



USS
USCGC

FINCH



DE 328 – WDE 428 – DER 328

Distinguished service through three wars from 1943 to 1970

Twenty-ninth Year Newsletter No. 3

September 15, 2017



The 2017 Finch reunion has been set for the 9th through the 12th of November, 2017 at Branson Missouri. This period will include the Branson's annual Veterans week celebration. It is not known yet exactly how the Finch will participate in said celebration, but at a minimum expect to be present during the opening ceremonies and to observe the parade on Saturday, November 11th. The tentative schedule of events is as follows; **THURSDAY:** arrival and spaghetti dinner. **FRIDAY:** Wilson Creek battle Field tour and museum, and time permitting, the Missouri Conservation Department Nature Center. Lunch at famous Lambert's "Throw'd Bun" Cafe, with Pizza dinner that evening. **SATURDAY:** Participate in Veterans Day celebration. **SUNDAY;** Church and/or shopping, with the Finch Business meeting at 1:00 P.M. Just to mention a few features of why Branson is an appropriate reunion site: It is a very clean city where you can take your grandchildren and they will not be offended; overflowing trash containers, and panhandlers are not tolerated. The police keep a very low profile, and yet crime is extremely low. The city is a veteran friendly city year round with many of the various entertainment shows free to veterans. The citizens have voted down the effort to bring gambling to the county. The College of the Ozarks is located nearby which is a "work your way through college" institution that is also very veteran friendly. There are many recreational opportunities, depending on the weather, including great trout fishing, Don't forget to bring your Finch or other veteran hats. If staying for an extended period be sure to enjoy one of the two train rides; the one into Arkansas being the better. They last about two hours. Also plan to visit to the Ralph Foster museum located on the campus of College of the Ozarks.





The History of the Unsung Heroes of W.W. Two:² **“THE BLACK CAT” SQUADRON**

Flying from the island of Guadalcanal during World War II, a squadron of black-painted PBV Catalina flying boats that operated mainly at night wrote another proud chapter in the history of U.S. Naval aviation. They were known as the "Black Cats." Their victories led the way for other Black Cat squadrons, who were also very successful. 21 Dec 1942: VP-44 turned in its 10 PBV-5A aircraft in return for 12 PBV-5 Catalinas. These aircraft were equipped with twin 30-caliber guns and Mark IX gun sights. 22 Dec 1942–May 1943: The squadron received orders to deploy to the combat zone at Espiritu Santo Island, New Hebrides, under the operational control of FAW-1. A detachment of two aircraft was sent to the Solomons campaign. In May 1943, the squadron received two aircraft from VP-72, increasing the complement of Catalinas to 14 PBV-5s. Attacks on the Catalinas during this period were frequent. No less than 12 attacks by Mavis flying boats and Nell bombers were recorded, but with no losses. 26 Jun 1943: VP-44 was relieved for return to NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii, and then on to the U.S. By 20 July 1943 VP-44 had arrived at NAS San Diego, Calif., coming under the operational control of FAW-14. All hands were given orders and home leave. 29 Sep 1943–Feb 1944: VP-44 was reformed at NAS San Diego, Calif., and conducted training in preparation for its second tour in the combat zone. It is interesting to note that, unlike the other Black Cat squadrons in the South Pacific, VP-44 was designated as such from the start. Its aircraft came from the factory with a flat-black finish instead of Navy blue, as was the normal practice. Training was completed in January 1944 and the squadron conducted its transpac to NAS Kaneohe, Hawaii. It was discovered that the new amphibious PBV-5A with wheels did not have the range of its predecessor the PBV-5, and could not fly all the way to Hawaii with its wheels attached. The squadron found some PV-1 drop tanks at San Diego that they were able to fit to the wings of the Catalinas that gave them the range needed to make it to Hawaii. This then became standard procedure for the squadrons that followed. From 18 January to 13 February, the squadron departed NAS San Diego in pairs bound for Kaneohe. 1 Feb 1944: The squadron remained at Kaneohe, under the operational control of FAW-2, for five weeks of intensive training with emphasis on ASW techniques. 11 Mar 1944: VP-44 was deployed to Luganville Airfield on Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides, under the operational control of FAW-1. A detachment of aircraft was maintained for convoy coverage at Nausori. ASW training resumed at Luganville Airfield, with the addition of two new technical aids: the sonobuoy and a searchlight with 80 million candlepower. Anti-shipping searches, ASW patrols and rescue missions were the primary missions at both locations. 15 Jun 1944: VP-44 moved to Green Island, halfway between Bougainville and Rabaul, only 150 miles from the enemy stronghold. A PATSU was available for maintenance of squadron aircraft and the berthing and feeding of unit personnel. Patrol missions involved flying daily search sectors extending in a northerly direction to within 200 miles of Truk. ASW operations were discontinued. Patrol missions ceased after 18 August when the primary mission of the squadron was changed to keeping 17 nearby enemy airfields neutralized and to prevent shipping at night from getting to the bypassed Japanese garrisons. Nightly Black Cat raids were conducted and the squadron maintained standby aircraft for ASW and Dumbo missions during the day. Nightly hunts were usually coordinated with one of the PT boat squadrons stationed on Green Island. The Cats would spot the target at night with their radar, then illuminate the scene for the PT boats. Both would then join in on the kill. Attacks were usually made with four 500-pound ANM-64 bombs and forty 20-pound fragmentation bombs. On one nighttime mission over Rabaul, an enemy floatplane fighter attacked Lieutenant Lloyd Garrison and his crew. In the ensuing combat they managed to shoot down the fighter. Upon return, the jubilant crew was informed that confirmation was needed before credit could be authorized. Undaunted, the crew returned early the next morning and took pictures in broad daylight of the smoking wreckage still floating in the bay at Rabaul. They were duly given credit for the deed. 4 Sep–Dec 1944: VP-44 operational control was changed from FAW-1 to FAW-2. By this stage of the war, Japanese resistance had been broken and Rabaul neutralized. It was the squadron's job to see that 17 enemy airfields were regularly bombed to prevent their use and to intercept resupply ships and barges attempting to reinforce Japanese troops on Bougainville and New Ireland. A detachment of three aircraft was maintained for a few months at Torokina airstrip on Bougainville for Dumbo work with Marine air units. This group was nearly overrun during a Banzai attack by the last remaining Japanese troops on Bougainville in December 1944.

