



President
Brent Baker

Vice Presidents
Steve Clawson
Jim Noone

Secretary
Christine Miller

Treasurer
Jeff Zakem

Board Members
Chris Baumann
Deborah Burnette
Donald Dvornik
Jim Finkelstein
Jack Garrow
Brian Gray
Larry Hamilton
Mary Hanson
Brayton Harris
Nathan Jones
George Kolbenshlag
Peter Litrenta
Jim McCain
Harry Padgett
Steve Pietropaoli
Tom Plantenburg
Dave Thomas

Webmaster
Alan Goldstein

Membership Chair
Tom Coldwell

Sightings Editor
Brian Gray

UNITED STATES NAVY PUBLIC AFFAIRS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

SIGHTINGS

VOLUME 12 ISSUE 3

OCTOBER 2006

Head South for Reunion XI

Next USNPAAA Reunion Set for March 2007 At Ponte Vedra Beach Inn and Club, Florida

Don't pack away your sun block and summer clothes just yet. You'll need them again in March when the USNPAAA convenes in sunny Florida for Reunion XI.

The reunion is scheduled for March 25-27, 2007, at the exclusive Ponte Vedra Beach Inn and Club in Ponte Vedra, Fla., on the Atlantic coast southeast of downtown Jacksonville.

The average March mid-day temperature in the Jacksonville area is about 75 degrees, all the more reason to head south to reconnect with friends and retell your favorite sea stories.

If seeing old friends isn't enough, the resort offers a full range of activities including golf, horseback riding, sailing,

fishing, four swimming pools and 15 tennis courts located alongside the white sandy beach. After all that activity, shop in the resort's upscale stores or enjoy a massage or treatment in the spa. (Make spa reservations two weeks in advance.)

\$185 Covers all Reunion Functions

Program details still are being arranged, but the reunion promises the traditional opening reception, business meeting, informative speakers, lunch and a closing Atlantic seaport dinner. Of course, the hospitality suite will be available—and it's all included in the \$185 per person registration fee. Reunion registration is open now. Use the form included in the letter you received from RADM Brent Baker or download the form from the association web site: www.usnpaaa.org. Send the form with your check for \$185 per person to USNPAAA, 6119 Larstan Drive, Alexandria, VA 22312. Registration is not complete without payment. Sorry, only checks are accepted; no credit cards.

Don't delay. The registration price increases to \$195 after Friday, February 23, 2007.

Reserve Rooms NOW

CAPT Bob Brett, a resident of Ponte Vedra, was successful in negotiating the same \$159 per day room rate that was



—continued Page 2

View from the Bridge

This Sightings is focused on the Reunion 2007, now scheduled for March 25-27, 2007, at Ponte Verda, Florida. It will be a great winter break for all of us. Some will just want to walk along the beach, some will play tennis, others will play golf, and some will make their home in the hospitality suite. There is something for everybody to do—or just relax and visit.



If you have any questions or suggestions for the reunion, here are the members of the reunion task force: RADM Jim Finkelstein, chairman; CDR Milt Baker; CAPT Bob Brett; LCDR Kathy Gillespie; LCDR Trish McMillan; CDR Bill Roach; RADM Brent Baker; CDR Jeff Zakem. Warm thanks already go to Kay Finkelstein and Dorothy Thompson for assembling all the reunion invitation letters—and with not a single paper cut!

I hope to see you all at Reunion 2007, which is by all accounts shaping up to be one of our best-attended reunions.

Departed friends

Just a brief word about the recent passing of LCDR G. William (Bill) Eibert and CAPT Jay Coupe. Both of these shipmates will be missed. Some of you have come online and expressed yourselves in e-mails. What strikes me are the diverse personalities we have in the PA community. On the one hand we had Bill Eibert, who was quiet and got the job done with no fanfare. Then there was Jay Coupe, who was “out there” having a great time and making sure we all knew about his latest adventure. I am thankful we have such a wonderful PA community and each new generation adds its luster to our rich history.

All the best,

---Brent Baker

Reunion XI – Continued from Page 1--

available in San Diego and Newport, even though rooms at the four-star Ponte Vedra resort generally rent in the \$400 range. Check out the resort web site

at www.pvresorts.com to see what first-rate facilities are in store for USNPAAA Reunion XI attendees. Our room block is direct oceanfront.

