

Newsletter, Spring and Summer 2020

As you may have heard, it's true the reunion that was planned for October has been pushed to 2021 with no reunion for 2020. This action was taken after careful consideration by the board taking into account the uncertainty associated with the pandemic, liability considerations if we had to cancel at a later date and the possibility people wouldn't want to travel that soon after an epidemic. I regret there won't be a reunion this year but we thought this would be the prudent thing to do. We had a great time at Nashville and we were all looking forward to our first North East venue. There are some pictures of Nashville on the website if you're interested.

I am well into my third year as your president and come September, it will be time for me to step down. Vice President Epley has agreed to work with the board to come up with a candidate. I told him, if he has trouble, past experience has shown that a suitable replacement for me could be five, clean red rags! I have had a long time with the association, starting a few years before our first official reunion at Solomon Springs, MD in 1992 (I think!). That I eventually came to be president just shows you good things can happen if you hang around long enough! Whoever takes over, there is a fine governing board in place and the association is solvent. I'll still be hanging around, helping where I can, but first and foremost, enjoying the camaraderie of the finest group of people I've ever been around! Thanks for the ride!

Very Respectfully, Allan Putt Prevette President, VQ Association

From the rear seat:

As Putt has said disappointing as it was to cancel the reunion this year we will get a reprise of the location in 2021. I have been working with Ray Casey who was the reunion planner we worked with to set up the 2020 reunion and we have tentative plans to schedule it the first or second week of October of 2021. We intend to schedule it as we had this year on a Monday- Wednesday which should make airline tickets and the hotel and tour events cheaper. The timing again will place us in the window to enjoy the New England fall colors. For those who made reservation this year the hotel, which has been very cooperative in this change, has cancelled all reservations made under the VQ Association Block but I would suggest calling 877-227-6963 just to be sure. We will be using this same Crowne Plaza hotel in 2021.

Don't know about the rest of you but here in Texas we find ourselves surrounded by shelter in place orders leaving lots of free time to read and contemplate our lot in life. For me it has forced cancellation of a much needed vacation relaxing on a cruise ship and wondering how we are going to close on a house in Kansas when I can't get from Texas across totally shelter in place Oklahoma to Kansas. Here in Texas I can still get to the hangar in San Marcos but only because the airport is in a different county than the city. Find it interesting that only the Big Cities in Texas are shelter in place bet you can't guess what party controls those cities. At any rate still taking precautions hope this will all blow over soon.

As Putt mentioned we will be welcoming a new President later this year and I suspect other positions on the board will become available for those looking for a challenging position among friends. Anyone who would like to volunteer to be on the board please let me know. Replacing Putt will take much more than 5 red rags. He has been and will continue to be a supporter and we are not going to let him get far. I hope everyone has gotten their 2020 Roster update. Thanks to Paul and Putt for getting that completed and printed. Thanks also to Patti for the thankless job of getting the newsletter out and to Sandy for financing it all. Clint

The following article appeared in THE DIPLOMAT

Are China's South China Sea Artificial Islands Militarily Significant and Useful? China's artificial islands are a symbol of its revisionism in the South China Sea, but they're also militarily significant. By Ankit Panda January 15, 2020

Are China's seven artificial islands in the Spratly Group in the South China Sea liable to complicate U.S. freedom of maneuver in a conflict in East Asia? In a recent article at War on the Rocks, Gregory Poling makes the case that the islands have "considerable military value for Beijing," contrary to some conventional wisdom that has written off the value of these facilities in a conflict.

Poling's argument is a convincing corrective to the conventional wisdom that these facilities — built on top of reclaimed land and quickly too — would be a strategic liability for Beijing in a conflict. In peacetime, these outposts serve to allow China coercive leverage as it bolsters its "nine-dash line" claim in the South China Sea, where the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, and Taiwan maintain territorial claims (and Indonesia maintains a disputed exclusive economic zone claim).

