



ANA **GRAMPAW PETTIBONE**  
**SQUADRON** INC.  
**1 SEPTEMBER 2018**



[www.gpsana.org](http://www.gpsana.org)

Editor Hal McDonnell

The Grampaw Pettibone Squadron is a non-profit organization (IRS Sect. 501(C)(4) which, through meetings, discussions, speaker programs, and periodic field trips, serves to educate squadron members and the general public on the requirements of an adequate national defense, especially maritime aviation, which is essential to a free society, and to support the military professionals (active and reserve) responsible for many aspects of national defense. GPS also seeks to foster the strong pride, esprit, and fraternal bonds which exist among those associated with Naval Aviation.

**THE GPS LUNCHEON MEETING**  
WILL BE HELD ON  
**THURSDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2018**  
AT THE  
**GARDEN GROVE ELKS LODGE**

LOCATED AT 11551 TRASK Ave., GARDEN GROVE

Hangar doors open at 1130, Luncheon is at 1200, secure at 1330.

Please make reservations before 9 PM on Monday 10 September.

COST IS \$18.00. FOR RESERVATIONS Please E-mail

[RayLeCompte34@Gmail.com](mailto:RayLeCompte34@Gmail.com) or by Phone: 562-287-4846

About our speaker's topic:



Nieuport 28

## LAFAYETTE WE ARE HERE!

Mr. Cashman will relate interviews with World War I pilots and mechanics in assisting the Smithsonian Institution to acquire an original Nieuport 28 aircraft, the first U.S. military fighter. Starting with Eddie Martin and looking for parts in museums all over the world, it was discovered that nearly all but three Nieuport 28's were destroyed in combat; or, in the filming of Howard Hughes' Hell's Angels movie. Deciding to build a flying full-size reproduction Nieuport 28, Cashman acquired the original plans from the French government and built an

aircraft accurate to the plans. The plane flew but was a disaster! With the assistance of engineers from the Boeing Company and their computers, it became apparent that there were big problems with all of the World War I British and French aircraft.

The combined talents of retired Boeing engineers and Robert Baslee of Aerodrome Airplanes, it was possible to develop a successful full scale Nieuport 28 and qualify it as a kit.

About our speaker:



## ROBERT L. CASHMAN

ENTREPRENEUR/ BUSINESS MANAGER

Robert L. Cashman grew up in an aviation family. His father, two brothers and a brother-in-law were all pilots. All had served in the military. He first soloed in his brother's Cessna 140 in 1950 at 18 years of age. He has been flying continually ever since.

\* Flew as a U. S. Army artillery fire control officer during the Korean War.

\* Appointed by the Orange County Supervisors as a member of a committee to decide what to do with the Santa Ana Army Air Base.

\* Committee grew into the Orange County Airport Commission and carved out a small part of the base that is today John Wayne Airport. Served on the Commission for 24 years during all of the litigation and construction.

\* Appointed by President George W. Bush as a Deputy to Secretary of Transportation, Norm Mineta, working on airport improvement funding. Served in this capacity for three and a half years.

\* Organizer and partner in two air ambulance companies.

\* Organizer and partner in what has grown into a major airline.

He has owned more than a dozen different aircraft and currently owns and flies a Cessna T210 and a replica Nieuport 28.

August Luncheon speaker briefing:

## A MARINE HELICOPTER PILOT AT THE BATTLE OF KHE SANH 1968 TET OFFENSIVE.

By David L. Malmad - PAO

The Grampaw Pettibone Squadron was honored to have Mr. Stephen Tucker, share his knowledge and experience serving as a US Marine Corps helicopter pilot at the battle of Khe Sanh, South Vietnam during the Tet Offensive of 1968. Cindy Macha, GPS Ops Officer introduced our speaker.

Mr. Tucker served on active duty as a US Marine from 1966-1970, becoming a Naval Aviator in September 1967. During his period of service, he spent February 1968-March 1969 as a Marine Helicopter pilot in South Vietnam.

