



VP-68 Hawk's Nest

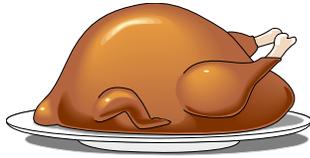


Volume No. 29

VP-68 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

December 2008

The Hawk's Nest is the official newsletter of the VP-68 Alumni Association, chartered in 1998 in the state of Maryland for the sole purpose of uniting in a central organization all former "Blackhawks" of Navy Patrol Squadron 68 (VP-68), it's parent and supporting Navy squadrons, and those interested in preserving the name and history of VP-68.



Happy Holidays



2008 Fall Deployment

This year under awesome co-chairs, Joe Odenthal and Cornelius Stripling, the VP-68 Alumni Association was treated to an outstanding change of procedure. Joe and Strip issued mobilization orders for the members to report for duty to the Naval Recreation Center (NRC), Solomons, MD on Friday, 03OCT08 at 1800 hours and embark on a "Fall Deployment." The word "deployment" conjured up many different memories for all of us, but now has a new and refreshing meaning for the future.

Many of the attendees were able to stay right there at NRC for the weekend. A variety of cottages, cabins and apartments provided us billeting within walking distance of Club 9 where the main event took place. The facilities and weather were great and an absolute fantastic time was had by all in attendance. A Plan of the Day (or weekend!!) was issued starting with Muster on Friday evening and a "Sea Bag Inspection" was conducted. Not many uniforms were presented but a fantastic variety of beer and libations were! Here "Trash" & "Recycle" (see sign) i.e. Bob Seaver and Jim Rozycki show their sea-bag contents. The quantity is the same but the quality has improved (Belvedere Vodka)!!



party Friday evening went into the wee hours.

Blackhawks started arriving Friday afternoon from all compass points and converged at Solomons, checked in at their billeting and headed to Cabin 113 No-Host Social for muster and the



The weather on Saturday was warm, sunny and clear and gave folks a chance to explore the local area with activities including golf, shopping, a wine festival, and yes, even some flying!!

Jacque LaValle piloted some aerial trips around the Solomons and Pax area for any of the membership interested. He gave folks a bird's eye view of the NRC facility along with the Pax River area.

(See "Deployment" - continued on page 2)

2008 Spring Fling

The annual VP-68 Alumni Association "Spring Fling" picnic is scheduled for Saturday, 06 JUN 2009 at the NAS Patuxent River Beach House. Activities start at 1100. Free food and sodas for current paid members and \$5.00 for all guests and non-members.

More detailed info will be in future issues of the Hawk's Nest so.....MARK YOUR 2009 CALENDARS!!!!

2008 Election of Officers

In accordance with our By-Laws, at the business meeting on Saturday, 04Oct08 we conducted an election of officers for the years 2009 and 2010 and the following officers were elected:

- President: Jacque LaValle
- Vice-President: Wyman Bailey
- Secretary: Kathy Wright
- Treasurer: John LeNard

Please offer your congratulations to them and above all...help and support them for the next two years as they steer the VP-68 Alumni Association into the future.

2009 Dues

If your address label has an "M-08" after your name, your 2008 membership is about to expire. Don't miss out on the coming fun next year....send in your dues now. See "Treasurer" on last page for more details.

“Deployment” - continued from page 1

Some folks headed to Sotterly Plantation at Holly-wood, MD for the Riverside Winefest and got to taste and buy some great local wines and also some crafts.

Folks started congregating at Club 9 around 1500 as “Quarters” was announced and we all “fell-in” for the required business meeting.



A standing ovation was given to Joe, Strip and their committee for the hard work and beautiful facilities they arranged. Above, Joe Odenthal shares some remarks about his and Strip’s planning and execution of the Deployment.



Here is the Secretary, Kathy Wright diligently taking the minutes of the business meeting. Kathy has served as Secretary since the Association was formed in 1998 and has done an exceptional job of keeping all of us on the same page of conducting the business at hand...not an easy task considering how scattered we are.

John LeNard collected dues, enrolled some new

members and gave the Treasurer’s report stating that we are in sound financial shape.