THE BATTLE OF WILSON CREEK

Wilson's Creek was the second major battle of the Civil War, and the first major Civil War battle fought west of the Mississippi River. It was also the site of the death of Nathaniel Lyon, the first Union general killed in action. The costly Southern victory on August 10, 1861, focused national attention on the war in Missouri.

Lyon sent General Franz Sigel (1824-1902) with 1,200 men to attack from the rear while Lyon struck the surprised Confederates just after dawn at their camp at Wilson's Creek, 12 miles southwest of Springfield. At first, the artillery barrage sent the Confederate camp into a panic, and the day seemed to belong to the Yankees. But Sigel mistook a force emerging from the smoke for an Iowa regiment, when it was actually a Louisiana regiment clad in similar uniforms since many of the Rebel units were dressed in colors of their own choosing.

The Confederates pushed Sigel back, and the tide turned against Lyon's force as well. In intense heat and humidity, the armies battled throughout the morning. Lyon was killed during one of the Confederate assaults, but the Union line managed to hold its ground. Although the Confederates withdrew from the field, the Union army was disorganized and running low on ammunition. Losses were heavy, with the Union suffering approximately 1,200 casualties and the Confederates suffering some 1,100 casualties. The Yankees soon retreated to Springfield and then back to the railhead at Rolla, Missouri, 100 miles to the northeast. Southwestern Missouri was secured for the Confederates.

Wilson's Creek NB commemorates and interprets the battle within the context of the war in the Trans-Mississippi West. We will be visiting this battleground on our reunion tour.

Prior Puzzle Question Answer:

"Three sheets to the wind"

If the sheet's (sails) ropes are loose on a fully rigged ship, the sails flap & flutter in the wind and are said to be "in the wind". A ship "in the wind" appears drunk as it staggers across the sea,, aimlessly floating about. So a drunken sailor is considered " 3 sheets to the wind."



KNOW YOUR NAVY: (New Puzzle Question)

In the last few years the Navy has initiated a new class of unique fighting ships known as Littoral Combat Ships. Most notable is the new USS Montgomery. What are the two most unique features of LCS ships?

DUES ARE DUE

Dues are paid annually based on the calendar year and are due January 1st, but can be paid any-time. If your dues are paid up for 2016 there will be a \$ sign next to your name on the mailing label. If you are in arrears on your dues please make out your properly completed check to USS Finch Reunion Association and mail to Ann Cragg. (See Finch Association Box below for Ann's mailing address. Include current registration update if needed for Resnick's files).

The dues we collect at the reunion are for the upcoming year. Annual dues are \$10 per year, but you can make a life-time payment of \$100 if you prefer. Dues paid at, or after, the reunion are applied to the following year.



