



The



# VIGILANTE



## Points of Interest!

- The Gear is Here!

## Inside this Edition

- Enlisted Aviators
- Speech from Don Tice CDR USN (ret)
- Spotlight on a Shipmate / Then and Now
- History lesson
- Did you Know?

## Did You Know?

### Scuttlebutt

The cask of drinking water on ships was called a scuttlebutt and since Sailors exchanged gossip when they gathered at the scuttlebutt for a drink of water, scuttlebutt became U.S. Navy slang for gossip or rumors. A butt was a wooden cask which held water or other liquids; to scuttle is to drill a hole, as for tapping a cask.

## SAVE THE DATE!!!!

### RVAHNAVY

Reunion 2009 will be  
in Pensacola FL  
June 18 - 21, 2009



### from NEBNA website

Traditionally, the Naval Aviator, i.e. Pilots, Navigators and Bombardiers have been Naval Officers. During times of war, with the shortage of Naval Officers, Enlisted Men were called upon to volunteer for positions of Pilots, Navigators and Bombardiers. Other positions for aircrew men, i.e. mechanics, radiomen, electronic technicians, etc. were held by enlisted men.

The Naval Enlisted Bombardier Navigator position was never officially sanctioned by the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS).

123 Enlisted Men have been trained and assigned to the position of Bombardier Navigator from different squadrons and their parent commands. Many of the enlisted bombardier navigators did get promoted to Officer rank, however, they did start as an Enlisted Bombardier Navigator.

The Enlisted Bombardier Navigator has flown in many different

Naval Aircraft. The primary aircraft has been the P2V Neptune, the AJ2 Savage, the A3D

capacity was needed, and began designing a prototype in 1941 as a private venture.

World War II delayed the first flight of a prototype until 1945 following an order from the Navy for two of them. Delivery of production models began in 1947. Designated the P2V "Neptune", it grossed out at 61,000 lbs, was powered by two 2,300 hp Wright engines with a maximum speed of 303 mph, possessed three .50 caliber machine gun turrets (later converted to 20 mm

cannons), an enclosed bomb-bay capable of carrying two torpedoes or twelve depth charges, and provisions for

sixteen underwing rockets. Later versions were equipped with more powerful engines as well as one, the P2V-7, with a 2,300 lb thrust jet engine under each

wing. Various submarine detection devices such as MAD and Julie/Jezebel were incorporated as state-of-the-art



Skywarrior and the A5A or RA5C Vigilante.

### P2V "Neptune"

After close-contact with Navy



patrol squadrons, Lockheed concluded that a new, shore-based, ASW long-range airplane with a greater ordnance load

electronic development progressed. It was not in the patrol-bomber role that the P2V became famous, but rather as a record setter. In 1946 a

The last Anti-Submarine Warfare P2V (a P2V-7) made its final flight in February, 1970. Co-pilot of the aircraft (RADM Davies) had been the

the time) nuclear strike aircraft to fly from an aircraft carrier. The "Savage" displayed its great range capability in the first trans-Atlantic



P2V named the "Truculent Turtle" flew non-stop from Perth, Australia (with a kangaroo on board) to Columbus, Ohio, a distance of 11,235 miles in 55 hours 17 minutes - a record for the longest flight without refueling that stood for 16 years. This was followed in 1949 by a flight from an aircraft carrier off the Virginia coast with 10,000 lbs of dummy bombs onboard, across the continent to the west coast, dropped its bombs, and returned non-stop to NAS Patuxent, Md. In addition to the distance traveled, the aircraft held the distinction of being the heaviest plane (74,668 lbs) to ever take-off from a carrier up to that time. The 1950s brought even more records for the P2V. In 1951, a P2V accompanied five AJ-1 "Savages" in completing the first transatlantic flight by carrier type aircraft on a trip from Norfolk, Virginia to Port Lyautey, Morocco. Then in 1955, a P2V patrol squadron was the first to fly around the world as a squadron. The P2Vs were the mainstay of Navy land-based patrol squadrons until replaced by the Lockheed P-3 "Orion".

pilot of the record setting "Truculent Turtle". Thereafter, it joined others in service as utility aircraft in Naval Reserve Squadrons.