Our speaker began his talk by first recognizing the sacrifice paid by over 58,300 US personnel who gave their lives during their service in Vietnam and the over 303,000 wounded both mentally and physically.

Further acknowledgment was extended to those in the audience who served and particularly those who were at Khe Sanh in 1968. He thanked the US Marines for making him a man and the US Navy for making him a pilot.

Our speaker's first duty station was at LTA/Marine Corps Air Station Tustin. His advanced training was in the Sikorsky H-34 helicopter. A 7000 pound payload with easy access to load and unload. After completing 90 hours of training, our speaker received orders for Vietnam.



Upon arriving in Vietnam, Stephen was assigned to HMM-364 and initially flew as co-pilot in the Boeing Vertol CH-46 helicopter. His first base was Phu Bai. The aircraft had a 7000 pound payload but was larger and faster than the H-34 previously assigned.

Outlining the time line of the events surrounding the 1968 Tet (Lunar New Year Celebration) Offensive, began with a stated ceasefire from 27 Jan – 3 Feb. North Vietnam violated the truce on 30 Jan by infiltrating NVA personnel to join up with the Viet Cong in the south of the country. Major cities and strategic locations were attacked, lists of personnel supporting the South Vietnamese government and US military were created and thousands were tortured and killed. Mass graves were created by the attackers. US forces and the South Vietnamese government and military were caught off guard. Almost 6000 in the city of Hue were murdered. The job of the South Vietnamese and US Military was to identify and eliminate the enemy and return control to the South.

The attack during this period by the NVA and Viet Cong included the shelling and rocketing of military bases to destroy air assets. While the destruction did impact operations, the large inventory of available replacements reinstated needed equipment in short order. The response to the equipment reinstatement led the enemy to attacking the personnel

and buildings where pilots and crews were housed. The actions of the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong was a coordinated large scale offensive that encompassed the entire country.

Khe Sanh was a US Marine Corps outpost south of the Vietnamese Demilitarized Zone and came under siege beginning on 20 January. Some 40,000 enemy surrounded the base defended by approximately 6000 Marines. The movement of supplies and reinforcements by ground transportation was curtailed. Massive shelling and mortar attack beginning 21 January and lasting 2 days resulted in the death of 18 Marines and injury to an additional 40. Between 30-31 January over 100 cities in South Vietnam were under attack. By the end of city battles, 37,000 V.C. were killed and many more wounded and captured. Reports of 68,000 NVA killed countrywide.



Photos were shown indicating the severity of the attack and daily shelling that the base personnel experienced. Additional photos identified the complexity of the NVA tunnel and trenching network surrounding the base.

Attempts to resupply the base initially called for aircraft to land, offload supplies and take

out wounded. This resulted in a number of aircraft being destroyed on the ground during resupply missions. Eventually resupply was carried out by low level fly-by and the release of material and equipment by secure pallet or parachute. One tactic to recover wounded or re-supply by helicopter required displaying false signals to confuse enemy artillery or mortar fire. Once an initial false landing was presented, it required 30 seconds for the pilot to land, off-load, load and depart at the actual landing zone before enemy fire could be redirected.



One method of resupply was a procedure called the "Super Gaggle". This was a combined effort with marking mortar fire, close air-jet support and up to 7 helicopters delivering supplies. Gunners would fire smoke on known enemy anti-aircraft sites and the jets would target the sites. This

would be followed by very fast supply flights to deliver material and recover wounded. Additional delivery of napalm and bombs against enemy ground movement prevented base perimeter wire penetration and enabled supply aircraft to deliver materials with minimal damage.

Steve noted that the "Super Gaggle" saved between 150-200 casualties and perhaps 6 or more aircraft and crew. During the month of February, helicopters flew over 15,700 sorties in 5,300 hours to deliver 3,100 tons of cargo and over 14,500 personnel for the hills. As weather improved so did the performance.

Our speaker noted his unit, HMM-364 flew 422 actual instrument hours and 246 radar departures/approaches, all with max loads. "It was a constant battle to fight vertigo and not lose control of the A/C...the beauty of 2 pilots @ the controls!" A total of 45 days in IFR weather.

