

VQ NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER 2014



The Prez Sez

In my last installment of our newsletter I reported about the many VQ folks who have been selected as ship and base commanders, skippers, task force commanders, an admiral and the Master chief Petty Officer of the Navy. I neglected to mention one. CAPT Jim Gibson, former VQ-1 Skipper, is now base commander of Naval Support Activity, Souda Bay, Crete, Greece. Congrats to all our talented VQ folks. If you have a success story about people in our Association please share the story with us.

Now for a VQ Association reunion 101 primer. We had a fantastic reunion in San Antonio last year honchoed by Clint Epley and this year's reunion in Wilmington, NC, with Dick and Sandy McClellan in the lead, is shaping up to be on par or better. We are also actively working on the 2015 reunion planning and I won't spill the beans just yet since we haven't got quite locked in, but it looks like it will be one of the more unique and interesting venues we've ever had. I often get the question, "Why don't we have the reunion in the Washington, DC area since there are so many active duty and retired VQ families there?" It's a valid question and most likely we would get a big showing, but... we tend to have really good attendance at every reunion no matter where we have it averaging around 200.

Aside from attendance we like to vary the location because we want to give every one of our members an opportunity to attend. Our association has members in every State of the Union and some overseas locations. If we had every reunion in the DC area we would exclude a large portion of our membership. In fact, some of our members have told us they would never join us if it was in DC. So we have a pattern that we follow year after year to make sure everyone has a chance to attend one near them. The pattern is Western, then Central, then Eastern part of the U.S. then back to the West.

There is another question that we get but not as often. We try very hard to keep the cost down to allow more to attend. Our volunteers who set up each reunion work hard to get us the best hotel prices and special events/tours. We set up a ready room so we can socialize together. We usually are able to get the hotels to give us that gratis and we charge for the drinks we provide so we generally don't dip into the association funds to pay for reunions and those who choose not to attend do not pay for the rest of us. We did charge a small fee from each person who attended our last reunion to help offset the ready room cost, but we try to avoid doing so unless absolutely needed. We also offer our guest speakers a comp room, but most of the time the speakers don't accept the offer for various reasons. I hope to see you in Wilmington, NC for our upcoming VQ Association reunion 11-14 Sep, 2014. For details, see our website at www.vqassociation.org. Click on the Reunion button for details and the sign-up sheet.

FROM THE V.P.

Sandy and I have been quite busy getting our 2014 Wilmington, NC reunion organized and together. Most of the major work is done!! See our reunion promotion article with all details elsewhere in the newsletter. Also, reunion "sign up" sheet is in the newsletter. PLEASE note "CUT OFF" date is SEPT. 1, 2014 for hotel and activities. Please, we ask you to take time when filling out and print/write as clearly as you can. Of course, reunion sign up and dues payments always go to Secretary Mike Chicvara for proper processing and accounting. I would like to give an abundance of thanks to Patti Brosh for doing such a great job in getting our newsletters together. Also thanks to our new board member and historian Allan "putt" Prevette for submitting such interesting historical articles in the newsletters. Patti Brosh and I have talked recently and have come up with a plan to get newsletters back on a more regular schedule. If things go as planned you'll get two newsletters as usual; Fall/Winter in Nov/Dec timeframe and Spring/Summer each May. This will give ample time to make reunion/ vacation plans with all reunion info always in May newsletter. Next subject: 2015 West Coast reunion is somewhat up in the air after things that were insurmountable did not work out for a reunion in Phoenix, AZ. Maybe a surprise announcement will be forthcoming at Wilmington, NC reunion for a 2015 reunion in CA. Some wheels and gears are turning as I write!! Please standby. Lastly, to all our widow and widowers, please try the best you can to join us at our lively reunions. Your presence is most valuable and dear to us. No matter what health or physical limitations, we will accommodate you. "Nuff said" V.P. "Dick" is outta here. See you in Wilmington Sept 11-14, 2014

SECRETARY'S NOTE

An application for membership is attached to the reunion sign up sheet. If you have not joined and want to, the dues are \$20.00 a year, \$30.00 for two years. **Note:** We do not look back to long lost members who are renewing their membership. Simply pay current membership dues and you're current. You will receive newsletter and a roster book as published. Your dues are our only source of

income to keep the VQ Association expenses and affairs in order!! We do not send notices for dues payment. We rely on the honor system with dues normally paid in October.

