



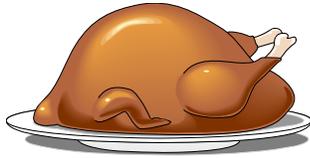
VP-68 Hawk's Nest

Volume No. 26

VP-68 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

November 2007

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), its parent and supporting Navy squadrons, and those interested in preserving the name and history of VP-68.



Happy Holidays



2007 Fall Muster

The annual VP-68 Alumni Association "Fall Muster" pizza-fest was held on Saturday, 13OCT07 starting at 1600 at the Sports Page Club on Andrews Air Force Base. About 40 Blackhawks and spouses attended. Not everybody there signed the "official" 3500 attendance report and you would think that you kids would know to sign that by now!! Guess you won't get paid for this drill!

Our Board of Directors, Dick Fickling and Joe Odenthal along with Secretary Kathy Wright and Treasurer John LeNard conducted the business meeting. A brief discussion was held about the Spring Fling (see 2008 Spring Fling article). Motion was made and passed to postpone the raffle of the Harry Estes Fund P-3 painting a bit longer as folks are still contacting us to contribute.

Tickets are \$5/each and 5 tickets for \$20.

Send your checks to the Treasurer John LeNard (address on last page)...**LAST CALL ON TICKETS!!**



Above, Jeannie Odenthal, Judy LeNard (John is in the background there), Clarissa and "Strip" Stripling and "Packy" Jones socialize and discuss Association business. Speaking of "Packy" Jones, Joe and Jeannie Odenthal were visiting the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB this summer and as they entered through the gate they noticed a large sign with arrow pointing the way to "Packy's". Drawing on his curiosity, Joe drove off to find the place. What they found was a sports bar of the Bob Hope hotel complex on Wright-Patterson and the name was Packy's. Always thinking of his former

shipmates, Joe presented to our "Packy", a menu and ballcap from the "Packy's" sports bar.

Once again, a great example of the friendships and fond memories we all share and keep strong over the



years. As in all of our Alumni Association events, the time flew by too quickly. Everybody exchanged holiday best wishes to each other and we all planned to get together again for the 2008 Spring Fling

2008 SPRING FLING

The annual VP-68 Alumni Association "Spring Fling" picnic is scheduled for Saturday, 26 April 2008 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. Jacque Lavallo will once again head up the event and contact some "volunteers" to help. Last year's horseshoe games were rained out so we'll try again...practice up!

Every year after the picnic, a bunch of us head out to a great local restaurant for more laughs, fine food, laughs, drinks, laughs and will do it again in 2008. Plan to stay after the picnic and join the gang for more fun.

More detailed info will be in future issues of the Hawk's Nest so.....**MARK YOUR 2008 CALENDARS!!!!**

Navy Humor Question

What is the difference between a jet fighter pilot and the jet he flies? (answer on the last page)

Veteran's Day

To all of us, Veteran's Day holds a special heartfelt meaning. We hold our heads up high that we dedicated part of our lives to serve and uphold the freedom and values of this great country of ours. We have served in the Armed Forces and are blessed to share the friendships and camaraderie of our fellow veterans.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, may we also remember, support, pray for and honor those who are serving, those injured, those who have given the ultimate sacrifice and also all of their families.

This photo from the Internet says it all.....



GOD BLESS THE MEN AND WOMEN OF OUR ARMED FORCES

What is a Veteran?

(submitted by Rex Lake)

A heartfelt tribute to our veterans and military personnel...attributed to Father Denis Edward O'Brian, Marine Corps chaplain, 09NOV01.

Some veterans bear visible signs of their service: a missing limb, a jagged scar, a certain look in the eye. Others may carry the evidence inside them, a pin holding a bone together, a piece of shrapnel in the leg – or perhaps another sort of inner steel: the soul's ally forged in the refinery of adversity. Except in parades, however, the men and women who have kept America safe wear no badge or emblem. You can't tell a vet just by looking.