#### **AJ-2 "Savage"**

Ordered by the Navy in 1946 as a high-performance carrier-based nuclear strike aircraft, the AJ "Savage" was destined to replace the P2V "Neptune" in this role. Equipped with two 2,400 hp Pratt & Whitney R-2800 engines as well as a 4,600 lb thrust Allison J33 auxiliary jet in the tail, the first AJs were delivered to the Navy in 1949. With the completion of carrier suitability tests in 1950, the AJ was introduced into operational service with the fleet as the largest (at

flight by carrier type aircraft when five AJ-1s in company with three P2V-3Cs flew from Norfolk to Port Lyautey, French Morocco. A sixth AJ-1 failed to complete the trip when it was grounded at Lajes, Azores, one of the scheduled en

route stops.

In addition to the nuclear strike role, the "Savage" was also modified for use as a carrier-based flight-refueling tanker. Some were fitted with five cameras in a redesigned nose and employed as photo-reconnaissance aircraft. These modifications were in response to the arrival of a new nuclear-strike aircraft, the Douglas A3D, which had beaten out a turbine powered variant of the "Savage" (A2J) in a design competition. AJs remained in service as tankers until the mid-1960s.

#### **A-3D "Skywarrior"**

Designed in 1947 to fit the role of a heavy bomber capable of operating





from carriers, the "Skywarrior" was intended to maximize the combination of jet-engine power and nuclear weapons delivery capability. The initial designed gross weight of 60,000 lbs (later increased to 82,000 lbs) made it the largest and heaviest plane ever projected for use from carriers then in service. The A-3 incorporated a 36 degree swept-wing design, podded engines, and an internal weapons storage bay capable of carrying 12,000 lbs of ordnance. First flown on October 28, 1952, the first of fifty production models were delivered to the Navy on March 31, 1956. It was these aircraft (manned by three crewmen) that were instrumental in evaluating the total concept of carrier-based strategic bombers, and experimenting with their use aboard aircraft carriers. Because of its size, the A3D was known as the "Whale". Unlike most jet aircraft, the A3D was not equipped with an ejection seat. Instead, the crew exited the A3D through a chute under the fuselage. Two hundred and thirty variants of this first version of the A3D would see service in a wide array of missions. The A3D-2 incorporated a change in the weapons bay in order to accommodate a wider range of weapons stores (including mines), as well as a 1,082 gallon in-flight refueling pack. The YA3D-1P photo-reconnaissance version and the A3D-



2Q (EA-3B) radar countermeasures and electronic reconnaissance aircraft were also developed. The A3D-2T with a pressurized fuselage was employed as a trainer for radar/navigation crewmen and could accommodate six pupils plus an instructor and the pilot.

3During the Vietnam War, the

"Skywarrior" served in the tanker and countermeasures capacity. Navy squadrons operated the EA-3B as a radar countermeasures and electronic jamming aircraft while the KA-3B tanker was utilized to top up the fuel for carrier-based strike aircraft on their way to missions into Vietnam. About thirty aircraft became EKA-3Bs with the dual role of countermeasures as well as tanker aircraft.

### **A-5A and RA-5C "Vigilante"**

Development of the North American A3J "Vigilante" began in 1952. Design criteria specified a two-seat, Mach 2 all-weather carrier-based bomber for delivery of nuclear weapons. Fitted with the new low-altitude bombing system (LABS) and an inertial navigation system (INS), the A3J was capable of carrying a 3,020 lb Mk-27 nuclear store or a 1,885 lb configuration of the Mk-28 weapon. Utilizing such methods as the loft bombing technique, the weapon would be ejected rearward from its internal linear bomb bay. Attached to the weapon were two empty fuel tanks to improve weapon aerodynamics and whose contents had been used en route to the target (a system fraught with problems that were never completely corrected). A high wing layout with a swept wing design, the "Vigilante" was the first production aircraft to use variable geometry intakes for its two side-by-side engines.

