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A Grand Time in Florida

Reunion XI: The Fun Was Spot On

Comfortable Florida weather, good food, informative briefings and warm friendships combined to make Reunion XI a great success. Close to 100 USNPAAA members, spouses and guests attended the gathering March 25 and 26 at the Ponte Vedra Inn on the Atlantic coast south of Jacksonville, Fla.

Following the precedent set in prior years, the reunion opened with a Sunday evening reception, this time near the putting green of the beach resort.

Part of Monday was devoted to official business and briefings. During the association business meeting, four new members were elected to the board of directors and Jeff Zakem reported on association finances.

See the president's column on pages 2 and 3 for the details.

Association members also agreed that Reunion XII in the fall of 2008 be held in the Washington, D.C., area.

Operational updates were provided by Bob Prucha, a retired member of the community who now is the civilian public affairs officer for the Central Command. Using a Power Point presentation, Prucha traced the origins and growth of the command and touched on the 100-year goal of Islamic fundamentalist to achieve a worldwide Islamic caliphate.

Chief of Information RADM Greg Smith provided an update on Navy

public affairs programs and generated a spirited question and answer session about the trend to combine public information with psychological operations. Smith indicated that he would travel to the Middle East in April to confer with ranking military officers to alert them to the dangers of combining the two functions.

Buzz Lloyd, a member the original "forty thieves," and Tom Oxendine reminisced about their early Navy careers and the path each one took to join the public affairs community

A panel by several officers who have "been there, done that," compared public affairs operations in Vietnam with those happening today in Iraq.

Panel members recognized that technology and media gathering rules have changed in the intervening years, but the requirement for truth is as important today as it was during Vietnam. They expressed the belief that Navy public affairs came through the Vietnam experience with reputations intact.

Following an open afternoon for golf, beachcombing or just plain relaxing, attendees gathered for the closing dinner. Association Certificates of appreciation were presented to Jack Garrow and Jim Finkelstein, former chiefs of information and USNPAAA presidents.

**The big picture—literally—is
on Page 4**

View from the Bridge

I've returned from Reunion XI refreshed. From member feedback I feel that the Ponte Vedra Reunion XI was a great success.

RADM Bill Thompson wrote, "‘Bravo Zulu’ on the conduct of Reunion XI. It was the best. This meeting met the obligation of being a ‘social event,’ which was the avowed intent of the organization in its early days, and other aspects of the program provided professional depth. Greg Smith was superb in his presentations and assured confidence in the leadership of the active community. Bob Prucha provided the guts of the tough situation this country faces in the Middle East today and, of course, Buzz Lloyd and Tommy Oxendine gave us some poignant and humorous highlights of the early days of our community."

"All were accepted well and I heard many compliments on the entire reunion. The reception and dinner were outstanding, particularly the menus. Also the decibel count in the hospitality suite gave credence to the spirit and acceptance of the entire occasion. Of course, the ambiance of the Ponte Vedra Inn and environment added to the pleasure and comfort of all."

Bill was right about the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club. If you wanted to feel like a king or queen, this was the place to be. From the warm Florida weather to the smiles and kindness of the staff, to the turned-down bed, the chocolate treats left on the pillow, the Ponte Vedra Club slippers and robe on the bed each evening, all of us felt like we were very special. Bob Brett was the one who came up with the idea of Ponte Vedra and personally negotiated the room and golf discounts for us. A special thanks to Bob.

I want to salute Jim Finkelstein for his handling of all the planning and logistic details for the reunion. Everything was perfect. The hospitality suite rocked! The food was unbelievable, and Kay Finkelstein and Susan Zakem can take full credit because they planned the excellent reunion menu.



I thank the members who worked the registration desk and hospitality watches, people like Milt Baker, Chris Baumann, Larry Hamilton, Trish McMillan and Jim Noone.

Business Meeting

We opened Reunion XI with a business meeting. Chaplain Chris Baumann offered a prayer and remembrance on those members who passed since the last reunion. They included: JOC Hugh Williams (February '06), CDR George Hall (March '06), CDR Doug Lawless (March '06), LCDR Bill Eibert (August '06), CAPT Jay Coupe (September '06), CDR Joe McGrath (October '06) and CDR Byron "Jug" Varner (November '06).

I should add that we are still requesting pledges for the endowment fund so we can meet our goal. At the reunion, CDR Russ Bufkins, set the pace by doubling his pledge on the spot, with a \$1,000 check. By the way, our newest member is CAPT Bob Prucha, who surrendered to peer and spousal pressure and gave us his \$100 check so he no longer must depend on his spouse, Alice, for access to the USNPAAA events.

CAPT Sid Wright introduced us to his new bride, Peggy, and she was very kind to put up with our Navy jokes and chatter.

I presented the board's proposed four new board members. The members then elected the four, who will begin three-year terms of service on January 1, 2008. Elected were:

RADM (Sel) Ken J. "KJ" Braithwaite, who is the new naval reserve PAO flag officer, who will make his flag number October 1.

JOCM Joe Ciokon, who spent 30 years on active duty and another 15 years as a Navy civilian PAO before retiring again. He is now the PAO for the USS Midway museum in San Diego.