The resort will honor the same rate for three days following the reunion. Unfortunately, the rate is not available before the reunion because of heavy weekend demand. Check-in time at the resort is 3 p.m. and check-out time is noon.

The daily room rate is subject to the usual state and county taxes (6 and 3 percent respectively). The resort has a no-cash tipping policy and adds a daily gratuity fee (\$12 for single occupancy, \$16 for double occupancy) to provide gratuities for the doorman, bellman and twice-daily chambermaid service.

Room availability at the special rate is limited, so make reservations as soon as possible. Once the association's guaranteed room block is filled, room rates may increase to as much as \$400 per night as excess rooms are returned to the in-season market.

Although the invitation letter mailed from RADM Baker indicated that resort reservations could be made online, the Ponte Vedra prefers that reservations be requested on the hotel form that accompanied the invitation letter. Note that one night's payment (check or credit card) must be made when making the reservation.

Use fax or regular mail to make your room reservations.

How to Get There

By auto the resort is accessible from interstate highway 95 and Florida state highway A1A. The closest commercial airport to the Ponte Vedra resort is Jacksonville International Airport, which is served by a dozen major carriers with 200 arrivals daily.

The resort has a contact with Beach Limo service for transportation to and from the airport. The price is \$69 one way for up to two persons, gratuity included. Once you have made your hotel and flight reservations, the resort concierge will be pleased to make limo reservations. Call (800) 234-7842 and ask for the bell stand.

Rental cars are another option for travel from the airport. A web search in early October found a nationally known rental agency with a price of \$92 for a three-day rental for an economy car and \$109 for an intermediate size care. The price did not consider discounts such as USAA, AARP or AAA.

Jacksonville also is served by Amtrak.

“Mad Bomber” Throws Caution (and VIP Paperwork)

A Tribute to Earl Greathouse by Joe McGrath

I was very saddened to hear of the passing of CDR Earl Greathouse. I was assigned to CINCPAC 1981-1985. I was honored to call him a co-worker, a mentor and a friend. He was the best community relations officer I ever met and I learned many valuable lessons from him.

Earl handled a huge number of VIP visits to the military services in Hawaii. He arranged tours for administration officials, cabinet officers, senators, congressmen, foreign officials and other VIPs.

He was an expert at conducting the perfect tour. Transportation was flawless. Briefings were succinct. Demonstrations were on time and on point. Schedules were precise.

As we all know, all military commands have a handout, brochure, folder or portfolio. Earl understood that most of the VIPs he was dealing with were going on to other locations and the last thing they needed was to have their baggage load of paper. He established a good system of collecting the paper handouts from all the VIPs and shipping the paperwork to their origin or headquarters.

One day Earl was shipping a package to a completed tour group. He took the package to the post office, which was in the same wing of the CINCPAC headquarters. While he was waiting in line, his secretary came to the post office to tell him there was an urgent call from an upcoming tour group about a change in schedule. Earl took the call upstairs, leaving his package on the post office floor.

Now this was the early 1980s when there was a heightened concern for threats against military facilities. This was nothing like the post 9/11 concerns, but it was a serious concern.

Earl finished his call and was about to return to the basement when the security alarm sounded. Command rules were to remain in place until we received specific instructions. A few minutes later we were instructed to evacuate the headquarters by the front entrance and muster in an open area across the street. We all gathered outside as directed. Our boss took his walkie-talkie (no cell phones in those days) and anxiously was trying to find out what was going on so we could make appropriate press releases and responses to queries.

We found out there was a bomb threat, based on an unidentified package left at the post office. It

was removed from the post office and taken to the parking lot behind the headquarters.

Our security forces were efficient, but not necessarily intelligent. This was before the days of bomb-sniffing dogs and robots so they decided to explode the unidentified package by placing a light charge around the top of the package. When the explosive went off, the air was filled with hundreds of pages from Earl's latest tour portfolios.

The security forces had placed the suspicious package within 100 feet of the CINCPAC super-secret command center. If the package had contained a large amount of explosives, as they suspected, the security guards may well have leveled the command center.