But in a conflict, the capabilities on the Spratly outposts are more than just cannon fodder. They will contribute to Chinese firepower, situational awareness, and logistics. Beijing is also well-positioned to employ anti-ship and anti-air missiles on these facilities to deny access to the U.S. Navy and other regional navies.

Separately, even the ability of the People's Liberation Army Air Force to sustain operations off these facilities in a crisis would be difficult for the United States to challenge. Poling writes, citing the U.S. cruise missile strike on Syria's Shayrat Air Base in 2017, that China would find it possible to reconstitute these airstrips not long after an initial conventional strike.

Finally, given the size of certain facilities — notably Mischief and Subi Reefs — even long-range conventional precision strike requirements for the United States would be substantial. To fully degrade the ability of these islands to serve as useful basing points for the People's Liberation Army, Navy and possibly even the PLA Rocket Force in the future, the U.S. would need a lot of firepower — perhaps more than is realistic.

One angle that Poling doesn't explicitly raise is the value of China's Spratly outposts — and Woody Island in the Paracels — in serving as the frontier of Beijing's burgeoning South China Sea ballistic missile submarine bastion.

Long concerned about the survivability of its land-based nuclear forces, in a crisis, China would seek to flush out its Type 094 nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines into the South China Sea and, if nuclear retaliation against the United States were to become necessary, seek to penetrate the first island chain to launch its JL-2 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (these missiles lack sufficient range to hit U.S. homeland targets from the South China Sea itself).

The Spratly outposts can contribute substantially to Beijing's ability to not only deny maneuver to the U.S. Navy in the South China Sea, thereby enhancing the survivability of deployed SSBNs in a crisis, but also serve as a staging area for anti-submarine warfare operations aimed at detecting and denying access to U.S. undersea surveillance assets, including submarines and autonomous underwater vehicles.

China's artificial islands have for too long been taken as the physical manifestation of Beijing's irredentism and revisionism in the South China Sea and while their primary purpose may be the assertion of dubious sovereignty claims, they're more likely than not to be a serious capability in wartime. It's past time for the conventional wisdom on the South China Sea to take this seriously.

How times have changed. By William Langland



Recently, a Miramar F-18 squadron commander just was relieved of command for a "Final Flight" flyover to celebrate their transitioning from F-18s to F-35s. They said the flyover was too fast and too low.

When VQ-1 moved from Sangley Point to Iwakuni I was LCDR E.R. Hall's P4M-1Q plane captain. *(see the retirement of the P4M to date this article.* The morning we were leaving we loaded up all the squadron records we could get in the plane along with the skipper's very large dog. We took off towards Manila and climbed up to probably 5 or 6,000 feet, the skipper then called Sangley tower for permission for a low pass. They cleared us but not to exceed 250 knots and to stay above 250 feet. We still had climb power on so when we

went down the runway the airspeed indicator was bouncing around 415 knots and I was looking UP at the tower. Times have changed. By the way, the dog slept the whole seven hours it took to get to Iwakuni but when we unloaded him he ran over to a main tire and created a virtual lake on the ramp, poor guy

An incident in the Gulf of Tonkin, July 1969

Our crew was flying the first mission of the day and the weather over the gulf and over North Vietnam was really bad. there were no thunderstorms and no high winds, just a solid, low overcast over the entire area. Neither the Air Force or the Navy were conducting any strikes against the north due to the low ceilings and poor visibility. There were no North Vietnamese aircraft in the air due to same poor weather. As a result our BARCAP and us were the only ones flying anywhere.Even the other electronic signals that we monitored were off the air and as a result, we were not getting any useful data. Our aircraft needed maintenance in a hurry and we decided to request cancellation of our mission so we could return to Da Nang and work on the tired bird.