LCDR Bobby Lincoln, who rose from E-1 to LCDR (LDO-Photo Officer) in his 27 years on active duty. He became a Navy civilian motion picture scriptwriter before retiring again after 10 years.

CAPT Jill Votaw, who graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy 1976 with the first class to include women. She was a line officer on active duty and joined the naval reserve as a PAO after leaving active duty in 1991. She has served as a civilian Navy public affairs specialist since

1992 and is the PAO for the Navy BRAC Program Management Office in San Diego. Reunion members saluted outgoing board members Deborah Burnette, Donald Dvornik, Jim Mathews and Dave Thomas for a job “well done.”

History Drafts

We discussed the draft copies of the U.S. Navy public affairs histories, which were distributed at the reunion. Part I—The First Hundred Years (1861-1961)—was compiled by the late CAPT Ed Castillo and ran 125 pages. Part II—Vietnam (1961-1973)—was compiled by yours truly and ran 280 pages.

We explained that these histories are “drafts,” and were compiled in a continuing “three layer cake strategy.” First, we outline a chronology of world events to be sure we cover all important political-military events; second, we summarize specific naval events and actions (these include significant peacetime PA projects); and finally, and most importantly, we include first-person accounts by public affairs people. These contributors are professionals who were taking an active part in these major naval events or projects, and who give us their “lessons learned.”

I invite all members who read the history drafts to contribute by sending their stories to me. But, I caution members that we do not just want fun “sea stories.” We want stories that would bring us behind the scenes of action and stories that include what public affairs lessons were learned.

You see, the USNPAAA PA history project is not just for our enjoyment, but it also is a text for the new generation of public affairs people. We

want the current and future generations to understand they are not alone in facing PA challenges. We want to outline timeless themes and lessons, such as the natural distrust of the news media by defense and Navy leaders; a tendency of some senior government leaders to not tell the whole truth in time of war, crisis or accident; a natural reluctance of some people to deal with the news media at all; and, finally, a tendency of some defense and Navy people to blame the public affairs community for not getting them “adequate recognition” in the media and public for their efforts in war and peace. So, we invite your stories and lessons learned for our PA history.

Next Reunion

The board decided that Reunion XII will be back in the Washington, D.C., area in fall 2008. Members may recall that Reunion III was held in Washington in October 1997.

—Brent Baker

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Jeff Zakem reported on the state of the association's finances. In March, the association had \$26,939 in its operating fund at Navy Federal Credit Union. Part of that includes of reunion registration fees so that account will draw down as reunion bills are paid.

The endowment fund totaled \$118,300. Although investment income has helped push the endowment fund beyond \$100,000, the fund has yet to reach the long-planned \$100,000 goal in pledges and contributions; more than 100 members have donated to the fund.





Four photographers tried and almost succeeded photographing nearly all who attended Reunion XI—and one guy who didn't.

A Monday Full of Informative Briefings

Reporting by Brent Baker.

Photos by Tom Coldwell, Bill Gengler, Kathy Gillespie and Trish McMillan

Central Command Briefing

CAPT Bob Prucha (deputy director of public affairs at CENTCOM) presented an informative Central Command PowerPoint briefing, which brought all of us up-to-date on events in the Middle East and horn of Africa. I can sum it up by saying that there is no more complex task than that which is faced by the public affairs people in those areas. It is a 24/7 unforgiving information environment, with so many players that it is hard to keep track of them. The Internet has given new international communications power to both good and bad guys.

Vietnam-Iraq Panel

The Vietnam-Iraq panelists saw similarities between Vietnam and Iraq, but noted many changes as well. **Jack Garrow** moderated the panel. Some highlights included:

CAPT Bob Prucha, pointed out how today's "instant" news channels now are different from the Vietnam War. He said, "Things that did not take place in the Vietnam Det Charlie days today include: 24/7 news channels, instant news, the Internet, digital cameras, cell-cameras, cell phones, web logs, MySpace, YouTube. These are all things we have been involved in—what we do right now. With the embedding of news media, it's not uncommon that the first time you see something is when you see it reported on the evening news or at other news at 2:37 in the afternoon because it can happen at any time. And that's something we have to get used to. It's just the way of life and the way we deal with things right now. Things just happen so much faster now. You don't have to have film taken somewhere to be processed and flown on airplanes; everything

just happens immediately. You have to be prepared for that. We get a lot of surprises. We get a lot of things we just don't know about, that we have to deal with. All challenges, but its kind of interesting."

RADM Greg Smith, CHINFO, said that there are more than 25 active and reserve Navy PAOs in the overseas fight today as individual augmentees supporting the ground wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and the horn of Africa. That represents about 10 percent of the Navy PAO community being deployed to these fights. He said, "So, somewhere in the world these Navy PAO augmentees are in the joint fight, but in what really is an Army fight. You've got a joint-Army structure augmented by the other

services, in this case by the Navy. You have 10 percent of the Navy PA community there and 10 percent getting ready to deploy on what are mostly 12-month tours, with some six-month tours. This number is basically broken down in a 60/40 split, with 60 percent filled by reserve PAOs and 40 percent by active duty people. That may sound like a small number out of 12,000 Navy people deployed



Panelists Smith, Mackercher, Graves and Prucha—just before they started talking.

in the ground war, but out of a PA community of 200-plus PAOs, it is a significant number."

