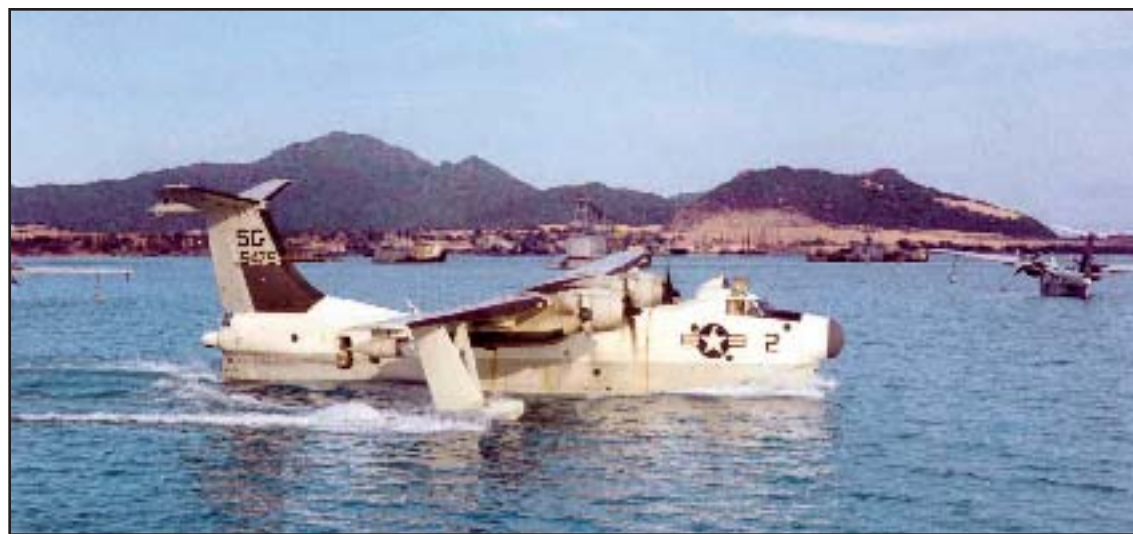


VP-50's #3 boat (BuNo 140147) on the buoy at Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam in 1966. Vic Jones Photo



VP-50's #2 boat (BuNo 135475) taxis towards the seadrome for departure from Cam Ranh Bay on an eight hour patrol in 1966. Vic Jones Photo



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In this issue...

Pensacola Recap

Martin P5M Book Review

Sea Stories

Changes in Rank and Rating



This Issue's Cover



A VP-49 P5M-1 makes a spectacular JATO takeoff from NOB Bermuda in 1955 while a USCG SAR PBM-5G stands at the ready in the foreground. Bruce Barth Collection



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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NAVAL AVIATION
1750 RADFORD BLVD
SUITE C
PENSACOLA FLORIDA 32508-5402

5756
N00/Ser 07-275
24 May 2007

Mr. Ronald A. Sommerdorf
President
Mariner/Marlin Association
15503 90th Street
Brownton, MN 55312-4818

Dear Mr. Sommerdorf,

This is response to your letter of 19 May 2007 which was delivered to me at your Reunion Banquet last Saturday.

First, thank you for inviting me to your event. I really had a good time and was inspired by the enthusiasm of your group for its community. It is that kind of attitude that cements the history and heritage of the people of the PBM/P5M community into Naval Aviation history. I was happy to be a small part of it. I really was surprised and very pleased by your generous offer to help with our Marlin project, and we are very appreciative. Your contribution will go a long way in making this effort a reality.

As indicated in my remarks, we are dedicated to the preservation of the sole remaining Martin Marlin that is in our collection and have already commenced the refurbishment of this aircraft. We have begun this with a complete corrosion control effort that will be followed by a repainting of the entire exterior of the aircraft. Eventually we will turn our efforts to the interior of the aircraft. While the interior is fully equipped as it was when it came out of service, it has deteriorated over the years and needs attention. We eventually intend to have it look like new inside and out, and I know that it will be something that you will take pride in.

Thanks again for your continued support. Please make sure that when your contribution is sent it is specifically identified for preservation of the Museum's Martin Marlin. That way we can be sure that every penny will go toward this important project.

Sincerely,


R. L. RASMUSSEN
Captain, USN (Ret.)
Director

PBM-5A Restoration Report

Dan Cain

The pictures pretty well tell the story. The Mariner, after 7 years, nearly \$45,000 of MMA money and about 9,000 volunteer man hours, is finally in a permanent home.

These pictures were taken only a few days after the new hanger was open to the public.

The Mariner PBM-5A is the only plane, out of 7, that has any display items around it

at this time. There was a rush to get the new hanger open to the public. Although the Sea-plane display is minimal it is a good start. We hope to have the "cut away" model of the PBM on display in the near future, along with additional artifacts.

As you can tell from the pictures, the ailerons and elevators have not been installed as yet. They are finished and

ready to install in the next few months. We also want to store some proprietary items in the plane. As before, the plane will not be open to the general public, but may be open again to Navy personnel, MMA or others related to the plane. Details of this arrangement are not yet established.

We will try to finish our part of the restoration as much as possible by the end of the year.



Chairman's Report

Ron Sommerdorf

Our organization passed another milestone with the very successful 25th Annual Reunion, held in Pensacola, Florida. Thanks and a tip-of-the-hat to the hard working co-chairmen Grabe Harman, Jack Page, and Jack Parsons. Incidentally, this was the second reunion Grabe Harman hosted and a certificate attesting to this singular accomplishment was presented by me, assisted by two of his sons, Lee and Tom, with wife Barbara. For those of us that had never seen the National Museum of Naval Aviation at Pensacola, touring this world-class museum was indeed an awesome event. Not only do they have outstanding exhibits but also surrounding the museum are many aircraft waiting to be restored. I was told that there are 400 volunteers assisting at the museum throughout the year. Best of all, fellow members, the LAST P5M-2 IN THE WORLD is at the head of the restoration line!

Through the herculean efforts of Dan Cain et al, the "Pima Bird" (PBM) at Tucson, Arizona is now properly hangared. And, as per Captain Bob Rasmussen, our keynote speaker at the Saturday evening banquet, the P5M-2 will soon be in a hangar, which will be constructed in the near future. To assist in the restoration of the P5M-2, a certificate pledging \$20,000 was presented to Captain Rasmussen at our banquet. Great food, fellowship, program and all within the inspiring atrium of the museum with the four Blue Angel jets suspended overhead! The beautiful orchid corsages presented to each lady in attendance added as a nice touch. Way to go!

At the business meeting prior to our banquet, two new positions were proposed and voted favorably upon, which were:

- 1) Potential Chairman-Elect - Bert Schwarz
- 2) Contributing Editor - Paul Hebner

It was felt that the Chairman-Elect position would give at least one year's board experience prior to being installed as Chairman of the Board. Also, by having a Contributing Editor, some of the work load would be taken off of our Editor, Arnold Zaharia. Also, we discussed dividing membership and treasury back into two positions. Doug King was asked to take on the duties membership chairman, which he agreed to, while Bob Escobar continues his duties as treasurer. Thanks Bert, Paul, and Doug.

Lastly, it was announced that the 2008 reunion will be held in San Diego, California. Reunion Chairman Russ Lansberry will be assisted by Jim Alyea, Ralieg Myles, John Deloach and others. It also looks like Tucson, Arizona is a very likely candidate for our 2009 reunion.

