



American Military Heritage Foundation
Dedicated to preserving, in flying
condition, a Vintage PV-2 Harpoon in memory of all who fought on
behalf of the United States of America

April 2017 Newsletter

Now March is in the books. Weather might have been just a little bit better than February. We were able to clean out space in the shop to create a makeshift paint booth and Steve has been able to paint both rudders and the associated parts that go with them. Now we will need to reorganize and create an area large enough to set each rudder up one at a time and check the balance after painting. They may not look very big when installed on the plane. However, when you have to lay one down flat and suspended on balance points it takes up a lot of space and when the shop is full it can sometimes be a task just getting to that point.

The good news is that we are getting much closer to being able to do the first engine runs and taxi test in preparation for test flight and start of crew training. It has been a long struggle with many chuck holes, not bumps, in the road getting to this point but at long last flight looks much closer and possible. As always we can still use all help to reach our goal so if you can donate some time let us know when and we will try to pick a day we can get the most members involved in the effort. I know we have some members who have never seen this plane fly and at times are not sure if it ever will. So let's all work together and push this through putting a

national treasure back in the air again. I will guarantee you there will be many big smiles and cheers when it again lifts off for first flight. If you doubt this in any way come on out give a hand and be there when it happens.

Last month we printed a list of things that came forward at the Board of Directors meeting and asked for feedback from the members on any or all of them or if we had any volunteers to help with any of the ones presented. I have listed them again in case you don't remember what they were or needed more time to present your ideas. Don't be bashful if you think you have an idea that may help the organization.

Increase membership while retaining current members.

How to get members interested in working on the plane

Find ways to make our organization more visible.

Have a capital fund drive at least on an annual basis.

Better organization in booking airshows.

New ways to generate revenue. (Open house, hangar dance)

Articles about the plane and or the AMHF suitable for publication

That just about brings everything up to date on our current status. I don't need to tell you that the flying season is almost on us and we need to be ready in order to book any of the airshows.



Any of you who have been reading the newsletters for any period of time know I try to include some history or interviews with veterans when I get the chance to interview one. This month I received an e-mail with the above picture and the question what happened to all of the drop tanks that were dropped over Vietnam. Yes, I know this is not WWII however; it is still part of our history. Currently I know there are two members of the AMHF that were in Vietnam. Steve Montani and I were there and possibly, there may be others.

I don't know exactly how many years I have been involved with the AMHF and how I got there is another whole story in itself and changes depending on who you ask Glen, Paula, or Jenny. I graduated from high school in 1960 and like most people of that age I really didn't know what I wanted to do. However, the one thing I did want to do was fly so I started taking lessons and received my private pilot license the next year. You guessed it. I worked full time and spent all of my money on flying. I worked on the farm for a year; then as psychiatric attendant at the state hospital for about 18 months after which time I decided that was not a job I wanted to continue. So here come the airplanes again. I had not been able to do anything with flying so I decided to be a mechanic and at least I could work on them. So I enrolled in Parks College in the A&P program. You can do the math. I graduated high school 1960, worked for a year on the farm, worked for 18 months at the hospital, then a year at school. So what war was heating up? I received that famous letter saying my friends and neighbors had chosen me to serve my country. So in November of 1964 I started on a two year tour of duty that would take me from Logansport, Indiana to the 25th Division in Hawaii, and finally to Cu Chi, South Vietnam.

First stop was Ft. Knox, Ky. for basic training and selection of our duty for our time in the Army. Well about 6 weeks into basic training and many tests we were marched down for classification. I sat there and listened to all of the various people be called up. First question, what would you like to do? Well I would like to be a cook. No you don't want to do that you really want to be a telephone lineman. What would you like to do? Well you see I have this novelty act and I would really like to work with the USO. No that is not available. However, we have a job for you in quartermasters. So I was forming an opinion that this was just a formality. So I was called up and asked the same question. Well, I would like to work on airplanes. What do you know about airplanes? I have my A&P license. Do you have it with you? Yes. May I see it? So I hand it to him and his reply is would you consider working on helicopters. My response was I am always willing to learn something new. Believe it or not I was sent from basic training straight to the 25th Division 725 maintenance Battalion with a classification of single engine twin rotor helicopter repairman. You may remember this as the H21/flying banana.

Well I spent about a year in the state of Hawaii during which time I was able to check out at Honolulu International in both a Cherokee 160 and a Cessna 182 and flew to most of the other Islands. Today I really wonder if that was smart when you consider it is 90 miles from landfall to landfall when you leave Honolulu and fly out to Kauai.

One day the CO announced they had tickets for us on an all-expenses paid cruise to Vietnam. So we packed up the whole division and took a 10 day trip via Okinawa and on to

Vung Tau, South Vietnam. We got up at like two in the morning to clean up the ship for the sailors. We were then transported to shore via a motor launch, then by C130 to Saigon, then via Chinook into the middle of a peanut field at Cu Chi. Then for several weeks we became experts at building tents, digging ditches and many other things rather than helicopter maintenance. Things finally settled down to your basic military life of KP, guard duty, and maybe work on a helicopter. We were visited one night by Puff, C47 with three mini Vulcan guns and I believe Steve crewed on these for a while. I rotated back to the states in October of 1966 and went to work for Lake Central Airlines working on the DC-3, Convair 340 and 580 conversions with some French Nord's on the side.

I went back to flying some and received my instrument, Cfl, and multiengine ratings. Then I tried flight instructing for a period of time. I ended up working in sales for a company that just happened to own a Cherokee 6. In the mean time I got married, started attending IUPUI and graduated with a degree in geology. The owner of the company decided to sell the company in 1984 and that is when Sandy and I started Piercy Machine Co.



Not bad looking drop tanks I guess you could say repurposed.

I was spending most of my time trying to get our business going. However, I was still flying as much as I could in our 1947 108 Stinson. I also would on occasion check out the local airport. By then we had moved to Shelbyville so if I heard of anything going on at the airport I would go out and take a look. Well one Saturday this big blue monster showed up and I decided to go in and take a look at it. I made the mistake of telling them I had an A&P and some experience on radial engines. Well I received a call one Saturday that they would be working on the plane so I drove up. They bribed me with my multi engine I could fly the plane. Over the years there have been many changes and improvements. It can be a humbling experience working on the Harpoon, just about the time you think you have things figured out something will come up that you never even thought of. Yes I finally did get checked out in the right seat and have several hours logged in it. For the most part it has been a great experience and a lot of fun. When we are on display at some air show and have the veterans come up and talk to us and thank us for the work we are doing to honor our service men and women and especially our WWII folks it is amazing how you forget about the oil baths, safety wire stabs, loss of skin, and late evenings getting it back together for an air show.

In closing if you enjoy airplanes, don't mind getting dirty, like to greet our service men, and understand that like all organizations there will be good days, bad days, and some may even be worse. I believe it is a worthwhile organization with a great mission statement.

Have a great Month,

Gaylon