**Secretary Mike Chicvara ; 1765 N. 131st Dr., Sun City West, AZ 85375 amcsret@cox.net
Ph. 480-313-4661**

LIBERTY BARS (*conclusion*)

Liberty bars were home and it didn't matter what country, state, or city you were in. When you walked into a good liberty bar, you felt at home. They were also establishments where 19 year-old kids received an education available nowhere else on earth. You learned how to "tell" and "listen" to sea stories. You learned about sex at \$25.00 a pop! — from professional ladies who taught you things your high school biology teacher didn't know were anatomically possible. You learned how to make a two fusion bank shot and how to toss down a beer and a shot of Sun Torry known as a "depth charge." We were young, and a helluva long way from home. We were pulling down crappy wages for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a-week availability and loving the life we lived. We didn't know it at the time, but our association with the men we served with forged us into the men we became. And a lot of that association took place in bars where we shared the stories accumulated in our, up to then, short lives. We learned about women and that life could be tough on a gal. While many of our classmates were attending college, we were getting an education slicing through the green rolling seas in WestPac, experiencing the orgasmic rush of a night cat shot, the heart pounding drama of the return to the ship with the gut wrenching arrestment to a pitching deck. The hours of tedium, boring holes in the sky late at night, experiencing the periodic discomfort of turbulence, marveling at the creation of St. Elmo's Fire, and sometimes having our reverie interrupted with stark terror. But when we came ashore on liberty, we could rub shoulders with some of the finest men we would ever know, in bars our mothers would never have approved of, in saloons and cabarets that would live in our memories forever. Long live those liberties in Westpac and in the Med! They were the greatest teachers about life and how to live it. (*Been there. Done that.*)

THE STORY OF A-3B 142633 - A Wounded Whale That Took A Dive

It was a pleasant, sunny; Sunday morning on the deck of the USS Coral Sea, the 2nd of October 1966. The ship had just completed a lengthy and grueling Yankee Station line period and was now heading towards Subic Bay for a deserved rest for the ships' crew and airwing 15. I was a B/N in VAH-2 Det "A" which had four A-3Bs, configured with tanker packages, onboard. My pilot was Charlie Cellar and our Crewman/Navigator (C/N) was Larry Sharpe. Our acres had been selected to fly off early to Cubi Point and we were looking forward to the Cubi Dogs and Cubi Specials and some relaxation time in the Cubi pool. We briefed our flight in the ready room and the weather was forecast to be good along our route and at Cubi



art by Allan R Prevette

upon our arrival. The only thing out of the ordinary for this flight was that we were taking a passenger along who would be sitting on the floor in the rear of the flight deck in what we called the "jump seat." He was a first class electrician, selected to fly in early to Cubi with because of his outstanding performance during this line period. Larry briefed him on all the safety procedures. He was very excited to be going because it would be his first catapult (CAT) shot and also his first flight in an A-3B. We were also told that

we would be carrying some mail bags and packages to Cubi.

At launch time we went out to the flight deck and preflighted our assigned A-3B, 142633 with side number 691, and manned up. We went through all the check lists and everything was proceeding normally. An E'2 was launched ahead of us, also going to Cubi. At our turn, we were directed onto the number two bow CAT. Everything was going smoothly and the CAT officer had now signaled for full power. Charlie checked all the gauges and saluted the CAT officer who saluted back, leaned forward in a crouch and touched the flight deck. Then it happened! Rather than the sharp, powerful jolt of a normal CAT shot, I heard a loud sharp bang and felt a very mild jolt. The nose bounced high and came back down as we started toward the bow of the flight deck at a slow speed. I remember some debris flying by on the starboard side and people

ducking for cover. Charlie was as busy as a one-armed paperhanger. He had the brakes pushed to the floorboard while shutting down both engines and pulling the handle on the emergency air bottle for emergency braking. I thought Charlie was going to get the wounded whale stopped before we went over the bow but I could see we were angling off to the port side. We later learned that the eye of the bridle in the starboard side had been mis-positioned over the tip of the aircraft's CAT hook. When the CAT fired, the tip broke off which let the bridle release and swing violently across from the starboard to port side of the aircraft. The CAT shuttle, which is positioned behind the nose wheel on the A-3, struck and blew the nose tire during its forward movement. This is what had caused the nose to bounce up and had also turned the nose wheel to the left. The starboard main mount was on the greasy

CAT track, which didn't help our braking efforts. When the nose gear went over the bow, I finally realized that we weren't going to stop and were going to get very wet feet. After the nose of the aircraft had dropped down over the bow, the starboard engine nacelle hung up on the ground down for a few seconds before giving way, which allowed us to fall nose down in an inverted attitude. When we hit the water, I remember it as a violent impact with the cockpit almost immediately engulfed with water. It was dark and I couldn't see anything as I unlatched my lap belt and pushed off from my

seat. But I felt a tug which held me back. I had forgotten to unhook my oxygen hose from the seat so I reached back, unhooked it, and pushed off again, reaching for the upper hatch. For those reading this who are not A-3 types, the A-3 upper hatch was always positioned open on all CAT shots and arrested landings for emergencies such as this. But we didn't need the upper hatch this time as the whole canopy was gone.