For all those out there who have never attended a reunion, please do so—and bring a shipmate. It is well worth it to renew acquaintances, tour facilities, and just plain enjoy first class accommodations. Thank you and "well done" to all who helped in any way at Pensacola. Please volunteer to assist our Co-Chairmen in any way you can at San Diego. Thanks again!

PLEASE NOTE!

- All dues renewals
- All address changes
- New members
- Taps notifications

Are now to be sent to our new membership chairman:

Doug King
155 Inlet Road
Chatham, MA 02633-2215
508-945-2287
1stDougKing@comcast.net

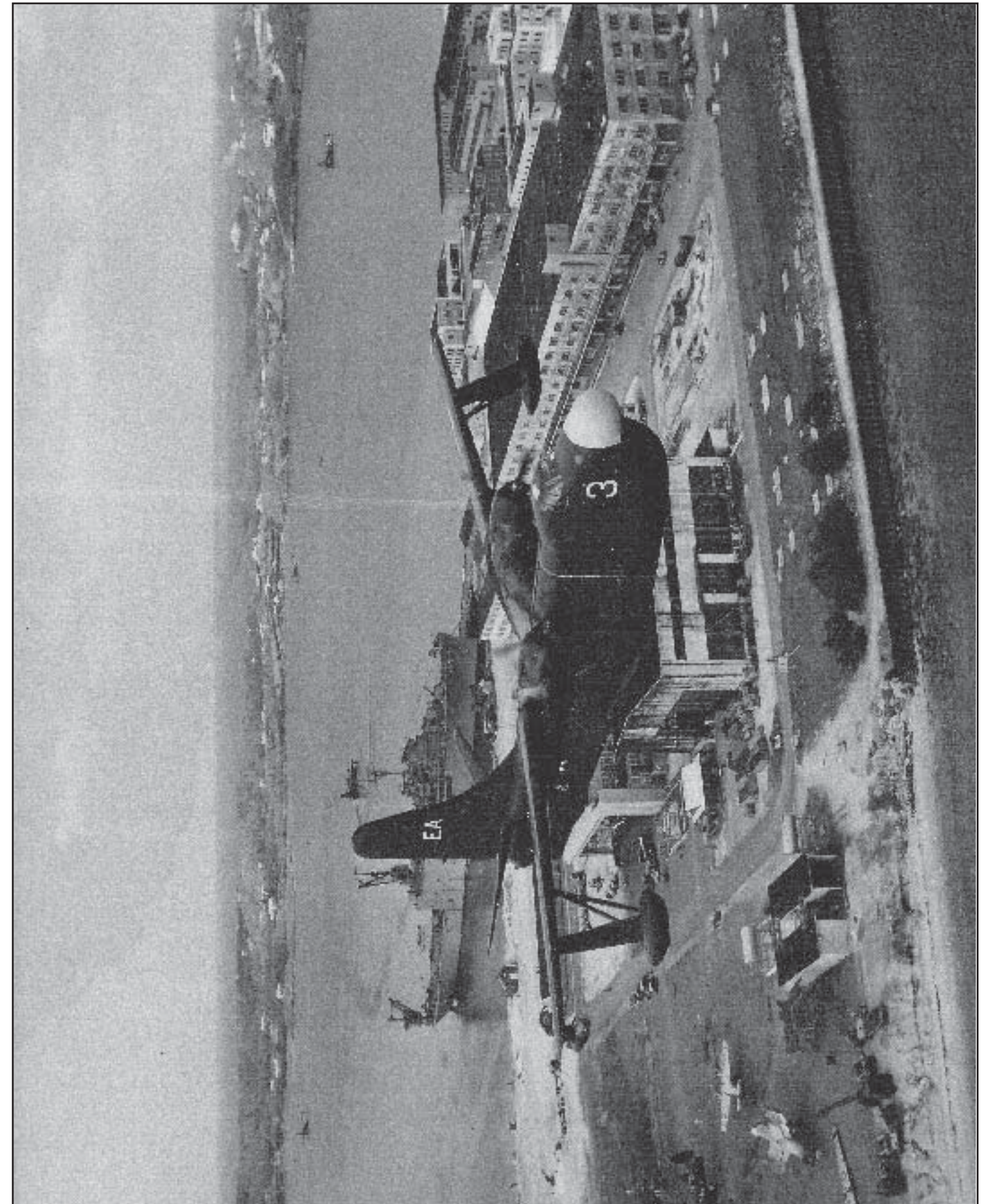
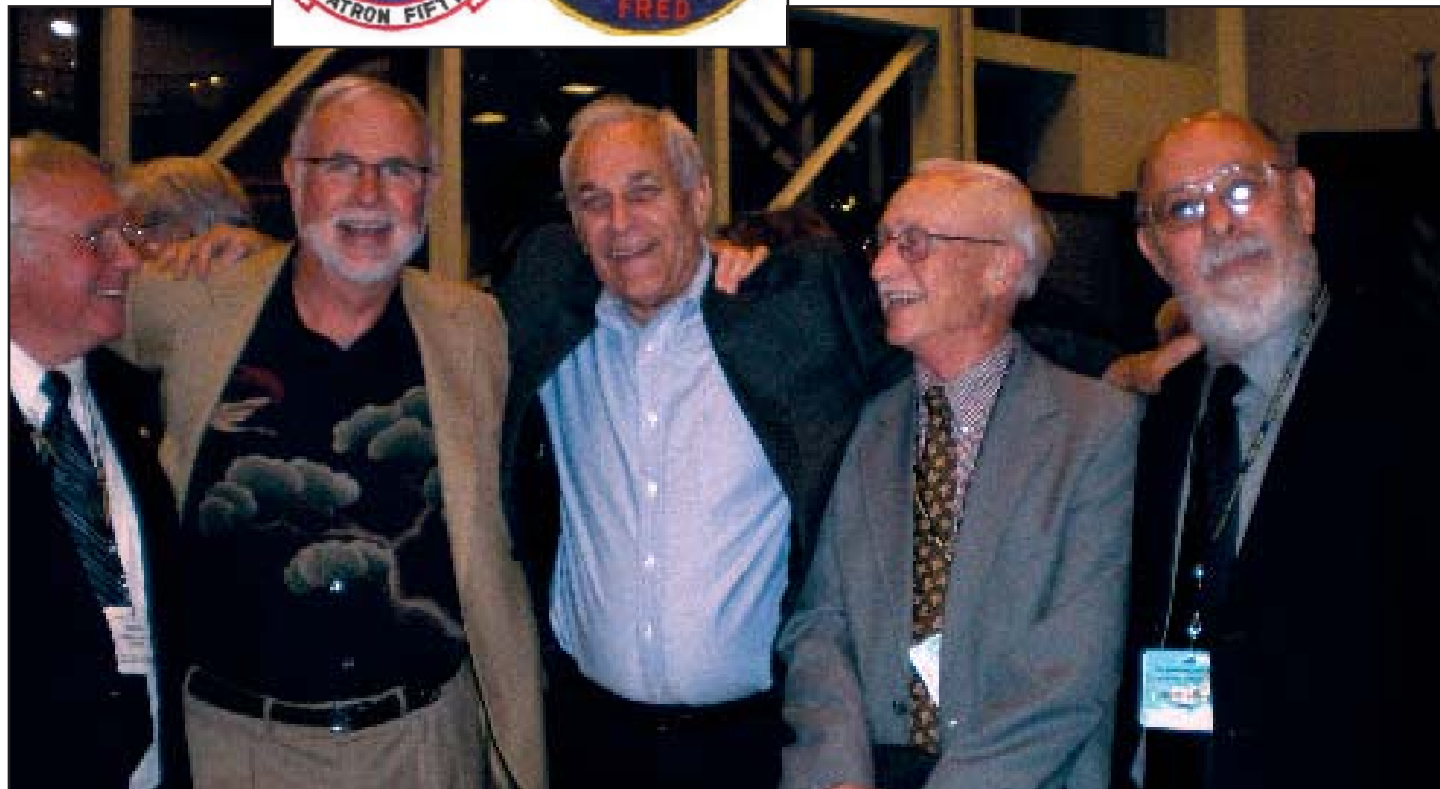
From the Editor's Desk

Arnold Zaharia

This reunion was very special for me as I was able to get together with my crew members after over 40 years. For me, this is what the Mariner/Marlin Association is all about. The time flies by so fast and being able to renew old friendships is priceless. I included some photos of our times together in Vietnam and one from the reunion. Guess we got a little older.