The admiral pointed out that today the joint commands are very big organizations, bigger than anything in the Vietnam War. He reported that most of these PAOs are operating in what is called an "information operations" structure, not a pure public affairs organization. That means that today there has developed a closer relationship between public affairs and psychological war operations. The CNO has tasked RADM Smith to go to Iraq this spring to ascertain what the public affairs

community can do to improve the public affairs operations in Iraq. CHINFO is heading a joint team with O-6s from the other services.

CAPT Bill Graves went to Vietnam in 1965 as a lieutenant on temporary additional duty orders from the CINCPACFLT staff. He discussed how the “blue water Navy” was greatly involved off Vietnam, from carriers on Dixie and Yankees stations to cruisers and destroyers supporting the ground forces, but there was nobody in Saigon representing the Seventh Fleet.



“Here is the key point; we had no guidance,” he said. “Everybody just said, ‘Go down there, you know what the media look like, where the Navy is, just get them together—just do your thing.’ And that’s what we did.”

“I was the Det Charlie PAO, and we operated out of a briefcase. We did everything by the hip; we were mavericks, but we had a great time and got the job done,” he said. Graves mentioned that other young lieutenants initially sent TAD to Saigon from CINCPACFLT included Jim Finkelstein and Jim Mathews.

CAPT Jack MacKercher was the initial senior PAO assigned fulltime to Det Charlie in 1966 to represent the Seventh Fleet.

He pointed out that in the case of Korea, Vietnam and the Iraq wars, there were no congressional declarations of war, but merely resolutions, “which means



when the going got tough, those with weak knees have a tendency to draw back from those resolutions,” he said. He discussed how upon his arrival in summer 1966 there were problems with naval aviators on Yankee Station not cooperating with the news media. He opined that the reason was that the aviators were scared to say anything because the public relations war was being tightly controlled by President Johnson in the White House. MacKercher pointed out that unlike most of the Navy PAOs today working for the joint commands in Iraq, Det Charlie worked with the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV), but not for MACV. “COL Bankson (MACV chief of information) gave the Navy a lot of latitude, but we walked a very narrow, straight line.

“I do want to add this,” MacKercher said. “We never lied about anything. I had a first class petty officer that took the strike reports—top secret—he’s the guy that declassified them because he made up the brief for the briefer at MACV. But we never put out anything that wasn’t the truth. My feeling was that the best people to report for us were the newsmen themselves.” He added, “We didn’t call it embedding, it was embarkation.” He ended saying, “We got a lot of news people out there, but there was always room for improvement.”

RADM Jack Garrow summed up the panel and said, “He’s right about that. Our credibility in Saigon was better than any of the other services. We were scrupulous about being candid and



about not telling any lies.” Garrow discussed how the American civilian Saigon officials and MACV briefers had lost their credibility with reporters long before the 1968 Tet Communist offensive. He remembered a reporter at the “Five O’clock Follies” shouting to an American military briefer, “You lied to us again,” and everyone knew it was true. Garrow pointed out that if one read Westmoreland’s and McNamera’s memoirs they could see that both men admitted to misleading the American public during the Vietnam War.

Garrow talked about using his old manual

Olivetti typewriter, which he took everywhere. It worked well, unlike today's laptops or blackberries. "The advantage of my Olivetti," he stated, "was it needed no power. It has its own printer, and nobody can talk to you on an Olivetti. So you could take your typewriter anywhere and do your job, and you won't be getting any guidance 24/7 over your Olivetti because it has no receiver.

"The output of a typewriter or a laptop is important if its truthful, if its accurate, if its timely," he said. "They both can do the same thing and that's the similarity."

He then posed some hypothetical questions. "First, could a correspondent in the White House or the Pentagon or in Baghdad say today, 'You're lying to us again'? Would they be right today? I really don't know; I hope not. Second, could any of us stand up a National Press Club luncheon and say to the press, 'You are misleading us again,' by commission or omission, and be right? Probably some of them. I suspect those covering the war on the ground day-to-day are doing a good job, But some of the talking heads—the chattering class—I have my doubts!"

Panel Q and A

Leading off the panel's question and answer period, **RADM**

Smith told the audience that this year for the first time since public opinion polling began, the U.S. military was not rated number one in the "confidence" of the American people. Today, small business is number one. Worse, he said, was the fact that the military used to have a confidence rating of 70 percent.

Today small business has a 47 percent confidence rating and the military a 46 percent rating—a real drop over the past several years.

Smith said he thinks the drop reflects the American public's feeling about military leaders (defined broadly), including former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld. "There's a consideration there as to what people think about us from a credibility



point of view," he said. "Confidence is the word used in the poll, but I think it's the same concept—it's the confidence and trust they have in us as leaders to tell them straight up what's going on, and what's not going right. And those numbers are coming down."

Irv Sharp: "I think I understood you to say that some of our people were working side-by-side with the psy war people."

Smith: "That's right."