After the event was over, we learned that the suspicious package was one of Earl's mailings. Earl suffered some good natured ribbing for the next month. He even picked a nickname of "Earl, the mad bomber." True to his nature, he reconstructed the entire mailing package and sent it off several days later.

Earl was a true professional and a great credit to the Navy's public relations program.

Book Review

Thanks to Captain Phil Rubin for sending in this book recommendation

“Riding Rockets” by Astronaut and Col. Mike Mullane, USAF

It's quite funny at times and very descriptive of the shuttle and space program. I never realized how exciting and frightening it was at the same time to be an astronaut. The book made me laugh (out loud) and brought a tear or two (or three!) to my eyes.

From the stories about the guys from Planet AD (read the book) to sincere accounts of his wonderful family and the great support they were to him over the years, he touched it all. His descriptions of the wondrous sights and feelings in space were marvelous. You'll also especially enjoy the account of the returning astronauts visit to the Pentagon to the CNO's office and the Air Force Chief of Staff's offices after a classified DOD mission.

All-in-all, a fine and very enjoyable read!

McCreary Talks About the State of Navy Public Affairs

Recently retired Chief of Information RADM T. L. McCreary reflected on the changing state of Navy public affairs in this interview with Sightings.

Q. How has the Navy and the public affairs mission has changed since 9/11 and during the current challenging Iraqi situation?

A. While the transition to joint started in the mid-eighties, it has totally solidified since 9/11. CHINFO no longer has any operational PA responsibilities. It is a train, equip and organize effort from the management point and a budget and programming effort from the media point. That said, Navy has gone into jointness in a big way from a PA perspective. The last four public affairs flags have come from joint jobs and not LANTFLT or PACFLT. Navy keeps its operational PA influence only by placing very talented PAOs at the combatant commander jobs. I forecast that there will never be another CHINFO that has no joint duty.

Q. What were the single most challenging external relations and internal relations issues that confronted you while you were CHINFO?

A. The single most challenging external relations issue is trying to tell the Navy story while you are engaged in what's primarily an all encompassing ground war. It makes you somewhat invisible from a national image perspective. You have to fight to tell the story where Navy is engaged—and it is a tough sell. Again, having strong Navy PAs in joint jobs allows them to find the Navy angle and tell it. From an internal perspective, it is strictly getting your internal audience perspective. Recent survey data indicate that only 5 percent of people want information about their organization from print, yet most companies spend 90 percent of their internal budget on print products. With the Internet and new ways of getting information globally, it is extremely difficult to find the venue that touches sailors, their families and our civilian workforce. The Internet holds promise and Navy.mil eventually will be a push as well as a pull site. That said, getting leadership to pass messages down the chain of command still is probably the best avenue yet. I don't know that we solved the issue but there is a plan to have Navy-wide POD notes available so everyone can copy and paste. If we can get that

effort on track, I think there will be more effective communication up and down the chain of command.

Q. How does the Navy manage to have a cohesive, timely news release policy when every sailor and Marine has a cell phone or access to an instant messaging Internet capability, and may beat the Navy or Joint commands to the media in a breaking news situation

A. Great question and technology will only make it harder. The PAO chain of all PAOs calling when there is a major issue still beats the operational reporting chain 10 out of 10 times. Commanders however, still are reticent to put out releases. Only since Admiral Mullen (CNO) took office has there been Navy-wide pressure to get it out fast and tell our story first. It is still a cultural thing and until we allow people to release information and photos at the lowest level possible will we ever beat the news reporting. Media embedding, by the way, was pushed by PAOs just for that sake. Part of the thinking was the only way to beat the Iraqis to the news was have the news media cover the story immediately. It worked.

Q. Has the Navy news desk adjusted its methods or hours of operation now that the news cycle is a 24-hour one? It was strictly a daytime operation in the experience of many USNPAAA members.

A. No, not in the sense of the bulk of the news desk day; however, we expect more of our duty officers. We expect any photo that comes into Navy Visual News to be released immediately. We expect queries to be answered 24 hours a day. The duty officer became the facilitator and more people did off-hour work from home when needed. However, since most of the operational issues were the ones that came off hours, the Navy PAO in the joint command or the Navy component in the relevant part of the world, handled the story.

