

*SURVIVORS OF INDIANAPOLIS WASHINGTON*  
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Just prior to war's end on 14 July 1945, two aircraft were lost. One was an F6F fighter and the other a TBM torpedo bomber, of the type flown by former President George Bush. The a/c launched on a weather reconnaissance mission from USS Bataan in the vicinity of Hokkaido, Japan and never returned. Among the missing was Caerm, (Air Crewman, William Rufus Browning aboard the TBM Avenger. It is unknown whether the planes met with enemy aircraft or went down in a storm.

**WW2 is OVER** - On 14 Aug. 1945 Japan agreed to surrender. The formal surrender was signed on USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on 2 Sept 1945 marking VJ Day and the end of World War Two.

**First Hurricane Hunters** - Newly commissioned VPB-114, Patrol-bombing squadron 114, based in Lajes, Azores in the summer of 1945 was tasked to carry out operations against the enemy but with a collateral assignment to observe and report weather conditions. VE Day left the squadron available for other duties and on 26 May 1945 it was transferred to the Commander Gulf Sea Frontier for "hurricane reconnaissance" to commence on 15 June 1945. On 31 May a 6 plane "det" was established at NAS Boca Chica, Key West FL. The first Aerologist to report for flying duty was LCDR Earl O'Dell USNR. In Nov, at the end of the hurricane season, the "det" rejoined their parent squadron at NAS Edenton, N.C.

**The First Weather Recon Squadrons** - Weather Reconnaissance squadron 114, VPW-1, was commissioned on 15 Nov 1945 at Camp Kearney, CA. VPW-2 was commissioned at the same base on 1 Dec 1945. An intensive training syllabus was completed using specially modified PB4Y-2M "Privateers". In February of 1946 Aerological officers were assigned to these squadrons and undertook an extensive ground school syllabus of instruction which included aerial navigation, radio communications, aircraft structures, aircraft engines, radar, ditching procedures and survival. The training was intended to qualify them as flight aerologists with full flight status similar to that of Electronic observers and navigators. VPW-3 was commissioned on 17 May 1946 and received aircraft from VPW-2. This was the first use of specially trained personnel and planes specifically equipped to perform this assignment. Aerologists initially assigned included LT R.W. Sanborn, LT E.B. Rinard, LT C.L. Riegger, ENS W.J. Remillard, ENS W.S. Tatlock and Caerm R.I. Taylor.

**AG numbers decline as peace "breaks out"** - At the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor there were 600 Aerographers mates. The period late in WW2 is recognized as the "high water mark" of the Naval Aerological Service with 6500 officers and men distributed around the world to approximately 1400 stations or units. Numbers subsided quickly

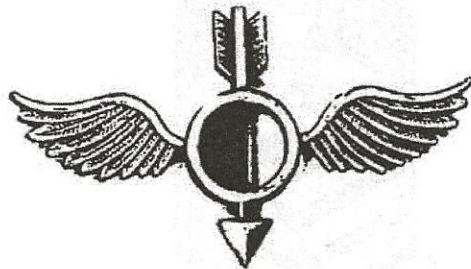
after the war. On 16 July 1945 the monthly quota for sailors at the Aerographers mates school plunged from 64 to 12.

**Sad Ending for "Indy"** - Repairs to Kamikaze damage completed, Indianapolis returned to the war zone, on a secret mission, carrying "fat boy", the Hiroshima atomic bomb to Tinian and "Enola Gay". At midnight on 31 July 1945, while enroute to Leyte, Indianapolis was hit by two torpedoes and sunk in about 8 minutes. Radiomen were unable to send distress calls and 883 men died. Newlywed Aerog 1/c Ed Alvey was not one of the 316 survivors.

**Duty in Siberia?** - In Sept 1945 the U.S. Navy formed a cooperative meteorological network with the Soviet Union immediately after the war to support extensive mine sweeping operations. Sixty five enlisted personnel were assigned to the Weather Centrals at Khabarovsk and Petropavlovsk in Siberia. The arrangement was short lived and they returned Stateside after less than five months.

**Bikini and The Bomb** - On 1 July 1946 an atomic bomb was exploded by airburst at Bikini atoll. This was to be the first of many such tests for which Aerologists and Aerographers mates would provide environmental services.

**Admiral Byrd in Antarctica...Again** - On 29 Jan 1947, the Philippine Sea, CV-47, launched the first of 6 R4D "Gooney Birds" (ferried from Norfolk) from a position 660 miles off the coast of the Antarctic continent to Little America. CDR William Hawkes was the pilot and his famous passenger was RADM Richard E. Byrd



**AGs arrive** - The Aerographer's mate rating abbreviation, Aerm, was changed to AG by Circular Letter 106-48 on 9 June 1948. S 1/c, S 2/c and AS became AN, AA and AR.

**AGs depart** - On 15 April 1949 Fleet Weather Central Shanghai was disestablished as Chinese Communist forces took over the country. Personnel from Fleet Weather Central and the Kang Wan airfield joined Com Nav Wes Pac staff personnel and ship's company in USS Eldorado to make it one of the largest known groups of AGs on any ship. Captain Paul Droulihet USN, Com Nav Wes Pac Staff