Sharp: "In my career we were told to scrupulously avoid that. To be sure, there was a difference between talking to the media and what the psyops people were doing. How do you deal with that?"

Smith: "The big difference is to try and differentiate between the message and the means. There needs to be coordination between the message. We need to make certain that we know what the psyops folks are doing. And largely the psyche-ops folks are not telling black lies. It's usually a white-gray area of the truth, and they're reaching audiences that traditionally we can't reach as communicators.

"Iraq is a bad model, because it's broken. But, take North Korea as a model. If we're trying to penetrate to North Koreans today, over time you want to employ more of a psyop information operations means because there is no way for us to reach the North Koreans because there is no free press in North Korea. To reach them you have to use other means.

"But now in Iraq there's a different situation as they move toward democracy and you'd like to think you could use the basic democratic principles of an open and free press, and use the traditional means of public affairs to reach that audience. And yet, there are parts of Iraq that you're going to reach, as Bob told you earlier, by putting out a press release about a school being worked on today. The problem is the fact that we're starting to blend the producers of the messages into one organization.

"That's why I'm going to Iraq in the next couple of weeks to talk about the danger of having an organizational structure where all the communicators are working for the same two-star, in this case GEN Caldwell. The Army is big on organization and process. Unfortunately they've amalgamated the two key components of communication—information operations and public affairs—into one shop. You will see in some theaters that the information operations officer has

become the spokesman for the commander. In Afghanistan, for a period of six months, there was a weak public affairs officer sent by one of the services. The general was fed up with that poor support and turned to a very capable major, who happened to be an information operations (IO) officer, and said, 'You are now my spokesman.'

"So, for about six months, the daily briefs were given by an IO person for the media. We should all be concerned about that, but to a large degree, though, it's based on the lack of quality of the people that we the services are sending to the fight."

Brent Baker: "Greg were the media concerned that they were being briefed by an information operations [officer] rather than by a PAO?"

Smith: "They were, and I don't know how much of this you've seen, but there's been a lot in the press about information operations and public affairs. The New York Times and LA Times especially have carried that water over the last year or so, but it's not getting a lot of traction in Washington, at least in the Pentagon. It's getting some traction over on the hill, and we'll see where this goes."

Recently, there's an effort to repeal a memo sent by the chairman, General Myers, about two years ago, which said in effect—keep those two roles apart. Do not create an organization where they work together under the same leadership or you will reduce your credibility as a commander to speak both on the psyop piece and public affairs. They have ignored that since it was sent out, and they (IO people) are trying to get that memo cancelled, so that GEN Petraeus (Multinational Force Iraq Commander) can operate within compliance with the Joint Chiefs. So, there's a real concern."

Jim Finkelstein: "Greg, I hope we can hold 'em at bay. I'd be very, very nervous about the public affairs community getting in bed—even at a distance—with those guys. Our credibility, once it's gone, is going to be almost impossible to get back."

Smith: "You're right. In fact, I wish I had one-tenth of the people and one-tenth of the budget (as information operations). It's huge, huge, thousands of people, hundreds of millions of dollars being poured into information operations. They've taken our business and put some big umbrellas over the top of it. Information operations is that one big umbrella they want to call it. It's a confusing term to many, and hardly a part of our business. Above that is a thing called strategic communication."

We've got ourselves all worked up with process and org charts and things. We've lost a lot of our precision in delivering a message.

"Rumsfeld did understand that our (public affairs) business was clearly not organized, equipped or resourced to do communications in this new 24/7 environment. And I'll tell you from a very positive point of view, we're getting a lot of emphasis on our ability to conduct that side of the business. I think its going to mean some real changes in the future, if we just push it forward in the right direction."

I've chosen in the last couple of years to reduce the tension of us versus them. It's a little like a 'keep the enemy close' kind of thing. Keeping close from the inside the beltway point of view—certainly not operationally, as ADM Finkelstein suggests we don't. And that's going to be my message to GEN Petraeus when I go there in April. That is—the great danger he's doing not only to himself, but also to the institution of government when it comes to the confidence of the American public in the message, in what we're telling folks. It's got to be pure and clean and it can't have even an org chart that shows public affairs and IO working for the same commander. You won't know what message is coming out of the top. There is great danger there and the press is smelling it, and they don't like it. I think the comment that ADM Garrow mentioned that, 'Could we have that same Vietnam comment (you're lying to us again) today' by an MSNBC reporter or Wall Street Journal reporter—you bet! Because there is a lot of politicizing, the message still occurring today. Maybe it was occurring for the MACV folks—for instance the White House changing the language and what they were saying fairly. But I will tell you the White House and the NSC and DOD dominate this message. It's very clear the agendas that occur, and you can see them. It's unfortunate that military commanders won't stand up to the political communication; it's even worse when you've got non-communicators communicating. They don't know the difference. That's a great danger."

Jack MacKercher: "If you tell 'em the truth, you don't have to remember what you said."

Conversation with CAPT Buzz Lloyd and CDR Tom Oxendine

Brent Baker conducted a live interview with two of the community's memorable individuals.