We are able to bring more color into the newsletters without much more expense as my company acquired a new digital press. So if anyone has any color photos, please send them in to our new location. (see new return address on back cover)

There is also some more good news in the way of a new contributing editor. Please welcome Paul H. Hebner to our staff. He is a talented creative writer and communication specialist and will be a fantastic addition to our organiza-



Welcome to the MMA

(New members as of June 20, 2007)

BEAN, Leonard R. (Nancy)
Aircrewman
VP-44
336 788-7491

Aerial Photographer
Unk
402 334-8123

BERGEN, James W. (Shirley)
Aircrewman
VP-49
570 524-0155

WOLLMUTH, Edmund
Pilot
VP-201
Unk

KREITZER, Thomas R.
Son of KREITZER, William R.,
Pilot (Deceased)
TONDL, Leonard J. (Betty)

TAPS

A special tribute to shipmates who have recently passed away. The sympathy of the entire membership of the Mariner Marlin Association is extended to widows and other survivors for their loss.

(As of June 20, 2007)

AHEE, CARL R., Visalia, CA, died April 24, 2007, reports his daughter Mary. Carl was a Pilot with VPB-201. He is survived by his daughter and wife, Lorraine.

CERNY, DONALD F., died Feb. 28, 2007, reports his wife, Lorraine. Donald was an aircrewman in VH-4, Banana River, Kaneohe.

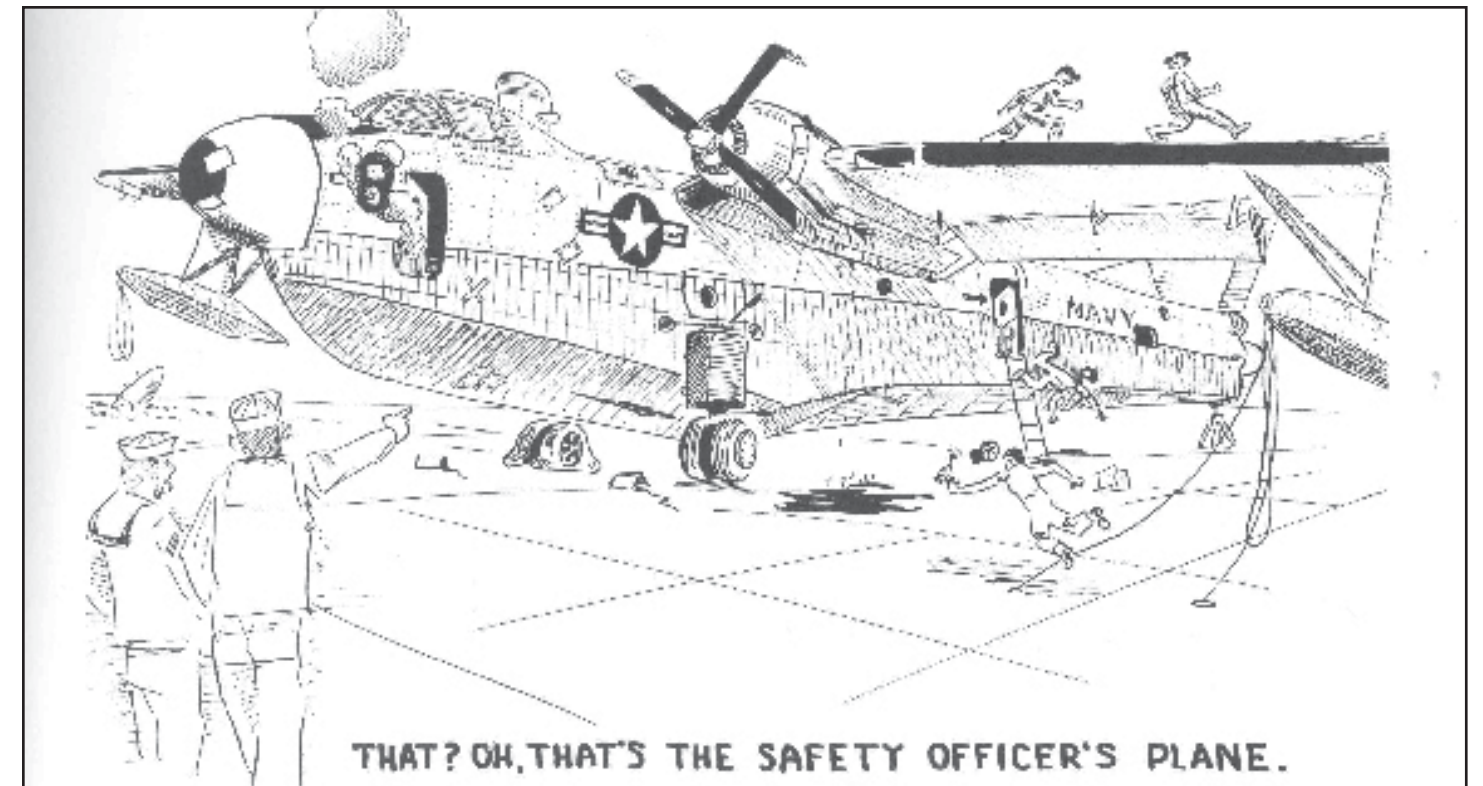
GIDDINGS, ROBERT G., Oak Harbor, WA, died April 26, 2007, reports his wife, Janie. Robert was an Aircrewman with VP-50.

KREITZER, WILLIAM R., Lexington Park, MD, died March 25, 2007, reports his son, Thomas R. Kreitzer of Lovettsville, VA. Bill

was a Pilot in VP-44, 202, VH-4 and VU-10. While in VH-4 he participated in Operation Crossroads at Bikini Atoll and was one of nine pilots selected for Operation Highjump, Western Antarctic Expedition aboard the USS Currituck in 1946. Of the nineteen discovered, Bill and his crew #3 laid claim to eight previously unexplored territories in the name of the United States, three of which are named after him - see Spring 2006 Newsletter. He is preceded in death by his wife, Madeleine

KROHN, THOMAS A., Nevada, reports Dale Larsen. Tom was a Pilot with VP-47. He is survived by his wife, Tasaya, son Sean and daughter Dao.