So what is a vet?.....

- A vet is the cop on the beat who spent six months in Saudi Arabia sweating two gallons a day making sure the armored personnel carriers didn't run out of fuel.
- A vet is the barroom loudmouth, dumber than five wooden planks, whose overgrown frat-boy behavior is outweighed a hundred times in the cosmic scales by four hours of exquisite bravery near the 38th Parallel.
- A vet is the career quartermaster who watches the ribbons and medals pass him by.
- A vet is the POW who went away one person and came back another - or didn't come back at all.

- A vet is the nurse who fought against futility and went to sleep sobbing every night for two solid years in Da Nang.
- A vet is the drill instructor, who has never seen combat but has saved countless lives by turning slouchy, no-account punks and gang members into marines, airmen, sailors, soldiers and coast guardsmen, and teaching them to watch each other's backs.
- A vet is the parade-riding Legionnaire who pins on his ribbons and medals with a prosthetic hand.
- A vet is the three anonymous heroes in The Tomb Of The Unknowns, whose presence at the Arlington National Cemetery must forever preserve the memory of all the anonymous heroes whose valor dies unrecognized with them on the battlefield or in the ocean's sunless deep.
- A vet is the old guy bagging groceries at the supermarket - palsied now and aggravatingly slow - who helped liberate a Nazi death camp and who wishes all day long that his wife were still alive to hold him when the nightmares come.
- A vet is an ordinary and yet extraordinary human being, a person who offered some of his life's most vital years in the service of his country, and who sacrificed his ambitions so others would not have to sacrifice theirs.
- A vet is a soldier and a savior and a sword against the darkness, and he is nothing more than the finest, greatest testimony on behalf of the finest, greatest nation ever known.

So remember, each time you see someone who has served our country, just lean over and say, "Thank You." That's all most people need, and in most cases it will mean more than any medals they could have been awarded or were awarded.

Two little words that mean a lot, "THANK YOU".

Veteran's • Then & Now

(a very nice power point presentation)

<http://www.usaforever.org/flash/WeSupportU.htm>

Holiday Card List

When you are making out your Holiday card list this year, please include the following:

A Recovering American Soldier
c/o Walter Reed Army Medical Center
6900 Georgia Avenue,NW
Washington,D.C. 20307-5001

A Recovering Sailor or Marine
c/o National Naval Medical Center
8901 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20889-5600

Saluting the Flag

Recently there have been many emails stating that veterans may now salute the flag in civilian clothes rather than just place their hand over their heart. We did some research and came up with the following:

Note: the referenced legislation, (S.1877) is not yet Law. The Bill has passed the Senate but has not been voted on by the House and as such, has not been signed by the President. Here is the link to get the Bill's current status:

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s110-1877>

Here is a website and article recently published about the issue.

<http://www.leatherneck.com/forums/showthread.php?t=51583>

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) today praised the passage by unanimous consent of his bill (S.1877) clarifying U.S. law to allow veterans and servicemen not in uniform to salute the flag. Current law (US Code Title 4, Chapter 1) states that veterans and servicemen not in uniform should place their hand over their heart without clarifying whether they can or should salute the flag.

"The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one's military service," Senator Inhofe said. "Veterans and service members continue representing the military services even when not in uniform. "Unfortunately, current U.S. law leaves confusion as to whether veterans and service members out of uniform can or should salute the flag. My legislation will clarify this regulation, allowing veterans and servicemen alike to salute the flag, whether they are in uniform or not. "I look forward to seeing those who have served saluting proudly at baseball games, parades, and formal events. I believe this is an appropriate way to honor and recognize the 25 million veterans in the United States who have served in the military and remain as role models to others citizens. Those who are currently serving or have served in the military have earned this right, and their recognition will be an inspiration to others."