Tom Oxendine, who had been the deputy PAO when **Buzz Lloyd** was the CINCPACFLT PAO, led off with his own story of how he got into the Navy and provided an American Indian's unique view during World War II while trying to become a naval aviator. Tom explained that during World War II, the Navy didn't allow American Indians to become officers. When he entered flight training there was an enlisted pilot program, but that was cancelled before he completed flight training. However, the Navy reaped so much positive publicity about Tom, as the first Indian going through flight training, that they let him be commissioned. He said, "I might mention that my mother pinned my Navy wings on here in Jacksonville, 65 years ago this year. It's hard to conceive today that I could have had that kind of a background considering that I never sat in a classroom with a black person or white person until I came into the Navy.

"I want to tell you two things. My claim to fame in the Navy, as I told Secretary Rumsfeld three or four months ago, is that I used to be XO of VF-124, the F-8 Crusader squadron. Bill Hauser was CO and I was XO, both commanders, and we had a young lieutenant in that squadron, Tom Hayward (later to become CNO). I was telling Secretary Rumsfeld that story and I said, 'I trained him right.' Rumsfeld replied, 'You sure as hell did.'

"The other story is that I take partial credit for naming the F-14 Tomcat. Now, my name being Tom.... Well, I'll tell you how that happened. Jack Matallioti was the vice president of Grumman. Grumman always named its fighters after members in the feline family: Hellcat, Wildcat, Tiger, Cougar, Panther, etc. I was the public affairs officer for the Naval Air Systems Command and we got the authority to build the airplane. So getting near time to finish the airplane, I asked Jack, 'How would they go about naming this plane?' He said, 'We'll do what we always do; we'll solicit names and then award the winner.'

"I said, 'You know my name is Tom—you



Tom Oxendine shares some history.

ought to name that plane the Tomcat.' He said, 'Hell no! Every plane Grumman has ever had, someone proposed that name, and we threw it away because he is a no good character.'

"I said the reason to name this plane the Tomcat is that the Chief of Naval Operations is Admiral Tom Moorer. The deputy chief for naval aviation is Admiral Tom Connolly. The head of the Naval Systems Command, which builds all the weapons systems, is Admiral Tom Walker; his deputy is Admiral Tom McKellen and the public affairs officer is CDR Tom Oxendine. If Tomcat has a bad reputation you ought to get a Madison Avenue PR firm and change the image of the tomcat. And that's exactly what they did, and they made him a slick person and a great character.

"The policy of the Navy, back when I came into public affairs in 1962, was that a line officer was CHINFO. The deputy PAO at CINCPACFLT and CINCLANTFLT were line officers. My first PIO assignment came after I was as CO of VT-2 at Whiting Field, the largest squadron in the Naval Air Systems Command. The detailer gave me some choices and looked at my background. I had studied some courses in journalism, and I negotiated a tour of duty as Deputy PIO at CINCPACFLT. CAPT Buzz Lloyd was head PIO when I came in and was my mentor to start.

"When I started, believe it or not, the line

officers got the top good jobs. I was the briefer every morning for the senior CINCPACFLT staff. I got to escort all the CINCPACFLT VIPs. We would bring them in for a week on a carrier, and I would escort them around. I've been out on the admiral's barge with John Wayne's daughter. Buzz found me all the great jobs that I came into.

"The first thing I'd like to mention about Buzz Lloyd is the advice he gave me early, me being a naval aviator and a golfer. He said, 'Ox, any day you don't play golf is a day wasted.' That's the kind of boss to have. One other thing: Buzz was a heavy smoker, but near the end of his tour he came to his office to get a press release signed. He put a cigarette in his mouth and was sitting there reading the release and flicking his lighter and it wouldn't fire. So, I reached in and got my lighter to light it and he said, 'No, no, no! I've given up smoking because the kids are getting to that age, and I want to be sure they don't start.'

"I thought that is not going to last an hour, because he always has one going. So I said, 'Buzz to give you some support, I'll give up smoking with you.' Believe it or not, to my knowledge, he has never had another cigarette. He stopped then and there, and I could not believe it happened. And I didn't smoke either. But when I saw him get on a plane to go to Europe for his next assignment to CINCUSNAVEUR, I reached in my pocket and lit up a cigarette. He's a great guy! "

Brent Baker: "Thank you, Tom. What we're going to do, Buzz, is walk down your career a little bit. In 1942 you enlisted and became a naval aviator. After your training you were a blimp pilot, weren't you?"

Lloyd: "Yes, that's right. When I got through my basic training at Gross Field, they said that they had a training backup; this was in the summer of '42. However, they said they had a requirement for six lighter-than-air pilots. Did I want to go into lighter than air? The idea of hanging around with 250 other aviation cadets.... I was a seaman duce then and I thought, hell, I lived in Cleveland and was used to seeing the big dirigibles come over, and I thought being a

pilot of a blip would be pretty neat. I had orders to Philadelphia. I arrived in Philly and, yes, they were going to start this program, but they weren't quite ready. So they puts us NAVCADS in the YMCA and we reported every morning for about a week. Then they put us on a bus and we went to Lakehurst, New Jersey, and they weren't ready for us there either.