After reports from the officers, President Lew Abbott spoke to the membership regarding the Association and his years as President. He thanked all for their support, asked that we all do everything possible to encourage new memberships for the Association and turned the meeting over to the Nominating & Election Committee to conduct the election of officers for the two-year term of 01JAN2009 to 31DEC2010.



After the election and business meeting, Lew turned the show over to Joe and Strip who announced that dinner was arriving.....Joe and Strip had a pleasant surprise for us concerning dinner Saturday evening.

Outside in the parking lot, a fleet of trucks and vans arrived and it was announced....”The Pig Is Here!!!” Well...Crew Four was perplexed for a moment as they thought the “Pigs” WERE here!!! After seeing the “pig of honor” and a brief Crew 4 dedication ceremony, they allowed the feast to begin!!



The Grill Sergeant BBQ from Solomons Island arrived with a huge BBQ in tow and aboard was one of the largest pigs we have seen!! It had been cooking since the evening before and was now ready to be enjoyed by all and enjoyed it was!!! The Grill Sergeant crew put on quite the show garnishing, seasoning, chopping, carving and presenting the shredded BBQ pork.



The line of hungry Blackhawks formed quickly and as displayed by the smiles and compliments, all were totally pleased. As the motto on the Grill Sergeant’s truck says....”Put Some South In Your

Mouth”.....and we did!!!!

Here Randy Sharp douses his shredded BBQ pork sandwich with some of the Grill Sergeant’s own homemade BBQ sauce ahead of his wife Crystal, Hedy and John McDermott, Irene and Jim Rozycki.



The pork and the fixin’s were fantastic and nobody went away hungry. We all sat down and ate as the sun set and provided a serene setting for us. The waterfront location of Club 9 with Pax River off in the distance was the perfect setting.

We can’t say enough “Thank-You’s”....our hats off to Joe and Strip for a great setting...and fantastic, delicious surprise dinner!!

(See “Deployment” - continued on page 3)

“Deployment” - continued from page 2

The rest of the evening was spent catching up with old friends and spinning yet more sea-stories and as always, some new ones surfaced. As with all of our events, time flew by way, way too fast and before we knew it, it was time to close up Club 9. But, the party just transferred to the various cottages, cabins and apartments just a few blocks away.

Joe and Strip made arrangements for us to have a continental breakfast the next morning at Club 9. A special thanks goes to Jeannie Odenthal and Clarissa Stripling for their hard work. The breakfast was yummy and filled us up for our trips home.

The gang all pitched in and did a final field day on the Club 9 facility. Sunday morning was sunny and the waterfront was postcard beautiful. Everybody exchanged holiday best wishes to each other and we all planned to get together again for the 2009 Spring Fling

We finish this story with some photos taken during the event and as witnessed by the laughs, smiles and emotions experienced....all had a great time.



DEPLOYMENT FLIGHT CREW



DON DICK ED



KELLIE REX



CABIN 113 NO-HOST SOCIAL



JUDY JEANNIE “STRIP” CLARISSA



DICK CARRIE RANDY



SECRETARY KATHY WRIGHT
TREASURER JOHN LENARD
V.P. WYMAN BAILEY
PREZ JACQUE LAVALLE



CO CUTTIN' CAKE



COW & ROZY SANDWICH



SOLOMON SUNSET



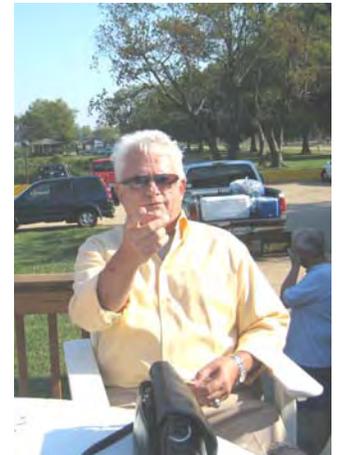
SOCIALIZING



LOU DON KELLIE RANDY JACQUE



JIM MANIN' THE BROOM



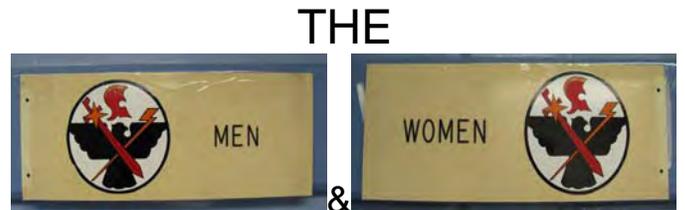
RELAXIN' RON



CREW 4 "SKY PIGS"



BECKY LEW STEVE BOB



THE
OF THE VP-68
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
Thank You "Strip" & Joe !!



