



A MEMORIAL DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF NAVAL AVIATION HISTORY
THE PB Y CATALINA AND THE SEAPLANE BASE AT OAK HARBOR, WASHINGTON



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PB Y Memorial Foundation Newsletter 139th Edition, July 2010

The “Old Cat” returns home after 67 years and is warmly greeted by veterans and fans as she settles to her final resting place on the Seaplane Base at NAS Whidbey Island’s Command Display Center at Simard Hall.....*the story in pictures.*



(1) The Boeing Chinook Helicopter from Columbia Helicopters, Portland, Oregon carries the precious PB Y “cargo” from its pick-up point near the Port of Skagit County Airport to the Simard Hall parking lot on NAS Whidbey Island’s Seaplane Base. The route from the pick-up point to the base was approximately 16 miles. (2) The PB Y nears its touchdown as the Chinook slows to a hover and spectators begin cheering as (3) the PB Y is gently lowered to its designated spot until (4) it is on the ground. The professionalism of the Columbia Helicopter crew is obvious as the PB Y was let down precisely on the chalk-marked X on the parking lot! (5) The harness is released and Columbia’s “Chinook” helicopter departs from a job well done! (6) Members of the PB Y Memorial Foundation “gang” greet the Cat with pats and shouts of “welcome home!” Now begins the next phase of “Project Seaplane” – the restoration - under the leadership of Aircraft Restoration Crew Chief Will Stein and advisor Alan Hodgkins.

It was an historic day for NAS Whidbey and Oak Harbor to see an aircraft the Seaplane Base was built for 68 years ago “come home again” to stay. It will be a monument to the pilots and crews of the many Catalina squadrons trained and deployed to remove the threat to America’s freedom in WWII. The Aleutian Islands with it’s hostile climate, enemy intrusion and remote loneliness, was to be one of the toughest assignments as recorded in pilot logs and the annals of Naval Aviation history.

On Saturday, July 10, relatives, friends and fans were present to witness the dedication of a PBY that was one of the surviving aircraft of those dark days of WWII. The pictures below tell the story of those who came to honor the crews and their plane - the PBY Catalina



(A) Wes Westlund Photo



(B) KC Pohtilla Photo



(C) OHFD Photo



(D) KC Pohtilla Photo



(E) KC Pohtilla Photo



(F) KC Pohtilla Photo

(A) The Dedication of the PBY was attended by members, veterans and friends of the PBY Memorial Foundation and Command Display Center at NAS Whidbey Island Seaplane Base. Base Commander, Captain Gerral David (right) gave the opening remarks and introduced Phillis Cole, wife of pilot Norwood Cole (who once flew this very PBY. Mrs. Cole gave a tribute to her husband and honored those who flew PBYs in the Aleutians and the Pacific in WWII. (B) Peter Cole, Phillis Cole’s son, breaks the champagne bottle over the bow of the PBY as the crowd applauds the moment. (C) The unveiling of the “nose art” caught Captain David by surprise as it was named in his honor and kept secret for this event. (D) Captain David and wife Ann (left) comment favorably. (E) Posing for a picture “album” photo are: Peter Cole, son of Norwood Cole; Wally Funk, former publisher of the Whidbey News Times’ Mrs. Norwood Cole and Captain Gerral David. (F) Members involved with the *Project Seaplane* pose for a photo op. They are (left to right): Will Stein, *Aircraft Restoration Crew Chief, Project Seaplane*, and PBY Memorial Foundation Board member; Gerald “Jug” Bernhardt, Weight Handling Equipment Program Mgr., NAS Whidbey’ Win Stites, President, PBYMF; Bruce Biddle, *Project Seaplane Crew, PBYMF*; Ed Hammond, *Project Seaplane*, Transportation Supervisor, PBY Memorial Foundation Board Member, and Ron Hancock, *Project Seaplane* and PBY Memorial Foundation Board member. Others on the *Project Seaplane* staff, not present for the event, included Brian McGuinness and Alan Hodgkins.

AUGUST PIK-NIK..... Once again a reminder that there is no regular meeting in August at the CPO Club. Instead, as we’ve done the past several years, we gather our members for a relaxing time while it is yet summer. We will again meet at the MEISCH’S for our annual picnic around noontime. Address: 1445 Arnold Road, Oak Harbor. This year it is Tuesday, August 24, 2010. All you need to remember is to bring a hot dish or salad or dessert. Beverages are provided -No beer. For information, call Dolores or Adolph Meisch at 360-679-6726. Come for a great time of food, fellowship and baloney!!!

Command Master Chief James C. Reynolds is our July 27 guest speaker at the CPO Club, Ault Field Rd. Oak Harbor. Chief Reynolds has extensive experience in aircraft electronic and maintenance on F-4, F-14, F?A-18 and EA-6B carrier aircraft. He has served aboard the USS MIDWAY, USS CONSTELLATION, USS CARL VINSON and the USS JOHN C. STENNIS. For the last 3 years, Chief Reynolds served as a Command Master Chief of Patrol Squadron One. He recently returned from a 7 month tour of duty to the Middle East, including Bahrain, Qatar and Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He holds a BA in Applied Sciences and Technology and a Masters in Organizational Leadership. Please be there for a highly interesting meeting! Win