

Gamewardens of Vietnam – Mid-Atlantic Chapter

Hi Everyone!

The latest meeting of the GWVN Mid Atlantic Chapter was held on Saturday, May 19th, 2007. Per the discussions at the previous meeting, this date was chosen because it is Armed Forces Day and will not interfere with Memorial Day events the following weekend.

The meeting was held from 1:00 to 3:00 pm (+/-) at: VFW Post 392 located at 2408 Bowland Pkwy, Virginia Beach, VA.

The “Firefight” print that was presented to the post by the GWVN Mid Atlantic Chapter was on display.

Present at the meeting were (14) members of GWVN Mid Atlantic Chapter, (1) Guest and (1) Rat:

The membership was represented by Roger Alston, Monte Blackwell, Clarence Cooper, Al DeRoco, Pat Doyle, Bill Ferguson, Bob Fred, Jerry Gandy, Tom Glickman, Gary Grahn, Milt Larkin, Gary Marker, Larry Weatherall and “Wes” Weseleskey, our guest was Mr. Ron Kilmer and the Rat was none other than A. Billy Rat Jr. (himself). (pictures attached)

The meeting was kicked off with the pledge of allegiance and the following agenda items were covered.

1. Two veterans of TF-116 in Vietnam are reported to have passed away since our last meeting.

Former GMG-3 Richard A. (Mac) McMurry

Retired Captain John F. (Jack) Doyle

Several Mid Atlantic Chapter members were present at the memorial service for Capt. Doyle and the family members were presented with a letter from National President John Woody and GWVN Challenge Coins as reminders of his service.

The Chapter has decided to recognize the passing of all TF-116 veterans by passing the word as quickly as possible and whenever I get the information, I'll send it out via the email distribution list.

2. Our guest speaker, Ron Kilmer, a post Vietnam era former ET-2 and owner of Virginia Electronics, talked with us about the refurbishment of MK II PBR's and their subsequent re-deployment to Columbia as part of the anti-drug forces. Ron's company has refurbished (5) former SBU MK II's and delivered them to the Columbian Navy over the past several years and the MK II on display at the UDT-SEAL Reunion in 2005 was one of the boats that his company had recently finished.

Ron initially contacted me when we were putting the MK I PBR back together for our display at Little Creek and has provided the radios that are currently on the boat. I have been fortunate to be able to help Ron in underway trials on a couple of the MK II's after their refurbishment and can testify that the boats are currently better than the ones we had in Vietnam. Some of the changes that are made to the boats during the refurbishment are:

A. The steel armor is replaced with titanium for strength, weight and maintenance benefits.

B. All the electronics are updated to the latest level including GPS and headset communication for the crew.

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C. The styrofoam is all cut out and replaced with non-hydroscopic foam to keep it from becoming saturated.

D. The foam in the fuel tank area is removed and hammocks are installed. The crews LIVE ON THE BOATS.

E. The throttle and discharge nozzle controls are separated for ease of maintenance and spare part availability.

F. The exhaust silencers are replaced with newer, quieter units.

In acceptance trials, the boats have been clocked at 32+ knots (without weapons and ammo) and are as SWEET as you can imagine! The attached pictures are some that were taken in 2004 during one of the trial runs that I had the good fortune to be part of.

3 . Report on the “Family Day Cruise” aboard the USS J.E. Williams. The Mid Atlantic Chapter was represented by Jerry Gandy, Clarence Cooper, Gary Marker and Bob Fred. Guests were not allowed out on deck due to the high winds but were escorted throughout the ship including the Engineering spaces, CIC and the Bridge. Jerry Gandy and Bob Fred talked about the visit and these are the highlights:

A. Bob Fred reports that the Engineering spaces are clean enough to eat off of and that DRY BILGES are standard. If there is something in the bilges, there is a problem that has to be dealt with!

B. Bob also reported that the Engineering spaces are climate controlled, noise and vibration insulated and a pleasure to be in. Quite a contrast to the oil fired boiler rooms or diesel engine rooms of 40+ years ago.

