



# The Grumman Retiree Club Newsletter



September 2013

Volume 46 , Issue 8

Circulation: 3700

**CLUB HEADQUARTERS/ PARENT CHAPTER**  
Bethpage, New York  
**President**, John Vosilla, (516-575-3777)

**CHAPTERS / MEETING LOCATIONS:**

**California** - Golden West / Pt. Mugu  
**President**, Fred Syrett (805-647-4934)

**California** - San Diego / San Diego  
**President**, Cliff Robinson, (760-749-8183)

**Florida** - First Coast / St. Augustine  
**President**, Fred Bauer (904-819-9817)

**Florida** - Manasota West / Bradenton  
**Sr. VP**, Ted Martnes (941-926-8891)

**Florida** - Mid-West / Spring Hill  
**President**, Richard Arso (352-684-0842)

**Florida** - Southwest / Locations Vary  
**President**, Carolyn Moors (239-283-8294)

**Florida** - Spacecoast / Melbourne  
**President**, Bob Prais (321-242-5782)

**Florida** - Suncoast / Pinellas Park  
**President**, Bob Barth (727-397-9714)

**Florida** - Treasure Coast / Port St. Lucie  
**President**, Bob Watkins (772-283-8638)

**Georgia** - Peach Pit / Milledgeville  
**President**, Ted Zarkowsky (478-452-6442)

**Maryland** - Glen Arm / Belair  
**President**, Frederick Kief (410-661-5098)

**New England** - New England North / Dorset, VT  
**President**, Bill Egner (802-446-2062)

**New Jersey** - Garden State / Lakehurst  
**President**, Bill Staples (732-350-9454)

**New York** - Bethpage Chapter & Club HQ  
**President**, John Vosilla, (516-575-3777)

**New York** - Eastern Long Island / Riverhead  
**President**, Bert Moller (631-864-4377)

**North Carolina** - Eastern Carolina / Locations Vary  
**President**, Peter McNamee (252-288-4569)

**Pennsylvania** - Northeast PA / So. Sterling  
**President**, Charles Dowd (570-491-2125)

**South Carolina**  
Coastal Carolinas (NC & SC) / Myrtle Beach  
**President**, Ronald Girardin (843-903-7116)

**Texas** - Houston / Houston  
**President**, Angelo LaCognata, (281-326-1665)

**Virginia** - Central Virginia / Monticello  
**President**, MaryAnne Muller (434-589-5565)

## **Cradle of Aviation Invites Everyone to a Lecture and Book Signing for Mike Ciminera's New Book on Grumman History**

Mike Ciminera, former Grumman vice president, and former Northrop Grumman vice president, will be on Long Island to discuss his new book *The Aircraft Designers, A Grumman Historical Perspective*. Mike will be at the Cradle of Aviation on September 19, for a lecture, discussion, and book signing.

Mike's book tells the behind-the-scenes stories of the designers and their teammates who conceived and built Grumman aircraft, from the founding of the company in 1929 until the 1994 acquisition by Northrop.

While Grumman aircraft have been previously documented, Mike's book focuses on remembering the people, the disciplines, processes, and anecdotes behind the creation of such icons as the F6F Hellcat, F4F Wildcat, TBF Avenger, and modern day weapon systems such as the F-14 Tomcat, E-2C Hawkeye, EA-6B Prowler, and Joint STARS. Mike has identified and documented as many key team members as possible who contributed to the creation of each new design and its development.

Admission to Mike's lecture and book signing is free, but reservations are required. Call 516-572-4066 to reserve your seat. Refreshments will be served.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Annual Bethpage Chapter Picnic**

**September 18**

**Everyone from Every Chapter is Invited.**

Make your reservations now. Tickets will *not* be sold at the picnic. Reservation coupon with details is on page 11 of this Newsletter.