Note: The current law is written as such:

SEC. 5. During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in review, all persons present except those in uniform should face the flag and stand at attention with the right hand over the heart. Those present in uniform should render the military salute. When not in uniform, men should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Aliens should stand at attention. The salute to the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.

SEC. 6. During rendition of the national anthem when the flag is displayed, all present except those in uniform should stand at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. Men not in uniform should remove

their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should render the military salute at the first note of the anthem and retain this position until the last note. When the flag is not displayed, those present should face toward the music and act in the same manner they would if the flag were displayed there.

SEC. 7. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all", should be rendered by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. When not in uniform men should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag and render the military salute.

Together We Served

(submitted by Jim Rozycki)

<http://navy.togetherweserved.com>

My son Jeff, former CTM2, passed this website onto me. I logged in and registered and in a few minutes located several names of shipmates from the late 60's aboard the U.S.S. Shangri-La (CVA-38). I even found our VP-68 good friend Paul Randolph's name in there.

You create a personal page and enter as much data as you wish about yourself and then you list your duty assignments, rates, ranks, medals and ribbons and so forth. The site then enters this into a database that may be viewed by all members and searched by the various data. I sorted by AW rating and then CPO ranks and hundreds of names show up that you can select and view their pages.

So, ya o'le seadogs, try it out and locate some of those former scallywags you used to go on liberty with overseas. Let us know how you did!

"Pentagon 9/11" the book

(submitted by Kathy Wright)

I am most happy to tell you that the book "Pentagon 9/11" is now published by the Government Printing Office. Those of you who were at the VP-68 35th Reunion in 2005 had the pleasure of meeting, and listening to as our guest speaker, the principle author of the book, Dr. Sarandis "Randy" Papadopoulos. I highly recommend that you read the "true" story. On television you only saw what happened to the Pentagon from the outside of the "E" ring. The book documents what happened in the inner rings that might never been told before. Here is the ordering information website:

<http://bookstore.gpo.gov/collections/pentagon911.jsp>

Family Affair

Naval Aviation News achieved high honors in the 2006 CHINFO Merit Awards competition. NANews won First Place in the category Magazine Format Publication. Art Director, Morgan I. Wilbur (VP-68, AW1 ret), won First Place in the category Art/Graphics in Support of a Publication, and Morgan's father "Grampa Pettibone" Artist Ted Wilbur (Capt., USN ret) won Second Place in the same category. Morgan's painting ("That's What You Get Flight Pay For," SEP-OCT '06, pp. 18-19), also won First Place in the DOD-wide Thomas Jefferson Awards competition's Art/Graphics category.

Morgan is an extremely talented and humble artist and would shy away from a lot of fanfare but he has helped us and has been extremely generous to the VP-68 Alumni Association by donating 1) the painting of the four aircraft VP-68 and parent squadrons have flown that became our Lithograph for sale; 2) a P-3 painting raffled off at the 2000 Reunion won by George Kurtz; and finally 3) the painting of a P-3 at altitude with contrails that we are raffling off for our Harry Estes Memorable Fund.

If you see Morgan, please congratulate him on this prestigious award and thank him for his support of our VP-68 Alumni Association.

USCGA Boat Crew Qual

In the Volume 23 / January 2007 issue of the Hawk's Nest **Never Again Volunteer Yourself** article we featured Kathy Wright and Carrie Blazek joining the Coast Guard Auxiliary. They both have put the same dedication and professionalism into the Coast Guard Auxiliary as they did VP-68. A lot of extra time, study and hard work goes into the program because they operate under real-world situations. On 18AUG07 both Kathy and Carrie underwent their "check ride" and qualified as Boat Crew.

This was a 2-year process and lots of work to complete all of the tasks and sign-offs required. This now qualifies them to go on U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary operational patrols on the Chesapeake Bay. If you happen to be out in a boat on the bay and see the Coast Guard Auxiliary on patrol, one of the crewmembers may be Kathy or Carrie. Congratulations to you both!