FUN - LAUGHS - FRIENDS

Commanding Officer Harry A. Estes

We were saddened to learn of the passing of CO Captain Harry "Big Red" Estes, 83, on 25 AUG 2008. Harry was the skipper of VP-68 parent squadron, Squadron VP-662. He was also the PPC for Crew 01, who together "Kissed A Mountain" in Ireland!!

(see Hawk's Nest - Vol. 24, April 2007)



1942 - Ensign Estes 1967 - Captain Estes

Harry Estes, enlisted as an Ensign in the US Navy in 1942 to prepare for a career as a pilot and retired with the rank of Captain in 1967 as CO of VP-662.

Harry is survived by Frances, his wife of 63 years, Daughter Marilyn, Son Kenneth, 2 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Funeral services and interment was on 30 AUG 08 with full military honors. The photo below shows the cemetery flags being flown at half-mast, the lone bugler to play taps in the distance and the ceremonial folding of and presentation of the flag to Frances.



Rarely has the devotion of a crew to their pilot been demonstrated as with Crew One to "Big Red". They previously presented Harry with a plaque that read "if the mission was to fly through hell....you would have a full crew". His son Ken gave the eulogy summing Harry as the most honorable and decent man he ever met and that while his father lay dying and unconscious, he asked him for one more mission...if the skipper would promise to be there to meet him when HE died.

We offer our condolences to the members of VP-662 Crew One Dale Grimes, Jim Hall, Lou Kress, Paul Monaghan and Bill Schott on the loss of "Big Red".

Command Master Chief Charlie Brown

By Bob Smith

I attended Charlie Brown's funeral service on the 4th of September 2008 in Ft. Myers, FL. It was, like Charlie Brown, very special. There were about 100 people there including all six of his children and their families. His wife Opal was as sharp, charming and as radiant as ever. About a half dozen relatives spoke during the service and their comments ranged between personal, poignant, emotional, heart wrenching and funny. There were a few distractions during the service as babies were crying and a few cell phones were going off at various times. But catch this...as the minister was giving a very touching and moving homily about death being "the way home, and not a way out", another cell phone went off with a very distinctive ring. The person being called had "Anchors Aweigh" as their call alert. Come to find out, the incoming call was from a Navy doctor, a relative of the family. We all laughed and I thought how very appropriate---Charlie Brown indeed had weighed anchor and WAS home.

Charlie's oldest son spoke of an example of how generous his dad was with his time and energy. Just before Charlie underwent amputation of the first of his two legs, and with significant leg pain, Charlie volunteered to help with a nearby building project, but was suppose to just "answer the phones". When Charlie's wife Opal arrives at the construction site where does she find Charlie? He was on top of the up going structure assisting in the placement of trusses for the roof. She literally "went through the roof" and made him get down.

Charlie's son also stated during his eulogy that "Navy Chiefs run the Navy". That's something I have believed for a very long time---from way back in my Ensign days. When all the family members had a chance to eulogize Charlie, I asked for a few minutes to say a few words. I realized I was the only Blackhawk able to attend and felt moved to speak. I affirmed Charlie's son's comment about the Navy Chiefs running the Navy and went one step further by adding that the Master Chief Petty Officers lead the Chiefs.

Then I related the Bermuda enlisted barracks painting story that appeared in the Hawk's Nest a while back where Charlie Brown, the Command Master Chief, had stripped down to his boxer shorts and boots and was painting the top floor of the barracks to get it more presentable for the enlisted Blackhawks coming on Summer Cruise. He was pushing a long handled paint roller right along side the junior-most sailors in the squadron in about 100 degree heat. Talk about a hands-on guy.