An average day during the siege saw: 350 tactical-fighter bombers, 60 B-52s, 30 light observation/recon a/c and 60-80 helicopters, all within the airspace surrounding the hills and base at Khe Sanh. Our speaker's unit HMM-364 delivered material and men for 101 days at Khe Sanh before resuming operations at their new assignment.

Our speaker noted a comment by Leonard F. Chapman, General U.S.M.C.: "When a Marine in Vietnam is Wounded, Surrounded, Hungry, Low on Ammunition, or Water, he Looks to the Sky. He Knows, the Choppers are Coming."

Completing his tour in Vietnam, Steve was reassigned to Pensacola at the Naval Education and Air Training Command, where he became an instructor pilot and served 18 months in that assignment until he completed his military service in 1970 as a Captain.

## OUTSTANDING SEAL BEACH SAILORS RECOGNIZED



Front Line L to R: N3 Freddie Parson, YN2(SW/AW) Joanna Carbajalmendiola, YN1(SW/AW), Joseph Williams, MA2 Joshua Ramirez, CAPT Noel D. Dahlke, Commanding Officer for Naval Weapons Station, Seal Beach  
Back Line L to R: Don Pageler, SOQ Committee for GPS, MNC Brian Lampman, MACS William Lyons, CMDCM Kirby Lee, Sel Ramsey, Membership Chair for GPS

The regular August meeting of the Grampaw Pettibone Squadron at the Elks Lodge in Garden Grove was certainly not routine. The presence of the Sailors of the Quarter from the Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station stirred the hearts of our members—many of whom had served in the military, especially the Navy, in earlier days. Today's outstanding sailors from the Naval Weapons Station included the Senior Sailor of the Quarter: MA1 Jayananda Moy (not present because of responsibilities at work); Junior SOQ: MA2 Joshua Ramirez; and Bluejacket of the Quarter: MA3 Johnathon Lewis. Those recognized from the Navy Munitions Command CONUS West Division Unit, Seal Beach were the Senior SOQ: YN1(SW/AW) Joseph Williams; Junior SOQ YN2(SW/AW) Joanna Carbajalmendiola; and Bluejacket of the Quarter: MN3 Freddie Parson. The Commanding Officer of the Base, Captain Noel Dahlke, the Command Senior Chief Petty Officer Kirby Lee, and MNC Brian Lampman presided in the presentation of the Grampaw Pettibone Squadron Certificates of Recognition to the sailors being honored.

We also appreciate the local restaurants who participated in today's honoring the SOQs with gift certificates. Gift certificates came from Seal Beach, and on Main Street were: 320 MAIN, Avila's El Ranchito, Bistro St. Germain, Crema Café, Hennessy's Tavern, The Abbey, and; on PCH were Finbar's Italian Restaurant, Glory Days Beachside Grill, Mahe', and Yucatan Grill; on Seal Beach Blvd were: California Pizza Kitchen, Chick-fil-A, and Santa Fe Importers. Restaurants in Long Beach were: Mimi's (PCH) and Corner Bakery Café (PCH), and Ruby's on 2<sup>nd</sup> St. Restaurants in Sunset Beach were: Fish Camp and Harry's Rooftop Patio and Grill. Included was the Crab Cooker in Newport Beach. Also, the USAA Insurance Company sent attractive plaques to be presented to the sailors.

Article by Bill Thompson

## US AIR FORCE BIRTHDAY (1947) 18 SEPTEMBER

## CO COLUMN

Tim Brown



Last month we were honored to have Steve Tucker as our speaker. As a Marine pilot, Steve flew CH-46 aircraft in Vietnam during Tet of 1968, specifically, resupply missions into and out of Khe Sanh. Both Cindy and I had put the word



L to R: Dale Ledbetter, Gordon "Ole" Olson (foreground), Rod Losey, Neil White, Bill Shultz (with his back to camera), Bruce Walters, Cindy Macha, and George Del Gaudio. In the background is Howard Wingo, Manager of the Elks Lodge.