Navy Humor

The Navy CPO boot camp drill instructor had just finished reading the riot act to the new recruits lined up in rank for totally messing up close-order drill practice and finished with "Alright all of you idiots...fall out and get out of my sight...NOW!!!" One lonely recruit still standing there after they were all gone smiled and said..."sure was a lot of 'em huh Chief"!!!

Blackhawks On The Move!!

Recently some Blackhawks have retired and moved and here is a brief update...

Bob Paty

Bob is now officially retired and has moved to Angola-By-The-Bay, in Lewes, Delaware.

Vince "AP" Apostolico

"AP" retired and is also now "on-the-bay" at Angola-By-The-Bay, in Lewes, Delaware.

(Hey, you 2 kids are neighbors - ya oughtta hook-up!)

Dick Fickling

Dick retired from Lockheed-Martin and he and Joann had their "River-House" in Wheems, VA on Moran Creek, torn down, re-did the topography and built a 2-story garage/workshop which they are currently living in. Their new home is currently under construction overlooking their dock and sailboat.

Brad Kirley

Brad retired and moved to Lake Anna in Orange, VA.

(see "Burning Down The House" in this issue)

Steve Black

Steve retired from the FAA and has moved to Rehoboth Beach, DE.

Bob Barnes, MSG, RES, USAR

(see Volume 24, April 2007)

Bob has been in Afghanistan since March of this year and is about 8 months into a 1-year tour after which he will retire. He writes that he cannot talk about what



he is doing but, was an AO in the Navy and his specialty has not changed there at Camp Vance. He says "lots more Navy folks showing up for duty there in Bagram, not bad duty, just different!"

"Winter is setting in fast and furious, really cold at night, expect the

snows soon. Roads will then ice over with little commuting and hibernating for weeks.

Bob won't be coming home for the holidays, and says hello to, and would like to hear from all of his Blackhawk friends.

Robert Barnes
CJSOTF-A
APO, AE 09354

robert.barnes2@us.army.mil

Military Family

(submitted by Kathy Wright)

At the end of October I combined a trip to California to visit my mother with attending the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego boot camp graduation of my great nephew, PFC Mike Fisher, Jr. He is one of our newest and youngest members of our sea-services (he turned 18 in boot camp). Through some great connections of mine, mom and I were seated on the reviewing stand two rows behind the General. Mike has a six-month school at Twenty-nine Palms, CA for Satellite Communication Operator before he heads to the fleet. Welcome aboard Mike!



PFC Mike Fisher, Jr & YNCS Kathy Wright, USNR (ret)

USO

(submitted by Bob Paty)

On our return trip home to Naples from Yellowstone National Park, Patty and I had the pleasure of visiting the USO Lounge at the Charlotte (CLT) airport. We had a three hour layover and heard a PA announcement about a USO lounge located on the second floor of the main concourse. It turned out to be a fabulous way to spend a few hours. The USO Lounge is the old British Airways First Class/Business Class lounge and is very swank. They had very nice sandwiches, soft drinks and snacks and were all complimentary (you just had to give Uncle Sam 20+ years of your life!). There were about a dozen lazy-boy type loungers in front of their very large wall-mounted TV. Also provided were three computer terminals and plenty of space to work on your own laptop. They even had a children's activity center. It was an outstanding experience.

Should you have a few extra minutes to spend at Charlotte Airport, spend them in the USO Lounge, you'll be glad you did. Also, should you have a few extra dollars to spend please consider the USO. You will be glad you did and so will thousands of other GIs.....**BOB Editor's Note:** In the 60's, as a new young sailor aboard an aircraft carrier overseas I often sought refuge in the USO and second Bob's endorsement.