On 13 December 1960, Navy Commander Leroy Heath (Pilot) and Lieutenant Larry Monroe (Bombardier/Navigator) established a world altitude record of 91,450.8 feet (27,874.2 metres) in an A3J Vigilante carrying a 1,000 kilogram payload, besting the previous record by over four miles. This new record held for over 13 years..

The first squadron deployment occurred in August 1962 aboard the USS Enterprise on its first cruise. Shortly thereafter the Navy's strategic

bombing mission was assumed by nuclear powered submarine Polaris missiles. The A3J's mission then reverted to that of photo reconnaissance with the introduction in 1963 of the RA-5C "Vigilante" incorporating a sophisticated electronic reconnaissance pod in its bomb-bay that included a side-looking airborne radar



in a fairing under the fuselage, vertical, oblique and split-image cameras as well as active and passive ECM equipment. Production deliveries began in mid-1964 and shortly thereafter began flying reconnaissance missions over Vietnam from carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin in which nineteen of them were lost to enemy fire.

The INS combined with an automatic flight control system enabled the RA-5C to fly precise courses on mission altitudes ranging from high to tree-top levels. Each photo taken carried a marginal notation that displayed latitude and longitude of the plane at the time it was taken, thus pinpointing target locations. The information obtained was then incorporated into a shipboard data bank and used for mission planning. Several RA-5Cs were also outfitted with a probe-and-drogue refueling package to serve as "buddy tankers" for compatible aircraft. Despite its Mach 2 capability, several "Vigilantes" were lost to surface-to-air missiles and/or anti-aircraft fire.

Gradual disestablishment of the "Vigilante" force occurred during 1979-1980 with the deactivation of the last RA-5C squadron, and phasing out of the last of the 156 RA-5/A-3Js produced.

# RIGHT SEAT VIEWS

by Joe Shevlin Capt USNR

Prior to VAH-6s deployment for a '64 – '65 Med cruise on the USS Forrestal, we departed NAS Whidbey Island and flew as a 12 plane squadron cross-country to NAS Oceana.

It was quite a feat for the maintenance department to get all 12 aircraft up and fully ready, but they came through as they always did. After takeoff, all planes joined up and flew in a max-range formation for five hours,

causing many on the ground to look up and wonder what was going on. Sitting in the right seat, the B/Ns could dial in local radio stations and hear some of the broadcasters telling people to look up and watch as we passed overhead at 33,000 feet. There was considerable speculation about our flight. Sitting in the right seat, just as contented as I could be, I had fulfilled my dream of being a heavy attack B/N. Having joined the squadron a few months earlier, this was my first deployment. I was pleased and must have told the pilot (LCDR R. E. "Wiley" Post) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> crewman (Chief A. W. Larson) a dozen times on that flight how happy I was.

As I think back to those memories of our deployment to the Med, I recall it as being among the most enjoyable periods in my life. VAH-6 was one terrific squadron and was made up of extremely talented and hard-working professionals. Those who maintained the planes, worked the flight deck, and were responsible for all of the operational and administrative duties were exceptional. Our Navigation Officer, LCDR George Pearson, was a stickler

for training and readiness. Among



other things, we flew Radar Bomb Scoring flights against NATO targets, low level missions in the Sierra Nevada and other mountains, night Pressure Line of Position flights, and, of course, bombed the spar that was drug behind the carrier. And there were many other readiness exercises, such as unannounced nuclear weapon loads and launches, practice drills against a shipboard NBC attack, and the most memorable of all—an endurance and fatigue exercise where the medical department hooked us up to monitors to gather data after flying and working "x" amount of hours without sleep.

During our deployment, we experienced the Mediterranean each of the seasons. We celebrated holidays in ports such as Rota, Barcelona, Valencia, Cannes, Genoa, Naples, Palma, Malta, Athens, and Istanbul. We worked hard while at sea, and played hard ashore. Morale was always high and it wasn't uncommon for crews or departments to play tricks on others. I recall during the winter months, when flight crews needed to wear anti-exposure "poopy suits," that one particular pilot was always the last to don

his exposure suit before a flight (the suits could be hot and uncomfortable). During the flight briefing, three pi-

lots who were not scheduled to fly, entered the separate locker area behind

the ready room, poured grape jelly into each foot of the "late donning pilot's" exposure suit, and then switched the padlock on his locker. When the briefing ended, and it was time for the pilot to change, he was unable to