TOKARZ, STANLEY, Bloomfield, MI, died 2007 reports his squadron mate, Art Ring. Stan was an Aircrewman in VP-731 and will always be remembered for the nose art "Ramp Tramp" he painted on his PBM. A professional clown for over forty years, Stan enjoyed attending MMA reunions and singing and playing the accordion in the Ready Room. At his peak he taught clowning at Oakland College, played accordion at 12 rest homes a month and won 24 medals in six years in the Senior Olympic (swimming). He is preceded in death by his wife, Rosalie.



In Search of...

If you have lost contact through the years with a shipmate and would like to see if anyone in our organization may know the whereabouts of him, this is the place to find them. Send in the name and whatever information you may have concerning the individual and we will post any feedback we get in the following newsletter.

Shipmates we are searching for:

Joe Bogre
VPB-28, Harvey Point, from formation until the end of WWII
Home town: Cleveland, OH

"Bud" Chapman
Pilot, VP-34, left NavSta Trinidad approximately May 1954
Home town: Ohio

John W. Hartman
AT2, VP-45, Bermuda, 1957-59
Home town: Buffalo, NY

Emerson A. (Easy Able) Jennings
VP-34
Home town: unknown

James (Jim) V. Miller
VP-34
Home town: Tennessee

Herbert Schneider
VPB-28, Harvey Point, from formation until the end of WWII
Home town: Jefferson City, MO

(Unknown) Urbaniak
VP-34
Home town: unknown

→
*Does anyone know where this patch can be purchased, the only one I had was destroyed by my ex.
Henry Lark
hlark@windstream.net*

Anybody with information about these individuals are asked to contact:
Mariner/Marlin Association
Arnold Zaharia
7615 N. 75th Ave., Unit 105
Glendale, AZ 85303
printcenteraz@hotmail.com
623-934-2100
If you are looking for someone, you can also use the same contact information to submit a name.



Changes in Rank and Rating

Among the decisions made in Pensacola by the Board of Directors were the appointments of Bert Schwarz as Potential Chairman-Elect and Paul Hebner as Contributing Editor for this newsletter. We're offering these brief biographies to help our readers get to know them.

Bert Schwarz, Chairman -Elect

Bert is a native of the town of Oceanside, on New York's Long Island. He served in the Navy with the rating of AT-3 and joined VP-50 as a radio/ECM operator aboard SE6 during the February 1954 to January 1955 TRANSPAC. During that tour, Bert flew patrol operations from Iwakuni, Japan and has some interesting memories of Main Street as well as the Australian Crown Sergeants Club. After the Navy, Bert worked for Hooker Chemical and later served in the New York State law enforcement, retiring after a 26-year career. A member of MMA since 2002, Bert began attending reunions in 2003 (Cocoa Beach). He now resides in Webster, New York, with his wife, Laurna. He is the proud father of three sons (including your new contributing editor), two stepsons, a stepdaughter, and is the prouder grandfather of three girls and two boys. Interestingly, he was replaced at the radar station on SE6 by current Chairman, Ron Sommerdorf.

Bert and Laurna moved to Webster only recently, so his contact information in the membership roster is now out of date. Here's where you can find him now:

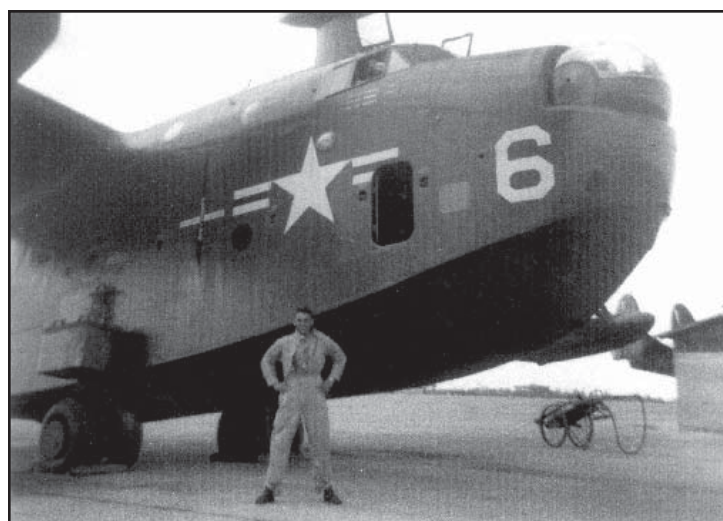
Bert P Schwarz
982 Pear Tree Lane
Webster, NY 14580
(585) 347-4938
paulbert@rochester.rr.com

Paul H. Hebner, Contributing Editor

Paul is the oldest son of Chairman-Elect, Bert Schwarz and became a MMA member in 2004. He attended his first reunion in 2003 (Cocoa Beach) as Bert's guest.



Left to right, Paul Hebner, Elizabeth Hebner, Bert Schwarz, and Laurna Schwarz at the 2005 MMA reunion in Minneapolis.



A young Bert Schwarz posing in front of SE6, NAS Ford Island, prior to the 1954-1955 TRANSPAC.

There, he began collecting sea stories as part of an oral history book project that has now been folded into his new editorial duties. (That book, or whatever it turns out to be, will still happen. Right now though, the MMA newsletter comes first.) Paul has been a lifelong aviation enthusiast (must be genetic) and student of military history. He's also been a published writer and editor for the past 25 years. During his career, just about the only things he hasn't written or edited are Hallmark cards. Paul, who likes to think of himself as "a son of VP-50," now lives in New York City with his wife, Elizabeth. He has two daughters, a stepdaughter and a stepson, all of whom are grown.

ously blurred or totally erased by amnesia.

One recall that comes from time to time goes back to the beginning of the trip home. It's early morning, before dawn actually, and the several departing crews from VPB-27 are slowly easing up the ladder to the deck of the Pine Esland with belongings in tow. The line is stagnated by a clattering of the opening at the top of the ladder. Pressing on, I finally come through the deck opening. As I do, a hand reaches out of the darkness. Lt. Commander Walter J. McGuire,

PPC, of Crew 2, stands before me, shaking my hand. He says something like "I just wanted to tell you good bye Woody, and to thank you for being in my crew." Something like that and a little more. Understand, I am little vague here. After all, you tell me, how many times does a Lt. Cdr. stand around waiting for a young AOM 3/C to make an appearance? In the middle of the night almost, besides.

That's it. One of my big war story memories. About someone who took time to step away from his rank, meet with his crew one

last time to say thanks for helping to make these last months a good run, and say good bye and take care. At first glance this seems hardly a story worthy of comment. But then again, think about this—just how many things does any of us do in a lifetime that will be recalled by others years later.



The PBM Mariners of VP-49 taxi away from Reykjavik, Iceland in Operation Mainbrace, October 1952. The USS Timbalier (AVP-54) is in the foreground. (Jim ALyea collection)

home across the Gulf on one engine that windy August night was one of our members, Robert A. Stephan, of Monterrey, CA.

It is doubtful if they could have made an open sea landing in the Gulf of Mexico because of the extremely rough sea conditions. They were flying in "ground effect" and landed as soon as they crossed the island barrier to the Corpus Seadrome, with extremely high oil temps on the "good" engine. Later I understood that the dipstick could not reach the remaining oil in the engine. Whew!!

William R. Bryant
VP-46, 1951-54

Dear Editor,

I hope you've been receiving dozens of comments concerning how great is the new look of our newsletter. In particular, the Spring 2007 is a knock-out from the P-8 front and back cover to the full text of the issue. Keep up the good work. I'll say this in person in P'Cola.