Can't Stay Out of Uniform

(submitted by Rex Lake & John Carr)

Senior Chief Rex Lake and AMH2 John Carr cannot seem to get enough of wearing uniforms. After retiring from the VP 68 they have traded their Navy dress blues for the Air Force Dress blue uniform. They both fly with the West Virginia Wing, Clarksburg Composite Squadron, of the Civil Air Patrol.

Rex has been a member since Jan of 2007 and recently received his commission as 1st Lieutenant. He also on July 21st took his check ride and is now qualified in the new G 1000, Glass Cockpit. He is now qualified as Transport Pilot, Cadet Orientation Pilot, and is currently training as Mission Pilot. He is also assistant Emergency Services Officer.

John has been a member since April of 03 and currently holds the rank of Captain. He is qualified as Transport Pilot, Cadet Orientation Pilot, Mission Pilot, and is currently waiting on clearance as a DEA Pilot. He is the Public Affairs Officer for the Clarksburg Squadron, and was named West Virginia Public Affairs Officer of the year for 2004 and 2006. He was also named Public Affairs Officer of the year of the Mid East Region (Delaware, Maryland, DC, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia) for the year of 2004.

John was one of three WV pilots selected for a "special mission" in Florida. Pilots selected must be instrument rated, night current, G 1000 qualified, passed the security check for DEA pilot, and be able to pass a Coast Guard water survival test. Due to his young age John had some misgivings about the water survival but he was assured Kathy Wright would be administering the swim test!!!

Buffalo Theory - Beer - Brain

(some of our crew "mottos" when we were younger)

From the episode of "Cheers" that Cliff, seated at the bar, explains the Buffalo Theory to Norm. "Well you see, Norm, it's like this...a herd of Buffalo can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo. And when the herd is hunted, it's the slowest and weakest ones at the back that are killed first. This natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general speed and health of the whole group keeps improving by the regular killing of the weakest members.

In much the same way, the human brain can only operate as fast as the slowest brain cells. Now, as we know, excessive intake of alcohol kills brain cells. But, naturally, it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first. In this way, regular consumption of beer eliminates the weaker brain cells, making the brain a faster more efficient machine. And that, Norm, is why you always feel smarter after a few beers."

Burnin' Down The House

(submitted by Brad Kirley)

Last year, former VP-68 Skipper Brad Kirley recently gave new meaning to the old saying "Burnin' Down The House". Upon deciding to retire to Orange, VA and build a new house, they donated their family cottage of 24 years on Lake Anna to the local volunteer fire department for training purposes. Along with removing all of their own possessions, they removed and donated to charity all usable items such as windows, doors, water heater and fixtures.

After obtaining all of the permits and precautions, the big day arrived and with several fire companies guarding the surrounding area, small fires were started in various rooms and extinguished 11 times for practice for the firemen. Entering the basement they worked their way up to the fires practicing search, rescue and firefighting techniques. Finally, the house was prepped for a major burn and up it went!!!



Two days later the ashes were cold, the debris cleared, and nine months later our new house was built on the property overlooking their favorite lake, providing us not only fond memories of past vacations, but many future memories to come.



Certified Flight Instructor

(submitted by Jacque LaValle)

On 04OCT07, I was certified by the FAA as a Certified Flight Instructor (CFI). This has been a "PhD" level effort for over a year but the result was worth the toil. But, my check ride took 34 days to complete due to a comedy of errors and may have been one of the longest check rides in history. Not that there were many strings attached to this ordeal, but the check-ride began in August with one of several trips from home-base St. Mary's County, MD airport to Manassas, VA airport requiring flying through the Washington, D.C. metro air-space in a private aircraft.



The FAA, TSA and the military are monitoring this airspace every single second and a slight mistake on my part could have resulted in being pursued by either military or TSA aircraft, made to land, investigated and pilot license suspended. The comedy of errors I mentioned included 1) NOTAM and FSS advised radio frequencies being changed without notice, 2) 5-hour oral exam held in a 5'x6' enclosed cubicle in 80° heat, 3) air speed indicator problems that caused flight to be repeated (indicator not serviced since 1974 and full of dirt, rust & mud, 4) flying to Manassas to have the examiner no-show, 5) examiner driving to St. Mary's, get lost in fog & cancel, to name a few.