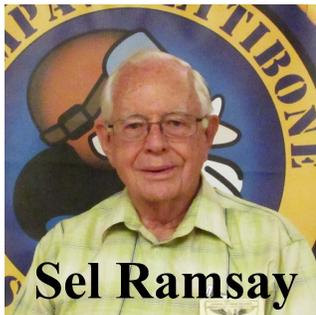


L to R: Don Pageler, Sel Ramsay, Steve Tucker (speaker), Conrad Gomez (CO and co-founder of 756), Max Stewart (co-founder of 756), Steve Cooper (756) Bob Harrison (1024).

out to our friends about Steve's presentation. Cindy got four of her members from Western Museum of Flight to attend. I, on the other hand, told Steve Cooper (a former Marine plane captain at Chu Lai in VMFA-115 in 1968-69) who is a member of VVA 756 in Long Beach about Steve Tucker's presentation. Coop then told some other guys and guess what? The two co-founders of 756 and a member of VVA 1024 in Orange County showed up. Now, I do not know whether any of those guests will become members but at least now they know about us and I will add their names and addresses to our email list. This is how we build our membership. Bring your friends, please!

When I see you at our meeting on 13 September I will have just returned from the Tailhook Convention in Reno. Usually Ray LeCompte attends with me but he is under the weather a bit, so is on the "unable to perform" list. As I usually do at Tailhook, I will look for speakers from active duty billets, authors and industry folks who can bring us current on the status of Naval Aviation or tell us good stories of things that happened in the past. I will have a list to give to Cindy upon my return. If you know authors, active duty or industry personnel who have interesting stories or information related to aviation, especially Naval Aviation, give Cindy the contact information. We need the name, telephone number and/or email address for any potential speaker. Also, please have an idea of what they might be comfortable presenting.

Finally, it is a few days before the services for Senator John McCain. CDR Jerry Loeb, USN (Ret.), who spoke at one of our meetings years ago wrote an open letter to the Editor of his local newspaper that I think appropriate for all of us to read. Jerry was Ensign McCain's flight instructor at one time. I do not believe that Hal has enough room in this OpPlan for Jerry's letter so I will ask Viki to post it on our website. It is worth your time to read it. *(Text on last page Ed.*



## MEMBERSHIP

Bt Sel Ramsay

In it's Hey-day, more than 45 years ago, Naval Air Station Los Alamitos was the largest Naval Air base in the United States, with more than 4,000 Reservists participating regularly. From this base, the Grampaw Pettibone Squadron was

formed. And when the Association of Naval Aviation was created, the Grampaw Pettibone Squadron joined with it as a local chapter of the new association. In the 1980's, Gramps sponsored the National Convention in Anaheim for ANA. This was a very active area for Naval Aviation, both for Navy and for Industry.

In the late 1960's the national economy bent under the expenses of running the country and war in Viet Nam. Naval Air Station Los Alamitos was not successful in its request to Congress for \$80 million to purchase land under its runway approach that contractors wanted to develop for housing and industry. To avoid potential tragedy, the Navy shut down flight operations. Squadrons were transferred to other bases, mostly in California, and NAS Los Alamitos was closed. Gramps lost its cadre for new memberships.

Gramps stayed active in activities for members: Monthly lunch programs with interesting speakers; awards for local active-duty sailors; field trips and visits to see ships and places of interest. But, members who were in their 20's-to-40's then, are in their 60's-to-80's, now. Mother Nature is attacking our membership. We used to have 120-150 attendees for lunch programs; now, we have 50, or so. You need a good audience to attract good speakers, and we need a good membership base to maintain the operations we want.

Ask people you know or meet. And ask them to bring a friend or two, so they have someone to talk with until they get acquainted.