Ken Gold

Dear Editor,

I have enclosed this letter that was sent to my daughter. She sent it to me. I was a Rosie at Martins on the PBM from 1942 -45. Wondered if you heard of this aircraft are now for sale and the Martin Museum would like to purchase one. I haven't heard if they were able to purchase it. I don't belong to the Rosie chapter in Baltimore as I haven't been able to attend any of their meetings or get-togethers.

Take Care
John & Ruth Fritz

Dear Rosies and Rosie Families,

We are canvassing ladies and their families who have attended meetings of our Baltimore chapter of the American Rosie the Riveter Association in search of ladies who worked at the Glenn Martin Aircraft Company when the Martin Mars were built and who recall these planes.

The Glenn L. Martin Maryland Aviation Museum has learned that the last two Martin Mars flying boats, owned by TimberWest Forest Corp. and used for fighting forest fires, are now for sale and the Museum would like to purchase one and bring this wonderful piece of history home to Middle River. If the Museum is successful in its purchase, this record breaking flying boat, with a wingspan longer than a 747 jumbo jet, will be a lasting tribute to those who worked at the Martin Company. Having a Mighty Mars at the Museum would offer present and future generations a connection to the early Martin years.

Time is of the essence in the endeavor as the Museum needs to raise significant funds immediately to prepare a bid by the end of January and return the Mars to its birthplace. Our Rosie chapter is assisting the Museum by providing accounts of folks who worked there during the Mars years. If you recall this aircraft when working at Martins, or if your mother or grandmother worked at Martins and she shared stories with you of these giant planes and you would assist with bringing the Mars home by sharing your remembrances, please email or call me. I know most folks are busy with holiday preparations this week but if you can remember anything about this aircraft and can give 5 minutes to

share your story with me by phone or email, we would so much appreciate your help.

Dear Editor,

I recently had a surprise encounter at lunch with some friends when I met a former Mariner pilot who had served in VP-201, guarding the Panama Canal in WWII.

Now, age 90, he was PPC, but still quite lucid in recalling exploits—such as finding a German U-boat on the surface at night, mounting an attack. But when he squeezed the pickle the depth charges refused to drop (to make matters worse, when he landed he heard them rolling around in the nacelle bays).

Anyhow, he is a neat guy and I would like to enroll him into the Mariner Association.

Incidentally, thanks for keeping up the good work, the new issues are superb.

Randall H. Rice
VPB-25

Dear Editor,

This was written years ago, to someone, for something I can not longer recall.

I stumbled across it the other day and was amazed at the feelings it brought out.

Maybe you can use it in the Mariner/Marlin one time when you need filler material.

JJ Woodson
2nd Crew, VPB-27

From the time Crew 2 departed the good ship Pine Island in November 1945, until I was discharged two weeks later in St. Louis, there is very little of my memory that is not seri-

Contributing Editor's Message

Paul Hebner

To those who served, we owe everything.

My new position within the Mariner/Marlin Association affords me a luxury that few other writers can boast: a virtually unlimited supply of great stories. I also have the privilege of honoring a wonderful group of naval aviators. And, that's how I look at my role as contributing editor. It's an honor and a privilege.

The pages of this newsletter are dedicated to your sea stories and news about Association activities, especially reunions and restoration projects. My job is to help tell the stories and news in the best way I know how. I want to make every issue a joy to read. Moreover, I want to begin a new conversation between the editors and you, the members, so that your comments and questions can lead to more stories being shared and more opportunities for old comrades to be reunited. My personal goal is to help create an historical treasure that can be passed to succeeding generations.

Regarding our recent reunion in Pensacola, I think the Association launched a significant new chapter in its history through its \$20,000 grant to the National Museum of Naval Aviation toward the restoration of their SP-5B Marlin, the last operational U.S. Navy flying boat. Apparently, that particular aircraft (BuNo 135533) has quite a history and was associated with VP-40, VP-42, VP-48, and VP-50, among others. Expect to read more about The Last Marlin in upcoming issues.

And since we're talking about VP-50, there was quite a bit of joking in Pensacola about renaming the Association "VP-50 and Others." Since my father, Bert Schwarz, is a Blue Dragon veteran and I have that personal connection, I was half tempted to take it all seriously. I mean, you couldn't throw a pretzel across the ready room without hitting someone from that outfit! Seriously, though, greater representation from other squadrons will be a result of participation and outreach. So, please reach out to your old shipmates any way you can and send us your sea stories and photographs—as many as you care to share. I'll do my best to give equal time to as many squadrons as I can and strike a fair balance between all you PBM and P5M fliers. Remember, the more you send, the more I can share.

All of the reunions I've attended have been special and this one was no exception. The museum is one of the finest I've ever seen. Its accessibility is unmatched. Where else can you put your hands on such amazing aircraft? And what could be better than a banquet beneath The Blue Angels, with a cadet choir and honor guard? Well, perhaps the flight deck of the Midway in San Diego? We'll see.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Mariner/Marlin Association newsletter. Please don't hesitate to send your comments, questions, suggestions, and sea stories by letter or e-mail. Since my contact information in the member directory is now outdated, here's where you'll find me:

Paul H. Hebner
36-12 36th Avenue
Astoria, NY 11106
718-956-5917
paul@hebner.org

Good hunting and good reading!

Sea Stories

Contributing Editor's Note:

This is a new recurring section (called a department in magazine lingo) that I want to devote to your sea stories. Of course, this newsletter has published countless sea stories in the past, but it's been on a catch-as-catch-can basis. I want to create a permanent home for them so MMA members will always know where to look.

This month, we're featuring a trio of stories from the memoirs of Phil Reynard, a Nebraska native who now lives and works in Auburn, California. I was introduced to him in Pensacola by Dan Cain and Phil was kind enough to send me a weighty collection of his written memoirs.

After he left the Navy, Phil earned a college degree as an animal science major with a journalism certificate. I'm sure his training in journalism helped make him the talented story teller he is today. His memoirs make for fine reading and I'm pleased to share a portion of them with you.

Phil's writing skill also made my editing job easy. After reading Volume 1 of his memoirs, I knew I wouldn't change a word.

I hope you enjoy these sea stories and I encourage you to send as many of your own stories as you care to and dare to share. You can send them by e-mail, the U.S. Postal Service, Air Mail, or pony express; I welcome them all. If you don't feel confident about writing your stories down, please send a tape recording. I'll be happy to listen and transcribe. **Paul H. Hebner, Contributing Editor.**

Overqualified

In September 1944, I graduated from flight school at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas, with a commission as an Ensign in the Naval Reserve and certification to wear the gold wings of a Naval Aviator and qualified in PBV Catalina flying boat. Then I went to Operational training at Banana River, Florida, where I checked out in the PBM Mariner, also a twin-engine flying boat, patrol bomber. After this I went back to Corpus Christi with my crew to pick up and train a new Plane Commander enroute to being assigned to overseas duty.

We hit a series of winter storms in the early months of 1945, limiting the training flights, giving the dozens of pilots, as well as our crewmen, hours and days of idle time. I had earlier decided that I would like to get a private (civilian) pilot license. Since I had plenty of flight time, all I needed was to brush up on the difference between military and civilian aviation rules and pass the CAA (Civil Aeronautics Administration) exam to get the license.

I convinced a few other pilots to join me. We went to town to get the CAA rules and material to study for the test. We got the book and had plenty of spare time to study so we shortly took, and passed, the exam. We were going to get our Private Pilot licenses. That is the permit which lets you to fly a plane for personal

use but not for pay.