Finally we flew the check-ride, poked out of the clouds to be in middle of Washington DC ADIZ again. We kept lookout for F-16s but eventually landed uneventfully and with CFI certificate in hand. I did learn one thing from this experience, the FAA's motto: "We're not happy until YOU'RE not happy!"

Anybody need a flight instructor? Contact me at:

jacque.lavalle@verizon.net

Navy Humor

Having just moved into his plush new office, a pompous new Navy Captain was sitting at his desk when a petty officer knocked on the door. Conscious of his new position the Captain quickly picked up the phone, told the PO to enter, then said into the phone, "Yes Admiral, I'll be seeing him this afternoon and I'll pass along your message. In the mean time sir, thank you for your good wishes." Feeling as though he had sufficiently impressed the young PO, he asked, "What do you want?" "Nothing important sir" the PO replied, "I'm just here to hook up your telephone."

Tri-Care • Medicare • Social Security

(submitted by Kevin Dillon)

Tri-Care

- The House passed FY2008 Defense Appropriations legislation (HR 3222) including funding for a 3.5% military pay increase and additional funding for TRICARE (\$1.9 billion) in lieu of fee increases proposed by the Pentagon and opposed by FRA.
- TRICARE has recently re-designed its website to provide up-to-date TRICARE benefit information in seconds. Check it out at: www.tricare.mil

Medicare

- If you have health care insurance from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or under TRICARE or CHAMPVA program, your health benefits may change or end when you become eligible for Medicare. You should contact the VA, Department of Defense or a military health benefits advisor for more information.
- MOAA's newest publication, "Aging Into Medicare" may be downloaded from the MOAA website at: http://www.moaa.org/pubs/pubs_booklets/pubs_booklets_infoex_aim.htm

Social Security

- Visit their website at: www.socialsecurity.gov or call 1-800-772-1213, Monday-Friday, 7a.m. to 7p.m.
- When you apply for Social Security benefits, you will be asked for proof of your military service (DD Form 214) or information about your Reserve or National Guard service.
- In Publication No. 05-10024, "Understanding The Benefits", explains that in addition to retirement benefits, Social Security pays survivors benefits to your family when you die and benefits to you and your family if you become disabled.
- When To Retire? Publication No. 05-10035 explains about retiring at age 62 or waiting. Full retirement age in 2007 is 65 and 10 months but will gradually increase until it reaches age 67 for people born in 1960 and later.

Navy Humor

After several days of heavy rains the young Lieutenant was driving down a muddy back road on base and encountered another car stuck in the mud with a red-faced Commander at the wheel.

"Your jeep stuck, sir?" asked the Lieutenant as he pulled alongside.

"Nope," replied the Commander, coming over and handing him the keys....."Yours is!"

Us Old Farts

(author unknown...but I can relate!)

I'm over 60 and the Armed Forces say I'm too old to track down terrorists. (You can't be older than 42 to join the military.) They've got the whole thing backwards. Instead of sending 18-year-olds off to fight, they ought to take us old guys. You shouldn't be able to join a military unit until you're at least 35. For starters:

- Researchers say 18-year-olds think about sex every 10 seconds. Old guys only think about sex a couple of times a day, leaving us more than 28,000 additional seconds per day to concentrate on the enemy.
- Young guys haven't lived long enough to be cranky, and a cranky soldier is a dangerous soldier. If we can't kill the enemy we'll complain them into submission. "My back hurts! I'm hungry! Where's the remote?"
- An 18-year-old hasn't had a legal beer yet and you shouldn't go to war until you're at least old enough to drink. The average old guy, on the other hand, has consumed 126,000 gallons of beer, and a jaunt through the desert heat with a beer and an M-60 would do wonders for the old beer belly. (Note there are 24 hours in a day and 24 bottles in a case...another convenient way to measure time!)
- An 18-year-old doesn't like to get up before 10 a.m. Old guys always get up early to pee.
- If captured we couldn't spill the beans because we'd forget where we put them. In fact, name, rank, and serial number would be a real brainteaser.
- Boot camp would be easier for old guys. We're used to getting screamed and yelled at and we like soft food. We've also developed an appreciation for guns. We like them almost better than naps. They could lighten up on the obstacle course however. I've been in combat and didn't see a single 20-foot wall with rope hanging over the side, nor did I ever do any pushups after completing basic training. I can hear the Drill Sgt now, "Get down and give me ... er ... one." Actually, the running part is kind of a waste of energy. I've never seen anyone out-run a bullet.
- An 18-year-old has the whole world ahead of him. He's still learning to shave, to carry on a conversation, and to wear pants without the top of his butt crack showing and his shorts sticking out. He's hasn't figured out that a pierced tongue catches food particles, and that a 400-watt speaker in the back seat of a Honda can rupture

an eardrum, and that a baseball cap has a brim to shade eyes, not the back of his head.

- These are all great reasons to keep our kids at home to learn a little more about life before sending them off into harm's way.
- Let us old guys track down those dirty rotten cowards who attacked us on September 11. The last thing an enemy would want to see right now is a couple of million old farts with attitudes.

Change of Command **Commander** **Naval Air Force Reserve**

(submitted by Lew Johnson)

On Friday, 21SEP07, Lew Johnson, Becky Connick, Ron & Pam Garman flew to Naval Air Station, San Diego, California to attend the Change of Command ceremony at which Rear Admiral (lower half) Jeffery A. Lemmons, Commander, Naval Air Force Reserve/Vice Commander, Naval Air Forces was relieved by Real Admiral Patrick E. McGrath, formally Deputy Commander of Navy Region Southwest.



RDML Lemmons' new assignment is at the Pentagon as Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Resources, Requirements and Assessments (N8R). On 30MAY07, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates announced that the President had nominated RDML Lemmons for appointment to the grade of Rear Admiral and he received his second star effective 01OCT07.



Above, RDML McGrath and RDML Lemmons.

Our trip went something like this...we departed early from Baltimore-Washington Airport for San Diego and were met by the Admiral's Aide and along with the Admiral's family were taken on a 2 hour personalized tour of the USS Ronald Reagan (CVN-76) hosted by the ship's PAO.

This was followed by an cocktail hour and dinner at the "O" Club. After dinner the skippers of the squadrons under RDML Lemmons' command conducted a program and "roast" of the Rear Admiral. They had made a very funny (to us..not sure how the Admiral felt) video about the Admiral's life from cradle to present. It was especially gratifying to the "Blackhawks" in attendance that VP-68 was specifically included in the video. At one point in the narration they said quote: "The Admiral must have loved VP-68...he spent 11 years there." We were all beaming as we know for a fact that he definitely has a special feeling for VP-68.

The next morning at the COC, Chief of Naval Reserve VADM John C. Cotton introduced the guest speaker, Vice Admiral Thomas J. Kilcline, Commander, Naval Air Forces. In his remarks he praised the NAFR and accomplishments under RDML Lemmons noting "before we were like two football teams playing in separate conferences, but now are on the same schedule and are one team." He also said "The statistics prove RDML Lemmons has brought NAFR to the next level and make no mistake, these efforts have saved lives." VADM Kilcline also presented the Distinguished Service Medal to RDML Lemmons.

Following the ceremony there was a reception and then we drove to a choice Restaurant/Bar on a pier jutting into San Diego Bay right at mid-course for the Red Bull Air Race. That evening we attended an informal reception for family and friends at the Admiral's cottage and Admiral and Mrs. Lemmons were wonderful hosts. Early Sunday morning (0430) we and some of the Admiral's family caught flights back to the east coast. We arrived back in Baltimore just in time to miss the Ravens game, which was a blessing!! Talk about an exciting weekend.

