

Of Iron Men and P-2s (or so they'll tell you...)



P-2V6 photo contributed by Doug Crowe

"In 1956 when I graduated from AT "A" school, my average was about the middle of the class. Back then, they put a bunch of billets on the board and starting with the honor man, you got to choose your duty. When it got down to me, all the VP's and VW's and Fasrons were taken and all that was left was VA's and VF's. I thought long and hard and chose VA(HM) 13 in Chincoteague, VA (mainly because I had a high school buddy stationed at Chinco).

"I had no idea what I was getting into, but when I went down to the duty office to check in, there sat 12 of the prettiest P2V-6M's on the flight line. They had taken VP-24 on the East Coast and another VP on the West Coast and made them mining

squadrons. It didn't work out and they changed them back to VP's after a couple of years.

"From there, I commissioned VP-30 as an instructor and was in VP's my whole career (sea duty). I've never been aboard ship except for about 2 hours when we put a P-2 in on its belly in Quonset Point, RI and at the end of the runway, the carrier Tarawa wasted up. They took us aboard to patch us up and I was so nervous--afraid it would up and sail before I could get off."

-- Mac McComas

"Boy don't these guys make you want to join up again?? So impressive, even Fat Albert!! My most memorable viewing of The Blues was at Whidbey Island in 1968 or 1969 (probably after the 68 deployment, so mid 69). I was young enough I got selected to point cars to parking areas on the hill above our hangar. What a great job! They were flying the F4 Phantom at the time and it was the most fantastic airship I had ever seen.

"Out of ADJ "A" school all I wanted to do was go to a Carrier and work on the J79. Poor me, they sent me to a P2 squadron via aircrew school. An old salty Chief was handing out orders after "A" school. He would walk up and say " Good orders Son, nothing better than F8's" or "Great job Sailor, the Coral Sea will make a man out of you". When he got to me he just shook his head. I asked what was wrong and he said "A VP Squadron". What's that I asked and he said "Them is some crazy Bastards! They fly about 12 feet above the ocean and with waves sometimes being 25 feet high a lot of the flight crew are killed because it flips the planes into the ocean.

"Oh by the way, that was my "good luck in aircrew school"! I was terrified that I had just received my death warrant. The Chief never said anything else to me, just walked to the next guy."