C. Jerry Gandy got some GREAT pictures of the accompanying tug playing like it was a submarine... (see attached pictures)

D. Jerry Gandy was asked to talk with the crew about BM1 Williams and Gamewardens.

4. East Coast MK I PBR Maintenance Committee: [NO new information since last meeting]

Larry Weatherall has volunteered to head up the Maintenance Committee that will work on “our” MK I PBR located at the entrance to the NSWG-4 Compound at NAB Little Creek. The focus of the maintenance efforts will be to ensure that the MK I is always in a presentable condition and to minimize the effects of exposure on the appearance and physical condition of the boat. The maintenance items to be undertaken later in the year are the following:

1. Replacement of the STEEL armor with ALUMINUM to eliminate the possibility of rust.
2. Repair of the coxswains flat floor (over the fuel tanks) where the fiberglass has delaminated.
3. Re-anchoring the canopy legs to their mounting bases.
4. Fabricating “U” mounts for the M-60 MG’s so they can be mounted.
5. FUTURE: Possible reconfiguration of the MK II front gun mount to a MK I layout.

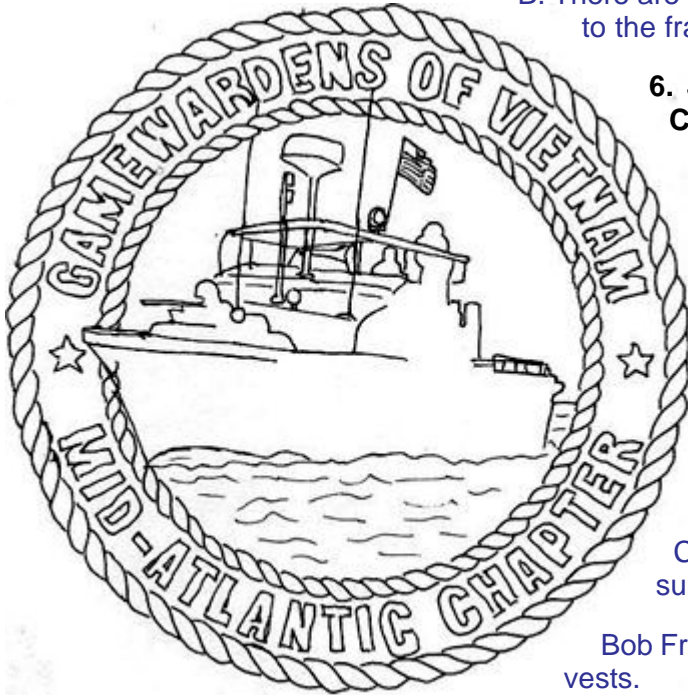
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Larry Weatherall will call for volunteers when the weather warms up a little.

5. Manufacture & Installation of a plaque of statistics near the MK I at Little Creek:

A. Coop, Jerry Gandy and Gary Marker have gotten the plaques fabricated and mounted.

B. There are TWO plaques, one on each side of the boat, both mounted to the framework of the cradle.



6. Jerry Gandy was asking for help in coming up with COLORS for our Mid Atlantic Chapter Logo:

No responses have been received (with the exception of one from Coop's Granddaughter).

It was decided that coloring the logo makes it look too dark and that having it "open" makes the logo easier to see.

It was also decided that we drop the idea of coloring the logo and use it the way it is.

7. Information on GWVN Mid Atlantic Chapter VESTS:

Coop has been unsuccessful in his efforts to find a local supplier.

Bob Fred will check with a friend of his who can possibly make the vests.

Bill Ferguson will check with a friend of his who can possibly do the embroidering.

Al DeRoco will also check on a possible source for vests and embroidering.

8. Info on the Annual UDT-Seal Assn East Coast Reunion at Little Creek:

A. The dates are July 19th through July 22nd this year.

B. We are welcome to join as Associate Members of the UDT-SEAL Assn.

1. Annual Membership is \$50.00 a year and that includes (4) issues of their OUTSTANDING Newsletter/Magazine "THE BLAST".