Again, it was so invigorating and fulfilling as a former member of VP-68 that these esteemed gentlemen were talking about our last skipper and it again made us so proud to be a "Blackhawk".

Editor's Note: Thanks to our roving reporter, Lew Johnson, for an outstanding job in this report and for a more detailed version, please email Lew at:

ljohnson@cablespeed.com

Navy Humor

When his son refused to get a job, his father insisted he join the Navy. At the induction physical, the doctor directed the reluctant recruit to read the eye chart across the room. "What chart?" the young man asked. "The one on the wall!" The doctor said. "What wall?" the young man asked. Sensing he had a deadbeat on his hands, the doctor asked his beautiful nurse to walk in naked. "What do you see now?" The doctor asked. "Nothing." the young man replied. "Well, you may not see anything," the doctor said, "but your 'indicator' is pointing toward Great Lakes!.....Welcome to the Navy, son."

Smith - Schauss

(by Jim Rozycki)

We so often refer to the friendships and camaraderie we have shared over the years as VP-68 Black Hawks and this feature is no exception. I have known both of these gentlemen since the mid 70's and would like to have some fun here at their expense.



First, we take you back to the mid 70's when "Chief" Harry Lee Smith received his commission as a Lieutenant, here being tacked on by his friend LT Nick Schaus. Then, in 2003 for a naval ceremony that Capt. Harry Lee couldn't attend, his "friend" Capt. Nick saw that he was represented by superimposing a color photo of Harry on top of his own photo (great job by the way!).



Huntin' Haven in beautiful Piney Flats, TN. Harry built this new awesome lodge on the hilltop but still maintained some rustic country charm to it. He has 8 farms total with 569 acres in SW Virginia and 170 acres in NE Tennessee. The company is called OUTDOORFUNUSA, outdoor services.

But, you know boys, even a photo doesn't replace you signing the darn 3500!! Did you get away with it??

Both are now retired with Harry Lee down in Tennessee and Nick in Maryland, and they still visit and keep in contact. In fact, Nick shared a recent visit to Harry Lee's

Harry said to turn off the paved road onto the dirt one just past the Rest Stop!! (shown below)



We approached the front door but upon inspection of the unique doorbell decided to call Harry Lee on his cell-phone instead!! We did consider ringing at least once. Wonder what the inside of the wall looks like?



Little did we know that Harry was right above our heads in his (patent-pending) "Harry's Hunter's Haven Luxury Huntin' Blind" with all the creature comforts of huntin' without ever leaving the house!!



Seriously though, if you are an outdoorsman or sportsman and would like to experience a great time and adventure, contact Harry Lee Smith at 800-874-4332 or caphlee@yahoo.com

He'll keep the lights on for ya!!

From the Editor:

Jim Rozycki

As always, I would like to thank all of the Blackhawks who called, mailed and emailed me contributions for this issue of the Hawk's Nest newsletter. I especially appreciate any digital photos included. If you have regular photographs, you may scan them and email them or just mail them to me and I will scan and return them to you with your copy of the next newsletter.

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

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 2007 is fast approaching and those of you who are Regular yearly members (M-07) should note that your 2007 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 are \$10, Life Memberships are \$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

2008 MEMBERSHIPS
ARE NOW DUE !

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

Navy Humor answer from page 1

(turned right to the answer didn't you!!!)

The jet engine stops whining after the flight is over!!!

Association Officers

- President **Lou Abbott**
louabbott1@verizon.net
- Vice-President **Jacque LaValle**
jacque.lavalle@verizon.net
- 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.

SEE YOU AT THE
2008 SPRING FLING
26 APR 08 • 1100
NAS PATUXENT RIVER
BEACH HOUSE