P. Little
1214 East Tern Ln.
Rockport,Tx. 78382
Ph # 361 729 0785
Email jplit43@gmail.com

I'm looking for ADJ2 George D. Nichols, I think he was from Massachusetts?

Reunion Update

All is in place to receive your reservations and registration for the 2007 reunion here in Indianapolis on September 1, 2, 3. **Hotel check in is Saturday September 1 and check out Tuesday September 4, our banquet is Monday night September 3.** If you want to come early or stay later please check with the hotel manager. Ray has the home page up and running, www.vp44goldenpelicans.com if you click on the picture of either hotel it will get you info you need. We can book on line for the Marriott (or call 317 322-3716) from their home page and use for the "Group Code" the following letters:"VPSVPSA". You have to call the LaQuinta direct 317 359-1021and tell them you are with VP44 for the special rate. The registration forms will come to me direct and I will copy Jeff for accounting purposes. I will keep track of those that have registrations made for the reunion and copy Ray so he can post them on the home page.

I want to give a special thanks to Ray Beck our web master, the home page and all its contents our way over my head and we couldn't do it without you, thanks.

VP-44 2007 Reunion Registration Form

Visit Your VP-44 Reunion 2007 Website and Pelican Shop:

<http://www.vp44goldenpelicans.com>

This registration does not include the hotel reservation. Make your hotel reservations by contacting: Marriott Center 317 352-1231, or LaQuinta 317 359-1021 both hotels are side by side in 7200 East 21 Street area. When making reservations mention that you are with the VP-44 Golden Pelicans Group.

Name _____ Spouse/Guest _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

Dates with VP44, VPB204, VP204, VPMS4 and Rate & Rank _____

Registration Fee: I will be attending and bringing ___ guests @ \$15.00 ea. \$ _____

Registration Fee after June 1, 2007 ___ guests @ \$20.00 \$ _____

Banquet Cost: \$40.00 Each (includes buffet & door prize tickets) \$ _____

Donation to VP44 Reunion Fund (funds to stock Pelican Shop & future events) \$ _____

Total \$ _____

The enclosed check is to be payable to: "VP-44 Reunion Fund." Please return this completed Form and check to: Chairmen Gene Toffolo

4334 Downes Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46235-1144

Reunion information request

Your preferred drink in the Ready Room _____

Would you like a group bus trip to the Indianapolis 500 or the downtown area
comments/requests _____

Would you like a professional group photo at the reunion? _____

Would you like music (band or DJ) at the banquet? _____

Additional comments for a better reunion: _____

Gene Toffolo

VP44 2007 Reunion Chairmen

Email addresses: Genejanjay@aol.com or VP44Paxmd@aol.com

TENTATIVE POD REUNION 2007 #2

Friday, August 31, 2007

Setup of Chief Val Ready Room, Quarter Deck, Pelican Shop, and Memorabilia Spaces in Suites 160 and 164. Early arrivals welcome but check with the hotels.

OFFICAL 2007 INDIANAPOLIS REUNION

Saturday, September 1, 2007

1400 Hotel check-in, hotel lobby.

All Reunion functions will be in suites 160 and 164 unless other wise noted.

0800 Reunion check-in at the Quarter Deck, get badges and information packets. Bring in your memorabilia and place on tables provided in the Chief Val Ready room.

0800 - ??? Chief Val Ready Room

0800 Pelican (merchandise) Shop open till 1700 or as requested.

1700 First Grip and Grin, meet new and old shipmates and plan the next day activities (sighting, shopping, etc). I will be available all weekend with maps, directions, and suggestions.

1800 Supper on your own.

Sunday, September 2, 2007

0900-1000 Second Grip and Grin, form car pools, (possible bus tour) to various sites in the city.

0900-1200 Pelican (merchandise) Shop open. Also opened as needed.

0900-???? Chief Val Ready Room open

1800 Supper on your own

Monday September 3, 2007

0900-1100 Business Meeting, all hands and spouses at the Marriott (room depends on numbers attending)

1100-1300 Pelican (merchandise) Shop open

1100-1600 Chief Val Ready Room open, closes at 1600 due to banquet.

1700-1800 Cocktails at the Marriott.

1730 Group Photo

1800-1900 Buffet Dinner, Invocation by Chaplain Dick Nevela.

1915 Introductions; Drawing for door prizes, 50/50 raffle, and recognitions.

2000-2300 Dancing to DJ music (and not the young stuff).

Tuesday September 4, 2007

Check out see you in 2009 at the next reunion-TBA.

Have a save trip back home and hope you enjoyed your stay.