When the administrator checked our log books, he found we had enough flight time to qualify, not for a Private license, but for a Commercial pilot's license which allowed us to fly for pay, including carrying passengers. And that is the license we were issued. The real surprise, however, that we didn't consider, is that we had qualified for single and multi-engine, land and seaplane rating. This was one of the last things I got before leaving Corpus Christi. Thank you, Uncle Sam, for making the flight time possible and the time off to take the test.

Ready to Go Overseas, Almost

Our crew completed the schedule for our second Operational Training to break in a new Plane Commander. We got orders to NAS San Diego where we joined the active fleet. It seemed like a new phase of training but we carried live depth charges for regular anti-submarine patrols. There was at least one patrol bomber in the air at all times from San Diego, NAS Alameda (San Francisco bay) and NAS Whidbey Island (Seattle) flying coastal patrol.

In addition, we were training, at least to the extent that every hour flown or every landing, take-off or every minute of water work tended to improve the ability of a crew to function. The Navy constantly

Letters

The Mariner/Marlin Association welcomes your letters to the editor, the chairman, or to the entire membership. Please send all letters to: Mariner/Marlin Newsletter, 7615 N. 75th Ave., Unit 105, Glendale, AZ, 85303, or via email to printcenteraz@hotmail.com.

Dear Editor,

Congratulations on a great looking—and reading—newsletter. I like the idea of separating the newsletter from the directory. However, I should mention it was a distressing to see a cover of a Mariner/Marlin Association publication that features a patrol plane that not only lacks a proper seaplane hull, but also lacks propellers and radial engines! I guess I have to face the fact that our special era is no longer fact, just history and fond memories.

Regarding history, I really enjoyed the coverage and photos of Pearl Harbor, but have one small caveat. Although the article—as well as the email that's been circulating with these same photos—doesn't state it specifically, the inference seems to be that these photos were found recently. In fact, several of them appear in Volume 2 of the "Pictorial History of the Second World War", copyrighted in 1944. And while this fact alone doesn't dispute the claim that they were found in an old Brownie in an old sea locker, I have serious doubts based on the high quality and fine detail of the images. In my opinion, these photos are dramatically better than

anything my Mom's 40's vintage Brownie could have ever have produced.

Still in a historical theme, anyone who spent time "splashing and dashing" in the waters of Manila Bay will find Dwight R. Messimer's book "In the Hands of Fate" extremely interesting. It's the story of dear old Patwing 10, during its terrible days between December 1941 and May 1942, as they made their bloody pullback from Sangley Point in the face of the Japanese attack. Their "Pearl Harbor" didn't end at the end of the day. The book is published by the Naval Institute Press.

Finally, I probably should assure both "Frank" and "Dale", stars of the poem "Why is Six Boat So Short" published in the Spring '07 issue, that their identities are completely safe with me... providing I receive suitable compensation, of course.

*Tom Bigley, CDR, USN, Ret.
VP-40, 63-66*

Dear Commander Bigley:

You are certainly not alone in your observation about the last issue of the newsletter. A great many of your fellow aviators looked at the cover illustration and wondered why there was no step on the featured aircraft's hull. The good news is that questions like yours help bring the mission of this Association and our newsletter into sharper focus. Your "special era" need not be consigned to "history and fond memories" Our aim as editors is to help preserve the history of the U.S. Navy's

last great operational flying boat patrol aircraft. Moreover, we want to honor the men who flew and crewed them by sharing your sea stories.

That being said, you can count on future issues featuring images of aircraft with proper seaworthy hulls, powered by real honest 18-cylinder aircraft engines, turning big props. The only jet propulsion allowed will be from JATO bottles.

Thank you for your book recommendation. I urge all our readers to submit recommendations for our reading pleasure. And don't miss my new book review in this issue. As for Frank and Dale, they can send their bribe money to us. We'll be happy to forward it to you.

*Paul Hebner
Contributing Editor*

Dear Editor,

While the Pearl Harbor pictures that were in the Spring issue were interesting, I was sorry to see the MMA misled by the email story that was circulated a few months ago.

Not only was it unlikely that a submarine-based sailor would have had access to a vehicle that day, but unbelievable that anyone could have been in so many places while the air attacks were taking place.

Most photographers that I have talked to pointed out that 65-year-old film stored in a camera in a footlocker without doubt would have been next to useless, let alone good enough to produce such pictures.

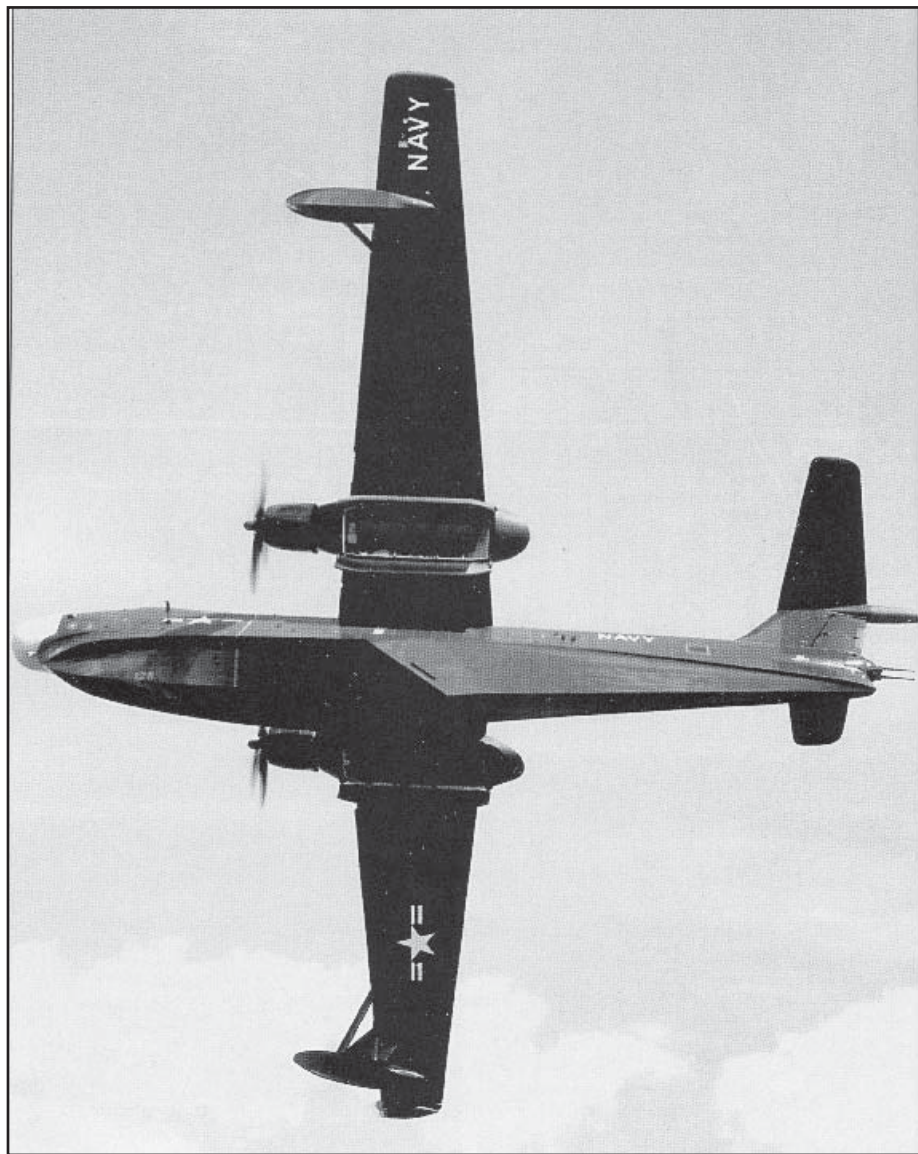
By the way, the copilot/instructor in the 1955 PBM that came

of this newsletter for Captain Hoffman's personal account of "The Jet Powered Marlin"), an inflatable rubber dock, and the use of both LSTs and submarines as seaplane tenders (who knew?). Of course, the unintended experiments (other folks call them "accidents") are just as fascinating. Take for example the VP-45 crew who set a record for open sea taxiing in 1960 after fire damaged the starboard wing and forced a three-day, 550 mile cruise to a NAS for repairs. Then there was the VP-50 Marlin that landed on a mud flat in Oregon and needed a JATO assist to get unstuck.