unlock his locker. As the clock ticked forward, and nothing seemed to work, the duty officer called for someone in maintenance to bring a bolt cutter. There were many in the ready room who knew the trick was being pulled off who could barely contain their laughter. By the time the lock was cut, it was almost past the time for pilots or flight crews to man their aircraft. Having no time to spare, the delinquent pilot pulled his exposure suit over his winter flight gear and departed for his plane. Or I should say, squished off to the flight deck and then into his plane. It was a great joke, which the pilot took in good humor, and we all laughed about it for days. Looking back, however, it was a dangerous trick which could have had a bad outcome. During my active and reserve years, I was a B/N in the A-3B, a RAN in the RA-5C, and a TN in the C-118. Of all the plane in which I flew, I always loved the A-3B the best. It was a dream airplane and VAH-6 was one terrific squadron.



**U.S. Naval Enlisted Bombardier/Navigator  
Memorial Plaque Dedication  
RA5C Vigilante site  
Sanford FL International Airport  
10 November 2007  
CDR Don Tise (USN Retired)  
Guest Speaker**

We are here today to honor and recognize a very unique group of men who served their country with distinction – **The Naval Enlisted Bombardier/Navigator**. Until the early 1950's, there were basically only two types of Officers in Naval Aviation Carrier Squadrons – Naval Aviators and Aircraft Maintenance Officers. There were also a few Naval Aviation Observers (NAO), however, this position was used primarily for Aerographers.

With the development of Carrier-Based Aircraft (i.e. AJ Savage, followed by the A3

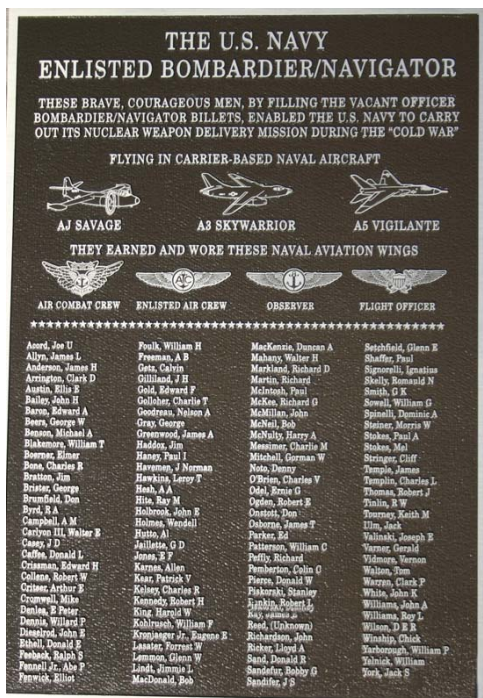
Skywarrior and the A5 Vigilante) that had the capability to deliver a nuclear weapon, this suddenly created the need to develop and train crews for this task.

Of all the initial options studied and tested, which included various Officer Programs, the use

of well-motivated and skilled Enlisted Men to team with the Pilot and fill the billet of Bombardier/Navigator was by far the most successful from its earliest days. The Enlisted B/N Training Program was relatively short-lived (10 years), but filled a critical need extremely well during its existence. It began in late 1954 when a notice went out to the fleet for volunteers. The first Enlisted B/N was AMH-1 Abe Fennel, who graduated from Heavy Attack Training Unit Atlantic (HATWING-1) in September 1954. The program ended in 1964 with the graduation of ATC Cal Getz and AD-1 Al Hutto. It should be noted that the training classes included both Officer and Enlisted Men. The Enlisted B/Ns competed very

favorably in this situation. Almost all of the Enlisted B/Ns were on the East Coast. The West Coast did not really endorse this concept. A total of 123 Enlisted Men graduated from this program and served with distinction.

This program had some major incentives for an Enlisted Man. First, it provided an opportunity to fly in Navy Jets, sec-



ond, to draw flight pay in a time of tight budgets and salaries and third, if desired, and opportunity to advance into the Limited Duty Officer (LDO) Program. About 65% took the LDO path. CDR "Rotten" Ralph Feeback, (USN Retired) is one example of where this program could lead.