**Don't miss this Always Enjoyable and Lots-of-Fun  
End-of-Summer Retiree Club Event!**





**Scholarship Fund Contributors**

**The Scholarship Fund directors and The Grumman Retiree Club thank the following for their recent donations:**

- Dolan, Frederick**
- Donohue, Peter**
- Ferris, Edwin**
- Nick Hadjigeorge** (correction of previously listed name)
- Harding Thomas**
- Hedrick, Tina**
- Hyman, Irwin**
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- Makbouljian, Martin**
- Nelson, Carol**
- Palazzolo, Salvatore**
- Pirrung, Robert**
- Sarrafte, Albert**
- Weisse, Sydney**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Please Keep Those (Tax Dedectible) Donations Coming . . .**

Send your checks (payable to **Retiree Scholarship Fund**) to Scholarship Fund, PO Box 0748, Bethpage, NY, 11714-0748.

**Every little bit counts . . . it all adds up!**

**GRUMMAN RETIREE CLUB NEWSLETTER**

(USPS # 023-096) Volume 46, Issue 8, Sept 2013, is published monthly except August by Grumman Retiree Club, Inc., 600 Grumman Road West, M/S Z49-25 Bethpage, NY 11714-5000. **Periodical postage rates paid at Bethpage, NY.** Subscription rates of \$11 are paid through membership dues. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Grumman Retiree Club, Inc. c/o Command Printing, P.O. Box 9040, Farmingdale, NY, 11735.

**Grumman Retiree Club  
2014 All Chapter Scholarship Awards Program**

This is the start of the 17th year of our Scholarship Fund. Thanks to all our members and contributors, this program has been a terrific success . . . and the success has been yours. All of the past applicants have made us proud of their maturity, drive, and intelligence. We look forward to meeting and getting to know your 2014 scholars.

The Scholarship Fund directors and The Grumman Retiree Club thank you for helping to continue the Grumman tradition of supporting education.

Your Membership contributions are the engine that allows our scholarship award program to be a continuing program for all members.

All donations for the scholarship program are tax deductible and every little bit counts. It all adds up!

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**2014 SCHOLARSHIP 50/50 RAFFLE**  
**Members of All Chapters May Participate!**

Enter often. Multiple winners possible.  
Max prize: \$500 for any one person, in any one drawing.

Winners announced in the Newsletter, after each quarterly drawing.

Send a filled-in raffle ticket (below) and a check (payable to **Grumman Retiree Club Scholarship Fund**), to PO Box 0748, Bethpage, NY, 11714-0748. Each raffle entry is **\$5**. (Please indicate how many raffles you are purchasing.)

**Everyone has a chance to win.**  
**This Raffle benefits the Scholarship Fund only.**

**2013 Scholarship Program**  
**SCHOLARSHIP 50/50 RAFFLE TICKET**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Raffles Purchased \_\_\_\_\_



**Bethpage Chapter**

**Calendar**

*Membership luncheon-meetings are generally held on the fourth Wednesday of the month.*

**September 18 - Picnic**

***Picnic Reservation form: Page 11***

**Sept 25 - Luncheon/Meeting at Crest Hollow CC**

***Luncheon Coupon: Page 11***

*Mark your calendars now for:  
December 11: Holiday Luncheon*

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**2013 Defensive Driving Course**

Call for details.

**2013 schedule:**

November 10

Classes are held in Plant 25.  
8:30AM sign-in.

To register: call Liz McGowan  
(516-221-6573),  
**Weekdays Only!**

Call between 6PM and 9PM.

Classes fill up quickly.  
Check you expiration date; sign up early.

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**Bethpage Chapter Meeting**

Bethpage chapter was on summer break during July and August.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Don't Miss the September 25  
Bethpage Chapter Luncheon Meeting**

Our special guest will be Mr. Gary Lewi, senior executive vice president of the public relations firm, Rubenstein Associates. His media experience is extensive, going back to his days as a reporter for LI radio station WGBB, and as press secretary for U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato. However, one of his passions is aviation history.

The seed of his aviation fascination was planted during his time at Grumman, where he was a summer student with the PR Department. His interest in aviation history caused him to become one of the drivers behind the American Airpower Museum.