(See "Charlie Brown" - continued on page 5)

“Charlie Brown” – continued from page 4

I finished my remarks by noting that Charlie Brown was by every measure a "true blue sailor". He had devoted nearly 64 years to his beautiful wife Opal and their six children and their families; he had devoted nearly 41 years to his country and the Navy.

Most importantly, every one of his family members and every one of his shipmates/squadron mates had significantly benefitted from their contact with this extraordinary man. I'm happy and proud to say, I was one of them. "I salute you Master Chief Charlie Brown; please save a spot on your flight crew for everyone lucky enough to have known you."Bob

Charlie Brown

By Debbie Gath Lineberry

Bob, Thanks for the heads up on Charlie Brown. I remember one cruise when we were in Rota. After working a rather hard day, I was going out to eat and check out the locals.....saw Daddy (Bob Gath) and Charlie and Bill Trudell on their way out the gates ahead of me.

I started waving and trying to catch up with 'all my dads'. And.....they ran. Yep, ran. I couldn't understand as a twenty something that her Dad and her other dads didn't want to hang with her. Never caught up with them that night. It's funny now and a great memory!!

I have a big grin on my face remembering.....Deb

Blackhawk People News**Harry Lee Smith**

Harry Lee Smith's grandson, Cody Smith, graduated from Navy Boot Camp Great Lakes in AUG 08. Shown are Harry Lee and Cody (a 13th generation Smith American since 1657) after the graduation ceremonies. Now,



Cody doesn't realize it yet, but he has a large pair of shoes to fill following in Harry Lee's footsteps. Harry Lee first enlisted in the Navy in 1958, rose up through the ranks to CPO in 1969, was commissioned as a Lieutenant in 1970 and retired as Captain in 1999 with 41yr07mo17day14hr

28min37sec!! of service and the Navy's "Old Salt" title!!

Harry Lee was the official Guest of Honor at the ceremony and wore his CPO device on his uniform and was recognized as such! Now, those of us who know Harry Lee's more colorful and adventurous side gotta say that 19 year old Cody doesn't have a chance of equaling the feats of the "Old Salt" but then, give him 40 years in the Navy and maybe, just maybe, history will repeat itself. Cody graduates Hospital Corpsman "A" School on 18DEC08 and has orders to Guam. Good Luck Cody!!

Al Torsentson, FE

By Jacque LaValle

Chris and I had the great opportunity to visit Seattle, WA for an SAE conference and took advantage of the trip to look up people we knew.



We found Al Torsentson and wife Gloria and had a great dinner reminiscing the good old days! Al left VP-68 16 years ago and went to Whidbey Island to play with C-9's, was the Safety/NATOPS Chief and retired on the last day of 1997. After retiring from the Navy, he worked for Flight Safety Boeing as an instructor, teaching maintenance systems on the Boeing 757/767. After 9/11, he was laid off and found a great job with the Issaquah Scholl District as a NJROTC Instructor. He teaches at Liberty High School which is 25 miles southeast of Seattle and also near to his home in Maple Valley, WA. He says it's sort of like being back in the Navy, but not, and that the kids are great and they give back as much as they get. Gloria and Al live on 43 acres in the country and have horses, chickens and a goose.

Jack Cann

By Nick Schaus

The Summer 2008 edition of the "Naval War College Review" contains a book review of VP-68's CAPT. Jack Cann's 2007 work: Brown Waters of Africa: Riverine Warfare, 1961-1974. "Cann recounts with balance and clarity the lessons the Portuguese drew from the experience, including how the Portuguese Navy and naval infantry fought an effective campaign..." The review is very positive and concludes: "In short, all practitioners and students of riverine warfare will be grateful that John P. Cann has written such an excellent account." Jack is currently residing in Charlottesville, VA and teaching at the University of Virginia.

Navy Humor

(submitted by Nick Schaus)

One day, long, long ago there was this Navy pilot who, surprisingly.....was not full of sh__! But, it was a long time ago...and it was only one day. The End.