Permission was granted and we turned for home, as we passed 19 north our BARCAP headed back to the Enterprise, We were close to the boat on our way home and were listening to our BARCAP as they flew their CCA approaches.I was in the left seat that day and asked Lt Jack Millikan to ask for a CCA approach for us. We were surprised when the controller started giving us headings and airspeeds. We decided to go ahead and accept the directions and see how long it would take for them to realize we were not who they thought we were. Our EA-3 Whales were regular visitors aboard the ship so our call sign sounded just like theirs except for the numbers. A CCA approach is pretty much like a GCA approach except the runway was awful short and had wires across it. We started down the glide slope and were doing pretty darned good when I heard some doubt creep into the controller's voice, we must have looked HUGE. He asked for our type of aircraft and we did not reply and when he asked again we told him we were an EC-121M. As we talked we started breaking out of the overcast and there she was right in front of us! The next few seconds were awfully spectacular, the stern of the ship turned all red as the wave off lights started blinking furiously, flares were fired to warn us off and the controller gave us a wave off call telling us to turn LEFT. We had sucked up the gear and were starting the wave off as soon as we had broken out of the overcast and as we added METO power and stopped our descent we saw the LSO and his crew dive into their safety net. Jack and I were laughing so hard our stomachs hurt.

We leveled off about 300 feet above the water and below the clouds and kept flying for 10 or 15 miles and told the ship that we wanted to make a pass down their PORT side from bow to stern and they could take our picture if anybody wanted to. We made a 180 and headed back toward the ship. When we could see her we dropped down to 100 feet and set METO power. As we passed down the port side it seemed there were a lot of guys on deck and as we passed I pulled the yoke all the way back and diagnagered into

the way back and disappeared into the overcast. I wanted to do a barrel roll but thought better of it.

We climbed back on top of the clouds and the rest of the trip was routine with a GCA at Da Nang also. As we flew back we were waiting for a message telling us to report to the OINC as soon as we landed but there never was a word said about any of it.

Years later I contacted the Enterprise public affairs office and told the story and asked if there actually were any photos of us but they were getting close to decommissioning and my request got lost in the shuffle.



Tony Krueger

Remembrances of VQ-1 Involvement (part 2)

Robert E. Morrison, Naval Security Group added some information and a paper back book that describes the raid in detail. It was executed on November 21, 1970. I was still on the CTF-77 staff at that time and the navy was tasked to support the raid by providing a diversionary force in the Gulf of Tonkin to hopefully get the North Vietnamese to look towards the gulf rather than towards Laos where the army special forces were coming from in their helos.

There were three carriers in the gulf that participated in the diversion effort, The Ranger, Oriskany, and the Hancock. We were required to have at least 30 aircraft in the air from 2:00AM until about 3:30AM in the Haiphong area as the army Special Forces were coming in at 2:30 AM. There was a bombing halt at this time against North Vietnam as negotiations were taking place in Paris. This was a tough one to send our pilots in possible harms way without weapons but it was done. They carried flares that lit up the whole sky around Haiphong and in the harbor. EKA-3B's

provided jamming of any radar that came up. F4's made threatening moves towards the airfields near Hanoi and in general I think we caused confusion for the North Vietnamese defenses.

How much confusion? It's hard to say, but, the army Special Forces got in and out without losing a man or help. Its just unfortunate that there were no POWs there. VQ-1 had an EA3B in that area and we asked them to also send an EP-3 because of its greater capability and the expected increase in North Vietnamese activity. So, if there are any of those crew who remember those flights I would think that they collected a lot of data and probably had an excting flight. The name of the book is "THE RAID" and the author is Benjamin Schemmer. It mostly covers the army special forces planning and the raid but here is some coverage of the navy diversionary mission.

CDR Dale Clark, USN (Ret) wrote:

Putt, after reading your general e-mail for history stuff, did a little research regarding the POW camp raid. Actual date was 20 November 1970, and you're right, the Son Tay OPORD called for an EP-3, and EA-3B on station starting about 3 hours before the raid. The Navy's role in the whole thing was to create a massive diversion by launching a fake air strike. This turned out to be the largest of the war, but there were no bombs dropped, only flares and chaff (to simulate mining Hai Phong). In addition to the EP-3, an EA-3B was positioned overhead the carrier, and the Willy was on standby at Da Nang should the EP-3 for some reason abort. Our mission of course was the same as always, MIG and SAM warnings, and to communicate with carrier based EKA-3B's should jamming support be desired.