Afterwards when we discussed the accident, we surmised that the pressure created at impact, and being inverted, had blown the canopy out. After I had exited the aircraft, I inflated my Mae West and ascended to the surface. I estimate we were about 15 ft. underwater at that time. Charlie said that he was right behind me on the way up to the surface. When I reached the surface, I removed my oxygen mask but was having trouble breathing. When Charlie reached the surface, he said that he looked around for the rest of the crew but at first saw only one other head. Then Larry's head finally popped up.

I noticed that I was about 15 ft. from the aircraft and that the tail was sticking out of the water at a 45-degree tangle in an inverted position from about the need brake location. Charlie also noticed that the tail hook was down. Pictures of the accident taken as we were going over the bow showed the tail hook as being up so we're not sure what caused that to happen. I could hear a lot of gurgling sounds as the A-3 was sinking and could also smell JP-5 fuel. I tried to swim away from the aircraft but didn't make much progress as my right side was really hurting and I was still having difficulty breathing. Charlie swam over to me to check on my condition and noticed that my Mae West was not fully inflated. He pulled both toggles again and it fully inflated. I guess I hadn't pulled them hard enough, as one cylinder had not been activated. At about this same time a crewman in the rescue helo, who also noticed that I was having some difficulty, jumped into the water and helped me into the rescue sling. From there I was hoisted up and into the helo. I later learned from the doctors that I had suffered broken ribs and a collapsed right lung which had caused my pain and difficulty in breathing.

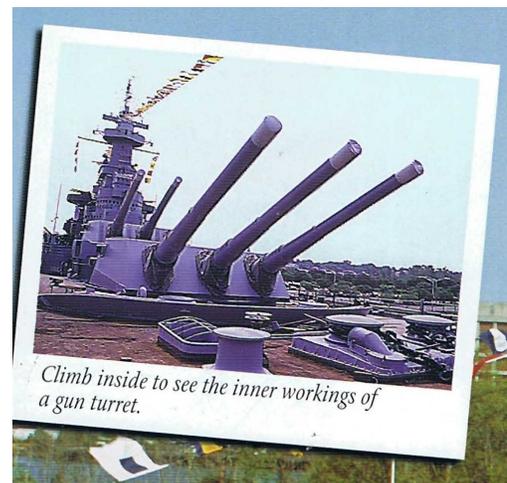
I do not recall seeing Larry or our passenger in the water nor, do I remember the Coral Sea bearing down on us. Charlie later told me that Larry and our passenger had made it to the surface and

were rescued by helo

. He also remembers that the Coral Sea was moving away from us as the Captain had put in full port rudder and then back to starboard, which caused the ship to move almost sideways away from us. Our passenger had a severely broken arm and was transferred to the Subic Naval Hospital. Charlie had a laceration on his leg and Larry a cut on one finger. They were both flying again soon. I was grounded for about a month while the superb Coral Sea doctors got me repaired. When I was given my up chit to fly again, it was with Charlie and Larry in our replacement aircraft with side number 691 and yes, it was from the number two bow CAT. Whew! But, this time it worked as advertised.

Our crew flew many more missions together without mishap for the remainder of our cruise. One side note that I should mention is the fact that for several months after our accident, the ships 1MC would announce: "Those personnel who lost money orders in the A-3 that went into the water report to the post office." They just wouldn't let us forget. jAlso, this accident is another reminder that carrier aviation is never routine. An unexpected accident is always just waiting to happen- so be prepared.
Dale V. Clark, CDR ret.

A TIDBIT FROM WILMINGTON, NC



Battleship North Carolina, located on the Cape Fear River in Wilmington, N.C., easily accessible from I-95 and I-40. For more info Email: ncbb55@aol.com or www.city-info/ncbb55.html

WILMINGTON, N.C.

