



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

August 2017 Newsletter

Can you believe it is August and the schools are already in session? That can only mean one thing; it will not be long until we are headed back down the temperature scale.

July did not work out as we had hoped. However, in the Harpoon world it wasn't all that bad. We succeeded in doing engine runs along with all of the ground checks that had to be completed before first flight. There were some minor squawks we need to address.

Another BOD meeting was held at MQJ. There are several things going on that could turn out well if the organization can put it all together. Two that are at the top of the list are participating in Riley Days with a fly over and booth. We are also looking at a hangar dance with a forties theme. In regards to the hangar we are still trying to raise funds for this project. Funding the organization through the end of the year was also discussed. The BOD is reaching out to all members for help with contributions or ways to bring in revenue. Currently the organization requires approximately \$800.00 per month and this does not include any fuel

or flight insurance. We also have a balloon payment coming due on the fuel tanks at the end of the year for approximately \$12,000.

We were not able to make Shelbyville due to the sign off and availability of a crew. We still have the possibility of a couple of air expos. Naturally this all depends on getting signed off and availability of a crew.

It is the wish of the BOD that all of our members and friends of the AMHF would see their way to make an extra donation and help out with some of the plans now in the works.

That pretty much brings you up to date on July activities. There is an interview following and I hope everyone enjoys it and believes all of our work is worthwhile.

Sometime in middle of June I was advised by one of our members there was a possible interview that I should pursue in Avon. So I took the advice and started checking things out. I was able to make contact with the nursing home where this individual was currently living. So within a few days I was contacted by his daughter and was told it would be ok to come meet and talk with him. So I set up to meet with them on Wednesday, June 21.

We met him at the assisted living facility in Avon along with his wife of 76 years and daughter.



Russell "Twister" Garrison was born on June 28, 1927 in Cane Valley, Kentucky. Once he woke up and realized we were interested in talking with him he came alive. He is quite the story teller and had what most of us would consider a very exciting life. I am not quite sure how he survived all of the antics he talked about being involved in. However, at the time he grew up things were much different. One Halloween they took an old car and pushed it up the street to the top of a hill, tied the steering wheel so it would run straight, put some hay in it, poured kerosene on that, set it on fire and pushed it down the hill. He said you know it didn't make it up the steps to the court house. He enlisted in the Navy and took his basic training at Great Lakes. From there he was sent to Pensacola Fl. for aviation mechanics school. Somewhere along this path is where he met his wife to be and once she saw him in uniform she said she "wasn't about to let him get away." She was with him at Pensacola at a movie and all at once the movie stopped, the lights came up, a Naval officer came on stage and told all navy personal to report immediately back to base. The United States had just been bombed, December 7, 1941. I asked if they remembered the movie they were watching and neither one could remember.

After his training he was sent to Adak, Alaska as an aircraft mechanic. When asked what he felt the hardest thing to do in the weather, it was pulling the planes out of the water. That is when I learned he was working on the PBY and not a Harpoon.

Some of his stories from Adak probably rival the ones of his growing up in Kentucky. He told me they tried skiing but he quickly gave that up. Their drink of choice was called Sneaky Pete. He couldn't remember how they made it but it must have been a rival for Kentucky white lightening and I'm sure more than one individual knew the recipe.

He told me he ended up in the brig while on Adak. I asked him how he managed to get there. Well, you see this Marine made a comment about his mother and he just decked him. He didn't mention what the Marine said. However, he ended up in front of the company commander and in the brig for some period of time.

While in the service his wife worked at a clothing store. When he came home and she quit work she had spent all her pay check and ended up owing the store money.

While on Adak they noticed a Kodiak bear visiting the garbage dump so they decided some fresh meat would be good. Well the bear outsmarted them for a few days. However, they finally outsmarted the bear. They field dressed, quartered, and then carried it to the company cook. He said, "I've never cooked bear." At that point Russell received orders to go back to Pensacola for discharge. Russell said, "You can keep the bear I'm going home."

When he came back home he set tombstones for a living. Eventually he was hired as conversation officer and later promoted to Director of Law Enforcement for the Department of Fish and Wildlife in Louisville, Kentucky.

Meeting with Mr. Garrison, his wife, and daughter was a real treat. The stories our veterans and family members can tell are so precious to the history of our great nation. Sandy and I were very thankful for the chance to sit and listen to their stories and record them for other people to read and understand a small part of what our veterans did.

I wished I could make this a better ending. However, Russell "Twister" Garrison flew west for his final time on June 28, 2017.

I reached out to our resident historian for information about squadrons stationed on Adak and she sent me the following information. PBY squadrons on Adak were VP-43, VP-61, and VP-62. Looks like they all belonged to Fleet Air Wing 4 (as did our squadron VPB-136). They flew PBY-5A's.

Have a great month,

Gaylon