Important Message on Getting Old

Please see Page 10 for this important Message!!



Twas the night before Christmas, and out on the ramp...

(submitted by Dick Fickling)

Author Unknown

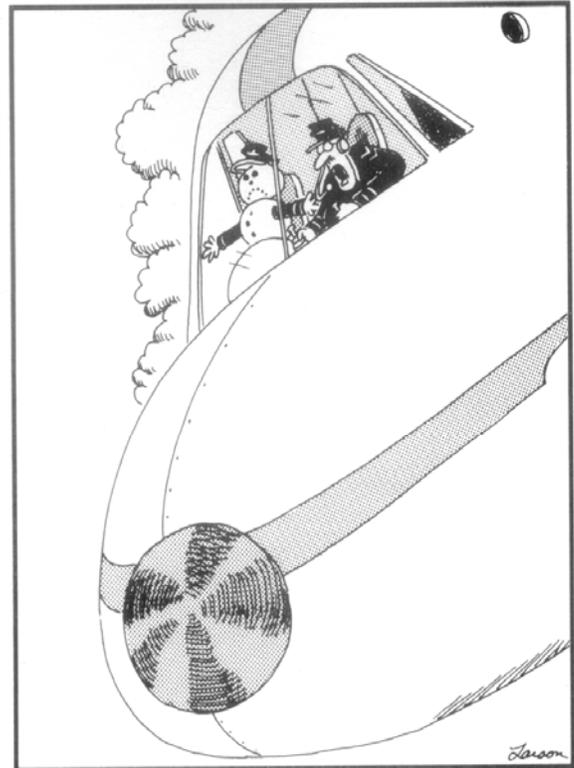
Twas the night before Christmas, and out on the ramp,
not an airplane was stirring not even a Champ.
The aircraft were fastened to tiedowns with care,
in hopes that come morning, they all would be there.
The fuel trucks were nestled all snug in their spots,
with gusts from two-forty at 39 knots.
I slumped at the fuel desk, now finally caught up,
And settled down comfortably, resting my butt.
When the radio lit up with noise and with chatter,
I turned up the scanner to see what was the matter.
A voice clearly heard over static and snow,
Called for clearance to land at the airport below.
He barked his transmission so lively and quick,
I'd have sworn that the call sign he used was "St. Nick".
I ran to the panel to turn up the lights,
The better to welcome this magical flight.
He called his position no room for denial,
"St. Nicholas One turnin' left onto final."
And what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a Rutan-built sleigh with eight Rotax Reindeer!
With vectors to final, down the glideslope he came,
As he passed all fixes he called them by name:
"Now Ringo! Now Tolga! Now Trini and Bacun!
On Comet! On Cupid!" What pills was he takin'?
While controllers were sittin', and scratchin' their head,
They phoned to my office and I heard it with dread,
The message they left was both urgent and dour:
"When Santa pulls in have him please call the tower."
He landed like silk, with the sled runners sparking,
Then I heard "Left at Charlie," and "Taxi to parking."
He slowed to a taxi, turned off of three-oh
And stopped on the ramp with a "Ho, ho-ho-ho..."
He stepped out of the sleigh, but before he could talk,
I ran out to meet him with my best set of chocks.
His red helmet and goggles were covered with frost
And his beard was all blackened from Reindeer exhaust.
His breath smelled like peppermint, gone slightly stale,
And he puffed on a pipe, but he didn't inhale.
His cheeks were all rosy and jiggled like jelly,
His boots were as black as a crop duster's belly.

He was chubby and plump, in his suit of bright red,
And he asked me to "fill it", with hundred low-lead.
He came dashing in from the snow-covered pump,
I knew he was anxious for drainin' the sump.
I spoke not a word, but went straight to my work,
And I filled up the sleigh, but I spilled like a jerk.
He came out of the restroom, and sighed in relief,
Then he picked up a phone for a Flight Service brief.
And I thought as he silently scribed in his log,
These reindeer could land in an eighth-mile fog.
He completed his pre-flight, from the front to the rear,
Then put on his headset, and I heard him yell, "Clear!"
And laying a finger on his push-to-talk,
He called up the tower for clearance and squawk.
"Take taxiway Charlie, the southbound direction,
Turn right three-two-zero at pilot's discretion"
He sped down the runway, the best of the best,
"Your traffic's a Grumman, inbound from the west."
I heard him proclaim, as he climbed through the night,
"Merry Christmas to all! I have traffic in sight."