"One of the first things that happened to me was that you were supposed to write a thesis as part of our flight training. I didn't know what to write, but as soon as I qualified for solo, a CDR Flarrity had a sled that he was using as a mine sweep with a remote control. He needed someone to be his co-pilot, so I got a leg up by being in this operational test. I decided to do my thesis on it. Just before we were supposed to graduate, the head of the school system came and said, 'Buzz we have a problem. Your thesis is classified secret, but you're not cleared for secret.' He said, 'I know it's embarrassing, but since I'm the sole judge of what kind of grade you get, write on anything you want that has any Navy flavor and we'll count it as your thesis.' So I sat down and—since I majored in journalism and had worked for a radio station in Cleveland, until I got the world's lowest draft number—I did my thesis on PR and blimps.

"Before coming in the Navy, I had worked with this Navy recruiter on a program at the Cleveland radio station. He said, 'Look, have you ever thought of being a radio officer?' I said, 'What's a radio officer?' He said, 'They do radio stuff for the Navy.



Buzz Lloyd tells his story.

You have to go through Great Lakes and be trained.' I said, 'sign me up!' Fortunately, I have a brother who joined the Navy as a boxer. When I told him the Navy was going to make me a radio officer and I had to go to Great Lakes as a formality, he told me how crazy I was, and asked why I had gone to college? So, I went back down to the recruiter, and they had applications for flight training."

Baker: "You went on and received your wings, and I was told you were the first blimp pilot to land on an aircraft carrier. Is that right?"

Lloyd: "That's right. I was stationed at Santa Anna and there was no submarine action on the West Coast at that time. We thought that we could get into the action by using blimps for sighting the sea mines in the Pacific. So, we got these tests approved for making a blimp landing on a carrier. The carrier was called the Altamaha (CVE 18), a jeep carrier,



USS Altamaha (before Buzz Lloyd landed his blimp)

and it was going to have a couple of days where they were doing deck qualifications. The CO thought all that was involved was dropping a line off the top of the blimp, and they would tow us in. He was amazed when we landed on a wheel. They made some adjustments to the flight deck and I made nine landings. The first six landings I did myself, and then I took the other pilots out to show them that anybody could do it."

Baker: "Let's go to 1947, when you were stationed at NAS Lakehurst, the blimp capital of the Navy. Some notice comes out about applying for PIO. Who called that notice to your attention?"

Lloyd: "I was working for Admiral Rosendahl. He needed someone to hold down the PIO job until a relief came in. The PIO he had was the head of one of the automobile PR outfits and he wanted to get

back in civilian life to make money. A dull idea! So, the Navy notice came out for the first 1650s. I was notified because the admiral came to my office. I see the admiral standing in front of my desk, and so I tried to get to my feet—in his almighty presence. As I went to get up my feet (got tangled) and I fell down. He reached to help me before I hit the deck, and said, 'Lloyd, what would you do without me?' He was the one who made me apply. He said, 'There's a lot of people in the Navy who can make steam, but not a lot who know how to get along with newsmen.'"

Baker: "So you applied and became one of the original forty thieves?"

Lloyd: "Right."

Baker: "Then you went to the staff of the Chief of Naval Reserve Air Training at Glenview, Ill., as assistant PIO, right?"

Lloyd: "That was one of the great jobs in the world. They had three lieutenant commanders (I was one of them) and one captain in the PIO office, which was also the air cadet procurement section. At that time, the naval air reserve had the ideal PR setup. We had 26 air stations at every big city, all near media markets. Each station had its own trained PIO. Many were former newsmen. Each station had a WW II hero—it was close enough to the war and there were heroes all over the damn place. We could trot them out for any event."

Baker: "Who was your boss at Naval Air Reserve headquarters?"

Lloyd: "He was Admiral Eddie Ewen. He later became chief of public relations in 1949."

Baker: "After Glenview, you later went to CHINFO to the special events branch. How did that happen?"

Lloyd: "The admiral got hold of me and asked me if I could come to Washington and relieve 13 (people). They had a clean-out of homosexuals in the Navy's PR office, and I told the admiral that I was fast on my feet, but not that fast."

Baker: "Now we're going to skip ahead to when you were ordered to Naval Air Force Pacific Fleet, when it was headquartered at Ford Island in Pearl Harbor."

Lloyd: "It was out at Pearl Harbor and you talk about your heroes.... The head of every department was a genuine hero. The heads of departments were all sweating the slowdown in promotion to captain, and they were all veteran commanders. They all had the Navy Cross or better. It was really a wonderful

environment to work in. The fact that I had a pair of wings helped them accept me.”

Baker: “At this time there were no boat tours at Pearl Harbor. Tell us what you did.”

Lloyd: “The girl that was PR at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel was named Linda Mangelsdorf. She was interested in providing VIPs who came out there with special treatment. She asked me if there was anything we could do at our place. You must understand that the devastation was still there from the December 7 attack. Not many people realized that more than the Navy got hit. The Navy was still perceived as having some responsibility for being caught with our britches down.

