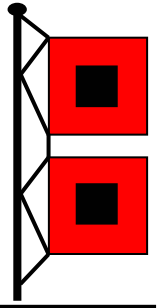


HURRICANE HUNTERS NEWSLETTER



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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK...

It is Spring Time. It is the time that all of the Northern Hemisphere is waking up from a long cold winter's nap and renewing itself. So should all of us here in the Hunter Nation. Time to start plowing the earth and sowing seeds for the coming year. Time to start planning ahead for what's to come. Not only should we do this in our physical world but in our social and spiritual world.

Okay let's get going. Our 2015 Annual Hurricane Hunter Reunion will be held in Pensacola, Florida at the Crown Plaza Hotel and Resort. The time will be October 22nd thru October 24th, 2015 with early check in on Wednesday 21st, 2015. You will be able to make your reservations at (850) 433-3336 or you can pull up their web-site at www.crowneplaza.com/cppensacola Please inform them that you are with the Hurricane Hunters and if they ask for a code, it is HHR.

I know a lot of you were expecting our reunion to be held the last week of September. For that error, I am totally to blame. I take responsibility for that failure and ask that I be forgiven. I had been operating under the assumption that our reunion reservation had been penciled in for that time frame. We were supposed to be contacted if anyone else wanted that time frame and we were supposed to be given 1st choice by sending in all monies required to hold that time frame. Unfortunately, that didn't happen. When I called March 2nd to confirm our reservation, I was informed that the slot was already contracted out. This time slot (October 21st thru 25th) was all that remained within a two month period. It was the best I could negotiate and ask that members forgive me for this.

Our Pensacola team has our time slot now written in stone and is on the job to ensure that this reunion will be another great success.

This being one of the 05 or 10 year's reunion, it is time for the re-election of your Board and Officers. Our Secretary, Mr. James J. Evans, has made his wishes known that he is giving up his position as Secretary. Mr. Arvid Nelson has graciously acknowledged that he would be willing to fill in at that capacity. However, he will still have to be elected by ballot for the position. If anyone else is interested, please let me know. One of our Directors, Mr. Wayne Ledbetter, has tendered his resignation due to health reasons. That position will have to be filled. I am very optimistically looking forward to one of our members willing and able to step forward and fulfilling this open position. I know there are a lot of capable and good members out there that would be welcomed by all members. Come on gang, I know we can do this.

Let's get working on the new year and making plans for our 2015 reunion. Fair Winds and Following Seas.

E.R. Eaton
President
Navy Hurricane Hunters

TAPS

It is with a heavy heart that we report the passing of the following members:

AT1 Charlie Harris's wife Marge Harris passed on Monday, May 26, 2014. She had been very ill for a long time. Charlie was assigned to the Radio Shop

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TAPS

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at NS Roosevelt Roads and NAS Jacksonville.

Robert Searles passed June 13, 2014. He was over 90 years old. His passing was reported by his son John, with no other information.

HURRICANE HUNTERS, INC.

A non-profit Florida corporation 501.c.19

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Association address:
Hurricane Hunters, Inc.
P.O. Box 506
Vernon, Florida 32462

Now, This Is No ...

[Editor's Note: Our previous *Newsletter* publisher, former President, and beloved shipmate Ray Boylan collected a number of old "Sea Stories" that he published in the *Newsletter* from time-to-time under the heading "Now, This Is No ..." The following article, "Meeting Gracie" and others were passed along for our future enjoyment.]

Meeting Gracie

By CDR Claude Giles, USN (Ret.)

I was in the VW-4 Hurricane Hunters based at NAS Jacksonville in 1959. I was a relatively new Patrol Plane Commander flying WV-3. Super Constellations. During the hurricane season that year, I flew an average of 50 hours per month. Most of those flights were on pre-planned tracks looking

for a developing hurricane. In late September we flew into "Gracie," the strongest storm of the season. It produced winds of 145 mph and was rated a Category Four storm when it hit South Carolina. On 22 September our flight to observe the storm, Gracie was developing, so there were no problems. The flight next day; however, was the worst experience of my career.

