

# SIGHTINGS

VOLUME 14 ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2008



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## Reunion Planning Nears Completion; Now It's Your Time to Act

The planning committee for Reunion XII is putting the finishing touches on arrangements for this fall's USNPAAA reunion, Saturday, Sept 27 through Monday, Sept. 29 in Old Town Alexandria, Va. About all that's left is for you to act to reserve your space at the reunion and the hotel.

Conference registration is only \$199 per person (\$398 per couple) and that includes the Saturday welcome reception, Sunday evening dinner and tribute to RADM Bill and Dorothy Thompson and Monday's breakfast, business meeting, professional sessions and lunch.

Registration forms will be mailed soon to all members. Return your form with a check for full payment to USNPAAA, 6119 Larstan Drive, Alexandria, VA 22312. Registration is not complete without payment. Credit card payment is not available. Convenient Hotel

The Hilton Alexandria Hotel, site for the reunion, couldn't be more convenient. Located at 1767 King Street, it's just minutes from Reagan National Airport, close to major highways and within walking distance of the Metro system and the Alexandria Amtrak station.

The association has negotiated a special room rate of \$159 per night. Normally the hotel charges an additional \$10 per night for a second person in the room, but that fee will be

be waived for Hilton Honors members. If you are not a Hilton Honors member already, it's easy to sign up when making a reservation.

The reunion rate is good until Aug. 28 if rooms still are available in the USNPAAA block at that late date. Once the association's guaranteed block is filled, however, higher rates may apply. The rate is good from Friday through Monday night so you can arrive a day early and stay until Tuesday morning

The Hilton has created a special site to make hotel reservations. Go to: <http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/DCAOTHF-SNP-20080927/index.jhtml>. Or call the hotel directly at (703) 837-0440 and ask for the Navy Public Affairs Alumni Association rate.

### The Agenda

Here's a look at the program so far:

On Saturday, catch up with old friends during the opening reception on the hotel terrace. Hors d' oeuvres and the first drink are included

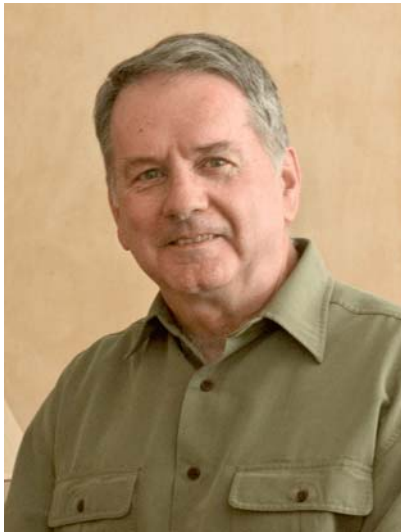
Early Sunday is free to visit friends in the Washington area or to see some of the newest sites in the area. The reunion committee will have suggestions once you arrive.

Sunday evening the reunion continues at the U.S. Navy Memorial on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. The evening will include a reception and dinner, capped off by a special tribute to the Thompsons.

—see Agenda on Page 4

## View from the Bridge

Your board is focused on the upcoming Reunion XII at the Hilton in Alexandria Sept. 27-29. The highlight of this reunion is the Sunday evening Sept. 28 Salute to RADM Bill and Dorothy Thompson at the Navy Memorial. Bill is our first 1650 CHINFO and our



“Godfather” who set the course for the great Navy public affairs team of today. It is clear to many of us who worked on the Navy public affairs history project that Admiral Bill took over the leadership of the Navy public affairs team at a critical Navy 1971-1975 turning point.

In the summer of 1971, the end of the Vietnam War was in sight, with one final 1972 surge of naval action by the Seventh Fleet operating off Vietnam. Working closely with the CNO, ADM Elmo Zumwalt, the Navy’s internal relations efforts were re-engineered by RADM Thompson with the CHINFO takeover of All Hands magazine and creation of the Navy Internal Relations Activity (NIRA) to bring professional focus to all Navy internal media.