At our luncheon, Gary will discuss the recent acquisition of Grumman aircraft by the Collings Foundation, which was founded, in 1979, to support "living history" events involving transportation. Originally focusing on automobiles, the foundation moved to aircraft as the need for quality aviation history exhibits grew.

Don't miss this delightful event. The luncheon is at the Crest Hollow Country Club. The reservation coupon is on page 11 of this Newsletter. Reserve now.



**CALIFORNIA / Golden West**

No report of July or August activity.

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**CALIFORNIA / San Diego**

San Diego chapter was on summer break.

**Next Activity: Sept 21** - Our annual picnic at Mills Park, Miramar Marine Corps Air Station.

By: Bill Roeckl, sec'y. billroeckl@cox.net

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**FLORIDA/ First Coast**

First Coast chapter was on summer break during July and August.

Meeting dates: Sept. 17; Oct.15 picnic meeting; Nov.19; Dec.10.

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**FLORIDA / Manasota West**

Florida/Manasota West chapter **is on summer break until our next meeting on October 9, 2013**. Note that our October meeting is on the 2nd Wednesday in lieu of our usual 3rd Wednesday. ALL meetings thereafter will be held on the 2nd Wednesday.

By: Nancy Winding (941- 355-7888) nanwinding@comcast.net

**Meeting Schedule: 10/09, 11/13, 12/11;**

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**FLORIDA/ Mid-West**

Mid-West chapter was on summer break during July and August

**Next Meeting: Sept 19**, 11:30AM, at Buffet City in Brooksville (on Rte. 50). Our September program will be a speaker from the Patriots Motorcycle Club, which

does charitable work for all the veterans.

By: Joan Mehl, sec'y (352-686-2735) and Richard Arso, president (352-684-0842)

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**FLORIDA / SouthWest**

Southwest chapter is on summer break.

**Next Meeting: October 8**, at the Golden Corral in Punta Gorda. Meeting and lunch at 11:30AM. Price: \$10pp.

**Following Meeting: November 12**, 11:30AM, at the Tara Woods Club House. Price: \$10pp. As requested, it will be an Italian meal prepared by George and Janet Daly. For those who are planning on attending: please call George Daly (239-567-2285) at least a week before, so he can prepare the menu.

Guests from other chapters are welcome to attend.

Hope to see you all.

By: Tony Perre (239-731-7146) tara88@comcast.net

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**FLORIDA / SpaceCoast**

Space Coast chapter was on summer break during July and August.

**Next Meeting:** Sept 18, 2013

2013 Meeting Schedule:  
10/16, 11/13/, 12/11 (2nd Wednesdays)

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**FLORIDA / Suncoast**

Suncoast chapter is on summer break until October.

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**FLORIDA / Treasure Coast**

Treasure Coast chapter was on summer break during July and August.

**Next Meeting: Sept 19**, at Manero's Restaurant, Palm City.

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**GEORGIA / Peach Pit**

Peach Pit chapter was on summer break during July and August.

**Next Meeting: Sept 17**, 12:30PM, at the Golden Corral Restaurant, N. Columbia Street, Milledgeville, GA.

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**Maryland**

No report of August activity.

Chapter Contacts:

- Rick Swinder (410-977-7829)  
rickswinder@gmail.com
- Rolfe Feser (410-661-2580)  
poppyro@comcast.net
- Joe Svach (443-567-6433)  
jam.svach@comcast.net

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**New England North**

**July Report**

Our July luncheon, held at the Fullerton Inn, in Chester, VT, started out with a disappointing six attendees. As a result, we decided to forego the customary opening ceremonies and the 50/50 drawing and proceed with the "chow-down." As we prepared to order, the "crowd" swelled to fourteen! In addition to our regular attendees, George Biscoe graciously had gone out of his way, to Middlebury, to pick up Bill Barnard, who is now living at The Lodge at Otter Creek, an assisted living facility (360 Lodge Road #332, Middlebury, VT 05753). We enjoyed the luncheon, and certainly

were happy to have Bill Barnard join us.