We took off just before dawn and headed for southern Florida, then direct toward Gracie which was meandering around since the previous day but had now intensified. Our radar showed the spiral bands of the growing storm. I was glad our meteorology officer (Met) was a very experienced Lieutenant. He and the radar operator conferred continuously. The Lieutenant had selected a heading that would lead us between the spiral bands. He would then turn navigation over to the radar operator for recommended headings. Turbulence increased expectedly. The radar operator reported we had a solid mass of clouds ahead. We briefed the crew to tie everything down and tighten safety belts. The flight engineer increased propeller RPM so that we could instantly add power if necessary without harming the engines.

The Met officer, observing the ocean waves, said, "I've never seen such heights 'or strong winds!" The waves were over 60-feet high and the wind was so strong that it was blowing the tops off the waves.

As we entered the wall of clouds we went on instruments and were immediately bouncing up and down. The instrument panel was vibrating badly. We hit severe down drafts. Passing through 400 feet the Met officer yelled into the intercom. "Pull it up!" We were already adding power. He was watching the radar altimeter; and as we reached 300 feet, his voice was even louder and noticeably agitated. "Bring it up!" he shouted. I transmitted to him that we had applied maximum power and were seeking 500 feet of altitude.

Slowly, with our four engines producing over 12,000 horsepower, we slowly ascended to 500 feet and continued into the storm. We heard the Met officer give a sigh of relief. After a time we broke

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Meeting Gracie

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into the clear. We were in the eye of Gracie. It was a beautiful sight and very calm with minor turbulence. Gracie's eye was 10 miles in diameter. We actually saw birds sitting on logs and other debris in the water. To remain in the eye we flew in a steady 30-degree angle of bank. We could look up and see clear blue sky. We stayed in the eye for more than an hour so the crew could rest and have a coffee break.

The Met officer sent his report to the Hurricane Center. The crew prepped for our exit from the eye. Anticipating the fierce down drafts, we-eased up to 700 feet, giving us a better cushion of altitude. Exiting the hurricane was just as rough as the entry. We flew in a counter-clockwise direction with the moving clouds.

As we departed from the eye of Gracie, turbulence and wind decreased. Our orders were to check all quadrants of the storm and report wind speed. This would help the Hurricane Center issue accurate warnings. It took several hours going around Gracie. She was a very large storm. (The damage caused by the storm was 15 million dollars, and 22 lives were lost.) We were instructed to land in Miami and report to the National Hurricane Center for a detailed debriefing.

Later, the Met officer said he had never had such a rough ride or flown so low above a raging sea. We did not tell him that we had heard him say he did not want to fly again, and that he might take a train home. However, next morning, he was with us for the return flight to NAS Jacksonville .

Early Pensacola History

Pensacola is the oldest European settlement in mainland America (1559). Its location has caused great turmoil, with many buildings destroyed by wars, and by numerous major hurricanes. The location, south of the original British colonies, as the dividing line between French Louisiana and

Spanish Florida, along the Perdido River, has caused Pensacola to change ownership several times. Pensacola was Spanish, then French, then Spanish, then British, then Spanish again, before becoming American, then Confederate, and then the current U.S. city. Early exploration of Pensacola Bay (dalled Polonza or Ochuse) spanned decades, with Ponce de Leon (1513), Panfilo de Narvaez (1528), and Hernando de Soto (1539) plus others charting the area.

Due to prior exploration, the first settlement of Pensacola was large. Led by Don Tristan de Luna y Arellano 1,400 people on 11 ships from Vera Cruz, Mexico, landed on August 15, 1559 and established the settlement at Pensacola. However, weeks later, the colony was decimated by a hurricane on September 19, 1559, which killed hundreds, sank five ships, grounded a caravel [ship], and ruined supplies. The 1,000 survivors divided to relocate/resupply the settlement, but due to famine and attacks by Indians, the effort was abandoned in 1561. About 240 people sailed to Santa Elena (today's Parris Island, South Carolina), but another storm hit there, so they sailed to Cuba and scattered. The remaining 50 at Pensacola were taken back to Mexico, and the Viceroy's advisors concluded that northwest Florida was too dangerous to settle, for 135 years.