He began his “Shucks from the Squirrel Cage” newsletter to PAOs. Under RADM Thompson’s leadership Navy public affairs transitioned from the print world to the video media in a big way. With Thompson’s upgrade of electronic media for internal relations, ADM Zumwalt became the first CNO to use a film “CNO SITREP” to inform the troops.

When Bill became CHINFO, the only ships that had closed circuit radio-TV systems were the carriers. In 1971, Bill (and Larry Hamilton) got Col. Buzz Rizer, USAF (Ret) to come from the Air Force to the Navy’s AFRTS. Buzz began putting TV systems in all Navy ships and thus the Navy’s ship-based SITE television systems went from *ad hoc* PAO planning to central Navy AFRTS and OPNAV-CHINFO planning and management.

Then, the Navy formed the Navy Broadcasting Service (NBS) under Rizer. In fact, Rizer got RADM Thompson in trouble several times within OPNAV and Systems Commander staffs because of the aggressive CHINFO handling of the budgeting and installation of shipboard TV. As always, Admiral Bill smiled and charged on! All of this progress while the Navy suffered through the anti-war movement’s challenges in the early 1970s, major racial problems (Kitty Hawk and Constellation) and the growing role of women in the Navy. (The first Navy women line officers went to sea duty in August 1972.)

Who can forget the POW return and Operation Homecoming, in which Navy PAOs had such a big role. Remember the “news summaries” put together by PAOs (available at all naval hospitals) to bring the POWs up-to-date on events they missed while in prisons.

RADM Thompson also focused on PAO professional development, with more post-graduate and War College billets. The Mack Study of the PAO program was completed in 1973.

Who can forget the Navy’s Bicentennial Planning (under Dave Cooney and Brayton Harris), which began on Thompson’s watch.

Finally, the 1973 Middle East War, resulting oil embargo, the 1972-1974 Watergate scandal and the 1974 CNO change of command made Bill’s watch a bumpy road to the very end.

President Nixon and Henry Kissinger were very much upset with ADM Zumwalt because of his hard line on SALT II talks, and with a letter Zumwalt sent to the president. Because of that, Vice President Gerald Ford spoke at the June 1974 CNO change of command.

RADM Thompson recalled in his unpublished memoir, “Up to the last hours of his (Zumwalt’s) naval career marked by the change of command on June 29, 1974, he was threatened with a court martial or being fired by President Nixon, all attributed to the paranoia and decadence that existed in the short-lived second term of President Nixon.

“The Watergate investigation was ongoing, which eventually brought about the resignation, to preclude impeachment, of Richard Milhous Nixon as the 37th president of the U.S. on August 9, 1974, a little more than five weeks after Zumwalt retired.”

RADM Thompson recalled, “Just prior to

Zumwalt's departure, he presented me with the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) for '...creation of the most effective and professional public affairs program in the history of the United States Navy.' This was the first award of the DSM to a Navy PAO and an honor for which I was grateful."

When RADM Thompson decided to retire from the Navy in February 1975, the new CNO, ADM James Holloway, planned to relieve him with an unrestricted line flag officer. Bill realized that this was not in the best interest of the Navy public affairs team. He had experienced how much having a 1650 admiral meant to the PAOs. He convinced the CNO to change his mind and appoint Captain Dave Cooney (his deputy) as acting CHINFO, until Cooney was selected for Rear Admiral about a year later. So, Bill's last active duty accomplishment was to maintain the 1650 CHINFO tradition, which he had established in 1971

Bill never really left the Navy, but I won't go into his key leadership role in establishing the Navy Memorial. The point is, Bill deserves a special salute, and we are the best qualified to do that. You can help! We need stories, photos, video, film about Bill Thompson. Send this material to Jim Finkelstein, who is coordinating the production of a video to be shown Sunday evening.