Q. A major reorganization of Navy active duty and reserve public affairs assets occurred on your watch. Did the reorganization meet your expectations?

A. The reorganization actually exceeded my

expectations. Quite frankly, we were paying a large bill for essentially part-time employees and using them primarily for special events or the same event over and over again. Therefore, a few of the reserves were plug-and-play PAOs during any type of operation but many, in fact most, were not. By realigning reserve assets with operational units and making the director of that unit responsible not to CHINFO but to the unit, we have started building a much deeper bench. For example, when the Tsunami relief operations started, PACFLT put two of their reserve folks on the plane to South East Asia and they were at work, knowing the system, in less than 48 hours; no on-the-job training during crisis needed. This still will take time to ingrain in our folks but I can tell you that the young reserve PAOs feel they have a satisfying and worthwhile job where they can serve alongside their active counterparts. By the way, only one reserve detachment reports directly to CHINFO..

Q. Navy public affairs personnel seem to be regarded by some sister service peers as more professional than the other service public affairs folks. What accounts for this?

A. We do seem to have a great reputation and it goes to our culture and history. Because our predecessors convinced the Navy we should have a professional PA

community, we have had three to four generations of promoting the best PAOs. This has led to

great respect among our service leadership and PA is not viewed as an afterthought. Our culture also has been to be the naysayer when appropriate. The courage and cultural that allows junior people (yes the PAO is still always the junior person in the room) to say, "Admiral, maybe we need to take a different approach or that won't fly or even that's screwed up," has become accepted in the Navy and even earned us a strong reputation for honesty and integrity. All past PAOs should be justifiably proud of the role they took in developing that culture. It has led to success.

Q. At your change of office ceremony, you paid tribute to a lot of your former leaders and colleagues as showing you the way to be a leader. In retrospect, what personal experience or thing do you feel prepared you best for the challenges of being CHINFO?

A. As a naval officer and PAO, I was, in fact, a product of the jobs I had and the people I worked for. I learned from both good and bad leaders—more from the bad actually. I also learned late in life from a guy named Denny Blair that you can be inclusive with sensitive information and not over compartmentalize it. He brought in everyone who had a stake in an issue or even a bit of knowledge that might help and shared information. You know what? Having that trust in people made for a great work environment and made for a tremendously loyal staff. Not only that, I think better solutions were developed to tough problems. That inclusiveness is what I tried to keep as a leader—tell everyone what I could and let them create the solution. It always was better that what I would have come up with myself.

Q. What is the biggest undone piece of work that you had to leave to your successor?

A. Civilian community management. We thought we were going to be able to tackle it but then DOD went to the National Security Personnel System (NSPS). There was no way we could lay down a whole change in community management when the entire system was changing. It is the biggest job left undone.

Q. Do you have any message for the retired PA community?

A. Just thanks a million. I know it is tough to train youngsters and then turn over the enterprise to them. All of the retired community set the standards that your successors follow today.

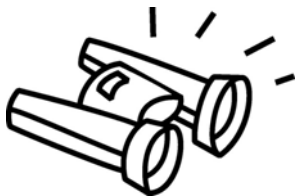
The reputation of Navy PA is as much your doing as anyone on active duty today.

Q. Is there anything else you wish to share about your CHINFO experience with USNPAAA members?

A. Quite frankly, CHINFO was an amazingly easy job to have. The men and women of Team PA were the ones that tackled the hard stuff. They did it with great professionalism, creativity and expertise. When each of your retired, you left individuals behind who could take your place. I hope I did the same. Each and every naval officer should be training the men and women they think can follow them. You did it right. Thanks for everything.

"All past PAOs should be justifiably proud..."

Recently Sighted



Jim McClure has been elected to the Public Relations Society of America's prestigious College of Fellows. He is one of 15 new fellows who

will be honored at the PRSA's 2006 International Conference Nov. 11 in Salt Lake City.

Election to the college, based on lifetime achievement, is a professional honor awarded to senior practitioners and educators. The college includes only 436 of the PRSA's nearly 22,000 members.

Jim started his own public relations practice in 1990 after a 22-year career with Illinois Bell. He has worked with clients in telecommunications, health care, food service and employee communications.