VQ-1 ramp at DaNang in the early '70s. All 3 types of squadron aircraft are represented. From left: EP-3B, EA-3B & EC-121M. Capt. J.D. Meyers' son Steve drew his impressions in 1969 of two of VQ-1's aircraft. The EA-3B was fondly call the "Whistling S..house" & the EC-121M as the "Peanut Butter Machine", which reportedly would not fly without a supply of peanut butter on board for the crew.



Army Special Activities Detachment One & the Navy EA3B Skywarrior. by Bill Crane

This is a tale about a very small Army group that officially didn't exist for several years. The story is the best that I can piece together from many sources and may have some errors but I believe is essentially accurate. In some cases I have had to read between the lines to figure out what was really or probably going on. It has only been in the last couple of years with recent books and the Internet that my research has been possible.

Background: I have heard from several sources that in the late 1950's there was a small Army group flying with Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron (VQ-1). I don't know what their mission was but understand that they flew in P4M's. I had contact with a Navy guy who indicated they flew out of Shemya Alaska. In the early 1960's there was intense interest by our government in Soviet missile development. At that time, the Air Force had primary focus on Air to Air and Air to Ground missiles. The Navy's primary responsibility was to study Ship to Ship missiles and likewise the Army had the primary mission to study Ground to Ground Missiles.

"The Soviet ICBM test project involved launching missiles from Plesetsk (1), Kapustin Yar (2) and Tyuratam/ Baikonur (3). When the missile's re-entry vehicle (RV) entered the atmosphere and streaked toward the Klyuchi test range (4) on Kamchatka the peninsula on the Far Eastern edge of the Soviet Union.[1]"Someone had to be there to watch." The U.S. ICBM program was just being deployed, over flight reconnaissance was severely restricted with the successful introduction of Soviet Surface to Air missiles (SAM), and our early surveillance satellites could not loiter over a particular area. The Russian ICBM Project was of particular interest to the U.S. The Army needed a high altitude platform to collect optical and telemetry information. A jurisdictional disagreement between the Army and Air Force resulted in the Army teaming up with the Navy. The Navy agreed to provide, maintain and fly a high altitude platform while the Army would provide the Intelligence gathering, analysis, equipment and back end crew. The chosen platform was the A3D-2Q Skywarrior later redesignated the EA3B. (EA3B PR-9 later redesigned PR-16 and PR-10 of Navy Squadron VQ-1. The EA3B was an unarmed ECM/reconnaissance variant of the A3D carrier based nuclear bomber. A total of 24 of the variant were built.

The Mission from 1961 -1964: In 1961, a Navy flight crew from VQ-1 flew PR-9 to the States for installation of Army optical and telemetry gathering equipment. It became a one-of-a-kind bird. The first Army group assigned to the project flew missions in 1961 & 1962. They flew out of Shemya Air Force Base in the Aleutian Islands. I joined the group in 1963 as part of the 2nd group to work the mission. By then a second aircraft (PR-10) had been fitted with optical and telemetry gathering equipment although without the sophisticated antenna array as on PR-9. Our 2 aircraft were known as Sun-1 (PR-9 BuNo 146449 & Sun-2 (PR-10 BuNo 144854). During the spring of 1964 our Army group was formally identified as Special Activities Detachment One (SAD 1). Prior to that we did not have a formal name and I did not know our chain of command beyond our Army Captain. A second Army group identified as SAD-2 flew in a similar Army/Navy arrangement with VQ-2 in Turkey. The back end crew consisted of 4 enlisted Army men who included an analyst, two radio intercept operators and an optical recording operator. Sometimes a position would be manned by our Army Captain or Lieutenant.