The reunion program on Monday will include the business meeting, where we will elect new officers and conduct a session with the new reserve public affairs flag officer, RADM K.J. Braithwaite, on the changing role of the integrated naval reserve public affairs team; a seminar session led by RADM Frank Thorp and his team; a session on public affairs from the decades of the 60s 70s, 80s, 90s and 00s with four retired 165x officers, and one active duty 1650 to highlight the lessons learned over those decades. We end the 2008 reunion with a Monday lunch, where (if he is back) we hope to have RADM Greg Smith enlighten us with tales of Iraq.

**New Members:** We welcomed six new members since our last Sightings:

- LT Jeffrey Gordon**, Washington, DC
- CAPT W. Curry Graham**, Annapolis, MD
- LT Cindy Moore**, Arlington, VA
- CDR Charles Templeton**, Canton, OH
- LT William Tisdale**, Chesapeake, VA
- CDR John Trombetta**, Camillus, NY

**RADM Jones' Retirement:** We salute RADM Nathan Jones, our fellow board member, who retires as our reserve flag on Thursday, May 15, at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C. Nathan was acting CHINFO after Greg Smith went to Iraq and until relieved by RADM Thorp. Hope to see many of you there.

**New Board Members:** This January we welcomed new board members **Joe Ciokon, K.J. Braithwaite, Bobby Lincoln** and **Jill Votaw**. I thank outgoing board members Brian Gray, Donald Dvornik, and Nathan Jones for their service.

**Norma S. Connelly Public Affairs Service Award:** CHINFO is putting the finishing touches on the CHINFO Instruction promulgating the Norma S, Connelly Public Affairs Service Award. You will recall that Norma served at CHINFO for 22 years, including service as CHINFO's personal executive secretary from September 1978 to July 2000. The award will be given to an individual who is not a public affairs professional but one who has given extraordinary service to Navy public affairs.

**2008 Worldwide Navy PA/VI Training Symposium:** CHINFO will host the 2008 Worldwide Navy PA/VI Training Symposium at the National Conference Center near Washington D.C., June 8-11. (We hope to be invited to participate.)

**Charles D. Connor:** We salute our colleague Charles Connor as he assumed his new post as executive vice president of the American Lung Association (ALA). On April 1 he becomes chief operating officer of the ALA.

Finally, we will all miss our long-time public affairs colleague Anna C. Urband. She represented the best in the CHINFO civilian specialists, who represent the true continuity within the Office of Information. It was my honor to host her retirement luncheon in the Pentagon on Feb. 27, 1990. She is mentioned elsewhere in this Sightings.

Finally, with this issue of Sightings, Brian Gray hangs up his editorship hat, with a job well done. We salute Brian's dedication, not only to this newsletter, but also as a vital member of our board. Bill Gengler steps in to take over as Sightings Editor. Welcome, Bill, in your new role.

That's all for now. Hope you will join us at the reunion.

All the best,

*---Brent Baker*

## *Agenda — continued from Page 1*

Monday morning will find the group again at the Hilton for a business meeting and professional development. As part of the morning, panel of USNPAAA members will walk attendees through the “Decades of Navy Public Affairs—the 1960s through the 2000s.” We will hear from:

1960s – **CAPT Bill Stierman**, former Det Charlie and CINCPACFLT PAO, on the Vietnam War.

1970s – **CAPT Brayton Harris**, former DOD Rep and head of the JIB at Balboa Naval Hospital during Operation Homecoming; and Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Navy for the 1976 Bicentennial and International Naval Review.

1980s – **RADM Jack Garrow**, on whose watch the Navy went from film CNO Sitreps to a new weekly video called “Navy News This Week.” Grenada happened on his watch and CNN first went on cable, so he will address technology and effects of ability to broadcast “live” from the battlefield on military, the Sidle Panel and DOD pools..