C. Being able to attend the "Capability Demonstration" during the reunion is worth the price of membership. It's THE BEST "demonstration" I've ever seen.

D. The UDT-SEAL web site is at www.udtseal.org/.

9. Info on 2007 PBR-FVA Reunion in Seattle, August 2nd through August 5th.

A. The PBR-FVA 2007 Reunion is in Seattle this year and more info on how to sign up and the details can be found at www.pbr-fva.org/.

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10. A proposal was raised to solicit interest from the membership in having a PURELY SOCIAL GATHERING, either in addition to or in place of one of our quarterly meetings. One thought was to plan a dinner gathering at a Norfolk / Virginia Beach restaurant and get together with our families instead of just the members.

It turns out that the members who were at the meeting are the only ones who voiced their opinions on this issue. The bottom line is that Coop will investigate locations for a “sit down” dinner where we could get together with our families around the time of the UDT-SEAL Reunion, tentatively on Saturday, 7/21.

Coop will follow up on locations and let me know and I'll send out the info to the Chapter Mailing List for those who are interested.

11. A question was asked about the interest in acquiring a Mid Atlantic Chapter Banner to use for parades and other gatherings of Veterans Groups.

The “Banner” idea was kicked around, abandoned and later revived. The bottom line is that Roger Alston, Al DeRoco and Pat Doyle are going to look at costs and let us know. The design will be pretty basic, the GWVN National Logo on one side, the Mid Atlantic Chapter Logo on the other and wording to the effect of GWVN Mid Atlantic Chapter in the middle. We'll undoubtedly find plenty of uses for it once we have it!

12. NEW ITEM: Memorial Day Event:

Coop and several other members will be meeting at the Virginia Beach Veterans Memorial at 11:00 this coming Saturday. Coop is going to pick up the Mid Atlantic Chapter WREATH and will organize walking it up to the memorial after the official ceremony. There is also talk about going out to the MK I and GWVN Memorial at Little Creek after the Virginia Beach ceremony and anyone interested in participating in either event should contact Coop via email at: seniorcoop33@aol.com or call him at: (757) 340-4898.

For those interested in attending, it was suggested that the “Uniform of the Day” include your Black Beret, Mid Atlantic Chapter shirt and medals. Medals can be your choice of full size, mini or ribbons.

13. There is going to be a MACC (Multi-Agency Craft Conference) at Little Creek on June 5th through June 7th.

Information is available at the MACC web site at: <http://www.boats.dt.navy.mil/macc/> . The boat displays and in-the-water exhibits are open to anyone with access to the base and Ron Kilmer advised that he will have two “Mini ATCs” on site for review.

Our MK I will be included in several presentations on Vietnam era combat craft and hopefully will draw attention to those interested in “our” war.

14. Care Packages to RIVRON ONE currently deployed to Iraq.

We talked a little bit about the information I sent out in March about how to send Care Packages to RIVRON ONE. Anyone who needs a resend of that information, please send me a note and I'll get the information off to you ASAP. Ron Kilmer suggested that “Gold Bond” powder is a good thing to include in any packages being sent based on his personal experiences with the heat.

15. Hertford Meeting picture distribution:

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Bill Ferguson handed out CD's with copies of the pictures that our guest took at the meeting down in Hertford, N.C..

16. Wes W. advised that he is hosting a local gathering of some "SeaWolf" veterans from 5/31 through 6/3.

If any of you are interested in hooking up with our former guardian angels, contact Wes at: wessally@yahoo.com for the details.

17. MISSING CHAPTER MEMBERS:

I forgot to mention it at the meeting but I'm getting "returned" emails from the following people.

- A. Ron Ritter
- B. Robert Tippins
- C. Bill Wood

If any of you know any of these guys, can you please call them and have them send me their current email addresses? Thanks!

18. NEXT MEETING:

Our next meeting will be held on August 18th, 2007 at the VFW Post 392. Please make plans to attend if at all possible and as always, if there are any "pet projects" that the membership would like to see the Chapter involved in, PLEASE make your voice(s) heard!

Larry Weatherall

President, GWVN Mid Atlantic Chapter
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