Lighthouse And Museum Offers Tours And Glimpse Of History

The Pensacola Lighthouse and Museum located aboard NAS Pensacola a short distance from the Naval Aviation Museum, offers an unique view of Pensacola's early and continued maritime history. Through a lease with the U.S. Coast Guard, the Pensacola Lighthouse Association is solely responsible for the maintenance and public tour operations of the Pensacola Light. The landmark 1859 lighthouse, situated on Pensacola Bay across from the Naval Aviation Museum, offers indoor and outdoor history exhibit, climbing tours to the top of the lighthouse, Light of the Moon tours,

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Lighthouse And Museum Offers Tours And Glimpse Of History

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Ghost Hunts, and a gift shop. The Richard C. Callaway Museum, located in the restored 1869 light keeper's quarters, offers local history exhibits including: Late Weeden Island culture, Presidio Santa Maria de Galve, first Pensacola Lighthouse, and the villages of Warrington and Woosley.

A lighthouse at Pensacola was first proposed in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and in March of 1823, Congress authorized \$6,000 for the Pensacola Lighthouse. On March 24, 1824, Winslow Lewis, responding to an advertisement in the Boston Patriot, offered to build the lighthouse and dwelling for \$4,927. For an additional cost of \$750, Lewis would "fit up and Light the Light House with ten patent Lamps and ten fourteen inch Reflectors and furnish two spare Lamps, six double tin oil butts to hold ninety gallons each, six wooden boxes, One lantern canister and trivet. One tube box. One wick box. One oil carrier. One torch. One hand lantern Lamp. One oil feeder. Two files. Two pairs of scissors. Six wick formers and have it completed in thirty days afdter the Light House is finished." Lewis' offer was accepted by Stephen Pleasonton, fifth auditor of the Treasury, on April 2, 1824.

The light from the new tower was first exhibited on December 20, 1824 by a bachelor Jeremiah Ingraham. To produce a flashing signature, two groups of five lamps were fastened to opposite ends of a

framework, which was rotated by a clockwork system.

After two years at the post, Ingraham married Michaela Penalber of Pensacola. Together, they managed the light and reared three children at the station. When Jeremiah died in 1840, Michaela operated the lighthouse until her death in 1855, when her son-in-law, Joseph Palmes, was hired as keeper.

By 1850, regular complaints were starting to be voiced regarding the lighthouse. Trees on Santa Rosa Island were said to block the light, and the light was considered too dim. In 1852, the newly established Lighthouse Board recommended that a "first-class seacoast light" with a height no less than 150 feet be built at Pensacola. Congress allocated \$25,000 for the lighthouse in 1854, and an additional \$30,000 in 1856. A site was selected one-half mile west of the original lighthouse, and work began. The construction was completed in 1858, and the lamp in the tower's first-order Fresnel lens was first lit on New Year's Day, 1859 by keeper Palmes. The tower stood 159 feet tall and was painted white. The base of the tower had a diameter of 30 feet, tapering to a diameter of 15 feet at the top. The upper portion of the tower was later painted black to provide contrast against a cloudy sky.

Make Your Reservations Now For Our Pensacola Reunion

Our planning team for the 2015 Hurricane Hunters' Reunion has arranged a block of rooms at the Crowne Plaza Pensacola Grand Hotel at the special rate of \$109.00 per night plus 11.5% tax for the nights of October 22 through 24 with the possibility of early arrival on October 21. Make your reservation by calling (850) 433-3336 or online at www.crowneplaza.com/cppensacola, using code HHR.

Reservations must be made before October 1, 2015, in order to secure one of the blocked rooms at the Hurricane Hunters' special room rate.