1990s – **RADM Kendell Pease**, CHINFO during the USS IOWA explosion; Tailhook and fallout (SECNAV resigned and CNO retired early), sexual harassment training and fallout, including admirals forced to retire because of allegations of sexual harassment or insensitive remarks; first female F-14 pilot killed trying to land on carrier and related charges of double standards in flight training; suicide of CNO.

2000s – Speaker to be designated by CHINFO on the global war on terrorism and current state of professionalism.

CHINFO, **RADM Frank Thorp**; Reserve **RADM K. J. Braithwaite**; and **RADM Greg Smith** (if he’s back from IRAQ) also are scheduled to speak.

The Alexandria location also provides the association an occasion to invite area active duty and reserve PAOs to participate in reunion activities. It’s also chance to learn that today’s Navy public affairs activities are in good hands. Don’t miss the opportunity.

## Book Review

### Looking at the Vietnam Air War

by Ted Storck

“The Naval Air War in Vietnam,” by Peter B. Mersky and Norman Polmar, published by The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, Annapolis, Maryland.

I bought this book in the late 1980s when I browsed through it and found several of the photos I had taken in Vietnam. It sat on my bookshelf until a rare rainy day in The Valley of the Sun, the Phoenix area, this year. I picked it up and read it in one afternoon.

It’s a must read for anyone interested in the Navy’s involvement in the Vietnam war, and especially for those who flew off carriers, served aboard the carriers or were in the task forces on Yankee or Dixie stations.

The book covers briefly Task Forces 115, 116 and 117 inside Vietnam, the PBR, Swift boats and other inland boats, as well as the helicopters that supported this action. Some Marine Corps and Air Force action is included.

But most of the book covers carrier operations and is filled with pictures of Navy aircraft and ships. It also details how some aircraft were modified to meet the changing needs.

Considerable time is also spent on the political side of the war, especially pertaining to bombing and how President Lyndon Johnson approved all or nearly all bombing targets. This, the book points out, sometimes meant good targets were never bombed, because they were not approved, or by the time permission was granted, the target was not there.

The book comes to a close with the fall of Saigon, but before ending, relives the Mayaguez Incident in May of 1975.

All-in-all, it’s good reading for any Navyman who served in or off Vietnam and those interested in the Navy’s role in the Vietnam War.

# Remembering Anna Urband



Four Chiefs of Information gathered with Anna Urband for her retirement party in 1990. Shown in the Pentagon executive dining room with Anna: Rear Admirals Jim Finkelstein, Bill Thompson, Dave Cooney and Brent Baker.

Anna Urband, a stalwart in the CHINFO Magazine and Book division, died Dec. 16, 2007. Art Norton offers this tribute:

I worked with, and to some extent was trained by, Anna Urband from 1975 to 76 as her boss (nominally) in OI-211, Mag & Book. I say nominally because Anna really worked on her own and needed nothing but an occasional signature from the naval officer du jour who happened to head the branch.

She came in late, but she worked until very late at night (often she was among the last to leave CHINFO), so Uncle Sam got his money's worth from her, and then some. When I had to stay late she usually outlasted me before she finally would trundle off to Maryland with her shopping bags.

She was without peer in extracting information from the Army's microfilm/microfiche records in the Pentagon basement (and from many other places, I should add). The word "unique" is overused, but Anna was literally unique. By the dictionary: one of a kind.

I am writing a book and would donate a major body part to have Anna around, or an Anna clone, but the position has gone away and there is no Anna

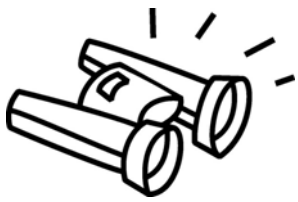
Urband analog, no single Navy Department source who will hunt down arcane, detailed information for a writer (at least none that I have found).

She is mentioned with gratitude in the acknowledgments of books by many authors, including Herman Wouk and James Michener, and she answered every letter she got, whether from a Wouk researcher or from an unknown.