Phil Hodge reported that we continue to be financially solvent. Paid membership is now up to twenty, with the receipt of dues from three more members this past month.

It was reported that Sterling Klein, of Shrewsbury, VT, is in an assisted living residence, possibly in Rutland, VT. We haven't heard from Harold Binder this year. We were sorry to hear from Paulette Devino that she is relocating to Connecticut, and will no longer be able to attend our luncheons. We will miss Paulette, and we wish her well.

By: Bill & Joan Wanner joan.c.wanner@comcast.net

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**August report**

Our August luncheon was held at the Fullerton Inn, in Chester, VT. As occurred in July, we started with few attendees but "swelled" to fifteen by lunchtime. Opening ceremonies, which were omitted last month, were led by Bill Egner and Joan Wanner.

As has been happening in other chapters, our membership is declining in numbers, due to Mother Nature . . . but, we continue to hang in there. As we ate lunch, Bunny Hodge circulated photo albums of some of our previous meetings and trips. That brought smiles and challenged our memories!

Our world traveler, George Biscoe, brought a lovely guest: Valentina, born in Russia, immigrated to the USA 15years ago, and is currently a computer programmer in Washington, DC. This was her second visit to Vermont. We were all touched by her enthusiasm as she expressed her delight at seeing the countryside of the Green Mountain State, and her appreciation of the welcome she has received from the people here.

Treasurer Phil Hodge reported that we continue to be financially solvent.

Bill Egner summarized our remaining 2013 activities:





September 10 & 11 - Ogunquit, Maine  
 September 26 - Luncheon, at "East Asian Cuisine";  
 Route 4, Rutland, VT. ( in the Home Depot Shopping  
 Center)  
 October 10 - Fullerton Inn, our 2013 Finale, featuring  
 a "Yankee Swap."

The 50/50 was won by Bill Wanner and Walter  
 Kaehler

By: Bill & Joan Wanner  
 joan.c.wanner@comcast.net)

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**New Jersey**

Our July 16, 2013 meeting was held at the Crestwood  
 Family Restaurant. The meeting was called to order  
 by President Staples at 1PM, with 12 members and  
 one guest present. The Pledge of Allegiance was  
 recited, followed by a moment of silence for our sick  
 and departed members and for our service men  
 and women.

The minutes of the previous meeting were omitted,  
 but can be read in the newsletter. The treasurer's  
 report was accepted as read.

July Birthdays: Ruth Kirkwood on the 11th and  
 Peggy Knipper on the 17th.

The only anniversary is Al & Gloria Larsen who will  
 be celebrating their 68th on the 22nd.

Sunshine Report – Peggy Knipper is still suffering  
 with back problems and has to have more work  
 done. We wish her well for what is expected to be  
 a long recuperation.

Old Business – None

New Business – Al Larsen discussed plans for  
 our Christmas Party. He recommended Le Bove  
 Grande. Al already contacted them and was able to  
 get the date. He discussed costs (\$20 pp) and the  
 possibility that we may have to pay an extra room  
 charge if we do not meet the minimum number of  
 people. It was suggested that any extra charge for

the room could come out of the treasury. Al also  
 distributed copies of a proposed menu. John Zator  
 made a motion that we have the party at the Bove  
 Grade. The motion was passed.

Ways and Means – Everyone present received a  
 gift.

The meeting was adjourned at 2PM.

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Our August 20, 2013 meeting was held at the  
 Crestwood Family Restaurant. President Bill Staples  
 called the meeting to order at 1PM, with seven  
 members present. The minutes of the previous  
 meeting and the Treasurer's report were accepted  
 as read.

Happy August Birthday to Ann Hilker, on the 9th; to  
 Ray Hermida, on the 15<sup>th</sup>; to Miriam Frankel, on the  
 20<sup>th</sup>; and to Carolyn Kerr; on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

There were no anniversaries for August.

