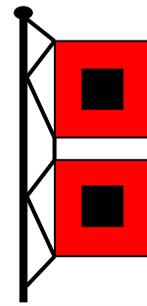


# HURRICANE HUNTERS NEWSLETTER



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## From the President's Desk

Spring.... Springtime is here. A time when the world refreshes it's self. A time for a new beginning. Let us all get together behind our newly elected President and help him make AMERICA great again. It might take awhile, but America will refresh itself, because we now have an administration that believes in GOD. Let us all start a new springtime and be part of something that we can all be proud of.

Spring is here and time to start thinking of our annual squadron reunion. It will be held in the same hotel as last year. Early check-in will be on Tuesday and Wednesday September 26-27, 2017. Regular Check-in will be September 28, 2017 and run thru September 30, 2017 with check-out October 01, 2017. I am looking forward to meeting each and everyone of you again. Let us have a great reunion meeting and greeting each other and renewing old acquaintances and making new friends. If you know someone who has not attended in awhile, please contact them and invite them. I assure you, they will thank you later.

I received an e-mail from Pete Wasmund, the VW-1 All hands Alumni Association Web-site Manager that their old site was taken down and replaced. I know a lot of the VW-4 personnel were in both squadrons, so if you would like to re-connect to some of your old squadron mates, the new site is:::  
<http://vw1assoc.org> Springtime so let's renew old friendships and squadron mates.

I received the article, "DEAD BUG" form Bud Horn, author unknown. I know this is the time for renewal, but sometimes it's great to reflect. How many of you remember the old NAVY Aviation???

*Ennis R. Eaton  
President*

*US Navy Hurricane Hunters.*

## DEAD BUG!!!

A tribute to Military Aviators (in victory, you deserve Champagne, in defeat, you need it!!)

As we get older and we experience the loss of old friends, we begin to realize that maybe we bullet-proof aviators won't live forever. We aren't so bullet-proof anymore. We ponder... If I were gone tomorrow, "Did I say what I wanted to my Brothers?" The answer is "NO" Hence, the following random thoughts.

When people ask me if I miss flying, I always say something like, "YES I miss flying because when you are flying, you are totally focused on the task at hand. It's like nothing else you will ever do (almost)" But then I always say, "However, I miss the squadron and the guys even more than I miss flying."

Why, you might ask? They were a bunch of aggressive, wise ass, cocky, insulting, sarcastic bastards in smelly flight suits who thought a funny thing to do was fart and see if you could clear a room. They drank too much, they chased women, they flew when they shouldn't, they laughed too loud and thought they owned the sky, the bar, and generally thought they could do everything better than the next guy. Nothing was funnier than trying to screw with a buddy and see how pissed-off they would get. They flew planes that leaked, that smoked, that broke, that couldn't turn, that burned fuel too fast, that never had working autopilots or radars, and with systems that were archaic next to today's new generation aircraft.

But a little closer look might show that every guy in the room was sneaky smart and damn competent and brutally handsome in their own way! They hated to

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## DEAD BUG!!!

*(Continued from Page One)*

lose or fail to accomplish the mission and seldom did. They were the laziest guys on the planet until challenged and then they would do anything to win. They would fly with wing tips overlapped at night through the worse weather with only little "Form" light to hold on to, knowing their flight lead would get them on the ground safely. They would fight in the air knowing the greatest risk and fear was that another fighter would arrive at the same six o'clock at the same time they did, They would fly in harm's way and act nonchalant as if to challenge the grim reaper.

When we flew to another base we proclaimed that we were the best squadron on the base as soon as we landed. Often we were not invited back. When we went into the O' club we owned the bar. We were lucky to be the Best of the Best in the Military. We knew it and so did the others. We found jobs, lost jobs, got married, got divorced, moved, went broke, got rich, broke some things, and knew that the only thing you could count - really count on- was if you need help, a fellow aviator would have your back.

I miss the call signs, nicknames, and the stories behind them. I miss getting lit up in a O' club full of my buddies and watching the incredible, unbelievable things that were happening. I miss the crew chiefs saluting as you taxied out of the flight line. I miss lighting the afterburners, if you had them, especially at night. I miss going straight up and straight down. I miss the cross countries. I miss the dice games at the bar for drinks. I miss listening to the BS stories while drinking and laughing until my eyes watered. I miss three man lifts. I miss naps in the squadron with a room full of aviators working up new tricks to torment the sleeper. I miss flying upside down in the Grand Canyon and hearing about flying so low that boats were blown over. I miss coming in hot and looking over and seeing three wingmen tucked in tight ready to make the troops on the ground proud. I miss belches that could be heard in neighboring states. I miss putting on *ad hoc* Air Shows that might be over someone's home or farm in faraway towns.

Finally, I miss hearing "DEAD BUG!!!" called out at the bar and seeing and hearing a room full of men hit

the deck with drinks spilling and chairs being knocked over as they rolled in the beer and kicked their legs up in the air....followed closely by a Not Politically Correct Tap dancing and singing spectacle that couldn't help but make you grin and order another round.

I am a lucky guy and have lived a great life! One thing I know is that I was part of a special, really talented bunch of guys doing something dangerous and doing it better than most. Flying the most beautiful, ugly, noisy, solid aircraft ever built... an aircraft that talked to you and warned you before she spanked you. Supported by ground troops committed to making sure we came home. Being prepared to fly and fight and die for AMERICA. Having a clear mission. Having FUN!!!!