The competence and performance of the Enlisted B/Ns was so good, that they were welcomed into every squadron. Since they were in effect occupying an Officer's billet, they frequently performed duties normally done by Officers. For example, as a First Class Petty Officer, Ralph Feeback was the Squadron NATOPS Officer.

Do you remember the "Totem Pole"

that was in front of the Navy Exchange at NAS Sanford in the early/mid 1960's? It listed the current ranking of the top crews in Bombing Derby Competition. The Enlisted B/Ns usually dominated the rankings, although there were only about 25% or less of the B/Ns in an A3 Squadron.

The Enlisted B/N Program ended when the Navy fully developed and implemented the Naval Flight Officer (NFO) Program, which provided a full career path for flying Officers who were not Pilots.

The Enlisted B/N Program played an important part in Naval Aviation history, was the "God Father" of the current NFO Program and played an important role in the Navy's development of nuclear weapons delivery procedures.

On a personal note, I have first hand experience regarding the professionalism of Enlisted B/Ns. During my 1963 cruise on the USS Saratoga, flying the A3 Skywarrior, I was

privileged to serve with three Enlisted (or former Enlisted) B/Ns, George Beers, Pat Kear

and Denny Noto. During my 1963-1964 Transition Training in RVAH-3 to the RA5C Vigilante, I received much of my training from men like Chick Winship and Al Hutto, who did a superb job! Denny Noto also served with me in RVAH-9 on the USS Saratoga during the first med cruise deployment of the RA5C in 1964-1965.

The only known Enlisted B/N to fly in combat in Vietnam in the RA5C was ATC Cal Getz.

Others who had become LDOs and some were tragically lost in combat and we honor them

for making the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

To all those who were Naval Enlisted Bombardier/Navigators, I salute you for a Job Well

Done. **BRAVO ZULU!**

CDR Don Tise (USN Retired)

# Spotlight on a Shipmate

## “Then and Now”

The date was July 2, 1979. We were in formation on the hanger deck in dress blues. In just a few moments RVAH-12 would exist only in Navy history books and our memories. Our squadron was being decommissioned. I looked at the sailors and officers directly in front of me. Our RA-5C jets were already gone except for the last remaining Speartips-painted bird that was standing guard behind us for display and ceremonial purposes. When the decommissioning ceremony was over this aircraft would be towed to corrosion control and a remaining RVAH squadron's colors would be painted over our beautiful brilliant red, white and blue scheme.

This was a sad moment indeed but this was also my last day of active duty. It was a bittersweet moment. Many of my RVAH-12

shipmates were moving onto other duty stations and others who were close to the end of their enlistment were offered the opportunity to get out early. There was so much activity that it was difficult to know who was staying in and who was shoving off. We were scattered like the wind to new duty stations or our

home towns. I had already decided to give civilian life a try and Petty Officer Jimmy Hodges decided to stay on active duty. I had no idea our paths would cross again 20 years later.

Jimmy Hodges is our June “Then and Now” Spotlight on a Sailor. Jimmy joined the Navy in June of 1974 and attended boot camp in San Diego Ca. He then attended Navy “A”



(AD) school in Millington TN. From 1975 – 1979 Jimmy served with RVAH-11, 12 and 3. He then moved to NAS Patuxent River and served with Strike Aircraft Test Directorate. Jimmy then served with VFA-137 at NAS Cecil Field, Florida and VFA-125 NAS Lemoore, California and VAQ-132 NAS Whidbey Island, Washington respectively. He then served a tour with the Bureau of

Naval Personnel (BUPERS) Washington, D.C. Jimmy's first tour as Command Master Chief was Command Master Chief NAS Ke

flavik, Iceland. In 1999 Jimmy's second Command Master Chief tour was VP-1 NAS Whidbey Island, Washington and this is where our paths crossed again. I was a civil servant working with the Navy's discrepancy reporting program and I found out that my former shipmate was none other than Master Chief Hodges. I decided a surprise visit was in order. I was thrilled to meet him all over again. He had done so well in his naval career and I was proud that he had done so. I remembered all

the Bombay fuel can removals and installations and the long hours we served together at sea and ashore. We were usually greasy and dirty and sweaty. And of course we loved it. Those were good times. Master Chief Hodges was the still the same old Jimmy but there was gold all over his uniform this time. Gone were the

long sleeve green mechanic jerseys and dungarees. We had a great visit talking about the Heavies and the old days. Good stuff!