**MEET AND GREET:** New Members: William Schultz; Rod

Losey. **Welcome Aboard!**



## From the CHAPLAIN

Bill Thompson

A former member of my congregation at the Joint Forces Training Base sent the following paragraph from the Army Times to me. It was entitled A DIFFERENT WORLD. "More than 60 percent of Americans today were born after the

last combat units left Vietnam in 1973, and over 75 percent of people today will never face the possibility of a draft, Wright said, calling it a "different world." Some 50 percent of American men over age 75 are veterans, while about 36 percent of men ages 65 to 74, the Vietnam generation, are veterans. By comparison, he said, only about 1.5 percent of men and women ages 18 to 34 today are veterans or serving."

That article should make recruiters for Grampaw Pettibone Squadron out of each one of us. On your mark. Get set. GO!

## To The Editor, The Desert Sun Newspaper With permission from Jerry Loeb

I was John McCain's flight instructor just as the undeclared war in Vietnam was throttling up. Then-Ensign John Sidney McCain, III and I were almost the same age although I was two senior ranks above him. I was assigned to train McCain since two factors were in motion. First, I had arranged for Ensign McCain to be released from a sticky civilian situation off base and secondly, I was the most likely aggressive flight instructor to see him through the formation and air-to-air gunnery phases of training. I had no idea what the future with Ensign McCain would bring. Little did I know what would lay ahead for both of us.

Before we ever got airborne for his first flight, we had a quiet meeting in the base coffee shop aka Gedunk. The fact that McCain's father was a four star Admiral would have no bearing on his flight training with me. I had already reviewed McCain's flight and academic records before we had our sit-down. He thanked me getting him out of the clutches of the County Sheriff the day before. I explained to Ensign McCain what he could expect from me as his designated "tutor" of sorts and what I expected from him for the next month or so. As we progressed through the training phases, we almost lost McCain during a near-collision on the landing runway. I urgently radioed McCain to land long as the other aircraft behind nearly ran him over. He missed death that morning by one throttle shove.

When then-LT McCain got shot down and was taken prisoner in an undeclared war environment, I knew that he and my other captured shipmates were going to be cruelly tortured and inhumanly denied any of their rights under the Geneva Convention. Their North Vietnam captors had no regard for any prisoner rights in an undeclared war. Rights did not exist.

A few years after McCain's capture, his brother, Joe McCain contacted me. He was under arrest in San Francisco for demonstrating for our prisoners' release in the Hanoi Hilton. The SFPD agreed to release Joe into my custody if he would leave San Francisco double-ASAP. I met up with Joe McCain the next day in Washington, DC where we met with Senator Ted Kennedy several days later. I had asked Senator Kennedy to meet with us and help promote the release of our pilots from the Hanoi Hilton. The meeting with Senator Kennedy was a cruel disaster. It was an outrageous act on Kennedy's part and I had to restrain Joe McCain from physically attacking Kennedy.

Within the hour after the debacle with Kennedy, we were trailed by two FBI men whom I invited to join us for our next meeting. They declined but followed us when I took Joe to meet with a former flight student of mine who had been released from the Hanoi Hilton in a prisoner exchange deal. My former student started to relate to us all the awful, inhumane conditions all the American pilots were undergoing. I cut that part of the conversation very short and focused on suggestions as to getting our pilots out of Hanoi. My former student and Joe McCain did not know about the Texas billionaire who was developing an extreme and bold plan to force the issue of a complete prisoner release of our pilots. I had declined to be one of the lead Naval Officers and the lead pilot in that plan.

When Senator John McCain was running in the Presidential Primary against Bush, The New York Times and the LA Times contacted me for a statement about Senator McCain et al. I told them the voters would make their decisions not the news media. Goodbye. Ditto years later in the other Presidential Election cycles as well.

With the passing of Senator John Sidney McCain, III; I remember well my farewell handshake with Ensign John McCain. "Mr. McCain, if you cannot be good be colorful." And so it went. I will see you on the "Other Side, sir. Keep the blue on the top and check six."

Sincerely yours,

CDR Jerry K. Loeb, USN (Ret.)  
Callsign: "Sand Man"

*Letter reformatted to fit space. Ed.*