She typed her own long, detailed, superbly crafted letters and her alter ego, Henrietta Zilch, and her squiggly representations of Ms. Zilch, still live on the old pink or green or yellow flimsies of any letter she typed (ACU:hz). I've kept a few for posterity. No words can capture my feelings of sadness at the passing of this quirky, funny, intelligent, wonderful little lady.

## Board Officers Elected

During the December board teleconference, USNPAAA officers were elected for 2008. George Kolbenschlag was elected secretary to replace Chris Miller. All other officers remain in the position held for 2007: president Brent Baker, vice presidents Steve Clawson and Jim Noone, treasurer Jeff Zakem and chaplain Chris Baumann.



## Recently Sighted

**Jack Garrow** was among 14 athletes inducted into the first class of the Antioch (CA) Sports Legends Hall of Fame in October. The 14 included three NFL players, an All American tackle, three major league baseball players, a record-setting swimmer, a member of Stanford University's Baseball Hall of Fame and a nationally recognized women's softball player and coach.

Garrow was selected as the all-around athlete of the inductees, having earned eight varsity letters in four sports in high school and four varsity letters in two sports at the Naval Academy. In high school Garrow was named to the all-county teams in football and baseball twice and played in the California baseball all-star game his senior year. In track in his senior year he won the high and low hurdle events in the Contra Costa County Meet and won the high hurdle event in the North Coast Meet in which all high schools in northern California participated. He was also a member of the winning 440-yard and 880-yard relay teams.

At the Naval Academy, Garrow was a halfback on Navy's famed "Team Named Desire" that won the Sugar Bowl in 1955. He also scored Navy's only touchdown in the 1953 Army-Navy Game. Garrow was Navy's leading high hurdler for two years on the track team, winning his event in the Army-Navy meet in 1955.

Garrow is a 1950 graduate of Antioch High School and a 1955 graduate of the U. S. Naval Academy.

**Charles Connor** was appointed chief operating officer of the American Lung Association. He joined the association as executive vice president and will assume the role of COO April 1 upon the retirement of Joseph Bergen.

Most recently he was senior vice president for communication and marketing for the National Headquarters of the American Red Cross in Washington, D.C. Prior to the Red Cross, where he had served since September 2002, he was principal for client strategy with The Dilenschneider Group in Chicago and before that he was the first director of public affairs for the Federal Judiciary.

**Perry Bishop** reports that although he has retired from full-time file work, he continues teaching several graduate PR classes (PR Techniques, Crisis Communications Management, and the Capstone Course) with University of Maryland University College. Perry has been with the university since 2000 and its Graduate School of Management and Technology since 2005.

**Pat Dooling** retired after 39 years of service in the active and reserve forces and the civilian public affairs community. His latest assignment was as public affairs officer for Navy Region Southeast.

After four years of active duty, Pat began his public affairs career in 1972 as an editorial assistant at Naval Station Charleston and was steadily promoted to editorial writer, editor and deputy PAO at COMNAVBASE/6th Naval District. He came to Naval Air Station Jacksonville in 1992 as the HELWINGSLANTPAO and through several reorganizations served as both the base and Navy Region Southeast PAO. He was the first civilian to serve as a Region PAO.

During his career Pat worked for 18 flag officers and with 12 CHINFOs. He received the Civilian Employee of the Year award three times and the Meritorious Civilian Service award. He retired after 26 years of service in the Naval Reserve as a CTCS in 1995.

**Patrishia Davis-Coupe**, widow of **Jay Coupe**, wants members to be aware of a web site which provides information about the scholarships established in Jay's memory. It's available at: [www.jaycoupe.com](http://www.jaycoupe.com).

**Bill Thompson** authored an article in the October 2007 Naval Institute Proceedings on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the U. S. Navy Memorial. After an account of the memorial's dedication, RADM Thompson lauded "the outstanding support...from many individuals, principally the stalwarts on the staff. Most were from the Navy public affairs community, who were never paid enough because of our lack of funds but who became obsessed to contribute to this project."