Jimmy left NAS Whidbey Island to serve as Command Master Chief of Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) Stuttgart, Commander Fleet Air Mediterranean (COMFAIRMED) Naples, Italy and finally U.S. Naval Hospital, Okinawa, Japan. Jimmy retired in October 2007. I guess after 30 plus years he decided that was enough. Along the way he managed to earn a



few ribbons too: Meritorious Service Medal (3), Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal (3), Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal (2), Meritorious Unit Commendation (3), Navy "E" Ribbon (2), Good Conduct Medal (30 years), National Defense Service Medal (3), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon (4), Navy/Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon (5), United Nations Medal and Pistol Marksman Medal (Expert) Today Jimmy serves as the Health Care Relations Coordinator and Public Affairs Officer at the Naval Hospital in Naples, Italy





# Martha Cothren's military history class at Joe T. Robinson High School in Little Rock, Arkansas learns about freedom

In September of 2005, a social studies schoolteacher from Arkansas did



They thought, "Well, maybe it's our grades."

"No," she said.

"Maybe it's our behavior."

And she told them, "No, it's not even your behavior."

And so they came and went in the first period, still no desks in the classroom. Second period, same thing. Third period. By early afternoon television news crews had gathered in the class to find out about this crazy teacher who had taken all the desks out of the classroom. The last period of the day, the instructor gathered her class.

tell you."

She went over to the door of her classroom and opened it, and as she did 27 U.S. veterans, wearing their uniforms, walked into that classroom, each one carrying a school desk. And they placed those school desks in rows, and then they stood along the wall. By the time they had finished placing the desks, those kids for the first time I think perhaps in their lives understood how they earned those desks.

Their teacher said, "You don't have to earn

those desks. These guys did it for you.

They put them out there for you, but it's up to you to sit here responsibly,

to learn, to be good students and good citizens, because they paid a price for you to have that desk, and don't ever forget it."

something not to be forgotten. On the first day of school, with permission of the school superintendent, the principal, and the building supervisor, she took all of the desks out of the classroom. The kids came into first period, they walked in; there were no desks. They obviously looked around and said, "Where's our desks?"

The teacher said, "You can't have a desk until you tell me how you earn them."



They were at this time sitting on the floor around the sides of the room. She said, "Throughout the day no one has really understood how you earn the desks that sit in this classroom ordinarily. Now I'm going to

# THE RVAHNAVY STORE IS OPEN!

Shipmates!

Good News! The RVAHNAVY store is now open! We have partnered with 2 fantastic vendors. You can find these vendors on the [RVAHNAVY.COM](http://RVAHNAVY.COM) website home page.

We are VERY proud to announce our partnership with [NAVYCHIEF.COM](http://NAVYCHIEF.COM)! This company is owned and managed by former Navy Chiefs. The quality of their products and the service they provide is the best in the business. NAVYCHIEF has agreed to offer our RVAH shipmates a 15% discount by using a product code. The code is: **RVAHNAVY**. All capital letters and no spaces. You must use this code when placing your order. NAVYCHIEF is offering us the following RVAHNAVY personalized products:

- Mouse Pads
- Coffee Mugs
- Travel Mugs
- Plaques
- Trailer Hitch Covers
- Koozies (Foldable Can Cooler)
- Coasters



We are also VERY proud to announce our partnership with [Plane Crazy Enterprises](http://Plane Crazy Enterprises)! Carl Altevogt established Plane Crazy in 1985 and has provided quality products and service to tens of thousands of customers. Carl regularly attends RVAH and other military reunions so many of you may already know him. Plane Crazy Enterprises has agreed to provide our RVAHNAVY shipmates with a 20% discount on all RVAH related products. You must use the promo code **RVAH** to get the discount.

## These Patches are available to order NOW!!