We box out bad memories from various operations most of the time but never hallowed memories of our fallen squadron mates. We are often amazed at how good war stories never let truth interfere and how they get better with age. We are lucky bastards to be able to walk into Squadron or bar and have men we respect and love shout out our names, our call signs, and know that this is truly where we belong.

WE are AVIATORS WE are the FEW and WE are PROUD

I am Privileged and Proud to call you BROTHERS  
*Author Unknown*



Jacksonville Double Tree Riverfront Hotel, site of the 2017 Hurricane Hunters' Annual Reunion.

# TAPS

It is with a heavy heart that we report the passing of our members that served so honorably.

Today is truly a sad day for me. I had the privilege of flying with most of these members of our great squadron, thus it is with a heavy heart that I report the passing of our members that served so honorably. ~ ~ *E.R. Eaton, President*

Mrs. Ethel Fitzsimmons September 28, 2016 Mrs. Fitzsimmons was the wife of our First President LCDR Robert Fitzsimmons. It was my privilege to have known such a wonderful. charming LADY

CDR Thomas E. (Tom) Stevens November 9, 2016



CDR Stevens is survived by his father, Richard Bryce Stevens of Cambridge, Ohio; his mother, Harriett Kemp Morgan of Punta Gorda, Fl.; wife, Mary of 49 years of Crescent City, Fl.; sons, Douglas Edward Stevens of Summerfield, Fl., Brent Allen Walters and wife, Michelle of Orlando, Fl., Heath Edward Walters of Orlando, Fl., Bill Calkins of Palm Coast, Fl.; daughter, Ginger Kemp Stokes and husband Scott of Palatka, Fl.; brother, Russell Bryce Stevens and wife, Teri of Orange Park, Fl.; sisters, Helen Elizabeth Brown and husband, George of Punta Gorda, Fl., Susie Shamblen of Georgetown, Fl., Sharon Kuder of Tampa, Fl.; grandchildren, Benjamin, Conall, Gabriel, Holly, Fiona, Duncan, Rowan, Zoey, and Gwynna Stevens, Billy and Abi Calkins, Mason and Jasmine Walters.

Charles George Joyeusaz October 10, 2016. I have no information on when he was in the squadron or his rank/rate

ATW2 Donald C. Gottlob, Jr. December 28, 2016. He passed away just five days after his 75th birthday. Don flew CIC on crew 3 from '63-'66

ATW2 Robert (Bobby K) Koeller December 30, 2016 Bobby flew CIC on crew 2 from '63-'66

ATC Jay Bondgren January 31, 2017 Chief Bondgren was the Radar Shop Chief from '63-'66

John Ewing Quicksall February 03, 2017 The only information I have on John is that he served in the squadron from 1966-1970

ATW2 William (W.T.) Pomeroy March 08, 2017 W T flew CIC on crew5 '63-66

ATR2 Tom Fuller March 06, 2017 Tom flew radar tech on crew 3 from '63-'66

AEC William J. Peavey 04/07/2017 Chief Peavey flew as Flight Engineer in the Squadron after we transitioned into the P-3. He served 35 years in the Navy

## HURRICANE HUNTERS, INC.

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## Squadron History



During the first few years of hurricane reconnaissance, the Navy used aircraft from various naval activities in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean areas. The first aircraft used was the PBM Mariner seaplane. In 1945, Navy Patrol Bomber Squadron 114 (VPB-114), stationed at Masters Field, Miami, was assigned the task of making the reconnaissance flights, using the famous World War II patrol bomber, the PB4Y Privateer. From 1946 to 1949 the Privateers continued the hurricane flight while the squadron's designation was changed to Weather Squadron Three (VPW-3), Meteorological Squadron THREE (VPM-3), and Heavy Land Based Patrol Bomber Squadron THREE (VPHL-3). In 1949 Patrol Squadron TWENTY-THREE (VP-23) was commissioned at the Naval Air Station, Miami, for the job.



With the advent of powerful long range airborne radar, a new aircraft was added to the long list of planes making storm flights. In 1955 the Hurricane Hunters received the first of the WC-121N Lockheed Super Constellations and by 1958 the Neptunes were replaced by the "Connies". New techniques were devised and weather reconnaissance underwent a radical change. Weather information which once took days to acquire could now be gathered on one meteorological flight. Conditions in an area of 200,000 square miles could be observed with one sweep of the powerful airborne radar. One Navy weather flight could provide information of an area encompassing 1,500,00 square miles. Needless to say, electronics had revolutionized weather reconnaissance as well as every phase of tropical meteorology.



The forerunner of VW-4 was Navy Weather Squadron TWO (VJ-2), commissioned during the 1952 Hurricane season at NAS, Jacksonville, Florida. The following year, the Hurricane Hunters replaced the Privateers with P2V Neptune, and in that same year the squadron's designation was changed to Airborne Early Warning Squadron FOUR.



VW4 was flying P3 aircraft at the time it decommissioned. There were 4 P3 modified with heavier landing gear and the electronics were upgraded for weather work with an onboard weather station and the infamous APS 20 search radar. The radome was installed in the bomb bay and was capable of being lowered and raised.