Sunshine Report - Gloria Larsen:

- (1) Gloria reported on a phone conversation she  
 had with the Smiths, who are now in an assisted  
 living with rehab facilities in Bayshore, Long Island.
- (2) Don Smith recently had another stroke, but is  
 recovering slowly through rehab. Gloria passed  
 around a photo of Joyce and Don, with their new  
 address and phone number.
- (3) Gloria also related her talks with Peggy Knipper  
 concerning Peggy's back. Peggy is in heavy pain  
 and not able to get around. Gloria asked every one  
 to keep Peggy in their prayers.
- (4) Gloria read a letter she received from Walter  
 Matuza, who just recently moved to be with his  
 family in Florida. He sent his regards and well  
 wishes to all of the club members..

Old Business:

Treasurer Al Larsen reported on securing a  
 reservation at the La Bove Grande for our Christmas  
 luncheon party on the 17th of December. The hours  
 are noon to 4PM. A deposit was made, which covers  
 the extra cost of less than 20 people occupying a  
 room.



**New Business:**

(a) President Staples reported on a letter he received from Bethpage telling us that the Retiree Club is sponsoring a site to display a Grumman Mohawk outside the main entrance of the Cradle of Aviation. The cost of the display site is \$5,000. Bethpage is asking for individual or group (club) contributions and Bethpage will make up the difference between what is donated and the \$5,000. Since the rollout date is October, we decided to take up this action at our September meeting, when it is hoped that we will have more members in attendance.

(b) A brief discussion was held on the "well being," status, and future of our club's membership and its active members. It was decided to attempt to reach a conclusion to this question at our annual Christmas party, as that is our best-attended meeting. In the meantime, the club will have three more meetings for member input to discuss and consider all the aspects to this problem.

Ways & Means: Gloria conducted a raffle of gifts in which each member received a gift.

President Staples adjourned the meeting at 2:30PM.

**Next Meeting: Sept 17, 1PM,** at the Crestwood Family Restaurant, in Whiting.

By: Al Larsen, for Carolyn Kerr, sec'y

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**NEW YORK / Eastern Long Island Chapter**

Eastern Long Island chapter was on summer break during July and August.

**Next Meeting: Sept.18** at the Holiday Inn Express (Rte 58, East of Tanger Outlets & Riverhead Raceway – look for the "Indian.) Lunch (\$14) at noon; meeting at 1PM. Tentative guest Speaker will be John Vosilla, president of our parent chapter.

Future meetings: Wed, Oct 16 and Wed, Nov 20

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**NORTH CAROLINA**  
**Eastern Carolina Chapter**

Eastern Carolina chapter was on summer break during July and August.

**Next Meeting: Tentatively September 10.**

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**PENNSYLVANIA**  
**Northeastern Pennsylvania Chapter**

July Report

Our July meeting was a lot of fun!

The attendees were: Ron & Ruth Peterson, Jim Frey, Bob & Judy Zupp, Fred & Alberta Rademacher, Chuck & Marie Dowd, and Ed & Marianne Sparkowski. While the Men - GACs - were at one table swapping war stories, the ladies went to their own table and had a good time. They were louder than us. And to think, they also wanted us to pay for their lunches, as well.

The meeting was opened at 12:18, with the Pledge of Allegiance. After that, we had a treasurer's report, and some comments from our secretary as to people who have contacted him. A consensus of opinion of the GAC members is that we will still meet as a Grumman Retiree Group as long as we have members to attend. If you wish to attend, fine, glad to have you. If not, it is your loss, and you will just have to find out what is going on via the newsletter. But, if you want a good time for two hours on the third Thursday of the month, then "Come On Down!"

Sickness - Bob Zupp was at the meeting and looked well. He is still on a lifting restriction, but on the whole he is doing well.

July Birthdays - Jane Belding, Charles Dowd, Ed Hirsch, John Robb, Richard St. Dennis, Eileen Saggese, and Charlie Teuffert.

July Anniversaries - Ron & Linda Alongi, Ed & Sharon Drydol, and Dan & Barbara Knowles.

Since we had a decent-size group for this luncheon,





we ran a 50X50, which was won by Bob Zupp.