“I thought that maybe we could take VIPs and show them what damage was done. So I asked my boss, Vice Admiral Felda, who was a very shy person. He said, ‘Look Buzz, I can’t meet with people. How about you doing it and we’ll use Johnny Hoskins.’ He was the only one-legged rear admiral. He had lost a leg on the carrier Princeton, when it was sunk. He was the chief of staff. Well, I got the greatest group of people through this Linda Mangelsdorfer, including the President of Bank of America. LCDR Hutchinson, our intelligence officer, did the boat briefings in Pearl Harbor. What we used was the crash boat, which was a sister to the PT 109 of Kennedy fame. People liked that boat.”

Baker: “Now we must skip ahead. You went to CINCLANTFLT and became the deputy PIO and made commander there. You then went to the Naval Academy and made captain two years early at the academy. You then went to CHINFO as head of the news or 200 division. The CHINFO was ADM McCain and you had a submarine officer as the deputy. Russ Bufkins was head of magazine and book branch at the time. Now, tell me about the bridge games at CHINFO. You’ve got to tell the truth.”

Lloyd: “As a matter of fact I was on the TV show, ‘To Tell the Truth.’”

Baker: “Let’s back up a minute when you were at CHINFO and RADM ‘Dog’ Smith was CHINFO just before McCain. Russ Bufkins tells me that you were worried about the admiral seeing you playing bridge during duty hours. You were in some sort of closet or small room playing bridge?”

Lloyd: “Actually, the admiral came in the room and we all thought this is the end of the bridge game.

Dog Smith was one of the world’s loveliest men and he said, ‘Deal me in.’”

Baker: “Tell us about your conversations with ADM McCain.”

Lloyd: “During the Cuban missile crisis, ADM McCain was never there. He was out on the road giving his Seapower presentations, and I got a belly full, because I was camped out in CHINFO and the deputy had left, so I had to assume all the duties of CHINFO. I was working my butt off, and McCain would stop by to refresh his slide presentation. I asked Lucy Dyer, who was his secretary, to go take a walk and get a sandwich. I had the admiral’s aide take the orderly for a walk. I closed the door and said, ‘admiral, I’d like to give you a course in mathematics.’ He said, ‘Yes my boy, go ahead.’ So we talked about how much he was gone—but actually he had his heart in the job.”

Baker: “Moving on to CINCPACFLT, you were the PIO for ADM Sides and ADM Ulysses S. Grant Sharp. Tom, was there some incident that happened there under Sharp?”

Oxendine: “There was a fleet amphibious operation going on with the Marines and there was an accident. It was on a Wednesday afternoon, and the admiral flew over to the accident and came back and wanted to meet with Buzz.”

Baker: “What usually happened on a Wednesday afternoon at CINCPACFLT? Buzz, what were you doing?”

Lloyd: “After the change of command ceremony we had a big luncheon. Three admirals ask me to put together a golf game, so they didn’t have to play tea party that afternoon.”

Baker: “So you’re on the golf course.”

Lloyd: “Right.”

Oxendine: “The admiral wanted Buzz to meet with him and to put out a press release about the admiral going over to the accident scene, and what he had done, and Buzz was not in the office. I had to fill in for him. But, I must mention that when I finally got hold of Buzz, he said, ‘OK, I’ll take care of that.’ He then had one of his friends from the Honolulu Advertiser come in and do a story on the admiral. He’s going to really beef-up the admiral’s image. And then the son-of-a-gun came in and met with the admiral. The reporter ran him down as a little short guy, five-foot four. The admiral was furious over that. Maybe Buzz can tell the aftereffects of that meeting with the admiral.”



Brent Baker presents the association's Significant Achievement Award to Buzz Lloyd.

Lloyd: "That's pretty much it, except for one thing. This article started out by saying that behind the mahogany desk at Makalapa sat a shirt-sleeved senior naval officer, who in 30 years had such an illustrious career that the only nickname he obtained was 'Obe.' Then the article went on a little further, describing that during World War II his only claim to fame was that his destroyer was sunk by enemy action. Part of the problem was that here was a guy who had never had any experience with the press.

"We had a landing exercise out at Molokai. We had a lot of exercises at Molokai all the time. I had formed a CIB, or command information bureau, for the exercise. Everything was well in hand, I thought, with Tom holding down the main office and with three vice admirals playing golf. As I came off the 18th, there is Tom to greet me. The admiral, when I called, said, 'You're too late. I've turned it all over to VADM Ephraim P. Holmes, who commanded the Pacific Fleet Amphibious Force. So, I called Ephraim, who I knew quite well. We sat down and we got a message that we lost something like 14 LCIs landing in a bad surf at Molokai. But the word was that they hadn't lost a single one of the boat coxswains. The boats were

completely destroyed in the wild surf.

"I wrote a message congratulating all the coxswains for sticking with their boats and saving a great number of lives. I got Ephraim to sign it out and that made the night's news on the mainland, so the whole action came out as a heroism story rather than a dumb landing. What I didn't know was that we had press aboard and the acting task force commander put an order out right away for no publicity. So, no accident word had gotten back to us, but the official word had gotten back to the admiral and he was going to be johnny-on-the-spot and take credit for going there.

That didn't happen!