Aviation Far Side

(submitted by Jim Rozycki)

My favorite cartoon is The Far Side by Gary Larson.
Here is another aviation-related gem...enjoy!!



"Mayday! Mayday! This is Flight 97! I'm in trouble!
... My second engine's on fire, my landing gear's
jammed, and my worthless copilot's frozen up!"

Tri-Care • Medicare • Social Security

(submitted by Kevin Dillon)

(Source: Fleet Reserve Association Today)

End-of-year financial, budget, war, and election concerns force a congressional shortcut on the FY 2009 Defense Authorization Act and drop some "people issues" off the table. After abruptly cutting off debate and abandoning more than 350 amendments in the Senate, congressional leaders compressed two months' worth of negotiations into a few days and rammed the final FY 2009 Defense Authorization Act (S.3001) through in late September.

TRICARE: The good news is retiree TRICARE fees / pharmacy fees will be frozen another year, beneficiary costs should drop for certain preventative health care, all service members will get a 3.9 % pay raise in JAN 09, and drilling reservists should see a drop in their TRICARE premiums for 2009. Under preventative care: it waives TRICARE copayments/deductibles for beneficiaries UNDER age 65 for colorectal, prostate, breast, and cervical screening; annual physicals; and vaccinations. Note: those OVER age 65 will have to be reimbursed for copayments, rather than be waived because of budget technicalities. It also establishes a free smoking-cessation program for all under age 65 (refund copayments for those over age 65), and builds pilot programs to incentivize healthy lifestyles.

Retired TRICARE beneficiaries living overseas may enroll in the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) The Enhanced-Overseas TRDP is effective 01OCT08 and is available for eligible Uniformed Services retirees and their families. For more info and customer service please contact Delta Dental of California via the international toll-free number: 866-721-8737.

COLA: The Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that the official 2009 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase is 5.8%, payable in January, and is applicable to military retired pay, VA benefits for disabled veterans, survivor annuities, and Social Security benefits for next year...the largest increase since 1982.

MILITARY ID CARD REPLACEMENT: Homeland Security Directive 12 now requires retirees and family members seeking to renew or replace a military identification card to provide two (2) types of ID, one of which must include a photo. For contact information and the location of the nearest ID card issuing facility visit <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/owa/home>.

VA CLAIM APPLICATIONS: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) began accepting applications online from claimants filing initial claims for benefits. Now veterans, survivors and other claimants seeking disability compensation, pension, education, or vocational rehabilitation benefits can apply electronically at:

www.va.gov/onlineapps.htm without the constraints of location, postage cost, and time delays in mail delivery.

For more information about VA benefits, go to the VA's website at: www.va.gov or call 1-800-827-1000.

NOTE: The House passed "The Veterans Disability Benefits Claims Modernization Act" (H.R. 5892) that would expedite payment for some claims for VA disability benefits.

P-8 Poseidons

(submitted by Ed Stanfield)

As we all know by now, the P-3C, Orion is going to be replaced by the P-8A Poseidon, a Boeing 737 airframe derivative. The initial fuselage is started in Wichita, Kansas then is shipped via rail to Washington State for final assembly and a short flight-test program. The first 3 aircraft will be assigned to the integrated test team at NAS Patuxent River, MD.

Structural fatigue, wear and tear and groundings of the P-3 fleet has caused the Navy to move up the original target date for the training schedule for the first ready-to-deploy squadron from late 2013 to late 2012. Between 2012 and 2019 a total of 84 P-8s will replace 120 P-3Cs. New squadrons will be smaller in both number of aircraft and personnel. Each squadron will be drawn down from eight P-3Cs to six P-8s.