More amazing still are the highly detailed technical drawings and diagrams. Every imaginable (for me, anyway) component of the Marlin's design, construction, operation, and maintenance is shown. There's more information there than anyone would need, unless you were going to build a replica. After studying those diagrams, I felt like I could take a big pile of aircraft aluminum, some wire, and pair of R-3350 engines and turn it into a brand new Marlin! Every switch and dial at every operational station is also shown. So, I guess you could build one and fly it!

There are only two faults I could find in this book. There's no table of contents or index, nor is there a bibliography or list of references and photo credits. These items would be very handy for research purposes, but they really take nothing away from the overall enjoyment of the book.

Toward the end of the book (pages 156 and 157) there's a chapter that every MMA member, and especially every member who attended the Pensacola reunion, will appreciate. It's called "The Last Marlin" and it provides a history and several photos of BuNo 135533, the same Marlin that now resides at the National Museum of Naval Aviation and that our Association has pledged \$20,000 to help restore. I learned that our Marlin was delivered to the Navy in May 1956, the same month I was born, and served



in both Atlantic and Pacific Fleet squadrons, including VP-40, VP-42, VP-44, VP-48, VP-50, and VP-56. After serving with VP-40 from June through November 1967, it was retired and transferred to the Smithsonian Institute. After a brief restoration, BuNo 135533 made its final flight from San Diego on July 8, 1968, landing in Patuxent River, MD four days later. Amazingly, our Marlin was not put on display in Pensacola until 1977!

So, do you think I enjoyed this book? You bet I did! I enthusiastically recommend it to every MMA member. I hope the staff of the National Museum of Naval Aviation will consult it as a guide to their restoration efforts.

*Good reading.
Paul H. Hebner
Contributing Editor*

rotated crews through this regimen to provide coastal security while "warehousing" crews ready for combat assignment to the Pacific theater. We knew it was a matter of weeks, or maybe just days, until we were to "TransPac" fly our plane across the Pacific to our next assignment.

Our crew and plane were also available for utility flights, as needed. The most memorable such assignment came when we were used to check out another pilot. He had flown several types of Navy planes and had several flights in PBM's but needed more experience in landings and take-offs, so we were "it." In addition to our regular crew, we had the student pilot and a check pilot. They were making "touch and go" landings in San Diego Bay.

This is the dullest kind of flying. In essence, we were all just passengers except for the duty aviation machinist who kept the engines doing their thing. I was in the forward bunk room; my co-pilot was at the navigation table just off the flight deck. Part of the crew had a card game going in the after station. Our new Plane Commander had been excused from the flight since he surely wasn't needed.

After several touch-and-go landings, the plane landed again, slowing down as if it were a final landing. Then they taxied back near the Ferry slip to begin a full take off. As they neared take-off speed the plane tipped to the left, then the pilot corrected, tipping back toward the right, but he over-corrected and the right wingtip float hit the water. Then he over-corrected to the left, the left float hit the water hard and the plane did a 180-degree turn at about 60 to 70 knots!

Bill Brady, our 2nd radioman, came running through the front bunk room where I was lounging, screaming "Get to the rear, she's going down!" I was instantly in a mixture of sea water and gasoline from the ruptured gas tanks in the hull underneath me. As the water gushed around me, I had to dive and swim down through the hatch (door) to the after bunk room, then dive again through that hatch and I was instantly swimming in San Diego Bay. The front and rear parts of the plane had torn completely apart near the middle of the fuselage.

The crewmen who had been playing cards were also swimming. My co-pilot, the student and check pilots, along with Jack Barrath, our plane captain, and Frank Mennuti, our first radioman, all went forward from their stations and climbed out through the top of the pilot cockpit. The front parts of the plane, wings, engines,

etc., were either afloat or sitting on the bottom.

I began counting heads. Was everyone accounted for? Erv Conley, our 3rd ordnanceman had blood all over his head from cuts he received as the tail section tore off, and we found everybody else except Colbeck, our 2nd aviation machinist. I yelled to the pilots and crewmen still high and dry on top of the plane's floating cockpit, wings, engines and forward section. They were well above the water; maybe they could see something we couldn't see from our spot in the water, at sea level. No Colbeck. Everybody else was visible.

Then, like a drowning rat, "glug, glug, plump," here came Colbeck, popping up out of the water, only a few feet from me. He had been watching the take-off and landing exercise from the clear plastic dorsal gun turret on top of the after station. He had gone down with the plane but the turret held air for him to breathe until he was able to open the escape hatch and pop out.

The crew from the rescue boat helped us all out of the water and took us to sick bay where I held Conley's hand while they shaved his head and stitched his jagged metal cuts—over 100 stitches! Except for wet clothes, I was the only other casualty. I had a badly sprained elbow, and was put in a binding and sling. I always had fair ambidexterity, but that's when I learned to eat left handed.

The accident happened in late morning, probably 10:30 to 11 a.m. but it was after noon by the time we all got to the hospital, put on hospital gowns while they dried our clothes, and double-checked every crewman to see that we still had two arms and legs with fingers and toes, then change back. They hustled us into the hospital dining hall but most of us had left our appetites out in the bay. You think you have good nerves but a test like this makes you reevaluate. We were shaken for the moment, but all came back to fly again.

A Crew without a Commander

We never knew exactly what happened to our new Plane Commander. He may have found an angel with a plan for his future. He never showed up again to fly with our crew after the crash. We flew a couple of times with other pilots, and then we got orders to join VPB-28, a patrol bomber squadron, in the Philippines. Most crews flew out in their own planes. We got to miss that boring ordeal.

We got orders, in early summer of 1945, to fly NATS (Naval Air Transport Service) to Hawaii, then to Manila. A new commanding officer had been assigned to the squadron and we went out to be his crew. We took over the plane flown by the previous squadron commander before he and his crew were rotated back to stateside duty.

Our new skipper was Lt. Commander Wm. Clark, a 1940 naval academy graduate who had done previous duty as a shipboard Navy officer, then applied to flight school. After he got his wings, he was assigned to Alameda for extended training and checked out as a Plane Commander. The squadron had just moved to NAS Sangley Point near Cavite City, across the bay from Manila, when we got there to meet our new Plane Commander and begin a duty tour of several months, covering several island bays and bases.