By: Edward J. Sparkowski sec'y/Chaplain  
(570-698-7182') firefly417@Verizon.net

\* \* \* \* \*

Not much to report about our August meeting. Dan Knowles was up and paid us a visit. There were 14 members present, eight GAC and six wives. Each group had its own table and there was a lot of conversation. For the "Grumms," it was great; swapping war stories and learning about areas of the company that each might not have known about. You would be surprised how fast two hours pass, when you're having a good time.

Nothing much to report club-wise. Our treasurer reminded us that it is getting to be dues time again. Anyone who wants to pay early, he is accepting dues.

No sickness report. Seems all our walking wounded are doing well. Only person with problems is Marianne Sparkowski, who is going in for cataract surgery on August 21st.

August Birthdays - Anne Appel, Frank Demis, Elsie Schrage, and July Zupp.

August Anniversaries - Hank & Anne Appel, Tony & Patricia Petrone, and William & Barbara McCaffrey.

The 50X50 was won by Dan Knowles.

**Next Meeting: Sept 19** - Noon, at the Boat House, on RTE 507 in Hawley. It was decided, that - because the Boat House is treating us well - we will be here for this year.

Well, that's it for now. See you at the Boat House.

By: Edward J. Sparkowski sec'y/Chaplain  
(570-698-7182) firefly417@Verizon.net

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**SOUTH CAROLINA / Coastal Carolinas**

**Meeting Schedule**

**09/04** - Noon, Sakura Hibachi Buffet, North Myrtle Beach

**10/02** - Noon, The Grill House (private room), North Myrtle Beach

**11/06** - Noon, Ryan's Family Steak House, North Myrtle Beach

**12/04** - Noon, The Sea Captain's House (Christmas lunch), Myrtle Beach.

If you have any questions regarding future meetings, please feel free to contact me (843-347-2113).

By: Nancy Webber, sec'y. (843-347-2113)  
nwebber90887@sccoast.net

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**TEXAS / Houston**

**No report of July or August activity**

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**VIRGINIA / CENTRAL VIRGINIA**

**No Report of July or August Activity**

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## Grumman History – Chapter 17

### *Headaches in Bethpage (1965)*

Wow! The anticipated problems came, but they came with an unanticipated intensity. Fielding the Intruder and the Hawkeye, the first true electronic aircraft, into a burgeoning war while simultaneously developing the first true spacecraft, the LEM, was suddenly becoming very challenging. The plethora of emerging problems required every ounce of the dedicated and resourceful spirit that personified Grumman.

The LEM Program Management organization demanded by NASA convinced Grumman management that the traditional functional organization concept was inadequate to make the faster, more integrated decisions demanded by modern, complex electronic aircraft and weapons systems. Program managers needed far greater responsibility and authority to do their jobs.

The Intruder program (A-6A and EA-6A) and the Hawkeye (E-2A)/Greyhound (C-2A) program were reorganized, to the chagrin of the functional organizations, according to this new management philosophy, from middle management up to their leadership. At the top, as program directors, were VP William M. Zarkowsky for the E-2A/C-2A programs, and VP A. James Zusi for the A-6A/EA-6A programs.

Meanwhile, in March 1965, involvement in Vietnam dramatically changed when the U.S. entered the ground war. The initial deployment of 3,500 marines escalated to 200,000 troops by year-end. At that time, the forward-based Mohawk was serving its Army commanders well, providing near real time surveillance data not matched by the Air Force with its rear based image-processing architecture. Furthermore, to the chagrin of the Air Force, the Mohawk was being armed with rockets, bombs, and a machine gun pod. While the Mohawk was highly effective performing its primary mission of calling-in artillery, its rapid, quiet approach and armament quickly earned it the nickname among the enemy as “Whispering Death.” Despite this proven effectiveness, the Air Force won the close air support mission battle at the Department of Defense; as a result, the Mohawk was restricted to surveillance duties. Nonetheless, armed Mohawks never quite stopped operating.