On 21NOV08 the Navy unveiled plans for basing the new P-8 squadrons. The plan calls for closing NAS Brunswick and will add two squadrons at NAS Jacksonville, FL, and one at NAS Whidbey Island, WA. The Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay will keep its number of squadrons at three. So current plans call for five squadrons at Jax + one replacement squadron; four squadrons at Whidbey and three in Hawaii.

Lower numbers are made possible because fewer people are required to maintain the newer aircraft and also because approximately 68 large unmanned aircraft from the Broad Area Maritime Surveillance program (BAMS's) will be based alongside the P-8 squadrons starting in 2015. Transition to the P-8 is projected to be complete in 2019. So, as world events and the economy fluctuate, we will keep you posted.

(Sources: Navy Times; Aviation Week; Military Times)

Navy Humor

(submitted by Jim Rozycki)

A sailor fell asleep on the beach for several hours and got a horrible sunburn, specifically to his upper legs. He went to the corpsman and was promptly admitted to the base hospital after being diagnosed with second-degree burns. With his skin already starting to blister, and the severe pain he was in, the corpsman prescribed continuous intravenous feeding with saline, electrolytes, a sedative and a Viagra pill every four hours. The sailor was rather astounded and asked.."What good will Viagra do for me Doc?" The corpsman replied, "It won't do anything for your condition, but it will keep the sheets off your legs!!"

Coming in the Next Hawk's Nest **"The Word" Revisited**

Yes.....you heard right. The unofficial publication most sought after and read by most Blackhawks (next to Playboy) on their monthly drill weekends from MAR 74 until JUL 90 was "The Word", published by our Association Historian AWCM Ed Stanfield.

Ed located the trunk, boxes and binders of copies and info sheets. He carefully arranged them in chronological order in binders and shipped them to me, so between the two of us....we are going to treat y'all to a trip down "The Word" memory lane in all future issues..

Ed used to write of crew standings; NATOPS info; ACDUTRA summaries; individual and department goings-on; promotions; retirements; marriages; divorces; "Only in Aviation" stories; and my favorite of them all was his words of wisdom..."Stanfield's Axiom of the Month": i.e. "A cross-eyed teacher cannot control their pupils!"

I have had a ball going through them, so get ready for some original Blackhawk history relived and get ready for some laughs.

Iranian Airspace

In addition to communicating with the local Air Traffic Control Facility, all aircraft in the Persian Gulf AOR are required to give the Iranian Air Defense Radar (military) a ten minute 'heads up' if they will be transiting Iranian airspace. This is a common procedure for commercial aircraft and involves giving them your call sign, transponder code, type aircraft, and point of origin and destination.

A commercial flight flying from Europe to Dubai monitored this conversation on the VHF Guard (emergency) frequency 121.5 MHz.

The conversation went something like this...

Air Defense Radar: 'Unknown aircraft at (location unknown), you are in Iranian airspace. Identify yourself.'

Aircraft: 'This is a United States aircraft. I am in Iraq airspace.'

Air Defense Radar: 'You are in Iranian airspace!

If you do not depart our airspace, we will launch interceptor aircraft immediately!'

Aircraft: This is a United States Marine Corps F/A-18...send 'em up...I'll wait!'

Air Defense Radar: (no response...total silence)!

In Remembrance

Please take a silent moment to honor the memory of the Blackhawks who we lost this year...

Charlie Brown
Paul Costello
Harry Estes
Don White

*Until we meet again our friends.....
.....fair winds and following seas!*

Military Humor

(submitted by Jim Rozycki)

It was entertainment night at the Military Retirement Community Center and over 300 senior retirees came to see the show. Claude the hypnotist exclaimed: "I'm here to put you into a trance; I intend to hypnotize each and every member of the audience." The excitement was almost electric as Claude withdrew a beautiful antique pocket watch from his coat.."I want you each to keep your eye on this antique watch. It's a very special watch. It's been in my family for six generations."

He began to swing the watch gently back and forth, back and forth while quietly chanting "Watch the watch, watch the watch, watch the watch..... The crowd became mesmerized as the watch swayed back and forth, light gleaming off its polished surface. Hundreds of pairs of eyes followed the swaying watch until, suddenly, it slipped from the hypnotist's fingers and fell to the floor, breaking into a hundred pieces.