We barely learned how to get in and out from our base on the southwest edge of Manila bay when our squadron was moved to a tiny island in Leyte Gulf called Jinamoc. It was shaped like a wedge or teardrop, a little over a mile long from north to south and less than a mile wide. There was a narrow band

of water on the west between Jinamoc and Leyte and another on the east between us and the island of Samar. The seaplane harbor was on the south end with ramps down into Leyte Gulf. The base was a Quonset hut complex and there was a small native village at the north end of the island.

Being the skipper's (squadron commander's) crew was the best and worst duty available. He gave us our full share of good duty and good flights. We also got more than our share of the bad. Our crew flew on almost every holiday. We got the night patrols that nobody wanted. I liked night patrols. I felt our radar was as good as theirs and we were always watching for ships. They might not be always watching for us.

Soon we settled in to making routine patrols, but the skipper was working overtime so much on management and official work that he needed to skip several flights. I had more hours of flight time than he and far more in PBM's so I was sent to take a few "qualifying" flights and became a Plane Commander. From that point on, it was really my crew and he flew with us when he had the time.

Phil Reynard VPB-28

2007 Reunion Wrap-up

To all 248 Mariner/Marlin Association members and guests who attended, I can only say "Thanks" for making this reunion a success. Without the assistance of my Co-Chairmen, Jack Page and Jack Parsons (and their wives), the Hospitality Room would not have been stocked, and we would not have been able to get "up close and personal" with our P5M-2 in the restoration area. There, you could kick the beaching gear tires, pat the old girl's hull and have your picture taken with that faithful friend. To accommodate our stay, the Ramada Bayview allowed us to completely take over the hotel! The First Timers BBQ was outstanding because everyone participated.

Busses to the Museum were on time and on schedule so that no one was left behind. At the Museum you could rest your feet and have a cold one at the Cubi Bar after enjoying the aircraft and displays. Time was also available for Squadron Mini-Reunions. The 25th Anniversary Banquet in the Museum's Blue Angel Atrium was impressive. The NATTC Choir and Color Guard set the tone for the evening. Food was well prepared, tasty, and served with precision. The program was kept short so that our speaker, Capt. Bob Rasmussen, the Museum's Director, could outline the scheduled plans for restoration of the P5M-2 Marlin. Following his briefing, the MMA Board of Directors presented a pledge of \$ 20,000.00 to assist with the P5M's restoration. All in all, the 2007 Reunion was a "Good One". It showed a lot of hard work by those in the background who deserve a pat on the back and a hearty "Well done." Thanks for all your support and we'll see you next year in San Diego.

Grabe Harman

Book Review: Like Walking Through a Big Museum

The Martin P5M Patrol Seaplane

By Capt. Richard Hoffman USN (Ret)

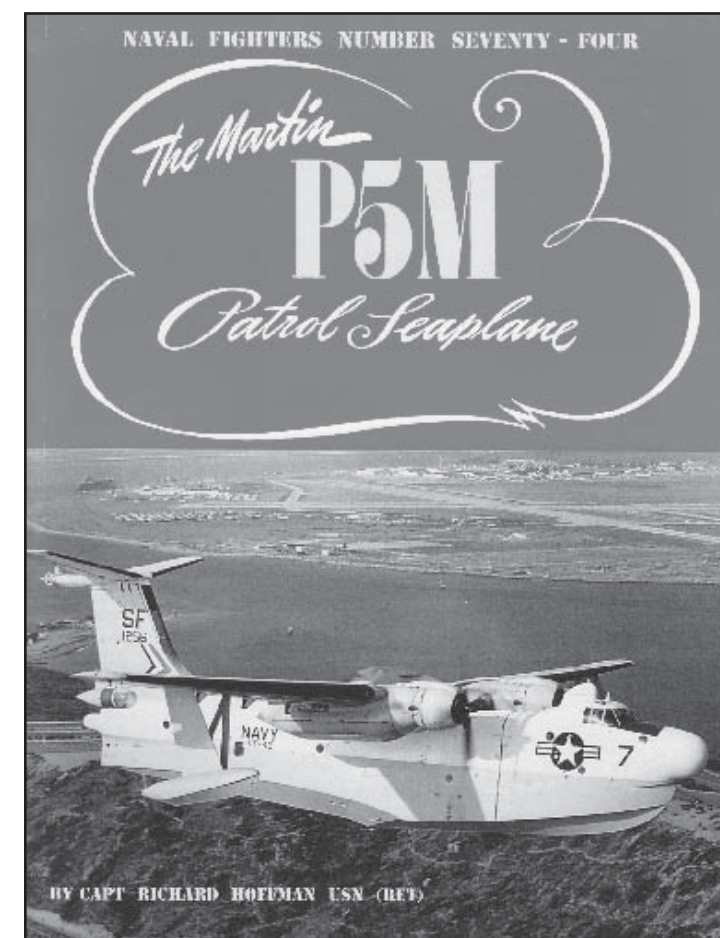
Like most writers, I'm also an avid reader. I've read just about every sort of book imaginable. Some, like novels, need to be read from front to back without cheating. Others invite random browsing and piecemeal consumption, like art books and nature guides. Captain Hoffman's new book is one of those books for browsers. You can read it in sequence if you want to, but I think you'll miss the pleasure of opening the book to any old page and discovering something new and amazing.

The Martin P5M Patrol Seaplane, by Captain Richard Hoffman is a painstakingly detailed pictorial service history of the famous Martin Marlin flying boat. It was published earlier this year by Ginter Books (www.ginterbooks.com), and is listed as number seventy-four in a series of Naval Fighter books that includes five other flying boats (the Grumman Goose, Convair Tradewind, Martin Mars, Convair Sea Dart, and Grumman Albatross).

The Captain's previous book, *The Fighting Flying Boat*, was a front-to-back-only book and as masterful a work of naval aviation history as you're likely to find anywhere. It was a very scholarly hardcover that provided a complete service history of the Martin Mariner PBM. His new book is completely different in appearance, but just as rigorous in terms of detail and accuracy.

To begin with, P5M is a big 8.5" x 11" soft cover book, and though it may look thin at 170 pages, it contains more photographs and technical drawings of Marlins than I ever thought existed. These aren't ordinary photos, either. They are all unusual and amazingly detailed. There are images of Marlins in every stage of its development, in every configuration, and (presumably) in every place it ever served. You can see Marlins in flight (alone and in formation), taking off (with and without JATO), landing, taxiing, on the ramp, at anchor, being hoisted aboard tenders, secured on deck, firing rockets, and dropping sonobuoys. The richness of this pictorial record is truly amazing and an easy way to spend many hours without realizing it.

As he did for PBMs in *The Fighting Flying Boat*,



Captain Hoffman has compiled a complete production and service history for the Marlin, listing Bureau Numbers, acceptance dates, squadron assignments, and strike dates. I haven't checked, but I wouldn't be surprised if every BuNo was represented photographically.

Also like his previous book, the Captain gives us a complete history of squadron operations, this time for the Marlins, for both Atlantic and Pacific fleets, from 1952 through 1967. Every P5 veteran in the MMA is likely to find at least one passage and set of photographs to remind him of his own service experiences. And, Coast Guard aviators won't feel left out; Captain Hoffman recounts their Marlin operations as well.

There are two portions of the book that really set it apart from its predecessor and fascinated me as student of naval aviation history. First, there are the stories of the Marlin as an experimental test bed. These experiments included the use of a turbojet auxiliary engine fitted in the tail (See the Summer 2006 edition