The escalation of the war demanded the need for the Intruders ... fast. The skipper of an A-6 attack squadron, Cmdr L.A. “Swoose” Snead (who later became an admiral), proclaimed “... the A-6A is the finest attack plane in the world today.” The A-6 was second to none for putting bombs on target, day or night, in fair or foul weather. While these accolades were deserved, there was a proviso: *when* the system worked. Reliability was a major issue. The carrier environment with its the hard landings and salt air played havoc with the electronic systems. On its first deployment from the *USS Independence*, in July 1965, each of the 12 A-6 aircraft on board had different electronics and wiring. As canopies would be left open, the black boxes would get wet, requiring removal and drying out. Spare parts inventory was not in place, requiring direct air shipments from Grumman. The DIANE computer, arguably the best nav/attack system of this era, had poor reliability. The Navy knew this was the right plane for the right mission ... but it needed to be fixed.

The Hawkeye, with its 10,000 pounds of avionics faced similar reliability issues. During its initial Vietnam deployments from the *USS Kittyhawk* and *USS Ranger*, in October and December 1965, respectively, the Hawkeye demonstrated system performance vastly superior to the E-1B ... when it worked. The cumbersome rotary drum computer was extremely unreliable and the packed avionics compartment was inadequately cooled, causing poor avionics reliability. The issue was so bad the E-2A program was actually cancelled after 59 aircraft, but was ultimately reinstated when the proposed fixes, the Litton L-304 digital computer and other avionics, were introduced. This version of the Hawkeye became the E-2B. Most E-2As were retrofitted into E-2Bs.

*continued on next page*



## Grumman History – Chapter 17

*(continued from previous page)*

Supporting complex electronic aircraft required an integrated approach and led to the creation of the Product Support organization, led by Vice President Ed Dalva.

Grumman's F-111B program progressed ahead of schedule and - with great fanfare - was rolled out on May 11, 1965. First flight, 13 days early, successfully took place on May 18, with pilots Ralph Donnell and Ernie Von Der Heyden. But this program was also in trouble. Weighing in at 78,000 pounds, the F-111B was way over the Navy's maximum allowable weight of 55,000 pounds. Both Grumman and General Dynamics instituted a Super Weight Improvement Program (SWIP) in an attempt to lower the weight. This problem, however, was never solved and, together with many other difficulties, would ultimately lead to the termination of the program.

The LEM was also facing an obesity problem. Its weight had grown alarmingly, well beyond a proposal weight of 22,000 pounds to surpass the target weight of 29,500 pounds. NASA projections that showed the LEM would grow to over 32,000 pounds, exceeding the lift capability of the Saturn rocket to launch Apollo to the moon, were proving true as monthly weight reports continued to show the LEM getting heavier. Learning from the F-111B program, Tom Kelly and Bill Rathke initiated a LEM SWIP aimed at slimming the LEM by 2,500 to 3,000 pounds. Under Tom Kelly's leadership, the LEM SWIP team (including NASA) reviewed both Grumman and subcontractor designs. The numerous changes implemented, all within tight cost and schedule constraints, started accruing the needed weight savings. The LEM program was getting back on track.

While dealing with these major issues, Grumman kicked off "Project Sterling," a name inspired by Admiral John S. McCain's (See Chapter 4) quote during World War II. It was a "Zero Defect" program stressing top quality workmanship and pride.

In May, the production go-ahead was given for the twinjet Gulfstream II corporate aircraft and in September the first OAO was delivered to NASA Goddard for ground testing and control station integration. The C-2A Greyhound successfully completed its Naval Performance Evaluation (NPE) tests. New facilities were being opened in Bethpage and Stuart, FL. Grumman's energy remained frenetic.

As 1965 was ending, Grumman sales were a record \$888.8 million while just three years earlier it was \$357 million. Approximately 8,500 people had been hired, bringing the company's total to 29,201 employees . . . a number that ranked Grumman as the largest company on Long Island. Despite its headaches, Grumman was thriving.

By: Larry Felieu and Ken Speiser

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**Bethpage**  
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**Newsletter**

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