"Aw SH_T" yelled the hypnotist.....

.....it took three days to clean up that auditorium!!!!

President's Corner

By Lou Abbott

As my time as the VP-68 Alumni Association President comes to a close, I would like to reflect on the past four years. Time slips by way too fast. It seems like just yesterday I was elected. During those years I have received support, encouragement and sometimes a needed reminder of unfinished tasks. All of the Alumni Association Officers, Board members, advisors, past Presidents and committee members have done and continue to do a superior job. As you read this, you know who you are and I will try to avoid forgetting to name somebody by singling out individuals.

Many, many hours are devoted to behind-the-scenes work that is transparent to the general membership. This is all done in order to keep this great organization alive and viable. We have been able to maintain a good membership population but time is against us. I encourage every member to recruit new members. We all know Blackhawks that are not members yet. Participate in as many events as you can and please volunteer your talents to assist for the good of the order.

I extend my best wishes to the incoming President and his very capable staff members.

Lou...

*Thank you for a
great job as President!*

From the Editor:

Jim Rozycki

As always, I would like to thank all of the Black-hawks who called, mailed and emailed me contributions for this issue of the Hawk's Nest newsletter. In this issue we took some liberties on the pilots in print and cartoon and abused the "S" word a bit. Now its time for the rest of you. Anybody have any suggestions and jokes out there???? Any maintenance jokes?? Admin jokes??

Email me at: rozyckijim@aol.com

Call me at: 412-487-5854

Mail to me at: VP-68 Hawk's Nest
2414 Rolling Farms Road
Glenshaw, PA 15116-2564

Color Copies of Hawk's Nest

Color copies of current and past Hawk's Nest newsletters may be downloaded and printed in pdf format from our website: www.vp68.org

From the Secretary

If you move and change your mailing address please let me know as that is the only way we can keep track of you. Send your address information to:

wright_kathleen@bah.com

or mail to: VP-68 Alumni Association
4773 W. Braddock Road, Apt 204,
Alexandria, VA 22311.

From the Treasurer

The end of 2008 is upon us and those of you who are Regular yearly members (M-08) should note that your 2008 dues will soon expire.

Members who have not renewed their dues by March of each year will be dropped from our roster, lose their membership rights and no longer receive this newsletter. Please consider converting to a Life Membership and never have to write us another check. Annual dues is \$10, Life Membership is \$100 unless you are over 75 and then it is only \$25.

All dues payments and financial matters are to be mailed to:

**VP-68 Alumni Association
708 Schindler Drive
Silver Springs, MD 20903-1330**

Make checks payable to:
VP-68 Alumni Association

contact John LeNard at 301-445-2261
or email at johnlenard01@comcast.net

**2009 MEMBERSHIPS
ARE NOW DUE !**

Getting Old Message from page 6

Now I forget what I was gonna tell you!!!

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee, headed up by Dick Perkins, is still searching for former Blackhawks who are not yet members of our Alumni Association. If you know of anybody please forward their names and contact info to Dick via e-mail at vp68co@yahoo.com

Membership applications may be downloaded from our website: www.vp68.org

Missing Blackhawks

We have a few "lost" Life Members who haven't told us of their move! If you know them or where they are please help us get their newsletter to them....have them contact Kathy Wright.

Alfredo Arroyo, L-98
Dave Foy, L-06
Nancy Yohn, L-04

2009-2010 Association Officers

- President **Jacque LaValle**
jacque.lavalle@verizon.net
- Vice-President **Wyman Bailey**
baileymod@msn.com
- Secretary **Kathy Wright**
wright_kathleen@bah.com
- Treasurer **John LeNard**
johnlenard01@comcast.net
- Historian **Ed Stanfield**
edstanfield@mrisc.com

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

The Officers and Staff of the VP-68 Alumni Association wish you and your families a most blessed, safe and happy holiday season.

Please remember and say a special prayer for our troops!

**SEE YOU AT THE
2009 SPRING FLING
06 JUN 09 • 1100
NAS PATUXENT RIVER
BEACH HOUSE**