"The next morning after the accident, the squawk-box went off and the admiral said, 'Lloyd, I want to have a press conference at 8:30 in my office.' And I said, "admiral, can I come down and see you." He said, 'Can't you take orders?' I said, 'I'm beginning to.' I went down to the office for the press conference and the first question was, 'How much do these boats cost?' Of course he didn't know. So, he picks up the phone and calls up Washington and talks to the chief of the Bureau of Ships, who had no idea what they cost. I finally said, 'admiral, let me fill them in after this press conference.' Then they all got on the money angle. The good things we had accomplished by the coxswain staying with their boats had now washed away. This press conference also washed away any hope of me becoming a flag officer.

Baker: "Thanks, Captain Lloyd. We have come full circle, the bad news gets out and the good news doesn't. I want to present to you the USNPAAA Significant Achievement Award for your distinguished 25-years of service to the nation, the Navy and the public affairs community."

Captain Lloyd received a standing ovation after receiving the award.

Lunch with the Chief of Information

We adjourned for lunch and after lunch **RADM Greg Smith**, CHINFO, briefed us on the state of the PA community. In short, the PA community is in good hands. RADM Smith has the confidence of the Navy leadership. He told us that there are seven new PAO captain billets coming on-line over the next year, bringing the total authorized 165X billets to about 210, a high point in recent years. The Norfolk and San Diego Public Affairs Centers now are providing public affairs teams to each deploying carrier strike group and expeditionary Marine amphibious group. While there have been PA teams on carriers before, the PA teams on the amphibious ships are a new CHINFO initiative.

As stated earlier during the panel discussion, Smith said the Navy public affairs team is respected and in high demand in joint commands. Smith looks forward to heading a joint public affairs team going to the Middle East this month.

The PAO post-graduate education program continues at San Diego State University. CHINFO left us with a very positive feeling for those on active duty today, but the overseas commitments are demanding on both reserves and active duty folks.

We completed the formal Reunion XI events with a Monday evening dinner, which was great. After that dinner, we presented USNPAAA Significant Achievement Awards to Jack Garrow and Jim Finkelstein for their distinguished leadership and service both on active duty as Chiefs of Information and as past presidents of the USNPAAA. The group then headed for the hospitality suite, where Bob Brett was in rare form, surrounded by lovely ladies, who he charmed with his many stories. A good time was had by all at Reunion XI.

Thanks to all who came to Ponte Vedra.



Brent Baker presents Significant Achievement Award to Jim Finkelstein. Kay seems pleased, y'think?

About the photos...

Our thanks to Bill Gengler, Trish McMillan, Kathy Gillespie and Tom Coldwell for their photo contributions for this issue.



Layne and Jack Garrow enjoyed his Significant Achievement Award

Jerry and Carolyn Pape Haven't Missed Yet!



Jerry and Carolyn Pape have the distinction—and steadfast loyalty to USNPAAA—to have never missed a USNPAAA reunion, all eleven of them. Someone suggested we ought to give ‘em a prize, but then we thought, what do we do next reunion? Hmm, that will be an even dozen. Doughnuts, maybe.

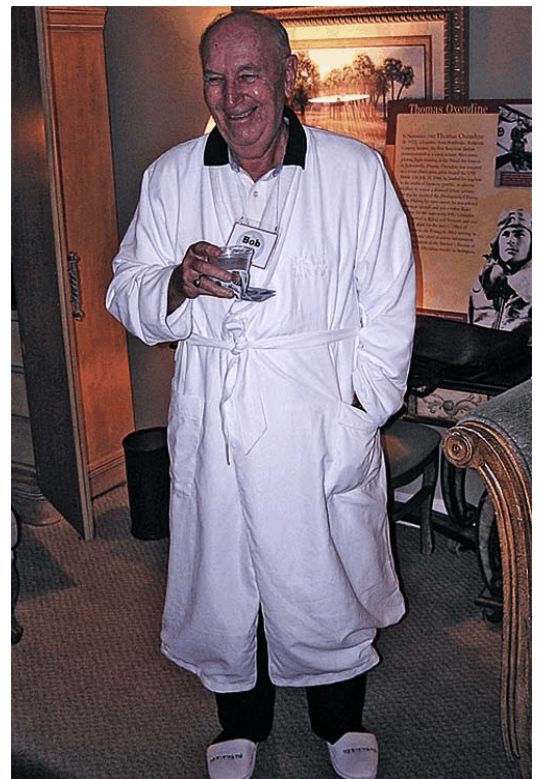


The Ponte Vedra, Fla., constable's office is investigating the theft of one or more bars of soap from an undisclosed number of rooms at the famed Ponte Vedra Inn & Club. The Inn's housekeepers discovered the theft on the morning of March 27th, shortly after several guests checked out of their rooms following a raucous weekend reunion of aging Navy retirees. Also missing were bottles of shampoo, conditioner, bath gel and mouth wash—and one white bathrobe. The inn has requested return of the items, no questions asked.

Sandy Wins a Prize



Sandy Vail is the lucky winner of Jim Nemer's sculpture of a female sailor. Jim's artistry was featured in the previous issue of Sightings.



That Nice Bob Brett (TBBB), the guy who pressed the board of directors to hold Reunion XI near his home and at a very fine resort, he is seen in "resort casual" attire, enjoying the hospitality suite.