SEPTEMBER 11-14, 2014

WOW!!! Reunion time again and here we are (Dick and Sandy) doing our 5th reunion for our VQ crowd. Well folks, we have a grand event planned hopefully to top all others. We'll get right to the particulars. We have selected Wilmington, NC for our east coast affair with a hotel in a great location with tons of things to do within easy walking distance. We'll be staying at the Hilton Wilmington Riverside hotel 3 short blocks down a fine boardwalk to the famous downtown historic area. See the World War II battleship North Carolina anchored across the river from our hotel. Our Hilton "hang out" for the four days is a bit pricey but it's a Hilton in a fine touristy location with all the amenities. It was the only hotel large enough that could book us. We'll open the (2) ready rooms Thursday as usual with beverages and snacks. Note ready rooms, we have 2 right next to each other with ample space. A Friday P.M. reception Luau dinner outside/poolside is in the works. Carved Hawaiian tourney will be a short golfers teeing off at Thursday and Friday so Golfers will car pool to else here on East coast and Don off the hook. Small golf prizes are



distance from the hotel at Magnolia Greens Golf Plantation with 7:30 A.M. Clint Epley or Don Martin will be getting teams together help them out by indicating handicaps on sign-up sheet if possible. course. Whoever has golf trophy bring it to reunion. If someone or? wishes to organize golf, info Dick or Sandy and we'll let Clint

have something to bring/donate. Saturday P.M. is extra special this year. We'll be boarding the Henrietta III Riverboat (3 blocks away) at 6 P.M. We have the whole bottom deck reserved for VQ cruise, dinner and an after dinner show just for us. Called "Letters from Home" think Andrews Sisters WWII - 3 gals and their songs and music to thrill us. Check them out at www.andrewssisterstribute.com. As they are very popular, we were extremely fortunate to be able to book them on our dinner cruise. Your cruise, dinner and entertainment are all one price on sign-up sheet. Dancing to their music will also be in order. Dinner entrees: Carved roast beef, southern baked chicken. Sunday will be are normal members business meeting in the A.M. with business, announcements, etc. Around noon or a bit before we'll again go poolside for a light buffet style lunch. After lunch it's all downhill 'til 2015 West coast. For folks driving in, Wilmington, NC is I-95 to I-40 East following signs to downtown. For those flying in, US Air and Delta service Wilmington. You may not need a rental car, walk to lots of stuff from hotel. Hotel airport shuttle is 910-763-5900. Sandy will be standing by her cell phone if any big problems arise. Her cell is: 252-578-3033. From what we've heard so far, sounds like a record crowd may be in the makin'!! See ya there!



Your reunion hosts. Dick & Sandy McClellan, (252)537-0954 sandyjmcclellan@earthlink.net
(252)537-0954 Home (252)578-3033 Sandy's cell



For Civil War

Bufs there is

Ft. Fisher State Historic Site



REUNION SIGN-UP WILMINGTON, N.C. SEPTEMBER 11-14 2014

Name _____ Spouse/Significant Other/ _____
 Guests _____
 Address _____ City/State/Zip _____
 Tel: _____ Email _____

I/we will play Golf Sat. A.M. No: _____ Total _____ X \$49 each : Hdcp (If Known) _____ Total Golf \$ _____

I/we will attend the Friday P.M. poolside reception Luau. Number _____ X \$43 each Total Luau \$ _____

I/we will attend Sat. P.M. Riverboat Dinner Cruise with after dinner "Letters from Home" entertainment.
 Number: _____ X \$40 each Total dinner Cruise \$ _____

I/we will attend Sunday outdoor poolside lunch at noon. Total number _____ X \$23 each, Total Lunch \$ _____

Ready room/hospitality Total number _____ X \$10 each Total Ready Room \$ _____

Permanent name tag (opt) \$5 each for members, wives, guests. No. _____ X \$5. Total Tags \$ _____

Info For Name Tag. Most put Name, Squadron and Years. Total Reunion \$ _____

1 _____

Make reunion checks/dues payable to VQ Association, send to Sec'y **Mike Chicvara, 17615 N. 131st Dr., Sun City West, AZ 85375.**

