



American Military Heritage Foundation

Dedicated to preserving, in flying condition, a Vintage PV-2 Harpoon in memory of all who fought on behalf of the United States of America

February 2020

I am sure all of us are aware that we are already going into the second month of the new year and saying “where did the first one go.” Then the year will speed up and we will all go WOW! Where did the year go? During the nice January weather, I have been working on locating and organizing stacks of paper and various documents that I have been trying to work on for the AMHF. While doing this I learned this is my tenth year of trying to write a monthly newsletter. It is a lot like working on the Harpoon. Some months everything just falls into place and comes out great and I say, “now that wasn’t too bad.” Then the next month rolls around and after a week I am still trying to figure out how to say what I want to say. In my mind it is perfectly clear, but then someone else reads it and picks up a totally different meaning. In conversation you have a chance at a rebuttal or explanation. Not so with the printed word. If anyone would like to try their hand at this, I will be more than happy let them take a month or two, or more if they would like.

This past month with visits to doctors and trips for work on our vehicles, you do understand you never have to wait at these places, I have had some time to do some reading about other organizations and how things are going with them. When I read articles from the various magazines one would think that everything is perfect, no problems, and everything just fell right into place. In most, not all, of the articles they only show the completed project and give you a list of which experts restored what. Somehow, I can't quite believe it all works like that. However, if this is all true what are we doing right and what are we doing wrong? Do you think it would be possible to have a discussion and see what we would put in the plus and minus columns? Three things I am sure of are: one, we have a big airplane; two, sitting outside twenty-four seven is taking a major toll on the plane; and three, we need a hangar. So, the \$64,000.00 question is how do we accomplish this. I am sure of one thing. I do not have all of the answers. However, with the brain power and contacts within this organization I am sure there is an answer. Are we willing, as a group to set down and openly discuss what we need to do to make all of his happen?

“Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere”

Albert Einstein

Last month I gave you a hint at what we might look at in this newsletter. I gave you the name Willy Victor and I will now add Berlin Airlift, Dew line, and Nike missile sites to it. How many of you are familiar with these names? Some of you just might be too young. Either of these four names would be an entire story by their selves. However, there is a relationship involved here.

When Russia cut off all ground pathways into West Berlin, the Berlin Airlift was started to supply all the needs of West Berlin. It ran from June of 1948 to September of 1949, and during that time there was a plane taking off or landing every 30 seconds in West Berlin. They were bringing in an average of about 8,000 tons of goods per day and made nearly 300,000 flights. Why talk about the Berlin Airlift. It took place during the early cold war which was 1945 to 1952. So, what does this do with the other three items? Our government had become concerned that the Russians might attack us over the pole from the north and we had no detection system to give us a warning.

Therefore, in 1954 the decision was made to build the Dew Line, Distant Early Warning Line, and it would follow roughly the 69th parallel starting in the Aleutian Islands and continuing across Canada and on to Greenland. This would give us total radar coverage across our northern approach. The first Nike missile base was built in California in 1954 and the Army would have almost 300 sites they operated during the cold war.

Navy crews referred to it as a "Willy Victor"



Chanute Air Museum, Illinois with storm on the way

OK, we finally get to Willy Victor. I am sure all of you have this figured out by now that Willy Victor is an airplane. Matter of fact it is a Lockheed 1049 (civilian number). Between the Navy and the Airforce, they purchased approximately 200 of these planes. No doubt by now you have figured out there is an awful lot of water both East and West of the United States and it would be a bit hard to build a radar site on the water. So here comes Willy Victor and the barrier flights. They maintained a presence 24/7 from 1957 through October 1965. They flew with two complete crews including a cook, and normally would be on station 16 to 18 hours. I read in one place they could stay airborne for 30 hours.

Fall forward. Every failed experiment is one step closer to success.

*Denzel Washington,
actor, director, producer*

Well that about does it for this month. If you would like to learn more about the Dew line and Willy Victor there is a book out written by Bruce Jarvis called "Willy Victor 25 Knothole." Mr. Jarvis was a crew member and flew many missions out of Argentia, Newfoundland. My wife gave the book to me at Christmas and I had it finished before the end of December. If all works out as planned, next month I will have an interview with an individual who worked on the Dew line.

Have a great month,

Gaylon