The optical equipment consisted of an ultra sensitive TV camera that was aimed by the Navy plane captain who sat behind the pilot. A conventional film movie camera that was pointed at a video display then recorded the closed circuit TV system.

The Navy navigator did the actual navigation while we were traveling at 500+ knots. Without radar and in radio silence this was a challenging assignment given the state of navigational aids of the era. We had a Nikon 35mm camera with motor drive taking star pictures during the event. The Naval Observatory would later figure out where we actually had been. At times they came back with a report that we were not where we thought we had been.

In the winter of 1964 we received one of the first airborne Loran receivers available which was installed at the analyst position. I was sent to the Loran school at the Pearl Harbor submarine base. There were many very nice and very curious submariners in my class. On our fist flight with it, I noted that we made an inappropriate turn and accidentally flew over an island with a known Russian SAM site. The navigator didn't appreciate my pointing that out since he was still using the much more primitive methods.

The nature of the mission required us to be scramble ready much of the time. We had very short notice to be on station off the Kamchatka Peninsula. Inevitable last minute ICBM launch delays often required in-flight refueling on our part. We flew summer missions out of Shemya AFB at the end of the Aleutian Islands. The weather and cross winds precluded working there in the winter. The EA3B was designed for carrier landings and with the large tail plus the narrow main landing gear it was limited to cross winds of less than 25 kts. The standard Navy response was to turn the runway into the wind. We couldn't get the Air Force to rotate their runway to meet our needs.

At times the winds would exceed the landing parameters while we were out on station. The nearest alternate landing site was 300 miles away at Adak. Additionally, we might not always have enough fuel to go on that far. We positioned a destroyer anchor chain down each side of the only runway and connected them with a cable. When needed, the cable could be propped up on a couple of old tires that had been cut in half and we could catch it with the tail hook. We would stop in very short order while making a spectacular show of sparks at night . The Air Force was really not too keen of that arrangement. I think they were really jealous that they couldn't use it.

The seas around Shemya are so bad that there were no boats of any kind on the island. If we happened to go down off the end of the runway, there was no way to get to us so we just flew in light cotton summer flying suits. I understand that the guys after us had to follow regulations and get into cold weather "poopy suits". I don't think it would have done them much good since the nearest rescue plane was a Navy amphibious Albatross that would have had to lumber out from Adak. By the time it would have gotten to them the cold water would have taken its toll.

At the end of each mission, I took the tapes to the Army Air Force Joint Operations Group (AAFJOG) for post analysis. The guys there were always very helpful while also questioning our sanity as they had watched the mission with their "over the horizon" radar. A special Air Force plane was sent to carry the tapes and films to the NSA for further analysis after each of our flights. I recently received the following from one of the guys that worked in AAFJOG on Shemya.

"Knowing the survival potential in a ditching situation (or worse) for a Bering Sea or North Pacific region..having jumped into freezing water myself (one was more than enough to have a thousand needles almost s top your heart)...it takes tremendous courage to volunteer to fly the "then, potentially hostile" area off Kamchatka, and to do the hard take0off and landings dictated by that airfield on the speck of an island. I remember the alarms going off for the air crew alert while sitting in the Mess Hall at Shemya, and laughing at the guys tripping over chairs and each other to get out the door for the ride to the air strip. Never appreciate at that age what was really being asked of those guys. We should have

stood and saluted them, or cheered them on. They must have thought we were idiot "ground pounder." REMFs[2], to say the least. I learned a saying later, "You gotta love it." Several years later, we started modifying that saying to, "You don't gotta love it, you just gotta do it.""

In the winter we flew missions out of Barber's Point NAS in Hawaii and Midway Island to cover the Russian Pacific missile range. Ground based listening stations in Europe and Asia would alert us as to when to fly.

We maintained complete radio silence from takeoff to landing. I attended the Navy Radio Code School in Yokohama, Japan to learn the first 10 letters of :Morse code. Again, confused and curious sailors were very nice to me. I received the coded instruction giving us mission instruction, which kept me busy the entire flight.