Editor's Corner:

Most Banson theaters and other businesses provide discounts to veterans. Just ask and wear your Finch or Veteran hat. There will be some free time between the Veteran's day parade and banquet, so we could arrange for a show where we could participate as a Finch group. Just let us know if you are interested. The weather can be very variable, especially with the climate changes over the past few years. It could be zero, or 80 degrees, but in general nights will be in the 20's and days in high 40s-low 50's. The hosts have made an effort to keep expenses low, within reason, and still have an enjoyable reunion.



Finch Reunion Association

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LOGISTICS FOR REUNION ARRANGEMENTS

Camden Hotel/Conference Ctr.
800-335-2555 or 417-355-2555

RESERVE YOUR ROOM TODAY — ASK FOR SPECIAL FINCH RATE

- > HOSPITALITY ROOM WILL BE OPEN : **7:30 AM TO 11:PM**
- > SPAGHETTI DINNER IS PLANNED FOR THURSDAY EVENING
- > INFORMAL PIZZA DINNER PLANNED FOR FRIDAY EVENING
- > DINNER BANQUET IS PLANNED FOR SATURDAY EVENING
- > BUSINESS MEETING SATURDAY AT 8:30 AM
- > CHECK-OUT TIME IS MONDAY AT 11:00 AM
- > OPTIONAL CHURCH SERVICE SUNDAY AT 11:00

FINCH 2017 REUNION RESERVATION

November 9-12, 2017

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Camden Hotel & Conference Center, 275 Tanger Blvd, Branson, Missouri

Name: _____ Guest: _____

Spouse: _____ Guest: _____

Arrival date: _____ Departure date: _____

Will arrive by car or rental car Yes _____ No _____ Where will you be staying : _____

Thursday, November 9 - Registration in the hospitality room, will open at approximately 1:00PM

5:30PM-7:00PM : Spaghetti Buffet Diner. Garden salad ranch & lite Italian dressing, Spaghetti & meatballs, garlic bread, red velvet cake, tea. Catered by Golden Correl

Number of dinners _____ x \$12.00 per person \$ _____

Friday, November 10 - 8:30-4:00PM Bus trip to Wilson Creek Civil War Battle Field, Missouri Conservation Department Nature Center, and Lambert's Café "Tossed Bun" Café (selection from menu)

Number participating _____ x \$27.00 per person \$ _____

5:30-6:30PM Pizza dinner, salad, desert, and drinks (Catered Finch hosts)

Number participating _____ x 7.00 per person \$ _____

Saturday, November 11 - 7:30AM-1:30PM Participate in Veteran's day activities. This includes transportation to the College the Ozarks for opening ceremonies, transportation to Old Town Branson for the Parade, and ride back to hotel.

Number Participating _____ x \$15.00 per person \$ _____

6:00PM Banquet dinner (comfortable dress) . Menu provide selection of 3 meals, all at the same price. All dinners come with Salad, Antigua vegetable blend, choice of starch, home-style yeast roll, dessert, and coffee or tea.

Indicate number of each: Prime rib _____ Chicken _____ Salmon _____

Total _____ x \$24.00 \$ _____

(Note: Anyone with special dietary needs please so indicate)

Registration, administration, and miscellaneous expenses:

Number attending reunion _____ x \$10.00 per person \$ _____

Total submitted: \$ _____

Sunday, November 12 - 8:00AM-1:00PM : OPEN DAY

Church or shopping as desired. There is a special theater that holds non-denominational services.

Hospitality room will close at approximately 10:30 PM

Monday, November 13 Departure day

7:00-9:00AM Gather in the breakfast room for final good-by's

Bits of information: The hotel provides free parking, free breakfast, handicap rooms. Ask for Renee Contreas and Indicate you are with the Finch Reunion and request Finch rate. Call 800 335 2555 or 417 335 2555.

FINCH REUNION “2017”

Richard S. Resnick
3175 Coolidge Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90066

TO:

We're on the web!

Ussfinch.com

TAPS



“....oh hear us when we pray to
thee for those in peril on the sea”

Navy Hymn

The following Finch shipmates recently set sail for a distant port of call:

Name	Dod	Reported	Ship	Rank	Wife
Ralph E. Randow	8/7/2017	8/28/2017	DER	FA	Trish
Leonard L. Huguenin	6/29/2017	8/2/2017	DER	GMGSN	Martrha
Lon J. Caffey	4/4/2016	5/9/2016	DER	EN3	Carol
Howard F. Driscoll	1/10/2016	9/5/2016	DE	EM3	Inlaw
Ernest Lamberski	11/1/2013	3/3/2015	DER	SN	Jan