Jim and his wife, Kathy, recently relocated from Chicago to Albuquerque, N.M., where they originally met during Jim's first tour of duty. (He had applied for sea duty out of OCS and received orders to Albuquerque instead.)

Michael Smith was elected president of the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) in July. Mike was the director of the reserve PAO team at the Naval War College before retiring this summer from the U.S. Navy Reserve after completing 30 years of service. As ROA



president he will lead the 72,000-member professional association of officers, former officers and spouses from all of the uniform services, primarily the Reserve and National Guard. ROA is chartered by Congress to advise Congress and the president on issues of national security on behalf of all members of the reserve component.

In civilian life, Mike works as technical director for the Center for Security Strategies and Operations and Information Technology at General Dynamics Corporation in Washington, D.C. He also is an international media consultant.

Bill Spann reports that in March he took a position heading up a national trade association's Florida chapter, allowing him and his family to remain in Tallahassee. "Governor Bush's second and final term ends this year and this was a great opportunity to 'get the big desk' as Mike Todd always called it," Bill said. "Mike was, as usual, right." Association members are commercial general contractors, subcontractors and their suppliers, who together build bridges, dams, highways, malls, condos and basically everything besides private homes.

"The job requires the exact combination of the leadership and communications skills we all learned on active duty," Bill said. He invites anyone interested in learning about opportunities running a non-profit to contact him at: Bill Spann, executive vice president/CEO, Associated General Contractors of Greater Florida, (850)-210-8983 or by email to bill@agcfl.org.

Ron Wildermuth won a Silver Anvil award from the Public Relations Society of America. The award was for community outreach to convince some 2.3 million people and their leaders that they should drink sewer water after it has been purified to near distilled water quality—defeating the toilet to tap media message. "Our purification process is so thorough and high tech that in minutes we can basically strip all the contaminants out of the water," Ron said. "The water is so pure that we cannot put it in conventional water pipes because it will damage them—we have to add minerals back to stabilize the water, just like bottled water companies do to Aquafina and others.

"I was project manager for this seven-year effort, including managing the PR firm and two agencies' outreach efforts. It was quite rewarding. Purified sewer water will be a significant part of California's, the nation's and the world's future water supply. Our project has already been replicated in Singapore. About 10 other U.S. cities are following in our footsteps," Ron wrote.

"What is unique about the project is that three similar projects in California were stopped due to public or political opposition. Our project has no opposition, and it has the support of every major political leader, community group, health and

medical leaders, environmentalists, AARP/seniors, 18,000 businesses, women’s groups, scientists, university experts, etc. The face-to-face tactic was very successful along with asking for a written letters of support. We could not have succeeded by only using ads, brochures, and other collateral.”

Ron adds that after his wife passed away a couple years ago from cancer, he recently married “a terrific lady who is an ex-mayor in Orange County and is active in Republican politics. I could not be happier.”

Brian Cullin reports that he is directing communications for Northrop Grumman Ship Systems. “I had the good fortune of leading one of the most outstanding communications teams in my career in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in directing communications for the largest military shipbuilder in the world and largest employer in Mississippi and Louisiana as we brought back together our 17,000 shipbuilders and got back to the business of building ships,” he said.

The effort was recognized by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC)

with their Gold Quill Excellence Award, the highest award for excellence in emergency communications.

Northrop Grumman’s entry documented the company’s outreach to the thousands of employees displaced by Hurricane Katrina as well as to other significant stakeholder audiences. IABC evaluators noted the company’s overarching concern for employees’ welfare as well as its professional, motivating approach in meeting its objectives.

Brian was part of the Northrop Grumman team that received the award June 5 at the IABC annual conference in Vancouver, Canada. “IABC receives more than 1,000 entries from all over the world and I could not be prouder of our Northrop Grumman communications team,” Brian said.

IABC’s Pacific Plains Region also announced that Northrop Grumman was selected for its top recognition, the Silver Quill Excellence Award, at the same conference. Both awards came in the Issues Management and Crisis Communication category.

Contact Brian at cullinbmw@aol.com.



By the Sea, By the Sea—where your friends will find you at Reunion XI in March. But check out the snazzy bedroom. Can we all fit in there?