During this early period, the Air Force was developing their RC-1135 aircraft known as Rivet Ball. I had a chance to tour it while on Shemya and it was very impressive. From what I can determine, as soon as they solved initial video calibration and teaching problems, they took over the optical portion of our mission. Rivet Ball had 10 cameras that looked through optically clear windows. That had to be much better than our single camera looking through a Plexiglas cockpit window. Their all officer crew was shocked when one night at the chow hall, they realized that very junior Army enlisted men were crewing in the back of the A3's.

In 1965 the optical equipment was removed from PR-9. Updated telemetry receiving equipment was installed. The project then took on the name of Seabrine. As time passed, 1st SAD crew members were awarded Army & Navy aircrew wins, some even earned membership inn the Navy Tailhook Society for landing and launching off of carriers. They continued the mission until 1972 with service in the Pacific and Indian oceans. In 1969, the Air Force RC 135 aircraft disappeared on a flight from Shemya AFB to Eielson AFB. The following comment is from the Air Force Rivet Ball web site and confirms the importance of the mission and the Army/Navy involvement.

"The loss of Rivet Ball, Rivet aAmber and 19 crew members in 1969 was devastating for all concerned. It was also a sever setback to our intelligence network and its ability to monitor the Soviet missile threat. The need for a replacement was of the highest priority. The Air Force worked 24/7 on two replacement aircraft (RC-135S) and named Cobra Ball I and Cobra Ball II. While Cobra Ball was under construction the Army (SADI) and Navy (VQ-1) returned with their EA3B Skywarrior ("The Whale") to help cover the gap until Cobra Ball was up ;and running"[4]

None of this story would have been possible without the dedication of hundreds of the very best and dedicated Navy enlisted ground crews they kept our birds flying while stationed thousands of miles from their squadron support and worked in cold and windy conditions at all hours of the day and night. The Navy pilots were absolutely first class senior officers, with hundreds of hours. They always brought us back safely. I am humbled at the amount of support that was required to get a plane with four Army personnel safely into position to accomplish the mission.



LAST VQ-1 P4M-1Q RETIRED NAS ATSUGI, 23 JULY 1960

SMALL STORES

Item	Qty	Description	Price	Total

NAME	 	
ADDRESS_	 	

City/State/ZiP_____

Phone_____

EMail

All prices include shipping Make check/M.O. to: VQ Association Mail to: Carl Hopkins 5525 Longfellow Dr. Santa Barbara, CA 93111 805-967-2943



Item	Description	Price
101	EA3B Hat (no eggs)	\$20.00
102	EA3B Hat (eggs)	\$21.00
103	EC121 Hat (no eggs)	\$20.00
104	EC121 Hat (eggs)	\$21.00
105	EP3E Hat (no eggs)	\$20.00
106	EP3E Hat (eggs)	\$21.00
107	P4M-1Q Hat (no eggs	\$20.00
108	P4M-1Q Hat (eggs)	\$21.00
109	VQ Ground Pounder Hat ((Bat)	\$17.00
110	VQ Ground Pounder Hat (Sandeman)	\$17.00
111	VQ Assoc. Logo Hat (White/ Soft/Golf)	\$20.00
112		
113	VQ-1 Bat Patch	\$7.00
114	VQ-2 Bat Patch	\$7.00
115	VQ-2 Sandeman Patch	\$7.00
116	A-3 Patch	\$7.00
117	EC-121 Patch	\$7.00
118	EP-3E Patch	\$7.00
119	Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club Patch	\$7.00
120	VQ-1 World Watchers patch	\$7.00
121	Decal, VQ Assoc. Navy Air Recon.	\$3.00
122	Pin A-3	\$11.00
123	Pin EP-3	\$11.00
124	Pin EC-121	\$11.00
125	Patch, FAIRECONRON ONE, dark blue	\$7.00
126	Patch, Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club Orange	\$7.00

See You all in Rhode Island, 2021!



VQ Association Web Site: vqassociation.org



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