Cut-off date for everything is September 1, 2014 After this date there is no guarantee to get a hotel room at negotiated rate nor be able to participate in reunion events nor be able to get a refund for cancellation. We will try to work with you after this date but **absolutely no** guarantees. Our hotel is: **Hilton Riverside Wilmington, 301 N. Water St., Wilmington, NC 28401**. Members must make their own reservations with a credit card by calling (910)763-5900 or on line at www.wilmingtonriverside.hilton.com **prior to 1 Sept.** Identify yourself as members of the "VQA" group to obtain negotiated rate of \$139.00 and 20% off all hotel breakfasts (best we could do!!) This rate will be honored 3 days prior and 3 days after reunion if you wish. U.S. Air and Delta service Wilmington, NC. Hotel airport shuttle available at hotel phone (910)763-5900. Other particulars of reunion events and info elsewhere in this newsletter. **Remember, "cut off" date is 1 Sept. 2014, after this date things become difficult for all!!**

Your reunion hosts. Dick & Sandy McClellan, (252)537-0954 sandyjmcclellan@earthlink.net

VQ ASSOCIATION NEW MEMBER APPLICATION/MEMBER DUES RENEWAL

Member name: _____ Spouse/Sig. Other _____ Nick name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Tel. _____ Email _____

Dues are \$20.00 year/\$30.00 two years. Total Dues \$ _____

For New Members

Last Military Rank/rate (opt) _____ Present Status _____ (Active, Retired, Civilian)

Squadron Service (VQ-1, 2, 5, 6 or Support only) briefly describes duties. (i.e. – VQ-1 1963-67, Atsugi, Personnel officer/A-3 navigator, airframe shop CPO, engine mech power plants shop, etc.)

Squadron: _____ Years: _____ Base: _____ Duties: _____
 Squadron: _____ Years: _____ Base: _____ Duties: _____ Squadron: _____ Years: _____
 Base: _____ Duties: _____

Note: We do not look back to long lost members who are renewing their membership. Simply pay current membership (\$20.00 (1) year or \$30.00 (2) years) and your good to go and current. You will receive newsletters and a roster book as published. Your dues are our only source of income to keep the VQ Association expenses and affairs in order!! We do not send notices for dues payment. We rely on the honor system with dues normally paid in October. Secretary Mike Chicvara. 131st Dr., Sun City West, AZ 85375, email: amesret@cox.net, Phone: 480-313-4661 **Please Print Legibly**

SMALL STORES



NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

| Item | Qty | Description | Price | Total |
|------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|
| | | | | |
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| | | | | |
| | | | | |

TOTAL _____

All prices include Shipping
Make check/M.O. to: VQ Association
Mail to: Dick McClellan
773 Woodcock Rd., Henrico, NC 27842
252-537-0954



| Item | Description | Price |
|------|--|--------------|
| 101 | EA3B Hat (no eggs) | \$19.00 |
| 102 | EA3B Hat (eggs) | \$20.00 |
| 103 | EC121 Hat (no eggs) | \$19.00 |
| 104 | EC121 Hat (eggs) | \$20.00 |
| 105 | EP3E Hat (no eggs) | \$19.00 |
| 106 | EP3E Hat (eggs) | \$20.00 |
| 107 | P4M Hat (no eggs) | \$19.00 |
| 108 | P4M Hat (eggs) | \$20.00 |
| 109 | VQ Ground Pounder Bat Hat | \$16.00 |
| 110 | VQ Ground Pounder Sandeman Hat | \$16.00 |
| 111 | VQ Assoc. Logo Hat white, soft, golf | \$19.00 |
| 112 | Navy Olive Drab Patrol Cap | \$19.00 |
| 113 | Bat Patch | \$6.00 |
| 114 | VQ2 Bat Patch | \$6.00 |
| 115 | VQ2 Sandeman Patch | \$6.00 |
| 116 | A-3 Patch | \$6.00 |
| 117 | EC121 Patch | \$6.00 |
| 118 | EP-2 Patch | \$6.00 |
| 119 | Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club Patch | \$6.00 |
| 120 | VQ Assoc, Logo Patch | \$6.00 |
| 121 | VQ Assoc. Logo Coffee Mug | \$12.00 |
| 122 | VQ Assoc. Logo 4 inch Decal | \$3.00 |
| 123 | Diecast VQ P-3 (Call me for \$ info) | 10 available |
| 124 | Diecast T-34 Acft. (Call me for \$ info) | 6 available |

They will **fill your memories** with their **voices**.
They will **charm** you with their **personalities**.
They will **touch** your hearts forever with their **patriotism**.



SATURDAY EVENING Sept. 12 ON THE RIVERBOAT CRUISE DINNER

Newletter Editor

Middlethian, TX 76065

2221 Cottonwood Ct.

Patti Brosh