He added, "considering that none of us had previous experience in building a memorial, we done good."

## Did You Know? Our Dick McCool Holds the Medal of Honor for Heroism in WWII

by Jack Mackercher



Some may not know our community has an officer who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism in the closing days of WWII. June 11, 1945, was a day of lasting note for LTJG Dick McCool.

I had the honor of relieving CAPT Richard Miles McCool, Jr., from his temporary duty at

Seventh Fleet Det Charlie in June 1966. Twenty-one years to the month had passed since his instinctive and valorous action placed him in the front ranks of “our greatest generation.” Let’s turn that day over to Peter Collier, who penned this account of the youthful Naval Academy graduate in response to a frenzied Japanese attack:

“...Suddenly kamikazes dived down through the overcast sky. Instead of heading for the destroyers, the first pilot pointed his plane at McCool’s LCS. McCool’s gunners opened fire and knocked the plane down, but another kamikaze was right behind it. The gunners hit the second plane as well, but it crashed into the ship’s conning tower. McCool, suffering chest wounds and burns, was knocked unconscious. When he came to, the conning tower was on fire. He managed to get down to the main deck and, acting instinctively, he rallied his crew to fight the fire that threatened to engulf the ship. When he heard that several men were trapped in the burning deckhouse, he went in to rescue them, carrying one of them to safety on his back despite his burns. He continued to command his ship until help was on the way. Then one of his lungs collapsed and he passed out.”

The Medal of Honor is awarded for selfless and demanding action that is above and beyond the call of normal duty. It possesses its own lore. Unlike an Olympic gold medal, you don’t win the medal—you become a recipient.

I met Dick McCool when I was a Lieutenant. He was a Commander. It was my honor. It has never failed to be so in our other meetings... and never will.

## The Night the Band Kissed My Admiral

by Tom Coldwell

As U. S. Seventh Fleet Public Affairs Officer 1973 to 1975, I was responsible for the Seventh Fleet Band, and my involvement with these highly talented musicians nearly got me kicked off the admiral’s staff.

It was a long while after VADM George Steele took command before we had a chance to showcase the band for him in a concert setting. But eventually we arranged a big night of dinner and dancing in the Yokosuka officers club, with the band set to perform on stage *à la* the big bands of yesteryear.

There sat the admiral, chief of staff Bob Foley (later CINCPACFLT), flag secretary, flag lieutenant, department heads, other staffers and ship’s company officers and all of our wives.

The band was gangbusters, turning out current popular songs and some rousing patriotic *tours de force*. Which would have been just fine, until a song and stage act began that I had not seen since our flagship crossed the equator a month before. Lots of laughs, y’know. One of the bandsmen, dressed in drag, began wandering through the audience accompanied by some exotic melody. Just imagine my surprise when the guy wheeled around and sat in the admiral’s lap—ooh, it hurts to write this—and kissed him in the ear!

Thankfully the song ended, opening an intermission before dancing. The admiral’s table quickly dispersed and on the way out the flag lieutenant spoke quietly to me, “The admiral will see you in his cabin Monday morning at 0800.”

As one might imagine, I spent the rest of the weekend pumping acid and gobbling Tums, all the while getting no sleep contemplating my impending doom. Monday arrived, and the admiral skillfully and forcefully pointed out to me that I should have known about and stopped this obviously embarrassing stunt beforehand. For this egregious lapse in command and control, I came “that close,” he said, to getting a set of orders—and, I supposed, a kiss-of-death marking in the top 30 percent. (Neither happened, bless his heart.)

Then, as now, I could not agree with him more; you just don’t let your troops go around kissing your admiral in the ear. There are demonstrably more effective and genteel ways to kiss an admiral. As many in our community have learned so well.